

The Plan's Recommendations

- complete the economic core envisioned in the General Plan
- increase employment
- organize communities around transit
- enhance connections to Germantown's greenbelt and stream valley parks
- pursue design quality and sustainability in the public and private realms
- build on cultural, historic, and civic facilities

This Plan directs new uses, activity, and design attention to the Town Center—the heart of Germantown. Its mixed uses will be complementary with the offices on the parallel route, MD 118, and nearby Montgomery College. Century Boulevard will be the community's main street, anchored with transit, lined with shops and restaurants, its library, arts center, and historic district as focal points for civic life.

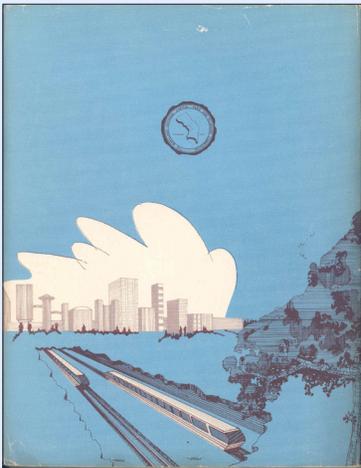
Building at higher densities, in strategic locations like Germantown, results in a greener approach to building than the traditional development pattern in Montgomery County. Low population densities spread over half-acre lots cannot sustain the cost of replacing current infrastructure. More residents in a compact communities result in economies of scale, allowing a more efficient use of resources that ensures sustainability.

In addition, jobs can draw workers from down-County to employment sites in Germantown, which increases the efficiency of the road and transit network without additional capital costs.



Future park and boardwalk in the Germantown Town Center

- Create Germantown as a Corridor City with a **Quality of Place** that makes it the up-County's commercial hub.
- Design and fund the **Corridor Cities Transitway** as an essential feature of Germantown's evolution. Transit, including the MARC station and bus service, is essential to addressing traffic congestion and building a sustainable community. The CCT will connect Germantown to the Metro Red Line and the County's Life Sciences Center.
- Create Germantown as a **strategic location for employment** in the County. Highway access and the eventual connection to a transit network will make Germantown accessible and attractive for employers.
- Strengthen and expand the **Town Center** to encompass properties within a walkable distance of the transit station by providing the options and activity of a thriving downtown. Focusing activity along Century Boulevard and surrounding it with complementary residential and employment uses will create a vibrant center.
- Create transit-served, mixed use **neighborhoods** that include public facilities, enhance existing communities and shape new ones, using references to Germantown's history and natural features. Infilling with connections, public facilities, and mixed uses will build distinct communities.
- Establish Germantown as the **up-County cultural center**. The Black Rock Center for the Arts, the new library, and the public green they frame will be the basis for active civic life in the Town Center and for all of Germantown.
- Enhance Germantown's **natural environment**. Germantown's greenbelt and stream valley parks are extraordinary environmental resources that will be enhanced by park connections and a network of urban open spaces, further supported by green design and building techniques that conserve energy and resources.
- Encourage **high quality design** that enhances character and identity. Distinct neighborhoods, green streets, and attractive urban spaces with historic and cultural references will give Germantown a strong sense of place. High quality design is expected for public and private development.
- **Balance** the amount and timing of development with infrastructure capacity. Density brings opportunity and options, but must be shaped through zoning and other tools that create a community of lasting quality.

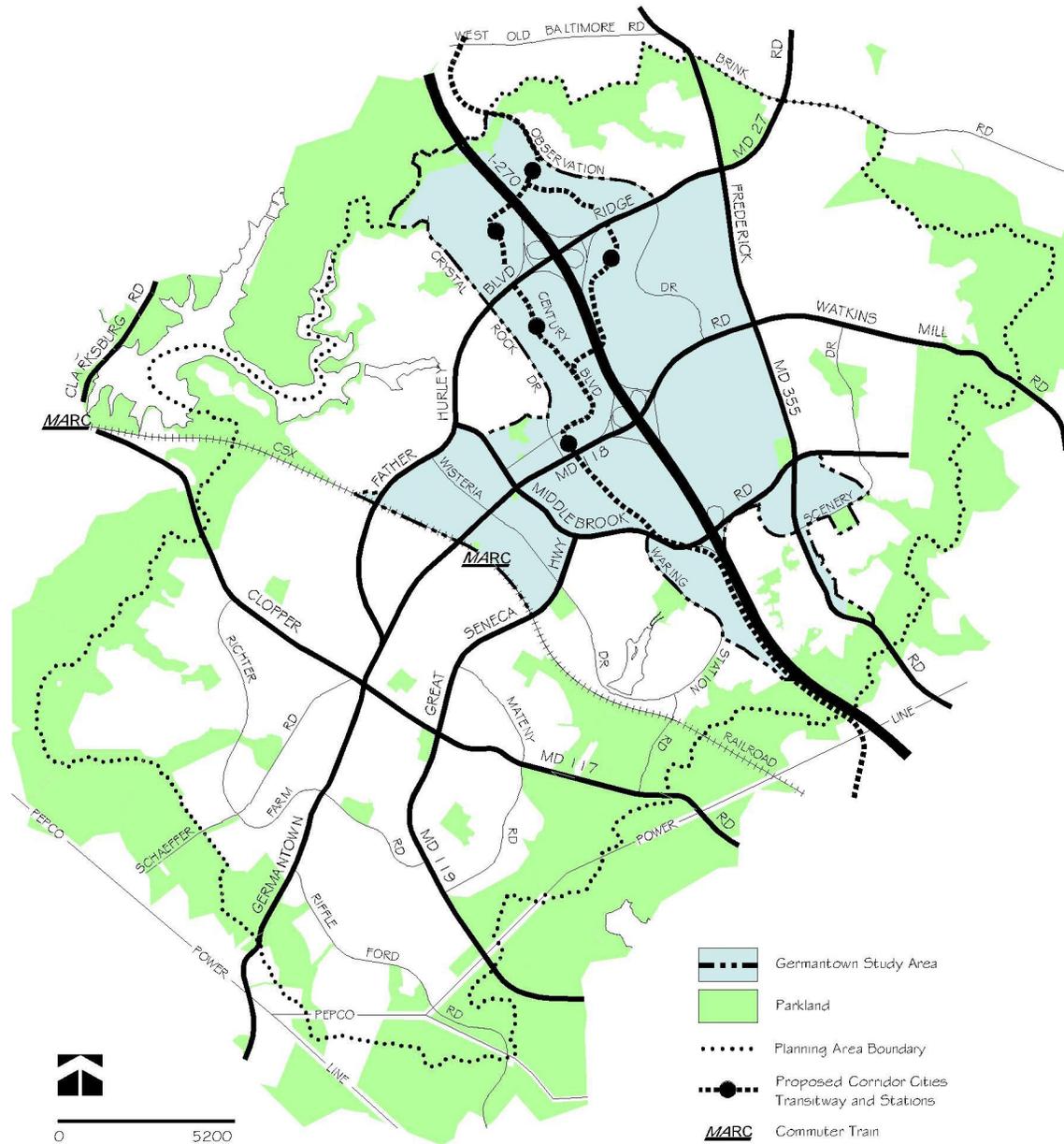


Creating the Corridor City

As early as the 1964 General Plan Germantown was defined as a corridor city, intended to “support a full variety of commercial, cultural, and social services...”.

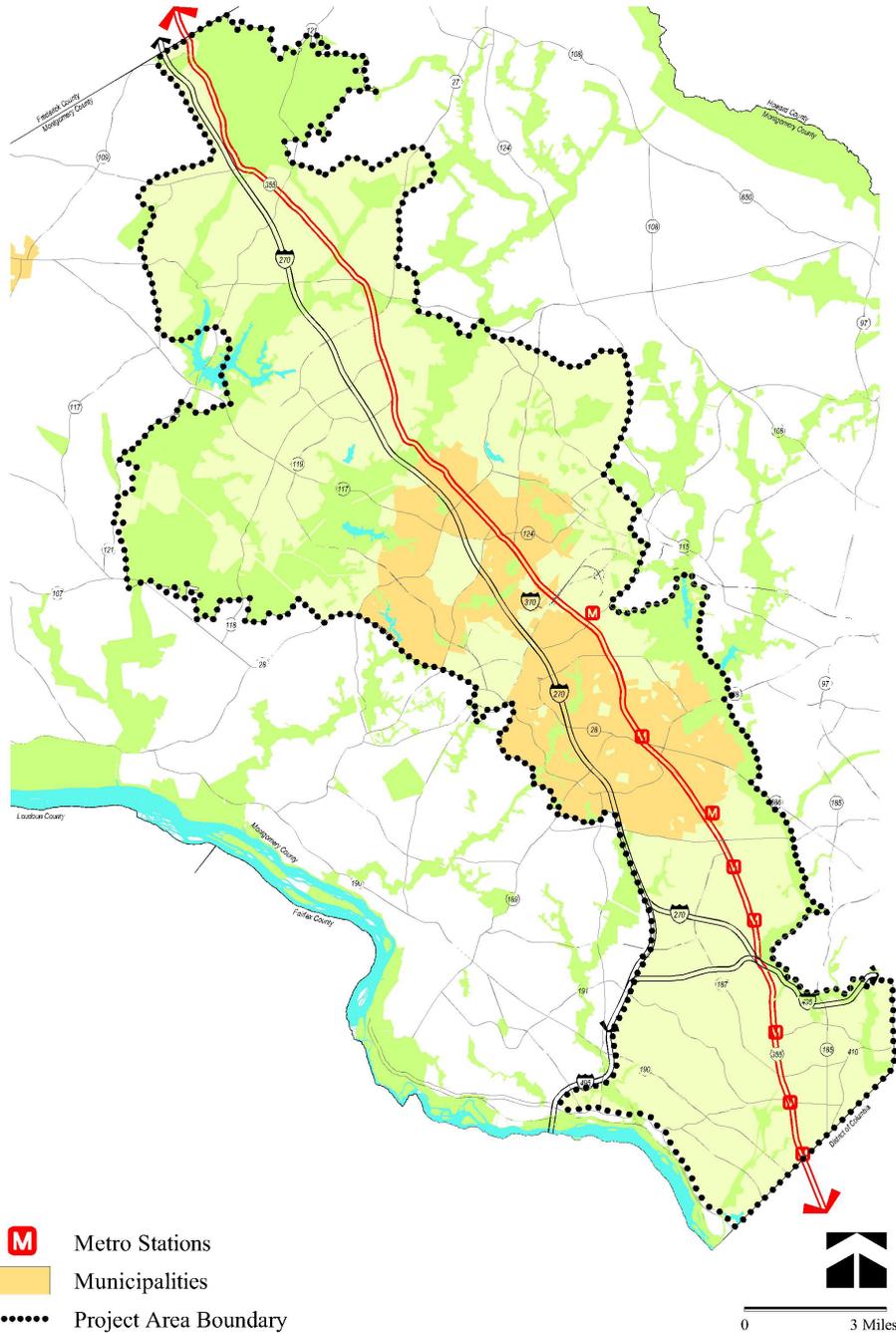
- The 1966 Plan
“Tall buildings will be the symbol of a core area” ... “allows a great number of people, who come together to make a downtown work efficiently”
- The 1974 Plan
A “new community” of six villages each with its own schools and commercial centers that would include a new campus of Montgomery College, all accessible via I-270 and rapid rail transit.
- The 1989 Plan
A continued pattern of mixed housing development and a Town Center of employment uses.

Sector Plan Area within Planning Area



Plan Boundary

The Germantown Sector Plan area crosses I-270 and focuses on a roughly 2,400-acre area in the employment and Town Center areas of Germantown. Roadways and road rights-of-way encompass approximately 600 acres of the Sector Plan area, almost 25 percent of the total acreage.

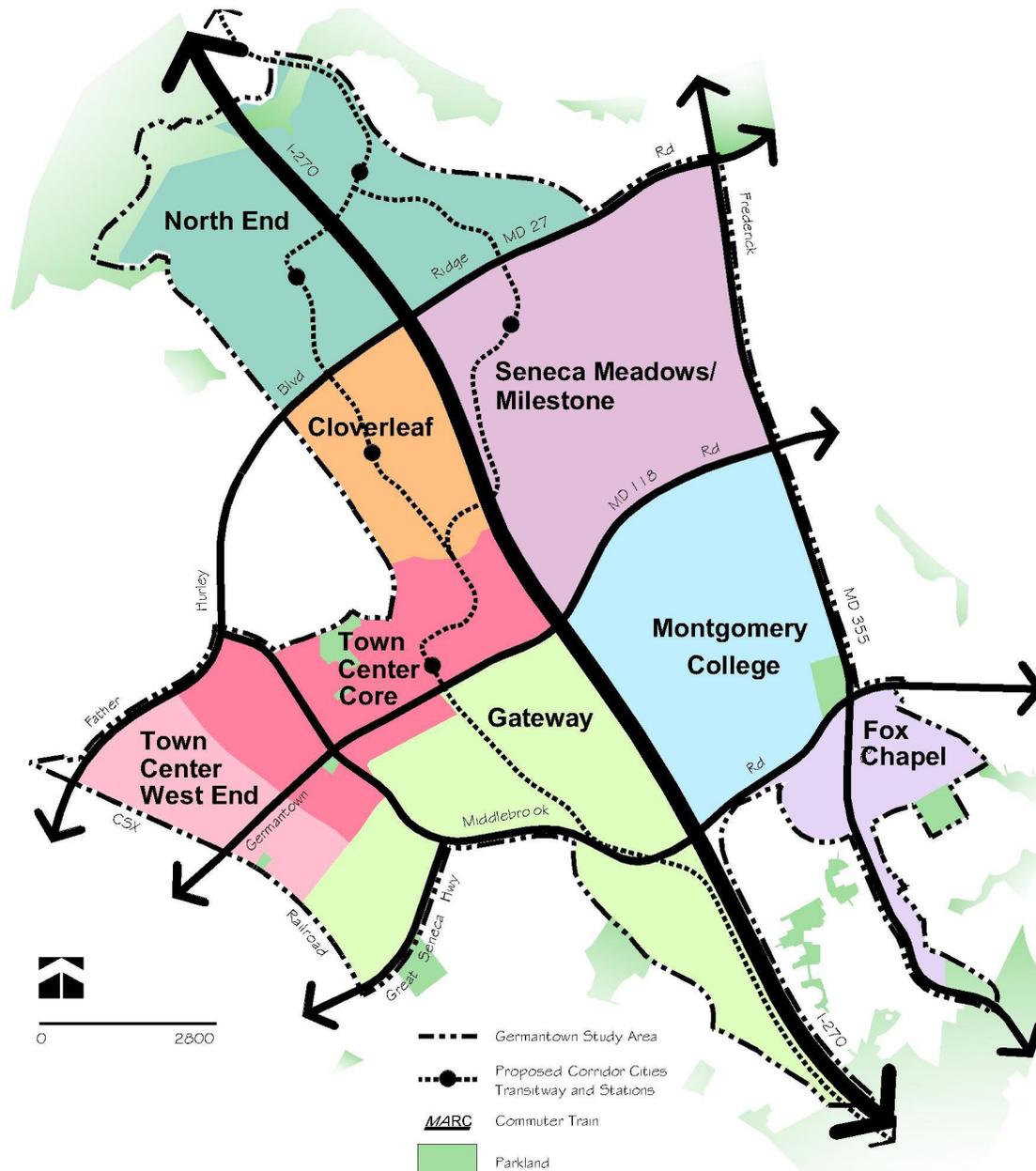


I-270/MD 355 Corridor

The corridor created by I-270, MD 355, the Metro Red Line, and the MARC line forms the transportation spine of the up-County today. The addition of the CCT will complete the transit infrastructure. The Corridor employs almost half of Montgomery County's workforce but more than one-third of the Corridor's employed residents commute to jobs outside of the County.

A significant portion of the County's future employment growth will take place on vacant or under-used sites in Germantown on the both sides of I-270 and in the area of Montgomery College. This plan replaces the single-purpose zoning designations of the 1989 Plan with flexible, mixed-use designations that retain employment potential and provide for retail, hotel, commercial, housing, and entertainment uses near jobs.

Germantown Districts



I-270/MD 355 Corridor

The **Town Center** has the most concentrated and varied development with a mix of residential, retail, office, and cultural uses in a compact and walkable form. New housing, restaurant and retail uses, and the Black Rock Center and the library attract patrons to Germantown’s downtown.

The **West End Neighborhood** of the Town Center District is a mix of retail and industrial uses with surface parking that extends along MD 118 from Middlebrook Road west to the CSX tracks. West of MD 118 are industrial uses and vacant property currently zoned for a mix of commercial uses without housing. This district is adjacent to the Germantown Historic District and contains historic properties such as the Pumphrey-Matney House and the Madeline V. Waters site.

The **Gateway District** stretches between the MARC station and I-270. The area also includes a mix of uses, including Seneca Valley High School and residential uses. In the north end of the district, adjacent to I-270/ Middlebrook interchange are industrial uses and auto dealerships. The federal Department of Energy is the Plan area’s largest employer and is expected to remain stable unless additional federal programs are relocated.

The **Cloverleaf District** is north of MD 118 and west of I-270. It is currently all commercial uses including flex buildings and the former Orbital Fairchild site, which will be the location of a future CCT station. This property is likely to redevelop with office, retail, hotel, and other services as well as multifamily housing.

The **North End District**, north of Father Hurley Boulevard, is a mix of residential development office, hotel, and industrial uses along I-270 at the Milestone Business Park. West of I-270, the district is vacant land with a small residential community north of Father Hurley Boulevard. A future CCT station will serve this district before crossing over I-270. On the east side of I-270 at Ridge Road are multi-story buildings and the area will be served by a CCT station.

Germantown's largest retail center, more than 100 acres and 850,000 square feet, is located in the **Seneca Meadows/Milestone District** at the corner of MD 355 MD 27. A mix of housing adjoins the retail area, along with an important environmental feature, the Germantown "Bog." The district also includes the Seneca Meadows Corporate Center, on the east side of I-270, a business park of one and two-story industrial and flex buildings with surface parking.

Montgomery College is recognized as one of the nation's leading two-year educational institutions. The Germantown campus

continues to increase its enrollment and the scope of its technology education and workforce training programs. The College also intends to create a business park with a private partner.

The **Fox Chapel** area is anchored by a neighborhood shopping center on MD 355 that

serves surrounding residential communities.

Other commercial uses along MD 355 include banks, specialty grocers, restaurants, and gas stations. The Plumgar Recreation Center on Scenery Drive is a County-owned recreation center with an adjoining ballfield.



The protected habitat of the Germantown Bog provides a source of clean water to the Little Seneca stream system.

LAND USE

This Plan’s land use recommendations provide for up to 23 million square feet of commercial development with approximately 69,700 jobs and 15,100 housing units.

Within the area of the Sector Plan, this results in a ratio of 4.6 jobs for each housing unit. In the entire Germantown planning area with approximately 32,000 housing units, the Plan will create 1.5 jobs per housing unit. The County wide goal is 1.6 jobs to each housing unit.

This Plan builds a pattern of density focused at the Town Center, stepping down to surrounding communities. The overall pattern will:

- Concentrate the highest density, 2.0 FAR, at the Town Center transit station
- Develop most of the employment corridor properties with mixed-use at an average density of 1.0 FAR
- Limit the average density to between 0.5 and 0.75 FAR for transit served properties north of MD 27 that adjoin existing residential communities.
- Develop areas not served by CCT or MARC at average densities of 0.3 to 0.5 FAR.

This Plan recommends the Transit Mixed-Use Zone (TMX-2) on sites located in a Transit Station Development Area, which is defined by the Zoning Ordinance as “an area near a metro transit station, or along an existing or proposed transit right-of-way, which is not located within a central business district, which has been designated as a Transit Station Development Area by an approved and adopted master plan or sector plan.” TMX permits a broad range of uses that can provide the variety to create a cohesive transit-served community with employment and housing options.

The Plan’s vision is best implemented through the TMX Zone’s optional method of development that ensures new projects are consistent with the Sector Plan and accompanied by appropriate facilities and amenities.

Existing and Proposed Development			
	Existing Development	1989 Master Plan	Proposed 2008 Plan
Dwellings	6,075	5,845	15,100
Commercial (sf)	13,990,000	20,345,500	23,000,000
Jobs	23,030	59,850	69,700



Casual dining along Century Boulevard in the Town Center.

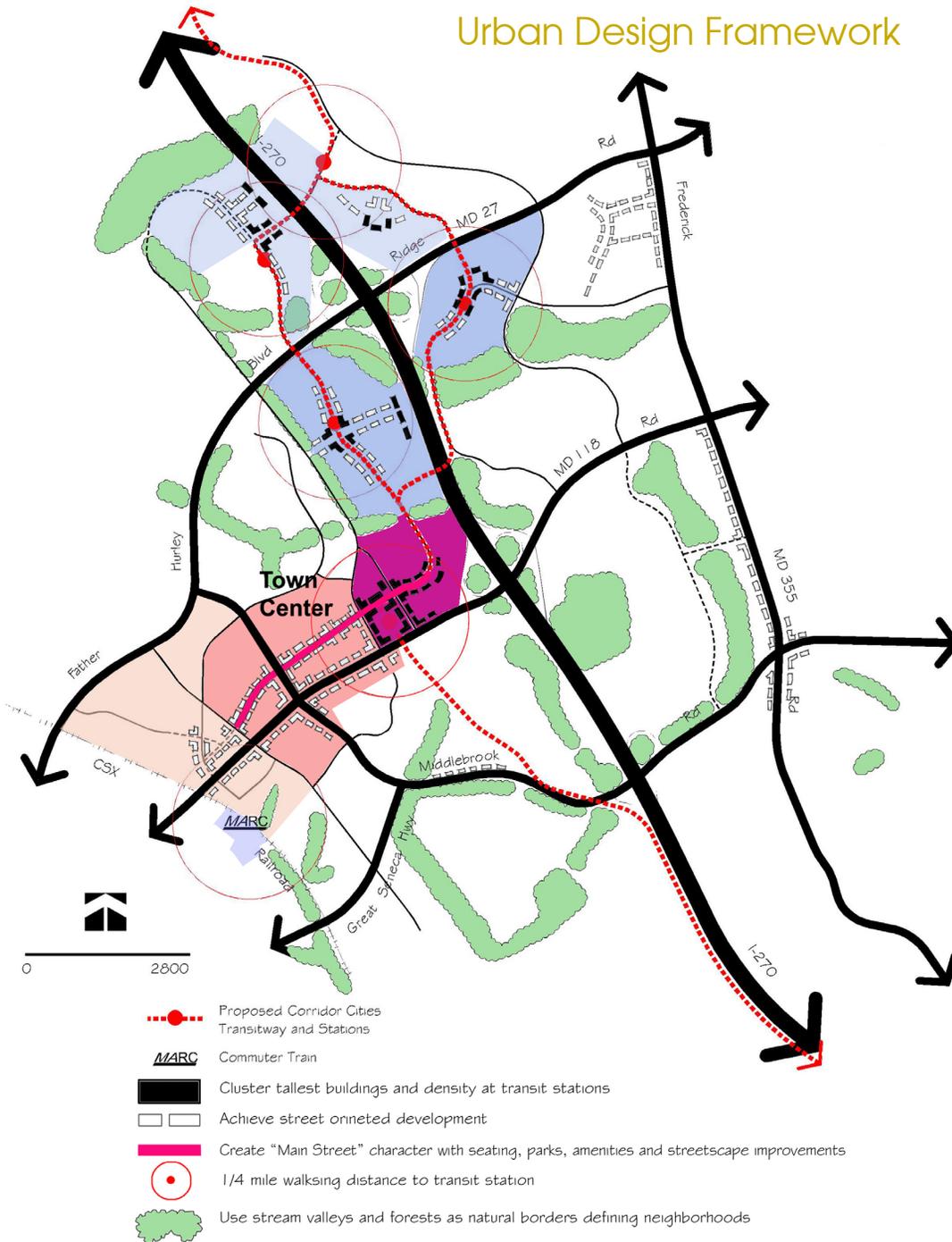
Urban Design Framework

URBAN FORM

Design Framework

This Plan concentrates the highest densities and building heights in Germantown's Town Center. Compact mixed-use development at slightly lower densities is recommended at each of the other transit stations. Design is critical to achieving quality of place and creating spaces that are vibrant, secure, and active. The streets, spaces, and centers of these transit neighborhoods will build community identity. In each of these areas, this Plan recommends:

- Clustering development at transit stations to encourage use of transit, provide convenience, and create a focus of activity.
- Connecting streets, bikeways, and pedestrian routes to encourage walking and improve access.
- Expanding the natural open spaces and urban gathering spaces as amenities, recreation spaces, and conservation areas.
- Incorporating historic, cultural, and nature-oriented themes into development to strengthen community identity.



Centers

This Plan redirects the character of land use in the Germantown employment corridor from a suburban pattern of low-rise buildings and large areas of surface parking into compact, walkable places with lively streets, activating uses, businesses and houses. Transit-oriented centers will be defined by walkable block lengths and inviting public spaces. Development is subject to design guidelines that establish a street-oriented pattern and require compatibility with nearby existing residential areas.

The guidelines will also encourage new development and redevelopment inspired by Germantown's history, natural areas, and other unique community features.

The design guidelines to implement this Sector Plan must address the following principles:

- Compact Centers

Concentrate development at transit stations creating compact, walkable centers. Place highest densities nearest transit stations, transitioning down to lower densities adjacent to existing residential communities.

- Street-Oriented Development

Locate buildings adjacent to the street to form a building line of the sidewalk and street that form public spaces. Provide front entrances along the street to improve pedestrian convenience, activate the street, and reduce walking distances. Provide street level retail uses along streets



Building heights stepping down toward residential neighbors.



Heights are lower at street level and higher in the rear portions of the property.



Provide wide sidewalks for seating



Activate streets with retail storefronts



Integrate parking with building design

where active street activity is desired. Place retail, restaurants, and other uses at highly visible locations along boulevards and main streets and adjacent to urban open spaces to add vitality and convenience. Design retail storefronts with large, clear glass windows for merchandise display that promote retailing and add visual interest to the street.

- Building Form and Facade Design

Buildings Reduce building bulk and mass through building design and facade treatment to improve light on the street, minimize shadows, and create a pedestrian scale along the street. Reduce building bulk by encouraging narrow building footprints and upper floor setbacks over 60 feet (four to five stories) from street level. Orient buildings along the street with articulated facades and architectural elements that de-emphasize horizontal mass and bulk. Use building form and details that are compatible with adjacent residential communities.

To achieve the building line where the street activity can frame the sidewalk, the height of the building walls fronting the sidewalk should have a minimal setback, if any, and be at least three floors high with active uses on each floor. There should be a maximum amount of windows to provide interest along pedestrian spaces and to improve the visibility of those spaces. This design approach animates the street even in the nighttime hours when interior light cascades onto public spaces.

- Building Heights and Transitions

Retail Locate the tallest buildings in Germantown, up to 180 feet (15 stories) at the Town Center transit station and adjacent properties. Other districts should have defined centers created by locating the tallest buildings at transit stations.

Use minimum building heights to enhance value, efficiency, and compactness. Decrease building heights stepping down from the center as a transition to adjoining residential communities and to create compatible relationships. Provide varied building heights and roof designs to create a visually interesting skyline.

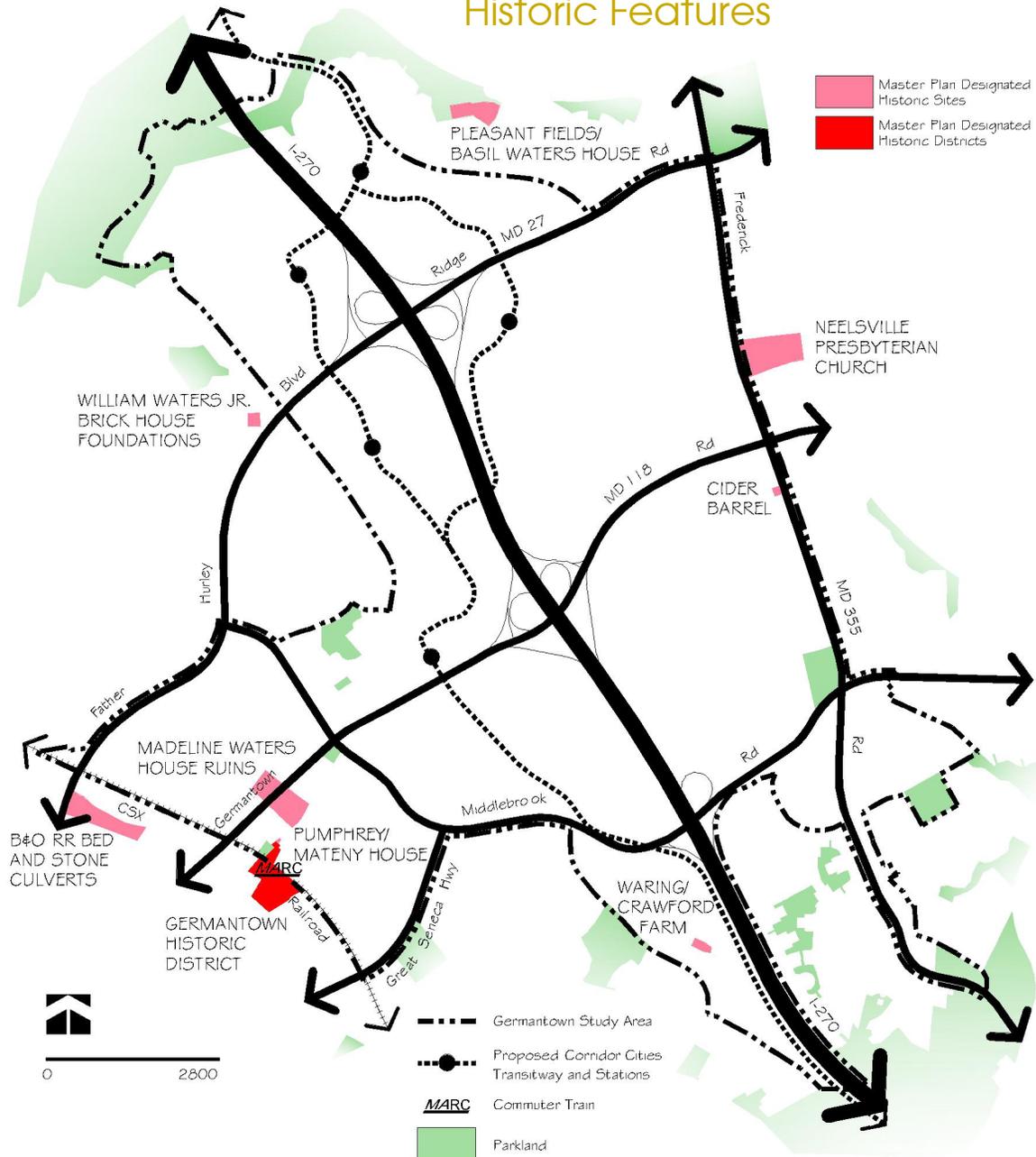
- Parking

Locate parking on the street, in mid-block structures or in structures lined with street activating uses. Surface parking, where necessary, should be located behind or to the side of development and screened with building extensions, low walls, or evergreen hedges.

Parking should not exceed the minimum required in the Zoning Ordinance. Encourage shared use parking and, if feasible, develop private/public parking facilities.

Establish a parking lot district in the Town Center to promote urban development by consolidating parking facilities. Evaluate providing public structured parking at the Upcounty Regional Services Center and the police station.

Historic Features



Historic Features

Design features should commemorate Germantown’s history, families, and industries to tie together the past and future. Many Germantown residents and employees are unaware of the Germantown Historic District just outside the Plan boundaries or of the Plan area’s designated historic sites. Designated historic sites should be protected and integrated into the community with compatible adjacent land uses. Adjacent site and building design must enhance, not diminish the historic setting in scale or architecture. Connect activity centers to historic features in Germantown’s parks and greenways and insert historic references, where appropriate, in new development or redevelopment, signage, and public art.

See Appendices 10, 11, and 12 for further information.

- Public Amenities

Public amenities will be created as part of redevelopment and will include but are not limited to fountains, seating, lighting, pavement, artwork and extensive plantings. Together they should provide options for active and passive participation, should be visible and accessible, and should consider environmental function in their design. Design elements will incorporate historic, cultural, and natural themes to reinforce community identity.



Expand the grid of streets with access to Century Boulevard and Crystal Rock Drive



Provide streetscape and pedestrian friendly street design

- Community Facilities

Completing new community facilities are recommended to support the additional workers and residents of Germantown. These facilities include:

- o the Town Center urban park behind the Library
- o a family-oriented public park in the Town Center
- o improvements to the Town Common at BlackRock to transform it into a community gathering place
- o development of the District 5 Police and Fire Station with additional space for police activities and workforce housing
- o a new urban recreation center with outdoor space to serve residents on the east side of I-270.
- o a new elementary school on the Waring Station Road school site, if needed.

Connections

An expanded network of roadways, streets, mid-block pedestrian connections, sidewalks, trails, and bikeways will link the community to desired destinations such as transit, schools, and commercial services. Roadway and street designs should promote pedestrian use with investment in streetscape elements including pedestrian crossing markings and signals, landscaping, street trees, and benches.

- Street Network

An interconnected street network is proposed for all districts and large parcels. New streets with short block lengths, approximately 250 to 350 feet in length, will promote walking and allow mid-block pedestrian crossings to bring people out to the sidewalks. These spaces need to be animated, visible, and be well lit.

- Street Character

Street character is defined by activities that occur on the sidewalks and how they interact with the uses in the buildings framing the space. All of the design elements should come together to create vibrant pedestrian spaces, both public and private, that are active at different times during the day and through all seasons.

Lighting, signage, and windows all play a major role. Street furniture is only a small part of the street character. Trees trimmed higher to allow visibility to first floor storefronts and appropriate building elements that frame entries, are the kind of details that enhance the pedestrian experience.

This Plan will establish tree-lined boulevards and main streets that will enhance Germantown's identity and provide tree cover and environmental benefits. Improvements include installing closely spaced street trees and landscaped medians, providing special walkway and paving materials where appropriate, and using pedestrian scaled lighting and other furnishings.

- Trails, Bikeways, and Sidewalks

Connect trails, bikeways, and sidewalks through all districts promoting an alternative to vehicle use and improving access to destinations such as transit stations, schools, commercial services, parks, and natural areas.

Public Spaces

This Plan adds to the network of diverse public spaces in Germantown, providing for public spaces in each district that help uniquely define it. Public and private open spaces should incorporate green design and be organized and connected to the larger greenbelt system at the edges of Germantown and beyond.

The following describes the hierarchy of Germantown’s public spaces.

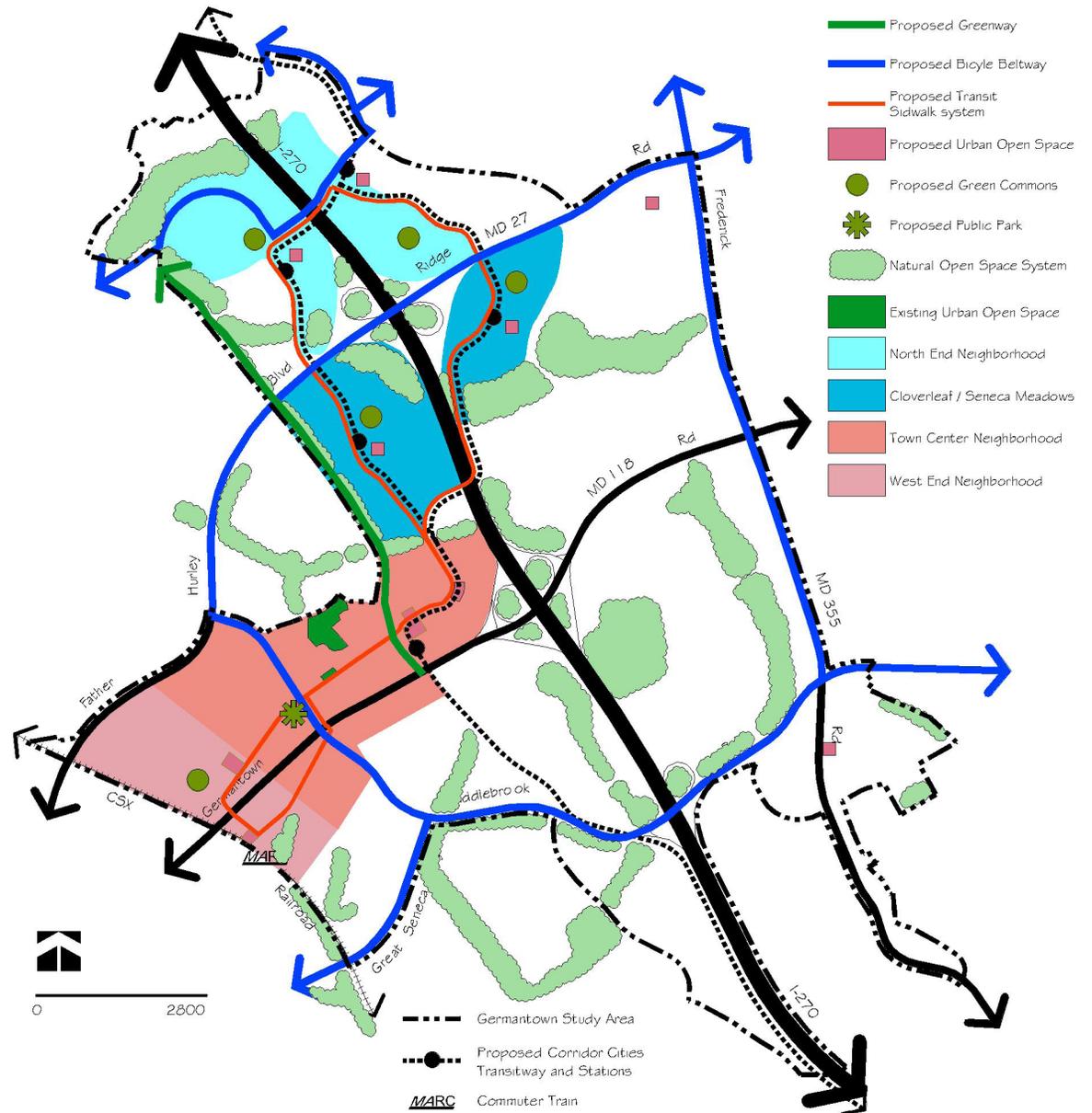
- Natural Area Network

This Plan expands Germantown’s natural area network by protecting forest stands, wetlands, streams, and scenic vistas through regulatory measures, design recommendations, dedication, and acquisition. The recommended trails system connects the surrounding greenbelt regional parks to the transit-oriented centers.

- Public Parks

Public parks are proposed as focal points of activity within each district. They are placed in visible and centrally located sites within mixed-use neighborhoods and along pedestrian routes. Parks should contain a variety of interactive activities, walkways, moveable tables and chairs,

Urban Open Space, Parks, and Trails



shade trees, and special features such as public art and historic elements that celebrate Germantown's history.

- Green Commons

A green common in every district has been designated to provide residents and workers a place to enjoy nature, exercise, walk, and enjoy social gatherings. Special features should be included such as fountains, artwork, gazebos and other amenities. Privately provided green areas for public use should be integrated into neighborhood designs and privately maintained

by property owners or by the proposed urban service district.

- Plazas and Gathering Places

Each district should contain a variety of plazas, gathering places, and urban spaces within each district. Such spaces should be defined by buildings and activated by retail or restaurants. Smaller spaces or “eddies” created through openings in the building wall along a sidewalk can offer great spaces for retail to open onto where people can sit and enjoy the activity passing by. Urban spaces, where appropriate,

should provide seating with moveable tables and chairs, landscaping, lighting, public art, and other amenities that contribute to one's enjoyment. Historic and cultural themes should be incorporated into designs. Transit station areas require additional features such as shelters and transit information kiosks. Plazas, gathering places, and urban spaces should be privately developed for public use and maintained by the property owner or by the proposed maintenance district.



Provide seating, shade, play equipment, and other amenities