

The General Plan objective concerning the balance of jobs and housing addressed the issue on a County-wide basis. The Plan clearly did not expect each smaller geographical area to strive for such a balance.

The buildout ratio of jobs to housing may be overstating the number of jobs. On average, employment sites use a smaller proportion of their holding capacity than housing. Industrial and retail buildings are designed for the functional use of their occupants more than to maximize floor area ratio (FAR). Many commercial uses, such as shopping centers and gasoline filling stations, prefer one or two story buildings even where a higher FAR is allowed. Surface parking is often preferred because it is usually more convenient and is much less expensive. The combination of low structures, green area, surface parking, and setback requirements results in lower than maximum use of available FAR. A housing site is considered fully developed, on the other hand, if it contains a housing unit of greater assessed value than the value of the land on which it is located, regardless of the size of the unit, setbacks and other development factors.

V. FARMLAND AND RURAL OPEN SPACE

*** The General Plan's commitment to farmland preservation has been reinforced by subsequent land use policies and zoning actions.** Changes in zoning, especially the adoption of the Rural Density Transfer (RDT) Zone and the introduction of the Transferable Development Rights (TDR) Program, have done much to protect Montgomery County farmland from residential development. In 1981, approximately 90,000 acres were rezoned to the Rural Density Transfer Zone and designated as the Agricultural Reserve. These zoning efforts complement state and local programs to purchase easements for the purpose of farmland protection as well.

*** The loss of farmland has slowed appreciably since 1969.** From January 1981 to November

1991, there have been only 76 subdivisions approved (213 lots) in the RDT Zone. This compares to 750 lots approved in 1978 alone. The decrease illustrates the dramatic decrease in development activity in the Agricultural Reserve.

*** The number of farms increased from 654 to 669 between 1969 and 1991.** At the same time, the average size of a farm declined from 177 acres to 155 acres.

*** The County's commitment to farmland preservation was reaffirmed in 1988.** In 1988, the Montgomery County Council appointed a working group to evaluate the Agricultural and Rural Open Space Preservation Programs. After thorough examination, the work group reaffirmed the agricultural and rural open space programs in Montgomery County and in particular, the 1980 *Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space*.

*** Since 1981, land use and zoning strategies in the wedge have differentiated between agricultural and rural open space preservation and low density residential land use.** The Rural Density Transfer (RDT) Zone, the Rural Zone and the Rural Cluster (RC) Zone now distinguish the Agricultural Wedge from the Residential Wedge. The acreage in each zone is as follows: RDT - 90,000 acres, the Rural Zone - 4,000 acres, and Rural Cluster - 21,000 acres. The Residential Wedge with its one- and two-acre zoning is discussed in Section II.

*** Almost 32,000 acres of farmland are protected by State and County easements.** The protected land includes over 26,000 acres in easements through the County's TDR program, over 2,000 in the County's Agricultural Easement Purchase Program, almost 2,000 in the Maryland Environmental Trust, and another 1,700 acres in the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation program.

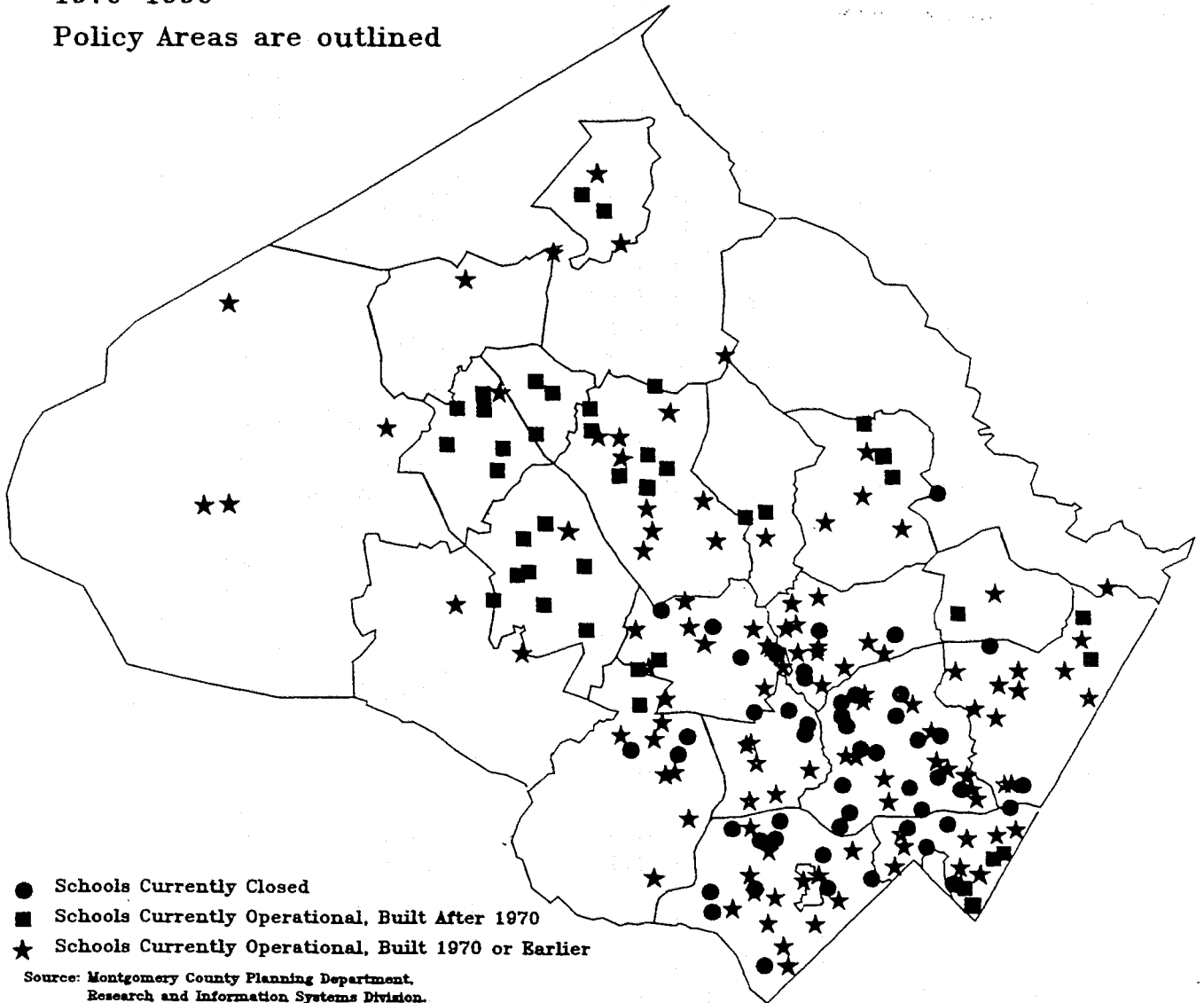
*** Over 2,000 acres of open space are preserved by private conservation groups.** Maryland Environmental Trust easements in the

Montgomery County

Public Schools

1970-1990

Policy Areas are outlined



Sugarloaf Mountain area account for the majority of this land. The Trust has land in other parts of the County as well. The Izaak Walton League and the Audubon Naturalist Society also have open space in the County.

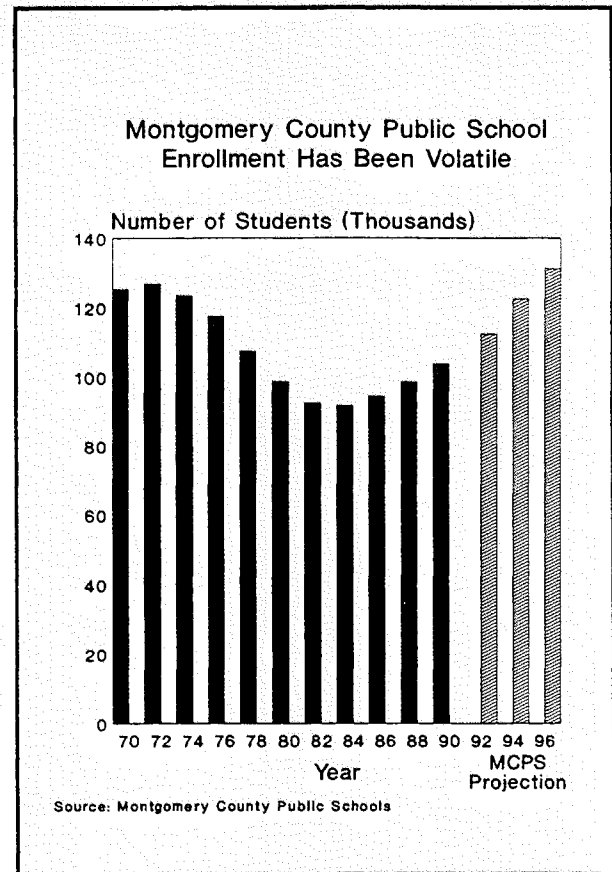
* The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) has over 3,000 acres of undeveloped land in Montgomery County. While the primary purpose of this hilly, wooded land is to protect two adjoining lakes used for public water supply, the WSSC allows hunting, fishing, boating, horseback riding and picnicking.

VI. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

A. Public Schools

* School enrollment has been quite volatile over the past 20 years. In 1972, a record 127,000 school children enrolled in Montgomery County public schools. Eleven years later, in 1983, enrollment dropped to a 30-year low of 91,000. Since 1983, school enrollment has been growing steadily, to 107,000 in 1991 and is expected to reach a new record of 129,000 by 1996.

* Since 1970, Montgomery County has closed 63 schools, reopened 12 of these schools and built an additional 40 new schools. The number of operational schools has declined 10 percent between 1970 and 1990 to 168 schools, including 9 special needs facilities. However, there has been almost no loss of classrooms due to the modernization of older schools and the larger size of new schools. The County has adapted closed schools for a variety of uses, including senior citizen centers, government offices, recreation centers, and day care or eldercare centers. Some space has been leased to non-profit organizations and private and parochial schools. Montgomery County Public Schools' capital expenditures totaled \$635 million between 1970 and 1990. Over 50 percent of total capital expenditures for the past 20 years has been spent since 1987, during which time 17 new schools were built and school closings ceased.



* The distribution of schools across Montgomery County has shifted reflecting changes in population distribution. New subdivisions within the I-270 corridor have created increased demand for new schools up-County. At the same time, demand has decreased for schools in older neighborhoods in the urban/suburban ring as children grow up and their parents remain in their homes rather than selling to young families. Approximately 60 percent of all new schools have been built in the I-270 corridor areas of Gaithersburg and Germantown. Similarly, closed school facilities are located almost entirely within the urban/suburban ring, with the greatest number of school closings in the Bethesda and the Kensington/Wheaton areas.

* Since 1970, Montgomery College enrollment has soared 350 percent to about 22,400 in 1990 and total college land holdings have grown by 200 percent. The college operated two campuses in 1970, a 13-acre site in Takoma Park and an 82-acre site in Rockville. In 1978, Montgomery