The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association, Inc.

Community Plan 2010

Ruxton

Riderwood

Lake Roland Area

Prepared by
The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association, Inc.
in consultation with
AB Associates

ADOPTED BY THE BALTIMORE COUNTY COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 22, 2011

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND
Legislative Session 2011, Legislative Day No. 4

Resolution No. 19-11

Councilmembers Almond & Marks

By the County Council, February 22, 2011

A RESOLUTION of the Baltimore County Council to adopt the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Plan as part of the Baltimore County Master Plan 2020.

WHEREAS, the Baltimore County Council adopted the Baltimore County Master Plan 2020 on November 15, 2010; and

WHEREAS, the County Council adopted the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Plan on August 5, 2002 (Resolution 76-02); and

WHEREAS, the County Council asked the Planning Board to review and update the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Plan (Resolution 51-09); and

WHEREAS, the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Plan was prepared in close cooperation with the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association; and

WHEREAS, the Plan was the subject of a public hearing by the Planning Board and was adopted by the Board on November 4, 2010; and

WHEREAS, the County Council held a public hearing on the recommended Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Plan update on January 18, 2011.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND, that the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Plan, a copy of which is attached hereto and made a part hereof, be and it is hereby adopted and incorporated into the Baltimore County Master Plan 2020 to be a guide for the development of the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area, subject to such further modifications as deemed advisable by the County Council.

R01911.WPD

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RUXTON-RIDERWOOD-LAKE ROLAND AREA PLAN

Councilwoman Vicki Almond

1. On page 6, in the first sentence under "Recommendations", after "Prepare" insert ", in collaboration with property owners and community stakeholders,"

2. On page 9, strike 4 a.i. in its entirety and substitute the following:

"4.

a. Bare Hills

Support a mix of uses throughout the Bare Hills Village area by facilitating redevelopment through the use of the PUD, Transect and Renaissance redevelopment processes, the possible establishment of a commercial revitalization district and, where appropriate, rezoning parcels which would provide the impetus for revitalizing and upgrading the uses for the Bare Hills area to become a more community-oriented retail, office and residential "village"."

3. On page 12, under paragraph 6., strike a. through d., inclusive, in their entirety and substitute the following:

"a. Evaluate how the County's Planned Unit Development, Renaissance and Transect Zoning processes can be used to implement the objectives of a Bare Hills Master Plan.

i. Additionally, interested parties should evaluate the utility and effectiveness of the Transect Map adopted in the County's 2020 Master Plan as it applies to the Bare Hills Village area. If the transect zoning designations in the Master Plan 2020 do not adequately facilitate the goals of the future Bare Hills Village Master Plan, consider establishing a new Transect Map as part of the new Bare Hills Village Master Plan, similar to localized Transect Maps for Owings Mills, Middle River and other similarly designated areas within Master Plan 2020.

ii. Work with the Office of Planning to ensure that the entire Bare Hills Village Area is designated as a Community Enhancement Area or other appropriate mechanism in the County Master Plan for higher density commercial and residential development opportunities.

b. Recommend that the County Council add the Bare Hills Village commercial properties to the list of areas that are reviewed by the Design Review Panel. The review criteria should include review of designs that seek to complement the historic characteristics of Bare Hills.

c. Work with stakeholders and the Office of Planning to create design guidelines to retain the historic low scale retail streetscape along the Falls Road corridor with new buildings two to three stories in height with higher density buildings toward the Jones Falls Expressway,

d. Work with stakeholders and the Office of Planning to create signage guidelines that will help facilitate a consistent and attractive look to the area and retain the Falls Road corridor's historic feel. In adopting these guidelines, incorporate measures to discourage incompatible electronic and internally illuminated signs along the Falls Road corridor".

proposed amendments to Ruxton Riderwood Lake Roland community plan.wpd

READ AND PASSED this ***22ND*** day of ***FEBRUARY,*** 2011.

BY ORDER

Thomas J. Peddicord, Jr.
Secretary

ITEM: ***RESOLUTION 19-11***

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND
Legislative Session 2009, Legislative Day No. 13

Resolution No. 51-09

Mr. Kevin Kamenetz, Councilman

By the County Council, August 3, 2009

A RESOLUTION of the Baltimore County Council requesting the Office of Planning to review and update the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Plan.

WHEREAS, the Baltimore County Council adopted the Baltimore County Master Plan 2010 on February 22, 2000; and

WHEREAS, the Master Plan advocates the development and use of community plans for the established neighborhoods in the County; and

WHEREAS, the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland community is a logical unit for planning within Baltimore County; and

WHEREAS, the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Plan was prepared in close cooperation with the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association and community volunteers; and

WHEREAS, the County Council adopted the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Plan on August 5, 2002 (Resolution 76-02) as part of the Baltimore County Master Plan 2010; and

WHEREAS, since the adoption of the Plan, the County has negotiated a long-term lease for Robert E. Lee Park and plans extensive improvements and renovations to the park. Additionally, the portions of the Plan concerning the Bare Hills Commercial Village should be reevaluated in light of

the planned improvements to the park; and

WHEREAS, the County Council believes that it is appropriate for these and other reasons to update the Plan in preparation for the 2012 Comprehensive Zoning Map Process;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND, that the Office of Planning is requested to review and to update the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Plan to be a guide for the future development of the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland community.

READ AND PASSED this ***3RD*** day of ***AUGUST,*** 2009.

BY ORDER

Thomas J. Peddicord, Jr.
Secretary

ITEM: ***RESOLUTION 51-09***

The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association

Community Plan 2010

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Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association

Community Plan 2010

Introduction

The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association Community Plan 2010 (the 2010 Community Plan) is intended to update the recommendations made in the 2001 Community Plan (the 2001 Plan) that was adopted August 5, 2002, by the Baltimore County Council. The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association is bounded on the north by the Baltimore Beltway; on the east by Charles Street plus the area between Charles Street and Charles Street Avenue extended to its terminus at Joppa Road; on the south by the Baltimore City line; and on the west by the Jones Falls Expressway north to the overpass at Falls Road, then north on Falls Road to the Baltimore Beltway.

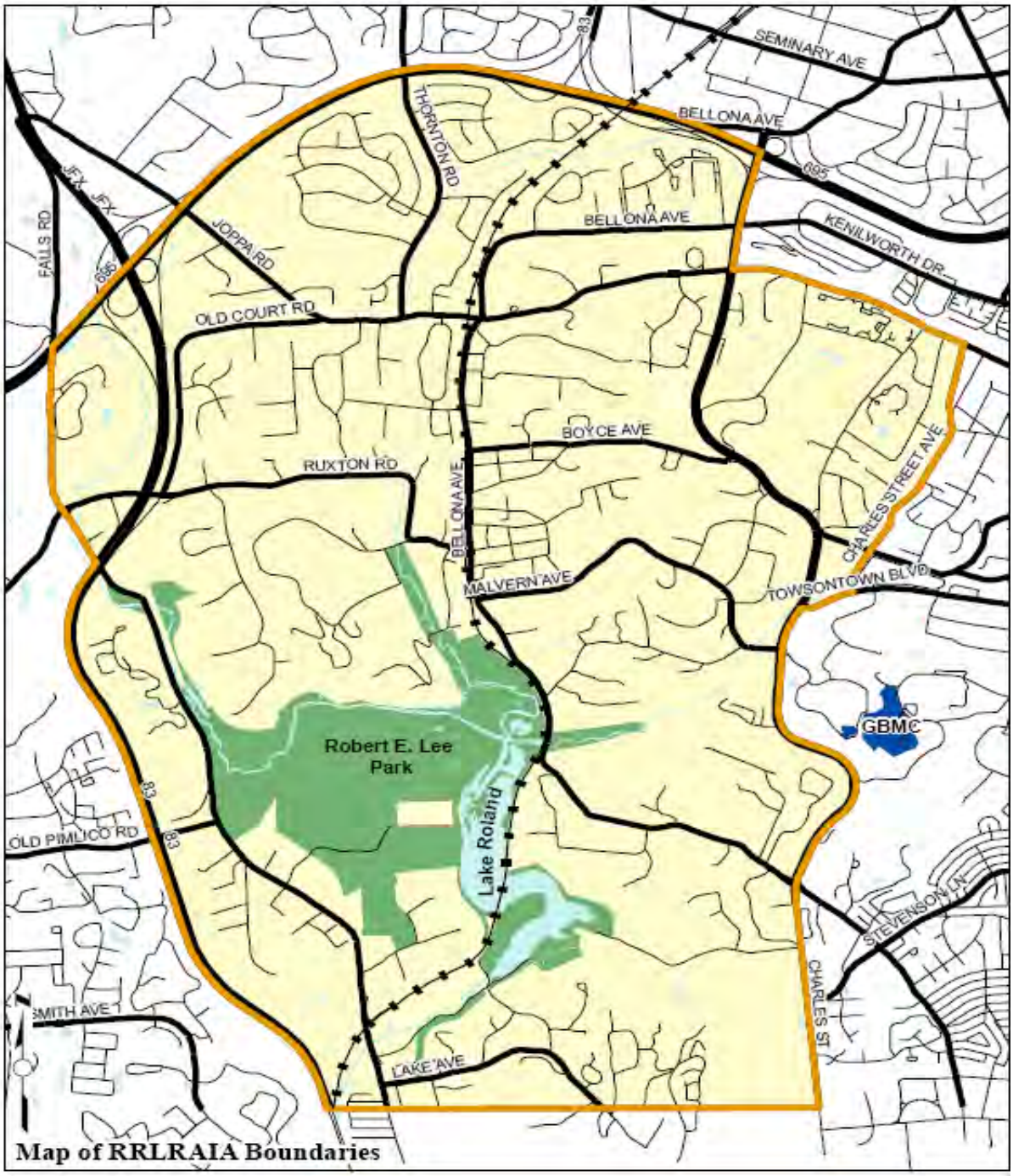
Robert E. Lee Park – Lake Roland

Aerial view of Bare Hills

The 2001 Plan included 100 recommendations. Approximately 70 of those recommendations (Internal Recommendations) were intended to be undertaken and implemented by the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association (RRLRAIA). The other 30 recommendations (External Recommendations) required government action. Many of the recommendations in the 2001 Plan are still relevant. The attached Appendix notes the recommendations from the 2001 Plan that are ongoing.

Some of the significant successes of the 2001 Plan include: the creation of the Greater Ruxton Area Foundation and its on-going easement and neighborhood enhancement programs, the initiation of a broad-based residential design review of proposed new development within RRLRAIA boundaries (known as the Design Review Panel, or DRP), the restoration of the Rider House which now serves as a community meeting place and headquarters of RRLRAIA, and the agreement to transfer operational control of Robert E. Lee Park (the Park) from Baltimore City to Baltimore County.

The 2010 Community Plan builds upon the priorities that were defined in the 2001 Plan. The overarching goal of the 2010 Community Plan is to ensure the preservation of RRLRAIA communities as attractive, historic, and thriving neighborhoods. The long-term stability of the communities within RRLRAIA is an asset to the County and warrants the County's resources as set forth in the recommendations below.



Map of RRLRAIA Boundaries

The following statements appear in the 2001 Community Plan and are still valid for inclusion in the current plan:

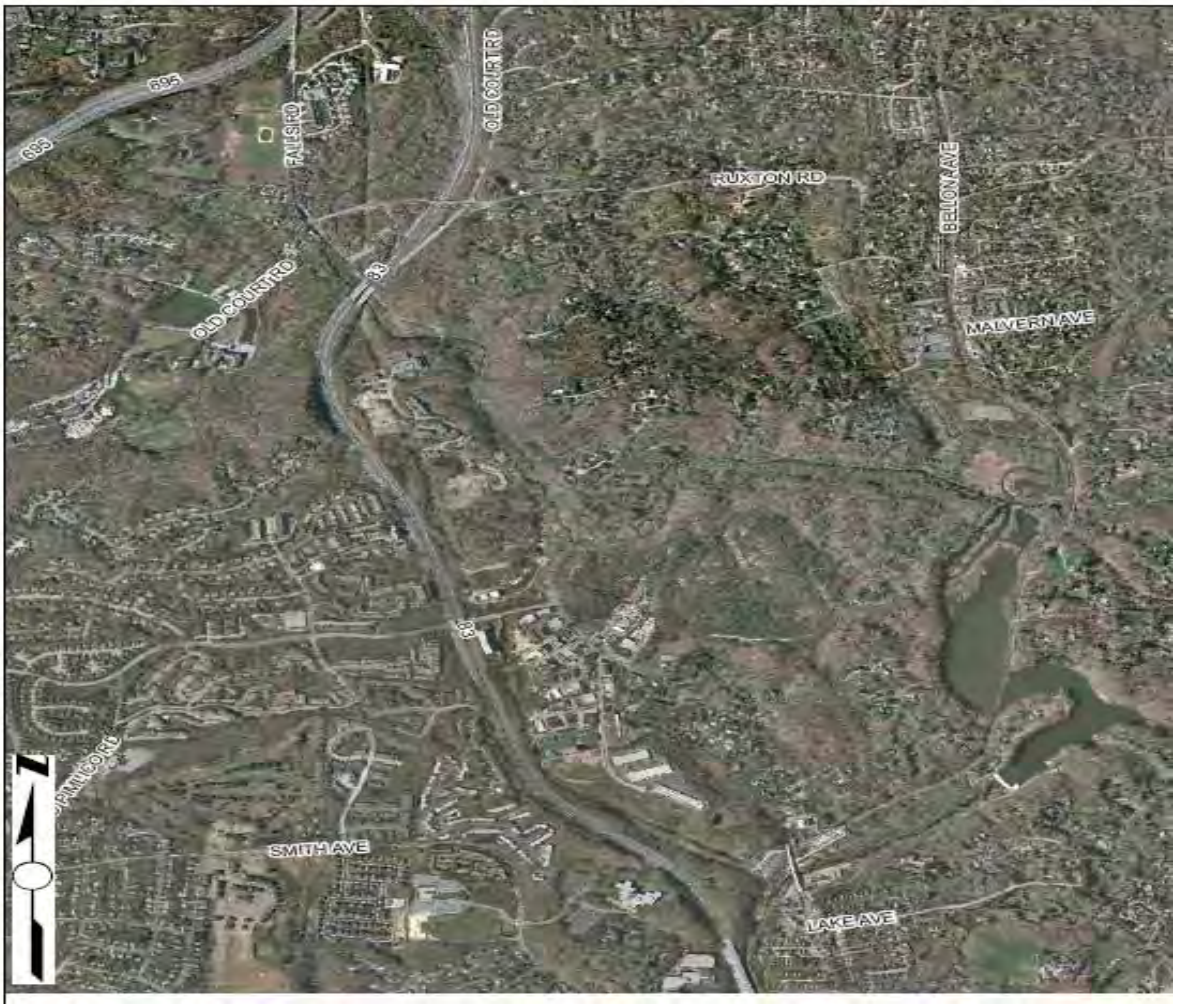
Goal of the RRLRAIA Community Plan:

To help preserve and/or enhance the "quality of life" of the Ruxton, Riderwood and Lake Roland communities.

Objectives of the Plan:

1. As an adopted part of the Baltimore County Master Plan 2010, the RRLRAIA Plan will serve as a guide to expectations, policy, and services from Baltimore County.

2. As a "living" blueprint to guide the Association in meeting expectations of the community.



Bare Hills and surrounding areas - 2008

Executive Summary and Plan Vision

A major theme of the 2010 Community Plan is creating "*connections*". This important planning principle is not just about obvious connections relating to pedestrian and other transportation needs. Rather, the goal is to think about the community's relationship to its surrounding communities and the region. The Park is a central part of what binds and connects the surrounding communities, and more broadly has the potential to be an important regional asset. Consequently, a significant part of the 2010 Community Plan focuses on the Park and the creation of a mixed-use village in the Bare Hills community on Falls Road. The connection of the mixed use Bare Hills Village to the Park is envisioned as a new "campus". The vision connects the Park to the community via various entrances, with a major connection between the Park and Bare Hills Village. These connections, together with significant improvements to the Park, will provide a catalyst for better utilization of the area's resources.

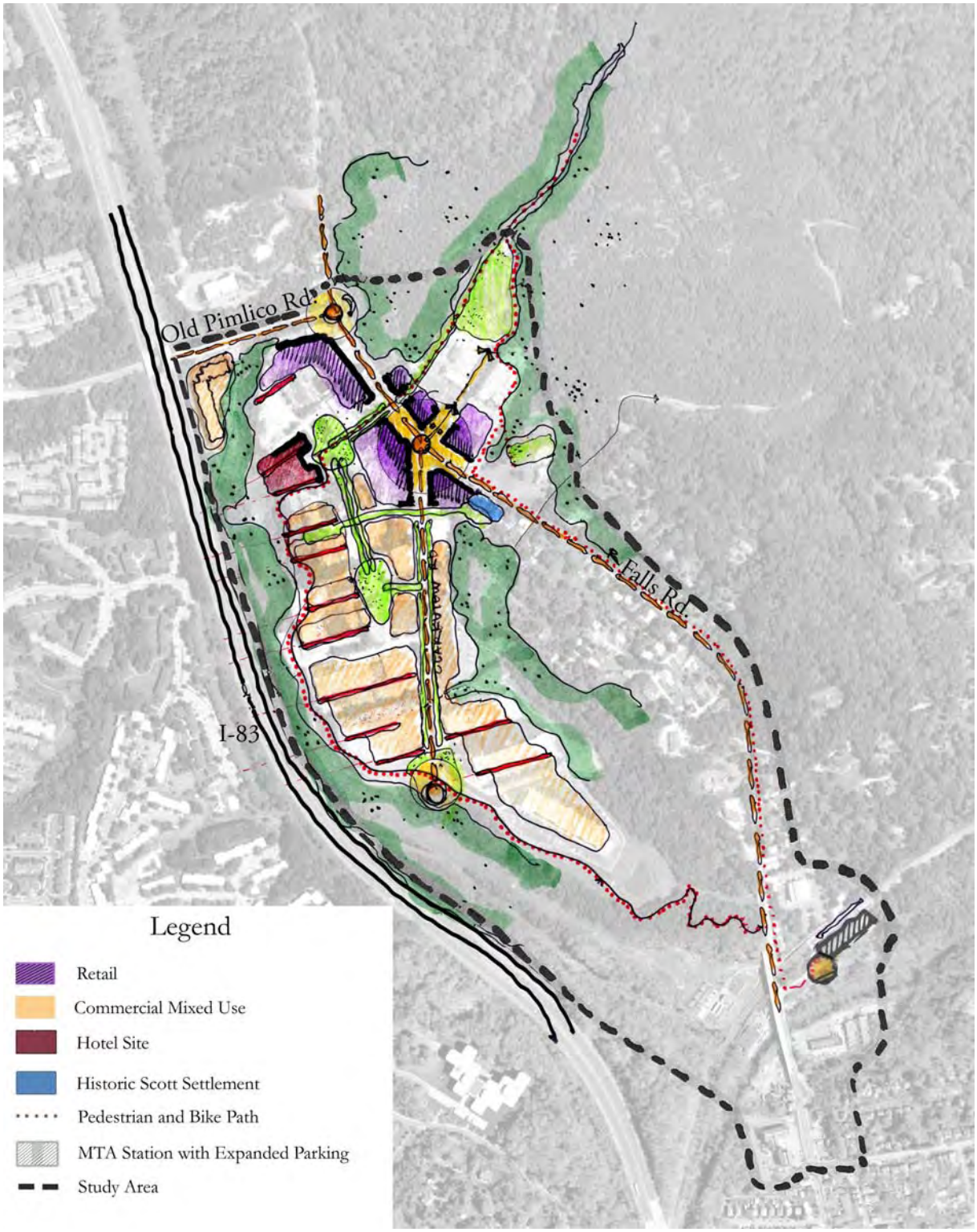
A number of the communities within RRLRAIA are historic. The historic character of these communities is rich and diverse ranging from Ruxton Heights, which is a classic example of early suburban development, to Bare Hills, an early free black community located on the historic Falls Road turnpike, to the railroad and industrial mining past, many remnants of which are located in the Park. Recognition, documentation and preservation of historic resources are recommended. These connections with the past serve to enhance the distinctive character of our communities. The expansion or creation of new historic districts can bring key economic benefits to historic neighborhoods and preserve their historic and cultural heritage.

Many established communities such as those in the RRLRAIA area struggle with undeveloped lots that offer opportunities for subdivision, infill development, and the ensuing challenges that additional density brings to a community. Developing design guidelines that are specific to the character of a community can result in more sensitive infill. In addition, encouraging higher density residential development in areas such as the Bare Hills Village can provide a strategic opportunity for a village-style lifestyle.

An important way to better connect the communities within the RRLRAIA boundaries and the region are enhancements to pedestrian and bike lanes and paths. Connecting the Park's bike and pedestrian paths to the surrounding network of paths will be an asset to the region. Upgrading and utilizing established roadways to provide defined pedestrian and bike paths is recommended.

Finally, continuing to work with business owners and County agencies and officials to upgrade and better integrate the six commercial centers within RRLRAIA is an ongoing priority. Commercial uses that offer amenities to the surrounding community are recommended.

Bare Hills Illustrative Site Plan



Section 1: Robert E. Lee Park Connections and Bare Hills Village Concept Plan

The proposed new Bare Hills Village mixed-use center would feature a restored historic Scott Settlement[1] at its southern edge and a mixture of newly-renovated industrial buildings and new construction for enhanced retail uses to serve the communities on both sides of Interstate 83. In addition, new multi-family residential uses can transform this area into a complete neighborhood similar to the Village of Cross Keys located farther south on Falls Road.

To ensure the successful transformation of this area, the community will partner with the County's Office of Planning, the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Recreation and Parks, as well as state agencies such as the State Highway Administration. A coordinated effort among these groups on all public and private improvements planned for this area will provide the greatest probability of success. Ideally, these agencies will work with stakeholders to develop a more specific and comprehensive development plan to serve as the basis for specific design review standards and necessary zoning changes.

The Bare Hills Village area redevelopment concept will require a traffic impact study to be submitted for review and comment to the State Highway Administration and the Baltimore County Department of Public Works. It should include the following:

1. Traffic impacts associated with the rezoned Bare Hills area - particularly along state roadway MD 25 (Falls Road).
2. Traffic signal warrant analysis for MD 25 at Clarkview Road.
3. Traffic safety and operational benefits of reducing curb cuts along MD 25 and introducing an internal local street system.

The transfer of the Park to Baltimore County in 2009 was a major accomplishment and represents a regional recreational and environmental opportunity for the community well into the future.

Recommendations:

1. Prepare in collaboration with property owners and community stakeholders, two separate and coordinated master plans for the Park and Bare Hills Village that connect the two areas as a single "campus". The master plan for Bare Hills Village would also include the properties on Falls Road immediately north of the light rail station through Old Pimlico Road. The two master plans will be guided by the following:
   a. The Park should become a regional asset accessible to a greater population as well as a community park.
   b. Long-term planning should seek to physically connect the Park out to and across both Falls Road and Bellona Avenue to increase visibility and access.

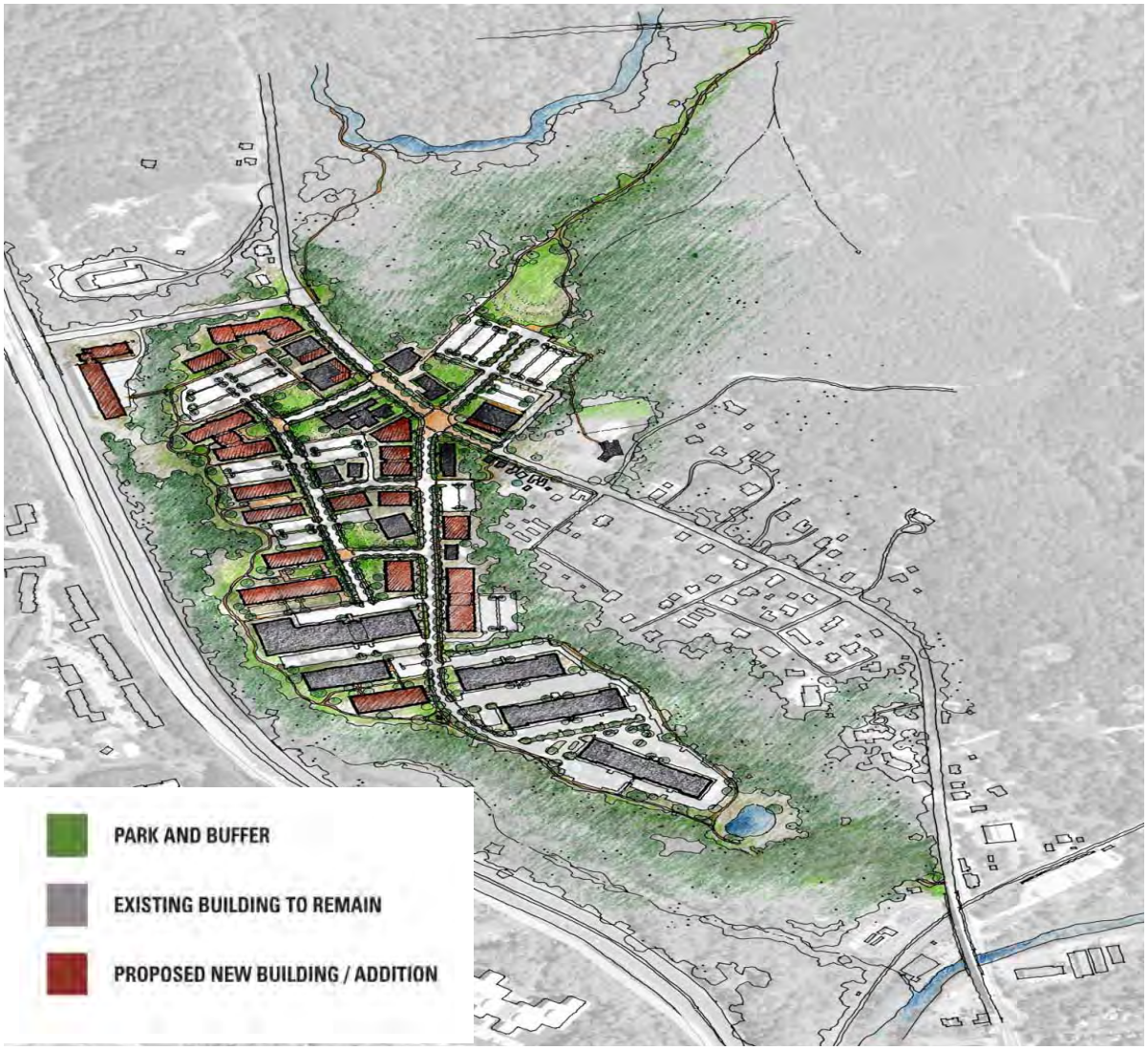
[1]The historic buildings in the Scott Settlement are an example of an early free black settlement.

c. New commercial uses in Bare Hills should act to complement the use of the Park and should, in part, include amenities that enhance the positive activities in the Park such as bike rentals and hiking supplies.

2. Create multiple points of access around the Park that will prevent burdening any single neighborhood with an influx of Park users. Suggested points of access include the following:
   a. Clarkview Road and Falls Road
      i. Extend Clarkview Road across Falls Road.
      ii. Create suitable parking at the Hollins Organic property (See Section 1: 3.b).
      iii. Create a new traffic signal at Falls and Clarkview Roads.
   b. Northern Falls Road entrance (approximately 7000 block of Falls Road)
      i. Remove current street parking from Falls Road and relocate to a new parking lot at the Brooklandville Fire Station property just to the north.
      ii. Convert the area currently used as parking along Falls Road to an enhanced walkway from the new parking lot located at the Brooklandville Fire Station into the Park. This section of trail will also serve the future route of the Torrey C. Brown Rail (NCR) Trail /East Coast Greenway.
      iii. Address safety concerns at this location by installing an architecturally appropriate safety barrier between Falls Road and the new walkway and consider street calming methods before and after the curve on Falls Road to slow traffic.
   c. Eastern entrance at rugby field off of Bellona Avenue
      i. Include a controlled vehicular/pedestrian crossing across the Light Rail tracks.
      ii. Evaluate the feasibility of a small parking lot with overhead lighting at this location. Overhead lighting should be turned off for the night following Park closure.
      iii. Add a new community recreation field, with limited amenities and no evening supplemental lighting, to make up for the open space lost in the building of West Towson Elementary School.
      iv. Employ traffic calming measures to increase safety for vehicular/pedestrian crossing.
   d. Current Falls Road MTA Light Rail parking lot
      i. Provide gated access to the Park via the Light Rail parking area to include a walking path through the Robert E. Lee Land, LLC acquisition area (See Section 1.3.a).
      ii. Make the MTA Light Rail parking lot available to Park users for parking. Park users are likely to use the parking lot during off-peak Light Rail usage.
      iii. Plan and implement long-term enhancements to this entrance together with a possible acquisition of the Davey Tree property at 6101 Falls Road (See Section 1.3.d.).
   e. Home and Hospital School (6229 Falls Rd.)
      i. Utilize the existing parking lot for Park users when the building is not in use.
      ii. Repurpose the location as an environmental education center or other Park related facility; specifically as the home to the Robert E. Lee Park Nature Council.
      iii. Use the grass field on the Home and Hospital School property as a recreation field for lower-aged children with limited amenities and no evening supplemental field lighting to make up for the open space lost in the building of West Towson Elementary.
3. Acquisition of several key parcels to enhance the Park/Bare Hills Village campus including the following:
   a. Robert E. Lee Land, LLC Property (6103 Falls Road – zoned DR 2)

i. This environmentally sensitive area located between the Light Rail parking area and the access bridge to the Park should serve as a gateway from the expanded Light Rail parking area into the Park. This new entrance would also ease the parking burden along Lakeside Drive.

Bare Hills Village Development Plan



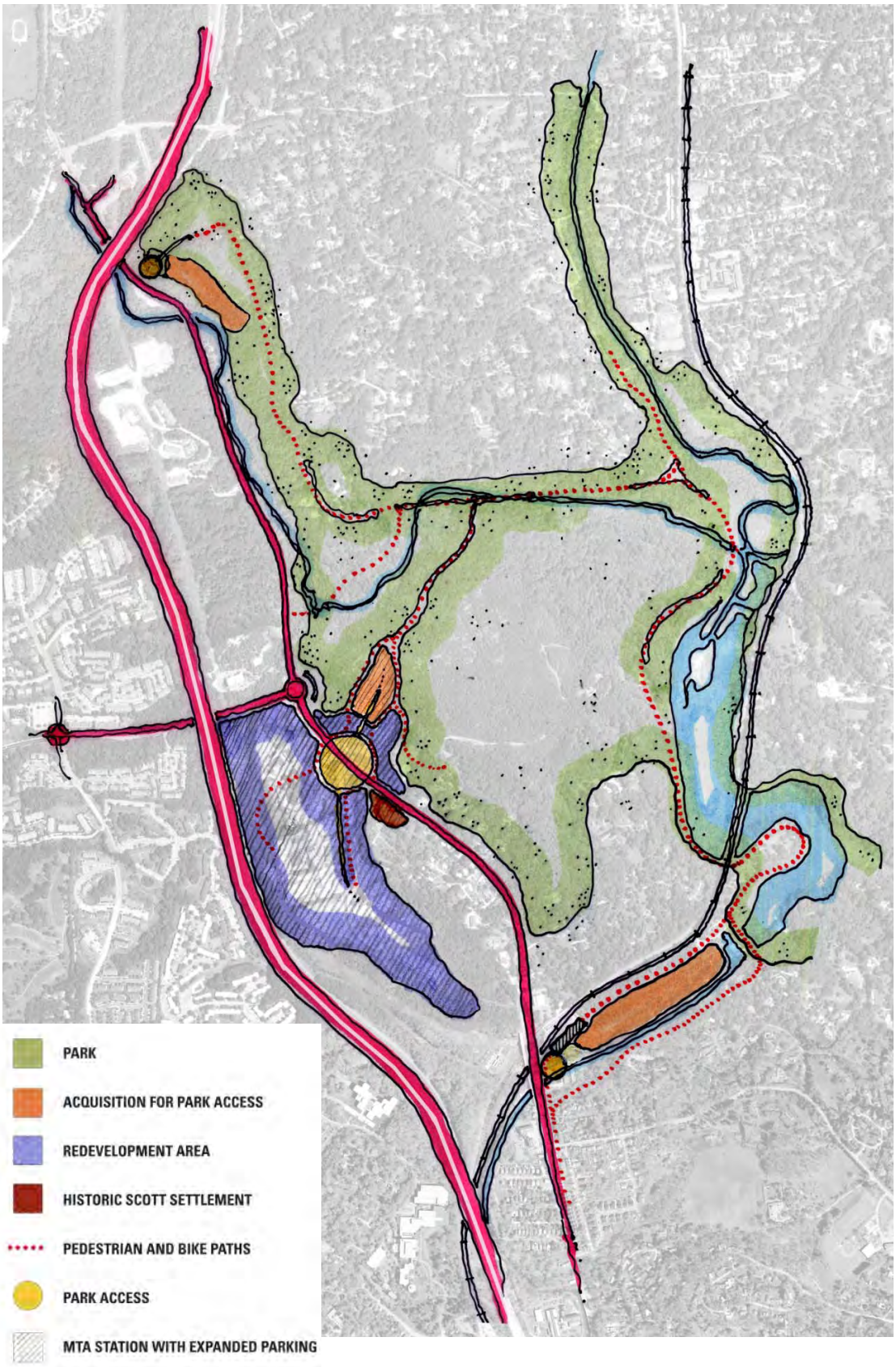
- Redevelopment opportunities with enhanced green space and organized parking
- Strategic building additions
- Opportunities to incorporate the Park, Education Building, and Scott Settlement into the Village core
- Total Ground Floor for new buildings = 346,400 GSF

b. Hollins Organic (6247 Falls Road – zoned BR-AS)
    i. This parcel located on the east side of Falls Road in the Bare Hills commercial area should be acquired for open space and parking to serve as the central western entrance to the Park.
    ii. This area should be acquired in conjunction with an extension of Clarkview Road across Falls Road. This intersection should include a new traffic signal and crosswalk.
    iii. Additional commercial parcels should be acquired to complete the Clarkview Road extension.
c. Various Falls Road Parcels
    i. Acquire several small pieces of private land on the east side of Falls Road, north of the Rockland Ridge development (formerly Sorrento Run), that would complete a continuous right-of-way for the northern Park entrance.
    ii. Explore the possibility of easements, rather than outright acquisitions, for Park expansion and a future route for the Torrey C. Brown Rail (NCR) Trail/East Coast Greenway.
d. Davey Tree Property (6101 Falls Road – zoned ML)
    i. This 3.357 acres property is located on the east side of Falls Road at the entrance to the MTA Light Rail parking lot. It is in the flood plain, and acquisition would enhance the southern Park entrance at Falls Road.
    ii. Consider this area for future expanded surface parking and as an extension of the Park.
e. Privately owned land within the Park
    i. Acquire easements along Lake Roland to protect the existing path system.
    ii. Easements for these parcels, which make up part of the trail system, are necessary to protect both land owners and the County.

4. Encourage a mix of uses and, in certain circumstances, consider zoning changes throughout the Bare Hills commercial area, the Park, and the Scott Settlement historic area.
    a. Bare Hills
        i. Support a mix of uses throughout the Bare Hills Village area by facilitating redevelopment through the use of the PUD, Transect and Renaissance redevelopment processes, the possible establishment of a commercial revitalization district and, where appropriate, rezoning parcels, which would provide the impetus for revitalizing and upgrading the uses for the Bare Hills area to become a more community-oriented retail, office and residential "village".
    b. The Park
        i. The areas to be acquired should be rezoned to RC 7 (Resource Conservation – very low density) to be consistent with existing Park zoning. Rezoning must take place *after* acquisition occurs.
    c. Scott Settlement/Falls Road
        i. The residential buildings along Falls Road should retain residential zoning for the time being. However, rezoning to a low intensity office or small-scale commercial district should be periodically considered, but <u>only</u> in conjunction with the simultaneous designation of a Scott Settlement Local Historic District (See Section 2.3).

Examples of existing conditions in Bare Hills

Bare Hills Village: Overall Proposed Conditions



Bare Hills Regional Concept Plan

5. Encourage commercial uses that enhance the recreational uses at the Park.
   a. Create appropriate zoning adjoining the Park on the Falls Road side to encourage new businesses such as bike rentals, fishing and hiking accessories stores, etc. that complement the community and Park's recreational uses.
   b. The Home and Hospital School building should be repurposed as an environmental center and home to the Robert E. Lee Park Nature Council (See Section 1.2.e).

Home and Hospital School 6229 Falls Road

6. Zoning changes should occur as designated in an adopted Bare Hills Village master plan (See Section 1.1) that includes a comprehensive new streetscape plan as well as design and signage standards along Falls Road throughout Bare Hills Village. In addition, the following should be undertaken:
   a. Evaluate how the County's Planned Unit Development, Renaissance and Transect Zoning processes can be used to implement the objectives of a Bare Hills Master Plan.
      i. Additionally, interested parties should evaluate the utility and effectiveness of the Transect Map adopted in the County's 2020 Master Plan as it applies to the Bare Hills Village area. If the transect zoning designations in the Master Plan 2020 do not adequately facilitate the goals of the future Bare Hills Village Master Plan, consider establishing a new Transect Map as part of the new Bare Hills Village Master Plan, similar to localized Transect Maps for Owings Mills, Middle River and other similarly designated areas within Master Plan 2020.
      ii. Work with of Office of Planning to ensure that the entire Bare Hills Village Area is designated as a Community Enhancement Area or other appropriate mechanism in the County Master Plan for higher density commercial and residential development opportunities.
   b. Recommend that the County Council add the Bare Hills Village commercial properties to the list of areas that are reviewed by the Design Review Panel. The review criteria should include review of designs that seek to complement the historic characteristics of Bare Hills.
   c. Work with stakeholders and the Office of Planning to create design guidelines to retain the historic low scale retail streetscape along the Falls Road corridor with new buildings two to three stories in height with higher density buildings toward the Jones Falls Expressway.
   d. Work with stakeholders and the Office of Planning to create signage guidelines that will help facilitate a consistent and attractive look to the area and retain the Falls Road

corridor's historic feel. In adopting these guidelines, incorporate measures to discourage incompatible electronic or internally illuminated signs along the Falls Road corridor.

e. Develop a new intersection with a traffic signal at Clarkview Road and Falls Road with Clarkview Road being extended across Falls Road as part of the new entrance to the Park.
f. Reduce curb cuts along Falls Road and implement a new internal interconnected street plan on the west side of Falls Road south of Old Pimlico Road. This off-street, ancillary road system would be safer, more attractive, and better serve both the businesses and the community.

7. Designate Bare Hills Village as a County Revitalization Area to allow for greater access to public funding.
   a. Work with the State and County Departments of Business and Economic Development to tap into available resources in order to strengthen Bare Hills Village as an employment center.
   b. Consider the potential for Bare Hills to become a Transit Oriented Development area similar to the Clipper Mill project in Baltimore City, taking advantage of its proximity to the MTA Light Rail, by:
      i. Allowing increased residential and office density behind the west side of the Falls Road retail area.
      ii. Create a pedestrian trail and encourage a commuter shuttle to promote easier access from public transportation to Bare Hills Village.

Example of Potential Higher Density Mixed Use Development in Bare Hills Village

8. Form a permanent public/private coalition of key stakeholders, including the Baltimore County Office of Planning and Department of Recreation and Parks and Department of Economic Development, RRLRAIA, Robert E. Lee Park Nature Council, and area business leaders to focus on the improvements to the Park/Bare Hills Village Campus.

9. Implement a comprehensive safety program in and around the Park
   a. Park to be gated and locked from dusk until dawn at all locations with vehicular access.
   b. Security/surveillance cameras should be placed at the Falls Road MTA Light Rail Station platform and parking lot.
   c. Security/surveillance cameras to be placed at key locations around the Park consistent with other vandalism reduction initiatives implemented by Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks at other County parks.

d. Define Park boundaries more clearly to prevent Park users from trespassing on private property. Include fencing where appropriate.

Falls Road at Clarkview Road
(See Sections 1.2.b., and 1.6.e.)

Existing Conditions

Proposed Conditions with New Intersection

Section 2: Historic Preservation

Historic preservation is a key tool in preserving the character of communities and bringing important economic benefits to the community. The creation of local and National Register Districts allows property owners to utilize tax credits to offset the costs of improving and rehabilitating older structures. The community will benefit from the existing tax advantages of designated districts, and in the case of local historic designation, will benefit from required review of changes to designated historic contributing structures, as well as design review of new development. The creation of historic districts may prove to be the most effective long-term community stabilization tool that the community might have at its disposal. Therefore, the community should support those areas that are interested in and eligible for historic designation.

Recommendations:

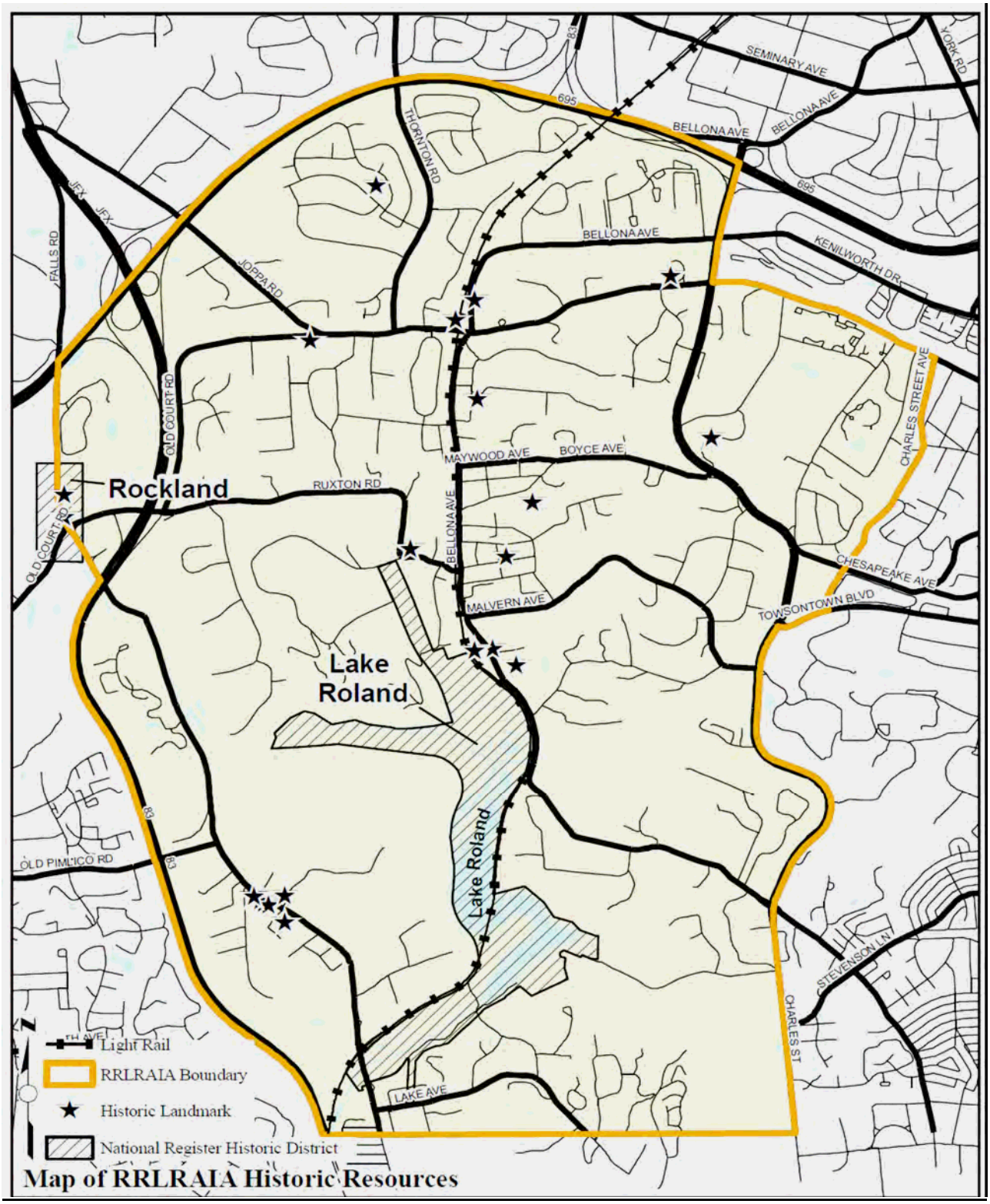
1. Support strategic National Register Historic District designations in eligible areas in the greater RRLRAIA area, including the Scott Settlement, to allow homeowners to receive historic rehabilitation tax credits.

2. Preserve the historic Scott Settlement buildings along Falls Road through a local historic district designation.
   a. An option of rezoning the Scott Settlement houses along Falls Road to a low intensity commercial or office district would help preserve the historic character of the Scott Settlement. However, the County should only consider this option in combination with a Baltimore County Local Historic District designation (See Section 1.4.c.).

3. Explore local historic district designations for other RRLRAIA communities to create a more effective design review and planning mechanism to control infill development.

4. The Bare Hills Village Area is likely to contain significant archeological resources which should be explored and protected prior to any grading, razing or new construction.

Conceptual View: Adaptive Reuse of Existing Scott Settlement House on Falls Road


Rockland
Lake Roland
Lake Roland
SEMINARY AVE
YORK RD
BELLONA AVE
BELLONA AVE
BELLONA AVE
KENILWORTH DR
THORNTON RD
JFX
JFX
FALLS RD
JOPPA RD
OLD COURT RD
OLD COURT RD
MAYWOOD AVE
BOYCE AVE
CHARLES STREET AVE
RUXTON RD
BELLONA AVE
CHESAPEAKE AVE
MALVERN AVE
TOWSONTOWN BLVD
OLD PIMLICO RD
STEVENSON LN
CHARLES ST
LAKE AVE
695
695
83
83
Light Rail
RRLRAIA Boundary
Historic Landmark
National Register Historic District
Map of RRLRAIA Historic Resources

Section 3: *Subdivision and Infill*

The fact that subdivision and infill development has slowed in recent years does not indicate that the interest has permanently gone away. The RRLRAIA community, with its significant large acreage lots, 56 privately owned lots over 5 acres for a total of 556 acres, also has an active conservation easement program through the Greater Ruxton Area Foundation to obtain easements that have the potential to further minimize the impact of infill development. Nevertheless, continued strong and consistent participation in the County's design review process is required prior to an application for permits. Ideally, these meetings should be handled as collaborative design work sessions.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a set of broad design guidelines for use in Design Review Panel cases, while keeping in mind that one set of rigid guidelines will not work for the many different and distinct neighborhoods within RRLRAIA boundaries.

2. Consider strategic down zoning opportunities for large lot properties within the Ruxton neighborhood to compliment the Greater Ruxton Area Foundation's conservation easement program. Growth and development consistent with the County's long range master plan should be encouraged through zoning changes in the Bare Hills Village. RRLRAIA is mindful of the County's Master Plan and seeks to encourage growth in appropriate areas while simultaneously protecting the character of its residential neighborhoods.

3. Encourage mixed-use zoning through a PUD or Transect approach for Bare Hills Village.
   a. Either process should involve a public charrette to be facilitated via the future Bare Hills Village Master Planning process.

4. Encourage a closer relationship with the Greater Ruxton Area Foundation, as well as participation in their conservation easement program to protect open space.
   a. The Foundation currently has easements on 13 properties totaling over 55 acres, while the Land Preservation Trust has easements on an additional 30 properties totaling over 100 acres.

Op*en Space in Greater Ruxton*

Section 4: Pedestrian and Bike Enhancements

The traditional method of transportation planning has evolved in recent years to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles, in addition to vehicles. The notion of "complete streets" to provide for all forms of transportation has led to increased planning and funding for sidewalks and bike lanes. The 2010 Community Plan recommends prioritizing the long-term upgrading of the principal streets in the community for this combined usage and as important links within a new Western Baltimore County Bike and Pedestrian Plan. More importantly, the potential for the Park to be part of the East Coast Greenway is an important opportunity.

Recommendations:

1. Incorporate the Park/Bare Hills Village as part of the route for the planned East Coast Greenway via the following steps:
   a. Link the Park to Baltimore City's proposed Jones Falls Valley trail system (Jones Falls Valley Trail).
   b. Connect the Jones Falls Valley Trail to Torrey C. Brown Rail (former NCR) Trail through the Park as part of the East Coast Greenway.
      i An appropriate path to accomplish this goal is via the decommissioned Westminster Railroad track bed to the Brooklandville Fire Station property.
      ii Study a connection from the plan area to Meadowood Park.
      iii Study a connection to the Torrey C. Brown (former NCR) trail as a possible connection to the East Coast Greenway.
      iv A parking area should be added at the Brooklandville Fire Station property to connect and provide access to the East Coast Greenway, to the Torrey C. Brown Rail (NCR) Trail and the Park.
   c. Create a partnership that includes the County's bike planner and RRLRAIA to continue to plan the best path through the Park and Ruxton, Riderwood, and Lake Roland communities and ensure a connection to the Meadowood Park north on Falls Road and the Torrey C. Brown Rail (NCR) Trail.
   d. The County should encourage the implementation of a bike-sharing program at Park trailheads. Bike sharing would involve strategically placed bicycles available for public use throughout the Park and the other trail systems described above.

2. Work with the County towards the creation of a Falls Road Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan
   a. A Corridor Management Plan will allow Falls Road to be designated a National Scenic Byway (NSB) and become eligible for additional funding and interpretive programs. Funds can support technical assistance for property owners and marketing the byway as a visitor experience.

3. Implement a pedestrian and bike way in the following areas:
   a. Along the entire length of Bellona Avenue from Charles Street (south) to Charles Street (north).
      i Implement appropriate signage to promote use of on road biking.

b. Along Lake Avenue from Charles Street to Falls Road, requiring coordination with both Baltimore County and Baltimore City.
c. Falls Road from the northern boundary of RRLRAIA to the City line.

4. Add a bike trail connection from the Park to Charles Street via Woodbrook Lane.

5. Work with the County's Community Traffic Safety Program Coordinator to implement strategies set out in the State's Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan when making road improvements through the Association's boundaries.
   a. Issues regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety along Charles Street should be addressed immediately

6. Pedestrian crossing upgrades should be added at the following locations:
   a. Charles Street to accommodate the new West Towson Elementary School, possibly in conjunction with the new traffic signal at the school entrance.
   b. Bellona Avenue and Charles Street (South).
   c. Bellona Avenue and Ruxton Road to facilitate access to the commercial areas on Bellona Avenue.

Bare Hills Open Space Structure

- *Improvements to streetscape and bicycle/ pedestrian connectivity*
- *Green network within developed area*
- *Trail connecting to East Coast Greenway*

Bare Hills Circulation and Parking

- *Enhanced network of bike/ pedestrian paths*
- *Better internal circulation and limited curb cuts on Falls Road*

Section 5: Commercial Centers

Within the RRLRAIA boundaries are six commercial centers all of which are low intensity centers offering amenities and services to the surrounding community. Since the Bare Hills Village is discussed extensively in Section 1 hereof, this section centers on the remaining five commercial centers which include:

- Lake Falls Village (intersection of Lake Avenue and Falls Road)
- Ruxton Village Center (intersection of Bellona Avenue and Ruxton Road)
- Charles Street Village Center (Charles Street between Stevenson Lane and Bellona Avenue)
- Thornton Road/Joppa Road (corner of Thornton Road and Joppa Road)
- Woodbrook commercial area (N. Charles Street-south).

All of these areas have opportunities to become more aesthetically attractive with modest landscaping and architectural enhancements. One functional area missing in many of these centers is a community gathering area where neighbors can meet and congregate. Architectural services should be employed from either public funding or volunteers to develop master plans for the commercial areas. These design schemes can involve collaboration with property owners and tenants in making improvements to their properties.

Example of Upgraded Façade along Labelle Avenue at Ruxton Village Center

Recommendations:

1. Upgrade design elements at the commercial centers along North Charles Street (Woodbrook) and Bellona Avenue (both at Ruxton Road and Riderwood). These upgrades should have a focus on immediate improvements such as enhanced landscaping along the street frontage and coordinated signage.

2. Encourage the development of long-term consistent architectural and design elements in the commercial districts, especially as properties are redeveloped, including the following:
   a. Improve landscaping.
   b. Consistent signage.

c. Reduce light pollution to the immediate neighbors.
d. Add outdoor seating, for both publicly and privately owned properties.
e. Reduce curb cuts, notably on Charles Street between Stevenson Lane and Bellona Avenue. At this location, seek the installation of a traffic signal for the commercial area and minimize curb cuts with internal service road network. Install a landscaped median.

3. Consider developing a design scheme for the eventual redevelopment of the Gill's Garage property on Joppa Road near Thornton Road (1717 West Joppa Road).

Aerial View of Woodbrook Commercial Area along North Charles Street

Section 6: Public Safety

A public safety strategy for the RRLRAIA communities cannot be presented as a "one size fits all" effort due to the diversity of neighborhoods and the Park. Crimes throughout the community are typically "crimes of convenience" involving unlocked homes or cars. These issues can be successfully dealt with through on-going common sense initiatives and real time neighborhood alerts. Public safety becomes more effective when neighborhoods and businesses partner with law enforcement agencies using a variety of innovative and participatory models. Technology can enhance the ability for communities and law enforcement to work together cohesively.

Recommendations:

1. Communities within the RRLRAIA boundaries should review best practices of several effective community policing efforts in the region to determine what ideas might work within their own neighborhood.

2. Establish community initiatives to continue close connections with the Baltimore County Police Department and the greater community, including encouraging community member participation in the community police academy programs, anti-graffiti initiatives, commercial property safety and anti-crime initiatives.

3. The community and the Baltimore County Police Department should evaluate the merits of installing video surveillance cameras at several strategic locations in the community to aid law enforcement. If the county, community and local businesses determine video surveillance cameras are desirable, they should assist the county in drafting new legislation that specifies where they should be installed, who pays for them and how they will be maintained. (It should be noted that the surveillance camera legislation adopted in 2005 only applies to shopping centers, defined as a single entity greater than 75,000 square feet). The scope and intent of this recommendation is not for the Baltimore County Police Department to monitor the cameras on a daily/continual basis, the intent is for the development of a public/private partnership with guidance from the police department that would allow for the implementation of surveillance technologies that could be utilized by the police in the event of a crime being committed in the community, the proverbial electronic version of the neighborhood watch programs.

4. Baltimore County Police, along with the Department of Recreation and Parks and the MTA Police, should work with the community and the Robert E. Lee Park Nature Council to address specific safety concerns associated with the Park.

Conclusion and Acknowledgements

The recommendations included in this 2010 Community Plan reflect the evolving and ongoing nature of communities, as well as the need to plan for the future to ensure that our communities thrive. In partnership with stakeholders, including the State of Maryland, Baltimore County, RRLRAIA, and surrounding community groups, the Community Plan Committee sincerely hopes that the recommendations contained in the 2010 Community Plan will become a reality.

The 2010 Community Plan is a product of the hard work and collaboration of many individuals. We would like to acknowledge and thank the following:

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	Glenn Neighbors	

We also wish to thank the numerous members of the community who contributed to this Plan.

Appendix: Update on External Recommendations from 2001 Community Plan

(Actions not listed are internal to the RRLRAIA and will be reviewed in a separate document).

Section 1: Traffic and Light rail

Traffic

Issue #1: Policy governing road construction, maintenance and traffic laws are dictated by SHA and Baltimore County.

1.1. (Internal)

1.2. Conduct periodic traffic meetings with community, county and state officials and police to discuss problems and solutions.

Comment: Happens infrequently. Should be continued.

1.3. (Internal)

Issue #2: Traffic calming devices may help slow traffic and discourage cutting through neighborhoods

2.1 (Internal)

2.2 (Internal)

2.3 Discuss with Baltimore County officials the possibility of installing traffic control devices in the community as part of a "pilot project" to determine effectiveness and problems. Since adoption of the 2001 community plan, the county has instituted a traffic calming program. The community may apply for traffic calming in specific locations.

Comment: Not Completed. Continue in conjunction with Section 4 (Pedestrian and Bike Enhancements) recommendations of 2010 CP.

Issue #3: Some traffic problems are caused by community residents.

3.1 (Internal)

3.2 Lobby for sidewalks along major roads to promote safe pedestrian and bicycle alternatives to vehicle trips.

Comment: limited sidewalks have been implemented. This is a major focus of the 2010 CP and should be continued according to Sections 4.3 and 4.4 of 2010 CP.

Issue #4: There are intricate issues throughout the community related to specific intersections, traffic volume and speed. Solutions can be controversial even within each neighborhood.

4.1 (Internal)

Comment: This Issue is primarily internal, however specific related recommendations can be found in Sections 1.6.e and 4.6.

Light Rail

Issue #1: Light tail trains cause disturbance of neighboring properties and are a traffic hazard. Glaring lights of light rail trains, especially along Bellona Avenue between Ruxton Road bridge and Joppa Road bridge interfere with driver vision.

1.1 Review plans to insure that sufficient landscape and sound buffers are designed and insist on proper installation and maintenance of those buffers.

Comment: There has been substantial landscaping along Bellona Avenue by the Foundation and this is an ongoing process.

1.2 Insist that MTA maintain light rail tracks to reduce noise.

Comment: This is an ongoing process that should be continued.

1.3 Review MTA plans to determine sufficient glare control has been designed for train lights.

Comment: This is an ongoing process that should be continued.

Section 2: Zoning and Development

Issue #1: (Internal)

Issue #2: (Internal)

Issue #3: Large tracts of land are targets for subdivision, resulting in increased density, increased traffic and loss of open space.

3.1 (Internal)

3.2 (Internal)

Comment: This problem is specifically addressed through strategic down zoning cited in Section 3.2 and 3.2.a of the 2010 Community Plan update.

Issue #4: (Internal)

Issue #5: Expertly drafted restrictive covenants offered by developers to safeguard communities can be effective, but they are not easily enforced as compliance requires monitoring and costly legal action.

5.1 Seek the most appropriate zoning designation for a tract or for a commercial enterprise because this is the neighborhoods best protection.

Comment: This recommendation is reinforced through several specific rezoning recommendations in the 2010 CP update. The 2010 CP update makes specific zoning change recommendations in Sections 1.4a-c, 2.3, and 3.2.

5.2 (Internal)

5.3 (Internal)

Issue #6: Many schools, medical institutions, religious institutions and retirement communities are in or border this community. They are permitted in residential zones by "special exception". They expansion and development plans should have positive impacts.

6.1 (Internal)

6.2 Work with the County Office of Planning staff, the County Council, and in concert with other community groups to improve compatibility standards for institutional uses in residentially zoned areas.

Comment: Needs improvement, possibly through greater oversight from the DRP (ex. Arden Courts on Bellona Ave). The West Towson Elementary School issue was an example of a County decision process without effective community input, particularly given the lost opportunity of the former Ridge School site. In 2009, Towson University unveiled a long range expansion of their campus which is primarily oriented to York Road with the western part of their campus remaining open space and parking.

Issue #7: County law and ordinances control the development process. Improvements would empower communities to: argue effectively for compatibility measures; ensure environmental protections are adequately applied; assure the preservation of historic structures; uphold the "scenic routes" and "scenic byways" guidelines.

7.1-7.6 Craft Legislation

Issue #8: Positive development can benefit the community.

8.1 Encourage redevelopment projects that improve the appearance and compatibility of existing business uses.

Comment: Not accomplished to the degree desired. This is a major component of the 2010 Community Plan. See Sections 1.6, 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6.

8.2 Encourage restoration and preservation of all of RRLRAIA's at-risk historic structures as residences or for adoptive reuse as these buildings weave our architectural "story".
Comment: Accomplished to a limited extent with the denial by the county of a demolition of a historic Scott Settlement property, however other historic Scott Settlement properties continue to deteriorate. The 2010 Community Plan specifically addresses this issue in Section 1.4.c. and Section 2.1-3.

8.3 Support the admirable goals of Maryland's "Smart Growth" initiative, such as the refurbishing of run-down neighborhoods in the metropolitan area.

Comment: The 2010 Community Plan encourages a substantial upgrading of the Bare Hills Village commercial area. The infill development recommended in Bare Hills Village is also a strong example of the state's "smart growth" policy.

Issue #9: (Internal)

Section 3: Land Preservation

Issue #1: Robert E. Lee Park is the community's greatest open space resource but there are several serious issues of concern: Off leash dog issues; paths being used by trail bikes, degradation of trails; former rugby; limited access.

Issue #2: Robert E. Lee Park is unusual in that it is a city-owned park located in the County. Although city residents do travel to use the park, many county residents also use the park. Without this park, the community would have very little public open space. Baltimore City has limited resources to devote to park maintenance.

Issue #3: The zoning of Robert E. Lee Park is currently residential. Although the City at this time has no intention of selling off any portions of the park, the current zoning would permit residential development.

Issue #4: Development of property adjacent to the park would detract from the park visually, functionally and environmentally.

1.1-4.1 (See below)

Comment: Nearly all issues related to Robert E. Lee Park are addressed in detail in the 2010 Community Plan update. The recent handover of operational authority from Baltimore City to Baltimore County is the greatest community success that came from the 2001 Community Plan, and many of the concerns have already begun to be addressed the County Department of Recreation and Parks. Detailed recommendations for the continued improvements of Robert E. Lee Park can be found throughout Section 1 of the 2010 Community Plan update, including rezoning, park improvements, acquisitions and specific programming. The actions dealing with Robert E. Lee Park in the 2010 Community Plan update are intended to replace those from 2001 Community Plan.

Issue #5: Additional development reduces open space.

5.1 (Internal)

5.2 (Internal)

Comment: Section 3 of the 2010 Community Plan update addresses various development issues and specifically recommends a better interaction with the Greater Ruxton Community Foundation to secure easements, which would limit unnecessary development.

Issue #6: Natural resources of the community – stream, woodlands and wetlands – are threatened by poor watershed management.

6.1 Support current regulations that provide stream protection and insist on county enforcement of these regulations. Vigorously oppose any variances of reduction of environmental restrictions.

Comment: This is a mostly internal action, however it should be emphasized and continued in line with Sections 2 and 3 of the 2010 Community Plan. In 2009, the

statewide storm water management regulations became effective that emphasize more environmentally sensitive development and regional watershed protection strategies.

6.2 (Internal)

6.3 (Internal)

Issue #7: The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area has very few active recreation facilities.

7.1 Consider improvements for open space in Essex Farm Park and the Ridge School which has been closed. Also consider bicycle/pedestrian linkage to the proposed Meadowood Park in addition to or in lieu of new facilities in the community.

Comment: The need for active recreation facilities still exists, however the above recommendation is to be replaced with the recommendations from Sections 1.2.c.iii, 1.2.e.ii-iii and Section 4.1.c.

7.2 (Internal)

Issue #8: Proposals to develop Lake Roland as a more active recreation facility are being considered, however, many residents prefer the current passive use.

8.1 Express community attitudes to Baltimore City Parks Department and insist that any plans for the park be developed with early input by the community.

Comment: No longer valid with the hand over to Baltimore County. The new Robert E. Lee Park Council will serve to address community involvement in park issues.

Section 4: Walkways and Bikeways

Issue #1: (Internal)

Issue #2: Village centers lack safe pedestrian access. The commercial centers of "Ruxton Village", "Charles Street Village", Lake Falls Village and Riderwood Village are not safely accessible by pedestrians or bicyclists.

2.1 Make sure that village center streetscape plans include crosswalks and sidewalks as part of the total redevelopment plan.

Comment: General efforts have been made to improve sidewalks within the RRLRAIA boundaries, however the village centers still need significant improvement of pedestrian access. The 2010 Community Plan update addresses both access and design quality of village centers in Section 4.2 and the entirety of Section 5.

Issue #3: Robert E. Lee Park is also difficult to access from the west.

3.1 Work with the Robert E. Lee Conservancy to repair and maintain the trail along the railroad bed to Falls Road.

Comment: The railroad bed trail into Robert E. Lee Park has been maintained to a certain extent, more so after the closing of the primary bridge entrance off of Lakeside Drive. Parking and potential easements are issues that need to be resolved to create a permanent viable entrance. See Sections 1.2.b and 1.3.c of the 2010 Community Plan update.

Issue #4: The MTA light rail tracks have divided the community into two sections. Prior to its construction, the right-of-way was used as a pedestrian link providing access and community interaction.

4.1 Work with MTA and the Robert E. Lee Park Conservancy to develop at-grade pedestrian crossing of the light rail tracks allowing access to Robert E. Lee Park from the east.

Comment: This has not been accomplished. This recommendation is key to creating public access to the eastern portion of Robert E. Lee Park, and is specifically addressed in Section 1.3.c.i.

4.2 Work with MTA to develop a trail from Essex Farm Park to Ridervale Park connecting them under the railroad bridge.

Comment: This recommendation proved to be unfeasible and should be removed.

4.3 Promote pedestrian improvements for the Falls Road, Ruxton Road and Joppa Road bridges over the light rail tracks. Ruxton road and Falls Road improvements should be part of the village center revitalization projects.

Comment: This is a valid recommendation that has yet to be realized. Improvements to the bridges should be done in coordination with the relevant portions of Section 5 (Commercial Centers) of the 2010 Community Plan update.

Issue #5: There is a lack of designated bicycle routes in the community.

5.1 (Internal)

5.2 Work with County and state agencies on bicycle safety measures including the following: Designate and mark Thorton Road with a bike lane from Joppa Road; designate and mark the east side of Falls Road from the city line to Joppa with a bike/pedestrian lane; designate a bike lane on Bellona Avenue from Ruxton Road south to Charles Street.

Comment: These improvements have yet to be accomplished, however the recommendations remain valid, if not slightly modified, and are represented in Sections 4.2-4 of the 2010 Community Plan update.

Issue #6: Bellona Avenue from Joppa Road south to Berwick Road is not safe for pedestrian traffic. A sidewalk in this area would provide safer pedestrian access for many residents to the Ruxton Village Center.

6.1 (Internal)

6.2 Based on adequate community support for the walkway, request planning, design and funding assistance from the Baltimore County Office of Community Conservation and elected officials.

Comment: Action to be replaced by Section 4.2.a-c of the 2010 Community Plan update.

Issue #7: There is no safe pedestrian access along Bellona Avenue between Riderwood Village and Ridervale. A sidewalk in this location would link several communities to the Riderwood Village.

7.1 Determine neighborhood support for a sidewalk in this location. RRLRAIA board should send a written request to Baltimore County Public Works endorsing the inclusion of sidewalks.

Comment: This recommend remains valid (See Section 4.2.a).

Issue #8 Baltimore County Plans to construct a regional park and sports complex west of Falls Road, north of the Beltway.

Comment: Meadowood Park was constructed, and the 2010 Community Plan advocates for a bike connection between Robert E. Lee Park and Meadowood Park (See Section 4.1.b.i).

8.1 (Internal)

8.2 Explore the possibility of reclassifying the Jones Falls greenway from an "environmental greenway" to a "recreational greenway" within the County's Master Plan 2010 and Land Preservation Plan.

Comment: The planned East Coast Greenway will provide a recreational greenway (See Section 4).

Issue #9 (Internal)

Section 5: Historic Preservation

Issue # 1: (Internal)

Issue #2: (Internal)

Issue #3: (Internal)

Issue #4: (Internal)

Issue #5: Individual properties can be designated for preservation if community support for the district is insufficient.

Comment: While still valid, a local district as recommended in the 2010 Community Plan would be the most effective design review tool.

5.1 (Internal)

Issue #6: Architectural and site design in the historic areas of the community should be consistent with the existing design.

6.1 Request that businesses and homeowners use neighborhood compatible design and provide examples.

Comment: This was somewhat accomplished for residential properties through the County's design review process. The 2010 Community Plan is recommending that this process be expanded into the Bare Hills area.

6.2 (Internal)

Issue #7: Zoning code violations and variances over the years have eroded the quality of our community's historic character.

7.1 Insist on enforcement of zoning restrictions.

Comment: This is still valid but mostly an internal recommendation for proper follow through.

Issue #8: Attractive landscapes define this community with winding narrow roads, extensive woodlands, natural areas and well maintained yards.

8.1 (Internal)

8.2 Require that all proposed improvements (including walks and trails) be designed and constructed to enhance the historic landscape.

Comment: This recommendation remains valid.

8.3 (Internal)

8.4 (Internal)

8.5 Insist on enforcement of county and state restrictions on forest damage and removal.

Comment: This recommendation remains valid.

Section 6: Community Enhancements

Issue #1: (Internal)

Issue #2: Commercial centers are increasingly congested, often lack a cohesive appearance, and are not pedestrian friendly. Some areas such as Lake Falls, Ruxton Village and Charles Street Village have initiated efforts to revitalize and upgrade the commercial centers.

Comment: This issue is addressed extensively in Section 5 of the 2010 Community Plan. While much of what is in the 2001 Community Plan remains valid, Section 5 of the 2010 Community Plan should guide future revitalization efforts.

2.1 (Internal)

2.2 (Internal)

Issue #3: (Internal)

Issue #4: Ridge School is likely to be closed and possibly torn down by the County.

Comment: The Ridge School was closed, but rather than being purchased by the County the property was purchased by private interests and developed as a significant subdivision. This was a lost opportunity for possible open space or as the site for the West Towson Elementary School now adjacent to the Ridge Ruxton School.

4.1 (Internal)

4.2 (Internal)

Issue#5: Land adjacent to county and state roads is not always well maintained. These areas, especially at the entrances to the community, can either diminish or enhance the community appearance.

5.1 (Internal)

5.2 Ensure that minimal standards of maintenance are enforced. Notify state and County roads supervisors regarding substandard maintenance.

Comment: Valid recommendation, should be continued. (Internal)

5.3 (Internal)

Issue #6: MTA is proceeding with the addition of a second light rail track from the Ruxton Road bridge north to the Beltway. They are developing plans to screen and enhance the tracks in conjunction with the track installation.

Comment: The second track has been constructed.

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