TRANSPORTATION PLAN

TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVES

Improve Wheaton's accessibility to the rest of the County and the region by extending the operation of the Metrorail system and by maintaining and improving other forms of transit and the street and highway system, while preserving and enhancing the area's livability.

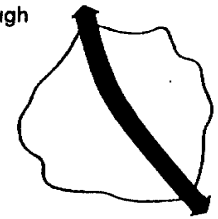
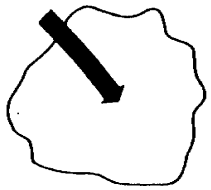
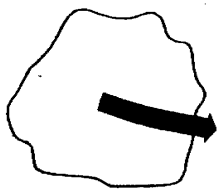
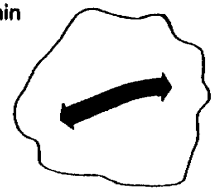
- Develop Wheaton as a transportation center through the construction and operation of a Metrorail station as a temporary terminal of the Glenmont 'B' Route of the Red Line.
- Work with other area jurisdictions to obtain funding to complete the Red Line to Glenmont.
- Support transportation improvements that improve the flow of traffic to, within, and through Wheaton.
- Develop an integrated transportation system where each mode, and the system as a whole, is both efficient and practical.
- Develop new transportation programs that better utilize the existing transportation system.
- Recognize that parking is an important element in the transportation system which supports businesses and ensures that the parking district has adequate parking.
- Encourage the use of bicycles and other alternative modes of transportation for general access into and within Wheaton by improving the pleasure and safety of the transportation system.
- Encourage development of public and private walkways for pedestrian movement.
- Separate bikeways and pedestrianways from the motorized vehicular system, whenever it is both practical and possible.
- Protect residential neighborhoods from auto and truck through traffic and commuter parking.

A basic goal of the Sector Plan is to provide a balanced and coordinated network of transportation facilities which provide safe and efficient mobility within the community and increased accessibility to regional activity centers. In order to achieve this goal, a transportation plan has been developed which details recommendations for each element of the CBD transportation system: public transportation, pedestrians and bicycles, parking facilities, and the highway system. The transportation plan addresses system needs for each of the projected development stages.

The transportation plan proposes improvements which would increase the capacity of the transportation system. These improvements, such as the establishment of a Transportation Management Association, which would apply incentives to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles within its

Table 3

IDENTIFICATION OF MASTER PLAN STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVED TRANSPORTATION IN THE WHEATON CBD

Trip Orientation	Components of Travel Through, To, From, and Within the Wheaton CBD					
	Start of the Trip	Predominant Means of Travel for the Trip				End of the Trip
		Auto/Highway	Transit	Biking	Walking	
Through 	o Locate more housing closer to accessible transit that comes through Wheaton CBD	o Separate through traffic from locally oriented traffic o Regional ride-sharing programs	o More upstream Glenmont station parking o Fare Policy changes o Upstream park-and-ride lots in non-Metro Corridors o Red Line Extension o to Glenmont	—	—	—
To 	o Locate more housing closer to transit routes that come to Wheaton CBD	o Highway capacity improvements o Intersection improvements o TMD emphasis	o Glenmont Park-and-Ride lots with express bus service to Wheaton o Fare Policy changes o TMD emphasis o Red Line Extension to Wheaton	o More bike routes in main travel corridors and within Wheaton CBD	—	o Parking availability and rates o Share-a-Ride programs for each Employment Centers o Bike storage for CBD workers
From 	o Share-a-Ride Program for Wheaton CBD residents o Improved sidewalks and access to transit routes and Metrorail stations	o Intersection improvements o Highway capacity improvements	o Expanded Metrorail system o Provide access to Wheaton Park-and-Ride lots	o Bike paths to employment centers o Improved bike storage at Metro stations		o Transit and pedestrian circulation system in other activity centers
Within 	o Improve sidewalks and access to transit stations	o Intersection improvements o Reduce conflicts with through traffic		o Improve bike paths to employment centers and community facilities o Improve bike storage at employment centers	o Improve pathway and sidewalk system between residential areas and employment centers and community facilities	o Reduce conflicts with vehicles; more signalized crosswalks o Improved street lighting and amenities

jurisdiction, could be considered as an alternative to some of the improvements specified in this Plan. A Transportation Management District is discussed in more detail in a subsequent section of this chapter.

The recommendations included in the transportation plan are based on several assumptions regarding the forecast demands on the transportation system. Assumptions concerning the development of forecast traffic volumes are detailed in the Sector Plan appendices.

THE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Summary of Transportation Strategies

Table 3 presents an overview summary which identifies master plan strategies for improved transportation in the Wheaton CBD. These strategies are among those discussed in more detail in the Plan. This summary shows that there are four basic trip orientations of people that differentiate the strategies; those people traveling through, to, from, or just within the Wheaton CBD. Particular strategies should be oriented to meeting the transportation needs and travel behavior of those different types of travelers.

The overview summary is also organized by the trip path of the traveler based upon the start of their trip, the predominant means of travel, and the end of their trips. Different strategies are identified that affect people's travel behavior in distinctly different ways. For example, strategies for controlling parking availability and rates in the CBD are primarily related to the end of trips for persons who are coming to Wheaton from outside the area, or perhaps from within the area. Such parting-related strategies will have no effect on people traveling through the area or residents who travel from Silver Spring to other areas.

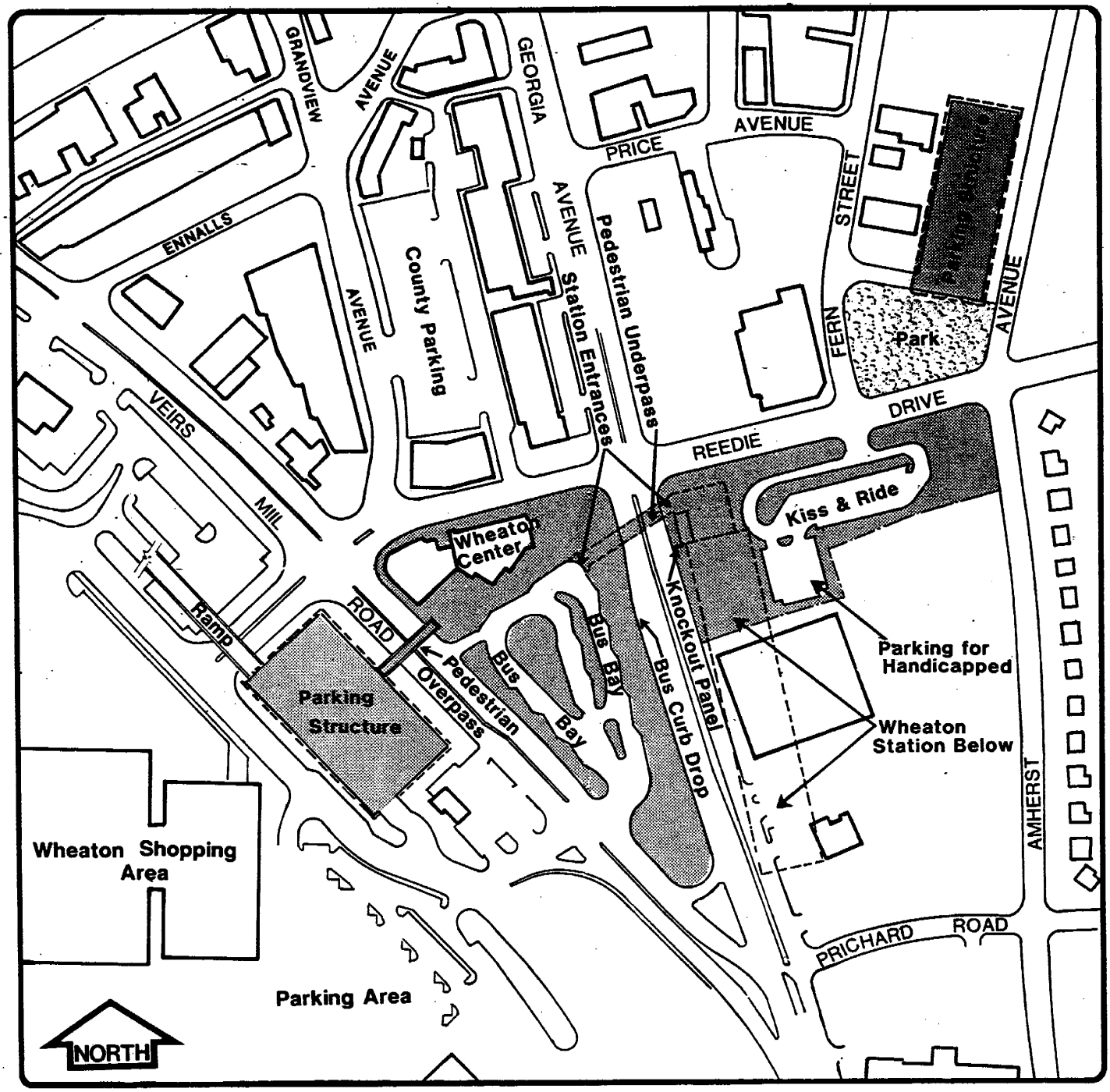
This overview summary is not meant to be a complete identification of all strategies. Rather it should be viewed as a tool which can be used to compare and interrelate the very diverse transportation strategies discussed below in this Transportation Plan.

Existing Transit

Two public transportation agencies operate bus service in the Wheaton area. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) provides regional Metrobus service, while Montgomery County provides local Ride-On Service. Wheaton is served by 10 Metrobus routes and 7 Ride-On routes.

Metrobus routes through Wheaton operate on Georgia Avenue, Veirs Mill Road, and University Boulevard. The heaviest service is provided on Georgia Avenue, from downtown Wheaton to the Silver Spring Metrorail station. During the Metrorail A.M. peak period (6:00 - 9:30 A.M.) 51 buses with scheduled stops in downtown Wheaton arrive at the Silver Spring station.

Metrobus routes through Wheaton travel to Rockville and Olney to the north, Prince George's County to the east, and Chevy Chase via Connecticut Avenue to the south.



METRO STATION PLAN

WHEATON

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SECTOR PLAN

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PLANNING AREA

Proposed Transit

The Wheaton Metro station, currently scheduled to open in 1990, will be located at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Reedie Drive. The platform will be located beneath Georgia Avenue and access to street level will be provided south of Reedie Drive, both to the east and west of Georgia Avenue. Figure 10 shows the plan for the Metro station facilities.

Parking for Metrorail patrons will be accommodated in two garages. A 250-space garage will be constructed on the lot bounded by Fern Street, Reedie Drive, and Amherst Avenue. This lot will be reserved for Metro patrons who purchase monthly parking permits. A second garage, with 900 spaces, will be built at Wheaton Plaza, directly to the southwest of the Veirs Mill - Grandview Avenue intersection. This garage will be staffed by cashiers to accommodate Metro patrons who pay daily for parking. A pedestrian overpass will be built across Veirs Mill Road, connecting the garage to the station facilities.

The forecast demand for park-and-ride spaces is greater than the number of programmed spaces at the Wheaton station. To alleviate this condition, a park-and-ride fringe lot will be constructed in Glenmont before the Glenmont Metrorail station opens. In the interim, bus service will be increased between Wheaton and Glenmont to allow Wheaton Metrorail patrons to park at Glenmont.

A kiss-and-ride lot will be built between Georgia and Amherst Avenues, with access to Reedie Drive at Fern Street. This lot will include 49 kiss-and-ride spaces, 2 taxi spaces, 19 spaces for handicapped parking, and 14 spaces for motorcycles. A bus staging area will be located in the triangle of land bounded by Georgia Avenue, Veirs Mill Road, and Reedie Drive. Fourteen bus bays will be constructed, as well as two storage spaces for bus layovers. In addition, two bus bays will be constructed on Georgia Avenue south of Reedie Drive.

Bicycle racks and storage lockers will also be provided near the entrances to the station, although the number and location of these facilities has not yet been decided by WMATA.

The primary service area of the Wheaton Metro station is bordered by Plyers Mill Road on the south, Rock Creek on the west, and the Northwest Branch on the east. After the Glenmont station is open, most Metro patrons north of Randolph Road will be diverted from the Wheaton station. Until Glenmont is opened, however, there is theoretically no northern boundary to the Wheaton station service area.

Ridership projections from previous Metrorail access studies, adjusted with recent growth projections, indicate that in the year 2000, about 25,800 persons per day will board Metro at Wheaton, including 3,100 during the morning peak hour. It is estimated that 13 percent of the peak hour boarding passengers will walk to the station, 50 percent will use the feeder bus system, 23 percent will use the kiss-and-ride facilities, and 14 percent will arrive in park-and-ride vehicles. Due to the projected demand and the number of park-and-ride spaces provided, the park-and-ride garages are expected to fill during the morning peak hour. Overall, Metro related vehicular trips are estimated to comprise 11 percent of the total traffic entering and leaving the Wheaton CBD during the A.M. peak hour. At the Georgia Avenue and Reedie Drive, Metro related vehicles are expected to comprise 33 percent of the total A.M. peak hour intersection traffic.

are expected to comprise 33 percent of the total A.M. peak hour intersection traffic.

As a retail area of regional attraction adjacent to a Metrorail station and located in the geographic center of the County, Wheaton offers a unique opportunity to develop into a transit hub, a focal point for bus service with routes reaching in all directions to enhance intra-County travel. The Wheaton CBD will be a major destination for transit passengers and a significant transfer point for bus-to-rail and bus-to-bus movements.

With the opening of the Wheaton Metrorail station, existing bus service will be restructured and additional routes added to improve cross-County service and to provide new or more direct peak-hour service to surrounding residential areas. New direct peak-hour service will operate between Wheaton and Randolph Road, Connecticut Avenue and Bonifant/Good Hope Roads. Bus service will connect Wheaton with the US 29 Corridor, Burtonsville, Olney, Layhill, Aspen Hill, and Glenmont. In addition, bus routes will connect Wheaton with all County Metrorail stations along the Shady Grove Line, including a direct express route between Rockville and Wheaton.

The bus staging area, shown in Figure 10, is designed to serve as the terminal station for Metrobus routes.

Effects of Metrorail on Wheaton Transportation System

The most significant change to the transportation system in Wheaton involves the extension of the Metrorail Red Line from its current terminal at Silver Spring. The Forest Glen and Wheaton stations are scheduled to open in 1990. The Red Line will eventually extend to Glenmont, but this terminal is still being planned and may or may not be operational within the next twenty years.

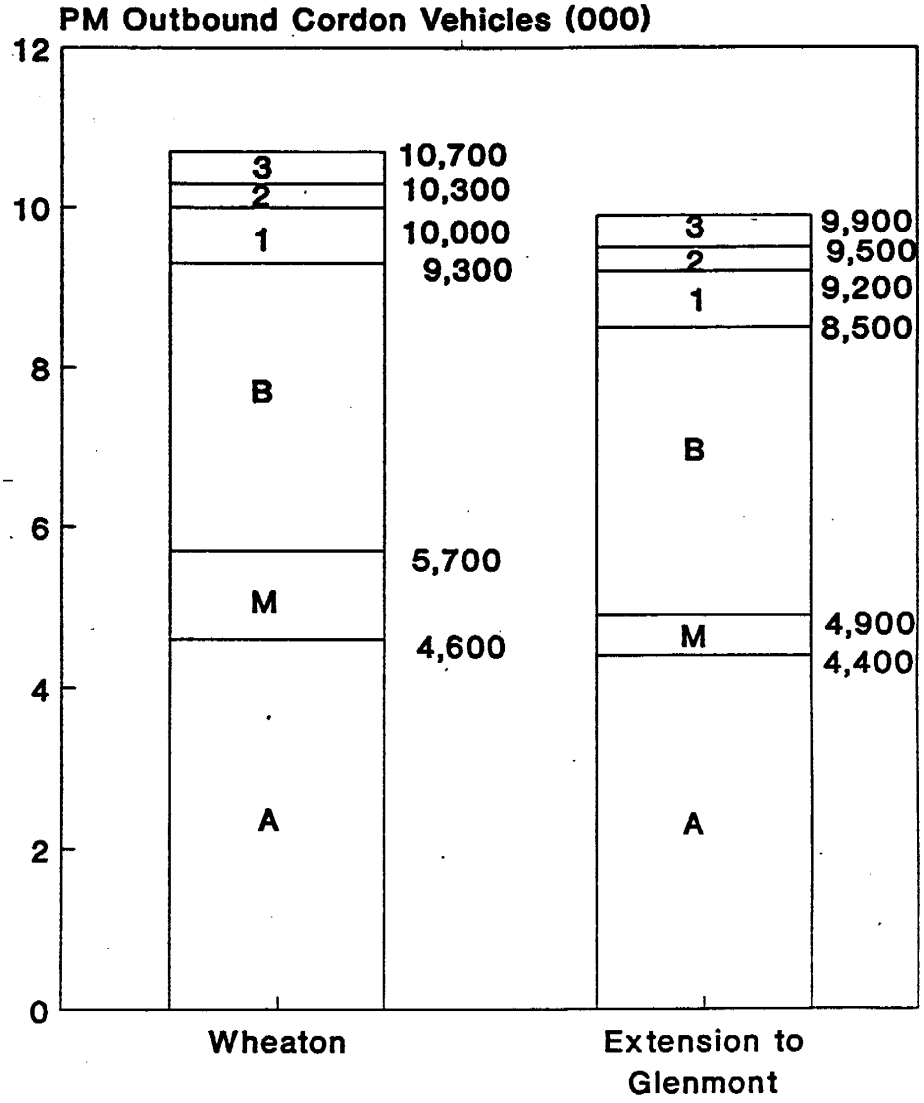
The extension of Metrorail from Wheaton to Glenmont will have a substantial impact on the transportation conditions in Wheaton. Peak hour ridership at the Wheaton station will be reduced, fewer vehicular through trips will be made through the CBD, and more parking will be made available for commercial use.

Since it is not certain that the Glenmont station will be operational within the 10-year time frame of this Sector Plan, Wheaton is assumed to be the Red Line terminal station for the purposes of the Plan. This assumption is critical, for the location of the Red Line's terminus has an impact on the number of vehicles traveling to and through Wheaton. Chart 2 compares the total number of vehicles leaving the Wheaton CBD during the evening peak hour assuming two different locations for the Red Line terminal station. The first column shows cordon line volumes which would be assumed if Metrorail service was not extended past Wheaton. The second column shows cordon line volumes with Metrorail service extended to Glenmont.

Since Wheaton will be an end-of-line station when it is opened, its service area will include all of northeastern Montgomery County, including such areas as Colesville, Layhill, and Norbeck. When the Glenmont station is opened, the service area for Wheaton will be greatly reduced, since up-County patrons will generally shift from Wheaton to Glenmont. Therefore, while ridership on the Red line is projected to increase when Glenmont opens, the number of peak hour riders at Wheaton is projected to decrease by 27 percent.

EFFECTS OF METRO EXTENSION TO GLENMONT

CHART 2



A = Through Trips
B = Trips Generated by Existing Development
M = Metro Related Trips
1 = Stage 1 Development Trips
2 = Stage 2A Development Trips

Most of the Metro patrons who shift to Glenmont will be those who travel to and from the Metro station by private auto. The number of peak hour riders at Wheaton who use private auto to reach the Metro station is projected to decrease by 57 percent with the opening of Glenmont. Chart 2 shows that the number of Metro-related (park-and-ride, kiss-and-ride) vehicles leaving the Wheaton CBD during the P.M. peak hour will drop from 1,100 to 500 when rail service is extended to Glenmont. Thus, the opening of Glenmont will improve levels of service at intersections near the Wheaton station.

Glenmont will not only attract riders who previously accessed Metrorail at Wheaton, but it will also attract new riders who previously drove to their destinations along Georgia Avenue. Data indicates that when the Wheaton station opens, peak hour volumes on Georgia Avenue south of the Wheaton CBD will be reduced by roughly 600 vehicles as auto trips are diverted to Metrorail. The extension of Metrorail service to Glenmont will increase peak hour diverted trips by roughly 200 vehicles. This is indicated in Chart 2 by the reduction in through trips. The opening of Glenmont will therefore improve the level of service on Georgia Avenue by diverting trips from auto to transit.

As an end-of-line station, Wheaton will attract a large number of park-and-ride vehicles. To accommodate this demand, 1,150 parking spaces will be provided in two garages. When the Red line is extended to Glenmont, all-day parking demand at the Wheaton station will decrease. A portion of the park-and-ride spaces could then be allotted for use by Wheaton's commercial establishments or for people who are using Metrorail for mid-day trips.

As shown in Chart 2, with Wheaton as the end-of-line station and Development Projection 1 in place, roughly 10,000 vehicles are expected to leave the Wheaton CBD during the P.M. peak hour. With Glenmont as the end-of-line station and Development Projection 2B in place, the outbound CBD cordon line volume is projected to be 9,900 during the P.M. peak hour. In other words, traffic conditions will be similar for these two conditions. Therefore, the highway improvements necessary to support the earlier development would also support later if the Glenmont station is assumed to be operational by the year 2000.

Transportation Management Association

A Central Business District such as Wheaton, located adjacent to a Metrorail station and with relatively high concentrations of businesses and employees, is ideally suited to the implementation of a Transportation Management Association (TMA). This would be a County-sponsored group that would take the lead in providing a structure for actions by the public and private sector to encourage the use of transit and ridesharing.

The TMA would provide programs and information aimed at encouraging both new and current employees to use transit and carpool to the area. Although our forecasts do not predict major traffic problems, reducing the number of vehicles coming into the CBD has many positive benefits. The overall capacity of the transportation system is increased in terms of moving people rather than cars as bus and carpool use increases as well. Moreover, reduced traffic volume provides the additional benefit of easing pedestrian crossing of the major highways that cut through the CBD. This Plan encourages creation of a voluntary TMA to provide incentives to commuters to travel by means other than the single-occupant automobile. A successful TMA could accommodate increased

transportation demand, and thus may reduce the need for intersection improvements and street widenings that hinder pedestrian movement.

A mandatory Transportation Management Association may be needed in Wheaton when the Retail Preservation Overlay Zone is removed and the "optional method of development" is permitted, and if traffic produced by future development cannot be accommodated by physical improvements to the transportation system.

This Sector Plan does not envision setting standards of transit mode share and auto occupancy. These could be added to the TMD programs at a later time based on more detailed analysis, after the Metrorail station opens for revenue operation.

HIGHWAY PLAN

This Plan does not recommend assigning a single or average value for the acceptable congestion on the overall roadway system. Rather, the individual components of the roadway system must be analyzed and evaluated in terms of the impact which the Sector Plan will have on them.

In order to accommodate traffic demand, the roadway network must have sufficient capacity both at intersections and along Central Business District blocks. Since even the major roadways in the Wheaton area have signalized intersections, it is usually the intersections that constrain the roadway network.

Therefore, each signalized intersection within the Sector Plan area was analyzed to determine if the capacity (number of lanes) was sufficient to accommodate demand (traffic volumes). The relationship between intersection capacity and demand is known as level of service (LOS).

The level of service of a roadway section or intersection is a measure which describes the quality of its performance as a traffic carrier. Intersection level of service is measured by analysis of the peak hour traffic demands at intersections and expressed as an alphabetic scale from A to F, where A indicates free flowing conditions and F indicates that the intersection failed, in theory, to provide enough capacity for the peak hour demand. Signalized intersections within the Wheaton Sector Plan area were analyzed using a critical lane volume (CLV) technique, which assigns a level of service to an intersection based on its traffic volumes and lane configuration.

Existing traffic volumes were analyzed, as were volumes forecast for the year 2000, assuming each of the Sector Plan development projections. Each intersection was assumed to have sufficient capacity if the critical lane volume (CLV) for peak hour traffic was less than 1,525, which indicates level of service E. Improvements were identified at intersections which failed to meet this criterion.

Development which occurs in the Wheaton CBD will increase the demand on the CBD roadway network. Since few of the trips made to new development will both begin and end in the Wheaton CBD, there will also be increased demand on the regional roadway network. Demand on the regional roadway network will also be increased by other new development in the metropolitan region. The impact that development in Wheaton has on an intersection, therefore, is

related to the proportion of traffic at that intersection traveling to or from the development.

Six intersections outside the Sector Plan area were identified which were considered to be potential constraints to traffic in the Wheaton CBD. These intersections will likely be affected more by regional development than by development in Wheaton. For each of these intersections, critical lane analysis was performed both with and without traffic generated by proposed Sector Plan development. If the critical lane volume was increased by more than 10 percent by the addition of Sector Plan development, improvements were identified to mitigate the impact of the development. An exception was made to this criterion in the case of the intersection of Arcola Avenue and Georgia Avenue. Due to its proximity to the Wheaton CBD, it was analyzed using the criteria applied to Sector Plan area intersections.

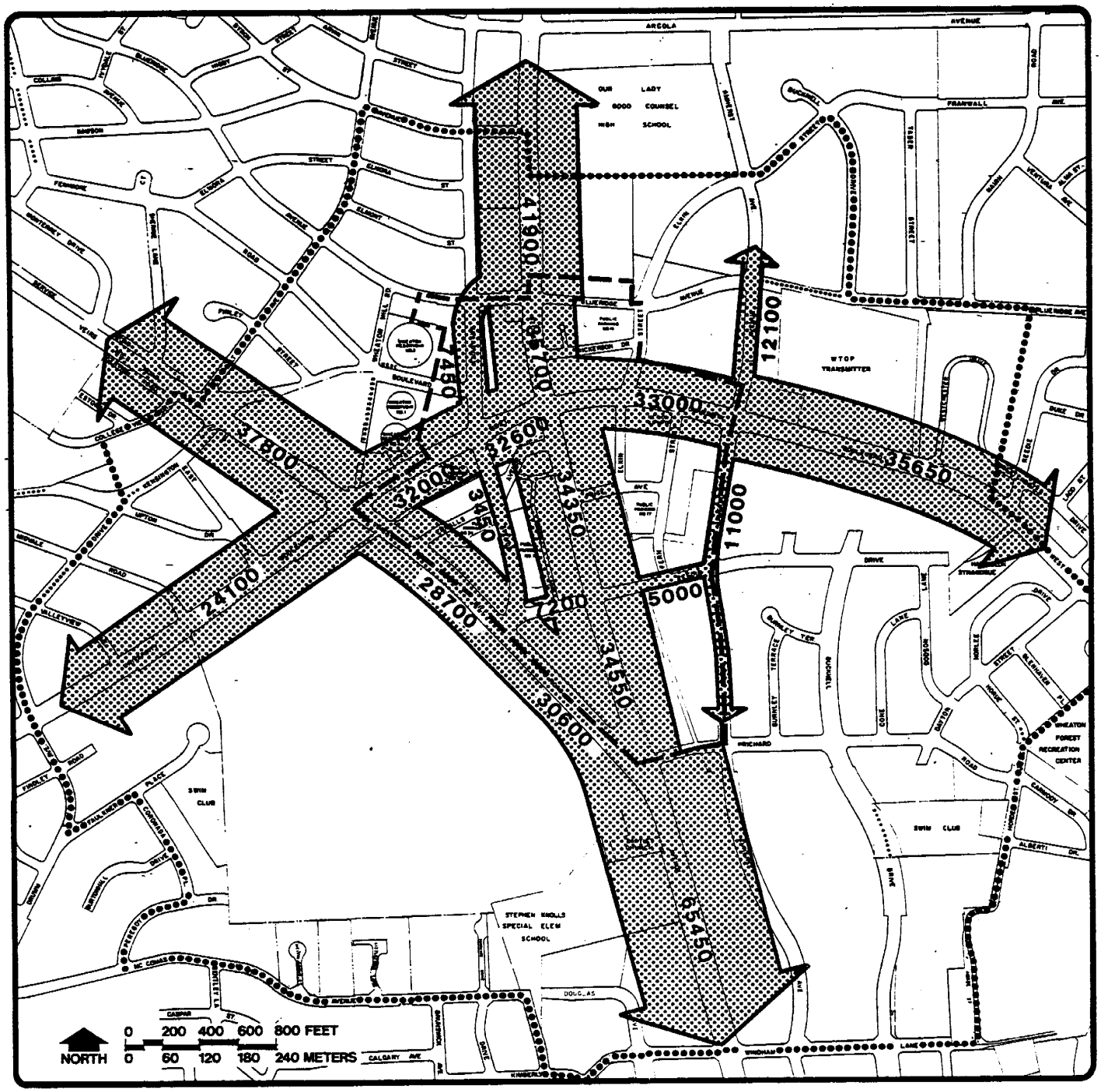
The following text describes the existing roadway network and the changes proposed to the network to accommodate traffic generated by each of the development projections according to the criteria defined in this section.

Existing Highway System

The Wheaton Sector Plan Area is traversed by three principal roadways. Georgia Avenue (MD 97) and Veirs Mill Road (MD 586) both run north-south, and University Boulevard (MD 193) runs east-west. Georgia Avenue, a six-lane divided highway, is a major regional radial extending from downtown Washington north to Howard County. Veirs Mill Road is a six-lane divided highway which extends from its intersection with Georgia Avenue in Wheaton to Rockville. University Boulevard, also a six-lane divided highway, is a major continuous east-west route extending from Connecticut Avenue in Kensington to beyond the University of Maryland campus in Prince George's County. Within the business district, these principal roadways are supplemented by Grandview Avenue and Amherst Avenue for north-south movements, and Reedie Drive and Blueridge Avenue for east-west movements. Average daily traffic (ADT) volumes for 1988 within the CBD range between 34,350 and 65,450 vehicles per day on segments of Georgia Avenue, between 24,100 and 35,600 vehicles per day on segments of University Boulevard, and between 30,600 and 37,800 vehicles per day on segments of Veirs Mill Road. On the internal business district streets, volumes range between 3,450 and 12,100 vehicles per day. Specific ADT volumes for these roadways are shown in Figure 11.

In addition to heavy daily traffic flows, the Wheaton area experiences substantial peak hour traffic demands. The P.M. peak hour demand is slightly higher than the A.M. peak hour demand, partly due to the greater number of shopping trips during the P.M. peak hour. The existing P.M. peak hour traffic volumes are shown in Figure 12.

Critical lane analysis was performed for each signalized intersection within the Wheaton Sector Plan area to determine existing levels of service. The analyses were performed using current turning movement counts and indicate the following levels of service:



1989 AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC

Vechicles Per Day (Two Directions)

WHEATON

— — — Central Business District Boundary

..... Sector Plan Boundary

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SECTOR PLAN

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PLANNING AREA

Amherst/University	A	C
Blueridge/Georgia	C	D
East/University	A	A
Georgia/Reedie	B	C
Georgia/University	E	E
Georgia/Veirs Mill	C	B
Georgia/Windham	D	E
Grandview/University	A	A
Grandview/Veirs Mill	A	A
Midvale/University	A	A
University/Veirs Mill	B	C

Proposed Highway System

The proposed highway system for the Wheaton Sector Plan area contains only a few modifications to the existing highway system. These modifications can be classified as either necessary to accommodate forecast demand at the prescribed level of service or desirable to facilitate efficient traffic circulation.

The recommended additions to the highway system are shown in Figure 13 and described as follows:

Arcola Avenue and Georgia Avenue (MD 97)

This intersection, while not in the CBD, currently operates at level of service F during the P.M. peak period. Since this intersection is only 600 feet north of the Sector Plan area, it acts as a constraint on P.M. traffic flow through the CBD.

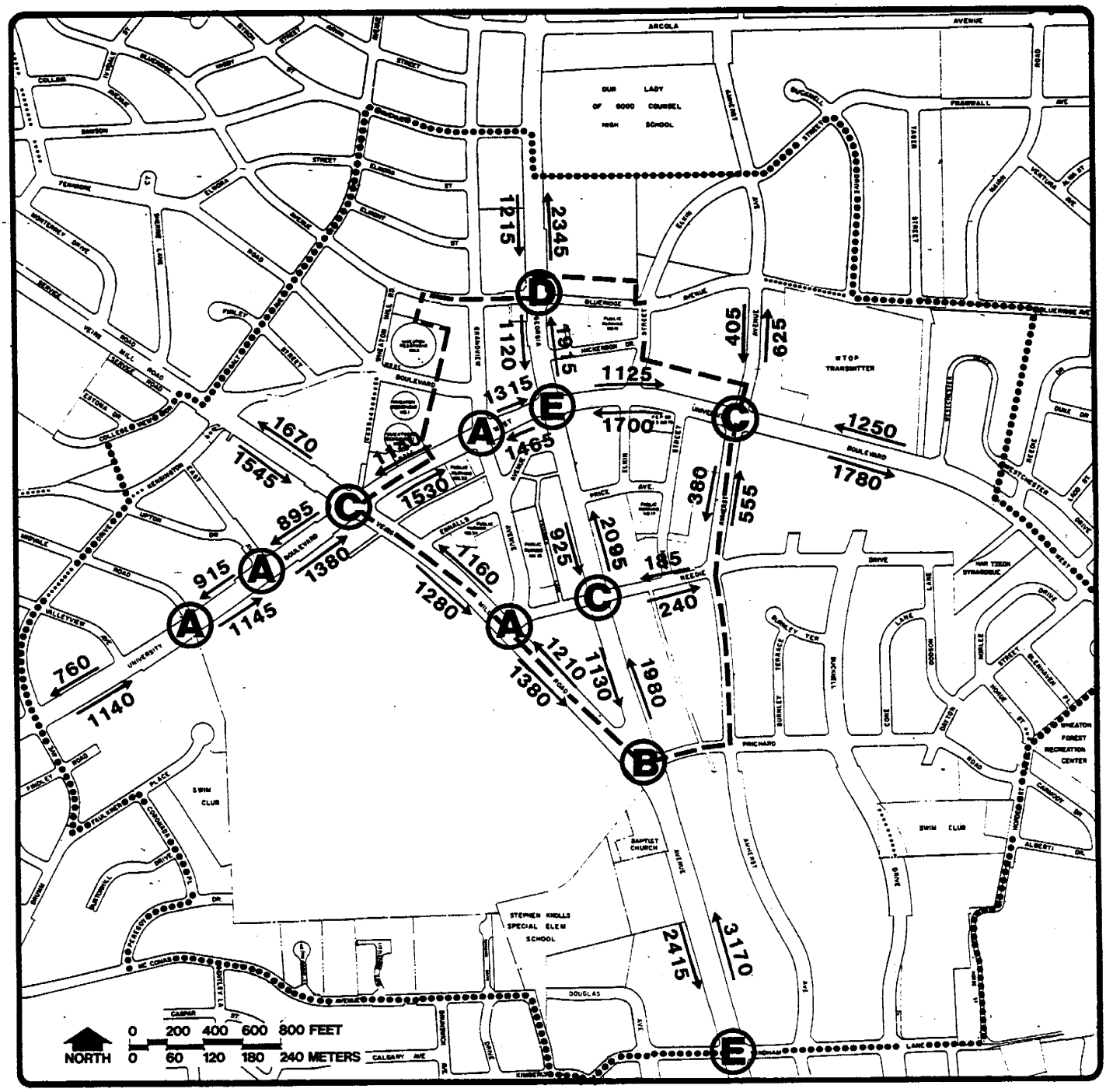
The addition of a second southbound left-turn lane on Georgia Avenue and the widening of eastbound Arcola Avenue to a two lanes between Grandview Avenue and Amherst Avenue would accommodate any of the three levels of development. Given 2B development projections, operation would improve during the A.M. peak hour from the existing level of service E to level of service D and during the P.M. peak hour operation would improve to level of service E.

Georgia Avenue (MD 97) and Reedie Drive

Since both Metrorail facilities and the development proposed in Development Projection 1 are adjacent to this intersection, the changes necessary at this location are greater than at any other location within the CBD. In order to accommodate Development Projection 1, Reedie Drive must be widened to a five-lane cross section from Grandview Avenue to Fern Street. Even with these improvements, conditions will exceed a CLV of 1,525.

Georgia Avenue (MD 97) and University Boulevard (MD 193)

This intersection may operate at level of service E under the three development projections. In order to attain a CLV of 1,525 or less, southbound Georgia Avenue traffic may use Blueridge Avenue and Grandview Avenue to access westbound University Boulevard. The reverse movement (eastbound University Boulevard to northbound Georgia Avenue) currently is directed on the same



1989 P.M. PEAK HOUR VOLUMES

(B) Intersection Level Of Service

3170 ← Vehicles Per Hour (One Direction)

WHEATON

— — — Central Business District Boundary

..... Sector Plan Boundary

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SECTOR PLAN

KW

PLANNING AREA

route. Therefore, this Plan recommends no alteration to the existing geometry of this intersection.

Georgia Avenue (MD 97) and Windham Lane

In order to improve access to the residential neighborhoods to the south and west of Wheaton Plaza, it is recommended that Windham Lane be extended to Douglas Avenue and that McComas Avenue be extended from St. Margaret Way to Douglas Avenue. These extensions should be constructed as primary residential streets, 36 feet wide, with curb, gutter, and sidewalks. The intersection of Windham Lane and Douglas Avenue should be reconstructed so that the east leg of Windham Lane connects only to the north leg of Douglas Avenue. These measures have the effect of extending McComas Avenue to Georgia Avenue and mitigate the impact of McComas Avenue traffic on secondary residential streets.

At Georgia Avenue, Windham Lane should have a four lane cross section consisting of two approach lanes and two departure lanes on both the east and west legs of the intersection. A left-turn lane should be added to northbound Georgia Avenue. The 2B development projections will be slightly over 1,525.

Grandview Avenue and Reedie Drive

This unsignalized intersection is less than 100 feet east of the signalized intersection of Reedie Drive and Veirs Mill Road. In order to facilitate operation of the signalized intersection, Grandview Avenue should be realigned so that it intersects Reedie Drive at right angles. Reedie Drive should have three eastbound lanes and two westbound lanes to the east of Grandview Avenue, maintaining lane continuity to Georgia Avenue.

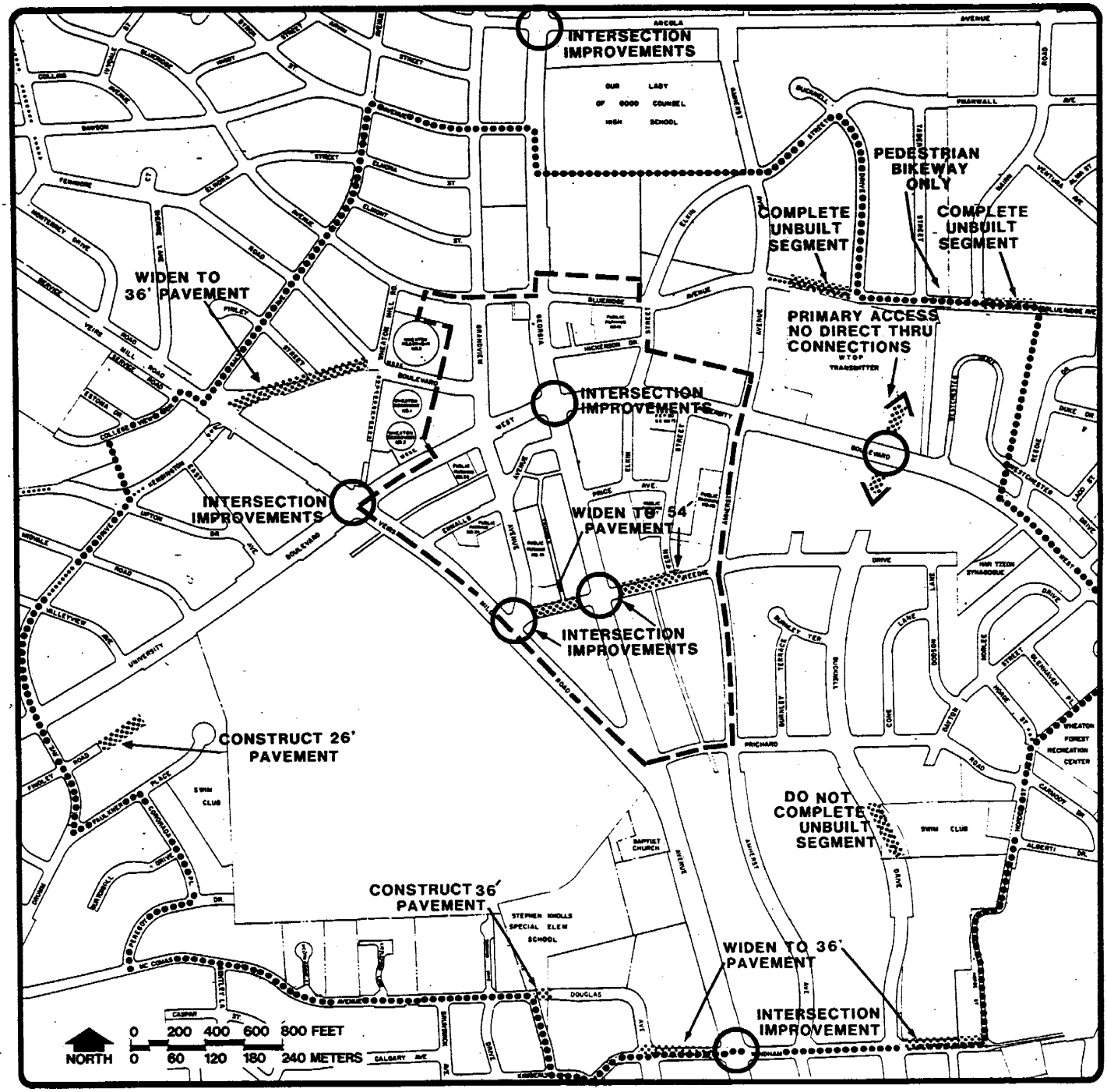
University Boulevard (MD 193) and Veirs Mill Road (MD 586)

This intersection currently operates at levels of service B and C in the A.M. and P.M. peak hours, respectively. Since roughly 40 percent of the Metro station traffic and 45 percent of future development traffic arrives or leaves from the west on University Boulevard and the northwest on Veirs Mill Road, this intersection will require improvements to accommodate additional development in the Wheaton CBD. A left-turn lane should be added to northbound Veirs Mill Road and a right-turn lane should be added to eastbound University Avenue to facilitate flow for traffic entering and leaving the CBD from the west.

Currently, the westbound approach includes three through lanes, although the rightmost lane operates as a right-turn only lane. Since current signal phasing promotes this type of operation and future volumes will warrant it, it is recommended that this lane be signed and striped as a right-turn only lane.

The Sector Plan also recommends:

- Windham Lane, between Bucknell Drive and Horde Street, should be widened to accommodate increased traffic. A primary residential street, 36 feet wide, curb, gutter, and sidewalks, is recommended.
- Kensington Boulevard, between Veirs Mill Road and Wheaton Hills Road, should be widened in conjunction with development of the properties along the south side of the street. The Sector plan recommends that this widening be constructed entirely on the south side of the existing



PROPOSED HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS

WHEATON

— — — Central Business District Boundary

••••••••• Sector Plan Boundary

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SEPT. 1990

13

SECTOR PLAN

KW

PLANNING AREA

roadway. A primary residential street, 36 feet wide, curb, gutter, and sidewalks, is recommended.

- Bucknell Drive should not be extended from Reedie Drive to University Boulevard or from Blueridge Avenue to University Boulevard. These extensions, which only marginally increase traffic capacity, would disrupt well established neighborhoods and encourage the intrusion of non-local traffic. It is recommended that the primary access for the residential development proposed on the vacant and underdeveloped properties in this area be to University Boulevard. A median break currently exists along University Boulevard which can accommodate these connections.
- The unbuilt section of Bucknell Drive between Prichard Road and Windham Lane should not be constructed at this time. However, the remaining right-of-way should be dedicated by the townhouse development adjacent to the swim club. The completion of this segment of Bucknell Drive should be determined by the County. Should the need arise to improve circulation for neighborhood traffic, the unbuilt section between Prichard Road and Windham Lane may be completed.
- Blueridge Avenue, between Amherst Avenue and Bucknell Drive, should be constructed to provide a secondary access for residential development on the WTOP site and to assure adequate access for emergency vehicles. Between Nairn Road and the existing section of Blueridge Avenue 400 feet to the east, Blueridge Avenue should be completed to provide access for the ultimate development of the adjacent properties and to assure efficient traffic circulation for emergency and service vehicles. The Sector Plan also recommends that the section of Blueridge Avenue between Taber Street and Nairn Road remain a pedestrian pathway and not be constructed as a vehicular roadway.

PARKING SYSTEM

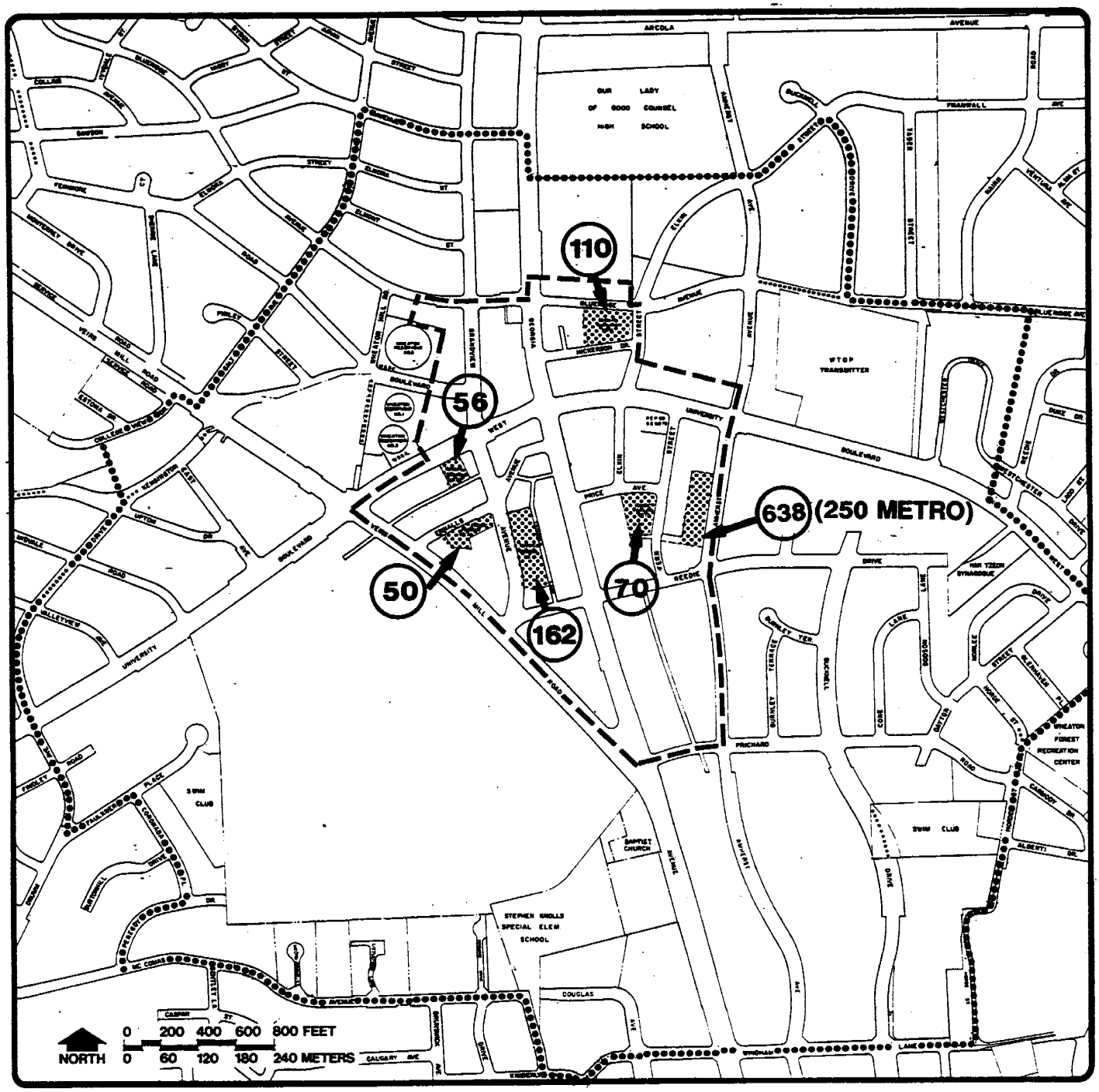
Existing Parking Facilities

Within the Wheaton Central Business District there are currently 972 public parking spaces provided by the Division of Parking of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT). According to a recent inventory, 539 spaces are located in six surface lots operated by the parking bureau, while 433 spaces are located at curbside along various streets within the parking district. Figure 14 shows the location of the public off-street parking spaces.

Public parking accounts for less than 25 percent of the total parking spaces within the business district, however. There are currently 3,000 private parking spaces in Wheaton, 2,255 of which are designated as "patron/employee" spaces.

Currently, all the parking facilities operated by the Division of Parking are surface lots. Since no vacant land exists for public parking, it is desirable that future public parking be structured to permit efficient use of the limited land within the business district. (See Land Use and Urban Design Sections.)

In Wheaton, construction of efficient public parking garages is severely constrained by the location and limited site area of the existing lots. The addition of Metro to the Wheaton CBD may have a favorable long-term impact on parking supply, however. In order to accommodate a satisfactory portion of



EXISTING OFF-STREET PARKING

(70) Number Of Public Off-Street Spaces

WHEATON

— — — Central Business District Boundary

..... Sector Plan Boundary

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the projected park-and-ride demand with Wheaton operating as an end-of-line station, WMATA is planning to build two parking garages with a total of 1150 spaces. When the Metro Red Line is extended to Glenmont, Metro parking demand will drop and many of WMATA's parking spaces may be turned over to the Division of Parking.

The Plan recommends that when the Metro station opens, MCDOT evaluate the need for a neighborhood parking permit system, particularly in that area within 2,000 feet of the station. The County parking permit system limits commuter parking on local public streets. These regulations, however, do not provide relief for private parking areas associated with apartment complexes or retail businesses. In the former case, for example, permanent stickers could be assigned to all residents and temporary passes could be distributed to visitors and guests when necessary. For the retail businesses, a three-hour parking limit is suggested to discourage all-day commuter parking. Employees of the various establishments could be given stickers which exempt their vehicles from this restriction. Finally, long term public parking could be limited to nine hours, thereby discouraging Metro commuters from parking in these areas.

BICYCLE NETWORK

Proposed Bicycle System

While motor vehicles are the most conspicuous mode of transportation in urban areas, they are not the only means for moving people that must be considered in a transportation plan. Every motor vehicle carries pedestrians, and both walking and bicycling are often viable transportation alternatives to the auto.

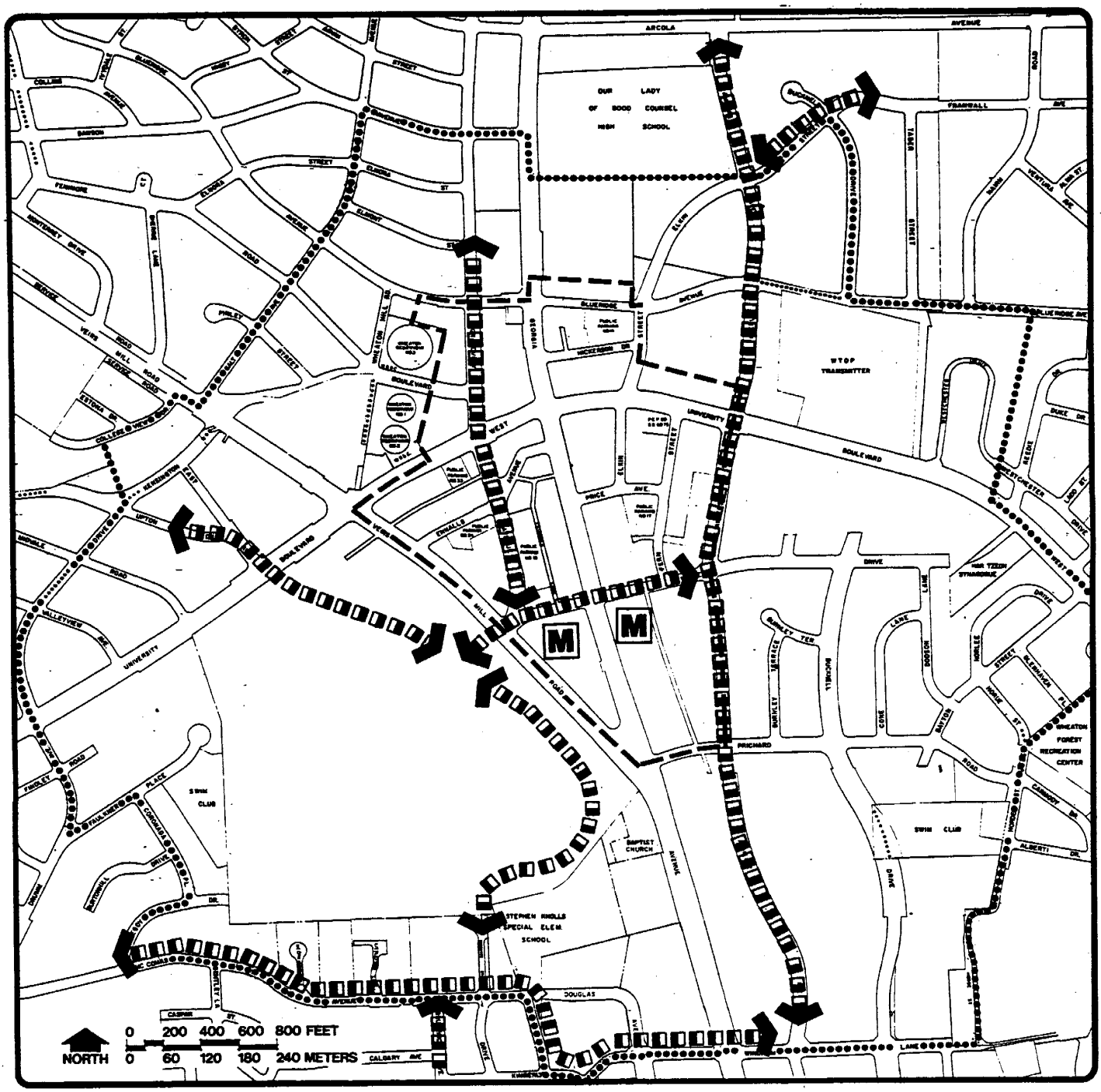
The extension of Metrorail to Wheaton will increase the number of pedestrian trips in the business district. The Metrorail station will be a focal point of pedestrian activity, as will Wheaton Plaza and retail land use bounded by Georgia Avenue, University Boulevard, and Veirs Mill Road. The principal pedestrian walkway in Wheaton will be along Reedie Drive, from the Metrorail station to Wheaton Plaza. A more detailed discussion of the elements of the pedestrian system can be found in the Land Use and Urban Design Sections.

It is the responsibility of the County and State to expand and develop bicycle access to the station from adjacent neighborhoods. A proposed bicycle circulation network, providing access to the Metro station as well as serving recreational and other travel needs in Wheaton, is shown on Figure 15. These bicycle network proposals have been identified with the guidance of the Master Plan of Bikeways.

The Master Plan of Bikeways sets forth the following criteria for bikeway planning:

Continuity: Bikeways should be developed as part of the continuous County-wide system, providing connections to adjacent jurisdictions.

Access: Bikeways should be located to provide convenient access to serve residential areas, shopping centers, schools, and recreation centers where bicycle usage is anticipated. Bicycle parking facilities should be provided where needed as integral components of the bikeways system.



PROPOSED BICYCLE NETWORK

▮▮▮▮ Bikeways

WHEATON

— — — Central Business District Boundary

..... Sector Plan Boundary

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SECTOR PLAN

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Safety: Bikeways should be located to provide protection for cyclists by minimizing conflicts with pedestrians and motor vehicles.

Purpose: Bikeways should be developed to serve the variety of trip purposes and the age and skill level of the users.

The principal elements of the bicycle system proposed by this Sector Plan are:

A Class III[1] east-west route from Kensington to Wheaton Plaza via Kensington Boulevard, Upton Drive, and East Avenue;

A Class III north-south route from Glenmont to Wheaton Plaza via Grandview Avenue;

A Class III north-south route from Silver Spring to Wheaton Plaza via Brunswick Avenue;

A Class III north-south route from Wheaton Regional Park to Forest Glen via Amherst Avenue;

A Class III east-west route along McComas Avenue and Windham Lane to Amherst Avenue; and

A Class III connector route from the existing Sligo Creek Trail to Amherst Avenue via Franwall Drive.

In addition, a short connector route along Reedie Drive, from Wheaton Plaza to Amherst Avenue, is proposed. This route will provide the critical interconnection of the major network elements with the Wheaton Metro station. Local streets, where traffic is light and bicycle/vehicular conflicts are minimal, will serve as feeder routes to this network.

Any bike route through Wheaton Plaza should follow the newly constructed "ring road."

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[1] *Bikeway classifications are defined as follows:*

Class I: Bike Path/Trail – An independent bikeway on a separate right-of-way or easement (combined with a pedestrian walkway where suitable).

Class II: Bike Lane – A restricted lane on a roadway designated by painted stripes and signed for the exclusive or semi-exclusive use of bicycles.

Class III: Bike Route – A roadway shared by motor vehicles, bicycles, and/or pedestrians and designated by signing only.