

TOWN CENTER-WIDE DESIGN FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

Collectively, the design frameworks of the vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems, the park and open space systems, and the location of community facilities constitute the major components of the overall design framework for the Town Center. These systems are significant in the proposed integration of existing development and that proposed for the Analysis Areas into a cohesive Town Center. Their specific application to these Analysis Areas, together with the land use and building related components of the framework, and the design of the street-scapes, will result in the establishment of the the overall functional and visual character of the Town Center.

The following describes each of these component systems of the proposed Town Center-wide design framework.

TRANSPORTATION

VEHICULAR ACCESS

The vehicular circulation system for the Town Center utilizes and expands the major highway/roadway and arterial street system that currently exists and is planned to serve the area. Major highways provide access to existing development and the various Analysis Areas that comprise the Town Center. The framework of internal streets is designed to provide clarity and ease of movement within and between these areas.

Each Analysis Area is served by entrances from the surrounding major highways and existing roadways. Internal streets are proposed to link these entrances and serve to distribute traffic. The internal patterns generally are those of grid street systems adapted as necessary to respond to adjoining streets, existing property lines, and natural features. This pattern distributes traffic efficiently by allowing alternative routes.

A hierarchy of access is provided within each Analysis Area. The MD-118 entrances to the Town Center Core (TC-1), TC-3, and TC-5 are four-lane divided boulevards, as are the entrances to these zones from the other major roadways (Crystal Rock Drive, Middlebrook Road, Father Hurley Boulevard, and Wisteria Drive). These boulevards provide definition at the primary entrances to each area. To discourage through traffic, the boulevards are discontinuous. In selected areas, they may also accommodate parallel parking. Most of the internal streets intersect these boulevards distributing traffic to and collecting traffic from parking.

An urban scale environment is provided through limiting the length of the blocks, which range from approximately 200 to 400 feet in length, similar to city blocks. This spacing helps to reduce the size of surface parking lots, also sized to accommodate their later retrofit as parking structures. Development of structured parking (preferably underground) is encouraged in the Town Center to the maximum extent feasible.

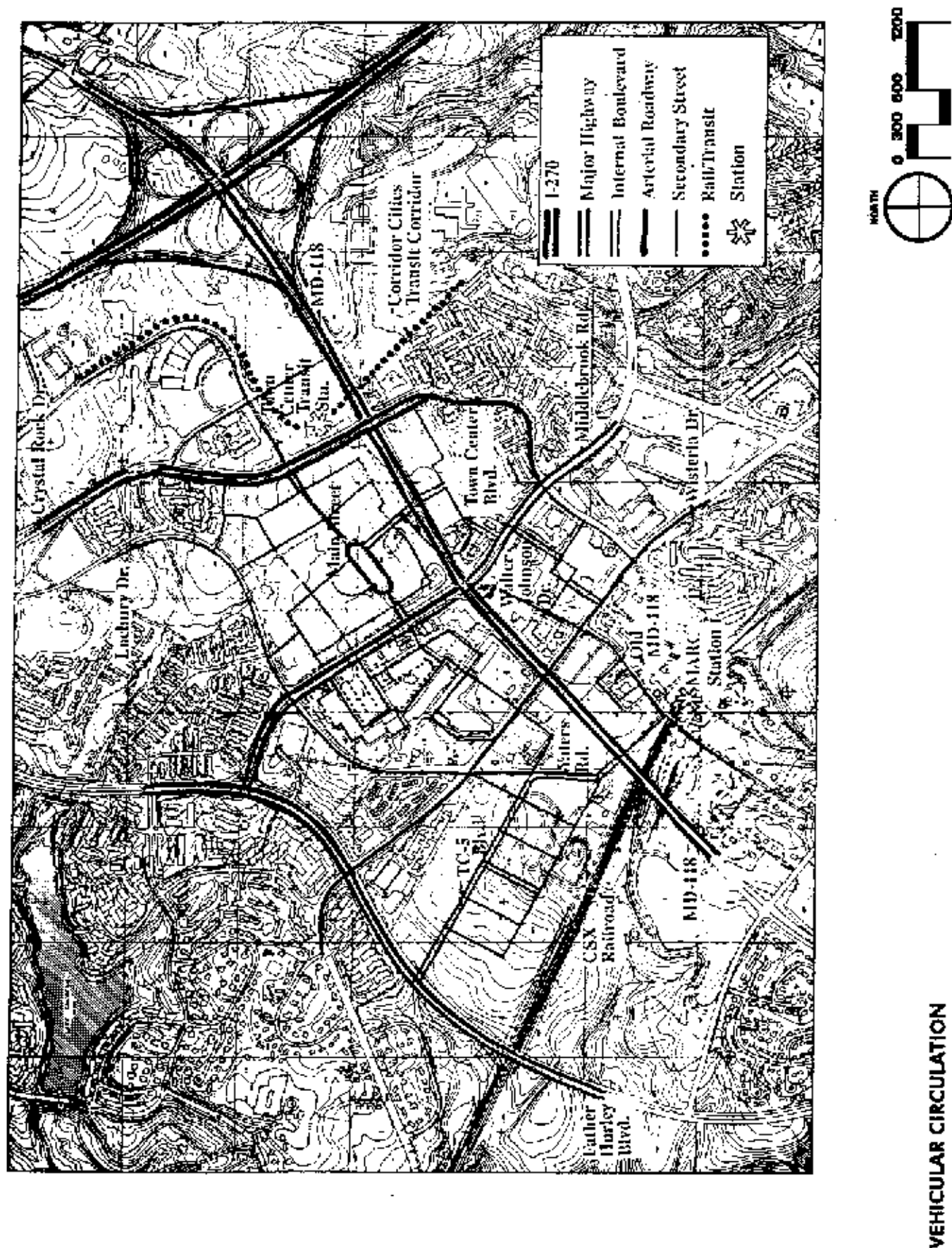
Town Center streetscapes reinforce the hierarchy of the circulation system throughout the Town Center as well as that internal to each Analysis Area. Almost all streets are proposed to have sidewalks and to incorporate street trees.

Several major vehicular connections have also been provided between Analysis Areas. The most important of these is the proposed Main Street link through Town Center. Originating at Crystal Rock Drive (opposite Century Boulevard) Main Street runs through the Town Center Core (TC-1) to Middlebrook Road. Main Street is then extended across Middlebrook Road and, utilizing the existing through street system within the existing shopping centers, continues across Wisteria Drive to the central internal boulevards within TC-5. These boulevards connect the TC-5 entrances of Father Hurley Boulevard, Wisteria Drive, and MD-118. From TC-5, Main Street Extended (Waters Road) continues across new MD-118 to and across old MD-118 to the MARC Commuter Rail Station. The current Master Plan does not indicate the intersection of Waters Road with extended MD-118. This is recommended as essential in providing access from MD-118 to the proposed TC-5 retail and service center and in accessing the MARC station to the southeast. Although a future parking lot for MARC is proposed to incorporate this road between new and old MD-118, this facility is recommended to be located to the north of Waters Road to provide access from MD-118.

Main Street thus links the future Corridor Cities Transit Corridor Town Center Station and related gateway development (TC-2), the Town Center Core (TC-1), the existing shopping centers, the new retail and service park (TC-5), and the MARC Commuter Rail Station and Historic District beyond.

The connection of Locbury Drive and Waters Road provides another means of linking the Town Center Core (TC-1) with TC-5. Although less circuitous than Main Street Extended, this route is more peripheral and is recommended to be more like a country road. Although Main Street is urban in character, both are proposed to be highly pedestrian oriented with the Locbury Drive and Waters Road connection recommended to incorporate more open space and to accommodate a hiker/biker trail.

Old MD-118 and Walter Johnson Drive are also proposed as special streets. With the extension of MD-118 this road will be relieved of all but local traffic. It dead-ends both at Germantown Square Park, and the bridge over the CSX Railroad tracks proposed to be closed to vehicular traffic. Old MD-118, the historic main street of Germantown, has the potential to provide a pedestrian-oriented street of



INTERNAL TRANSIT

unique character linking the new Core of the Town Center to the Historic District.

The Circulation Framework provides multiple opportunities to link activities throughout the Town Center. An internal **on-street** transit system is proposed to not only provide access to, but also within each of the Town Center Analysis Areas and to feed the main Town Center transit stations. Initially a jitney or local bus, this system could evolve into a more advanced mode. Internal transit is also designed to reinforce the imageability and hierarchy of the overall circulation system.

An internal transit route is proposed along Main Street and Main Street Extended to link the primary areas of activity in the Town Center. This route connects the proposed Town Center Corridor Cities Transit Station (TC-2) to the existing MARC Commuter Rail Station (TC-6). The route could vary to stop at specific public facilities/amenities and to serve special events, such as **Octoberfest**.

When the Town Center Transit Station is constructed it will be accompanied by a substantial parking garage with roof top recreational/open space and/or other amenities as well as the **air rights** development of a substantial number of high-rise dwelling units. Together with office development, this center of activity will act both as an origin and a destination. The Town Center Core (TC-1), across Crystal Rock Drive, will also be a high density, mixed use, activity center. Main Street in TC-1 will consist of multiple shopping and entertainment activities. Its central focal areas will be the Town Center Commons and the adjacent Cultural Arts Center, related community facilities and parkland. Internal transit is proposed to link these activities across Middlebrook Road to the Upcounty Government Center and library, through the existing shopping centers and across Wisteria Drive to TC-5.

Although primarily a service and retail center, TC-5 is also proposed to contain a substantial number of dwelling units (including a residential high-rise similar to that proposed for TC-2), and a public indoor pool and health club, in addition to the possible indoor component of the Germantown Recreation Center building. Transit will connect these uses and activities to the rest of the Town Center. The internal transit system is proposed to continue to the MARC Commuter Rail park-and-ride lot, its adjacent parkland and associated open space system and (across the railroad tracks) to the Historic District.

A second internal transit route might tie the proposed indoor recreational facility and related multi-family housing in TC-5 to the major parkland, recreational facilities, open space system, and community facilities of the Town Center Core (TC-1). This transit route is recommended to utilize the central boulevard within TC-5 and the Locbury Drive and Waters Road connection to access TC-1 at the Town Center Park. Transit service could proceed on to the Town Center Commons at Main Street. Utilizing this peripheral route, a bus could shuttle people from remote parking in TC-5 to special events in the Town Center Core, such as performances in the park amphitheater, the Cultural Arts Center and **Octoberfest**.



INTERNAL TRANSIT

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

The Town Center design framework incorporates a substantial pedestrian circulation system. This framework is designed to respond to the various functional requirements of access, to provide a safe and efficient environment, to accommodate both active and passive outdoor activities, and to establish an overall pedestrian character in the Town Center.

Sidewalks are the primary pedestrian circulation system elements. Sidewalks occur on almost every street in the Town Center. They link all of the various Analysis Areas as well as all development internal to these areas. Sidewalks vary in character and design in response to their function and edge conditions. In combination with other streetscape elements, Town Center sidewalks are designed to provide structure and order, orientation, and a sense of place.

Sidewalks are generally grouped into those having pavement at the curb of the street or building (**hard edge**) and those with planting strips between the walk and the street (**soft edge**). Within these general classifications variety is also provided by such factors as the width of the sidewalk, the width and landscape treatment of the planting strip, treatment of the building edge of the sidewalk, the use of paving materials, etc.

In the Town Center **hard edges** generally are recommended to occur adjacent to retail uses such as are proposed in the Town Center Core (TC-1), and within the service retail center proposed for TC-5. The existing storefront sidewalks of the Middlebrook and Sugarloaf Centers will be upgraded to be consistent with Town Center-wide streetscape treatments.

The majority of the sidewalks within the Town Center are **soft edge**. Sidewalks vary from 4 to 16 feet in width and the width of the planting strips average six feet. The major exception is the unique streetscape treatment of MD-118 Boulevard (see the Streetscape Design Framework). Here the sidewalk is six feet in width and set back from the curb of the road by a 10-foot-wide planting strip. Buildings are recommended to be set back 20 to 25 feet from the street right-of-way. This area is, for the most part, recommended to be landscaped and could contain a second walkway (in front of the buildings).

Locbury Drive, Waters Road, and Old MD-118/Walter Johnson Drive are identified as **special streets**. Although different in character, all are proposed as highly pedestrian in nature. The Old MD-118 and Walter Johnson Drive sidewalks are recommended to be reconstructed in a historic streetscape, possibly incorporating brick paving. This street provides a link from the Germantown Historic District to the Town Center Core.

Locbury Drive and Waters Road connect the Town Center Core with the Germantown Historic District (the old and new town centers). These pedestrian oriented streets afford the opportunity for separate sidewalks and hiker/biker pathways. It also provides an alternative route linking the major open space systems to the south of the MARC Commuter Rail Station (TC-6) and to the north of Locbury Drive and the Town Center Park.



PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

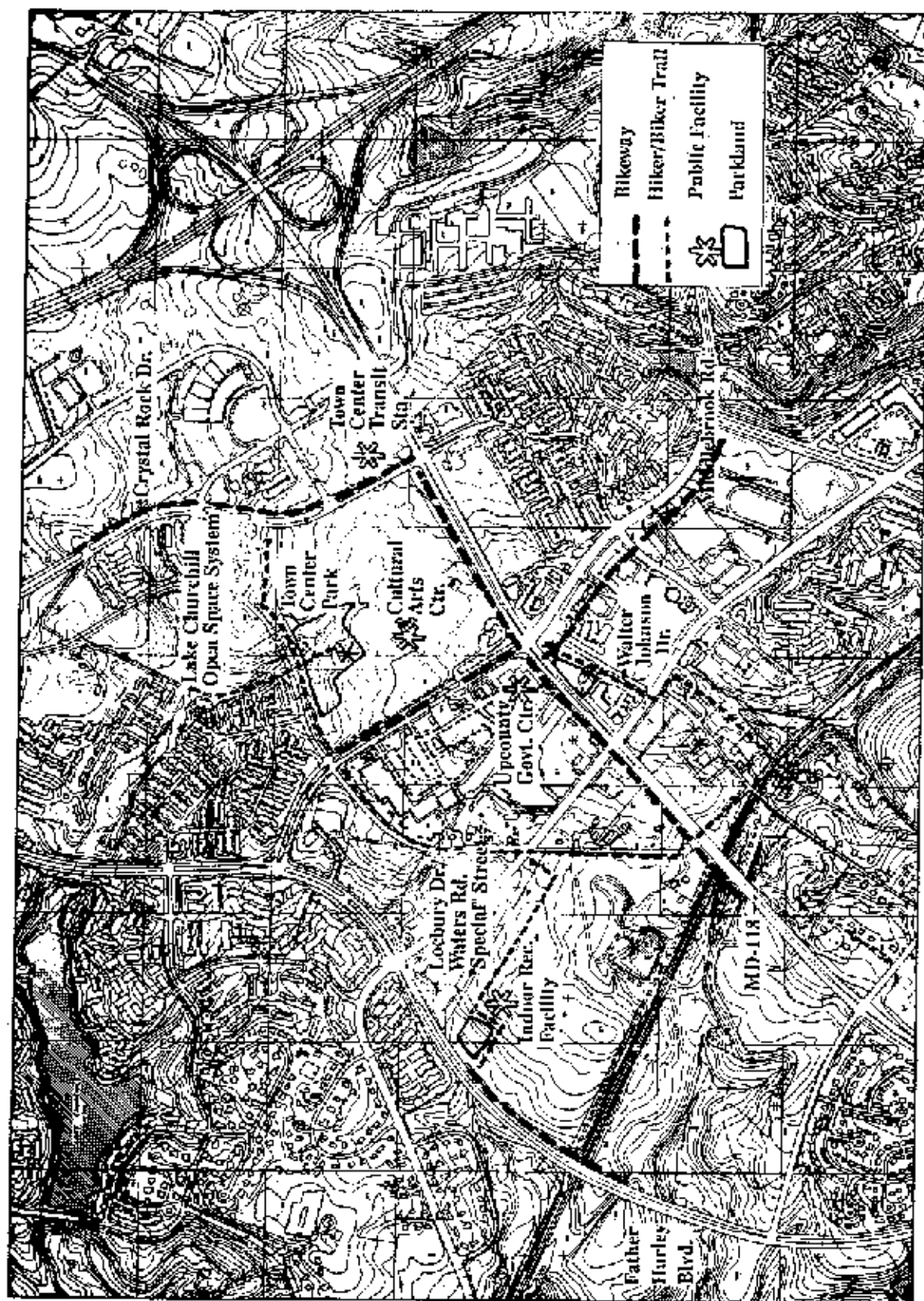
BIKEWAYS

The Town Center circulation framework incorporates and extends the existing bike path on the south side of Middlebrook Road to its intersection with MD-118 and on to Lockbury Drive. This system also connects to a bike path proposed on the south side of Lockbury Drive, where no sidewalk currently exists.

A bike path is also to be provided on the south side of Father Hurley Boulevard, from its Town Center entrance over the CSX tracks to the TC-5 Boulevard and Father Hurley Park, tying to the hiker-biker trail to Lockbury Drive and on to the Town Center. A bike path is also to be provided on the north side of MD-118 from the CSX Railroad tracks to Crystal Rock Drive. Whereas the MD-118 bike path serves as the sidewalk, that on Crystal Rock Drive is separate from the sidewalk. This bike path is recommended to be located on the TC-2 (station) side of Crystal Rock Drive, and continue north of Century Boulevard within the public open space adjacent to the police and fire stations. (This location, serving the future transit station and incorporating an off-sidewalk, biker-only path, is preferred to that of the Master Plan which shows this path on the west or TC-1 side of Crystal Rock Drive, however; other factors may either necessitate this location on the west side of Crystal Rock Drive or preclude its relocation.)

In addition to these bikeways, hiker/biker paths are also incorporated into the development of the Town Center. The major proposed link is that previously discussed along the Lockbury Drive and Waters Road connection. A connection from this trail is also proposed along the northern edge of TC-5 to Father Hurley Park and the associated open space system.

A hiker/biker trail is also proposed to be provided from the open space system in the area of the MARC Commuter Rail Station (TC- 6), along the stormwater management pond to and across Wisteria Drive, to join the pedestrian pathway on Walter Johnson Drive (Old MD-118) to Germantown Square Park. There also exists the opportunity to incorporate the natural system that remains on the North-lake side of this street.



BIKEWAYS/HIKER/BIKER TRAILS

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

PARKLAND/OPEN SPACE

The framework for parkland and open space is designed to provide needed parkland in the Town Center while tying both parkland and open space into a continuous system. This system also incorporates elements of the vehicular circulation, pedestrian circulation, and hiker/biker systems.

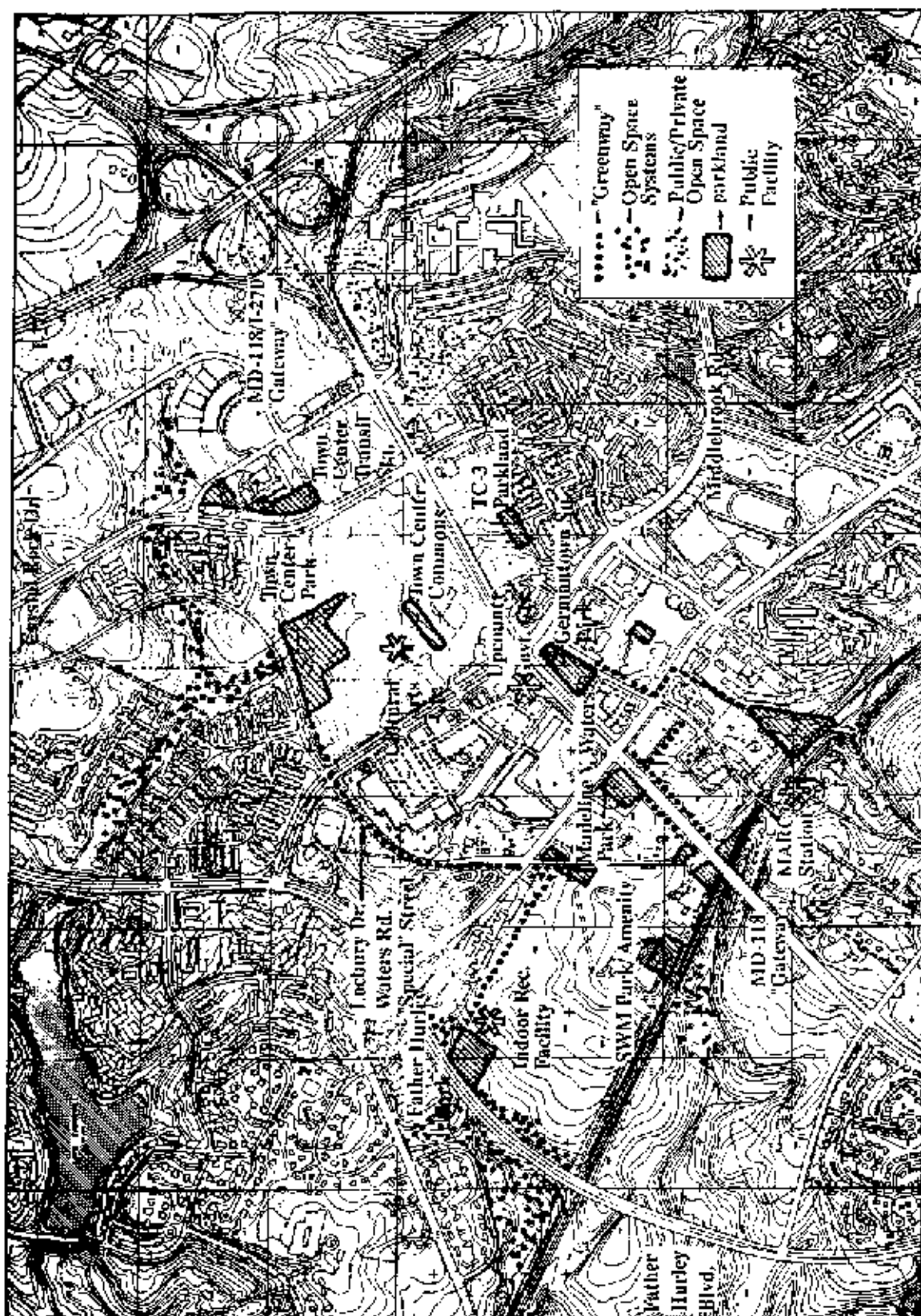
The basis of the Town Center open space system is the linking of the three primary natural open space systems that penetrate the Town Center study area. As previously described, these systems include the Lake Churchill open space system that enters the Town Center Core (TC-1) from the north side of Lacbry Drive; the system that enters the Town Center adjacent to the MARC Commuter Rail Station park-and-ride lot (TC-6), where the stormwater management pond was recently constructed; and the system that enters at Father Hurley Boulevard extended (TC-5).

Parkland is proposed within the Town Center in association with each of these open space systems. Proposed parks include Town Center Commons and Town Center Park within TC-1; parkland at the end of the entry boulevard in TC-3; the existing open space associated with the stormwater management pond adjacent to the MARC Commuter Rail Station (TC-6); a park at the site of the historic Madeline V. Waters House (TC-5); parkland to be developed in association with the improvement of the existing pond in TC-5; a park proposed to be located in the open space system at Father Hurley Boulevard (referred to as Father Hurley Park) on TC-5; and existing Germantown Square Park. Germantown Square Park is currently owned by the Montgomery County Parks Department. Although possibly initially developed and maintained as private open space, Town Center Park, Father Hurley Park, and the Madeline V. Waters Park are recommended to become public in the long term.

The largest parks, all located within or adjacent to the natural open space systems, are proposed as natural in character. Primarily designed for passive activities, all incorporate a component of wetlands. The largest of these is the Town Center Park. Located within the Town Center Core this facility is also proposed to contain a gazebo and amphitheater, and is recommended to include both active and passive activities (see OCTOBERFEST).

Town Center Commons, located in the center of the Town Center Core at the intersection of the Town Center Boulevard and Main Street, is intended to serve many purposes. Symbolizing the Town Center, this park is viewed as an outdoor setting for buildings, such as the Cultural Arts Center, that will front onto it. Town Center Commons is proposed as an urban park and a people place.

An open space amenity is also proposed to be developed on the roof of the parking structure associated with the development of the Corridor Cities Transit Corridor Town Center Station (TC-2). This park is recommended to provide green space and possibly a water feature at the base of proposed residential high-rise air rights development over the station.



PARKLAND/OPEN SPACE

All Town Center parks and related open space systems, including committed private open space, are proposed to be linked by **greenways**. MD-118, with its streetscape of double rows of trees, wide planting strip, and substantial building setbacks, establishes the most prominent greenway through the Town Center.

As previously described, the **special street** development of Lockury Drive provides a connection from Town Center Park and the associated natural open space system to, within, and through TC-5, to both the proposed Father Hurley Park and the parkland associated with MARC Commuter Rail Station (TC-6) and the natural open space systems related to both of these parks. This latter park and the associated stormwater management pond are also proposed to be linked through the woodland to be retained on the Northlake tract and the Walter Johnson Drive (Old MD-118) right-of-way to Germantown Square Park and the Town Center Core beyond.

Within the Core, Town Center Boulevard serves as a greenway tying the MD-118 entrance to Town Center Commons and Main Street and back to the Town Center Park. Crossing MD-118 to the south, this greenway also ties this system to the proposed parkland terminus within TC-3.

CULTURAL FACILITIES/HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Cultural Arts Center that is proposed to be located within the Town Center Core (TC-1) is viewed as one of the primary components of the new **downtown** of Germantown. The success of the Town Center depends, in part, on its strong identity as the cultural and recreational center of Germantown.

The Cultural Arts Center is recommended to include a 300- to 500-seat auditorium with stage, classrooms for the performing visual arts, and display space for visual arts. It will also contain community meeting rooms and related activity areas. This facility is recommended to be a freestanding building and is to be highly imageable and highly visible. The proposed location for this facility is on the Town Center Commons, at the intersection of the Town Center Boulevard entrance road and Main Street. The Center is shown located in the northwest side of the commons facing the open space. This location is highly visible from the entrance boulevard and from Main Street. An alternative location that may be considered in the siting of this facility is on the axis of the Town Center Boulevard.

Other cultural facilities that will exist within the Town Center include the library located in the Upcounty Government Center. Town Center Park is also recommended to incorporate the development of an outdoor amphitheater, a gazebo, and related facilities and amenities.

As previously described, the Town Center includes part of the Germantown Historic District and several historic sites. The former site of the Madeline V. Waters House (TC-5) is proposed to be developed as a park. The trees that once lined the driveway of this house should be incorporated into the development of the adjoining parcel (TC-6).



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

OTHER FACILITIES

As with the circulation and open space design frameworks, the linking of community facilities is an important component of the design framework.

In addition to the existing facilities of police and fire stations, the proposed Post Office and the Upcounty Government Center, and the Cultural Arts Center; several other public facilities are recommended to be included within the Town Center.

As previously mentioned, an amphitheater is proposed for inclusion on Town Center Park. Although the size of this facility is not specified, it should be large enough to accommodate a reasonably sized crowd. Lawn seating is recommended to be incorporated. Other facilities to be provided in this and other Town Center parks include open areas for casual recreation, frisbee and ball throwing, kite flying, facilities for picnicking, and an ample number of park benches.

It is also suggested that each of the Town Center parks incorporate landscape features (gazebo, trellis, sculpture, water features, etc.) to create interest, variety and identity. The Town Center Commons provides the opportunity to incorporate a landmark focal point.

Development of the TC-5 Analysis Area under RMX-2 zoning requires the provision of a major site amenity. Although this requirement could be satisfied with an off-site contribution such as funding of the operational budget of the Cultural Arts Center, the TC-5 amenity preferably will be provided within the TC-5 area. The community facilities framework for the Town Center identifies the possible inclusion of an indoor recreation facility, to be located adjacent to the proposed Father Hurley Park in TC-5. This facility could include an indoor pool and health club. If felt appropriate, it could also be combined with the indoor component of the Germantown Recreation Center. Considerable additional community discussion is needed before the final determination of the TC-5 amenity. If an appropriate facility is not determined by the time the developer of TC-5 is ready to proceed, in addition to the proposed dedication of Father Hurley Park, a donation or commitment to fund a to-be-determined amenity is required.

In addition, there has been discussion about setting aside land for non-profit organizations, including houses of worship. Although not the the appropriate TC-5 amenity, the identification of a location for additional places of worship in the Town Center is encouraged.

OCTOBERFEST

The accommodation of Oktoberfest in the Germantown Town Center is a basic requirement of the planning and design of the Town Center. Currently located on the 59-acre open field of TC-1, Oktoberfest will continue to be held in this location; however, the setting will be one of the **downtown** of Germantown.

Oktoberfest is envisioned to occupy a major portion of the Town Center Park and the Town Center Commons. In addition, Main Street and portions of the Town Center entrance boulevard will be closed to vehicular traffic and incorporated into Oktoberfest, not only to provide additional area but a linking of all areas and events. This area

is estimated to accommodate some 40,000 to 50,000 persons. Additional capacity could also be obtained by the incorporation of one or more of the TC-1 major parking areas with additional parking provided on the adjacent TC-2, TC-3 and Middlebrook Shopping Center lots. After the completion of the Town Center Transit Station (TC-2) an additional 1,000 car parking spaces, in addition to transit service, can be available on this site.