

MEMORANDUM

December 8, 2009

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee
FROM: ⁶⁰ Glenn Orlin, Deputy Council Staff Director
SUBJECT: White Flint Sector Plan—transportation issues--continuation

Note: Please bring your copies of the Final Draft Sector Plan and Appendix to the meeting.

This is a continuation of the November 10 worksession on transportation issues in the White Flint Sector Plan. This packet will cover those matters not addressed on November 10.

Land use/transportation balance. At the last worksession the Committee tentatively concurred with assuming the following:

- *Increase the non-auto-driver mode share (NADMS) for employees in White Flint from 39% to 50%.*
- *Increase the NADMS for residents by 5%.*

The Committee agreed neither with removing the median on Montrose Road between I-270 and Montrose Parkway and replacing it with a reversible lane, nor widening Rockville Pike from 6 to 8 lanes between Edson Lane and the Beltway.

As follow-up, therefore, Planning staff and Council staff will be developing and analyzing options that would reduce the proposed land use density from the Final Draft Plan in order to bring the build-out Relative Arterial Mobility no lower than 40% (i.e., staying out of Level of Service 'E'). We will report the results at a worksession after the winter recess.

Executive Boulevard/Old Georgetown Road intersection. At the last worksession the Committee wanted more information as to whether, as part of the Final Draft's proposal to re-orient the Old Georgetown Road/Executive Boulevard intersection, Old Georgetown Road could be extended north as a two-way thoroughfare not just to Montrose Parkway and Montrose Road, but all the way to Rockville Pike. Currently, the Final Draft Plan would allow through traffic in the southbound direction from Rockville Pike to Montrose Road, Montrose Parkway, and Old Georgetown Road, but in the northbound direction traffic would proceed only to Montrose Parkway and Montrose Road.

DOT and Planning staff find two problems with extending Old Georgetown Road northbound between Montrose Road and Rockville Pike. The primary concern is that the northbound roadway would intersect the Pike too close to the Pike's signalized intersection with the entrance to Montrose Crossing. Secondly, the extension would disrupt a second stormwater management facility being built as part of the Pike/Montrose interchange. Therefore, the staffs have concluded that the northbound extension beyond Montrose Road is not feasible. The northbound movement could still be made, albeit more indirectly, via Montrose Parkway and its ramp to northbound Rockville Pike.

Council staff recommendation: Approve the Executive Boulevard/Old Georgetown Road intersection as described in the Final Draft Plan (see ©44).

Size of the White Flint MSPA. This is a reprise of the issue recently discussed during deliberations on the 2009-2011 Growth Policy. The Planning Board recommends that the Metro Station Policy Area (MSPA) be expanded to the Sector Plan boundary, increasing its land area from about 10.0 million SF to 18.3 million SF. Currently, there are five consequences of including an area in an MSPA:

- The intersections in an MSPA have a LATR standard of 1,800 CLV, which tolerates more congestion than in the surrounding policy area.
- Under the Growth Policy, the Alternative Review Procedure for MSPAs and the new alternative for certain mixed-use developments with higher energy efficiency would be options for some new developments.
- The transportation impact tax rate is half that of the surrounding policy area.
- Street improvements are built to the "urban" standards under the Road Construction Code, generally requiring narrower lanes and more pedestrian-friendly design than in the surrounding policy area.
- In certain zones, certain developers must produce workforce housing.

Four years ago, in worksessions on the 2005-2007 Growth Policy, the Council tentatively approved expanding the policy area to nearly the same boundary now proposed. However, when the Council ultimately decided not to adopt that Growth Policy, the boundary remained the same.

Federal Realty Investment Trust, the Holladay Corporation, and ACT recommend expanding the boundary to match the Sector Plan boundary. The County Executive, the Garrett Park Estates-White Flint Park Citizens' Association and the Coalition for Kensington Communities oppose its expansion. The opponents point to the fact that the LATR standard for the Rockville Pike intersections at Security Lane and Edson Lane would be raised from 1,550 CLV to 1,800 CLV, meaning that every intersection on the Pike between the Beltway and the Rockville City boundary would have an 1,800 CLV standard.

The map on ©47 shows the existing boundary and the map on ©48 shows the proposed boundary. The maps on ©49-57 show the boundaries for the other 9 MSPAs, with overlays showing the ¼-mile and ½-mile distances from their respective Metro Stations. Scanning these maps, it is clear that while the other MSPAs include substantial land between ¼-mile and ½-mile of the station, with several MSPAs having some land even beyond ½ mile, the existing White

Flint MSPA is much smaller. Expanding the boundary to that of the Sector Plan would make it more consistent with the others. An apples-to-apples way to compare the MSPAs is to determine what proportion of each of them is within a ½-mile of its Metro Station. This information is also shown at the bottom of ©47-57, and are rank-ordered here:

<i>Metro Station Policy Area</i>	<i>Portion of MSPA within ½-mile of Metro Station</i>
White Flint (existing)	99.65%
Twinbrook	99.02%
Friendship Heights	98.29%
Glenmont	96.20%
Wheaton CBD	92.42%
Grosvenor	88.49%
Silver Spring CBD	85.03%
White Flint (proposed)	84.95%
Rockville Town Center	79.73%
Bethesda CBD	74.14%
Shady Grove	71.43%

Adopting the Sector Plan boundary would bring White Flint near the middle of the range: 7th of 10. Its percentage of area within ½-mile would be about midway between the highest (Twinbrook) and lowest (Shady Grove).

Council staff recommends expanding the White Flint MSPA to its Sector Plan boundary. Any change to the MSPA boundary would be implemented in a Growth Policy amendment running concurrent with—or shortly following—adoption of this Plan.

If this is not acceptable, a secondary recommendation is to expand the boundary to what (mistakenly) was in effect between 2007 and 2009. Its map is on ©58; the area is the same as the Sector Plan except that it would cut out the properties south of Edson Lane in the NoBe District and the Nicholson Court properties in the White Flint Mall District. With this boundary, the portion of the White Flint MSPA within ½-mile of the Metro Station would be 95.07%. The intersection standards would be the same as under the Sector Plan boundary.

Public and private streets. As a follow-up to the last worksession, DOT and Planning staffs will be meeting over the next few weeks with individual property owners to determine if the following proposed private streets could have conditions that would satisfy the government's concerns, while allowing them to continue to be private streets:

- Woodglan Drive from Nicholson Lane to B-16 (the new east-west public street through the Federal Realty property);
- The one-block, east-west connection between Nebel Street (B-5) and Chapman Avenue (B-12) following the boundary between the Maple Avenue and Metro East Districts; and
- The one-block, north-south connection between Nicholson Lane (A-69) and the eastern extension of Executive Boulevard (B-7), essentially where there is now a private access road serving the west side of White Flint Plaza and the north side of White Flint Mall.

The results of these discussions will, too, be reported back to the Committee at a worksession after the winter recess.

Local circulation in the White Flint Mall District. The Council has received several comments about Nebel Street Extended through this district and the fact that a potential elementary school site east of the Mall would block the road and cause significant circulation issues.

Planning staff and MCPS staff are now recommending that the primary location for the school be south of the Mall and just north of the dead end on Stillwater Avenue. (The Board of Education is taking up this issue December 8 in the afternoon.) With this location, the Draft Plan's street network, including Nebel Street Extended, can remain intact.

Nebel Street Extended is described in Table 4 on page 57 of the Plan as having 3 lanes, but one of the lanes is only for turning traffic. The number of lanes noted on this table are strictly for the number of through lanes, not including turning, parking, acceleration, deceleration, or other auxiliary lanes. **Therefore, in Table 4 Nebel Street Extended should be described as having 2 lanes, not 3.**

Bikeways. DOT's comments on bikeways and pedestrian facilities are on ©33-34, and the comments from Montgomery Bicycle Advocates (MoBike) are on ©65-66. The comments from the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) are on ©67-69.

Council staff recommends approval of the bikeway elements in the Draft Plan. They generally follow the practice of recommending bike lanes on major highways, arterials, and selected business district streets with high traffic volume (e.g., Rockville Pike, Nicholson Lane, Old Georgetown Road, Nebel Street) but not requiring them on lower-volume roads where they are not needed and would create unnecessarily wide cross-sections. The specifics of the bikeway along Rockville Pike should be part of—or a follow-up to—the development of a BRT concept under the Countywide BRT Study.

Parking. DOT notes that new development must provide what is required in the County Code, that the amount of parking to be required is currently under review as part of the study of parking requirements in MSPAs, that the cost of managing parking must be covered by revenue generated by the parking, and that DOT should manage public parking. The Draft Plan's recommendation is to:

Establish a parking management authority for the Plan area to assist in the active management of parking demand and promote shared parking efficiencies, particularly relieving the requirements for smaller properties to self-park. Public/private parking arrangements should be encouraged as private properties redevelop. [page 55 of the Plan]

The location and supply of parking spaces, their allocation between long-term (for commuters) and short-term, their fees and their financing are arguably the most important matters that will determine whether White Flint's transportation will "work" or not. These matters are certainly more important than the planned improvements to transit, bikeways, sidewalks, and many roads.

The provision and management of parking needs to be a major part of the infrastructure financing plan for White Flint. If the outlines of a financing plan—including parking—are developed before the conclusion of the Sector Plan, the Council should take the opportunity to beef up the Plan’s language on parking management.

Park-and-ride. The Draft Plan calls for the SHA property south of Montrose Parkway to be zoned to promote affordable housing and public facilities, possibly in conjunction with private development. For the island inside the new interchange loop ramp north of Montrose Parkway, the Draft Plan indicates the appropriateness for public safety uses, such as EMS, fire and rescue, and police services (see page 35 of the Plan). DOT strongly opposes the permanent loss of any spaces from the former MD 355 Park-and-Ride lot. **Council staff disagrees with DOT.** As White Flint develops into an urban center, surface park-and-ride lots will become an increasingly inappropriate use. These lots consume valuable land that is better used for mixed use developments and supporting public facilities. Furthermore, they encourage more car-commuters to enter the MSPA who are not working in the MSPA.

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expected to be achieved upon the full development of the area, not during the interim stages, be included in the plan.

- a. Page 52 indicates that automobile traffic contributes to greenhouse gas emission and that encouraging transit is beneficial. While this statement is correct, there is new research being used by TPB/COG that related carbon dioxide vehicle emissions to speed. Very slow speeds, less than 10 miles per hour have the worst carbon emissions while speeds in the 20 to 35 mph have the best emissions profile. The report should recognize that any benefit from transit may be offset by increased auto emissions from slower operating speeds. Additionally, traffic standing still due to congestion degrades air quality, economic development and quality of life for individuals and businesses.
- b. PP. 56 & 59 – recommended target speed on all master planned roadways in the Sector Plan area = 25 mph (with the exception of Montrose Parkway). This recommendation is not consistent with the ranges of target speeds approved by the County Council for different classes of roadways in an urban district. We oppose identifying a specific target speed in a Master Plan document; such an approach is contrary to Context Sensitive Design principles.

Pedestrian Facilities and Bikeways

1. Recreational Loop: Page 22 refers to a recreational loop. This loop crosses Rt. 355 three times. MCDOT recommends that the Plan recognize and address the potential for auto/ped/bike conflicts at these intersections.
2. Pedestrian Bridge over CSX Tracks: The CIP Projects section of the Implementation chapter contains some projects that are not discussed in the text of the plan. One example is a “Pedestrian Bridge over CSX Tracks”. This needs to be deleted from Table 7 since no analysis is contained in the body of the plan justifying the need for such a bridge or the benefit for it given its probable significant cost.
3. Bikeway Network on the New Street Grid System
The lower volume, newly proposed grid street system would make a better bikeway network than the existing major roadways. MCDOT recommends the following routes:
 - a. Boylston St., Citadel Ave., Huff Ct.
 - b. B-7 Route, entire length.
 - c. B-15 to B-16
 - d. Local Street between Old Old Georgetown and MD 355.
 - e. B-10, entire length.
 - f. B-12, entire length.
 - g. Old Old Georgetown Road (M-4a).
4. Marinelli Road
MCDOT cautions that Marinelli Road may not be an appropriate major bike route. MCDOT recommends providing an alternate route such as B-10.

5. Nicholson Lane Bike Lanes

MCDOT notes that it will be difficult to gain bike lanes on Nicholson Lane between Woodglen and Nebel Street given the traffic volume and number of turn lanes. MCDOT recommends providing an alternate route such as B-7 – Executive Blvd.

6. Nicholson Lane as a Recreation Loop

MCDOT notes that Nicholson Lane will not be a good recreation Loop roadway. It is undesirable currently to walk or to bike on Nicholson Lane. MCDOT recommends proposal of an alternate.

7. Shared Use Paths

Comments from the Montgomery County Bicycle Action Group indicate that bicyclists desire bicycle friendly streets overall and not just shared use paths. Particularly in urban areas such as the White Flint area, it will be difficult for cyclists to share a path with the large amount of pedestrians in the area.

8. Bike Racks

Bicycle racks should be proposed throughout the White Flint Area.

9. On-Street Parking

P. 19 – On street metered parking has a detrimental effect upon the safety of bicyclists, especially on narrow private roads.

10. Curb Lanes Serve Bicycles

Page 56 includes a bullet specifying that Rockville Pike be reconstructed. MCDOT staff recommends that the curb lane should serve bicycles as well as transit vehicles.

11. Bikeway Map Page 57

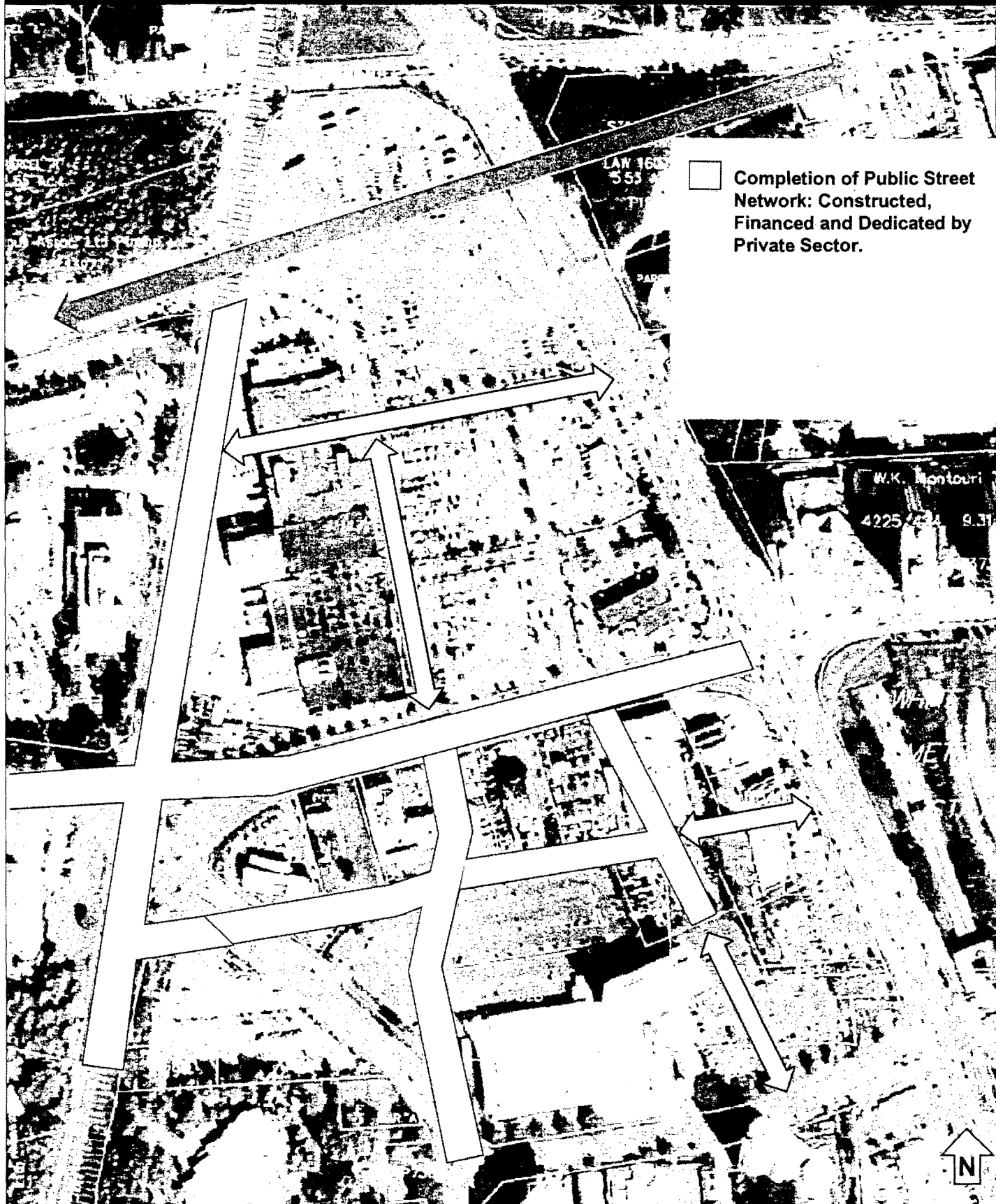
- a. How do bikes on DB-14 access SP-50 and SP-41? Map does not show connectivity.
- b. DB-13 should connect to White Flint Drive and/or Orleans Terrace for neighborhood access.
- c. DB-13 should have an arrow continuing onto Edson Lane heading west.
- d. SP-41 should indicate an existing bike corridor instead of an arrow to empty space.

Specific Comments: Other Transportation Issues

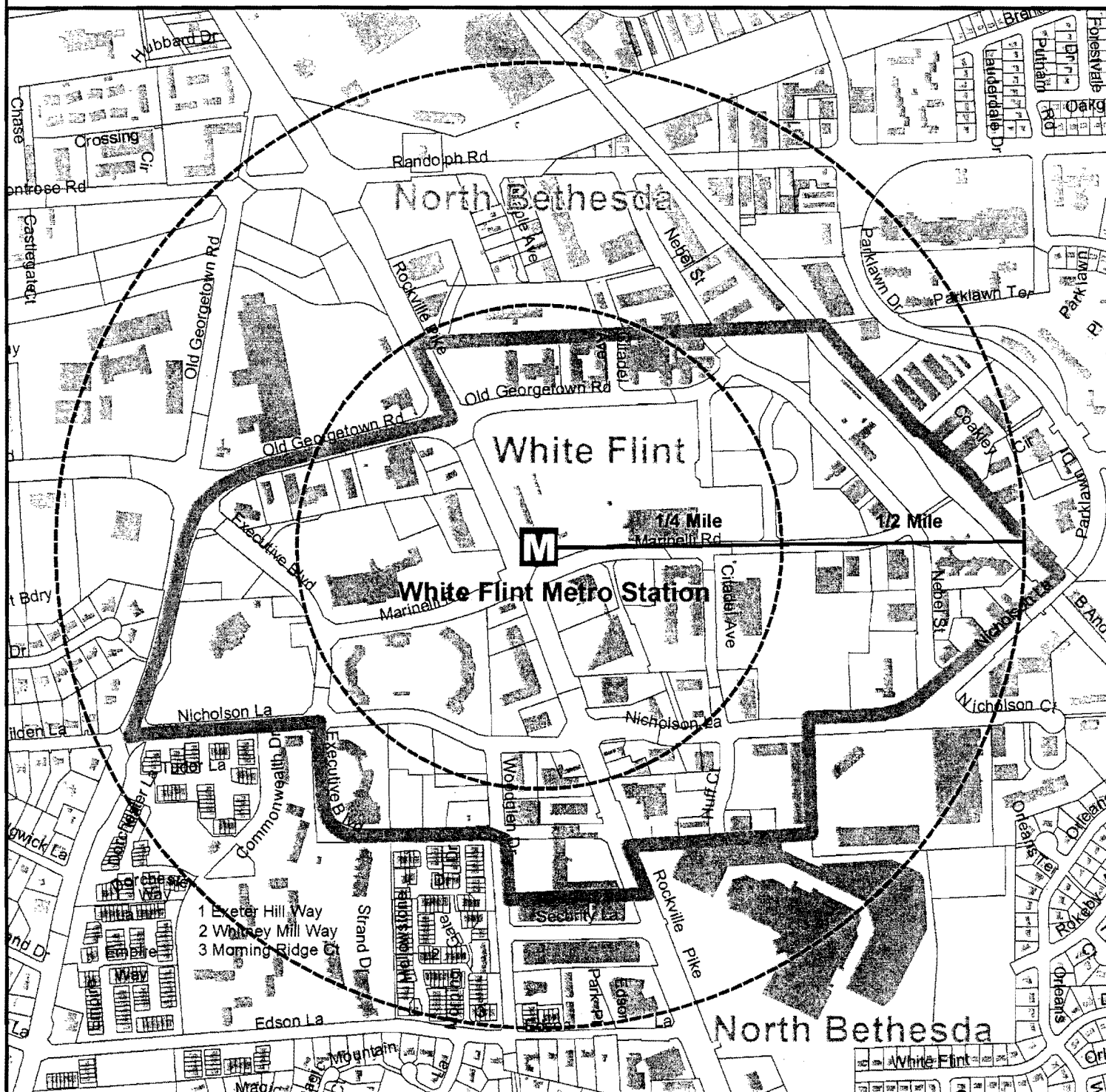
1. White Flint Urban Design Guidelines

- a. There is no need for “White Flint Urban Design Guidelines” as they relate to roads when the Road Code, which encompasses design for transportation projects, has just been completed. MCDOT remains concerned that the White Flint Urban Design Guidelines, which will not be specifically approved by Council, will conflict with the Road Code and cause confusion.
- b. Which agency will be responsible for administering the White Flint Urban Design Guidelines?

White Flint Sector Plan: Additional Streets: Constructed by Private Sector



2003 White Flint Metro Station Policy Area



% of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro Station*:

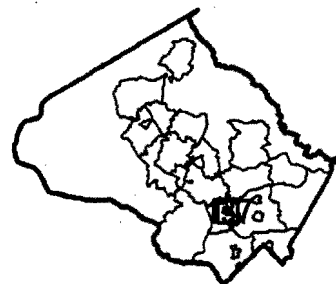
Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro	%
North Bethesda	230,214,264	375,079	0.16%
White Flint	10,011,140	5,097,020	50.91%

% of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro Station*:

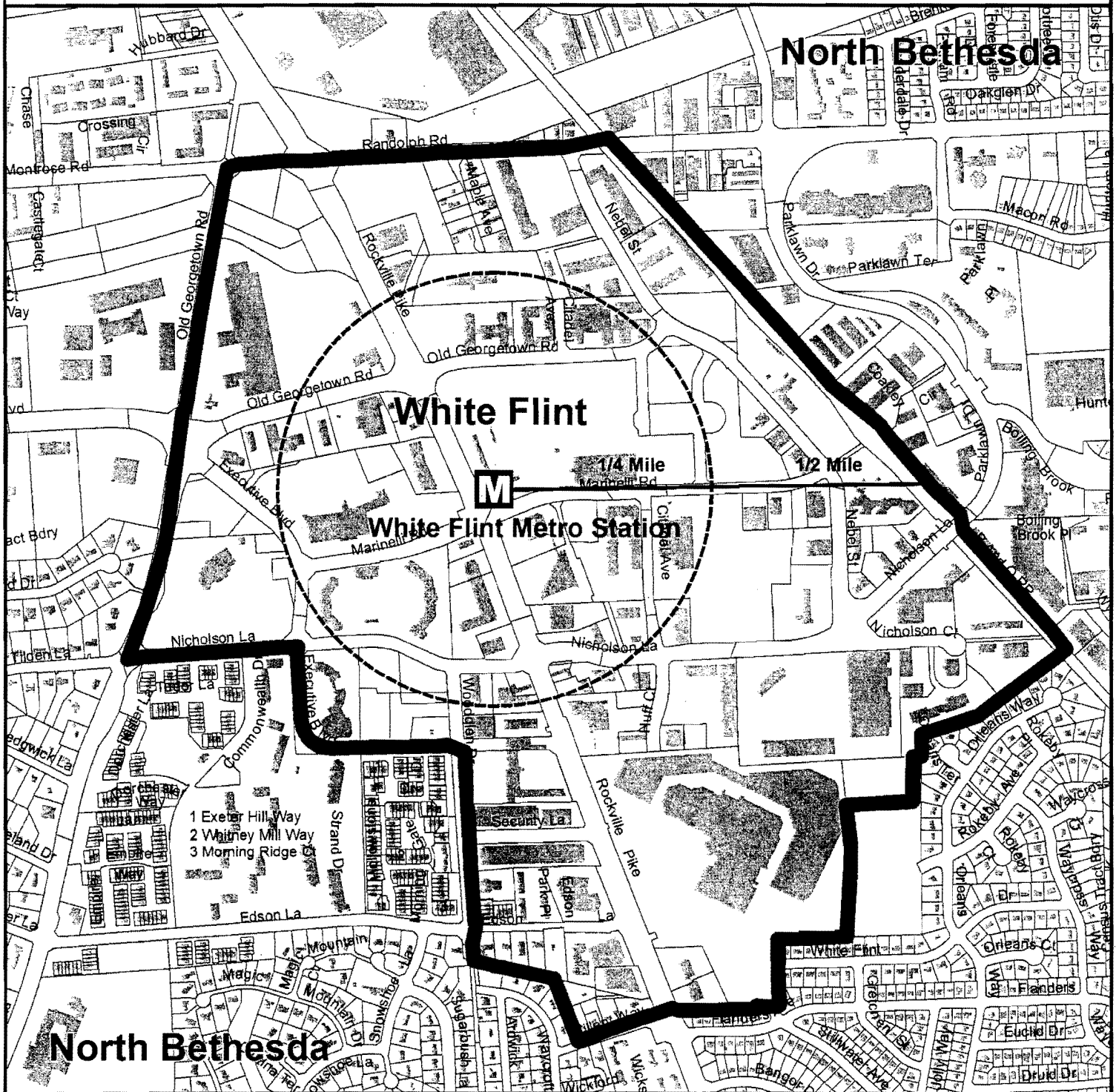
Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro	%
North Bethesda	230,214,264	11,915,661	5.18%
White Flint	10,011,140	9,976,382	99.65%

* Formula: (policy area within buffer/total policy area) * 100

Source: Research and Technology Center, Montgomery County Planning Department, October 2009



White Flint Metro Station Policy Area: Current Proposal



% of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro Station*:

Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro	%
White Flint	18,306,761	5,472,100	29.89%

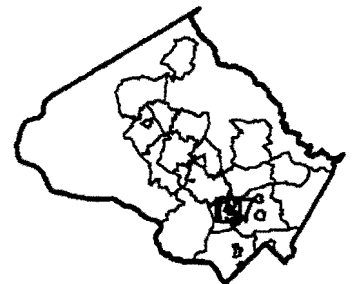
% of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro Station*:

Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro	%
North Bethesda	221,918,643	6,339,932	2.86%
White Flint	18,306,761	15,552,111	84.95%

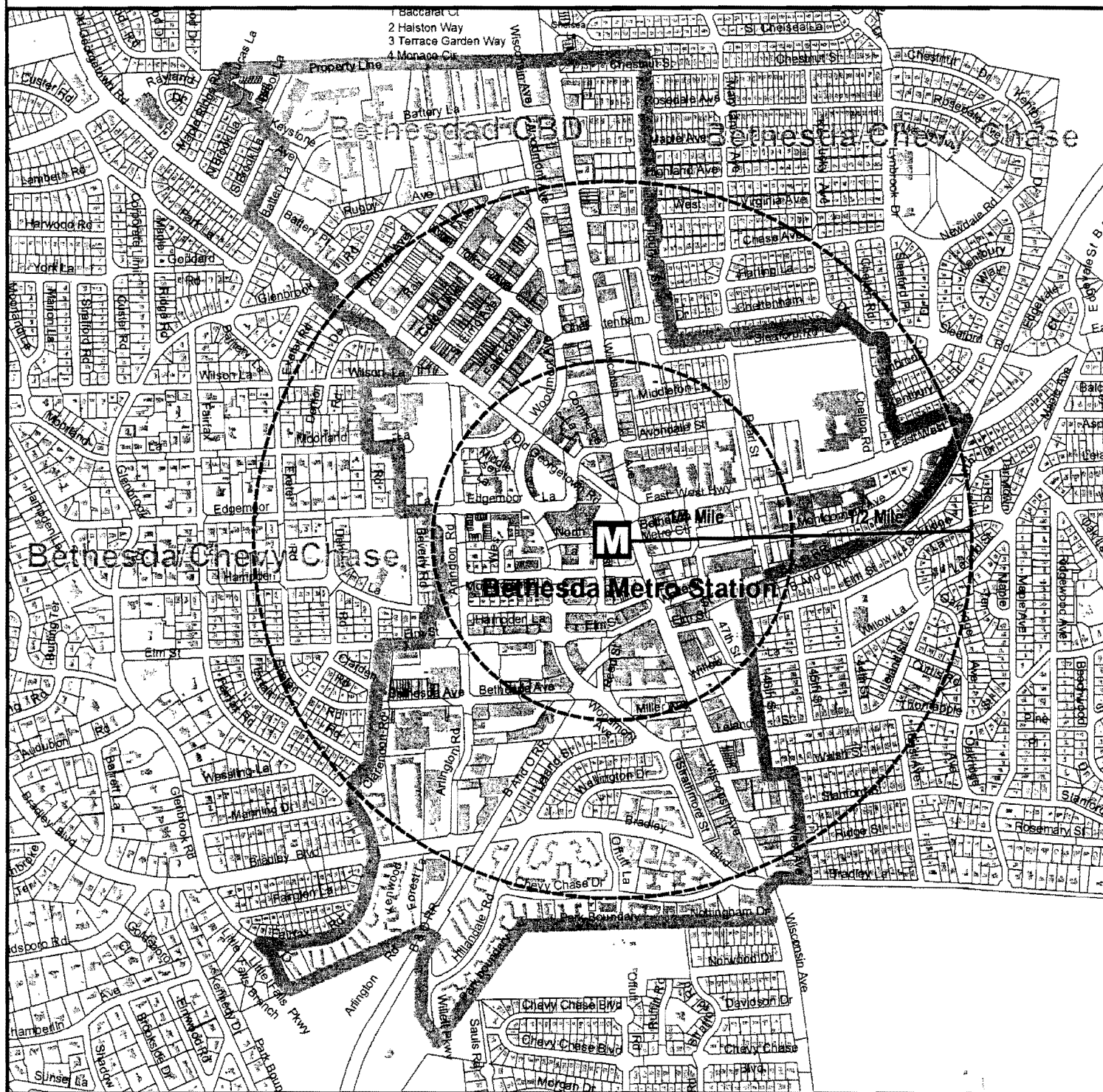
* Formula: (policy area within buffer/total policy area) * 100

Source: Research and Technology Center, Montgomery County Planning Department, October 2009

48



Bethesda CBD Metro Station Policy Area



% of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro Station*:

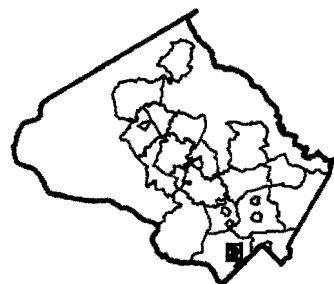
Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro	%
Bethesda CBD	19,913,142	5,352,511	26.88%
Bethesda/Chevy Chase	566,884,489	119,589	0.02%

% of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro Station*:

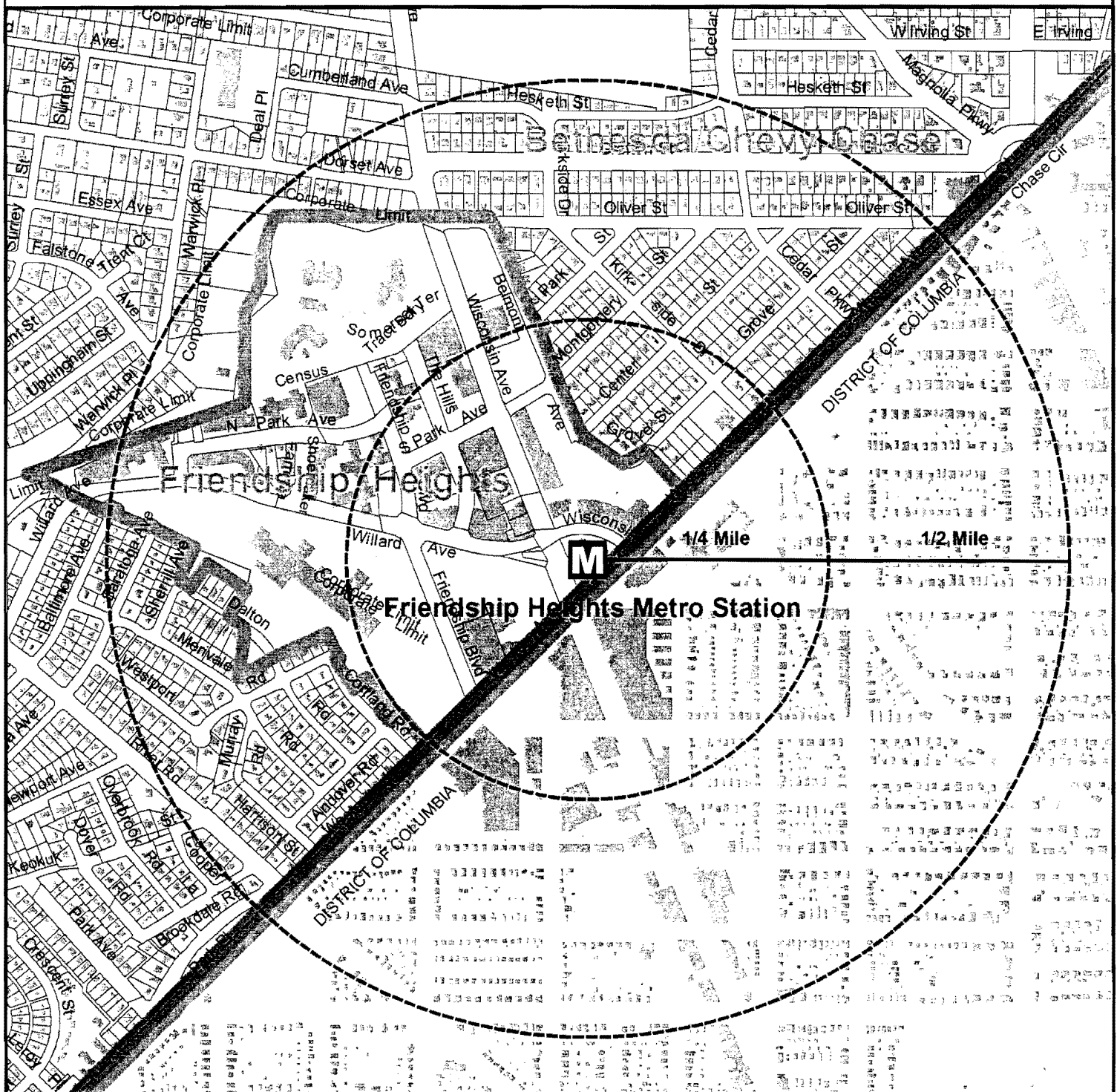
Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro	%
Bethesda CBD	19,913,142	14,764,596	74.14%
Bethesda/Chevy Chase	566,884,489	7,127,447	1.26%

* Formula: (policy area within buffer/policy area) * 100

Source: Research and Technology Center, Montgomery County Planning Department, October 2009



Friendship Heights CBD Metro Station Policy Area



% of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro Station*

Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro	%
Beltsdale/Chevy Chase	566,884,489	742,153	0.13%
Friendship Heights	5,252,446	2,404,562	45.78%

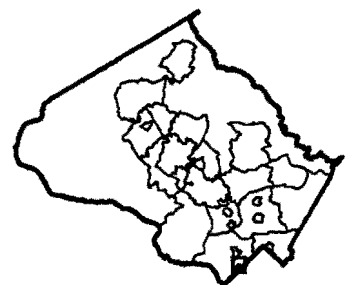
% of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro Station*

Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro	%
Beltsdale/Chevy Chase	566,884,489	6,615,579	1.17%
Friendship Heights	5,252,446	5,162,849	98.29%

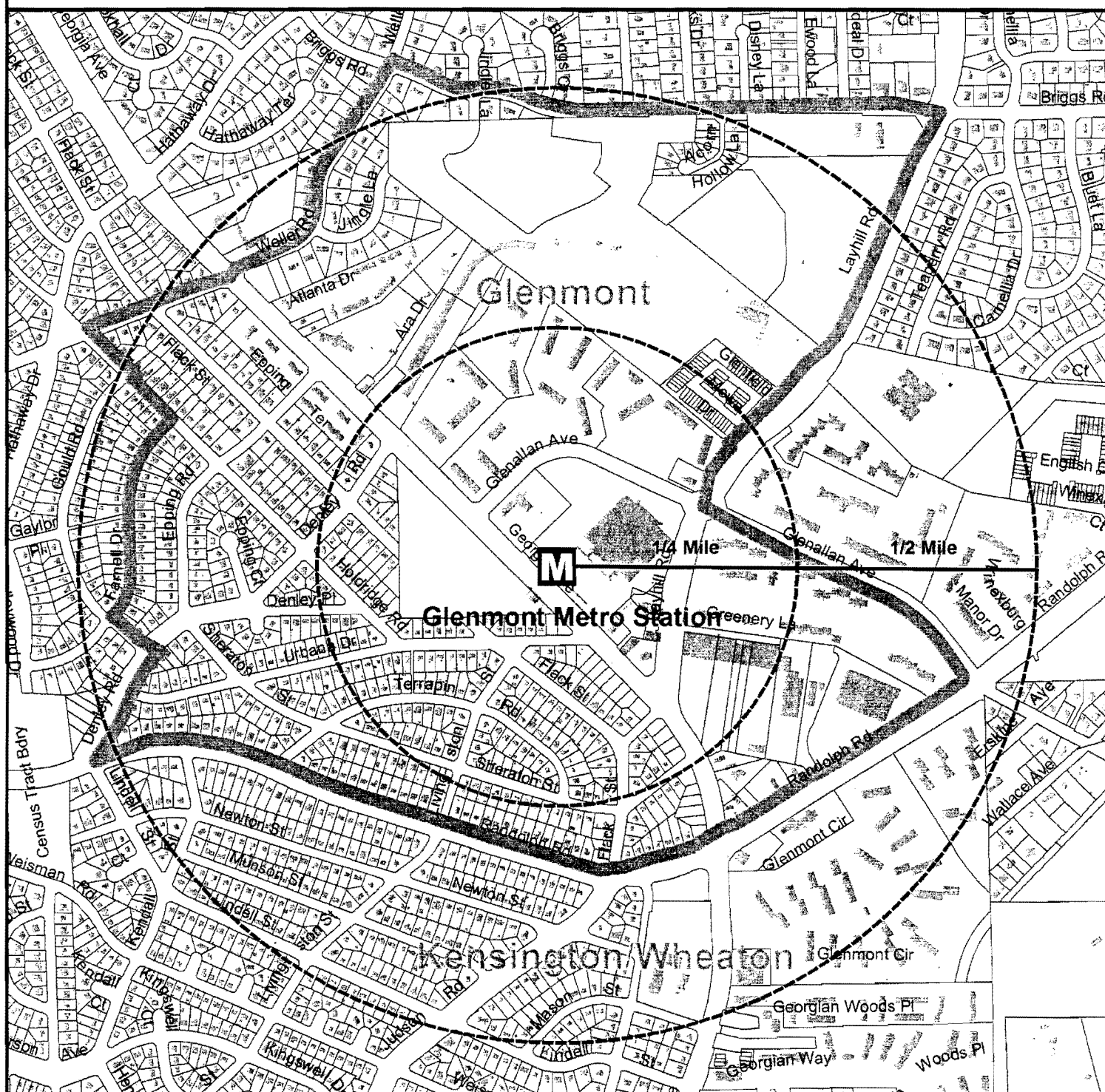
* Formula: (policy area within buffer/bal policy area) * 100

Source: Research and Technology Center, Montgomery County Planning Department, October 2009

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Glenmont Metro Station Policy Area



% of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro Station*:

Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro	%
Glenmont	14,359,634	5,269,270	36.70%
Kensington/Wheaton	509,602,637	202,830	0.04%

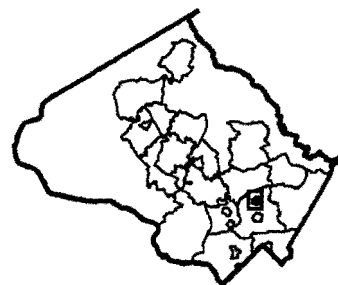
% of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro Station*:

Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro	%
Glenmont	14,359,634	13,813,519	96.20%
Kensington/Wheaton	509,602,637	8,078,524	1.58%

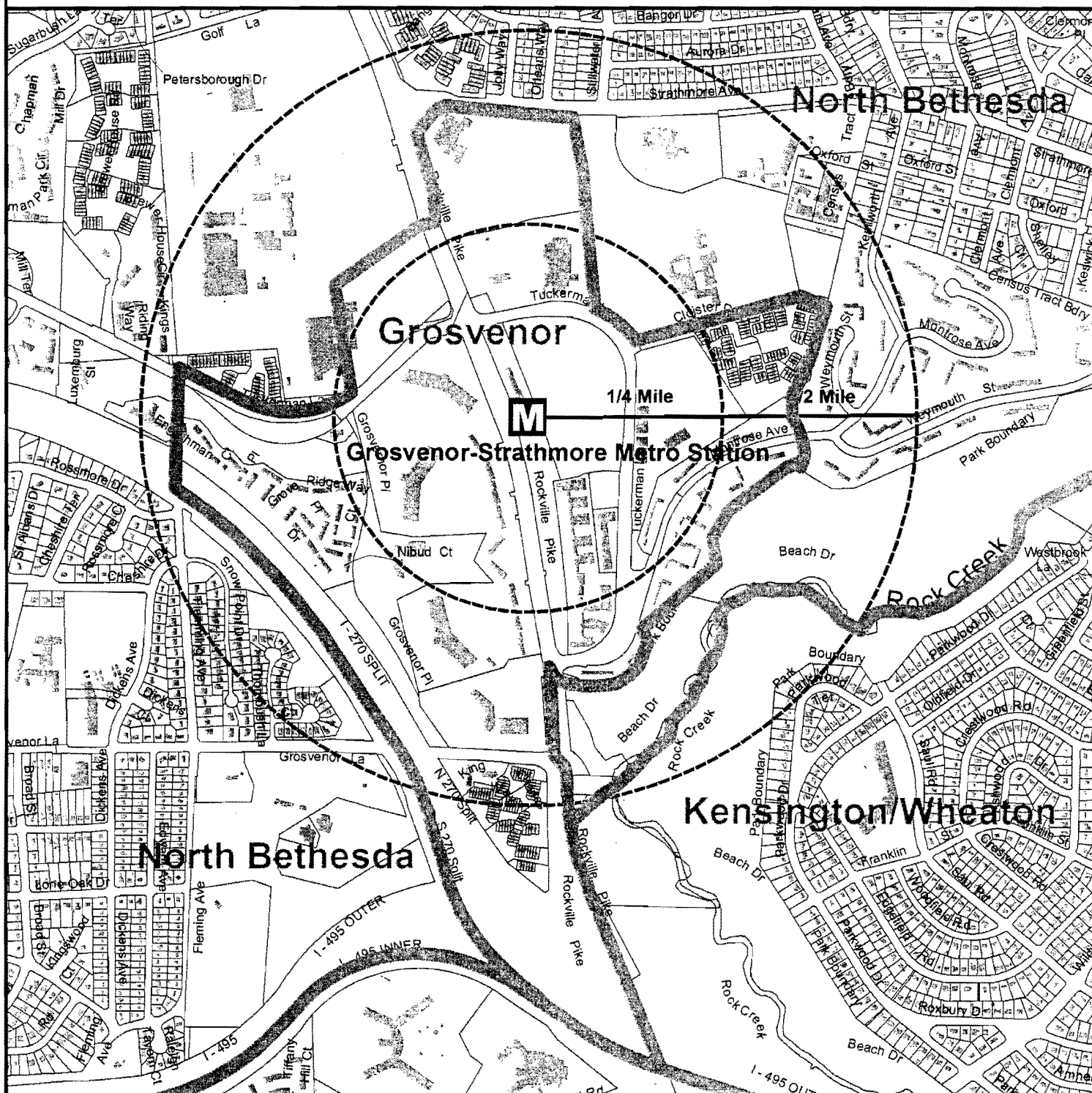
* Formula: (policy area within buffer/total policy area) * 100

Source: Research and Technology Center, Montgomery County Planning Department, October 2009

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Grosvenor Metro Station Policy Area



% of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro Station*:

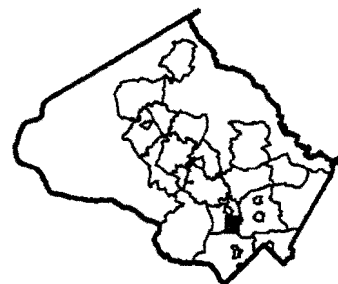
Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro	%
Grosvenor	12,038,540	5,159,512	42.87%
North Bethesda	221,918,843	312,588	0.14%

% of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro Station*:

Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro	%
Grosvenor	12,038,540	10,651,104	88.49%
Kensington/Wheaton	508,692,337	898,018	0.18%
North Bethesda	221,918,843	10,342,921	4.66%

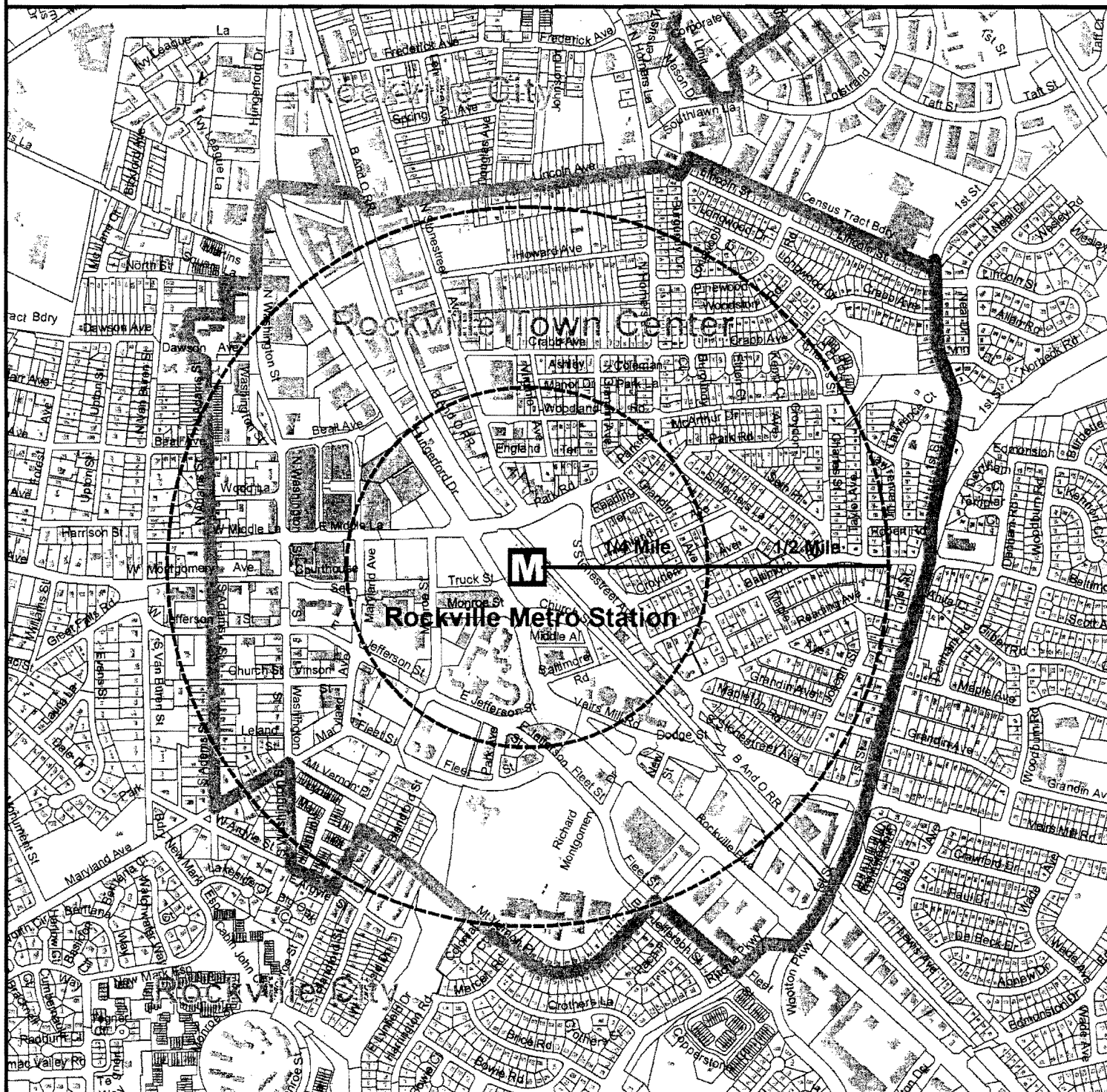
* Formula: (policy area within buffer/total policy area) * 100

Source: Research and Technology Center, Montgomery County Planning Department October 2009



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Rockville Town Center Metro Station Policy Area



% of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro Station*:

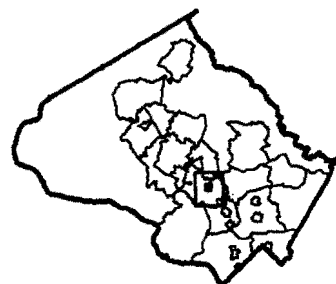
Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro	%
Rockville Town Center	26,371,737	5,472,100	20.75%

% of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro Station*:

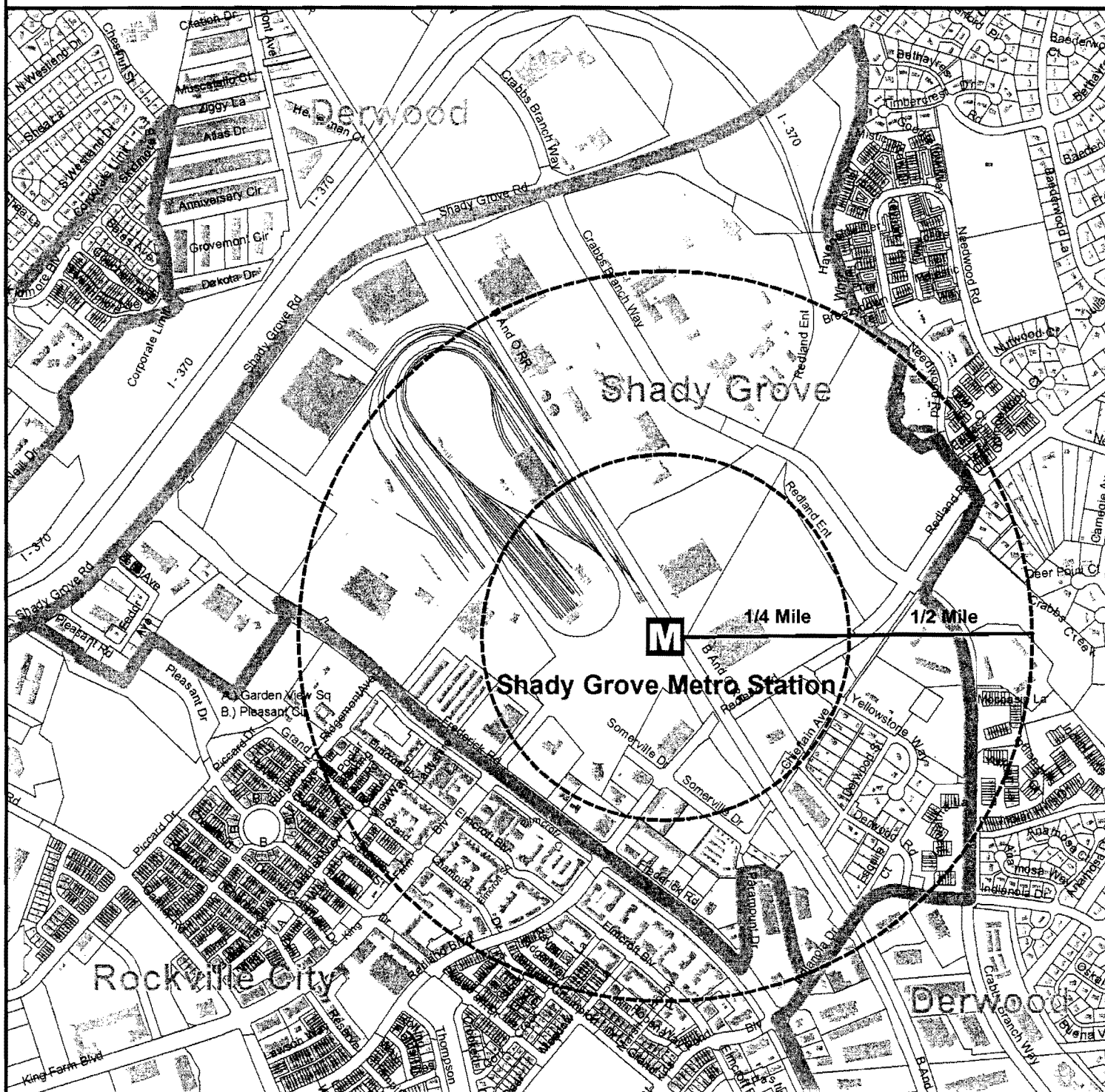
Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro	%
Rockville City	343,174,610	866,189	0.25%
Rockville Town Center	26,371,737	21,025,854	79.73%

* Formula: (policy area within buffer/total policy area) * 100

Source: Research and Technology Center, Montgomery County Planning Department, October 2009



Shady Grove Metro Station Policy Area



% of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro Station*:

Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro	%
Shady Grove	23,469,444	5,472,100	23.32%

% of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro Station*:

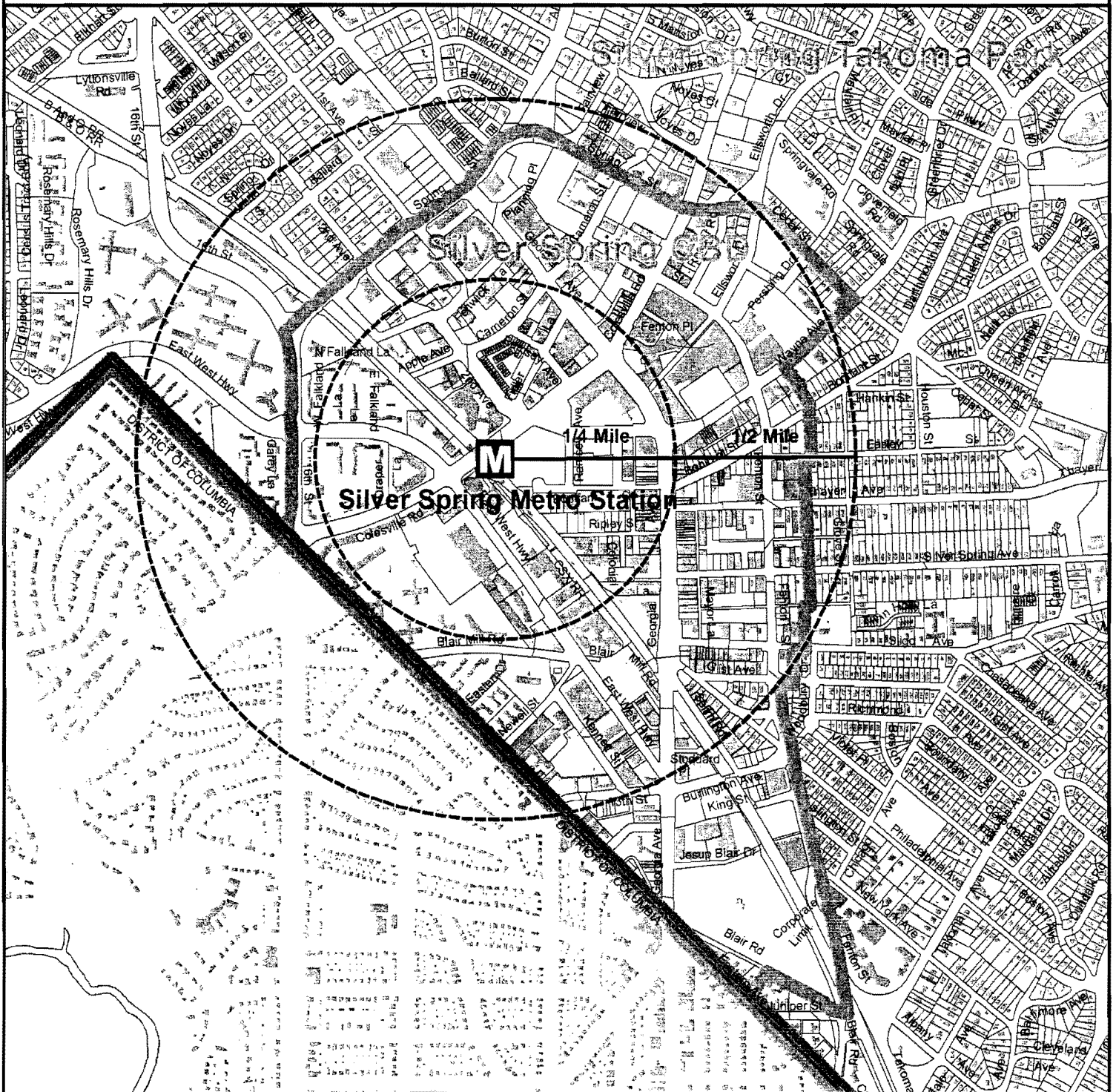
Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro	%
Derwood	208,084,758	1,430,069	0.69%
Rockville City	343,174,610	3,698,162	1.08%
Shady Grove	23,469,444	16,763,812	71.43%

* Formula: (policy area within buffer/total policy area) * 100

Source: Research and Technology Center, Montgomery County Planning Department, October 2009



Silver Spring Metro Station Policy Area



% of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro Station*:

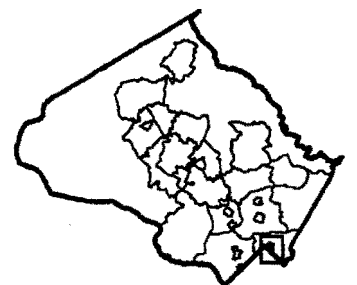
Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro	%
Silver Spring CBD	16,616,543	5,472,100	32.93%

% of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro Station*:

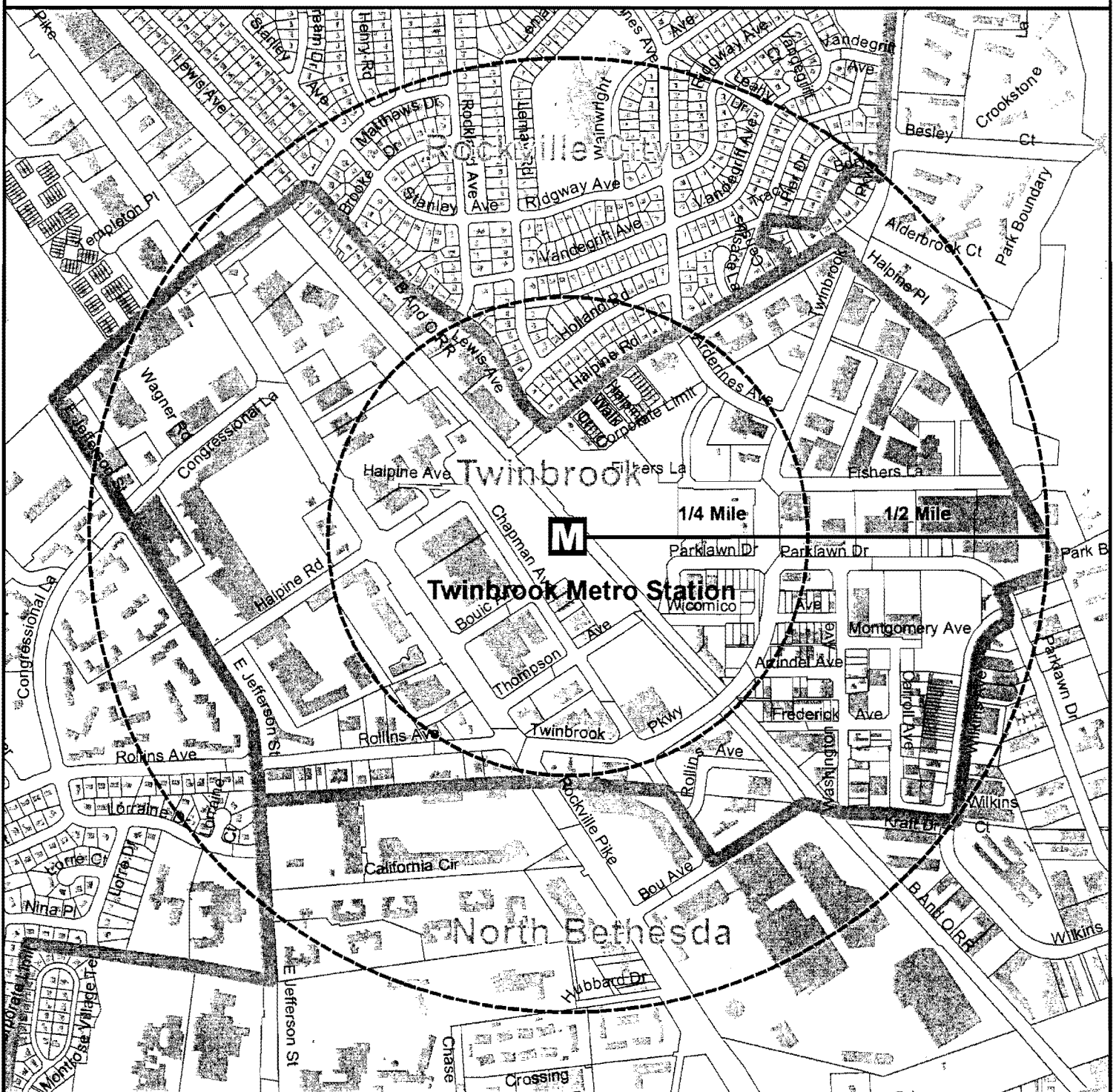
Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro	%
Silver Spring CBD	16,616,543	14,129,762	85.03%
Silver Spring/Takoma Park	263,687,531	4,349,399	1.65%

* Formula: (policy area within buffer/total policy area) * 100

Source: Research and Technology Center, Montgomery County Planning Department, October 2009



Twinbrook Metro Station Policy Area



% of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro Station*:

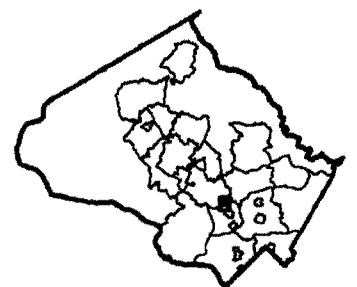
Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro	%
Rockville City	343,174,610	447,798	0.13%
Twinbrook	12,656,409	5,024,301	39.70%

% of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro Station*:

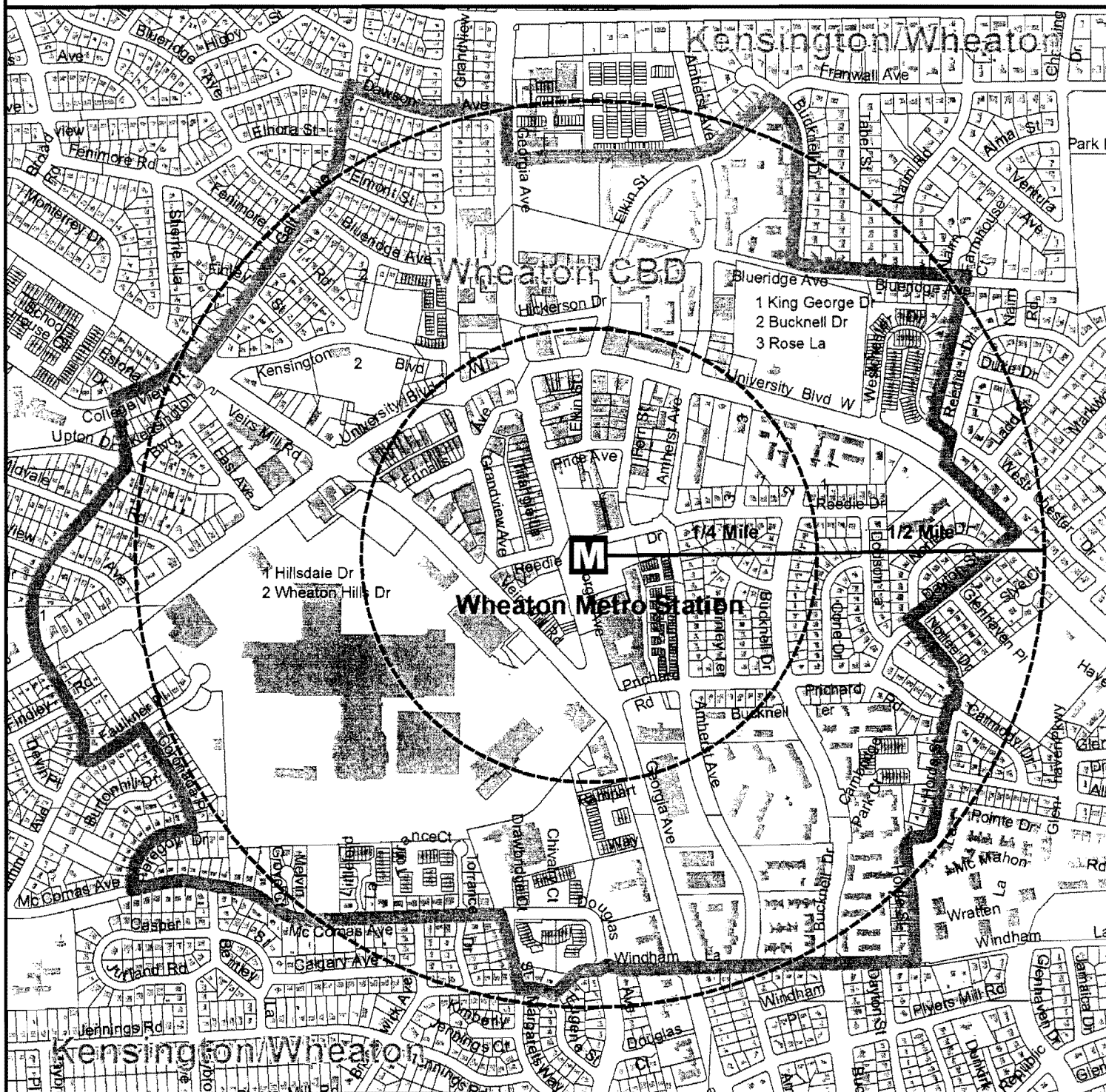
Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro	%
North Bethesda	221,918,643	4,490,032	2.02%
Rockville City	343,174,610	4,869,941	1.42%
Twinbrook	12,656,409	12,532,069	99.02%

* Formula: (policy area within buffer/total policy area) * 100

Source: Research and Technology Center, Montgomery County Planning Department, October 2009



Wheaton CBD Metro Station Policy Area



% of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro Station*:

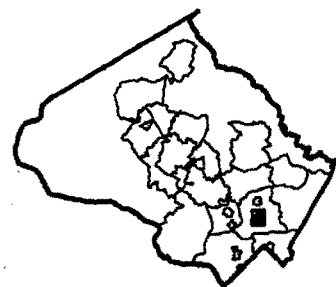
Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro	%
Wheaton CBD	20,845,307	5,472,100	26.25%

% of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro Station*:

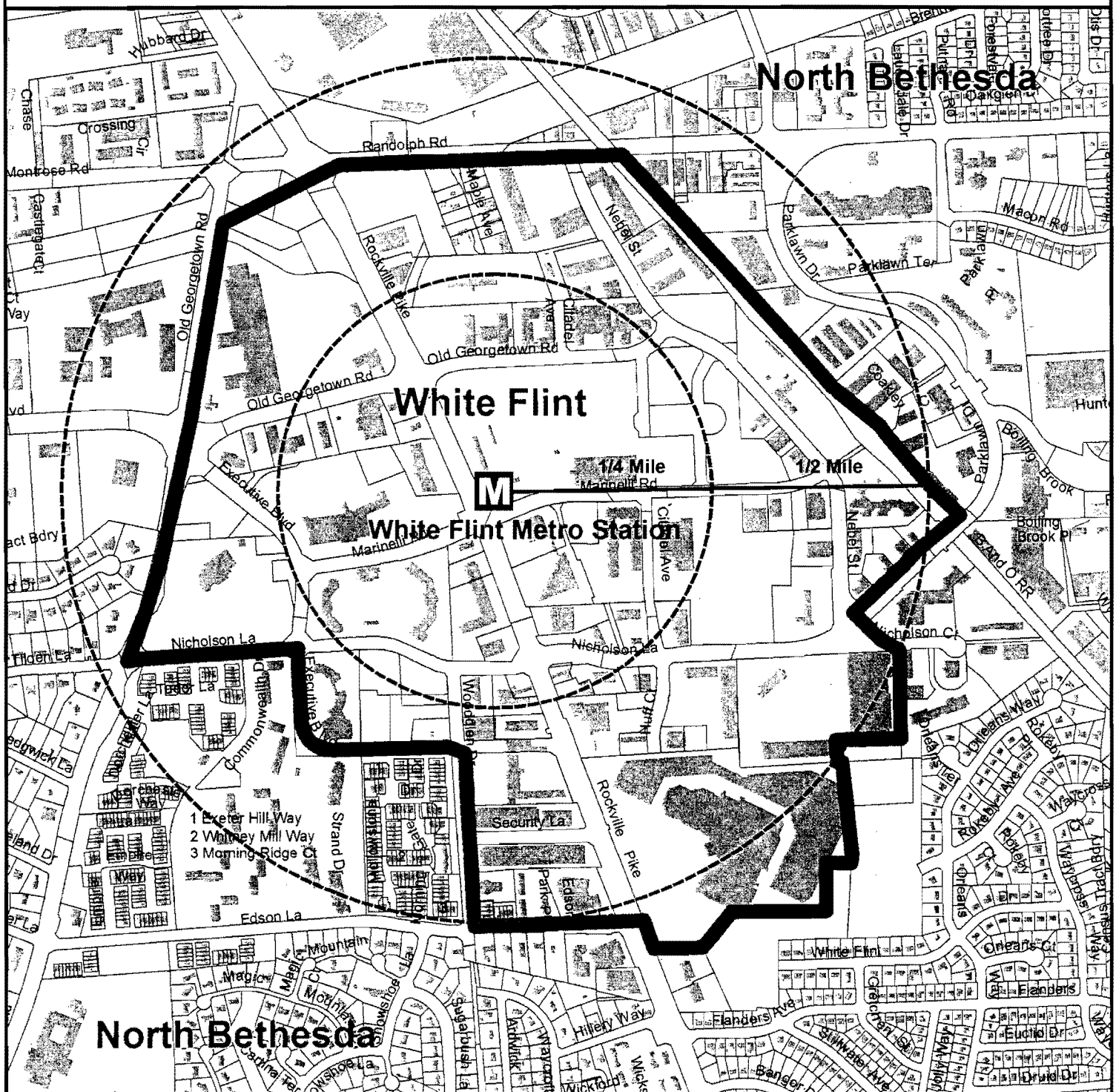
Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro	%
Kensington/Wheaton	20,845,307	19,264,537	0.52%
Wheaton CBD	509,602,637	2,627,506	92.42%

* Formula: (policy area within buffer/total policy area) * 100

Source: Research and Technology Center, Montgomery County Planning Department, October 2009



2007 White Flint Metro Station Policy Area



% of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro Station*:

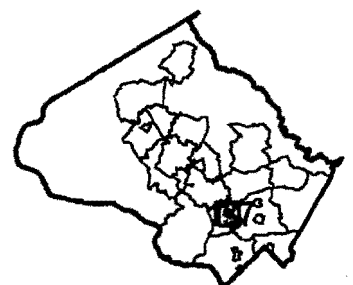
Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Quarter Mile of Metro	%
White Flint	15,934,989	5,472,100	34.34%

% of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro Station*:

Policy Area	Total SqFt of Policy Area	SqFt of Policy Area within Half Mile of Metro	%
North Bethesda	224,290,414	6,742,957	3.01%
White Flint	15,934,989	15,149,086	95.07%

* Formula: (policy area within buffer/total policy area) * 100

Source: Research and Technology Center, Montgomery County Planning Department, October 2009



Montgomery Bicycle Advocates
7121 Thomas Branch Dr.
Bethesda, Md. 20817

October 30, 2009

Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Ave.
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: MoBike written testimony on the White Flint Sector Plan

Members of the County Council,

Please accept the following written testimony from Montgomery Bicycle Advocates (MoBike) regarding the White Flint Sector Plan.

- We are pleased that the Planning Board responded to bicyclists concerns and made significant revisions to the initial draft. The initial draft did not strike a good balance between on-road and off-road bikeways and provided almost exclusively off-road (path) bikeways. The plan correctly recognizes the "[new county] Road Code emphasis on bike accommodation on all streets", and should itself emphasize this policy by designating more streets as shared roadway bikeways and by identifying a more detailed approach to making business district streets comfortable for bicyclists. Single lane business district streets with narrow lanes should be avoided
- The plan appears to call for the outside lanes of Rockville Pike to be shared by buses, bicyclists and off-peak parking. To facilitate this the outside lanes should be at least 14' wide (not counting the gutter). The plan should formalize this design (if adopted) by designating the Pike as a shared roadway or dual bikeway. We also expect a shared use path (or cycle tracks – see below) to be provided along the Pike.
- As an alternative to the Rockville Pike proposal in the plan, we also support a new innovation called "cycle tracks" as proposed by Glatting-Jackson. These are a hybrid path/bike lane solution, consisting of a one-way path or track for bicyclists on each side of the street, separated from the roadway by a buffer of some sort. They are placed within or next to the sidewalk and typically bounded by low mountable curbs. While cycle tracks may not be appropriate for many streets and are the subject of continued study, Rockville Pike is a promising application of the concept due to high vehicle speeds and volumes.
- For any street where bike lanes are called for next to parallel parking, we strongly recommend that 14' total width be provided for the two uses together. We recommend dividing this into an 8' wide parking area and a 6' bike lane.

- Street by street comments can be summarized as follows:
 - Rockville Pike – See the above comments.
 - Woodglen Drive should be a dual bikeway for its entire length rather than dual bikeway just for the portion south of Nicholson Lane and shared use path for the rest. North of Marinelli there appears to be a north-south local street extending Woodglen. Its likely key role as an on-road bikeway should be formalized by designating it as a shared roadway bikeway.
 - Marinelli Road should be a bikeway of some type for its entire length, and furthermore should connect to a path through Wall Park to Old Georgetown Road. A previous draft did call for this (as a path). It's important that either bike lanes or shared use path (not just a sidewalk) be provided to serve less experienced bicyclists given the street's role as a connection to Metro. Bike lanes are preferred due to likely pedestrian volume, but a path combined with reasonable on-road conditions may be suitable.
 - Executive Boulevard east/south of Old Georgetown Road – This should be a shared roadway route, even if not officially designated as such. We are currently seeking more bike-friendly striping on the existing portion of Executive. Executive may be needed to fill a gap in north-south connectivity for bicyclists (depending on how Woodglen is extended).
 - Market Street – The plan calls for a path on this "promenade" street. Traffic must be slow for the road to serve most bicyclists without any special accommodation or width.
 - Recreation Loop – This circuit of paths is a superb idea. It includes a path along Nicholson Lane. Therefore Nicholson Lane can be referred to in the plan as a dual bikeway instead of just bike lanes.

Thank you for considering this testimony. Sincerely,

Jack Cochrane
Chair, Montgomery Bicycle Advocates (MoBike)
7121 Thomas Branch Drive, Bethesda, MD 20817

Contact: Casey Anderson
(202) 487-0877 (cell)

White Flint Sector Plan Hearing

Testimony of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association

October 20, 2009

WABA strongly supports the White Flint plan. Our interest in this sector plan is not limited to the specifics of the bicycling accommodations, although we are pleased that the Planning Board and its staff were responsive to our requests for more on-road bike lanes along with the shared use paths included in the original draft.

The larger significance of this plan is that it represents a major step away from the land use and transportation policies that have left many Montgomery County residents with no practical alternative to driving to work, driving to their homes, driving to go shopping, and driving to do just about anything. Our county has been developed in ways that make many residents feel that transit, walking, or riding a bike would be too unsafe, time-consuming, or just plain inconvenient to be a practical alternative. By overhauling Rockville Pike and other major arterials in the sector to create tree-lined boulevards with reduced traffic speeds and accommodations for transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians, this plan offers a chance to break from the assumptions that have led us to try to pave our way out of every traffic problem at tremendous cost in both dollars and quality of life.

The Council could improve on the Planning Board draft dramatically by incorporating the cross section for Rockville Pike developed by the consulting firm Glatting-Jackson and supported by local developers. The Glatting-Jackson proposal to include a dedicated transit way along with a separated "cycle track" and numerous pedestrian improvements along Rockville Pike is a big improvement over previous designs and will greatly encourage more use of transit, walking, and of course bicycling throughout the sector.

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation, among others, has expressed skepticism about whether encouraging transit, walking, and bicycling will be enough to avoid creating major traffic congestion along Rockville Pike. This skepticism is understandable, but misplaced. Other neighboring jurisdictions have achieved much larger mode share splits for non-automobile forms of transportation -- in DC, more than half of residents commute by means other than a car, and in Arlington the share is one-third -- and traffic in the Orange Line corridor is about the same as it was in the mid-nineties before the addition of 40 million square feet of development.

So where do bikes fit in? They won't be the whole solution, but they can be a part of the answer. For example, the debate over how far people can be expected to walk to Metro -- a quarter mile or half a mile -- does not account for bicycles. If we make bicycling easy, safe, and convenient, we can take advantage of higher density and make the most of our investments in transit in a way that makes our communities more attractive and livable. Even if you never ride a bicycle again in your life, you will benefit from a more bikable White Flint, because the kinds of places where bicycles are a realistic transportation option are the kinds of places all of us want to live, work, and play.

Comments of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association and Montgomery
Bicycle Advocates on the Revised White Flint Sector Plan

May 4, 2009

We are writing today to offer our comments on the White Flint Section Plan that was recently revised by the Planning Board. While we greatly appreciate the improvements in on-road accommodations for cyclists in the latest plan, we strongly urge the Planning Board to consider the cross section for Rockville Pike that was recently developed by the consulting firm Glatting-Jackson and supported by local developers. In addition to a dedicated transit way and numerous pedestrian improvements, the proposed plans call for a cycle track along Rockville Pike that we feel is a big improvement over previous designs and will greatly encourage more cycling throughout the sector.

Again, we are very pleased that the Planning Board and planning staff have heard and responded to the comments of bicyclists and community members regarding the White Flint Sector Plan. The 2008 public hearing draft of the plan featured too few on-road bike routes given the stated bike goals of the plan. The routes it did identify did not adequately connect to bike routes outside the sector.

The revised plan calls for the following additional streets to have bicycle lanes, a change we fully support:

- Nicholson Lane
- Woodglen Drive
- Old Georgetown Road east of Executive Blvd.

It is unclear whether the revised plan calls for bike lanes or a shared use path or both or neither on Executive Blvd.

One needed accommodation missing from the new plan (apparently) is bike lanes along Executive Blvd. between Nicholson Lane and Old Georgetown Road (roads B-15 and part of B-7 in Fig. 33 in the public hearing draft). Adding bike lanes there would provide north/south on-road connectivity on the west side of the sector where it is otherwise very lacking. Otherwise the east-west routes of Old Georgetown Road, Marinelli Road and Tilden Lane would not connect well to one another.

The shared use path options are fewer in the revised plan. One comment is that the path along Marinelli Road is shown ending at the west end of Marinelli with no direct path connecting through to Old Georgetown Road. A path heading south from Marinelli along Executive Boulevard and then west along Nicholson Lane would be the best way to fill this gap (more so than a path north of Marinelli; but both could be added). Even better would be a shared use path along the entire length of Nicholson Lane in the sector, in addition to bike lanes there. Nicholson is slated to be one of the higher volume streets in the sector, so off-road bike accommodations are appropriate (in addition to, not instead of, bike lanes).

Where bike lanes are called for next to parallel parking, we are firm in requesting at least a combined 14' width for parked cars and bikes. We recommend dividing this into an 8' wide parking "lane" and 6' bike lanes. That is consistent with the county road. In some tight retrofit situations we have accepted 13' (in which case we may recommend measures such as diagonal painted "door lines" to warn bicyclists of opening car doors), but White Flint is not a retrofit situation and should be done right from the beginning.

While the revised plan appears to state that Rockville Pike will be bike-friendly on-road, we are concerned that the plan calls for outside lanes to be used by buses and right turning cars during rush hour, and for parking at other times. The plan states that the outside lanes would accommodate bicyclists in either case, but given the high volume of vehicles and higher speeds to traffic, we feel that a separated facility for cyclists is required. The lack of dedicated facilities along Rockville Pike will greatly limit its use by cyclists. The Glatting-Jackson plan has proposed innovative separated bikeway design that combines cycle tracks along the road and more traditional bike lanes at the intersections. Cycle tracks, which are widely used in Europe and are increasing being built in the US, can make intersection crossings difficult since cyclists and pedestrians may be hidden from view by parked cars or street amenities. By moving the cycle track to street level at the intersections we hope that crossing conflicts can be reduced. We are a bit concerned that the median between parked cars and the cycle track is too narrow, and should be reexamined as more detailed drawings are created, but we feel overall that the design should move forward.

Again, the new draft is a great improvement over the public hearing draft and we appreciate all the work Planning staff has done to respond to bicyclists' comments and make this a better plan.

Thank you.



Eric Gilliland
Executive Director, Washington Area Bicyclist Association

/s/

Jack Cochrane
Chair, Montgomery Bicycle Advocates (MoBike)