
COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Community facilities provide a network of services to meet the physical, social, cultural and protective needs of the community. In this respect, they help determine the desirability of a community as a place to live and work. A community facilities plan helps to create and reinforce the community's sense of social cohesion - a sense of community. The Commission on the Future (1988) defined a sense of community as "a feeling of belonging to a local area and having an interest and a stake in what happens there."

COMMUNITY FACILITY OBJECTIVES

- o Coordinate the location of these facilities with the needs of the community, in proper relationship to those of adjoining areas.
- o Give guidance to future Capital Improvements Programs.

COMMUNITY FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Parks and Recreation

- o Support the construction of a hiker/biker trail and greenway/park connecting Northwest Branch to Rock Creek by way of Matthew Henson State Park and the former Rockville Facility right-of-way.
- o Ensure that all existing parks will continue to function as parks.
- o Support the development of Aquarius Local Park, Harmony Hill Neighborhood Park, Strathmore Local Park and Northwest Branch Recreational Park.
- o Provide adequate maintenance funding for the upkeep of the recreational facilities at closed schools so that these facilities can remain available to the residents of those areas.
- o Encourage formal archaeological studies of the entire Northwest Branch and Rock Creek Stream Valleys to investigate potentially fertile fields of prehistoric sites.
- o Support the placement of historic markers at the Norbeck Colored School site on Muncaster Mill Road and the original Veirs Mill site near Veirs Mill Road.

Recreation Centers

- o Give consideration to expanding the existing Bauer Drive Community center.
- o Give consideration to locating a second recreational center east of Georgia Avenue to serve the Layhill community.

Public Schools

- o Support the retention of school sites and the modernization and utilization of the existing schools.

The Elderly

- o Provide affordable housing for the elderly, both rental and privately-owned units, in a variety of housing types.
- o Identify needs specific to the elderly population of Aspen Hill.
- o Enable the elderly to enjoy convenient utilization of community facilities and public services through appropriate placement of housing and through programs for the elderly.
- o Encourage the incorporation of design features that increase the safety and security of the physical environment.

Child Day Care Facilities

- o Allow child day care facilities in the unrestricted portion of the PRC zone through the special exception process.
- o Support various types of child day care facilities within the planning area.

Public Safety

- o Support the location of a small police substation within the planning area as conditions warrant.

Libraries

- o Support the provision of a satellite library service from a neighborhood library to a "storefront" facility or provision of bookmobile service for the area east of Georgia Avenue.

Government Service Center

- o Support the utilization/creation of a part-time staff position to act as a source point for inquiries and dissemination of information on County services and programs.

Post Office

- o Support a separate zip code for Aspen Hill.

Accessibility for People with Disabilities

- o Support the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The Montgomery County Department of Parks manages 1,869 acres of parkland within the Aspen Hill Planning area. The 102-acre Matthew Henson State Park is included in the planning area's total park acreage. As a result of an agreement between the State and the County, the Department of Parks maintains and manages this State Park. Figure 48 shows the location and type of parks in the area.

The Aspen Hill Planning Area has a wide variety of recreational facilities including the following:

16 softball fields	5 baseball fields
10 tennis courts	3 open shelters
9 playground areas	1 recreation center
5 football-soccer fields	hiker/biker trails

Based on the 1990 U.S. Census population figure of 54,612 for the planning area, the residents are generally well-served by the existing open space and outdoor recreation facilities. There are approximately 32.1 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. This is substantially higher than the National Recreation and Parks Association's suggested guidelines of 6.25 to 10.5 acres per 1,000 residents when built out.

The National Recreation and Parks Association guidelines are not the standards used for the provision of recreational opportunities in Aspen Hill or any other part of Montgomery County. The Montgomery County standards vary by activity and can be found in the Park Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.

County-wide Parks in the Planning Area

STREAM VALLEY PARKS

Stream valley parks, which are fingers of green following major streams, are acquired for a number of reasons including:

- o Passive and active recreation.
- o Scenic relief through open space.
- o Protection and improvement of wildlife habitat.
- o Preservation and improvement of water quality.
- o Sediment and erosion control.
- o Flood prevention and stormwater management.

These parks generally contain some type of low-density recreational development, such as trails, picnic areas and interpretation areas (which include nature centers or places where a naturalist will give tours and discussions). In some cases, certain areas of these parks are developed with additional active recreational facilities, such as ballfields.

The Rock Creek Unit #7 Stream Valley Park totals slightly more than 231 acres. There are two active recreation areas in the Rock Creek Stream Valley Park that also serve as local parks for the Aspen Hill residents - Aspen Hill and Parklawn Local Parks.

REGIONAL PARKS

Regional parks are large parks consisting of more than 200 acres that meet both conservation and recreational needs on a County-wide basis. This type of park preserves at least two-thirds of the acreage as a conservation or natural area. Typical facilities in a regional park include athletic fields, tennis courts, multi-use courts, picnic and playground areas, hiker/biker trails, natural areas, water oriented recreation and golf courses.

A portion of Rock Creek Regional Park, totaling 519 acres, is located in the western portion of the Aspen Hill Planning Area. This area of the park includes a hiker/biker trail and half of Lake Frank. A master plan for Rock Creek Regional Park, which is currently being developed, will examine the existing recreational facilities, conservation and nature areas and the need for future facilities, if any.

Lake Frank was designed and built to provide flood and sedimentation protection to the downstream reaches of Rock Creek, to reduce sediment loads on the Potomac River and to provide recreational water resources for residents of Montgomery

County. Structurally, the dam was designed to accommodate the highest runoff-producing conditions considered remotely possible at that time, which was R-90 zoning throughout the controlled drainage area. The dam was constructed to provide sufficient height to accommodate the six-foot depth of recreation water over and above that required for the sediment pool. The lake was theoretically designed to have a 50-year life span before being filled with sediment. This length of time can be considerably shortened or lengthened, depending upon how the watershed is developed.

RECREATIONAL PARKS

Recreational parks are large parks (50 acres or more) that serve a variety of County-wide recreational needs and generally do not contain large environmentally sensitive areas. Regional parks tend to preserve more natural area than the recreational parks. The only recreational park in the planning area is the partially developed Northwest Branch, which has a total of 686 acres and is located in the eastern portion of the planning area.

Northwest Branch contains a golf course, the Trolley Car Museum and the Layhill Local Park, which contains ballfields, play equipment and tennis courts. It is anticipated that a master plan for Northwest Branch Recreational Park will be completed and coordinated with the community within a few years. Northwest Branch has an area north of Bonifant Road and west of the Trolley Car Museum that acts as a natural stormwater management area. Future development in the park will need to address the issues of accommodating stormwater management and the Intercounty Connector.

Community Use Parks in the Planning Area

LOCAL PARKS

Local parks are generally larger than ten acres and provide both passive and active facilities, including ballfields, play equipment, tennis, basketball and multi-use courts and in some cases a small community building. While all facilities are used on an informal basis, the ballfields and the community buildings can be reserved in advance.

Currently, there are ten developed local parks and one undeveloped local park, Aquarius. This totals slightly more than 170 acres (see Table 7).

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

These small, walk-in parks provide passive and active recreation in residential neighborhoods. Facilities at this type of park may include basketball and tennis courts, play equipment, sitting areas and an informal playing area. There are two developed and one undeveloped neighborhood parks totaling slightly more than 30 acres in the area.

Table 7

**EXISTING PARKS AND FACILITIES
ASPEN HILL PLANNING AREA**

Index Number	Name of Park	Acreage	Developed	Existing Facilities
REGIONAL USE PARKS*				
1	Matthew Henson State Park	102.28	No	None
2	Northwest Branch Recreational	395.83	No	To be determined upon completion of master plan
	Northwest Branch Public Golf Course	200.00	Yes	18-hole golf course, driving range
3	Rock Creek Regional	518.97	Yes	Hiker/biker trail and half of Lake Frank
	Rock Creek Stream Valley Park Unit #6	46.72	Yes	Hiker/biker trail
	Rock Creek Stream Valley Park Unit #7	231.32	No	Hiker/biker trail
	Total Regional Use	1,495.12		
LOCAL USE PARKS				
<u>Local Parks</u>				
4	Aspen Hill	39.40	Yes	3 softball, 1 baseball and 1 football-soccer overlay
5	Aquarius	11.21	No	May include play equipment, ballfields and multi-use courts

* The acreage of stream valley parks does not include any acreage for local parks that are located in the stream valley park.

TABLE 7 (Cont'd.)

Index Number	Name of Park	Acreege	Developed	Existing Facilities
6	Layhill	32.00	Yes	2 softball, 2 football-soccer fields, 1 playground, 1 football-soccer overlay 1 baseball, open shelter
7	Layhill Village	10.01	Yes	2 tennis courts, 1 playground, 1 basketball-multituse court, 1 baseball, 1 softball, 1 football-soccer overlay
8	Northgate	8.44	Yes	1 playground, 1 basketball-multituse court and 1 playfield
9	Parkland	8.50	Yes	3 softball, 1 baseball, 1 basketball-multituse court, 1 football-soccer overlay
10	Parklawn	13.80	Yes	2 football-soccer fields
11	Strathmore	13.06	Partially	2 tennis courts, 1 playground, 1 softball, 1 football-soccer, open shelter. May include football-soccer field, play equipment and trail
12	Wheaton Woods	11.46	Yes	2 softball, 2 tennis courts, 1 basketball-multituse court, 1 playground, 2 football-soccer overlays, closed recreation center
13	Wood	17.79	Yes	2 tennis courts, 2 softball, 3 football-soccer overlays, 1 playground, 1 baseball
	Subtotal	165.67		
<u>Neighborhood Parks</u>				
14	Bel Pre	10.00	Yes	2 tennis courts, 1 playground
15	Flower Valley	16.84	Yes	2 tennis courts, 1 playground, 1 basketball-multituse court, open shelter
16	Harmony Hills	3.29	No	May include play equipment, open shelter, picnic area
	Subtotal	30.13		

TABLE 7 (Cont'd.)

Index Number	Name of Park	Acreage	Developed	Existing Facilities
<u>Neighborhood Conservation Areas</u>				
17	Arctic	2.37	No	Will remain undeveloped
18	Beret	3.57	No	Will remain undeveloped
19	Drake Drive	17.00	No	Will remain undeveloped
20	Manor Park	1.79	No	Will remain undeveloped
21	Norwood Village	14.22	No	Will remain undeveloped
	Subtotal	38.95		
<u>Other</u>				
22	Bauer Drive Community Center and Local Park	8.00	Yes	Recreation center, 2 lighted tennis courts, 2 basketball-multiuse courts, 1 playground, 1 softball, 1 football-soccer overlay
23	Former English Manor Elementary School	5.30	Yes	2 playgrounds, 1 softball, 1 basket-ball-multiuse court, 1 football-soccer overlay
24	Former Rockville Facility	118.11	No	Interim soccer field and picnic area
	Subtotal	131.41		
	Total Local Use Park	374.75		
	Total Aspen Hill Parkland	1,869.87		

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION AREAS

This type of park is generally a natural area adjacent to residential development that is acquired through dedication during the subdivision process for watershed protection and open space preservation. Neighborhood Conservation Areas are passive parks and generally contain no recreational development. In the area, there are currently five parks totaling slightly less than 39 acres.

Private Recreation and Open Space Areas

In addition to the trails, open space and golf course at Northwest Branch, the planning area has three private golf courses totaling 417 acres, including Manor Country Club (175 acres), Argyle (145 acres) and Rossmoor-Leisure World (97 acres). These major private open spaces are valuable visual resources and provide vistas from adjacent roads and residences. The private recreational facilities also relieve pressure on the existing public facilities and additional future need for such facilities in the planning area. The presence of three private swimming pools in the planning area greatly reduces the need for similar public facilities at this time.

Park Renovation

The Department of Parks has an ongoing renovation program for local parks throughout the County. Parks that are selected for renovation are prioritized and placed into the Capital Improvements Program. Park facilities in the Aspen Hill Planning Area are evaluated on a yearly basis and are selected for renovation as needed. Recent renovations completed in the Aspen Hill area include the outdoor park facilities at Wheaton Woods Local Park. Future renovations in the area include walkway and parking lot improvements at Parklawn Local Park. As the Aspen Hill park facilities age over the next 20 years, this Plan supports their renovation and upkeep. Improved signage and appropriate recreational lighting would increase public knowledge and use of facilities.

Future Park Acquisition

The Department of Parks has no current plans for additional parkland acquisitions for the planning area; however, this does not preclude an investigation of sites when specifically requested. There are existing parcels of land owned by Montgomery County that should be considered for addition to the Matthew Henson State Park. These parcels include the former Arbor Nursery property, as well as the unbuilt portion of Kilburn Lane. Turkey Branch would also be an appropriate addition. All of these properties are immediately adjacent to the State park.

Future Facility Needs

The need for additional facilities is based upon facility demand and future population projections. The staff draft of the 1992 Park, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) Master Plan update cites a need for three additional playgrounds in the planning area. No additional needs for ballfields or tennis courts have been identified. The currently planned park development at Aquarius, Harmony Hills and Strathmore will meet the need for additional playgrounds and will provide additional recreational facilities above the current needs.

Future Parks and Recreational Facilities in the Planning Area

As noted in Table 7, there are two local parks scheduled for future development, Aquarius Local Park and Harmony Hills Neighborhood Park. Also, additional development is scheduled for Strathmore Local Park and Northwest Branch Recreational Park.

FUTURE LOCAL USE PARKS

Aquarius Local Park is an 11.2-acre park located in the northeast quadrant of Bel Pre Road and Connecticut Avenue. It may include active recreation fields and courts, an open shelter, play equipment and site amenities, such as benches, tables, water fountains and landscaping. This park is not scheduled for development in the currently adopted Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Fiscal Years 1993-98.

Harmony Hills Neighborhood Park is a three-acre park located on the west side of Georgia Avenue, north of Ralph Road and adjacent to Harmony Hills Elementary School. Development may include play equipment, a picnic area and shelter and site amenities. This park is not scheduled for development in the currently adopted CIP FY 1993-98.

ADDITIONAL PARK DEVELOPMENT

Strathmore Local Park is a 13.7-acre local park located at the ends of Beaverwood and Peppertree Lanes and adjacent to Strathmore Elementary School. Development of this park is not currently scheduled in the adopted FY 1993-98 CIP. Additional facilities in this park may include a football-soccer field, play equipment, a picnic area and site amenities.

Construction of a hiker-biker trail in Northwest Branch is currently scheduled to begin in fiscal year 1997 with one mile, and finished in 1997 with one additional mile (adopted FY 1993-98 CIP). The future Master Plan for Northwest Branch Recreational Park will determine the type and quantity of facilities that may be a part of the future development at this park.

When a master plan for Northwest Branch Recreational Park is undertaken, consideration should be given to determine if a recreational center could be accommodated in the park. Further discussion of the recreation center is located in the Recreation Center portion of this Plan.

MAINTENANCE OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AT CLOSED SCHOOLS

There are five closed schools, including holding schools, in the planning area. (A holding school acts as a temporary home for the student body of another school while that school is undergoing major renovations.) They are English Manor Elementary, Aspen Hill Elementary (now the Frost Center), Peary High School, North Lake Elementary and Argyle Middle School. These schools contain six ballfields, two playgrounds and six tennis and basketball courts.

The responsibility for maintaining the recreational facilities at closed schools in the County generally belongs to the Department of Facilities and Services. However, the Department of Parks maintains and schedules the outdoor facilities at English Manor. The Department of Parks does not have any plans to discontinue the maintenance or scheduling of the outside portion of the former English Manor School. Currently, the Interagency Coordinating Board permits the football-soccer field at the former Peary High School.

These facilities relieve the pressure on existing park facilities and lessen the need for future facilities. As such, adequate maintenance funding should be provided so that these facilities can remain available to the residents.

Parkland Archaeological and Historical Sites

There is one identified historic site on parkland in the Aspen Hill Planning Area. The remains of the Montmorency Barn is located in Northwest Branch Recreational Park. The barn was part of a 529-acre farm purchased in 1859 by David Bready from the estate of William Holmes. The property is located in the northeast corner of the present-day Northwest Branch Park. The barn was constructed in 1877 of tongue and groove siding. Unfortunately, the structure burned in 1990.

The entire Northwest Branch and Rock Creek Stream Valleys, including Matthew Henson State Park, are likely to contain areas of high archaeological potential, not only for prehistoric populations but also for 18th and 19th century water powered technology. However, little formal study has been conducted to date.

The Park Historian's Office initiated a Historic Marker Program to recognize the most significant of the over 80 historic park properties. Similar in style and size to the Maryland State historic roadside markers, these markers have a unique design featuring park colors and logo.

This Plan supports the placement of historic markers at the Norbeck Colored School site on Muncaster Mill Road and the original site of Viers' Mill near Veirs Mill Road. Both properties are now owned by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. A short description of these sites is included in the Historic Resources section of this Plan.

Park Accessibility Program

The Montgomery County Park Commission appointed the Park Accessibility Advisory Committee in 1987 to advise the Department of Parks on the effectiveness of the Park Accessibility Program and to ensure that the parks are available to County residents with disabilities.

Accessibility is defined as the ability for individuals with disabilities to participate in all aspects of our park system. This would include the ability to park at sites, enter buildings, participate in programming and use restrooms, water fountains and telephones. In addition, it includes access to trails, tennis courts, golf courses and ballfields.

The goals of the accessibility program are as follows:

- o Make the most widely used park facilities totally accessible.
- o See that Park staff members in all aspects of the park system receive training on accessibility and sensitivity toward people with disabilities.
- o Employ more people with disabilities in the park system.
- o Develop more publicity about programs and activities.

There are a number of ways that park facilities can be accessible to people with disabilities. One way is to design accessibility into projects at the outset. Another way is to renovate existing facilities. The Department of Parks determines which facilities should be renovated each year on a priority basis using a variety of criteria which include:

- o Review of the amount of use a facility receives with park permits.
- o Geographic distribution of accessible facilities within the County.
- o Condition of the structure of the building.

- o Other types of renovations scheduled at a particular site so that all construction can take place at one time.
- o Assurance that a cross-section of park facilities are available for public use.

Within the Aspen Hill Planning Area, there is an accessible hiker-biker trail and water fountain located at Aspen Hill Local Park (Rock Creek Stream Valley Park Unit 7). Other accessible facilities at this park include parking, a water fountain, restrooms and the patio immediately adjacent to the center. A small portion of the tot lot is available to a child who uses a wheelchair.

Park Police

The Maryland-National Capital Park Police are appointed by M-NCPPC to provide protection for the Commission's activities and property. In connection with the responsibility to provide that protection, it is the responsibility of the Park Police to prevent crime, apprehend criminals, enforce the criminal and motor vehicle laws of the State, enforce park regulations and perform whatever other related duties are imposed by the Commission.

The Park Police have concurrent general police jurisdiction with the Montgomery and Prince George's County Police within the parks and other areas and within buildings under the jurisdiction of the Commission, and that portion of all roads and sidewalks immediately adjacent to any property under the jurisdiction of the Commission. They have whatever jurisdiction off park property that may be provided by any reciprocal agreement.

The Park Police have primary supervisory jurisdiction over the approximately 1,700 acres of parkland in the Aspen Hill Planning Area. All parks in the area are patrolled on a regular basis with both marked and unmarked units.

There are no Park Police facilities in Aspen Hill. There are three facilities in the County. The closest facility is Saddlebrook Headquarters, which is located in a former school at 12751 Layhill Road and is the headquarters for the Park Police.

RECREATION CENTERS

On a County-wide basis, the Department of Recreation schedules and programs 3 neighborhood centers and 12 larger community facilities, which were developed over the past 25 years. The community recreation centers not only provide recreation opportunities for the community, they also provide a location for large community meetings and social gatherings and for smaller social and programmed activities for all segments of the population.

Community recreation facilities provide space for the following types of activities:

- o Structured group and unstructured, self-directed physical activities such as weight lifting, aerobic dancing and organized athletic programs for various age groups.
- o Space for Senior Adult Programs. Recreation centers are heavily used by seniors for active and passive opportunities, particularly during the daytime.
- o Space for meetings and group activities, such as civic association meetings, garden clubs, scout meetings, dances, wedding receptions and other activities.
- o Public information about government and private services, programs and agencies.
- o Space for special human services programs, such as food distribution, blood pressure checks and temporary shelter in times of fire and other public emergency.

New community recreation facilities should allow maximum program flexibility and should be capable of reasonably easy physical modification to adapt to changing community demographics and leisure interests. The center would ideally comprise a set of fixed core spaces, a lobby, a regulation gym, a social hall large enough for weddings and similar events, and a series of adaptable 1600- to 1800-square-foot activity spaces.

According to current Department of Recreation standards, a community recreation facility of at least 23,500 square feet serves an area population of 40,000 to 50,000 within a three- to five-mile radius. However, the Department of Recreation will be updating the Master Plan for the Recreations Centers, and at that time, the standards may be revised. It is likely that the number of people that can be served by one center will be lowered.

The existing community recreation centers are very active centers serving about 15,000 people per month. On a typical evening, all the available space will be in use.

The Bauer Drive Community Center is an 18,000-square-foot facility built on an 8.42-acre lot (Figure 48). The immediate service area for Bauer Drive is projected for the residential area west of Georgia Avenue and part of the Olney and Upper Rock Creek Planning Areas. This Plan recommends expanding this center.

This Plan recommends locating a second recreational center east of Georgia Avenue to serve the Layhill community. When a location is considered, proximity to other recreation centers and their service areas should be taken into consideration. Three possible sites are identified below:

- o A possible site is located east of Layhill Road between Queensguard Road and Sullivan Lane. It is adjacent to the vacant East Layhill school site. This site has particular advantages because of its immediate proximity to the major activity center for the Layhill Community with its distance from Bauer Drive, its visibility from Layhill Road and its proximity to both a park and school site.
- o If redevelopment of the Argyle Country Club should take place, a possible site would be the clubhouse area at Argyle.
- o A future master plan for Northwest Branch Recreational Park will be done to specify the future type and quantity of recreational equipment. During that process, consideration should be given to identifying any possible sites for a recreation center in the park.

If other suitable sites become available in the future, they should also be considered.

The Wheaton Woods recreation building is part of the Wheaton Woods Local Park and is maintained by the Department of Parks. As part of the renovation of the park, the Parks' staff examined the condition and usage of the small recreation building. It determined that due to its deteriorated condition, it would not be cost effective to renovate the building.

Early in 1990, the Department of Parks recommended that the building be demolished and not replaced. However, some residents in the adjacent community opposed this recommendation and requested that the center be rebuilt. The Montgomery County Park Commission did not approve demolishing and replacing the recreation building, but stated that it would remain open as long as possible with regular maintenance only. The Park Commission indicated that it would review the issue again when the structure reached the point that it was no longer safe to use.

Due to operating budget constraints and low use of the facility, the Department of Parks recommended that the facility should be closed during the 1992 fiscal year. The Commission supported this recommendation and the center was closed. It is uncertain whether the fiscal situation will improve enough for the building to be reopened. The Department of Parks continues to recommend that the center be demolished and not replaced.

At this time, the Department of Parks and a local civic association are negotiating a lease for the Wheaton Woods recreation building, pursuant to the provisions of the Alternative Uses of Closed and/or Under-utilized Park Building Policy. The agreement would allow the association to lease the building in an "as is" condition. If the association should lease the building, it could be reopened as a community center with the association responsible for liability insurance, maintenance, utilities and repairs. The association would have the ability to charge fees for use of the building.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Aspen Hill Planning Area contains 17 school sites that total approximately 186 acres (Figure 49). Eleven of the 17 sites have existing and functioning public schools. Of the 11 schools, there are three middle schools and eight elementary schools that serve the planning area.

Of the remaining six sites, two former school buildings are currently leased for various other purposes. The former Aspen Hill Elementary School is presently known as the Frost Center. It is leased by at least five different groups for a variety of uses including day care and private schools. The former English Manor Elementary School building is leased to the Children's Learning Center. As mentioned in the Parks section, the grounds of English Manor are maintained by the Parks Department for use by the community.

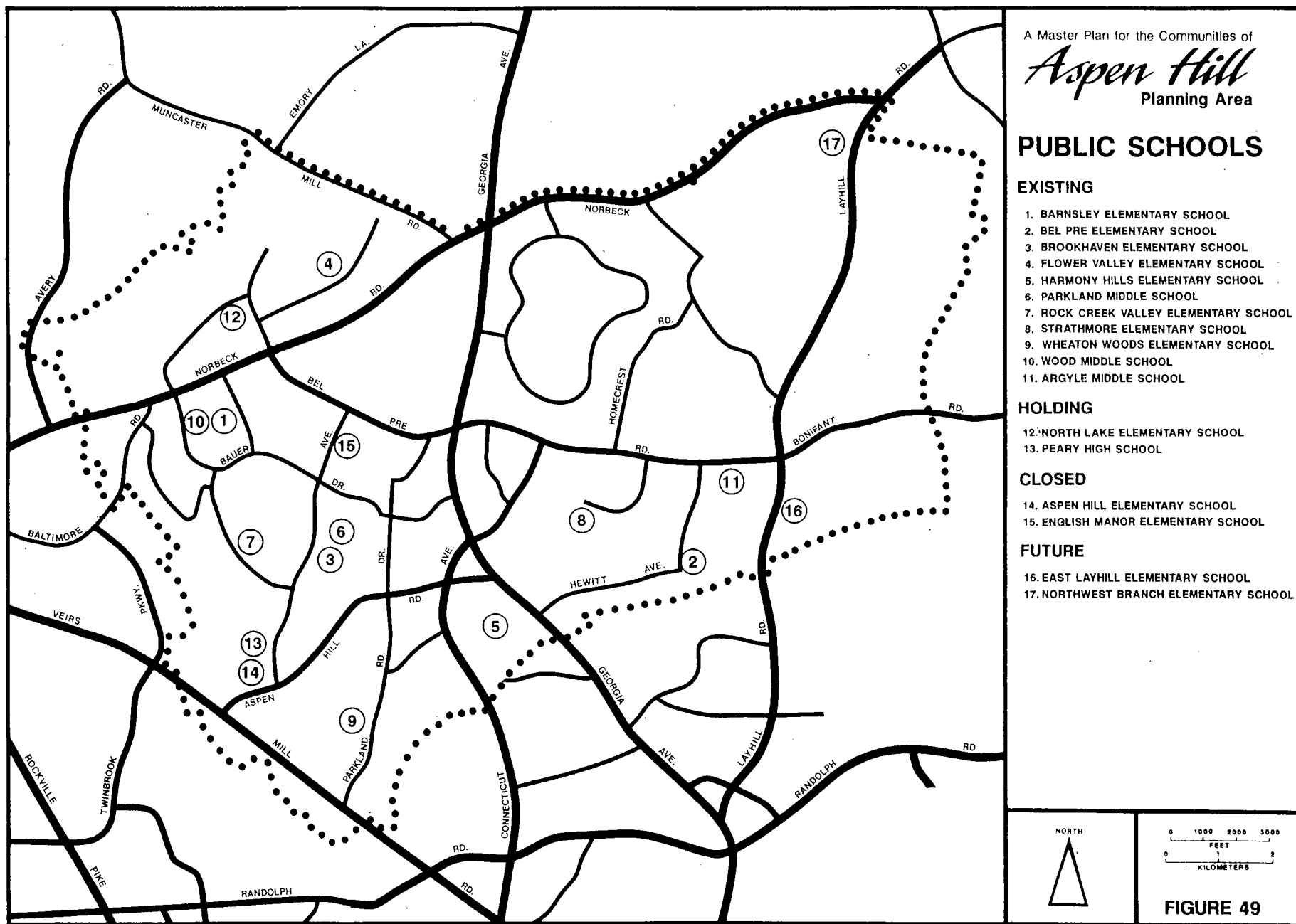
The former North Lake Elementary School site is currently being used as a holding school and is projected to continue in that capacity for the foreseeable future. (A holding school acts as a temporary home for the student body of another school while that school is undergoing major renovations.)

The former Peary High School site might reopen as a holding school. This will depend upon the decision of the Board of Education on two other school sites in another part of the County. If it is not used as a holding school and then reopened as a high school, the site might be returned to the County for reuse as a public facility or disposed of for a private use.

There are currently two vacant school sites in the planning area - Northwest Branch and East Layhill Elementary School sites. The Board of Education has expressed an interest in retaining these vacant sites. These sites will be developed when a need for additional schools is determined. The need for new schools is determined by both the capacity of existing schools and the projected increase in student enrollment.

The Department of Parks has acquired two former school sites. These sites are included under the parkland sites, but not in the school sites. The former 10-acre Aquarius Elementary School site near the intersection of Bel Pre Road and Connecticut Avenue is slated for development as a local park. The former Viers Mill Road Primary School site, located on Gaynor Road next to the fire station, is now part of the Rock Creek Stream Valley Park.

The Board of Education programs capital funds for new schools and existing school modernizations and additions through the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and the Approved Master Plan for Educational Facilities. This program improves the quality of existing school buildings and provides classrooms or additional space as required. The timing of additions and modernizations are evaluated annually in those documents.



This Plan supports the retention of school sites and the modernization and utilization of the existing schools. If the Peary High School site is surplus, the Department of Parks should consider acquiring the site for inclusion for the Rock Creek Stream Valley Park. No non-school use of any facility shown in Figure 49 as a "holding" or "closed" school should preclude its eventual reuse as a public school.

THE ELDERLY

"The elderly" is a term that generally refers to those aged 55 and over. The Planning Department Round IV Modified Intermediate Forecast plus the 1990 U.S. Census survey figures show that slightly more than one-quarter of the Aspen Hill population is within this age group, approximately 14,200.

Montgomery County provides services and develops programs for the elderly through the Department of Family Resources (DFR), Division of Elder Affairs. The Commission on Aging is located within the Division of Elder Affairs and is composed of volunteers appointed by the County Executive to advise the County on the needs and problems of senior citizens. DFR has developed Human Service Profiles for some planning areas in coordination with M-NCPPC's planning process. Ideally, these Profiles should be completed as master plans are undertaken. This Plan encourages the completion of a Human Service Profile in conjunction with the preparation of every master plan.

Aside from Leisure World, several other existing or approved residences for the elderly are located in Aspen Hill. These include the Aspenwood Retirement Center, Bauer Park Apartments, Homecrest House I, II and III, Bedford Court and Mackey's Group Home. These residences are similar to garden apartments in style and will provide a total of approximately 900 dwelling units. In some cases, services such as housekeeping, meals and skilled nursing care are offered.

Availability of affordable rental units has been identified as a strong housing need in the County. For Aspen Hill's elderly, excluding Leisure World residents, the median monthly housing payment for owners in 1987 was just under \$300 per month, while the median monthly payment for renters was in the \$500 to \$550 range. As household incomes of the planning area's elderly decrease over time, rentals will become less affordable.

In addition, again excluding Leisure World, the vast majority of elderly residents of Aspen Hill live in single-family detached residences that they own. As these residents approach the age of 75 to 80, it is assumed that they will be increasingly interested in moving. The County's *Area Plan for Programs on Aging FY 1991* (Department of Family Resources, May 1990, pages 173-175) cites a 1986 survey of the elderly in Montgomery County indicating that the preference of those who move is generally for a living arrangement similar to the one they left. Attention should be given to ensure that both owners and renters have the opportunity to choose affordable accommodations with characteristics that are similar to the type of housing they prefer.

This Plan supports location of housing for the elderly such that residents can easily access community facilities and services, including public transportation, community recreation centers, shopping centers and parks.

In particular, accessory apartments in single-family homes should be encouraged through the special exception process.

The elderly frequently express the need for increased safety and security. This Plan encourages the incorporation of design features that increase the safety and security of the physical environment in places such as parking lots and public spaces, and particularly, of residences for the elderly.

CHILD DAY CARE FACILITIES

There is a variety of child day care resources available in Aspen Hill. Care may be provided at the child's home through formal or informal paid or unpaid arrangements or out of the home in programs of various sizes, which may or may not be licensed by the state.

Of the large, licensed programs in Aspen Hill, which accept as many as 70 children, about 15 are preschool programs. The preschool programs accept infants through four year olds. There are five school-age programs for children of ages five and above. In addition, the planning area currently supports approximately 95 licensed family day care providers plus an unknown number of unlicensed providers. In-home, licensed family care providers are limited to a maximum of eight children.

Montgomery County offers assistance to families in need of child care. The Department of Family Resources operates the Child Care Connection, a public referral service, that maintains a list of licensed child care operations within the County by zip code. In addition to referral information, subsidies are available through the Department of Social Services to cover all or part of the cost of child day care.

According to the 1990 U.S. Census, a larger percentage of women with children under the age of six work either full- or part-time in Aspen Hill than County-wide. This suggests that the need for child day care is also somewhat greater in Aspen Hill than County-wide. Aspen Hill households use day care centers rather than home-based care to a much greater degree than County households in general.

The population of Aspen Hill is projected to increase over the next 20 years to about 63,500, an increase of approximately 16 percent. During the late 1980's and early 1990's, a baby boom occurred as people in their thirties had children. Presently, a large segment of Aspen Hill's residents are now in their twenties and early thirties. As these people move through their thirties in the next decade, they are not expected to repeat the pattern of delayed child bearing of the 1980's.

Therefore, in the next decade the population in the planning area should not experience the same rapid expansion of births as in the 1980's. Consequently, the number of children in the 0-4 age group will increase by about 17.6 percent. Children aged 5-9, however, will increase by about 44.8 percent and children aged 10-14 will increase by about 50 percent, as the children of the current boom move into these age groups.

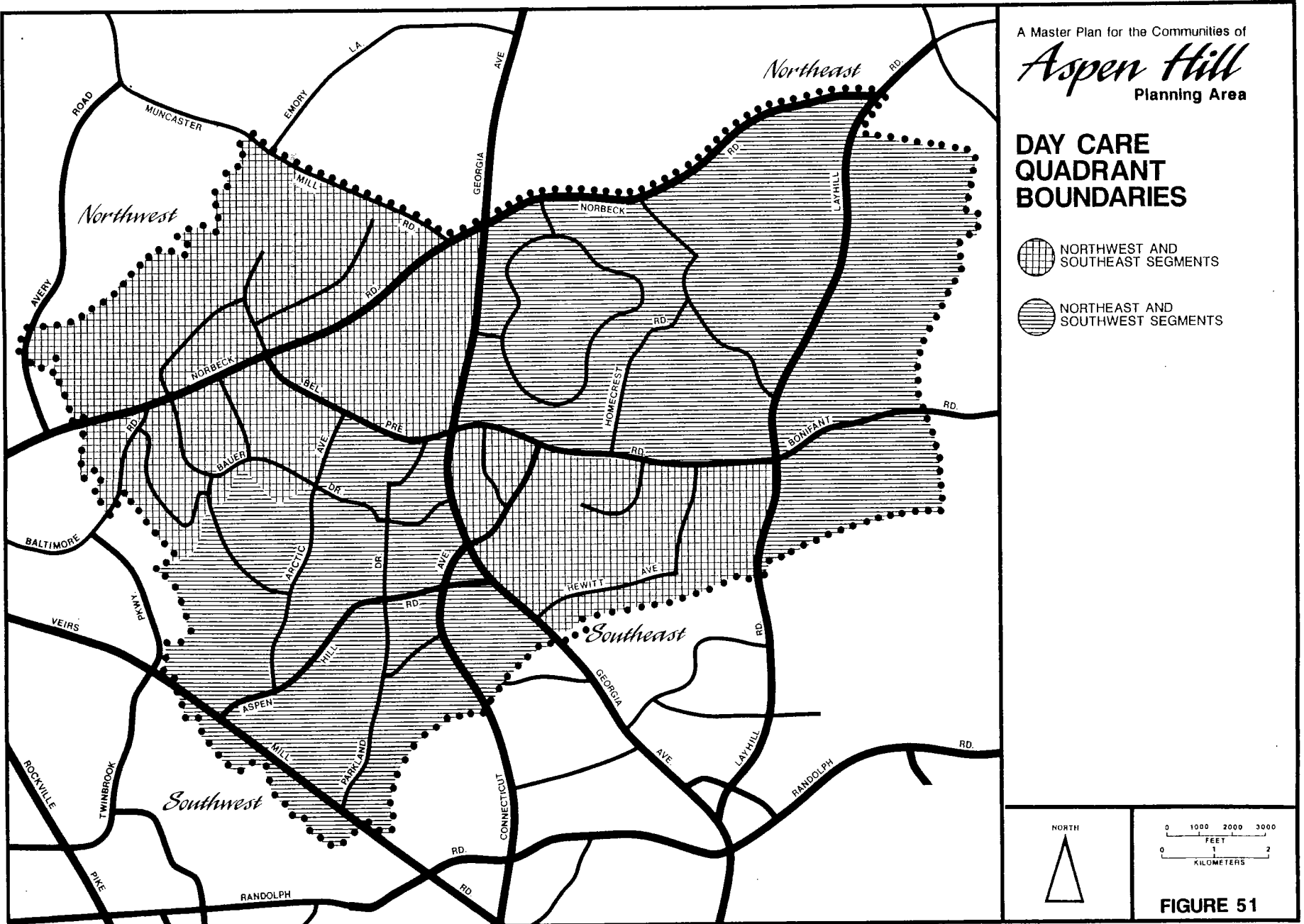
Figure 50 illustrates the geographic distribution of licensed child day care facilities in Aspen Hill. If the planning area is broken into quadrants (Figure 51) and the Montgomery County Planning Board's 1987 Census Update Survey data is analyzed accordingly, some interesting patterns are revealed. In general, residents in the northwest and southwest depend as much or more on unpaid care, i.e., informal arrangements, than on any other type of care. Conversely, residents in the northeast and southeast rely equally on family providers and day care centers, but much less on unpaid care. The distribution of providers appears to mirror these use patterns. The most striking result of the analysis is that over one-half of the 1987 census update respondents who expressed an unmet need for paid care live in the northeast.

It is probable that part of the reason for the lack of facilities in the northeast is that child day care is not permitted or allowed by special exception in the PRC zone. The PRC zone was originally designed to provide age-restricted housing. However, a portion of the PRC-zoned land currently allows unrestricted housing. Longmead Crossing, which is a portion of the unrestricted area, was approved for a total of 2,106 dwelling units, of which over half have been completed. It is reasonable to assume that as it is completed, demand for day care in this quadrant of the planning area will increase at a higher rate than that of the overall planning area.

Another area of need is that of care for infants. Providers report that the majority of calls they receive are from parents seeking this service. While many family providers accept infants, many preschool programs do not accept children under the age of two.

Child care facilities should be encouraged to meet the needs of the residents of Aspen Hill. To the extent possible, they should consistently provide the following:

- o Sufficient open space to provide adequate access to sunlight and suitable play areas, taking into consideration the size of the facility.
- o Location and design to protect children from excessive exposure to noise, air pollutants and other environmental factors potentially injurious to health or welfare.
- o Location and design to ensure safe and convenient access. This includes appropriate parking areas and safe and effective on-site circulation of automobiles and pedestrians.



- o Location and design to avoid creating undesirable traffic, noise and other impacts upon the surrounding community.
- o Consideration should be given to locations in employment centers to provide locations convenient to work places. However, these locations should make provisions for a safe and healthful environment in accord with the criteria listed above.

This Plan supports the amendment of the Zoning Ordinance to allow child day care facilities in the unrestricted portion of the PRC zone through the special exception process.

This Plan supports various types of child day care facilities within the planning area, particularly those providing care to the youngest children. Day care (for any age group) may be an appropriate use for some Parks Department buildings in the planning area.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Fire And Rescue

Two fire and rescue stations are located in the planning area. Kensington Volunteer Fire Department Station #21 is located at 12500 Veirs Mill Road and Kensington Volunteer Fire Department Station #25 is located at 14401 Connecticut Avenue. Another facility serving the planning area, Kensington Volunteer Fire Department Station #18, is located on Georgia Avenue at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Randolph Road in Glenmont.

Fire Station #25 is a new facility which became operational in the fall of 1990. It replaced the old #25 station that was located on Georgia Avenue, which is presently the site for a men's overflow shelter. Fire Station #21 recently underwent repairs and renovations. Given the scheduled improvements, repairs and new facilities, it is anticipated that each of the facilities will have an operation use well into the 21st century.

According to the Department of Fire and Rescue Services' Draft Fire Defense, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Plan (May 1991), no new fire and rescue stations are planned for this area at this time. An increased need for emergency medical services is expected in the future and future traffic conditions may cause delays in response time. Specifically, the fact that the majority of the planning area's population is and will be in the 20-49 age group will contribute significantly to expected increases in non-critical care emergency medical services responses and non-fire emergency medical services incidents. Also there will remain the requirement for the timely and adequate provision of fire, rescue and emergency medical services

to the elderly residents in the Leisure World development. The recommendations of this Plan are subject to the long range plans of Fire and Rescue Services.

Police

Police service in the Aspen Hill Planning Area is provided by stations located outside the area, in Rockville and Glenmont. The Rockville District Station is located at 1451 Seven Locks Road in Rockville. It presently covers the portion of the planning area between Norbeck and Muncaster Mill Roads. The Wheaton-Glenmont District Station is located at 2300 Randolph Road in Glenmont. It provides service to the remainder of the planning area.

The Police Department does not have any plans to increase the number of stations in this area. Changes in police district boundaries are not expected to result in a decrease of level of service to area residents because police service does not physically originate from the station where the call for assistance is received but rather from personnel already patrolling the district in cars, who are dispatched by radio. Depending on the need, the Police Department may decide to use satellite stations within a district to provide decentralized service in the future.

This Plan supports the use of a small police substation within the planning area as conditions warrant.

LIBRARIES

Library service is provided to the Aspen Hill residents through the Aspen Hill Library, which is located at 4407 Aspen Hill Road. It is categorized as a community library. It has a collection of 45,000 to 85,000 volumes and serves a geographical area between two to three miles.

The library was reopened in the summer of 1991 after extensive renovations. Before its closure for renovations, the 16,000-square-foot structure had one of the largest circulations among the community libraries in the Montgomery County library system.

According to the Montgomery County Department of Public Libraries criteria, no new libraries will be needed in this planning area. However, there is a perception of an unmet need in the Layhill community, especially in respect to distance between existing facilities. This portion of the planning area is experiencing the greatest amount of residential growth with the completion of Longmead Crossing and other residential developments.

This Plan supports the provision of a satellite library service from a neighborhood library to a "storefront" facility or provision of bookmobile service for the area east of Georgia Avenue. The recommendations of this Plan are subject to the long range plans of the Montgomery County Department of Public Libraries.

MID-COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

The Aspen Hill Planning Area is presently part of the Mid-County Government Center area. The center is located at 2424 Reddie Drive in Wheaton. The governmental centers provide a decentralized location for area residents to receive government services and assistance. The services and assistance offered at the centers vary depending upon the needs of the community.

This Plan supports the utilization/creation of a staff position, who would be associated with the Mid-County Government Center, to work part-time in the planning area. The staff person could be located in any of the existing or proposed public facilities. This person could be responsible for the administration of the Transit Assistance Center (TAC) program that was described in the Transportation chapter of this Plan. The community perceives a need for a staff person to act as an information point source for collecting inquiries and disseminating information in regard to County services and programs.

SHELTER

The former Kensington Volunteer Fire Department Station #25 structure, located at 14111 Georgia Avenue, was turned over in December 1990 to the Montgomery County Department of Family Resources to provide a men's winter overflow homeless shelter. The site is located on the east side of Georgia Avenue above the intersection of Georgia and Connecticut Avenues.

The Georgia Avenue Men's Shelter is in operation from the beginning of December to the end of March. Except during life-threatening weather conditions, the shelter will house up to 25 men. Admission to the shelter is on a referral basis only by a County outreach or soup kitchen worker.

The structure does not have a designated use during the April to December time period. It was used as a temporary relocation site between April and December in 1991 for another full-time shelter and another home that were displaced by flood and fire. The County Department of Family Resources should work with the community to identify appropriate uses for the facility for those times that the structure is not being used as a men's shelter.

POST OFFICES

Three postal facilities are located in the Aspen Hill Planning Area. The Aspen Hill Branch of the Silver Spring Post Office is located at 14030 Connecticut Avenue. A finance branch is located at 3802 International Drive. The finance branch provides basically the same key services as the Aspen Hill Branch except that no postal carriers originate from the finance unit. A contract station is located on International Street in Leisure World. The contract station is contained in a private business that is under contract with the U.S. Postal Service to provide basic postal sales and services. The planning area is also served by the Twinbrook Station of the Rockville Post Office. It is located at 2001 Veirs Mill Road.

The U.S. Postal Service has indicated that the existing facilities are sufficient to absorb the projected growth.

Post offices across the country will be converting to mail sorting equipment that will read the full street, city, state and zip code on the mailing address. This will be used to cross-check the destination. Since this would preclude any future use of Aspen Hill or Layhill as the city location with the zip codes for this area, this Plan would support a separate zip code for the Aspen Hill Planning Area.

TROLLEY MUSEUM

After ten years of voluntary efforts and a golden spike ceremony featuring U.S. Senator Charles Mc. Mathias, the National Capital Trolley Museum officially opened to the public in 1969. Since that time the museum has been an educational and recreational resource for the Aspen Hill Planning Area and the region. The car barns, visitor center and 3/4 mile of track were constructed by the National Capital Historical Museum of Transportation, Inc. This group of local streetcar and railroad enthusiasts still operates the facility under a lease arrangement with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

This is the only museum in the Aspen Hill Planning Area. The master planned right-of-way for the Intercounty Connector goes through the museum site. In the event any use of the ICC right-of-way impinges on the functioning of the Trolley Museum, every effort should be made to relocate the museum within the Aspen Hill Planning Area.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted on July 26, 1990. The act generally prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, public accommodations, transportation, telecommunications and state and local services, programs or activities. Other privately owned businesses, such as restaurants, stores and banks, must comply with the ADA standards.

The enforcement of ADA will require that **all** publicly owned facilities, such as parks, sidewalks, recreation centers and schools in Aspen Hill be evaluated for accessibility. Transitional plans will be developed that outline structural changes for these facilities. Such structural changes could include alterations to the entrances, doors, rest room facilities, elevators and assembly areas. Some buildings may not require structural changes because they have acceptable solutions, such as relocating an activity to an accessible site or providing alternate auxiliary aids. A determination of necessary structural alterations, if any, will be made after the evaluation process.

The ADA will also require mass transit systems, including state and local bus routes, trains and subway systems, to make vehicles, facilities and transit information more accessible and usable by persons with disabilities. As bus routes in Aspen Hill and over the County are reviewed, accessibility of the buses, bus routes, bus stops and route information will be evaluated.