

Summary

Human settlement patterns globally have followed waterways and locations of available fresh water and food. As the food goes, so do the settlement patterns; it was always the same for Montgomery County with the first indigenous settlements from ten thousand years or more ago following the stream valleys and fall line where game, fish, shellfish, and other food sources were readily available. This broad pattern continued with the early trade routes, then post roads, rail lines, trolley lines, and highways—all roughly laid out in north-south configurations following the stream valleys. Very few west-east corridors were ever developed—they didn't make sense from a settlement, ecological, or industrial perspective. Locking in the protection of these water sources in the stream valleys with the creation of WSSC, NCPC, and MNCPPC in the 1910s-1930 firmly established the corridors as resources to be physically protected through land use laws and policies. The Wedges and Corridors plan should be considered and understood in the context of the corridors and corridor-centered settlements that had existed for nearly 200 years prior in Montgomery County and more specifically within the framework of conservation and protection that was established in the first half of the 20th century. With that framework in mind, perhaps we should consider returning to the source of our settlement patterns and the roots of our agency: the protection of the natural stream valley corridors and towns strung along their paths. The wedge areas have grown it seems mostly according to plan, with the agricultural reserve areas largely protected, and the suburban areas infilling over the past 50 years. Yet people in these wedge areas feel increasingly disconnected from cultural centers and from each other. Suburban circulation patterns and the countywide location or colocation of public amenities (schools, parks, libraries) has perhaps exacerbated this feeling, along with exponentially increasing traffic congestion.

Where does this point to? Three broad thoughts:

1) Our current planning department structure and master planning efforts focus largely on redevelopment potential and broad environmental conservation efforts. Yet people crave immediacy and personal interactions and micro-planning efforts have been enthusiastically accepted and promoted. Consider a broadly-based new division or co-equal emphasis on Neighborhood Plans and Neighborhood Planning, along with Master Planning and Development Review. Encourage the County to float bond efforts yearly (\$3-5million) or restructure MNCPPC to expand ability to float our own bonds to implement neighborhood planning and infrastructure improvements. These teams would be cross-staffed with DOT, MCPS, DGS staff with equitable distribution and funding of projects across the County.

2) Return to the Corridors. Reinvest and reinvigorate all levels and layers of the corridors. Beginning with the natural systems, then moving vertically to study the industrial (canal, railroad) corridors, to the 19th c. settlements to the railways, finally to the highways. Plan for the next phase lifecycle of some of the corridor roadways. Imagine and plan for the next step. All industrial corridors, from the early road traces, to the canals, to the railways, are eventually supplanted by the next generation of transportation/industry. Should we plan for the end of the rail lines or their enhancement? Similar for automobiles. How can we enhance existing highway corridors to the benefit of the center cities and neighborhoods? Imagine the next technological future after the single-passenger automobile and be able to envision enhancing the remnants of the old corridor technology while embracing the new.

3) Cultural Planning. Implement culturally-based master planning efforts. Public Arts planning, Urban agriculture planning, Maker-Space/Small Industrial Planning, other plans we may not have conceived, but that the community desires. Revisit the oldest cultural plans (Ag Plan, HP Plan, Heritage Area Plan, other Parks plans (??)) to see how their visions can be enhanced and sustained by the new General Plan vision.

Settlement Pattern and Cultural Timeline

<1600s: Native Americans Corridors

- Native American tribes: 1632 founding of the Maryland colony beginning of land acquisition from the Native American tribes (Piscataway part of the Eastern Woodlands tribes predominantly in Montgomery County at this time). Native Americans utilized waterways as corridors to establish hunting routes and created settlement nodes at certain advantageous locations. Native American archaeological sites (quarries, settlements, temporary hunting grounds) have been recorded along the Potomac, Patuxent, and Monocacy rivers dating back thousands of years. Maryland 355 from Washington, DC to Frederick, MD has been recorded as an example of a long-established Native American trading route that was easily navigable and then settled by Anglo-settlers beginning in the 18th century.
- Critical importance of the Fall Line and the Carolina Road, later Monocacy Road

1700-1776: Early Anglo- and African- Colonial Settlements

- Africans and African-Americans are enslaved, working on early tobacco farms. Significant European settlements in the region are Frederick (1745) and Georgetown (1751).
- 1770s – Sandy Spring Quakers and the Underground Railroad
- 1776: Montgomery County established from portion of Frederick County
- Most settlement large land-grant tracts.
- Mix of small, log-cabins and few grander Tidewater-style plantations with Georgian architectural influences.
- Only cash crop was Tobacco.
- Navigable waterways and roadways were few and rough.
- 1751: Incorporation of Georgetown: Frederick and then Montgomery County's only port City below the Fall Line. (Bladensburg, Alexandria, Upper Marlborough were the other major cash crop/tobacco ports)

1776-1864: Republic to Civil War, Earliest Anglo-Corridors and Town Nodes, Industry, Agriculture

- 1776: Hungerford's Tavern (later Rockville) established as County Seat.
- 1791: Loss of Georgetown with its incorporation into the newly created District of Columbia.
- By 1790 Enslaved persons were nearly 1/3 of the total population of the county
- 1800s: Tobacco cultivation begins to fail
- 1800s-1840s: Conversion to cereal crops, orchards, stonefruits, and more commercial livestock ventures

- 1800s: Earliest established African-American community/town at Big Woods (1813) and Mount Ephraim (1814) – free people of color? 1822 Big Woods Sharp Street United Methodist Church founded, oldest African American congregation in the County
- Widespread use of water and grist mills/expansion of industrial technologies at key waterways.
- 1828: Establishment of C & O Canal, huge shift in industrial technologies (stone quarries, goods moving above and beyond the fall line). Opened new roads, brought in new labor, diversified economy, to a point.
- Most settlement followed the Great Road to Frederick (Rockville, Middlebrook, Clarksburg, Hyattstown).
- Turnpikes furthered node developments along the Union Turnpike (old Brookeville post road to Brookeville and north), River Road, Old Georgetown Road.
- By 1860, approximately 1,500 free people of color lived in Montgomery County, while another 5,400 African Americans were held in slavery (total population: 18,322)
- November 1, 1864: Enslaved people are emancipated in Maryland

1864 -1900: Railroads, the Metropolitan Branch Line and a Changed Landscape

- Establishment of African American communities: Tobytown, Scotland, Lyttonsville, River Road
- 1873: Laying of the Metropolitan Branch of B & O Railroad
- Connected the earlier turnpike and canal villages
- Expansion of coal-powered steam mills
- Introduction of guano fertilizer revolutionized farming, making unfertile lands available. Massive deforestation and clearing of marginal areas for widespread agriculture.
- Large-scale, organized land development along the trolley-car and rail commuter routes. Mirrors the rise and growth of the professional bureaucracy in Washington, DC and the expansion of the DC suburbs north and west.
- Summer hotels and boarding houses from Takoma Park to Boyds.
- Chevy Chase, Takoma Park, Kensington, Washington Grove, Glen Echo, Bethesda.
- Popular architectural magazines, home journals, media spread popular house designs and suburban living plans.

1900-1950: Suburbanization, racially segregated housing and the establishment of M-NCPPC

- 1902: Silver Spring enacted more than 50 racially restrictive covenants that prohibited owning or renting “the whole or any part of any dwelling or structure thereon, to any person of African descent” between 1902- 1948.
- By 1915, dairy farming was the County’s chief agricultural pursuit. The agricultural landscape, buildings, and transportation routes are enhanced to promote this specialized industry.
- 1921: Colonel Edward Brooke Lee, Maryland politician and Montgomery County private developer, attached racially restrictive covenants to all his suburban properties. These prohibited African-Americans from buying or renting homes in the subdivisions unless they were domestic servants.
- In 1927, Silver Spring political boss E. Brooke Lee lobbied to create the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) as a complementary agency to Washington’s National Capital Park and Planning Commission formed the year before.³ Operating as an independent bi-county agency, the new Commission assumed authority to approve zoning, manage land use, and review subdivision applications in Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties. In order to plan for orderly growth, the

Commission established a new policy requiring subdivision applicants to dedicate land for current and future utilities, streets, schools and parks. The Commission also kept residential development separate from commercial development, and both of those separate from industrial development.⁴ During the 1950s, the Commission approved as many as 4,800 new lots per year. In addition, the Commission was authorized to purchase land for the design and construction of park systems in both counties. (From <https://suburbs.montgomeryhistory.org/how-montgomery-county-grew-in-the-1950s/>)

- 1920-1930: County's population increases >40% from the growing federal workforce in the interwar period.
- Capper-Cramton Act of 1930 (amended 1946, 1952, 1958): Act of Congress establishing the stream valley parks system. Provided funds for construction of parkways (GW Memorial PKWAY, Rock Creek PKWAY, Clara Barton PKWAY), bridges, and land acquisition to protect the stream valley parks in Maryland and Virginia that fed into the District of Columbia. Protected stream valley parks in MoCo acquired include Rock Creek, Paint Branch, Northwest Branch, Cabin Branch.
- 1936: FHA publishes map of planned federally insured housing. The map grades the perceived quality of existing housing in regions of DC and nearby portions of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in racialized terms, providing some of the policy basis for subsequent discriminatory real estate practices in the region. The mapping segregation project also shows the "block busting" that shifted racial demographics per the redlined zones post-1936.
<http://mappingsegregationdc.org/historic-maps.html>
- 1937: Falkland Gardens, the 2nd FHA-financed garden apartment complex in the Nation constructed in Silver Spring.
- 1930s-1940s saw a radical shift in people moving from rural to suburban/urban areas. Majority of the nation's population went from living with outdoor restrooms and cold water flats to newly constructed apartments with indoor toilets, hot running water, availability of telephones, etc.
- 1930s-1950s: explosive growth of middle-class population with the vast and rapid expansion of federal workforce.

1950-1970: Civil Rights, desegregation, protecting African-American communities, Fair Housing

- 1954 - MCPS begins desegregation of schools
- 1950s-1970s: Huge suburban growth following the Wedges and Corridors growth plan. Shopping centers and schools located on transportation arteries and within neighborhoods.
- 1960s - The NAACP Montgomery County Chapter boycotted two Rockville restaurants that refused to serve African Americans. The Montgomery County Council formed a "Council on Human Rights" which addressed cases of discrimination in response to a petition from concerned citizens.
- 1962: City of Rockville passes public accommodations Law
- Path towards Fair Housing
 - 1966 - The Action Coordinating Committee to End Segregation in the Suburbs protested against segregated apartment complexes around the Beltway
 - 1967 - Montgomery County passed an open housing law which outlawed discrimination in the sale or rental of all housing, except/ owner-occupied housing

of two rented units or less. Federal authorities stated that it was “the most comprehensive fair housing measure in the United States”, stronger than the recently enacted federal legislation against housing discrimination.

- 1968 - Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act (Fair Housing Act) bans discrimination based on race, color, religion or national origin in the sale, rental, or financing of housing.
- Building moratorium – the annual growth policy (AGP) limits growth based on available public facilities. In East county, not enough public facilities, no growth allowed.

1970-2000: Immigration, diversity, change. Bicentennial, Historic Preservation, New Urbanism

- 1974 – Montgomery County established the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program, which pioneered inclusionary zoning practices by requiring any developer applying for subdivision approval, site plan approval, or building permits for construction of 50 or more dwelling units at one location to ensure that 15% of the units were MPDUs.
- 1976: American Bicentennial
- 1979 Historic Preservation Master Plan specifically lists African American historic sites and calls out these sites and communities for further protection and engagement.
- 1989-1991: Conception and beginning construction of Kentlands, Duany & Plater-Zyberg designed the County's first Traditional Neighborhood Design.
- 1993: Founding of the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU)

2000s: Into the 21st Century: Green Building, Sustainability

- Establishment of USGBC
- 2002: Adoption of Heritage Area Plan: Is this the only Countywide culturally focused Planning Document?

CHAPTER 1: HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE: A SUMMARY

The land that became Montgomery County included the considerable advantage of its forests, a resource exhausted and then replenished during its long history. It also enjoyed the more permanent advantage of its location at the Fall Line, the head of navigation and point where the broad tidal estuary of the Potomac could most easily be crossed. The first settlers found a region largely empty of Indian habitation, but crisscrossed with hunting trails and longer routes connecting Tidewater with the interior valleys, and northern New York with the Carolinas. The native forest yielded its selected timber for shipbuilding, construction of all types, and met the manifold needs of the frontier farms for fence posts, rails and firewood. It produced the log buildings in which early settlers lived, and the many outbuildings of their farmsteads, and later the hewn timbers for more sophisticated structures. But with axe and fire the native forest yielded to the laboriously cleared fields of the eighteenth century.

Montgomery's port city of Georgetown was lost when Maryland ceded its jurisdiction to the Federal government to create the national capital city, but the County profited in the long run by its proximity to the rising metropolitan center of Washington, and continued to enjoy its advantage of a location on the Potomac corridor to the West as expressed in road, canal, and railroad.

The colonial settlers of early Montgomery came from Tidewater, and brought with them their cash crop, tobacco, and the plantation system with its characteristic institution of slavery, and its way of life. But on the rocky, thinner soils of the Potomac piedmont this form of agriculture met with many obstacles. Little has survived. More successful were the settlers from the north, the Quakers who settled around Sandy Spring, and the Germans who migrated from Frederick into the western reaches of the County. With these came the new cash crop of wheat, and the more independent self-sustaining family farm with its dairy cows, orchards and gardens. In this new landscape, the bank barn was a notable feature, and while the log buildings continued to reflect the principal local resource, fieldstone and brick houses became more frequent as prosperity increased. The foothill streams turned water wheels for sawmills, gristmills and many other small enterprises.

Transportation of the staple crops of tobacco and wheat to the ocean ports, and later to the urban centers of Baltimore and Washington, translated the military road to Pittsburgh into the Great Road running northwest through Montgomery County, and encouraged George Washington's dream of a Potomac canal toward its later realization in the form of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. Turnpike and canal greatly stimulated the building of minor roads. But Montgomery was not to know the railroad, the decisive transportation mode of industrial America, until the building of the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio in 1873. With this event, the yoke of poverty and isolation was lifted. The railroad brought guano, the fertilizer that redeemed the rolling farmlands, and conveyed its products to the new urban markets. The railroad opened the high and agreeable lands to summer vacationers and later rail commuters. More fundamentally, the railroad centralized the nation's economy, bringing from great distances the coal, the manufactured products, and the new urban sophistication which equally left their marks on the local scene.

The armies of the Civil War had marched and countermarched across a countryside that, by contrast to Frederick and Washington Counties, yielded little to their appetites. By the 1880's that had changed. Towns had grown up close to the District Line, along the main roads leading from the city, and on the new line of rail. Distinctive settlements of black families dotted the landscape in areas such as Martinsburg, Big Woods, Scotland, Lyttonsville, Brooke Road, Jerusalem, and White Grounds. Logtown became Gaithersburg; the sleepy village of the Blairs became busy Silver Spring; the Chautauqua established itself in Glen Echo; the Methodist camp meeting had taken root at Washington Grove; and summer hotels and boarding houses were to be found at Takoma Park, Forest Glen, Rockville, Boyds and Buck Lodge. Farm houses and suburban villas alike reflected the popular taste for the many-gabled houses in the Queen Anne style, popularized in Godey's Ladies Book. Churches, schoolhouses, railroad depots and commercial buildings arose to proclaim the new jigsaw and fretwork building styles born of the power saw and created by carpenters from pattern books.

Thus, one hundred years ago the lineaments of a suburban county could be seen, and the appearance of the large-scale builder was as inevitable as the development of new forms of transportation, i.e.,--trolley car, bicycle and automobile. Takoma Park and Rockville exhibited the promotional talents, as well as the technical capacities of the homebuilder, but it was at Chevy Chase that these came to full flower and thus influenced the subsequent development of the modern county. By 1900, the Chevy Chase Land Company had acquired nearly 2,000 acres of land for systematic development, overcome the barrier of Rock Creek and constructed a trolley line out Connecticut Avenue to Chevy Chase Lake. The fashionable darker tones of the shingle style characterized the homes that lined leafy streets and reinforced the concealment and surprise that was the charm of the new suburban environment.

The growth of Washington, decisively spurred by the first World War, spilled over into Montgomery County, following initially the lines of the trolley cars, but after 1925 more diffused by the popular use of automobiles. Required to support suburban growth was the new governmental apparatus of water supply, sewer lines and sanitation, provided first on a special district basis in 1916, and later through the bi-county Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. The mechanism of land use planning, zoning and parks arrived in 1927. Thus reinforced, by the time the second stage of suburban growth arrived to accommodate the swelling bureaucracies of the New Deal, Montgomery County was better prepared to cope with such new forms of residential development as vast tracts of Cape Cod or split-level ranch houses, garden apartments, or multi-story high rise development in the older suburban centers of Silver Spring and Bethesda. More significant still was the arrival of distinctly urban types of employment centers, whether originating with Federal action, like the National Institutes of Health, or with the opportunities and demands of private industry, like the establishments along the Capital Beltway or Interstate 270. By 1960, it was clear that single-story research and development complexes, in spacious landscaped settings surrounded by large areas for automobile parking, had become as characteristic of the County as the equally spreading high schools, shopping centers or other supporting features of residential community life.

In this fashion the County, which fifty years ago was sharply divided between its relatively urbanized fringe close to the District Line and its untouched rural areas, had the potential to become an almost uninterrupted stretch of suburbia. In the spaces between development, the once cutover forest was reestablishing itself in stream valley

parks and on abandoned farms. Along the interstate highways, paralleling the old Indian paths, the earlier pattern of corridors reasserted itself.

The search for Montgomery County's architectural and environmental identity must reflect the different historical periods and the long span of time over which it has evolved, the large area with its diverse regional characteristics, and the significant change from a provincial to a more sophisticated suburban community. Only in relatively recent years has the County moved into the mainstream of American urban development.

During its period of isolation, Montgomery responded slowly to national architectural developments. Its poverty accounted for the small size of its buildings. Its conservatism was marked, possibly because of the predominantly southern character of the County. Its architectural identity is regional in its reflection of influences from north and south, east and west; and one must search more widely for clues to its origin. Developments in Silver Spring and Wheaton are related to what was happening down the pike in the District of Columbia. Sandy Spring and Brookeville responded more to Baltimore and Ellicott City influences. Poolesville was intimately connected across the Potomac, via White's Ferry, with Leesburg and Loudoun County. And Gaithersburg, Clarksburg and Hyattstown looked up the Great Road to Frederick and the west for inspiration. The resulting historical amalgam is today the basis for the future of this rapidly growing County, and its emerging character and identity will reflect the understanding and preservation of the significant features from its past.

A background paper for this Plan, Montgomery's History and Architecture, provides further discussion of the County's history and illustrations of its architecture, and is included as Appendix "B."

CHAPTER 2: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Fewer than one thousand of Montgomery County's historical resources have survived to the present day. Unless effective actions are taken, many more will be lost to development or neglect.

The management of growth and the regulation of development are major tools of preservation. It is, therefore, useful to review current plans, policies and programs at the County and municipal level, to inquire how these are being used, and to identify circumstances where plans and policies can be changed to further historic preservation.

RECENT TRENDS IN COUNTY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

More clearly than any other jurisdiction in the metropolitan area, the growth of Montgomery County has followed a predictable pattern--expanding first in areas adjacent to the District of Columbia and then pushing outward along radial corridors centered on transportation routes such as I-270. The County grew very little during the 1800's, and by 1870 had a total population of 20,600, only 10 percent above the level of 1790. The first really substantial growth began just prior to World War II with a 70 percent rise in population between 1930 and 1940 to 83,900. A period of exponential growth followed the war, with the population doubling every decade until 1960. By this time, the inner sectors of the County were filling up and growth was already reaching out along major transportation corridors. In 1970, the County's total population had reached 520,000 and was pushing out beyond Gaithersburg and beginning to spill over into satellite towns such as Olney and Damascus.

In 1964, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission adopted the "Wedges and Corridors" General Plan, which officially recognized and attempted to reinforce this pattern of growth. It aimed at guaranteeing a progressive development of "corridors" separated by "green wedges" of less intensive use. Satellite towns were permitted within the wedges at Damascus and Olney. Later, unanticipated growth sprang up in Poolesville. But in general, the wedges and corridors concept has been a success, as confirmed by recent population statistics. Since 1970, 35 percent of all dwelling units completed and 50 percent of the County's total population growth has occurred in the I-270 Corridor. The next greatest growth occurred in Potomac, which received 20 percent of the population increase, followed by the satellite town of Olney with 16 percent. Present forecasts anticipate that this pattern will continue through the period up to 1986 with the I-270 Corridor receiving nearly 48 percent of future growth and Olney absorbing 11 percent. (See Figure 1.)