



# A Once & Future County:

## How planning politics shaped Montgomery County

# **100 years of development In 5 easy doses**

**Nov. 12: Planners, politicians and how we got this way**

**Dec. 10: Retrofitting the suburbs: Friendship Heights to White Flint**

**Jan. 14: Trials & Errors of Corridor City Planning**

**Feb. 11: Creating and Sustaining the Agricultural Reserve**

**Mar. 11: Hunting the Snark: Growth Policy & the Public Interest**



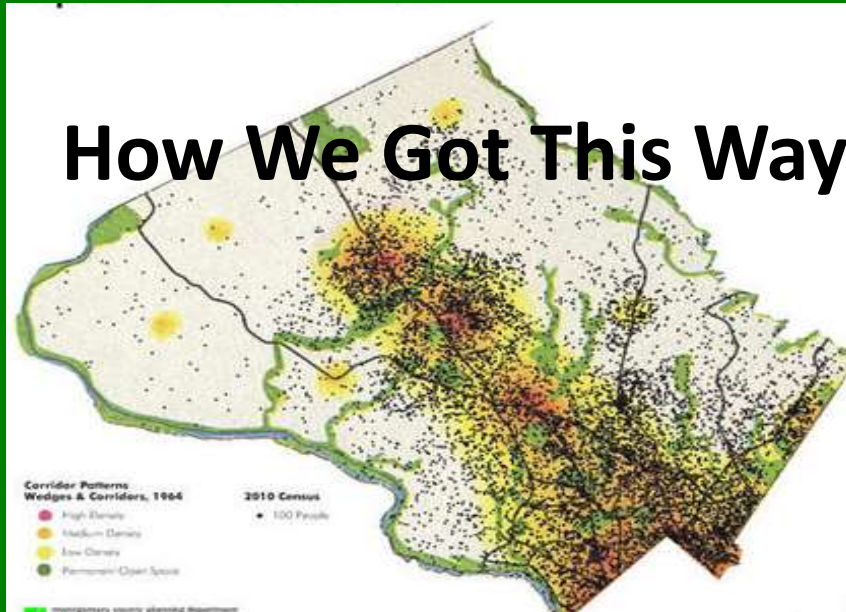
# Planners

# Politicians



and

## How We Got This Way



**Everything has to happen somewhere**

**That makes  
planning useful**

**Nothing happens by itself**

**That makes  
politics necessary**

# Planning politics

combines 2 ways of thinking



**Planners'**  
**Logic of**  
**Consequentiality**  
**(Rational Method)**

**Politicians'**  
**Logic of**  
**Appropriateness**  
**(Garbage Can)**



and competing values & interests of  
2 virtual republics



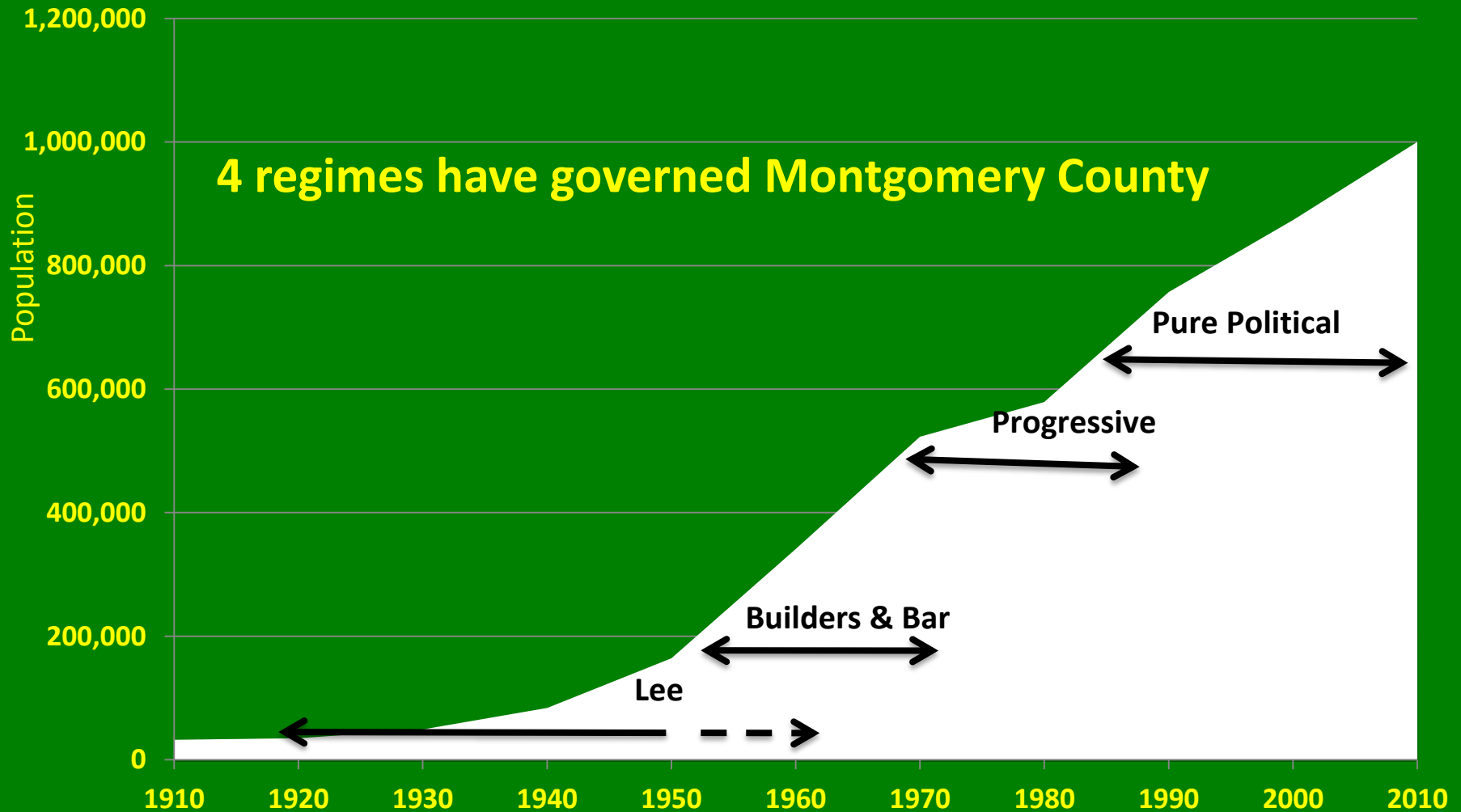
**Commercial**  
**Republic**

**Miniature**  
**Republic**



# Governing Regimes

shape the character of planning politics  
and the county's development pattern



# The Lee Regime – 1918-1958 – and the Commercial Republic

*The automobile made suburban living feasible. Sewers made it possible. E. Brooke Lee made it happen.*



**Basis of the regime: Unity of Public & Private Sectors**

**Democratic Party Organization**

**Bi-County Commissions**

**Diffused Government; Centralized Power**

**Accomplishments:**

**Suburban Growth: 35,000-341,000**

**East-West Highway**

**Stream valley parks**

**Federal Agencies**



# Rise of the Miniature Republic: Charter and Reform Politics 1938-1962



**The Charter Movement: from consumers to citizens**

**Civic Federation and League of Women Voters**

**Loses fight to control planning**



# Builders & Bar Regime—1950-1970

Basis of the regime:



**Merchant Builders & Land Use Bar**

Commercial Republic's 2<sup>nd</sup> growth machine

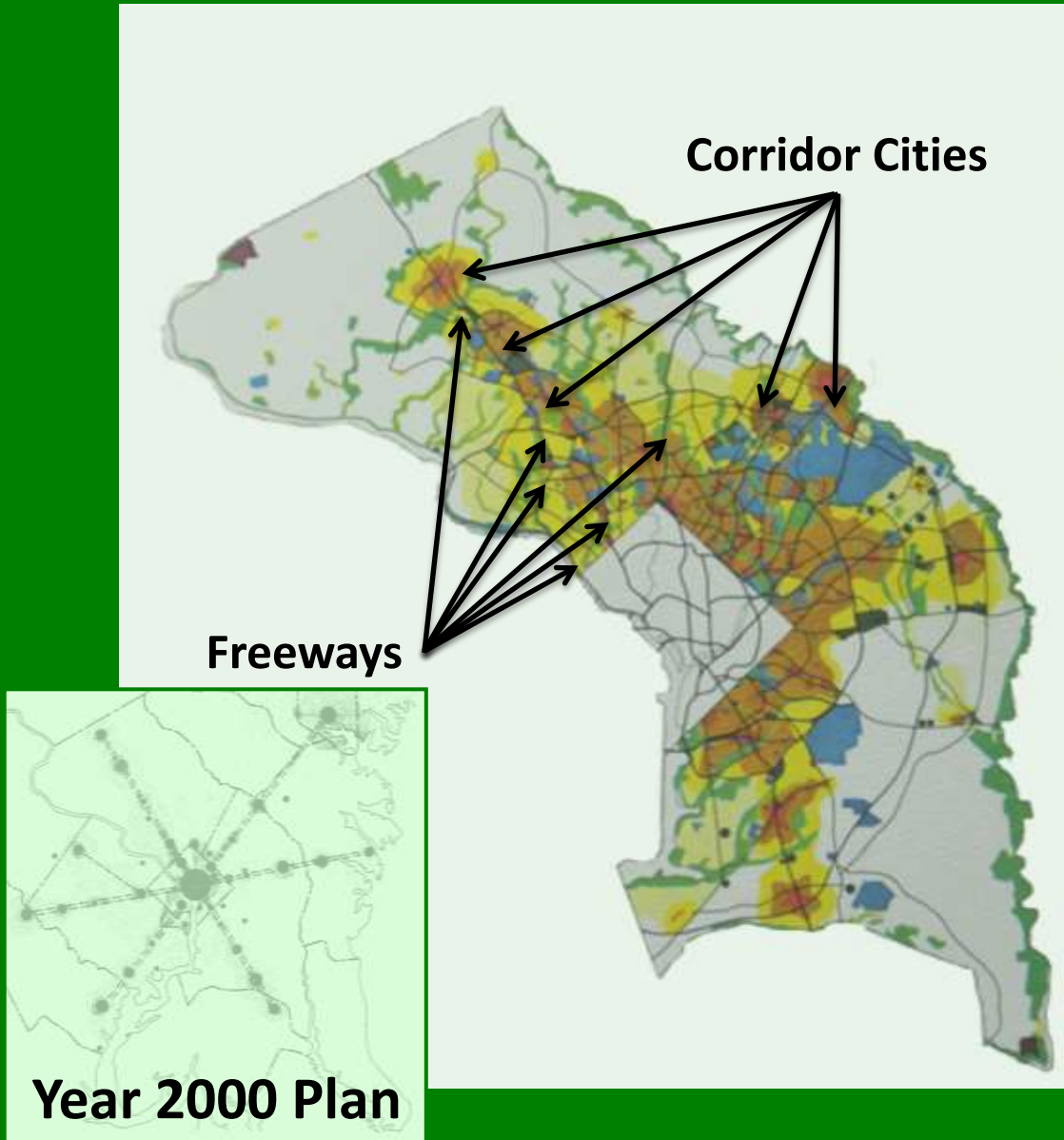
**The CAP Council's zoning binge**

**Floating Zones**

The 1964 General Plan



# Bartholomew Draft of the General Plan

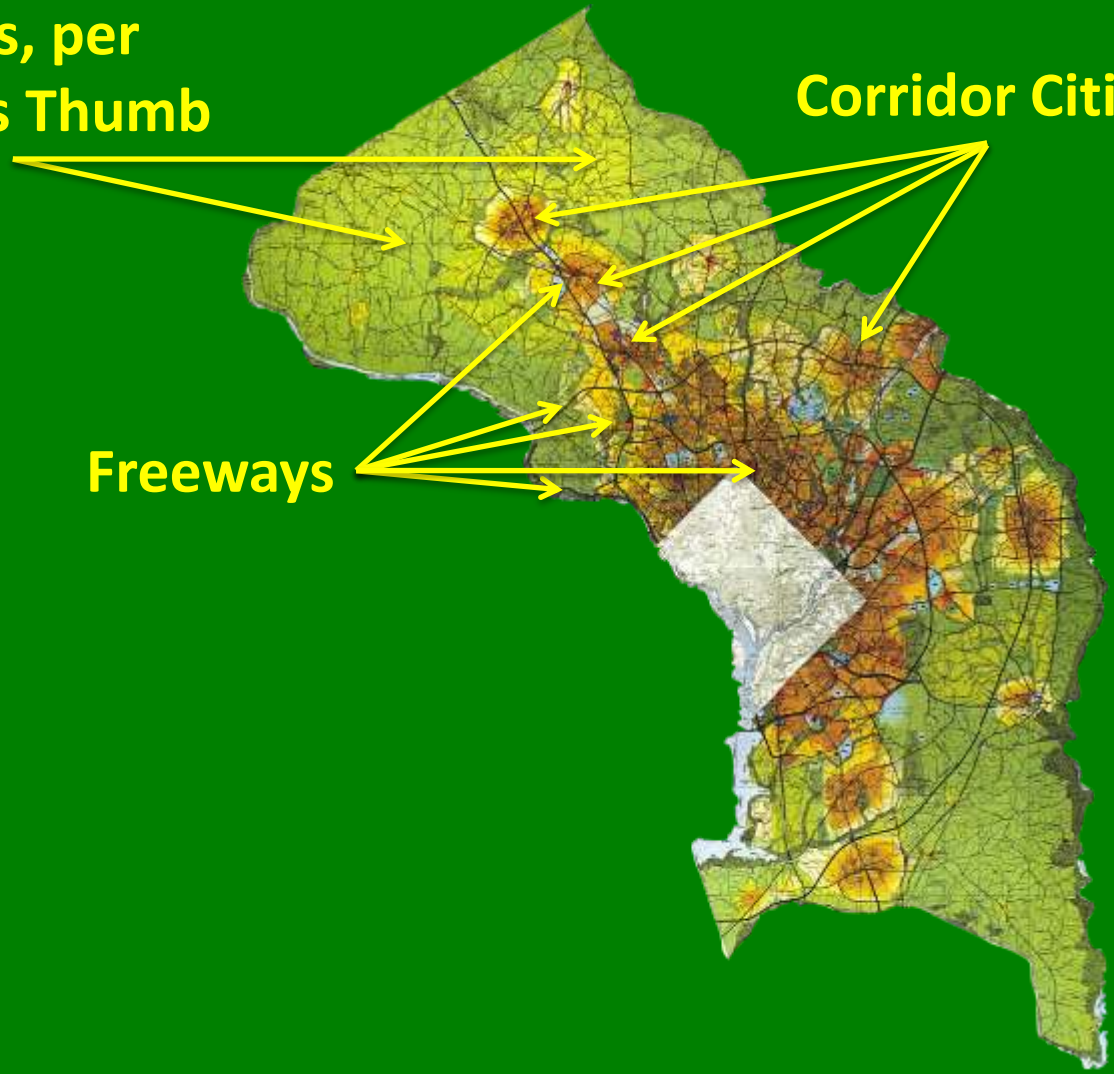


# *On Wedges and Corridors: The 1964 General Plan*

**Wedges, per  
Elston's Thumb**

**Corridor Cities**

**Freeways**



# The Progressive Vanguard



**The Scull Coalition: 1967-68**

**Scull & 3 Democrats**

**Achievements**

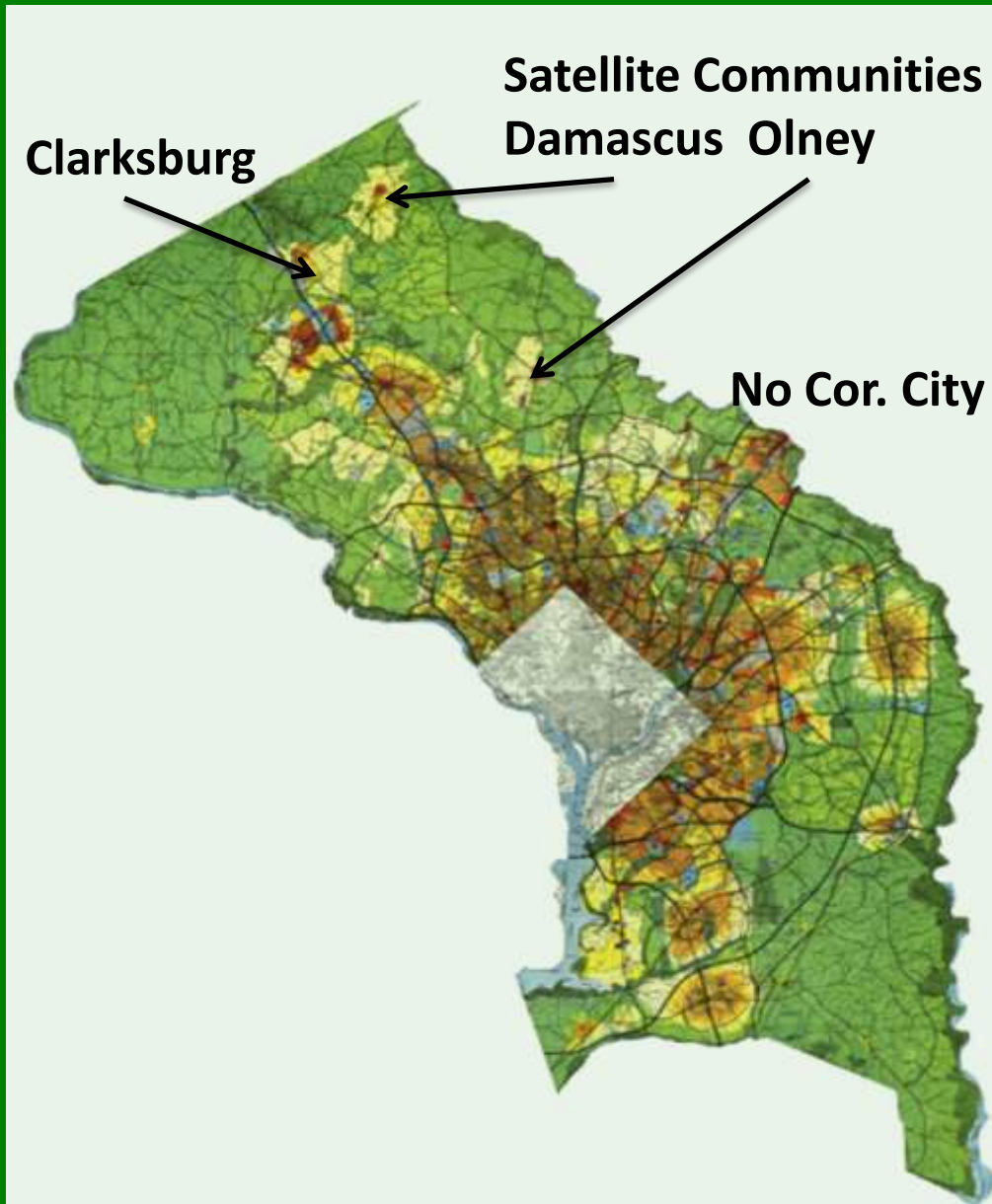
**Updated General Plan**

**Zoning Hearing Examiner**

**Metro alignment & stations**



# Council-approved General Plan 1969



# The Progressive Regime 1970-1986



Regime Base:

**County Council/Planning Board**  
**Liberal Precincts/Miniature Republics**

Managed Growth: consequentiality = appropriate

**Sector Plans for Metro, CBDs**

**Area Master Plans + SMAs**

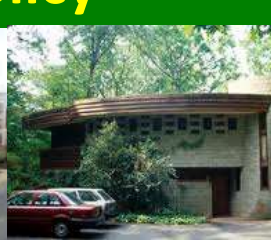
**Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance**

**Moderate Priced Dwelling Units Law**

**Agricultural Reserve**

**Historic Preservation**

**Growth Policy**



# The Pure Political Regime –1986-



**No stable governing coalition**

**Independent political actors**

**No stable components**

**Shifts from Commercial to**

**Miniature republics**

**Achievements**

**Road Wars—from ICC to BRT**

**Silver Spring Revitalization**

**Legacy Open Space**

**Clarksburg White Flint**

**Zoning Code Revision**



# Planners and Politicians play distinct roles

## Structure matters

**Autonomy, Authority, & Accountability**

## The Board's role:

**Policy initiative using the Logic of Consequentiality**

## The Council's Role:

**Policy adaptation, using the Logic of Appropriateness**

**Reconcile Interests, values of Commercial & Miniature Republics**



# The Rules of Engagement in Planning Politics

*Welcome to Montgomery County, where process is our most important product*

- 1. Everyone gets into the act**
- 1. Participants are due a lot of process**
- 2. The price of consent is advice by committee**
- 3. Land use decisions are public and openly made**
- 4. Every decision requires expert analysis**
- 5. Master Plans are sacred**
- 6. Litigation is planning by other means**

# Lessons

**Logics & Roles of Politicians and Planners were complementary**

**Autonomy of planning was critical to policy initiation & success**

**Balancing the two republics was the essence of planning politics**

**Participation in planning built civic capital**

**Legitimacy required extensive process**