

Brooklyn Park Small Area Plan

**Adopted September 7, 2004
By County Council Bill No. 51-04**

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Brooklyn Park Small Area Plan

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Introduction

The *Brooklyn Park Small Area Plan* is a refinement of the 1997 Anne Arundel County *General Development Plan*.

The purpose of the *Brooklyn Park Small Area Plan* is to enhance the quality of life in the area, to help implement the goals and recommendations of the *General Development Plan*, and to promote citizen, business and County cooperation in the planning and development process.

The Plan's development was a collaborative process involving the Brooklyn Park Small Area Planning Committee, staff from the Office of Planning and Zoning (OPZ), other County agencies and the public. Together, the Small Area Planning Committee and staff have held public forums, conducted regular committee meetings, held focus group roundtables, and have spoken with and listened to area residents to help identify assets, issues, and opportunities and to formulate a vision for the future of their area. They have worked together to identify where pedestrian and road improvements are needed, what type of land uses are appropriate and where they should be located, and how residential and commercial areas can be designed to improve their overall function and appearance.

This Plan for the Brooklyn Park area consists of a document and maps. The document addresses community history, housing, land use, zoning, transportation, natural and historic resources, utilities, community facilities and community design. The maps show, among other features, existing and proposed land use. Together, the text and maps amend the *General Development Plan*.

The Small Area Plan Process

Starting with the appointment of committee members and ending with the adoption of a long range plan for the community, the Small Area Plan process is designed to maximize public participation, build consensus and present the best plan for the future of the small planning area. All committee meetings are open to the public. In addition, two public forums are held, one near the start of the process to hear from the community about issues, opportunities and a vision for the future and one near the end to present draft recommendations on the various subject areas of the plan as well as a draft land use map. Once the Committee and staff have formulated their draft plan, it is presented to the Planning Advisory Board (PAB) for further review and comment by the public. Comments from the PAB are provided to the County Executive for consideration prior to introducing the Small Area Plan to the County Council for public hearing and adoption.

Once the Plan has been adopted by the Council and incorporated into the *General Development Plan*, planning staff will begin the implementation of the plan recommendations. It is hoped that the citizens who participated in the plan development will continue to follow the process and provide input during the implementation stage.

Acknowledgments

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Community History

The history of the Brooklyn Park Small Planning Area is closely related to the growth and development of Baltimore. The area's strategic location within Anne Arundel County's major transportation corridors and its proximity to the Patapsco River, Curtis Bay and the Chesapeake Bay also played significant roles in the evolution of Brooklyn Park and its surrounding communities. Map 1 defines the boundaries of the Small Planning Area.

Bounded on the north by the Patapsco River, the area was a favorite spot for Native Americans because of the river's bountiful supply of fish. Drawn to the region due to the abundant animal and plant life, and easy access to fresh water and the Chesapeake Bay, these early inhabitants first appeared in the area approximately 13,000 years ago. Evidence of their occupation was discovered by archaeologists a decade ago just south of the planning area near BWI Airport. Dating to 11,000 B.C., this site is one of the earliest known Indian sites yet to be found in Maryland. Almost unimaginable today, its inhabitants hunted large game, including mastodons, with spears tipped with fluted Clovis points. Another recent find, near Marley Station Mall, revealed archaeological remains of the earliest intact cooking hearths found in Maryland (8000 B.C.).

The majority of surviving prehistoric sites found within the planning area are small extractive sites, where Native Americans camped for short periods of time while exploiting the natural resources of the area. The area's geographical position within a larger regional system of migratory and trade routes, created the first trails and footpaths which later became the transportation routes of the European settlers.

By the time of the first European settlement of Anne Arundel County in 1649, native Algonquin tribes had virtually abandoned the present day area of the county due to raids by the warlike Susquahannocks from the north. The first settlers were Protestant Englishmen from Virginia who established a hamlet known as Providence at the mouth of the Severn River. The population quickly increased, primarily along the shoreline of the Bay and its tributaries.

This rapid settlement resulted in the creation of Baltimore County in 1659. A boundary dispute ensued between Anne Arundel and Baltimore Counties, lasting into the early 18th century. The new Baltimore County claimed the northeast portion of Anne Arundel, north of the Magothy River. Inhabitants in this area petitioned the General Assembly numerous times to return to Anne Arundel County. In 1696, the legislature returned about half of the peninsula to the county, making the division line halfway between the Patapsco and the Magothy Rivers. Finally, in 1726, the Patapsco River became the northern boundary for Anne Arundel.

By this time, Baltimore was emerging as an important port along the Atlantic seaboard. Outlying regions, such as the planning area, were used for resource extraction, such as timber,

Map 1

iron and other minerals. The region's plentiful timber stands were harvested to support the growing need for construction of wharves, factories, and dwellings.

A few plantations were established in the area where tobacco, corn and grains were grown. Some of the early property owners were from the Ballman, Carroll, Crisp, Cromwell, Dorsey, Gischel, Hammond, Lucas, Shipley, Stoll and Walker families. They and their descendants and subsequent owners amassed large tracts of land ranging from several hundred to several thousand acres. One of the most prominent was Col. Charles Hammond of Curtis Bay. Known as "the great land owner," Hammond built Snow Hill (also known as Jackson's Chance and later as the Stoll Farm) in the second half of the 18th century. It stood just north of Ordnance Road overlooking Curtis Bay until it was destroyed in 1971. Another significant 18th century house, which still stands within the planning area, is Sunnyfields. Located on Hammonds Lane, it was built in the 1770s or 1780s for Elizabeth Walker, the daughter of Dr. James Walker.

By the 19th century, the area supported numerous farms where fruits and vegetables were grown for the markets in Baltimore and as far as Boston and Montreal. Known as truck farming, this livelihood proved profitable for farmers in northern Anne Arundel County. Seasonal laborers, mostly Eastern European immigrants from Baltimore, were used to harvest the crops for which they were paid in tokens made of brass, known as "pickers checks." The laborers or "pickers" were brought to local farms where they lived for 6 to 8 weeks during the harvest season. Although found elsewhere in the mid-Atlantic region, the extensive use of pickers checks is unique to Anne Arundel County. Truck farming remained a significant source of income in the northern part of the county well into the 20th century. The Mewshaws, Hammonds and Cromwells were some of the many farmers that participated in truck farming.

The rapid growth of the city of Baltimore, beginning in the mid-19th century, brought major changes to the planning area. In 1853, the Patapsco Company was incorporated and began laying out the town of Brooklyn. This effort was bolstered in 1856 by construction of the Light Street Bridge, an enterprise spearheaded by the Crisp and Cromwell families. Connecting South Baltimore and Brooklyn across the Patapsco River and Middle Branch, the 4,750-foot wooden bridge became known as the Long Bridge, or sometimes, the Brooklyn Bridge. As a more direct route, this soon became the preferred passage for northern Anne Arundel County farmers taking their produce to Baltimore markets.

Recognizing the strategic location of the Patapsco Company land to the Baltimore Harbor, the corporation reformed in 1874 under the name of Patapsco Land Company of Baltimore City. They promoted the industrial opportunities of Curtis Bay. Several key transportation projects followed in quick succession, giving further impetus to the growth and development of the planning area. The State of Maryland purchased the Light Street Bridge in 1878 and ended toll collecting; a system which many thought restricted the development of the Brooklyn area. In 1882, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad built a spur line across the Patapsco,

through Brooklyn, to Curtis Bay. The Baltimore and Curtis Bay Railway initiated streetcar service in 1892, using the Long Bridge route.

Two crossings of the Patapsco River at the western boundary of the planning area, one by rail and the other by road (Annapolis Road) were vital to the growth and development of northern Anne Arundel County. Sweetzer's Bridge was constructed in the 1850s to carry the Annapolis Road (present day Rt. 648) over the Patapsco. This was the earliest and most direct north-south route for many years. In 1887, the Annapolis and Baltimore Short Line Railroad (renamed the Baltimore and Annapolis Short Line Railroad in 1894) was constructed, crossing the Patapsco just east of Sweetzer's Bridge. Forming a 22-mile link between Baltimore and Annapolis, it became the most direct rail line between the two cities and quickly superseded the longer Annapolis and Elkridge Railroad line.

The Patapsco Land Company once again reorganized itself in 1882 under the name of South Baltimore Harbor and Improvement Company. It and the Curtis Bay Company of Anne Arundel County brought heavy and large-scale industrial and manufacturing development to the region, primarily in the Curtis Bay area, just east of the planning area. The old grid plan of Brooklyn was expanded in the early 20th century, largely due to the extension of water lines into the area. Rapid growth occurred, reaching present day Brooklyn Park in 1916 when John K. Culver initiated a residential development. In 1919, the northeastern portion of the Curtis Bay peninsula and the old section of Brooklyn were annexed by the City of Baltimore. Brooklyn Park remained within Anne Arundel County and continued to grow as a residential and commercial suburb of Baltimore.

Although residential development was concentrated in the Brooklyn Park area, other smaller communities emerged within the planning area. The community of Pumphrey was established around 1860, surrounding the B&A Shortline Railroad station, located near where the rail line intersects with Baltimore-Annapolis Boulevard and Belle Grove Road. The African American community of Cedar Hill, located just south of Cedar Hill Cemetery, developed in the post Civil War era and centered around Mt. Calvary Church. Several houses, an old Masonic Lodge, and the site of a Rosenwald school are situated along Cedar Hill and Snow Hill Lanes. This school and one built in Pumphrey were constructed in the 1920s using the Rosenwald School Fund, an ambitious program designed to provide better educational facilities for rural African Americans in the South. Initiated by Julius Rosenwald, the president of Sears, Roebuck Company the program remained in operation from 1911 to 1932. Inspired by Booker T. Washington, Rosenwald provided matching funds to black communities for school construction. Thousands of schools, some of which are still standing today, were built across the South using this fund.

A series of major transportation projects initiated in the 20th century brought continuous change to the land use of the planning area. The Baltimore-Annapolis Boulevard, established in 1912, followed the approximate route of the earlier north-south road. Governor Ritchie

Highway was constructed between 1934 and 1938, as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project. Intended as a scenic highway, it was designed to divert traffic away from the growing congestion on Crain Highway and B&A Boulevard, however, this purpose was short-lived. The area's strategic location brought yet another major highway project to its doorstep in the mid-20th century with the construction of the Baltimore beltway, followed by the Harbor Tunnel Thruway (Rt. 895) in the 1970s.

Like much of Anne Arundel County, the historic land use of the Brooklyn Park Planning Area was dominated by farming and water-related enterprises. However, the planning area's close proximity to the growing city of Baltimore brought residential and industrial growth much earlier to this area than others. By the 1880s, the blueprint of suburban development had made its mark. Major transportation projects, initiated by the Annapolis and Baltimore Short Line Railroad in 1887, followed by construction of numerous regional highway systems in the 20th century solidified the character and future direction of the planning area as a major suburb of Baltimore.

Demographics

The Brooklyn Park Small Planning Area is bounded by Baltimore County and Baltimore City, the Baltimore Beltway (I-695), and Baltimore Annapolis Boulevard. This area comprises nearly 2,700 acres of land, or approximately 4 square miles. As seen on Map 2, there are five census tracts within this Planning Area. Demographic data have been compiled from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2000 Census and from historical census counts.

Population

Table 1 indicates that while the population in Anne Arundel County has grown steadily over the past few decades, increasing 64 percent from 1970 to 2000, the population in Brooklyn Park has actually declined by 21 percent since 1970 to a population in 2000 of 13,642 persons. This decline is likely due to the fact that the planning area is largely built-out with little opportunity for new development, and the housing market in Brooklyn Park has been in decline for several reasons which are discussed further in this plan.

Table 1. Historical Population in Brooklyn Park and Anne Arundel County

Area	1970	1980	1990	2000
Brooklyn Park	17,308	14,080	13,664	13,642
Anne Arundel County	298,042	370,775	427,239	489,656

Population forecasts in Table 2 indicate that the population decline in Brooklyn Park will turn around and the area will see some additional growth over the next 25 years. This is based primarily on an assumption that the remaining vacant and developable land in the area will be developed over this time period, and it also assumes a small amount of redevelopment that may serve to increase residential densities. However, projected growth in the area (8 percent by 2025) is significantly less than that projected for the County, whose population is forecast to increase by 15 percent by 2025.

Table 2. Population Forecasts, 2000 to 2025

Area	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Brooklyn Park	13,642	14,161	14,302	14,425	14,573	14,741
Anne Arundel Co.	489,656	520,022	532,172	542,532	552,695	562,929

Map 2

A racial breakdown of population in the Planning Area is shown in Table 3. Brooklyn Park is slightly less diverse in terms of race and ethnicity than Anne Arundel County as a whole, although the racial mix is similar in both areas. Based on the 2000 Census, 87 percent of Brooklyn Park's population is White, over 9 percent is Black/African American, and only about 4 percent of the population is comprised of other races. In the County in 2000, over 81 percent of the population was White, 13.6% Black/African American, and over 5 percent of other races. Only a small proportion of the population is of Hispanic origin, 1.5 percent in Brooklyn Park and 2.6 percent in the County.

Table 4 illustrates the racial mix among the various census tracts in Brooklyn Park. Although the mix is similar in most respects between the census tracts, Tract 7502.01 has a significantly higher proportion of Black/African Americans than does the rest of Brooklyn Park. This tract contains the community of Pumphrey, which is an historical African American community which has resided in this area for several generations.

The population age distribution in Brooklyn Park and in the County in 2000 is shown in Table 5. The age distribution in the early and adolescent years is similar in the Planning Area and the County. However, the County has a larger proportion of its population in the prime working years between ages 25 and 64 (57 percent in the County compared to 51 percent in Brooklyn Park). Likewise, Brooklyn Park has a larger proportion of senior citizens ages 65 and over as compared to the County (17 percent in Brooklyn Park compared to 10 percent in the County). This higher proportion of senior citizens, who often have less disposable income than those in their prime working years, may have implications for the Planning Area with regard to its local retail and housing markets.

Median household income data from 1989 and 1999, as recorded in the 1990 and 2000 Censuses respectively, are presented in Table 6. As they were in 1990, household incomes in most of the Planning Area continue to be substantially lower than those for the entire County. This is likely related in part to the older and somewhat outdated housing stock in many parts of Brooklyn Park, which often will not attract higher-income homebuyers.

In a trend that is commonly seen nationwide, household income levels are often closely correlated with education levels. Table 7 indicates the educational attainment levels in Brooklyn Park are not as high as those seen in the County as a whole. Over 30 percent of Anne Arundel County residents ages 25 years and older have a Bachelor's degree or higher degree, as compared to only 8 percent in the Brooklyn Park Planning Area.

Table 3. Population by Race and Hispanic Origin in the Brooklyn Park Small Area, 2000

Characteristic	Total	Non-Hispanic	Hispanic
Total Population of One Race:	13,486	13,300	186
White	11,869	11,738	131
Black or African American	1,264	1,261	3
American Indian or Alaskan Native	62	61	1
Asian	213	213	0
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	6	5	1
Some other race	72	22	50
Total Population of Two or More Races	156	133	23
Total Population	13,642	13,433	209

Table 4. Percentage of Population by Race and Hispanic Origin, 2000

Characteristic	Census Tract 7501.01	Census Tract 7501.02	Census Tract 7502.01	Census Tract 7502.02	Census Tract 7502.03	Total Brooklyn Park Area
White	91.48%	92.58%	66.20%	93.24%	90.53%	87.00%
Black/African American	3.91%	4.50%	29.70%	3.66%	6.10%	9.27%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.55%	0.47%	0.37%	0.40%	0.41%	0.45%
Asian	2.07%	0.63%	1.81%	1.46%	1.57%	1.56%
Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0.00%	0.16%	0.07%	0.00%	0.00%	0.04%
Some other race	0.50%	0.83%	0.33%	0.31%	0.99%	0.53%
Two or more races	1.49%	0.83%	1.52%	0.93%	0.41%	1.14%
Hispanic of Any Race	1.26%	1.42%	1.29%	1.98%	1.98%	1.53%

Table 5. Population by Age, 2000

Age Range	Brooklyn Park: Number in Age Group	Brooklyn Park: % in Age Group	Anne Arundel County: Number in Age Group	Anne Arundel County: % in Age Group
Under 5	748	5.48%	33,083	6.76%
5 to 14	1,989	14.58%	70,656	14.43%
15 to 19	883	6.47%	31,753	6.48%
20 to 24	734	5.38%	27,854	5.69%
25 to 44	3,839	28.14%	160,553	32.79%
45 to 64	3,178	23.30%	116,937	23.88%
65 to 84	2,032	14.90%	44,380	9.06%
85 and over	239	1.75%	4,440	0.91%
Total	13,642	100.00%	489,656	100.00%

Table 6. Median Household Income in Brooklyn Park Small Area, 1990 and 2000

Census Tract	Median Household Income in 1990 Census	Ratio to County Median 1990	Median Household Income in 2000 Census	Ratio to County Median 2000
7501.01	\$26,036	0.58	\$38,005	0.62
7501.02	\$33,173	0.73	\$39,333	0.64
7502.01	\$29,710	0.66	\$42,208	0.68
7502.02	\$40,176	0.89	\$52,000	0.84
7502.03	\$32,917	0.73	\$38,693	0.63

Note: 1990 and 2000 income data are not directly comparable. Data has not been adjusted to constant dollars using consumer price index.

Table 7. Educational Attainment Levels (Percentage of Population 25 years and over), 2000

Census Tract	Less than 9 th Grade	9 th to 12 th Grade, No Diploma	High School Graduate	Some College, No Degree	Associate Degree	Bachelor Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
7501.01	6.16%	21.79%	44.10%	14.60%	3.74%	7.38%	2.23%
7501.02	10.21%	22.51%	42.81%	15.96%	2.20%	5.50%	0.80%
7502.01	11.70%	15.20%	43.08%	17.54%	6.19%	3.85%	2.44%
7502.02	8.59%	18.82%	38.52%	21.20%	4.19%	6.26%	2.42%
7502.03	5.78%	22.63%	41.70%	18.70%	4.80%	4.80%	1.60%
Brooklyn Park	8.63%	19.83%	42.10%	17.42%	4.21%	5.79%	2.02%
Anne Arundel County	3.68%	9.87%	27.92%	21.86%	6.06%	19.07%	11.53%

Housing

Data on housing units in Brooklyn Park and the County are shown in Table 8. In general, the Brooklyn Park area has a higher proportion of owner-occupied housing units than seen in the County overall. There are no apartment complexes in Brooklyn Park, and most of the rental units are rowhomes or single family detached homes. There are also two mobile home parks, both of which are located in Census Tract 7502.01, which combined contain approximately 280 units. Mobile homes are included in the statistics on housing units. Vacancy rates in Brooklyn Park are comparable to those seen County-wide. There is, however, one exception found in Census Tract 7501.01, which covers the Brooklyn Heights community. Here, 28 percent of the housing units are occupied by renters, and the vacancy rate is somewhat higher than elsewhere in Brooklyn Park. Although the 2000 Census figures on median home values have not yet been compiled, the median value of owner-occupied housing units in Brooklyn Park in 1990 was \$84,241 compared with a County-wide median value of \$127,900.

According to the 2000 Census, the average household size in Brooklyn Park was 2.65 persons per household, which is the same figure seen for the County as a whole. It is anticipated that average household sizes will continue to fall, as they have continued to do nationwide.

Table 8. Housing Units in the Brooklyn Park Small Planning Area, 2000

Census Tract	Total Housing Units	Owner-Occupied Units	Percent Owner-Occupied	Renter-Occupied Units	Percent Renter-Occupied	Vacant Units	% Vacant
7501.01	1,652	1,075	65%	457	28%	120	7%
7501.02	948	734	77%	170	18%	44	5%
7502.01	1,028	871	85%	117	11%	40	4%
7502.02	1,211	1,048	86%	128	11%	35	3%
7502.03	500	406	81%	75	15%	19	4%
Total Brooklyn Park	5,339	4,134	77%	947	18%	258	5%
Total in County	186,937	134,921	72%	43,749	24%	8,267	4%

Employment

Current estimates indicate that there were approximately 4,120 persons employed in the Brooklyn Park area in 2000. This number is projected to remain fairly constant over the 25-year forecast period. According to a 1997 inventory, the largest employers in Brooklyn Park at that time were Novatec, Kanasco, and Meridian Nursing Home. There are several light industrial businesses in the Planning Area, and the retail shopping centers along Ritchie Highway offer employment opportunities as well. However, there are no large-scale office developments or business parks in Brooklyn Park, and most residents commute either into Baltimore, Annapolis, or the Washington D.C. metro area for their employment.

Community Vision

The future Brooklyn Park is one of the most desirable communities in which to live in Anne Arundel County. Originally developed as one of Baltimore's first suburbs and one of the oldest communities in Anne Arundel County, the area has maintained its close-knit community spirit and family ties. With several clean, quiet and attractive neighborhoods to choose from, Brooklyn Park still offers an attractive option for those who want to live near the big city opportunities of Baltimore and Washington but in a less urban setting. In addition, Brooklyn Park provides plenty of activity in its own small town center.

Using a range of innovative incentives, private investors, local planners and citizen groups have teamed together to initiate redevelopment projects in the area's most deteriorated neighborhoods, resulting not only in high quality housing in the area but also in a much lower crime rate. Lovely streetscapes are found throughout the neighborhoods, with well-maintained sidewalks, landscaping, and lighting. Reinvestment and creative homebuyer programs have helped to increase the rate of home ownership, but there are also attractive rental options available for non-homeowners. The range of housing opportunities now offers something for everyone, from quaint rowhouses and townhomes to charming bungalows and single family homes. Senior citizens have abundant housing choices as well, from assisted living facilities to a new senior community.

Brooklyn Park's residential neighborhoods are not the only areas that have undergone revitalization. The community's main commercial corridor, Ritchie Highway, contains a variety of shopping and entertainment activities and is lined with attractive building facades, landscaping, street trees, and sidewalks. Residents can take a stroll along this vibrant corridor into the bustling town center. This new mixed-use center and arts district has become the core of activity in Brooklyn Park and contains a well-designed mix of retail shops, art galleries and studios, restaurants, professional office space, and residential units. The nicely landscaped public plaza provides a central location for community events such as concerts and street fairs as well as a place for residents and visitors to sit and chat.

The area's top-notch community facilities also contribute to the strong sense of community identity in Brooklyn Park. Public schools in the area are highly rated, and the local youth center offers a wide variety of after-school activities for children and teenagers. Recreational opportunities are abundant for all ages and include well-maintained ballfields, playgrounds, and a bike trail along the Patapsco River that connects to the BWI Trail and beyond. The Patapsco Valley State Park offers more passive recreational activities such as canoeing, nature trails, and scenic picnic areas. Seniors are offered a wealth of educational and recreation classes at the local senior center.

Finally, and most importantly, Brooklyn Park is home to a strong network of proactive community associations that work closely with one another and with local planners and officials

to find new ways to improve and enhance their communities. As a result of these ongoing collaborative efforts, Brooklyn Park residents can once again feel a great sense of pride in the place they call home.