COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Vision

Rockville will have a range of high-quality community facilities that are well located to provide superior services to residents, workers and visitors. Growth in the city will be coordinated with investments in community facilities.



The City of Rockville and Montgomery County government are responsible for developing and maintaining the public facilities on which high-quality local government service delivery relies. The Community Facilities Element establishes policies and actions for a significant portion of these public facilities, including the City's main administrative facilities of City Hall, Police Headquarters, and the Public Works and Parks Maintenance Complex. Other City facilities are covered in the Recreation and Parks, Water Resources, and Transportation Elements of this Plan. This Element also addresses facilities owned and operated by Montgomery County government, Montgomery County Public Schools, and Montgomery College.

Summary of Community Input

During the Rockville 2040 process, Rockville community participants expressed the great value that they place on services from the City of Rockville and Montgomery County government. They communicated that the high quality of life in Rockville depends on responsive and local governance; great schools with sufficient capacity; superior security services, which include police, fire and rescue; and more.

Plan for the future of City of Rockville facilities, and advocate for County, State, federal, and private facilities, to meet the needs of the Rockville

community.

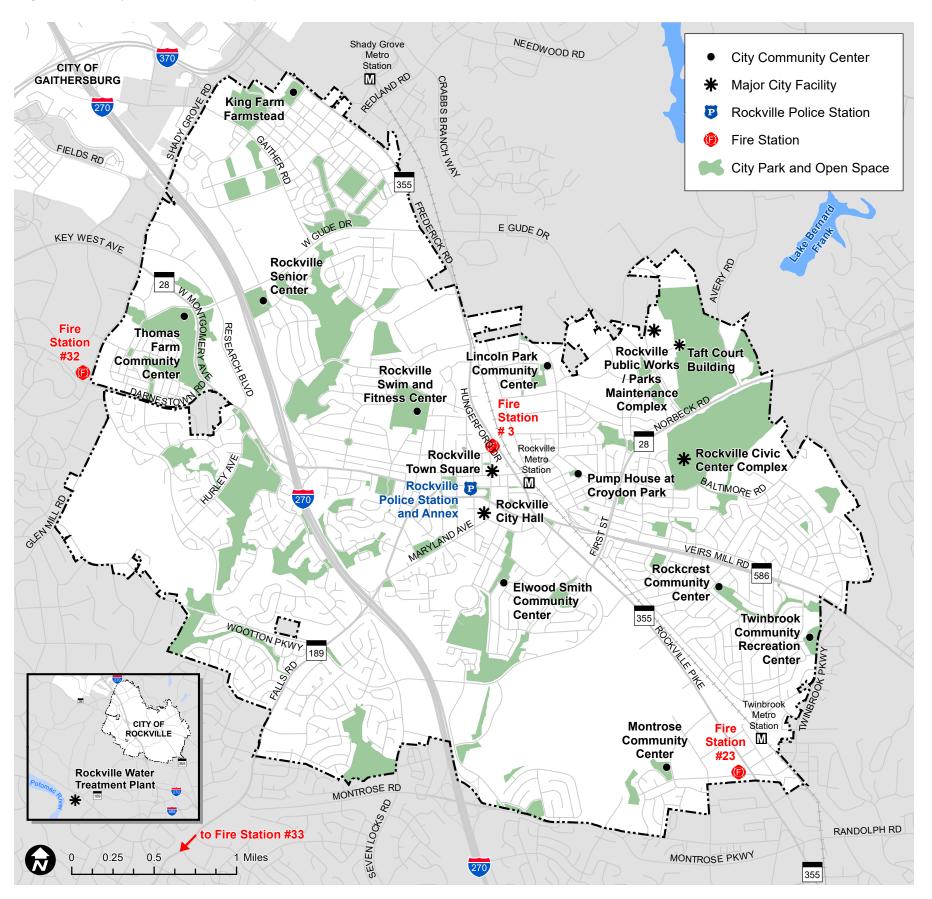
This Plan envisions growth of the city over the next twentyyear period with a strong commitment to maintain City services at the high level that the Rockville community expects. In order to ensure the delivery of services, the City needs facilities to house staff, records, materials, and equipment. For more on the city's projected growth, see the Introduction to this Plan.

The City is also committed to open government and robust engagement between citizens, elected officials, and staff, conducted frequently through public hearings and daily meetings in City facilities, primarily Rockville City Hall. Adequate meeting space and multimedia facilities are important to hosting

Goals for Rockville's community facilities include:

- 1. Plan for the future of City of Rockville facilities, and advocate for County, State, federal and private facilities, to meet the needs of the Rockville community.
- 2. Ensure adequate facilities for the Rockville Police Department and coordinate with Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services on their facility needs.
- 3. Actively engage on school development issues with Montgomery County Public Schools and maintain the highest standards for schools and libraries.
- 4. Foster better working relationships with Montgomery County government and Montgomery College on facility planning and implementation.
- 5. Keep Rockville on the cutting edge of information technology for City facilities, provision of City services, and infrastructure for residents and businesses.

Figure 19: City of Rockville Major Facilities and Fire Stations





Rockville City Hall (top) is the main administrative facility for the City. Facilities in City Hall include Mayor and Council Chamber and offices, staff offices and workspace, meeting rooms, and the Rockville 11 television studio (bottom).

public meetings and keeping all citizens informed through our print, video, and web-based communication channels.

In 2018, the City was served by a total full-time staff of 517 and a full-time equivalent of 95 part-time staff, for a total of 612 full-time equivalent employees. As of 2019, City staff serve approximately 68,000 residents and more than 76,000 employees who work in Rockville, plus the many thousands who shop, attend college, recreate or otherwise visit the city every day. Rockville is estimated to grow to approximately 87,000 residents and 91,000 workers by 2040.

Policy 1 Maintain City of Rockville facilities and staff levels to provide a high level of City services to the entire community.

Policy 2 Plan for the future of City of Rockville facilities.

City-owned facilities should be able to accommodate existing and future service needs. This Plan recommends development of a long-range City of Rockville facilities master plan that incorporates an analysis of space utilization and demand and strategies for meeting safety, security, and capacity needs to serve the Rockville community in the next decades. The current Rockville City Hall dates to 1962 with a number of expansions and internal reconfigurations having since been made. Analysis and consideration of options for Rockville City Hall will be necessary over the twenty-year planning horizon.

The Public Works and Parks Maintenance Complex on Rothgeb Drive is the crucial heart of operations for Rockville's heavy equipment maintenance and field technicians for the wide variety of jobs the City implements, from park maintenance to sewer and street repair and refuse collection. Storage of bulk materials, including road salt, and the City's stockroom, are located at this facility. With the purchase of an existing office building on Taft Court in 2019, the City moved to address space needs for administrative offices for the Public Works and Recreation and Parks departments. The addition of this 55,000 square feet of new space addresses a long-standing need, and its

location immediately adjacent to the Maintenance Complex on Rothgeb Drive provides convenient access between the two facilities.

For a discussion of other City facilities and amenities, including parks, playgrounds, trails, and community and recreation centers, see the Recreation and Parks Element.

Actions

- 2.1 On a regular basis, conduct space needs analyses using quantitative and qualitative methodologies to analyze existing facilities and functions; determine overall facility space needs; and provide recommendations for overall service efficiencies and improvements.
- 2.2 Develop a long-range facilities master plan that outlines strategies to meet safety, security, emergency preparedness, and capacity needs of the City's facility space, equipment, information technology systems (IT), and staff resources, including projections for growth over the next 20 years.
- 2.3 Identify strategies for funding space, equipment, and staff needs identified in the long-range facilities master plan, beyond the five-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) period.
- 2.4 Monitor space needs at Rockville City Hall to meet the service demands and staffing needs generated by the city's existing and projected population.
- 2.5 Retrofit the acquired office building at 6 Taft Court to accommodate the City's administrative space needs and enhance the City's emergency preparedness.
- 2.6 Update the facilities and emergency management plan for the Public Works and Parks Maintenance Complex on Rothgeb Drive.
- 2.7 Incorporate environmentally sustainable 'green' building practices in existing and new City facilities, including electric vehicle fleets and charging stations (See also Actions 4.3 and 4.4 of the Environment Element and Policy 14 of the Transportation Element).
- 2.8 Develop a emergency operations plan for City facilities and services that ensures community preparedness and





A new vehicle maintenance facility (under construction in the top image) helps to keep pace with the Public Works and Recreation and Parks needs. Conference rooms in Rockville City Hall (bottom) provide accessible and comfortable meeting spaces for Rockville staff and the public to conduct business and collaborate.

resiliency to natural disasters, security threats, extreme weather events, and public health emergencies. Coordinate emergency planning with County, State and federal partners, including the County Circuit and State District court systems located within the city.

- 2.9 Explore options to reconfigure or add community gathering spaces in Rockville City Hall and other publicly-accessible City buildings.
- 2.10 Study the need for additional community and recreation centers in currently under-served areas, including on the west side of I-270 south of Hurley Avenue.

Policy 3 Monitor County, State, and federal master plans and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) proposals.

Actions

- 3.1 Advocate for capital investments by County, State and federal entities, including the County Circuit and State District court systems located within the city that would benefit Rockville and its citizens, and against investments that would be detrimental.
- 3.2 Consider regional and local impacts as part of the City's advocacy positions.

GOAL 2

Ensure adequate facilities for the Rockville Police Department and coordinate with Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services on their facility needs.

The City of Rockville Police Department has more than 60 sworn officers, plus other staff addressing animal control, parking enforcement, photo enforcement, communications and administration. The Montgomery County Police Department also provides services to Rockville as needed, in coordination with Rockville's Police Department. Rockville is committed to having a safe and welcoming community.

Policy 4 Ensure that the Rockville Police Department has the facilities, equipment, and infrastructure needed to provide high-quality public safety services.

In 2012, the Rockville Police Department moved into renovated and new buildings on the site of the historic Rockville post office on North Washington Street, permitting the department to more than double its space to 26,000 square feet. Rockville's population increase is expected to require an increase in the number of Rockville Police Department staff, which can be accommodated in its current facilities for at least the next 10 to 15 years. However, not all vehicles and equipment can be securely located on-site.

Actions

- 4.1 Support the Police Department's efforts to maintain physical facilities consistent with its evolving needs and Rockville's growing population.
- 4.2 Find a long-term solution to the lack of non-secured equipment storage and parking for police vehicles.
- 4.3 Continue to monitor and invest in technology that enhances prevention of criminal activity, law enforcement, and traffic violations.

Policy 5 Support Montgomery County's Fire and Rescue Services to provide services to meet the city's current and future needs.

Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services (MCFRS) provides emergency medical response and fire fighting in the city. At present Stations 3 and 23 are within Rockville, and Stations 32 and 33 are located just outside the city. Fire Stations 3, 23, and 33 are staffed and owned by the Rockville Volunteer Fire Department and Fire Station 32 is staffed by MCFRS career firefighters and is a County facility.

MCFRS updates its Fire, Rescue, Emergency Medical Services and Community Risk Reduction Master Plan every

six years, with the current plan covering 2016-2022. This Plan concludes that Station 3, at the corner of Beall Avenue and Hungerford Drive, where the Rockville Volunteer Fire Department is headquartered, is in need of renovation or rebuilding. The MCFRS Master Plan also suggests that relocation could be considered, should a suitable site be identified. The City would like to see Station 3 relocated to a bigger site north of Rockville Town Center. Most of the operations out of Station 23 on Rollins Avenue are slated for relocation as well, to a new facility anticipated in the North Bethesda area near the intersection of Chapman Avenue and Montrose Parkway, while retaining the existing smaller facility in Rockville.

Fire and emergency response times are measured by MCFRS in terms of goals based on the type of emergency. The goals are expected to be met 90 percent of the time. Rockville will advocate to ensure adequate coverage for all portions of the city, for current and future needs.

Actions

- 5.1 Periodically assess the MCFRS Fire, Rescue, **Emergency Medical Services and Community Risk** Reduction Master Plan and the Strategic Plan to determine if Rockville is serviced in an effective and timely manner.
- 5.2 Ensure that fire station locations are strategically located to meet the city's needs.
- 5.3 Work with the County to develop an acceptable solution for the renovation or relocation of Rockville Fire Station 3.

GOAL 3 Actively engage on school development issues with Montgomery County Public Schools and maintain the highest standards for schools and libraries.

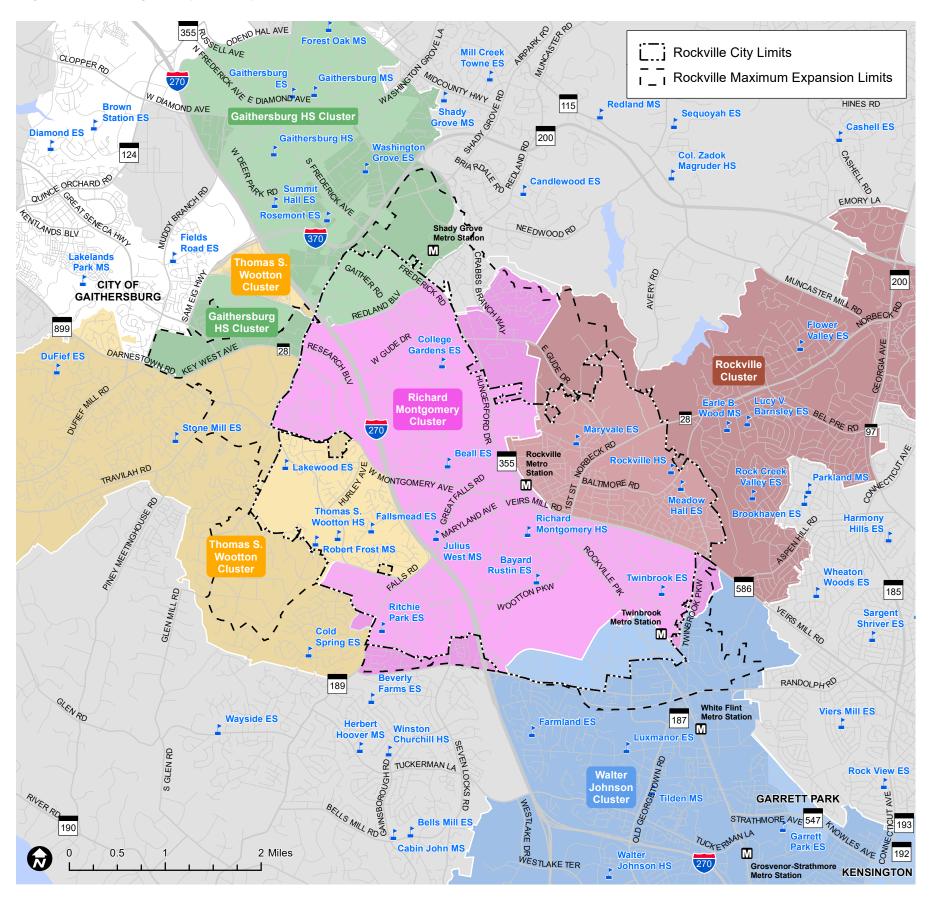
Rockville was a founding community in the formation of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). Our city hosted some of the first schools in the system and continues to be a proud participant—as citizens of the county, parents and school children—in the shaping of one of the nation's best





Students at Thomas S. Wootton High School (top) participate in a survey for the Rockville 2040 process in 2016. Richard Montgomery High School (bottom) was reconstructed and reopened in 2007 to provide the most up-to-date facilities for instruction of Rockville students.

Figure 20: Montgomery County Public Schools Clusters (2020-2021 School Year)



public school systems. The City of Rockville does not own or manage any of the community's public schools or other educational facilities. And yet, the daily life of our schools, the quality of its facilities, and other considerations (such as access and traffic or taxation impacts) are of paramount interest to Rockville residents.

MCPS owns and administers the public high schools, middle schools, elementary schools, and special education programs in Rockville. Attendance areas are organized as clusters that include elementary and middle schools that feed into a high school that names each cluster. Students who live in Rockville are served by the following MCPS high school clusters:

- Gaithersburg
- Walter Johnson
- Richard Montgomery
- Rockville
- Thomas S. Wootton

Rockville students.

MCPS enrollment has increased in recent years and growth will continue. This growth challenges MCPS given that there are currently significant facilities deficits throughout the system, including in the clusters that serve Rockville's neighborhoods. The City monitors capacity issues and supports MCPS attempts to address needs through capital investments.

Policy 6 **Advocate for Montgomery County Public** Schools to ensure that there are highquality schools at appropriate locations for

The provision of school space is an important consideration during the City's adequate public facilities review of proposed residential development projects. A projection of school enrollment is made for each project, checked against the available space, in the local school cluster. Consequently, the sharing of information between the City and Montgomery County Public Schools is of critical importance for ensuring current and planned schools serve existing and projected student populations in the city.

The majority of Rockville students have relatively easy access to a school in or near their neighborhood. However, sites reserved for schools in King Farm and Fallsgrove have not seen construction of new schools to serve these large neighborhoods. Rockville supports school development in growth areas and a system of supporting schools.

In addition to capacity, the age and condition of schools are of concern to Rockville residents. Comments received during the Rockville 2040 process called for improvements to schools in older parts of the city, for instance Twinbrook Elementary and Thomas S. Wootton High School, as well as school renovation and expansion in other areas. City policy and practices are to continually work with MCPS to address school capacity issues to keep our schools at the highest standards.

Actions

- 6.1 Work with MCPS to align the development of appropriately located and sized school facilities with anticipated growth in the number of school-age children.
- 6.2 Monitor the MCPS Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and advocate for funding of MCPS school projects necessary to serve Rockville students and address overcapacity and deteriorated older schools.
- 6.3 For housing development that would bring additional school-age children, if necessary, advocate for MCPS to ensure adequate public school facilities. The City should continue to share information about development review projects with the school district to help support school facilities planning.
- 6.4 Review enrollment in schools that serve Rockville's neighborhoods on an annual basis to determine whether there is capacity for residential development.
- 6.5 Discuss with MCPS and Montgomery County government the future of closed schools, including those leased for private or non-profit use, including if they can serve other community uses or whether they should be preserved for reopening if the need arises. (See also Action 3.2 of the Recreation and Parks Element)
- 6.6 Advocate for MCPS to provide adequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities at schools located in the city, including bicycle parking, sidewalks, crosswalks, and wayfinding.

- 6.7 Work with MCPS to study the potential for the conversion of office or commercial buildings to school-related uses.
- 6.8 Advocate for schools in the city, and their grounds, to be fully compliant with the American for Disabilities Act (ADA), either in the context of a modernization project or otherwise.

Policy 7 Work with MCPS to bring resolution to long-term challenges with respect to administrative and operational facilities, as they impact Rockville.

In addition to schools, Rockville is home to other facilities important to MCPS administration and operations. Currently, the MCPS headquarters, housing the Board of Education and administrative staff, is located in the former George Washington Carver High School and Junior College, which was designed as a high school in the 1950s. Additional MCPS administrative space is leased on West Gude Drive. The City is committed to retaining MCPS headquarters in Rockville, if a new administrative headquarters is sought by MCPS.

In advance of this Plan's adoption, the City approved a plan amendment and zoning changes for the MCPS materials distribution facility on North Stonestreet Avenue as a step to encourage relocation of this vital and busy distribution center to a more accessible location. This Plan incorporates those changes, as well. The City looks forward to continued coordination with MCPS on potential development options for that site.

Actions

- 7.1 Collaborate with MCPS on siting a new headquarters building in Rockville, and work to maintain the historic integrity of the former Carver High School building.
- 7.2 Work with MCPS to facilitate the move of the materials distribution center from its current location on North Stonestreet Avenue to a location better suited for this activity and work with MCPS so that the site is redeveloped in a manner consistent with the City's Land Use Policy Map. (See also Planning Areas 2 and 6)

7.3 Continue to advocate for a future MCPS school bus parking depot that is centrally located in the county and does not adversely impact neighborhoods or roadways in the city.

GOAL 4

Foster better working relationships with Montgomery County government and Montgomery College on facility planning and implementation.

Rockville is the seat of Montgomery County government and is home to its executive, legislative and judicial branches, which are all headquartered in Rockville. Additionally, Rockville is also the central location for the county for providing various human support services.

The Rockville campus of Montgomery College enrolls nearly 17,000 students per semester. In addition to credit students, the campus also serves a substantial non-credit student body through programs of Workforce Development and Continuing Education. The Montgomery College Facilities Plan (2013-2023) identifies building space, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, open space, and infrastructure as being the key deficiencies in the Rockville campus.

This Plan provides a broader discussion of Montgomery College in Planning Area 7 (Montgomery College Area) later in the plan. This section simply discusses the key policies related to the College's overall facilities.

Policy 8 Advocate for high quality public libraries.

Public libraries in Rockville are provided by Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL). Two library branches are within the city limits: the Rockville Memorial Library (65,000 square feet) in Rockville Town Center, and the Twinbrook Library (25,000 square feet) on the east side of the city, along Veirs Mill Road. The American Library Association has a standard that states that there should be 1,000 square feet of library space for each 10,000 population. The two libraries, serving a population of just over 68,000, more than meet this standard. In addition, the full resources of the library system are available through interlibrary transfers and electronic material.

Libraries continue to evolve in response to new technologies and material formats. In addition, the use of library space by patrons changes over time. The City of Rockville encourages MCPL to engage with the Rockville community to keep our libraries up-to-date and relevant community spaces. No new public libraries are planned in the City of Rockville. There have been preliminary discussions regarding new library services in response to recently updated master plans and expected growth in the areas of Shady Grove and North Bethesda. However, at this time, no known new facilities are currently programmed.

Actions

- 8.1 Advocate to ensure that MCPL provides public library facilities that permit high-quality services for the Rockville community.
- 8.2 Support opportunities for development of satellite libraries, especially in the new growth areas near Rockville's city limits such as Shady Grove Road and North Bethesda.



Rockville Memorial Library is a key civic facility in Rockville Town Square. Books and other materials are available for all ages and library meeting rooms provide space for community meetings. (Source: Grimm+Parker)

8.3 Participate in discussions with MCPL on the evolution of libraries and how they are used, as technology evolves, to ensure that library spaces and buildings continue as valuable community assets.

Policy 9 **Encourage Montgomery County's** continued investment in Rockville's role as the seat of government.

Actions

- 9.1 Encourage the County to retain its existing facilities in Rockville, especially as an anchor in Rockville Town Center.
- 9.2 Establish stronger working partnerships with the County, through proactive engagement across many service areas, to ensure that City and County facilities can meet the needs of Rockville residents.
- 9.3 Monitor the County's Capital Improvements Program to advocate for projects that would benefit Rockville.
- 9.4 Monitor the County's plans for the former location of the County District One police station on Seven Locks Road, which moved to a new facility in 2013.

Policy 10 **Integrate Montgomery College into** the economic and social life of the community.

The 86-acre Rockville campus of Montgomery College. with its approximately 16,000 students, is one of the most important activity centers in Rockville. Because its importance, and that of the adjacent Montgomery County Public Schools campus and commercial properties to the north along MD-355, the new Planning Area 7 has been created in this Plan. The Planning Area 7 section provides a longer discussion than is presented here. Of greatest importance is that this Plan recognizes the importance of the relationship between the City of Rockville and Montgomery College in collaborating on achieving goals of mutual interest and solving problems as they arise.

Actions

- 10.1 Pursue mutually beneficial agreements with Montgomery College for shared use of athletic and cultural facilities and seek opportunities for joint investment in facilities of benefit to the College and City.
- 10.2 Collaborate with Montgomery College to achieve the goals, policies and actions in the many relevant elements of this Plan, which include Economic Development, Land Use, Transportation, Community Facilities, and Recreation and Parks. (See also Planning Area 7)
- 10.3 Support Montgomery College in its effort to upgrade and renovate its Rockville campus and acquire additional sites for expansion, while limiting potential negative impacts to surrounding neighborhoods.
- 10.4 Seek alignment and consistency between the college's 10-year master plan and the City's Comprehensive Plan.
- 10.5 Engage with Montgomery College and adjacent neighborhoods, property owners, and businesses to advocate for opening non-vehicular pathways between the college campus and surrounding neighborhoods (See also Goal 2 of the Transportation Element and Planning Areas 5 and 7).

GOAL 5

Keep Rockville on the cutting edge of information technology for City facilities, provision of City services, and infrastructure for residents and businesses.

Advancements in computing technologies and digital networks have created a high level of uncertainty regarding future life styles, work patterns, real estate markets, and infrastructure. Change has come at an increasing pace with smart phones providing instant communication, mapping, networking, and shopping in the palm of our hands. The so called 'Internet of things' seeks to link digital networks with devices we use in everyday life and to basic infrastructure under City control. These might include linking our street lights and traffic signals and cameras to a computer network

and a wide array of sensors that collect and analyze data in real time.

The implications of such integrated technologies are hard to fathom or predict, particularly in regard to personal privacy. Some governments have begun to work with digital technology companies that are promoting 'smart cities' as a path toward efficiency and control. What is clear is that change can happen quickly with unplanned for consequences for the city.

Rockville businesses have been pioneers in creation of high technology, and the City of Rockville will continue to be on the cutting edge of technology. Given the unpredictable future, this Plan recommends continual monitoring and weighing of the costs and benefits of implementation, and the potential need for new regulations at the local level. In many cases, private sector products and services can play a major role in supporting the City's information technology advancements.

Policy 11

Monitor advancements in digital technology to support City operations, and be prepared to implement and regulate as deemed appropriate.

Actions

- 11.1 Incorporate state-of-the-art technology and communication facilities into City operations to deliver effective and innovative solutions for residents, businesses, and government.
- 11.2 Develop regulations for new technologies in order to protect the best interests of the community, as needed, including for privacy.
- 11.3 Develop policies and procedures for archiving of digital media and records across all City departments.
- 11.4 Ensure that the City is defended against, and resilient to, cybersecurity attacks to its municipal infrastructure

Policy 12 Support the availability of high-speed and affordable Internet connectivity for city residents and businesses.

Actions

12.1 Work with private Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to expand or enhance broadband access to all areas of the city.

12.2 Consider financial or logistical support for city residents and businesses without reliable and/or affordable Internet access, such as through City-sponsored subscription clubs, grants, low-interest loans, or technology support.