2008 MASTER PLAN

TOWN OF WASHINGTON GROVE
MARYLAND

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TOWN OF WASHINGTON GROVE
MASTER PLAN

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INTRODUCTION; PURPOSES OF THE PLAN

Washington Grove is an incomparable town -- unique in its roots, in its initial land use plan, in the design of its dwellings, in its determination to retain more land in a natural state as forests and parks than developed property, and in the character of its history.

Recognizing that most of the Town's privately owned parcels are already developed, the goals and objectives of this plan are:

- Preserve the integrity of the Town and its way of life by providing guidance for protection of the original pattern and character of the community
- Enhance the Town's destiny by preserving historic resources through thoughtful adaptation of housing stock and conservation of the natural landscape
- Protect and improve the economic value of both the privately owned property and the property and resources held in common
- Create an awareness of Washington Grove in adjacent jurisdictions and support planning requirements throughout the State

Integral to the value of the commons is the "sense of place" described in the nomination form for inclusion on the National Register for Historic Places. That character is a unique composite of setting, historic legacy, and community life that is strong yet vulnerable to gradual erosion on many fronts. The threats are both from without, in the form of ever encroaching urbanization, and internal in the form of diminished communal contribution and physical integrity.

The most striking element of the layout of the Town is the relative proportion of developed and natural spaces. Even the developed areas are integrated into the natural environment to achieve "a Town within a Forest."

The preparation of a master plan is the legal responsibility of the Washington Grove Planning Commission under the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 66B. It states that "it is the function and duty of the Planning Commission to make and approve a plan which … shall serve as a guide to public and private actions and decisions to ensure the development of public and private property in appropriate relationships." The plan must include the following elements:

1. Statement of goals, objectives, principles, policies, and standards
2. Land use plan element including urban growth areas
3. Transportation plan element
4. Community facilities plan element
5. Mineral resources plan (if appropriate)
6. Identification of areas of critical State concern (if appropriate)
7. Sensitive area element/environmental quality
8. Recommendations for implementation encouraging the following:
   (a) Streamlined review of applications for development, including permit review and subdivision review within the areas designated for growth in the plan;
   (b) The use of flexible development regulations to promote innovative and cost-saving site design and protect the environment; and

(c) Economic development in areas designated for growth in the plan through the use of innovative techniques.

In addition to these items, the Town of Washington Grove Master Plan includes the following subject areas:

- Recreation and Parks
- Water Resources
- Commercial Corner
- Development and Preservation Strategies
- Interjurisdicational Issues

The State's Article 66B also mandates that a community's master plan implement the following visions:

1. Development is concentrated in suitable areas;
2. Sensitive areas are protected;
3. In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected;
4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic;
5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced;
6. To assure the achievement of 1 through 5 above, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined;
7. Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under the control of the county or municipal corporation are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur, and
8. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.

This master plan is a guide to public and private actions and decisions adopted by the Town. The plan formulation process involved work sessions of the Planning Commission, focus group meetings, and public hearings before the Commission, the Mayor and Town Council. The plan addresses areas outside of Town as these relate to the preservation and enhancement of the boundaries and gateways of the Town. Notification and participation by Town residents and by other jurisdictions and interests have been encouraged to insure the common good as development of public and private properties occurs.

We who live in Washington Grove enjoy the fruits of those who planned for us. It is our intention and our legal responsibility to do the same for future residents.

EXHIBIT A – Current Zoning and Growth Areas

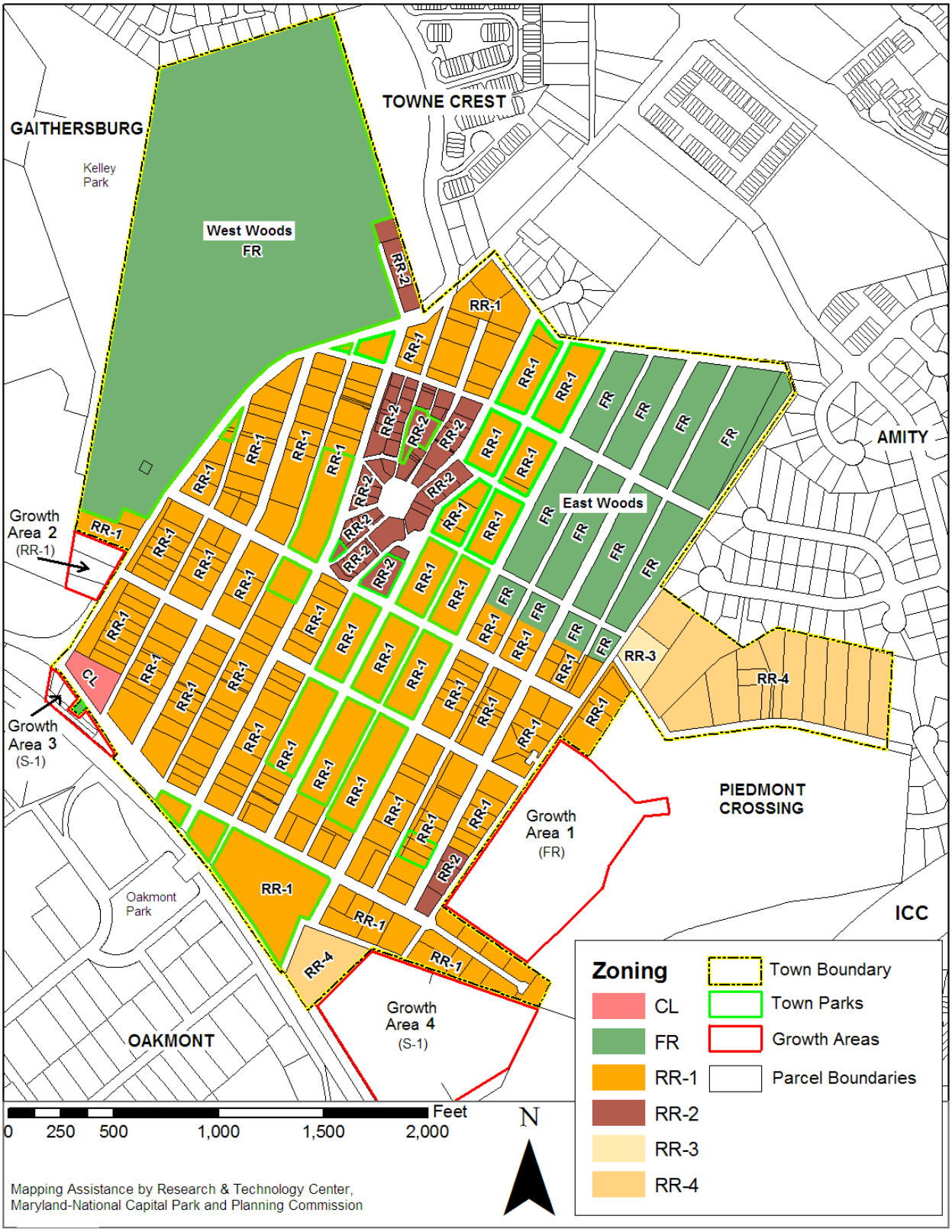
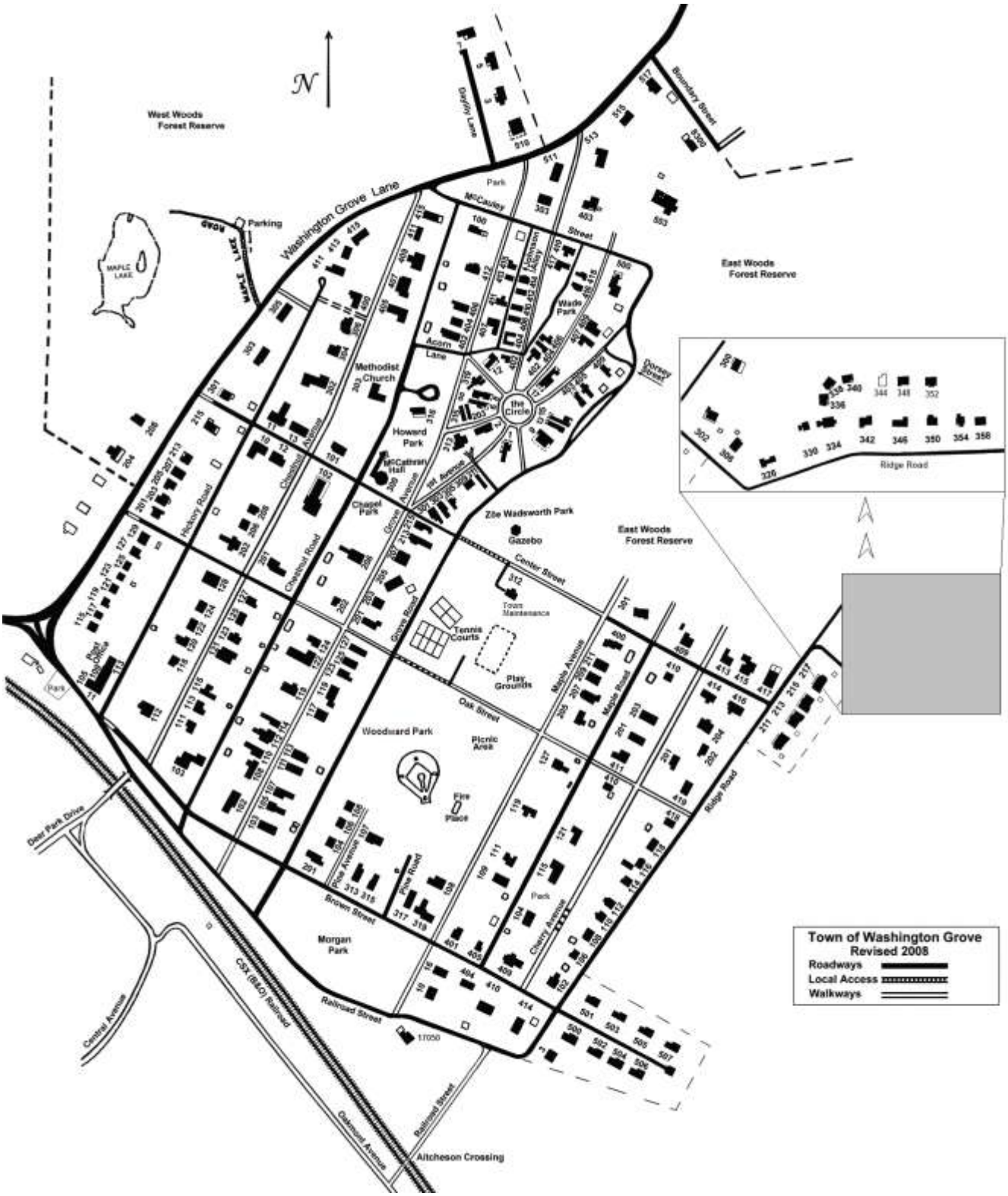


EXHIBIT B – Town Buildings, Parks, Community Facilities



1. LAND USE AND ZONING

In accordance with State Law, this Plan recognizes the need to encourage the following:

1. Streamlined review of applications for development within the areas designated for growth in the Plan
2. Use of flexible development regulations to promote innovative and cost-saving site design and protect the environment
3. Economic development in areas designated for growth in the Plan through the use of innovative techniques

The existing zones and total acreage of each zone within the Town limits are as follows:

RR-1	**Residential – 1**	**82.0 acres**	**38.0 %**
RR-2	**Residential – 2**	**12.0 acres**	**5.6 %**
RR-3	**Residential – 3**	**1.0 acres**	**0.5 %**
RR-4	**Residential – 4**	**12.6 acres**	**5.8 %**
C-L	**Commercial – Local**	**1.0 acres**	**0.5 %**
FR	**Forest & Recreation**	**107.0 acres**	**49.6 %**
	TOTAL	**215.6 acres**	**100.0 %**

A map (Exhibit A) showing the location of the Town's various zones and the Washington Grove Zoning Ordinance (hereinafter referred to as the Zoning Ordinance and included by reference), are incorporated into this Plan.

1.1 Residential Zones

RR-1 Zone

The RR-1 zone contains 157 single-family homes (plus one under construction) and one church. The minimum lot size, specified by the Zoning Ordinance, is 11,250 square feet, and most homes within the zone occupy parcels composed of more than one of the historically designated lots. This Plan does not recommend any changes to the permitted land uses, or the existing standards for minimum lot size, set backs, and heights for the RR-1 zone. To address the significant number of existing homes each located on a lot with lot area substantially less than 11,250 square feet, this Plan recommends realignment of building coverage for residential zones to be based on lot area rather than zone to better protect the character of existing residential areas while creating more equitable opportunities for renovation.

RR-2 Zone

The RR-2 zone contains 49 single-family homes. The minimum lot size, specified by the Zoning Ordinance, is 7,500 square feet, reflecting the historic setting of homes in the area of the Circle and its radiating avenues. This Plan does not recommend any change to the permitted land uses, or the existing standards for minimum lot size, set backs, and heights for the RR-2 zone. To address the significant number of existing homes each located on a lot with lot area substantially more than 7,500 square feet, this Plan recommends realignment of building coverage as noted for the RR-1 Zone above.

RR-3 Zone
The RR-3 zone contains one single-family home. The RR-3 zone was initially established to annex a parcel once owned by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission; that parcel has since been re-zoned. The minimum RR-3 lot size, specified by the Zoning Ordinance, is 20,000 square feet and is reflective of the character of properties that developed under Montgomery County's R-200 zoning designation. This Plan does not recommend any changes to the permitted land uses, or the existing standards for minimum lot size, building coverage, set backs, and heights for the RR-3 zone.

RR-4 Zone
The RR-4 zone contains 16 single-family homes plus one under construction. The minimum lot size, specified by the Zoning Ordinance is 18,000 square feet. Most of the homes in the RR-4 zone are located along Ridge Road and comprise the properties that were annexed into the Town to protect within the Washington Grove community the historic rustic rural nature of the road and the character of these properties. This Plan does not recommend any changes to the permitted land uses, or the existing standards for minimum lot size, building coverage, set backs, and heights for the RR-4 zone.

Recommendation:
- **Maintain the RR-1, RR-2, RR-3, and RR-4 zones to foster and encourage owner-occupied, single-family residences; and to promote new and renewed development to be in physical scale with surroundings and neighbors.**

1.2 Commercial Zone

C-L Zone
The C-L zone contains a 1-acre commercial shopping center located in the southwest corner of the Town. The uses permitted now as a matter of right, or by special exception, reflect the Town's efforts to promote commercial uses more compatible with the historic and residential nature of the Town. The resulting permitted uses are characterized by offices, limited personal services, and other commercial uses that are intended not to significantly burden the Town with increased noise, litter, or pedestrian or vehicular traffic. The existing standards for minimum lot size, building coverage, set backs, and heights for the C-L zone remain.

1.3 Forests, Parks, and Other Town-Owned Land

FR Zone
The Town contains 107 acres of forest and park sites, and for the most part, the latter are scattered throughout the residential areas. The FR (Forest / Recreational) zoning designation is assigned to the two sections of woods, approximately 50 acres each. Park sites are not within the Forest Preserves. The East Woods is located in the northeast corner of the Town. Blocks 28 and 33 contain Town-owned lands adjacent to the East Woods and to residences. The West Woods lie to the west of Washington Grove Lane, along most of the Town's northwest boundary with the City of Gaithersburg. The latter contains Maple Lake. This Plan does not recommend changes to the permitted land uses for the FR zone. (see Section 6.1 for forest preserve issues)

Recommendation:

- **Record, as part of the Forest Preserves, the Town-owned lands contained within Blocks 28 and 33, removing lot and block demarcation and dedicating them to public use.**

Parks

The largest Town park area, Woodward Park, extends north from Pine Avenue to Boundary Street. This park and the many others within the Town have been secured through original designation, dedication, and through Town acquisition of privately-owned parcels when possible. Only one intrusion into Woodward Park of privately-owned land remains – lot 22, block 9.

Recommendations:

- **Acquire lot 22, block 9 as soon as economically feasible.**
- **Dedicate as parkland the two Town-owned lots within that same park land (designated lot 8, block 23 and lot 8, block 24) and incorporate into the green area without lot or block designation.**

Other Town-Owned Land

There are some parcels of publicly-owned land in residential areas. (see Section 3.4 Internal Streets and Roadways) Any sale of public land would be considered only after analysis and determination that such sale would be consistent with the Town's Policy for Sale of Surplus Parcels. In those rare cases, these parcels may be considered for sale.

Recommendation:

- **Review identified lots on a case-by-case basis. Determine their potential need by the Town and whether sale would be consistent with the Town's Policy for Sale of Surplus Parcels. Such sales would only be authorized after enactment of an ordinance to ensure public notice and an opportunity for input during a public hearing.**

2. MUNICIPAL GROWTH AND BOUNDARY ENHANCEMENTS

2.1 Growth within Town

(1) Historic Growth Patterns

Roy McCathran, the Town's first mayor, referred poetically to Washington Grove as "a town within a forest, an oasis of tranquility and a rustic jewel in the diadem of the great free state of Maryland." Amazingly, this is as true today as it was in 1937 when he spoke these words. Only the dramatic effect has been heightened by the intense urban development now surrounding Washington Grove. The fact that Washington Grove has survived, integrity intact, may bear witness to its origins.

In 1873, the Washington Grove Camp Meeting Association was formed, and a parcel of 267.5 acres was purchased along the new Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Metropolitan Line. The earliest camp meetings lasted 10 days to 2 weeks, and involved more than two hundred fifty campers and 10,000 visitors. Over the decades, religious programs were replaced with secular activities, and community facilities evolved to meet the changing demands. Eventually tent sites became cottages for year-round residents, trees continued to be given priority, and a permanent Town government was established in 1937.

The Town's land use plan for the original portions of the Town is built upon two spatial forms. First is The Circle with its seven radiating avenues which was the focus of the original community, each such avenue designated as a walkway. Building upon this is the second form, a regular grid of alternating roads and walkways. The common network of maintained but un-paved walkways provides a unique organizing element for the community. Most of the original houses are oriented to face a walkway with a welcoming porch. This land use plan has supported a culture of social interaction dating from the original camp meeting. There are no sidewalks at the roads that run behind the houses, and five Grove houses do not have direct vehicular access.

(2) Capacity for Development

The roads and walkways as designated with the original plats, and subsequently updated, provide the block boundaries for the subdivided land within the Town. These blocks were historically subdivided into lots to accommodate the Camp Meeting activities, and a significant number of homes in Town remain on these earlier lots, though many of these lots have an area or width below the minimum requirements specified in the Town's zoning ordinance. The ordinance provides for these sub-standard situations, allowing continued use of non-complying buildings. However, where land of sufficient area or width is in common ownership on July 1, 1964, or at any subsequent time, the ordinance provides that no construction shall take place on any parcel or tract of land of less area or width than otherwise specified in the ordinance. The Town's Planning Commission works with property owners in Town to understand the development capacities and subdivision opportunities. For the newer portions of the Town, a more typical suburban subdivision scheme has been permitted.

In order to plan for growth within Town, the potential for additional homes was analyzed based on current zoning and the established block boundaries. The first analysis, based on current subdivisions within the blocks ("Infill Development") provides the most likely capacity potential, given the placement and ownership of existing homes. The second analysis includes the possibility of re-subdivisions ("Re-development") which are less likely to occur because of subdivision costs, but rising property values may inspire removal of an existing home and re-subdivision to maximize a return on investment. This analysis was conducted on a block-by-block basis, through spreadsheet compilation of the area and applicable minimum lot size for each parcel and each block segment.

Infill Development: Potential for additional homes based on current zoning and subdivisions
Re-development: Potential for additional homes based on current zoning, but also assuming re-subdivisions within current blocks

Zone	Existing Homes	Infill Development	Redevelopment
RR-1	**157**	**+ 20**	**+ 32**
RR-2	**49**	**+ 2**	**+ 4**
RR-3	**1**	**+ 1**	**+ 1**
RR-4	**16**	**+ 13**	**+ 17**
Totals	**223**	**+ 36**	**+ 54**

These projections for additional homes are not exclusive; that is, the potential for additional homes from re-development includes and extends the potential from infill development. Thus, for each zone, the projection for re-development represents the maximum growth potential for additional homes within that zone.

(3) Accommodating Growth within Town

The infrastructure investments for water supply and wastewater treatment associated with accommodating additional homes within the RR-1 and RR-2 zones will be significantly less than that required in the RR-4 zone. All homes within the RR-1 and RR-2 zones receive water and sewer service from the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), and the RR-1 and RR-2 zones are already substantially built out with complete networks of water and sewer pipes adjacent to developable parcels. By contrast, the RR-4 zone has been developed to only half of its potential for homes, and 15 of the 16 existing homes within the RR-4 zone rely on individual wells for water. While all existing homes have WSSC sewer service, each additional RR-4 home requires a substantial installation to connect to the primary sewer lines. Also, there is a concern regarding groundwater quality and well recharge for RR-4 zone properties along Ridge Road as a result of the recent County approval for the Piedmont Crossing development adjacent to the Town. Discussions have included the need for monitoring these existing wells, and for contingency planning to finance possible installation of water supply mains and distribution lines to serve the RR-4 homes, existing and new.

The incremental stormwater management for homes within the RR-1 and RR-2 zones would be handled with the Town's network of almost a mile of installed and maintained storm drain pipes

and channels, more than half being grass swales and open ditches that allow for absorption. These drainage pipes and channels convey the Town's stormwater runoff to the Town's East Woods and West Woods, historically located and preserved to absorb the stormwater while also providing for passive recreation and environmental rejuvenation. The larger lot sizes within the more recently annexed properties of the RR-4 zone (minimum 18,000 square feet) would continue to insure that stormwater can be accommodated on-site and/or with local improvements as part of the subdivision and development process.

A primary concern associated with additional potential homes is accommodating the needs of the additional Town residents. Using the current average occupancy (537 residents in 225 homes = 2.4 residents/home), the associated population increases are as follows:

Infill Development:	**+36**	**homes**	**x**	**2.4**	**=**	**86 additional residents**
Re-development:	**+54**	**homes**	**x**	**2.4**	**=**	**130 additional residents**

The 2006 Census estimate of the Town's population was 537. This growth from the official Washington Grove 2000 Census count of 515 included the annexation of 12 homes during that time period. The potential for additional homes from re development throughout the Town has an associated population increase of 130 additional residents. The projected total of 537 + 130 = 667 reflects the maximum growth potential for the Town's population under this plan. Since this maximum growth potential was derived via block-by-block analysis of current residential land and existing zoning, the land capacity within present municipal boundaries can accommodate this population increase.

The Town government expenses for these additional residents are associated with infrastructure (e.g. Parks, Roads) and services (e.g. Waste Collection, Recreation, Administration). The Town's largest expense category is "Parks"-- approximately 23% of the Town's annual expenses after applying offsets of targeted income categories. The Town has set a high community standard for "Parks" expenses to support active and passive recreation. An increased population will increase the use and demand for the Town's parks, and the increased expenses for this category would be covered using increased income from "Real Property Tax" for the additional homes.

The Town's second largest expense category is "Streets, Roadways, and Alleys" -- 17% of the Town's annual expenses, but only 10% of the expenses after the income from the "Highway User Revenues" category is applied. Since these projections for additional residents involve infill development, there is no associated increase in road mileage, but there would be an expected heavier use of the existing roads and a resulting increase in expenses for repair and repaving. Some of this increased road expense would be covered with an expected increase in "Highway User Revenues" from the number of automobile registrations, and some would be covered by expected increases in "Income Tax" for the additional residents, but most of the load would be covered by the increased income from "Real Property Tax" for the additional homes.

To offset expenses for major Town services, the Town has established user fees such as the "Dwelling Tax" (11% of annual income) that is set to match the "Waste Collection and Disposal" expenses for homes in Town -- and this income category would be adjusted to

accommodate the expenses for the increased homes. The Town has also established a high standard of public commitment to "Recreation" services, and an associated category of "Recreation Program User Fees" (6% of annual income), and this income would likewise be adjusted to accommodate increases.

Other services to accommodate growth within the Town, e.g. public schools, libraries, police, fire, and emergency medical, are provided through County agencies. For public schools, the Superintendant's Capital Improvement Program provides planning projections for the Gaithersburg Cluster, including the elementary, middle, and high schools serving students from Washington Grove. While the above Washington Grove population increase projection may well result in a total increase of 27 students (using an estimate of 0.5 students/dwelling unit) for these schools, such an increase is dwarfed by nearby development approvals in the Shady Grove area. The two most recent residential approvals closest to Washington Grove will add more than 500 dwelling units, so a detailed school impact analysis here is not useful. Likewise, this local increase in Shady Grove area dwelling units will significantly impact library services as well, and a new County library facility is being planned nearby along Crabbs Branch Way, a short walk from Washington Grove. County planning is also underway for a new police facility in the Shady Grove area, and the Town has representation on the Gaithersburg-Washington Grove Fire Department Board to enhance coordination. The Town's consultation with County officials and agencies, as well as with the Town's municipal neighbors, will ensure consideration of the above development capacities and a coordinated implementation of this growth element.

2.2 Municipal Growth Areas

To control and coordinate the physical development of areas near the Town's boundaries with Montgomery County and adjacent jurisdictions, the Town adopts municipal growth areas for the Town through the master planning process. These municipal growth areas have potential for annexation into the Town's corporate limits. Clearly, what is in the Town's best interests is the lessening of bordering impacts with the continuing goal of preservation of this historic Town.

The review should continue of adjacent properties which could be included in Washington Grove. This revision of the Town's Master Plan is very cautious in its approach to annexation, as was the direction taken in the earlier plans. However, the Town has completed ten annexation actions to better define community boundaries while insuring a capability to continue to provide municipal services with the current governmental structures. Now that more of the Town's borders are permanently defined, the municipal growth areas become more focused.

This Master Plan extends a vision toward the future preservation and protection of the Town, and refines the municipal growth areas to reflect logical boundaries, e.g. the railroad tracks to the south, the City of Gaithersburg to the west, and the Piedmont Crossing development to the east. Within these bounds are four municipal growth areas that need focused attention.

(1) Four Municipal Growth Areas

Area 1: Legacy Open Space Field along Ridge Road: The former Casey agricultural property has been proposed for development for several years. In 2002 a portion of the property adjoining

the Town's existing Eastern boundary was designated as Legacy Open Space [LOS] property in accordance with the County's Legacy Open Space Master Plan, with the stated intent to maintain that portion of the property as open space for the primary purpose of protecting the historic character and setting of the Town of Washington Grove. Notwithstanding the identification of the LOS in that particular Master Plan, the County's Area Master Plan would still possibly permit development of the LOS according to the Area Master Plan's land use and zoning categories imposed for residential use, and neither of those plans would prevent the acquisition of the LOS by another political subdivision, such as Montgomery County, for possible uses contrary to the open space contemplated by the Legacy Open Space Master Plan. Any even marginally intensive use of the property adjoining Ridge Road could and no doubt would have significant adverse effects on the historic nature of the Town. The land owner received approval for a Preliminary Plan of Subdivision from the Montgomery County Planning Board in July of 2005, which included the recommendation as part of that plan for setting aside approximately 12 acres devoted to LOS purposes for the protection of the Town's historic character. No plats have been recorded and no spade of earth has been turned in connection with that proposed development, despite the passage of over 3 years since the preliminary plan approval. Indeed, most recently, the approval of that plan was extended, and the plan was amended, by action of the Montgomery County Planning Board at its meeting of October 2, 2008.

Given the lack of uncertainty that the LOS would remain open space in perpetuity under the designation in the Area Master Plan's land use and zoning categories, the Town Council, by Resolution No. 2005-06, authorized the institution of an action to acquire the LOS by the Town's power of eminent domain pursuant to the authority granted to it by the Town Charter and state law. That action is pending. The Town should continue to pursue acquisition of the LOS, inasmuch as the Town is in the best position to maintain and preserve the LOS field inviolate for the stated purposes of protecting the Town in the first instance. The Town's role in that regard is driven home in light of the fact that the Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission [the Commission] has repeatedly refused to provide a sufficient and legally enforceable guarantee to the Town that the LOS, even if received and maintained by the Commission, would not be devoted to a substantially different use at sometime in the future, a use which may be contrary to the County's own Legacy Open Space Master Plan, and contrary to the stated necessity of protection of the Town and its historic setting. Following acquisition of title to the LOS, the Town, as the then-property owner, should immediately annex the same into the corporate boundaries of the Town and simultaneously place the same in the zoning classification FR-- Forest and Recreational. The proposed land use is passive recreation, suitable for continued habitation by birds and small animals. Other than maintenance and due diligence to limit inappropriate activities on this field, annexation would not involve other impacts on Town services. Financing of the field maintenance and monitoring activities is anticipated via general municipal revenues.

Area 2: <u>Residences on Western Side of Washington Grove Lane</u>: A standing offer exists to the three residences remaining between the Town's corporate limits and the limits of the City of Gaithersburg. Annexing these three properties (total area is 54,763 square feet) into one of the Town’s existing residential zones will reinforce the historic residential character of this area and continue the compatible relationship with the neighboring, low intensity, agricultural implement business. There are no significant infrastructure requirements associated with annexing these

three already developed residential properties, and the impacts of extending Town services can be accommodated from general municipal revenues. The zoning for this area is proposed to be RR-1 – Residential, One Family, Detached.

Area 3: Industrial Parcels West of Humpback Bridge: These are the industrial parcels located east of the City of Gaithersburg limits and west of the humpback bridge, along the railroad tracks. One of the parcels in this area is already owned by and within the corporate limits of the Town, and developed as "Railroad Park" to commemorate the historic ties to the B&O Railroad. Creating a new Industrial Services zone within the Town and annexing the other six parcels (total area is 35,652 square feet) into this new zone within the Town will enable development of local industrial uses that can be compatible with the historic character of Washington Grove. Services for this area would involve subdivision and business development reviews and approvals. The Town would also represent the property owners in discussions with the County on the future of the humpback bridge and impacts on these properties. The Town services would be financed from general municipal revenues. The Town should also explore the possibility of annexing both the railroad tracks and Washington Grove passenger shelter that lie east of the humpback bridge. The zoning for this area is proposed to be S-1 – Services. The specific uses permitted in this proposed new zone would be negotiated with property owners as part of the annexation process, such uses to be compatible with the Town and appropriate for these entrance areas.

Area 4: Roberts Oxygen and Adjacent Storage: Considering rising property values and the associated pressures of 'smart growth' within the Shady Grove Master Plan, the Town should pursue annexation discussions with owners of the Roberts Oxygen and adjacent storage parcels. Current uses on these two parcels of 7 and 5 acres are incompatible with the adjacent Town residential properties. Redevelopment under County zoning could bring even more undesirable results should they be converted to high density housing or other incompatible uses. Issues such as truck access, and noise and visual buffering from Town residential areas are of prime concern, and further exploration is needed to assess whether current use and operations violate County law. Annexation discussions should focus on low intensity industrial/research and development uses that provide compatible buffering adjacent to residential areas while reflecting an upgrade in property condition and economic value. Services for this area would involve subdivision and business development reviews and approvals, and the Town services would be financed from increases in general municipal revenues, including Real Property Tax and Operating Property Tax. The zoning for this area is proposed to be S-1 – Services, as described above.

(2) Municipal Growth Area Strategy

It is the Town's intent to assert its interest in the municipal growth areas in order to forecast the future needs for Town and County services, and to establish responsibility between the Town and the County governing bodies for developing and maintaining these public services. The Town will work on a cooperative basis with the County Council, the County Executive, the City of Gaithersburg and other public agencies in the development of plans and programs that affect parcels within the municipal growth areas. It is also the Town's intent to provide notice to owners of properties within the municipal growth areas that annexation will be pursued when annexation is deemed in the public's best interest to further the goals and objectives of this Plan.

Recommendations:

- **Monitor the areas within the municipal growth areas for zoning/rezoning activities and opportunities to discuss potential annexations issues with property owners and other interested parties**
- **Meet and confer with appropriate County agencies and the City of Gaithersburg regarding this municipal growth element**

2.3 Boundary Enhancements

Within the corporate limits, there is a need to complete the survey work required to replat boundaries of certain of the original Town blocks, public rights of way, and public parks near the Circle and radial avenues and to record the updated Town plats. Surveying and recording these block corners would enable the Town to have an accurate public land record and would reduce costs to Town residents to obtain boundary surveys for their properties. Boundary surveys should be required of property owners seeking large additions or alterations where property lines are ambiguous in nature.

As increased development "blurs" the boundaries and historic nature of the Town, a plan for enhancing the entrances to the Town and delineating its borders needs to be developed and implemented. The visual impacts of industrial uses at the Oakmont Avenue/Railroad Street entrance and of the commercial/industrial uses at the East Diamond Avenue/Washington Grove Lane entrance degrades the very essence of "The Town within a forest". Research should be undertaken to determine the historic structures and locations of the Town's gateways in the past. Post-hung signs that identify Washington Grove need to be installed on public roads at entrances to the Town. The signs should be integrated with landscaped areas to reinforce the character of Washington Grove. Such entrances would include: Washington Grove Lane at Daylily Lane, Railroad Street at its intersection with East Diamond Avenue and Washington Grove Lane; the humpback bridge crossing on the Oakmont side; and the Oakmont Avenue/Railroad Street grade crossing.

Maintenance of a treed separation buffer from the development proposed to occur south of the easternmost segment of Ridge Road will require delineating and maintaining the strip of land owned by the Town along that road.

The effort should be to provide quality but low maintenance landscaping and signage for entrances at these Town boundaries to reflect the historic nature, scale and significance of the Town. A general Town policy toward eliminating unnecessary signs, both at the boundaries and within the Town, should be encouraged.

Recommendations:

- **Continue funding and coordination of the ongoing re-survey, and install monuments at Town block boundary corners; ensure the inclusion of the updated Town plats in the public land records as soon as possible after each block is completed.**
- **Enhance the entrances to the Town with appropriately designed landscaping and signs at the Town entrances. Vehicular speed limits should be incorporated. Approaches should be delineated with aesthetically appropriate markers.**

- **Work with property owners, County agencies, and the City of Gaithersburg to screen with plantings and aesthetic fencing the industrial areas bordering the Town.**
- **Approach businesses that border the Town, as well as the owners of the Towne Crest apartments, to offer Town assistance in improving the aesthetic characteristics of their properties with the goal of enhancing Town borders and entrances.**
- **Delineate using survey markers the strip of land owned by the Town south of the easternmost segment of Ridge Road, and plant and maintain that strip so that it serves as a buffer free of vehicular crossing traffic.**

3. TRANSPORTATION

The original subdivision plan for Washington Grove, developed by its founders in the late 19th Century, established a concept of pedestrian walkways separated from vehicular ways, and interspersed with numerous parks and open spaces. This layout and pedestrian walkways are distinguishing features cited in the inclusion of the Town on the National Register of Historic Places. This legacy must continue to be protected and preserved for future generations.

Since the adoption of the 1995 Master Plan significant changes have taken place in the area surrounding Washington Grove which have major implications for transportation planning. Changes include:

- The Shady Grove Sector Plan, adopted by Montgomery County in 2006, calls for dense residential, multi-use development centered around the current Shady Grove metro stop, as well as a new transportation hub with a train stop.
- The InterCounty Connector (ICC) with a major interchange neighboring Washington Grove, recommended by the Montgomery County Council and approved by the State of Maryland, is under construction.
- The City of Gaithersburg has approved plans for major new development in Old Town Gaithersburg.
- The land adjacent to Ridge Road that is currently open fields is slated for development within the life of this master plan time period.

These changes will bring intense development with greater overall traffic in the area surrounding Washington Grove. To ensure the existing, historic community of Washington Grove is preserved, residential roads at the Town's periphery and within the Town must be protected from additional traffic. The Town is committed to ensuring that roads at the edges of Town (including Washington Grove Lane, Railroad Street and Ridge Road) remain in keeping with the residential and historic nature of Washington Grove. This is critical to preserving the quality of life for residents in terms of noise, safety, environment, history and aesthetics. These roads should remain rural in nature with the primary goal to serve local residential users. Speeds and traffic volume should be kept low and consistent with the residential nature of the area. In addition, roads internal to the Town must be kept safe and pedestrian friendly by continuing to be protected from cut-through traffic.

3.1 Walkways

One of the most unique attributes afforded to residents of the Town are the internal walkways. These walkways offer residents and visitors an opportunity to stroll through a bucolic residential setting not normally found in a metropolitan area. As tract after tract of surrounding woodland and fields fall prey to development, the preservation of these walkways becomes an increasingly important part of that which defines the character of Washington Grove.

Within developed areas of Town, the walkways require regular maintenance. Although these walkways include partially graveled areas, a few sections remain with grass only or attempts to grow grass. Gravel along Town walkways helps to convey a sense of public access, an invitation for pedestrian use, and year-round access for emergency vehicles. Given the density of Town

homes and the Town house numbering system (a majority of houses front on walkways) as well as the location of fire hydrants, the walkways within developed areas of Town also provide essential emergency vehicle access. (Note: Resolution 6-82 designates all Town walkways as Fire Lanes.) Concerns have been raised about excessive vehicular use of walkways.

Recommendations:

- **Continue use of gravel for all walkways within the developed areas of Town to provide a more uniform appearance, allow a sense of public ownership, invite pedestrian use, and insure year-round access for emergency vehicles.**
- **Increase public awareness of permitted vehicle use of walkways as designated in the ordinance.**
- **If instances of excessive vehicular use are numerous, consideration should be given to erecting a barrier, as long as its design permits emergency access.**
- **Periodically review walkways to assess need for trimming adjacent shrubbery to maintain usable widths, to remove any barriers and encroachments that would impede access by emergency vehicles, and to otherwise ensure they are reasonably maintained.**
- **Continue placing benches at intervals along walkways (sites for benches to be determined as benches are donated)**

3.2 Streetlights, Walkway Lights, and Utilities

The Town has about 100 streetlights along its roads and walkways. Most have incandescent bulbs, although a few mercury (blue) and sodium (orange) vapor fixtures have been installed. The cost for electricity and maintenance of Town streetlights is significant and growing. This reflects more frequent maintenance and less energy efficient power usage of the incandescent bulbs. A proactive solution by the Town can be beneficial, for cost and for energy conservation.

While developing a modernized, more efficient lighting system, consideration should be given to light trespass and light pollution. Light trespass refers to glaring light that crosses property boundaries and causes an annoyance by reducing others' ability to see clearly or by shining in others' windows. Excessive spill-over light or over illumination obliterates the beauty of the night skies, wastes energy, can be an annoyance to neighbors, and actually can reduce security because bright, glaring light at night creates dark shadow where criminals can hide and prevents the eye from properly adapting to darker areas.

The Town often suffers from power outages, particularly from storm damage with tree limbs knocking down power lines.

Recommendations:

- **Develop a plan for putting all wiring underground so whenever repairs or significant work is done in Town, wiring will be moved underground. As part of this plan, all new development should be conducted with underground wiring. Part of this conversion plan needs to identify locations for all light poles, so as utilities go underground and utility poles are removed, new lighting can be installed without loss of coverage.**
- **Explore sources of funds to assist with placing wiring underground (e.g. a Federal energy assistance grant)**

- **Develop a plan to replace the existing streetlights and walkway lighting system with a more efficient system that also preserves safety and is in keeping with the historic aspect of the Town, yet minimizes glare, light trespass, and light pollution. The plan should consider differentiating lighting for roads, walkways and recreational facilities, (e.g. use of foot-level lighting along sections of the Town walkways, rather than pole lighting). Lighting should be chosen to illuminate only the target area using only the amount of light needed.**

3.3 Parking Policy

Encroachments on public property on an ongoing basis, including the regular parking of vehicles, detract from the bucolic nature of the Town and may create safety problems. In some more densely built sections of the Town, particularly along Acorn Lane, there is a problem of inadequate parking space on private property. As a result, many residents regularly park on Town property. This problem should not be exacerbated by the granting of permits to expand houses in a manner that further reduces space for parking on the affected property.

This Parking Policy is presented to guide actions by the Mayor and Council regarding parking of motor vehicles on public property. Implementation of this policy is through regulations and requirements enacted in accordance with the Town Charter.

(a) It is public policy that, where possible and practical, Town residents and guests will meet their primary parking needs by parking their vehicles on private property, and that all parking on public property will be in Public Parking Areas established by ordinance.
(b) The criteria for establishing a Public Parking Area will include the safety of pedestrians and vehicles in the immediate vicinity, the number of dwellings and potential drivers residing in the immediate vicinity, the extent to which the parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance can be met using private property, and existing conditions that limit vehicular accessibility to nearby residential property.
(c) The greatest need for Public Parking Areas is within the RR-2 zone where the arrangement of public rights of way and smaller lot sizes have historically limited vehicular access to some properties; there is less need for Public Parking Areas within the other residential zones as lot sizes are generally sufficient to accommodate residential parking needs.
(d) Public Parking Areas will be identified by posting of Town signs or by Council designation on a Public Parking Area map.
(e) Public Parking Areas are to be located such that vehicles will not be parked so as to inhibit the safe flow of traffic.
(f) Public Parking Areas must be prepared by application of Town-approved paving material, and such preparation is to be performed only by the Town or under the Town's direct control.
(g) A motor vehicle with expired, revoked, cancelled or suspended registration may not be parked on any public property for more than 24 hours.
(h) Parking a motor vehicle on public property continuously for more than 7 days will not be permitted, unless a waiver has been obtained from the Mayor based on good and sufficient reason, e.g. owner out of Town for an extended period.

(i) Stopping of vehicles on public property is to be permitted to receive and discharge passengers or merchandise.

Recommendations:

- **Review implementation of the Parking Policy; update Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and Building Permit Regulations to reinforce existing minimum parking requirements associated with the type of use in each zone including the number of parking spaces, the location of parking spaces, and the plan and design standards.**
- **Limit such building expansion on residential lots as would effectively eliminate parking on the affected property.**

3.4 Walkway/Bikeway Connection

The Shady Grove Sector Plan calls for a shared use walkway/bikeway path connection between Amity Drive and the Town. Such a path will provide Town residents with improved walking and biking options for access to the Shady Grove Metro Station and nearby services.

Recommendation:

- **Support bike/pedestrian access from Washington Grove to the Shady Grove Metro Station. The Town should define the optimal location and coordinate with the County for a shared-use path in keeping with the history and character of the Town.**

3.5 Railroad Corridor

(1) Commuter Trains -- Historically, the Town began with the railroad, linked to the expansion of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company's Metropolitan Line to the northwest of Washington, D.C. The Town is served by a double set of tracks along its southerly border owned and operated by CSX Transportation, successor to the B&O. The tracks are used by numerous daily freight trains and by Amtrak. Washington Grove is an sheltered stop for morning and evening MARC commuter trains operated for the Maryland Department of Transportation that provide daily transportation for Town residents and others commuting to Rockville, Garrett Park, Kensington, Silver Spring, or Union Station. Some parking spaces are available along the southernmost side of the railroad tracks, opposite the Town, between the tracks and Oakmont Avenue, and for a few cars on the north side of the tracks, along Railroad Street. Many Town residents walk to and from the commuter stop, as do residents from the Oakmont and Deer Park areas. Additional parking might encourage more riders to use the Washington Grove stop, and lessen concerns that the stop could be eliminated at some time in the future. The public property dedicated in 1881 as "Oakmont Park" and the adjacent public right of way used for access to parking behind Hershey's Restaurant could be explored with Montgomery County for expanded commuter parking. Delineation of a crosswalk on Railroad Street near Grove Road has increased pedestrian safety, but pedestrians are still at risk given Railroad Street traffic and limited sightline to the east.

Recommendations:

- **Support the continuation and expansion of MARC commuter train service at the Washington Grove stop.**

- **Explore options for providing additional southside parking for MARC commuters using the Washington Grove stop.**
- **Explore additional measures to insure pedestrian safety for those crossing Railroad Street near Grove Road.**

(2) Other Transit Services and Easement – While Town residents currently enjoy walking access to the commuter train and daily bus service provided by Montgomery County Ride-On, the existing railroad corridor was studied to determine the need for a right of way along the southern side of the tracks for additional transit options as part of the 1990 Corridor Cities Transit Easement Study. The resulting document recommended further study of this alignment near Washington Grove for possible extension of Metrorail, as well as a possible light-rail (trolley) or dedicated busway. However, more recently, the Shady Grove Sector Plan adopted by the County Council in 2006 removes the 50-foot transit easement on the west side of the CSX right-of-way, north of the Shady Grove Metro Station, within the Plan Area boundary. Instead, priority is given to building the Corridor Cities Transitway, a transit extension proceeding directly west from Shady Grove through the King Farm property north towards Clarksburg. This transit alignment is preferred because it would serve major developments that currently do not have any access to transit.

Any mass transit extension in the vicinity of Washington Grove would have impacts on the Town. The historic Humpback Bridge (see discussion below) is not likely wide enough to provide clearance for additional transit. Either the bridge would have to be closed or a new bridge would need to be built that would be higher and much longer which would have significant adverse impacts on the Town.

If Metrorail is chosen, then a transit stop at Washington Grove might not be practical. The noise of the frequent trains could be greatly lessened by undergrounding the system, as has been discussed to protect Olde Towne in Gaithersburg. If a trolley line or a busway is chosen, then a passenger stop at Washington Grove would be possible, though the impacts of increased traffic would have to be considered. Any of these transit options would negatively impact the historic view along the railroad tracks and the Grove's traditional connection to the rail line.

Recommendations:

- **Support the County Council's decision to eliminate the transit easement on the southerly side of the railroad corridor.**
- **Support the building of the Corridor Cities Transitway as the preferred means to provide transit beyond the Shady Grove Metro station.**
- **Oppose using heavy rail for any new extension of mass transit along the railroad corridor near Town, unless the system is completely enclosed below ground.**

3.6 Washington Grove Lane

In response in large part to Washington Grove concerns, old State Highway MD124 has now been relocated away from Washington Grove. While the stretch of the highway now named Washington Grove Lane was transferred from the State to the County in 1998, truck traffic,

speeding, and pedestrian safety at the Maple Lake pedestrian crossing on the 0.57-mile stretch through the Town continue to be of concern.

The Town previously sought to have this stretch of road transferred from the State to the Town. The Town's 1975 Master Plan called for this section of road to revert to Town control and that it be discontinued as a through street, to serve as a residential road only. In March 1993, a Special Town Meeting voted to accept jurisdictional responsibility for the road, including maintenance. In 1998 the State was ready to pursue transfer of ownership but chose to transfer the road to the County as part of a compromise with Washington Grove, Montgomery County and Gaithersburg. A negotiated formal agreement provided land swaps between Gaithersburg and Montgomery County and the State to relocate MD124 away from Washington Grove. In addition, the agreement responded to Gaithersburg's concern by providing that Washington Grove Lane cannot be permanently closed unless all three signatories - the County, State and Gaithersburg - agree to it.

To address Washington Grove concerns regarding speeding, the agreement also specified that speed humps would be installed. Subsequently, seven speed humps were installed. The speed humps had the desired effect of significantly lowering speeds. Traffic volume was also significantly reduced. However, an unexpected consequence on some nearby homes of one of the humps was increased noise and vibration due to braking, accelerating and trucks going over the humps. As a result, that hump was removed.

With the re-routing of MD124, Washington Grove Lane qualified as a County "traffic calming" project. To respond to concerns regarding truck traffic, the road has been posted for a 7,000-lb gross vehicle weight restriction; enforcement, however, remains a problem. Other efforts are underway to reinforce a driver's perception and understanding that Washington Grove Lane is a residential road in a special place.

Recommendations:

- **Continue efforts to improve speed and weight limit enforcement on Washington Grove Lane; seek ways to improve the safety of the pedestrian crossing and explore additional traffic-calming options that would not hamper fire and safety vehicles.**
- **Seek improvements to the intersection of East Diamond Avenue, Railroad Street and Washington Grove Lane to improve pedestrian safety and the aesthetics as an appropriate entrance to the historic Town of Washington Grove while ensuring low speeds.**
- **Undertake improved signage and landscaping on Washington Grove Lane to distinguish it as a residential road that runs through a National Register Historic District.**
- **Continue to pursue transfer of Washington Grove Lane to the Town.**
- **Keep Oak and Center Streets closed at Washington Grove Lane to reduce cut-through traffic.**
- **Seek improved enforcement of current prohibition of southbound "NO LEFT TURN" onto McCauley Street and "NO RIGHT TURN" onto northbound Washington Grove Lane to reduce cut through traffic. Explore alterations to the intersection of McCauley Street and Washington Grove Lane to make illegal turns more difficult.**

3.7 Humpback Bridge/Railroad Street – The present alignment of Railroad Street extending from the bridge to the southeast to Aitcheson Crossing and Oakmont Avenue became a public way by usage through the early 1900s. The B & O Railroad reconstructed the bridge about 1946, replacing a deteriorating timber structure with a new timber structure that replicated the earlier bridge design.

In April 1961, a Master Plan for the vicinity of Gaithersburg was adopted by M-NCPPC that showed a new road through the area now occupied by Girard Place and Gaithersburg Ford Tractor, crossing over the then existing alignment of Route 124 (East Diamond Avenue) with the bridge over the B & O tracks and tying into Oakmont Avenue in lieu of East Deer Park Drive.

The Town's 1975 Master Plan incorporated this location for the County's planned bridge replacement location but did so to preclude the direct connection of Railroad Street to Crabbs Branch Way. The plan noted that such a connection would stimulate increased traffic flow and that the bridge as planned would have a deleterious environmental impact.

Around 1977, a study prepared for the Gaithersburg Planning Department proposed construction of the new bridge at Girard Street. This concept was the subject of a public hearing by Gaithersburg in January 1985, and was supported by Town testimony.

Subsequent to the January 1985 Public Hearing in Gaithersburg, the County Planning Board asked the County DOT to prepare various studies of the alternatives to accommodate flow in this traffic corridor, including the Girard Street Option with variations, the Master Plan Option with variations, and the Railroad Street to Crabbs Branch Way Option. The Town asked that a "No Build" Option with variations also be evaluated.

The bridge alignment in the 1961 Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan would have created a new four-lane bridge crossing the tracks at a skew, much longer and approximately 6 feet higher than the existing bridge, highly visible and projecting traffic noise farther into the Town than at present, and "impose(d) a serious nuisance on Grove residents through loss of direct access to the south" (as stated in the Town's 1975 Master Plan) by requiring that all vehicular access to the Grove be by way of Washington Grove Lane.

The Girard Street Bridge Alignment would have moved most traffic to the west side of the railroad. The connection of existing Railroad Street to Crabbs Branch Way would still be a possibility to be faced. While the proposal would have had no significant visual impacts on the Town, it shared with the prior plans the requirement that all vehicular access to the Grove be by way of Washington Grove Lane.

The Railroad Street to Crabbs Branch Way connections would have opened a major traffic route paralleling Route 355 between Gude Drive and downtown Gaithersburg intensifying traffic on Railroad Street and Washington Grove Lane (then MD124).

The Town, at the time, supported the Girard Street option as having the least impact on the Town while Gaithersburg decided to oppose this option although this had originally been proposed by the City of Gaithersburg planning staff. The County dropped continued consideration of new

bridge options and continued to maintain the existing humpback bridge.

In 2004, the County's Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) once again brought up the issue of replacing the bridge with multi-lane alternatives, all of which, if built as proposed, would have deleterious impacts on the Town and neighboring residential communities and no significant transportation benefit. The Girard Street option was not included, given Gaithersburg's concerns. The Town asked that retaining the existing bridge should be included as an option since it was consistent in size, scale and aesthetic with the historic character of the Town as well as with neighboring communities.

On July 9, 2005, the Washington Grove Town Council adopted a resolution opposing the three bridge replacement concepts proposed by DPWT and supporting rehabilitation and preservation of the existing humpback bridge. Among the negative impacts on the Town cited in the resolution of the DPWT proposals were:

- additional traffic, safety concerns, pollution, and noise at unacceptable levels that would be magnified by increasing the height of the bridge;
- the elimination of "forested areas on both sides of the tracks including cherished old Oak trees that contribute to the rural viewscapes from Washington Grove 's historic walkways";
- the taking of Town land dedicated to public use and adversely impacting internal Town pedestrian and auto circulation patterns

The Town subsequently hired a bridge engineer, who is nationally recognized for historic preservation, to study the bridge. In a July 12, 2005 letter, the engineer stated, "My conclusion is that the bridge is in good condition structurally, and can be preserved for decades to come with the appropriate maintenance and rehabilitation." Subsequently, the bridge was nominated for the Master Plan for Historic Preservation in Montgomery County. The Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission recommended the bridge for the Master Plan. On July 14, 2005, the Montgomery County Planning Board placed the bridge on the County's Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites.

Part of the justification for consideration of four-lane bridge replacement options by DPWT was that Oakmont Avenue was identified in existing Master Plans as a four-lane road. This designation assumed connecting Oakmont Avenue to a four-lane Girard Street. However, since the earlier County Master Plans were written, significant changes have taken place on area roads. Gaithersburg has placed a traffic circle on Girard Street to reduce traffic to 15 miles per hour and does not support its connection to Oakmont Avenue. Route 124 has been re-located and Washington Grove Lane is now a residential road with speed humps. Given these changes, expansion of Oakmont Avenue to four lanes with a multi-lane bridge would be clearly incompatible with the surrounding road system and residential communities.

With the completed annexation of the Cator/Harrison property, more of Railroad Street is now within the Town's corporate limits, including the portion of Railroad Street fronting the I-1 zoned properties in the County known as Roberts Oxygen and the adjacent storage yard. The County-authorized driveway access for both these properties via Railroad Street expires once access is available via Amity Drive/Crabbs Branch Way.

Recommendations:

- **Continue Town opposition to any connection of Railroad Street to Crabbs Branch Way due to the negative impacts of the high volume traffic flow that would result on Railroad Street and Washington Grove Lane, as well as the potential for additional cut-through traffic through the Town.**
- **Continue to support proposed access of the I-1 zoned property (known as Roberts Oxygen) to Crabbs Branch Way, and closing that property's access to Railroad Street as called for in the Shady Grove Sector Plan, to help reduce industrial traffic crossing the CSX at-grade crossing on Railroad Street or traveling on Railroad Street through the Town.**
- **Monitor possible creation of a two-lane industrial street bridging over the CSX tracks north of I-370, connecting Crabbs Branch Way to Oakmont Avenue to provide local access for industrially zoned properties, if the vacant Casey properties 6 and/or 7 are developed with relocated County services.**
- **Seek to have the County reclassify Oakmont Avenue as a two-lane road in keeping with the residential communities on both sides of the tracks and the goal to minimize through traffic on these local, residential roads.**
- **Support improved maintenance and preservation of the existing single-lane historic humpback bridge, as well as the improved maintenance of the at-grade crossing.**
- **Seek full historic preservation designation of the existing historic bridge at the county, state and federal levels.**
- **Continue opposition to planning and construction of a new multi-lane bridge from Oakmont Avenue or East Deer Park Drive across the CSX Railroad tracks.**
- **Maintain closure of Brown Street at Hickory Road to reduce cut-through traffic.**
- **Consider the possible relocation of Railroad Street from the bend just east of Grove Road to continue it contiguously with the railroad right-of-way to Aitchison Crossing, abandoning the short section through Morgan Park, and retaining most of the existing road as local access to Block 25.**
- **Seek improved signage and other improvements on Railroad Street to slow traffic approaching the Railroad Street/Grove Road intersection to enhance the safety of pedestrians and vehicles.**

3.8 Ridge Road

Prior to 1992, the southern portion of Ridge Road delineated the eastern boundary of the Town. With annexation of the 1.58-acre Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission property (Parcel 360), the 2.88-acre Ward property (Parcel 635), the 0.95-acre Moyer-Gussack property (Parcel 291), the 0.42-acre Pammel property (Parcel 660), and the 13.55 acres of the Voigt Properties and Washington Grove Hills, the corporate limits have moved eastward. Ridge Road is a narrow residential lane within the Town corporate limits.

The Piedmont Crossing development that borders Ridge Road could have a dramatic impact on the rustic rural character of the road. All consideration should be sought from County planners and developers to protect the character of the road and the residential ambience within the Town of Washington Grove.

Recommendations:

- **Oppose any vehicular access to Ridge Road from the Piedmont Crossing development, including emergency or restricted access. Oppose use of Ridge Road by construction vehicles used for development of the property outside of Town boundaries.**
- **Preserve the character of Ridge Road as a country road along its entire length.**
- **Define and protect the strip of wooden land owned by the Town on the southern side of the eastern portion of Ridge Road.**

3.9 McCauley Street and Maple Road

The Town holds title to a 50-foot strip of land along the northern side of McCauley Street in order to accommodate public improvements and any future widening of that street. The Town also holds title to a 25-foot strip of land along the eastern edge of most of Maple Road to accommodate possible public improvements and as surety in maintaining open space on the narrow roadway by restricting construction. Adoption of Town width standards can assist with evaluation of road and right-of-way requirements for McCauley Street and Maple Road. These standards also can provide some measure of consistency for any new road construction, and for decisions on maintenance and or transfer of existing Town-owned parcels. Transfer of surplus parcels will reduce areas of Town maintenance and direct responsibility.

Recommendations:

- **All new road construction should be based on a standard right-of-way total width of 30 feet to accommodate traffic needs and public improvements. Standard paved roadways should have a 20-foot asphalt base width with 16-foot drivable surface and 2-foot shoulders on either side of the drivable surface. The shoulder should not encourage driving but allow parking; a tar and chip shoulder or other heavy textured surface should be used to avoid displacement by vehicles and runoff.**
- **The drivable surface should consist of a 6-inch bituminous concrete (asphalt); the shoulders of a 4-inch asphalt base course and 2 inches of tar and chip.**
- **Reduce Town ownership of existing strips along Town roads within developed areas of the Town for a right-of-way maximum width of 50 feet. This accommodates possible public improvements and maintains open space.**
- **Prepare updated listings of all Town-owned parcels, rights of way, easements, and abandoned alleys. Review and evaluate data using the above standards. The Town policy to sell parcels, when found to be surplus, to the contiguous property owner(s) should be encouraged wherever it is determined that there is no potential for Town need. Evaluation of requirements for rights-of-way should take into account parking needs and other possible public improvements, including under grounding of utilities.**

3.10 Center Street

At issue for this discussion is the possible opening of the portion of Center Street between Grove Road and Maple Avenue for emergency vehicle access. While opening this street would save approximately 1-2 minutes transit time, the possible negative consequences should be considered, if vehicular access is not restricted to emergency vehicles. Among the most obvious

are the maintenance area and its environs, which will become more susceptible to trash and waste dumping, thus compromising the ecological balance of the entire woodland area.

Recommendation:

- **Continue restriction of vehicular access on Center Street between Maple Avenue and the Maintenance area.**

3.11 Cherry Avenue

In 1976, special permission was given to four homeowners of Lots 1-6 of Block 31 to use the center 10 feet of width of Cherry Avenue between Brown Street and its coincidence with the intersection of Lots 6 and 7 of Block 31 for reasonable vehicular access to their properties. The 1976 resolution provided that this permission shall be progressively withdrawn from each successive lot owner beginning at Lot 6, Block 31, as said lot owner gives consent to such withdrawal or as each of the four properties is sold. This permission now only applies to one residence, 108 Ridge Road. Despite the limitations on vehicular access, there have been occasional eruptions in controversy caused by vehicular use of Cherry Avenue contrary to the 1976 resolution. Recent Town action has included reminding residents of the area and eliminating trash trucks on Cherry Avenue.

Recommendation:

- **As vehicular use of Cherry Avenue ceases, as provided in the 1976 Town Council resolution, Town maintenance staff should work with the Forestry and Beautification Committee to restore that portion to conform with other walkways in Town.**

3.12 Brown Street

The western end of Brown Street at Hickory Road is closed to regular vehicular traffic by a locked gate. This has dramatically reduced cut-through traffic speeding along narrow roads of the Town.

Recommendation:

- **Continue restriction of vehicular access at the western end of Brown Street.**

3.13 I-370/InterCounty Connector (ICC)

The ICC has quite a long history. First conceived as a freeway along part of the path of a planned “Outer Beltway,” many of the individual purposes and needs for the facility have changed over the years. In 1983, a draft environmental document for the ICC between I-270 and Gladys Spellman Parkway was approved by Maryland State and Federal Highway Administrations. However, as the sensitivity of the environment became an increasing concern in the late 1980's, the impacts of the ICC as planned were determined to be excessive. While the ICC was not built as planned, the process did yield the construction of I-370, which connects I-270 to the Shady Grove Metro Station.

In recent years, plans for the ICC were resurrected and the first design/build ICC phase is underway to construct a toll road from I-370 on around to an intersection with Georgia Avenue. This road construction includes connection loops (closer to Washington Grove than I-370) to connect the ICC with the current Metro access portion of I-370. When the Town earlier protested construction of I-370 and its impacts on the Town, an Historic District on the National and State registers, the State Highway Administration (SHA) responded in 1982 with:

> "Since Washington Grove is further removed from I-370 than the sites then analyzed, it is obvious there will be no degradation of the existing air and noise environment of Washington Grove."

Listening to the increased day and night-time noise that has resulted from I-370 traffic, Town residents must question this assessment by SHA officials. The inaccuracy of SHA's 1982 response raised doubts that the most recent ICC study will adequately address Town concerns as does the contractor's report that the State points to in declining to install noise abatement structures. It is clear that the ICC toll road will exacerbate the negative impacts of I-370, and further degrade the Town's ambient environment with diesel fumes and noise from increased truck traffic near the Town.

The most recent round of studies included a determination, known as a Section 106 Report, of the impacts of the proposed road on Washington Grove as a historic resource. This was undertaken as a part of the Environmental Impact Statement. The State contractor's report purported to examine whether, according to the National Historic Preservation Act, there would be "introduction of visual, audible, or atmospheric elements that are out of character with the property or alter its setting." Initial Historic and Noise Technical Reports were prepared that found there to be "no impact" on Washington Grove. The State Highway Administration, Federal Highway Administration, and Maryland Historic Trust (as the State Historic Preservation Officer) concurred in the determination of "no impact" and thus no mitigation was included in the Memorandum of Understanding required for impacts on historic resources. The Town has vigorously challenged this determination. It has presented evidence to and held meetings with representatives of the regulating authorities in order to demonstrate the bases of its objections.

During the recent process, the Town asserted that Federal historic preservation statutes require noise mitigation for any adverse impacts associated with the project. SHA responded that modeled impacts will not exceed allowable thresholds for noise increase, and that the Town's historic district status therefore does not require mitigation measures. SHA also emphasized that the recently approved alternate for Loops A and C (connecting ICC traffic with the Metro Access Road) will reduce impacts on the Town as Loops A and C will pass underneath the ICC. The modeled reduction in noise impact on the Town would be less than 1 decibel, and therefore must be labeled as a "negligible" reduction. These loops will be about 20 feet below adjacent ground level with reduced visual impacts, less impact on wetlands, less removal of existing trees, and additional space for landscaped buffering and reforestation.

The Town also pushed for evaluation of road surface treatments to reduce traffic noise, e.g. textured or porous asphalt. The ICC contractors and SHA responded that contract specifications preclude evaluation of such surface alternatives, requiring use of standard asphalt or concrete to

achieve a minimum 25-year pavement life. SHA reported that nearby portions of I-370 (now concrete) will be repaved with asphalt to reduce traffic noise.

Based on the experience with SHA's projection of noise from I-370, the Town has requested that SHA develop a quality assurance program based on real measurements to confirm model accuracy, evaluate cumulative impacts including long-term health of replanted trees, particulate emissions, as well as noise levels, and then prompt further mitigation and/or traffic management if standards are not met. The initial response from SHA reps was that 2030 is the design year and therefore model confirmation must await 2030. This response is unacceptable to the Town representatives. The Town will work with neighboring communities and our elected representatives to get this situation corrected and ensure the necessary oversight during this design/build process to protect existing communities all across the ICC project area.

Recommendations:

- **Corrective noise abatement structures should be built along the present course of I-370 and along the nearest portions of the ICC to protect existing communities.**
- **Continue to press for development of a quality assurance program to validate noise and air pollution modeling and prompt corrective mitigation.**
- **Inform and encourage elected State and County representatives to help protect existing communities all across the ICC project area.**
- **New expenditures for transportation should encourage the use of public transportation.**

4. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Town makes heavy use of its several existing facilities: McCathran Hall and its Historic Archives Room, the Town Garage, the Gazebo and the Recreation shed, all of which the Town operates and maintains. Over the years, these facilities have provided residents and guests with a wide and enriching range of changing activities and services. In the future, three overarching considerations should guide the Town with regard to its existing facilities and any additional it may construct:

I. The use and maintenance of Town facilities should include an annual review by a standing committee to ensure the safety, viability and usability of these spaces.
II. Energy consumption and conservation is of growing concern. Use of Town facilities should be governed by an informed evaluation of current or planned energy consumption and effective conservation methods appropriate for the circumstances.
III. Reflect the Grove's character in any changes to Town facilities. Implementation of the recommendations of this document should always weigh the aesthetics of each facility as an important part of such actions.

4.1 McCathran Hall -- McCathran Hall, renovated in 1997 with an addition, is composed of the main hall, the lower hall, the Council room and Archives room. As the oldest public structure in Town, the one with unique historical values, and the one closest to the heart of the community, McCathran Hall will be treasured into the foreseeable future.

Recommendations:

- **Continue to support the special needs of McCathran Hall under the direction of the designated Council member.**
- **Annually inspect settling effects related to the new addition to determine when corrective/preventive measures should be taken.**
- **Devise and enact a drainage plan for the building that will solve existing problems in the furnace room area.**

Electrical Systems -- The Town has completed a modification to the Hall's electrical service to meet current demands. There are existing short-comes that include lights dimming when the air conditioning starts in the lower hall. These are under investigation related to lower hall air conditioning operations.

Recommendation:

- **Determine and complete electrical modifications to correct existing light dimmings.**

Air Conditioning -- As part of the 1997 addition, the Lower Hall and new Council and Archive Rooms were air-conditioned. Air conditioning the main Hall is a topic of very differing points of view among its users. Air conditioning has cost, comfort, and possible exterior and interior visual implications that should be explored in detail.

Recommendation:

- **Thoroughly study the full range of issues, including an energy audit associated with air conditioning the main hall, and present all the findings at a special Town meeting.**

Lighting -- Existing lighting in the Hall is relatively stationary and basic in its function and availability. A lighting plan for the main Hall has been implemented. This includes modifications for specific events from general lighting to specialized capabilities such as spot and flood. Remote control of individual lights - an emerging and, at present, costly advancement - has advantages for control of lighting in the main Hall with its extremely high ceilings. Advances in the quality and availability of assorted low-energy bulbs have expanded the possibilities for desirable illumination at more efficient energy consumption levels.

Outside light in late afternoon and during evening productions can be intrusive to the events within the main Hall. Effective window blinds for the main Hall that are appropriate to the style of McCathran Hall, easy to operate, and low in maintenance have been installed.

Recommendations:

- **Conduct ongoing review and conversion, as identified through the energy audit and as economically feasible, of light bulbs throughout McCathran Hall to take advantage of energy-efficient advancements.**

Insulation -- Presently, the Main Hall is above unheated crawl space. There is no floor or ceiling insulation. A resistance rating of R-25 for crawl spaces and of R-38 for attics is a minimum level that should be considered. If installed, special care will need to be focused on electrical and fire suppressant systems that now exist within these areas.

Recommendation:

- **Guided by the energy audit and given energy and operating cost implications, consider installing industry recommended R-rated insulation to meet actual and anticipated use as soon as this can be budgeted.**

Aesthetics -- From the exterior, the Hall is unique in its appearance and deserves special attention to aesthetics associated with it and the environs. Landscaping efforts to date have been aimed at enhancing those qualities, making it more attractive within its setting and for adjacent residences. The popular Summer-In-The-Parks program for Town children makes heavy use of the Hall grounds. The entrance and walkway tile paving has held up and continues to make access to entrances of the whole building more comfortable in all weather. An unsightly electric pole sits at the corner of the main entrance and, since the death of two large oaks on either side of the Hall, has become especially noticeable.

Recommendations:

- **Explore underground wiring for McCathran Hall.**
- **Work with Pepco to either remove or relocate the offending pole.**
- **Investigate replacing some of the heavily used grassy areas on the grounds with lower maintenance mulch to accommodate play activities, to reduce earth compaction over tree roots and to reduce mowing and water needs.**

4.2 <u>Town Maintenance Shop</u> -- An addition to the garage in 1999 provided sufficient work and storage space for Town maintenance activities. Storage of waste pick-up, etc. is held outside for regular removal, but can be unsightly to walkers along this wooded section of Center Street and can harbor insects such as mosquitoes and rodents during the interim. The flourishing but sometimes rampant bamboo forest provides a good screen of the Maintenance Shop and is a favorite spooky trail for younger kids in Town.

Bathrooms with exterior access on the playground side of the Maintenance Shop are important to kids waiting for the morning bus as well as to the assorted users of all the playground areas, including casual walkers. Vandalism has been enough of a problem over the years to necessitate combination locks for a good portion of the time.

Recommendations:

- **Establish screening of the trash storage area to create a visual block from Center Street and investigate enclosed storage that allows easy transfer of waste materials, both in and out.**
- **Institute a regular bamboo containment schedule that will control spread beyond a range intended to shield the garage and immediate environs.**
- **Increase lighting in and annually paint and generally improve the interior appearance of the restrooms.**

4.3 <u>Gazebo</u> -- The Town Gazebo, built originally by volunteers and heavily used for organized and informal events, is an open structure that is located between the east woods and a quiet residential portion of Grove Road. Periodically, the gazebo undergoes a wave of vandalism that requires significant repairs. The issue of security lighting has been proposed as one possible means of control.

Recommendation:

- **Monitor use of Town Gazebo and evaluate opportunities to discourage vandalism there.**

4.4 <u>Recreation Shed</u> -- Designed and built by Town volunteers, the two-part recreation shed has had active use for equipment by the many tennis groups in Town, while the second side is largely an "away" space for odds and ends. Shed maintenance requires periodic exterior cleaning and eventual attention for the ramp to the door on the tennis side.

4.5 <u>Walkway Lighting</u> -- For decades, the soft lighting along Town walkways has been provided by incandescent bulbs. Despite periodic urging by Pepco to convert to less expensive, more intense kinds of light such as sodium or mercury vapor, the Town has held fast and willingly paid the cost of lighting that accommodates the aesthetics of the Town Within a Forest. Recent technological advances, however, in modifying kinds and amounts of light continue to work toward providing light sources that could compliment the aesthetics along the walkways of the Town.

Recommendations:

- **Under direction of a lighting expert, select a section of walkway and replace existing incandescent bulbs with more efficient bulbs that provide aesthetically pleasing results.**

In the event of two or more possible replacement types of bulbs, this study of walkway lighting might include a second walkway section for comparison.

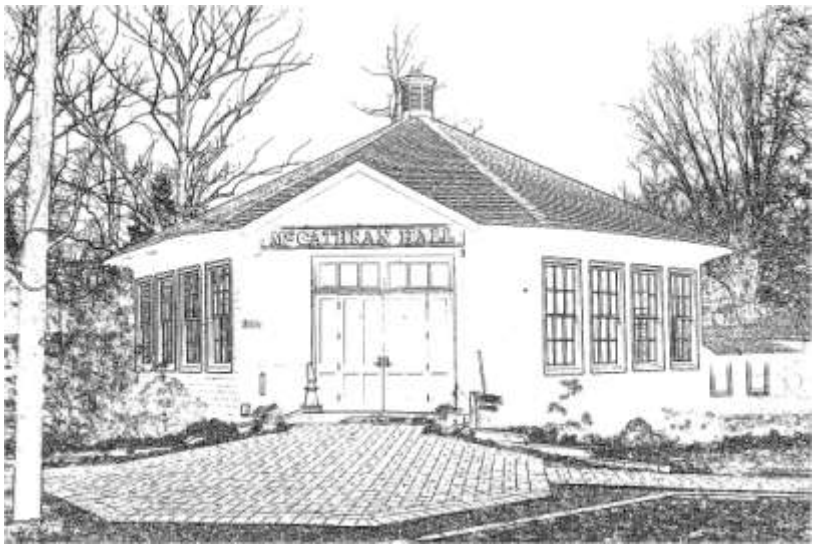
- **As a Town, determine after a full year study, whether or not to continue with such walkway lighting conversion throughout the Town, or return the trial area(s) to incandescent lighting.**

4.6 Incidental Structures

Athletic Club Fireplace -- Planned and built in 1935 by the then Teen Athletic Club of Washington Grove, the fireplace which formerly was often used for cook-outs has fallen into some disrepair: its lintel with names and date of the founders is mostly gone, the exterior stones have some mortar decay, and the cooking area and grate have missing and degenerated fire brick, mortar and stones. Recent picnics have relied mostly on individual grills brought to a specific event. The fireplace continues, however, to have limited use and a real visual impact on Woodward Park. The previous Master Plan suggested locating a fire circle in the park for similar events.

Recommendations:

- **Acknowledge the historic artifact qualities of the Fireplace.**
- **Renovate the exterior of the structure and redesign and renovate the cook area for practical use.**
- **Establish a fire circle as an adjunct to certain Town events and as an active area for group and community gatherings: sing-alongs, story hours, marshmallow roasts, general camaraderie.**



5. RECREATION AND PARKS

Washington Grove has a long standing interest in recreation and has sponsored many activities in Town parks since the earliest Camp Meeting days. Town parks provide space and openness that enhance the quality of life within the Grove. Town parks also provide an opportunity for spontaneous activity by children and adults, perhaps a "pick-up" game, in contrast to the regulated pace that is characteristic of the work and school day. Town parks are intended to provide active and passive recreation areas and are located in several locations within the Town boundaries.

Passive recreation by Town residents ranges from star gazing on a bench in Wade Park to acidic comments while draped over the tennis court fence. Active recreation can be accomplished on an individual basis with one or more players (golf practice, shooting hoops, use of children's play equipment, croquet, tennis) or on a team basis with several members composing each team. In general, team play requires much larger areas and has a potential for ancillary needs, such as parking and spectator spaces. Typically, both individual and team players want to practice to improve their skills and use Town facilities for that purpose.

Because most of Town parks are imbedded within the residential areas of the Town, adjacent households have the advantage of immediate access for their recreation, and are front row spectators for all activities related to park use. Users of the parks have a responsibility to the Town to safeguard the condition of the parks and to abide by Town regulations concerning such things as parking, trash, and hours of use. Users of the parks also have a responsibility to adjacent households to minimize any peripheral effects of the users' activities. These include, but are not limited to, physical damage to property, excessive noise, and inappropriate behavior.

It is the responsibility of the Town to maintain the park areas in good condition for a variety of uses, both for current residents and guests and for future generations of Grovers and their friends. The popularity of certain sports, games, or activities will wax and wane with succeeding generations and town regulations should provide flexibility for these changes.

Recommendations:

- **Establish a Town Safety Plan after evaluation of Town facilities in cooperation with municipal insurance commission. Any unsafe playground equipment or other items should be scheduled for repair, replacement, or removal.**
- **Post rules for use of Town parks on the Town website.**

5.1 Designated Parks and Green Space (See Exhibit A)

Woodward Park -- Bounded by Grove Road, Maple Avenue, and Boundary Street, this large park includes the following active recreation areas: 1 soccer field, 2 baseball fields with back stops, 3 tennis courts, 1 basketball court, children's playground equipment, picnic areas, and garden plots. A simple, but very direct, sign has been installed at the entrance to the parking area in Woodward Park which states that a permit is required for use of the field by groups of people.

Recommendations:

- **Support a consistent policy for use and maintenance of the active recreation areas within Woodward Park to ensure their continuing viability for present and future users.**
- **Examine tennis court fence condition and repair accordingly.**
- **Enforce permitting process for use of the soccer field. The sign indicating OPEN or CLOSED needs to be removed or clarified as it is misinterpreted to mean that it is O.K. to use the field.**
- **Evaluate Woodward Park fireplace for safety and require a permit for a fire.**
- **Monitor and upgrade playground equipment, including safety issues, as needed.**
- **Consider erecting signs which state that trash must be removed by users of the Park.**
- **Evaluate continued use of the community garden plots; consider reversion to use as part of the active recreation area.**

Wade Park - This park is bounded by 4th and 5th Avenues.
Knott Park - This park is bounded by Grove and 1st Avenue near McCathran Hall.
Howard Park - This park is bounded by Chestnut Road, Grove Avenue, McCathran Hall and the Woman's Club.
Zoe Wadsworth Park - This park is bounded by Center Street, Grove Road to the intersection of Locust Lane, and Woodward Park.
Chapel Park - This park is bounded by Chestnut Road, Grove Avenue, and Center Street.
McCauley / Washington Grove Lane Park - This park is bound on the south by McCauley Street, on the east by Grove Avenue, and on the north by Washington Grove Lane.
Maple Road "McCathran" Park - This park is located on the east side of Maple Road between house numbers 105 and 115, and was dedicated as a neighborhood woodland park.
Jackson Park - This park is bounded by Acorn Lane, Chestnut Road, Grove Avenue, and Miller Drive.
Morgan Park - This park is bounded by Brown and Railroad Streets between Maple Avenue and Hickory Road.
Railroad Park - This park is west of the humpback bridge on the south side of Railroad Street between two commercial properties outside of the Town's boundaries. See Section 7.3 for discussion of this park.

Recommendations:

- **These parks should be maintained as open space within the Town.**
- **For Morgan Park, extend the woodlands to the footpath running diagonally from Brown Street to Railroad Street.**
- **Survey all parks and define with standard boundary markers.**

5.2 Maple Lake

Maple Lake, located in the West Woods, continues to be one of the prime sites for recreational use in the Town. Lifeguards are on duty from 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m. weekends starting Memorial Day weekend, and then daily from the day in June that public schools close for the summer through the Labor Day weekend. The Town has continued to support 4 weeks of

swimming lessons in the month of July. The Lake area is also used year round for walking, birding, fishing and quiet contemplation.

Recommendations:

- **Develop better ways to discourage non-residents from vandalizing the fence, dock, and shed.**
- **Establish a procedure to better protect the town from liability problems by providing increased security at Maple Lake.**

6. ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

In accordance with State law, this Plan recognizes the need for goals, objective, principles, policies, and standards designed to protect, from the adverse effects of development, sensitive areas, including streams and their buffers, 100-year floodplains, habitats of threatened and endangered species, and steep slopes.

The abundant and clean water supplies within the 200 acres of the Town were a major attraction for the original purchasers of the Town. Over the years, open and piped drainage systems were installed in the residential and wooded sections of Town.

Recommendation:

- **The Town culverts and drainage systems should continue to be maintained on a yearly basis and replaced when necessary as roads are repaved. This benefits the quality of the headwaters of three major streams that feed the Potomac River: Rock Creek, Muddy Branch, and Great Seneca Creek.**

6.1 Forest Conservation

The Town's Forest Preserves (see Exhibit A) serve five main purposes. They significantly affect air quality and temperatures; they provide habitat for plants and wildlife in an area of diminishing natural habitat; they help to prevent erosion and degradation of the quality of the headwaters of three significant waterways; they provide places for passive recreation such as walking and birding; and they act as natural buffers from encroaching development. To ensure that the goals of forest conservation also apply to privately-owned properties within the Grove, the Town has enacted a forest conservation ordinance that governs subdivisions, grading, and activities requiring a sediment control permit for tracts of land over a specified size. This Master Plan recognizes that the Town's Planning Commission must administer the forest conservation ordinance as part of its development review activities.

(1) East and West Woods - The Forest Preserves of Washington Grove total almost one half of the Town's lands and are located on the northeast and northwest sides of Town. They provide significant environmental and aesthetic benefits to the Town, as well as to the external neighborhoods in the area. Water running through the East Woods is part of the Rock Creek headwaters. Water running through the West Woods is part of the Great Seneca Creek headwaters. The Town has an adopted Forestry Policy that is aimed at protecting the East and West Woods and ensuring that their benefits will be available for the foreseeable future.

Since adoption of the 1975 Master Plan, additional housing has been constructed along a portion of both the east and west woods borders (see map). The East Woods now are encircled by housing. The result of the new housing, some with lawns extending to the woods and occupants who look out on and develop concern for the woods, has been to reduce points of entrance to the woods and some of the associated impacts such as trash dumping, motorized vehicles and vandalism.

Along the West Woods borders, there is new single-family housing within Town boundaries along Daylily Lane and two older single-family homes with access along Washington Grove Lane, now annexed into the Town; previously constructed multi-family and more recent single-family housing beyond the Town boundaries. The only green space adjoining the West Woods that remains is the floodplain associated with Whetstone Run and City of Gaithersburg playfields. Erosion, encroachment by neighbors bordering all woods, invasive plants, and trash dumping continue to have a noticeable negative impact on all woods.

The impact on the Woods and its flora and fauna, as surrounding green spaces have disappeared, cannot be assessed because firm baseline data are not available for preceding years. While the East Woods also suffer from rampant invasive plants and the changes associated with wet-weather streams and a deteriorated drainage system dating back to Association days, they continue to enjoy the most regular use by Town residents for dog walking, nature hikes, and exercise.

Walkways within the Town's forest preserves offer a variety of settings and require different levels of maintenance, as opposed to walkways within developed areas. For instance, portions of walkways within the East Woods are currently unusable for days (or even weeks) after inclement weather, but mitigation of several drainage problems could allow easier access into some areas. Within both the East Woods and the West Woods, revising the layouts of some of the walkways and enhancing them by seating areas, by replantings that concentrate native plants into low-maintenance natural gardens, and by naming and mapping the walkways will improve their functions for pedestrians.

Regular removal of trash helps to eliminate the notion that woods should function as dumps. The East Woods currently enjoy a fairly low level of trash impact. The West Woods, however, are the repository of large amounts of dumping, much of which originates from outside Town borders. Using Town maintenance staff time on a regular basis to combat refuse from others is not feasible.

Whether from erosion, run off, invasions of destructive plants, or the assault of motorized vehicles or tree cutters, both woods are sensitive areas and vulnerable to degradation. Maintaining as much environmental diversity as possible to support flora and fauna should be a major goal of the Town. This includes a hospitable environment for those species that appear in Town woods on a seasonal schedule as well as for those that pass through the woods as part of their regular territory.

Recommendations:

- **Implement plans to revise layout of the woods' paths to remain reasonably accessible throughout the year, and to maintain a variety of habitats for birds and vegetation. Leave existing nature trails/walkways wide enough for access by the Town tractor. Some trimming along designated trails may encourage additional pedestrian use, and also increase sunlight to maintain a variety of habitats for birds and vegetation.**
- **Schedule regular trash removal from the woods. Utilize community resources and request enforcement assistance from the County offices to help control trash and storm water impacts on the woods.**

- **Any actions related to the future of Washington Grove Lane must mitigate existing and potential runoff and erosion in the West Woods.**
- **Increase plantings on the west side of the Lake for screening, to prevent erosion, and to clearly mark the Town boundary.**
- **Annually, clear rampant growth around Whetstone Spring to enhance its use for passive recreation while safeguarding its natural qualities.**
- **Implement the adopted 5-year plan to remove invasive plants from each woods.**
- **Compile a 3-year inventory of existing plants, animals, soils, and water of both woods. Seek professional assistance from local, state, and federal experts in coordination with Town Volunteers.**
- **Following inventory of woods flora and fauna, assess the long-term impact of erosion and invasive plants. Consider whether drainage patterns through each woods should be altered.**
- **Restore names of walkways in the forest preserves, as shown on early maps.**

(2) Town Trees and Arboretum – Within the residential portion of town, huge old trees are a complement to the forest preserves. In addition to natural trials such as drought, they have others to contend with, among the most lethal of which are lack of nutrients as they age, air pollution and base wounds.

A Town Nursery, now the Town Arboretum, was established within the Woodward Park boundaries over 30 years ago. Many plantings in the Grove began as small slips and seedlings from the nursery, transplanted over the years by volunteers and Town maintenance staff. There now is considerable older plant stock, however, so big that transplanting cannot be easily accomplished by volunteers with shovels. Many of the trees and shrubs are of high quality and would be real assets, if transplanted successfully in other public areas around Town. The largest plants in the nursery are taking space that could better be used to begin new, young plants for future plantings and replacements.

Recommendations:

- **Maintain the Tree Inventory through regular updates, especially for trees that are removed or for new plantings.**
- **Develop a program for tree health and, when necessary, replacement. A periodic inspection for Gypsy Moth infestation should be part of the program. The program should be the basis to schedule regular feeding of the trees in the Town parks and along the walkways, as well as for the annual safety trimming and tree removal. Include necessary supplies and staff time in the Town's annual budgets.**
- **Review and update the goals of the 2006 Urban Forest Management Plan; the educational component of the Plan should be implemented.**
- **Evaluate plant stock in the Town Arboretum for transplanting or replacement. Seek funds from green and open space programs to successfully relocate trees and shrubs from the nursery to other public areas in Town.**
- **Control growth of vines and bramble around Town trees and other invasive plants.**
- **Evaluate and address the impacts of the deer population; seek outside resources to assess and minimize the impacts of the deer population on gardens, plants, and trees.**

6.2 Sensitive Areas

(1) Maple Lake (See Exhibit B) -- Maple Lake is one of the great environmental and recreational treasures of Washington Grove and its source, Maple Spring, is part of the headwaters system of Great Seneca Creek. Originally constructed in 1910-1911 for swimming, boating, and ice-harvesting, the Lake later was neglected and gradually filled in with silt, plants and decayed organic material. In the 1950's it was revived by cleaning out and deepening the basin, building the earth berm on the east side and improving the drainage and outflow systems. In 1974 and again in 2000, the Lake was drained and dredged by a bulldozer to remove the silt, mud and organic decayed material. The sludge was heaped and left at the southeast side of the lake, where it became covered with overgrowth.

A deep drainage ditch was constructed outside the entrance to the Lake. This ditch carries run-off and storm water from the woods and Washington Grove Lane around the area of the Lake. A wooden bridge spans the ditch and has survived the recent passage of a large drilling rig.

In the late 1980's significant water flow was lost from Maple Spring (the Lake's source) due to construction outside of Town west of the Lake. With support from the City of Gaithersburg, the Town was reimbursed by the builder for the construction of a deep well and pumping system which is now adding cool, clear water to the lake on a timed basis each day during the summer months.

Monitoring and Management: The primary goal is to prevent eutrophication, the process by which excessive nutrient enrichment (including increased nitrogen and phosphorus) due to decomposition of organic materials, including algae and submerged rooted pond weeds, depletes oxygen levels in the water. Lakes then gradually fill in with new plant growth and silt and become swamps or small streams. This process is what happened to Maple Lake after 1912. In recent years, algae and submerged rooted pond weeds have been controlled fairly well with algaecides and herbicides, but the decomposition of algae and weeds as they fall to the bottom increases the nutrients in the water, causing further growth.

The Town must continue to maintain the delicate ecological balancing act that allows the use of the Lake for safe swimming, and keeps it safe and hospitable for water creatures including fish, turtles, muskrats, frogs and birds both on site and as headwaters for Great Seneca Creek. This balance can best be accomplished by continued water quality testing and by continued use of safe herbicides and algaecides while we consider and investigate long-term plans. The fecal coliform count has been well below the standard acceptable level.

With the availability of the well water at Maple Lake, an opportunity exists for constructing toilet facilities (Exhibit B, item 1). This possibility should be explored with WSSC to determine if the existing sewer line at Maple Lake is still active. A connection permit and some form of metering system would be required. The bathroom itself should be a simple block structure, vandal proof to the extent possible. It should be located away from the open area, so as not to become a prominent landmark of the Lake.

Recommendations:

- **Continue water testing and appropriate use of safe herbicides and algaecides to protect and maintain this headwater of Great Seneca Creek.**
- **Compile a data base of water quality parameters and plant, animal and fish characteristics to monitor for signs of degradation of the Lake's ecology; seek advice and assistance from environmental experts, in addition to Town volunteers.**
- **Increase planting of trees and shrubs on the west side of the Lake for visual screening and to prevent erosion. The Forestry and Beautification Committee should be consulted for ideas and recommendations.**
- **In conjunction with the Town block surveys, clearly mark the Town boundary on the west side of the Lake beyond the fenceline; use plantings to help define the property line.**
- **Inspect the bridge over the drainage ditch to determine its weight capacity and remaining life; install handrails along the span of the bridge.**
- **Eliminate erosion of the Lake fence post anchors by some means, such as reinstalling the fence farther into the Lake compound area and away from the drainage ditch or, in conjunction with the ditch inspection, analyze the cost of piping the ditch along the limits of the Lake fence. Alternately, consider stabilizing the ditch with rip-rap or gabions to curtail further erosion.**
- **Investigate the possibilities of installing toilet facilities at a location near the old pumping station for use only during hours of Lake operations.**

Prevention of Future Eutrophication: To increase depth and remove the rooted pond weeds and accumulated organic debris, the Town should plan for periodic dredging of the accumulated silt, mud and organic debris from the Lake bottom as was done in 1974, 1998, and 2002. The problem of disposal of the sludge also must be looked into with attention to legislation since the earlier dredging work to determine if any restrictions now apply to the process of dredging or disposal of sludge from the Lake. In 1998, an aeration system was installed at the Lake to decrease turbidity and improve oxygen flow throughout the water.

Recommendations:

- **Establish a schedule to dredge Maple Lake to prevent future eutrophication. Maintain the aeration system and monitor its effectiveness for increasing dissolved oxygen levels in the Lake.**
- **Following any dredging project that may be undertaken, extend the sand beach from its present location as far as practical to the island bridge.**

Maple Spring and Whetstone Spring: Maple Spring is the primary source for Maple Lake and, along with Whetstone Spring (also located within the West Woods), are headwaters to Great Seneca Creek. In order to enable Town residents to enjoy the springs that were so much a part of the leisure activities of the original residents, the spring box at Maple Spring should be refurbished and an elevated boardwalk provided (see Exhibit B, item H). Because the environment is sensitive, access to this new nature area should be limited. Therefore, the fenced perimeter around Maple Lake should be enlarged to incorporate this area.

Recommendations:

- **Refurbish the spring box at Maple Spring. Erect a raised boardwalk nature trail up to and around the spring. Erect a fence so that Maple Spring is included within the present Maple Lake compound. Install rustic log benches at the Spring. Maintain the rest of the area as open space and natural habitat.**
- **Annually clear silt and undesirable growth around Whetstone Spring to enhance its use for passive recreation while safeguarding its natural qualities**.

(2) Brown Street Corridor -- The Brown Street Park corridor extends from Maple Avenue westward to the intersection of Railroad Street and Hickory Road. A gate at this intersection restricts vehicular access to Brown Street between Hickory and Chestnut Roads. A major portion of this corridor, Morgan Park, extends from Maple Avenue westward to Grove Road and borders Railroad Street. Water flowing through this area is one headwater of the Muddy Branch tributary to the Potomac River. Approximately two-thirds of Morgan Park is an emerging woodland. The remainder is semi-wooded and includes two memorial gardens. A drainage ditch traverses the park near Pine Road to a culvert at Railroad Street.

The Brown Street park corridor is a major buffer zone between the Town and the traffic along Railroad Street and along the railroad tracks. The completion of possible extensions to Metro, in addition to the steady growth in railroad and vehicular traffic, will increase noise and air pollution in the Town. The emerging woodlands has potential to ameliorate these, as would berms along Railroad Street. If the wooded area is extended, the standing committee for Forestry should review security control experiences of other park systems to determine if strips or baffles should be mowed within the wooded area.

Recommendations:

- **Extend existing woodlands in Morgan Park to the present footpath running diagonally from Brown Street to Railroad Street. Consider increasing wooded growth as a shield along the remainder of the Brown Street Park corridor.**
- **Maintain the ditch in Morgan Park to ensure drainage of both residential and wood areas and to safeguard the quality of water draining into Muddy Branch. Consider the use of Town equipment contrasted to contracted excavation. County officials should consider correcting drainage flow problems under Railroad Street to support the Town's efforts.**

(3) Ridge Road Corridor -- The Ridge Road corridor extends north and east from the intersection with Brown Street to the easternmost end of Ridge Road. Residential lots cover the west side of Ridge Road, while the east side is as yet undeveloped, except for four homes within the Town. Waters from this area drain to Rock Creek. In 2002, 13 acres of the former Casey Field on the east side of Ridge Road were designated for protection as Legacy Open Space.

The Town's highest priority for the Legacy Open Space portion of Casey Field is that it be preserved as public open space; any development approved for the former Casey Field, must protect the historic character of Washington Grove and the Town's forests, recreational and park facilities, and must be compatible with Washington Grove.

A strip of land on the south side of the easternmost portion of Ridge Road is owned by the Town, and east of that a 15-foot wide wooded buffer and an intermittently wooded drainage bed are proposed to buffer the new housing development.

Recommendations:

- **Protect the a portion of the former Casey Field on the east side of Ridge Road via permanent inclusion in the Legacy Open Space program under County control, or via Town control, to help maintain water quality of headwaters for Rock Creek and for passive recreation needs as the greater Shady Grove area becomes fully developed.**
- **Negotiate with Montgomery County, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and the developers of Piedmont Crossing to establish a significant diverse wooded buffer zone along the southern side of the easternmost portion of Ridge Road right-of-way to help mitigate the sight and noise impacts. Utilities for all new development should be underground and planned for as the buffer zone is planted.**
- **Collaborate with developers of the Piedmont Crossing community to explore finding and relocating box turtles impacted by the development.**
- **Protect the easternmost portion of Ridge Road and the Town-owned strip of land on the south side of that portion by delineating and maintaining that strip as a wooded barrier and buffer.**

(4) The Emmons Property – In 1994, the Town purchased the Emmons property, about 1/3 acre along the east side of the four-hundred block of Grove Road, for the purpose of establishing a continuous line of Town owned open space from the ball field to the Town's northern border and to control and direct the future use of the land, in keeping with the 1975 Master Plan (see map). Only one small parcel along Grove Road still remains privately owned. Town ownership of the Emmons property now precludes private development, a potential prospect that Grove residents wanted to prevent, and allows its incorporation into the planning and management of the Woodward Park / East Woods tract.

The parcel has remained fallow for decades and as a result of being unused and not maintained by its owners, has become overgrown with volunteer trees and shrubs consisting predominately of tulip poplar and locust trees and wild rose bushes. No trees of significant stature grow on the property except for a large oak at the eastern edge. Additionally, the rear of the property near the woods walkway is very wet each spring and after long wet periods. Remnants of a previous garden are evident, predominantly in the spring when many bulb flowers are in bloom. The flowers, however, are losing their ability to thrive because of the uncontrolled undergrowth and the heavy shade.

Some Town residents remember when the property was a meadow attracting and providing habitat for a variety of song birds, and have suggested that the property should be returned to a similar state. Many Town residents would like to see this area along Grove Road managed as a different environment, not allowed to continue growing haphazardly.

Certainly this and other areas of Washington Grove could be maintained for particular purposes. A more controlled and planned management of this and adjoining tracts along Grove Road would provide opportunity to create a different habitat and support more diversification of

species. Any project directed at reclaiming and managing the area, however, would be a major effort. It would require a commitment of Town resources either through volunteer help and/or paid-for services.

Recommendations:

- **Assess and evaluate the area generally east of Grove Road to the fire lane, and from the wooded area north of the Gazebo extending to the fire lane opposite Dorsey Street. Assessment and documentation should include:**
  1. **description of the boundaries to be studied;**
  2. **documentation of the current flora and fauna;**
  3. **description of other characteristics and the appearance of the land, noting any significant features and problems and changes that might be occurring; and**
  4. **evaluation of potential problems, trends, and opportunities for changes and improvements.**
- **Develop a plan for Town consideration to convert a portion or all of the study area to a managed area that would result in a greater diversification of plant and animal life.**
- **Continue to seek ways to secure for public use the last piece of privately-owned property north of the Gazebo on the east side of Grove Road.**

7. WATER RESOURCES ELEMENT

The Town of Washington Grove is within the area serviced by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC). The WSSC was established in 1918, but the concept of a bi-county water/sewer agency was first suggested in 1912 following a strong complaint from the neighboring District of Columbia about the streams within the Nation's Capital being fouled by waste from Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. Over the years, small existing community systems, some run by municipalities like Hyattsville and others privately operated by land companies such as those in Chevy Chase and Edgemoor, were acquired and eventually integrated into the WSSC regional system. Among the early acquisitions were the water systems of Takoma Park (1919), Mount Rainier and Kensington (1922), and Glen Echo (1926). Washington Grove, served in its earliest times by a collection of springs and wells (and honey wagons), approved joining the WSSC system at an annual meeting in 1923, thus initiating a major construction effort that resulted in the first hookups in 1927.

7.1 Water Supply System

With regard to water supply, the Patuxent Plant was the WSSC's principal supply facility during the last half of the 1940s and in the 1950s when rapid post-World War II suburban growth was taking place. During the 1950s, the WSSC pursued the study, design, and construction of what is today its principal water supply facility, the Potomac River Filtration Plant in western Montgomery County. When the first 30 MGD (million gallons per day) stage of the Potomac Plant was opened in 1961, the WSSC was in a position to operate a dual source system, drawing on both the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers. The Potomac Plant was expanded progressively during the 1960s and now has a nominal capacity of 250 MGD with the ability to produce at a rate of 285 MGD for short operational periods.

Further expanding its resources, the WSSC completed construction of the Little Seneca Creek Dam and Reservoir in northwestern Montgomery County in 1985. The Reservoir, containing 4.25 billion gallons of water, is available to supplement flows in the Potomac River during dry periods and serves as a recreational resource along with the other two WSSC reservoirs. The WSSC also has access to water stored in the 30 billion gallon Jennings Randolph reservoir, located further upstream on the Potomac in Bloomington, Maryland, and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These resources ensure adequate water supply for the Town of Washington Grove for the foreseeable future, including the maximum potential of 54 additional homes from re-development within the current municipal boundaries. (Capacity confirmed via communication from Roland Steiner, WSSC, 24 October 2008.)

However, many homes located along the easternmost portion of Ridge Road still rely upon wells for their water supply. With the proposed development of the former Casey Field, there are concerns regarding impacts on the water table that supports these wells. As part of the development process, plans and funding contingencies have been proposed for the possible extension of the WSSC water lines to serve these homes along Ridge Road within the Town.

There is also significant concern for the condition of the aging water delivery systems within the Town. The frequency of water line assessments and rehabilitation work has increased, as well as

the impacts of such work on public roads, walkways, and parking areas. As noted in the July 2007 WSSC Utility-Wide Master Plan, the renewal of buried assets is WSSC's most immediate challenge, with approximately 85% of the buried water distribution system piping reaching or exceeding its useful life by the year 2020. Considerable Town diligence will continue to be required to ensure that WSSC contractors and crews restore the disturbed areas in an acceptable manner.

Recommendations:

- **Monitor contingency plans, water assessments, and funding commitments to support extension of WSSC water lines to serve all of Ridge Road.**
- **Coordinate with WSSC representatives to plan ahead, when possible, for water line rehabilitation work; ensure follow up tracking of restoration work needed for both public and private areas disturbed by WSSC pipeline repairs and rehabilitation.**

7.2 Wastewater System

While the water supply system was being developed, progress was also being made on the regional integration of the wastewater system. The first sewer constructed by the WSSC was installed in 1919 in Riverdale, Prince George's County. The early backbone of the Commission's wastewater system was formed by the acquisition of municipal networks in Hyattsville, Takoma Park, Kensington, Mount Rainier, Chevy Chase and Edgemoor. Direct connections, under agreements with the District of Columbia, were made with the Washington system for the Little Falls, Rock Creek, and some other tributary trunk facilities in the 1930s and 1940s as the WSSC was able to complete connecting lines. Shortly after the end of World War II, negotiations began with the District of Columbia for the joint, Maryland-D.C. development of the Blue Plains Water Pollution Control Plant, which was designated as the regional facility for both Washington, D.C. and the Maryland suburbs. Today, all major trunk sewers in Montgomery County, with the exception of the Great Seneca Sewer Basin, are connected to the regional Blue Plains System, which have a present day capacity of 370 MGD, of which just under 170 MGD has, by agreement, been allocated to the WSSC.

It was not until the late 1950s and the 1960s that the WSSC began to develop some major new permanent sewage treatment facilities of its own. In the 1970s, the WSSC developed the 5 MGD interim Seneca Treatment Plant in Montgomery County and two lesser facilities with capacities under 1 MGD, the Horsepen Wastewater Treatment Plant near Bowie (no longer in service) and the Damascus Plant in Upper Montgomery County. The Seneca Wastewater Treatment Plant was expanded to 20 MGD in 2003 and is currently being expanded to 26 MGD. In recent years, all plants receiving sewage from the WSSC's wastewater collection system have been equipped with some form of advanced treatment. The WSSC service area is generally ahead of the rest of the nation in the development of facilities which have taken a big step (tertiary treatment) beyond the conventional primary-secondary processing of wastewater. Consequently, it produces an exceptionally high quality of effluent (treated wastewater) at all of its plants.

The advanced capabilities of these WSSC facilities, and the associated programmed expansions as documented in the WSSC Utility-Wide Master Plan, will ensure adequate sewerage treatment capacity for the Town of Washington Grove for the foreseeable future, including the maximum

potential of 54 additional homes from re-development within the current municipal boundaries. (Capacity confirmed via communication from Roland Steiner, WSSC, 24 October 2008.) With regard to the possibility of annexing parcels for low intensity industrial/research uses, any water supply and local wasterwater collection system capacity issues would be identified and addressed during the preliminary planning process and under WSSC's Development Services Process.

Note that the last home within Washington Grove relying on a septic system was connected to a WSSC sewer in 2007. The Town's Building Permit Regulations require that every plan for the erection of a new building must show suitable provisions for connection to the WSSC wastewater system.

7.3 Stormwater Management and Pollution Reduction

In its years of operation, the WSSC has taken on other responsibilities as well, such as the promulgation and enforcement of plumbing regulations (licensing and inspection) in suburban Maryland, and the development and maintenance of storm drainage facilities within its boundaries. In the late 1960s, Montgomery County assumed responsibility from WSSC for storm drain facilities within its boundaries. But Washington Grove was established as a planned community, where the practical art of stormwater management was best tested in the presence of the water itself. Early experience as a campground led to placing tents and cottages (and ultimately home sites) on the higher elevations within Washington Grove, with ongoing community investment in stormwater management. Today, the Town has a network of almost a mile of installed and maintained storm drain pipes and channels, more than half being grass swales and open ditches that allow for absorption. These drainage pipes and channels convey the Town's stormwater runoff to the Town's East Woods and West Woods, historically located and preserved to absorb the stormwater.

The topography of Washington Grove provides a structure for analysis of the pollution associated with stormwater runoff. The Town is located at a high point between watersheds with all drainage from Town leading ultimately to the Potomac River via three distinct paths. Within Town, each of these paths includes Town-owned properties that absorb and initially filter the runoff.

1. Morgan Park/Oakmont Park/Muddy Branch – A number of years ago, the Town undertook an aggressive multi-species planting effort within the parkland between Brown Street and Railroad Street to jumpstart re-growth of woodlands in this former mowed portion of Morgan Park. Besides establishing a visual and noise buffer, the re-growth has successfully increased absorption of runoff from Brown Street and adjacent private properties. However, once the stormwater runoff leaves Morgan Park, there are significant hindrances to stormwater flow that need attention, all within County jurisdiction. First is the drainpipe under County-maintained Railroad Street—this needs to be replaced and lowered about 6 inches. Next is the larger drainpipe under the railroad tracks—where accumulated gravel and silt have filled about half of the pipe's diameter. Next, stormwater flow through the drainpipe under Oakmont Avenue and into County-owned Oakmont Park is hindered by the excessive accumulation of wood chips. These wood chips, dumped in the last decade in Oakmont Park by trucks of the Asplundh Corporation, have inhibited water flow and killed trees and other vegetation that should be

helping to absorb and filter the runoff. Some cleanup of these drainpipes has been done over the years by Town volunteers, but much more work is needed by the County to restore flow capacity and filtering of this stormwater that drains into Muddy Branch.

2. East Woods/Mill Creek/Rock Creek – Some of the most historic stormwater drainpipes convey runoff from The Circle into the East Woods, where almost all runoff is absorbed within this property of more than 40 acres. Originally laid out with walkways and waterlines, the East Woods is preserved and enjoyed as a Forest Preserve of mature trees, with renewed efforts to enhance the trails with pedestrian bridges over the wandering swales and wetter areas. There is also a renewed focus on controlling invasive species within the East Woods to help ensure that trees and other vegetation continues to thrive. While excessive runoff from the East Woods would conceptually flow towards Rock Creek, in fact, very little runoff leaves the East Woods and thus there is effectively no pollution contribution from this path.

3. West Woods/Whetstone Run/Great Seneca Creek -- The greatest stormwater challenges come not from within Town, but from properties outside the Town boundaries that have been allowed by the County to dump their stormwater into the West Woods. The tremendous outflows of stormwater (and trash) from Towne Crest and the surrounding County jurisdiction have plagued the West Woods with significant erosion, tree damage, and trash accumulation. The Town and the County have renewed their collaboration to improve management of this intrusive flow from adjacent properties and to conduct remedial restoration for natural streambeds suffering from the erosion. The County's contractor installed a 2-level catchment basin to lessen the velocity of the runoff and catch trash in basins accessible from the Towne Crest parking area for trash removal. Boy Scouts, Town volunteers, and young residents of Towne Crest tackled erosion areas and trash removal within the West Woods. While some of the stormwater leaving the Town via Whetstone Run originates from springs within the West Woods, the greatest threat to Whetstone Run is from sediment and trash-related pollution associated with this Towne Crest influx. Increased community awareness will assist, as will continued collaboration with County experts, and more frequent volunteer efforts to remove accumulated trash.
In 2006, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) completed a Flood Insurance Study of Montgomery County, Maryland, and incorporated areas. This study revises and supersedes previous Flood Insurance Study reports and/or Flood Insurance Rate Maps for these areas including Washington Grove. This study developed flood risk data to be used to establish actuarial flood insurance rates. The information is also to be used by local governments to update floodplain regulations and to promote sound land use and floodplain development. This study concluded that Washington Grove is among the incorporated areas of Montgomery County that are non-floodprone.

Recommendations:

- **Continue seasonal removal of leaves and debris from drainage swales.**
- **Conduct periodic inspections of swales and critical drainage points, with additional inspections particularly prior to predicted heavy rainfall.**
- **Convert paved swales to grassy swales, where practical and with due consideration of possible impacts on basements of adjacent homes, to promote natural filtering.**
- **Work with County to increase stormwater flow capacity under Railroad Street and the railroad tracks to improve drainage for Morgan Park.**

- **Monitor effectiveness of recently installed stormwater catch basin intended to slow the heavy flow of stormwater and water-borne debris entering the Town's West Woods from the neighboring apartment development under County jurisdiction.**
- **Schedule periodic trash collections in West Woods to remove debris along borders and from improved stormwater catch basin on the Town's northern boundary; coordinate efforts to include volunteers from Town and the apartment development.**
- **Continue to consult with experts in streambed restoration to develop and implement restoration in the West Woods necessitated by years of excessive stormwater flows resulting from County-approved development; evaluate lessons learned by other jurisdictions; implement and enhance streamflow controls using downed wood and other heavy natural materials.**

8. COMMERCIAL CORNER

The Town of Washington Grove is essentially residential in nature. In its early days, the Town was separated from adjoining communities by open space. At that time, there was some need to have easy access to food and supplies, and a small general store filled these needs. In addition, the Town's postal needs have been provided over the years by a local post office rather than home mail deliveries. Through much of its history, the Town has had a single local commercial zone of approximately 40,000 square feet at the southwest corner of the Town known as the commercial corner.

The Town's residents continue to need and want a local post office which functions as one of the focal points for the community. The postal facility now housed in the commercial zone well serves that need. For many years, Town residents have had access to an ever-increasing number of commercial centers outside the Town where they can fill their commercial needs. Businesses at the commercial corner, therefore, have become less critical for meeting the needs of Town residents. This change in importance of the commercial corner to Town residents calls for new thinking on the relationship of the corner to the Town.

In the past decade, the Town has attempted to address, through ordinance revisions and discussions with the property's owners, the commercial needs of Town residents regarding the types of businesses housed at the corner, and improvements to the physical environment of the commercial corner. Although progress has been made, the corner continues to require significant attention of the Town Council and Planning Commission in monitoring and intervening to improve the relationship between the commercially zoned property and the Town's primarily residential character.

As a major gateway to Washington Grove, the commercial corner and businesses adjacent to the corner across Railroad Street and Washington Grove Lane do not positively project the vision of a predominantly residential "Town Within A Forest" of quiet, sylvan beauty and charm. Any effort to improve the commercial corner will ideally include the entire gateway, including the adjacent business areas. While the Town's ability to influence or control commercial development outside its borders is limited, the Town can have significant influence and control within its borders.

8.1 Long-term Vision for Commercial Corner

The Town should move in the coming years to develop and implement a plan for improvements at the commercial corner that will be more compatible with the sylvan beauty and quiet residential nature of the Town. The overarching goals should be to create an environment inside and around the commercial corner that will result in increased green space, more pedestrian-friendly walkways, automotive-friendly roads, and building façades that better reflect the residential nature of the Town.

The commercial corner exists in an area that has potential impacts from ongoing outside stresses, such as plans by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation for the future of the Humpback Bridge, potential developments in areas adjacent to the Town, possible changes in Washington Grove Lane, and the potential impact of the Inter-County Connector on surrounding roads. Areas that must be monitored include changes in roads or road patterns in the area, zoning issues in Gaithersburg that may impact the commercial corner, annexation issues in properties adjacent to the Town and Gaithersburg, and the development of strategies to address issues proposed by Montgomery County that could potentially impact both municipalities. The Town must be vigilant in staying involved in these issues to monitor their impact on future plans for the commercial corner.

Recommendations:

- **Develop a future plan for the commercial corner that includes the property within Town limits, the roads and businesses adjacent to the corner, and development and construction plans in the area that may impact the corner, such as the future of the Humpback Bridge.**
- **Focus on development of beneficial relationships with the owner of the commercial corner, as well as proprietors of businesses housed therein.**
- **Institute a more formal relationship, at the level of Town Council, with the City of Gaithersburg, and work with the City to develop and monitor plans for compatible land uses for properties in the vicinity of the commercial corner.**
- **Work with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and the City of Gaithersburg to redesign the intersection of Railroad Street and Washington Grove Lane in concert with proposed changes to the commercial corner.**

8.2 Zoning Issues

The Zoning Ordinance appropriately provides that the purpose of the local commercial zone is to protect both nearby residences and local retail enterprises. The Zoning Ordinance presently sets out an appropriate mix of permitted and special exception uses that meet this goal. The ordinance should continue to prohibit food preparation uses; these uses produce unacceptable by-products such as trash, odors, and traffic that make food preparation uses incompatible with near-by residential uses.

The Zoning Ordinance continues to evolve regarding issues related to the commercial corner. While this has been effective to a point, it has not resulted in entirely satisfactory solutions for maintaining a positive relationship between the commercial corner and the Town. It is incumbent that in the next decade the Town revise the ordinances to improve this relationship, with the goal of revisions to benefit both the Town and the owners and proprietors at the corner. The Town should be consistent and vigorous in enforcing applicable Town ordinances to the commercial corner. If the Town will not enforce an ordinance, the ordinance should be reviewed and repeal considered.

A creative approach to help address improvements at the commercial corner is to create a special Tax District for commercial properties, designed to provide a source of funds that in conjunction with general tax revenues could be used to provide for the establishment of more green space

with emphasis on well-maintained gardens, much needed façade improvements to the commercial structures, traffic, and safety improvements. These improvements will reduce the adverse impacts of the commercial corner on adjacent residential.

Recommendations:

- **Regularly review the commercially zoned property for compliance with Town ordinances and tenant agreements, in coordination with the Town attorney.**
- **Involve the code compliance official in issues regarding compliance with Town ordinances at the commercial corner including attention to issues along Hickory Road.**
- **Work with the owner of the commercial corner to ensure compliance with existing ordinances and/or agreements.**
- **Evaluate the extent to which impervious area at the commercial corner could be converted to green space and what sort of façade enhancements would reduce the negative visual impacts of the present commercial structures on adjacent residential uses.**
- **Create a special Tax District for commercial properties to fund, in conjunction with general tax funds, improvements that will reduce the impervious area of the corner, create and maintain more green space improved with appropriate plantings creating a more park/residential setting, improve and maintain the façade of the commercial structures, and improve traffic/pedestrian safety in and around the corner.**

8.3 Beautification and Safety Issues

An inviting commercial area attracts desirable tenants as well as customers and beautification of the commercial corner requires cooperation of the owner and tenants. The Town supports and encourages those permitted uses which motivate the landlord to make improvements to the property, including creation of a special Tax District to encourage visual enhancements.

Beautification of the commercial corner should begin with a focus on the area within Town limits, but should include discussions with adjacent businesses that are not within the Town limits. With the creation and ongoing maintenance of Railroad Park, the Town has begun the process of improving areas adjacent to the commercial corner. An effort should be made to assist businesses adjacent to Railroad Park in making visual improvements along Railroad Street and Washington Grove Lane.

The focus of changes at the commercial corner to improve the visual and safety profile of the corner should begin with the following:

1. The area behind the commercial corner, along Hickory Road, should be altered to eliminate or reduce the existing impervious parking spaces and replaced with green space (for example, raised soil beds for plantings). Improvement of the façade of the commercial structure, especially along Hickory Road and the north side, is important to protect the residential character of the west side of Town.

2. The front parking area of the commercial corner should be modified by the reduction in parking spaces, added green space, and de-emphasizing the current dumpster site.

3. In the area around the commercial corner, improving safety of pedestrians and automotive traffic will depend on improvements to the traffic patterns at the adjacent stop light. Construction of a traffic circle to replace the stop light or use of a 3-way stop should be investigated. This will alleviate the current safety issues regarding left turns out of the entrance to the commercial corner onto Washington Grove Lane, as well as the dangerous right and left turns out of the entrance onto Railroad Street.

4. The façade of the four buildings should be unified visually and designed more compatibly with near-by residences.

5. Signs throughout the center should have a continuity of design. Maximum safety should be a major pedestrian and traffic sign consideration. Placement of signs regarding pedestrian and automotive traffic should be studied within the scope of larger issues regarding changes to roads abutting the commercial corner.

Recommendations:

- **Work with the owner of the commercial corner to address sight and distance problems that now affect both pedestrian and vehicular traffic along Hickory Road. Work to solve parking alignment issues in the area on Hickory Road and in the front parking area of the commercial corner.**
- **Study if elimination of food preparation business at the commercial corner could allow a smaller dumpster site or its elimination.**
- **Enforce existing ordinances and review them for potential changes within a special Tax District for beautification strategies to be applied to the commercial corner.**
- **Maintain Railroad Park and encourage adjacent business owners to participate in visually enhancing the corner. Establish landscape treatment along Washington Grove Lane to establish a visual/psychological sense that one is entering a community that cares about itself.**
- **Maintain regular contact with the City of Gaithersburg and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation to provide visual enhancements in the area surrounding the commercial corner.**
- **Include the front area of the commercial corner in the Town's regular maintenance schedule, seeking assistance from the County for assistance in the area of the bus stop.**

9. DEVELOPMENT AND PRESERVATION STRATEGIES

The Town maintains both its economic and historic vitality because its structures and setting retain and amplify the overall sense of place that placed it on the National and State Registers of Historic Places. Its commonwealth and way of life depend on retaining the character-defining elements of its structures and setting while encouraging appropriate augmentation to its built environment.

9.1 Infill Development and Re-development

Although most of the Town's privately owned parcels are already developed, the analysis provided in Section 2.1 demonstrates the capacity for further internal growth is significant. Section 2.1 deals with the adequacy of the infrastructure in the face of two types of possible internal growth. The challenges to preservation from both potential infill development and re-development are highlighted.

The first type of development essentially retains the current placement of existing homes and subdivides lots only on that basis. This infill development can potentially increase the number of residential houses by 36 units. This would represent additional growth of more than 15%. The second type of potential development for growth is substantially greater using a re-development scenario. When taking into account the possibility for demolition of existing homes and then re-subdividing the lots to maximize the number of allowed units, the number of homes could increase by up to 54 units. This would represent growth of 25% above the current size. Either of these two scenarios would significantly impact the Town's character.

The threat of this occurring may not be immediate or imminent, but many older neighborhoods in the County today are struggling to retain their original character in the face of the pressure of increasing land values and the resulting spread of mansionization. Washington Grove is not immune. It faces the same pressures driven by the vanishing space available for new development. The attractiveness of infill and re-development will only increase as development in the surrounding sectors that is already planned or approved becomes reality. This indicates a need to re-examine Town ordinances and to explore a wide range of alternatives to assure further infill and re-development is compatible with the historic character of the Town.

The Town has chosen "a live and let live" attitude when it comes to placing limits on the kinds of buildings that are erected within its borders. The Zoning Ordinance regulates lot area and width, building coverage, set backs and height only. There are manifold and complex reasons for this. Many are compelling and are historically rooted in long standing traditions, such as reliance on the strong sense of volunteerism within the community, and have served the Town well. Any action taken to promote or enhance preservation must balance public and private needs. Any action must reflect the individualistic attitude of Town residents and recognize the need to accommodate older structures to contemporary standards and modern amenities.

9.2 Historic Character

This quality that strongly binds the Town together is best described in the document that

nominated it for inclusion on the National Register:

> "*Washington Grove is an incomparable town – unique in its roots, in its initial land use plan, in the design of its dwellings, in its determination to retain more land in a natural state as forests and parks than developed property, and in the character of its history."*

In November 2001, the Town established a Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) with the task of helping to safeguard the heritage of the Town by encouraging the preservation of the historic nature of the Town and the elements of its cultural, social, economic and architectural history. The HPC reviews and comments on plans and proposals, and all such reviews are advisory only. The HPC also serves as an official archival body of the Town and a resource and clearinghouse for information regarding historic preservation.

The elements identified below combine to produce what is viewed as critical to the preservation of the Town's character.

9.3 Overall Layout and Walkways

The Town's original land plan - encompassing all but the newer portions of the Town - was built upon two spatial forms: 1) the Circle with seven radiating avenues designated as walkways, and 2) a regular grid of alternating roadways and walkways. This common network of maintained but un-paved walkways provides a unique physical organizing element for the community and, as most of the original houses are oriented to face the walkways with a welcoming porch, a social organizing one as well. There are no sidewalks along the vehicular roadways running behind the houses, reinforcing the communal space created by the walkways in front.

As this represents a unique quality that binds the community, it is important to retain and enhance it wherever possible as a character-defining element. While the grid system has not been put in place in the newer annexed areas of Town, it could be pursued in any additional subdivision.

9.4 Structures and Special Venues

The structures described in Community Facilities (Section 4) constitute the principal components and locations of the Town's common activities that define the sense of place. Each has its unique contributions supporting the setting, legacy and common functional aspects of community character.

In addition to the physical structures are the following venues that enhance interaction with the natural environment:

- Tree Nursery/Arboretum
- Woodward Park, Morgan Park, McGregor Park, Chapel Park, Wade Park, Wadsworth Park, Howard Park, Knott Park
- Dedicated benches and the Gazebo
- Maple Spring and Maple Lake
- East and West Woods
- The Circle

Recommended actions for sustaining and enhancing these venues are contained in this and other sections of the Master Plan.

9.5 Scale and Character of Homes

The National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form outlines elements of the original houses contributing to the unique sense of place which justified the Town's inclusion on the Register. The most important of these elements are the modest scale and compatible character of the houses and their easy integration with the natural landscape.

The first of these, modest scale, is the perceived size of a house or addition in relation to its surroundings, both natural and constructed. Along with actual small size, modest scale can be reinforced by multifaceted roof arrangements, use of porches, separate garages, and other design elements breaking up the mass of the house.

The second, compatibility of character, is the recognition of those common aspects of Grove houses that both contribute to their shared identity and that distinguishes them from other communities. Though dominated by the Early Methodist Cottage Style, it is described more broadly in the Nomination Form as one of "adaptive re-use coupled with eclectic spirit".

The last, integration with the natural environment, is achieved by preserving native trees and plants and accommodating the built environment to them rather than the other way around. This has given rise to the motto "a Town within the forest".

These elements are critical to any effort to retain and enhance the historic character of the Town.

9.6 Neighborhoods

The Town is composed, as well, of neighborhoods that share common characteristics that in many cases distinguish them from other neighborhoods. These common characteristics can be age, scale, house character, density, shared public elements, or combinations thereof. This eclectic composition is a contributing aspect to the sense of place.

Delineation of neighborhoods is not always clear or easily defined and can be characterized in different ways. The area along Washington Grove Lane and Chestnut Road has a general character distinct from the Circle and its environs, which is different again from the neighborhood bounded by Cherry and Maple Avenues. Many neighborhoods in the Grove have their own charm and intrinsic value and can be appreciated for their distinguishable attributes, yet each has at least some diversity of design.

9.7 Financial Incentives

Most homes in Washington Grove are located within the registered historic district, and there are financial incentives available to those homeowners. The following outline demonstrates the tax credits that may assist with rehabilitation and restoration.

A. Maryland Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits

- Provide Maryland income tax credits equal to 20% of the qualified capital costs expended in the rehabilitation of a "certified heritage structure"
- Are available for owner-occupied residential property as well as income producing property
- The rehabilitation expenditure in a 24-month period must be substantial, exceeding $5,000 for owner-occupied residential property, and the greater of the adjusted basis of the structure or $5,000 for all other property

B. Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits

- Provide federal income tax credits equal to 20$ of the qualified capital costs expended in the rehabilitation of eligible properties
- Is only available for income producing properties
- The rehabilitation expenditure in a 24-month period must be substantial, exceeding the greater of the adjusted basis of the structure or $5,000
- Must be performed in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*

9.8 Connections with Neighbors and Viewsheds

Washington Grove has longstanding historic connections to its neighboring landscape and the associated vistas. Maintaining connections that are mutually beneficial has been a consistent objective of the Town. Oldest amongst these is the tie to the railroad and the string of railroad communities spawned by it. This connected Washington Grove to the City of Washington through daily commuter trips, provided a common focus with the Oakmont neighborhood, and instigated the commercial activity at the corner of Washington Grove Lane and Railroad Street. Oakmont developed a more suburban character of housing, but the layout focused on the Train Station, the original General Store and Post Office (now Hershey's Restaurant), and the Washington Grove Elementary School. The Oakmont viewscape from Town includes a Commercial-Transition zoned parcel, developed and undeveloped residential parcels, Hershey's Restaurant, Oakmont Park, and the Oakmont School, which viewed across the railroad, is of a compatible scale and density.

The Commercial Corner sprang up near one of the few crossing points of the railroad, the Humpback Bridge, and became a transfer point for agricultural goods from wagons to the railroad. The Corner provides an important connection and transition area between the residential Town and the commercial East Diamond entrance into Gaithersburg. Gaithersburg historically functioned as the "downtown" destination for purchase of goods and materials for the Washington Grove summer residents. The elements of the agricultural character are retained in the southwest vista with the former silos and feedstore, and the current tractor store.

The Amity community presently shares only the frontage onto our forest preserve areas and walking connections, but there are strong historical connections deriving from the parallel development of the African American Emory Grove Community. While the Town's vistas to the more intensively built areas to the northwest and northeast are mostly buffered by the forest preserves, the proximity of the adjacent neighborhoods and the walking connections invite

interactions and use of the recreational amenities. The Town is committed to keeping its park facilities available for enjoyment by its neighbors.

The farmland and woods to the southeast of the Town have always afforded the residents a chance to experience the founders' desire to "sojourn" within a rural agrarian environment as an escape from the urban environment of the city. This property is undergoing approval for residential development, but 10 acres of the 'upper field' may be preserved. The proposed dense neighborhood of single-family houses and townhouses is designed to face the houses along Ridge Road across a parallel road and a buffering hedgerow. It is hoped that much of the character of a country road will survive the development. The Town's vista to the southeast is imperiled by the planned InterCounty Connector with its multi-level traffic loops and associated lighting of the roadway, vehicles, signs, and toll facilities.

The last connection is an inappropriate one represented by the industrial yard of Roberts Oxygen, the adjacent multi-use open storage clutter, and the industrially zoned Oakmont strip. This development replaced the original landscape of farms and houses, has no positive connection, and provides a viewshed that is detrimental to the character of the Town.

Recommendations:

- **In all planning efforts, consideration should be given to sustaining the historic character of the Town as an important attribute and a key aspect of its economic vitality.**
- **Any effort to promote or enhance preservation must do so through a balance between preservation efforts and respect for private property and accommodation of private needs.**
- **Individuality of design contributes to the eclectic composition of the Town and should be encouraged.**
- **To counter the trend towards mansionization, a re-examination the Town's ordinances is underway, including a proposal to realign building coverage standards to help assure that further infill and redevelopment is compatible with the character of the Town.**
- **Historic preservation efforts should feature educational initiatives that expand public awareness and build on the Town's rich history and the appreciation of that history by residents.**
- **The Historic Preservation Commission should expand its role to collect and disseminate relevant historic information, to promote the appropriate storage, display, and availability of archival material, and to conduct workshops on financial and other incentives associated with historic preservation.**
- **The Historic Preservation Commission should enhance the effectiveness of its advisory role by promoting to residents the value of it design review early in the proposal process.**
- **The expanse of The Circle, the historic center of the community, should be reinforced by restoring the open character of the public areas and removing encroaching undergrowth and plant material on the publicly-owned segments of The Circle consistent with an emphasis on the hardwood canopy over an open, mowed environment.**

10. INTERJURISDICTIONAL ISSUES

The Montgomery County Planning Board developed the 1977 Shady Grove Sector Plan and the 1985 Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan which were adopted by the County. These planning documents delineated the County's earlier general design for the area surrounding Washington Grove. The area in the Shady Grove vicinity is serviced by: the extensive County Service Park located at Crabbs Branch and Shady Grove Road; the terminus of the Red Line of Metrorail abutting the Service Park; and the Central Processing Facility, which allows a rail transfer of trash, at Shady Grove Road and Route 355.

In 2006 the Board radically shifted their vision for the area and adopted a new Sector Plan that instead focused concentrated mixed use development on the land adjacent to the Metro Station as part of the State and County priority for Smart Growth Development. In reaction to previous creation of a surplus of employment growth, the Board decided to facilitate development of housing to re-balance the jobs/housing ratio and reduce future traffic increases generated by job growth. In order to accomplish this, the Board has re-zoned much of the property surrounding the Station to accept up to 6,500 of attached single-family and mid and high-rise multifamily residences, over 1 million square feet of commercial space, additional parking and a library and recreational space. This amount of growth requires that a new elementary school be located either as part of the immediate development or on the alternate site on the “lower field” portion of the 65-acre former Casey property adjacent to the Town. Also in order to accomplish this, all or part of the above-mentioned County Service Park must be relocated. Among the sites identified for this are the Casey properties flanking I-370 along the future extension of Crabbs Branch Way planned to connect with Amity Drive through the planned development southeast of Town.

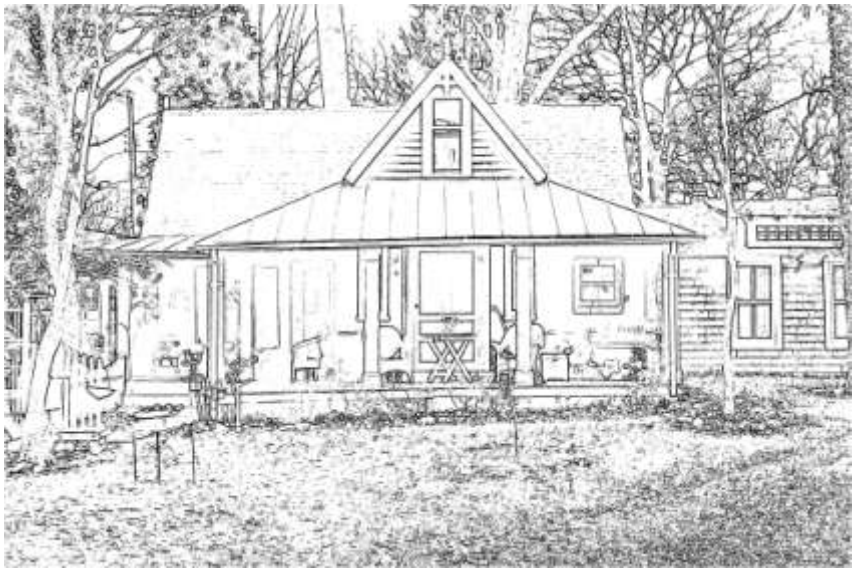
Since 2001, this property adjacent to the full length of Ridge Road and Brown Street extended has been in the active planning stages for residential development. Zoned R-90 for quarter-acre lots in the 1977 Sector Plan, a complex phased Preliminary Plan utilizing the cluster option was approved in 2005. The first of three phases allows for 65 single family detached and attached dwellings including 12 mandated Moderately Priced Dwelling Units to be concentrated along Amity Drive and adjacent to lower Ridge Road, the transfer of 11.3 acres of the field along upper Ridge Road to the County as passive open parkland, and a small active neighborhood park adjacent to the stream. The second phase allows either an additional 89 detached and attached dwellings or a reservation for the elementary school required in the Sector Plan. The third phase allows for an additional 43 attached and detached single-family dwellings on the InterCounty Connector (ICC) ramp reservation adjacent to the ICC right-of-way property. These two phases require the completion of the connection between Amity Drive and Crabbs Branch Way through the adjacent Casey property. The Town has been actively working with the County and developers to minimize the impact and maximize the compatibility of this development. These, and development of the King property along Route 355, exert enormous pressures on day-to-day living in the Grove.

A large and varied employment area continues to expand from the Metro station at Shady Grove to Route 28/Shady Grove West. Workers from all parts of the County and beyond commute in and out of this area. There are growing and unmet needs for transportation, recreation, and such basic job amenities as sidewalks from bus stops. Traffic noise from the highways that encircle the communities in this area is now almost as intrusive at night as during the day. In 2006, the Final Environmental Impact Statement and the Record of Decision were approved for the ICC. A design/build contract has been awarded for the westernmost portion of the ICC, and construction has begun. The adopted concept plan included connecting the ICC/I-370/Metro Access Road with a complex three-level cloverleaf interchange located in the southeastern portion of the "lower field", and the elevation of the top level roadway at the level of the existing hedgerow separating the upper and lower fields. Besides the expected loss of this hedgerow, virtually all of the existing forest separating the lower field from the Crabbs Branch Shopping Center will be eliminated. Lights, signs and toll gantries are planned to rise above the roadway. No noise barriers are planned for the portions of the new roadway or existing I-370 facing the Grove. Substantial efforts have been and continue to be made to pressure the State Highway Administration (SHA) to recognize and mitigate the negative visual and auditory impact that will result. Further efforts are being made to induce the County to address the same issues for the county-regulated properties between the ICC and the Town. Location of the SHA ICC road maintenance complex on one of the Casey properties adjacent to Robert's Oxygen is also a common concern.

The cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville provide much needed stability and a number of amenities for the area-at-large. Their recreation program and facilities are carefully controlled but available for use by many workers and residents in the greater Shady Grove area. The cities have an exemplary approach to landscaping and maintaining their roadways, many of which feed into the County employment area. Beyond city boundaries, the County has required local recreation facilities as part of the development process.

The needs in this part of the County, however, outstrip local amenities. Review of the heavy impact traffic and roads have had on this area must be a prime restraint whenever the County considers more employment opportunities or new development. The demands for major recreational areas for adults as well as children should be resolved.

Between the ever increasing development pressures this area of the County has been experiencing, the proposed "urban village" for 15,000 people at Shady Grove Metro, and the effects of the ICC, the neighborhood is on the verge of radical transformation, losing the last vestiges of its rural character and becoming an attraction for a housing market with values revolving more around transportation opportunities than the peaceful contemplation of nature. This will inevitably affect the future of the Grove in ways that will require ever more efforts to protect its unique community values. Cooperation among neighborhoods, municipalities, and county decision makers is an important ingredient to the successful resolution of these large issues that span such jurisdictions. A Town liaison should be identified for such purposes. Examples of such cooperative efforts are the Town's active participation in the Maryland Municipal League and such intergovernmental groups as the Gaithersburg-Washington Grove Fire Board. The Town should remain open to participation on other mutually beneficial organizations as appropriate.

Recommendations:

- **Ensure a Council-level responsibility for liaison with Gaithersburg, Rockville, and County agencies.**
- **Promote cooperation with County agencies by holding "open houses" and other events/forums to host visits by County representatives.**
- **Continue to invite the District 39 State Senator and Delegates for periodic updates on legislative issues.**
- **Encourage participation by the Mayor, Council, and other Town officials in Maryland Municipal League meetings and events.**