

TOWN CENTER PLANNING CONTEXT

THE GERMANTOWN MASTER PLAN

The 1989 Comprehensive Amendment to the Germantown Master Plan provides a set of comprehensive recommendations and guidelines for the Germantown Town Center.

The Master Plan presents the overall planning context (land use and zoning, transportation, environment, community facilities, etc.) that is applicable to the future development of the Town Center.

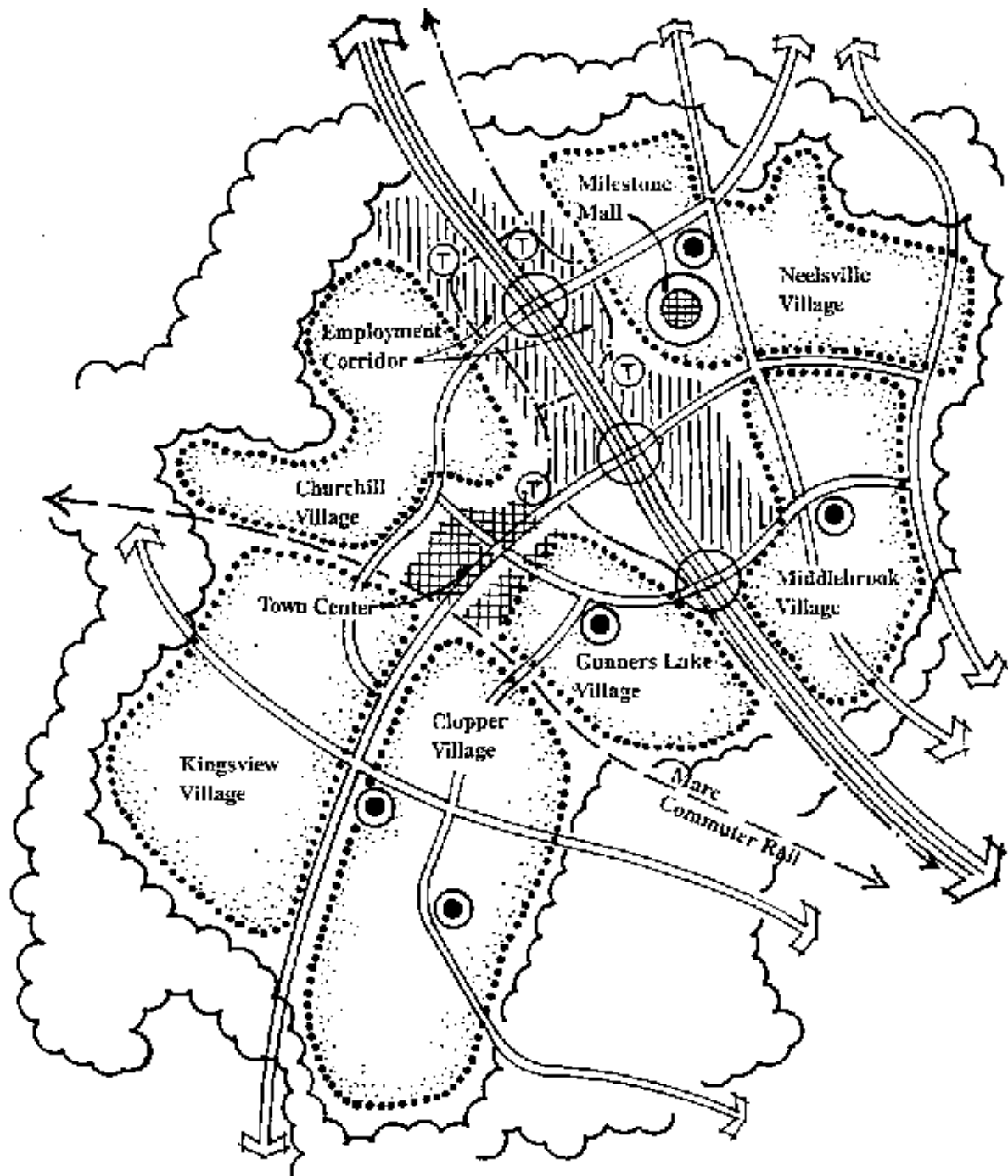
Germantown is an 11,000-acre planning area located in Montgomery County, Maryland, approximately 25 miles northwest of Washington, D.C. The Master Plan describes Germantown in terms of a **new community** and calls on the County government to coordinate the efforts of individual landowners to create a cohesive community with a distinct identity. The Plan describes the development of six residential villages, the I-270 employment corridor, and the Town Center (see **COMMUNITY CONCEPT PLAN**). The development of the Town Center is identified as one of the most critical components of Germantown. This area represents Germantown's **downtown** and is proposed to become the visual and functional center of the community. The design of the Town Center will reflect the image of Germantown.

The Master Plan also incorporates **Townscape Design**, the objective of which is to assist in the development of a sense of community identity. Town Center objectives include:

- the location of a broad mix of land uses, including a cultural arts center, so as to create a focus for community activity;
- the development of a major commercial area that offers a variety of shops, theaters, restaurants, multi-family housing, the Upcounty Government Center and other public facilities, and public open space; and
- the creation of Town Center as the central design element of the Germantown townscape; that which identifies Germantown and reinforces its community identity.

The Town Center Core (TC-1) is described as an essential element of the Town Center, proposed to have the broadest mix of uses in Germantown. The densities and built form in this area are recommended to be sufficiently compact and massed in order to create a **sense of urbanity**.

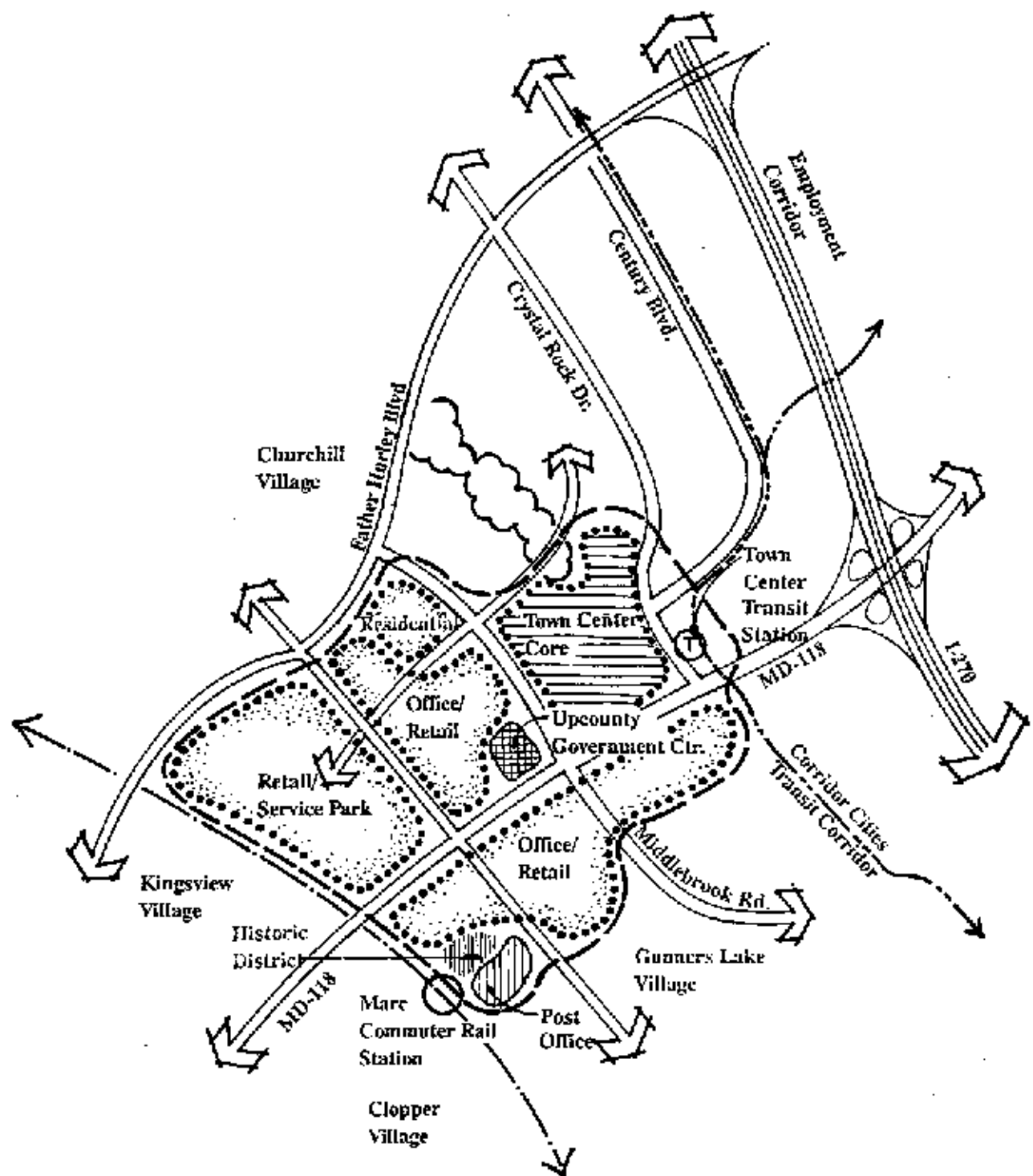
TOWNSCAPE DESIGN



GUIDELINES

The following guidelines were also provided in the Master Plan. They are intended to provide the basis of a design framework that will result in an identifiable and cohesive Town Center:

- Create **gateway** landscaping and signage at the major entrances to the Town Center.
- Establish the visual quality of a landscaped, tree-lined boulevard along MD-118.
- Require a building and parking setback of 30 feet along MD-118 through the Town Center.
- Establish visual continuity along the street through the establishment of low walls or rows of trees.
- Establish a place-making element at each corner of the intersection of MD-118 and Middlebrook Road.
- Create a pedestrian and bike path system that connects the Town Center to all forms of transit and land uses; separate vehicular and pedestrian traffic where possible.
- Establish a specific visual theme including signage, street furnishings, and lighting.
- Provide place-making elements such as sculpture, water features, etc., throughout the Town Center.
- Minimize the visual impact of parking areas from adjacent roadways through the use of berms, decks, fences, landscaping, and trellises.
- Soften all **edges** through the provision of extensive landscaping.



THE HALCYON STUDY

The Town Center development strategy developed by Halcyon, Ltd., states that in order to create a viable Town Center, the center must be recognized as the place to be, the place to go for activities, events, and social gatherings. Concentration of uses is identified as important in that concentration will promote pedestrian activity and vitality. Density is important in establishing the Town Center as a focus of activity in the community.

The conclusions reached in the Halcyon Study were as follows:

- **IDENTITY** - In communities the focal point for activity is frequently centered around shopping, entertainment, and recreation. The major shopping destination in Germantown is likely to be the Milestone Mall. The Town Center, if focused around recreation and entertainment, can be a unique place, a unique destination.
- **CONCENTRATION/COMPACTNESS** - The Town Center Core should conceptually and practically be limited to the TC-1 site. If the uses and densities that need to be in the Core are spread out onto sites beyond TC-1, the concentration of activities required to generate vitality will not be served.
- **DENSITY** - The higher the density of office workers and residents in TC-1 and surrounding Town Center sites, the higher the likelihood that enough activity can be generated to make the Town Center a commercial as well as community success. When the variety and mix of activities are maximized, the Town Center identity becomes more apparent to everyone and hence becomes the place to be, the place to go, the focus for the community.

The Halcyon Study also recommended the following:

- The Town Center should incorporate a cultural facility to be located in the Core (TC-1), and should expand the concept to include a community recreation center, as well as commercial recreational facilities, including multiplex cinemas, nightclubs, a concentration of restaurants, and a health club. The Town Center should also be the place in the community for festivals, promotions, and public events.
- Commercial retail on TC-1 should focus on restaurants, commercial entertainment, convenience retail, galleries and other specialty shops that would not traditionally locate in shopping malls.
- Town Center uses should be clustered around/near a ceremonial public open space, designed to accommodate special events like Oktoberfest, while also providing a focal point for the Town Center at other times.
- Design of the Core area should be distinctive. The design of the structures and the landscape plan must be unique in order to achieve a successful sense of place for the Town Center. The architectural treatment of all components of the TC-1 site are crucial to the success of the program.

TOWN CENTER ANALYSIS AREAS

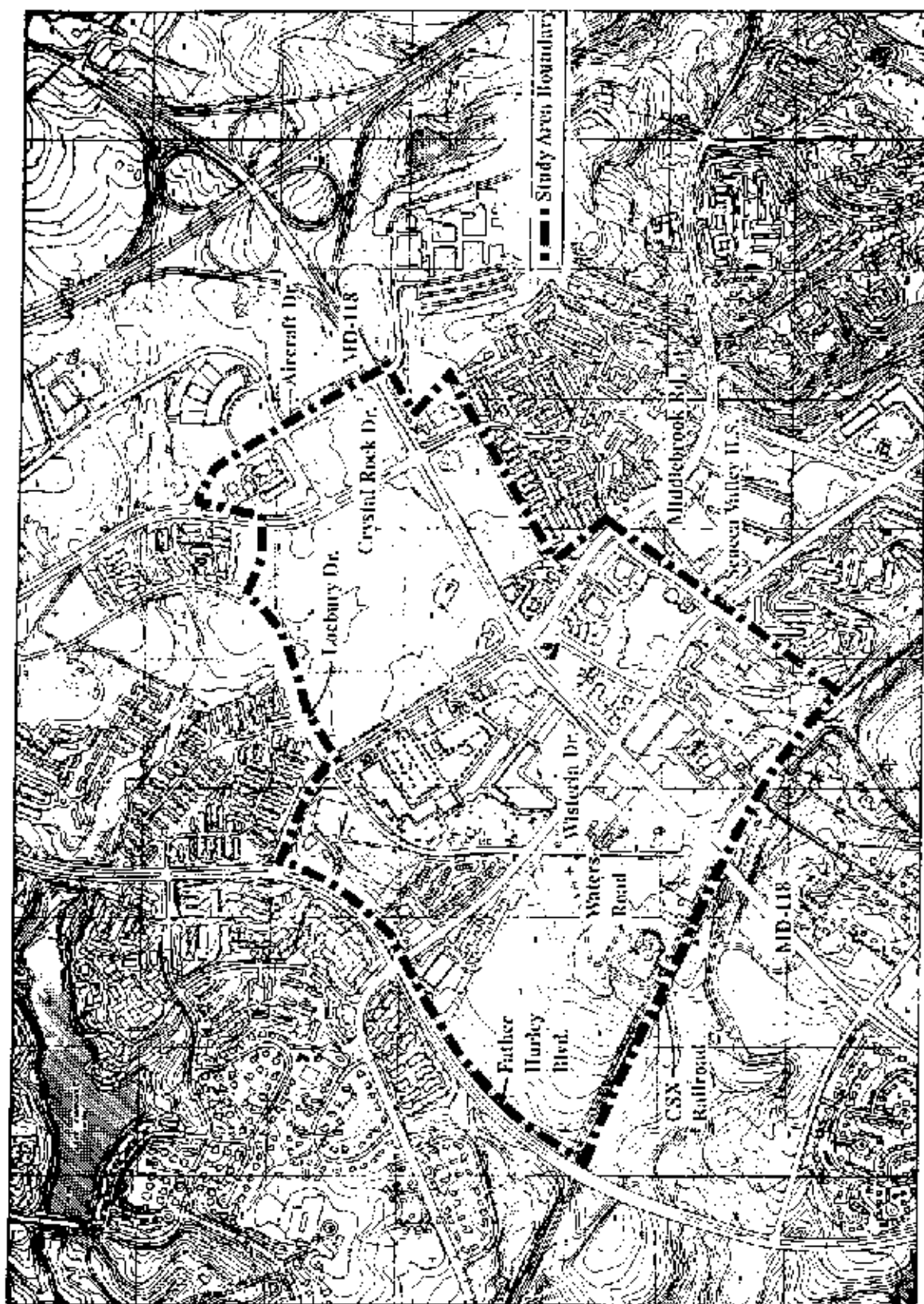
Located immediately to the west of I-270 and its intersection with MD-118, the Germantown Town Center is approximately 1.5 miles in width and nearly two miles in length. The Town Center Design Study Area is bounded by the CSX Railroad tracks on the southwest, Father Hurley Boulevard and Lockbury Drive on the north, Aircraft Drive on the east (just east of Crystal Rock Drive), and the extension of Crystal Rock Drive to the Seneca Valley High School on the south. The Town Center consists of approximately 353 acres of land, of which nearly two-thirds are undeveloped.

For planning purposes most of the undeveloped portion of the Town Center has been divided into site specific Analysis Areas. The Germantown Master Plan established seven such areas (TC-1 through TC-7) described as follows:

- **TC-1** is the major 59-acre tract of undeveloped land that is proposed as the Town Center **Core**. Located on the north side of MD-118, between Crystal Rock Drive and Middlebrook Road; this area extends north to the Town Center boundary at Lockbury Drive.

This highly visible site is what many refer to as the **Town Center**. As the major available development site in close proximity to the MD-118/I-270 interchange, adjacent to the currently developed Town Center Middlebrook and Sugarloaf shopping centers, and bounded by new access highways, TC-1 is prime for development.

- **TC-2** is also in a highly visible and accessible location. The initial Town Center site encountered on MD-118 at the principal Town Center entrance from I-270, this 10 acre parcel is proposed to be developed as the Corridor Cities Transit Corridor Town Center Station. Long-term Development will constitute the **gateway** to Town Center.
- **TC-3** is located south of MD-118 between Crystal Rock Drive on the east and the existing development fronting on Middlebrook Road to the west. Only eight acres, the TC-3 Analysis Area is also highly visible as well as strategically located across MD-118 from the Town Center Core.
- **TC-4** consists of a one-acre parcel on the south side of MD-118 in the approximate center of the block between Middlebrook Road and Wisteria Drive. The parcel is adjacent to the recently developed Germantown Square Park. Small in size and constrained as to access, this parcel may be best incorporated as an extension to the existing adjacent parkland.
- **TC-5** is a 76-acre area generally bounded by relocated or new MD-118 (extended), the CSX Railroad tracks, Father Hurley Boulevard (extended) and Wisteria Drive. Primarily undeveloped to the west of Waters Road (which crosses this Analysis Area), TC-5 is recommended for development as a **retail and service park**. Although larger in area than TC-1, its location and the fact that both MD-118 and Father Hurley Boulevard have yet to be extended, have resulted in less visibility than the Town Center Core.



GERMANTOWN TOWN CENTER DESIGN STUDY AREA

- **TC-6** is a 23-acre tract generally bounded by the to-be-relocated MD-118, from the CSX Railroad tracks to Wisteria Drive and includes the properties fronting on the existing MD-118 (Old MD-118). Included in this 23-acre area is the Germantown Historic District and several historic sites. In multiple ownership and including existing development to remain, the Analysis Area affords limited opportunities for infill development and should incorporate the future expansion of the parking facilities of the MARC Commuter Rail Station, as required.
- **TC-7 Analysis Area** is a 10-acre area immediately to the southeast of TC-6 that has been designated as the site of the proposed Germantown Post Office.



TOWN CENTER ANALYSIS AREAS