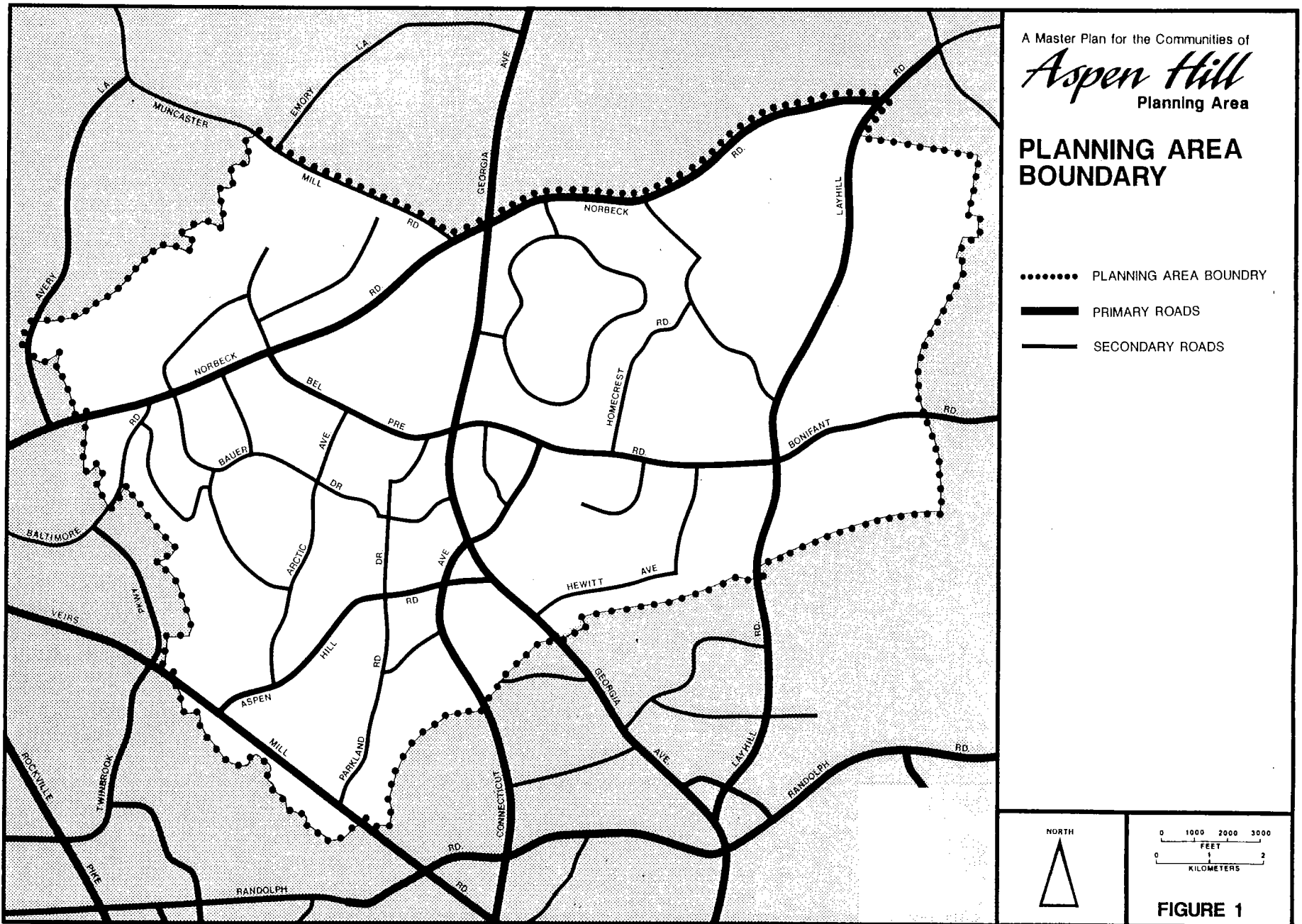

BACKGROUND

Definition of the Planning Area

The boundaries of the Aspen Hill Planning Area are shown in Figure 1. The following master plans were amended to establish the planning area boundaries:

- o Olney Master Plan to include the right-of-way for the former relocated Muncaster Mill Road, Muncaster Mill Road and the land in between.
- o Eastern Montgomery Master Plan to include the portion of the Northwest Branch Regional Park that originally was in the 1970 Aspen Hill Master Plan.
- o Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan to include all of the right-of-way for the former Rockville Facility and the Matthew Henson State Park.
- o The Upper Rock Creek Master Plan to conform with the boundaries of the 1985 Plan amendment and to include the portion of Lake Bernard Frank that was originally in the 1970 Aspen Hill Master Plan.



See Appendix A for list of amendments this Master Plan makes to the master plans listed above.

The planning area is located in the eastern portion of Montgomery County, Maryland. (See Figure 2.) It is situated between the urbanized areas of Wheaton and Rockville and the low-density areas of Olney and Cloverly. It is this proximity to urban and rural portions of Montgomery County that establishes Aspen Hill's regional function as an urban-suburban transitional area or, as defined in the General Plan, a suburban community. Figure 3 illustrates the location of the Aspen Hill Planning Area within the region.

HISTORY OF ASPEN HILL

Aspen Hill was largely agricultural until the middle of the 20th century. The land grant for "Lahill" (the original spelling of Layhill) was in 1718 and included 1,298 acres of land. Large land areas were gradually divided and sold, creating farms of several hundred acres each. At the time of the American Revolution, there was a mill on upper Rock Creek, called Elgar's Mill, near the site of the later Muncaster Mill. When State voting districts were established in 1790, this area became known as the Berry District.

In the mid-1830's, the James Rannie family of Scotland (buried in the Beall family cemetery) established a 700-acre farm at what is now Georgia Avenue and Chesterwood Drive. Georgia Avenue was then the Brookeville - Georgetown Turnpike (later called the Washington - Brookeville Turnpike) and was one of the only roads in the area. Soon after, Samuel Veirs built his grist mill at what is now the intersection of Veirs Mill and Aspen Hill Roads.

During the Civil War, both Confederate and Union armies traveled the Turnpike, one of the best maintained roads in the County. Union troops under General Ambrose Burnside were quartered in Aspen Hill in September 1862 on their way to the Battle of Antietam. In July 1864, General Jubal Early led his men down Veirs Mill Road during his unsuccessful raid on Washington.

In 1864, the first post office was opened in Aspen Hill, operating from a general store on the Washington - Brookeville Pike where Connecticut and Georgia Avenues now intersect. Alexander Leadingham was the first postmaster, and the community was called Enster (after the local Land Grant). The name Aspen Hill is said to come from the aspen trees located at the post office site in the late 19th century. The post office shifted back and forth between Norbeck and Aspen Hill over the years until the current post office building opened on November 28, 1977.

There were two general stores and a blacksmith shop on the Washington - Brookeville Turnpike (now Georgia Avenue) between what is now Connecticut Avenue and Heathfield Road. Another general store and blacksmith were located on what is Muncaster Mill Road and Norbeck Road. Two area schools were also located near these centers.

A Master Plan for the Communities of

Aspen Hill Planning Area

PLANNING AREA MAP

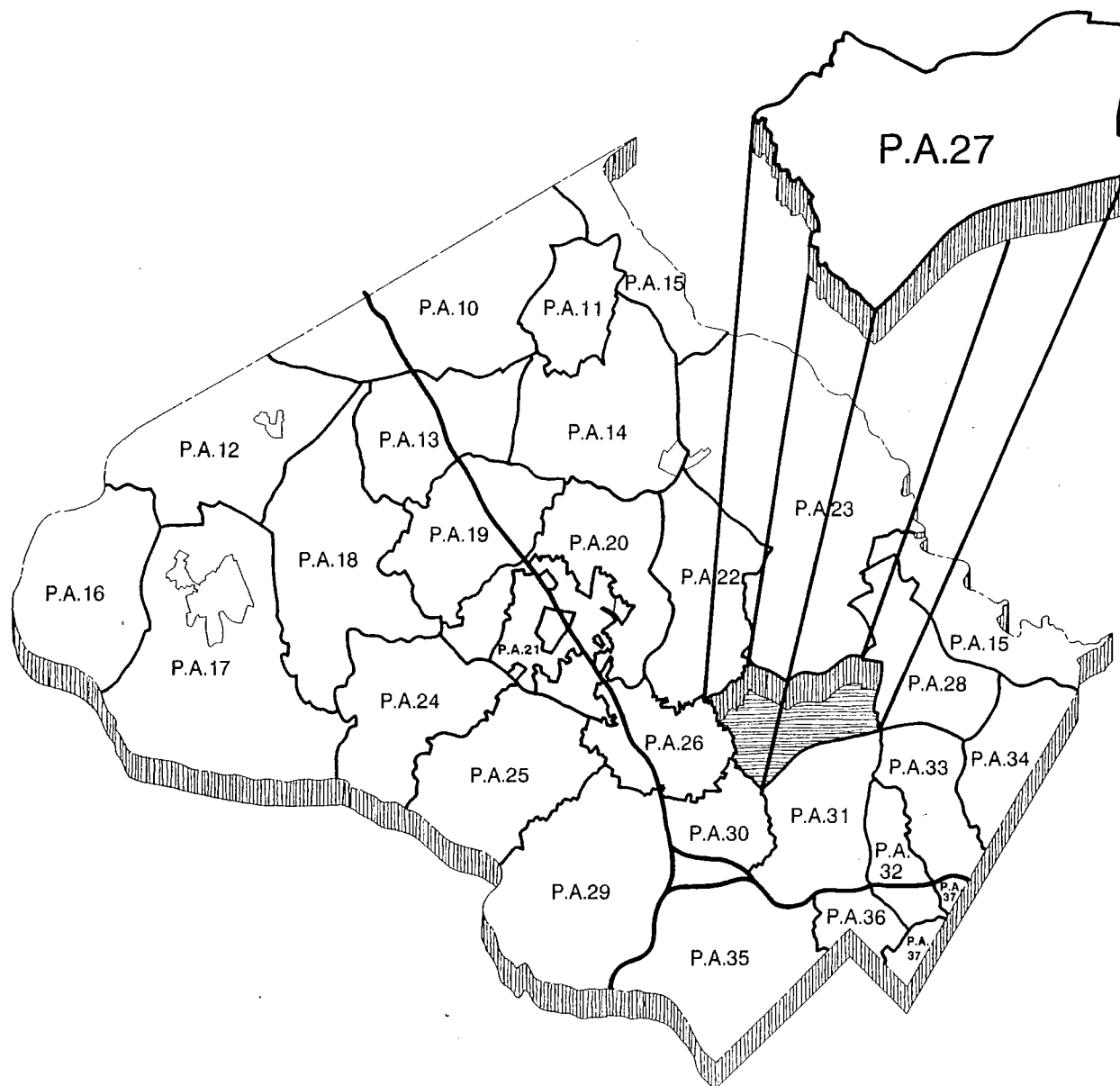
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

- P.A.10 BENNETT & LITTLE BENNETT WATERSHED
- P.A.11 DAMASCUS & VICINITY
- P.A.12 LITTLE MONOCACY BASIN/
DICKERSON-BARNESVILLE
- P.A.13 CLARKSBURG & VICINITY
- P.A.14 GOSHEN, WOODFIELD, CEADER
GROVE & VICINITY
- P.A.15 PATUXENT WATERSHED
CONSERVATION AREA
- P.A.16 MARTINSBURG & VICINITY
- P.A.17 POOLESVILLE & VICINITY
- P.A.18 LOWER SENECA BASIN
(PARTS ONE, TWO & THREE)
- P.A.19 GERMANTOWN & VICINITY
- P.A.20 GATHERSBURG & VICINITY
- P.A.21 CITY OF GATHERSBURG
- P.A.22 UPPER ROCK CREEK WATERSHED
- P.A.23 OLNEY & VICINITY
- P.A.24 DARNESTOWN & VICINITY
- P.A.25 TRAVILAH & VICINITY
- P.A.26 ROCKVILLE
- P.A.27 ASPEN HILL & VICINITY
- P.A.28 CLOVERLY NORWOOD
- P.A.29 POTOMAC SUBREAGION
- P.A.30 NORTH BETHESDA-GARRETT PARK
- P.A.31 KENSINGTON-WEATON
- P.A.32 KEMP MILL-FOUR CORNERS
- P.A.33 EASTERN MONTGOMERY COUNTY
- P.A.34 WHITE OAK
- P.A.35 BETHESDA-CHEVY CHASE
- P.A.36 WESTERN PORTION OF SILVER SPRING
- P.A.37 TAKOMA PARK AND VICINITY

NORTH



FIGURE 2



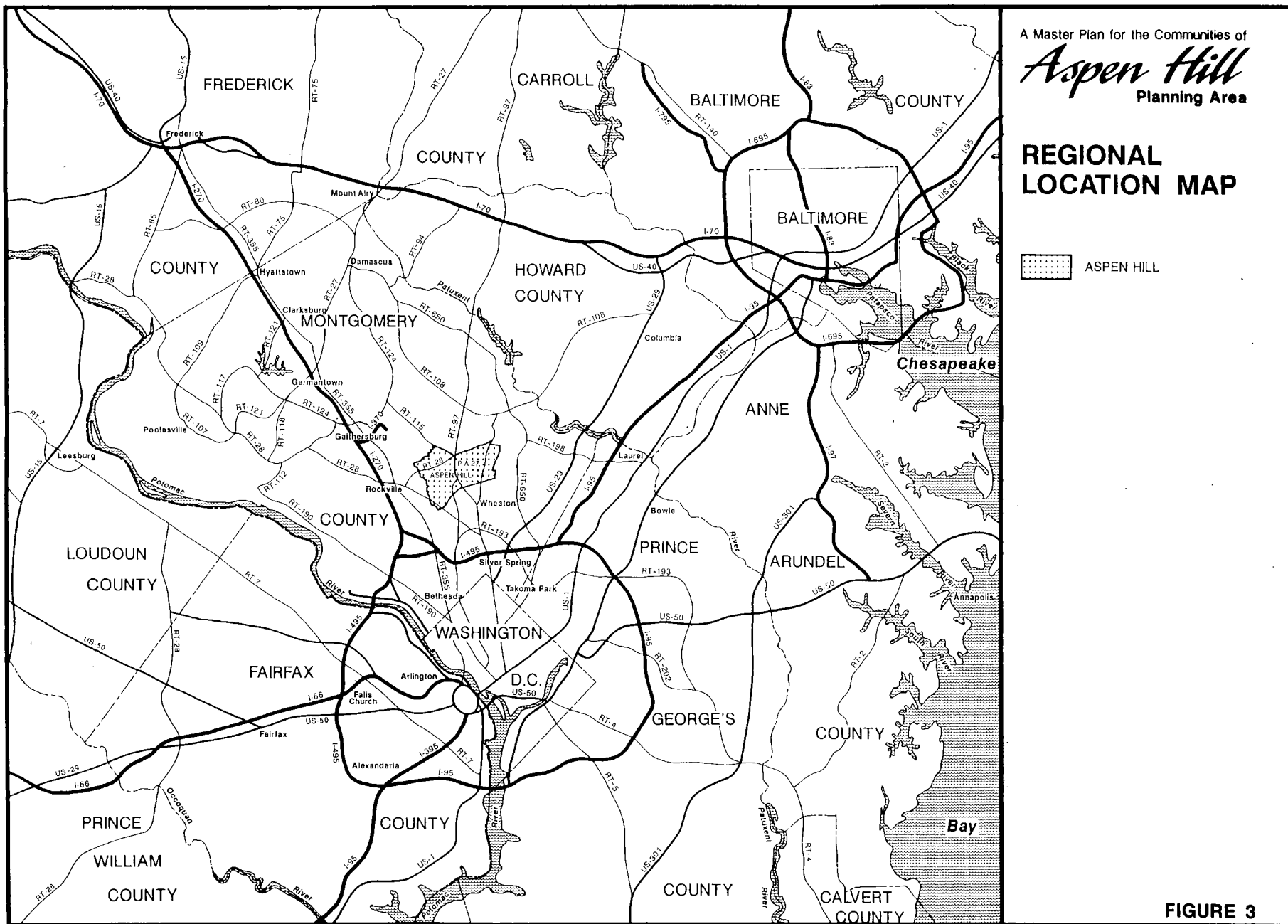


FIGURE 3

In addition to the two area schools, the Lay Hill Academy was located on Layhill Road near the Layhill M. E. Church (now known as the Oak Chapel United Methodist Church). In the Norbeck area, the black community of Mt. Pleasant had a school as early as 1872. It was destroyed by fire in 1925, but was replaced by the Norbeck Colored School on the same site in 1927. This school was closed in 1951.

The first subdivision of land in the Aspen Hill area occurred in 1926, when the Manor Country Club sold some of its property for residences. The Manor Club idea came from E. Brooke Lee and T. Howard Duckett, when they formed a syndicate for the purpose of creating a country club in 1923. They purchased "Homewood," an estate established in 1849 by Charles Abert, who married Constantina Bache (great granddaughter of Benjamin Franklin). The old stone manor house was replaced by a brick clubhouse soon after, and lots were sold around the fringes of the golf course.

Very little development occurred in the area during the Depression and Second World War, but by 1945, more land was made available by the Manor Club, and homes were built along Homecrest Road and Gayfields Road. The next surge of development occurred along Aspen Hill Road in the early 1950's, and then along Georgia Avenue in the second half of the 1950's. Vitro Laboratories opened in 1957, and the Aspen Hill Shopping Center opened in 1958.

By the 1960's, major developers and builders, many with national and international operations, began to build in the area. Levitt and Sons, who built Bowie and other large Washington projects, built Strathmore at Bel Pre in 1968. Ross W. Cortese, a California builder, built Rossmoor/Leisure World, a self-contained community for retired or semi-retired persons over the age of 52, in 1966.

PLANNING HISTORY OF THE AREA

Prior to 1961, the Aspen Hill Area was guided by a variety of Highway Master Plans, a Schools, Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the 1957 General Plan. The first land use plans for the area now designated as Aspen Hill were completed in 1961: master plans for the Upper Rock Creek Watershed and the Upper Northwest Branch Watershed. The Upper Rock Creek Watershed Plan covered the area of Aspen Hill west of Georgia Avenue, and the Upper Northwest Branch Plan covered the area east of Georgia Avenue. The proposals set forth in these two plans were for Aspen Hill to develop as a predominantly large-lot residential area with half-acre and two-acre areas east of Georgia Avenue and a range of lot sizes from 6,000 to 20,000 square feet west of Georgia Avenue. Employment centers were limited to those of the Vitro Laboratories at Connecticut Avenue and Aspen Hill Road. No additional major commercial centers were proposed.

On January 22, 1964, a General Plan for Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, known generally as the "Wedges and Corridors Plan", was adopted by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. The adopted "Wedges and Corridors" Plan re-established the development concept expressed for Aspen Hill in the 1961 Master Plans. In the 1960's,

however, much of the area recommended for low-density residential use was reclassified and, in many cases, developed at much higher densities. The most notable case was the reclassification in 1964 of over 920 acres of two-acre and half-acre residentially zoned land to the Planned Retirement Community (PRC) Zone to accommodate the Leisure World Retirement Community.

The 1970 Aspen Hill Master Plan was the first plan to recognize the Aspen Hill area as a separate entity from the Upper Rock Creek Watershed and Upper Northwest Branch areas. The objective of the 1970 Plan was to establish a planning concept that would stabilize the Aspen Hill area after the extensive zoning changes that had taken place in the 1960's.

Since its adoption in 1970, the Plan has been amended five times. The first two amendments, 1974 and 1977, deleted school designations and rezoned the properties. The first school was the proposed Northgate Elementary School site on the east side of Grand Pre Road near Connecticut Avenue. Originally, the site was zoned for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) and was changed to R-20 (multiple-family, medium-density residential). The second site was the Norwood High School site off Norbeck Road above the northern portion of Leisure World. The site was originally zoned RE-2 (residential estate, two acres). The amendment changed it to R-200 (one-family detached, large lot). Both sites have subsequently been developed at their zoned density.

The next two amendments, in 1978 and 1979, deleted street classifications on portions of Beaverwood and Emory Lanes. The 1978 amendment deleted a 900-foot section of the proposed Beaverwood Lane that fronted Strathmore Local Park. In 1979, the portion of Emory Lane between Old Muncaster Mill Road and the right-of-way for the proposed relocated Muncaster Mill Road was deleted and a desire line for a proposed primary roadway connection between Old Muncaster Mill Road and Winslow Subdivision to the south was added.

The last amendment, in 1986, deleted the primary street classification of Palmira Lane between Connecticut Avenue and Wendy Lane. It also adopted commercial redevelopment guidelines for the Aspen Hill Shopping Center to ensure compatibility with the adjacent Harmony Hills neighborhood. These guidelines are restated in this document.

MARYLAND PLANNING ACT OF 1992

The seven visions of the Maryland Economic Development, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992 (the Planning Act) are embraced and confirmed by the Aspen Hill Master Plan.

The seven visions of the State Planning Act, as stated in Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, are:

- "1. Development is to be concentrated in suitable areas;
2. Sensitive areas are to be protected;
3. In rural areas growth is to be directed to existing population centers and resource areas are to be protected;
4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is to be considered a universal ethic;
5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption is to be practiced;
6. To assure the achievement of paragraphs 1 through 5 above, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are to be streamlined;
7. Funding mechanisms are to be addressed to achieve these objectives."

In addition to the Amendment's conformance to the seven visions, the Planning Act requires the implementation of a sensitive areas element designed to protect environmentally impacted areas. Sensitive areas are described in the Act as 100-year floodplains, streams and their buffer areas, habitats of threatened and endangered species, and steep slopes. The Environmental Resources chapter complies with the sensitive areas requirement of the Planning Act along with regulatory strategies for protecting these areas.

Flexible development regulations, the streamlining of the development process, and innovative economic development techniques are also required by the Planning Act. The Aspen Hill Master Plan uses flexible development standards in several instances where significant new development is contemplated.

GENERAL PLAN FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY

The 1993 General Plan Refinement of the Goals and Objectives for Montgomery County will amend the 1964 General Plan, commonly called ". . . on Wedges and Corridors," and the 1969 Updated General Plan for Montgomery County (approved in 1970). The General Plan Refinement provides the framework for the development of more specific area master plans, functional plans and sector plans. Its purpose is to provide clear guidance regarding the general pattern of development in Montgomery County, while retaining enough flexibility to respond to unforeseeable circumstances as they arise.

The General Plan Refinement divides Montgomery County into four geographic components: the Urban Ring, the Corridor, the Suburban Communities, and the Wedge. Each area is defined in terms of appropriate land uses, scale, intensity and function. The geographic components provide a vision for the future while acknowledging the modifications to the Wedges and Corridors concept that have evolved during the past three decades. In particular, they confirm two distinct sub-areas of the Wedge - an Agricultural Wedge and a Residential Wedge. They also recognize the transitional areas of generally

moderate density and suburban character that have evolved between the Wedge, Corridor and Urban Ring as Suburban Communities. Emphasis remains on intensification of the Corridor, particularly along the main stem.

In addition to defining geographic components, the General Plan Refinement provides seven goals and associated objectives and strategies that give guidance to development within those geographic components. The goals, objectives, and strategies provide a future vision for Montgomery County and establish a frame of reference for decision-making to make that vision become a reality. The seven goals relate to Land Use, Housing, Economic Activity, Transportation, Environment, Community Identity and Design, and Regionalism.

Conformance with the Maryland Planning Act of 1992 and General Plan for Montgomery County

The land area covered by the Aspen Hill Master Plan is fully within the boundaries of the Suburban Communities. The vision for the Suburban Communities, as described in the General Plan Refinement, is characterized by "moderate density land uses which are transit serviceable along major arteries; increased transportation options; suburban residential neighborhoods; distinct centers; and appropriate public investment." The Aspen Hill Master Plan fulfills these visions by proposing a continuation of the established suburban character of the area. Proposals for a transitway, a hiker/biker trail system and additional park-and-ride facilities would increase transportation options in the area. In addition, this Plan proposes methods to improve community identity, an issue noted in the General Plan as particularly important in Suburban Communities. To promote the centers concept in the General Plan, the Aspen Hill Master Plan supports design improvements to the neighborhood shopping centers located along major State highways in the Aspen Hill area.

This Master Plan also addresses each of the seven goals and related objectives and strategies.

LAND USE

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

The Aspen Hill Master Plan directly supports the Land Use Goal and Wedges and Corridors Concept by maintaining residential and supporting commercial uses as the most important uses in the area (Land Use Objective 3). Additional commercial and residential opportunities in Aspen Hill 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" (Land Use Objective 1). Also, the Plan proposes rezoning of some properties to TDR zones, supporting protection of an agricultural wedge (Land Use Objective 4). This also conforms with Vision 1 of the Maryland Planning Act--development is to be concentrated in suitable areas--and Vision 3--rural growth directed to population centers and resource areas protected.

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.

Aspen Hill already offers a wide choice of housing, including single-family detached and attached housing units, multi-family units, and a large housing resource for the elderly, Leisure World. Protection of these existing residential communities is a main housing objective of the Plan and is also in accordance with the General Plan objective to "maintain and enhance the quality of housing and neighborhoods" (Housing Objective 5). Despite projections for significant population growth in the County, the Aspen Hill Master Plan does not anticipate or plan for great increases in housing units, thereby channeling higher density housing development to the Urban Ring and Corridor.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

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

This Master Plan seeks to retain the existing employment centers in Aspen Hill, but recognizes that Aspen Hill is not an appropriate location for increases in employment-related activities beyond its existing activity centers. The Plan does not seek a vast expansion of employment opportunities in the area, allowing the major portion of economic activity to be directed to the Urban Ring and Corridor (Economic Activity Objective 6). Improving connections between commercial centers and residential areas are promoted in the Plan, as envisioned by the General Plan Refinement (Economic Activity Strategy 4C). The recommendation which permits the intensification of existing centers of economic activity is in accord with Vision 6 of the State Planning Act--economic growth is encouraged.

TRANSPORTATION

Provide a safe and efficient transportation system that serves the environmental, economic, social and land use needs of the County and provides a framework for development.

The Aspen Hill Master Plan supports many of the General Plan Transportation principles, including an improved transit system (Transportation Objective 4), bikeway system (Transportation Objective 6) and movement of through traffic away from local streets (Transportation Strategy 5A). The Plan also favors the construction of a roadway or transitway along the ICC right-of-way, thereby supporting a General Plan strategy to "give priority to improving east-west travel" (Transportation Strategy 1B). In addition, the recommended study for a Georgia Avenue transitway linking Aspen Hill with Silver Spring is consistent with another strategy, "give priority to establishing exclusive travelways for transit and high occupancy vehicles serving the Urban Ring and Corridor" (Transportation Strategy 4B).

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.

Stream quality, wetland protection and reduction of flooding are all environmental issues addressed by both the Aspen Hill Master Plan and the General Plan Refinement. This Plan pays particular attention to the prevention of any further degradation of stream quality and erosion (Environment Objective 5) and calls for a retrofit of a major redevelopment site for water quality and quantity to improve stream valley protection. Aspen Hill's commitment to reduce single-occupancy automobile travel will help to improve air quality (Environment Objective 7) and reduce energy consumption (Environment Objective 14). The environmental resource chapter identifies sensitive areas to be protected in compliance with Vision 2 of the Maryland Planning Act. This chapter is an indication of the County's stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and land (Vision 4). The Plan's efforts for resource conservation comply with Vision 5.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND DESIGN

Provide for attractive land uses that encourage opportunity for social interaction and promote community identity.

The advancement of social interaction and community identity is a major issue in the Aspen Hill 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 connectivity between residential neighborhoods and between residences and commercial areas are proposed (Community Identity and Design Strategies 1E, 1H, 1I). This Plan also proposes that guidelines for special exceptions be developed to ensure compatibility with existing development (Community Identity and Design Strategy 5D). Other proposals include the retention of publicly-owned sites for future community facilities and a separate zip code for Aspen Hill to increase community identity (Community Identity and Design Strategy 4C).

REGIONALISM

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

Aspen Hill's commitment to achieve Clean Air Act standards and protect water quality and quantity conform to the General Plan Refinement's strategy to "attain and maintain regional standards for matters of regional significance" (Regionalism Strategy 2D).

Rationale for Chosen Priorities

The General Plan Refinement recognized that there will be conflicts between its goals, objectives and strategies and noted that "it is only within the master plan context, where decisions about individual parcels of land are made that any reasonable prioritization of competing goals and objectives can be made." Therefore, a discussion regarding this Master Plan's priorities is appropriate.

Due to its location in the Suburban Communities, this Master Plan has tended to make protection of environmental features a priority over new development. For example, the recommendation to forego productivity housing because appropriate sites are located in areas that conflict with the protection of streams and their watersheds is supported by the General Plan (Environment Objective 4). The Aspen Hill Master Plan also requires that environmental impact statements be completed on the two major undeveloped sites prior to development.

One exception to the Plan's environmental priority exists. The source of this Plan's greatest conflict is its support for an east-west transportation route along the Intercounty Connector right-of-way. In this matter, the Plan favors the General Plan Refinement transportation objective of improving east-west transportation and leaves the environmental assessment of this project to the State.

SUMMARY OF KEY INDICATORS

Summary Profile

The Aspen Hill Planning Area boundaries encompass approximately 13.20 square miles. It has a 1990 population of approximately 54,800 people living in approximately 21,700 households. The household population is expected to grow between 1990 and 2010 to almost 63,200, an increase of almost 8,700 residents, or 16 percent (Table 1). Technical Appendix A gives a more detailed listing of selected 1990 population and housing characteristics for the planning area. It also provides a sampling of selected social, employment, commuting and income characteristics for the planning area.

Aspen Hill Policy Area

The Annual Growth Policy is a document which addresses subdivision approvals. That document divides the County into Policy Areas which are different than Planning Area geographics. For the purposes of subdivision regulations, the Aspen Hill policy area evolved from the Kensington/Wheaton/Aspen Hill Policy Area in June 1989. The Kensington/Wheaton/

Table 1

**ASPEN HILL AREA POPULATION FORECAST BY AGE
1990-2010**

Age	Number					Percent Distribution				
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
0-4	3,400	3,900	4,200	4,004	4,000	6.2%	6.9%	6.8%	6.4%	6.3%
5-9	2,900	3,800	4,300	4,300	4,200	5.3%	6.7%	7.0%	6.9%	6.6%
10-14	2,800	3,200	4,000	4,200	4,200	5.1%	5.5%	6.5%	6.7%	6.6%
15-19	3,000	2,800	3,300	3,600	3,800	5.5%	4.9%	5.3%	5.8%	6.0%
20-24	4,000	3,300	3,400	3,500	3,800	7.3%	5.8%	5.5%	5.6%	6.0%
25-29	5,200	4,400	4,600	4,400	4,400	9.5%	7.8%	7.4%	7.1%	7.0%
30-34	4,900	5,200	5,500	5,200	5,100	9.0%	9.2%	8.9%	8.3%	8.1%
35-39	4,100	4,800	5,400	5,200	5,000	7.5%	8.5%	8.7%	8.3%	7.9%
40-44	3,700	4,400	5,000	5,200	5,100	6.8%	7.8%	8.1%	8.3%	8.1%
45-49	3,300	3,700	4,400	4,700	4,900	6.1%	6.5%	6.1%	7.5%	7.8%
50-54	3,000	3,000	3,400	3,800	4,100	5.5%	5.3%	5.5%	6.1%	6.5%
55-59	2,900	2,700	2,800	3,000	3,300	5.3%	4.8%	4.5%	4.8%	5.2%
60-64	2,800	2,700	2,600	2,500	2,700	5.1%	4.8%	4.2%	4.0%	4.3%
65-69	2,600	2,600	2,500	2,400	2,400	4.8%	4.6%	4.0%	3.9%	3.8%
70-74	2,200	2,300	2,400	2,300	2,200	4.0%	4.1%	3.9%	3.7%	3.5%
75-79	1,700	1,700	1,800	1,800	1,700	3.1%	3.0%	2.9%	2.9%	2.7%
80-84	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	2.2%	2.1%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%
85+	800	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,100	1.5%	1.8%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%
Total	54,500	56,700	61,800	62,300	63,200	100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Group Quarters	300	300	300	300	300					
Total	54,800	57,000	62,100	62,600	63,500	100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Montgomery County Planning Department, Research Division,
Round IV Modified Intermediate Forecast; 1990 U.S. Census

Aspen Hill area was the largest policy area in terms of land area, households and population. The County Council determined that it was not valid to have the same level of service standards for such a large and diverse area. As a result, new standards for the Annual Growth Policy review had to be set.

In establishing Aspen Hill as a separate policy area, the adopted staging ceiling between the two areas had to be split. To accomplish this, transit availability had to be determined for the two areas. The availability of transit service in the Aspen Hill policy area put it in the Group III classification with an average level of service (LOS) standard of C/D.