

Master Plan Framework

The purpose of this Master Plan is to establish the policy framework that will guide the future direction of Bethesda-Chevy Chase for the next twenty years.



1.1 Master Plan History

1.11 Existing Plans

The County General Plan has been in effect in Montgomery County since 1964. Called "On Wedges and Corridors," A General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District, it was first adopted by the Montgomery County Planning Board in 1964. (See Figure 1.) In 1970, it was updated and adopted in revised form by the Montgomery County Council. Since that time it has been amended numerous times by the County through the adoption of various local area master and sector plans. It has also been amended by functional plans such as the *Master Plan of Highways*, the *Ten-Year Water Supply and Sewerage Systems and Solid Waste Management Plans*, the *Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan*, the *Master Plan of Bikeways*, and various watershed preservation plans. Bethesda-Chevy Chase is a mature suburban community which continues to be one of the growth centers for Montgomery County. (See Figure 2.)

The *Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan* has been an effective guide for the development of the Planning Area since its adoption in 1970. **The major accomplishments of the Master Plan include:**

1. recognizing and maintaining the predominant low to moderate density single-family character of the Planning Area,
2. containing medium to high density business and residential areas within clear boundaries at selected locations,
3. planning for an areawide street and highway network to serve a variety of community mobility needs, and
4. recognizing the special environmental qualities of the Planning Area.

Despite these successes, it is important to recognize that much of the growth and change in the last 18 years require adjustments in how the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area should be

viewed for the next 20 years. Changes in land use and travel patterns will continue to significantly affect the quality of life for residents and businesses in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. The 1970 Master Plan did not anticipate dramatic changes such as a lower population, reduced need for schools, and growing needs of an aging population.

Since 1970 there have been some 22 amendments to the *Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan*. Three of these amendments have involved adoption of sector plans for the business areas of Friendship Heights (1974), Bethesda (1976), and West-bard (1982). There have been numerous additional amendments to the *Bethesda Central Business District Sector Plan*. The 1990 Master Plan addresses the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area outside the boundaries of the three Sector Plan areas. Other amendments have addressed specific needs at various locations throughout the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area.

1.12 Amendment Process

In February 1988, the Planning Department staff issued two reports. The *Trends and Conditions Report* describes current conditions and continuing trends affecting the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. The *Issues Report* identifies problems and issues that should be addressed by the Master Plan Update. These reports were based on an extensive process of public involvement with the Master Plan. This process included public contact in community areas having major issues and many meetings with a community issues committee. Planning Department staff also scheduled locations and times at access centers where a staff member was available to respond to questions and to exchange information.

Three major issues were discussed in the *Issues Report* (February 1988):

1. making land use decisions related to vacant land, special exceptions, and large land uses;

GENERAL PLAN

Figure

1

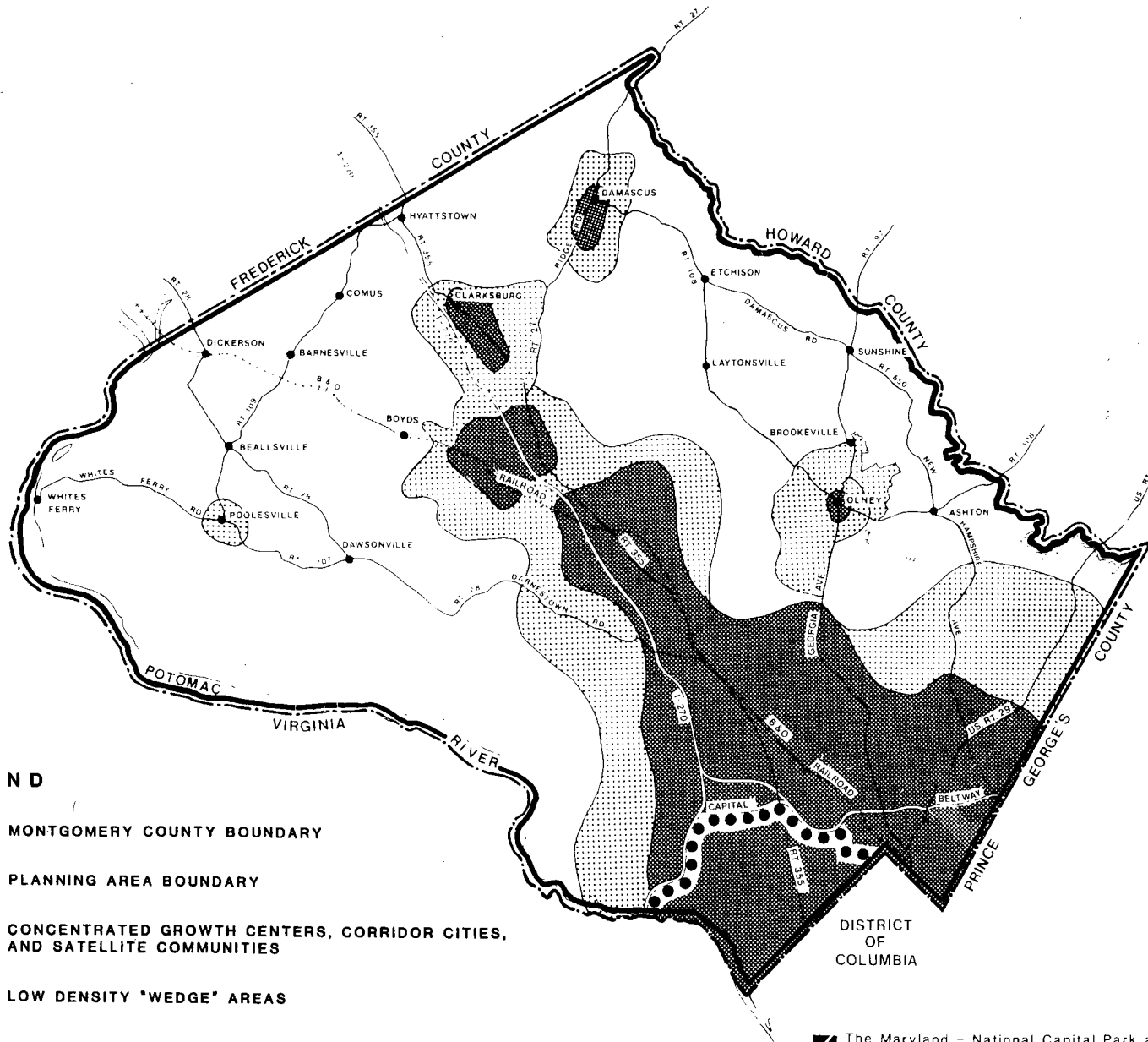
LEGEND

 MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOUNDARY

 PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY

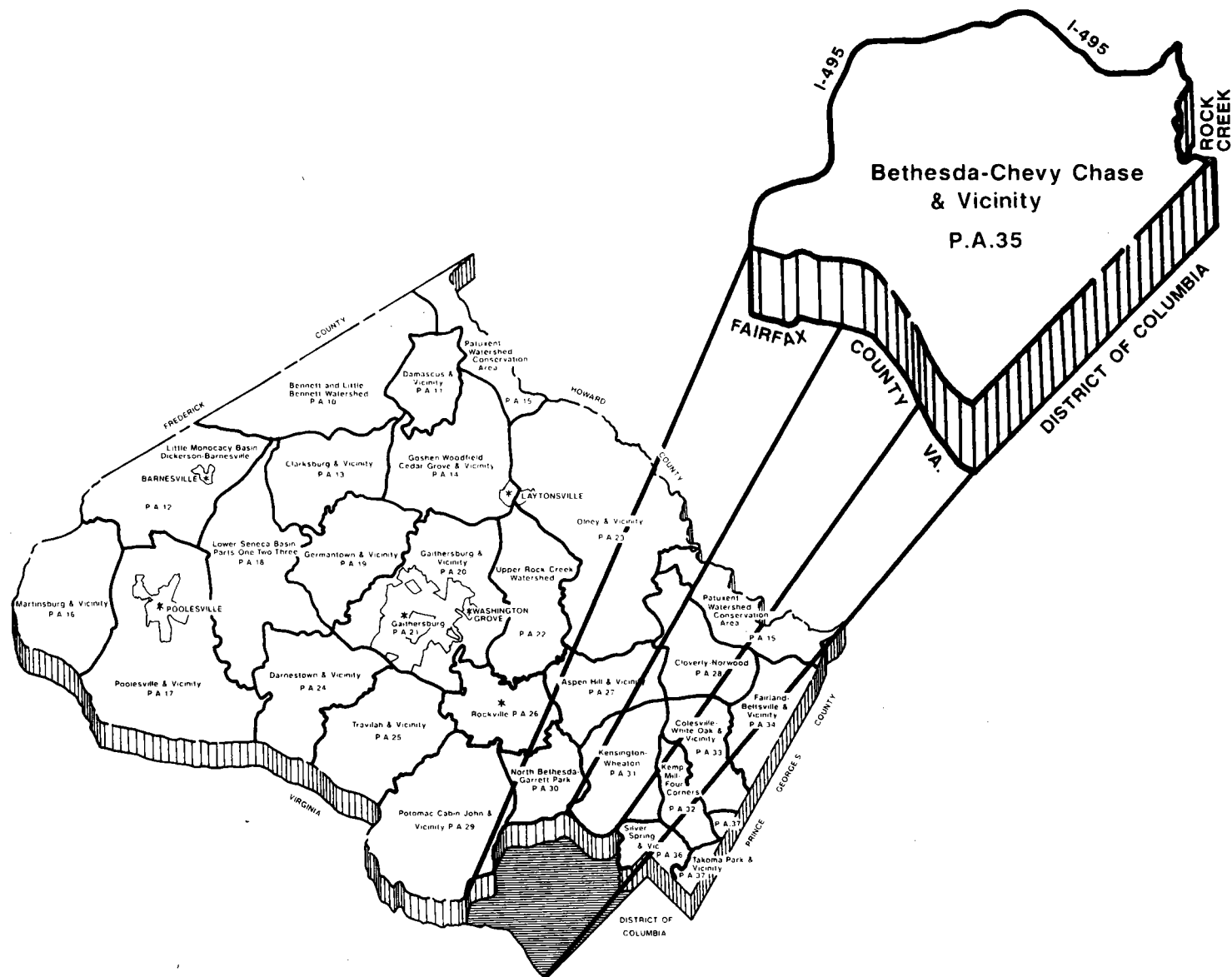
 CONCENTRATED GROWTH CENTERS, CORRIDOR CITIES, AND SATELLITE COMMUNITIES

 LOW DENSITY "WEDGE" AREAS



PLANNING AREA MAP

Figure
2



2. achieving a better mixture of development within Bethesda-Chevy Chase; and
3. relating increased traffic volumes to possible expansion of transit and highways.

Public involvement continued during the preparation and review of major alternatives. Activities included a public forum on major topics, meetings with various communities, the community issues committee, topic groups, and access centers. As a result of these meetings, there was a better understanding by both staff and the public of the issues raised during the many public discussions.

This new Master Plan provides a comprehensive land use analysis which guides special exception requests, zoning cases, and subdivision plans.

After completion of the intensive public review of alternatives, the Planning Board approved a Final Draft Master Plan. After County Executive and Council review, this Master Plan was approved and adopted. This new Master Plan provides a comprehensive land use analysis which guides special exception requests, zoning cases, and subdivision plans. Recommendations concerning the land use and zoning of numerous parcels are also made in this Plan. The Plan also addresses development levels and transportation needs. In preparing the Plan, the many views expressed by the public during the previous steps were considered.

Two 1,000-foot scale fold-out maps accompany this Plan. They are:

1. Zoning and Highway Plan, including Parcel Locations.
2. Recommended Land Use Plan.

1.13 Relation to Other Master and Sector Plans

This Master Plan addresses the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area. (See Figure 3.) Within the Planning Area there are three Sector Plan areas that are excluded from this Master Plan. These areas are:

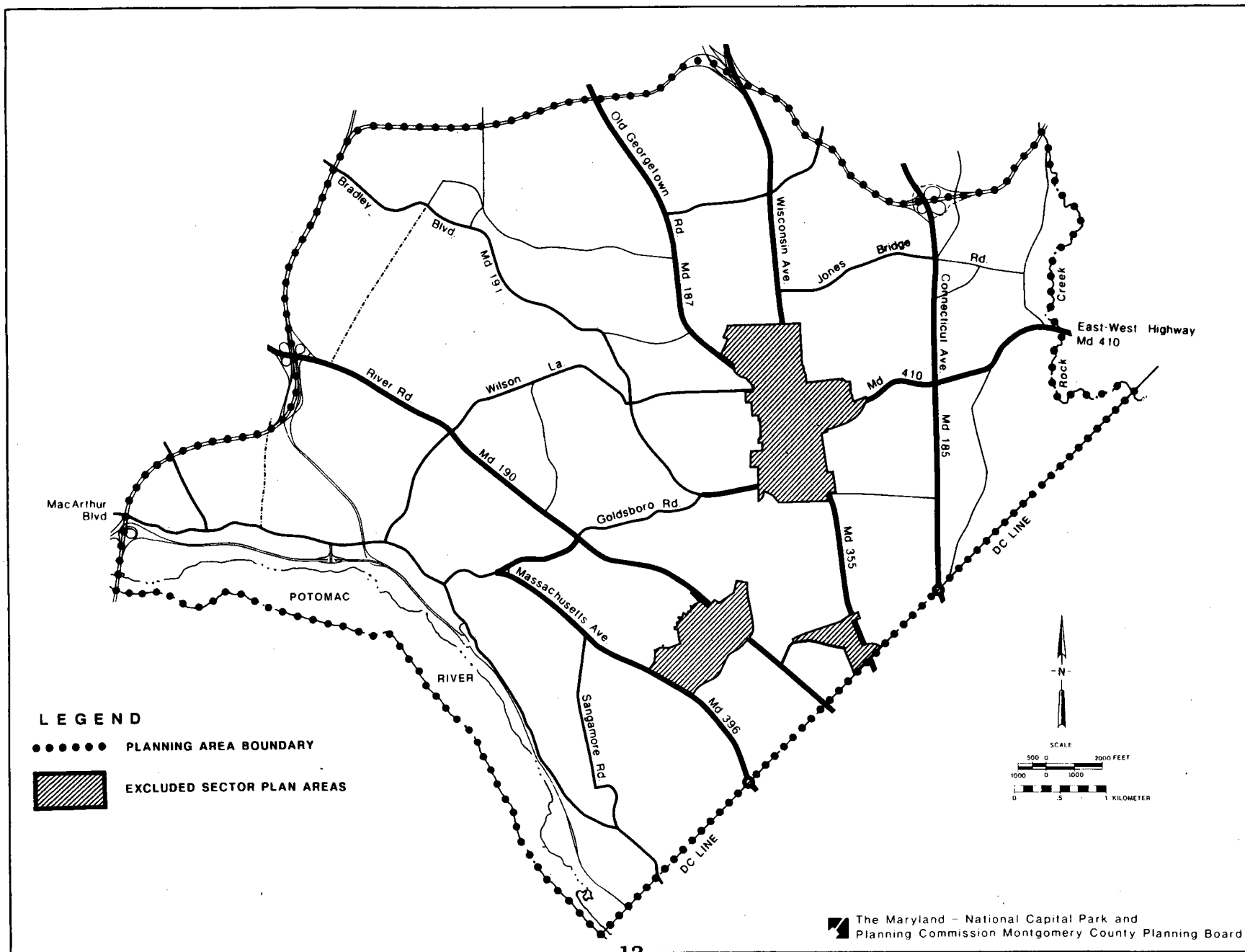
1. the areas within Sectional Map Amendment and the Sector Plan study area boundaries for the Bethesda Central Business District,
2. the Central Business District zoned area, as addressed in the *Sector Plan for the Central Business District of Friendship Heights*, and
3. the area within Sectional Map Amendment and the Sector Plan study area boundaries for the Westbard Sector Plan Area.

This Master Plan does not address specific land use, zoning, and transportation recommendations within these areas. The roles and policies of these areas are endorsed in this Plan, but are subject to change in subsequent Sector Plan revisions. The Master Plan does recommend development level policies and provides areawide transportation system recommendations. These policies and recommendations should be considered in preparation of any revisions to the three Sector Plans within Bethesda-Chevy Chase.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission approved and adopted the *Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment* in January 1990. The Amendment designates the Georgetown Branch right-of-way as suitable for trail and trolley use between the Silver Spring and Bethesda CBDs. The *Georgetown Branch Master Plan* amends both the *Master Plan for Bethesda-Chevy Chase* and the *Sector Plan for the Bethesda Central Business District*. This Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan discusses the issues related to the potential trail and trolley use of the Georgetown Branch, but does not make specific recommendations. This Master Plan does address the potential

MASTER PLAN BOUNDARY

Figure
3



recreational use of the Georgetown Branch from the Bethesda CBD to the District of Columbia line.

This Master Plan discusses a number of historic resources that have been considered for designation on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. These resources are all listed in Chapter 7 of this Master Plan. The sites and districts were evaluated as part of a separate but simultaneous amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. Nineteen sites were found to merit historic designation while 9 resources were removed from the *Locational Atlas*.

1.2 Summary of Trends and Land Use

Current trends in modern society will have a dramatic effect on how we live in our communities in the next 20 years. This Plan attempts to understand and address some of these trends for all of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area, including the Sector Plan areas. Following is a summary of the trends which are discussed in the *Trends and Conditions Report*, February 1988. The three Sector Plan Areas (Bethesda CBD, Friendship Heights, and Westbard) are included in the data presented below.

1.21 People/Society

Population Trends

The Planning Area experienced major population losses in the 1970's and moderate population gains during the first part of the 1980's. The number of people residing in the community is expected to remain stable in the future. Bethesda-Chevy Chase is one of the more densely populated Planning Areas in the County, but among the least dense of the down-County Planning Areas.

Bethesda-Chevy Chase households are less likely to have children than County or United States households. Therefore, Bethesda-Chevy Chase has a smaller proportional share of pre-

schoolers than the County or the United States. The number of school-age children is expected to rise as the children of the baby boom generation mature.

Only moderate household growth is expected in Bethesda- Chevy Chase.

The most stable age groups will be the young (ages 0-14), the adult age group of 35-44, and the very old (75 and over). Other age groups which will experience some decline include various adult groups (ages 15-31 and 45-74). Between 1990 and 2010 the distribution of major age groups will remain about the same. The distribution in 2010 is estimated to be for ages 0-19, about 19 percent, for ages 20-64, about 62 percent, and for ages 65 and over, about 18 percent. (See Figure 4.)

Household Trends

The Bethesda-Chevy Chase population has a large proportion of small households. Average household size declined rapidly in the 1970's and is forecasted to continue declining in the future. Only moderate household growth is expected in Bethesda-Chevy Chase.

Racial Characteristics

Bethesda-Chevy Chase is more racially homogeneous than the County. Asians represent a greater proportion of Bethesda-Chevy Chase's non-white population than blacks.

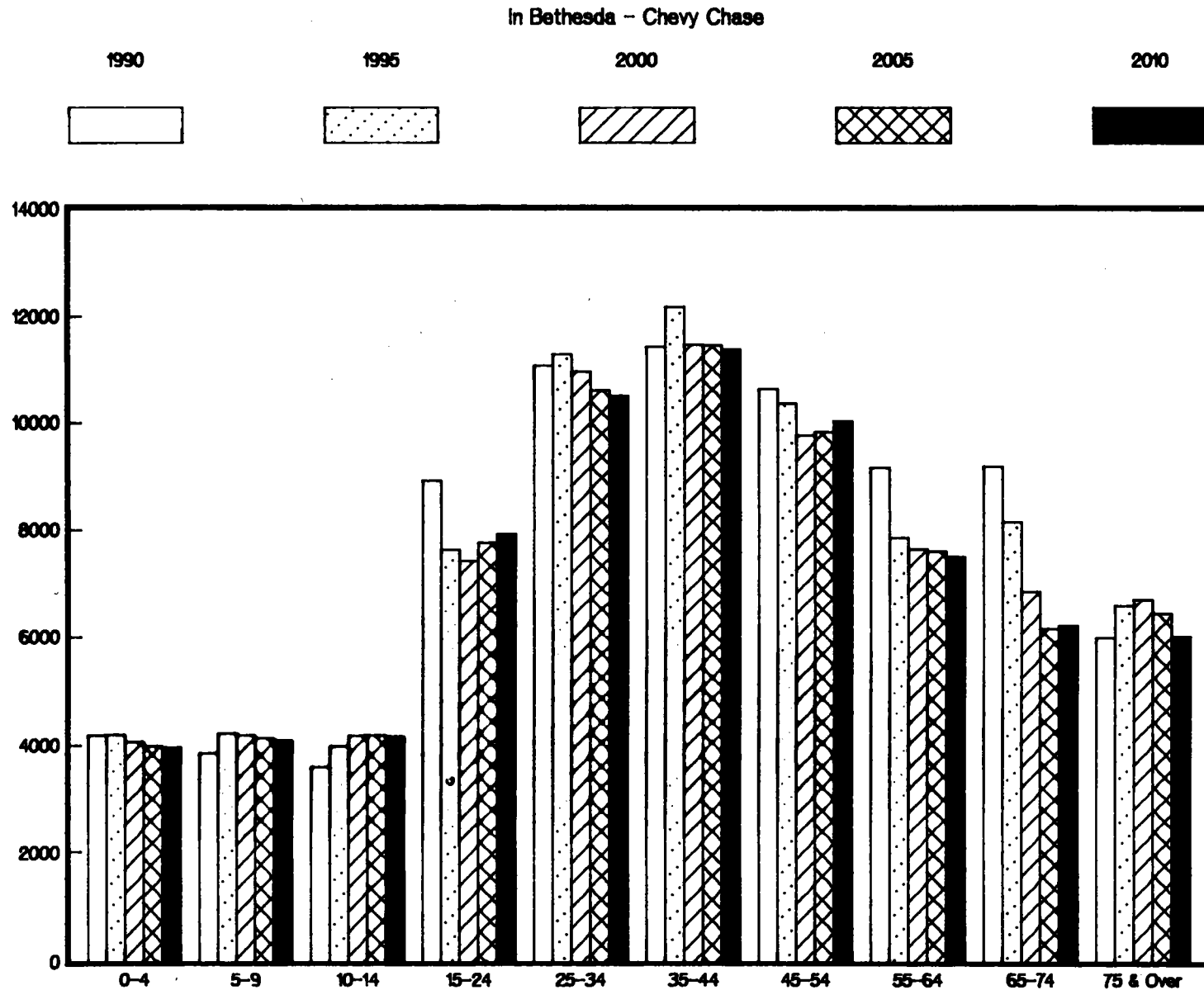
1.22 Jobs/Economy

Income

Bethesda-Chevy Chase residents enjoy a high income level which is rising more rapidly than County and United States household income levels. While a large proportion of Bethesda-Chevy Chase households enjoy high income levels, 7 percent have incomes under \$15,000.

PROJECTED POPULATION BY AGE GROUPS

Figure
4



Employment

Bethesda-Chevy Chase is an established but growing employment center. In 1980, the Bethesda CBD was the largest single area of employment in the Planning Area, followed closely by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Naval Hospital.

The number of jobs (77,200 in 1988) in Bethesda-Chevy Chase exceeds the number of households (34,050 in 1988). Based on development approved to date, the proportion of jobs to households will rise in the future, thereby increasing commuting into the area. Office employment dominates job opportunities in Bethesda-Chevy Chase. The percent of females employed is lower in Bethesda-Chevy Chase than in the County, with young mothers being more likely to work part time.

New Construction

The Montgomery County Planning Board has approved, as of 1988, future development of space which could potentially accommodate another 8,800 jobs in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area, with almost all new jobs to be located in office buildings in the Bethesda CBD. Bethesda-Chevy Chase has been above average in nonresidential completions in the past several years.

1.23 Housing

Age and Type

While single-family detached housing dominates Bethesda-

Chevy Chase, there is a limited choice of townhouse or garden apartment housing. Bethesda-Chevy Chase's housing stock is older than the County's and has increased minimally since 1980.

Ownership and Value

The majority of Bethesda-Chevy Chase households own their homes. Median housing values in Bethesda-Chevy Chase are much higher than County and national values and are rising more rapidly.

1.24 Land Use

The Bethesda-Chevy Chase area can be characterized as a mature suburban community comprised of predominantly single-family residential areas with a limited number of clearly defined, high-density employment and neighborhood retail areas. There is a major Federal presence, both in health and defense employment, as well as Federal park areas. Numerous other large land users include country clubs, private schools, and institutional uses. These large land users, combined with the stream valley park system and low-density wooded hillsides, create a strong sense of openness that adds to the special character of the community. Major highways and arterials serve the area and are relatively free of commercial development. A rail line, the Georgetown Branch, traverses the area. The area has numerous historic sites and a good variety of public facilities. In general, this land use fabric is viewed as contributing to a very high quality living environment.