

III. PLAN FRAMEWORK

PLAN VISION

Communities are often described as fabrics, a weaving together of places, buildings, people, and activities. In a successful community these elements come together as one. Fairland, more than anything else, is its communities.

To extend the metaphor, the fabric of Fairland has frayed. The Fairland Citizens Advisory Committee has described US 29 as “the Nile,” separating community from community and communities from facilities. This Plan must draw together these unraveled threads of places to build useful, pleasant, and safe neighborhoods—in a suburban context.

Beneath the built environment, however, lies the shape of the land. Fairland is physically divided by numerous stream valleys, some of which have water quality high enough to support a self-sustaining brown trout population. Although these stream valleys make it difficult to connect roads, they provide an opportunity to form a trail system for active use of the parkland.

This Plan envisions physical alterations to US 29 that will alleviate congestion, improve east-west travel, and most importantly, allow bikes and pedestrians to cross US 29 safely to reach facilities and services on either side of the highway.

This Plan sees new residential development as providing options and variety, while being compatible with existing surrounding neighborhoods. Emphasis is placed on single-family detached housing with the centerpiece being a golf course community developed in conjunction with an upgraded public golf course.

Sidewalks, bikeways, and hiking trails will link the communities of Fairland and provide access to recreation and public facilities. The pedestrian and bike system will connect communities with better defined local neighborhood retail and employment centers. Neighborhood shopping centers at Briggs Chaney and Burtonsville will have streetscaping designed to create identity and improve the pedestrian environment. These retail areas will be defined by a shared public and private presence.

Most of all, this Fairland of the future is a livable suburban community—a series of neighborhoods with sidewalks and street trees, access to the natural environment and recreational facilities with employment and commercial areas emphasizing horizontal rather than vertical structures. There is plenty of green space, jobs, shopping, and, most importantly, a variety of housing options to serve a variety of needs and households—the young couples just starting out, single adults, families who need room, older couples who want less space, and senior citizens who want to be able to participate in community life.

PLAN CONCEPT

The land use concept for the Fairland Master Plan area has three components: 1) Fairland is composed of livable suburban communities, 2) that the communities are surrounded and interlaced by a system of open spaces and greenways, and 3) that the communities are served by neighborhood commercial and employment centers (Figure 9).

Land-use strategies to guide the development of these three components are:

Residential Communities:

Emphasize suburban densities and single-family detached housing.

Maintain suburban densities in suburban communities as defined by the General Plan Refinement.

Lower densities in the transition area between the Residential Wedge and the Suburban Communities as defined by the General Plan Refinement.

Maintain low-density development pattern within the Residential Wedge and Patuxent watershed.

Interconnect local streets, bikeways, sidewalks/paths for access between communities, public facilities, and neighborhood centers.

Open Space and Greenways:

Include public open space and new recreational facilities in future residential development, including playgrounds, ballfields, and an expanded golf course.

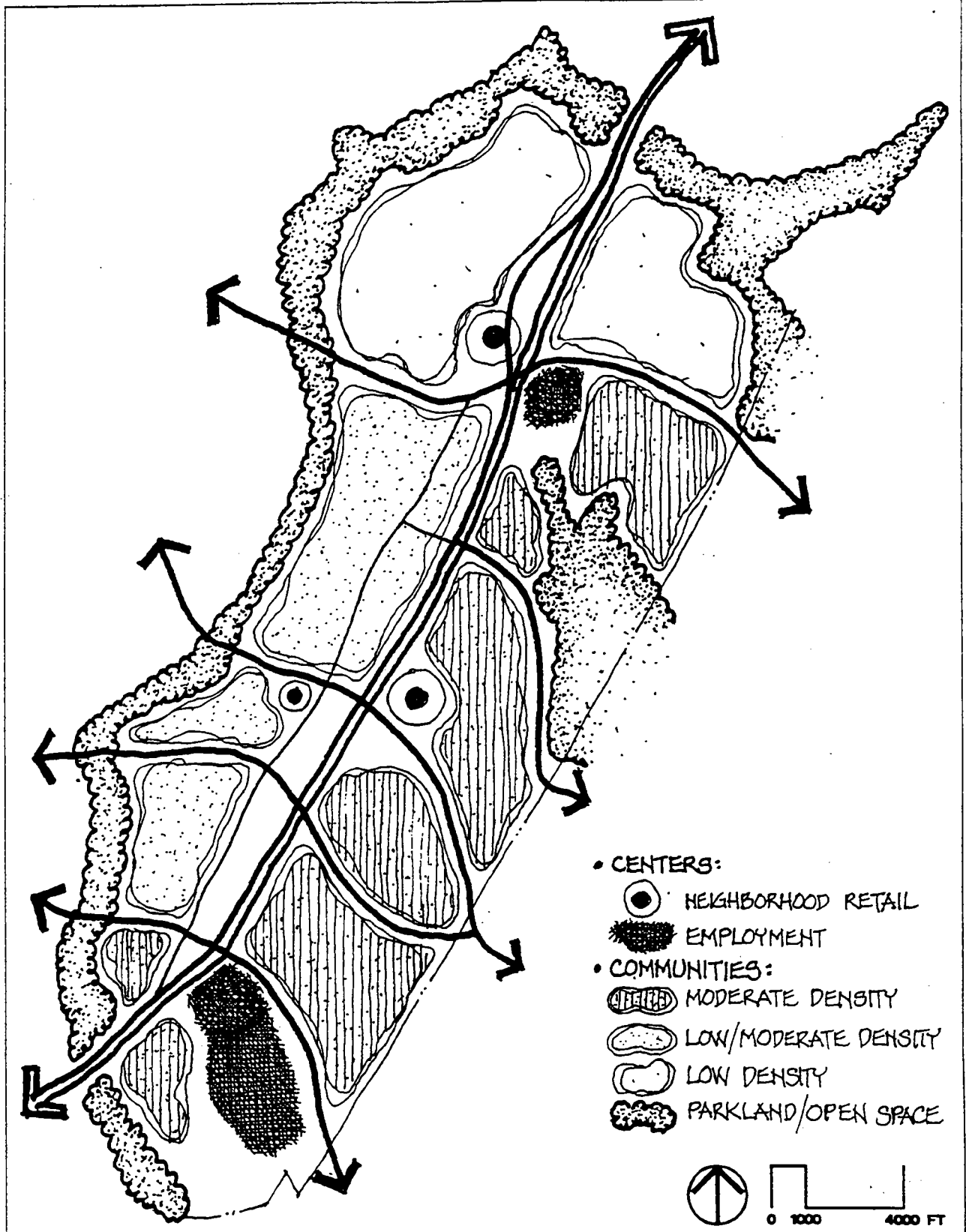
Add critical pieces to expand the stream valley park system.

Develop a greenway system.

Centers:

Define and improve the circulation, access, and appearance in the two neighborhood shopping centers, Briggs Chaney and Burtonsville, through public/private partnerships.

Diversify uses in the two employment centers, US 29/Cherry Hill Road Area and Burtonsville Industrial Area, to develop self-sufficient, modern centers.



CONFORMANCE WITH THE STATE PLANNING ACT AND THE GENERAL PLAN REFINEMENT

The visions established in the 1992 Planning Act generally coincide with the General Plan Refinement goals, objectives, and strategies. The following description, organized around the seven goals of the General Plan—Land Use, Housing, Economic Activity, Transportation, Environment, Community Identity, and Regionalism—explains how the Fairland Master Plan supports both the seven visions of the Planning Act and the goals of the General Plan. (See page 11 for a brief description of the Planning Act's Seven Visions.)

Land Use: **Achieve a variety of land uses and development densities consistent with the Wedges and Corridors pattern.**

The Fairland Master Plan is consistent with the Wedges and Corridors concept of the General Plan by establishing medium-densities in the Suburban Communities and low-densities in the Residential Wedge. New commercial and residential opportunities in the Fairland Master Plan area are limited, thereby supporting a General Plan objective to “direct the major portion of Montgomery County's future growth to the Urban Ring and I-270 Corridor.” This also conforms with Vision 1 of the Planning Act that development is to be concentrated in suitable areas.

Housing: **Encourage and maintain a wide choice of housing types and neighborhoods for people of all incomes, ages, lifestyles, and physical capabilities at appropriate densities and locations.**

The Fairland Master Plan area already offers a wide choice of housing, including single-family detached and attached housing units and multi-family units. In some communities there are far greater numbers of attached units and multi-family units than single-family detached units. To help balance this housing mix, the Master Plan recommends that undeveloped areas be predominantly single-family detached. This correlates with the General Plan objective to “maintain and enhance the quality of housing and neighborhoods.”

Economic Activity: **Promote a healthy economy, including a broad range of business, service, and employment opportunities at appropriate locations.**

The Master Plan seeks to enhance the existing employment centers in the Fairland Master Plan area by recommending additional uses in the employment areas. Improved connections between commercial centers and residential areas are promoted in the Plan, as envisioned by the General Plan Refinement. These recommendations are in accord with Vision 6 of the Planning Act that economic growth be encouraged in areas where development already exists.

Transportation: **Enhance mobility by providing a safe and efficient transportation system, offering a wide range of alternatives that serve the environmental, economic, social, and land use needs of the County and provides a framework for development.**

The Fairland Master Plan supports the General Plan transportation principles, including an improved transit system, a bikeway system, and encouraging movement of through-traffic away from local streets and onto major highways. The Plan recommends grade-separations of US 29 intersections and assumes the construction of a roadway or transitway along the InterCounty Connector right-of-way, thereby supporting a General Plan strategy to “give priority to improving east-west travel.”

Environment: **Conserve and protect natural resources to provide a healthy and beautiful environment for present and future generations; manage the impacts of human activity on our natural resources in a balanced manner to sustain human, plant, and animal life.**

Protecting stream quality, wetlands, floodplains, and forest cover are all environmental issues addressed by both the Fairland Master Plan and the General Plan Refinement. The Fairland Master Plan pays particular attention to limiting further degradation of stream quality. It calls for selected park acquisition in the tributaries of the upper Paint Branch watershed, a special protection area for the upper Paint Branch and encourages stormwater management projects to improve stream valley protection. This Plan's commitment to reducing single-occupancy auto-mobile travel will help to improve air quality and reduce energy consumption.

Community Identity: **Provide for attractive land uses that encourage opportunity for social interaction and promote community identity.**

Community identity and community building are major components in the Fairland Master Plan. Many of the General Plan goals, objectives, and strategies aimed at improving community identity are employed in this Plan. Design improvements to increase the connections between residential neighborhoods and between residential and commercial areas are proposed. Other proposals include the retention of publicly-owned sites for future community facilities, improvements to the Gunpowder Golf Course as part of a golf course community, and public-private partnerships to improve streetscaping and access in the commercial and employment centers.

Regionalism: **Promote regional cooperation and solutions of mutual concern to Montgomery County, its neighbors, and internal municipalities.**

This Plan's commitment to achieving Clean Air Act standards and to protect water quality and quantity conforms to the General Plan Refinement's strategy to "attain and maintain regional standards for matters of regional significance," and with Visions 4 and 5 of the Planning Act regarding the regional importance of the Chesapeake Bay and other environmental resources.

