



Planning Area 17

SOUTHLAWN AND REDGATE

Planning Area 17 is unique in Rockville for its mix of land uses. It consists of light industry, the David Scull Courts residential community, retail shops, office parks, RedGate Park, and public property owned by the City of Rockville and Montgomery County government. The planning area is shown in detail on Figure 74.

Area Characteristics

Much of the planning area was annexed into Rockville in the 1960s and 1970s, as early iterations of the Southlawn light industrial area and RedGate Industrial Park took shape out of forests and farmland. As Gude Drive east of Maryland Route 355 opened in sections through the early 1970s, more commercial and industrial buildings were built and now dominate the Gude Drive corridor today.

The Southlawn light industrial district is now a major light industrial cluster and a critically important portion of one



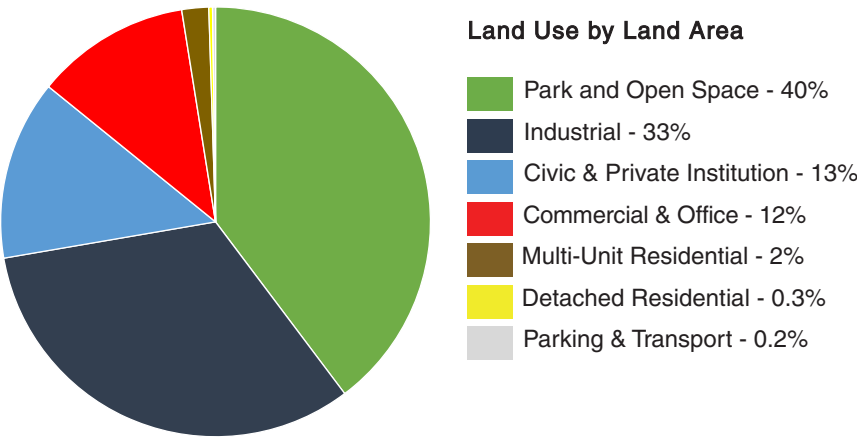
Light industrial buildings on Southlawn Lane

of Montgomery County’s few industrial districts. Southlawn area businesses include automotive repair and servicing, wholesale supply, assembly and processing, warehousing, and small-scale alcoholic beverage production. Nestled within the Southlawn light industrial area is the 76-unit public housing community David Scull Courts apartments, built in 1968 by the Rockville Housing Authority.

The RedGate Industrial Park is located across East Gude Drive from the Southlawn light industrial area and home to a range of office and light industrial uses, including: general, medical, and professional offices; research laboratories; restaurants; commercial recreation facilities; and some retail and wholesale businesses. In 2019, the City of Rockville purchased the property and three-story office building at 6 Taft Court in this area. The building will be used for City and other related functions, including expected construction of an emergency operations center and to address current and future staffing needs. (See also the *Community Facilities Element*)

Next to the RedGate Industrial Park is the City’s Public Works and Parks Maintenance Complex and RedGate Park (the site of a former municipal golf course). The remainder of the planning area consists of two large indoor recreation

Existing Land Uses in Planning Area 17



Residential Dwelling Units	
Detached Residential	2
Multi-unit Residential (apartment/condo)	76
Total units	78

Source: City of Rockville land records and GIS, 2019.

facilities (the Sportsplex at Rockville and Rockville Ice Arena), public parkland, open space, schools, and other institutions.

East Gude Drive is a key feature of the planning area, providing connections to all areas of the city and Montgomery County. The hiker-biker Carl Henn Millennium Trail is part of the East Gude Drive right-of-way in this area.

Planning History

There is no adopted neighborhood plan for this planning area, yet the area has been the subject of various studies through the years to assess its industrial land uses and their impact on adjacent neighborhoods.

In 1999, a study of the industrial area along East Gude Drive and Southlawn Lane was conducted by the City and County to establish a policy for determining which properties in the area were appropriate for reclassification from the County's I-2 (heavy industrial) zone to the City's I-1 (light industrial) zone after annexation into the city. Following the study, the Montgomery County Council adopted a resolution stating that properties north of East Gude Drive, largely along Southlawn Lane, are not appropriate for reclassification to the City's I-1 zone and properties generally south of East Gude Drive, including those on Southlawn Lane, Dover Road, Lofstrand Lane, and Taft Street, are consistent with the City's I-1 zone and are appropriate for reclassification. The City has generally followed this direction, though few properties have so far annexed into the city north of East Gude Drive.

In 2015, the City conducted a study of the Southlawn light industrial area to assess the feasibility of allowing non-industrial uses and to identify possible land use and traffic solutions to minimize impacts to the abutting neighborhoods of East Rockville and Lincoln Park. The *Southlawn Industrial Area Feasibility Study* reviewed recommendations from the East Rockville and Lincoln Park neighborhood plans, as well as the *2002 Comprehensive Master Plan*, yet the study was also a response to specific concerns of residents at the time.

Recommendations from the study's final report offered short- and long-term solutions to the area's transportation infrastructure, zoning regulations, streetscape improvements, and economic development measures. Major redevelopment

and street re-alignment options were explored by the study consultants, but the City chose not to pursue them at the time. While some of the short-term recommendations are now accomplished, some long-term policy recommendations from the Feasibility Study are incorporated below.

Key Issues

The following issues were identified during the Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Plan effort:

- Interest in the future use and design of RedGate Park (a former municipal golf course);
- Difficulty in mitigating impacts of heavy industrial uses in the county that are adjacent to the city;
- Need for safety and aesthetic improvements to the public streetscape of the light industrial areas;
- Desire to reduce in truck traffic impacts in the planning area and in nearby neighborhoods;
- Concerns for the safety and health of the residents of David Scull Courts, especially the need to increase access to neighborhood services and amenities, such as groceries;
- If redevelopment of David Scull Courts were to take place, protection of the right of David Scull Courts residents to be housed in the new development;
- Desire to improve sidewalks, bike paths, and connections to the City's nearby RedGate Park and Civic Center Park, and to Rock Creek Park;
- Concerns regarding the impacts of industrial activities on the residential areas of David Scull Courts, East Rockville, and Lincoln Park.

Opportunities in this planning area include the following:

- The future of RedGate Park, a former municipal golf course, is an active planning project as of the date of this plan's adoption. In 2019, the Mayor and Council voted to end the property's use as a golf course and dedicate the entire property to some sort of active or passive recreation use. A community planning initiative is ongoing that will gather public input to inform possible uses and improvements in the new park.
- A new initiative to designate the East Gude Drive

corridor as the Rock East District presents a framework for projecting a positive and marketable image, to encourage creative “maker” industries and uses.

- Piecemeal annexation of properties within the Southlawn light industrial area has resulted in a patchwork of property that is divided between City and County jurisdictions. Expanding the city limits to encompass more of the adjacent light industrial property in the county would facilitate a more orderly approach to property maintenance, roadway standards, coordinated development, and marketing.

Focus Area Recommendations

These land use policies and zoning and urban design recommendations apply to specific sites in the Planning Area.

AREA 1 A1

1301 First Street (David Scull Apartments) and property along First Street to the south

This area includes the community of David Scull Courts apartments and the light industrial and commercial properties between the apartments and the neighborhoods of Burgundy Knolls and East Rockville. The land use and zoning policies of the area serve to create the potential for a more compatible land use transition that better links the existing residential communities.



The intersection of Taft Street and First Street

Land Use Policy Map

This area is planned for transitional land uses between the David Scull Courts apartment community and the residential neighborhood of East Rockville through the SRM (Service Industrial and Residential Mix) land use designation.

Zoning Recommendation

Rezone the properties from IL (Light Industrial) to MXE (Mixed-Use Employment) to allow continuation of existing light industrial uses while permitting a mix of office, and residential uses, including live/work units. Commercial and non-profit uses that provide services and amenities to the nearby residents are also encouraged.

Urban Design Recommendations

As a gateway into the Southlawn light industrial area and the East Rockville neighborhood from East Gude Drive, any redevelopment of properties within this focus area should improve the streetscape and building facades along Taft Street and First Street. Building frontages should be oriented toward the street so as to create a safe and activated pedestrian corridor, especially for residents of David Scull Courts apartments and workers who may use transit to reach their places of employment or walk to school at Maryvale Elementary School.

Any redevelopment of David Scull Courts should ensure that residents have the opportunity to be housed in the new development or, if they choose, to be assisted in moving to a new location.

Recommended City Projects

These projects or studies are recommended to be undertaken by the City in specific locations within the Planning Area.

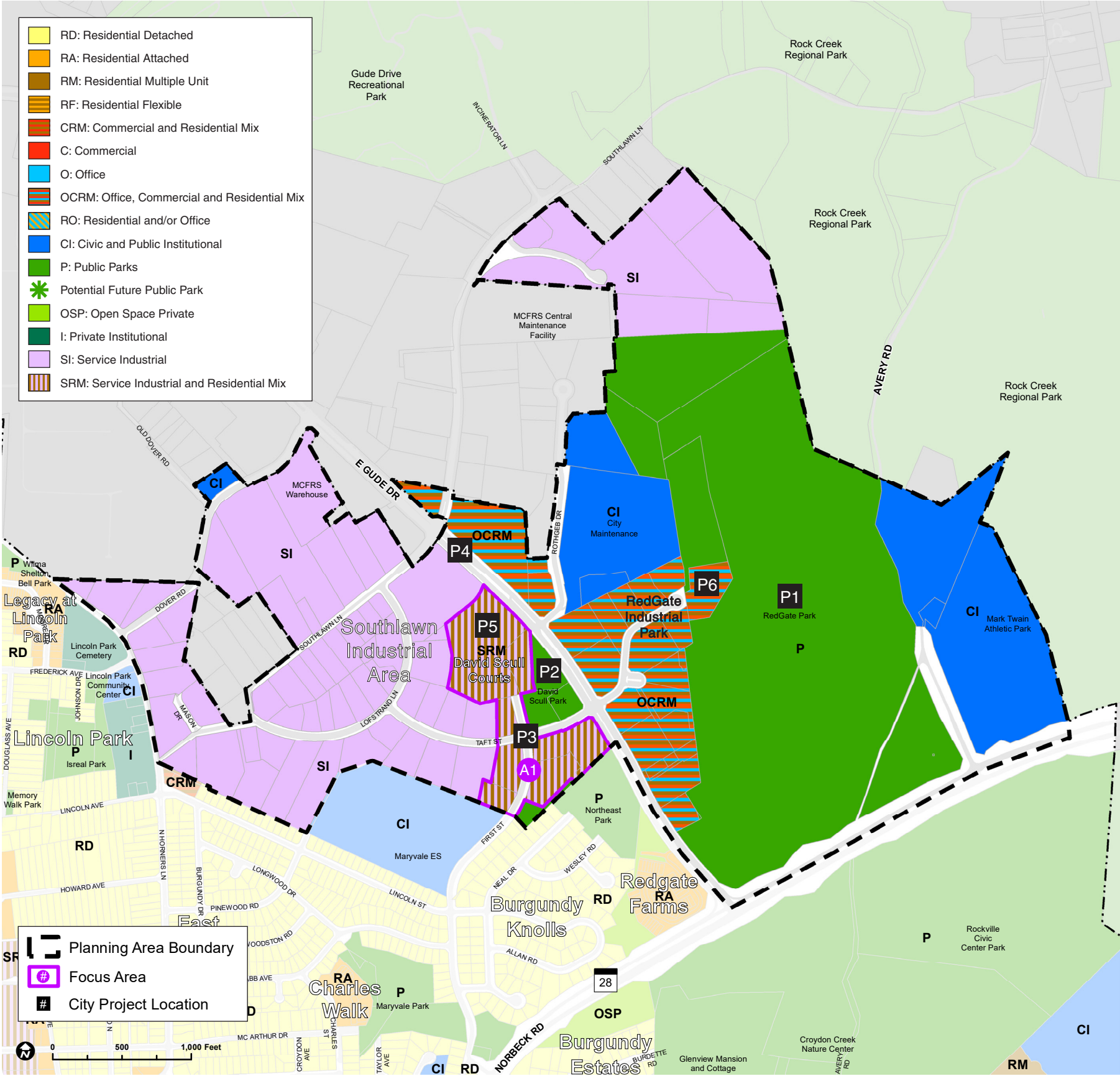
PROJECT 1 P1

Conduct a community planning process to determine the future recreational uses of RedGate Park. (*See also Action 25.1 of the Land Use Element and Action 3.3 of the Recreation and Parks Element*)

PROJECT 2 P2

Upgrade and improve David Scull Park, including program improvements that improve safety (e.g., stormwater facilities,

Figure 74: Land Use Policy Map of Planning Area 17



street traffic), upgrade equipment and structures, and improve the park border along East Gude Drive, Taft Street, and First Street.

PROJECT 3 P3

Explore the installation of a gateway monument or pylon at the intersection of First Street and Taft Street to demarcate the entrance to the Southlawn light industrial area and East Rockville neighborhood. Improvements should be coordinated between the City's Traffic and Transportation Division of the Public Works Department and the Recreation and Parks Department.

PROJECT 4 P4

Install directional wayfinding road signage to divert thru-traffic away from North Horners Lane. Signage should encourage through-traffic to use Maryland Route 28 or other major arterials as deemed appropriate by the City's Traffic and Transportation Division staff. Installation of signage on County or State road rights-of-way will require coordination with Montgomery County Department of Transportation and/or Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration.

PROJECT 5 P5

Continuously review and upgrade infrastructure and services in the vicinity of the David Scull Courts to improve their connectivity, amenities, placemaking, and accessibility with the broader Rockville community. Seek opportunities for fresh food and other goods and services for residents of David Scull Courts and other nearby residents and workers.

PROJECT 6 P6

Renovate the City-owned 6 Taft Court building to reflect the high value that the City places on green building, emergency preparedness, and serving as a new facility for City staff and customers over the next 20 years. Modernize the facility for the 21st century for staff in the departments of Public Works, Recreation and Parks, and Planning and Development Services. Incorporate the best practices of emergency preparedness as part of building renovations and establish an Emergency Operations Center on the site. (See also *Policy 2 of the Community Facilities Element*)



Aerial view of RedGate Park as the former golf course is reclaimed by natural vegetation.

Other Policy Recommendations

The following additional items are recommended to address key issues and opportunities in the Planning Area.

Land Use & Urban Design

1. Preserve industrial land as a valuable freight and economic development resource while mitigating impacts on surrounding communities. (*See also Action 17.1 of the Land Use Element*)
2. Encourage unique light industrial businesses to locate in the Southlawn light industrial area and areas of the city within the Rock East District (RED), including 'maker'/creative/artisan uses that are compatible with the light industrial district and can also provide services and destinations for local area residents. (*See also Action 11.5 of the Economic Development Element, Action 16.6 of the Land Use Element, and Action 3.4 of the Municipal Growth Element*)
3. Seek opportunities to upgrade and improve the light industrial areas through property maintenance enforcement, streetscape improvements, and approval of high-quality development projects. (*See also Action 10.3 of the Housing Element*)
4. Pursue annexation of industrial properties adjacent to

the Southlawn light industrial area. (*See also Action 4.1 of the Municipal Growth Element*)

5. Update the facilities plan for the Public Works and Parks Maintenance Complex on Rothgeb Drive. (*See also Action 2.6 of the Community Facilities Element*)

Transportation

6. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow some portion of on-street parking spaces in the IL (Light Industrial) zone to count toward the minimum parking requirements of uses in the zone. This change is intended to provide some flexibility to meet the parking requirements of uses compatible in the light industrial district, such as gyms, restaurants, breweries, or other assembly uses, that have higher parking requirements than light industrial uses.
7. Complete missing sidewalks in the city's portion of the Southlawn light industrial area streets, and advocate for Montgomery County government to complete missing sidewalks on its portion of area streets.
8. Coordinate with MDOT SHA to establish a pedestrian and bicycle trail connecting Rockville Civic Center Park and RedGate Park, across Norbeck Road (MD-28). (*See also Action 5.14 of the Transportation Element*)
9. Collaborate with Montgomery County government to connect the Carl Henn Millennium Trail with Rock Creek Trail through a bicycle and pedestrian shared use path. (*See also Action 5.6 of the Transportation Element*)