

Community Facilities and Needs Plan

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to help create a sense
of community
cohesion.



The Master Plan supports measures to help create a sense of community and to reinforce community cohesion. The Commission on the Future (1988) defined a sense of community as "a feeling of belonging to a local area and having an interest and a stake in what happens there."

This Master Plan addresses a broad range of ways that residents and businesses view their community. The high quality of life in Bethesda-Chevy Chase derives from fine residential areas, employment and shopping opportunities, a high level of transportation service, and a combination of woodlands and open spaces throughout the area.

A sense of community also occurs at a more local level, with much of the area being organized into special taxing districts, municipalities, or very active community associations. Local initiatives to meet neighborhood needs can contribute to a sense of community. Specific initiatives identified in this Plan include: deciding where to locate sidewalks, (see Section 4.13), adoption of local green spaces (Section 6.12), and conducting stream clean-ups (Section 5.21).

The many public facilities and shopping areas provide a focus for community gatherings and impromptu meetings. Such places should be linked to residential neighborhoods by sidewalks, bicycle paths, and small-scale public transportation, as discussed in the Transportation section (Section 4.13).

Public facilities often become a focus for meeting neighbors as well as providing public services. However, demographic and social changes often lead to changes in how public facilities are used. This section addresses the changing needs of the B-CC area as summarized in the following objectives:

1. View public schools as flexible resources to meet a variety of community needs. Closed school sites can be converted to a variety of community-serving purposes. Also, school facilities are used after hours for public meetings, civic

events, and other important neighborhood functions.

2. Allow communities to adopt local green spaces, where they are willing to maintain such properties.

The way we meet the special needs of the elderly and for child day care and other special need groups also relates to our sense of a community that cares about its residents. In Bethesda-Chevy Chase, some of the most critical needs are among the frail elderly (among the 9 percent of residents over age 75) and very young children (about 5 percent of residents are in the 0-4 year age range). Objectives for meeting elderly and child care needs include:

1. Support additional daytime senior services and home improvement assistance to the elderly.
2. Support both residential and employment based child care services.

Community or neighborhood retail centers provide local services and provide for informal meeting places. An objective of this Master Plan is to support both neighborhood-and community-scale retail centers.

6.1 Public Facilities

6.11 Public Schools, Libraries, and Other Facilities

Public Schools

This Plan endorses using public school sites as flexible resources to meet a range of community needs. The primary role of school sites is the education of young people. But when schools are closed, there is a potential for other community uses. According to Montgomery County Public Schools, there are no surplus school sites in the B-CC Master Plan area. Also, after hours, schools are used for recreational, civic, and educational purposes.

The Bethesda-Chevy Chase area is currently served by 3 high schools, 3 junior/intermediate/middle schools (JIM), and 11 elementary schools. As indicated in the table on the following page, these schools are currently in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase, Walter Johnson, and Whitman clusters. Fourteen of these schools are located in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area, while 3 of the schools are located outside the planning boundaries with service areas that fall within the Planning Area.

In response to declining enrollment in the 1970's and early 1980's, the Board of Education closed nine elementary schools, two junior high schools, and a special school in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. A table listing the closed schools in the area and their current uses has been included. Former schools are providing facilities for special programs of the Montgomery County Public Schools, non-profit community organizations, and private schools.

The sharp declines of the 1970's were projected to turn around or level off somewhat after 1986. The following table presents information on the projected increases and decreases in school-age children from 1990 to the year 2010.

**PROJECTED AGE DISTRIBUTION,
BETHESDA-CHEVY CHASE PLANNING AREA
1990-2010**

Age	1990 Estimated	2010 Projected	Projected Change 1990-2010	Projected % Change 1990-2010
5-9	4,737	5,462	725	15.3%
10-14	3,746	5,173	1,427	38.1%
15-19	4,281	4,637	356	8.3%
Total: 5-19	12,764	15,272	2,508	19.6%

SOURCE: Montgomery County Planning Department, Research Division, Intermediate Forecast, Round IV, Modified 9/90.

Using the most recent actual enrollments and the most recent Intermediate Forecast from the Research Division, and assuming additional enrollments in the magnet programs in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster, Montgomery County Public School planners project that elementary and Junior/Intermediate/Middle (JIM) enrollments will increase steadily in the next decades in B-CC. It is unlikely that there will be additional school closings.

Closed schools serve the community in a variety of ways. Closed school sites can serve as multi-social service centers, providing space for child day care and adult day care and nutrition. In some areas, closed schools have been converted to elderly housing or housing for other special need groups. Joint use of schools for educational and social service needs may result in cooperative activities of benefit to all users. The location of many school sites next to public parks doubles their potential value to the community.

Of the 12 schools closed because of declining enrollments, Montgomery County Public Schools may continue to use some as "holding schools"—which students from schools undergoing renovation can use temporarily. Using closed schools to help alleviate the capacity problems at other public schools might also be considered. School sites should remain in public ownership in case changing demographics require reopening for educational use.

When new uses are programmed for school sites, compatibility with the neighborhood must be maintained. The degree to which a new use is incorporated into the existing community fabric is crucial. The mandatory referral process should be used to ensure that proposals for school modernization, additions, and reuse are compatible with the surrounding area. Issues to address include:

1. traffic and parking controls,
2. sensitive siting of modular classrooms, additions, or new buildings, and
3. landscaping and parking lot screening.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY HIGH SCHOOL CLUSTER

High School Cluster/ School Name	Date Originally Constructed	Year Modernized	Site Size (Acres)	Number of Teaching Stations/Classrooms
BETHESDA-CHEVY CHASE CLUSTER				
B-CC High	1934	1979	16.0	71
Westland Intermediate	1951	1973	25.3	42
Bethesda Elementary	1952		4.9	20
Chevy Chase Elementary	1936	1975	3.9	22
North Chevy Chase Elementary	1953		7.9	14
Somerset Elementary	1949	1972	3.5	17
Westbrook Elementary	1939	1990	10.7 PK	21
WALTER JOHNSON CLUSTER				
*W. Johnson High	1956	1977	31.5	75
*Tilden Intermediate	1969		19.7	38
*Ashburton Elementary	1957		8.3	22
*Wyngate Elementary	1952	1972 M	9.5	23
WHITMAN CLUSTER				
Whitman High	1962		26.8 PK	82
Pyle Middle	1962		14.4	47
Bannockburn Elementary	1957	1988	8.3	20
Bradley Hills Elementary	1951	1984	5.4 PK	18
Burning Tree Elementary	1958		6.8 PK	18
Wood Acres Elementary	1952	1975	2.6 PK	21

*Not located inside the boundaries of the planning area, but service area falls within the planning area.

NOTE: M—denotes minor or partial renovation;
PK—denotes an adjacent park site; park acreage is in addition to that shown.

SOURCE: APPROVED FY 90 MASTER PLAN AND THE FY 90 TO FY 95 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM, June 1, 1989, Montgomery County Public Schools.

CLOSED SCHOOLS — BETHESDA-CHEVY CHASE PLANNING AREA

Name	Address	Acres	Date Closed	Current or Proposed Use
North Bethesda Jr. High	8935 Bradmoor St	17.3	1981	Occupied by a private school. Proposed for future MCPS interim housing.
Leland Jr. High	4301 Willow La	3.7	1981	Original school building razed. Recreation and day care center.
Alta Vista Elem. School	5615 Beech Ave	3.3	1976	Occupied by a private school.
Ayrlawn Elem. School	5650 Oakmont Ave	3.1	1982	Occupied by a private school.
Brookmont Elem. School	4800 Sangamore Rd	6.0	1982	Occupied by a private School.
Clara Barton Elem. School	75th St			Occupied by a day care center.
Concord Special School	7210 Hidden Creek Rd	8.9	1988	In use by the Board of Education with leases to a nursery school and a counseling program for the handicapped.
Fernwood Elem. School	6801 Greentree Rd	6.2	1977	Occupied by a private school.
Lynnbrook Elem. School	8001 Lynnbrook Dr	5.0 PK	1982	In use by the Board of Education for special programs.
Radnor Elem. School	7000 Radnor Rd			In use by Board of Education as a holding school.
Rollingwood Elem. School	3200 Woodbine Street	4.1 PK	1983	Currently occupied by a private school; may be converted to Board of Education office use.
Whittier Woods Elem. School	7300 Whittier Blvd	7.0	1977	In use by the Board of Education with leases for day care, an arts center, and non-profit community organizations.

School playgrounds at closed school sites must be maintained or alternative sites provided. School playgrounds at closed schools remain open to the public and are included in the inventory of recreational facilities for determining future needs. To continue to serve the recreational requirements of the local community, they must be maintained. Alternative recreational sites will be needed if these school sites are converted to uses that are not compatible with community recreation.

Public schools, libraries, community centers, and other public facilities should serve as "community magnets" to help restore a sense of community.

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Existing public facilities already provide a range of programs and activities that enhance life in the Planning Area. But where there is space available on the site for expansion, community-enhancing functions should be planned. The Leland School site, converted to a community center, recreation facility, and town office is a good example of a creative response to such an opportunity. Such facilities should be linked to the neighborhood by pedestrian and bicycle paths and small-scale public transit.

Police and Government Services

Adequate facilities and space should be provided for government services to the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area.

The Bethesda police station will need to be either renovated or relocated elsewhere in the Bethesda District. If a new location is needed, then the following general location criteria are suggested:

1. Meet the service and operational requirements for efficient access and for size.
2. Avoid locations that cannot be easily secured or buffered from nearby residential communities.

The Bethesda-Chevy Chase Government Service Center located at 7815 Woodmont Avenue may need additional space to accommodate increased programs and services. One possible location is the Walsh Street Center which could provide additional space and continue to serve as a "community magnet" for the area.

Fire and Rescue Stations

Fire protection in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area is provided by the following stations:

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Address</u>
Bethesda Fire Department Station No. 6	6600 Wisconsin Avenue Bethesda
Bethesda Fire Department Station No. 20	9041 Old Georgetown Road Bethesda
Bethesda Fire Department* Station No. 26	6700 Democracy Boulevard Bethesda
Chevy Chase Fire Department Station No. 7	8801 Connecticut Avenue Chevy Chase Chevy Chase
Glen Echo Fire Department Station No. 11	5920 Massachusetts Avenue Glen Echo
Cabin John Park Fire Department* Station No. 10	8201 River Road* Bethesda

* Not located inside the boundaries of the Planning Area, but service area falls within the Planning Area.

Ambulance and emergency health services are provided by the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad, which is located at 5020 Battery Lane in Bethesda.

Libraries

The Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area is served by the Bethesda Regional Library, located at 7400 Arlington Road in Bethesda. It is also served by two community libraries: the Chevy Chase library is located at 8005 Connecticut Avenue and the Little Falls Library is located at 5501 Massachusetts Avenue.

Postal Facilities

Two main post offices serve the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area. One is located in the Bethesda CBD on Wisconsin Avenue and the other is located on Harvard Avenue in Glen Echo. The area also is served by the Chevy Chase Branch Post Office on Connecticut Avenue and a Carrier Annex on Arlington Road near Bradley Boulevard. In addition, there are post offices in the Village of Friendship Heights and in Cabin John. The Postal Service five-year facility plan proposes construction in 1991 of a new building for the Glen Echo Post Office. Recent Federal budget-cutting measures make this project uncertain.

6.12 Parks and Open Space

The existing community use and Countywide parks and facilities in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area offer the local residents outstanding opportunities for their leisure time. Also, three existing urban parks are immediately adjacent to the Central Business District. These urban parks allow office workers a place to eat lunch and provide a transition and a buffer between the Central Business District and residential areas. All parks in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area are included in the 1,000-foot scale map.

There are approximately 700 acres of parkland within the

Planning Area, with 193 acres in community use parks. The remaining acreage is in Rock Creek, Cabin John, and Booze Creek Stream Valley Parks and McCrillis Gardens. The recreational facilities located at the Bethesda-Chevy Chase parks include: 30 ballfields, 42 tennis courts, 8 recreation centers, 35 playgrounds, hiker-biker trails, and an outdoor swimming pool. (See Table 4.0 in the Appendix.)

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The 1988 *Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* contains a detailed classification system with the various types of parks and guidelines for their acquisition and development. The two main categories of the system are community use and Countywide parks. Community use parks are parks that serve residents of surrounding communities, are close to home, and can be used on a daily basis. This category is further divided into neighborhood parks, urban parks, local parks, and neighborhood conservation areas. Countywide parks serve all residents of the County and meet conservation needs.

Community Use Parks

The community use parks are further subdivided into four types:

Local Parks

These parks are generally ten acres or more in size and provide ballfields, in addition to other active and passive recreation facilities for the Planning Area residents. There are 16 existing and developed local parks in the Bethesda-Chevy

Chase area. Eight of these parks also contain a recreation building used by the Recreation Department, community groups, and local residents.

Neighborhood Parks

These parks are smaller than local parks and are walk-to parks that provide informal leisure opportunities. They generally contain facilities such as playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts, and sometimes small playfields. The Bethesda-Chevy Chase area currently has seven developed neighborhood parks, and another two are scheduled for development in the near future.

Urban Parks

These are small parks that serve central business districts, highly urbanized areas, and commercial areas. These parks also provide a transition area between commercial/business areas and residential areas. They are intensively developed and provide beautification, walkways, sitting areas, and occasionally, playground equipment and small ball courts. There are four developed urban parks in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area, and one additional urban park is planned for the future.

Neighborhood Conservation Areas

Neighborhood conservation areas are small undeveloped parkland parcels that serve local preservation purposes in residential areas. They frequently contain streams or drainage areas and adjacent wooded slopes. Presently, there are three such parks in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area.

Countywide Parks

The Countywide parks in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area include stream valley and special parks.

Stream Valley Parks

These parks are interconnected along major stream valleys serving conservation and recreation needs. They provide valuable open space, passive recreation areas, and active recreation facilities on adjacent usable land. The Rock Creek Stream Valley Park is the eastern boundary of the Planning Area. Cabin John and Booze Creek Parks are located in the western portion of the stream valley. Little Falls Park starts in the central portion of the Planning Area and runs to the southern boundary. These linear parks provide public access to streams and trails for jogging, hiking, and bicycling. They also help protect the area from flooding, erosion, and sedimentation.

Special Parks

Special parks include sites with historic, cultural, or agricultural significance, as well as those with unique facilities. These parks may include historic homes, gardens, small conference centers, farms, and specialized facilities. They vary in size and use. McCrillis Gardens, located in the Bethesda area, was donated to the Commission in 1979. The property has an extensive garden with many varieties of azaleas and rhododendrons, with walkways and sitting areas.

School Sites

The 14 open public schools in the Bethesda Planning Area also provide recreation facilities that are available to the public. Facilities generally include: ballfields, basketball and multi-use courts, and playground equipment. Outdoor recreation facilities at the closed schools in the Planning Area continue to remain available to the public.

Park Rehabilitation

Renovation of older parks and facilities in the area has been given high priority in the CIP and funds have been allocated for the now completed major rehabilitation of two local parks: Cabin John Local Park and Norwood Local Park. Other rehabilitation projects of specific park facilities that have been com-

pleted in the Bethesda area include the play equipment at Ayr-lawn, Bradley, and Sangamore Local Parks; and tennis courts at Sangamore, Meadowbrook, and Westmoreland Local Parks. Also, the Meadowbrook recreation building was modified to improve handicapped access.

Park Planning

This Plan recognizes that parks and open spaces are essential ingredients of the quality of life in Bethesda-Chevy Chase. Parks in B-CC provide a system of natural areas, open spaces, and recreation facilities, which are developed in harmony with our natural resources.

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One of the reasons people like living in Montgomery County is because it is green and beautiful. As the down-County area becomes increasingly urbanized, it is even more important to safeguard the parks and open spaces that provide breathing room for residents. The sense of openness and beauty is created by:

1. The network of public parks, ranging from extensive stream valley parks to small urban parks, providing relief from concrete and asphalt. These parks also safeguard some of the historic sites in the area and provide opportunities for environmental education.
2. The vistas from major roads across parkland and other large land areas including Federal land, private country clubs, schools, and other institutions. While the M-NCPPC park acreage of 10 acres per 1,000 residents is low compared to other planning areas, these Federal and private institutions provide a valuable visual resource. The 650 acres of private open space also relieve the pressure on public recreational facilities.

3. The acres of wooded vacant developable land.
4. The tree-lined streets.

The open space quality of the Planning Area should be preserved by a variety of public and private measures including:

1. Monitoring the adequacy of existing parks in the Planning Area to keep pace with public needs and recognizing opportunities to expand the system where maintenance can be assured. (See discussion below.)
2. Preserving the buffer around the Federal employment centers through the mandatory referral process. (See the discussion under 3.6, Federal Employment Centers.)
3. Encouraging continuation of current institutional uses on large private holdings and preserving a major portion of open space and roadway vistas should the land be converted to housing in the future. (See the discussion under 3.13, Large Land Users.)
4. Encouraging the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas not already within parkland. (See 3.14, Conservation Areas and 5.1, Natural Features.)
5. Examining ways to protect mature trees as part of the subdivision and site plan review procedure prior to issuance of a permit to clear and strip trees from the site.
6. Promoting the Green Corridors policy to create and preserve tree-lined avenues along the major highways of the Planning Area. (See 3.11, Green Corridors.)
7. Identifying several areas which should be protected as conservation areas. Such areas may either be in a 100-year floodplain, a wetland, or on a steeply sloping wooded site. In most cases, these sites could serve as extensions of existing parkland. Conservation Areas are identified in Section 3.14.

This Plan endorses the park planning process, summarized below, to ensure that the park system continues to meet the needs of the B-CC area. The 1988 *Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan* examines the status of the system from a Countywide perspective, projects needs for new Countywide

and community-use parks, and assesses recreation facility needs. In the B-CC area, there are currently 28 community-use parks (5 urban, 8 neighborhood, and 16 local/community) and 4 Countywide parks (3 stream valley and 1 special park).

Parkland Acquisition

The Parks Department has no current plans to buy additional acreage for parks in the B-CC area. However, the Parks Department will examine specific sites if requested by local residents or civic associations. If any Federal lands are declared surplus, they will also be examined for acquisition as parkland, especially for areas needing additional active recreation. As vacant parcels in the Planning Area are developed, environmentally sensitive areas may be dedicated as parkland under cluster or planned development options.

Facility Needs

Existing park and school fields should be preserved. Better scheduling and maintenance could improve ballfield use. It may be that additional fields could be built on existing parkland. The *Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan* projects the needs for local park facilities to the year 1995, based upon future population and extensive user surveys conducted in 1985. The needs for playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis courts, and ballfields were analyzed. The analysis for the B-CC area indicated that the only facilities needed are five additional ballfields in 1995.

Park Development

The FY 1989-1994 Capital Improvements Program contains two proposals for new parks in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. The proposed Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park is currently programmed for construction in FY 89-90. It will include a double multi-use court, parking, hiker-biker trails, fitness course, games tables, picnic area, and play equipment. The Wyngate Woods Neighborhood Park is scheduled for development in FY 93 and may include a picnic area, play equipment, and landscaping.

Maintenance and rehabilitation of existing parks is essential to their continued use and enjoyment by Bethesda-Chevy Chase residents. Park maintenance and rehabilitation are important to maintaining a safe, usable park system. If parks are allowed to deteriorate, they ultimately cost more to maintain, are not pleasant to use, can be the site of accidents, and create an unfavorable public image. Many of the parks in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area are more than 20 years old. The Parks Department periodically examines existing parks and facilities in the area to determine what facilities are in need of rehabilitation.

The Department has instituted policies to curtail maintenance costs where possible. In stream valley parks, areas that are on slopes, adjacent to the stream, or not developed with park facilities are being allowed to return to their natural wooded state. This reduces maintenance costs, but also serves the conservation purpose of reducing sedimentation and stream bank erosion.

Adopt-A-Green-Space Program

Neighborhoods and municipalities are encouraged to adopt-a-green-space where continued maintenance can be guaranteed. Like other areas of the County, the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area contains stub streets (streets that dead end after a short distance and are adjacent to an undeveloped parcel of land), paper streets (streets that were dedicated to the County but never built), and other public rights-of-way that may offer opportunities for neighborhood open space if not needed for streets. Currently, many of these rights-of-way are overgrown with brush and are dumping grounds for trash. However, some of these areas have been adopted by neighborhoods and have become a useful and attractive part of the community.

Fiscal concerns prevent the Commission's Parks Department from maintaining and developing all these small open spaces, although requests regarding specific sites will be examined. The primary support for this program should come from the neighborhoods and communities in the B-CC area. Com-

munities may be able to adopt-a-green-space and should contact Montgomery County Department of Transportation regarding use of their rights-of-way. In addition, some parcels may be incorporated as part of the hiker-biker trail system.

It must be stressed that rights-of-way developed by community groups become their responsibility to maintain. If the neighborhood changes and enthusiasm for maintenance wanes, the adopted sites will return to their previous condition. Also, the County Department of Transportation will make use of any right-of-way when needed for transportation purposes.

6.2 People Needs

6.21 Elderly Population

The Plan recommends that additional senior centers should be provided in the B-CC area. A major purpose of senior centers is to provide social activities that reduce isolation, which is a common problem of the elderly. The B-CC area, which has one-fifth of the County's population over 75, has only one senior center. The Division of Elder Affairs has consistently sought to find sites for senior centers in the B-CC area, but has been unsuccessful due to land costs.

Space in closed schools should be considered as a possible location for senior centers. The Division of Elder Affairs should continue to work with the Board of Education to develop new senior centers.

This Plan supports additional elderly day care in Bethesda-Chevy Chase.

Adult day care in single-family homes, operating as satellites of adult day care centers and backed-up by the centers' expertise, can provide a good, low-cost location that serves an intermediate need between a senior center and an adult day care center.

According to the 1987 Census Update, the B-CC area has nearly 17 percent of the County's population over 75 that needs day care. The study, *Status And Needs Of Elder Citizens In 1986* (Division of Elder Affairs, 1986), indicated that "care-giving" in the B-CC area was a "problem for a much higher than average proportion of respondents." There are only two adult day care centers in the B-CC area, with a total capacity of 38 places. There will be some growth in the 75-year and older population, which suggests a need for more adult day care.

This Plan supports additional senior centers and elderly day care in Bethesda-Chevy Chase.

Older homeowners may need assistance with contractor selection, contract preparation, and construction supervision for home improvement projects. This service is available through the construction supervision program already existing in the Department of Housing and Community Development's Housing Improvement Program. Aside from the need for this service to help maintain the homes of an aging population, the service can also help maintain the quality of neighborhood life and the housing stock in the B-CC area.

The literature on aging indicates that although some homeowners will move, most will probably stay in their homes. The Census Update reports that the B-CC area has approximately 3,300 people over 75 living in single-family homes, more than any other planning area and one-quarter of the County total. Since older people typically own older homes, for them to age in comfort it is often necessary to provide for major and minor home maintenance and for weatherization, for accessibility improvements and assistive devices, and, occasionally, for accessory apartments. Many older people have little confidence in selecting contractors, little knowledge about what should be done to their homes and how much it should cost, and little ability to ensure that work is being done correctly.

6.22 Child Needs

Within the B-CC Planning Area, demographic projections show that the 0-4 age population will remain at just under 5 percent of the B-CC population through the year 2010. The 1987 Census Update reports that there has been an influx of young families with children into the Planning Area. The demand for child day care in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area is increasing due to a growing child population (ages 9 and under) and the high level of employment. The increasing numbers of both children of residents and employees will likely require additional child day care facilities.

To provide child care opportunities to residents and employees with varying locational and program preferences, the Plan supports the location of centers in both neighborhood/residential and employment settings. Changes in neighborhood and employer supported child day care facilities and programs may be needed to better address the scarce supply of centers for children of ages two and under and for all-day child day care centers.

Neighborhood-Based Services

The Plan supports the location of child care centers within public and private facilities when they are compatible with the surrounding residential communities.

Family day care homes and small centers provide accessible child care services throughout residential neighborhoods within B-CC. By utilizing existing dwelling units, they require minimal additional capital investment to provide services. The family day care homes are currently permitted and the development of small centers should be encouraged.

Within neighborhoods, child day care services are provided through various means. In addition to in-home care by paid providers and immediate or extended family members, specified child care services frequently are provided within three settings: 1) family day care homes; 2) child care centers in public and private facilities such as closed schools, religious institutions, and park or recreation centers; and 3) freestanding child

care centers in either retrofitted homes or new centers.

Registered family day care homes, operating within the home of the child care provider, serve up to six children at one time. They provide services for significant numbers of residents and employees in the area. Family day care homes do not require significant capital costs since they represent an additional use within a residential structure. Family day care homes are a permitted use within residential zones.

The Plan supports the location of child care centers within public and private facilities...

Recent studies of small child care centers serving 7-20 children suggest that these centers have few negative impacts, including traffic and parking, on the surrounding community. The Zoning Ordinance provides that child care in small centers within most residential zones be permitted uses, providing they meet specific conditions. Centers serving 13-20 children can be approved by the hearing examiner, if certain special exception requirements are met.

Providers of child care services attempt to locate centers within public and private facilities that have convenient neighborhood locations and relatively low leasing costs. Most buildings suitable for day care have been leased for that purpose, and there is currently a scarcity of such opportunities within the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. Increasing school-age enrollments have reduced the availability of leasable space in public schools. Many private and parochial elementary schools provide affiliated full day child care and before- and after-school programs.

It is also difficult to create new free-standing centers or retrofits of existing homes in mature residential areas. Several factors serve as deterrents to providers interested in acquiring property or structures for child care: 1) prohibitive costs, 2) scarcity of vacant sites or buildings, and 3) significant capital and operating costs.

Employment-Based Services

The Plan supports the location of child care centers to directly serve employment centers. Centers may be located in commercial transition zones adjacent to employment areas or within residential neighborhoods accessible to major employment centers. Within the Central Business District, employers should be encouraged to provide child care centers, particularly within the optional method of development projects.

A variety of child care centers serve both employees and residents located close to major employment centers. Centers constructed within employment centers include the construction of new structures in conjunction with new projects or the retrofit of portions of existing structures to develop a child care center. Child care centers require significant capital and operating costs in all employment centers.

6.3 Retail Needs

The Master Plan recommends that community and neighborhood retail services be provided throughout the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. A sense of community is reinforced by the presence of local services. Such services are a convenience to residents and may also reduce automobile use. Children and residents without automobiles should be able to walk to nearby stores. Such centers can also offer opportunities for sociability and for community building through informal conversation, bulletin boards, and other chance meetings. The County Council's Commission on the Future report recently advanced this philosophy.

Community retail centers differ from neighborhood centers in that they are larger and have a wider service area and a greater range of merchandise. Restructuring or modest expansions of community retail services throughout the Planning Area may be needed to maintain business competitiveness and adequate service. These changes may result from unforeseen national retail service trends which could occur during the next 10-20 years. There appears to be potential for strong re-

tail growth based on high incomes in the B-CC Planning Area. Both community shopping and neighborhood convenience space are well below the commercial space needs forecast by the Montgomery County Planning Department staff.

The Plan endorses continuation of existing neighborhood retail stores and centers.

In Bethesda-Chevy Chase, community-scale shopping areas are located at two well established centers—Chevy Chase Lake on Connecticut Avenue and Little Falls Mall on Sangamore Road. Community-scale retail services are also available along Connecticut Avenue in the District of Columbia. The Sector Plan areas contain community-scale shopping in areas like Arlington Road and Bradley Boulevard, at Wisconsin Circle in Friendship Heights, and at the Westbard shopping center. Needs and changes for these locations can be addressed in subsequent Sector Plan revisions.

The Master Plan recommends that as community-scale shopping areas are renovated, they be designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Provide public use spaces to accommodate informal gathering, public events, outdoor eating, and pedestrian connections to other areas.
2. Develop and remodel projects in line with an overall design concept. Design guidelines may be provided by the Planning Department for each area.
3. Upgrade the pedestrian environment, addressing the special needs of the elderly and handicapped. Design projects to facilitate use of transit services. Projects should extend protected walkways into parking areas and possibly to bus stops.

The Plan endorses continuation of existing neighborhood retail stores and centers. Such stores provide for convenience and sociability at the neighborhood level. Locally owned, small scale stores are particularly popular with nearby residents and

are supported by this Master Plan. Neighborhood retail occurs in the Cabin John area, the Town of Glen Echo and at a few scattered locations along Western Avenue, MacArthur Boulevard, and Brookville Road.

Neighborhood retail stores or centers should be designed to meet the following guidelines:

1. Provision of convenience retail goods and services that are frequently needed and that are of small enough scope not

to attract large numbers of people from outside the neighborhood.

2. Linkage with the neighborhood by pedestrian paths so that residents of all ages can walk safely to a local store, thus reducing reliance on the automobile.
3. Provision of a scale that is compatible with residential neighborhoods and parking that is buffered from adjacent houses.