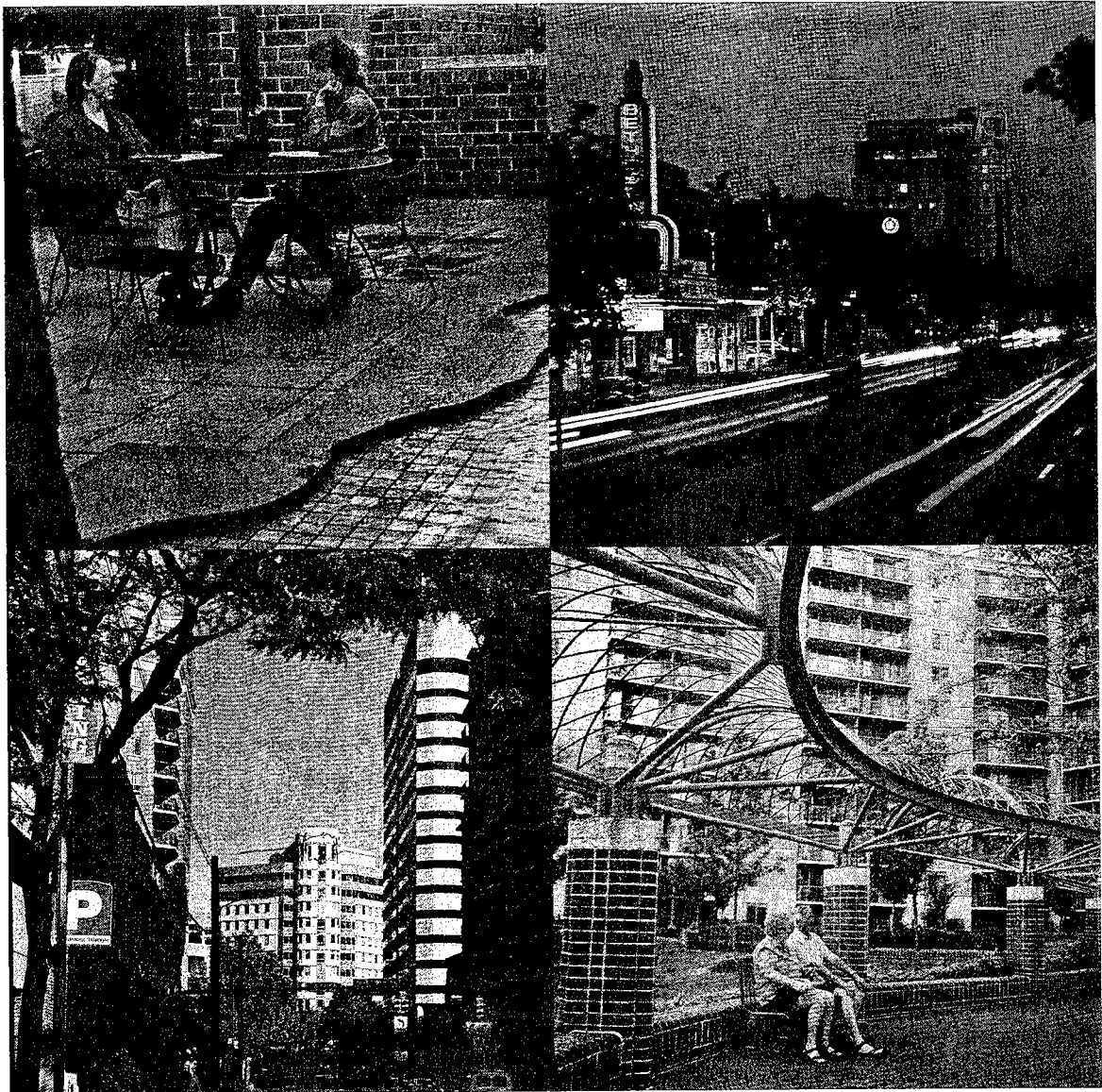


approved  
& adopted  
July 1994

# BETHESDA CBD



# **APPROVED AND ADOPTED**

## **COMPREHENSIVE AMENDMENT TO THE BETHESDA CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT SECTOR PLAN**

July 1994

This Sector Plan amends the Bethesda Central Business District Sector Plan, 1976, as amended; being also an amendment to the General Plan for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District, and the Master Plan of Highways within Montgomery County, Maryland; the Master Plan of Bikeways, 1978, as amended; the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, 1979, as amended; the Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment, 1990; and the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan, 1990.

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

## **ABSTRACT**

### **TITLE:**

Approved and Adopted  
Bethesda Central Business District Sector Plan

### **AUTHOR:**

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

### **SUBJECT:**

Bethesda Central Business District Sector Plan

### **DATE:**

July 1994

### **PLANNING AGENCY:**

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

### **SOURCE OF COPIES:**

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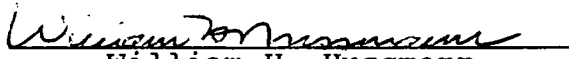
### **ABSTRACT:**


This publication contains the text with supporting maps and tables for the Approved and Adopted Bethesda Central Business District Sector Plan which replaces the 1976 Sector Plan and the 1982 Amendment to that Plan. It also amends some elements of the Master Plan of Highways, the Master Plan of Bikeways, the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, the Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment, and the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan.


## CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL AND ADOPTION

This Comprehensive Amendment to the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan, as amended; the Master Plan for Bethesda-Chevy Chase, April 1990, as amended; the Master Plan of Bikeways, May 1978, as amended; the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, September 1979, as amended; the General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery County, as amended; the Master Plan of Highways within Montgomery County, Maryland, as amended; and the Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment, January 1990, has been approved by the Montgomery County Council, sitting as the District Council, by Resolution No. 12-740 on July 14, 1994; and has been adopted by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission by Resolution No. 94-13 on July 20, 1994, after duly advertised public hearings pursuant to Article #28 of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

### THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

  
William H. Hussmann  
Chairman

  
Roy I. Dabney, Jr.  
Vice Chairman

  
A. Edward Navarre  
Secretary-Treasurer

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL SUFFICIENCY

  
M-NCPPC Legal Department

Date 8/15/94



## **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 a General Plan for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties (1964);
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 encourages the involvement and participation of individuals with disabilities, and its facilities are accessible. For assistance with special needs (e.g., large print materials, assistive listening devices, or sign language interpretation), please contact the Community Relations Office, 301-495-4600 or TDD 301-495-1331.

## **ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS**

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Derick P. Berlage, *Vice President*

Bruce Adams

Nancy Dacek

Gail Ewing

Betty Ann Krahne

Isiah Leggett

Marilyn J. Praisner

Michael L. Subin

### **COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

Neal Potter

### **THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION**

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### **COMMISSIONERS**

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Arthur Holmes, Jr.\*

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James M. Brown

Regina J. McNeill

\*William H. Hussmann succeeded Gus Bauman as Chairman; Ruthann Aron succeeded Richmond M. Keeney; and Arthur Holmes, Jr. succeeded Nancy M. Floreen. Mr. Bauman, Mr. Keeney and Ms. Floreen served on the Planning Board during preparation of the Bethesda Central Business District Sector Plan.

# **BETHESDA CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT SECTOR PLAN**

## **CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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Gordon G. Swan, Sacks Subdivision Neighborhood Association  
Shelby M. (Tom) Thompson, Cultural Manager  
Carol Trawick, B-CC Chamber of Commerce  
Mier Wolf, Town of Chevy Chase

The listing of the names of the committee members does not indicate approval or disapproval of this document by any members of the Citizens' Advisory Committee. The members advised the Montgomery County Planning Board regarding the problems, needs and views of the groups or areas they represent. The Planning Board considered these views in its deliberations regarding the Sector Plan.

\*Resigned

## **NOTICE TO READERS**

An area master plan, after approval by the County Council and adoption by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, constitutes an amendment to the General Plan for Montgomery County. As such, it provides a set of comprehensive recommendations and guidelines for the use of publicly and privately owned land within its planning area. Each area plan reflects a vision of future development that responds to the unique character of the local community within the context of a County-wide perspective.

Area master plans are intended to provide a benchmark point of reference with regard to public policy. Together with relevant County-wide functional master plans, they should be referred to by public officials and private individuals when decisions are made that affect the use of land within the plan's boundaries. It should be noted that master plan recommendations and guidelines are not intended to be specifically binding on subsequent actions, except in certain instances where an ordinance or regulation requires a specifically defined linkage to be established. The precise timing and character of public facility projects is determined annually through the Capital Improvements Program and the Operating Budget.

Master plans generally look ahead to a time horizon of about 20 years from the date of adoption, although it is intended that they be updated and revised about every ten years. It is recognized that the original circumstances at the time of plan adoption will change over time, and that the specifics of a master plan may become less relevant as time goes on. Any sketches or site plans in an adopted plan are for illustrative purposes only, and are intended to convey a general sense of desirable future character rather than any specific commitment to a particular detailed design.

## THE MASTER PLAN PROCESS

**Staff Draft Plan** - This document is prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Department for presentation to the Montgomery County Planning Board. A Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan is then prepared for approval to go to public hearing by the Planning Board. The Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan incorporates those preliminary changes to the Staff Draft Plan that the Planning Board considers appropriate.

**Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan** - This document is a formal proposal to amend an adopted master or sector plan prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. It is prepared for the purpose of receiving public hearing testimony. Its recommendations are not necessarily those of the Planning Board. Before proceeding to publish a Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan, the Planning Board holds a public hearing. After the close of the record of this public hearing, the Planning Board holds open worksessions to review the testimony and to revise the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan.

**Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan** - This document is the Planning Board's recommended Plan. After October 1, 1992, changes in the Regional District Act require the Planning Board to transmit the Plan directly to the County Council with copies to the County Executive. The Regional District Act then requires the County Executive, within sixty days, to prepare and transmit a fiscal impact analysis of the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan to the County Council. The Executive may also forward any other comments and recommendations regarding the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan within the sixty-day period.

After receiving the Executive's fiscal impact analysis and comments, the County Council may hold a public hearing to receive public testimony on the Plan. After the close of record of this public hearing, the Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee (PHED) holds open worksessions to review the testimony and revise the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan. The County Council, after its work sessions, then adopts a resolution approving the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan, as revised.

**Adopted Plan** - The Plan approved by the County Council is forwarded to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for adoption. Once adopted by the Commission, the Plan officially amends the various master or sector plans cited in the Commission's adoption resolution.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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Community Planning  
Development Review  
Design, Zoning and Preservation  
Environmental Planning  
Research Division  
Transportation Division  
Administrative Services  
Mapping and Graphics

### **Others who contributed to this Plan include:**

Gene Sieminski, Housing Consultant  
LMD, Design & Production







# BETHESDA CBD



*published by*

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT *of* PARK & PLANNING  
8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910



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## Chapter 1

# THE FUTURE OF BETHESDA

### 1.1 VISION

The future Bethesda will be a bustling downtown ringed by quiet neighborhoods, where residents can watch a play or visit an artist's studio, eat at an ethnic restaurant or sit at an outdoor café, meet friends while shopping on the main street or the farmers' market, listen to a band concert in summer or ice skate in winter in the center of town. They can catch the Metro to the nation's capital or walk to work on brick sidewalks under leafy trees.

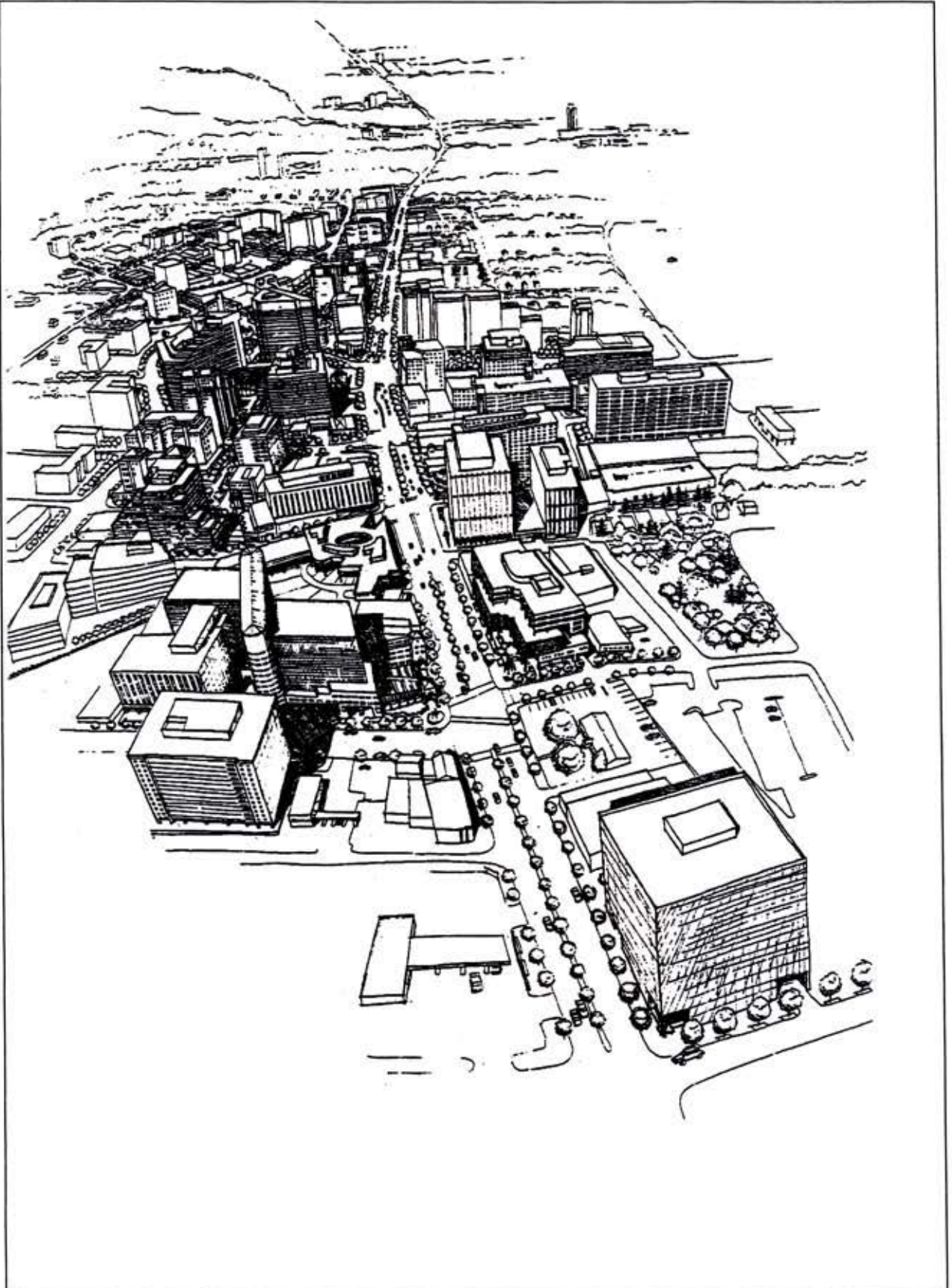
Bethesda already has many of the elements of this vision. It is a mature suburban downtown for Bethesda-Chevy Chase and southern Montgomery County; a major concentration of office employment; a regional destination for restaurants, specialty goods, and services; a neighborhood convenience shopping center; a government services and educational center, and a transportation hub. Bethesda is fast becoming both a prime urban residential neighborhood and a focus for culture and the arts.

This Sector Plan is a fine-tuning of earlier Sector Plans, a reevaluation of original goals and the resulting environment rather than a radical change of direction. Consistency of County policy helps create a community that is confident in its future and whose citizens are committed to improving that community. (See Figure 1.1, Aerial of Downtown Bethesda.)

Much of the Core development around the Metro station is in place. While preserving what is successful, the Plan provides opportunities for new development. A key component of the Plan is to complete the Metro Core, still intended as the focus for most intense development, with high-quality infill structures, green open space, and streetscape improvements such as trees, special paving, and seating. The Plan expands its vision to include commercial and residential districts surrounding the Core. It aspires to give each a distinctive character through less intense redevelopment and incremental improvements, while knitting them together into a complete fabric.

The vision includes expanded opportunities to live in the downtown in a variety of settings, from single-family neighborhoods to high-density apartments, at varied price ranges. The Plan also preserves surrounding neighborhoods, which contribute to a sense of continuity and community.

Bethesda will continue to play a major role in regional and local markets. The Plan seeks to increase the diversity of employment and shopping opportunities to serve current and future workers and residents. The strong retail sector, with its special shops and restaurants, is expected to expand, reinforced by cultural spaces and activities. The Plan endorses the concept and vision of Bethesda as a "cultural district."



The physical environment will be safe and welcoming to pedestrians, cyclists, and commuters. The Plan envisions a future Bethesda in which more of its residents and employees ride the Metro, use a carpool, cycle, or walk to work and other activities. Bethesda will be a greener place, carrying out the design theme of Bethesda as a “garden,” as new street trees are planted, and as a combination of private development and public initiative adds open spaces at all scales from small landscaped areas to a regional hiker/biker trail linking Bethesda to an extensive regional park system.

## **1.2 GOALS**

The Plan vision describes the kind of place we want Bethesda to be. The Plan goals represent the milestones on the path to reach the city we have envisioned. They include the following:

### **1. DOWNTOWN**

Realize the vision of Bethesda as a diverse and lively downtown for Bethesda-Chevy Chase. Continue well-designed redevelopment within the Metro Core and reinforce the physical character and varied activities of districts radiating out from the Core so that each district has a distinct identity yet is linked into a coherent whole.

### **2. URBAN FORM**

Encourage infill development that complements the underlying physical form of Bethesda. Create a high-quality built and pedestrian environment, including a network of pathways and open spaces. Enhance Bethesda's commercial and residential districts with improvements appropriate to the character of each.

page  
**3**

### **3. HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS**

Encourage and maintain a wide range of housing types and neighborhoods in and around Bethesda for people of all incomes, ages, lifestyles, and physical capabilities, in keeping with County goals. Provide an adequate supply of housing, including affordable units, to reinforce Bethesda as a place to live as well as work. Protect adjacent neighborhoods from commercial intrusion, undue traffic, and environmental degradation.

### **4. EMPLOYMENT**

Provide opportunities for additional jobs in this major down-County employment center, in keeping with County policy to concentrate growth in the urban ring near Metro stations and to increase the County's revenue base.

### **5. COMMUNITY CHARACTER**

Enhance Bethesda as an appealing environment for working, shopping, and entertainment. Strengthen its attraction as a destination for visitors while ensuring that residents find a sense of community. Reinforce a unique sense of place through the themes of Bethesda as a “garden” and a “cultural district.”

### **6. CIRCULATION**

Provide a safe and functional transportation system to serve the current and recommended



land uses. Achieve a significant shift of travel from drive-alone auto use to transit, car-pooling, and other alternatives. Enhance the pleasure, safety, and convenience of walking and bicycling.

The goals for the Sector Plan area reflect the goals in the *Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan (1990)*, which is intended to guide the overall development of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase (B-CC) planning area, including the Bethesda Central Business District (CBD) and the two other Sector Plan areas. The Sector Plan goals presented above are also consistent with the direction of the *General Plan Refinement of the Goals and Objectives for Montgomery County*. (See Section 1.5.)

## 1.3 SECTOR PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

Chapter 2 of this Sector Plan establishes the context for the Plan. Section 2.1 describes the area covered by the Plan geographically and makes certain recommendations to amend the Sector Plan boundary. It sets forth the local and regional roles of Bethesda as a community center, market, and transportation hub, and it summarizes Bethesda's planning history. Section 2.2 presents a profile of the area as it exists today: its people, land use, employment, and housing.

Chapters 3-9 contain objectives which further develop the Plan goals. These chapters make a series of recommendations to meet the goals and objectives that will allow the public and private sectors to realize the Plan vision.

page

4

### A. LAND USE AND ZONING PLAN

This chapter presents land use and zoning recommendations as well as design concepts and guidelines. The Bethesda CBD Sector Plan envisions the Sector Plan area as a regional employment center with the potential addition of about 16,400 jobs by the year 2010 above the existing 1993 level. The Plan also envisions establishing a stronger housing balance with the potential to add about 2,700 housing units by the year 2010.

#### **Metro Core District**

A major Plan objective is to achieve a compact central core and complete development of the center.

The Plan recommends optional method employment uses on most CBD-2 (Central Business District) sites at 4 FAR (Floor Area Ratio). Optional method residential use is also allowed at 5 FAR. County-sponsored mixed-income housing is recommended for Garage 49 on Woodmont Avenue near the Metro station.

The Hot Shoppes site, on a critical corner at the heart of the Core, receives considerable discussion. The Plan recommends designating the site CBD-3 with a density of 615,000 square feet of office. Optional method development of 750,000 square feet may be approved, if a professional theater or housing is provided.

The Plan allows optional method office development above the historic Bethesda Theatre Cafe, if the interior design is preserved and a performance use is provided.



### **Transit Station Residential District**

The Plan recommends creation of a high-density, low-rise “urban village” that steps down in height from 6 floors along Woodmont Avenue to 3 floors along Arlington Road, and provides from 45 up to about 100 dwelling units per acre. The Plan retains and revises the TS-R (Transit Station-Residential) Zone to achieve this vision.

### **Woodmont Triangle District, Old Georgetown Road Corridor, and the Wisconsin North and South Corridors**

The Plan seeks to preserve the low-density commercial character of these areas while encouraging the addition of housing. Current zoning is CBD-1, with 1 FAR of housing allowed under the standard method of development in addition to 1 FAR of commercial use. Revisions to the CBD-1 Zone provide an additional incentive for housing under the optional method. CBD-R1 or -R2 zoning is recommended for some sites. Housing may be constructed as part of future parking structures on Lot 36 and Deck 35 in the Woodmont Triangle.

### **Battery Lane and Bradley Boulevard Districts**

The Plan recommends preserving existing multi-family residential use to maintain variety in housing type and affordability. It also recommends higher density multi-family zoning on four sites along Battery Lane to increase the number of dwelling units accessible by Metro. The Plan also recommends maintaining the single-family neighborhood along Leland Street and Wellington Drive.

### **East Bethesda, Town of Chevy Chase, and Edgemoor Transition Areas**

The prime objective for these areas is to ensure stability of the adjacent single-family neighborhoods. The Plan recommends guidelines to limit special exception approvals and supports measures to discourage cut-through traffic.

In East Bethesda, the Plan recommends the confirmation of existing R-60 (residential, one-family) zoning with additional commercial transition (C-T) zoning on selected lots. The Plan also recommends moving the Sector Plan boundary closer to the CBD. Townhouse development is recommended in the parking lot behind the Bethesda Theatre Cafe and would also be allowed on Public Lot 25 on Tilbury Street.

In Chevy Chase, the recommended use for properties between Walsh and Stanford Streets is predominately residential townhouses. The Plan recommends the R-60/TDR (transferable development rights) Zone, allowing up to 12.5 dwelling units per acre. In Edgemoor, the Plan supports confirming the R-60 Zone in the block bounded by Moorland Lane, Arlington Road, and Edgemoor Lane.

### **Montgomery Triangle Corridor**

The Plan recommends infill development on the remaining sites in this district. It supports a density of 1.5 FAR in the current C-O (commercial office) Zone for properties along East-West Highway and Pearl Street (northeast), O-M (office building, moderate intensity) zoning for the small lots east of Pearl Street and south of East-West Highway, and C-T and O-M zoning for the triangle of land created by East-West Highway,



Montgomery Avenue, and Pearl Street.

### **Arlington Road District**

The Plan seeks to preserve and enhance this district as a community retail and business service area. It recommends concentrating redevelopment along Bethesda Avenue – the district’s “main street” – with a focus at the intersection of Bethesda Avenue and Arlington Road. The Plan designates a C-2 retail preservation overlay zone limited to .5 FAR for the southern portion of the Arlington Road District.

The Plan recommends a combination of mixed-income housing, main street retail, and parking on Public Parking Lot 31 under the existing R-60 base zone and a floating TS-M Zone, and a staging area for the Capital Crescent Trail. About 100 dwelling units could be developed.

## **B. TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

### **Transit and Other Non-Auto-Driver Modes**

The Sector Plan recommends a major shift of travel from drive-alone auto use to transit, carpooling, and other alternatives, by the following measures:

- Establish a transportation management organization (TMO).
- Establish an internal loop bus circulation system.
- Locate a terminal within the Bethesda CBD for the Silver Spring-Bethesda Trolley.
- Provide a second, southern entrance to the Bethesda Metro station.
- Provide pedestrian access improvements.
- Create a bicycle network that provides connections to the Metro station and throughout the Sector Plan area. The Capital Crescent Trail is a major Class I route into and through Bethesda.
- Limit the supply of employee parking in Bethesda. Since the Plan may require as many as 3,500 new spaces, all existing public parking sites must be reserved for possible structured parking. New parking structures on certain sites could also include mixed-income housing.
- Achieve 37 percent non-auto-driver travel during peak travel periods.

### **Highway System**

The Transportation Plan seeks to provide a balanced transportation system, where the area-wide level of congestion remains within acceptable levels and where congested roads and intersections are improved, when feasible. Recommendations related to the highway system include:

- Rely on the area-wide recommendations of this Plan and the Annual Growth Policy in reviewing specific development applications.

- Improve the intersection of Connecticut Avenue with East-West Highway, which is already congested and will get worse in the future.
- Study improvements to intersections of Rockville Pike with Cedar Lane and other roads in the vicinity of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Connecticut Avenue with Bradley Lane, and Old Georgetown Road with Arlington Road/Wilson Lane.
- Realign Arlington Road south of Bethesda Avenue to reduce the curve and provide better sight distance.
- Provide adequate right-of-way along East-West Highway at Wisconsin Avenue to allow sidewalks, five auto travel lanes, and a park-like landscaped area on the north side.
- Recognize the possible future need for a peak-period reversible lane on Old Georgetown Road from Woodmont Avenue to Huntington Parkway.

### **C. STREETScape PLAN**

Streetscape recommendations include:

- Extend the Metro Core streetscape system along Wisconsin Avenue and Old Georgetown Road. These are urban boulevards that will serve increasing amounts of pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
- Install underground utilities in these additional priority areas: East-West Highway, Bradley Boulevard, Woodmont Avenue, Norfolk Avenue, Arlington Road, Bethesda Avenue, Montgomery Avenue, Miller Avenue, Fairmont Avenue, and Montgomery Lane.
- Stage new streetscape improvements in response to limited public financial resources and to include private sector participation at the time of development.

page  
**7**

### **D. ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES PLAN**

Environmental objectives are achieved through implementation of ongoing programs and cooperation with County agencies. These objectives include improving air quality, increasing recycling, reducing noise impacts, mitigating stormwater impacts, and ensuring sufficient water supply and sewerage facilities.

### **E. COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN**

Recommendations regarding community facilities to meet future needs include:

- Create additional green open spaces.
- Consider joint public uses and housing in any redevelopment of the existing police station site.
- Provide an expanded Government Services Center to better meet community and public service needs.



## **F. HISTORIC RESOURCES PLAN**

Protecting Bethesda's historic heritage is achieved through the County Master Plan of Historic Preservation, which designates a property as a historic resource. The Sector Plan designates Brooks Photographers, the Little Tavern, Mrs. Withers' (Leslie W. Beall) House and the Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School.

## **G. IMPLEMENTATION**

Recent zoning text amendments applicable to this Plan include:

- A new CBD-R2 Zone.
- An amendment to the CBD-1 and CBD-2 Zones to allow the addition of 1 FAR of residential use in standard method development, with similar additions in the other CBD zones. The amendment also allows a lower percentage of residential use for optional method, mixed-use projects in the CBD-1 and CBD-2 Zones.

Zoning ordinance amendments recommended by this Plan include:

- Amend the TS-R Zone to allow a greater building coverage, a wider range of commercial uses, and a smaller assemblage requirement.
- Amend the PD Zone to allow townhouses near single-family detached houses and to allow urban densities on some small sites.
- Create a new C-2 Overlay Zone for part of the Arlington Road District.

Staging recommendations include:

- Stage I allows new employment and housing development in the Sector Plan area. During that time, transportation management measures will go into effect and new pedestrian, bicycle, and roadway facilities will be provided.
- Stage II begins when a transportation study is completed and the Annual Growth Policy approves more ceiling capacity to allow more development in the Sector Plan area.
- Stage III begins when a new traffic study is completed for a Sector Plan amendment.

Growth in the Bethesda CBD, Friendship Heights, and Westbard Sector areas and at federal facilities should be staged so that public facilities can be coordinated to serve new development.

The Sector Plan favors cooperation between the public and private sectors to administer and coordinate public services and private initiatives in the Bethesda CBD. The Plan recommends that the Bethesda Urban Partnership provide programs and improvements in support of the vision and recommendations of the Plan.



## 1.4 MARYLAND PLANNING ACT OF 1992

The Bethesda CBD Sector Plan embraces and confirms the seven visions of the Maryland Economic Development, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992 (the Planning Act).

The seven visions of the State Planning Act, as stated in Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, are:

1. "Development is to be concentrated in suitable areas;
2. Sensitive areas are to be protected;
3. In rural areas, growth is to be directed to existing population centers and resource areas are to be protected;
4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is to be considered a universal ethic;
5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption is to be practiced;
6. To assure the achievement of paragraphs 1 through 5 above, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are to be streamlined;
7. Funding mechanisms are to be addressed to achieve these objectives."

In addition to the Sector Plan's conformance to the seven visions, the Planning Act requires the implementation of a sensitive areas element designed to protect environmentally impacted areas. Sensitive areas are described in the Act as 100-year floodplains, streams and their buffer areas, habitats of threatened and endangered species, and steep slopes.

The Environmental Resources chapter of the Sector Plan complies with the sensitive areas requirement of the Planning Act, along with appropriate strategies for protecting these areas.

Flexible development regulations, streamlining the development process, and innovative economic development techniques are also required by the Planning Act. The Sector Plan uses flexible development standards in several instances where significant new development is contemplated.

## 1.5 GENERAL PLAN FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY

The 1993 *General Plan Refinement of the Goals and Objectives for Montgomery County* amends the 1964 General Plan, commonly called "... on Wedges and Corridors" and the 1969 *Updated General Plan for Montgomery County* (approved in 1970). The General Plan Refinement provides the framework for the development of more specific area master plans, functional plans, and sector plans. Its purpose is to provide clear guidance regarding the general pattern of development in Montgomery County, while retaining enough flexibility to respond to unforeseeable circumstances as they arise. (See Figure 1.2.)



The General Plan Refinement divides Montgomery County into four geographic components: the Urban Ring, the Corridor, the Suburban Communities, and the Wedge. Each area is defined in terms of appropriate land uses, scale, intensity, and function. The geographic components provide a vision for the future while acknowledging the modifications to the Wedges and Corridors concept that have evolved during the past three decades. In particular, the General Plan Refinement confirms two distinct sub-areas of the Wedge—an Agricultural Wedge and a Residential Wedge. It also recognizes the transitional areas of generally moderate density and suburban character that have evolved between the Wedge, Corridor, and Urban Ring as Suburban Communities. Emphasis remains on intensification of the Corridor.

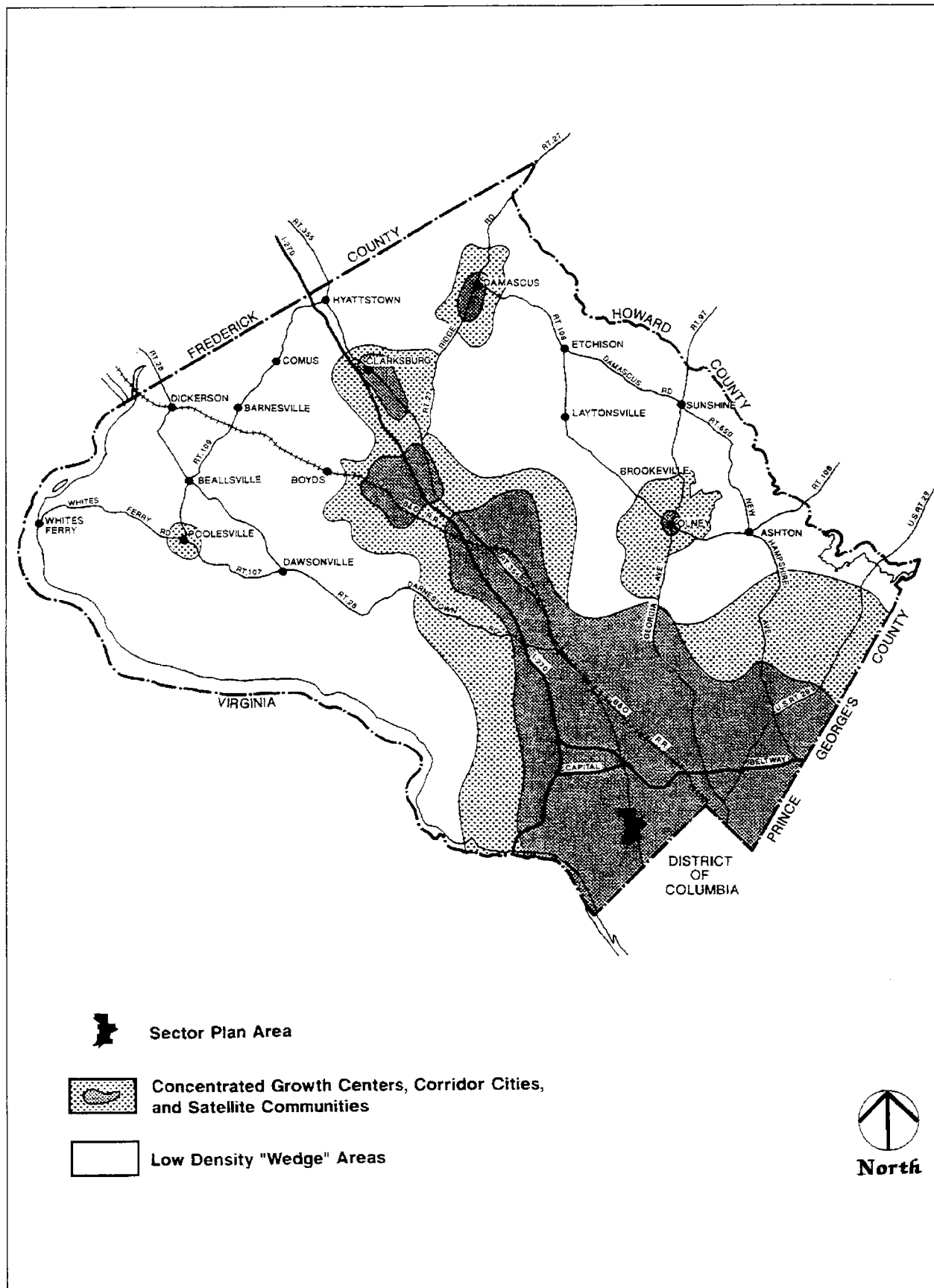
In addition to defining geographic components, the General Plan Refinement provides seven goals and associated objectives and strategies that give guidance to development within those geographic components. The goals, objectives, and strategies provide a future vision for Montgomery County and establish a frame of reference for decision-making to ensure that the vision becomes a reality. The seven goals relate to Land Use, Housing, Economic Activity, Transportation, Environment, Community Identity and Design, and Regionalism.

### **Conformance with the Maryland Planning Act of 1992 and General Plan for Montgomery County**

The land area covered by the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan is within the boundaries of the Urban Ring. The vision for the Urban Ring, as described in the General Plan Refinement, is characterized by “well-established, lively centers with job and housing opportunities; strong residential neighborhoods; varied transportation options; relatively dense development; active public reinvestment; and commercial revitalization.”

The Sector Plan will fulfill this vision by proposing a continuation of the established urban character of the area. Bethesda will continue to be a vital retail and employment center, with expanded opportunities for new housing. Neighborhoods within and adjacent to the Sector Plan area will be protected. A comprehensive bicycle network will include connections to the Metro station and the Capital Crescent Trail. Improvements are also planned for the pedestrian, transit, and roadway systems. Large-scale commercial development will complete the center of Bethesda surrounding the Metro station. Public facilities and amenities will be provided from both public and private sources. Commercial activity will be supported by the Bethesda Urban Partnership.

The Sector Plan also addresses each of the seven goals and related objectives and strategies of the General Plan Refinement, along with the visions of the Maryland Planning Act.





## **A. LAND USE**

### **Achieve a variety of land uses and development densities consistent with the Wedges and Corridors pattern.**

The Sector Plan directly supports the Wedges and Corridors concept by directing higher-density development to the Urban Ring in a transit serviceable area (Objective 1). A mix of uses is planned throughout the Plan area, while ensuring suitable transitions to adjacent residential communities (Objective 2). The Plan recommends rezoning some properties to TDR zones, in support of the agricultural wedge (Objective 4). A large increase in housing is provided, in balance with increased employment (Objective 7). The Plan also conforms with the Maryland Planning Act by concentrating development near transit (Vision 1), providing for transferred development from rural areas (Vision 3), and supporting large-scale employment development (Vision 6).

## **B. HOUSING**

### **Encourage and maintain a wide choice of housing types and neighborhoods for people of all incomes, ages, lifestyles, and physical capabilities at appropriate densities and locations.**

The Sector Plan anticipates an expansion of multi-family housing, including garden, mid-rise, and high-rise apartments, as well as some townhouses (Objectives 1-3 and 6). Mixed-income housing is supported on certain publicly owned parking lots and moderately-priced dwelling units will be included within private housing development (Objectives 4 and 6). The scale of development on the edges of the Sector Plan area will ensure compatible transitions to adjacent neighborhoods (Objective 5). The Plan conforms with the Maryland Planning Act by concentrating residential development near transit (Vision 1).

## **C. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY**

### **Promote a healthy economy, including a broad range of business, service, and employment opportunities at appropriate locations.**

The Sector Plan provides opportunities for new high-quality office employment and also for the continuation and expansion of existing retail and service businesses (Objectives 1, 4, and 6). An improved streetscape and pedestrian amenities will support the business environment, and the Bethesda Urban Partnership will provide maintenance and activity programming (Objectives 2 and 5). Mixed-use projects and mixed-income housing are planned (Objective 3). The Plan conforms with the Maryland Planning Act by supporting expanded employment opportunities (Vision 6).

## **D. TRANSPORTATION**

### **Provide a safe and efficient transportation system that serves the environmental, economic, social, and land use needs of the County and provides a framework for development.**

The Sector Plan supports a transportation system that connects all transit modes to the Metro station and provides bicycle, pedestrian, and auto access to the station (Objective 1). A transportation management organization is recommended to help reduce peak travel demand (Objective 3). The Plan includes options for a transit station location

for the Bethesda-Silver Spring Trolley and recommends a southern entrance to the Metro station (Objective 4). An extensive bicycle network and improvements to the streetscape and pedestrian environments, including consideration of extending the existing pedestrian tunnel, are planned (Objectives 6 and 8). The Plan conforms with the Maryland Planning Act by supporting conservation of vehicle fuel resources (Vision 5) and by identifying capital facilities to be funded by a variety of sources (Vision 7).

## **E. ENVIRONMENT**

**Conserve and protect natural resources to provide a healthy and beautiful environment for present and future generations. Manage the impacts of human activity on our natural resources in a balanced manner to sustain human, plant, and animal life.**

Implementing ongoing programs, in cooperation with County agencies, will protect environmental values. Policies and recommendations to protect the environment in the area surrounding the Bethesda CBD are also addressed in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan (1990). The Sector Plan recommends a transportation management program, which will increase awareness of environmentally prudent travel behavior (Objective 1). The Plan provides for street trees and new open spaces (Objective 2 and 8), mitigation of stormwater impacts in new development (Objectives 3 to 5), transportation alternatives to improve air quality and efficient use of energy (Objectives 7 and 14), increased recycling by business and residents (Objective 9), and reduced noise impacts in residential development (Objective 11). The Plan ensures sufficient water supply and sewerage facilities (Objective 12) and recommends installing public utilities underground (Objective 13). The Plan conforms with the Maryland Planning Act by demonstrating efficient and sensitive use of land through concentration of development near transit (Visions 1 and 4) and encouraging efficient use of fuel and solid waste resources (Vision 5). Sensitive areas surrounding the Bethesda CBD are addressed in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan (1990) (Vision 2).

page  
**13**

## **F. COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND DESIGN**

**Provide for attractive land uses that encourage opportunity for social interaction and promote community identity.**

The Bethesda CBD has an identity as the downtown for the greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase area because of the amount and character of employment, shopping, services, and housing. The concentration of density, the confluence of transportation services, and the high-quality public environment all reinforce the image of Bethesda as a downtown serving a larger community (Objective 1). The Arlington Road District also provides a major community-oriented shopping environment. The Plan seeks to build on existing public parks and open spaces and improve the pedestrian and bicycle links throughout the Sector Plan area and to the adjacent neighborhoods (Objectives 2 and 5). Preservation of historic resources, recognition of a "cultural district" theme, and the recommendation to provide a professional theater reinforce Bethesda's identity (Objective 3). The Plan recommends an expanded Government Services Center and highlights other public service needs (Objective 4).



## **G. REGIONALISM**

### **Promote regional cooperation and solutions of mutual concern to Montgomery County, its neighbors, and internal municipalities.**

The expansion of employment in Bethesda will support a healthy regional economy (Objective 1). Concentration of development near Metro supports the region's efforts to attain Clean Air Act standards (Objective 2). A representative of the Town of Chevy Chase served on the Sector Plan advisory committee and was consulted during the preparation of the Plan (Objective 3).



# SECTOR PLAN FRAMEWORK

## 2.1 ROLE AND PLANNING HISTORY OF BETHESDA

### A. DESCRIPTION OF SECTOR PLAN AREA

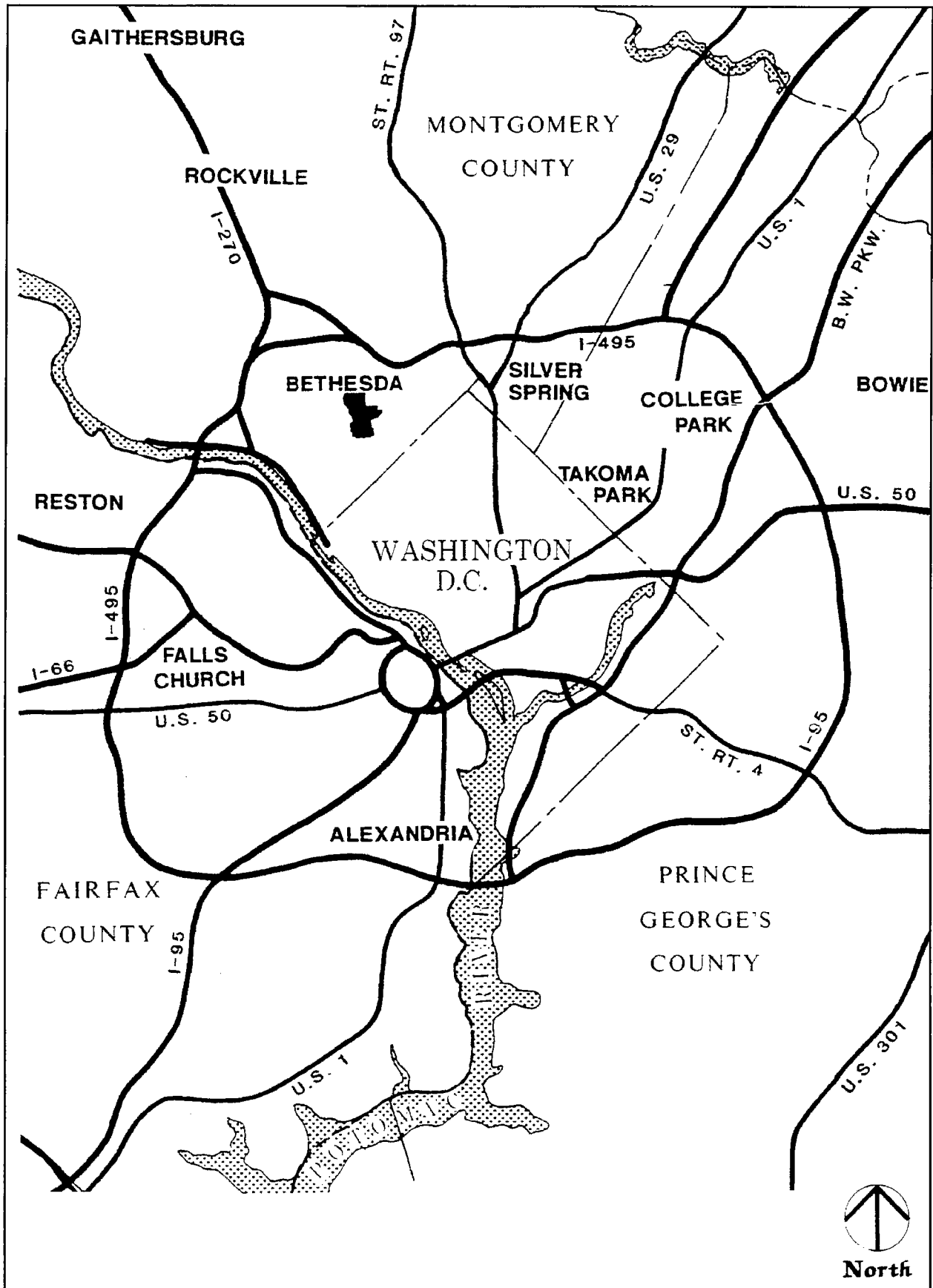
The Bethesda Central Business District Sector Plan area is located between the Capital Beltway (I-495) and northwest Washington, D.C., as shown in Figure 2.1, Regional Location. The Plan area is in the southernmost corner of Montgomery County. (See Figure 2.2, Location within Montgomery County.) The center of the area occurs at the intersection of three Maryland state highways: Wisconsin Avenue, East-West Highway, and Old Georgetown Road.

The Bethesda CBD Sector Plan boundary encloses an area of about 405 acres within the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area. The Sector Plan area has an irregular shape, which is bounded by the National Institutes of Health on the north; Tilbury Street, Sleaford Road, and Chelton Streets, along with the CSX rail line, 46th Street, and West Avenue on the east; Nottingham Drive, Chevy Chase Recreation Center, and portions of Kenwood Forest on the south; and the C-2 zoned property west of Arlington Road and portions of Old Georgetown Road on the west. The Sector Plan boundary is shown in Figure 2.3.

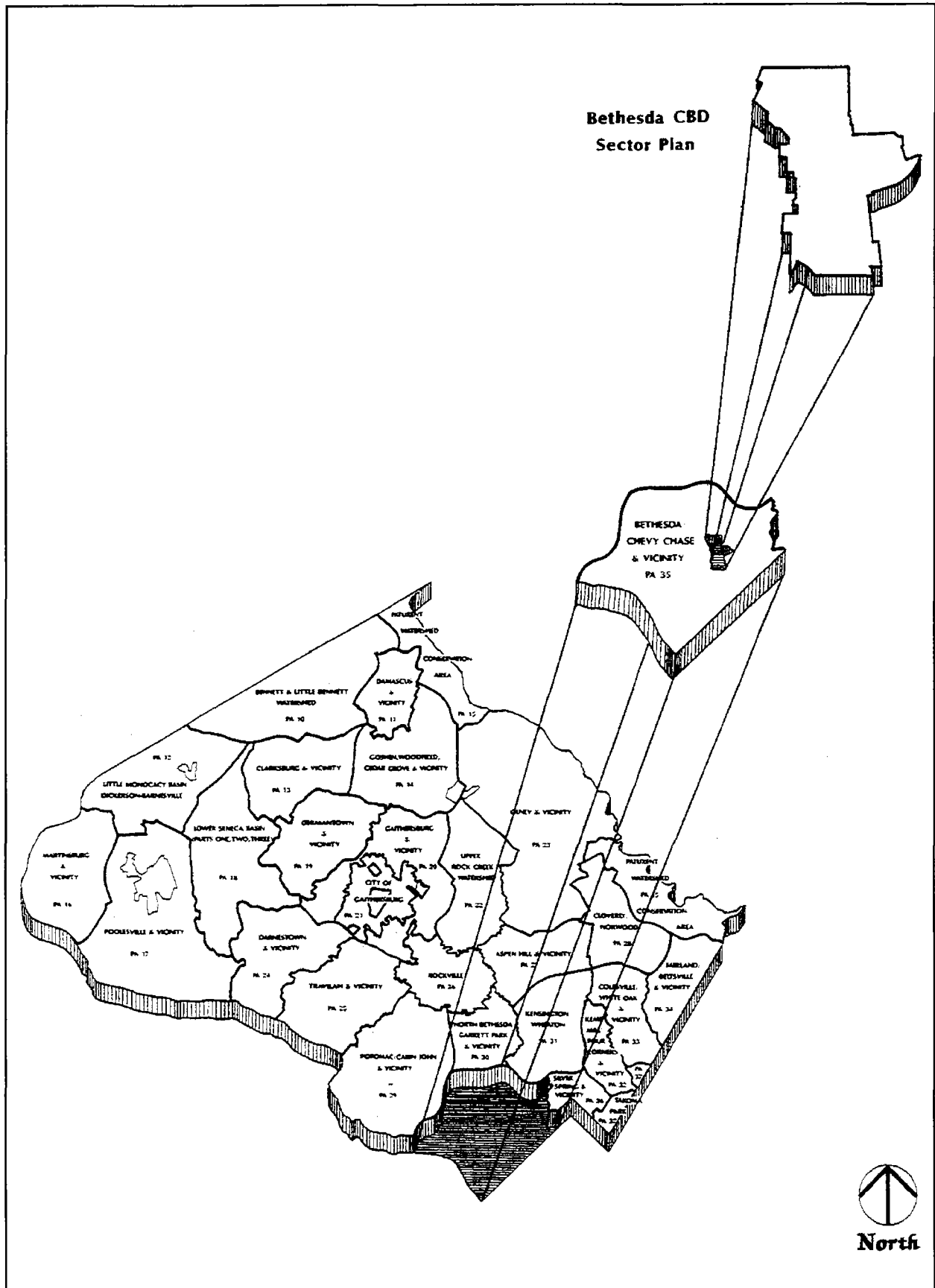
The Plan modifies the Sector Plan boundary. The new boundary is also shown in Figure 2.3. The new boundary deletes some single-family detached lots in East Bethesda and one lot in Edgemoor from the Sector Plan area, adding them to the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area. This change will further protect the single-family character of these properties and the adjacent neighborhoods. (See Section 4.7.) As a formal amendment to the 1990 *Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan*, the Sector Plan makes the following recommendations for the single-family housing area added to the Master Plan area:

1. Confirm the existing single-family land use and R-60 zoning for these properties.
2. Apply to these properties the B-CC Master Plan guidelines for special exceptions to zoning.

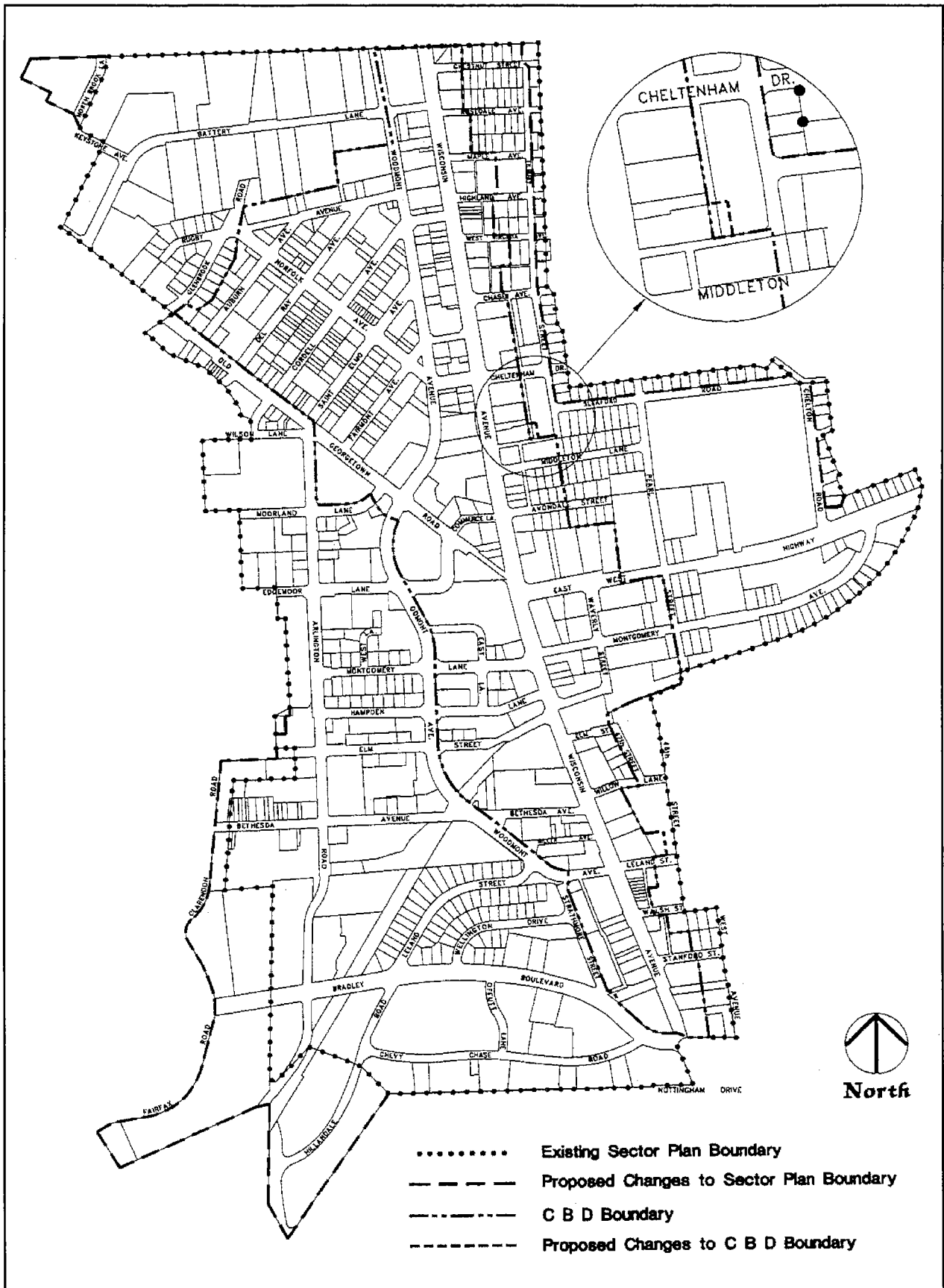
The new boundary also adds to the Sector Plan area some established townhouse and garden apartment communities in the southwest, removing them from the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area. The zoning for these communities was confirmed in the B-CC Master Plan. The addition of stable, single-family attached and multi-family housing areas is consistent with the higher density character of other housing within the Sector Plan boundary. (See Figure 2.3 and discussion in Section 4.4, Battery Lane District; Section 4.11, Bradley Boulevard District; and Section 4.13, Edgemoor Transition area).







## SECTOR PLAN AREA

**FIGURE 2.3**

The CBD boundary defines the Central Business District. It is a smaller area within the Sector Plan area that contains the parcels designated with the Central Business District (CBD) zones. These zones, CBD-0.5, CBD-1, CBD-2, CBD-3, CBD-R1, and CBD-R2, are intended to encourage residential and commercial development at densities which can be supported by public facilities and which are compatible with the surrounding areas. They are designed to encourage provision of open space and other amenities, and to promote better pedestrian and vehicular circulation. Each zone allows development by a "standard method" or an "optional method" of development.

The Plan modifies the Bethesda CBD boundary as follows. (See Figure 2.3, Sector Plan Area.)

1. Extend the boundary eastward 50 feet across an existing public alley right-of-way into the Beta Corporation parking lot, located between Cheltenham Drive and Middleton Lane, to allow an optional method project that should result in preservation of the interior of the historic Bethesda Theatre Cafe. (See discussion in Section 4.1, the Metro Core District.)
2. Depict the boundary just north of Leland Street and west of 46th Street as following the lot lines defined on the original plats of subdivision for Chevy Chase. The boundary line change occurs wholly within the area of Parking Lot #24.
3. Locate the CBD boundary along the east edge of the right-of-way of Strathmore Street. A wider right-of-way will not be needed since the Plan does not recommend the extension of Woodmont Avenue to Bradley Boulevard. The Plan recommends that the entire property on the east side of Strathmore Street be zoned R-10 to retain the garden apartment use. (See discussion in Section 4.11, the Bradley Boulevard District.)

page  
19

## **B. ROLE OF BETHESDA**

Bethesda has both a local role in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area and a regional role in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. These roles can be viewed from several perspectives: Bethesda as a downtown, a community center, a diverse market, and a transportation hub.

Bethesda is the downtown for the southwest part of Montgomery County, particularly the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. While there are many centers of concentrated mixed-use development in the Washington, D.C. suburbs, only a few have the more urban qualities found in Bethesda. These characteristics include a high-quality public environment in the Metro Core District, a strong regional restaurant market, and an emerging cultural arts environment. Bethesda has the vitality of a diverse retail sector, a strong employment base, and a growing housing component. This urban identity has developed while respecting the character of nearby residential communities.

Bethesda is considered the heart of the community by a growing number of B-CC and other down-County residents. It provides many of the central functions common to traditional downtowns. Popular public facilities include a library, schools, and parks,



complemented by private facilities such as churches, and academies. Shopping at the major community retail center along Arlington Road offers encounters with friends and acquaintances. The public plazas and shopping streets have also become places for special community events. Public services include a police station, a fire and a rescue station, and a County government services center.

Bethesda is a strong market for jobs, retailing, and housing. The job market includes the National Institutes of Health and the Naval Medical Command, immediately to the north. Landowners and developers find Bethesda an attractive location for office space, as demonstrated in the development competition of the 1980's. A large and diverse retail sector has grown despite the proliferation of suburban shopping and strip centers in nearby areas. When housing is provided, new residents readily move to Bethesda. The strength of the Bethesda economy provides a strong revenue base for Montgomery County. Bethesda residents' high incomes and the appealing environment continue to attract developers, retailers, and shoppers to Bethesda. A continuing challenge is to ensure that the various types of new growth can be accommodated by transportation and other public facilities.

Bethesda is an important transportation center in Montgomery County. The Metro Center provides both rail and bus transit service. State highways go through the heart of Bethesda, although it is not located directly on the interstate highway system. While travel to Bethesda continues to be dominated by single-occupant auto use, there is potential for increasing the use of walking, bicycles, transit, and car pooling for work-related trips.

### **C. PLANNING HISTORY**

The 1970 *Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan* expressed concerns regarding the advent of the Metro station in Bethesda. It raised questions about how the new transportation mode would affect the CBD, including whether it would stimulate positive change, how to guide such change, and what its impact would be on surrounding areas. The plan recommended a CBD boundary but did not specify kinds or intensity of uses.

The public sector made significant progress in implementing the 1970 Master Plan, which was widely supported by public officials and citizens. The County Council contracted the size of the CBD and adopted the Commercial Transition (C-T) Zone as a means of protecting residential communities. Public agencies incorporated the transit station location, design, and major access facilities into various programs.

The 1976 *Bethesda Central Business District Sector Plan* effected a substantial downzoning, reducing theoretical development potential from 63 million square feet to 12.4 million square feet. The Sector Plan applied a new transit station development area zone and CBD zones instead of the C-2 Zone, reducing FAR from 14 to 6 in the CBD-3 Zone, and to 4 in the CBD-2 Zone.

The 1976 Plan also recommended that development in the Metro Core occur in the early years of the planning period, and that the Metro Center be the first part of the Metro Core to be developed. However, prior to development of Metro Center, some optional method projects were built farther out from the Core. Eventually, a large retail-office-hotel complex and a central plaza over the subway station were approved for Metro Center.

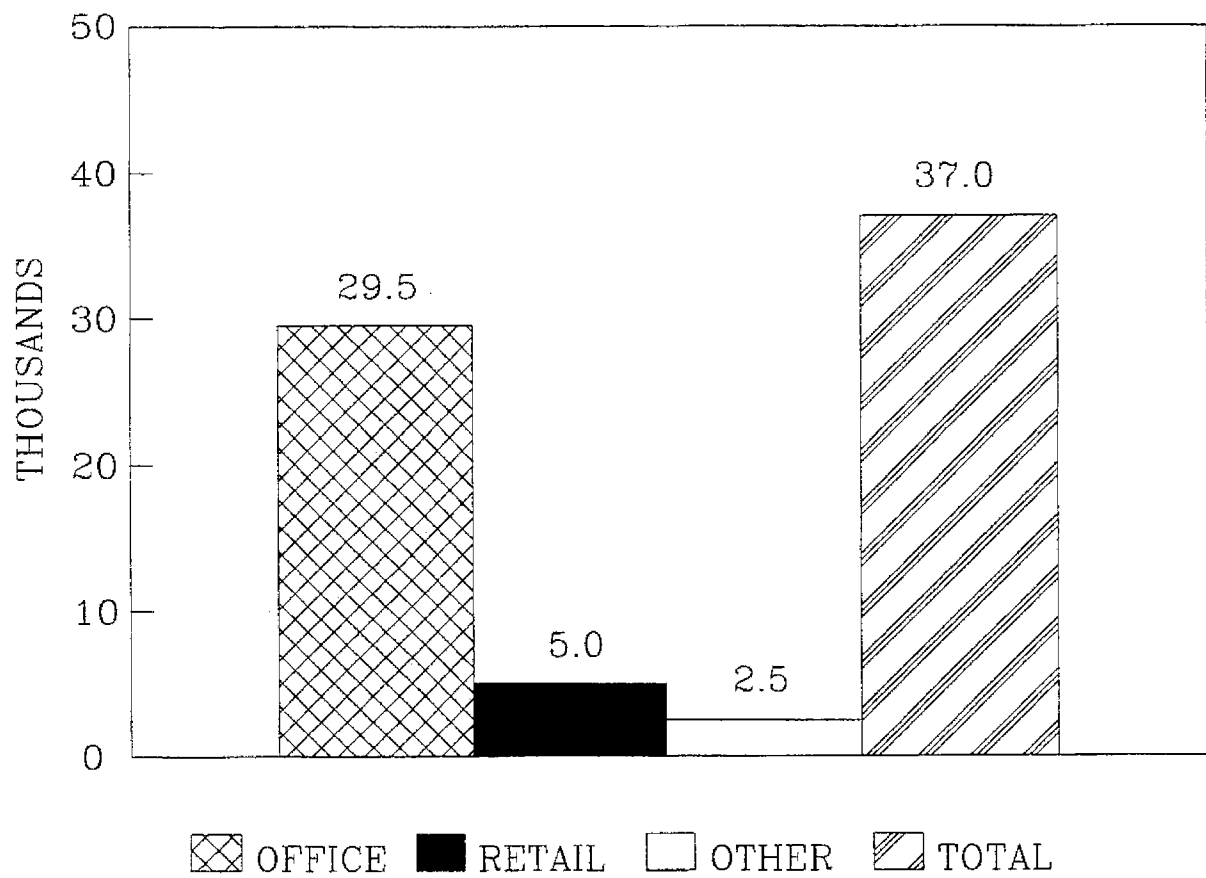
This complex opened in 1984, the same year as the Metro station. The timing of these projects followed the general intent of the 1976 Plan. Along with the CBD Zone areas, the 1976 Plan addressed other commercially and residentially zoned land surrounding the Metro Core.

In 1982, the County Council adopted an amendment to the 1976 *Bethesda Central Business District Sector Plan*. Adoption of the Plan Amendment lifted a moratorium on optional method development. The Amendment was solely related to staging issues and development scale and did not address zoning changes or public facility location.

The 1982 Amendment's staging plan permitted development applications prior to the opening of Metro in the Stage II area, farther out from the Core, including most of the CBD-2 and the TS-R areas. Peak-hour vehicle trips became the overall limiting factor in granting development approvals. Two thousand one hundred (2,100) trips were allocated to specific use mixes. The Amendment gave general guidance concerning the land use mix and described desirable features and public benefits to be provided by individual properties in the Metro Core District. The 1982 Amendment ranked optional method applications in Stage II, based upon a set of Standards For Comparison.

Since 1985, there has been no transportation capacity for projects relying on the standard method of development. Two amendments to the Sector Plan, the latest in 1988, allowed very small projects to receive subdivision approval. In 1989, the County Council approved "loophole closure" legislation (Bill 25-89), which placed development limits on those properties recorded prior to 1982 that registered. If they generate fewer than 50 peak-hour vehicle trips, these loophole properties can obtain building permits without meeting further Adequate Public Facilities (APFO) requirements. Loophole properties generating more than 50 peak-hour trips are required to meet APFO requirements, just as new subdivisions are.

Montgomery County and Bethesda experienced a rapid rate of urban growth in the late 1980's. Although this development has been contained within the limits of the County's growth management system, the experience justified a closer look at the impacts of future growth. This Sector Plan provides a comprehensive review of the Bethesda CBD following completion of the new *Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan* in 1990.



## 2.2 SECTOR PLAN PROFILE

### A. PEOPLE

The residents of the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan area reflect its suburban downtown nature. In brief, the residents are:

- Apartment dwellers, with 87 percent in either garden or high-rise apartments.
- Middle-aged, with a median age of 40 years, though 30 percent are in the 25-34 age range.
- Female, 61 percent of the total population.
- Single, 57 percent of the total population, but above 60 percent for apartment dwellers.
- Employed in Bethesda-Chevy Chase (35 percent) or in Washington, DC (41 percent).
- Well educated (29 percent of residents over age 25 have graduate degrees).
- Owners of one car, 71 percent of the residents.
- Residents of small households, an average of 1.5 persons per household.

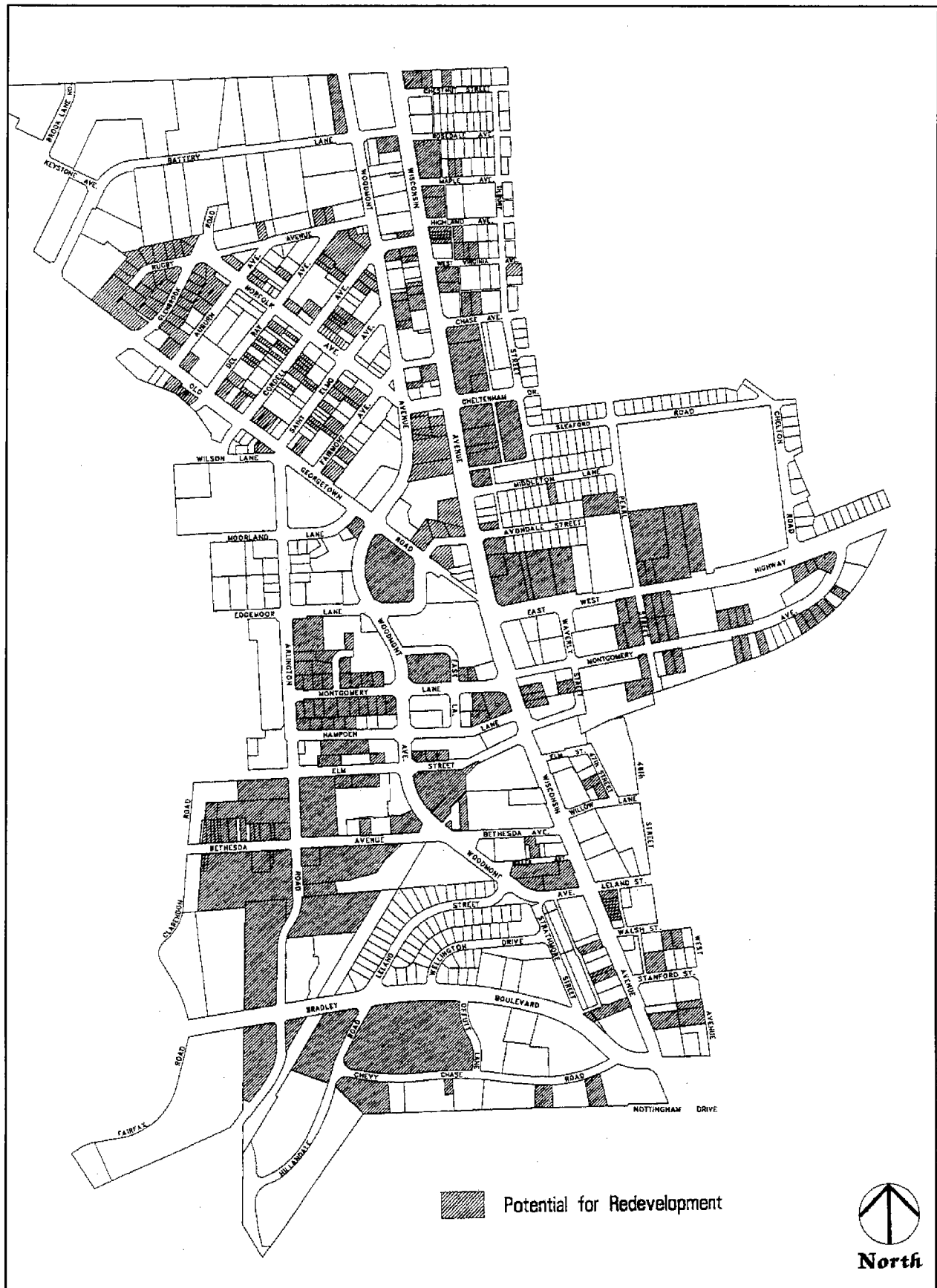
### B. LAND USE AND EMPLOYMENT

The Bethesda CBD Sector Plan area contains a mix of land uses in a suburban downtown environment. Highest densities are concentrated in the Metro Core District. However, high-density buildings are also found along East-West Highway and north along Wisconsin Avenue into the Woodmont Triangle District. Retail exists on the first floor of most commercial structures. Housing is distributed throughout the area.

Between 1980 and 1991, the total floor area in commercial use increased from 6.3 million square feet to 10.1 million square feet. Current space includes 6.7 million square feet of office, 2.3 million square feet of retail, and 1.1 million square feet of other uses.

The employment capacity of commercial buildings increased from 23,000 jobs in 1980 to 37,000 jobs in 1991. In 1991, there was capacity for an estimated 29,500 office jobs, 5,000 retail jobs, and 2,500 jobs in other business groups. (See Figure 2.4.) Since office vacancy reached 21.8 percent and retail reached 12.6 percent in 1991, the actual job level is estimated to be below 30,000 jobs.

Many properties in the Sector Plan area have potential for redevelopment under the 1976 Sector Plan's recommended zoning. Figure 2.5 identifies those properties that have potential for either optional method or standard method redevelopment. The criteria for determining redevelopment potential reflect both the technical standards of the zone and assumptions concerning decisions by property owners. It is clear from the map that many properties have redevelopment potential.





In the past 10 years, almost 3 million square feet of new office space have been completed. The average annual office rent in 1991 was \$24 per square foot and ranged from \$16 to \$33. These figures are comparable to rental rates in Ballston and Courthouse Square Metro station areas in Virginia. The five-year rate of office space absorption through July 1991 has been 143,600 square feet per year. Assuming this five-year rate continues, about 4 million square feet of existing vacant and new office development would take almost 28 years to be absorbed. It is expected that absorption of office space will be considerably slower in the 1990's due to more restrictive financing requirements, less favorable tax laws, and more conservative investment attitudes. As a result, the assumed rate of absorption may still be too high, even though Bethesda will probably be stronger than most other locations in the region.

In the past 10 years, almost 600,000 square feet of new retail space have been completed. Retail space rents range from \$14 to \$45 a square foot, with higher rates occurring in the Metro Core and Arlington Road Districts. Lower rates tend to occur as distance from Metro increases. Since 1987, the number of retail establishments has grown by 13 percent. Bethesda's retailers have identified distinct market niches, offering an eclectic mix of goods and services. Major types of retail establishments include comparison retail, such as home furnishings, women's apparel, electronics, and gifts. Neighborhood retail establishments include food stores, hair care, and dry cleaning. Other retail includes restaurants, cultural retail, auto services, and professional services. These types of retail are dispersed throughout Bethesda, as shown in Figure 2.6.

## **C. HOUSING**

page  
**25**

The Bethesda CBD Sector Plan area contains about 5,200 housing units, including 600 units within the expanded Sector Plan boundary. The units are 49 percent high-rise, 38 percent garden, and 13 percent single-family detached and townhouse. Among the high-rise and garden units are 800 condominiums and 250 units for the elderly.

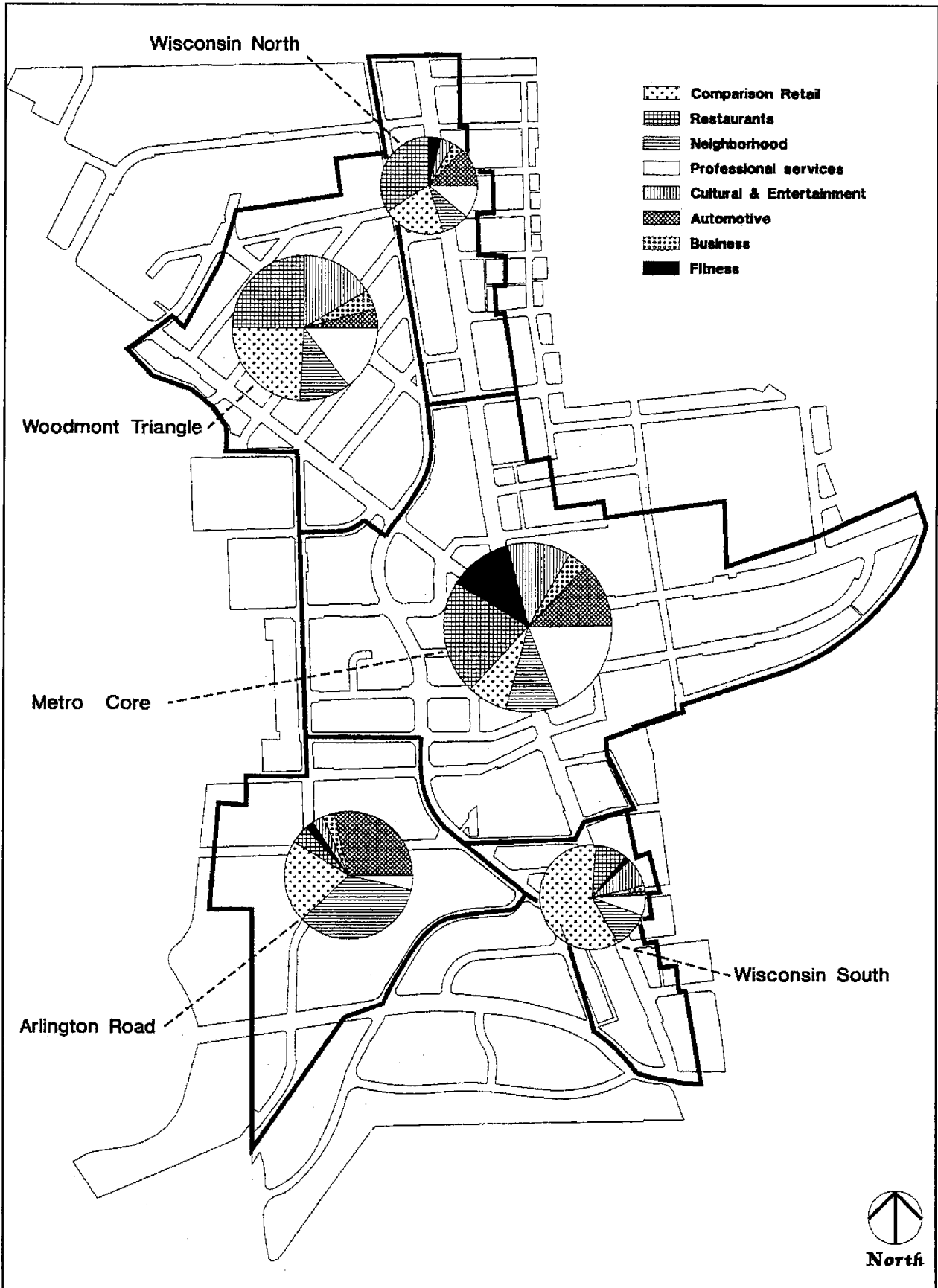
The largest concentrations of housing are in the north, primarily along Battery Lane, and in the south, primarily along Bradley Boulevard. Two lesser concentrations occur along Woodmont Avenue near Old Georgetown Road and along East-West Highway.

Major characteristics of housing in Bethesda include:

- Over half of Bethesda's rental high-rise and garden units are one-bedroom.
- Rents for existing garden and mid-rise units range from \$470 to \$790 per month, with many of the non-air-conditioned units at the lower, more affordable end of the range.
- Rents for new high-rise apartments range from as low as \$650 for an efficiency unit to \$1,400 for a two-bedroom unit.
- Average age of housing completed prior to the 1987 Census Update Survey is now 34 years (in 1992).
- New condominium housing serves higher income households, with a median sales price since 1987 of about \$260,000 and prices as high as \$500,000.
- New apartment rentals appear to have shifted to young and middle-aged singles.

# RETAIL SPACE BY CATEGORY

FIGURE 2.6





# PLANNING AND DESIGN OBJECTIVES

## 3.1 LAND USE OBJECTIVES

### A. EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

The Bethesda CBD Sector Plan area will continue to be an important center of employment growth for Montgomery County. Office workers comprise the largest segment of employment in Bethesda, followed by various categories of retail and service employees. In 1993, the employment capacity of buildings in Bethesda was 38,500 jobs, although the actual employment level was lower, due to vacancies in office and retail space. Other major near-by employment centers include the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Naval Medical Command, with 18,650 existing jobs, and Silver Spring CBD, with a job capacity of 31,400 jobs. Future Bethesda employment for the year 2010 is projected by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) to be 48,800 jobs.

There are numerous benefits to continuing employment growth in Bethesda. Jobs with Metro access will be available to a wider pool of employees, making efficient use of a multi-billion dollar transit system, while decreasing traffic congestion and air pollution from drive-alone commuters. Moreover, Montgomery County will gain significant tax revenue from Bethesda's commercial property. In 1991, Bethesda provided \$860 million, 3.3 percent of the total County assessed property tax base. Finally, the proximity to adjacent residential neighborhoods of a high-quality, contained employment center increases the value of the residential properties. These benefits can be retained while Bethesda continues as a model of mixed-use downtown development.

The Sector Plan recommendations could result in about 16,400 new jobs above 1993 levels at Plan build-out, including about 1,700 jobs in projects that are already approved. Actual growth by the year 2010 may be less, as indicated by the COG employment forecast.

The Sector Plan endorses the following growth objectives and strategies in support of the Plan goals:

1. Concentrate high-density office development in the Metro Core and allow lower-density infill development along with housing in other districts.
  - a. Encourage primarily office development in the Metro Core to maximize the number of jobs created. Residential development and modest office development will occur in the CBD's other districts.
  - b. Chapter 4.0, Land Use, states the land uses and densities recommended for each district.



2. Support new commercial development that enhances the character of Bethesda by providing desired public benefits and high-quality redevelopment.
  - a. Encourage new development and redevelopment that follows the guide lines for urban form, open space, streets, and pathways. (See Section 3.2 and the Guidelines in Chapter 4.0.)
  - b. Approve optional method projects that provide or contribute to public benefits such as cultural facilities, open spaces, or other public gathering places identified in the Plan.
3. Coordinate new growth with public facilities, so as not to burden nearby residential areas. Public facility plans and impacts of growth are addressed throughout the Plan.
  - a. Stage new development to correspond with the availability of major transportation facilities, such as the Silver Spring-Bethesda Trolley (Section 5.3 C), parking (Section 5.6), and new roadway capacity (Section 5.7).
  - b. Provide other public facilities, as needed, to serve additional employees and residents. Facilities addressed in this Plan include open space (Section 3.2 C), pathways (Section 5.4), bikeways (Section 5.5), parks, and other public facilities (Chapter 8.0). Some of these facilities can be provided by new development.
  - c. Protect nearby residential neighborhoods from the effects of new development. Stabilizing the transition areas next to single-family areas is addressed in Chapter 4.0, Land Use. Cut-through traffic is addressed in Section 5.7 D, Neighborhood Protection.

## **B. HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS**

Bethesda is a place to live and to work. Encouraging housing in the CBD meets a number of County planning goals. Housing in combination with office and retail uses in the CBD will enliven the area by creating a well-rounded community of residents and workers who contribute to the health and vitality of the downtown. Providing apartments within walking distance of jobs and Metro will encourage commuting alternatives to the automobile and help reduce air pollution from auto emissions. Additional housing will also help achieve a more balanced demand on the transportation network.

The Sector Plan provides for about 2,700 dwelling units at build-out. According to a housing study conducted for the Plan, the market could absorb 1,000 units in 3 to 4 years, while 4,000 units could be absorbed in 8 to 11 years. Therefore, it is realistic to assume absorption of about 2,700 units by the year 2010. The study assumed annual construction of 375 to 500 new rental and condominium housing units (125-150 condos, 100-150 garden apartments and 150-200 rental high-rise apartments).

These units would be in a price range affordable by upper-moderate and high-income households. Without special efforts, there will be a continuing shortfall of new units to

meet the needs of lower income households employed by retail and service establishments in the Bethesda area. The existing mid-rise and garden apartments provide a stock of affordable housing. In addition to a need for more affordable housing units, there is a market demand for rental housing that is of higher quality than available in many of the existing garden and mid-rise projects but priced below high-rise apartments.

The housing study completed for the Plan concluded that there will be continuing demand for all forms of housing in the Bethesda CBD and the surrounding area because of the diversity of the market seeking housing; the relatively safe living environment; the increasing availability of restaurants, shops and recreational activities; the growing employment base; and the easy access to Metro.

One of the major reasons for the strength of the Bethesda CBD housing market is the CBD's attractiveness as a place to live—not just convenience to Metro and a prestigious address, but the ambience of street life, shops, and restaurants. The downtown is small enough and built-up enough so that it is difficult to increase the housing zoning capacity substantially without threatening these elements.

The strong absorption rates for new housing in the Bethesda CBD in the last five years may represent continuing strong demand or it may mean that the new units filled pent-up demand for new apartments in a downtown atmosphere near Metro. If the strong absorption continues, the 2,700 units in the Sector Plan area will accommodate demand for a reasonable period of time.

The Sector Plan endorses the following objectives and strategies in support of the Plan goals regarding housing and neighborhoods:

1. Promote variety and choice in housing of quality design and durable construction in various types of neighborhoods. A diversity of living environments is one of Bethesda's strengths. The Plan supports measures to continue such diversity.
  - a. Preserve opportunities for single-family residential living in and around the Sector Plan area. Attractive single-family neighborhoods ring the area and must be protected. There is also a sizable single-family neighborhood within the Sector Plan boundary that should be preserved. (See Objective 5, below.)
  - b. Zone land for mixed-use or multi-family residential development at various densities, commensurate with urban form and compatibility objectives.
2. Provide a sufficient supply of housing to serve Bethesda's existing and planned employment.
  - a. Provide adequate zoning capacity within the Sector Plan area for 2,700 dwelling units. Residential development is assumed on mixed-use sites and sites currently zoned residential. The Plan recommends rezoning certain sites from a commercial or mixed-use zone to a residential zone, and increasing the incentives to encourage housing on other sites.



- b. Modify County regulations and policies to improve the feasibility and attractiveness of higher-density housing.

The CBD zones allow residential uses to be added to existing and new buildings above currently allowed density under the standard method; or allow a higher commercial component as an incentive for provision of a minimum housing component under the optional method. The TS-R Zone encourages low-rise, high-density housing and allows a limited amount of commercial use.

3. Promote an adequate supply of affordable housing, especially for households at the median income and below, in keeping with General Plan goals and objectives. Such housing will benefit from Bethesda's convenient public transportation, employment, shopping, and recreational facilities.

- a. Preserve existing affordable housing by confirming existing zoning or downzoning to be consistent with current density. Promote County acquisition or creative financing alternatives and partnerships in order to retain existing apartment buildings at affordable prices, as opportunities arise.
- b. Designate County-owned parcels (excluding parkland) that meet appropriate housing site selection criteria as locations for mixed-income housing. High land values add substantially to the cost of building housing in Bethesda. The elimination of all or part of the land cost for a new project by using land already owned by the County would contribute to providing rental housing at affordable prices for moderate-income households.

4. Maintain and enhance the quality of housing.

- a. Encourage excellence in architectural design, within the limits of the public planning process.
- b. Discourage deterioration of housing through well-funded code enforcement, neighborhood improvement programs, and other appropriate techniques.
- c. Encourage well-designed mixed-income housing that is compatible with surrounding houses. The Plan includes design guidelines to be followed by County agencies and the private sector when developing such housing.

5. Maintain and enhance the quality of neighborhoods, both single- and multi-family, within and on the periphery of the Sector Plan area.

- a. Provide transitional land uses and physical buffers. Such land uses are limited to low to moderate-density housing, schools, churches, public institutions, parks and open space, and parking facilities if no more than

one-story above grade and properly screened. Physical buffers include dense landscaping, fencing, walls, or buildings of appropriate scale and use. (See Sections 4.7, 4.9, and 4.13.)

- b. Channel through traffic away from residential streets. Enforce programs to discourage nonresidential parking from spilling into adjacent residential areas. These strategies must be achieved through cooperation and agreement between residents and local government.
- c. Endorse guidelines for the location of special exceptions to zoning uses within residential areas. These guidelines are applicable to single-family detached houses and to townhouses in the East Bethesda, Town of Chevy Chase, and Edgemoor Transition areas and to other areas when stated in Chapter 4.0, Land Use. Guidelines should include the following provisions:
  - Avoid over concentration of retail, service, or office special exception uses.
  - Protect residential areas from incompatible design of special exception uses.
  - Support special exception applications for uses that contribute to the housing objectives of the Sector Plan.
  - Endorse child day care, elder day care, and hospice services, but not medical clinics or offices.
- d. Promote infill development that complements existing housing and neighborhoods. Ensure that new residential developments are linked with existing housing through open space and pedestrian paths to form neighborhoods.
- e. Encourage the provision of adequate indoor and outdoor recreation facilities to meet the needs of new residents. Create opportunities to build a sense of neighborhood through providing community facilities and public meeting spaces in new development, where people can gather.

## **C. RETAIL**

Retail adds vitality to the local economy and is an animating feature which gives Bethesda much of its character. Bethesda draws its retail vitality from the juxtaposition of residences, offices, restaurants, hotels, cultural resources, and shops. The CBD offers a different shopping experience than the typical suburban shopping center. Part of Bethesda's appeal is the eclectic mix of shops that offer hard-to-find items for their customers and add an interesting flavor to the CBD shopping experience. Bethesda has developed a reputation as a major dining destination. The neighborhood retail facilities serve the weekly shopping needs of residents and business people.



Planning Department staff prepared a retail study in January 1992 that documents the successes of and opportunities for Bethesda retail. The study concludes that there is a need for some additional retail space to serve projected local growth. However, many of the restaurants, specialty retail shops, and cultural services draw from a regional market area, and so future demand is much harder to predict. The study also notes that, while retail is dispersed over a large geographic area, most stores are within an acceptable walking distance of the center of Bethesda. Though Bethesda is an active retail environment, the report notes that the regional malls surrounding the CBD will, at best, maintain their market share of comparison shopping goods. Some experts believe that malls could actually lose their market share of comparison goods over the next decade.

Bethesda's retail success has resulted from private sector initiatives, its particular demographic characteristics, and supportive public policies and actions. In an effort to perpetuate retail vitality in Bethesda, the Sector Plan endorses the retail objectives and strategies discussed below to achieve the Plan goals.

1. Approve zoning recommendations and land use guidelines that support the continued vitality of retail in Bethesda. Such tools can influence the location of retail as development opportunities arise.
  - a. In general, allow standard method development to proceed without being restrained by development staging limits. This allows properties to redevelop in response to retail market opportunities.
  - b. Retain lower-density zoning in some areas, in contrast to the higher-density central Core. Lower densities encourage retention of reasonable rents, local retail business, and smaller scale buildings. Low densities and retail uses are recommended in portions of the Woodmont Triangle, Arlington Road, and Wisconsin South Districts.
  - c. Encourage street oriented retail where it would extend the existing retail environment, particularly along the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor. Retail space is not supported in parts of buildings with low visibility and is not needed in all new projects.
  - d. Designate both Norfolk Avenue and Bethesda Avenue as Main Streets, to receive special emphasis through both streetscape improvements and enhanced retail use. (See Chapter 6.0, Streetscape Plan.)
  - e. Recognize the value of anchor retail locations to increase shopping activity in an area. For example, the Giant Food store and the Farm Women's Cooperative Market anchor both ends of the Bethesda Avenue Main Street. Anchor retailers, such as Safeway, strengthen the Metro Core and Woodmont Triangle Districts, serving both nearby residents and employees.
2. Promote improved accessibility to retail shops and awareness of the character of retail districts.



The following strategies would facilitate an efficient and effective pattern of accessibility to shops through identifying features and an improved transportation network for both the vehicle and pedestrian:

- a. Provide a good supply of on and off-street short-term parking throughout the area. Readily available parking aids access and is critical to successful retail. On-street parking also creates a zone that buffers pedestrians from moving traffic.
  - b. Re-establish on-street parking during non-peak traffic periods in the Metro Core District and other places where it is currently limited. Implementation of on-street parking must be subject to safety and capacity limits.
  - c. Provide convenient pedestrian street crossings and expanded streetscape to make all parts of the CBD more pedestrian-friendly. (See Sections 5.4 and 6.0.)
  - d. Provide a circulating loop bus throughout the CBD area. Careful study of the route is needed since parking is well distributed and most employees are willing to accept a nine-minute walk from the Metro Core.
  - e. Locate retail directory maps for each district at key locations, such as the Metro station, public garages, and other gathering places. Directory maps should be updated periodically. Brochure maps can also be created to highlight specialty store groups or shopping districts.
  - f. Use identifying features, such as banners, throughout the CBD that would enhance the special nature of each district. Various themes, such as cultural arts, could differentiate the areas.
3. Support government and private sector efforts that strengthen retail business effectiveness.
- a. Endorse improvements in coordinating downtown services through the Bethesda Urban Partnership.
  - b. Continue government initiatives and support services. Initiatives may include subsidizing facade improvements, phased completion of streetscape improvements, and ongoing maintenance of public sidewalks and open spaces. Support services, such as the-programming of special community events, should continue.
  - c. Support new private sector initiatives to sustain and enhance the retail environment in Bethesda. The Plan recognizes that the private sector must play the primary role in molding the retail environment in Bethesda. The following initiatives could be carried out more readily through a private sector organization:



- Cooperate in setting hours of operations, developing voluntary exterior design guidelines, advertising in local newspapers, and creating group purchasing programs.
- Develop a cultural arts emphasis as a theme for strengthening the vitality of Bethesda. (See Section 3.1D.)
- Develop a business retention program to help existing merchants find affordable space and possibly to seek new businesses that complement the retail character of the area.
- Organize window displays and a short-term rental program for vacant retail space.
- Create a retail parking validation program.
- Develop a revolving loan fund to support facade improvements.

#### **D. "CULTURAL DISTRICT" THEME**

Bethesda has begun to develop as a cultural center. The Sector Plan supports this focus of activity and community energy. The Plan recognizes that a "cultural district" theme could guide and link development, complemented by the "garden" design theme currently expressed in streetscape and open spaces. As used in this Plan, the word "district" means a loosely defined area devoted to cultural activities, as in "theater district," rather than a legally designated sector of the County with specific geographic boundaries and powers.

Promoting a cultural theme for Bethesda would capitalize on and expand existing features. Bethesda already has a strong specialty and community oriented retail base, including a variety of ethnic restaurants and arts-related businesses such as bookstores, art galleries, and dance studios. There is public art in the amenity spaces of new buildings and an attractive pedestrian environment, which this Plan recommends enhancing. There are also a number of historic resources evoking the community's past that can be integrated into future development. Moreover, Bethesda, like the rest of Montgomery County, supports the arts.

The initiative for a "cultural district" came from the Bethesda community. The Sector Plan's first public forum stressed the value of building on the existing culturally oriented businesses and activities in Bethesda. A committee of the Chamber of Commerce and a majority of the Citizens Advisory Committee support the Plan vision, and a new committee for A Bethesda Cultural District (ABCD) has led the effort for recognition of such an area. ABCD seeks to add new performance space, galleries, studios, arts-related retail, and a variety of events that will create a critical mass of cultural spaces and activities. The Plan supports continued private sector initiatives to realize this unifying vision for Bethesda.

There are several reasons why the County would benefit from enhanced cultural activities in Bethesda. First, the arts are an integral part of the quality of life in an economically dynamic, diverse urban community. In new suburban downtowns such as Bethesda, the arts can help create a unique place. Expanding the arts in Bethesda could complement

cultural initiatives at Strathmore Hall, Silver Spring, Germantown and other areas, and provide County-wide attractions.

Second, the arts are an economic resource. The earnings of restaurants, hotels, retailers, and parking facilities might well be increased by emphasizing culturally related businesses and activities in Bethesda. A greater cultural emphasis could affect business location decisions and individual job choice, and attract new residents to the downtown.

The "cultural district" theme could inspire public and private facilities dedicated to the performing, visual, or literary arts, such as restaurants with entertainment, small community theaters, galleries, bookstores, and writing centers. Regularly scheduled events- indoor or outdoor-could include plays, concerts, opera, dance performances, film festivals, and poetry readings. Activities could appeal to all ages and ethnic groups and range from barbershop quartets to swing dancing, jazz trios to chamber orchestra, classical drama to mime or puppet theater.

A small professional management staff within the reorganized and privatized Bethesda Urban Partnership (see Section 10.3) would be responsible for arts development, programming, and promotion of cultural events in Bethesda. It could also run a resource center for the public and arts organizations providing information on cultural space availability, event schedules, and performance tickets. A coordinated program of signs, locator maps, banners, kiosks, and other displays could create public awareness of the "cultural district" theme.

Funding would come from many sources. The management operation would be funded under the Bethesda Urban Partnership budget. The corporation could also raise outside funds from institutional, business, and individual sources and from government entities such as the Maryland State Arts Council or the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Plan proposes the following objectives and strategies to realize the goal of a Bethesda "cultural district":

1. Support the local initiative to promote and celebrate the arts in Bethesda. Endorse the management of cultural activities through the Urban Partnership.
2. Endorse the provision of a major, privately funded and operated professional theater in Bethesda.

The ideal facility would be a performance theater with adequate capacity to meet criteria for a viable theater operation. It would have auxiliary spaces to accommodate such uses as rehearsal space, support facilities, and related retail. The site should have high visibility, sufficient size and mix of uses to support the facility economically, easy access to Metro, sufficient public parking, and good pedestrian accessibility.

The owners of the Hot Shoppes site have agreed, within certain parameters, to provide a 400-seat professional theater on their site. The Plan recommends zoning the site CBD-3 and allowing 750,000 square feet of development if a theater, the preferred public benefit, or a specified amount of housing is constructed. (See Section 4.1, Metro Core District.)

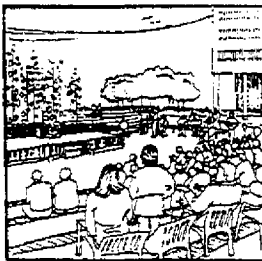


3. Support optional method amenities that strengthen the cultural resources of Bethesda, both historic and arts-related, and that may well serve as anchor activity centers. For example, retention of the Bethesda Theatre Cafe contributes to a stronger cultural and retail environment.
4. Explore a range of other incentives to encourage the provision of cultural facilities and activities. For example, a review of the zoning ordinance requirements for optional method amenities may yield creative new possibilities to encourage cultural features. (See Section 10.1.)

## 3.2 URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

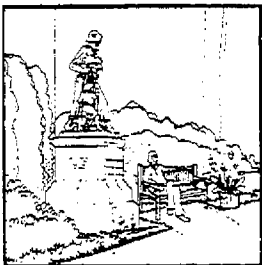
The built environment of Bethesda reflects a maturing CBD with an established Metro Center as the major focus of business and community life. This Plan continues to endorse the concept that more intense development should be located in the central Metro Core District, creating a lively and walkable downtown surrounded by less intense development. The CBD comprises a series of districts and corridors that form its framework. The following urban design objectives emphasize the importance of building upon and improving the existing framework:

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### A. GENERAL OBJECTIVES

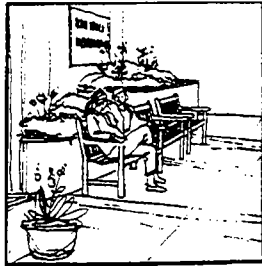
1. Strengthen the existing urban form by improving and reinforcing the districts and transitional areas, open spaces and gathering places, landmarks and focal points.



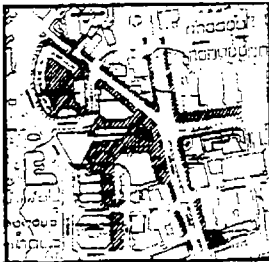
2. Reinforce Bethesda's sense of community by encouraging attractive environments that refer to Bethesda's cultural heritage and emphasize the more recent design themes of Bethesda as a "garden" and a "cultural district." Encourage use of local building materials, such as the Bethesda stone.



3. Provide street-activating uses, such as retail stores with storefront display windows or building entrances. Activating uses help promote a safe, interesting, and lively environment.



4. Enhance the pedestrian environment to provide a visually diverse and stimulating experience, maximize social interaction, and encourage walking. Special attention should be given to the design of streetscapes to help maintain human scale, achieve good street definition, and enhance the visual character.



5. Extend the network of open spaces to serve the needs of an expanding population for a diverse range of activities in spaces that are safe, visible, and perceived as public.

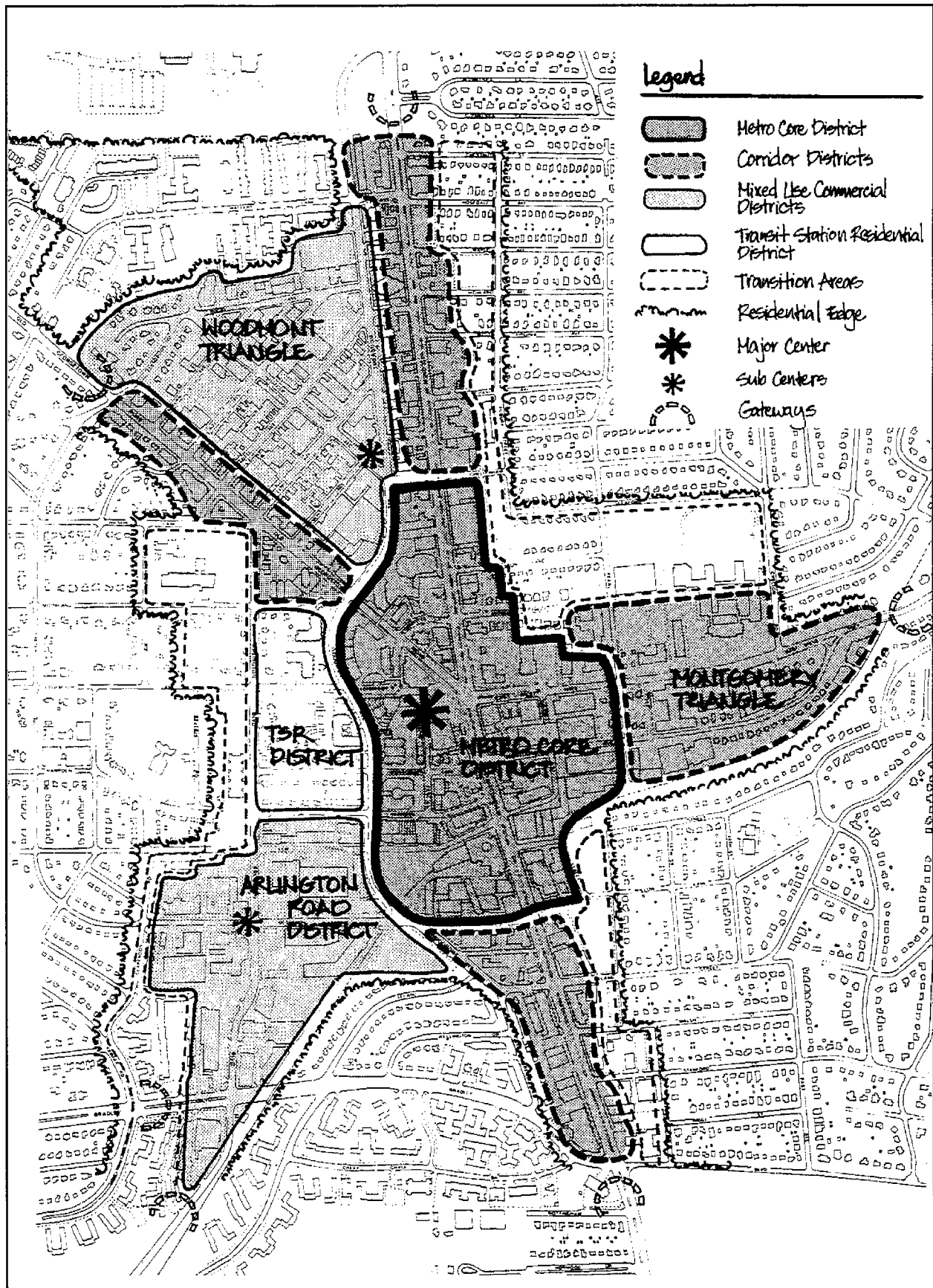


6. Improve compatibility with existing uses through urban design concepts and guidelines that address form, shadows and skyline, building heights, scale, massing, and set-backs. In general, new development should respect established patterns of development.

## B. URBAN FORM

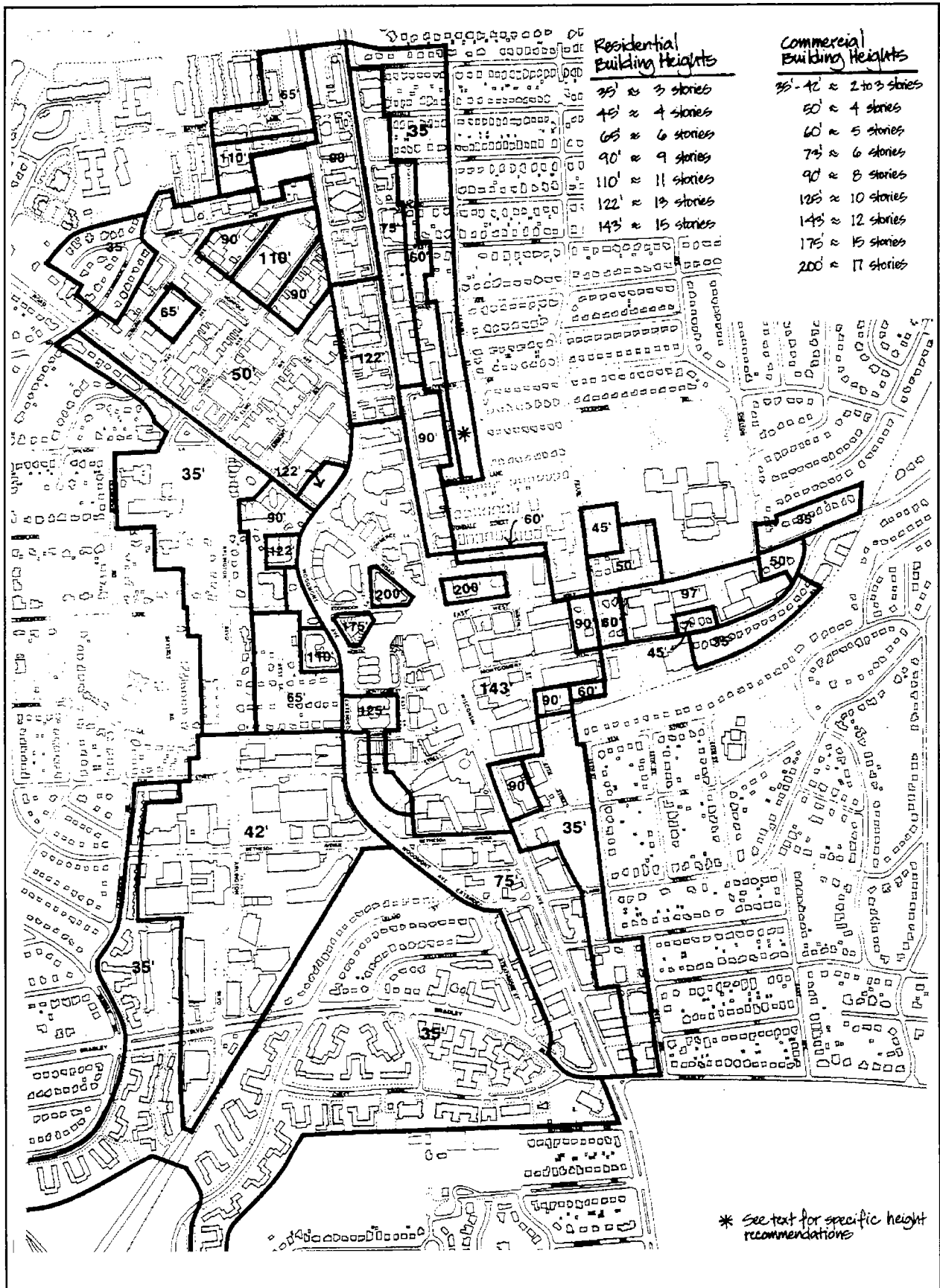
Bethesda's urban form has been guided by land use planning since the mid 1970's. The earlier plans provided a foundation for the current districts by recommending land uses, densities, and streets that helped define the district areas and boundaries.

The prior plans organized the CBD in a manner that focused the majority of new growth in the heart of the CBD, the Metro Core District. The major center has developed at the traditional crossroads of Wisconsin Avenue, East-West Highway, and Old Georgetown Road, where the Metro station and the tallest buildings are found. Around the Metro Center, development steps down in density and building heights to the residential edges. The major street system also organizes the CBD into distinct districts such as the Woodmont Triangle and the Transit Station Residential District. Several of these districts are large enough to have sub-centers. Along the residential edges, there are land uses that serve as transitions between single family neighborhoods and CBD development. (See the Framework Concept, Figure 3.1, for an illustration of Bethesda's underlying structure.)



# BUILDING HEIGHT LIMITS

FIGURE 3.2





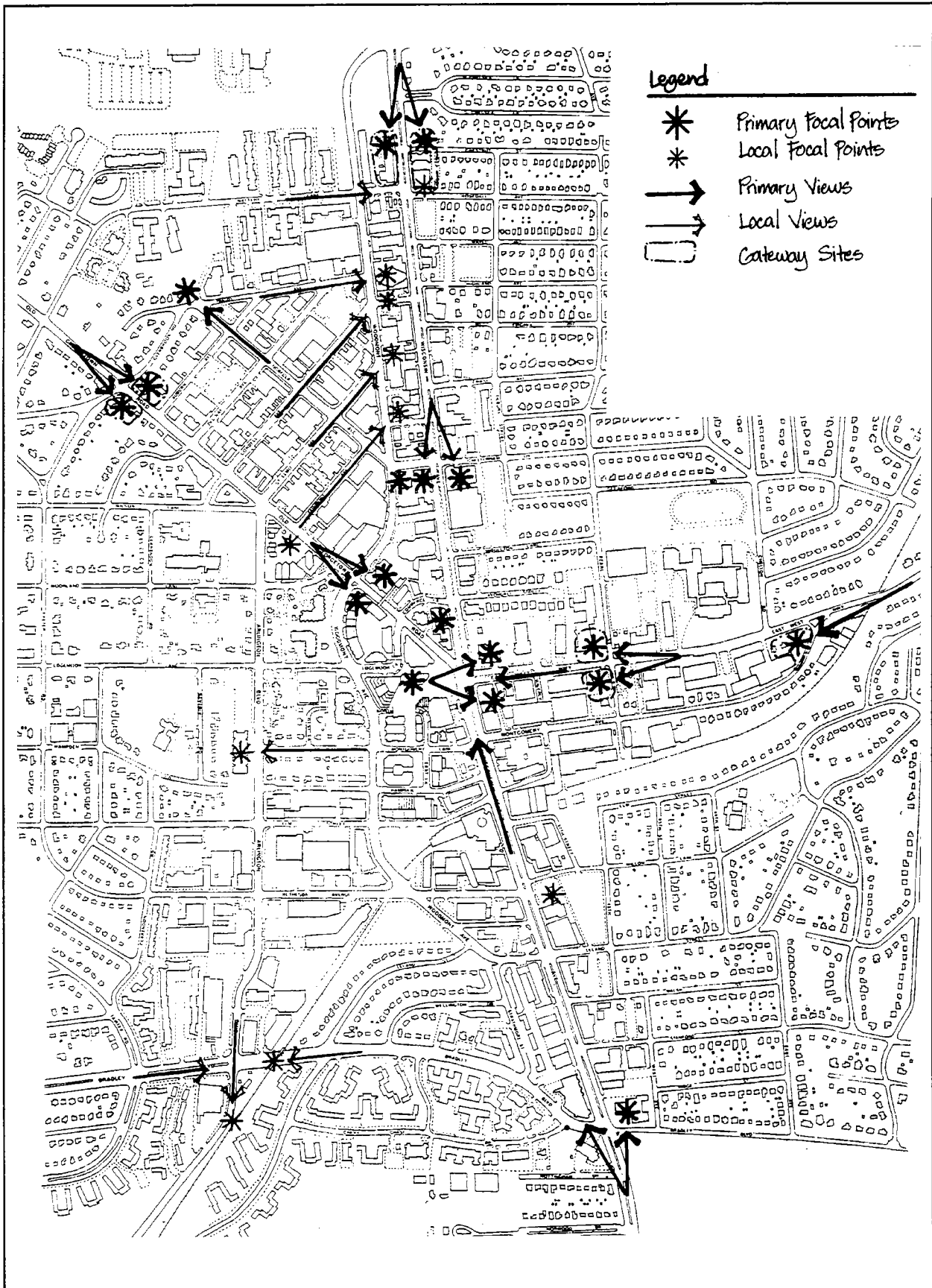
The proposed urban form principles acknowledge the existing framework as a viable pattern on which to build. In general, the current pattern should be maintained and perimeter edges strengthened. The urban form principles are as follows:

1. Focus the highest densities within the Metro Core District to achieve a tightly configured center, while improving transitions to the residential edges.
2. Step down building heights from the Bethesda Metro Center properties to achieve desirable and compatible transitions to adjacent areas. Buildings that are located at the edge of a district where taller heights are allowed should step down with intermediate heights toward the adjacent district with lower allowable heights. (See Figure 3.2, Building Height Limits, for recommended heights based on the zoning requirements for optional method development and, in some cases, on the need to create compatible transitions. For height limits for development under the standard method, see the zoning ordinance.)
3. Achieve an infill character for new development by dividing large projects into several buildings, which will achieve an urban form with a “fine grain” versus a “coarse grain” created by larger, single structures.
4. Design new buildings that respond to views and vistas within the CBD to create focal points and landmarks that improve the orientation and strengthen the perception of existing centers. Certain parcels are identified as gateway sites and should be developed in a manner that acknowledges this visual aspect of the site. (See Figure 3.3, Views and Focal Points, for identification of important views.)
5. Treat rooftops as sculptural elements that contribute to the visual interest of the skyline. Where appropriate, consider rooftops as usable outdoor space for recreational or commercial purposes.
6. Allow a diversity of architectural styles that achieve good building proportions, reduce the sense of bulk, and maintain human scale. Clearly identify the building entrance in the facade design and locate it at street level.
7. Achieve compatibility with nearby residential areas through techniques such as stepped down heights, articulated building walls and facade treatments, and other architectural means designed to minimize building bulk and shadow impacts, and create a gradual transition.
8. Achieve energy efficiency in the form and design of the building by such means as recessed windows or awnings to shade interiors from direct sunlight. (See Urban Form Principles, Figure 3.4.)

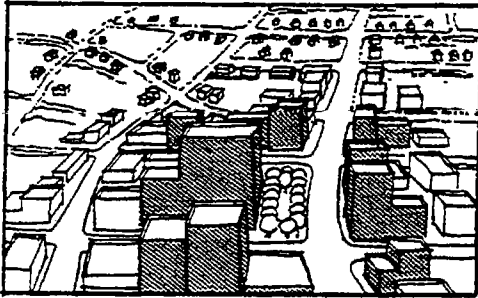


# VIEWS AND FOCAL POINTS

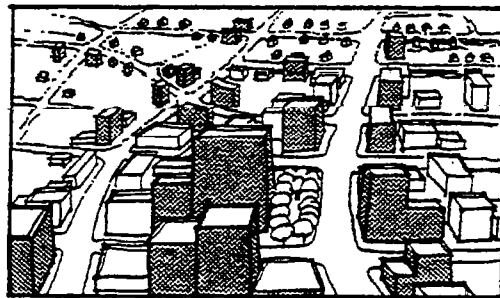
FIGURE 3.3



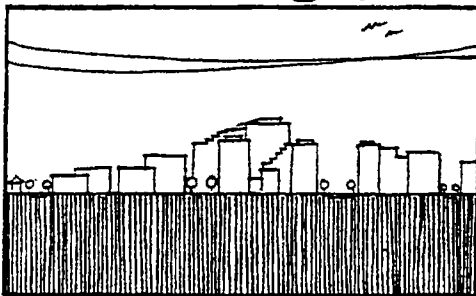
1. Achieve a concentrated center.



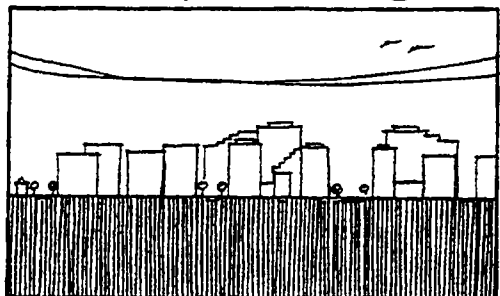
1. Avoid dispersal.



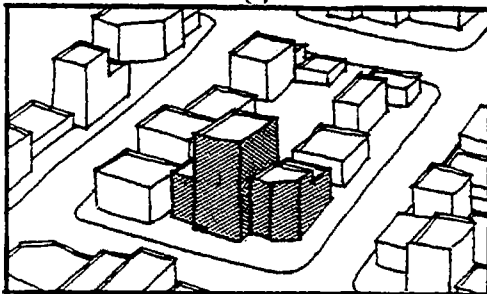
2. Step down building heights.



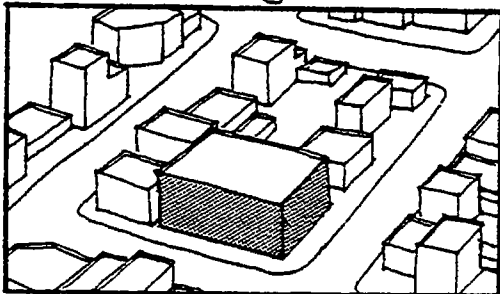
2. Avoid uniform building heights.



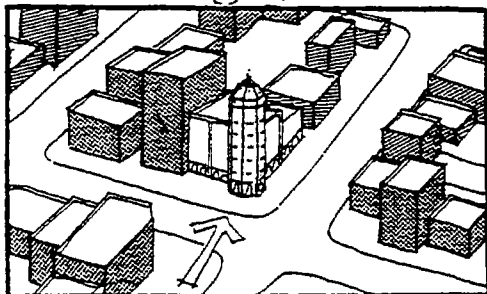
3. Achieve a "fine-grain" texture.



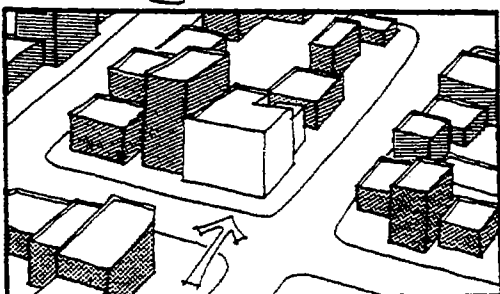
3. Avoid a "coarse-grain" texture.



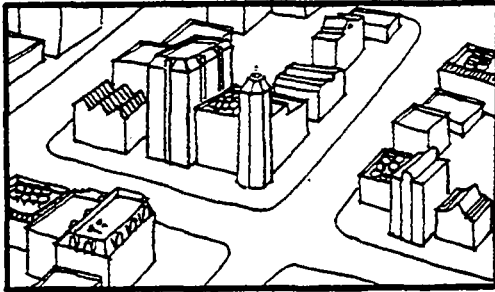
4. Take advantage of views.



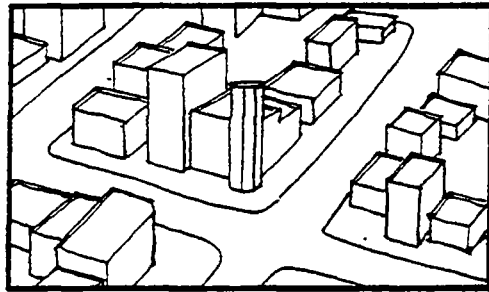
4. Do not ignore views.



5. Design rooftops for visual interest.



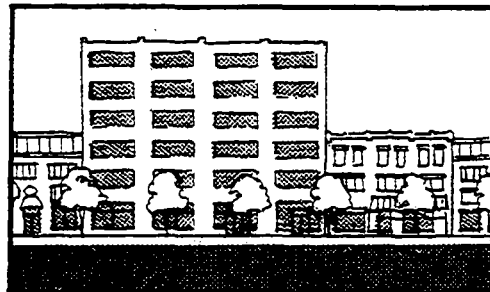
5. Avoid lack of design attention.



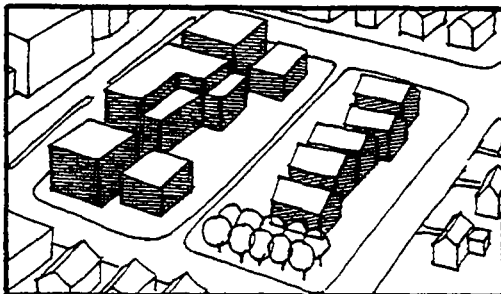
6. Achieve compatible building styles.



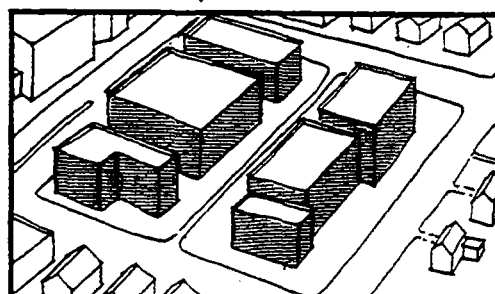
6. Avoid incompatible building styles.



7. Achieve compatible transitions.



7. Avoid incompatible transitions.





## C. OPEN SPACE

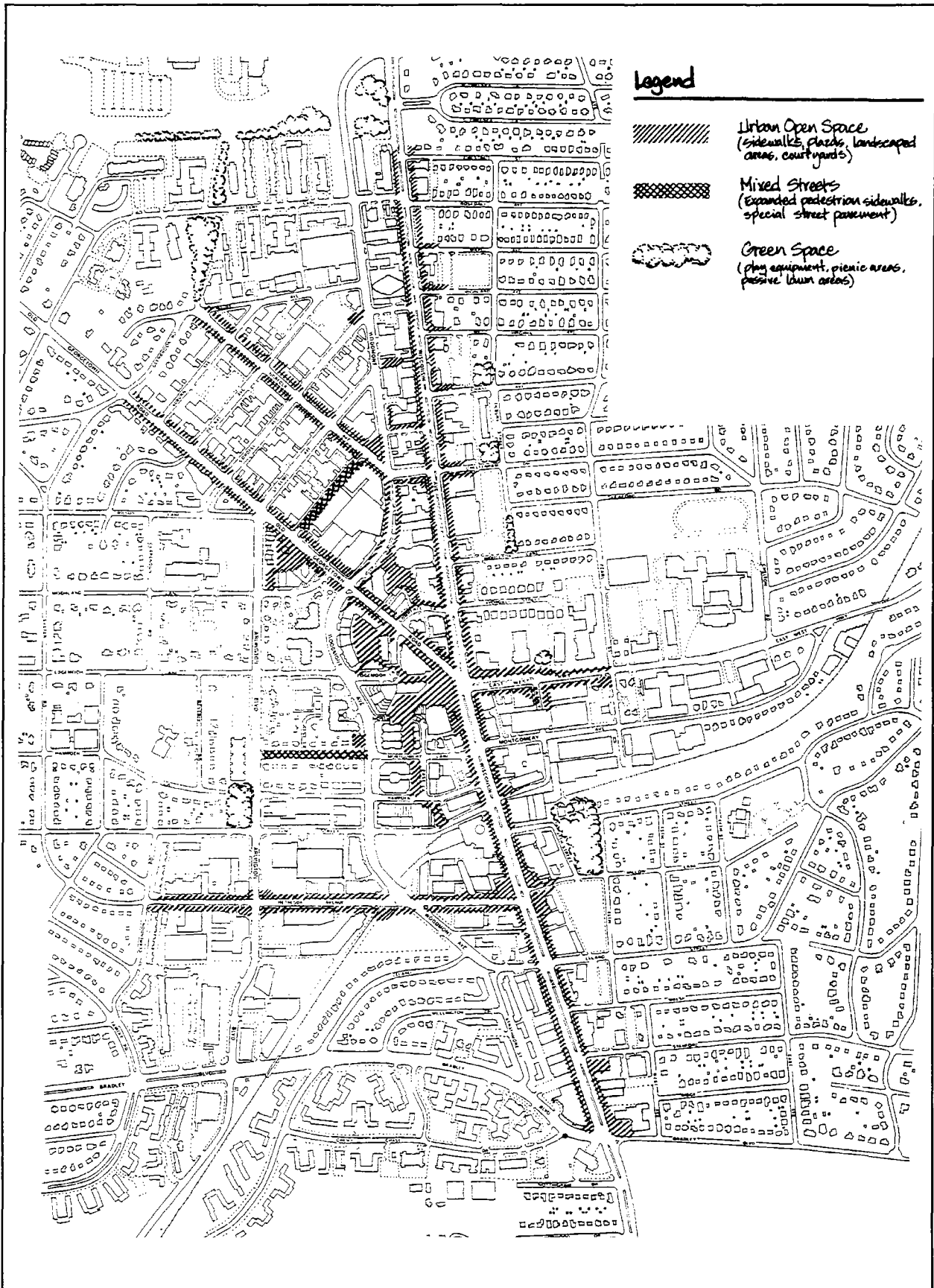
Bethesda's current open space system is dispersed throughout the CBD in an inner and outer network of spaces. The inner network, with its more urban character, is formed by the paved plazas at Metro Center, surrounded by a series of smaller urban spaces connected to Metro Center via an upgraded streetscape system. This interconnected system is known as the "Discovery Trail." It is illustrated in Figure 4.7 of the Land Use Plan. The outer network, at the edge of the CBD, is primarily a series of parks and green open spaces of various sizes. These perimeter parks provide visual buffers for the residential neighborhoods as well as recreational opportunities. (See Figure 3.5, Open Space Concept, for an illustration of existing and proposed open spaces.) The following figure 3.3 discussion highlights key recommendations. For a detailed discussion of the proposed open spaces within each district and area, see Chapter 4, the Land Use Plan.

As new development occurs in the Sector Plan area, the network of urban open spaces and parks should be expanded to meet the growing needs. Within the Metro Core District, new open space should be provided in a way that ties into the existing network. It should be developed with a character that reflects Bethesda as a "garden," a unifying design theme of the 1984 optional method developments. There is also an opportunity to expand the Discovery Trail on the northeast side of Wisconsin Avenue and create an eastern "loop" of the trail around the Metro. This loop will improve pedestrian access in general by providing an alternative route away from the major street corridors.

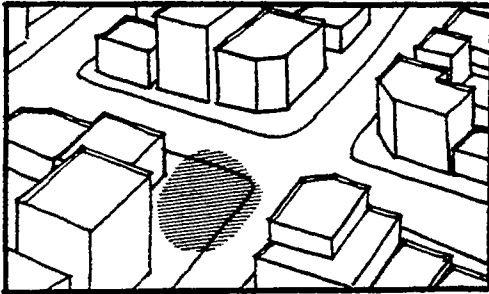
For sidewalk areas outside the Metro Core District, the Plan recommends that the major and secondary pedestrian routes identified in Figure 3.7, Pathways and Places, be developed as linear open spaces. Sidewalks can function as open spaces if bordered by activating uses and developed with seating, shade, and other amenities. The wider the sidewalk, the more one perceives it as a space. Since these important pedestrian routes typically occur along the Urban Boulevards and Main Streets such as Wisconsin Avenue and Norfolk Avenue, the sidewalks along these streets should be developed with a higher level of pedestrian amenity than typically found along an urban street.

The Plan also recommends several Mixed Streets to create special linear open spaces next to activating uses, such as residential development in the TS-R District and restaurants in the Woodmont Triangle. In a Mixed Street, vehicular volumes and travel speeds are so low that pedestrians and vehicles easily coexist. Implementation of the Mixed Street is dependent on further study of safety and operational issues by the County Department of Transportation. For further discussion of Main Streets and Mixed Streets, see Chapter 6, the Streetscape Plan.

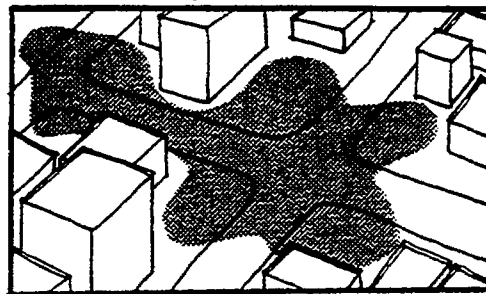
In addition to the development of urban and linear open spaces, there is a need to provide more traditional parks and green open spaces within the Sector Plan area, as Bethesda continues to grow. There are opportunities to expand existing parks, such as the Battery Lane Urban Park, and to create new green open spaces. Specific recommendations are located in the Land Use Plan for each district or area and in Chapter 8, Community Facilities.



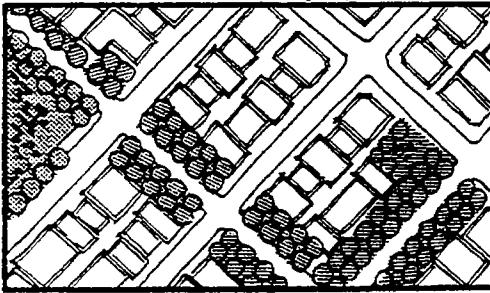
1. Achieve well-defined open space.



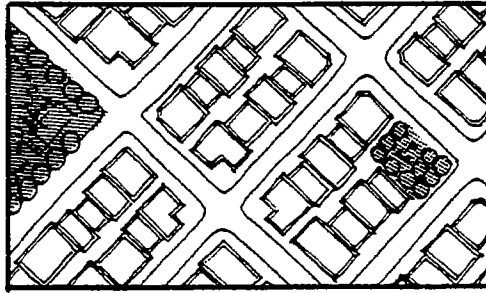
1. Avoid poorly defined open space.



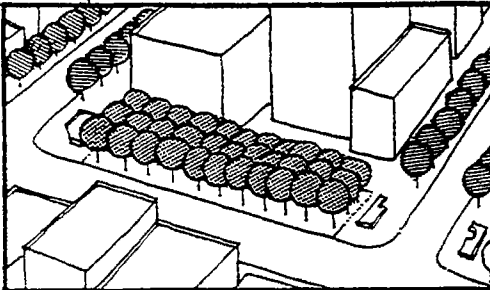
2. Create a network of spaces.



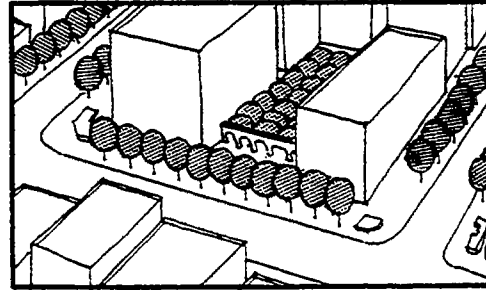
2. Avoid disconnected spaces.



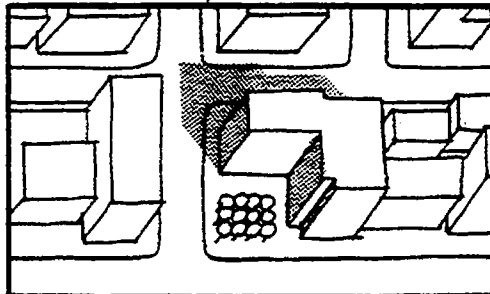
3. Create visible and defensible spaces.



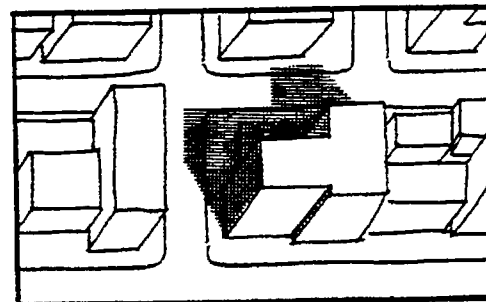
3. Avoid isolated spaces.



4. Achieve good environmental relationships.



4. Avoid undesirable impacts.



The following open space principles are general and are intended to help guide redevelopment in a manner that achieves useful, attractive, and defensible spaces. (See Figure 3.6.)

1. Arrange buildings, where appropriate, to form well defined, visible open spaces that relate well to the surrounding context. Open spaces in an urban setting are defined by building edges: the taller the building edge within recommended limits, the stronger the sense of visual containment. Good spatial definition is important to achieving a comfortable sense of human scale and proportion.
2. Expand the existing network of open spaces so that it responds to existing pedestrian movements and, if possible, connect new open spaces to the existing network.
3. Locate open space in a manner that achieves easy access and good visibility from the street so that the open space is perceived as public. Avoid locating open space in isolated and less defensible areas.
4. Design buildings to avoid undesirable environmental impacts on adjacent open spaces and other properties. Environmental factors to consider include sun, wind, noise, shadow, and reflection.
5. Locate garage and emission exhaust systems away from fresh air intakes, public plazas, and pedestrian ways.
6. Locate street level, activating uses such as storefront retail, restaurants, or office building entrances next to existing and future open spaces to encourage use.
7. Locate open space to meet expanded needs of new employees and residents.

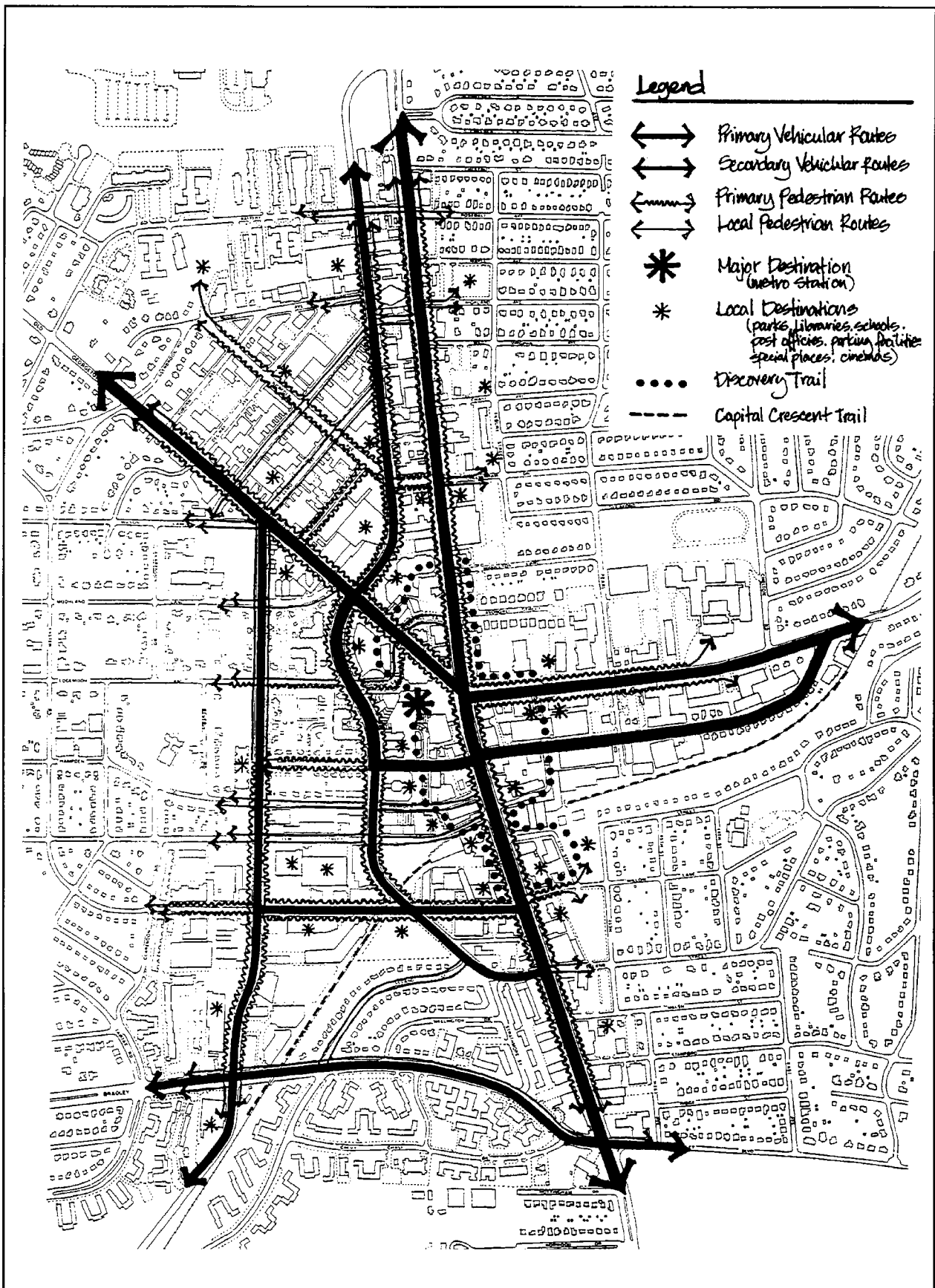
## **D. PATHWAYS**

In a transit served CBD, a well developed network of pedestrian pathways is critical to encourage use of transit and to encourage walking to local destinations. Fortunately, Bethesda has developed in recent years a good network of pedestrian pathways in the Metro Core District and has enhanced this network with upgraded streetscapes.

Because of the significant number of destinations in the Metro Core District, especially along Wisconsin Avenue, major pedestrian routes are found along the streets serving the Metro Core. Primary pedestrian routes also occur along streets that provide a connection from the surrounding districts to the Metro Core, such as Woodmont or Bethesda Avenues. With a few exceptions, existing sidewalks provide adequate pedestrian access within the Sector Plan area. For a more detailed discussion of pedestrian circulation, see Section 5.4.

As additional development occurs in the Sector Plan area, there is a need for a more comprehensive network of pathways. This network should respond to existing and new destinations, and create attractive new connections to encourage walking.

Figure 3.7, Pathways and Places, illustrates the existing and proposed pathways. The recommendations for each district and area are discussed in detail in the Land Use Plan. Specific streetscape improvements for these pathways are listed in Chapter 6, the Streetscape Plan.

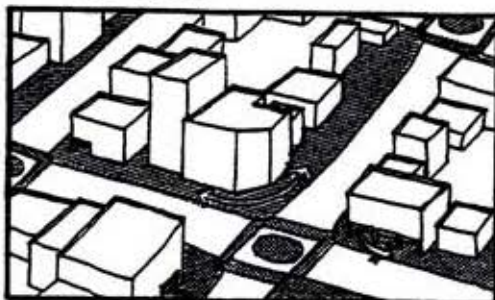




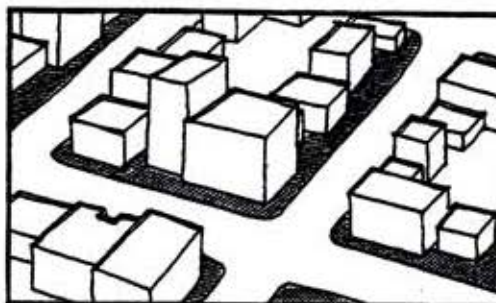
The following pathway principles are general and are intended to help redevelopment achieve good pedestrian access:

1. Expand the network of pathways in a manner that responds to major pedestrian movements. Site buildings to facilitate public access, especially at street corners, and provide street crosswalks where important pedestrian movements occur.
2. Where new streets are recommended, achieve short block lengths of 300 to 350 feet, which are comparable to the majority of block lengths found in the CBD. Short blocks are more pedestrian friendly than long blocks.
3. Emphasize the pedestrian environment along streets. Design buildings to provide visual interest and human scale at the street level, adjacent to sidewalks. Architectural facades should incorporate interesting details, store-front display windows, and front entrances to enliven and activate the sidewalks.
4. Use upgraded streetscape elements such as special pavers, lighting, tightly spaced trees, and other features to enhance significant pedestrian pathways, visually define distinct districts, and improve the overall attractiveness of the CBD.
5. Minimize pedestrian-vehicular conflicts by locating auto-related functions such as parking lots, service areas, and loading docks to the rear of properties and screened from view. In most CBD areas, parking should be located underground to maximize use of the parcel for residential or commercial uses and to emphasize the pedestrian orientation of the street frontage.
6. Recognize Wisconsin Avenue as Bethesda's primary Main Street; orient major building entrances and active uses along this street. Achieve at least a 20-foot sidewalk width along Wisconsin Avenue within the Metro Core District and a 15-foot width along other streets to ensure adequate space for pedestrians and streetscape. (See Pathway Principles, Figure 3.8.)

1. Respond to existing pedestrian movements.



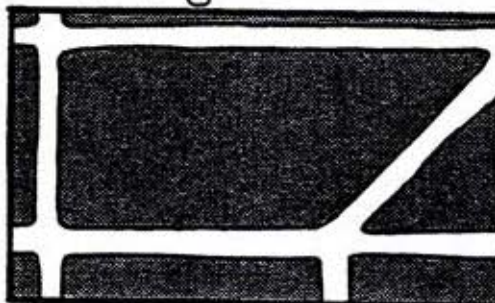
1. Avoid restricting pedestrian movements.



2. Achieve short, walkable blocks.



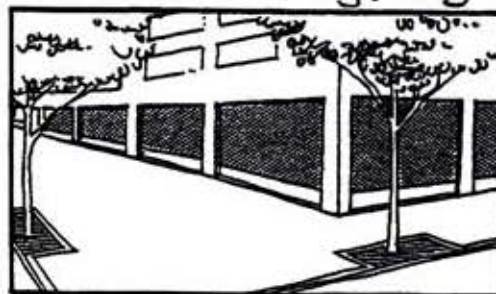
2. Avoid long, unwalkable blocks.



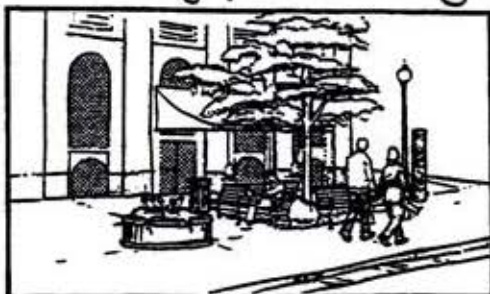
3. Animate facades along pathway



3. Avoid blank walls along pathway



4. Provide upgraded streetscapes to encourage pedestrian activity



4. Avoid bleak streetscapes which discourage walking.



# LAND USE AND ZONING PLAN

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

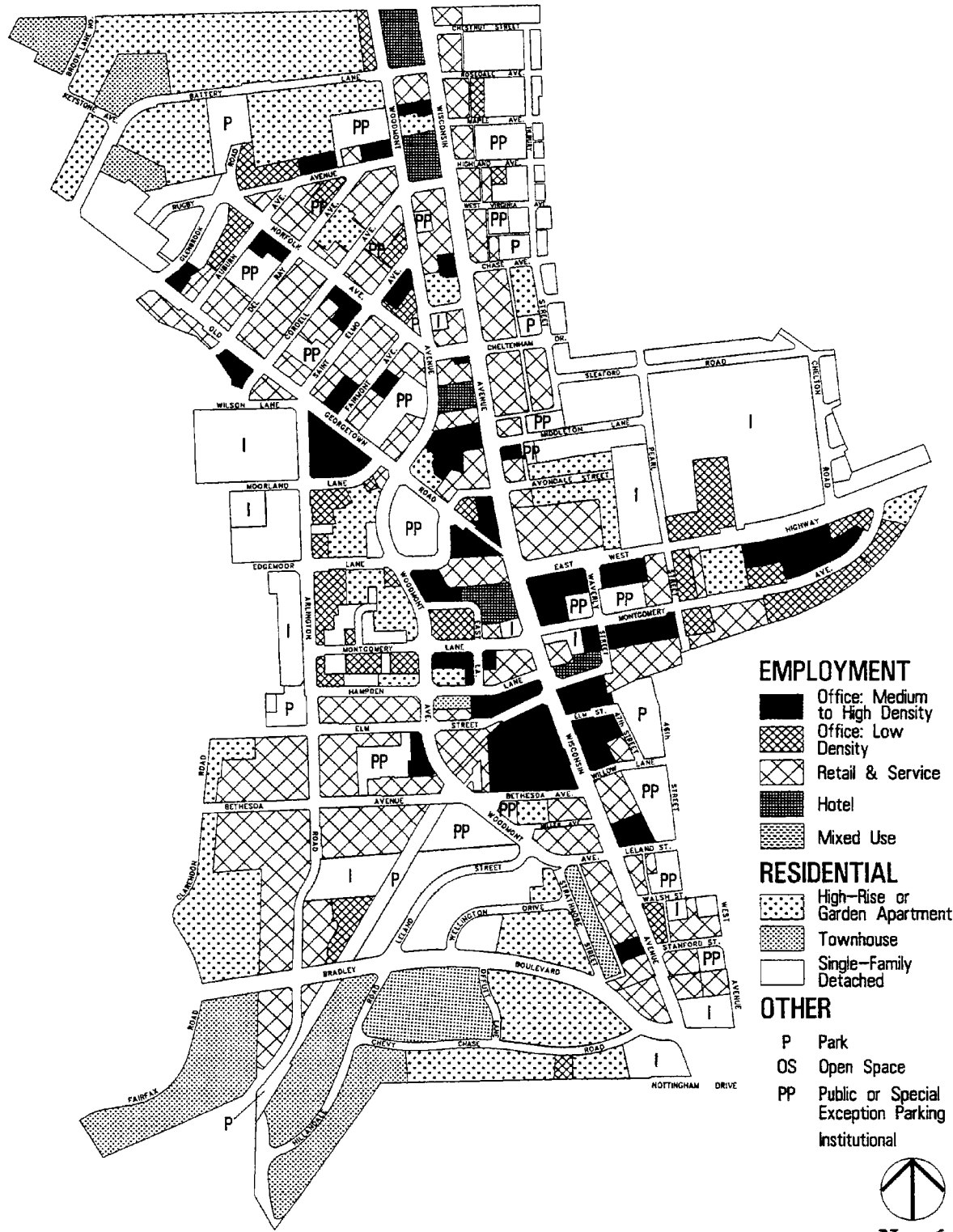
The Plan envisions the continuation of the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan area as a regional employment center, assuming a policy of using the Bethesda infrastructure rather than spreading employment throughout the County. Public benefits and amenities associated with optional method projects will add vitality. More retail stores, restaurants, and service businesses will meet the needs of an enlarged working and residential population and can also expand service to regional markets. The Plan estimates an ultimate buildout (at or beyond the year 2010) of about 16,400 jobs, a 43 percent increase above existing levels.

The Plan also envisions establishing a stronger housing component in the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan area to house more CBD employees and lessen commuter traffic congestion. An increase in housing will enhance the 24-hour vitality of the CBD. The Plan estimates an ultimate buildout of about 2,700 additional units, a 48 percent increase above current levels. Figure 4.1 shows the existing land use in 1992 and Figure 4.2 the existing zoning. The Plan recommends confirming all zoning within the Sector Plan boundary except where zoning changes are proposed and illustrated on recommended zoning plans. Figure 4.3 shows recommended zoning.

## **B. CHAPTER ORGANIZATION**

The Land Use Plan is organized by district. (See Figure 4.4.) Within each section there is first a description of the district, followed by a list of objectives, a series of recommendations, and a set of urban design guidelines. In the Metro Core District, the text combines recommendations and design guidelines for the district as a whole, followed by those for several key properties.

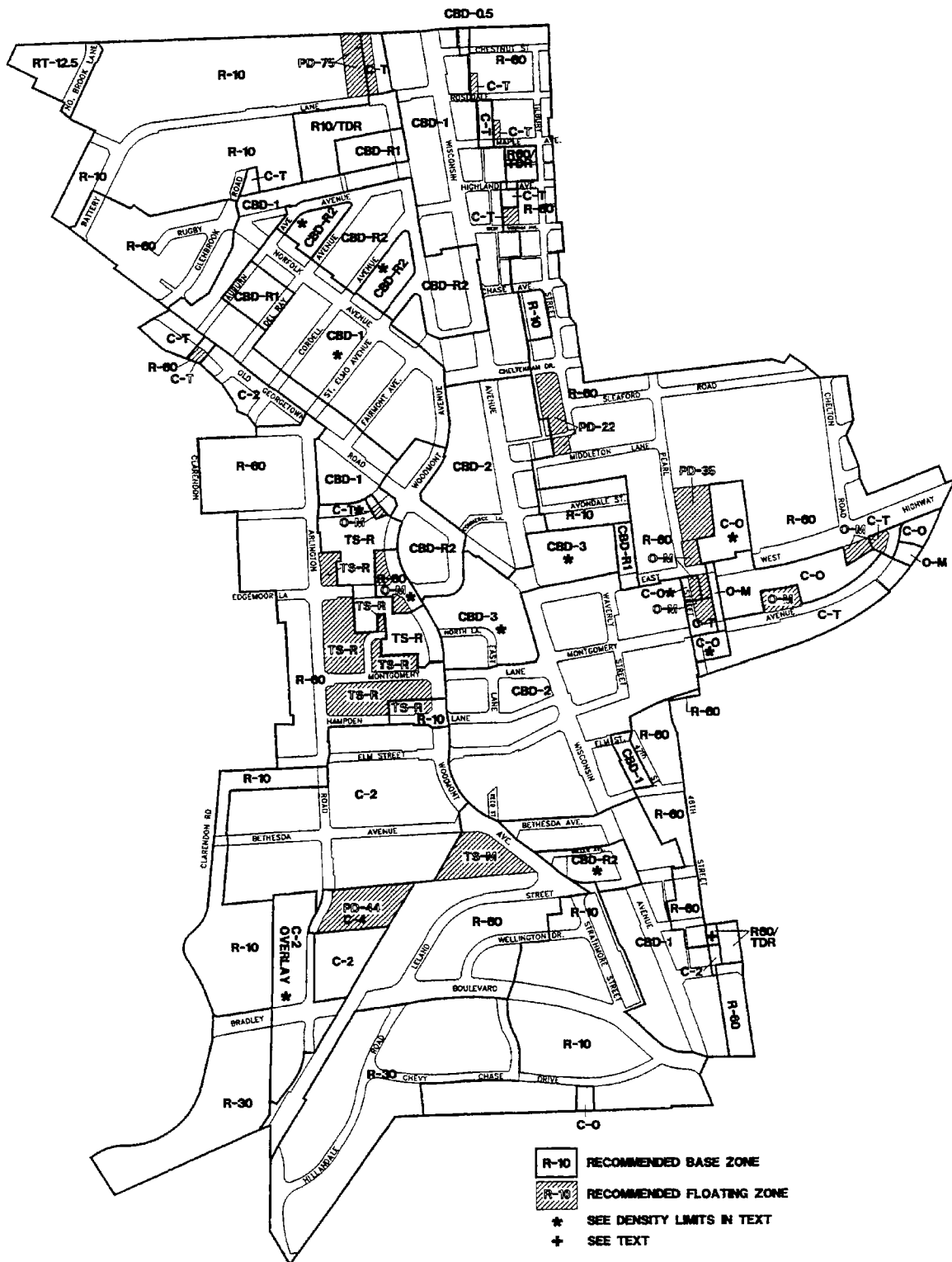
Figures presenting future land use and recommended zoning occur in each section. The land use plans reflect expected changes to some land uses and retention of others, presenting an estimate of the long term land uses that could occur, given the Sector Plan recommendations. Changes will occur as owners respond to the variety of land use choices available as a result of the zoning on the property. While in some cases owners will choose to redevelop at the highest density allowed, in other cases owners will retain the existing use or build to a lower density.





page  
53

# ZONING PLAN

**FIGURE 4.3**

The graphic symbols in the land use plans represent either employment or residential uses. For vacant parcels, the symbol that corresponds to the existing zoning is used on the existing land use map (Figure 4.1). The following categories of land uses are shown on the map of existing land uses and on the land use plans for each district:

**Office, Medium to High Density:** Includes predominately office use of 2 FAR or more.

**Office, Low Density:** Includes predominately office use of less than 2 FAR in a building of four or more floors.

**Retail and Service:** Includes retail or service businesses on the ground floor of a building with less than 2 FAR and up to three floors.

**Hotel:** Includes both commercial and residential hotels.

**High-Rise or Garden Apartment:** Includes predominately residential use in a multi-story building, not including townhouse structures.

**Townhouse:** Includes predominately residential use in a townhouse-style structure.

**Single-Family Detached:** Includes single-family structures in an area zoned for single-family detached housing.

**Mixed Use:** Includes both residential and employment uses where either use occupies at least 33 percent of the floor area.

page  
55

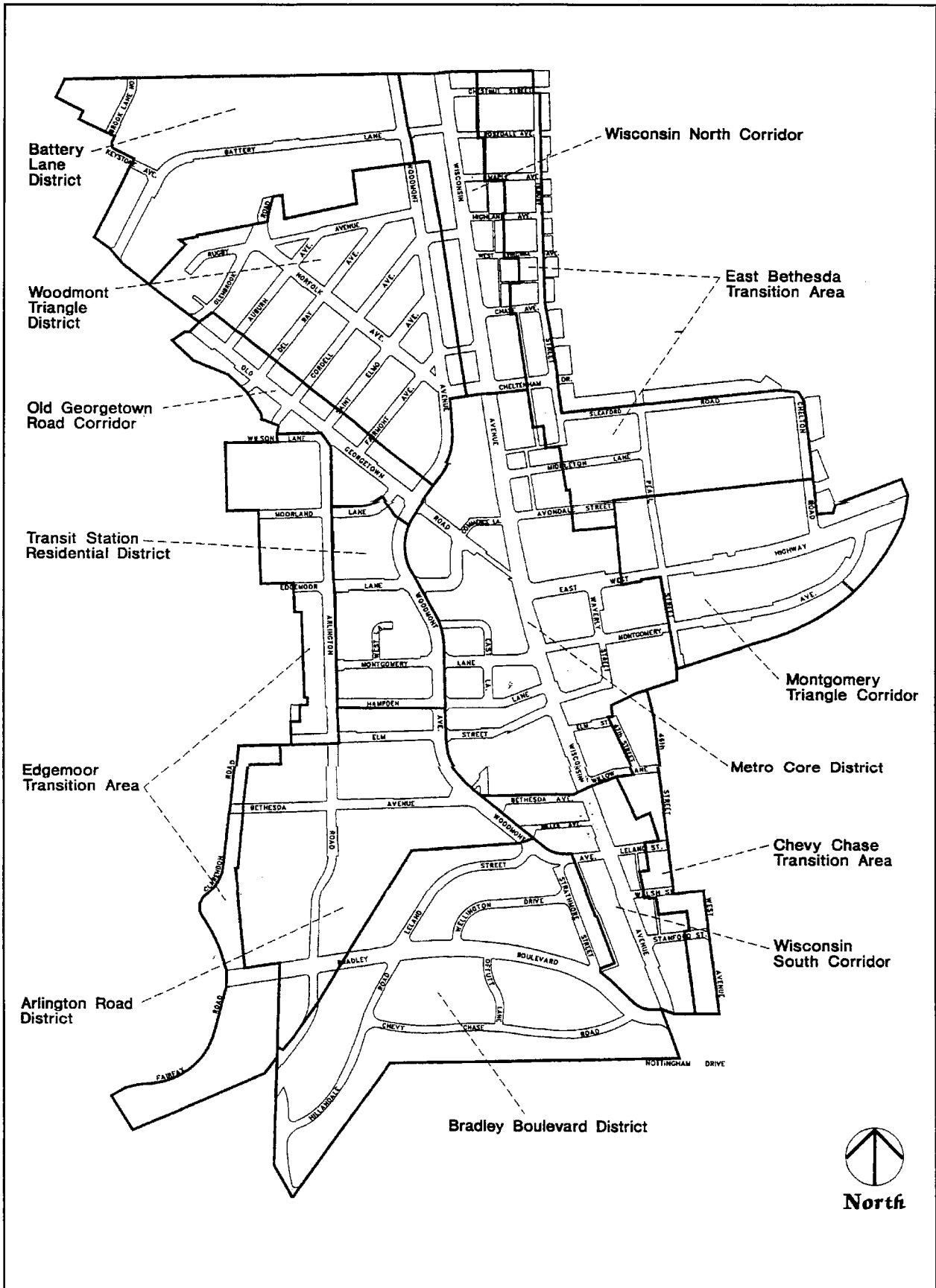
The letters indicate parks (P), open space (OS), public or special exception parking sites (PP), and institutional or public uses (I). The zoning plans designate recommended zones for specific sites. Where there is a floating zone, it is indicated in parentheses below the base Euclidean zone.

In addition to land use and zoning recommendations, each section includes an illustration of the Urban Design Guidelines for the district. The guidelines are intended to direct infill development and redevelopment to achieve a coherent and compatible urban form. Guidelines are applied as part of the process for approving new development or redevelopment. They address the following features:

**Building Line:** An edge created by a building wall or facade. The location of the building line next to the sidewalk is a key element in achieving an attractive and lively pedestrian environment.

**Urban Open Space:** Plazas, courtyards, landscaped areas, wide sidewalks, and other pedestrian passages. The Plan recommends an inner network of such spaces, the Discovery Trail, in the Metro Core District.

**Green Open Space:** Public parks or private landscaped spaces with play equipment, picnic areas, and/or passive lawn areas. The Plan recommends an outer network of such spaces at the edge of the CBD.





**Mixed Street:** A street which emphasizes pedestrian circulation while allowing limited, slow vehicular traffic.

**Primary Pedestrian Paths:** A major route for people to walk, often to sites within the Metro Core.

**Local Pedestrian Paths:** A minor route for people to walk, often to sites outside the Metro Core.

**Gateways:** Symbolic entrances to the CBD or to a district, which should be enhanced by special architectural or landscape treatment.

## 4.1 THE METRO CORE DISTRICT

### A. DESCRIPTION

The Metro Core District is the center of downtown Bethesda. The Core contains the highest intensities of building and the largest concentration of employees. It is also a major transportation hub. The district extends from Cheltenham Drive on the north to Bethesda Avenue on the south, and from Woodmont Avenue on the west to Pearl Street on the east. Portions of the Metro Core are located near existing single-family residential areas.

The Metro Core is primarily a commercial area, containing both retail and office uses. Among numerous large office buildings are older ones predating the 1976 Plan, such as the Air Rights Building, the buildings at the Bethesda Metro Center, and newer office buildings from the “competition” of the 1980s. The primary types of retail are restaurants (26 percent) and professional services (24 percent). Professional services include banking and real estate. The area also contains the Bethesda Theatre Cafe and the United Artists Cinemas. Chevy Chase Chevyland provides auto sales. There are three hotels: Hyatt, Marriott, and Manor Inn. The largest residential uses in the Metro Core are Bethesda Place, Hampden Square, Waverly House, and some townhouses. A Safeway grocery store is located in the Bethesda Place complex.

The Metro Core District, consistent with adopted planning principles, has the tallest buildings. Building heights step down from the 200-foot Clark Building to the surrounding 143-foot heights allowed in the CBD-2 Zone. Buildings at Bethesda and Wisconsin Avenues provide a gateway open space at the corner. A number of potentially high-density sites remain to be developed. Two with approved projects are the Lorenz property and Garage 49, a mixed-use project. Major redevelopment potential remains on the Hot Shoppes site, Miller property, and properties along Commerce Lane. Some smaller sites have potential for low-density standard method development.



The Bethesda Metro Center provides a focus of activity, a town center, by providing a mix of uses and a major community gathering place. The hotel, food court, and transit station attract people, and there are often community and entertainment events. Daytime and evening use of restaurants, shops, and cinemas add activity to the center. The surrounding area contains projects with smaller plaza spaces, many of which are interconnected to form a "Discovery Trail" network to the west of Wisconsin Avenue. The upgraded streetscape and plazas, which follow the "garden" design theme and provide public art, have created a high-quality urban district in the heart of Bethesda.

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

1. Strengthen the Metro Core as the center of Bethesda, with greatest emphasis on and around the Metro Center and plaza.
2. Increase the choices and activities in the Metro Core associated with retail, restaurants, cultural programming, open space, and pathways.
3. Develop a compact core that places the highest intensity in the center, provides distinctive infill buildings, and steps down to lower densities and heights near the edge of the district.
4. Emphasize employment near Metro transit to complete Metro Core development.

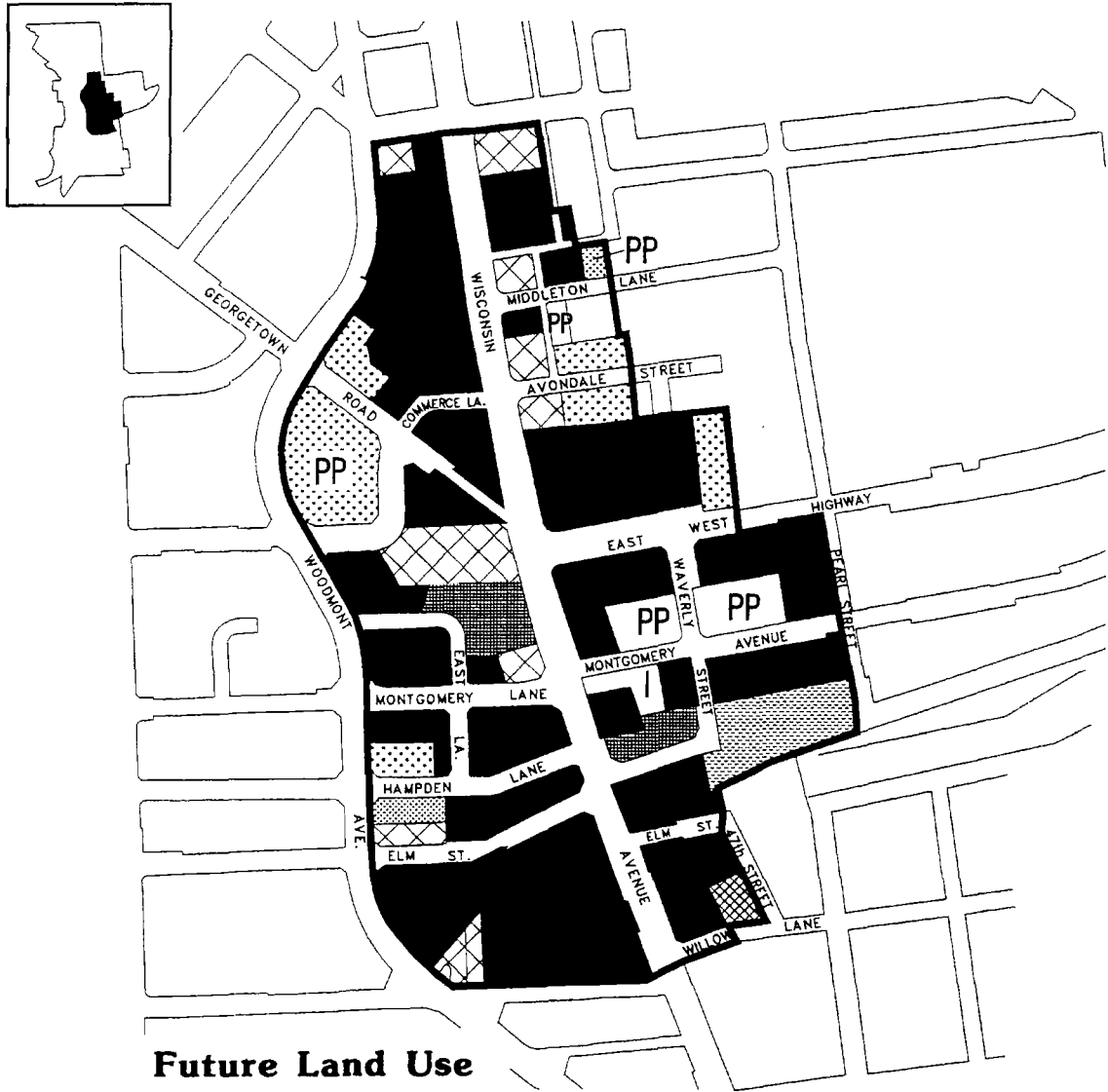
## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS AND URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

### **1. METRO CORE DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The land use recommendations for the Metro Core District emphasize employment land uses, but include potential for some additional residential uses. (See Figure 4.5.) Major new optional method projects would generate substantial public benefits and amenities, possibly including a professional theater. Although this subsection discusses most of the properties in the Metro Core District, subsections 2 through 7 address specific major properties. (See recommended zoning in Figure 4.6.)

The Sector Plan recommends optional method employment uses on most CBD-2 sites, at 4 FAR. Optional method residential use is also allowed at 5 FAR. Some new housing may be provided, since the CBD-2 Zone allows a high percentage of commercial use as an incentive in mixed-use projects.

On the Garage 49 site, owned by Montgomery County, the Plan recommends the CBD-R2 Zone. A predominately residential mixed-use project was approved for this site in the 1980's. An amended site plan has been submitted to increase the amount of affordable housing within the project, retain a small office building for County government use, and retain the approved day care center.



**EMPLOYMENT**

- Office: Medium to High Density
- Office: Low Density
- Retail & Service
- Hotel
- Mixed Use

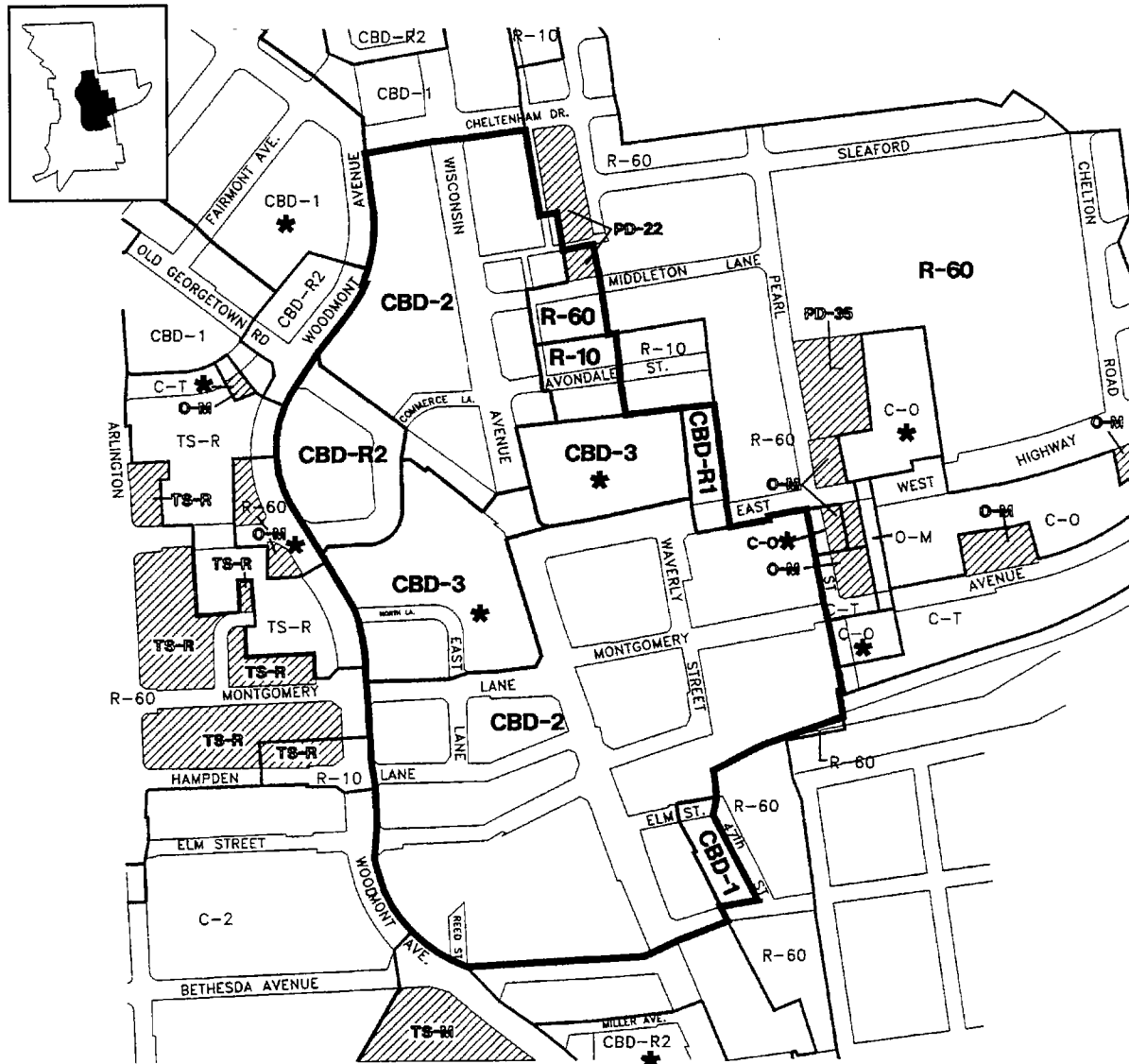
**RESIDENTIAL**

- High-Rise or Garden Apartment
- Townhouse
- Single-Family Detached

**OTHER**

- OS Open Space
- PP Public or Special Exception Parking
- I Institutional





- R-10** RECOMMENDED BASE ZONE
- R-10** RECOMMENDED FLOATING ZONE
- \*** SEE DENSITY LIMITS IN TEXT
- +** SEE TEXT

## Recommended Zoning



North

On the parking deck of the second Air Rights Building, the Plan recommends a small residential building, if compatibility with the adjacent single-family area is maintained. Development should have a maximum height of 90 feet, stepping down to 60 feet toward Pearl Street. The building height should include the existing parking structure. There should be no development on that portion of the deck that abuts the single-family detached houses along Elm Street.

Larger office projects could occur on the Lorenz site, the Hot Shoppes site, along Wisconsin Avenue going north to Cheltenham Drive, and on the Miller property at Elm Street and Woodmont Avenue, discussed below. In the block containing the Metro Center, individual properties should be permitted to develop under the CBD-3 optional method, provided that the overall density of the area retains an average of 4 FAR, including streets, open space, and public facilities. A number of smaller sites would also qualify for optional office development or standard method development.

The Metro Core District should be “infill” in nature and all development should follow the general Sector Plan urban design objectives and principles identified in Section 3.2. The following additional guidelines apply to the Metro Core District (see Figure 4.7):



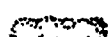
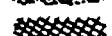
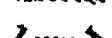



- a. Reinforce Metro Center as the focus of urban activity. Adjacent properties should develop in a manner that complements the activities and urban open space at Metro Center.
- b. Maintain a compact development with the tallest buildings concentrated in the center. Development at perimeter locations of the Metro Core should step down in height to achieve a more gradual transition and better compatibility with the adjacent areas.
- c. Locate new open space to tie into the existing “Discovery Trail” network and to expand the pedestrian connections. Where appropriate, locate new open space in a manner that reinforces the gateways and provides a transition between districts.
- d. Step down the building height to six floors along East-West Highway for the McDonald’s property on Pearl Street.

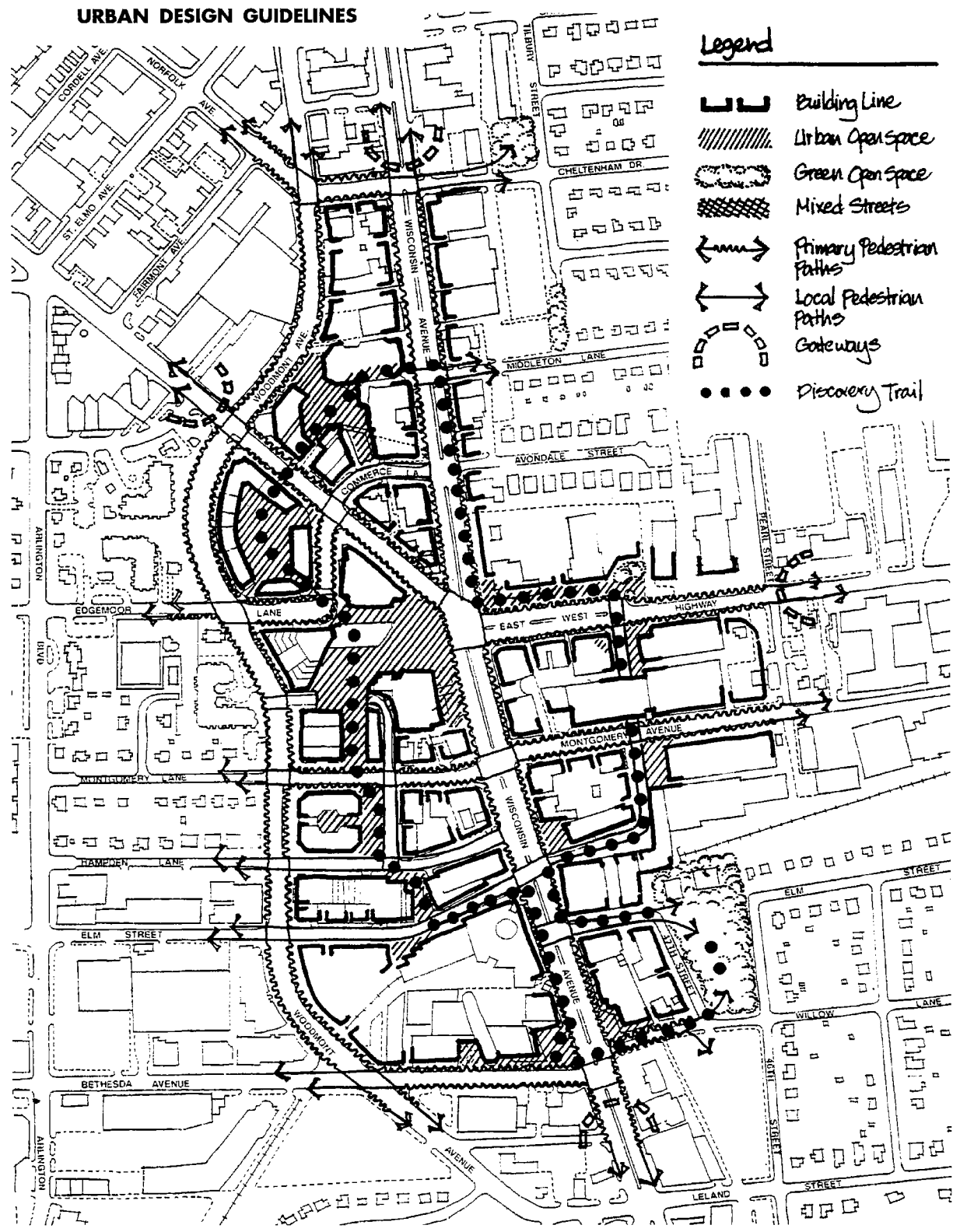
## **2. BETHESDA METRO CENTER RECOMMENDATIONS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The Plan recommends that conversion of poorly located retail space in the interior of Metro Center 3, to office uses be considered in exchange for various recommended improvements. Additional improvements to the existing Metro Center could help achieve a greater focus of activities, a better sense of community, and a more attractive open space. Recommended improvements include:

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Legend

-  Building Line
-  Urban Open Space
-  Green Open Space
-  Mixed Streets
-  Primary Pedestrian Paths
-  Local Pedestrian Paths
-  Courtways
-  Discovery Trail



- a. Locate additional stores within the inner plaza areas that have good street visibility or connect with other retail space to form a continuous line of retail uses to help animate the plaza areas.
- b. Remove existing physical barriers to pedestrian circulation and retail visibility, especially within the inner plaza. Increase outdoor seating.
- c. Improve visibility of the existing food court by modifying building entrances, facade treatments, and lighting in a manner compatible with the surrounding buildings.
- d. Improve the overall attractiveness of the Main Plaza by retrofitting the existing sculpture at the Metro escalator, "Rainbow Forest," to achieve a more colorful and kinetic piece.
- e. Add more greenery and seasonal flowers to the area around the Metro fountain and seating areas on the main plaza in a manner that does not restrict visibility to retail areas or the food court.

### **3. LORENZ SITE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

CBD-3 zoning and employment land use is recommended on the Lorenz site. If the currently approved project does not proceed, and the project plan either expires or is amended, the following design guidelines apply:

- a. Develop the allowable density into two buildings separated by an open space to avoid a single, bulky structure. The smaller building should be located on the eastern side of the site next to East Lane. The larger one should be oriented toward Woodmont Avenue.
- b. Locate the major open space within the middle of the block to provide important visual and physical access to the inner plaza of Metro Center. The midblock open space should be wide enough to be experienced as a space, not merely a passage connecting to the Metro Plaza, and to allow adequate light and air in the Plaza. This open space should be developed with landscaping, seating, lighting, and other special features to provide public enjoyment.
- c. Maintain adequate sunlight in the inner plaza by stepping up building heights from the east to the west of the site. Along East Lane, building heights should not exceed 60 feet, or 5 floors. Along Woodmont Avenue, heights should not exceed 143 feet, or 13 floors, to achieve a compatible transition to the TS-R neighborhood across Woodmont Avenue.
- d. Locate a transitional open space along Woodmont Avenue to achieve compatibility with the existing residential midrise building.
- e. Locate all driveway access to underground parking and service areas from North and East Lanes, in a manner compatible with the Metro station kiss-and-ride facility.



- f. Provide sufficient public benefits or amenities to satisfy zoning requirements for the optional method of development. Desirable public benefits for this site may include one or more of the following:
  - 1) Extensive retrofitting of the existing plazas as stated in the Metro Center design guidelines.
  - 2) Additional streetscape improvements beyond the property, possibly to include the Montgomery Avenue Mixed Street, which extends to the public library.
  - 3) Development of a Class 1 Bikeway along Woodmont Avenue beyond the property.
- g. Provide special night lighting and retail signs that complement the existing lighting at the Metro Center and are compatible with adjacent residential properties.
- h. Achieve an architectural style that is harmonious yet differentiated from the existing Metro Center buildings to avoid the appearance of a monotonous megastructure.

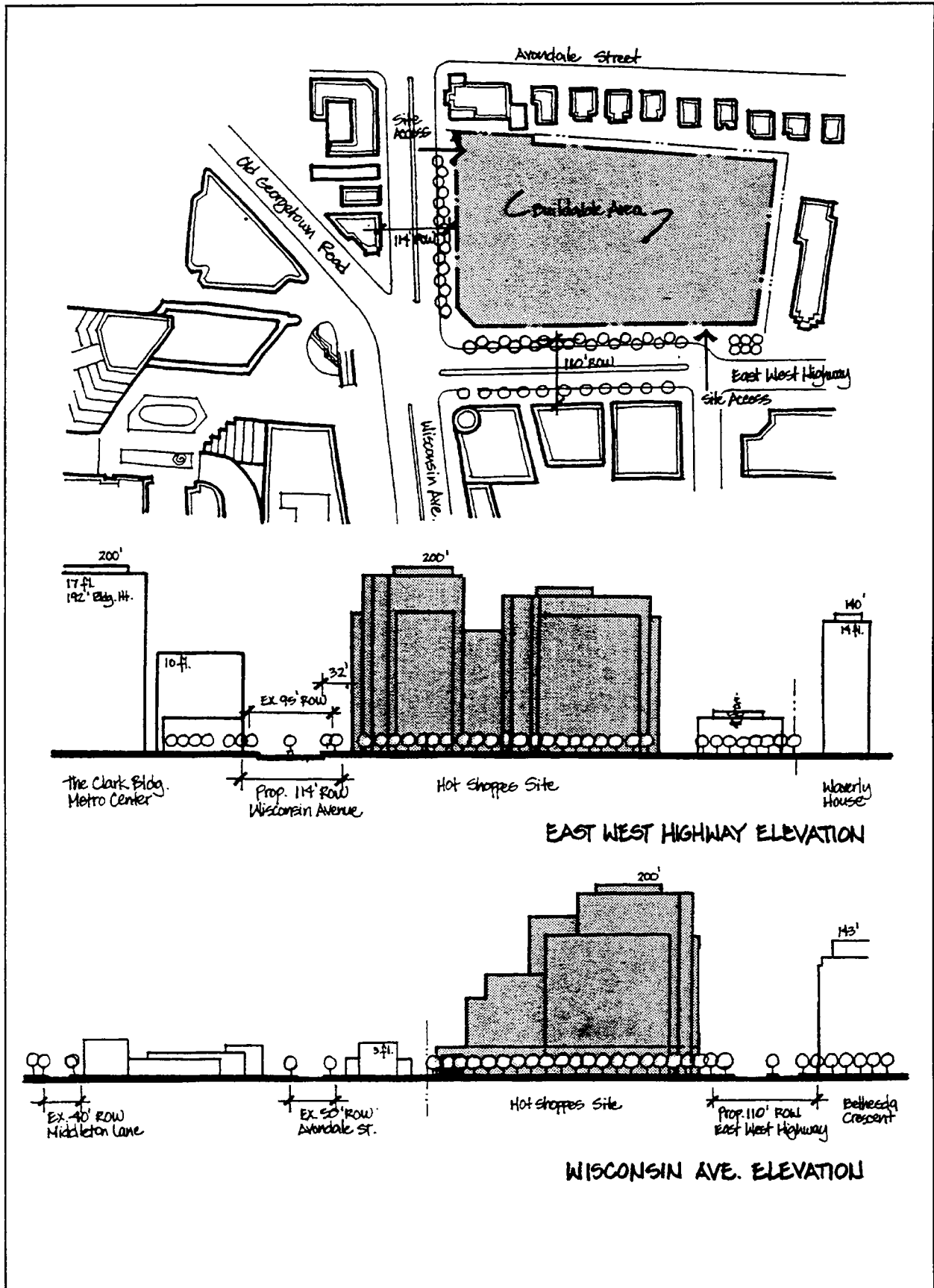
#### **4. HOT SHOPPES SITE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

Redevelopment of the Hot Shoppes site provides a major opportunity for establishing additional employment, street activating retail and entertainment uses, and civic spaces in the Metro Core District. The Sector Plan recommends the CBD-3 Zone, with significant limitations on the density. This recommendation is intended to establish a balance between the objective to locate high density development next to Metro stations and the need to provide compatibility with surrounding areas. The Plan prefers the optional method of development on the Hot Shoppes site. The optional method will allow a major office-retail complex across from the Metro station and an important cultural facility, a professional theater, in the heart of Bethesda.

If the site is redeveloped under the standard method, any subdivision/resubdivision should be limited to a 2 FAR project. A FAR of 2 would retain the same development potential as existed before rezoning from CBD-2 to CBD-3. Without the major public benefits and amenities of an optional method project, a smaller infill development with fine-grained texture is more consistent with the Plan's urban form objectives than a large bulky structure.

Buildable area and height concepts are illustrated in Figure 4.8. The following specific requirements for the optional method of development apply to the Hot Shoppes site:







- a. Limit the density to 615,000 square feet of gross floor area (4 FAR). This density can be increased to 750,000 square feet (approximately 4.9 FAR) of retail and office uses with the provision of a professional theater as the preferred, substantial public benefit. The gross floor area of the professional theater is not included in the limitations on density and would be in addition to the 750,000 square feet. If the Planning Board determines that the theater is not viable, a minimum of 135,000 square feet of housing (approximately 120 to 150 dwelling units) may be provided within the 750,000 square feet, with an appropriate level of amenities.
- b. Step buildings down next to existing residential development to achieve the required compatibility.
- c. Dedicate 15 feet of additional right-of-way, for a total of 110 feet, as shown in Figure 5.13. The developer may retain the subsurface rights to the additional 15 feet to allow below-grade construction, with accommodation for street trees and utilities.
- d. Satisfy the public benefits, facilities, and amenities requirement of the optional method of development by providing the specific public benefits, facilities, and amenities listed in design guideline f, and either g, or h, below.
- e. Study the feasibility and cost of a pedestrian tunnel under East-West Highway. Accommodate a future connection to such a tunnel if the study, to be completed by the time of the project plan application, indicates its feasibility.

Prior to the project plan application, the developer should explore with the Planning staff and the community schemes illustrating alternative building height and bulk, theater locations, and open space configurations. The schemes will be reviewed in terms of compatibility, theater visibility, and open space relationships.

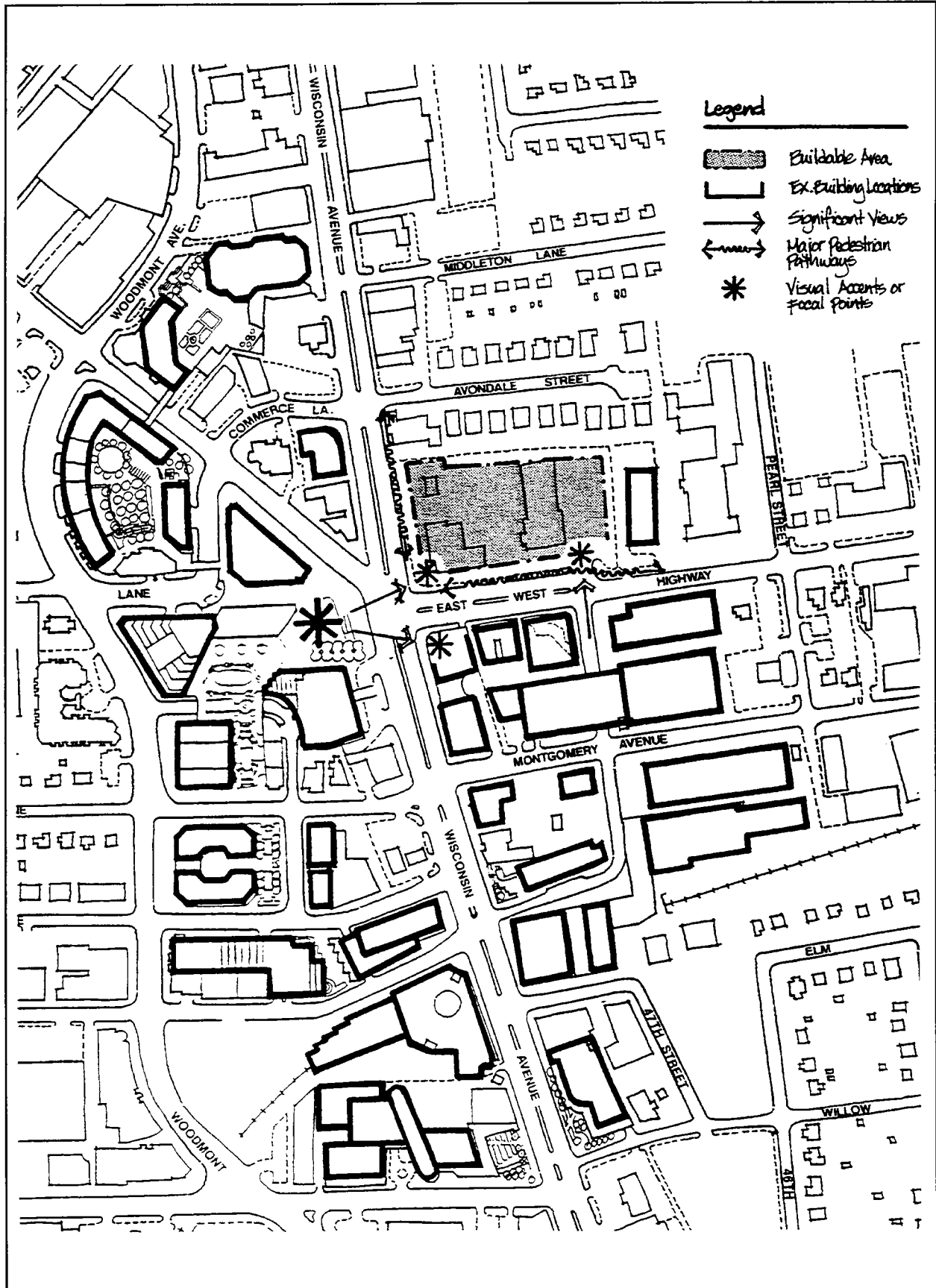
The urban form context of the site is shown in Figure 4.9. An illustration of the developed Hot Shoppes site is in Figure 4.10. In addition to the limit on gross floor area, the following principles and guidelines apply to this site and should be used in the review of a future project plan:

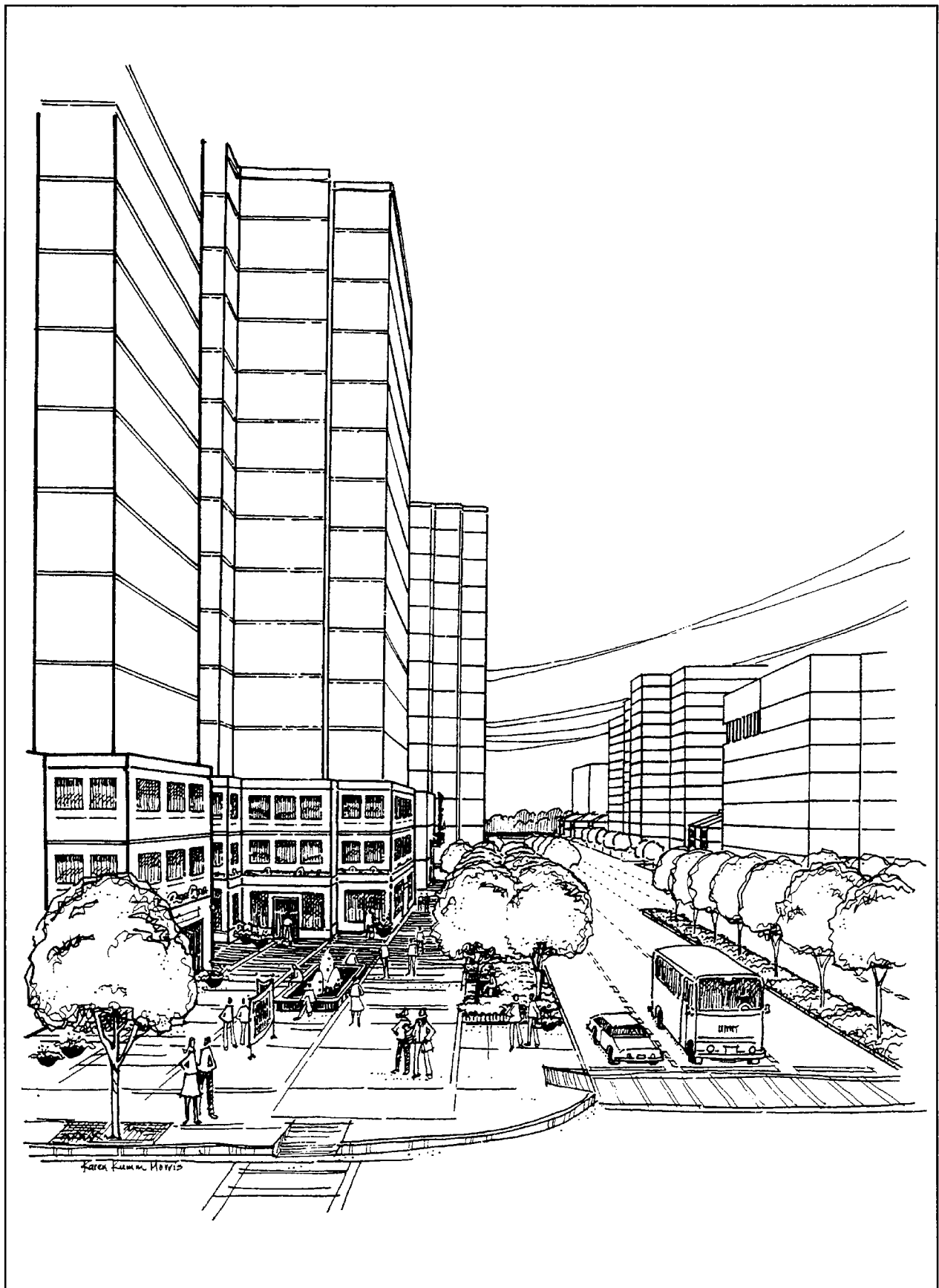
### **Planning Principles**

- a. Achieve a level of density appropriate to the Metro location that provides the opportunity for a major commercial development with a professional theater or a mixed-use development with housing.
- b. Create an attractive urban development of "landmark" character and quality that complements Bethesda's lively, pedestrian-oriented downtown environment.

# HOT SHOPPES SITE: URBAN FORM DIAGRAM

FIGURE 4.9





- c. Create a street-oriented development by locating buildings and their major entrances facing the adjacent streets, with service and parking access located at the rear of the property.
- d. Accommodate required vehicular circulation in a safe, functional, and efficient manner by such measures as confining vehicular access to an entrance opposite Waverly Street and from Wisconsin Avenue near the northern property line.
- e. Create accessible park-like open space that provides a sense of greenery in keeping with Bethesda's "garden" theme.
- f. Establish compatibility with adjacent residential properties.

### **Design Guidelines**

- a. Orient buildings with heights that exceed 143 feet toward the intersection of East-West Highway and Wisconsin Avenue.
- b. Provide setbacks and significant stepping down of buildings to the northern and eastern boundaries of the site to establish compatibility with the adjacent garden apartments, nearby single-family houses, and the Waverly House high-rise.
- c. Provide a buffer along the northern property line to protect adjacent residents from the noise and visual impact of activities on the site.
- d. Provide a setback for buildings in addition to the public right-of-way along East-West Highway and Wisconsin Avenue to establish an enhanced sidewalk and streetscape that can accommodate the high volume of pedestrian movement. The area added to the public right-of-way could be used as public use space.
- e. Locate public use space in a manner that is safe, inviting, and visible from adjacent streets. Public use space located either along East-West Highway or next to Waverly House is preferable to interior plazas. The Plan seeks to create a promenade character by the combination of pedestrian amenities and streetscape next to retail and restaurants along East-West Highway and Wisconsin Avenue. At project plan review, careful consideration should be given to the width of the promenade.
- f. The following list indicates a desirable level of public benefits, facilities, and amenities appropriate for this site for all development options:
  - 1) Provide park-like public use space on the site with a significant amount of trees and grass. Public use space should also be furnished with a high level of amenities, such as fountains, seating areas, special paving, distinctive



lighting, public art, and other pedestrian amenities designed to enhance the enjoyment of the space. Public use space should not include internal plazas or large amounts of paved surfaces.

- 2) Include streetscape improvements along the frontage of this site in project plans. Implement the Bethesda Streetscape Plan to enhance existing pathways and provide for the continuation of the eastern loop of the "Bethesda Discovery Trail."
- g. Consider other public amenities that may be needed to support a level of optional method density up to 4 FAR. These may include, but are not limited to:
  - 1) Extensive offsite streetscaping in accordance with the Bethesda Streetscape Plan, such as improvements along East-West Highway that extend to the eastern boundary of the Sector Plan area.
  - 2) An extensive linear park along East-West Highway.
  - 3) A significant public open space that is safe, attractive, and visible from public streets.
- h. Provide a professional theater as the preferred amenity option to support the proposed 750,000 square feet (approximately 4.9 FAR) of density for a commercial project. The theater should be constructed for live performances with a stage and adequate support facilities. The Plan does not assume that County funds will be required or provided for construction or operation of the theater.

### **Theater Guidelines**

The developer should adhere to the following guidelines for the theater:

- a. Facilities
  - 1) Provide a fully enclosed dedicated theater space with approximately 400 seats.
  - 2) Design the theater to meet the acoustic, artistic, and technical requirements for professional dramatic and musical productions. The design should be submitted for comment to a theater review panel that includes an expert in theater design and construction.
  - 3) Provide the theater on a turnkey basis, complete with furnishings, fixtures, and equipment with the exception of stage lighting and controls, sound equipment, stage equipment, and drapes, which will be provided by the theater company.

b. Visibility

Provide a permanent, prominent, and lighted marquee at the theater entrance, and other prominent identification feature(s) facing both East-West Highway and Wisconsin Avenue at a location ensuring the best visibility for the theater.

c. Parking

Make available at market rates adequate, secure, underground parking during theater operating hours.

d. Timing

- 1) Provide a commitment to construct the theater prior to approval of a project plan.
- 2) Construct the theater in the first phase or provide adequate financial security by the project plan approval to ensure timely construction.
- 3) Protect the theater, once open, from future construction in a manner that allows continued and uninterrupted theater operation.

e. Theater Company and Cost Allocation

- 1) Ensure the selection under a fair and competitive proposal format of a resident theater company with an established professional reputation for artistic quality, management proficiency, and financial stability.
- 2) Submit a written agreement, as part of the project plan application, with the professional theater company which identifies the company as the operating entity and clarifies the relationship between developer and theater company. Costs may be allocated as follows:
  - a) Allocate to the developer the entire capital costs of theater, ancillary production facilities, and parking garage construction, along with the costs of general site maintenance and site security.
  - b) Allocate to the theater company in a dollar-a-year lease with the developer only the direct operating costs of the theater space, including utilities, maintenance, and security directly related to theater operations; real estate taxes, if any; and the costs of lighting, sound, and stage equipment.



## 5. **COMMERCE LANE SITE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

Along Commerce Lane, the Plan recommends the CBD-2 Zone and allows optional method employment development up to 4 FAR. Office development will allow a coherent extension of the Bethesda Place project. A mixed-use project of up to 5 FAR may also be built on the properties.

Urban design guidelines for this site include:

- a. Develop allowable density in several separate buildings. This site is considered an “in-fill” block in which buildings should fill out the building envelope within recommended setbacks.
- b. Locate the office buildings’ main entrances toward Wisconsin Avenue and Old Georgetown Road. If residential use is included, buildings should provide entrances primarily along Commerce Lane, with ground floor retail.
- c. Locate taller buildings along Wisconsin Avenue. Building heights should step down along Commerce Lane, with lower heights along Old Georgetown Road to assure that adequate sunlight and air reach the inner plaza of Bethesda Place.
- d. Achieve building setbacks along Old Georgetown Road comparable to existing building setbacks of Bethesda Place to ensure a continuous sidewalk area.
- e. Provide a major open space and pedestrian connection from Commerce Lane, through the site, into the inner plaza of Bethesda Place. This will satisfy onsite open space requirements, improve pedestrian access, and create a desirable link of interconnected public spaces within the Metro Core District.
- f. Locate vehicular access to rear service areas and underground parking from Commerce Lane. Restrict driveway access from Old Georgetown Road and Wisconsin Avenue.

## 6. **WOODMONT AVENUE AT ELM STREET SITE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

For properties on the east side of Woodmont Avenue, between Elm Street and Bethesda Avenue, the Plan recommends the CBD-2 Zone and optional method employment development up to 4 FAR. The area is located two blocks from the Metro station by way of the “Discovery Trail” and is next to a possible southern entrance to Metro.

Urban design guidelines for this area include:

- a. Develop allowable density in several buildings to avoid larger, bulky single structures and to permit phasing. The larger building along Elm



Street should be located on the eastern end of the triangular site. A lower building should face Woodmont Avenue.

- b. Step down building heights to six floors along Woodmont Avenue to achieve a transitional building height at the western edge of the Core District, similar to existing optional method projects to the north. A building height of six floors along Woodmont Avenue is compatible with the three-floor height restrictions of the C-2 Zone across Woodmont Avenue.
- c. Orient storefront retail and/or restaurant uses along Woodmont Avenue to complement existing retail across the street. Extension of retail along Elm Street will create a link with Metro Core District retail activity and with the "Discovery Trail."
- d. Establish 15-foot building setbacks from the right-of-way along Woodmont Avenue to accommodate both pedestrians and the Class 1 Bikeway recommended along Woodmont Avenue.
- e. Locate driveway access to rear service areas and underground parking in locations that do not negatively affect traffic flow and pedestrian use of public spaces.
- f. Locate onsite open space along Elm Street at the northeastern corner of the site to connect with the "Discovery Trail," the existing series of mid-block open spaces. The open space should also provide a pedestrian connection to the Capital Crescent Trail and a bicycle storage area, as identified in Section 5.5, Bicycle Network Plan.
- g. Locate some open space along the Capital Crescent Trail if an optional method project is provided along Woodmont Avenue at Bethesda Avenue.

## **7. BETHESDA THEATRE CAFE AND CHEVYLAND BLOCK: RECOMMENDATIONS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The Bethesda Theatre Cafe has a historic design and a use that contribute significantly to the "cultural district" theme supported by the Sector Plan. The attractive interior design reflects Art Deco styling. The theater has a screen and a stage suitable for a variety of performing arts programs. The building's exterior is protected by historic resource designation. (See Section 9.4, Master Plan Sites.)

Chevy Chase Chevyland was established in 1939 by the Bowis family, which still owns the property. Though placement on the Locational Atlas has been suggested, the Plan does not recommend historic designation because of substantial alterations. (See Section 9.5, Sites under Consideration for Historic Designation.) The site contains three parcels of 22,000, 27,498, and 7,307 square feet.

The Sector Plan recommends confirming the CBD-2 Zone and allowing optional method office development on the Theatre Cafe and Chevyland sites. The Plan recommends preserving the interior design of the theater and retaining a cinema



or performance use. The owners of the Chevyland site are encouraged to consider a joint development with the theater owners to save the theater interior. A special Wisconsin to Tilbury Study analyzed the relationship between these sites and the East Bethesda Transition Area. (See Appendix C.)

The complexities of a possible Bethesda Theatre Cafe development require further explanation.

The Beta Corporation owns the theater site (within the CBD and zoned CBD-2) and the parking lot to the east (outside the CBD and zoned R-60). The property within the CBD has less than the 22,000 square feet required for the optional method, but a project could qualify by combining with adjacent properties in one of two ways: 1) submit a joint application with properties to the north or south, or 2) submit a joint application with Public Parking Lot 42 for an area of about 42,457 square feet.

Land use and zoning recommendations to allow the second alternative for development of the Beta Corporation property include:

- a. Extend the CBD boundary and the CBD-2 Zone line 50 feet across an existing public alley right-of-way into the Beta Corporation parking lot for the area immediately to the east of the theater site only.
- b. Extend the CBD-2 Zone line south across Public Parking Lot 42, which already lies within the CBD boundary.
- c. Allow an optional method project to be built over the public alleys, although it may be necessary to maintain pedestrian or vehicle access to serve the project and adjacent properties. Access requirements, consideration of abandonment of the alley, and efforts to minimize cut-through traffic in the East Bethesda neighborhood should be determined at the time of Project Plan.
- d. Preserve the interior of the theater, including the murals on the walls and ceiling, and a cinema or performing arts activity as the primary public benefit associated with a joint optional method development.
- e. Retain the existing R-60 Zone as the base zone for the Beta parking lot. A special exception for commercial parking would not be inconsistent with Sector Plan objectives if redevelopment does not occur.
- f. Recommend residential development of the Beta parking lot. The floating PD-22 Zone, which allows up to 22 housing units, would be an appropriate zone. (Amendments to the PD Zone are described in Section 10.1.) Preliminary site analysis suggests that about 20 housing units may be suitable on this site. Alternatively, if an optional method project is built on the adjacent property that preserves the theater interior, a mixed-use project with up to 24,000 square feet of office and up to 15 housing units may be provided on the Beta parking lot. Any office structure must

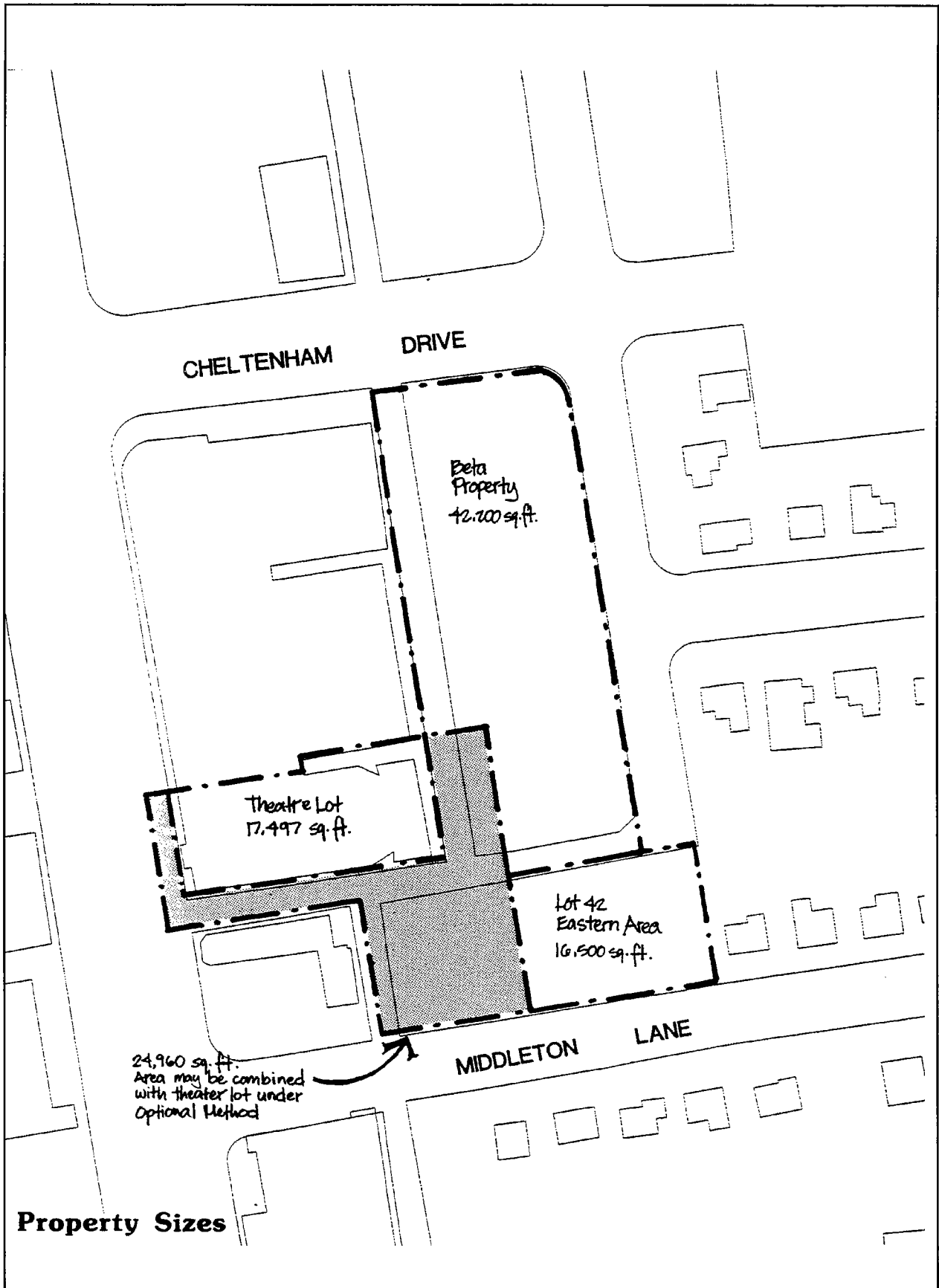
be placed along the public alley and height guidelines must be maintained.

- g. Retain the R-60 Zone on the portion of Parking Lot 42 outside the CBD. The floating PD-22 Zone, which allows up to eight housing units, would be an appropriate zone. Preliminary analysis based on the design guidelines suggests that about five units may be suitable on this site. Any unit within the PD Zone fronting on Middleton Lane should be residential in use and design. Any office use fronting on Middleton Lane should be located within the CBD-2 Zone.

The above recommendations would allow several parcels to be combined as follows: the theater site (17,497 square feet), a small portion of the Beta Corporation outlot now used for parking (3,300 square feet), public alleys that were dedicated with the original plat approval in 1937 (8,460 square feet), and the west portion of Lot 42 to be zoned CBD-2 (13,200 square feet). The total land area of 42,457 square feet would permit a 4 FAR optional method project of up to 169,828 square feet, including 12,500 square feet for the theater. The net new office space would be 157,328 square feet. If the Beta Corporation built townhouse-scale offices along the alley on their parking lot, up to 24,000 square feet of office area could be added. (See Figure 4.11.)

Joint development of the Beta Corporation and Parking District properties is the most likely means of preserving all of the Bethesda Theatre Cafe, including the interior design and performing arts activity. Both the interior and exterior make this historic Art Deco structure an important resource for Montgomery County residents. The recommendations benefit the Beta Corporation by allowing an optional method project of about 157,000 square feet plus the theater rather than a standard method project of 48,000 square feet. The Parking District gains a larger area for a structure to serve the expected growth in parking demand in the Metro Core District. The nearby residential community gains an assurance of underground parking rather than a multi-story deck and the limitation of building height to 90 feet, stepping down to 65 feet at the rear. They also benefit from residential and possibly some office town-houses as an appropriate transition land use to complement the east facade of the theater building and buffer the auto dealership or other future office development.

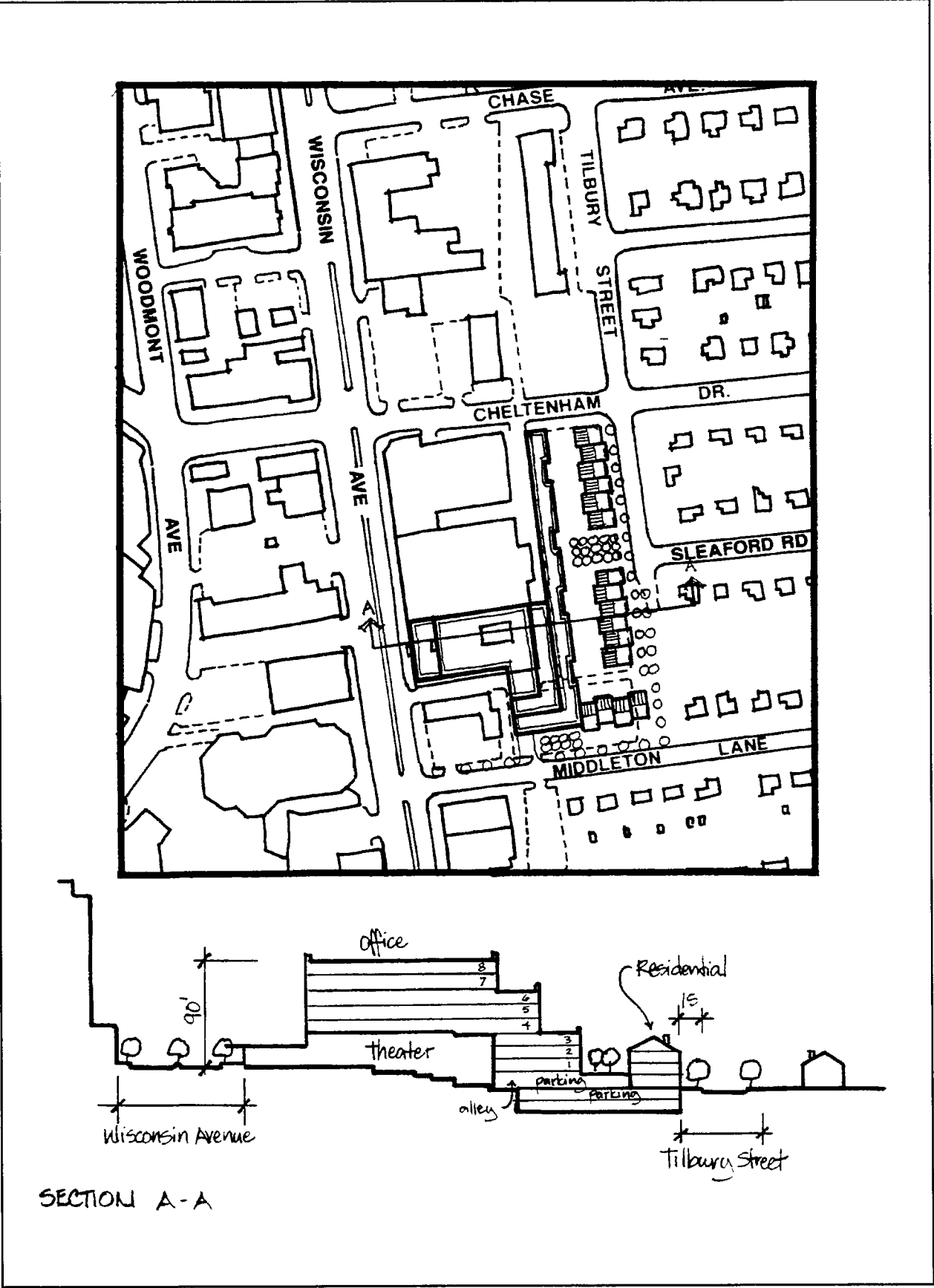
The Plan recommendation seeks to allow an investment return that justifies retention of the entire theater structure. To preserve the theater interior beneath a multi-story office building requires a structured platform over the theater space, with office space built on the platform. The added cost of the platform and measures to protect and restore the theater interior require a substantial project to create a reasonable investment return. The recommended density is intended to provide a good incentive for the project. Reduction in the permitted density could lead the Beta Corporation to abandon the optional method project and build a standard method office building.



A standard method building of about 48,000 square feet would be possible. The small area of the Beta parking lot recommended for the CBD-2 Zone could not be included in a building permit application since the property is separated by a public alley. Use of public alley dedication is also not permitted in standard method development. Any demolition would require approval by the Historic Preservation Commission. While the front of the theater would be preserved, it is likely that the rear and the interior would be demolished. The community would have lost an intact, functioning theater and all but the facade and marquee of a historic resource if a standard method project were built.

In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following specific guidelines apply to a development on the Bethesda Theatre Cafe/Beta Lot/Lot 42 properties (see also Figure 4.12):

- a. Preserve the existing structure and use as recommended in Chapter 9, Historic Resources Plan. Allow new development to be built over the existing structure, set back from the existing marquee. This will provide a visual backdrop for the marquee and will locate the new building mass closer to Wisconsin Avenue than to the residential neighborhoods along Tilbury Street. More specific design review will take place at the time of Project Plan and Historic Area Work Permit review.
- b. Maintain building heights no higher than 90 feet along Wisconsin Avenue to provide a scale compatible with the existing historic structure and marquee and with nearby residential neighborhoods. Provide several step downs in building height from a maximum of 90 feet to a maximum of 65 feet at the rear and a maximum of 45 feet along the east side of the alley. Residential townhouse development should not exceed 35 feet along Tilbury Street and Middleton Lane.
- c. Provide a street-oriented townhouse development with front doors facing surrounding streets, to achieve compatibility. Allow a 15-foot minimum setback from the street curb.
- d. Allow no more than three continuous attached townhouses with the same front building line in order to maintain a compatible relationship with adjacent single-family properties. The variations in building line must be at least two feet. The illustrative site plan in Figure 4.12 is for design guidance only.
- e. Locate commercial parking either underground or in a structured deck no higher than one level, as measured from adjacent streets. Structured parking should be located so as not to be seen from the nearby single-family neighborhood.



- f. Locate required open space in a manner that expands the existing open areas and provides attractive views from the adjacent residential neighborhood.
- g. Provide a park-like open space and a pedestrian pathway from Tilbury Street to Middleton Lane to improve pedestrian access and link the new and existing residences.
- h. Design residential rooftops to create a residential image by such means as hip roofs, gables, or other types of pitched roof lines. A varied roof line is desirable to improve character and reduce a sense of bulk.
- i. Achieve a coordinated architectural character for the office and residential portions of the project that establishes a compatible yet distinct identity for each area. Any frontage of the office building on Middleton Lane and any portion of the office structure adjoining Cheltenham Drive should be compatible in scale, style, and materials with residential townhouses to achieve maximum integration with the East Bethesda neighborhood.
- j. Exempt the property from the right-of-way dedication requirement of 9.5 feet shown in the Street and Highway Plan in order to preserve the historic building.

The following additional guidelines apply to the Chevy Chase Chevyland site:

- a. Maintain building heights no higher than 90 feet along Wisconsin Avenue, stepping down to 60 feet at the rear, to ensure compatibility with nearby residential areas.
- b. Respond to the view from the residential neighborhood in the design of the building and avoid a blank wall at the rear through such features as massing, fenestration, and design details.
- c. Review alley access requirements at the Project Plan stage.
- d. Dedicate 9.5 feet of right-of-way, in conformance with the Street and Highway Plan, only at the time that replacement of the existing buildings occurs.



## 4.2 THE TRANSIT STATION RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

### A. DESCRIPTION

The Transit Station Residential (TS-R) District is partially developed with high-rise residential buildings. Part of it remains an area of single-family houses. Houses used as offices are located along both Montgomery Lane and Arlington Road. The district is located between Woodmont Avenue and Arlington Road and extends from Hampden Lane to Moorland Lane.

The form of new development has been mid to high-rise apartments. Since the TS-R Zone has required 50 percent green space, buildings have been forced to rise vertically rather than spread horizontally. The 1976 Sector Plan established height limits which step down from 12 floors along Woodmont Avenue to 5 floors along Arlington Road.

The TS-R District continues to be in transition, in response to the requirements of the Sector Plan. Three major TS-R projects have been built: The Chase, The Christopher, and Chase II of Bethesda. Most houses along Arlington Road have been converted to offices, with their use limited to a few professional office categories. Some properties along Montgomery Lane are also in office use. The housing study completed for this Sector Plan indicates that high land values and multiple ownerships can make assembly of parcels for TS-R development difficult.

### B. OBJECTIVES

1. Provide incentives for and remove barriers to achieving high-density housing in the TS-R District.
2. Increase flexibility in the TS-R Zone to allow the district to achieve a low-rise, high-density "urban village" pattern.
3. Retain residential scale along Arlington Road.

### C. RECOMMENDATIONS

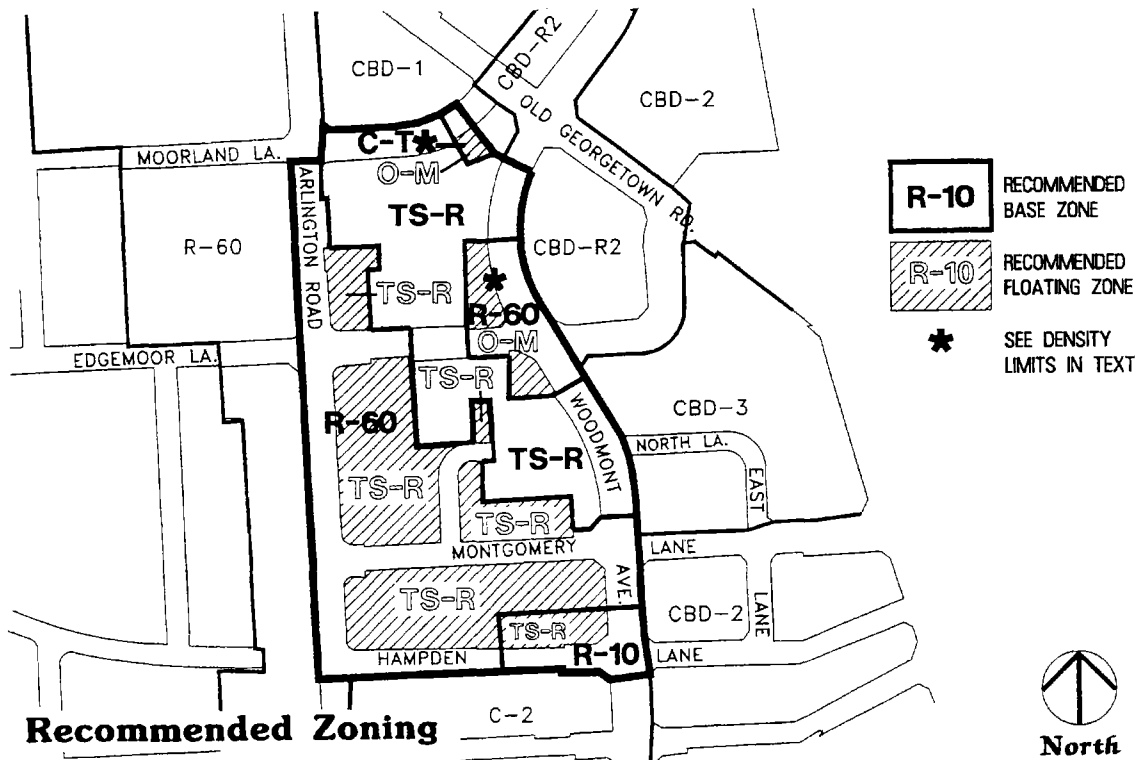
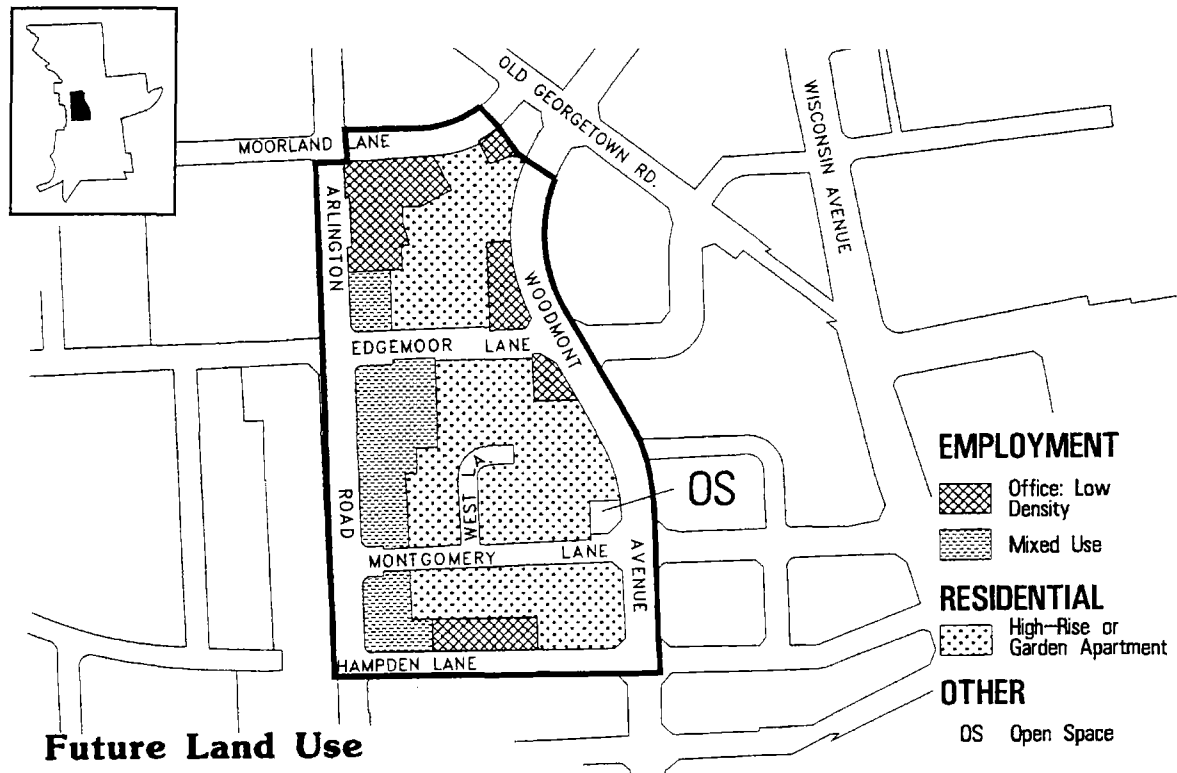
Reservation of the TS-R area for high-density housing is an important objective of the Sector Plan. To encourage provision of housing in the TS-R area, the Plan recommends greater incentives and flexibility. (See future land use and recommended zoning in Figure 4.13.)

The Plan recommends that retail and office uses be more generally approved as part of a TS-R project. Such commercial uses would be limited to the ground floor or may be located above the ground floor if the amount of square footage does not exceed 20 percent of the total floor area and commercial uses do not share common pedestrian access with residential. The Plan limits retail uses to locations along Hampden Lane and on or near Woodmont Avenue, across from the Metro Core District. There is no need to extend retail further, since community shopping is available in the nearby Arlington Road District. The Plan permits office uses in locations facing Arlington Road or Montgomery Lane. This will allow recovery and some expansion of the economic value associated with existing office uses.



# TRANSIT STATION RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

FIGURE 4.13





The conversion of single-family houses to professional offices has provided an interim use for many years. The Plan recommends allowing existing special exception uses to continue and allowing approval of new special exception uses under the established review procedure.

The TS-R Zone has been amended to provide more flexibility for site development. This will allow the Plan's preferred form of development for this area, a low-rise, high-density "urban village." (See Figure 4.14.) Revisions to the TS-R Zone allow a lower minimum parcel size to make assemblage easier. A reduced green space requirement would allow lower building heights, a more spread out building, and, therefore, a less expensive structure since construction of such low-rise development can be less costly than high-rise. The type of housing should appear to be townhouses but actually be three to six-floor buildings with apartments at each level. This form of development can create a high-quality environment in a market not currently being served in Bethesda. Design guidelines to achieve the preferred form are presented below.

The Plan recommends a minimum of 45 dwelling units per acre everywhere except on lots facing Arlington Road, where there would be no minimum density in order to allow townhouse development at lower densities. The Plan anticipates that some projects will incorporate higher densities, and the full 2.5 FAR density (about 100 dwelling units per acre) would be allowed. (See Transit Station Residential District illustrative, Appendix B.)

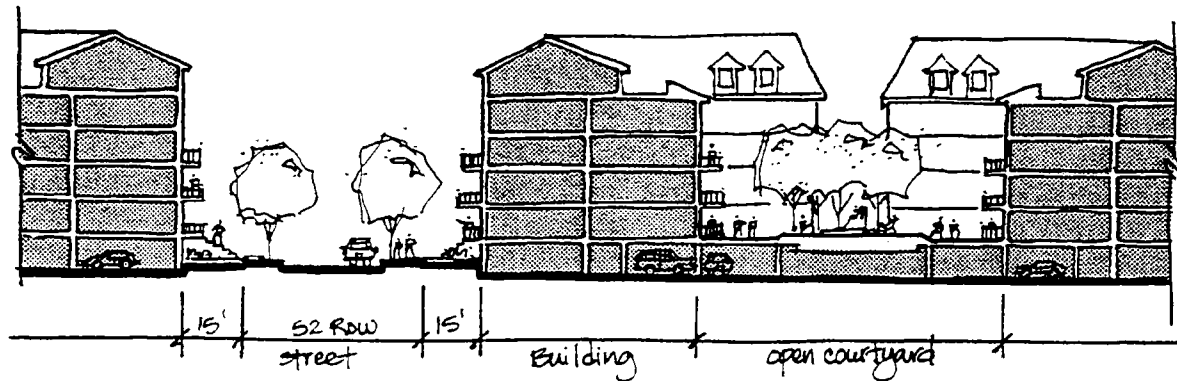
The Plan proposes a combination of private and public open space, both within and outside the TS-R District, to serve new residents. Open space within the TS-R neighborhood would be primarily developed as private recreational areas, possibly with both housing and private outdoor areas located above structured parking. (See Figure 4.14.) The advantage of the closed block configuration is that it creates a consolidated amount of more usable open space. Interior community room or rooftop recreation areas may also be provided.

One possible resource for publicly oriented open space within the TS-R District is the area in front of the new apartment structures along Montgomery Lane. Streetscape and special seating areas could be provided in the setback from the sidewalk to the building face, creating an outdoor community space. The Plan also recommends a Mixed Street along Montgomery Lane that would have curbside parking and special pavers. (See Chapter 6, Streetscape Plan.) The street should be developed with 20 feet for travel lanes within a 52-foot right-of-way. An existing one-way pattern would continue to discourage cut-through traffic. The street design is illustrated in Figures 4.15 and 5.14 and is subject to further study and approval by the County Department of Transportation. Both the streetscape and the Mixed Street would provide pleasant pedestrian linkages between the public library and park on Arlington Road and a proposed urban green space at Woodmont Avenue.

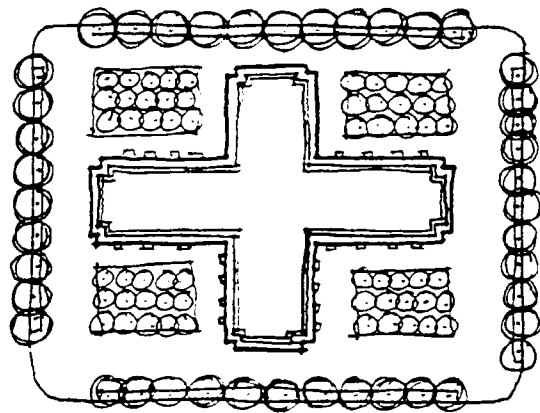
Outside the TS-R District, the Plan recommends additional open space resources both in private optional method projects and on public land. New optional method projects such as Garage 49 and the Hot Shoppes development will provide open space with appeal to

- Achieve unit entrances along the street

- Locate parking underground or in deck structures in the rear yard.
- Provide private open space

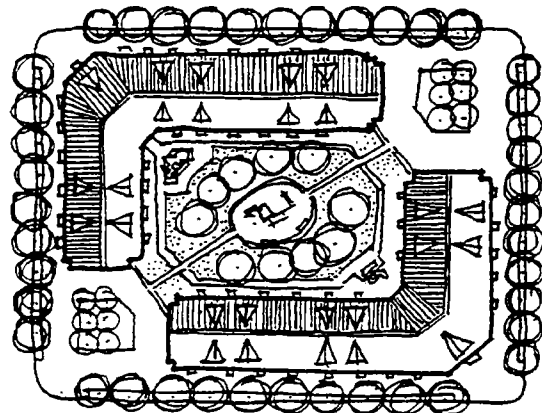


Avoid:  
Open Block Configurations

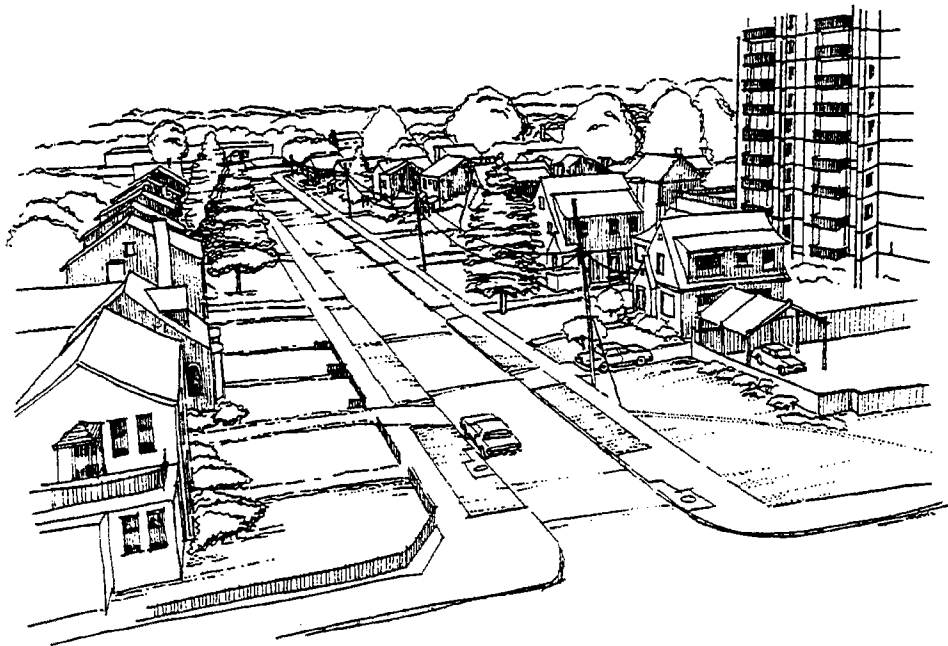


- Poor relationship to the street.
- No distinction between private and public open space.
- Low building coverage & taller buildings.

Achieve:  
Closed Block Configurations

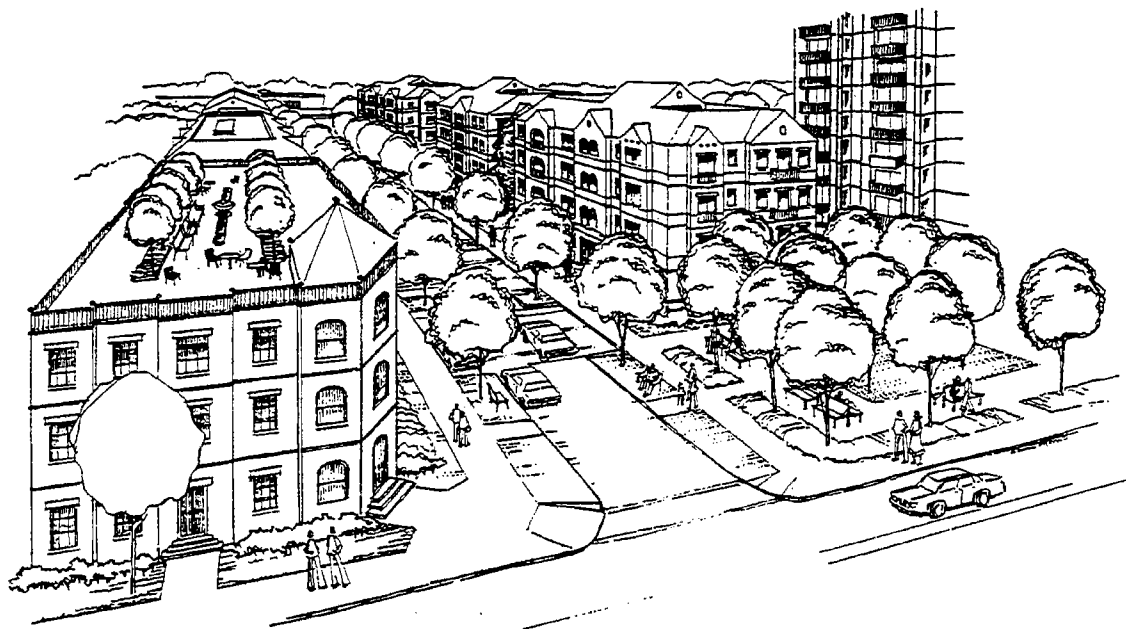


- Good relationship to the street, with continuous building line.
- Internal private open space.
- Higher building coverage & lower building heights.



"Before", Existing View of Montgomery Lane Looking West

page  
84



"After", Proposed Low-Rise, High-Density Housing on a Mixed Street

urban residents in addition to existing urban amenities. The residents of the new “urban village” will find extensive recreation and open space in downtown Bethesda.

The Plan supports the joint development of parking through the Bethesda Parking District. The provisions for expanding the Parking District are discussed in Section 5.6, Parking. There may be some savings associated with joint development of parking.

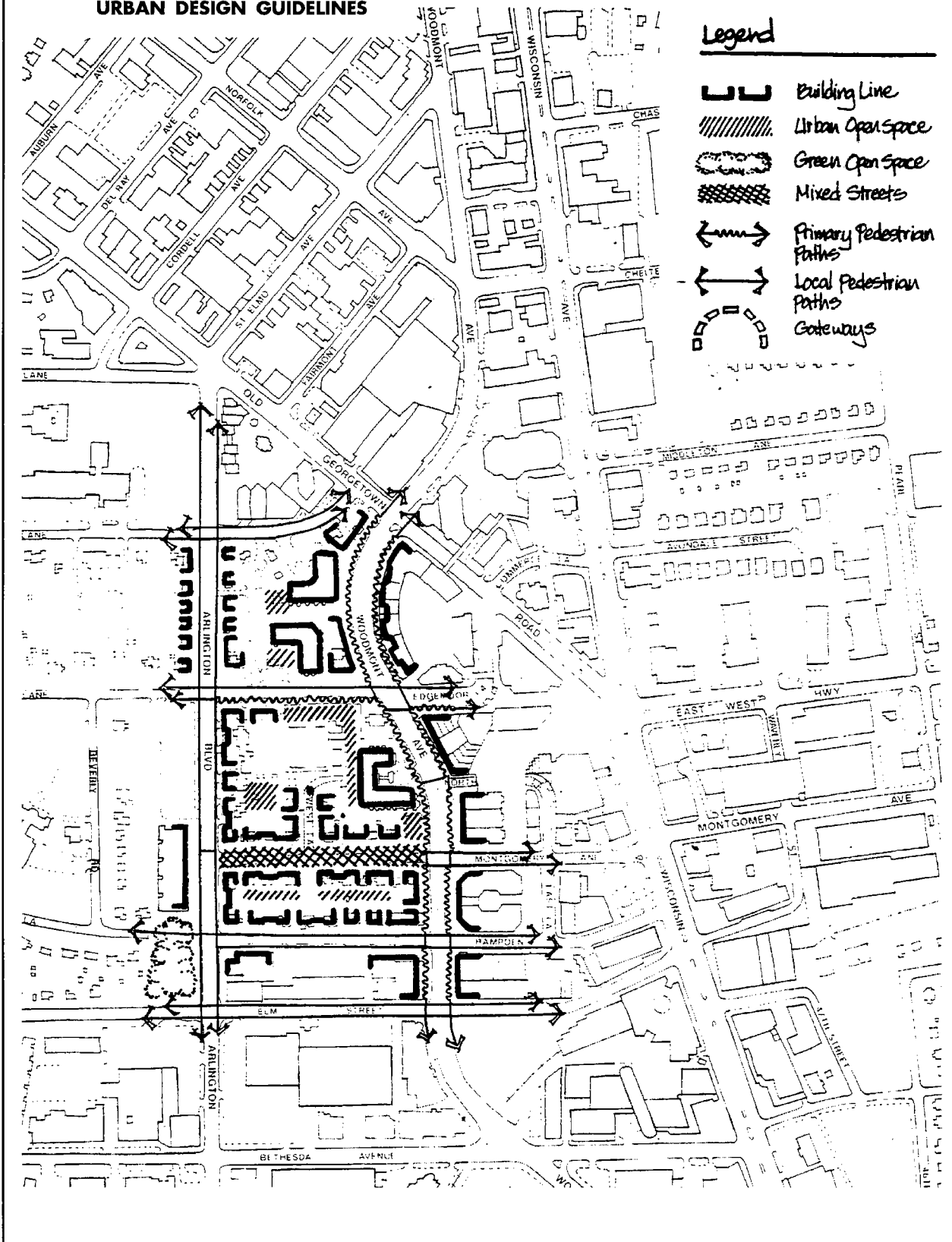
The Plan recommends low-density office use for the properties at the corner of Woodmont Avenue and Edgemoor Lane and on Moorland Lane near Old Georgetown Road. These properties are isolated from further TS-R development. For the parcel on Moorland Lane, the density should be limited to 1.0 FAR to coincide with the density allowed on the adjacent CBD-1 parcel. Office use may also continue on the Moorland Lane parcel in the C-T Zone. For the parcels on Woodmont Avenue, the density should be limited to 0.6 FAR to allow adequate landscaping and parking. Office use may proceed under either the R-60 Zone, with a special exception, or the O-M Zone.

#### **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply in the TS-R District (see Figure 4.16):

1. Permit projects with a minimum lot size of 18,000 square feet to encourage smaller-scale projects. Projects should not leave isolated parcels.
2. Encourage low-rise buildings to fill out the parcel.
3. Maintain low-rise building heights which step down to three floors along Arlington Road. Heights of up to six floors are preferred near Woodmont Avenue to achieve the desired urban form.
4. Provide 25-foot building setbacks from the curb (15 feet from the Sector Plan right-of-way) along Arlington Road. Setbacks in the remaining portion of the TS-R District will be decided on a case-by-case basis as redevelopment proceeds through the Planning Board approval process.
5. Design roof tops to achieve a residential image by using hip roofs, gables, turrets, and other types of pitched roof lines. The varied roof line is desirable to improve character and reduce the sense of bulk.
6. Locate front unit entrances along the street when residences are provided on the first floor to encourage street life.
7. Locate required parking either underground or in rear decks, so as not to be seen from surrounding streets.

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES



## **4.3 THE OLD GEORGETOWN ROAD CORRIDOR**

### **A. DESCRIPTION**

The Old Georgetown Road Corridor serves as an entry and commercial area for Bethesda. Low-scale buildings predominate and only scattered possibilities for small-scale infill development remain. The corridor extends from Woodmont Avenue to Glenbrook Road and includes properties with buildings that generally face onto Old Georgetown Road.

Land use is primarily retail, including restaurants and comparison retail. The uses and activities common to the Woodmont Triangle are also found along Old Georgetown Road.

### **B. OBJECTIVES**

1. Preserve the predominantly low-density, low-scale commercial character of the corridor.
2. Continue the “greening” of Bethesda by planting street trees and extending other streetscape improvements.

### **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Plan recommends continuing smallscale standard method infill development as the predominant pattern along Old Georgetown Road. (See Figure 4.17.) Construction of larger, bulky buildings will be avoided in great part because of the many small properties and separate ownerships.

The Plan recommends that the only optional method projects allowed be mixed-use with a residential component. Few, if any, such projects will occur due to the difficulty of achieving the minimum parcel size of 22,000 square feet.

Residential use above 1 FAR is recommended on small sites developed under the standard method, with retail uses allowed only on the ground floor. The CBD-1 Zone allows the addition of up to 1 FAR for residential use.

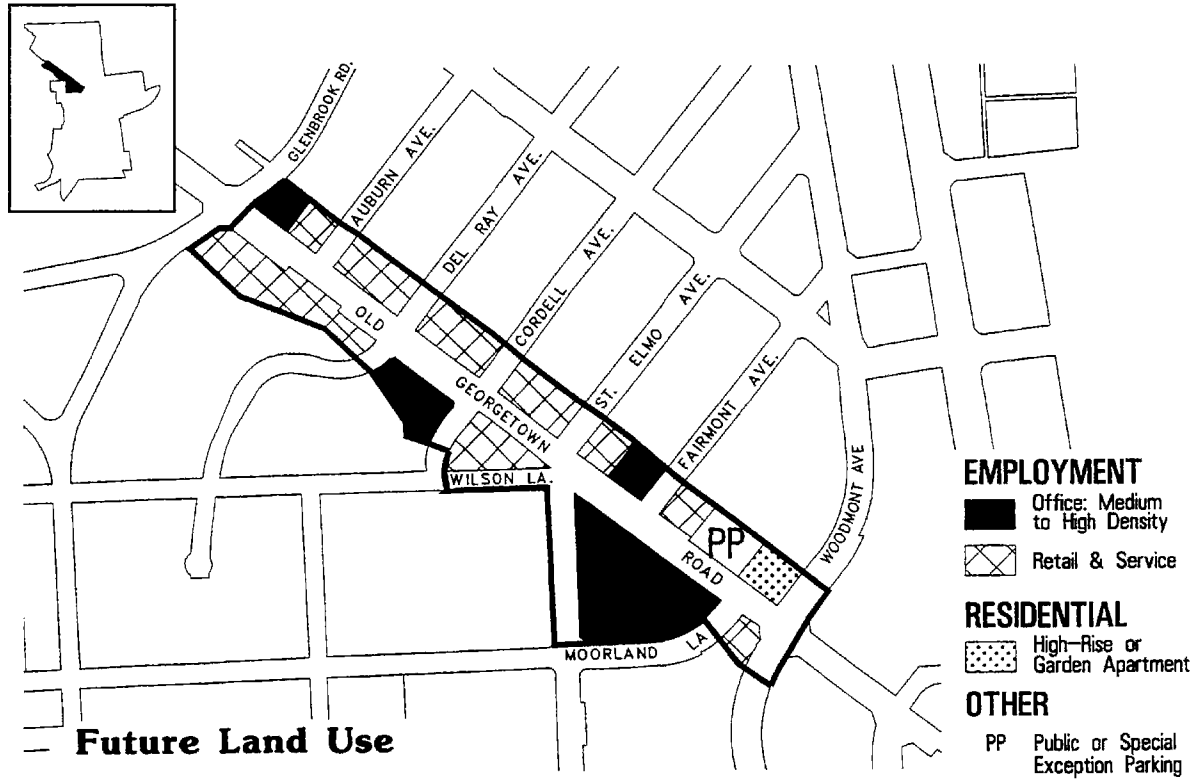
The Plan recommends that low-density commercial uses continue along the south side of Old Georgetown Road. Properties should retain the existing zoning. The one property that is zoned R-60, 7920 Old Georgetown Road, is suitable for the C-T Zone.

### **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

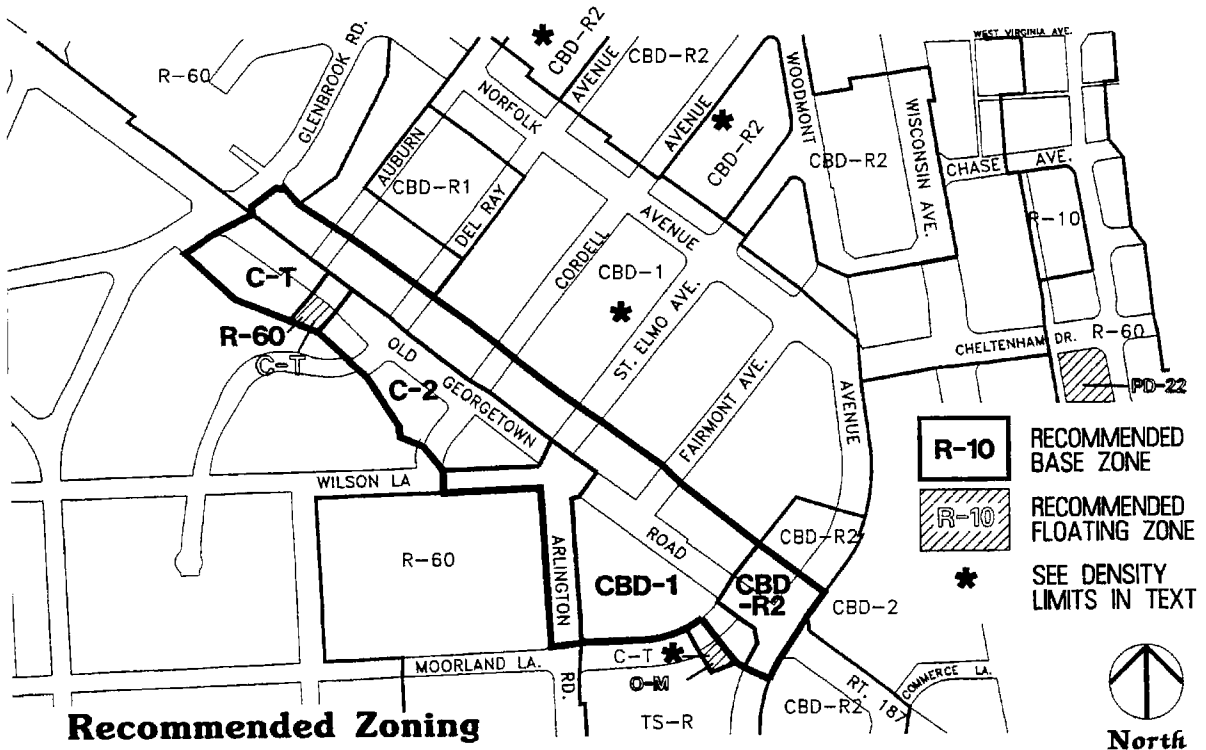
In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, new buildings should be placed to locate front entrances, store windows, and activating uses along the corridor. (See Figure 4.18.)

# OLD GEORGETOWN ROAD CORRIDOR

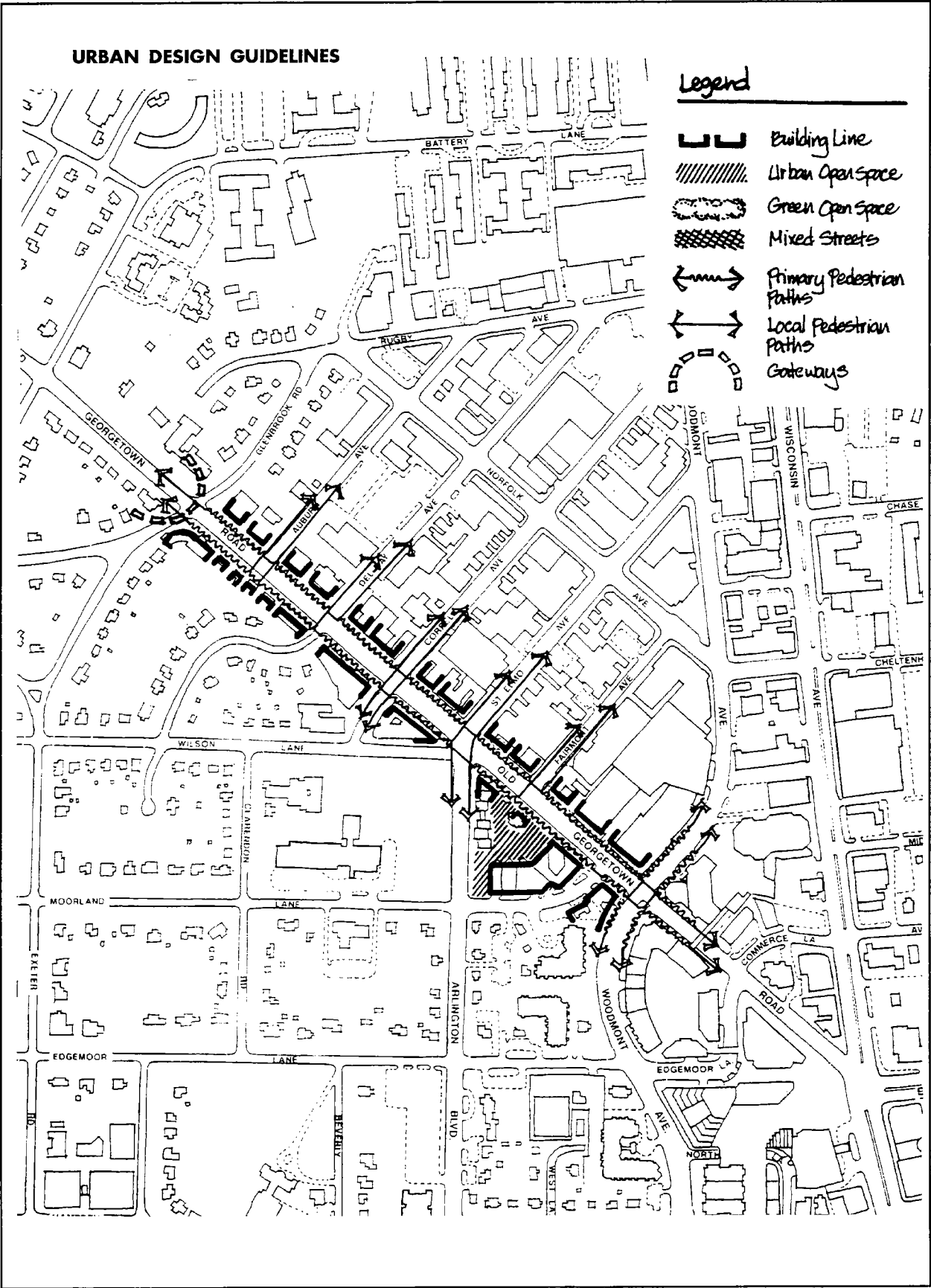
FIGURE 4.17



page  
88









## 4.4 THE BATTERY LANE DISTRICT

### A. DESCRIPTION

The district consists primarily of garden and mid-rise apartments on either side of Battery Lane between Woodmont Avenue and Old Georgetown Road, just south of the National Institutes of Health campus. A two-acre park provides a pedestrian/bicycle link to the Woodmont Triangle and recreation for both residents and employees. The Bethesda Rescue Squad occupies a site on the corner of Old Georgetown Road and Battery Lane on the southwestern edge of the district. The Plan proposes adding the townhouses on North Brook Lane to the Sector Plan area.

Current land use is predominantly multifamily residential, under R-10 zoning. This use provides an appropriate transition between the single-family neighborhood to the west and the Central Business District. There are 875 dwelling units in 12 complexes, which provide one of the major sources of affordable housing in Bethesda. Most of the apartment houses were built in the 1950's and 1960's. Many lack air conditioning, but they are well maintained, rents are reasonable, and vacancy rates are relatively low. Tenants are employed in Bethesda-Chevy Chase, including NIH, or in the District of Columbia. They are predominantly young and single, although there are some families and older people and a high-rise apartment building, built in 1988, is designed for the elderly.

A parcel on the corner of Woodmont Avenue and Battery Lane is appropriate for redevelopment, either in conjunction with apartment development on the adjacent site or as small scale office.

### B. OBJECTIVES

1. Retain most of the existing affordable housing.
2. Allow redevelopment of certain sites to increase the amount of housing near Metro and further the goals of the County's agricultural preservation policy.
3. Provide a northern gateway to the Woodmont Triangle with redevelopment of the parcel on the corner of Woodmont Avenue and Battery Lane.

### C. RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the existing housing in the district should be preserved to ensure a variety of types and to allow retention of lower-cost housing. The Plan endorses application of programs to ensure that housing remains affordable. Such programs may include a County subsidy of renters in scattered market-rate units, or acquisition of apartment properties which may be sold and operated as affordable housing. (See future land use and recommended zoning in Figure 4.19.)

The Plan recommends extending the Sector Plan boundary to include the townhouses on North Brook Lane.

The Plan recommends allowing redevelopment of a site on the north side of Battery Lane (Site 1), the adjacent property on the corner of Woodmont Avenue currently

**FIGURE 4.19**



zoned C-T (Trunnell), and two sites on the south side of Battery Lane just west of Woodmont Avenue (Sites 2 and 3). Redevelopment will allow additional housing units near two Metro stops. The PD Zone has recently been amended to add options of 60, 75, and 100 dwelling units per acre. The PD-75 Zone would be an appropriate zone for Site 1 and the Trunnell property if the two sites assemble. If assemblage does not occur, Site 1 could develop under the PD-75 Zone, and the Trunnell property would retain the existing C-T Zone. (See Battery Lane illustrative in Appendix B.)

An amendment to the multiple family residential zones created three new TDR zones: R-30/TDR, R-20/TDR, and R-10 TDR. On the south side of Battery Lane, the Plan recommends the R-10/TDR Zone at 100 dwelling units to the acre for Sites 2 and 3. A greater density can be accommodated on the south side of the street because higher heights are acceptable toward the rear of the property. Use of the TDR Zone will further the public policy objective of agricultural preservation. Any redevelopment on these sites should be compatible with the possible development of housing and parking on the Garage 35 site.

#### **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

In addition to the objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following general guidelines apply to all properties along Battery Lane which are recommended for rezoning:








1. Maintain a building setback along Battery Lane which is consistent with the setbacks of the existing buildings. (See Figure 4.20.)
2. Orient building entrances, where feasible, toward Battery Lane to activate the street and increase public safety.
3. Provide parking in the rear or below grade to minimize the impact on the pedestrian environment.
4. Achieve a lushly landscaped, garden character along Battery Lane, consistent with the garden character already established in this residential neighborhood.

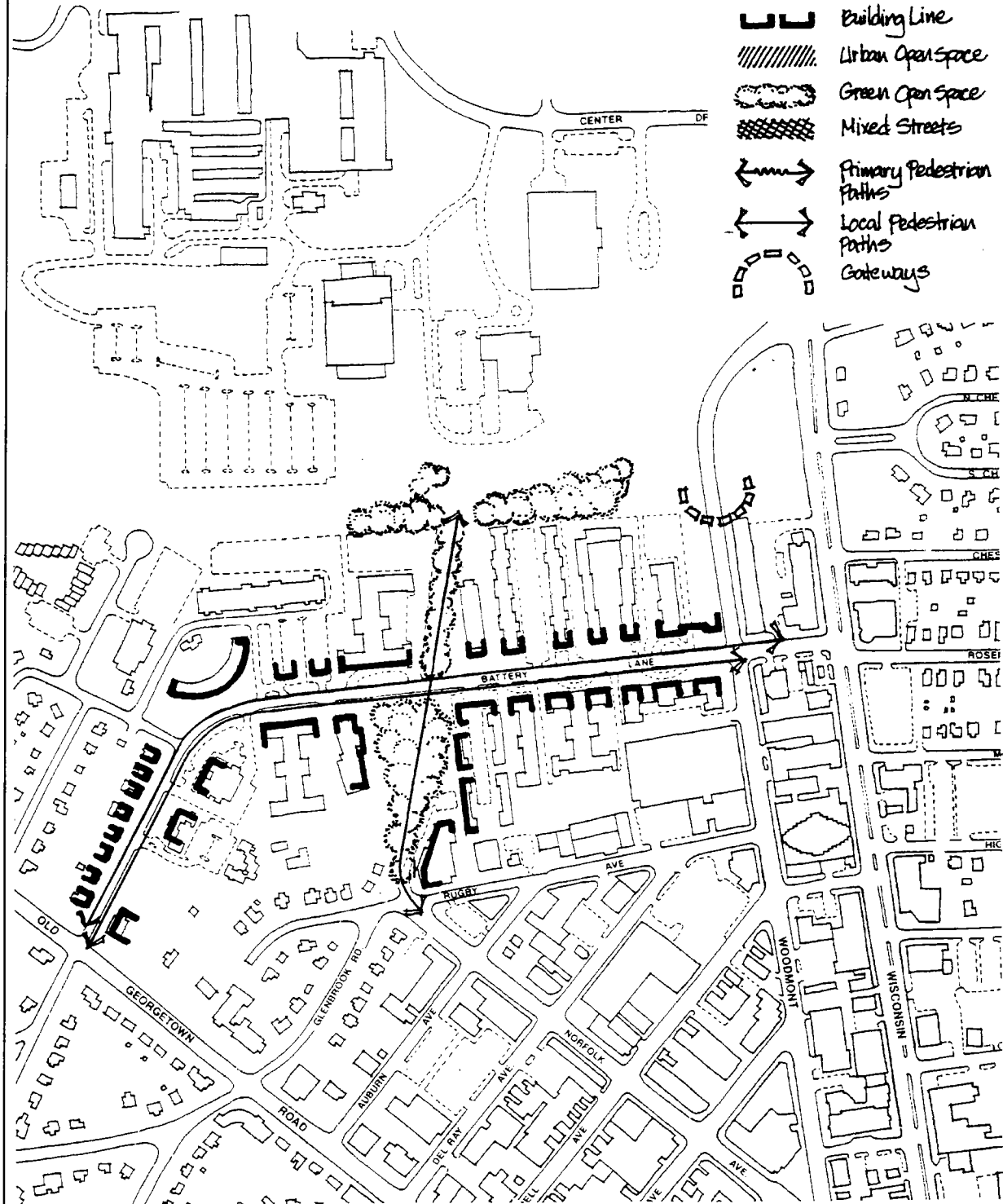
The following specific guidelines apply to Site 1 assembled with the Trunnell property:

1. Arrange the buildings in a manner that acknowledges the site's gateway location for the Woodmont Triangle District and minimizes a "canyon effect" along Woodmont Avenue. This can be achieved by such measures as locating the bulk of the building perpendicular to the street, stepping back the upper floors, or architecturally expressing the two- or three-story base.
2. Create a "gateway" to the Woodmont Triangle by providing flowering trees along the eastern perimeter of the site.
3. Maintain building heights no greater than 65 feet, as shown on Figure 3.2, Building Height Limits.

## URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

### Legend

-  Building Line
-  Urban Open Space
-  Green Open Space
-  Mixed Streets
-  Primary Pedestrian Paths
-  Local Pedestrian Paths
-  Gateways





If Site 1 and Trunnell do not assemble, the guidelines regarding height, building orientation, and stepping would continue to apply to both sites. In addition, the following guidelines would apply to the Trunnell property:

1. Create a gateway to the Woodmont Triangle by providing flowering trees along the eastern perimeter of the site. Coordinate the landscape design with plans for the site across Woodmont Avenue, if it redevelops.
2. Orient the new building toward the intersection of Woodmont Avenue and Battery Lane.
3. Maintain building heights no greater than 35 feet, as required by the zoning ordinance.
4. Provide vehicular access via a driveway from Woodmont Avenue. Parking should be provided in a manner which minimizes the impact on adjacent residential properties.

The following specific guidelines apply to Sites 2 and 3 assembled:

1. Maintain a human scale adjacent to the street by providing a height of no more than 65 feet along Battery Lane, with the building stepping up to a maximum of 110 feet toward the rear of the property to avoid a "canyon effect" along Battery Lane. (See Figure 3.2, Building Height Limits.)
2. Reduce the building mass as seen from the street by locating the bulk of the building toward the rear of the site and providing landscaped courtyards between the building's wings.

## 4.5 THE WOODMONT TRIANGLE DISTRICT

### A. DESCRIPTION

This district serves as an office and retailing center during the day and as a restaurant district during the evenings and weekends. The district is located roughly between Old Georgetown Road and Wisconsin Avenue, south of the Battery Lane District.

The Woodmont Triangle is mainly a commercial area, containing both retail and office uses. The primary types of retail establishments are comparison (24 percent), restaurant (21 percent), cultural (17 percent), and neighborhood (16 percent). Comparison and neighborhood retail are described in Section 2.2 B. Cultural retail includes art galleries, book stores, and hobby shops. Offices occupy both low-scale and second-floor space, as well as a few high-rise buildings. Larger office buildings include the Landow Building and a structure occupied by federal employees. Residential uses are limited. The Triangle Towers high-rise is on Cordell Avenue and another high-rise backs onto Woodmont Avenue. There is a single-family community on Rugby Avenue and Glenbrook Parkway.

The predominance of low buildings on small parcels in the Woodmont Triangle creates a strong contrast with the higher density of the Metro Core District. There are scattered high- and mid-rise buildings and some larger low-density parcels. Parking lots and decks, both public and private, occupy the limited number of otherwise vacant properties. There is a perception that more parking is needed. The area has little open space and few visually distinctive buildings. Lack of distinguishing characteristics among the streets creates orientation problems for visitors.

Despite its lack of visual quality, the district's diverse business activity, low-scale buildings, and low-speed grid street pattern contribute to the area's appeal. In the 1980's, the Woodmont Triangle emerged as a regional restaurant district. The area is also known for specialty shops and services that are popular with residents. Culturally-related businesses, such as art and book stores, represent a growing market.

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

1. Preserve the predominantly low-density and low-scale character of the district.
2. Provide additional housing, particularly in the north end of the district.
3. Support a diverse specialty retail, community-serving retail, and restaurant environment, including sidewalk cafes and dispersed parking facilities.
4. Improve the pedestrian environment with up-graded streetscape, including street trees and green open spaces.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Plan recommends small-scale standard method infill development in the southern portion and housing in the northern portion of the Triangle. For much of the area, assemblage of large parcels is not likely because of the many small properties and separate ownerships. There is potential for apartment buildings on some larger sites. Future land use and recommended zoning are shown in Figure 4.21.

### **Mixed-Use Potential**

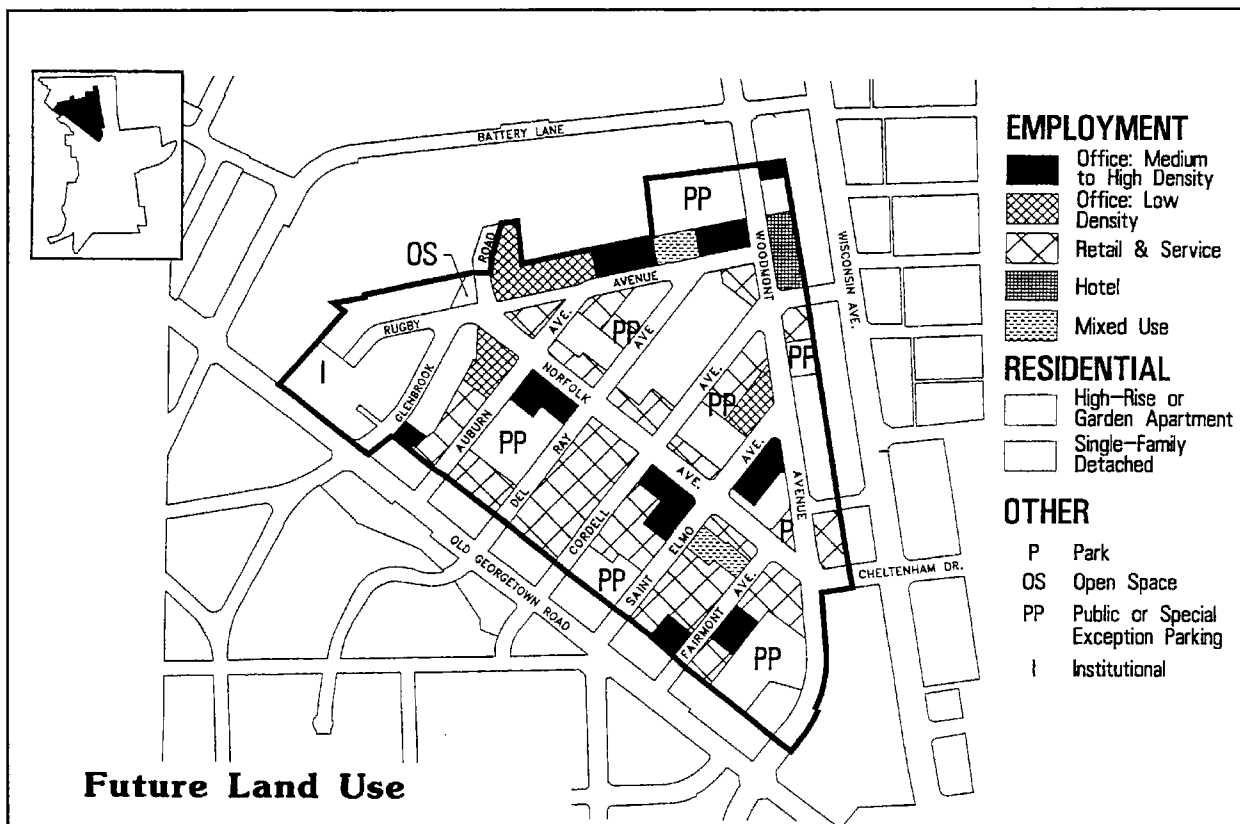
The CBD-1 Zone is recommended for most properties along Auburn, Rugby, and Woodmont Avenues. The Plan recommends that optional method projects be allowed only if residential use is included. The CBD-1 Zone allows mixed-use development to 3 FAR, with a low residential floor area and a high commercial floor area. Although this creates an economic incentive to provide more housing, properties in this district are generally too small to have redevelopment potential.

For the section along Norfolk Avenue and southeast of Del Ray Avenue, the Plan recommends the CBD-1 Zone, limited to standard method development. This is the heart of the active restaurant/retail area, and it should retain a low-density, small-scale character.

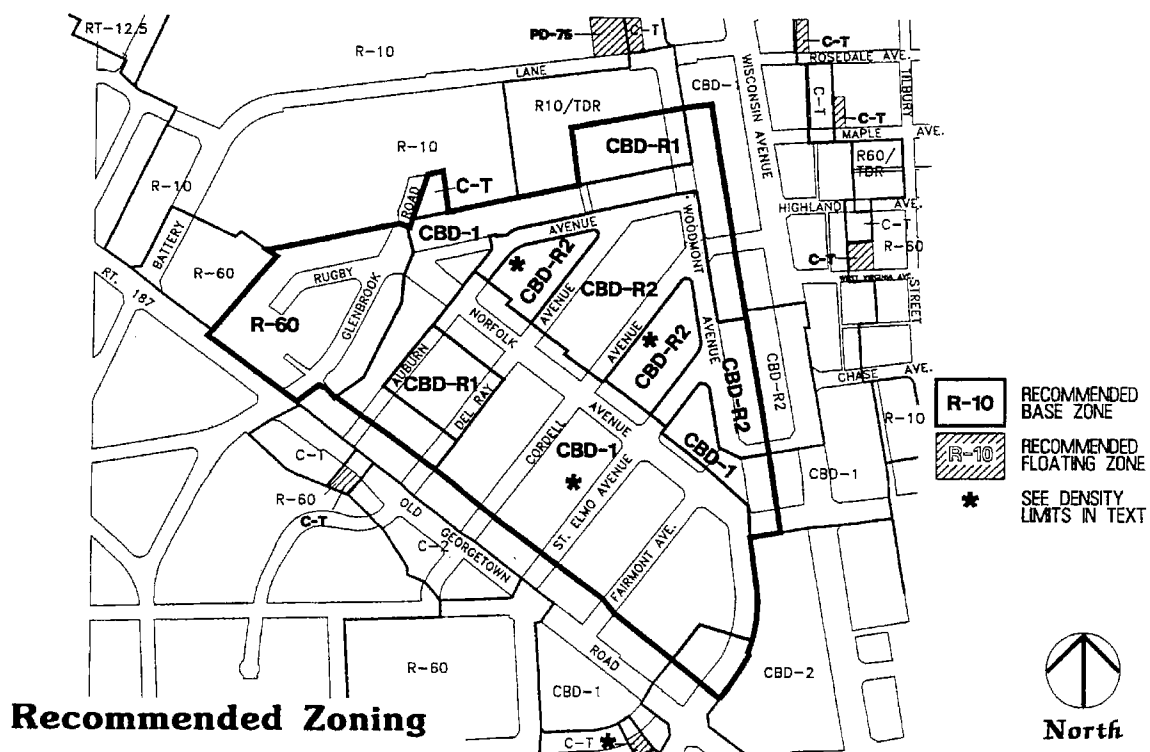
Many buildings in the Woodmont Triangle were built prior to the 1 FAR density limit imposed in the CBD-1 Zone by the 1976 Sector Plan. Many of these buildings could become more attractive with facade improvements and small expansions of public waiting areas. The Sector Plan supports very small additions to floor area to make existing buildings more useful and attractive.

# WOODMONT TRIANGLE DISTRICT

FIGURE 4.21



page  
96





The CBD-1 Zone allows the addition of up to 1 FAR for residential use. The Plan assumes that retail would be provided on the ground floor with residences above. Such residential uses could be provided at many locations, since small lots occur throughout the Woodmont Triangle. The expansion of community-serving retail, possibly including a grocery store, would complement new residential development.

### **Housing Potential**

The Plan recommends the CBD-R2 Zone at several locations in the Woodmont Triangle District. The zone allows predominately residential projects of up to 5 FAR. Standard method projects of up to 1 FAR are allowed, with permitted uses that are similar to the CBD-1 Zone. The new CBD-R2 Zone is described in Section 10.1.

The Plan recommends the CBD-R2 Zone for a property at the northwest corner of Woodmont Avenue and Old Georgetown Road, the Woodmont Corner building. The site is across from the Bethesda Place mixed-use project and is suitable for high-rise residential use with ground floor retail. The CBD-R2 Zone is recommended for a second area, north of Fairmont Avenue. The area contains the existing Fairmont Plaza and there is potential for housing on the Brown property, located at mid-block. (See Site 15 illustrative in Appendix B.)

For a three-block area north of Norfolk Avenue, south of Rugby Avenue, and west of Woodmont Avenue the Plan recommends the CBD-R2 Zone. The area has potential for large-scale optional method projects. The most likely project would be between Del Ray and Cordell Avenues on the Wohlfarth Property. (See Site 11, 11a, 11b illustrative in Appendix B.) Other projects are possible if small properties are assembled. Zoning the three-block area CBD-R2 provides a more uniform zoning map and allows flexibility for private initiative and property assembly.

The Plan supports 5 FAR and a 110-foot height limit on the block between Del Ray and Cordell Avenues. Other CBD-R2 properties in the three-block area would be limited to 3 FAR and would step down in height from 110 to 90 feet to provide lower scale development.

The Plan recommends the CBD-R1 Zone and mixed-income housing on two public properties. These sites are among the best locations in the Sector Plan area for additional housing. The CBD-R1 Zone ensures that new development will be residential, with some ground floor retail. Public Parking Garage 35 is on a 1.6-acre parcel west of Woodmont Avenue and south of Battery Lane. (See Site 5 illustrative in Appendix B.) Housing should be provided when the existing garage needs to be replaced. Development of a joint parking/housing project is unlikely to occur until there is a need to expand or demolish the garage to meet the parking needs of the area. Several small private properties on Rugby Avenue, zoned CBD-1, have the potential of being assembled with the parking garage for an optional method project. A height limit of 90 feet is recommended for this site.

Public Parking Lot 36 is on a 0.8-acre property between Del Ray and Auburn Avenues. (See Site 12 illustrative in Appendix B.) Housing should be provided when a new parking



structure is built. The County crisis center should be retained or relocated. A height limit of 65 feet is recommended. The site contains the former B-CC Rescue Squad structure, which has potential value for a variety of public uses. If the existing County crisis center is relocated, other possible uses could include a teen facility.

The Plan encourages the conversion of older office buildings in the Woodmont Triangle and elsewhere in the Sector Plan area to housing. The Plan recommends that amendments to the zoning ordinance be prepared for this purpose.

In the area along Rugby Avenue and Glenbrook Road, the Plan recommends retaining the existing R-60 Zone to preserve the affordable single-family detached houses.

The Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church property should be rezoned R-60 from the current R-H zoning. Development of higher density housing on the site would be difficult because structured parking would be required to accommodate both housing and church activities.

### **Other Improvements**

Additional public parking in multiple levels will be needed to serve retail businesses and employment in the area. Underground parking should be combined with mixed-income housing on Lot 36 and a rebuilt Garage 35, as discussed above.

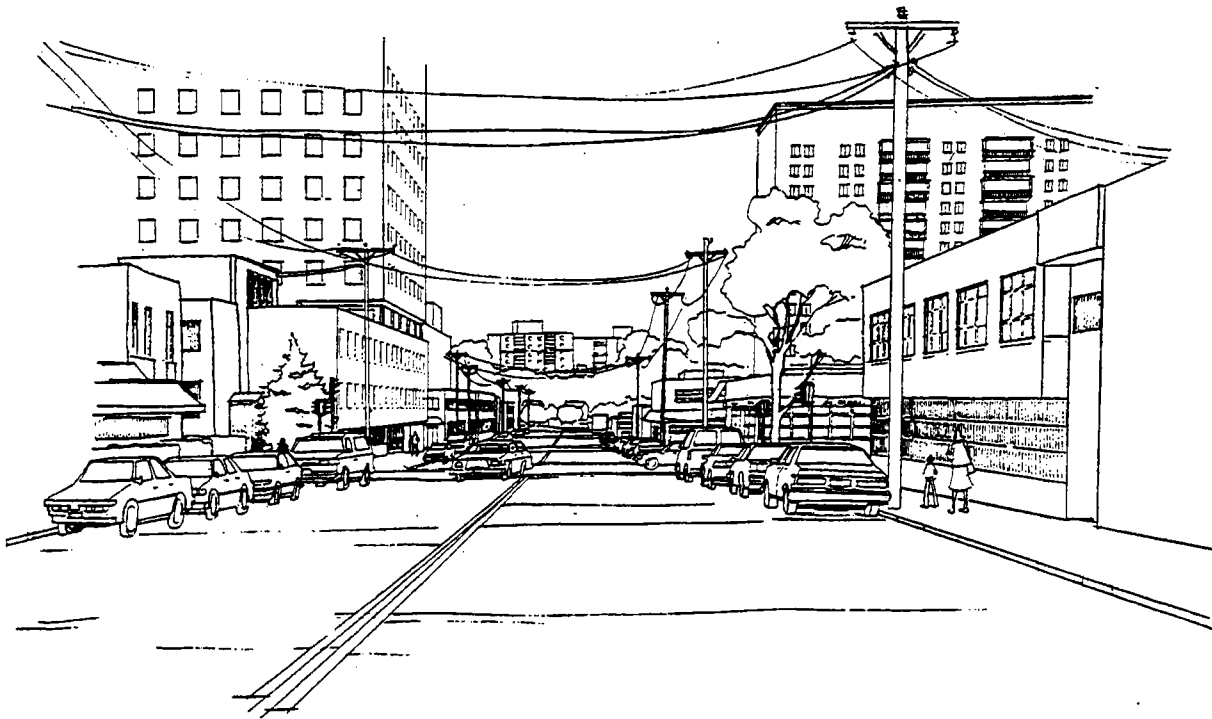
The Plan recommends that Norfolk Avenue be designed as a tree-lined "Main Street." This pedestrian link could result in widened sidewalks or construction of a central median. The enhanced boulevard would create a major new identity for the Woodmont Triangle and would significantly improve orientation for visitors to the district. (See Chapter 6, Streetscape Plan.) Norfolk Avenue is illustrated in Figure 4.22.

Another recommended improvement to the Triangle's pedestrian environment is to narrow Fairmont Avenue and allow parking on both sides, creating a short, Mixed Street accessible to slow moving vehicles and easily crossed by pedestrians. Businesses and restaurants would benefit from the special character of the street and expanded sidewalks. The final design would be prepared cooperatively with affected property owners. A Mixed Street could be achieved in a variety of ways, including a possible one-way street. Fairmont Avenue is illustrated in Figure 4.23. Other pedestrian destinations, located at either end of Fairmont Avenue, are a botanical garden at Chevy Chase Garden Plaza and the expanded War Memorial park. The Mixed Street recommendation is discussed in the Streetscape Plan. Implementation of the Bicycle Friendly Area recommendations in the Bicycle Network Plan (see Section 5.5) will also enhance both the pedestrian and cyclist environments in the Triangle.

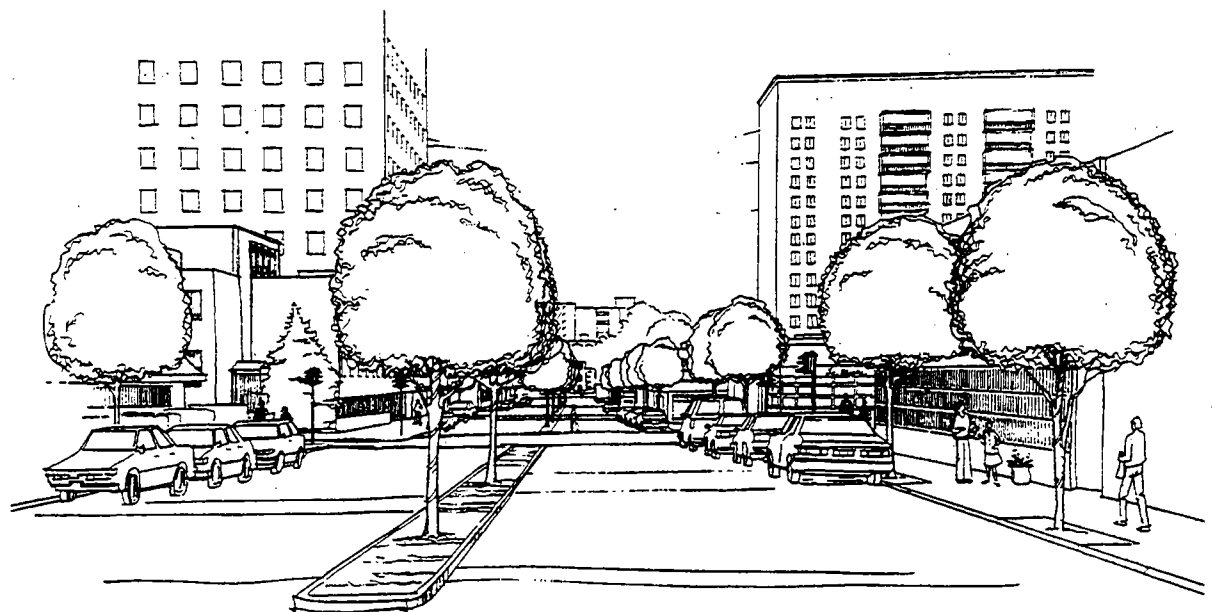
## **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply in the Woodmont Triangle District (see Figure 4.24):

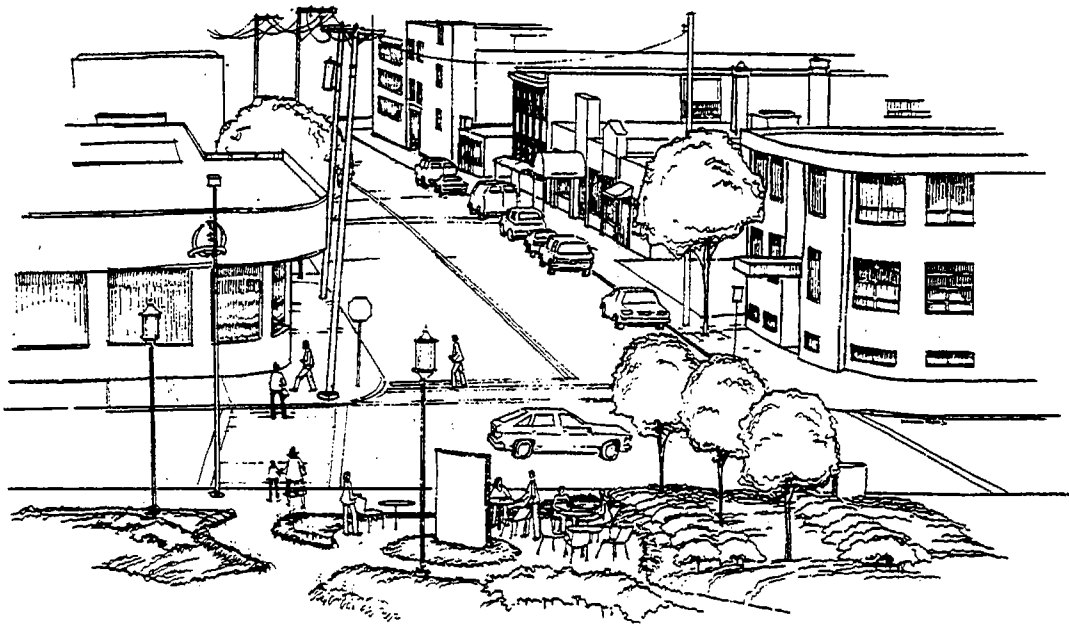
1. Maintain the low-rise, human scale of the area by establishing a height limit of 50 feet or 4 stories, except where housing is recommended. A low-rise, high-density



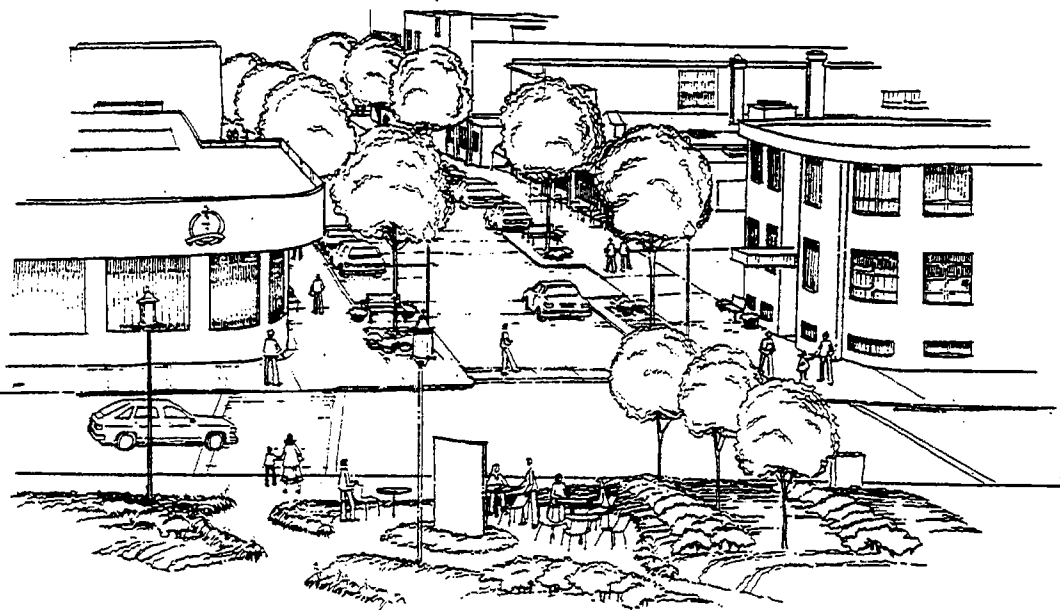
"Before", Existing View of Undivided Norfolk Avenue



"After", Proposed Landscaped Island and Streetscape










"Before", Existing View of Fairmont Avenue Looking South

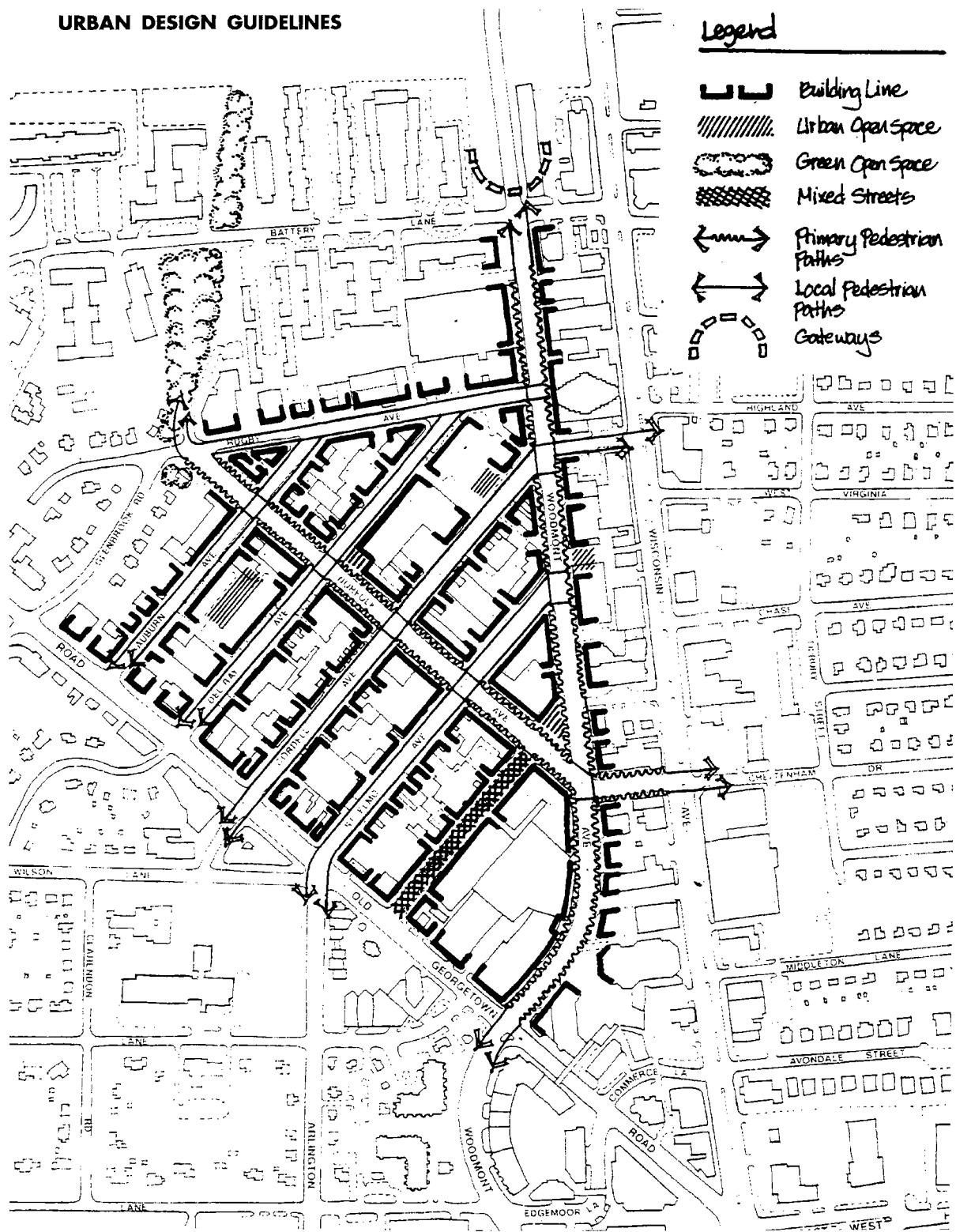


"After", Proposed Mixed Street Looking South

## URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

### Legend

-  Building Line
-  Urban Open Space
-  Green Open Space
-  Mixed Streets
-  Primary Pedestrian Paths
-  Local Pedestrian Paths
-  Gateways





urban character is preferred for housing sites in this area. Figure 3.2, Building Height Limits, provides recommended maximum heights for areas with potential for new housing. These heights were determined after careful evaluation of each area. Optional method housing development must respect the height limits.

2. Provide sufficient building setbacks to adequately accommodate pedestrians and streetscape improvements. Where sidewalk cafes are appropriate, additional building setbacks may be required to accommodate pedestrian space plus outdoor seating.
3. Achieve compatibility with adjacent properties through the use of architectural facade treatments, consistent building setbacks, and a continuation of storefront retail or restaurant space.
4. Improve pedestrian access across the intersection of Rugby and Norfolk Avenues by narrowing the intersection. Add a landscaped open space to improve access and visibility to the Battery Lane Urban Park.
5. For all housing sites within the Woodmont Triangle, the following specific guidelines apply, in addition to the preceding list:
  - a. Maintain a desirable street width to building height ratio in the range of a 1:1 (height to width) and avoid a “canyon effect” along streets for buildings over six stories in height. This can be accomplished by such measures as locating the bulk of the building perpendicular to the street or stepping back the upper floors of a building over six stories to express a two- or three-story base.
  - b. Provide adequate sunlight for mid-block courtyards and recreation areas by such measures as orienting taller buildings to the north side of such spaces or in a north-south alignment.
  - c. Achieve an adequate sense of privacy and light for residential units above 4 stories by such measures as maintaining a minimum of 50 feet from adjacent tall buildings.
  - d. Encourage mid-block pedestrian access, where feasible, to facilitate pedestrian circulation.

## **4.6 THE WISCONSIN NORTH CORRIDOR**

### **A. DESCRIPTION**

The Wisconsin North Corridor serves as a major entryway and commercial area for the Bethesda CBD. The corridor extends from north of Chestnut Street to Cheltenham Drive and includes buildings that generally face onto Wisconsin Avenue. Immediately to the east

of the corridor is the East Bethesda Transition Area, the Sector Plan boundary, and the East Bethesda community of single-family detached houses.

The Wisconsin North Corridor contains both retail and office uses. The primary types of retail establishments are comparison (29 percent), restaurant (22 percent), and neighborhood (13 percent). Comparison and neighborhood retail are described in Section 2.2 B. There are several hotels, including a Holiday Inn and a Ramada Inn.

The corridor contains mid- to high-rise buildings along the west side and low-rise buildings along the east side. Some of the older one- and two-floor commercial buildings, including several properties on the east side, appear ready for redevelopment. Such redevelopment provides an opportunity to create a more attractive entry to Bethesda by addressing the lack of street trees, the overhead utility wires, and the scattered attention to building facades. Redevelopment on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue will also have an impact on the East Bethesda neighborhood. A Wisconsin to Tilbury Special Study analyzed the relationship between Wisconsin Avenue development and neighborhood preservation. (See Appendix C.)

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

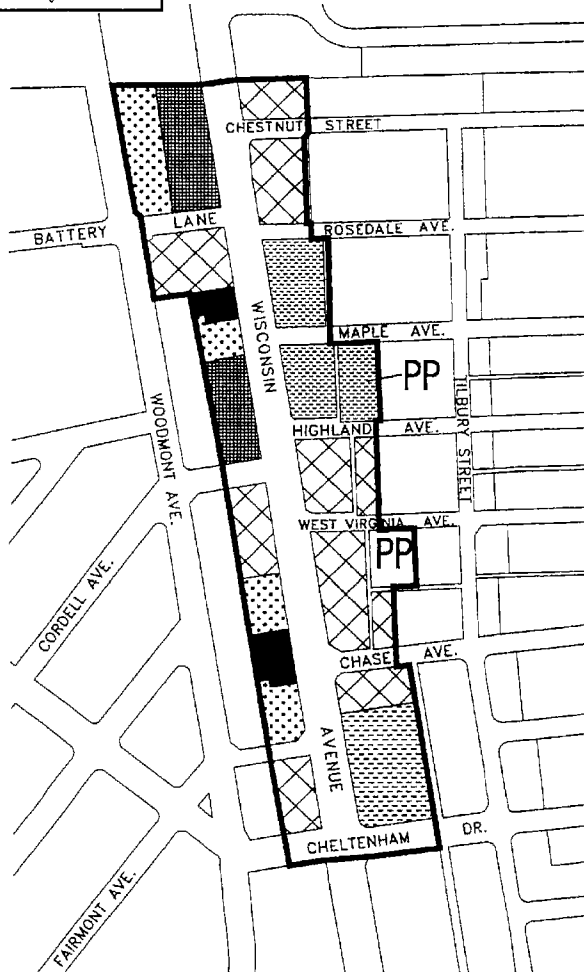
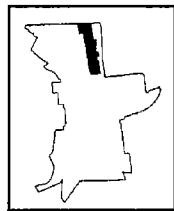
1. Create a high-quality entry into Bethesda by redevelopment, improved streetscape, and facade improvements.
2. Provide additional housing, particularly along the east side of the corridor, to encourage uses that are compatible with nearby residential areas.
3. Support a diverse specialty retail, community-serving retail, and restaurant environment, including provision of adequate short-term parking facilities.
4. Consider the impact on East Bethesda when redeveloping sites along the east side of Wisconsin Avenue.

page  
**103**

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Plan recommends confirmation of the existing CBD-1 Zone in all but two segments of the corridor. (See Figure 4.25.) The only optional method development allowed would be mixed-use projects containing a residential component. The CBD-1 Zone allows mixed-use development to 3 FAR. A low residential floor area and a high commercial floor area offer an economic incentive to provide more housing. On the west side of Wisconsin Avenue, at Battery Lane, housing could be added on the Ramada Inn property. (See Appendix B, Site 1 illustrative.) On the east side of Wisconsin Avenue, mixed-use projects would be required to have a minimum of 67 percent residential use. The expansion of community-serving retail, possibly including a grocery store, would complement new residential development. Ground floor retail should be provided in mixed-use projects on both sides of Wisconsin Avenue.

The Plan allows continued small-scale, standard method infill commercial development on CBD-1 sites that are too small for optional method development. The CBD-1 Zone allows the addition of a further 1 FAR for residential use. The Plan allows retail uses on the ground floor of mixed-use projects.



### Future Land Use

#### EMPLOYMENT

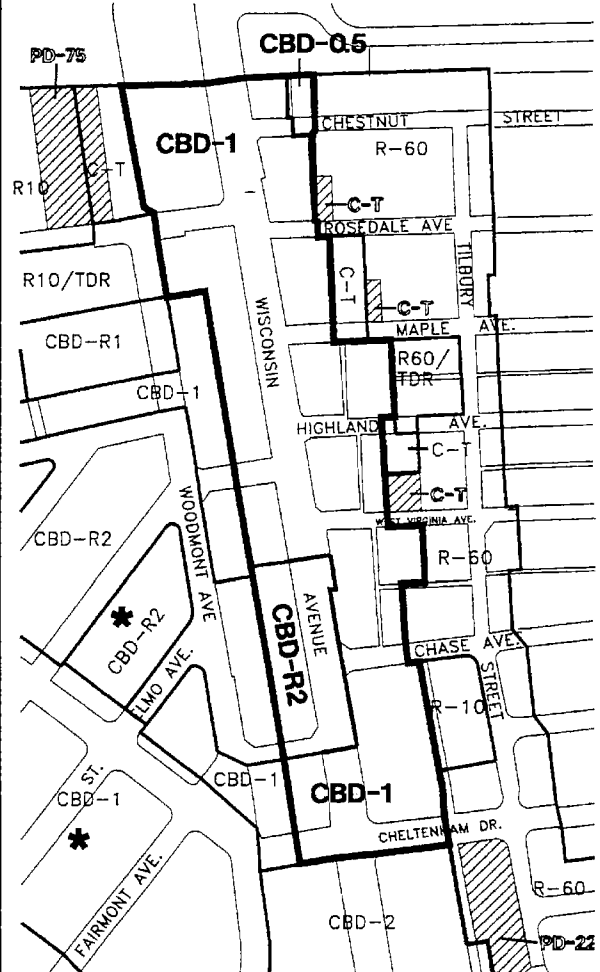
- Office: Medium to High Density
- Office: Low Density
- Retail & Service
- Hotel
- Mixed Use

#### RESIDENTIAL

- High-Rise or Garden Apartment

#### OTHER

- PP Public or Special Exception Parking



### Recommended Zoning



RECOMMENDED  
BASE ZONE



RECOMMENDED  
FLOATING ZONE



SEE DENSITY  
LIMITS IN TEXT



North



For the one-half block north of Fairmont Avenue, on the west side of Wisconsin Avenue, the Plan recommends CBD-R2 at the full 5 FAR for optional method and a maximum height of 122 feet. (See Figure 3.2, Building Height Limits.)

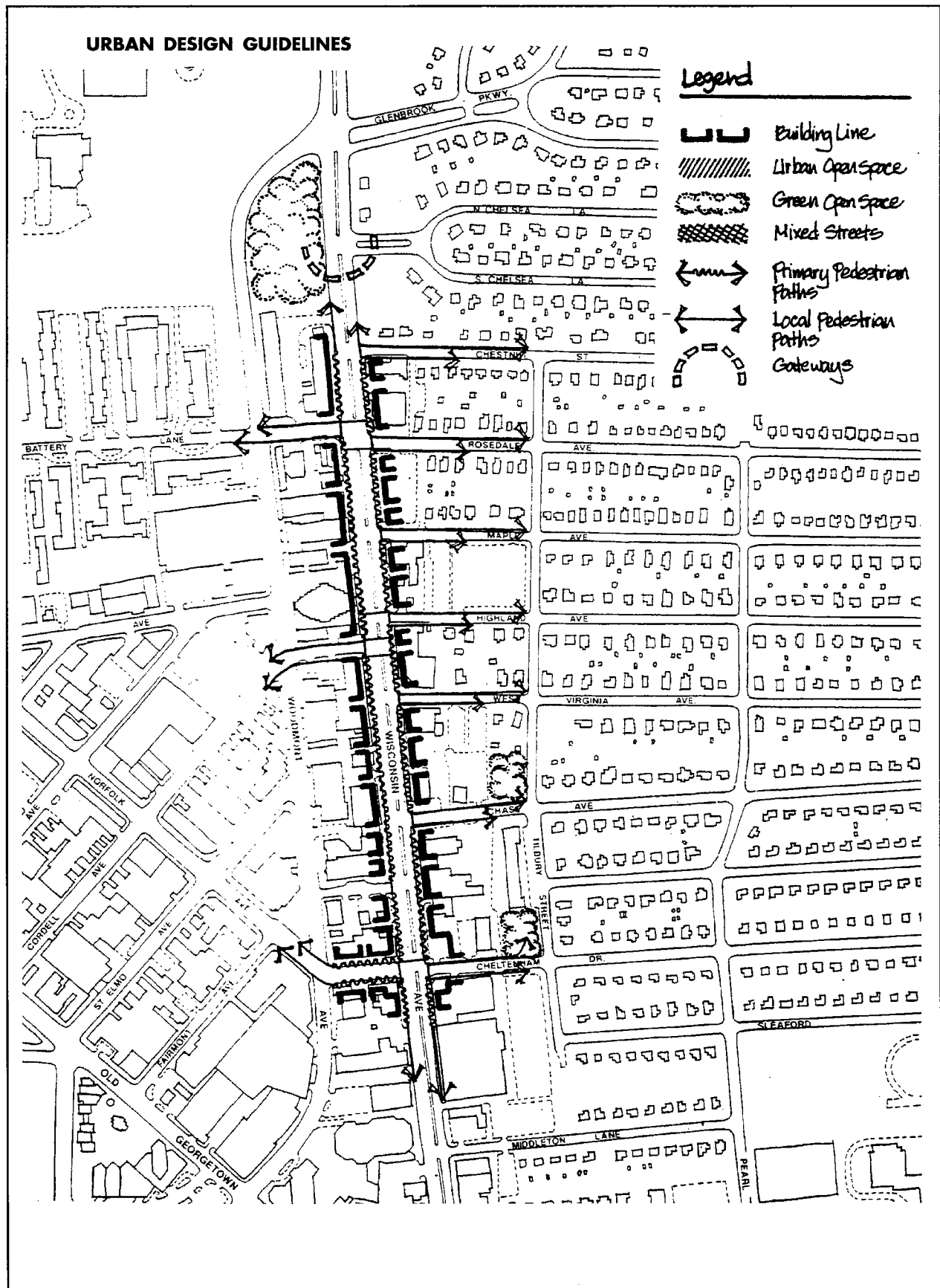
On the east side of Wisconsin Avenue, at the northern end of the corridor, the Plan seeks to retain the option of commercial uses for three small properties currently used for office or retail while ensuring a scale that is compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhood to the east. The Plan recommends urban design guidelines for redevelopment under the existing CBD-1 Zone of the two lots on the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Chestnut Street. Any subdivision plan should comply with these guidelines. The Plan recommends the CBD 0.5 Zone for the third lot east of Wisconsin Avenue to retain the existing retail use and scale and create a compatible transition with the adjacent house.

The Plan recommends creation of landscaped “gateway” entries at several locations. One northern gateway to Bethesda is established by the park-like area owned by the National Institutes of Health, beyond the Sector Plan boundary. A gateway to the Metro Core is recommended at Cheltenham Street (shown in Figure 4.7). The intersection can become both a transition to the higher densities of the Metro Core and a linkage to the East Bethesda neighborhood.

#### **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply in the Wisconsin North Corridor (see Figure 4.26):

1. Orient new development toward Wisconsin Avenue, with major building entrances and retail uses located at street level. Building setbacks should continue to be 20 feet from the street curb, as recommended in the Metro Core.
2. Allow building heights on the west side up to 122 feet where shown on Figure 3.2, Building Height Limits, and on the east side up to 75 feet, stepping down to 60 feet to achieve a compatible transition with adjacent residential properties.
3. Consider views from the residential neighborhood in the design of new buildings.
4. Locate vehicular access and service areas along the east side of Wisconsin Avenue in the rear of the site, along upgraded alleys, and provide screening from nearby residential properties.
5. Provide continuous sidewalks and streetscape improvements along all street frontages to improve pedestrian access to the neighborhood.
6. Locate open space associated with new development in a manner that creates a link with existing open spaces or provides a transition to the residential neighborhood to the east. A possible location for additional open space may



be the northeast corner of Cheltenham Drive and Wisconsin Avenue to help connect the open space of the Woodmont Triangle with that of Tilbury Street.

7. Create a focal point for the existing view looking east from St. Elmo Avenue when redeveloping properties on the west side of Wisconsin Avenue directly across from St. Elmo Avenue.

The following guidelines apply to any redevelopment of the two lots on the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Chestnut Street:

1. Set the building back 20 feet from the Wisconsin Avenue street curb. The setback from Chestnut Street should conform to that of the adjacent houses.
2. Provide 35-foot maximum building heights, as required in the zoning ordinance.
3. Design the building with a residential image, including roof treatment, window scale and placement, and entrances to achieve compatibility with the neighborhood.
4. Provide landscape features along Wisconsin Avenue that enhance the entry to Bethesda. Along Chestnut Street, the landscape design and plant material should create a residential character.
5. Provide streetscape improvements in accordance with the streetscape plan.
6. Locate off-street parking either beneath the building or to the rear, screened from Wisconsin Avenue, Chestnut Street, and the residential area to the northwest. Retain the existing common access drive if possible.

## **4.7 THE EAST BETHESDA TRANSITION AREA**

### **A. DESCRIPTION**

This area forms a transition between the single-family houses of East Bethesda and the Central Business District. It is characterized by low-density, primarily residential development, green open spaces, and paved parking lots screened with landscaping.

The area is only half a block from the commercial uses within the CBD on Wisconsin Avenue, and redevelopment of Wisconsin Avenue North sites will have an impact on the transition area and the East Bethesda neighborhood. A Wisconsin to Tilbury Special Study analyzed the relationship between these areas. (See Appendix C.)

The western edge of the transition area is the CBD line. The existing Sector Plan boundary currently defines the district on the north and east. Along the southern edge, the area includes the playing fields and the bulk of the buildings of Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. The Plan proposes changing the Sector Plan boundary. (See Figure 2.3 for the existing Sector Plan boundary and proposed boundary changes.)



From Chestnut Street to Sleaford Road, the transition area comprises single-family houses in both residential and special exception or Commercial Transition (C-T) use, a row of 30 garden apartments, 2 small public parks, Public Parking Lot 25, and a privately owned vacant lot used for commercial parking. The garden apartments on Tilbury Street predated the 1976 Sector Plan, and the two parks, recommended by the 1976 Plan, are stable transition land uses. Lot 25, though it may ultimately be needed for a parking structure, is screened by a mature evergreen hedge and currently serves as an effective buffer.

The private parking lot south of Cheltenham, however, does not provide a stable land use. It is unsightly, does not screen adjacent commercial uses adequately, and is a source of neighborhood concern. Though eligible to apply for special exception parking for commercial use under the current R-60 zoning, no application has been filed. The analysis of parking needs (Section 5.6) shows that this lot may be needed by the Parking District in the future. Owned by the Beta Corporation, which owns the Bethesda Theatre Cafe, the lot is discussed in the Metro Core District with the theater and Public Parking Lot 42.

The other area where there has been question about long-term stability is the section of single-family houses between Chestnut Street and West Virginia Avenues. The 1976 Sector Plan confirmed the R-60 Zone. The issue has been whether these structures are still viable and likely to be well maintained as single-family detached houses in a safe and relatively quiet neighborhood; comparable to, or part of, the East Bethesda neighborhood.

There is some evidence that houses have been poorly maintained and used for group rental housing, in anticipation of rezoning for higher density redevelopment near the CBD. Adjacent commercial uses and vehicles reportedly disturb residents at night, and there is a perception of increased crime. On the other hand, the properties provide a source of attractive, moderately priced houses and some have been purchased recently for single-family use. There has also been an organized neighborhood effort to ensure zoning and building code enforcement. The Special Study examined two approaches to address the concerns in this area. (See Appendix C.)

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

1. Ensure the stability of the land uses in the transition area to preserve East Bethesda as a single-family residential neighborhood.
2. Provide parking to serve the needs of the adjacent commercial establishments. Keep overflow parking and cut-through traffic from having an undesirable impact on the East Bethesda neighborhood.
3. Provide low-density housing.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Plan recommends that a new Sector Plan boundary be established that excludes the single-family detached properties east of Tilbury Street, north of Sleaford Road, and east of Chelton Road from the Sector Plan area. The new boundary would extend along the

east side of the Tilbury Street right-of-way from Chestnut Street to Sleaford Road, then along the north side of the Sleaford Road right-of-way to Chelton Road, proceeding along the east side of Chelton Road to within one lot width of East-West Highway. (See Figures 2.3, 4.27, and 4.28.)

The Plan recommends confirming the R-60 zoning on the properties east of Tilbury Street, north of Sleaford Road, and east of Chelton Road. Once these houses are incorporated into the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area, B-CC guidelines limiting special exception activities will apply. The Plan also recommends special exception guidelines within the transition area. (See Section 3.1 B, Housing and Neighborhoods.)

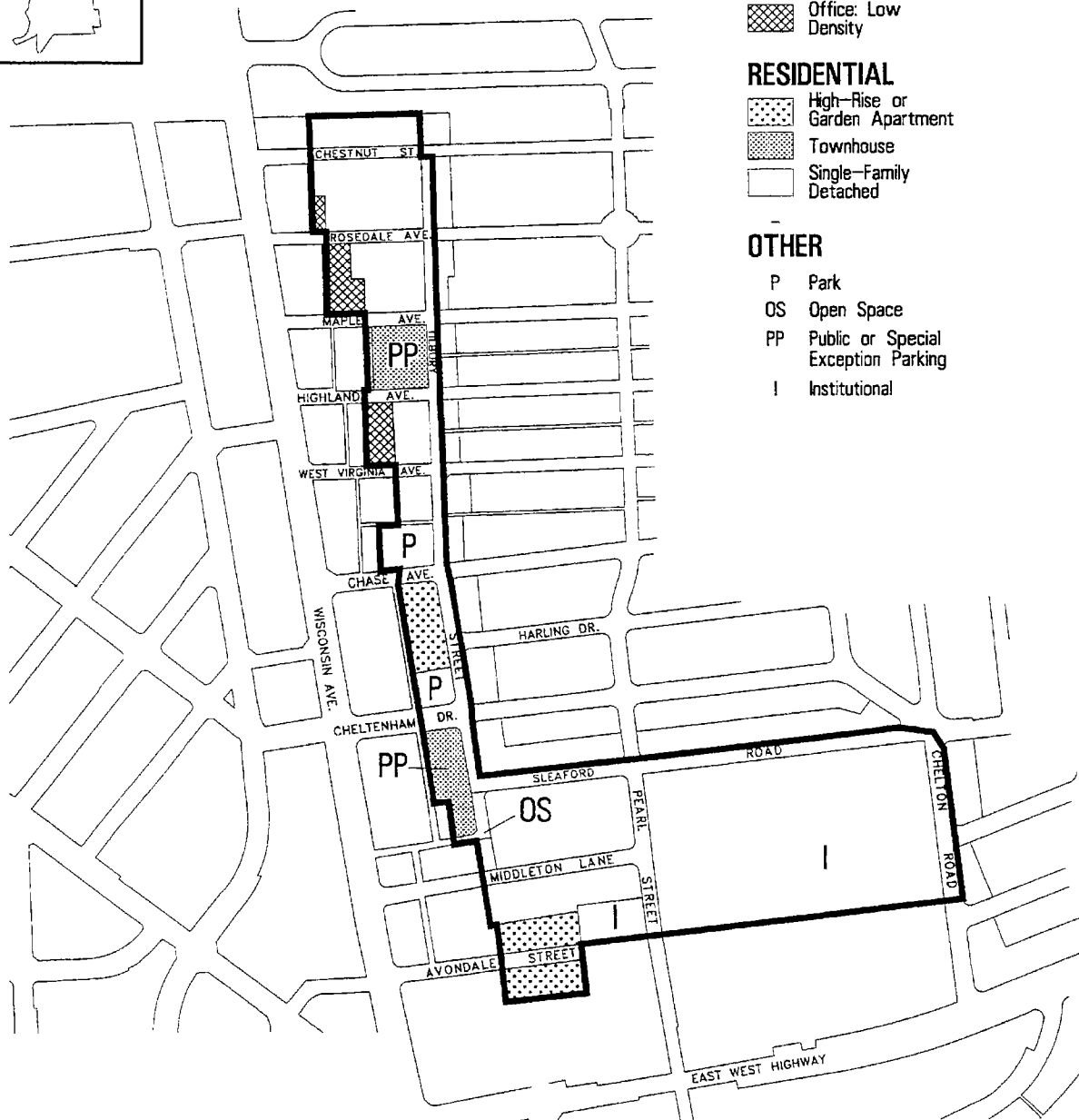
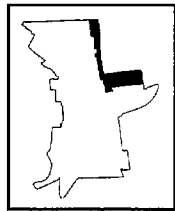
For the private parking lot south of Cheltenham Drive behind the Bethesda Theatre Cafe, the Plan recommends townhouses as the appropriate land use. The existing R-60 zoning is recommended as the base zone, with an option to develop townhouses under the floating PD-22 Zone. A special exception for parking would not be inconsistent with Sector Plan objectives if redevelopment does not occur. (See discussion on Bethesda Theatre Cafe, Beta Lot, and Lot 42 in Section 4.1.C.7, Metro Core District.)

The Plan recommendations for the area between Chestnut Street and West Virginia Avenue are similar to those in the 1976 Sector Plan. The existing R-60 single-family detached zoning should be retained on most properties except for C-T zoning on a narrow band of selected lots along the CBD line. A primary Plan objective for the transition area is to ensure stable land uses. The trend toward home ownership and neighborhood efforts to pursue vigorous enforcement of building codes and special exception guidelines are signs of such stability.

page  
109

The Plan recommends confirming existing C-T zoning between Rosedale and Maple Avenues and on the south side of Highland Avenue. The Plan also retains the 1976 Plan recommendation for R-60 (C-T) zoning for Lots 18, 19, and 20 (block 5) on the north side of West Virginia Avenue. Applications for C-T zoning on these lots will be considered to be in accordance with the Sector Plan for individual parcels. Where an existing structure is on more than one lot or where a structure previously existed on two lots as on Lots 19 and 20 (block 5), these lots should be considered a single lot. Otherwise, if assembly should take place, C-T zoning would not be considered favorably. Any additions or expansions of existing structures or any new construction should be residential in scale and character to achieve compatibility with the adjacent single-family houses. (See numbered lots in Figure C.7.)

In addition, the Plan recommends designating Lot 16 (block 3) on the north side of Rosedale Avenue and Lot 17 (block 7) on the north side of Maple Avenue as suitable for the C-T Zone to provide a transition between the CBD and the single-family neighborhood. Both lots face entrances to large parking lots. Lot 16 (block 3) is next to an alley used by commercial vehicles and Lot 17 (block 7) shares with the adjacent C-T property a deeded driveway leading to a private parking lot used by two contractors' offices.

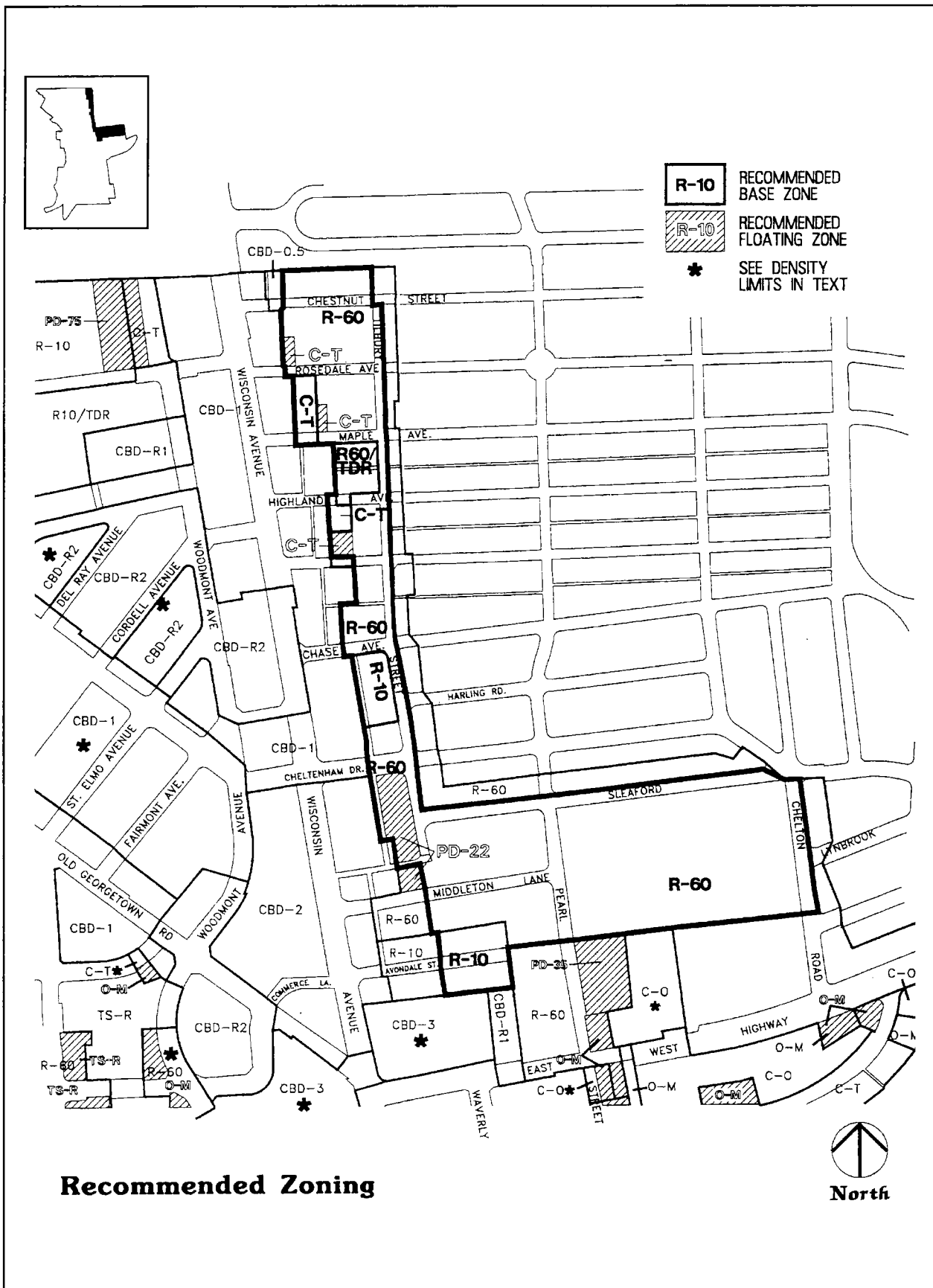


**Future Land Use**



**North**

## EAST BETHESDA TRANSITION AREA

**FIGURE 4.28**



These lots, 16 and 17, are now occupied by single-family houses. They will be permitted to convert to use for medical and other professional offices under the C-T Zone, but as individual lots only. Re-subdivision will not be permitted. If assembly should take place with the lots to the west, C-T zoning would not be appropriate for Lot 17 (block 7). Application for C-T zoning for the lots to the east of the designated lots would also not be considered favorably. Any additions or expansions of the existing structures should retain their residential scale and character.

If there is a need in the future for structured parking on Public Parking Lot 25, between Maple and Highland Avenues, the Plan recommends that a new structure be limited to one story above grade, with the remainder below grade. Landscape screening and sensitive lighting would be required and planning liaison with the neighborhood should occur. Townhouses could also be provided on this site under the recommended R-60/TDR Zone, allowing a density of up to 15 dwelling units per acre. Up to 12 units would be possible on the portion of the lot within the East Bethesda Transition Area. The Plan also recommends a mixed-use project containing a residential component for the portion of the lot that is in the CBD, as discussed in the Wisconsin North Corridor section.

The Sector Plan supports cooperative measures between East Bethesda residents and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation to discourage cut-through traffic associated with new development. Traffic control measures may include one-way access patterns or peak period access limits (similar to the Town of Chevy Chase) but should not inhibit access by emergency vehicles. Permanent street closings are not encouraged, though they may be considered where commercial traffic is intrusive. The Plan proposes a study of a morning limitation on use of Pearl Street by vehicles coming from East-West Highway and destined for locations beyond Our Lady of Lourdes Church.

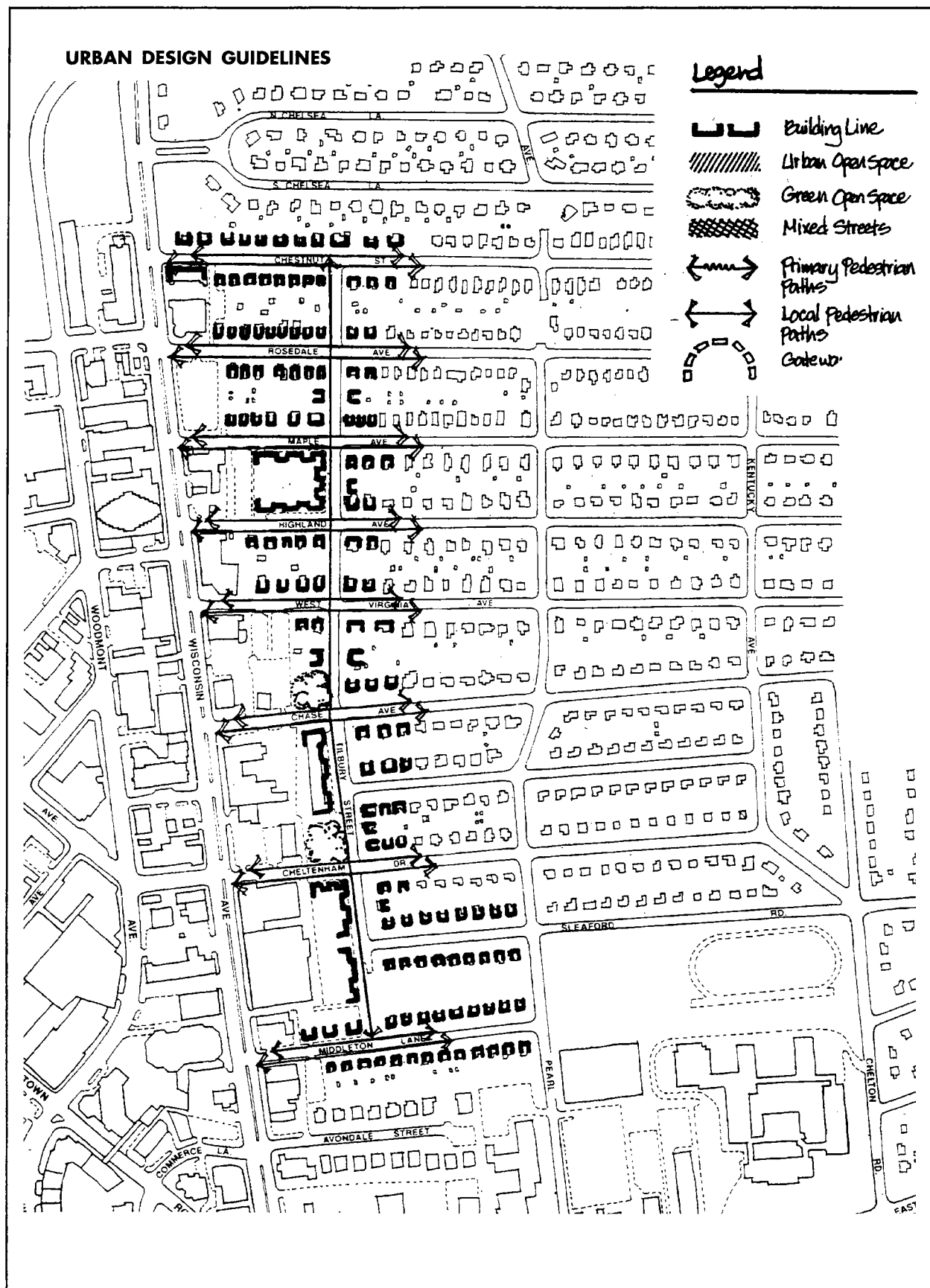
The Plan recommends strengthening the East Bethesda parking permit program to protect residents close to the CBD from spillover parking. All required parking must be provided for new CBD development, either on site or in Bethesda Parking District facilities.

#### **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply if Lot 25 is redeveloped with townhouses or garden apartments (see Figure 4.29):

1. Achieve a townhouse scale and character to provide a compatible transition to single-family residences. Provide screening where appropriate.
2. Vary building roof lines with a combination of two- and three-story building heights, for visual interest.
3. Orient front entrances toward Maple and Highland Avenues. Provide a minimum of 15-foot for building setbacks from the right-of-way along Maple and Highland Avenues. Provide 20-foot minimum building setbacks along Tilbury Street to achieve compatible setbacks with adjacent residences.







4. Separate public from private residential parking, if public parking is provided.
5. Provide sidewalks and streetscape improvements on all bordering streets to improve pedestrian access and create an attractive setting for new development.

## 4.8 THE MONTGOMERY TRIANGLE CORRIDOR

### A. DESCRIPTION

The Montgomery Triangle Corridor serves as the major access to the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan area from the east. The corridor extends along East-West Highway and Montgomery Avenue, from Pearl Street on the west to the bridge over the Georgetown Branch right-of-way on the east. It includes properties north of the Georgetown Branch and East-West Highway.

The Montgomery Triangle contains a mix of office and residential uses, many constructed prior to the 1976 Sector Plan. High-rise buildings facing East-West Highway include two apartment buildings and an office complex. Other uses in the area include Our Lady of Lourdes Church, the front section of Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, and a sports club. Numerous single-family structures and small office buildings are scattered throughout the area.

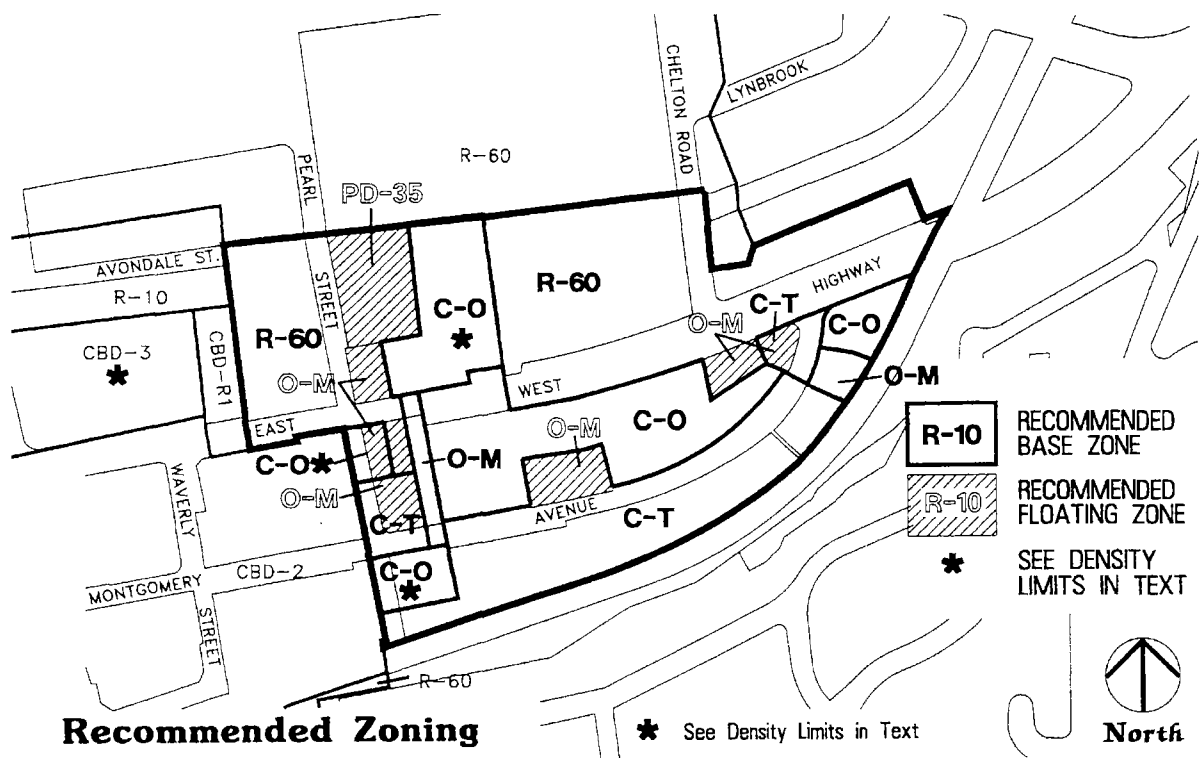
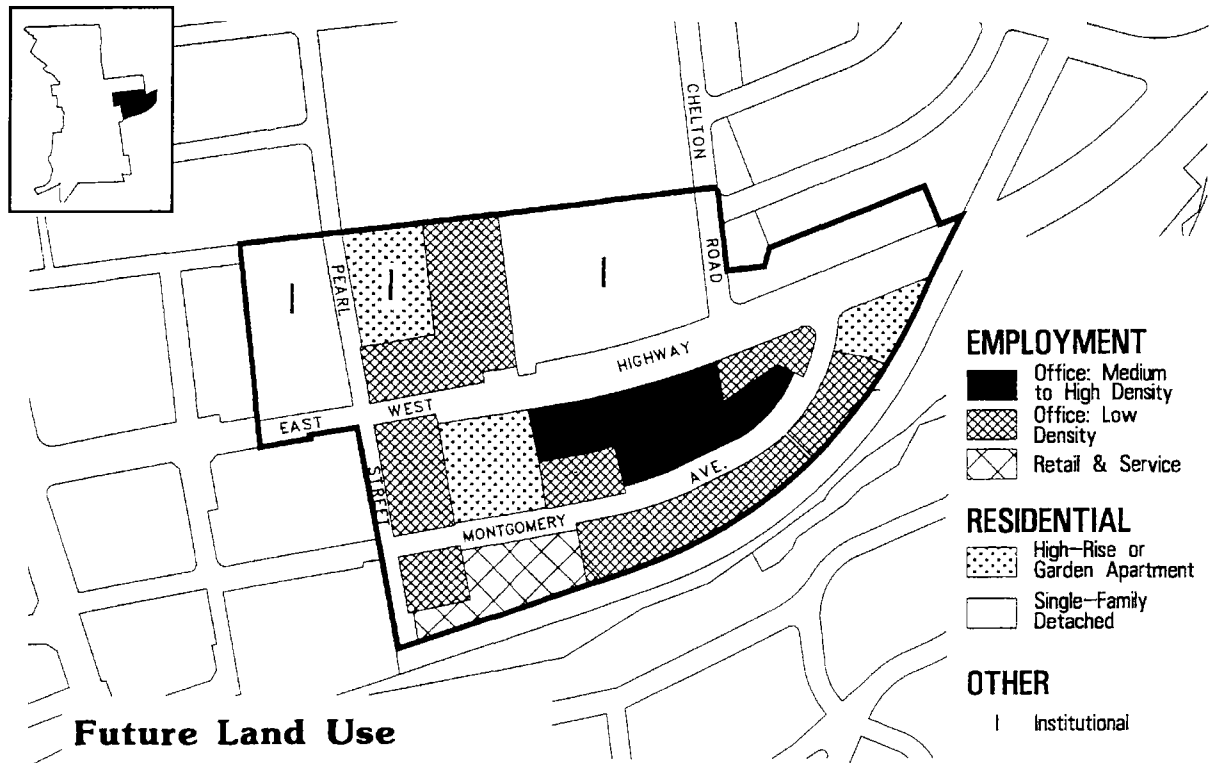
The character of each street in the corridor varies. East-West Highway is primarily highrise and urban on the south, but the character on the north is less clearly defined. Montgomery Avenue contains the rear service entrances to high-rises on the north and a variety of offices in single-family houses on the south. The small offices were viewed in the 1976 Sector Plan as a transition to the community of single-family houses located south of the Georgetown Branch. The attractiveness of this corridor would be improved by additional streetscaping and redevelopment of lower density parcels.

### B. OBJECTIVES

1. Improve the sense of a gateway to Bethesda along East-West Highway and a gateway to the Metro Core District at Pearl Street. Improve the visual quality of the departure along Montgomery Lane.
2. Allow attractive, compatible redevelopment and infill development on properties with low densities.
3. Protect the adjacent single-family neighborhoods from the negative impacts of redevelopment by establishing development and design guidelines.

### C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Plan recommends infill development on the remaining sites in this corridor. In some locations, existing structures in scale with adjacent residential neighborhoods would be retained. In locations closer to the Metro and the CBD, opportunities are created for





somewhat higher density development. Future land use and recommended zoning are shown in Figure 4.30.

The Plan supports low-density apartment use on the Our Lady of Lourdes Church parking lot, east of Pearl Street, and identifies the site as suitable for PD-35 zoning. Adequate parking should be maintained for church use. Office uses at East-West Highway and Pearl Street (north-east) would continue, but a density limit of 1.5 FAR is recommended on properties in the current C-O Zone.

The small lots at the northeast corner of East-West Highway and Pearl Street currently have commercial uses in a mix of small office buildings and single-family houses. The Plan recommends O-M zoning, which would allow up to 1.5 FAR and enable the owners to proceed individually or to assemble.

The small lots east of Pearl Street and south of East-West Highway currently have commercial uses in a mix of small office buildings and single-family houses. The Plan recommends that properties retain their current base zones and allow owners to apply for O-M zoning. The O-M Zone would allow up to 1.5 FAR and enable the owners to proceed individually or to assemble on their own schedules.

The southeast corner of Pearl Street and Montgomery Avenue is occupied by the three-story Potomac Valley Bank and its parking lot directly to the east. The bank's C-O zoning should be extended to the parking lot, which is zoned R-60, with a density limit of 1.5 FAR. These properties are under single ownership. Rezoning will create a unified redevelopment opportunity and reflect the existing use.

In the triangle of land created by East-West Highway, Montgomery Avenue, and Pearl Street, scattered single-family houses are used as offices. The O-M zoning recommended for these areas allows future redevelopment to a consistent commercial density. The Plan also recommends that the parking garage with frontage on Montgomery Avenue associated with 4350 East-West Highway be rezoned from R-60 to C-O. The C-O Zone would more accurately reflect the current use and makes the site consistent with surrounding commercial neighbors. It does not create redevelopment potential since the existing building already exceeds the 3.0 FAR allowed by the C-O Zone.

The Plan recommends confirming the existing R-60 zoning on the properties along East-West Highway at Chelton Road. The Plan endorses efforts to protect and enhance residential use.

Since the 1976 Plan, the houses along the south side of Montgomery Avenue have been converted to commercial uses. While presenting a reasonable reuse for the property owners, residents in the Town of Chevy Chase are concerned that commercial activity may have contributed to the flooding, noise, and aesthetic problems they experience. Accordingly, the Plan recommends allowing office and service uses under the C-T Zone, but adds environmental and design guidelines for redevelopment. Redevelopment in this area offers the opportunity to create a more attractive exit from the CBD, to establish an appropriate long-term use, and to improve the environmental conditions for these properties and the neighborhoods behind them.








## **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

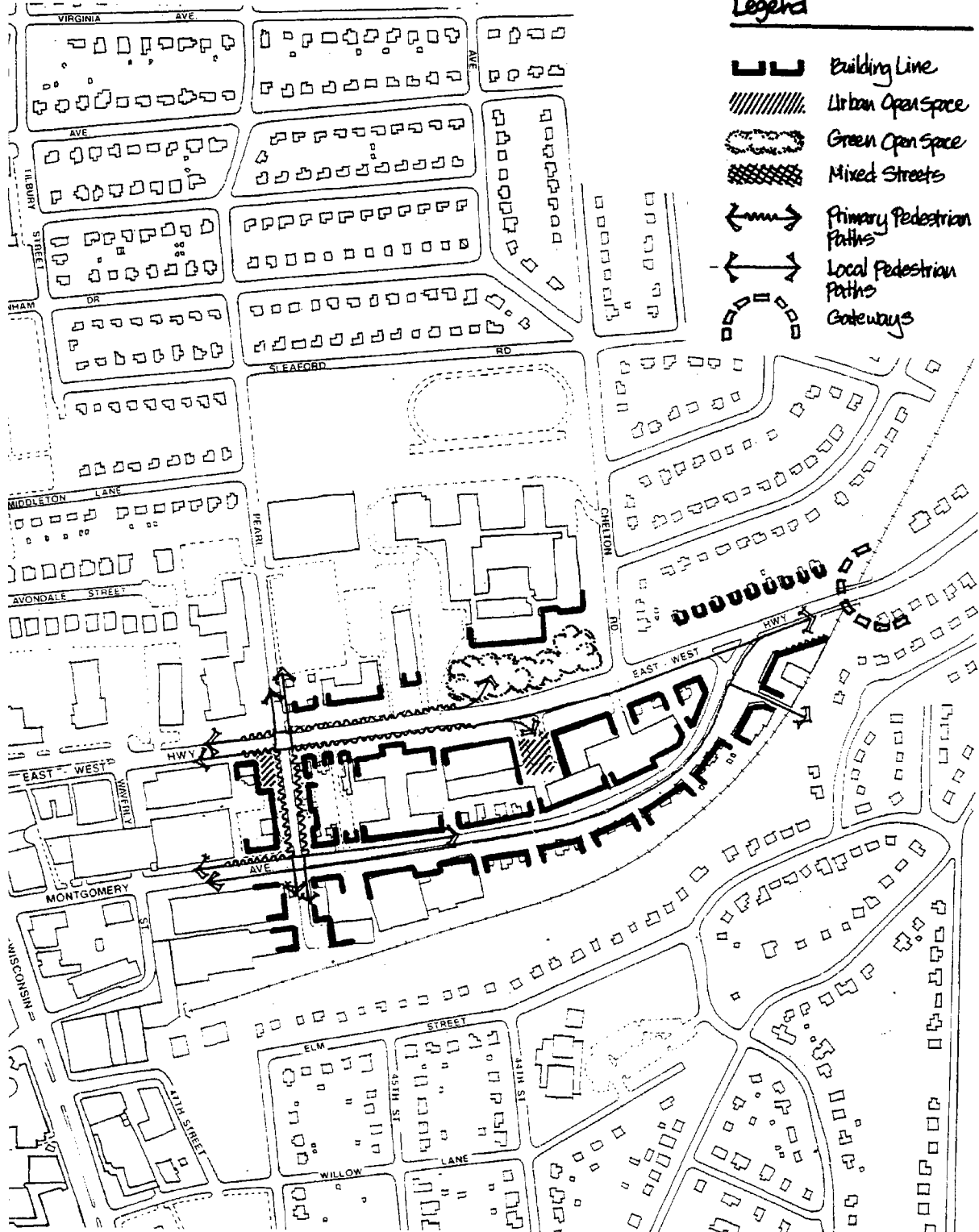
In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply in the Montgomery Triangle Corridor (see Figure 4.31):

1. Achieve a low-rise gateway building at the convergence of Montgomery Avenue and East-West Highway to visually express the entry to Bethesda and to achieve a more gradual transition in building heights than currently exists.
2. Redevelop properties at the southeast corner of East-West Highway and Pearl Street to achieve street-oriented development. Provide a minimum 20-foot building setback along East-West Highway to accommodate the large volume of pedestrians along this corridor and a 15-foot building setback on all other adjacent streets. Locate driveway access from East-West Highway and Montgomery Avenue. Provide parking underground.
3. Redevelop existing single-family buildings along the south side of Montgomery Avenue to create groups of office townhouses and to minimize the impact on the neighborhood to the rear of these lots, according to the following design and development guidelines:
  - a. Limit building heights to three stories in the rear and two stories in the front to correspond to the scale of existing buildings.
  - b. Locate buildings close to the street while maintaining adequate sidewalk and streetscape area to help reduce the visual width of the corridor.
  - c. Consolidate driveway entrances along Montgomery Avenue and locate all parking in the rear of the lots.
  - d. Provide for safe conveyance and appropriate controls to mitigate stormwater runoff.
  - e. Place air conditioning units toward the front of buildings or screen them to block their noise from the adjacent neighborhood.
  - f. Erect a sight-impervious screen incorporating landscaping and fencing in a buffer area at least ten feet wide along the rear lot line.
  - g. Limit lot assembly to three lots to avoid monolithic building walls. The rear of buildings should minimize bulk and maintain a residential character. At least two lots should be assembled to encourage grouped driveways.

## URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

### Legend

-  Building Line
-  Urban Open Space
-  Green Open Space
-  Mixed Streets
-  Primary Pedestrian Paths
-  Local Pedestrian Paths
-  Cul-de-sacs



## **4.9 THE TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE TRANSITION AREA**

### **A. DESCRIPTION**

This area functions as a transition between the single-family residential Town of Chevy Chase and the Central Business District. It is characterized by green public open space, several parking lots, and one block with a mixture of residential and commercial uses, including a County-owned structure. The boundary of the area is the CBD line on the west and 46th Street/West Avenue on the east.

Primary land uses include the two-acre Elm Street Park at the northern end, between Elm Street and Willow Lane, and Public Parking Lots 24 and 10. Elm Street Park serves as a stable transition use, enjoyed by both Town of Chevy Chase residents and CBD employees. Parking Lots 24 and 10, screened by well established evergreen hedges, currently are effective buffers. A long-term issue for the area is ensuring continued compatibility of these two public parking lots. The Parking District has reserved Lot 24 for a possible future garage.

A more immediate issue is the stabilization of the block bounded by Walsh and Stanford Streets, West Avenue, and the CBD line. (See Figure B.10.) The block includes the County-owned Walsh Street Center on two lots (6 and 7); its functions were replaced by the Leland Community Recreation Center. The County has retained ownership and leased the facility to the Writers Center. Next to it is a C-2 zoned lot (8), adjoining two lots (9 and 10) zoned R-60, which face single-family homes across Walsh Street. Lot 9 has a special exception for private parking, related to a commercial use on Wisconsin Avenue. Lots 11 and 12 on Stanford Street, also zoned R-60, face a parking deck; Lot 11 contains an architect's office, a nonconforming use, and Lot 12 is vacant. Lot 13, zoned C-2 and in the Wisconsin South District, contains an 11,140-square-foot carpet store. The owner of Lot 13 also owns Lot 12.

A final issue is the future use of two vacant lots zoned R-60 on West Avenue just north of St. John's Episcopal Church. The lots are currently used by a commercial establishment on Wisconsin Avenue for loading, truck storage, and parking. They are not well maintained or screened. The 1976 Sector Plan recommended public parking on the lots.

page  
**119**

### **B. OBJECTIVES**

1. Ensure stability of the land uses in the transition area to preserve the Town of Chevy Chase as a single-family residential neighborhood.
2. Provide parking facilities to serve the needs of adjacent commercial uses. Keep overflow parking and cut-through traffic from having an undesirable impact on the Town of Chevy Chase.
3. Provide low-density housing.

### **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Plan endorses measures that would discourage cut-through traffic. Such measures may include one-way access patterns or peak period access limits (similar to those



enacted by the Town of Chevy Chase) but should not inhibit access by emergency vehicles or access to the Leland Community Recreation Center. Permanent street closings are not encouraged, but may be considered where commercial traffic is intrusive.

Parking Lot 24 adequately serves the current parking needs of the adjacent CBD businesses. If there is a need in the future for additional, structured parking, the Plan recommends that a new structure be limited to one story above grade, with the remainder below grade.

On the block bounded by Walsh and Stanford Streets, West Avenue, and the public alley, it is desirable to find an approach that recognizes existing uses and meets the needs of the community and the landowners. The Plan recommends retaining R-60 zoning on Lots 6 and 7, the Walsh Street Center. The Plan endorses continued County ownership of the Center and leasing to an organization, like the Writers Center, whose objectives reinforce the Plan's cultural district theme. For Lots 8 through 12, the Plan recommends the R-60/TDR Zone. A density up to 12.5 dwelling units per acre is appropriate, which would allow development of up to ten residential townhouses on these lots. The Plan recommends setbacks that will be compatible with adjacent land uses. Compatibility will be determined during the subdivision and site plan review process. A building permit has been issued for Lot 8 under the existing C-2 Zone. If the zoning is vested at the time of the Sectional Map Amendment, the Plan recommends confirming the existing zone. (Future- land use and recommended zoning are shown in Figure 4.32.)

The Plan supports a special exception for private or public parking on the two vacant lots on West Avenue between Stanford Street and the church to serve adjacent CBD-1 commercial uses. Adequate landscape screening and maintenance of the lots must be provided.

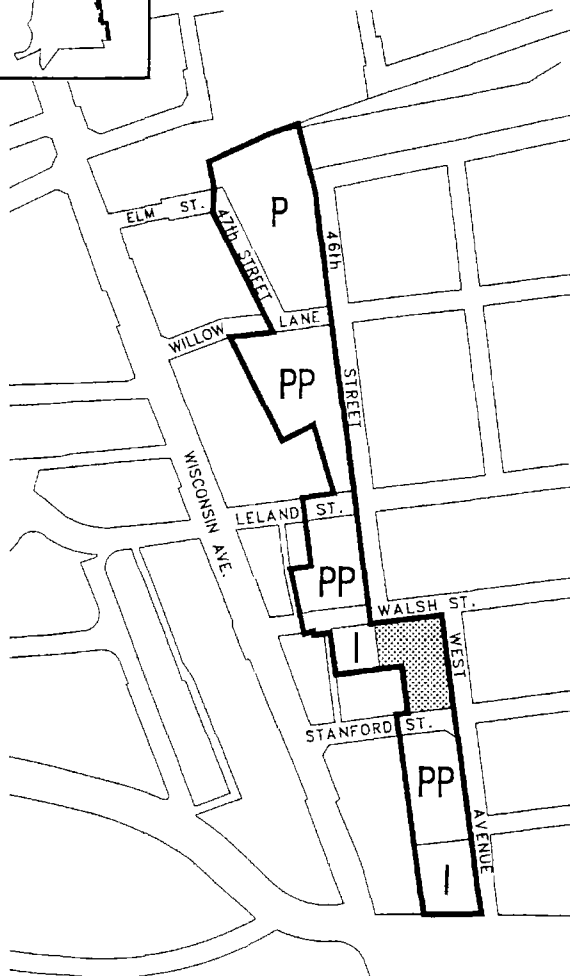
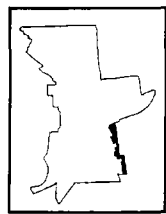
Certain lots in the Town of Chevy Chase, within the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area, have been incorrectly shown on the Zoning Map as in the C-2 rather than the R-60 Zone. These properties lie between the south line of the B&O Railroad right-of-way and the north line of Lots 6, 7, 8, and part of Lot 9, Block L, on Elm Street. The Sector Plan recommends that R-60 zoning be applied in the Sectional Map Amendment to correct this drafting error and confirm the R-60 Zone. (See Section 10.1, Zoning.)

#### **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply (see Figure 4.33):

1. Redevelopment of Lot 24 for a parking structure:
  - a. Construct the above-grade portion of the parking facility with a maximum height of nine feet.
  - b. Provide a minimum of 20 feet for building setback along 46th Street to achieve a compatible setback with adjacent residences and to permit adequate area for landscaping.





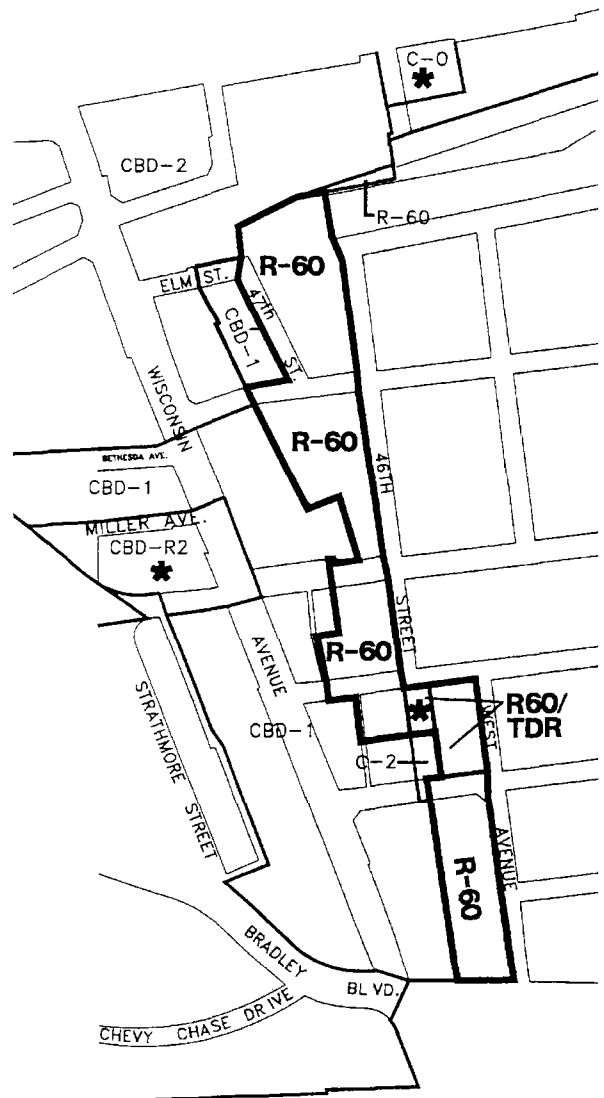
**Future Land Use**

**RESIDENTIAL**

- Townhouse
- Single-Family Detached

**OTHER**

- PP Public or Special Exception Parking
- I Institutional



**Recommended Zoning**



RECOMMENDED  
BASE ZONE



RECOMMENDED  
FLOATING ZONE

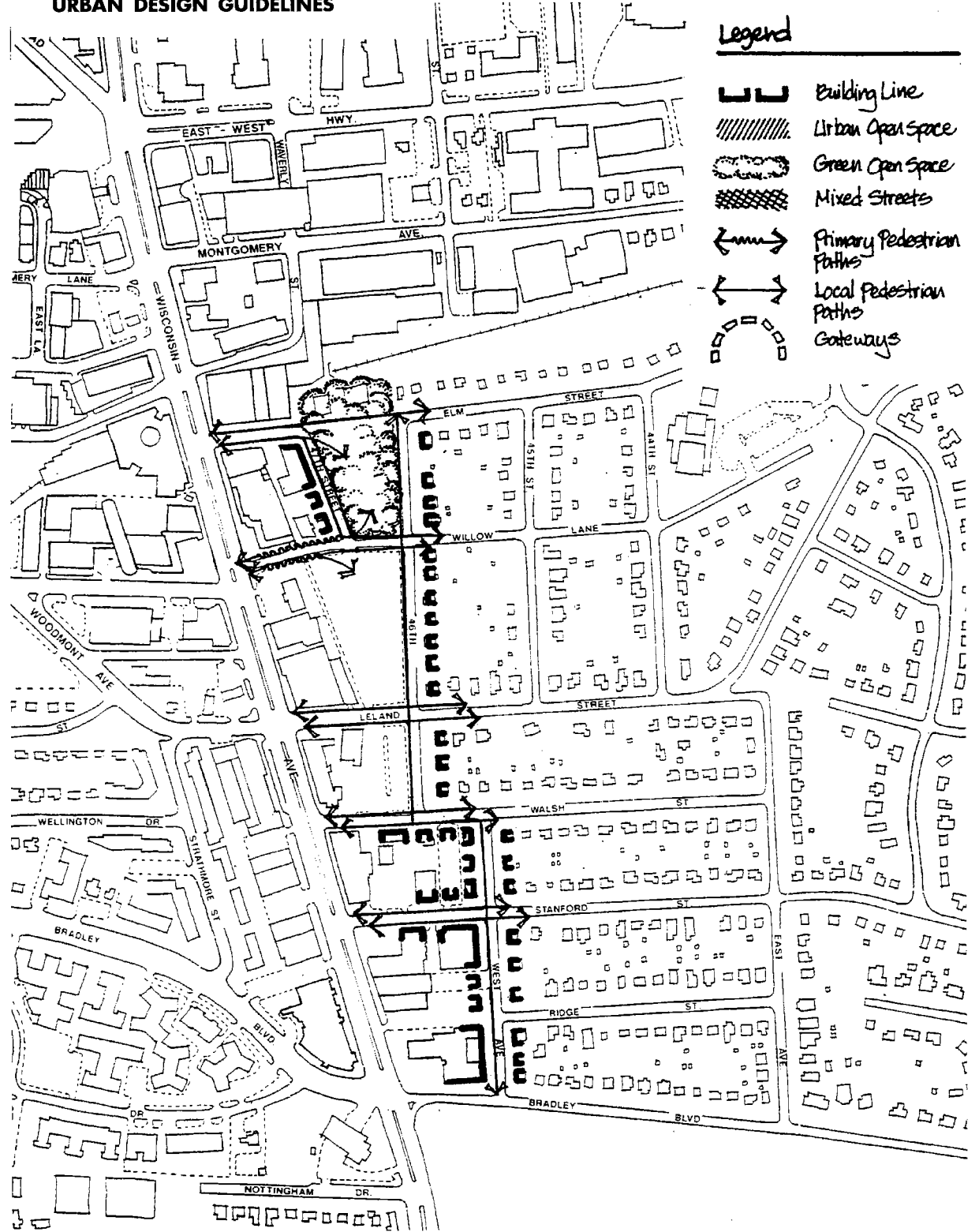


SEE DENSITY  
LIMITS IN TEXT



North

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES



- c. Ensure that facade treatments and landscaping create attractive views from the neighborhood as well as from the CBD.
  - d. Ensure that lighting does not have a negative impact on neighboring houses.
  - e. Provide sidewalks and streetscape improvements on all bordering streets.
  - f. Restrict vehicular access to the underground parking to the western end of the site, along Willow Lane and Leland Street.
2. Redevelopment of the Walsh/West/Stanford block:
- a. Orient townhouse or duplex units to face Walsh Street and Stanford Street in a compatible relationship with single-family houses. Do not exceed 2-1/2 stories. Provide parking at the rear of the site, preferably via an alley or private driveway.
  - b. Develop commercial structures at a residential scale, with compatible setbacks and heights limited to 2-1/2 stories.

## 4.10 THE WISCONSIN SOUTH CORRIDOR

page  
123

### A. DESCRIPTION

This corridor is characterized by low- to moderate-height commercial buildings arrayed on either side of Wisconsin Avenue and on the east side of Woodmont Avenue. It is intended to have a lower profile and less dense development than the Metro Core, for which it provides the southern approach. The southern gateway to the corridor and to Bethesda is marked by St. John's Episcopal Church on the east and a new commercial structure on the northwest corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Bradley Boulevard—experienced after one passes the green expanse of the country club on the east and the single-family neighborhood on the west. The CBD-1 line creates the boundary of the district.

The major land uses are office and retail. Comparison retail predominates (44 percent of total retail establishments), of which nearly three-fifths are devoted to carpet and furnishings stores. There are fewer restaurant (16 percent) and neighborhood (15 percent) retail establishments. Comparison and neighborhood retail are described in Section 2.2 B. The retail on Wisconsin Avenue is primarily located in street-fronting stores oriented to the pedestrian, with both on-street parking and some private structured parking. Public parking and private special exception parking lots are available in the transition area to the east. In addition to the church on the northeast corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Bradley Boulevard, there is a fire station on the southwest corner of the intersection.

There are two potential sites for optional method redevelopment between Miller Avenue and Leland Street. Otherwise, little change is expected along this part of Wisconsin



Avenue except for small-scale infill development, which could include some 2 FAR residential projects on small sites.

A major landmark at the northern end of the corridor is the Farm Women's Cooperative Market, designated on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. This white frame, one-story structure evokes the farm era in Montgomery County's history and serves as an important gathering place on the days when the market is open or when the front parking lot serves as a flea market. It is a focal point at the terminus of Bethesda Avenue and has the potential of increased market activity, becoming the link between community-oriented retail to the west and south. Any expansion of the structure will be limited by its historic resource designation.

Another local landmark evoking the mid-1920's is the Tudor Style Shopping Complex between Leland and Walsh Streets. The small individual neo-Tudor structures reflect the predominant scale of the corridor, while the street orientation provides an appealing pedestrian environment.

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

1. Support a diverse specialty - and community-serving retail environment, including adequate short-term parking facilities.
2. Provide additional housing to encourage uses that are compatible with nearby residential areas.

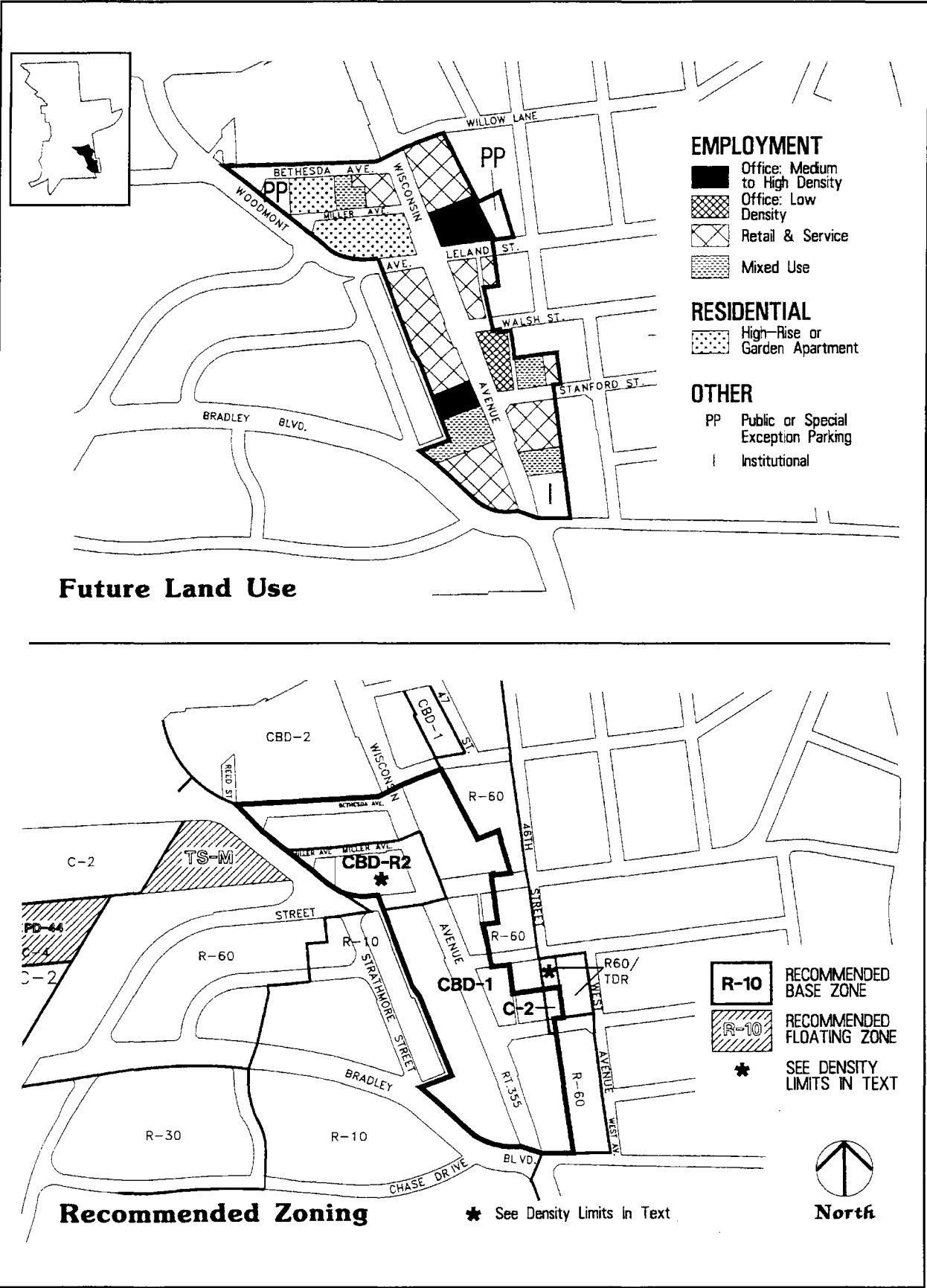
## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Plan recommends confirmation of the existing CBD-1 Zone for most of the corridor. The only optional method development allowed would be mixed-use projects containing a residential component. The CBD-1 Zone allows mixed-use development up to 3 FAR. A low residential floor area and a high commercial floor area offer an economic incentive to provide more housing. Ground floor retail should be provided on such projects. Recommended land use and zoning are shown in Figure 4.34.

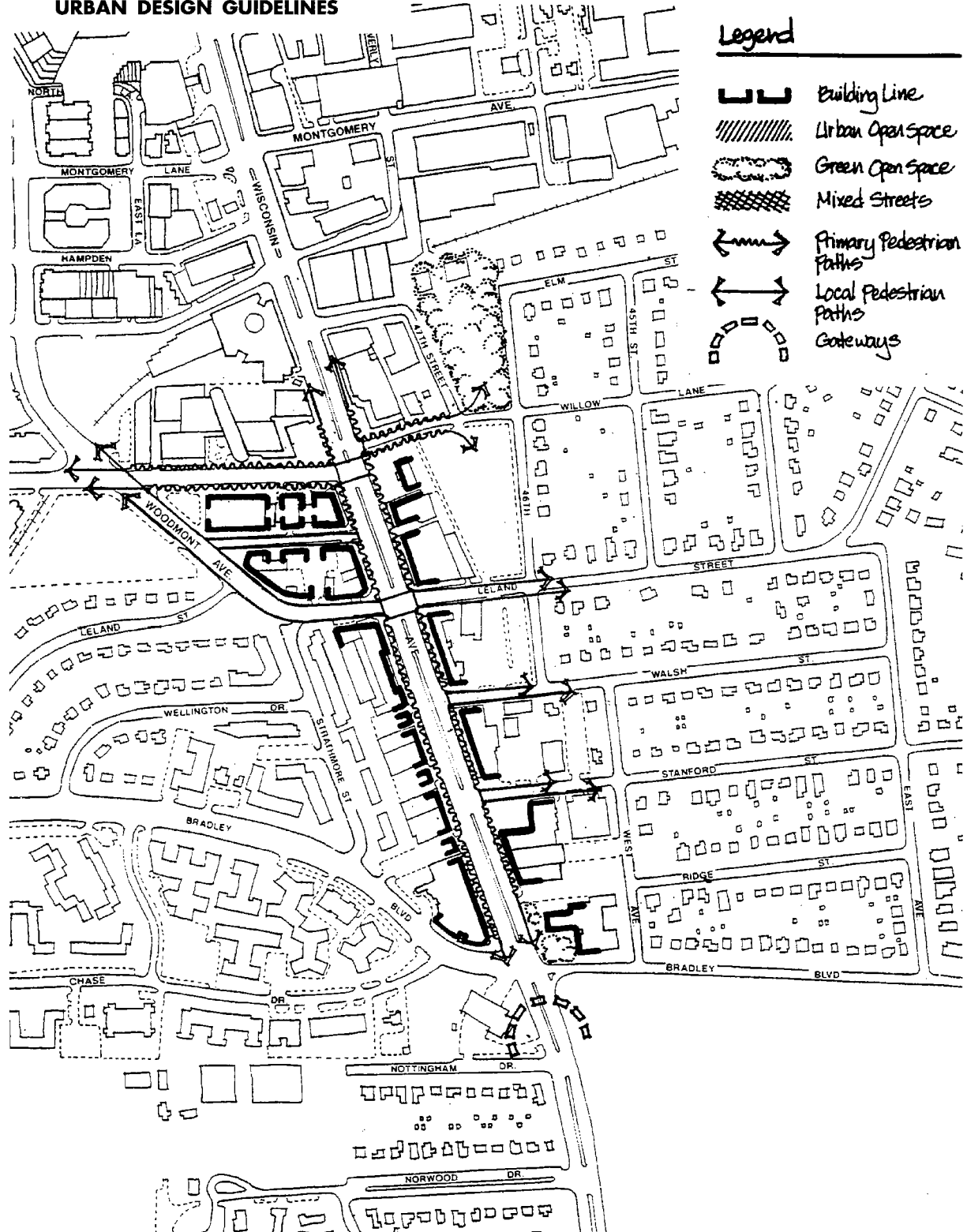
The Plan allows continued small-scale, standard method infill commercial development on sites that are too small for optional method development. The CBD-1 Zone allows an additional 1 FAR for residential use. The Plan recommends retail uses on the ground floor only.

On the block south of Miller Avenue, the Plan recommends the CBD-R2 Zone limited to a maximum of 3 FAR and a maximum height of 75 feet.

The Tudor Style Shopping Complex offers a unique amenity for Bethesda in its pedestrian orientation, scale, and retail diversity. Methods should be explored to preserve the complex while increasing the economic viability of the small retail businesses on the site. At a minimum, the Plan encourages facade renovation and supports methods to achieve that result, such as participation in an easement program and rehabilitation funding. The possibility of limited redevelopment to include housing could be explored—either under the standard method or, by assemblage of all properties with an adjacent property, under the optional method.



URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES



Section 4.9, The Town of Chevy Chase Transition Area, contains a recommendation regarding the parking lots north of St. John's Episcopal Church.

#### **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply in the Wisconsin South Corridor (see Figure 4.35):

1. Set new buildings back 20 feet from the street curb to accommodate the higher level of pedestrian activity that occurs along the corridor. Provide streetscape in accordance with the recommendations of the Streetscape Plan.
2. Limit building heights to 75 feet to step down heights from the Metro Core and to ensure compatibility with nearby residential areas.
3. Achieve a compatible transition from the single-family community across Woodmont Avenue for new development on properties fronting on Woodmont and Miller Avenues. Locate the building to take advantage of views down Woodmont Avenue. Locate parking to the rear of the site adjacent to the existing gas station or underground with access limited to two driveways, one along Miller Avenue and the other along Leland Street.

For optional method development, provide improvements to the landscaped open space within public right-of-way across Woodmont Avenue along Leland Street and off-site streetscaping along Leland Street and Miller Avenue.

4. Reflect the historic character of the Tudor Style Shopping Complex. Limit any redevelopment to three stories, and maintain the pedestrian character, scale, and opportunity for retail diversity. If any portion of the existing building is retained, the most significant architectural feature is the Tudor-style roof line, which should be reflected in the design of the new portion of the structure. Provide a coordinated design for signs. Do not enclose the side-walk space with a permanent structure.

page  
**127**

### **4.11 THE BRADLEY BOULEVARD DISTRICT**

#### **A. DESCRIPTION**

The residential community on either side of Bradley Boulevard is composed predominately of garden apartments and townhouses, except for a neighborhood of single-family detached houses in the north-west section. The district is roughly defined by the Georgetown Branch on the west, Public Parking Lot 31 and Woodmont Avenue on the north, the CBD line on the east, and the Sector Plan boundary on the south. The Plan



proposes including in the Sector Plan area the section along Hillandale Road ending at Willett Parkway.

There are 650 rental garden apartments built primarily in the 1950's along Strathmore Street, Bradley Boulevard, and Chevy Chase Drive. Within the existing Sector Plan area, there are about 170 townhouses along Bradley Boulevard, Offutt Lane, Hillandale Road, and Chevy Chase Drive, many substantially renovated in the 1970's. The 1976 Sector Plan recommended R-10 zoning for this area. There are also about 110 townhouses along Hillandale Road outside the Sector Plan area, which the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan recommended rezoning to R-30 to match existing density.

In the Sacks subdivision on Leland Street and Wellington Drive, zoned R-60, there are 60 single-family houses occupied by both long-time residents and more recent homeowners. Plan preparation included discussions about the viability of this subdivision as a singlefamily neighborhood so close to the CBD. Economic analysis suggests that high land values and the equity interest of the houses would make assemblage unlikely. Redevelopment would remove an option for ownership of single-family housing in this price range. A majority of the homeowners believe that the neighborhood is desirable for close-in urban living and seek County support to deter cut-through traffic.

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

1. Preserve moderately priced multi-family housing.
2. Preserve the integrity of the Sacks subdivision as a single-family residential neighborhood.
3. Deter cut-through traffic.

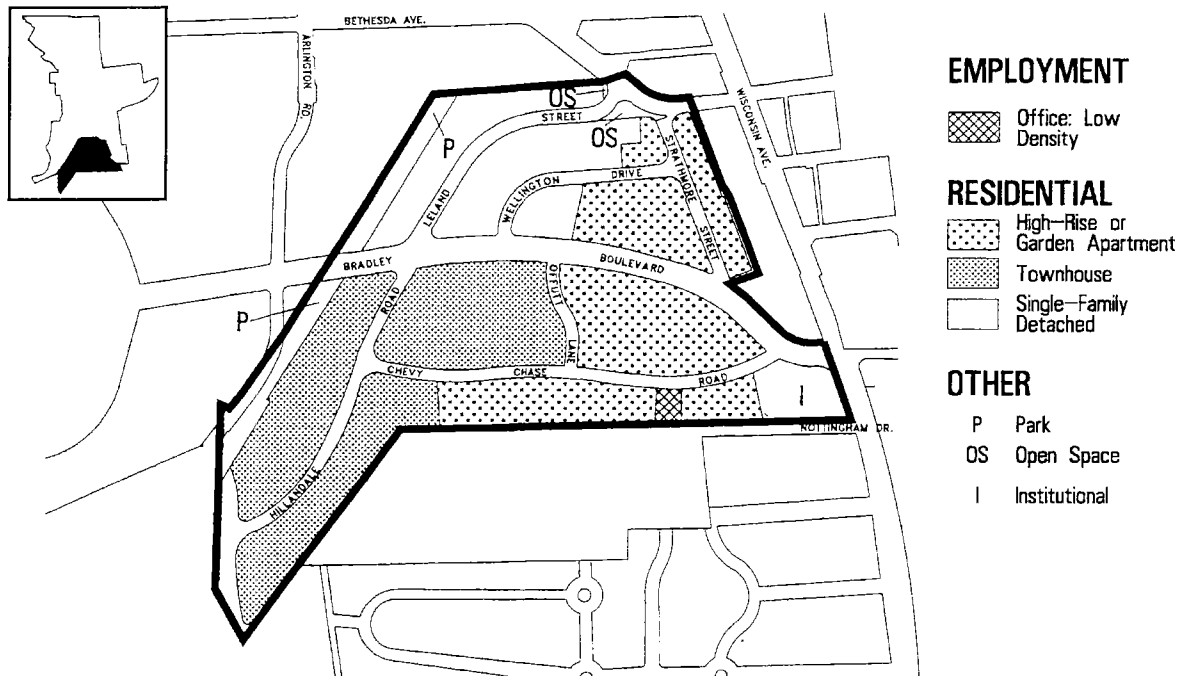
## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Existing apartments and townhouses in the Bradley Boulevard District should be preserved to ensure a variety of housing types and to retain a major source of moderately priced housing. R-10 properties west of Offutt Lane should be rezoned R-30 to match more closely the density of the existing townhouses, as was done in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan. The Plan also recommends moving the Sector Plan boundary to the south to include the townhouses on either side of Hillandale Road, and confirming the R-30 zoning applied by the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan. (See Figure 4.36.)

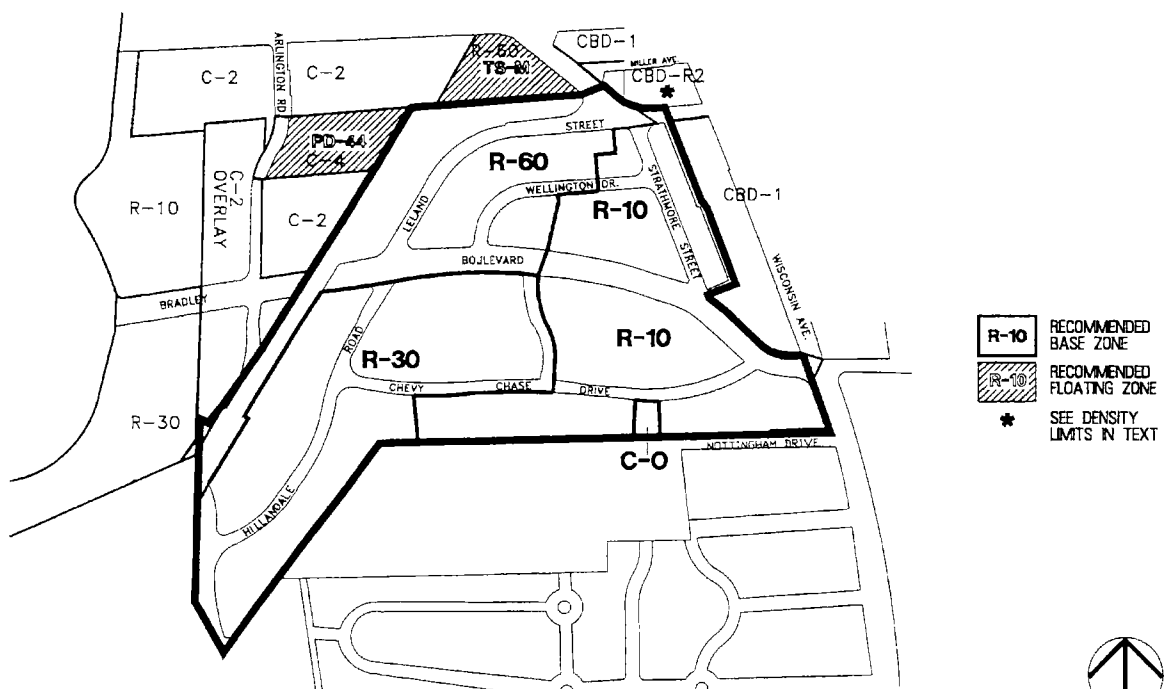
The Plan endorses continued application of programs to ensure that existing housing remains affordable. Such programs may include County subsidies to renters in scattered market rate units or acquisition of apartment properties, which may be sold to be operated as affordable housing.

In the Sacks subdivision, the Plan recommends confirming the existing R-60 zoning to retain the single-family detached houses along Leland Street and Wellington Drive. The Plan supports efforts to preserve the viability and residential integrity of the neighborhood as an alternative to multi-family living in the Sector Plan area. Such efforts include guidelines to limit special exception approvals, which might otherwise proliferate because of proximity to the commercial area. (See Section 3.1B, Housing and Neighborhoods.)





**Future Land Use**



**Recommended Zoning**



**North**



Additional measures to discourage cut-through traffic are also appropriate, including one-way access patterns or peak period access limits (similar to the Town of Chevy Chase), but they should not inhibit access by emergency vehicles. Permanent street closings are not encouraged, though they may be considered where commercial traffic is intrusive. The Plan also endorses residential parking permits and recommends enhanced landscape screening on the triangle of land owned by the Department of Transportation (MCDOT) between Woodmont Avenue and Leland Street.

Recommendations for garden apartments on Lot 31 and on the Post Office property would also help create transitional residential uses between the single-family houses and commercial development to the north and west, supporting the viability of the Sacks neighborhood. Neighborhood representatives should be included in the planning of residential development on Lot 31. (See Section 4.12, Arlington Road District.)

A commercial office use located on a site zoned C-O south of Chevy Chase Drive should be retained at the current density.

The Plan recommends the R-10 Zone for the entire property on the east side of Strathmore Street that is now primarily zoned CBD-1 but also has a strip of land zoned R-10. The property includes about 50 garden apartments, consisting of one, two, and three bedroom units. These units are part of the stock of affordable housing in the Sector Plan area that the Plan seeks to retain, and it is desirable that the district remain residential in character. The R-10 Zone would encourage retention of the existing apartments.

#### **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The general objectives and principles in Section 3.2 apply in this district.

### **4.12 THE ARLINGTON ROAD DISTRICT**

#### **A. DESCRIPTION**

This district provides the major community retail for the Sector Plan area and adjacent neighborhoods. It is characterized by linear strip shopping along Arlington Road, with an emerging “main street” character along Bethesda Avenue. The crossroads of Bethesda Avenue and Arlington Road have the potential to develop as the center of the district. The district is bounded by Elm Street and Hampden Lane on the north, Woodmont Avenue on the east, the southern edge of Public Parking lot #31 and the Georgetown Branch on the south and southeast, and multi-family apartments along Fairfax and Clarendon Roads to the west.

The predominant land use is retail. Of about 100 establishments, close to 30 percent is neighborhood retail, a segment that has increased in recent years as the Metro Core redeveloped. Comparison retail comprises about 28 percent, and 11 percent is automotive

sales, repair, and service. Comparison and neighborhood retail are described in Section 2.2 B. There are also a limited number of offices, a postal service distribution center, a public parking garage, and a public parking lot.

Visually, the area is characterized by low-rise structures. Along Arlington Road, the shopping center and auto sales on the west side are one-story, with a new five-story office-retail complex on the east side. Along Bethesda Avenue east of Arlington Road, there is a combination of attractively renovated one-story community retail structures and new three-story structures with retail at street level and two floors of office above. Structures of similar scale and character line the western side of Woodmont Avenue. These new buildings, oriented toward the street with wide sidewalks, on-street parking, and rear loading, have helped to create the "main street" character. The neighborhood orientation of the shops and offices is beginning to create a sense of community and to restore some of the small town atmosphere that residents felt was lost with the urbanization of Bethesda.

There are several problems with vehicular circulation in and around the Bradley Shopping Center. A substantial curve on Arlington Road makes it hard to see cars exiting and entering the center, and pedestrians cross illegally at mid-block. Many people drive and repark when visiting shops in different parts of the district, compounding traffic congestion at the Arlington Road-Bethesda Avenue intersection. But the pedestrian environment on Arlington Road does not encourage walking.

Redevelopment of the surrounding sites will help establish the intersection of Arlington Road and Bethesda Avenue as the district's center. The major sites with short-term redevelopment potential are the four-acre Euro Motorcars, Inc., site in the southwest quadrant of Arlington Road and Bethesda Avenue, and the Miller and former Maloney Concrete (now Boston Chicken) properties in the southeast quadrant, which total two and a half acres. In the north-east quadrant, redevelopment is unlikely on the Giant supermarket site because of a long term lease until 2015; the corner will probably continue in its present use as a surface parking lot. There is a similar lease on the Giant pharmacy site in the northwest quadrant of the intersection. Parking for the pharmacy is provided on an adjacent lot zoned R-10. Assemblage of the small individually owned lots in the northwest quadrant along Bethesda Avenue is unlikely in the short-term, though desirable so that redevelopment could provide sidewalks, streetscape improvements, and organized parking.

South of the Arlington Road-Bethesda Avenue intersection, it is important to retain the Bradley Shopping Center on the west side of Arlington Road because of the community retail it provides. On the east side of Arlington Road, the U.S. Postal Service has a ground lease until 1999, with an option to renew until 2015. The Postal Service owns the 16,000-square-foot building, used as a distribution center. (See Section 8.6, Other Public Facilities.)



## **B. OBJECTIVES**

1. Preserve and enhance the Arlington Road District as a community retail and service business area.
2. Concentrate redevelopment along Bethesda Avenue, with special focus at the intersection of Bethesda Avenue and Arlington Road as the center of the district.
3. Continue the “main street” shopping character along Bethesda Avenue, consistent with recent development.
4. Protect the surrounding residential areas from commercial intrusions by directing growth away from the edges and by providing lower densities, appropriate uses, and landscaped buffers at the residential edges.
5. Improve traffic circulation, pedestrian safety, amenities, and convenience.
6. Provide additional housing and reduce the potential for additional employment away from the Metro Core.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Plan recommends retaining C-2 zoning at full 1.5 FAR density on properties north of the Bradley Shopping Center and post office site to encourage redevelopment of three-story mixed office-retail buildings along Bethesda Avenue similar to those on the north side of the street east of Arlington Road. The design guidelines address the type of redevelopment that is encouraged. It would be desirable to have site plan review, though site plans are not currently required in the C-2 Zone. (See future land use and recommended zoning in Figure 4.37.)

When the Euro Motorcars site redevelops, Arlington Road should be realigned to partially straighten the curve and improve sight distance. This improvement will increase safety and vehicular access to the Bradley Shopping Center. The Plan recommends creation of a new access drive for circulation through the Euro Motor-cars site between Bethesda Avenue and the Bradley Shopping Center parking lot. An evaluation of the access and circulation plan for the shopping center may eventually warrant an additional signal on Arlington Road, perhaps in conjunction with a pedestrian crossing and the curve-straightening that would occur with redevelopment of the Euro Motorcars site. (See Section 5.7C, Roadway System Improvements and Figure 5.11, Proposed Changes for Arlington Road District.) The Plan also recommends enhanced pedestrian amenities to encourage pedestrian activity and thus reduce some vehicular movement.

The property at the southwest corner of Arlington Road and Elm Street should retain the R-10 zoning, with the use limited to special exception parking. The lot has been designed to deflect traffic from the neighborhood and is well screened.

The CVS Pharmacy and new office retail complex on the east side of Arlington Road should retain the C-2 zoning to conform with existing densities. The Plan recommends that the remaining parcels be part of an overlay district with C-2 development limited to 0.5 FAR. This approach would allow the Bradley Shopping Center, Safeway, and service





stations to remain with modest expansion but would not allow major redevelopment at higher densities. The zoning ordinance has been amended to create an overlay district in this area. (See Section 10.1, Zoning.)

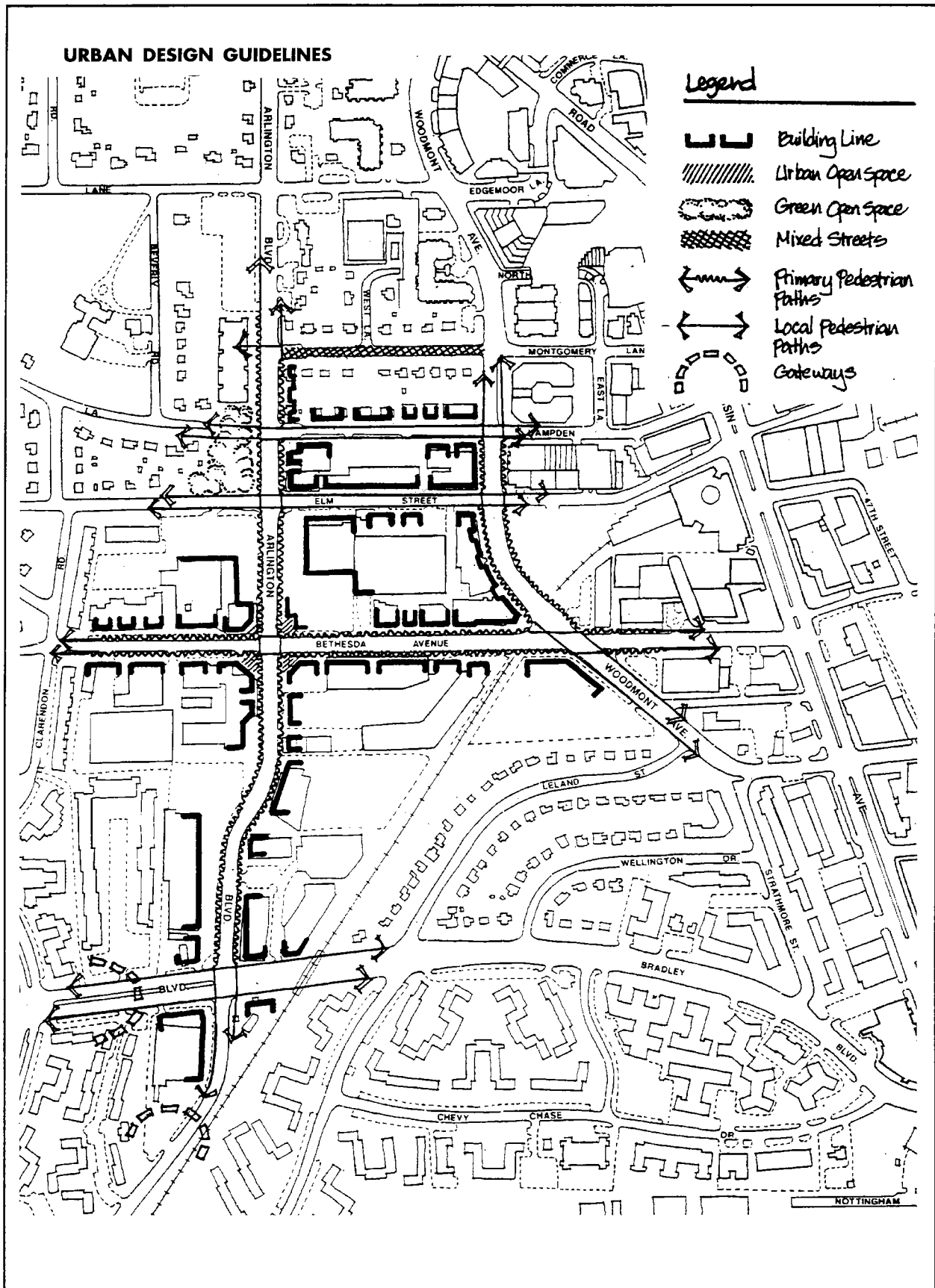
The Plan recommends rezoning the post office site with a base zone of C-4, limited to standard method development of .25 FAR. If the U.S. Postal Service does not need the site for continued postal use, the site could be redeveloped with a neighborhood-serving commercial use up to .25 FAR. Alternatively, the site could be redeveloped for multi-family housing, with neighborhood-serving retail along Arlington Road. The PD-44 Zone, allowing up to 105 dwelling units and 40,000 square feet of commercial space, would be an appropriate zone. Residential use would provide a transition from commercial uses for the Sacks subdivision of single-family houses to the east, helping maintain the viability of the neighborhood. Residents from both communities could use the Capital Crescent Trail. (See Arlington Road Post Office Site illustrative in Appendix B.)

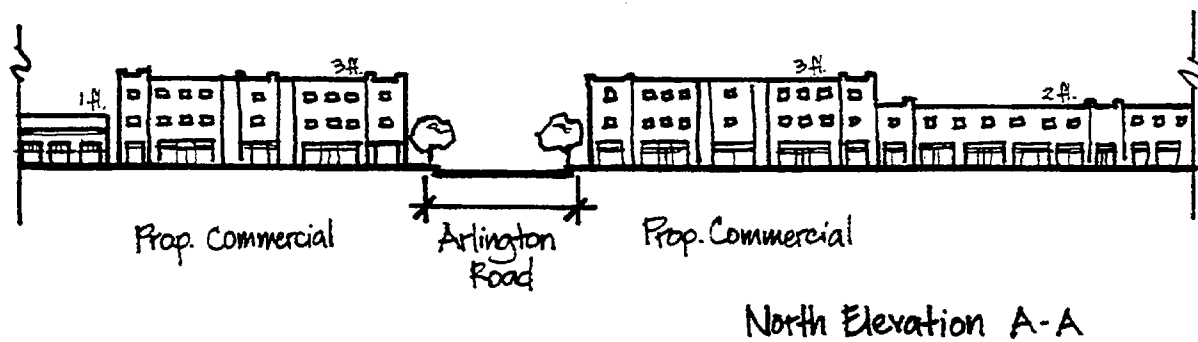
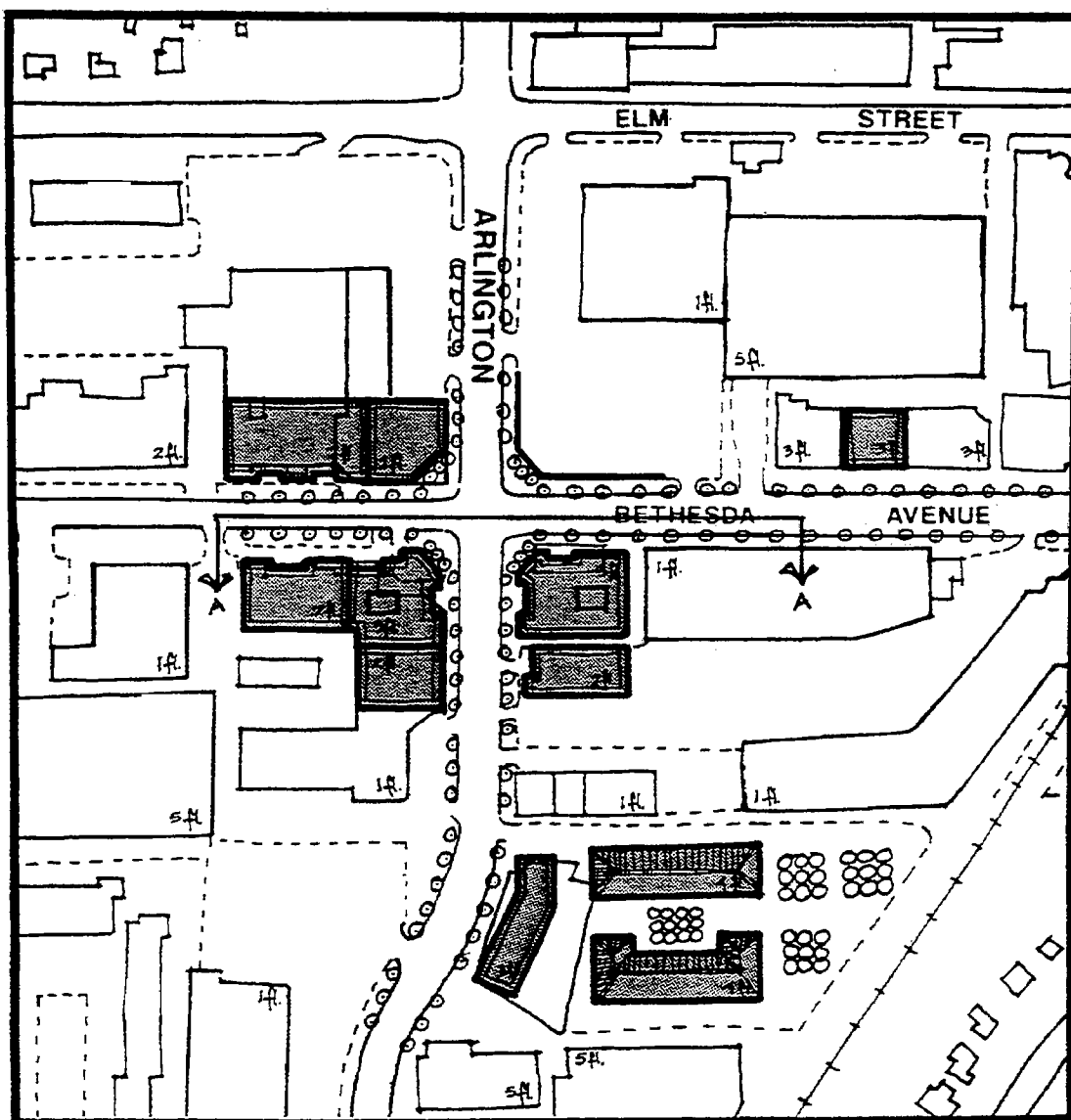
The Plan encourages exploration of creating a staging area for users of the Capital Crescent Trail on a portion of Lot 31. When future parking demand indicates a need for structured parking on Lot 31, the Plan recommends a combination of mixed-income housing and parking on the site. The project should also include ground floor retail along Bethesda Avenue to continue the “main street” concept. Below-grade and some surface parking should be provided to meet the requirements of the Parking District, in addition to parking for the residents and retail customers. (See Section 5.6, Parking.) The Plan designates the site as a transit station development area and as appropriate for the TS-M Zone. The base zone would remain R-60. About 100 housing units could be provided at heights that are compatible with the adjacent neighborhood. Representatives of the Sacks neighborhood should be included in all stages of planning and design for this site. (See Public Parking lot 31 illustrative in Appendix B.) A final decision to build housing and public parking on this site will be made by the County government based on an analysis of economic feasibility and the impact of redevelopment on the ability of the Parking Lot District (PLD) to meet the parking demands of retail shoppers and the advisability of providing a staging area for use by the Capital Crescent Trail.

## **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply (see Figures 4.38 and 4.39):

1. Arlington Road and Bethesda Avenue
  - a. Develop low-rise commercial or mixed-use buildings with store-front retail located directly adjacent to the public sidewalk.
  - b. Develop interconnected vehicular circulation routes between parcels, where feasible, to improve local vehicular access and reduce congestion. Provide outside parking and service areas in the rear of properties.
  - c. Expand pedestrian connections between parcels to promote walking and reduce the number of vehicular shopping trips.







- d. Set corner buildings back at least 25 feet from the curb radius in redevelopment of parcels bordering the intersection of Arlington Road and Bethesda Avenue to create an open space for pedestrians and a center for the district. On the Giant parking lot in the northeast corner, add a small landscaped open space to help define the corner pending redevelopment.
  - e. Provide pedestrian access to the public parking garage to the east in any redevelopment of the Giant site. Also provide direct vehicular access to the garage, if acceptable to the Division of Parking, to minimize on-street congestion.
  - f. Redevelop Bethesda Avenue west of Arlington Road as a Main Street with public sidewalks, street-scape, and seating to improve pedestrian access and to continue the character already established along the eastern portion of the street. Provide public parking along both sides of Bethesda Avenue, where feasible. (See Chapter 6, Streetscape Plan.)
  - g. Provide landscaped buffers between the multi-family residences along Clarendon Road and adjacent commercial development to the east as part of any redevelopment.
  - h. Limit heights, if the post office site is redeveloped for housing, to four stories stepping down to three stories along the east side of the site to ensure compatibility with the Sacks single-family neighborhood. Provide vehicular access to Arlington Road from the south-west corner of the site and provide pedestrian and bicycle access to the Capital Crescent Trail on the east.
2. Lot 31
- a. Continue the Main Street character in developing retail frontage along Bethesda Avenue and a portion of Woodmont Avenue.
  - b. Limit heights to three to five floors and vary roof lines for visual interest. The greatest height and bulk should be located primarily on Bethesda Avenue. The building(s) should step down to a lower height and be no closer than 50 feet from the property line of the houses in the Sacks neighborhood. The building design should express a residential character that is compatible with the neighborhood.
  - c. Provide landscape screening along the southern edge of the site as a buffer with the adjacent houses.
  - d. Ensure pedestrian and bicycle access to the Capital Crescent Trail and provide a Class 1 Bikeway along Bethesda Avenue, in accordance with the Bicycle Network Plan (Figure 5.7.)



## 4.13 THE EDMOOR TRANSITION AREA

### A. DESCRIPTION

The Edgemoor Transition Area consists primarily of public institutional and recreational facilities, which form a stable transitional land use between the single-family residential Edgemoor neighborhood to the west and the high-density Transit Station Residential District to the east of Arlington Road. The current boundary of the transition area is Arlington Road on the east and the Sector Plan boundary on the west. The Plan proposes including in the Sector Plan area the multi-family units on Clarendon and Fairfax Roads. (See Figure 2.3 for the existing Sector Plan boundary and proposed boundary changes.)

The existing stable uses include the Bethesda Elementary School, the Montgomery County Library, and a one-acre M-NCPPC park. The location of these public facilities reflects implementation of 1970 Master Plan recommendations—confirmed by the 1976 Sector Plan—that the entire west side frontage of Arlington Road between Wilson Lane and Elm Street be acquired for public use.

Only in the block between Moorland Lane and Edgemoor Lane has this vision remained incomplete, creating uncertainty. For many years the School Board pursued an acquisition program in the eastern two-thirds of the block to implement a campus master plan for the expansion of Bethesda Elementary School and accompanying recreation facilities. Three properties remain in private ownership. The Vision Center, a County-wide school facility, occupies a one-story brick structure on two of the lots across Moorland Lane from the school.

The School Board will reevaluate space needs of Bethesda Elementary School within the next two or three years. The existing school site is smaller than standard. County fiscal constraints may dictate a modified expansion from that envisioned in the campus master plan to meet modernization program needs.

North and south of Bradley Boulevard there are about 380 garden apartments in three-story buildings (including a small complex owned by the Housing Opportunities Commission) and about 120 townhouses along Clarendon and Fairfax Roads. These units are a source of housing for moderate income households. Currently in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan area, the units north of Bradley Boulevard are zoned R-10. The Master Plan applied R-30 zoning to the units south of Bradley Boulevard to match existing densities.

### B. OBJECTIVES

1. Ensure the stability of the land use in the transition area to preserve Edgemoor as a single-family residential neighborhood. Stabilize the block between Moorland and Edgemoor Lanes.
2. Recognize the existing multi-family uses as an appropriate and stable transition use along Clarendon and Fairfax Roads.
3. Discourage cut-through traffic.

## C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Plan proposes extending the Sector Plan boundary west to Clarendon and Fairfax Roads. This proposal recognizes that the garden apartments and townhouses create an effective transition between the single-family detached residential neighborhoods to the west and the Arlington Road commercial district to the east. They share a similar character with other multi-family and single-family attached complexes within the Sector Plan area. The Plan recommends confirming the existing R-10 Zone north of Bradley Boulevard and the R-30 Zone south of Bradley Boulevard to retain the existing densities. Future land use and recommended zoning are shown in Figure 4.40.

The Plan recommends deleting Lot 6 from the Sector Plan area at the point where Hampden Lane terminates at the M-NCPPC park. The lot was not acquired at the time the park was created and remains part of the Edgemoor neighborhood.

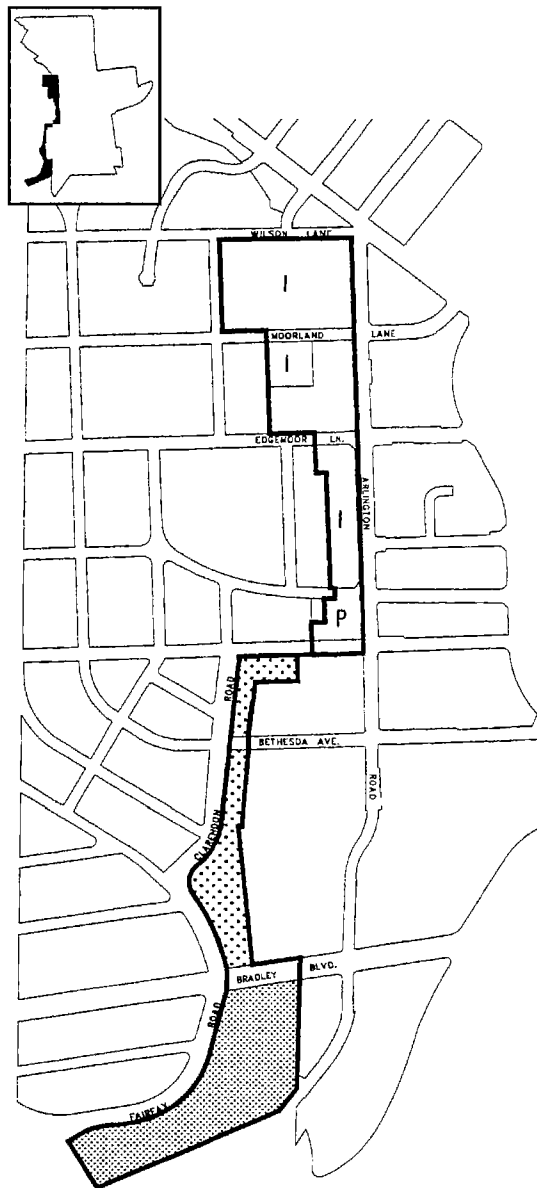
For the block bounded by Moorland Lane, Arlington Road, Edgemoor Lane, and the Sector Plan line, the Plan recommends confirmation of the R-60 zoning. The School Board has no immediate plans for use or sale of the houses it owns in this block. The intent of the 1976 Sector Plan to maintain the properties in public ownership should be carried forward until the School Board makes a specific modernization decision for Bethesda Elementary School.

The Plan endorses measures to discourage cut-through traffic. Such measures may include one-way access patterns or peak period access limits (similar to the Town of Chevy Chase), but they should not inhibit access by emergency vehicles. Permanent street closings are not encouraged, though they may be considered where commercial traffic is intrusive. This approach may be explored on Moorland Lane, if needed to ensure the safety of elementary school students. Because ultimate educational needs for Bethesda Elementary School may require student and faculty use of the Vision Center property across Moorland Lane, a safe and controlled traffic pattern that largely excludes through traffic along that street will be necessary.

## D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply (see Figure 4.41):

1. Respect the scale and character of the nearby single-family neighborhood in any school expansion on the block between Moorland and Edgemoor Lanes.
2. Provide street trees and sidewalk repairs as recommended in the Streetscape Plan.



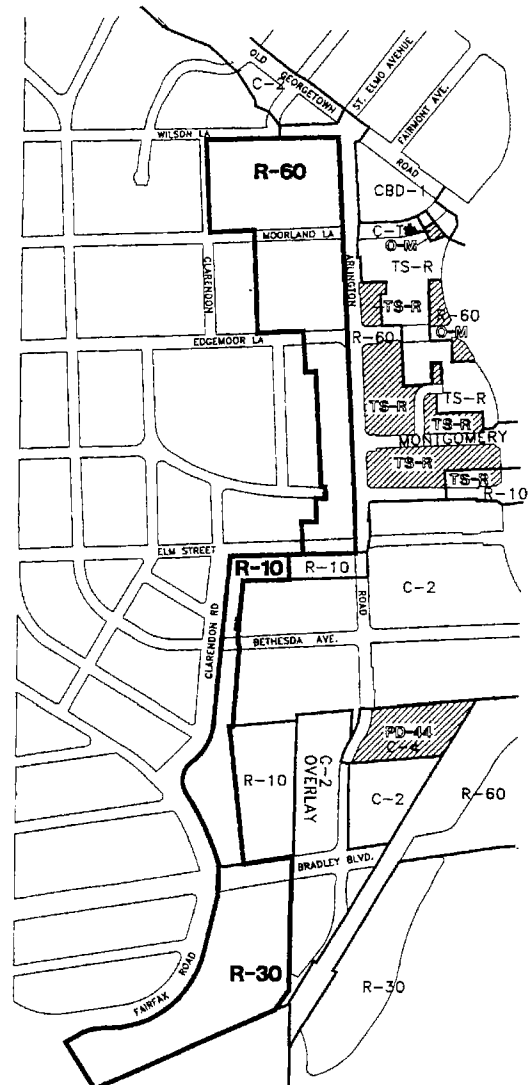
### Future Land Use

#### RESIDENTIAL

- High-Rise or Garden Apartment
- Townhouse
- Single-Family Detached

#### OTHER

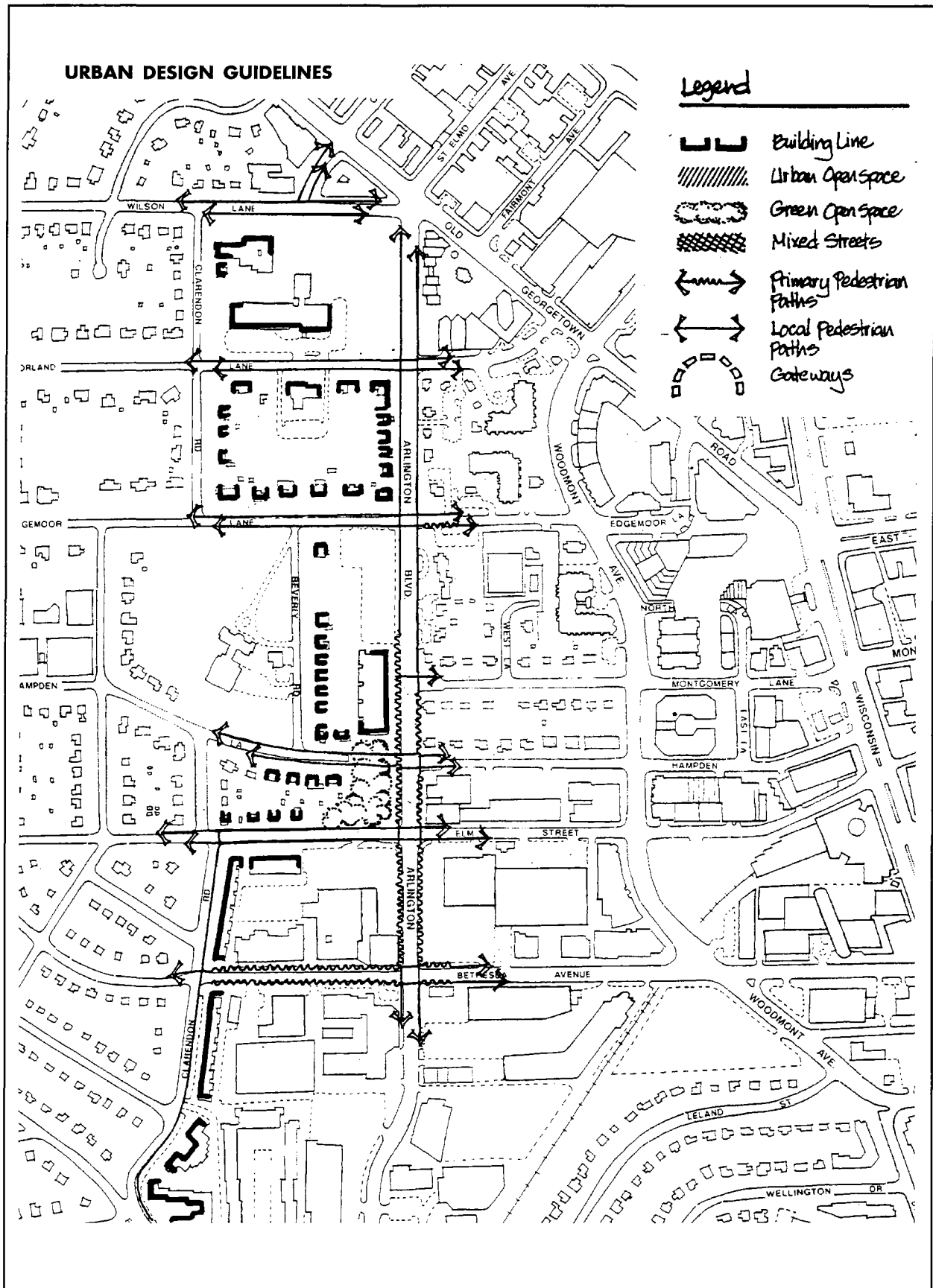
- P Park
- I Institutional



### Recommended Zoning

- R-10 RECOMMENDED BASE ZONE
- R-10 RECOMMENDED FLOATING ZONE
- \* SEE DENSITY LIMITS IN TEXT









# TRANSPORTATION PLAN

## 5.1 PLAN OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

### A. TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVES





1. **Increase the use of non-auto-driver travel for commuting.** The recommendations in this chapter are intended to increase the peak-hour commuter use of transit, car-pools, bicycling, and walking by Bethesda CBD employees. These modes are not used to the extent they could be, and they offer significant potential for supporting needed jobs and housing without creating additional traffic congestion.
2. **Integrate the Silver Spring-Bethesda Trolley into the transportation and land use pattern.** This transit line improvement must be a part of the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan so that space can be reserved for stations, tracks and passenger access.
3. **Improve pedestrian and bicycle conditions.** The Plan provides guidance for improving the future pedestrian and bicycle systems.
4. **Provide a balanced transportation system for the recommended land use plan.** The Plan defines balance between transportation and land use as the condition where the average area-wide level of service (a measure of traffic congestion) is within the bounds for the recommended transportation category as defined by the Annual Growth Policy.

The recommended transportation system is designed to be in balance with land use that includes projected growth outside Bethesda and the full development of every parcel according to its recommended use and density. It is highly unlikely that this build-out will occur within the 20-year life of the Plan. The Staging text (Section 10.2) recommends that the balance be maintained in interim stages as the Plan is implemented.

5. **Provide improvements at key intersections that exceed congestion standards.** Intersections are the major choke points where future demand can exceed capacity. The Plan identifies locations where problems are forecast.

Table 5.1

**IDENTIFICATION OF SECTOR PLAN STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVED TRANSPORTATION IN THE BETHESDA CBD**

TRIP ORIENTATION	Components of Travel Through, To, From, and Within the Bethesda CBD					
	Start of the Trip	Predominant Means of Travel for the Trip				End of Trip
		Auto/Highway	Transit	Biking	Walking	
Through 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Locate more housing closer to accessible transit that comes through Bethesda CBD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Separate through traffic from locally-oriented traffic</li> <li>o Regional ride-sharing programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Fare policy changes</li> <li>o Upstream park-and-ride lots in non-Metro corridors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Connectivity with regional bikeway system</li> <li>o Capitol Crescent Trail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Capitol Crescent Trail</li> </ul>	
To 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Locate more housing closer to transit routes that come to Bethesda CBD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Intersection improvements</li> <li>o TMD measures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Silver Spring-Bethesda Trolley Trail</li> <li>o Fare policy changes</li> <li>o TMD Measures</li> <li>o Expand Metrorail system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o More bike routes in main travel corridors and within Bethesda CBD</li> <li>o Improve bike storage in CBD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Improve pathway system to CBD</li> <li>o Provide signs to orient visitors to CBD walkways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Parking availability and rates</li> <li>o Share-A-Ride programs for each employment center</li> </ul>
From 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Share-A-Ride Program for Bethesda CBD residents</li> <li>o Improve sidewalks and access to transit routes and Metrorail stations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Intersection improvements</li> <li>o Highway capacity improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Silver Spring-Bethesda Trolley Trail</li> <li>o Expand Metrorail system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Bike access from employment centers</li> <li>o Improve bike storage in CBD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Improve pathway system from CBD</li> </ul>	
Within 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Improve sidewalks and access to transit routes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Intersection improvements</li> <li>o Reduce conflicts with through traffic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Restructure parts of bus services to provide more internal circulation</li> <li>o Provide loop bus system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Expand bicycle system connecting to Metro Core District</li> <li>o Improve bike storage in CBD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Improve pathway and sidewalk system within the CBD</li> <li>o Pedestrian crossings and intersection improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Reduce conflicts with vehicles; more signalized crosswalks</li> <li>o Improve street lighting and amenities</li> </ul>



## B. TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

Table 5.1 presents an overview of Sector Plan strategies for improved transportation. These strategies are among those discussed in more detail later in the chapter. The summary shows the strategies categorized by four basic trip orientations: travel through, to, from, and within the Bethesda CBD.

The summary is also organized by elements of the trip path: the start of the trip, the predominant means of travel, and the trip's end. Different strategies are presented for each of the travel elements. For example, strategies to control parking supply and cost in the CBD are only useful for the end of trips to Bethesda from outside the area, or from within the area. Such parking-related strategies will have no direct effect on people traveling through the area or residents who travel from the CBD to other areas. This overview is not meant to be a complete list of all strategies. Rather, it should be viewed as a tool to compare and interrelate the diverse transportation strategies discussed below.

## 5.2 TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

The Sector Plan goals include creating a Central Business District that attracts people for various purposes: to live, work, shop, and play. A basic premise of transportation planning is that a given amount of development will attract a specific number of people. The number of trips made by these people remains relatively constant regardless of the manner in which the trips are made, whether on foot, by car, or by public transportation, as long as the level of development does not change. However, the manner in which trips are made to or from the CBD has a significant impact on the transportation system. Actions to encourage the use of transit, carpooling, walking, and bicycling and discourage people from driving alone are valuable for their ability to relieve traffic congestion.

At the present time, 16 percent of the workers leaving the CBD in the evening rush hour use transit. (Current use of transit to the Bethesda CBD in the evening is 32 percent.) The average auto occupancy is about 1.1 persons per car, meaning that only one commuter car in 10 carries a passenger. To the extent that carpooling can grow, it would substitute for some of the increased use of transit and reduce future congestion. The process of influencing people to increase transit or carpool use for work trips is not an easy task. Transportation management schemes must be developed which improve the attractiveness of transit as a means of transportation relative to the automobile. Incentives should be provided to employers and employees to participate in Share-A-Ride services, in-house car-pools, transit pass discount programs, and other efforts.

Several methods may be employed to induce the auto driver to switch to carpools or transit. Most fall into one of two categories: incentives, which make transit more attractive, and disincentives, which make drive-alone auto use less attractive.

To realize the Plan's goal of achieving a significant shift of travel from drive-alone auto use, a Transportation Management Organization (TMO) should be formed in the Bethesda CBD. A major TMO objective is to increase to 37 percent the percentage of morning peak period work trips made by people who do not drive to existing and new jobs in the Bethesda CBD.



At present, the number of CBD employees who do not drive to work is about 27 percent. Increasing the number to 37 percent would require increasing transit use from 16 to 26 percent or increasing auto occupancy from 1.1 to 1.27 (1 passenger in every 4 commuting cars) or a combination of the two. All told, 3,000 to 4,000 people would need to stop driving alone, based on the year 2010 employment forecast.

The TMO can use a variety of incentives to achieve this objective, including reduced transit fares, improved transit service, and preferred parking in the Bethesda CBD for motorists who travel with passengers. The success of incentives such as these has been demonstrated by the reduction of workers driving to the Silver Spring CBD. Another method of reducing traffic is to require new development to offer specific incentives and disincentives.

Certain incentives are already being used. The Montgomery County parking code allows office building owners to reduce parking requirements in return for participating in Share-A-Ride, vanpool, transit pass discount, or other similar programs. The building owners, therefore, have an incentive to promote alternative forms of transportation; they generally pass the incentive along to their tenants, who then pass them on to their employees. A TMO would mandate the participation of developers of new office space in this type of program and could set performance goals, probably higher than the average the Plan envisions, to help achieve the overall average of 37 percent non-auto drivers. It might also be necessary to require existing employers to participate.

Auto disincentives include limiting long-term parking and increasing commuter parking rates. Such disincentives will promote either a switch from auto to transit or carpools, or a decision not to make the trip. The short-term parkers in Bethesda will continue to be accommodated, as described in the discussion on parking.

## 5.3 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The Bethesda CBD is well served by transit, with a centrally located Metrorail station and an adjacent bus terminal for both Ride-On and Metrobus service. These are valuable resources, and the Plan builds upon them. The public transportation recommendations support the goals of the Sector Plan. Bus and rail transit serve the recommended land use, including the higher density employment in the Metro Core District. The Plan emphasizes a shift to transit and other non-auto modes of transportation which saves fuel resources, reduces air pollution, and reduces the need for highway expenditures.

The Plan supports:

1. Expansion of bus service in the CBD, including the possible use of a shuttle bus loop for circulation.
2. Provision of a south entrance to the Metro station.
3. Connection of a light rail to the Silver Spring CBD using the Georgetown Branch right-of-way, with a terminal located near the south entrance to Metro in the Bethesda CBD Metro Core.

## **A. EXISTING RAIL AND BUS TRANSIT SERVICE**

The Bethesda Metro station is part of the 103-mile Adopted Regional Metrorail System. The station is located beneath the Metro Center building, with a large bus terminal above. Rail service is provided at 3- to 6-minute intervals during the peak commuting periods and at 12-minute intervals during the midday and evening hours of operation.

A south entrance to the Metro station should be constructed near Elm Street in the future. A knock-out panel already exists near the station platform level. The south entrance may be connected to the Silver Spring-Bethesda Trolley station.

Public bus service is provided in Bethesda by both Montgomery County Ride-On and Metrobus. In combination, the two transit systems provide more than 40 peak-hour buses to and from the Bethesda CBD. This meets the level of bus service required by the Annual Growth Policy for group V classification. Ride-On buses to the Bethesda CBD circulate throughout the Bethesda and Chevy Chase areas, including NIH, the Naval Medical Command, Friendship Heights, and Glen Echo. Connections to Potomac, Kensington, and Wheaton Plaza are also provided, as is Metrobus service to Montgomery Mall and Silver Spring.

## **B. PROPOSED LOOP BUS CIRCULATION**

Improved accessibility to retail shops is an objective of the Plan. (See Section 3.1 C.) One strategy to achieve this objective is to consider provision of a bus circulating throughout the CBD. Such a loop bus system would primarily support retail business and cannot be considered a traffic mitigation measure. The service should connect Metro, major parking facilities, and the major retail areas. Measures to encourage use of the system should include a vehicle with a distinctive appearance, widespread promotion of the service, and free or low-cost fares subsidized by the merchants.

Careful planning is needed to ensure effective service. Many communities have implemented downtown bus circulator services and, in most instances, these services have continued for the primary purpose of maintaining an ambience or uniqueness in the area. San Antonio, Texas; Richmond, Virginia; and Annapolis, Maryland have all used such systems. The City of Baltimore operated a circulating trolley bus in the CBD and satellite parking lots. It was discontinued because of its cost, as was a midday shuttle bus in the Bethesda CBD several years ago.

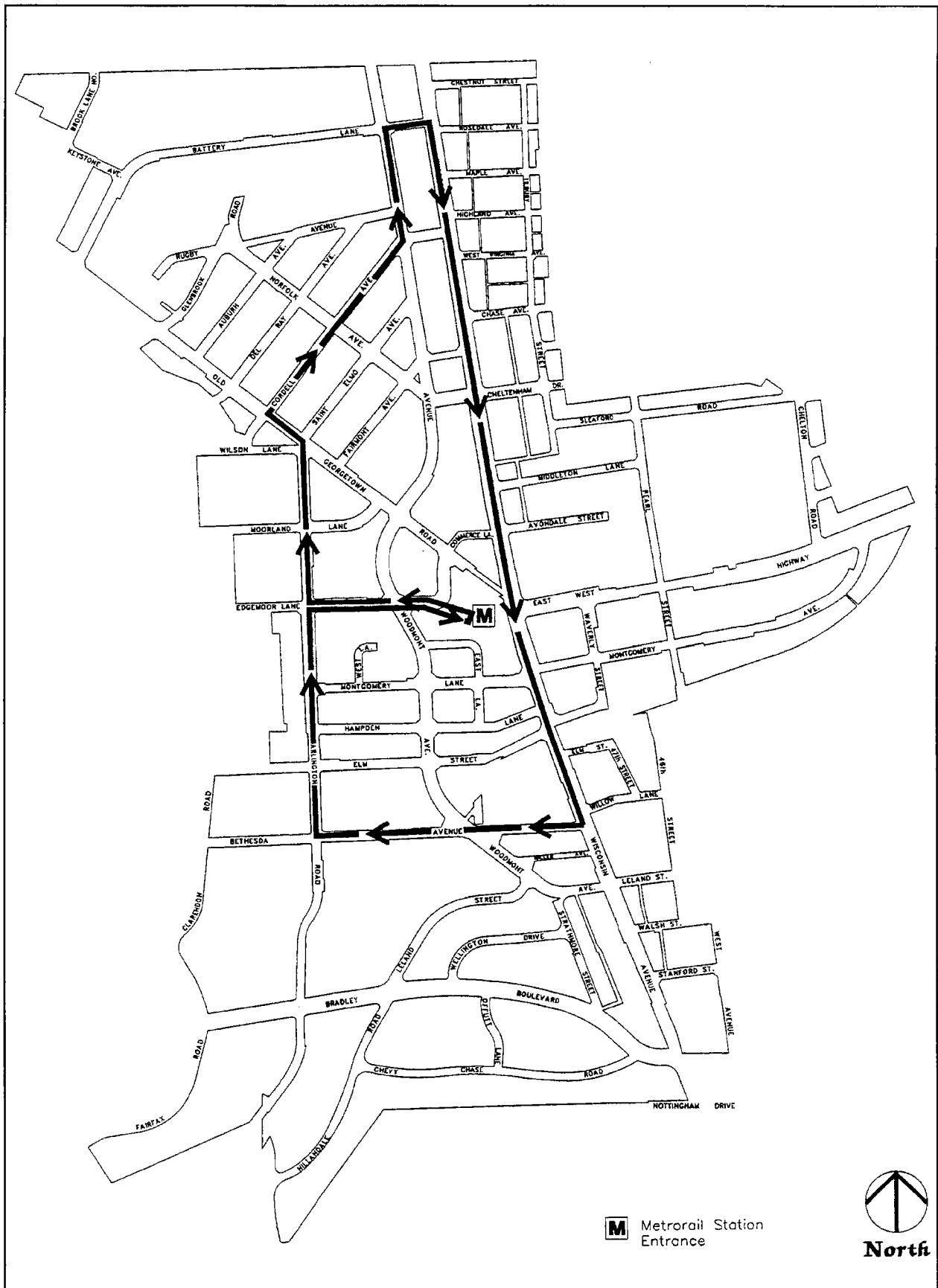
The Montgomery County Department of Transportation and the Bethesda Urban Partnership worked with local merchants to develop an all-day loop service following the route shown in Figure 5.1. Funding details have not been worked out but there appears to be broad support for the service.

## **C. FUTURE SILVER SPRING-BETHESDA TROLLEY**

The Silver Spring-Bethesda Trolley/Trail consists of a light rail transit line and a recreational trail between the Central Business Districts of Bethesda and Silver Spring. It uses an abandoned railroad right-of-way, the Georgetown Branch. An essential element of the trolley/trail is direct passenger transfer to the Metro stations in the two CBDs.

# CONCEPTUAL LOOP BUS ROUTE

FIGURE 5.1



This will allow the trolley to function, in part, as a shuttle between the two arms of Metro's Red Line.

The *Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment* recommended a Bethesda trolley terminal under the Apex Building. It also anticipated that the south entrance to the Metro station would be built. Subsequent studies indicate that this terminal location would require substantial modifications to the building to gain access to the Metro station. The nature of these modifications and the cost implications warrant that alternative Metro-trolley connections be considered.

The Sector Plan recognizes that the final trolley alignment and terminal location decision will be made in the context of federal and state requirements, which will include the evaluation of all reasonable alternatives. The Sector Plan identifies two alternatives and deletes the existing Master Plan terminal. (See Figure 5.2.) The alternatives are:

1. **West of Apex Building: staying within the Georgetown Branch right-of-way and locating the terminal west of the Apex Building at Elm Street.**
2. **North of Apex Building: staying within the Georgetown Branch right-of-way and locating the terminal access north of the Apex Building within the right-of-way of Elm Street at Wisconsin Avenue.**

The County Council considered other alternative terminal locations. They rejected several on-street alternatives because of their negative impacts.

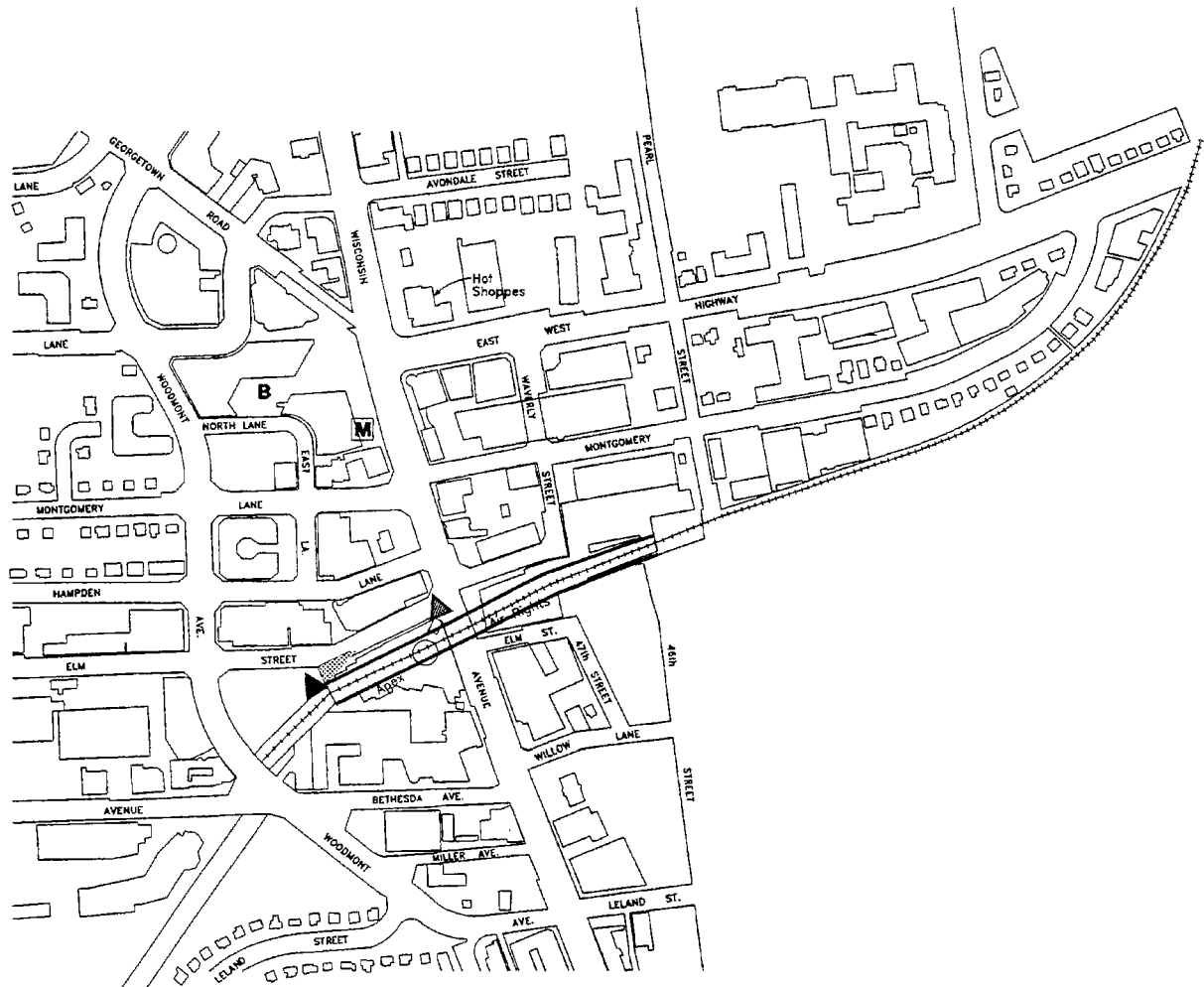
The following criteria were considered in identifying options for further study:

1. **The alternative must provide reasonably direct access for rail and bus at the Bethesda Metro station, so that public transit ridership will not be significantly reduced.**

The North and West of Apex alternatives provide such access if a south entrance to the Metro station is built. For the terminal West of Apex, riders would have access to Metro via a tunnel to be constructed under Elm Street to a new south entrance. For the terminal North of Apex, riders would have access to Metro via elevators to be constructed within the Elm Street right-of-way at Wisconsin Avenue. Some buses would be relocated to Elm Street.

2. **The hiker-biker trail recommended by the Georgetown Branch Master Plan must be accommodated.**

This criterion focuses on the use of the tunnel under the Air Rights and Apex Buildings at Wisconsin Avenue. The alternatives use tunnel space for double tracks needed to maintain the system schedule. The tunnel area for the trail would be greatly reduced or perhaps eliminated. The Bicycle Network Plan in Section 5.5 recommends an on-street bicycle route to either replace or supplement the tunnel route.



## Legend

- ++++ Rail Line
- ▲ North of Apex Terminal
- ▲ West of Apex Terminal
- M Metrorail Station Entrance
- B Metrobus and Ride On Bus Station
- Right-of-Way Needed
- == Air Rights/Apex Buildings Tunnel



3. **The impact on automobile access, traffic circulation, and congestion must be acceptable.**

The North and West of Apex alternatives will need to have some buses relocated to stops along Elm Street. The North of Apex alternative may require Elm Street to become one lane, one way and/or bus only at the Wisconsin Avenue intersection.

## **5.4 PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION**

### **A. EXISTING PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION**

Sidewalks throughout the CBD serve as pedestrian routes and are enhanced by the "Discovery Trail," a mid-block path combining sidewalks and urban open spaces. The largest number of pedestrians are found within the Metro Core District and along the sidewalks of Wisconsin Avenue, Old Georgetown Road, and East-West Highway. The location of major destinations along these corridors is the primary reason for the higher pedestrian volumes. Such destinations include the Metro station, the post office, large parking facilities, office buildings, and movie theaters.

The following streets provide important pedestrian connections in the CBD:

1. Willow Lane links the Town of Chevy Chase Section 4, Elm Street Park, and Parking Lot 24 with the Metro Core District.
2. Woodmont Avenue from Old Georgetown Road to Norfolk Avenue links the Metro Core with the shops and restaurants of the Woodmont Triangle.
3. Norfolk Avenue and Cheltenham Lane link the residential communities along Battery Lane with the Metro Core District.
4. Montgomery Lane, within the TS-R District, links the Metro Core to the library, used by employees and residents alike.
5. Bethesda Avenue, within the Arlington Road District, links the Edgemoor community with the Town of Chevy Chase Section 4, via Willow Lane. Significant destinations along this street include the Giant grocery store, several parking facilities, an entrance to the Capital Crescent Trail, and the Farm Women's Cooperative Market.

Local pedestrian movements are dispersed throughout the sidewalk network. However, due to the concentration of land uses, even local routes have a considerable amount of pedestrian traffic. The 1984 Bethesda Streetscape Plan therefore recognized the need for upgrading all the pedestrian paths within the Metro Core District.

The current network of sidewalks accommodates these pedestrian routes fairly well and there is generally good pedestrian access within the Metro Core District. However, large numbers of pedestrians must cross Wisconsin Avenue at East-West Highway because of a lack of alternative routes. Along East-West Highway, east of Pearl Street, sidewalks are



too narrow to safely accommodate pedestrians from the high school and high-rise office buildings.

Some streets within the transition areas lack sidewalks. Other streets with significant pedestrian volumes, such as Norfolk and Bethesda Avenues, lack streetscape enhancements.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

One of the Sector Plan goals is to encourage walking and the use of transit to reduce reliance on the automobile. To achieve this goal, sidewalks within the Metro Core District should be at least 20 feet in width and at least 15 feet in all other areas. Additional building setbacks beyond the required right-of-way may be needed to achieve the recommended sidewalk widths. The proposed streetscape plan also supports this goal, but it must be further supported with intersection improvements that enhance safety and convenience for pedestrians.

The Plan recommends that pedestrian crosswalks be provided at this time for intersections with heavy projected traffic congestion. Future conditions at these intersections may require studies to assure an acceptable level of traffic flow.

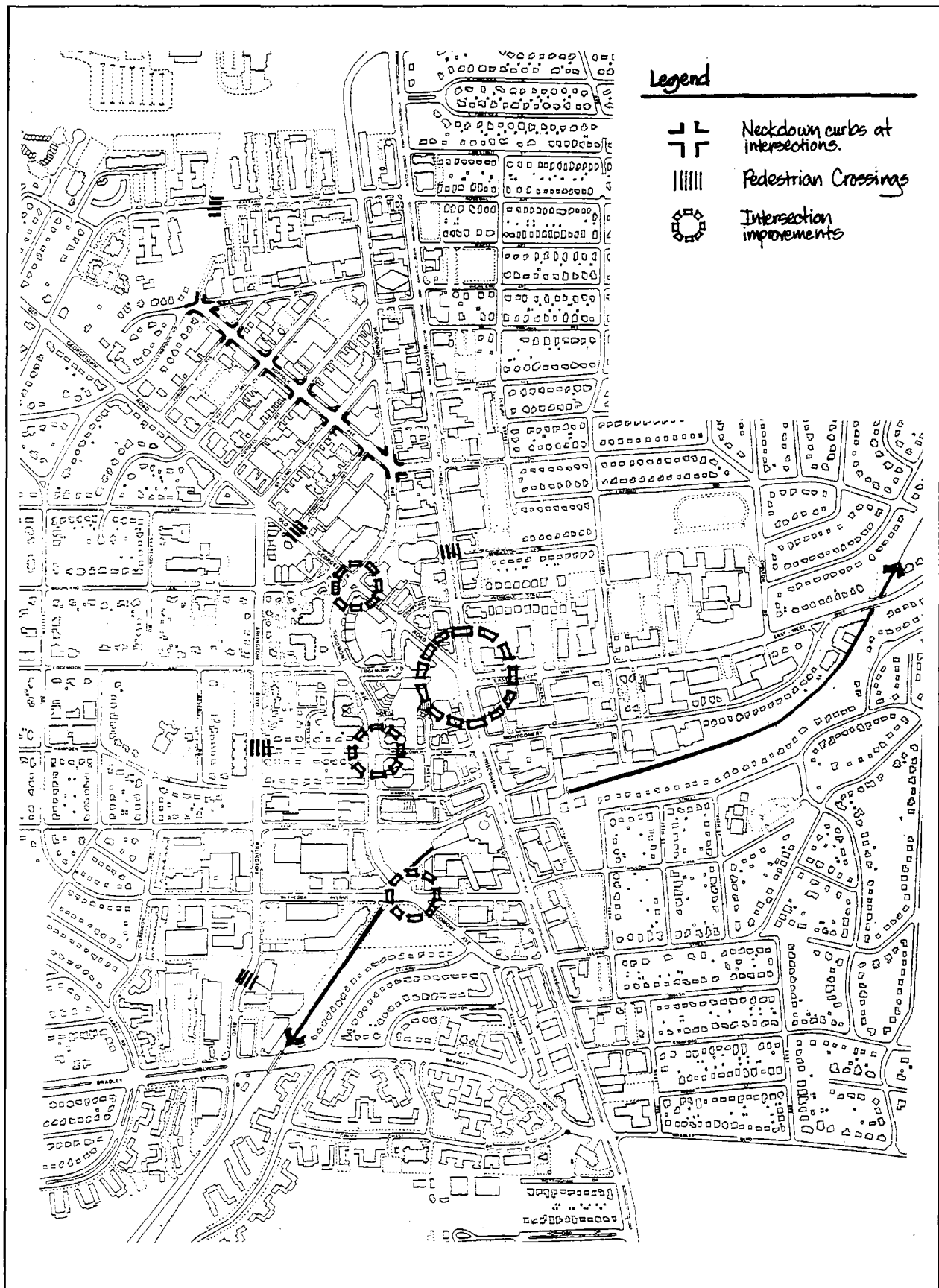
As a general guideline, most intersections within the CBD should have curb radii of 15 feet or less, as called for in the 1984 streetscape plan. Tight corners slow down turning vehicles to 10 or 20 miles per hour, which is safer for pedestrians. It is not appropriate within a pedestrian oriented, transit-served CBD to encourage higher speeds by using larger corner radii. Likewise, free right- or left-turning lanes separated from the through movement lanes by traffic islands should be discouraged because turning traffic tends not to yield to pedestrians, even in marked crosswalks. Existing corners with radii exceeding 15 feet should be tightened. Along higher capacity streets without on-street parking, corner curb radii may be increased to 25 feet to accommodate turning vehicles.

Intersections along local streets identified as Main Streets within the Street-scape Plan—Norfolk Avenue, Cheltenham Drive, and Bethesda Avenue—should be narrowed (or “necked down”) at their intersections with cross streets to accommodate their higher pedestrian volumes. These streets have permanent parking lanes which allow the street to be necked down at corners without affecting travel lanes. These recommendations are subject to capacity conditions and operational studies. Intersections with a significant number of left and right turns, such as Bethesda Avenue and Arlington Road, should not be necked down. Studies will also be required to ensure that adequate flow to the stormwater drainage system is not interrupted. (See Figure 5.3.)

### **INTERSECTION OF WISCONSIN AVENUE, EAST-WEST HIGHWAY, AND OLD GEORGETOWN ROAD**

This intersection next to the Metro station has some of the highest levels of pedestrian crossings in Bethesda. Pedestrians generally travel either along the street to destinations on Wisconsin Avenue, such as the post office and the Metro Center food court, or to Metro using the tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue, or the escalator entrance at Metro Center.







Currently, pedestrians crossing Wisconsin Avenue are not adequately accommodated due to existing conflicts with right turns from East-West Highway and a pedestrian crossing restriction along the south side of the intersection. No crosswalk is provided along the south side because MCDOT and the State Highway Administration (SHA) want to 1) encourage pedestrians destined for Metro to use the tunnel, and 2) better accommodate left-turning vehicles from East-West Highway to Wisconsin Avenue. Metro-bound pedestrians usually do take the tunnel because it is a more convenient route than crossing at street level to the escalators at Metro Center. However, some pedestrians heading to street level destinations cross at the south side of the intersection despite restrictions, bollards and chains, and the lack of a pedestrian walk light because it is more convenient than entering the tunnel and taking the escalator back up to street level.

The Plan recommends that the restriction on pedestrian access at the south side of the intersection be continued. All street-level pedestrians should be required to cross the intersection to the north, using existing crosswalks. Pedestrians walking to Metro would continue to use the tunnel. More substantial physical barriers should be installed to discourage crossing on the south side, supplemented by better signs to guide pedestrians to the Metro tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue. Improvements to guide pedestrians to the Metro tunnel should be coordinated with the streetscape design. A study will be required by the time of the Project Plan for the Hot Shoppes property to determine the feasibility and cost of extending the existing Wisconsin Avenue tunnel under East-West Highway.

#### **OLD GEORGETOWN ROAD AND WOODMONT AVENUE**

Provide a 25-foot radius for the corners at the south side of the intersection on either side of Woodmont Avenue to limit vehicle turning speeds and reduce the pedestrian crossing distance. Provide sufficient time in the traffic light cycle for pedestrians crossing at 3 feet per second.

#### **MONTGOMERY LANE AND WOODMONT AVENUE**

Provide 15-foot radii at all corners except the northeast one to reduce the pedestrian crossing distance. Consider providing a traffic light with pedestrian crosswalks on all four corners, if shown to be feasible through a traffic operational analysis, to create safe pedestrian passage between the Metro and the library. Currently, two lanes of traffic are allowed free left turns onto Montgomery Lane, which compromises safe pedestrian crossing. MCDOT should include the convenience and safety of pedestrians and cyclists as a concern in any feasibility analysis.

#### **BETHESDA AVENUE AND WOODMONT AVENUE**

Improve pedestrian crossings at this angled intersection by reducing the pavement width of the free right turns onto Bethesda Avenue to lessen the pedestrian's exposure to turning vehicles and providing neck-downs where appropriate. MCDOT should consider the convenience and safety of pedestrians and cyclists in any revised design for this intersection. Lights should be timed so that pedestrians may cross in all directions at three feet per second.

## MID-BLOCK PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

Consider providing new traffic signals to allow mid-block pedestrian crossings along certain streets that have blocks over 500 feet in length and where adjacent destinations create pedestrian movement. The Plan recommends that a mid-block signal be provided at the following locations, if endorsed by MCDOT or SHA after an operational analysis:

1. Wisconsin Avenue and Middleton Lane, to allow pedestrian movement along the "Discovery Trail."
2. Old Georgetown Road and Fairmont Avenue, to facilitate pedestrian movement from the TS-R neighborhood along Fairmont Avenue to the War Memorial Park in the Woodmont Triangle. This crossing may be considered if future pedestrian volumes warrant and would be subject to capacity conditions and operational studies.
3. Arlington Road and Montgomery Lane, to improve pedestrian access to the library from the Metro Core District via the TS-R neighborhood.
4. Arlington Road, south of Bethesda Avenue, as a part of a relocated main entrance to the Bradley Shopping Center.
5. Battery Lane, at the M-NCPPC park pathway, to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists between NIH and the Bethesda CBD.

Additional locations are identified in the Bicycle Network Plan.

## 5.5 BICYCLE NETWORK PLAN

### A. OBJECTIVES

The Sector Plan recommends creating a network of bikeways to encourage bicycling as an alternative to driving an automobile and as a form of recreation.

The objectives for the network are:

1. Provide safe and efficient bicycle access for adults and children who are not highly experienced cyclists.
2. Provide a logical relationship to the County-wide Master Plan of Bikeways and bikeway projects in surrounding neighborhoods.
3. Integrate the local bikeway system with the existing street system while maintaining space for pedestrians and, where possible, on-street parking.
4. Provide Biker Friendly Areas and promote motorist awareness.

5. Provide linkages between districts of the CBD, surrounding neighborhoods, shops, employment centers, transit, and community facilities for both utilitarian and recreational cycling. Ensure safe crossings of major roads.
6. Provide a Bicycle Network Plan that can be implemented.

## **B. BIKEWAY CLASSES**

The bikeways are classified according to the categories of the Master Plan of Bikeways, illustrated in Figure 5.4. The bikeway classes are Class 1, separate paths; Class 2, striped bike lanes; and Class 3, shared travel lanes. The Class 1 paths should be 10 feet wide unless constraints require reduction to 8 feet. When a Class 1 bikeway is a combined sidewalk/bikeway, it should be a minimum of 12 feet wide as recommended by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. This sidewalk/bikeway occurs only when an important link must be made and other classes are not appropriate. In addition, special signs should warn cyclists to watch out for pedestrians. Paving materials for bikeways are to be consistent with those recommended in the Streetscape Plan and will be subject to MCDOT approval.

The bikeway routes and their classes are shown in Table 5.2, with notes concerning implementation and function. The following discussion presents highlights of the Bikeway Network Plan. (See Figure 5.5.)

## **C. THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL (CCT)**

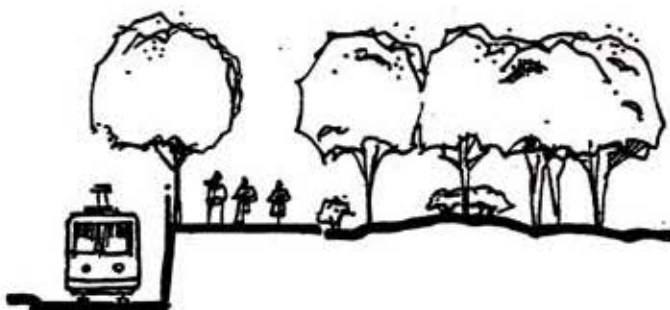
The Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) will link the Bethesda and Silver Spring Central Business Districts, the C&O Canal Trail, Georgetown, and Capitol Hill via the proposed Metropolitan Branch Trail. The trail will be important for commuters and recreational users on bicycles as well as for those on foot, including people with disabilities. This regional hiker/biker route will run parallel to the proposed Silver Spring-Bethesda Trolley within the Georgetown Branch right-of-way, where feasible. Therefore, careful coordination is needed between the trolley and trail. (See Section 5.3C.) Wherever possible, design standards should be consistent with those used for the existing section of the CCT immediately to the south. It is a 10-foot-wide paved trail which runs on the original railroad centerline.

The CCT will have both a street-level route and a tunnel route. The tunnel route runs in the Georgetown Branch right-of-way through an existing tunnel under the Apex and Air Rights buildings. Use of this route will provide a high degree of continuity and will separate trail users from the traffic and delays of a busy intersection. Security is an important consideration in the design and operation of this route. For example, this tunnel must be well lit for safety. A street-level route is also important since it will allow easy access to many businesses and activities and will contribute to the vitality of the area. Its high visibility might make it a preferred route for some people. (See Route A2 on Figure 5.6.) The tunnel area for the CCT may be greatly reduced or perhaps eliminated if double tracks for the trolley are needed there. In the event that the CCT does not run through the tunnel, the CCT will follow only a street level route.

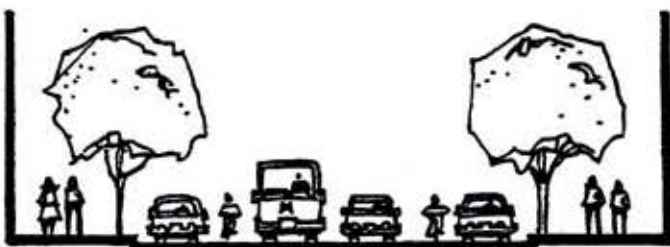
The street-level route minimizes the detour from the railroad right-of-way. It will be a Class 1 bike path on Bethesda Avenue and Willow Lane, which will then run through Elm



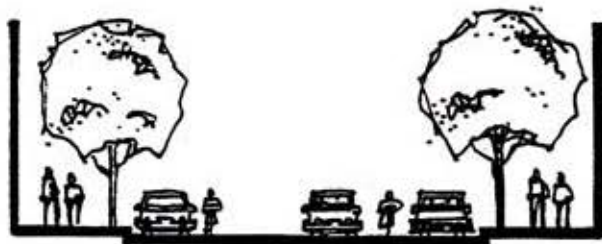
Class I  
Off street in CBD, two way  
bikeway, defined by trees,  
& separated from sidewalk



Class I  
Capital Crescent Trail  
regional bikeway (tunnel  
section not shown).

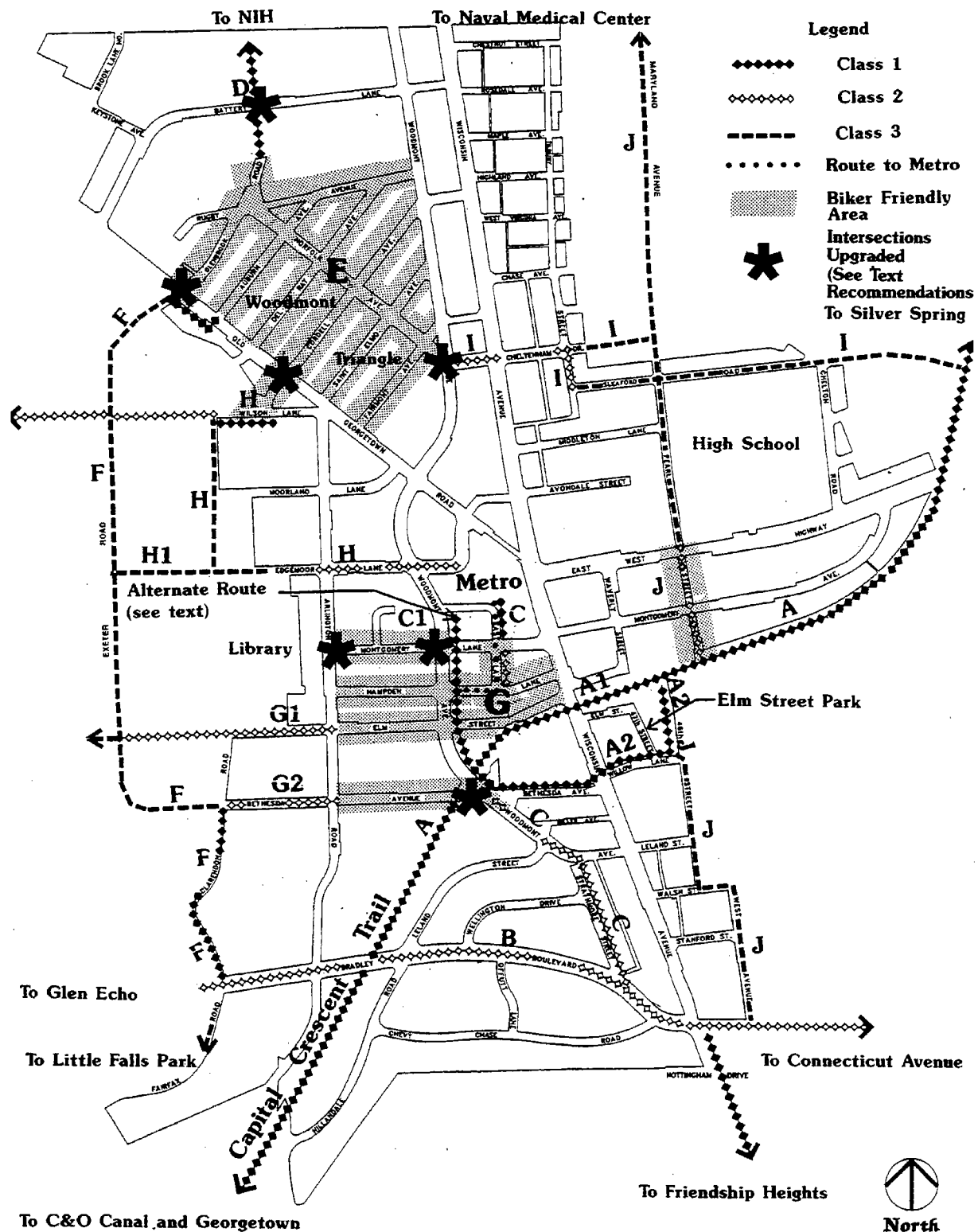


Class II  
On street in CBD, one way  
bikeway with striped lanes  
adjacent to parking.



Class III  
On street in CBD, shared  
travel lanes adjacent to  
parking.





Street Park and rejoin the railroad right-of-way. The bike path in the park should be connected to the north-south route on Pearl and 46th Streets. Due to the loss of on-street parking that would result from this route, another one could be considered if a tunnel route is also provided. This alternative could run along Lot 31, Leland Street, 46th Street in the Town of Chevy Chase, and Elm Street Park to the railroad right-of-way. However, it would be quite constrained, not allowing a continuous Class 1 bike path. In addition, it would require a greater detour and would depend on consent of the Town. For these reasons, the other street-level route is preferred, even if a tunnel route is provided.

A safe crossing for the CCT is essential at Woodmont Avenue. Redesign of this intersection could include neck-downs, special paving and markings for crosswalks, special signs for motorists and cyclists, and pedestrian/bicycle signal indications.

An important link is provided from the CCT to the Metro station. It is designated Route C. This connection includes a separate Class 1 bike path for two blocks along Woodmont Avenue. The route then runs on side streets to the Metro in a combination of classes. This link also includes a spur, which stays on Woodmont Avenue for one more block to Montgomery Lane to provide residents with a good connection to the CCT. Enhanced crosswalks should be considered on the west and south legs of the Woodmont Avenue/Montgomery Lane intersection for the spur. (See Route C on Figure 5.7.)

There is a more desirable route to the Metro which may be possible. Route C1 is more direct and level and could be a continuous, separate Class 1 bike path its entire length. However, this route would require obtaining approval for a new traffic signal at Montgomery Lane and Woodmont Avenue and making changes to the design of the Lorenz site. If this bikeway is feasible, its future incorporation should not compromise the public space and "Discovery Trail" at the Lorenz site.

#### **D. BIKER FRIENDLY AREAS**

Biker Friendly Areas (BFA) should be established to provide continuity of bikeways through the CBD and better access to stores and transit. BFA are particularly appropriate where striped bike lanes are difficult to fit continuously because of space limitations and on-street parking needs. However, BFA designation should not preclude striping of lanes where appropriate.

The Biker Friendly Areas could incorporate a variety of features to alert motorists and invite cyclists: neck-downs at intersections and special crosswalks, distinctive signs and logos, secured and frequent bike racks, entry features, and posted bike route maps. Features within the public right-of-way would require the approval of MCDOT. The most critical function would be alerting motorists to the fact that these are special streets which cyclists are invited to use and where cyclists should be protected.

The two main Biker Friendly Areas are Area E, covering the Woodmont Triangle, and Area G, covering the Metro station, Capital Crescent Trail Area, and linking streets. (See Figure 5.5.) Two blocks of Pearl Street are also recommended for designation. Streets recommended as Biker Friendly Areas are listed in Table 5.2, Bikeway Locations and Classes, and are shown on the Bicycle Network Plan.

Table 5.2

BIKEWAYS: LOCATIONS AND CLASSES

Route/Area	Location	Limits	Class	Notes
<b>A1. CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL - TUNNEL ROUTE</b>				
	Georgetown Branch Right-of-Way	West Sector Plan Boundary to East Sector Plan Boundary	1	Via tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue if the tunnel is not needed for the trolley.
<b>A2. CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL (CCT) - STREET LEVEL ROUTE</b>				
	Georgetown Branch Right-of-Way	West Sector Plan Boundary to Woodmont Avenue	1	
	Bethesda Avenue	Woodmont Avenue to Wisconsin Avenue	1	Removes a line of on-street parking. An alternative to this route may be considered.
	Willow Lane	Wisconsin Avenue to Elm Street Park	1	One-way street eastbound. Removes a line of on-street parking.
	Elm Street Park	Willow Lane to Capital Crescent Trail	1	
	Georgetown Branch Right-of-Way	Elm Street Park to East Sector Plan Boundary	1	
<b>B. BRADLEY BIKEWAY (East-West)</b>				
	Bradley Boulevard	West Sector Plan Boundary to Wisconsin Avenue	2	
	Bradley Lane	Wisconsin Avenue to West Avenue/East Sector Plan Boundary	1	Southside of Bradley Lane. Should provide for safe crossing.
<b>C. METRO - BRADLEY BIKEWAY (Metro Station to CCT and Bradley Boulevard)</b>				
	East Lane	Metro Entrance to Montgomery Lane	2 & BFA	
		Montgomery Lane to Hampden Lane	1	Remove a line of on-street parking.
	Hampden Lane	East Lane to Woodmont Avenue	BFA	



# BIKEWAYS: LOCATIONS AND CLASSES (Continued)

Route/Area	Location	Limits	Class	Notes
C. (Continued)				
	Woodmont Avenue	Hampden Lane to Bethesda Avenue	1	With connection to CCT.
		Bethesda Avenue to Strathmore Street	2	
	Strathmore Street	Woodmont Avenue to Bradley Boulevard	2	
	Spur: Woodmont Avenue	Montgomery Lane to Hampden Lane	1	Allows connection to the Montgomery Lane mixed street/BFA.
C1. ALTERNATIVE TO METRO - BRADLEY BIKEWAY (Hampden Lane to Metro)				
	Woodmont Avenue	North Lane to Montgomery Lane	1	Requires design changes to the Lorenz site and approval of a new traffic signal at Montgomery Lane.
D. LINK; NIH TO WOODMONT TRIANGLE				
	Battery Lane Urban Park	Rugby Avenue to NIH Campus	1	Provide crossing of Battery Lane with user-activated signal, crosswalk warning signs. New signal subject to MCDOT approval.
E. WOODMONT TRIANGLE BIKER FRIENDLY AREA				
	Glenbrook Road	Old Georgetown Road to Rugby Avenue	BFA	New signal subject to MCDOT and SHA approval.
	Auburn Avenue	Old Georgetown Road to Rugby Avenue	BFA	
	Del Ray Avenue	Old Georgetown Road to Rugby Avenue	BFA	
	Cordell Avenue	Old Georgetown Road to Woodmont Avenue	BFA	
	St. Elmo Avenue	Old Georgetown Road to Woodmont Avenue	BFA	
	Fairmont Avenue	Old Georgetown Road to Norfolk Avenue	3*	Provide new crossing to park.

# BIKEWAYS: LOCATIONS AND CLASSES (Continued)

Route/Area	Location	Limits	Class	Notes
E. (Continued)				
	Rugby Avenue	Glenbrook Road to Woodmont Avenue	BFA	
	Norfolk Avenue	Rugby Avenue to Woodmont Avenue	BFA	
F. NORTH-SOUTH ROUTE, WEST SIDE (Woodmont Triangle to Little Falls Park)				
	Old Georgetown Road	Exeter Road to Auburn Avenue	1	Widen to 12 feet. share with pedestrians. Use only if new signal at Glenbrook Road is not feasible.
	Exeter Road	Old Georgetown Road to Clarendon Road	3	BCC Planning Area.
	Clarendon Road	Exeter Road/Bethesda Avenue to Fairfax Road	1	
	Fairfax Road	Clarendon Road to Bradley Boulevard	1	
G. METRO AND CAPITAL CRESCENT BIKER FRIENDLY AREA AND LINKS				
G1.	Elm Street	Arlington Road to Wisconsin Avenue	BFA	
G2.	Bethesda Avenue	Woodmont Avenue to Arlington Road	BFA	
		Clarendon Road to Arlington Road	3	
		Exeter Road to Clarendon Road	2	
	Montgomery Lane	Arlington Road to Woodmont Avenue	BFA	New signal at Arlington Road for crossing to library subject to MCDOT approval.
	Hampden Lane	Arlington Road to Wisconsin Avenue	BFA	Also Route to Metro. New signal at Arlington Road for crossing to library subject to MCDOT approval.

\* Mixed-street recommended.

# BIKEWAYS: LOCATIONS AND CLASSES (Continued)

Route/Area	Location	Limits	Class	Notes
G2. (Continued)				
	East Lane	Hampden Lane to Montgomery Lane	2 & BFA	Route to Metro.
H. LINKS; WOODMONT TRIANGLE AND METRO	Edgemoor Lane	Exeter Road to Arlington Road	3	B-CC Planning Area.
		Arlington Road to Metro	2	Remove one lane to accommodate bike lanes. Subject to MCDOT approval.
	Clarendon Road	Wilson Lane to Edgemoor Lane	3	
	Wilson Lane	Exeter Road to Clarendon Road	2	BCC Planning Area.
		Clarendon Road to Cordell Avenue	1	South side of road. Widen to 12 feet. Share with pedestrians.
	Cordell Avenue	Wilson Lane to Old Georgetown Road	1	Northwest side in front of church. New signal at Old Georgetown Road. Subject to MCDOT and SHA approval.
I. LINK; WOODMONT TRIANGLE TO HIGH SCHOOL AND CCT	Cheltenham Drive	Woodmont Avenue to Wisconsin Avenue	2 & BFA	
		Wisconsin to Tilbury Street	2	
		Tilbury Street to Pearl Street	2	One-way westbound.
	Tilbury Street	Cheltenham Drive to Sleaford Road	2	Two-way for bikes. One-way north for cars.
	Sleaford Road	Tilbury Street to CCT	3	

## BIKEWAYS: LOCATIONS AND CLASSES (Continued)

Route/Area	Location	Limits	Class	Notes
J.	NORTH-SOUTH ROUTE, EAST SIDE (Naval Medical Command to Friendship Heights)			
	Pearl Street/Maryland Avenue	Jones Bridge Road/North Sector Plan Boundary to East-West Highway	3	
	Pearl Street	East-West Highway to CCT	2 & BFA	Possible trolley route.
	46th Street	Willow Lane to Walsh Street	3	Subject to approval by the Town of Chevy Chase
	Walsh Street	46th Street to West Drive	3	
	West Avenue	Walsh Street to Bradley Lane	3	Subject to approval by the Town of Chevy Chase

## **E. BICYCLE PARKING AND SIGNS**

Secure and accessible bicycle parking should be provided throughout Biker Friendly Areas and at transit stations to include the Bethesda Metro station; the access points of the CCT, Elm Street near the "Discovery Trail," the intersection of Bethesda and Woodmont Avenues and 46th Street near the trail; community facilities, and employment centers. Bicycle parking should also be provided in new development through the development review process.

The Capital Crescent Trail is expected to attract a large number of cyclists and hikers to Bethesda who are not familiar with the area and will need directional signs. A better sign system is needed to indicate the direction to major destinations such as the Bethesda Metro station, NIH, and the Naval Medical Command. In addition, bike signs should be prominent in locations where bikes are allowed to turn, but cars are not, such as from eastbound Cheltenham Drive to southbound Tilbury Street.

## **F. NEW TRAFFIC SIGNALS AND OTHER INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS**

New traffic signals and other intersection improvements should be considered to improve bicycle access, safety, and continuity. (See Figure 5.5.) An operational analysis by MCDOT would be necessary for each traffic signal to determine feasibility. SHA approval would be needed for those along Old Georgetown Road. In some cases, a signal could replace an existing signal at a nearby location. Locations to be considered for traffic signals are:

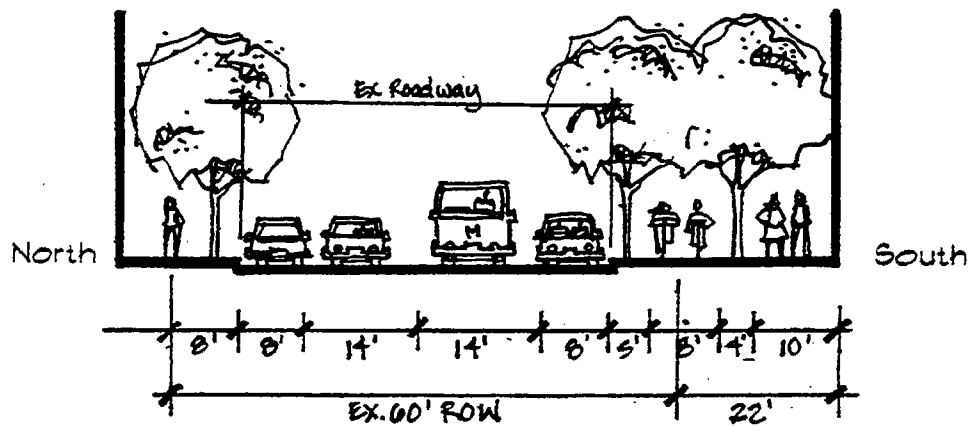
1. Old Georgetown Road and Cordell Avenue (high priority)
- 2.\* Battery Lane mid-block (user-activated signal plus crosswalk and warning signs)
- 3.\* Woodmont Avenue and Montgomery Lane (serves the more desirable route between CCT and Metro, Route C1. MCDOT has looked at this intersection in the past and determined that a signal was not needed at that time.)
- 4.\* Arlington Road and Montgomery Lane
5. Old Georgetown Road and Glenbrook Road

\*Signals at these intersections have also been identified in the Plan as desirable for pedestrian access.

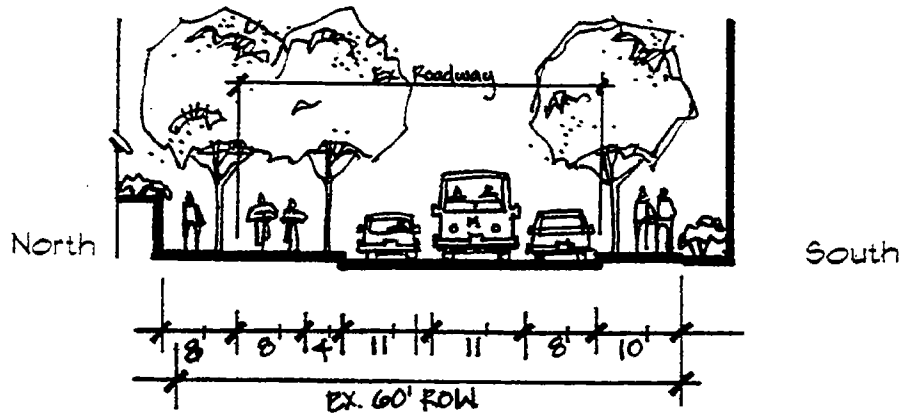
Although the intersection of Woodmont Avenue and Norfolk Avenue/Cheltenham Drive has recently received a new traffic signal, other improvements should be considered at this location, such as enhanced crosswalks, neck-downs, and a better sign system.

## **G. MASTER PLAN OF BIKEWAYS**

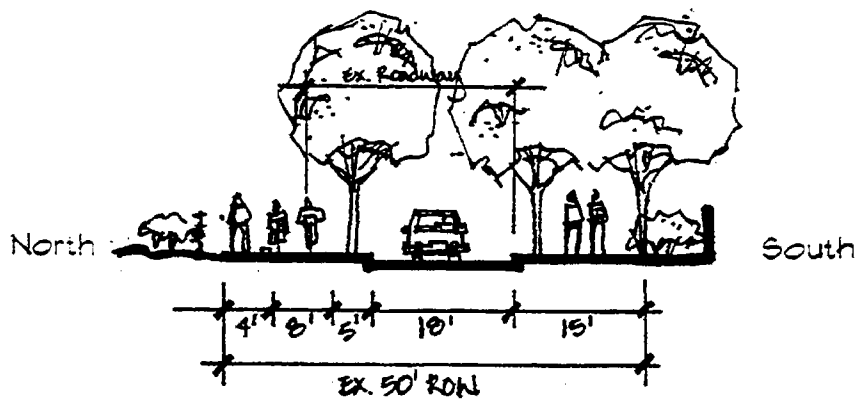
Most of the bikeways recommended in this Sector Plan are additions to the 1978 Master Plan of Bikeways. However, three bikeways shown on the Master Plan of Bikeways have been deleted. Two of them are Montgomery Lane/Montgomery Avenue and East-West Highway within the Sector Plan area, because they duplicate the Capital Crescent Trail functions. The third is the Woodmont Avenue bikeway north of North Lane, due to constraints. All other bikeways recommended by the Master Plan of Bikeways remain.



Bethesda Avenue in front of  
Lot 31, west of Woodmont Avenue



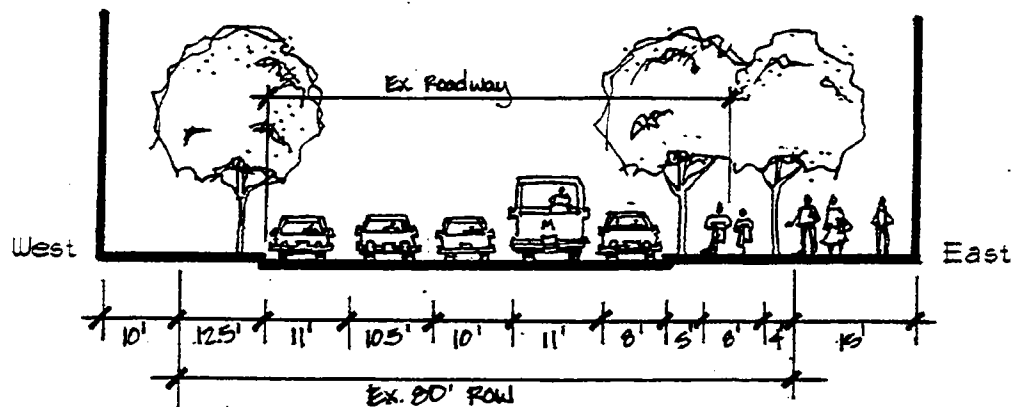
Bethesda Avenue just east of  
Woodmont Avenue



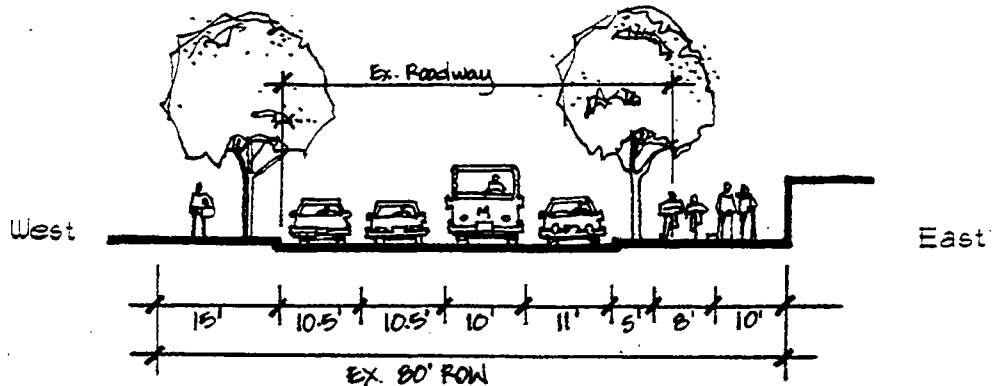
Willow Avenue just east of  
Wisconsin Avenue

# METRO BRADLEY BIKEWAY-C (CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL TO METRO)

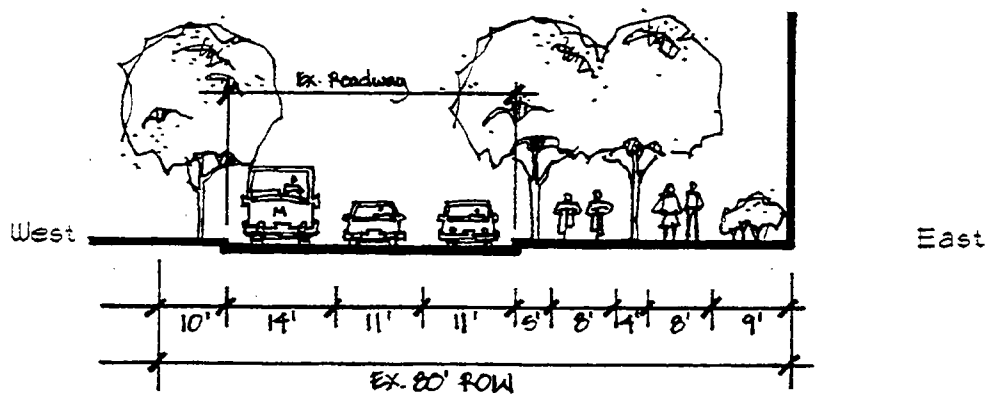
FIGURE 5.7



Woodmont Avenue from  
Bethesda Avenue to Elm Street



Woodmont Avenue from  
Elm Street to Hampden Lane



Woodmont Avenue from  
Hampden Lane to Montgomery  
Avenue



## 5.6 PARKING

### A. OBJECTIVES

The parking objectives for the Sector Plan area are:

1. Limit the supply of employee parking, including some parking for Metro riders, as part of a balanced public transportation system.
2. Provide an adequate supply of short-term parking for use by retail, restaurant, and small business customers.
3. Add to the supply of public parking in coordination with phased new development.
4. Add public parking in cooperation with the private sector.
5. Provide joint use of selected parking sites with other public uses, such as housing and parks.
6. Develop a public parking implementation strategy consistent with the fiscal integrity of the Parking Lot District Enterprise Fund.
7. Ensure that all parking facilities next to single-family neighborhoods are designed to be compatible with adjacent residences.

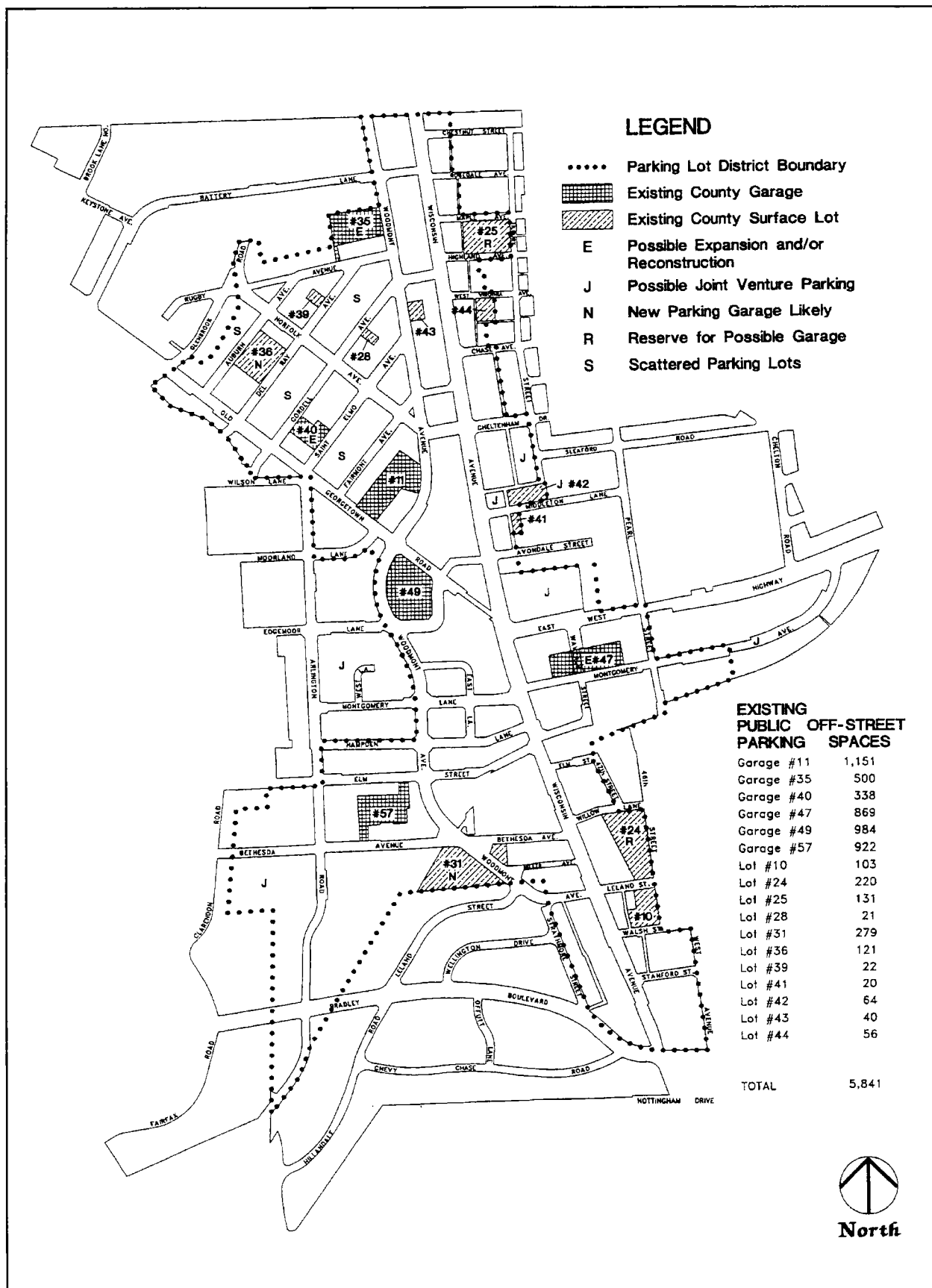
The total number of parking spaces, as of spring 1992, is estimated to be over 20,000. Approximately 70 percent of these parking spaces are privately owned. Of the over 6,500 public parking spaces, almost 90 percent are in off-street parking lots and garages. (See Figure 5.8.)

### B. RECOMMENDED PARKING POLICIES

The Sector Plan recommends a policy of constraining the supply of employee parking in Bethesda. The employee parking supply will be planned to serve the proportion of employees expected to arrive by automobile, including car or van pool. The projected parking demand will vary, depending on how many people are expected to use alternative modes of transportation. The number of long-term spaces should be set to meet the expected vehicle demand during the peak parking accumulation period, based on the non-auto-driver mode share of 37 percent during that period. Limiting employee parking will support the Transportation Management Organization.

The Plan recommends providing an adequate parking supply for retail and service business customers. Short-term parking should continue to be located on surface lots, near the ground level entry of public parking garages, or on the street wherever possible. Additional scattered lots should be located in districts with more retail and service businesses, especially the Woodmont Triangle District. The Plan endorses public-private cooperation to increase the sharing of parking facilities between day and evening users. Innovative approaches could include expanded valet parking and review of pricing policies to give private owners incentives to offer day and evening use.







The Plan recommends that on-street parking be allowed within the CBD during non-peak hours for major routes, on a case-by-case basis. For local streets, on-street parking should have unrestricted hours. On-street parking provides convenient access to stores and services, and physically separates the pedestrian from moving vehicles. Detailed traffic studies will be necessary to determine which major routes can incorporate non-peak hour parking without compromising acceptable traffic flow and safety. Areas to be studied for non-peak on-street parking include:

1. Both sides of Wisconsin Avenue from Bethesda Avenue north to Montgomery Avenue, and from Avondale Street north along Wisconsin Avenue.
2. The south side of Montgomery Lane from Woodmont Avenue to Wisconsin Avenue.
3. The south side of Montgomery Avenue from Waverly Street to the curve as it approaches East-West Highway.
4. The south side of Old Georgetown Road from Wisconsin Avenue to Woodmont Avenue and for the remainder of the road along both sides to the edge of the CBD.
5. Both sides of Woodmont Avenue from Old Georgetown Road south to Bethesda Avenue, except where the street narrows to become two-way at Elm Street.

The Sector Plan assumes provision of spaces for commuters who use Metro. The Division of Parking's current approach is to allow both employees and commuters to obtain long-term parking permits and not to reserve Metro parking in a specific garage. Five hundred reserved commuter spaces are assumed in overall parking demand calculations.

Friendship Heights and Medical Center stations have no commuter parking. Bethesda is the only Parking Lot District (PLD) served by Metro that does not have a parking facility financed by WMATA. The Plan assumes provision of 500 spaces in the Metro Core District as a safety valve for those who are expected to ride Metro. In the future, these spaces may be reassigned to meet an increased demand for employee parking spaces, unless an overriding need to serve transit riders exists.

The Plan recommends that additions to parking supply be staged over time to meet the requirements of new commercial and residential development. In general, new parking facilities will not be constructed until development is approved. Although most new commercial development is expected to occur in the Metro Core District, the Division of Parking should continue to monitor cumulative growth in other districts. In the Arlington Road and Woodmont Triangle Districts, parking demand may increase due to the accumulation of smaller scale developments and housing construction.

In providing future parking supply, the Plan endorses joint ventures between the Division of Parking and private developers. Garage 58 in Silver Spring is an example of how joint ventures might work. There, the developer agreed to acquire Division of Parking land to construct an office building and a parking garage. The garage will be leased to the County for a public parking facility. Such joint development may occur on publicly owned sites or in locations where public property is not readily available, on private sites.

The PLD is an independent taxing district with obligations to bondholders who finance PLD facilities. The Plan endorses a limited expansion of the Bethesda PLD to include both residential and non-residential use in the Transit Station Residential District under the following conditions: The property must be contiguous to the existing PLD, and the property owners must petition the County to join the PLD. Upon joining the PLD, parking demand from new development could be met by PLD purchase of a site or a joint venture within the TS-R District, or by serving some of the need outside the TS-R District.

### **C. RECOMMENDED PARKING FACILITIES**

A study of future parking demand associated with the recommended Plan estimates a need for an additional 8,750 spaces. About 3,500 of these would be new public parking spaces. Section 10.4, Capital Improvements Program, lists an estimated allocation of spaces for new parking structures. (The 4,800 total public spaces listed in the CIP discussion include new and existing spaces.)

To meet the projected demand for additional parking spaces, the Division of Parking will need to acquire new land, build garages on existing surface lots, and establish joint ventures for new public parking facilities. Figure 5.8, Public Parking Requirements, shows current and possible future parking facilities. Other potential sites may need to be considered.

Land acquisition will be required in the Woodmont Triangle District to continue providing scattered lots primarily to serve retail and service businesses. Parking garages are likely to be built on existing Lots 31 and 36 and an expanded Lot 42. Garage 35 may need to be demolished and rebuilt. Lots 24 and 25 may also be needed for parking structures, in the long term.

A joint venture development is one option for providing parking if the TS-R District joins the Parking District, as noted above. The Hot Shoppes, Euro Motorcars, and Beta Corporation sites are potential locations for other joint ventures within the current PLD. The Plan recommends combining Lot 42 with the Beta Corporation surface parking lot east of the Bethesda Theatre Cafe, either by such a joint venture or by direct acquisition. Development of low-density garden apartments or townhouses with below-grade structured parking on this combined site would meet parking demand from new development on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue while providing a sensitive transition between the CBD and the single-family neighborhood. Alternatively, Lot 42 could expand west to Wisconsin Avenue by joint development or land acquisition.

Parking facilities located near single-family residential areas should be designed to ensure compatibility with these areas, and there should be neighborhood participation in the facility planning process. For surface lots, attractive landscaping and screening is required. For garages, below-grade levels are preferred, if financially feasible, and above grade portions should be limited to one story. Facade treatment, lighting, and landscaping should be sensitive to views from nearby residential areas.

The Plan recommends combining land uses on parking sites where feasible. Garage 49 was constructed to allow housing and open space above the garage. These housing units



will increase the amount of mixed-income housing within the CBD. Such provision of mixed-income housing or green open space on the same site as a parking facility is strongly encouraged on certain sites elsewhere in the CBD. The Plan recommends a combination of mixed-income housing and public parking on Garage 35 and Lot 36 in the Woodmont Triangle, and on Lot 31 on Bethesda Avenue. Space for ground floor retail is desirable for decks that front onto streets. Any below-grade parking and mixed-use development of PLD property must fully recognize the responsibility of the PLD to meet public parking needs and the District's financial obligations. Final decisions to build housing and public parking on one site will be made by the County government.

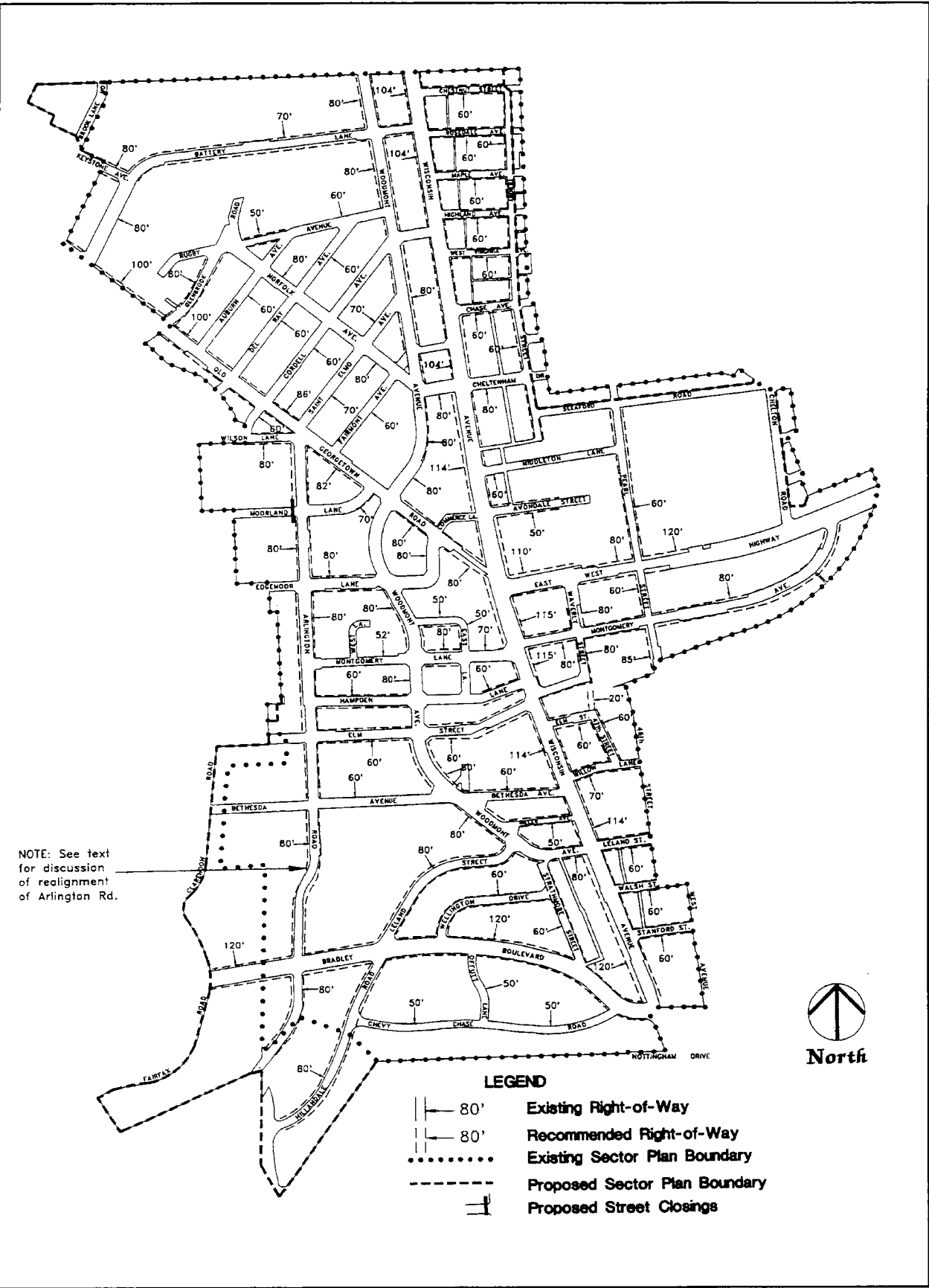
## 5.7 HIGHWAY SYSTEM PLAN

The transportation plan provides for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods to, from, and within the Bethesda CBD. The primary goal of the highway portion of the plan is to provide adequate vehicular mobility within the CBD and sufficient access to and from the CBD along the corridors serving it.

The Bethesda CBD is both blessed and cursed by its location relative to major roadways. It lies at the confluence of three larger capacity state roads: Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355), Old Georgetown Road, and East-West Highway (MD 410). These roads provide good auto access to the local street network in the CBD, but also bring thousands of vehicles daily through the CBD. The combination of through trips and local trips currently operates well, but Bethesda's roads will become considerably more congested during the life of the Sector Plan, especially at intersections. The Plan seeks a balance between future intersection congestion, pedestrian and bicycle needs, and bus transit service.

A comprehensive set of signs prohibiting turns into neighborhoods during the peak periods has served to protect areas lying close to the CBD from most cut-through traffic. Similar efforts to protect neighborhoods are important for the future, but must be considered in the context of each community's needs to ensure that essential neighborhood circulation patterns are maintained.

The Sector Plan recommends intersection improvements but no additional and few widened roads. The plan in Figure 5.9 defines the ultimate width of street and highway rights-of-way to serve the Sector Plan area. The dashed lines indicate where added right-of-way is needed in the future, whether for adequate lane width, sidewalks, street amenities or building setbacks. The Plan widens the rights-of-way along Wisconsin Avenue to 114 feet from East-West Highway to Cheltenham Drive and to 104 feet from Cheltenham Drive to the northern boundary of the Sector Plan. The Plan also widens the right-of-way along East-West Highway between Wisconsin Avenue and Waverly Street to 110 feet and between Waverly and Pearl Streets to 80 feet. Changes to rights-of-way from the 1976 Sector Plan are explained in Appendix F.





The Sector Plan recommends classification of streets within the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan, as shown in Table 5.3. The Plan area contains major highways and arterials. Most of the remaining streets are business district streets, except for several residential streets.

## **A. CAPACITY**

The roadway system for the Bethesda CBD serves traffic at three levels. They are: 1) roads feeding and passing through the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area, 2) access portals to the Bethesda CBD, and 3) internal traffic circulation within the Bethesda CBD.

All three levels are critical to the success of the transportation system in serving the travel needs generated by development within the Bethesda CBD, Montgomery County, and throughout the Washington metropolitan region. A simplified approach that only considers one or two of the above levels could fail to identify necessary highway system improvements or constraint points.

According to the FY 94 Annual Growth Policy (AGP) guidelines, development in a Metro station policy area is limited by the average level of traffic congestion on the streets in the policy area surrounding the Metro station policy area. An acceptable level of congestion in the surrounding area is assigned by the County Council, based on a policy that permits greater traffic congestion in areas where more transit service provides an alternative mode of travel to the automobile. (This procedure is explained in more detail in Appendix E.) Some roads are or will become congested. However, on the average, the Bethesda CBD and Bethesda-Chevy Chase areas meet this roadway congestion standard now and will do so in the future.

The AGP guidelines require an intersection-level analysis to assure that new development is not allowed to cause congestion at critical intersections. The critical lane volume (CLV) technique, which recognizes conflicting turn movements as well as traffic volumes, is used to measure intersection congestion. The adequacy of signalized intersections can be assessed and compared to a standard on the basis of its CLV. Access to the Bethesda CBD is currently being limited by the capacity of the key intersections in and around it, not by the roads leading to it. Although few intersections inside the CBD currently cause problems, more will in the future. There is a good network of internal roads that allows a variety of paths to and from destinations.

The 1982 Amendment to the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan analyzed the traffic that would be produced by additional development in the CBD using new trip generation rates and mode share assumptions. The amount of new development allowed by the plan was limited by the evening peak-hour traffic capacity of streets crossing a cordon around the CBD.

The analysis carried out for this Sector Plan updates the trip-generation rates assumed in 1982 as well as using new transit mode share information that recognizes the installation of the Metro Red Line through the Bethesda CBD. Moreover, it expands the 1982 focus on cordon street capacity to include intersection capacity in both the CBD and at outlying intersections.

Table 5.3

**Highway Classification in Bethesda CBD**

<b>Roadway</b>		
<b>Designation</b>	<b>Roadway</b>	<b>Limits</b>
<b><u>Major Highways</u></b>		
M-3	Bradley Boulevard	W. CBD Boundary to Wisconsin Avenue
M-4	Old Georgetown Road	N. CBD Boundary to Wisconsin Avenue
M-6	Wisconsin Avenue	N. CBD Boundary to Bradley Boulevard
M-20	East-West Highway	E. CBD Boundary to Wisconsin Avenue
<b><u>Arterials</u></b>		
A-20	Leland Street	Bradley Boulevard to Woodmont Avenue
A-68	Woodmont Avenue	N. CBD Boundary to Leland Street
A-82	Arlington Road	Old Georgetown Road to Bradley Boulevard
A-83	Wilson Lane	W. CBD Boundary to Old Georgetown Road
<b><u>Residential Streets</u></b>		
	Avondale Street	From CBD-2 zoning east to dead end
	Battery Lane	Woodmont Avenue to Old Georgetown Road
	Brook Lane	North of Keystone Avenue
	Chevy Chase Drive	Hillandale Road to Bradley Boulevard
	Hillandale Road	Bradley Boulevard south to CBD Boundary
	Keystone Avenue	Battery Lane west to Sector Plan Boundary
	Offutt Lane	Bradley Boulevard to Chevy Chase Drive
	Strathmore Street	Leland Street to Bradley Boulevard
	Wellington Drive	Bradley Boulevard to Strathmore Street

Other streets that front on or lead into single-family detached residential areas, extending from the CBD or from commercial zoned areas, are Residential Streets.

**Business District Streets**

All of the remaining streets in the Bethesda CBD are Business District Streets.



Determining planning standards and objectives for roadway facilities in Montgomery County is a continually evolving process. As used in this Sector Plan, the planning objective is to achieve LOS E/F or better at all locations which, for intersections, would require CLVs of less than 1,600. The Sector Plan's planning standard is for each intersection to have a CLV of less than 1,800.

The allowance of CLVs greater than 1,600 in a planning standard results from a County-wide review of practical and theoretical intersection capacity. The theoretical definition of LOS F is a condition where traffic exceeds available roadway capacity. In a true over-capacity situation, time spent waiting at traffic signals (queue lengths) should increase rapidly. In reality, there are several locations within Montgomery County, including intersections in the Bethesda area, where measured CLVs are currently around 2,000. Most of these intersections would be called congested, but on an average day, the traffic demand does not truly exceed capacity, and queue lengths fluctuate during the peak period.

When an intersection operates at true capacity, the volumes passing through the intersection cannot be increased, regardless of the volumes approaching the intersection. The theoretical capacity of an intersection, therefore, should be closer to a CLV of 2,000 than to a CLV of 1,600. A CLV of 1,800 is almost certain to be perceived by the public as a congested location, yet it is actually a conservative estimate of true intersection capacity.

The highway system plan seeks to attain the CLV planning objective of 1,600 at each intersection. At certain locations, however, the geometric improvements that would be necessary to attain a CLV of 1,600 have negative impacts on adjacent development. At these locations, the planning standard of 1,800 has been applied. In the CBD, almost all the intersections will meet the planning standard (a CLV of 1,800) with the incorporation of geometric improvements recommended in the following sections, and most will achieve the planning objective (a CLV of 1,600). The exceptions over the long term may be the intersections of Wisconsin Avenue with Montgomery Lane/Avenue and with East-West Highway/Old Georgetown Road. These locations have physical restrictions to increased capacity.

Outside of the CBD, more intersections are or soon will have CLVs exceeding the planning standard. Improvements, most of which have already been recommended in the 1990 Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan, will reduce the CLV of these intersections to acceptable levels and will be discussed in later sections.

## **B. ANNUAL GROWTH POLICY GROUP DESIGNATION**

The FY 93 AGP includes a Group designation for each policy area. The Bethesda CBD is currently a Group V area. The Silver Spring CBD is the only policy area in Group VI, a significant difference because of the different Local Area Review procedures used in a Group VI area. The FY 94 AGP established a Metrorail Station Group that set local intersection standards, with the area-wide standard depending on the surrounding area.

Since the concept of cordon capacity has been used in sector plans at least as far back as 1976, applicants for new development have not been required to do a traditional local intersection impact analysis as part of obtaining subdivision approval in sector plan areas.



Instead, a larger area analysis was used to approve the subdivisions as long as the total development did not produce traffic that was above the cordon capacity. The Sector Plan recommends continuing this procedure, but without the reliance on cordon capacity. Instead, the staging text will define the specific roadway network improvements needed to support proposed development levels that can be approved within the AGP ceiling limits.

## **C. ROADWAY SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS**

Based on the results of the analysis in Appendix D, a number of actions are recommended for the Bethesda CBD and surrounding intersections. The year 2010 analysis did not include every intersection in the study area, and changes to other locations may be needed as well. The analysis used the mid- and longer-term improvements identified in the 1990 Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan as a starting point. The feasibility of the potential improvements was determined by the need for the capacity increase and a field inspection that verified the physical possibility of the change. The Sector Plan staging text in Chapter 10 is more comprehensive and shows the sequence in which the improvements are proposed; some would be made only after additional review of alternative actions. In all cases, significantly increased use of transit, ridesharing, or other positive shifts in travel patterns could reduce or eliminate the need for the changes.

The Plan suggests changes in lane configurations, such as reversible lanes at some intersections, but not detailed design. The necessary future configuration would depend on actual traffic volumes that develop and other factors that emerge as part of the design study. (See improvements within the Sector Plan in Figure 5.10.)

### **1. CBD STREETS**

#### **Arlington Road**

The section of Arlington Road between Bethesda Avenue and Bradley Boulevard experiences several traffic problems during peak periods and weekends. It combines poor sight distance caused by a sharp curve with a number of driveways accessing the road from adjacent retail centers and pedestrian movements across the road.

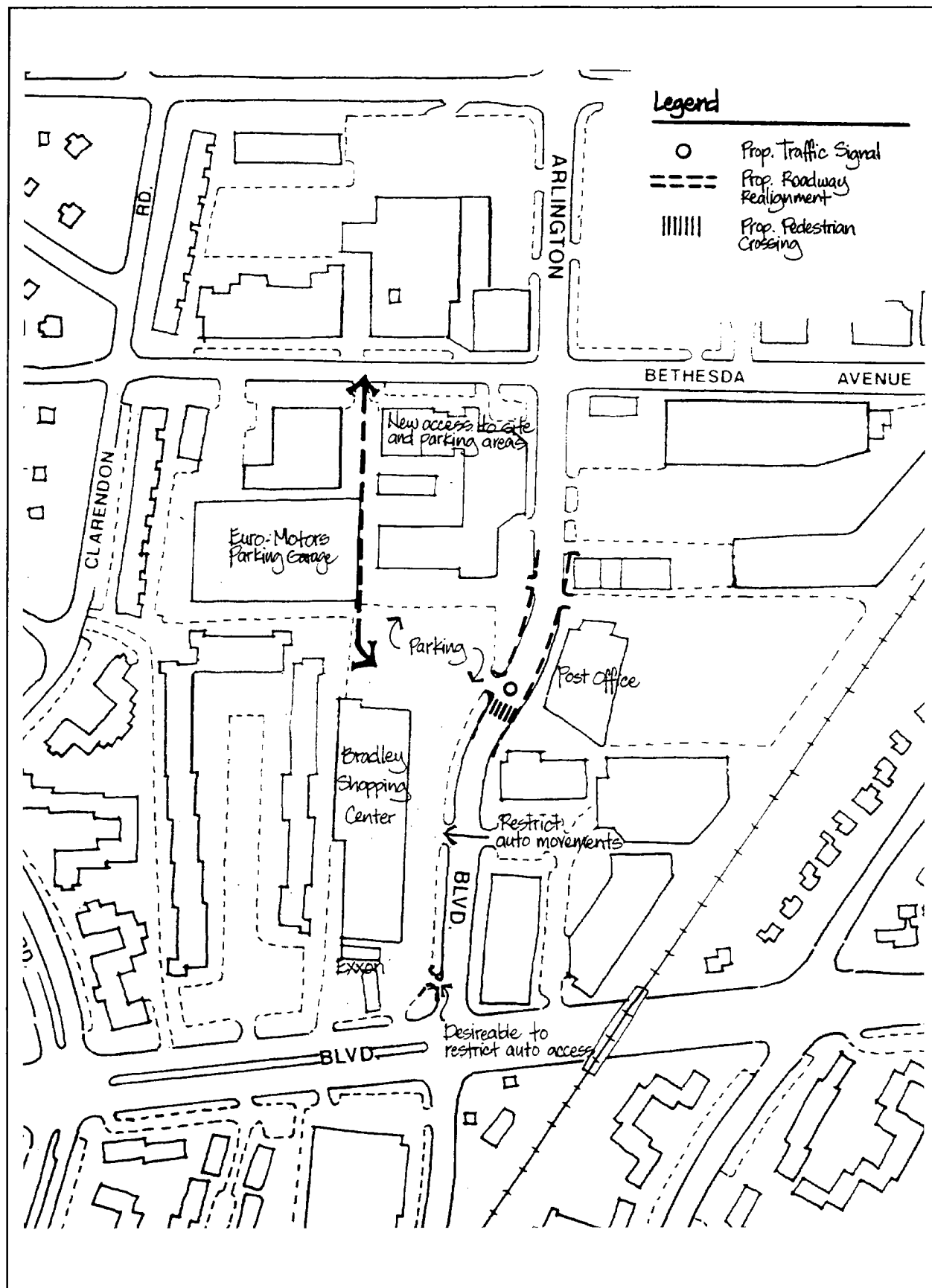
The Plan suggests several actions to alleviate these conditions. The actions are shown graphically in Figure 5.11. They include:

- Realign Arlington Road to reduce the curve and provide better sight distance. This would require additional right-of-way, which could be obtained by dedication if the Euro Motorcars site redevelops.
- Provide a new access drive from Bethesda Avenue south into the Bradley Shopping Center parking lot, if the Euro Motorcars site redevelops.
- Evaluate the access and circulation plan for the shopping center, and, if possible, consolidate more of the movements at the northern entrance/exit point from Arlington Road. This could eventually warrant a traffic signal, perhaps in conjunction with a pedestrian crossing. The curb break at the gas station onto Arlington Road near Bradley Boulevard should be eliminated, when possible, to improve operational safety at that location.



# PROPOSED CHANGES FOR ARLINGTON ROAD DISTRICT

FIGURE 5.11





## **Traffic Movement on Mixed Streets**

Fairmont Avenue between Norfolk Avenue and Old Georgetown Road, and Montgomery Lane between Arlington Road and Woodmont Avenue are recommended as Mixed Streets to accommodate the anticipated higher level of pedestrian activity. (See Figure 5.12.) On Montgomery Lane, the current one-way restriction for one-half of the block should be maintained. This restriction prevents eastbound traffic through movement from Arlington Road to Montgomery Avenue.

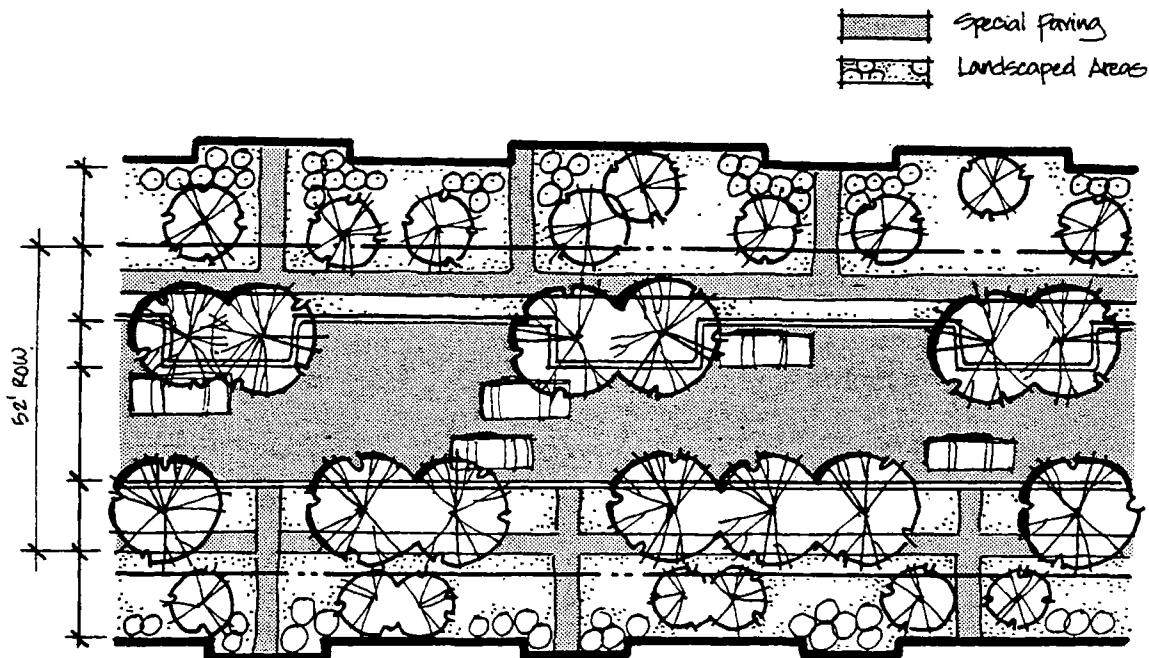
On Fairmont Avenue, establishment of a one-way movement may be considered. A one-way pattern could accommodate traffic circulation within the Woodmont Triangle and enable sidewalks to be expanded while still providing for on-street parking. (Street life and cafe activity associated with the Mixed Street are illustrated in Figure 4.23.) The one-way direction would be determined at the time of the roadway development plan. If the one-way movement were southbound, it would help prevent congestion on Old Georgetown Road by eliminating left and right turns northward onto Fairmont Avenue.

In the design of one-way streets, travel ways should accommodate emergency vehicles and allow traffic to pass a stopped vehicle. Adequate access to business sites must also be provided.

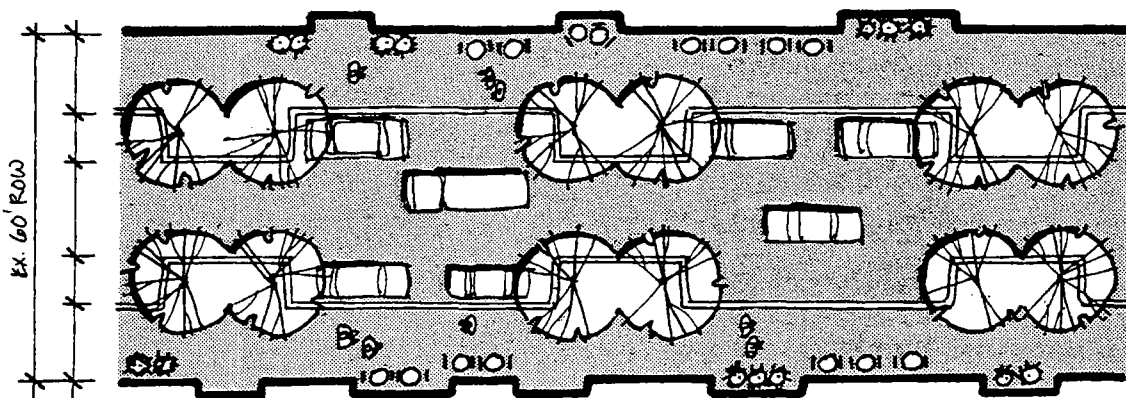
## **Old Georgetown Road Reversible Lane**

The 1990 Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan identified the need for implementing a peak-period reversible lane on Old Georgetown Road from Woodmont Avenue north to Huntington Parkway. The reversible lane is a technique that is applicable when peak traffic flows are unbalanced, as is the case here. The Sector Plan maintains this recommendation for long-term implementation later in the life of the Plan. The change would reduce future congestion along Old Georgetown Road at the intersection of Old Georgetown Road with Arlington Road/Wilson Lane. Carrying traffic northward in the evening peak period, it would require restricting left turns by southbound traffic into the Woodmont Triangle. Analysis shows that most of these left turns occur at Battery Lane, so the problem of turn restrictions during peak periods may not be severe.

The Sector Plan also recognizes that between Huntington Parkway and Cedar Lane, Old Georgetown Road will experience considerable growth in traffic in the future, influenced both by NIH and the Bethesda CBD. Although not specifically analyzed in the Sector Plan, a recent NIH-sponsored study of growth on their campus forecasts future traffic problems. The evening traffic northbound along Old Georgetown Road increases with distance from the CBD, so terminating the reversible lane at Huntington Parkway will not relieve all the future concerns along Old Georgetown Road. Actions to address possible congested locations in this section of the road will be evaluated as part of future comprehensive traffic analysis and will consider retention of the median along Old Georgetown Road.



Proposed Montgomery Lane: 52' ROW, 2 lanes with parking on one side only.



Proposed Fairmont Avenue: ex. 60' ROW, 1 lane with parking on both sides.



## 2. CBD INTERSECTIONS

### **Wisconsin Avenue and East-West Highway/ Old Georgetown Road**

A significant number of both local and through trips pass through this central intersection. The East-West Highway/Montgomery Lane one-way pair has enabled the intersection to function well, and given current growth trends it will continue to do so for a number of years. However, as Sector Plan development occurs, the congestion will increase markedly, and at buildout the CLV will probably exceed the planning standard of 1,800. Any approach for increasing the capacity of the intersection must be in accordance with a plan approved by the Planning Board, SHA, and MCDOT.

Figure 5.13 shows cross sections for East-West Highway, looking east from Wisconsin Avenue. A total of 110 feet of right-of-way will be needed for pavement, median, sidewalks, and street trees.

Provision of adequate pedestrian crosswalks on East-West Highway and Wisconsin Avenue is an important design consideration for this busy intersection. Some of the issues have already been discussed in the section on pedestrian circulation, including a study to determine the feasibility of extending the existing Wisconsin Avenue pedestrian tunnel under East-West Highway.

### **Wisconsin Avenue and Montgomery Avenue/Lane**

Like the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and East-West Highway just to the north, this intersection will probably not experience serious congestion for the next few years, but over the long term will exceed the planning standard. Actions to reduce future congestion at this intersection are limited, so its performance will need to be monitored.

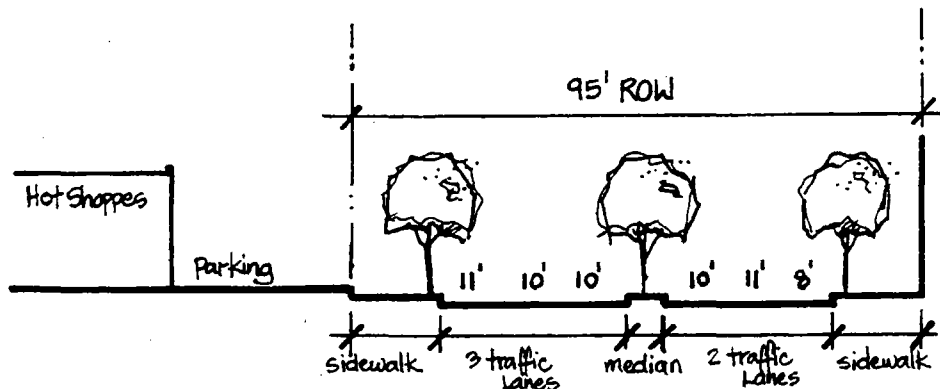
### **Old Georgetown Road and Arlington Road/Wilson Lane**

Although this intersection does not pose serious congestion problems in the near term, it has safety problems associated with it. The 1976 Bethesda CBD Sector Plan identified it as a problem because of high traffic volumes and poor intersection geometrics. The Sector Plan recommends a study of reconfiguring this five-way intersection and the streets around it. There are safety problems at nearby intersections of Cordell Avenue with Old Georgetown Road and with Wilson Lane.

## 3. SURROUNDING AREA LOCATIONS

### **Connecticut Avenue and East-West Highway**

Traffic congestion is already serious at this intersection. The 1990 *Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan* noted that at-grade improvements were desirable. The Sector Plan recommends an investigation of the most effective reconfiguration. One possibility is to add turning lanes between eastbound East-West Highway and

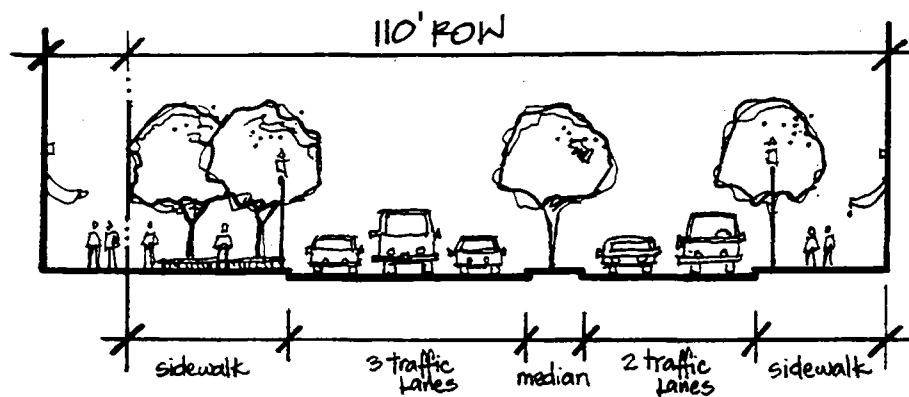


**EXISTING CROSS SECTION**

5 LANES & BIKEWAY

25' ROW

± 125' Building to Building



**PROPOSED CROSS SECTION**

5 Lanes & Median

110' ROW

± 122' Building to Building



north bound Connecticut Avenue (and the opposite movement, for improved A.M. service) on land currently owned by the Columbia Country Club. This change could bring the critical lane volume (CLV) for the intersection down to the planning standard in the short term, but adequate level of service will ultimately depend on attraction of riders to the Silver Spring-Bethesda Trolley or a major redesign of the intersection.

### **Rockville Pike and Cedar Lane**

The 1990 *Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan* recommended at-grade improvements to this intersection, while retaining the possibility of a grade-separated interchange further in the future. Added turn lanes between northbound Wisconsin Avenue and eastbound Cedar Lane (and for the opposite movement in the A.M.) could be very beneficial. The level of service at the intersection will be influenced in large part by the future trips from NIH and which exit they use to leave the campus. The ability to accommodate future volumes at an at-grade intersection will be a function of the success of the demand management program at NIH as well as in the CBD.

### **Wisconsin Avenue (Rockville Pike) and Jones Bridge Road.**

This intersection was recently improved by adding a turn lane from northbound Wisconsin Avenue to eastbound Jones Bridge Road. However, congestion will increase, as will the congestion at intersections of Wisconsin Avenue with Center Drive and Wilson Drive. All are access points for NIH and need to be considered as a system with the intersection at Cedar Lane. Although NIH will not be the only contributor to the growth in traffic, its traffic planning might include the metering of vehicles exiting from various points around the campus to avoid overloading intersections along Wisconsin Avenue from Jones Bridge Road to Cedar Lane.

### **Connecticut Avenue and Bradley Lane**

As part of the Sector Plan analysis, this intersection was identified as very congested now and in the future. Added turn lanes from eastbound Bradley Lane to Connecticut Avenue should be studied. They are the most feasible improvement currently identified. In reality, turning bays would have to be constructed along Bradley Lane to the west of the intersection for the turn lanes to be effective. The 1990 *Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan* identified the widening of Bradley Lane to four lanes as a possible long-term improvement. If this were done, the mature trees that line the lane should be preserved. The new facility might be a boulevard, with the eastbound lanes located to the south of the trees on right-of-way currently owned by the Chevy Chase Country Club.

### **Old Georgetown Road and Cedar Lane**

This intersection was identified in the year 2010 analysis as a problem intersection. However, in the mid-term, its congestion will not be as serious as for the



intersections along Wisconsin Avenue (Rockville Pike) to the east of NIH. Implementation of the reversible lane on Old Georgetown Road would benefit this intersection in the long-term.

### **Wisconsin Avenue and Woodmont Avenue**

This intersection should not pose congestion problems for the next ten years. However, as the CBD and NIH develop, it may be desirable to increase the left-turn capacity from eastbound Woodmont Avenue to northbound Wisconsin Avenue, and the right-turn capacity in the opposite direction. Finally, the widening of Wisconsin Avenue from Woodmont Avenue to I-495, mentioned in the 1990 *Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan*, is retained as a future action to relieve congestion.

### **Bradley Boulevard and Huntington Parkway**

This intersection is forecast to reach level of service F by the year 2010. The Sector Plan does not recommend improvements unless congestion and safety become problems. Any redesign process should clearly describe the reasons for the improvements and include input from local citizens.

## **D. NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION**

Heavy traffic is inappropriate in residential communities. While accessibility is an advantage to commercial activity, large volumes of vehicular traffic can be disruptive to the peace and serenity of residential areas. Since the Bethesda CBD is a downtown in the midst of residential suburbs, it is important to mitigate the detrimental impact of traffic on adjacent neighborhoods.

The Plan endorses measures that would discourage cut-through traffic in residential areas. Such measures may include one-way access patterns or selected street access closings, but should not inhibit access by emergency vehicles. The County government has a program to implement such measures. Restrictions have already been applied during peak periods for access to the area west of Arlington Road in the CBD, to Leland Street east of Wisconsin Avenue in the Town of Chevy Chase, and to Leland Street west of Woodmont Avenue.

It is also possible to establish parking permit programs to protect residential areas from non-resident commuter parking. Such measures must be initiated and agreed upon by the affected communities. The Town of Chevy Chase has a very successful program that can serve as a model for other communities.

Neighborhood protection was considered in developing the future roadway improvements for the transportation plan in that traffic generated by future development was not assumed to use any local streets outside the CBD as through routes. Conversely, additional neighborhood protection measures were not assumed to cause any diversion from existing traffic patterns.





## Chapter 6

# STREETSCAPE PLAN

An attractive pedestrian environment contributes to an active and lively CBD, encourages walking and social interaction, and provides a setting for public life. The public sidewalks form a major portion of the pedestrian environment within a CBD in addition to plazas, parks, and other open spaces.

In 1984, the Montgomery County Planning Board approved the Bethesda Streetscape Plan for the Metro Core District. The plan recommended improvements that included placing utilities underground (undergrounding); planting trees; and installing brick pavers, lighting, and wood benches. For the most part, the 1984 plan has been implemented. The community now enjoys an attractive center with over 400 new street trees that help realize the theme of Bethesda as a “garden.”

The streetscape recommendations in this Sector Plan provide a conceptual framework for improvements to the pedestrian environment. (See Figure 6.1.) This Plan also builds upon the 1984 Bethesda Streetscape Plan for the Metro Core District and will help unify the entire CBD by providing a comprehensive approach for areas beyond the Metro Core.

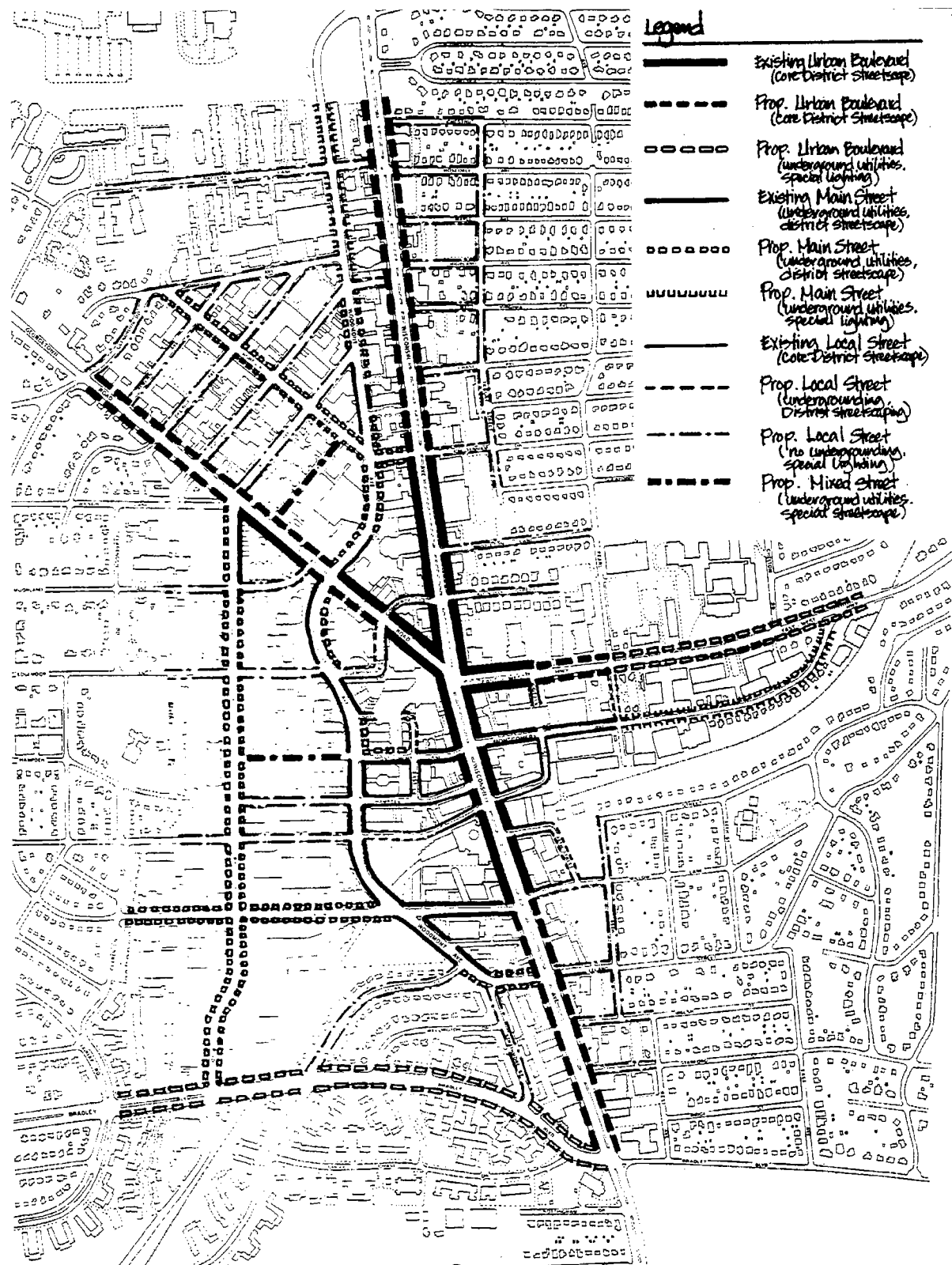
## 6.1 PLAN OBJECTIVES

Recommendations for streetscape improvements should achieve the following objectives:

1. Reinforce the identity of the districts by developing distinguishing streetscapes for each one while creating a unified image for the entire CBD.
2. Reinforce the street hierarchy by achieving a higher level of streetscape improvements along the major corridors and significant pedestrian routes.
3. Provide for the “greening” of Bethesda by planting street trees along all streets, using a variety of species to achieve horticultural diversity.
4. Encourage walking by creating an attractive pedestrian environment and improving pedestrian access.
5. Reduce visual clutter and create attractive street corridors by undergrounding overhead utilities on major streets and pedestrian routes, and by upgrading streetscape character throughout the CBD.
6. Consider the fiscal implications of all streetscape recommendations.

# STREETSCAPE PLAN

FIGURE 6.1



The Sector Plan recognizes the following hierarchy of streets within the CBD, each with its own special character: Urban Boulevards, Main Streets, Local Streets, and Mixed Streets. (See Figure 6.2, Street Types.)

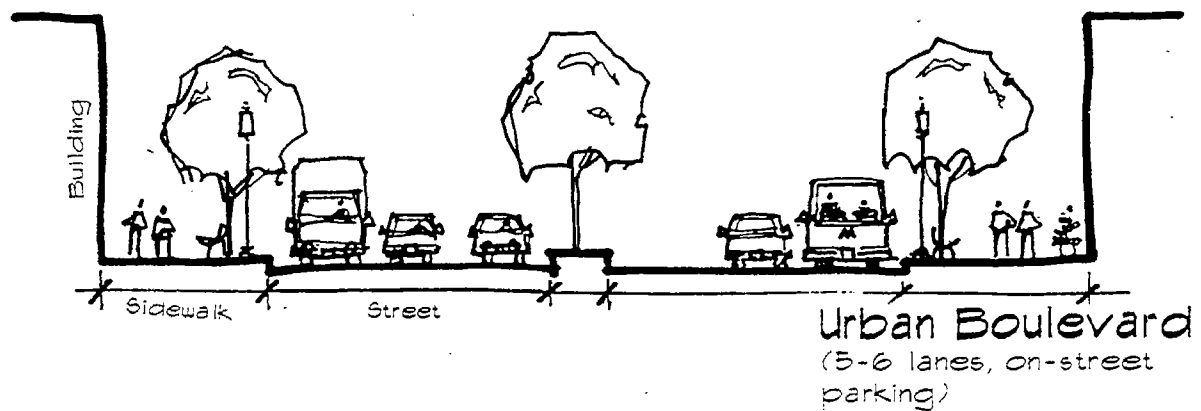
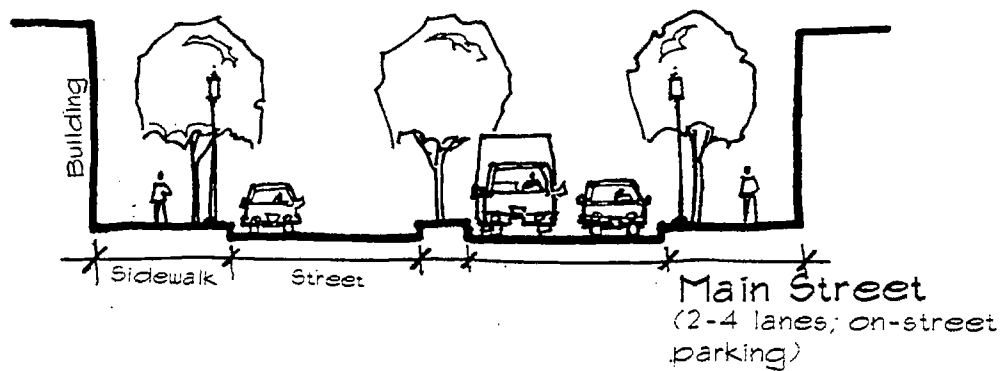
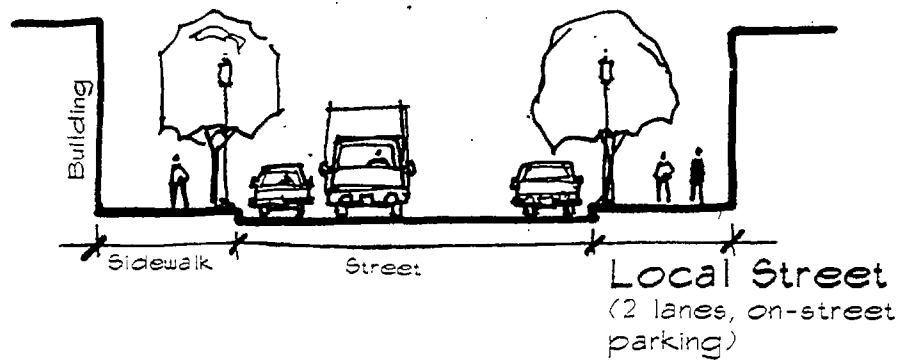
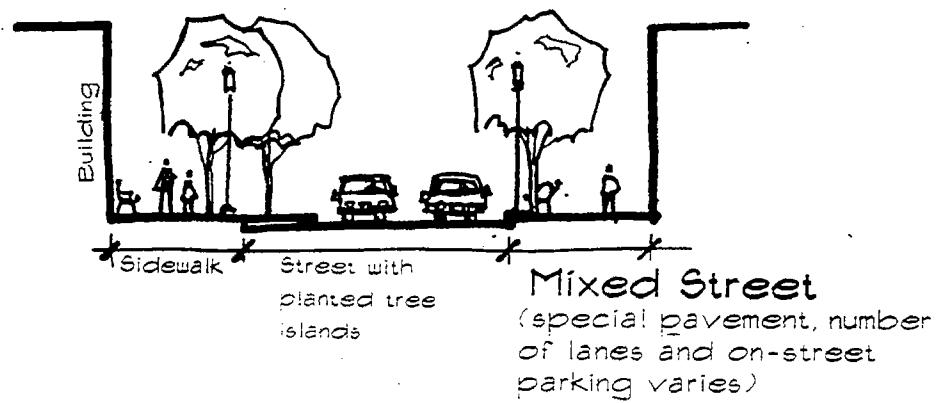
- **Urban Boulevards** are typically six-lane divided highways that carry a significant amount of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Wisconsin Avenue, East-West Highway, and Old Georgetown Road are Urban Boulevards.
- **Main Streets** are local streets that serve to collect and distribute local traffic and experience a significant level of pedestrian activity due to land uses such as retail stores or restaurants. Norfolk, Woodmont, and Bethesda Avenues are examples of Main Streets.
- **Local Streets** are internal CBD streets that provide general access for vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
- **Mixed Streets** emphasize pedestrian circulation while allowing limited, slow vehicular traffic. These streets should be developed with streetscape elements, including trees, plantings, special paving, and furniture. Bollards may be used rather than curbs to emphasize the pedestrian character of the street. Mixed street designs will require interagency review prior to implementation. Currently, Bethesda has only one Mixed Street, a private driveway serving the office development behind CVS Pharmacy on Arlington Road.

A central feature of the Sector Plan is to give each district its own distinguishing characteristics while creating a unified image for the entire CBD. To achieve a unified character, the “garden” design theme developed in the 1984 *Bethesda Streetscape Plan* for the Core District should be used within other areas. The Streetscape Plan recommends a range of treatments for each district. These recommendations include high, medium, and low levels of improvements, which respond to the existing hierarchy of streets and take into account fiscal implications. Five levels of streetscape improvement are described in Section 10.4C. (See Figure 6.1 for an illustration of the Streetscape Plan and identification of street types within the CBD.)

The recommended improvements provide sufficient information to guide future development regarding lighting, paving, and street trees. It is necessary, at a minimum, to identify specific materials for different areas of the CBD to achieve a cohesive, unified streetscape as individual parcels are developed.

The Sector Plan recommends that all streets within the CBD have underground utilities to reduce visual clutter in an intensely developed area. However, because of the cost of undergrounding utilities, the Plan recommends that such a program follow the proposed priority list and proceed as resources allow. Both optional and standard method private sector development should participate in implementing the streetscape recommendations. Where feasible, relocation of overhead utilities to rear alleys should be considered in lieu of costly undergrounding.

Special attention should be given to gateways along major corridors leading into Bethesda, where landscape treatment should visually signal the transition into the CBD from surrounding areas. To express the “garden” design theme of Bethesda’s streetscape, groves of flowering trees and ground



covers or median shade trees are preferred to pylon signs or sculptural artwork. Since each gateway is unique, design studies of each gateway are needed to develop specific recommendations.

## **6.2 AREA-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. SIDEWALK PAVING**

All sidewalks within the Core District, selected Main Streets, and Mixed Streets outside the Core should be upgraded with the Bethesda brick paver currently specified in the approved 1984 Bethesda Streetscape Plan. (On Mixed Streets, bricks will also be used in the travel lanes. See Figure 5.12.) The proposed use of these brick pavers has been limited to highly visible sidewalks along the Urban Boulevards, to locations where enhanced sidewalks would encourage use of Metro, and to areas that currently are or potentially will experience significant pedestrian activity.

The continued use of Bethesda brick pavers will provide continuity within the network of sidewalks. Brick substitutes of comparable or higher quality can be considered but must achieve a range in color value that is compatible with the existing brick sidewalks. (See Figure 6.3 for locations of the proposed brick pavers.)

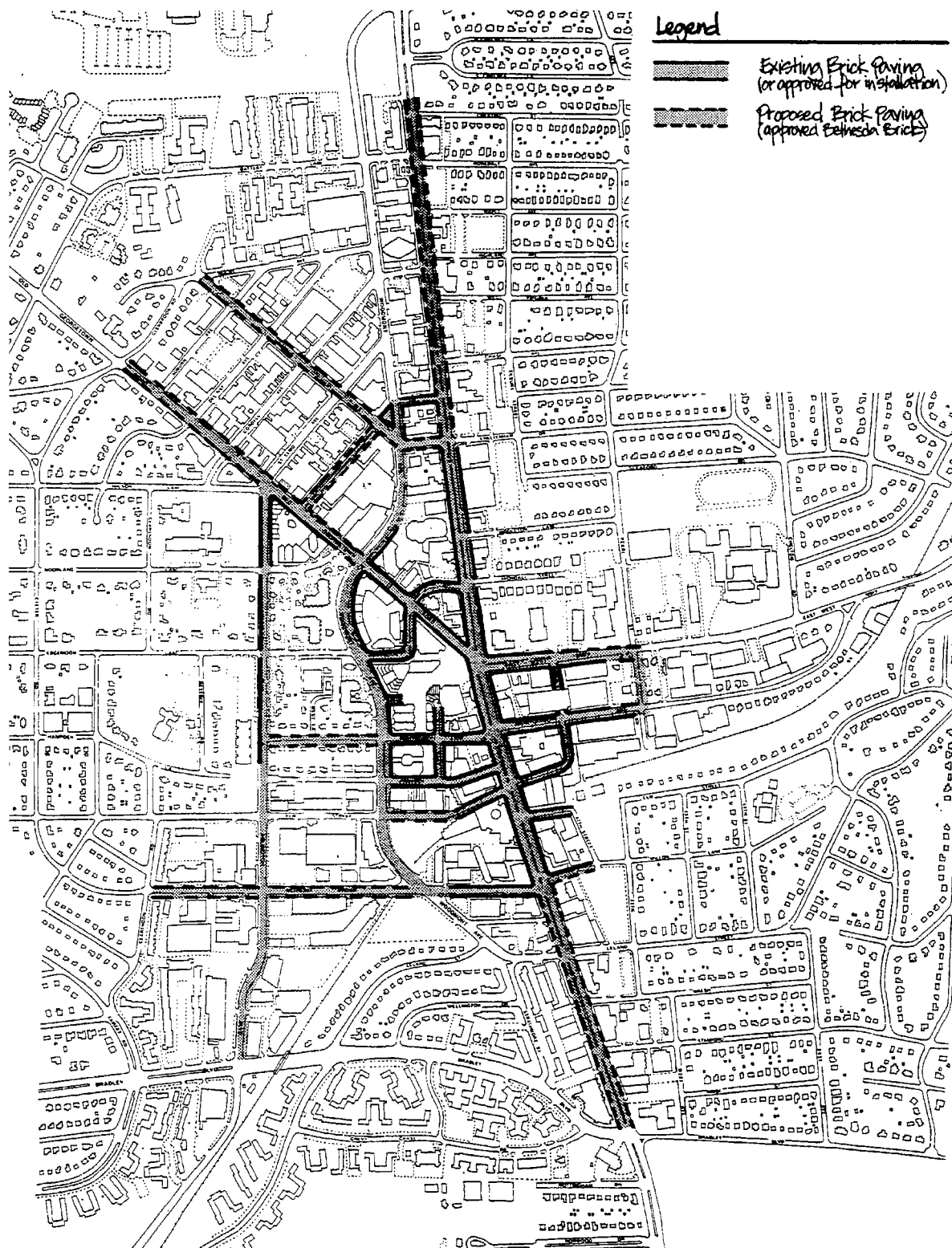
### **B. STREET LIGHTING**

All streets within the Core District, including Woodmont Avenue and along the Urban Boulevards of Wisconsin Avenue, East-West Highway, and Old Georgetown Road should receive Bethesda Street Lanterns as the primary street light. The lanterns are limited to those streets to acknowledge fiscal constraints and accentuate the most heavily traveled Urban Boulevards, while increasing Bethesda's sense of identity. Should funds become available in the future, Norfolk and Bethesda Avenues, where significant pedestrian activity occurs, could also be considered for Bethesda Lanterns.

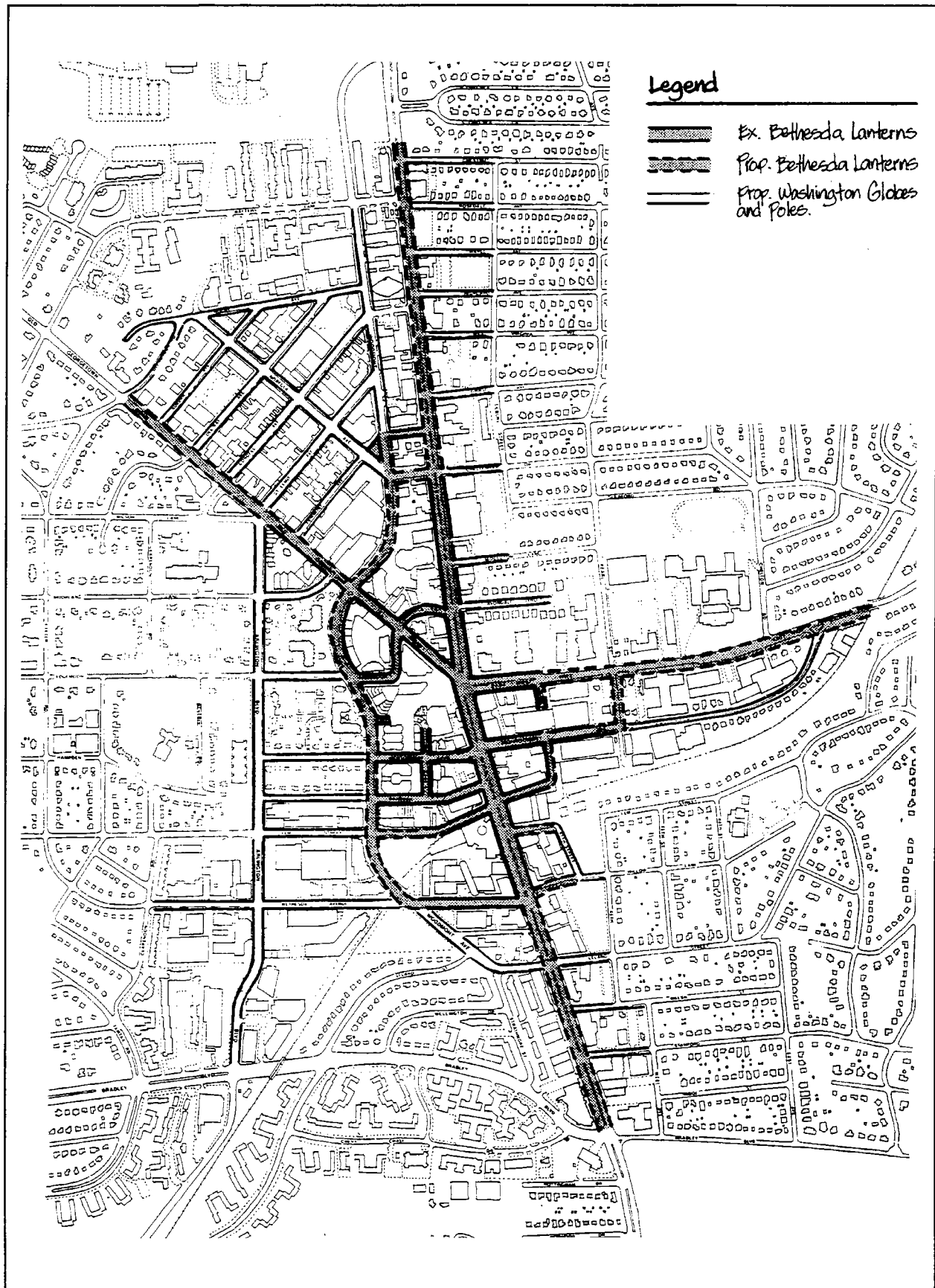
All other streets in the CBD should use the traditional Washington Globe, which has an "Acorn" globe fixture mounted on a fluted black 16-foot pole similar to the approved Silver Spring Decorative Lamp. This street light is pedestrian-friendly in scale, provides sufficient light for non-divided streets in the CBD, and is less expensive than the Bethesda Lantern. Signalized intersections throughout the CBD should continue to be lighted with bronze high-mount, cut-off luminaries as specified in the approved 1984 Bethesda Streetscape Plan. (See Figure 6.4 for the street lighting plan.)

### **C. STREET TREE PLANTING**

The Plan recommends a policy of planting trees on all CBD streets. Street trees within an urban area provide needed shade, reduce the urban heat buildup, filter pollutants, maintain human scale next to tall buildings, and introduce visual interest with seasonal changes. There are also aesthetic benefits to planting a line of street trees to visually unify a diverse building environment.







Note:  
Substitutions to this list  
may be considered if  
availability or maintenance  
concerns become significant  
problems.

Note:  
Substitutions to this list  
may be considered if  
availability or maintenance  
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may be considered if  
availability or maintenance  
concerns become significant  
problems.

The recommended tree species have been selected on the basis of vitality in an urban setting, form and height, aesthetic qualities, maintenance characteristics, and availability. The London Plane Tree should continue to be planted along the major Urban Boulevards to visually unify and accentuate these streets. A variety of different species will provide horticultural diversity within the rest of the CBD. Substitutions to the recommended tree planting plan will be considered if certain species are not available after an extensive search or have become more susceptible to disease or pests. However, it is important to try to achieve a consistent species for visual unity. (See Figure 6.5, for the recommended street tree planting plan.)

The botanical names of recommended tree cultivars are as follows:

- *Acer rubrum* 'October Glory', (Red Maple)
- *Acer saccharum* 'Green Mountain', (Sugar Maple)
- *Fraxinus p. lanceolata* 'Marshall's Seedless', (Marshall's S. Ash)
- *Gleditsia t. inermis* 'Shademaster', (Shademaster Honey Locust)
- *Platanus acerifolia*, (London Plane Tree)
- *Quercus acutissima*, (Sawtooth Oak)
- *Quercus borealis*, (Red Oak)
- *Quercus palustris*, (Pin Oak)
- *Quercus phellos*, (Willow Oak)
- *Sophora japonica*, (Sophora)
- *Tilia cordata* 'Greenspire', (Little Leaf Linden)
- *Ulmus parviflora*, (Chinese Elm)
- *Zelkova serrata* 'Village Gree', (Zelkova)

## **6.3 DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. THE METRO CORE DISTRICT**

The adopted 1984 Bethesda Streetscape Plan should continue to guide improvements within the Metro Core District. The plan requires upgrading of all Core streets by undergrounding overhead utilities, using brick pavers, and installing Bethesda Lantern streetlights, wood benches, and tightly spaced street trees. This represents Level One streetscape, the highest level of improvements. In addition, the Urban Boulevards of Wisconsin Avenue, Old Georgetown Road, and East-West Highway should receive a high level of street furnishings, such as planters and additional benches, to accommodate greater pedestrian activity. The materials specified in the 1984 plan create a "garden"



character, intended to complement the surrounding residential gardens outside the CBD.

The Sector Plan recommends a few minor revisions to the 1984 Bethesda Streetscape Plan to improve pedestrian access and achieve a more unified approach. These revisions include:

1. Provide a minimum 20-foot building setback from the street curb along Wisconsin Avenue to better accommodate the higher volumes of pedestrian traffic on this street. The 1984 plan called for 15-foot sidewalks, a width that is more appropriate for side streets than for Wisconsin Avenue.
2. Unify Woodmont Avenue with Bethesda brick pavers and Bethesda Lanterns on both sides of the street, as shown in Figures 6.3 and 6.4. The 1984 plan considered each side of Woodmont Avenue to be in a different district, requiring different pavements. This Sector Plan treats the street as a unified corridor which should receive the same treatment on both sides.
3. Create signalized pedestrian crossings and new crosswalks to facilitate pedestrian movement within the Core. (See Chapter 5.0, Transportation.)
4. Upgrade the existing East-West Highway corridor and median.

## **B. THE WISCONSIN CORRIDORS, NORTH AND SOUTH**

Both of these areas should receive the same level of streetscape improvement as the Metro Core District (Level One) to achieve a unified street corridor and respond to a higher level of pedestrian activity. This upgraded streetscape will visually define Wisconsin Avenue as one of Bethesda's most significant Urban Boulevards.

1. Provide a 20-foot building setback to match setbacks in the Metro Core and to help emphasize the street hierarchy.
2. Place overhead utilities underground.
3. Provide the 1984 streetscape standards, which call for Bethesda brick pavers, tightly spaced street trees, and Bethesda Lanterns.
4. Install a high level of pedestrian amenities, such as planters and seating.
5. Upgrade the existing median and sidewalks.

## **C. OLD GEORGETOWN ROAD CORRIDOR**

Extending Metro Core District streetscape (Level One) along Old Georgetown Road will contribute to a unified street corridor and create an Urban Boulevard. However, due to the proposed reversible center lane, no median is proposed within the Sector Plan area.

1. Place overhead utilities underground.
2. Provide the 1984 streetscape standards, which call for Bethesda brick pavers, tightly spaced street trees, and Bethesda Lanterns.

## **D. MONTGOMERY TRIANGLE CORRIDOR**

The two main roads in the Montgomery Triangle Corridor are East-West Highway and Montgomery Avenue, which make a one-way couplet through the CBD. The streetscape treatment should reflect the distinct character of each road.

East-West Highway should be developed as an Urban Boulevard but without a median, due to the one-way traffic pattern. This area receives heavy pedestrian traffic from the Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. The current six to eight foot sidewalks are inadequate. There is sufficient pavement space to reduce travel lanes to 11 feet in certain areas, allowing installation of sidewalks wide enough for both pedestrians and street trees.

Although Montgomery Avenue carries significant traffic as half of the East-West Highway one-way couplet, its streetscape improvements should be limited to planting street trees, providing a concrete sidewalk, and maintaining the high-mount lighting.

Level Two streetscape is recommended for these streets. Level Two upgrades as follows:

1. Place overhead utilities underground.
2. Expand concrete sidewalks to a minimum of 15 feet and plant tightly spaced street trees.
3. Install Bethesda Lanterns along East-West Highway and provide Washington Globe lighting along Montgomery Avenue.

This Plan does not envision special pavement outside the Core District portion of the corridor because of fiscal constraints. However, the expansion of Metro Core District streetscape improvements along East-West Highway to the eastern gateway should be considered, if funds become available.

## **E. THE WOODMONT TRIANGLE DISTRICT**

Streetscape improvements in the Woodmont Triangle should distinguish it as a unique restaurant and retail district. Several special pedestrian-oriented streets should be developed to create a hierarchy within the street grid, to improve orientation, and to respond to pedestrian routes.

Level Three streetscape should be provided for certain streets, as follows:

1. Provide the Washington Globe with fluted pole base throughout the area to help visually define the district. Should funds become available, the Bethesda Lantern could be considered for Norfolk Avenue to highlight this street within the grid.
2. Place utilities underground only along Norfolk Avenue, Cheltenham Drive, Fairmont Avenue, and Woodmont Avenue to reduce visual clutter along these important streets. If fiscal resources permit, undergrounding utilities should be considered for additional streets in the Woodmont Triangle after other streetscape improvements have been made.
3. Install Bethesda brick pavers along Cheltenham Drive and Norfolk and Fairmont Avenues to upgrade these sidewalks, which link with other open spaces. Provide



concrete sidewalks at least 15 feet wide for all other streets to accommodate additional street trees and provide adequate pedestrian space.

4. Consider most streets in the Woodmont Triangle as Local Streets, with Level Five streetscape. This level upgrades streets with only Washington Globe lighting, additional street trees, and repair of concrete sidewalks.

Recommendations for individual streets follow:

1. Develop Norfolk Avenue and Cheltenham Drive as Main Streets, with Level Three streetscape, to create a pedestrian path through the Woodmont Triangle. These upgraded Main Streets would tie together several existing and future open spaces and create an important link between the Battery Lane and East Bethesda communities.
2. Install tightly spaced street trees, a landscaped median, Bethesda brick pavers, the Washington Globe, and a high level of pedestrian amenities such as benches and planters along Norfolk Avenue and Cheltenham Drive. Expansion of sidewalk cafes is encouraged as long as it does not restrict adequate pedestrian space.
3. Develop Fairmont Avenue as a Mixed Street, with Level Four streetscape, to create a pedestrian-oriented zone with restaurants and retail shops along either side. This short block terminates in the War Memorial Park on the north and Chevy Chase Garden Plaza on the south. The street could become one-way, and should have expanded sidewalks, and allow on-street parking. A Mixed Street (Level Four) calls for Bethesda brick pavers within both the sidewalk zone and the travel lane to visually unify the street and reduce travel speeds. Washington Globe lighting, street trees, and a high level of pedestrian amenities should be provided. Outdoor cafes are encouraged as long as adequate pedestrian space is maintained.
4. Develop Woodmont Avenue from Old Georgetown Road to Fairmont Avenue as a Main Street, with Level One streetscape, to accommodate pedestrians attracted to the Triangle's restaurants. From Fairmont Avenue to the northern gateway near NIH, provide Level Two streetscape. Locate existing utilities along Woodmont Avenue underground to reduce the visual clutter and improve the overall character of the street. Due to fiscal considerations, no special streetscape is required in this segment other than to install Washington Globe street lighting. If funding becomes available after the Plan's recommendations have been implemented, consideration should be given to additional streetscape improvements to Woodmont Avenue.

## **F. THE TRANSIT STATION RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT**

Streetscape in the TS-R District should distinguish it as a residential district and create a hierarchy of streets and pedestrian routes. Montgomery Lane should become a link between the library and the Metro Core.

1. Provide upgraded streetscapes to highlight the area as a district and improve the pedestrian access.

2. Create a Mixed Street shared by cars and pedestrians along Montgomery Lane, with Level Four streetscape. A portion of this short block is already designated one-way to prevent cut-through traffic. Washington Globe street lighting, Bethesda brick pavers, tightly spaced street trees, and a higher level of pedestrian amenities should be installed to distinguish this street.
3. Place overhead utilities underground along Montgomery Lane to reduce the visual clutter and to highlight this street as the primary pedestrian focus of the neighborhood.

All other streets in the TS-R neighborhood are considered Local Streets, with Level Five streetscape, and because of fiscal constraints, should receive only tightly spaced street trees, Washington Globe lighting, and concrete sidewalks. If resources permit, consideration should be given to undergrounding utilities along Elm Street, Edgemoor Lane, and Moorland Lane.

## **G. THE ARLINGTON ROAD DISTRICT**

Streetscape improvements in this busy shopping district should encourage walking to reduce traffic congestion, create a hierarchy in the street system, and improve the area's visual character. Improvements for pedestrian access and on-street parking are especially needed along the north side of Bethesda Avenue, west of Arlington Road. In all cases, sidewalks should be no less than 15 feet wide to accommodate both street trees and pedestrians.

The Plan recommends developing Bethesda Avenue as a Main Street to build upon the existing "main street" characteristics, create a hierarchy, and improve pedestrian connections from the Edgemoor Community along Bethesda Avenue to the Core District. However, because of limited space, there should be no median.

Level Three streetscape should be provided as follows:

1. Place overhead utilities underground.
2. Provide a minimum of 15-foot sidewalks and on-street parking for the entire street.
3. Provide Washington Globe street lighting, Bethesda brick pavers, street trees, and a high level of pedestrian amenities such as benches and planters.
4. Along Lot 31, provide streetscape improvements that incorporate a Class 1 Bikeway. (See Figure 5.6.)

The Plan recommends developing Arlington Road between Montgomery Lane and Bradley Boulevard as a Main Street. This segment forms the central spine of the shopping district, linking it with the TS-R District to the north and the residential areas to the south. Due to limited space and high traffic volumes, no median or on-street parking should be provided. Level Three streetscape should be provided as follows:

1. Place overhead utilities underground.



2. Provide Washington Globe street lighting, Bethesda brick pavers, and street trees.
3. Provide a signalized pedestrian crossing at Montgomery Lane, in front of the library.

## **H. THE TRANSITION AREAS**

Although the residential streets provide pedestrian access to the Metro and CBD, the volume of pedestrian traffic is insufficient to warrant special treatment. Neither placement of overhead utilities underground nor special streetscape treatment will be required. The Plan recommends Level Five streetscape for the Transition Areas as follows:

1. Install standard concrete sidewalks along all residential streets that connect to the CBD.
2. Plant street trees along all residential streets that connect to the CBD.

## **6.4 STAGING PRIORITIES**

The streetscape plan should be implemented in a sequence that reinforces the hierarchy of the street system. The sequence promotes maximum linkage between segments by emphasizing areas where improvements are likely to be completed primarily with private sector redevelopment funds. The priority list also attempts to disperse the staging of improvements throughout the CBD to all the districts, while responding first to areas with higher levels of pedestrian activity.

The Plan recommends that both standard and optional method private development within the CBD contribute to the proposed streetscape improvements. This recommendation will require certain changes in Chapters 49 and 50 of the County Code. These changes would be designed to create a reasonable and equitable distribution of support for improvements which benefit all property owners and businesses within the CBD.

The provision of a capital improvements program for those areas not likely to be redeveloped must be approved by the County Council and programmed over time to be financially feasible. The Plan recommends a sequence for implementation but does not identify a time schedule. Improvements, such as median retrofits, sidewalk repairs, and street tree plantings, can be achieved with a variety of other funding sources, for example Bethesda Urban Partnership funds and MCDOT's sidewalk repair funds.

- Priority 1:**
- A. All unfinished streetscapes within the Core District, such as the east side of Woodmont Avenue from Old Georgetown Road to Cheltenham Drive, and both sides of East-West Highway from Waverly Street to Pearl Street.
  - B. Northern Wisconsin Avenue from Cheltenham Drive to the northern gateway, if there is sufficient private sector development to coordinate public sector improvements.



- Priority 2:**
- A. Norfolk Avenue, Cheltenham Drive, and Woodmont Avenue within the Woodmont Triangle.
  - B. Southern Wisconsin Avenue from Bethesda Avenue to Bradley Boulevard.
  - C. All unfinished streetscapes along northern Wisconsin Avenue to be completed without delaying further for private sector development to occur.
- Priority 3:**
- A. Bethesda Avenue from Woodmont Avenue to Clarendon Road.
- Priority 4:**
- A. East-West Highway from the eastern gateway at the railroad bridge to Pearl Street.
  - B. Old Georgetown Road from Woodmont Avenue to the western gateway at Glenbrook Road.
- Priority 5:**
- A. Arlington Road from Old Georgetown Road to Bradley Boulevard.
  - B. Montgomery Avenue from Pearl Street to East-West Highway.







# ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES PLAN

Bethesda is and will continue to be an urban environment. However, there are elements of the natural environment that should be preserved and enhanced. The challenge of environmental planning in the Bethesda CBD is to respect the natural environment and mitigate undesirable consequences of urban development as much as possible.

## **7.1 PLAN OBJECTIVES**

The Plan's environmental objectives are:

1. Contribute to improved air quality by encouraging more travel by non-autodrivors during peak traffic periods.
2. Increase recycling within the Sector Plan area.
3. Reduce the impact of noise on the public environment and in residential areas.
4. Mitigate the impact of stormwater runoff on area streams.
5. Ensure sufficient water supply and sewerage facilities to serve Sector Plan development.

## **7.2 AIR QUALITY**

On November 15, 1990, the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 became law. This legislation fundamentally changed the law and significantly altered the approach for attaining air quality standards in areas that currently do not satisfy the standards (called non-attainment areas). The Clean Air Act is intended to reduce the severely adverse impact air pollution has on the health of our citizens as well as on property and resources such as crops, forests, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay. The Washington D. C. Area, which includes all of Montgomery County and consequently, the Bethesda CBD, is in the "serious" category for ozone. (See Appendix G for technical information.)

Although there are many provisions in the Clean Air Act Amendments, the major focus for the Washington area will be on reductions in usage and emissions from mobile sources, such as automobile commuting. Reduction of single-occupancy automobile transportation is the most



important component for achievement of air quality standards. The Clean Air Act, as amended, requires state and local governments to develop extensive plans to reduce emissions. When those plans have been completed and strategies adopted, all development (including new or expanded transportation facilities) in the planning area should be evaluated for compatibility with and implementation of the adopted strategies. Land use plans that encourage higher-density development near transit corridors should help achieve air quality standards.

Other new federal requirements for the Washington region relevant to the Bethesda CBD include new regulations for stationary air pollution sources, installation and use of gasoline vapor-recovery systems, and new particulate emission standards for urban buses.

Another way of improving air quality is through energy efficiency and energy conservation. The County's Energy Plan (CEP), adopted in February 1990, advocates incorporating energy conservation measures into building design and construction, and into land use planning.

The Sector Plan includes the following recommendations that will help improve air quality:

1. Reduce dependency on automobile travel by encouraging a mixture of residential, retail, and office uses to increase the opportunities for work and shopping trips on foot, bicycle, or public transit.
2. Allow higher density development in the Metro Core to facilitate the use of transit and carpooling.
3. Develop parking policies such as constrained employee parking, preferential short-term parking rates, and reserved spaces for carpools to encourage people to commute via transit or carpools.
4. Create a system of bikeways to provide access to and from the CBD.
5. Develop a Transportation Management Organization (TMO) which involves employers in new and existing developments in reducing single occupancy-vehicle commuting. This program includes providing transit coordinators, providing bicycle parking, and subsidizing mass transit.

In addition, the following design guidelines should be followed to improve overall air quality:

1. Locate garage and emission exhaust systems away from fresh air intakes, public plazas, and pedestrian ways.
2. Design and locate public spaces in a way that avoids human exposure to polluted areas such as major intersections or garage exhaust facilities.

### 7.3 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Central business districts generate considerable amounts of waste material, mostly paper from office buildings; cardboard from retail establishments; and metal, glass, plastics, and food waste from restaurants and multi-family developments. The collection, transportation, and disposal of solid waste is costly and time-consuming to the County. Sanitary landfills use land for the ultimate disposal of solid waste. The waste stream of the Bethesda CBD, however, contains great potential for recycling.

The goal most relevant to the Bethesda CBD in the County's Ten Year Solid Waste Plan is achievement of a minimum 35% recycling rate by 1995 for all waste producers. Furthermore, a 50% recycling rate is to be achieved by the year 2000. This recycling goal will be largely met for businesses through the establishment of a private sector recycling infrastructure that will collect and process recyclables. The reduction of almost a quarter of the total waste stream will be accomplished by encouraging onsite grass cycling and composting.

The County requires that specific materials from all commercial and multi-family residential sources be recycled. Recycling from both businesses and residences presents challenges in collecting, temporarily storing, and transporting materials to a recycling facility.

A primary challenge to instituting recycling in the CBD is finding space for collection and temporary storage of recyclable materials. The high land values of the CBD put space at a premium. Interim measures should be established to support recycling in the CBD while permanent solutions are being developed.

The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (MCDEP) is responsible for ensuring that the mandated recycling goals are met. MCDEP has ongoing programs for non-residential recycling and multi-family residential recycling.

The Plan recommends the following actions to help achieve the County's solid waste management goal:

1. Create local recycling centers where appropriate, provided that noise, litter, hours of operation, and visual pollution do not have a negative impact on neighboring properties.
2. Encourage participation of Bethesda businesses in the County's business recycling program, including voluntary acceptance of recycling center facilities.
3. Encourage participation of new office or retail uses, including restaurants, in County-wide waste volume reduction and recycling programs.
4. Make approval of new non-residential uses subject to the designation of adequate areas for pickup and storage of recycled goods.
5. Develop multi-family recycling programs in accordance with County regulations.



## 7.4 NOISE

### A. MOBILE NOISE SOURCES

The principal causes of noise pollution in the Bethesda CBD are mobile sources such as cars, trucks, buses, and Metrorail. The impact of mobile source noises can be controlled by quieting the source or protecting the receiver of the noise. Generally speaking, control of noise originating with vehicles is a federal responsibility and is preempted from local control. Therefore local control of mobile source noise involves protecting the receiver people living and working in the CBD.

Noise mitigation for outdoor areas can be achieved in an urban area in a variety of ways. For instance, sitting areas should be set back from traffic, not placed on sidewalks adjacent to major roadways if possible. Buildings should be sited as barriers to provide quiet outdoor areas. In addition, residential balconies should be on the sides of the building away from noise sources, or if that is not feasible, designed to mitigate noise through use of noise-absorptive surface treatments and solid barriers in place of standard open balcony railings.

Outdoor spaces can also be protected from excessive noise by vertical separation from the roadway, integrated design of multipurpose noise barriers (e.g., planters or decorative walls), masking noise sources (e.g., fountains), and the use of substantial landscaping to provide the perception of noise reduction by blocking the view of the source.

After all options for exterior reduction have been implemented, acoustic building treatments may be necessary to provide an acceptable interior sound environment. In most circumstances, building materials commonly used for energy efficiency are sufficient to meet interior noise standards.

In areas where short-term, intense noise peaks are likely to occur (e.g., along main roads with sirens from emergency vehicles), higher levels of acoustical treatment are recommended. Changing window and door specifications usually provides the necessary reduction. Acoustic windows and doors are similar to standard thermal windows; their primary difference is the amount of air space between the panes.

The Plan recommends the following land use and site design measures to protect people working and living in the CBD from excessive noise:

1. Integrate noise mitigation measures in all projects in the earliest phases of site layout and building design.
2. Use design features to buffer public and private exterior amenities from noise sources. Such features include using buildings as barriers, landscaping, streetscaping, vertical separation, and using noise absorbing building materials.
3. Encourage acoustic treatment for doors and windows of buildings subject to intense short-term noise peaks. (See Appendix G for technical information.)

## **B. STATIONARY NOISE SOURCES**

Stationary noise sources-noise emanating from a particular property and land use can be locally controlled. Montgomery County and the State of Maryland have regulations intended to control truly stationary sources, such as heat pumps, commercial heating and air conditioning systems, and backup generators, as well as portable sources that commonly operate on a particular property, such as trucks, front end loaders, forklifts, or other heavy equipment.

The State's Department of the Environment has almost no resources to implement or enforce the provisions of the State Noise Control Regulations at the present time and for the foreseeable future. However, the Montgomery County Noise Ordinance takes precedence because it is deemed equal to or more stringent than the state regulations. MCDEP also has the option of enforcing the provisions of the state regulations through, and with the concurrence of, the Attorney General's Office.

Deviations from the County noise limits are permitted for short durations of time, generally during weekday daylight hours, for construction and other noisy activities. Regulatory levels are 20 dBA higher for construction than the normal 55 or 62 dBA property line limits during weekday daytime hours. For all other noise sources, daytime noises that are 5, 10, and 15 dBA above the appropriate property line limits are allowed for 12 minutes, 3 minutes, and 30 seconds, respectively, out of any hour.

The Plan makes the following recommendations to mitigate the impacts of stationary noise sources:

1. Enforce existing State and County regulations for stationary noise sources.
2. Use site design features noted earlier to mitigate the impact of stationary noise sources.

## **7.5 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT**

Water is one of the most powerful forces in nature and, if permitted to run uncontrolled, can destroy the County's stream valley system and degrade its water quality. The Sector Plan area drains to Little Falls and Rock Creek, and, ultimately, to the Chesapeake Bay.

Since most of the Bethesda CBD was developed prior to enactment of regulations for sediment control and stormwater management, changes in land use have had an adverse impact on the stream systems draining the area. These negative impacts include: streambank erosion, reduced base flows, stream valley disturbance for installation of storm drains, water and sewer lines, litter, poor water quality, and reduced diversity in aquatic species.

There is the potential for stormwater management facilities that can mitigate the impact of urban runoff. Further analysis of possible locations for stormwater management facilities is appropriate. One potential location is on the grounds of NIH just west of Wisconsin Avenue. A stormwater management pond there would control an approximately 170-acre drainage area, including the



Woodmont Triangle and the area between Old Georgetown Road and Wilson Lane. The Department of Environmental Protection is working with active community and business input to identify ways to address stormwater quality and quantity issues in the planning area. The decision to establish any stormwater management retrofit facilities should only be made after a comprehensive study has been conducted that includes citizen and business involvement.

All new development and redevelopment within the CBD should address stormwater quantity and quality controls. As rainwater runs over impervious surfaces such as streets, parking lots, and sidewalks, it has little opportunity to percolate through the soil and have pollutants filtered out. The high degree of impervious cover, combined with the enclosed storm drain systems in the CBD, carries pollutants in stormwater runoff directly into area streams.

State and local regulations require that infiltration through trenches, porous pavement, buffer strips, and similar features be the primary means of providing onsite stormwater controls. In the event that infiltration proves infeasible due to soil or site constraints, alternate stormwater control measures should be used. These include but are not limited to flow and pollutant attenuation, onsite retention, detention through underground storage pipes, and any combination of these methods as is appropriate to the site and situation. New SWM technologies should also be considered as they develop.

The existing stormwater management regulations currently have provisions that allow waivers of onsite stormwater management controls. These waivers have historically been granted in urbanized areas like the Bethesda CBD where most of the sites are redeveloping (e.g., paved parking to commercial buildings) because of site constraints, high cost of underground storage facilities, and a storm drain network that conveys runoff to the receiving stream. However, the County Department of Environmental Protection will be considering both onsite stormwater quality and quantity controls for redeveloping areas. Where site conditions permit, onsite water quality controls are generally required.

The majority of streams in the Bethesda CBD are enclosed in the storm drain network. Currently, the only remaining open channels within the CBD are the headwaters of Coquelin Run parallel to the Georgetown Branch railroad, and portions of Willett Branch running through Little Falls Park. Both of these have experienced a significant amount of stream bank erosion. There is little opportunity to provide conventional stream buffers for these areas other than that already provided by Little Falls Park. The Sector Plan supports a comprehensive stream channel improvement program along Coquelin Run.

To mitigate the impact of urban runoff and development on the aquatic system, the Plan recommends the following measures:

1. Require new development and redevelopment to provide onsite water quality controls, where site conditions permit, and safe conveyance of stormwater runoff to the receiving stream.
2. Encourage the National Institutes of Health to incorporate a regional stormwater facility on their grounds as part of their master plan for improvements.



3. Conduct watershed studies to identify possible methods to control quality and quantity of runoff from portions of the CBD area, and to identify potential streambank stabilization projects along the tributaries. All watershed studies should include active community and business involvement.
4. Ensure strict adherence to the guidelines adopted in "Environmental Management of Development in Montgomery County."
5. Initiate educational outreach by appropriate agencies to inform citizens about ways to improve water quality (e.g., The Citizens Program for the Chesapeake Bay's Baybook, 1985).

## 7.6 WATER SUPPLY AND SANITARY SEWERAGE

The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) provides water and sewer service to the Bethesda Sector Plan area. Bethesda is part of a larger water supply area called the Montgomery Main Service Area, which serves Chevy Chase, Kensington, Potomac, and parts of Silver Spring, Takoma Park, and Wheaton. It supplies water treated at the Potomac Filtration Plant and the Patuxent Filtration Plant. The Bethesda Sector Plan area is served by two sewer systems: Little Falls system and Rock Creek system.

In the 1970' and 1980's, the WSSC constructed additional water mains and sewerage capacity necessary to support proposed development. These improvements were: improvement of the Little Falls system to convey anticipated sewage flows, and construction of water mains in Woodmont Avenue, Waverly Street, and Hampden, East, and Edgemoor Lanes. These facilities are complete. In addition, a number of water mains were cleaned and lined. This maintenance work improves water pressures. More water mains in this sector will be cleaned and lined, or replaced, according to WSSC's Water Reconstruction Program (CIP No. W-1.00).

Water supply CIP projects to serve the future demands of the Bethesda CBD and the rest of the Montgomery Main Zone are:

W-81.06	Bi-County Water Supply Improvement Project
W-150.03	Wheaton Water Pumping & Storage Facilities
W-127.00	Bi-County Water Treatment Expansion
W-127.01	Potomac Bi-County Supply Main

None of these projects are within the CBD itself, but they will improve its water service.

There are no plans for any sewerage system CIP projects that would affect the Sector Plan area at this time. Within the Little Falls Branch basin, at the intersection of Bradley Boulevard and Arlington Road, a single sewer segment may be at or over capacity at buildout of the recommended land use. A flow monitoring study, to be initiated when flows in this segment near its capacity, will help the WSSC decide if a relief or replacement sewer is necessary.





## Chapter 8

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

Public facilities and services are the building blocks of community. Fire and rescue services ensure safety, and public schools, day care, and elderly services address the needs of all generations. Libraries, post offices, and recreation centers help build a community among people with shared needs, interests, and values.

The Bethesda CBD provides its residents with a variety of services. As a growth center and commercial focus for Bethesda-Chevy Chase and southern Montgomery County, Bethesda CBD's services and facilities reach a population beyond the Sector Plan boundary. This chapter describes existing services and makes recommendations for additions to facilities that can respond to future commercial and residential growth.

## 8.1 PLAN OBJECTIVES

1. Provide public facilities to meet the human service, recreation, security, educational, and other needs of the community.
2. Encourage flexibility in space and programming to adapt to future needs.

## 8.2 HUMAN SERVICES

### A. CHILD CARE SERVICES

The Central Business District's role as a job and transportation center makes it an appropriate location for child care services for both employees and nearby residents. The CBD currently has a number of privately run child care facilities, located in churches, community centers, and office buildings. The Metropolitan Park project at Garage 49 will have day care space, perhaps with extended hours, to support employees in restaurants and other businesses concentrated nearby. It will also serve the large existing and proposed residential components of the TSR and Woodmont Triangle Districts.

The Plan can have an effect on the life of young children in the CBD in other ways. One is to create a "child-friendly" environment with parks, wide sidewalks, and safe street crossings. These issues are addressed elsewhere in the Plan.



The second way is to encourage private developers to provide subsidized child care facilities in appropriate locations. Proximity to parks and open space and location of play spaces away from busy roads are important criteria when reviewing sites. The high land value of CBD property often prices child care services out of the market and limits the provision of outdoor play space for children.

### **Recommendation**

The Plan recommends that child care facilities be encouraged in the CBD. Subsidized child care facilities are among the amenities considered appropriate for optional method development, pending future study of CBD zones. (See Section 10.1, Plan Implementation, Zoning.)

## **B. FACILITIES FOR THE ELDERLY**

While the Bethesda CBD generally attracts younger residents, its nature as an established and compact community with concentrated services and Metro access also makes it attractive to elderly residents who are not comfortable driving.

Most of Bethesda's seniors have relatively high incomes and home equity, which have enabled them to turn to the private sector for the services they need. As the population ages, the market has responded with housing, entertainment, and services geared to an affluent elderly population. However, elderly people between the ages of 75 and 80 often begin to lose the ability to care for themselves and their homes. Because of an inadequate supply of housing in the CBD for such service workers, the in-home care they need is not always readily available.

The growing elderly population in the CBD and the surrounding area also includes less affluent residents who need the option to "age in place" or in a familiar environment near their former homes. The County Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) currently operates Waverly House, a senior citizen development of 158 apartments on East-West Highway that partially addresses this need.

### **Recommendation**

Although policies beyond the scope of this Plan have primary impact on the lives of the elderly, some local measures can add to their quality of life. The land use recommendations are designed to create an environment that is concentrated and walkable, affording elderly people increased mobility and independence.

Private and public housing options should meet the needs of a range of people, including hired caregivers who cannot afford market-rate housing in the CBD, family caregivers who need the space and special design features to take care of older relatives at home, and the elderly themselves. Assisted care facilities and up to 25% of the proposed new housing units should be designed for elderly or near-elderly residents.

Improved transportation can provide better access to groceries and services. The proposed loop bus or a special bus service that could possibly extend to the Friendship Heights elderly community would provide increased mobility and independence. The financing of such a service must be explored further.

Other services, like the nutrition program, recreation programs, and adult day care, are currently available in the CBD, including those provided at Waverly House and the Leland Community Recreation Center. Additional services should be consolidated in a visible and accessible public space, convenient to housing, as discussed below. (See Section 8.6 A.)

### **C. FACILITIES FOR THE HOMELESS**

Despite Bethesda's status as an employment center and the high education and income levels of its residents, the CBD has a homeless population. The amount of homelessness varies with the strength of the economy and with community responses to the problem. Among the homeless population are veterans, families, and the mentally ill, all with different needs requiring different responses.

The Bethesda community has responded with Bethesda House, a men's shelter, and Bethesda Cares, a lunch program sponsored by the Bethesda First Baptist Church and the Christ Lutheran Church. Greater urbanization and other factors may increase the homeless population. The Department of Family Resources estimates that there are at least 400 homeless people on the streets of Montgomery County on any given night. The current day and night shelter capacity in the County is approximately 200 beds.

#### **Recommendation**

Although the increase in jobs and housing may offer opportunities to some segments of the homeless community, many more will probably not be served by the market. Since many of the service jobs that will be created will likely not pay enough to meet current housing costs, new housing options should be considered, such as Single Room Occupancy (SRO) buildings, perhaps reusing small CBD hotels. SRO housing typically consists of a one-room unit with limited-sometimes shared-cooking facilities. SRO's are not currently permitted by the County zoning ordinance, though boardinghouses are. Consideration should be given to a zoning text amendment allowing SRO's in appropriate locations in some CBD zones.

page  
**213**

### **D. CRISIS CENTER**

The County Crisis Center, run by the Department of Addiction, Victim and Mental Health Services, is currently located in the Woodmont Triangle in the former BCC Rescue Squad building adjoining Public Parking Lot 36. The center provides client telephone crisis services, walk-in crisis services, a mobile crisis team, triage, and evaluation beds. The center is also responsible for various supportive services.

#### **Recommendation**

The County is attempting to relocate the center to a site that is more central to the entire County. When a new and enlarged facility is available, reuse options for the existing building, owned by the Parking District, could include a teen facility, shelter, or other public uses. If the building is torn down and a new parking structure built on the entire site, the Plan recommends that mixed-income housing be provided.



## 8.3 PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

The Department of Parks manages five urban parks in the Bethesda Sector Plan area. They are small between one and two acres and are located on the edges of the CBD, where they provide appropriate transitional uses between single-family residential neighborhoods and the CBD. These green open spaces also provide a valued respite from the dense urban environment and offer recreational opportunities to apartment residents and workers. Urban parks are particularly popular with lunchtime visitors, who eat, read, socialize, and relax. Neighborhood children often use the play equipment on weekends.

All of the urban parks include landscaped sitting areas and walkways, in addition to other features. The two-acre Elm Street Park buffers the Town of Chevy Chase from CBD commercial uses and includes a playground, paddle tennis courts, ping-pong tables, and a horseshoe court. It is scheduled for renovation, which may replace some of these facilities with others preferred by the community and with more green space. The two-acre Battery Lane Urban Park is a bicycle and pedestrian link between NIH and the Bethesda CBD, as well as providing recreational facilities. The Chase Avenue Urban Park (one-half acre) and the Cheltenham Drive Urban Park (one-third acre) buffer the East Bethesda neighborhood from commercial activity on Wisconsin Avenue and provide sitting and play space for small children. The one-acre Caroline Freeland Urban Park on Arlington Road between Hampden Lane and Elm Street provides a stable transitional use at the edge of the Edgemoor neighborhood and includes a small playground.

In addition to these urban parks, the two schools in the Sector Plan area and a community center just outside it meet some of the area's recreation demand. The playing fields, gym, stage, and meeting rooms of Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School are available for community use. Bethesda Elementary School's facilities provide a recreational resource for both the residents of the adjacent single-family neighborhood and the apartments in the area zoned Transit Station Residential, across Arlington Road.

The Leland Community Recreation Center, at 4301 Willow Street in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area, has a gymnasium, meeting rooms, a playground, and tennis courts, as well as housing a privately operated child care center and offices for the Town of Chevy Chase. The outdoor recreational facilities are maintained by the Department of Parks. The Department of Recreation offers various programs at this location for area residents. Local parks just outside the CBD include Norwood Local Park and Lynbrook Local Park.

The 1988 Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan established criteria for the acquisition and location of urban parks. The criteria include the need for beautification and open space, passive recreation areas, and buffering of residential neighborhoods or transition between different uses or districts. Employment centers, transit stations sites, commercial areas, and high density residential areas are considered appropriate locations for urban parks.

Montgomery County has long enjoyed a reputation for a superior park system. In an era of increased fiscal constraints at all levels of government, public dialogue is desirable on several issues of importance to Bethesda and the County, including the following:

1. How can we pay for acquisition, development, and maintenance of new parks and open spaces? What is the relative responsibility of public agencies versus private sector developers in meeting recreational needs generated by growth?

Should Bethesda Urban Partnership funds be used to acquire, develop, and/or maintain parks and open spaces? Is maintenance most economical and effective if coordinated by one entity?

2. How should priorities be assigned for public expenditure between the urbanizing, down-County sector plan areas and the up-County demands for traditional suburban park and recreation areas?

Despite the high land values in the CBD, there are opportunities to enhance the park and open space network. A privately funded, publicly accessible park-like open space in the center of the CBD, on the Hot Shoppes site, would complement Metro Plaza and provide an amenity for the elderly residents of adjacent Waverly House. Small landscaped open spaces can be provided on land already in public ownership to buffer the residential neighborhoods. Existing parks can be linked with streetscape improvements to increase their visual impact. The Capital Crescent Trail will also bring a green swath with unique recreational value into the CBD. (See discussion in Section 5.5.)

## **Recommendations**

Innovative approaches for acquiring, developing, and maintaining urban parks and open spaces are needed, considering the capital and operational cost burden that new parks place on the Department of Parks. Programmed public expenditure involving several County agencies and private redevelopment should combine to create a linked park and open space system in the CBD.

The Plan recommends green open spaces and parks in the following locations (see Figure 8.1, Existing and Proposed Community Facilities):

page  
**215**

1. **Expansion of Battery Lane Urban Park**

The existing park should be expanded with landscaping, path extension, and a possible seating area for workers in the Woodmont Triangle and adjacent residents. This expansion, which would involve public right-of-way, would improve visibility and public access from the Woodmont Triangle to this well-used park. The design must provide parking for the two houses to the west.

2. **Northwest corner of Woodmont Avenue and Montgomery Lane:**

This small urban green space could include a landscaped seating area. It would require combined acquisition and development by new and existing TSR projects.

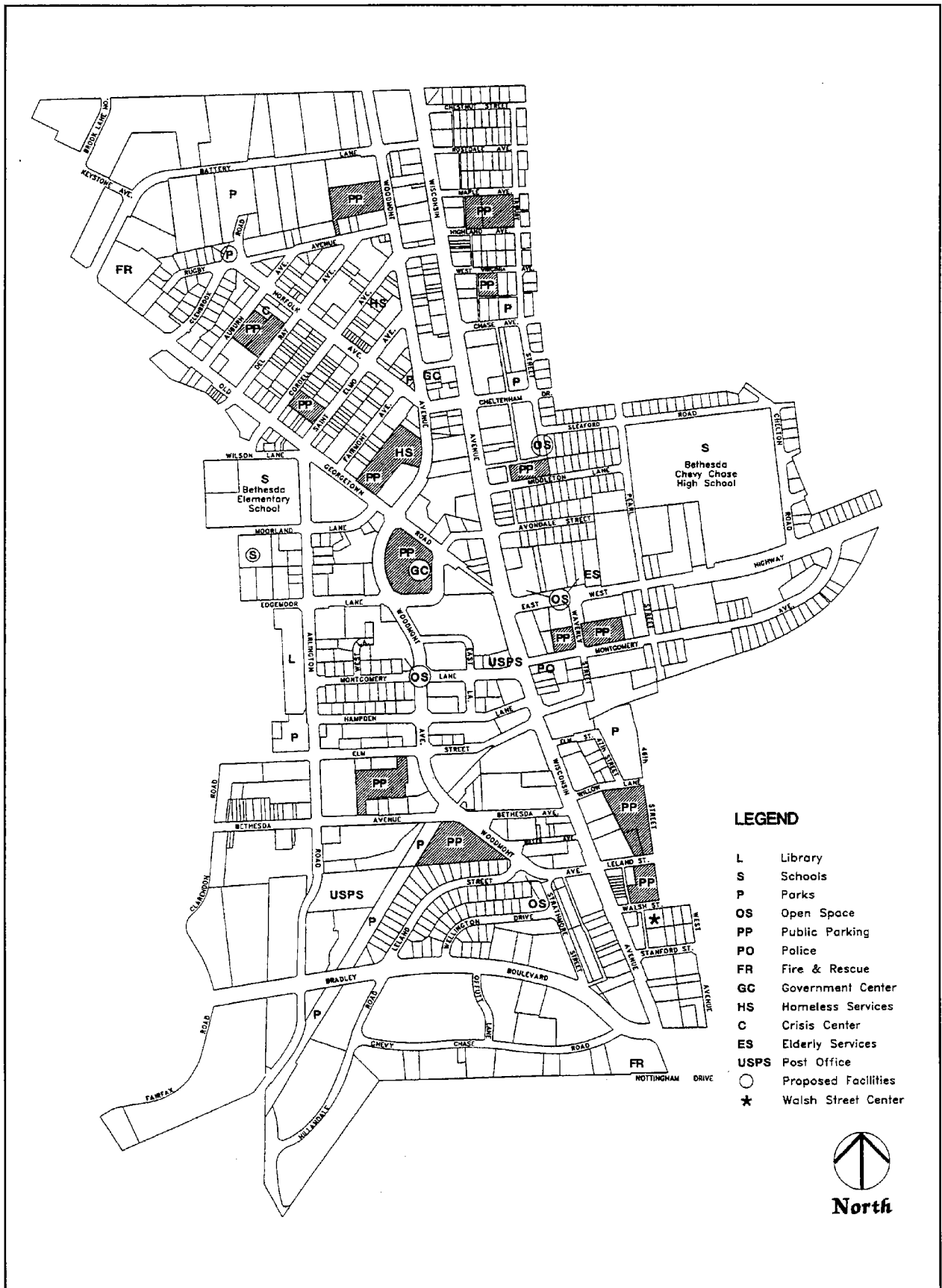
3. **Sites used for below-grade parking and mixed-income housing:**

Lot 31: Site development should include landscape screening along the southern edge of the site to buffer the single-family houses in the Sacks subdivision. Pedestrian and bicycle access to the Capital Crescent Trail should also be provided and the possibility of a staging area for trail users should be explored.

Lot 36: This small urban open space is primarily intended for young adults, including apartment residents and retail/office workers. It should provide landscaped seating areas.

# EXISTING & PROPOSED COMMUNITY FACILITIES

FIGURE 8.1





4. Parking Lot 42 and Beta Corporation Lot:

Open space in the southeast corner of the proposed joint development site should create a park-like setting and provide a pedestrian pathway from Tilbury Street to Middleton Lane to allow pedestrian access for new and existing residents.

## 8.4 PUBLIC SECURITY

### A. POLICE STATION

In response to plans to relocate or renovate the Bethesda Police Station on Montgomery Avenue, the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan recommended two criteria for making that decision.

1. Meet the service and operational requirements for efficient access and for size.
2. Avoid locations that cannot be easily secured or buffered from nearby residential communities.

Planning Department and County staff analyzed several sites in the BCC area. After a public hearing, the hearing examiner made a recommendation. The County Executive postponed the decision to relocate the station because of County fiscal constraints and the development of the police strategic master plan.

page  
217

### Recommendations

If a location in the CBD is considered for a new station as a result of the strategic master plan, it may be a site that is recommended for housing in this Sector Plan. The relative priority of housing or police use should be resolved at the time of site selection.

Should the police station relocate, leaving the existing 21,700-square-foot building vacant, this Plan recommends the following criteria for reuse of the site and/or building:

1. The use should advance the goals of the Plan, giving priority to public and community uses.
2. The use should not exceed the density or height limits set by the Plan.
3. The use should be compatible with adjacent land uses.

Possible uses could include the following:

1. Bethesda-Chevy Chase Government Services Center. The center is currently in a rented building in the Woodmont Triangle District. The police station would offer a more central location for community services with improved parking and Metro access, if plans to locate the government center at Garage 49 are not realized.
2. Bethesda Urban Partnership offices, including "cultural district" management (Section 10.3).



3. Subsidized artist studios to enhance the objectives of the Bethesda "cultural district."
4. Programs for the elderly or a teen center.
5. Housing. Subsidized or mixed-income housing on the police station parking lot, or on the whole site if the building were demolished, should be considered. The site is a low priority for housing because of limited size and lack of adjacent amenities for residents. The site would be more attractive for housing if it could be combined with the private lot that fronts onto Waverly so that the entrance to the complex could be on a pedestrian-friendly street. The lot would also be an appropriate location for elderly housing if the police station were reused for community facilities, including an elder care center.
6. A mix of private and public uses. An appropriate mix of community services with some private uses might provide an income stream to help operate and maintain the building.

#### **B. FIRE AND RESCUE STATIONS**

The Bethesda CBD has two fire and rescue facilities. The fire station is located at the southern edge of the planning area at the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Bradley Boulevard (6600 Wisconsin Avenue). The rescue squad is located at the northern end of the planning area at 5020 Battery Lane.

These facilities are able to serve the CBD adequately at this time. With an increase in the elderly population and an increase in office workers, the Fire and Rescue Planning Division anticipates an increase in demand for emergency medical services and hospital transport trips. This demand can be met by the existing facilities.

There is no anticipated increase in the demand for fire services since current demand is being met and new buildings will have internal sprinkler systems. A significant increase in CBD traffic congestion, however, could affect the response time of both services.

### **8.5 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES**

#### **A. LIBRARY**

The Bethesda Regional Library, at 7400 Arlington Road, serves the CBD. Along with its regular collection, it features an extensive reference collection and meeting rooms, all of which are well used. The Bethesda Library is an active community gathering place. It is one of the busiest libraries in the County, attracting both business and residential users.

Despite a projected population increase in the CBD, future demand can be accommodated in the existing facility with some increase in staffing levels. The County has plans to renovate the Bethesda Library before the year 2000. At that time the emphasis will be on internal reconfiguration and installing electronic data systems. The primary impact of

increased growth and demand will be on the materials budget as well as the need for additional staffing.

## **Recommendations**

Rather than investing in large capital expenditures, like a building expansion, the library prefers to move into the community with small facilities and through electronic connections to homes and businesses. Staffed "mini-libraries" or unstaffed information kiosks at Metro stations can provide such services as electronic access to community and collection information, reserve book pickup, and a small selection of lending paperbacks.

The Plan recommends creating and encouraging opportunities for the library to provide expanded services to the community at appropriate locations in the CBD. The Plan supports locating a kiosk at the Bethesda Metro station.

## **B. PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

There are two public schools in the Bethesda CBD, Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School and Bethesda Elementary School. Both are on less than optimum sites, but expansion opportunities are limited and expensive due to their CBD locations.

Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School is located on East-West Highway on a 16-acre site. The site does not meet present standards, which recommend a 30-acre site. Limited funds and site options make expansion of the high school site unlikely. BCC has a stable enrollment and was renovated in the 1970's. No expansion or change is anticipated. The Plan designates the school on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. (See Chapter 9.0.)

The Bethesda Elementary School, like Somerset and Chevy Chase Elementaries, is also on an undersized site by current standards. In the 1970's, the School Board planned to expand this less-than-five-acre site by acquiring single-family properties between Moorland Lane and Edgemoor Lane. (See Figure 4.40.) The Board purchased several properties, but did not complete the purchases originally intended because of budget limitations, the increasing price of real estate, and changes in the anticipated size of the school population.

The school system's Vision Center occupies a structure across Moorland Lane from the school. It includes a special library and serves both students and adults. Relocation of the Vision Center will be considered in connection with plans for the modernization of Bethesda Elementary, now scheduled for the end of the decade. The School Board has no immediate plans for use or sale of the houses it owns in the block between Moorland Lane and Edgemoor Lane. The intent of the 1976 Sector Plan to maintain the properties in public ownership should be carried forward until the School Board makes a specific modernization decision for Bethesda Elementary School.

The Bethesda Elementary School gym, meeting rooms, and outside play area are significant assets to both the single-family and the multi-family residential neighborhoods on either side of Arlington Road. Any planning for nonschool use of the school's facility in the future should take this recreational use into consideration.



## 8.6 OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES

### A. GOVERNMENT SERVICES CENTER

Bethesda is not an incorporated municipality, but the County has found it efficient to decentralize its provision of services in small government services centers throughout the County. These centers can respond to the needs and interests of the residents and businesses in their areas.

The Bethesda-Chevy Chase Government Services Center is located at 7815 Woodmont Avenue in rental space of about 3,000 square feet. The center serves as a clearinghouse for community events and services. It also provides two meeting rooms, used by community and business groups.

The County's lease for the Government Services Center space will soon expire and there is a strong probability that the center will relocate. It will continue in its role as a focus of community activities and location for meetings, an information and referral clearinghouse responding to the demands of a changing population, and a site for satellite office space for County departments. The appropriate location can help ensure the effectiveness of the center in serving the community.

#### Recommendation

In considering a new site for the Government Services Center, a central site in the CBD should be selected for maximum visibility and accessibility. The Planning Board has approved the Housing Opportunities Commission's (HOC) plans to locate the center in the office building portion of the mixed-income housing project above Garage 49. Should this not occur, other possible sites are the Lorenz site, or the police station site if the station is relocated.

If the functions are increased, a larger facility than the existing leased space would be required. The center could house a variety of consolidated services and community functions such as the Bethesda Urban Partnership and elder day care.

### B. WALSH STREET CENTER

The Walsh Street Center is a County-owned building formerly operated as a community center. This publicly owned property presents a valuable opportunity in an urban area with high land costs to accommodate a variety of uses over the next 20 years.

The County has decided to retain ownership and has leased the building on a long-term basis to the Writers Center. By retaining title, the County will have the flexibility to change tenants depending on local demand and interests.

#### Recommendation

The Plan recommends continued County ownership of the building to further the objectives of the "cultural district" or other community objectives.

## **C. POST OFFICE FACILITIES**

The Bethesda CBD is currently served by two post offices. The post office at 7400 Wisconsin Avenue, near Metro Plaza, is on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation and is a community landmark. It is a retail, public-service facility. The site, while centrally located and convenient for Metro users, is accessible by car from one-way streets only. It has limited customer parking in the rear, and no on-street parking.

The post office at 7001 Arlington Road is designed as a carrier annex where mail is sorted for delivery. This location's retail facilities are limited. Although there is a large off-street parking lot, most of it is used by mail trucks and access is difficult because of the curve in Arlington Road.

The 110,758-square-foot site is privately owned. However, the U.S. Postal Service owns the 16,000-square-foot building and has a ground lease that expires in 1999, with options to renew that extend until 2015-beyond the life of the Plan.

The Postal Service will implement a corporate automation plan in 1995, which may reduce the numbers of employees on the site. But it is also possible that the Service might choose to expand the building if automation suggests a consolidation or extension of distribution functions on the site. Given the high land values and the difficulty of finding a site in Bethesda, the Postal Service considers the site attractive because of the possibility it provides for expansion and extensive parking.

### **Recommendations**

Although the Postal Service does not currently believe it necessary to expand retail service substantially on this site, an increase in jobs and housing in the Bethesda Sector Plan area would increase postal service demand. The site has the potential to be redeveloped for uses which could include a retail post office.

If the Postal Service does not renew the lease, the site could be developed for a combination of retail use along the Arlington Road frontage and multi-family residential uses for the remainder of the site. (See Section 4.12.) Residential use would not be compatible with continued function as a carrier annex on any portion of the site because of the hours of operation.





# HISTORIC RESOURCES PLAN

This chapter opens with a short history of the Bethesda Central Business District (CBD). It then describes historic sites currently designated on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, those historic resources currently on the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites in Montgomery County, Maryland, and other properties of potential historic interest in the planning area that are to be evaluated for historic designation. Properties which this Plan acts to designate as historic are added to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation and are placed under the jurisdiction of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

The majority of the resources discussed in this chapter date from the early “Automobile Era” in Bethesda’s development, approximately from 1920 to the beginning of World War II. Table 9.1 summarizes the current status of historic resources in the Bethesda CBD and Figure 9.1 gives the general location of these properties. Further explanation of the historic preservation designation criteria and the effects of historic site designation conclude the chapter.

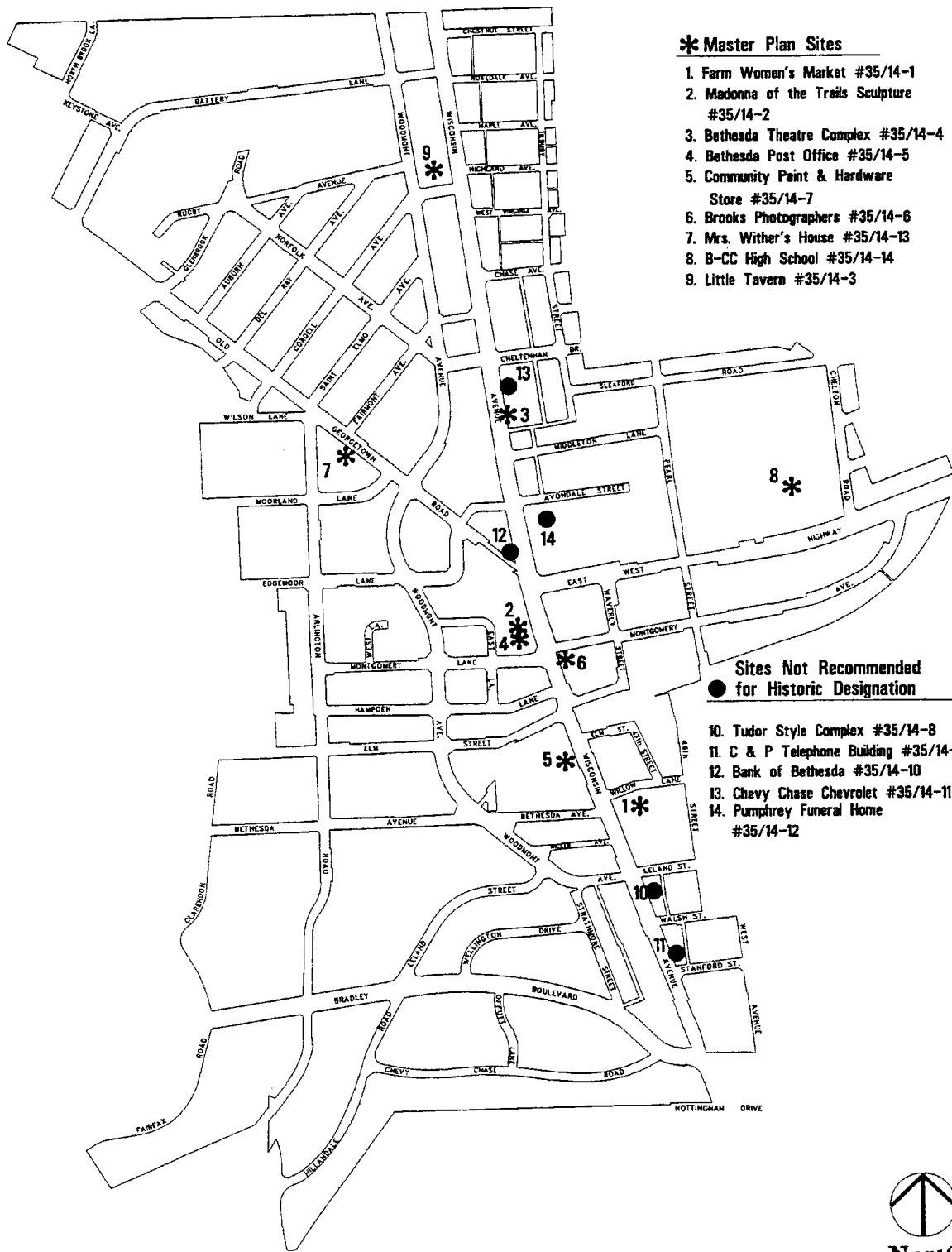
## **9.1 PLAN OBJECTIVES**

1. Highlight the values that are important in maintaining the character of Bethesda.
2. Protect and enhance Bethesda’s historic and architectural heritage for the benefit of present and future residents.
3. Integrate historic sites into new and existing development.

## **9.2 INTRODUCTION**

The intent of the County’s preservation program is to provide a rational system for evaluating, protecting, and enhancing the County’s historic and architectural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations. It serves to highlight the values that are important in maintaining the individual character of the County and its communities.

The Master Plan for Historic Preservation and the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code, are designed to protect and preserve Montgomery County’s historic and architectural heritage. Placement on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation officially designates the property as a historic site or historic district and subjects it to further procedural





requirements of the ordinance. Designation affects only the exterior of structures and their environmental settings. In addition, designated properties can make use of a number of County and State tax credits, as well as other financial aids and incentives.

The 1976 Locational Atlas originally proposed the Bethesda CBD as a historic district. However, when the historic designation of the area was first considered in 1986, it was determined that a cohesive historic district did not exist and that, instead, a thematic collection of individual resources along Wisconsin Avenue should be evaluated for placement on the Master Plan. A total of five sites were designated as historic at this time.

The linear arrangement of the designated historic sites along Wisconsin Avenue reflects the original development and growth patterns in the Bethesda CBD. They create an excellent historic complement to the Bethesda "Discovery Trail" network, which focuses on recent development and public art in the CBD area.

As part of the Sector Plan process, the HPC, the Planning Board and the County Council evaluated all Bethesda CBD resources identified in the Locational Atlas and some additional properties of potential historic interest that members of the Bethesda community recommended for consideration. The Sector Plan includes the HPC's recommendation on each property, as well as the County Council's final action on designation.

## **9.3 HISTORY OF BETHESDA**

page  
225

The history of Bethesda CBD can be divided into four general periods: the Agricultural/Crossroads Community period, the 20th century Automobile Era between the two World Wars, the post-World War II expansion period, and the Metro related development in the 1980's. As Bethesda grew over the years, many early buildings were demolished; the Bethesda Community Paint and Hardware Store is the only significant pre-1900 building still intact in the CBD. There are about a dozen other early 20th century resources that reflect Bethesda's evolution in the 1920's and 30's from a rural crossroads to an automobile-oriented, suburban community.

As a small crossroads community surrounded by farms in the post-Civil War era, Bethesda was originally known as Darcy's Store. The store itself was located opposite the toll booth on the Rockville Pike, just south of the intersection with Old Georgetown Road. On January 23, 1871, the name of the community was changed to Bethesda, after the nearby Presbyterian meeting house. Wilson's Store and Post Office (later the Bethesda Community Paint and Hardware Store) was built in 1890, the same year that the Tennytown and Rockville Railroad Company streetcar line was extended along Wisconsin Avenue to Alta Vista. In the same period, George Bradley built a house which later became the Pumphrey Funeral Home.

In the 1890's, the Chevy Chase Land Company began buying farmland for residential development, and by 1912 farming had been virtually eliminated in Bethesda. Commercial development continued to focus on the area along Wisconsin Avenue, both because the Chevy Chase Land Company covenants prohibited commercial development in residential areas and because the streetcar served as a natural catalyst for businesses.



Commercial growth was further enhanced by the coming of the B&O Railroad's Georgetown Branch in 1910. The railroad resulted in the creation of some related industries, including a number of coal yards, lumber yards, a planing mill, and an ice plant.

From 1922 to 1926, escalating land values, the subdivision of farms, and the increasing use of the automobile as a means of commuting created a real estate boom. The book *A Grateful Remembrance* states that the "Bethesda District was by far the most affluent section of the suburban County in the 1920's, and Chevy Chase and Bethesda vied with each other for more expensive homes in landscaped surroundings." Suburban growth in this period was significant. In 1920, population in the County began to shift toward the south, and by 1940, 65 percent of the County's population was in the Bethesda and Wheaton Districts.

The higher land values and residential subdivisions of the 1920's dictated more substantial buildings in the CBD area. Leslie Beall, a prominent Bethesda businessman, built a Colonial Revival house on Old Georgetown Road in 1925 (now known by his daughter's name, as Mrs. Withers' house). South of the railroad, the Warren brothers built the Leland Shopping Center in 1926-27, in a picturesque Tudor style, to provide shops for their nearby residential development. In 1926, the Bank of Bethesda constructed the first major commercial building on the site of an early blacksmith shop, and in 1928 Leland School was built.

Also during this period, C&P Telephone built a two-story stone building for the Bethesda Exchange, and Dr. Benjamin Perry built a new brick office with residence above (Brooks Photographers Building). In the late 1920's, Bethesda had three filling stations, a drug store, a hardware store, a variety store, a grocery store, two feed stores, two barber shops, and three small lunchrooms.

When the Great Depression came in the early 1930's, a group of Montgomery County women formed the Bethesda Farm Women's Market as a self-help effort to sell produce directly to families living in the area. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) built a new post office, and, as a response to increasing numbers of students in the area, the Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School was built in 1935. In 1936, Robert Pumphrey relocated George Bradley's old house closer to the road to create his new concept of a funeral "home." In 1938, the Bethesda Theatre was constructed in the popular Art Deco style. In 1939, the Little Tavern hamburger restaurant was built, as well as Chevyland Chevrolet, one of 23 auto-related businesses in Bethesda at the time.

The development of the National Institutes of Health complex in 1938 and the Bethesda Naval Hospital in 1940 spurred additional commercial activity in Bethesda during World War II. Following the war, a second wave of home building took place. As Bethesda's residential areas matured, the CBD continued to grow and prosper.

In more recent years, the coming of Metro generated additional growth in the 1980's, replacing many of the post-World War II commercial structures. The emphasis of this development shifted from smaller commercial activities along Wisconsin Avenue designed to serve only nearby residential areas to offices, shops, and restaurants that have made Bethesda a new downtown for the southern part of the County.

**TABLE 9.1**  
**BETHESDA CBD HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Resource #	Resource Name	Address	Comments	HPC Recommendation	Plan Action
<b><u>Master Plan Sites</u></b>					
#35/14-1	Bethesda Farm Women's Market	7155 Wisconsin Avenue	In continuous use since 1934 as a farm market, built as a self help response to the severe economic conditions of the Great Depression by the Farm Women's Cooperative.	Master Plan	
#35/14-2	Madonna of the Trails Sculpture	7400 Wisconsin Avenue	Erected by DAR in 1929 to commemorate pioneer women. It is one of 12 such sculptures across the country marking the trail settlers took to the west.	Master Plan	
#35/14-4	Bethesda Theatre Complex (Bethesda Theatre Cafe)	7715-7723 Wisconsin Avenue	Art Deco movie theater built in 1938, designed by noted theater architect John Eberson; features distinctive tower, marquee and banded brick facade.	Master Plan	
#35/14-5	Bethesda Post Office	7400 Wisconsin Avenue	WPA Project built in 1938 of native Stoneyhurst Stone by Sofarelli Bros. of Jamaica, NY. Neo-Georgian style featuring hipped roof, cupola and arched windows.	Master Plan	
#35/14-7	Wilson Store & Post Office (Community Paint and Hardware Store)	7250 Wisconsin Avenue	Only remaining commercial structure from Bethesda's early cross-roads period. Built in 1890 as general store and post office and later a popular hardware store for generations of Bethesda families. Moved 50 feet south and restored for retail use in 1988.	Master Plan	
<b><u>Sites Under Consideration for Historic Designation</u></b>					
#35/14-6	Brooks Photographers	7349 Wisconsin Avenue	Three-story brick Colonial Revival commercial structure built in late 1920's by Dr. Benjamin Perry as doctor's office with residence above. Later office of first Bethesda dentist.	Positive	Positive

TABLE 9.1 (Cont'd.)

Resource #	Resource Name	Address	Comments	HPC Recommendation	Plan Action
#35/14-8	Tudor Style Shopping Complex	7003-7029 Wisconsin and 4606 Leland Avenue	Neo-Tudor half-timbered shopping center built by Chevy Chase developers, Monroe and Robert Bates Warren, in 1926-27, to service new homes in the neighborhood. One of 3 left in County. Shops built for owner occupant rather than rental.	Positive	Negative
#35/14-9	C&P Telephone Company Building	6925 Wisconsin Avenue	Built of local stone in 1928 and enlarged in 1940, it marks the rapid growth of telephone communication in the development of Bethesda. Reflects early 20th century interest in revival styles of architecture.	Positive	Negative
#35/14-10	Bank of Bethesda (Crestar Bank)	7500 Wisconsin Avenue	Established in 1919, the Bank of Bethesda built this substantial structure in 1925-26 on site of original blacksmith shop. Built of Stoneyhurst Stone, with quoined corners. Entrance altered. Landmark location.	Negative	Negative
#35/14-13	Mrs. Withers' House (Chevy Chase Garden Plaza)	7740 Old Georgetown Road	American Foursquare home with Colonial Revival features and red tile roof built in 1925 by Leslie Beall, one of the area's first grocers to offer fresh meat. His daughter, Mrs. Withers, leased the property for 99 years to developers of the site in 1986.	Positive	Positive
#35/14-14	Bethesda/Chevy Chase High School	4301 East-West Highway	One of oldest public high school buildings in the County, designed by school architect in 1935 with Colonial Williamsburg influence. Replaced the 1917 Chevy Chase High School on Bradley Lane.	Positive	Positive
#35/14-3	Little Tavern	8100 Wisconsin Avenue	Precursor to fast-food restaurant. Early chain of hamburger restaurants constructed in 1939 in "Old English Cottage" style with the latest materials and technology. One of 4 in the County.	Positive	Positive
#35/14-11	Chevy Chase Chevrolet	7725 Wisconsin Avenue	Founded in 1939, it is the only remaining auto dealership opened before World War II. Enlarged 8 times, it is in original location and owned by original founders. One of 21 auto related businesses in Bethesda in 1939.	Negative	Negative
#35/14-12	Pumphrey Funeral Home	7557 Wisconsin Avenue	Possibly the oldest structure in Bethesda, it was originally home of the Wilson Family, purchased by Pumphrey in 1934-35 as an early funeral home—a 20th Century development. Remodeled and expanded in 1949-51.	Negative	Negative

## 9.4 MASTER PLAN SITES

**NAME: BETHESDA FARM WOMEN'S MARKET (#35/14-1)**

**ADDRESS:** 7155 Wisconsin Avenue

**HISTORY/DESCRIPTION:** A group of Montgomery County women formed the Farm Women's Cooperative as a self-help response to the severe economic conditions of the Great Depression. In 1932, they held the first market in an empty storefront, selling fresh produce and home-made products directly to suburban families. The one-story, 4,750-square-foot frame building at 7155 Wisconsin Avenue was built to house the market in 1934 and has been in continuous use as a farm market ever since. It remains an important link to the County's agricultural heritage.

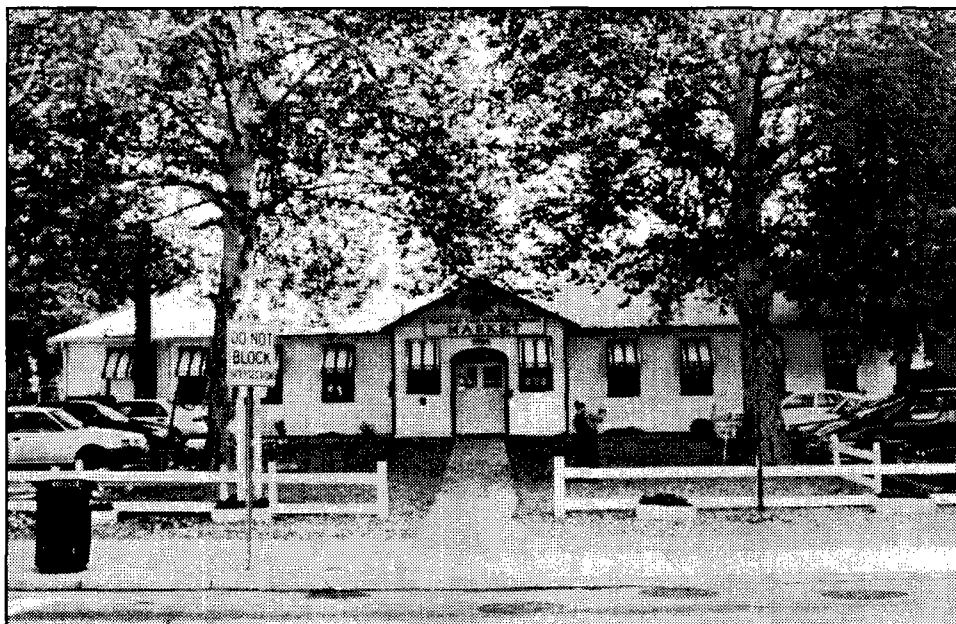
**CURRENT USE:** Farm market

**PLANNING ISSUES:** The building form, open space, and market function make the Farm Women's Market an important Bethesda landmark and gathering place. Major redevelopment is not encouraged. Efforts should be made to support the current use and character while increasing the days of operation, if possible, to enhance activity along Wisconsin Avenue. The site is eligible to participate in the County's historic easement program, as well as other historic preservation incentives. The site is zoned CBD-1.

**STATUS:** On Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

**ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING:** Entire parcel of 29,967 square feet.

page  
**229**





**NAME: MADONNA OF THE TRAILS SCULPTURE (#35/14-2)**

**ADDRESS:** Located next to the Bethesda Post Office, 7400 Wisconsin Avenue

**HISTORY/DESCRIPTION:** This sculpture, Madonna of the Trails, depicts a pioneer woman and her children. It was erected on Wisconsin Avenue in 1929 by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) as one of 12 such sculptures across the country marking the route taken by settlers to the West. It commemorates this country's pioneer women and their role in the country's westward expansion. The sculpture was moved during the construction of the Bethesda Metro Center from its place on the corner south of the Bethesda Post Office to its new location north of the Post Office.

**CURRENT USE:** Public art/commemorative sculpture

**PLANNING ISSUES:** The sculpture is part of the Bethesda Metro Center's site plan enforcement agreement. This agreement specifies that the DAR will maintain the sculpture and the Bethesda Metro Center developer will maintain the site. It is located in a CBD-3 Zone.

**STATUS:** *On Master Plan for Historic Preservation.*

**ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING:** Sculpture only.



**NAME: BETHESDA THEATRE COMPLEX (BETHESDA THEATRE CAFE) (#35/14-4)**

**ADDRESS:** 7715-7723 Wisconsin Avenue

**HISTORY/DESCRIPTION:** This Art Deco movie theater was designed in 1938 by John Eberson, a nationally noted theater architect. Its distinctive tower, marquee, and banded brick facade are characteristic of this style of architecture.

**CURRENT USE:** Movie theater/restaurant

**PLANNING ISSUES:** The site is in the CBD-2 Zone. In the event of redevelopment, the building's tower, marquee, and facade must be retained, as stipulated by the County Council in a Consent Order following designation. In addition to sensitively integrating the exterior features into any new construction, the optional method of development should include retention and renovation of the significant interior features that reflect the Art Deco styling. The Land Use chapter includes redevelopment guidelines.

**STATUS:** On *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

**ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING:** Entire parcel of 17,497 square feet.





**NAME: BETHESDA POST OFFICE (#35/14-5)**

**ADDRESS:** 7400 Wisconsin Avenue

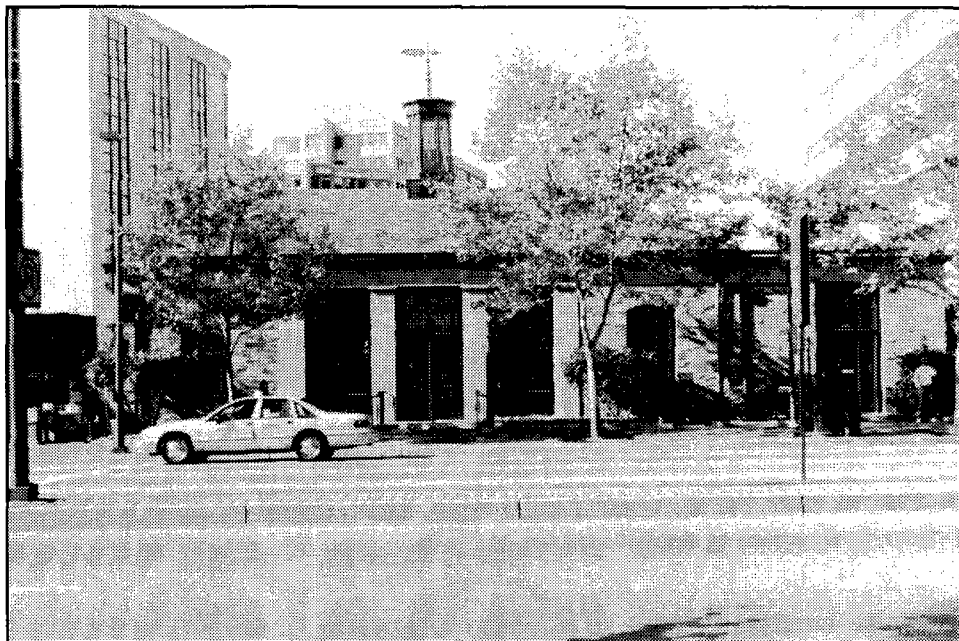
**HISTORY/DESCRIPTION:** Built in 1938 of native Stoneyhurst stone, this post office was constructed as a WPA project. The builders were the Sofarelli Brothers of Jamaica, New York. The architectural style of the structure is Neo-Georgian, featuring a hipped roof, cupola, and arched windows.

**CURRENT USE:** Post office

**PLANNING ISSUES:** Expansion on this building is only feasible to the rear. Particular attention should be paid to preserving the murals on the interior. The site is zoned CBD-3.

**STATUS:** On Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

**ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING:** Entire 13,211-square-foot parcel.





**NAME: WILSON'S STORE AND POST OFFICE (BETHESDA COMMUNITY PAINT AND HARDWARE STORE) (#35/14-7)**

**ADDRESS:** 7250 Wisconsin Avenue

**HISTORY/DESCRIPTION:** This site is the only remaining commercial structure from Bethesda's early crossroads history. The two-story frame store was built in 1890, on the site of the original Rockville Pike toll booth, and is a good example of turn-of-the-century rural village commercial architecture. Originally the community's general store and post office, this property became a popular hardware store for several generations of Bethesda families in the 20th century. The store building was relocated 50 feet to the south and restored for retail use in 1988 as part of the Apex Building's optional method development.

**CURRENT USE:** Retail store

**PLANNING ISSUES:** This site retains its landmark status. It is zoned CBD-2.

**STATUS:** On *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

**ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING:** The footprint of the building.





## 9.5 SITES UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR HISTORIC DESIGNATION

**NAME: BROOKS PHOTOGRAPHERS BUILDING (#35/14-6)**

**ADDRESS:** 7349 Wisconsin Avenue

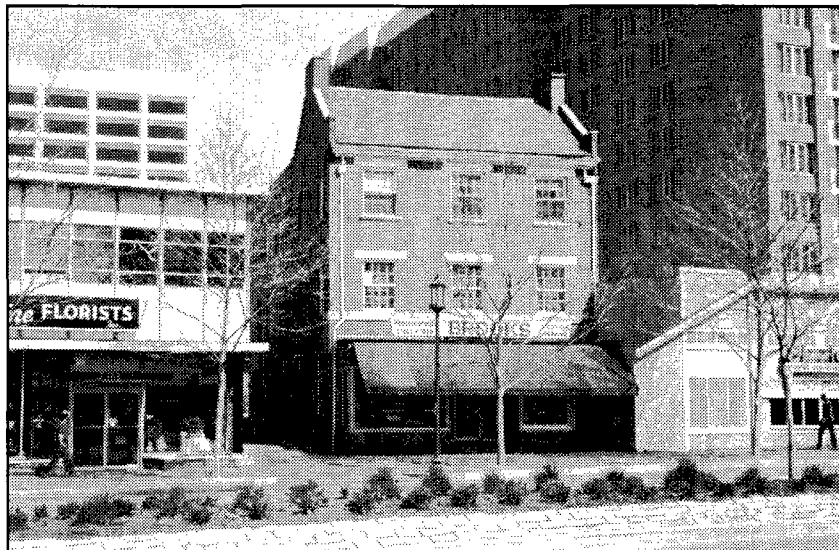
**HISTORY/DESCRIPTION:** This three-story brick building is a narrow, Colonial Revival commercial structure built in the late 1920's by Dr. Benjamin Perry. Dr. Perry had his office on the first floor and a residence above. The building was later occupied by Bethesda's first dentist, Dr. Clendenin. Brooks Photographers, a longtime Bethesda business, has been located in the building for 20 years.

**CURRENT USE:** Photography studio

**PLANNING ISSUES:** Redevelopment of this 10,338-square-foot site is unlikely, since it is only large enough for a standard method project. Should the parcel assemble with adjacent properties to a size suitable for the optional method, the historic integrity of the site should be preserved. The site is zoned CBD-2.

**HPC RECOMMENDATION:** Designate on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Meets ordinance criteria 1(A) and 1(D) as an exceptional early 20th century office building with residence above which reflects Bethesda's commercial center in the early part of this century; 1(C) for its association with Dr. Benjamin Cissel Perry and Dr. George B. Clendenin; and 2(A) for its Colonial Revival style architecture. The environmental setting would be the entire 10,338-square-foot parcel.

**PLAN ACTION:** Designate on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, under the same criteria and with the same environmental setting as noted by the HPC.



**NAME: TUDOR STYLE SHOPPING COMPLEX (#35/14-8)**

**ADDRESS:** 7003-7029 Wisconsin Avenue and 4606 Leland Avenue

**HISTORY/DESCRIPTION:** This one-and-a-half-story stucco and frame shopping complex was designed in the Neo-Tudor half-timbered style popular in both commercial and domestic architecture in the early 20th century. The complex was built in 1926-27 on an 18,665-square-foot parcel by residential developers of the era, Monroe and Robert Bates Warren. It was constructed as a neighborhood shopping center with store bays adjacent to the sidewalk and a strong pedestrian orientation, predating the Automobile Era development. The complex is one of three Tudor style shopping centers remaining in the County. There are nine small owner-occupied businesses in this complex, excluding the later two-story business on the south end.

**CURRENT USE:** Retail shops

**PLANNING ISSUES:** The site is zoned CBD-1. Either standard or optional method redevelopment providing residential use in addition to existing retail would be allowed. Because the shops are in separate ownership, optional method redevelopment would require assemblage among the owners as well as with the adjacent site to meet the 22,000-square-foot site requirement.

**HPC RECOMMENDATION:** Designate on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Meets ordinance criteria 1(A) as a unique neighborhood commercial development that predates automobile shopping centers; 1(D) for representing a builder-planned amenity which helped encourage the sale of homes in the Leland area; 2(A) for its Tudor Style design; and 2(E) as an established and familiar visual feature. The recommended setting would be the entire parcel of shops at 7003-7029 Wisconsin Avenue and 4606 Leland Avenue, excluding the two-story, southernmost shop at 7001 Wisconsin Avenue.

**PLAN ACTION:** Remove from the Locational Atlas, because of substantial alterations to the facades of the various shops, and because the property does not clearly meet the criteria of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.





**NAME: C&P TELEPHONE BUILDING (#35/14-9)**

**ADDRESS:** 6925 Wisconsin Avenue

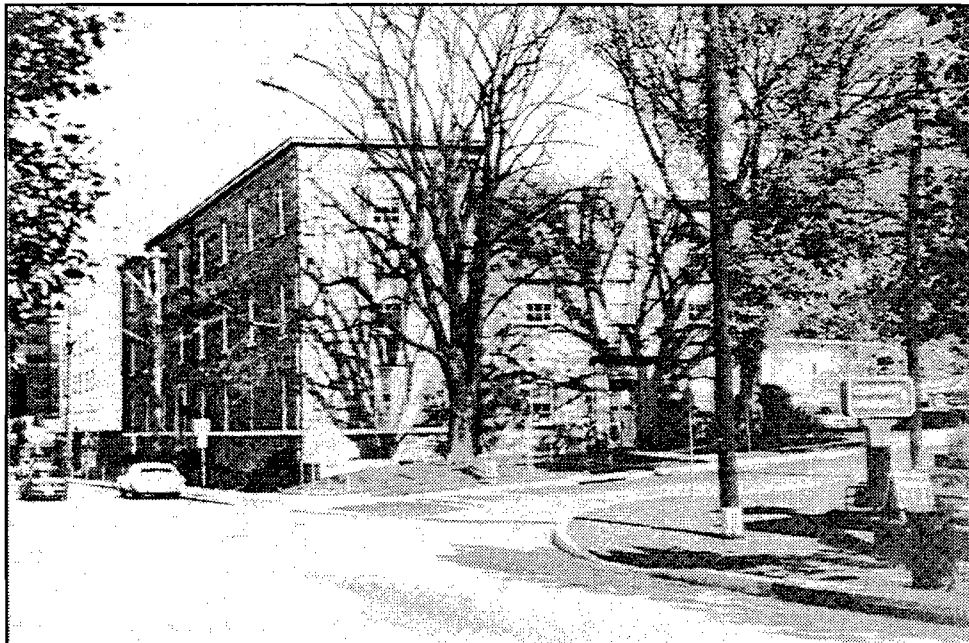
**HISTORY/DESCRIPTION:** This large stone building was built in 1928, with a major two-story addition in 1940. It is now four stories, including a mansard roof. Built of local stone from Stoneyhurst Quarries, it reflects the early 20th century interest in revival styles of architecture; though altered, it is similar to other stone commercial structures in Bethesda from the same period. There are some fine stone carvings on the entrance facing Stanford Street. The parcel contains 16,072 square feet.

**CURRENT USE:** Office/telephone building

**PLANNING ISSUES:** The site is zoned CBD-1.

**HPC RECOMMENDATION:** Designate on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Meets ordinance criteria 1(A) and 1(D) as a reflection of the exponential growth of the community and the use of the telephone as part of the suburban way of life; 2(A) for its construction material-local Stoneyhurst stone as well as its fine classical details and mansard roof; and 2(E) as a familiar visual feature along Wisconsin Avenue.

**PLAN ACTION:** Remove from the Locational Atlas because of substantial alterations to the structure specifically the 1940, four-story addition which fronts on Wisconsin Avenue and obscures the original 1928 building.



**NAME: BANK OF BETHESDA (CRESTAR BANK) (#35/14-10)**

**ADDRESS:** Corner of Old Georgetown Road and Wisconsin Avenue

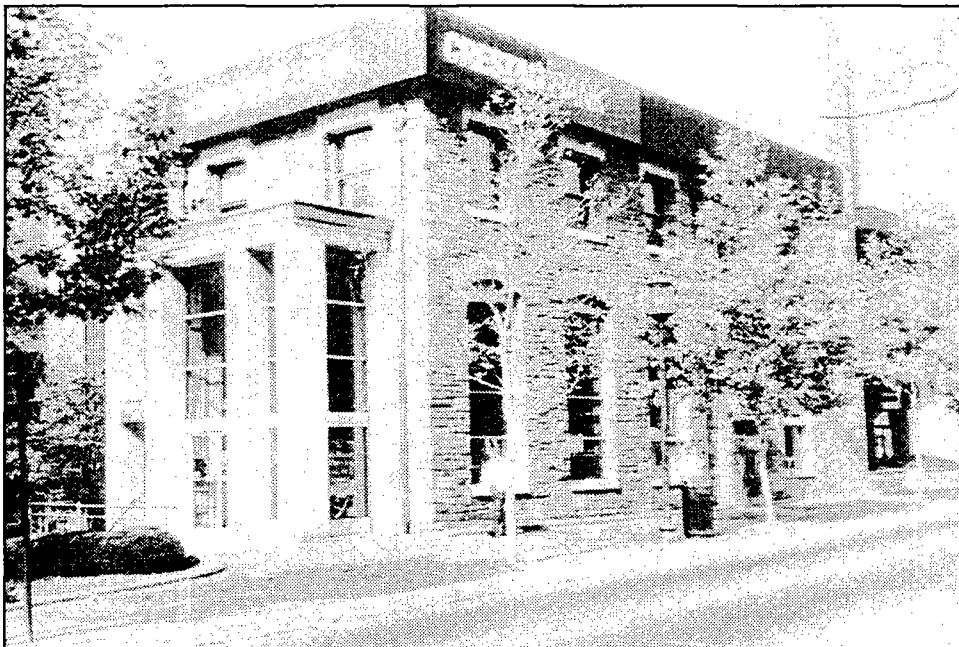
**HISTORY/DESCRIPTION:** The existing Bank of Bethesda building was built in 1925-26 on the site of Bethesda's original blacksmith shop. Established in 1919, the bank had originally occupied a one-story structure across the street, which later became the community library-now the Metro site. The Bank of Bethesda is constructed of local stone with quoined corners. The shape of the entry has been altered from a one-story, tile-roofed enclosure to a two-story columned portico. The structure is a prominent landmark as one approaches the Bethesda Core from the south. The parcel contains 4,496 square feet.

**CURRENT USE:** Bank

**PLANNING ISSUES:** The site is zoned CBD-2.

**HPC RECOMMENDATION:** Do not place on the Locational Atlas or the Master Plan because of major alterations and additions to the exterior of the structure which have diminished the resource's architectural and historical integrity.

**PLAN ACTION:** Do not place on the Locational Atlas or the Master Plan for the reasons cited by the HPC.





**NAME: MRS. WITHERS' HOUSE (#35/14-13)**

**ADDRESS:** 7740 Old Georgetown Road

**HISTORY/DESCRIPTION:** Leslie W. Beall, one of the first grocers in the Bethesda area, built this two-and-a-half story, frame, American Four Square style house with Colonial Revival features and a tile roof in 1925. Mrs. Withers is Leslie Beall's daughter. She leased the property in 1986 for 99 years to the developers of the site with the specification that the house was to be incorporated in the design of any new development. It is now part of the Chevy Chase Garden Plaza, which covers the entire block at the corner of Arlington and Old Georgetown Roads.

**CURRENT USE:** Antique store

**PLANNING ISSUES:** The site is zoned CBD-1. Preservation of the house was part of the optional method agreement when the site was redeveloped.

**HPC RECOMMENDATION:** Designate on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Meets ordinance criteria 1(A) and 1(D) as a reflection of the residential character of the Bethesda CBD in the early 20th century-which has been largely lost in recent years; 2(A) as a characteristic and distinctive style of residential architecture popular in the first quarter of the 20th century; and 2(E) as an established and familiar visual feature of the Bethesda community, now incorporated into a new development. The environmental setting would be the footprint of the structure only.

**PLAN ACTION:** Designate on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, under the same criteria and with the same environmental setting as noted by the HPC.



**NAME: BETHESDA-CHEVY CHASE HIGH SCHOOL (#13/14-14)**

**ADDRESS:** 4301 East-West Highway

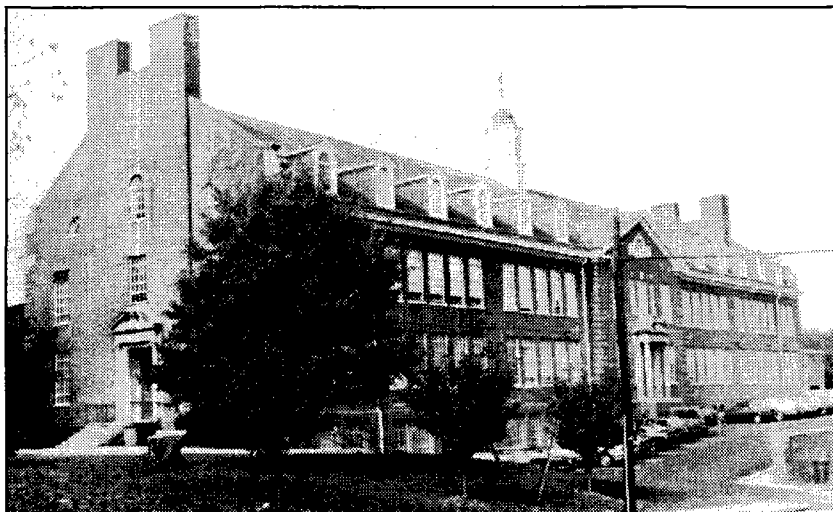
**HISTORY/DESCRIPTION:** Howard Cutler designed the Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, which was constructed in 1935. Thomas W. Pyle was the first principal of what was then the largest school in Maryland. Leland Junior High school, built in 1928, had served both junior and senior high students. The present high school was constructed in response to the area's population growth and was expanded in 1938, 1941, and 1946. It is one of the oldest public high school buildings in the County and was also the first home of Montgomery Junior College in the late 1940's. The Georgian Revival two-story structure with cupola reflects the interest in Colonial revival styles in the 1930's. It was influenced by Christopher Wren's academic building at William and Mary College in Williamsburg, Virginia, and Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

**CURRENT USE:** High School/Language Arts Building

**PLANNING ISSUES:** The school lies outside the CBD Zone, and is zoned R-60. It contains 16.36 acres, comprising most of the block between Sleaford Road and East-West Highway.

**HPC RECOMMENDATION:** Designate on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Meets ordinance criteria 1(A) and 1(D) as the first four-year high school in the County which reflects the area's growth and interest in education; 2(A) for its fine architectural features and distinctive characteristics of Georgian Revival architecture; and 2(E) as an established and familiar visual feature of the Bethesda community for over 50 years. The environmental setting would be the footprint of the building, excluding attachments of connecting passageways to other buildings on the campus.

**PLAN ACTION:** Designate on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, under the same criteria and with the same environmental setting as noted by the HPC. In reviewing Historic Area Work Permit applications on this site, the HPC should balance the Board of Education's concerns regarding cost and energy efficiency with appropriate historic preservation and rehabilitation.





**NAME: LITTLE TAVERN (#35/14-3)**

**ADDRESS:** 8100 Wisconsin Avenue

**HISTORY/DESCRIPTION:** This early chain of hamburger restaurants is of cultural interest as a pioneer of the now ubiquitous fast food industry. The Bethesda eatery, believed to have been constructed in 1939 in the "Old English Cottage" style, integrates the latest materials and technology of the "moderne" age—vitrolite, tile, formica, aluminum alloys, and neon signage. It is one of four Little Tavern restaurants left standing in the County. Its green roof is its identifying symbol, much as the orange roof of Howard Johnson's roadside restaurants of the same period attracted customers.

**CURRENT USE:** Restaurant

**PLANNING ISSUES:** The site is zoned CBD-1. If not designated historic, it is likely to redevelop under the standard method.

**HPC RECOMMENDATION:** Designate on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Meets ordinance criteria 1(A) and 1(D) as a reflection of the early automobile era in Bethesda and as a culturally significant representation of a type of restaurant which would become symbolic of the American lifestyle in the late 20th century; and 2(A) for its distinctive roadside architecture which typifies the early automobile era. The environmental setting would be the parcel on which the structure is located.

**PLAN ACTION:** Designate on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation under the same criteria and with the same environmental setting as noted by the HPC.





**NAME: CHEVY CHASE CHEVROLET (CHEVY CHASE CHEVYLAND) (#35/14-11)**

**ADDRESS:** 7725 Wisconsin Avenue

**HISTORY/DESCRIPTION:** Founded in 1939, Chevy Chase Chevrolet is the only remaining Bethesda auto dealership from the pre-World War II era. The Bowis family has owned the business since its founding. Its location and orientation toward NIH acknowledged the impact government development would have on the community. The building is still in its original location, but has been obscured by later additions. The curved facade has remained, but the large vertical glass and aluminum addition facing NIH predominates and reflects the 1960's.

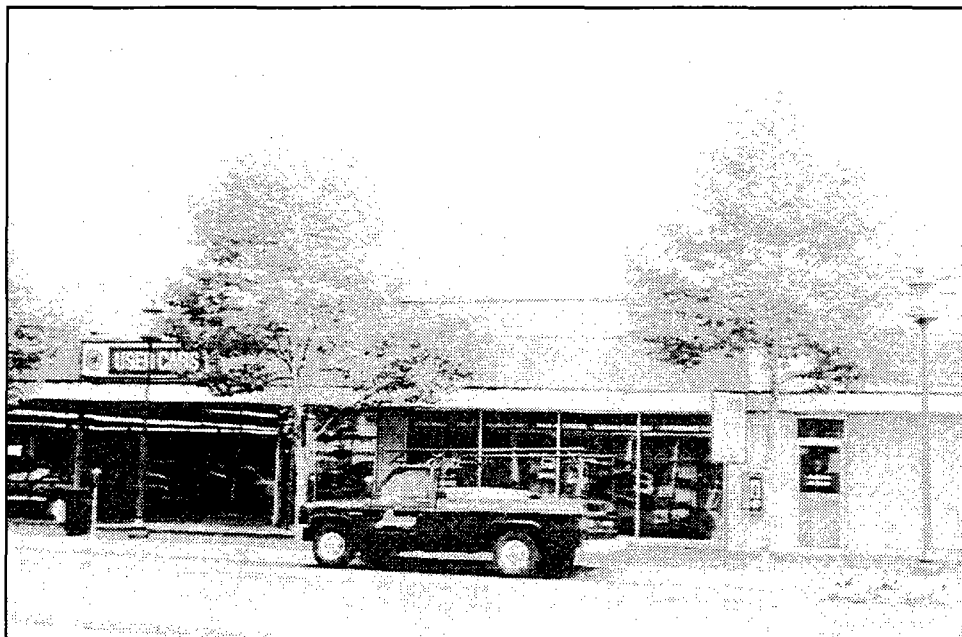
**CURRENT USE:** Auto dealership

**PLANNING ISSUES:** The auto dealership is a prominent northern gateway to the CBD and symbolic of Bethesda's auto-era development. The site contains three parcels of 22,000, 27,498, and 7,307 square feet. It is zoned CBD-2. The Plan allows 4 FAR office redevelopment under the optional method. If the site were designated historic, such redevelopment would not be recommended unless the designated portions were incorporated into the project.

**HPC RECOMMENDATION:** Do not place on the Locational Atlas or the Master Plan, because of substantial alterations and additions to the exterior of the building, which have obscured the original structure.

**PLAN ACTION:** Do not place on the Locational Atlas or the Master Plan for the reasons cited by the HPC.

page  
**241**





**NAME: PUMPHREY FUNERAL HOME (#34/14-12)**

**ADDRESS:** 7557 Wisconsin Avenue

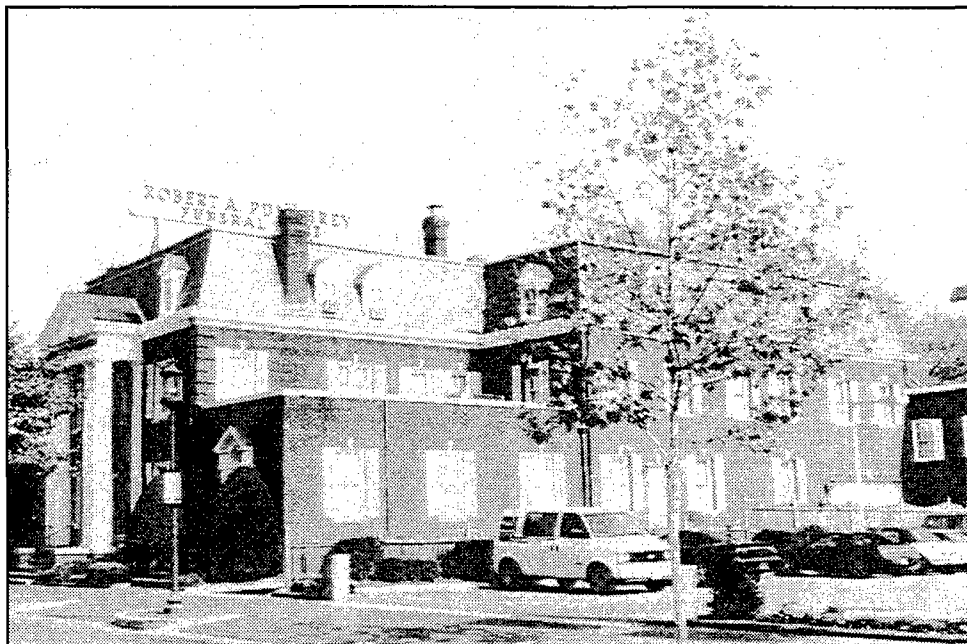
**HISTORY/DESCRIPTION:** Five generations of Pumphreys have served Montgomery County as undertakers. William E. Pumphrey, a Rockville cabinetmaker, started the original business in the 19th century. Branch offices, located around the County, included the horses, carriages, hearses, and coffins to meet any emergency functioning also as early ambulances. Until the 20th century, funerals were held in the family home of the deceased. William R. Pumphrey, Jr. created an innovative "funeral home" concept in 1928, in Rockville. He purchased the old George Bradley family home in Bethesda circa 1934 and moved it closer to Wisconsin Avenue. The structure was extensively remodeled in 1949-51 with a new roof, an addition on the back, and a side portecochere. It occupies a 12,897-square-foot parcel.

**CURRENT USE:** Funeral home

**PLANNING ISSUES:** The site is zoned CBD-2.

**HPC RECOMMENDATION:** Do not place on the Locational Atlas or the Master Plan because of substantial alterations and additions to the exterior of the building.

**PLAN ACTION:** Do not place on the Locational Atlas or the Master Plan for the reasons cited by the HPC.



## 9.6 HISTORIC DESIGNATION

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION DESIGNATION CRITERIA:

The following criteria, as stated in Section 24A-3 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, shall apply when historic resources are evaluated for designation on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation:

#### 1. HISTORIC AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The historic resource:

- a. has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the County, State, or Nation;
- b. is the site of a significant historic event;
- c. is identified with a person or a group of persons who influenced society;
- d. exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the County and its communities; or

#### 2. ARCHITECTURAL AND DESIGN SIGNIFICANCE:

The historic resource:

- a. embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction;
- b. represents the work of a master;
- c. possesses high artistic values;
- d. represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- e. represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or County due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.

page  
**243**

### EFFECT OF HISTORIC DESIGNATION:

Once designated on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, historic sites are subject to the protection of the Historic Preservation Ordinance. Any substantial changes to the exterior of a resource or its environmental setting must be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission and a Historic Area Work Permit issued under the provisions of Section 24A-6 of the ordinance. In accordance with the Master Plan for Historic Preservation and unless otherwise specified in the amendment, the environmental setting for each site, as defined in Section 24A-2 of the ordinance, is the entire parcel on which the resource is located as of the date it is designated on the Master Plan.

Designation of the entire parcel provides the County adequate review authority to preserve historic sites in the event of development. It also ensures that, from the beginning of the development



process, important features of these sites are recognized and incorporated in the future development of designated properties. In the case of large acreage parcels, the amendment will provide general guidance for the refinement of the setting by indicating when the setting is subject to reduction in the event of development, by describing an appropriate area to preserve the integrity of the resource, and by identifying buildings and features associated with the site which should be protected as part of the setting. It is anticipated that for a majority of the sites designated, the appropriate point at which to refine the environmental setting will be when the property is subdivided.

Public improvements can profoundly affect the integrity of a historic area. Section 24A-6 of the ordinance states that a Historic Area Work Permit for work on public or private property must be issued prior to altering an historic resource or its environmental setting. The design of public facilities in the vicinity of historic resources should be sensitive to and maintain the character of the area. Specific design considerations should be reflected as part of the Mandatory Referral review processes.

In the majority of cases, decisions regarding preservation alternatives are made at the time of public facility implementation within the process established in Section 24A. This method provides for adequate review by the public and governing agencies. To provide guidance in the event of future public facility implementation, the amendment addresses potential conflicts existing at each site and suggests alternatives and recommendations to assist in balancing preservation with community needs.

page  
**244**

In addition to protecting designated resources from unsympathetic alteration and insensitive redevelopment, the County's Preservation Ordinance also empowers the County's Department of Environmental Protection and the Historic Preservation Commission to prevent the demolition of historic buildings through neglect.

The Montgomery County Council passed legislation in September 1984 to provide for a tax credit against County real property taxes to encourage the restoration and preservation of privately owned structures located in the County. The credit applies to all properties designated on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation (Chapter 52, Art. VI). Furthermore, the Historic Preservation Commission maintains up-to-date information on the status of preservation incentives including tax credits, tax benefits possible through the granting of easements on historic properties, outright grants, and low-interest loan programs.



# IMPLEMENTATION

## 10.1 ZONING

The Sector Plan proposes using several zoning categories to achieve the stated goals and objectives. During the Sector Plan process, amendments to certain existing zones or the creation of new zones also occurred. CBD Housing Incentives are described below along with other recommendations.

### A. CBD HOUSING INCENTIVES

The County Council approved a text amendment to the CBD zones. It was developed in connection with the Silver Spring Sector Plan and closely coordinated with the Bethesda Sector Plan process as part of an effort to encourage housing in CBD's. (See Table 10.1 for a summary of the approved amendments.)

The text amendment redesignated the existing CBD-R Zone as the CBD-R1 Zone to provide consistent terminology. It amended the CBD-R Zone to add language allowing existing uses to remain as legal nonconforming uses. The Sector Plan recommends that the CBD-R1 Zone be applied to selected sites currently zoned CBD-1 where predominantly residential development is appropriate.

The text amendment also created the CBD-R2 Zone, intended to accommodate high-density residential development. It encourages housing by providing 5 FAR of optional residential development versus 1 FAR of standard commercial use. The Sector Plan recommends that the CBD-R2 Zone be applied to selected sites within the CBD.

The County Council also approved amendments to both standard and optional method development provisions in the CBD-0.5, -1, -2, and -3 Zones to create greater incentives to provide housing in mixed-use projects. The Sector Plan land use recommendations rely on the CBD Zone incentives to achieve the build-out of 2,700 dwelling units.

### B. CBD STANDARD METHOD: SITE PLAN REVIEW

The Sector Plan recommends amending the CBD Zones to require site plan review for standard method development, including those projects that use the housing bonus. A project's site plan should conform with the streetscape and design guidelines of the Sector Plan.

### C. CBD OPTIONAL METHOD: PUBLIC BENEFITS AND AMENITIES

The Plan proposes that a range of public benefits be considered for optional method projects in addition to the traditional open space and amenities provided in previous projects.

Table 10.1

<b>HOUSING INCENTIVES IN CBD ZONES</b>										
ZONE	Previous Zoning Standards					Approved Zoning Standards				
	Maximum Commercial FAR	Commercial as a % of Total FAR	Minimum Required Housing FAR	Housing as a % of Total FAR	Total Maximum FAR	Maximum Commercial FAR	Commercial as a % of Total FAR	Minimum Required Housing FAR	Housing as a % of Total FAR	Total Maximum FAR
<b>CBD 0.5</b>										
Standard	0.5	100%	---	---	0.5	0.5	100%	---	---	0.5
Standard						<b>0.5</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>1.0**</b>
Optional	1.0	100%	---	---	1.0	1.0	100%	---	---	1.0
Optional	0.3	20%	1.2	80%	1.5	<b>1.0</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>1.5</b>
<b>CBD 1.0</b>										
Standard	1.0	100%	---	---	1.0	1.0	100%	---	---	1.0
Standard						<b>1.0</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>2.0**</b>
Optional	2.0	100%	---	---	2.0	2.0	100%	---	---	2.0
Optional	0.6	20%	2.4	80%	3.0	<b>2.0</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>CBD 2.0</b>										
Standard	2.0	100%	---	---	2.0	2.0	100%	---	---	2.0
Standard						<b>2.0</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>3.0**</b>
Optional	4.0	100%	---	---	4.0	4.0	100%	---	---	4.0
Optional	1.0	20%	4.0	80%	5.0	<b>3.0</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>5.0</b>
<b>CBD 3.0</b>										
Standard	3.0	100%	---	---	3.0	3.0	100%	---	---	3.0
Standard						<b>3.0</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>4.0**</b>
Optional	6.0	100%	---	---	6.0	6.0	100%	---	---	6.0
Optional	7.0	87.5%	1.0	12.5%	8.0	<b>5.0</b>	<b>62.5%</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>8.0</b>
<b>CBD-R1*</b>										
Standard	1.0	100%	---	---	1.0	1.0	100%	---	---	1.0
Optional	0.6	20%	2.4	80%	3.0	0.6	20%	2.4	80%	3.0
<b>CBD-R2</b>										
Standard						1.0	<b>100%</b>	---	---	<b>1.0</b>
Optional						<b>1.0</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>5.0</b>
* No Changes to densities. Grandfather existing retail. ** With site plan review										

The following uses would be appropriate in the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan area if there is a future study of the public benefits in the CBD Zones, and if the proposed uses are consistent with CBD Zone amendments proposed by the study:

1. An increased amount of affordable housing beyond the minimum MPDU requirement (perhaps double the minimum), including possible off-site provision of such housing).
2. Subsidized or rent-free space for educational, government, child, or adult day-care, or other public use, including possible acquisition and renovation of off-site space for public use.
3. Subsidized or rent-free space designed for visual or performing arts, including:
  - a. a professional theater,
  - b. a community theater, or
  - c. other cultural and arts related facilities.

The Plan recommends continuing to provide off-site streetscape improvements, open space acquisition and site development, or outdoor public use space. It also recommends providing underground utilities where specified in the Streetscape Plan.

The Plan endorses the management of cultural activities through the Bethesda Urban Partnership. Such activities could include enhanced use of outdoor and indoor public use spaces.

page  
**247**

#### **D. TS-R AND PD ZONES: INCENTIVES AND FLEXIBILITY TO ENCOURAGE HOUSING**

The TS-R Zone has been amended to provide greater flexibility and incentives to build low-rise, high-density residential projects, forming an urban neighborhood. (See Section 4.2, Transit Station Residential District.)

The Plan recommends use of the PD Zone to create a compatible transition between commercial and single-family areas, such as on the Beta Corporation lot behind the Bethesda Theatre Cafe. Amendments to the PD Zone allow development at urban densities within portions of CBD and transit station areas, for example, on the corner of Battery Lane and Woodmont Avenue. The PD Zone standards provide flexibility that allows townhouses on small sites across the street from single-family houses. The standards also allow flexibility for developing projects at higher urban densities of 60 to 100 units per acre on small sites.

#### **E. ARLINGTON ROAD DISTRICT OVERLAY ZONE: RETENTION OF COMMUNITY RETAIL**

The Plan land use and zoning recommendations for the Arlington Road District use a new overlay zone. The overlay zone encourages the retention of existing community-serving commercial uses along Arlington Road near Bradley Boulevard by restricting density in the C-2 Zone to approximately existing densities. (See Section 4.12, Arlington Road District and Figure 4.37.)

**F. R-10/TDR ZONE: HIGHER DENSITY HOUSING**

A text amendment to the multiple family residential zones created three new multi-family TDR zones: R-30/TDR, R-20/TDR, and R-10/TDR. Development is permitted at the rate of two multi-family dwelling units for each TDR used. The allowable density is controlled by the recommendations of the sector or master plan. The Bethesda CBD Sector Plan recommends use of the R-10/TDR Zone at 100 dwelling units to the acre for two sites on Battery Lane.

**G. CORRECTION TO BETHESDA CHEVY CHASE SECTIONAL MAP**

Certain lots in the Town of Chevy Chase, part of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area, have been incorrectly shown on the Zoning Map as in the C-2 rather than the R-60 Zone. These properties lie between the south line of the B & O railroad right-of-way and the north line of Lots 6, 7, 8, and part of Lot 9, Block L, shown on the Montgomery County Zoning Map, page 209-NW4 left. A review of the records indicates that a drafting error led to the incorrect zoning designation. The Sector Plan recommends that R-60 zoning be applied in the Sectional Map Amendment to correct the error and confirm the R-60 Zone. Upon approval of the Sectional Map Amendment, the Montgomery County Zoning Map, page 209-NW4 left will be revised to show these properties in the R-60 Zone.

**10.2 STAGING AND THE ANNUAL GROWTH POLICY****A. BACKGROUND**

The Sector Plan addresses the “end state” of development, the point at which, in theory, land will be built out to the limits allowed by the Plan’s zoning recommendations and all planned transportation improvements will be available. In reality, all capital facilities and programs needed to support the end state development are not provided simultaneously. To account for this, the amount of development that can be accommodated by existing and programmed public facilities in any given year is established through the Annual Growth Policy (AGP). The Sector Plan provides guidance concerning how much additional development can be accommodated at this time by programs and facilities that exist or are recommended for the near-term. However, the Plan defers to the AGP regarding when and how much additional growth can be accommodated beyond Stage I. (See Appendix E for a Description of the Annual Growth Policy and the Adequate Public Facilities Review Process.)

The Sector Plan should guide future AGP decisions for several reasons. First, the Plan identifies some priority public improvements needed to support anticipated development. Second, the Sector Plan and the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan guide the expansion of major federal facilities, including the National Institutes of Health. These federal facilities have significant growth potential and are not controlled by the AGP. Third, the Plan establishes transportation management goals needed to maintain a balance between future development levels and transportation system capacity.



The Sector Plan envisions long-term growth above the 1993 base level of about 16,400 jobs for the Bethesda Central Business District. The transportation analysis for Stage I tested about 5,000 additional jobs in the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan area. This level of growth still allows the area-wide average LOS standard of D/E to be achieved in the B-CC policy area. The long-term potential for about 2,700 additional housing units can also be accommodated within the Sector Plan area. The transportation studies constitute a local area transportation review analysis of the impacts of short-term development within the Bethesda CBD. (See Appendix D for the Transportation Analysis.)

## **B. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Staging seeks to balance new development and the transportation system in support of the growth and fiscal needs of the County. The following principles guide the preparation of the staging recommendations of the Sector Plan:

### **AGP-Related Principles**

1. Rely on the AGP to determine the timing and amount of new development, considering Sector Plan guidance.

The AGP provides guidance from a County-wide perspective and the Sector Plan provides guidance from a local area perspective.

2. Remove geographic priorities within the CBD.

Since the character of the Metro Core District is well established, there is no need to provide geographic guidance for new development.

3. Transfer some AGP ceiling capacity for jobs from the Bethesda-Chevy Chase policy area to the Bethesda CBD policy area, following adoption of the Sector Plan. Further increase CBD staging ceiling, based on proximity to Metro and assuming a future increase in non-auto-driver mode share for employees. The ceiling capacity will be available for both standard and optional method development.

The Sector Plan recommends that the Bethesda CBD receive priority for new development over Friendship Heights, Westbard, the Naval Medical Command, and the remainder of the B-CC policy area. While it is recognized that federal facilities, such as the National Institutes of Health, cannot be controlled by the County AGP, the policy of this Plan is to emphasize CBD over NIH growth. In general, the Plan intent is to facilitate new development near Metro stations.

4. Give priority to housing in allocating Stage I ceiling capacity.

During Stage I, the ceiling capacity for housing should allow a major portion of the potential build-out of housing within the Sector Plan area. This is to ensure that the AGP does not constrain provision of additional housing in the CBD.



## Program-Related Principles

5. Require creation of a Transportation Management Organization.

The Plan recommends managing transportation demand to accommodate future development and control congestion. The Plan endorses effective transportation measures to balance congestion and growth. Transportation Management Organization (TMO) is a general term encompassing districts as well as other possible structures. TMO's are essential elements of effective transportation management programs.

6. Maintain a policy that constrains the amount of long-term parking available to employees in the Sector Plan area.

The policy supports provision of a portion of the parking needed for employees, but avoids an excessive parking supply that might encourage single-occupant auto use. The policy is discussed in the Parking text, Section 5.6.

7. Establish a mode-share goal of 32 percent, to be achieved during Stage I.

The Silver Spring CBD experience shows that quality programs with adequate staff and regulatory support should allow the Bethesda CBD to increase from the present 27 percent to a 32 percent mode share for employees during Stage I development. The Bethesda CBD should ultimately be able to achieve the overall Sector Plan goal of a 37 percent non-auto-driver mode share, if transportation demand management is effective.

8. Accept the Sector Plan Stage I traffic analysis as the local area transportation review for new development in Stage I.

The Planning Department has conducted an area-wide local area transportation review (LATR) for the entire Bethesda CBD Sector Plan area and so an individual LATR should not be required at the time of development review.

## Facilities-Related Principles

9. Program transportation facilities that give priority to non-auto drivers, such as transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

The Transportation Plan, Chapter 5.0, emphasizes non-auto driver modes of travel for commuting. Therefore, improvements to transit, bikeways, and sidewalks, are emphasized in the recommended facilities for each stage.

10. Program improvements for Stage I to some congested intersections outside the CBD but affected by its growth. Use a Critical Lane Volume

standard of 1,800 when identifying these improvements. In this and subsequent stages, exempt intersections from improvement if the Montgomery County Council finds that impacts of improvements on the surrounding community are too negative.

The Plan recognizes that it may be better to accept some continued congestion, rather than provide improvements which would negatively impact near-by communities. This analysis indicates greater intersection congestion at several locations unless improvements are made, even if the non-auto-driver mode shares are increased significantly.

This intersection analysis includes only one-half of the approved pipeline of development outside the B-CC area, since this reflects the expected growth that would occur in the Stage I time period. Subsequent stages would account for growth expected at that time.

### **C. STAGE I (SHORT-TERM)**

Stage I begins when the Sector Plan is adopted and the AGP allocates additional jobs and housing units to the staging ceiling in the Bethesda CBD policy area. The work to provide the programs and facilities needed to support Stage I development should begin when the Sector Plan is approved. Sector Plan recommendations for each stage are summarized on Table 10.2, Staging of Sector Plan Development in the Bethesda CBD.

The Plan recommends that the AGP transfer some staging ceiling capacity from the Bethesda-Chevy Chase policy area to the Bethesda CBD policy area to further increase the ceiling for jobs and housing units in proximity to Metro. This follows guiding principle number three above. By allocating some of the remaining staging ceiling capacity to the CBD, instituting a TMO, limiting parking, and thereby achieving a better mode share, some additional staging ceiling capacity can be created. The Plan recommends that the AGP allow the approval of approximately 5,000 additional jobs for the Bethesda CBD over 1993 base levels. It also recommends that the AGP set a policy area ceiling that would allow the approval of approximately 2,150 housing units over 1993 base levels. These are growth level targets which may be adjusted through the AGP process.

The Sector Plan recommends that specific programs and facilities be provided for the Bethesda CBD during Stage I, including:

1. Establish a Transportation Management Organization (TMO) in the Sector Plan area that requires all employers with over 25 employees to participate in the TMO during Stage I. Appropriate staff and funding levels should be provided for the organization.
2. Maintain a policy that constrains the amount of long-term parking available to employees in the Sector Plan area. (The policy is discussed in Section 5.6, Parking.)

Table 10.2

**STAGING OF SECTOR PLAN DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE BETHESDA CBD**

STAGE	POLICIES AND PROGRAMS	RECOMMENDED TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES EACH STAGE
STAGE I (SHORT- TERM)	<p><b>BEGIN WHEN:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sector Plan is adopted</li> <li>2. AGP approves a target level job ceiling of approximately 5,000 jobs and approximately 2,150 housing units in the Bethesda CBD over the 1993 base.</li> </ol> <p><b>POLICIES AND PROGRAMS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish Transportation Management Organization (TMO)</li> <li>2. Maintain a constrained long-term parking policy.</li> <li>3. Increase non-auto-driver mode share for employees to 32 percent (now at 27 percent).</li> </ol>	<p><b>PROVIDE IN STAGE I (SHORT TERM)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bicycle network Route A2 along Bethesda Avenue, Willow Lane, and Elm Street Park, including pedestrian improvements at Woodmont and Bethesda Avenues.</li> <li>2. Bicycle network Route C along Woodmont Avenue, Hampden Lane, and East Lane.</li> <li>3. Pedestrian system improvements at several intersections, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Woodmont Avenue and Montgomery Lane;</li> <li>b. Wisconsin Avenue and East-West Highway;</li> <li>c. Wisconsin Avenue and Middleton Lane; and</li> <li>d. Old Georgetown Road and Woodmont Avenue.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Streetscape improvements in the Metro Core District, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Woodmont Avenue, from Old Georgetown Road to Cheltenham Drive; and</li> <li>b. East-West Highway, from Waverly to Pearl Streets.</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Bicycle network Route H along Wilson Lane, Clarendon Road, and Edgemoor Lane.</li> <li>6. Streetscape improvements along northern Wisconsin Avenue from Cheltenham Drive to the northern gateway.</li> <li>7. Other bicycle network routes, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Route I from Woodmont Avenue to Maryland Avenue/Pearl Street;</li> <li>b. Biker Friendly Area and improvements in the Woodmont Triangle; and</li> <li>c. Route D crossing of Battery Lane.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

Table 10.2 (Cont'd.)

STAGE	POLICIES AND PROGRAMS	RECOMMENDED TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES EACH STAGE
		8. Intersection improvement at Connecticut Avenue and East-West Highway.  9. If significant growth occurs at NIH, then provide intersection improvements at Cedar Lane and Jones Bridge Road on Rockville Pike.
STAGE II (MID-TERM)	BEGIN WHEN:  1. A Transportation Management Organization is in operation and other improvements needed to support Stage I have been programmed.  2. An analysis of traffic congestion and transportation management program effectiveness is completed. The new area-wide transportation level of service must meet an acceptable AGP standard.  3. Bethesda CBD Stage I ceiling capacity has been reached. As new facilities are provided, the AGP ceiling capacity may be increased several times during Stage II.	PROVIDE IN STAGE II (MID-TERM)  The facilities required during Stage II will be defined as a result of the transportation analysis that precedes AGP approval of increased ceiling capacity. Possible improvements could include:  1. Additions to the bicycle network and pedestrian improvements.  2. Programming of the Silver Spring-Bethesda Trolley.  3. Increased transit service.  4. Intersection and roadway improvements inside and outside the CBD.  5. Improvements to Arlington Road, if redevelopment occurs on the Euro Motorcars site.
	POLICIES AND PROGRAMS:  1. Increase the effectiveness of transportation demand management programs.  2. Maintain a constrained long-term parking policy.  3. Increase non-auto-driver mode share for employees to 37 percent.	

Table 10.2 (Cont'd.)

STAGE	POLICIES AND PROGRAMS	RECOMMENDED TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES EACH STAGE
STAGE III (LONG-TERM)	<p>BEGIN WHEN:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A Bethesda CBD Sector Plan Amendment will be prepared in about 10 to 15 years. At that time, a new comprehensive transportation study will be prepared to determine how transportation capacity conditions can meet AGP standards.</li> <li>2. Following adoption of the Sector Plan Amendment, a new AGP ceiling capacity can be established. The estimated long-term development potential of the Bethesda CBD is 54,900 jobs and 8,300 dwelling units.</li> </ol> <p>POLICIES AND PROGRAMS:</p> <p>New policies and programs will be determined as part of the Sector Plan Amendment and in the context of the AGP policies at that time.</p>	<p>PROVIDE IN STAGE III (LONG-TERM)</p> <p>The facilities required during Stage III will be defined as a result of the new comprehensive transportation analysis prepared as part of the new Sector Plan. Our analysis for the Sector Plan shows that high traffic volumes and congestion are possible at Sector Plan build-out, both inside and outside the Bethesda CBD. Possible improvements to meet congestion standards include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Additions to the bicycle network and pedestrian improvements.</li> <li>2. Increased transit service.</li> <li>3. Intersection and roadway improvements inside and outside the CBD.</li> </ol>

3. Increase peak hour non-auto-driver mode share for all employees from the current 27 percent to 32 percent in Stage I. As part of the subdivision approval process, require new developments to meet a future goal of 37 percent peak hour non-auto-driver use for their employees.
4. Include in the CIP critical portions of the bicycle and pedestrian network to provide a conducive environment for non-auto use. The priorities for new bicycle and pedestrian routes are:
  - a. Bicycle network Route A2 along Bethesda Avenue, Willow Lane, and Elm Street Park. The route connects two regional bicycle routes, the Capital Crescent Trail, and Route J along Pearl Street and Maryland Avenue. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements at Woodmont and Bethesda Avenues are included.
  - b. Bicycle network Route C along Woodmont Avenue, Hampden Lane, and East Lane. The route connects the Capital Crescent Trail to the Bethesda Metro station.
  - c. Pedestrian improvements at the following intersections:  
  
Woodmont Avenue and Montgomery Lane, Wisconsin Avenue and East-West Highway, Wisconsin Avenue and Middleton Lane, Old Georgetown Road and Woodmont Avenue.
  - d. Pedestrian improvement to complete unfinished streetscapes within the Metro Core District, such as portions of Woodmont Avenue from Old Georgetown Road to Cheltenham Drive, and both sides of East-West Highway from Waverly to Pearl Streets.
  - e. Bicycle network Route H along Wilson Lane, Clarendon Road, and Edgemoor Lane. The route connects the Woodmont Triangle area to the Bethesda Metro station.
  - f. Pedestrian/streetscape improvements to northern Wisconsin Avenue from Cheltenham Drive to the northern gateway, assuming some optional projects contribute to the project.
  - g. Several other bicycle network routes could be considered. These include: Route I from Woodmont Avenue to Maryland Avenue/Pearl Street, improvements to parts of Biker Friendly Area E in the Woodmont Triangle, and the Battery Lane crossing for Route D.
5. Include in the CIP those intersection and roadway improvements that are found to be needed due to Critical Lane Volumes over the applicable standard, have acceptable community impacts, and are otherwise feasible. Key locations recommended for improvement in Stage I include:



- a. Connecticut Avenue at East-West Highway, where the likely improvement is to add turn lanes.
- b. Rockville Pike at Cedar Lane and at Jones Bridge Road, if significant growth occurs at NIH.

#### **D. STAGE II (MID-TERM)**

The Plan recommends that the AGP process determine when and by how much to increase staging ceilings for jobs and housing units in the CBD above Stage I. Prior to approving an increase, the five programs and facilities recommended above for Stage I should be programmed. An analysis of the Bethesda CBD and the Bethesda-Chevy Chase policy areas must determine that the area-wide level of service for B-CC resulting from additional development will meet an acceptable AGP standard (currently LOS of D/E). The timing of the analysis will be determined by the County Council as part of the Planning Board annual work program. A Transportation Management Organization must also be in place prior to Stage II.

Possible programs and facilities during Stage II, which may be needed to implement Sector Plan recommendations, could include:

1. Increase the effectiveness of transportation demand management to institute new programs and further reduce auto use to a 37 percent non-auto-driver mode share in the peak hours for all employees.
2. Maintain a constrained long-term parking policy.
3. Provide additions to the bicycle network and pedestrian improvements.
4. Program the Silver Spring-Bethesda Trolley.

The Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment states "This Plan recommends that the new staging ceiling created by the programming of the trolley project be allocated to residential use." This guidance must be considered when the AGP sets the staging ceiling for Stage II.

5. Consider increasing transit service in coordination with the trolley.
6. Provide intersection improvements inside and outside the CBD at locations which do not meet the Critical Lane Volume standard. These will be identified at the time of the Stage II analysis.
7. Dedicate land for realignment of Arlington Road when site development is approved on the Euro Motorcars site.

#### **E. STAGE III (LONG-TERM)**

In about 10-15 years, an amendment to the Sector Plan will be needed. Prior to the Sector Plan Amendment, the relationship between new development and travel congestion should be monitored through the transportation analysis for the AGP. At the time of the Sector Plan Amendment, a new comprehensive transportation study should be prepared to determine what additional transportation management programs and transportation



facilities are needed. The analysis must also determine that transportation capacity conditions meet AGP standards at that time. The study may address a variety of ways to meet congestion standards.

The Sector Plan recommends completion of the south entrance to the Metro station, near Elm Street and Wisconsin Avenue.

## **F. STAGING OF B-CC AREA DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE THE CBD**

All planning and staging strategies recognize that the growth allowed in the Bethesda CBD will occur along with growth at the federal facilities just to the north, as well as other parts of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan area. Development in these areas will affect the same limited roadway system. Transportation improvements in the B-CC Master Plan area should be provided in accordance with the Master Plan recommendations. The Sector Plan provides staging recommendations that are consistent with the Master Plan guidance for growth in these areas.

The County has only an advisory role, through the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) referral process, regarding additional development at NIH and the Naval Medical Command. Coordination of growth in the CBD and the federal areas is essential, and should meet several objectives:

1. Growth in the Bethesda CBD, Friendship Heights CBD, and Westbard Sector Plan areas, and at the federal facilities should be staged so that public facilities can be coordinated to serve new development in safe, efficient, and environmentally sound ways.
2. Guidelines should be established with the National Capital Planning Commission for approving federal expansion that is coordinated with Sector Plan development to avoid exceeding AGP limits and to achieve the goals of the Clean Air Act.

Growth on the NIH campus will be a major factor contributing to congestion at surrounding intersections. The Plan recommends that both NIH and the Naval Medical Command be encouraged to continue planning and implementing strong traffic demand management actions. Greater reliance on transit and carpooling also is needed to achieve air quality standards called for by the Clean Air Act. Employees at building sites that are close to the Medical Center Metro station should be offered enhanced transit or ridesharing options. It may also be necessary to constrain parking availability in these areas.

Monitoring of transportation programs and intersections next to NIH and the Naval Medical Command is important to determine whether excessive congestion is occurring at nearby intersections. If NIH and/or Naval Medical Command add significantly to their employment and if transportation management programs are inadequate, improvements to the following intersections or roads may be needed to alleviate serious roadway congestion:

1. Rockville Pike at Cedar Lane, at South Drive, and at Jones Bridge Road.
2. Old Georgetown Road at Cedar Lane.



### 10.3 BETHESDA URBAN PARTNERSHIP

The Sector Plan favors cooperation between the public and private sectors to administer and coordinate enhanced public services and private initiatives in the Bethesda CBD.

Montgomery County passed legislation in 1987 which created the Bethesda Urban District, a special assessment district covering much of the Sector Plan area. Legislation passed in 1993 authorized the creation of urban district corporations to provide certain functions in each urban district. These functions include maintaining and enhancing the streetscape and streetscape amenities, promotion, organization, and support of cultural and business activities, specialized transportation, and similar activities.

Pursuant to the 1993 legislation, the County Council approved the creation of the Bethesda Urban Partnership. The organization will be an important instrument for implementing key objectives of the Sector Plan, including retail enhancement, "cultural district," and streetscape objectives.

### 10.4 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM (CIP)

This section identifies a number of projects that are recommended in the Sector Plan. While many of these projects could be implemented by government agencies, other projects could be paid for and included within private sector developments.

Timing of projects is dependent on a variety of factors. County fiscal limits will require selection of only the highest priority projects. The pace of private sector growth will influence the need for some new facilities, such as street improvements and parking facilities. Private sector growth may also contribute financially to some improvements, such as portions of the Streetscape Plan. Facilities which are less costly, such as pedestrian and bikeway improvements, may be able to proceed sooner. Some projects may be eligible for State or federal funding to increase non-auto-driver use and thereby contribute to national air quality objectives. The Plan does not seek to determine a specific timing or sequence, but instead recommends provision of facilities as the need arises and fiscal resources are available.

This section provides a brief description of each capital project recommended in the Plan. The capital projects are located in various districts, and in most cases, more detailed description and justification for the project is included in the body of the text. The County Office of Planning Implementation has prepared a fiscal analysis of recommended capital facilities.

Projects are generally listed in the order they first appear in the Plan text. This section does not attempt to assign specific financial responsibility for public or private sector involvement.

#### A. LAND USE PLAN (CHAPTER 4.0)

Agencies involved: Department of Housing and Community Development, Housing Opportunities Commission, Division of Parking.

1. Provide mixed-income housing in conjunction with new structured parking on the following public parking sites:

- a. Lot 36, up to 158 dwelling units, CBD-R Zone.
- b. Rebuilt Deck 35, up to 204 dwelling units, CBD-R Zone.
- c. Lot 31, about 100 dwelling units, TS-M Zone.

## **B. TRANSPORTATION PLAN (CHAPTER 5.0)**

Agencies involved: Montgomery County Department of Transportation, Maryland Transit Administration, Division of Parking, Department of Housing and Community Development, Housing Opportunities Commission, Parks Department, State Highway Administration, M-NCPPC, and Bethesda Urban Partnership.

- 1. Expand Ride-On bus service as growth in demand justifies.
- 2. Construct the Silver Spring-Bethesda Trolley and a south entrance to the Metro station, with a trolley terminal near the south entrance.
- 3. Institute a loop bus circulation system which may include private sector financing.
- 4. Install traffic signals to provide safe pedestrian and bicycle crossing at several locations. These recommendations, subject to capacity conditions and operational studies, apply to the following locations:
  - a. Arlington Road at Montgomery Lane.
  - b. Arlington Road at the Bradley Shopping Center (part of road alignment improvement).
  - c. Old Georgetown Road at Fairmont Avenue (long-term and subject to capacity conditions and operational studies).
  - d. Wisconsin Avenue at Middleton Lane.
  - e. Old Georgetown Road and Cordell Avenue.
  - f. Battery Lane: mid-block user-activated signal only.
  - g. Woodmont Avenue and Montgomery Lane.
  - h. Old Georgetown Road and Glenbrook Road.
- 5. Narrow ("neck down") street pavement widths by expanding sidewalks at the corners of selected intersections to provide safe and convenient pedestrian crossings. These recommendations, subject to capacity conditions and operational studies, apply to the following locations:
  - a. At intersections along Norfolk Avenue.
  - b. Intersections associated with Biker Friendly Areas.



- c. Intersections where the Capital Crescent Trail crosses Woodmont Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue.
6. Complete Capital Crescent Trail Class I bikeway into and through Bethesda, including:
  - a. Southern boundary of Sector Plan to Bethesda Avenue.
  - b. From Bethesda Avenue under Wisconsin Avenue by way of the tunnel (Route A1).
  - c. Class I along Bethesda Avenue and Willow Lane to Elm Street Park (Route A2).
  - d. 46th Street to Pearl Street (Route J + A2) (to be built in conjunction with the trolley).
7. Complete other trails shown on the Bicycle Network Plan:
  - a. North-South Route - west side (Route F) (Class 1 & 3).
  - b. North-South Route - east side (Route J) (Class 2 & 3).
  - c. Links, Woodmont Triangle and Metro (Route H) (Class 1 & 2).
  - d. Bradley Boulevard (Route B) (Class 1 & 2).
  - e. Metro Bradley Bikeway (Route C or C1) (Class 1, 2 & BFA).
  - f. Link: NIH to Woodmont Triangle (Route D) (Class 1).
  - g. Link: Woodmont Triangle to High School and CCT (Route I) (Class 2).
8. Create Biker Friendly Areas (BFA) with sign system, entry features, intersection improvements, maps, and bike racks in the following locations:
  - a. Woodmont Triangle BFA (Area E).
  - b. Metro and Capital Crescent BFA & Links (Area G).
  - c. Pearl Street - two blocks.
9. Provide parking required by the Parking District for up to 3,500 cars. Estimates of possible public parking locations are assigned based on the likely long-term demand for parking within each area of Bethesda. Deck 35, Lot 36, and Lot 31 are suitable for construction of mixed-income housing and possible public open space in combination with parking. The amount of parking estimated for Lot 31 would require the Parking Lot District to pay a larger share of the cost for below grade construction than was assumed in the mixed-income housing feasibility study. The 4,800 total spaces listed below include new and existing spaces. The following locations are recommended for parking:

- a. Joint parking in the Metro Core District, with an estimated 700 spaces.
  - b. Small lot parking on four scattered sites in the Woodmont Triangle District, with an estimated 100 spaces.
  - c. Deck 35, possibly rebuilt, with an estimated 600 spaces.
  - d. Lot 36, expanded and a structure added, with an estimated 600 spaces.
  - e. Lot 25, reserved for a future facility, with an estimated 250 spaces.
  - f. Lot 42, expanded and a structure added, with an estimated 600 spaces.
  - g. Lot 24, reserved for a future facility, with an estimated 350 spaces.
  - h. Lot 31, a structure added, with an estimated 700 spaces.
  - i. Joint parking in the TS-R District with an estimated 100 spaces.
  - j. Joint parking in the Arlington Road District, with an estimated 300 spaces.
  - k. Other properties, not shown in the Sector Plan, which may have to be acquired to meet future parking requirements, providing up to 500 more spaces.
10. Provide roadway system improvements, as follows:
- a. Reconstruct Arlington Road, south of Bethesda Avenue, to remove the curve, improve sight distance, and provide a mid-block signal with a pedestrian crossing.
  - b. Install a reversible lane system on Old Georgetown Road from Woodmont Avenue to Huntington Parkway, as a long-term improvement.
11. Require dedication and developer construction of a two-lane circulator/access drive at the time of redevelopment in the Arlington Road District in the southwest quadrant of Arlington Road and Bethesda Avenue.
12. Provide intersection improvements within the Sector Plan boundary, as follows:
- a. East-West Highway at Wisconsin Avenue may require capacity improvements if future volumes and congestion warrant.
  - b. Arlington Road and Wilson Lane at Old Georgetown Road.
13. Provide intersection improvements beyond the Sector Plan boundary, as follows:
- a. East-West Highway and Connecticut Avenue to provide additional turn lanes.
  - b. Rockville Pike and Cedar Lane to provide additional capacity on



Rockville Pike and also to retain possible grade separation as a future improvement.

- c. Wisconsin Avenue and Jones Bridge Road to add capacity as NIH expands.
- d. Connecticut Avenue and Bradley Lane to relieve present and future congestion.
- e. Old Georgetown Road and Cedar Lane to provide additional through lanes.
- f. Wisconsin Avenue at Woodmont Avenue to provide additional capacity in the long-term.
- g. Bradley Boulevard at Huntington Parkway to be redesigned when safety and congestion warrant.

### **C. STREETScape PLAN (CHAPTER 6.0)**

The Streetscape Plan contains a detailed discussion and maps of the different levels of recommended streetscape improvements. Agencies involved: Department of Housing and Community Development, Department of Transportation, PEPCO, C & P Telephone, and Bethesda Urban Partnership.

1. Provide Level One Streetscape along Wisconsin Avenue, Old Georgetown Road, portions of East-West Highway, and portions of Woodmont Avenue.

Level One Streetscape is the same level as the approved 1984 Bethesda Streetscape Plan for the Metro Core District. This includes undergrounding utilities, Bethesda brick pavers, Bethesda Lanterns and trash receptacles, tightly spaced street trees, 30 feet on center, and street furnishings such as benches and planters.

2. Provide Level Two Streetscape along portions of East-West Highway, portions of Montgomery Avenue, and portions of Woodmont Avenue.

Level Two Streetscape includes undergrounding utilities and tightly spaced street trees, 30 feet on center, but does not require special pavements. Bethesda Lanterns would be used along East-West Highway. Washington Globe street lighting would be used along Woodmont and Montgomery Avenues.

3. Provide Level Three Streetscape along Norfolk Avenue, Bethesda Avenue, Cheltenham Drive, and Arlington Road.

Level Three Streetscape includes undergrounding utilities, Bethesda brick paving, Washington Globe street lighting, tightly spaced street trees, 30 feet on center, and street furnishings such as benches and planters.

4. Provide Level Four Streetscape along Montgomery Lane and Fairmont Avenue.

Level Four Streetscape includes undergrounding utilities, Bethesda brick paving on sidewalks and within the street, Washington Globe street lighting, tightly spaced street trees, 30 feet on center, and street furnishings such as benches and planters.

5. Provide Level Five Streetscape along all other streets within the Sector Plan area.

Level Five Streetscape includes concrete sidewalks, tightly spaced street trees, and Washington Globe street lighting. It does not require undergrounding utilities.

6. Place public utilities underground as the recommended policy for all Sector Plan area streets. This should be accomplished whenever possible, but is primarily dependent on a change in policy by local public utilities.

#### **D. COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN (CHAPTER 8.0)**

Agencies involved: Department of Parks, Division of Elder Affairs, Bethesda Evergreen, Department of Housing and Community Development, Housing Opportunities Commission, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Services Center, Department of Transportation, Bethesda Urban Partnership, Police Department.

1. Provide additional urban green space, public parks, and open space as follows:

- a. Expand the Battery Lane Urban Park to Rugby Avenue (feasibility depends on providing parking for existing residents).
- b. Provide a small urban green space on the northwest corner of Woodmont Avenue and Montgomery Lane, which may be acquired by new private TS-R development.
- c. Provide a small open space and connection to the Capital Crescent Trail on a portion of Lot 31, which will also be used for below-grade public parking and mixed-income housing.
- d. Provide a small urban open space on portions of Lots 36 and 42 if more below-grade public parking is provided.

2. Provide for future police station needs, which may include:

- a. Option #1: retain and renovate the current police station facility.
- b. Option #2: construct a new police station at some location within the police service area.
- c. If the current police station is closed, the priority recommendation is to retain and renovate the existing building for government, non-profit functions, and other community oriented services to Bethesda and other down-County areas.



## IMPLEMENTATION

### BETHESDA CBD

Mixed-income housing, possibly elderly housing, could be placed on the police station parking lot. This could be an optional method residential project with adjacent properties.

3. Retain the Walsh Street Center for a community service or non-profit use.
4. Provide a long-term location for an expanded Bethesda-Chevy Chase Government Services Center, which could house a variety of consolidated services, offices for the Bethesda Urban Partnership, and community meeting rooms. Current plans are to move the center and provide community services at the Garage 49 mixed-use project site.



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