



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

February 28, 2011

Mr. Greg Ossont, Director
Planning and Code Administration
City of Gaithersburg
31 South Summit Avenue
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877-2098

SUBJECT: Draft 2009 Land Use Plan

Dear Mr. Ossont:

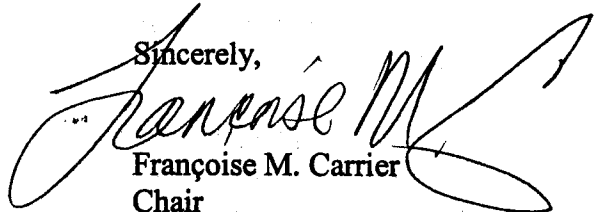
At its regular meeting on February 25, 2011, the Montgomery County Planning Board reviewed the City of Gaithersburg Draft 2009 Land Use Plan. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Planning Board (F. Carrier, M. Wells-Harley and J. Alfandre) unanimously voted to **APPROVE** the transmittal of the following comments:

1. The City of Gaithersburg should follow the procedures of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 23A, Section 9 in reference to annexation and zoning. As you know, for five years following any annexation, land uses and density of newly annexed properties may not be substantially different from those under County zoning at the time of the annexation, unless the Montgomery County Council provides its express approval.
2. The City should consider the removal of Map Designations #18, 36, and 37 from the Maximum Expansion Limits. The boundary should be located at logical natural or physical features that respect community identity and do not weaken the County's economic vitality. The City should not promote piecemeal annexation of properties, even at the owner's request. MD 28 and I-370 provide a physically identifiable edge that would not further split properties in the County's jurisdiction.
3. The proposed land use designation and zone for Map Designation #21 are appropriate, if annexed, provided that the commercial/employment/industrial uses are limited to land confronting the major highways, Muddy Branch Road and Diamond Avenue. The Land Use Element Update should recognize and protect the natural features of the site.
4. The proposed land use designations and zones for Map Designations #16, 17, and 20 are appropriate. The Land Use Element Update should recognize the needs of improved stormwater management, reduced impervious surfaces, and increased tree planting with the redevelopment of the Walnut Hill Shopping Center (Map Designation #17).

5. The Open Space land use designation should be expanded to preserve high quality forest on Map Designation #29.
6. The proposed land use designation and zone for Map Designation #39 aligns with the vision for the adjacent Life Science Center as expressed in the Great Seneca Science Corridor Plan. The City should continue to promote mixed-use development and the provision for the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) station.
7. The proposed Commercial-Office-Residential land use designation and Corridor Development zone for Map Designation #19 is substantially different than the current zoning under County jurisdiction. Unless waived by the County Council, development inconsistent with County zoning cannot occur within five years of annexation. The Planning Board supports this change to achieve the goals outlined in the Land Use Element Update.
8. Continued coordination is desirable between Planning Department staff and the City regarding the increased development envisioned on Lakeforest Mall and adjacent properties to assess the impacts on surrounding properties and the circulation network.

The Planning Board appreciates the opportunity to review this document and looks forward to working closely with you and your staff in the future.

Sincerely,



Françoise M. Carrier
Chair

FMC:mb:ha

Enclosure



Gaithersburg
A Character Counts! City

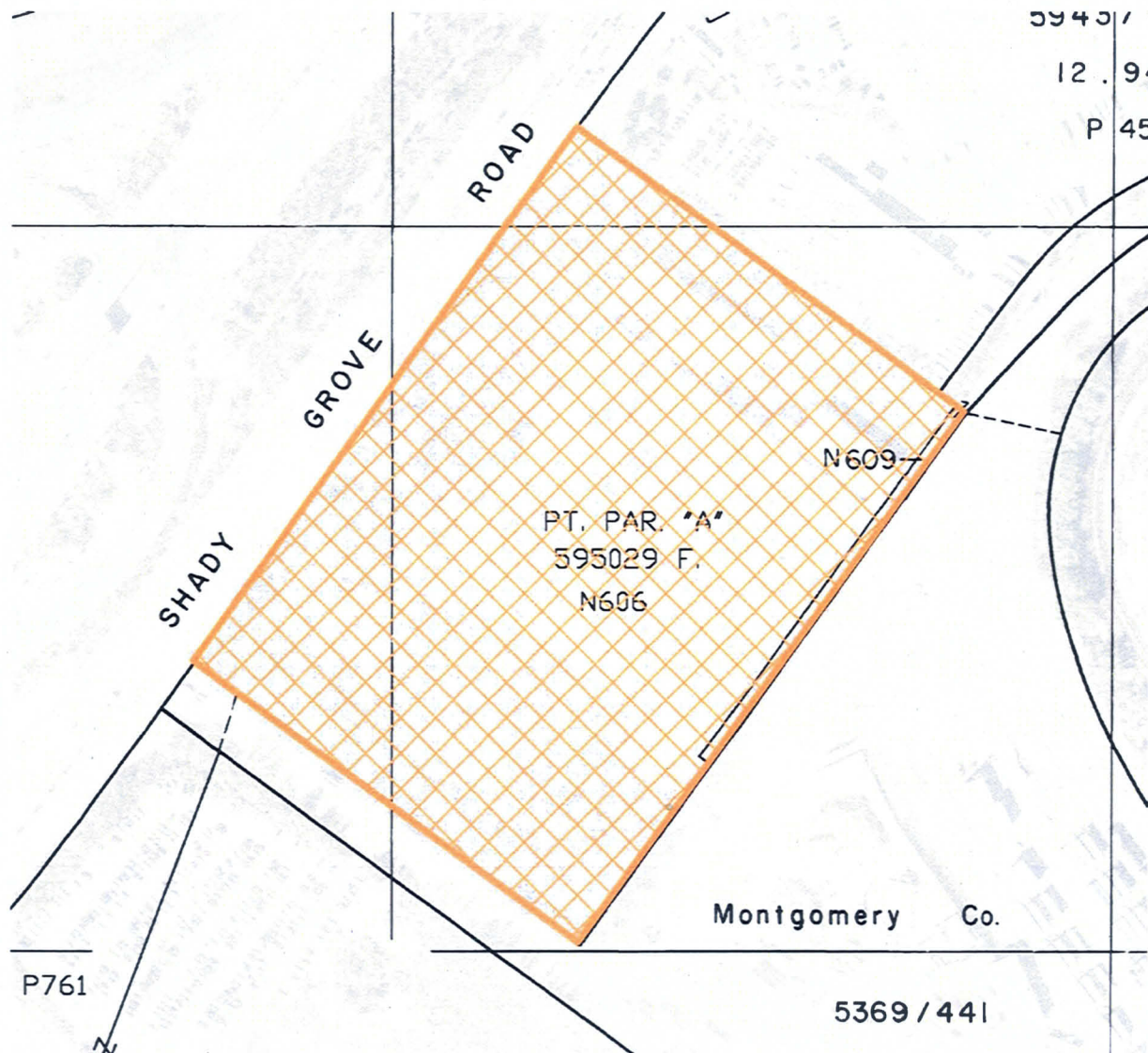
City of Gaithersburg

LAND USE PLAN

A Master Plan Element

Published December 20, 2011

2009
MASTER PLAN

18. Tax Map GS13 Parcels N606 and N609

This 13.7-acre area contains a large one-story retail building (The Great Indoors) with a large surface parking lot. This property is within the City's Maximum Expansion Limits, is contiguous with the City's current boundary, and could be annexed without creating an enclave. This property is currently surrounded by a mix of warehouse and industrial uses.

Land Use and Zoning Actions:

- Adopt Commercial/Industrial-Research-Office land use designation, if annexed
- Recommend CD or MXD Zoning, or a future zone that facilitates sustainable development standards, if annexed



Gaithersburg
A Character Counts! City

City of Gaithersburg

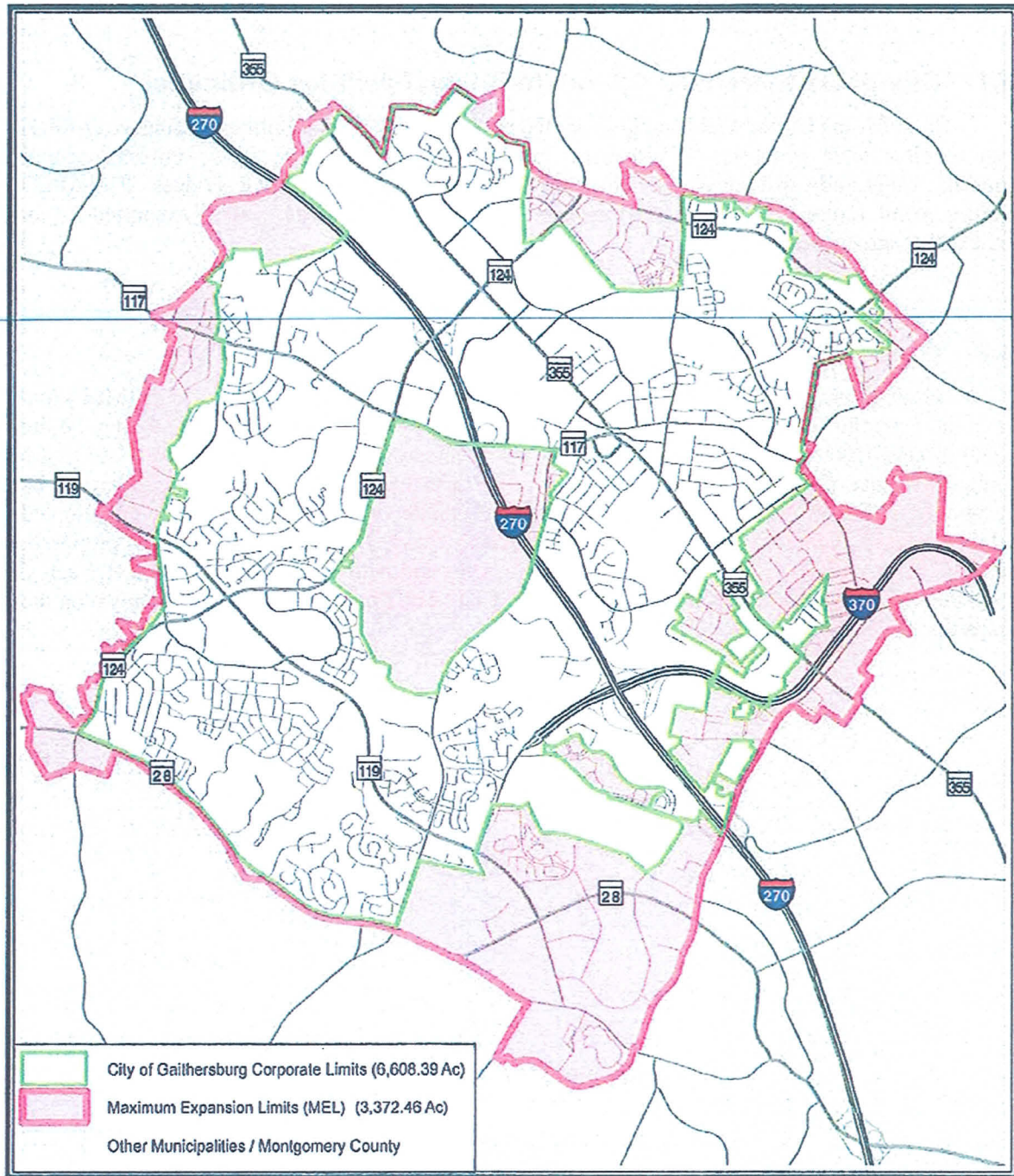
MUNICIPAL GROWTH

A Master Plan Element

Adopted April 6, 2009

Published April 14, 2009

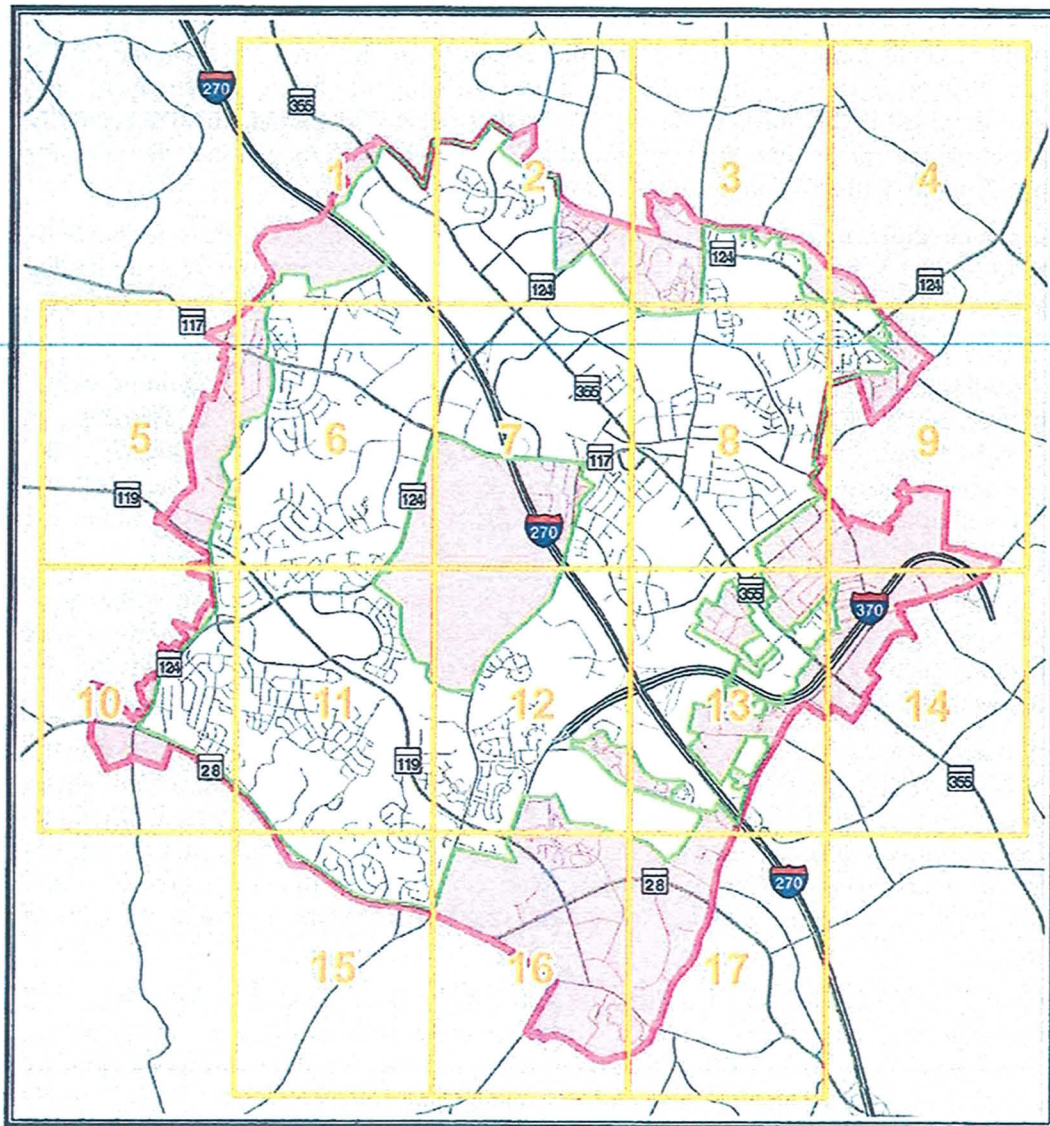
2003
MASTER PLAN

Map 2: Maximum Expansion Limits (MEL) for Gaithersburg

Please refer to Appendix A for more detailed maps of properties within the MEL.

15. Appendix A: Detailed Maps of MEL, Growth Areas, Zoning

Index of Detailed Appendix Map Sheets

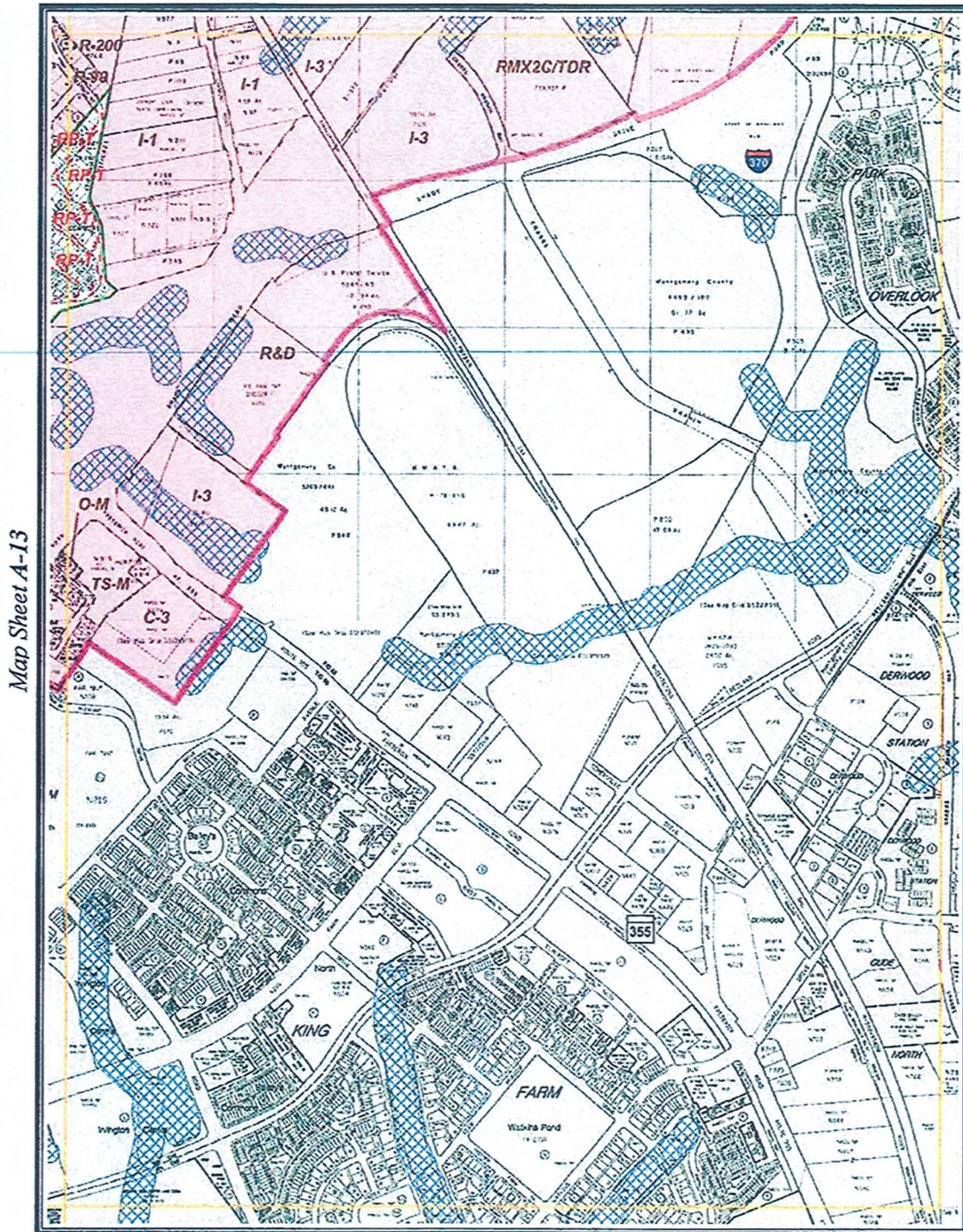


Legend Key for Appendix Map Sheets

 City of Gaithersburg Corporate Limits	 Growth Areas - City
 Maximum Expansion Limits (MEL)	 Growth Areas - MEL
 Other Municipalities / Montgomery County	 Map Sheet Border
 City Zoning	 Non-Buildable Environmental Areas
 County Zoning	

Map Sheet A-14

Map Sheet A-09



LINOWES
AND BLOCHER LLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

January 12, 2012

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City of Gaithersburg Mayor and Council
31 South Summit Avenue
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

Dear Mayor Katz and Councilmembers:

On behalf of our client, Sears, Roebuck and Co. ("Sears"), owner of The Great Indoors Property, located at 16331 Shady Grove Road ("Property"), enclosed please find a Petition for Annexation and supporting materials seeking annexation of the Property into the corporate boundaries of the City of Gaithersburg ("City"). The Property is identified as property number 18 in the approved and adopted 2009 amendment to the City's Land Use Plan, and is recommended therein for annexation into the City.

The Property is currently developed with The Great Indoors, a home-improvement showcase center, an appliance repair center, and associated parking, all of which were developed on or around 1966. The Property is serviced by two points of access from Shady Grove Road, is relatively flat, with no significant environmental features, and is currently adequately served by all public utilities.

In 2006, Montgomery County comprehensively rezoned the Property to Research and Development ("R&D"), which does not permit retail uses. With The Great Indoors use being grandfathered as part of the comprehensive rezoning, Sears did not participate in the County's Master Plan process to the extent it should have to ensure greater flexibility in the use of the Property until alternative uses envisioned by the County's master plan for the area are viable. The lack of demand for R&D space in the area, currently and for the foreseeable future, renders the R&D zone very problematic for the Property. Through the proposed annexation, Sears hopes to achieve more flexible and realistic zoning for the Property and, to that end, is requesting MXD zoning from the City, consistent with the recommendation of the City's Land Use Plan. Such a zone will allow for viable uses within the existing improvements on the Property until the market will support redevelopment of the Property. We believe, therefore, that the proposed annexation benefits both Sears and the City, with the City being ensured of future tax revenue from the Property and Sears being given the flexibility it needs to keep the Property productive.

Mayor and City Council
X-184
Exhibit #1

City of Gaithersburg Mayor and Council
January 12, 2012
Page 2

Thank you for your attention to this request. If you have any questions, or require any additional information, please feel free to contact us.

Very truly yours,

LINOWES AND BLOCHER LLP



C. Robert Dalrymple



Erin E. Girard

cc: Mr. Tony Tomasello
Lynn Board, Esq.
Mr. James Terrell
Marianne Simonini, Esq.

COMMUNICATION: PLANNING COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Trudy M. Walton Schwarz, Community Planning Director

DATE: March 15, 2012

SUBJECT: Staff Analysis & Annexation Plan
X-184 – Sears/The Great Indoors Property
Robert Dalrymple & Erin Girard, Linowes & Blocher, LLP, for
Sears, Roebuck and Company

Application for annexation of approximately 27.89 acres (595,029 square feet) of land, known as the Sears Property (The Great Indoors and Sears Service Center & Repair), located at 16331 & 16401 Shady Grove Road, and adjacent road rights of way, adjacent to the present corporate limits. The application requests a reclassification of the subject property from the current Montgomery County Research and Development (R&D) Zone to the Mixed Use Development (MXD) Zone in the City of Gaithersburg, Maryland.

APPLICANT:

James Terrell
Sears, Roebuck and Company
3333 Beverly Road BC 102B-A
Hoffman Estates, Illinois 60179

APPLICANT'S REPRESENTATIVE:

Robert Dalrymple and Erin Girard
Linowes and Blocher, LLP
7200 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 800
Bethesda, Maryland 20814

OWNERS:

Sears, Roebuck and Company
3333 Beverly Road BC 102B-A
Hoffman Estates, Illinois 60179

Maryland State Highway Administration

Montgomery County Rights of Way

LOCATION:

The subject property is located northeast of the intersection of South Frederick Avenue (Maryland Route 355) and Shady Grove Road and southwest of the intersection of Oakmont Avenue and Shady Grove Road. The property consists of one parcel and two road rights of way and is a total of approximately 27.89 acres. The Sears property consists of approximately 13.66 acres, the State Highway (SHA) right of way for I-370 contains approximately 11.84 acres, and the Montgomery County (County) right of way for Shady Grove Road is approximately 2.39 acres. The roadways and the parcel are adjacent and contiguous to the current City limits.



TAX MAP REFERENCE:

Tax Sheet: FS 563 and GS 123

Tax Parcel ID Number: N606

BACKGROUND:

Sears, Roebuck and Co. (Sears) has submitted a petition for annexation, X-184, to the City. As part of the annexation request, the applicant is requesting a rezoning from the County Research and Development (R&D) Zone to the City of Gaithersburg Mixed Use Development (MXD) Zone. Further, a site plan of the current use of 204,490 Square Feet of retail and warehouse use has been submitted as part of the application.

Articles 23A and 66B of the *Maryland Annotated Code* and Chapter 24 (Zoning) of the City of Gaithersburg Code outline the requirements and process for a proposed annexation. The Planning Commission is required to review the proposed annexation and associated rezoning and land use plan for consistency with the City's master plan¹, and provide a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council at least 15 days prior to the required Mayor and City Council public hearing². The Mayor and City Council are required to hold a public hearing prior to making a final decision on the requested annexation and zoning. The public hearing before the Mayor and City Council is scheduled for May 21, 2012.

EXISTING LAND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY/FOREST STAND DELINEATION:

A natural resource inventory/forest stand delineation (NRI/FSD) was submitted and approved as part of the X-184 Application³. This somewhat rectangular site currently contains several retail stores and associated parking lots. The topography of this relatively flat site ranges from a high point of 512 feet above sea level at the northern portion of the site, near the entrance of the store, to 500 feet above sea level at the southern corner of the property by the Truck entrance to the County Landfill Transfer Station. There are no steep slopes on the site.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey indicates three soil types present on the site: Glenelg Silt Loam, Glenville Silt Loam, and Urban Land. None of these soils are highly erodible, unsuitable or unsafe soils. The majority of the property is Urban Land designation, which applies to areas that are covered with impervious surfaces (buildings and parking lots.)

There is no forest on the property. Landscape trees exist in parking islands and along the perimeter of the property. None of these trees are of significant size. There are no streams observed on the Sears property and FEMA has not mapped any floodplain on or

¹ Article 66B, Section 1.02 Maryland Annotated Code

² Section 24-9 Gaithersburg City Code

³ Exhibit 23

within 100 feet of the property. Additionally, there are neither wetlands on the property nor any dams upstream of the property. The property is within the Upper Rock Creek watershed, in the Use Class IV portion.

There have been no rare, threatened, or endangered species observed, identified or known to occur on or near the site. While the property does receive noise pollution from vehicles on Shady Grove Road and I-370, the trucks and heavy equipment at the transfer station, rail stock moving within the WMATA site and vehicles from the Shady Grove Distribution Center/post office, a noise study was not required as a component of the Natural Resource Inventory. Existing light pollution sources are mostly security derived. The pollution comes from lights within the parking lot, the transfer station, the post office distribution center and along Shady Grove Road.

There are no cultural or historic resources on the site and none mapped in the Adopted Shady Grove Sector Plan of 2006 or the Montgomery County Location Atlas and Index of Historic Sites. There were no significant views on this property.

MASTER PLAN HISTORY:

Montgomery County Master Plan

The *Shady Grove Sector Master Plan*⁴, adopted in 2006, made recommendations for the Sears parcel at the time of redevelopment to contribute to the “area’s technology uses.” The Plan proposed that the site be a part of the Shady Grove Technology Corridor rezoned from I-1 zone to R&D (Research & Development) with an I-3 standard method zone. The property was subsequently comprehensively rezoned to the R&D.

Great Indoors Site (Site 4)

While the current use is a building supply use, this property may eventually have redevelopment potential. At that time, it should contribute to the area’s technology uses. This Plan recommends:

Providing technology, research and development, and office uses to create a technology corridor.

- *Orienting buildings toward street frontage and screening parking from Shady Grove Road.*
- *Ensuring that any redevelopment of the site preserves and enhances the pedestrian environment of Shady Grove Road.*
- *Rezoning this site from I-1 to R&D with an I-3 standard method zone. Development should not exceed 0.35 FAR to maintain a balance of jobs to housing within the plan area. Housing is not appropriate given the site’s proximity to the Solid Waste Transfer Station.*

Shady Grove Road is discussed in the Transportation portion of the Shady Grove Sector Plan:

⁴ Exhibit 17

This road is a major traffic route through the planning area connecting with two interstate highways, I-370 and I-270. Local access is limited to a few connecting streets along Shady Grove Road. This Plan recognizes Shady Grove Road's role in cross-County travel. Improvements should address local pedestrian access, noise impacts, and streetscape character. This Plan recommends:

- *Maintain Major Highway classification with six-lanes, divided, with an increase to a 150-foot right-of-way west of I-370. Increased right-of-way will provide adequate space for pedestrians and streetscape improvements.*
- *Improve Shady Grove Road's overall character with streetscape improvements.*
- *Provide noise walls east of I-370 along residential properties, if found in compliance with the County's noise guidelines.*

City of Gaithersburg

The subject property was identified within the *2003 City of Gaithersburg Master Plan Municipal Growth Element*, which was adopted in April of 2009. The property is included within the City's maximum expansion limits (MEL). This was included at the request of the property owner and also fulfilled the City's Strategic Goals. Additionally, the property is part of a Gaithersburg boundary established by the postal zip code system.

The *2009 Process and Overview Element*, while not making specific recommendations for this property, did establish the following Guiding Strategies that are applicable to this petition:

- Explore opportunities for those areas located within the City's Maximum Expansion Limits.
- Limit new development where public utilities, facilities, and services cannot be established without unduly burdening the existing service provision or users. Continue to enforce the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) and update requirements periodically, if needed.
- Utilize the City's 'Smart Growth' principles to encourage high quality infill redevelopment.

The *2009 City of Gaithersburg Master Plan Transportation Element* delineates Shady Grove Road as a 150-foot wide Major Arterial. The roadway is to contain six through lanes.

The *2009 City of Gaithersburg Master Plan Land Use Element* discussed the property and identified as Map Designation 23. The following land use or zoning recommendations for this parcel:

This 13.8-acre area contains a large one-story retail building (The Great Indoors) with a large surface parking lot. This property is within the City's Maximum Expansion Limits, is contiguous with the City's current boundary, and could be annexed without creating an enclave. This property is currently surrounded by a mix of warehouse and industrial uses.

Applicable Strategic Direction: Planning, Economic

Land Use and Zoning Actions:

- *Adopt Commercial/Industrial-Research-Office land use designation, if annexed*
- *Recommend CD or MXD Zoning, or a future zone that facilitates sustainable development standards, if annexed*

SURROUNDING LAND USES:

Northeast of the property is the U.S. Postal Distribution Center and Post Office at Shady Grove, which is zoned R&D in Montgomery County. North of the CSX Railroad right of way is the County Service Park, which is zoned Transit Oriented, Mixed Use Zones (TOMX-2). The TOMX-2 Zone surrounds the WMATA property (Shady Grove METRO Station) and the County's Transfer Station, which are zoned I-1 (as shown on the second zoning map). Southeast of the property is the truck entry road to the Transfer Station, which is also zoned I-1. South of the road is the Casey Property, which is vacant and does include existing wetland and a stream. This property is zoned I-3 and is in the County jurisdiction.

West of the proposed annexation area are City zoned properties. These include the Hyatt House hotel, which is zoned C-2 (General Commercial), and the Gateway Commons subdivision, which is zoned RPT (Medium Density Residential). Gateway Commons includes a mix of unit types including townhouses, back-to-back townhouse units and detached single-family units.

Northwest, across Shady Grove Road and I-370 is the Oakmont Industrial Park, which is zoned I-1 in the County. This includes a mix of retail, warehouse and industrial businesses.

ZONING:

Existing Montgomery County Zoning

The subject property is currently zoned R&D (Research & Development) in Montgomery County.⁵ The R&D does not permit retail uses, so the current use of the Great Indoors is a grandfathered use in the County. The R&D Zone generally allows technology and research and development uses.

Substantial Change

It should be noted that per Article 23A, Subsection 9(c) of the Maryland Annotated Code:

"no municipality annexing land, may for a period of five years following annexation, place that land in a zoning classification which permits a land use substantially different from the use for the land specified in the current and duly adopted Master Plan or plans . . . without the express approval of the . . . County council in which the municipality is located."

City Staff will be working with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) - Montgomery County Planning Department (MCPD), to evaluate the proposed annexation.

Proposed City Zoning

The applicant has requested that the Sears parcel be zoned MXD (Mixed Use Development), if annexed into the City.⁶ It is the objective of this zone to establish procedures and standards for the implementation of master plan land use recommendations for comprehensively planned, multi-use projects. It is also intended that this zone provide a more flexible approach to the comprehensive design and development of multi-use projects than the procedures and regulations applicable under the various conventional zoning categories. In so doing, it is intended that this zoning category be utilized to implement existing public plans and pertinent City policies in a manner and to a degree more closely compatible with said City plans and policies than may be possible under other zoning categories. The specific purposes of this zone are:

- (a) To establish standards and procedures through which the land use objectives and guidelines of approved and adopted master plans can serve as the basis for evaluating an individual development proposal, as well as ensuring that development proposed will implement the adopted master plan and other relevant planning and development policies and guidelines for the area considered for MXD zoning.

⁵ Exhibit #16

⁶ Exhibits #1 - 3

- (b) To encourage orderly, staged development of large scale comprehensively planned multi-use developments by providing procedures for various zoning and plan approvals, including development phasing.
- (c) To encourage design flexibility and coordination of architectural style of buildings and signage.
- (d) To ensure the integration and internal and external compatibility of applicable residential and nonresidential uses by providing a suitable residential environment that is enhanced and complemented by uses such as commercial, recreational, open space, employment and institutional uses and amenities within a multi-use development. A multi-use development is defined as a single parcel or a group of contiguous parcels of land zoned MXD which, among the various parcels comprising that contiguous area, include residential, commercial, recreational, open space, employment and institutional uses and amenities.
- (e) To assure compatibility of the proposed land uses with internal and surrounding uses by incorporating higher standards of land planning and site design than could be accomplished under conventional zoning categories and to provide a superior quality of development exceeding that which could be achieved under conventional zoning regulations and procedures.
- (f) To encourage the efficient use of land by: locating employment and retail uses convenient to residential areas; reducing reliance upon automobile use and encouraging pedestrian and other nonvehicular circulation systems; retaining and providing useable open space and active recreation areas close to employment and residential populations; and providing for the development of comprehensive nonvehicular circulation networks, separated from vehicular roadways, which constitute a system of linkages among residential areas, open spaces, recreational areas, commercial and employment areas, and public facilities.
- (g) To provide a superior natural environment by the preservation of trees, natural topographic and geologic features, wetlands, watercourses and open spaces.

The MXD Zone would allow the current use to remain productive until the market would support redevelopment. It would allow for the City and the property owner to have more flexibility to create vibrant mixed use development. The proposed zoning is in conformance with the *2009 Master Plan Land Use Element*.

PUBLIC FACILITIES:

The City of Gaithersburg's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) establishes requirements related to water and sewer service, emergency services, traffic impacts, and school capacity that must be met for development to occur. As the APFO relates to annexations, Section 24-244 of the City Code states:

This article (XV. Adequate Public Facilities) shall not apply to any development that has received schematic development plan approval, preliminary site plan approval, or final site plan approval prior to the effective date of this article. Additionally, when a property is subject to an annexation agreement, any provision of this article that is contrary to the annexation agreement shall not be applicable.

Water and Sewer Service:

The subject property currently has WSSC water and sewer categories of W-1 and S-1, respectively. These category designations mean the property is currently served by both water and sewer service and any development could expand those services. Further, the 2003 *Municipal Growth Element* and the 2009 *Water Resources Element* both affirmed that there is sufficient water and sewer supply capacity for growth area developments within the City's approved Maximum Expansion Limits. The Applicant is proposing to keep the current use type on the property. Therefore, the job demand should continue to be maintained. Future density for a mixed use development will be evaluated at the time of redevelopment of the property. The current development proposal to maintain the existing building footprint and use types with some modifications has sufficient water and sewer capacity. There is also sufficient water and sewer capacity for additional future development of the property.

Emergency Services:

The City's APFO requires that any development project be served by at least two (2) fire stations with a ten (10) minute response time. The Sears property is within the ten (10) minute response areas of Montgomery County Department of Fire and Rescue Services Stations 3, 8 and 28.

Traffic

The City's Traffic Impact APFO states that applications for development approvals shall be subject to the adopted Gaithersburg Traffic Impact Study Standards regulations⁷. It further states that no application for development approval shall be approved unless it complies with the requirements of Traffic Impact Study Standards regulations, or the applicant has obtained a determination from staff that the standards are not applicable to the applicant's proposed development. The adopted Traffic Impact Study Standards require a traffic impact study (TIS) for any new development or redevelopment that generates thirty (30) or more total weekday trips in the AM and/or PM peak hours⁸.

⁷ Section 24-245

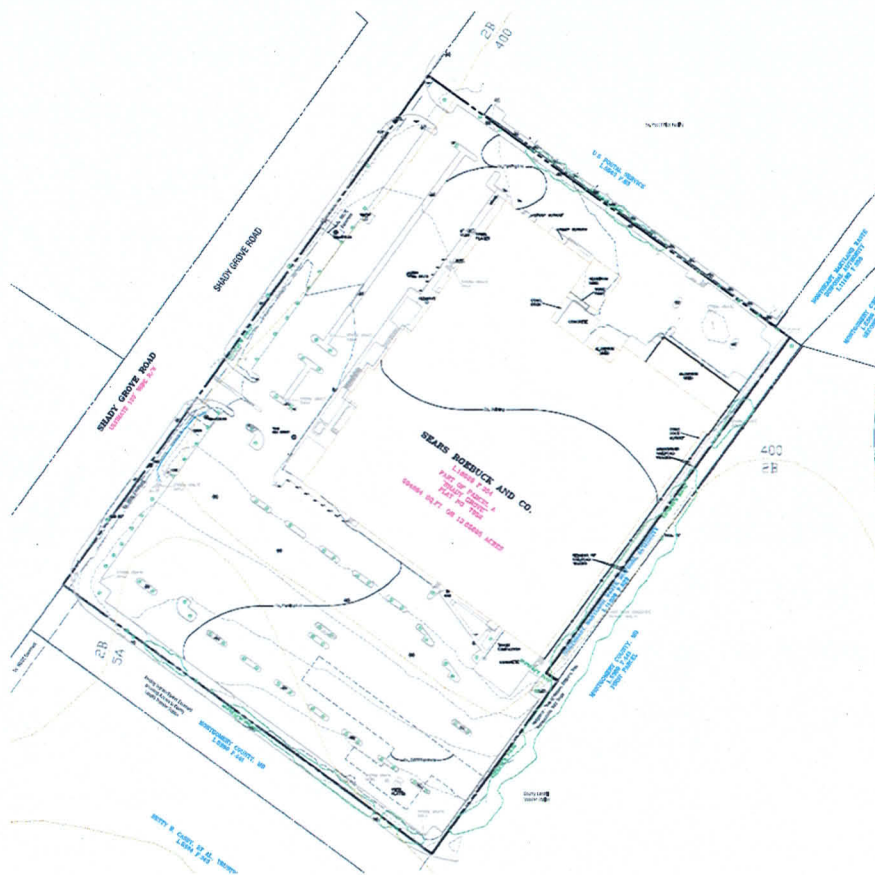
⁸ Regulation 01-07

Schools

The subject property lies within the Gaithersburg Cluster of the Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) system, which includes the following schools: Washington Grove Elementary, Forest Oak Middle School, and Gaithersburg High School. The current plan does not propose any housing on this property. Any future plans, should they include any residential use, would need to comply with the City's requirement for adequate school capacity.

PROPOSED USE / SITE PLAN:

The applicant is proposing to continue using the existing building as general retail and warehouse as was approved by Montgomery County. The plan submitted, Exhibit J⁹, shows 204,490 square feet of gross floor area for the existing building. According to the calculations on the plan, the building requires 783 parking spaces. The site includes 810 parking spaces.



Portion of Existing Conditions - Exhibit #19

⁹ Exhibit #19



2011 Aerial of the site – Exhibit #30

STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND FINDINGS:

Staff finds that the proposed petition for annexation, X-184, complies with the City's Master Plan. The annexation will further the City's stated goals of promoting economic development, diversifying local economy to allow a variety of uses, allowing for redevelopment opportunities on underutilized sites, promoting a mix of uses for "24/7 activity" and increasing the City's tax base. Additionally, staff supports the proposed annexation as it increases area in the City for jobs, which assists in balancing the Jobs to Housing Ratio. The proposed annexation, as identified in the City's adopted Maximum Expansion Limits, will conform to City's municipal growth boundary. Lastly, the proposed annexation will be not unduly burdening existing public facilities.

Articles 23A and 66B of the *Maryland Annotated Code* and Chapter 24 (Zoning) of the City of Gaithersburg Code outline the requirements and process for a proposed annexation. The Planning Commission is required to review the proposed annexation and associated rezoning and land use plan for consistency with the City's master plan and adequacy of public facilities , and provide a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council at least 15

days prior to the required Mayor and City Council public hearing. The public hearing before the Mayor and City Council is scheduled for May 21, 2012.

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission hold their record open for 21 days until 5:00pm on April 11, 2012, and provide a formal recommendation on the annexation petition on April 18, 2012.

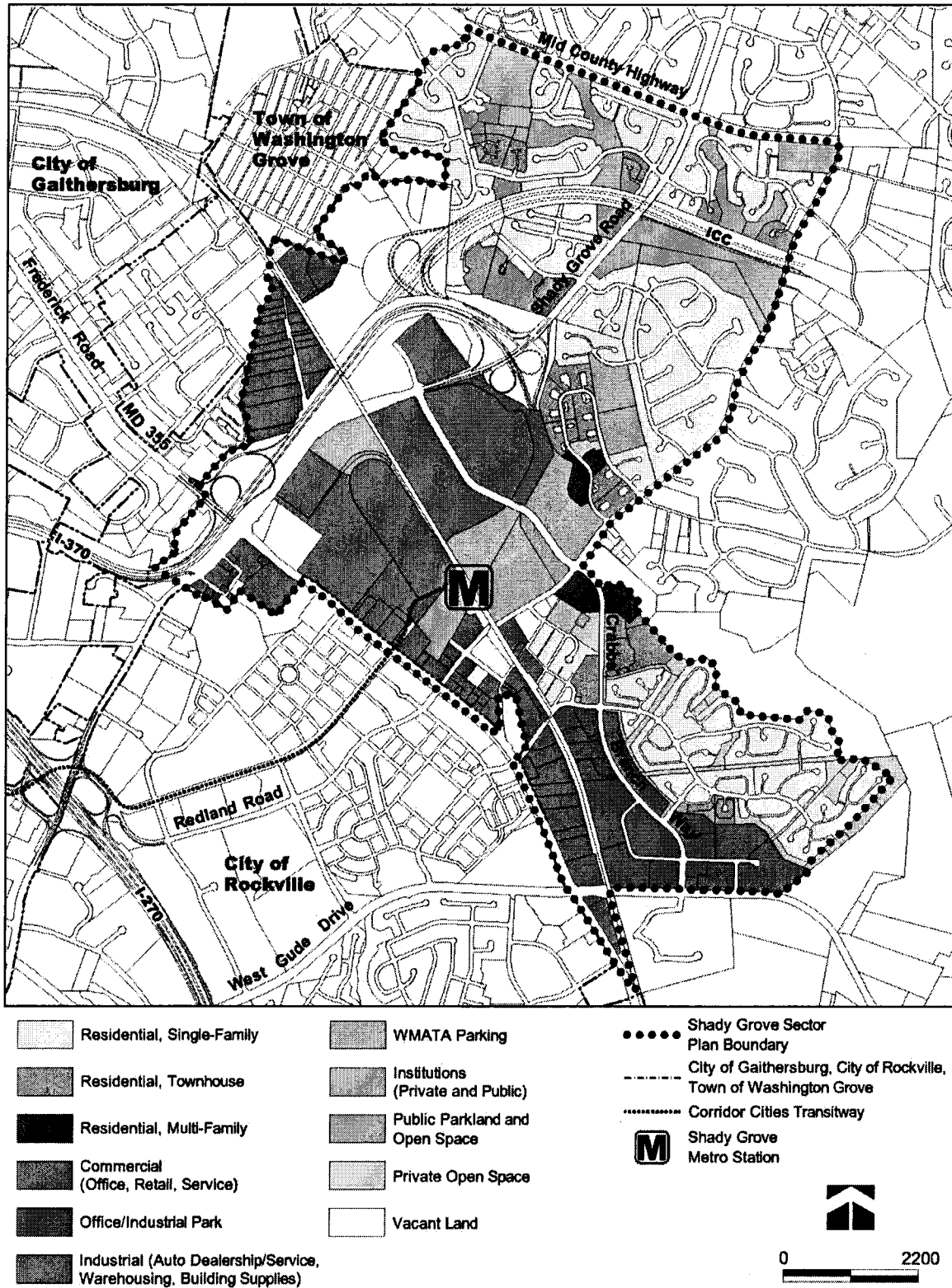
APPROVED AND ADOPTED

SHADY GROVE

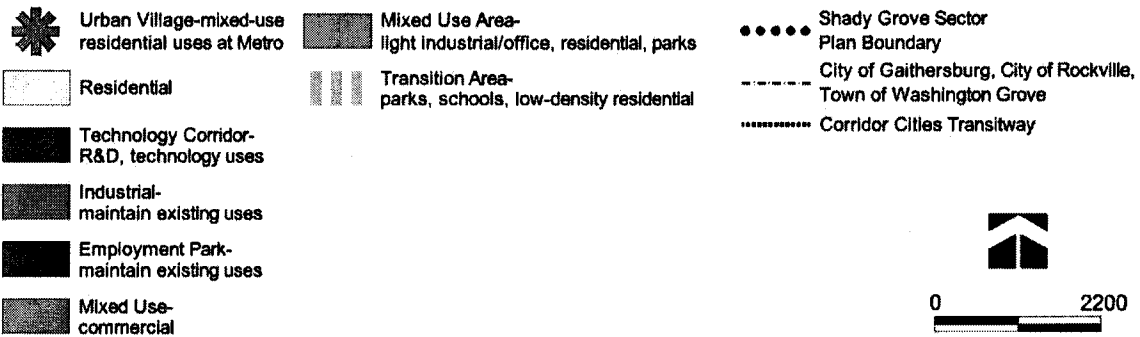
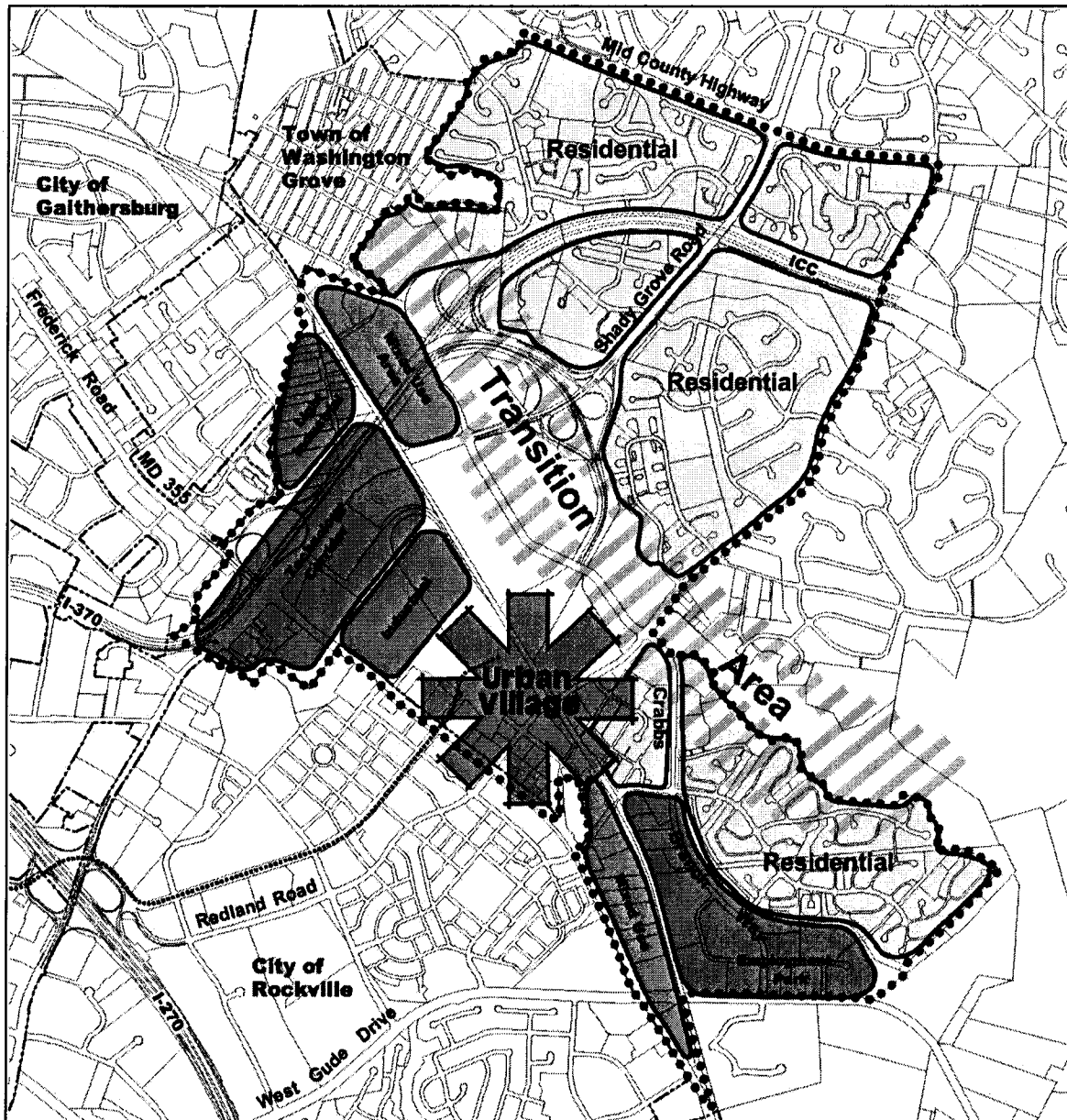
SECTOR PLAN



Existing Land Use



Land Use Vision



VISION

Today, Shady Grove is a transit hub, an industrial center, and home to 2,600 households. Historically farmland, the area along the railroad tracks evolved into an industrial center with the Shady Grove Metro Station at its core in the late 1970's and early 1980's, while residential communities emerged further to the east. More recently, residential and commercial growth along MD 355 has increased along with redevelopment pressure. The 1977 Sector Plan envisioned this area as being primarily industrial.

This Sector Plan envisions Shady Grove as a mixed-use community with a new residential focus at the Metro station, one that makes best use of Metro proximity and relocates industrial uses to more efficient sites. Relocation of the County Service Park is a major goal and provides new housing opportunities close to Metro. The Plan recognizes that residential change has already begun with the King Farm across MD 355 and continues that traditional neighborhood pattern.

The Sector Plan proposes a mix of housing types to serve the County's diverse population. It also offers employment opportunities, building on the existing concentration of advanced technology and biotechnology industries by creating opportunities for expansion. Shady Grove will offer residents a variety of community-serving retail designed to enhance community life and sociability. Residents will be able to visit bookstores, enjoy nearby restaurants, or the convenience of a dry cleaner at the Metro station. Shady Grove is not envisioned as a major retail center given the proximity of major shopping centers along MD 355.

New development will enhance the Derwood community, which will continue as a quiet, residential enclave with access to the Metro station, and to new parks, schools and neighborhoods. Views will be enhanced by screening and streetscaping. Building heights will form a compatible transition to neighboring communities.

A network of bikeways and sidewalks will make Shady Grove a more pedestrian-oriented place by improving access from Derwood neighborhoods to Metro, shopping areas, and parks. Residents will find walking along tree-lined streets and using bike paths as convenient as driving. Those that live too far from Metro to walk or cycle will be able to use expanded kiss-n-ride facilities or Ride-On bus service to the Metro station.

Shady Grove will be a greener community with a significant amount of new parks and urban open spaces. A series of parks are recommended in the transition area between the Derwood community and the Metro station area. Tree-lined streets will provide shade and green relief. Streetscape treatments including extensive landscaping will be emphasized along all roadways.

Recognizing growth and housing demands, and the need to address alternative travel options, this Sector Plan strives to create a balanced community that provides more housing close to transit and jobs, provides business opportunities, and creates a more convenient and attractive environment for residents and employees. The Sector Plan also recommends staging development to coincide with adequate public facilities.

The Plan recommends a mixed-use community at the Metro station, establishes a technology corridor along Shady Grove Road, and creates a transition area of parks, schools, and other public institutions.

These distinct elements recognize the needs of both existing and new communities while promoting a walkable environment and improving access throughout the planning area (see Land Use Vision map).

Redevelopment of industrial areas to residential uses significantly changes the ratio of jobs to housing in the planning area and is proposed to increase Metro ridership, provide more housing in the I-270 Corridor, and to enhance the existing residential communities.

GOALS

This Sector Plan has the following goals:

- Balance the need for higher density housing at the Metro station with the need to buffer adjacent Derwood communities. Limit development to 6,340 new housing units for the entire plan area, including workforce housing, transferable development rights (TDRs), and moderately priced dwelling unit (MPDU) bonus density.
- Contribute to the preservation of the Agricultural Reserve by providing TDRs on the County Service Park, WMATA properties, the Derwood Bible Church site, the Grove Shopping Center site, and Metro West and Metro South properties that have a maximum base density of 1.6 FAR.
- Organize future development into a series of defined and attractive neighborhoods around the Metro Station.
- Provide civic uses, public open space, and recreation to serve the needs of employees and residents.
- Include guidelines that provide a variety of housing types and achieve a diversity of households.
- Coordinate the proposed land use changes with open space and streetscape recommendations that encourage transit use and create an attractive community.
- Encourage transit ridership and better manage traffic congestion.
- Balance development with the capacity of the transportation system and public facilities.

PLAN POLICIES

The following policies have guided this Plan's recommendations. They are designed to encourage Shady Grove's evolution from an industrially oriented, commercial edge adjacent to the Derwood community into an attractive transit-and pedestrian-oriented community.

Housing in the I-270 Corridor

This Sector Plan responds to the high market demand for housing by recommending a substantial increase in housing within walking distance of the Metro station. The Plan encourages housing choices that benefit from Metro proximity, including affordable housing, a component of luxury housing, family-friendly units, live-work units (where residents live above their shop or office), and senior housing. A range of housing types with Metro access will offer options for singles, couples, families, and elderly residents. This Plan recommends:

- Maintaining and protecting the existing residential neighborhoods of Derwood.
- Increasing the number and variety of multi-family units within walking distance to Metro.
- Increasing the number of single-family attached units within walking distance to Metro.
- Locating sites for senior housing within walking distance to Metro.
- Providing incentives that encourage developers to provide the maximum amount of affordable housing, including Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDU) and market rate units.

A Mixed-Use Urban Village at Metro

This Plan establishes a mixed-use urban village at the Metro station providing housing, employment, and retail uses within walking distance of the Metro. Public investment in the Metro system warrants guiding growth to this location. A change from industrial to residential uses will increase transit ridership, ease future traffic congestion, and create an attractive place to live and work in the I-270 Corridor.

The Plan's recommended land use change is supported by the 1992 Maryland Planning Act and by the 1997 Smart Growth Act, which guide development to locations served by transit. New residential growth at a Metro station area also is promoted by the *General Plan* that recommends channeling growth into the development corridors, specifically to the I-270 Corridor. The County Council's 2002 *Transportation Policy Report* also recommends that new residential development be located within the I-270 Corridor at transit stations to improve the Corridor's jobs/housing balance and allow residents to live closer to jobs, thus reducing traffic congestion and travel time. Finally, the County Council's 2003 *Action Plan for Affordable Housing* recommends using underdeveloped land near Metro stations for housing. This Plan recommends:

- Creating a traditional town pattern of interconnected streets, street-oriented buildings, interior structured or below-grade parking, and a network of urban open spaces. Vertically mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail are encouraged.
- Locating taller and higher density buildings to the west side of the Metro station, creating a compatible transition to the Derwood community.
- Establishing a new local park, expanded recreational use of the Crabbs Branch stormwater management pond, and a series of urban open spaces and gathering places for residents and employees.
- Creating a transit center at Metro, and coordinating transit circulation and Metro access with new development to maintain and improve the station's visibility, safety, efficiency, and compatibility for all its users.
- Allowing the possibility for increased transit parking to promote transit ridership.
- Providing adequate schools to serve the residential community in a timely manner to avoid overcrowding existing schools.

Protect the Derwood Residential Communities

The existing community of Derwood forms the eastern edge of the Shady Grove Sector Plan area. Its neighborhoods extend into the Upper Rock Creek planning area. This Plan strives to protect existing communities with a transition area of compatible transitional uses between the Metro station area and the Derwood community. This Plan recommends:

- A pyramid approach to density, locating the tallest and most dense buildings on the west side of the Metro station, stepping down to townhouses and open spaces along the eastern edge of the Metro station area.
- Increasing the woodland edges along the Crabbs Branch Stream and the I-370 interchange to provide visual separation between existing neighborhoods and future development.
- Traffic calming measures on neighborhood roads that experience cut-through traffic.
- Protecting Old Derwood by rezoning adjacent industrial land to residential uses and reducing cut-through traffic with new traffic circles.
- Celebrating the history of Old Derwood and its place in the history of Montgomery County by identifying key sites for consideration as historic resources.
- Noise barriers and extensive landscape treatments along major roadways to mitigate traffic noise.

Employment and the Technology Corridor

The planning area's location at the junction of transit and highways, and the proximity of both office and technology businesses makes this area convenient and attractive for new employment and technology uses. This Plan recognizes the importance of the existing I-270 Technology Corridor and strengthens opportunities by designating a technology corridor along Shady Grove Road. The Plan also recommends redevelopment along MD 355 South in the long term, to achieve a mixed-use character of employment, technology, and housing. This Plan recommends:

- Improving the balance of jobs and housing in the I-270 Corridor to reduce commuting time and congestion.

- Designating an advanced technology and biotechnology corridor along Shady Grove Road to extend the existing adjacent technology character into the planning area.
- Retaining the planning area's existing business parks.
- Relocating County Service Park uses to more efficient locations and providing land uses that increase ridership near the Metro station.
- Allowing public facilities within the technology corridor, if needed. Employment character along the corridor may become more of a mixed use industrial and technology corridor as a result.

Transportation

This Plan strives to minimize future traffic congestion by land use recommendations, an emphasis upon transit usage and reduction in single-occupancy vehicle trips. The proposed roadway network is complemented by a connected system of transit, paths, sidewalks, and bikeways that offer transportation choices. Roadways also contribute to improving the area's visual character with careful attention to their design by incorporating medians, streetscapes and safe crosswalks. This Plan recommends:

- Establishing a transportation management district and coordination with County transit services to increase transit ridership.
- Providing a transit center to coordinate and encourage transit use.
- Redesigning the Metro station's bus, kiss-n-ride, and taxi service to make it a convenient and attractive pedestrian environment.
- Designating roadway classifications that balance through traffic with access to adjacent land uses.
- Creating a network of interconnected local streets that improve Metro access and mobility within and between neighborhoods.
- Providing pedestrian- and bike-friendly street and intersection designs within walking distance of Metro.
- Designating MD 355 within the Metro station area to be developed as an urban boulevard with short blocks and crosswalks to improve pedestrian access.
- New sidewalks and pathways along existing neighborhood streets to improve community access.
- Providing traffic calming measures in neighborhoods that experience cut-through traffic.
- Incorporating the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) and a future MARC station as integral parts of the Metro station.
- Locating the CCT maintenance and yard shop outside the Shady Grove Sector Plan area.
- Applying trip mitigation measures as the first priority to achieve level of service standards at intersections.

Transit-and Pedestrian-Oriented Development

The Plan clusters new transit and pedestrian-oriented development around the Metro station area. This type of development is located close to the street with generous sidewalks and streetscaping to create an attractive and convenient pedestrian environment. This Plan recommends:

- Establishing a mix of uses in vertically integrated buildings in each Metro station neighborhood to meet retail needs, enhance street life activities, and reduce car dependency.
- Creating a network of short block, walkable streets to serve the Metro station area that facilitates pedestrian and Metro access.
- Achieving an interconnected street system throughout the planning area to improve local access between communities and to Metro.
- Creating a street-oriented development pattern with parking in the rear, internal to the block, or below-grade. Locating building front entrances along the street to reduce walking distances and improve street life.
- Discouraging separation of uses or freestanding buildings that increase walking distances for pedestrians.

Pedestrian Environment and Access

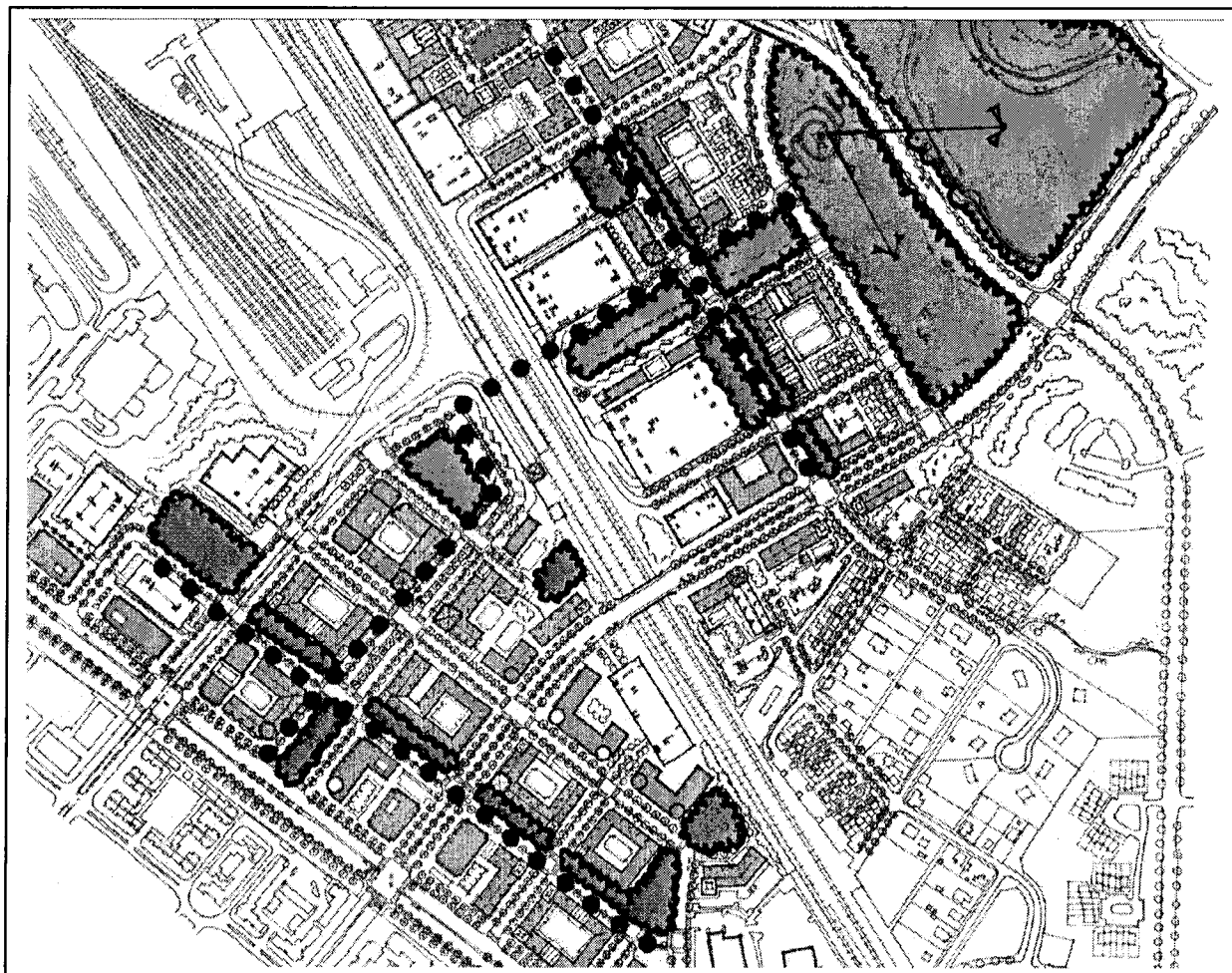
The Plan emphasizes the pedestrian environment, striving to create a safe, convenient, and attractive environment for residents, employees, and commuters. Increased pedestrian access will help reduce car dependency, foster a sense of community, and enhance street life and the community's safety. This Plan recommends:

- Safe streets with generous sidewalks and active uses within the mixed-use areas.
- Convenient and safe connections between neighborhoods, the Metro station area, retail shopping, parks, and schools.
- Safe pedestrian crossings at all major intersections.
- On-street parking along streets with mixed uses to separate pedestrians from moving traffic.
- Extensive streetscaping along all major streets in the Metro station area to create an attractive setting for pedestrians.
- A network of sidewalks and bikeways that provide safe and pleasant routes.

Parks and Open Space

The Plan recommends preserving and enhancing the existing recreational parks and stream valley parks. To meet the increased need for recreation, the Plan recommends providing two new local parks, a nature park, a network of urban open spaces, and a connected bikeway system that provides access to these expanded public facilities.

Park Network



This Plan recommends:

- Creating a series of new parks linked to existing natural areas such as stream valley parks that will form a transition area between the Derwood community and new residential development around the Metro station.
- Developing a minimum of 4 acres for a park south of Shady Grove Road and east of Crabbs Branch Way with additional acreage if ball fields are provided.
- Providing an approximately six-acre active recreation park on Casey 6 if the County Service Park facilities are not relocated there.
- Providing a passive, nature-oriented neighborhood park along Amity Drive.
- Redeveloping the stormwater management pond to provide passive, nature-oriented recreation.
- Providing urban parks, the Town Common and the Town Square, on each side of the Metro station.
- Creating a network of public urban open spaces in each Metro neighborhood that provides recreation for future residents and employees.
- Providing access to the complete park network and connecting Mill Creek residents to the Metro station via a bikeway along Crabbs Branch Way.
- Locating schools adjacent to local parks and natural areas.
- Providing a safe and convenient recreational link to Upper Rock Creek Regional Park.
- Providing natural surface park trail connections to community destinations.

A Green Environment

This Plan endorses a green environment including increased woodland areas, tree-lined streets, green urban parks, and sustainable building technologies. This Plan recommends:

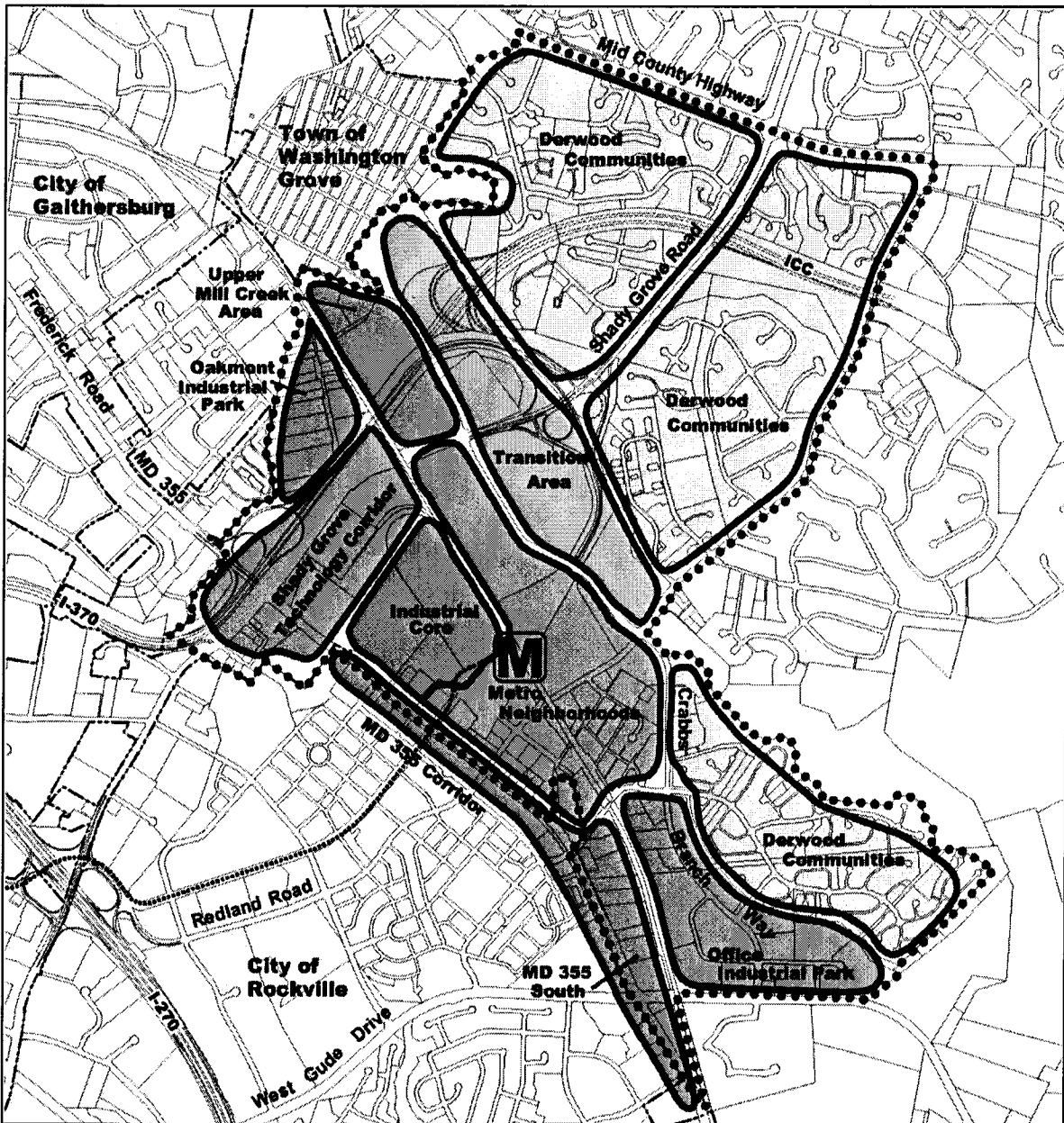
- Establishing a comprehensive streetscape plan that weaves a tree canopy throughout the street network, greening the Shady Grove area.
- Improving water quality with a variety of approaches appropriate to an urban setting.
- Increasing woodland areas where feasible by adding trees to the stream valley network and in highway rights-of-way such as I-370 and the Intercounty Connector.
- Encouraging green building materials and technologies to improve energy efficiency and contribute to environmental quality.
- Providing extensive landscape treatments to visually buffer incompatible uses.

Implementation

This Plan recommends staging future development to ensure that adequate transportation, schools, and other public facilities are provided in a timely fashion. Completing the Plan's recommendations will require relocating County Service Park uses, increased transit service, new schools, and additional parks. This Plan recommends:

- Establishing a staging sequence that establishes Transportation Management District trip mitigation procedures for all staged development.
- Coordinating development with needed public facilities.
- Rezoning land within the planning area to achieve the Plan's vision.
- Encouraging public/private partnerships such as WMATA's joint development efforts and other planning tools.
- Requiring an urban service district to maintain and manage common facilities.
- Requiring a review of adequate public facilities at each stage and a finding by the Planning Board that the next stage can proceed. By Stage 3, if facilities are found to be inadequate, a review of the Sector Plan's recommendations will be required.

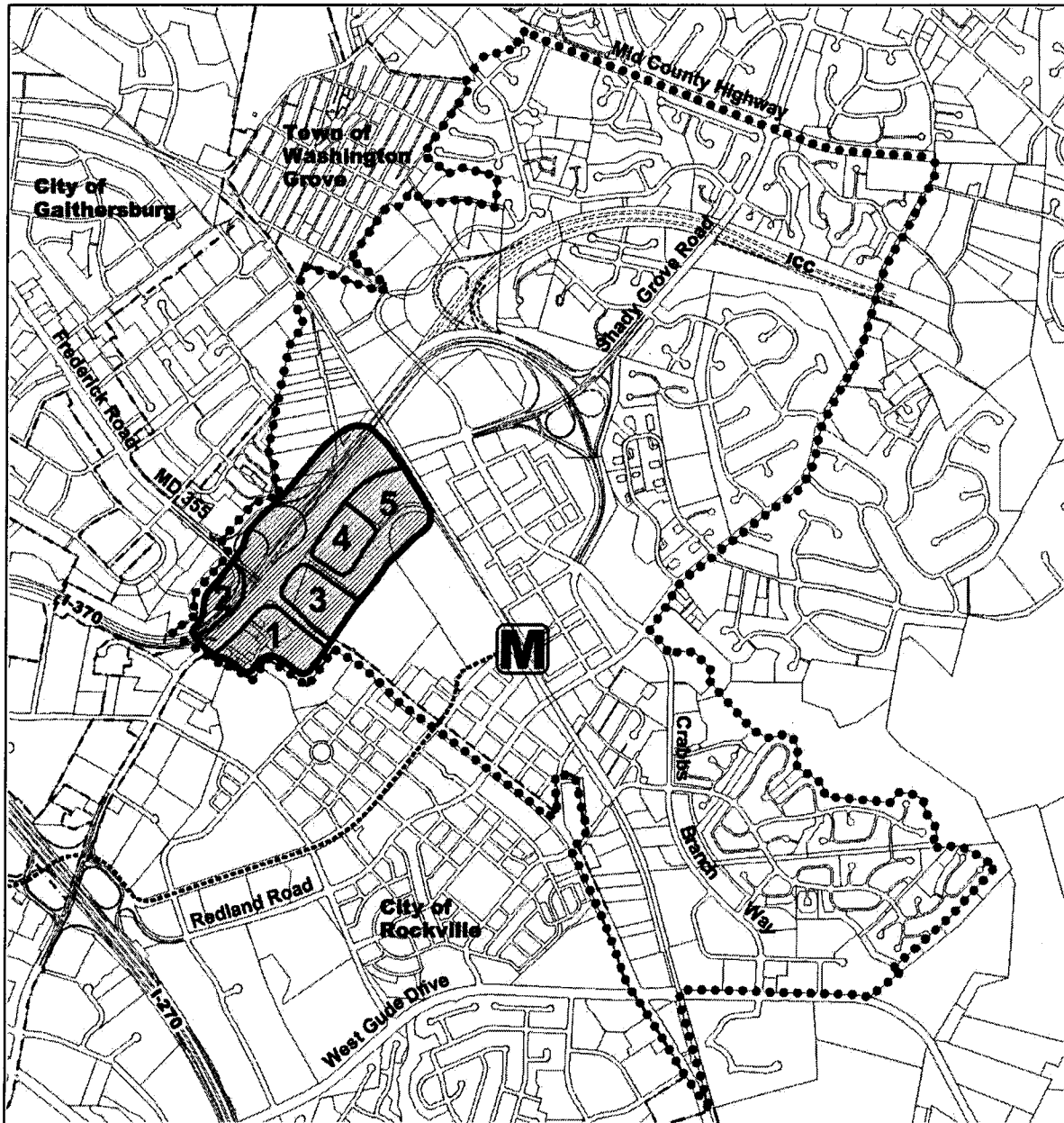
Districts and Corridors



- Shady Grove Sector Plan Boundary
- - - - - City of Gaithersburg, City of Rockville, Town of Washington Grove
- Corridor Cities Transitway
- M** Shady Grove Metro Station



Shady Grove Road Technology Corridor



 Technology Corridor

- 1 Shady Grove Plaza
- 2 Casey Property
- 3 Casey Property
- 4 The Great Indoors
- 5 Post Office

..... Shady Grove Sector
Plan Boundary

----- City of Gaithersburg, City of Rockville,
Town of Washington Grove

----- Corridor Cities Transitway



Shady Grove
Metro Station



0 2200

SHADY GROVE ROAD TECHNOLOGY CORRIDOR

Existing Conditions

Shady Grove Road runs through the planning area from Midcounty Highway to MD 355. At its western end, the corridor is commercial and industrial in character, busy with through traffic to the Metro station and I-370, and truck traffic to the Oakmont industrial area and the Solid Waste Transfer Station. East of I-370, the corridor is bordered by residential communities and gives access to neighborhoods. Reconciling these two characters, preserving pedestrian access, and buffering the residential neighborhoods are challenges for this Plan.

Objectives

- Create opportunities for advanced technology and biotechnology businesses along Shady Grove Road, thus extending the existing pattern in the western end of the corridor.
- Relocate, as much as possible, the corridor's current industrial uses to more appropriate locations to change the character of the roadway.
- Minimize the vehicular and environmental impacts of the Solid Waste Transfer Station.
- Protect the Derwood communities from the noise impacts of Shady Grove Road.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to Metro and between the communities bordering the corridor.
- Enhance the visual and landscape character of Shady Grove Road.
- Protect the existing, adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Concept

This Plan creates a Technology Corridor from MD 355 to the CSX rail line, relocates the County Service Park's industrial uses to allow mixed-use residential redevelopment, and preserves existing communities east of I-370. Industrial and commercial areas north of Shady Grove Road such as the Oakmont Industrial Park will remain industrial areas. Shady Grove Road should be viewed as a major highway that also provides local access and should be improved with extensive landscape treatment to achieve a more positive visual character for the entire corridor. The Plan recognizes that alternative land use recommendations (housing or potential relocation of County Service facilities) on Casey 6 and 7 will create a different character within this area of Shady Grove Road and will need enhanced landscape screening to ensure compatibility.

Land Use and Urban Design Recommendations

Shady Grove Plaza (Site 1)

This existing mixed-use commercial center is located at the southwest corner of MD 355 and Shady Grove Road at the site of the original "shady grove." Some of the original trees remain. This center is not anticipated to undergo significant redevelopment within the life of this Plan although existing zoning does allow substantial additional density. The existing uses include a hotel, a five-story office building, a variety of retail uses, and auto-related services. Several small vacant parcels located at the end of Pleasant Street will likely redevelop with more commercial uses. This Plan recommends:

- Extending Pleasant Street to connect with the street network of the King Farm community as envisioned in the 1990 *Shady Grove Study Area Master Plan*.
- Preserving existing old trees to maintain vestiges of the original "shady grove."
- Any redevelopment within the commercial area to be street-oriented, with direct and safe pedestrian access, and increased shade trees.
- Maintaining the existing commercial and mixed-use zoning.

Casey Property (Vacant Site 2)

Located in the northwest quadrant of MD 355 and I-370, this five-acre site has limited access but still has the potential to contribute to creating a technology corridor. This Plan recommends:

- Providing technology, research and development, or office uses to help establish the technology corridor.
- Orienting buildings toward O'Neill Drive and screening all loading docks and trash areas from view.
- Rezoning this site from R-20 to R&D with an I-3 standard method allowing expanded employment.

Casey Property (Vacant Site 3)

This highly visible site is located at the intersection of MD 355 and Shady Grove Road and is a key redevelopment opportunity in the Corridor. This site is also appropriate for a fire station, needed in this area. Environmental concerns, vehicular and pedestrian access, and building siting need careful consideration to achieve efficient, compatible, and desirable development of the property. This Plan recommends:

- Providing technology, research and development, and office uses to create a technology corridor.
- Preserving existing wetlands, accommodating afforestation along MD 355, and maintaining the required stream buffer.
- Orienting buildings and entrances toward Shady Grove Road and screen all parking facilities from major roads. Site lighting should not produce glare or dominate the night view from the roadway.
- Development along MD 355 is constrained due to traffic and environmental conflicts.
- Rezoning this site from I-1 to R&D with an I-3 standard method allowing expanded employment uses. Housing is not appropriate given the site's proximity to the Solid Waste Transfer Station.
- Ensuring that any redevelopment of the site preserves and enhances the pedestrian environment of Shady Grove Road and MD 355.

The Casey 3 property provides an opportunity within the Shady Grove area to locate a future MCFRS station and possibly ancillary MCFRS facilities. A station at this location would provide easy access to MD 355, I-270, Shady Grove Road and the ICC, as well as the busy service areas of Rockville and Gaithersburg. The site's environmental constraints are extensive and may limit development. Other sites within the vicinity will also be considered during the site evaluation process that meet MCFRS's criteria for location and site suitability. Colocation of the fire station with other necessary public facilities should be explored. This Plan recommends:

- As an alternative to technology or research and development uses on this site, a public fire and rescue station would be appropriate to serve the immediate and surrounding areas.

Great Indoors Site (Site 4)

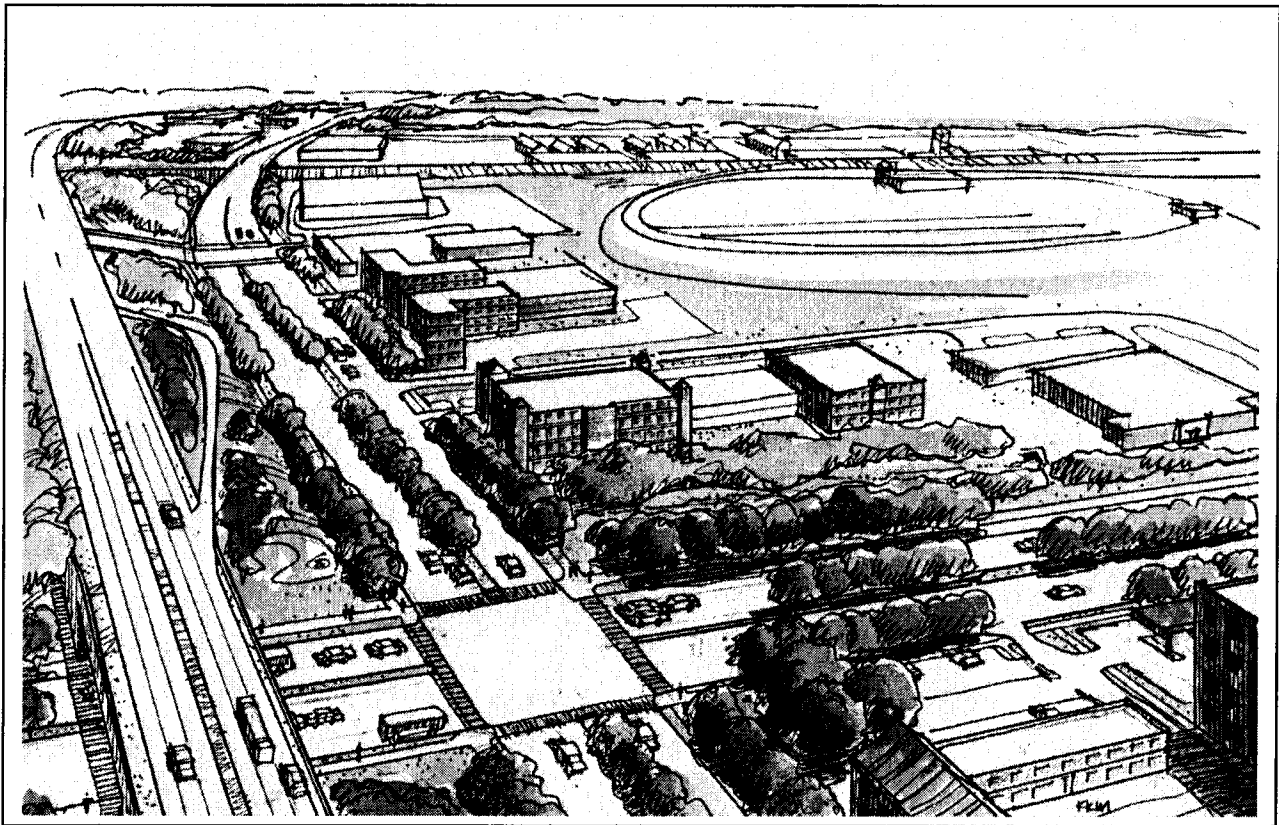
While the current use is a building supply use, this property may eventually have redevelopment potential. At that time, it should contribute to the area's technology uses. This Plan recommends:

- Providing technology, research and development, and office uses to create a technology corridor.
- Orienting buildings toward street frontage and screening parking from Shady Grove Road.
- Ensuring that any redevelopment of the site preserves and enhances the pedestrian environment of Shady Grove Road.
- Rezoning this site from I-1 to R&D with an I-3 standard method zone. Development should not exceed 0.35 FAR to maintain a balance of jobs to housing within the plan area. Housing is not appropriate given the site's proximity to the Solid Waste Transfer Station.

Post Office Site (Site 5)

This Plan recognizes the importance of the postal distribution center. If the Post Office or a new user decides to redevelop the site, both use and site design should contribute to the Shady Grove Road Corridor's technology emphasis. This Plan recommends:

- Providing technology, research and development, and office uses to create a technology corridor.
- Orienting buildings toward street frontage and screen parking from Shady Grove Road.
- Ensuring that any redevelopment of the site preserves and enhances the pedestrian environment of Shady Grove Road.
- Designing the site to minimize truck traffic on Shady Grove Road.
- Rezoning this site from I-1 to R&D with an I-3 standard method allowing expanded employment uses. Development should not exceed 0.35 FAR to maintain a balance of jobs to housing within the plan area. Housing is not appropriate.

View of Shady Grove Road Technology Corridor

Transportation Management District (TMD)

A transportation management district is a public/private partnership organized to reduce single-occupancy driving by various means including carpooling, subsidizing transit costs, and improving transit service. This Plan recommends:

- Creating a TMD before new development can be approved. (See Implementation section for further discussion.) The TMD should include all businesses and residents in the Shady Grove Policy Area including, if feasible, a larger area such as the Life Sciences Center and the municipalities.
- Reducing peak period vehicle trips in the Shady Grove Policy Area in accordance with Growth Policy Alternative Review Procedures. Strive for a transit ridership goal of 35 percent for residents within the Shady Grove Policy Area, 25 percent for residents elsewhere in the Sector Plan, and 12.5 percent for employees of office development traveling to work.
- Pursuing innovative measures to achieve higher non-auto-driver mode share goals, such as:
 - Providing free or heavily discounted transit passes for new residents;
 - Providing frequent shuttle service between the Metro station and nearby job sites;
 - Providing car-sharing incentives;
 - Encouraging incentive-based casual carpooling;
 - Providing wireless computers to residents to encourage telecommuting;
 - Charging market-rate parking for both residential and commercial developments;
 - Making the minimum off-street parking requirements under the Zoning Ordinance be the maximum allowed;
 - Lowering the minimum off-street parking requirements in the new zone; and
 - Increasing the frequency and efficiency of bus service on the major routes serving the Metro station and employers in the technology corridor.
- Requiring each significant development within the Shady Grove Policy Area, and any development on County-owned property in the policy area, to enter into a Traffic Mitigation Agreement that would result in no more than 50 percent of the residential-related vehicle trips and 65 percent of the non-residential-related vehicle trips that would otherwise be expected. This requirement is described more fully in the Implementation chapter.
- Using minimum parking standards as the maximum allowable parking for development in proximity to Metro to support transit use, to lower development costs, and to constrain the amount of new traffic in the planning area. Support CBD parking standards for the Metro Neighborhoods and Jeremiah Park to encourage transit use.
- Increasing opportunities for shared vehicle parking, employee and residential incentives, and bicycle parking.

Bus Service

This Plan recommends:

- Improve pedestrian access from neighborhoods to bus stops.
- Support increased Ride-On bus service to increase transit convenience and ridership, especially to community destinations such as local shopping and schools, and particularly Magruder High School. Consider private/public shuttle bus service to meet local access needs.
- Provide further study of MD 355 transit improvements to connect activity centers with development and to better serve transit needs.

Transit Center at the Metro Station

The number of different travel modes serving the Metro station, and the addition of a substantial number of new residents and businesses, warrants the creation of a well-coordinated, multi-modal transit center. The mix of uses and transportation functions are complex and will require on-going management and maintenance to benefit all users.

This Master Plan recommends that within the Shady Grove Sector Plan area the ICC be constructed along the Master Plan alignment, consistent with the Master Plan of Highways as amended by the 1985 Upper Rock Creek Master Plan and subsequent area master plans along the ICC right-of-way for Gaithersburg Vicinity (1990), Aspen Hill (1994), Fairland (1997), and Cloverly (1997). This Master Plan also provides some level of flexibility to allow a Western Connector to be constructed within the ICC right-of-way, based on the results of recent state and local planning studies, including the Planning Board's 2002 Transportation Policy Report.

MD 355

MD 355 runs from Friendship Heights to Clarksburg. Within urban metro areas, the roadway is treated as an Urban Boulevard, divided with a median, requiring slower speeds, enhanced with streetscape and emphasizing pedestrian safety and access. This urban character should be achieved along MD 355 between the Solid Waste Transfer Station and Indianola Drive, and is consistent with road character in Rockville and Gaithersburg. This Plan recommends:

- Maintaining classification as a Major Highway with six lanes and a median. Outside the Metro Neighborhoods, establish a recommended minimum right-of-way of 150 feet but only require right-of-way dedication from adjacent properties at such time when these properties are subdivided or resubdivided and changed from their current uses to incorporate residential, office, or mixed uses.
- Creating an Urban Boulevard character between Indianola Drive and the entrance to the Solid Waste Transfer Station. Maintain the existing 120-foot right-of-way with additional space through a public improvement easement for adequate sidewalks. Roadway design characteristics will include features appropriate for Metro areas with significant pedestrian traffic, such as increased streetscape improvements, slower travel speeds, short intersection spacing, and minimized pedestrian crossing distances at intersections.
- Minimizing direct driveway access from MD 355. The proposed street system is designed to consolidate access to side streets. If driveways are allowed because no alternative access is feasible, use driveway aprons, not corner curb returns. Driveway ramps must reach the level of adjacent sidewalks to maintain a safe sidewalk for pedestrians. Avoid driveways with defining curbs and medians that increase pedestrian exposure to turning vehicles and that encourage high speed turning movements.
- Maximizing pedestrian safety, especially at intersections, by minimizing pedestrian crossing distance, increasing pedestrian time to cross, and ensuring adequate sight distances.
- Allowing short block lengths intersecting MD 355 in the Metro station area (see Commercial Business Streets for Metro Neighborhoods maps). Shorter block lengths better accommodate residential development, improve Metro access by increasing the number of possible routes to the station, and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Providing the recommended streetscape improvements.

Shady Grove Road

This road is a major traffic route through the planning area connecting with two interstate highways, I-370 and I-270. Local access is limited to a few connecting streets along Shady Grove Road. This Plan recognizes Shady Grove Road's role in cross-County travel. Improvements should address local pedestrian access, noise impacts, and streetscape character. This Plan recommends:

- Maintain Major Highway classification with six-lanes, divided, with an increase to a 150-foot right-of-way west of I-370. Increased right-of-way will provide adequate space for pedestrians and streetscape improvements.
- Improve Shady Grove Road's overall character with streetscape improvements.
- Provide noise walls east of I-370 along residential properties, if found in compliance with the County's noise guidelines.

Streetscape Plan

The Shady Grove plan area needs a safe and an attractive pedestrian environment that encourages Metro use, contributes to social interaction, and provides a setting for public life. Currently, walking to Metro or nearby parks is challenging and unpleasant due to the lack of sidewalks and streetscape improvements. This Plan recommends an extensive network of streetscaping, sidewalks, trails, and crosswalks to improve the pedestrian environment and enhanced streetscaping in the Metro Neighborhoods. The recommended streetscape improvements for Metro Neighborhoods are depicted on the illustration entitled Proposed Street Cross Sections for the Metro Neighborhoods create an attractive setting for pedestrian and business activity, reinforce the stability of existing neighborhoods, and promote the vitality of the new Metro Neighborhoods.

Objectives

- Encourage walking by creating an attractive pedestrian environment that improves access to Metro and other destinations.
- Strengthen community identity by developing streetscapes that distinguish each of the Metro Neighborhoods and the Metro station area.
- Reinforce the street hierarchy by achieving a higher level of streetscape improvements within the Metro station area and in areas of significant pedestrian activity.
- Increase greenery to improve attractiveness and environmental quality by planting closely spaced street trees within the Metro Neighborhoods.
- Improve pedestrian safety with street lighting that also contributes to community character and identity.
- Reduce visual clutter and create attractive street corridors by means such as coordinating public signage and encouraging attractive commercial signage.
- Maintain streetscape improvements through public/private partnerships.

Concept

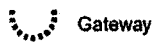
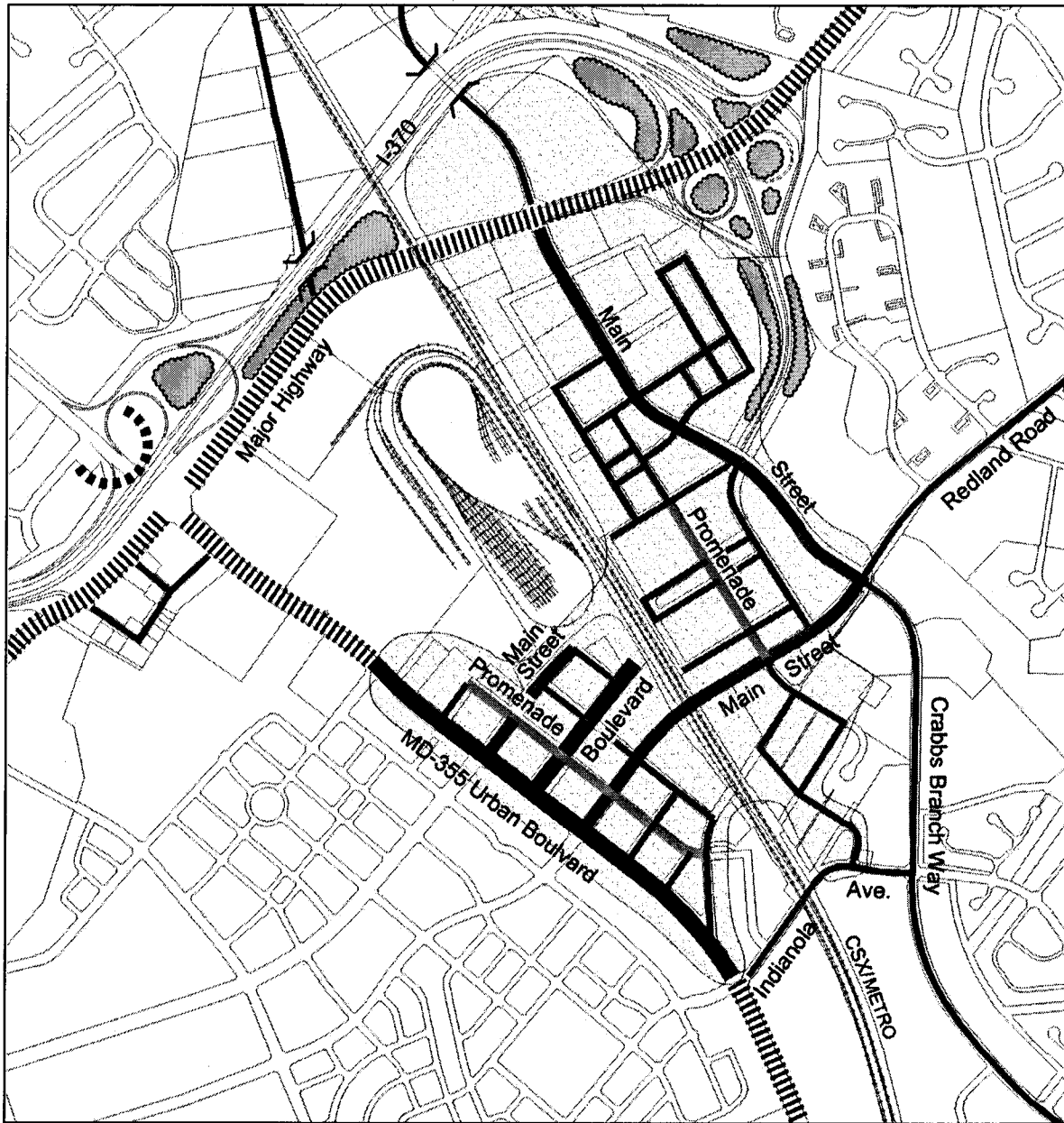
The streetscape concept enhances the existing corridors of Shady Grove Road and MD 355, and creates a new district of streetscape improvements centered in the Metro Neighborhoods. This concept supports the Plan's land use recommendations. A major theme of the streetscape concept is "re-greening the Shady Grove" to create an attractive setting for existing and new communities. A separate document, the *Shady Grove Streetscape Plan*, will include detailed specifications on streetlights, street tree species, paving, and other streetscape elements (see Streetscape Plan map and Proposed Cross-sections map).

Shady Grove Road Corridor

This Plan recommends:

- Upgrade Shady Grove Road with sidewalks, lighting, and extensive landscaping and street trees to create a green, attractive setting along its entire length.
- Reforest the right-of-way between I-370 and Shady Grove Road to increase the amount of greenery in the Corridor.
- Create a naturalized landscape within the I-370 interchange with Shady Grove Road and along both sides of the Metro access road to provide a greater sense of the natural environment.

Streetscape Plan



Gateway



Urban Boulevard



Major Highway



Main Street



Promenade



Local Streets



Woodland Treatments



Bridge Crossings



Area with upgraded streetscape treatment



Not to Scale

Redevelopment of the planning area also presents opportunities for stream restoration work in the Metro station area. These efforts should be coordinated with the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection's recently completed *Rock Creek Watershed Feasibility Study* (2001). This Plan recommends:

- Reforesting the buffers along the Use IV tributary of Upper Rock Creek, on Casey Property 3.
- Protecting the stream buffer and retain as much additional forest as possible where this stream resurfaces east of the Solid Waste Transfer Station.
- Increasing landscaping wherever feasible, and encourage the use of low-impact development techniques, green roofs, parking lot planting, and other initiatives to address stormwater quality without occupying land needed for development.
- Designing the passive recreation area at the stormwater management ponds to preserve the ponds' and reforestation areas' environmental functions. Work with the County Department of Environmental Protection.

Wetlands

There are about 40 acres of wetlands in and immediately adjacent to the planning area. Some are on privately owned land north of I-370, near the intersection of Shady Grove Road and MD 355, and within the ICC right-of-way. The remaining wetlands are in parkland at Crabbs Branch and Rock Creek. This Plan recommends:

- Protecting high quality wetlands by maintaining or managing the land and adjoining habitats as natural areas. Intrusions into these natural areas by man-made features, including paved paths or trails, should be avoided as much as possible.
- Wetlands and associated buffers on developable or re-developable properties, at a minimum as defined in the *Environmental Guidelines*, should be protected through the application of conservation easements or through public ownership as parkland.
- Do not use natural wetlands as controls for stormwater runoff from developed land.
- Compiling a detailed inventory of the planning area's degraded wetlands and identify opportunities for restoration and enhancement.
- Mitigating the unavoidable wetland impacts of development with programs such as publicly funded stream restoration projects, volunteer projects, or developer funded off-site improvements.

Noise

Excessive noise has a significant effect on the quality of life in any community, and particularly in Shady Grove, which has significant noise volumes from several sources. Shady Grove Road, MD 355, I-370, the CSX Railroad, Metro, and stop-and-go traffic contribute to noise, along with stationary noise sources such as Roberts Oxygen and the Solid Waste Transfer Station. The proposed ICC will be an additional significant noise source.

Montgomery County can mitigate and minimize the noise impact of both stationary and mobile noise sources. The noise ordinance regulates stationary sources such as heating and air conditioning units, construction activity, noise producing land uses, and neighborhood annoyances. The Planning Board uses master plan and regulatory review to implement noise reduction strategies and protect residential properties from mobile sources. Strategies to minimize transportation noise on new development include compatible land uses, buffers, external mitigation techniques, and internal mitigation.

Effective noise control will ensure the sustainability of the planning area as a desirable place to live, work, and conduct business. Roads, streetscapes, residences, and public areas must be designed and located to maximize noise attenuation. This Plan recommends:

- Supporting noise-compatible site design along Shady Grove Road, MD 355, Metro and CSX rail lines, the Solid Waste Transfer Station, and Roberts Oxygen.
- Incorporating compliance with the Adopted County Noise Control Ordinance (Chapter 31B of the County Code) and the Planning Board's *Staff Guidelines for the Consideration of Transportation Noise Impacts in Land Use Planning and Development*.
- Incorporating noise mitigation strategies along Shady Grove Road and I-370 and for residential uses along the Metro Access Road as part of redevelopment of the County Service Park if noise levels are found to exceed appropriate standards and guidelines.
- Investigating the feasibility of eliminating the CSX train whistle as a noise source through CSX policy changes or changes in the at-grade crossing.
- Wherever possible, locating structured parking adjacent to CSX tracks to mitigate noise.

Air Quality

Montgomery County currently does not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency, creating health concerns stemming from exposure to ground level ozone. The main sources of these pollutants are utilities and other industries, motor vehicles, small gasoline powered engines, and small businesses using solvents, cleaning solutions, paints, and insecticides. In the Washington region, motor vehicles account for 30 to 40 percent of the ozone.

After they are emitted, these pollutants can travel several miles before reacting to form ozone. Accordingly, multi-jurisdiction strategies are needed to address ozone. Montgomery County must continue ongoing initiatives to reduce emissions. At the master plan level, these initiatives should include transportation demand management strategies that encourage people to reduce motor vehicle trips and miles traveled. Providing residential units close to transit can contribute significantly to this reduction.

Odors emanating from the Solid Waste Transfer Station are an additional air quality concern in the Shady Grove Sector Plan area. This Plan recommends:

- Designating new development and redevelopment to minimize the need for motor vehicle trips.
- Limiting Metro parking to help improve air quality.
- Providing safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access to Metro, community retail centers, recreation, and employment areas within the Shady Grove planning area, and link this system to regional trail networks.
- Providing incentives for transit use to minimize single-occupant vehicle travel.
- Working with the Solid Waste Transfer Station to control odors by eliminating or relocating its yard waste processing area or through other innovative measures.