

Community Facilities

Public community facilities, such as schools and parkland, should be adequate to serve the population projected by this Plan.

This chapter describes several existing and planned community and public facilities in the Gaithersburg area. The major conclusions are:

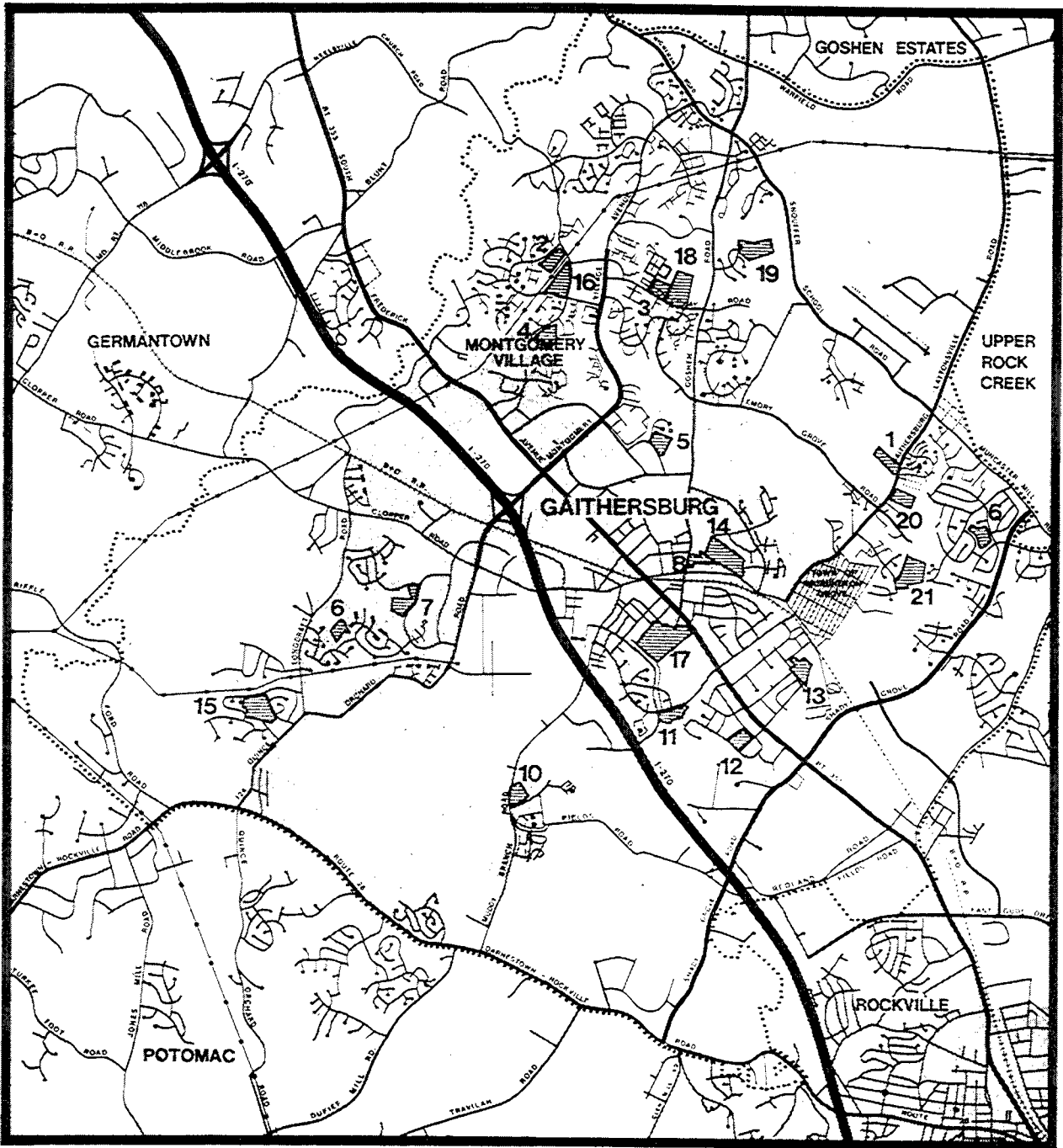
- Except for ballfield recreational areas, the Gaithersburg area generally has adequate park and recreational facilities to serve both the existing population and that anticipated with approved subdivisions.
- The number of future school sites shown on the 1971 Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan should be reduced.

GOALS AND GUIDELINES




- Provide community facilities which promote the health, safety, and welfare of a variety of users including the elderly, the handicapped, and children.
- Provide conveniently located parks and other facilities for both active and passive recreation to meet the needs and interest of various segments of the community.
- Promote access to recreational opportunities and facilities.
- Provide appropriate facilities to meet the general and specialized educational needs of area residents.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Land Use Plan's recommendation concerning future school sites reflects the Board of Education's (BOE) 15-Year Comprehensive Plan for Education



EXISTING AND FORMER SCHOOL SITES

 MUNICIPALITIES	3. Whetstone	11. Summit Hall	HIGH SCHOOLS
 PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY	4. Watkins Mill	12. Rosemont	17. Gaithersburg
 SPECIAL SCHOOL	5. South Lake	13. Washington Grove	FORMER SCHOOL SITES
1. Longview	6. Diamond	JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS	18. Stewarttown
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	7. Brown Station	14. Gaithersburg	19. Charlene
2. Stedwick	8. Gaithersburg	15. Ridgeview	20. Emory Grove
	9. Mill Creek Towne	16. Montgomery Village	21. Muncaster
	10. Fields Road		

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Fig. 30

Facilities. The Board of Education's demographic projections show a continued decline in the school-age population in Montgomery County as a whole throughout the 1980's. These projections are consistent with the Planning Board's growth forecast model. Based on these projections, the planned number of school sites indicated on the proposed Land Use Plan Map (see foldout map) has been significantly reduced from the 1971 Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan.

Four school sites in Gaithersburg have been declared surplus or unneeded (see figure 30). The future use of these sites is a major land use concern. Although any recommendation of the use of former school sites must go through a separate review procedure by the County government, the County Council has analyzed the potential land use of these sites as part of the planning process. The recommendations for disposition of surplus sites are as follows:

Charlene Elementary (10 acres)

This site is located east of Goshen Road and is the school portion of a previously designated park school site. According to the BOE staff, due to lower pupil yields from development and a slower pace of development, the site is no longer needed. This Plan recommends continuation of R-90 zoning and recommends the site should be considered for a park, since it is adjacent to an undeveloped local park site. The site is wooded and could provide an important recreational area to the surrounding townhouse and single-family development. The school site was dedicated to public use as part of a cluster subdivision and, therefore, cannot be used for housing.

Emory Grove Elementary (14 acres)

This site is located east of MD 124 near Emory Grove Road and has been conveyed to the County. This Plan recommends that the site be used for market rate housing (R-60/TDR-6) and for a small local commercial area (C-1 Zone). Recreational facilities are currently available at the Emory Grove Local Park directly across MD 124. (See Land Use and Zoning Recommendations Chapter, Non-contiguous Parcels, for additional information.)

Muncaster Junior High (20 acres)

This site is located on Taunton Drive west of MD 124, near the proposed Midcounty Highway in the Mill Creek Towne community. It was once the proposed location of the Upper County Community Center and Swimming Pool complex, now located at the northwest quadrant of MD 124 and Emory Grove Road. The site is situated between Gaithersburg Junior High and Redland Middle School. According to the BOE staff, the location of the Muncaster site relative to the other schools and the eventual conversion of Gaithersburg Junior High School to a two-grade intermediate school eliminate the need for retaining this site. The Plan recommends that the site be used for non-assisted housing. It is not suitable for assisted housing due to the dominance of that type of housing in the immediate area. The Plan recommends continuation of the parcel's existing R-90 zoning, with an option to increase density to six units per acre through the TDR program (TDR-6).

Stewartown Junior High (20 acres)

This site is located on Centerway School Road adjacent to Montgomery Village. According to the BOE staff, lower pupil yields from residences in the

service area and a slower pace of development indicate that it will not be needed. The Plan recommends continuation of the R-90 Zone, and recommends that the site be developed as an active (field sport) recreation area for the residents of the communities in and adjacent to Montgomery Village. The site should be transferred to the M-NCPPC Parks Department and included in the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for funding, design, and construction.

Since schools provide important community recreation facilities, when a school site is declared surplus its suitability for a local-use park should be given serious consideration. Additionally, as fewer schools are being constructed, there is a greater demand for parks to provide public active recreation facilities. This Plan recommends utilization of four undeveloped school sites (Strawberry Knoll, Blueberry Hill and Charlene Elementary Schools and Stewartown Junior High School) for recreational purposes. The latter two sites have been declared surplus.

PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Park and recreation facilities to serve Gaithersburg residents are provided by public parks, schools, and private recreation facilities. Residents are served by facilities within the Gaithersburg Vicinity Planning Area as well as facilities located in areas immediately adjacent to it.

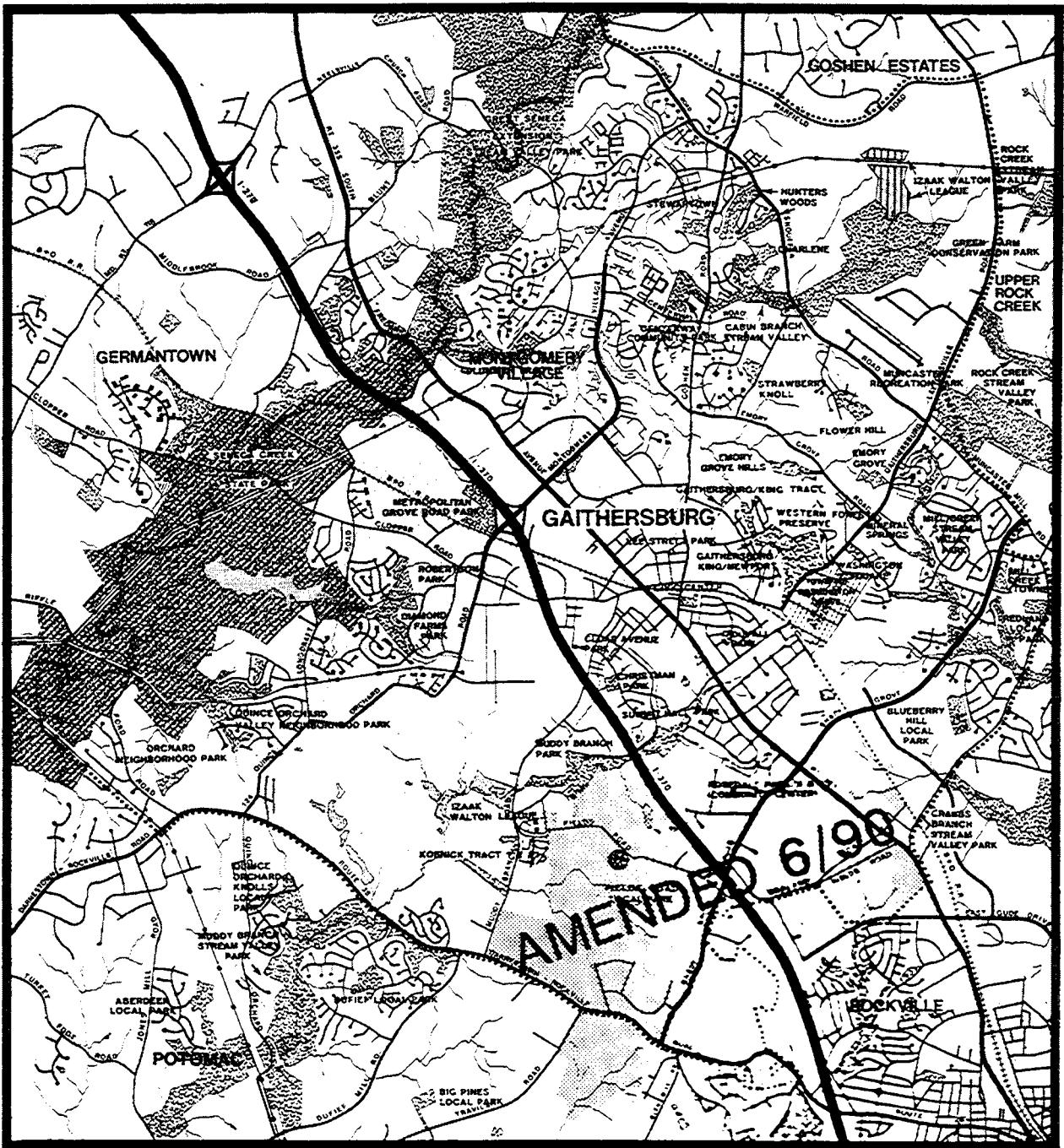
Parkland within the Gaithersburg area is provided by several separate agencies or jurisdictions: the city of Gaithersburg, and the town of Washington Grove, which provide parks and recreation areas within their corporate limits; the M-NCPPC; the Montgomery Village Foundation; and the state of Maryland. Existing and planned public parkland is shown in figure 31.

Parks in the Gaithersburg area serve both active and passive recreation needs. There are approximately 1,260 acres of M-NCPPC parkland in the Planning Area. Approximately 90 percent of the acreage is in stream valley and conservation parkland, with the remainder in local-use parks.

Passive recreation is provided primarily by stream valley and conservation parks. These parks are predominantly undeveloped, but may contain a few picnic/playground areas and trails. The 200-acre Green Farm Conservation Park will eventually serve as a historic, interpretive, conservation center. The Seneca Creek State Park follows Great Seneca Creek. The M-NCPPC owns the land upstream from MD 355 and the state of Maryland owns 5,600 acres along both sides of Great Seneca Creek, downstream from MD 355, to the Potomac River. A lake, built on Long Draught Branch in the state park, provides water-oriented recreational opportunities.

Local parks provide active recreation opportunities for Planning Area residents. These parks contain a variety of recreation facilities, ranging from picnic/playground areas to courts and ballfields (see table 9). In the Gaithersburg Vicinity Planning Area, there are six existing local parks, one under construction, and seven proposed for acquisition or construction over the next few years. Several parks in the Potomac area also serve the residents living close to MD 28 in the Gaithersburg Vicinity Planning Area.

The 1978 Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan (PROS) suggests that the community park concept be utilized wherever feasible to increase the flexibility of recreation programming and to decrease park maintenance costs.



PARKS

.....	Planning Area Boundary		Existing M.N.C.P.&P.C.
	Municipalities		Proposed M.N.C.P.&P.C.
	State		Izaak Walton League Conservation Area
	Municipal		

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NORTH

Fig. 31

TABLE 9
EXISTING AND PLANNED PUBLIC PARKLAND AND PARK FACILITIES
IN THE GAITHERSBURG VICINITY AREA

Name	Current Acreage	Ultimate Acreage	Comments
<u>LOCAL USE PARKS</u>			
<u>Developed or Under Construction</u>			
Emory Grove Local	9.9		Open shelter, picnic area, playground equipment, baseball field, lighted basketball court, two lighted tennis courts.
Mill Creek Town Local	9.7		Playground equipment, softball field, multi-use court.
Quince Orchard Valley Neighborhood	41.5		Community building, open shelter, playground equipment, lighted basketball court, two lighted tennis courts, playfield, hiker-biker path.
Washington Square Neighborhood	5.0		Open shelter, playground equipment, two basketball courts, two tennis courts, playfield.
Stewartown Local	13.0		Lighted tennis courts, picnic area playground equipment, softball field, lighted basketball court.
Blueberry Hill Local	2.0		A recreation shelter, athletic fields, tennis courts, play equipment.
Strawberry Knoll Community	10.6		Two athletic fields, tennis courts, play equipment. A soccer field has also been proposed for construction on the adjacent school site.
<u>Planned Acquisition and/or Development</u>			
Charlene Local Park	10	20	This proposed community park would be developed on a dedicated park school site. The Board of Education does not anticipate the need for the school site. Development may include: shelter, athletic field, play equipment, picnic area and trails.
Orchard Neighborhood Park		11+	This park could include play equipment, picnic area.
Fields Road Local *	10		Development may include: athletic fields, courts, play equipment.
Flower Hill Local	4.6	9.8	Development may include: athletic fields, tennis courts, multi-use courts, play equipment, hiker-biker path.
Redland Local	10.0		Development include: athletic field with lighted parking, lighted tennis courts, lighted multi-use courts play equipment.
Centerway Community Park (Stewartown Jr. High School Site)			Development may include: athletic fields, courts, etc.

* See Shady Grove Study Area Master Plan

TABLE 9 (Cont'd.)

Name	Current Acreage	Ultimate Acreage	Comments
<u>STREAM VALLEY PARKS</u>			
Great Seneca Extension Community Park*	826*	846*	Facilities could include: play equipment, tennis courts, athletic fields, equestrian and hiker-biker trails.
Cabin Branch	71		Development may include: hiker-biker paths, picnic areas, picnic shelters, playground equipment.
Mill Creek	44		None.

<u>CONSERVATION PARKS</u>			
Green Farm	204		Restoration of an historic house to eventually serve as an historic interpretive conservation center.

<u>RECREATIONAL PARKS</u>			
Gude Drive**	161		This facility is currently a landfill which is to be converted to a park which may include: athletic field, archery ranges, picnic areas, amphitheatre, astronomy study area and hiker-biker trail.
Muncaster**	105		Future facilities may include: ballfields, picnic areas, playground equipment.

* This park is located on the boundary of the Gaithersburg Vicinity Planning Area. Acreage listed is for the portion of the park near Gaithersburg.

** Site is located outside Gaithersburg Vicinity Planning Area, but proposed facilities are intended to also serve Planning Area residents.

Note: Budget constraints may necessitate a deferral in construction of proposed parks.

Community parks are larger than local parks and contain more programmable facilities. There are three potential community park sites in the Gaithersburg area, two of which are dependent on utilization of undeveloped school sites. They are the proposed Strawberry Knoll, Centerway, and Great Seneca Extension Community Parks.

FUTURE PARK NEEDS

New park and recreation facilities are needed to serve the additional population proposed in the Gaithersburg Area. As few new schools will be constructed, a greater burden is placed on public parks and private developments to supply future recreation needs.

Local Park Needs

The need for future local park facilities was estimated in the 1978 PROS Plan. These needs have been projected to the year 1990. Projections indicate that approximately six additional tennis courts and six additional ballfields will be needed by 1990 for the Planning Area. As local facilities for residents of the city of Gaithersburg are provided by the city, these estimates only apply to the population outside the city limits.

Facility needs for 1990 could be met as follows:

	<u>Tennis Courts</u>	<u>Ballfields</u>
Charlene Local Park	0	1
Redland Local Park	2	1
Strawberry Knoll Local Park	2	1
Flower Hill Local Park	2	1
Stewartown Site (Centerway Park)	0	2
TOTAL	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>

The timing of park development is coordinated as much as possible with housing development. Parks in the northern portion of the Gaithersburg Vicinity Planning Area are scheduled for construction between now and 1990 as much of the housing in this area is either already in existence or under development. Budget constraints, however, may necessitate a deferral in construction of these parks.

An additional local park in the Shady Grove West Study Area is also proposed for acquisition and development after 1989. The timing of this park may be accelerated if development of housing in the area south of Fields Road occurs earlier.

The need for unprogrammed neighborhood parks¹ is not quantitatively analyzed by the updated PROS Plan. However, it does recommend that acquisition of neighborhood parks adhere to the following criteria:

In new areas of housing construction, developers should be encouraged to provide sufficient private neighborhood areas and facilities, so that no additional public neighborhood park need be purchased.

¹ Neighborhood parks are small parks that provide informal recreation opportunities and do not have programmable ballfields.

Dedication of neighborhood parks may also be accepted provided the site is suitable for the development of neighborhood recreation facilities and does not pose exceptional maintenance problems.

This Plan recommends that these criteria be followed with respect to neighborhood parks in the Gaithersburg Vicinity Area. The Plan proposes one neighborhood park in the Smokey Glen Study Area.

Non-Local Park Needs

Two recreational parks (Gude and Muncaster) will be constructed adjacent to the Planning Area and will serve Gaithersburg Vicinity residents. These parks will provide a large number of active recreation facilities (such as ballfields) to help meet County-wide needs. They will also include other specialized facilities, such as an adventure playground and an archery range.

Additional stream valley park needs include completion of land acquisition in the Cabin Branch, Great Seneca, and Mill Creek Stream Valleys.

Private Recreation Facilities in Developing Areas

Housing developers have an obligation to see that the recreation needs of future residents are met by either existing or proposed public parkland, private recreation facilities within the development, or by dedication of land suitable for future park development.

The development of private open space areas to service various age groups can be done relatively inexpensively by encouraging the provision of sitting areas, pathways, open play areas, and playgrounds in attractive open spaces.

Large office and commercial complexes should provide amenities for their employees and customers. These may include, for example, landscaping, sitting areas, and outdoor places to eat a bag lunch.

Montgomery Village Recreation and Open Space Facilities (1980)

Substantial recreation and park facilities are available to residents of Montgomery Village by virtue of automatic membership in the Montgomery Village Foundation. With the exception of school site facilities, all were built by the developer and are maintained, at no cost to the County, by the Montgomery Village Foundation. It is important that at least a portion of each undeveloped school site in the Village be transferred to the Montgomery Village Association for field sport recreation, if the site is not needed for school construction. For example, the ballfield site on Apple Ridge Road should be retained by the Association even if a portion of the site is ultimately used for non-school purposes.

Upper County Community Center and Outdoor Pool Complex

A regional facility complex composed of a community center and a 50-meter outdoor pool is located at the northwest quadrant of MD 124 and Emory Grove Road. The complex includes: a gymnasium, social hall, multi-purpose room, meeting space, and a weight and exercise room. Recreational, social, and educational programming are sponsored by the Montgomery County Department of Recreation. In addition, a bike path is proposed for a portion of MD 124. The bike path will provide pedestrian access to the community center and pool. Day care

facilities may also be provided in the future.

Other Community Facilities

Other community facilities are also important to the life of the community. The County library system has four regional libraries. The largest and newest is in Gaithersburg. It is also the reference branch for fine arts and performing arts. This facility should adequately serve the projected needs of the community.

The Gaithersburg Health Center, which includes a mental health office and children's center, is presently located in temporary, rented quarters in the Gaithersburg Square Shopping Center. A permanent location for the health center will be proposed after further study. A conceptual project is recommended in the adopted FY 1984-1990 CIP for an approximately 30,000-gross-square-foot, County-owned office and clinic space. The facility is to be located in an area accessible to public transportation in central or northern Gaithersburg. Agencies housed in the new facility will include health, social services, labor services (family resources), and others as appropriate. If need arises in the future, the new facility will be upgraded to form part of a regional community service center.

The Shady Grove Life Sciences Center complex is located at Shady Grove Road and MD 28. This 207-acre complex, when completed, will contain a variety of public and private hospitals and institutions. A more complete discussion of the Life Sciences Center is contained in the Land Use and Zoning Recommendations Chapter.