

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Vision

Enhance the character of Rockville and contribute to its quality of life and local economy by proactively identifying and safeguarding its physical and cultural heritage to preserve the themes and periods of the city's history and development, no matter the era.

The Jerusalem-Mount Pleasant United Methodist Church at 21 Wood Lane (left), dating from 1858 and designed in the Romanesque style, is part of the West Montgomery Avenue Historic District, along with the Italianate-style parsonage next door at 17 Wood Lane.



Rockville is one of Maryland's oldest municipalities. Its character and identity are closely tied to its history, and its buildings and other features illustrate its evolution over the past two centuries. The city has grown from an agrarian society and small village to the County seat, commuter suburb, and more recently to a commercial destination and employment center. Most of its residential areas continue to have a suburban feel, while Town Center and areas close to the Metrorail stations are becoming increasingly urban.

Despite its transformation, Rockville retains many of its historical qualities. The original six streets that formed the town are still at the heart of the city, as shown in the 1803 "Plan of Rockville" (see image on opposite page). Rockville Pike, once known as the 'Great Road,' is still the main north-south arterial through the city, and examples of Rockville's historic neighborhoods, buildings, sites, and landscapes, dating to the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, have been preserved for the benefit of current and future generations.

Rockville's history is communicated through its built environment. Its historic buildings convey the city's character and identity and are the most visible evidence of the city's past. The results of Rockville's long-term preservation efforts

articulate the value the community places on its history and provides a richness and depth that are important to maintaining its high quality of life.

Summary of Community Input

Comments received at Rockville 2040 community meetings emphasized the continued identification, preservation and protection of Rockville's historic resources, including mid-20th century resources that had not been a focus of previous master plans. A desire for a more proactive approach to the designation of new historic districts and the expansion of existing districts was expressed. The historic preservation policies that follow primarily stem from the feedback provided by the public and historic preservation stakeholders, in addition to an analysis of the City's historic preservation program and designation process that was done by a consultant in 2016.

Goals for historic preservation in Rockville include:

1. Safeguard Rockville's physical and cultural heritage through a proactive historic preservation program.
2. Preserve significant examples of architectural periods and historic themes through local historic designation.
3. Promote the benefits of preservation through education and partnerships, programs, and heritage tourism.
4. Act as a strong steward of City-owned historic sites, structures, parks and other properties.
5. Pursue an equity and inclusion framework to recognize the diversity of Rockville's history and historic resources.

GOAL 1

Safeguard Rockville’s physical and cultural heritage through a proactive historic preservation program.

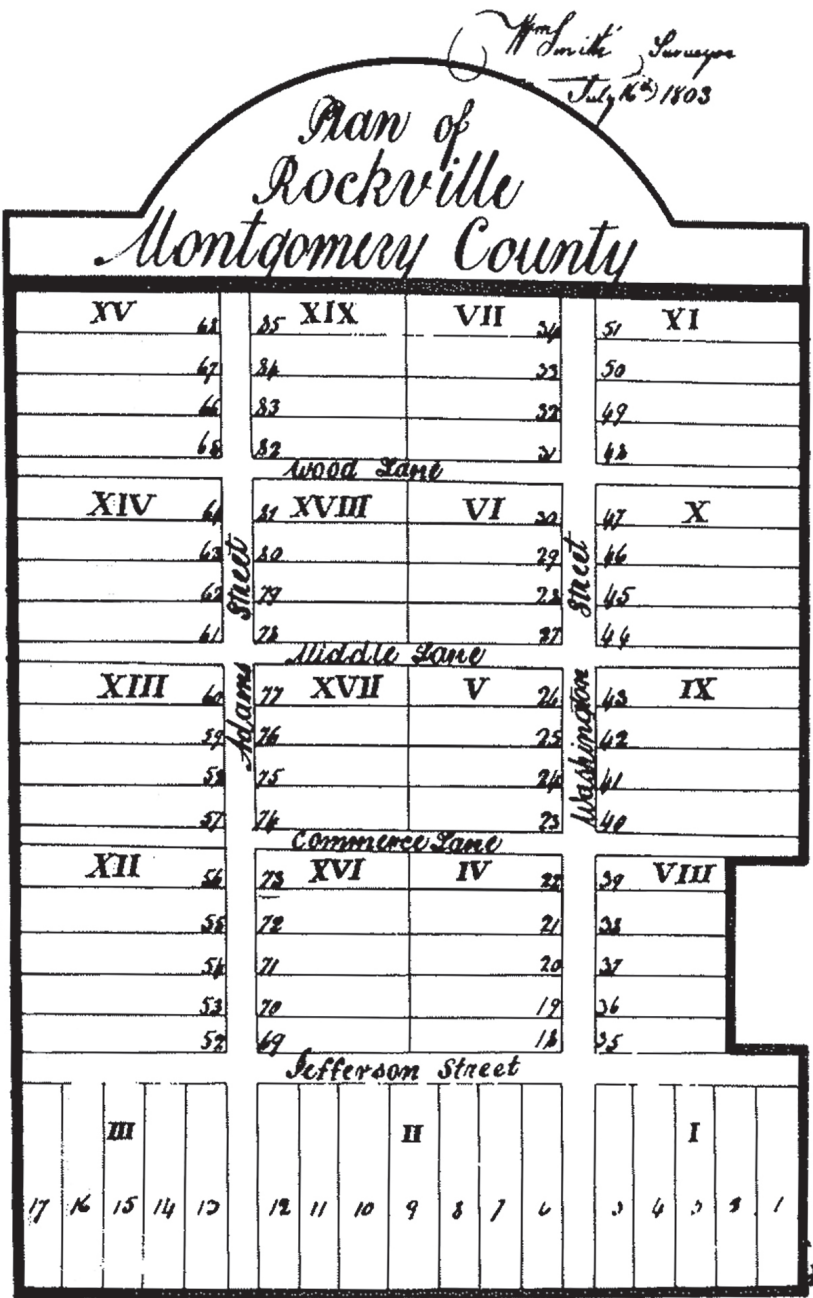
The Mayor and Council created the Rockville Historic District Commission (HDC) and adopted the City’s first regulations for historic preservation in 1966. The National Historic Preservation Act was passed in the same year. In Rockville, the preservation movement was initially driven by the threatened loss of some of the city’s landmark buildings, including the designation in 1974 of St. Mary’s Chapel. Later, continued preservation efforts through the 1970s saved a number of buildings that were in the path of urban renewal, and the B&O Railroad Station was moved, rather than demolished, to make way for the Rockville Metro station. In more recent years, the City has recognized the value of mid-20th century assets, as demonstrated by its designation in 2017 of the Americana Centre, built in 1972 as the residential component during the era of urban renewal, as well as its support for listing the New Mark Commons neighborhood on the National Register of Historic Places in 2017. Rockville’s first National Historic Landmark, the Frieda Fromm-Reichmann Cottage, was designated by the Secretary of the Interior on January 13, 2021. Located on the former grounds of the Chestnut Lodge sanitarium and restored by Peerless Rockville, the 1936 home, also known as Frieda’s Cottage, served as home and office for Dr. Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, a pioneering psychiatrist in the treatment of schizophrenia.

Rockville’s historic sites and structure, no matter the historical era, continue to be considered for local and national historic recognition in order to continue the preservation of the city’s physical and cultural heritage.

Policy 1

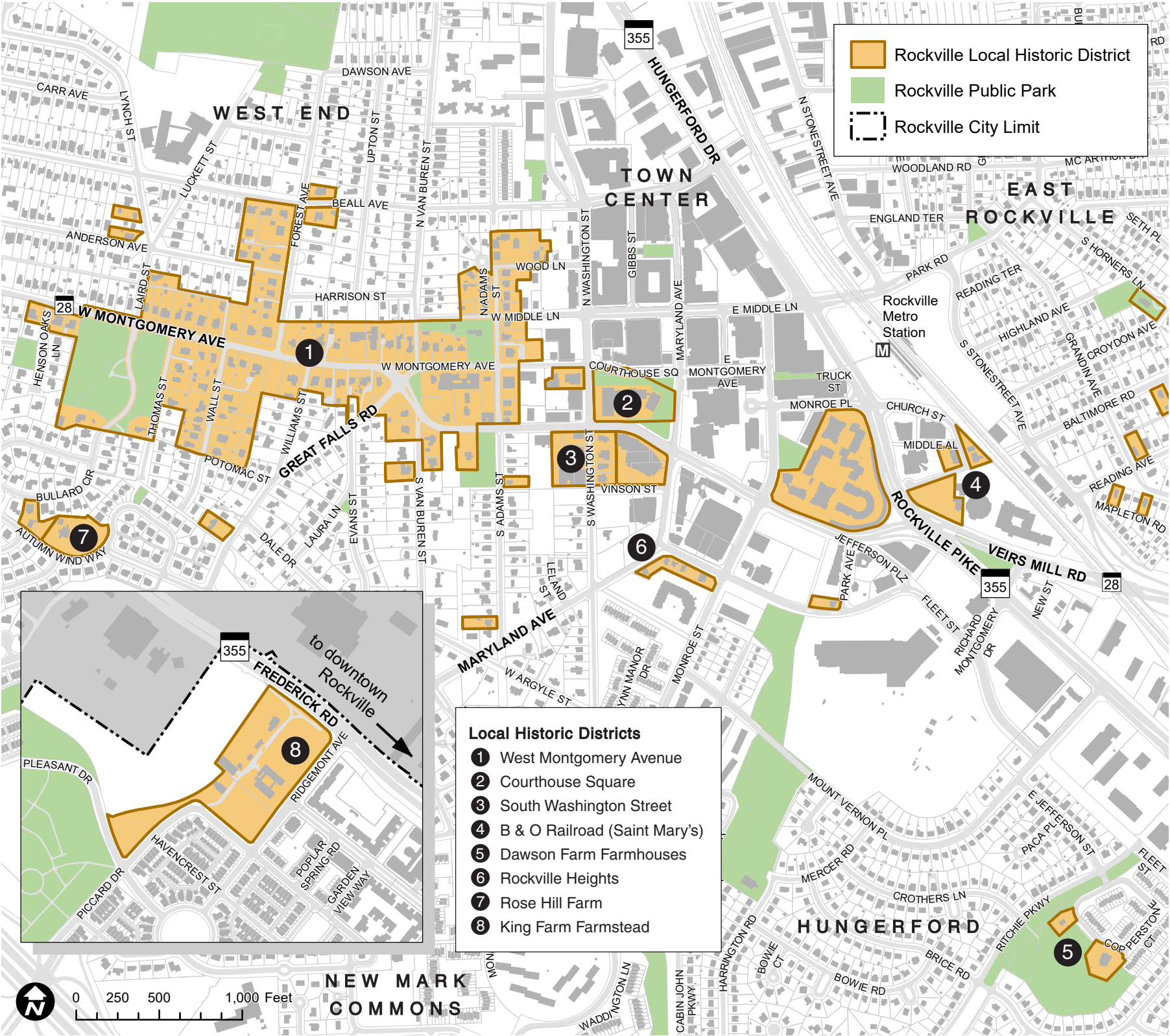
Maintain and strengthen the City of Rockville’s historic preservation program.

Since adoption of the *2002 Comprehensive Plan*, Rockville has been successful in expanding its inventory of historic designated resources. Between 2002 and 2018, the West Montgomery Avenue Historic District was expanded to



The first plan and plat for ‘Rockville’ dates to 1803 (above). The street and block layout is still recognizable 215 years later for the core section between Washington and Adams streets. The notch between Jefferson Street and Commerce Lane indicated the location of the courthouse.

Figure 32: Locally Designated Multi-Site Historic Districts



In 1974, the Mayor and Council established Rockville's first three historic districts: the West Montgomery Avenue Historic District, the South Washington Street Historic District, and the B&O Railroad Station Historic District. These districts, were concurrently recognized with listing in the National Register of Historic Places. As of 2018, more than 150 sites and buildings are either individually designated or located within local historic districts, and more than 90 are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Local Historic District Architecture in Downtown Rockville



1 West Montgomery Avenue Historic District
(Designated 1974)



2 Courthouse Square Historic District
(Designated 1979)

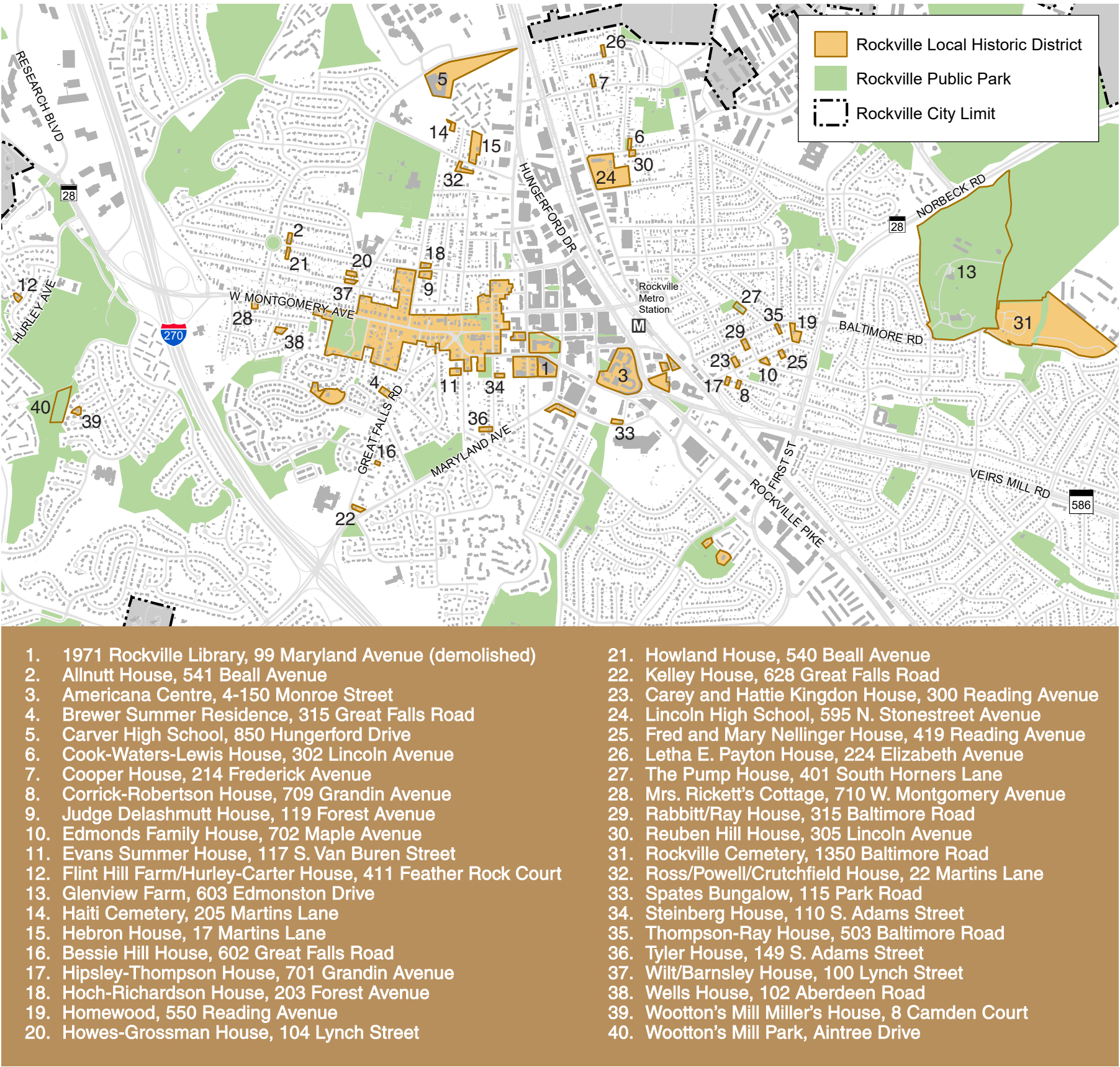


3 South Washington Street Historic District
(Designated 1974)



4 B & O Railroad Historic District
(Designated 1974)

Figure 33: Locally Designated Individual Historic Properties



include portions of Chestnut Lodge and the adjacent Thirty Oaks properties. King Farm Farmstead Park, Glenview Farm, Rockville Heights, the Americana Centre, and other sites were locally designated. In addition, Glenview Farm, Rockville Park, and New Mark Commons residential neighborhoods were added to the National Register.

Rockville's historic preservation efforts and its HDC are recognized by the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) as a Certified Local Government program. The Trust awards ten percent of its annual allocation from the Historic Preservation Fund to projects and educational opportunities each year for certified programs. Rockville has received grants in the past and maintains eligibility for future projects.

Actions

1.1 Maintain the City's Certified Local Government (CLG) status.

1.2 Regularly update the design guidelines and other policy documents that the Historic District Commission uses to issue Certificates of Approval.

1.3 Prioritize completion of the update to the Historic Resources Management Plan (HRMP), with completed historic context statements to include new periods associated with the later 20th century and the histories of under-represented communities and cultures in Rockville.

1.4 Prioritize areas of the City for future survey and conduct those surveys.

GOAL 2

Preserve and recognize significant examples of architectural periods, historic themes and the diversity of Rockville's history and historic resources through local historic designation.

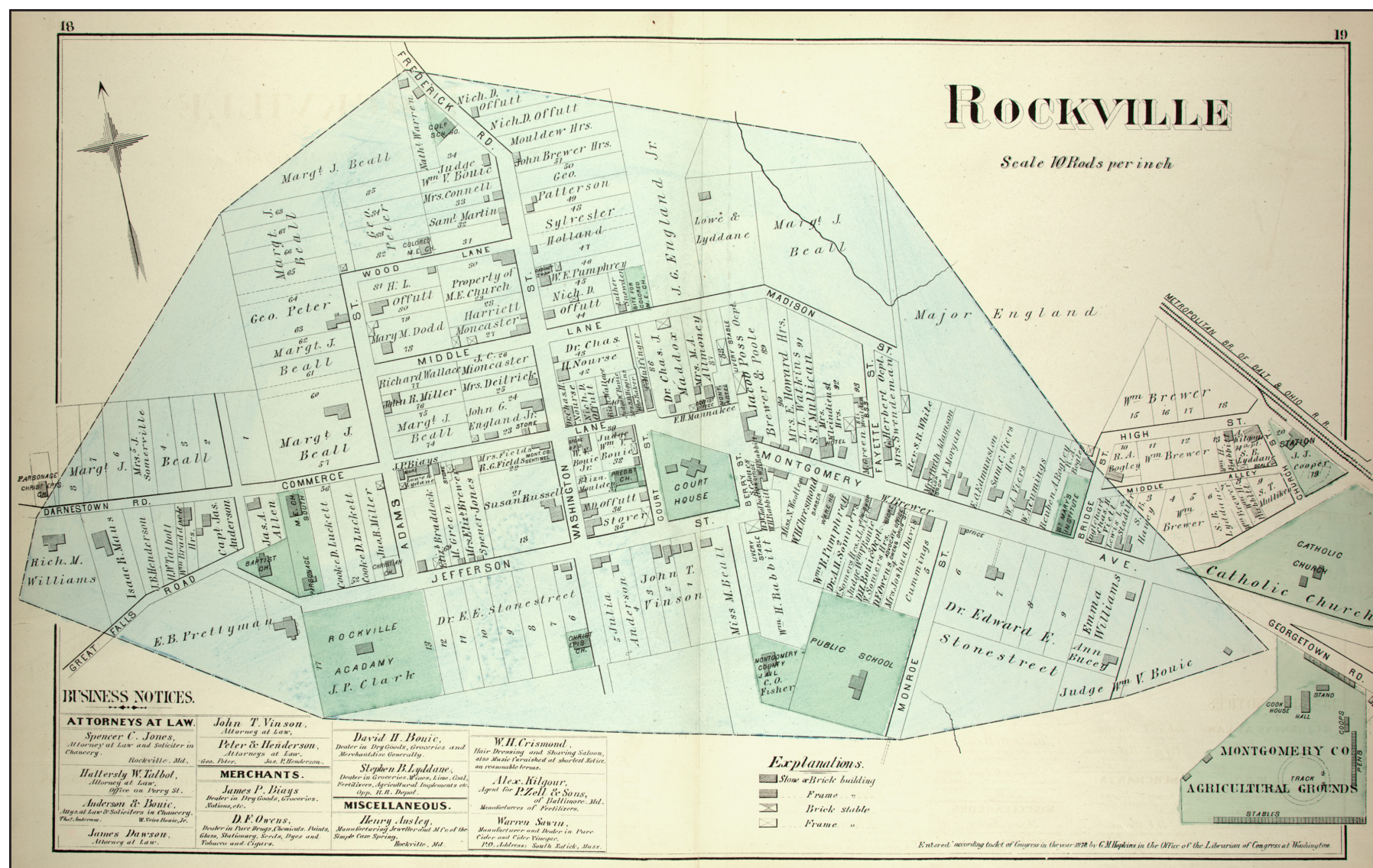
The two main methods of historic designation are national and local. As applied in Rockville there are overlapping national and local historic districts, with slight variations in boundaries, but also larger differences. For instance the Rockville Park Historic District is in the National Register,



The former Lincoln High School at 595 N. Stonestreet Avenue is a locally designated historic property, preserving the history of African-American educational institutions in Rockville. The building has been adapted for a new use.



The Pump House at 401 S. Horners Lane is an example of adaptive reuse of a locally designated historic property, owned by the City of Rockville and retrofitted from a water pump house to an activity center with meeting room used primarily by the East Rockville community.



An early map of Rockville from 1878 (above) shows growth in the 75 years following the original 1803 town plat. The regular spacing of streets and lots is abandoned with the first additions and the regional roads—including Montgomery Avenue/Georgetown Road, Frederick Road, and Great Falls Road—meet the grid at angles. Narrow, deep lots along the main commercial street, Montgomery Avenue, are laid out to maximize frontage for businesses and shops. The 'Great Road' from Georgetown to Frederick passed through the heart of Rockville, running through Courthouse Square, then north on Washington Street and jogging back to Frederick Road. This difficult circulation pattern would pose challenges to the town center and bring on wholesale reordering of streets during the urban renewal of the 1960s, continuing to the current time: an unusual uncertainty about the location of streets at the heart of a town that dates back to the 1790s. The sharp angle of the unlabeled Veirs Mill Road and Georgetown Road intersection would later become known as the 'mixing bowl.' The new railroad track hints at the coming expansion to the east.

which provides for certain tax benefits to owners, but the majority of those properties are not locally designated. Local designation enforces a much stricter regulatory system on alterations or demolitions. Some anomalies are left over from the way that designations were applied, for example the Beall-Dawson House was listed in the National Register in 1973, two years before the larger, encompassing West Montgomery District was listed.

Historic properties in Rockville are designated as local historic sites either individually or as part of a multi-site historic district. In terms of the regulatory structure and review process, there is no distinction between the two.

Rockville has adopted eligibility criteria for local historic designation. The HDC uses the criteria to determine if a property is significant because of its association with historic

events or with the lives of people who were important in the past (cultural and historical significance), and whether or not it has architectural, design or landscape significance. The property must also retain sufficient integrity to convey the sense and time of its significance.

The Zoning Ordinance is the local enabling legislation by which the HDC exercises its authority to evaluate properties to determine if they meet the criteria for historic designation and recommend those that do to the Mayor and Council. The Mayor and Council make the final determination on all local designations. Historic district (HD) designation is implemented through an overlay zone which defines the boundaries and protects the character of the historic district.

Rockville values buildings, structures, sites, landscapes, viewsheds, and objects that:

- Represent the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the city;
- Are sites of important events;
- Are identified with a person or group of persons who influenced the city's history;
- Exemplify the cultural, economic, industrial, social, political, archaeological, or historical heritage of the city;
- Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction;
- Represent the work of a master architect, craftsman, or builder;
- Possess styles or elements distinctive to the region or city;
- Represent a significant architectural, design, or landscape entity in the city; and,
- Represent an established visual feature of the neighborhood or city because of its physical characteristics or landscape components.

Policy 2

Follow a clear and proactive process for evaluating and designating historic districts based on established criteria and an ongoing preservation strategy and work program.

Since 2009, Rockville's Zoning Ordinance has required that any building or structure must be evaluated for historic

significance by the HDC before a demolition permit can be issued. Because of this change, the vast majority of evaluations for historic significance over the past decade have been initiated by demolition permit applications, rather than by planned survey work intended to identify potential historic districts. Only a small number of designations have resulted from these evaluations. This approach has resulted in some piecemeal additions to the city's historic district inventory and historic preservation program that has been focused on individual properties over multi-site districts.

This Plan supports a more proactive and comprehensive approach to historic designation. Rockville should actively create new, and expand existing, historic districts, based on surveys, oral histories, public input, and other research. A more proactive approach will provide greater predictability for individual property owners and communities as a whole.

Actions

2.1 Prioritize potential new or expanded historic districts and sites identified in the 2016 Historic Preservation Report and the updated Historic Resources Management Plan for evaluation by the HDC as the starting point for an evolving list.

2.2 Maintain and update the priority list of potential new or expanded districts and sites on a regular basis as evaluations of significance and designations occur and as new knowledge is gained.

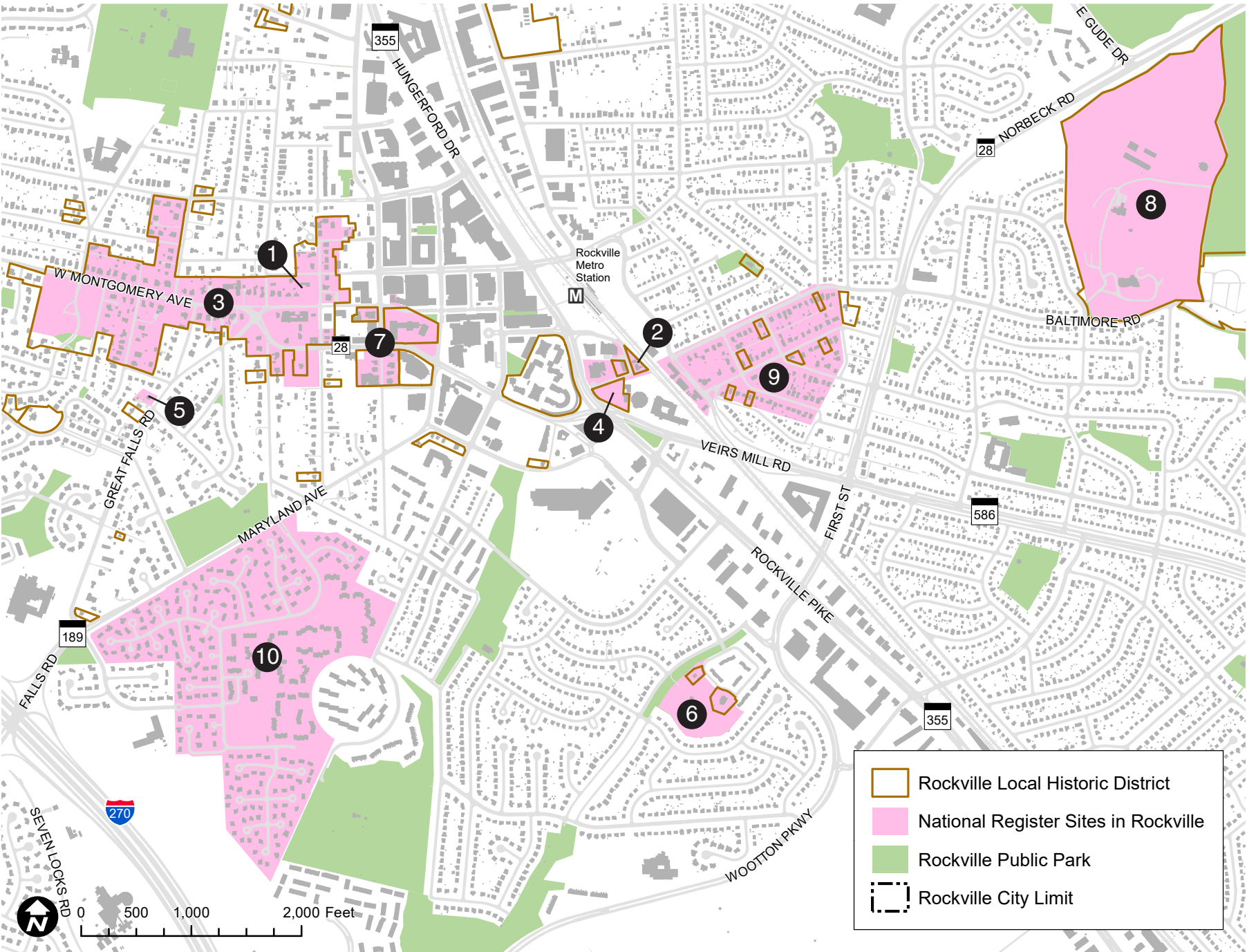
2.3 Design and fund a multi-year work program to research, survey, and evaluate potential historic districts. Such a program should include consideration of underrepresented communities, places, and time periods of development in Rockville.

2.4 Establish clear boundaries and define the environmental setting for historic districts when they are designated.

2.5 Identify and evaluate properties, and elements of properties, that are contributing to an historic context and those that are non-contributing when historic districts are designated.

2.6 Periodically re-evaluate Rockville's designation process and criteria used to evaluate historic and architectural significance.

Figure 34: National Register-Listed Historic Districts



- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Beall-Dawson House (1973) | 6 Dawson Farm (1985) |
| 2 Rockville B&O Railroad Station (1974) | 7 Montgomery County Courthouse Historic District (1986) |
| 3 West Montgomery Avenue Historic District (1975) | 8 Glenview Farm (2007) |
| 4 Third Addition to Rockville & Old St. Mary's Church (1978) | 9 Rockville Park Historic District (2011) |
| 5 Bingham-Brewer House (1980) | 10 New Mark Commons Historic District (2017) |

Policy 3

Review nominations to the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Register of Historic Places is a federal program administered by the National Park Service in partnership with State governments. The National Register was created by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 to recognize and protect properties of historic and cultural significance. The program’s protection is limited to properties potentially impacted by projects with federal or State funding, such as highway construction, which must be mitigated.

The relocation of Rockville’s B&O Railroad station in the 1980s to make room for Metrorail, which was a federally funded project, is an example of mitigation. Listing on the National Register also offers eligibility for certain tax benefits. The HDC has no authority over alterations to properties that are on the National Register, unless they are also locally designated.

Actions

3.1 Consider local historic designation and/or provide support to protect historic sites and districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places that are not already locally designated.

National Register versus Local Designation

The National Register of Historic Places and local historic district designations are two very different programs that each recognize historic properties. National Register listing is primarily an honor. Alterations to properties that are listed on the National Register, but not locally designated are not reviewed by the Historic District Commission. All locally designated properties must receive a Certificate of Approval from the HDC for exterior alterations.



550 Reading Avenue is a locally designated historic property, adjacent to, but not in, the nearby Rockville Park National Register historic district (shown on Figure 34 as item #9).

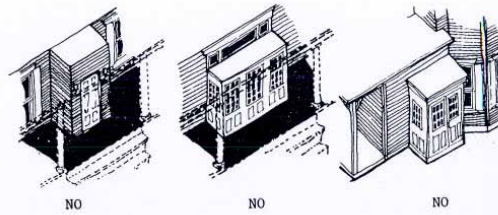


720 Maple Avenue is within the National Register’s Rockville Park Historic District as a contributing structure, but is not locally designated as historic by the City of Rockville.

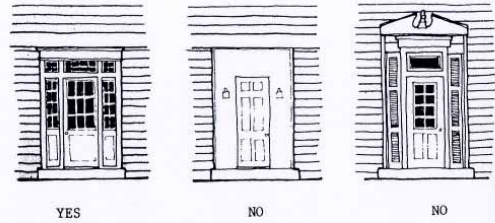
National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106

The Section 106 review process is an integral component of the National Historic Preservation Act, requiring federal agencies to consider the effects on historic properties of projects they carry out, assist, license or approve. A fundamental goal is to ensure that federal agencies consult with interested partners to identify and evaluate historic properties, assess the effects of their undertakings on historic properties, and attempt to negotiate an outcome that will balance project needs with historic preservation values.

Vestibules



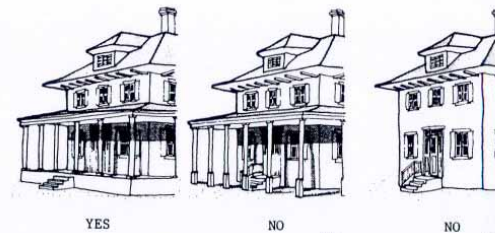
Modifications to door frames



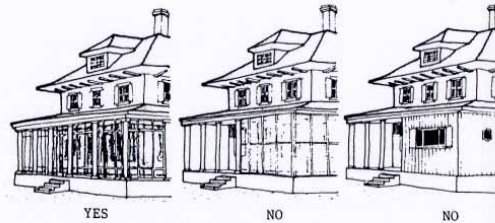
Screen and storm doors



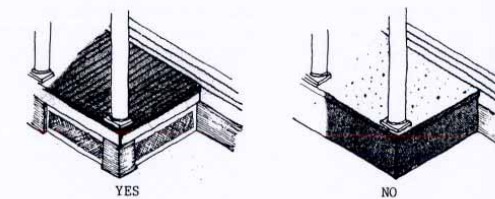
Porches and their removal



Enclosures of a porch



Porch floor surfaces



Examples from the *Architectural Design Guidelines For The Exterior Rehabilitation Of Buildings In Rockville's Historic Districts*. Adopted September 1977, Rockville Historic District Commission.

Policy 4

Ensure that Rockville has effective tools to protect and preserve its historic resources.

Historic preservation objectives must be thoughtfully weighed in planning for the city's future and should align with land use, housing, environment, transportation and other City objectives. Rockville should integrate historic preservation policies into its larger planning activities, neighborhood plans, and development projects.

Within local historic districts, the HDC has the authority to review changes to a site or the exterior appearance of a structure to ensure that changes are compatible with the structure, streetscape and surrounding district. The HDC issues Certificates of Approval for work that meets the Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and locally adopted design guidelines. The HDC also promotes tax credits to incentivize continued use of historic properties and appropriate alterations. These and other tools are essential to an effective historic preservation program.

Actions

- 4.1 Update existing and establish new regulations to avoid demolition by neglect and respond to cases of demolition by neglect.
- 4.2 Ensure that preservation issues are identified and resolved as early as possible in the development process.
- 4.3 Continue to update and revise design guidelines to reflect current best practices and appropriate materials.
- 4.4 Develop and implement architectural design guidelines specific to individual historic districts, where they do not currently exist, including guidance for new construction and non-contributing elements.
- 4.5 Encourage the adaptive re-use of historic properties when the original use is no longer practical.
- 4.6 Maintain the residential character of designated residential buildings even when the structures are used for non-residential purposes, such as along North Adams Street.

4.7 Enforce maintenance and protect the structural integrity of designated historic structures.

4.8 Develop and enforce appropriate stabilization and protection plans for vacant designated historic properties that follow National Park Service guides.

4.9 Ensure that all locally designated properties are compliant with building codes, to avoid demolition by neglect.

4.10 Determine appropriate methods to preserve and maintain historic cemeteries and archaeological resources.

4.11 Support federal, State and Montgomery County government tax credits and other economic incentives for historic preservation.

4.12 Evaluate instituting a Rockville tax credit specifically for contributing resources in historic districts and individually designated resources as an added incentive to existing credits, such as to assist property owners with maintenance of historic properties, providing resources to protect property owners from displacement, or to assist in returning structures to their previous residential use.

4.13 Consider alternative preservation strategies such as easements, area plans, and conservation districts when historic designation is not feasible or desired.



Doctor Edward E. Stonestreet's office (left) is preserved as part of the Beall-Dawson House, the oldest home in Rockville, at 103 W. Montgomery Avenue.

4.14 Allow for routine maintenance as well as appropriate alterations to historically designated properties, as determined by the Historic District Commission through Certificates of Approval.

Policy 5

Maintain the historic character and identity of historic districts when street, sidewalk, utility, street furniture, signage and other improvements are undertaken.

Actions

5.1 Initiate streetscape design projects for large multi-site historic districts.

5.2 Ensure that modifications or additions proposed for historic districts preserve the historic character of the streetscape and add signage, if appropriate.

GOAL 3

Promote the benefits of preservation through education and partnerships, programs, and heritage tourism.

Programs to educate citizens about Rockville's historic places and stewardship of historic properties help property owners and interested individuals appreciate the importance of preservation and understand the goals and processes associated with maintaining the resources.

Policy 6

Enhance understanding of and appreciation for Rockville's history and historic character.

The visible evidence of Rockville's unique identity derives from its geographical setting, its development pattern and street layout, its wide range of building ages and architectural styles, and the people who have lived here. These qualities help to create a sense of place and continuity that contributes to community pride and identity. Providing context

through educational materials and events allows residents and visitors to connect with and promote awareness and appreciation for Rockville's past. The City partners with Peerless Rockville, Montgomery County Historical Society, and other organizations in producing educational programs.

Actions

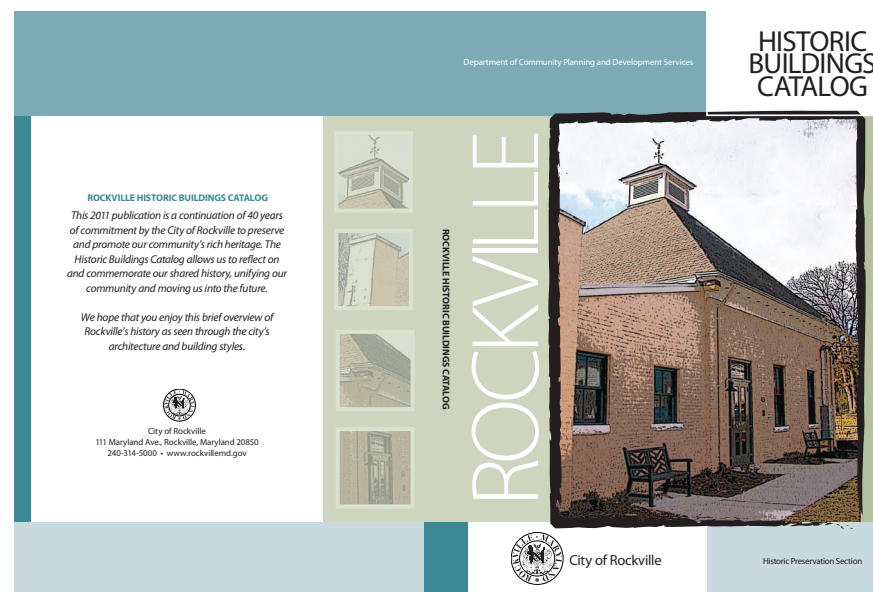
6.1 Expand educational efforts to promote understanding of Rockville's history and the benefits and responsibilities of historic designation.

6.2 Strengthen partnerships with preservation organizations to achieve and advocate for historic preservation objectives.

6.3 Implement programs to increase awareness of Rockville's history and historic preservation, including historic sites without structures where significant moments or points in time occurred in Rockville, through interpretive signage, online resources, and school and community programs.

6.4 Provide technical assistance to property owners who wish to nominate their property for designation and properly conserve and maintain their historic properties.

6.5 Provide training opportunities for historic district commissioners, owners of historic property, and historic preservation staff.



The Historic Buildings Catalog published by the City in 2011 is both a resource for historic preservation work and an educational tool.

6.6 Work with community partners to gather and preserve historical information through recorded interviews as a way to obtain information about past events and people that may not be found in written sources.

6.7 Work with Montgomery College, Montgomery County government, local archaeological organizations, and other partners to develop educational materials on archaeology and recommendations for testing, excavation and analysis under qualified supervision.

Policy 7

Promote and support heritage tourism as a tool for economic development, recreation, and community education.

Heritage tourism offers multiple benefits. It can help create jobs and diversify a local economy, increase property values and revenue, build community pride and help preserve a community's unique character. It can be a valuable component of an economic development strategy and is a growing industry. Heritage tourism also provides recreational and educational opportunities for the Rockville community and visitors; it can be fun as well as financially beneficial.

The Montgomery County Heritage Area (MCHA) was certified for inclusion in the State of Maryland's Heritage Areas Program in 2004. Rockville joined the Heritage Area in 2013 through an amendment to the Montgomery County Heritage Area Management Plan. In order to do so, Rockville was required to adopt the County's Management Plan into its *2002 Comprehensive Master Plan* and it is hereby adopted into this Plan as well. The Rockville amendment to the Management Plan includes a list of projects that could be eligible for grants through the program.

Actions

7.1 Prioritize the proposed Target Investment Projects in Rockville's amendment to the Montgomery County Heritage Area Management Plan and apply for capital grants.

7.2 Promote visitation and tourism in Rockville through events such as Hometown Holidays and Montgomery County Heritage Days.

7.3 Support City programming in publicly owned structures and sites that are significant historic resources.

7.4 Develop and produce a comprehensive interpretive and wayfinding plan to showcase the city's historic resources.

7.5 Expand walking tours and enhance with attractive and coordinated interpretive signage and online resources.

7.6 Replace deteriorating wayfinding and interpretive signage in Rockville historic districts.

7.7 Integrate isolated commercial historic districts, such as the B&O Railroad Station District, into the city's economic fabric.

7.8 Create linkages between Rockville's bicycle trails and the Rock Creek trail and the C&O Canal trail.

7.9 Encourage the use of markers and plaques to identify significant historic structures and sites.

7.10 Re-implement and fund the house plaques program to provide all historic property owners with date plaques.

7.11 Incorporate into this Plan the Rockville Chapter of the Montgomery County Heritage Area Management Plan.

7.12 Partner with Visit Montgomery, the County's destination marketing organization, to promote and market Rockville's historic resources and events.

Policy 8

Support the synergistic connection between historic preservation and environmental sustainability.

Good preservation practice is often synonymous with sustainability and Smart Growth. Reinvestment in existing neighborhoods saves resources and promotes socially, culturally, and economically rich communities. Because historic resources already exist, they use public infrastructure and services that are already in place. The retention of older buildings also preserves the materials, energy, and human capital already expended in their construction. Rockville's



St. Mary's Church cemetery contains some of the oldest monuments in the city, and the graves of F. Scott Fitzgerald and his wife Zelda.

19th and early 20th century buildings, in particular, were designed to work with their environment through site orientation, landscaping, and building features such as porches, operable shutters, and wide eaves.

Actions

8.1 Communicate the ways that historic preservation is environmentally sustainable.

8.2 Provide information on the preferred, minimally invasive means for achieving energy efficiency in historic buildings.

GOAL 4

Act as a strong steward of City-owned historic sites, structures, parks and other properties.

The city is home to several significant historic structures and properties including structures, parks and cultural sites. The City's active involvement, in partnership with other agencies and individuals, with the future planning of these properties is important to their preservation and future viability.

Policy 9

Determine suitable uses for City-owned historic buildings, especially the King Farm Farmstead and Beall-Dawson House, and implement appropriate maintenance, restoration, and/or adaptive re-use in keeping with recognized historic preservation standards.

Actions

9.1 Consider options for adaptive reuse and/or restoration of City-owned historic buildings that support their usefulness while ensuring their continued integrity and historical significance.

9.2 Investigate and implement a viable adaptive reuse of the King Farm Farmstead.

9.3 Ensure necessary maintenance and preservation of City-owned historical buildings and property, that retains their historical context while providing a useful community amenity.

9.4 Determine appropriate methods to preserve and maintain historic cemeteries and archaeological resources.

GOAL 5

Pursue an equity and inclusion framework to recognize the diversity of Rockville's history and historic resources.

Moving forward, the City has an opportunity to strengthen and expand its historic preservation program to add further focus on its diverse history. Viewing historic preservation through a more inclusive lens is key to reaching greater equity within our community. Recognition and preservation of historically under-represented populations, time periods and building styles must go hand-in-hand with ensuring inclusive representation in all preservation efforts.

Policy 10

Recognize native, under-represented, and diverse historical contexts, communities, and periods of development in Rockville.

Actions

10.1 Develop a designation and preservation strategy for under-represented and diverse contexts, populations, and periods of development in Rockville to increase appreciation, understanding and equity in historic preservation.

10.2 Support City acquisition of properties representative of Rockville's diverse history, including African American sites (e.g., Lincoln High School and Carver School) and sites identified by working with Rockville's Asian-American and Latin-American communities.

10.3 Dedicate space in Rockville City Hall, other City facilities, and on the City's website for education and awareness of the city's multi-faceted and diverse history and people.

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