

TOWN CENTER DESIGN CONTEXT

TRANSPORTATION VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

Town Center is directly accessed from I-270 via MD-118, Middlebrook Road, and Father Hurley Boulevard. The Town Center Core is approximately one mile southwest of the MD-118 and I-270 interchange. A six-lane divided highway, MD-118 is currently constructed to Wisteria Drive. Its planned extension will connect to Clopper Road (MD-117). Engineering has been completed and the construction of the extension of MD-118 is scheduled to start in May 1993. Access from the southwest is currently via Old MD-118 to Wisteria Drive or via Great Seneca Highway.

The other major highways that currently provide access to Town Center are Father Hurley Boulevard and Middlebrook Road. Father Hurley Boulevard is currently constructed as a four-lane divided highway between Wisteria Drive and Crystal Rock Drive; however, the median is designed to provide two additional lanes. When extended southward, Father Hurley Boulevard will connect to MD-118 north of its intersection with Clopper Road. North of the Town Center Father Hurley Boulevard will provide access to and from the north and eastern areas of Germantown and will provide a new interchange with I-270.

Middlebrook Road runs southeast from Father Hurley Boulevard through the Town Center, across MD-118 to a partial interchange with I-270 which is now under construction. Middlebrook Road is currently four lanes divided and is designed as a six-lane divided highway. Significant right-of-way exists for widening both north and south of MD-118.

Crystal Rock Drive also provides access to Town Center from the north. Running northwest, it connects MD-118 with Father Hurley Boulevard. Crystal Rock Drive is a four-lane divided highway also designed with sufficient right-of-way to accommodate six lanes.

Wisteria Drive is a four-lane arterial roadway that parallels Middlebrook Road to the south. This road also connects Father Hurley Boulevard with MD-118 and Great Seneca Highway. Until the completion of both Father Hurley Boulevard and new MD-118 (relocated), Wisteria Drive and Middlebrook Road provide the major connections to Old MD-118 and Great Seneca Highway and the area to the south of Town Center.

There are currently few other roads within the Town Center. Locbury Drive forms the northern boundary of the Town Center Core (TC-1). Although it currently dead-ends after crossing Middle-

brook Road, it will connect with Waters Road. Waters Road runs west and north from its intersection with Old MD-118, just north of the CSX Railroad bridge. Both Lockbury and Waters are currently two-lane roads, master planned for four lanes.

Aircraft Drive is a two-lane road that currently connects MD-118 to Century Boulevard and Crystal Rock Drive to the north. Century Boulevard is a four-lane arterial that curves to parallel Crystal Rock Drive as it heads toward Father Hurley Drive. The southern end of this road is proposed to be extended across Aircraft Road to Crystal Rock Drive (and the Town Center Core).

In summary, a network of major highways provides access to the Town Center. The intersection of MD-118 and Middlebrook Road lies at the center of the Town Center Study Area. Crystal Rock, Middlebrook and Wisteria all cross MD-118 dividing the Town Center into three major areas. Only Waters Road and, to a lesser extent, Old MD-118 cross these areas.

Because MD-118, Father Hurley Boulevard, Crystal Rock Drive, Middlebrook Road and Wisteria Drive are all either four- or six-lane roads, considerable vehicular access is provided to the Town Center. Access to individual sites is constrained by the limited number of median breaks and curb cuts that are allowed on these divided highways. Fortunately the opportunity exists to structure a new road system within the Town Center that provides internal access, a sense of order and place, and a pedestrian scale.

TRANSIT ACCESS

Currently the Town Center is served by bus service that utilizes the vehicular circulation system and by commuter rail. Rail service runs on the CSX Railroad tracks located on the southwestern boundary of the Town Center Study Area. The station has recently upgraded by the construction of a functioning replica of the old station building and the addition of a park-and-ride lot with access from Old MD-118. The program of additional parking capacity is currently proposed with the construction of another lot immediately across old MD-118.

The Town Center Station of the Corridor Cities Transit Corridor Easement is proposed in the TC-2 area bordered by MD-118, Crystal Rock Drive, Century Boulevard and Aircraft Drive. Although still under study, the alignment that is shown in the Master Plan is incorporated into this study.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

The existing pedestrian circulation system within the Town Center consists primarily of the sidewalks associated with the major streets and those associated with the existing shopping centers. Although the Master Plan proposes sidewalks for both sides of all streets, the current sidewalk system is discontinuous and fragmented. Current development is highly automobile oriented.



EXISTING VEHICULAR ACCESS

BICYCLE ACCESS

An existing bikeway parallels Middlebrook Road from south of the Seneca Valley High School to its intersection with MD-118. This path provides an important link from the High School to the existing shopping centers. The Master Plan proposes bikeways through Town Center along MD-118 to and along Crystal Rock Drive.

A hiker/biker trail currently exists within Churchill Village, following the south shore of Lake Churchill and the stream valley and open space system eastward to and across Father Hurley Boulevard. This system is proposed to be extended to Locbury Drive and into the Town Center Core (TC-1). Opportunities also exist to develop similar trail systems within the two major open space systems that penetrate Town Center from the south.

ENVIRONMENTAL

OPEN SPACE SYSTEMS

Existing and proposed natural open space systems penetrate the Town Center in several areas. These systems are primarily associated with stream valleys, wetlands, woodlands and/or steep slopes.

The major existing open space system follows a tributary of Lake Churchill and lies in a Class IV watershed. One finger of this stream originates within the Core of the the Town Center (TC-1). Two spring-heads, originating near the middle of TC-1, and a small wetland area feed an old farm pond to the north, near Locbury Drive. Although the extent of this wetland area remains to be determined, an initial approximation includes the pond and an area that follows the spring-flow channel.

The area within and surrounding this wetland will contribute to the open space framework of the Town Center and more specifically the parkland within the Town Center Core.

In that the wetland system on TC-1 has already been disturbed through farming activities on the site, minor grading with the intent to create an aesthetic and naturalistic open space may be allowed. Conversion of the farm pond into a stormwater management facility is also proposed. Any disturbance within wetlands (including the farm pond) requires permits from the U.S. Corps of Engineers and the Maryland Department of the Environment.

Another open space system is the stream valley that abuts the Town Center study area at the northwestern boundary (TC-5). Although the head of the stream valley will be altered through the construction of the extension of Father Hurley Boulevard, this system is proposed to be retained as valuable natural open space. It also provides the opportunity to enhance the southwestern entrance to the Town Center.

Another pond currently exists on the southwestern boundary of the Town Center. This facility, which is piped under the CSX Railroad tracks to the stream system to the west, is proposed to be upgraded to serve future development in this area (TC-5). As it is identified as wetlands on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wet-



EXISTING PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION/BICYCLE ACCESS

VEGETATION

lands inventory maps, any disturbance or modification to this pond will require appropriate permits.

The existing regional stormwater management pond adjacent to the MARC Commuter Rail Station park-and-ride lot satisfies a functional role and also provides needed open space. This pond is part of the larger system to the south of the Town Center study area (across the CSX Railroad tracks).

The open space systems that penetrate the Town Center offer opportunities not only to maintain natural open space but also to develop a linked parkland system throughout.

The undeveloped areas of Town Center consist primarily of open field areas (either in active cultivation or fallow and overgrown). These fields are representative of the current open character of the Town Center. They also are the primary areas planned for future development.

As previously described, current natural open space areas are associated with wetlands, stream valleys, and their related and natural open space systems. Other open space occurs along highways and within existing private development. The most significant are the large grass areas at the I-270/MD-118 interchange and the adjacent front lawn of the Department of Energy complex. These open areas are likely to remain and offer the opportunity to maintain the green character of this important gateway to the Town Center. The 530-foot elevation of the MD-118 overpass at I-270 affords a substantial view of the future Town Center Station site (TC-2) and the Town Center Core (TC-1).

The only existing public park in Town Center, recently completed, is located on the triangle of land between the realigned MD-118 and Old MD-118 (Walter Johnson Drive) at the intersection with Middlebrook Road. This park is just over one acre in size.

There is a lack of mature and valued trees in Town Center. A small stand of trees exists in the southwest corner of the TC-2 area and several tree groupings are recommended to be preserved, where possible, and incorporated into the future development of the core. This is proposed at the MD-118 entrance.

The only major stands of trees are on the remainder of the Northlake tract (between Middlebrook Road and Wisteria Drive to the southeast of Walter Johnson Drive) and to the west of Old MD-118 near the CSX Railroad tracks. A major wooded area exists southwest of the tracks for the entire length of the TC-5 zone (MD-118 to Father Hurley Boulevard). Opportunity exists to incorporate these latter wooded areas into the MD-118 and Father Hurley Boulevard gateways of the Town Center.

The absence of existing significant vegetation affords the opportunity (and need) to create new streetscape and park environments unique to the Town Center.

TOPOGRAPHY

Although gently rolling, Town Center's topography is relatively flat overall. There is less than 100 feet of change in elevation, from the highest point of 533 feet at the existing Middlebrook shopping center, to the lowest point (approximately 450 feet) at the edges of the study area where the existing open space systems enter the site.

The Town Center Core (TC-1) is at approximately 500 feet in elevation at its boundaries on Crystal Rock Drive, MD-118 and Middlebrook Road. It slopes gently to the wetlands at the center, and beyond to the farm pond and the open space system across Locbury Drive. (The farm pond is at elevation 456 feet).

The only significant slope within the Town Center is at the Father Hurley Boulevard edge of TC-5 where the topography drops from the 500-foot ridge line to lower than 450 feet at the stream.

The topography of Town Center presents few constraints to development. It offers considerable opportunity for visually linking the various areas of the Town Center and strategically locating public facilities and other major buildings, while maintaining and enhancing long distance views.

The volume of traffic projected for the major highways of the Town Center imposes a substantial level of noise on the adjacent development parcels. This is especially significant on MD-118 and to a lesser extent on Middlebrook Road and Crystal Rock Drive and on Father Hurley Boulevard. The projected 60 dBA, Ldn noise contour (that which is acceptable for residential development) extends from the center line of MD-118 up to 370 feet into the Town Center Core (TC-1). This condition does not prohibit residential development within this area but does require mitigation of the potentially adverse impact of noise on development. Specific noise criteria is required to be established at the time of site plan review.

NOISE

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATION

As previously described, only one public park currently exists in the Town Center Study Area. Referred to in the Master Plan as Germantown Square, this park is centrally located and has high visibility. It is immediately across MD-118 from the Upcounty Government Center. Although small in size and seemingly isolated, the park provides needed open space and affords the opportunity to create identity within the Town Center.

Limited pedestrian circulation and bikeway systems currently exist in the Town Center; other public recreational facilities are primarily restricted to Seneca Valley High School. Most of the adjacent larger residential subdivisions also have their own privately-maintained recreational facilities.

A County Recreational Center is proposed for Germantown. While a large outdoor pool complex and ballfields is not considered appropriate for location within the Town Center, the indoor facilities may be. This facility, together with the Cultural Arts Center would help increase the overall amount of community activity in the Town Center and would support the other Town Center-wide public facilities and proposed community-related activities, as well as programmed commercial and residential development.

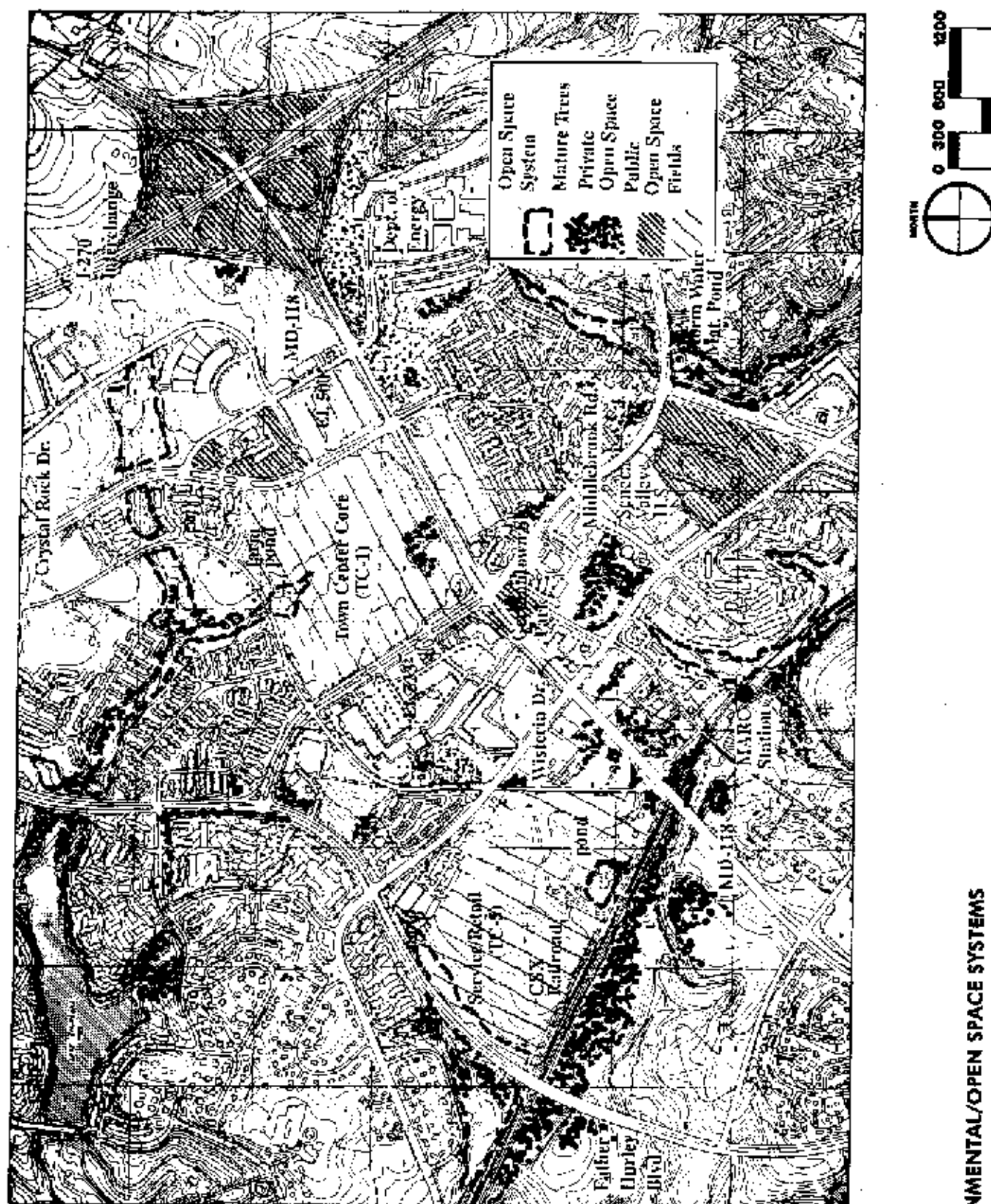
HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Town Center Study Area includes a portion of the Germantown Historic District (Master Plan Site 19-13). Although located primarily to the south and west of the CSX Railroad tracks, this District extends on both sides of Old MD-118 from the bridge over the tracks to Wisteria Drive. Within this District are two historic sites.

The Madeline V. Waters House site is located on the north west corner of Wisteria Drive and Old MD-118. Added to the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation (19/13-1) in 1985, the Waters House burned, but several mature trees remain, including those that were adjacent to the house and those that lined the driveway. The Master Plan proposes that these trees be preserved and the site of the Waters House incorporated into the green space of the Town Center. Historic designation does not preclude the development of the Waters House site but it does provide guidelines to ensure that this site be maintained as a reminder of Germantown's history. Development of this historic resource requires approval of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

The Pumphrey/Mateney House (19/13-5) is also located in the Town Center Study Area (on Old MD-118 adjacent to the MARC Station park-and-ride lot).

Old MD-118 is viewed as a **special** street that should establish a strong visual and functional link from the new Town Center Core to the majority of the Historic District (the Old Town Center) across the railroad tracks.



ENVIRONMENTAL/OPEN SPACE SYSTEMS

OTHER FACILITIES

The Upcounty Government Center is currently nearing construction completion. Centrally located within the Town Center, at the intersection of MD-118 and Middlebrook Road, this facility is sited so as to be highly visible from the Town Center entrances of both MD-118 (at the I-270 interchange) and Middlebrook Road and most of the Town Center. The Upcounty Government Center will contain a library, a child care center, and the offices of Montgomery County Public Schools, in addition to several County government departments.

Police and fire stations are located between Crystal Rock and Aircraft Drives, north of Century Boulevard. A future regional post office will be located on Wisteria Drive in the southeastern corner of the Town Center study area (TC-6).

Private and institutional facilities also currently exist within the Town Center. These include Mother Seton Parish Church and several day-care facilities.

Although currently scattered, these facilities have the potential to be linked by transportation and open space systems and through the future development of the Town Center. Although land values tend to prohibit the future development of institutional facilities in the Town Center, the identification of locations (including shared space) appropriate for such uses as houses of worship is important to the overall development of the Town Center.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

LAND USE

Existing private development in the Town Center is primarily of service retail and office commercial uses. Scattered institutional uses and public facilities also exist. The majority of the Town Center study area is undeveloped.

The majority of the existing development is clustered by use. Retail occurs primarily in the two major shopping centers, between Middlebrook Road and Wisteria Drive, north of MD-118. Retail establishments also exist across MD-118, at its intersection with Middlebrook Road, and in a new, small service center between MD-118 and Walter Johnson Drive (Old MD-118). Most of the office development is concentrated in the Northlake One and Two buildings, to the south of MD-118, off Middlebrook Road. A new townhouse office project is located on Wisteria Drive to the west of Waters Road, and medical offices have been developed on Wisteria Drive at Old MD-118. As previously described, public and institutional uses are scattered on the perimeter of the Town Center Study Area. The Upcounty Government Center is, however, located in the very center of the Town Center.

While some older development and new infill development is found along Old MD-118, the majority of Town Center's development is located between Middlebrook Road and Wisteria Drive. With the completion of the Northlake development, this middle area will be, for the most part, built out. On the other hand the areas to the north (TC-1, TC-2, and TC-3) and south (TC-5 and TC-6) are virtually unde-

veloped, and together represent nearly 200 acres of potential development. Enough uncommitted land remains to create a vital town center in terms of both form and function.

Recommendations regarding the future development of the Town Center focus on the mixed use Town Center Core (TC-1) and the adjacent joint-use of the Town Center Transit Station site (TC-2); and on the proposed retail and service park (TC-5).

The Town Center Core offers the opportunity to create an identifiable and distinctive mixed-use activity center in the Town Center. The Master Plan encourages a mix of cultural, retail, office, residential and community uses. Retail uses are recommended to include specialty shops, restaurants, indoor recreation and entertainment. Outdoor areas should also provide opportunities for both entertainment and active and passive recreation. A substantial component of residential use is proposed for the Core. The Cultural Arts Center is also proposed as an integral component of this mixed-use center.

The site of the Town Center Transit Station (TC-2) is prominently located at the I-270 entry **gateway** to the Town Center (on MD-118). Across Crystal Rock Drive from the Core, TC-2 is proposed for joint use development as station, office and high density residential use. Station related retail and commercial along with the incorporation of public amenity in the form of open space are also encouraged.

The Master Plan recommends the development of TC-5 in the southwestern portion of the Town Center, as a comparison shopping center to include general merchandise stores, department stores providing discount and moderately priced merchandise, hardware and building supplies and automotive and business services. There is a strong market potential for these stores, many of which are too large or of an inappropriate nature for location in the Village Centers or along roadways. Their clustering in one area provides yet another opportunity to define a sense of place.

Existing development in the Town Center does not present a coherent image. It is highly fragmented. Future development presents the opportunity to develop a cohesive Town Center with a strong sense of place – a coordinated development linking retail and office activity centers to residential areas and incorporating cultural, recreational and related community facilities and parkland through integration of the vehicular and pedestrian circulation and open space systems.

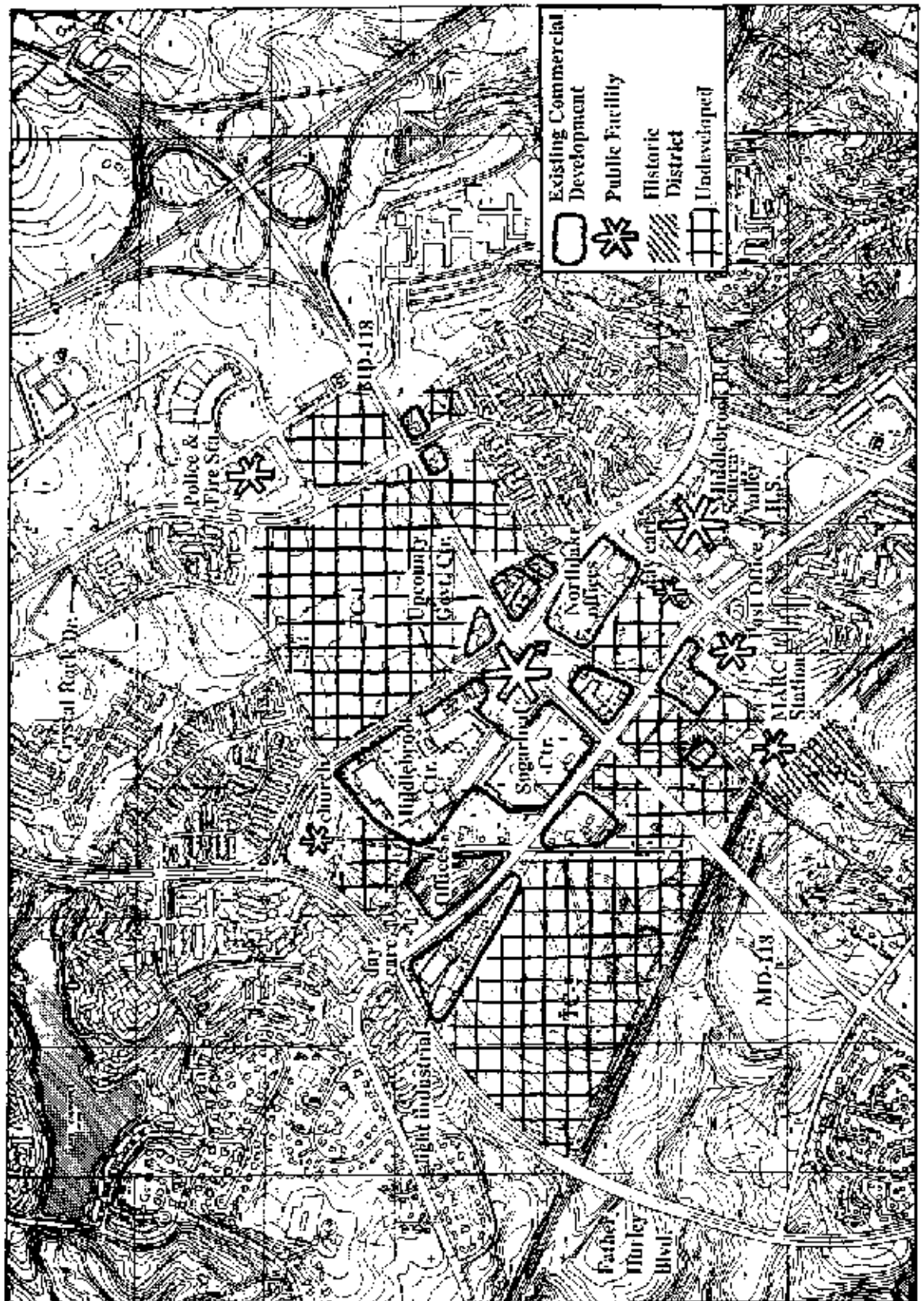
Most of Town Center's sites are in zones that require site plan review. These zones require submittal to the Planning Board of a detailed site plan showing how the property will develop. The uncommitted portions of the Town Center are zoned one of the following floating or project plan zones:

- TS (Town Sector)
- RMX (Residential Mixed Use)
- O-M (Office Building - Moderate Intensity)
- C-T (Commercial Transition)
- C-3 (Highway Commercial)
- P-D (Planned Development)

ZONING



GENERALIZED LAND USE



- **TC-1** is in the Town Sector Zone and requires submission of a supplemental plan (prior to site plan submittal), the intent of which is to achieve an integrated plan for the entire 59 acre Town Center Core.
- **TC-2** is a PD-44 zone which requires site plan approval to insure that the plan can adequately accommodate phased development to include the transit station.
- **TC-3** is zoned C-5. The site is also appropriate for development under the C-T Zone.
- **TC-4** is zoned C-5; and is also appropriate for development under the C-T Zone.
- **TC-5** is zoned RMX-2 (Residential-Mixed Use) and requires submittal of a project plan prior to site plan submittal. Plans for development of this area must establish internal compatibility among the broad mix of uses allowed in the area.
- **TC-6** is zoned R-200 and O-M. The portions zoned R-200 are recommended for office use under the O-M zone. The O-M (Office Building-Moderate Intensity) zone will allow development that may not be compatible with the preservation of the historic character of the area - including the retention of existing trees. To address this compatibility issue a rezoning application using the optional method of application and the use of a schematic development plan may be employed.
- **TC-7 Analysis Zone**, zoned C-T, is the site of the proposed Germantown Post Office facility.

The Town Center consists of approximately 300 acres of land (excluding existing and planned highways), of which 110 acres are committed to development. The Town Center Analysis Areas (TC-1 through TC-7) comprise 187 acres of largely undeveloped land.

Master Plan recommendations for these areas include 575,000 square feet of retail and approximately 800,000 square feet of office development. Also included are up to 1,800 residential dwelling units. Recommended public facilities include the Cultural Arts Center and the provision of an indoor pool facility (possibly including the indoor component of the Germantown Recreation Center). A substantial commitment of open space/parkland, entertainment and recreational facilities is also desired. TC-2 will include the Town Center Transit Station and is recommended to accommodate up to 1,000 parking spaces to serve this facility. TC-7 has been identified as the site of the Germantown Post Office.

Based on the Master Plan's recommendations, proposed Town Center development is presented in the table on the following page (see Page 30):

Development of this program will require parking for a minimum of 7,500 cars plus those parking spaces desired to serve the Transit Station and additional parking that may be required to serve the MARC Commuter Rail Station. Parking to serve public facilities, if not shared, would also be additional. Surface parking for this number of cars would require 70 plus acres. Internal roadways and related infra

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

TOWN CENTER RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT

Analysis Area No.	Acres	Retail Sq. Ft.	Office Sq. Ft.	Residential DUP's	Community Facilities	Parking Requirements ¹
TC-1	59	150,000	400,000 (including Hotel) ²	800	Cultural Arts Center Indoor/Outdoor Recreation, ³ Parkland	3,000
TC-2	10	10,000	206,000 25,000 ⁴	500 ⁵	Transit Station Parkland (on parking)	1,250 (plus 1,000 for transit)
TC-3	8		75,000		Parkland	250
TC-4	1		10,000			25
TC-5	76	400,000 ⁶	500		Public Amenity Indoor Recreation, ³ Parkland	2,750
TC-6	23		125,000 ⁷		Open Space	325
TC-7	10				Post Office	
Na ⁸		33,500	827,500	130	Public & Fire Daycare Houses of Worship	

NOTES:

- ¹ Parking requirement is estimated and all parking for community facilities is assumed shared with commercial uses.
- ² Hotel development is in addition to office square footage.
- ³ Indoor recreation to possibly include the indoor component of the Germantown Recreation Center.
- ⁴ Retail development to occur with development of the station.
- ⁵ Residential development to utilize station air-rights.
- ⁶ ALL one story service retail.
- ⁷ Scattered site infill development.
- ⁸ Development within Town Center but not in Analysis Area.

structure requirements could require another 35 to 40 acres. Of the 187 developable acres this leaves roughly about 75 acres for buildings and/or open space. At an average of three stories in height the buildings would require approximately 25 acres of land area; thus leaving approximately 50 acres of open space. A number of these Analysis Areas will have considerably more than 10%-20% open space, therefore, others would have less than 10%. The provision of additional open space would require either structured parking or a reduction in development. The overall Town Center Development program recommended above is at an FAR (floor area ratio) of approximately .40.

As previously described, existing and committed development in Town Center occupies approximately 110 of the 300 acres of developable land. This development includes the two major shopping centers that together contain approximately 300,000 square feet of grocery store, convenience and specialty shops, and restaurants. Other significant existing development includes the two Northlake office buildings, totalling approximately 120,000 square feet, and the Upcounty Government Center, currently under construction. Other existing development in the Town Center includes storage and warehouse space, professional office space and several small professional office buildings. A few other service retail uses such as banks, fast food restaurants and gas stations are located on individual sites along MD- 118.

Existing development is at a low FAR and designed to accommodate vehicular circulation and access. Most buildings are one story in height, the Upcounty Government Center is a three story building and the Northlake office buildings are four stories. Surface parking occupies the majority of each site; no parking structures currently exist in the Town Center.

Virtually all of the undeveloped land contained within the Town Center is currently being planned for development. Development is proposed for all of the Town in accordance with the land Analysis Areas. Collectively this development would approach the 3,000,000 square feet of development presented in the Master Plan program. Planned and/or pending developments range from one story to seven stories in height. The Master Plan program for TC-2 would necessitate high-rise development of up to 12 stories, to accommodate the recommended residential development over the transit station. Mid-rise or high-rise towers may also be required to accommodate the residential development recommended for TC-5. The only structured parking proposed in the initial phases of the pending development of the Town Center is that associated with the Town Center Transit Station and the residential development above it.

DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

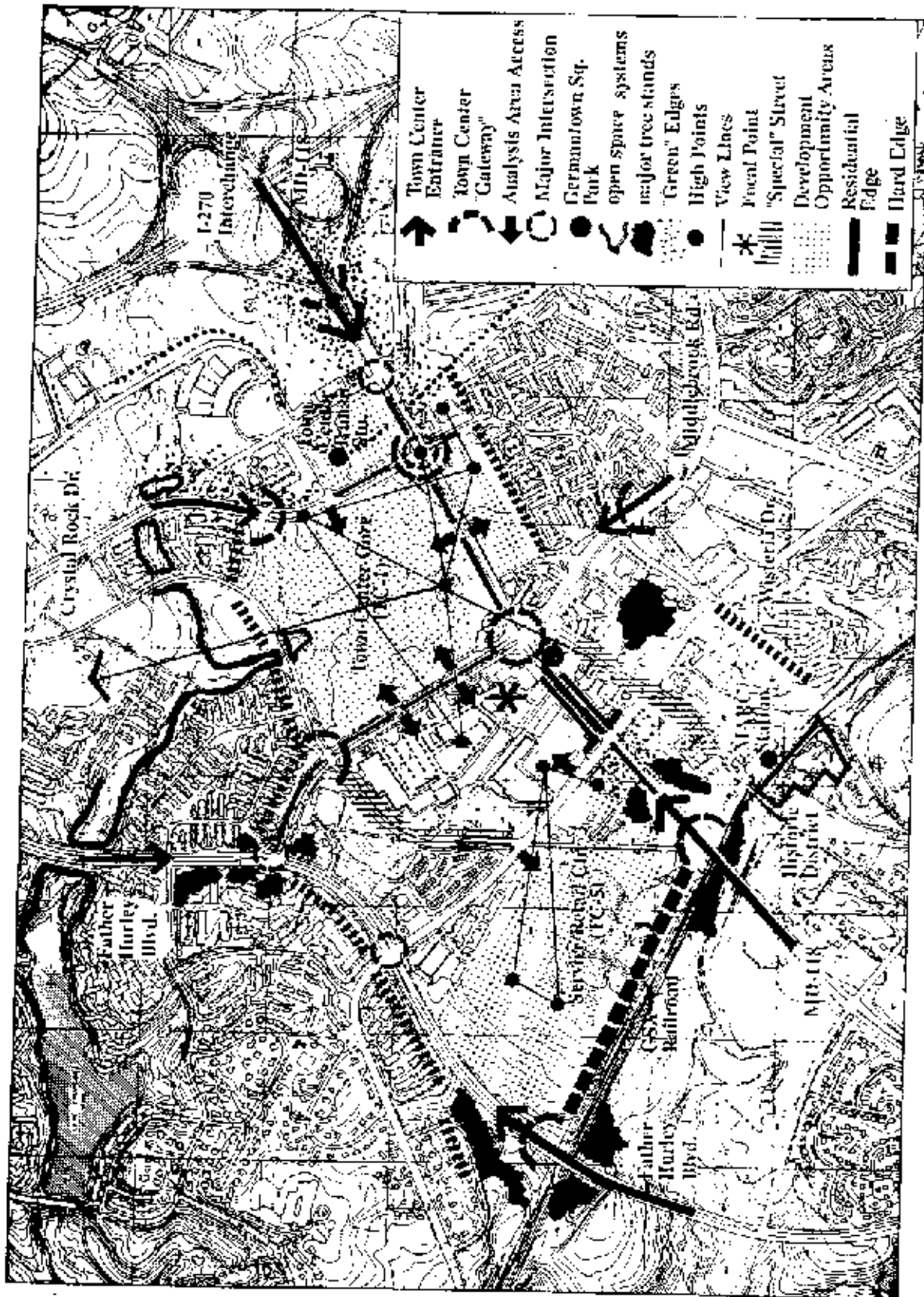
OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The greatest opportunity for the future development of Germantown Town Center results from the quantity of available currently undeveloped land. The major constraints are likely to be the unknowns of the market and the costs associated with this development.

In addition to these overall considerations, a number of site-specific opportunities and constraints are identified. Opportunities are summarized as follows:

- The major entrances to the Town Center are well defined. They include the MD-118 entrance from the I-270 interchange and the MD-118 entrance over the CSX Railroad from the south, and the nearly identical Father Hurley Boulevard entrance also from the south. Also included are the Father Hurley Boulevard and Crystal Rock Drive entrances from the north, and the Middlebrook Road entrance from the southeast.
- These entrances form **gateways**. Major gateways occur at the Town Center entrances and secondary gateways occur at the entrances to the Town Center Core (TC-1).
- Significant opportunities exist to develop the character of Town Center entrances/gateways. All have some element of green space (woodlands, grass areas, etc.). The MD-118 gateway from the I-270 interchange is characterized by the grass area associated with this interchange and reinforced by the **front lawn** of the adjacent Department of Energy Headquarters. The southern gateways of MD-118 and Father Hurley Boulevard, that will bridge the CSX Railroad tracks at their entrances to the Town Center, will enter through adjacent woodlands. The Father Hurley Boulevard entrance parallels the open space system to the west. Likewise both the Father Hurley Boulevard and Crystal Rock Drive northern entrances both cross over the Lake Churchill open space system. The Middlebrook Road **gateway** occurs at the entrance to, and open space associated with, Seneca Valley High School.
- The proposed Corridor Cities Transit Corridor Town Center Station (TC-2) represents a major opportunity to develop a future **gateway** to the Town Center. Joint development of this site, that is adjacent to the Town Center Core, affords the opportunity to create identity and a sense of place as well as both an origin and a destination within the Town Center. The existing MARC Commuter Rail Station, at the opposite end of the Town Center, affords the same opportunity.
- Significant opportunities are created by the topography and open areas currently found in the Town Center. The MD-118 entrance from I-270 offers major views through the Town Center Core to the existing development across Middlebrook Road. High points and view corridors offer opportunities for siting development.
- A major focal point and symbolic place is created by the new Upcounty Government Center. This building is easily seen from the MD-118 entrance (from I-270) and from the Middlebrook Road **gateway**.
- Other major buildings also represent **givens** to be considered, including the existing shopping centers and the two Northlake office buildings.

Germantown Square Park, centrally located at the intersection of MD-118 and Middlebrook Road and across from the Up-



OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

county Government Center, also represents a major **given** to be incorporated into the overall development of the Town Center.

The Germantown Historic District, both within and adjacent to the Town Center Study Area, offers both an opportunity and a constraint. Several historic sites also exist within the Town Center.

The existing hierarchy of streets presents a major opportunity to develop a Town Center identity, organization and structure. MD-118 is not only the primary entrance to the Town Center, it is also the major through street. Father Hurley Boulevard provides the opportunity for a distinctly different experience. Providing additional access, both Middlebrook Road and Crystal Rock Drive also distribute traffic within the Town Center. Wisteria Drive is also a major distributor of traffic. Finally, several of the roads internal to the Town Center, Lockbury Drive, Waters Road and Old MD-118/Walter Johnson Drive have the potential to be developed as **special** pedestrian streets.

Streetscape treatments are important in defining differences in the roads internal to the Town Center Analysis Areas. The Town Center Core is recommended to include a hierarchy of streets varying from entrance boulevard, and **main street**, to secondary commercial and residential frontage streets, parking lot access roads, and service alleys.

Walter Johnson Drive currently dead-ends at Germantown Square Park, north of Wisteria Drive and Old MD-118 may be converted to a pedestrian bridge at its crossing of the CSX Railroad tracks in the Historic District. Relieved of traffic, this road presents a major opportunity for redevelopment as a pedestrian-oriented street and bikeway, incorporating the character of historic Germantown.

The major existing and natural open space systems that are adjacent to and enter the Town Center study area offer significant opportunities for the development of natural open space and parkland. In providing stormwater management, all also offer opportunities for incorporating water amenities into the Town Center, such as that currently adjacent to the MARC Commuter Rail Station park-and-ride lot. Two ponds already exist on TC-5 and a farm pond exists in the TC-1 Core.

The few areas of woodlands and major trees offer opportunities for preservation and incorporation into the future development of the Town Center. This is the case at the MD-118 entrance to the Town Center Core, in the build-out of the Northlake project and in the Historic District (TC-6).

Many of these opportunities may also represent constraints. The following constraints are associated with the future development of the Town Center:

- Intersections of the four- and six-lane divided highways that cross the Town Center Study Area represent major potential constraints not only to vehicular movement but also to pedestrian circulation. Specifically, the intersection of MD-118 and Middlebrook Road, in the center of the Town Center, presents a major constraint to the pedestrian crossing of either street.

- Site (parcel) entry from these major highways is limited to those points where median breaks and curb cuts are permitted. Only one entry is afforded to the Town Center Core (TC-1) from MD-118. Although recommended, at present there is no entry to TC-3 from MD-118. Likewise, entrance to TC-5 is restricted to one entry from MD-118 and one from Father Hurley Boulevard.
- The volume of traffic carried on these highways imposes substantial noise impacts on the adjacent development parcels. The projected 60 dBA, Ldn noise contour associated with MD-118 extends from the centerline to 370 feet into the Town Center Core (TC-1). This imposes setback and design requirements on adjacent residential development in this area.
- The wetlands associated with the open space systems of TC-1 and TC-5 limit building development and the development of parkland. Permits are required by both the Corps of Engineers and the Maryland Department of the Environment, prior to development in these areas.
- The proposed development of the Town Center Transit Station (on TC-2) with the associated requirements of easements, bus bays and parking, imposes a constraint on the development of this site. In addition, the recommendation to provide a substantial number of dwelling units over the station presents an additional constraint, in terms of the design, cost of construction and marketability of this Analysis Area.
- The significant length of residential development along the edge of the Town Center must also be taken into consideration. This edge will require adjacent uses to be compatible and may require buffering.