

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION TO THE ODENTON TOWN CENTER PLAN

1.0 BACKGROUND

This section addresses the following topics:

- Overview of the OTC Plan
- OTC Location
- Vision
- Goals
- Genesis of the Plan

1.1 Overview of the OTC Plan

The Odenton Town Center (OTC) Plan provides a significant new level of planning guidance compared to previous County Plans. In addition to providing general planning guidance to be used in making land use, development review, zoning, and public improvements decisions, this plan has regulatory standing. As a result, the planning guidance throughout this plan is organized into two parts - Intent and Requirements. All text labeled “Requirements” constitutes regulatory directives, and is presented in bold italics for ease in identification.

The OTC Plan includes Functional Planning Controls and Design Standards. It is intended to serve both as a guide for future growth and as the standard of review for individual applications for land use development and permitting. The Plan establishes seven (7) new zoning Sub-Areas, and numerous blocks within those Sub-Areas, each having special characteristics. The Plan sets forth criteria for development in each Block, some of which may be common to the entire Plan, or specifically detailed to serve as development criteria for that particular Block.

The Design Standards and the Block-by-Block design criteria, including site design, environmental considerations, architecture, open space and activity areas, signs, parking, landscaping, and streetscapes are a regulatory function of this Plan.

The OTC Plan also contains numerous Functional Plan components. They include a Functional Master Plan of Roads, Streets and Highways, a Functional Plan for Block Layout and Design, for Greenways, for Trails, for Pedestrian and Bike Pathways, and for Streetscapes.

Seven new OTC specific zoning categories are established based upon the nature of past development in the category area and the Plan goals for future development or re-development of that area. The Zoning Categories set out the types of uses permitted. The Plan sets out dimensional requirements (setbacks, yards, heights, massing and similar

components); density (DUA's) and intensity of development (FAR's), ratios of required mixes of use, and the sequencing of development of those uses. These seven zones are intended to be by-right zones, not overlay or floating zone classifications.

The Plan sets forth:

- goals, policies and procedures
- guidelines for future growth
- standards of review for individual applications for land use development
- recommended fiscal and public finance programs and policies that further the goals of the PLAN and implement its recommendations
- methods of streamlining the permit process
- unifying, as practicable, related regulatory processes and programs such as zoning, sub-division, landscape manuals, storm water management, road codes, and other regulatory codes
- credit, bonus, and incentive systems that encourage and support owners and developers to build vertical, mixed-use projects linked to pedestrian walkways and transit/structured parking facilities.
- a series of disincentives to build or renovate in sprawling, low intensity patterns
- significant enhancements to environmental best practice and quality standards

The OTC Plan is intended to serve two distinct functions and with separate intended audiences, as follows:

Function A

This Plan is directed towards the individuals and organizations, who need to understand development rules, in order to build public or private projects, within the OTC, or who plan to review or comment on those development activities.

Function B

The Plan also provides planning and implementation guidance to the public sector. It serves as a resource for the County in planning public expenditures needed to support OTC growth and as a tool in monitoring and updating this Plan. It provides the background analysis that is the basis for generating this Plan, such as existing conditions and trends. It quantifies projected County benefits such as jobs and tax revenues that would result from continued OTC redevelopment. This function also provides regional context and advisory recommendation of issues beyond the boundaries of the OTC in order to reinforce the need to protect these areas from unwarranted adverse impacts.

Illustrative Vision Plan

Figure 3, Illustrative Vision Plan and the other sub-area vision plans found in this document, show the OTC area as it may become, by the year 2020, if this vision and plan are implemented. The uses shown on these vision plans are conceptual and are not meant to indicate that any of the uses shown are required uses.

1.2 Related Documents

This plan supercedes the 1995 Odenton Town Plan.

Several other documents also regulate development nearby or within the OTC boundaries and should be consulted in conjunction with this plan. These include the:

- Severn Small Area Plan;
- Odenton Small Area Plan;
- Anne Arundel County Greenways Master Plan;
- Anne Arundel County Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan;
- Anne Arundel County Storm Water Practices and Procedures Manual;
- Anne Arundel County Landscape Manual;
- Anne Arundel County Subdivision Code;
- Anne Arundel County Zoning Code;
- Severn River Watershed Management Master Plan.

1.3 OTC Location

“Odenton Town Center” is the name given to the entire Odenton Growth Management Area. In some earlier documents, only a part of the area (now comprised of the Core, Transition, and Village sub-areas) was referred to as the “Town Center.”

The OTC is a sixteen hundred and twenty acre area, located in the western part of Anne Arundel County. It is located within twelve miles of the City of Baltimore, sixteen miles of Washington DC, and five miles from the Baltimore Washington International Airport. (See Figure 1, Odenton Regional Context Map.)

Odenton is one of three designated “Town Centers,” in Anne Arundel County, the others being Parole to the southeast and Glen Burnie to the northeast. It is strategically located in the Washington-Baltimore corridor at the junction of Maryland Routes 32, 170, and 175, with close connections to the Baltimore–Washington Parkway and I-97. Its location on the MARC rail line has played a significant role in Odenton’s development. The adjacent U.S. Army Base, Fort George G. Meade, is an important economic influence on the area. The OTC lies at the center of a large and growing residential area as shown in the County’s General Development Plan. (See Figure 2, Odenton Vicinity Map.)

1.4 Vision

The Odenton Town Center will be a vital community where some live and work and others come for the shopping, entertainment, cultural enhancement and transportation access provided there. It will offer something for everyone and be a place that brings the diverse population of the Odenton area together as a community. The Odenton Town Center located in western Anne Arundel County, is at the heart of an area that has experienced tremendous residential and business growth in recent decades and is expected to experience even more growth in decades to come. The Odenton Town Center is particularly well positioned to deal with that growth and provide a center of

community activity to serve the growing population. The presence of a train station in the Odenton Town Center, the proximity of the Odenton Town Center to major highways and regional connector roads, the bus service to the Odenton Town Center and the connection of the Odenton Town Center to area hiker/biker trails combine to make the Odenton Town Center accessible to all. The Odenton Town Center will be a retreat of green places, memorable spaces and pleasant connections. The preservation of places of historical significance, special beauty and environmental sensitivity together with the carefully planned development of the area, will make the Odenton Town Center a unique and special place and a source of pride and enjoyment for all who live, work and visit it.

Insert figure 1 regional context map

insert figure 2 odenton vicinity map

1.5 Goals

The goals for development of the OTC are as follows:

Goal 1: Create a destination for shopping, employment, entertainment, education, and other public services that serves the Odenton area and West County.

Goal 2: Capitalize on access to regional public transit by creating development conditions that promote transit use by both residents commuting out and workers commuting into Odenton.

Goal 3: Embrace the State's Smart Growth principles and create a compact, mixed-use urban Core that is designed so that jobs, housing, and daily needs are within walking distance of each other.

Goal 4: Create a strong sense of place for the town center that draws upon and respects Odenton's heritage and its historic resources.

Goal 5: Protect the natural resources of the OTC and in particular the wooded upland wetlands in the northern portions of the OTC.

Goal 6: Provide community spaces.

Goal 7: Ensure accessibility of the Town Center by those traveling on foot or by bike, car bus, or train.

Insert figure 3 illustrative vision plan

1.6 Genesis of the Plan

This plan updates the 1995 Odenton Town Plan (OTP), which was itself an update of the 1972 Odenton Plan. The 1972 plan envisioned channeling growth in the county to the Odenton area, and defined the area around Odenton as the Town Center. OTP attempted to develop policies and proposals to create an attractive, livable, and economically viable town center. In May of 1995 the Anne Arundel County Council adapted the Odenton Town Center Growth Management Area Plan.

A primary recommendation of the OTP was accomplished with the formation of an oversight committee in 1995. The committee produced an update to the OTP in 1999, which reviewed progress towards the plan's goals and outlined a series of "Next Steps" to be taken. In 2001 the oversight committee, in conjunction with the Odenton Small Area Plan Committee, participated in creation of the Odenton Town Center Master Plan, which formalized a new vision for the town center. The new plan took into consideration the design recommendations of the 1999 Route 175 Streetscape and Roadway Improvement Plan, the ongoing Corps of Engineers Wetlands Permit Applications and several other documents. The plan contained several elements, including: a refined vision for the core, formerly known as the town center, more detailed development controls, new design standards, and recommendations on zoning.

In 1995 fifty percent of the OTC was undeveloped. Since that time, progress has been made on several recommended actions of the 1995 OTC Plan. Figure 4, Existing Conditions Map and Figure 5, Existing Land Use Map, illustrates the extent of development in 2002. Key accomplishments in implementing the 1995 Plan include the following:

- The Odenton Town Plan Oversight Committee was formed.
- A County Coordinator was assigned to help coordinate OTC development.
- A Regional Library facility is under construction in the OTC.
- Industrial development continues at a steady pace along Route 170 in two of the County's premier industrial parks, Arundel Crossing East and West.
- Designs of roadway and streetscape improvements for Route 175 through the OTC were prepared but not yet built.
- Funding is in place for the construction of a roundabout at the five-way intersection of Route 175 and Burns Crossing Road.
- The North Odenton sub-area was designated as part of a State Community Legacy area and a County revitalization area.
- Several historic buildings in the Village were acquired and restorations of these are underway along with others in the historic village areas.

Insert figure 4 existing conditions map

Insert figure 5 existing land use map