

THE URBAN PATTERN

Economy, convenience, and pleasant surroundings are the key concepts of the General Plan. Economy arises from the compact form of urban development, easily reached by public services. Most important of these services is transportation, and this is reflected in the radial corridor shape of the urban pattern. This pattern is a simple and direct one with a major focus in downtown Washington. By concentrating most of the new urban development along transportation corridors convenience is maximized. But even though the largest number of people will want to travel along the major corridors, travel between corridors cannot be ignored. Two circumferential freeways and numerous lesser highways tie the whole Regional District together, affording adequate access to all parts of the urban pattern.

Careful study of the existing land use map shows that present development already recognizes the simplicity, convenience, and workability of the radial corridor pattern. By accepting this existing tendency toward radial development and by reinforcing it with public policy, the General Plan takes full advantage of natural forces working toward economy and convenience.

The radial corridor pattern also has inherent advantages which help to establish pleasant surroundings for everyday living. By stretching out along the radial transportation corridors the urban pattern takes on a star shape with rural open spaces

“Men come together in cities in order to live; they remain together in order to live the good life.”

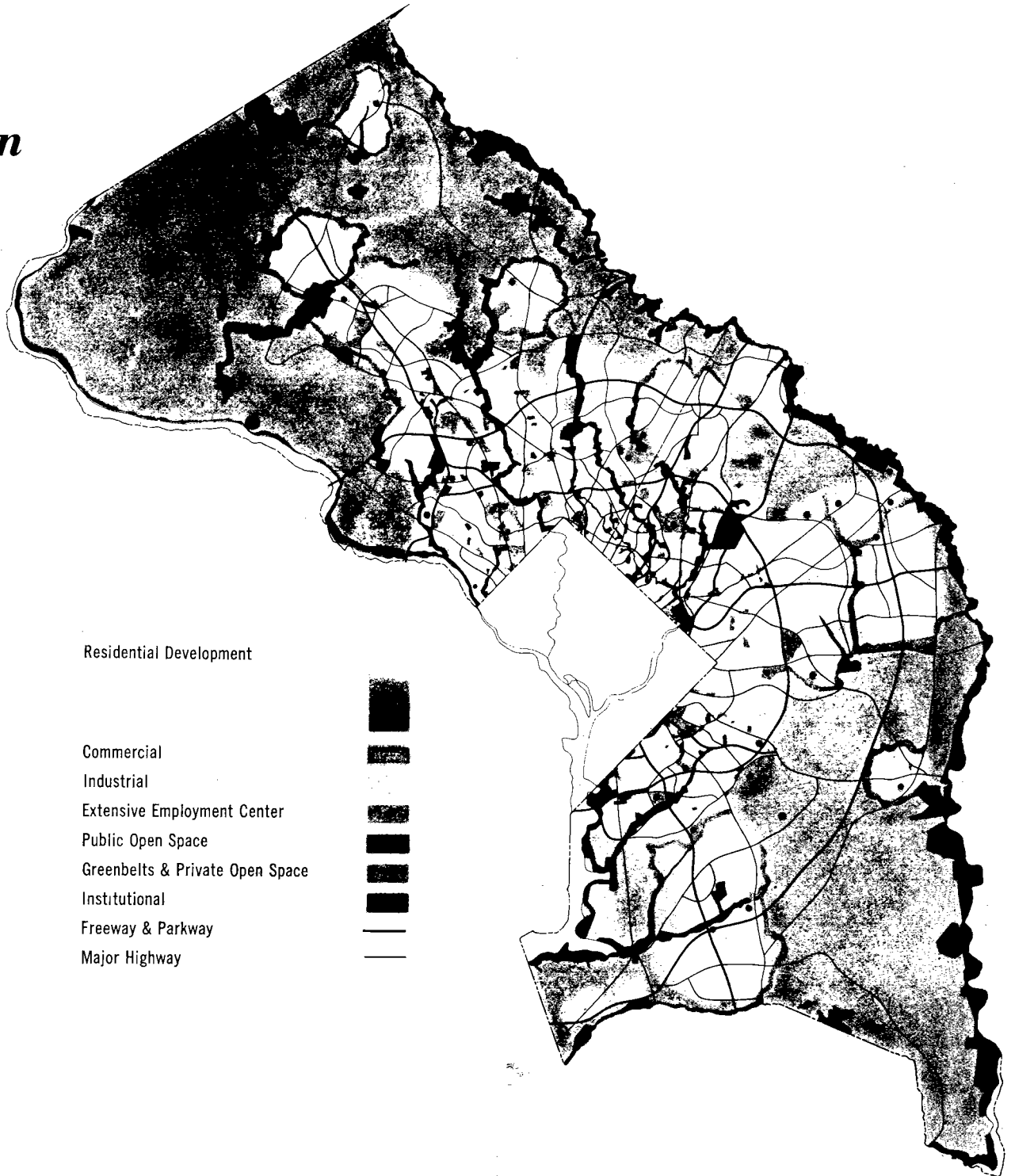
Aristotle

alternating between the points and surrounding the corridor cities. Major rapid transit station locations supply a focus for the core of each of the corridor cities, giving them identities of their own. The brand new corridor cities offer the opportunity to start fresh far enough from the already urbanized area to be unaffected by pre-set urban patterns. Corridor cities in now-rural areas can be planned for pleasant living much better than if development were to occur in a scattered, haphazard, and uncertain pattern. Planning for “pieced-on” development at the edges of already urbanized areas, and running to catch up with unexpected trends of growth, are not satisfactory ways of providing pleasant living conditions compared to starting fresh in a complete, new, comprehensively conceived corridor city.

The centers of new corridor cities are spaced about four miles apart so that they can grow large enough to support a full variety of commercial, cultural, and social services, and still not crowd too tightly against the next city. This spacing will allow convenient rapid transit service with stops about two miles apart at the centers and edges of each corridor city.

The two-mile spacing of stops assures a large enough service area to make each stop worthwhile, yet will not reduce the transit to a slow start-and-stop operation which will exhaust the patience of commuters. Rapid transit, after all, must remain rapid.

generalized land use plan



Residential Development

Commercial

Industrial

Extensive Employment Center

Public Open Space

Greenbelts & Private Open Space

Institutional

Freeway & Parkway

Major Highway



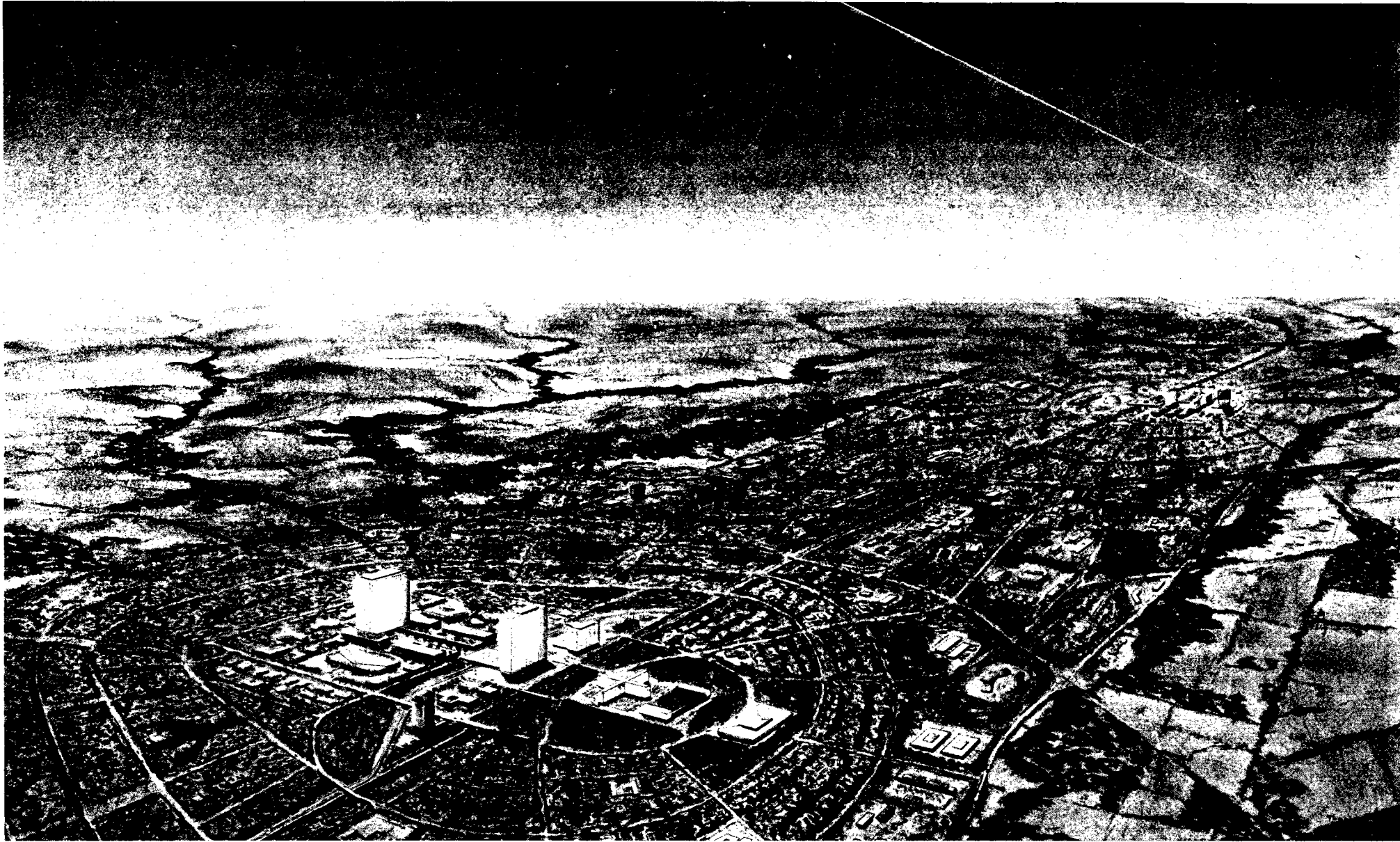
Of the four Maryland corridors the northwest corridor in Montgomery County is the largest and most complex. It will have two rapid transit routes in its broad urbanized base and two new corridor cities beyond Rockville, one at Gaithersburg and the other near Germantown. Considerable room for expansion northward into still another corridor city will be available in the Clarksburg area even after the Year 2000. Interstate Highway 70-S is this corridor's major limited access freeway. Natural corridor development is most pronounced in this corridor. Headquarters sites for the National Bureau of Standards and the Atomic Energy Commission have been chosen along the highway and numerous industrial firms, including I.B.M., Emerson Electronics and Fairchild-Stratos have followed suit.

Progressing clockwise, the next corridor centers around Interstate Highway 95, sometimes known as the third route to Baltimore. Urban development along this rather short corridor will straddle the Montgomery-Prince George's county line. Urbanization has already taken place as far out as the Naval

Ordnance Laboratory, but the fact that sewer service beyond this point is only now becoming available has saved a good site for a new corridor city east of Fairland. A second corridor city will develop around the town of Laurel.

The third urban corridor is rapidly developing along John Hanson Highway (Route 50) toward Annapolis. The Belair portion of the City of Bowie will form the nucleus of a major city beyond the Capital Beltway.

The fourth corridor in the Regional District centers around a newly proposed freeway and rapid transit route southeast of Washington, eventually providing a new Bay crossing and route to the beaches. Development which has hardly begun in this corridor will take place generally between Indianhead Highway and Branch Avenue, with new city centers near Henson Creek, Clinton, and Brandywine. The recently opened Woodrow Wilson Bridge at Jones Point is spurring development in this corridor.



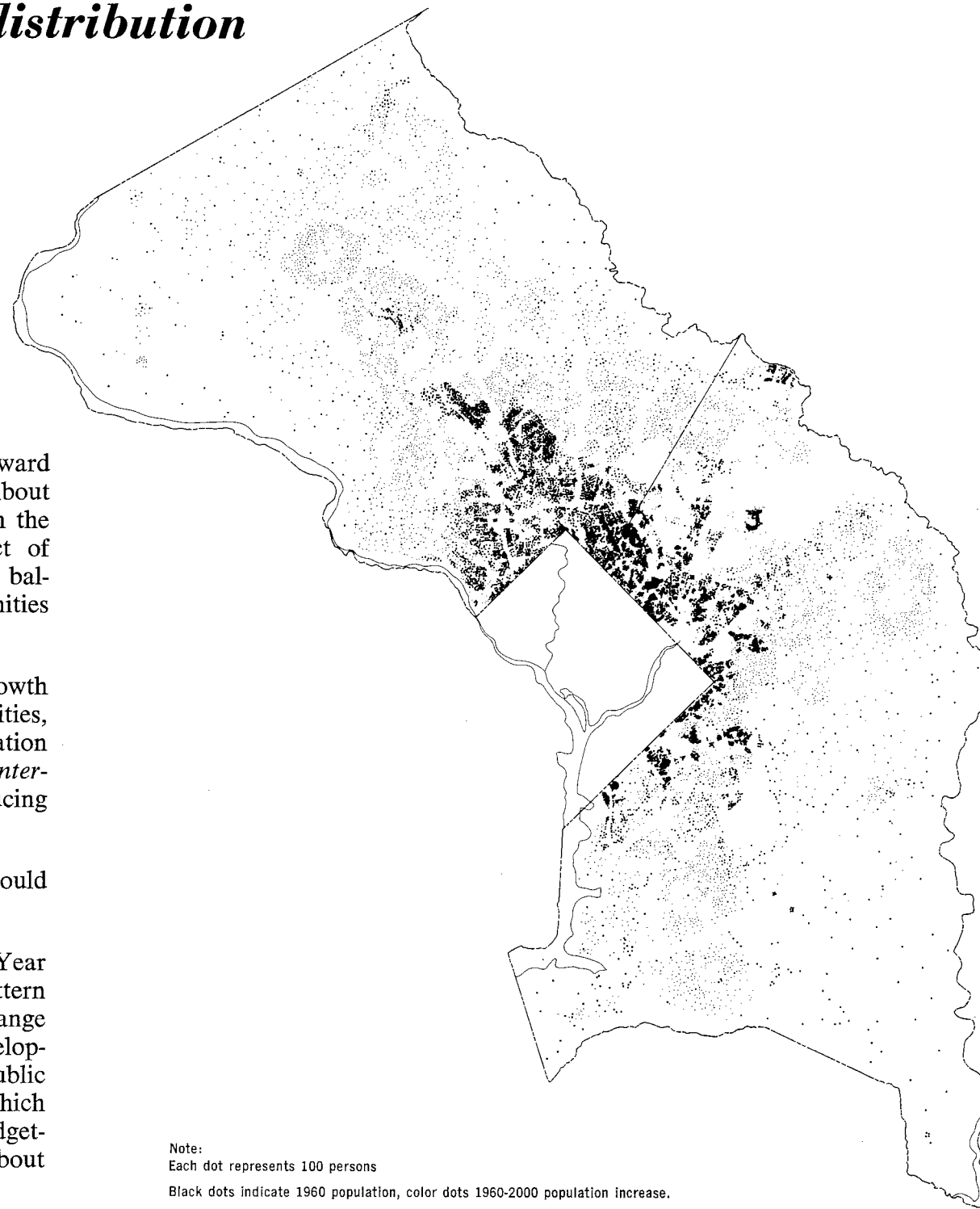
population distribution

Of course all population growth from this date forward will not be expected to take place in the corridor cities. About 63% of the growth in the next 20 years will take place in the ring of already urbanized land surrounding the District of Columbia, and 24% will occur in the corridor cities. The balance of population will be distributed in satellite communities and at scattered locations in the rural areas.

In the period between 1980 and the Year 2000, new growth is located to a much greater extent in the new corridor cities, some of which begin to approach their maximum population ranges of 75,000 to 125,000. (*The Baltimore-Washington Inter-regional Study* establishes this as an optimum size for reducing local travel needs.)

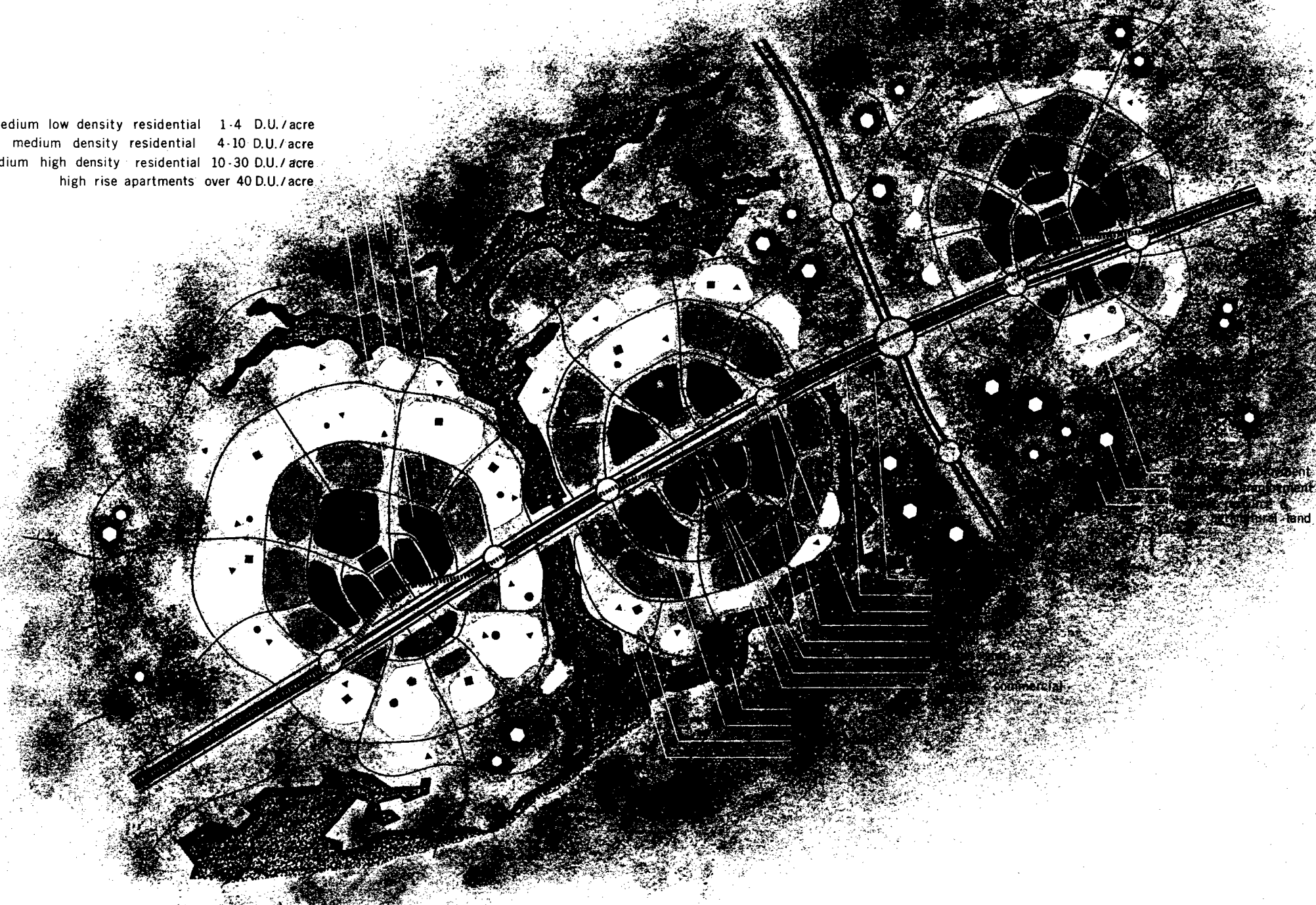
The growth of employment centers under this plan would closely parallel the growth of population.

The corridors will not develop overnight. Even by the Year 2000 all the space provided in the recommended urban pattern will not be used to its fullest capacity. This is a very long-range plan and if it is not carefully administered premature development could take place, resulting in undue burdens on public service systems. Orderly community development upon which pleasant living conditions are based, and orderly public budgeting upon which equitable taxation is based, will come about only if the plan is carefully implemented in stages.

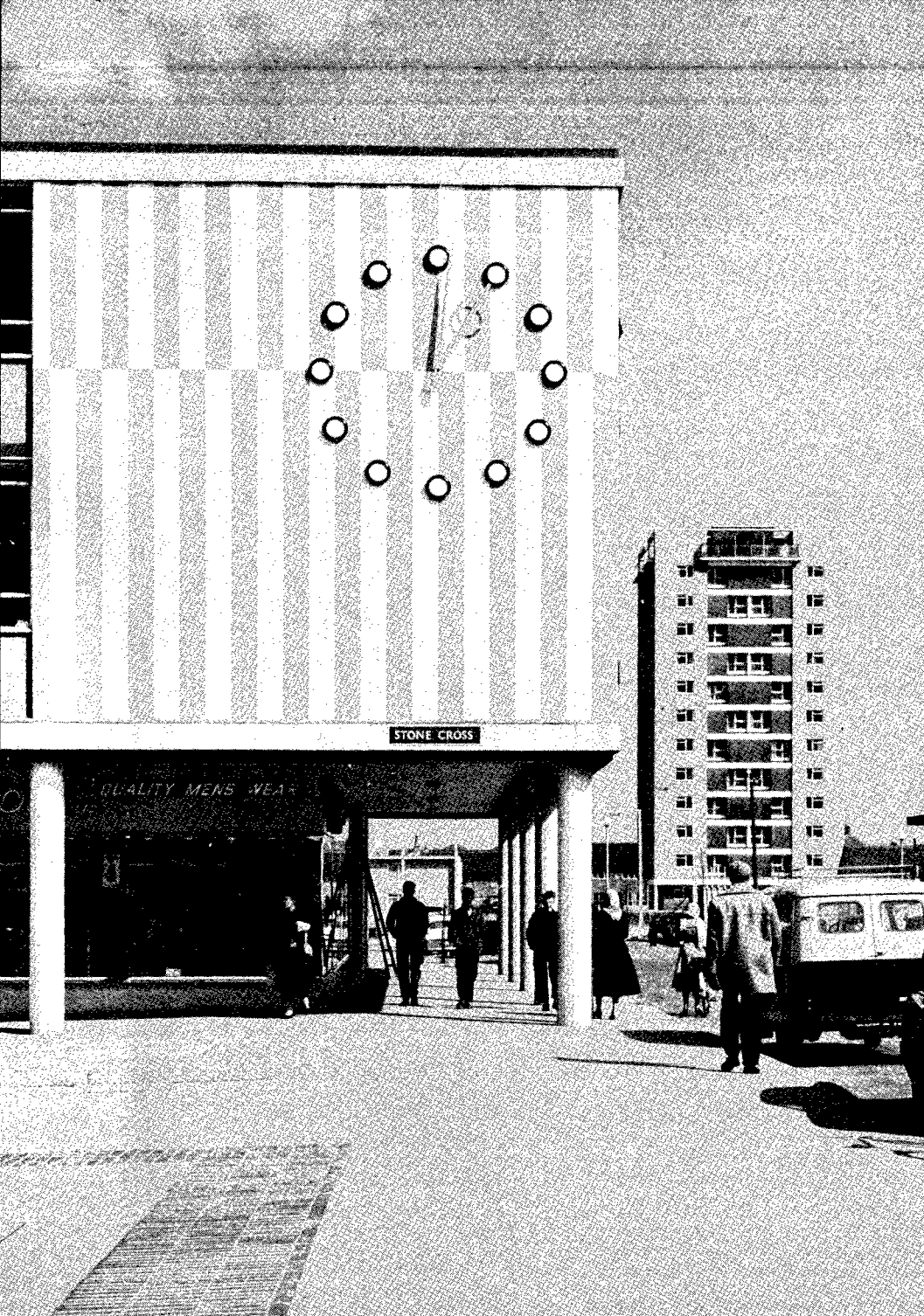


Note:
Each dot represents 100 persons
Black dots indicate 1960 population, color dots 1960-2000 population increase.

medium low density residential 1-4 D.U./acre
medium density residential 4-10 D.U./acre
medium high density residential 10-30 D.U./acre
high rise apartments over 40 D.U./acre



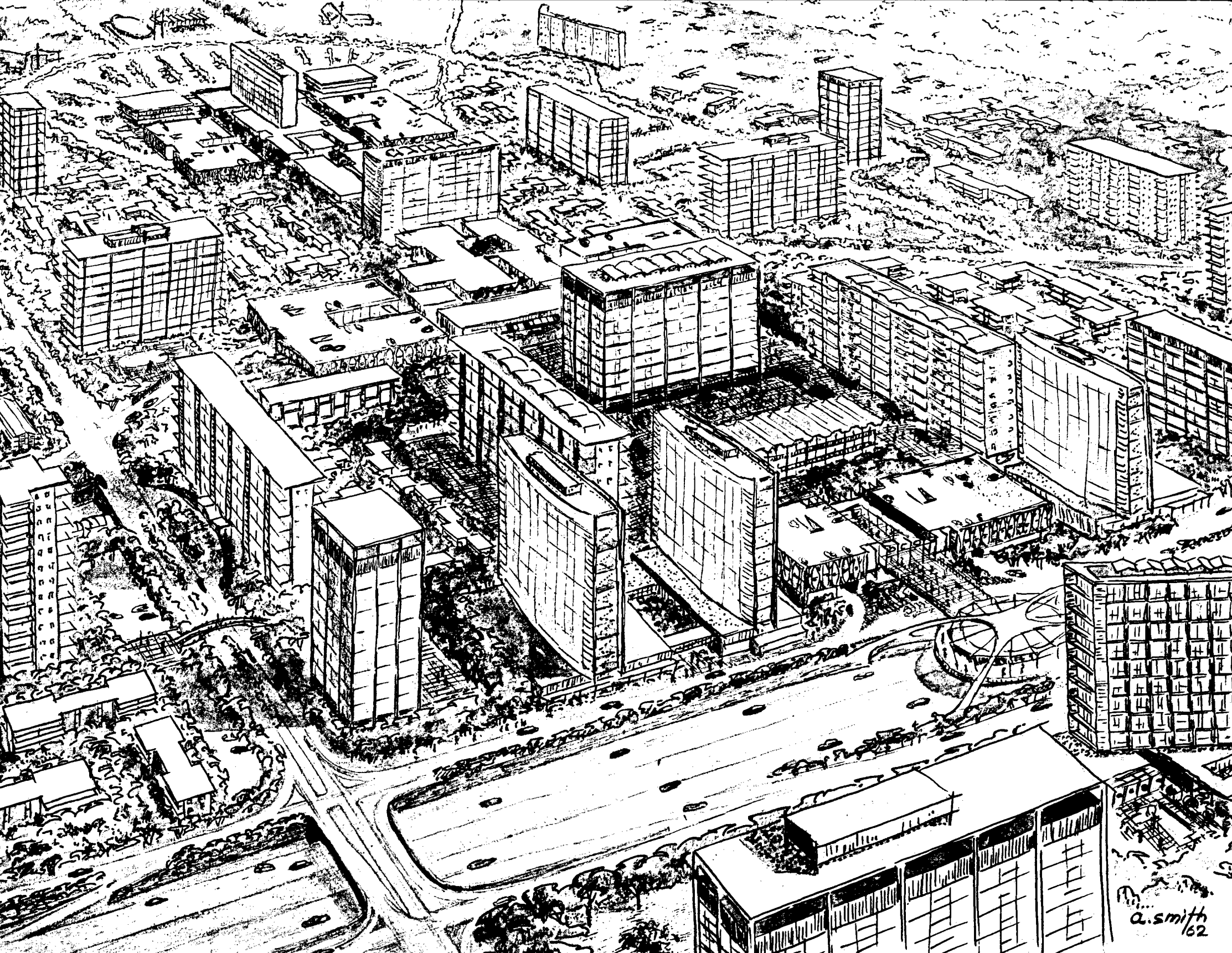
commercial
residential
industrial



Population densities of the corridor cities will gradually taper off from apartments in and near the core to half-acre and one-acre homesites at the outer edge. At the edge, also, will be found spacious regional parks for extensive outdoor recreation. Still another facility to be found at the edge of corridor cities is the industrial park with its campus-like atmosphere. Large automobile parking lots will be provided around "park and ride" rapid transit stations, also at the edge between corridor cities.

Great care will have to be taken so that these similar features of the corridor cities will not create a "stamped-out-of-the-same-mold" effect. Using natural drainageways instead of piped-in storm drains will give individual character to communities. Encouraging not only architectural harmony but also architectural variety can be most rewarding. Greater emphasis will be placed on flexible regulations such as cluster subdivisions and density control zoning to encourage relief from the monotony of standard rows of dwellings.

Cluster design will require more care in planning, with greater attention paid to natural features of the landscape, but the extra effort will be worth it. With imaginative design it will often be possible to put the same number of houses on a piece of land by pleasantly situating them in relation to a natural hill, a striking view, or a nice stand of trees as by simply lining them up in the wake of a bulldozer. Good planning is a small cost, well worthwhile in the increasingly competitive housing market of today. Values are higher and sales are easier in pleasant communities possessing individuality in landscaping, subdivision design, and architecture.



a. smith
162



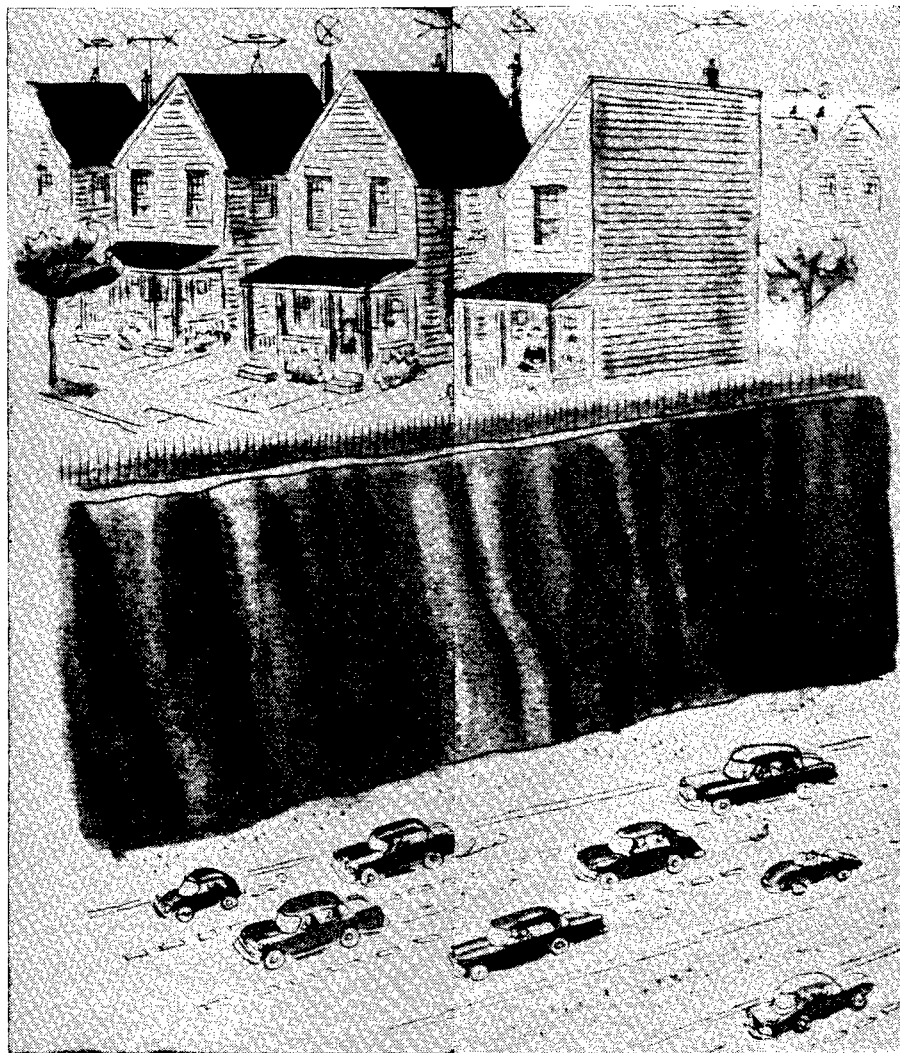
THE URBAN RING

Ringling the District of Columbia and forming a base for each of the four urban corridors is the more or less solidly built up group of communities where most of us now live. This urban ring has many advantages such as quiet residential neighborhoods, widespread home ownership, and convenient new shopping centers.

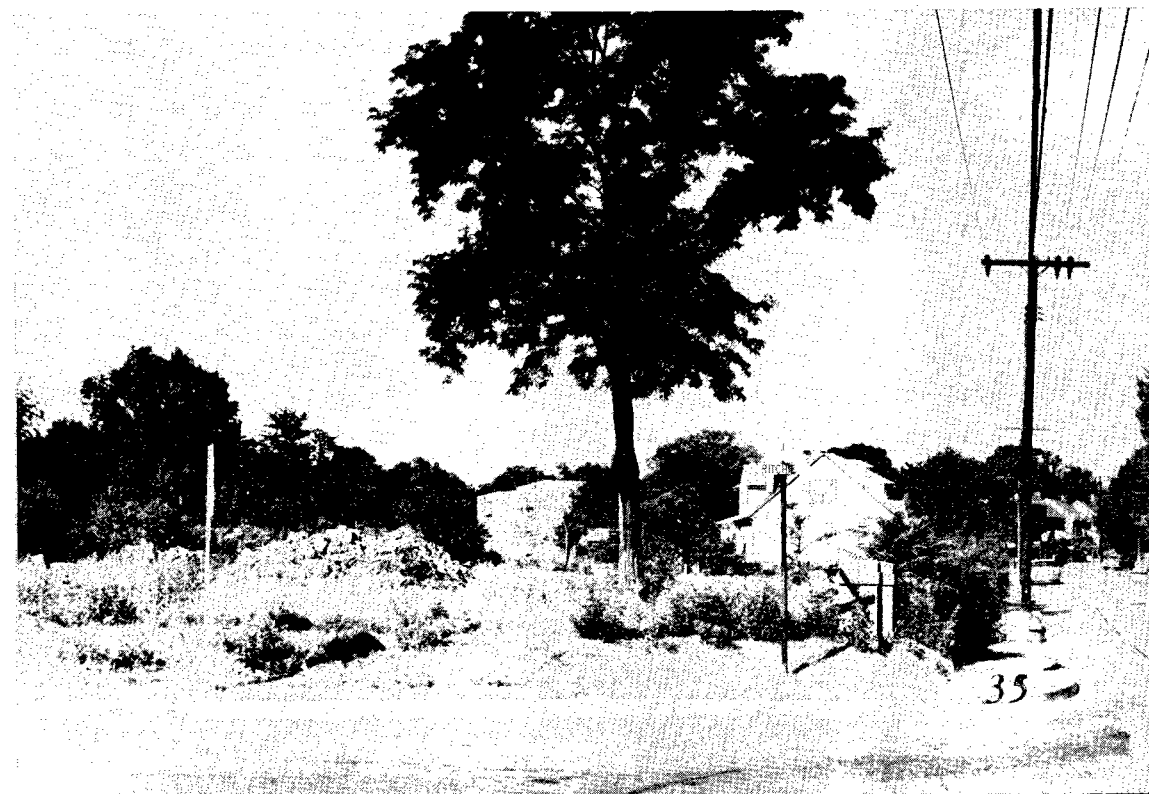
But the urban ring also has its problems. Every time another new subdivision is tacked on a little farther out from what used to be the edge of things, the traffic through the older suburbs gets a little heavier. The new subdivision may be quiet and uncluttered by alien traffic, but the older ones must pay the price. Streets must be widened and by-passes built; an open

field near a newly-important intersection becomes a gas station; old estates along transportation routes become shopping centers or apartment sites. Proper transitions between these new uses and the well established single-family homes surrounding them are often hard to establish, and the neighborhoods along the heavily travelled roads deteriorate. From this beginning, the trend is toward strip zoning. Resulting traffic problems resemble "hardening of the arteries." In recognition of the increased population, long established commercial centers expand into nearby residential neighborhoods, causing more transitional problems. The end result is a disease known as urban blight. This disease is contagious and is almost sure to spread where preventive measures are not taken.

"They were such nice neighbors. We were sorry to see them go."



Drawing by Robt. Day; © 1961 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.



To overcome these problems, many of the refinements described in connection with the new corridor cities can be gradually worked into the communities of the urban ring. Rapid transit and a few high-speed freeways will have to be painfully pushed through the ring, but once done this will keep through-traffic off the local streets and out of the quiet residential neighborhoods. Constant road-widenings will cease and stability will be returned to the close-in communities. Access to downtown Washington from the urban ring as well as from the new corridor cities will be greatly facilitated, but the major advantage to residents of the ring will come in the form of greatly reduced disruption to their established communities. This advantage cannot be had by freeway expansion alone. One track of rail rapid transit is equal in passenger capacity to 8 or 10 lanes of limited access freeway. Without rapid transit, the amount of land required for highways in the urban ring when Metropolitan Washington reaches a population of 5 million would be unbelievably great.

The high density cores recommended for new corridor cities are not feasible in the urban ring, where community design has already been determined. While the proposed transit lines are located in the most populous parts of the urban ring for convenience, pedestrian access to and from transit stations in the ring will not be so heavily relied upon. Greater emphasis will be placed on "park and ride" stations resembling the fringe parking areas now in use on some bus routes. The highway and transit systems will need to be conveniently tied together to compliment each other.

Like the highway and transit rights-of-way themselves, the required stations and parking lots will take space in the urban ring. Urban renewal may be necessary in some cases to make this space available, and to make the appropriate adjustments in the surrounding community.







RENEWAL IN THE URBAN RING

Urban renewal in the ring communities will be useful in other respects than in making room for transportation systems. Older communities tend to deteriorate in their more vulnerable spots unless something is done to bolster them up. Evidences of blight are already visible here and there in the urban ring.

Until 1954 when the term “renewal” replaced it, “redevelopment” meant the complete clearing and rebuilding of an area. But today, renewal includes the rehabilitation and conservation of urban areas as well as clearance and rebuilding. It is a comprehensive program to halt deterioration of urban communities and stimulate them into renewed and healthy growth.

With the use of urban renewal, planning and zoning mistakes can be rectified, nonconforming uses which existed prior to zoning can be removed; older buildings can be restored before they mar the neighborhood too much; newer buildings can be kept in almost new condition; and most important of all—the missing amenities, including small open spaces, can be added to communities in need of them.



FUTURE GROWTH IN THE URBAN RING

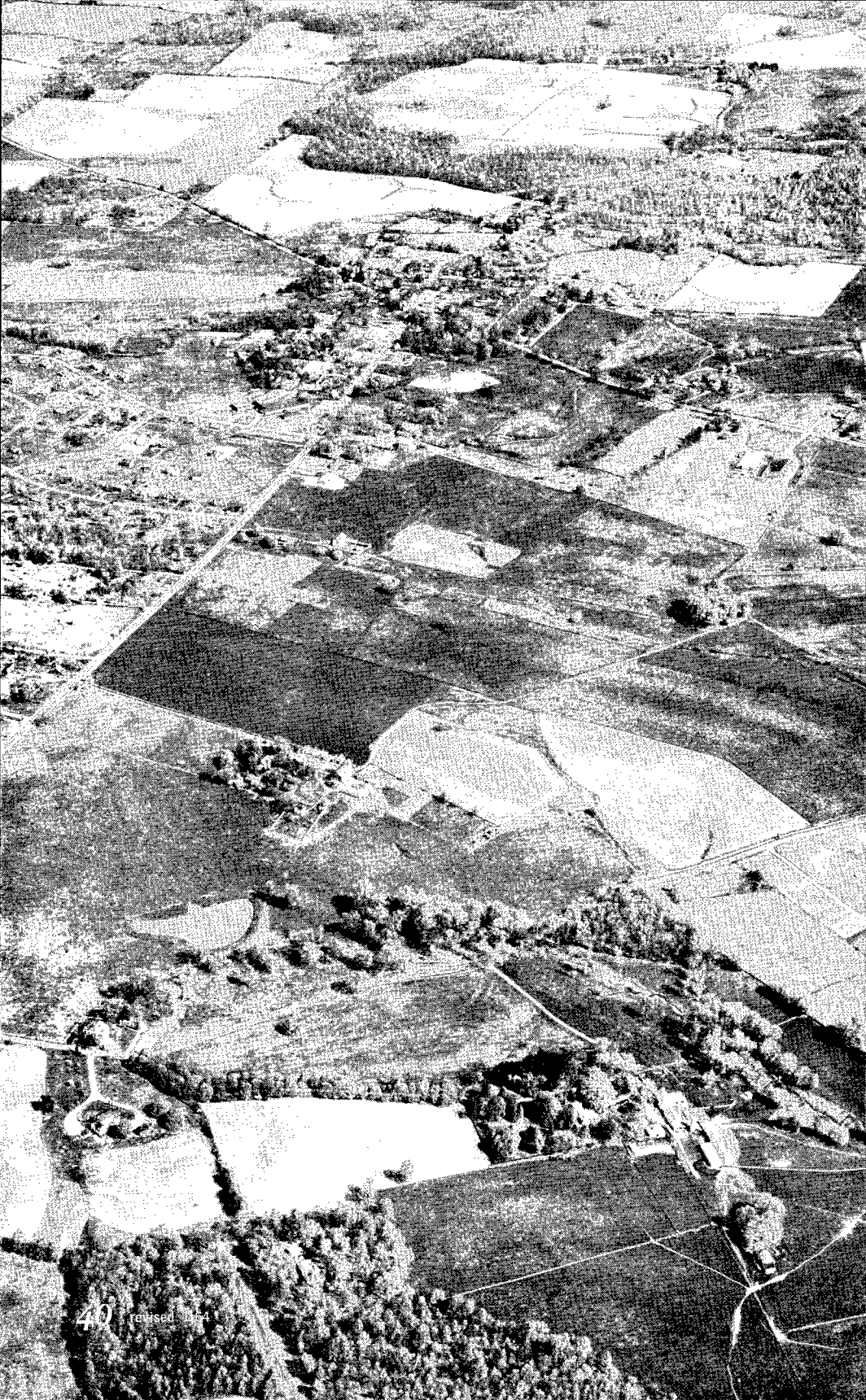
Although the urban ring is substantially developed, it has by no means reached its ultimate population. As many as 460,000 more people may be finding new homes in the urban ring within the next 20 years. Planning in the urban ring will include new development as well as refinements to the old. As in the case of planning regulations for guiding growth in the corridor cities, improved zoning and subdivision ordinances will be needed in the urban ring to encourage greater flexibility of design in relation to natural views, terrain, and vegetation.

Special attention will have to be given to two other problems: (1) appropriate development of by-passed tracts of land, and (2) forming satisfactory transitions between potentially inharmonious types of land use.

The great danger accompanying by-passed tracts of land is that rezoning is frequently requested for them long after surrounding properties have been built up—with the expectation that development of the by-passed tract will be in harmony. Such expectations are often backed up by publicly adopted master plans. Yet, as long as the by-passed tract remains unused, there is the ever present danger of rezoning for a gasoline

station, shopping center, or apartment project. Speculative bidding-up of such tracts with prices based upon unsound rezoning is common, and must be discouraged by firm public policy upholding adopted zoning plans. In addition, this firm policy should be reinforced by a constructive plan of action including a constant inventory of these danger spots, continuing analyses as to their suitability for inclusion in urban renewal projects or for use by public agencies, and a positive program for acquisition of those tracts which are suitable for public use.

There has already been some success in working out better transitions between potentially inharmonious types of development in the urban ring. Specific setback, screening, and landscaping conditions are being placed in the zoning ordinance to govern special exceptions in residential zones and off-street parking lots in or adjoining residential zones. The industrial park zone has strict performance standards governing smoke, heat, light, noise, and electrical emissions. Extra large setbacks and stringent site plan approval requirements also apply to the industrial park and high-rise apartment zones. With the continuance of such efforts, the transition problem can be overcome to the great benefit of the whole Regional District.



Communities isolated from corridor development have been recognized and accounted for in the plan. Some of these communities scattered throughout the bi-county area, are proud of their "small town" atmosphere and are planned not only to preserve, but enhance, the desirability of small town living.

Upper Marlboro is the only community that has a sufficient degree of employment in the form of the Prince George's County Government, to exhibit the characteristics of a self-contained satellite.

Other communities such as Damascus, Olney and Accokeek will experience gradual growth in both single and multi-family residences but will remain dependent on the central city and the corridor cities for both major employment and shopping facilities.

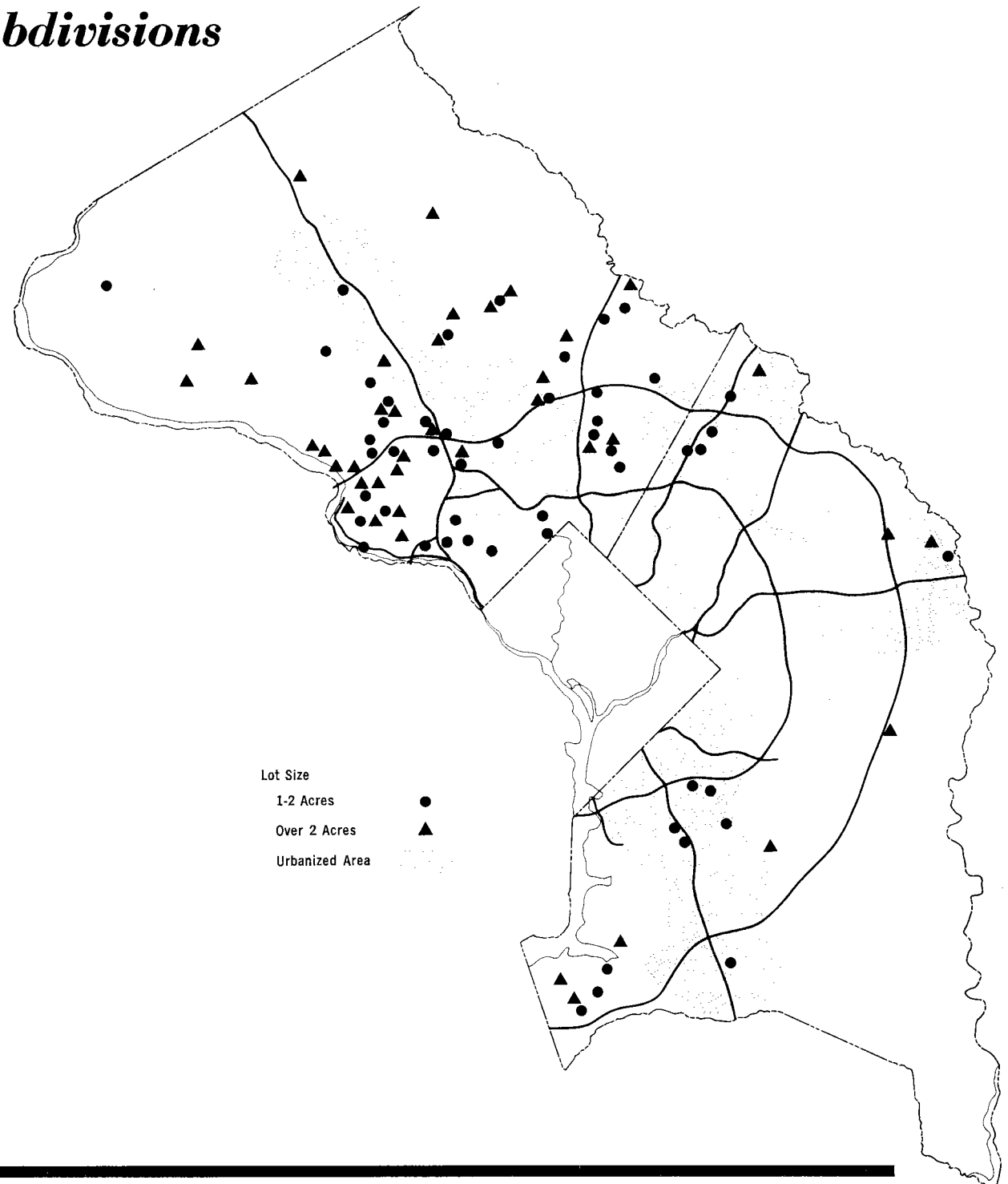
Geographical isolation from the trends of urban development, the cost and difficulty of providing public utilities, and soil conditions that are not receptive to septic systems are factors that will restrict the development of communities such as Poolesville, Barnesville, Darnestown, Laytonsville, Cheltenham, Naylor, Eagle Harbor and others to small, pleasant rural towns.

large lot residential subdivisions

1961

LARGE-LOT RESIDENTIAL FRINGES

Estate living on one or more acres is well established in the Potomac, Upper Rock Creek, and Upper Northwest Branch areas in Montgomery County, and the Moyaone Reserve area in Prince George's County.





MAKING THE URBAN PATTERN WORK

The following tools will help to achieve successful development of the urban pattern in accordance with the General Plan. They are explained in the chapters of *Part II, Carrying Out the Plan*.

- * Adopt detailed master plans for local areas in accordance with the General Plan.
- * Enact new conservation, apartment, town house, shopping center, and core commercial zones.
- * Apply zoning in conformance with detailed master plans and in step with need.
- * Improve special exception procedures under the zoning ordinance to help assure better urban design.
- * Review all Federal, State, local and utility capital improvement projects to help assure conformance with adopted master plans.
- * Improve procedures for preparing and reviewing long-range capital improvement budgets.
- * Acquire additional parks.
- * Appoint a Community Appearance Advisory Committee to act as a community conscience for the Regional District, spurring good public and private design.
- * Maintain strict review of applications for all rezonings, subdivisions of land, building permits, and zoning site-plan approvals in order to help assure conformance with master plans and general regulations.
- * Establish an urban renewal program to eliminate pockets of existing blight and to prevent new blight.
- * Establish new tax policies relating land assessments to zoning, and extending preferential assessments to all open space uses of land.
- * Improve intergovernmental cooperation and coordination.