

noise barriers have been constructed along interstate highways in the County.

Federal regulations prohibit local jurisdictions from controlling motor vehicle noise at the source. Land use planning, which designates land uses that are less affected by noise is used to reduce the cumulative impacts of vehicle noise on people. Since 1980 transportation noise has been considered in making land use decisions in master plans and during the review of development plans.

* Noise impacts from other transportation noise sources such as the Montgomery County Airpark, rotorcraft operations and Metrorail have been partially reduced in some areas by the implementation of noise mitigation measures and noise compatible land uses in affected areas.

* Development review guidelines have been developed for maximum noise levels around the County. The levels range from 65 decibels Ldn (the level of normal speech) in urbanized areas to 45 decibels Ldn in less developed areas. Ldn is the Day-Night sound level that represents the average sound level for a 24-hour period with a 10 dBA weighting for nighttime noise to account for increased sensitivity at night. The guidelines are used to determine which newly developing areas might need noise mitigation. One proven mitigation technique is to locate one row of buildings so that it acts as a noise barrier for the rest of the subdivision. In addition, the Department of Environmental Protection enforces a noise ordinance to regulate noise generated on private property.

15. SOLID WASTE

Montgomery County handles and regulates the collection and disposal of solid waste. As do many other jurisdictions, this County generates more trash than can be handled in its landfills. The alternatives to landfills are also problematic. Simply throwing away less ("source reduction") conflicts with a lifestyle predicated upon conven-

ience. Current economic realities and policies favor the use of products made from raw material over recycled material. Incineration has met with stiff local opposition based on a variety of concerns such as environmental and community impacts, and cost. Recycling is increasingly being relied upon to reduce the quantity of solid waste that needs to be disposed.

* Over a ton of solid waste was generated for every man, woman, and child in Montgomery County in fiscal year 1991. The estimated 757,000 tons generated represents an average annual increase of 7.2 percent since 1985, when 528,000 tons were generated. This 1991 figure represents a decrease of 18,000 tons from the previous year and is attributed to decreased economic activity. The most recent waste stream projections for the year 2005 indicate that between 850,00 and 950,000 tons of trash will have to be managed each year. These forecasts are based on expected increases in population and commercial activity, as well as increases in the amount of waste each County resident and worker generates.

* The County is making progress towards achieving its 1995 goal to recycle 35 percent of its waste. In its second year of operation, between 14 and 17 percent of the waste stream was recycled through a County-wide program of curbside pick-up in low-to-moderate density residential areas, provision of drop-off centers, and recycling of waste by private firms. The County has set a recycling goal of 40 percent by the turn of the century. To help meet that goal, the County will require that all yard waste be recycled, and will expand the mandatory program to include apartment buildings and commercial areas.

* The County has invested in state-of-the-art facilities to convert waste into useful products. The Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), located at Shady Grove, separates, cleans, and packages 200 tons of commingled glass, aluminum, plastic, and bimetal containers and 280 tons of newspapers each day. At the Dickerson Com-

posting facility over 21,000 tons of wood waste, grass and leaves are received and recycled in 1991. One issue for future consideration is the degree to which the County will support recycling by making industrial land available for the construction of reprocessing facilities.

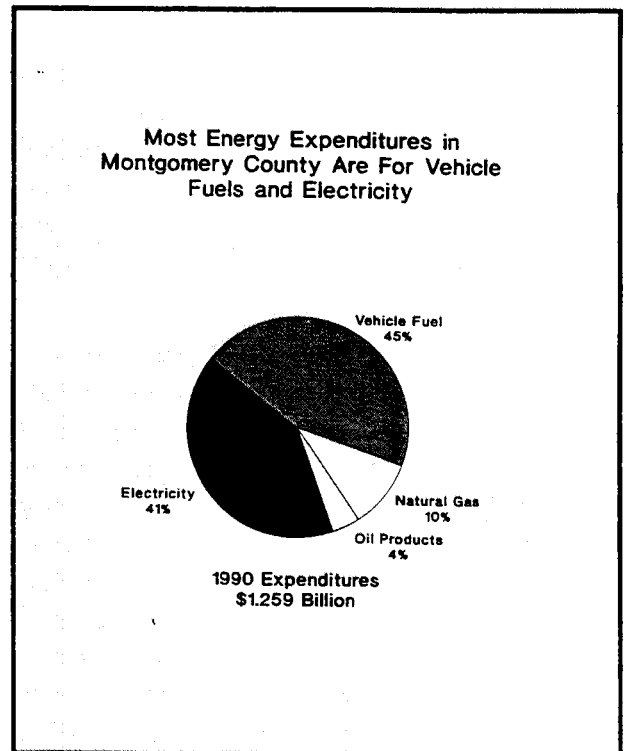
* The County's solid waste management plan calls for the construction of a Resource Recovery Facility (RRF), increased recycling, and construction of at least one new landfill. The RRF, a waste-to-electricity plant proposed for a site in Dickerson, is designed to burn up to 1,800 tons a day of waste, which, it is estimated, will account for 58 percent of the waste stream by 1995. The balance will be recycled or sent to one of the new landfills to be located either in Dickerson or Boyds. Critics of this proposal claim that the RRF will undermine recycling efforts and create environmental hazards, such as air pollution and toxic ash, in the County's wedge areas.

While the incinerator issue awaits resolution by an adjudicatory hearing, a 10-million-cubic-yard capacity expansion of the Oaks Landfill recently has begun and will extend the landfill's useful life another 7 to 10 years. One of the recurring controversies associated with solid waste disposal is the siting of new facilities due to concerns about environmental and community impacts.

16. ENERGY

County residents and businesses have come to expect inexpensive and reliable supplies of energy to sustain the standard of living and economic growth we benefit from. For the future, the County is looking to increased conservation and efficiency as one means of meeting energy demand that will rise with growth and development. There are several reasons for this strategy. First, there is no assurance that energy will remain cheap and abundant in the future. Second, most of the money spent on energy leaves the area, whereas conservation efforts might stimulate the local economy. Third, reducing energy demand through conservation will further efforts to improve regional air quality.

* Energy expenditures in Montgomery County increased about 182 percent between 1976 and 1990. Increases in the cost of energy, especially for electricity and vehicle fuels, account for much of this change. During this same period, energy consumption rose 45 percent. Based on 1990 data, roughly 45 percent of energy expenditures were spent on vehicle fuels, 41 percent on electricity, 10 percent on natural gas and 4 percent on oil products.



* The County plans to increase efficiency through a variety of means. The 1990 Montgomery County Energy Plan seeks to amend building codes, educational programs and renewable energy projects such as solar energy and co-generation that are supportive of energy conservation. It also seeks to encourage land use patterns that offer alternatives modes of transportation to the single-occupant auto and shorter trip lengths.

17. DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The planning process involves the balancing of a number of competing goals and objectives. When these competing interests are examined in the evaluation of an individual development pro-