



PLANNING AND DESIGN OBJECTIVES

3.1 LAND USE OBJECTIVES

A. EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

The Bethesda CBD Sector Plan area will continue to be an important center of employment growth for Montgomery County. Office workers comprise the largest segment of employment in Bethesda, followed by various categories of retail and service employees. In 1993, the employment capacity of buildings in Bethesda was 38,500 jobs, although the actual employment level was lower, due to vacancies in office and retail space. Other major near-by employment centers include the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Naval Medical Command, with 18,650 existing jobs, and Silver Spring CBD, with a job capacity of 31,400 jobs. Future Bethesda employment for the year 2010 is projected by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) to be 48,800 jobs.

There are numerous benefits to continuing employment growth in Bethesda. Jobs with Metro access will be available to a wider pool of employees, making efficient use of a multi-billion dollar transit system, while decreasing traffic congestion and air pollution from drive-alone commuters. Moreover, Montgomery County will gain significant tax revenue from Bethesda's commercial property. In 1991, Bethesda provided \$860 million, 3.3 percent of the total County assessed property tax base. Finally, the proximity to adjacent residential neighborhoods of a high-quality, contained employment center increases the value of the residential properties. These benefits can be retained while Bethesda continues as a model of mixed-use downtown development.

The Sector Plan recommendations could result in about 16,400 new jobs above 1993 levels at Plan build-out, including about 1,700 jobs in projects that are already approved. Actual growth by the year 2010 may be less, as indicated by the COG employment forecast.

The Sector Plan endorses the following growth objectives and strategies in support of the Plan goals:

1. Concentrate high-density office development in the Metro Core and allow lower-density infill development along with housing in other districts.
 - a. Encourage primarily office development in the Metro Core to maximize the number of jobs created. Residential development and modest office development will occur in the CBD's other districts.
 - b. Chapter 4.0, Land Use, states the land uses and densities recommended for each district.



2. Support new commercial development that enhances the character of Bethesda by providing desired public benefits and high-quality redevelopment.
 - a. Encourage new development and redevelopment that follows the guide lines for urban form, open space, streets, and pathways. (See Section 3.2 and the Guidelines in Chapter 4.0.)
 - b. Approve optional method projects that provide or contribute to public benefits such as cultural facilities, open spaces, or other public gathering places identified in the Plan.
3. Coordinate new growth with public facilities, so as not to burden nearby residential areas. Public facility plans and impacts of growth are addressed throughout the Plan.
 - a. Stage new development to correspond with the availability of major transportation facilities, such as the Silver Spring-Bethesda Trolley (Section 5.3 C), parking (Section 5.6), and new roadway capacity (Section 5.7).
 - b. Provide other public facilities, as needed, to serve additional employees and residents. Facilities addressed in this Plan include open space (Section 3.2 C), pathways (Section 5.4), bikeways (Section 5.5), parks, and other public facilities (Chapter 8.0). Some of these facilities can be provided by new development.
 - c. Protect nearby residential neighborhoods from the effects of new development. Stabilizing the transition areas next to single-family areas is addressed in Chapter 4.0, Land Use. Cut-through traffic is addressed in Section 5.7 D, Neighborhood Protection.

B. HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Bethesda is a place to live and to work. Encouraging housing in the CBD meets a number of County planning goals. Housing in combination with office and retail uses in the CBD will enliven the area by creating a well-rounded community of residents and workers who contribute to the health and vitality of the downtown. Providing apartments within walking distance of jobs and Metro will encourage commuting alternatives to the automobile and help reduce air pollution from auto emissions. Additional housing will also help achieve a more balanced demand on the transportation network.

The Sector Plan provides for about 2,700 dwelling units at build-out. According to a housing study conducted for the Plan, the market could absorb 1,000 units in 3 to 4 years, while 4,000 units could be absorbed in 8 to 11 years. Therefore, it is realistic to assume absorption of about 2,700 units by the year 2010. The study assumed annual construction of 375 to 500 new rental and condominium housing units (125-150 condos, 100-150 garden apartments and 150-200 rental high-rise apartments).

These units would be in a price range affordable by upper-moderate and high-income households. Without special efforts, there will be a continuing shortfall of new units to

meet the needs of lower income households employed by retail and service establishments in the Bethesda area. The existing mid-rise and garden apartments provide a stock of affordable housing. In addition to a need for more affordable housing units, there is a market demand for rental housing that is of higher quality than available in many of the existing garden and mid-rise projects but priced below high-rise apartments.

The housing study completed for the Plan concluded that there will be continuing demand for all forms of housing in the Bethesda CBD and the surrounding area because of the diversity of the market seeking housing; the relatively safe living environment; the increasing availability of restaurants, shops and recreational activities; the growing employment base; and the easy access to Metro.

One of the major reasons for the strength of the Bethesda CBD housing market is the CBD's attractiveness as a place to live—not just convenience to Metro and a prestigious address, but the ambience of street life, shops, and restaurants. The downtown is small enough and built-up enough so that it is difficult to increase the housing zoning capacity substantially without threatening these elements.

The strong absorption rates for new housing in the Bethesda CBD in the last five years may represent continuing strong demand or it may mean that the new units filled pent-up demand for new apartments in a downtown atmosphere near Metro. If the strong absorption continues, the 2,700 units in the Sector Plan area will accommodate demand for a reasonable period of time.

The Sector Plan endorses the following objectives and strategies in support of the Plan goals regarding housing and neighborhoods:

1. Promote variety and choice in housing of quality design and durable construction in various types of neighborhoods. A diversity of living environments is one of Bethesda's strengths. The Plan supports measures to continue such diversity.
 - a. Preserve opportunities for single-family residential living in and around the Sector Plan area. Attractive single-family neighborhoods ring the area and must be protected. There is also a sizable single-family neighborhood within the Sector Plan boundary that should be preserved. (See Objective 5, below.)
 - b. Zone land for mixed-use or multi-family residential development at various densities, commensurate with urban form and compatibility objectives.
2. Provide a sufficient supply of housing to serve Bethesda's existing and planned employment.
 - a. Provide adequate zoning capacity within the Sector Plan area for 2,700 dwelling units. Residential development is assumed on mixed-use sites and sites currently zoned residential. The Plan recommends rezoning certain sites from a commercial or mixed-use zone to a residential zone, and increasing the incentives to encourage housing on other sites.



- b. Modify County regulations and policies to improve the feasibility and attractiveness of higher-density housing.

The CBD zones allow residential uses to be added to existing and new buildings above currently allowed density under the standard method; or allow a higher commercial component as an incentive for provision of a minimum housing component under the optional method. The TS-R Zone encourages low-rise, high-density housing and allows a limited amount of commercial use.

3. Promote an adequate supply of affordable housing, especially for households at the median income and below, in keeping with General Plan goals and objectives. Such housing will benefit from Bethesda's convenient public transportation, employment, shopping, and recreational facilities.
 - a. Preserve existing affordable housing by confirming existing zoning or downzoning to be consistent with current density. Promote County acquisition or creative financing alternatives and partnerships in order to retain existing apartment buildings at affordable prices, as opportunities arise.
 - b. Designate County-owned parcels (excluding parkland) that meet appropriate housing site selection criteria as locations for mixed-income housing. High land values add substantially to the cost of building housing in Bethesda. The elimination of all or part of the land cost for a new project by using land already owned by the County would contribute to providing rental housing at affordable prices for moderate-income households.
4. Maintain and enhance the quality of housing.
 - a. Encourage excellence in architectural design, within the limits of the public planning process.
 - b. Discourage deterioration of housing through well-funded code enforcement, neighborhood improvement programs, and other appropriate techniques.
 - c. Encourage well-designed mixed-income housing that is compatible with surrounding houses. The Plan includes design guidelines to be followed by County agencies and the private sector when developing such housing.
5. Maintain and enhance the quality of neighborhoods, both single- and multi-family, within and on the periphery of the Sector Plan area.
 - a. Provide transitional land uses and physical buffers. Such land uses are limited to low to moderate-density housing, schools, churches, public institutions, parks and open space, and parking facilities if no more than

one-story above grade and properly screened. Physical buffers include dense landscaping, fencing, walls, or buildings of appropriate scale and use. (See Sections 4.7, 4.9, and 4.13.)

- b. Channel through traffic away from residential streets. Enforce programs to discourage nonresidential parking from spilling into adjacent residential areas. These strategies must be achieved through cooperation and agreement between residents and local government.
- c. Endorse guidelines for the location of special exceptions to zoning uses within residential areas. These guidelines are applicable to single-family detached houses and to townhouses in the East Bethesda, Town of Chevy Chase, and Edgemoor Transition areas and to other areas when stated in Chapter 4.0, Land Use. Guidelines should include the following provisions:
 - Avoid over concentration of retail, service, or office special exception uses.
 - Protect residential areas from incompatible design of special exception uses.
 - Support special exception applications for uses that contribute to the housing objectives of the Sector Plan.
 - Endorse child day care, elder day care, and hospice services, but not medical clinics or offices.
- d. Promote infill development that complements existing housing and neighborhoods. Ensure that new residential developments are linked with existing housing through open space and pedestrian paths to form neighborhoods.
- e. Encourage the provision of adequate indoor and outdoor recreation facilities to meet the needs of new residents. Create opportunities to build a sense of neighborhood through providing community facilities and public meeting spaces in new development, where people can gather.

C. RETAIL

Retail adds vitality to the local economy and is an animating feature which gives Bethesda much of its character. Bethesda draws its retail vitality from the juxtaposition of residences, offices, restaurants, hotels, cultural resources, and shops. The CBD offers a different shopping experience than the typical suburban shopping center. Part of Bethesda's appeal is the eclectic mix of shops that offer hard-to-find items for their customers and add an interesting flavor to the CBD shopping experience. Bethesda has developed a reputation as a major dining destination. The neighborhood retail facilities serve the weekly shopping needs of residents and business people.



Planning Department staff prepared a retail study in January 1992 that documents the successes of and opportunities for Bethesda retail. The study concludes that there is a need for some additional retail space to serve projected local growth. However, many of the restaurants, specialty retail shops, and cultural services draw from a regional market area, and so future demand is much harder to predict. The study also notes that, while retail is dispersed over a large geographic area, most stores are within an acceptable walking distance of the center of Bethesda. Though Bethesda is an active retail environment, the report notes that the regional malls surrounding the CBD will, at best, maintain their market share of comparison shopping goods. Some experts believe that malls could actually lose their market share of comparison goods over the next decade.

Bethesda's retail success has resulted from private sector initiatives, its particular demographic characteristics, and supportive public policies and actions. In an effort to perpetuate retail vitality in Bethesda, the Sector Plan endorses the retail objectives and strategies discussed below to achieve the Plan goals.

1. Approve zoning recommendations and land use guidelines that support the continued vitality of retail in Bethesda. Such tools can influence the location of retail as development opportunities arise.
 - a. In general, allow standard method development to proceed without being restrained by development staging limits. This allows properties to redevelop in response to retail market opportunities.
 - b. Retain lower-density zoning in some areas, in contrast to the higher-density central Core. Lower densities encourage retention of reasonable rents, local retail business, and smaller scale buildings. Low densities and retail uses are recommended in portions of the Woodmont Triangle, Arlington Road, and Wisconsin South Districts.
 - c. Encourage street oriented retail where it would extend the existing retail environment, particularly along the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor. Retail space is not supported in parts of buildings with low visibility and is not needed in all new projects.
 - d. Designate both Norfolk Avenue and Bethesda Avenue as Main Streets, to receive special emphasis through both streetscape improvements and enhanced retail use. (See Chapter 6.0, Streetscape Plan.)
 - e. Recognize the value of anchor retail locations to increase shopping activity in an area. For example, the Giant Food store and the Farm Women's Cooperative Market anchor both ends of the Bethesda Avenue Main Street. Anchor retailers, such as Safeway, strengthen the Metro Core and Woodmont Triangle Districts, serving both nearby residents and employees.
2. Promote improved accessibility to retail shops and awareness of the character of retail districts.

The following strategies would facilitate an efficient and effective pattern of accessibility to shops through identifying features and an improved transportation network for both the vehicle and pedestrian:

- a. Provide a good supply of on and off-street short-term parking throughout the area. Readily available parking aids access and is critical to successful retail. On-street parking also creates a zone that buffers pedestrians from moving traffic.
 - b. Re-establish on-street parking during non-peak traffic periods in the Metro Core District and other places where it is currently limited. Implementation of on-street parking must be subject to safety and capacity limits.
 - c. Provide convenient pedestrian street crossings and expanded streetscape to make all parts of the CBD more pedestrian-friendly. (See Sections 5.4 and 6.0.)
 - d. Provide a circulating loop bus throughout the CBD area. Careful study of the route is needed since parking is well distributed and most employees are willing to accept a nine-minute walk from the Metro Core.
 - e. Locate retail directory maps for each district at key locations, such as the Metro station, public garages, and other gathering places. Directory maps should be updated periodically. Brochure maps can also be created to highlight specialty store groups or shopping districts.
 - f. Use identifying features, such as banners, throughout the CBD that would enhance the special nature of each district. Various themes, such as cultural arts, could differentiate the areas.
3. Support government and private sector efforts that strengthen retail business effectiveness.
- a. Endorse improvements in coordinating downtown services through the Bethesda Urban Partnership.
 - b. Continue government initiatives and support services. Initiatives may include subsidizing facade improvements, phased completion of streetscape improvements, and ongoing maintenance of public sidewalks and open spaces. Support services, such as the-programming of special community events, should continue.
 - c. Support new private sector initiatives to sustain and enhance the retail environment in Bethesda. The Plan recognizes that the private sector must play the primary role in molding the retail environment in Bethesda. The following initiatives could be carried out more readily through a private sector organization:



- Cooperate in setting hours of operations, developing voluntary exterior design guidelines, advertising in local newspapers, and creating group purchasing programs.
- Develop a cultural arts emphasis as a theme for strengthening the vitality of Bethesda. (See Section 3.1D.)
- Develop a business retention program to help existing merchants find affordable space and possibly to seek new businesses that complement the retail character of the area.
- Organize window displays and a short-term rental program for vacant retail space.
- Create a retail parking validation program.
- Develop a revolving loan fund to support facade improvements.

D. "CULTURAL DISTRICT" THEME

Bethesda has begun to develop as a cultural center. The Sector Plan supports this focus of activity and community energy. The Plan recognizes that a "cultural district" theme could guide and link development, complemented by the "garden" design theme currently expressed in streetscape and open spaces. As used in this Plan, the word "district" means a loosely defined area devoted to cultural activities, as in "theater district," rather than a legally designated sector of the County with specific geographic boundaries and powers.

Promoting a cultural theme for Bethesda would capitalize on and expand existing features. Bethesda already has a strong specialty and community oriented retail base, including a variety of ethnic restaurants and arts-related businesses such as bookstores, art galleries, and dance studios. There is public art in the amenity spaces of new buildings and an attractive pedestrian environment, which this Plan recommends enhancing. There are also a number of historic resources evoking the community's past that can be integrated into future development. Moreover, Bethesda, like the rest of Montgomery County, supports the arts.

The initiative for a "cultural district" came from the Bethesda community. The Sector Plan's first public forum stressed the value of building on the existing culturally oriented businesses and activities in Bethesda. A committee of the Chamber of Commerce and a majority of the Citizens Advisory Committee support the Plan vision, and a new committee for A Bethesda Cultural District (ABCD) has led the effort for recognition of such an area. ABCD seeks to add new performance space, galleries, studios, arts-related retail, and a variety of events that will create a critical mass of cultural spaces and activities. The Plan supports continued private sector initiatives to realize this unifying vision for Bethesda.

There are several reasons why the County would benefit from enhanced cultural activities in Bethesda. First, the arts are an integral part of the quality of life in an economically dynamic, diverse urban community. In new suburban downtowns such as Bethesda, the arts can help create a unique place. Expanding the arts in Bethesda could complement

cultural initiatives at Strathmore Hall, Silver Spring, Germantown and other areas, and provide County-wide attractions.

Second, the arts are an economic resource. The earnings of restaurants, hotels, retailers, and parking facilities might well be increased by emphasizing culturally related businesses and activities in Bethesda. A greater cultural emphasis could affect business location decisions and individual job choice, and attract new residents to the downtown.

The "cultural district" theme could inspire public and private facilities dedicated to the performing, visual, or literary arts, such as restaurants with entertainment, small community theaters, galleries, bookstores, and writing centers. Regularly scheduled events- indoor or outdoor-could include plays, concerts, opera, dance performances, film festivals, and poetry readings. Activities could appeal to all ages and ethnic groups and range from barbershop quartets to swing dancing, jazz trios to chamber orchestra, classical drama to mime or puppet theater.

A small professional management staff within the reorganized and privatized Bethesda Urban Partnership (see Section 10.3) would be responsible for arts development, programming, and promotion of cultural events in Bethesda. It could also run a resource center for the public and arts organizations providing information on cultural space availability, event schedules, and performance tickets. A coordinated program of signs, locator maps, banners, kiosks, and other displays could create public awareness of the "cultural district" theme.

Funding would come from many sources. The management operation would be funded under the Bethesda Urban Partnership budget. The corporation could also raise outside funds from institutional, business, and individual sources and from government entities such as the Maryland State Arts Council or the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Plan proposes the following objectives and strategies to realize the goal of a Bethesda "cultural district":

1. Support the local initiative to promote and celebrate the arts in Bethesda. Endorse the management of cultural activities through the Urban Partnership.
2. Endorse the provision of a major, privately funded and operated professional theater in Bethesda.

The ideal facility would be a performance theater with adequate capacity to meet criteria for a viable theater operation. It would have auxiliary spaces to accommodate such uses as rehearsal space, support facilities, and related retail. The site should have high visibility, sufficient size and mix of uses to support the facility economically, easy access to Metro, sufficient public parking, and good pedestrian accessibility.

The owners of the Hot Shoppes site have agreed, within certain parameters, to provide a 400-seat professional theater on their site. The Plan recommends zoning the site CBD-3 and allowing 750,000 square feet of development if a theater, the preferred public benefit, or a specified amount of housing is constructed. (See Section 4.1, Metro Core District.)

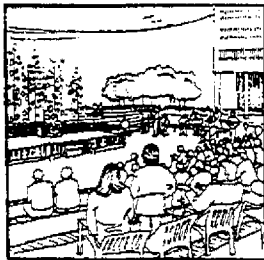


3. Support optional method amenities that strengthen the cultural resources of Bethesda, both historic and arts-related, and that may well serve as anchor activity centers. For example, retention of the Bethesda Theatre Cafe contributes to a stronger cultural and retail environment.
4. Explore a range of other incentives to encourage the provision of cultural facilities and activities. For example, a review of the zoning ordinance requirements for optional method amenities may yield creative new possibilities to encourage cultural features. (See Section 10.1.)

3.2 URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

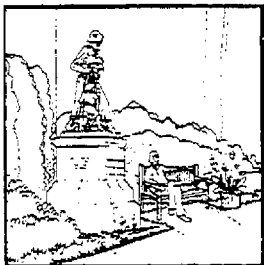
The built environment of Bethesda reflects a maturing CBD with an established Metro Center as the major focus of business and community life. This Plan continues to endorse the concept that more intense development should be located in the central Metro Core District, creating a lively and walkable downtown surrounded by less intense development. The CBD comprises a series of districts and corridors that form its framework. The following urban design objectives emphasize the importance of building upon and improving the existing framework:

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A. GENERAL OBJECTIVES

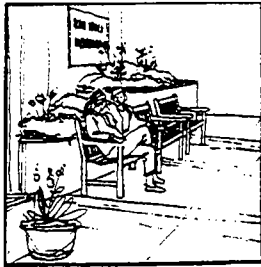
1. Strengthen the existing urban form by improving and reinforcing the districts and transitional areas, open spaces and gathering places, landmarks and focal points.



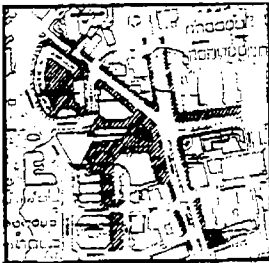
2. Reinforce Bethesda's sense of community by encouraging attractive environments that refer to Bethesda's cultural heritage and emphasize the more recent design themes of Bethesda as a "garden" and a "cultural district." Encourage use of local building materials, such as the Bethesda stone.



3. Provide street-activating uses, such as retail stores with storefront display windows or building entrances. Activating uses help promote a safe, interesting, and lively environment.



4. Enhance the pedestrian environment to provide a visually diverse and stimulating experience, maximize social interaction, and encourage walking. Special attention should be given to the design of streetscapes to help maintain human scale, achieve good street definition, and enhance the visual character.



5. Extend the network of open spaces to serve the needs of an expanding population for a diverse range of activities in spaces that are safe, visible, and perceived as public.

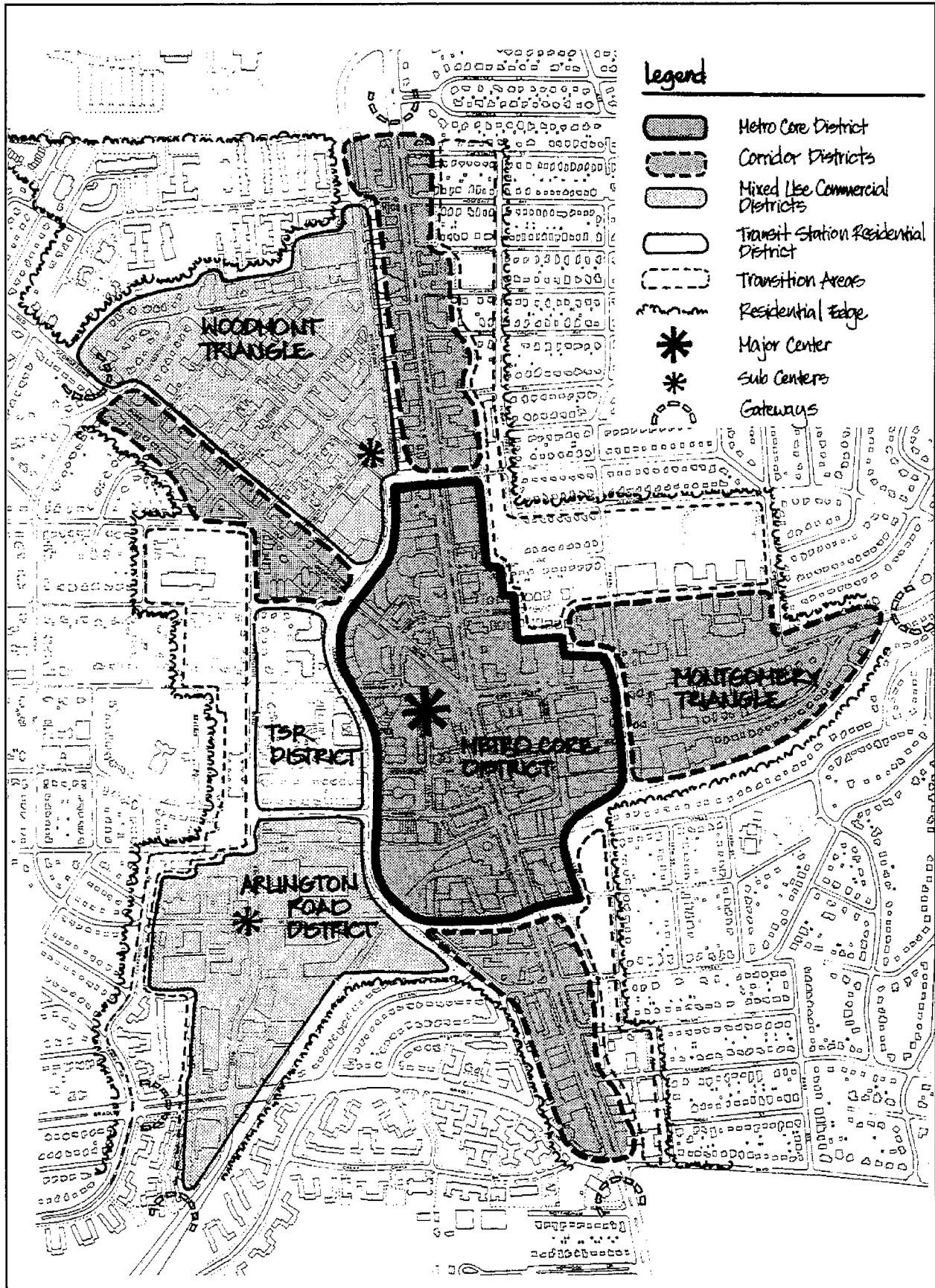


6. Improve compatibility with existing uses through urban design concepts and guidelines that address form, shadows and skyline, building heights, scale, massing, and set-backs. In general, new development should respect established patterns of development.

B. URBAN FORM

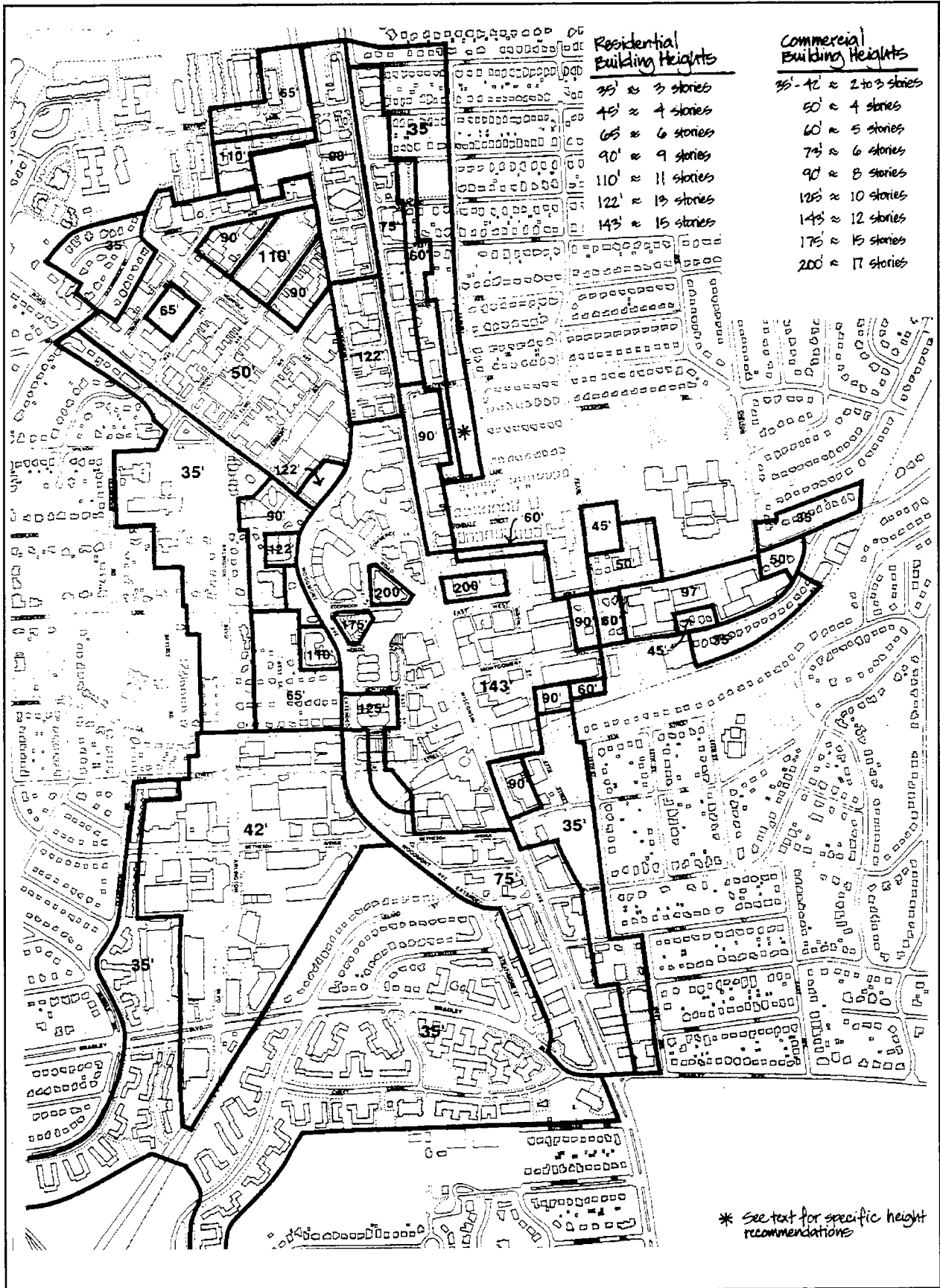
Bethesda's urban form has been guided by land use planning since the mid 1970's. The earlier plans provided a foundation for the current districts by recommending land uses, densities, and streets that helped define the district areas and boundaries.

The prior plans organized the CBD in a manner that focused the majority of new growth in the heart of the CBD, the Metro Core District. The major center has developed at the traditional crossroads of Wisconsin Avenue, East-West Highway, and Old Georgetown Road, where the Metro station and the tallest buildings are found. Around the Metro Center, development steps down in density and building heights to the residential edges. The major street system also organizes the CBD into distinct districts such as the Woodmont Triangle and the Transit Station Residential District. Several of these districts are large enough to have sub-centers. Along the residential edges, there are land uses that serve as transitions between single family neighborhoods and CBD development. (See the Framework Concept, Figure 3.1, for an illustration of Bethesda's underlying structure.)



BUILDING HEIGHT LIMITS

FIGURE 3.2



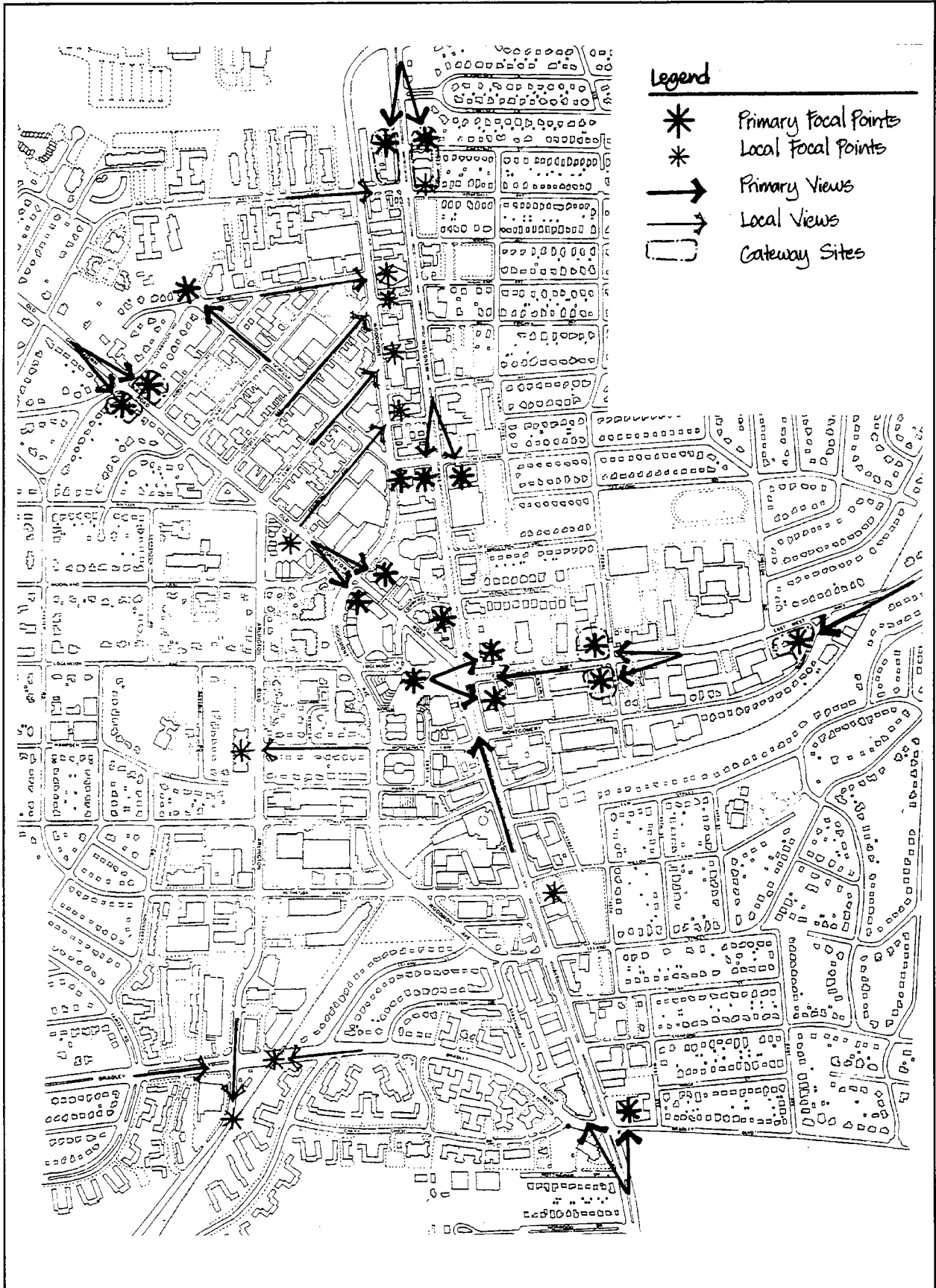


The proposed urban form principles acknowledge the existing framework as a viable pattern on which to build. In general, the current pattern should be maintained and perimeter edges strengthened. The urban form principles are as follows:

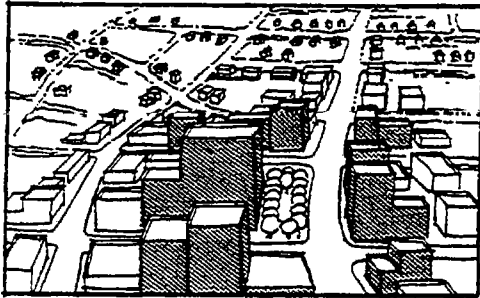
1. Focus the highest densities within the Metro Core District to achieve a tightly configured center, while improving transitions to the residential edges.
2. Step down building heights from the Bethesda Metro Center properties to achieve desirable and compatible transitions to adjacent areas. Buildings that are located at the edge of a district where taller heights are allowed should step down with intermediate heights toward the adjacent district with lower allowable heights. (See Figure 3.2, Building Height Limits, for recommended heights based on the zoning requirements for optional method development and, in some cases, on the need to create compatible transitions. For height limits for development under the standard method, see the zoning ordinance.)
3. Achieve an infill character for new development by dividing large projects into several buildings, which will achieve an urban form with a “fine grain” versus a “coarse grain” created by larger, single structures.
4. Design new buildings that respond to views and vistas within the CBD to create focal points and landmarks that improve the orientation and strengthen the perception of existing centers. Certain parcels are identified as gateway sites and should be developed in a manner that acknowledges this visual aspect of the site. (See Figure 3.3, Views and Focal Points, for identification of important views.)
5. Treat rooftops as sculptural elements that contribute to the visual interest of the skyline. Where appropriate, consider rooftops as usable outdoor space for recreational or commercial purposes.
6. Allow a diversity of architectural styles that achieve good building proportions, reduce the sense of bulk, and maintain human scale. Clearly identify the building entrance in the facade design and locate it at street level.
7. Achieve compatibility with nearby residential areas through techniques such as stepped down heights, articulated building walls and facade treatments, and other architectural means designed to minimize building bulk and shadow impacts, and create a gradual transition.
8. Achieve energy efficiency in the form and design of the building by such means as recessed windows or awnings to shade interiors from direct sunlight. (See Urban Form Principles, Figure 3.4.)

VIEWS AND FOCAL POINTS

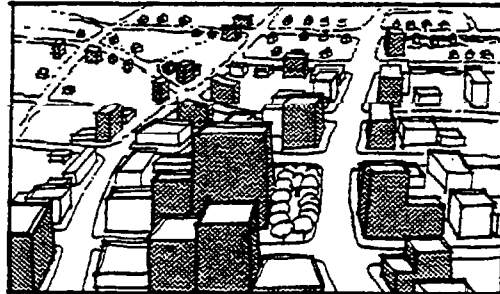
FIGURE 3.3



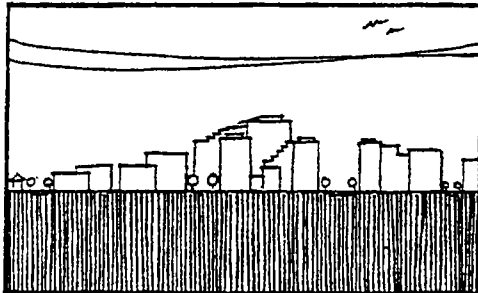
1. Achieve a concentrated center.



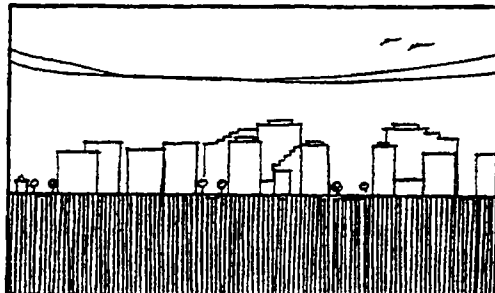
1. Avoid dispersal.



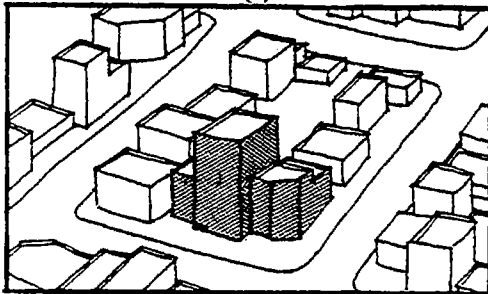
2. Step down building heights.



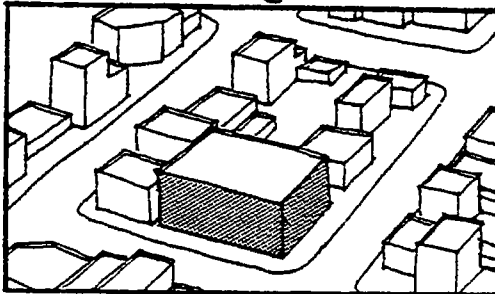
2. Avoid uniform building heights.



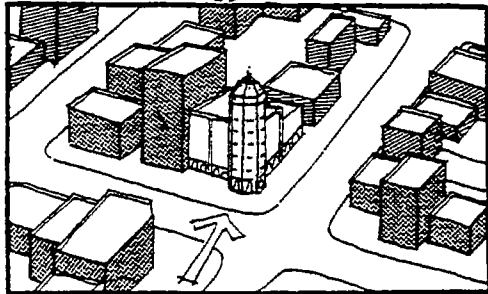
3. Achieve a "fine-grain" texture.



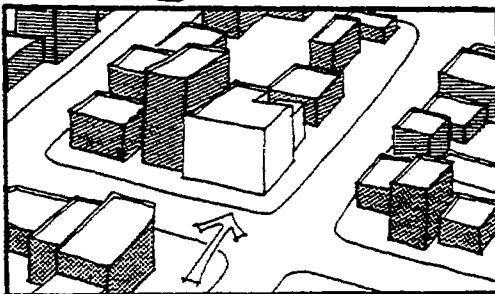
3. Avoid a "coarse-grain" texture.



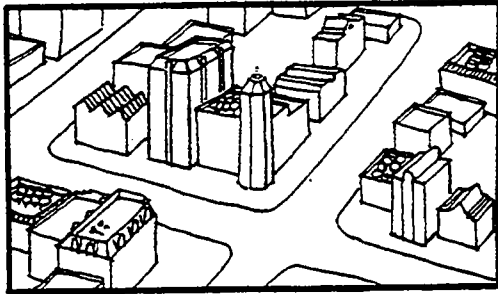
4. Take advantage of views.



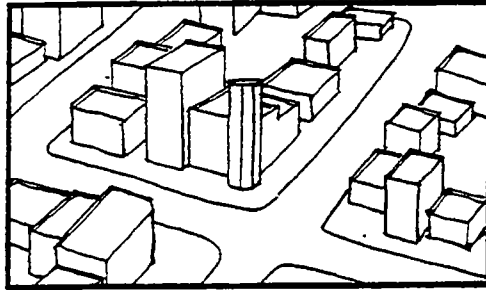
4. Do not ignore views.



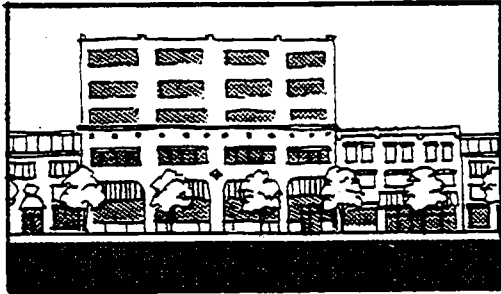
5. Design rooftops for visual interest.



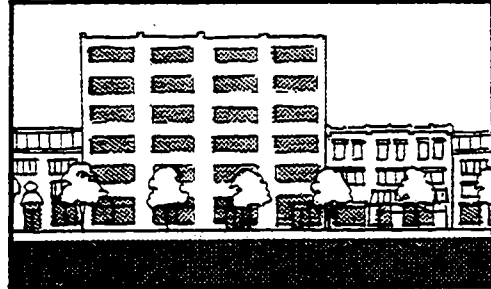
5. Avoid lack of design attention.



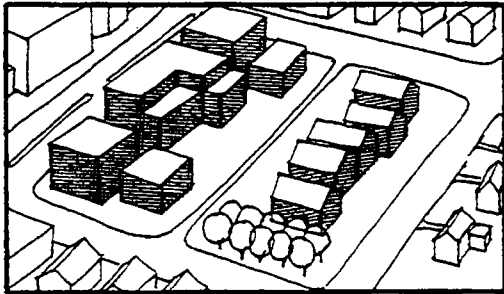
6. Achieve compatible building styles.



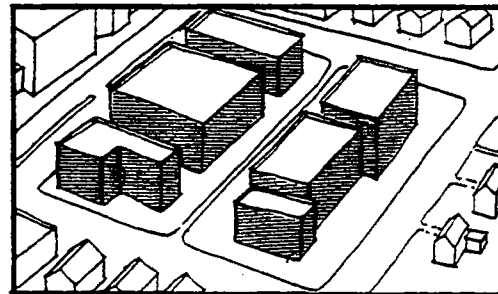
6. Avoid incompatible building styles.



7. Achieve compatible transitions.



7. Avoid incompatible transitions.





C. OPEN SPACE

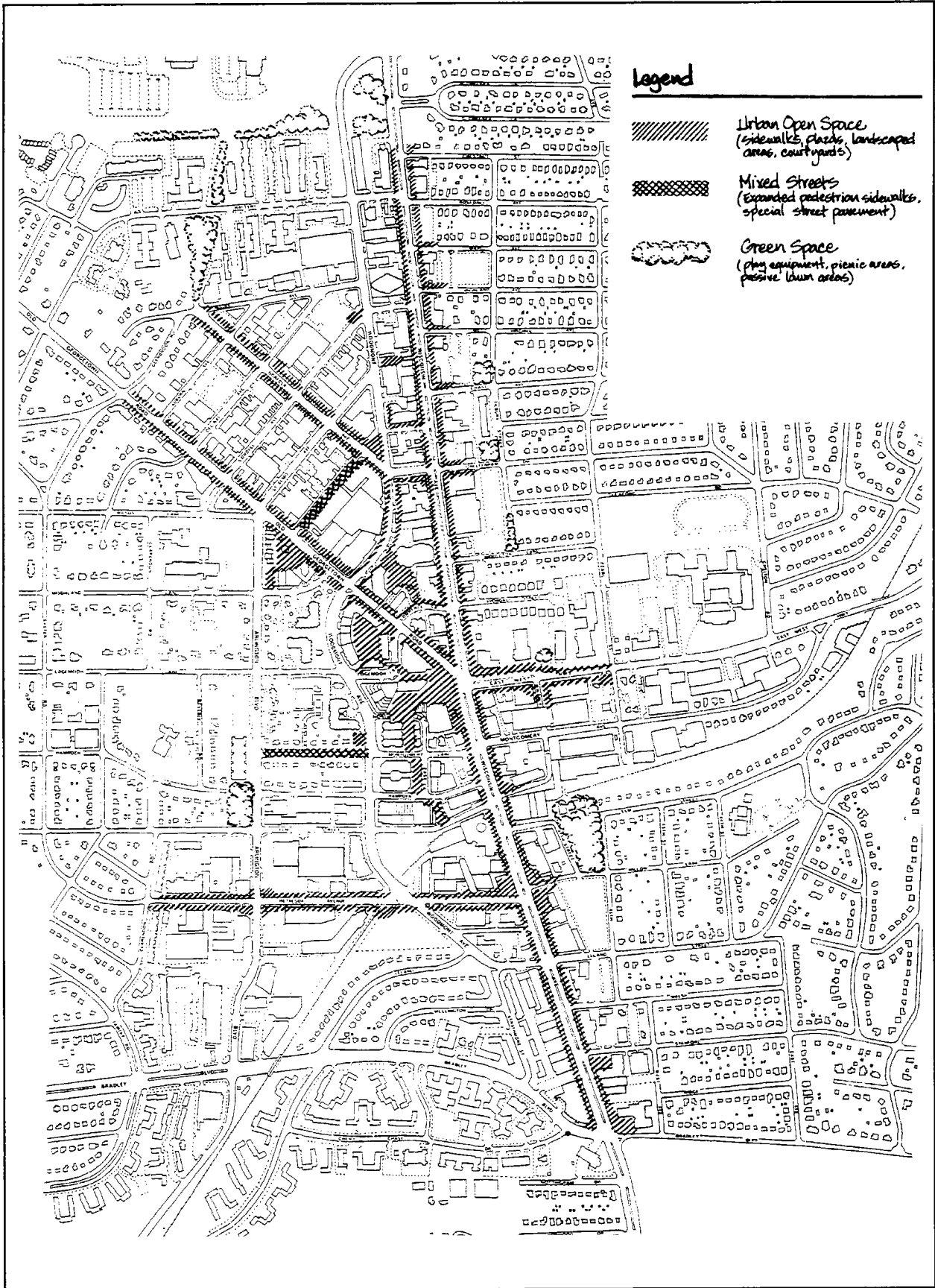
Bethesda's current open space system is dispersed throughout the CBD in an inner and outer network of spaces. The inner network, with its more urban character, is formed by the paved plazas at Metro Center, surrounded by a series of smaller urban spaces connected to Metro Center via an upgraded streetscape system. This interconnected system is known as the "Discovery Trail." It is illustrated in Figure 4.7 of the Land Use Plan. The outer network, at the edge of the CBD, is primarily a series of parks and green open spaces of various sizes. These perimeter parks provide visual buffers for the residential neighborhoods as well as recreational opportunities. (See Figure 3.5, Open Space Concept, for an illustration of existing and proposed open spaces.) The following figure 3.3 discussion highlights key recommendations. For a detailed discussion of the proposed open spaces within each district and area, see Chapter 4, the Land Use Plan.

As new development occurs in the Sector Plan area, the network of urban open spaces and parks should be expanded to meet the growing needs. Within the Metro Core District, new open space should be provided in a way that ties into the existing network. It should be developed with a character that reflects Bethesda as a "garden," a unifying design theme of the 1984 optional method developments. There is also an opportunity to expand the Discovery Trail on the northeast side of Wisconsin Avenue and create an eastern "loop" of the trail around the Metro. This loop will improve pedestrian access in general by providing an alternative route away from the major street corridors.

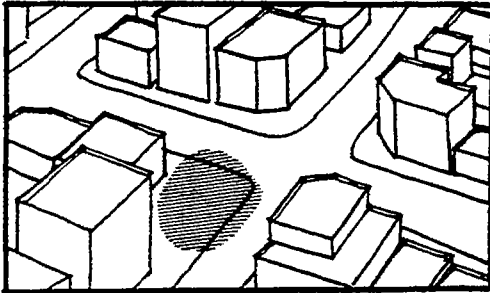
For sidewalk areas outside the Metro Core District, the Plan recommends that the major and secondary pedestrian routes identified in Figure 3.7, Pathways and Places, be developed as linear open spaces. Sidewalks can function as open spaces if bordered by activating uses and developed with seating, shade, and other amenities. The wider the sidewalk, the more one perceives it as a space. Since these important pedestrian routes typically occur along the Urban Boulevards and Main Streets such as Wisconsin Avenue and Norfolk Avenue, the sidewalks along these streets should be developed with a higher level of pedestrian amenity than typically found along an urban street.

The Plan also recommends several Mixed Streets to create special linear open spaces next to activating uses, such as residential development in the TS-R District and restaurants in the Woodmont Triangle. In a Mixed Street, vehicular volumes and travel speeds are so low that pedestrians and vehicles easily coexist. Implementation of the Mixed Street is dependent on further study of safety and operational issues by the County Department of Transportation. For further discussion of Main Streets and Mixed Streets, see Chapter 6, the Streetscape Plan.

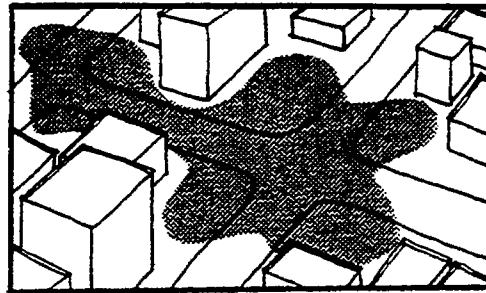
In addition to the development of urban and linear open spaces, there is a need to provide more traditional parks and green open spaces within the Sector Plan area, as Bethesda continues to grow. There are opportunities to expand existing parks, such as the Battery Lane Urban Park, and to create new green open spaces. Specific recommendations are located in the Land Use Plan for each district or area and in Chapter 8, Community Facilities.



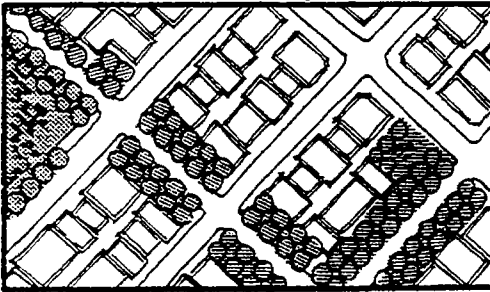
1. Achieve well-defined open space.



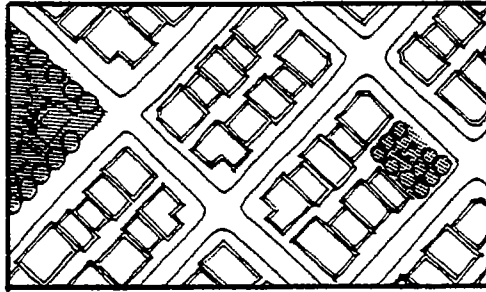
1. Avoid poorly defined open space.



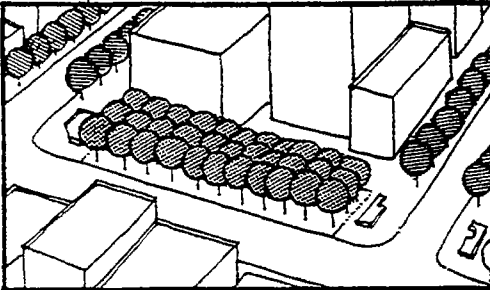
2. Create a network of spaces.



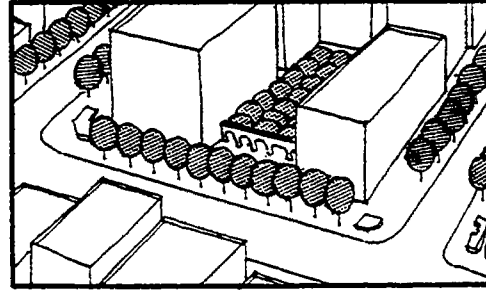
2. Avoid disconnected spaces.



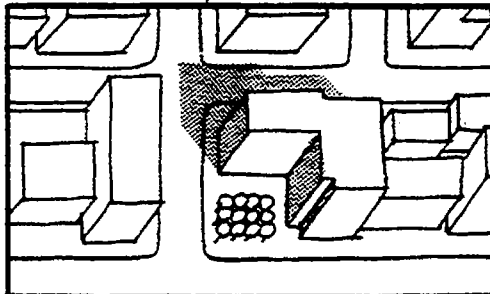
3. Create visible and defensible spaces.



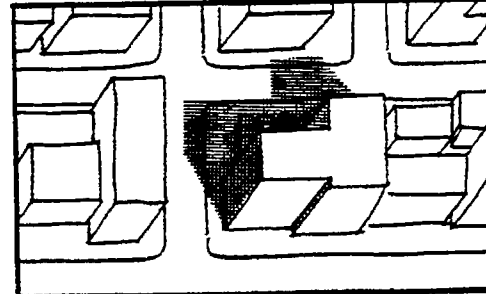
3. Avoid isolated spaces.



4. Achieve good environmental relationships.



4. Avoid undesirable impacts.



The following open space principles are general and are intended to help guide redevelopment in a manner that achieves useful, attractive, and defensible spaces. (See Figure 3.6.)

1. Arrange buildings, where appropriate, to form well defined, visible open spaces that relate well to the surrounding context. Open spaces in an urban setting are defined by building edges: the taller the building edge within recommended limits, the stronger the sense of visual containment. Good spatial definition is important to achieving a comfortable sense of human scale and proportion.
2. Expand the existing network of open spaces so that it responds to existing pedestrian movements and, if possible, connect new open spaces to the existing network.
3. Locate open space in a manner that achieves easy access and good visibility from the street so that the open space is perceived as public. Avoid locating open space in isolated and less defensible areas.
4. Design buildings to avoid undesirable environmental impacts on adjacent open spaces and other properties. Environmental factors to consider include sun, wind, noise, shadow, and reflection.
5. Locate garage and emission exhaust systems away from fresh air intakes, public plazas, and pedestrian ways.
6. Locate street level, activating uses such as storefront retail, restaurants, or office building entrances next to existing and future open spaces to encourage use.
7. Locate open space to meet expanded needs of new employees and residents.

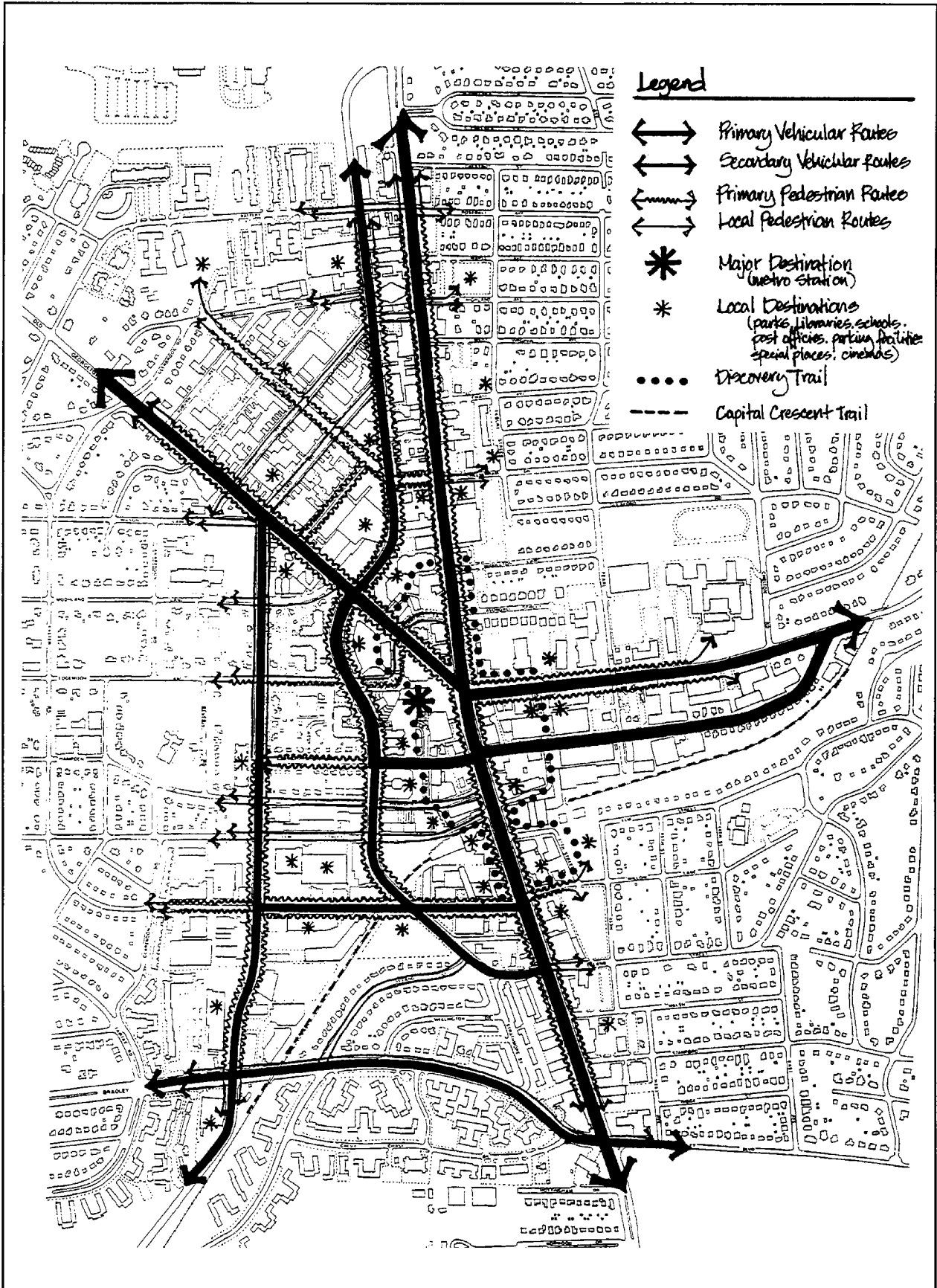
D. PATHWAYS

In a transit served CBD, a well developed network of pedestrian pathways is critical to encourage use of transit and to encourage walking to local destinations. Fortunately, Bethesda has developed in recent years a good network of pedestrian pathways in the Metro Core District and has enhanced this network with upgraded streetscapes.

Because of the significant number of destinations in the Metro Core District, especially along Wisconsin Avenue, major pedestrian routes are found along the streets serving the Metro Core. Primary pedestrian routes also occur along streets that provide a connection from the surrounding districts to the Metro Core, such as Woodmont or Bethesda Avenues. With a few exceptions, existing sidewalks provide adequate pedestrian access within the Sector Plan area. For a more detailed discussion of pedestrian circulation, see Section 5.4.

As additional development occurs in the Sector Plan area, there is a need for a more comprehensive network of pathways. This network should respond to existing and new destinations, and create attractive new connections to encourage walking.

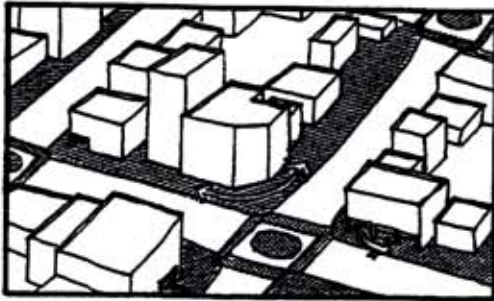
Figure 3.7, Pathways and Places, illustrates the existing and proposed pathways. The recommendations for each district and area are discussed in detail in the Land Use Plan. Specific streetscape improvements for these pathways are listed in Chapter 6, the Streetscape Plan.



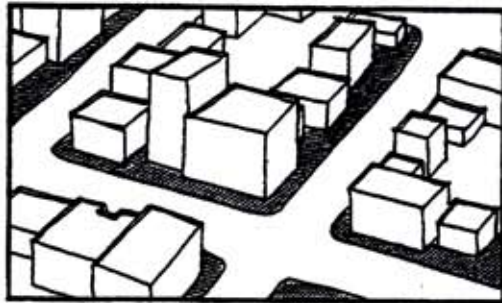
The following pathway principles are general and are intended to help redevelopment achieve good pedestrian access:

1. Expand the network of pathways in a manner that responds to major pedestrian movements. Site buildings to facilitate public access, especially at street corners, and provide street crosswalks where important pedestrian movements occur.
2. Where new streets are recommended, achieve short block lengths of 300 to 350 feet, which are comparable to the majority of block lengths found in the CBD. Short blocks are more pedestrian friendly than long blocks.
3. Emphasize the pedestrian environment along streets. Design buildings to provide visual interest and human scale at the street level, adjacent to sidewalks. Architectural facades should incorporate interesting details, store-front display windows, and front entrances to enliven and activate the sidewalks.
4. Use upgraded streetscape elements such as special pavers, lighting, tightly spaced trees, and other features to enhance significant pedestrian pathways, visually define distinct districts, and improve the overall attractiveness of the CBD.
5. Minimize pedestrian-vehicular conflicts by locating auto-related functions such as parking lots, service areas, and loading docks to the rear of properties and screened from view. In most CBD areas, parking should be located underground to maximize use of the parcel for residential or commercial uses and to emphasize the pedestrian orientation of the street frontage.
6. Recognize Wisconsin Avenue as Bethesda's primary Main Street; orient major building entrances and active uses along this street. Achieve at least a 20-foot sidewalk width along Wisconsin Avenue within the Metro Core District and a 15-foot width along other streets to ensure adequate space for pedestrians and streetscape. (See Pathway Principles, Figure 3.8.)

1. Respond to existing pedestrian movements.



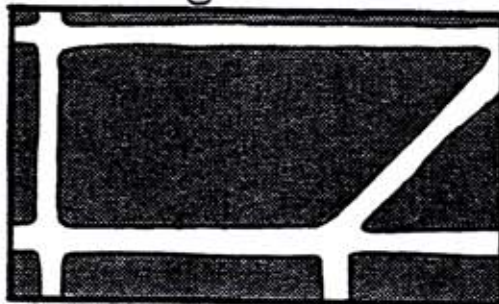
1. Avoid restricting pedestrian movements.



2. Achieve short, walkable blocks.



2. Avoid long, unwalkable blocks.



3. Animate facades along pathway



3. Avoid blank walls along pathway



4. Provide upgraded streetscapes to encourage pedestrian activity



4. Avoid bleak streetscapes which discourage walking.

