

Submitted by Randy Nittoli, President of the Board of the Ashton Village Homeowners Association

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Two major considerations for Ashton are to provide:

- Active recreational opportunities for all ages, including the older adult population, and
- Strengthened connections to nearby public spaces, parks and historic programming.

This Plan recommends the creation of new open spaces for social gathering, play and active recreation with amenities that encourage social interaction, such as picnic areas, playgrounds, community gardens and dog parks. Opportunities for active amenities such as a skate park could be appropriate near the high school if land becomes available.

Two areas within the Sector Plan area have sufficient space to accommodate substantial new open space amenities: the land behind the townhouses and adjacent to an existing stormwater management facility in the northwest quadrant, and as part of the undeveloped land in the southeast quadrant.

A community playground is situated between the two cul-de-sacs (Ashton Club Way and Orion Club Drive), as well as approximately 3.2 acres of private open space. This space is identified as “common use facilities” for the Ashton Village HOA but nearly two acres of private open space in and around the stormwater pond have been identified as a “common area” on the record plat for the community. The declaration of covenants for the Ashton Village Homeowners Association (HOA) gives the HOA the right to dedicate or transfer any part of the common area to a public agency. It is recommended that a potential shared public/private use agreement be explored with the Ashton Village HOA to make the space potentially more accessible for a limited number of community events in the future. Options should be explored to make this space more accessible and usable to the public instead of just for the members of the Ashton Village HOA.


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Open space in the Residential Edge neighborhood is mostly privatized or designed to feel private and serving of the adjacent residential communities. A roughly 3.2 acre open lawn area surrounding the stormwater pond is owned by the Ashton Village Homeowners Association. The open areas around the pond may be suitable for a village gathering space, and a potential public/private shared use agreement should be explored with the HOA. Retrofitting the pond according to current standards would offer opportunities to redesign this space and add amenities. A playground on the property currently signed for the exclusive use of the Ashton Village homeowners would ideally could also potentially be incorporated into this shared use gathering space. An existing sidewalk connects these open spaces to the Ashton Village Shopping Center aiding in accessibility from all points in the village center.















Email

Ashton Village Center Sect...

Email

From  Françoise Carrier

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Subject Ashton Village Center Sector Plan: Comments on Working Draft

Date Sent **Date Received** 9/24/2020 11:00 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Chair Anderson,

As a supplement to my testimony at the public hearing on the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan, please find attached changes that Nichols Development proposes to the Working Draft. We have made our comments directly in the document for the sake of clarity and ease of reference. To simplify your review, we've provided only the pages on which we have comments. Red text represents proposed insertions, and we used red strike-throughs for proposed deletions. You will find explanations and additional commentary in blue text.

Thank you for considering this input. We look forward to working with you on the plan as it progresses.

Yours,

Françoise M. Carrier



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Attachments



WORKING DRAFT – JULY 2020

Cover

3.2.2 PROPOSED LAND USE AND ZONING

This Plan does not propose land use or zoning changes in the Rural Buffer or Residential Edge neighborhoods except to replace the Planned Development zone with the TLD (Townhouse Low Density) zone, based on the densities of the existing townhomes and detached houses.

The Sector Plan proposes very modest land use changes within the Village Core to encourage development of a more meaningful village center that puts an increased emphasis on residential density over commercial density (see Map 8). Proposed zoning in the Village Core carefully manages the types of commercial uses that may be built, generally going from CRT-0.75 and CRT-1.25 (Commercial Residential Town) to CRN-0.5 (Commercial Residential Neighborhood), with both commercial and residential uses being allowed to utilize up to the full 0.5 FAR. This increases the allowed residential density by 0.25 FAR in the two southern quadrants and reduces the potential for commercial development by 0.25 FAR in all the CRT-Zoned properties. The commercial portion of the PD-5 zone, the church property in the southwest quadrant and most of the properties in the southeast quadrant will also be zoned CRN with a total FAR of 0.5.

The specific zoning recommendations are also discussed in the Neighborhoods chapter of the Sector Plan.

3.2.3 SANDY SPRING/ASHTON RURAL VILLAGE OVERLAY ZONE

As can be seen on the Existing Zoning Map (see Map 6), much of the Plan area is also in the Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Village Overlay zone. The SSA Overlay zone was created to restrict uses and provide guidelines to achieve a “village scale” of development in both Sandy Spring and Ashton.

The 2015 Sandy Spring Rural Village Plan rezoned properties from the CRT to the CRN zone and removed the SSA Overlay zone from the Sandy Spring Village Center because of the finer-grained management of land uses, densities and heights allowed in the C/R family of zones. A similar review was performed for this Plan, and while many provisions of the overlay are no longer needed, there are some protections allowing specific land uses that warrant modifying rather than eliminating the overlay zone. The requirement for site plan should be retained as the best way to implement design recommendations.

This Plan recommends removing the list of prohibited uses in the overlay zone and replacing the CRT zone with the CRN zone to achieve a similar result. The Plan also recommends removing the properties in the Residential and Rural Residential zones from the overlay zone because the underlying zones already offer adequate protections to lot sizes and heights. The zoning text can

then be updated to remove unnecessary provisions.

Three existing uses in the Plan area are not allowed under the CRN zone, however: the filling station and auto repair shop in the southwest corner and the drive-thru associated with the bank in the southeast corner. All three of these uses are Limited or Conditional uses in the CRT zone but not allowed in the CRN zone. This Plan recommends adding language to the overlay zone to allow drive-thrus not associated with restaurants, filling stations and vehicle repair services to be considered conforming and be allowed to continue or be altered, repaired or replaced.

on the same site or on contiguous property

The Plan also recommends removing text from the overlay zone requiring public water and sewer systems and off-street parking in residential areas to serve nearby commercial uses because these provisions are no longer needed.

The combination of changes in the 2014 Zoning Ordinance, the recommended changes above and the design guidelines provided by this Plan requires an update to the purpose of the SSA Overlay zone. This Plan recommends updating the SSA Overlay zone’s purpose to:

Preserve and enhance the rural village character of the Sandy Spring and Ashton village centers using detailed site review and the continuation of community

servicing businesses within the village center.

See the Plan Appendix for a more detailed analysis of the proposed modifications to the SSA Overlay zone.

3.2.4 REMOVAL OF THE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT ZONE

The new Zoning Ordinance kept the Planned Development Zones in place but precluded their future use. Master plans done since the revision was approved in 2014 have evaluated land in these retained zones and have proposed appropriate reclassifications from the new Ordinance. This Plan recommends new zoning for the Ashton Village Shopping Center and the adjacent residential community, now in the PD-5 zone. The CRN zone should be applied to the shopping center consistent with the recommendations for the rest of the Village Core neighborhood while the residential community should be rezoned Townhouse Low Density (TLD).

3.2.5 LAND USE AND ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Rezone all properties in the northeast, northwest and southwest quadrants of the Village Core neighborhood to CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-35
2. Rezone all properties in the southeast quadrant of the Village Core neighborhood to CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-40 with the exception of the BG&E substation property, which should retain its R-60 zone.

3. Rezone the residential properties in the Ashton Village development from PD-5 and R-200 to Townhouse Low Density (TLD).
4. Confirm the existing zoning for the properties in the Rural Buffer neighborhood and the remainder of the Residential Edge neighborhoods.
5. Revise the Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Village Overlay zone to:
 - a. Remove the limitations on land uses.
 - b. Remove or update the residential development standards.
 - c. Remove the development standards for the Commercial/Residential or Employment zones.
 - d. Remove the sewer requirement.
 - e. Remove the use of properties in a residential zone for off-street parking.
 - f. Retain the site plan requirements but remove the requirement for direct accessibility from a sidewalk, plaza or other public space.
 - g. Allow a drive-thru as a Limited Use if associated with a bank. Do not allow the drive-thru lane to be adjacent to MD 108 or MD 650 under any condition.
 - h. Revise the purpose statement to reflect these proposed changes.
 - i. Revise the boundary of the SSA Overlay zone to only cover the CRN-Zoned properties.

, with the exception of the mixed uses portion of the Ashton Market site, which should be rezoned to CRN-0.75, C-0.5, R-0.5, H-35 to conform to the Village Core CRN zoning while retaining its current density.

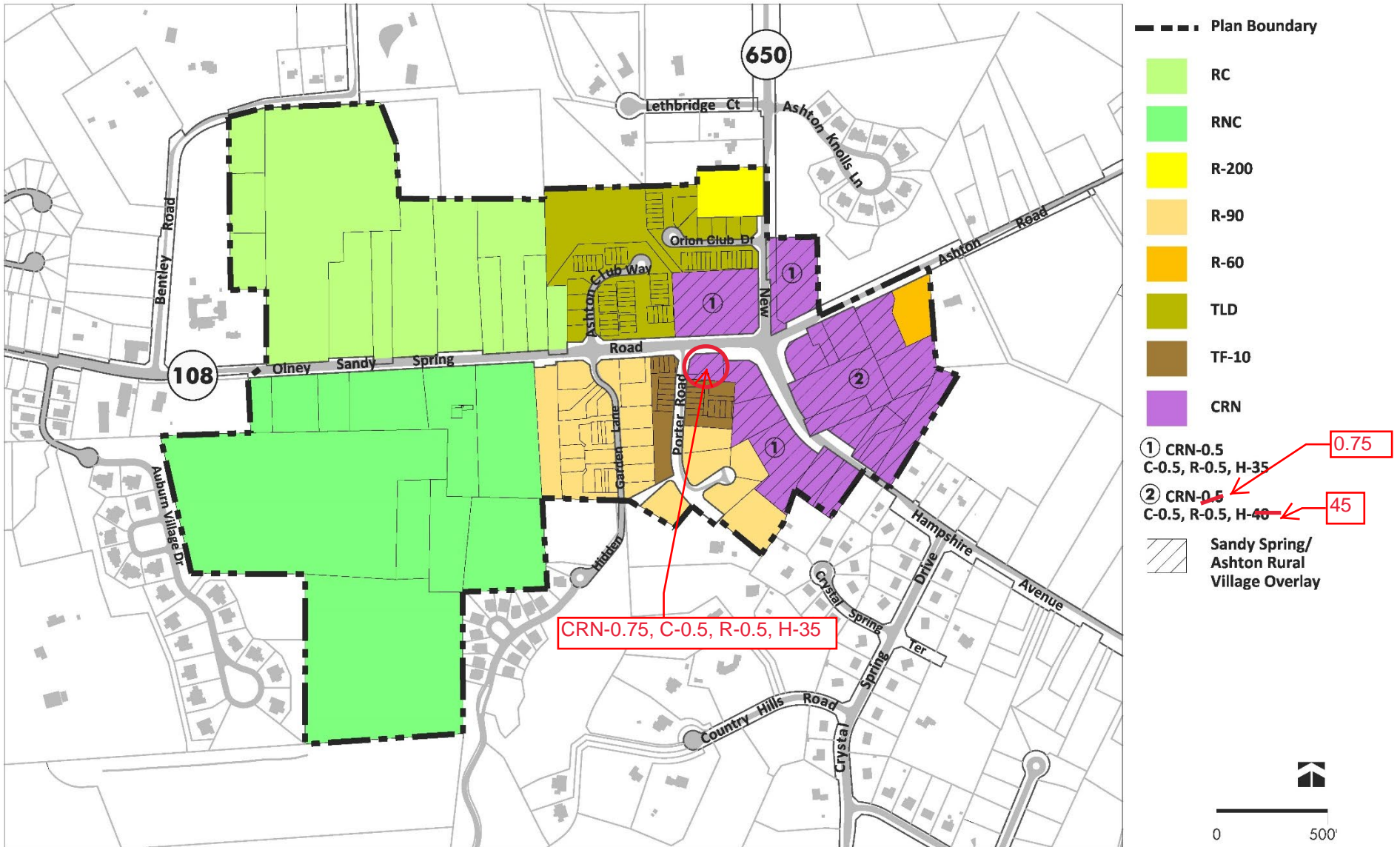
located between the building edge and

This language is suggested for consistency with page 53.

0.75

45

Map 8. Proposed Zoning



3.3 Community Design

3.3.1 CONTEXT

An integral part of ensuring a vibrant and successful rural village is the design of the buildings and public spaces. In many of the older, traditional villages found in the Mid-Atlantic region, building placement and architecture are critical to achieving the village-like character and a sense of place. At village edges, buildings are typically spaced farther apart with varying setbacks from the street. As one gets closer to the Village Core neighborhood, buildings are pulled closer to the street and to each other to form a continuous street wall, helping to create a sense of place and defining the arrival at the village center. At critical junctures, buildings are sometimes set back to signify an important community gathering or civic space. (See Figure 2.)

Many basic design elements, such as building placement and orientation and limiting building heights are already prescribed within the recommended CRN zone. This Plan builds upon the zoning requirements with additional recommendations that will provide visual interest, engage the public realm and ensure that new developments enhance rather than detract from the existing character of the village.

These recommendations address ways to address building massing, and to ensure any new construction in the rural village character.

3.3.2.2 would significantly depress achievable density and would make it extremely difficult (a) to locate a multi-family building along MD 108 or MD 650, and (b) to create the desirable transition described in 3.3.2.1.

achieve. Additional design elements are provided for community open spaces and transportation systems within their respective sections of the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan. More detailed guidelines are provided in the Design Guidelines chapter which both define and provide best practice examples of these design elements.

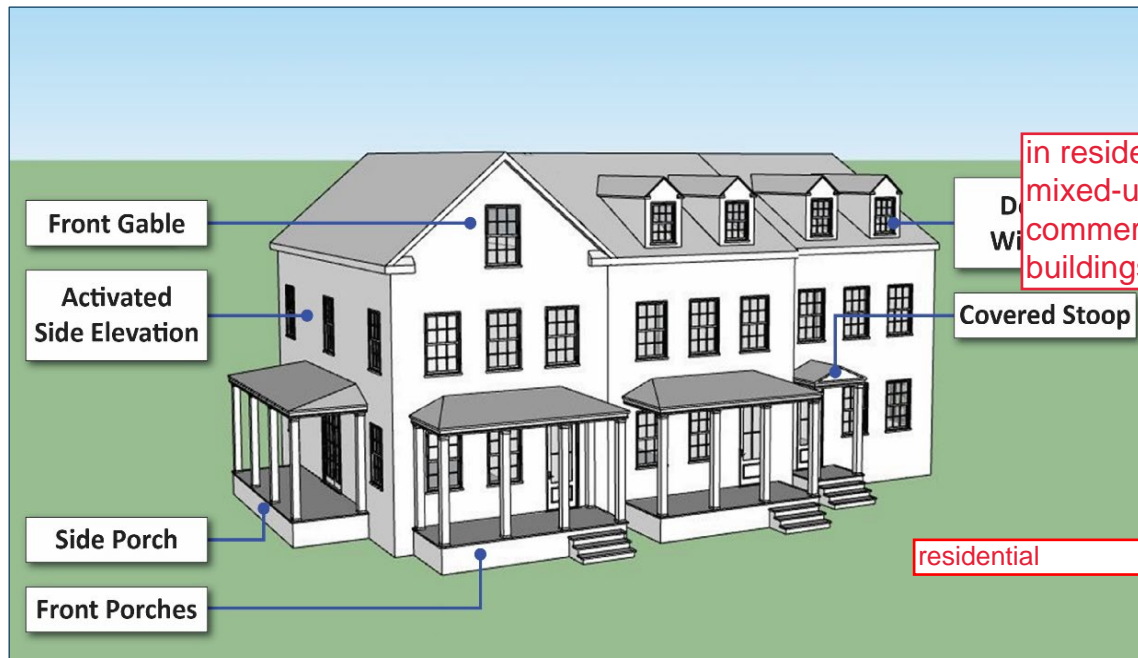
While the existing pattern of building placement in the Rural Buffer and Residential Edge neighborhoods has an appropriate scale and placement, a significant portion of the buildings in the Village Core do not currently contribute to a meaningful street wall. This disconnect leaves the public realm ill-defined and uninviting. This Plan strives to create a truly vibrant place that serves as the core to Ashton. To do this and maintain the appropriate transition between the Village Core and the Residential Edge and Rural Buffer, new development within the Village Core should ensure that new buildings are context-sensitive and complement existing buildings in surrounding communities.

3.3.2 COMMUNITY DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Building height, massing and placement should create a transition between the single-family detached dwelling units outside the Village Core neighborhood, and potential commercial, mixed-use, or multifamily buildings clustered around the intersection of MD 108/650.
2. ~~Entirely residential buildings with front or side elevations along MD 108 or MD 650~~



Figure 2. Figure grounds of Mid-Atlantic villages showing development patterns.



the side and rear of buildings for public or private access.

7. Building heights should vary between adjacent buildings, with lower heights closer to the edge of the Village Core neighborhood and higher heights closer to the MD 108/650 intersection.
8. Vary rooflines and setbacks in the front façade plane to break down the massing and to provide visual interest for new buildings.
9. A majority of buildings should contain pitched roofs. If flat roofs are used, the façade should introduce a cornice along the roof edge.
10. Provide pedestrian accessible pass-throughs between commercial or mixed-use buildings to break up the scale of structures on larger development sites and to provide access to the street from parking areas.
11. Incorporate architectural elements in the façades, such as front and side-turned gables, front and side porches, covered stoops, recess entries, bay windows, dormer windows and cupolas.
12. All sides of building should be designed and built with the same exterior architecture and building materials in mind.
13. Buildings should be clad in materials and patterns authentic to rural village character, such as brick, stone, wood shingles, and wood cladding.

in residential, mixed-use or commercial buildings

residential

each

and cement fiber siding imitating wood cladding

Figure 3. Architectural embellishments provide visual interest to building massing.

should be designed so that the building width, building massing and façade treatment fronting to these roads suggests a single-family detached or duplex building form, regardless of actual housing type. The depth of these buildings should be flexible to accommodate various building types and building densities.

3. New commercial and mixed-use buildings containing neighborhood-serving retail should be located closer to the corner of MD 108 and MD 650 to establish a clear village center or should be placed adjacent to planned open spaces to establish community gathering spaces.

4. Use front and side building façades to establish street walls along MD 108 and MD 650 to frame the streets, creating a distinction from areas outside the Village Core.
5. Parking should be located behind or to the side of buildings to avoid visibility from the street. Parking potentially visible from the street shall be screened with walls and/or landscaping to maintain the street wall. Parking shall not be located at a street corner.
6. Orient primary building façades, including entrances, toward streets or publicly accessible open spaces. Additional entrances may be located to

now sits. The easternmost portion of this collection of properties is a complex of wetlands and woodlands. The wetlands surround a spring that is the beginning of a tributary to the Patuxent River. These sensitive areas should be protected through Forest Conservation and remain in a natural condition. If feasible, a publicly accessible green should be located adjacent to the environmental features to provide visual access to the natural amenities and to make the usable portion of the space feel larger and more accessible to the public. Any green space in this area should also directly access a public or private road to make the area welcoming to the greater Ashton community.



View of undeveloped property behind the Sandy Spring Bank branch looking east from MD 650

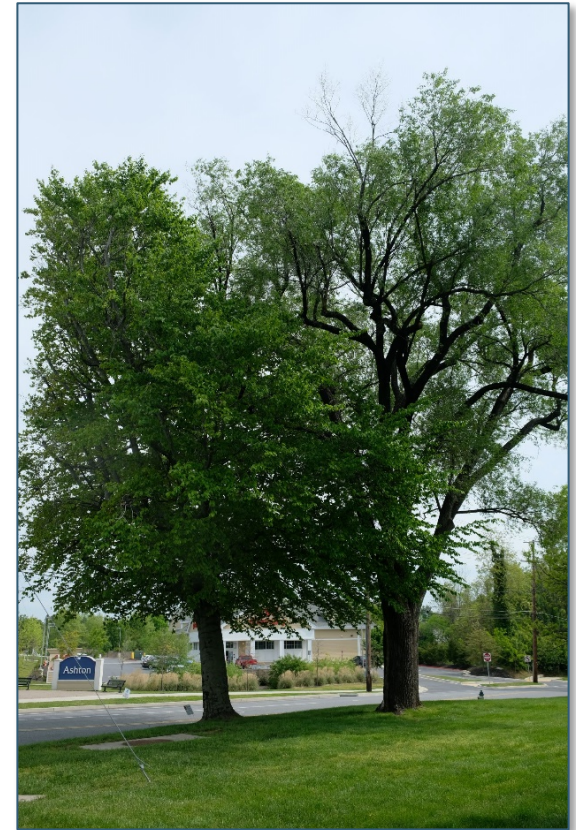
To enhance accessibility to any public green on the southeast quadrant, a more linear neighborhood green could link the public green to MD 650, furthering the connection to the greater community. This linear green could also serve as an outdoor area fronted

by commercial uses on the site, furthering the creation of a community gathering space.

Finally, a small open space area should be designated adjacent to the intersection of MD 650 and MD 108 to protect the iconic shade trees in this major intersection and the village center. This open space designation will ensure that these or other large trees will continue to enhance the character of Ashton.

When designing these new open spaces, the following design best practices should be considered:

- Where practical, frame open spaces with building façades and uses that activate those spaces.
- Ensure that open spaces remain publicly accessible by avoiding fencing unless it is for safety, such as a tot lot or dog park, in which case context-sensitive fencing should be provided.



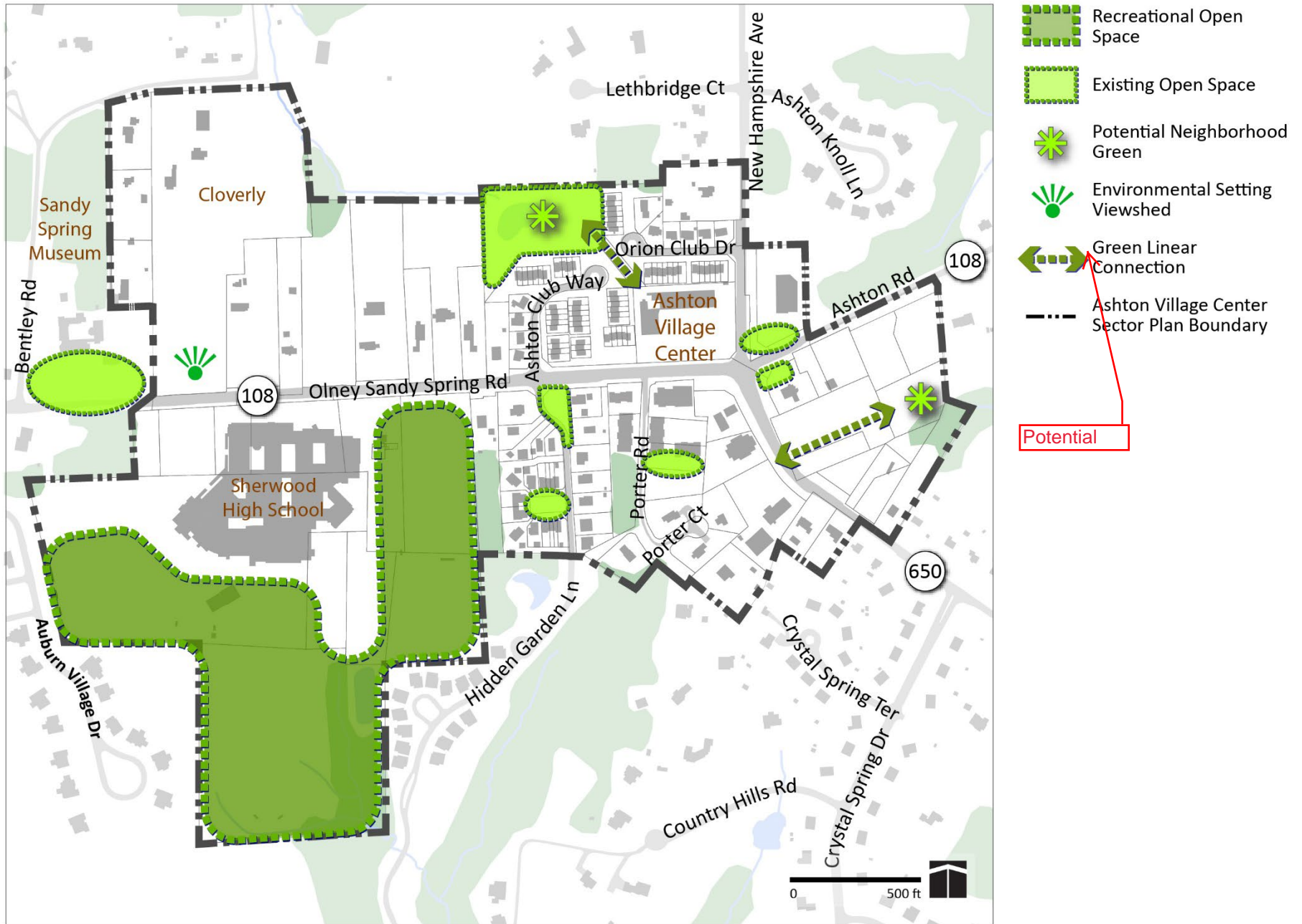
Large shade trees at the corner of MD 108 and MD 650.

that are intended to be open to the general public

This green may be in private or public ownership, to be determined at the time of development.

that is intended to be open to the general public

Map 12. Recommended Open Spaces



Nichols is willing to entertain the possibility of a village green that will be open to the general public, but wishes to reserve the flexibility to have additional, smaller open spaces that are open only to residents of the new development.

Station 4 on Brooke Road which is just outside the plan boundary to the west in Sandy Spring. They also operate Station 40 on Georgia Avenue south of Olney. The original Station 4 was built in 1930 on MD 108 at Meeting House Road but moved to its current location in 2001. Station 4 serves Sandy Spring, Ashton, Brinklow, Ednor and Norwood. The existing fire station is sufficient to serve the build-out of Ashton based on current and future population projection.

3.5.2.4 Public Schools

Ashton is served by Sherwood High School, William H. Farquhar Middle School and Sherwood Elementary School. A school cluster adequacy test for 2024 shows that at the elementary, middle and high school levels in the Sherwood High School Cluster, an additional 142, 159 and 222 students, respectively, could be accommodated before exceeding the current program capacity.

At an individual school level, Sherwood Elementary School would require an additional 120 students to reach the utilization rate that would trigger a residential building moratorium in the school's service area. William H. Farquhar Middle School is 238 students away from reaching a moratorium utilization rate. Given the modest residential density increases

the open space is intended only for private use, or the fence

included in this plan and analyzed in the Plan appendix, all school levels have sufficient capacity to accommodate the number of students that would be generated by the zoning recommended in this Plan.

3.5.3 COMMUNITY FACILITIES, OPEN SPACE AND TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS

Open space recommendations:

1. Encourage new open spaces to provide amenities that accommodate social interaction, such as picnic areas, playgrounds, community gardens and dog parks.
2. Explore opportunities for active amenities such as a skate park near Sherwood High School if public land becomes available.
3. Consider options to make the Ashton Village HOA's common area more accessible and usable to the public.
4. New development in the southeast quadrant of the MD 108/650 intersection should provide a publicly accessible public green space large enough to act as a civic gathering space. This space is encouraged to be adjacent to the environmental features to help the space feel larger. Any green space in this area should have direct frontage to a public or private road.
5. Consider using a linear neighborhood green or other similar open space that would connect a new public green in the southeast quadrant to MD 650.
6. Designate a small open space area adjacent to the southeast corner of the

intersection of MD 650 and MD 108 to protect the existing large shade.

7. Frame open spaces with building façades and uses that activate those spaces wherever practical.
8. Do not enclose open spaces with fencing unless it is for safety, such as for a tot lot or dog park, in which case context-sensitive fencing should be provided.

Trail recommendations:

9. Coordinate with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and Sherwood High School to construct a multiuse natural surface trail on either the east or west side of the school (or both) connecting the sidewalk along MD 108 with Park property to the south.
10. Remove the prior plan recommendation to continue the Northwest Branch Trail/Underground Railroad Experience Trail north of MD 108. This connection was removed by the 2016 *Countywide Parks Trails Master Plan* but is in the 1998 *Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan*.

good water quality, including the Patuxent River and the Rocky Gorge Reservoir.

3.6.2 SHADE

Shading and cooling features are particularly important in more developed areas with higher predicted pedestrian volumes such as the Village Core. Spaces that are planned for public gathering, pedestrian passage and other areas subject to the heat-island effect should be designed to increase shade coverage, including tree canopy and other means, such as awnings and building orientation. Many of the commercial properties in the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan area have limited existing shade and tree cover. Opportunities exist in rights-of-way and on private property to increase shade coverage and should be pursued through programs such as Shades of Green and funding from the State Highway Administration. New construction and reconstruction should consider building and solar orientation when locating outdoor gathering spaces. New development should ensure large canopy tree species are included in the landscaping.

The 1998 Plan had a recommendation to protect the entrances into Ashton to create a unique sense of the village versus the rural surroundings. Similarly, the distinction between Ashton and Sandy Spring is important to maintain. This Plan continues these recommendations and encourages maintaining and establishing future large

shade trees and forest edges that overarch the road at these rural entry points.

Recommendations:

- Any new development or redevelopment should include large canopy tree species in its landscaping.
- Consider awning, building orientation and other means of providing shade in any new development or redevelopment.
- Maintain existing and plant new shade trees that overarch MD 108 and MD 650.

3.6.3 GREENHOUSE GASES

This Plan advances carbon emission reductions through smart growth principals; a mix of building types and land uses, multiple transportation options, open space protection, and the promotion of walkable and bikeable neighborhoods. Further greenhouse gas reductions can be achieved by retrofitting older buildings and through the construction of new energy-efficient buildings. Given the relatively small geographical scope of the Ashton Village Center and the minor changes to land use recommendations, the impact of this Sector Plan on population and the transportation system in the area will be very limited. Proposed residential zoning in the Village Core could yield a net reduction in total vehicles over what the current commercial zoning would generate given that commercial density is more traffic intensive.

This results in an impact to the overall carbon footprint that is not detectable using current analysis methods required by Montgomery County Code Section 33A-14.

3.6.4 ENVIRONMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Retain the existing RC zoning in the Rural Buffer neighborhood for continued water quality protection in the PMA.
2. Incorporate shade-creating elements into building and site design with any new development or redevelopment, including but not limited to:
 - a. Including large canopy tree species in its landscaping,
 - b. Using awnings and canopies over doors and windows, and
 - c. Orienting buildings to try to provide shade to any public or outdoor gathering space.
3. Maintain existing and plant new shade trees in strategic locations that will eventually overarch MD 108 and MD 650, including at the entry points to the Village.
4. Promote existing tree programs such as Shades of Green to increase shade and canopy coverage on private properties.

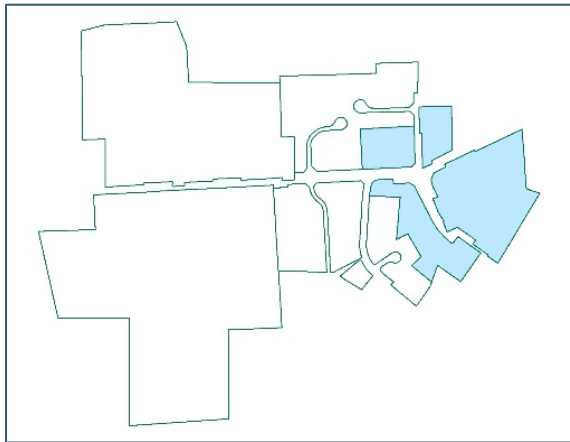
(to the extent feasible)

(to the extent feasible)

CHAPTER 4: NEIGHBORHOODS

The Ashton Village Center Sector Plan has three plan neighborhoods, each with a distinct context that requires specific recommendations. The following sections detail neighborhood and site-specific recommendations for land use, zoning, design and other potential impacts for the three neighborhoods.

4.1 Village Core Neighborhood



The Village Core neighborhood is located at the intersection of MD 108 and MD 650 and is both the current and planned focal point of

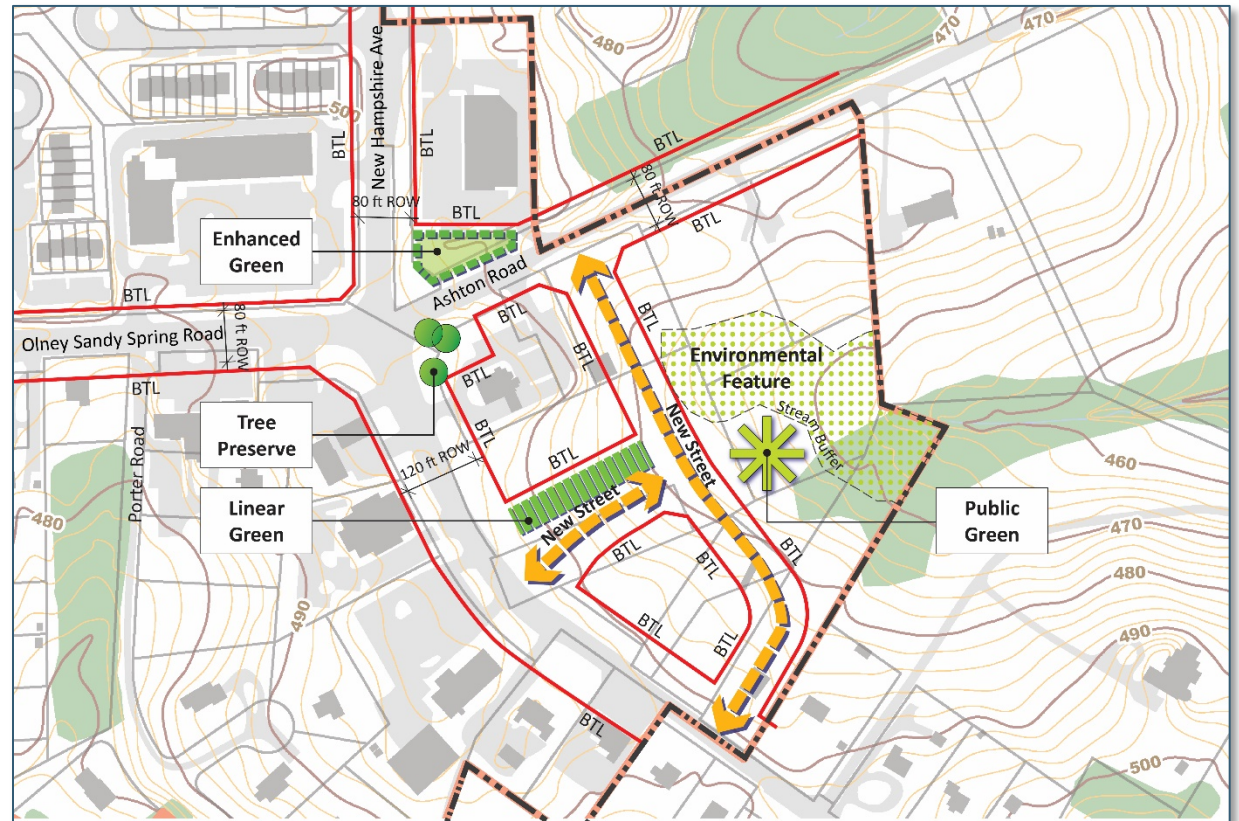


Figure 6. The Village Core Framework. (BTL = Build-to line)

community activity. Commercial uses define the immediate four corners of this intersection, although the southeast

quadrant is largely undeveloped. Recommendations for the Village Core will be presented first for the overall

All features shown are illustrative only.

neighborhood, then by intersection quadrant.

4.1.1 OVERALL ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

This Plan proposes a uniform density for the entire area of CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-35 with

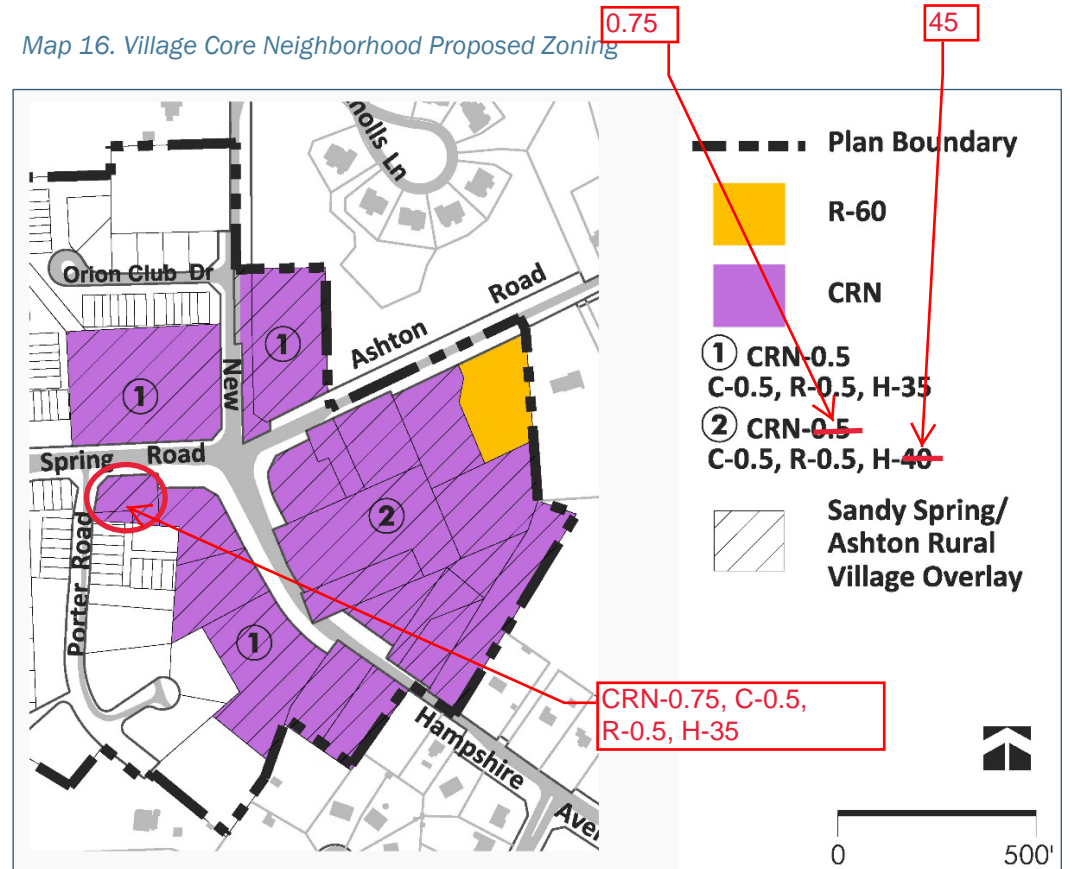
the exception of the southeast quadrant, where heights of up to 40 feet would be allowed. A total FAR of 0.5 accommodates all current development in the Plan area and allows for modest expansion of either commercial or residential uses on all properties.

The change from CRT to CRN zoning is recommended because the CRN zone more closely aligns with the existing SSA Overlay zone regarding land uses than the CRT zone does. The use of the CRN zone would also be consistent with the recommendations from the 2015 *Sandy Spring Rural Village Plan*.

Figure 7. Aerial view (2019) of Village Core neighborhood.



Map 16. Village Core Neighborhood Proposed Zoning



4.1.2 SOUTHWEST QUADRANT

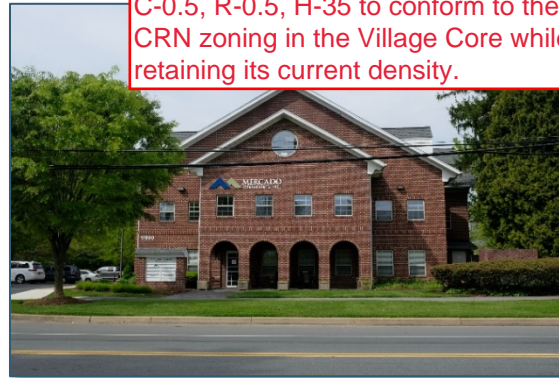
The existing zoning in the southwest quadrant of the main intersection is CRT-0.75 C-0.75 R-0.25 H-35, with the exception of the Christ Community Church of Ashton, which is R-90.

Without substantial property consolidation, appropriate limitations of building height and necessary parking make substantial redevelopment in the quadrant unlikely. Two existing developments on the west side of MD 650, the Alloway Building at 0.37 FAR and the Cricket Book Shop at 0.26 FAR, are the only two properties that currently exceed a total FAR of 0.25. For reference, the mixed-use portion of the Ashton Market development recently approved at the intersection of MD 108 and Porter Road is 0.34 FAR. The southwest Quadrant also has no residential development, though there are residential uses immediately to the south and west of the properties.

An existing section of sidepath—about 300 feet—is located along the west side of MD 650 from in front of the gas station to the north driveway of the Christ Community Church of Ashton. A shared-use path is recommended on the west side of MD 650 to continue this path to the south.

To provide a safer path and to improve traffic flow through the intersection, this Plan also recommends that two of the four curb cuts from the Exxon station be replaced by this path and an additional landscaping buffer.

with the exception of the mixed-use portion of the Ashton Market property, which should be rezoned to CRN-0.75, C-0.5, R-0.5, H-35 to conform to the CRN zoning in the Village Core while retaining its current density.



The Alloway Building (M-NCPPC Site Plan No. 820000280) was built in 2001 on what was known as the “Cuff Property” in the 1998 Plan, which rezoned the land from R-90 to C-1; it was subsequently rezoned CRT-0.75 in 2014.



The recently approved Ashton Market development (M-NCPPC Site Plan No. 820180160) along Porter Road contains 20 townhouses and a mixed-use building containing three apartments above commercial space for a restaurant or other retail use. The mixed-use building is the larger structure on the upper right.

Recommendations for the southwest quadrant:

1. Rezone all Village Core properties in the southwest quadrant from CRT-0.75 C-0.75 R-0.25 H-35 and R-90 to CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-35.
2. Extend the sidepath on the west side of MD 650 both to the north and south of the currently built segment in front of the Alloway building.
3. Eliminate the two driveways closest to the intersection at the filling station and replace with the sidepath and a vegetated buffer between the path and MD 650. There may be room for parking in the parts of the driveways outside the rights-of-way.
4. Pursue pedestrian and/or vehicular interconnectivity between the Ashton Market development and any redevelopment of the gas station property.
5. Provide additional shade trees on both private property and within the right-of-way along MD 650.

4.1.3 NORTHWEST QUADRANT

The northwest quadrant is currently zoned PD-5. Since the Planned Development zone is no longer used in the current zoning ordinance, a replacement zone must be found. There are two distinct land uses in the PD-5 Zoned area, the southeastern portion which contains the Ashton Village Shopping Center, and the northwest portion which contains one-family attached and detached dwellings. No formal open space exists at the

development application. At the corner in front of the existing bank, large canopy trees serve as a landmark in Ashton and should be protected if possible. Designation within the Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan as important open spaces will provide additional tools to support the creation of these spaces.

In the southeast corner, the proposed zoning should be ~~consistent with the other three corners at CRN 0.5 total FAR, but the~~ maximum allowable height is 40 feet instead of 35 feet. The additional height should be limited to ~~certain buildings and not applied~~ consistently across all new buildings in the quadrant. The BG&E property is an exception that should remain under its current zone, R-60.

Because the community and the landowner have a strong desire to continue a bank use on the southeast corner, the SSA Overlay zone, which is being retained in an altered form, should contain language allowing this use to be continued with any redevelopment. The revised overlay allows a drive-thru in the CRN zone but with Limited Use standards requiring the vehicular circulation associated with the drive-thru to be screened from the state roads.

Recommendations for the southeast quadrant:

1. Retain the R-60 zone for the BG&E property
2. Rezone all other properties in the southeast quadrant from CRT-0.75 C-0.75 R-0.25 H-35 to CRN-0.5 C-0.5 R-0.5 H-40.

slightly higher than the other three corners, at CRN-0.75 total FAR, to provide adequate flexibility for this key site. The commercial and residential FAR should be consistent with the other three corners at 0.5 FAR. The

should

3. Ensure a variety of building widths, building heights and the number of building floors to achieve compatibility with existing surrounding development and maintenance of the rural village character.
4. Provide sidewalks along MD 108 and MD 650.
5. Interconnected vehicle access to both MD 108 and MD 650 should be provided through streets built to a public standard, including sidewalks, street trees and street parking were feasible. The circulation shall be designed to discourage cut-through traffic.
6. Design any future drive-thru uses to avoid vehicle queuing between the building edge and a public roadway.
7. Provide a publicly accessible open space, ideally adjacent to the environmental features at the eastern edge of the quadrant.
8. Provide a linear green space to connect to the primary public open space to the sidewalk along MD 650.
9. Retain a small green area near the MD 108/650 intersection to protect the mature shade trees there to the extent feasible.
10. Designate the proposed open spaces within the Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan.

should be 45

drive-thru

and to be part of a new bank building located on any contiguous property within close proximity to the intersection of MD 650 and MD 108, not just at the location of the current bank.

a small number of mixed-use buildings located near the intersection of MD 650 and MD 108, and should not be

1998 Plan Erratum

During development of the 1998 Plan, allowing mixed-use development in the southeast quadrant was considered but the County Council ultimately requested removal of this recommendation in their resolution approving the plan (p. 20 of the resolution Council Resolution adopting the Plan). The printed document, however, inadvertently left the two sentences in the Plan document.

“flexibility in placement of commercial uses in the southeast quadrant to encourage design that better integrates residential and commercial uses” and the idea that applying the Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Village Overlay zone would allow the necessary flexibility to achieve this recommendation (p. 39 of the 1998 Plan).

This space may be in public or private ownership, to be determined at the time of development.

The intent of the Council's decision in 1998 was to allow a mix of uses in the quadrant. Council's view on mixed use has evolved; during the rewrite of the county's Zoning Ordinance in 2014, strictly commercial zones countywide were replaced by C/R zones to encourage mixed uses. The CRT zone was applied to previously commercial properties in the southeast quadrant but much of the quadrant is still in a single-family residential zone (R-60).

Other buildings should be a mix of heights at 40 feet and below.

0.75

scale and dimensions are important to maintain the character of a village. Typical villages in the Mid-Atlantic region feature many small buildings that include single family homes, duplexes, small multiplexes and small commercial buildings. If new buildings are too wide or deep, the character of a traditional village may be lost. Smaller building widths along street edges are preferred, as is providing a variety in building widths.

90

With the exception of multi use or general building types, new buildings along the two state roadways should be 80 feet or less in width to maintain a building massing that replicates the building forms found along MD 108 and MD 650. Multi use and general buildings may be slightly longer in length to accommodate mixed-use tenants. On non-state road street frontages, buildings should be no wider than 120 feet to remain compatible with the vision for Ashton.

up to 120 feet

150

Buildings may be deeper than their road frontage if the depth is not highly visible. Buildings at the recommended maximum width, or that are deeper than wide should be carefully located to ensure that are dispersed throughout the Village Core and not clustered all in one area.

Here are the various building types anticipated in the future in Ashton.

1. **Single-Family Detached** – A single-family detached house is a single dwelling unit on its own lot. The lot and building dimensional requirements should comply with the standards of its zone. Ideally,

room for an accessory dwelling unit on these detached house sites should be considered.

2. **Duplex** – A duplex or a semi-detached dwelling, which is a building containing two single-family dwelling units attached side-by-side, may take on various orientations to the streets. Architectural embellishments are not counted in the width of a unit.



3. **Townhouses** – A townhouse is a building containing three or more single-family dwelling units where each dwelling is attached to its neighbor, separated

vertically by a party wall. The front façade of any individual townhouse unit may vary in width however most units should be 22 feet or narrower in width to avoid inappropriate massing.



4. **Stacked Flats** – Stacked flats are a type of building with multifamily dwelling units separated vertically by floor. A stacked flat building may be two or more stories and contain dwelling unit(s) on each floor. Stacked flats may be either one dwelling unit wide with multiple units stacked vertically, or may be attached similar to townhouses with multiple stacks composed as one building.

dwelling on townhouses or stacked flats should be avoided unless it creates a coherent front elevation.

- b. Multi use and general buildings should have a base, middle and top in their composition with the cornice or eave being the top. The façades of a building greater than 60 feet in width along the public realm should be designed to look like more than one building that has been attached. The façade should be designed so that the first floor appears taller than the floors above.

Residential

Buildings have varied and simple roof lines along streetscape



- 3. **Rooflines** – Buildings should have simple rooflines that reflect traditional architectural styles. Rooflines should be similar to the architecture in the surrounding area, which features primarily pitched roofs. Attached units, multi use buildings and general buildings ~~should also have pitched roofs or~~ provide a strong cornice element

may

- a. New buildings with a pitched roof should be designed to be similar to the pitch of existing buildings, which is approximately a minimum 6:12 pitch, except for those emulating an architectural style that dictates a lower roof pitch (i.e. Craftsman). Gables should be symmetrical.
- b. Consider incorporating top floor living space of the dwelling unit into the attic roofline.

or flat roofs, and if flat roofs are used, should

- c. Rooflines or cornice heights should be varied on wider general, or multi use buildings or sticks of townhomes with more than three units.

- c. There should be no expanses of long blank walls without fenestration on any elevations.

5.2.2.4 Architectural Embellishments

Some form of architectural embellishment provides additional rhythm and visual interest to building façades. Architectural elements may encroach beyond the build-to line. This is especially important to any façade that is visible from or faces a street or open space.

1. **Porches** – All porches should be designed with enough depth to enable outdoor furniture placement while maintaining safe circulation, and should extend a minimum of two-thirds the length of the primary façade on a residential dwelling unit. Porches may also be located on or wrap around to the sides of residential dwelling units. Porches may be placed on multi use and general buildings. Porches may be one, two or three stories. The second or third floors of a porch may or may not be covered. The covering of a porch may have a flat or shed roof with straight or hipped ends.
2. **Stoops** – Stoops are usually at least five feet in depth and should extend a minimum of one foot on each side of the front door of the primary façade on a residential dwelling unit. If a stoop is covered, it may have a flat, shed or gabled roof.

3. **Recessed Entries** – A recessed entry should be deep enough to provide cover from the elements at the entryway and should extend a minimum of one foot on each side of the front door of the primary façade on a residential dwelling unit.
4. **Bay Windows** – Bay windows may be angular or rectangular and encroach up to three feet beyond the build-to line.
5. **Shutters** – If shutters are used, the shutter and window opening sizes should match to provide the appearance of operability.



of each individual building

Architectural elements, such as recessed entries and bay windows provide visual interest

5.2.2.5 Building Materials

Buildings within the greater Sandy Spring/Ashton area represent a wide range of architectural styles, including Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Queen Anne and Victorian. When new buildings are designed in the Plan area, materials on new buildings should take their cues from and complement surrounding existing structures.

1. **Building Elevations** – Façades should be composed of durable materials that are indicative of a rural village such as brick, stone, wood or cement fiber, and should be clad in a way that clearly convey a particular architectural style. All façades should be composed of the same building materials.
2. **Water Table** – If the material used to create a water table at the base of an elevation of a building differs from the rest of the façade, the water table material should not extend above the window sill on the first floor of the elevation.

, where practical,

5.3 Open Space

Open spaces are places for passive and active recreation and social interaction in the community, and they come in a variety of forms. Some spaces incorporate important environmental features, while others may serve as the outdoor room for adjacent uses. All forms of open space can bring vibrancy to a community. New open spaces shall be well-designed, appropriately scaled and publicly accessible to all. Public open spaces should face a minimum of one publicly used street and should not be dominated by stormwater management facilities. Buildings facing directly onto open spaces should have a front parallel sidewalk that delineates the semiprivate front yard from the public space.

5.3.1 OPEN SPACE GUIDELINES

Public

The locations of public spaces, their dimensions and the activities adjacent to those open spaces help to determine if an open space is part of the public or private realm. Open spaces need to have an appropriate location and adequate size so that they are perceived as public, inviting and visually accessible to the immediate residents and the surrounding community. Publicly accessible open space should be adjacent to rights-of-way and not hidden within a community or behind barriers.

5.3.1.1 Open Space Types

Open spaces should integrate well with the surrounding building context. Multiple open space types should be employed throughout

the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan area to fill the recreational needs of the surrounding community.

1. **Linear Green** – A linear green is typically a passive space which are smaller open spaces lined by buildings and adjacent to a street. These linear greens tend to run the full length of a block, may also include programming for active functions and serve as a green connection to other public spaces. Widths may vary but should be at least wide enough to provide for seating, possible small pieces of public art or other decorative furnishings, enhanced landscaping, and a parallel walkway to the main sidewalk. Alternatively, the sidewalk space could be widened providing more of a plaza like feeling while keeping ample space for greenery and shade.



An active linear green with hardscape provides an area for sidewalk cafe space

2. **Neighborhood Green** – A neighborhood green is a larger, more centralized space than a linear green. Ideally, they are at least 10,000 square feet of contiguous space. It may have some of the same activities as a linear green, or a pocket park but it allows for greater community gathering, provides opportunities for other activities such as pick-up sports or picnics, and may have play equipment. A neighborhood green would be further enhanced if located in a way to connect with existing environmental features on a site to provide a transition area from the built environment to nature and to visually expand the size of the space.
 - a. At least one side of a neighborhood green should be adjacent to a public or private street.
 - b. If buildings front a neighborhood green, a sidewalk should be provided for accessibility.
 - c. Shade trees should be provided along street edges and at defined seating areas.
3. **Viewshed** – Viewsheds are not always formal gathering spaces, but rather windows in the built environment allowing visual access to the rural spaces that surround the village. Viewsheds should keep all users in mind including those in motor vehicles, on bikes, and on foot. Locating viewsheds that provide visual access to the environmental

setting that distinguishes the Rural Buffer from the Residential Edge needs to be maintained with minimal new development and the protection of large yards and established trees.

5.4 Connections

A true vibrant village is safe for pedestrians and bicyclists while allowing for vehicular traffic to move at acceptable speeds. Parking is located to the rear and sides of buildings. Curb cuts are strategically located and limited to enhance walkable and bikeable conditions. Where possible, alleys behind buildings and housing provide for parking access, services and deliveries.

A network of transportation connections, including sidewalks, sidepaths, streets and alleys needs to be established in the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan area to prioritize pedestrian and bike connections over automobile mobility.

5.4.1 CONNECTIONS GUIDELINES

A safe, attractive interconnected street network that is comfortable and convenient for all users, regardless of age, mobility or transportation choice, needs to be established in order to create a vibrant village. Services should be directed to the rear of properties to avoid conflicts with pedestrians and bicyclists.

5.4.1.1 Connection Elements

In addition to the paved surface of the roadway, design of sidewalk/sidepaths, alleys and parking locations helps to determine the walkability and bikeability of a village. Sidewalks and sidepaths promote walkability and bikeability in a community which can lead to increased social interaction, improved health and enhanced neighborhood safety. If cars are given priority, the vibrancy of a community may be lost.

1. **Public/Private Streets** – The size of existing public rights-of-way should not be expanded, ensuring that crossing distances are minimized for pedestrians and that drivers do not speed. New rights-of-way for new streets need to be designed so that they are pedestrian friendly and are sized appropriately to provide all the necessary street elements.
 - a. Existing rights-of-way need to be enhanced with grass panels or tree pits contiguous to the roadway that separate the sidewalk/sidepath from the travel lanes. The grass panel or tree pit should be at least eight feet in width to accommodate stormwater and shade trees.
 - b. On all streets without existing overhead obstructions, shade trees should be planted approximately every 35 to 40 feet on center to promote walkability, bikeability and limit the heat island effect.

- c. All new streets should be two-way with ample on-street parking.
- d. Consider special paving materials at critical locations, such as crosswalks, intersections, and areas with mixed-use development, to emphasize the unique sense of place of the location.

2. **Alleys** – On sites with smaller lots, alleys help maintain the streetscape fabric of the community by separating cars from pedestrians and bicyclists. Alleys provide vehicular and parking access to the rear of properties, service access and easy deliveries while enhancing streetscapes in front of properties with no curb cuts or driveways. Alleys are smaller in width than streets. Any parking not in garages or parking pads off alleys should be accommodated on-street, unless excess space in the alley allows for a small separate parking area with shade trees.

- a. Alleys are used for service purposes, such as access to garages, parking pads and trash pickup. Alleys do not need to be oversized and compete with streets, which are a primary organizing element in neighborhoods. The width of alleys should be narrow enough to be safe for service vehicles. Additional residential parking should occur on streets in the form of parallel parking.

The 2015 *Sandy Spring Rural Village Plan* removed the overlay from all properties within that plan area but left several disconnected fragments of the overlay zone on properties outside the Plan area surrounding the Sandy Spring Village Center. These properties are zoned R-90, R-200, RT-10 and RE-1. Proposed revisions to the SSA Overlay zone include removal of the residential development standards because

the underlying character of the area. Nichols urges elimination of the recommendation for an Implementation Advisory Committee. Obligating a developer to go through an extra layer of process, with at least one and perhaps more than one meeting with community members, would add unacceptable delay and expense in a market where it is already difficult to develop profitably.

6.4 Future

Several of the trails were in the area. The high school Branch Street high school nowhere," the champion and Hidden area. Further the exact

If an Implementation Advisory Committee is formed, the Planning Board should appoint a well-rounded cross-section of the community, including representatives of the southeastern quadrant property developer. The committee can be a forum for planning staff to keep residents informed and get their feedback, and the committee should provide advisory recommendations to planning staff at the time of DRC (Development Review Committee) review for any proposed development in the plan area. Any presentations to the Implementation Advisory Committee can be made at the same time as a project's pre-submission community meeting.

This Plan also recommends increased pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented wayfinding signs to direct residents and visitors to the numerous historic resources and parks in Ashton and Sandy Spring. A wayfinding master plan or similar research project will be needed to identify resources, design signage and determine the best placement of the signs.

6.5 Implementation Advisory Committee

This Plan supports the creation of an advisory group to address its implementation. The formation of any new advisory group should be staffed by the Planning Department in close coordination with the Ashton Area Community Association Alliance (AACAA).

This advisory group would work in coordination with the AACAA (or successor group) and the Mid-County Regional Services Center by providing specific community and redevelopment expertise. It would also serve as an interface between developers and County agencies in implementing recommendations of the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan. This new group should be structured to include representatives from the various constituencies interested in successful implementation of the Plan.

6.6 Sewer and Water

This Sector Plan confirms the 1998 Master Plan recommendation of providing community water and sewer service to the Ashton Village Center. Sewer service must be provided by extension from the existing Northwest Branch sewerage system, with no new pumping stations permitted in the Patuxent River watershed. This Plan extends the recommendation for sewer service to include the one property currently zoned RC in the southeast quadrant of the Village Core neighborhood.

6.7 Capital Improvements Program

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP), which is funded by the County Council and implemented by County agencies, establishes how and when construction projects are completed. The CIP cycle occurs every two years when regional advisory committees and M-NCPPC hold forums to discuss proposed items for the six-year CIP.

Table 3 shows a list of potential capital improvement projects that may be needed to support implementation of the Plan's vision over the life of the Sector Plan.