

Purpose of the Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan

The Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan serves two purposes. The first purpose is to permanently designate some roads in the Study Area as rustic or exceptional rustic. The second purpose is to examine travel needs in the Study Area and establish master plan designations for those roads which carry non-local traffic. The roadway classifications were not comprehensively reviewed when the *Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space* was developed. Some of these roadway classifications were inappropriate and all of them needed review. The Study Area is shown in Figure 1.

As a result of this comprehensive review, new roadway classifications for use in the rural area of the County are recommended. These are: a) a country road, to be used instead of the primary residential street classification, and 2) a country arterial, to be used in place of the arterial classification. In addition, this Master Plan recommends that a method of accessing new residential development in the Agricultural Reserve be developed. This new method would most probably be a small road, possibly called a country lane, which could be either a public street or a private street. If public, it

would require less right-of-way than a secondary residential street and be designed to fit more appropriately into the rural character of the area.

The Rustic Roads Program preserves the rustic character of certain County roads. The legislation which established this program grew out of a County Council Task Force which studied the issue of establishing a rustic roads program and produced a "Proposal for a Rural/Rustic Roads Program" in March 1990. That report defined a rural road as "a road within the Agricultural Reserve or adjoining rural areas (areas where the majority of zoning is RDT, RC, or Rural) in Montgomery County, which enhances the rural character of the area due to its particular configuration, alignment, scenic quality, landscaping, adjacent views, and historic interest, and which exemplifies the rural and agricultural landscape of the county." What the task force identified as a rural road became identified as a rustic road in the legislation. The term rural road was dropped, partly because there is already a rural road classification in the Montgomery County Road Code. The dictionary identifies rural and rustic as interchangeable terms.

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The Task Force Report identified an exceptional rustic road as one "having such unusual and pleasing character as it exists today that preservation of the road in its current state is highly desirable. The road has special characteristics which contribute significantly to the rural, scenic, or historic features of Montgomery County and might lose these specific characteristics if improved or widened." The rustic and exceptional rustic roads are defined in legislation in accordance with criteria which must be met before a road can be so designated. The original legislation establishing the Rustic Roads Program and the subdivision regulation concerning the Rustic Roads Program, adopted in 1993, are found in Appendix A.

When the County Council adopted the legislation (Bill 20-92) and the subdivision regulation (Ordinance 12-31), it also adopted an Interim List of Rustic Roads with a sunset date of December 31, 1996. This list is found in Exhibit A of the Subdivision Regulation. That list is the list prepared by the task force and also includes several roads which the Council was asked by local residents to include on the list. The Council did not evaluate the roads for appropriateness when the Interim List was adopted. That task was left for this planning effort.

Most of the roads on the County Council Interim List are located in the Study Area. A list of these roads can be found in Appendix B. Figures 2 and 3 show those roads in the Study Area which are on the Interim List. Each of the roads on this list was reviewed. Many of them are recommended for designation as rustic roads but fewer are recommended for designation as excep-

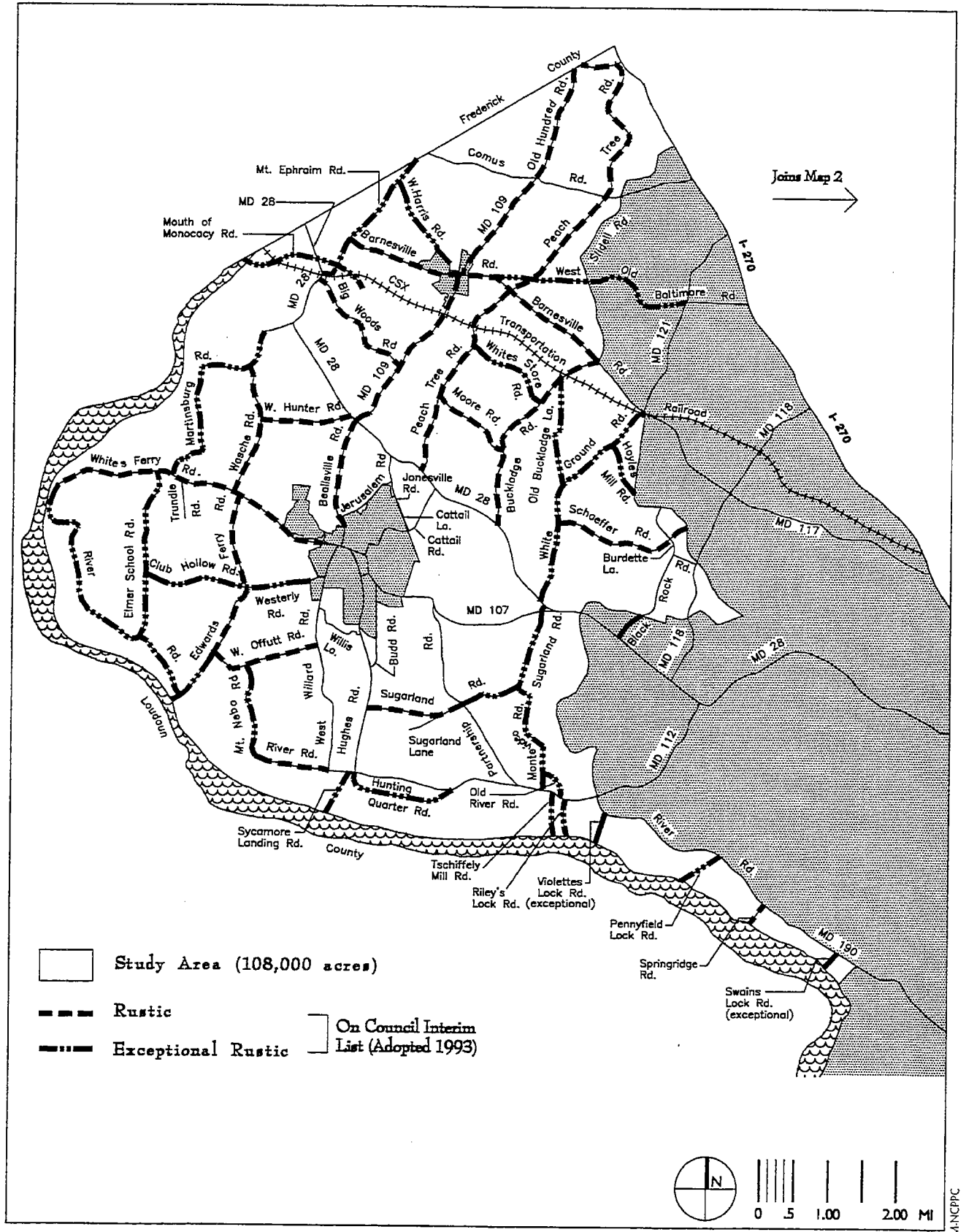
tional rustic than were on the Interim List for that designation.

This Master Plan recommends 66 roads for designation as rustic or exceptional rustic. Twelve of these roads are recommended for classification as exceptional rustic roads. Four of the Lock roads in the Potomac Subregion (included in the 66 above) are recommended as rustic roads and one as an exceptional rustic road. This Master Plan also recommends removing the sunset date from the Interim List of Rustic Roads and adding four roads to the Interim List.

The rustic roads designation is not intended to affect the use of adjoining land except in the design of access to subdivision. It is also not intended to prevent needed improvements to adjoining land uses or to the roads and bridges themselves. Because many of these roads are located in the Agricultural Reserve and serve primarily agricultural uses, it is important that their designation as rustic roads not preclude providing adequate roads for the farming community, either for moving farm equipment or getting products to market. Many of these roads already do not meet the needs of farmers for farm machinery and equipment between farms. The Master Plan acknowledges the importance of maintaining agriculture as a viable industry in the County's economy and, for this reason, supports improvements that are necessary to support the business of farming and land use patterns within the Agricultural Reserve now and in the future.

Interim Rustic Roads – map 1

Figure 2



Interim Rustic Roads-map 2

Figure 3

