

CULTURAL HERITAGE

OBJECTIVE

- To inventory and protect the cultural heritage of the Sector Plan Area (Map 16).

EXISTING SITUATION AND ISSUES

Prehistoric Times¹—Due to its geographic location at the interface between the Coastal Plain and Piedmont physiographical regions, the area surrounding the confluence of Indian Creek and Upper Beaverdam Creek has a very high potential for containing archaeological resources from Maryland’s prehistoric past. During the Archaic period of prehistory, (8000 - 1000 B.C.) Indian groups of up to 100 members, called bands, moved across the landscape of North America with the seasons to their various camps. As the seasons changed, the Indians took advantage of the hunting, fishing and plants that became available at particular campsites.

One such camp was located at the present site of Greenbelt Service & Inspection Yard at the end of the Metro Green Line. This camp was situated on a small area of high ground surrounded by hundreds of acres of wetlands. In the wetlands adjacent to their camps, the Native Americans found supplies for their many needs, including food, beverage, medicines, clothing and basketry.

This prehistoric campsite was discovered during the planning process for the Metrorail yard and extensive archaeological investigations ensued (State designated area #18PR94 Area III). These excavations provided significant information about the Archaic period, in particular: prehistoric subsistence, adaptation to the changing environment, and Native American settlement patterns. In addition to artifacts from human activities, scientists discovered an ancient peat deposit that was

formed when Indian Creek shifted in its course over 10,000 years ago. The peat had preserved prehistoric vegetation and provided information about the natural prehistoric environment. This quality of the excavation site is rare in the Mid-Atlantic region, due to the usual disturbance or destruction by development, farming and industry. The artifacts from the Metrorail yard are maintained at the State’s Jefferson Patterson Park facility. They could provide an interesting and invaluable learning opportunity, especially in combination with historical and environmental information, at an interpretive center or interpretive displays within the Sector Plan Area.

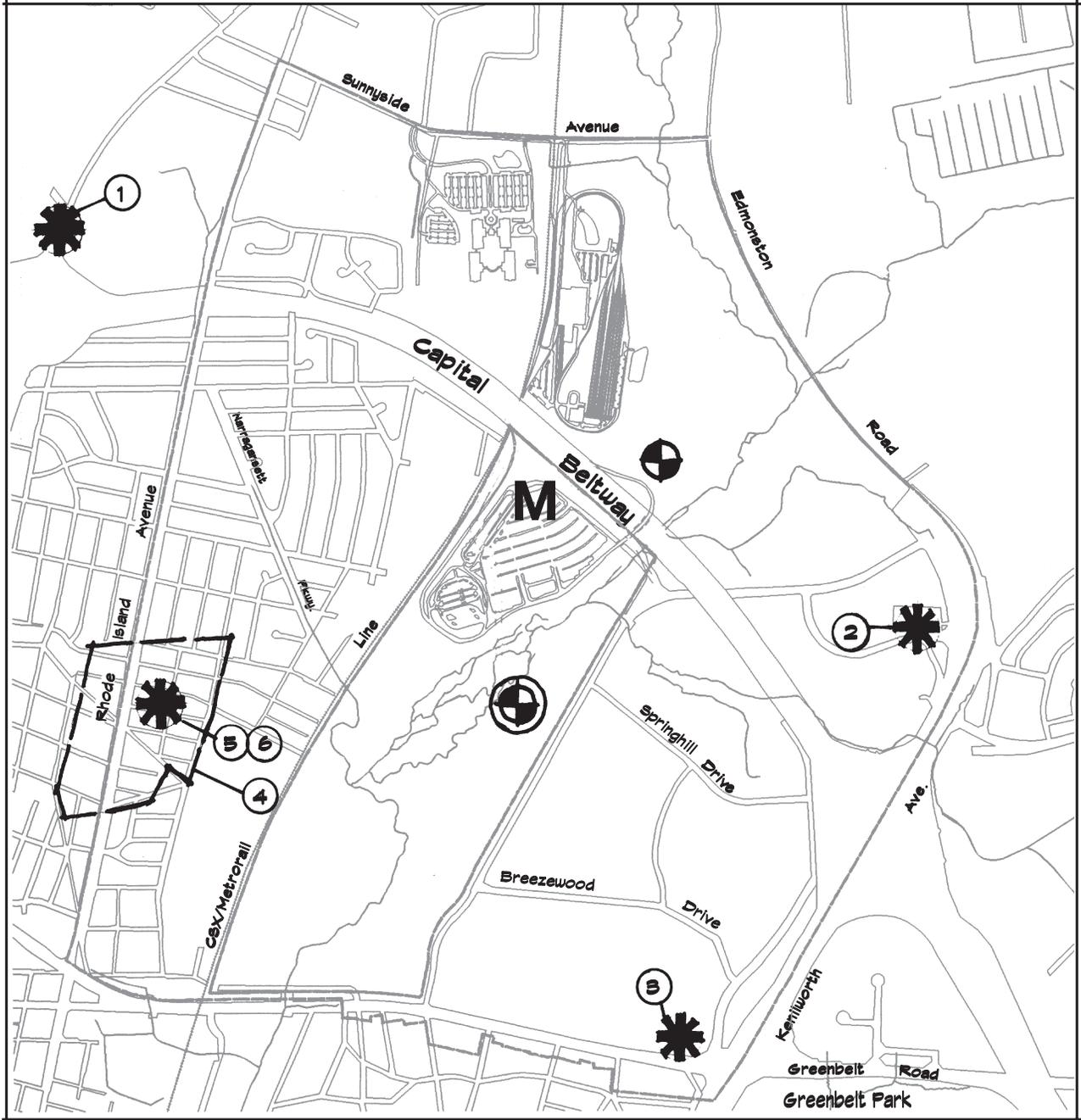
Other locations along Indian Creek would have been used and frequented by the Indians during their hunting and gathering activities, and excavation at these sites may be undertaken in the future if appropriate.

When the Federal Courthouse, near Capital Office Park, was constructed, an “Art-in-Architecture” park was created to celebrate the indigenous people who visited the site from 8000-1000 B.C. in search of stone materials for arrowheads, spear points and tools. The park also commemorates the Native American’s contribution to our nation’s legal system.

Transition Period—Following the Archaic Period, the Woodland Cultures were present in the area. The Indians of this era turned from a hunting and gathering culture to one based on farming and more permanent settlements. From this point on, the general area around Greenbelt was cultivated as farmland for generations before other development began.

Modern Times—Beginning at the time of the American Revolution, a public road, being the main route south from

¹ Indian Creek v. Charles Leedecker for Louis Berger & Associates, 1989. Prepared for Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. (See also poster: Archaic Lifeway: Archaeology at the Greenbelt Service Yard, 1992.)



Historic Properties

1. White House Tavern (Brown's Tavern) (66-1)
2. Turner Cemetery (part of Greenbelt National Historic Landmark)
3. Greenbelt Middle School (part of Greenbelt National Historic Landmark)
4. Daniels Park (66-27) includes:
 5. Baker-Holiday House (66-27-24)
 6. Lavalle House (66-27-25)

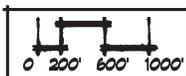


Archaeological Resources



Possible Archaeological Resource

Note: Information from *Historic Sites and Districts Plan, 1992*



Cultural Resources

Map 16

Baltimore, was in use just west of the Sector Plan Area. The route was improved early in the nineteenth century to serve as the Washington and Baltimore Turnpike (now called US 1) and was the principal connection between Baltimore and the Federal City until the construction of the Washington line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (now CSX). The existing stream valley provided a relatively easy right-of-way for the construction of the railroad in the 1830s.

The first trains ran on the Washington line in the summer of 1835, and in the years following, traffic on the turnpike began to decrease, replaced by the convenience of the new railroad. The old road lost its turnpike status after March 1866, by decision of the U.S. Supreme Court. It regained importance early in the twentieth century with the advent of the automobile. Traffic increased in the 1920s and 1930s as the number of privately owned automobiles increased and the old turnpike right-of-way was improved into the heavily traveled US 1. Today the study area is in part defined by these two historic arteries of transportation: the old turnpike lying to the west of the Sector Plan Area and the Washington Branch of the Baltimore & Ohio (now CSX railroad) running north and south roughly through its center.

During the nineteenth century, the northerly stream valley of Indian Creek, part of which is within the Sector Plan Area, was part of a large farm operated by John W. Brown. He managed the White House Tavern (Brown's Tavern) a short distance to the northwest on the Washington and Baltimore Turnpike (present US 1). At the time of John Brown's death in 1862, his farm contained 1,740 acres stretching south from the village of Beltsville, on both sides of the turnpike, to south of the Paint Branch School on what is now Cherry Hill Road. The easterly section of his farmland included part of the northern Sector Plan Area. (See Map 16.)

The south boundary of the sector plan is defined by Greenbelt Road (MD 193). This east-west road, which now connects Greenbelt with US 1, evolved from the original farm road to the Walker family plantation, Toaping Castle. The plantation house, as well as Montebello of the Morsell family, were just outside of the Sector Plan Area to the east. Although important antebellum plantations, both plantation houses and all evidence of their existence, have been destroyed. At the intersection of the original Greenbelt Road and the B&O tracks, a small community grew up in the years following the Civil War. This small village, known as Branchville, clustered around the general store and post office of Pinkney A. Scaggs, and boasted a population of 60 at the end of the nineteenth century. The east boundary of the study area is MD 201, a

heavily traveled modern road which roughly follows the alignment of an ancient road between Bladensburg and Vansville. Originally called Edmonston Road, it was named for members of the Edmonston family who had owned land and managed plantations along its path. (See Figure 11.)

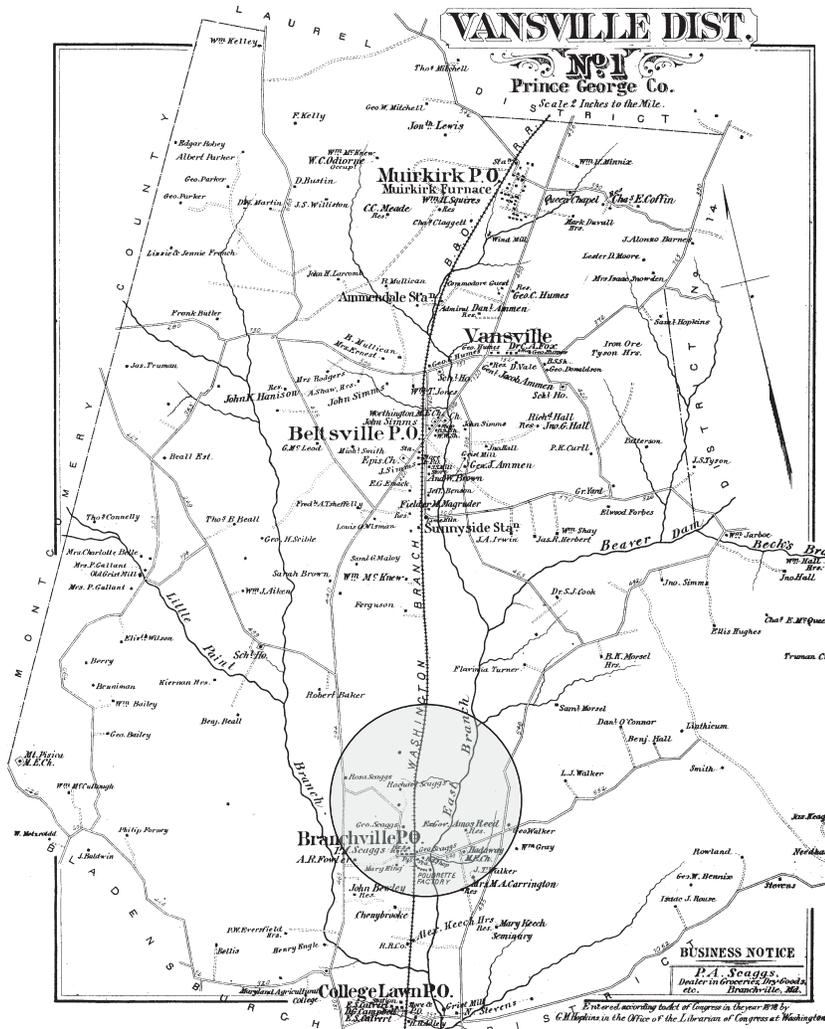
The Sector Plan Area includes two small noncontiguous portions of the National Historic Landmark Town of Greenbelt: the Greenbelt Junior High School property at the northwest sector of MD 193 and 201, and the Turner family cemetery on the west side of MD 201 near Ivy Lane. (Map 16) The Sector Plan Area also includes two Historic Sites designated under the Prince George's County Historic Preservation



LaValle House.



Baker-Holliday House.



Base Map: Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington Including the County of Prince George Maryland, G.M. Hopkins, C.E., 1878. (Reprinted by Prince George's County Historical Society, 1975.)

Figure 11. 1868 Vansville District historic map. (Approximate location of Sector Plan is shaded.)

Ordinance². These two Historic Sites are within the historic community of Daniels Park, the eastern half of which is included in the Sector Plan Area. Subdivided in 1905-06, Daniels Park developed around the City and Suburban Railway (trolley), now Rhode Island Avenue, and its streetscapes include examples of the housing stock popular in the first third of the twentieth century. Two individual houses have been identified and documented in the east section of Daniels Park: the Baker-Holliday House (Historic Site 66-27-24), a frame foursquare built for the Baker family in 1907, and the LaValle House (Historic Site 66-27-25), a cross-gabled frame house built in 1910 for George LaValle who operated a locally well-known florist business. (See Map 16.)

All of the Sector Plan Area is contained in the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area (ATHA). A heritage area, as described by the Maryland Heritage Area program, is a region united by a common history, whose special features can be used to enhance and promote tourism. The ATHA is united by a shared history of prehistoric and colonial settlement and agriculture, transportation innovations and small historic towns. Once a recognized heritage area is certified by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, it may be awarded grants, loans, and tax credits for local economic development and capital improvement projects that will benefit heritage tourism. Prior to certification, the State requires a heritage management plan that is an official adopted plan of the local

² The Historic Preservation Commission, appointed by the County Executive to implement the Ordinance, can designate a property listed in the County Inventory of Historic Resources as an Historic Site if the property meets specific criteria of architectural or historical significance. Once designated, Historic Sites are protected from adverse impact and are eligible for restoration incentives.

jurisdictions. In Prince George's County, the ATHA plan is an amendment to the County's General Plan and meets all requirements of the Zoning Ordinance for adoption by the Planning Board and approval by the County Council. The ATHA Heritage Management Plan: A Functional Master Plan for Heritage Tourism was approved by the District Council on September 25, 2001.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Preserve the historic and cultural heritage of the Sector Plan Area by coordinating proposed development and other projects with the M-NCPPC Planning and Preservation Section, the respective municipalities and the ATHA consultants.
- Require consultations, inventories and mitigation for certain sites.

If development within the sector plan will disturb locations along Indian Creek that would have been used and frequented by the Indians during their hunting and gathering activities, an excavation and documentation should be required. If these sites are likely to contain archaeological or historic features, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Planning and Preservation Section and the Natural and Historical Resources Division of M-NCPPC should be consulted. If Federal or State funding or permits are involved for the proposed development, a Phase I archaeological assessment will be required for areas that have not been disturbed or disrupted previously. If historic or archaeological sites are found, a Phase II archaeological assessment will be required. Based on significance of findings, consultation between SHPO and developers would produce preservation or mitigation activities.

- Coordinate and implement an archaeological/historical/environmental interpretive center or displays within walking distance of the Greenbelt station and local communities.

Artifacts from the Metrorail yard excavation should be retrieved from archives for display and educational purposes. Physical connections via the trail system to Indian Run Park at Federal Courthouse and other historic and archaeological sites should be part of a comprehensive plan for the interpretive center and/or displays.