

PLAN INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A "MASTER PLAN"?

A Master Plan is a comprehensive and detailed statement about how and where a community should develop. The Montgomery County Planning Board¹ and the Montgomery County Council rely heavily on a community's Master Plan when making decisions regarding:

- zoning;
- road construction;
- park development;
- the extension of public sewer and water;
- community improvement projects; and
- public transportation (including fringe parking lots).

Because a Master Plan is so very important to the future of a community, developing a Plan takes time and involves drafts and meetings with Planning Board staff, the Planning Board itself and the County Council. This Master Plan is the culmination of the process shown in Table 1, page 12.

This Plan amends the 1966 Damascus Master Plan (see 1966 Damascus Master Plan Map). In addition to the normal procedure of reviewing master plans every 10 to 15 years, there are several distinct reasons for amending the 1966 Plan. During a town meeting of the Damascus Homeowners Association in 1977, several points were made by residents supporting revision of the Plan:²

- Population and housing growth rates have been slower than anticipated in 1966;

¹ The Montgomery County Planning Board consists of five County residents appointed by the County Council. The chairman is full-time but the four other members are part-time.

² "Damascus Survey 1977," a project of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, George Washington University, for Damascus Homeowners Association, Damascus, Maryland.

- Much of the land proposed for a high density in Damascus lies in the 50-year floodplain, is not well-drained and is on steep slopes;
- Much of the residential land zoned for higher density is not scheduled for sewer service within 10 years;
- The Route 27 by-pass is planned through highest density residential area to serve an "employment center" which is unlikely to be developed;
- The Plan includes only the immediate area around Damascus. Surrounding areas affected by Damascus growth should be studied.

These points are explored in more detail in the Plan Recommendations chapter.

Although this Plan amends the 1966 Plan recommendations, many of the 1966 Plan concepts and proposals are continued because they are still valid today. They will continue to guide the Plan process in the 1980's just as they have since 1966.

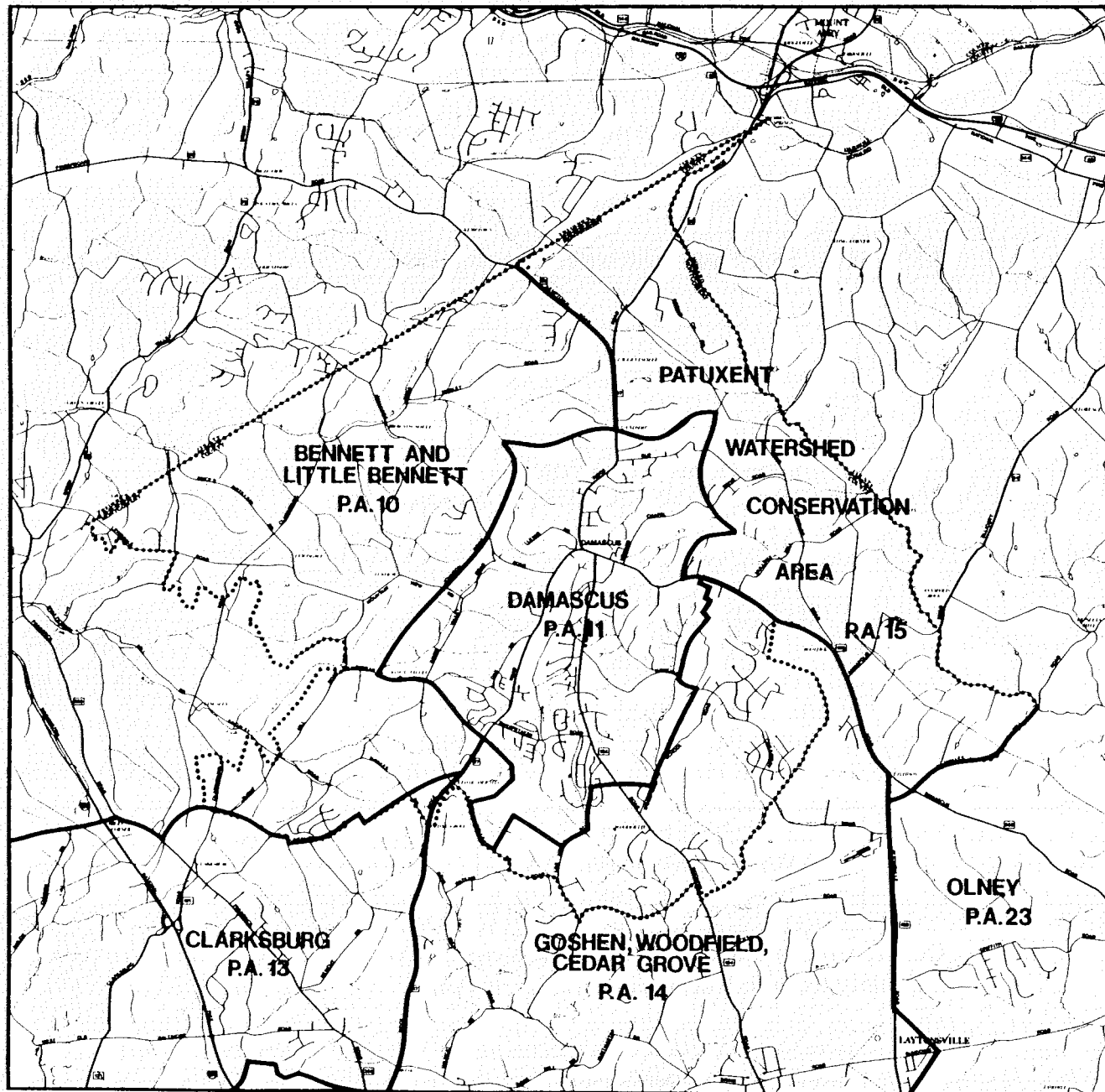
WHAT AREA IS COVERED BY THIS PLAN?

The Montgomery County Planning Board divides the county into "planning areas" for study purposes. Damascus forms Planning Area (P.A.) 11, which is the main focus of this Plan (see Master Plan Study Area Map).

Other planning areas are also part of this Master Plan study. The land use in these outlying areas is mostly agriculture. These areas are included in the Master Plan Study Area primarily to allow a comprehensive transportation study of upper Montgomery County and to study more closely rural communities like Lewisdale, Purdum and Browningsville.

HOW DOES THIS PLAN RELATE TO THE COUNTY GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

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. The General Development Plan designates Damascus a rural community planned to remain a "small and simple" single-family, low density town. Protecting rural communities from outward urban expansion is a stated plan objective.



DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN STUDY AREA

- PLANNING AREAS
OUTSIDE MASTER
PLAN STUDY AREA
- PA.11 PLANNING AREA
NAME & NUMBER
- PLANNING AREA
BOUNDARIES
- DAMASCUS MASTER
PLAN BOUNDARY

NOTE: THE MASTER PLAN
STUDY AREA INCLUDES
ALL OF P.A. 11, P.A. 15, A
PORTION OF P.A.'S 10,
13, 14, 23

Approved and Adopted: June 1982

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



TABLE I
DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN
PLANNING PROCESS

ISSUES AND ALTERNATIVES
REPORT

January 1981

Community Workshops: January/February 1981

STAFF DRAFT
DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

June 1981

Open House: June 1981

Planning Board Community Worksessions: June/July 1981

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

August 1981

Public Hearing: September 1981

Planning Board Worksessions: October 1981

FINAL DRAFT
DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

December 1981

County Council Public Hearing: February 1982

County Council Worksessions: March 1982

APPROVED AND ADOPTED
DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

June 1982

Towards this end, the General Development Plan proposes defined edges to corridor cities like Clarksburg and Germantown and recommends low density, rural zoning to separate rural towns from suburban development.

These General Development Plan policies have guided the preparation of the Damascus Master Plan.

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 zoning recommendations will be implemented by the County Council through the adoption of what is known as a "Sectional Map Amendment." A Sectional Map Amendment describes all the zoning changes necessary to implement a newly adopted master plan. Once the Sectional Map Amendment is approved, the zoning changes proposed by the Damascus Master Plan will be implemented.

A Sectional Map Amendment for the area covered by the Damascus Master Plan was filed in May 1982 and adopted by the County Council after a Public Hearing and worksessions in late summer 1982.