

**PLAN
INTRODUCTION**

**OLNEY
MASTER PLAN**
Montgomery County Maryland

PLAN INTRODUCTION

Olney Today

Many events since the early 1970's have altered the landscape of Olney and shaken the community's sense of identity. Improvements to the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Route 108 required the removal of long standing commercial structures. Olney Inn was lost to fire. New development has proceeded at a rapid pace.

Change is always hard to accept especially when it seems to be at odds with the basic character of the community. Change will occur, but the commitment of citizens and this Plan to enhance and preserve a quality environment will continue to make Olney a desirable place to live. Olney may no longer be a quiet, rural community but it remains a good place to live.

What is the purpose of this Plan?

This Plan for the Olney Planning Area is a comprehensive and detailed statement of concepts, goals and guidelines for the area's development.

How does this Plan relate to other plans?

This Plan amends the Montgomery County General Plan (The General Plan for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District and the Master Plan of Highways). The General Plan provides policy guidance at a broad county-wide level for future patterns of development in the County. It was first adopted by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission in 1964 and updated in 1969. The General Plan recommends that:

- future growth be channeled generally into corridor cities along I-270 Corridor and into existing, established down-County activity centers (such as Silver Spring, Wheaton, and Bethesda) and to a lesser extent into satellite communities such as Damascus and Olney; and
- wedge areas of the County should be maintained between the corridors and around the satellite communities; these wedge areas should be predominantly low density and rural-type development.

This Plan is also a comprehensive amendment to the 1966 Master Plan for Olney and Vicinity. The 1966 Plan proposed a semi-rural character for Olney but many of the tools needed to implement the concept were not available. The absence of a staging plan prevented the coordination

of public facilities with private development. Farmland preservation was not yet a priority and agriculture and open space zoning and administrative tools would not be implemented for another 14 years.

How was this Plan Developed?

In 1976, a new Master Plan process was initiated. The key steps in the process are described below:

- An Issues and Alternatives Report was developed in 1976 by the Montgomery County Planning Board staff.

The Report is concerned not only the present state of the community, but also the alternative directions which it might take in the foreseeable future. This Report described the implications of three specific development alternatives for Olney but it did not make specific recommendations. The Issues and Alternatives Report evolved as an expression of the concerns of the Olney Master Plan Advisory Committee and the Montgomery County Planning Board staff.

- In September of 1977, the staff prepared a Concept Plan for the Olney area based on the scale of development most supported by the community and by the General Plan.
- A Staff Draft was published in 1978 and was the subject of two public forums in Olney. The Planning Board reviewed the Staff Draft during four worksessions with staff and citizens.
- A Preliminary Plan was then published in 1979 by the Planning Board; an all-day Public Hearing was held June 7, 1979.

- A Final Draft Plan followed the Public Hearing and many Planning Board worksessions. County Council held a public hearing on the Draft in October, 1979.
- Final adoption of the Olney Master Plan occurred in June 1980.

How will Plan Recommendations be Implemented?

A Master Plan recommends the type and density of land use and recommends a general zoning plan. The Plan's recommendations are implemented by the County Council through a comprehensive zoning action known as a Sectional Map Amendment. A Sectional Map Amendment for Olney was filed in July, 1980 and a Public Hearing on the Amendment occurred in September, 1980. The zones applied during the Sectional Map Amendment determine how property is developed, e.g., the type of use, setbacks, height.