

Comprehensive Amendment to

# Bethesda – Chevy Chase Master Plan

Approved & Adopted  
April 1990

Exhibit 4  
CBA-1174-E

# Master Plan Highlights

**T**his Plan Highlights section is a summary of the key recommendations addressed in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan and provides an opportunity for the reader to preview, in a few pages, the complete document. Throughout the body of the text, Master Plan recommendations and major points are emphasized in bold text.

## Purpose and Content

**The purpose of this Master Plan is to establish the policy framework that will guide the future direction of Bethesda-Chevy Chase for the next 20 years.** Almost as many years have passed since the last Master Plan for the area was approved and adopted, and much change has occurred both in B-CC and in the County. These changes have been carefully considered in the recommendations of this Plan. At the same time, it is equally important to attempt to anticipate future change so that the best recommendations can be made to prepare the Planning Area for the year 2010.

The Bethesda-Chevy Chase area has many desirable characteristics which are critical to the continued stability of the area and which make B-CC one of the strongest communities in the County. These include well established residential neighborhoods, a combination of open space and wooded areas, employment and shopping opportunities, and a high level of transportation service. **A major goal of this Master Plan is to perpetuate and enhance the high quality of life to which citizens of Bethesda-Chevy Chase are accustomed.**

The boundaries of this Plan include all of the Planning Area outside of the three Sector Plan areas of the Bethesda Business District, Friendship Heights, and Westbard. Since each of these has been reviewed more recently than the remainder of Bethesda-Chevy Chase, it was important to focus on the balance of the area to establish the Master Plan framework. There are integral links among each of the Sector Plan areas and with the larger Planning Area which have been taken into consideration in preparing this document. Since the three areas were not studied in depth, this Plan assumes that the policies and recommendations contained in the Sector Plans are valid.

This is a comprehensive Master Plan, in the tradition of master plans approved by the County Council since adoption of the *General Plan*. As a comprehensive plan, it addresses the interrelated issues of the various elements affecting our communities: natural resources and environmental values, demographic changes, community needs, employment and housing development policies, public facility needs, transportation, and land use.

**The key land use policy of the Plan is a reconfirmation of the existing residential character and zoning of the Planning Area.** The Master Plan recommends relatively modest changes and a moderate level of development, which are intended to assure the continuation of these strong communities. The Plan also emphasizes increased transit use as the primary way to serve increased commuter traffic. The comprehensive nature of the Plan is completed by inclusion of an

Implementation Plan setting out the zoning, legislation, capital and operating programs, and supplementary actions needed to achieve the objectives of the Plan.

**The Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan is designed to achieve the following goals:**

1. Perpetuate and enhance the high quality of life which exists in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area.
2. Achieve a level of future employment development that is in balance with a high quality of life and the transportation capacity of the Planning Area.
3. Provide for a balanced housing supply so that persons of varying income levels, age, backgrounds, and household characteristics may find suitable housing appropriate to their needs.
4. Protect the high quality residential communities throughout the Planning Area as well as the services and environmental qualities that enhance the area.
5. Achieve a significant shift of new travel from auto to transit and other mobility alternatives.
6. Protect the natural resources and environmental qualities of the Planning Area.
7. Contribute to a strong sense of community and help reinforce community cohesion.

Extensive background material is available in other documents prepared by the Planning Department. The Appendix to the Master Plan contains background material and key parcel maps. The major support material is contained in two documents released in February 1988. The *Trends and Conditions Report* is primarily a background document. The *Issues Report* contains an extensive discussion of land use and other issues in the Planning Area.

## ***Development Levels***

**The Master Plan endorses a moderate level of development for Bethesda-Chevy Chase.** A moderate level of develop-

ment is in balance with the overall transportation capacity of the Planning Area. A high level of new development was considered and rejected due to potential for excessive traffic congestion. A low level of new development was considered and rejected due to excessive restriction on the expectations of property owners. The remaining Master Plan recommendations assume the moderate level of future development.

The recommended level of development achieves most of the expectations of property owners and can be reasonably accommodated within the transportation capacity of the Planning Area. Development expectations are based in great part on existing zoning for the private sector and availability of land for the public sector. Transportation facilities are assumed to be limited to moderate improvements to the existing highway system, coupled with strong efforts to increase use of public transit and other mobility alternatives. More extensive highway improvements would be excessively disruptive to local communities.

**The proposed level of development can be implemented through the following recommendations:**

1. Maintain the relative level of households compared to jobs to reduce the pressures on commuting into the area.
2. Share new employment development between the Sector Plans and the Federal employment centers.
3. Locate new employment and residential development in existing centers, near Metro stations.
4. Continue to recognize the importance of biomedical and medically-oriented development in the area, but place less emphasis on large-scale office projects.
5. Support existing businesses, including those that meet community retail and service needs.
6. Support increased housing density and types in Sector Plan areas and where compatible with nearby properties.

# Land Use and Zoning

## Areawide Recommendations

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**The major goal of the Master Plan is to protect the high quality of life, the residential character, and the natural environment throughout the area.** A related objective is to reconfirm the zoning for the extensive single-family detached residential areas. These goals and objectives can be achieved, in part, by balancing the level of new development with existing and potential transportation capacity. It has been necessary to review all of the land uses and zoning designations throughout the Planning Area.

This Plan recognizes that land use and community change can be affected by areawide concerns. **Thus the Plan makes the following recommendations which apply to the Planning Area at-large:**

1. Reconfirm the existing single-family land use and zoning (R-60, R-90, and R-200) as appropriate for the major portion of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area. Recommend single-family attached (townhouse) use on some larger sites in the Planning Area.
2. Endorse the maintenance and enhancement of residential communities through a program of Green Corridors along major highways.
3. Provide guidelines for locating special exceptions that discourage concentrations of office-related special exceptions but support those related to child, elder, and health services, and other community-serving needs.
4. Encourage the continuation of the current country club uses. For country clubs, as well as **private schools** and institutional uses, endorse housing as the primary future alternative use if these parcels are ever redeveloped.
5. Preserve and protect sensitive environmental areas.

## Community Recommendations

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Several portions of the Planning Area received detailed and focused consideration because of the need to resolve the many complex issues in these areas. The major recommendations of these areas are highlighted below.

**In Chevy Chase Lake, the Plan seeks to maintain a moderate scale, community-oriented, mixed use development. Major recommendations include:**

1. Recommend residential land uses which protect wooded properties through cluster development, attempt to achieve housing objectives by use of transferable development rights, and establish an open space and pathway system.
2. Enhance the existing community retail center by encouraging amenities such as a public use spaces. Amenities are identified in a statement of design guidelines.

It is important to note that these recommendations are independent of any possible use of transit on the Georgetown Branch.

**Along Old Georgetown Road and in the adjacent communities, the Plan seeks to retain the residential character and discourage certain types of special exception approvals. Major recommendations include:**

1. Discourage approval of additional special exceptions except those that are community-serving, which includes child day care, elderly care and housing, group homes, accessory apartments, home occupations, and hospice care. This recommendation is due to the cumulative effect of existing extensive special exception activity within that area.
2. Apply design and landscaping guidelines in review of special exception petitions to maintain and encourage a quality appearance and residential character along the corridor.

**In the Palisades, the Plan endorses protection of the environment, character, and cultural resources of the area. Major recommendations include:**

# Land Use and Zoning Plan

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**This Plan reconfirms the single-family zoning  
throughout the area and balances  
the level of new development  
with transportation  
capacity.**

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**A** major goal of the Master Plan is to protect the high quality of life, the existing residential character, and the natural environment throughout the area. This is achieved by reconfirming the single-family zoning throughout the Planning Area and by balancing the level of new development with existing and new transportation capacity, as discussed in subsequent sections of the Plan.

This Plan recognizes that the land use outside the major employment centers is predominantly non-commercial. While single-family housing comprises 47 percent of the land area in B-CC, 32 percent of the households are in multi-family housing. Other major land users are large stream valley and Federal parklands, country clubs, and private schools, all of which contribute to a high quality, open space environment. Some commercial and higher density housing is concentrated at several locations throughout the area. The Plan endorses the following objectives.

#### **Areawide Land Use Objectives:**

1. Maintain residential character along major highways through a Green Corridors policy.
2. Discourage concentrations of office-related special exceptions, while supporting those related to child and elder services, and other community-serving uses.
3. Support the current use of large land users, but endorse housing as the primary alternative use if they are ever redeveloped.
4. Increase housing choice by allowing townhouse development where compatibility criteria can be achieved.

#### **Community Land Use Objectives:**

1. Maintain a moderate scale, mixed use residential and commercial environment in the Chevy Chase Lake area.
2. Discourage special exception approvals along Old Georgetown Road, except those that are community-serving.

3. Protect the environment, character, and cultural resources of the Palisades area.

This Plan reaffirms the policies and roles of the Sector Plan areas. The Sector Plans are centers of mixed use jobs and high density housing in the Planning Area. Each Sector Plan seeks to concentrate commercial development in limited areas, to limit development to local traffic capacity constraints, and to protect adjacent residential areas. The Master Plan does not change the land use or transportation recommendations of the Sector Plans. However, the Master Plan reviews the zoning adjacent to each Sector Plan and determines the appropriate zoning for those areas. In almost all cases, the existing single-family zoning and other existing zoning are reconfirmed.

This Plan establishes development level policies for Federal employment centers and seeks their cooperation with those policies. Expansion of Federal employment has the same impact on local roads as private sector employment growth. A large increase in ultimate Federal job levels could have several adverse effects on the B-CC Planning Area. These may include:

1. reducing the level of development in other employment centers in B-CC, such as the Bethesda CBD (to ensure that the B-CC area would remain within a moderate level of development), and
2. increasing road congestion above acceptable levels. This may lead to a need for increased road capacity, possibly by a major highway widening to accommodate the larger volumes of highway traffic.

### **3.1 Areawide Land Use Guidelines**

The Master Plan establishes guidelines for various land uses that are located throughout the Planning Area. These guidelines address land use issues related to major highway corridors, special exceptions, large land users such as country clubs and private schools, and conservation areas.

The land use and zoning recommendations for vacant and potentially redevelopable parcels are among the most important recommendations of this Master Plan. This Master Plan analyzes parcels of three acres or more. However, in the special study areas and in other selected locations, parcels under three acres are addressed. The Plan also addresses parcels which could redevelop. The parcel analysis is contained in subsequent sections of the Plan. Each parcel is identified and analyzed on a table in the various land use Sections 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4. Parcels adjacent to the *Friendship Heights* (Section 3.51) and *Bethesda Business District Sector Plans* (Section 3.52) are analyzed on tables in those sections. The Appendix contains maps of key parcel.

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This Master Plan also considers the status of the many un-built rights-of-way throughout the Planning Area. Several larger parcels are specifically addressed in the various land use sections of the Plan. Most parcels are addressed generically as potential pathway connections (Section 4.13), as a deterrent to neighborhood cut-through traffic (Section 4.21), or as a potential adopted neighborhood green space (Section 6.12). These rights-of-way should be preserved for long-term street use, unless other public needs override the need for local access or safety.

Each parcel is evaluated in the context of the overall objectives of this comprehensive Master Plan, as well as for compatibility with the surrounding community. The rationale for each recommendation relates to both the Planning Area and compatibility with nearby properties. Determination of each parcel's compatibility should consider environmental constraints, types of use, height and bulk of structures, buffering by vegetation

or distance, effect of topography on visibility of the use, use of a major highway or arterial for access or buffering, proximity to public or quasi-public uses, proximity to community services or transit, and the comparative density of nearby properties. Nearby uses need not be exactly the same.

This Plan recommends single-family attached (townhouse) uses on some sites throughout the Planning Area. Townhouses could occur through cluster development under existing zoning, through the Transferable Development Rights (TDR) Zone, or through the Townhouse Floating Zone (R-T). (See the Appendix for an explanation of TDR's.) The locations recommended achieve Master Plan objectives and are compatible with nearby properties. In general, townhouse use is recommended in areas of medium density or on larger sites that allow for transition to single-family detached areas.

### **3.11 Green Corridors Policy**

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**The Master Plan endorses a policy of maintenance and enhancement of Green Corridors along the major highways of the Planning Area.** The policy is recommended to stabilize the residential character of the area along major highways. The Green Corridors policy guidelines apply to those parts of East-West Highway, Connecticut Avenue, Wisconsin Avenue, River Road, Massachusetts Avenue, and Goldsboro Road classified as Major Highways. The Old Georgetown Road corridor has its own policy, which incorporates many of the Green Corridor concepts. **Following is the Green Corridors policy for the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area:**

1. Maintain and enhance planting of vegetation along road-sides and in medians of major highway corridors. Much of the green character is already in place in Bethesda-Chevy Chase. Design guidelines include: placing a landscaped buffer between the curb and relocated sidewalks, placing trees in medians and along curbs, screening of front yard parking, and relocating utility poles to allow for optimum tree planting and sidewalks. Visibility for highway safety must also be considered. Protection and enhancement pro-

jects will require coordination between the Maryland State Highway Administration and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, as well as local property owners, municipalities, and civic associations. (Concepts for planting along the Green Corridors are shown in Figure 6.)

2. Limit the extension of nonresidential land uses in major highway corridors outside Sector Plan and other high density zoned areas. Detailed policies for special exception uses are found in the following section and in the Plan for Old Georgetown Road. In general, the approval of nonresidential uses such as offices should be limited to avoid creating a change from a residential to a commercial character. Without this policy, individual land use changes could erode the residential character along these corridors.

### ***3.12 Special Exceptions***

The Master Plan endorses guidelines for the location of special exception land uses in residential areas. Special exception uses, as identified in the Zoning Ordinance in single-family zones, may be approved by the Board of Appeals. Special exception uses may be compatible if they meet the standards and requirements, as well as the general conditions set forth in the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance provides that special exceptions may be denied by the Board of Appeals where there is an excessive concentration in residential areas or where they are inconsistent with Master Plan recommendations. This Master Plan seeks to provide guidelines that will protect residential areas while also attempting to meet important social needs.

To achieve these objectives, **it is recommended that the following guidelines be used for review of special exceptions:**

1. Avoid excessive concentration of special exception and other nonresidential land uses along major highway corridors. Because sites along these corridors have better visibility for business uses, they are more vulnerable to over-

concentration. Of particular concern are office uses, which should be discouraged and are better located in areas with commercial zoning, such as the Bethesda CBD. It is also important to minimize uses that might degrade the safety and capacity of the highway by creating too many access points and conflicting turning movements.

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### **This Master Plan seeks to provide guidelines that will protect residential areas...**

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2. Avoid over-concentration of commercial service or office-type special exception uses in residential communities. These include funeral parlors, horticultural nurseries, veterinary clinics, medical or dental clinics, medical or professional offices, and philanthropic organizations. The Plan does not discourage home occupations that meet Zoning Ordinance criteria. Areas which may be most vulnerable are near employment centers and along major highways.
3. Protect major highway corridors and residential communities from incompatible design of special exception uses. In the design and review of special exceptions, the following guidelines should be followed, in addition to those stated for special exception uses in the Zoning Ordinance:
  - a. Any modification or addition to an existing building to accommodate a special exception use should be compatible with the architecture of the adjoining neighborhood and should not be significantly larger than nearby structures.
  - b. Front yard parking should be avoided because of its commercial appearance; however, in situations where side or rear yard parking is not available, front yard parking should only be allowed if it can be landscaped and screened adequately.
4. Support special exception uses that contribute to the housing objectives of the Master Plan. In general, the Plan endorses meeting special population needs through provision of elderly housing and group homes that are compatible



with nearby land uses. The Plan also endorses expanding choices of housing types by provision of accessory apartments.

5. Support special exception uses that contribute to the service and health objectives of the Master Plan. The needs and objectives related to child day care and the elderly are discussed in Section 6.2. In general, the Plan endorses provision of child day care, group homes, elder day care, and nursing homes. It is important to meet health needs through hospital services and hospice centers that are appropriately sized to be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.

### ***3.13 Large Land Users***

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**This Master Plan recommends the continued use, within existing zoning, of country clubs, private schools, and other institutions throughout the Planning Area.**

Country clubs in the area include Burning Tree Country Club, Columbia Country Club, Chevy Chase Club, and Kenwood Country Club. It is assumed that the country club uses will continue and therefore, the existing zoning designations of these properties are appropriate. These properties are recognized as an important private open space resource, particularly in an area which is as largely developed as Bethesda-Chevy Chase. Some protection of country club open space might be achieved through a tax incentive program.

If a change in use occurs in the future, this Plan recommends that the use of the country club properties be primarily for housing. Further analysis at the time would determine the appropriate zoning, scale, and form of development. These parcels would be considered for mixed residential use with the possibility of public active or passive recreational space, affordable housing, and increased density through the use of Transferable Development Rights (TDR's), as explained in the Appendix. Each of these alternatives must be weighed against other considerations, such as adequacy of highway facilities and compatibility with nearby development. Such changes

in land use would require another amendment to the Master Plan.

This Master Plan makes specific land use and zoning recommendations for several properties. (See Table 1.) These include:

- Audubon Naturalist Society
- Stone Ridge School
- F.A.E.S. and the Knights of Columbus
- American College of Cardiology
- Landon School
- Holton Arms School

In general, existing zoning is reconfirmed. Existing zoning and the option for using TDR's is recommended for portions of Stone Ridge School, FAES, Knights of Columbus, and Landon School. Protection of a historic resource and its environmental setting is recommended for Audubon Naturalist Society and Landon School.

Residential zoning and continuation of the existing use is recommended for the National 4-H Center, the YMCA on Old Georgetown Road, Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, the French School, St. Jane de Chantal Church and School, and the Sidwell Friends School. These are long-term, stable uses which are viewed as community resources. In some cases, new development on these sites will also require an amendment to existing special exception conditions to protect the setting of the use and to maintain compatibility with nearby properties.

**This Plan recommends that new, large-scale special exception uses are generally not appropriate for these sites.** Such uses would generally change the residential character of adjacent areas. Occasionally, a school or club will construct new facilities or additions which require special exception approval. These should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to ensure compatibility with area residences and conformance with other Plan objectives.

Table 1 (Cont'd.)

## LARGE LAND USERS LAND USE AND ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

Parcel Identification (#, Owner)		Estimated Area (Acres and/ or Sq. Ft.)	Existing Use	Existing Zone	Recommended Use	Recommended Zone	Conditions, Constraints, Comments	Rationale
LL5	Wilson La at Merrick Rd (Landon School)	66.5 acres						
		a. 51.31 acres (Historical environ- mental setting: 11.77 acres)	Private School (Potential, 186 du)	R-90	LL5a Single- family detached (180 du potential, including 27 MPDU's)	R-90	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development potential of LL5a is limited due to location of school structures and related facilities as well as to presence of stream and slopes</li> <li>- HPC and Planning Board have recommended inclusion of Landsdale House and environmental setting on Master Plan for Historic Preservation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expect private school use to continue</li> <li>- If it occurs, development within environmental setting should preserve the vista of the Landsdale (House) from Wilson Lane</li> <li>- Protect environmental character of site</li> </ul>
		b. 15.19 acres	(Potential, 65 du)		LL5b Single- family attached and 8 units detached (147 du poten- tial, in- cluding 22 MPDU's)	R-90/ TDR suitable for 8 units to the acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Size and topo of area would enable site to accommodate mixed housing types</li> <li>- Single-family detached units should be sited along Wilson La and along perimeter of property with R-90 zoned neighborhoods</li> <li>- Campus-like environment should be maintained, particularly from Wilson La</li> <li>- Access to be determined at subdivision</li> <li>- Careful traffic analysis at time of subdivision would better determine appropriate number of du's for site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meet housing and TDR objectives</li> <li>- Assure compatibility with adjacent single-family residences</li> </ul>
LL6	River Rd near Burdette Rd (Holton Arms School)	51.89 acres						
		a. 32.76 acres P569 N 777	Private School	R-200		R-200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited development potential due to school structures and related facilities</li> </ul>	Expect private school use to continue
		b. 19.13 acres P755 P752	Private School, Vacant	R-90	Single- family de- tached (82 du potential, including 12 MPDU's)	R-90, suitable for cluster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Only access appears to be dedicated but unbuilt Burning Tree Road</li> <li>- Preserve trees and slopes</li> <li>- Provide pedestrian pathway to local park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conforms to existing development pattern</li> <li>- Enhance and protect environmental character of site</li> </ul>

### 3.14 Conservation Areas

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Three locations in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan area are identified as conservation areas. It is the policy of this Master Plan that these areas should be preserved, protected, and enhanced. The identification does not imply absolute prohibition of development or support for park acquisition. These areas include:

1. Coquelin Run Conservation Area in the Chevy Chase Lake area. This area includes Parcels C 9, C 10, and part of C 19.
2. Booze Creek Conservation Area in the Mid-Bethesda area north of River Road. This area includes parts of Parcels LL 3 and N 16.
3. Braeburn Parkway Conservation Area in the Palisades area north of MacArthur Boulevard. This area includes Parcels P 4, P 5, and P 6.

The purpose of a conservation area is to recognize and provide guidelines for environmentally constrained sites.

The means of protection may include:

1. applying environmental protection criteria at the time of subdivision, in accordance with the subdivision regulations and the guidelines followed by staff;
2. retaining property in public ownership or endorsing public acquisition of property; and
3. requesting action by private owners to protect sensitive environmental features on their property.

**The conservation areas identified in this Master Plan do not prohibit any development of a particular property or include endorsement for public park acquisition.** However, development may be greatly reduced at the time of subdivision and decisions to acquire property may be made as part of the Parks Department planning process.

Conservation areas in this Master Plan include areas within the ultimate 100-year floodplain and a stream buffer area. In

some cases, the stream buffer goes beyond the 100-year floodplain. A conservation area may also include other sensitive environmental features in need of protection, such as areas with steep slopes, highly erodible soils, or mature woodlands. Some conservation areas provide linkages to existing parks.

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**The purpose of a conservation area is to recognize and provide guidelines for environmentally constrained sites.**

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This Master Plan does not identify large geographic areas, such as the Palisades area, as conservation areas. Instead, such areas are identified and protected through other measures, including development guidelines, land use recommendations, and scenic route designation.

The "Montgomery County Planning Board Staff Guidelines for the Protection of Slopes and Stream Valleys" are applied during the regulatory process. Floodplains are designated in State and County regulations as unbuildable areas. Wetlands disturbance is strongly discouraged by State and Federal regulations.

## 3.2 Chevy Chase - Eastern and Southern B-CC

### 3.21 Areawide Plan

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This portion of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Planning Area is bounded on the north by I-495 (the Beltway), on the east by Rock Creek Park, and on the south by the District of Columbia. The western boundary includes the Naval Medical Center, the Bethesda Business District, Little Falls Branch Parkway, and Massachusetts Avenue.

This area has stable land use and transportation charac-

nue. Also endorse retention of a grass median and design for safe pedestrian crossing of Connecticut Avenue and Jones Bridge Road.

This Plan recognizes that while new development projects may adopt measures to avoid making traffic congestion worse, the intersection at Connecticut Avenue and Jones Bridge Road will remain congested. This Plan removes the proposal from the 1970 Master Plan to provide a grade-separated interchange at this location. Improvements to expand turn lane capacity at this intersection are proposed in the Transportation Plan.

The Master Plan does not recommend any change in land use based on potential transit service on the Georgetown Branch. A separate Master Plan Amendment addresses the Georgetown Branch. It provides generally for:

1. improved transit access to the Bethesda and Silver Spring CBD's and Metro, including a stop at Connecticut Avenue; and
2. separate bike and hiking trails along the same route.

### **3.3 Mid-Bethesda – Northern B-CC**

#### **3.31 Areawide Plan**

This portion of the Planning Area is bounded on the north and west by the Beltway, on the south by River Road, and on the east by Little Falls Parkway, the Bethesda Central Business District, Jones Bridge Road, and includes the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. Many of the land use, transportation, community, and environmental concerns are the same as those found throughout the Planning Area. The uniqueness of the Old Georgetown Road corridor, including Pooks Hill, results in this being designated as a special study area, and a more in-depth discussion will follow the areawide plan.

#### **Land Use**

**This Plan recommends reconfirmation of existing zoning throughout the area, with the exception of four locations along Old Georgetown Road which are recommended to be designated to receive transferable development rights.** (See Section 3.32.) This will ensure the continuation of the existing residential character and patterns so well established here.

Mid-Bethesda is a mature, stable area, predominantly zoned R-60 and R-90, with the westernmost portion being zoned R-200. This zoning pattern provides a transition to the lower densities in the adjacent Potomac Subregion Planning Area. Single-family detached homes are pervasive, except for multi-family housing of varying densities and townhouses at Pooks Hill. There is no commercially zoned land. The area is largely built out and there is little potential for redevelopment, although there are several vacant and potentially redevelopable parcels greater than three acres in size, as well as several large land users, for which recommendations are included. (See Tables 1 and 5.)

There are several special land uses in Mid-Bethesda for which recommendations are made in other major sections of this Plan. Below are considerations of these uses as they pertain to this area.

1. There are three historic resources in the area which are currently on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. In addition, there are five others which have been designated and four which have been removed as part of this planning effort from the *Locational Atlas*. Refer to Chapter 7 for more detailed information.
2. There are several major Federal properties in Mid-Bethesda, including the Uniformed Services University, the Naval Medical Command, and the National Institutes of Health. The other large land users in the area include: Burning Tree and Kenwood Country Clubs, Suburban Hospital, Stone Ridge School, FAES, Knights of Columbus, American College of Cardiology, Landon School, and Holton Arms School. Any change in use on these properties, including any expansion proposals, should be reviewed in

the context of the impact it will have on the adjacent communities and also within the guidelines of the master plans for the Federal facilities. Specific land use and zoning recommendations for selected large land users are found in Section 3.13.

3. Only a relatively short segment of the Georgetown Branch is located in this area, connecting the Bethesda Business District and Westbard. The proposed use of this portion of the former rail right-of-way is discussed in Section 4.14.
4. There are several neighborhoods which abut the Bethesda Business District and Westbard. These two Sector Plan areas will not be revised as part of this Master Plan update. The existing land use recommendations are not questioned; the zoning of these transition areas is being reconfirmed. (See Section 3.5.)

## **Transportation**

Several major highways traverse northern B-CC, including Bradley Boulevard, Old Georgetown Road, and Wisconsin Avenue. The major transportation concerns are traffic volumes and congestion, which are consistent with the remainder of the Planning Area. Growth of the Bethesda Business District and NIH as major employment centers, as well as growth in the rest of Montgomery County, has been a major traffic generator. The two employment centers have had a powerful impact on this portion of the Planning Area as commuters traverse northern B-CC to reach destinations to the south. Related transportation recommendations can be found in Chapter 4 and below.

1. To lessen the increase of traffic through the area, incentives need to be developed and measures taken to get people out of their cars and into alternative means of transportation, such as carpooling, public transit, and bicycles.
2. The Metrorail station located at NIH mainly serves the major employment centers of NIH and the Naval Medical Command. These Federal facilities should implement a program to encourage higher ridership. In addition, bike path linkages with other trails and a shuttle bus service could encourage higher use of Metro for commuters journeying to other places of employment.

3. To facilitate pedestrian movement which could further enhance use of alternative modes, develop a pathway and sidewalk network in conjunction with recommendations to provide safer highway crossings. (See Section 4.13.)

## **Community and Environment**

To foster a sense of community in an area as large as Mid-Bethesda, certain facilities need to be located in relatively close proximity to neighborhoods so that people can have places to gather and socialize. Schools, recreation centers, local parks, and country clubs are found throughout the northern B-CC area and serve as places where people from the community can come together. Such facilities are discussed from a Planning Area perspective in Section 6.1 of this report.

### **3.32 Old Georgetown Road Plan**

Old Georgetown Road has a character, history, and location that put it in a unique position in Bethesda-Chevy Chase. It is a major highway into the Bethesda Business District, serving as an important commuter link to this employment and retail center. It functions as an attractive gateway leading to downtown Bethesda and provides access to the surrounding communities—providing a front door to these adjacent residential areas. Old Georgetown Road also provides major access to the National Institutes of Health, an organization attracting researchers from around the world, with a projected employment of close to 20,000 people by the year 2000. An aesthetically pleasing boulevard with a residential character can create a positive image for visitors and local citizens alike.

This section of the Plan refers to the first row of properties fronting or adjoining Old Georgetown Road as well as the eight communities which are adjacent to the corridor. (See Figure 9.)

Along Old Georgetown Road, from Glenbrook Road to I-495, a significant number of special exceptions have been approved which have allowed the conversion of houses to commercial and service uses and construction of nonresidential buildings.

# Environmental Resources Plan

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**A major goal of this Plan is to protect the  
natural resources and environ-  
mental qualities of  
Bethesda-Chevy  
Chase.**

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**A** major goal of this Plan is to protect the natural resources and environmental qualities which are important to the quality of life for Bethesda-Chevy Chase.

Steeply sloped and heavily wooded areas are distinctive features of the Palisades and portions of the Chevy Chase area. Throughout B-CC, residential areas are heavily treed. Environmental concerns within the area include loss of mature woodlands, stream quality, and highway noise.

Objectives to protect the natural resources of B-CC include:

1. Protect wetlands, steep slopes, and wooded areas.
2. Endorse corrective measures to reduce flooding and to improve stream quality.
3. Design new projects to limit impacts of roadway traffic noise.
4. Endorse higher densities near transit stations and use of ridesharing to help reduce future levels of automobile-related air pollutants.
5. Design any new sewer or water lines to protect natural features in parklands.

The environmental resources of Bethesda-Chevy Chase are recognized in the land use recommendations of the Master Plan. The Plan identifies three areas as conservation areas. Future use of these areas should be limited due to floodplains, steep slopes, and woodlands. The Plan seeks to protect the Palisades area by a combination of zoning, scenic highway, and site design recommendations. The Plan recognizes and supports retention of much of the open space resources of B-CC, both public and private. These range from extensive parklands to large land users such as private schools and country clubs. Many individual parcels are recommended for cluster development, with guidelines to provide buffer areas and to avoid environmentally sensitive areas.

## 5.1 Natural Features

The Planning Area lies in the Piedmont region. The land is characterized by rolling and hilly topography. Some areas have moderately steep (15 to 25 percent grade) to extremely steep (over 25 percent) slopes. The steepest topography is concentrated in the southwestern portion of the Planning Area known as the Potomac Palisades. Glenelg or Manor silt loam soils, which are the predominant soils in this Planning Area, are subject to moderate to severe erosion during construction when they are located on steep slopes. Figure 14 locates the environmentally sensitive areas in the Planning Area.

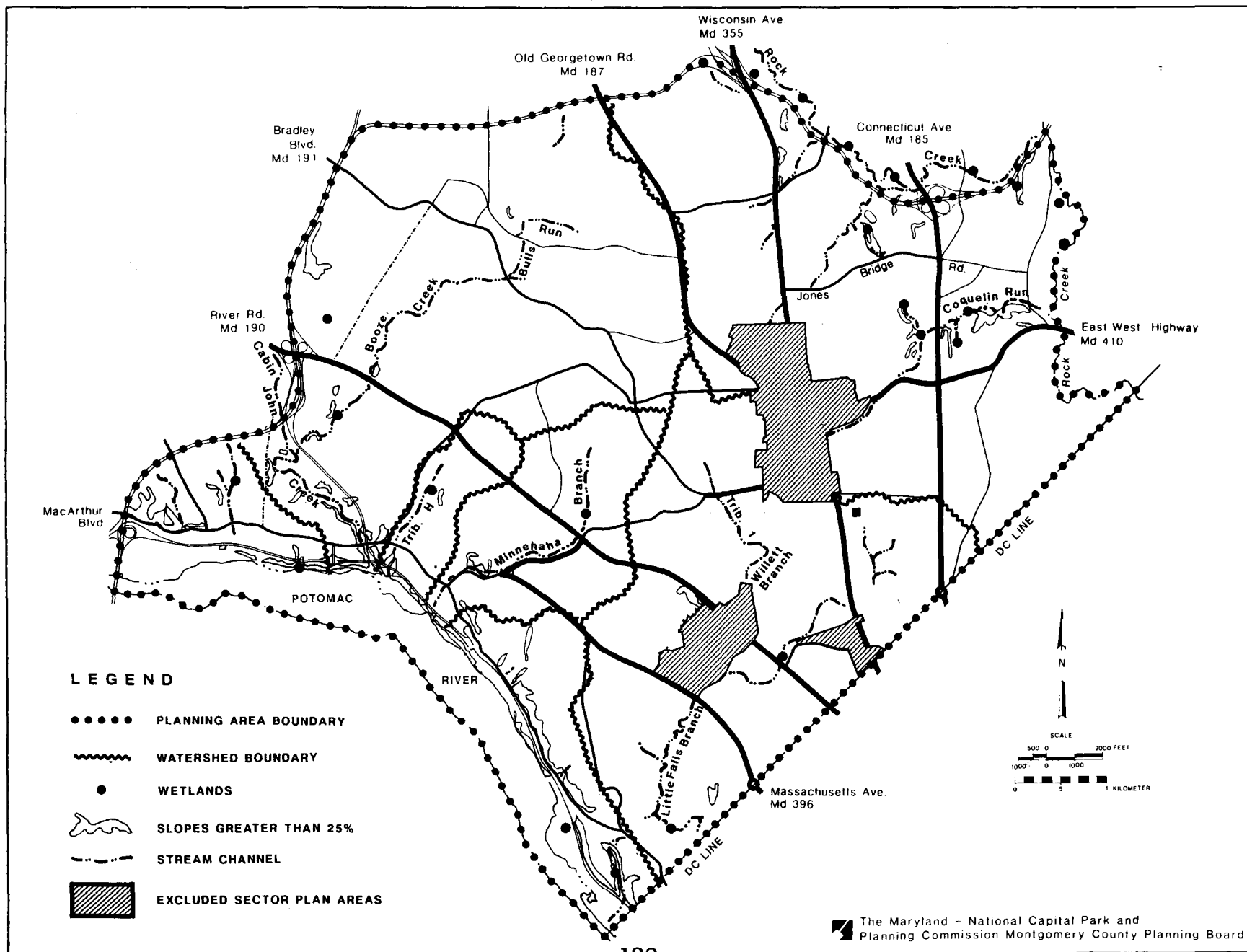
**This Plan supports the preservation, wherever possible, of wetlands and steeply sloping areas (25 percent and greater slopes) that may lie outside floodplains or stream buffers as defined by existing regulations and guidelines.** This recommendation will prevent extensive hillside erosion which can result in large amounts of sediment washoff into streams. Existing regulations and guidelines that provide for the preservation of some open space include State and County regulations that prohibit the construction of buildings within 25 feet of the 100-year ultimate floodplain and Planning Department's *Staff Guidelines for the Protection of Slopes and Stream Valleys*. These natural features must be defined and delineated on a site-by-site basis.

Streams, their associated floodplains, and wetlands provide essential habitats for many plant and animal communities. Wetlands can aid in flood control and in reducing water pollution to receiving streams. Scattered areas of Worsham and Glenville silt loams, which are highly erodible and poorly drained, are mostly associated with floodplains. Development on these soils is strongly discouraged.

**This Plan supports the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas that are not already within parkland.** The Plan identifies three conservation areas along Coquelin Run, Booze Creek, and Braeburn Parkway (Tributary H). There are also recommendations to protect the Potomac Palisades area.

# ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Figure  
**14**





To create such undisturbed open space systems, developable parcels should be encouraged to use a cluster or planned development option. Another alternative is to allow a cluster development with a high proportion of townhouse units under the existing single-family detached base zone (e.g., R-60, R-90) if the development provides greater environmental benefits than a standard development under the base zone. Such land use options provide the flexibility for site layout and creation of open space systems. Other areas may be protected by public ownership or private action.

Large areas of maturely forested land in the Planning Area are mainly limited to stream valleys and steeply sloping land. Preservation of such woodlands is important in retaining the character of parts of the Planning Area, such as the Potomac Palisades, as well as providing such environmental benefits as:

1. reducing land surface erosion,
2. reducing the occurrence of flooding events and minimizing the degradation of water quality,
3. moderating temperature extremes of the micro-climate, and
4. providing a source of food and cover for wildlife.

## 5.2 Water and Air

### 5.21 Water: Quantity and Quality

**This Plan supports actions to correct flooding problems:**

1. Continuation of County CIP projects to upgrade undersized storm drainage systems in the Planning Area.
2. Evaluation of roadways experiencing flooding due to undersized culverts and bridges; determination and implementation of the best engineering solution by the Department of Transportation.
3. Prevention of new developments within the ultimate 100-year floodplain.

There are isolated flooding problems in each of the three major drainage areas of the Planning Area — Rock Creek, Cabin John, and Little Falls Basins. (See Figure 15.) These problems result from a high degree of impervious surfaces (e.g., roads, parking lots, rooftops, driveways) that causes rapid surface water flow during precipitation periods and from the absence of flood control impoundments to control such rapid surface runoff. Such flooding problems are further aggravated by undersized culverts and houses located too close to streams. These flooding problem areas have been identified and evaluated in two MCPB technical reports: *Rock Creek Stormwater and Water Quality Management Study*, 1977, and *Cabin John, Rock Run and Little Falls Watershed Study*, 1982. To correct some of these problems, the County has Capital Improvements Program (CIP) projects to upgrade some of the old and undersized storm drain systems in the Planning Area. **The Plan also recommends that owners of the properties in the floodplain acquire flood insurance.**

The Master Plan endorses a combination of monitoring, corrective measures, and local action to improve stream quality. The large amount of development with the absence of stormwater management controls in most of the Planning Area has resulted in the degradation of the quality of stream systems in the Planning Area. The negative impacts of urbanization on these streams include accelerated stream channel erosion, concrete or piped channels, sanitary sewer line leaks, unsightly litter, poor water quality and stream flow, and destruction or change in aquatic life to favor pollutant-tolerant biota.

**This Plan supports the County's efforts to re-establish a water quality monitoring program and emphasizes the need for such a program in this Planning Area.** Water quality monitoring can identify streams where water quality improvement measures need to be focused. The County operated a water quality monitoring network from about 1969 to 1980.

**WSSC monitoring to identify and correct old leaking sewer lines should be continued and expanded to cover the entire Planning Area.** WSSC has, in the past, identified and

# Appendix



## ***2.0 Maps of Each Parcel Analyzed (200-Foot Scale)***

The following maps show the locations of key vacant and redevelopable parcels for which recommendations have been made. They have been arranged alphabetically by the letter preceding the parcel number. All of the parcels addressed in the text are shown on the 1,000-foot scale map accompanying the Plan. Tables in the Plan give specific recommendations regarding each parcel.

As explained in Section 3.1 of the Plan, our analysis dealt primarily with parcels of three acres or more. However, in the special study areas and in other selected locations, parcels under three acres were addressed. On redevelopable parcels, the Plan does not generally recommend that existing uses be replaced.

