



# NORTHWOOD NEWS

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY THE NORTHWOOD-FOUR CORNERS CIVIC ASSOCIATION ■ APRIL 2015

## The BRT, Colesville Road, and You

By Jim Zepp  
**The BRT Corridor Advisory Committees**

Last July when the County Council adopted the County-Wide Transitways Functional Master Plan, which authorized a network of ten Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes involving most of the County's major roadways, it acknowledged that, up to that time, all of the planning for this system was conceptual rather than considering the actual requirements and implications

of constructing and operating the BRT vehicles on these streets.\* Consequently, the Council's resolution included language calling for the creation of Corridor Advisory Committees (CACs) for each of the affected roadways that would focus on the potential impacts and BRT design alternatives for communities around these corridors.

Because no construction or operating funding has been forthcoming for the two BRT routes that have been studied for years (the Corridor Cities Transitway and Viers Mill BRTs) and the large number of additional BRT routes authorized by the Council, only four routes were initially planned to have CACs and detailed studies—Rockville Pike, Colesville Road, Viers Mill Road, and Georgia Avenue.

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*\* A BRT uses large buses (usually 60' articulated vehicles) with dedicated lanes, traffic signal priority, or other mechanisms for allowing them to travel faster than other traffic on a road. For more information about the BRT and its relation to planned development in our area, please see earlier issues of the NFCCA newsletter on the Association's Website at [www.nfcca.org](http://www.nfcca.org).*

## Change in Date Of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association will be held on **Tuesday, 7 April 2015**, at 7:30 p.m. at Forest Knolls Elementary School, which was not available on our regularly scheduled date of Wednesday, 8 April. The school is located at 10830 Eastwood Avenue, just off Caddington Avenue (there's no access from other sections of Eastwood).

A presentation will be given on the importance of using native plants, plus a map will be shown of proposed sites for Little Free Libraries (see p. 10).

All residents of the Northwood-Four Corners-Forest Knolls area are invited to attend and express their views. Please note that only paid members of the NFCCA are eligible to vote. (Annual dues are \$10 per household and may be paid at the meeting.)■

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## FROM THE LISTSERV

### Road Resurfacing

I have an update on road resurfacing for the neighborhood. Our neighborhood was scheduled for a complete hot-mix asphalt repaving last spring but, as the date became closer, it was removed from the website.

I contacted the County DOT last summer and they told me that, due to budget reasons, it had been postponed by two years. I contacted our Councilmember, Tom Huckler, a few weeks ago and then was connected to the head of the Department of Transportation. The road resurfacing is scheduled now to begin after 1 July 2015 for all areas south of Hannes Road to Colesville Road in two phases (see map below). Unfortunately, WSSC is doing work on Hannes Street north to Loxford Terrace over the next two years, so the

repaving will not begin until after that because they don't want to pave, have it dug up by WSSC, and then have to pave again. The WSSC project info can be found at <http://gisweb.wsscwater.com/In-YourNeighborhood/>.

—Kevin Harris  
Edgewood Avenue

NOTE: Residents of NFCCA territory (see boundaries in the box at right or on the map online) may join the listserv.

■ If you have a Yahoo email account, go to Yahoo Groups and search on NFCCA.

■ If you have an email account other than Yahoo, send an email directly to [nfcca-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:nfcca-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

In either case, include your street address in the body of the email. Once the listserv administrator confirms your address, you'll be approved. ■

## Join One or Both Of the NFCCA's Two Listservs

### NFCCA General Listserv

- Subscribe: [nfcca-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:nfcca-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)
- Post a Message (you must subscribe first): [nfcca@yahoogroups.com](mailto:nfcca@yahoogroups.com)

### Northwood Parents Listserv

- Subscribe (send an email to): [northwoodparents-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:northwoodparents-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)
- Post a Message (you must subscribe first): [northwoodparents@yahoogroups.com](mailto:northwoodparents@yahoogroups.com) ■

## NORTHWOOD NEWS

*Northwood News* is published by the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association. The NFCCA represents the ~1,485 households in the area bounded by Colesville Rd. (Rte. 29), University Blvd. (Rte. 193), Caddington Ave., and the Northwest Branch.

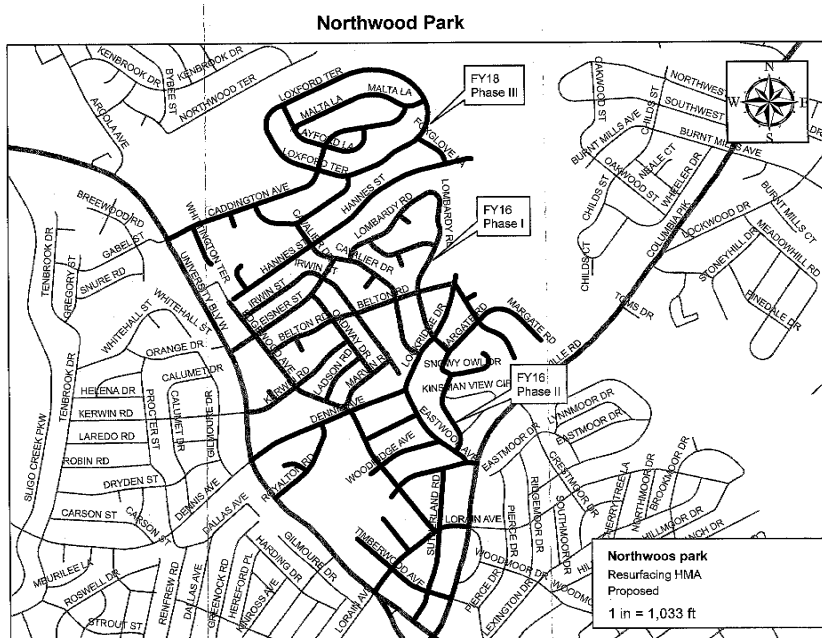
Any resident of this area is eligible to join the NFCCA. Annual dues are \$10 per household and may be paid at any Association meeting or mailed to the treasurer.

The *Northwood News* is published five times a year—in October, December, February, April, and June. To place an ad or discuss a story, please contact the editor.

### Editor

Jacque Bokow  
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Visit Our Website  
[www.nfcca.org](http://www.nfcca.org)



This map from the MoCo Department of Transportation shows the proposed schedule for repaving our neighborhood roads.

# MCPS Downcounty Consortium Elem. School Capacity is Studied

By *Jacquie Bokow*

Montgomery County Public Schools will be holding a series of public information meetings about expanding the elementary school capacity in the Downcounty Consortium (DCC) area. This will primarily involve whether to build additions to five existing school buildings or to find land to build a new school. (This does not include any new schools necessitated by the new White Oak Master Plan, which could result in 8,600 or more residential units being built in that area.) Seven other elementary schools also are being studied, including Forest Knolls Elementary School.

FKES expanded its classroom capacity in 2007, adding a dozen new classrooms and removing the portable classrooms that had been in use until then. By 2012, portables had been returned for the increased enrollment. Although FKES only has room for 506 students, in the 2012–2013 school year enrollment reached 683. Current enrollment, including pre-K and speech students, stands at 758, 252 over the school's capacity.

The results of the DCC capacity study will be compared to the cost of opening a new elementary school. During the study, all relevant materials will be posted, as they become available, at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/construction/studies/dccstudy.shtm](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/construction/studies/dccstudy.shtm).

## Elementary School Meetings

The meetings at each elementary school will allow community members to provide input on the classroom additions being studied. At each school, the architect will present one or more concepts for the classroom addition. Comments will be recorded and the architect will incorporate any changes based on the input.

Public meetings to review the concept plans for the additions have already been held at Sligo Creek Elementary School (11 March) and Oak View Elementary School (17 March). The three remaining plan reviews will be (in the Media Centers at each):

## New Hampshire Estates Elementary School

8720 Carroll Avenue  
2 April 2015  
3:30–5:00 p.m.  
7:00–8:30 p.m.

## Montgomery Knolls Elementary School

807 Daleview Drive  
20 April 2015  
3:30–5:00 p.m.

## NFCCA BOARD

The Board of Directors for the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association serves for one year and meets every month except July and August. Current officers (until October 2015) are:

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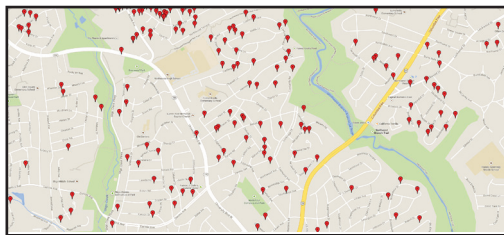
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### **My Career Transactions in Your Area**

The Map below shows my career sales in and around Northwood/Forest Knolls. You can see that we are selling all over the area. Our constant and broad sales experience beyond your local market helps us to better understand the general real estate market and how it affects the sale or purchase of your home.



**Barbara Ciment Team Career Sales in This Area**

### **Your Neighborhood Reports on the Web**

My real estate reports are now on the web. Below is a Personalized URL (PURL) that allows you see All the Active Listings and Recent Sales in your Neighborhood!

**[www.ciment.com/northwood](http://www.ciment.com/northwood)**

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**– Barbara Ciment**  
Associate Broker, Long & Foster Real Estate, Inc

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# Elem. Schools Capacity is Studied

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

7:00–8:30 p.m.

## Pine Crest Elementary School

201 Woodmoor Drive

30 April 2015

4:00–5:30 p.m.

7:00–8:30 p.m.

The initial public information meeting was held 2 March 2015 at Montgomery Blair High School. The final informational meeting, on the results of all the elementary school meetings, will be held 1 June 2015, 7:00–8:30 p.m., at the Northwood High School cafeteria (919 University Blvd. West).

Spanish interpreters will be present at all evening

meetings. Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals who need accommodations or special assistance may contact the Office of Interpreting Services at 301.517.5539 or via video phone at 301.637.2933.

## Capacity Study Follow-Up

Following completion of all these meetings, the architect will develop cost estimates for each proposed school addition. The cost of additions will be compared with the cost of a new elementary school. This Fall, the Superintendent of Schools will make a recommendation on whether to construct additions at some schools, build a new elementary school, or a combination of both. The

## Elementary Schools to be Studied for Additions

Montgomery Knolls ES  
New Hampshire Estates ES  
Oak View ES  
Pine Crest ES  
Sligo Creek ES

## Other Cluster Elementary Schools Included in the Study

East Silver Spring ES  
Forest Knolls ES  
Highland View ES  
Piney Branch ES  
Rolling Terrace ES  
Takoma Park ES  
Woodlin ES

recommendation will be included as part of the *Superintendent's Recommended FY 2017–2022 Capital Improvements Program (CIP)* where funds and opening dates will be recommended. ■



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# The BRT, Colesville Road, and You

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Due to the lengths and varied characteristics of the Rockville Pike, Colesville Road, and Georgia Avenue BRT routes, each of these corridors were to have an upper and lower CAC, which initially meant a total of seven CACs were to be created.

However, since (1) the Georgia Avenue BRT Route faced strong opposition by citizens and businesses in Olney, (2) the State Highway Administration (SHA) had already concluded that operating a BRT on lower Georgia Avenue was impractical due to conflicts with the Beltway ramp traffic, and (3) there are no pending development projects that would benefit from having a BRT, County Executive Ike Leggett canceled the two BRT CACs and studies for Georgia Avenue. This means that \$21 million will be spent studying the three remaining BRT corridors over two years.

After the adoption of the Transitways Master Plan, the County Department of Transportation staff met with civic leaders from the affected areas around the County to discuss the selection criteria to be used for choosing the CAC members. Because the previous County-wide planning for the BRT has been dominated by government agencies, those representing developers' interests, and activists advocating specifically for BRT over other transportation and transit alternatives, there was great concern that the CACs should have a broader perspective and actual (as op-

posed to a passing) knowledge of local transportation conditions. The criteria that was agreed upon by all parties:

- Geographic proximity to the corridor;
- Potential degree of impact from the rapid transit system (RTS) project;
- Population represented (i.e., larger subdivisions for residents or larger number of employees/congregants/constituents for businesses/employers);
- Diversity, such as business size or type, organization mission, age, ethnic background, gender, etc.; and
- Transit or road user within the corridor (both types sought).

The total number of members representing each corridor was constrained by the following factors:

- Maximum number of direct stakeholders = 30;
- Maximum number of at-large representatives = 10; and
- Direct stakeholders must outnumber at-large representatives by a ratio of at least 3:1.

Unfortunately, the County staff have apparently interpreted these rules very loosely. As long as a CAC applicant was nominated by either a civic organization or the Chamber of Commerce, they were considered for inclusion. Consequently, some CAC members who are characterized as "directly impacted or affected representatives" are representing communities or businesses which are located three miles or more

away from the BRT corridor or represent contractors or development interests which may benefit from the CAC recommendations.

The ratio of three members from directly affected constituencies to one at-large representative was originally set to be in keeping with the Council's intention that the CACs would be the major forum for the residents and businesses most impacted by the BRT to be heard. A stricter interpretation of the selection criteria puts the South Route 29 CAC membership at about 20 directly affected representatives to 21 at-large. Although these choices have been brought to the attention of the County staff, they maintain that the selection rules were met if one of the criteria (but not all relevant characteristics) was satisfied.

This is important because the mission of the CACs is to examine in detail the issues of implementing a BRT route along each corridor, including impacts on transit services for area residents (not just those for riders passing through the area); possible effects on traffic flows for other vehicles accessing local businesses and communities as well as other roadways such as the Beltway and University Boulevard; and economic and environmental impacts that may not be apparent or a significant concern from a County-wide perspective, but can be substantial burdens or costs to local residents and businesses.

A general kickoff meeting for all five CACS was held on 28 February. The first meet-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)

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# The BRT, Colesville Road, and You

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ing of the South Route 29 CAC was held on 31 March 2015 in the Fenton Room at the Silver Spring Civic Center in downtown Silver Spring. Kevin Harris (who lives on Edgewood Avenue) will be representing the NFCCA; he can be reached at [kevinharris1964@gmail.com](mailto:kevinharris1964@gmail.com). More information about the CACs is available at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rts/](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rts/).

## The Independent Transit Authority

Despite not knowing what the BRT system will cost because the detailed studies won't be finished until at least two years from now (general estimates range from two to ten billion dollars), the County Executive requested new state legislation that would allow him to create an Independent Transit Authority (ITA) that would be run by five appointees named by him; would have broad powers over all transit-related projects and services, including the BRT, Ride-On buses, and subways; could issue bonds to finance construction that County taxpayers would have to pay off through future property taxes; and its new public debt obligations could exceed the County Charter limit on property taxes. The County government would have very limited approval of the ITA's capital expenditures and no approval power over its operating budget.

A preliminary estimate for financing the BRT was about an additional \$300 a year for a home valued at \$400,000 and \$1,700 for an average commercial property. One proposal would be to tax communities such as ours at a higher rate because we are closer to a BRT route and would theoretically receive a greater benefit (and negative impact) than an area such as Potomac, where the BRT won't go near.

On 30 January, the Montgomery County State Legislative Delegates held a public hearing on the proposed ITA bill. The overwhelming outcry by citizens and the County employees union over the hurried and premature nature of the ITA bill for which no reasonable cost estimate or specific project plans were available, resulted in a major public embarrassment for the County Executive, who withdrew the bill ([www.gazette.net/article/20150202/NEWS/150209982&template=gazette](http://www.gazette.net/article/20150202/NEWS/150209982&template=gazette)). However, he stated that, if no other financing alternatives were suggested for the unknown billions of dollars possibly needed, he would reintroduce the bill six months later.

The persistent pursuit of the BRT and ITA are mystifying since the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP, a national proponent of BRT systems) concluded in its 2012 study, *Demand and Service Planning Report to Montgomery County DOT*, that "true BRT really only makes sense in Montgomery County in the context of a broader array of

changes, including changes in land uses and urban design."

This is because the County is mainly a suburban area lacking the density needed for such a large-capacity transit system that would still be a poor alternative to driving for most residents. Furthermore, the BRT would, even under optimistic conditions, provide minimal improvements in travel speed for riders.

Finally, the ITDP consultants noted, on roadways where traffic congestion is a problem, that "the sorts of bus service delays that [they] observed along these suburban arterials, primarily roadway congestion and multiphase traffic signals, are not the primary causes of delay that are well-addressed by gold-standard BRT elements."

Consequently, many of the concerns that are being used to justify a multibillion dollar investment in constructing and operating a BRT system could be better spent on other options such as more regular and express bus service and traffic management systems.

Obviously, it is up to County residents and businesses to express their concerns about whether yet another unelected, independent agency—like WSSC, WMATA, or the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)—is needed or wanted, as well as whether massive increases in local taxes are a wise decision in terms of keeping and attracting residents and businesses. Emails can be sent to the County Executive's Office at [ocemail@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:ocemail@montgomerycountymd.gov). ■

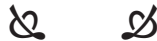
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*Picturing Mary: Woman, Mother, Idea* explores the concept of womanhood represented by the Virgin Mary as well as the social and sacred functions her image has served through time. This landmark exhibition, organized by the National Museum of Women in the Arts, brings together more than 60 Renaissance- and Baroque-era masterworks from the Vatican Museums, Uffizi Gallery, and other museums, churches, and private collections in Europe and the United States.



*Picturing Mary* is part of the National Museum of Woman in the Arts ongoing program of major historical loan exhibitions that examine humanist themes related to womankind.



Another great event will take place on Friday, May 8th, between 12 & 1 o'clock. To honor our remaining World War II veterans and to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of the war, there will be a fly-over of the National Mall and the World War II Memorial. About 30 vintage WWII aircraft will participate in the fly-over, including a B-25, B-17, P-38, Mustang, P-40, Hellcat, Bearcat, Corsair, SBD, Avenger, and several others. It should be spectacular event.

On Saturday, May 9, about 20 of these planes will be on public display at the Udvar-Hazy Center near Dulles Airport (14390 Air and Space Museum Parkway, Chantilly, Va. 20151). It will be a wonderful opportunity for everybody to get an up-close look at these beautiful vintage aircraft.

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# Check Out the CSA Possibilities in Mont. County

By Sondra Katz

For those who like healthy, locally grown (which may include neighboring states) produce without having to drive from farm to farm, a Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) program may be just what you are looking for. There are quite a few CSAs offering drop-off sites near our neighborhood. Most CSAs provide produce during the summer, but a number of them also have offerings in the spring and fall and there are a few that deliver year-round.

CSAs (and farmers markets as well) are a way to try out new vegetables and fruits and most of the farm websites include recipes and descriptions of the vegetables and fruits. In addition, you will be helping to support family farms. Farmers get help with their cash flow and you get healthy and fresh food with minimum to no pesticides. Many farms are organic, and meats will not be from factory farms.

CSAs generally offer two sizes: either full/large or half/medium. The large size is usually listed as being for a family of four (two adults and two children), while the medium is suggested for one or two adults. The selection is usually the same items but the half share will be fewer of each item. The number of items will vary depending on the CSA. Most will offer weekly produce with the farmers selecting what's available on their farms, but a growing

number are offering the ability to pick out one's selection each week. This can be done online by a deadline or by coming to a farmers market and selecting what's available.

Things to consider as you think about a CSA (from the *localharvest.org* website):

- Don't expect to get all your produce from the CSA.
- If you aren't used to eating seasonally, do some research.
- Quantities vary, so ask up front.



The *localharvest.org* website also suggests asking yourself the following questions to decide if a CSA is right for you (think about your family members as well).

1. Do I eat a lot of vegetables?
2. Do I like to cook and does my schedule allow me to make homemade meals most evenings?
3. Will it be fun to try vegetables that are new to me?
4. How will I handle excess produce? (Do you have a neighbor who would like to get some veggies if you're unable to eat it all?) Feeling bad about wasting food is one of the top reasons former CSA members cite for not renewing.

5. Am I willing to accept the unknowns involved in "shared risk"? "Shared risk" means members share with the farmer the risk that some crops might do poorly due to bad weather, pest problems, and the like. With so many crops included in a CSA, it is expected that, even if some languish, others will flourish and there will be plenty of food overall. Members pay the same whether it turns out to be a bumper year or a skinny one.

When comparing CSAs, note whether fruits are included in the basic share; some have them, but as an option that costs extra. Beef, chicken and eggs, dairy, and bread are also additional cost items. Check if the CSA is totally organic if that is important to you (some use integrated pest management or pesticides only as a last resort) as well as if the pickup location and hours are convenient for you.

The following CSAs are some of the ones that have a pickup location in the Four Corners area within several miles or have a pickup at the Farmers Market in downtown Silver Spring on Saturday.

**Bending Bridge Farm**  
*bendingbridgefarm.com*  
Wed. 4–8 p.m. on Spring St.

**Calvert Farm**  
*calvertfarm.com*  
Wed. 5–7 p.m. on Brisbane St. (Forest Glen)

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

## Check Out the CSA Possibilities

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

### Dragonfly Farms

[dffarms.com](http://dffarms.com)

Early Sat. morning on Georgia Ave. near Beltway

### Evensong Farm

[evensong-farm.com](http://evensong-farm.com)

Sat. from 9 a.m.–1 p.m. at Silver Spring Farmers Market

### From the Earth Foods and Country Pleasures Farm

[mocoalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/CSA\\_Letter\\_2015-from-the-earth-food.pdf](http://mocoalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/CSA_Letter_2015-from-the-earth-food.pdf)

Sat. from 9 a.m.–1 p.m. at Silver Spring Farmers Market

### Hungry Harvest

[hungryharvest.net](http://hungryharvest.net)

Fri. late afternoon/evening, delivered to your home

### Lancaster Farm Fresh Cooperative

[lancasterfarmfresh.com](http://lancasterfarmfresh.com)

■ Hyde Road (near Lamber-ton Dr. in Kemp Mill)—day TBA

■ Rogart Road at Lanark Way—day TBA

### Orchard Country Produce

[orchardcountryproduce.com](http://orchardcountryproduce.com)

Fri. on Newport Mill Road

### Shallowbrooke Farm

[shallowbrookefarm.com](http://shallowbrookefarm.com)

Wed. 2:30–8 a.m. in South Four Corners

### Spiral Path Farm

[spiralpathfarm.com](http://spiralpathfarm.com)

Sat. 7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at the Sil. Spr. Farmers Market

### The Farm at Our House

[thefarmatourhouse.com](http://thefarmatourhouse.com)

Sat. 9 a.m.–1 p.m. at the Silver Spring Farmers Market

The Farm at Our House helps at risk youth with farm jobs. Hungry Harvest collects surplus food that is perfectly fine but doesn't meet grocers' or restaurants' specifications.

The above is a sampling and you can check further at a few websites that have collected information about area CSAs. These are:

■ [localharvest.org](http://localharvest.org)  
■ [washingtonpost.com/graphics/food/csa-community-supported-agriculture-interactive-map](http://washingtonpost.com/graphics/food/csa-community-supported-agriculture-interactive-map). This page allows you to select by pickup sites.  
■ [greenpeople.org/csa.htm](http://greenpeople.org/csa.htm). These are listed by state, so scroll down until you see Maryland.

■ [mocoalliance.org/newsroom/community-supported-agriculture](http://mocoalliance.org/newsroom/community-supported-agriculture). This is a list of farms in Montgomery County as well as those nearby that have pickup spots in the County.

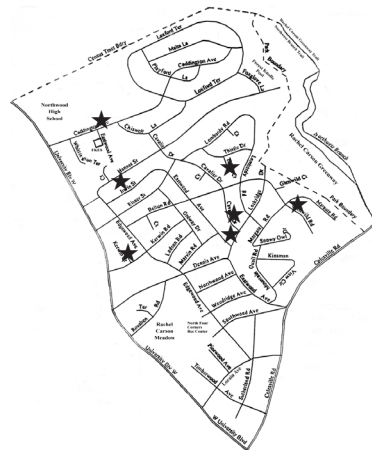
If you don't want to commit a lot of money in advance, farmers markets are an alternative. Again, there are a number of them within easy driving range, although most only have morning hours. Lists can be found at [washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/lifestyle/dc-farmers-markets-interactive-map/](http://washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/lifestyle/dc-farmers-markets-interactive-map/). This map is from April 2014 but most of those listed will be open again in 2015 and the page will should be updated this month. It allows you to look day-by-day as to when markets are open, as well as the hours and locations. ■

## To Be Discussed At the 7 April NFCCA Meeting

At the NFCCA meeting on 7 April (see page 1), we'll hear a presentation by Carole Ann Barth on the importance of using native plants. Barth is owner and principal of Heal Earth Gardens, an environmental consulting firm offering planning, writing, education, and landscape design.

An environmental planner, Barth worked in the field of Environmental Site Design and codeveloped the nationally recognized "Rainbows to Rain Gardens" program. She co-authored the BayScapes program, and she has taught BayScapes at the Graduate School for over 10 years. Barth currently serves on the Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council Board. She is also immediate past president of both the NFCCA and the Montgomery County Civic Federation.

We'll also discuss placement of our planned Little Free Libraries. Homeowners who have expressed an interest in hosting an LFL box are shown in the map below. ■





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10618 Cavalier Dr	\$409,900	Rambler	3	2	0
319 Ladson Rd*	\$410,000	Cape Cod	3	1	0
10708 Lombardy Rd	\$384,900	Bilevel	3	2	0
1134 Loxford Ter*	\$349,000	Split Level	5	3	0
10821 Margate Rd**	\$354,900	Rambler	4	3	0
10430 Mountain Quail Rd	\$530,000	Contemporary	3	2	1
101 Southwood Ave	\$464,900	Colonial	4	2	0
214 Thistle Ct	\$365,000	Split Level	3	2	0
211 Thistle Dr	\$449,900	Colonial	4	3	0

**CONTRACTS on the following properties:**

1108 Chiswell Ln	\$410,000	Split Level	4	2	1
507 Dennis Ave	\$825,000	Colonial	6	4	0
316 Irwin St	\$439,000	Rambler	4	3	0
317 Ladson Rd*	\$249,900	Cape Cod	4	1	0
1008 Loxford Ter***	\$290,000	Split Level	3	1	1
10404 Mountain Quail Rd	\$539,000	Colonial	4	4	0
116 Southwood Ave	\$539,000	Craftsman	4	2	1
222 Thistle Dr*	\$350,000	Split Level	3	2	1
211 University Blvd W*	\$352,000	Colonial	5	3	1

\*Short Sale \*\*Foreclosure \*\*\*REO/Bank



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## North 4Corners Park Rec Building Old, Not Historic

By David S. Rotenstein

In 2013, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) evaluated recreation buildings in Montgomery County parks and recommended designating seven of them historic. The North Four Corners Local Park building was not among the ones selected for protection under Montgomery County's historic preservation law, Chapter 24A of the County Code.

land legislature created the M-NCPPC, with jurisdiction in Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

Among the new agency's responsibilities was developing and managing parks. In the 1930s, as much of the nation struggled in the Depression, Montgomery County experienced a development boom as government workers flocked to the region for work in New Deal agencies and programs. Demand for rec-

[Work Projects Administration] labor. These were completed in 1934 in Rock Creek, Sligo Creek, and Kensington parks.

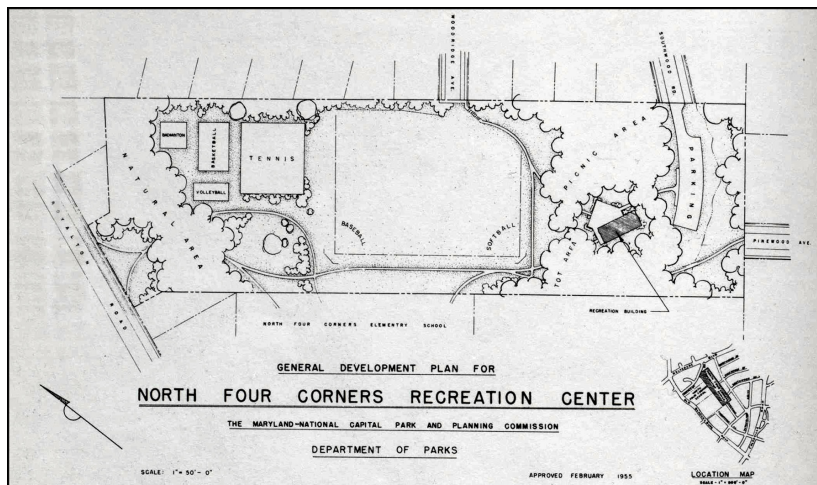
The North Four Corners Park building was built during what M-NCPPC historians call the "suburbanization" era of Montgomery County park development starting in 1950. Planning for a recreation building and tennis courts in North Four Corners Park began in 1947, three years after M-NCPPC bought the facility's original 5.57 acres. *The Washington Post* reported that the proposed improvements in North Four Corners were part of a countywide plan to build 26 tennis courts and seven recreation buildings in county parks.

It took another eight years for County officials to get from the planning stage to constructing the new facilities in North Four Corners Park. In 1955, the M-NCPPC announced that funding was in place for the improvements first announced in 1947.

Plans for the \$25,000 North Four Corners Park building included a kitchen, toilet, storage space, and a "large recreation room." The North Four Corners building was the only postwar recreation building designed using the earlier "rustic log cabin" model; other park recreation buildings erected in the period reflected a more streamlined, modernist aesthetic.

The site plan M-NCPPC

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)



*The original 1955 plan for North Four Corners Park, as it appeared in the "1955-1956 M-NCPPC Annual Report."*

Although County officials declined to recognize the North Four Corners building's historical significance, that doesn't mean the building doesn't have a history and deep attachment to our community.

Montgomery County has been in the parks business since the early 20th century. Congress in 1926 created the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and, the following year, the Mary-

reational facilities kept pace with the demand for housing and, in the early 1930s, Montgomery County began building park buildings modeled after ones found in national parks.

The County's earliest park buildings were rectangular log cabins with fireplaces and pitched roofs, sometimes dubbed "parkitecture." The earliest "rustic cabins" were true corner-notched log buildings constructed using WPA

## The North 4Corners Park Rec Building Built in 1955

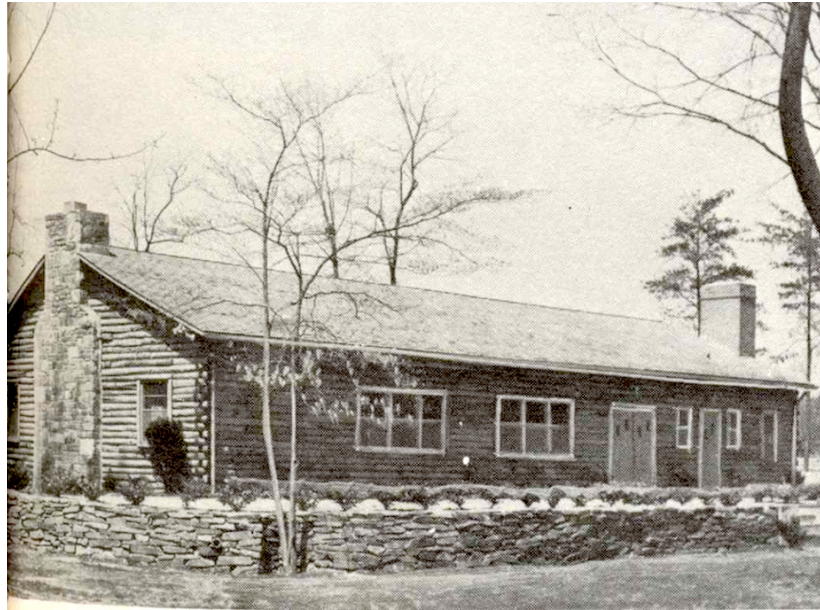
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

approved for North Four Corners Park improvements included the recreation building with a surfaced patio area and adjacent wooded picnic and children's play areas; a ball field; tennis, basketball, and volleyball courts; and, a "natural area" buffering the park's connection with Royalton Road. A surfaced circulation network (paths) connected the park's individual landscape elements.

Shortly after the North Four Corners Park building was completed, it was pictured in an M-NCPPC annual report. The photo, at right, shows the building in an area enclosed by a surfaced terrace and stone retaining wall with steps connecting the walkway from the surfaced driveway. The building's existing fenestration pattern, stone and brick chimneys, and asphalt shingle roof are clearly visible in the 1955 photo.

The new park building quickly became a valuable part of the Northwood Park/North Four Corners community. Scout meetings and parties were held there and it became our neighborhood's polling place during elections.

Architectural changes to the North Four Corners Park building during its first half-century include foundation improvements, installation of HVAC systems, and alterations to secure the building (metal window grills, fireplace sealing). Up until the first decade of the 21st century, the



*Newly constructed North Four Corners Park recreation building, reprinted from the "1955-1956 M-NCPPC Annual Report."*

park building was available for community events, including civic association meetings and festivals.

In 2007, Parks Department officials reported that the North Four Corners recreation building was in poor condition compared to other buildings in the agency's inventory. Three years later, the North Four Corners Park recreation building was one of 11 underused park buildings M-NCPPC proposed closing. [*Editor's Note: See the October 2008 issue of the newsletter for an article on how difficult it was to actually rent the facility (online at [www.nfcca.org/news/nn200810.pdf](http://www.nfcca.org/news/nn200810.pdf)).*] Civic association meetings were relocated to nearby Forest Knolls Elementary School and neighbors met with Parks Department officials to find ways to keep the building

open. These included leasing the building and working to find long-term tenants.

Architect and neighbor Ralph Bennett conducted a condition assessment and prepared architectural drawings to bring the building back into use. In 2013, Chabad of Silver Spring moved its Montessori school to the building.

As an adaptive use was found for the North Four Corners building, County planners were completing a survey of park buildings for designation in Montgomery County's Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Historic Preservation staff selected a sample of buildings representing each of the chronological periods of construction in county parks. Despite substantial alterations to its original building fabric, including changes to its

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)

## HISTORY CORNER(S)

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14) character-defining windows, the Veirs Mill Park recreation building was selected to represent the Cold War era among the parks buildings designated historic.

Historic preservation can be a highly subjective art. One preservation professional's landmark is another's landfill candidate. Just look at the volatile debates over preserving buildings like Silver Spring's Perpetual Bank Building or D.C.'s Brutalist Third Church of Christ, Scientist.

Now that North Four Corners Park's original designed landscape has been terraformed into new spaces for new uses, it's hard to say whether

a second opinion would have returned a recommendation for preserving the entire park as an historic Montgomery County resource. I think it might have. The price tag for the new park was substantial in dollars and in sense of place and history. The

postwar park landscape created for returning veterans and their families has been transformed into a new, larger park for new generations of neighbors ready to make new stories that one day may be evaluated for their historical significance. ■



The North Four Corners Park recreation building, March 2015.

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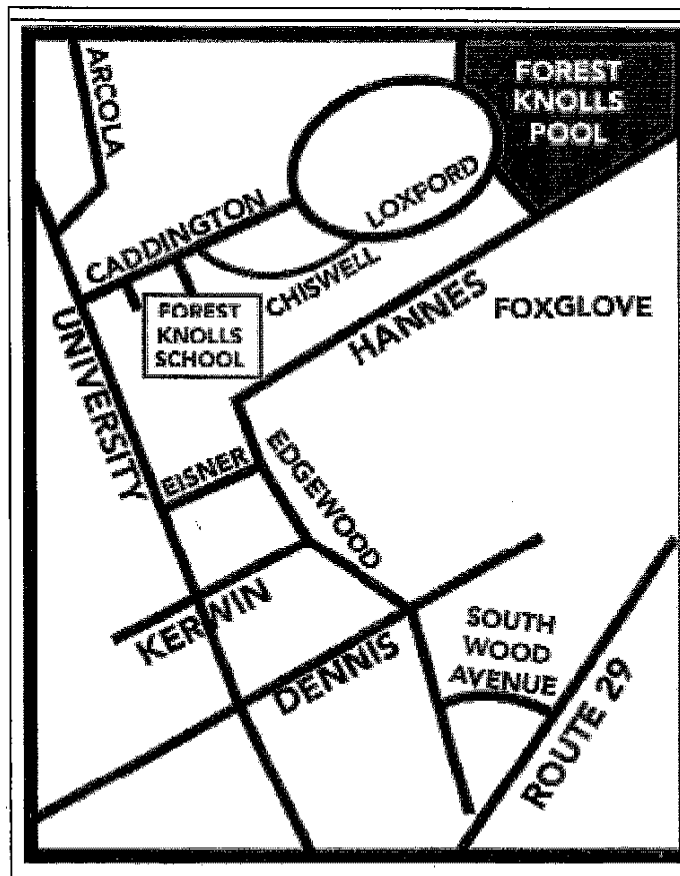
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