

2.0

Visions and Concepts

**A primary goal of this Plan is to perpetuate
and enhance the high quality of life
in the Planning
Area.**



2.1 Goals and Objectives

This section summarizes in broad terms the goals and objectives of this Master Plan. A goal is the end result, as related to the development and future character of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area. An objective is that which must be achieved in support of the higher goal.

2.11 General Goals and Objectives

1. Perpetuate and enhance the high quality of life which exists in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area.
 - a. Adopt a revised comprehensive Master Plan that addresses the interrelated issues of the various elements affecting Bethesda-Chevy Chase.
 - b. Include in the Master Plan land use and zoning recommendations that will provide a basis for adopting a sectional map amendment for the Planning Area.
2. Achieve a level of future employment development that is in balance with a high quality of life and the transportation capacity of the Planning Area.
 - a. Allow a moderate level of new employment development, which is in balance with the proposed moderate level of transportation improvements.
 - b. Endorse the sharing of new employment development, primarily between the Sector Plan areas and the Federal employment centers.
 - c. Endorse general policy guidelines concerning the location, type, and density of new employment development to be considered in future planning for the Sector Plan areas and Federal employment centers.
3. Provide for a balanced housing supply so that persons of varying income levels, age, backgrounds, and household characteristics may find suitable housing appropriate to their needs.
 - a. Endorse a moderate level of new housing development

and identify possible ways to achieve a greater housing supply.

- b. Recommend locations where a variety of housing types can be provided, particularly single-family attached.
- c. Retain and expand the supply of affordable housing.
- d. Endorse efforts to meet the housing needs of the elderly.

2.12 Land Use and Zoning Goals and Objectives

4. Protect the high quality residential communities throughout the Planning Area, as well as the services and environmental qualities that enhance the area.
 - a. Reconfirm the zoning for the extensive single-family detached residential areas.
 - b. Maintain and enhance residential communities along major highways and arterials.
 - c. Maintain moderate scale, community-oriented, mixed use development at various locations.
 - d. Protect the environment, character, and cultural resources throughout the Planning Area.

2.13 Transportation Goals and Objectives

5. Achieve a significant shift of new travel from auto use to transit and other mobility alternatives.
 - a. Provide an expanded and vigorous program of expanded transit and other mobility services and facilities.
 - b. Provide only moderate highway improvements, such as redesign of some intersections rather than addition of lanes to roads.
 - c. Provide improved access and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

2.14 Environmental Resources Goals and Objectives

6. Protect the natural resources and environmental qualities of the Planning Area.
 - a. Identify conservation areas having natural features that should be preserved, protected, or enhanced.
 - b. Protect and enhance the environmental, scenic, and cultural qualities of the Palisades/MacArthur Boulevard area.
 - c. Endorse corrective measures to reduce flooding impacts and to improve stream quality.
 - d. Design new projects to limit impacts of roadway traffic noise.
 - e. Design any new sewer or water lines to protect natural features in parklands.

2.15 Public Facility and Community Goals and Objectives

7. Contribute to a strong sense of community and help reinforce community cohesion.
 - a. Support continuance of fine residential areas, employment and shopping opportunities, and a high level of transportation service throughout the area.
 - b. Use public schools and other public facilities as flexible resources to meet a range of community needs.
 - c. Preserve and protect the extensive open space resources in the Planning Area, including public parklands.
 - d. Provide services to meet the special needs of the elderly and for child day care.
 - e. Encourage renovation of community-scale shopping areas to retain community serving retail and to achieve an enhanced pedestrian and public space environment.
 - f. Protect the historic resources in the Planning Area.

2.2 Development Levels and Location Policies

This section provides a comprehensive policy framework for balancing the expectations that competing locations in the Planning Area will achieve new development. The Master Plan does not specifically limit development in each location, rather the Plan provides general guidance for future planning decisions.

Development expectations are based in great part on existing zoning for the private sector and availability of land for the public sector. Expectations are likely to be higher due to the above average growth rates of the 1980s. Transportation facilities are assumed to be limited to moderate improvements to the existing highway system, coupled with strong efforts to increase use of public transit and other mobility alternatives. (See discussion in Chapter 4.) More extensive highway improvements could be excessively disruptive to local communities.

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The levels of both job and housing development in the Planning Area also affect the use of available transportation capacity. The current proportion of jobs to households in all of Bethesda-Chevy Chase (at a 2.2 ratio) is among the highest in the County. Because there are many more jobs in the B-CC area than resident workers, this proportion of jobs to housing results in more commuters coming into B-CC than leaving the area. An increase in housing relative to jobs may therefore result in somewhat less in-commuting.

Most new development for either jobs or housing must be located in the major centers of the Master Plan area. The three Sector Plan areas of the Bethesda CBD, Friendship Heights CBD, and Westbard provide locations for mixed-use, high density development that have not been developed to their full potential. Three Federal employment centers include the National Institutes of Health, the Naval Medical Command, and the Defense Mapping Agency. A moderate level of development assumes that development will be shared primarily between the Sector Plan areas and the Federal employment centers. The objectives and broad policies for the development of these areas are discussed in this section.

A major objective of this Master Plan is to establish a broad framework for the density, location, and type of ultimate development within the Planning Area.

A major objective of this Master Plan is to establish a broad framework for the density, location, and type of ultimate development within the Planning Area. Each year the County Council adopts an Annual Growth Policy. This Master Plan provides guidance for that policy by establishing a long-term policy framework for making annual growth decisions.

The Master Plan recommends a moderate level of development for Bethesda-Chevy Chase. This allows for development which achieves much of the expectations of property owners, but can be reasonably accommodated within the transportation capacity of the Planning Area. This objective assumes some of the following recommendations:

1. Maintain or possibly increase the relative level of households compared to jobs.
2. Locate new employment and residential development in existing centers near Metro stations.

3. Recognize the importance of biomedical development in this area, but place less emphasis on large-scale office projects.
4. Support existing businesses, including those that meet community retail and service needs.
5. Support increased housing densities and types, where compatible with nearby properties.

2.21 Development Levels Objectives

The Master Plan addresses the complex relationship between future development and traffic congestion in Bethesda-Chevy Chase. This relationship was evaluated by comparing three levels of future development to an assumed set of moderate improvements to the highway system. It was found that either the low or moderate future development levels could proceed and still maintain the average level of service (LOS) standard for traffic congestion for the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area (LOS D/E). If a high level of development were to occur, then the average level of service standard would be exceeded.

The Master Plan endorses a moderate level of future development for the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area. The Master Plan also supports moderate expansion of federal facilities, but states that such expansion should remain within the constraints of B-CC transportation capacity. As a result, future job development must be shared primarily between the Sector Plan and Federal employment center areas. Some job development will also occur in other parts of the B-CC Planning Area. The sharing of future development will be determined by amendments to the Annual Growth Policy and to the Sector Plans. Actual development levels for each area will be derived from consideration of community impacts and from the regional and local transportation system capacity.

The advantages of a moderate development approach include:

1. Increased traffic volumes can be managed with moderate roadway improvements, while maintaining an acceptable level of areawide roadway congestion.
2. Moderate job growth need not interfere with the potential for strong housing growth.
3. Both employment and housing development can be directed to areas near transit stations.
4. Residential areas near business districts can be better protected from commercial encroachment.

The levels of jobs and housing included in this Master Plan are estimates of a likely level of moderate employment and housing development. These estimates were used to determine that the proposed Transportation Plan would be able to support the moderate level of development, but not the high level of development.

The recommended level of development for jobs could result in about 18,800 more jobs within the Planning Area by the year 2010, including about 8,800 jobs already approved.* This is a preliminary estimate of the total job potential which will be considered more carefully and potentially revised during consideration of the Friendship Heights and Bethesda CBD Sector Plans. In 1988, 77,200 jobs existed in all of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. This level of jobs (about 96,000) can be accommodated within both the fiscal 1990 Annual Growth Policy ceiling and the existing zoned General Plan holding capacity of the adopted Master and Sector Plans. To support some 96,000 jobs the County must:

1. Provide both a significant expansion of transit and mobility services to Bethesda-Chevy Chase employment centers and moderate improvements to the highway system, especially in the more congested eastern part of the Planning Area. (See Transportation Plan, Chapter 4.)
2. Stage the approval of new development to the availability of transportation capacity through the Annual Growth Policy.
3. Locate new employment within existing employment centers and in areas with good transit service.

The recommended level of development for housing could result in about 4,100 more units within the Planning Area by the year 2010, including about 2,675 units already approved.* In 1988, about 34,050 units existed in all of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area. This moderate level of housing (about 38,150 units) is well below the fiscal 1990 Annual Growth Policy limits and is the same as the estimated zoned holding capacity of the adopted Master and Sector Plans. While this Plan assumes a moderate level of housing, policies are endorsed by this Plan which could lead to a larger increase in housing, particularly in Sector Plan areas. To support some 38,000 housing units the County must:

1. Establish additional priorities and incentives for housing in the Bethesda Business District and in other areas zoned for high density housing.
2. Support some density increases on large parcels where compatibility can be established and endorse those sites as Transferable Development Rights (TDR) receiving areas.

To increase the housing supply above the recommended levels would require: a large number of housing units at the National Institutes of Health and at the Naval Medical Command, designation of country clubs as potential TDR receiving areas, designation of more sites in low-density residential areas for increased density using cluster development, and possibly, selective density increases on small infill properties. The Master Plan identifies some sites where increased housing could be allowed, but does not generally anticipate a large amount of new housing outside the Sector Plan areas.

This Plan does not endorse the low or high levels of development. The advantages of a low alternative include: lower traffic growth, easier to achieve housing development, and maintenance of existing employment centers.

Disadvantages of a low level of development include:

* From Final Draft, FY 90 Annual Growth Policy, December 1988. (Pipeline data as of September 29, 1988.)

1. less flexibility for businesses and organizations to grow to maintain their market share, vitality, employment, and contribution to County revenues;
2. property owners may not be allowed to build to the density allowed in current Master Plans and under their current zoning, which they assume they should be able to do; and
3. only a small amount of additional development will occur near transit stations.

The advantages of a high level of development include: potentially large amounts of development near transit stations, vitality of a growing local economy, and achievement of a higher development potential. Disadvantages include:

1. Higher levels of traffic congestion are probable, due to much greater emphasis on jobs over housing.
2. High potential for approving extensive commercial development makes investment in new housing much less competitive.
3. Probable high expenditures for highways and transit may exceed revenues from new taxes.

2.22 Employment Development Objectives

The Master Plan recognizes the contribution of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area to the positive economic image of Montgomery County. To maintain this image, **the Master Plan supports the following employment development objectives:**

1. Support the continuation of existing businesses within the Planning Area, including those that meet community retail and service needs.
2. Recognize the importance of employment in the biomedical, medically-related, and high technology areas.

The Master Plan does not assign a specific development level allocation to each employment center in B-CC. Such an allocation should be done as part of subsequent Sector Plan amend-

ments and through the Annual Growth Policy. The amount of available traffic capacity will be determined as part of those studies.

Figure 5 illustrates the Development Location Policies which are explained below. The figure shows that there is only a limited potential for new job and housing development in the western portion of Bethesda-Chevy Chase. Moderate levels of job and housing development may occur in the eastern portion of the Planning Area. The level of job development endorsed by this Master Plan must be shared among the major employment centers of Bethesda CBD, National Institutes of Health, Friendship Heights, and Naval Medical Command. The potential for increasing the supply of housing is greatest in the Bethesda CBD.

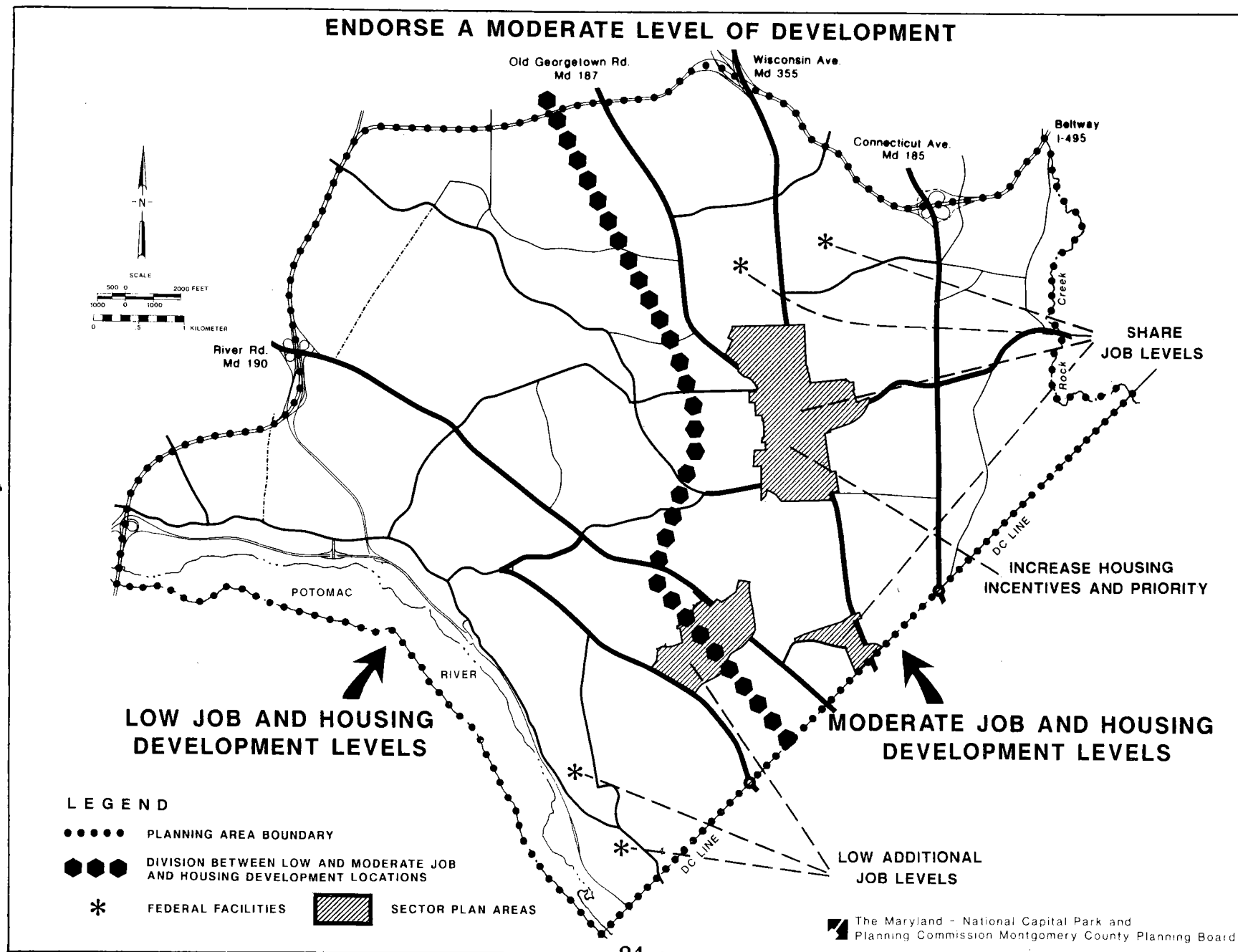
The Master Plan recommends that the following general policies concerning the location, type, and density of new development be considered in planning for the following areas. These policies do not impose specific capacity limits on each area. Rather, they provide general guidance for future planning decisions.

Bethesda Business District

1. The Business District should remain the largest center of job capacity in B-CC.
2. The Business District should share any future traffic capacity for new development with National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Naval Medical Command.
3. During preparation of the next Sector Plan, evaluate:
 - a. assigning priority to standard method development projects that support existing and small businesses, and would provide for retail and services in the B-CC area;
 - b. reducing emphasis on approval of large-scale optional method office projects; any new approvals are to be guided by a subsequent amendment to the Sector Plan; and
 - c. whether the existing zoned density can be achieved.

DEVELOPMENT LOCATION POLICIES

Figure
5



National Institutes of Health and the Navy Medical Command

1. Support some additional development to allow operational flexibility, but NIH and NMC should share future B-CC development with the Bethesda Business District. The largest additional development is likely to occur at the National Institutes of Health.
2. Development levels must remain within the transportation system capacity constraints of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. More capacity could be achieved through a program of traffic reduction measures.

Friendship Heights Business District

1. Proposals to possibly allow for some additional development must be evaluated through a new Sector Plan in light of the recommended level of development for the Planning Area, compatibility with and stability of nearby residential areas, area transportation constraints, transit serviceability, and new development in the District of Columbia. Any proposals for further expansion of GEICO should be reviewed in a new Sector Plan.

Other Employment Locations

1. Assume that a small amount of job development will occur at Defense Mapping Agency, through existing zoning in the Westbard Sector Plan area, and, possibly, in the Little Falls Mall and Chevy Chase Lake areas.
2. Development in these areas will remain subject to zoning limits and the transportation limits of the Local Area Review.

2.23 Housing Development Objectives

General Housing Needs

This Plan supports the Montgomery County housing policy and endorses opportunities that will result in meeting the policy's objectives.

It is a goal of the County housing policy to provide for a bal-

anced housing supply so that persons of varying income levels, age, backgrounds, and household characteristics may find suitable housing appropriate to their needs. A diversity of housing needs exists in Bethesda-Chevy Chase which will require balancing the future market rate housing, more variety of housing types, a limited amount of affordable housing, and housing for elderly residents.

It is a goal of the County housing policy to provide for a balanced housing supply...

A moderate level of housing development is endorsed by this Plan with some potential for increasing the housing supply above this level. The recommended level of housing development will place less emphasis on employment and more on housing in B-CC, both now and in the future. This could be accomplished under existing zoning in most cases with some density increases where compatibility can be established. It must be noted that residentially zoned land in Bethesda-Chevy Chase is largely built out with relatively few options for higher density residential development. To provide for the recommended amount of additional residential development, increased emphasis will have to be placed on housing in or near the major employment centers, near Metro stations, and in other areas zoned for higher density. Additional housing density would result from residential development of large land users (see Section 3.13) and increased density on parcels designated to receive transferable development rights. (See discussion in the Appendix.) The land use recommendations for the vacant and redevelopable land in the Planning Area provide an added opportunity for housing by designating certain parcels for cluster development and by selectively increasing density on some larger properties.

This Master Plan encourages a wider variety of housing types to meet the varied needs of the population. Bethesda-Chevy Chase is dominated by single-family detached housing,

which results in a serious lack of housing choices to meet the needs of people in varied stages of life, lifestyles, or financial situations. There are opportunities for providing a greater housing mix without jeopardizing the single-family character of the Planning Area. The greatest potential for increasing the multi-family, high-density choice remains in the three Sector Plan areas and in areas currently so zoned. An increase in the stock of townhouses will be attained by locating this type of housing in environmentally sensitive areas, protecting trees and steep slopes on the selected parcels with sensitivity toward compatibility and environmental concerns. If a change in use for the large land users occurs, it would provide a unique opportunity for a mix of housing types which could be well buffered from adjacent single-family homes. In the review and update of the Sector Plans, ways should be sought to encourage more apartments, particularly within the Business Districts. In addition, an adequate supply of rental property in all housing types should be available.

Special Housing Needs

This Plan supports measures to provide affordable housing in the Planning Area and recommends continuing to seek ways to fill this need. This issue was explored extensively with both the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) and the Department of Housing and Community Development in an effort to develop concrete ideas for providing more low-

and moderate-income housing in B-CC. It appears that little affordable housing will result from market rate projects in the area. This special need may be met, in part, through approval of subsidized housing developments, use of Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs), use of accessory apartments, and County acquisition and maintenance of older affordable rental apartment complexes. These approaches should be continued and enhanced where possible.

This Plan recommends that land in public ownership be considered for affordable housing. Without public intervention, the steady increase in property values will almost certainly remove the small stock of lower priced housing which exists in the area, and with it the diversity prized by the County. There are limited opportunities for new modest-cost housing in B-CC. Parcels which are unused or whose use can be readily consolidated with other nearby parcels in governmental ownership could be declared surplus and transferred to HOC for the provision of affordable housing.

There are few places in Bethesda-Chevy Chase where large-scale elderly housing could be built, due to incompatibility with nearby single-family detached housing areas. It could be that smaller projects of 50 units or less would be compatible on a large number of sites. A small operation could be efficient if it offered meals and senior center services to the neighborhood residents.