

AIGBURTH MANOR
BURKLEIGH SQUARE
TOWSON MANOR VILLAGE

SOUTHEAST TOWSON COMMUNITY PLAN

As Adopted by the Baltimore County Council
October 19, 1998

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND
Legislative Session 1998, Legislative Day No. 18

Resolution No. 76-98

Mr. Douglas B. Riley, Councilman

By the County Council, October 19, 1998

A RESOLUTION of the Baltimore County Council to adopt the Southeast Towson Community Plan as part of the Baltimore County Master Plan 1989-2000.

WHEREAS, the Baltimore County Council adopted the Baltimore County Master Plan 1989-2000 on February 5, 1990; and

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

WHEREAS, a community plan for the Aigburth Manor, Burkleigh Square and Towson Manor Village neighborhoods in southeast Towson is a logical unit for planning within Baltimore County; and

WHEREAS, the Southeast Towson Community Plan was prepared in close cooperation with area residents, business owners and representatives of Towson University and was the subject of community meetings on June 2 and June 18, 1997; and

WHEREAS, the draft plan was the subject of a public hearing by the Planning Board on May 21, 1998, and was adopted by the Board on July 9, 1998; and

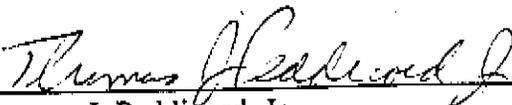
WHEREAS, the County Council held a public hearing on the recommended Southeast Towson Community Plan on September 8, 1998.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND, that the Southeast Towson Community 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 1989-2000 to be a guide for the development of the Southeast Towson area, subject to such further modifications as deemed advisable by the County Council.

READ AND PASSED this *19th* day of *October*, 1998.

BY ORDER



Thomas J. Peddicord, Jr.
Secretary

ITEM: Resolution 76-98



Baltimore County
Planning Board

401 Bosley Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204
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RESOLUTION
Adopting and Recommending the
SOUTHEAST TOWSON COMMUNITY PLAN

WHEREAS the Baltimore County Master Plan 1989 - 2000 places great importance on the development and use of community plans for the established neighborhoods in the County; and

WHEREAS the Community Conservation Committee of The Towson Partnership has assisted residents, business people and representatives of Towson University and Baltimore County government to draft a community action plan for the Aigburth Manor, Burkleigh Square and Towson Manor Village neighborhoods in southeast Towson, which is a logical area for planning in Baltimore County; and

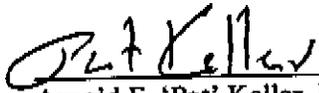
WHEREAS the draft of the Southeast Towson Community Plan was the subject of community-wide meetings on June 2 and June 18, 1997; and

WHEREAS the draft plan, as presented to the Planning Board on April 23, 1998, was the subject of a public hearing by the Board on May 21, 1998, discussion on June 18, 1998, and further discussion and amendment by the Board on July 9, 1998;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, pursuant to Section 26-81 of the Baltimore County Code, 1988, that the Baltimore County Planning Board hereby adopts the Southeast Towson Community Plan, as amended, to constitute a part of and an amendment to the Baltimore County Master Plan 1989-2000; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeast Towson Community Plan shall be transmitted to the Baltimore County Council for adoption in accordance with Section 523(a) of the Baltimore County Charter.

DULY ADOPTED by vote of the
Planning Board this 9th day of
July, 1998.



Arnold F. 'Pat' Keller, III
Secretary to the Planning Board



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Southeast Towson Community Action Plan Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

The Southeast Towson Communities of Burkleigh Square, Towson Manor Village and Aigburth Manor participated in the creation of these recommendations. These three communities are located on the east side of York Road, contiguous to downtown Towson's offices, courts, shops and restaurants on the north and across York Road from Towson University.

Members of The Towson Partnership's Community Conservation Committee assisted community member by discussing problems identified in a survey conducted in the tri-community area. Four subcommittees, comprised of area residents, business people, representatives from Towson University and Baltimore County government worked on the Plan. The surveys indicated great appreciation for the convenient location, safe and quiet neighborhoods with well-kept nicely landscaped homes and good schools. Residents expressed concerns about the negative impact of the following:

- the number of properties rented to students,
- large volumes of traffic on neighborhood streets,
- the rate at which that traffic moves,
- the lack of adequate parking enforcement,
- the need for more efficient code enforcement,
- the lack of adequate maintenance of some of the properties.

This provided the basis for the committees' work. The committees discussed these concerns, circulated a draft to the community and held a town meeting to solicit public comments on that draft. These recommendations are the result.

The purpose of these recommendations is to strengthen good neighborhoods and to make them better. The framework relies on neighborhoods defining standards which are considered acceptable and encouraging all of those living or owning property within the Plan area to meet those standards. These standards are those that define a strong community, not the minimum thought necessary through code enforcement to prevent health and safety hazards. For those who are unable to meet these standards, help will be offered. For those who refuse to maintain their properties, code enforcement will be invoked. A poorly maintained property is a blight on the community and decreases the value of all other properties, whether owner-occupied or investment property. It is in everyone's long range economic interest to have an orderly, well-maintained community where residents enjoy a high standard of living, and feel comfortable raising their families or enjoying their retirement.

The plan recommendations envision a cooperative approach among all those with a stake in the plan area: homeowners, renters, students, University administrators, absentee landlords, code and building inspectors, community planners, and the Police. These stakeholders must work together to solve problems, build relationships, and create a solid basis for Southeast Towson's excellent neighborhoods, with their strong housing values, wonderful location, terrific schools, foundation in history, and good working relationships with Towson University.

SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTION

The Southeast Community Plan area includes the neighborhoods of Aigburth Manor, Burkleigh Square, and Towson Manor Village. Plan boundaries are as follows:

- North Towsontown Boulevard
- West West Burke Avenue and York Road
- South Cedar Avenue and Aigburth Road
- East Hillen Road and Aigburth Road

An estimated one thousand six hundred persons live within the boundaries which includes six hundred twenty three properties, four apartment buildings totaling one hundred thirty five units, fourteen commercial properties on York Road corridor with thirty one businesses, and seven commercial properties on Towsontown Boulevard with 31 businesses.

Methodology:

The members of The Towson Partnership's Community Conservation Committee worked with community residents in gathering the background information. A property survey form was completed for each of the six hundred twenty three properties in the study area from public information in the Tax Assessment Office and from visual inspection of each property. Information on property ownership, assessed value, purchase price, and date of purchase was gathered to establish a basis for determining the percentage of rental properties within the communities and for assessing trends in the value of properties. Teams of two persons looked at each property within each community to observe the exterior condition of the property. These teams also noted the type of home (attached, detached, etc.), availability of off-street parking and the general condition of lawns, landscaping, garages, etc. These teams also noted properties exhibiting maintenance needs, possible zoning violations and any other special features relevant to this survey. This information was then entered into a database.

Following the completion of the property survey, an opinion and demographic survey was distributed to all homes in the communities. Two hundred and twenty one surveys were returned. The survey gathered demographic information about residents in the communities and learned about the attitudes of the residents toward their community. Thirty three percent of the surveys were returned. The surveys allowed the respondents to remain anonymous.

State tax assessment data:

Data gathered on four hundred seventy seven homes show an average assessment of \$37,888, translating to a selling average of \$94,720. Of sixty two houses sold in the 1970's, the average selling price was \$32,674. During the next decade that average price rose 79% to \$58,618, based on eighty four houses sold. Between 1990 and 1995, one hundred four houses sold at 64% increased price versus the prior decade, for an average of \$94,976.

Housing Values 1970-1995

Decade Sold	Number Sold	Average Sale Price	% Increase
1970's	62	32,674	—
1980's	84	58,618	79%
1990-1995	104	94,976	64%

The tax information indicates that assessed value for the three communities varies depending upon the housing styles and size of lot, from a low of \$29,841 for Susquehanna Avenue to a high of \$68,337 for Aigburth Road. A historic review of the average purchase price indicates rising value with an average annual increase for 2½ decades exceeding the average increase for the metropolitan area. On Susquehanna Avenue, for example seven homes were sold in the 1970's for an average price of \$27,782; fourteen were sold in the 1980's for an average price of \$55,075, and fourteen were sold in the 1990's for an average of \$91,174.

Sixty-nine percent or 423 properties are owner occupied. Thirty-one percent or 188 are rented. The apartments at Cardiff Hall were not counted as part of the rental totals. Census block data from 1990 which includes apartment complexes on a per unit basis is given in the following table for comparison.

Percentage of Owner/Renter: Study area vs. Greater Towson area

	Study area(%)	Towson, 2 mile radius(%)
Owner occupied	45.2	58.3
Renter occupied	50.3	37.1
Vacant	4.5	4.6

Residential inventory:

The above chart confirmed community residents belief that a disproportionately large percentage of homes in their neighborhoods were rental properties.

Residents noted on the inventory forms that :

- 25 properties were rented to students
- 36 were rented to singles/roommates
- 45 were rented to a family member
- 4 are group homes
- 20 properties have frequent tenant turnover
- 20 owners were listed on 2 or more deeds, 9 of whom live within the study area
- 13 properties were vacant
- 11 properties were listed for sale
- 62 homes (10%) were divided into 2 or more units (apartment conversions)

Perceptions and attitudes:

Respondents expressed very positive opinions about their community, especially:

- Close proximity to services; such as shopping, library, restaurants, stores, doctors' offices, houses of worship

- Safety, quiet, and friendliness of the neighborhood
- Variety of shopping opportunities
- Entertainment possibilities
- Excellent schools
- Variety of institutions
- Steady to increasing property values

The stability of southeast Towson is illustrated by the fact that the vast majority of respondents were property owners who have owned their homes for more than seven years and who intend to remain in the community for another seven years or more. Respondents, by and large, know and like their neighbors, maintain their properties well, and appreciate the ambiance of the older homes and tree-shaded streets. Of those who are active in the workplace, most report working in Baltimore County or Baltimore City. Twenty two percent of the population is elderly and/or retired. Among this group, there is an intention to remain in their homes as long as possible, again citing the friendly neighbors, quiet and safe neighborhood, and proximity to hospitals and shopping. Many respondents replied that they would recommend to others that they purchase homes in their neighborhood.

Population by age: Study area vs. Greater Towson area

Age group	#	%	County wide	Study area	Towson 2 mile radius
<18 years	82	18	17%	13.4%	14.1%
18-24 years	36	8	9%	11.5%	2.5%
25-39 years	108	24	25%	13.1%	14.9%
40-64 years	122	27	27%	29.7%	27.1%
65+ years	101	22	20%	32.3%	19.6%
Total	449				

Source: Community Survey

Source: Census Data

Problem areas:

Respondents expressed fairly specific negatives which affect the neighborhoods:

- Rental properties, especially those rented to students, were the number one problem, according to 79 respondents.
- Traffic problems on Burke Avenue, both volume and speed, were also a major problem, noted by 61 respondents.
- Parking problems such as commuters in the neighborhoods and excessive rental housing populations who tend to violate restricted parking regulations were cited by 43 respondents.
- Animal problems, (dog, cats and wild birds) were mentioned by 43 respondents.

Towson University:

Respondents indicated a sometimes mixed relationship with Towson University. Many listed proximity to TU as a positive for the neighborhood; but many of the same people listed it as a negative. Negatives were associated with disruptive student behavior, commuter traffic and parking, and noise from large parties. Many of the negative

comments about rental housing related to behavior of students - too many people, too many cars, too late hours, too much noise, too many parties, etc. The University in an on-going effort to address issues will work with the area neighborhood associations to develop "Good Neighbor Guidelines", which are now printed in the Student Handbook distributed to students who live off campus.

Maintenance /appearance:

In general, properties in this area are well maintained, neatly landscaped, and with sturdy porches and outbuildings, and fresh paint. Properties which do not adhere to the neighborhood standards are a source of aggravation to the nearby property owners, who are concerned that these properties will lower the standards of the neighborhood. Sixty-three homes were rated poor or terrible which meant that approximately 9.5% of the homes needed exterior work. In addition, 15% of properties were judged in need of landscaping improvements. Of these 63, 29 homes were owner occupied and 34 homes were rented. Subsequent mapping indicated that the homes in poor condition are clustered in one area, leading community residents to speculate that the unkempt rentals were a disincentive for property owners to carefully maintain their properties.

Density:

Limited parking is a problem in both Burkleigh Square and Towson Manor Village, especially on the streets with row homes. Therefore, the number of persons in each home and the number of cars was of special interest to them. The chart below indicates the increase pressure on parking spaces due to rental property density.

Property type	Average household size (# of persons)	Average vehicles per household
Owner occupied (69%)	2.1	1.7
Rentals (31%)	2.9	2.3
Total (100%)	2.3	1.8

RECOMMENDATIONS

Zoning classification issues:

In general the zoning classifications in the area are appropriate. The residential portion is mostly zoned DR 5.5; the Burkshire is RAE 2, and the York Road commercial corridor is zoned BM.

1. The triangle of land between Burke Avenue, York Road and Towsontown Boulevard should be considered for consolidated future development. The small narrow lots on this section of York Road do not lend themselves to cost-effective redevelopment for commercial uses, and the stream behind them further constrains their redevelopment potential.
2. The community will work with developers to bring this area to their attention as a redevelopment opportunity. The portion of the study area zoned DR 16 should be

promoted for redevelopment. Redevelopment of this area should focus on providing a variety of owner-occupied housing types (for example condominiums) that are well constructed and maintained.

3. In the event that the American Legion decides to terminate the use of its property, consider rezoning to RAE 2. However, given the deficit in parkland acreage in Towson, recreational use would be preferable.
(see Appendix A).

Community/Business/Institutions initiatives:

The community associations and the business owners should take responsibility for educating their members and informing them of events which may impact the community. Both groups should work together to find solutions to problems and to build a stronger community. Each should consider attendance/membership in the other's organization to foster mutual understanding.

1. The community associations and Towson University will work collaboratively regarding:

- University expansion
- A model community education program for students who live in off-campus housing
- Students as community volunteers
- University police problem solving
- Use of the campus by area residents

2. Businesses should retain regular lines of communication with one another, including:

- Participation in the Business Watch program
- Coordination of dumpster locations and pickup times
- Shared vehicular access

3. Both businesses and residents would benefit from a deeper understanding of how the development process and the Design Review Panel work so that the impact of proposed development can be better understood. Baltimore County should consider writing a clear and concise manual explaining the processes.

4. Community associations and landlords will address collaboratively:

- Management training for landlords in conjunction with the Apartment Builders and Owners Association.
- Creation of a category for absentee landlord membership in the community association to improve communication.
- Support Tenants Rights.
- Work with Citizens Planning Housing Association to learn how to work productively with landlords.

5. Work with the Office of Planning to develop a University area with guidelines for rental units, adequate parking, and additional police and zoning enforcement services. The University area would apply to areas directly impacted by student housing and commuting issues, and should involve a process for close cooperation among the University, the community, and County regulatory authorities.

Community/property maintenance issues:

Efficient zoning and code enforcement procedures are critical to maintain the appearance of properties. Community members need to understand the regulations and how they are enforced. The Office of Permits and Development Management needs to develop consistent policies and open lines of communication between the inspectors and the residents/community associations. Community concerns about enforcement policies include: fines for non-compliance for repeat violators, use of special exception hearings to rectify violations, lack of interior inspections, cross training of building inspectors to identify possible zoning violations, difficulty in finding posted building permits, accurate record keeping.

1. Work with the Office of Permits and Development Management to improve enforcement of Rooming House/Boarding House regulations.
2. Identify problem properties for investigation by Code Enforcement. Consider community wide enforcement if problems warrant.
3. Publicize programs which can help defray the costs of repairs for residents who need such assistance.
4. Develop a "community standards" list for property maintenance which can be distributed to all property owners and residents.
5. Identify non-traditional sources of help for low-income property owners to repair their properties.
6. Community associations will work with the Office of Community Conservation to develop a tenants' rights and responsibilities manual, including information about lease terms, property maintenance, housing code requirements, and the reporting of violations.
7. Community associations will work with the Commander of Precinct 6 to discuss how to call the police for help, what follow through they can expect from the officer, how to obtain copies of arrest reports, and how to coordinate with the University police.
8. The State needs to evaluate the way in which property ownership is listed in the tax records. Too often, an absentee property owner's address is not accurate, is a post office box, or is the address of the rental property which adjacent residents know is occupied by others. Of the 188 rental properties identified within the study area, ownership could not be determined for 42 properties, or 22% of the rentals. The lack of an accurate address where community residents may inform absentee landlords of problems which their properties are causing is a major frustration for both community residents and those attempting to enforce the Liveability Code.

Transportation/parking initiatives:

The heavy commuter traffic on Burke Avenue negatively impacts its residential character, resulting in many non-single family uses locating here. With the goal of lessening the impact of heavy traffic on this street, the following recommendations are designed to spread traffic over the whole study area and to endorse the use of routes, other than Burke Avenue, for commuter traffic. In an effort to spread out the flow of

traffic and reduce the speed of traffic, changes to the present road configuration and use of neighborhood traffic management techniques should be made to create a more pedestrian friendly environment.

1. A transportation analysis of Towson has recently started and will require approximately 18 months to complete. Community residents and businesses will work with the Bureau of Traffic Engineering and Transportation Planning in identifying problems and potential solutions. Community association representatives should work with Traffic Engineering to focus on a regional approach for a solution.

a. First National Bank customers attempting to turn left from Burke Avenue into the Bank parking lot frequently back up traffic into the intersection of Burke Avenue and York Road. Relief is needed.

b. Consider changes to Goucher Boulevard such as:

- Installing a second left hand turn from Goucher Boulevard to Joppa Road to encourage through traffic on Joppa Road.
- Installing truck restriction sign to prewarn truck drivers of restrictions on Burke/Hillen Avenues.

c. Traffic enforcement should monitor the following:

- Strictly enforce existing laws banning trucks over 3/4 ton on residential streets.
- Install better signage at more appropriate locations to alert truck drivers about restrictions.

d. Clarify towing laws to allow a vehicle that is blocking a driveway or parking pad or maintaining less than 12 foot clearance in an alley to be towed.

e. Enhance Parking enforcement:

- Refine the layout of annual visitor pass in Burkleigh Square to require that the address of the resident be clearly visible. Clearly define how visitor passes are to be used.
- Expand enforcement to include evenings and weekends and early mornings. Coordinate enforcement with the beginning of the University's school terms, especially at the beginning of each new semester.

f. The transportation analysis will form the basis for future updates of the Towson Community Plan.

g. Generally, no zoning variance should be granted for less than the required amount of parking on any site within the study area. Parking requirements, in particular for limited exemption site development, should be reevaluated for adequacy as redevelopment occurs along the York Road strip. Consideration of transit proximity and use should be a factor in determining the need for parking.

Marketing initiatives

Marketing programs can help maintain the viability of the residential neighborhoods.

- 1. Establish a marketing program with the nearby institutions to market the area for residential use by staff, etc. Develop a "Live Near Your Work" program with Towson's institutions to encourage their employees to live in close proximity to the institutions where they work.**
- 2. Establish special relationships with College/University and communities to promote better understanding of the needs of both and to understand how each impacts the other.**
- 3. Notify HARBEL of properties which could be purchased by homeowners instead of investors.**
- 4. Contact Neighborhood Design Center for help with remodeling strategies that will make housing in the Plan area attractive to today's home buyer.**
- 5. Create a "Good Neighbor" award.**
- 6. Organize a "contractor fair" in the community to have contractors available to meet with residents to discuss multiple projects.**
- 7. Establish a marketing plan to cooperate with Towson's Realtors, local businesses, the local schools, Towson University, Goucher and other area colleges to invite home buyers into the community. Develop packets with all of the neighborhood brochures for Realtors.**
- 8. Create special incentives to encourage converting rental properties into owner occupied homes. For example, extend the tax credit from the Greater Hillendale area to Southeast Towson.**
- 9. Develop a map of historic properties, possibly based on the 1898 tax map, which would emphasize the history of the area.**

Responsibility for Implementation

The following chart assigns the responsibility for ensuring implementation for each action to a specific group.

Zoning Classification issues	Community/ Business Initiatives	Community/ Property Maintenance Issues	Transportation/ Parking Initiatives	Marketing Initiatives
1. Community	1. Community and University	1. Permits and Development Management	1. Community and Bureau of Traffic Engineering	1. Community Conservation
2. Planning	2. Businesses	2. Permits and Development Management	1a. First National Bank and Traffic Engineering	2. Community and University
	3. Community and Business	3. Community and Code Enforcement	1b. Traffic Engineering	3. Community
	4. Community and landlords	4. Community Conservation	1b. Traffic Enforcement	4. Community
	5. Planning	5. Community	1d. Traffic Engineering	5. Community
		6. Community and Community Conservation	1e. Traffic Engineering and Parking Enforcement	6. Community
		7. Community and Police	1f. Planning	7. Community
			1g. Planning	8. Community Conservation
				9. Planning

Completion of recommended actions

The actions recommended in this plan will be presented for adoption by the Baltimore County Planning Board and by the Baltimore County Council, as part of the Master Plan. As the Towson Community Plan was adopted in 1992 for a ten year period, it is envisioned that work on these recommendations should be completed, by and large, by the year 2002, in time for the next Towson Community Plan. Implementation of transportation issues which may require Capital Improvement Program funding may not be completed during this time frame.

Evaluation of Success

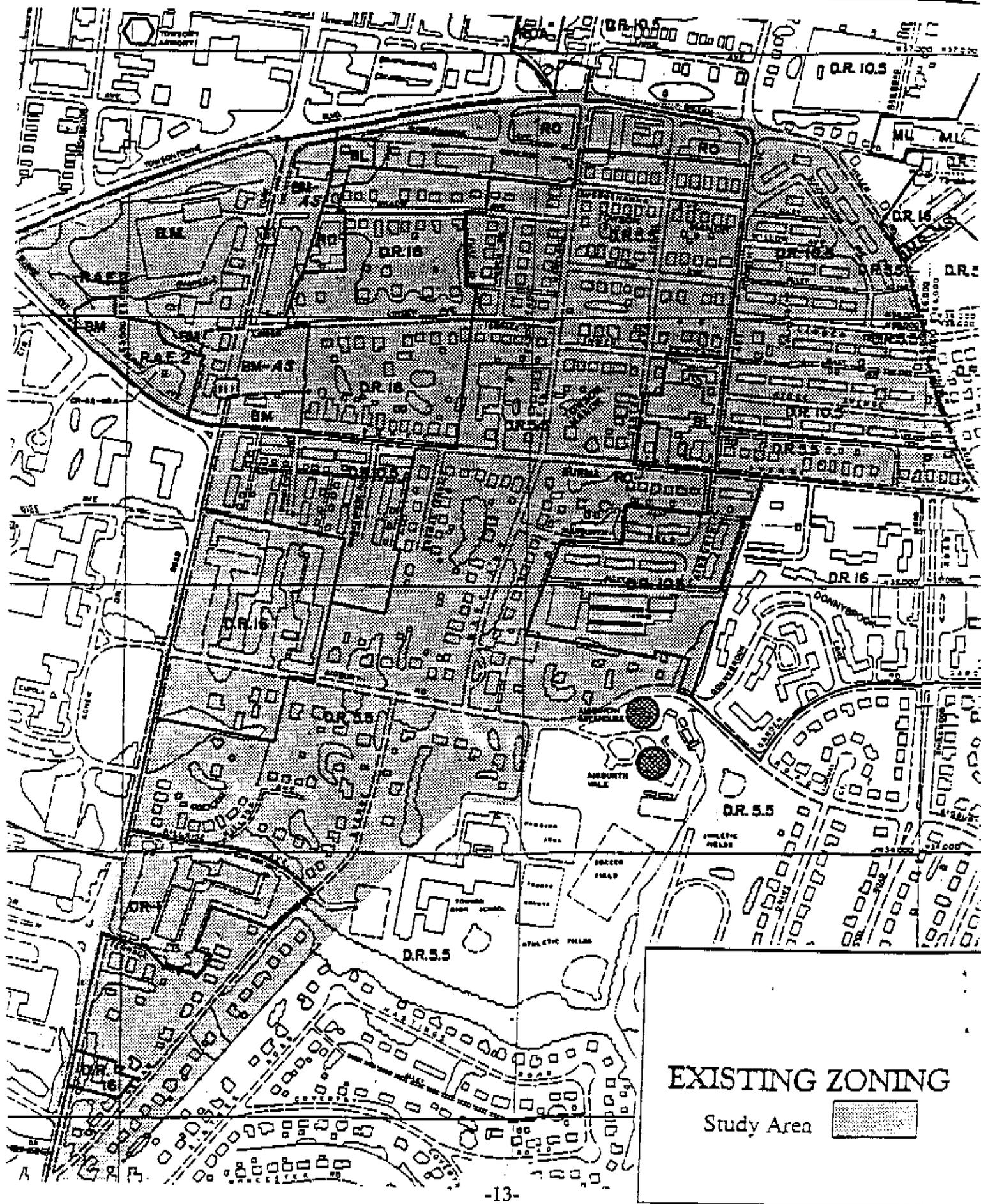
The Community will revisit the recommendations annually to determine the status of implementation and a strategy for moving each recommendation toward completion. Information about the numbers of houses in the study area sold, the prices for which they sold, and the time on market should be used as markers of the success of the recommendations.

Appendix A:

The Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks has noted that the only County owned parkland in the study area is Towson Manor Park, though Towson High School Recreation Center is located just outside of the study area boundaries. Based on the State of Maryland's prescribed local parkland goal of 30± acres per 1,000 residents, the study area's estimated population of 1,600 would result in a parkland acreage goal of 48± acres. Thus, subtracting out the existing 2.5± acre Towson Manor Park (including the recently acquired Stebbins Anderson addition), the study area has a parkland deficiency of approximately 45.5± acres. It must be recognized, however, that achieving this goal will in all likelihood have to be met outside the study area. The challenge for the future is finding available land that could be utilized as parkland (especially quality land).

As a general note, greater Towson is an area in which the Department of Recreation and Parks has great interest in obtaining additional parkland to meet community recreational needs. Therefore, should a sizable property such as the Towson American Legion become available, the Department should consider acquiring a portion of the parcel for use as parkland. This is especially true of the American Legion property as the ball diamond at the site is currently utilized for some recreational programs of the Towson Recreation and Parks Council.

SOUTHEAST TOWSON COMMUNITY PLAN





Baltimore County
Office of Planning
County Courts Building
401 Bosley Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204