

# LAND USE AND ZONING PLAN

## A. INTRODUCTION

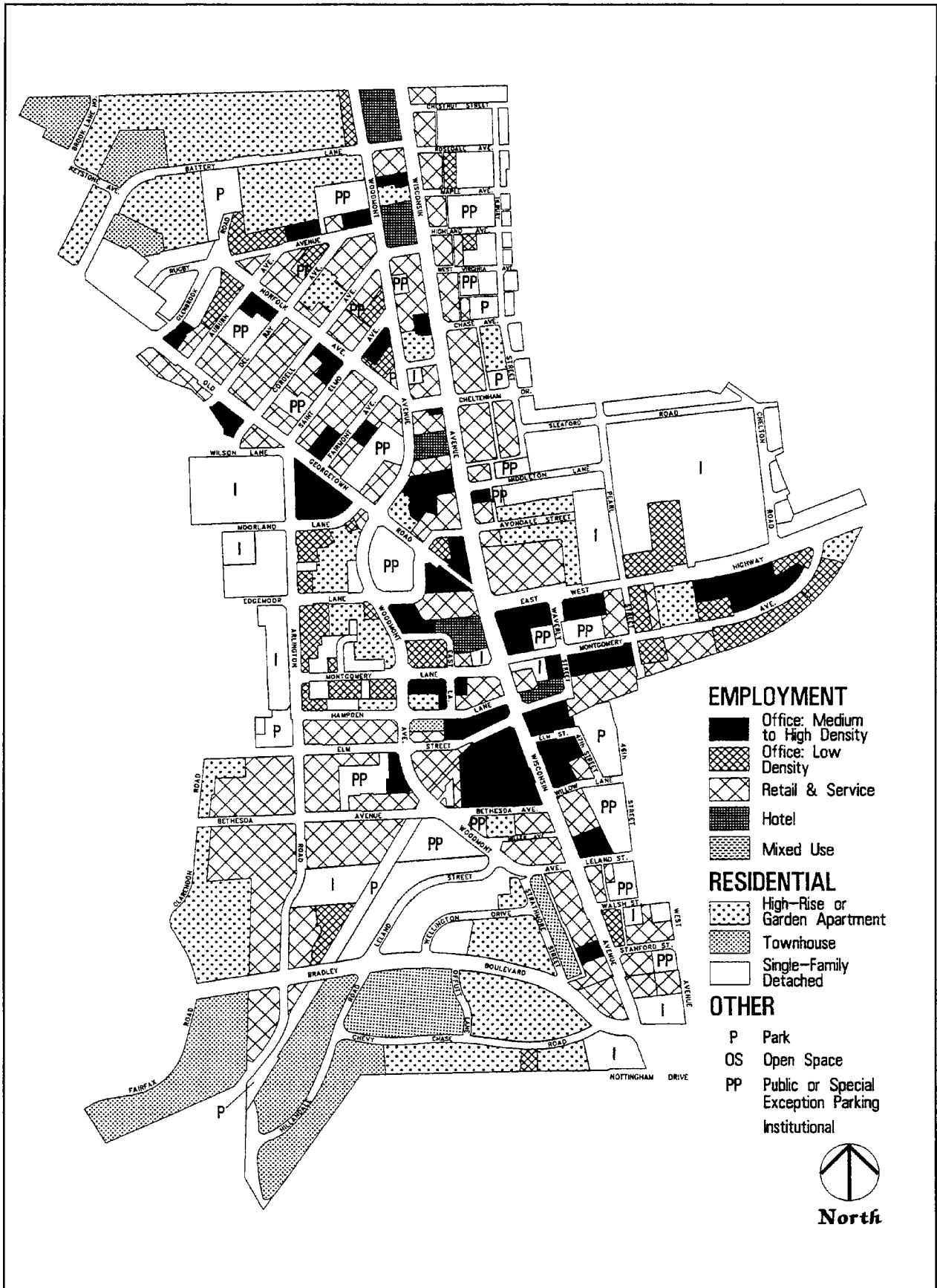
The Plan envisions the continuation of the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan area as a regional employment center, assuming a policy of using the Bethesda infrastructure rather than spreading employment throughout the County. Public benefits and amenities associated with optional method projects will add vitality. More retail stores, restaurants, and service businesses will meet the needs of an enlarged working and residential population and can also expand service to regional markets. The Plan estimates an ultimate buildout (at or beyond the year 2010) of about 16,400 jobs, a 43 percent increase above existing levels.

The Plan also envisions establishing a stronger housing component in the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan area to house more CBD employees and lessen commuter traffic congestion. An increase in housing will enhance the 24-hour vitality of the CBD. The Plan estimates an ultimate buildout of about 2,700 additional units, a 48 percent increase above current levels. Figure 4.1 shows the existing land use in 1992 and Figure 4.2 the existing zoning. The Plan recommends confirming all zoning within the Sector Plan boundary except where zoning changes are proposed and illustrated on recommended zoning plans. Figure 4.3 shows recommended zoning.

## B. CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

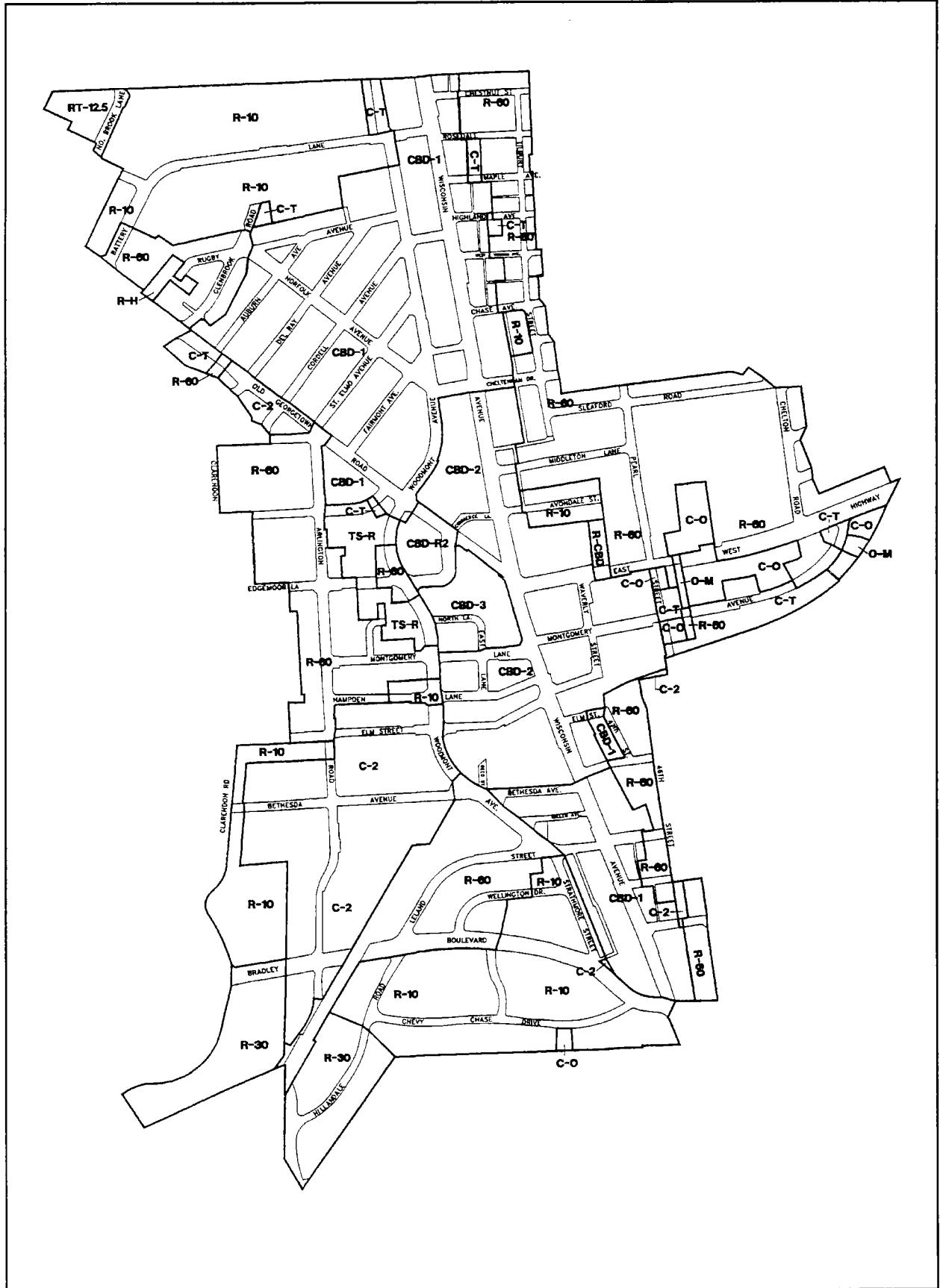
The Land Use Plan is organized by district. (See Figure 4.4.) Within each section there is first a description of the district, followed by a list of objectives, a series of recommendations, and a set of urban design guidelines. In the Metro Core District, the text combines recommendations and design guidelines for the district as a whole, followed by those for several key properties.

Figures presenting future land use and recommended zoning occur in each section. The land use plans reflect expected changes to some land uses and retention of others, presenting an estimate of the long term land uses that could occur, given the Sector Plan recommendations. Changes will occur as owners respond to the variety of land use choices available as a result of the zoning on the property. While in some cases owners will choose to redevelop at the highest density allowed, in other cases owners will retain the existing use or build to a lower density.



# EXISTING ZONING

# FIGURE 4.2





The graphic symbols in the land use plans represent either employment or residential uses. For vacant parcels, the symbol that corresponds to the existing zoning is used on the existing land use map (Figure 4.1). The following categories of land uses are shown on the map of existing land uses and on the land use plans for each district:

**Office, Medium to High Density:** Includes predominately office use of 2 FAR or more.

**Office, Low Density:** Includes predominately office use of less than 2 FAR in a building of four or more floors.

**Retail and Service:** Includes retail or service businesses on the ground floor of a building with less than 2 FAR and up to three floors.

**Hotel:** Includes both commercial and residential hotels.

**High-Rise or Garden Apartment:** Includes predominately residential use in a multi-story building, not including townhouse structures.

**Townhouse:** Includes predominately residential use in a townhouse-style structure.

**Single-Family Detached:** Includes single-family structures in an area zoned for single-family detached housing.

**Mixed Use:** Includes both residential and employment uses where either use occupies at least 33 percent of the floor area.

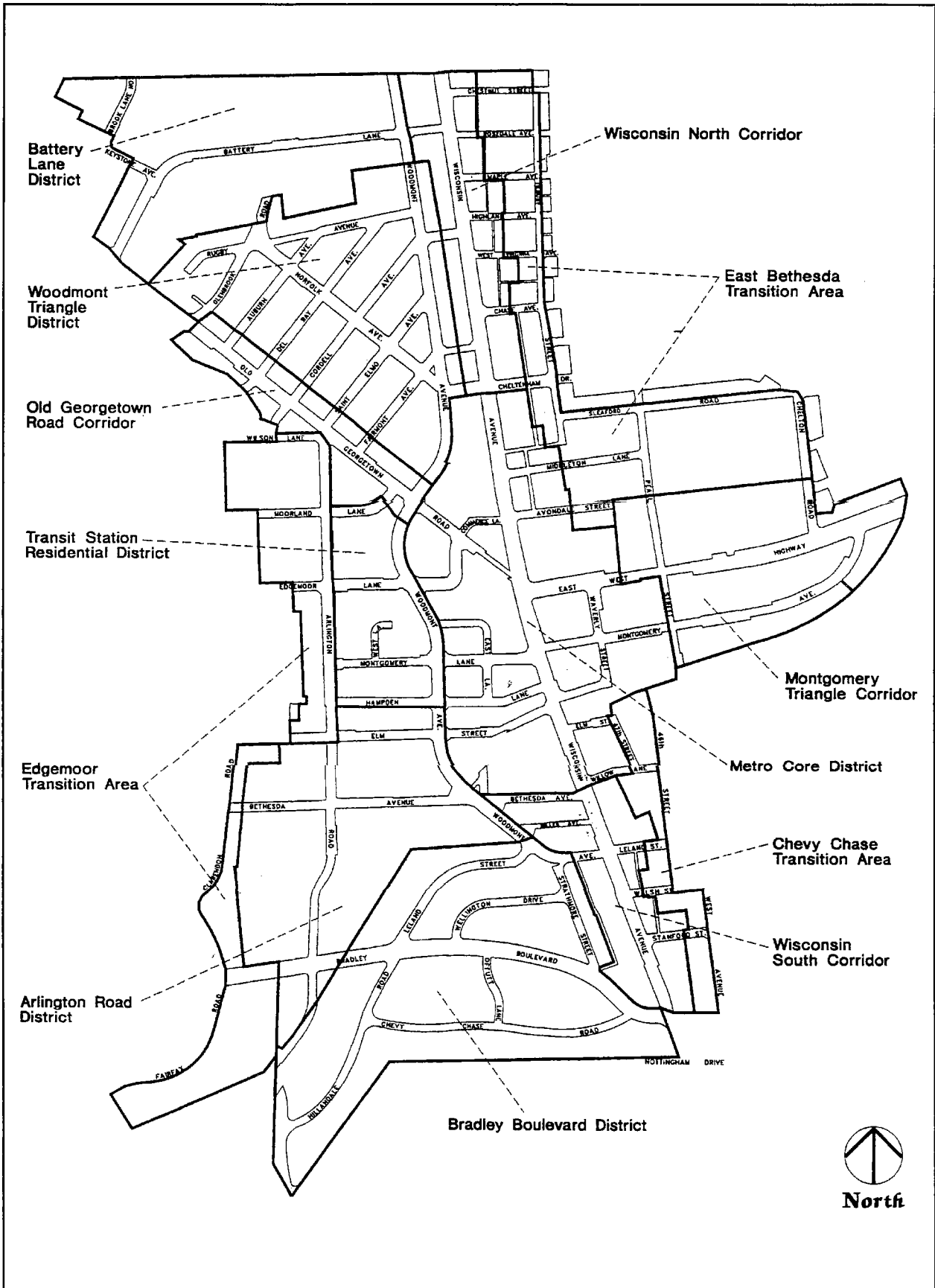
The letters indicate parks (P), open space (OS), public or special exception parking sites (PP), and institutional or public uses (I). The zoning plans designate recommended zones for specific sites. Where there is a floating zone, it is indicated in parentheses below the base Euclidean zone.

In addition to land use and zoning recommendations, each section includes an illustration of the Urban Design Guidelines for the district. The guidelines are intended to direct infill development and redevelopment to achieve a coherent and compatible urban form. Guidelines are applied as part of the process for approving new development or redevelopment. They address the following features:

**Building Line:** An edge created by a building wall or facade. The location of the building line next to the sidewalk is a key element in achieving an attractive and lively pedestrian environment.

**Urban Open Space:** Plazas, courtyards, landscaped areas, wide sidewalks, and other pedestrian passages. The Plan recommends an inner network of such spaces, the Discovery Trail, in the Metro Core District.

**Green Open Space:** Public parks or private landscaped spaces with play equipment, picnic areas, and/or passive lawn areas. The Plan recommends an outer network of such spaces at the edge of the CBD.



**Mixed Street:** A street which emphasizes pedestrian circulation while allowing limited, slow vehicular traffic.

**Primary Pedestrian Paths:** A major route for people to walk, often to sites within the Metro Core.

**Local Pedestrian Paths:** A minor route for people to walk, often to sites outside the Metro Core.

**Gateways:** Symbolic entrances to the CBD or to a district, which should be enhanced by special architectural or landscape treatment.

## 4.1 THE METRO CORE DISTRICT

### A. DESCRIPTION

The Metro Core District is the center of downtown Bethesda. The Core contains the highest intensities of building and the largest concentration of employees. It is also a major transportation hub. The district extends from Cheltenham Drive on the north to Bethesda Avenue on the south, and from Woodmont Avenue on the west to Pearl Street on the east. Portions of the Metro Core are located near existing single-family residential areas.

The Metro Core is primarily a commercial area, containing both retail and office uses. Among numerous large office buildings are older ones predating the 1976 Plan, such as the Air Rights Building, the buildings at the Bethesda Metro Center, and newer office buildings from the “competition” of the 1980s. The primary types of retail are restaurants (26 percent) and professional services (24 percent). Professional services include banking and real estate. The area also contains the Bethesda Theatre Cafe and the United Artists Cinemas. Chevy Chase Chevyland provides auto sales. There are three hotels: Hyatt, Marriott, and Manor Inn. The largest residential uses in the Metro Core are Bethesda Place, Hampden Square, Waverly House, and some townhouses. A Safeway grocery store is located in the Bethesda Place complex.

The Metro Core District, consistent with adopted planning principles, has the tallest buildings. Building heights step down from the 200-foot Clark Building to the surrounding 143-foot heights allowed in the CBD-2 Zone. Buildings at Bethesda and Wisconsin Avenues provide a gateway open space at the corner. A number of potentially high-density sites remain to be developed. Two with approved projects are the Lorenz property and Garage 49, a mixed-use project. Major redevelopment potential remains on the Hot Shoppes site, Miller property, and properties along Commerce Lane. Some smaller sites have potential for low-density standard method development.



The Bethesda Metro Center provides a focus of activity, a town center, by providing a mix of uses and a major community gathering place. The hotel, food court, and transit station attract people, and there are often community and entertainment events. Daytime and evening use of restaurants, shops, and cinemas add activity to the center. The surrounding area contains projects with smaller plaza spaces, many of which are interconnected to form a "Discovery Trail" network to the west of Wisconsin Avenue. The upgraded streetscape and plazas, which follow the "garden" design theme and provide public art, have created a high-quality urban district in the heart of Bethesda.

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

1. Strengthen the Metro Core as the center of Bethesda, with greatest emphasis on and around the Metro Center and plaza.
2. Increase the choices and activities in the Metro Core associated with retail, restaurants, cultural programming, open space, and pathways.
3. Develop a compact core that places the highest intensity in the center, provides distinctive infill buildings, and steps down to lower densities and heights near the edge of the district.
4. Emphasize employment near Metro transit to complete Metro Core development.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS AND URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

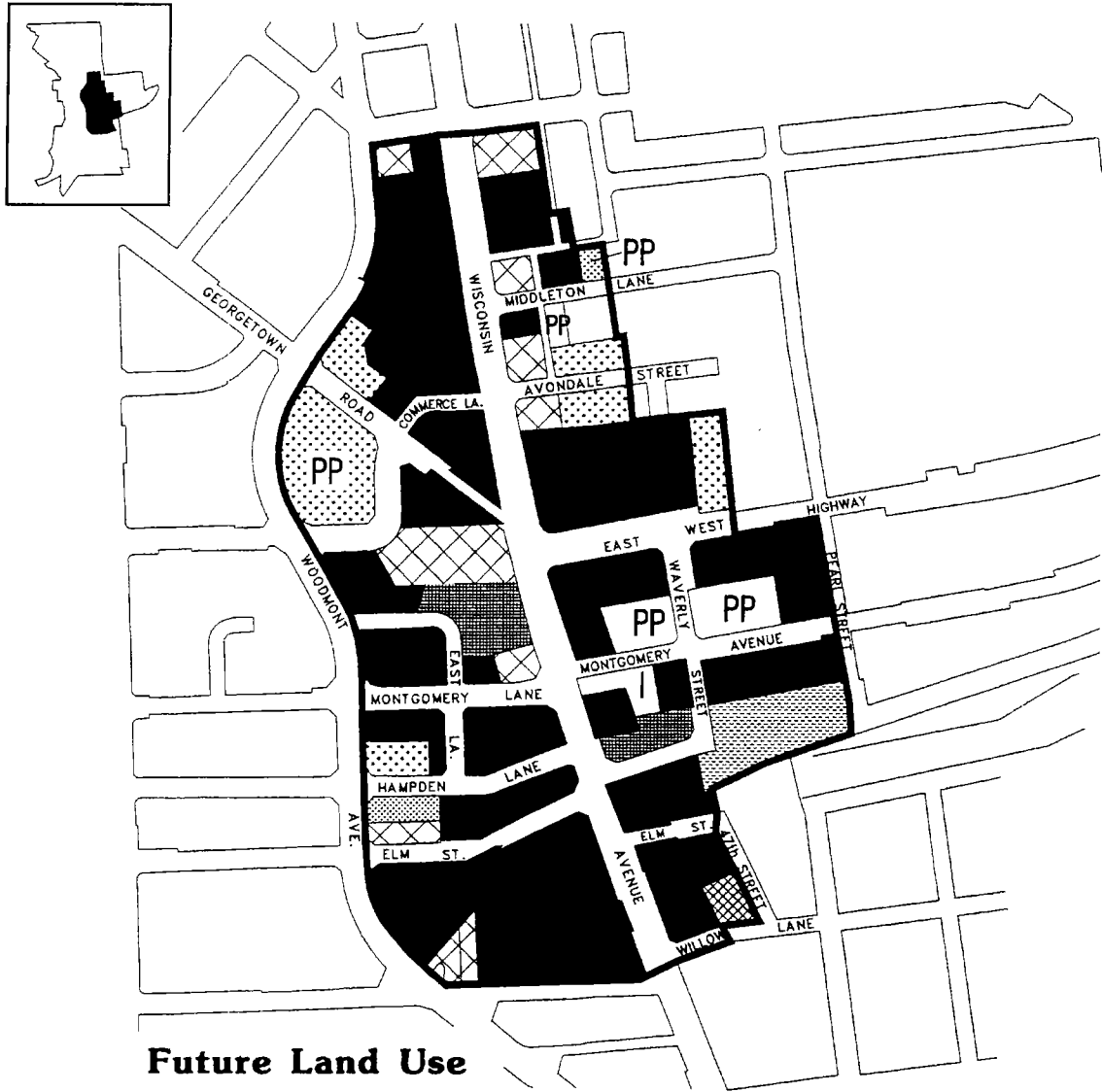
### **1. METRO CORE DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The land use recommendations for the Metro Core District emphasize employment land uses, but include potential for some additional residential uses. (See Figure 4.5.) Major new optional method projects would generate substantial public benefits and amenities, possibly including a professional theater. Although this subsection discusses most of the properties in the Metro Core District, subsections 2 through 7 address specific major properties. (See recommended zoning in Figure 4.6.)

The Sector Plan recommends optional method employment uses on most CBD-2 sites, at 4 FAR. Optional method residential use is also allowed at 5 FAR. Some new housing may be provided, since the CBD-2 Zone allows a high percentage of commercial use as an incentive in mixed-use projects.

On the Garage 49 site, owned by Montgomery County, the Plan recommends the CBD-R2 Zone. A predominately residential mixed-use project was approved for this site in the 1980's. An amended site plan has been submitted to increase the amount of affordable housing within the project, retain a small office building for County government use, and retain the approved day care center.





**EMPLOYMENT**

- Office: Medium to High Density
- Office: Low Density
- Retail & Service
- Hotel
- Mixed Use

**RESIDENTIAL**

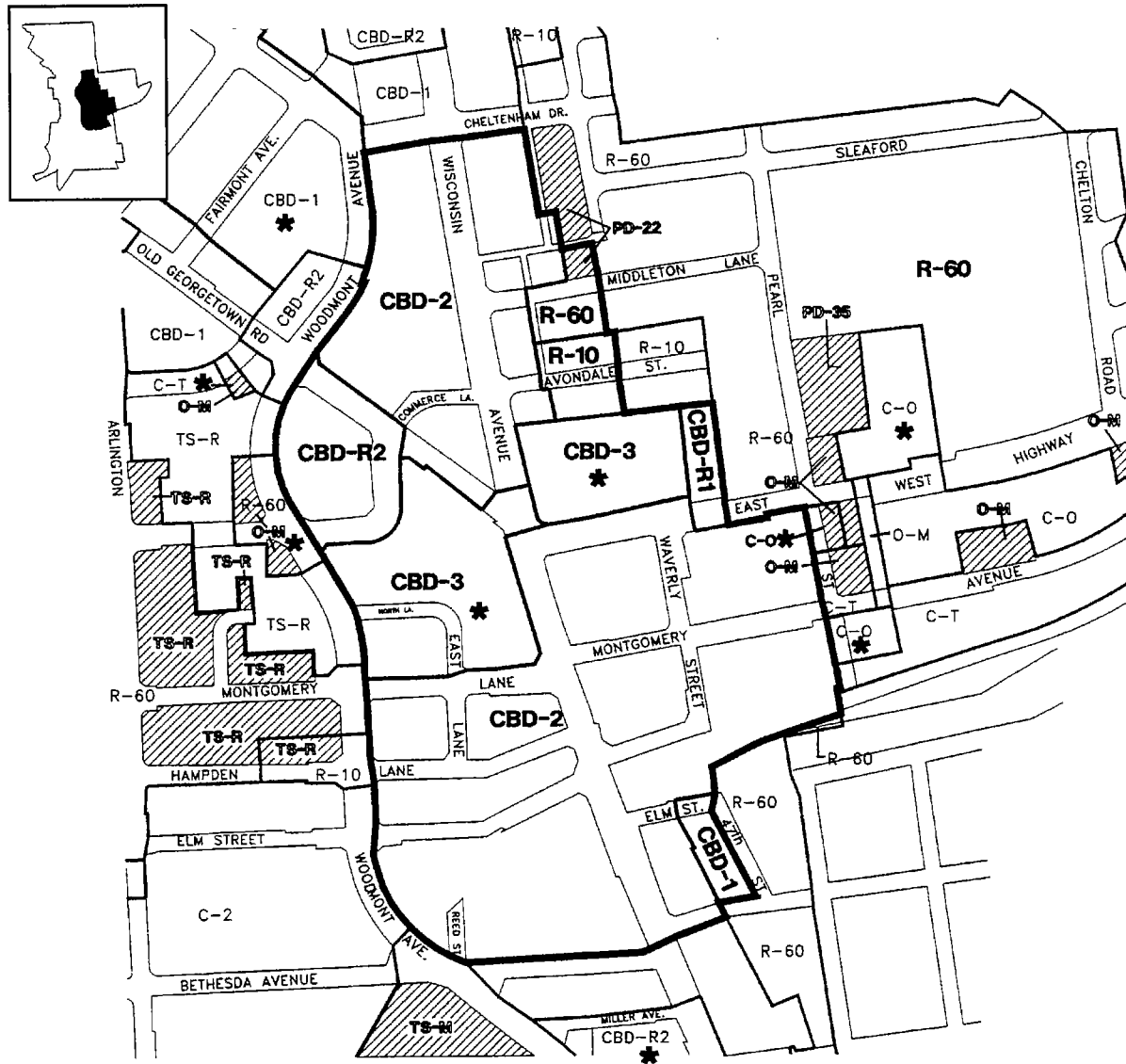
- High-Rise or Garden Apartment
- Townhouse
- Single-Family Detached

**OTHER**

- OS Open Space
- PP Public or Special Exception Parking
- I Institutional



**North**



page  
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- R-10** RECOMMENDED BASE ZONE
- R-10** (with hatching) RECOMMENDED FLOATING ZONE
- \*** SEE DENSITY LIMITS IN TEXT
- +** SEE TEXT

**Recommended Zoning**



North

On the parking deck of the second Air Rights Building, the Plan recommends a small residential building, if compatibility with the adjacent single-family area is maintained. Development should have a maximum height of 90 feet, stepping down to 60 feet toward Pearl Street. The building height should include the existing parking structure. There should be no development on that portion of the deck that abuts the single-family detached houses along Elm Street.

Larger office projects could occur on the Lorenz site, the Hot Shoppes site, along Wisconsin Avenue going north to Cheltenham Drive, and on the Miller property at Elm Street and Woodmont Avenue, discussed below. In the block containing the Metro Center, individual properties should be permitted to develop under the CBD-3 optional method, provided that the overall density of the area retains an average of 4 FAR, including streets, open space, and public facilities. A number of smaller sites would also qualify for optional office development or standard method development.

The Metro Core District should be “infill” in nature and all development should follow the general Sector Plan urban design objectives and principles identified in Section 3.2. The following additional guidelines apply to the Metro Core District (see Figure 4.7):



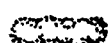

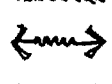
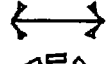


- a. Reinforce Metro Center as the focus of urban activity. Adjacent properties should develop in a manner that complements the activities and urban open space at Metro Center.
- b. Maintain a compact development with the tallest buildings concentrated in the center. Development at perimeter locations of the Metro Core should step down in height to achieve a more gradual transition and better compatibility with the adjacent areas.
- c. Locate new open space to tie into the existing “Discovery Trail” network and to expand the pedestrian connections. Where appropriate, locate new open space in a manner that reinforces the gateways and provides a transition between districts.
- d. Step down the building height to six floors along East-West Highway for the McDonald’s property on Pearl Street.

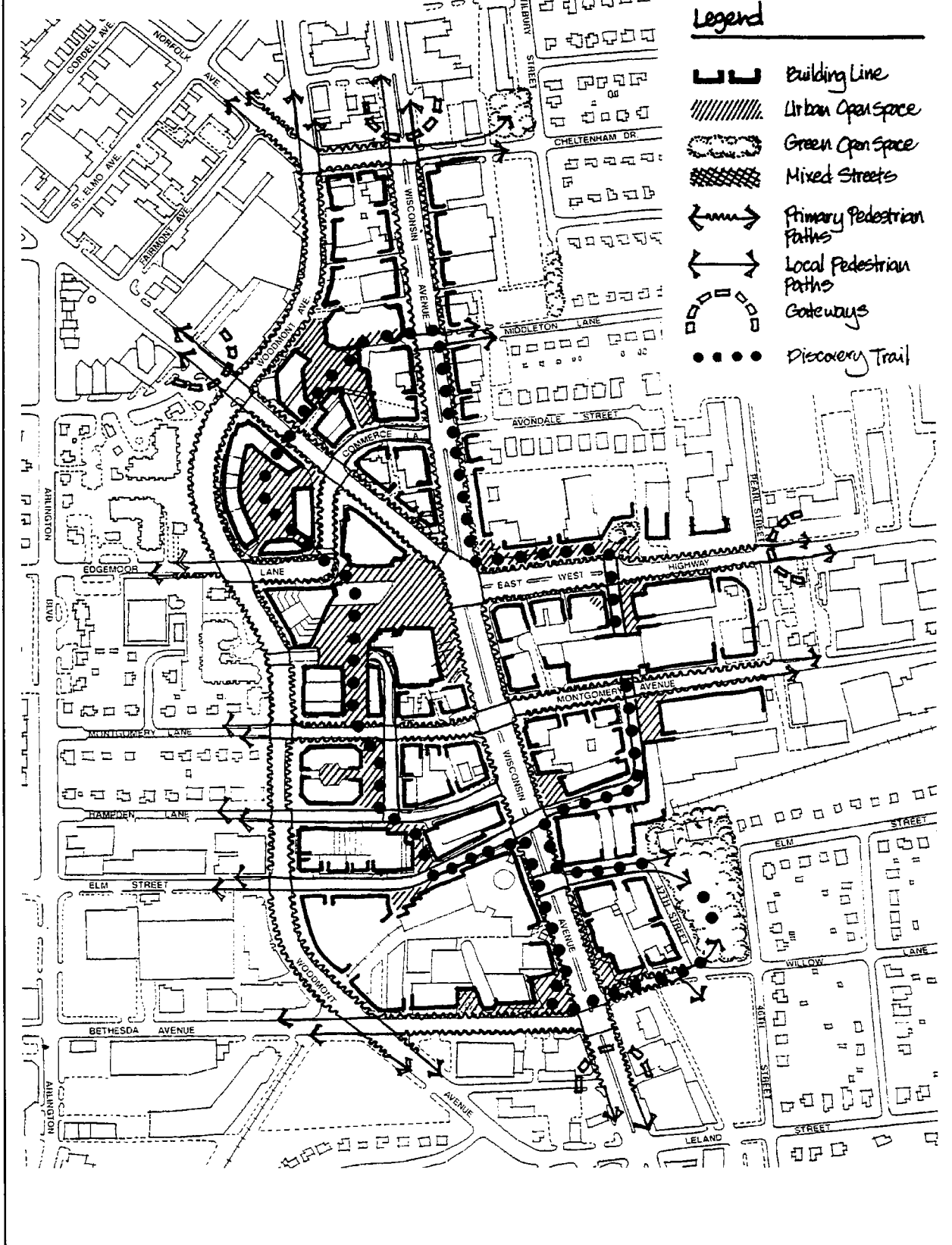
## **2. BETHESDA METRO CENTER RECOMMENDATIONS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The Plan recommends that conversion of poorly located retail space in the interior of Metro Center 3, to office uses be considered in exchange for various recommended improvements. Additional improvements to the existing Metro Center could help achieve a greater focus of activities, a better sense of community, and a more attractive open space. Recommended improvements include:

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Legend

-  Building Line
-  Urban Open Space
-  Green Open Space
-  Mixed Streets
-  Primary Pedestrian Paths
-  Local Pedestrian Paths
-  Courtways
-  Discovery Trail



- a. Locate additional stores within the inner plaza areas that have good street visibility or connect with other retail space to form a continuous line of retail uses to help animate the plaza areas.
- b. Remove existing physical barriers to pedestrian circulation and retail visibility, especially within the inner plaza. Increase outdoor seating.
- c. Improve visibility of the existing food court by modifying building entrances, facade treatments, and lighting in a manner compatible with the surrounding buildings.
- d. Improve the overall attractiveness of the Main Plaza by retrofitting the existing sculpture at the Metro escalator, "Rainbow Forest," to achieve a more colorful and kinetic piece.
- e. Add more greenery and seasonal flowers to the area around the Metro fountain and seating areas on the main plaza in a manner that does not restrict visibility to retail areas or the food court.

### **3. LORENZ SITE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

CBD-3 zoning and employment land use is recommended on the Lorenz site. If the currently approved project does not proceed, and the project plan either expires or is amended, the following design guidelines apply:

- a. Develop the allowable density into two buildings separated by an open space to avoid a single, bulky structure. The smaller building should be located on the eastern side of the site next to East Lane. The larger one should be oriented toward Woodmont Avenue.
- b. Locate the major open space within the middle of the block to provide important visual and physical access to the inner plaza of Metro Center. The midblock open space should be wide enough to be experienced as a space, not merely a passage connecting to the Metro Plaza, and to allow adequate light and air in the Plaza. This open space should be developed with landscaping, seating, lighting, and other special features to provide public enjoyment.
- c. Maintain adequate sunlight in the inner plaza by stepping up building heights from the east to the west of the site. Along East Lane, building heights should not exceed 60 feet, or 5 floors. Along Woodmont Avenue, heights should not exceed 143 feet, or 13 floors, to achieve a compatible transition to the TS-R neighborhood across Woodmont Avenue.
- d. Locate a transitional open space along Woodmont Avenue to achieve compatibility with the existing residential midrise building.
- e. Locate all driveway access to underground parking and service areas from North and East Lanes, in a manner compatible with the Metro station kiss-and-ride facility.



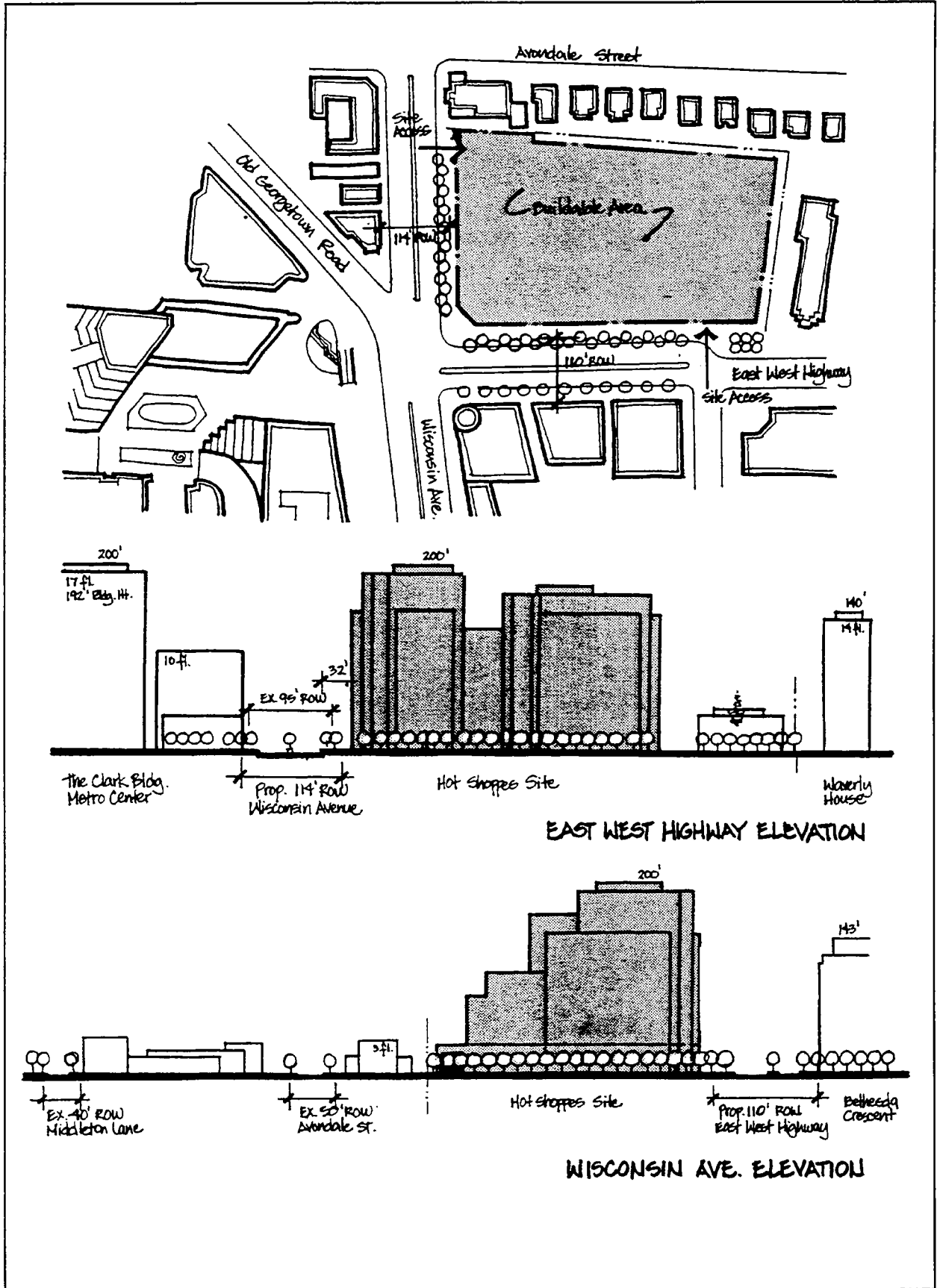
- f. Provide sufficient public benefits or amenities to satisfy zoning requirements for the optional method of development. Desirable public benefits for this site may include one or more of the following:
  - 1) Extensive retrofitting of the existing plazas as stated in the Metro Center design guidelines.
  - 2) Additional streetscape improvements beyond the property, possibly to include the Montgomery Avenue Mixed Street, which extends to the public library.
  - 3) Development of a Class 1 Bikeway along Woodmont Avenue beyond the property.
- g. Provide special night lighting and retail signs that complement the existing lighting at the Metro Center and are compatible with adjacent residential properties.
- h. Achieve an architectural style that is harmonious yet differentiated from the existing Metro Center buildings to avoid the appearance of a monotonous megastructure.

#### **4. HOT SHOPPES SITE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

Redevelopment of the Hot Shoppes site provides a major opportunity for establishing additional employment, street activating retail and entertainment uses, and civic spaces in the Metro Core District. The Sector Plan recommends the CBD-3 Zone, with significant limitations on the density. This recommendation is intended to establish a balance between the objective to locate high density development next to Metro stations and the need to provide compatibility with surrounding areas. The Plan prefers the optional method of development on the Hot Shoppes site. The optional method will allow a major office-retail complex across from the Metro station and an important cultural facility, a professional theater, in the heart of Bethesda.

If the site is redeveloped under the standard method, any subdivision/resubdivision should be limited to a 2 FAR project. A FAR of 2 would retain the same development potential as existed before rezoning from CBD-2 to CBD-3. Without the major public benefits and amenities of an optional method project, a smaller infill development with fine-grained texture is more consistent with the Plan's urban form objectives than a large bulky structure.

Buildable area and height concepts are illustrated in Figure 4.8. The following specific requirements for the optional method of development apply to the Hot Shoppes site:





- a. Limit the density to 615,000 square feet of gross floor area (4 FAR). This density can be increased to 750,000 square feet (approximately 4.9 FAR) of retail and office uses with the provision of a professional theater as the preferred, substantial public benefit. The gross floor area of the professional theater is not included in the limitations on density and would be in addition to the 750,000 square feet. If the Planning Board determines that the theater is not viable, a minimum of 135,000 square feet of housing (approximately 120 to 150 dwelling units) may be provided within the 750,000 square feet, with an appropriate level of amenities.
- b. Step buildings down next to existing residential development to achieve the required compatibility.
- c. Dedicate 15 feet of additional right-of-way, for a total of 110 feet, as shown in Figure 5.13. The developer may retain the subsurface rights to the additional 15 feet to allow below-grade construction, with accommodation for street trees and utilities.
- d. Satisfy the public benefits, facilities, and amenities requirement of the optional method of development by providing the specific public benefits, facilities, and amenities listed in design guideline f, and either g, or h, below.
- e. Study the feasibility and cost of a pedestrian tunnel under East-West Highway. Accommodate a future connection to such a tunnel if the study, to be completed by the time of the project plan application, indicates its feasibility.

Prior to the project plan application, the developer should explore with the Planning staff and the community schemes illustrating alternative building height and bulk, theater locations, and open space configurations. The schemes will be reviewed in terms of compatibility, theater visibility, and open space relationships.

The urban form context of the site is shown in Figure 4.9. An illustration of the developed Hot Shoppes site is in Figure 4.10. In addition to the limit on gross floor area, the following principles and guidelines apply to this site and should be used in the review of a future project plan:

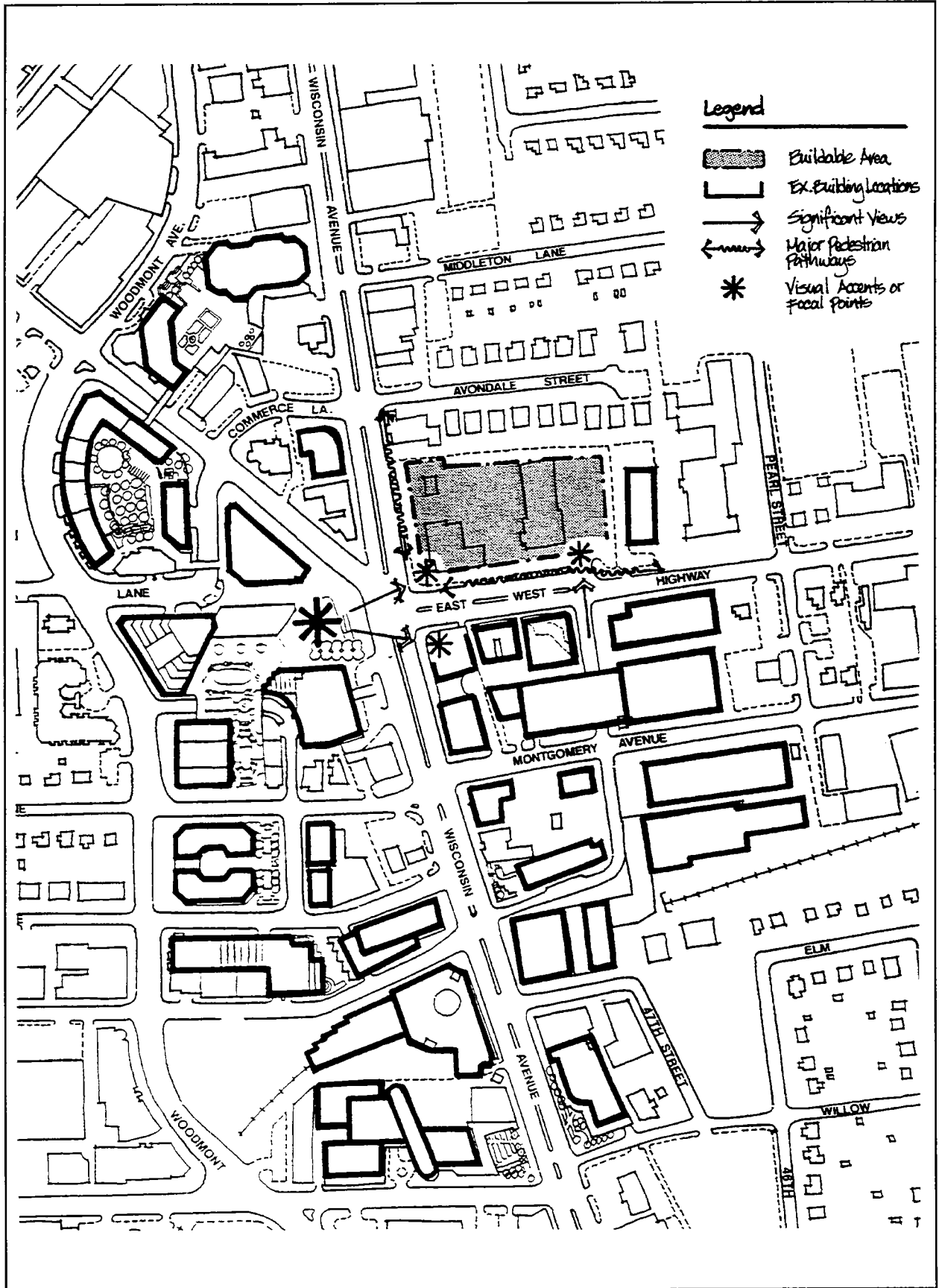
### **Planning Principles**

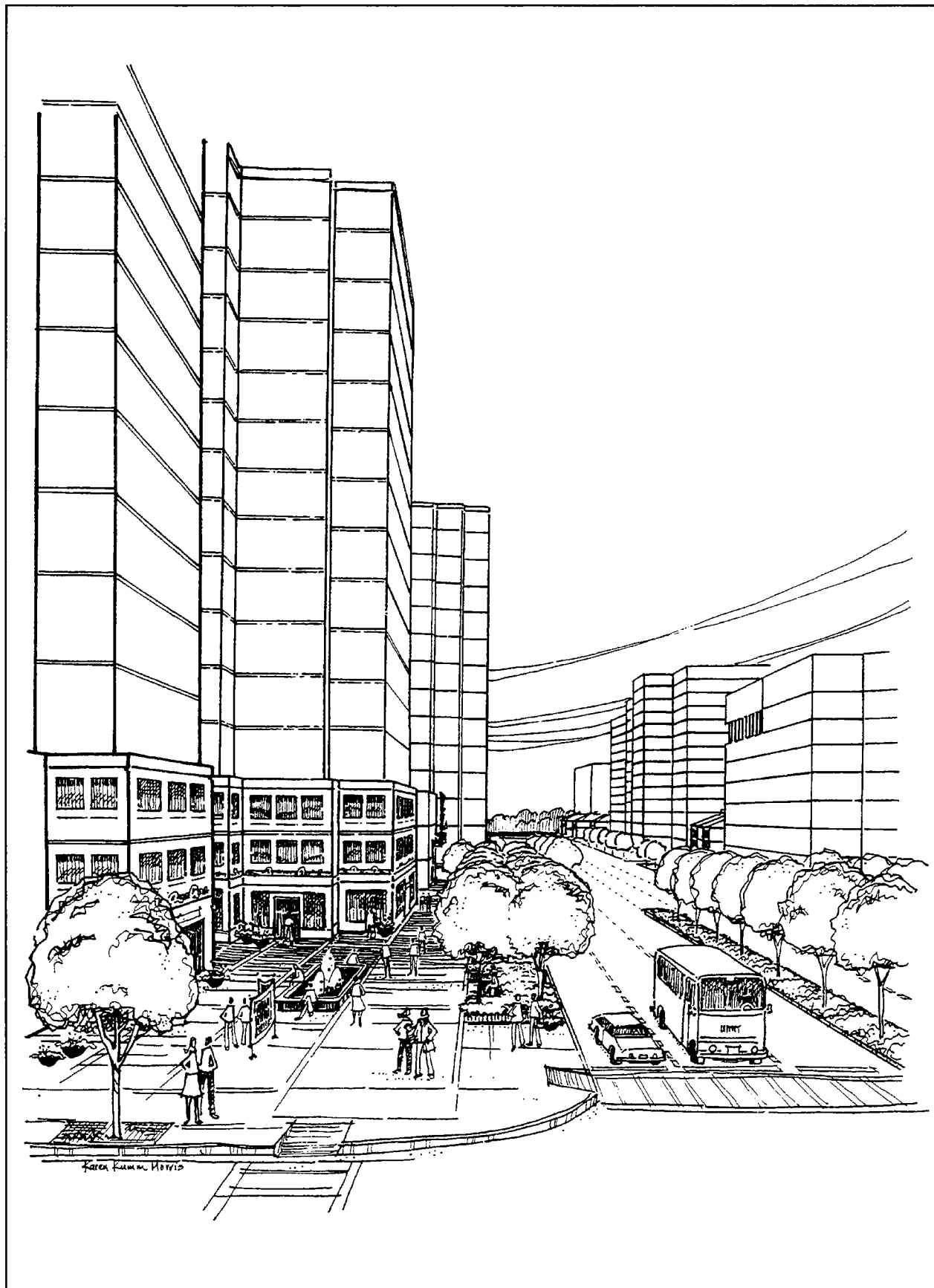
- a. Achieve a level of density appropriate to the Metro location that provides the opportunity for a major commercial development with a professional theater or a mixed-use development with housing.
- b. Create an attractive urban development of "landmark" character and quality that complements Bethesda's lively, pedestrian-oriented downtown environment.



# HOT SHOPPES SITE: URBAN FORM DIAGRAM

FIGURE 4.9





- c. Create a street-oriented development by locating buildings and their major entrances facing the adjacent streets, with service and parking access located at the rear of the property.
- d. Accommodate required vehicular circulation in a safe, functional, and efficient manner by such measures as confining vehicular access to an entrance opposite Waverly Street and from Wisconsin Avenue near the northern property line.
- e. Create accessible park-like open space that provides a sense of greenery in keeping with Bethesda's "garden" theme.
- f. Establish compatibility with adjacent residential properties.

### **Design Guidelines**

- a. Orient buildings with heights that exceed 143 feet toward the intersection of East-West Highway and Wisconsin Avenue.
- b. Provide setbacks and significant stepping down of buildings to the northern and eastern boundaries of the site to establish compatibility with the adjacent garden apartments, nearby single-family houses, and the Waverly House high-rise.
- c. Provide a buffer along the northern property line to protect adjacent residents from the noise and visual impact of activities on the site.
- d. Provide a setback for buildings in addition to the public right-of-way along East-West Highway and Wisconsin Avenue to establish an enhanced sidewalk and streetscape that can accommodate the high volume of pedestrian movement. The area added to the public right-of-way could be used as public use space.
- e. Locate public use space in a manner that is safe, inviting, and visible from adjacent streets. Public use space located either along East-West Highway or next to Waverly House is preferable to interior plazas. The Plan seeks to create a promenade character by the combination of pedestrian amenities and streetscape next to retail and restaurants along East-West Highway and Wisconsin Avenue. At project plan review, careful consideration should be given to the width of the promenade.
- f. The following list indicates a desirable level of public benefits, facilities, and amenities appropriate for this site for all development options:
  - 1) Provide park-like public use space on the site with a significant amount of trees and grass. Public use space should also be furnished with a high level of amenities, such as fountains, seating areas, special paving, distinctive



lighting, public art, and other pedestrian amenities designed to enhance the enjoyment of the space. Public use space should not include internal plazas or large amounts of paved surfaces.

- 2) Include streetscape improvements along the frontage of this site in project plans. Implement the Bethesda Streetscape Plan to enhance existing pathways and provide for the continuation of the eastern loop of the "Bethesda Discovery Trail."
- g. Consider other public amenities that may be needed to support a level of optional method density up to 4 FAR. These may include, but are not limited to:
- 1) Extensive offsite streetscaping in accordance with the Bethesda Streetscape Plan, such as improvements along East-West Highway that extend to the eastern boundary of the Sector Plan area.
  - 2) An extensive linear park along East-West Highway.
  - 3) A significant public open space that is safe, attractive, and visible from public streets.
- h. Provide a professional theater as the preferred amenity option to support the proposed 750,000 square feet (approximately 4.9 FAR) of density for a commercial project. The theater should be constructed for live performances with a stage and adequate support facilities. The Plan does not assume that County funds will be required or provided for construction or operation of the theater.

### **Theater Guidelines**

The developer should adhere to the following guidelines for the theater:

- a. Facilities
- 1) Provide a fully enclosed dedicated theater space with approximately 400 seats.
  - 2) Design the theater to meet the acoustic, artistic, and technical requirements for professional dramatic and musical productions. The design should be submitted for comment to a theater review panel that includes an expert in theater design and construction.
  - 3) Provide the theater on a turnkey basis, complete with furnishings, fixtures, and equipment with the exception of stage lighting and controls, sound equipment, stage equipment, and drapes, which will be provided by the theater company.

b. Visibility

Provide a permanent, prominent, and lighted marquee at the theater entrance, and other prominent identification feature(s) facing both East-West Highway and Wisconsin Avenue at a location ensuring the best visibility for the theater.

c. Parking

Make available at market rates adequate, secure, underground parking during theater operating hours.

d. Timing

- 1) Provide a commitment to construct the theater prior to approval of a project plan.
- 2) Construct the theater in the first phase or provide adequate financial security by the project plan approval to ensure timely construction.
- 3) Protect the theater, once open, from future construction in a manner that allows continued and uninterrupted theater operation.

e. Theater Company and Cost Allocation

- 1) Ensure the selection under a fair and competitive proposal format of a resident theater company with an established professional reputation for artistic quality, management proficiency, and financial stability.
- 2) Submit a written agreement, as part of the project plan application, with the professional theater company which identifies the company as the operating entity and clarifies the relationship between developer and theater company. Costs may be allocated as follows:
  - a) Allocate to the developer the entire capital costs of theater, ancillary production facilities, and parking garage construction, along with the costs of general site maintenance and site security.
  - b) Allocate to the theater company in a dollar-a-year lease with the developer only the direct operating costs of the theater space, including utilities, maintenance, and security directly related to theater operations; real estate taxes, if any; and the costs of lighting, sound, and stage equipment.



## 5. **COMMERCE LANE SITE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

Along Commerce Lane, the Plan recommends the CBD-2 Zone and allows optional method employment development up to 4 FAR. Office development will allow a coherent extension of the Bethesda Place project. A mixed-use project of up to 5 FAR may also be built on the properties.

Urban design guidelines for this site include:

- a. Develop allowable density in several separate buildings. This site is considered an “in-fill” block in which buildings should fill out the building envelope within recommended setbacks.
- b. Locate the office buildings’ main entrances toward Wisconsin Avenue and Old Georgetown Road. If residential use is included, buildings should provide entrances primarily along Commerce Lane, with ground floor retail.
- c. Locate taller buildings along Wisconsin Avenue. Building heights should step down along Commerce Lane, with lower heights along Old Georgetown Road to assure that adequate sunlight and air reach the inner plaza of Bethesda Place.
- d. Achieve building setbacks along Old Georgetown Road comparable to existing building setbacks of Bethesda Place to ensure a continuous sidewalk area.
- e. Provide a major open space and pedestrian connection from Commerce Lane, through the site, into the inner plaza of Bethesda Place. This will satisfy onsite open space requirements, improve pedestrian access, and create a desirable link of interconnected public spaces within the Metro Core District.
- f. Locate vehicular access to rear service areas and underground parking from Commerce Lane. Restrict driveway access from Old Georgetown Road and Wisconsin Avenue.

## 6. **WOODMONT AVENUE AT ELM STREET SITE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

For properties on the east side of Woodmont Avenue, between Elm Street and Bethesda Avenue, the Plan recommends the CBD-2 Zone and optional method employment development up to 4 FAR. The area is located two blocks from the Metro station by way of the “Discovery Trail” and is next to a possible southern entrance to Metro.

Urban design guidelines for this area include:

- a. Develop allowable density in several buildings to avoid larger, bulky single structures and to permit phasing. The larger building along Elm

Street should be located on the eastern end of the triangular site. A lower building should face Woodmont Avenue.

- b. Step down building heights to six floors along Woodmont Avenue to achieve a transitional building height at the western edge of the Core District, similar to existing optional method projects to the north. A building height of six floors along Woodmont Avenue is compatible with the three-floor height restrictions of the C-2 Zone across Woodmont Avenue.
- c. Orient storefront retail and/or restaurant uses along Woodmont Avenue to complement existing retail across the street. Extension of retail along Elm Street will create a link with Metro Core District retail activity and with the “Discovery Trail.”
- d. Establish 15-foot building setbacks from the right-of-way along Woodmont Avenue to accommodate both pedestrians and the Class 1 Bikeway recommended along Woodmont Avenue.
- e. Locate driveway access to rear service areas and underground parking in locations that do not negatively affect traffic flow and pedestrian use of public spaces.
- f. Locate onsite open space along Elm Street at the northeastern corner of the site to connect with the “Discovery Trail,” the existing series of mid-block open spaces. The open space should also provide a pedestrian connection to the Capital Crescent Trail and a bicycle storage area, as identified in Section 5.5, Bicycle Network Plan.
- g. Locate some open space along the Capital Crescent Trail if an optional method project is provided along Woodmont Avenue at Bethesda Avenue.

## **7. BETHESDA THEATRE CAFE AND CHEVYLAND BLOCK: RECOMMENDATIONS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The Bethesda Theatre Cafe has a historic design and a use that contribute significantly to the “cultural district” theme supported by the Sector Plan. The attractive interior design reflects Art Deco styling. The theater has a screen and a stage suitable for a variety of performing arts programs. The building’s exterior is protected by historic resource designation. (See Section 9.4, Master Plan Sites.)

Chevy Chase Chevyland was established in 1939 by the Bowis family, which still owns the property. Though placement on the Locational Atlas has been suggested, the Plan does not recommend historic designation because of substantial alterations. (See Section 9.5, Sites under Consideration for Historic Designation.) The site contains three parcels of 22,000, 27,498, and 7,307 square feet.

The Sector Plan recommends confirming the CBD-2 Zone and allowing optional method office development on the Theatre Cafe and Chevyland sites. The Plan recommends preserving the interior design of the theater and retaining a cinema



or performance use. The owners of the Chevyland site are encouraged to consider a joint development with the theater owners to save the theater interior. A special Wisconsin to Tilbury Study analyzed the relationship between these sites and the East Bethesda Transition Area. (See Appendix C.)

The complexities of a possible Bethesda Theatre Cafe development require further explanation.

The Beta Corporation owns the theater site (within the CBD and zoned CBD-2) and the parking lot to the east (outside the CBD and zoned R-60). The property within the CBD has less than the 22,000 square feet required for the optional method, but a project could qualify by combining with adjacent properties in one of two ways: 1) submit a joint application with properties to the north or south, or 2) submit a joint application with Public Parking Lot 42 for an area of about 42,457 square feet.

Land use and zoning recommendations to allow the second alternative for development of the Beta Corporation property include:

- a. Extend the CBD boundary and the CBD-2 Zone line 50 feet across an existing public alley right-of-way into the Beta Corporation parking lot for the area immediately to the east of the theater site only.
- b. Extend the CBD-2 Zone line south across Public Parking Lot 42, which already lies within the CBD boundary.
- c. Allow an optional method project to be built over the public alleys, although it may be necessary to maintain pedestrian or vehicle access to serve the project and adjacent properties. Access requirements, consideration of abandonment of the alley, and efforts to minimize cut-through traffic in the East Bethesda neighborhood should be determined at the time of Project Plan.
- d. Preserve the interior of the theater, including the murals on the walls and ceiling, and a cinema or performing arts activity as the primary public benefit associated with a joint optional method development.
- e. Retain the existing R-60 Zone as the base zone for the Beta parking lot. A special exception for commercial parking would not be inconsistent with Sector Plan objectives if redevelopment does not occur.
- f. Recommend residential development of the Beta parking lot. The floating PD-22 Zone, which allows up to 22 housing units, would be an appropriate zone. (Amendments to the PD Zone are described in Section 10.1.) Preliminary site analysis suggests that about 20 housing units may be suitable on this site. Alternatively, if an optional method project is built on the adjacent property that preserves the theater interior, a mixed-use project with up to 24,000 square feet of office and up to 15 housing units may be provided on the Beta parking lot. Any office structure must



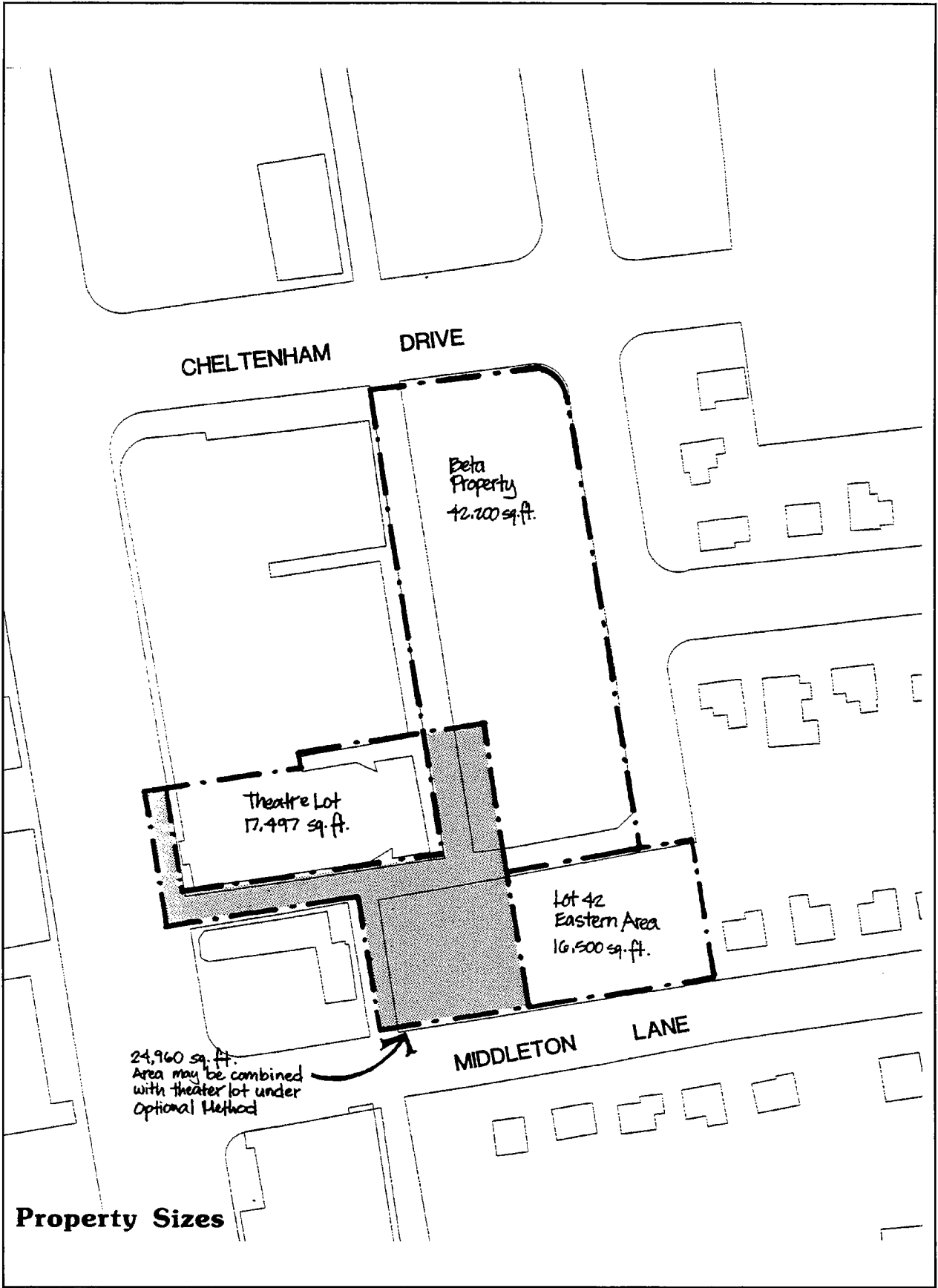
be placed along the public alley and height guidelines must be maintained.

- g. Retain the R-60 Zone on the portion of Parking Lot 42 outside the CBD. The floating PD-22 Zone, which allows up to eight housing units, would be an appropriate zone. Preliminary analysis based on the design guidelines suggests that about five units may be suitable on this site. Any unit within the PD Zone fronting on Middleton Lane should be residential in use and design. Any office use fronting on Middleton Lane should be located within the CBD-2 Zone.

The above recommendations would allow several parcels to be combined as follows: the theater site (17,497 square feet), a small portion of the Beta Corporation outlot now used for parking (3,300 square feet), public alleys that were dedicated with the original plat approval in 1937 (8,460 square feet), and the west portion of Lot 42 to be zoned CBD-2 (13,200 square feet). The total land area of 42,457 square feet would permit a 4 FAR optional method project of up to 169,828 square feet, including 12,500 square feet for the theater. The net new office space would be 157,328 square feet. If the Beta Corporation built townhouse-scale offices along the alley on their parking lot, up to 24,000 square feet of office area could be added. (See Figure 4.11.)

Joint development of the Beta Corporation and Parking District properties is the most likely means of preserving all of the Bethesda Theatre Cafe, including the interior design and performing arts activity. Both the interior and exterior make this historic Art Deco structure an important resource for Montgomery County residents. The recommendations benefit the Beta Corporation by allowing an optional method project of about 157,000 square feet plus the theater rather than a standard method project of 48,000 square feet. The Parking District gains a larger area for a structure to serve the expected growth in parking demand in the Metro Core District. The nearby residential community gains an assurance of underground parking rather than a multi-story deck and the limitation of building height to 90 feet, stepping down to 65 feet at the rear. They also benefit from residential and possibly some office town-houses as an appropriate transition land use to complement the east facade of the theater building and buffer the auto dealership or other future office development.

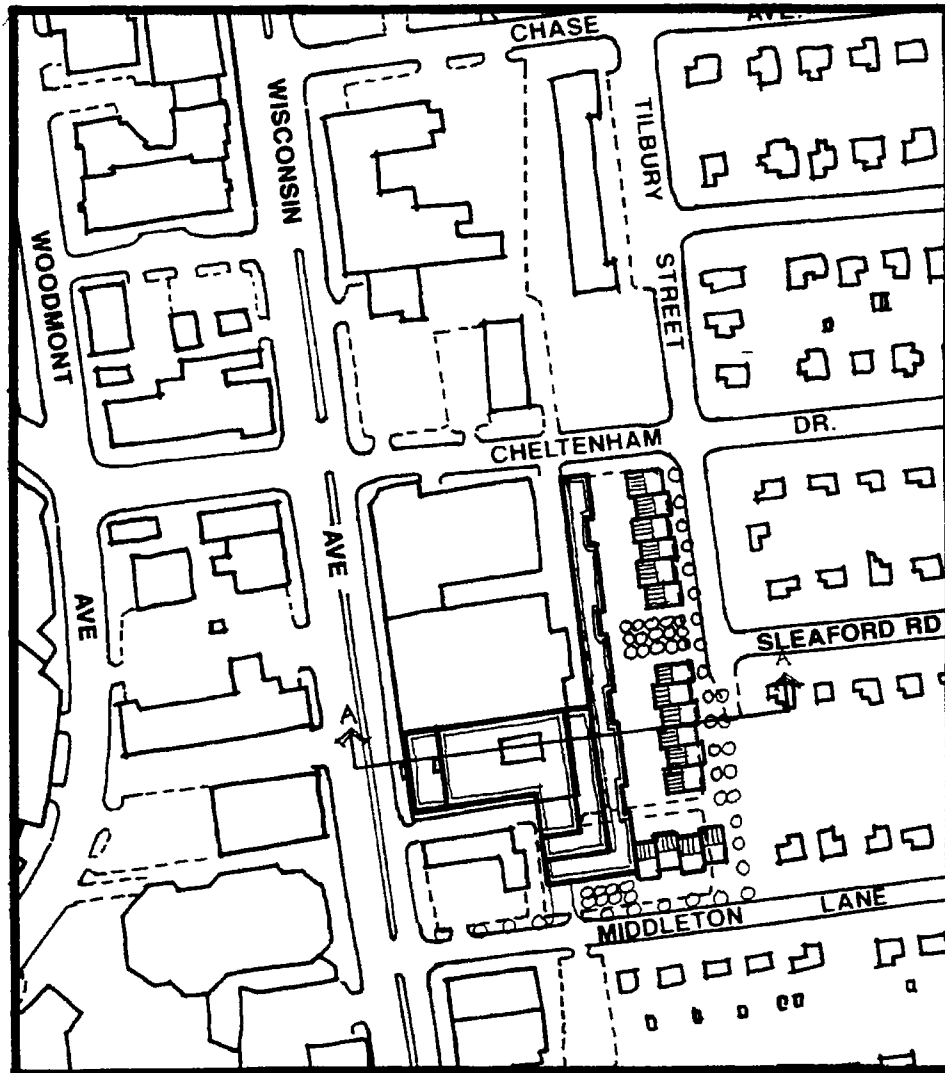
The Plan recommendation seeks to allow an investment return that justifies retention of the entire theater structure. To preserve the theater interior beneath a multi-story office building requires a structured platform over the theater space, with office space built on the platform. The added cost of the platform and measures to protect and restore the theater interior require a substantial project to create a reasonable investment return. The recommended density is intended to provide a good incentive for the project. Reduction in the permitted density could lead the Beta Corporation to abandon the optional method project and build a standard method office building.



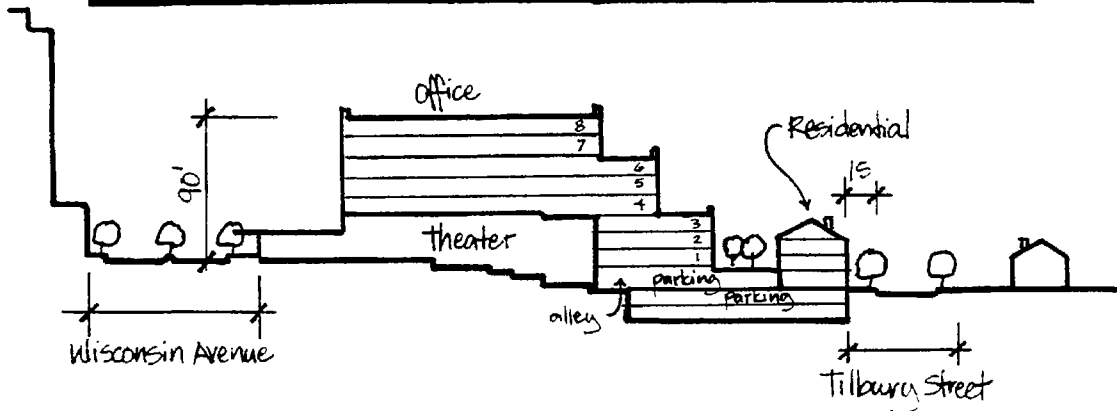
A standard method building of about 48,000 square feet would be possible. The small area of the Beta parking lot recommended for the CBD-2 Zone could not be included in a building permit application since the property is separated by a public alley. Use of public alley dedication is also not permitted in standard method development. Any demolition would require approval by the Historic Preservation Commission. While the front of the theater would be preserved, it is likely that the rear and the interior would be demolished. The community would have lost an intact, functioning theater and all but the facade and marquee of a historic resource if a standard method project were built.

In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following specific guidelines apply to a development on the Bethesda Theatre Cafe/Beta Lot/Lot 42 properties (see also Figure 4.12):

- a. Preserve the existing structure and use as recommended in Chapter 9, Historic Resources Plan. Allow new development to be built over the existing structure, set back from the existing marquee. This will provide a visual backdrop for the marquee and will locate the new building mass closer to Wisconsin Avenue than to the residential neighborhoods along Tilbury Street. More specific design review will take place at the time of Project Plan and Historic Area Work Permit review.
- b. Maintain building heights no higher than 90 feet along Wisconsin Avenue to provide a scale compatible with the existing historic structure and marquee and with nearby residential neighborhoods. Provide several step downs in building height from a maximum of 90 feet to a maximum of 65 feet at the rear and a maximum of 45 feet along the east side of the alley. Residential townhouse development should not exceed 35 feet along Tilbury Street and Middleton Lane.
- c. Provide a street-oriented townhouse development with front doors facing surrounding streets, to achieve compatibility. Allow a 15-foot minimum setback from the street curb.
- d. Allow no more than three continuous attached townhouses with the same front building line in order to maintain a compatible relationship with adjacent single-family properties. The variations in building line must be at least two feet. The illustrative site plan in Figure 4.12 is for design guidance only.
- e. Locate commercial parking either underground or in a structured deck no higher than one level, as measured from adjacent streets. Structured parking should be located so as not to be seen from the nearby single-family neighborhood.



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SECTION A-A

- f. Locate required open space in a manner that expands the existing open areas and provides attractive views from the adjacent residential neighborhood.
- g. Provide a park-like open space and a pedestrian pathway from Tilbury Street to Middleton Lane to improve pedestrian access and link the new and existing residences.
- h. Design residential rooftops to create a residential image by such means as hip roofs, gables, or other types of pitched roof lines. A varied roof line is desirable to improve character and reduce a sense of bulk.
- i. Achieve a coordinated architectural character for the office and residential portions of the project that establishes a compatible yet distinct identity for each area. Any frontage of the office building on Middleton Lane and any portion of the office structure adjoining Cheltenham Drive should be compatible in scale, style, and materials with residential townhouses to achieve maximum integration with the East Bethesda neighborhood.
- j. Exempt the property from the right-of-way dedication requirement of 9.5 feet shown in the Street and Highway Plan in order to preserve the historic building.

The following additional guidelines apply to the Chevy Chase Chevyland site:

- a. Maintain building heights no higher than 90 feet along Wisconsin Avenue, stepping down to 60 feet at the rear, to ensure compatibility with nearby residential areas.
- b. Respond to the view from the residential neighborhood in the design of the building and avoid a blank wall at the rear through such features as massing, fenestration, and design details.
- c. Review alley access requirements at the Project Plan stage.
- d. Dedicate 9.5 feet of right-of-way, in conformance with the Street and Highway Plan, only at the time that replacement of the existing buildings occurs.



## 4.2 THE TRANSIT STATION RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

### A. DESCRIPTION

The Transit Station Residential (TS-R) District is partially developed with high-rise residential buildings. Part of it remains an area of single-family houses. Houses used as offices are located along both Montgomery Lane and Arlington Road. The district is located between Woodmont Avenue and Arlington Road and extends from Hampden Lane to Moorland Lane.

The form of new development has been mid to high-rise apartments. Since the TS-R Zone has required 50 percent green space, buildings have been forced to rise vertically rather than spread horizontally. The 1976 Sector Plan established height limits which step down from 12 floors along Woodmont Avenue to 5 floors along Arlington Road.

The TS-R District continues to be in transition, in response to the requirements of the Sector Plan. Three major TS-R projects have been built: The Chase, The Christopher, and Chase II of Bethesda. Most houses along Arlington Road have been converted to offices, with their use limited to a few professional office categories. Some properties along Montgomery Lane are also in office use. The housing study completed for this Sector Plan indicates that high land values and multiple ownerships can make assembly of parcels for TS-R development difficult.

### B. OBJECTIVES

1. Provide incentives for and remove barriers to achieving high-density housing in the TS-R District.
2. Increase flexibility in the TS-R Zone to allow the district to achieve a low-rise, high-density "urban village" pattern.
3. Retain residential scale along Arlington Road.

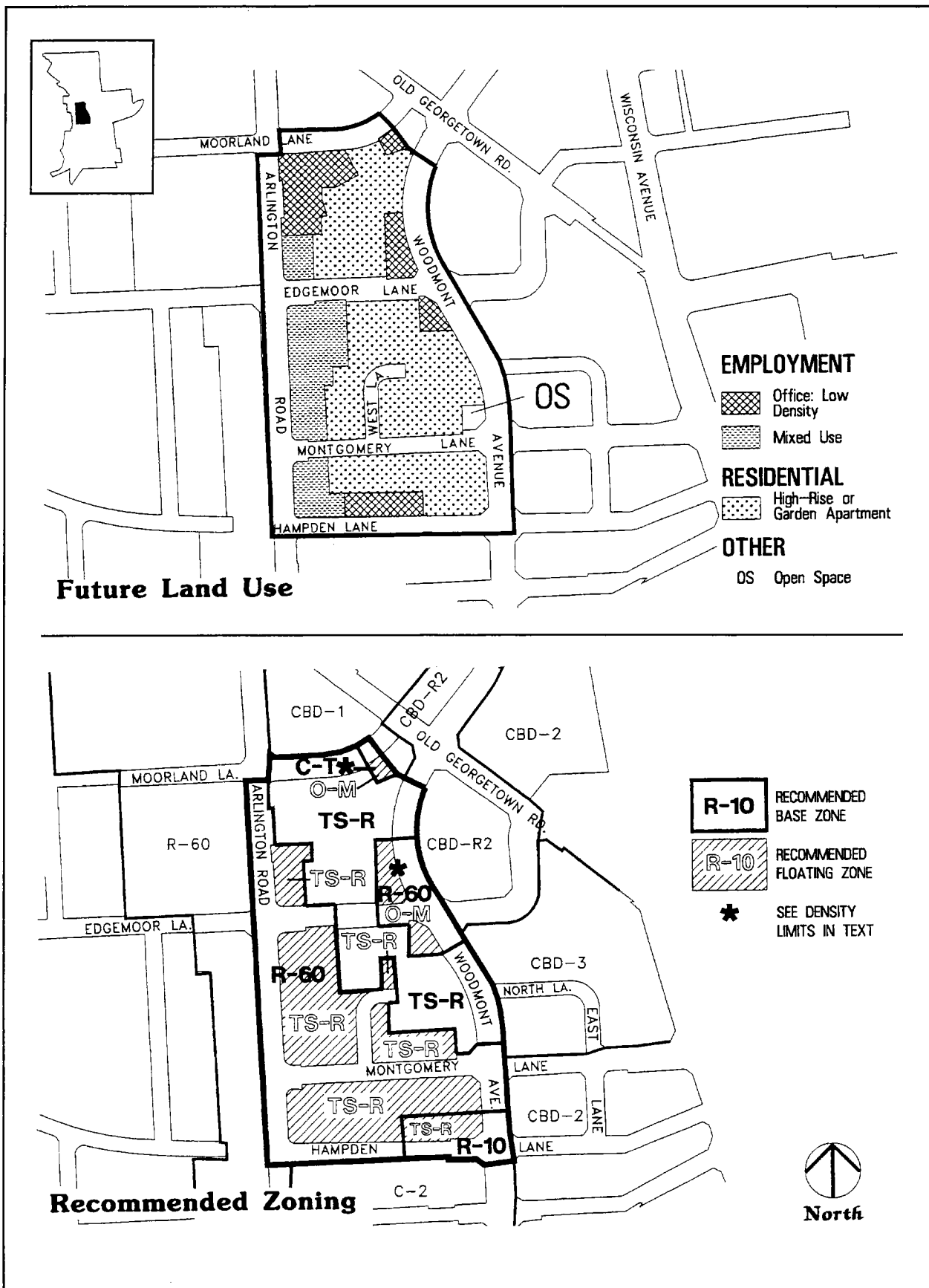
### C. RECOMMENDATIONS

Reservation of the TS-R area for high-density housing is an important objective of the Sector Plan. To encourage provision of housing in the TS-R area, the Plan recommends greater incentives and flexibility. (See future land use and recommended zoning in Figure 4.13.)

The Plan recommends that retail and office uses be more generally approved as part of a TS-R project. Such commercial uses would be limited to the ground floor or may be located above the ground floor if the amount of square footage does not exceed 20 percent of the total floor area and commercial uses do not share common pedestrian access with residential. The Plan limits retail uses to locations along Hampden Lane and on or near Woodmont Avenue, across from the Metro Core District. There is no need to extend retail further, since community shopping is available in the nearby Arlington Road District. The Plan permits office uses in locations facing Arlington Road or Montgomery Lane. This will allow recovery and some expansion of the economic value associated with existing office uses.

# TRANSIT STATION RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

FIGURE 4.13





The conversion of single-family houses to professional offices has provided an interim use for many years. The Plan recommends allowing existing special exception uses to continue and allowing approval of new special exception uses under the established review procedure.

The TS-R Zone has been amended to provide more flexibility for site development. This will allow the Plan's preferred form of development for this area, a low-rise, high-density "urban village." (See Figure 4.14.) Revisions to the TS-R Zone allow a lower minimum parcel size to make assemblage easier. A reduced green space requirement would allow lower building heights, a more spread out building, and, therefore, a less expensive structure since construction of such low-rise development can be less costly than high-rise. The type of housing should appear to be townhouses but actually be three to six-floor buildings with apartments at each level. This form of development can create a high-quality environment in a market not currently being served in Bethesda. Design guidelines to achieve the preferred form are presented below.

The Plan recommends a minimum of 45 dwelling units per acre everywhere except on lots facing Arlington Road, where there would be no minimum density in order to allow townhouse development at lower densities. The Plan anticipates that some projects will incorporate higher densities, and the full 2.5 FAR density (about 100 dwelling units per acre) would be allowed. (See Transit Station Residential District illustrative, Appendix B.)

The Plan proposes a combination of private and public open space, both within and outside the TS-R District, to serve new residents. Open space within the TS-R neighborhood would be primarily developed as private recreational areas, possibly with both housing and private outdoor areas located above structured parking. (See Figure 4.14.) The advantage of the closed block configuration is that it creates a consolidated amount of more usable open space. Interior community room or rooftop recreation areas may also be provided.

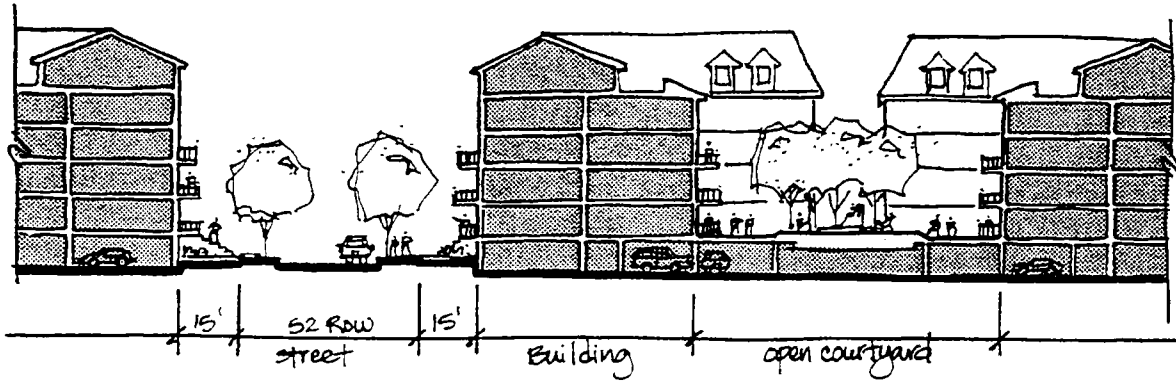
One possible resource for publicly oriented open space within the TS-R District is the area in front of the new apartment structures along Montgomery Lane. Streetscape and special seating areas could be provided in the setback from the sidewalk to the building face, creating an outdoor community space. The Plan also recommends a Mixed Street along Montgomery Lane that would have curbside parking and special pavers. (See Chapter 6, Streetscape Plan.) The street should be developed with 20 feet for travel lanes within a 52-foot right-of-way. An existing one-way pattern would continue to discourage cut-through traffic. The street design is illustrated in Figures 4.15 and 5.14 and is subject to further study and approval by the County Department of Transportation. Both the streetscape and the Mixed Street would provide pleasant pedestrian linkages between the public library and park on Arlington Road and a proposed urban green space at Woodmont Avenue.

Outside the TS-R District, the Plan recommends additional open space resources both in private optional method projects and on public land. New optional method projects such as Garage 49 and the Hot Shoppes development will provide open space with appeal to

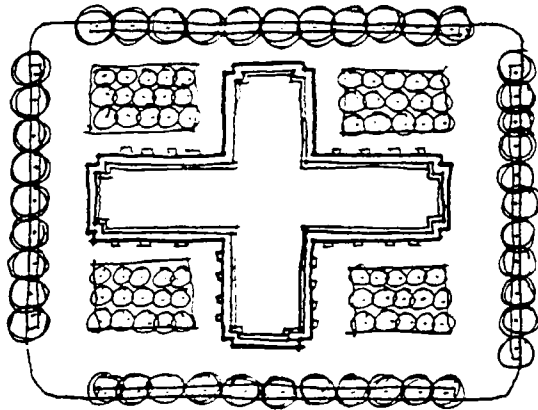


- o Achieve unit entrances along the street

- o Locate parking underground or in deck structures in the rear yard.
- o Provide private open space

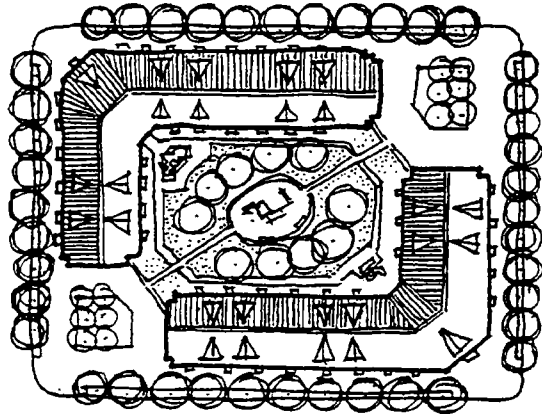


Avoid:  
Open Block Configurations

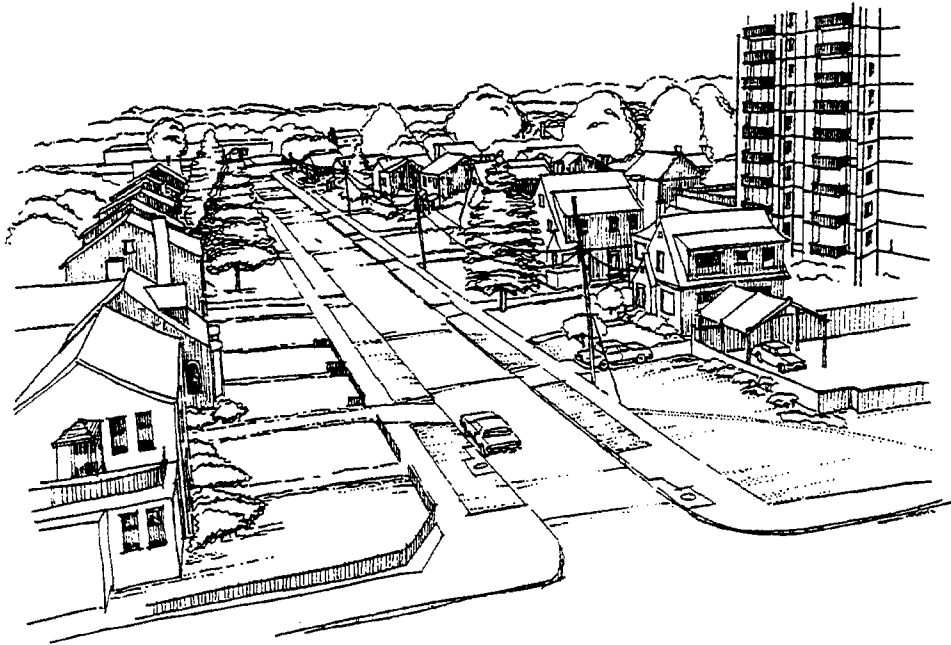


- o Poor relationship to the street.
- o No distinction between private and public open space.
- o Low building coverage & taller buildings.

Achieve:  
Closed Block Configurations

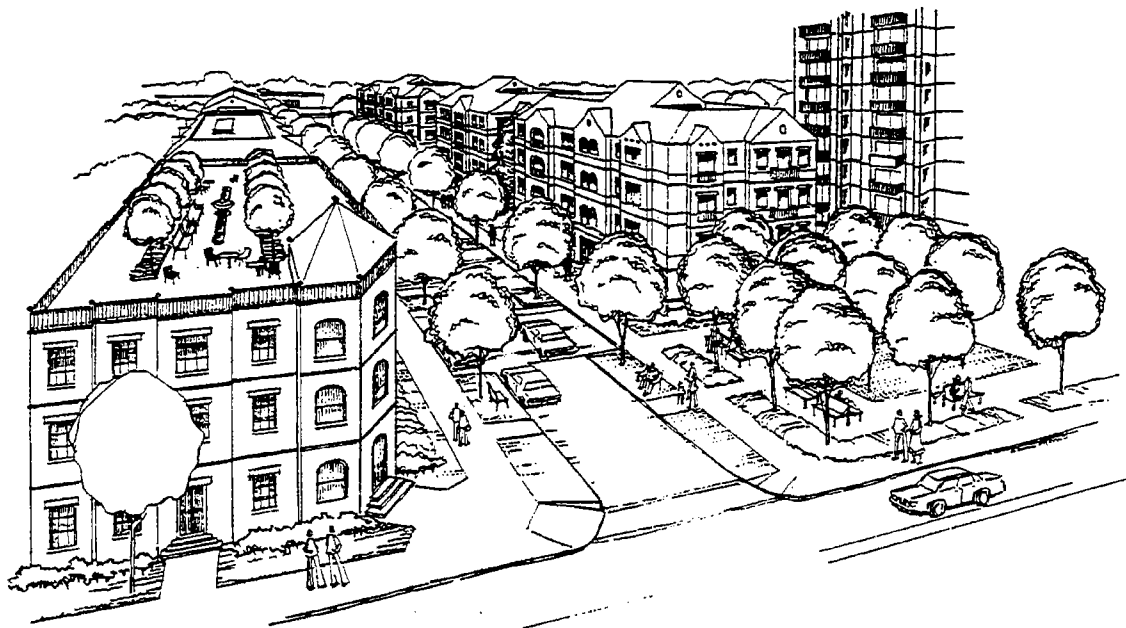


- o Good relationship to the street, with continuous building line.
- o Internal private open space.
- o Higher building coverage & lower building heights.



"Before", Existing View of Montgomery Lane Looking West

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"After", Proposed Low-Rise, High-Density Housing on a Mixed Street

urban residents in addition to existing urban amenities. The residents of the new “urban village” will find extensive recreation and open space in downtown Bethesda.

The Plan supports the joint development of parking through the Bethesda Parking District. The provisions for expanding the Parking District are discussed in Section 5.6, Parking. There may be some savings associated with joint development of parking.

The Plan recommends low-density office use for the properties at the corner of Woodmont Avenue and Edgemoor Lane and on Moorland Lane near Old Georgetown Road. These properties are isolated from further TS-R development. For the parcel on Moorland Lane, the density should be limited to 1.0 FAR to coincide with the density allowed on the adjacent CBD-1 parcel. Office use may also continue on the Moorland Lane parcel in the C-T Zone. For the parcels on Woodmont Avenue, the density should be limited to 0.6 FAR to allow adequate landscaping and parking. Office use may proceed under either the R-60 Zone, with a special exception, or the O-M Zone.








#### **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

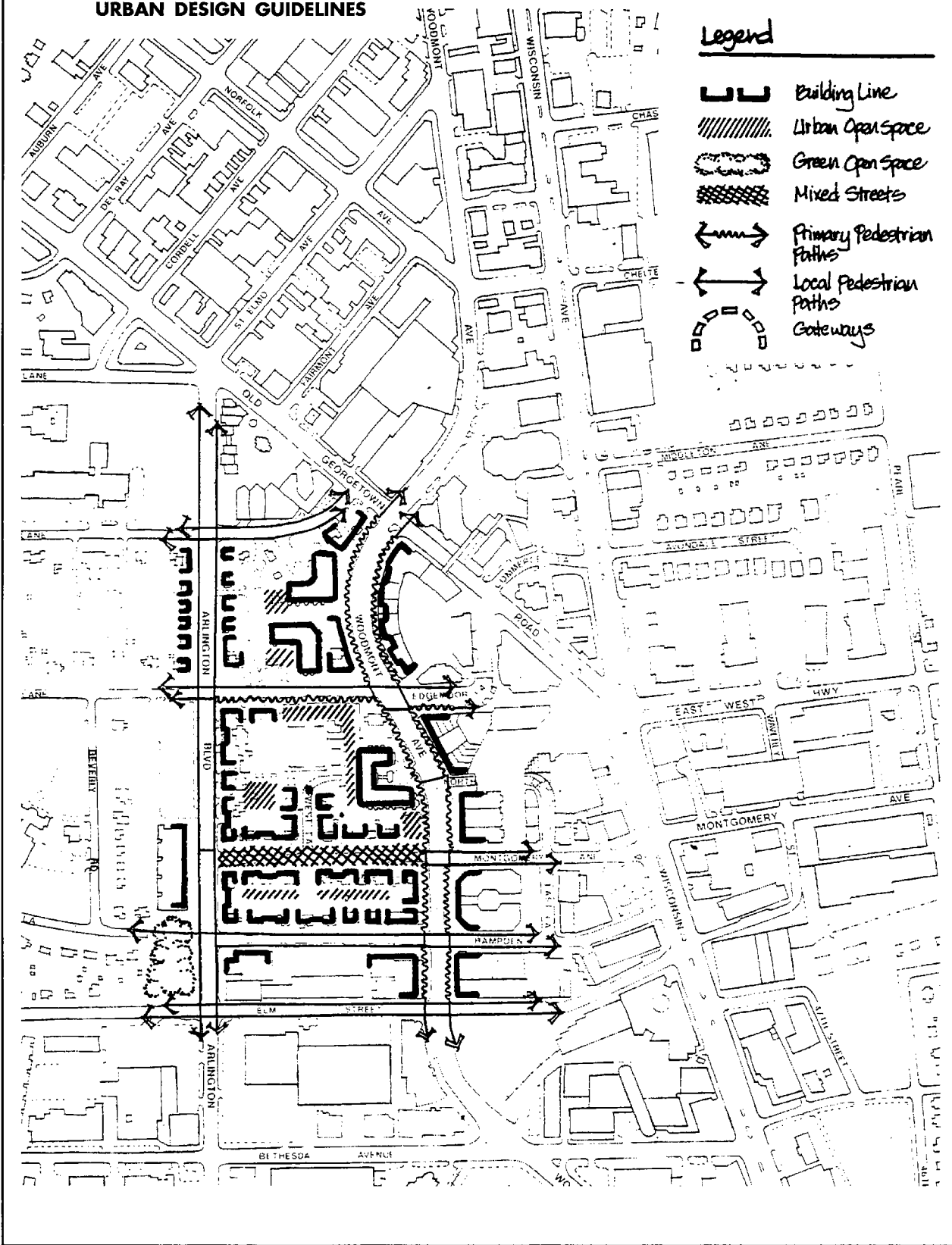
In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply in the TS-R District (see Figure 4.16):

1. Permit projects with a minimum lot size of 18,000 square feet to encourage smaller-scale projects. Projects should not leave isolated parcels.
2. Encourage low-rise buildings to fill out the parcel.
3. Maintain low-rise building heights which step down to three floors along Arlington Road. Heights of up to six floors are preferred near Woodmont Avenue to achieve the desired urban form.
4. Provide 25-foot building setbacks from the curb (15 feet from the Sector Plan right-of-way) along Arlington Road. Setbacks in the remaining portion of the TS-R District will be decided on a case-by-case basis as redevelopment proceeds through the Planning Board approval process.
5. Design roof tops to achieve a residential image by using hip roofs, gables, turrets, and other types of pitched roof lines. The varied roof line is desirable to improve character and reduce the sense of bulk.
6. Locate front unit entrances along the street when residences are provided on the first floor to encourage street life.
7. Locate required parking either underground or in rear decks, so as not to be seen from surrounding streets.

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Legend

-  Building Line
-  Urban Open Space
-  Green Open Space
-  Mixed Streets
-  Primary Pedestrian Paths
-  Local Pedestrian Paths
-  Gateways



## **4.3 THE OLD GEORGETOWN ROAD CORRIDOR**

### **A. DESCRIPTION**

The Old Georgetown Road Corridor serves as an entry and commercial area for Bethesda. Low-scale buildings predominate and only scattered possibilities for small-scale infill development remain. The corridor extends from Woodmont Avenue to Glenbrook Road and includes properties with buildings that generally face onto Old Georgetown Road.

Land use is primarily retail, including restaurants and comparison retail. The uses and activities common to the Woodmont Triangle are also found along Old Georgetown Road.

### **B. OBJECTIVES**

1. Preserve the predominantly low-density, low-scale commercial character of the corridor.
2. Continue the “greening” of Bethesda by planting street trees and extending other streetscape improvements.

### **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Plan recommends continuing smallscale standard method infill development as the predominant pattern along Old Georgetown Road. (See Figure 4.17.) Construction of larger, bulky buildings will be avoided in great part because of the many small properties and separate ownerships.

The Plan recommends that the only optional method projects allowed be mixed-use with a residential component. Few, if any, such projects will occur due to the difficulty of achieving the minimum parcel size of 22,000 square feet.

Residential use above 1 FAR is recommended on small sites developed under the standard method, with retail uses allowed only on the ground floor. The CBD-1 Zone allows the addition of up to 1 FAR for residential use.

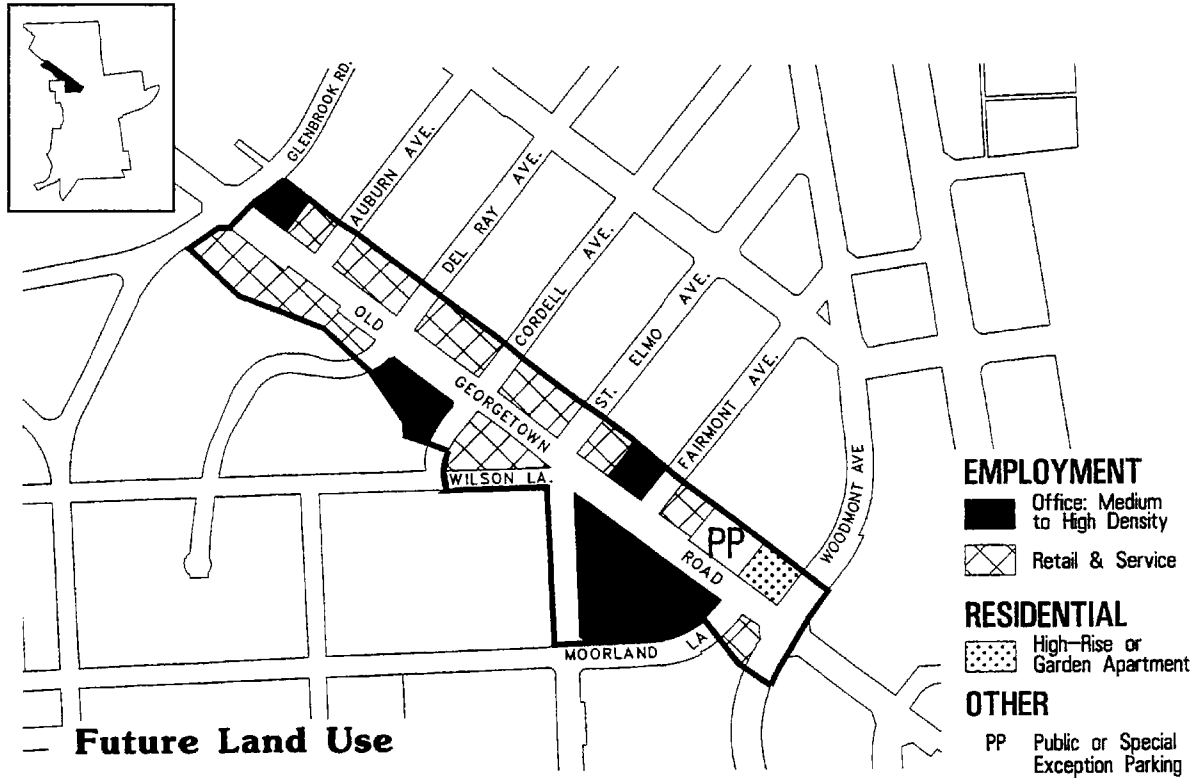
The Plan recommends that low-density commercial uses continue along the south side of Old Georgetown Road. Properties should retain the existing zoning. The one property that is zoned R-60, 7920 Old Georgetown Road, is suitable for the C-T Zone.

### **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

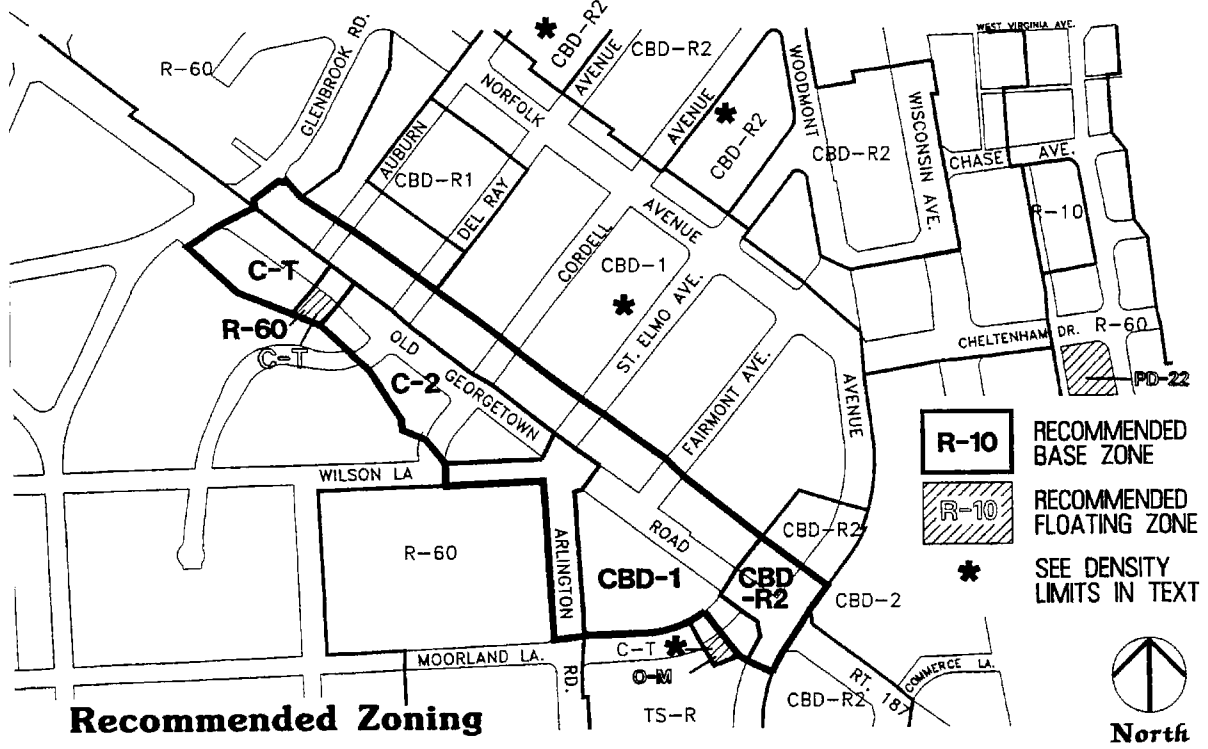
In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, new buildings should be placed to locate front entrances, store windows, and activating uses along the corridor. (See Figure 4.18.)

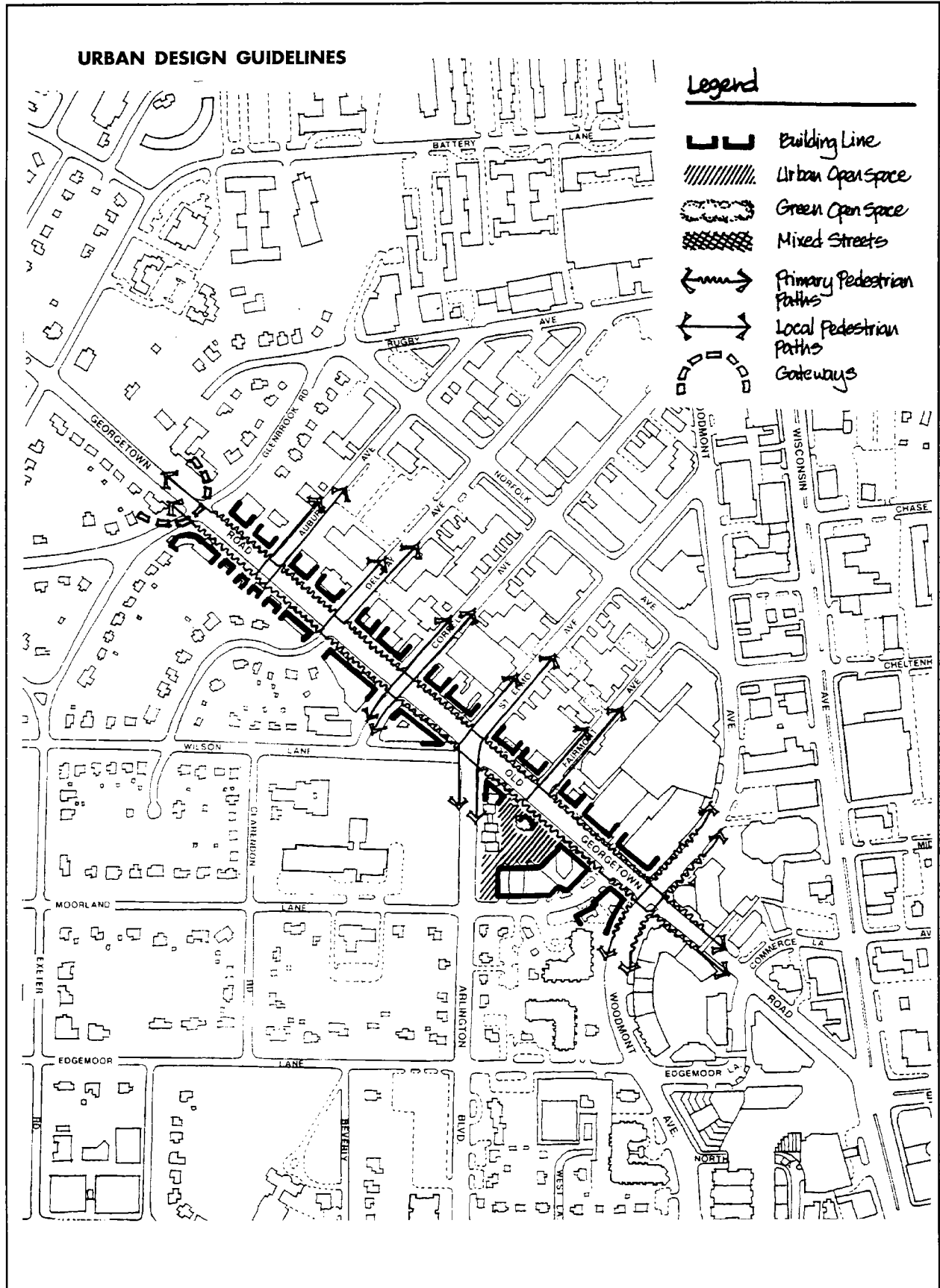
# OLD GEORGETOWN ROAD CORRIDOR

FIGURE 4.17



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## 4.4 THE BATTERY LANE DISTRICT

### A. DESCRIPTION

The district consists primarily of garden and mid-rise apartments on either side of Battery Lane between Woodmont Avenue and Old Georgetown Road, just south of the National Institutes of Health campus. A two-acre park provides a pedestrian/bicycle link to the Woodmont Triangle and recreation for both residents and employees. The Bethesda Rescue Squad occupies a site on the corner of Old Georgetown Road and Battery Lane on the southwestern edge of the district. The Plan proposes adding the townhouses on North Brook Lane to the Sector Plan area.

Current land use is predominantly multifamily residential, under R-10 zoning. This use provides an appropriate transition between the single-family neighborhood to the west and the Central Business District. There are 875 dwelling units in 12 complexes, which provide one of the major sources of affordable housing in Bethesda. Most of the apartment houses were built in the 1950's and 1960's. Many lack air conditioning, but they are well maintained, rents are reasonable, and vacancy rates are relatively low. Tenants are employed in Bethesda-Chevy Chase, including NIH, or in the District of Columbia. They are predominantly young and single, although there are some families and older people and a high-rise apartment building, built in 1988, is designed for the elderly.

A parcel on the corner of Woodmont Avenue and Battery Lane is appropriate for redevelopment, either in conjunction with apartment development on the adjacent site or as small scale office.

### B. OBJECTIVES

1. Retain most of the existing affordable housing.
2. Allow redevelopment of certain sites to increase the amount of housing near Metro and further the goals of the County's agricultural preservation policy.
3. Provide a northern gateway to the Woodmont Triangle with redevelopment of the parcel on the corner of Woodmont Avenue and Battery Lane.

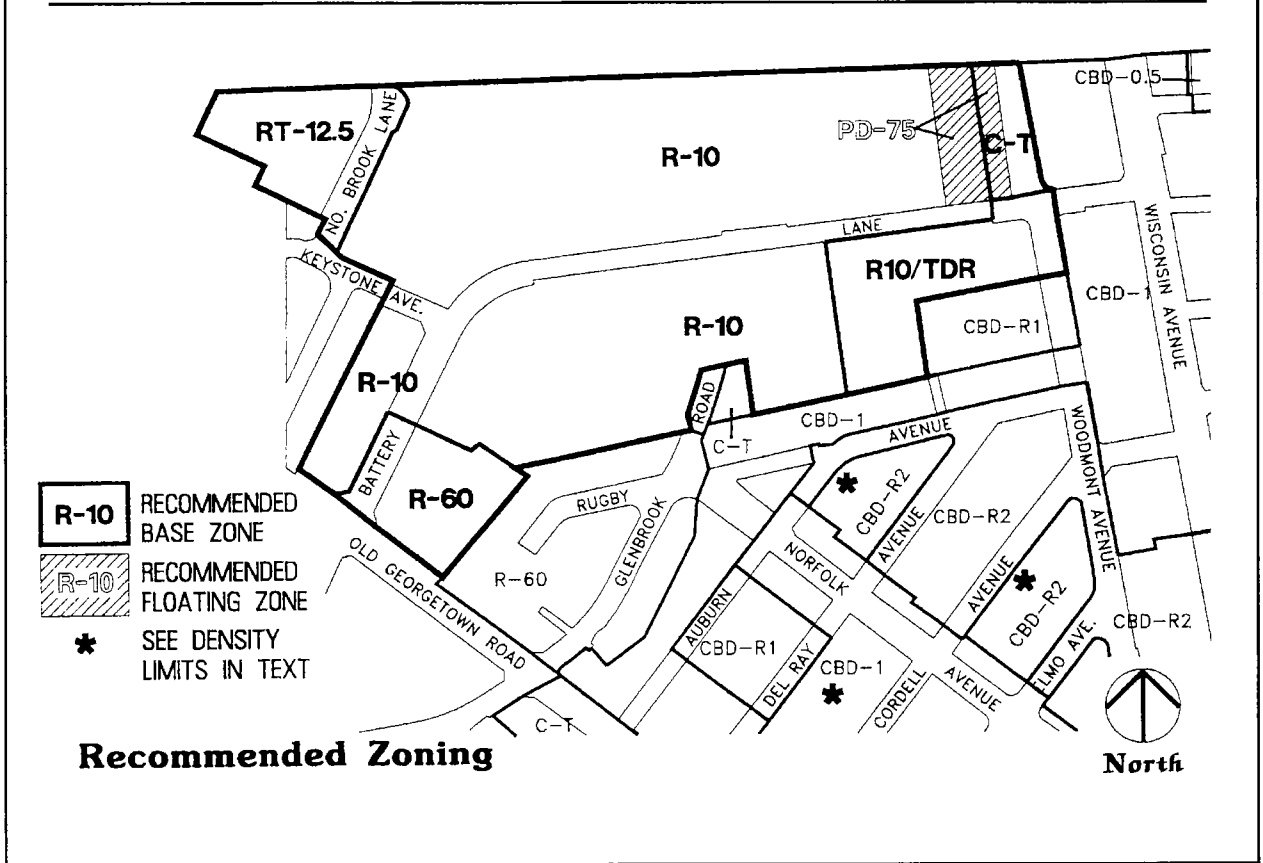
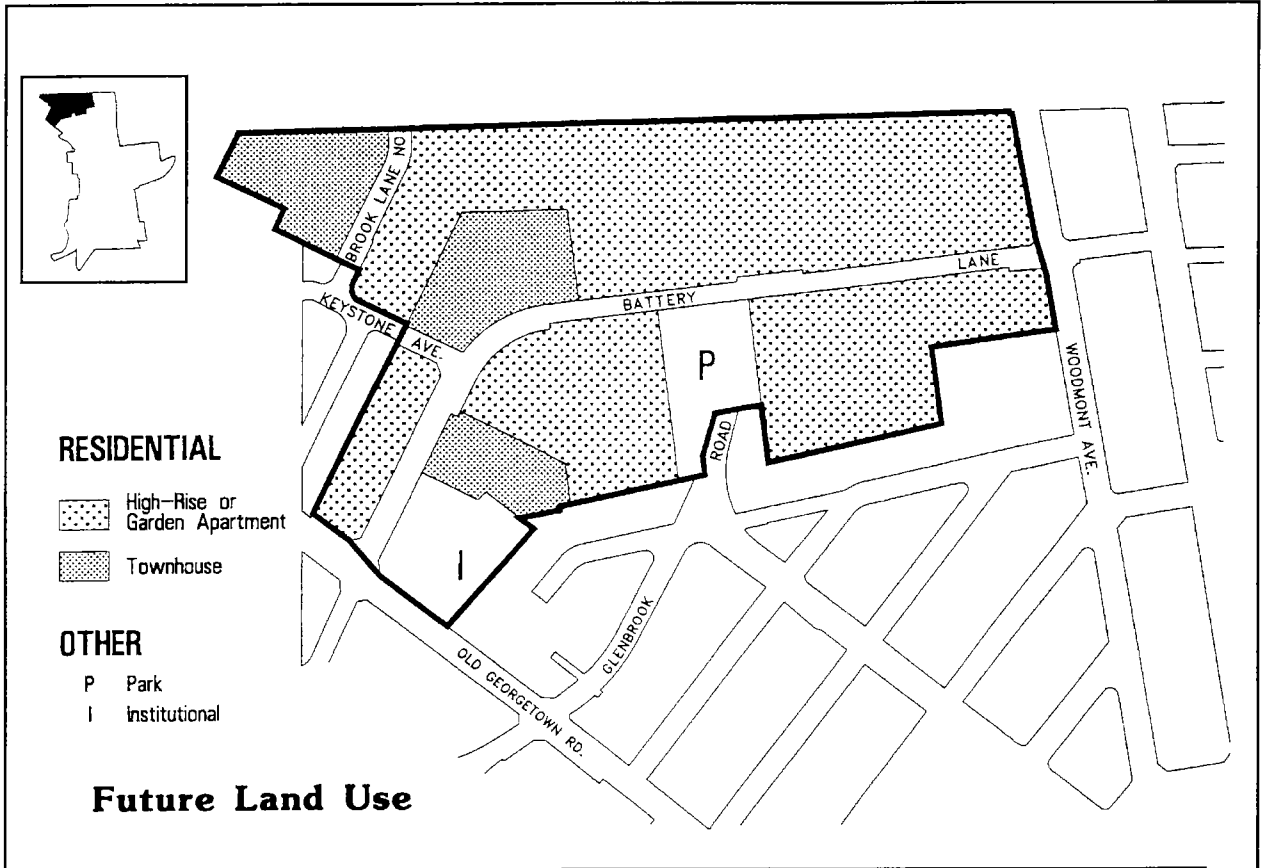
### C. RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the existing housing in the district should be preserved to ensure a variety of types and to allow retention of lower-cost housing. The Plan endorses application of programs to ensure that housing remains affordable. Such programs may include a County subsidy of renters in scattered market-rate units, or acquisition of apartment properties which may be sold and operated as affordable housing. (See future land use and recommended zoning in Figure 4.19.)

The Plan recommends extending the Sector Plan boundary to include the townhouses on North Brook Lane.

The Plan recommends allowing redevelopment of a site on the north side of Battery Lane (Site 1), the adjacent property on the corner of Woodmont Avenue currently







zoned C-T (Trunnell), and two sites on the south side of Battery Lane just west of Woodmont Avenue (Sites 2 and 3). Redevelopment will allow additional housing units near two Metro stops. The PD Zone has recently been amended to add options of 60, 75, and 100 dwelling units per acre. The PD-75 Zone would be an appropriate zone for Site 1 and the Trunnell property if the two sites assemble. If assemblage does not occur, Site 1 could develop under the PD-75 Zone, and the Trunnell property would retain the existing C-T Zone. (See Battery Lane illustrative in Appendix B.)

An amendment to the multiple family residential zones created three new TDR zones: R-30/TDR, R-20/TDR, and R-10 TDR. On the south side of Battery Lane, the Plan recommends the R-10/TDR Zone at 100 dwelling units to the acre for Sites 2 and 3. A greater density can be accommodated on the south side of the street because higher heights are acceptable toward the rear of the property. Use of the TDR Zone will further the public policy objective of agricultural preservation. Any redevelopment on these sites should be compatible with the possible development of housing and parking on the Garage 35 site.

#### **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

In addition to the objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following general guidelines apply to all properties along Battery Lane which are recommended for rezoning:








1. Maintain a building setback along Battery Lane which is consistent with the setbacks of the existing buildings. (See Figure 4.20.)
2. Orient building entrances, where feasible, toward Battery Lane to activate the street and increase public safety.
3. Provide parking in the rear or below grade to minimize the impact on the pedestrian environment.
4. Achieve a lushly landscaped, garden character along Battery Lane, consistent with the garden character already established in this residential neighborhood.

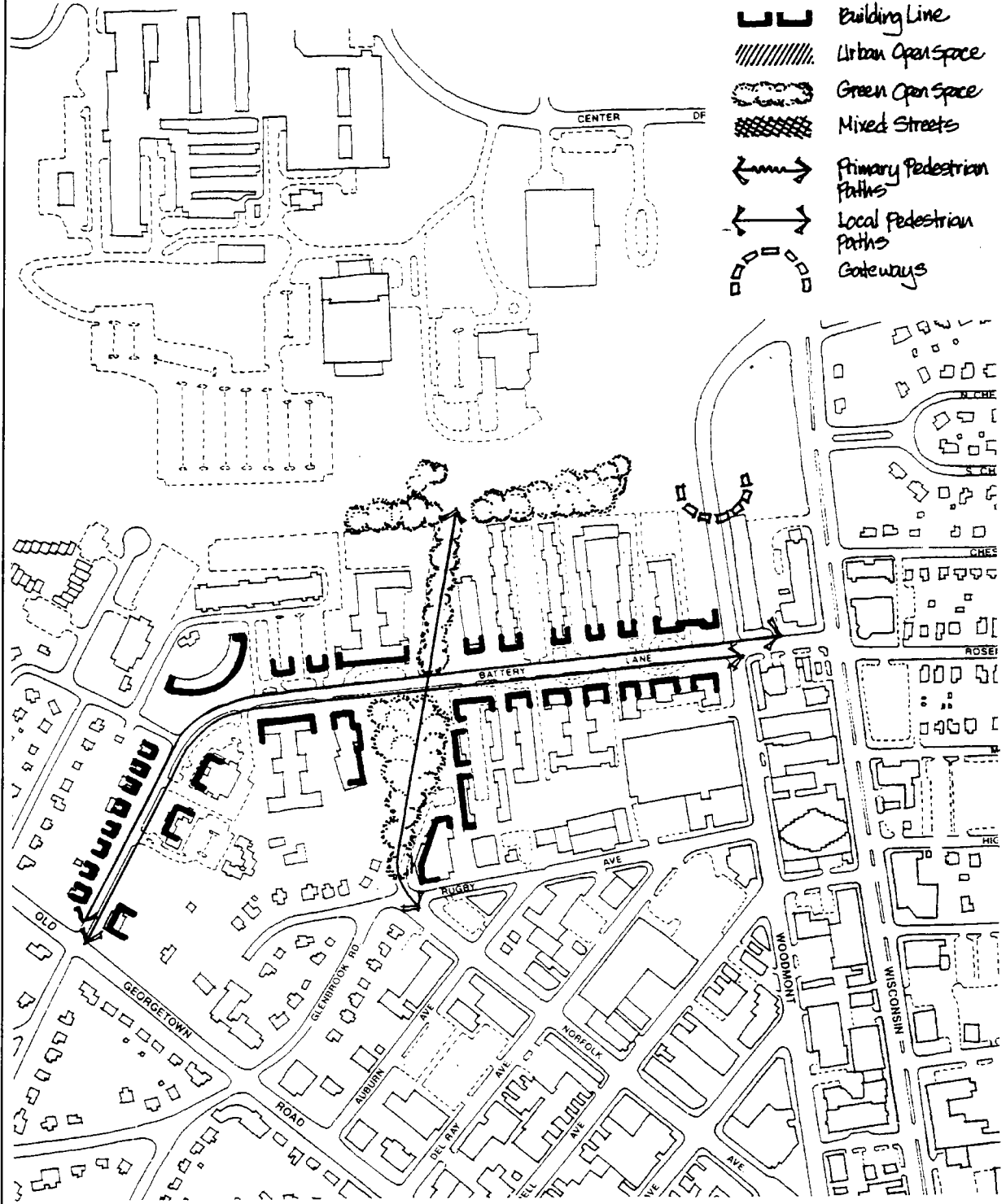
The following specific guidelines apply to Site 1 assembled with the Trunnell property:

1. Arrange the buildings in a manner that acknowledges the site's gateway location for the Woodmont Triangle District and minimizes a "canyon effect" along Woodmont Avenue. This can be achieved by such measures as locating the bulk of the building perpendicular to the street, stepping back the upper floors, or architecturally expressing the two- or three-story base.
2. Create a "gateway" to the Woodmont Triangle by providing flowering trees along the eastern perimeter of the site.
3. Maintain building heights no greater than 65 feet, as shown on Figure 3.2, Building Height Limits.

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Legend

-  Building Line
-  Urban Open Space
-  Green Open Space
-  Mixed Streets
-  Primary Pedestrian Paths
-  Local Pedestrian Paths
-  Gateways





If Site 1 and Trunnell do not assemble, the guidelines regarding height, building orientation, and stepping would continue to apply to both sites. In addition, the following guidelines would apply to the Trunnell property:

1. Create a gateway to the Woodmont Triangle by providing flowering trees along the eastern perimeter of the site. Coordinate the landscape design with plans for the site across Woodmont Avenue, if it redevelops.
2. Orient the new building toward the intersection of Woodmont Avenue and Battery Lane.
3. Maintain building heights no greater than 35 feet, as required by the zoning ordinance.
4. Provide vehicular access via a driveway from Woodmont Avenue. Parking should be provided in a manner which minimizes the impact on adjacent residential properties.

The following specific guidelines apply to Sites 2 and 3 assembled:

1. Maintain a human scale adjacent to the street by providing a height of no more than 65 feet along Battery Lane, with the building stepping up to a maximum of 110 feet toward the rear of the property to avoid a "canyon effect" along Battery Lane. (See Figure 3.2, Building Height Limits.)
2. Reduce the building mass as seen from the street by locating the bulk of the building toward the rear of the site and providing landscaped courtyards between the building's wings.

## 4.5 THE WOODMONT TRIANGLE DISTRICT

### A. DESCRIPTION

This district serves as an office and retailing center during the day and as a restaurant district during the evenings and weekends. The district is located roughly between Old Georgetown Road and Wisconsin Avenue, south of the Battery Lane District.

The Woodmont Triangle is mainly a commercial area, containing both retail and office uses. The primary types of retail establishments are comparison (24 percent), restaurant (21 percent), cultural (17 percent), and neighborhood (16 percent). Comparison and neighborhood retail are described in Section 2.2 B. Cultural retail includes art galleries, book stores, and hobby shops. Offices occupy both low-scale and second-floor space, as well as a few high-rise buildings. Larger office buildings include the Landow Building and a structure occupied by federal employees. Residential uses are limited. The Triangle Towers high-rise is on Cordell Avenue and another high-rise backs onto Woodmont Avenue. There is a single-family community on Rugby Avenue and Glenbrook Parkway.

The predominance of low buildings on small parcels in the Woodmont Triangle creates a strong contrast with the higher density of the Metro Core District. There are scattered high- and mid-rise buildings and some larger low-density parcels. Parking lots and decks, both public and private, occupy the limited number of otherwise vacant properties. There is a perception that more parking is needed. The area has little open space and few visually distinctive buildings. Lack of distinguishing characteristics among the streets creates orientation problems for visitors.

Despite its lack of visual quality, the district's diverse business activity, low-scale buildings, and low-speed grid street pattern contribute to the area's appeal. In the 1980's, the Woodmont Triangle emerged as a regional restaurant district. The area is also known for specialty shops and services that are popular with residents. Culturally-related businesses, such as art and book stores, represent a growing market.

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

1. Preserve the predominantly low-density and low-scale character of the district.
2. Provide additional housing, particularly in the north end of the district.
3. Support a diverse specialty retail, community-serving retail, and restaurant environment, including sidewalk cafes and dispersed parking facilities.
4. Improve the pedestrian environment with up-graded streetscape, including street trees and green open spaces.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Plan recommends small-scale standard method infill development in the southern portion and housing in the northern portion of the Triangle. For much of the area, assemblage of large parcels is not likely because of the many small properties and separate ownerships. There is potential for apartment buildings on some larger sites. Future land use and recommended zoning are shown in Figure 4.21.

### **Mixed-Use Potential**

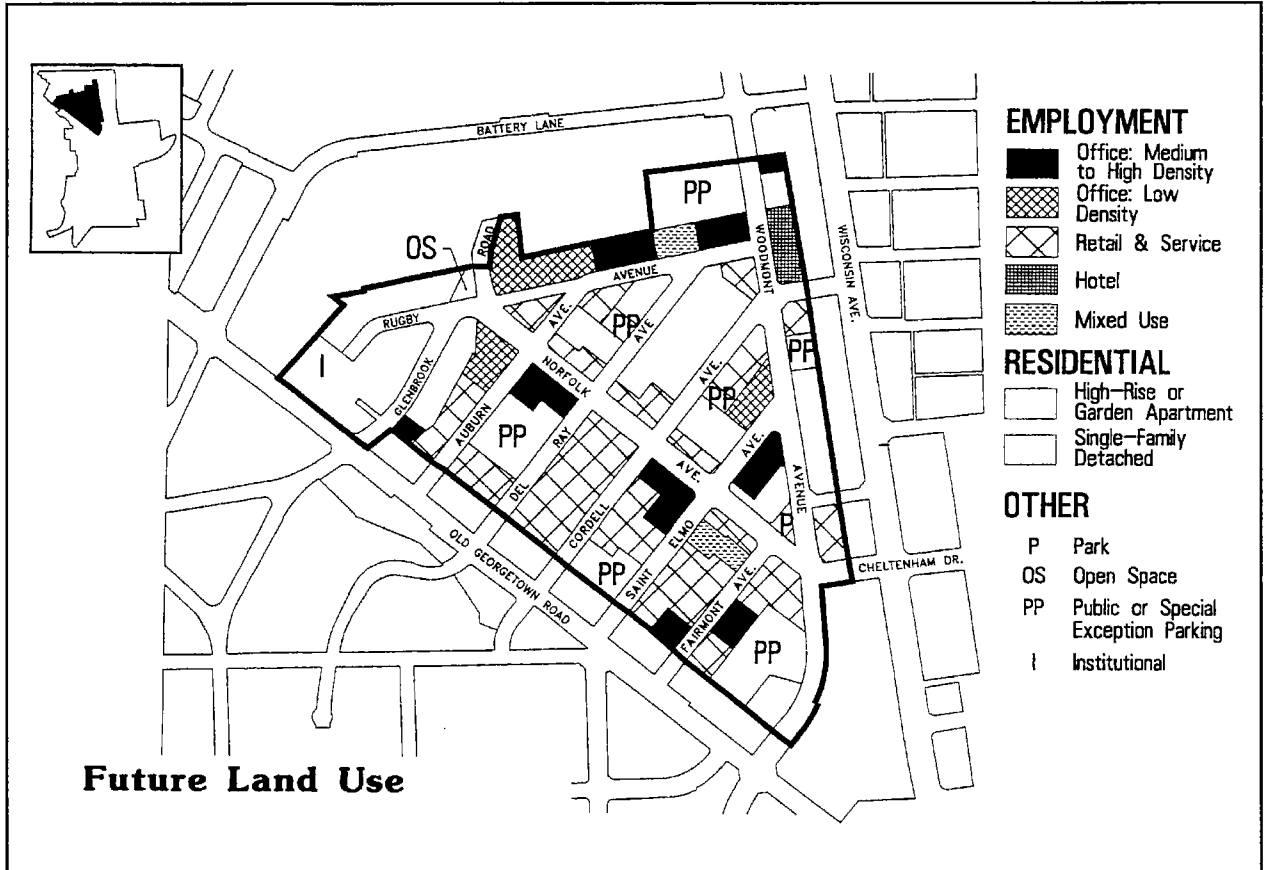
The CBD-1 Zone is recommended for most properties along Auburn, Rugby, and Woodmont Avenues. The Plan recommends that optional method projects be allowed only if residential use is included. The CBD-1 Zone allows mixed-use development to 3 FAR, with a low residential floor area and a high commercial floor area. Although this creates an economic incentive to provide more housing, properties in this district are generally too small to have redevelopment potential.

For the section along Norfolk Avenue and southeast of Del Ray Avenue, the Plan recommends the CBD-1 Zone, limited to standard method development. This is the heart of the active restaurant/retail area, and it should retain a low-density, small-scale character.

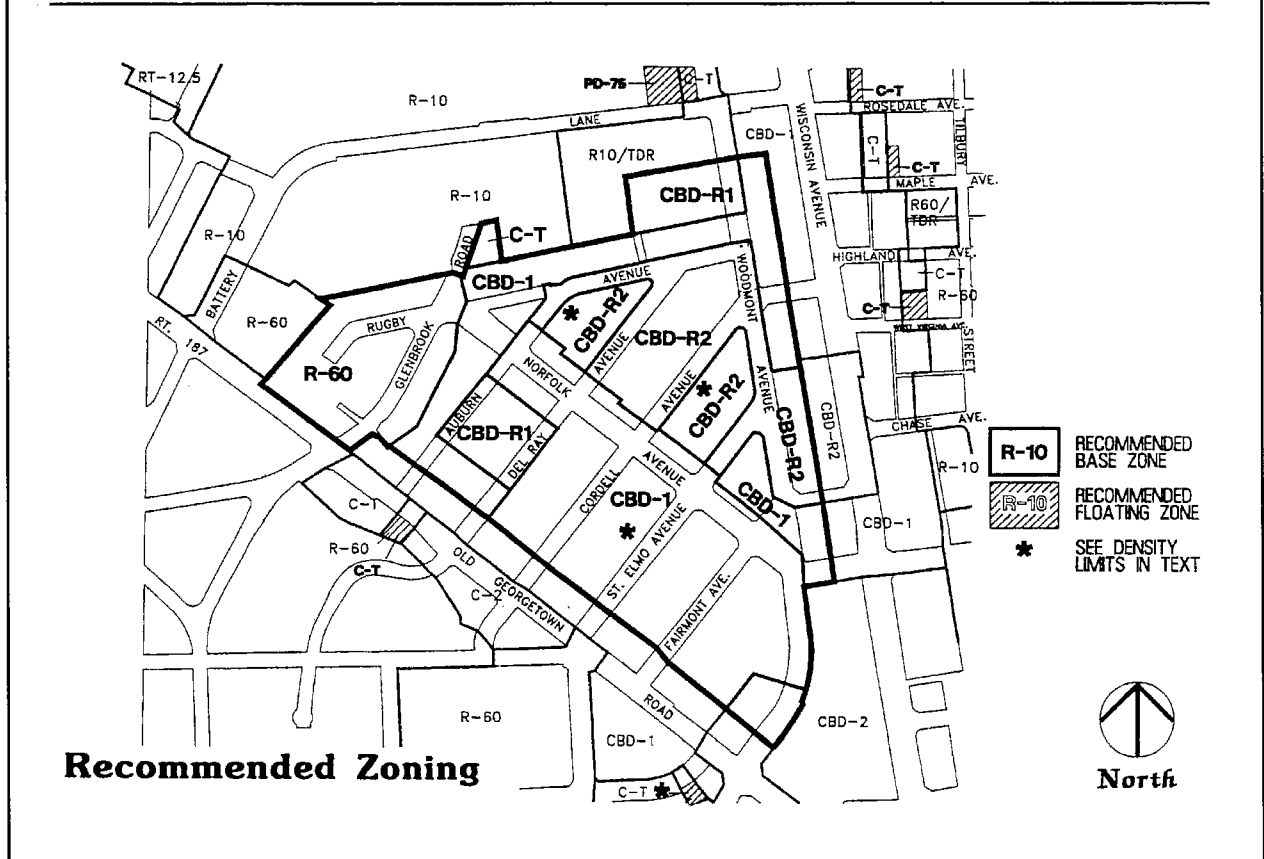
Many buildings in the Woodmont Triangle were built prior to the 1 FAR density limit imposed in the CBD-1 Zone by the 1976 Sector Plan. Many of these buildings could become more attractive with facade improvements and small expansions of public waiting areas. The Sector Plan supports very small additions to floor area to make existing buildings more useful and attractive.

# WOODMONT TRIANGLE DISTRICT

FIGURE 4.21



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The CBD-1 Zone allows the addition of up to 1 FAR for residential use. The Plan assumes that retail would be provided on the ground floor with residences above. Such residential uses could be provided at many locations, since small lots occur throughout the Woodmont Triangle. The expansion of community-serving retail, possibly including a grocery store, would complement new residential development.

### **Housing Potential**

The Plan recommends the CBD-R2 Zone at several locations in the Woodmont Triangle District. The zone allows predominately residential projects of up to 5 FAR. Standard method projects of up to 1 FAR are allowed, with permitted uses that are similar to the CBD-1 Zone. The new CBD-R2 Zone is described in Section 10.1.

The Plan recommends the CBD-R2 Zone for a property at the northwest corner of Woodmont Avenue and Old Georgetown Road, the Woodmont Corner building. The site is across from the Bethesda Place mixed-use project and is suitable for high-rise residential use with ground floor retail. The CBD-R2 Zone is recommended for a second area, north of Fairmont Avenue. The area contains the existing Fairmont Plaza and there is potential for housing on the Brown property, located at mid-block. (See Site 15 illustrative in Appendix B.)

For a three-block area north of Norfolk Avenue, south of Rugby Avenue, and west of Woodmont Avenue the Plan recommends the CBD-R2 Zone. The area has potential for large-scale optional method projects. The most likely project would be between Del Ray and Cordell Avenues on the Wohlfarth Property. (See Site 11, 11a, 11b illustrative in Appendix B.) Other projects are possible if small properties are assembled. Zoning the three-block area CBD-R2 provides a more uniform zoning map and allows flexibility for private initiative and property assembly.

The Plan supports 5 FAR and a 110-foot height limit on the block between Del Ray and Cordell Avenues. Other CBD-R2 properties in the three-block area would be limited to 3 FAR and would step down in height from 110 to 90 feet to provide lower scale development.

The Plan recommends the CBD-R1 Zone and mixed-income housing on two public properties. These sites are among the best locations in the Sector Plan area for additional housing. The CBD-R1 Zone ensures that new development will be residential, with some ground floor retail. Public Parking Garage 35 is on a 1.6-acre parcel west of Woodmont Avenue and south of Battery Lane. (See Site 5 illustrative in Appendix B.) Housing should be provided when the existing garage needs to be replaced. Development of a joint parking/housing project is unlikely to occur until there is a need to expand or demolish the garage to meet the parking needs of the area. Several small private properties on Rugby Avenue, zoned CBD-1, have the potential of being assembled with the parking garage for an optional method project. A height limit of 90 feet is recommended for this site.

Public Parking Lot 36 is on a 0.8-acre property between Del Ray and Auburn Avenues. (See Site 12 illustrative in Appendix B.) Housing should be provided when a new parking



structure is built. The County crisis center should be retained or relocated. A height limit of 65 feet is recommended. The site contains the former B-CC Rescue Squad structure, which has potential value for a variety of public uses. If the existing County crisis center is relocated, other possible uses could include a teen facility.

The Plan encourages the conversion of older office buildings in the Woodmont Triangle and elsewhere in the Sector Plan area to housing. The Plan recommends that amendments to the zoning ordinance be prepared for this purpose.

In the area along Rugby Avenue and Glenbrook Road, the Plan recommends retaining the existing R-60 Zone to preserve the affordable single-family detached houses.

The Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church property should be rezoned R-60 from the current R-H zoning. Development of higher density housing on the site would be difficult because structured parking would be required to accommodate both housing and church activities.

### **Other Improvements**

Additional public parking in multiple levels will be needed to serve retail businesses and employment in the area. Underground parking should be combined with mixed-income housing on Lot 36 and a rebuilt Garage 35, as discussed above.

The Plan recommends that Norfolk Avenue be designed as a tree-lined "Main Street." This pedestrian link could result in widened sidewalks or construction of a central median. The enhanced boulevard would create a major new identity for the Woodmont Triangle and would significantly improve orientation for visitors to the district. (See Chapter 6, Streetscape Plan.) Norfolk Avenue is illustrated in Figure 4.22.

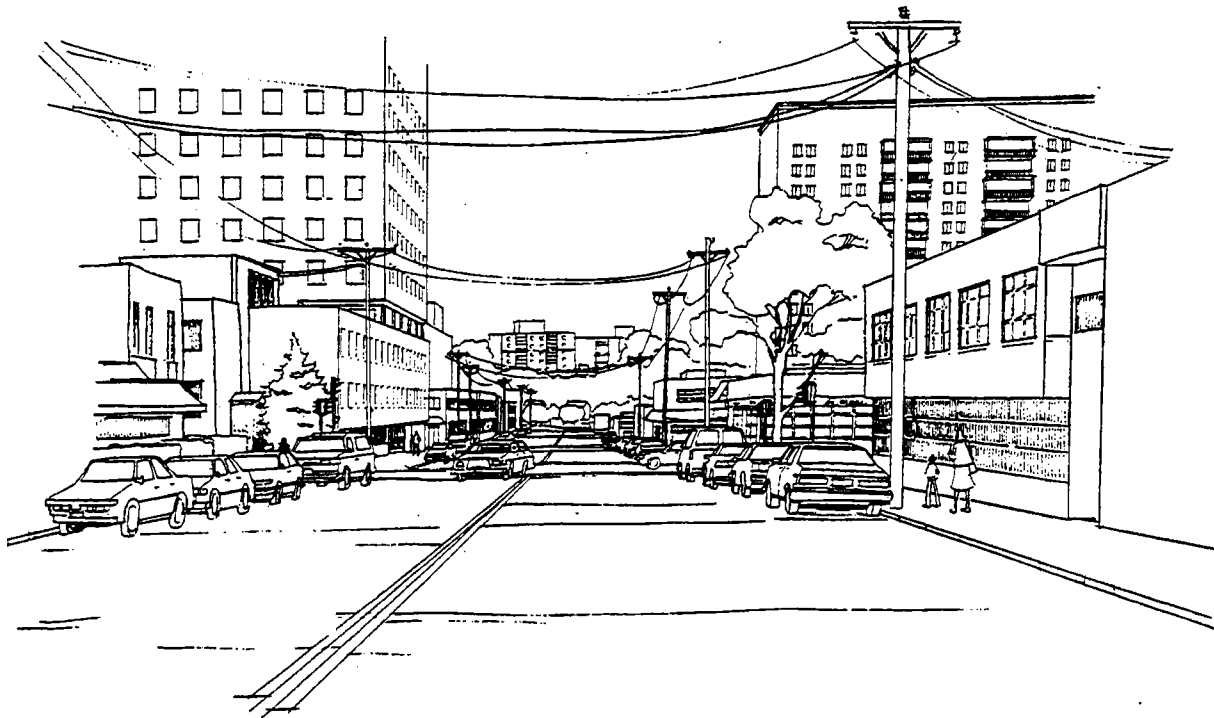
Another recommended improvement to the Triangle's pedestrian environment is to narrow Fairmont Avenue and allow parking on both sides, creating a short, Mixed Street accessible to slow moving vehicles and easily crossed by pedestrians. Businesses and restaurants would benefit from the special character of the street and expanded sidewalks. The final design would be prepared cooperatively with affected property owners. A Mixed Street could be achieved in a variety of ways, including a possible one-way street. Fairmont Avenue is illustrated in Figure 4.23. Other pedestrian destinations, located at either end of Fairmont Avenue, are a botanical garden at Chevy Chase Garden Plaza and the expanded War Memorial park. The Mixed Street recommendation is discussed in the Streetscape Plan. Implementation of the Bicycle Friendly Area recommendations in the Bicycle Network Plan (see Section 5.5) will also enhance both the pedestrian and cyclist environments in the Triangle.

## **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

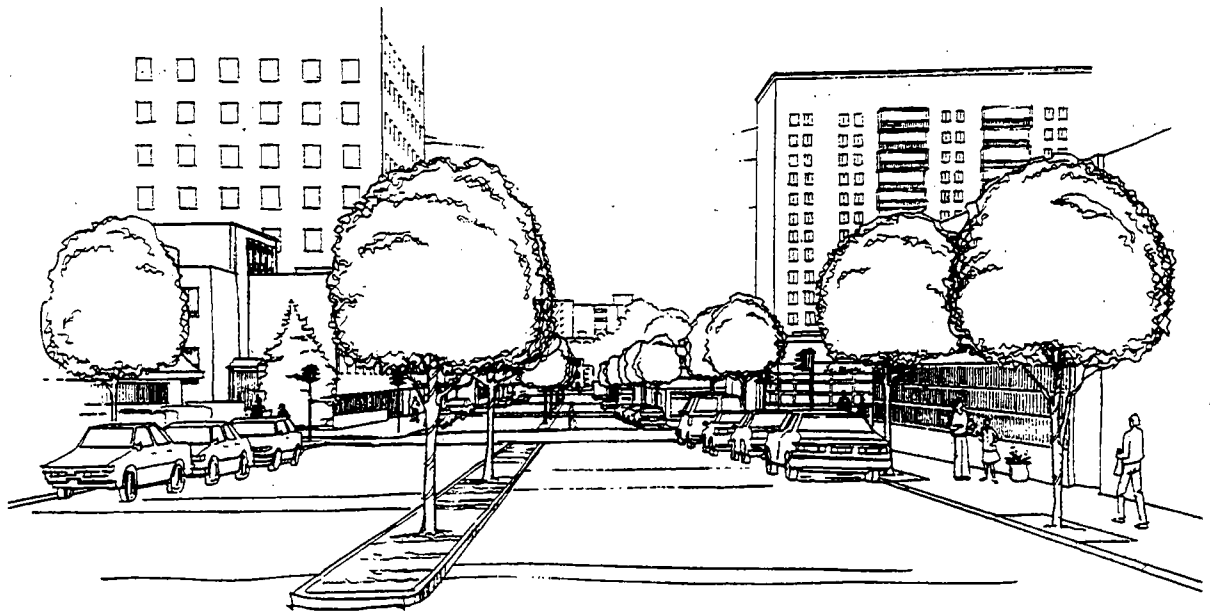
In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply in the Woodmont Triangle District (see Figure 4.24):

1. Maintain the low-rise, human scale of the area by establishing a height limit of 50 feet or 4 stories, except where housing is recommended. A low-rise, high-density

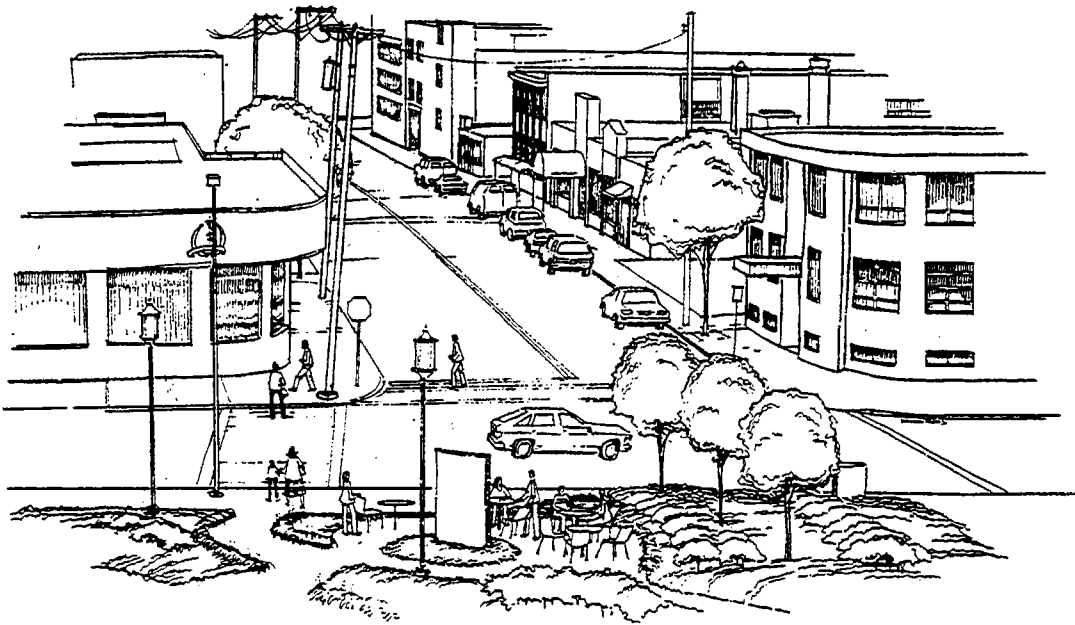




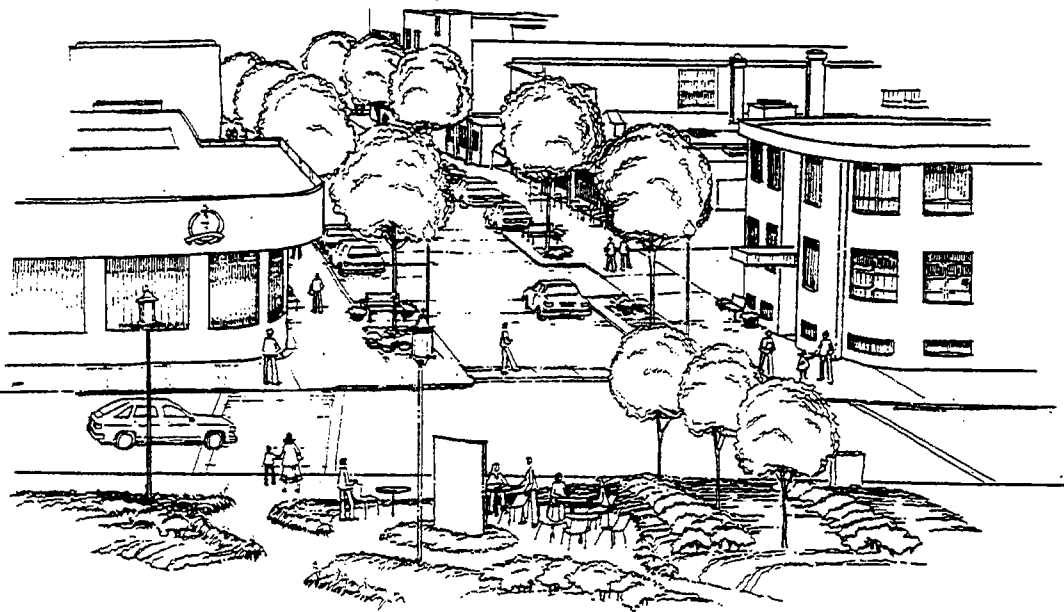
"Before", Existing View of Undivided Norfolk Avenue



"After", Proposed Landscaped Island and Streetscape










"Before", Existing View of Fairmont Avenue Looking South

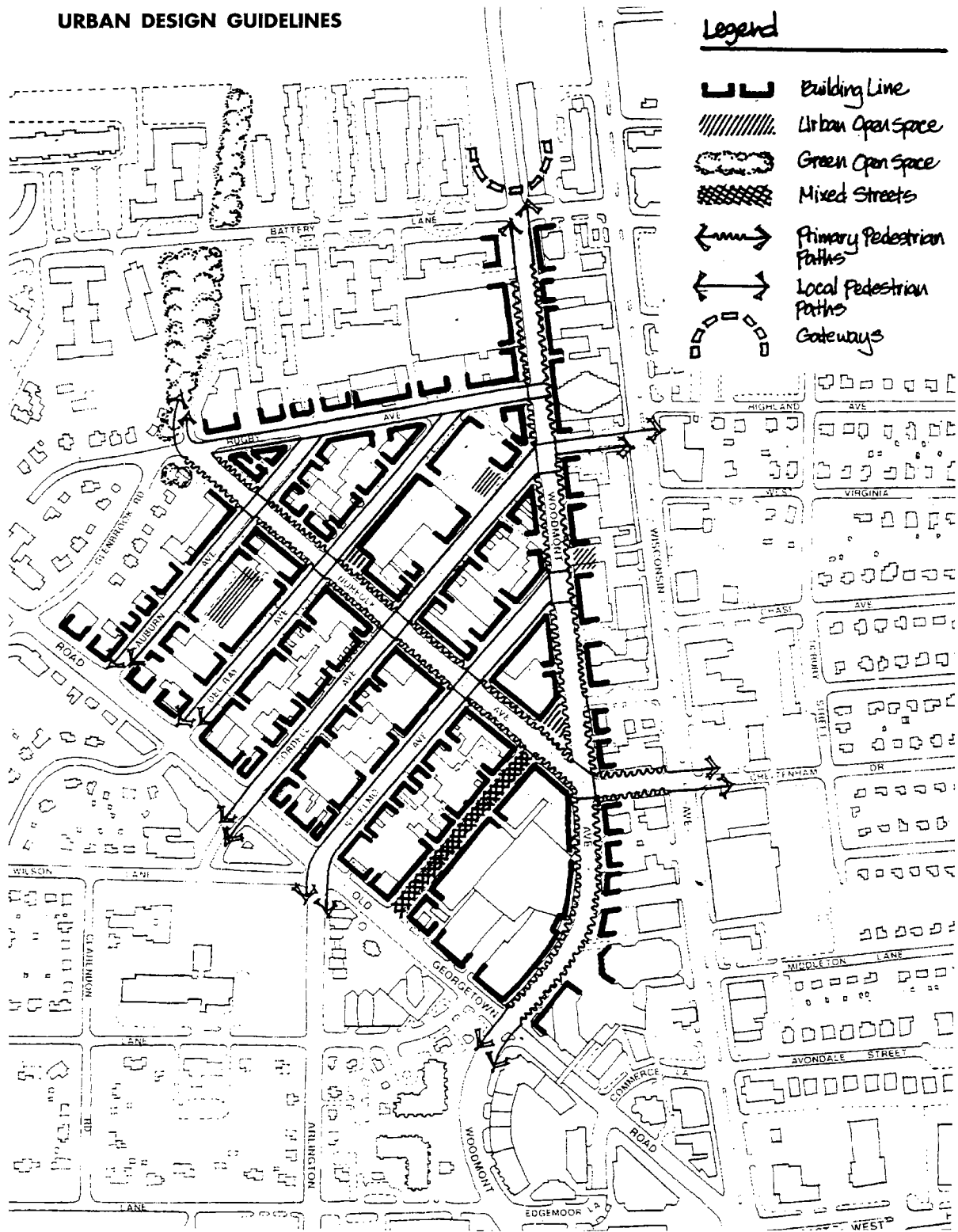


"After", Proposed Mixed Street Looking South

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Legend

-  Building Line
-  Urban Open Space
-  Green Open Space
-  Mixed Streets
-  Primary Pedestrian Paths
-  Local Pedestrian Paths
-  Gateways





urban character is preferred for housing sites in this area. Figure 3.2, Building Height Limits, provides recommended maximum heights for areas with potential for new housing. These heights were determined after careful evaluation of each area. Optional method housing development must respect the height limits.

2. Provide sufficient building setbacks to adequately accommodate pedestrians and streetscape improvements. Where sidewalk cafes are appropriate, additional building setbacks may be required to accommodate pedestrian space plus outdoor seating.
3. Achieve compatibility with adjacent properties through the use of architectural facade treatments, consistent building setbacks, and a continuation of storefront retail or restaurant space.
4. Improve pedestrian access across the intersection of Rugby and Norfolk Avenues by narrowing the intersection. Add a landscaped open space to improve access and visibility to the Battery Lane Urban Park.
5. For all housing sites within the Woodmont Triangle, the following specific guidelines apply, in addition to the preceding list:
  - a. Maintain a desirable street width to building height ratio in the range of a 1:1 (height to width) and avoid a “canyon effect” along streets for buildings over six stories in height. This can be accomplished by such measures as locating the bulk of the building perpendicular to the street or stepping back the upper floors of a building over six stories to express a two- or three-story base.
  - b. Provide adequate sunlight for mid-block courtyards and recreation areas by such measures as orienting taller buildings to the north side of such spaces or in a north-south alignment.
  - c. Achieve an adequate sense of privacy and light for residential units above 4 stories by such measures as maintaining a minimum of 50 feet from adjacent tall buildings.
  - d. Encourage mid-block pedestrian access, where feasible, to facilitate pedestrian circulation.

## **4.6 THE WISCONSIN NORTH CORRIDOR**

### **A. DESCRIPTION**

The Wisconsin North Corridor serves as a major entryway and commercial area for the Bethesda CBD. The corridor extends from north of Chestnut Street to Cheltenham Drive and includes buildings that generally face onto Wisconsin Avenue. Immediately to the east

of the corridor is the East Bethesda Transition Area, the Sector Plan boundary, and the East Bethesda community of single-family detached houses.

The Wisconsin North Corridor contains both retail and office uses. The primary types of retail establishments are comparison (29 percent), restaurant (22 percent), and neighborhood (13 percent). Comparison and neighborhood retail are described in Section 2.2 B. There are several hotels, including a Holiday Inn and a Ramada Inn.

The corridor contains mid- to high-rise buildings along the west side and low-rise buildings along the east side. Some of the older one- and two-floor commercial buildings, including several properties on the east side, appear ready for redevelopment. Such redevelopment provides an opportunity to create a more attractive entry to Bethesda by addressing the lack of street trees, the overhead utility wires, and the scattered attention to building facades. Redevelopment on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue will also have an impact on the East Bethesda neighborhood. A Wisconsin to Tilbury Special Study analyzed the relationship between Wisconsin Avenue development and neighborhood preservation. (See Appendix C.)

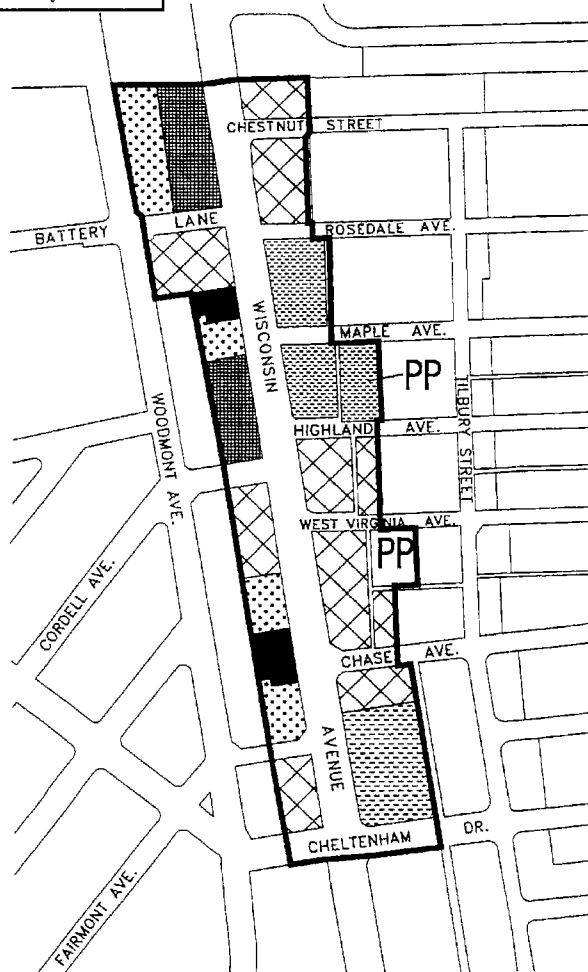
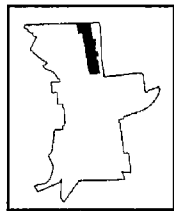
## **B. OBJECTIVES**

1. Create a high-quality entry into Bethesda by redevelopment, improved streetscape, and facade improvements.
2. Provide additional housing, particularly along the east side of the corridor, to encourage uses that are compatible with nearby residential areas.
3. Support a diverse specialty retail, community-serving retail, and restaurant environment, including provision of adequate short-term parking facilities.
4. Consider the impact on East Bethesda when redeveloping sites along the east side of Wisconsin Avenue.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Plan recommends confirmation of the existing CBD-1 Zone in all but two segments of the corridor. (See Figure 4.25.) The only optional method development allowed would be mixed-use projects containing a residential component. The CBD-1 Zone allows mixed-use development to 3 FAR. A low residential floor area and a high commercial floor area offer an economic incentive to provide more housing. On the west side of Wisconsin Avenue, at Battery Lane, housing could be added on the Ramada Inn property. (See Appendix B, Site 1 illustrative.) On the east side of Wisconsin Avenue, mixed-use projects would be required to have a minimum of 67 percent residential use. The expansion of community-serving retail, possibly including a grocery store, would complement new residential development. Ground floor retail should be provided in mixed-use projects on both sides of Wisconsin Avenue.

The Plan allows continued small-scale, standard method infill commercial development on CBD-1 sites that are too small for optional method development. The CBD-1 Zone allows the addition of a further 1 FAR for residential use. The Plan allows retail uses on the ground floor of mixed-use projects.



**Future Land Use**

**EMPLOYMENT**

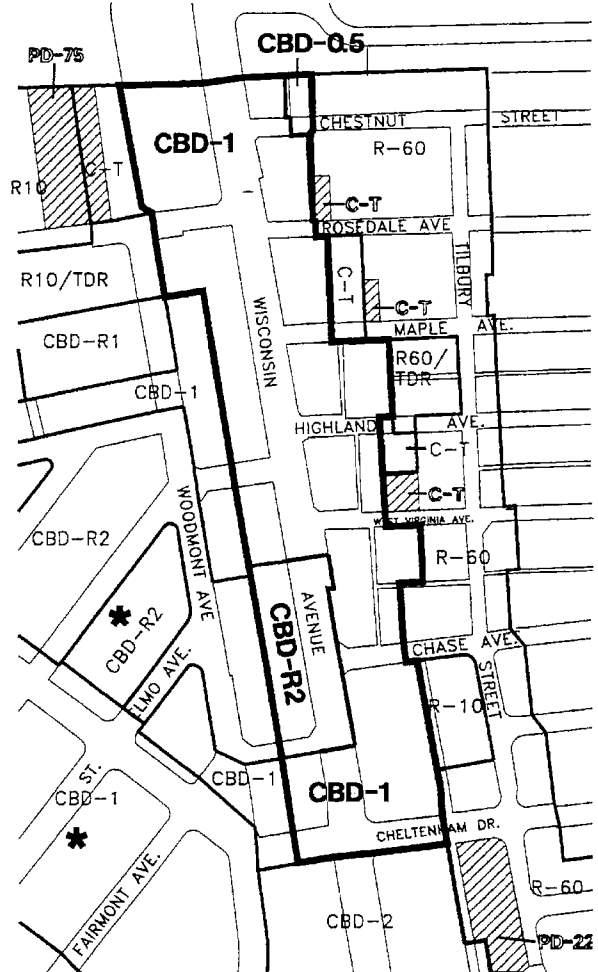
- Office: Medium to High Density
- Office: Low Density
- Retail & Service
- Hotel
- Mixed Use

**RESIDENTIAL**

- High-Rise or Garden Apartment

**OTHER**

- PP Public or Special Exception Parking



**Recommended Zoning**

- RECOMMENDED BASE ZONE
- RECOMMENDED FLOATING ZONE
- SEE DENSITY LIMITS IN TEXT



North

For the one-half block north of Fairmont Avenue, on the west side of Wisconsin Avenue, the Plan recommends CBD-R2 at the full 5 FAR for optional method and a maximum height of 122 feet. (See Figure 3.2, Building Height Limits.)

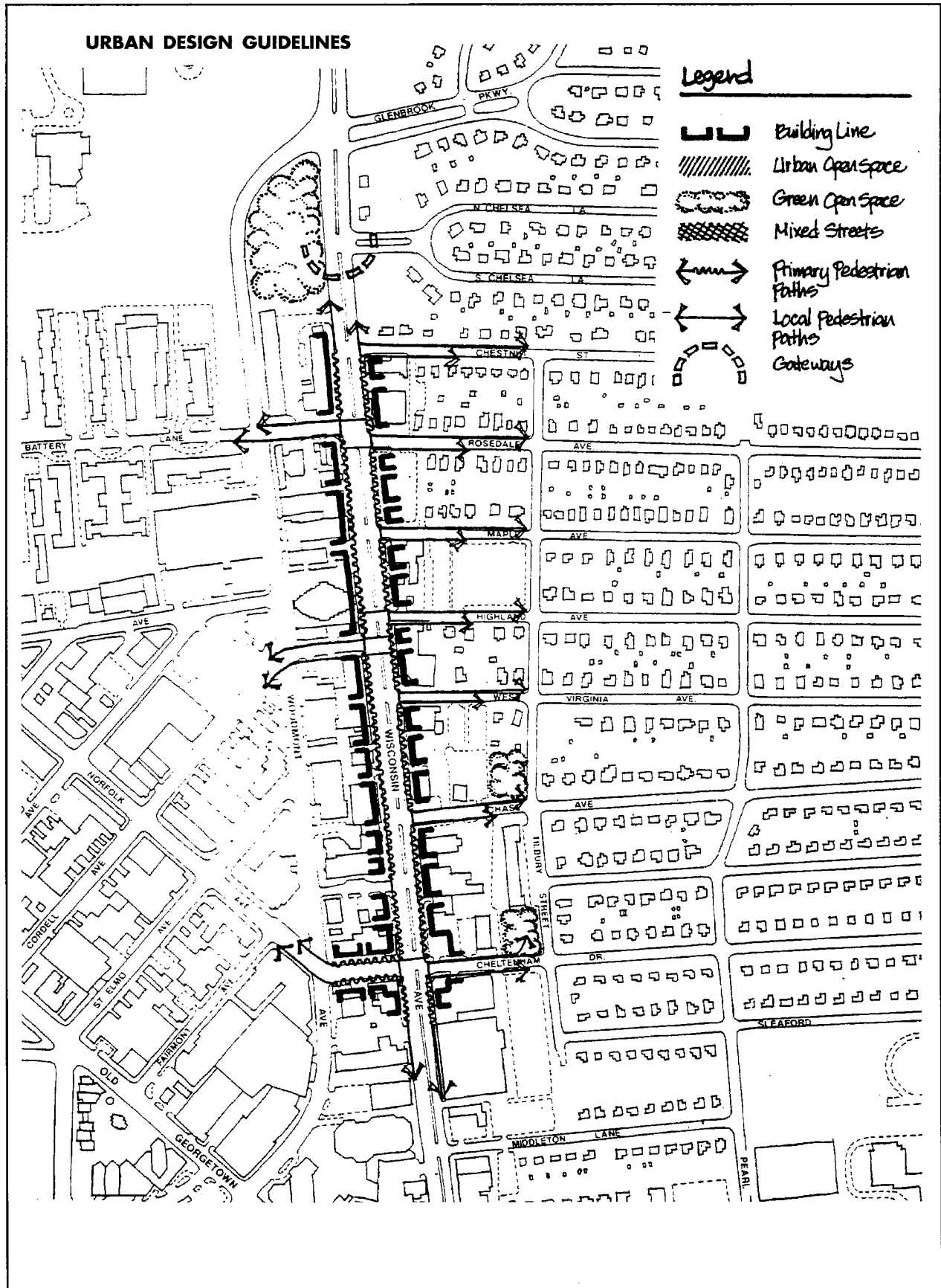
On the east side of Wisconsin Avenue, at the northern end of the corridor, the Plan seeks to retain the option of commercial uses for three small properties currently used for office or retail while ensuring a scale that is compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhood to the east. The Plan recommends urban design guidelines for redevelopment under the existing CBD-1 Zone of the two lots on the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Chestnut Street. Any subdivision plan should comply with these guidelines. The Plan recommends the CBD 0.5 Zone for the third lot east of Wisconsin Avenue to retain the existing retail use and scale and create a compatible transition with the adjacent house.

The Plan recommends creation of landscaped “gateway” entries at several locations. One northern gateway to Bethesda is established by the park-like area owned by the National Institutes of Health, beyond the Sector Plan boundary. A gateway to the Metro Core is recommended at Cheltenham Street (shown in Figure 4.7). The intersection can become both a transition to the higher densities of the Metro Core and a linkage to the East Bethesda neighborhood.

#### **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply in the Wisconsin North Corridor (see Figure 4.26):

1. Orient new development toward Wisconsin Avenue, with major building entrances and retail uses located at street level. Building setbacks should continue to be 20 feet from the street curb, as recommended in the Metro Core.
2. Allow building heights on the west side up to 122 feet where shown on Figure 3.2, Building Height Limits, and on the east side up to 75 feet, stepping down to 60 feet to achieve a compatible transition with adjacent residential properties.
3. Consider views from the residential neighborhood in the design of new buildings.
4. Locate vehicular access and service areas along the east side of Wisconsin Avenue in the rear of the site, along upgraded alleys, and provide screening from nearby residential properties.
5. Provide continuous sidewalks and streetscape improvements along all street frontages to improve pedestrian access to the neighborhood.
6. Locate open space associated with new development in a manner that creates a link with existing open spaces or provides a transition to the residential neighborhood to the east. A possible location for additional open space may





be the northeast corner of Cheltenham Drive and Wisconsin Avenue to help connect the open space of the Woodmont Triangle with that of Tilbury Street.

7. Create a focal point for the existing view looking east from St. Elmo Avenue when redeveloping properties on the west side of Wisconsin Avenue directly across from St. Elmo Avenue.

The following guidelines apply to any redevelopment of the two lots on the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Chestnut Street:

1. Set the building back 20 feet from the Wisconsin Avenue street curb. The setback from Chestnut Street should conform to that of the adjacent houses.
2. Provide 35-foot maximum building heights, as required in the zoning ordinance.
3. Design the building with a residential image, including roof treatment, window scale and placement, and entrances to achieve compatibility with the neighborhood.
4. Provide landscape features along Wisconsin Avenue that enhance the entry to Bethesda. Along Chestnut Street, the landscape design and plant material should create a residential character.
5. Provide streetscape improvements in accordance with the streetscape plan.
6. Locate off-street parking either beneath the building or to the rear, screened from Wisconsin Avenue, Chestnut Street, and the residential area to the northwest. Retain the existing common access drive if possible.

## **4.7 THE EAST BETHESDA TRANSITION AREA**

### **A. DESCRIPTION**

This area forms a transition between the single-family houses of East Bethesda and the Central Business District. It is characterized by low-density, primarily residential development, green open spaces, and paved parking lots screened with landscaping.

The area is only half a block from the commercial uses within the CBD on Wisconsin Avenue, and redevelopment of Wisconsin Avenue North sites will have an impact on the transition area and the East Bethesda neighborhood. A Wisconsin to Tilbury Special Study analyzed the relationship between these areas. (See Appendix C.)

The western edge of the transition area is the CBD line. The existing Sector Plan boundary currently defines the district on the north and east. Along the southern edge, the area includes the playing fields and the bulk of the buildings of Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. The Plan proposes changing the Sector Plan boundary. (See Figure 2.3 for the existing Sector Plan boundary and proposed boundary changes.)



From Chestnut Street to Sleaford Road, the transition area comprises single-family houses in both residential and special exception or Commercial Transition (C-T) use, a row of 30 garden apartments, 2 small public parks, Public Parking Lot 25, and a privately owned vacant lot used for commercial parking. The garden apartments on Tilbury Street predated the 1976 Sector Plan, and the two parks, recommended by the 1976 Plan, are stable transition land uses. Lot 25, though it may ultimately be needed for a parking structure, is screened by a mature evergreen hedge and currently serves as an effective buffer.

The private parking lot south of Cheltenham, however, does not provide a stable land use. It is unsightly, does not screen adjacent commercial uses adequately, and is a source of neighborhood concern. Though eligible to apply for special exception parking for commercial use under the current R-60 zoning, no application has been filed. The analysis of parking needs (Section 5.6) shows that this lot may be needed by the Parking District in the future. Owned by the Beta Corporation, which owns the Bethesda Theatre Cafe, the lot is discussed in the Metro Core District with the theater and Public Parking Lot 42.

The other area where there has been question about long-term stability is the section of single-family houses between Chestnut Street and West Virginia Avenues. The 1976 Sector Plan confirmed the R-60 Zone. The issue has been whether these structures are still viable and likely to be well maintained as single-family detached houses in a safe and relatively quiet neighborhood; comparable to, or part of, the East Bethesda neighborhood.

There is some evidence that houses have been poorly maintained and used for group rental housing, in anticipation of rezoning for higher density redevelopment near the CBD. Adjacent commercial uses and vehicles reportedly disturb residents at night, and there is a perception of increased crime. On the other hand, the properties provide a source of attractive, moderately priced houses and some have been purchased recently for single-family use. There has also been an organized neighborhood effort to ensure zoning and building code enforcement. The Special Study examined two approaches to address the concerns in this area. (See Appendix C.)

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

1. Ensure the stability of the land uses in the transition area to preserve East Bethesda as a single-family residential neighborhood.
2. Provide parking to serve the needs of the adjacent commercial establishments. Keep overflow parking and cut-through traffic from having an undesirable impact on the East Bethesda neighborhood.
3. Provide low-density housing.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Plan recommends that a new Sector Plan boundary be established that excludes the single-family detached properties east of Tilbury Street, north of Sleaford Road, and east of Chelton Road from the Sector Plan area. The new boundary would extend along the

east side of the Tilbury Street right-of-way from Chestnut Street to Sleaford Road, then along the north side of the Sleaford Road right-of-way to Chelton Road, proceeding along the east side of Chelton Road to within one lot width of East-West Highway. (See Figures 2.3, 4.27, and 4.28.)

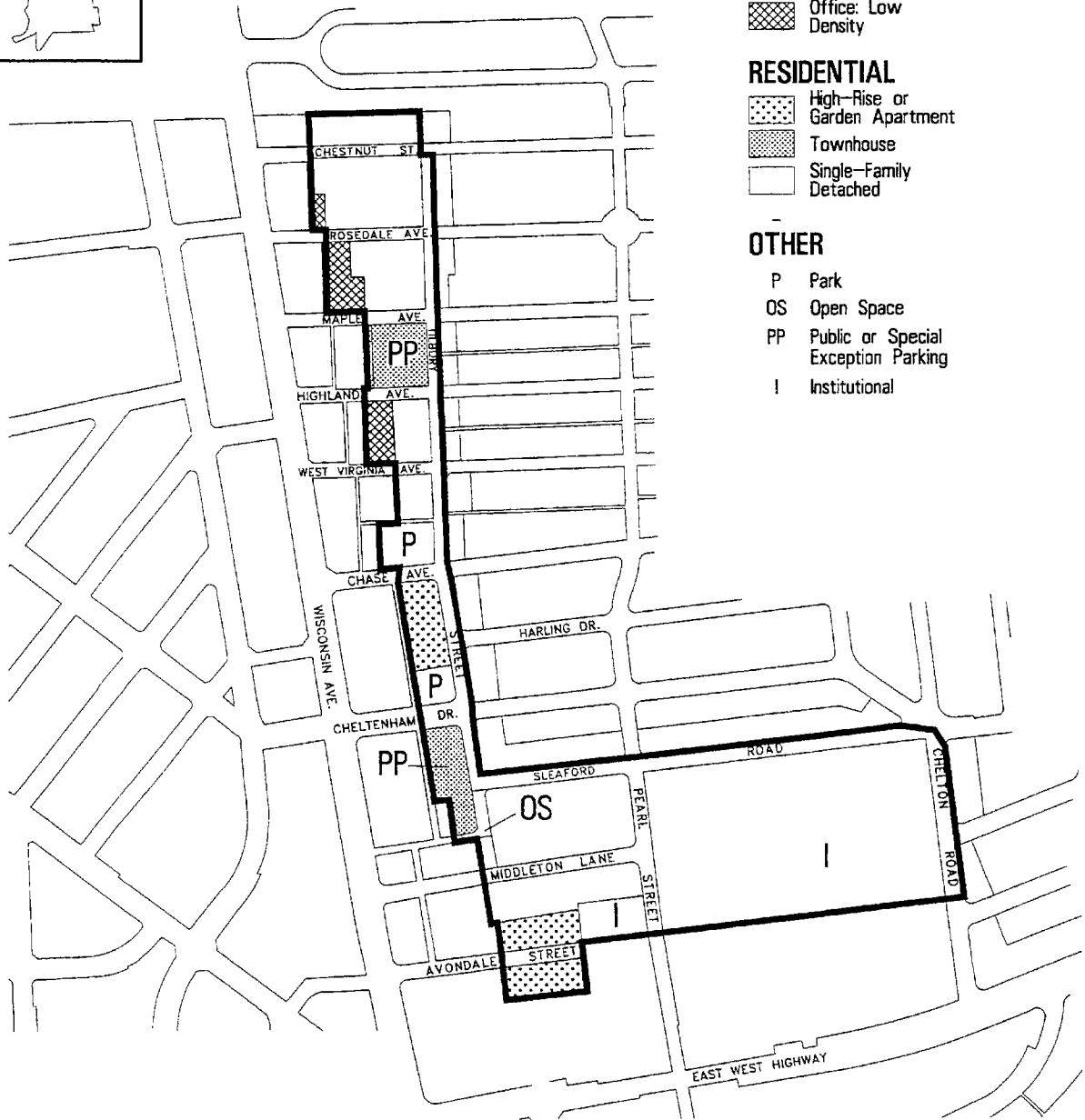
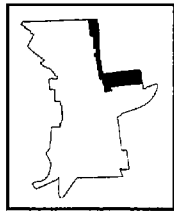
The Plan recommends confirming the R-60 zoning on the properties east of Tilbury Street, north of Sleaford Road, and east of Chelton Road. Once these houses are incorporated into the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area, B-CC guidelines limiting special exception activities will apply. The Plan also recommends special exception guidelines within the transition area. (See Section 3.1 B, Housing and Neighborhoods.)

For the private parking lot south of Cheltenham Drive behind the Bethesda Theatre Cafe, the Plan recommends townhouses as the appropriate land use. The existing R-60 zoning is recommended as the base zone, with an option to develop townhouses under the floating PD-22 Zone. A special exception for parking would not be inconsistent with Sector Plan objectives if redevelopment does not occur. (See discussion on Bethesda Theatre Cafe, Beta Lot, and Lot 42 in Section 4.1.C.7, Metro Core District.)

The Plan recommendations for the area between Chestnut Street and West Virginia Avenue are similar to those in the 1976 Sector Plan. The existing R-60 single-family detached zoning should be retained on most properties except for C-T zoning on a narrow band of selected lots along the CBD line. A primary Plan objective for the transition area is to ensure stable land uses. The trend toward home ownership and neighborhood efforts to pursue vigorous enforcement of building codes and special exception guidelines are signs of such stability.

The Plan recommends confirming existing C-T zoning between Rosedale and Maple Avenues and on the south side of Highland Avenue. The Plan also retains the 1976 Plan recommendation for R-60 (C-T) zoning for Lots 18, 19, and 20 (block 5) on the north side of West Virginia Avenue. Applications for C-T zoning on these lots will be considered to be in accordance with the Sector Plan for individual parcels. Where an existing structure is on more than one lot or where a structure previously existed on two lots as on Lots 19 and 20 (block 5), these lots should be considered a single lot. Otherwise, if assembly should take place, C-T zoning would not be considered favorably. Any additions or expansions of existing structures or any new construction should be residential in scale and character to achieve compatibility with the adjacent single-family houses. (See numbered lots in Figure C.7.)

In addition, the Plan recommends designating Lot 16 (block 3) on the north side of Rosedale Avenue and Lot 17 (block 7) on the north side of Maple Avenue as suitable for the C-T Zone to provide a transition between the CBD and the single-family neighborhood. Both lots face entrances to large parking lots. Lot 16 (block 3) is next to an alley used by commercial vehicles and Lot 17 (block 7) shares with the adjacent C-T property a deeded driveway leading to a private parking lot used by two contractors' offices.



**EMPLOYMENT**

Office: Low Density

**RESIDENTIAL**

High-Rise or Garden Apartment

Townhouse

Single-Family Detached

**OTHER**

P Park

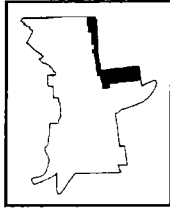
OS Open Space


PP Public or Special Exception Parking

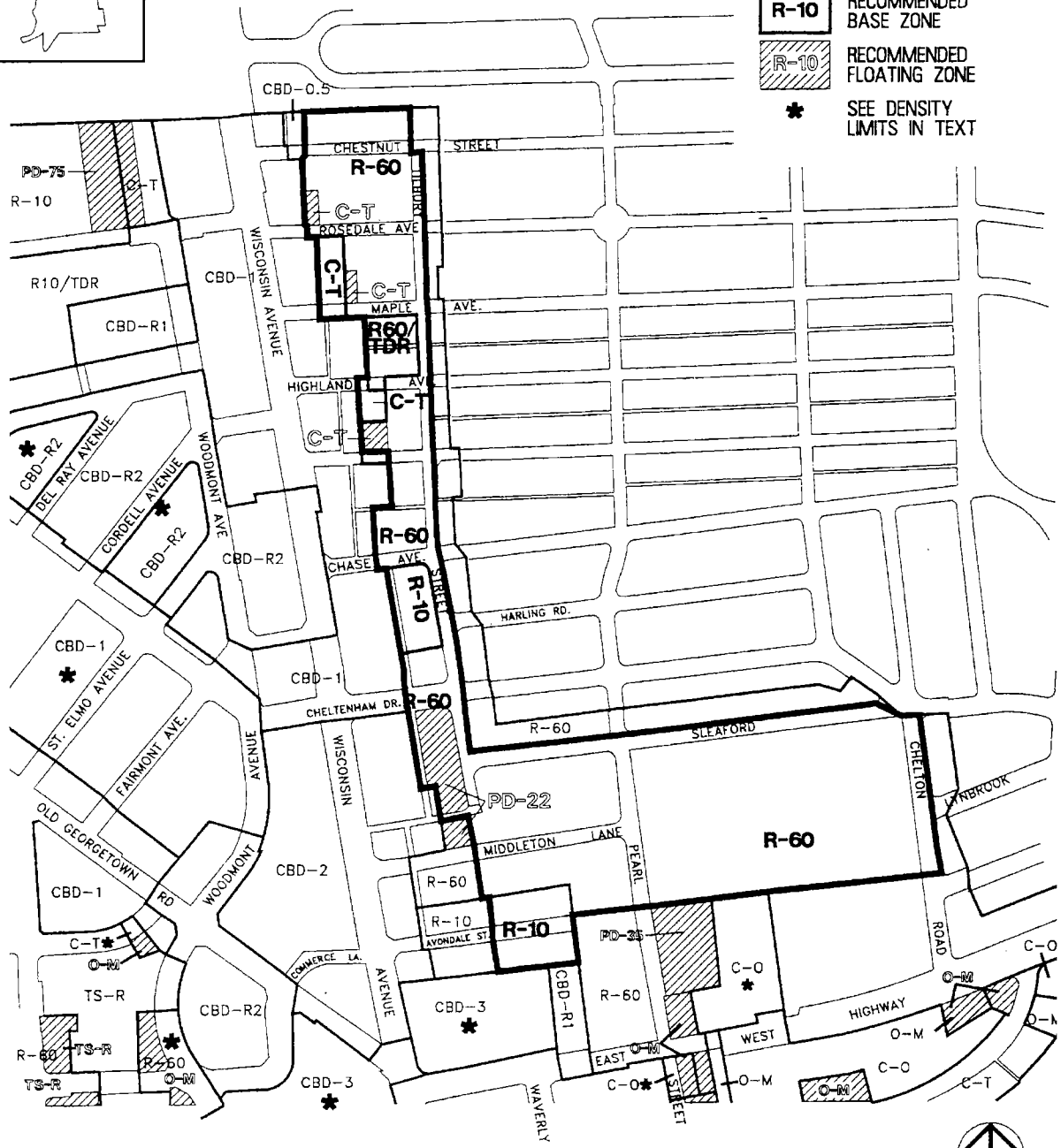
I Institutional

**Future Land Use**





- R-10** RECOMMENDED BASE ZONE
-  RECOMMENDED FLOATING ZONE
- \*** SEE DENSITY LIMITS IN TEXT



**Recommended Zoning**





These lots, 16 and 17, are now occupied by single-family houses. They will be permitted to convert to use for medical and other professional offices under the C-T Zone, but as individual lots only. Re-subdivision will not be permitted. If assembly should take place with the lots to the west, C-T zoning would not be appropriate for Lot 17 (block 7). Application for C-T zoning for the lots to the east of the designated lots would also not be considered favorably. Any additions or expansions of the existing structures should retain their residential scale and character.

If there is a need in the future for structured parking on Public Parking Lot 25, between Maple and Highland Avenues, the Plan recommends that a new structure be limited to one story above grade, with the remainder below grade. Landscape screening and sensitive lighting would be required and planning liaison with the neighborhood should occur. Townhouses could also be provided on this site under the recommended R-60/TDR Zone, allowing a density of up to 15 dwelling units per acre. Up to 12 units would be possible on the portion of the lot within the East Bethesda Transition Area. The Plan also recommends a mixed-use project containing a residential component for the portion of the lot that is in the CBD, as discussed in the Wisconsin North Corridor section.

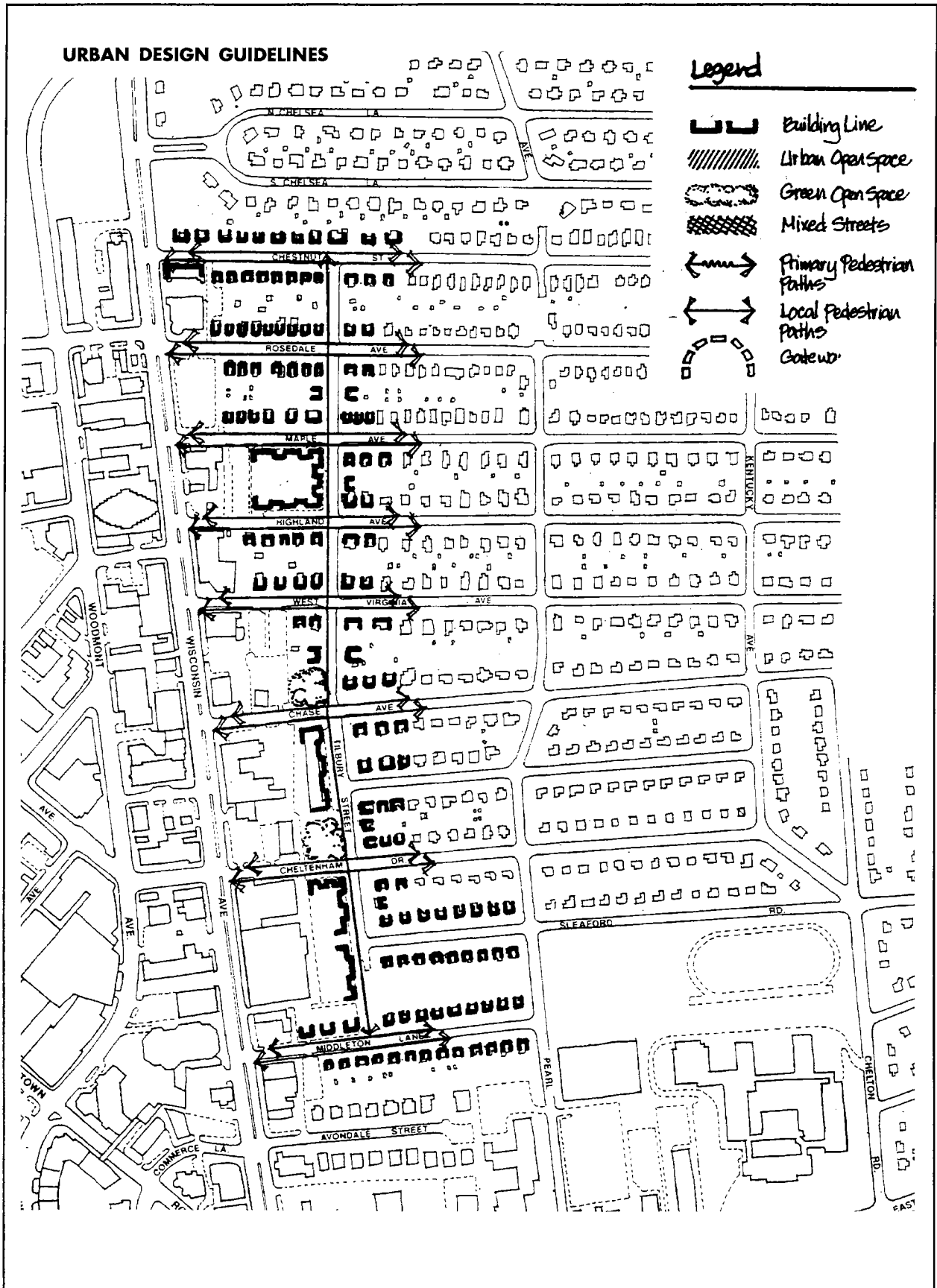
The Sector Plan supports cooperative measures between East Bethesda residents and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation to discourage cut-through traffic associated with new development. Traffic control measures may include one-way access patterns or peak period access limits (similar to the Town of Chevy Chase) but should not inhibit access by emergency vehicles. Permanent street closings are not encouraged, though they may be considered where commercial traffic is intrusive. The Plan proposes a study of a morning limitation on use of Pearl Street by vehicles coming from East-West Highway and destined for locations beyond Our Lady of Lourdes Church.

The Plan recommends strengthening the East Bethesda parking permit program to protect residents close to the CBD from spillover parking. All required parking must be provided for new CBD development, either on site or in Bethesda Parking District facilities.

#### **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply if Lot 25 is redeveloped with townhouses or garden apartments (see Figure 4.29):

1. Achieve a townhouse scale and character to provide a compatible transition to single-family residences. Provide screening where appropriate.
2. Vary building roof lines with a combination of two- and three-story building heights, for visual interest.
3. Orient front entrances toward Maple and Highland Avenues. Provide a minimum of 15-foot for building setbacks from the right-of-way along Maple and Highland Avenues. Provide 20-foot minimum building setbacks along Tilbury Street to achieve compatible setbacks with adjacent residences.





4. Separate public from private residential parking, if public parking is provided.
5. Provide sidewalks and streetscape improvements on all bordering streets to improve pedestrian access and create an attractive setting for new development.

## 4.8 THE MONTGOMERY TRIANGLE CORRIDOR

### A. DESCRIPTION

The Montgomery Triangle Corridor serves as the major access to the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan area from the east. The corridor extends along East-West Highway and Montgomery Avenue, from Pearl Street on the west to the bridge over the Georgetown Branch right-of-way on the east. It includes properties north of the Georgetown Branch and East-West Highway.

The Montgomery Triangle contains a mix of office and residential uses, many constructed prior to the 1976 Sector Plan. High-rise buildings facing East-West Highway include two apartment buildings and an office complex. Other uses in the area include Our Lady of Lourdes Church, the front section of Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, and a sports club. Numerous single-family structures and small office buildings are scattered throughout the area.

The character of each street in the corridor varies. East-West Highway is primarily highrise and urban on the south, but the character on the north is less clearly defined. Montgomery Avenue contains the rear service entrances to high-rises on the north and a variety of offices in single-family houses on the south. The small offices were viewed in the 1976 Sector Plan as a transition to the community of single-family houses located south of the Georgetown Branch. The attractiveness of this corridor would be improved by additional streetscaping and redevelopment of lower density parcels.

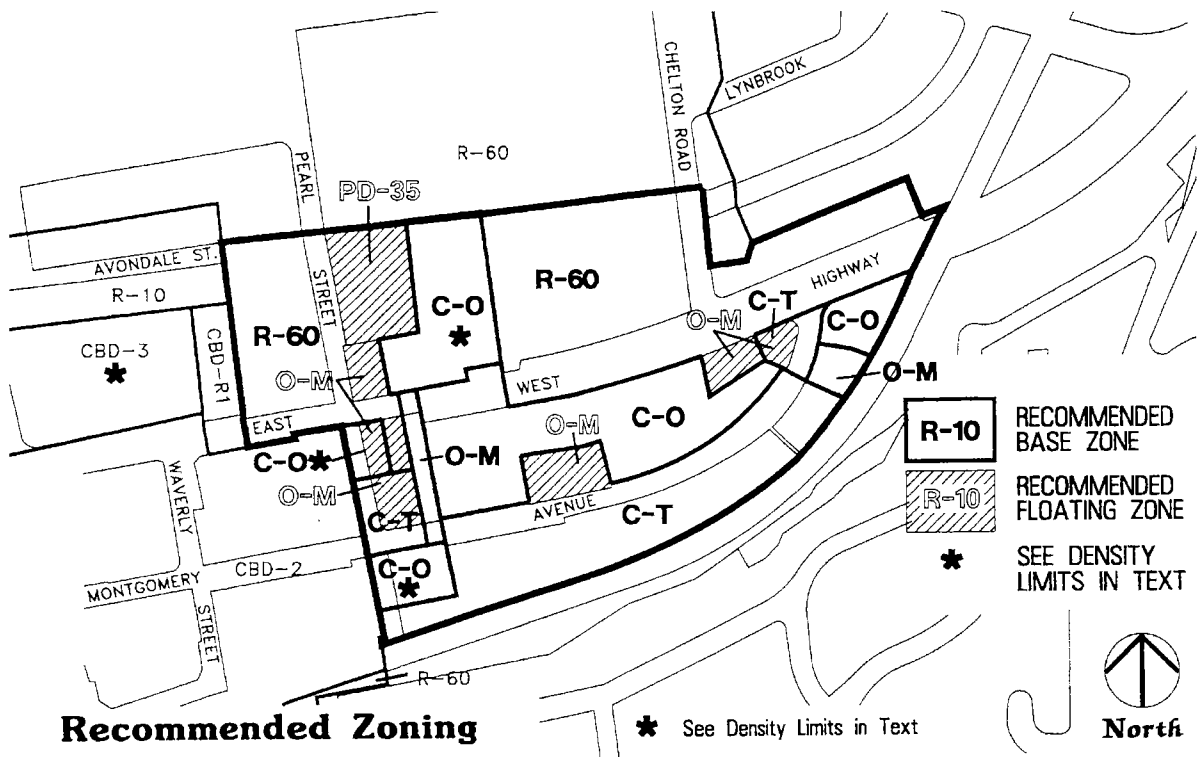
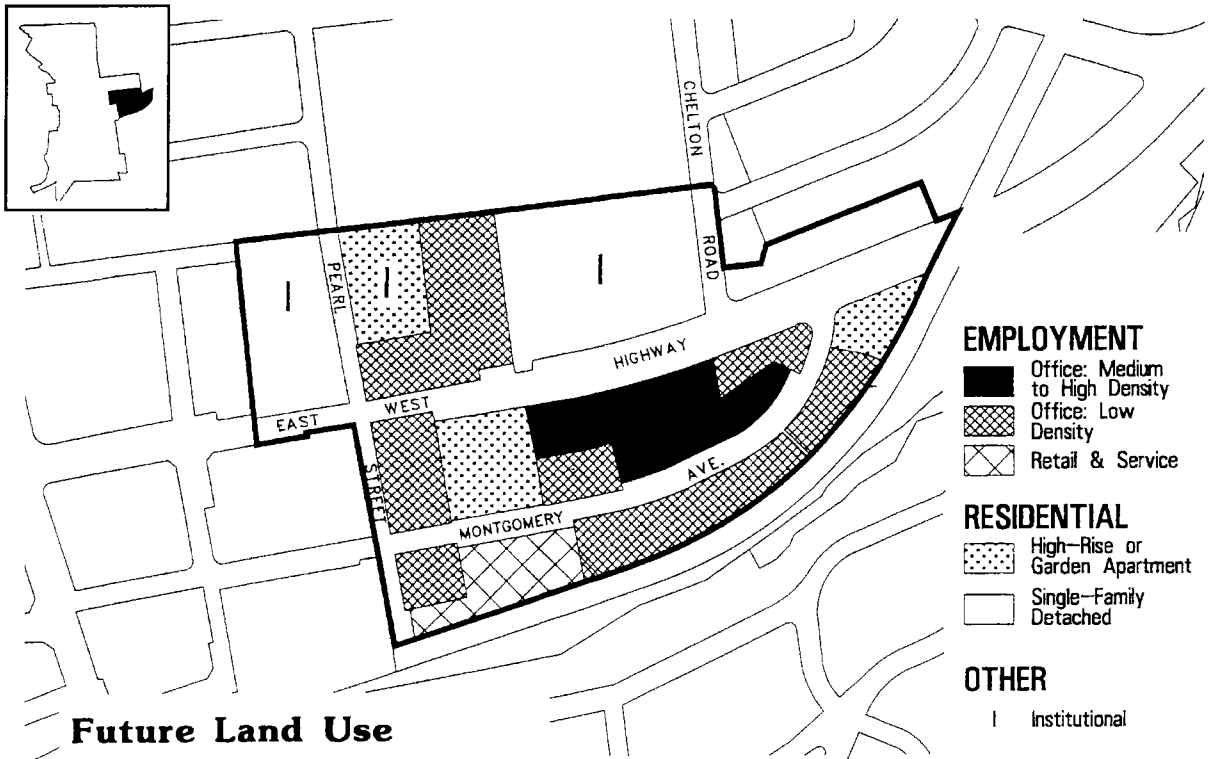
### B. OBJECTIVES

1. Improve the sense of a gateway to Bethesda along East-West Highway and a gateway to the Metro Core District at Pearl Street. Improve the visual quality of the departure along Montgomery Lane.
2. Allow attractive, compatible redevelopment and infill development on properties with low densities.
3. Protect the adjacent single-family neighborhoods from the negative impacts of redevelopment by establishing development and design guidelines.

### C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Plan recommends infill development on the remaining sites in this corridor. In some locations, existing structures in scale with adjacent residential neighborhoods would be retained. In locations closer to the Metro and the CBD, opportunities are created for







somewhat higher density development. Future land use and recommended zoning are shown in Figure 4.30.

The Plan supports low-density apartment use on the Our Lady of Lourdes Church parking lot, east of Pearl Street, and identifies the site as suitable for PD-35 zoning. Adequate parking should be maintained for church use. Office uses at East-West Highway and Pearl Street (north-east) would continue, but a density limit of 1.5 FAR is recommended on properties in the current C-O Zone.

The small lots at the northeast corner of East-West Highway and Pearl Street currently have commercial uses in a mix of small office buildings and single-family houses. The Plan recommends O-M zoning, which would allow up to 1.5 FAR and enable the owners to proceed individually or to assemble.

The small lots east of Pearl Street and south of East-West Highway currently have commercial uses in a mix of small office buildings and single-family houses. The Plan recommends that properties retain their current base zones and allow owners to apply for O-M zoning. The O-M Zone would allow up to 1.5 FAR and enable the owners to proceed individually or to assemble on their own schedules.

The southeast corner of Pearl Street and Montgomery Avenue is occupied by the three-story Potomac Valley Bank and its parking lot directly to the east. The bank's C-O zoning should be extended to the parking lot, which is zoned R-60, with a density limit of 1.5 FAR. These properties are under single ownership. Rezoning will create a unified redevelopment opportunity and reflect the existing use.

In the triangle of land created by East-West Highway, Montgomery Avenue, and Pearl Street, scattered single-family houses are used as offices. The O-M zoning recommended for these areas allows future redevelopment to a consistent commercial density. The Plan also recommends that the parking garage with frontage on Montgomery Avenue associated with 4350 East-West Highway be rezoned from R-60 to C-O. The C-O Zone would more accurately reflect the current use and makes the site consistent with surrounding commercial neighbors. It does not create redevelopment potential since the existing building already exceeds the 3.0 FAR allowed by the C-O Zone.

The Plan recommends confirming the existing R-60 zoning on the properties along East-West Highway at Chelton Road. The Plan endorses efforts to protect and enhance residential use.

Since the 1976 Plan, the houses along the south side of Montgomery Avenue have been converted to commercial uses. While presenting a reasonable reuse for the property owners, residents in the Town of Chevy Chase are concerned that commercial activity may have contributed to the flooding, noise, and aesthetic problems they experience. Accordingly, the Plan recommends allowing office and service uses under the C-T Zone, but adds environmental and design guidelines for redevelopment. Redevelopment in this area offers the opportunity to create a more attractive exit from the CBD, to establish an appropriate long-term use, and to improve the environmental conditions for these properties and the neighborhoods behind them.








## **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

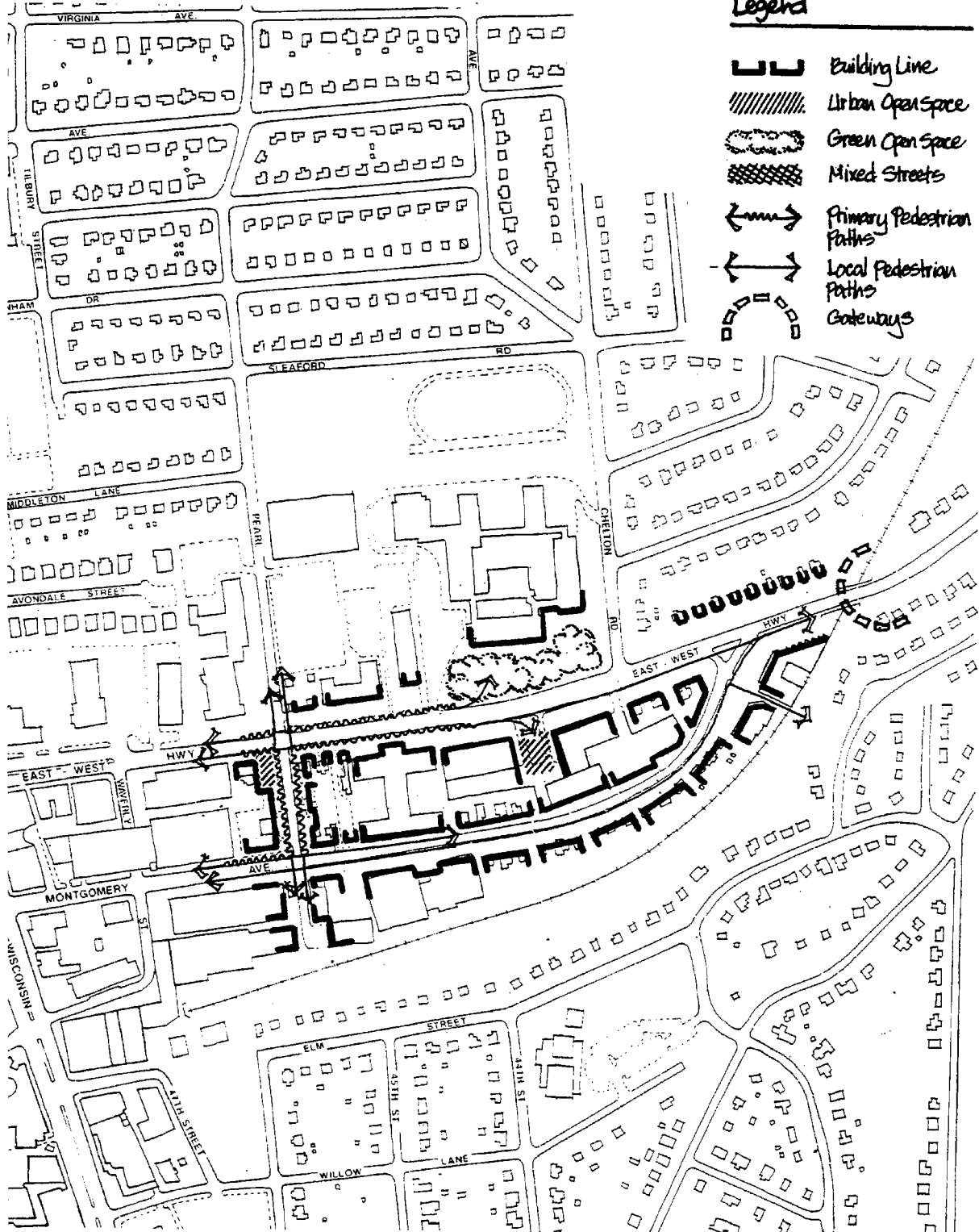
In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply in the Montgomery Triangle Corridor (see Figure 4.31):

1. Achieve a low-rise gateway building at the convergence of Montgomery Avenue and East-West Highway to visually express the entry to Bethesda and to achieve a more gradual transition in building heights than currently exists.
2. Redevelop properties at the southeast corner of East-West Highway and Pearl Street to achieve street-oriented development. Provide a minimum 20-foot building setback along East-West Highway to accommodate the large volume of pedestrians along this corridor and a 15-foot building setback on all other adjacent streets. Locate driveway access from East-West Highway and Montgomery Avenue. Provide parking underground.
3. Redevelop existing single-family buildings along the south side of Montgomery Avenue to create groups of office townhouses and to minimize the impact on the neighborhood to the rear of these lots, according to the following design and development guidelines:
  - a. Limit building heights to three stories in the rear and two stories in the front to correspond to the scale of existing buildings.
  - b. Locate buildings close to the street while maintaining adequate sidewalk and streetscape area to help reduce the visual width of the corridor.
  - c. Consolidate driveway entrances along Montgomery Avenue and locate all parking in the rear of the lots.
  - d. Provide for safe conveyance and appropriate controls to mitigate stormwater runoff.
  - e. Place air conditioning units toward the front of buildings or screen them to block their noise from the adjacent neighborhood.
  - f. Erect a sight-impervious screen incorporating landscaping and fencing in a buffer area at least ten feet wide along the rear lot line.
  - g. Limit lot assembly to three lots to avoid monolithic building walls. The rear of buildings should minimize bulk and maintain a residential character. At least two lots should be assembled to encourage grouped driveways.

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Legend

-  Building Line
-  Urban Open Space
-  Green Open Space
-  Mixed Streets
-  Primary Pedestrian Paths
-  Local Pedestrian Paths
-  Gateways



## 4.9 THE TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE TRANSITION AREA

### A. DESCRIPTION

This area functions as a transition between the single-family residential Town of Chevy Chase and the Central Business District. It is characterized by green public open space, several parking lots, and one block with a mixture of residential and commercial uses, including a County-owned structure. The boundary of the area is the CBD line on the west and 46th Street/West Avenue on the east.

Primary land uses include the two-acre Elm Street Park at the northern end, between Elm Street and Willow Lane, and Public Parking Lots 24 and 10. Elm Street Park serves as a stable transition use, enjoyed by both Town of Chevy Chase residents and CBD employees. Parking Lots 24 and 10, screened by well established evergreen hedges, currently are effective buffers. A long-term issue for the area is ensuring continued compatibility of these two public parking lots. The Parking District has reserved Lot 24 for a possible future garage.

A more immediate issue is the stabilization of the block bounded by Walsh and Stanford Streets, West Avenue, and the CBD line. (See Figure B.10.) The block includes the County-owned Walsh Street Center on two lots (6 and 7); its functions were replaced by the Leland Community Recreation Center. The County has retained ownership and leased the facility to the Writers Center. Next to it is a C-2 zoned lot (8), adjoining two lots (9 and 10) zoned R-60, which face single-family homes across Walsh Street. Lot 9 has a special exception for private parking, related to a commercial use on Wisconsin Avenue. Lots 11 and 12 on Stanford Street, also zoned R-60, face a parking deck; Lot 11 contains an architect's office, a nonconforming use, and Lot 12 is vacant. Lot 13, zoned C-2 and in the Wisconsin South District, contains an 11,140-square-foot carpet store. The owner of Lot 13 also owns Lot 12.

A final issue is the future use of two vacant lots zoned R-60 on West Avenue just north of St. John's Episcopal Church. The lots are currently used by a commercial establishment on Wisconsin Avenue for loading, truck storage, and parking. They are not well maintained or screened. The 1976 Sector Plan recommended public parking on the lots.

### B. OBJECTIVES

1. Ensure stability of the land uses in the transition area to preserve the Town of Chevy Chase as a single-family residential neighborhood.
2. Provide parking facilities to serve the needs of adjacent commercial uses. Keep overflow parking and cut-through traffic from having an undesirable impact on the Town of Chevy Chase.
3. Provide low-density housing.

### C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Plan endorses measures that would discourage cut-through traffic. Such measures may include one-way access patterns or peak period access limits (similar to those



enacted by the Town of Chevy Chase) but should not inhibit access by emergency vehicles or access to the Leland Community Recreation Center. Permanent street closings are not encouraged, but may be considered where commercial traffic is intrusive.

Parking Lot 24 adequately serves the current parking needs of the adjacent CBD businesses. If there is a need in the future for additional, structured parking, the Plan recommends that a new structure be limited to one story above grade, with the remainder below grade.

On the block bounded by Walsh and Stanford Streets, West Avenue, and the public alley, it is desirable to find an approach that recognizes existing uses and meets the needs of the community and the landowners. The Plan recommends retaining R-60 zoning on Lots 6 and 7, the Walsh Street Center. The Plan endorses continued County ownership of the Center and leasing to an organization, like the Writers Center, whose objectives reinforce the Plan's cultural district theme. For Lots 8 through 12, the Plan recommends the R-60/TDR Zone. A density up to 12.5 dwelling units per acre is appropriate, which would allow development of up to ten residential townhouses on these lots. The Plan recommends setbacks that will be compatible with adjacent land uses. Compatibility will be determined during the subdivision and site plan review process. A building permit has been issued for Lot 8 under the existing C-2 Zone. If the zoning is vested at the time of the Sectional Map Amendment, the Plan recommends confirming the existing zone. (Future- land use and recommended zoning are shown in Figure 4.32.)

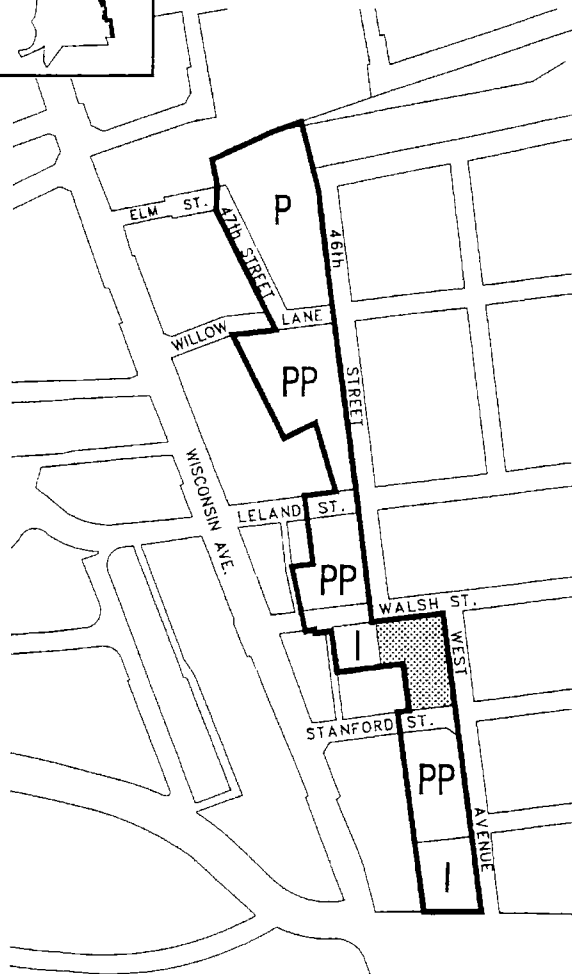
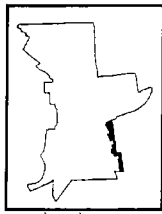
The Plan supports a special exception for private or public parking on the two vacant lots on West Avenue between Stanford Street and the church to serve adjacent CBD-1 commercial uses. Adequate landscape screening and maintenance of the lots must be provided.

Certain lots in the Town of Chevy Chase, within the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area, have been incorrectly shown on the Zoning Map as in the C-2 rather than the R-60 Zone. These properties lie between the south line of the B&O Railroad right-of-way and the north line of Lots 6, 7, 8, and part of Lot 9, Block L, on Elm Street. The Sector Plan recommends that R-60 zoning be applied in the Sectional Map Amendment to correct this drafting error and confirm the R-60 Zone. (See Section 10.1, Zoning.)

#### **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**



In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply (see Figure 4.33):

1. Redevelopment of Lot 24 for a parking structure:
  - a. Construct the above-grade portion of the parking facility with a maximum height of nine feet.
  - b. Provide a minimum of 20 feet for building setback along 46th Street to achieve a compatible setback with adjacent residences and to permit adequate area for landscaping.



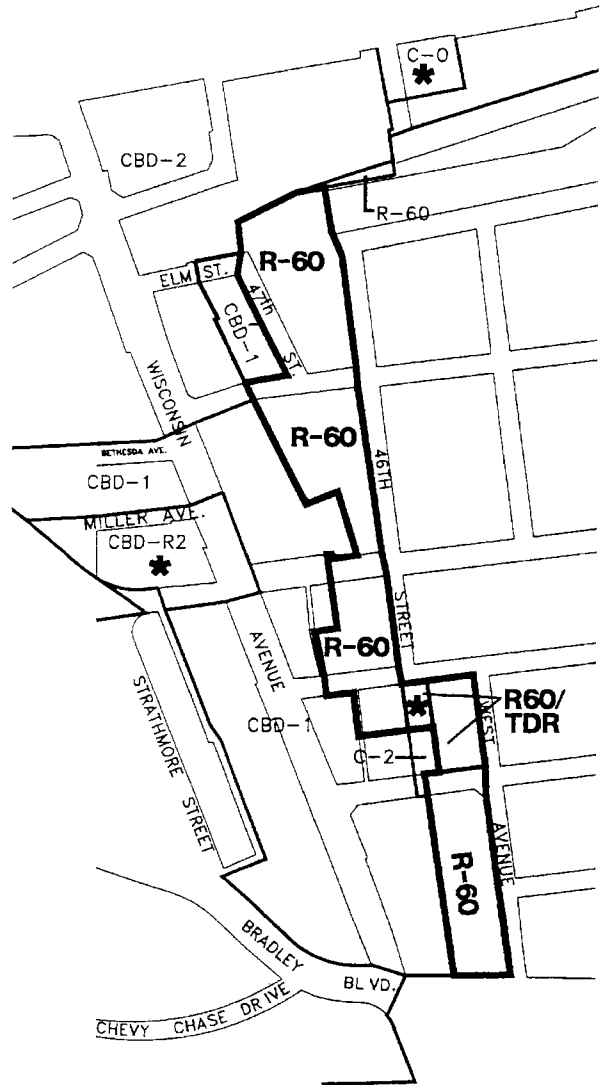
**Future Land Use**

**RESIDENTIAL**

-  Townhouse
-  Single-Family Detached

**OTHER**

- PP Public or Special Exception Parking
- I Institutional



**Recommended Zoning**



RECOMMENDED  
BASE ZONE



RECOMMENDED  
FLOATING ZONE










SEE DENSITY  
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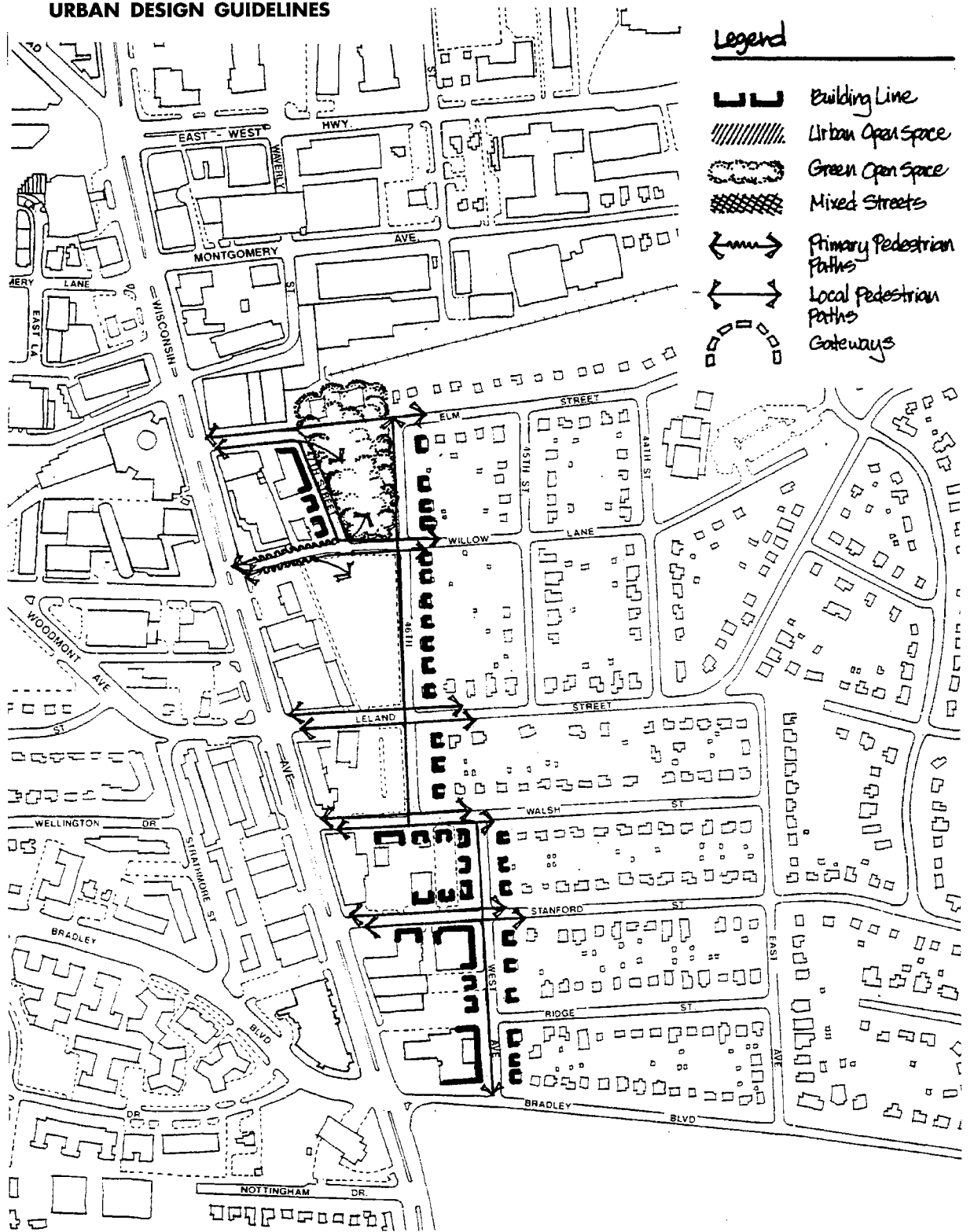


North

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Legend

-  Building Line
-  Urban Open Space
-  Green Open Space
-  Mixed Streets
-  Primary Pedestrian Paths
-  Local Pedestrian Paths
-  Gateways





- c. Ensure that facade treatments and landscaping create attractive views from the neighborhood as well as from the CBD.
  - d. Ensure that lighting does not have a negative impact on neighboring houses.
  - e. Provide sidewalks and streetscape improvements on all bordering streets.
  - f. Restrict vehicular access to the underground parking to the western end of the site, along Willow Lane and Leland Street.
2. Redevelopment of the Walsh/West/Stanford block:
- a. Orient townhouse or duplex units to face Walsh Street and Stanford Street in a compatible relationship with single-family houses. Do not exceed 2-1/2 stories. Provide parking at the rear of the site, preferably via an alley or private driveway.
  - b. Develop commercial structures at a residential scale, with compatible setbacks and heights limited to 2-1/2 stories.

## 4.10 THE WISCONSIN SOUTH CORRIDOR

### A. DESCRIPTION

This corridor is characterized by low- to moderate-height commercial buildings arrayed on either side of Wisconsin Avenue and on the east side of Woodmont Avenue. It is intended to have a lower profile and less dense development than the Metro Core, for which it provides the southern approach. The southern gateway to the corridor and to Bethesda is marked by St. John's Episcopal Church on the east and a new commercial structure on the northwest corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Bradley Boulevard—experienced after one passes the green expanse of the country club on the east and the single-family neighborhood on the west. The CBD-1 line creates the boundary of the district.

The major land uses are office and retail. Comparison retail predominates (44 percent of total retail establishments), of which nearly three-fifths are devoted to carpet and furnishings stores. There are fewer restaurant (16 percent) and neighborhood (15 percent) retail establishments. Comparison and neighborhood retail are described in Section 2.2 B. The retail on Wisconsin Avenue is primarily located in street-fronting stores oriented to the pedestrian, with both on-street parking and some private structured parking. Public parking and private special exception parking lots are available in the transition area to the east. In addition to the church on the northeast corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Bradley Boulevard, there is a fire station on the southwest corner of the intersection.

There are two potential sites for optional method redevelopment between Miller Avenue and Leland Street. Otherwise, little change is expected along this part of Wisconsin



Avenue except for small-scale infill development, which could include some 2 FAR residential projects on small sites.

A major landmark at the northern end of the corridor is the Farm Women's Cooperative Market, designated on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. This white frame, one-story structure evokes the farm era in Montgomery County's history and serves as an important gathering place on the days when the market is open or when the front parking lot serves as a flea market. It is a focal point at the terminus of Bethesda Avenue and has the potential of increased market activity, becoming the link between community-oriented retail to the west and south. Any expansion of the structure will be limited by its historic resource designation.

Another local landmark evoking the mid-1920's is the Tudor Style Shopping Complex between Leland and Walsh Streets. The small individual neo-Tudor structures reflect the predominant scale of the corridor, while the street orientation provides an appealing pedestrian environment.

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

1. Support a diverse specialty - and community-serving retail environment, including adequate short-term parking facilities.
2. Provide additional housing to encourage uses that are compatible with nearby residential areas.

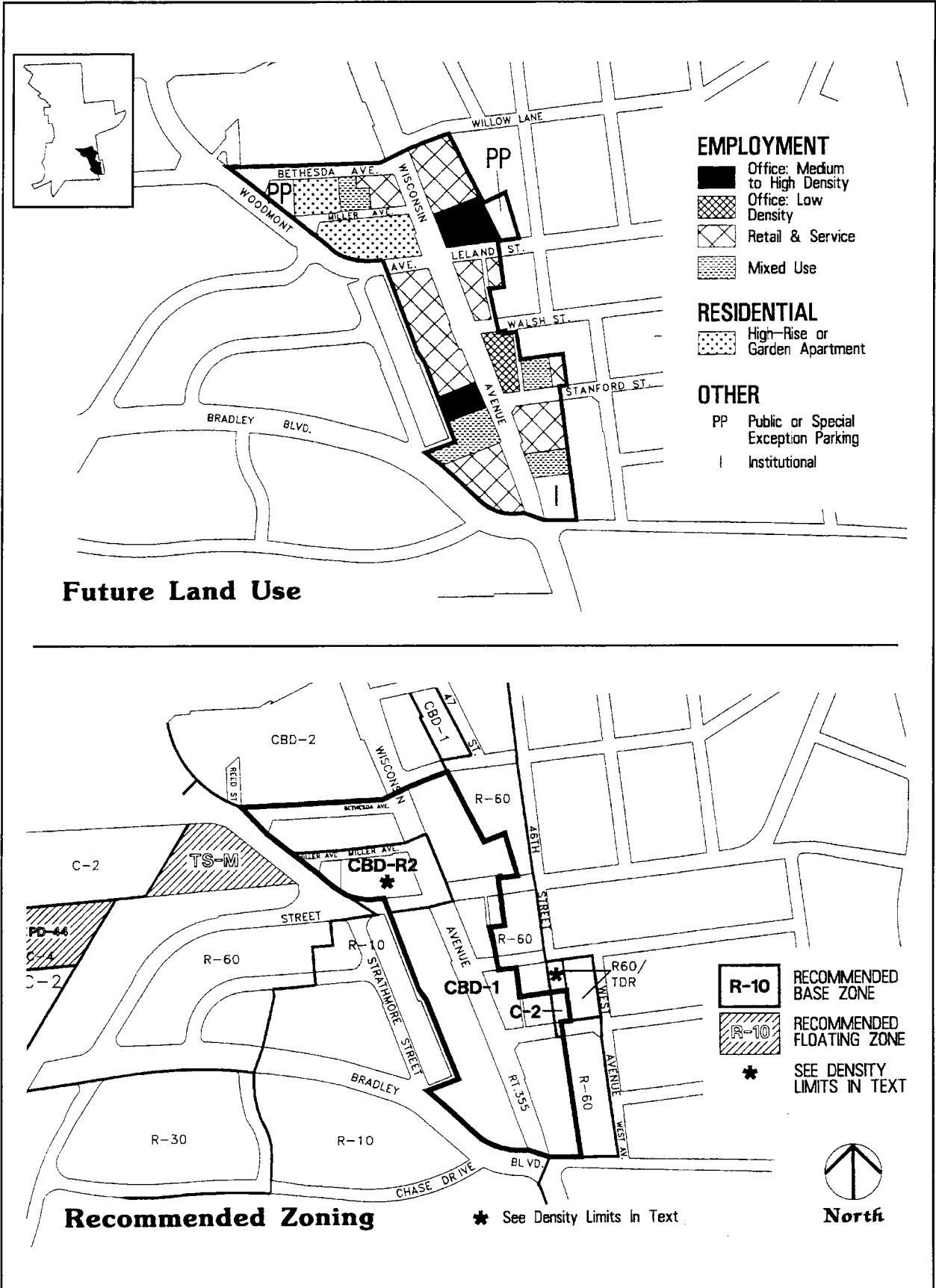
## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

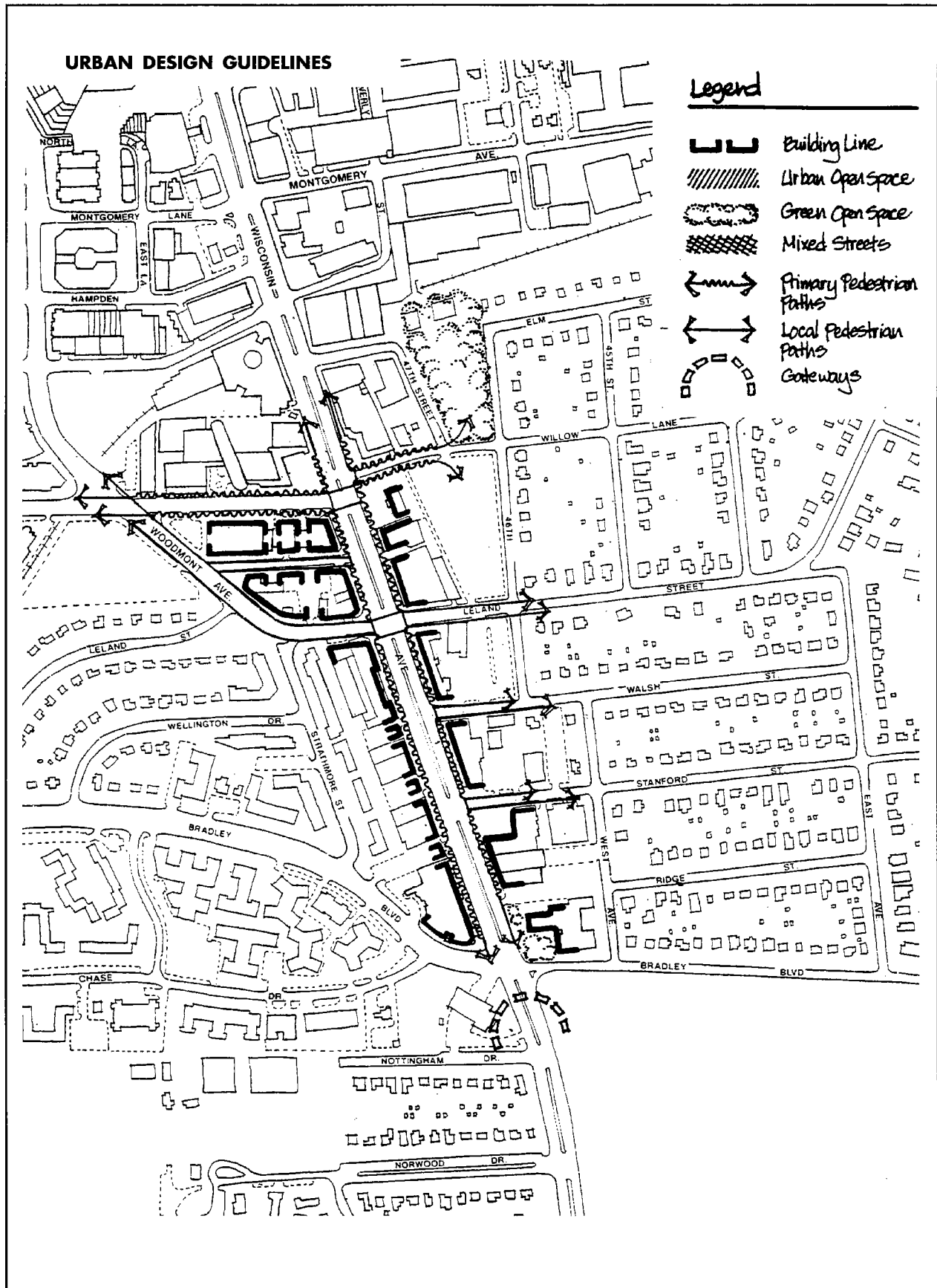
The Plan recommends confirmation of the existing CBD-1 Zone for most of the corridor. The only optional method development allowed would be mixed-use projects containing a residential component. The CBD-1 Zone allows mixed-use development up to 3 FAR. A low residential floor area and a high commercial floor area offer an economic incentive to provide more housing. Ground floor retail should be provided on such projects. Recommended land use and zoning are shown in Figure 4.34.

The Plan allows continued small-scale, standard method infill commercial development on sites that are too small for optional method development. The CBD-1 Zone allows an additional 1 FAR for residential use. The Plan recommends retail uses on the ground floor only.

On the block south of Miller Avenue, the Plan recommends the CBD-R2 Zone limited to a maximum of 3 FAR and a maximum height of 75 feet.

The Tudor Style Shopping Complex offers a unique amenity for Bethesda in its pedestrian orientation, scale, and retail diversity. Methods should be explored to preserve the complex while increasing the economic viability of the small retail businesses on the site. At a minimum, the Plan encourages facade renovation and supports methods to achieve that result, such as participation in an easement program and rehabilitation funding. The possibility of limited redevelopment to include housing could be explored—either under the standard method or, by assemblage of all properties with an adjacent property, under the optional method.





Section 4.9, The Town of Chevy Chase Transition Area, contains a recommendation regarding the parking lots north of St. John's Episcopal Church.

#### **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply in the Wisconsin South Corridor (see Figure 4.35):

1. Set new buildings back 20 feet from the street curb to accommodate the higher level of pedestrian activity that occurs along the corridor. Provide streetscape in accordance with the recommendations of the Streetscape Plan.
2. Limit building heights to 75 feet to step down heights from the Metro Core and to ensure compatibility with nearby residential areas.
3. Achieve a compatible transition from the single-family community across Woodmont Avenue for new development on properties fronting on Woodmont and Miller Avenues. Locate the building to take advantage of views down Woodmont Avenue. Locate parking to the rear of the site adjacent to the existing gas station or underground with access limited to two driveways, one along Miller Avenue and the other along Leland Street.

For optional method development, provide improvements to the landscaped open space within public right-of-way across Woodmont Avenue along Leland Street and off-site streetscaping along Leland Street and Miller Avenue.

4. Reflect the historic character of the Tudor Style Shopping Complex. Limit any redevelopment to three stories, and maintain the pedestrian character, scale, and opportunity for retail diversity. If any portion of the existing building is retained, the most significant architectural feature is the Tudor-style roof line, which should be reflected in the design of the new portion of the structure. Provide a coordinated design for signs. Do not enclose the side-walk space with a permanent structure.

## **4.11 THE BRADLEY BOULEVARD DISTRICT**

### **A. DESCRIPTION**

The residential community on either side of Bradley Boulevard is composed predominately of garden apartments and townhouses, except for a neighborhood of single-family detached houses in the north-west section. The district is roughly defined by the Georgetown Branch on the west, Public Parking Lot 31 and Woodmont Avenue on the north, the CBD line on the east, and the Sector Plan boundary on the south. The Plan



proposes including in the Sector Plan area the section along Hillandale Road ending at Willett Parkway.

There are 650 rental garden apartments built primarily in the 1950's along Strathmore Street, Bradley Boulevard, and Chevy Chase Drive. Within the existing Sector Plan area, there are about 170 townhouses along Bradley Boulevard, Offutt Lane, Hillandale Road, and Chevy Chase Drive, many substantially renovated in the 1970's. The 1976 Sector Plan recommended R-10 zoning for this area. There are also about 110 townhouses along Hillandale Road outside the Sector Plan area, which the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan recommended rezoning to R-30 to match existing density.

In the Sacks subdivision on Leland Street and Wellington Drive, zoned R-60, there are 60 single-family houses occupied by both long-time residents and more recent homeowners. Plan preparation included discussions about the viability of this subdivision as a singlefamily neighborhood so close to the CBD. Economic analysis suggests that high land values and the equity interest of the houses would make assemblage unlikely. Redevelopment would remove an option for ownership of single-family housing in this price range. A majority of the homeowners believe that the neighborhood is desirable for close-in urban living and seek County support to deter cut-through traffic.

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

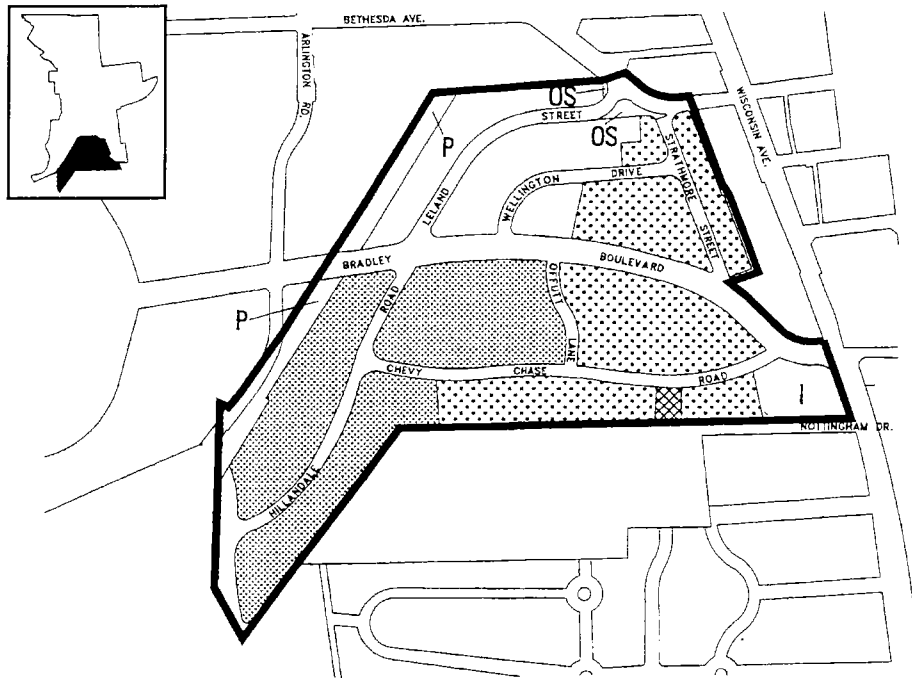
1. Preserve moderately priced multi-family housing.
2. Preserve the integrity of the Sacks subdivision as a single-family residential neighborhood.
3. Deter cut-through traffic.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

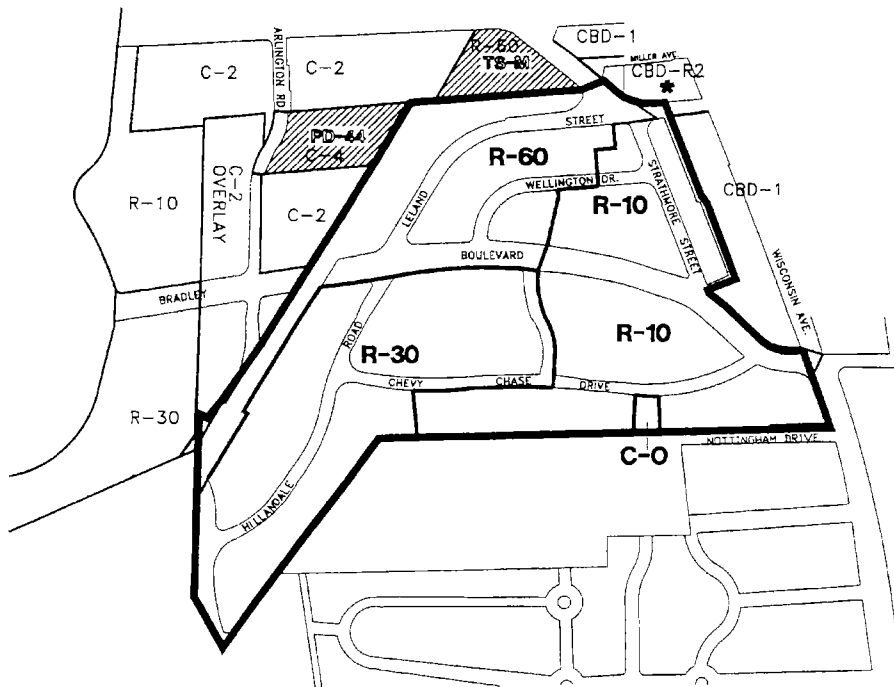
Existing apartments and townhouses in the Bradley Boulevard District should be preserved to ensure a variety of housing types and to retain a major source of moderately priced housing. R-10 properties west of Offutt Lane should be rezoned R-30 to match more closely the density of the existing townhouses, as was done in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan. The Plan also recommends moving the Sector Plan boundary to the south to include the townhouses on either side of Hillandale Road, and confirming the R-30 zoning applied by the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan. (See Figure 4.36.)

The Plan endorses continued application of programs to ensure that existing housing remains affordable. Such programs may include County subsidies to renters in scattered market rate units or acquisition of apartment properties, which may be sold to be operated as affordable housing.

In the Sacks subdivision, the Plan recommends confirming the existing R-60 zoning to retain the single-family detached houses along Leland Street and Wellington Drive. The Plan supports efforts to preserve the viability and residential integrity of the neighborhood as an alternative to multi-family living in the Sector Plan area. Such efforts include guidelines to limit special exception approvals, which might otherwise proliferate because of proximity to the commercial area. (See Section 3.1B, Housing and Neighborhoods.)



**Future Land Use**



**Recommended Zoning**



Additional measures to discourage cut-through traffic are also appropriate, including one-way access patterns or peak period access limits (similar to the Town of Chevy Chase), but they should not inhibit access by emergency vehicles. Permanent street closings are not encouraged, though they may be considered where commercial traffic is intrusive. The Plan also endorses residential parking permits and recommends enhanced landscape screening on the triangle of land owned by the Department of Transportation (MCDOT) between Woodmont Avenue and Leland Street.

Recommendations for garden apartments on Lot 31 and on the Post Office property would also help create transitional residential uses between the single-family houses and commercial development to the north and west, supporting the viability of the Sacks neighborhood. Neighborhood representatives should be included in the planning of residential development on Lot 31. (See Section 4.12, Arlington Road District.)

A commercial office use located on a site zoned C-O south of Chevy Chase Drive should be retained at the current density.

The Plan recommends the R-10 Zone for the entire property on the east side of Strathmore Street that is now primarily zoned CBD-1 but also has a strip of land zoned R-10. The property includes about 50 garden apartments, consisting of one, two, and three bedroom units. These units are part of the stock of affordable housing in the Sector Plan area that the Plan seeks to retain, and it is desirable that the district remain residential in character. The R-10 Zone would encourage retention of the existing apartments.

#### **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The general objectives and principles in Section 3.2 apply in this district.

### **4.12 THE ARLINGTON ROAD DISTRICT**

#### **A. DESCRIPTION**

This district provides the major community retail for the Sector Plan area and adjacent neighborhoods. It is characterized by linear strip shopping along Arlington Road, with an emerging “main street” character along Bethesda Avenue. The crossroads of Bethesda Avenue and Arlington Road have the potential to develop as the center of the district. The district is bounded by Elm Street and Hampden Lane on the north, Woodmont Avenue on the east, the southern edge of Public Parking lot #31 and the Georgetown Branch on the south and southeast, and multi-family apartments along Fairfax and Clarendon Roads to the west.

The predominant land use is retail. Of about 100 establishments, close to 30 percent is neighborhood retail, a segment that has increased in recent years as the Metro Core redeveloped. Comparison retail comprises about 28 percent, and 11 percent is automotive



sales, repair, and service. Comparison and neighborhood retail are described in Section 2.2 B. There are also a limited number of offices, a postal service distribution center, a public parking garage, and a public parking lot.

Visually, the area is characterized by low-rise structures. Along Arlington Road, the shopping center and auto sales on the west side are one-story, with a new five-story office-retail complex on the east side. Along Bethesda Avenue east of Arlington Road, there is a combination of attractively renovated one-story community retail structures and new three-story structures with retail at street level and two floors of office above. Structures of similar scale and character line the western side of Woodmont Avenue. These new buildings, oriented toward the street with wide sidewalks, on-street parking, and rear loading, have helped to create the "main street" character. The neighborhood orientation of the shops and offices is beginning to create a sense of community and to restore some of the small town atmosphere that residents felt was lost with the urbanization of Bethesda.

There are several problems with vehicular circulation in and around the Bradley Shopping Center. A substantial curve on Arlington Road makes it hard to see cars exiting and entering the center, and pedestrians cross illegally at mid-block. Many people drive and repark when visiting shops in different parts of the district, compounding traffic congestion at the Arlington Road-Bethesda Avenue intersection. But the pedestrian environment on Arlington Road does not encourage walking.

Redevelopment of the surrounding sites will help establish the intersection of Arlington Road and Bethesda Avenue as the district's center. The major sites with short-term redevelopment potential are the four-acre Euro Motorcars, Inc., site in the southwest quadrant of Arlington Road and Bethesda Avenue, and the Miller and former Maloney Concrete (now Boston Chicken) properties in the southeast quadrant, which total two and a half acres. In the north-east quadrant, redevelopment is unlikely on the Giant supermarket site because of a long term lease until 2015; the corner will probably continue in its present use as a surface parking lot. There is a similar lease on the Giant pharmacy site in the northwest quadrant of the intersection. Parking for the pharmacy is provided on an adjacent lot zoned R-10. Assemblage of the small individually owned lots in the northwest quadrant along Bethesda Avenue is unlikely in the short-term, though desirable so that redevelopment could provide sidewalks, streetscape improvements, and organized parking.

South of the Arlington Road-Bethesda Avenue intersection, it is important to retain the Bradley Shopping Center on the west side of Arlington Road because of the community retail it provides. On the east side of Arlington Road, the U.S. Postal Service has a ground lease until 1999, with an option to renew until 2015. The Postal Service owns the 16,000-square-foot building, used as a distribution center. (See Section 8.6, Other Public Facilities.)



## **B. OBJECTIVES**

1. Preserve and enhance the Arlington Road District as a community retail and service business area.
2. Concentrate redevelopment along Bethesda Avenue, with special focus at the intersection of Bethesda Avenue and Arlington Road as the center of the district.
3. Continue the “main street” shopping character along Bethesda Avenue, consistent with recent development.
4. Protect the surrounding residential areas from commercial intrusions by directing growth away from the edges and by providing lower densities, appropriate uses, and landscaped buffers at the residential edges.
5. Improve traffic circulation, pedestrian safety, amenities, and convenience.
6. Provide additional housing and reduce the potential for additional employment away from the Metro Core.

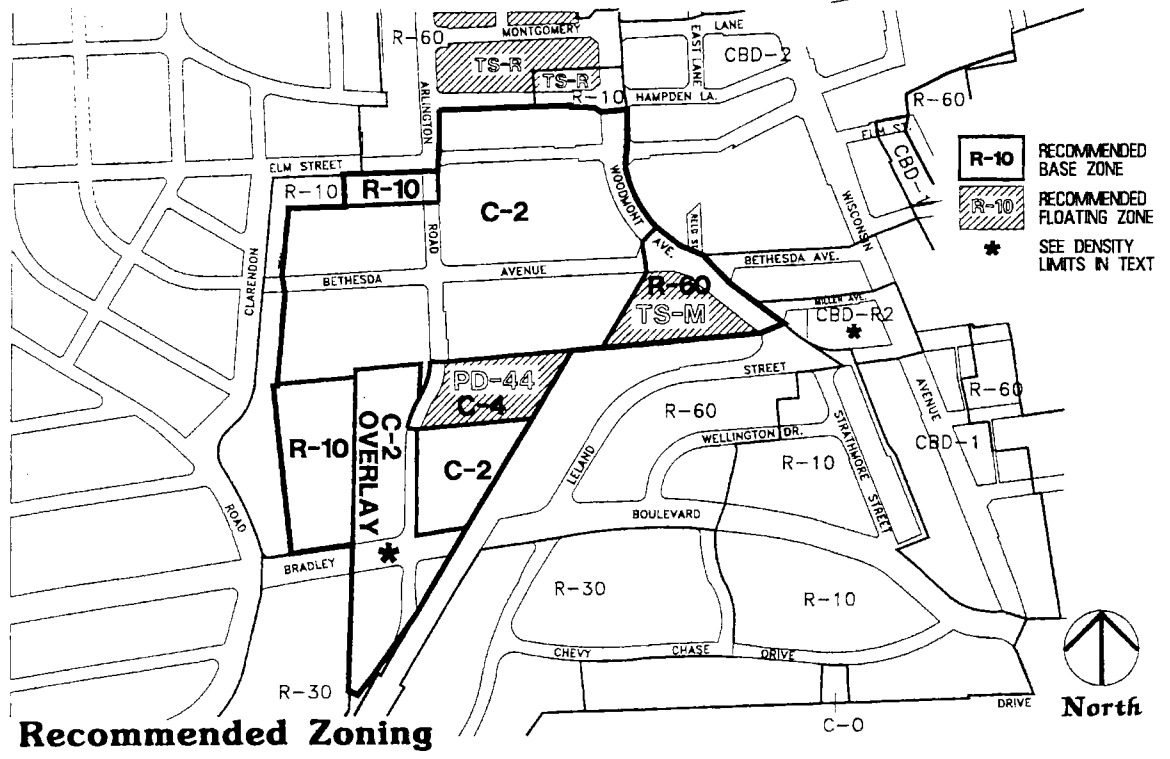
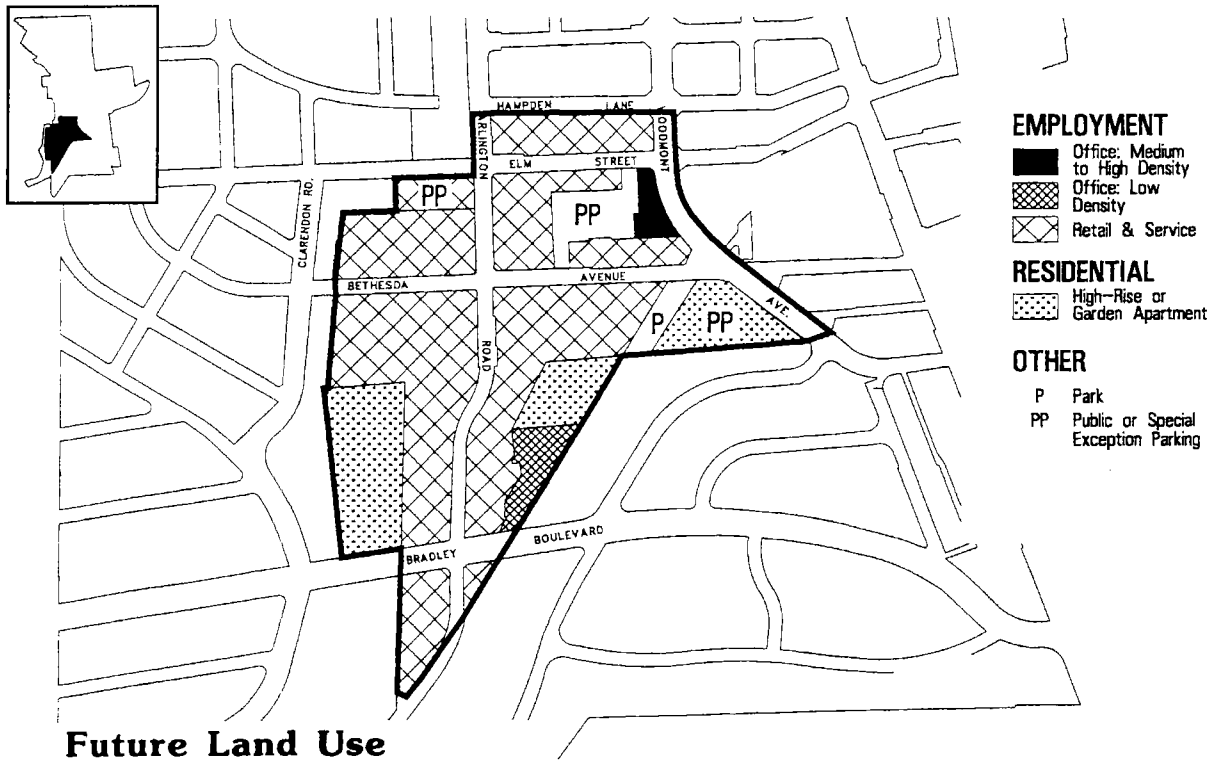
## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Plan recommends retaining C-2 zoning at full 1.5 FAR density on properties north of the Bradley Shopping Center and post office site to encourage redevelopment of three-story mixed office-retail buildings along Bethesda Avenue similar to those on the north side of the street east of Arlington Road. The design guidelines address the type of redevelopment that is encouraged. It would be desirable to have site plan review, though site plans are not currently required in the C-2 Zone. (See future land use and recommended zoning in Figure 4.37.)

When the Euro Motorcars site redevelops, Arlington Road should be realigned to partially straighten the curve and improve sight distance. This improvement will increase safety and vehicular access to the Bradley Shopping Center. The Plan recommends creation of a new access drive for circulation through the Euro Motor-cars site between Bethesda Avenue and the Bradley Shopping Center parking lot. An evaluation of the access and circulation plan for the shopping center may eventually warrant an additional signal on Arlington Road, perhaps in conjunction with a pedestrian crossing and the curve-straightening that would occur with redevelopment of the Euro Motorcars site. (See Section 5.7C, Roadway System Improvements and Figure 5.11, Proposed Changes for Arlington Road District.) The Plan also recommends enhanced pedestrian amenities to encourage pedestrian activity and thus reduce some vehicular movement.

The property at the southwest corner of Arlington Road and Elm Street should retain the R-10 zoning, with the use limited to special exception parking. The lot has been designed to deflect traffic from the neighborhood and is well screened.

The CVS Pharmacy and new office retail complex on the east side of Arlington Road should retain the C-2 zoning to conform with existing densities. The Plan recommends that the remaining parcels be part of an overlay district with C-2 development limited to 0.5 FAR. This approach would allow the Bradley Shopping Center, Safeway, and service





stations to remain with modest expansion but would not allow major redevelopment at higher densities. The zoning ordinance has been amended to create an overlay district in this area. (See Section 10.1, Zoning.)

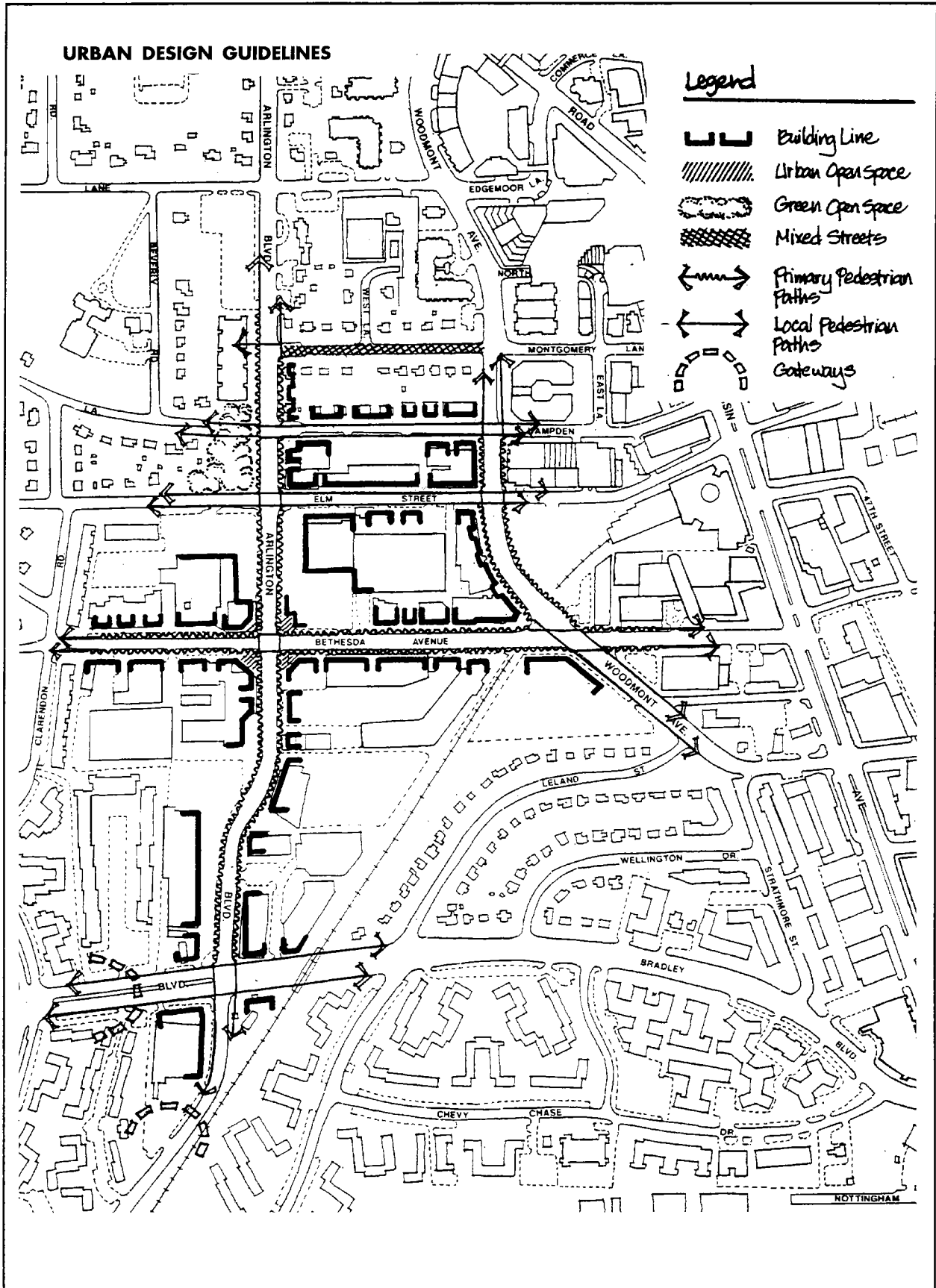
The Plan recommends rezoning the post office site with a base zone of C-4, limited to standard method development of .25 FAR. If the U.S. Postal Service does not need the site for continued postal use, the site could be redeveloped with a neighborhood-serving commercial use up to .25 FAR. Alternatively, the site could be redeveloped for multi-family housing, with neighborhood-serving retail along Arlington Road. The PD-44 Zone, allowing up to 105 dwelling units and 40,000 square feet of commercial space, would be an appropriate zone. Residential use would provide a transition from commercial uses for the Sacks subdivision of single-family houses to the east, helping maintain the viability of the neighborhood. Residents from both communities could use the Capital Crescent Trail. (See Arlington Road Post Office Site illustrative in Appendix B.)

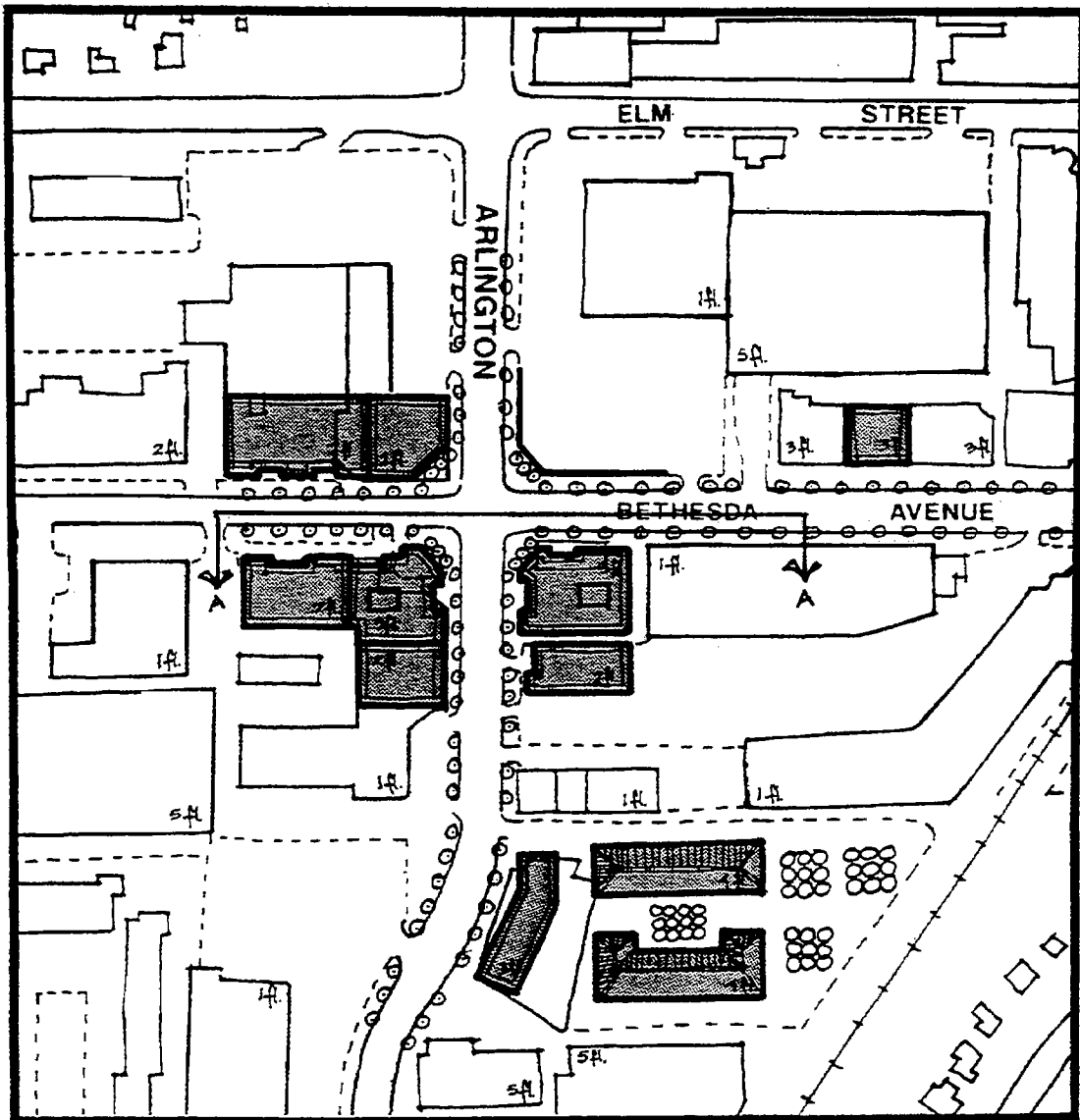
The Plan encourages exploration of creating a staging area for users of the Capital Crescent Trail on a portion of Lot 31. When future parking demand indicates a need for structured parking on Lot 31, the Plan recommends a combination of mixed-income housing and parking on the site. The project should also include ground floor retail along Bethesda Avenue to continue the “main street” concept. Below-grade and some surface parking should be provided to meet the requirements of the Parking District, in addition to parking for the residents and retail customers. (See Section 5.6, Parking.) The Plan designates the site as a transit station development area and as appropriate for the TS-M Zone. The base zone would remain R-60. About 100 housing units could be provided at heights that are compatible with the adjacent neighborhood. Representatives of the Sacks neighborhood should be included in all stages of planning and design for this site. (See Public Parking lot 31 illustrative in Appendix B.) A final decision to build housing and public parking on this site will be made by the County government based on an analysis of economic feasibility and the impact of redevelopment on the ability of the Parking Lot District (PLD) to meet the parking demands of retail shoppers and the advisability of providing a staging area for use by the Capital Crescent Trail.

#### **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

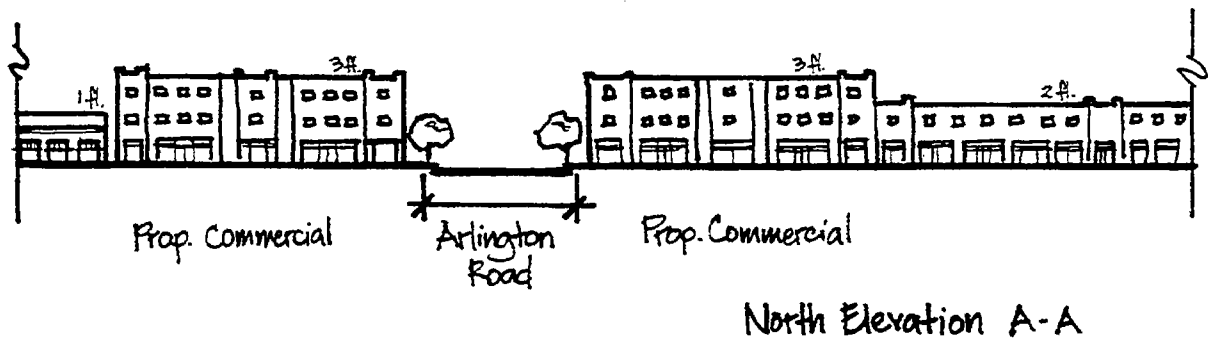
In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply (see Figures 4.38 and 4.39):

1. Arlington Road and Bethesda Avenue
  - a. Develop low-rise commercial or mixed-use buildings with store-front retail located directly adjacent to the public sidewalk.
  - b. Develop interconnected vehicular circulation routes between parcels, where feasible, to improve local vehicular access and reduce congestion. Provide outside parking and service areas in the rear of properties.
  - c. Expand pedestrian connections between parcels to promote walking and reduce the number of vehicular shopping trips.





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- d. Set corner buildings back at least 25 feet from the curb radius in redevelopment of parcels bordering the intersection of Arlington Road and Bethesda Avenue to create an open space for pedestrians and a center for the district. On the Giant parking lot in the northeast corner, add a small landscaped open space to help define the corner pending redevelopment.
  - e. Provide pedestrian access to the public parking garage to the east in any redevelopment of the Giant site. Also provide direct vehicular access to the garage, if acceptable to the Division of Parking, to minimize on-street congestion.
  - f. Redevelop Bethesda Avenue west of Arlington Road as a Main Street with public sidewalks, street-scape, and seating to improve pedestrian access and to continue the character already established along the eastern portion of the street. Provide public parking along both sides of Bethesda Avenue, where feasible. (See Chapter 6, Streetscape Plan.)
  - g. Provide landscaped buffers between the multi-family residences along Clarendon Road and adjacent commercial development to the east as part of any redevelopment.
  - h. Limit heights, if the post office site is redeveloped for housing, to four stories stepping down to three stories along the east side of the site to ensure compatibility with the Sacks single-family neighborhood. Provide vehicular access to Arlington Road from the south-west corner of the site and provide pedestrian and bicycle access to the Capital Crescent Trail on the east.
2. Lot 31
- a. Continue the Main Street character in developing retail frontage along Bethesda Avenue and a portion of Woodmont Avenue.
  - b. Limit heights to three to five floors and vary roof lines for visual interest. The greatest height and bulk should be located primarily on Bethesda Avenue. The building(s) should step down to a lower height and be no closer than 50 feet from the property line of the houses in the Sacks neighborhood. The building design should express a residential character that is compatible with the neighborhood.
  - c. Provide landscape screening along the southern edge of the site as a buffer with the adjacent houses.
  - d. Ensure pedestrian and bicycle access to the Capital Crescent Trail and provide a Class 1 Bikeway along Bethesda Avenue, in accordance with the Bicycle Network Plan (Figure 5.7.)



## 4.13 THE EDGEMOOR TRANSITION AREA

### A. DESCRIPTION

The Edgemoor Transition Area consists primarily of public institutional and recreational facilities, which form a stable transitional land use between the single-family residential Edgemoor neighborhood to the west and the high-density Transit Station Residential District to the east of Arlington Road. The current boundary of the transition area is Arlington Road on the east and the Sector Plan boundary on the west. The Plan proposes including in the Sector Plan area the multi-family units on Clarendon and Fairfax Roads. (See Figure 2.3 for the existing Sector Plan boundary and proposed boundary changes.)

The existing stable uses include the Bethesda Elementary School, the Montgomery County Library, and a one-acre M-NCPPC park. The location of these public facilities reflects implementation of 1970 Master Plan recommendations—confirmed by the 1976 Sector Plan—that the entire west side frontage of Arlington Road between Wilson Lane and Elm Street be acquired for public use.

Only in the block between Moorland Lane and Edgemoor Lane has this vision remained incomplete, creating uncertainty. For many years the School Board pursued an acquisition program in the eastern two-thirds of the block to implement a campus master plan for the expansion of Bethesda Elementary School and accompanying recreation facilities. Three properties remain in private ownership. The Vision Center, a County-wide school facility, occupies a one-story brick structure on two of the lots across Moorland Lane from the school.

The School Board will reevaluate space needs of Bethesda Elementary School within the next two or three years. The existing school site is smaller than standard. County fiscal constraints may dictate a modified expansion from that envisioned in the campus master plan to meet modernization program needs.

North and south of Bradley Boulevard there are about 380 garden apartments in three-story buildings (including a small complex owned by the Housing Opportunities Commission) and about 120 townhouses along Clarendon and Fairfax Roads. These units are a source of housing for moderate income households. Currently in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan area, the units north of Bradley Boulevard are zoned R-10. The Master Plan applied R-30 zoning to the units south of Bradley Boulevard to match existing densities.

### B. OBJECTIVES

1. Ensure the stability of the land use in the transition area to preserve Edgemoor as a single-family residential neighborhood. Stabilize the block between Moorland and Edgemoor Lanes.
2. Recognize the existing multi-family uses as an appropriate and stable transition use along Clarendon and Fairfax Roads.
3. Discourage cut-through traffic.



## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Plan proposes extending the Sector Plan boundary west to Clarendon and Fairfax Roads. This proposal recognizes that the garden apartments and townhouses create an effective transition between the single-family detached residential neighborhoods to the west and the Arlington Road commercial district to the east. They share a similar character with other multi-family and single-family attached complexes within the Sector Plan area. The Plan recommends confirming the existing R-10 Zone north of Bradley Boulevard and the R-30 Zone south of Bradley Boulevard to retain the existing densities. Future land use and recommended zoning are shown in Figure 4.40.

The Plan recommends deleting Lot 6 from the Sector Plan area at the point where Hampden Lane terminates at the M-NCPPC park. The lot was not acquired at the time the park was created and remains part of the Edgemoor neighborhood.

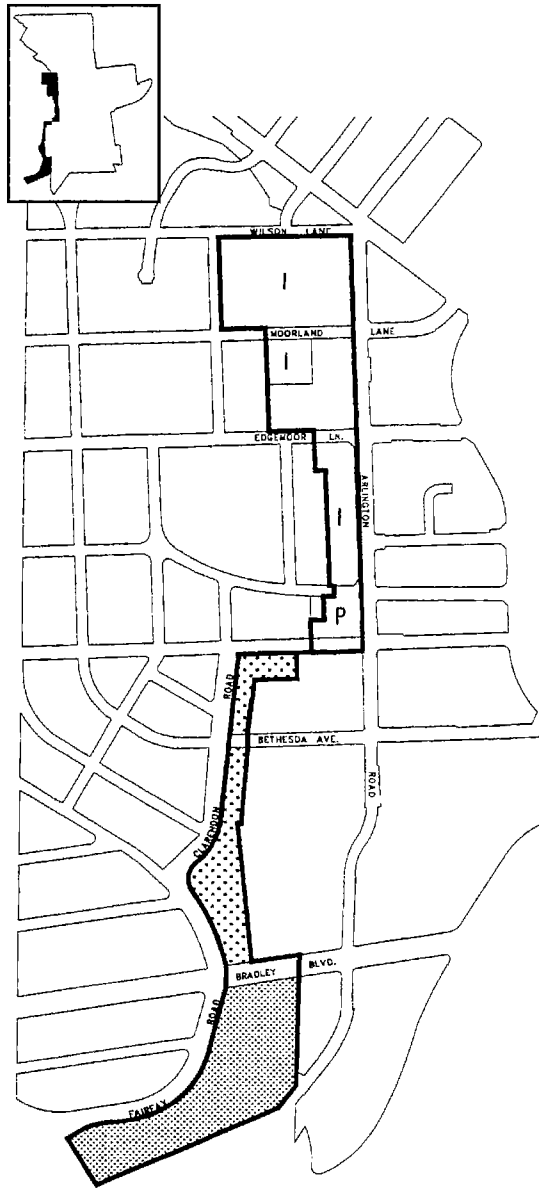
For the block bounded by Moorland Lane, Arlington Road, Edgemoor Lane, and the Sector Plan line, the Plan recommends confirmation of the R-60 zoning. The School Board has no immediate plans for use or sale of the houses it owns in this block. The intent of the 1976 Sector Plan to maintain the properties in public ownership should be carried forward until the School Board makes a specific modernization decision for Bethesda Elementary School.

The Plan endorses measures to discourage cut-through traffic. Such measures may include one-way access patterns or peak period access limits (similar to the Town of Chevy Chase), but they should not inhibit access by emergency vehicles. Permanent street closings are not encouraged, though they may be considered where commercial traffic is intrusive. This approach may be explored on Moorland Lane, if needed to ensure the safety of elementary school students. Because ultimate educational needs for Bethesda Elementary School may require student and faculty use of the Vision Center property across Moorland Lane, a safe and controlled traffic pattern that largely excludes through traffic along that street will be necessary.

## **D. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**




In addition to the general objectives and principles in Section 3.2, the following guidelines apply (see Figure 4.41):

1. Respect the scale and character of the nearby single-family neighborhood in any school expansion on the block between Moorland and Edgemoor Lanes.
2. Provide street trees and sidewalk repairs as recommended in the Streetscape Plan.



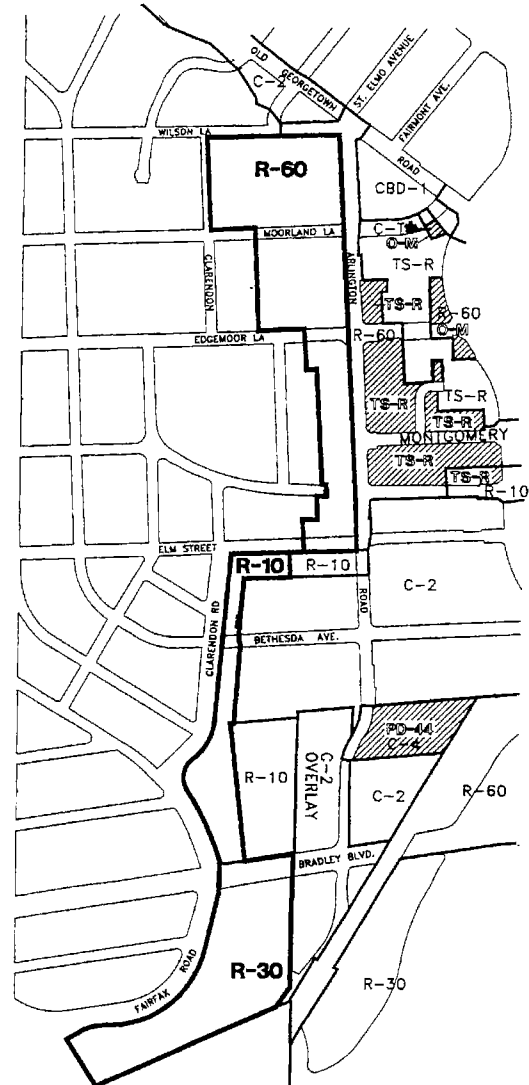
**Future Land Use**

**RESIDENTIAL**



-  High-Rise or Garden Apartment
-  Townhouse
-  Single-Family Detached

**OTHER**

- P Park
- I Institutional



**Recommended Zoning**

-  RECOMMENDED BASE ZONE
-  RECOMMENDED FLOATING ZONE
- \* SEE DENSITY LIMITS IN TEXT



# EDGEMOOR TRANSITION AREA

FIGURE 4.41

