

SCOPE

The Regionalism Goal focuses on the need for cooperation among the different governments, both within the County and around it, to address regional problems that are best solved collectively. There are current and future challenges associated with air quality, water quality, water and sewer service, transportation, land use, and other issues. The need for regional cooperation has long been recognized, but is often difficult to achieve. Nonetheless, the value of achieving a strong region cannot be underestimated. Montgomery County exists in a global marketplace where the emphasis is on regions rather than smaller jurisdictions. In the global marketplace, the first decision is to come to the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, the second is to come to Montgomery County. Strong regional cooperation is necessary not only to solve regional issues more efficiently and effectively but to be more competitive in the global marketplace.

Montgomery County is part of many regions that are defined according to the issues. One of the regions that changes over time is the U.S. Census Bureau's Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). This region includes Washington, D.C. and the surrounding jurisdictions from which workers commute. The Baltimore and Washington MSAs are scheduled in 1993 to become a single Consolidated MSA (CMSA) with approximately 6.3 million residents, making it the fourth largest metropolitan area in the country behind New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Other regions are determined by natural features, such as the Potomac River Drainage Basin and the Chesapeake Bay Drainage Basin, while still others are defined by political choice, such as the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

the municipality and in the County for five years unless approved by the County Council. Five years, however, is a very short time when considering long-term land uses. A similar concern is the differences between the County's growth control mechanisms, most notably the Annual Growth Policy (AGP), and those of the municipalities. Annexation to circumvent AGP restrictions can result in inadequate public facilities within the municipality and in the County. Another concern is that there is little, if any, guidance from municipalities regarding their current view of maximum expansion limits.

CHANGES FROM THE 1969 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

The Regionalism Goal was not contained in the 1969 General Plan Update. The increased recognition that regional cooperation is essential to resolve some of the issues facing Montgomery County warrants the explicit inclusion of regionalism as a goal. During the public participation portion of the Refinement effort, it became clear that each of the distinct goals of the Refinement has regional aspects and that the concept could have been an objective within each goal. However, due to the wide-reaching application of the regionalism concept, it is included as a separate goal.

INTERRELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER GOALS

Land Use

The regional aspects of the Land Use Goal stem from the Wedges and Corridors concept for the entire region. The Wedges and Corridors concept identified Washington, D.C. as the center of employment and social activity. As housing, retail, and employment activities moved successively into the suburbs, Washington's share of regional housing and employment decreased. As a result, many residents in the region now live and work in Montgomery County or live in the County and work in other suburban

jurisdictions. While the regional pattern is no longer exclusively focused on downtown Washington, D.C., the Wedges and Corridors concept is still an effective tool to minimize the sprawl that would otherwise occur. The 1964 General Plan considered a sprawl pattern for the development of the County, but rejected it since past experience with sprawl demonstrates that a more compact and stable form of development is necessary." Sprawl, if looked at in the context of current development patterns, still holds many of the same disadvantages from a regional and local governance perspective. Just as the Wedges and Corridors concept guided the planning and development of the Metrorail system, overall land use patterns on a regional level need to be known to plan and provide needed infrastructure.

Housing

The Housing Goal focuses on maintaining existing housing and communities while encouraging the development of new communities. The desirability of the Washington region in general and Montgomery County in particular as a place to live has a large impact on the economics associated with buying or constructing housing in the County. The success of the regional economy has been a key ingredient in median housing prices that are among the highest in the nation. This success has also created an increased need for affordably priced housing for those who live and work in the region. Montgomery County has responded with a number of programs to increase the supply of affordable housing for County residents. The housing market, like the job market, is regional in nature. Homes in Montgomery County compete with homes in surrounding jurisdictions and throughout the greater Washington region. Further, many of the County residents' needs are served by regional facilities such as water and sewer service, Metrorail, and interstate highways.

Economic Activity

The regional linkages of the Economic Activity Goal are based in the regional nature of the economy. The County's

economy is in part a subset of the Washington area's economy as well as the national and international economies. Montgomery County offers advantages for some sectors of the economy, such as biotechnology, government contracting, and other office-based industries, while offering disadvantages for others, such as heavy manufacturing. Fostering the growth of existing Research and Development and high technology business includes associated manufacturing, assembly, warehousing, and distribution activities. The benefit is greater opportunity and higher paying jobs for various segments of the population. At the same time, the County's economy competes with other jurisdictions in the region for preferred businesses. This competition often serves as a primary obstacle in achieving solutions to regional problems. Few jurisdictions are willing to forego potential tax revenue to another jurisdiction.

Transportation

The transportation system is a regional one that includes the County's system. The planning, construction, operation, and maintenance of the transportation system requires coordination with municipal, county, state, regional, and federal transportation agencies to ensure the proper planning and operation of the whole system.

Environment

The region's environment is influenced by activity within the County. While some environmental impacts are local, most environmental conditions affect the region and require coordinated action throughout the region to resolve. Among these issues are air quality, water quality, water and sewer service, and solid waste. A number of interjurisdictional agreements and organizations have been established to address specific environmental problems. Recent legislation at the State and federal levels requires a new degree of cooperation among governments to address problems that are beyond the ability and authority of local governments to solve.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

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

OBJECTIVE 1

Develop mechanisms for effective and meaningful regional planning and implementation.

Strategies

- A. Support efforts to develop a regional economic development strategy to maintain a healthy economy and economically viable region.
- B. Work with adjacent and internal jurisdictions to plan concurrently and compatibly.
- C. Advocate the provision of regional facilities necessary to support locally planned development.
- D. Encourage the development of priorities in addressing regional problems.
- E. Attain and maintain regional standards for matters of regional significance.
- F. Encourage regional economic development marketing as opposed to interjurisdictional competition within the region.
- G. Use both proven and innovative techniques for the resolution of regional conflicts.

OBJECTIVE 2

Foster cooperation between the County and the municipalities and seek resolutions of common concerns.

Strategies

- A. Work with the County's municipalities to achieve consensus on regional issues and solutions.
- B. Work with the County's municipalities to develop agreement on maximum expansion limits and orderly growth decisions.
- C. Develop procedures to ensure long-term consistency.