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# PLAN VISION

This Plan proposes an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary vision for Aspen Hill. The Plan reinforces the primarily suburban and residential character of the Aspen Hill area by retaining its residential zoning with relatively few refinements. The Plan seeks to increase opportunities for community interaction. It looks to reduce the social and sometimes physical isolation of various neighbors through both public investment and physical designs of private activity. The Plan seeks to increase recreational and transportation options in the Aspen Hill Planning Area in a manner that improves the overall environment and the quality of life of residents and workers.

An aerial view of Aspen Hill shows many of the area's attributes. It shows a largely built out residential area bracketed by major parks to the east and west. A wide range of residential densities is evident from the high-rises of Leisure World to the large-lot, single-family areas of Layhill. Neighborhood shopping centers can be seen dispersed in and around the community, with a single large employment area near the center. No industrial areas are visible. The general impression is one of a stable, maturing suburb.

A picture at a larger scale shows the growth areas. To the west is Rockville and the I- 270 corridor; to the east is US 29 and the I-95 corridor; to the north is Olney. The activity in these nearby areas pushes and pulls on the fabric of the communities of Aspen Hill. They offer benefits for Aspen Hill residents as well as burdens. Due to Aspen Hill's unique location, surrounded by growing areas, this Master Plan must balance the needs of Aspen Hill residents with the needs of the entire County.

The interdependence of Aspen Hill and the County is obvious. Aspen Hill relies upon the rest of the County and region for employment opportunities and comparison shopping. The County relies upon Aspen Hill to be a housing resource. Aspen Hill relies upon the County to take care of necessary services such as jails, trash disposal and sewage disposal. The County may need to rely upon Aspen Hill to carry more of the burden for traffic and water service.

From a County-wide perspective, through-traffic in Aspen Hill is and will be unavoidable. The growth on all sides of Aspen Hill will demand transportation services. One of the goals of this Plan is to service and channel that demand in a manner that most benefits the citizens of Aspen Hill and mitigates the detrimental impacts of transportation facilities. Another goal of this Plan is to decrease reliance on the automobile to the extent possible.

The communities of Aspen Hill need and seek the help of County government in promoting a greater sense of community identity. The Aspen Hill community has felt a loss of existing infrastructure, particularly with the closing of Peary High School. The Layhill community, even with the absence of supporting public facilities, is witnessing the prolonged and consistent development of a very strong sense of community identity distinct from Aspen Hill. To Aspen Hill's west is North Bethesda/Rockville; to the north is Olney. To the East is Cloverly and Fairland. All of these areas are growing. The strains of surrounding growth bring traffic and a demand for desirable County services in those growing areas. There is a temptation to serve the citizens of Aspen Hill by making them travel to those growth areas. Presently, they must travel to Wheaton for social services and to three different high schools for secondary education. The Plan seeks a sensitivity to provide community services in a manner that promotes and enhances community identity for the communities of Aspen Hill. The County should do everything it can to reinforce opportunities for neighbors to interact with other neighbors to the extent possible. Building and strengthening the sense of community within the Aspen Hill Planning Area is one of the primary goals of the Aspen Hill Master Plan.

The economic heart of Aspen Hill lies at the crossroads of Georgia Avenue, Connecticut Avenue and Aspen Hill Road. Its mix of retail and office uses in close proximity to apartments and other housing resources has a function and vitality that is only hoped for in less mature areas of the County. The office uses have a cadence of activity that makes them a good neighbor to both residences and adjoining retail centers. On the weekends, when many people are at home and shopping activity is most intense, the office activity is sedentary. Office is still the preferred long term use for the portion of the area previously used by the Vitro Corporation. However, with sufficient conditions and limitations, retail on a portion of the Vitro site could be a beneficial neighbor. It is not the vision of this Plan for Aspen Hill to become a regional shopping district. Retail expansion should be limited to those uses which reinforce the community-serving nature of existing retailers.