

LAND USE AND ZONING PLAN

LAND USE AND ZONING OBJECTIVES

Continue with past land use goals, objectives, and policies in the Wheaton Central Business District. Specifically, encourage and reinforce the Marketplace and the variety of goods and services currently existing in the Wheaton Central Business District.

Preserve the Marketplace and the existing scale of development by balancing new growth and retail retention.

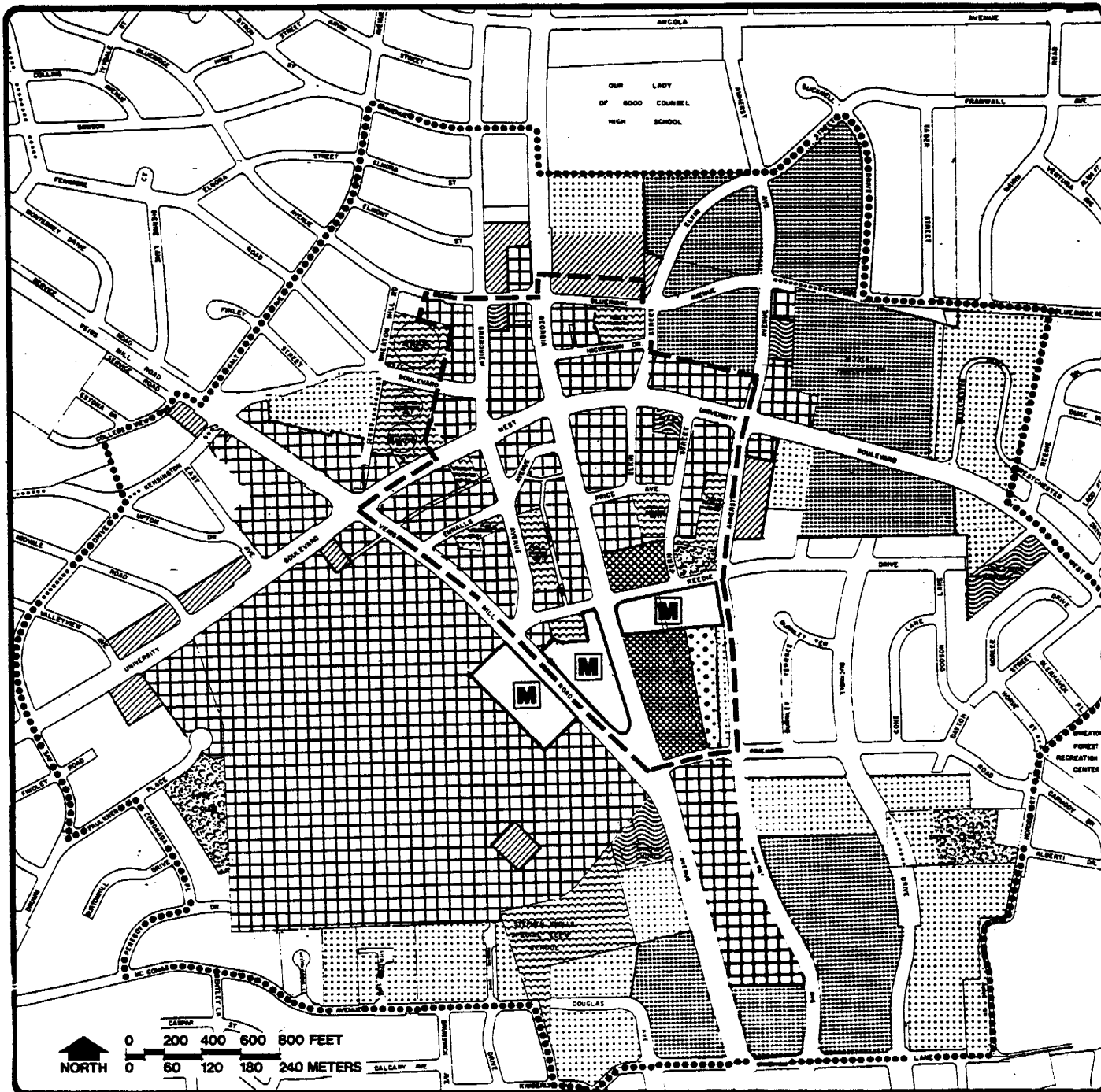
- Continue to encourage a public/private partnership which promotes the private reinvestment in business and properties.
- Maintain a stable environment to encourage investment in the future of Wheaton.
- Develop policies and programs that retain as many existing businesses as possible.
- Direct new development to appropriate locations and limit it in areas that have a distinctive character that could be threatened by inappropriate new building.
- Encourage new mixed use development to concentrate around the Metro station and in other areas of greater transit accessibility.
- Encourage policies which would more closely link Wheaton Plaza with the Marketplace and the Metro station.

Maintain Wheaton's residential character by continuing to promote a balance of housing with the development of other uses.

- Encourage the development of new housing in a range of types, prices, and rents, especially within walking distance of the Metrorail and Metrobus stations.
- Encourage new housing to help reinforce Wheaton as a lively area, especially during evenings.
- Preserve and encourage the maintenance of existing housing.
- Continue to address the housing needs of special populations.

Provide urban design guidelines that will reinforce the Plan's recommendations for the physical environment.

- Encourage remodeling and new development that is sensitive to the existing scale and character.
- Encourage the development of a safe, convenient, and attractive pedestrian environment.
- Strengthen links and improve the circulation between activity centers.
- Improve the visual quality by encouraging the "greening" of Wheaton.



LAND USE PLAN

 Residential Low

 Residential Medium

 Residential Medium/High

 Residential High

 Commercial

 Mixed Use

 Office

 Parks & Open Space Recreation

 Public

 Semi-Public

WHEATON

--- Central Business District Boundary
 Sector Plan Boundary



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SECTOR PLAN

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PLANNING AREA

The Land Use Plan translates the concepts, goals, and objectives into specific land use recommendations within the Sector Plan area. Many of the basic ideas and concepts behind the Sector Plan are derived from extensive experiences with suburban shopping centers, such as Wheaton Plaza, and the adaptation of these experiences to the modernization of central business areas. Shopping centers have taken a similar form: a pedestrian walkway or mall in the center of the development, the mall bordered by commercial establishments, mall and stores surrounded by parking, and the whole development ringed by a road system distributing cars to the parking area from a major highway. The mall, in its simplest form, is a pedestrian way connecting commercial establishments and with major "magnets" (department stores) or anchors at each end. Often the parking areas are subdivided into a number of smaller parking fields, all accessible from ring roads and served by an internal circulation system designed to distribute traffic among the several parking areas.

This Plan attempts to apply many of the basic elements found in successful shopping centers such as Wheaton Plaza to the rest of the CBD, including the Marketplace and Metro Center. The Plan proposes: a pedestrian circulation system, a linking of a number of magnets, a series of parking facilities, and an integrated vehicular circulation system which is connected to major arterials. Some of the pedestrian areas, e.g. the underpass connecting the bus terminal with the Metrorail station, are created by separating vehicular and pedestrian circulation. Automobiles are stored in parking lots or parking structures built on the periphery of the area. Other areas, notably much of the Marketplace, integrate pedestrian and vehicular circulation. Streets may be narrowed and parking in the center of the CBD may be limited to ease pedestrian movement. Some parking will continue to exist in the Marketplace area to support the retail uses.

COMMERCIAL LAND USE

The Marketplace

Retail preservation is a central theme of this Plan. The Plan recommends limited redevelopment opportunities in order to preserve the existing character of the Wheaton Marketplace. Several factors contribute to the desirability of maintaining a predominant retail emphasis in the Wheaton CBD.

1. **The historic role of Wheaton as an important locally oriented retail market.** For decades, Wheaton has been characterized as a strong and diverse retail center. The historic identity of Wheaton is linked to its retail activity.
2. **The continued economic viability of retail businesses in the Wheaton CBD.** During a time when some older retail centers in the Metropolitan Area declined, retail activity in the Wheaton Central Business District remained strong. The strength of retailing in Wheaton continues today.
3. **The success of the commercial revitalization program.** The County Department of Housing and Community Development has teamed with many local businesses to improve the physical landscape in the Marketplace area. This program has stimulated significant reinvestment in retail establishments in the Wheaton CBD.

4. The presence of a compatible major regional mall adjacent to the CBD.

The success of Wheaton Plaza further establishes the retail identification of Wheaton. Moreover, as a regional attraction, Wheaton Plaza nicely complements the locally oriented and specialty shops of the Marketplace.

5. The proximity of the Wheaton CBD to large residential concentrations.

The residents of the diverse neighborhoods in the vicinity of the CBD find Wheaton a convenient destination for shopping trips.

The Marketplace is the community's principal trading center offering a great variety of goods and services that cannot be found elsewhere. It is also the entertainment center, offering a variety of fare possible only as long as there are concentrations of people to support it.

The Central Business District of Wheaton is an urban marketplace. It provides a variety of goods and services that cannot be found elsewhere in the eastern part of Montgomery County. The coming of Metro adds another dimension to the Wheaton business area. Urban places are characterized by a land use pattern that is both compact and varied. Such a pattern can be strengthened by encouraging development in which a variety of activities and establishments, including offices, shops, and apartments, can be found within individual buildings or in close proximity to one another.

The Sector Plan hopes to retain and preserve the Wheaton Marketplace. It is a rational attempt to relate various types of commercial uses to the size and type of market to be served and to the land use and traffic implications of various types of commercial activity, both retail and non-retail. The Plan also indicates those land uses which would support and strengthen the commercial base by increasing the magnitude of purchasing power within the trade area. (The trade area is the geographic area from which customers are drawn.) Within the Central Business District area, where land is at a premium and usually very costly, low density uses, such as auto sales lots or drive-in businesses, are not appropriate, whereas retailing, offices, and professional services, doing a high volume of business per square foot, would be most desirable. Likewise, some activities, such as automotive services and drive-in businesses, require direct access and generate fairly high volumes of traffic. These uses can often be located on the fringes of the business area.

The Marketplace consists of the many retail, service, and specialty shops in the Triangle to the east of Georgia Avenue and north of University Boulevard. Prior to 1978, the strength of this Marketplace was being somewhat diminished by the age of most of the stores, physical unattractiveness, and growing traffic congestion in parking areas and on local streets. The 1978 Sector Plan recommended the revitalization and retention of the existing retail area in Wheaton as a major Marketplace in Montgomery County. Since the early '80's, the County's Commercial Revitalization Program has encouraged and reinforced this concept and the retail function in Wheaton. The Wheaton Commercial Revitalization strategy is built upon a private/public partnership aimed at fostering reinvestment in existing buildings, businesses, and public infrastructure. The private sector has been responsible for building renovations and business improvements. The public sector has been responsible for relocating overhead utilities to below ground and streetscaping (beautification) along the "Main Streets" of Georgia Avenue, University Boulevard, and Veirs Mill Road. The public sector has also included in its budget the streets around the

Metro station, due to open in the fall of 1990. This strategy has proven very successful in revitalizing the area. Consequently, both the private and public sector's commitment to the effort has grown over the years.

This Sector Plan recommends that public and private efforts continue to promote the preservation and the retention of the Marketplace within the Wheaton Central Business District. These programs would continue to reinforce the retail and service function in Wheaton. The physical improvements and modernization already begun, should be continued in other parts of the Marketplace. Through public action, the Marketplace should be preserved as low-density retail and service uses.

The biggest single problem facing the existing small retail and service business use in the Wheaton Marketplace will be the escalation of rents in existing buildings subsequent to the arrival of Metro. In addition, new projects could replace the existing one- and two-story buildings. The small buildings that are replaced had rents that the existing retail and service businesses can afford. Space in new projects will not be available at comparable rents and small businesses could be priced out of the area.

This Sector Plan recommends two strategies to preserve the development scale and businesses within the Wheaton Marketplace.

- Amend the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance to establish a Retail Preservation Overlay Zone. (See discussion in the Zoning section of the Plan.)

This overlay zone would require that a minimum floor area in new development be devoted to retail uses. It would stipulate specific bulk and design standards that are more stringent than those in the Central Business District zones.

- Within the Wheaton Central Business District, establish continue efforts to encourage reinvestment in existing businesses.

The County will continue its planned commercial revitalization efforts and may expand the program to new areas of the CBD. The County may explore other means of providing reinvestment incentives for existing businesses.

The Wheaton Lumber Company is located on the edge of the CBD at Blueridge and Grandview Avenues. This sector plan recognizes that the company has provided a needed and valuable service as a building supply store for over 40 years. In keeping with the sector plan's goals and objectives to retain as much of the mix of existing retail and service uses as possible, the Plan recognizes that the Wheaton Lumber Company may need to expand its retail operation to better serve the community. Additional parking may also be required on or near the current site. The provision of additional parking by special exception is preferable to an expansion of commercial zoning.

Wheaton Plaza and Other Commercial Areas

Wheaton Plaza, at some point in time, plans to add a fourth department store to the three existing at the shopping center. This store will probably be constructed on the Veirs Mill Road side of the Plaza. The Transportation section of this Plan recommends road improvements that would accommodate traffic

generated by a future addition to the Plaza. The Sector Plan also recommends the development of a physical linkage between the two main retail attractions in Wheaton: the Plaza and Marketplace. The Plan recommends new office and retail development between the Plaza ring road and the Veirs Mill Road frontage to help establish a physical linkage between the two areas.

There are a number of automotive storage uses located south of Prichard Road on Georgia Avenue. As redevelopment occurs, the Sector Plan recommends that this area should be developed with housing, which would be more compatible with a Metro-oriented central business district.

Commercial establishments north of University Boulevard on the east side of Amherst Avenue help to satisfy needs for local convenience stores. This retail area should continue to service the surrounding residential neighborhood.

MIXED-LAND USE

Integral to the land use concepts recommended in this Plan is the creation of a major activity core at the transit station site and the development of a number of linkages between it, the retail "Marketplace" in the Wheaton Triangle, and Wheaton Plaza.

The Plan recommends a mixed-use development – residential/office/retail – on and around the Metro station, between Reddie Drive and Prichard Road. This development could take place on air rights over the Metro entrance and kiss-and-ride facility, and on adjacent private property. Residential and office development would benefit from the excellent transportation network and the convenience of the adjacent shopping and services. The Marketplace and Wheaton Plaza would benefit from the purchasing power of the residences and office workers. In addition, the integrated planning and development of the Metro transit facility and multi-use development provide an opportunity to improve mobility, increase Metro ridership, diminish negative environmental impacts, reduce traffic congestion, and increase the diversity of employment opportunities and services in the Wheaton area.

An area adjacent to the Metro station, west of Amherst Avenue, is recommended for new residential development. Metro will increase the ease of access from Wheaton to employment centers throughout the Washington region. The proposed transportation improvements and the convenient shopping and service already in place make the Wheaton area particularly suitable for a variety of housing types. In order to take advantage of Metro and encourage increased ridership on the system, residential mixed-use development should be encouraged in the vicinity, particularly in the parcel south of Reddie Drive, west of Amherst Avenue.

Future residential development on this site must be sensitive to the existing residential communities lying to the east. The western frontage on Amherst Avenue should develop at a scale and sensitivity that is compatible with the existing single-family houses. The Plan recommends that the frontage of Amherst Avenue be developed with townhouses at a height not to exceed 35 feet. Higher density apartments could be built behind these townhouses. Density and height would increase as the development "stepped up" to Georgia Avenue. (See Urban Design and Zoning section.)

The Plan anticipates that, over the next ten years, new development around the Metro station will occur on the east side of Georgia Avenue. The future development of "air rights" over the bus terminal on the west side of Georgia Avenue will most likely take place beyond this time frame. When the Red Line is extended to Glenmont, there will be less bus activity at the Wheaton station, since it will no longer function as a terminal. This would provide the opportunity to temporarily relocate the buses while a building was being constructed over the bus bays. The Plan supports future air-rights development at this location.

New commercial and service uses within mixed-use projects should also be encouraged. Such development would complement the existing retail area and service local residents and workers.

OFFICE LAND USE

In addition to new office development within the Metro Center, office development is recommended north of Blueridge Avenue, on the northern frontage of University Boulevard between East Avenue and Valleyview Avenue, and on the east side of Amherst Avenue south of University Boulevard.

The northern frontage of Blueridge Avenue contains a number of office buildings. These are occupied largely by professional services such as architects, engineers, attorneys, insurance companies, and banks. These functions are peripheral to the Wheaton business area and in close proximity to existing single- and multi-family residential development. Any future office development in the same area which abuts either single- or multi-family residential areas should be restricted to a height limit of 30 to 40 feet. These offices should serve as a transition between the residential areas to the north and the Central Business District south of Blueridge Avenue.

The Plan indicates office use for the University Boulevard frontage between East Avenue and Valleyview Avenue. The remaining residential structures front on a major artery with associated traffic noise and air pollution. The residential sensitivity of these problems is indicated by the deterioration of a number of the homes. The conversion of these houses to offices would tend to stabilize this frontage area and provide a buffer to the existing single-family community to the north. Future development should be similar in scale to the existing conversions that have taken place in the block between East Avenue and Valleyview Avenue. This type of development is also recommended on Amherst Drive adjacent to the Central Business District.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

This Sector Plan attempts to build upon the existing retail advantages and the potential of the Metro transit station in Wheaton. In attempting to capitalize on these assets, the Plan recommends the development of a strong supporting population base. A variety of housing types in close proximity to the Central Business District and the Metro station would meet the needs of the residential housing market, would provide built-in purchasing power for the local retail Marketplace, would provide for an increase in the potential ridership on the Glenmont Transit Route, and should not contribute to the demand for commuter parking in the station area since it would be within walking or short bus-ride distance.

The future development of various types of housing (single-family detached, townhouses, garden apartments, condominiums, etc.) to keep up with residential demand will be determined by a large number of interrelated factors. Land availability, price, zoning and building regulations, the cost of money, energy costs, material costs, access to transportation, utilities, municipal services, the level of taxes, and nearness to shopping and other community facilities are all important factors which will influence the nature of residential construction.

Traditional zoning has tended to create a distinct compartmentalization based on the concept that the introduction of any two distinct types of residential uses into a given area creates conflict. Newer zones encourage a diversity of housing types, including various necessary services as an integral part of the development. This serves to avoid areawide segregation of people by age, family composition, and income. Under this concept, the fear of adverse effects upon property values usually associated with multi-family development would simply become irrelevant, since such development would be a designed part of the community to begin with. An ideal neighborhood would include an appropriate range of housing types designed to serve a well-balanced population structure. The use of the Planned Development concept is a major attempt to achieve this goal.

The 1978 Sector Plan recommended Planned Development zoning for a number of the smaller "in-fill" sites surrounding the Central Business District. Many of these projects have been built as a mixture of single-family detached and attached units. This Sector Plan also recommends the use of the residential Planned Development zoning in Wheaton.

The proposed residential areas are identified by the range of their densities in terms of dwelling units (DU's) per acre of land. For the purposes of this Plan, residential densities are categorized as follows:

<u>Residential Area</u>	<u>Density Range</u>
Low Density	3 - 6 DU/acre
Medium Density	9 - 13 DU/acre
Medium/High Density	15 - 22 DU/acre
High Density	Over 22 DU/acre

The proposed density for single-family residences remains at 3 to 6 dwelling units per acre. This is the existing density range in the single-family areas adjacent to the business district. The medium density of 9 to 13 dwelling units per acre, as proposed by the Sector Plan, would encourage the construction of various types of single-family detached and townhouse uses. The medium/high density range of 15 to 22 dwelling units per acre would encourage the development of a mixture of housing types such as townhouses and garden apartments. Higher density development is recommended closer to the business district and the Metro station. Lower density development is recommended adjacent to existing single-family areas.

The sector plan recommends residential development for the site of the WTOP transmitter. The broadcast station and its transmitter were established on this site approximately 50 years ago, long before Wheaton became a thriving community. Residential land use for these 13 acres would be more compatible with the surrounding community. It would be in the best interests of the

Wheaton area if Montgomery County government, the Planning Commission, and WTOP officials would cooperate to find a more suitable location for WTOP and its transmitter facilities.

The sector plan also recommends the future redevelopment of the commercially zoned properties on the block bounded by Georgia Avenue, Prichard Road, Amherst Avenue, and Windham Lane for housing. Any future change in the zoning of these properties must have sufficient incentives to encourage their redevelopment with residential uses more compatible with a Metro-oriented central business district.

The single-family areas to the north and west of the Central Business District are stable residential areas which have shown some signs of deterioration due, in part, to speculation about commercial rezoning. It is recommended that the existing single-family character of these areas be reaffirmed.

Many dwelling units in Wheaton are occupied by elderly residents. While there are no existing facilities specifically for elderly or infirm residents in the Sector Plan Area, seven existing or proposed housing facilities for these residents are located in close proximity to Wheaton. Many of the vacant or underdeveloped parcels in Wheaton could accommodate housing or other facilities for the elderly or the infirm.

Mixed generational housing should be encouraged. To the extent that housing for the elderly is included, the following guidelines should be observed insofar as they are practical:

- Sites should be within easy access of transportation.
- Sites should be located near or have easy access to shopping, service, and recreational facilities.
- Sites should not be cut off from needed services by major traffic arteries.

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

The urban design objectives and guidelines are provided to promote a coherent and well integrated physical environment, enhance the livability and attractiveness, and retain the sense of the Marketplace in Wheaton. A number of these objectives reflect the County's commercial revitalization program, which has stimulated significant reinvestment in retail establishments. This program consists of building renovations, facade easements, and the Wheaton streetscape, which helps to unify and integrate the built environment. These guidelines apply to new development and the renovation of existing buildings. They consist of a hierarchy of circulation elements, recommendations on the massing and scale of future development, and recommendations for open space including a promenade, plazas, and parks. This Plan recommends guidelines that:

Encourage renovation of existing buildings to promote the Marketplace theme

The renovation of existing buildings should retain and promote an animated pedestrian-oriented setting. The physical environment will consist of diverse building forms that are unified by an attractive, modular streetscape.

Improve the visual quality of the Wheaton CBD

The “greening” of Wheaton can be achieved by providing more trees and landscaping in-streets, boulevards, plazas, and parks.

Provide for diversity

Diversity in terms of the architecture will add to the interest and vitality of the urban fabric.

Enhance the “human scale” of the CBD

A human scale of the environment can be developed through the architecture of the buildings and the design of the streets and public spaces. The development scale of the Marketplace should be preserved. New development should be compatible in scale and massing.

Encourage pedestrian circulation

This can be accomplished through the development of a safe, convenient, and comfortable pedestrian system that creates vitality and interest in the area. Plazas and open spaces offer the opportunity for social interaction and should be provided. These open spaces must be intentional and defined, not merely residual spaces left by buildings. Building entrances should open onto the street or other public space. Retail should be provided at the ground level of commercial streets to achieve urban vitality. In the long-term, new grade-separated pedestrian walkways may become desirable at key linkages across Georgia Avenue, University Boulevard or Veirs Mill Road.

The Wheaton transit center will produce much pedestrian activity within the CBD. High quality, direct pedestrian access is essential to maximize use of the transit system. Site plans (including overlay district compliance plans) should consider improvements to ease pedestrian access to the transit system. For example, these plans could require bus passenger amenities (shelters, benches, lighting of bus facilities) and orient building entrances toward roadways served by bus routes.

Protect the existing residential communities

The character and scale of existing low density residential communities must be protected.

Create a transition in densities and massing

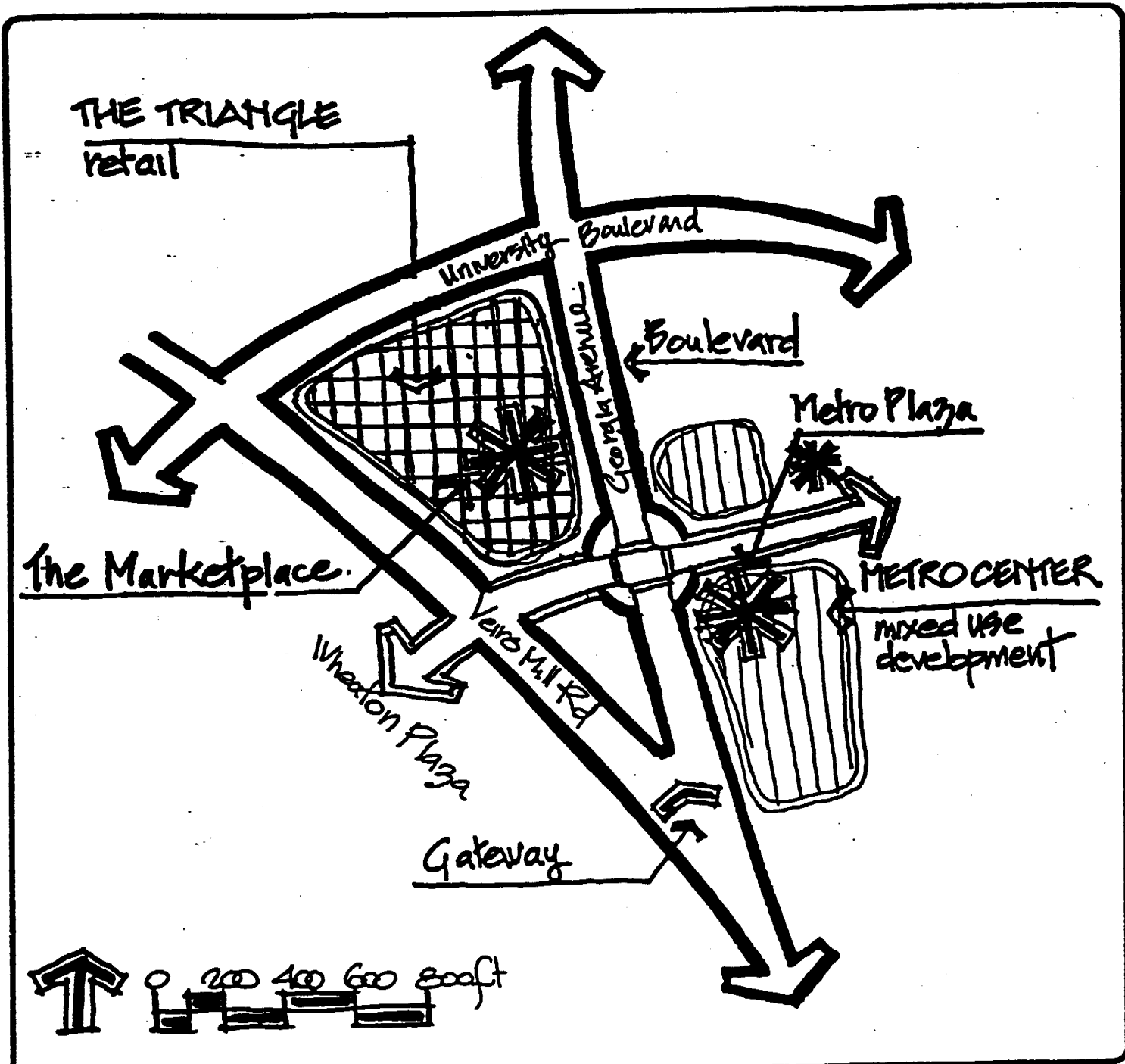
It is important to create adequate transition in densities and massing so that new development is sensitive to existing buildings.

Strive for excellence in design

Attractive buildings enhance the quality of the environment. It is important to provide for diversity and variation in the design of the various projects, whether it is new development or the modernization of existing buildings.

Provide for an open space system

Public policy and private development should provide open spaces that cater to diverse activities and provide for the needs of existing and future populations.



THE URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT PLAN



Public Open Space

WHEATON



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The Pedestrian Network

A major objective of this Plan is to create a unified and aesthetically pleasing series of pedestrian ways that could make walking through the CBD enjoyable. The Plan proposes a continuous pedestrian network, consisting of streets and boulevards, a promenade, plazas, and open spaces that link together all the major activities in the Wheaton CBD. The proposed pedestrian system consists primarily of a continuous sidewalk system. It also includes a tunnel under Georgia Avenue, a bridge over Veirs Mill Road, a pedestrian district, and plazas, greenways, and open spaces which encourage pedestrian movement.

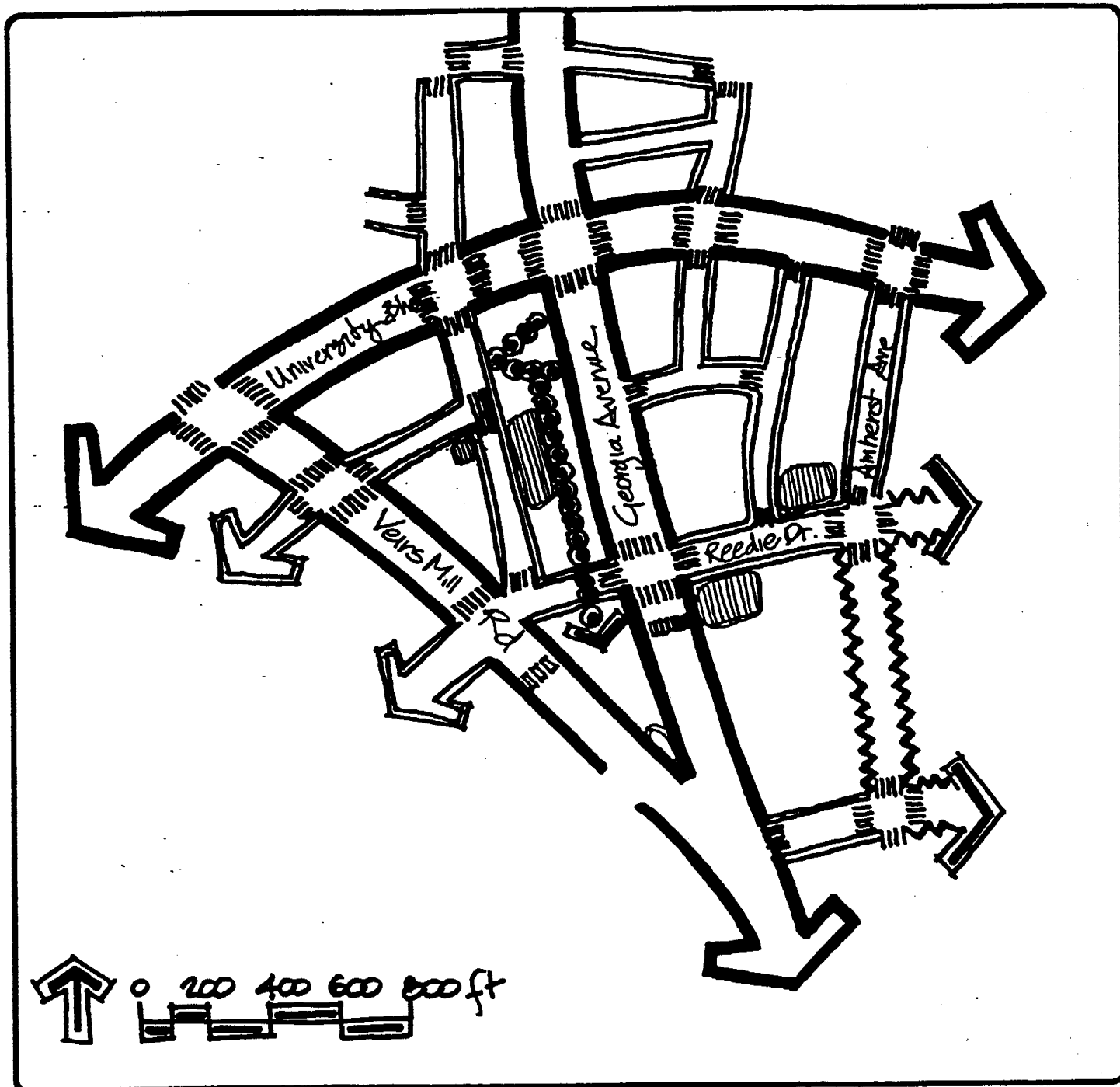
The Wheaton Central Business District falls under the Wheaton Streetscape, which consists of paving, street trees, lighting, and street furniture. The paving pattern is modular, thus providing for flexibility in the sidewalk width. The Department of Housing and Community Development, which sponsors the program, feels that that "the diverse collection of architectural styles found in buildings are unified by the Wheaton Streetscape which introduced a clearer sense of time, place, and scale through distinctive lighting and landscaping and its modular paving system. The modular pattern of the sidewalk paving system establishes rhythm and order, an important concept employed in the Art Moderne Style to regain a sense of place in a rapidly changing world". Minimum sidewalk widths are set in the streetscape guidelines. Some areas, mainly north of University Boulevard, have already been successfully improved.

The three major roads in Wheaton are Georgia Avenue, University Boulevard, and Veirs Mill Road. Wide sidewalks on these roads would form the backbone of the pedestrian system. The Plan proposes a unifying boulevard treatment. In addition, attractive paving and landscaping should be provided along the boulevards, with convenient street crossings. The major north-south pedestrian spine should be developed along both sides of Georgia Avenue, linking mixed use development at the Metro station with the retail uses on the west and north. Convenient at-grade street crossings as well as a tunnel to the station mezzanine will provide for the pedestrian connections across Georgia Avenue. University Boulevard, Reedie Drive, and Ennalls Avenue are the major east-west pedestrian walkways. On these streets an environment conducive to pedestrians is encouraged through the provision of wider sidewalks, landscaping, street furniture, and, where appropriate, street narrowing.

The Boulevards – Georgia Avenue, Veirs Mill Road, and University Boulevard

The three major arterial roads are proposed as "Urban Boulevards" in terms of the street design. These roads have a high volume of traffic and a high potential for pedestrian/vehicular conflict. Given the narrow sidewalk in the public right of way, the Plan encourages setting new buildings back from the property line to allow for a wider sidewalk. The provision of street trees is encouraged to achieve an attractive boulevard setting. New projects, mainly along Georgia Avenue and Veirs Mill Road, are encouraged to provide a defined street wall with retail at ground level and parking at the rear.

With the opening of the Metro station at the southeast quadrant of Georgia Avenue and Reedie Drive, Georgia Avenue may become the "Main Street" of Wheaton. As such, it should become more pedestrian friendly. Along the west



THE PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

- Boulevard
- Commercial Street
- Residential Street
- Pedestrian Way
- At grade street crossing
- Grade Separated Crossing
- Public Open Space

WHEATON



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side, sidewalk improvements are planned within the public right-of-way. The existing building setback, which in most cases is over 40 feet, is currently used for off-street parking. There is an opportunity to improve the pedestrian environment while retaining some off-street parking. Parking layout could be modified to accommodate a wider sidewalk in front of the stores. Street trees could then be planted along both parallel sidewalks. Attractive paving throughout the area will enhance the visual quality and will provide for a pedestrian oriented environment.

Reedie Drive

Reedie Drive provides an east-west connection from Wheaton Plaza, through the "Marketplace" and bus terminal, to the Metro Plaza and the residential communities to the east. Reedie Drive also connects to major open space nodes: Metro Plaza, which will be a paved and landscaped urban plaza; "The Promenade," a green pedestrian walkway, could be developed as part of the Metro Center parcel; and Wheaton Veterans Park, an urban park at the corner of Reedie Drive, Fern Street, and Amherst Avenue.

The 1978 Sector Plan envisioned a major pedestrian walkway running east-west along Reedie Drive, anchored by Wheaton Plaza on the west and by the Metro station facilities on the east. Georgia Avenue follows a ridge through the business district to a high point north of University Boulevard. Veirs Mill Road follows a depression between Georgia Avenue and Wheaton Plaza, rising to a high point at its intersection with University Boulevard. This pedestrian walkway should take maximum advantage of this topography to separate vehicles from pedestrians.

The Wheaton Metro Station Plan includes a tunnel under Georgia Avenue at Reedie Drive to provide direct access to the Metro station mezzanine from the Metro surface facilities east and west of Georgia Avenue. While this 24-foot-wide passage is designed primarily to provide access to the Wheaton station, it also provides the opportunity for pedestrian flow east-west across Georgia Avenue without pedestrian vehicular conflicts. The actual tunnel is of minimum length; the approaches return to sidewalk grade approximately mid-block along Reedie Drive, between Georgia Avenue and Fern Street on the east and Georgia Avenue and Veirs Mill Road on the west.

The existing topography west of Georgia Avenue along Reedie Drive, which is falling away to Veirs Mill Road and then rising to Wheaton Plaza, provides the opportunity to develop a grade separated pedestrian link above Veirs Mill Road. This linkage could connect directly to the mall level of Wheaton Plaza from the Veirs Mill Road bus terminal. This pedestrian walkway would complete the walking and access link between Wheaton Plaza, the Marketplace, the Metro Center, the Wheaton Veterans Park, and the residential communities east of Amherst Avenue.

The first stage of this pedestrian link will be completed with the construction of the Metro garage in Wheaton Plaza. Plans include a grade separated pedestrian walkway from the garage, over Veirs Mill Road to the Metro bus terminal. A second stage would be the future construction of a pedestrian bridge from the garage to Wheaton Plaza.

Other Streets

The commercial streets should be improved for better pedestrian circulation, be more attractive, and provide opportunities for strolling and outdoor sitting. The street right-of-way is usually about 80 feet, with roadway paving consisting of two lanes of traffic and two lanes of parking. In most of the commercial streets – Reddie Drive, Grandview Avenue, Ennalls Avenue, (west of Grandview Avenue), Amherst Avenue, and Blueridge Avenue – the parking width should be retained except for the use of flares to ease pedestrian crossings. However, some streets – Price Avenue, Fern Street, Ennalls Avenue (east of Grandview Avenue), and Elkin Street – have little through traffic and therefore provide an opportunity for improved pedestrian circulation. For example, the County might increase the pedestrian space by reducing the width of the roadway and increasing the width of the sidewalk. Restaurants in that area will benefit from the additional space that could be devoted to outdoor seating areas.

A pedestrian walkway is also proposed along Triangle Lane. This pedestrianway, a major component of the pedestrian system, would be constructed from Reddie Drive to Ennalls Avenue and would provide direct pedestrian access from the east-west pedestrian walkway north to University Boulevard. The pedestrianway would be attractively paved and landscaped and include benches, kiosks, and other design features.

The Plan envisions pedestrian walkways running east-west along University Boulevard and Ennalls Avenue. This would provide comfortable pedestrian access to the businesses along University Boulevard, the commercial area to the north. These walkways would be linked to the major pedestrian ways along Reddie Drive and Wheaton Plaza to the west by Triangle Lane. This secondary spine could be developed by utilizing and expanding the existing sidewalk systems.

The Metro Center Promenade

A green promenade is recommended internal to the Metro Center parcel, linking the residential areas on the south and east through Metro Center to the Metro entrance on Reddie Drive, the Marketplace and Wheaton Plaza. The promenade will serve both the existing and future population in the area. It would be developed as part of a mixed-use development on this block.

The Places

The Marketplace

The heart of Wheaton's Marketplace is a triangular area formed by the intersecting geometry of Georgia Avenue, University Boulevard and Veirs Mill Road. Its central location, active business environment, and well-defined arrangement of buildings and parking offer a unique opportunity to create a well-integrated retail center. The Marketplace, the area that is bounded by the three boulevards, will receive pedestrian emphasis. The County-sponsored streetscape program will enhance the Boulevards and include streetscaping on a portion of Grandview Avenue. Other improvements are needed in the center of this area. For example, the provision of attractive paving, landscaping, lighting, and street furniture will further enhance the pedestrian environment. The stores and services have the potential of promoting a vibrant activity center.

Any increase in shoppers will generate additional demand for short term parking in the Marketplace. The area suffers from a lack of short-term customer parking, a limited and inconvenient pedestrian environment, obscured access, poor visibility from major arterials, and a somewhat confusing interior circulation pattern. Compounding these problems is the unattractive visual environment: overhead utilities, parking areas without landscaping, cluttered business signage, and poor vehicular and pedestrian signage. These problems need special attention. Recognizing ongoing efforts by the County to work with the local business community to revitalize downtown, the Plan recommends developing a specific strategy to address the problems identified above. This strategy should be formulated through joint efforts of the County Government and the business community.

Improvements to this area may include a broad range of possibilities, such as creating open space for "people watching," festivals, book markets, and other community activities. One way of meeting future pedestrian and parking demand may be by replacing the existing surface parking on Parking Lot 13 with underground structured parking. There may be an opportunity to use a portion of the structure for a central open space – a "Marketplace square." Given the sloping topography, two levels of underground parking may be provided.

Metro Center

This parcel is bounded by Prichard Road, Georgia Avenue, Reddie Drive, and Amherst Avenue. A major mixed-use high-rise project will be developed in this area. It is important that new development relate to the scale of the surrounding area. Since most of the existing development consists of buildings that are one to three stories high, the new development should provide for transition in heights with the tallest structures toward Georgia Avenue and around the Metro station.

The Plan recommends that along Georgia Avenue street trees be provided and the buildings be configured to help define the boulevard. Retail and service uses should be provided at the ground level. An open urban plaza is recommended at the Metro station to function as a major node for activities generated by the Metro entrance, the retail, and the central location. The Plan encourages retail uses along the Georgia Avenue frontage, including at the edge of the urban plaza. Planting and trees would be provided consistent with the objective of "greening" Wheaton.

The low density residential character along Amherst Avenue should be retained. Building heights along the street should not exceed 35 feet within the first 75 feet as measured along the Amherst Avenue property line. Setbacks from the street right-of-way should be compatible with the existing development on the east side.

The Plan recommends that an attractive, open space be developed in the "Metro Center" parcel. It could provide an additional pedestrian linkage to Metro and serve the passive recreational needs of the community: walking and strolling, sitting areas, and play areas for children.

THE ZONING PLAN

In order to preserve existing business and structures in the Wheaton Marketplace, this Sector Plan recommends that the County Council amend the zoning ordinance to establish a "Retail Preservation Overlay Zone."

An overlay zone is a mapped zone that imposes a set of requirements or restrictions in addition to those of the underlying zoning district. In an area where an overlay zone is established, property is placed simultaneously in the two zones and the land may be developed only under the conditions and requirements of both zones. Overlay zones typically are applied where there is a special public interest in a geographic area that does not coincide with the underlying base zone. The proposed overlay zone is more restrictive than the underlying CBD Zone. It would be applied to specific areas of central business districts where it is determined that more restrictive development controls are needed to retain existing retail use and service.

The proposed "Retail Preservation Overlay" would:

- not permit the optional method of development, regardless of assemblage or parcel size;
- require that any new building over one story devote part of the first floor to retail uses;
- require site plan review for all new buildings;
- require that all retail uses in new buildings be directly accessible from a sidewalk, plaza, or other exterior public space; and
- restrict blank walls and facades at street level.

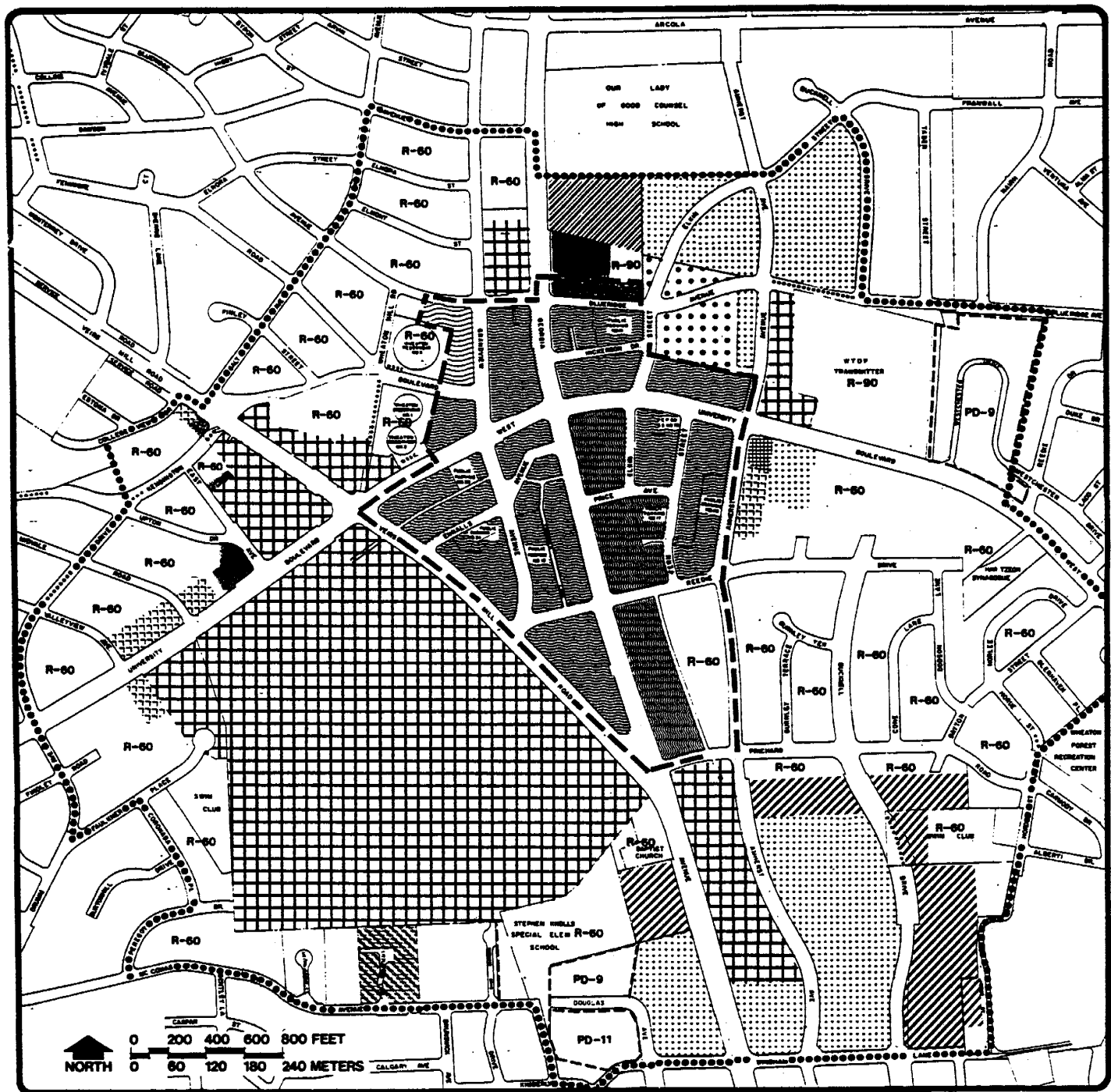
The Retail Preservation Overlay provides a clear policy to guide future land use in the Wheaton Marketplace subsequent to the opening of Metro and will help to achieve one of the major goals and objectives of this Sector Plan.

It is standard practice in all master plans adopted in Montgomery County since 1971 to designate a base "Euclidean" zone for every parcel and to indicate for some parcels an appropriate floating zone, which allows somewhat different development and sets a higher limit on the intensity of development than the base zone. Euclidean zones contain rigid requirements such as lot size, setbacks, and height limits. Except when developed under the cluster option, the entire land area will be divided into approximately equal size lots.

Euclidean zones may be applied to an entire area by the County Council in a comprehensive rezoning following a master plan study. Piecemeal requests for Euclidean rezonings may be granted only upon a showing that there has been a change in the character of the neighborhood since the last comprehensive rezoning or there was a mistake in that comprehensive rezoning.

Floating zones have more flexible development standards, but they may be approved by County Council only upon a finding that the development will be compatible with surrounding land uses and is in accord with the purpose clause of the zone. In all floating zones, development can only occur in accordance with a detailed site plan approved by the Planning Board.

The practice of following a master plan with a comprehensive rezoning through a sectional map amendment is a safeguard against piecemeal Euclidean



EXISTING ZONING

R-60 One Family	R-20 Low Density Apartment	C-1 Local Commercial
R-80 One Family	PD-9 P.D. Planned Development Zone	C-2 General Commercial
RT-8 Townhouse	O-M Office Building Moderate Intensity	CBD-1 Central Business District
RT-12.5 Townhouse	C-O High Density Office	CBD-2 Central Business District
R-30 Medium Density Apartment	C-T Commercial Transition Zone	CBD-3 Central Business District
WHEATON		Sector Plan Boundary
		Central Business District Boundary
		Dedicated Street Not Constructed



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rezonings. The comprehensive rezoning establishes the base against which "change or mistake" will be measured. Since the comprehensive rezoning conforms to the master plan, and floating zones cannot be considered changes in the character of the neighborhood, there is a strong safeguard against future Euclidean rezoning. This is an important element in assuring the stability of the area.

The base zones within the Wheaton Central Business District are the Central Business District Zones (CBD-1, CBD-2, and CBD-3) which were applied by sectional map amendment following the adoption of the 1978 Sector Plan. These zones, the proposed Retail Preservation Overlay, and others contained in the zoning ordinance and used in this Plan, are intended to implement the recommendations of the Sector Plan by regulating private land development activities.

The zoning proposed in this Plan ought to be subject to review within the same time limits as the other elements of the Plan, namely, a period of ten years or when events dictate. Such a review would have several advantages, chief among them the opportunity to measure actual experience with the Retail Preservation Overlay Zone after the opening of Metro, and the relationship of the overlay's development controls to the scale and bulk of new buildings and modernizations, and the actual retention of existing retail uses and services. A periodic review should also evaluate the progress of new development in regard to the Sector Plan's development program and mix of uses. Areas could be removed or added to the overlay district prior to the 10-year re-evaluation of the Sector Plan by amending sections of the Plan, as experience dictates.

Within the context of this Plan, both designations of appropriate land uses and designations of densities, consistent with the densities allowable under the proposed zoning, are given. Figure 9 shows the zoning proposed for the Wheaton Sector Plan area. It is proposed that the existing single-family zoning in the Sector Plan area outside the Central Business District be reaffirmed as it presently exists, with the exception of the areas discussed in this Chapter. The proposed Zoning Plan:

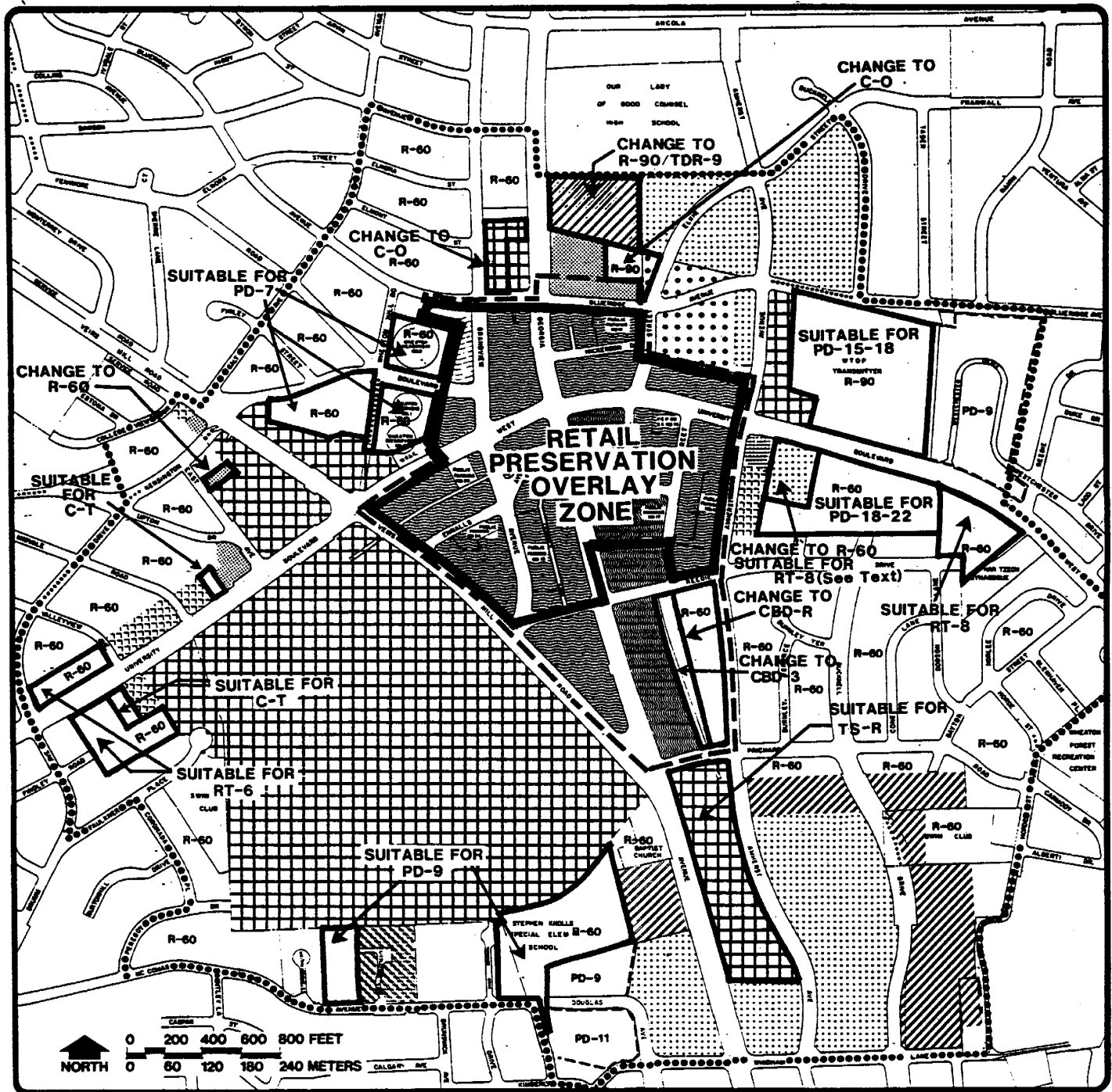
- Retains the existing base CBD zoning in the retail Marketplace (north and south of University Boulevard) and proposes a new "Retail Preservation Overlay District" (see Figure 9).
- Designates the Metro Center parcel a combination of CBD-R and CBD-3 zoning. The total parcel of land should be developed as a unified optional method project. The existing public alley on the site would have to be abandoned prior to the approval of subdivision plan. The height, scale and bulk of the proposed project must be compatible with the existing residential communities to the east and south of the site. The land immediately west of Amherst Avenue is most appropriate for development of residential uses in the CBD-R Zone. A townhouse frontage along Amherst Avenue with a maximum height of 35 feet should be provided on this portion of the site to ensure compatibility with the adjacent single-family community. The 35-foot height limit should apply for a distance of 75 feet as measured from the property line.
- Retains the CBD-3 zoning for the parcel north of Reedie Drive between Georgia Avenue and Fern Street. This Plan encourages inclusion of a substantial residential component and street-level retail should this

property redevelop. In addition, this Plan encourages retention of a supermarket to serve nearby residents on this parcel or elsewhere in the CBD.

- Retains CBD-1 zoning along the Central Business District boundary which abuts single-family residential areas.
- Retains the general commercial C-2 Zone on Wheaton Plaza and on other properties where it currently exists.
- Recommends TS-R zoning on the automotive and storage uses on Georgia Avenue south of Prichard Road. This commercially zoned area is suitable for future development in the TS-R Zone to encourage their future redevelopment with residential uses more compatible with a Metro-oriented central business district.
- Changes C-2 zoning north of Blueridge Avenue and east of Grandview Avenue to C-O zoning.
- Changes the Metro owned property south of Good Counsel High School from O-M zoning to R-90/TDR-9 zoning.
- Recommends C-T zoning (low-intensity office development) for the northern frontages of University Boulevard between East Avenue and Valleyview Avenue, and the south frontage of University Boulevard adjacent to Wheaton Plaza on those parcels where this zoning does not currently exist. A number of single-family structures along University Boulevard have already been converted to nonresidential uses. While some of the existing houses are large enough to lend themselves to office conversion, a number of properties would be better developed as new low-intensity office development. New development should be limited to existing lots and should be discouraged on assemblages of more than one lot. Conversion, where appropriate, and low-intensity new development are encouraged to buffer existing single-family residences from adverse effects associated with major traffic arteries.
- Recommends C-T zoning on two properties on University Boulevard adjacent to Wheaton Plaza. (One of these properties was rezoned to the C-T Zone in November 1989.)

As in the 1978 Plan, this Sector Plan recommends the use of Townhouse and Planned Development zoning. This zoning would encourage the development of a variety of housing types on individual parcels. Higher density development should be sited closer to the Metro station, to the business district, and to major roads. Lower density development (primarily single-family homes) would be developed adjacent to existing single-family areas. The Zoning Plan recommends:

- PD-15 to -18 zoning on the WTOP parcel.
- PD-18 to -22 zoning on the 6-acre property on the south side of University Boulevard. Two lots to the west of this property are zoned R-20 but contain a single-family house on each lot. The Plan recommends that they be zoned R-60 and designated in the Plan as suitable for townhouses in the RT-8 Zone. If the 2 lots are combined with the adjacent 6-acre tract, they would be suitable for PD 18-22 zoning. Additional vacant parcels currently zoned R-60 could be assembled and would also be suitable for PD 18-22 zoning.



PROPOSED ZONING PLAN

R-90 R-90 One Family	R-20 Low Density Apartment	C-1 Local Commercial
R-60 R-60 One Family	PD-9 P.D. Plannend Development Zone	C-2 General Commercial
RT-8 Townhouse	O-M Office Building Moderate Intensity	CBD-1 Central Business District
RT-12.5 Townhouse	C-O High Density Office	CBD-2 Central Business District
R-30 Medium Density Apartment	C-T Commercial Transition Zone	CBD-3 Central Business District

WHEATON

- Sector Plan Boundary
- Central Business District Boundary
- Dedicated Street Not Constructed



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- RT-8 and RT-6 zoning on a number of parcels along University Boulevard. The Plan also recommends RT-6 zoning for the residential properties fronting on University Boulevard between Valleyview Avenue and Hillsdale Drive, if they are assembled.
- PD-7 zoning on the WSSC water storage tanks (if they are no longer needed some time in the future).

The Zoning Plan indicates the recommended Planned Development density category. The Sectional Map Amendment, to be filed in conjunction with this Sector Plan, will indicate and reconfirm the existing base zoning. The owners of the individual properties would then apply for the Planned Development Zone recommended by the Sector Plan. Each application could then be reviewed in relation to such criteria as proximity to Metro, variety of housing types contained, compatibility with existing communities, and development experienced in the Sector Plan area subsequent to the adoption of the Plan.

ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT

The staging and management of future growth is a process that is simple in concept and difficult in practice. The fundamental objective is to maintain an acceptable balance over time between private development and public facilities. The staging process by which this balance is achieved is sometimes perceived as speeding up the provision of public facilities while slowing down the private development. It can, however, have a major effect on a variety of public policies, such as housing policy and housing prices, economic development policies, land use policies, and the perceived quality of life. Achieving the desired balance in a dynamic economy is extremely difficult.

Staging depends on maintaining an equilibrium between the supply of public facilities and the demands created by private development. The capacities of the road network and transit system, of the water and sewage systems, and of the quality of other public facilities impose physical limitations on the size, density, and amount of new building that can be accommodated. Economic constraints come from the nature of the market demand for housing, commercial activities, office space, and other types of activities, both absolutely and for the Wheaton Central Business District in competition with other centers of activity in the Washington Metropolitan Area.

Wheaton has many advantages which will influence pressures for new development and redevelopment. Wheaton is very accessible because of its position at the confluence of several major roads linking it with other suburban locations. It is astride a major and historically important cross-country arterial – University Boulevard – providing linkage westward to Kensington and Chevy Chase and eastward to Prince George's County. It is convenient to Kensington and Chevy Chase and eastward to Prince George's County. It is convenient to the Beltway, providing ready access to other parts of the Metropolitan Area. Wheaton has a sizable area of influence in terms of retail trade and work place attraction, extending north to Aspen Hill and south into the District of Columbia. With the coming of Metro rail transit, Wheaton will be linked directly with Silver Spring and downtown Washington, adding a new dimension for the future.

The development projections contained in this Sector Plan are a measure of the capacity of an area – in this case the Wheaton Central Business District and Vicinity – to accommodate development based upon various constraints. The

constraints reflect the area's ability to contain or handle traffic generated by activities within the area in combination with Metro traffic and through traffic. It should also be noted that the size of the development projections can be modified by increasing the capacity of the systems on which it is measured – for example, by building new links in the transportation system or reducing the output of pollutants by fixed sources.

A second factor in establishing development projections involves making a judgment about how much growth is likely or should occur. Since development is largely the result of private investment and construction, and since land is privately owned by many separate owners, it cannot be assumed that every piece of land will be developed to the full limit of the zoning envelope. Some parcels will be only partially developed, some may not be developed at all. Existing low density uses may be quite profitable, and their owners may have no interest in redevelopment. Other parcels have new structures which are unlikely to be replaced for 30 or 40 years. In other cases, assembly of enough contiguous parcels of land for a substantial building will not be possible. Much of the land within a mature area like Wheaton might not actually be subject to redevelopment pressures.

In a developed area such as Wheaton, the many existing conditions, both natural and man-made, limit options for development. The location and character of existing residential, commercial, and public lands become fixed guide-points; the majority of them are not subject to major change. As a result, the available options for those areas are limited in scope to such improvements as landscaping and other changes to existing physical appearance. Similarly, the location of major roads and highways and the established locations for Metro and its related station facilities preclude certain options.

A key factor in developing a realistic development projection for the next ten years is the land presently committed to existing development, which will preclude much redevelopment in the foreseeable future. These areas will undoubtedly be influenced by public policy and this Plan's objective of preserving the scale and use of existing buildings in the Wheaton Marketplace.

The Plan recognizes that other factors will affect the timing and location of development and redevelopment in Wheaton. Because of the ownership patterns, age of structure, financing of existing development, profitability or unprofitability of existing businesses, the general economic and market climate, and other considerations, it is unrealistic to attempt to predict with certainty the exact location and configuration of new development. Obviously, some of the vacant land will remain vacant; obviously, there will be redevelopment interest in properties already occupied by buildings. The basic development envelope represents, however, a realistic measure of the ability of Wheaton to meet market absorption and market potential within the Sector Plan period and within the constraints and opportunities discussed in this Plan.

The land use framework of the Wheaton Sector Plan gives guidance to what uses should be located at what locations. Zoning implements these land use recommendations and also determines the magnitude of development. Transportation capacity and public policy will limit the amount of development that is appropriate. The following development projections were determined by the improvements recommended to the transportation system and the adoption of a Retail Preservation Overlay Zone for the Wheaton Marketplace. (See

Transportation section and Appendices A, B, and C.) The Plan does not encourage or recommend the redevelopment of the Marketplace.

- First priority should be the development of "Metro Center," which includes the block bounded by Georgia Avenue, Reddie Drive, Amherst Avenue, and Prichard Road. It also includes the Safeway Site on the north side of Reddie Drive. This development could contain 800+ residential units, 400,000 square feet of office, and 70,000 square feet of retail. Parking for approximately 2,000 cars would be provided on site.
- The development projections also include a fourth department store in Wheaton Plaza, mixed-use development on a number of parcels within the Central Business District and on the western frontage of Vairs Mill Road, and "infill" residential development on the remaining vacant parcels within the Sector Plan boundary but outside the Central Business District. The development program includes 550+ residential units, 250,000 square feet of retail within Wheaton Plaza, and 270,000 square feet of mixed-use development (240,000 square feet of office and 30,000 square feet of retail).

The first priority area (Metro Center) should develop as a joint venture between the owners of the Jones Property and Metro. (The kiss-and-ride is located at the north end of the Metro Center block.) Accordingly, methods to secure the transportation capacity necessary to achieve timely development of this priority area should be considered within the context of the County's Annual Growth Policy.