

Plan Highlights

This Plan seeks to enhance stable residential neighborhoods, upgrade local commercial centers, transform a highway into a landscaped urban boulevard, and improve pedestrian and bikeway connections.

This Plan covers two planning areas that share important issues as well as proximity to the Silver Spring Central Business District. North and West Silver Spring are composed primarily of established residential neighborhoods supported by local commercial centers. The planning area includes some light industrial, service, and institutional uses.

This Master Plan reaffirms the basic concepts of the 1972 *Master Plan for the Western Portion of the Silver Spring Planning Area* and the 1978 *North Silver Spring Sector Plan*. These concepts recognize the predominately residential nature of the area and the community orientation of its local commercial centers. This mixture results in vibrant neighborhoods that are convenient to goods, services, and transportation. However, proximity also results in concerns about the appropriate limits of commercial areas and their impact on residential neighborhoods.

North and West Silver Spring neighborhoods are located near Metrorail, the CBD, and regional parks; residents are connected to the larger community without relying solely on the car. Improved trails and pedestrian access will increase and enhance these connections. While the area is largely developed, renovation, particularly in commercial and industrial areas, could create opportunities for environmental improvements along with aesthetic and business-oriented improvements.

Because there is little opportunity to create new parks in North and West Silver Spring, existing parks must be maintained and upgraded to respond to changing community needs and desires.

The Plan's recommendations are designed to sustain and enhance these neighborhoods with upgraded infrastructure, stabilized and reused historic resources, renovated parks, and a neighborhood-friendly transportation system that provides pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular access to Metrorail, recreation, and retail areas. This Plan makes a major recommendation to improve Georgia Avenue in Montgomery Hills (between 16th Street and the Capital Beltway). The Proposed Concept for Georgia Avenue envisions turning the highway into a landscaped urban boulevard with a center median, improved local circulation, and wide, tree-lined sidewalks. Decisions about transportation, parks, and the environment will effect the long-term viability of the residential neighborhoods, sustaining them as convenient, safe, and attractive places to live.

The Silver Spring Central Business District, which is undergoing revitalization, will serve as a community-oriented downtown for these residential neighborhoods. North and West Silver Spring's commercial areas are primarily small, neighborhood shopping centers. Some are active and fully tenanted despite parking and access problems; others are losing tenants to retail alternatives and need to be upgraded and repositioned to serve the local market. This Plan

makes recommendations to sustain them as viable commercial centers without negatively impacting the surrounding residential neighborhoods. The Plan also recommends retaining the existing light industrial area, upgrading its streetscaping, and improving its buffers with the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Community Preservation, Stability, and Character

Well-established residential neighborhoods of active community life are supported by a variety of local services. Map 1 is an Illustrative Concept reflecting Community Character in North and West Silver Spring.

The intent of the Master Plan is to preserve the existing residential character and to reinforce the many desirable features of the North and West Silver Spring neighborhoods. The Plan reconfirms the existing residential zoning in both North and West Silver Spring. The Plan also recommends using a variety of County programs to improve community infrastructure and the housing stock.

The Plan recommends designation of several historic properties on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. The largest resource in the area, the National Park Seminary Historic District, is already on the Master Plan and is in the ownership of the United States Army. The Army is actively working to transfer ownership to another government agency and then to the private sector. Once the disposition of the District is known, a minor master plan amendment may be necessary if the proposed reuse cannot be accommodated by the existing R-90 zoning.

Plan Recommendations:

- **Preserve the residential character of the North and West Silver Spring neighborhoods.**

- **Limit the impact of traffic in residential neighborhoods.**
- **Limit commercial zoning to the areas recommended in this Plan.**
- **Designate recommended historic resources.**

Commercial Centers - Character and Vitality

North and West Silver Spring residents value local businesses in their community and many of their daily convenience retail needs can be met in the immediate neighborhood. Recommendations to improve the appearance, vehicular and pedestrian access, and the overall economic health of commercial centers in North and West Silver Spring are an important focus of this Plan.

This section addresses the Rock Creek Center neighborhood commercial area, the Brookville Road Industrial Area, the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, the National Park Seminary Historic District, and special exception uses. Map 2 is an Illustrative Concept of Commercial Centers in the area. The Montgomery Hills Commercial Center was the subject of a special study and recommendations are outlined in a separate section.

Plan Recommendations:

- **Reconfirm the existing commercial zoning in North and West Silver Spring and limit commercial and industrial development to the existing established centers.**
- **Ensure that the Army complies with and fully implements the 1992 Memorandum of Understanding for the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Forest Glen Annex that it made with the National Capital Planning Commission and the Montgomery County Planning Board.**

- Prepare a minor master plan amendment to this Plan if the proposed reuse of the National Park Seminary Historic District cannot be accommodated by the existing zoning (R-90, residential, one-family).
- Apply increased scrutiny to the review of special exception applications to minimize their impact in residential neighborhoods.
- Remove the designation of properties as suitable to apply for a non-resident professional office special exception on most properties in the Master Plan area except the nine houses on Cedar Street between Ellsworth Drive and Pershing Drive and any other properties that currently have an approved special exception.
- Improve landscape buffers between the industrial uses and the residential neighborhoods.

Montgomery Hills Proposed Concept

The Montgomery Hills Commercial Area is located along Georgia Avenue between the Beltway and 16th Street. It is an older commercial area that provides convenience shopping primarily for the local neighborhoods. Today, Georgia Avenue through Montgomery Hills is a 7 lane highway with minimal attention paid to the pedestrian environment. Montgomery Hills—and the residential neighborhoods that surround it—should be a place where people are encouraged to walk, rather than drive. The Forest Glen Metrorail station is located just north of the Capital Beltway and is the closest station for many North Silver Spring residents. With all the convenience that this location offers, Georgia Avenue in Montgomery Hills should be an attractive, accessible neighborhood center that serves the local community.

This Plan recognizes that Georgia Avenue in Montgomery Hills serves several functions: it is a major north-south regional highway; it is adjacent to a busy Beltway interchange; it provides a connection between the Brookville Road Industrial area and the Capital Beltway; it traverses a vital neighborhood center; and it is a gateway to downtown Silver Spring. This Plan recommends that Georgia Avenue be transformed from a highway into a landscaped urban boulevard with a center median, improved local circulation, and wide, unobstructed, tree-lined sidewalks. This Plan seeks to achieve this vision for Montgomery Hills through implementation of the Proposed Concept, which balances the needs of motorists and pedestrians, as well as merchants and local residents.

Plan Recommendations

- Remove the reversible lane and install a center median on Georgia Avenue between 16th Street and Forest Glen Road, within the recommended Master Plan right-of-way of 120 feet.
- Provide seven or eight through lanes.
- Provide for evening peak period left turns from northbound Georgia Avenue at one or more locations within Montgomery Hills.
- Implement related improvements in Montgomery Hills to address local circulation and parking issues.

Neighborhood-Friendly Circulation Systems

North and West Silver Spring have tremendous locational advantages for those seeking a close-in residence or business site that is conveniently situated within the metropolitan region. Map 3 is an Illustrative Concept of the Circulation System. The area is densely developed and includes major

commuter arteries that carry significant amounts of daily vehicular traffic. Beyond the highways traversing North and West Silver Spring are stable, mature residential neighborhoods. However, the high volume of traffic that passes through the area often turns the convenience of this down-County location into a drawback for local residents.

This Plan recommends major vehicular and pedestrian improvements, particularly for the Montgomery Hills area. The challenge for the Plan is to find a balance that accommodates local and regional traffic, yet provides safe pedestrian access and protects the neighborhoods from intrusive vehicular impact.

Plan Recommendations:

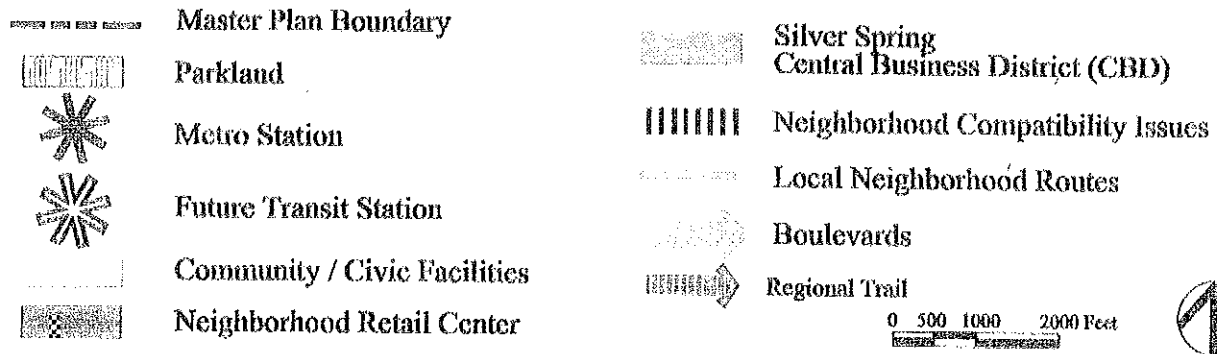
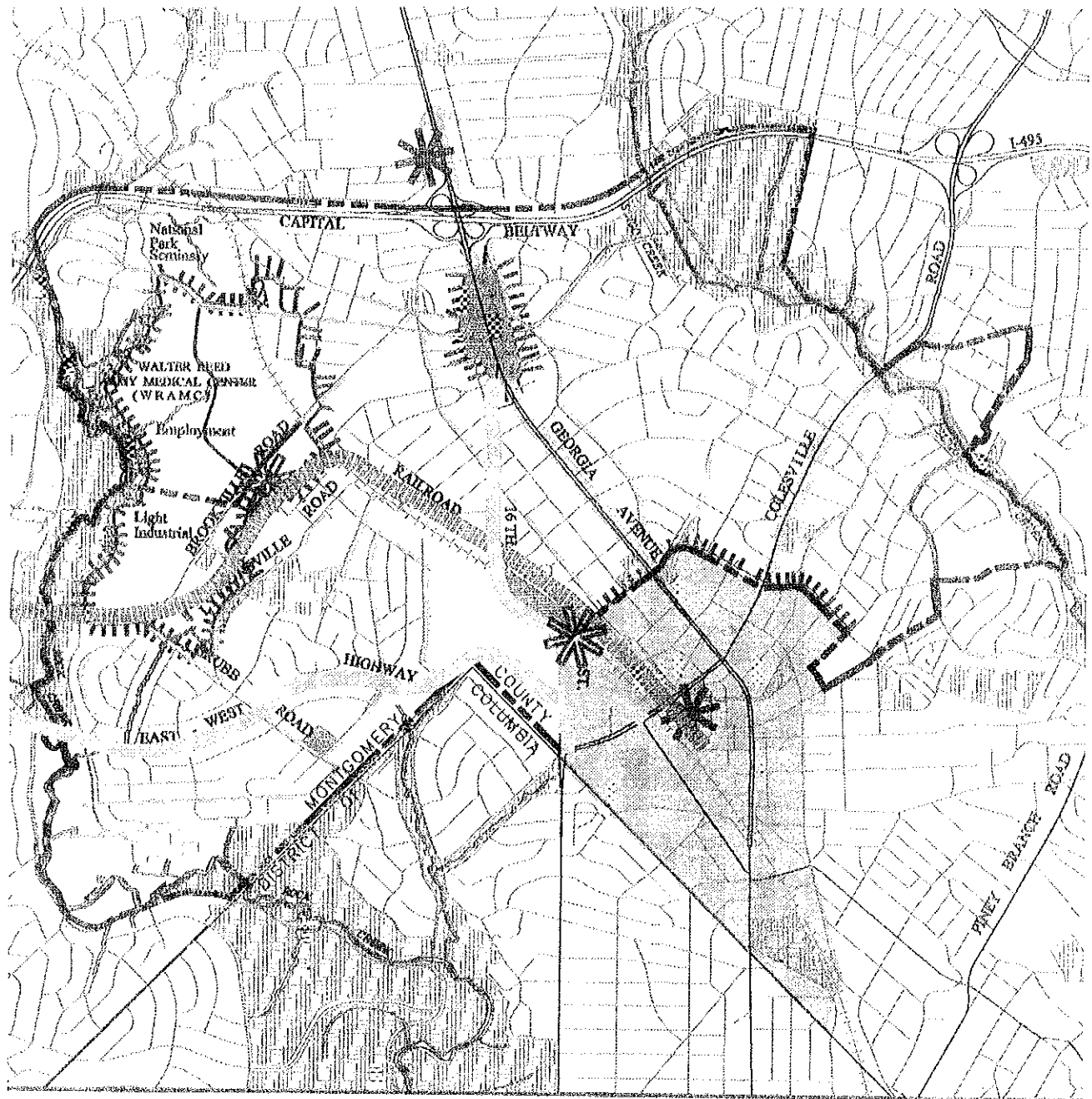
- Protect the residential neighborhoods from commercial and through traffic.
- Enhance pedestrian access to shopping areas, transit, and community facilities by improving pedestrian safety and providing wide, tree-lined sidewalks throughout the area.
- Consider alternative designs for the intersection of Georgia Avenue and 16th Street when the State Highway Administration (SHA) studies the Georgia Avenue corridor.
- Implement the Georgetown Branch Transitway between Silver Spring and Bethesda.
- Improve and expand the inter-connected system of bikeways and trails in Silver Spring and beyond. Silver Spring can help ease mounting traffic congestion by providing substantive and user-friendly alternatives to the automobile. Without good facilities, commuters are less likely to choose a non-auto means of transportation.

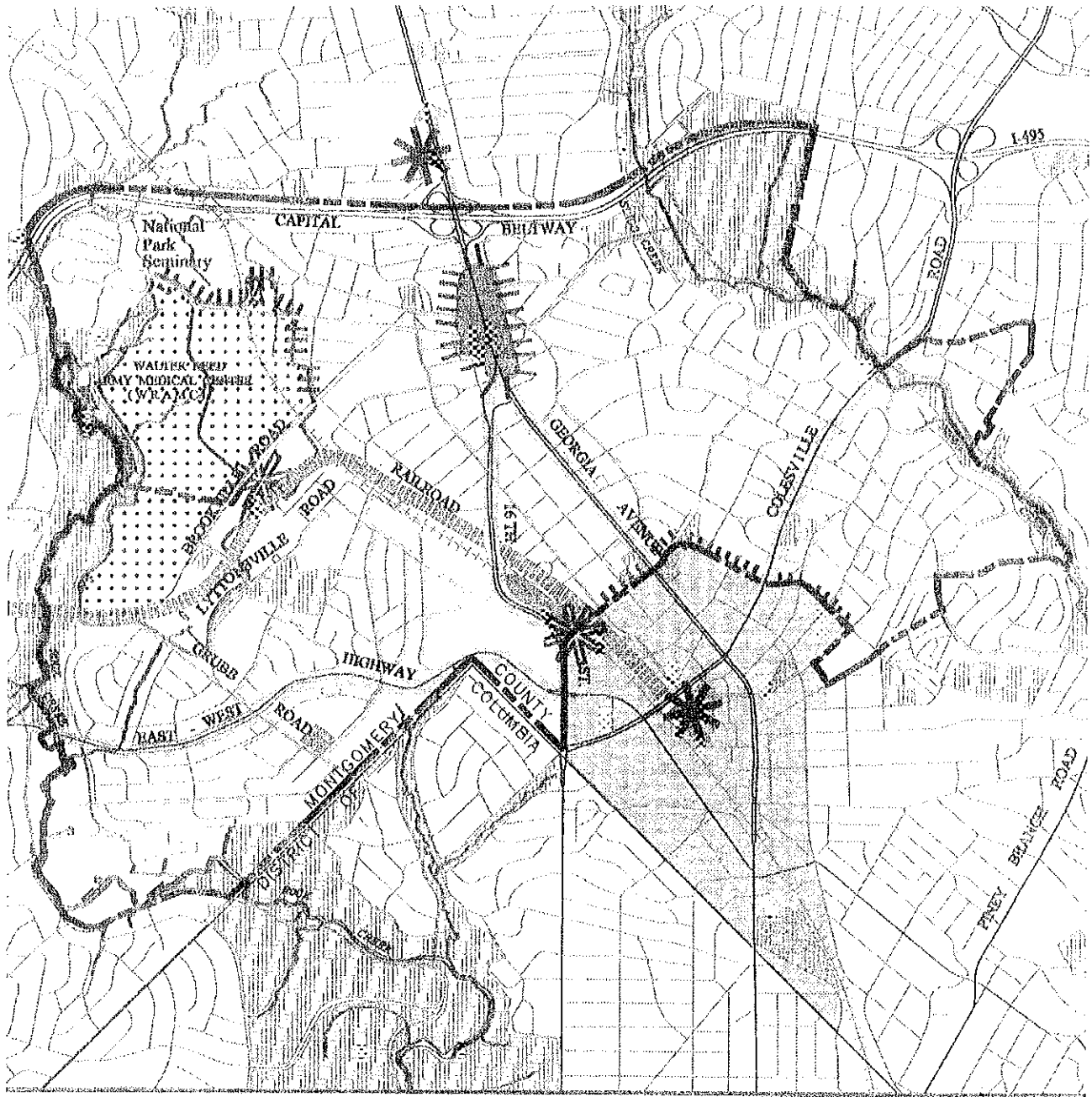
Parks, Community Facilities, and Environmental Resources

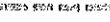






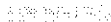



North and West Silver Spring neighborhoods have a compact, densely developed residential character with a full complement of community facilities. Map 4 is an Illustrative Concept of Parks and Community Facilities. These resources are essential elements of community life that establish neighborhood identity and provide valuable services and programs. Much of the appeal and attractiveness of these neighborhoods is derived from their proximity to natural resources, particularly the nearby stream valley parks, Sligo Creek Park and Rock Creek Park.

Plan Recommendations:

- Provide community facilities to meet the human service, recreation, security, educational, and other needs of the diverse community.
- Renovate existing facilities and provide new facilities and recreational programs for a wide range of ages, backgrounds, and interests.
- Design new development and redevelopment to prevent conditions that may create local noise and air pollution nuisances.
- Enhance the natural environment by creating green spaces and identifying locations for improved street tree planting.





	Master Plan Boundary		Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD)
	Parkland		Employment /Light Industrial
	Metro Station		Local Neighborhood Routes
	Future Transit Station		Boulevards
	Neighborhood Retail Center		Neighborhood Compatibility Issues
	Regional Trail		



