

## **II. BACKGROUND**

### **GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE MASTER PLAN AREA**

The Cloverly Master Plan Area consists of approximately 14 square miles located in the eastern portion of Montgomery County, Maryland. (See Figure 6, page 3.) In 1990, Cloverly contained approximately 4,900 housing units with a population of 15,600 residents. The southern boundary of the area is approximately six miles north of Washington, D.C. The master plan area is roughly bordered by Ednor Road and Howard County to the north, Burtonsville Local Park and the Right Fork of the Paint Branch to the east, the proposed master plan alignment of the Intercounty Connector to the south, and the Northwest Branch Golf Course to the west. (See Figure 7, page 7.)

### **CONFORMANCE WITH THE MARYLAND PLANNING ACT OF 1992 AND THE GENERAL PLAN FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

The seven visions of the Maryland Economic Development, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992 (the Planning Act) and the 1993 *General Plan Refinement of the Goals and Objectives for Montgomery County* together establish State and County-wide planning objectives that must be reflected in local master plans.

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

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

In addition to the seven visions, the Planning Act requires the implementation of a sensitive areas element designed to protect natural features that are important to the health of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Sensitive areas are described in the Planning Act as 100-year floodplains, streams and their buffer areas, habitats of threatened and endangered species, and steep slopes.

The Cloverly Master Plan supports and confirms these seven visions. The Environmental Resources Chapter complies with the sensitive areas requirement of the Planning Act and the regulatory strategies for protecting these areas.

The General Plan Refinement amends the 1969 *Updated General Plan for Montgomery County* (approved in 1970). The General Plan Refinement provides the framework for the development of specific area master plans, functional plans, and sector plans. It provides clear guidance for the general pattern of development in Montgomery County while retaining enough flexibility to respond to unforeseeable circumstances. The General Plan Refinement divides Montgomery County into four geographic components: the Urban Ring, the Corridor, the Suburban Communities, and the Wedge. Each area is defined in terms of appropriate land uses, scale, intensity, and function. The geographic components provide a vision for the future while

acknowledging the modifications to the Wedges and Corridors concept that have evolved during the past three decades. In particular, they confirm two distinct sub-areas of the Wedge: an Agricultural Wedge and a Residential Wedge. They also recognize the transitional areas of generally moderate density and suburban character that have evolved as Suburban Communities between the Wedge, Corridor, and Urban Ring.

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

The visions established in the Planning Act generally coincide with the General Plan Refinement goals. The Cloverly Master Plan fulfills these visions by proposing a continuation of the established suburban and rural characters of the area. The following discussion is keyed to the seven goals of the General Plan Refinement and also includes discussion of the Cloverly Master Plan's relationship to the 1992 Planning Act.

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

The Cloverly Master Plan directly supports the Land Use goal and Wedges and Corridors concept by maintaining residential uses and supporting commercial uses at appropriate densities. Additional residential and commercial opportunities in Cloverly are limited; thus the Plan supports both the General Plan objective to “direct the major portion of Montgomery County's future growth to the Urban Ring and I-270 Corridor” and the environmental protection guiding principle. The Cloverly Master Plan also conforms with Vision 1 of the Planning Act—development is to be concentrated in suitable areas—and Vision 3—rural growth is to be directed to population centers and resource areas are to be protected.

**Encourage and maintain a wide choice of housing types and neighborhoods for people of all incomes, ages, lifestyles, and physical capabilities at appropriate densities and locations.**

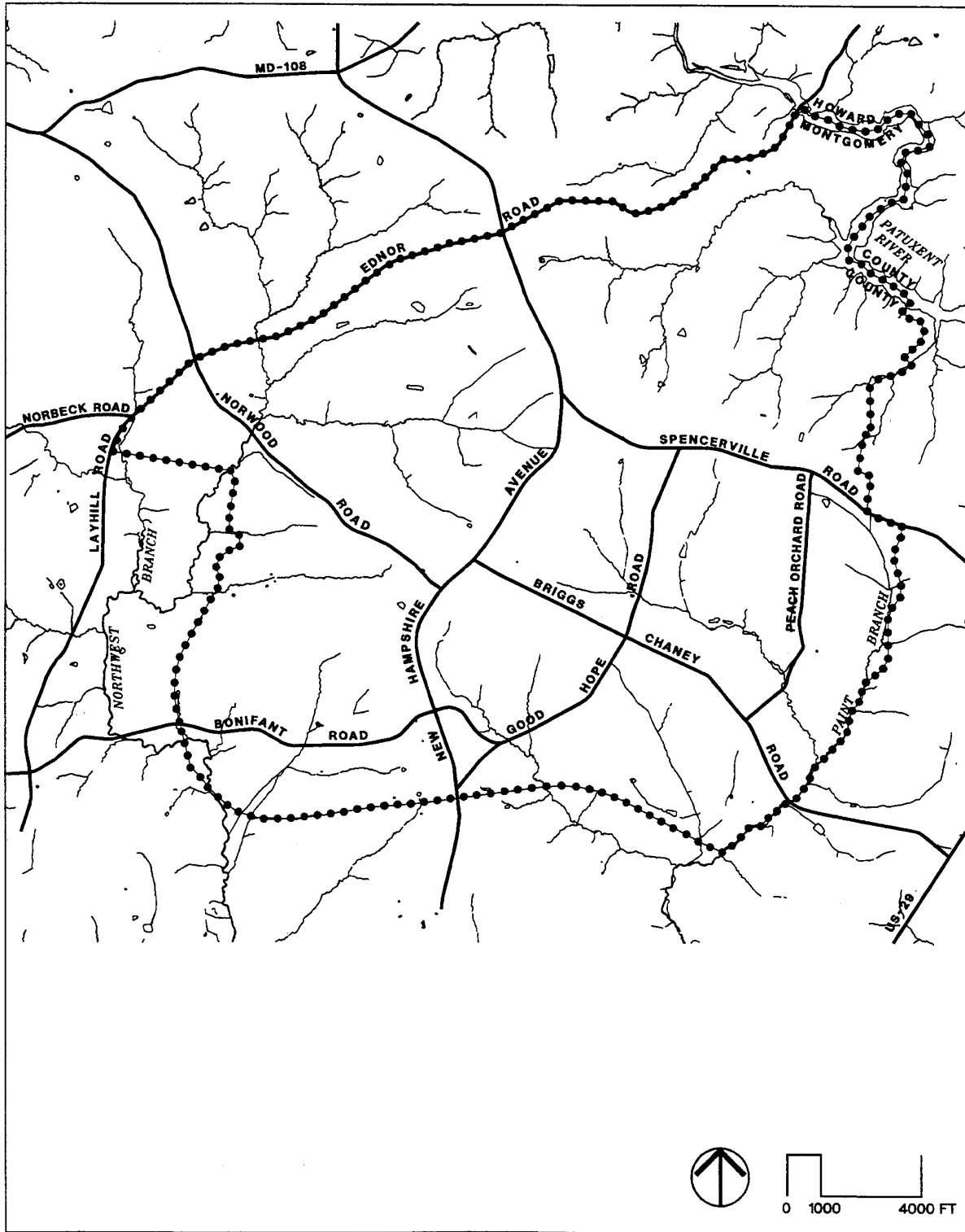
Because Cloverly is located in the lower density Agricultural Wedge, Residential and Suburban Communities areas, it does not offer as wide a choice of housing types as found in more urban communities. Single-family detached homes make up 87 percent of existing units. Attached housing units, multi-family units, and housing for the elderly constitute only 13 percent of total units. Reinforcing the character of Cloverly's communities is the main housing objective of the Plan. This objective is also in accordance with the General Plan objective to “maintain and enhance the quality of housing and neighborhoods.” Despite projections for significant population growth in the County, relatively few additional homes are planned for Cloverly, while higher density housing development is planned in the Urban Ring and I-270 Corridor.

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

This Plan recommends limited expansion of commercial zoning to provide for additional retail space to meet Cloverly's neighborhood shopping needs. Streetscape improvements in the commercial areas are intended to improve retail vitality. Guidance for the evaluation of special exceptions is designed to determine whether individual applications for businesses in residential zones are appropriate.

# CLOVERLY MASTER PLAN AREA

FIGURE 7



Improved connections between commercial centers and residential areas are promoted in the Plan, as envisioned by the General Plan Refinement. These recommendations are in accord with Vision 6 of the Planning Act encouraging economic growth in existing areas of development.

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

The Cloverly Master Plan supports many of the General Plan Refinement transportation principles, including the improved interconnection of streets and an improved bikeway system. This Plan recommends the construction of Norbeck Road Extended to support the General Plan strategy to “give priority to improving east-west travel.”

**Conserve and protect natural resources to provide a healthy and beautiful environment for present and future generations. Manage the impacts of human activity on our natural resources in a balanced manner to sustain human, plant, and animal life.**

Watershed protection is one of two fundamental planning principles of this Plan. Stream quality, wetlands, forest cover, and floodplain protection are all environmental issues addressed by both the Cloverly Master Plan and the General Plan Refinement. The Cloverly Plan calls for the acquisition of portions of the Paint Branch headwaters and encourages restoration projects to improve stream quality. Public acquisition, zoning, and limited public facilities are tools used to protect the Northwest Branch as well as the Patuxent River, which serves as a drinking water reservoir. The Environmental Chapter identifies sensitive areas to be protected in compliance with Vision 2 of the Planning Act and reflects the County's stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and watershed (Vision 4). Recommendations for resource conservation comply with Vision 5 of the Planning Act.

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

Reinforcing the character of Cloverly's communities is one of two fundamental planning principles of the Cloverly Master Plan. The recommendations of this Plan are consistent with General Plan Refinement objectives designed to reinforce the character and identity of each community and to ensure that commercial areas are functional and accessible and that historic features are preserved. The Cloverly Plan implements these objectives through recommendations concerning special exception uses and streetscape elements that are designed to preserve and reinforce the community's residential and rural character. New parkland recommendations will help maintain the attractive wooded landscape while protecting water quality.

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

This Plan's commitment to watershed protection benefits neighboring counties and states by protecting the quality of the Anacostia River, Patuxent River, Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay.

### **Rationale for Chosen Priorities**

The General Plan Refinement recognizes that there will be conflicts among its goals, objectives, and strategies and notes that “it is only within the master plan context, where decisions about individual parcels of land are made that any reasonable prioritization of competing goals and objectives can be made.” Therefore, a discussion of the priorities for this master plan area is appropriate.

The Plan attempts to maintain or restore, where necessary, the balance between environmental protection and land use. Overall, this Plan makes protection of environmental features a priority over new development. In some cases, innovative measures are encouraged to achieve recommendations. The Plan recommends a limited expansion of the Cloverly Commercial Area because of the community benefits of a vital commercial area with an expanded supermarket. Special attention to water quality is necessary since the Cloverly Commercial Area is located in the Paint Branch and Northwest Branch watersheds.

## **CLOVERLY TODAY**

The Cloverly Master Plan Area is primarily residential in nature. In accordance with the General Plan Refinement, the more densely developed Suburban Communities in the southern half of the area gradually transition to the less densely developed Residential and Agricultural Wedges in the northern areas. (See Figure 8, page 11.)

The Suburban Communities portion of Cloverly is south of Norwood and Briggs Chaney Roads and generally is developed with 2 houses per acre. The Suburban Communities west of New Hampshire Avenue, in the Northwest Branch watershed, is more fully developed than other parts of Cloverly and has only scattered vacant properties. To the east of New Hampshire Avenue, in the Paint Branch watershed, there are a number of large undeveloped properties. The large amount of open space creates a broad transition between the Suburban Communities and the Residential Wedge.

The Residential Wedge in Cloverly is roughly the area bounded by Norwood and Briggs Chaney Roads to the south and the area just north of Spencerville Road and Ednor Road to the north. This area is zoned at one and two acre densities (RE-1, RE-2, and RE-2C). The Residential Wedge contains portions of the Northwest Branch and Paint Branch watersheds. The major undeveloped areas in Cloverly are located in the Residential Wedge and Agricultural Wedge.

The Agricultural Wedge is north of Spencerville Road and east of New Hampshire Avenue in the Patuxent River watershed and is in the Rural Cluster Zone (one house per 5 acres with lots as small as one acre). In Cloverly, the protection of open space rather than agriculture is the primary purpose of the Agricultural Wedge.

The varying physical character of the different parts of Cloverly helps to create a community that is unique in Montgomery County. Today, Cloverly is seen as a study in contrasts that include, large expensive homes and small modestly priced homes, produce stands and a shopping center, farms and subdivisions, clear trout spawning streams and streams in pipes, and busy major thoroughfares and virtually empty country roads. This diversity sets it apart from much of the rest of the County.

While Cloverly's demographic profile is similar to many County-wide averages, its resident profile also stands out in a number of ways.

- 78 percent of Cloverly's households are headed by married couples compared to 58 percent County-wide.
- The median sized household in Cloverly contains 3.27 persons compared to 2.65 County-wide.
- The median age of 33.9 years is the same for Cloverly and the County.

- Cloverly's population is 70 percent white, 16 percent black, and 13 percent Asian, compared to 77 percent white, 12 percent black, and 8 percent Asian County-wide.
- 87 percent of Cloverly's homes are single family detached compared to 52 percent County-wide.
- Cloverly's median resale price of \$216,250 for a single-family detached house in 1991 was slightly higher than the County-wide average of \$208,800.
- 55 percent of Cloverly's residents lived in the same home since 1985, compared to 47 percent County-wide.
- Cloverly's median income in 1989 was \$63,215, compared to \$54,089 County-wide.
- 77 percent of Cloverly's resident workers drive alone to work compared to 68 percent County-wide.

Additional demographic information based on the 1990 Census and other data can be found in the *Population and Housing Profiles Eastern Montgomery County Master Plan Areas*.

