

North Potomac

Introduction

North Potomac is an emerging community that was previously part of the Darnestown and Travilah areas. Residents are striving to create a clear identity for their community and are seeking needed local community services, such as a recreation center.

Located roughly between Darnestown Road and Travilah Road, abutting Rockville and Gaithersburg, North Potomac covers only seven square miles, but has the largest population of any of the Subregion's four communities and is the most densely populated.

Even though the Travilah Shopping Center, the University of Maryland Shady Grove Campus, and the proposed Traville development are in the Subregion, they were reviewed as part of the July 1990 *Shady Grove Study Area Master Plan*, which included specific design objectives and concepts to guide area development.

This Plan reconfirms both the general and specific objectives and concepts for those properties. Further, this Plan recommends no new shopping centers in North Potomac, except for the retail component of the proposed Traville development.

Potential Planning Area

The Potomac Subregion is comprised of three planning areas, Potomac, Travilah and Darnestown, with internal boundaries defined by the Watts Branch and the Muddy Branch. Since the last Potomac Subregion master plan was prepared in 1980, the area of North Potomac has emerged, receiving a census area designation in 1990. North Potomac straddles parts of the Planning Areas of Travilah and Darnestown, yet is fundamentally different from both. For example, the population density per square mile in North Potomac is 3,361, compared with 421 in Travilah and 272 in Darnestown.

The northern and western boundaries of North Potomac (Darnestown Road and Jones Lane) are relatively easy to define, the southern and eastern boundaries less so. To prepare a demographic profile, staff defined North Potomac as the six traffic zones generally corresponding to the recommended sewer service envelope and the Transfer Development Rights Zones.

Citizens in North Potomac have requested that a new North Potomac Planning Area be created, a separate County Council legislative action from master plan approval. The basis of the request is that North Potomac has a unique identity, is internally cohesive, and differs from the remainder of the Subregion.

Recommendation

- **The County Council should authorize the Planning Board to study the creation of a new North Potomac Planning Area, with the participation of the citizens associations of Darnestown, North Potomac, and West Montgomery.**

Country Corner Properties

This 4.18 acre site is located at 10312 and 10304 Darnestown Road, at its intersection with Hunting Lane and Key West Avenue. (See Map 12.) The uses on the site include a horticultural nursery, permitted by special exception, and an interior decorating store that is a non-conforming use. These two uses are situated on several parcels zoned R-200. Surrounding uses include a proposed church, single family and low-density townhouse residences, and office and commercial development (both existing and proposed).

Circulation in the immediate vicinity is somewhat difficult due to one-way travel lanes and oddly angled intersections. Hunting Lane is a secondary road serving residential development, with connection to both Darnestown Road and Travilah Road (via Nolan Drive). A prescriptive right-of-way exists on Hunting Lane along the site's western property line. Darnestown Road is classified as an arterial east of Key West Avenue and a Major Highway to the west, the same classification as Key West Avenue. Because Darnestown Road and Key West Avenue serve as major access roads to I-270, regional circulation to and from the site is good.

The character of the neighborhood surrounding the site is one of roadway-oriented non-residential uses and inward-facing residential areas. Residential densities in the area vary from single-family homes on half-acre lots to townhouses that average around eight dwelling units per acre. To the east, a residential subdivision bordering the site is zoned R-200/TDR and to the west, land is zoned R-200 and PD-3. On the northern side of Darnestown Road, land is zoned R&D on the north and west side of Key West Avenue and C-3 and O-M on the east and south side.

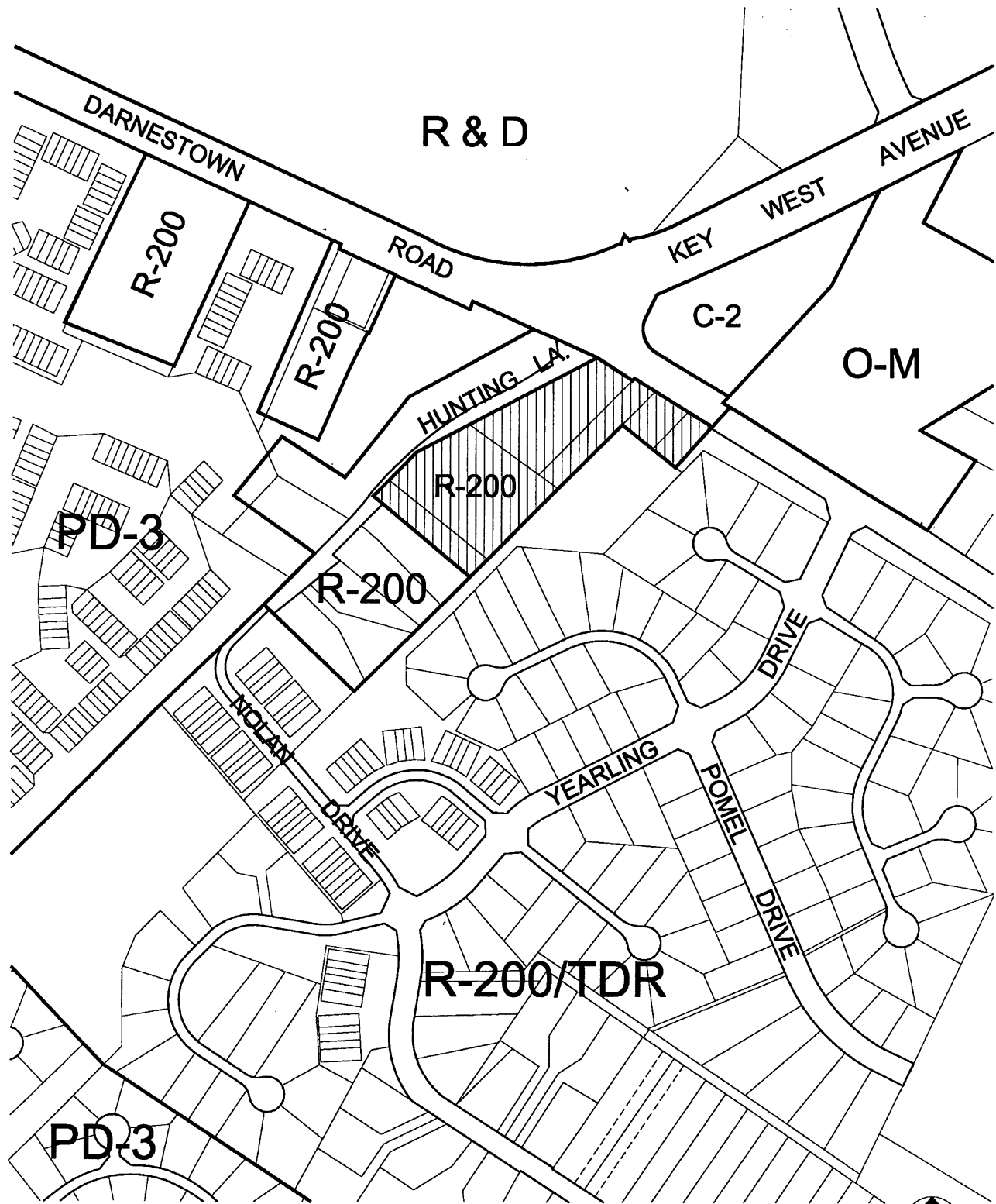
Despite the current use as a commercial business, this site remains a desirable place for a residential use. The existing zoning, which permits about two dwelling units per acre, and surrounding development, which averages between two and eight units per acre, indicate that a fairly low density should be maintained here. This Plan recommends that the property be rezoned to R-200/TDR-10, and at time of site plan, the number of units be capped at 38. The unusual traffic patterns along Darnestown Road will require careful study as to the best point(s) of access and to circulation. Additionally, a 60 foot right-of-way consistent with the width required for a secondary road will be required along Hunting Lane. Planting vegetated buffers along the perimeter of the property will help to screen out noise and visual impacts from Darnestown Road and Key West Avenue.

Recommendations

- **Rezone parcels 881, 883, 884, 885, 933, and 958 at 10312 and 10304 Darnestown Road from R-200 to RT-200/TDR-10, limiting the number of units to a maximum of 38. A waiver of the requirement for 15 percent detached dwellings is also recommended.**

Hanson Farms

The 170-acre Hanson farms are located along Muddy Branch Park, west of Quince Orchard and Dufief Mill Roads and north of Travilah Road. (See Map 13.) The Potomac Horse Center is located to the east of the property on Quince Orchard Road. The Hanson Farms are in dual ownership with the northern 95 acres referred to as the "Hanson Farm" and the southern 75 acres referred to as the "Trust Property."



 Country Corner Properties



Not To Scale

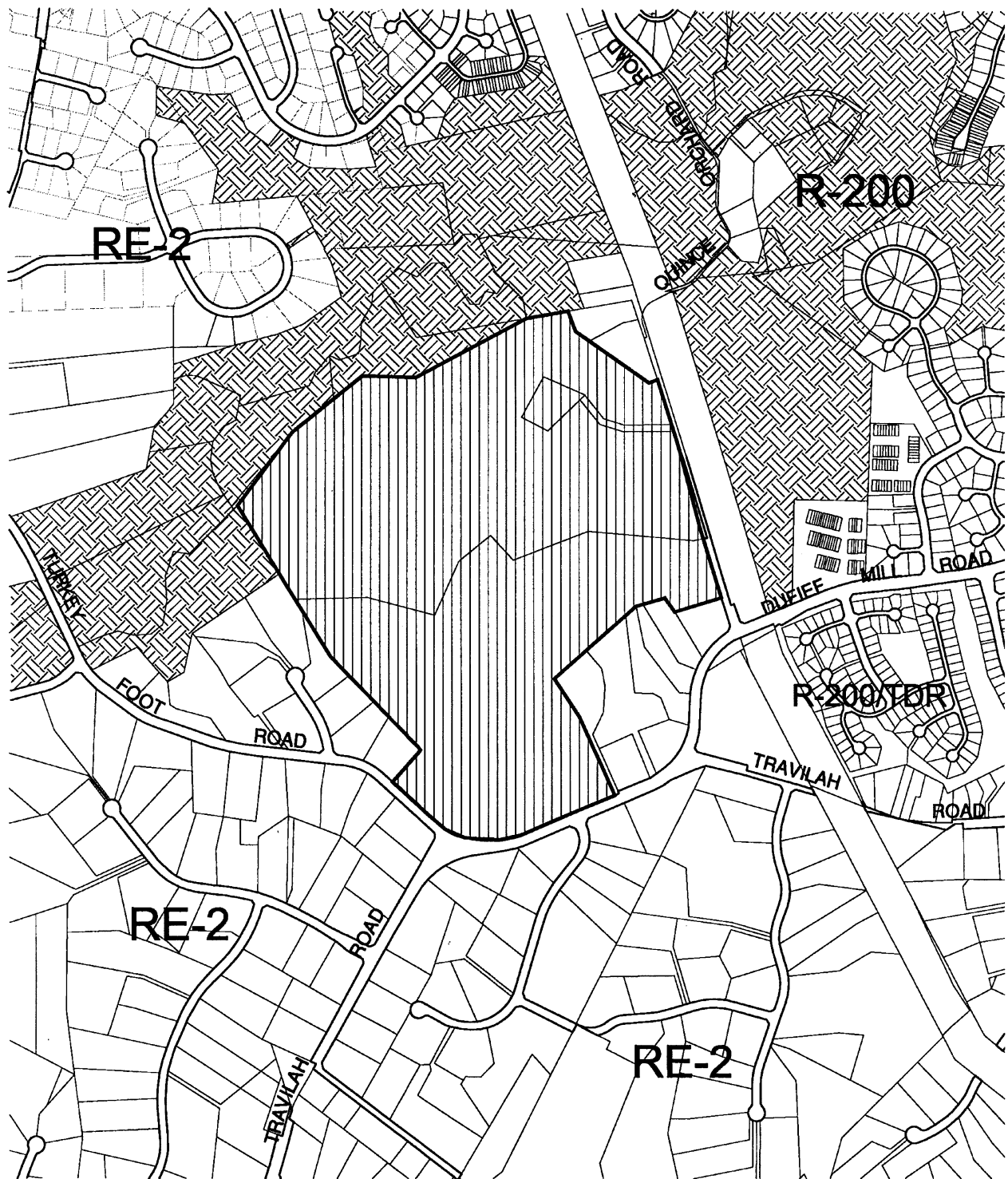
Almost the entire 170-acre site, which includes several environmentally sensitive areas, drains to the Muddy Branch, either directly or via three unnamed tributaries. Two farm ponds are located on the Trust Property, one of which is spring fed. The property has been actively farmed by three generations of the Hanson family, raising beef cattle, grain and timber. Because the fourth generation of Hansons are not farmers, the owners have contemplated development proposals within the time frame of this Master Plan. However, due to the fact that the owners wish to continue farming as long as possible, it may be many years before the property is developed.



Ultimately, the development of this 170-acre working farm will present an opportunity to preserve environmentally sensitive lands, expand the stream valley park system, provide a needed public facility, and create a walkable residential community. (See Figure 6.)

Located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Travilah Road and Quince Orchard Road, and east of the Muddy Branch Stream Valley Park, the farm is surrounded by R-200 and RE-2 residential development. The site includes several structures along Quince Orchard Road and there is a single-family lot to the north of the farm structures, improved with a dwelling unit. The site includes sensitive areas, such as steep slopes and forested areas along stream valleys and along Travilah Road. It is zoned RE-2, which would allow for development of two acre lots outside the environmentally sensitive areas.

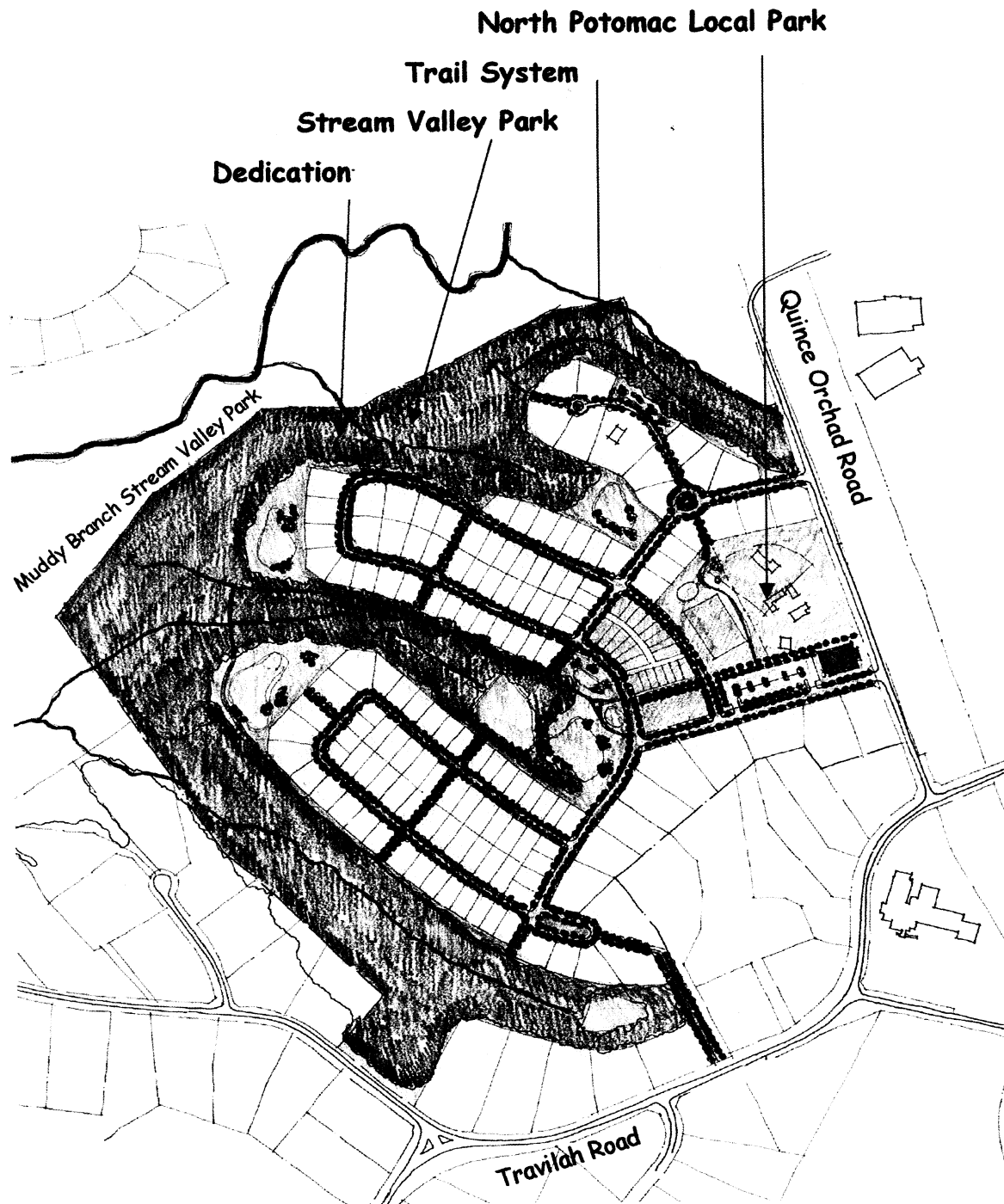
Recommendations

- **Rezone the site from RE-2 to PD-2 with a TDR option, to encourage more compact development, expand the regional stream valley system, protect sensitive areas, provide community facilities, and promote walking and biking.**
- **Limit the allowable density to a maximum of 170 dwelling units, including MPDUs. The Council is considering a text amendment to provide a TDR option in the PD zone. If this change is approved, TDR density incentives may be used to increase the maximum number of dwelling units by 10 percent, to 187.**
- **Include large lots at the perimeter to buffer existing residences, generally on the south and east.**
- **Retain both existing Hanson residences and incorporate them into the fabric of the new community.**
- **Dedicate land for the North Potomac Community Recreation Center if the County Council does not select the preferred site for the center on Travilah Road. (See Community Facilities Plan.)**
- **Maintain adequate setbacks between playing fields and the adjacent homes.**
- **Provide links from the local park to the Muddy Branch Stream Valley Park.**



-  Hanson Farms
-  Park Land


Not To Scale



Land Use and Design Guidelines

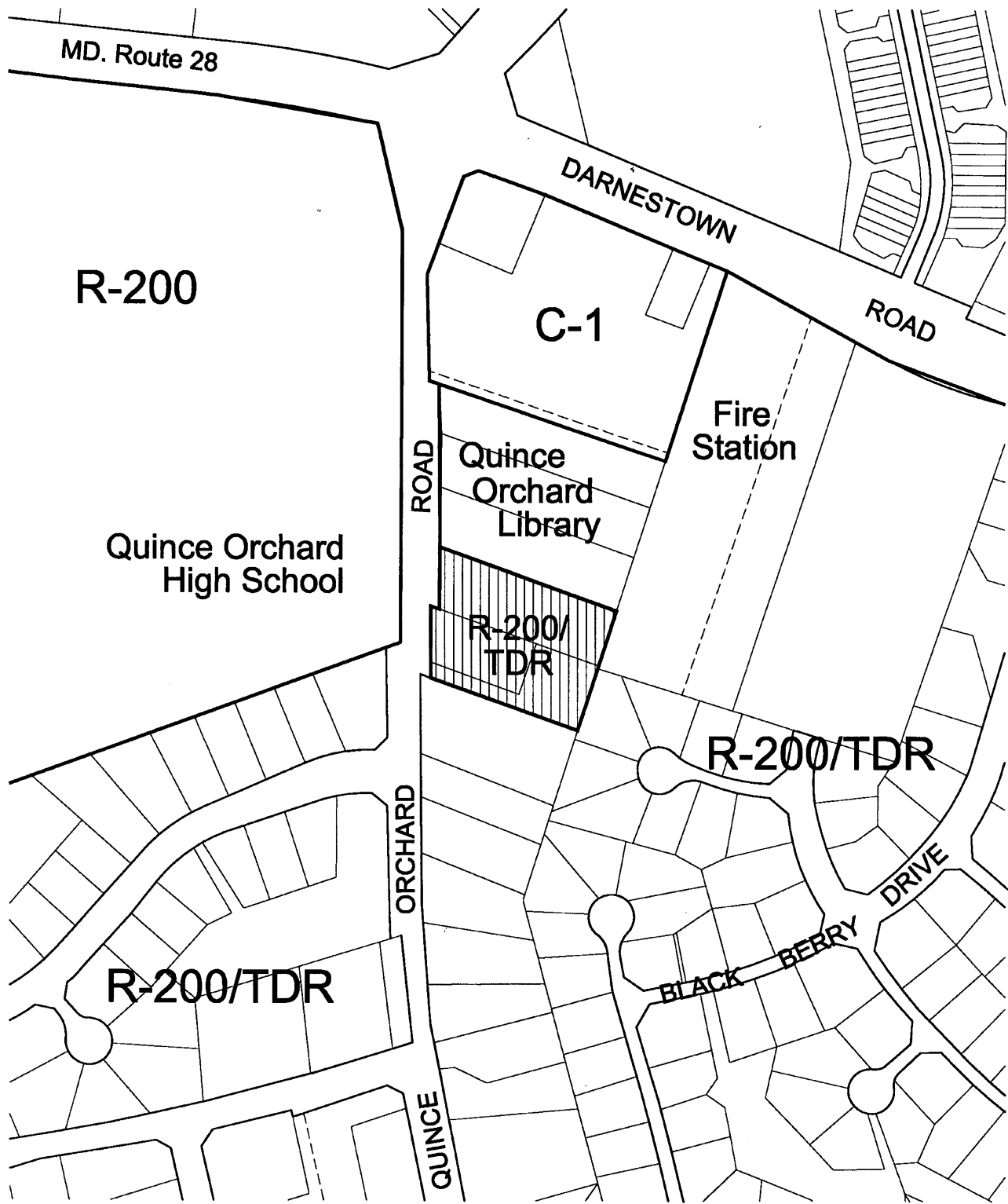
- Development on this site should meet this Plan's general design principles. (See Figure 6.)
- Cluster development away from environmentally sensitive resources.
- Dedicate a 12-to 13-acre site for a community recreation center along Quince Orchard Road to ultimately include the existing farm. The site should accommodate a 24,000 net square foot recreation center, playing fields, and adequate parking.

If the County Council selects the preferred community recreation center site on Travilah Road, (Community Facilities Plan), then the following guidelines apply for alternative recreational facilities at Hanson Farms:

- Dedicate a ten-acre site as a local park, sufficient to accommodate two ball fields and adequate parking.
- Development on this site must not exceed 50 percent of the total site area, excluding the potential community recreation center.
- Expand the regional stream valley park system by dedicating:
 - forested area along northernmost tributary, including the existing farm road, which can be incorporated into the trail system
 - areas of sensitive features, such as steep slopes and a 200 foot buffer along the Muddy Branch main stem
 - forested area adjacent to Travilah Road and adjacent stream valleys to connect with the existing stream valley park.
- Provide paths between the community center or local park, the Potomac Horse Center, Travilah Road, and the stream valley park.
- Provide frequent pedestrian links to the trail system in the stream valley park that provide community access to the park.

Lamari/Navelanko Properties

These three residential lots in the R-200/TDR Zone, each improved with a single family house, are located on the east side of Quince Orchard Road, south of the Quince Orchard Library, east of the Quince Orchard High School, and west of a fire station with a telecommunications tower and site of a proposed collapse rescue building. (See Map 14.) The properties are therefore almost surrounded by non-residential public uses, none of which were anticipated by the 1980 Potomac Master Plan.



Lamari and Navelanko Properties



Not To Scale

Although the area is beginning to take on the character of a government center, it is not appropriate for high intensity uses. The northern part of the property was subject to a zoning request for the O-M Zone in 1989. The Planning Board was split on the issue, and the Hearing Examiner recommended a remand to permit the applicant to revise the schematic development plan. The County Council concurred and in 1991 granted a request to withdraw the zoning request without prejudice.

Recommendations

- This site should be considered for public uses such as expansion of the Quince Orchard Library and the provision of a Regional Services Center satellite office.
- In the alternative, the property should be zoned O-M, with the land use and development standards restricted to those of the C-T Zone, via a schematic development plan with binding elements.

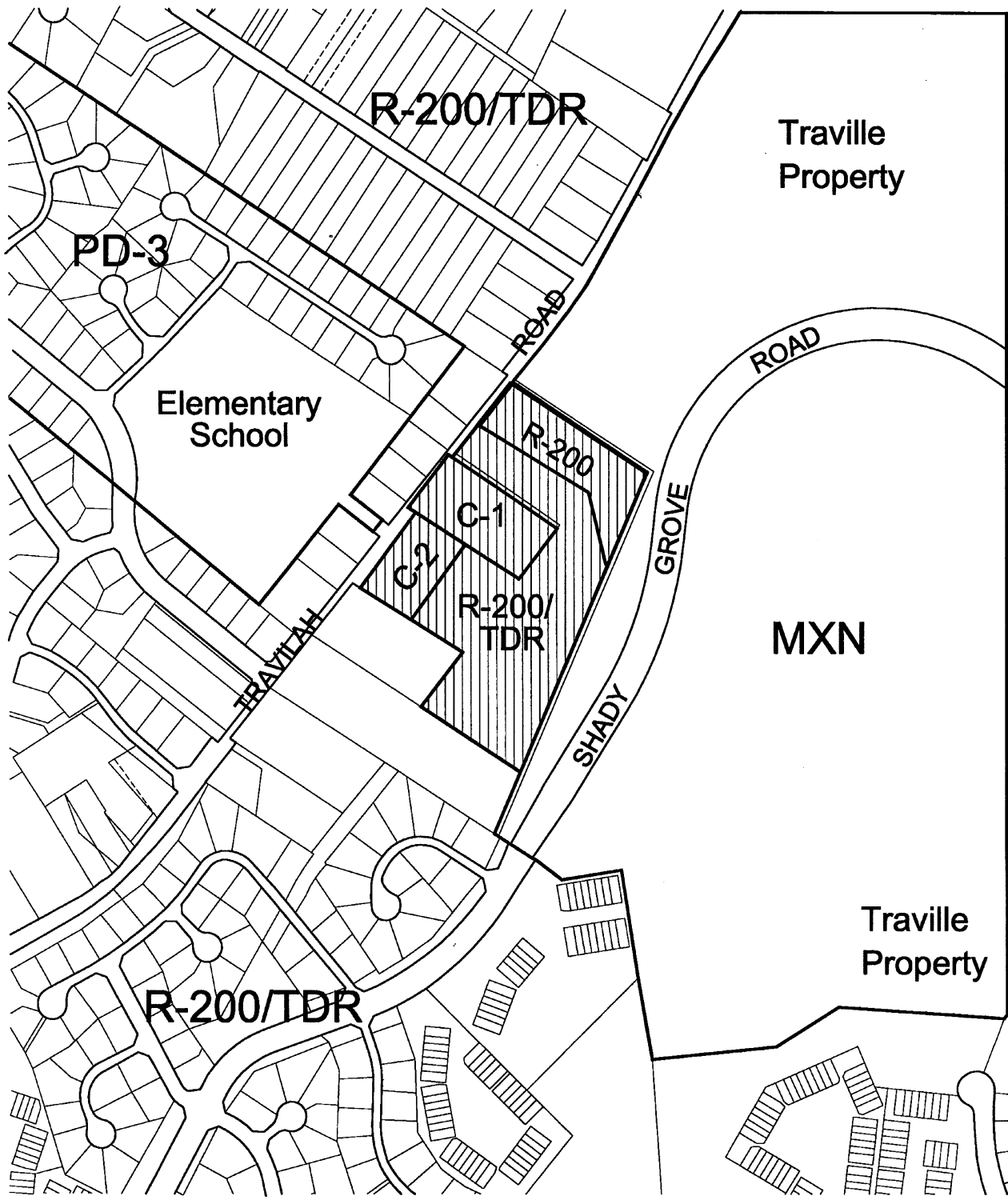
Rickman Property

This 13-acre property comprises six parcels in four different zones and is located on the east side of Travilah Road south of Nolan Drive and extending almost to Shady Grove Road. (See Map 15.) The property is bordered on the north and east by the Traville property, zoned MXN. The Rickman property is currently zoned C-1, C-2, R-200, and R-200/TDR while older single family homes and a school on the west side of Travilah Road are zoned R-200/TDR and PD-3 respectively. The property to the south is zoned R-200/TDR.

Two large commercial/industrial buildings occupy the central portion of the site, one of them the site of the former Travilah Trading Company. The northeast portion of the property was the location of a longstanding dump, which has since been extensively rehabilitated by the present owner. The C-1 and C-2 portions of the site could be developed for commercial purposes without benefit of site plan review. A research and development use for the property, possibly associated with the biotech industry, with a generous setback from Travilah Road and dedication of a badly needed recreational field at the southern end, would substantially improve the appearance of these parcels.

Recommendations

- Rezone the property from the C-1, C-2, R-200, and R-200/TDR Zones to the R&D Zone.
- Dedicate sufficient land for a regulation size soccer field on this site or elsewhere in the Subregion or, in the alternative, provide funding in lieu of land.
- Orient the site to Shady Grove Road by providing for access via the property to the north during the subdivision process, possibly by the use of easements or joint access to Shady Grove Road extended. Such access shall only be allowed if it can be accomplished without impacting endangered species in the area. Provide a pedestrian and bike link from Travilah Road to the southeast edge of the property facing Shady Grove Road.
- Design the site to meet the Plan's design principles.



 Rickman Property


Not To Scale

Rockville Crushed Stone Quarry

The Rockville Crushed Stone Quarry on Piney Meetinghouse Road, zoned I-2 (heavy industrial), covers over half a square mile and is over 400 feet deep in places. It is anticipated that its reserves will continue to be mined beyond the life and projections of this Master Plan. In the very long term, it offers the potential of a reservoir after mining operations cease.

The Quarry's heavy industrial zoning is the only such zoning in the Potomac Subregion. Because of the extensive area and unique configuration of the quarry, and the proximity of surrounding residential development, any future redevelopment or rezoning proposal by the Quarry owners should be subject to specific public review.

Recommendation

- **Should redevelopment or rezoning of the Rockville Crushed Stone Quarry be proposed prior to another master plan amendment, an advisory group will be formed to ensure public review and comment on the proposed redevelopment or rezoning.**