

PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

Goals:

Provide a network of local and countywide parks that offers recreational activities, supports an interconnected trail system, protects important natural features and creates attractive settings for cultural and historical resources.

INTRODUCTION

The Olney Master Plan Area includes approximately 2,500 acres of parkland, which serves both active and passive recreation needs including playgrounds, trail corridors, protection of natural areas and preservation of historic and cultural sites. Parkland plays an important role in defining Olney as a community; the North Branch of Rock Creek, Hawlings and Reddy Branch Stream Valley Parks encircle Southern Olney to the north and west and help mark the transition from town to countryside.

The residents of Olney have expressed the need for more parks and open space in Olney. Many people have voiced the need for "unprogrammed" park space, where people may simply go to enjoy informal outings. Another issue is how to provide better access to parkland. While Olney is close to a network of local and regional parks, getting to them by means other than automobile is difficult. One of the objectives of this Plan is to integrate sidewalks, bike paths and bike trails so that people may leave their house and either bike or walk to parks.

More detail about the basis of the recommendations in this section can be found in a document prepared separately during the Master Plan process entitled *Park and Trail Analysis for the Olney Planning Area*.

The park and trail planning objectives and recommendations are organized by the four functions of parkland in Montgomery County:

1. to provide recreation opportunities;
2. to enhance resource protection;
3. to provide trail corridors; and
4. to protect historic, archeological and cultural features.

RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The Olney area includes one recreation park, one conservation park, three stream valley parks, eight local parks and seven neighborhood parks. Although analysis of park needs based on population estimates and projections indicate Olney is generally well served by park and recreation facilities, a need for three additional ballfields is projected by the year 2010. The County Recreation Department has identified a future need for an outdoor pool in this area of the County. Residents have prepared a petition requesting a skateboard park to serve Olney area youth.

Three properties in the Southeast Quadrant are appropriate for purposes of active and passive recreation and should be acquired as parkland. Two of these properties, Kimble and Graefe, are located adjacent to the Olney Manor Park. The Kimble property, with existing open field, could be buffered from adjacent homes by evergreen plantings and provide the opportunity for one or more of the following: a picnic/playground area; soccer/lacrosse field; or outdoor pool. Acquiring all or part of the wooded Graefe property could provide nature trails, and other passive recreation opportunities with a buffer for nearby homes. Acquiring both properties would allow the greatest flexibility in terms of providing additional active and passive recreational facilities while allowing a natural buffer at the park's edge. The third property, Casey property next to Farquhar Middle School, would serve the need for a future active recreation local park in the area and could be shared by the school.

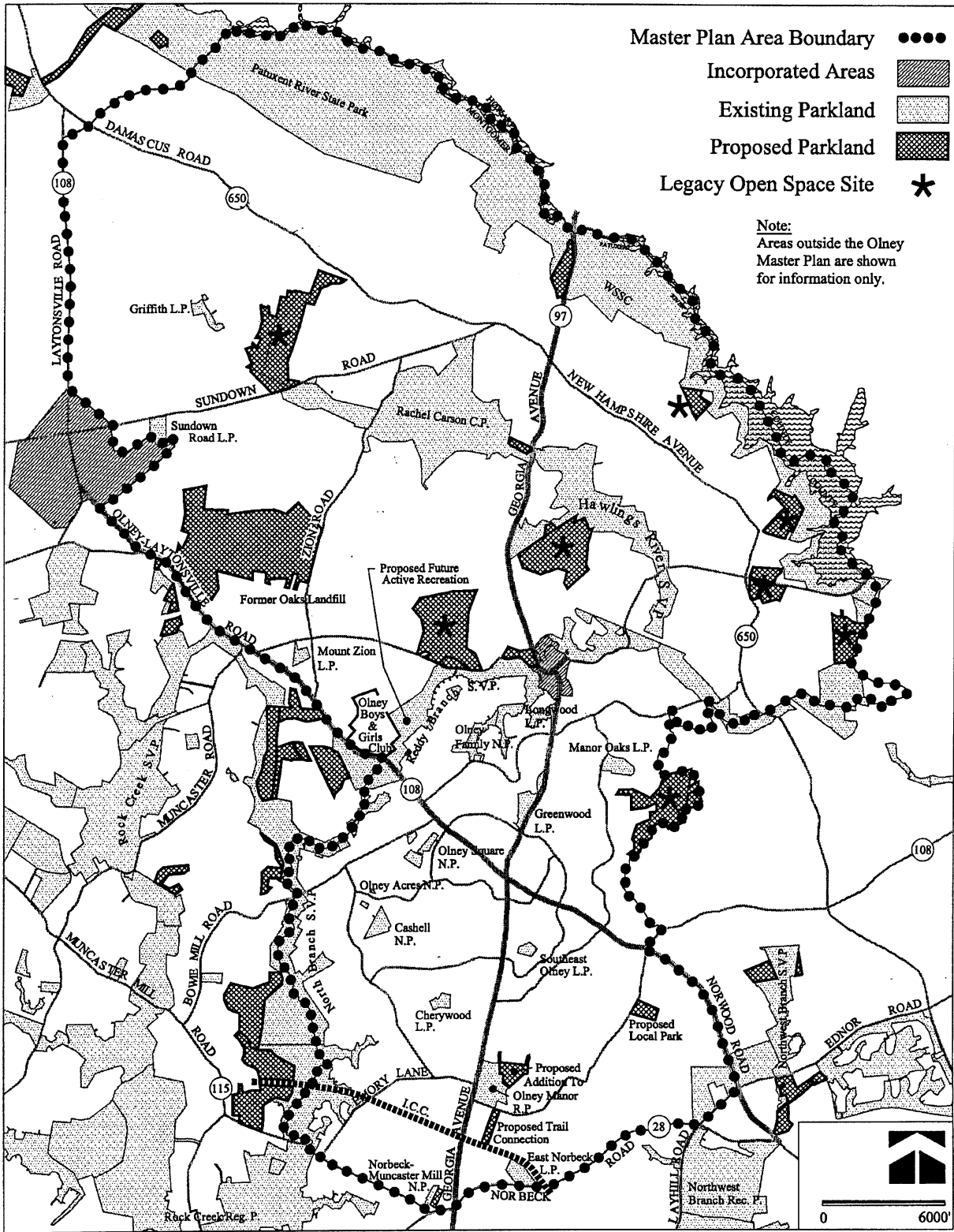
In addition, the former Oaks Landfill should be reserved for future recreational needs of the area. Landfill buffer area is currently used for a natural surface trail, but other future uses are possible including picnic/playground area, equestrian area, etc.

An open field area exists on the parkland in the Reddy Branch Stream Valley Park adjacent to the Olney Boys and Girls Club. It could be needed to meet the future active recreation needs of the local community, the Rosa Parks Middle School, and the Olney Boys and Girls Club. It should be reserved for future active recreation needs.

Recommendations:

- 1. Expand Olney Manor Recreational Park through acquisition of the Kimble property and all or part of the Graefe property.**
- 2. Consider an area of Olney Manor Park for a skateboard park.**
- 3. Acquire the open field site adjacent to Farquhar Middle School for a new local park.**
- 4. Reserve the existing open field parkland area adjacent to the Olney Boys and Girls Club for future active recreation, if needed.**
- 5. Develop nature trails in Cashell Neighborhood Park to provide community connections and access to the natural areas of the park.**
- 6. Retain Griffith Local Park primarily as a passive recreation area. The area has become wooded. Future picnic or playground facilities could be considered if desired by the community.**
- 7. Consider re-use of under-utilized park facilities including allowing under-utilized tennis courts to be used for roller hockey practice.**
- 8. Retain Oaks Landfill site for existing and future recreation purposes.**
- 9. Recognize the long-term need for an outdoor aquatic facility.**
- 10. Acquire the vacant WSSC property along Olney Mill Road to provide trail access to the Olney Boys and Girls Club site if it is not needed for WSSC use.**

Existing and Proposed Parkland



RESOURCE PROTECTION

A major concern in the Olney Area is the continued protection of the drinking water supply of the County in the Patuxent River watershed, which includes the Triadelphia and Rocky Gorge Reservoirs. Although most of the watershed west of Georgia Avenue is in the Agricultural Reserve and there is no immediate threat to these resources, more should be done to protect the open spaces and sensitive resources in the Patuxent River watershed, particularly in the area east of Georgia Avenue that is zoned for rural cluster. The continued protection of the North Branch of Rock Creek is also of concern as well as the Southeast Quadrant of Olney.

In general, this Plan recommends the following guidelines for resource protection in parkland:

1. Balance the stewardship of sensitive areas (i.e. streams and their buffers; steep slopes; 100 year floodplains; highly erodible soils; wetlands and wetland buffers; habitats of rare, threatened, endangered or watch-list species of plants and animals; archeological sites; and historical sites) with recreation.
2. Facilitate enjoyment and appreciation of nature in all parks through naturalized landscapes and sound stewardship of environmentally sensitive areas.
3. Locate any new recreation facilities, except judiciously placed trails, outside of sensitive areas.

Specific recommendations for properties that should become part of the park system to better protect natural resources are included in the Environmental Resources Chapter of this Plan. The following park acquisition recommendations for the protection of natural resources reflect those recommendations and are described in the Legacy Open Space section of the Implementation Chapter.

Recommendations:

1. **Acquire several sites in the Patuxent River watershed to protect water supply.**
2. **Acquire portions of the Mess property in northeast Olney through dedication to preserve the high quality forest stand.**

TRAIL CORRIDORS

The 1998 Countywide Park Trails Plan proposes an interconnected system of natural and hard surface trails. Olney lies within three of the Trail Corridors identified in the Plan: the Rock Creek, the Northwest Branch, and the Patuxent River. Residents in Olney will one day have access to a large network of hard surface and natural surface trails. Providing community access to regional trails requires that trails be incorporated as a feature of new subdivisions and that bike paths and walkways connect to park trails.

Currently, the Countywide Parks Trails Plan indicates a park trail located in the vicinity of Howard Chapel Road. Residential properties and their configuration along this road precludes any park trail opportunities. Therefore, the Countywide Park Trails Plan should be amended as shown in the Implementation Chapter (Relation of Olney Master Plan Area to Park Trail Corridors) to identify a broader area for a future trail, which could either be a trail easement, or a park trail. Until a final alignment is identified and implemented, the shoulder along Howard Chapel Road will provide a connection between Rachel Carson Conservation Park and the Patuxent River trail corridor.

The following recommendations to implement the Countywide Park Trails Plan are discussed in more detail in the *Park and Trail Analysis Report*. The Countywide Park Trails Plan should be amended to reflect these recommendations.

Recommendations:

In the Northwest Branch Greenway Trail Corridor:

- 1. Amend the Countywide Park Trail Plan to show a generalized area for a future trail route between Rachel Carson Conservation Park and the Patuxent River.**
- 2. Use a portion of the proposed parkland on the Mess property for a trail connection from Sandy Spring to Dellabrooke.**

In the Rock Creek Trail Corridor:

- 1. Ensure connection of North Branch trail to the ICC.**
- 2. Minimize impacts to the sensitive biodiversity areas in the North Branch Rock Creek by routing the proposed hard surface trail in that area at the narrowest point and by connecting it to a proposed bike path along Emory Lane.**
- 3. Provide safe crossing of Muncaster Mill Road (traffic light preferred) from the Emory Lane bike path to a bike path on the south side of Muncaster Mill Road for access to Rock Creek Regional Park.**
- 4. Extend the Percheron Trail from the Agricultural History Farm Park to the trail network at the former Oaks Landfill through the use of trail easements.**
- 5. Link the existing equestrian trail systems on the former Oaks Landfill and the Percheron Trail.**

In the Patuxent River Trail Corridor:

- 1. Provide a natural surface trail along the Patuxent River. Opportunities for new trails in future developments in the area should be considered.**

- 2. Encourage WSSC to designate an existing maintenance road as suitable for trail use.**

Other Trail Connection Proposals

Bikeways, easements and sidewalks should be provided to improve local access between major Countywide trails in the park system and residential neighborhoods. Parkland should be acquired as needed or trail easements provided on intervening properties to accommodate a trail or bike path connection to the Countywide park trails system in the Master Plan area. Access to the Countywide park trails network should be provided on the following properties when they are developed: North Branch of Rock Creek Trail Corridor from the Norbeck Country Club property; Northwest Branch Park Trail Corridor through the Mess property; and a trail/bike path connection between Olney Manor Park and the east-west trail in the Intercounty Connector (ICC) right-of-way through the Gandel property in the Southeast Quadrant. A local connection to Olney Manor Park from the adjoining Polinger property should be considered when that property redevelops.

Recommendations:

- 1. Connect Olney Manor Park and the proposed bike path in the ICC right of way through a hard surface trail or bike path.**
- 2. Include public access to trail system in the North Branch of Rock Creek Park in any redevelopment proposal for the Norbeck Country Club.**
- 3. Provide trail access from Olney Mill residences to the Olney Boys and Girls Club.**
- 4. Explore opportunities for safe trail crossings whenever any planned road improvements are considered at or near the following locations:**
 - a. Bowie Mill Road and North Branch Trail.**
 - b. Maryland 108 and the Percheron natural surface trail extension. Study retaining or improving the blinking traffic light installed for truck access to the closed Oaks Landfill for a safe crossing for trail users.**
 - c. East-west access to Oakley Cabin Trail at the proposed Brookeville Bypass.**
 - d. Holland Store (Red Door store) property.**

