

Abstract

TITLE: Approved and Adopted Damascus Master Plan

AUTHOR: The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

SUBJECT: A land use and zoning plan for the Damascus Planning Area and portion of the Patuxent Planning Area, the Clarksburg Planning Area and the Goshen-Woodfield Planning Area.

DATE OF ADOPTION: June 1982. Amented July 1985.

DATE OF PUBLICATION: November 1985

PLANNING AGENCY: The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20907

SOURCE OF COPIES: The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20907
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, Upper Marlboro, MD 20870

SERIES NUMBER: 1608852506

NUMBER OF PAGES: 139

ABSTRACT: This document contains land use and zoning recommendations for Damascus and vicinity. The Plan continues the rural and agricultural character of the area. Most residential and commercial development is channeled to the town of Damascus but a limited amount of low density residential development is permitted along ridge tops. Three Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) receiving areas are designated.

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN AMENDMENTS

July 1985

- . Deletes A-11A from the Highway Plan Map
- . Re-examines zoning boundaries in the vicinity of the Damascus business area.
- . Clarifies the Plan language concerning a conservation buffer to the rear of Damascus Motors.

Damascus Master Plan

Approved and Adopted June 1982

Amended July 1985

A proposed amendment to the 1966 Master Plan for Damascus, as amended in 1971; the Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space, October 1980; the Patuxent River Watershed Park Master Plan, 1964; the Clarksburg and Vicinity Master Plan, 1968; the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, 1979; the General Plan for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District; and the Master Plan of Highways within Montgomery County, Maryland.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20907

14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20870

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is a bi-county agency created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927. The Commission's geographic authority extends to the great majority of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties: the Maryland-Washington Regional District (M-NCPPC planning jurisdiction) comprises 1,001 square miles, while the Metropolitan District (parks) comprises 919 square miles, in the two Counties.

The Commission has three major functions:

- (1) the preparation, adoption, and from time to time amendment or extension of the General Plan for the physical development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District;
- (2) the acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of a public park system; and
- (3) in Prince George's County only, the operation of the entire County public recreation program.

The Commission operates in each county through a Planning Board appointed by and responsible to the county government. All local plans, recommendations on zoning amendments, administration of subdivision regulations, and general administration of parks are responsibilities of the Planning Boards.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

COMMISSIONERS

Montgomery County Planning Board

Norman L. Christeller, Chairman

Mable Granke, Vice Chair
Judith B. Heimann
Betty Ann Krahnke
Robert E. Brennan

Prince George's County Planning Board

Charles A. Dukes, Jr., Chairman

Edwin H. Brown, Vice Chairman
Ann C. Shoch
John B. Cumberland
Edgar B. Keller, Jr.

DEPARTMENT HEADS

Thomas H. Countee, Jr.
Executive Director

A. Edward Navarre
Secretary-Treasurer

Arthur S. Drea
General Counsel

Richard E. Tustian
Montgomery County Planning Director

John F. Downs, Jr.
Prince George's County Planning Director

Stanton G. Ernst
Montgomery County Parks Director

Hugh B. Robey
Prince George's County Parks and Recreation Director

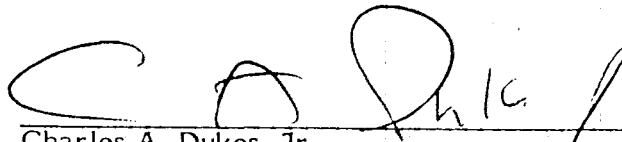
John R. Hoover
Community Relations Officer, Montgomery County

Robert D. Reed
Community Relations Officer, Prince George's County

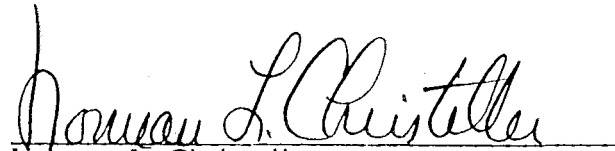
Certificate of Approval and Adoption

This Master Plan, being an amendment to the 1966 Master Plan for Damascus, as amended in 1971; the Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space, October 1980; the Patuxent River Watershed Park Master Plan, 1964; the Clarksburg and Vicinity Master Plan, 1968; the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, 1979; the General Plan for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District; and the Master Plan of Highways within Montgomery County, Maryland, has been adopted by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission by Resolution Number 82-12 on June 9, 1982, after duly advertised Public Hearing held on September 12, 1981, pursuant to the provisions of Article 66D, #7-108, of the Annotated Code of Maryland, 1981 Cumulative Supplement, and has been approved by the Montgomery County Council, sitting as the District Council by Resolution Number 9-1781 on May 18, 1982, after duly advertised Public Hearing held on February 10, 1982.

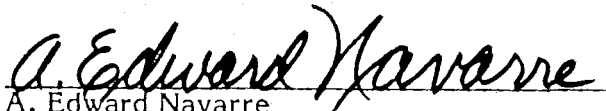
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission



Charles A. Dukes, Jr.
Chairman



Norman L. Christeller
Vice-Chairman



A. Edward Navarre
Secretary-Treasurer

Table of Contents

Page

PLAN CHAPTERS

PLAN HIGHLIGHTS	1
PLAN INTRODUCTION	7
ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS	15
LAND USE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	27
TRANSPORTATION	37
DAMASCUS BUSINESS AREA PLAN	53
RESIDENTIAL LAND USE PLAN	67
AGRICULTURAL AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION	79
COMMUNITY FACILITIES	87
IMPLEMENTATION	95
APPENDICES	111

MAPS AND FIGURES

Damascus Master Plan Study Area	11
Drainage Basins	19
Soils Which Pose Septic System Limitations	21
Soil Limitations (for buildings with basements)	23
1966 Damascus Master Plan	31
Land Use Plan	33
Proposed Traffic Circulation and Rights-of-Way	43
Proposed Business Area Road Improvements	45
Damascus Business Area Development Constraints	55
Damascus Business Area: Generalized Existing and Proposed Zoning	57
Business Area Land Use Plan	61
Transition Areas	71
Ridge Top Development Pattern	73
TDR Receiving Areas	75
Agriculture and Open Space	81
Proposed Agriculture Reserve Area	83
Parkland Map	89
Magruder Branch Stream Valley Park Design Concept	91
Historic Sites	93
Generalized Existing Zoning	100
Zoning and Highway Plan	101
Proposed Sewer and Water Service Areas	103
Bypass Alternatives	117

Artwork and Photograph Descriptions

Cover: 1878 Plat of Main Street in Damascus

Plan Highlights: Steeple of the Damascus United Methodist Church Sanctuary

Plan Introduction: Historical Marker at Corner of Route 124 and Main Street

Environmental Concerns: Bridge over Bennett Creek in Browningsville

Land Use Plan Recommendations: Looking over the Clearspring Manor Subdivision from Clearspring Road

Transportation: Intersection of Route 27 and Main Street

Damascus Business Area Plan: Looking West on Main Street

Agricultural and Open Space Preservation: Farmer Plowing a Field off Moxley Road near Claggettville

Page 86: A Well Preserved Barn at the Intersection of Faith Lane and Ridge Road

Implementation: Band Concert at Damascus Regional Park

Appendices: Saturday Night at the Jimmy Cone in Damascus

Staff Acknowledgements

Staff members with primary responsibility for the Approved and Adopted Damascus Master Plan:

Supervision: Perry Berman, Chief, Community Planning North

Planner-in-Charge: Lyn Coleman, Principal Planner, Community Planning North

Primary Support Staff:

Dave Fugitt, Drafting
Charles Loehr, Environmental Planning
Ted Murphy, Environmental Planning
Fred Pavay, Transportation Planning
Pat Plunkett, Community Relations
Tanya Schmieler, Parks Planning
Jennifer Stein, Community Planning North

Staff members who contributed special studies or data:

Nazir Baig, Environmental Planning
Helen Burns, Community Planning North
John Carter, Urban Design
Gene Elliott, Parks Planning
Robert Hnat, Special Projects
Nam Q. Hoang, Drafting
Marsha Kadesch, Community Planning North
George Marenka, Drafting
Malcolm Shaneman, Research
Marie Steingrebe, Word Processing
Jim Sumler, Drafting
Florence Taylor, Word Processing

Design and Artwork:

Dave Fugitt
Jennifer Stein

Photographs taken by:

Vicky Kline-Atwood
Jennifer Stein

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN AMENDMENTS

July, 1985 -

- . Deletes A-11A from the Highway Plan Map
- . Re-examines zoning boundaries in the vicinity of the Damascus business area.
- . Clarifies the Plan language concerning a conservation buffer to the rear of Damascus Motors

February, 1993 -

- . Recommends that no bypass for MD27 be built and that it remains a two-lane road for the life of this master plan.
- . Recommends alternate alignment A for the intersection of A-12 & MD27
- . Recommends that Damascus Blvd. be reinstated as a rural business street with a 40' right-of-way
- . Recommends the Cramer Property for I-1 zoning
- . Recommends that the Heritage Builders Property be included in the Sewer Service Envelope
- . Recommends the the King Farm not be designated as a TDR receiving area
- . Recommends that a corrective Sectional Map Amendment be done to rectify zoning map errors on the Burdette Property and others.

PLAN INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A "MASTER PLAN"?

A Master Plan is a comprehensive and detailed statement about how and where a community should develop. The Montgomery County Planning Board¹ and the Montgomery County Council rely heavily on a community's Master Plan when making decisions regarding:

- zoning;
- road construction;
- park development;
- the extension of public sewer and water;
- community improvement projects; and
- public transportation (including fringe parking lots).

Because a Master Plan is so very important to the future of a community, developing a Plan takes time and involves drafts and meetings with Planning Board staff, the Planning Board itself and the County Council. This Master Plan is the culmination of the process shown in Table 1, page 12.

This Plan amends the 1966 Damascus Master Plan (see 1966 Damascus Master Plan Map). In addition to the normal procedure of reviewing master plans every 10 to 15 years, there are several distinct reasons for amending the 1966 Plan. During a town meeting of the Damascus Homeowners Association in 1977, several points were made by residents supporting revision of the Plan:²

- Population and housing growth rates have been slower than anticipated in 1966;

¹ The Montgomery County Planning Board consists of five County residents appointed by the County Council. The chairman is full-time but the four other members are part-time.

² "Damascus Survey 1977," a project of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, George Washington University, for Damascus Homeowners Association, Damascus, Maryland.

- Much of the land proposed for a high density in Damascus lies in the 50-year floodplain, is not well-drained and is on steep slopes;
- Much of the residential land zoned for higher density is not scheduled for sewer service within 10 years;
- The Route 27 by-pass is planned through highest density residential area to serve an "employment center" which is unlikely to be developed;
- The Plan includes only the immediate area around Damascus. Surrounding areas affected by Damascus growth should be studied.

These points are explored in more detail in the Plan Recommendations chapter.

Although this Plan amends the 1966 Plan recommendations, many of the 1966 Plan concepts and proposals are continued because they are still valid today. They will continue to guide the Plan process in the 1980's just as they have since 1966.

WHAT AREA IS COVERED BY THIS PLAN?

The Montgomery County Planning Board divides the county into "planning areas" for study purposes. Damascus forms Planning Area (P.A.) 11, which is the main focus of this Plan (see Master Plan Study Area Map).

Other planning areas are also part of this Master Plan study. The land use in these outlying areas is mostly agriculture. These areas are included in the Master Plan Study Area primarily to allow a comprehensive transportation study of upper Montgomery County and to study more closely rural communities like Lewisdale, Purdum and Browningsville.

HOW DOES THIS PLAN RELATE TO THE COUNTY GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

This Plan amends the Montgomery County General Plan (The General Plan for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District and the Master Plan of Highways). The General Plan provides policy guidance at a broad County-wide level for future patterns of development. The General Development Plan designates Damascus a rural community planned to remain a "small and simple" single-family, low density town. Protecting rural communities from outward urban expansion is a stated plan objective.

TABLE I
DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN
PLANNING PROCESS

ISSUES AND ALTERNATIVES
REPORT

January 1981

Community Workshops: January/February 1981

STAFF DRAFT
DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

June 1981

Open House: June 1981

Planning Board Community Worksessions: June/July 1981

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

August 1981

Public Hearing: September 1981

Planning Board Worksessions: October 1981

FINAL DRAFT
DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

December 1981

County Council Public Hearing: February 1982

County Council Worksessions: March 1982

APPROVED AND ADOPTED
DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

June 1982

Towards this end, the General Development Plan proposes defined edges to corridor cities like Clarksburg and Germantown and recommends low density, rural zoning to separate rural towns from suburban development.

These General Development Plan policies have guided the preparation of the Damascus Master Plan.

HOW WILL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS BE IMPLEMENTED?

A master plan recommends the type and density of land use and recommends a general zoning plan. The Plan's zoning recommendations will be implemented by the County Council through the adoption of what is known as a "Sectional Map Amendment." A Sectional Map Amendment describes all the zoning changes necessary to implement a newly adopted master plan. Once the Sectional Map Amendment is approved, the zoning changes proposed by the Damascus Master Plan will be implemented.

A Sectional Map Amendment for the area covered by the Damascus Master Plan was filed in May 1982 and adopted by the County Council after a Public Hearing and worksessions in late summer 1982.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

This chapter describes environmental features in the Master Plan area and proposes general guidelines for future development. More detailed information about environmental resources in Damascus is contained in the Environmental Technical Appendix. This Appendix may be reviewed at the Damascus Library or at Park and Planning office in Silver Spring.

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

The Damascus and Vicinity Master Plan Area includes some of the more rugged terrain found in upper Montgomery County. The center of Damascus is located along ridges which form the high divide separating three major drainage basins. Tributaries of the Patuxent River flow eastward from near the business area; those of the Seneca Creek (Great Seneca Creek and Magruder Branch) drain to the south; and those of the Monocacy River (Bennett Creek, Little Bennett Creek and Fahrney Branch) drain to the west and northwest. The highest point in Montgomery County (846 feet) is on the ridge just east of the business area.

The numerous streams draining this region have cut deeply into the uplands, producing narrow steep-sided valleys and, through erosion, the more gently rolling hilltops. Most of the land that is suitable for development is on this high ground. Since the majority of the study area is rural, these areas primarily are utilized for farming and are best suited to agricultural pursuits. Much of the rural area includes land designated under the Agricultural Preservation Plan as part of the Agricultural Reserve which is zoned for agriculture and open space uses and may only be developed at a density of one dwelling unit per 25 acres.

Sensitive areas for development throughout most of the study area relate to soils, slopes, shallow depths to bedrock, high water table, numerous drainage channels and perennial streams, extensive woodland areas and prime agricultural lands. Ecologically sensitive headwaters, soil limitations for septic systems and building construction, and limited community sewer and water service areas are three important considerations in the Damascus area.

The protection and preservation of water quality and quantity is an important concern of land use proposals for Damascus. Sensitive headwaters draining away from the town center include Class III (natural trout reproduction) waters and tributaries of the

Patuxent River located above the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) water supply reservoirs. Also, most of the study area encompasses a sole source aquifer (drinking water supply confined to groundwater stored in a single water-bearing zone). Thus, it is imperative that both the surface water and groundwater be protected from contamination and depletion.

Maps (see pages 21 and 23) are included which show the general suitability of soils in Damascus for development. Much of the study area contains soils which are generally poor for septic systems or which pose problems for the excavation of basements.

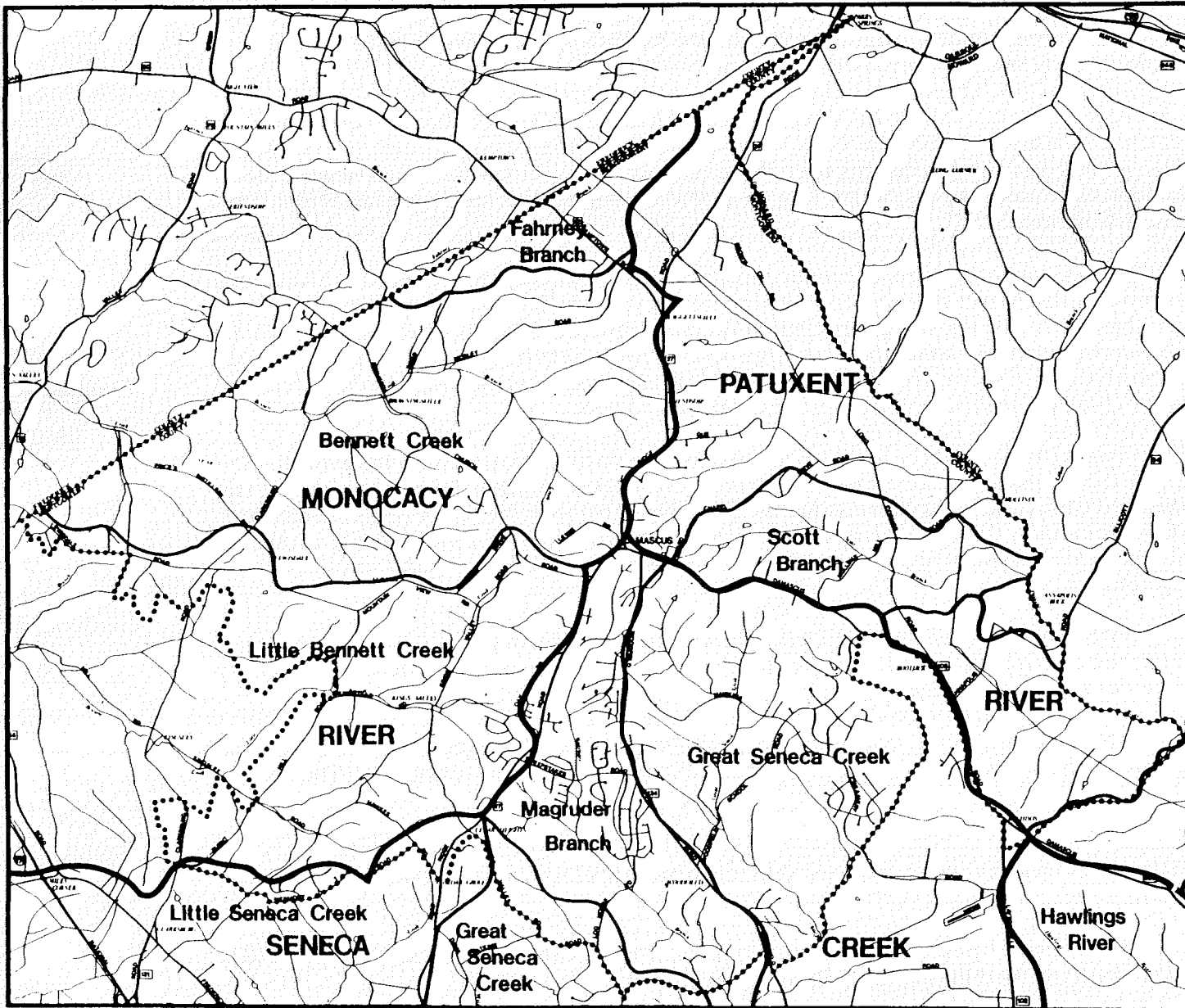
DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The Drainage Basin Map, page 19, identifies the boundaries of the major drainage basins and their sub-basins within the Damascus Master Plan Area.

The Magruder is the most fully developed basin. Much of Magruder Branch stream valley is subdivided and most of the remaining sewage treatment plant (STP) capacity is committed to the proposed developments. Subdivision activity is occurring although it is evident that a fairly high percentage of the land is poorly suited for development. Developers are constrained by steep slopes, erodible soils, floodplains and access. The headwaters reach of Magruder Branch, above the Sewage Treatment Plant at Welsh Road and extending to its terminus within the commercially zoned section of town center, is a highly sensitive area.

All development in the headwaters should be carefully controlled to protect the stream valley and to preserve water quality. By acquiring the floodplains and adjacent steep slopes of this stream valley for parkland, there would be opportunities for protecting and preserving the stream in more or less its natural condition. It is recommended that all floodplain areas above Welsh Road be acquired by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission or preserved as private conservation areas. Developers of land along and adjacent to the stream and its tributary drainage-ways, should be encouraged to observe a setback of up to 200 feet from the stream bank. Exact delineation of the boundaries would be determined at time of subdivision or site plan review. Existing regulations require all developers of residential subdivisions and commercial, industrial or institutional sites to manage stormwater runoff on-site, including safe conveyance of flows to an acceptable outfall.

Because of the importance and sensitivity of the streams in the area, this plan discourages the granting of stormwater management waivers unless facilities are programmed and synchronized with development. In the past there have been instances



DRAINAGE BASINS

- MAJOR DRAINAGE BASIN LINES
- SUB DRAINAGE BASIN LINE

Approved and Adopted: June 1962

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



where such lack of synchronization has adversely impacted the stream. This plan further recommends a study by a broad based committee which should focus on the granting of waivers; programming and construction of central facilities; the maintenance of stream valleys where there are stormwater management facilities; and other related issues. For further discussion, see the Stormwater Management section.

Average water quality in the Magruder Branch is "permissible" according to Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection studies. A slight improving trend has been observed over the past four years, but water quality still seems to be under continuing stress, according to a draft study by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.²

To help ensure continued improvements of water quality in the Magruder basin, this Plan recommends on-site stormwater management facilities for new subdivisions. Waivers of such facilities should be permitted only if a centralized, off-site facility can be provided and funded. A small-scale storage site or sites requiring a total storage volume of approximately 58-acre feet in the upper Magruder basin would be needed to control post-development runoff from the 2-year frequency storm.

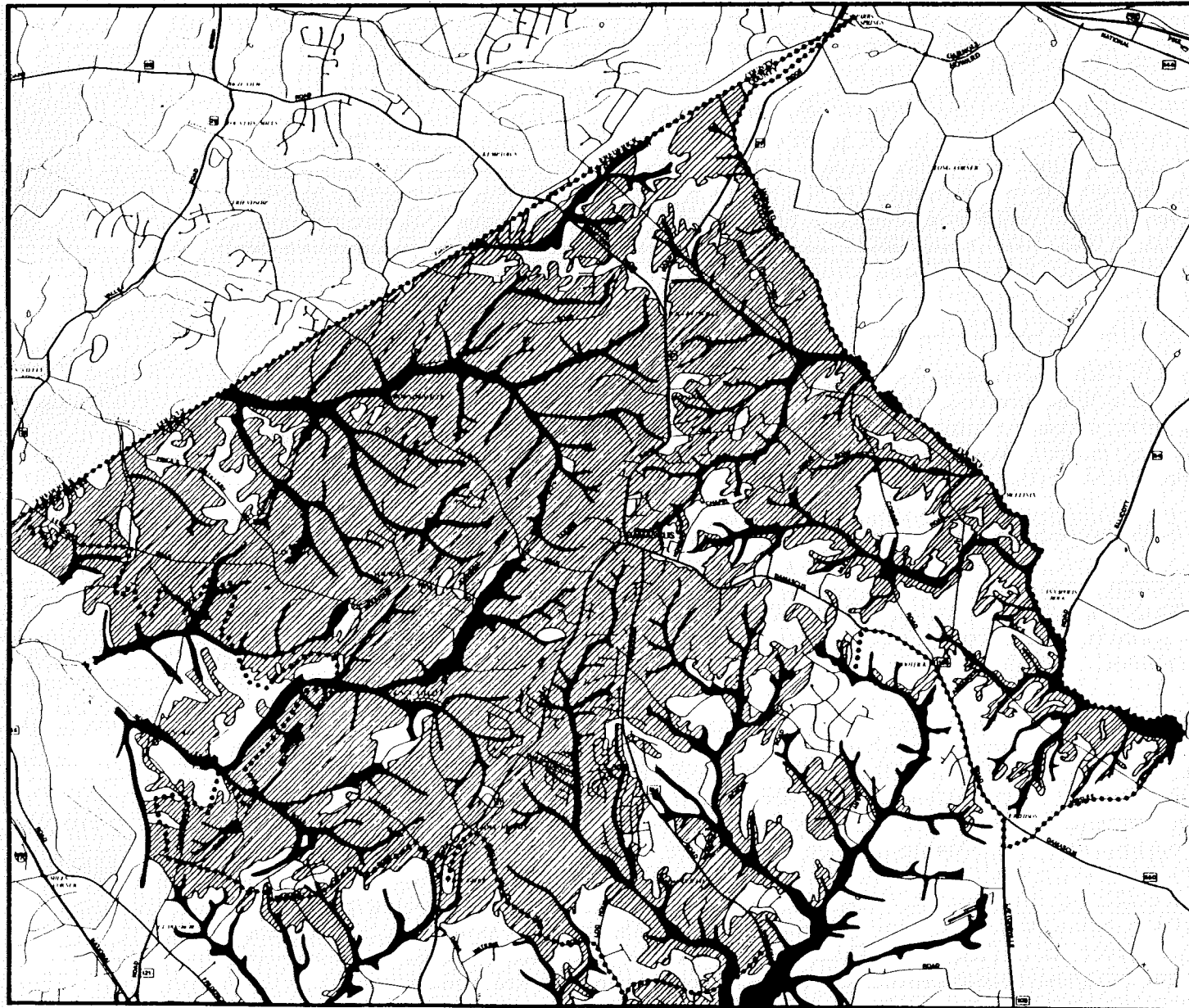
The Patuxent and Little Bennett tributaries are natural trout (Class III) waters. The water quality of these streams must be strictly controlled to preserve the trout's aquatic environment. Protection of these valuable fisheries must be achieved through stormwater detention, sediment control and water quality enforcement. Open space uses, conservation areas and low-density residential development are preferred land uses in these drainage basins.

Bennett Creek is experiencing high levels of fecal coliform (animal and human waste bacteria); the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has recommended a sanitary survey to determine the causes.




A high coliform count may indicate problems with existing septic systems and/or contributions from farming (a sewage grinder-pump system is under construction to

¹ The water quality index includes four classes: excellent, good, permissible, poor or bad.

² "Draft Interim Report on the Seneca Creek Watershed Study," May 1981, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.



SOILS WHICH POSE SEPTIC SYSTEM LIMITATIONS

-  SOILS GENERALLY GOOD FOR SEPTIC SYSTEMS
-  SOILS GENERALLY POOR FOR SEPTIC SYSTEMS
-  FLOODPLAIN AREAS

Approved and Adopted: June 1982

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



relieve septic failures along Lewis Drive and Locust Drive). Because of soil limitations for septic systems, large lots are recommended. In general, development off the ridges is not feasible, owing to steep slopes and soils which contribute to septic system failures and thereby to health hazards.

Soil types which are suitable for residential development using septic fields are found in the Great Seneca Creek basin south of Hawkins Creamery Road. This area has gently sloping and moderately eroded silt loam soils. Water quality in this basin is "permissible." Of all the basins in the study area, the Great Seneca appears the most suitable for rural residential densities (2 acre lots) with public water. Industrial uses as proposed in the 1966 Plan should not be recommended as they are inconsistent with watershed management and protection.

Subdivision Review Criteria

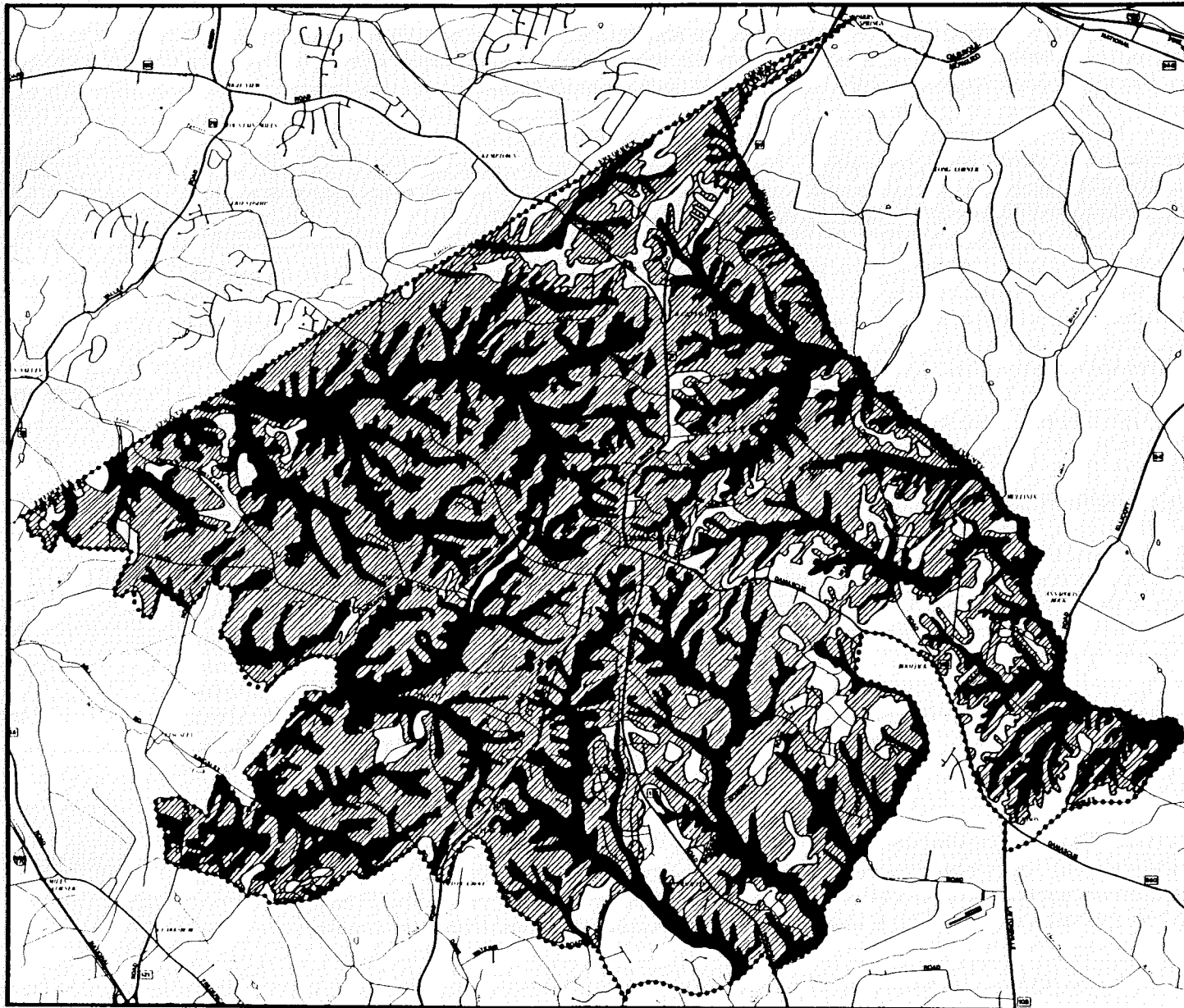
This Plan endorses and is complementary to the recommendations contained within M-NCPPC's "Functional Master Plan for Conservation and Management in Seneca Creek and Muddy Branch Basins." The Functional Master Plan presents recommendations concerning water quantity and water quality, erosion and sedimentation and general environmental quality.

Slope protection will be a key concern in the subdivision review process.




Primary concerns relate to erosion. Increases in erosion, due to extensive grading and changes in impervious area, will produce more sediment transported by runoff. This could produce detrimental effects on surface water quality and aquatic systems. No development, land disturbance or stripping will be permitted on slopes in excess of 25 percent.

Similarly, approval should not be given to a subdivision where paved surfaces, structures or septic fields are likely to be located on slopes in the range of 15-25 percent, and where soils are classified as severely eroded. Such areas should be included in the open space required by the zoning. Where such open space is not available, lots should be designed to provide a buildable area which does not intrude on the 15-25 percent slopes.

Specific environmental criteria which should be used in reviewing preliminary subdivision plans is included in the Environmental Technical Appendix (available under separate cover at M-NCPPC). These criteria relate to slopes, floodplains, stormwater management, groundwater protection, woodland protection and noise levels.



SOIL LIMITATIONS
(for buildings with basements)

-  SLIGHT
-  MODERATE
-  SEVERE

Approved and Adopted: June 1982

DAMASCUS
MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



Stormwater Management

The entire Damascus Planning Area is located within the sensitive headwaters of Patuxent, Bennett, Little Bennett and Seneca watersheds. Preliminary analysis suggest that without proper stormwater management and erosion/sediment control measures the proposed land uses may adversely impact the natural stream systems. The Seneca and Muddy Branch Functional Plan, Rock Creek Functional Master Plan and the Council of Governments land use guidelines identify preventive measures (Best Management Practices) to prevent the degradation of water resources. These techniques are also applicable to the Damascus Planning Area.

Although it is generally desirable to control stormwater by preventive measures (land use, subdivision, zoning and site planning), it may not be possible to entirely rely on such measures without severely curtailing the provision of more housing, which has been identified as a County goal. To avoid such curtailment, appropriate stormwater management protective measures such as retention/detention ponds would be necessary.

The Seneca and Muddy Branch Functional Master Plan has identified a need for approximately 60 acre-feet of storage capacity to control the 2-year flood in the Magruder Branch Basin. No storage capacity numbers are available for the Bennett and the Patuxent watersheds because no basin-wide analyses have been done for these basins.

In the Magruder Branch sub-watershed, a central stormwater management facility should be programmed in the Capital Improvements Program Budget for design and construction in the general vicinity as indicated on the Proposed Land Use Plan. This facility will provide the major portion of channel protection for the downstream reach of the main stem of Magruder Branch within the Planning Area. This structure should provide stormwater management more economically and in a more environmentally satisfactory manner than can be provided on-site on some of the development sites located on the steeper slopes of this narrow valley. In some cases, stormwater management waivers have been granted by the Montgomery Soil Conservation District due to severe on-site constraints.

This Plan recommends that the County DEP further investigate the technical feasibility and cost-effectiveness of other sites shown on the Land Use Plan, and recommends appropriate projects in the Capital Improvements Program. These facilities could be funded entirely by the developers or with contributions from the County.

On-site stormwater management is recommended for areas not controlled by the programmed centralized facilities, on a case-by-case basis. Waivers should be discouraged unless the facility is programmed and synchronized with development.

The most potentially erodible channel reach of the Magruder Branch is in the proposed parkland. Techniques such as instream gabion weir, stilling basins and rip rap should be considered on selective locations to help reduce erosion.

For smaller tributary streams not controlled by centralized facilities, a conservation easement up to 200 feet from the bank is recommended. Exact delineation of the boundaries would be determined at time of subdivision.

LAND USE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERVIEW

When asked what they liked most about living in Damascus, people attending the Issues and Alternatives Forum listed "rural environment," "sense of community" and "small town flavor" as the factors which make Damascus a special place to live. Residents are very proud of Damascus, its history as a market center, and the school system. Community support for some future additional growth reflects strong, local pride. Damascus is unique in other ways: the community is served by an all-volunteer fire company, another source of community pride.

The pattern of development in Damascus has been shaped by natural features. The Damascus business district is situated at the ridge line intersection of three major watersheds. Residential development has occurred linearly along the ridge roads leading to the business district. The valleys between the ridges pose many constraints to building and are largely undeveloped (the major exception being the Magruder Basin where public water and sewer has overcome some of the natural limitations).

Because of its distance from major employment centers, Damascus has not experienced growth pressures, as have communities such as Olney. Growth has occurred as envisioned by the 1969 County General Development Plan: slow but steady. An average housing completion rate of 60-65 homes per year (1971-1980) has allowed Damascus to absorb new growth without overburdening community facilities and without altering Damascus' stable community structure (many of the people who attended recent community forums helped write the 1966 Plan).

During the community forums, residents stated that Damascus differs in some respects from "down county" areas. Demographic and housing data, as well as field observation, support these feelings. In terms of housing, the prices of homes in Damascus generally run below the County average. A very high percentage of the work force is employed in the County (83%); most people who work outside the County are employed in Howard County or Frederick County rather than in urban areas inside the Beltway. The "up-county" orientation of many Damascus residents is understandable given their place of employment and the traveling distance to the Beltway (until only a few years ago, a phone call to Silver Spring was long distance).

The 1966 Damascus Master Plan envisioned Damascus as the "focal point for the upper county" and "provided for the expansion of the business district" to enable Damascus to compete with other centers. The Plan recognized Damascus was growing at a slower

rate than the County as a whole, noting "this is to be expected of any rural area out of the direct path of the forces of suburbanization." However, the Plan continues, "if water and sewer are extended to Damascus it would not be unreasonable to expect a population of around 7,000 persons by 1980 and about 14,000 by the year 2000." A residential land use pattern, reflecting the possible extension of public sewer, was proposed.

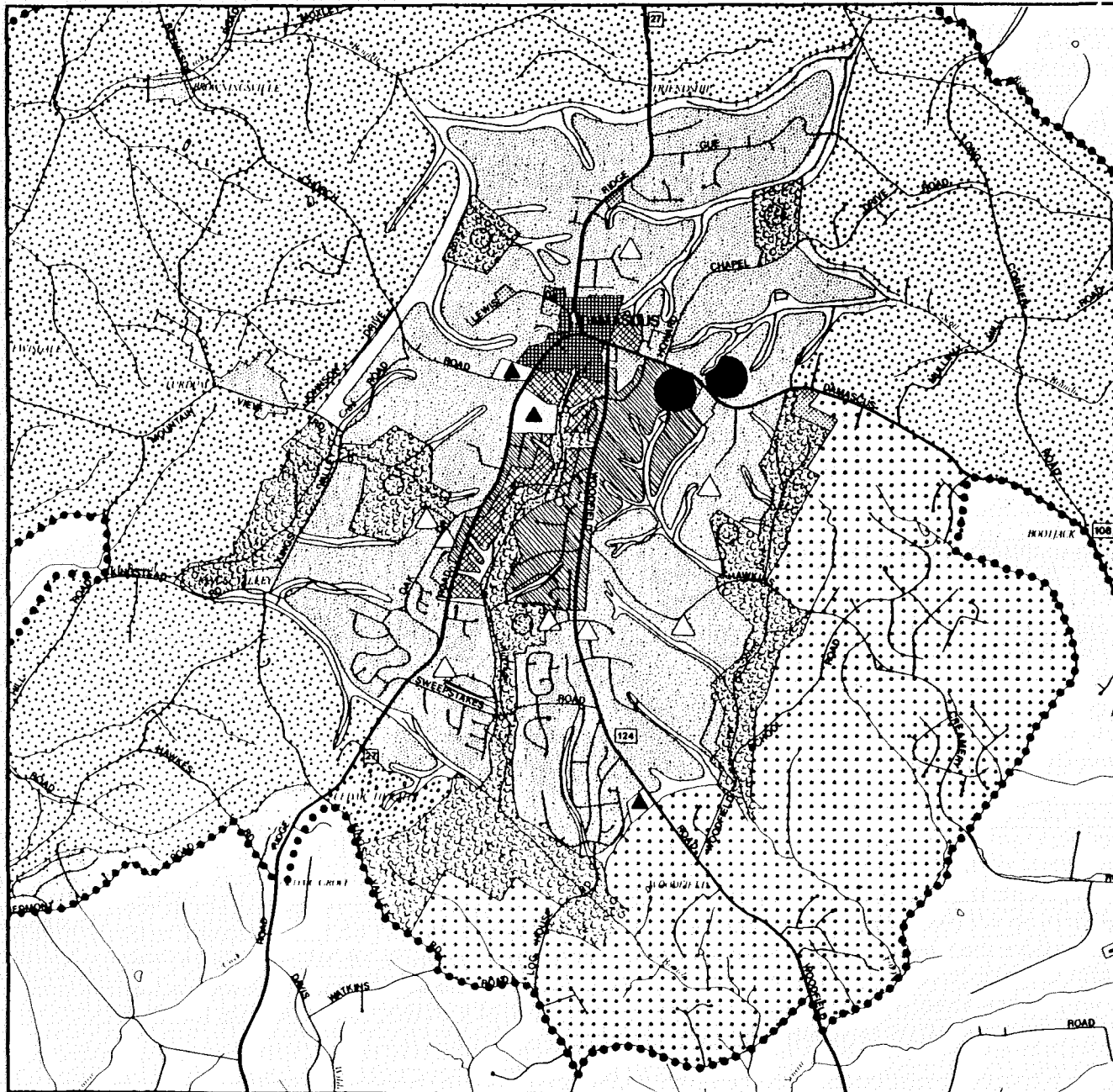
To support and encourage a population of 14,000 people, the 1966 Plan for Damascus proposed "an architecturally unified, clean and attractive" commercial center (58-92 acres). The 1966 Plan further recommended that residential development "of relatively high density," comprised of apartments and townhouses, serve as a transition between the business district and single-family residential areas to the south. With the exception of a small townhouse complex immediately east of the business district, the rest of Damascus was proposed to be developed at half-acre lot densities.

WHY DOES THE SCALE AND GROWTH ENVISIONED BY THE 1966 PLAN NEED TO BE RE-EXAMINED?















The passage of time and changing population and development trends pointed to the need to re-examine the 1966 Plan. The 1966 Plan goal to make Damascus the "focal point of the upper county" is still desirable, for example. However, the pace and extent of development planned for Damascus must be re-evaluated in light of changing market conditions, the limited availability of public facilities and generally slower population growth. These reasons, as well as others, are discussed below.

Market Demand and Growth Forecasts: The development potential assumed in the 1966 Plan has not been realized. The pace of growth in Damascus has been steady but gradual over the past several years, averaging about 60 units per year. Other County areas close to job centers have grown at faster rates. Growth forecasts project this 10-year trend to continue. Rather than 14,000 people in the year 2000, only 5,500 to 7,200 residents are expected in Damascus (P.A. 11) by year 2000 (see Table 2).

Because of nearby competing population centers which are closer to major transportation corridors, employment centers and, ultimately METRO, Damascus is not expected to attract a significant share of future County residential development, no matter what this Plan may ultimately recommend. Nor should it; a significant growth rate would be inconsistent with Damascus' rural character and environmental constraints.



1966 DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

-  AGRICULTURE RESERVE
-  RURAL (1 HOUSE/5 ACRES)
-  RURAL RESIDENTIAL (1 HOUSE/2 ACRES)
-  RESIDENTIAL (2 HOUSES/1 ACRE)
-  MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (3-4 HOUSES/1 ACRE)
-  HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (12-14 HOUSES/1 ACRE)
-  COMMERCIAL
-  LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
-  EMPLOYMENT CENTERS
-  INSTITUTIONAL
-  PARKLAND & RECREATION CENTER
-  PRIVATE OPEN SPACE
-  EXISTING SCHOOLS
-  PROPOSED SCHOOLS

NOTE: Agriculture Reserve Areas are part of the 1980 Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture & Rural Open Space.

Approved and Adopted: June 1982

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



TABLE 2
GROWTH FORECASTS FOR DAMASCUS

	1980		1990		2000	
	Popu- lation	House- holds	Popu- lation	House- holds	Popu- lation	House- holds
DAMASCUS (P.A. 11)						
Low	4,600	1,330	4,900	1,690	5,500	1,930
Intermediate	4,600	1,330	5,300	1,770	6,100	2,010
High	4,600	1,330	5,900	2,200	7,200	2,620
DAMASCUS PLAN STUDY AREA (Including P.A. 11)						
Low	8,500	2,700	9,700	3,450	11,200	4,250
Intermediate	8,500	2,700	10,500	3,750	12,400	4,700
High	8,500	2,700	11,100	3,950	13,450	5,100

SOURCE: MCPB, Long Range Forecast: People, Jobs & Housing, 1979.

Housing: The 1966 Plan recommends many apartment and higher density townhouse areas of development. This character is generally not within the current or future Damascus housing market or these areas are situated on land which is so difficult to develop that the construction for each unit would make the project more costly than the market would accept. Actual unit yields have been generally much lower than the maximum the zoning has permitted.

Public Facilities: The scale and growth envisioned for Damascus by the 1966 Plan was predicated on extensive public sewer and water service. One basin is sewered (Magruder) but the other basin (Great Seneca) proposed for 2-4 units per acre is not. Given the cost that would be associated with such a program, it is unlikely the Great Seneca will be served. Therefore, land use recommendations should be re-evaluated with the realization that public sewer extensions will not occur soon, if at all. Similarly, the State and County have reduced the funds available for road construction. This limitation and other county road projects make it very unlikely for any major road building for this area. This fact also affects school and park planning.

Environmental Features: Damascus is characterized by ecologically sensitive headwaters, shallow depths to bedrock, a high water table and narrow steep-sided valleys. Land that is suitable for development is located on the high ground or ridges. Half-acre zoning blankets areas which, without public sewer or water, pose severe constraints to building construction. The scale and growth of Damascus proposed in the Master Plan must be re-evaluated in light of environmental constraints. These were recognized by the 1966 Plan but the Plan failed to assess fully the methods and practicability of overcoming these factors. Overbuilding at the headwaters of a stream creates problems throughout the entire valley. Engineering solutions have either not been undertaken or are expensive.

Agricultural Preservation: The 1966 Master Plan was prepared before farmland preservation was raised as a County-wide concern. Now that it is (as will be discussed in the Agricultural Preservation chapter), the issue of preserving agricultural land in Damascus for farming rather than for future residential development must be explored.

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES TO THE 1966 PLAN?

A revised Land Use Plan proposal has been prepared (see map) which addresses the above issues. The Plan proposal will be discussed in detail in subsequent chapters but, in general, the Plan is based on the following assumptions:

- The Plan assumes and encourages the same pace of development evident in Damascus for the past 10 years (see Table 2). This pace (about 60 houses per year average) reflects full development of the sewer Magruder Basin and would permit limited residential expansion along the major ridge roads.
- The Plan recognizes Damascus as the commercial center of the upper county as proposed in the 1966 Plan and encourages the location of agricultural services (feed and seed sales, farm implement dealerships, etc.,) in the business area to support farming operations.
- The Plan is consistent with County growth policies which channel new jobs and housing to the I-270 Corridor and other areas which are located close to job locations.
- The Plan channels higher residential densities to sewer and/or water service areas.

- The Plan reduces densities where soil limitations contribute to septic system failures and thereby to health hazards.
- The Plan recognizes the importance of farming to the character of Damascus.
- The Plan reflects the probability that funds for major public improvements (particularly sewage treatment and major highway projects) will be very limited in the next 10, and probably even 20, years.

The proposed Land Use Plan continues Damascus' existing development pattern. Within the Magruder Basin, where public sewer and water is available, higher residential densities and commercial development are proposed. The existing development pattern outside the sewer service area consists of homes along ridge lines and farms in the valleys. This form of development is continued and encouraged.

TRANSPORTATION

The proposed Transportation Plan (see fold-out map) generally supports the road network proposed in the 1966 Plan. However, this Plan does eliminate a major by-pass of the business area. The Plan recommends instead a series of improvements to roads in the business area itself. Table 3 gives a description of all proposed highways and roadways (see page 38). No new roadways are proposed in outlying areas proposed for Agricultural Reserve. A brief description of bikeways and pathways is also included in this chapter.

RELIEVING TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN THE BUSINESS DISTRICT

The major transportation issue in Damascus stems from existing and future regional through traffic. Commuters from Howard County (Mt. Airy), Carroll and Frederick Counties travel Route 27 to employment centers along the I-270 Corridor. When coupled with traffic generated by the business center itself, the average daily traffic (ADT) on Route 27 north of Main Street reaches 13,000 vehicles per day (derived from a 1980 count). The level of service at Main Street and Ridge Road during the P.M. peak hour is E, which represents an unacceptable degree of congestion, as described on Table 4.

Route 124 (Woodfield Road), which carries traffic between Damascus and Woodfield, Washington Grove, Gaithersburg and Rockville, has experienced a 22 percent increase in average daily traffic (ADT) from 1977 to 1980. There has been a corresponding increase of 33 percent in northbound traffic during the P.M. peak hour. This is probably due in part to the opening of Shady Grove Road from Route 355 to Route 115. This road provides a new and more convenient path from South Gaithersburg to and beyond Damascus. Traffic volumes are expected to increase even more when the Metro station at Shady Grove opens, now scheduled to be operational in late 1983.

TABLE 3

PROPOSED HIGHWAYS AND ROADWAYS
(See Zoning and Highway Fold-Out Map)

Map No.	Route No. and/or Name	Limits	Right-of-Way	Recommended Lanes of Paving*	Implementation
<u>MAJOR HIGHWAYS</u>					
M-27	Md. 27 (Ridge Road)	Southern boundary of P.A. 11 to A-11A	120'	4-6 lane divided highway	State Highway Administration (S.H.A.)
M-60	Md. 108 (Damascus Rd.)	From 2800' east of Woodfield Rd. (Md. 124) to boundary of P.A. 11	120'	2 lanes	S.H.A.
<u>ARTERIAL ROADS</u>					
A-11	Md. 80 (Kempton Rd.) and Md. 27 (Ridge Rd.)	Frederick County Line to Ridge Rd. (Md. 27) thence from Md. 80 to 2800' south of northern intersection with Oak Drive (excluding business district).	80'	2 lanes	S.H.A.
A-12	Md. 124 (Woodfield Rd.) plus northern extension (A-5 on 1966 Plan)	From southern boundary of Planning Area 11 to Md. 108 (Main Street) thence to an intersection with Ridge Road.	80'	2-5 lanes	S.H. A. and private developers.
A-13	Md. 650 (Damascus Rd.)	From Etchison southeast to boundary of P.A. 11	80'	2 lanes	Existing paving.
A-10	Bethesda Church Rd.	From Clarksburg Rd. to Woodfield Rd. (Md. 124)	80'	2 lanes	Existing paving.
A-25	Valley Park Drive	From Ridge Rd. (Md. 27) to Woodfield Rd. (Md. 124)	80-120'	2 lanes	Montgomery County, private developers.
A-27	Clarksburg-Lewisdale-Gladhill Rd.	From southern boundary of P.A. 11 to Frederick County line.	80'	2 lanes	Existing paving.
A-9	Burnt Hill-Kingstead Rd.	From Clarksburg Rd. to Ridge Rd. (Md. 27)	80'	2 lanes	Existing paving.
A-26	Md. 108 (Main Street)	From Woodfield Rd. (Md. 124) to 2800' east	80'	2 lanes	Existing paving.

TABLE 3 (Cont'd.)

Map No.	Route No. and/or Name	Limits	Right-of-Way	Recommended Lanes of Paving*	Implementation
BUSINESS					
B-1	Md. 108 (Main Street)	From Woodfield Rd. (Md. 124) to Ridge Rd. (Md. 27)	80'	3 lanes	S.H.A. and private developers.
B-2	Damascus Blvd.	From Ridge Rd. (Md. 27) to 600'+ east	80'	4 lanes	Existing paving.
B-4	Lewis Drive	From Ridge Rd. to end of commercial zone	80'	2 lanes exist	Montgomery County.
B-5	Md. 27 (Ridge Rd.)	From Main Street (Md. 108) to end of commercial zone	80'	See Map	S.H.A. and private developers.
B-6	Ridge-Lewis Connector	From Ridge Rd. to Lewis Drive	80'	See Map	S.H.A.
PRIMARY (Primary roads propose only generalized locations; final alignment will be determined at time of subdivision)					
P-1	Gue Rd.	From Ridge Rd. to Long Corner Rd.	70'	2-3 lanes	Existing paving, except for P-2, P-5 and P-9. Primary roads are usually the responsibility of private developers.
P-3	Kings Valley Rd.	From Ridge Rd. (Md. 27) to Bethesda Church Rd.	70'	2-3 lanes	
P-4	Sweepstakes Rd.	From Ridge Rd. (Md. 27) to Woodfield Rd. (Md. 124)	70'	2-3 lanes	
P-5	New road	From Woodfield Rd. (Md. 124) to Hawkins Creamery Rd.	70'	2-3 lanes	
P-6	Hawkins Creamery Rd.	From Woodfield Rd. to Boundary of Planning Area 11	70'	2-3 lanes	
P-7	Burdette Rd. (Piedmont Rd.)	From Clarksburg Rd. to Ridge Rd. (Md. 27)	70'	2-3 lanes	
P-8	Moyer Rd.	From Woodfield Rd. (MD 124) to M-NCPPC property	70'	2-3 lanes	

* The actual number of lanes will be determined prior to construction by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation or the Maryland State Highway Administration, as appropriate. An 80' R.O.W. can accommodate a 5-lane undivided roadway.

TABLE 4

HOW LEVEL OF SERVICE IS DETERMINED

"Level of service" is a traffic engineering term which describes conditions on a segment of roadway. There are six levels, ranging from free flowing conditions to very heavy traffic, extremely unstable flows, and long delays. "Levels of service" are identified alphabetically. The terms are described as follows:

<u>Level of Service</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>
"A"	Free unobstructed flow, no delays. All traffic signal phases sufficient in duration to clear all approaching vehicles.
"B"	Conditions of stable flow, very little delay. A few signal phases are unable to handle all approaching vehicles.
"C"	Conditions of stable flow, delays are low to moderate, full use of peak direction signal phase(s) is experienced.
"D"	Conditions approaching unstable flow, delays are moderate to heavy. In a significant number of signal phases, during short durations of the peak traffic period, traffic will not clear a signalized intersection.
"E"	Conditions of unstable flow, delays are significant, signal phase timing is generally insufficient. Congestion exists for extended duration throughout the peak period.
"F"	Very long delays. Jammed traffic conditions.

HOW CAN CONGESTION IN THE DAMASCUS BUSINESS AREA, DUE LARGELY TO THROUGH TRAFFIC, BE RELIEVED?

The 1966 Damascus Master Plan proposes an ultimate solution: a by-pass of the business area to the east. The 1980 State Highway 20-Year Needs Inventory does not include the by-pass on its list of needed improvements. This means that, as of this date, the state does not recognize a need for the by-pass. Instead, the state lists reconstruction of Route 27 as a divided highway as a needed project with no schedule for construction. This Plan recommends that Route 27 should not be considered for widening to a divided highway north of Cedar Grove (the edge of the planning area) until such time that the traffic load indicates improvements are needed. At that time, alternatives to widening Route 27 between Cedar Grove and Claggettville should be considered. Alternative routes discussed during the preparation of this plan are found in Appendix A.

In addition to the lack of funds to construct a by-pass and the fact that the State does not recognize it as a needed project, there are environmental impacts (such as stream crossings) which must be recognized. There is also the problem of reserving the right-of-way until such time as construction or acquisition funds are available.

In recognition of funding, land use and environmental constraints, the proposed Transportation Plan does not propose a by-pass. Instead, it reaffirms the need for the northern extension of Woodfield Road to an intersection with Md. 27. This will serve the same purpose of diverting traffic from Main Street but on a smaller scale.

If at some future date funding constraints are lifted and proposed interim improvements are not adequate to handle traffic needs, this Plan should be re-examined to consider other by-pass alternatives. Any re-examination of a by-pass should address the following concerns:

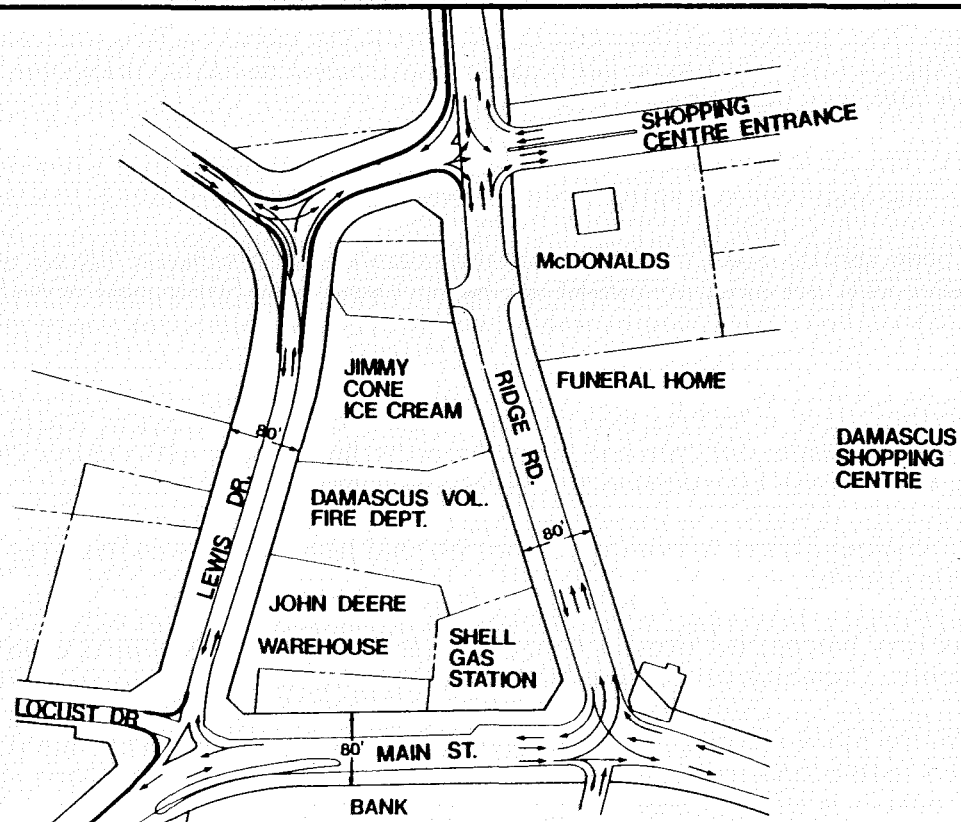
- land use impacts, particularly on existing residential development and farmland;
- impact on economic vitality of business area;
- cost;
- the ability of the County and/or state to reserve the necessary right-of-way;
- impact on environment;
- ability of a by-pass to divert significant traffic volumes from the business area.

To relieve traffic congestion at the intersection of Route 27 and Main Street, which is already operating with significant traffic delays during the P.M. peak hour (Level of Service E), some immediate measures are proposed (see Proposed Circulation and Rights-of-Way).

The 1966 Master Plan also proposes to re-align Route 27 through the business center (see Proposed Business Area Roadway Improvements Map). When coupled with the extension of Woodfield Road north of Ridge Road, this would provide two north-south parallel roads through the Damascus business area and reduce turning movements from Route 108 to Route 27.

This Plan slightly modifies the 1966 Plan for the business area to provide better control of traffic on Ridge Road at the shopping center's access road. The Damascus Shopping Center was not built when the 1966 Plan circulation system was devised; due to the location of the center's driveway off Ridge Road, the 1966 Plan is not the most effective treatment. The Proposed Transportation Plan recommends instead a connecting road between Ridge Road and Lewis Drive which lines up with the shopping center's access driveway. This scheme will make better use of existing pavement and rights-of-way. There will also be less effect on existing points of access. The immediate effect on the flow of traffic through the center of Damascus will be better than could be obtained by means of the 1966 Plan alignment. No alignment adopted will constitute an obligation on the Maryland State Highway Administration to build. State project planning requires consideration of feasible alternatives prior to any final choice of alignment or commitment to construct improvements.

The items described under "Proposed Immediate Road Improvement: Damascus Business District" represent the first stage of a public improvement package which this Plan proposes in order to provide capacity to handle anticipated traffic increases in the near future. The entire improvements package is described in Proposed Business Area Roadway Improvement Map. This Plan recommends that these improvements be included in the State Highway Administration's "Special Projects" programs as quickly as possible. These improvements are calculated to raise the level of service from "E" to "A" at the intersection of Routes 108 and 27 during P.M. rush hour.



THE EXACT LOCATIONS OF EXISTING CENTERLINES, PRESCRIBED RIGHTS-OF-WAY, AND FINAL RIGHTS-OF-WAY CAN BE DETERMINED ONLY THROUGH FIELD SURVEYS AND RECORDED PLATS OF SUBDIVISION OR RIGHT-OF-WAY PLATS AS THEY ARE COMPLETED IN THE FUTURE.

THIS DRAWING SHOWS PROPOSED RIGHTS-OF-WAY, LOCATION, AND DIRECTION OF ROADWAY LANES.

ALL ROADS WILL REQUIRE, ULTIMATELY, 80 FOOT RIGHTS-OF-WAY.

WHERE RIGHT-OF-WAY HAS NOT BEEN DEDICATED, STATE LAW PRESCRIBES 40 FOOT RIGHTS-OF-WAY BASED ON CENTERLINES OF ALL STATE MAINTAINED ROADS.

PROPERTY LINES SHOWN ARE INCOMPLETE. THEY WERE OBTAINED FROM AVAILABLE RECORDS AND ARE SHOWN FOR ORIENTATION ONLY.

PROPOSED TRAFFIC CIRCULATION AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY


 PROPOSED TURNING AND DIRECTIONAL MOVEMENTS

Approved and Adopted: June 1982

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



PROPOSED IMMEDIATE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS: DAMASCUS BUSINESS DISTRICT

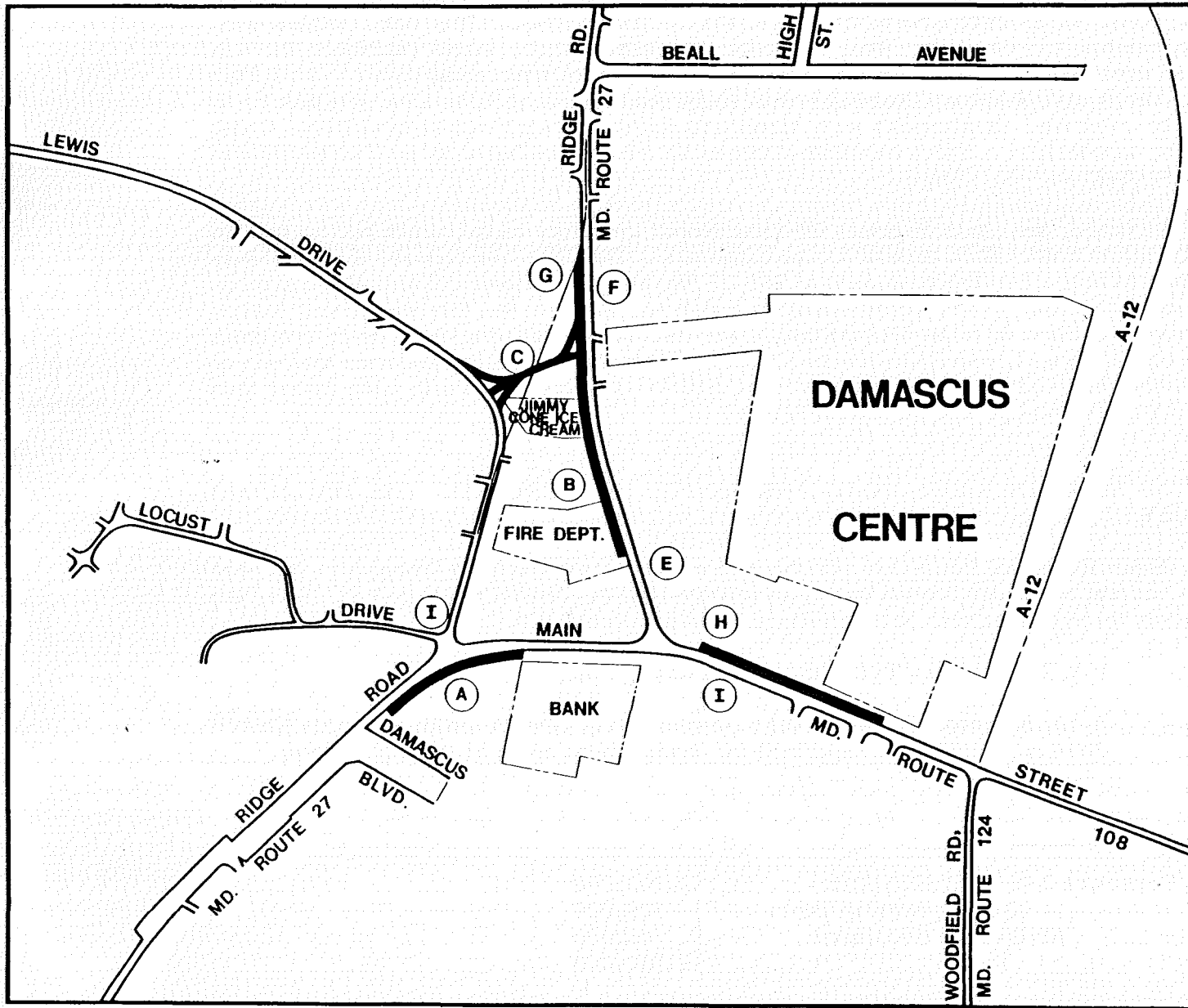
- a. Extend the eastbound through lane, in front of the bank, back around the curve on Route 27 southward to Damascus Boulevard. This improvement will make both eastbound lanes accessible during the P.M. peak hour. Right lane is now intermittently blocked by standing vehicles.
- b. Extend the southbound right turn lane on Route 27 from the fire house northward to a point opposite the old Woodfield-Ford garage. This improvement will permit operation described in e. and f. below.
- c. Construct a 24 foot 2-lane open section road from the existing entrance to Damascus Center at Route 27 westward to intersect radially with the existing curved paving on Lewis Drive (this road is referred to as Ridge Road-Lewis Drive connector). This improvement will provide an alternate route through the business area.
- d. Re-stripe and install appropriate signs to create two eastbound lanes on Main Street at Ridge Road with left turn mandatory from the left lane and optional from the right lane. This will reduce the time required for eastbound traffic to clear the intersection during its green cycle.
- e. Re-stripe Ridge Road north of Main Street to create two northbound lanes and one southbound lane as far as the entrance to the shopping center.
- f. North of the above intersection merge the two northbound lanes into one. Additional capacity is not recommended beyond this point. Capacity will be provided to the east by A-12.
- g. Beginning opposite the furniture store (former Woodfield garage) on the west side of Ridge Road, stripe the paving so as to provide a southbound free right lane and a central through-left turn lane approaching the intersection of Ridge Road-Lewis Drive connector.

This new intersection should be clearly marked so as to direct southbound Route 27 traffic to turn right at this point and proceed via Lewis Drive rather than turning right at Main Street. (Operation should be observed to determine need for a future signal). Right and left turns would still be allowed at Main Street to serve local needs.

- h. Extend the widening of Main Street adjoining the entrance to the Damascus Center westward to meet the very short right turn lane now existing just east of the intersection at Ridge Road.

Improvements "a" through "h" are recommended to be included in the state's "Special Projects" program.

- i. To improve safety, parking on the south side of Main Street east of the intersection with Ridge Road should be removed to an off-street location or, at least, converted from a diagonal to parallel pattern.



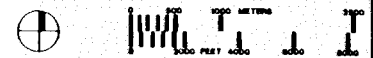
PROPOSED BUSINESS AREA ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

- (D) LETTERS REFER TO SECTIONS IN TEXT
- EXISTING PAVING
- PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION
- 1966 PLAN RECOMMENDATION

Approved and Adopted: June 1982

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



To accommodate the additional traffic that is expected along Woodfield Road (Md. 124) in future years, particularly when the Shady Grove Metro station opens, Woodfield Road should be extended north of Route 108 to Ridge Road. This link, coupled with improvements to the Ridge Road - Route 108 intersection, would distribute through traffic over several roads and would greatly reduce rush-hour congestion. This Plan recommends that Woodfield Road intersect Ridge Road south of Faith Lane and that Faith Lane be relocated to intersect with Woodfield Road extended rather than Ridge Road. Further capacity, if needed, could be attained by adding another lane to Woodfield Road between A-25 and Main Street.

As noted, the State Highway 20-Year Needs Inventory recommends reconstruction (widening) of Route 27 to relieve future congestion. This Plan has explored the possibility of constructing a parallel road west of Md. 27 (between Gue Road and Md. 80) to provide additional capacity. The cost of acquiring a right-of-way and building 9000 linear feet of roadway is estimated to be \$2.8 million. The estimated cost of adding one or two lanes to Route 27 ranges from \$450,000 to \$780,000. This Plan therefore endorses the idea of reconstructing Route 27 within the present right-of-way north of Faith Lane rather than building a new road paralleling Route 27.

ACCESS BETWEEN RIDGE ROAD AND ROUTE 124: CROSSING THE MAGRUDER VALLEY

Ridge Road and Route 124 are the two major access roads to Damascus. Between them lies the Magruder Stream valley and substantial residential development. This Plan proposes three connections between Ridge Road and Route 124.

- P-4, Sweepstakes Road - this is an existing road;
- A-10, Bethesda Church Road extension - the completion of Bethesda Church Road is a condition of approval for development north of the high school;

1	Construct 2-lanes @ \$225.00/ft.	=	\$2,300,000
	+ 20% engineering costs	=	\$ 500,000
	R-O-W @ \$500/acre	=	\$ 80,000
			<u>\$2,880,000</u>

- A-25, Valley Park Drive - this connection replaces the crossing recommended in the 1966 Damascus Master Plan. Valley Park Drive is unbuilt but dedicated along much of its length. Unlike the crossing to the south recommended in the 1966 Damascus Master Plan, Valley Park Drive makes use of existing grading and filling in the stream valley.

The proposed Plan recommends that Damascus Boulevard (B-2) not be extended from Ridge Road to Route 124 for the following reasons:

- The crossing affects the sensitive headwaters of the Magruder Branch;
- The proposed Business District Plan recommends commercial zoning be eliminated from the headwaters, thereby eliminating the need for a business street.

ACCESS IN RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL AREAS

Outside the Business District and the Magruder Basin, farming is the primary land use.

The only new roads proposed for construction in this area are:

- P-2 to provide access from Route 124 extended east towards Howard Chapel Drive;
- P-5 to provide access from Route 124 to areas south of Hawkins Creamery Road; and
- P-6 to eliminate a curve in Hawkins Creamery Road.

All of these proposed primary roads are consistent with the 1966 Master Plan. These roads will be built by developers of the adjoining properties if and when the land develops.

No new roads are proposed in the portion of the Study Plan Area designated Agricultural Reserve by the Master Plan for Preservation of Agriculture and Open Space. Piedmont Road, designated as an arterial roadway on the Master Plan of Highways and recommended for re-alignment near Ridge Road, is re-classified to a primary road (P-10) and no changes are proposed to its present alignment. This change is reasonable in light of the fact that the Master Plan of Highways arterial alignment traverses a farm in the Agricultural Reserve area; it is unlikely this segment of the road will ever be built by the landowner.

HIGHWAY AND ROADWAY CLASSIFICATION

The proposed Transportation Plan includes four types of roadways:

- Major highways (120' right-of-way)
- Business District streets (80' right-of-way)
- Arterial roadways (80' right-of-way)
- Primary roadways (70' right-of-way)

The Highway Typical Cross Sections show the configuration of each; the key to the Transportation Plan map describes the roads by this classification.

The only major highways in the planning area are Md. 108 between Etchison and the Damascus Business area and Ridge Road (Md. 27) south of A-25. Although Md. 108 will probably not be widened in the next 10 or 20 years, new homes will be required to be set back from the proposed right-of-way. Maryland 27 is listed in the State's 20 Year Highway Needs Inventory to be reconstructed as a divided highway.

Arterial roadways usually are obtained by dedication during the subdivision process and are usually constructed with private funds. Driveway access to arterial roads can be controlled in accord with subdivision regulations, thereby assuring high capacity and smooth traffic movement.

Primary roadways provide internal circulation within a subdivision or neighborhood. Although the Transportation Plan shows proposed locations for primaries, the final location is determined at time of subdivision. Primary roads may also be deleted or added at time of subdivision.

IMPLEMENTING PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

Table 5, Staging of Road Improvements in Damascus, places a priority on road improvements and identifies how they would be implemented.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

The Damascus area is not currently served by public transportation. Current planning and financial studies being conducted by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, with input by Montgomery County, include a proposal to extend Metrobus service to Damascus. The proposal is being made for purposes of analysis as part of a 10 year projection of budget impacts of Metro transit services. The results of the study, which are not yet available, will indicate the patronage demand and costs associated with the proposal. The proposal specifies 30 minute peak-only headway between Damascus and the Shady Grove Metrorail Station. Service of that nature would most likely be implemented, if warranted, some time at or soon after the opening of the Shady Grove Line late in 1983.

Informal commuter parking for 30 cars is occurring every business day near the church north of the intersection of Md. 80 and Md. 27 at Claggetttsville. If public funds become available for commuter parking in Damascus, sites north of the business area should be considered to reduce congestion at Ridge Road and Route 108. One possibility which should be explored is leasing a church parking lot during weekdays.

BIKEWAYS

The Master Plan of Bikeways proposes three bikeways in the Master Plan Area:

- P-34 (6.6 miles) would link Magruder Valley Park to Little Bennett Regional Park via linear open space and Little Bennett Park;
- P-39 (15.6 miles) would provide a scenic route along Md. Route 108 from Ridge Road east to Etchison;

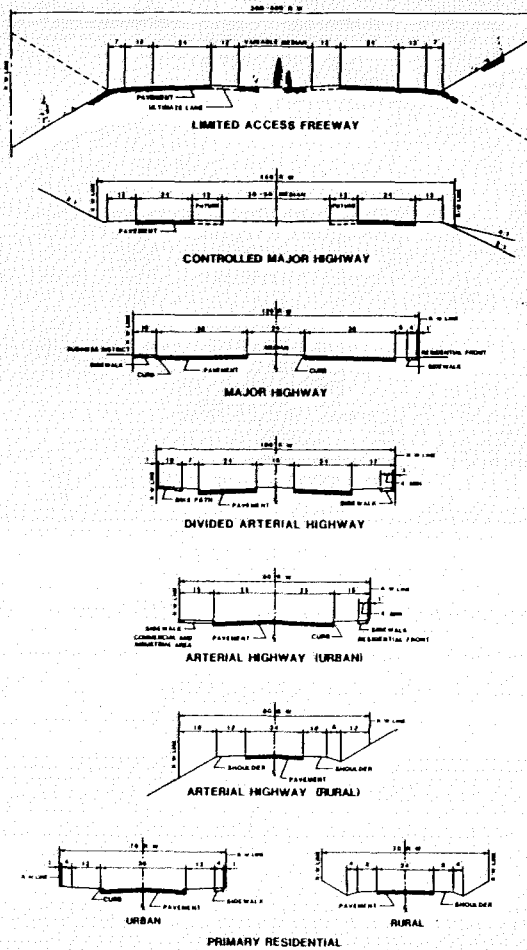
TABLE 5
STAGING OF ROAD IMPROVEMENTS IN DAMASCUS

Item	Cost (1981 Dollars)	Effect	Implementation
1. a. Complete westbound lane on north side of Main Street	\$ 60,000	Critical lane volume reduced at Main St. and Ridge Rd. from 1476 to 1110.	State Highway Administration "Special Projects" program.
b. Eastbound lane on south side of Main St. approaching Ridge Road	\$ 50,000	(Level of service E to B)	
	\$ 110,000 total		
2. a. Construct Ridge-Lewis connector	\$ 150,000	Critical lane volume reduced at Main and Ridge from 1110 to 927.	Montgomery County or State Highway Administration.
b. Complete paving and re-stripe Ridge Rd. from Main St. north to connector	\$ 40,000	(Level of Service B to A)	
	\$ 190,000 total		
3. Extend Woodfield Rd. north of Main St. to Ridge Rd.	\$1,300,000 total	Will divert 310 Westbound and 113 Eastbound vehicles per hour from Main St. and from Ridge Rd. north of Main St. to limit of extension. <u>Note:</u> As traffic on Woodfield Rd. and Rte. 108 grows, these figures will increase.	Montgomery County and private developers.
4. Widen Md. 27 north of A-12 to Claggettsville (adds two lanes).	\$ 780,000	Would carry future increased traffic.	State Highway Administration.
5. Extend Bethesda Church Rd. to Woodfield Rd.	\$ 500,000	Would serve new development. Could divert maximum of 50 eastbound and 50 westbound vehicles from Main St. during the P.M. peak hour. Probably fewer diversions if items 1 and 2 have been completed.	Private developers.
6. Hold A-11-A right-of-way (M-27 on 1966 Plan) for future use in connection with the extension of Woodfield Road north of Main Street.		Could divert northbound through traffic from intersection of Main St. and Ridge Rd. to Woodfield Rd.	State Highway Administration.

Source: MCPB staff. Costs are estimates only.

- S-78 (2.5 miles) is proposed in the Magruder Valley Park from Damascus Regional Park to the business area. No specific route is designated.

As will be noted in the Community Facilities chapter, residents at community forums expressed support for a pathway system along the Magruder Valley Park. A more detailed proposal for such a system will be developed as part of Plan implementation, and will include study of a bikeway proposal prepared by residents of Damascus.



HIGHWAY CROSS SECTIONS

DAMASCUS BUSINESS AREA PLAN

This Plan reaffirms and plans for the continuation of the Damascus Business Area as the commercial center for northern Montgomery County and Western Howard County. In addition to providing typical shoppers goods, Damascus offers important farm-related products which help support the area's agriculture heritage. Farm-related commercial uses are specifically encouraged by this Plan.

The community has expressed a desire for a second shopping center location in the business area. This Plan recommends a shopping center site along Ridge Road at the southern edge of the existing business area.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

There are presently 71 acres of commercially zoned land in the business area. About 55 acres are actually developed; much of this acreage is not fully utilized.

The largest concentration of retail floor space is 130,000 square feet in the Damascus Shopping Center. Safeway is the major tenant; other occupants include a drug store, a hardware store, restaurants, the County library, clothing stores and other specialty shops. Of 42 stores in the shopping center, many were vacant during the time this Plan was under study in 1982. Many causes were suggested at public meetings for the high vacancy rate, including poor access from Main Street and inconvenient Mall layout.

In terms of zoning, all commercial land in Damascus is General Commercial (C-2). Although this zoning allows a floor area ratio of 1.5 (that is, floor area may not exceed one and one-half times the lot size) and permits 3-story buildings, none of the Damascus businesses are developed to this extent. Most businesses occupy small, detached 1-story buildings. There are vacant lots in the business area but the greatest potential for future retail commercial expansion lies in redevelopment of under-utilized parcels and leasing of vacant stores (particularly in the shopping center, although other vacant stores do exist).

1966 PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The 1966 Plan proposes a minimum of 58 acres and a maximum of 92 commercial acres by the Year 2000 based upon a population forecast of 14,000 people (see 1966 Master Plan Map, page 31).

The design concept for the business area encourages an "architecturally unified center" and proposes a system of vehicular and pedestrian traffic distribution to support the center. The area between proposed Damascus Boulevard and Main Street and the land north of Main Street are proposed primarily for central business district uses. The area west of Route 27 is proposed for service and other non-retail uses, while the area south of proposed Damascus Boulevard, (which the Plan describes as "topographically unsuited for typical shopping area use") is proposed for offices.

WHY AMEND THE 1966 PLAN?

The generalized design concept for retail and office development in the 1966 Plan provides an identifiable, well-integrated commercial center for Damascus. No change to the generalized concept is proposed. However, several changes to the 1966 recommended land use and zoning pattern are proposed for the following reasons:

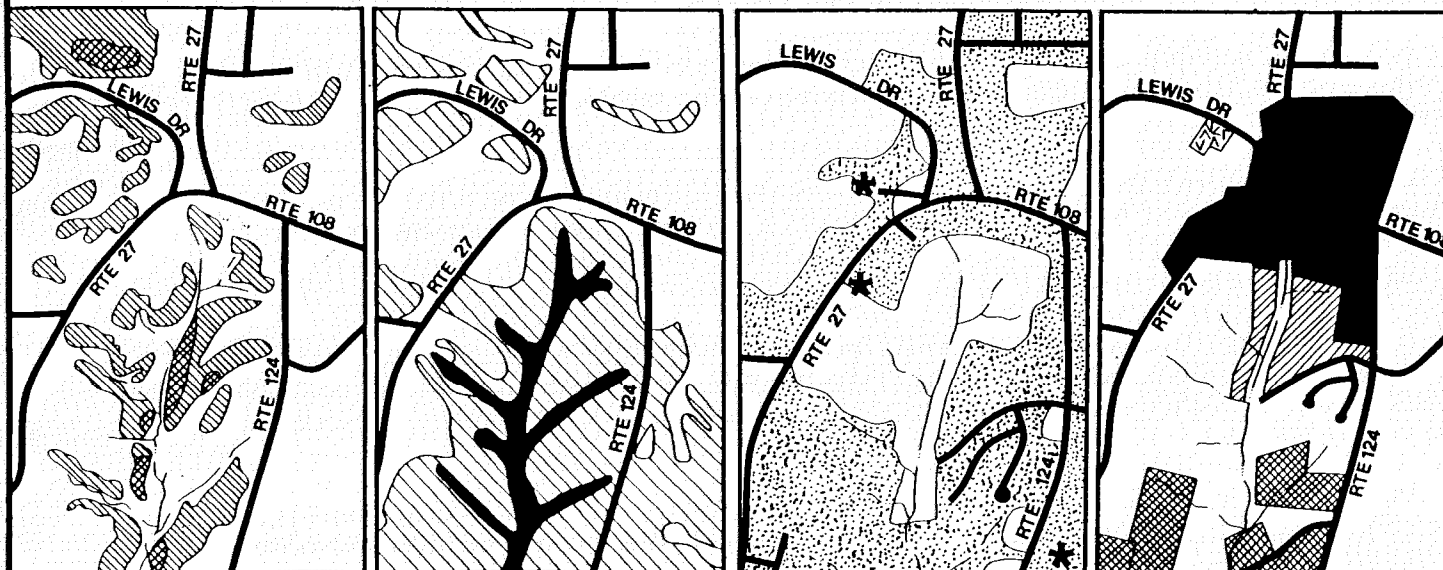
Environmental Concerns

The 1966 Plan locates about 15 acres of commercial development (C-2 zoning) in the fragile headwaters of the Magruder Stream Valley. Commercial areas have a high percentage of area covered by impervious surfaces (e.g., parking lots and roofs) which accelerate run-off, produce erosion and cause flooding problems. Pollutants that are washed off streets and parking lots also have the potential for degrading the quality of surface waters. If the commercial area proposed in the 1966 Plan were to be fully developed, there would be harmful impacts on the headwaters of Magruder Stream. Further, other environmental features of the headwaters (steep slopes, erodible soils) have severely limited commercial development possibilities. Alternative land uses to retail commercial are proposed in this chapter.



Employment Centers

Another recommendation of the 1966 Plan which needs to be re-examined is a 100-acre employment center concept. Although the concept of local employment is a good one, the proximity of more attractive employment locations (I-270) makes it unlikely that a large-scale employer would locate in Damascus. Further, the employment center is oriented to the proposed major by-pass of Damascus, but it is unlikely this by-pass will be built in the next 20-25 years. A 100-acre employment center would place additional pressure for housing and services which could change Damascus' rural character.




DAMASCUS BUSINESS AREA DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS



TOPOGRAPHY

-  15-25% SLOPE
-  25% OR MORE SLOPE






SOILS

-  MODERATE EROSION
-  SEVERE EROSION
-  WET SOILS AND FLOODPLAIN

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

-  EXISTING DEVELOPMENT
-  HISTORIC SITES

GENERALIZED EXISTING ZONING

-  SINGLE-FAMILY
-  MULTI-FAMILY
-  SINGLE-FAMILY, TOWNHSE.
-  COMMERCIAL
-  INDUSTRIAL

Approved and Adopted: June 1982

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



Residential Development

The housing densities proposed by the 1966 Plan (12 to 14 units per acre) are too high not only in terms of environmental constraints but also in terms of Damascus' existing residential character. From strictly an environmental viewpoint, very low densities would be most desirable to help limit sediment, turbidity and urban run-off, all of which negatively affect water quality. The proposed Business Area Land Use Plan balances these environmental concerns with the existing land use pattern (which includes apartments), pedestrian access and commercial viability.

A density of 6-8 homes per acre is proposed as an alternative to the 1966 Plan recommendation of 14 units/acre for the following reasons:

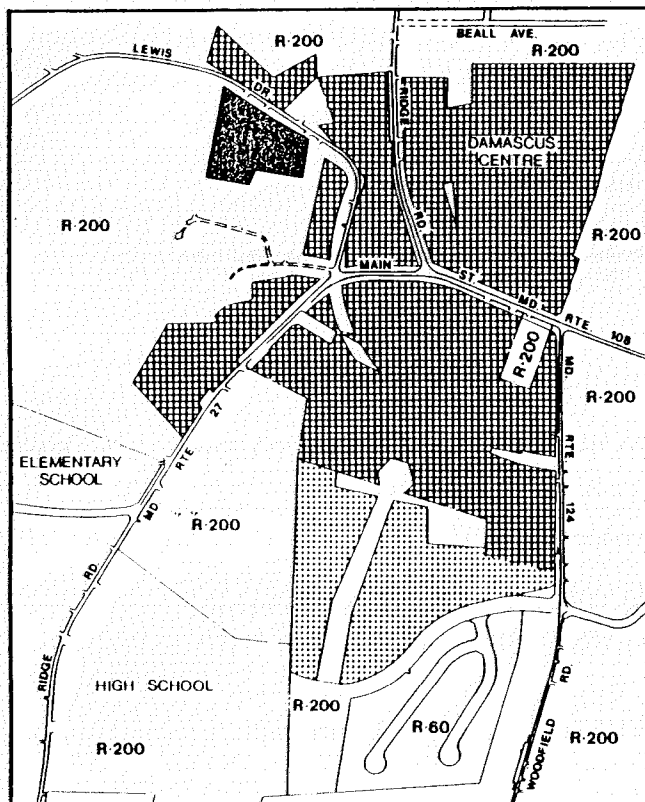
1. It is unlikely a density of 14 units per acre can be achieved given the percentage of the headwaters area that is poorly suited for development (see Development Constraints Map);
2. The residential character of Damascus is predominantly low density suburban residential. A density of 6-8 units per acre would encourage a mix of housing types at a density that is compatible with the overall residential character of Damascus and the Magruder Valley;
3. A lower density than 14 units per acre will help reduce the amount of impervious surface (particularly parking lots) in the headwaters and would be less destructive of the highly erodible soils in the headwaters (see Development Constraints Map).

As discussed in the Environmental Concerns Chapter, stormwater management is a major concern in the Magruder Valley. Private conservation areas will be required along the tributaries of the Magruder. On-site stormwater management impoundments should be required unless a centralized facility is planned. These concerns would be addressed in detail at time of subdivision.

HOW SHOULD THE 1966 PLAN BE REVISED?

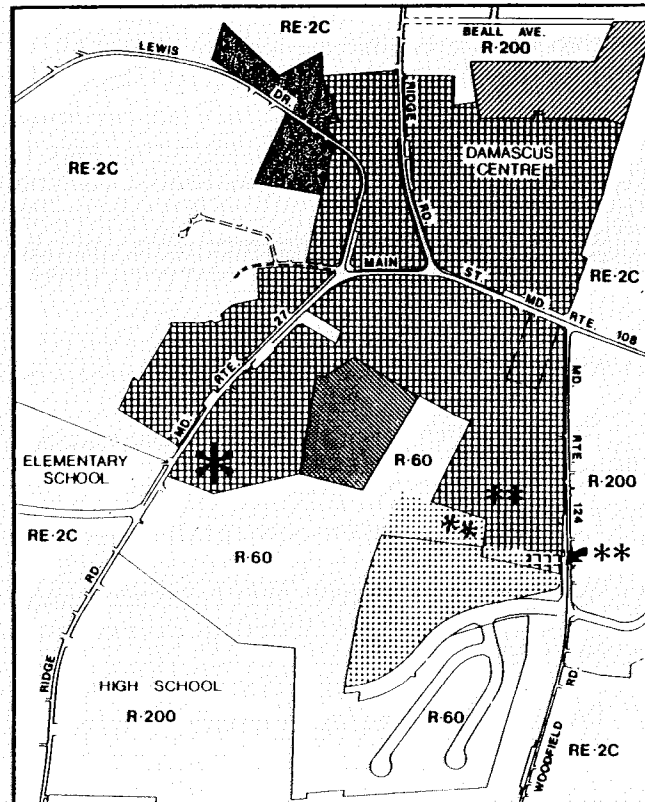
Many elements of the 1966 Plan regarding commercial and office development should be retained. The Plan objective "to encourage an architecturally unified center" and "to provide a wide range of goods and services" should continue to guide the plan process. The 1966 Plan recommendation regarding the extension of Route 124 north of

DAMASCUS BUSINESS AREA ZONING PLAN



ZONING (1982)

- R-200 2 UNITS/ACRE
- R-60 5 UNITS/ACRE
- R-30 14 UNITS/ACRE
- C-2 GENERAL COMMERCIAL
- I-1 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL



ZONING PLAN

- R-200 2 UNITS/ACRE
- RE-2C 1 UNIT/2 ACRES
- R-60 5 UNITS/ACRE
- R-30 14 UNITS/ACRE
- RT-B 8 UNITS/ACRE
- C-2 GENERAL COMMERCIAL
- C-T COMMERCIAL TRANSITIONAL
- O-M OFFICE BUILDING MODERATE INTENSITY
- I-1 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- * PROPOSED LOCATION FOR FUTURE SHOPPING AREA
- ** SUITABLE FOR C-3

Approved and Adopted: June 1982
Amended July 1985.

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



Main Street is critical to the relief of congestion and the development of strong pedestrian movements in the business district. And finally, the Plan designation of the area west of Route 27 for service and other non-retail uses should be confirmed.

This Plan for the business area (see page 61):

1. Supports the 1966 Design Plan recommendations regarding vehicular access with one exception: Damascus Boulevard, which would cross the headwaters of the Magruder and which would require substantial fill and grading, is eliminated;
2. Encourages office development on the fringe of the retail area as a transitional use between retail stores and non-commercial development;
3. Extends service, non-retail commercial uses along Lewis Drive to accommodate local needs for services such as warehousing, repair facilities, etc.;
4. Endorses the 1966 Plan recommendation for pedestrian pathways through the business area;
5. Proposes an area for new retail commercial development;
6. Proposes that future retail development along Ridge Road and Main Street, should be consistent with the existing development: buildings fronting the road with parking in the rear;
7. Eliminates 100 acres of employment and industrial land use along Route 108.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A FUTURE SHOPPING CENTER SITE

Market forecasts prepared by Montgomery County Planning Board staff indicate a potential need for 40-80 commercial acres in Damascus by the year 2000 (see Table 6).

These market forecasts are based on a very optimistic service area; the population of the Damascus Master Plan study area in 1980 was 8500 people and by 2000, the population is expected to be 13,000. The market forecasts increase these population numbers by almost 20 percent to reflect potential Howard and Frederick County shoppers.

Even with these optimistic assumptions about the Damascus market area, the forecasts indicate that existing commercial acreage in Damascus is sufficient to meet

1990 market demand. The high vacancy rate in the shopping center, vacant store fronts, and undeveloped lots attest to the fact that the Damascus market is not yet strong enough to support major additional retail uses, particularly another shopping center. Nearby malls (Lake Forest, Francis Scott Key) offer strong competition. A second shopping center in Damascus would likely compete for businesses already in the business area, drawing new tenants from either Damascus Center or Main Street. If this occurs Damascus could have two weak centers, not just one.

Despite market forecasts, community residents have presented strong testimony that additional acreage should be planned to allow a second shopping area. The possibility of additional competition, they feel, is needed to offer merchants an alternative to locating in Damascus Shopping Center and to spur design and building improvements in the Center.

TABLE 6

DAMASCUS MARKET AREA

POPULATION AND SUPPORTABLE COMMERCIAL ACREAGE

<u>Damascus Market Area</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
Number of People*	12,730	14,000	15,460
Supportable Commercial Acreage**	25-50 acres	31-62 acres	41-82 acres

* To help determine the Damascus' market area, staff of the Frederick and Howard County Planning Departments were asked to estimate the number of people who might shop in Damascus. Generally, these forecasts assume that every resident of the Damascus Master Plan area shops in Damascus (even those living closer to Mount Airy) and that another 3,000-4,000 people from Howard and Frederick Counties shop in Damascus.

** Montgomery County Planning Board Retail Commercial Model was used to convert population into supportable acres of commercially zoned land. The acreage range presented is based on how much of the site is actually used for floor area. If 20 percent of the land is used for floor area, less acreage is needed; if only 10 percent of the land is used, more acreage is required.

In response to this testimony, this Plan recommends a site for a second but smaller shopping area. The proposed location is along Ridge Road at the southern edge of the Damascus business area much of which would otherwise be designated general commercial. This site has excellent visibility from Ridge Road and sewage will flow by gravity to the sewage treatment plant.

During the Plan process, another site was analyzed east of Damascus Shopping Center. This site was not selected because needed road improvements (the extension of Woodfield Road to Ridge Road) and sewerage facilities are not planned for 10 to 20 years. However, this Plan does recommend the use of this location for a shopping area in the future if development of the site along Ridge Road does not occur.

The type of shopping envisioned by this Plan is a grocery store and several small convenience shops. Only 80,000 square feet of floor area is recommended to ensure a scale of development compatible with the neighborhood; a regional-type shopping mall is not proposed.

To ensure site plan review by the Planning Board and to afford the community ample opportunity to comment on any commercial plans that are submitted, this Plan proposes a Planned Development (PD) zone for the site.

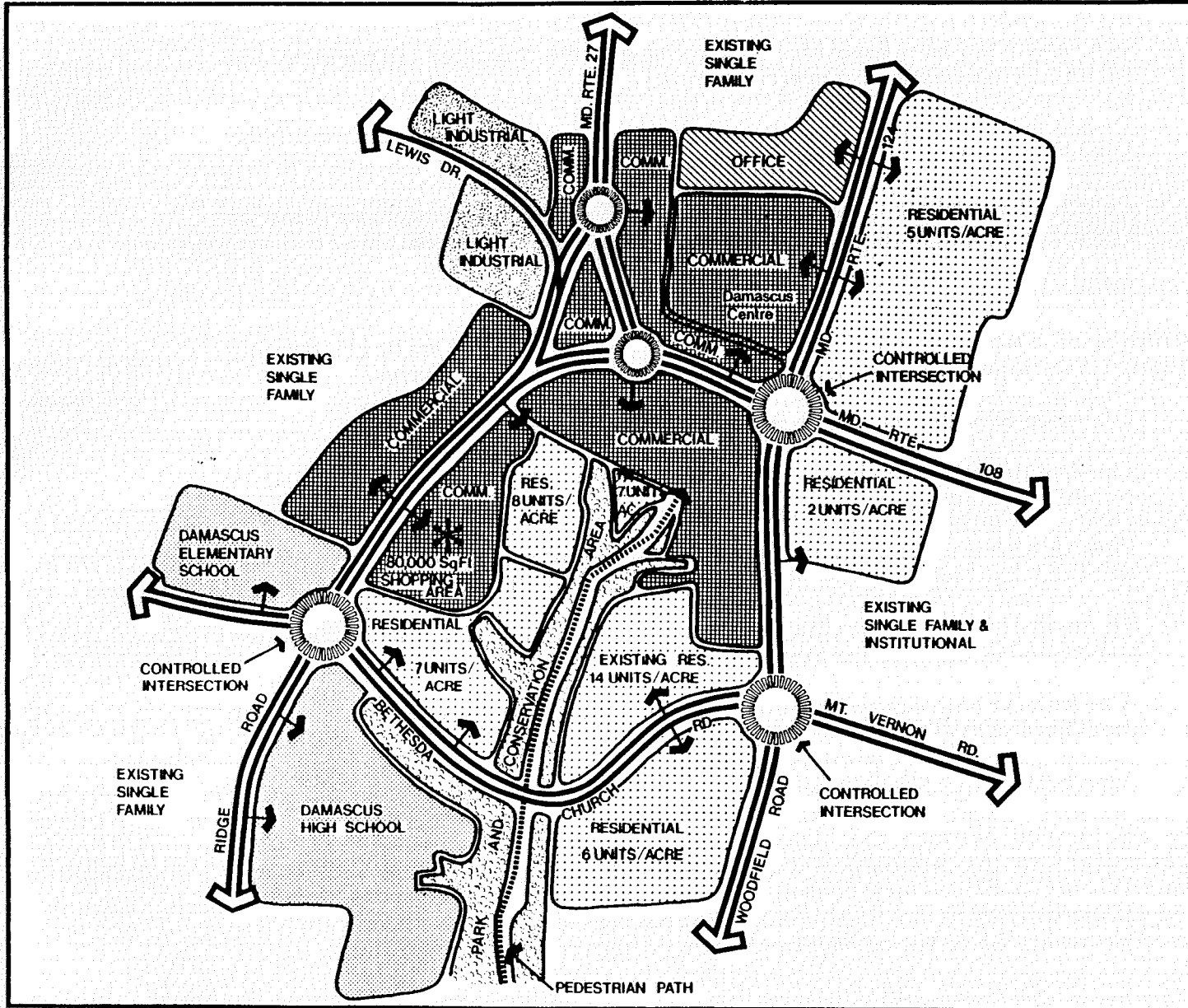
In the PD zone, the Planning Board and the County Council are empowered to review

- location, height, ground coverage and use of all structures
- landscaping
- lighting
- floor areas
- grading
- pedestrian linkages

This level of review is desirable both from the Planning Board's and the community's viewpoint since Planned Development zones require a Public Hearing on the actual physical plan for the development.

Commercial Development Criteria

The preparation of a PD application should be guided by the following plan principles:



**BUSINESS
AREA
LAND USE PLAN**

Approved and Adopted: June 1982

**DAMASCUS
MASTER PLAN**

Montgomery County, Maryland



- Environmental disruption should be minimized (the topography at the rear of the site includes steep slopes and erodible soils);
- The design and layout should be in keeping with the character of Damascus and related to the existing commercial center;
- Proper traffic and pedestrian access should be included and the site should be linked to the Magruder Valley park;
- Retail floor area should not exceed 80,000 square feet (for purposes of comparison, Damascus Shopping Center is 130,000 square feet);
- Office floor area should not exceed 10,000 square feet;

Approval of the PD application would be conditional on the applicant meeting several design criteria including, but not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Extension of Bethesda Church Road from Ridge Road to Route 124;
- Construction of an additional lane on Route 27 (Ridge Road) to accommodate turning movements;
- Phasing of the shopping center in coordination with residential development (7 units per acre) so that a mix of commercial and housing occurs;
- An on-site or central stormwater management facility which protects water quality and quantity in the Magruder Valley;
- A pedestrian pathway system that links the shopping center and the residential development to Magruder Valley parkland.
- Appropriate buffering between commercial uses and the high school.

The relationship between the high school and the proposed shopping area is of particular concern to the School Board and to parents of students at Damascus High School and Damascus Elementary School. To help assure that the shopping center is developed with sensitivity to the close proximity of the high school and elementary school, this Plan recommends the following development and design criteria:

- to the maximum extent possible, residential development should be located between the high school and commercial uses;
- parking lots should be visible from nearby roads;
- buffering along Bethesda Church Road should be of such type and extent to channel pedestrian movement to the signalized intersection at Bethesda Church and Ridge Road;
- buffering along Bethesda Church Road should be in place prior to the completion of the shopping area;
- an anti-loitering program should be submitted as part of the PD application.

In reviewing the Planned Development application, the Planning Board will also seek input from the School Board and the principals of Damascus Elementary and Damascus High Schools regarding the appropriate mix of stores, lighting plans, and accessibility.

As noted, a major planning concern is the viability of the Damascus market to support a second shopping area. When a PD application is filed, it will be evaluated in light of market conditions and the potential impact of the commercial development on existing businesses.

OTHER COMMERCIAL LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

Main Street (Route 108)

No changes are proposed to the land use (commercial) or zoning (C-2) along Main Street. The existing scale of development is attractive and there is an opportunity for a very strong pedestrian orientation here. The extension of Route 124 north of Main Street would help pedestrian movement by shifting through automobile traffic from Main Street to the Route 124 extension.

Ridge Road (Route 27)

Most of the businesses along Ridge Road north and south of Main Street are automobile oriented and are zoned General Commercial (C-2). No changes are proposed to these businesses or their zoning.

Several small properties now zoned residential are proposed for commercial. They are:

The King property (2.3 acres) is located between the Elementary School and a small commercial development. A brick home is located on the portion of the property closest to the Elementary School. This Plan recommends Commercial-Transitional (C-T) zoning in the portion of the property with the house (1.15 acres) and General Commercial (C-2) zoning on balance (1.15 acres). Access to commercial development should be from the same driveway that serves the neighboring stores.

East of Ridge Road, south of the Farmers and Mechanics National Bank, this Plan recommends General Commercial (C-2) on about 7 acres fronting Ridge Road (County Maintenance Depot; Gladhill property; Souder property). As noted earlier, this amount of commercial acreage could be expanded as part of a Planned Development application for a mix of commercial and residential uses.

This Plan recommends the maintenance depot along Ridge Road be relocated from the commercial area to a more appropriate location for equipment storage.

The Damascus Shopping Center Area

The northeast section of the Business Area is dominated by the Damascus Shopping Center. The Center is partly vacant in part due to market conditions and, according to residents, in part due to mall design. As part of Plan implementation, staff will contact mall owners and managers to offer design assistance to increase the mall's attractiveness and to improve access and circulation.

Just north of the shopping center is a vacant 5-acre lot which has no public road access from Ridge Road on Route 108. This Plan recommends medium density residential or low-intensity office development for this property as a transition between existing homes and the shopping center. Commercial development is not proposed here but is channeled to Ridge Road, where the Plan proposes enough commercial land use to support a retail shopping center. The Plan proposes a residential density of 8 units per acre on the site. A low intensity office building developed under C-T (Commercial Transitional) or O-M (Office, Moderate Intensity) zoning standards would be compatible if the project followed development standards in the RT-8 (townhouse) zone regarding building mass, density, heights, setback and lot coverage. It should be noted that development of this site is dependent on road access which may not be available until Route 124 is extended north of Route 108.

A residential Planned Development zone (PD-5) is recommended east of the Damascus Shopping Center. This area is not planned to develop until additional sewage treatment capacity is available (sometime beyond 1995) so as not to compete with development in the Magruder Valley. Review of an application for a PD-5 would include, but not be limited to the following development criteria:

- Extension of Route 124 north of Main Street along the length of the property;
- Construction of a pumping station to pump sewage into the Magruder Valley sewage system;
- Construction of on-site stormwater management facilities to protect water quality in the Patuxent River basin;
- Pedestrian and bicycle linkages to commercial areas;

Commercial uses in the PD would be appropriate if a market for additional commercial uses exists and if the shopping area along Ridge Road has not commercially developed.

Lewis Drive Area

Service type commercial and light industrial uses are proposed in the Lewis Drive area. Lewis Drive near Ridge Road is well-suited for small scale, light industrial development. An auto parts dealer, a farm implement dealer and the Damascus Fuel building set the light industrial character of this portion of Lewis Drive. Further west, detached homes, an American Legion building and a fairground are present. A vacant building, once used as a roller rink, forms the logical boundary between light industrial uses and residences to the west.

Light industrial uses (I-1 Zone) which would be permitted include (but are not limited to) minor manufacturing, storage yards, lumber yards, warehousing and general offices. A major industrial employment center is not recommended. Buildings greater than 3 stories would require detailed site plan review by the Planning Board.

Magruder Valley Headwaters

The 1966 Plan recommends office, commercial and residential development (14 units per acre) in the Magruder Valley headwaters area.

This Plan recommends the same land uses but reduces residential densities, reduces commercial acreage, and recommends site plan review of any development in this sensitive area.

Vacant land in the headwaters area consists of two parcels: a 6 acre tract (the Acme property), an interior parcel that lies behind existing commercial uses along Ridge Road; and a 5 acre tract to the rear of the Damascus Motor Company.

This Plan recommends residential, rather than commercial zoning, on the Acme property and proposes conservation areas along two streams. A density of 8 units per acre is recommended.

Vacant property (approximately 5 acres) lies between the Damascus Motor Company and the Magruder Stream Valley. This Plan recommends enough commercial zoning (no more than 3 acres) to allow expansion of the service department but proposes the balance of acreage be dedicated as parkland or private conservation use to protect steep slopes and stream valleys from development and to enhance pedestrian access to the business area from the proposed Magruder Branch Stream Valley Park. (By private conservation use, this Plan intends the land remain undeveloped and not be used as storage or parking facilities for adjoining commercial development.)

Approximately 1.0 acre of land lies between the Damascus garden apartment and the Damascus Motor Company. This transition area is proposed for residential (R-30, apartments). If, at some future date, the adjoining commercially zoned land is redeveloped, this parcel could be integrated into an overall development proposal in accord with the C-3 Zone. The C-3 Zone involves site plan review; approval of the site plan would be conditioned upon, but not limited to, the developer providing an appropriate buffer between the apartments and commercial uses. The area proposed for C-3 is shown on the Zoning and Highway Plan Map and the Damascus Business Area Generalized Existing and Proposed Zoning Map.

Two apartment buildings (Perrywood Apartments) adjoin Damascus Motors to the south. Given the age of these buildings, their redevelopment is almost certain. Thus, the major land use issue is what the ultimate land use should be on this site. This Plan, recommends the C-3 Zone if the site is redeveloped in concert with the Damascus Motors property.

The C-T Zone is recommended for the apartment building closest to Woodfield Road until joint redevelopment does occur. The C-T Zone is appropriate as a transitional zone between general commercial (C-2) and residential (R-30) uses.

The rear apartment building is recommended for the R-30 Zone.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE PLAN

This chapter focuses on two areas of Damascus:

- the Magruder Valley, where most of the subdivision activity in the planning area is occurring; and
- the "transition area" between the Magruder Basin and outlying farmland (see Transition Area map). Land use in the transition area consists of rural subdivisions, large individual lots, farms and parkland. The farming area is discussed later in the Agriculture and Open Space Preservation section.

Land use policies for each of these areas are discussed in this chapter.

This chapter also proposes alternative Transferable Development Rights (TDR) receiving areas.

Existing Conditions

The residential development pattern in Damascus has been shaped by the topography. Since much of Damascus is poorly suited to septic systems due to steep slopes, floodplains and poorly-drained soils, development has traditionally occurred along the ridges where soil and slope constraints are less severe.

Public sewer and water was extended to a portion of Damascus known as the Magruder Basin in the early 1970's. About 1,700 acres are in the sewer service area; this land is largely developed or recorded or part of an approved preliminary plan (see map).

Existing residential densities in the Magruder Valley generally range from 2 houses per acre to 8 houses per acre (5 apartment buildings along Route 124 near Main Street are the major exceptions). Although the present zoning pattern would theoretically allow higher yields, site constraints have reduced actual development potential.

A key concern of this Plan process is the transition from suburban residential densities in the Magruder Valley to agriculture and open space areas which surround Damascus. Presently, all this "transition" area is zoned for half-acre residential lots. As might be expected, given environmental constraints and the absence of public sewer, these densities are not being realized (in some instances, 10 to 20 acre lots are necessary to meet county health standards).

Lying just beyond the transition area are many large farms and an active farm community.

1966 RESIDENTIAL LAND USE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The 1966 Plan recommends development of low- to medium-density in the Magruder Valley. Townhouse densities are proposed along the stream valley, oriented to the park, to "provide a variety in housing which could be quite pleasing." Apartments are located on the edge of the business district.

The area outside the Magruder Valley is designated for half-acre residential lots based in part "upon the feasibility of providing public sewer."

WHY AMEND THE 1966 PLAN RESIDENTIAL LAND USE RECOMMENDATION?

The reasons for re-examining the 1966 Plan's residential recommendations have already been noted in the Overview. They include environmental concerns; a slower pace of growth than envisioned by the 1966 Plan; inappropriately high housing densities; decreased availability of public facilities; and newly adopted agriculture preservation policies.

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL LAND USE POLICIES IN THE MAGRUDER VALLEY

The residential character of the Magruder Valley, the sewered portion of the planning area, is developed or committed to development in accord with the 1966 Plan. The Master Plan encourages the continued development of the Magruder Valley.

The only major change to the 1966 Plan concerns 45 acres recommended for 12 houses per acre by the 1966 Plan; instead a density of 6 units per acre is proposed in order to reflect environmental constraints and actual development yields on adjoining properties. The topography on these properties makes higher yields than 6 or 7 units per acre very unlikely; less constrained land just to the north, although zoned for 8 units per acre actually yielded only 7 units acre even with a 20 percent density bonus for including moderately priced dwelling units.

A density of 6 units (RT-6) is also more compatible with the overall character of the Magruder Valley which consists mainly of low to medium density single-family homes.

The Planning Board will carefully review subdivision plans to ensure that development fronting Ridge Road or Route 124 is compatible with the existing land use pattern (small, residential lots with detached homes) and that environmental concerns are addressed.

A minor change to the 1966 Plan concerns a 5 acre property on Woodfield Road adjoining the swimming pool entrance. The 1966 Plan proposed 2 units per acre on this parcel. However, adjoining property is developed at a higher density (6 units per acre). To allow the property owner greater flexibility in developing this small amount of acreage, this Plan recommends 6 units per acre, which is compatible with adjoining development.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE POLICIES IN THE TRANSITION AREAS

The key residential issues relate to the transition areas lying between developed or soon-to-be developed portions of the Magruder Valley and outlying agriculture areas.

Presently zoned for half-acre residential lots, this land lies outside the sewer service area and includes many working farms. Retaining half-acre zoning would be inconsistent with plan policies to channel development to the sewer service area and to retain the small-scale, rural character of Damascus; and to preserve the County's agricultural base.

The following objectives have guided land use decisions for the transition area:

- Densities should be low enough to protect fragile environmental features. Numerous streams cut through the transition area, including natural trout waters (Little Bennett Creek) and streams feeding public water supply reservoirs (Patuxent River tributaries). Rural densities will best protect these streams from sedimentation and erosion.
- Residential development should be encouraged to cluster away from farmland to minimize negative effects on farming operations.
- The traditional development pattern of Damascus should be continued: individual lots along the ridge lines. Limited development along ridge roads is consistent with the rural character of Damascus; homes frame beautiful, even dramatic, views of rolling farmland, woodstands and stream valleys. Allowing this trend to continue would not open up extensive new areas to development, but would allow "rural infill" among existing residences. To allow residential infill to occur, 1 to 2 acre lots should be permitted if public water is available and if soils pass percolation tests.

Farmland which can be considered part of the larger County-wide agricultural area should be included in the Agricultural Reserve area.

The following transition area land-use recommendations are based on these objectives (numbers refer to Transition Area Map).

1. Ridge Road

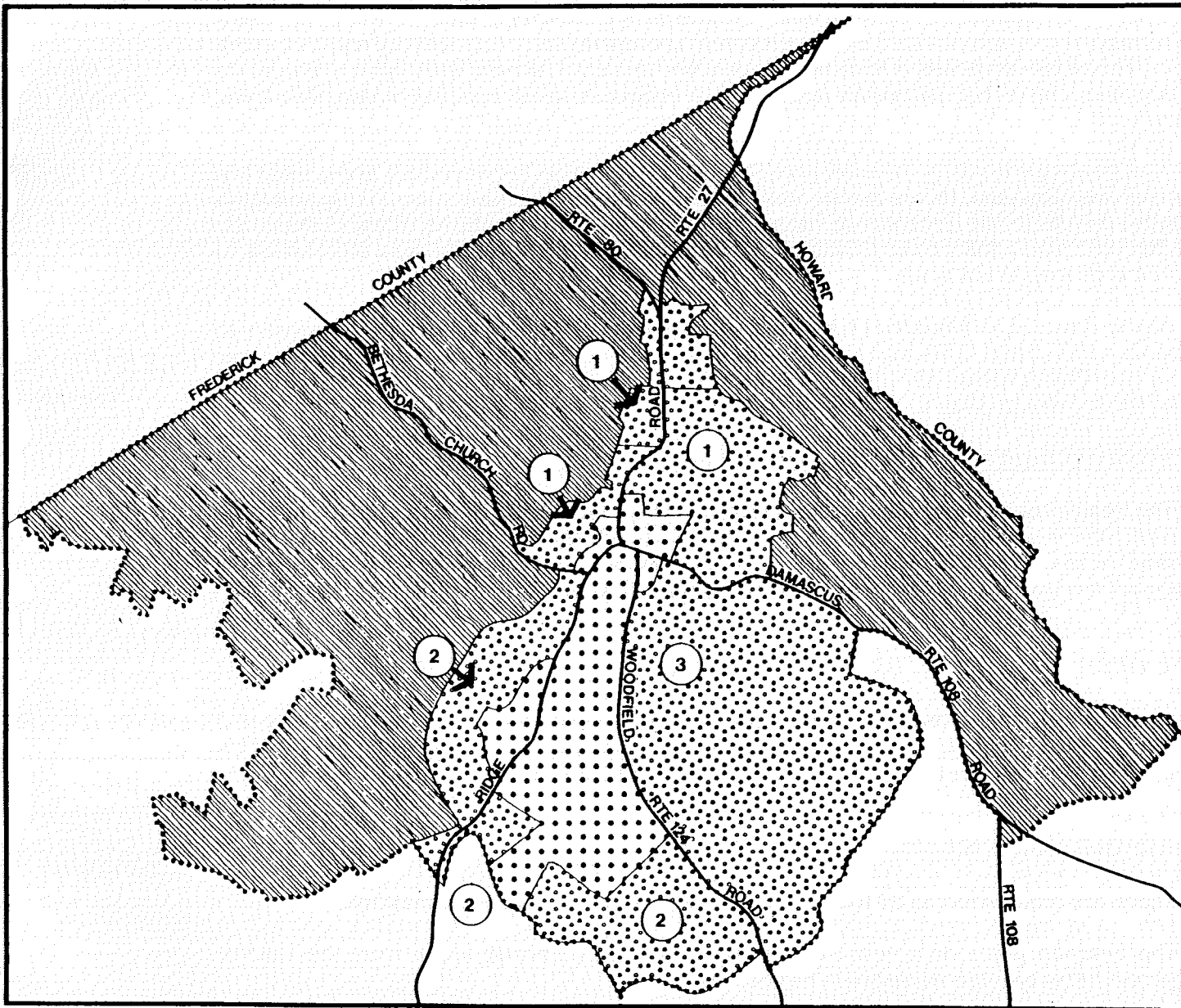
The land use pattern along Ridge Road north of the business area and south of Route 80 is a mix of houses fronting Ridge Road and farmland in the interior. Permitting residential infill along the frontage will continue historic development patterns. Near the business area, where residential subdivision has been most extensive and slopes pose fewer constraints to development, the Plan recommends a density of one house per 2 acres. North of Holsey Road, the development pattern becomes less dense and the number of farms increases. In this area, the Plan proposes a density of one house per 5 acres to begin the transition from Damascus to the agricultural reserve area further north.

To allow a small amount of residential infill north of Bethesda Church Road, the Plan recommends a density of one house per 2 acres. Soils here are poor for septic tanks (sewerage lines are being extended to nearby Lewis Drive to relieve failing septic tanks) so residential development should be limited. This area is inappropriate for agricultural preservation because of the existing development pattern and because of the rough terrain.





2. Rural Entryway along Ridge Road and Woodfield Road

Damascus is located north of an urbanizing area (Germantown and Gaithersburg) and a future new town (Clarksburg). As development proceeds in these areas, it is important that Damascus retain its identity as a separate community. Special care must be taken to provide a low density buffer along portions of Route 124 and Ridge Road to visually emphasize that Damascus is a separate, distinct community.

Along Ridge Road, north of Cedar Grove, two-acre densities are proposed. A sewer pumping station serves approximately 330 acres proposed for two-acre densities west of Ridge Road. Property owners will be encouraged to cluster development (minimum lot size: 25,000 square feet) with sewer in a way that preserves wooded areas, stream banks, steep slopes and scenic vistas. All these features contribute to a rural entry along Route 27.



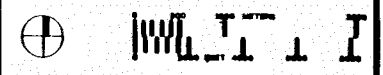
TRANSITION AREAS

-  TRANSITION AREA BETWEEN SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES AND FARMS
-  SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL (MAGRUDER VALLEY)
-  FARMS (AGRICULTURAL RESERVE)
-  1 PROPOSED LAND USES IN TRANSITION AREA (NUMBERS KEYED TO TEXT, 1-3)

Approved and Adopted: June 1982

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



Just south of Kings Valley Road are two properties which are designated for half-acre lots by the Clarksburg Master Plan. These properties form part of the rural entry into Damascus and are limited in development potential by a stream valley and steep slopes. This Plan proposes a density of one house per 5 acres, with public water, to facilitate the clustering of homes on more developable land fronting Ridge Road and Hawkes Road.

East of Ridge Road, a 91-acre parcel forms a transition between half acre, suburban residential development to the north and a highly productive family farm (Tregonning) to the south. Although the Tregonning farm, part of the Clarksburg Master Plan, is currently zoned for half-acre, the revised Clarksburg Plan will re-examine this area in relation to agricultural preservation goals.

Along Route 124 (Woodfield Road) 2 units per acre densities are also proposed to maintain a rural entry. This approach is consistent with the Approved and Adopted Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Open Space which designates this rural area for low density development.

3. Woodfield Road and Route 108 Transition Area

The residential character of this area is well-established. From an environmental viewpoint, there are relatively better soils for development here than in the other transition areas. Two units per acre densities are recommended with clustering encouraged towards Route 108, Woodfield Road and Hawkins Creamery Road.

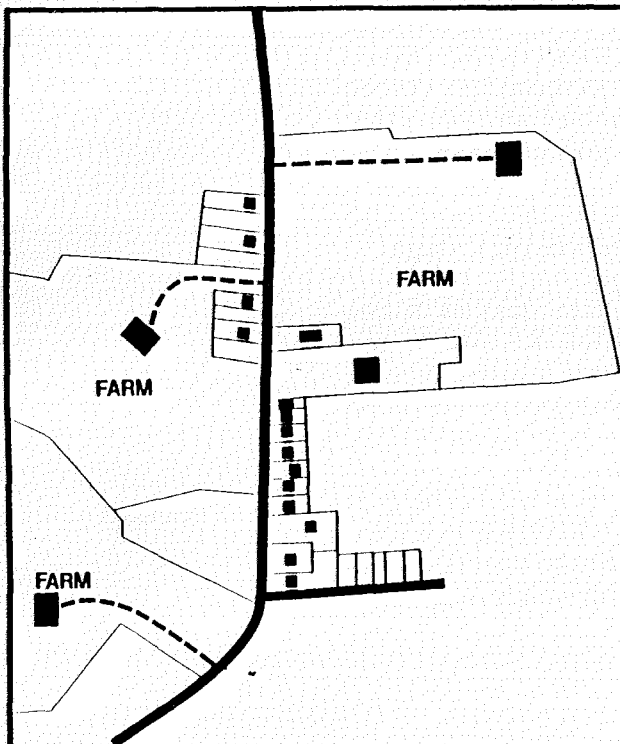
RURAL OPEN SPACE LAND USE POLICIES IN THE TRANSITION AREA

As shown on the Transition Areas map, Rural Open Space densities (1 house per 5 acres) are proposed as a transition from residential land uses to the Agricultural Reserve. This policy is discussed in the Agricultural and Open Space Preservation chapter.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

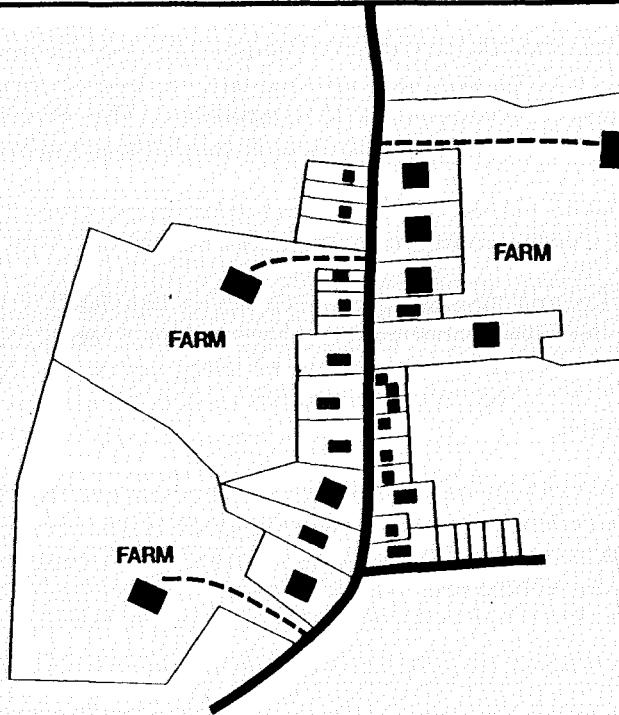
There are many sources of low-to-moderate income housing in Damascus.

The average price of a new home in Damascus is generally lower than the County average and helps provide moderate-cost housing.



RIDGE TOP DEVELOPMENT
Existing Pattern

DAMASCUS HAS DEVELOPED IN A LINEAR FASHION ALONG
RIDGE TOP ROADS.



RIDGE TOP DEVELOPMENT
Proposed Pattern of Infill

NEW DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED ALONG RIDGE TOPS
WHERE SOILS AND SLOPES ARE BETTER SUITED FOR
CONSTRUCTION. STREAM VALLEYS AND VALLEY WALLS SHOULD
REMAIN AS OPEN SPACE OR FARM RELATED USES.

RIDGE TOP
DEVELOPMENT
PATTERN

Approved and Adopted: June 1982

DAMASCUS
MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



For persons unable to afford these prices, the moderate-priced dwelling unit (MPDU) provisions of the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance offer an alternative. Every subdivision of fifty or more units must include a certain percentage of moderate-priced homes. Several subdivisions in Damascus (The Plantations, for example) already offer these less costly homes, and as future subdivisions are built, the supply will increase.

Damascus Gardens, a 104-unit apartment complex built by a private developer with federal and County assistance, provides rental units in the low and moderate rent range.

The Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) owns a 15 acre site east of Ridge Road near the Oak Drive intersection. The Commission has no plans for the site at the present time. Presently zoned for 12 units per acre, this Plan recommends a lower density (6 units per acre) to reflect environmental constraints and actual development yields on nearby parcels.

The market price of housing in Damascus; the MPDU program; assisted housing at Damascus Gardens and HOC ownership of a 15 acre property all help meet the need for low to moderate priced housing in Damascus. Although this Plan proposes no specific sites for additional affordable housing, recommended densities are proposed which will allow smaller lots sizes and less costly housing types (townhouses).

TRANSFERABLE DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDR) RECEIVING AREAS

The proposed Agriculture Reserve area in Damascus (P.A. 11) consists of 1,050 acres. Development rights are created at the rate of one development right per 5 acres. Thus, a "pool" of 210 development rights would be created by the proposed Agricultural Reserve area (see Agriculture and Open Space Preservation Section).

In accord with Planning Board policy to examine all Master Plans under review for TDR receiving areas, this Plan proposes three alternative Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) receiving areas where development rights could be transferred to increase density. These alternative areas are located on the southern edge of Damascus (PA 11). These properties help form a "rural" entry way along Ridge Road and Route 124. Increasing density through the TDR program may reduce the rural character of these particular parcels, but it will help strengthen the larger, County-wide agricultural reserve. This trade-off is proposed to further the public interest, namely, preservation of farmland. All TDR subdivision plans will be carefully reviewed to help ensure the rural residential character of the entry way is retained.

These receiving areas, if fully developed in accord with TDR program, would absorb 430 development rights. Density increases in two of these Receiving Areas will require sewage treatment capacity. As discussed in the Implementation Section, most of the treatment capacity in Damascus has been allocated; many allocations, however, have not been used to the Treatment Plant is not operating near its capacity. TDR receiving areas would simply compete for recaptured allocation. The third TDR receiving area should be eligible for public water in accord with the TDR program.

The proposed TDR receiving areas (shown on page 75) are:

Receiving Area A: Cedar Grove Area (91 acres)

- Present Zoning - Rural (one house per 5 acres)
- Proposed Base Density Without TDR - Rural Residential (one house per 2 acres)
- Proposed TDR Optional Density - 2 units per acre (half-acre lots)
- Maximum Density Increase With TDR - 135 houses

This parcel is part of the low-density entry proposed for Damascus. If developed as a receiving area, density in this property could increase to 2 units per acre.

Receiving Area B: Woodfield Road Area (126 acres)

- Present Zoning - Rural Residential (one house per 2 acres)
- Proposed Base Density - Rural Residential (one house per 2 acres)
- Proposed TDR Optional Density - two houses per acre (half-acre lots)
- Density Increase With TDR - 189 houses

This property also forms part of the rural entry into Damascus. The Agricultural and Rural Open Space Preservation Plan confirmed a density of one house per 2 acres for this parcel, which is presently being farmed. This parcel begins the transition from suburban residential densities to the northwest and the rural residential densities (2 acre lots) to the southeast and southwest. Allowing half-acre development through the transfer of development rights would shift the beginning of the transition area further south along Ridge Road. However, this trade-off is an acceptable one given the larger public purpose that a TDR program would implement: the preservation of farmland.

Although this Plan designates the entire 126 acres as a receiving area, the Planning Board recognizes only a portion of the property flows by gravity to the sewage treatment plant. This Plan does not endorse the construction of a pumping station to serve the property but the acreage which can be served by gravity can only be determined by

detailed engineering studies which are not part of this Master Plan. These studies should be undertaken at time of subdivision. Only that portion of the property which can be served by gravity is recommended as a receiving area.

Receiving Area C: North of Watkins Road (213 acres)

- Present Zoning - Rural Residential (one house per 2 acres)
- Proposed Base Density - Rural Residential (one house per 2 acres)
- Proposed TDR Optional Density - one house per acre
- Density Increase with TDR - 106 houses

A third receiving area is bounded to the north by Damascus Regional Park and to the south by Agriculture Reserve land. Owners of the Agriculture Reserve land also own the 213 acres north of Watkins Road. Allowing the transfer of development rights would permit an "internal" transfer from one portion of the property to another.

No sewer service is proposed, with or without TDR. However, if developed as a receiving area, this property should be eligible for public water to facilitate the transfer of rights.

A TDR density of one house per acre is consistent with the rural residential character of this area.

AGRICULTURAL AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

Damascus has always been a town surrounded by farms. Today, a substantial number of working farms are still present in the Master Plan area (see page 81, Agriculture and Open Space). The approved and adopted Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space in Montgomery County (October 1980) identifies farmland in this portion of Montgomery County as "the pivotal point in the County's agricultural and rural open space program." Without farming around Damascus, the character of Damascus and the upper county would change because Damascus links the two "halves" of the County's Agriculture Area and provides continuity for the western and eastern farming areas.

Preserving farmland in Montgomery County is adopted county policy. Past experience has shown that minimum lot sizes of 2 to 5 acres have not slowed conversion of farmland to residences. Much stricter subdivision requirements, coupled with economic incentives to encourage farming, are needed. The County's farmland is already dotted with many subdivisions. This does not make farmland preservation any less important or farming less viable - in fact, it only underscores the need for stricter controls if farmland is to be preserved for future generations.

Agricultural preservation in Damascus (P.A. 11) and the Master Plan Study Area as a whole is important not only in terms of maintaining the County's agricultural base, but in strengthening the role of Damascus as the rural commercial focal point of Upper Montgomery County. Between 1971 and 1980, residential development in the rural vicinity of Damascus equalled development in Damascus itself (P.A. 11) as can be seen in Table 7.

Channeling residential development from outlying areas to the center of Damascus will strengthen the rural satellite town concept as well as preserve farmland.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Much of the land around Damascus has already been designated "Agricultural Reserve" by the Agriculture and Open Space Plan to help preserve farmland from residential development pressures. Damascus itself (P.A. 11) was not studied as part of the County-wide Agriculture and Open Space Plan because a new Master Plan for Damascus was underway. Lands designated Agricultural Reserve are afforded special protection from urban and suburban development pressures. Non-farm uses, especially intensive

residential development, are discouraged and farm-related activities, such as farm markets and primary agricultural processing, are encouraged. Although farming is the preferred use in the Agricultural Reserve, the farmer does have some development options:

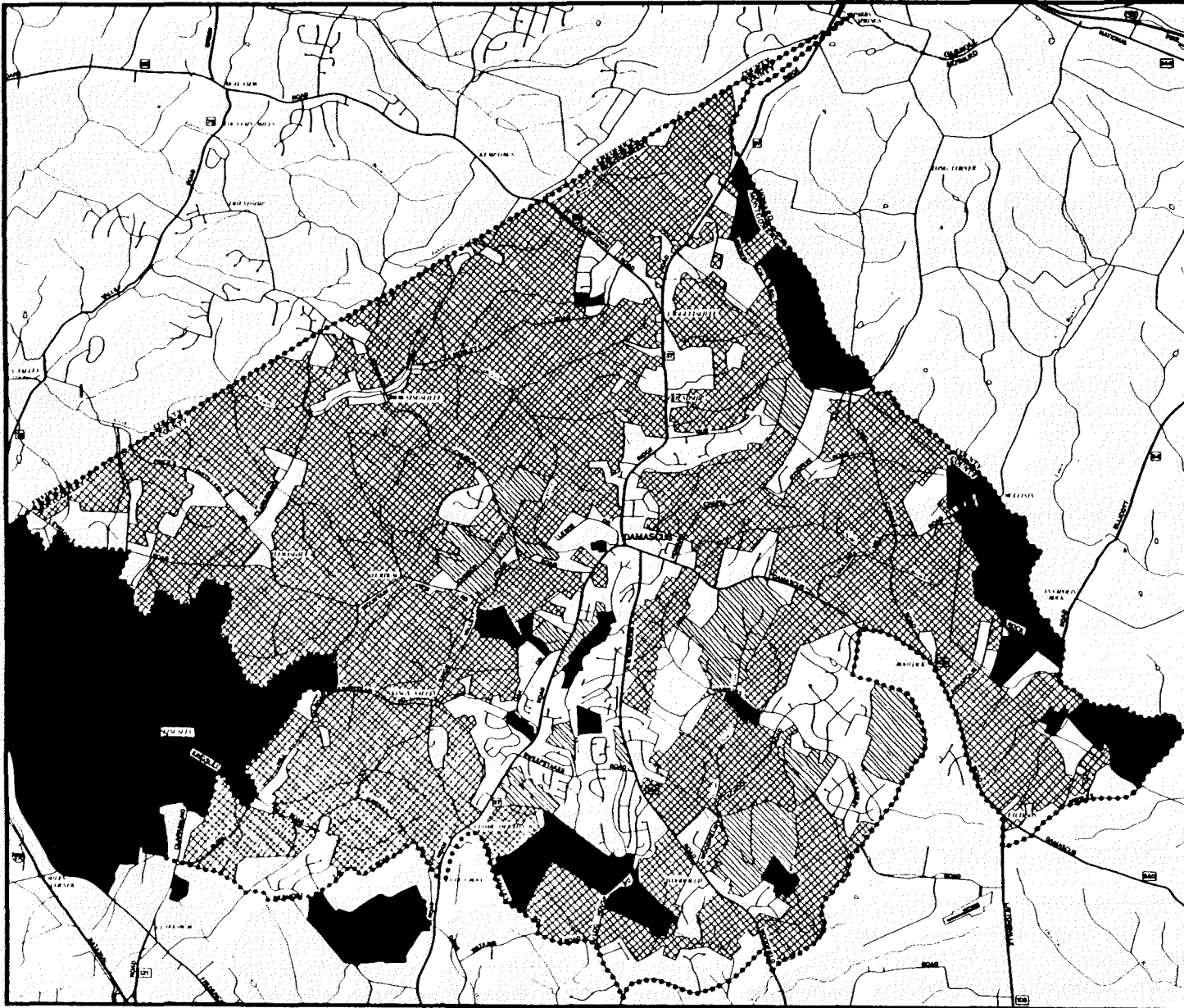
- One lot may be subdivided on the land for every 25 acres, and these lots may be as small as one acre, soils permitting;
- One development right may be sold off the land at the rate of one right per 5 acres (more about the "transfer of development rights" program later in this chapter).

TABLE 7





Damascus Housing Completions
1971-1980

Number of Completions	<u>Year</u>										Total
	'71	'72	'73	'74	'75	'76	'77	'78	'79	'80	
Damascus (P.A. 11)	25	59	85	39	8	37	51	163	29	149	645
Damascus Vicinity	<u>49</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>571</u>
Total	74	107	144	123	43	77	108	232	119	189	1,216

Source: Montgomery County Planning Board Staff



AGRICULTURE AND OPEN SPACE

-  WORKING FARMS
-  PUBLIC OWNED LAND
(STATE, M.N.C.P. & P.C.)
-  SUBDIVISION ACTIVITY
-  EXISTING RESIDENCES

Approved and Adopted: June 1982

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



One of the objectives of this Plan process is to determine what land should be included in the County-wide Agriculture Reserve and what land, upon closer examination, should be excluded from the Agriculture Reserve area. Many working farms are operating in Damascus but this Plan recommends for preservation only those farms which can be considered part of the larger, County-wide agricultural community. Presently, all the farms in Damascus (P.A. 11) are zoned for half-acre residential lots. This density is generally unrealistic given soil and bedrock constraints. More importantly, however, designating farmland as residential fails to recognize that:

- Farming is a viable industry and a reasonable use of the land;
- Preservation of farmland is in the public interest;
- The need to preserve regional food supplies close to primary markets has become vital to energy conservation;
- Preserving farmland in Montgomery County is important to maintaining a viable local and regional agricultural community;
- Damascus is in close proximity to active farming areas in adjacent counties.

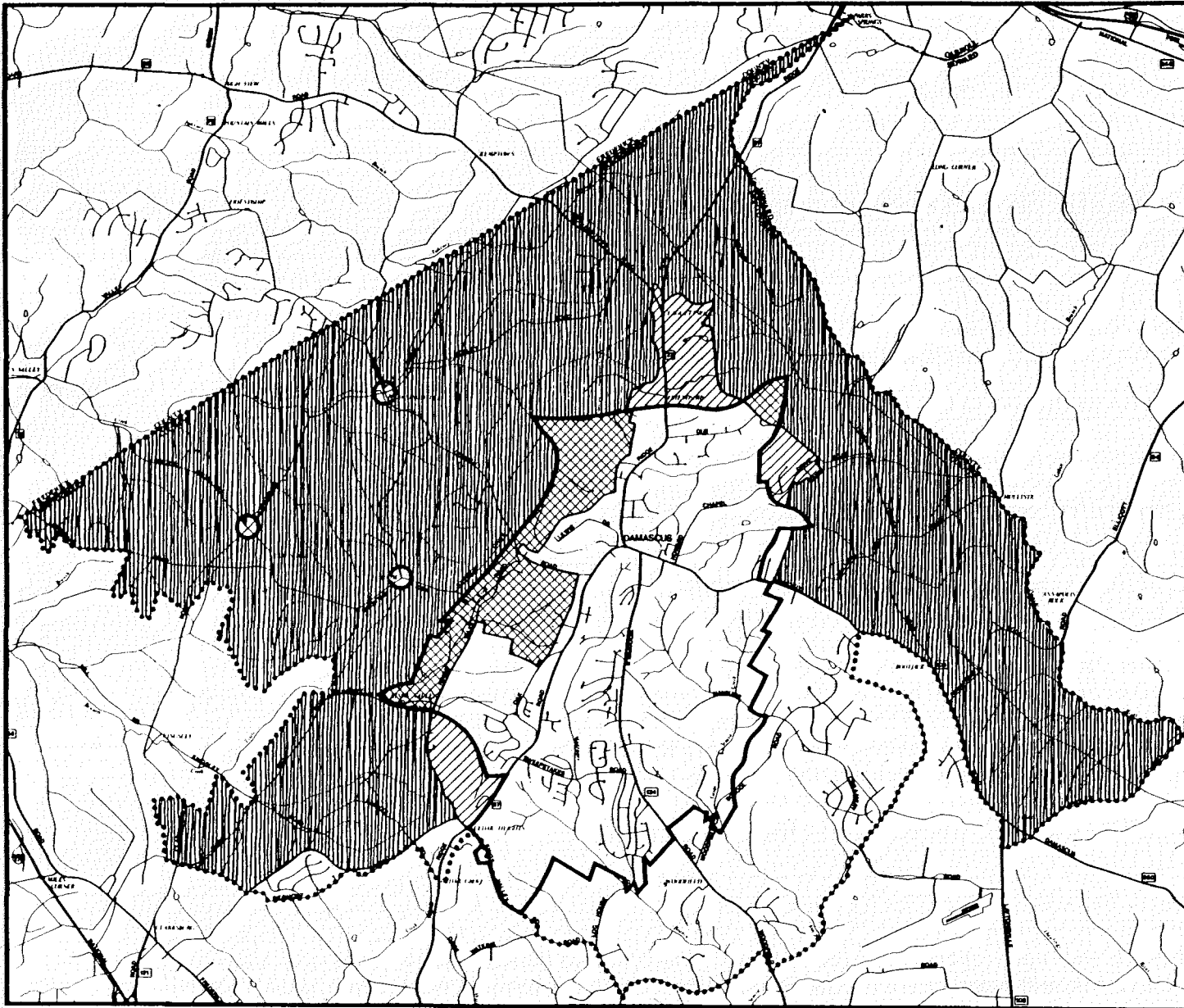
This Plan proposes 1,050 acres in and around Damascus (P.A. 11) be included in the County's Agricultural Reserve Area. The areas are shown on page 83, the Proposed Agricultural Reserve Area map. A more detailed discussion follows:

Kings Valley Road






This area is heavily wooded and includes a tributary of the Little Bennett Creek, a natural trout waterway.

Because of its long-standing agricultural character, its physical separation from nearby residential development and its common boundary with agricultural land identified in the Agricultural and Rural Open Space as critical, this Plan recommends approximately 325 acres be included in the Agriculture Reserve and 170 acres be designated for Rural Cluster zoning (one house per 5 acres, cluster option).

A long-standing family farm operation (the King Dairy Farm) is located south of Oak Ridge special park and spans both sides of Kings Valley Road. The dairying operation itself lies west of Kings Valley Road; this portion of the farm is recommended for Agriculture Reserve. Part of the farm does lie within the proposed boundaries of Little



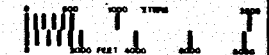
PROPOSED AGRICULTURE RESERVE AREA

-  AREA DESIGNATED AGRICULTURE BY: AGRICULTURE AND OPEN SPACE PLAN
-  AREAS PROPOSED TO BE EXCLUDED FROM AGRICULTURE RESERVE
-  AREAS PROPOSED TO BE INCLUDED IN AGRICULTURE RESERVE
-  RURAL COMMUNITIES
-  P.A. 11 (DAMASCUS BOUNDARY)

Approved and Adopted: June 1982

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



Bennett Stream Valley Park. This Plan recommends alternatives to fee-simple acquisition of this farmland be explored as a means of balancing park development and farmland preservation goals (see Parks and Recreation section for further discussion).

To the east of Kings Valley pond, the land is heavily wooded and only a small portion is easily farmed. The Rural Cluster zone is recommended here to allow limited residential development on the non-agricultural portions of the land. Homes should be located away from Kings Valley Road and away from land best suited for farming.

West of Ridge Road, North of Lewis Drive

This area (about 400 acres) is dominated by farmland. Steep slopes along Little Bennett Creek are heavily wooded but the more gently rolling slopes are planted in corn. Some residential development in this area is recommended by the Plan on properties fronting Ridge Road and Lewis Drive. However, interior parcels are better suited for agriculture and open space and should be included in the Agricultural Reserve.

Howard Chapel Drive

Farms operate to the north and south of Howard Chapel Drive. The major farms in the area are 238 and 104 acres respectively. The northern portions of these two farms abut residential development (.5 to 2 acre lots) along Gue Road but the southern acreage (340 acres) is undeveloped and adjoins farmland in the Agriculture Reserve area. Two acre densities (with a cluster option) are recommended north of Howard Chapel Drive. Rural Cluster zoning is recommended south of Howard Chapel Drive to provide a transition from 2 acre residential development to the Agriculture Reserve.

This Plan also recommends that 860 acres be excluded from the Agriculture Reserve area. Damascus is characterized by a great many working farms. However, not every farm should be preserved. There are working farms in Damascus which, because of their proximity to existing and pending development, should be designated for low-density rural residential rather than for Agricultural Reserve. They are:

Cedar Heights Area, West of Route 27 - 220 acres

This area forms part of the rural entry into Damascus. Due to the proximity of built and recorded subdivisions (Spring Garden Estates, Kings Valley Manor), the Agricultural Reserve Zone is inappropriate. Two acre densities are recommended to provide a mix of residences and open space. To encourage clustering of homes away from the Little Bennett Creek and wooded areas, the Plan recommends the extension of public sewer and

public water. A pump station already serves this area and can accommodate the amount of development generated by 2 acre densities.

North of Damascus along Ridge Road - 390 acres

In accord with Plan policies to allow limited residential expansion along the ridge tops, this Plan recommends densities of one house per 5 acres and one house per 2 acres along Ridge Road north of Damascus. This policy only applies to properties fronting Ridge Road; interior parcels should remain in Agriculture Reserve.

A small area (10 acres) at the intersection of Gue Road and Howard Chapel Road is recommended for exclusion from the Agriculture Reserve because of subdivision activity (Watkins Village and linear residential development). The Agriculture Reserve designation would only preserve a 47 acre tract already surrounded by residential development.

RURAL OPEN SPACE RECOMMENDATIONS

East of Woodfield Road and south of Route 108, extensive development has occurred on 1 to 2 acre lots. This Plan continues the rural residential character of this area.

The only density change involves land to the east of Great Seneca Creek. Most of the remaining vacant land adjoins the Creek; Rural Cluster (one house per 5 acres) rather than 2 acre lots is recommended to reflect environmental constraints to development and to encourage clustering away from Great Seneca Creek.

This Plan recommends that subdivision applications already on file in this area be permitted to proceed through the subdivision process when proposed development is generally in accord with Rural Cluster densities.

AGRICULTURE RESERVE: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

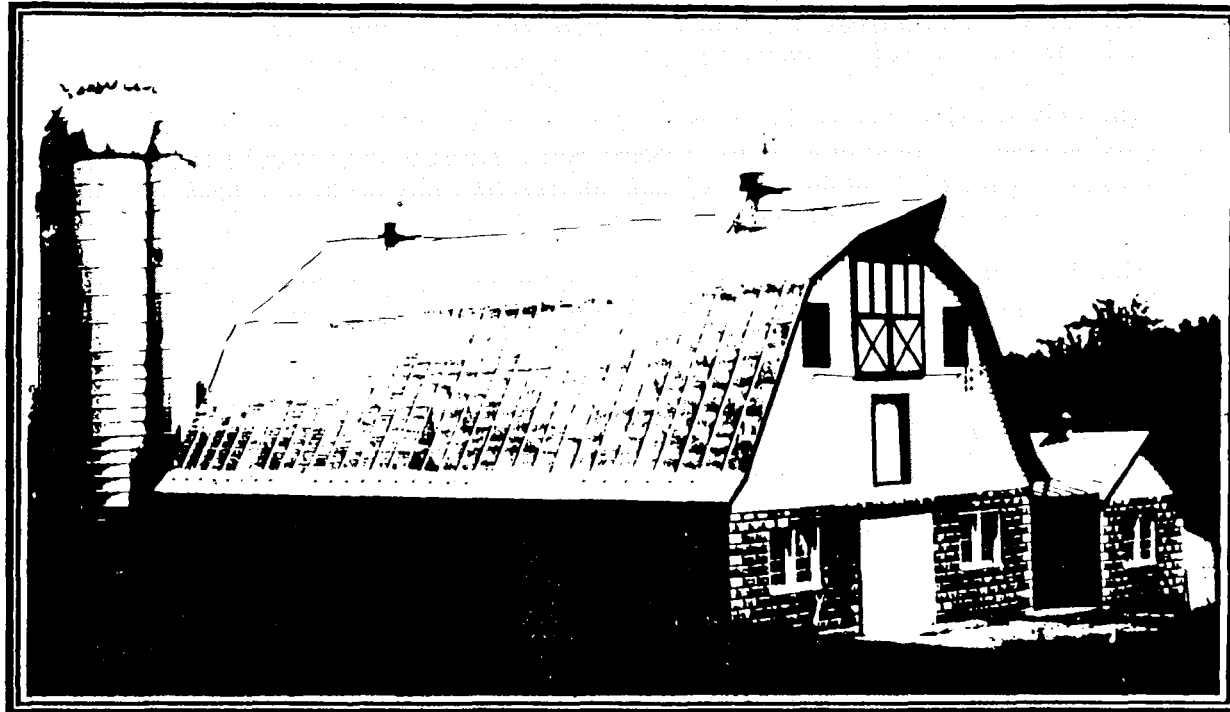
The preferred use in the Agricultural Reserve area is agriculture. Only one residential lot may be subdivided for every twenty-five acres. The owner of a one hundred-acre farm in the Agricultural Reserve, for example, may subdivide only four lots:

$$\frac{100 \text{ acres}}{1 \text{ lot per } 25 \text{ acres}} = 4 \text{ lots, each of which may be as small as one acre, soils permitting.}$$

Landowners in Agricultural Reserve area also have another development option: they may sell development rights from their land at the rate of one development right per five acres after deducting for any new or future houses on the property. A short pamphlet entitled Plowing New Ground, published by the Montgomery County Planning Board, explains the Transferable Development Rights (TDR) program in more detail.

Development rights can be most easily compared to coupons: each coupon (or development right) allows the purchaser to build one additional house in certain places ("receiving areas") outside the Agricultural Reserve. Who would buy development rights? Developers would because they could build more homes and realize more profits with development rights "coupons."

The TDR program attempts to give farmers some return on the development value which has accrued on their land over many years. By shifting development from farm areas to more urban and suburban areas, the TDR program preserves farmland while providing equity to the farmer.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The major comments at the Community's Issues and Alternatives Forum regarding community facilities were as follows:

- provide more recreational development (walkways, bikepaths) in Magruder Valley;
- provide more soccer fields;
- provide some local recreation facilities at Damascus Regional Park;
- provide better pedestrian access in town;
- expand library but keep it in the Damascus Shopping Center;
- explain impact of new development on school needs.

The proposed plan offers the following responses:

PARKS AND RECREATION

The Magruder Valley, a wooded stream valley between the Damascus Regional Park and the business area, offers a unique opportunity for a hiker-biker pathway system. About 162 acres of the Magruder Stream Valley (which also extends south of the regional park) are already owned by M-NCPPC; another 249 acres will be dedicated to M-NCPPC as subdivisions are developed.

This Plan endorses the development of the Magruder Branch Stream Valley Park and recommends that the proposed Magruder Valley Park be extended to the edge of the Damascus business district (possibly to the theater parking lot) to provide the opportunity for a continuous trail from the town to the regional park.

Although County-wide hiker-biker funds are available, trails in more densely populated areas have higher priority. New priority lists, which could include the Magruder Branch Stream Valley Park, will be developed by Parks Department staff and the Planning Board with adequate representation by residents through the Citizens' Bike Committee and Recreation Advisory Board Committee.

There are a number of equestrian trails in the Damascus area which have been established and maintained by user groups on an informal basis. Additional equestrian trails are proposed in the Magruder Stream Valley Park and in the Damascus Regional Park (see Magruder Branch Stream Valley Park Design Concept Map, page 91). These trails will also be established and maintained by their user groups (including Trail

Riders of Today) and would be in the form of narrow dirt paths, separate from the hiker-biker trails that will be built when the Stream Valley Park is developed.

A need for more local parks was raised by citizens at the community forums. Although two neighborhood parks are located in Damascus (Damascus and John Haines Neighborhood Parks), they provide only playground equipment and a small basketball court. Citizens stressed the need for ballfields that the community can use (fields at nearby Damascus Regional Park are available only to teams by permit).

How Can Local Recreation Needs of the Community be met

The Planning Board is recommending two park areas to provide additional local recreation.

- (1) Develop a local park at Moyer Road. This 25-acre park is owned by M-NCPPC but is undeveloped. A key advantage of this park site is that it is adjacent to the Magruder Valley and could be an integral part of any pathway system developed in the Valley.

A 10-acre vacant school site adjacent to the Moyer Road Park will be considered for acquisition, if declared surplus by the Board of Education.

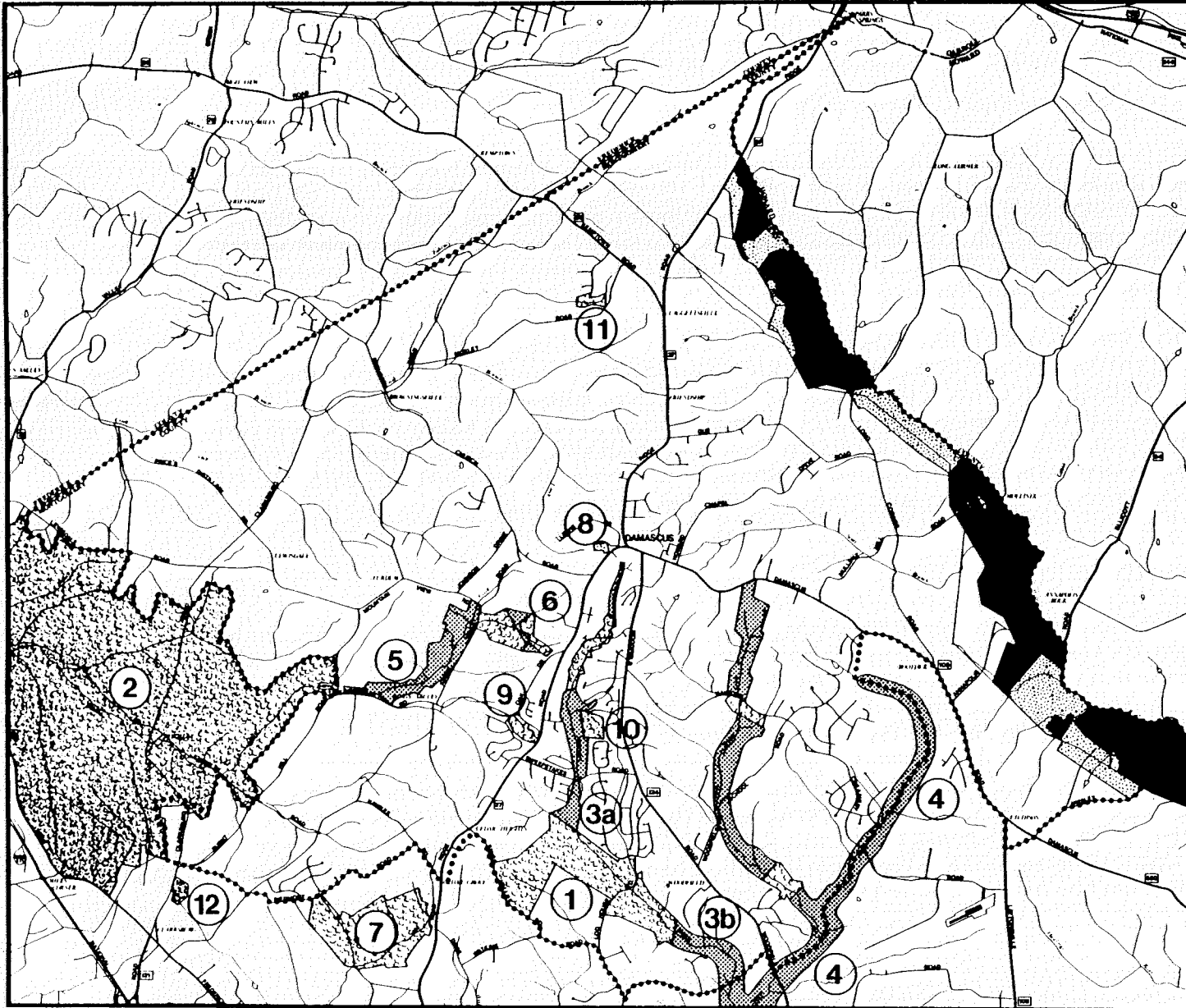
- (2) Develop local recreation areas at Damascus Regional Park. This would include an informal softball field for community use. Soccer fields currently programmed for the park will be available to the community when not in use.

Proposed Changes to the 1966 Parks and Recreation Plan





The 1966 Master Plan proposed five local parks and recreation centers. Since population growth is not expected to reach levels anticipated by the 1966 Plan, it is unlikely this many parks and recreation centers will be needed or funded.

This Plan recommends that local recreation centers and parks proposed on the outskirts of Damascus by the 1966 Plan be eliminated and that future local park development focus on close-in sites like Moyer Road.

Another park that is being re-evaluated as to need is Oak Ridge Conservation Park. About 64 acres are in public ownership; another 12 acres are proposed for acquisition (this compares to 132 acres proposed in the 1966 Plan). Oak Ridge is primarily forested and includes a tributary of Little Bennett Creek. Development would be conservation oriented



PARKLAND MAP

-  EXISTING MNC.P.P.C. PARKLAND
-  PROPOSED MNC.P.P.C. PARKLAND
-  EXISTING STATE & WSSC PARKLAND
-  PROPOSED STATE & WSSC PARKLAND

MNC.P.P.C. PARKS

REGIONAL PARKS

1. DAMASCUS REGIONAL
2. LITTLE BENNETT REGIONAL

STREAM VALLEY PARKS

- 3a. UPPER MAGRUDER BRANCH
- 3b. LOWER MAGRUDER BRANCH
4. GREAT SENECA EXTENSION
5. LITTLE BENNETT

SPECIAL PARKS

6. OAK RIDGE
7. OVID HAZEN WELLS

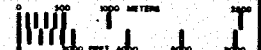
LOCAL USE PARKS

8. DAMASCUS NEIGHBORHOOD
9. JOHN HAINES NEIGHBORHOOD
10. MOYER ROAD POTENTIAL LOCAL PARK
11. NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION AREA NORTH POINT
12. KINGS LOCAL PARK

Approved and Adopted: June 1982

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



with primarily passive recreation facilities (hiker-biker and nature trails; picnic and playground areas). Oak Ridge would provide a park link between Damascus and Little Bennett Regional Park. The need for this park will be explored in more detail in light of the final recommendations of the Master Plan for surrounding land use.

Little Bennett Stream Valley Park

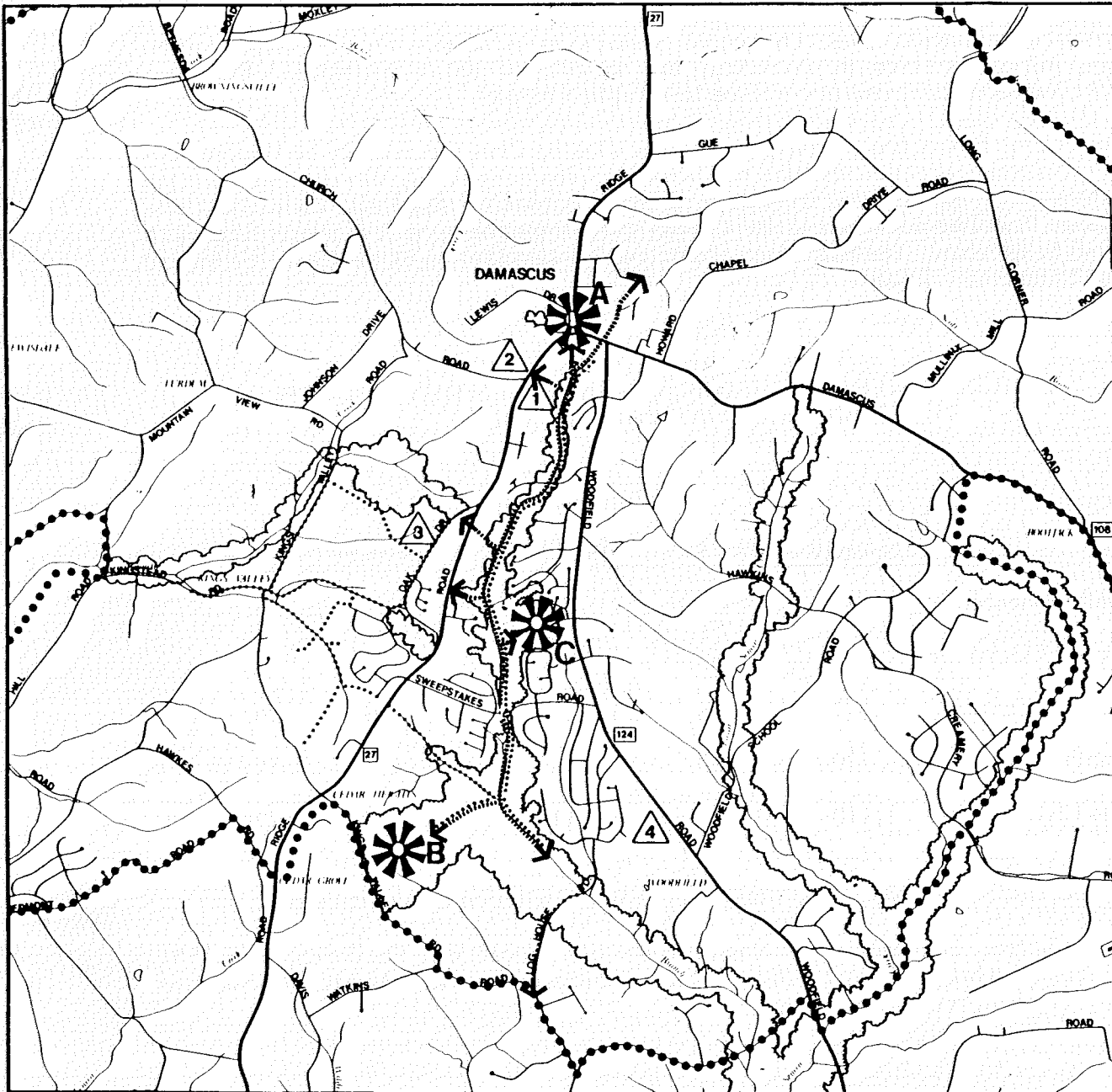
This stream valley park follows Little Bennett Creek and lies upstream from Little Bennett Regional Park. This is a significant natural resource area because of Little Bennett Creek's high water quality and its attributes as a natural trout stream (brown trout reproduction). All efforts should be made to protect the natural environment in this stream valley area, as well as protecting the migration routes for wildlife in and out of Little Bennett Regional Park.

The Land Use Plan identifies approximately 115 acres in this stream valley park. A sizeable portion of this acreage in the park taking line is from one property, the King Farm, totalling approximately 75 acres. Every effort will be made to negotiate for a scenic easement, without public cost, on this portion of the stream valley park area if two objectives can be met: (1) public access for future trail system through the property, and (2) the conservation criteria usually associated with stream valley parkland, which should also provide for protection against over grazing and over cropping.





DAMASCUS LIBRARY

The Damascus Branch of the Montgomery County Library Department is located in the Damascus Shopping Center, in a leased storefront. Although the library owns a site for a new building at the corner of Woodfield Road and Route 108, completion of a new library is not programmed until 1990. Until that time, the County Department of Public Libraries is recommending expansion of the storefront facility.

The Library Department may consider alternate sites to the property at the corner of Woodfield Road and Route 108 depending on future growth patterns. As part of Plan Implementation, the Planning Board will work with Department of Public Libraries staff to evaluate other locations which may be linked to the future Magruder Valley Park trail and which may be better oriented to future commercial and residential development.



**MAGRUDER
BRANCH STREAM
VALLEY PARK
DESIGN CONCEPT**

-  MAJOR OPEN SPACE & PARKLAND AREAS
-  HIKER-BIKER PATHS
-  EQUESTRIAN TRAILS
-  PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY

MAJOR ACTIVITY CENTERS

- A** DAMASCUS TOWN CENTER
- B** DAMASCUS REGIONAL PARK
- C** PROPOSED MOYER ROAD LOCAL PARK

SCHOOLS

- 1** DAMASCUS HIGH SCHOOL
- 2** DAMASCUS ELEM. SCHOOL
- 3** BAKER JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
- 4** WOODFIELD ELEM. SCHOOL

Approved and Adopted: June 1982

**DAMASCUS
MASTER PLAN**

Montgomery County, Maryland



SCHOOLS

Damascus residents cite the school system as a source of community pride. Generally, all the schools in Damascus are at or just below capacity. Five-year projections indicate this trend to continue (see Table 8 below).

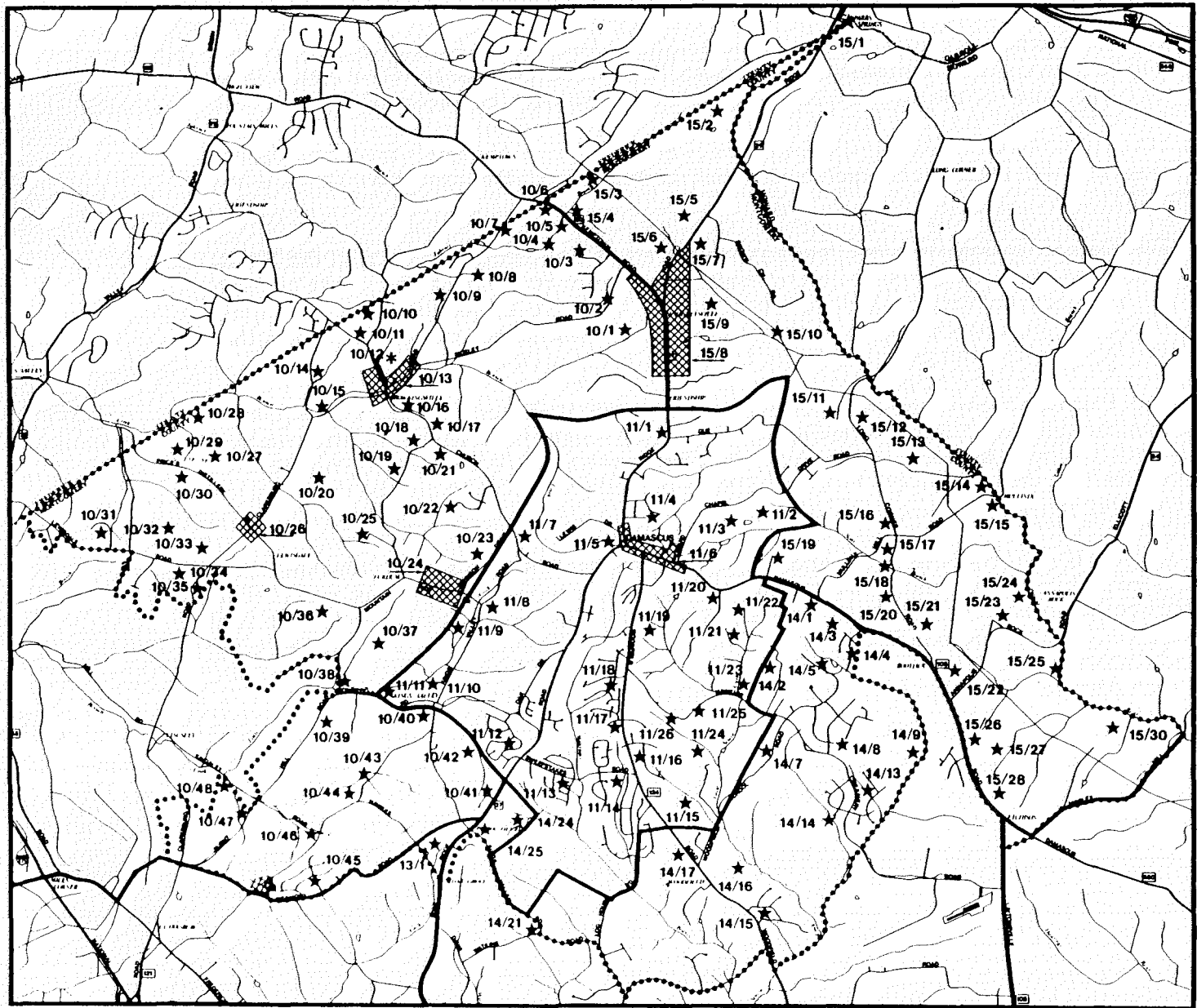
The School Board has prepared a 15-year Master Plan for schools in Montgomery County. This Plan recommends that the Hawkins Creamery Road, Moyer Road and Oak Drive future elementary school sites be retained, but that the Magruder Elementary site (Sweepstakes Road) be conveyed to the County government because it is poorly located to future growth patterns. The Plan also recommends modernization of the Cedar Grove and Woodfield Elementary Schools.

TABLE 8
CURRENT AND PROJECTED SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: 1980-1996
DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN AREA






School	Enrollment- Capacity	Enrollment By Year			
		1982-83	1985-86	1990-91	1995-96
Woodfield Elementary	380	431	442	Restudy*	
Cedar Grove Elementary	329	266	295	361	390
Damascus Elementary	593	498	469	509	547
Baker Junior High	730	610	535	463	521
Damascus High School	1,180	1,120	1,148	776	778

* Restudy for possible boundary changes or building addition if overutilized.

Source: 15-Year Comprehensive Master Plan for Educational Facilities, May 1981, Montgomery County Public Schools, Department of Educational Facilities Planning and Development.



HISTORIC SITES

-  HISTORIC DISTRICTS
-  SITES IDENTIFIED IN COUNTY ATLAS OF HISTORIC SITES
-  HISTORIC RESOURCE SHOWN ON MASTER PLAN FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION (10/12 MENDELSON TERR., BROWNSVILLE)
-  PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY
-  DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN BOUNDARY

NOTE: This plan proposes that Historic District 11/6 be removed from the Atlas.

Approved and Adopted: June 1982

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Montgomery County Atlas of Historic Sites identifies five historic districts and 116 historic sites within the Damascus Master Plan Area boundary. (The Atlas is an inventory and many of the sites appear only because they were constructed before 1900). One of these historic districts and 24 historic sites are located within Damascus (Planning Area 11). This abundance of historic locations is illustrative of the small town atmosphere of the area: the deep roots, old family ties and sense of the past that pervade the community.

The Damascus business area itself is identified as an historic district on the Atlas. Renovations to many of the shops along Main Street, the removal of the Hyatt building and the pending renovations and addition to the Bank of Damascus have left little authenticity to the historic nature of the business area. The historic sites and homes that do exist are scattered and generally lie at the edges of the district.

The Planning Board recommends that the Damascus Historic District be removed from the Montgomery County Atlas of Historic Sites. Individual sites presently located within this area may be added to the Atlas, but will have to be recommended on their own merit. The four other districts located within the study area should also be re-examined for historical merit.

Currently only one site in the Planning Area, Mendelsohn Terrace in Browningsville, is included in the Montgomery County Master Plan for Preservation. Listing in this Plan requires an owner to obtain an "historic area work permit" before making any changes to a site or structure. Properties listed in the County Atlas of Historic sites are afforded only limited, interim protection from destruction by demolition because the County will not issue such permits until the significance of the historic site has been reviewed.

IMPLEMENTATION

There are many ways of implementing a MasterPlan:

- zoning practices;
- subdivision review;
- public funding of recommended projects;
- mandatory referral;
- citizen involvement;
- water and sewer service recommendations.

ZONING PRACTICES

Zoning is one of the most effective way of implementing a Master Plan. A Master Plan is a guide for growth; it recommends how property should develop but zoning actually regulates land use in specific accord with the Master Plan. Zoning determines what uses are allowed on a property; imposes building height limitations; and determines setback requirements and open space requirements.

When the Damascus Master Plan process is completed and a revised Master Plan adopted, the entire Master Plan area will be rezoned in accord with Plan recommendations (see Proposed Zoning map). This is called the Sectional Map Amendment process. This will help insure that future development occurs in accord with the Damascus Master Plan.

This Plan proposes a change to the Zoning Ordinance text to provide property owners access to public water lines in areas proposed for 2-acre densities to allow clustering of homes on better soils. Presently, clustering is only permitted in the RE-2C (two acre, cluster option) zone if public water and public sewer are available. Sewer availability is limited in Damascus but water lines exist along many of the roadways (see Water and Sewer Service Recommendation). The following text amendment would permit clustering in the RE-2C zone with public water alone (soils must still pass standard percolation tests).

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ALLOW CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT ON PUBLIC WATER IN RE-2C ZONE

59-C -1.5 CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

59-C-1.52 Special Requirements

59-C-1.522 Community water and sewer. No land shall be subdivided under this method and no building permit shall be issued unless the resulting development will be connected to community water and sewer. The only exception to this requirement is the RE-2C zone where land that is not served by community sewer may be subdivided under this method if it meets all of the following conditions:

- (a) An approved and adopted master plan or sector plan specifically recommends cluster development with community water but not community sewer.
- (b) The resulting development will be connected to community water.
- (c) The resulting development meets all of the requirements for individual sewerage systems outlined in the most recent County Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan and Executive Regulation No. 5-79 on Individual Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Systems.

The RE-2C zone permits cluster development on parcels of land containing less than 50 acres only upon the Planning Board's finding that cluster development is desirable from an environmental perspective. Such a finding would support the Plan's intent to encourage property owners to cluster away from environmentally sensitive steep slopes and towards ridge lines.

SUBDIVISION REVIEW

Zoning determines the general use of property (residential or industrial, for example). Subdivision regulations govern how a particular property is divided into lots, streets and open space. The following Plan recommendations will be implemented through the subdivision review process:

- Environmental Review. Many of the densities recommended must be carefully reviewed as to environmental effects. Where warranted, actual densities can be lower than the maximum allowed by the zone.
- Stormwater Management. Residential subdivision will be reviewed to assure proper sediment control and stormwater management in the planning area.
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Path System. The Planning Board will use its subdivision review authority to ensure that development plans indicate pedestrian and bicycle paths proposed by the Master Plan.
- Roadways. Subdivision plans must reflect the roadway network proposed by the Transportation Plan.

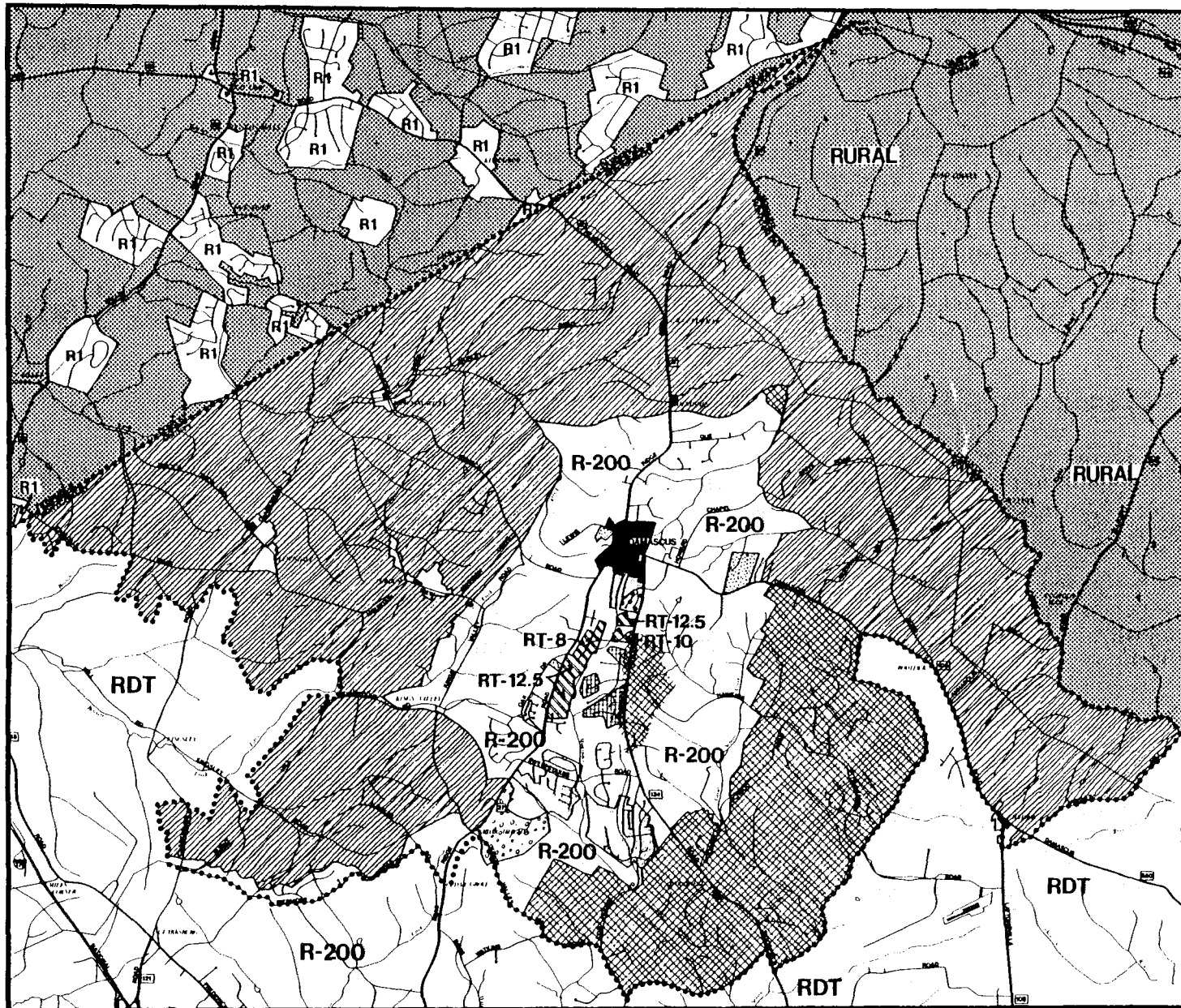
PUBLIC FUNDING OF RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

Many of the projects or public improvements recommended in this Plan will require public funding. Developing a pedestrian pathway along the Magruder Valley, for example, or making improvements to the business area street network, will require public expenditures.















Each year, the Montgomery County Council adopts a Capital Improvements Program (CIP), a 6-year schedule of expenditures. Amending this schedule to include funding for public improvements proposed in a Master Plan is the first step towards their implementation.

MANDATORY REFERRAL

All publicly funded acquisition and construction projects must be reviewed by the Montgomery County Planning Board. This review is advisory to the agency proposing the development. This process will allow Planning Board and citizen input on projects like the new library and any street improvements proposed by the state or County.



GENERALIZED EXISTING ZONING

-  **RURAL**
(5 ACRE LOTS)
-  **AGRICULTURE RESERVE**
(RURAL DENSITY TRANSFER)
-  **RESIDENTIAL ESTATE**
(2 ACRE LOTS)
-  **R-200**
ONE-FAMILY DETACHED
(LARGE LOT 20,000 SQ. FT.)
-  **R-150**
ONE-FAMILY DETACHED
(15,000 SQ. FT.)
-  **R-90**
ONE-FAMILY DETACHED &
ATTACHED (9,000 SQ. FT.)
-  **R-60**
ONE-FAMILY DETACHED &
ATTACHED (6,000 SQ. FT.)
-  **RT-8**
TOWNHOUSE
(8 DU'S PER ACRE)
-  **RT-10**
TOWNHOUSE
(10 DU'S PER ACRE)
-  **RT-12.5**
TOWNHOUSE
(12.5 DU'S PER ACRE)
-  **R-30**
MULTI-FAMILY
LOW DENSITY
-  **COMMERCIAL**
(C-1 & C-2)
-  **INDUSTRIAL**
(I-1 & I-3)
-  **NEIGHBORING COUNTIES**
ARE AGRICULTURE OR
RURAL ZONES

Approved and Adopted: June 1982

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Zoning and subdivision regulatory techniques do not govern building design or facades. Private developers make these decisions. However, private developers are often receptive to community recommendations regarding architectural styles. The Planning Board's weekly agenda is one way for the community to be aware of pending development proposals. Meeting with the developer and identifying community design concerns is an important way for citizens to affect building appearance.

WATER AND SEWER SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

The availability of public sewer and/or water is critical to Plan implementation. Higher residential densities may be proposed by a master plan, but if public water and sewer is not provided, this type of development cannot occur. Plan proposals for where and how public services should be extended are discussed below on the Water and Sewer Service Area Map.








Water Service Areas

One of the striking aspects of the Water Service Map is the length of waterline extension along Ridge Road, Bethesda Church Road and Route 108. These lines exist for two reasons: they were either extended before adoption of the Water and Sewer Plan; or they were extended to serve health problem areas. Currently, County policy states that intervening or nearby parcels in areas where lines were extended for these reasons should not be connected to the system. As a result, most of the property adjoining these lines in the Damascus area is not presently eligible for service.

In cases where soils are suitable for septic systems, the availability of public water could allow lots less than an acre in size because acreage would not be needed for well sites. This Plan proposes that limited residential development (generally, 1 house per 2 acres) along Ridge Road and east of Route 124 be permitted, consistent with Damascus traditional growth pattern. To implement this concept, the Planning Board recommends that property owners in these areas be permitted access to public water. An amendment to the Zoning Ordinance (see Zoning Practices) is proposed to allow clustering of homes on smaller lots with public water. It must be emphasized that the land must still meet all septic system standards; public water will permit smaller lots only if these smaller lots pass percolation tests.



PROPOSED SEWER & WATER SERVICE AREAS

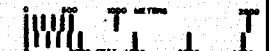
-  EXISTING & PROPOSED
COMMUNITY SEWER &
WATER
-  EXISTING & PROPOSED
COMMUNITY WATER
-  WATER SERVICE WILL
BE PROVIDED IN
ACCORD WITH TDR
PROGRAM [see text]
-  SEWAGE PUMPING
STATION
-  SEWAGE TREATMENT
PLANT
-  EXISTING WATER
LINES
-  PROPOSED POTOMAC-
EDISON MONTGOMERY,
DAMASCUS MT AIRY
230 KV LINE

NOTES: 1) ALL SERVICE AREAS HAVE IMMEDIATE PRIORITY
2) WATER SERVICE WILL BE PROVIDED TO AREAS PROPOSED FOR RE-ZONING ONLY IF THE ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT IS APPROVED [see text]
3) AREAS TO BE SERVED BY COMMUNITY WATER WITHOUT SEWER MUST STILL MEET ALL REQUIREMENTS FOR ON-SITE SEWAGE SYSTEMS
4) IT IS ASSUMED THAT ALL SEWER SERVICE AREAS EITHER FLOW BY GRAVITY TO THE TREATMENT PLANT OR CAN BE SERVED BY PUMPING STATIONS 'B' OR 'D' AND THE PROPOSED GRINDER PUMPS. NO NEW PUMPING STATIONS ARE RECOMMENDED.

Approved and Adopted: June 1982

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



Sewer Service Areas

Densities proposed in the Magruder Valley will be served by existing community sewer and water systems. The major implementation issues regarding public sewer are:

- How should existing treatment capacity be allocated to implement land use proposals in this Plan. Should the present sewage treatment allocation system for Damascus be abandoned?
- What are the alternatives for providing additional sewage treatment capacity?

Although community sewerage facilities in the Damascus area are owned and operated by the WSSC, the Damascus system has its own sewage treatment plant which is completely separate from other WSSC sewerage facilities in Montgomery County. Most of the existing service area (see map, page 103) lies within the Magruder Valley between Routes 27 and 124. There are two pumping stations serving areas outside of the Magruder Valley, one for the Damascus Shopping Center and one for Spring Garden Estates (known as pump station "D"). The major interceptor follows Magruder Branch from its headwaters near Route 108 south through Damascus Regional Park to a pumping station located near Welsh Road. The sewage is then pumped a short distance to the sewage treatment plant which is located in the park.

The Damascus Sewage Treatment Plant was built in the early 1970's and upgraded in 1978 from secondary to advanced wastewater treatment. It has a design capacity of 750,000 gallons per day. The average monthly flow for 1980 was only 123,000 gallons per day.

Allocation Policy

Capacity in the Damascus Sewage Treatment Plant is allocated under a policy established by the County's FY 1978-1987 Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan. The Executive's proposed FYs 1981-1990 plan update has recommended the transfer of some commercial allocation to residential and the use of more recent unit flow factors. The allocations which would result from the policy as amended are given in Table 8.

This table shows that nearly all of the allocation for new residential development has been committed. This is significant, given the fact that actual flows at the treatment plant are only 16 percent of the design capacity. Even based on the current Planning Board high growth forecast, the existing treatment capacity should be adequate to support the population expected in the year 2000. The allocation policy does provide for the

TABLE 8

DAMASCUS SERVICE AREA ALLOCATION SUMMARY

Category	Sub-Total	Flow (gpd)*	Total
1a. Health Problem Areas Due to Failing Septic Systems			21,000
1b. Potential Future Health Problem Areas			66,850
2. Public Facilities			
Public Schools			
(a) Damascus Elementary	4,428		
(b) Baker Junior High	4,088		
(c) Damascus High	7,920		
(d) Woodfield	2,064		
Library Facilities	500		
Fire Facilities	500		
Subtotal			19,500
3a. Existing Commercial Area	33,300		33,300
3b. Future Commercial			
Currently Allocated**	3,272		
Currently Unallocated**	26,128		
Subtotal			29,400
4. Residential Development			
Currently Allocated (including existing hookups)**	553,370		
Currently Unallocated**	26,580		
Subtotal			579,950
TOTAL			750,000

* gpd = gallons per day

** As of September 9, 1981

Source: Proposed FY's 1981-1990 Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan; Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission.

"recapture" of commitments in cases where units have not proceeded to construction within one year (the County is considering a change to 18 months). It appears that a number of commitments could be recaptured on this basis if a "waiting list" for sewer ever occurred.

Several recommendations of the Plan may increase the "waiting list" for sewer:

1. The Plan recommends 345 acres of the land that flows by gravity to Pump Station "D" be zoned for one house per 2 acres. Sewer service should be provided to encourage clustering away from Little Bennett Creek.
2. Two areas proposed as TDR receiving areas are recommended for a base density of one house per 2 acres. By participating in the TDR program, developers would be eligible for a density increase to 2 houses per acre (half-acre lots).
3. Approximately 213 acres south of Damascus Regional Park are proposed as a TDR receiving area. The base density proposed is one house per 2 acres without public water or public sewer. To encourage the transfer of development rights, a TDR density of 1 house per 1 acre with public water is proposed. Sewer service is not recommended.

Estimates are shown in Table 9 of the amount of treatment capacity needed for each proposal.

This Plan proposes that development in the vicinity of Pump Station "D" and the two proposed TDR receiving areas be eligible for public sewer in accord with County allocation and recapture policies. Sewer service for the Business Area Expansion east of Damascus Shopping Center should only be programmed if this site is selected as the preferred location for a new shopping center.

Whether this present allocation policy should be retained or abandoned will be explored with County staff as part of Plan Implementation.

Providing Additional Treatment Capacity

The possibility of obtaining additional sewage treatment capacity is uncertain at this time. Any expansion of the existing treatment plant is dependent upon the assimilative capacity of Magruder Branch and would be expensive due to the level of treatment required. Other alternatives include land treatment or small, package treatment plants.

TABLE 9
 PROPOSED ADDITIONS TO
 EXISTING SEWER SERVICE AREA

Area	Acres	Potential No. of Houses	Estimated Daily Sewage Flows (Houses x 350 Gals.)	Comments
Pump Station "D"	283	At 1 per 2 acres: 141 plus 97 potential homes on existing lots. 141 + 97 = 238	83,300	With minor modification, Pump Station "D" appears adequate to accom- modate these sewage flows.
Ridge Road TDR Receiving Area A	91	At 2 per acre (TDR density): 182	63,700	
		At 1 per 2 acres (without TDR): 45	15,750	
Woodfield Road TDR Receiving Area B	126	At 2 per acre (TDR density): 252	88,200	
		At 1 per 2 acres (without TDR): 63	22,050	

TABLE 10
 DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN
 SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	COMMENTS
BUSINESS AREA		
1. General Commercial	Zoning	All General Commercial is located in the Business Area. A site for a second shopping center is proposed; development must occur as part of a Planned Development application.
2. Light Industrial	Zoning	Located along Lewis Drive.
3. Office	Zoning	Property owners will be encouraged to apply for office zoning which includes site plan review.
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT		
1. Single Family, Detached	Zoning	Most land proposed for one-half acre lots is developed or pending development.
2. Single Family, Detached and Attached	Zoning	Clustering is encouraged on properties zoned 6 houses per acre to provide conservation areas a mix of housing types and adjustment for topography. Appropriate stormwater management facilities will be required.
3. Single Family, Rural Residential	Zoning; Water Service Area Change	To allow "infill" in rural residential areas, water service is proposed.
RURAL OPEN SPACE	Zoning; Subdivision Review	Clustering will be encouraged to preserve environmental features and farmland.

TABLE 10 (Cont'd.)

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	COMMENTS
AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION	Zoning; Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)	Agriculture will be the preferred use. Farmers will have an option to sell development rights (1 per 5 acres).
TRANSPORTATION		
Business Area Road Improvements	Public Funding	Recommend including in State Highway Road Improvements program.
Major Highways (Route 108)	Mandatory Referral	Review of lighting, landscaping and access will be reviewed.
Primary Roads and Arterial Roads	Subdivision Review	The alignment of these roads will be reviewed at subdivision and developers will build them.
COMMUNITY FACILITIES		
New Damascus Library	Mandatory Referral	Review of location, lighting, landscaping and access will be reviewed.
Parks and Recreation	Montgomery County Capital Improvements Program	Proposed parks will be included for funding in the CIP.
Historic Sites	Subdivision Review	Development which will affect historic sites will be reviewed to help maintain historic setting.

Eventually, it is anticipated that an interceptor will be extended up the Little Seneca Creek from the main WSSC system serving the developed areas of Montgomery County. It would then be possible to pump Damascus flows over to this line and phase out the Damascus treatment plant if desired. This extension is not expected to occur, however, until Clarksburg develops, which is not forecast for another 15 or 20 years.

The issue of additional treatment capacity will be addressed in a WSSC Damascus sewerage facility plan which has been included in the County's proposed FYs 1982-1987 Capital Improvements Program. This facility plan will consider the sewerage needs of master plan land use alternatives. At this point, Planning Board staff question the need to pursue new treatment capacity solely for the purpose of providing additional commitments, considering that the existing treatment plant should be adequate to handle actual flows through the year 2000.

The Land Use Plan does recommend an area east of Damascus Shopping Center for a Planned Development at 5 units per acre. However, until additional sewer capacity is available, this land should remain RE-2C (one house per 2 acres) without sewer service.

Planned Facilities

The only new sewerage facilities planned for the Damascus area at this time are an expansion of the pumping station serving the shopping center (Project S-94.03) and the installation of individual grinder pump systems on Locust Drive and Lewis Drive. The shopping center pumping station (known as B⁰) is being upgraded to serve the health problems in the nearby Beall Avenue area. It will serve 57 existing and 12 future residences, plus the existing shopping center.

The grinder pumps will be installed at 25 houses on Lewis Drive and 11 houses on Locust Drive. Sewage from each house will be ground up and pumped through a small diameter plastic pipe to the ridge line where it will connect to the existing sewerage system. A conventional pump station had previously been planned for this area but it was determined that the grinder pumps would be a more cost-effective approach for serving this health problem area.

APPENDIX A
ASSESSMENT OF BYPASS ALTERNATIVES

During the preparation of this Master Plan, the Planning Board and staff studied and considered several road improvement alternatives to relieve traffic pressures along the main roads leading into Damascus. The alternatives are presented here for purposes of comparison to be used at such time as funding constraints are lifted and proposed interim improvements are not adequate to handle traffic needs.

Following is a description of each alternative, including road improvement components and total estimated cost in 1982 dollars. Alternatives described would apply to the Damascus Road network between the Kings Valley Road-Route 27 intersection to the south, and the Route 80-Route 27 intersection at Clagettsville to the north (see map).

ALTERNATIVE 1

Alternative 1 includes a bypass of the town of Damascus to the west, and an extension of Woodfield Road to Route 27 at Faith Lane, bypassing the business area.

<u>Improvement</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Estimated Cost (1982 Dollars)</u>
Western Bypass	5.4 miles of 2-lane new road	\$ 6,300,000
Woodfield Road Extension	1.12 miles of 2-lane new road	<u>\$ 1,300,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$ 7,600,000

This alternative was not endorsed by the Planning Board because of environmental impacts (numerous stream valleys and steep slopes would be traversed), land use concerns (much of the route would cross land designated for agricultural preservation) and the fact a western bypass would not relieve traffic congestion along Woodfield Road. Any future consideration of a western bypass should address these same concerns.

ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2 involves reconstructing Route 27 as a 4-lane divided highway from Kings Valley Road north to Claggettville. This project is listed on the 1980 State Highway 20-Year Needs Inventory. Listing on this inventory is not a commitment by the State to build this project; their project planning process requires that all feasible alternatives be examined before any project commitment is made. The listing in the Needs Inventory is an ultimate solution to traffic pressures along Route 27.

<u>Improvement</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Estimated Cost (1982 Dollars)</u>
Route 27 Reconstruction	5.07 miles of 4-lane divided highway	\$ 8,600,000
	TOTAL	\$ 8,600,000

Reconstructing Route 27 as a 4-lane undivided highway should also be examined.

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3 includes rebuilding Route 27 as a divided highway to the Magruder crossover, building the Magruder crossover, improving or widening Woodfield Road north of the crossover, building an extension of Woodfield Road to Faith Lane, and widening Route 27 north of Faith Lane.

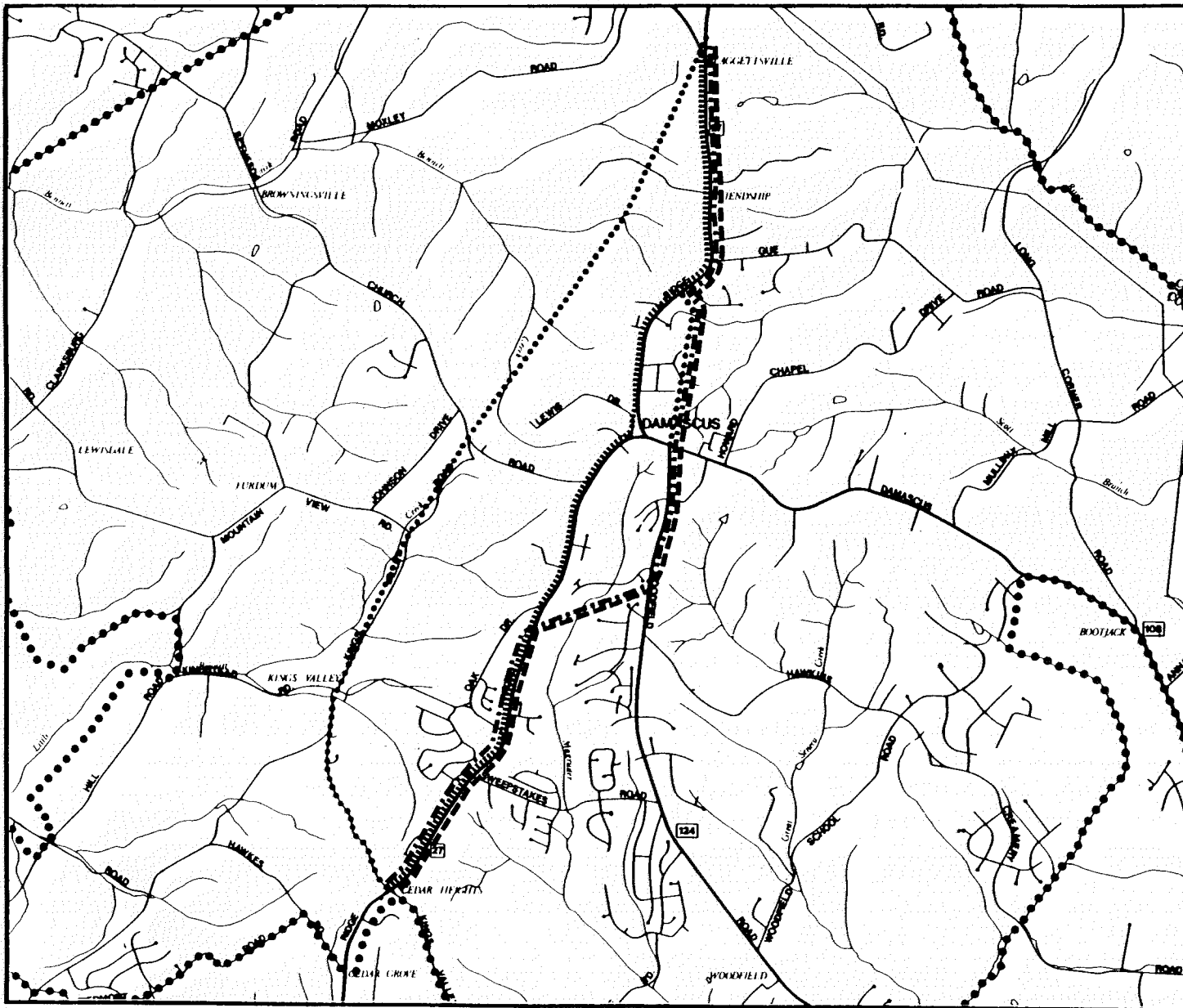
<u>Improvement</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Estimated Cost (1982 Dollars)</u>
Route 27 from Kings Valley Road to Magruder crossover	1.23 miles of 4-lane divided highway	\$ 2,100,000
Magruder crossover	.94 miles of 2-lane new road	\$ 1,100,000
Improve Woodfield Road	.66 miles adding 2 lanes, resurfacing 2 lanes	\$ 400,000
Woodfield Road extension	1.12 miles of 2-lane new road	\$ 1,300,000
Widening Route 27 north	1.29 miles adding 2 lanes, resurfacing 2 lanes	\$ 700,000
	TOTAL	<u>\$ 5,600,000</u>

This alternative would distribute through traffic in the business area over two routes, thereby reducing congestion.

ALTERNATIVE 4

Alternative 4 is similar to Alternative 3, but reflects 1980 State Highway 20-Year Needs Inventory listing of Route 27 as a divided highway north of Faith Lane.

<u>Improvement</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Estimated Cost (1982 Dollars)</u>
Route 27 from Kings Valley Road to Magruder crossover	1.23 miles of 4-lane divided highway	\$ 2,100,000
Magruder crossover	.94 miles of 2-lane new road	\$ 1,100,000
Improve Woodfield Road	.66 miles adding 2 lanes, resurfacing 2 lanes	\$ 400,000
Woodfield Road extension	1.12 miles of 2-lane new road	\$ 1,300,000
Route 27 north of Faith Lane	1.29 miles of 4-lane divided highway	\$ 2,200,000
	TOTAL	<u>\$ 7,100,000</u>



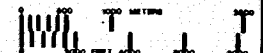
BYPASS ALTERNATIVES

- ALTERNATIVE 1
- ALTERNATIVE 2
- . - . - . ALTERNATIVE 3
- ALTERNATIVE 4

Approved and Adopted: June 1962

DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland



Resolution No. 9-1781

Introduced: May 18, 1982
Adopted: May 18, 1982

COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
SITTING AS A DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THAT PORTION
OF THE MARYLAND-WASHINGTON REGIONAL DISTRICT
WITHIN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

By: District Council

SUBJECT: Approval of the Final Draft Damascus Master Plan

WHEREAS, on November 19, 1981, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission approved the Final Draft Master Plan for Damascus and duly transmitted said approved Final Draft Master Plan to the Montgomery County Council and the Montgomery County Executive; and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery County Council held a public hearing on February 10, 1982, wherein oral and written testimony was received concerning the Final Draft Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery County Council conducted worksessions on the Final Draft Master Plan on March 3 and March 17, 1982, at which time detailed consideration was given to the evidence of record developed at the public hearing and to the comments and concerns of interested parties attending the worksession discussions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the County Council sitting as the District Council for that portion of the Maryland-Washington Regional District within Montgomery County that said Final Draft Master Plan for Damascus is hereby approved with such revisions, modifications, and amendments as hereinafter set forth.

Council changes to the Final Draft Master Plan for Damascus, dated December, 1981, are identified below by chapter, section and page number. Deletions to the text of the plan are indicated by ~~dashed lines~~, and additions by underscoring.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES, Page 18

The Drainage Basin Map identifies the boundaries of the major drainage basins and their sub-basins within the Damascus Master Plan Area.

The Magruder is the most fully developed basin. Much of Magruder Branch stream valley is subdivided and most of the remaining sewage treatment plant (STP) capacity is committed to the proposed developments. Subdivision activity is occurring although it is evident that a fairly high percentage of the land is poorly suited for development. Developers are constrained by steep slopes, erodible soils, floodplains and access. The headwaters reach of Magruder Branch, above the Sewage Treatment Plant at Welsh Road and extending to its terminus within the commercially zoned section of town center, is a highly sensitive area.

All development in the headwaters of this watershed should be carefully controlled to protect the stream valley and to preserve water quality. By acquiring the floodplains and adjacent steep slopes of this stream valley for parkland, there would be opportunities for protecting and preserving the stream in more or less its natural condition. It is recommended that all floodplain areas above Welsh Road be acquired by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission or preserved as private conservation areas. Developers of land, along and adjacent to the stream and its tributary drainage/ways, should be encouraged to observe ~~a minimum 50-foot building setback from the 100-year floodplain or from the defined channel of minor tributaries;~~ a setback of up to 200 feet from the stream bank. Exact delineation of the boundaries would be determined at time of subdivision or site plan review. Existing regulations require all developers of residential subdivisions and commercial, industrial or institutional sites to manage stormwater runoff on-site, including safe conveyance of flows to an acceptable outfall. ~~An exception should only be made if an off-site facility is programmed and is 50 percent funded.~~

SUBDIVISION REVIEW CRITERIA, Page 22

This Plan endorses and is complementary to the recommendations contained within M-NCPPC's "Functional Master Plan for Conservation and Management in Seneca Creek and Muddy Branch Basins." The Functional Master Plan presents recommendations concerning water quantity and water quality, erosion and sedimentation and general environmental quality.

Slope protection will be a key concern in the subdivision review process. Primary concerns relate to erosion. Increases in erosion, due to extensive grading and changes in impervious area, will produce more sediment transported by runoff. This could produce detrimental effects on surface water quality and aquatic systems. No development, land disturbance or stripping will be permitted on slopes in excess of 25 percent.

Similarly, approval should not be given to a subdivision where paved surfaces, structures or septic fields are likely to be located on slopes in the range of 15-25 percent, and where soils are classified as severely eroded. Such areas should be included in the open space required by the zoning. Where such open space is not available, lots should be designed to provide a buildable area which does not intrude on the 15-25 percent slopes.

Specific environmental criteria which should be used in reviewing preliminary subdivision plans is included in the Environmental Technical Appendix. These criteria relate to slopes, floodplains, stormwater management, groundwater protection, woodland protection and noise levels.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT, Page 22 and 24

The entire Damascus Planning Area is located within the sensitive headwaters of Patuxent, Bennett, Little Bennett and Seneca watersheds. Preliminary analysis suggest that without proper stormwater management and erosion/sediment control measures the proposed land uses may adversely impact the natural stream systems. The Seneca and Muddy Branch Functional Plan, Rock Creek Functional Master Plan and the Council of Governments land use guidelines identify preventive measures (Best Management Practices) to prevent the degradation of water resources. These techniques are also applicable to the Damascus Planning Area.

Although it is generally desirable to control stormwater by preventive measures (land use, subdivision, zoning and site planning), it may not be possible to entirely rely on such measures without severely curtailing the provision of more housing, which has been identified as a County goal. To avoid such curtailment, appropriate stormwater management protective measures such as retention/detention ponds would be necessary.

The Seneca and Muddy Branch Functional Master Plan has identified a need for approximately 60 acre-feet of storage capacity to control the 2-year flood in the Magruder Branch Basin. No storage capacity numbers are available for the Bennett and the Patuxent watersheds because no basin-wide analyses have been done for these basins.

~~Greenhorne and O'Mara in their preliminary report to the County Department of Environmental protection have identified sites for two facilities in the Magruder Basin and~~

~~the County has preliminarily approved a site for a potential SWM facility in Bennett Creek. These sites are shown on the Land Use Plan Map for purposes of Public Hearing.~~

~~The Planning Board staff is undertaking a detailed analysis, scheduled to be completed in late January, to evaluate these sites and to recommend, where appropriate, alternative sites. This analysis will be available for County Council work sessions on this Master Plan. All sites proposed on the Land Use Plan as stormwater management facilities should be reserved at time of subdivision.~~

In the Magruder Branch sub-watershed a central stormwater management facility should be programmed in the Capital Improvements Program Budget for design and construction in the general vicinity as indicated by Potential Stormwater Management Facility Site #1 on the Proposed Land Use Plan. This facility will provide the major portion of channel protection for the downstream reach of the main stem of Magruder Branch within the Planning Area. This structure should provide stormwater management more economically and in a more environmentally satisfactory manner than can be provided on-site on some of the development sites located on the steeper slopes of this narrow valley. In some cases, stormwater management waivers have been granted by the Montgomery Soil Conservation District due to infeasibility associated with severe site constraints.

This Plan recommends that the County Department of Environmental Protection further investigate the technical feasibility and cost-effectiveness of other sites shown on the Land Use Plan, and recommend appropriate projects in the Capital Improvements Program. These facilities could be funded entirely by the developers or with contributions from the County.

On-site stormwater management is recommended for areas not controlled by the programmed centralized facilities, on a case-by-case basis. Waivers should be discouraged unless the facility is programmed and synchronized with development.

The most potentially erodible channel reach of the Magruder Branch is in the proposed parkland. Techniques such as instream gabion weir, stilling basins and rip rap should be considered on selective locations to help reduce erosion.

For smaller tributary streams not controlled by centralized facilities, a conservation easement up to 200 feet from the bank is recommended. Exact delineation of the boundaries would be determined at time of subdivision.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

HOW CAN CONGESTION IN THE DAMASCUS BUSINESS AREA, DUE LARGELY TO THROUGH TRAFFIC, BE RELIEVED? Page 37

The adopted Damascus Master Plan proposes an ultimate solution: a by-pass of the business area to the east (see Long Term Solutions Map). The 1980 State Highway 20-Year Needs Inventory does not include the by-pass on its list of needed improvements. This means that, as of this date, the State does not recognize a need for the by-pass. Instead, the State lists reconstruction of Route 27 as a divided highway as a needed project with no schedule for construction. This Plan recommends that Route 27 should not be considered for widening to a divided highway in the Planning Area until such time that the traffic load indicates improvements are needed. At that time, alternatives to widening Route 27 between Cedar Grove and Claggettsville should be considered. Alternative routes discussed during the preparation of this plan are found at Appendix A.

PROPOSED IMMEDIATE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS: DAMASCUS BUSINESS DISTRICT, Page 43

As noted, the State Highway 20-Year Needs Inventory recommends reconstruction (widening) of Route 27 to relieve future congestion. This Plan has explored the possibility of constructing a parallel road west of Md. 27 (between Gue Road and Md. 80) to provide additional capacity. The cost of acquiring a right-of-way and building 9000 linear feet of roadway is estimated to be \$2.8 million. The estimated cost of adding one or two lanes to Route 27 ranges from \$450,000 to \$778,000. This Plan therefore endorses the idea of reconstructing Route 27 within the present right-of-way north of Faith Lane rather than building a new road paralleling Route 27.

ACCESS BETWEEN RIDGE ROAD AND ROUTE 124: CROSSING THE MAGRUDER VALLEY, Page 43

Ridge Road and Route 124 are the two major access roads to Damascus. Between them lies the Magruder Stream Valley and substantial residential development. The 1966 Transportation Plan proposes four connections between Ridge Road and Route 124. The revised Plan endorses three of the four crossings (see Proposed Transportation Map):

- P-4, Sweepstakes Road - this is an existing road;
- A-11A, a road originally proposed as part of the 1966 Plan by-pass (this Plan reduces the paving from 4 to 2 lanes). Although the majority of right-of-way for this road is already acquired, ~~although~~ there are drawbacks to this

road from an environmental viewpoint (steep slopes, in particular). ~~A-11A is important to long term transportation improvements in Damascus. When Woodfield Road is extended north of Route 108, A-11A will help divert through traffic from the business area and help relieve congestion along Ridge Road. This Plan recommends construction of A-11A to be programmed in accord with the extension of Woodfield Road (A-12), Valley Park Drive, located just north of proposed A-11A, is unbuilt but dedicated along much of its length. It is designated a primary road and crosses the Magruder Valley in an area already filled and graded. Designating Valley Park Drive as a potential substitute for A-11A would make use of existing grading and filling and existing dedicated rights-of-way. More study is needed, however, to determine if the alignment is adequate to handle large volumes of traffic and whether additional right-of-way in approved subdivisions may be reserved if needed. To maintain Valley Park Drive as an alternative crossing to A-11A, this Plan recommends Valley Park Drive be designated an arterial rather than primary roadway. If further study supports A-11A as the preferred alignment, Valley Park Drive would be redesignated a primary. The Master Plan should be amended to reflect the final selected alignment, whether it is A-11A or Valley Park Drive.~~

DAMASCUS BUSINESS AREA PLAN, Page 49

This Plan reaffirms and plans for the continuation of the Damascus Business Area as the commercial center for northern Montgomery County and Western Howard County. In addition to providing typical shoppers goods, Damascus offers important farm-related products which help support the area's agriculture heritage. Farm-related commercial uses are specifically encouraged by this Plan.

The community has expressed a desire for a second shopping center location in the business area. ~~Two sites were proposed for public comment at the Planning Board Public Hearing. After hearing citizens' comments and after studying environmental, transportation and land use impacts, the Planning Board is recommending a shopping center site along Ridge Road (Site B). Both sites are shown for purposes of Public Hearing by the County Council; however, the Planning Board does endorse Site B. This Plan recommends a shopping area site along Ridge Road at the southern edge of the existing business area.~~

EXISTING CONDITIONS, Page 49

There are presently 71 acres of commercially zoned land in the business area. About 55 acres are actually developed; much of this acreage is not fully utilized.

The largest concentration of retail floor space is 130,000 square feet in the Damascus Shopping Center. Safeway is the major tenant; other occupants include a drug store, a hardware store, restaurants, the County library, clothing stores and other specialty shops. Of 42 stores in the shopping area, ~~11 are vacant, including a theatre and a store for a junior department store~~ many were vacant during the time this Plan was under study in 1982. Many causes were suggested at public meetings for the high vacancy rate, including poor access from Main Street and inconvenient Mall layout.

TABLE 4, DAMASCUS MARKET AREA, POPULATION AND SUPPORTABLE COMMERCIAL ACREAGE, Page 55

TABLE 4

<u>Damascus Market Area</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
Number of People*	12,730	14,000	15,460
Supportable Commercial Acreage**	25-30 acres <u>25-50 acres</u>	31-62 acres	41-82 acres

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A FUTURE SHOPPING AREA SITE, Page 56

Despite market forecasts, community residents have presented strong testimony that additional acreage should be planned to allow a second shopping area. The possibility of additional ~~Additional~~ competition, they feel, is needed to offer merchants an alternative to locating in Damascus Shopping Center and to spur design and building improvements in the Center.

~~In response to community testimony, the Preliminary Draft Plan included two alternative shopping center sites and land use configuration (see maps). Based on Public Hearing testimony and staff analysis, the Planning Board is recommending the site fronting Ridge Road just north of Damascus High School (Site B). This site is the preferred location for the following reasons:~~

- ~~The Ridge Road location (Site B), is preferable from an environmental viewpoint (see Environmental Comparison Table);~~
- ~~A pumping station will not be required to service Site B since it flows by gravity to the treatment plant;~~

- ~~The road network needed to service the Route 108 site (extension of Woodfield Road) will not be in place for many years, road improvements needed for Site B will be part of the development package, and~~
- ~~The site has excellent visibility which is important for merchandising.~~

In response to this testimony, this Plan recommends a site for a second but smaller shopping area. The proposed location is along Ridge Road at the southern edge of the Damascus business area much of which would otherwise be designated general commercial. This site has excellent visibility from Ridge Road and sewage will flow by gravity to the sewage treatment plant.

During the Plan process, another site was analyzed east of Damascus Shopping Center. This site was not selected because needed road improvements (the extension of Woodfield Road to Ridge Road) and sewerage facilities are not planned for 10 to 20 years. However, this Plan does recommend the use of this location for a shopping area in the future if development of the site along Ridge Road does not occur.

The type of shopping envisioned by this Plan is a grocery store and several small convenience shops. Only 80,000 square feet of floor area is recommended to ensure a scale of development compatible with the neighborhood; a regional-type shopping mall is not proposed.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A FUTURE SHOPPING AREA SITE, Shopping Center Development Criteria, Page 57 and 61

~~Shopping Center~~ Commercial Development Criteria

The preparation of a Planned Development (PD) application should be guided by the following plan principles:

- Environmental disruption should be minimized (the topography at the rear of the site includes steep slopes and erodible soils);
- The design and layout should be in keeping with the character of Damascus and related to the existing commercial center;
- Proper traffic and pedestrian access should be included and the site should be linked to the Magruder Valley park;

- Retail floor area should not exceed 80,000 square feet (for purposes of comparison, Damascus Shopping Center is 130,000 square feet). This would require 12 acres of commercial zoning; and
- Office floor area should not exceed 10,000 square feet--
- ~~As much parking as possible should be located in the rear of the shopping center. This would maintain building frontage along the road.~~

The approval of the PD application would be conditional on the applicant meeting several design criteria including, but not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Extension of Bethesda Church Road from Ridge Road to Route 124;
- Construction of an additional lane on Route 27 (Ridge Road) to accommodate turning movements;
- Phasing of development of the shopping center in ~~accord~~ coordination with residential development (7 units per acre) so that a mix of commercial and housing occurs;
- ~~A building layout oriented to Ridge Road, with parking in the rear.~~
- ★ An on-site or central stormwater management facility which protects water quality and quantity in the Magruder Valley;
- A pedestrian pathway system that links the shopping center and the residential development to Magruder Valley parkland --j and
- Appropriate buffering between commercial uses and the high school.

The relationship between the high school and the proposed shopping area is of particular concern to the School Board and to parents of students at Damascus High School and Damascus Elementary School. To help assure that the shopping center is developed with sensitivity to the close proximity of the high school and elementary school, the Plan recommends the following development and design criteria:

- to the maximum extent possible, residential development should be located between the high school and commercial uses;

- parking lots should be visible from nearby roads;
- buffering along Bethesda Church Road should be of such type and extent to channel pedestrian movement to the signalized intersection at Bethesda Church and Ridge Road;
- buffering along Bethesda Church Road should be in place prior to the completion of the shopping area;
- an anti-loitering program should be submitted as part of the PD application.

In reviewing the Planned Development application, the Planning Board will also seek input from the School Board and the principals of Damascus Elementary and Damascus High Schools regarding the appropriate mix of stores, lighting plans, and accessibility.

As noted, a major planning concern is the viability of the Damascus market to support a second shopping area. When a PD application is filed, staff will evaluate market conditions and the potential impact of the commercial development on existing businesses.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPARISON OF SHOPPING CENTER SITES A AND B, Page 60

Delete table entitled, "Environmental Comparison of Shopping Center Sites A and B" in its entirety.

OTHER COMMERCIAL LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS, Page 62

The Damascus Shopping Center Area

The northeast section of the Business Area is dominated by the Damascus Shopping Center. The Center is partly vacant in part due to market conditions and, according to residents, in part due to mall design. As part of Plan implementation, staff will contact mall owners and managers to offer design assistance to increase the mall's attractiveness and to improve access and circulation.

Just north of the shopping center is a vacant 5-acre lot which has no public road access from Ridge Road on Route 108. This Plan recommends medium density residential homes and the shopping center. Commercial development is not proposed here but is channeled to Ridge Road, where the Plan proposes enough commercial land use to support a retail shopping center.

The Plan proposes a residential density of 6 8 units per acre on the site. A low intensity office building developed under C-T (Commercial Transitional) or O-M (Office, Moderate Intensity) zoning standards would be compatible if the project followed development standards in the RT-6 RT-8 (townhouse) zone regarding building mass, density, heights, setback and lot coverage. It should be noted that development of this site is dependent on road access which may not be available until Route 124 is extended north of Route 108.

A residential Planned Development Zone (PD-5) is recommended east of the Damascus Shopping Center. This area is not planned to develop until additional sewage treatment capacity is available (sometime beyond 1995) so as not to compete with development in the Magruder Valley. Review of an application for a PD-5 would include, but not be limited to the following development criteria:

- Extension of Route 124 north of Main Street along the length of the property;
- Construction of a pumping station to pump sewage into the Magruder Valley sewage system;
- Construction of on-site stormwater management facilities to protect water quality in the Patuxent River basin;
- Pedestrian and bicycle linkages to commercial areas; and
- If the proposed Ridge Road shopping area is not developed, this Plan would support commercial uses in the PD application.

Commercial uses in the PD would be appropriate if a market for additional commercial uses exists and if the shopping area along Ridge Road has not commercially developed.

OTHER COMMERCIAL LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS, Page 63

Magruder Valley Headwaters

The 1966 Plan recommends office, commercial and residential development (14 units per acre) in the Magruder Valley headwaters area.

The Draft Plan recommends the same land uses but reduces residential densities, reduces commercial acreage, and recommends site plan review of any development in this sensitive area.

Vacant land in the headwaters area consists of two parcels: a 6 acre tract (the Acme property), an interior parcel that lies behind existing commercial uses along Ridge Road; and a 5 acre tract to the rear of ~~Warfield-Chevrolet Sales~~ the Damascus Motor Company.

The Plan recommends residential, rather than commercial zoning, on both properties and proposes conservation areas along two streams. A density of 8 units per acre is recommended.

~~The vacant Warfield-Chevrolet property is wedged between the sales department and the Magruder Branch. Residential development is unlikely given the configuration of the land, but General Commercial zoning (G-2) is undesirable because it does not allow the level of site plan review that is needed to assure protection of this sensitive headwaters area. This Plan recommends, therefore, residential zoning. However, an application by the owner for C-3 zoning (Highway Oriented Commercial), which does allow the Planning Board site plan review and which would permit the expansion of the existing automobile sales business, would be consistent with this Plan subject to, but no limited to, the following conditions:~~

- ~~• a conservation buffer along the stream is preserved;~~
- ~~• stormwater management is adequately addressed; and~~
- ~~• a C-3 application is filed for the entire tract (including the existing show room and carport).~~

~~This recommendation strikes a balance between the property owner's desire to expand his business at some future date and Plan objectives to protect steep slopes and stream valleys from development.~~

Vacant property (approximately 5 acres) lies between the Damascus Motor Company and the Magruder Stream Valley. This Plan recommends enough commercial zoning (no more than 3 acres) to allow expansion of the service department but proposes the balance of acreage be dedicated as parkland to protect steep slopes and stream valleys from development and to enhance pedestrian access to the business area from the proposed Magruder Stream Valley Park.

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL LAND USE POLICIES IN THE TRANSITION AREAS, Page 70

3. ~~Bethesda Church Road Area~~

~~The Bethesda Church Road transition area is predominantly rural and agricultural. Residential development has occurred north of the road, but the land use pattern to the south, consists of farmland and woodland.~~

To allow a small amount of residential infill north of Bethesda Church Road, the Plan recommends a density of 1 house per 2 acres. Soils here are poor for septic tanks (sewerage lines are being extended to nearby Lewis Drive to relieve failing septic tanks) so residential development should be limited. This area is inappropriate for agricultural preservation because of the existing development pattern and because of the rough terrain.

~~South of Bethesda Church Road, the predominant land use is agriculture. This area, which is discussed in more detail in the Agricultural Preservation Chapter, includes a long-standing family farm operation and is traversed by a tributary to the Little Bennett, a trout bearing waterway. The Plan recommends 388 acres be included in the County-wide agricultural reserve area.~~

~~4. Ridge Road, South of Damascus and Route 124, South of Damascus~~

2. Rural Entryway along Ridge Road and Woodfield Road

* * *

5. 3. Woodfield Road and Route 108 Transition Area

* * *

RURAL OPEN SPACE LAND USE POLICIES IN THE TRANSITION AREA

As shown on the Transition Areas map, Rural Open Space densities (1 house per 5 acres) are proposed as a transition from residential land uses to the Agricultural Reserve. This policy is discussed in the Agricultural and Open Space Preservation chapter.

TRANSFERABLE DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDR) RECEIVING AREAS, Page 73

The proposed Agriculture Reserve area in Damascus (P.A. 11) consists of 970 ~~1500~~ acres. Development rights are created at the rate of 1 development right per 5 acres. Thus, a "pool" of 194 development rights would be created by the proposed Agricultural Reserve area (see Agriculture and Open Space Preservation Section).

In accord with Planning Board policy to examine all Master Plans under review for TDR receiving areas, this Plan proposed two alternative Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) receiving areas where development rights could be transferred to increase density. These alternative areas are located on the southern edge of Damascus (PA 11). These properties help form a "rural" entry way along Ridge Road and Route 124. Increasing density through the TDR program may reduce the rural character of these particular parcels, but it will help strengthen the larger, County-wide agricultural reserve. This trade-off is proposed to further the public interest, namely, preservation of farmland. All TDR subdivision plans will be carefully reviewed to help ensure the rural residential character of the entry way is retained.

These receiving areas, if fully developed in accord with TDR program, would absorb development rights. Density increases in two of these Receiving Areas will require sewage treatment capacity. As discussed in the Implementation Section, most of the treatment capacity in Damascus has been allocated; many allocations, however, have not been used so the Treatment Plant is not operating near its capacity. TDR receiving areas would simply compete for recaptured allocation. The third TDR receiving area should be eligible for public water in accord with the TDR program.

The proposed TDR receiving areas are:

Receiving Area A: Cedar Grove Area (91 acres)

- Present Zoning - Rural (1 house per 5 acres)
- Proposed Base Density Without TDR - Rural Residential (1 house per 2 acres)
- Proposed TDR Optional Density - 2 units/acre (half-acre lots)
- Maximum Density Increase With TDR - 135 houses

This parcel is part of the low-density entryway proposed for Damascus and is not proposed for public sewer. If ~~designated~~ developed as a receiving area, density in this property could increase to 2 units per acre. ~~and be eligible for a sewer service category change.~~

TRANSFERABLE DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDR) RECEIVING AREAS, Page 78

Although this Plan designates the entire 126 acres as a receiving area, the Planning Board recognizes only a portion of the property flows by gravity to the sewage treatment plant. This Plan does not endorse the construction of a pumping station to serve the property but the acreage which can be served by gravity can only be determined by detailed engineering studies which are not part of this Master Plan. These studies should

be undertaken at time of subdivision. Only that portion of the property which can be served by gravity is recommended as a receiving area.

~~A third receiving area located north of Watkins Road and south of Damascus Regional Park, is being studied by staff. It is being included for purposes of Public Hearing. More detailed study will precede Council work sessions. This property is bounded to the north by Damascus Regional Park and to the south by Agriculture Reserve land. Owners of the Agriculture Reserve land also own the 213 acres north of Watkins Road. Allowing the transfer of development rights would permit an "internal" transfer from one portion of the property to another.~~

AGRICULTURAL AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION, Page 80

Kings Valley Road

~~Most of the 680 acres proposed for Agricultural Reserve are part of a family dairy farm operation (the King family). The land area is heavily wooded and includes a tributary of the Little Bennett Creek, a natural trout waterway.~~

Because of its long-standing agricultural character, its physical separation from nearby residential development and its common boundary with agricultural land identified in the Agricultural and Rural Open Space as critical, this Plan recommends ~~the Kings Valley area be included in the Agricultural Reserve, approximately 325 acres be included in the Agriculture Reserve and 170 acres be designated for Rural Cluster zoning (1 house per 5 acres, cluster option).~~

AGRICULTURAL AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION, Page 82

Howard Chapel Road

Farms operate to the north and south of Howard Chapel Drive. The major farms in the area are 238 and 104 acres respectively. The northern portions of these two farms abut residential development (½ to 2 acre lots) along Gue Road but the southern acreage (340 acres) is undeveloped and adjoins farmland in the Agriculture Reserve area. Two acre densities (with a cluster option) are recommended north of Howard Chapel Drive. Rural Cluster zoning is recommended south of Howard Chapel Drive to provide a transition from 2-acre residential development to the Agriculture Reserve. ~~Agriculture Reserve is recommended south of Howard Chapel Road as a continuation of farmland preservation policies in the Patuxent Watershed.~~

RURAL OPEN SPACE RECOMMENDATIONS, Page 83

~~To east~~ East of Woodfield Road and south of Route 108, extensive development has occurred on 1 to 2 acre lots. This Plan continues the rural residential character of this area.

The only density change involves land to the east of Great Seneca Creek. Most of the remaining vacant land adjoins the Creek; Rural Cluster (1 house per 5 acres) rather than 2 acre lots is recommended to reflect environmental constraints to development and to encourage clustering away from Great Seneca Creek.

This Plan recommends that subdivision applications already on file in this area at time of Plan adoption be permitted to proceed through the subdivision process when proposed development is generally in accord with Rural Cluster densities.

HOW CAN LOCAL RECREATION NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY BE MET, Page 88

This proposed Plan recommends that local recreation centers and parks proposed on the outskirts of Damascus by the 1966 Plan be eliminated and that future local park development focus on close-in sites like Moyer Road.

Another park that is being re-evaluated as to need is Oak Ridge Conservation Park. About 64 acres are in public ownership; another 12 acres are proposed for acquisition (this compares to 132 acres proposed in the 1966 Plan). Oak Ridge is primarily forested and includes a tributary of Little Bennett Creek. Development would be conservation oriented with primarily passive recreation facilities (hiker-biker and nature trails; picnic and playground areas). Oak Ridge would provide a park link between Damascus and Little Bennett Regional Park. The need for this park will be explored in more detail in light of the final recommendations of the Master Plan for surrounding land use.

Little Bennett Stream Valley Park

This stream valley park follows Little Bennett Creek and lies upstream from Little Bennett Regional Park. This is a significant natural resource area because of Little Bennett Creek's high water quality and its attributes as a natural trout stream (brown trout reproduction). All efforts should be made to protect the natural environment in this stream valley area, as well as protecting the migration routes for wildlife in and out of Little Bennett Regional Park.

The Park taking line identifies approximately 115 acres in this stream valley park. A sizeable portion of this acreage in the park taking line is from one property, the King Farm, totalling approximately 75 acres. Every effort will be made to negotiate for a scenic easement, without public cost, on this portion of the stream valley park area if two objectives can be met: (1) public access for future trail system through the property, and (2) the conservation criteria usually associated with stream valley parkland, which should also provide for protection against over grazing and over cropping.

CURRENT AND PROJECTED SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: 1980-1985 - DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN AREA, Substitute the following Table for the Table on Page 90

CURRENT AND PROJECTED SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: 1980-1996
DAMASCUS MASTER PLAN AREA

School	Enrollment Capacity	Enrollment By Year			
		1982-83	1985-86	1990-91	1995-96
Woodfield Elementary	380	431	442	Restudy*	
Cedar Grove Elementary	329	266	295	361	390
Damascus Elementary	593	498	469	509	547
Baker Junior High	730	610	535	463	521
Damascus High School	1,180	1,120	1,148	776	778

* Restudy for possible boundary changes or building addition if overutilized.

IMPLEMENTATION

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ALLOW CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT ON PUBLIC WATER IN RE-2C ZONE, Section 59-C-1.522, Page 96

59-C -1.5 CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

59-C-1.52 Special Requirements

59-C-1.522 Community water and sewer. No land shall be subdivided under this method and no building permit shall be issued unless the resulting development will be connected to community water and sewer. The only exception to this requirement is the RE-2C zone where land that is not served by community sewer may be subdivided under this method if it meets all of the following conditions:

- (a) An approved and adopted master plan or sector plan specifically recommends cluster development with community water but not community sewer.
- (b) The resulting development will be connected to community water.
- (c) The resulting development meets all of the requirements for individual sewerage systems outlined in the most recent County Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan and Executive Regulation No. 5-79 on Individual Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Systems.

The RE-2C zone permits cluster development on parcels of land containing less than 50 acres only upon the Planning Board's finding that cluster development is desirable from an environmental perspective. Such a finding would support the Plan's intent to encourage property owners to cluster away from environmentally sensitive steep slopes and towards ridge lines.

WATER AND SEWER SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS, Allocation Policy, Page 104

Allocation Policy

2. Two areas proposed as TDR receiving areas are recommended for a base density of 1 house per 2 acres. No public sewer is proposed at this base

density. By participating in the TDR program, developers would be eligible for a density increase to 2 houses per acre (half-acre lots) and public sewer.

3. Approximately 213 acres south of Damascus Regional Park are proposed as a TDR receiving area. The base density proposed is 1 house per 2 acres without public water or public sewer. To encourage the transfer of development rights, a TDR density of 1 house per 1 acre with public water is proposed. Sewer service is not recommended.

APPENDIX A, Add assessment of bypass alternatives undertaken during preparation of Master Plan.

GENERAL

All figures, tables, and maps are to be revised where appropriate to reflect County Council changes to the Final Draft Master Plan for Damascus and to reflect the FY 1982-87 Capital Improvements Program. The text is to be edited as necessary to achieve clarity and consistency, to update factual information, and to convey the actions of the County Council. All identifying references pertain to the Damascus Master Plan document dated November, 1981.

A True Copy.

MCPB 82-8
M-NCPPC 82-12

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, by virtue of Article 66D, Annotated Code of Maryland is authorized and empowered to make, adopt, and from time to time amend, extend, and add to a General Plan for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District; and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, pursuant to said law, held a duly advertised public hearing on September 21, 1981, on the Preliminary Draft Damascus Master Plan, being also a proposed amendment to the 1966 Master Plan for Damascus, as amended in 1971; the Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space, October 1980; the Patuxent River Watershed Park Master Plan; the Clarksburg and Vicinity Master Plan, 1969; the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, 1979; the General Plan for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District; and the Master Plan of Highways within Montgomery County, Maryland; and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, upon due deliberation and consideration did approve a Final Draft Damascus Master Plan for submittal to the Montgomery County Council, with the recommendation that Council approve said Final Draft Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery County Council, sitting as the District Council for that portion of the Maryland-Washington Regional District, lying within Montgomery County, pursuant to said laws, held a duly advertised public hearing on February 10, 1982 on the Final Draft Damascus Master Plan, and on May 18, 1982 approved said Plan by Resolution Number 9-1781;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Montgomery County Planning Board and The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission do hereby adopt the Damascus Master Plan consistent with County Council Resolution Number 9-1781; said Plan being an amendment to the 1966 Master Plan for Damascus, as amended in 1971; the Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space, October 1980; the Patuxent River Watershed Park Master Plan; the Clarksburg and Vicinity Master Plan, 1968; the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, 1979; the General

MCPB 82-8
M-NCPPC 82-12

Plan for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District; and the Master Plan of Highways within Montgomery County, Maryland; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this copy of said Plan shall be certified by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and filed with the clerks of the Circuit Courts of each of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, as required by law.

* * * *

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the Montgomery County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, on motion of Commissioner Granke, seconded by Commissioner Krahnke and Commissioners Brennan, Christeller, Granke, Heimann, and Krahnke voting in favor of the notion, at its regular meeting held on Thursday, June 3, 1982 in Silver Spring, Maryland

* * * *

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission on motion of Commissioner Christeller, seconded by Commissioner Shoch, with Commissioners Brennan, Brown, Christeller, Cumberland, Dukes, Granke, Heimann, Keller, Krahnke, and Shoch voting in favor of the motion at its regular meeting held on Wednesday, June 9, 1982 in Prince George's County, Maryland.

Thomas H. Countee, Jr.
Executive Director