

REGIONALISM FACT SHEET

I. INTRODUCTION

Regional aspects of planning and governance have been and will continue to be key challenges for Montgomery County's future. In 1961, when the original *...On Wedges and Corridors* General Plan was being prepared, President Kennedy addressed this issue in a message to Congress:

Bold programs in individual jurisdictions are no longer enough. Increasingly, community development must be a cooperative venture through the common goals of the metropolitan region as a whole.

At the kick-off symposium on the General Plan Refinement held in October 1991, an issue that seemed to be on a lot of people's minds was that many of the problems facing Montgomery County appear to be regional in nature. Regionalism was chosen as one of the new goals to add to the General Plan. This fact sheet explores the idea of regionalism as it relates to Montgomery County and this General Plan Refinement.

This fact sheet first introduces the concept of regionalism, then discusses Montgomery County's regional role. The final section examines issues that need regional approaches and past and present approaches to resolve those issues.

What do County residents mean when they think of a problem as being a regional problem? In many respects, we believe that it is a recognition that a particular concern facing a jurisdiction is greater than that jurisdiction's power to directly deal with. Most County residents have little interest in whether there is an entity that can address the concern or how such an entity should go about accomplishing that task. Yet, we also believe there seems to be an understanding and expectation by County residents that there should be a means for Montgomery County to participate in addressing such regional concerns. In any discussion of regionalism, there are various institutional and government issues on subjects such

as geographic coverage, roles, responsibilities, and authority. One dilemma of regionalism is that these subjects are of little interest to the average citizen, yet they are important to be mindful of due to legal and political concerns that can help or hinder the development and implementation of solutions to the issues and of the General Plan.

II. THE CONCEPT OF REGIONALISM

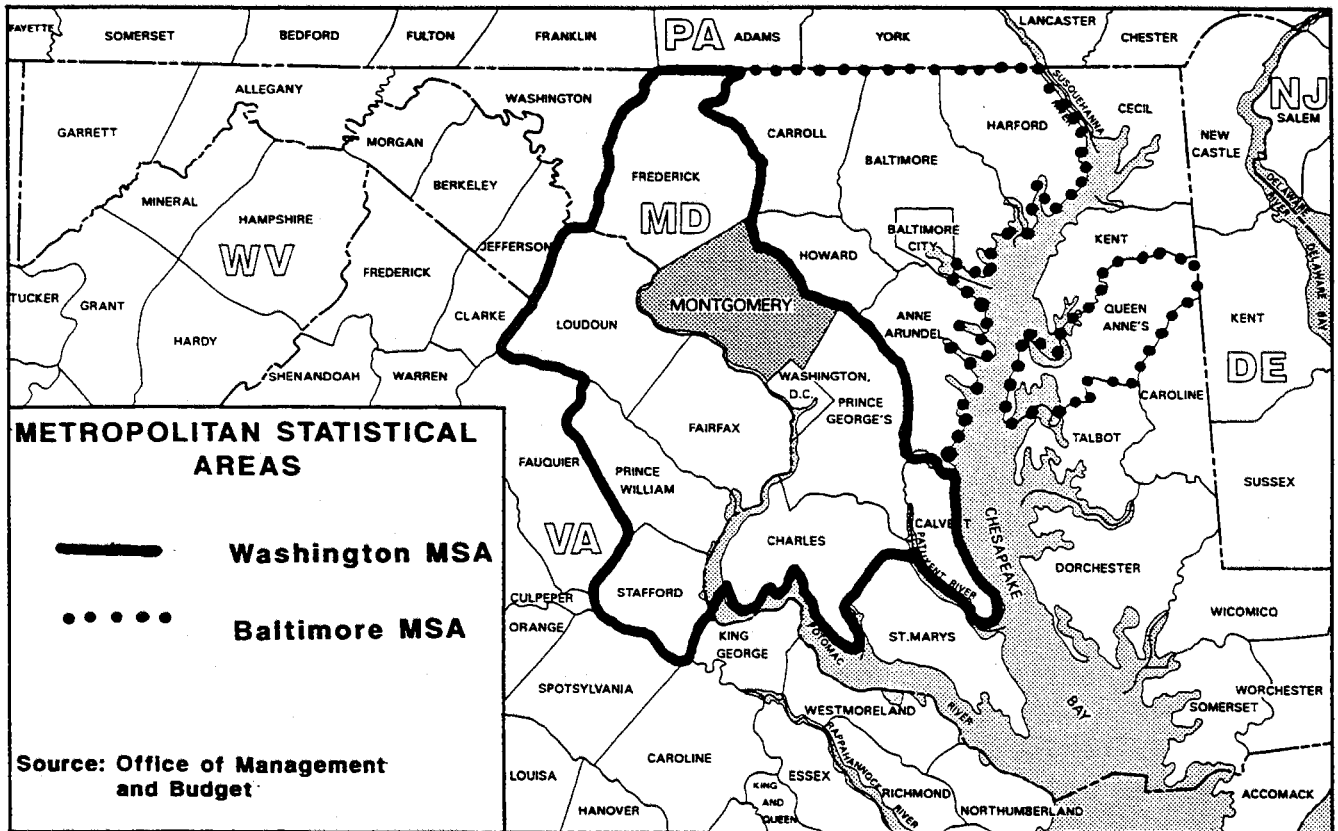
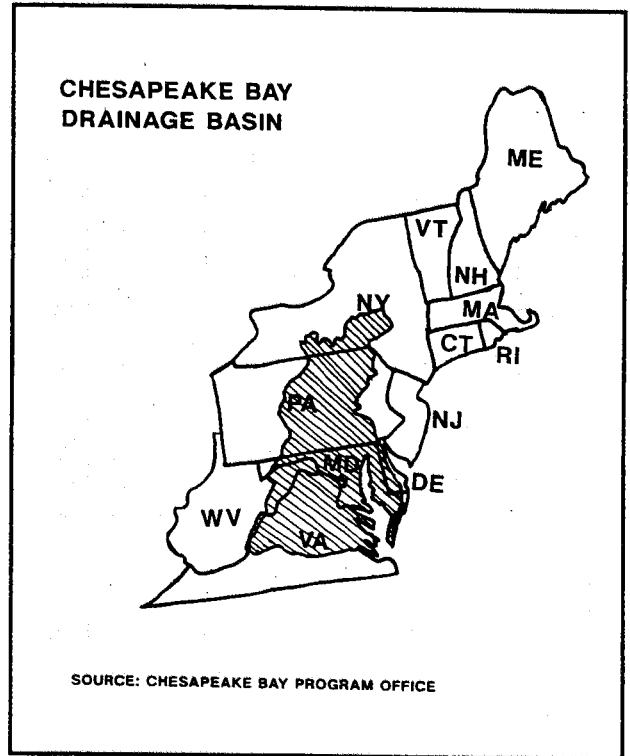
* **Montgomery County is part of many regions that change over time.** The geographic coverage of each region varies, based on its focus. In some cases, the boundaries of a region reflect political boundaries and in other cases, natural boundaries. The variety of regions and their overlapping boundaries affects regional cooperation. For example, there are different regions for statistical and environmental purposes. The U.S. Census Bureau defines the Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as the region comprised of Washington, D.C. and the surrounding counties from which workers commute. This type of region changes over time as workers live farther away from the central city. After the 1980 census, the Washington MSA was expanded to include Frederick, Charles, and Calvert Counties in Maryland and Stafford County in Virginia.

It appears that the metropolitan region, of which Montgomery County is a part, is about to be changed as a result of the 1990 Census which is expected to show that the Washington and Baltimore MSAs now overlap. It is expected that the two adjacent metropolitan areas will be consolidated into a Combined Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) later in 1992. The Washington-Baltimore CMSA, with about 6.3 million residents, will be the fourth largest metropolitan area in terms of population behind Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago.

Another type of region that includes Montgomery County is the Chesapeake Bay drainage

basin, which extends from North Carolina in the south to New York in the north, and from West Virginia in the west to Delaware in the east.

* Cooperation and coordination among governmental agencies and the private sector are central components of the regionalism concept. When a region is comprised of dozens of counties, many cities, several states, and the District of Columbia, coordination is essential, but difficult. The need for regional approaches to regional problems can conflict with the self determination of affected jurisdictions. Sometimes facilities in one jurisdiction serve neighboring jurisdictions. For example, reservoirs and water lines in Montgomery County serve Prince George's County, and sewer lines in Prince George's County connect Montgomery County to Blue Plains in Washington, D.C.

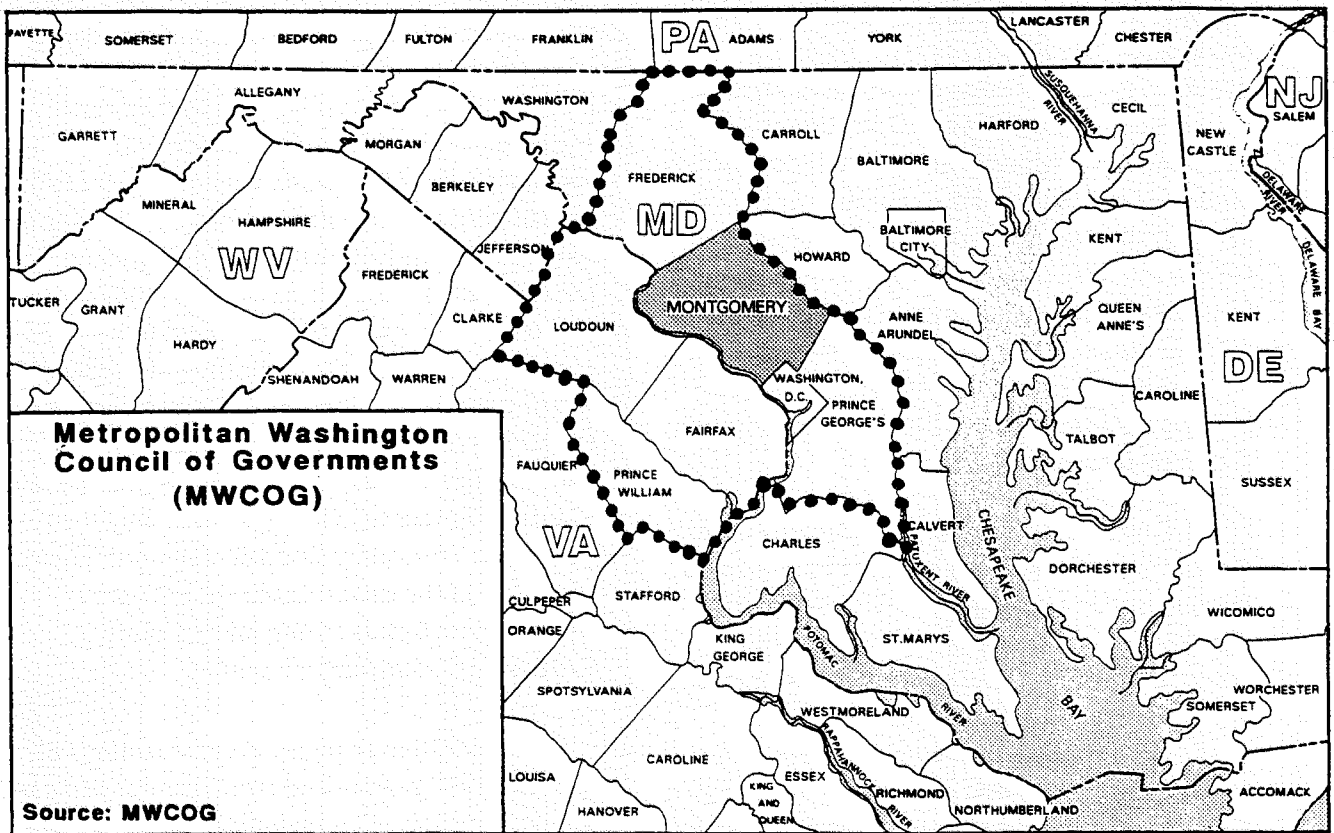


A number of regional agreements and agencies have been formed and are discussed in this fact sheet.

* **The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments provides one regional forum for debate and resolution of diverse issues.** The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) was formed in 1957. MWCOG addresses topics such as the environment, housing, public safety and regional planning, serves as a clearinghouse for information, and provides an administrative structure for regional purchasing by member governments.

and the planning agencies of the environs." The result of that cooperative effort was *A Policies Plan for the Year 2000*.

The MWCOG region now covers 17 local governments and includes Washington, D.C.; Montgomery, Frederick, and Prince George's Counties in Maryland; and Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William Counties in Virginia, along with individual municipalities in those counties. These jurisdictions, with the exception of Frederick, Loudoun, and Prince William Counties, made up the Washington MSA from the 1960 Census. The geographic coverage of



MWCOG was preceded by the National-Capital Region Planning Council, created by Congress in 1952 to "prepare a general plan for the development of the National Capital region and to promote collaboration and cooperation between the National Capital Planning Commission

COG is not the same as the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) from the 1980 census. Three counties within the SMA, Stafford, Charles, and Calvert, have chosen not to join MWCOG. The MWCOG is funded by an annual fee assessed to each member jurisdiction based upon its popula-

tion, and by various federal grants available to regional agencies. Presently, Montgomery County is represented on the MWCOG Board by a member of the County Council and by the County Executive.

*** The MWCOG provides a variety of information that is generally the result of cooperative effort by the member jurisdictions or special studies by MWCOG staff.** One example is the cooperative forecasting process which develops forecasts for housing, population, and employment growth in each jurisdiction in the region. These forecasts form the standard data set for regional planning analyses. Member jurisdictions and various state agencies, such as the Maryland Department of Transportation, also utilize these cooperative forecasts to prepare analyses for issues such as future traffic conditions, air quality, or sewage demands. Other cooperative efforts include various programs for the purchasing of supplies used regionally such as gasoline or road salt. MWCOG has a number of policy committees such as the Environmental Policy Committee that formulate recommendations and policy on many regional issues. There are also a number of task forces established from time to time for specific projects such as the recent Task Force on Growth and Transportation.

*** There are also a number of boards or regional committees which influence planning in the region that are associated with MWCOG.** Among these are the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) and the recently formed Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC). The TPB was formed in 1965 and coordinates transportation planning in the region in accordance with federal procedures. The TPB provides for coordination with state departments of transportation as well as independent transportation authorities such as Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and the Washington Metropolitan Airports Authority (WMAA).

As with other regional Boards and committees which coordinate with the States of Mary-

land and Virginia, the practice of regional cooperation gives the District of Columbia equal status with the two states.

*** Special purpose groups commonly address specific regional concerns rather than having one group deal with all concerns.** Examples include the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and the Washington Metropolitan Airports Authority and the Year 2020 Panel.

*** A tendency in Maryland is to have agencies of the state government take responsibility for activities that might otherwise be done by a regional group.** Geographically, Maryland is a relatively small state with many of its metropolitan-oriented activities centered on the City of Baltimore. The region of interest to many state agencies has also tended to coincide with the metropolitan area of Baltimore. Examples include the transit, port, and airport functions each having a separate administration within the Maryland Department of Transportation. This tendency has also reinforced approaches that tend to keep regional efforts within the authority of Maryland. A recent example includes the Governor declining the Metropolitan Washington Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) invitation for Charles and Calvert Counties to join the TPB, keeping them as part of the Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland. One of the issues associated with state-based regionalism is Montgomery County's location in the Washington region.

*** In addition to regional organizations of governments, private and social groups often organize themselves by regions, by issue or on a metropolitan-wide basis.** These include the Metropolitan Washington Board of Trade, the Boy/Girl Scouts, the Sierra Club and the Southern Maryland Builders Industry Association; and cultural institutions such as the Kennedy Center, sports teams, and charitable organizations, to name a few. These serve to provide regional identity for many individuals.