

# INTRODUCTION

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Twinbrook Sector Plan area is located in the County's I-270 Corridor, along the Metro Red Line. The Plan area abuts the City of Rockville on the west and garden apartments and the Parklawn Memorial Park on the east. It is a pocket of commercial uses, buffered from adjacent neighborhoods by parks and major roads.

The Plan's recommendations seek to create Twinbrook as a distinct and varied community. As part of the I-270 Technology Corridor, redevelopment in Twinbrook has the opportunity to create a technology node that builds on existing government agencies and private businesses, makes use of adjacent light industrial sites for incubator activities, and develops a community profile with housing and retail near the Metro station and park connections.

Based on land uses and geography, this Plan divides the area into three districts. The sites west of Twinbrook Parkway adjacent to Twinbrook Station make up the Metro Core Area, envisioned for mixed use redevelopment. Sites east of Twinbrook Parkway around Fishers Lane and Parklawn Drive are the Technology Employment Area, proposed for development that builds on existing technology uses. South of Parklawn Drive, the Plan identifies the Light Industrial Area, proposed to continue with amendments to the I-4 Zone that will allow existing businesses to evolve in place.

## EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

### Development Character

Commercial uses in Twinbrook are a mix of small and large users on a mix of small and large lots, ranging from the 15-story Parklawn Building to a few remaining single-family houses. Most development falls in between, a mix of simple office buildings and warehouses. Surrounding Fishers Lane, properties assembled into larger lots have encouraged office and biotechnology redevelopment and have upgraded sidewalks, streetscapes and public spaces. South of Parklawn Drive, the pattern of small residential lots, remains, and with fewer assemblages, has allowed a mix of high tech support services and traditional industrial services.

Most of Twinbrook is zoned I-1 and I-4. The 109 acres of industrially zoned land make up about five percent of the County's total industrial land. As it has throughout the County, this industrial zoning has generated office and laboratory uses. Other zoning designations include single-family residential zones (R-200 and R-90) and commercial zones (C-O and O-M) that reflect earlier land use decisions to move from residential to commercial uses in the area.

The environment and public realm have received little attention. As a center for office and industrial uses along a rail line, Twinbrook sites have been paved for storage and parking as needed. Without a resident population, there has been little impetus to create park and recreation facilities. Nonetheless, the area is close to Rock Creek Regional Park and redevelopment can help regenerate the natural environment, add park facilities, and make park and trail connections.

Twinbrook Parkway connects Veirs Mill Road and Rockville Pike. As a through route, it tends to divide the area, particularly for pedestrians. It also gathers traffic from the area's two parallel primary streets, Fishers Lane and Parklawn Drive, and so has the potential for congestion. The area also is close to the proposed Montrose Parkway and regional bike routes, and to Metro. The Metro station straddles the City of Rockville and the County and its surface lots are undergoing redevelopment into a mixed-use community, the Twinbrook Station project.

The Twinbrook Station project will be a mixed-use, main street pattern community with 1,595 multifamily housing units, and approximately 500,000 square feet of retail and office space. It will significantly change the area's character and is the starting point for many of this Plan's recommendations which seek to create Twinbrook as a distinct community of complementary uses.

## Population and Housing Stock

The Twinbrook Plan area has no resident population, but 2000 Census data for the larger surrounding North Bethesda planning area provides a profile of other Metro Red Line communities. North Bethesda residents tend to be older and more educated than the County average; 76 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher. At \$79,620, the area's median household income reflects this level of education. Slightly more than half of North Bethesda residents work in the County and prefer to drive to their jobs, with an average commuting time of close to 30 minutes.

About half of North Bethesda households are married couples. One-third of the households are single-person households. This percentage jumps for those living in high-rise apartments to 61.4 percent. North Bethesda households generate the smallest percentage of school-age children (5.3 percent in high-rise and 11.8 percent in garden apartments). More North Bethesda householders own their home or apartment than rent.

There are about 18,000 housing units in North Bethesda, primarily multifamily, ranging from single-family attached townhouses to buildings with 20 or more units. More than half of North Bethesda householders live in multifamily housing (54.3 percent), in contrast to the I-270 Corridor (32.0 percent) and Countywide (30.8 percent). Households in all locations and apartment types have at least one car.

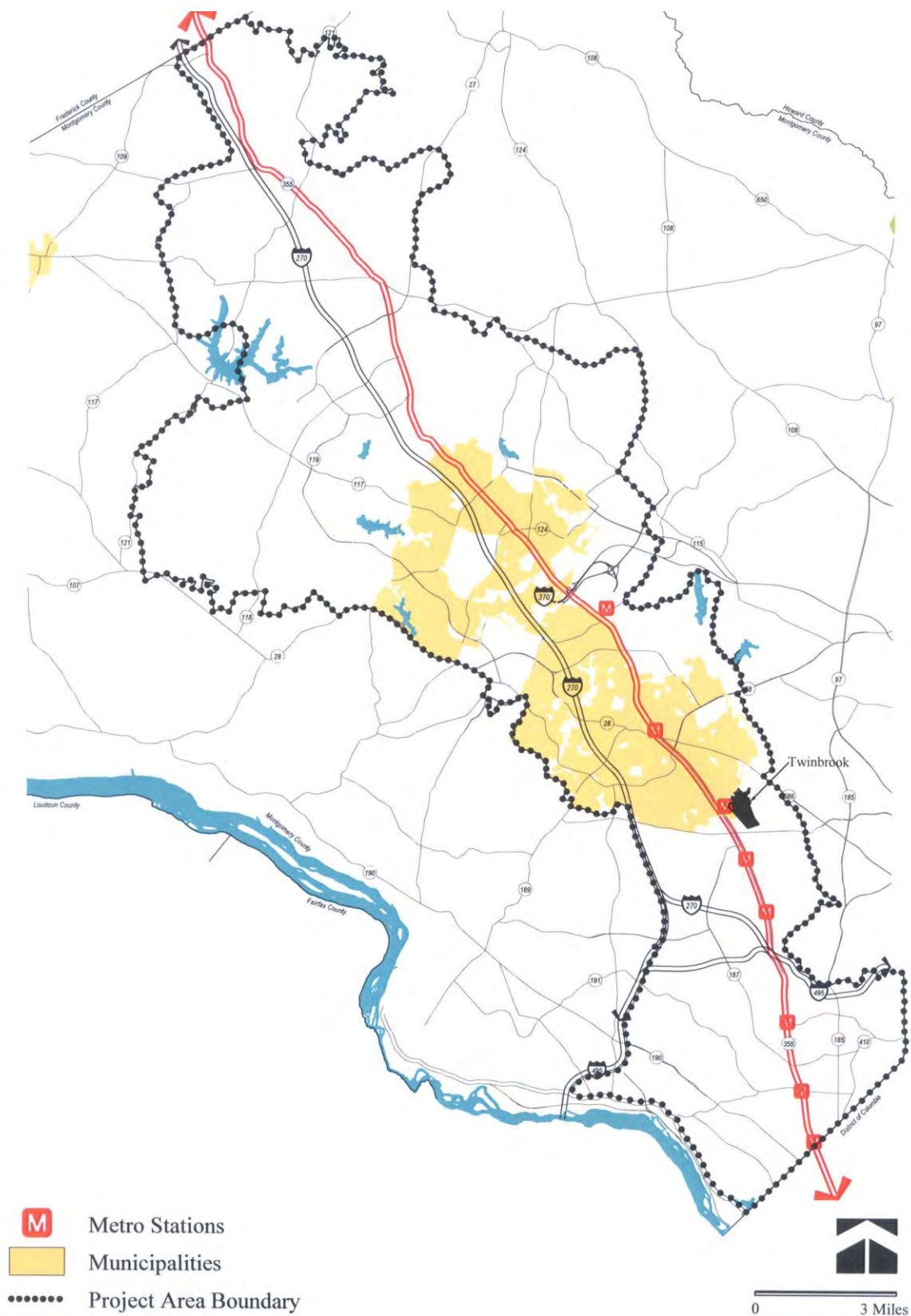
Another nearly 6,000 dwelling units have been approved or are proposed for the North Bethesda area, and include the 1,595 units at Twinbrook Station, 2,500 units among various projects in White Flint.

## Land Use in the Twinbrook Plan Area

Land Use	Existing	1992 Proposed	2007 Proposed
Residential (total)	0	416 du	500–1,200 du*
- TDRs (105)	0	0	315 du
- Workforce housing	0	0	50-120 du
- MPDUs	0	52	180 du
Commercial	4.0m sf	5.2m sf	5.3m sf

\*The Twinbrook Station project in the City of Rockville will generate 1,595 units and redevelopment of the Parklawn Building could generate another 700 units.

## MD 355/I-270 Corridor



## HISTORY

Development in Twinbrook was established as the residential Spring Lake subdivision in 1892 and the area was eventually zoned R-90. The R-90 zoning at the eastern end of Fishers Lane is a holdover from this era, as are the small lots in the industrial area south of Parklawn Drive.

By the time of the **1970 North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan** land uses around Twinbrook Parkway were commercial and industrial. That Plan also describes the area straddling the Rockville and County lines as one of three “primary impact areas” from the proposed transit line. Because the area is primarily within the City and at the time, the station was planned to be located entirely within the City, the Twinbrook area of the County is not specifically addressed in the Plan. The station was later moved to the south, and the area is more directly addressed in later plans.

Overall, the 1970 Plan’s policies and recommendations recognized the impact of I-270 and transit, and established a pattern of mixed offices, retail uses, and multifamily dwellings around transit stations that stands to this day.

The **1978 Twinbrook Sector Plan** begins by stating “The Twinbrook Metro station was located to serve a number of primary passenger generators including Parklawn HEW [the building was leased by the federal Health Education and Welfare agency, which later became Health and Human Services], and other commercial and industrial employers.”

The Plan noted that the area “is dominated by the Parklawn Building...” and recommended retaining the area’s existing I-1 zoning to limit development in the area in response to a County Council mandate to decrease trip generation.

The Twinbrook area was last examined in the **1992 North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan**. That Plan compared the area to the adjacent City of Rockville, which had begun redeveloping land around the Twinbrook Metro Station with moderate density office buildings and townhouses, while County sites remained low-intensity uses.

The Plan recognized the area as an “underutilized yet potentially important asset...” and sought through rezoning, to introduce a residential component into the area, to retain industrial uses, and to improve the area’s urban design. The primary implementation tools recommended were the Transit Station-Mixed and Transit Station-Residential floating zones. These zones allow mixed uses, but require a cumbersome review process and offered a lower density potential than the underlying I-1 base zone. In redeveloping the area, property owners used the underlying I-1 Zone that offered them a simpler process, more density, and enough flexibility to meet market demands for office and laboratory space. As a result, the area redeveloped without the desired component of housing or urban design improvements. This Plan proposes the Euclidean TOMX Zones that allow mixed uses, require public amenities, emphasize high quality design, and are shaped by plan recommendations.

The 1992 Plan recognized another significant feature of the area, the Parklawn Building, then tenanted by the federal government’s Department of Health and Human Services. At that time, the 1.3 million square foot building housed almost 6,000 employees. The government’s lease will end in 2009, and the agency is seeking improved space, either in the building or elsewhere. This Plan seeks to ensure that future redevelopment of the building and site contributes to the desired mixed-use urban environment and continues the development of technology uses.

The 1992 Plan also identified and created an “industrial sanctuary” on sites south of Parklawn Drive, rezoning them from I-1, which allows office uses, to I-4, a strictly light industrial zone. While this has maintained the industrial uses, many of the smaller lots cannot expand or improve their businesses under the I-4 Zone’s current development standards, and may be forced to relocate.

In the **2000 planning and design charrette**, the M-NCPPC staff worked extensively with community members and consulting architects to develop an Initial Concept Plan for the Twinbrook area. The concept plan described a community with an identifiable center, a public space at Metro, new residential development, a transit center, and higher densities at the Metro core.

Since that charrette, the JBG Companies teamed with WMATA to create Twinbrook Station, a mixed-use development on Metro and private property that will meet many of the charrette’s goals. The project accommodates Metro buses and parking, includes 1,595 residential units, and organizes mixed office and retail uses around a central green. Since its design and approval, Twinbrook Station has been annexed by the City of Rockville, but has become a driver of change in the Twinbrook Plan area.

Other desired elements of character and use identified by the charrette included a mix of uses, an expanded circulation network, and an emphasis on streetscape design and urban design standards. This Plan fills out the charrette recommendations with mixed-use zones that build on the pattern established by Twinbrook Station.

Through time, Twinbrook has consistently been shaped by its proximity to transit, and early development patterns and plan recommendations have sought to build on this resource. This Plan proposes zoning and improvements to the public realm that move Twinbrook closer to becoming the mixed-use, transit-oriented community envisioned in previous plans.

## CONTEXT

### Plan Boundary

The area addressed by the Twinbrook Sector Plan is located in the North Bethesda planning area, three miles north of the Beltway, and adjacent to the Metro Red Line. The Twinbrook area’s northern and western edges abut the City of Rockville. The eastern boundary is adjacent to Parklawn Memorial Park. The Twinbrook area’s southern boundary is along the future Montrose Parkway right-of-way, and the CSX/MARC rail line further defines the area’s western edge.

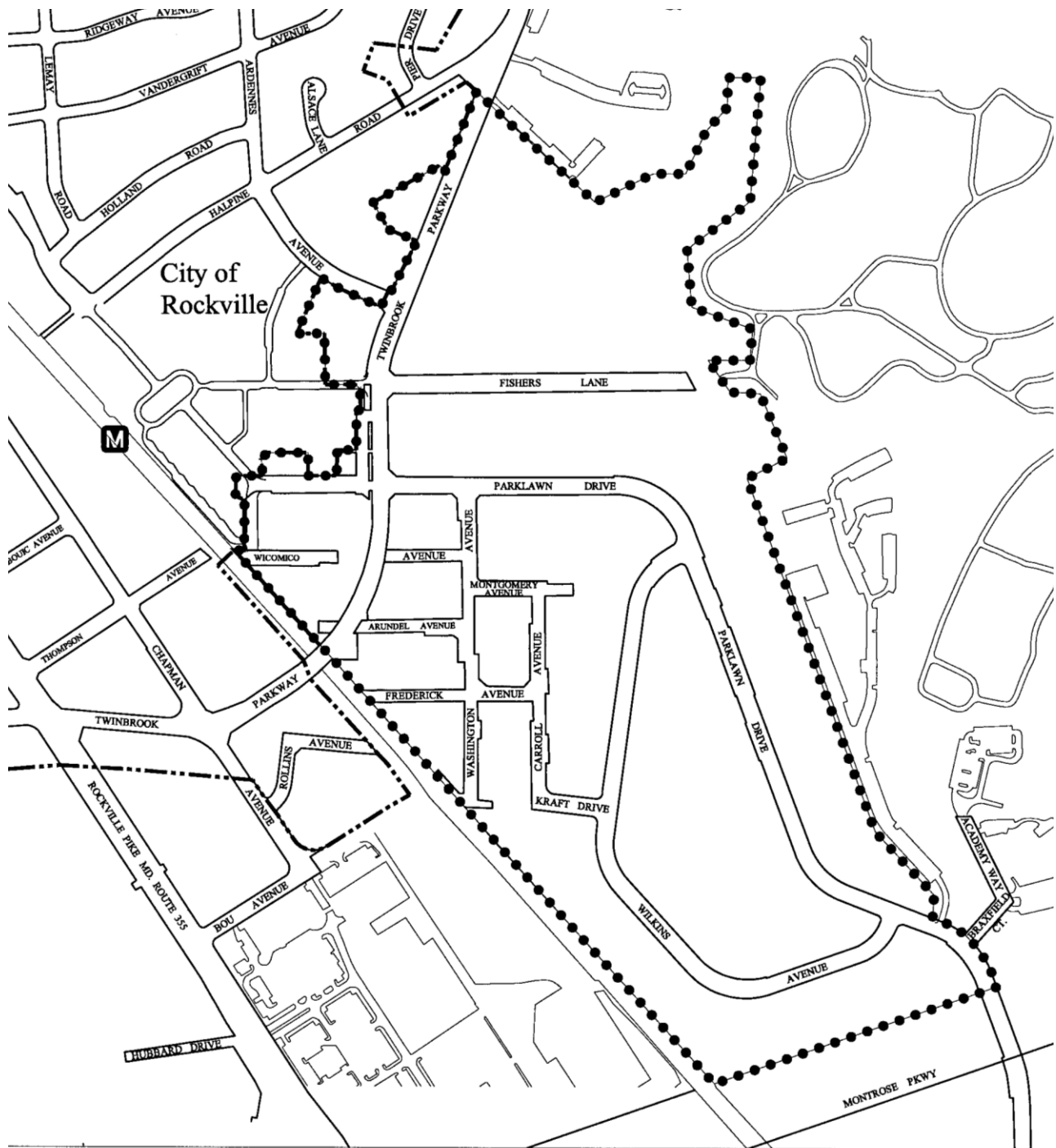
This Plan expands the Twinbrook area defined in the 1992 Plan, nearly doubling it to 154 acres. The northeastern boundary has been extended to include the Parklawn Building’s northern parking lot. This nine-acre site’s access is from Fishers Lane, creating a potential Metro connection.

The boundary has been further adjusted to reflect the City of Rockville’s June 2005 annexation of land east of the Metro station.

The area’s southern boundary now includes the area of entire light-industrial zoned land along Wilkins Avenue and Parklawn Drive. Including these properties allows the Plan to address the Light Industrial Area as a whole and to incorporate current facility planning recommendations for the future Montrose Parkway.

Finally, this Plan designates the entire area covered by the Twinbrook Sector Plan as a Transit Station Development Area. The recommended TOMX Zones are allowed only in areas designated by a master plan as transit station development areas, and Road Code business street standards would be applicable.

## Sector Plan Boundaries – 1992 and 2007



Metro Station



2005 Twinbrook Sector Plan Boundary



City of Rockville



0 600'

## Relationship to the MD 355/I-270 Corridor

Beginning with the *General Plan*, expanded upon in the *1970 North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan*, and continuing through successive plans, the County has recognized the MD 355/I-270 Corridor as a distinct place and recommendations in area plans strive to support the corridor's advanced technology and biotechnology centers with transit-accessible communities of residential and commercial options, while continuing the County's strong tradition of linked open spaces and parks. Located along the Metro Red Line, Twinbrook will be one of a number of transit-oriented communities in the MD 355/I-270 Corridor.

The County has undertaken the MD 355/I-270 Corridor project to coordinate issues that cross planning area boundaries. The project will examine the character of corridor communities, support advanced technology uses, balance jobs and housing, enhance mobility, address environmental needs, and coordinate public facilities.

This Plan's recommendations fulfill countywide policies in the MD 355/I-270 Corridor by supporting its concentration of biotechnology and advanced technology uses and by adding housing incentives to help balance jobs and housing. The Plan also recommends retaining and maximizing the existing light industrial uses that support not only the County's basic high-technology economy, but provide services to residents as well. The Plan also addresses community character with design and environmental standards for street oriented, high quality redevelopment.

## Relationship to the City of Rockville

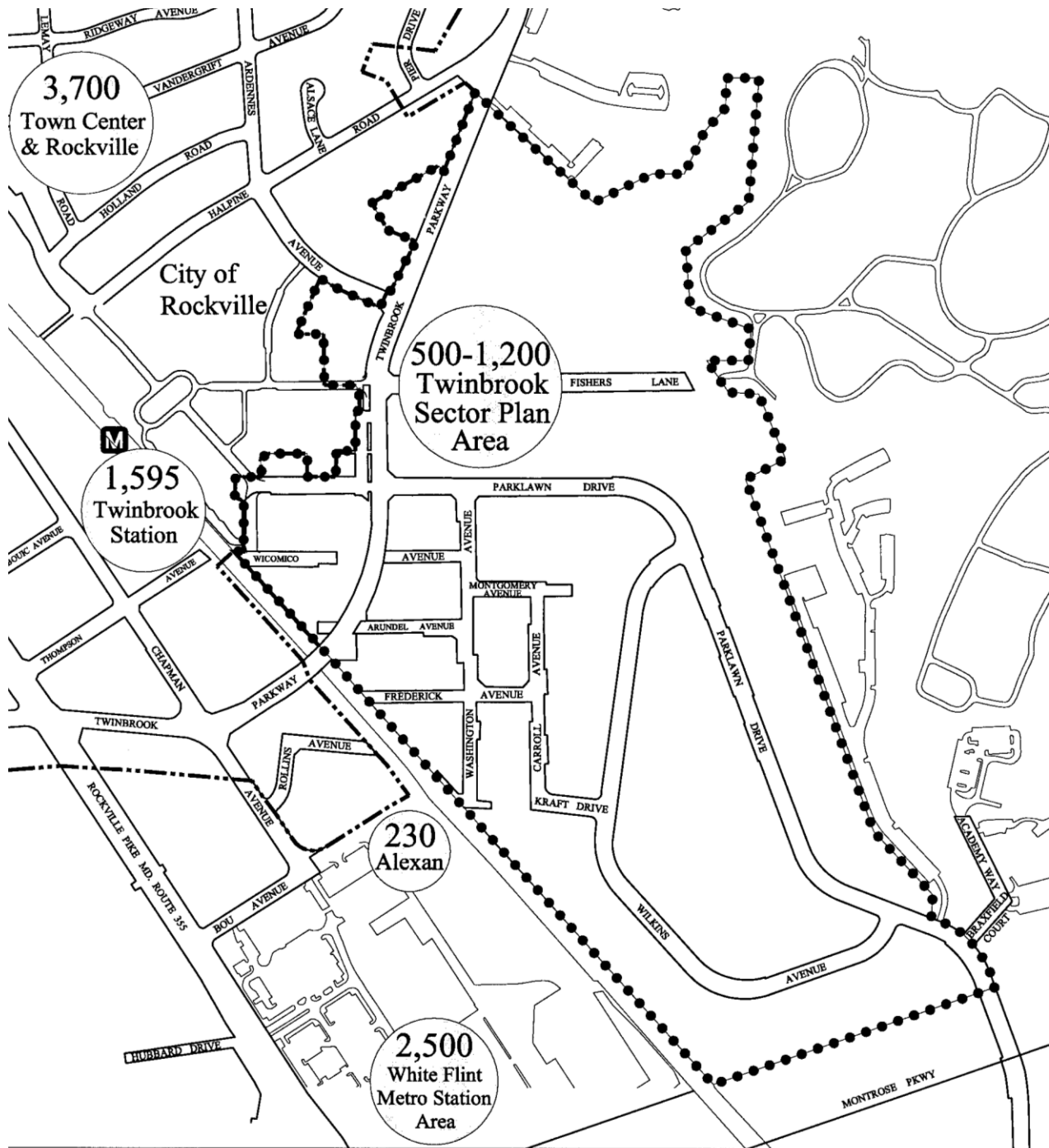
The Twinbrook Sector Plan area lies within the City of Rockville's Urban Growth Area and includes land that abuts the City's current boundaries. In June 2005, the City annexed the roughly sixteen acres east of the Metro station proposed for redevelopment as a mixed-use community, Twinbrook Station, a project that achieves some of the goals identified in previous City and County planning efforts.

The City of Rockville is completing its own master planning for areas adjacent to the Twinbrook Metro Station. In the *Rockville Pike Corridor Neighborhood Plan*, which abuts Twinbrook at the Metro station, the City has designated the area west of the CSX tracks as a Metro Performance District and has developed urban design goals and development guidelines intended to focus significant commercial and residential densities at the Twinbrook Metro Station.

The *Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan* abuts the northern edge of the County's Twinbrook Plan area and is designed to maintain the existing residential communities, allow further study of industrial land use policy, and explore traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and policies that enhance the area's environmental quality.

Just as the City and County share the land surrounding the Metro station, they share a vision of its redevelopment, with density and activity focused to create a distinct neighborhood of varied uses and public spaces. This Plan recommends redevelopment with compatible uses and densities.

## Potential Housing Units in the Twinbrook Vicinity



Metro Station



Sector Plan Boundary



City of Rockville



0 600'



## MAJOR PLANNING ISSUES

Redevelopment since 1992 has begun to change Twinbrook's character. The Twinbrook Station project will introduce a new level of mixed uses and density. This Plan seeks to meet that change with complementary uses and connections that fulfill long-standing County policies to direct density and mixed uses to areas with transit access. Accordingly, the Plan addresses the following issues.

- Building on its existing mix of high technology uses and traditional industrial services, Twinbrook will continue to support the County's knowledge based economy.
- Proximate to Metro, and with significant redevelopment potential, Twinbrook is an opportunity to balance jobs and housing in the I-270 Corridor and create a transit-accessible community.
- Retail in Twinbrook will serve the emerging mixed-use community, and complement the significant retail centers along Rockville Pike.
- Redevelopment offers the opportunity to create a sense of place that should not be squandered. Design and development decisions should contribute to a walkable community between a regional park and transit station, with its own public spaces and streetscape.
- The redevelopment of the Parklawn Building and its parking lots should contribute significantly to the public realm, contributing an active employee and resident population and contributing to the area's high quality public realm.

## PLAN GOALS

Twinbrook is envisioned as a community of employment, residential, retail, and technology uses in an urban environment. Convenient to transit, employment, and services, Twinbrook will integrate its land use, urban design, environmental, transportation, and community facilities to create a distinct community connected to the resources of the Washington region.

### ***Create Twinbrook as a distinct place along the Metro Red Line.***

The Twinbrook Sector Plan makes recommendations for three mutually supportive districts.

- The Metro Core Area west of Twinbrook Parkway, an area of mixed uses focused on the Metro station and its emerging neighborhood.
- The Technology Employment Area along Fishers Lane and Parklawn Drive, with mixed uses featuring advanced technology and biotechnology activities in an area of high quality public design.
- The thriving goods and services businesses in the Light Industrial Area around Washington and Wilkins Avenues.

### ***Provide opportunities for housing.***

The Plan encourages a range of new housing near Metro and jobs, improving the balance of jobs and housing in the I-270 Corridor and fulfilling the 1992 Plan's housing recommendations. The Plan recommends housing in the Metro Core area, building on the emerging Twinbrook Station neighborhood.

## Twinbrook Illustrative







The Plan's recommendations will create a living and working community marked by public spaces and amenities, and connected to parks and Metro.


- 1 Twinbrook Metro Station
- 2 U.S. Pharmacopeia headquarters
- 3 Fishers Place project
- 4 Parklawn Building
- 5 Proposed Boland Services project

The Plan envisions Twinbrook as a single community of complementary residential and commercial neighborhoods.

 Twinbrook Station project

 Metro Core Area

 Technology Employment Area

 Light Industrial Area



***Reduce the impact of development on the natural environment.***

The Plan proposes mixed-use development near the Metro station to create a walkable environment that encourages fewer vehicle trips. Redevelopment will require improved stormwater management techniques, an increase in the requirement for pervious surface, and substantial tree cover, which will transform an area of paved parking lots into one of mixed public spaces and buildings.

***Create a connected road network.***

A grid street pattern with a range of route options will be created through redevelopment and will improve traffic flow and intersection impacts.

***Provide an improved system of pedestrian and bicycle connections.***

The Plan recommends routes that connect within and through the area, to the Metro station, and to adjacent regional parks and trails.

***Encourage high quality design features.***

The Plan's recommendations will provide an upgraded public environment by incorporating parks, streetscaping, public open spaces, connections, and the natural environment into redevelopment that will serve future employees and residents.

***Establish a development envelope balanced with infrastructure capacity.***

The mixed uses, road network, and community facilities proposed in this Plan maintain a balance while allowing for redevelopment that will make best use of the Metro system.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

This Plan's land use recommendations encourage mixed-use redevelopment, support advanced technology and industrial employment, and offer housing development potential. The Plan also provides urban design, environmental, transportation, historic resources, and community facilities recommendations as summarized below.

### Land Use and Zoning

- Apply the TOMX-2 and TOMX-2/TDR Zones to encourage high-density, mixed-use development near Metro.
- Establish and apply the TOMX-1/TDR Zone to allow lower-density, mixed-use development on sites farther away from Metro.
- Amend the I-4 Zone in Transit Station Development Areas to reflect an urban environment, with standards appropriate to a transit-accessible area of light industrial uses.

### Urban Design

- Support design standards for Fishers Lane and Parklawn Drive to redevelop them as active streets, connecting to Metro, linked by a streetscaped pedestrian/vehicle connection, and lined with commercial, retail, and some residential uses.
- Create public open spaces at the eastern end of Fishers Lane and along Parklawn Drive that contribute to a network of green spaces and pedestrian routes.

- Ensure that new development and redevelopment contribute to improving both the natural environment and community spaces.

#### Environmental Resources

- Integrate urban design, parks, land use, and transportation recommendations with environmental improvements to create an urban form that promotes the function of healthy natural processes.
- Encourage the use of emerging green principles in site and building design.
- Reduce automobile dependence by encouraging increased pedestrian activity and transit accessibility.

#### Transportation

- Create a network of local streets that offer alternative vehicle routes.
- Create and enhance pedestrian and bike routes that connect to parks and the Metro station.

#### Historic Resources

- Add the Higgins Cemetery to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and incorporate its open space with the area's system of open space and pedestrian routes.

#### Park and Recreation Facilities

- Improve connections to public and private parks and open spaces.
- Secure new urban parks east of Twinbrook Parkway, along Parklawn Drive and at the eastern end of Fishers Lane.
- Establish a trail route through the Plan area's northeast corner connecting to M-NCPPC park facilities, Rock Creek Park, and Veirs Mill Road, as well as a connection south to the planned Montrose Parkway hiker-biker trail.

#### Implementation

- Rezone sites as recommended to encourage mixed-use, transit-focused development.
- Amend the TOMX-2 Zone to include commercial and residential TDRs.
- Establish and apply the TOMX-1/TDR Zone.
- Amend the I-4 Zone as applied in Transit Station Development Areas.



# Twinbrook Plan Concept

