

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF THE CITY OF ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND PLANNING AREAS

APPROVED AND ADOPTED
AUGUST 2, 2021



INTRODUCTION

This section of the Comprehensive Plan recognizes the unique neighborhoods and districts that make up the city, provides a summary of their distinctive characteristics and key issues, and identifies area-specific policies and recommendations for zoning changes, City projects, and topics for additional study. Focusing on smaller parts of the city in this way allows a finer-grained examination of topics than is possible in the citywide Elements section. Recommendations in these planning areas are aligned with broader City policies and all citywide policies in the Elements section also apply to all planning areas, unless superseded by any overriding planning area policy(ies). Both sections should be referenced together to understand the full extent of City policy for each of the recommended actions and projects.

The planning areas (PA) in this section are as follows:

PA 1	Rockville Town Center
PA 2	East Rockville
PA 3	Hungerford, New Mark Commons, Lynfield, and Fireside Park
PA 4	West End and Woodley Gardens East-West
PA 5	Woodley Gardens and College Gardens
PA 6	Lincoln Park
PA 7	Montgomery College Area
PA 8	Twinbrook and Twinbrook Forest
PA 9	Rockville Pike
PA 10	Montrose and North Farm
PA 11	Woodmont
PA 12	Tower Oaks
PA 13	Potomac Woods, Potomac Springs, Falls Ridge and Orchard Ridge
PA 14	Rockshire and Fallsmead
PA 15	Fallsgrove and Research Boulevard
PA 16	King Farm and Shady Grove
PA 17	Southlawn and RedGate

These planning areas and their boundaries, shown in Figure 42, may be changed only by Planning Commission recommendation of a Comprehensive Plan amendment to the Mayor and Council for adoption, consistent with State law.

Community Involvement

The public engagement process for this Comprehensive Plan is described in the main introduction of the Comprehensive

Plan. In short, the effort, known as “Rockville 2040”, included a citywide kick-off meeting on May 9, 2015, followed by thirty-five planning area-based listening sessions, four citywide forums, and three open houses in January 2018. Many additional meetings were held with individuals and representatives of neighborhoods, businesses, and other institutions to gather feedback and craft portions of the plan. Community input relevant to the city’s planning areas was received at every one of these opportunities. Formal public hearings were then held by other the Planning Commission and the Mayor and Council, and both oral and written testimony was received and considered.

The Relationship of Planning Areas and Neighborhood Plans

Neighborhood and other small area plans integrate local community concerns with long-range planning policies and programs at the citywide level. They provide the City, and its residents, businesses, and institutions, the chance to clarify and refine citywide visions and goals on a smaller geographic scale, based on community identified goals and Mayor and Council priorities.

Neighborhood plans are part of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and, therefore, hold as much weight as any other part of the Comprehensive Plan. As with the Comprehensive Plan, neighborhood plans must also comply with State planning requirements.

Three neighborhood plans were approved in the 1980s, before the adoption of the *2002 Comprehensive Master Plan* (2002 CMP). These plans are superseded and replaced by the policies of this Comprehensive Plan for their corresponding planning areas, including:

- Hungerford-Stoneridge, New Mark Commons, Monroe-Lynfield (adopted 1985) - superseded by Planning Area 3
- West End-Woodley Gardens East/West (1989) - superseded by Planning Area 4
- I-270 North of Montrose Road (1985) - superseded by Planning Area 12

Other, more recent, neighborhood plans are adopted into this Comprehensive Plan by reference for portions of the former neighborhood plan area that coincide with their respective

new planning area boundary. However, policies in this plan supersede any policies in conflict with those in previously adopted neighborhood plans. These neighborhood plans are:

- Town Center Master Plan (2001) - superseded in part by portions of Planning Areas 1, 2, 4, 6, and 9
- East Rockville Neighborhood Plan (2004) - superseded in part by Planning Area 2
- Lincoln Park Neighborhood Plan (2007) - superseded in part by Planning Area 6
- Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan (2009) - superseded in part by Planning Area 8
- Rockville Pike Neighborhood Plan (2016) - superseded in part by Planning Area 9

It is the City's intention to discontinue the production of stand-alone and separate neighborhood plans that correspond to planning area boundaries and, instead, adopt policies and recommendations within the Planning Areas section of this Comprehensive Plan. Until such time as the following plans are completely superseded, they will be considered adopted by reference, as described above.

One full neighborhood plan update is included in this Plan. The *West End-Woodley Gardens East/West Neighborhood Plan* was originally adopted in 1989 and was among the oldest plans still in effect while this Comprehensive Plan was being prepared. For this reason, as well as for the planning area's unique historic character and its adjacency to Town Center and its associated development pressures, it was determined that a neighborhood plan should be produced simultaneously and in conjunction with the citywide Comprehensive Plan update. The updated *West End-Woodley Gardens East/West Neighborhood Plan* is incorporated into this section as Planning Area 4. It supersedes the 1989 plan as well as previous policies for the planning area from the *2002 Comprehensive Master Plan*.

Planning Area Changes from 2002

Neighborhood-based planning in Rockville began in 1979 with the adoption of the Town Center Urban Design Plan. In 1982, the City established eighteen planning areas to highlight locally-focused planning policies within the Comprehensive Master Plan. Planning areas were incorporated into the 2002 CMP and are once again incorporated here.

Two new planning areas are introduced in this plan to reflect their unique character from adjacent areas: Montgomery College Area (PA 7) and Woodmont (PA 11). Some planning areas have been combined, such as Twinbrook with Twinbrook Forest and Montrose with North Farm, while others have seen boundary changes from their previous 2002 CMP extents. In general, the adjusted planning area boundaries reflect common characteristics within each area and the location of practical delineations, such as major roads, railways, natural features, and established neighborhoods or commercial districts.

How to Read this Section

This Planning Areas section is written as a complement to the Elements section of the plan, which includes the broader citywide policies consisting of the plan's ten topical elements. Each planning area includes a summary of their distinctive characteristics; a history of previously approved plans, studies, and major developments; and key issues facing the planning area now and in the near future. Most planning areas include focus area recommendations, which are properties or groups of properties with recommended zoning changes and/or urban design recommendations; public projects or studies recommended to be undertaken over the life of the Plan; and other recommendations particular to each planning area.

Focus areas are denoted in each planning area's Land Use Policy Map by a purple circle with the letter "A" followed by a number; recommended City projects are numbered in a black square and the letter "P". Land use policy changes take effect with the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan. Zoning changes are recommended in the plan but require implementation through separate Zoning Ordinance or Map amendments; and urban design recommendations are intended to guide future redevelopment of the subject area.

Many policies and recommended public projects in this section have their foundations in one or more of the Comprehensive Plan's Elements. Where such relationships exist, references are made to their respective policy or action in the Elements.

Definitions for land use policy designations in each planning area's Land Use Policy Map are shown on the next page, as well as a map for the entire city, overlaid by planning areas. The definition of some land use designations vary from the general definitions and are explained in the relevant planning area Focus Areas.

Definitions for Land Use Policy Map Designations

RESIDENTIAL

-  **RD - Residential Detached** is mapped for properties with a single house per lot, but may include institutional or home office uses. This category may also include one accessory dwelling unit, under rules defined in the Zoning Ordinance.
-  **RA - Residential Attached** includes a variety of house types that share party walls. Types of construction include duplex, triplex, fourplex, townhouses/row houses, and, depending on the location in the city, small apartment buildings with up to six units in a single structure. Detached houses are also allowed.
-  **RF - Residential Flexible** includes a mix of townhouses/row houses, and apartment buildings, as well as detached houses. It is applied to sites where the mix of allowed residential types is flexible and to be finalized during development review. Small-scale commercial uses are an included option if integrated into the residential development.
-  **RM - Residential Multiple Unit** is mapped for apartment or condominium buildings, which are defined as construction types with shared corridors and entrances. The density of units and size of the building is regulated by the zoning ordinance. RM areas exclude detached and attached types of construction.

COMMERCIAL AND MIXED-USE

-  **C - Commercial** is mapped exclusively for commercial uses, which include all types of businesses that provide direct sales or customer service, including retail shops, grocery stores, restaurants, personal or professional services, and lodging. In some locations, the Plan indicates where commercial is strongly preferred along a street frontage.
-  **CRM - Commercial and Residential Mix** expresses the City's interest in retaining and introducing commercial uses in specific locations mixed with multiple unit residential and/or residential attached types. The mix can be horizontal, with stand alone commercial next to apartment buildings on a site; or the mix can be vertical, with commercial on the ground floor and apartments above. In some locations, the Plan indicates where commercial is strongly preferred along a street frontage.
-  **O - Office** is mapped where office or other employment-generating uses, such as hotels, research & development, or laboratories, are preferred as the primary use. Commercial or other customer-serving uses are allowed as complements to the primary employment-generating use.

-  **RO - Residential and/or Office** allows either or both uses, but not commercial.

-  **OCRM - Office, Commercial and Residential Mix** is the most flexible category, allowing a wide choice in mixing office, commercial, and residential uses. Uses such as research & development, breweries, distilleries, and small manufacturing may be appropriate if they do not adversely impact surrounding properties. In some locations, the Plan indicates where commercial is strongly preferred along a street frontage.

-  **SRM - Service Industrial and Residential Mix** is mapped in areas where service industrial is the primary use, but a mix of residential, commercial, office, and other uses is also allowed.

-  **SI - Service Industrial** is inclusive of a wide variety of light industrial uses, warehouses, automobile repair, construction supply, and other distribution, repair, or wholesale businesses. It also allows for food service, kennels, or indoor recreation. Railroad and other utility properties are included.

PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL

-  **P - Public Parks** includes all public parks and open space.¹
 A green asterisk is placed on the map in the general area where a **Potential Future Public Park** is needed, but the specific location has yet to be determined.
-  **CI - Civic and Public Institutional** are uses where government and other civic functions are located on publicly owned property. These uses include public schools and colleges, courthouses, Rockville City Hall, County offices, libraries, and maintenance facilities. Public parks are mapped under the Public Park (P) designation.
-  **OSP - Open Space Private** is private country club land and golf courses, and also large common areas owned by homeowners associations.
-  **I - Private Institutional** is mapped for private religious institutions and organizations, private schools, and cemeteries.²

¹ Any land use designation of Public Parks on private property or property not owned by the City of Rockville is for planning purposes only. Any such property will not be zoned as "Park" and nothing in this Plan precludes an owner from developing property in accordance with the zoning designation and zoning regulations applicable to the property.

² The Land Use Policy Map applies the Private Institutional designation to existing institutional uses on parcels larger than three acres; smaller parcels are designated with the recommended land use for the property as if it was not occupied by an institutional use. In either case, institutional uses should be an allowed use in the Zoning Ordinance.

The map displays the City of Gaithersburg, Maryland, divided into 17 numbered planning areas. The areas are color-coded to represent different land use types: yellow for residential, green for open space, blue for commercial, orange for industrial, and brown for other uses. Major roads and highways are shown, including I-270, I-495, and various local roads like Shady Grove Rd, Research Blvd, and Wootton Pkwy. The map also includes labels for Montgomery County, Shady Grove Metro Station, and Rockville Metro Station. A scale bar at the bottom indicates distances up to 1 mile.