

I. INTRODUCTION

The Fairland Master Plan covers one of four contiguous master plan areas covering Eastern Montgomery County (Figure 5). These four master plans (Cloverly, White Oak, Four Corners, and Fairland) are being updated simultaneously so that common issues, such as transportation and environmental protection, can be addressed in the master plans in a comprehensive and consistent manner. Supporting information regarding the analysis of the region covered by the four plans can be found in the following documents referenced in this Plan: *Population and Household Profile Eastern Montgomery County Master Plan Areas* (1995), *Eastern Montgomery County Neighborhood Retail Study* (1994), *Transportation Report: Eastern Montgomery County Master Plan Areas* (Revised 1996), *Historic Resources of the Eastern Montgomery County Master Plan Areas* (1995), *Environmental Resources: Eastern Montgomery County Master Plan Areas* (Revised 1996), and *The Upper Paint Branch Watershed Planning Study* (1995).

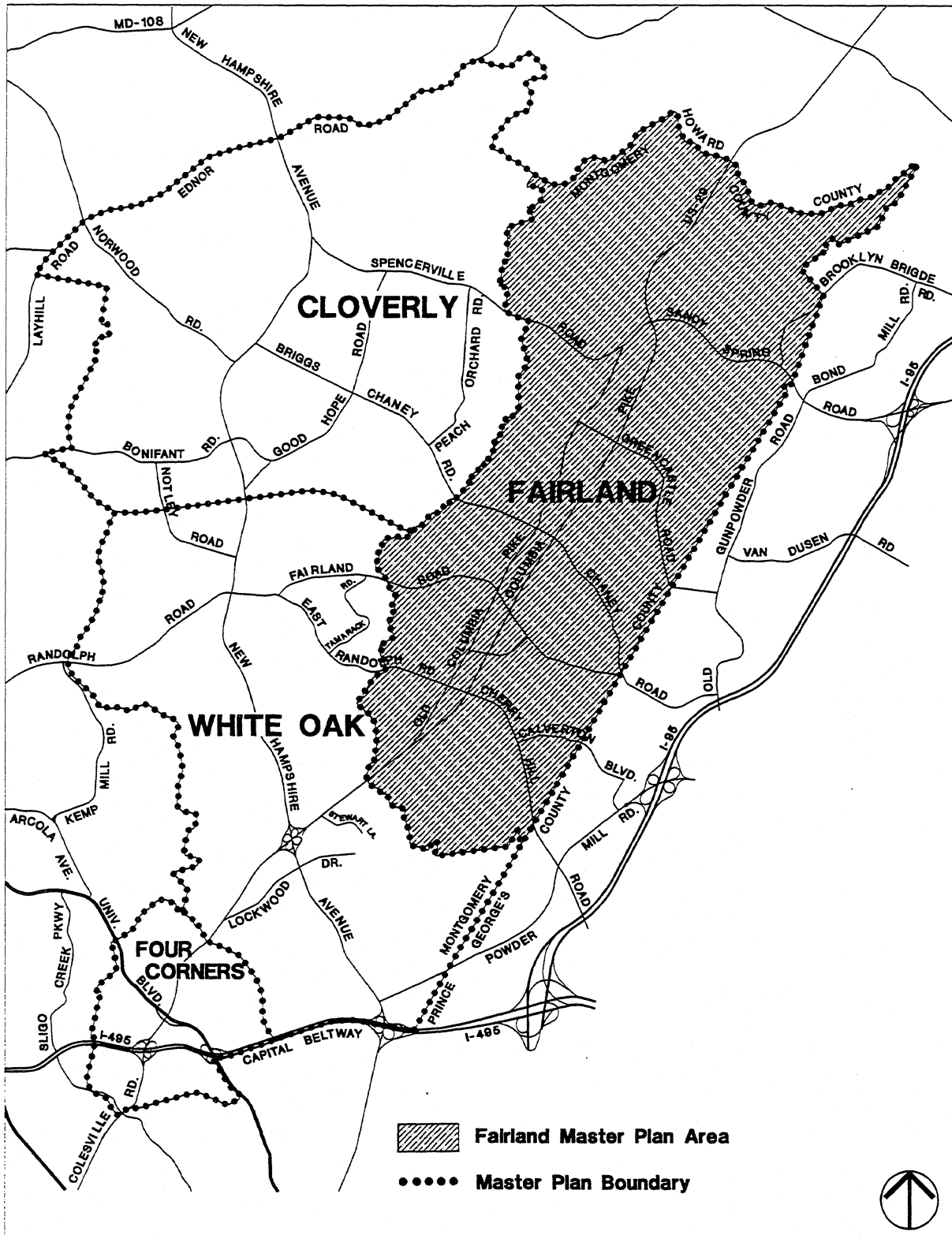
In 1992, at the direction of the Montgomery County Council, the Montgomery County Planning Board hired consultants to assist in designing a consensus-based citizen participation process that would be used in revising the Four Corners, White Oak, Fairland, and Cloverly master plans. The Concordia Systems Group and the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University formed the consultant team. The Planning Board endorsed the consultants' recommendations to initiate a collaborative method for citizen involvement in the Eastern Montgomery County master plans. The major changes to the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) process for these four master plans include: selection of a chairperson by the CAC members, development and presentation of the Issues Report and subsequent master plan drafts as a collaborative effort between the Montgomery County Planning staff and the CAC, and extension of the life of the CAC beyond the County Council adoption of the master plan.

This Plan is a culmination of a two-year process involving more than 40 meetings of the Fairland CAC, M-NCPPC, and County and State agencies. During these meetings, issues and concerns regarding the Fairland Master Plan area were discussed. Forums with the other Eastern Montgomery County CACs and informational sessions with various citizens groups and business groups were also held.

This Master Plan serves as a guide for the communities in Fairland, the general public, and government agencies to direct and assure that public investment and future growth occur in a manner consistent with *The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties* and The 1993 General Plan Refinement.

RELATIONSHIP TO EASTERN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

FIGURE 5



II. BACKGROUND

The Fairland Master Plan area is in transition, having changed in less than two decades from a semi-rural area in the 1970s to a suburban community in 1990 with a population of over 23,000. In 1981, more than half of Fairland was farmland, woodland, or vacant. Less than one-third of the area was developed with homes; a very small percentage was in commercial or industrial use. Large tracts of land were in public or semi-public use, such as the 330-acre University of Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station and the Greencastle Golf Course.

By 1991, only a decade after adoption of the *1981 Master Plan for Eastern Montgomery County Planning Area: Cloverly, Fairland, White Oak*, the housing stock had more than doubled from 5,000 units to 13,000 units and employment had nearly tripled from 5,700 to 15,800 jobs. The Greencastle Golf Course became part of Greencastle—a residential community of 2,000 homes—and the Agricultural Experiment Station became the West*Farm Technology Park.

This phenomenal growth and dramatic physical change, although envisioned in the 1981 Master Plan, occurred rapidly and sometimes without the timely provision of matching infrastructure. Although growth in Fairland is anticipated at some point in the future, it will probably occur at a much slower pace and under greater constraints. This Master Plan has as its prime task to answer the questions: what defines Fairland today? What should define Fairland tomorrow?

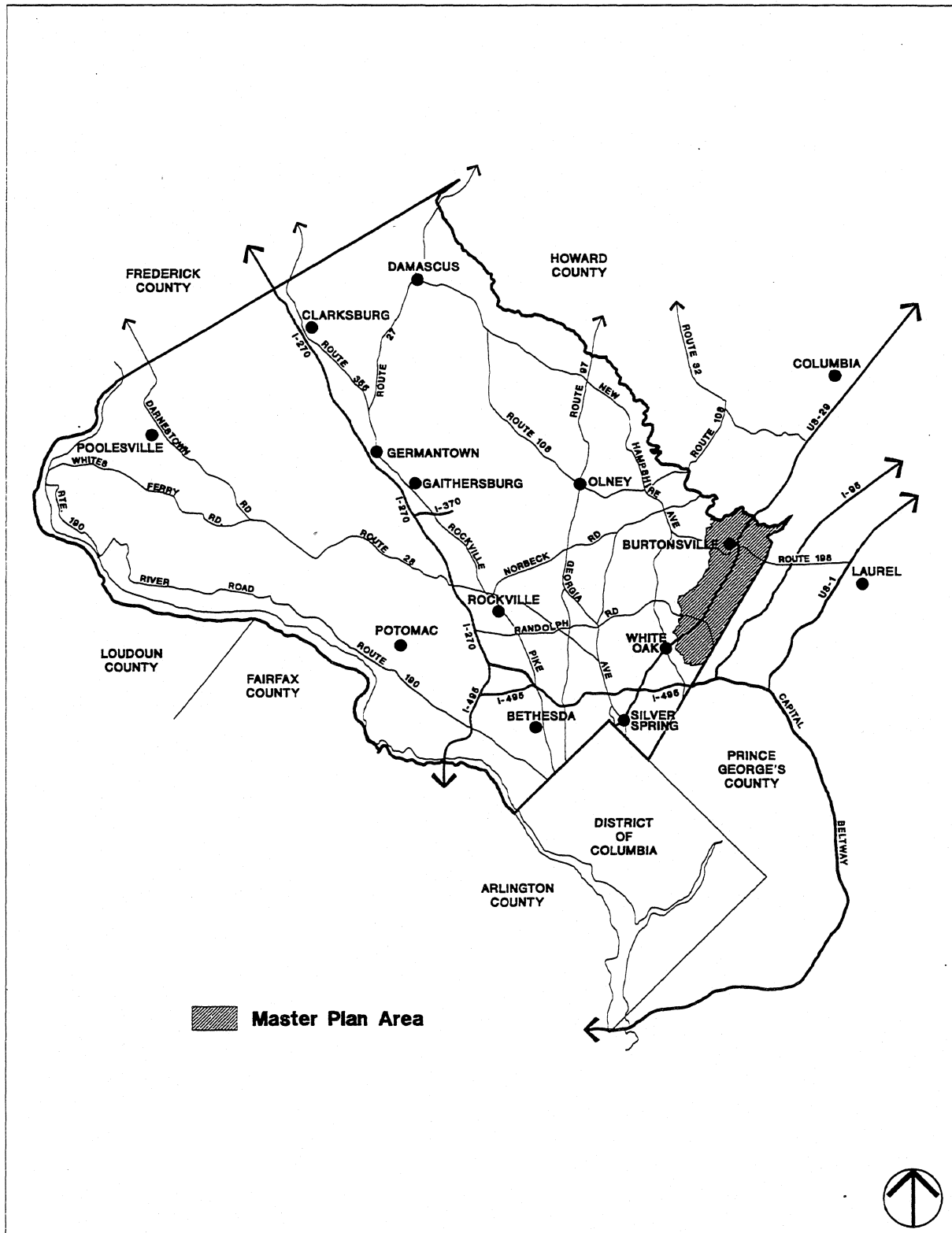
REGIONAL CONTEXT

Fairland is directly affected by land use and traffic generated in adjacent Prince George's and Howard Counties (Figure 6). Both counties recently updated their respective master plans. Howard County adopted the comprehensive master plan, *The 1990 General Plan*. Prince George's County adopted the *Subregion I Master Plan* for the area adjacent to Fairland in 1991. Both plans recommended residential, commercial, and industrial growth along the main transportation routes: US 29 in Howard County and I-95 in Prince George's County. In November 1992, Howard County began the process of approving comprehensive zoning for the eastern portion of the County and implementing the 1990 General Plan, including some large mixed-use zones along US 29. Prince George's County adopted much of the zoning recommended in the Subregion I Plan in 1991. Land uses proposed in the Subregion I Plan include a large retail mall and a 500-acre mixed use area, both with access to I-95 and the proposed InterCounty Connector (ICC).

DESCRIPTION OF THE FAIRLAND MASTER PLAN AREA

The Fairland Master Plan area (Figure 7) contains approximately 8,200 acres, or about 13 square miles. It is entirely bordered on the east by Prince George's County; on the west and south by the Paint Branch stream and the northern boundary of the Naval Surface Warfare Center and on the north by the Patuxent River, which also serves as the boundary between Montgomery and Howard Counties.

Natural and man-made features divide Fairland into smaller areas. Of these, streams and roads are the most prominent. The Paint Branch, which divides Fairland from the White Oak and Cloverly planning areas, and the Little Paint Branch, located east of US 29, are the two major streams in the master plan area. Both streams are part of the Anacostia watershed. The Paint Branch watershed is the more environmentally sensitive and supports a spawning brown trout population in the headwaters of its tributaries. Old Columbia



Pike is the divide between the two watersheds: the western side drains to the Paint Branch watershed; the eastern side to the Little Paint Branch watershed. Few east-west roads cross the Paint Branch or the Little Paint Branch streams because of the steep topography and wetlands.

US 29, a six-lane divided highway, bisects the entire north-south length of Fairland. Land use on the western side of US 29 contains predominantly single-family detached homes and also townhouses and multi-family housing. There is commercial and office development at major intersections and along US 29. The eastern side is more densely developed than the western side and contains a wide range of housing types. There are substantial areas of industrial and commercial development to the east of US 29 between Briggs Chaney Road and the southern boundary of the planning area. These include the Auto Sales Park, the Montgomery Industrial Park, and the West*Farm Technology Park.

Old Columbia Pike, which originates at the intersection of Tech Road and US 29 and terminates at MD 198, is the other main north-south road. This two-lane road was a state road that connected Howard County to Silver Spring before being replaced in 1956 by US 29. Old Columbia Pike provides access to the residential areas lying between US 29 and the Paint Branch. As with most of the roads that wind through this area, the surrounding neighborhoods retain a somewhat rural flavor, hilly topography and winding open section roads with no sidewalks.

MD 198 is one of the major east-west roads and connects Fairland west to the Cloverly Master Plan area and east to the city of Laurel in Prince George's County. The road is planned as a four-lane highway for its entire length and currently has four lanes east of US 29. MD 198 follows the ridge line dividing the Patuxent watershed from the Paint Branch and Little Paint Branch watersheds. Land use in the Patuxent watershed is generally low- to very low-density residential. Some of the larger tracts are still farmed. The road network within the Patuxent watershed consists of narrow roads, all of which terminate before the Patuxent River. US 29 is the only crossing of the Patuxent River in the Fairland Master Plan area. Other east-west roads that connect Fairland to Prince George's County, Cloverly, and White Oak are Briggs Chaney Road, Fairland Road, Greencastle Road, and East Randolph Road/Cherry Hill Road.

PLANNING HISTORY

"... On Wedges and Corridors"

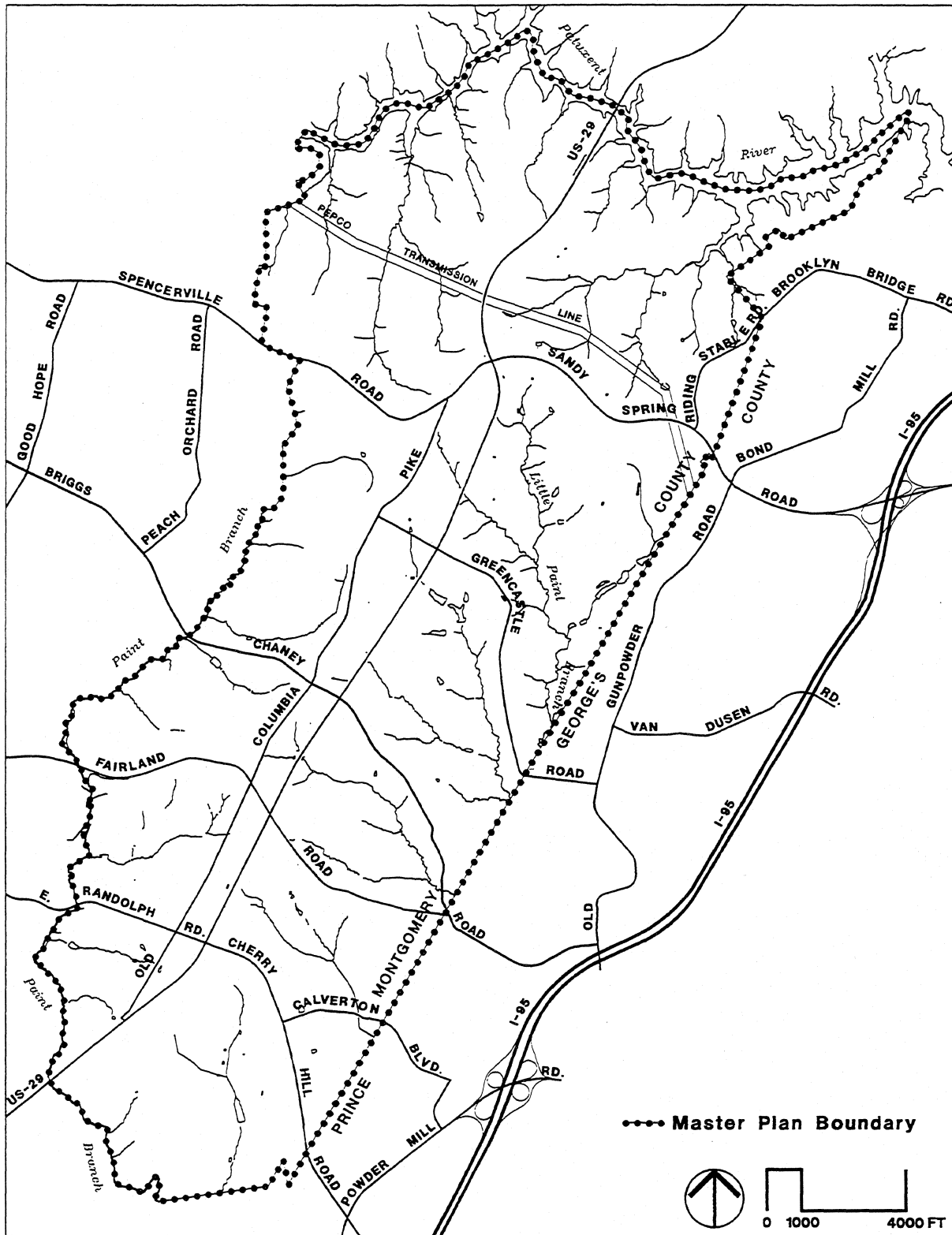
In 1964, "*... On Wedges and Corridors*," *The General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties* set forth a vision for the entire County and laid the groundwork for all subsequent planning efforts. The 1964 Plan was based on extending the existing radial pattern of development emanating from the District of Columbia, where a strong radial road pattern had evolved over the years, into parts of Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. The 1964 Plan developed the concept of concentrating development on transportation corridors alternating with low-density open-space wedges. Fairland, east of US 29 and between Greencastle and Fairland Roads, was depicted as the edge of a corridor city to be located on the I-95 corridor in Prince George's County.

The 1968 Fairland-Beltsville Plan

The corridor city concept was further developed in the first master plan specifically for the Fairland area, the Fairland-Beltsville Plan, approved and adopted in 1968. That Plan refined the concepts as outlined in the 1964 Plan and applied them to the inter-county Fairland-Beltsville area, a 37.5-square-mile area of which one-third

FAIRLAND MASTER PLAN AREA

FIGURE 7



was in Prince George's County and the remainder in Montgomery County. The 1968 Plan offered specific land-use and zoning recommendations for the development of a planned corridor city, plus a number of transportation recommendations, such as a transit network, to connect the corridor city to Baltimore and Washington and a new major circumferential highway, named the outer beltway. The Fairland-Beltsville Corridor City straddled the County line between the outer beltway and Fairland Road. Higher-density residential development, such as high-rise apartments and townhouses, was planned around the city core and between US 29 and the County line. At that time, the zoning recommended in master plans was not implemented through the comprehensive zoning process (Sectional Map Amendment), but was approved on a case-by-case basis through local map amendments.

The 1969 General Plan Update

In 1969, the Montgomery County Council revised the 1964 Plan to reflect new statistical information and changes in planning policy and theory, particularly the introduction of staging strategies in master plans and transportation policy. The Council did not alter planned land uses in the Fairland-Beltsville Plan and, as a result, property owners were able to seek high-rise and garden apartment zoning in accordance with that Plan. By the 1970s, about 150 acres of multi-family and townhouse zoning were approved in the Briggs Chaney Road area through local map amendments.

The 1981 Eastern Montgomery County Plan

In 1970, the Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene imposed a moratorium on all new sewer construction in the County. New development requiring sewer in the eastern part of Montgomery County could not proceed. In 1978, the Montgomery County Council anticipated the end of the sewer moratorium and changes in market conditions and directed the Planning Board to develop a new master plan for the eastern portion of Montgomery County. That plan, titled *The Eastern Montgomery County Planning Area, Cloverly, Fairland, White Oak*, was approved and adopted in 1981 and is the current master plan.

The 1981 Master Plan incorporated a number of County policies, such as the need for affordable housing, preservation of agricultural land, and environmental protection. One of the underlying land-use planning concepts in the Plan was "transit serviceability," defined as a policy of "encouraging a pattern of development which is not entirely automobile dependent." Transit serviceability meant that higher densities should be located where they could be served by transit. The broad policy of locating more intense land uses near transit resulted in three major land-use recommendations: (1) land located near employment and transit should develop at higher densities than remote tracts, (2) a major employment center should be located on properties adjacent to the existing Montgomery Industrial Park situated along US 29, and (3) major commercial development should be limited to key intersections on US 29 and at existing commercial centers.

The 1981 Master Plan eliminated the Fairland "corridor city" shown in the 1968 Fairland-Beltsville Master Plan and recommended a variety of housing types and densities. It also encouraged using the provisions of two legislative acts, the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) ordinance and the Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) program. Using the then recently adopted (1974) County policy of farmland preservation, the Plan proposed the use of Transfer of Development Rights from agricultural lands in the northwestern part of the County to designated receiving areas in other areas throughout the County. The Eastern Montgomery master plan areas were among the first to incorporate receiving areas for TDRs. The receiving areas were located on either side of US 29, in keeping with the policy of concentrating development along transit serviceable arteries. The MPDU policy, adopted by the County Council in 1974, was also to be incorporated in proposed residential development wherever densities for a given project exceeded 49 units. Another major land use concept in the 1981 Master Plan was environmental assessment and the protection of environmental resources. Issues included watershed management, the Paint Branch brown trout fishery, noise, and air quality.

These environmental issues led to recommendations for density reduction in the areas draining to the Paint Branch and for optional methods of development, such as the Planned Development (PD) Zone, to address environmental constraints.

To achieve the goals of the 1981 Master Plan and to match public facilities with recommended changes in land use, the Plan recommended a phasing schedule over 15 or more years for new capital improvement projects that would serve planned development.

By 1985, development in Eastern Montgomery County was progressing rapidly, as was the case in other parts of Montgomery County. There was mounting concern over managing growth County-wide as it became apparent that there was an increasing delay in providing road improvements and other public facilities, such as schools, libraries, and fire/rescue services, to serve new residential and non-residential development. In 1987, the County Council passed legislation to manage growth, known as the Annual Growth Policy (AGP), that would be reviewed and adopted every year. The AGP linked development approval at the time of subdivision with programmed public facilities contained in the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). The AGP set levels of growth capacity (ceilings) for each policy area to ensure that new development would not outpace the provision of a transportation network, schools, and other public facilities in any planning area. By 1986, the Fairland/White Oak Policy Area was in a development moratorium due to lack of road capacity. During the 1980s, the State Highway Administration (SHA) added capacity to US 29 through several projects. Concurrent with the development of the C&P Telephone Chesapeake Complex, a fifth and sixth lane were added between East Randolph Road and Fairland Road in 1982. Private developers, in cooperation with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and SHA, funded an extension of these lanes south to Industrial Parkway and north to Greencastle Road. The lanes have now been extended from New Hampshire Avenue to MD 198. These projects were completed contemporaneously with a comprehensive study of US 29 from Sligo Creek to the Howard County line. Alternatives studied included intersection improvements, grade-separations, and the construction of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes within the existing median area. Among the recommendations was a “jug-handle” configuration of the intersection of US 29 and University Boulevard in the Four Corners Master Plan area.

The 1990 Trip Reduction Amendment

Despite these road improvements, by 1988, traffic congestion in the area served by US 29, New Hampshire Avenue, and MD 198 reached unacceptable levels of congestion. In 1990, the County Council adopted the *Trip Reduction Amendment* to the 1981 Plan as an interim measure to reduce potential growth until a comprehensive master plan addressing the transportation infrastructure imbalance could be undertaken. The amendment eliminated the Planned Development option, reduced the TDR densities in the receiving areas to one unit above the base zone, and implemented voluntary trip reduction agreements with the owners of properties within the Montgomery Industrial and West*Farm Technology Parks.

By 1990, the gap between public facilities and development had grown so large in the Fairland area that the only development that could be approved was residential development under special affordable housing provisions of the AGP. This option was removed in the 1991 AGP, resulting in a moratorium for new subdivision approvals in the Fairland/White Oak Policy Area. The worsening of transportation conditions was matched by increasing evidence of infrastructure imbalance in other facilities as well, notably schools. The *Fairland Master Plan Issues Report* states, “The school capacity imbalance alone would have placed the Fairland/White Oak Policy Area in moratorium were it not for the County Council's decision to waive the 110 percent capacity standard established in the 1993 AGP.”

The 1990 Trip Reduction Amendment was considered a short-term answer to the gap between public facilities and development. The length of the moratorium and the limited options for increasing transportation capacity has led to the conclusion that reductions in density and related automobile trips are necessary to address the imbalance between land use and transportation capacity in the long run as well.

The 1993 General Plan Refinement

The 1993 *General Plan Refinement of the Goals and Objectives for Montgomery County* amended the 1964 Plan and the 1969 *Updated General Plan for Montgomery County*. The General Plan Refinement provides the framework for the development of more specific area master plans, functional plans, and sector plans. It provides clear guidance regarding the general pattern of development in Montgomery County, while retaining enough flexibility to respond to unforeseeable circumstances as they arise. The General Plan Refinement divides Montgomery County into four geographic components: the Urban Ring, the Corridor, the Suburban Communities, and the Wedge (Figure 8). Each component 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. Two distinct sub-areas of the Wedge have evolved—an Agricultural Wedge and a Residential Wedge. The Refinement also recognizes the Suburban Communities—the transitional areas of generally moderate density and suburban character that have evolved between the Wedge, Corridor, and Urban Ring. While the Refinement continues to emphasize the intensification of development along the I-270 Corridor, particularly along the main stem, the area of influence of the I-95 corridor no longer extends to the Suburban Communities in Fairland.

One of the most important objectives in the Fairland Master Plan is to reshape the land use and zoning in the Fairland Planning Area consistent with the General Plan Refinement and to define clearly Fairland as suburban and not within the area of influence of the I-95 corridor.

The vision for the Suburban Communities includes:

- moderate-density land uses which are transit serviceable along major arteries
- increased transportation options
- suburban residential neighborhoods
- distinct centers
- appropriate public and private investment

The vision for the Agricultural and Residential Wedges includes:

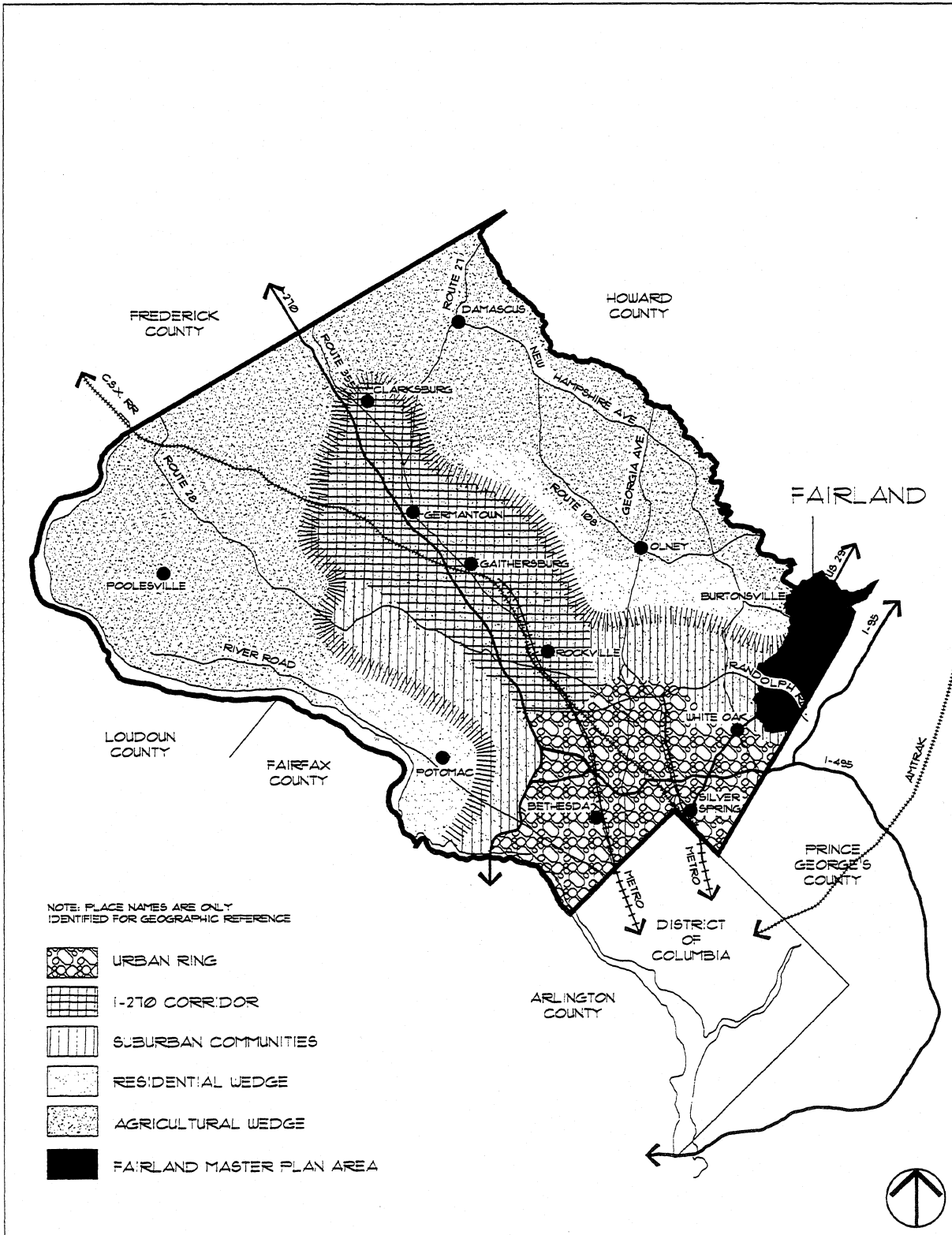
- agricultural use
- low density residential development
- large areas for open space
- small rural centers
- targeted public and private investment

The Maryland Planning Act of 1992

The Maryland Economic Development, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992 (the Planning Act) establishes state-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:

WEDGES AND CORRIDORS GEOGRAPHIC COMPONENTS

FIGURE 8



- Vision 1. Development is to be concentrated in suitable areas;
- Vision 2. Sensitive areas are to be protected;
- Vision 3. In rural areas growth is to be directed to existing population centers and resource areas are to be protected;
- Vision 4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is to be considered a universal ethic;
- Vision 5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is to be practiced;
- Vision 6. Economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are to be streamlined;
- Vision 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 areas of environmental importance. Sensitive areas are described in the Planning Act as 100-year floodplain, streams and associated buffer areas, habitats of threatened and endangered species, and steep slopes.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

According to the 1990 US Census¹, the typical Fairland household consists of a dual-income, college-educated, married couple between 25 and 35 years of age with a child under ten years old. The family lives in a single-family detached home or townhouse purchased within the last five years. The 1990 US Census showed the average household income to be \$51,775 for 1989. Most residents are drawn to the affordable and up-to-date housing in Fairland, most of which was built during the 1980s. The area's housing stock provides a variety of types from which to choose. Housing opportunities are abundant for the first-time buyer and more limited for the move-up market.

Proximity and easy access to jobs in Prince George's and Howard Counties also attract people to Fairland. Most residents work outside the County, and many residents drive to work alone. Dual-income families rely on automobiles to run errands before and after work or pick up children from school and day-care. This multi-purpose trip pattern makes carpooling and use of transit difficult. More facilities provided close to home and options for improving mobility will make Fairland more livable.

Fairland is a youthful community, with 30 percent of its population between 25 and 35. The percentage of adults over 65 is about 5 percent. The typical resident is young—30 years old—and there is a large pre-school age population. There is a demand for day-care and pre-school facilities, and a need in many new subdivisions for recreational facilities within walking distance.

As the current population ages, their demographic characteristics suggest a need for new facilities and services. A new high school site on Norwood Road in the Cloverly Master Plan Area was approved in 1994 to relieve anticipated pressure in the Paint Branch, Springbrook, and Sherwood school clusters. Additional school facilities may be necessary to solve this problem over the life of this Plan.

The projected number of high school students suggests that there will be a need for recreational facilities suitable for teenagers. At the other end of the spectrum, elder care, housing for independent senior citizens, retirement homes, and nursing homes may be needed for the parents of current residents.

¹ See: *Population and Household Profiles Eastern Montgomery County Master Plan Areas*, Montgomery County Planning Department, May 1995.

Almost 70 percent of the residents in Fairland moved during the five years prior to the 1990 US Census, compared to 50 percent County-wide. Fairland's high rate of mobility reflects the record number of housing completions during 1985 - 1990, a relatively young population, and a large share of multi-family rental housing.

Townhouses and multi-family units make up almost 70 percent of Fairland's housing stock. The area's baby boomers have now reached parenting age and the average size of area households has leveled out and will decline slightly over the next fifteen years. However, families with maturing children often have greater space needs. Currently, single-family detached housing makes up 30 percent of Fairland's housing stock, compared to 52 percent County-wide. The preference for single-family detached housing and Fairland's household characteristics suggests that single-family detached housing would best serve the needs of the community. This would also produce a closer balance among housing types in portions of the planning area with undeveloped properties.

EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK

Fairland experienced tremendous employment growth during the 1980s. As of 1995, area jobs are estimated at 15,800, an increase of 10,000 jobs since 1980. The area's inventory of non-residential space totals 5.3 million square feet. Fairland offers a wide variety of employment opportunities, which fall into four categories: office, retail, industrial, and "other." Office jobs, which include employment in research and development space, are estimated at 9,400, representing 59 percent of the area's employment. Area office space users include corporate headquarters; local professionals; and financial, insurance, and business services. Employers in research and development space include engineering telecommunications and other high-tech jobs. Retail employment is estimated at 2,900, followed by industrial related jobs at 2,500. Jobs in the "other" category total 1,000 and include medical, lodging, and non-office public employment.

Office Space

The Fairland area contains 2.8 million square feet of office and flex-space. Over 85 percent of this space has been constructed since 1980. Owner-occupied space accounts for 1.7 million square feet, or 63 percent of the area's office space. Leasable space totals 1.1 million square feet, of which 20 percent is currently vacant. Assuming the past five-year average rate of absorption continues, it would take five years to absorb the vacant space.

There is also a large amount of additional office space that could go forward if the market warranted. As of June 1995, there were about 1.43 million square feet of office space in the pipeline of approved projects. The potential supply of office space totals 1.83 million square feet. Forecasts indicate, however, that office employment in the Fairland area will increase less than three percent a year during the next 15 years, well below the historical growth rate. By 2010, the Cooperative Forecast anticipates office employment to reach 14,000, an increase of 4,800 jobs. The development potential from approved and pending plans, along with current vacant space, could more than accommodate the 15-year office employment forecast.

Retail Space

The Fairland Master Plan area contains 1.1 million square feet of retail space. Existing retail is a mixture of neighborhood convenience and comparison retail. For the most part, retail in the area serves the local market. Notable exceptions to this are Fairland's auto sales businesses, which serve the regional market.

Over three-quarters of the retail space in Fairland was completed during the last 15 years. Three new shopping centers opened during this period: the 186,000 square-foot Briggs Chaney Plaza in 1983, the 41,000 square-foot Briggs Chaney Center in 1987, and the 130,000 square-foot Burtonsville Crossing in 1989. A total of 292,000 square feet of auto-related retail space was completed at the Montgomery Auto Sales Park and Montgomery Industrial Park. In addition, approximately 50,000 square feet of retail developments including single-tenant buildings and smaller strip centers were constructed in the Burtonsville commercial area.

Staff analysis of neighborhood retail in Fairland indicated that an additional grocery store can be supported today in the Briggs Chaney market area.² The analysis also showed a greater supply of neighborhood retail space in the Burtonsville area than can be supported by market area residents. A number of factors help explain Burtonsville's ability to sustain a greater amount of retail space than the traditional market area can support, including great access to households outside the immediate market area. While the Burtonsville retail market currently appears to be doing well, potential retail development in Cloverly and in neighboring counties could reduce the size of the Burtonsville market, thereby reducing the amount of supportable space. In addition, the realignment of US 29 will reduce accessibility to Burtonsville Crossing for northbound commuters.

Retail trends toward value-oriented shopping, combined with the limited amount of large-scale discount retailing in the eastern part of the County, suggest that Fairland is a relatively untapped market for value-retail. The amount of non-neighborhood retail or comparison shopping space per capita in Eastern Montgomery County is 6.9 square feet compared to 20.6 square feet county-wide, evidence that the eastern portion of the county is underserved with respect to non-neighborhood retail space. The lack of large vacant tracts of commercially zoned land to accommodate this type of development make redevelopment of older commercial space an attractive real estate investment option. The age and size of Burtonsville Shopping Center, in particular, could encourage the future redevelopment of this site.

Industrial Space

Industrial space in the Fairland Master Plan Area totals 810,000 square feet. Most of this space is in the US 29/Cherry Hill Employment Area. The predominant industrial uses are storage/warehouse, with some assembly, printing, and research-related space. Industrial space completions since 1980 total 430,000 square feet. Higher-end uses, such as office and research and development space, dominate new development in the Industrial Park.

The current oversupply of office space, and in particular research and development space, may encourage some developers to pursue traditional industrial development. However, high land costs in eastern Montgomery County tend to discourage industrial development and force most low-end users to less expensive markets, primarily in neighboring Prince George's County. Many properties in the Montgomery Industrial Park could redevelop at a higher Floor Area Ratio (FAR) under current zoning. Some of the older buildings may need to be demolished or renovated to bring them up to market standards.

² *Eastern Montgomery County Neighborhood Retail Study*, The Montgomery County Planning Department, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 1994.

III. PLAN FRAMEWORK

PLAN VISION

Communities are often described as fabrics, a weaving together of places, buildings, people, and activities. In a successful community these elements come together as one. Fairland, more than anything else, is its communities.

To extend the metaphor, the fabric of Fairland has frayed. The Fairland Citizens Advisory Committee has described US 29 as “the Nile,” separating community from community and communities from facilities. This Plan must draw together these unraveled threads of places to build useful, pleasant, and safe neighborhoods—in a suburban context.

Beneath the built environment, however, lies the shape of the land. Fairland is physically divided by numerous stream valleys, some of which have water quality high enough to support a self-sustaining brown trout population. Although these stream valleys make it difficult to connect roads, they provide an opportunity to form a trail system for active use of the parkland.

This Plan envisions physical alterations to US 29 that will alleviate congestion, improve east-west travel, and most importantly, allow bikes and pedestrians to cross US 29 safely to reach facilities and services on either side of the highway.

This Plan sees new residential development as providing options and variety, while being compatible with existing surrounding neighborhoods. Emphasis is placed on single-family detached housing with the centerpiece being a golf course community developed in conjunction with an upgraded public golf course.

Sidewalks, bikeways, and hiking trails will link the communities of Fairland and provide access to recreation and public facilities. The pedestrian and bike system will connect communities with better defined local neighborhood retail and employment centers. Neighborhood shopping centers at Briggs Chaney and Burtonsville will have streetscaping designed to create identity and improve the pedestrian environment. These retail areas will be defined by a shared public and private presence.

Most of all, this Fairland of the future is a livable suburban community—a series of neighborhoods with sidewalks and street trees, access to the natural environment and recreational facilities with employment and commercial areas emphasizing horizontal rather than vertical structures. There is plenty of green space, jobs, shopping, and, most importantly, a variety of housing options to serve a variety of needs and households—the young couples just starting out, single adults, families who need room, older couples who want less space, and senior citizens who want to be able to participate in community life.

PLAN CONCEPT

The land use concept for the Fairland Master Plan area has three components: 1) Fairland is composed of livable suburban communities, 2) that the communities are surrounded and interlaced by a system of open spaces and greenways, and 3) that the communities are served by neighborhood commercial and employment centers (Figure 9).

Land-use strategies to guide the development of these three components are:

Residential Communities:

Emphasize suburban densities and single-family detached housing.

Maintain suburban densities in suburban communities as defined by the General Plan Refinement.

Lower densities in the transition area between the Residential Wedge and the Suburban Communities as defined by the General Plan Refinement.

Maintain low-density development pattern within the Residential Wedge and Patuxent watershed.

Interconnect local streets, bikeways, sidewalks/paths for access between communities, public facilities, and neighborhood centers.

Open Space and Greenways:

Include public open space and new recreational facilities in future residential development, including playgrounds, ballfields, and an expanded golf course.

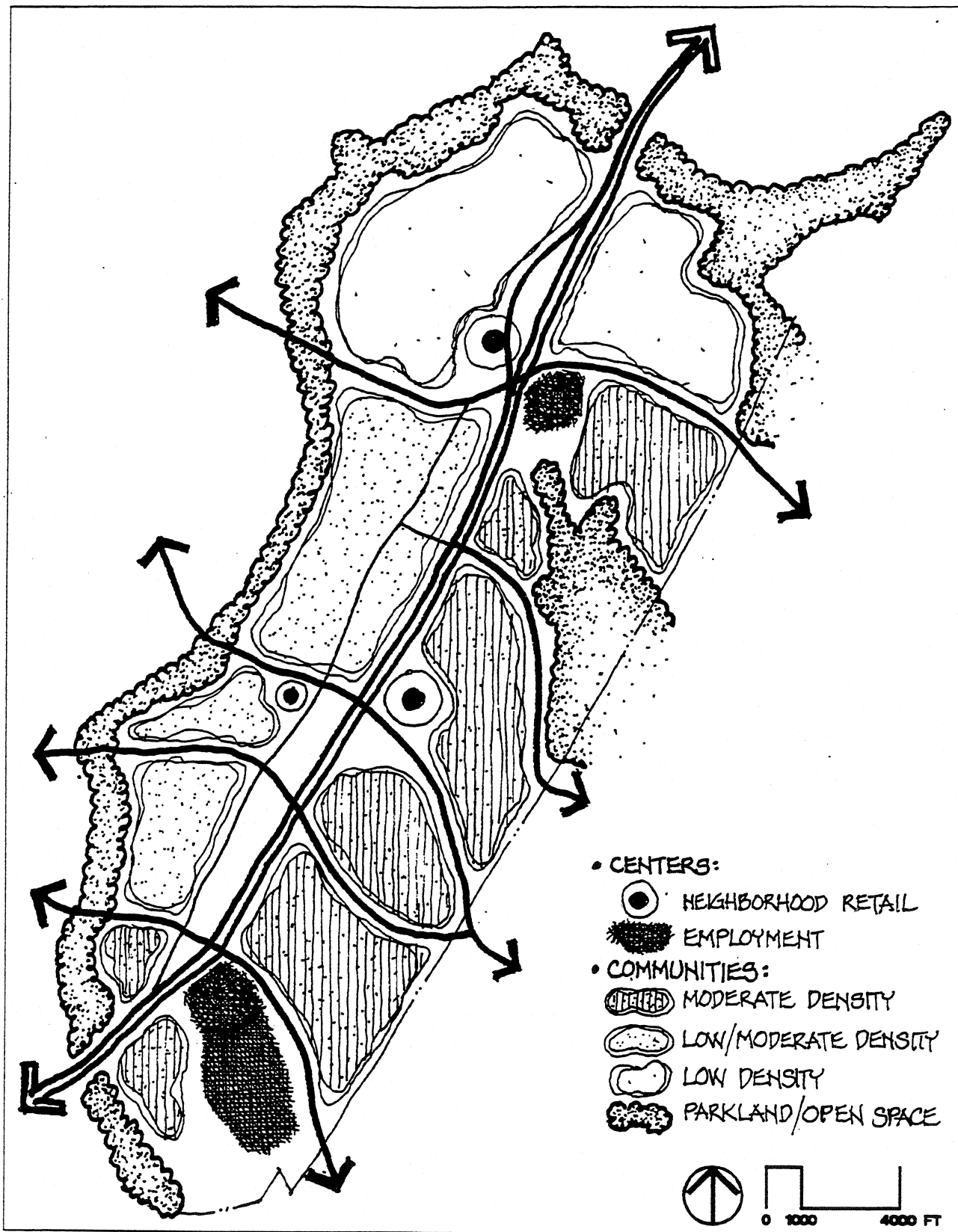
Add critical pieces to expand the stream valley park system.

Develop a greenway system.

Centers:

Define and improve the circulation, access, and appearance in the two neighborhood shopping centers, Briggs Chaney and Burtonsville, through public/private partnerships.

Diversify uses in the two employment centers, US 29/Cherry Hill Road Area and Burtonsville Industrial Area, to develop self-sufficient, modern centers.



CONFORMANCE WITH THE STATE PLANNING ACT AND THE GENERAL PLAN REFINEMENT

The visions established in the 1992 Planning Act generally coincide with the General Plan Refinement goals, objectives, and strategies. The following description, organized around the seven goals of the General Plan—Land Use, Housing, Economic Activity, Transportation, Environment, Community Identity, and Regionalism—explains how the Fairland Master Plan supports both the seven visions of the Planning Act and the goals of the General Plan. (See page 11 for a brief description of the Planning Act's Seven Visions.)

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

The Fairland Master Plan is consistent with the Wedges and Corridors concept of the General Plan by establishing medium-densities in the Suburban Communities and low-densities in the Residential Wedge. New commercial and residential opportunities in the Fairland Master Plan area are limited, thereby supporting a General Plan objective to “direct the major portion of Montgomery County's future growth to the Urban Ring and I-270 Corridor.” This also conforms with Vision 1 of the Planning Act that development is to be concentrated in suitable areas.

Housing: **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.**

The Fairland Master Plan area already offers a wide choice of housing, including single-family detached and attached housing units and multi-family units. In some communities there are far greater numbers of attached units and multi-family units than single-family detached units. To help balance this housing mix, the Master Plan recommends that undeveloped areas be predominantly single-family detached. This correlates with the General Plan objective to “maintain and enhance the quality of housing and neighborhoods.”

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

The Master Plan seeks to enhance the existing employment centers in the Fairland Master Plan area by recommending additional uses in the employment areas. 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 that economic growth be encouraged in areas where development already exists.

Transportation: **Enhance mobility by providing a safe and efficient transportation system, offering a wide range of alternatives that serve the environmental, economic, social, and land use needs of the County and provides a framework for development.**

The Fairland Master Plan supports the General Plan transportation principles, including an improved transit system, a bikeway system, and encouraging movement of through-traffic away from local streets and onto major highways. The Plan recommends grade-separations of US 29 intersections and assumes the construction of a roadway or transitway along the InterCounty Connector right-of-way, thereby supporting a General Plan strategy to “give priority to improving east-west travel.”

Environment: 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.

Protecting stream quality, wetlands, floodplains, and forest cover are all environmental issues addressed by both the Fairland Master Plan and the General Plan Refinement. The Fairland Master Plan pays particular attention to limiting further degradation of stream quality. It calls for selected park acquisition in the tributaries of the upper Paint Branch watershed, a special protection area for the upper Paint Branch and encourages stormwater management projects to improve stream valley protection. This Plan's commitment to reducing single-occupancy auto-mobile travel will help to improve air quality and reduce energy consumption.

Community Identity: Provide for attractive land uses that encourage opportunity for social interaction and promote community identity.

Community identity and community building are major components in the Fairland Master Plan. Many of the General Plan goals, objectives, and strategies aimed at improving community identity are employed in this Plan. Design improvements to increase the connections between residential neighborhoods and between residential and commercial areas are proposed. Other proposals include the retention of publicly-owned sites for future community facilities, improvements to the Gunpowder Golf Course as part of a golf course community, and public-private partnerships to improve streetscaping and access in the commercial and employment centers.

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

This Plan's commitment to achieving Clean Air Act standards and to protect water quality and quantity conforms to the General Plan Refinement's strategy to "attain and maintain regional standards for matters of regional significance," and with Visions 4 and 5 of the Planning Act regarding the regional importance of the Chesapeake Bay and other environmental resources.