

Planning Policies

A. Plan Vision

A vision statement attempts to answer the question, "What should this community be like twenty years from now?" In doing so, it expresses the community's hopes and expectations for the future. Implicit in the vision for Forest Glen are the key goals of enhancing community identity and sense of place, and the need to protect existing neighborhoods from undesirable intrusions.

This Sector Plan retains the basic aim of the 1978 *Forest Glen Sector Plan*: the maintenance of a harmonious relationship and balance among the various physical, social, and economic aspects of the Forest Glen area within the context of the Kensington-Wheaton Planning Area and of Montgomery County. The 1978 Plan was written in anticipation of the proposed Forest Glen Metro station, which opened in 1990. Now that the impacts of Metro can be assessed based on actual

experience, it is appropriate to review and adjust the Plan vision to reflect future directions, trends, or events not anticipated in 1978.

This Plan reinforces the most desirable existing aspects of the Forest Glen area while accommodating those elements of change which are appropriate. The Plan preserves and strengthens the existing residential communities and the Forest Glen Metro station. The Plan also addresses elements of potential change in Forest Glen including the potentially developable or redevelopable properties near Metro and the nature and location within the community of health care services.

This Plan envisions a community consisting of two stable residential neighborhoods, identified herein as Forest Glen East and Forest Glen West, which are separated by Georgia Avenue. While the prevalent character of the two neighborhoods is that

of single-family homes, several multi-family complexes in Forest Glen West round out the range of housing choices.

This Plan attempts to improve the sense of community for both Forest Glen East and Forest Glen West by providing for recognizable public open spaces and a pedestrian friendly environment. This Plan envisions Georgia Avenue as a landscaped corridor with safer sidewalks and crosswalks. Multi-family residences and limited special exception uses border the street, buffering the residential neighborhoods of Forest Glen West and Forest Glen East behind them.

On the east side of Georgia Avenue, in Forest Glen East, this Plan envisions a stable single-family residential community with improved sidewalks and bicycle paths to Metro and other public facilities. Holy Cross Hospital will continue to play an important role in Forest Glen East. This Plan attempts to balance the hospital's needs with those of the surrounding community; it establishes limits for future hospital expansion in Forest Glen so that the hospital can continue to provide health care services to County residents and the residential neighborhoods can be assured of future stability.

The single-family neighborhoods in Forest Glen West would also be enhanced by improvements to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access to Metro and to the community's public open spaces. Future development near the Metrorail station should be residential, although day care would also be an appropriate use, and should be compatible in scale with the existing community. Public open spaces and pedestrian friendly streets would provide gathering places for the community.

B. Planning Goals

Generally speaking, the residents of Forest Glen appear to be comfortable with their community as it exists today. Georgia

Avenue may divide the sector area into two separate communities, but both Forest Glen East and Forest Glen West are desirable places to live and raise families.

Given the apparent degree of satisfaction with the status quo, the sector plan process presents quite a dilemma. Long-term plans look at change almost by definition. Even if the Sector Plan ultimately does nothing more than reaffirm what exists today, the process leading to those recommendations involves the consideration of potential changes.

Certainly, some kinds of change are inevitable no matter what the Sector Plan recommends. For example, regional through traffic in Forest Glen is likely to increase even if nothing new is built in the sector area itself. There may also be things which can be done over the next 15 years to make Forest Glen an even better place to live, at least in theory.

During the development of this Sector Plan, some members of the CAC and the community have expressed the concern that potential changes to land use and the transportation network could de-stabilize Forest Glen rather than improve it. This Plan is sensitive to these concerns. A major goal of this Plan is to maintain and strengthen community stability.

At the same time, this Plan must identify potential solutions to those problems which do exist, as well as means to accomplish broad County policies. In doing so, this Sector Plan seeks to achieve a fair and responsible balance between competing interests. In some cases, this requires balancing local interests with regional interests; in other cases, it may involve balancing the interests of adjoining property owners. Although it would be desirable to satisfy each interest fully, it is more often the case that each interest is only partly satisfied. Usually, compromise is required. This Plan seeks to balance the needs of the local community, the motorists on Georgia Avenue, and the larger community. The Planning Goals identified below, and the specific

recommendations in the chapters which follow, reflect a balancing of these at times competing interests.

- 1 To preserve the Forest Glen community as a stable, predominantly single-family residential community.
- 2 To enhance community identity by strengthening the neighborhoods within the sector plan area and providing additional gathering places such as public open spaces and pedestrian-friendly streets.
- 3 To focus new development at appropriate locations near the Metrorail station consistent with the General Plan.
- 4 To provide a balance between the needs of the residential neighborhoods and the regional interests served by Holy Cross Hospital.
- 5 To ensure that new development or future redevelopment is compatible with the character of the existing community.
- 6 To provide safe and efficient traffic circulation for both local and regional travel, taking into account the impacts of vehicular traffic on existing neighborhoods.
- 7 To encourage non-automobile modes of transportation such as transit, bicycles, and walking by providing for attractive, safe, and convenient access to major destinations including the Metrorail station and the center in Montgomery Hills.
- 8 To protect neighborhoods as much as possible from intrusive uses.
- 9 To provide an attractive, landscaped boulevard along Georgia Avenue.
- 10 To protect the edges of residential neighborhoods on both sides of Georgia Avenue.
- 11 To prevent the spread of commercial areas along Georgia Avenue.
- 12 To protect neighborhoods from excessive noise and air quality impacts.
- 13 To protect and preserve environmentally sensitive features, including forest and stream systems.
- 14 To protect and preserve historic features within the sector area.