



# FALL NEWSLETTER 2021 MEMBERSHIP ISSUE

Newsletters and Events are posted on  
**GreaterFarmland.org**  
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## It's Time to Renew Our Greater Farmland Memberships A Big Thank You to the Many Who've Already Renewed for 2022!

- \* Community Day BBQ \* Neighborhood Yard Sale \* Winter-on-the-Farmland Holiday Party \*
- \* Garden Club \* Landscaping Improvements and Maintenance \* July 4th Parade \*
- \* General Meeting Programs \* Government Advocacy \* Email Listserv \*
- \* Website and Facebook Page \* Newsletters \*
- \* Online & Print Directories \* Candidate Forum \* Block Party Support \* Welcome Baskets\*

Dues support activities and services, as permitted by public safety guidelines.  
Some activities will resume when safe, while others have been added or modified for our mutual health.



**Online option 1:** Go to the GFCA directory at **Gfca.membershiptoolkit.com**. If you'd already registered on this site, log in. If not, register as a new account. Follow the prompts to purchase the membership length of your choice using your credit card or PayPal. Your membership renewal will be automatically reflected in the directory.

**Online option 2:** On our website, **GreaterFarmland.org**, select the number of years you'd like to pay for, fill in your address, and click Pay Now.

**Mail:** Use the enclosed addressed envelope to **mail a check, payable to GFCA** for \$35, \$70, or \$105. Please allow time for us to manually update your membership and deposit your check.

We are a volunteer organization composed of neighbors.



## DIRECTORY NEWS



To date, 196 households have registered new accounts on our new online directory, **Gfca.membershiptoolkit.com**. Once you've registered on our secure, private system, you can:

- Present your household information any way you want, including whatever you'd like to be visible
- Pay dues seamlessly, with your membership status automatically updated with your online payment
- Have the most up-to-date information, so you don't have to wait for the printed directory to get updates
- Download the free app to your phone, so you have our directory with you when you need it



Go to **Gfca.membershiptoolkit.com** and click Register a new account.

The login ID and password that you had from the old AtoZdirectory.com system will not work on this site; you must set up a new one.

## GFCA LISTSERV

Our listserv is an email distribution group that allows us to communicate with each other, via email, in real time. Over 650 of us use the GFCA listserv. GFCA announcements, buying & selling or free items, traffic concerns, security events, lost & found items/deliveries/pets, tips, gardening, appeals for charity events, community events & participation opportunities, all of these are the "stuff" of our discussions. To be part of "what's happening," join. Email **Gfca+subscribe@groups.io** or click the Community Email List icon on the bottom of GreaterFarmland.org.

NOTE: Our community has been targeted again by NextDoor marketing. This is a national organization pretending to be local. There are some security concerns about scammers using personal information posted on NextDoor, and their mailings are designed to look like they come from our neighbors, but are bogus bulk mailings. Please beware.



Faith United Methodist Church, 6810 Montrose Road, has placed a box for food donations outside of the office door entrance (under the brown awning). The box will be available through the Thanksgiving holiday. Last year, several families reported that their children looked forward to making repeated trips to the donation box, into which they personally placed the food items as a tangible way to celebrate the Thanksgiving Season by sharing with the less fortunate. Please bring boxed or canned goods, no glass. Thank you!  
To learn more about Manna or see a list of preferred foods, go to [mannafood.org](http://mannafood.org). from Bill Maas

## TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY COMMITTEE IS UP AND RUNNING

The GFCA board has given the committee the task of inventorying neighborhood streets' traffic and safety issues. Pedestrian safety on Hitching Post Lane was given top priority. The committee is authorized to contact the county arborist, as well as a private arborist, to determine the health of the cherry trees along the block between Old Stage Road and Old Gate Road. Alternatives will be explored to promote pedestrian safety. A preliminary report is due to the Board within 3 months.  
Please drive carefully on our streets; drive slowly, Stop at signs, and watch for children, walkers, & bicyclists.

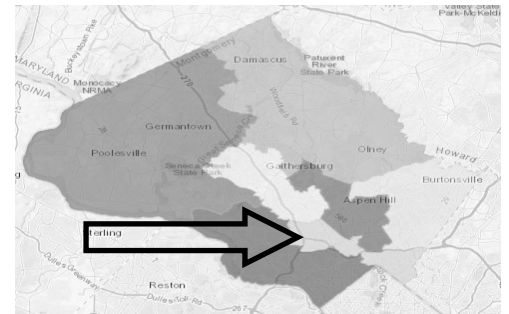
## THE COUNTY COUNCIL WILL REDISTRRICT THE ENTIRE COUNTY

### Redistricting Montgomery County – Report on Zoom meeting 11/4/2021 with Commissioner Jason Makstein

Last year, county residents passed a referendum to add two more districts, due to a population increase of over 90,000 residents in the past 10 years and under-representation in the upper county. Councilmembers will total 11, 4 at-large and 7 district representatives. The Council empaneled an 11-member commission to propose a redistricting map. Even without the referendum, redistricting is required every 10 years, after a census.

The commission set **six major goals**:

1. **Equal populations** – districts should have approx. 150,000 residents
2. **Compactness** – districts should be regular in shape, ideally, circles & squares
3. **Contiguity** – a district cannot have non-contiguous regions
4. **Minority representation** – the county population is majority minority, with non-hispanic whites comprising 40.6%
5. **Preservation of incorporated cities and political subdivisions** – municipalities cannot be split into more than one district
6. **Preservation of community interest**



In a 6-5 vote, the commission passed this map. We are the bowtie district.

Jason Makstein, who had voted in opposition to it, will be submitting a dissenting report to the County Council. He described a process whereby commissioners negotiated privately with each other, producing a less-than-ideal product.

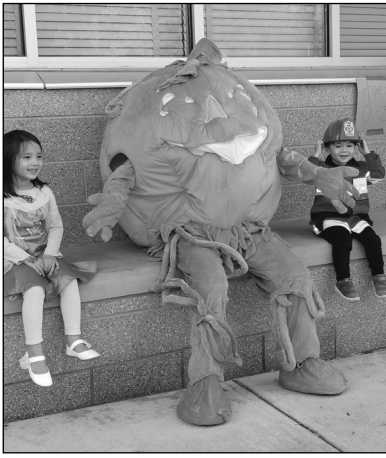
The first decision, made at the request of the City of Rockville, was for Rockville and Gaithersburg be in the same district. That formed a single district in the center of the county. All other districts had to be carved out of the remaining area. Communities near the Town of Chevy Chase, including Bethesda, wanted to be in the same district. The balance left odd bedfellows, as Leisure World was not districted into Aspen Hill, but with Burtonsville. Parts of Silver Spring and eastern Chevy Chase function together, but were split. North Bethesda and Rockville are closely aligned, but were split.

You see that the new district assigned to North Bethesda follows a bowtie shape along an east-west path to include Kensington, Forest Glen, Silver Spring, and Takoma Park. The northern boundary follows the CSX railroad line. According to some of the commissioners, the RR line was a “logical axis” and that the North Bethesda and Silver Spring urban districts interests align sufficiently.

Several of us pointed out to Mr. Makstein that the railroad has no defining role for our community, but that we are steadfastly aligned along the Rockville Pike and I-270 corridor. We would have been better represented by being in a district with the City of Rockville. That was precluded by the first decision they had made. A pairing with Rockville, Aspen Hill, and Twinbrook areas would have given our district enhanced minority representation while preserving common interests with all of our district residents.

**The new district that includes North Bethesda violates 3 of the 6 goals: Compactness, Contiguity, and Preservation of Community Interest.** Technically, the bowtie district is “contiguous,” but the 180-foot-wide string that connects the ends makes the label disingenuous. This map was created with all of our communities as an afterthought, shoe-horned into place after other interests created their islands. It will not serve our interests nor those of the other communities in the district as well as we should expect. There are communities contiguous to ours that could have been included in alternative map configurations so that all of our district is paddling in the same direction with shared goals and interests for how this part of the county is governed.

There were no public hearings during the commission phase, and the county council's hearings on Nov. 16 & 18 are booked up. Ed Rich, GFCA president, is presenting testimony, which will be posted on [GreaterFarmland.org](http://GreaterFarmland.org).



## OUR HALLOWEEN PARADE WAS A HUGE SUCCESS!

Over 400 neighbors, including kids and pets, participated in the costume parade at Farmland Elementary School, led by the Great Pumpkin. Prizes were awarded for several costume categories, and GFCA sponsored an ice cream truck. Yum! Thank you, Kathy Hofmann, for organizing the Farmland festivities.

Crystal Paultre and her daughters manned the Books for Teachers table so that Farmland teachers have the books they need to enrich their classrooms.



As she did last year, Olya Dougherty produced an online map of households providing trick-or-treat candy safely at the street. The kids had a great trick-or-treat evening after the parade.

## JOIN US! FOR UPCOMING EVENTS

GFCA's board and the social committee, are working on the logistics to bring our community together in person. We have a **NEW Interactive CALENDAR on GreaterFarmland.org**. Upcoming dates and event details are posted online. Thank you to Diana Keohane for setting up our calendar and keeping it up-to-date.

Winter-on-the-Farmland may be coming back! If GFCA can book Farmland Elementary School or an alternate site, we are looking forward to a great party and to see everyone on January 8, 2022. The social committee is working on fascinating presentations, games, crafts, cookie exchange, food bank collection, and a few surprises!

We are also planning to bring back our ever-popular Community Day on June 11, 2022. We'll have fun for the entire family, from littles to seniors, with buffet provided, dessert table, and activities for the kiddies. The Community Yard Sale, July 4th and Halloween Parades are also in planning stages.

There will be at least two general community meetings, with the Issues & Elections meeting tentatively scheduled for March 23 at 7 pm. As many as two additional Open Forum Zoom meetings may be added.

Board meetings are open to interested community members and occur approximately every two months.

*Keep an eye on the listserv and on GreaterFarmland.org for details*

## I-270 WIDENING PROPOSAL UPDATE by Ed Rich & Marjorie Raley

**The public comment period for the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) ends at 11:59 PM on Monday, November 30, 2021.**

The proposal adds between 2 and 4 lanes to the current 12 lane I-270. The state's recent analysis noted that toll lanes will not reduce traffic congestion. GFCA submitted a detailed and well-reasoned statement during the DEIS comment period. It's now critical that as many community members as possible submit comments for the supplemental DEIS. Our concerns include negative impacts on the environment, climate, increased amounts of vehicle-created air pollution permeating our community, and, potentially, billions of dollars taxpayers will pay to fund the project and relocate WSSC infrastructure. The GFCA faulted the DEIS for failing to model alternatives, such as telecommuting, staggered work hours, convenient, consistent and affordable transit alternatives, and smart growth that includes affordable housing around transit hubs such as Metro Stations.

To access the full text of the SDEIS, go to <https://oplanesmd.com/sdeis/#SDEIS>

**To provide comments, go to <https://oplanesmd.com/your-participation/provide-feedback/>**

Clickable links, along with much more information, are available at <https://greaterfarmland.org/i-270-widening.html>



## NEW TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD ?

We invite you to join the Greater Farmland Civic Association and our community listserv, which is our major source of information. Please email [directory@GreaterFarmland.org](mailto:directory@GreaterFarmland.org) so we can get a Welcome Packet to you.

*Nearly 500 of our households were paid members of GFCA in 2021!  
Let's continue to build our warm and caring community.*

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY IS CONSIDERING A PLAN CALLED THRIVE 2050

In response to concerns about the housing component of the Planning Department's draft revision to its county's general plan, known as THRIVE 2050, the GFCA has established the Land Use/Zoning Committee, chaired by Alan Bergstein. Alan is a recently retired lawyer for the DC Office of the Attorney General who advised that jurisdiction's Zoning Commission, Office of Planning, and Office of the Surveyor. His wife, Carol Joffe, also a retired attorney with over 30 years of litigation experience, will also serve on the committee. The committee is monitoring the progress of the draft, which is currently with the County Council, as well as a potential zoning text amendment that would permit the conversion of existing neighborhood homes into multifamily dwellings. The committee will keep the board and community abreast of these and other land use proposal that may affect our neighborhood.

DCist.com has published an article, <https://dcist.com/story/21/11/02/thrive-montgomery-2050-controversy/>  
Montgomery County Parks & Planning has a page, <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/master-plan-list/general-plans/thrive-montgomery-2050/>

Follow the issue and links at <https://greaterfarmland.org/thrive-2050-land-use-proposal.html>

## JULIE MERBERG'S SCHOOLS CORNER

After over a year of virtual school, Montgomery County Public School students returned to the classroom this fall. Also, this fall, Tilden Lane and nearby streets saw an overwhelming influx of **school-related traffic as Tilden Middle School relocated from Old Georgetown Road, the Rock Terrace School relocated to Marcliff Drive adjacent to the new Tilden, a renovated Luxmanor Elementary School reopened with a doubled-student capacity, and the Diener School joined the Green Acres School's Danville Drive campus.** Adding to the traffic volume, Farmland area students are no longer being provided with bus service to Tilden Middle School, though they are eligible under MCPS guidelines.

The confluence of these five schools has resulted in increased traffic on several Farmland area streets, and parts of Tilden Lane are virtually impassable during school arrival and dismissal times. Beyond inconvenient to drivers, traffic congestion is causing unsafe conditions for students and others walking and biking, road rage incidents, and delayed emergency response.

GFCA is working with the Luxmanor Civic Association, County Councilmember Andrew Friedson, school and PTA leaders, Montgomery County Police Department, and the Montgomery County Dept. of Transportation to address both the short and long term issues related to the placement of five schools in a small area, which can only be accessed through neighborhood streets that were not designed for the traffic load.

It is hard to miss the major construction project underway on Old Georgetown Road as the old Tilden Middle School is demolished to build a new Woodward High School. The school is scheduled to open in September 2023 and will initially house students from Northwood High School while that school is renovated. Woodward will open as a full high school for our cluster in 2025. Boundary decisions to determine which students are assigned to the school will be made 18 months prior to opening. The 2025 opening date is of particular importance to families with children currently in 7th grade or younger who may attend the new high school.

Woodward High School is being constructed to support the growing population in our area, which has resulted in significant overcrowding at Walter Johnson and other nearby schools. Construction will occur in two phases, and, while the timeline remains the same, MCPS has proposed reducing the capacity of the planned school by 540 students (from 2,700 to 2,160 students). This reduction is driven by cost with the project currently running \$18 million over the \$125 million budget.

## HOME MAINTENANCE SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FALL/WINTER

1. Leaves provide a winter "blanket" and compost for your plantings, so you can leave them in your garden.
2. Leaving your dormant plants uncut allows native insect eggs to overwinter and promotes native ecosystems.
3. Have your fireplace cleaned and inspected before using it.
4. Stack firewood and lay mulch at least one foot from any wall to prevent termite intrusion into your house structure.
5. Clean gutters and downspouts after the leaves fall. Water intrusion promotes mold growth.
6. Clean out the clothes dryer flue to prevent fire. There are companies that will come do this.
7. Check that your fire/smoke & carbon monoxide detectors are less than 10 years old to be sure they will alert when needed.