

public rights-of-way. In the down-county area known as the Suburban District, however, tree loss is outpacing tree replanting by an estimated ratio of three-to-one.

*** Maryland's Forest Conservation Act, passed in 1991, allows the Planning Board to require tree retention and replanting as a condition during the development review process. The County's program, mandated by this state legislation, will require an inventory of trees on properties proposed for development. For each acre of trees cleared, one-quarter acre must be replaced, up to a prescribed limit, after which the rate of tree replacement will increase to 2 acres for each acre cleared. Under some circumstances, replanting will be allowed away from the development site. The state will establish a Forest Conservation Fund, which will be funded from penalties levied upon anyone found not in compliance with the law. Other strategies include "fees in lieu of" when areas cannot be found to plant trees on site and the enlargement of existing forest areas that would function as tree "receiving areas."**

10. PARKS

Montgomery County's extensive park system combines conservation areas with areas primarily intended for recreation. The parks' ability to restore and conserve nature depends on how the parks are used, and on the air and water that flow to them from beyond their boundaries. The County will continue to be challenged to balance the need for conservation and recreation areas in the County's parks.

*** About 70 square miles of the County's total area of 495 square miles are devoted to parkland and open space. Sixty percent of this parkland is owned by the County, and is spread over 320 parks, ranging in size from the 3,500-acre Little Bennett Regional Park in Clarksburg to the 1/10-acre Philadelphia Park in downtown Silver Spring. A primary purpose of over half of the parkland in the County is to protect stream valleys and watersheds from urban run-off, flood-**

ing, sedimentation, and erosion, and to maintain a habitat for wildlife in areas of limited or no disturbance. In addition to these environmental resource functions, the park system provides recreational opportunities for County residents.

*** Park acquisition began in the 1930's, and peaked in the 1960's. Early parkland purchases, made possible by the passage of the Capper-Crampton Act of 1930, focused on stream valley acquisition in the urban ring along Sligo Creek, Rock Creek, and Cabin John Creek. Between 1940 and 1960, Montgomery County's population increased 300 percent, and the County responded by quadrupling the amount of its parkland and open space holdings, which reached a total of 16,000 acres by 1970. About 11,300 acres have been added since 1970.**

11. AIR QUALITY

As scientific understanding of the threat posed to the environment and public health by airborne pollutants has increased, so have calls for cleaner air. The most significant federal response to date is the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. As a result of this legislation, Montgomery County will participate in a region-wide effort to plan for and attain ambitious goals for improving air quality. Regional transportation planning will be one of the functions of government most affected by the legislation.

*** For almost every year since 1970, regional levels of ozone and carbon monoxide have exceeded federal air quality standards set by the 1970 Clean Air Act. The Washington, D.C. region is one of 16 areas nationwide categorized as "serious non-attainment" areas for ozone. Ozone forms part of a family of chemicals that contribute to what is generally referred to as smog. Ozone levels exceed the 0.12 parts per million (ppm) standard by 15 to 33 percent, typically on hot, muggy summer days. The region is also a "moderate non-attainment" area for carbon monoxide (CO), although levels have decreased since 1973.**