

# PLAN CONCEPT

Almost one-quarter—more than 4,000 acres--of the Upper Rock Creek watershed is parkland. This land allows active and passive recreation and contributes to high stream quality in the upper part of the watershed. North of Muncaster Mill Road, Rock Creek has been classified a Use III watershed, the highest classification in the state. Large blocks of forest and wetland areas in the stream valley parks enhance stream quality by providing cool and clean baseflows for the mainstem and tributaries of Rock Creek. A primary goal of this Plan is to protect environmental resources and maintain stream quality by keeping streams, forests and wetlands in a natural state. This reflects the objectives of the 1993 General Plan Refinement, which included protection and improvement of water quality and preservation of sensitive areas. This Plan's concept builds on and extends the Upper Rock Creek watershed's open space heritage, and recognizes that open space can be achieved by using easements on private property or through public ownership.

Of equal importance is preserving residential character. The generally low-density nature of the Upper Rock Creek watershed is in keeping with the wedges and corridors concept outlined in the General Plan. Much of the watershed is in the Residential Wedge, an area envisioned by the General Plan Refinement to maintain low densities and relatively large lots. Maintaining low densities also contributes to stream quality by limiting imperviousness, which in turn reduces the amount of warm water that flows into the streams and contributes to stream quality. Keeping the existing residential densities is a second basic concept for this Plan.

The Plan also allows the existing Redlands commercial center to develop with housing surrounding the retail core, and retains recommendations for a light industrial district near the Montgomery County Airpark. It also creates road, bikeway, and trail networks that connect neighborhoods with community facilities and other destinations.

The Plan Concept for the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan includes the following:

To extend the open space heritage and preserve resources, this Plan:

- Directs development away from stream valleys, forests, and other sensitive areas;
- Establishes low density zones for remaining large undeveloped properties in the Planning Area to insure that open space can be preserved; and
- Increases open space through dedication, acquisition, or easement as land develops and recommends that options be explored to ensure that this land will be protected in perpetuity.
- Requires the designation of portions of the Planning Area as “Special Protection Area” and the application of an impervious surface cap to minimize the impacts of development on water quality.

To preserve residential character, this Plan:

- Encourages future development that is consistent with the character of neighboring communities;
- Maintains lowest densities adjacent to stream valleys and low densities along ridges;
- Encourages integration of new and existing communities, with emphasis on design and preservation of open space in those areas where new and existing communities meet;
- Recommends design and preservation methods that retain the character of existing local roads; and
- Recommends protection of significant views and open spaces that contribute to community character.

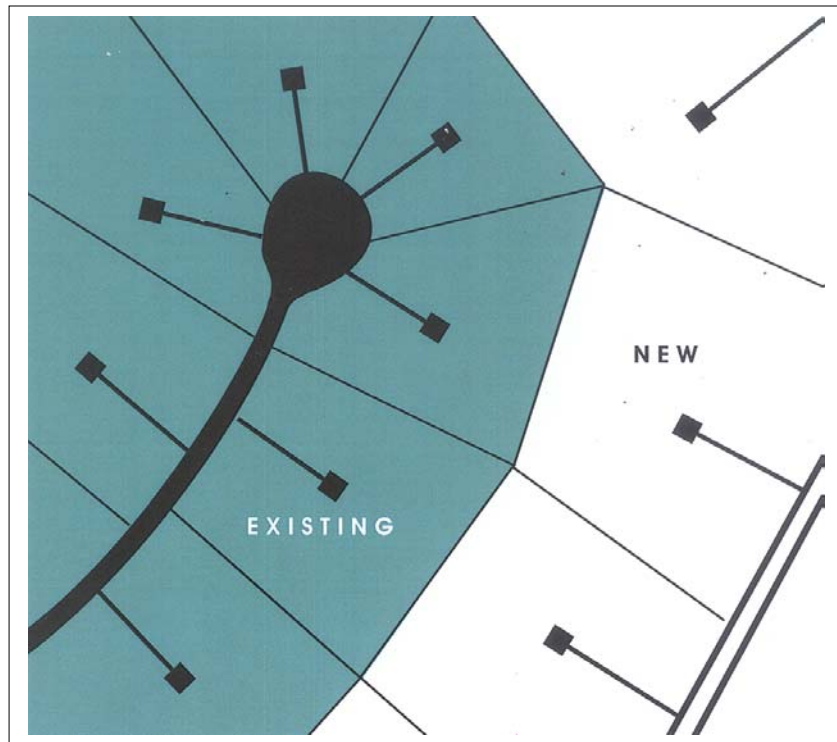
To enhance neighborhood centers and industrial areas, this Plan:

- Recommends additional housing adjacent to the Redlands commercial area; and
- Retains existing industrial zones.

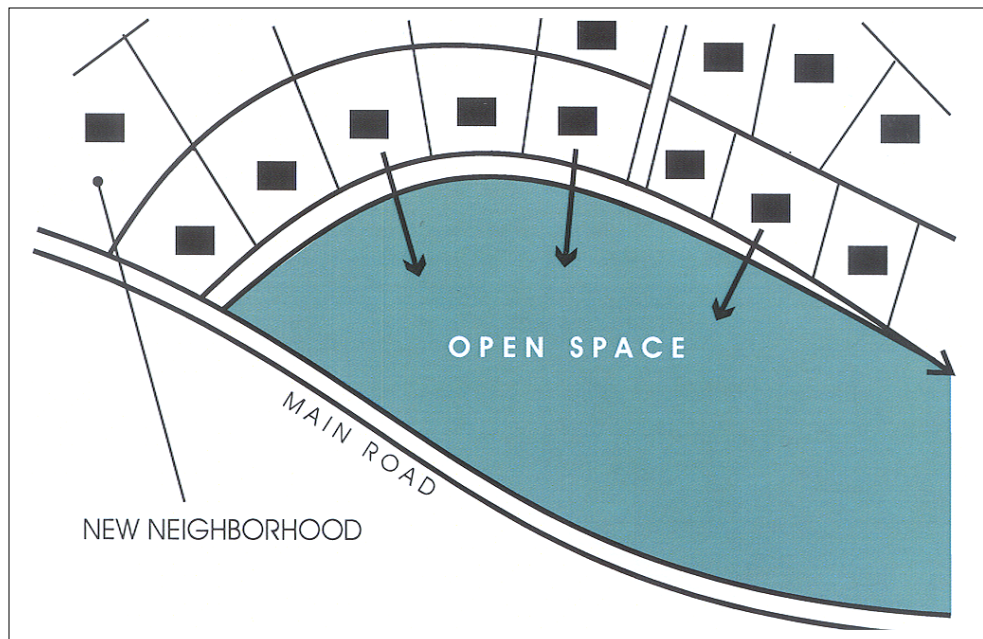
To connect communities, this Plan:

- Recommends development of a bikeway and trail network that enhances access to community facilities and commercial areas and connects to regional bicycle and trail systems; and
- Provides a system of open section roads to connect the communities in the Upper Rock Creek watershed to the surrounding areas.

## PRESERVING RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

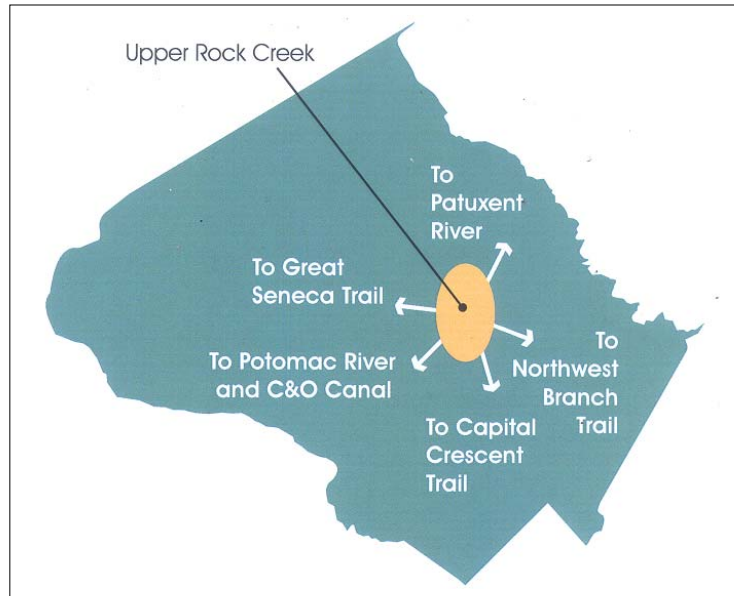


Match development pattern at edges – setbacks, height, spacing and orientation

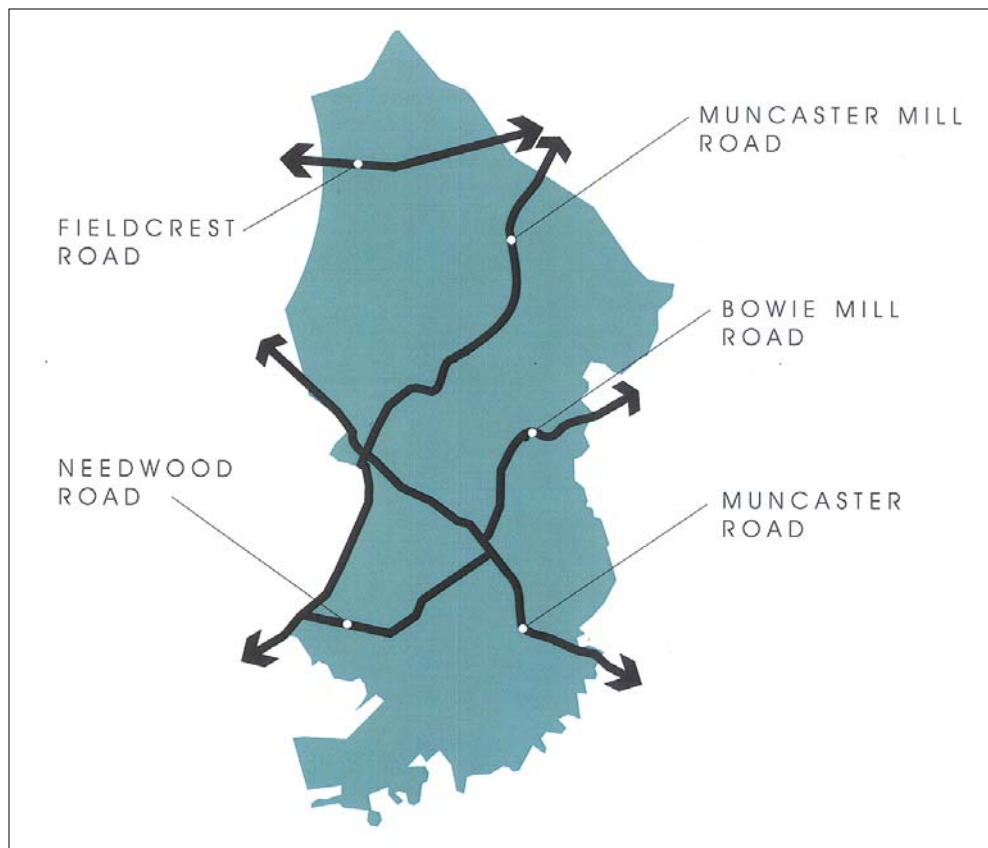


Preserve highly visible open space along roads

## CONNECTING COMMUNITIES



Connect to the regional park, trail and bikeway system.



Maintain character of two lane roads