

THE GENERAL PLAN 21 YEARS LATER FACT SHEET

WHAT IS ... ON WEDGES AND CORRIDORS?

Both the 1964 General Plan and the 1969 Updated General Plan have guided the general land use pattern and the transportation network in Montgomery County for more than two decades. The Plan's name, "... On Wedges and Corridors," comes from the land use pattern it recommends. The General Plan has shaped Montgomery County by channeling growth into transportation corridors and an urban and suburban ring around Washington, D.C. At the same time, it preserves wedges of green open space, farmland, and lower density residential uses.

Conceived in 1961, wedges and corridors was the growth pattern first proposed for the entire national capital area by the "Policies Plan for the Year 2000," a plan prepared by the National Capital Planning Commission and the National Capital Regional Planning Council (a forerunner of the Council of Governments). Montgomery County is the only jurisdiction in the Washington region that officially adopted the wedges and corridors concept to guide its development. The concept was originally based on six corridors of urban development, one of which is in Montgomery County, the I-270 Corridor. Another, the I-95 Corridor, straddles the Montgomery County-Prince George's County line. The corridors radiate out from the District, the region's employment center, like the spokes of a wheel and were to be separated by the wedges, land reserved for rural open space.

The I-270 corridor consists of several cities, including Rockville, Gaithersburg, and Germantown, linked with one another and with Washington by Metrorail. For the 21st Century, the 1964 plan recommended another corridor city, Clarksburg, along the I-270 Corridor. The later plan downsized the scale of this community to a town. Proposed cities for the I-95 Corridor included a new city, east of Fairland, and Laurel.

Served by transit, the corridor cities were to be located about four miles apart so they could grow large enough to support a real mixed use downtown with high-rise buildings, housing, offices, and a host of shopping and cultural amenities. A ring of residential communities consisting of a variety of housing types with their own local shopping, recreational and educational facilities were to surround the core.

The General Plan envisioned the wedges as green open space with low density housing needed to help shape the corridor cities, to provide recreational opportunities and a rural environment for farming, and to conserve and protect natural resources, such as the public water supply. Generally, stream valley parks and lower density housing have separated the wedges from the corridors.

In 1969, the Montgomery County Council reaffirmed the wedges and corridors concept by approving the updated General Plan and revising the 1964 Plan's goals and objectives.

WHY IS MONTGOMERY COUNTY REFINING THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE GENERAL PLAN?

Although the wedges and corridors concept is sound and has basically been followed, Montgomery County has changed in many ways during the past two decades as discussed earlier. Thus, it is an ideal time to look at the General Plan's goals and objectives as the County prepares for the 21st century. This Refinement is the culmination of 22 years of working with the General Plan, two recent Planning Department studies, a report from a government working group, and a series of citizens committees.

In 1988, three important reports were issued. The first was "Envisioning Our Future," the report of the Montgomery County Commission on the Future. It recommends solutions to current and