

The routing of a rail transit line to Glenmont has implications for Georgia Avenue, regardless of whether the area is considered a "corridor". The mere presence of the Glenmont line will increase accessibility to land in the vicinity of Georgia Avenue, both in absolute and in relative terms. The Glenmont line, together with the Northern Freeway, can be expected to increase land values enough that normal market pressures to convert some single family residential uses to higher-density residential or to non-residential urban uses will develop. The degree to which these pressures develop will be a function of the relative supply and demand for accessible urban space at the time the Glenmont line and Northern Freeway are built.

Route 29 and the construction of I-95 in Prince George's County will increase the marketability of land in the Route 29 corridor in Montgomery County. Pressures for more intensive land development will result, and, considering the radial corridor pattern, such pressures should probably be accommodated through the provision of necessary public facilities and appropriate land development policies. The Fairland-Beltsville Master Plan was adopted in recognition of this logical development. The one element which is missing in the development of Route 29 as a corridor of activity in Montgomery County is rapid transit. Because of decisions which have already been made on the alignment and construction timing of the College Park transit line, it appears doubtful that the rail transit extension as called for in the Fairland-Beltsville Plan will be provided as a rail facility in the foreseeable future.

In the urban ring, transportation studies undertaken for the development of the Silver Spring and Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plans and for assessment of the General Plan indicate clearly that there will be greatly increased demands for capacity of movement through these areas into Washington. A combination of rail transit, bus transit, sophisticated traffic engineering technology, and new internal transportation modes will be needed if the livability of the urban ring is to be retained.

The basic underlying problem of achieving the transportation goal of the General Plan remains implementation. Public funds must be made available, facilities constructed and transportation service provided with particular attention to the timing of these facilities and service to other public improvements and market conditions.

IV. CONSERVATION

CRITIQUE

In addition to the rather limited aspect of conservation covered by the policy statements in the General Plan, a number of other aspects have not received adequate attention. Among these are the protection of streams and stream valley corridors as interrelated systems involving water supply, flood protection, and ecological features; the preservation of historic and scenic areas; and the use of clustered development and park dedication as one means of soil and water conservation. Especially important is the preservation of natural features during the development of urban and suburban areas, so that nature is brought close to the people where it may enhance the environment and be appreciated daily. Additional guidelines are needed for the accomplishment of these purposes.

Another aspect of conservation involves the general quality of the living environment, a subject which is treated further in the "environmental" section of this report but which can also be viewed as a matter of preserving natural features which contribute to health, diversity, and beauty. The General Plan contains some limited comments with respect to the preservation of the environment in the rural areas, but it is of equal importance that this sort of conservation be practiced in urban areas as well, integrating development with conservation, and man with nature.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The preservation of natural features and the effectuation of good conservation practices are essential to the provision of a desirable living environment for residents of Montgomery County.

The 1964 General Plan did not include a major conservation element. An assessment of the Plan shows that this was a serious omission. Conservation values are an essential element in the planning procedure and must be a part of the decision-making process along with economic and other criteria.

When maps of streams, floodplains, wetlands, plants, wildlife, and scenic and historic areas are combined, a pattern of regional conservation values becomes apparent. The stream valley corridors form the matrix of natural values in the County and thus the backbone of the conservation pattern.

Stream valleys containing surface water, floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, wildlife and botanical features provide a natural setting for conservation and natural beauty for human enjoyment

in urban society. The stream valleys, whose sense of wilderness is heightened by abundant vegetation, fish and wildlife, have been termed "corridors of environmental quality."⁵

Additional values are located outside of or adjacent to the stream valleys, usually in clusters. These have been termed "nodes of diversity."⁶ They most frequently include historic and scenic areas.

The regional conservation pattern in Montgomery County is formed by the corridors of environmental quality along with the nodes of diversity.

The predominant environmental corridors in the County are formed by the Patuxent and Potomac Rivers. These two rivers encompass the most significant ecological areas and thus the most important conservation values.

The preservation of the smaller stream valley corridors also contributes essential conservation values to development, at a sub-regional, community, and neighborhood level. The retention of these smaller corridors is as vital as the conservation of primary stream valleys, although the lesser streams are too small to be included within the regional pattern.

In addition to preserving regional conservation values, conservation must be integrated with urban development. The retention of natural features in developing urban and suburban areas will bring nature to the people and greatly enhance their environment. Touches of nature can be added to existing urban areas and are especially essential in high density urban cores and regional activity centers to provide a feeling of spaciousness and diversity.

The protection of regional conservation values and the integration of development with nature can only be accomplished if conservation becomes an established element in the planning and development procedure. Consideration of these values should become an important part of the decision-making process, a major element in regional and local plans, and an item of significance in future urban and suburban developments.

CRITIQUE

The 1964 General Plan contains few policies on several subjects of great environmental importance. Air and water pollution is one of these subjects. The only statements in this field are concerned with preserving the supply of water for domestic use, referring also to underground water resources, which are now seen as a relatively unimportant part of the future water supply except in certain local areas.

The General Plan proposes no policies in connection with the disposal of solid wastes, a problem whose dimensions are now more evident than when the Plan was prepared.

Another aspect of the environment which received little recognition in the General Plan is aesthetic values. The only guideline in this area is the encouragement of the undergrounding of electric and telephone wires.

Important additions to the General Plan policy statements on the environmental aspects of development are needed, especially in connection with the elimination of pollution and the encouragement and accomplishment of an improved aesthetic quality in development in the County.

Also, the Plan should be expanded to include the policies enacted by the County Council in response to the State legislation of 1966 and 1967 concerning County water and sewerage systems.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Public water and sewer service has not consistently followed the sound planning principles envisioned in the 1964 General Plan. Undesirable development has occurred, a portion of which is due to the untimely provision of water and sewer service. It is imperative that plans and programs for water and sewer systems be developed which implement the principles of staging, financing, and construction.

⁵Phillip H. Lewis, Jr. Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Basin Studies, Appendix B - Esthetic and Cultural Values, U. S. Department of the Interior, 1958.

⁶Ibid.