



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
March 27, 2003

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** John A. Carter, Chief, Community-Based Planning Division *JAC*  
Sue Edwards, Team Leader, I-270 Corridor Team *Sue*

**FROM:** Nancy Sturgeon, Planner Coordinator (301-495-1308)

**SUBJECT:** Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan: Purpose and Outreach Report

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**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval for Staff Use

Attached is the Purpose and Outreach Report for the Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan update. Production of this Report completes the first phase of the Master Plan update. After review by the Planning Board, staff will distribute the Report to interested persons and continue its dialogue with the community. The Purpose and Outreach Report includes the following:

*Statement of Purpose and Delineation of Boundaries:* The Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan update is part of a series of plan revisions that focus on the I-270 Corridor. The primary purpose for updating the Gaithersburg Plan at this time is to ensure that the final build-out of this important I-270 community occurs in a manner consistent with County policies. The boundaries for the Master Plan update are basically unchanged from previous plans; adjustments were made to reflect annexations by the municipalities and to accommodate the boundaries for the Shady Grove Sector Plan update, which is currently underway. The master plan boundaries essentially match the traffic zones.

*Approach to Community Outreach:* The outreach process includes participation from civic groups, residents, property and business owners, and public agencies. A community issues survey has been distributed so that individuals can inform staff of their specific concerns. Several general community meetings will be held during the development of the Plan.

*Summary of Issues:* This Plan will focus on the implementation of Countywide policies, including housing and housing affordability, the provision of transit, transit-oriented and pedestrian-friendly development with commensurate public facilities, a review of roadway connections, an interconnected park and trail network, and the final build-out of the Research and Development Village.

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# PURPOSE AND OUTREACH REPORT GAITHERSBURG VICINITY MASTER PLAN

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# **PURPOSE AND OUTREACH REPORT GAITHERSBURG VICINITY MASTER PLAN**

## **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

This Purpose and Outreach Report for the Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan outlines the rationale for the Plan update, discusses the context of the area within the I-270 Corridor, and frames the issues that will be addressed through the Master Plan process. This report also discusses the proposed schedule and outreach strategy for the Plan.

The Department of Park and Planning is undertaking a series of master plan revisions that focus on the I-270 Corridor. The Corridor extends northwest through Montgomery County from the Beltway to Clarksburg. In addition to Gaithersburg Vicinity, the Department is currently updating the Shady Grove Sector Plan and will initiate plan updates for Germantown and Twinbrook in mid-2003. The parallel schedule for the I-270 Master Plan updates will allow close coordination of information, issues, and options. In addition, an I-270 Corridor Framework Plan will accompany the master plans and address overarching issues for all the communities of the Corridor, including the provision of public facilities, expansion of recreation and open space, and improvements to all modes of the transportation system.

The municipalities of Gaithersburg, Rockville, and Washington Grove are within the I-270 Corridor but have their own zoning and land use authority as well as a separate master plan process. Where the planning area abuts these municipalities, land uses and community character should be carefully coordinated and complemented, where possible. Since the Gaithersburg Vicinity planning area surrounds the City of Gaithersburg, coordination with this municipality will be an essential component of the Gaithersburg Vicinity update.

### **A. Purpose for the Master Plan Update**

Master plans and sector plans reflect a vision of future development that responds to the unique character of the local community within the context of a countywide perspective. Once the plans are adopted, they provide a point of reference with regard to public policy that is useful to public officials and private individuals when decisions are made that affect the use of land within the plan boundaries.

Updating a master plan maintains its relevancy and ensures that countywide policies are being addressed appropriately and equitably. Several new policies and programs have been put in place countywide since the 1985 *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan*, including a major housing initiative, new environmental regulations, an emphasis on pedestrian safety and access, park and trail needs, and the recommendations of the *Transportation Policy Report*. The primary purpose for updating the Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan at this time is to ensure that the final build-out of this important I-270 Corridor community occurs in a manner consistent with these current County policies.

It is also essential that the Gaithersburg Vicinity Plan be updated at the same time as the Shady Grove Sector Plan. The Sector Plan will recommend a major transformation of land uses, from light industrial to a mixed-use center, around the Shady Grove Metro Station. The impetus for the Shady Grove redevelopment is based on the County's General Plan as well as sound, long-term policies that have been implemented elsewhere, including maximizing the public investment in Metrorail by creating mixed-use centers at Metro stations, increasing the supply of housing units that are served by transit, and encouraging transit ridership by placing housing and employment at station locations. A transformation of land use at the Metro station has implications for adjacent I-270 communities, particularly Gaithersburg Vicinity. These areas must be planned in unison to ensure that overall systems – schools, roads, parks, and paths – can accommodate and complement new development.

## **B. Proposed Boundaries**

The Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan area is centrally located in Montgomery County. (See Figure 1.) Straddling both sides of I-270, the Master Plan area includes the communities that surround the City of Gaithersburg but are not within the incorporated area of the municipality. On the east side of I-270, the Plan includes Montgomery Village, portions of Derwood, the Airpark area, Flower Hill, Mill Creek, and Oakmont. On the west side of I-270, the Plan includes the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center, Decoverly, and communities east of Seneca Creek State Park.

The boundaries of the Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan area are essentially unchanged from the previous Gaithersburg Vicinity plans from 1971 and 1985. The planning area is currently 13,000 acres, which represents a decrease in the total size due to a number of annexations by the cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville, including King Farm, Thomas Farm, Washingtonian Center, Washingtonian Industrial Park, IBM, Bechtel, National Geographic Society, Asbury Methodist Home, as well as several smaller parcels.

The boundaries for the Master Plan update are: Darnestown Road on the south, Great Seneca State Park on the west, Warfield Road on the north, and Woodfield Road/Muncaster Mill Road/Shady Grove Road on the east. The eastern boundary has been adjusted slightly from previous plans to accommodate the boundaries of the Shady Grove Sector Plan update and the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan, as well as to exclude parcels recently annexed by Gaithersburg, Rockville, and Washington Grove. (See Figure 2.)

## **PART II: BACKGROUND**

Montgomery County has a long history of comprehensive planning. In addition to the master plans and sector plans for local communities, a countywide General Plan was first prepared in 1964. "...*On Wedges and Corridors,*" *A General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District* established a geographic vision for the future arrangement of land uses, with the I-270 Corridor as a primary feature. The *Corridor* was viewed as the appropriate location for higher density uses, a means to avoid sprawl and concentrate development in centers with transit service. *Wedges* of green space, including stream valley parks, farmland, and lower density residential uses would provide respite and recreation.

Along I-270, the General Plan envisioned a series of Corridor Cities – Rockville, Gaithersburg, Germantown, and Clarksburg – that were linked with one another and with Washington, D.C. via the Metrorail red line. The Corridor Cities were to have intensively developed downtowns located about four miles apart with high-rise buildings containing housing, offices, and a host of shopping and cultural amenities. A ring of residential communities consisting of a variety of housing types and local shopping, recreational, and educational facilities were to surround the downtowns.

### **A. The I-270 Corridor Today**

Today, the I-270 Corridor is a significant economic resource for the County and the region. With its concentration of knowledge and information-based businesses, it is one of the most important centers for the biotechnology industry in the entire country. The area is served by a variety of transportation services, including Metrorail, commuter rail, the Airpark, expanded I-270 capacity, and numerous major highways.

At the same time, the I-270 Corridor has not yet fully evolved and many challenges remain. Achievements in fulfilling the "Corridor Cities" concept in the General Plan have been modest, at best. Demand to develop the I-270 Corridor came well in advance of the transit stations envisioned in the 1964 General Plan. Consequently, early development was characterized by low-density office parks loosely strung along I-270, with housing located away from the main travel arteries. Higher density development has begun to appear, but it is in a linear fashion (along MD 355 and I-270) rather than in compact, transit-oriented centers. Traffic congestion and a poor pedestrian environment plague the area and it is characterized by surface parking lots, strip-retail, and sprawling development, instead of densely developed, identifiable centers. In addition, east-west transportation movement remains a problem.

Much of the residential development in the Corridor is relatively new and built to popular suburban standards. Curved, cul-de-sac streets in strictly residential areas lend an air of privacy while reducing the intrusion of through traffic. Yet these patterns tend to reduce mobility; without a logical grid network of streets, community circulation and interaction beyond the immediate neighborhood is limited. More recent residential developments, such as Rockville's King Farm and Fallsgrove (the former Thomas Farm) developments have introduced the design characteristics of new urbanism. These neo-

traditional developments with interconnected streets and street-oriented buildings have sold quickly, perhaps a reflection of the strong market for mixed-use neighborhoods.

While the concept of the Corridor remains strong and sound, the future holds a number of challenges. Market forces will continue to push the spread of the I-270 Corridor toward the Wedge and the suburban communities. Creating compact, mixed-used, transit-serviceable centers from the current suburban pattern will be difficult. More importantly, additional density for commercial and residential development could be limited by transportation constraints, the lack of transit facilities, and the ability to provide adequate public services.

## **B. Gaithersburg Vicinity: A Demographic and Housing Profile**

The Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan area has a **total population** of nearly 69,000 residents, which represents about eight percent of the County's population. At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 68,985 persons resided in 24,777 households in the Master Plan area. Incomes are concentrated in the middle ranges as are housing prices. Overall, the area is a major source of workers for the County. Gaithersburg Vicinity and the City of Gaithersburg are geographically intertwined, and the 2000 Census shows both similarities as well as significant differences.

Demographically, both areas are a little **more diverse** than the County as a whole. In both Gaithersburg Vicinity and the City, almost 40 percent of residents identify themselves as racial minorities, compared to about 35 percent countywide. The City of Gaithersburg has a larger Hispanic population than either the Vicinity area or the County; one in every five residents is Hispanic in the City of Gaithersburg. The share of Asians in Gaithersburg Vicinity is about two percentage points higher than the County share and represents the greatest difference in the area's racial composition compared with the County.

Both Gaithersburg Vicinity and the City of Gaithersburg have attracted large **foreign-born populations**, with many immigrants choosing to become citizens. Almost 30 percent of the Vicinity population and more than one-third of the City's population are foreign-born with almost half of Gaithersburg Vicinity's foreign-born population entering this country between 1990 and 2000. A higher percentage of residents, primarily Hispanic and Asian, report that they do not speak English "very well" compared with residents countywide. The substantial number of people with language barriers is a particular challenge to government, schools, businesses, and other institutions working with foreign-born residents.

With regard to **age**, residents of Gaithersburg Vicinity are more likely to be young adults (age 18-34) or school age children; almost one of every five residents is aged 5-17. Also, fewer adults are over age 65. The small size of the retirement age population in Gaithersburg Vicinity may reflect the amount of comparatively newer, affordable housing that has drawn younger residents to the area. In addition, most specialized housing for the elderly in this area is located in the City of Gaithersburg, which draws more elderly residents there and accounts for the higher number of those 65 and older in the City.

Gaithersburg Vicinity has more single-family **housing** and more of its residents are homeowners than the City profile. The category of single-family housing includes both single, detached homes as well as attached homes, which are typically townhouses. Gaithersburg Vicinity contains 25,626 housing units and at the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 96 percent were occupied. Gaithersburg Vicinity has a slightly larger share of single-family housing than the County as a whole, but the mix of detached/attached units is quite different. Countywide, single-family detached housing accounts for 51 percent of all housing types while townhouses comprise 18 percent. In Gaithersburg Vicinity, 31 percent of the housing is detached while 40 percent is townhouse and nearly 28 percent is multi-family or apartments. The City of Gaithersburg has a significant supply of multi-family, or apartment, housing; nearly 50 percent of the housing supply is multi-family and 50 percent is single-family (both detached and townhouses).

The prevalence of families with children in the Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan area creates an expectation of fairly large households and the data supports this. Both owner and renter households are larger than the countywide average. Renter households are most notably larger and, therefore, likely include children. This reflects the younger age demographic for the area as a whole as well as the large number of newcomers, which tend to be households that choose rental housing while they are getting settled.

Gaithersburg Vicinity contains a sizable supply of **affordable housing**. In fact, the County's first moderately priced dwelling units (MPDUs) were built in Montgomery Village and the Gaithersburg area has continued to be a location for numerous MPDUs. Gaithersburg Vicinity, the Shady Grove area, and projects in the City of Gaithersburg that were approved before annexation from the County have produced 2,239 MPDUs during the 28-year history of the program. Most of these are located in Gaithersburg Vicinity. As of the end of 1999, only 829 MPDUs were still price controlled, however, most are still affordable with sales prices of less than \$150,000. Over time, both the County and the building industry have become more adept at creating a solid affordable housing product that fits well into its neighborhood.

In addition to units constructed through the MPDU program, there are 10 subsidized housing complexes in Gaithersburg Vicinity with 1,014 units for low-income households. These units constitute about four percent of the housing in the planning area, which is in the mid-range for developed areas of the County. Most of the affordable units are designated for working age households. Only 28 units have been set aside for the elderly. Given the age profile of the area and the sizeable supply of housing for the elderly in the City of Gaithersburg, the distribution of affordable housing by age category seems reasonable. It also makes sense to provide housing for workers in this area of the County – the I-270 Corridor - with its many employment opportunities. In the future, more senior housing may be needed if the current young householders decide to remain in the area as they age.

Several other demographic indicators are worth mentioning. With regard to **education**, Montgomery County is known for the high educational attainment of its residents and Gaithersburg Vicinity displays a similar pattern. In both the County and Gaithersburg

Vicinity, 27 percent of residents have a Bachelor's degree. The percentage of those with graduate and professional degrees is a little lower in Gaithersburg Vicinity than the County. Nonetheless, the total percentage of those with a Bachelor's degree or better is double the national percentage at 48.5 percent.

With regard to **income**, Gaithersburg Vicinity households have a higher median income than City of Gaithersburg households, but lower than households countywide. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the 1999 median household income for County households was \$71,551; for Gaithersburg Vicinity households it was \$68,761; and for City residents it was \$59,879. This income pattern is consistent with the youthful age profile of the Gaithersburg area. Generally, household income rises with age, peaking between ages 45 and 54. The supply of moderately priced single-family housing in the area tends to attract young families who probably have not yet reached their full earning potential.

A large majority of Gaithersburg Vicinity residents **drive to work** alone. Although the Shady Grove Metro Station and MARC station at Metropolitan Grove are nearby, employed residents in Gaithersburg Vicinity are slightly less likely to take public transportation to work than other County residents. They are also less likely to work at home. The differences between area workers and all County workers are not large, but the high percentage that drive alone is unexpected given the transit alternatives in the area. This could be related to the proximity of jobs in the area, making commutes on Metro or MARC unnecessary.

### **PART III: PROPOSED OUTREACH AND PROCESS**

The community outreach strategy outlines the recommended techniques for community and intergovernmental agency involvement in the planning process. Several techniques are combined to form a coordinated and customized outreach strategy designed to reflect the unique character and issues of the Gaithersburg community. Emphasis is placed on obtaining a wide range of perspectives from a diverse set of participants to heighten and broaden community involvement.

As an alternative to the Master Plan Advisory Group (MPAG) used in previous master plans, staff is seeking broader community participation through a series of general public meetings that will be held throughout the process. In addition, staff has and will continue to attend meetings of the various civic associations. Initial meetings have introduced the community to the master plan process, explained the types of issues that the Plan will address, distributed the Community Issues Survey, and provided an opportunity for community members to express their concerns.

Demographic data from the U.S. Census shows that the racial and ethnic profile of Gaithersburg Vicinity is reasonably similar to the County's as a whole. Outreach to the more diverse community members in Gaithersburg Vicinity is an important aspect in the overall citizen participation strategy. Staff is working with the County's Outreach Coordinator and other agencies to engage the diverse members of the community who typically do not participate in general public meetings.



## **Tentative Master Plan Schedule**

### ***Phase 1: July 2002- December 2002***

- Collect preliminary data; prepare base maps
- Analyze and prepare summary of Census data on population and housing
- Gather information from the community
- Prepare and distribute Community Issues Survey
- Prepare Draft Purpose and Outreach Report

### ***Phase 2: January 2003 – June 2003***

- Present Purpose and Outreach Report to the Planning Board
- Distribute Community Issues Survey and tabulate responses
- Continue meeting with the community
- Prepare transportation analysis
- Identify alternatives and preliminary recommendations

### ***Phase 3: July 2003 – December 2003***

- Refine alternatives
- Prepare draft land use recommendations
- Finalize transportation data
- Prepare Staff Draft Master Plan
- Present Staff Draft Master Plan to the community
- Present Staff Draft Master Plan to the Planning Board

### ***Phase 4: January 2004 – July 2004***

- Planning Board holds public hearing on the Public Hearing Draft Master Plan
- Planning Board conducts worksessions with staff on the Master Plan
- Planning Board may recommend changes to the Master Plan
- Master Plan reprinted as the Planning Board (Final) Draft Master Plan
- Planning Board Draft Master Plan reviewed by the County Executive
- County Council holds public hearing on the Master Plan
- County Council conducts worksessions on the Master Plan
- County Council may recommend changes to the Master Plan
- County Council approves the Master Plan

### ***Phase 5: July 2004 – and Beyond***

- Plan adoption by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPCC)
- Monitor Master Plan recommendations and implementation

## **PART IV: ISSUES**

This Plan update will examine ways to implement County policies as well as increase amenities, community facilities, and connections that can begin to define Gaithersburg Vicinity as a more unified place. The Plan update will examine overall systems that could better connect the area, including roads, transit, pedestrian and bike paths, and an interconnected park and trail network. Most of the remaining land available for development is located on the west side of I-270 near the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center. This area provides the opportunity to create livable, walkable, and transit-oriented developments with a mix of uses.

This section of the report frames the major, significant policy and land use issues that the Plan will address. If additional issues that are appropriate for inclusion in a master plan emerge during the course of plan preparation, these will also be addressed. This compilation of issues is based on staff's comprehensive review of the area, community input, and by both completed and ongoing countywide studies such as the *Transportation Policy Report* and the Housing Montgomery Initiative. There are six issue areas and each is summarized with a list of topics that the Plan update will address.

### **A. Housing and Housing Affordability**

The housing vision for Montgomery County is for all residents to have decent, well-priced, good quality homes in safe neighborhoods. While the basic principles underlying the County's housing policy have not changed significantly over the years, the County has experienced tremendous demographic and economic changes: from a farming community to a suburban bedroom community to an important regional employment center. Today, many businesses, especially those in the biotechnology and information technology sectors are attracted to the County (particularly the I-270 Corridor) due to the presence of federal agencies and a highly educated population. At the same time, new residents are drawn to the area for jobs, excellent schools, good quality of life, and housing options.

Extensive development and the implementation of programs to protect open space and agricultural areas have reduced the amount of land available for new housing. As the County reaches build-out, housing units, particularly affordable ones, are being produced at a slower rate as the supply of developable land decreases. In addition, as the County has become more racially, ethnically, and economically diverse, demand for a wider variety of housing types has also increased.

The Montgomery County Council has recently directed the Department of Park and Planning to include a chapter on housing in each new master plan. The County Housing Policy, *Montgomery County – The Place to Call Home*, directs community master plans to include goals for affordable and assisted housing and to designate suitable sites for elderly housing and other special needs housing. In addition, staff intends to provide a description of the existing supply of affordable and senior housing, an analysis of potential sites, and specific recommendations, if feasible.

## A Balance of Jobs and Housing

A reasonable mix of housing and jobs in an area provides opportunities for people to choose to live near their workplace, creates shorter commuting distances, allows the residential and commercial sectors to share the local tax burden, and moderates pressures on housing costs. An oversupply of jobs or housing may lead to traffic congestion, inequitable distribution of the tax burden, and high housing costs. As Montgomery County nears build-out of its land, the ratio of jobs and housing is increasingly difficult to change. The reduced supply of vacant land puts great pressure on real estate prices, leading to increased difficulties in providing affordable housing, even for middle-income households. Land prices increase as the supply decreases, driving up the cost of housing.

The jobs/housing ratio is a description of the balance between potential housing and potential employment. It is a useful tool for planners, especially in areas that are reaching build-out and decisions are being made about remaining developable sites. The ratio is derived by dividing the total number of jobs by the total number of housing units in a given area. A typical Montgomery County household produces about 1.6 workers (this is a standard used by local governments as well as the building industry). A high jobs/housing ratio, for example 5.4, means that for every household in a given area, there are 5.4 jobs in that same area. This indicates that a significant number of workers will have to commute from outside the area to fill all the jobs, even if a high proportion of the workers live within the area. This Plan will analyze the ratio of jobs and housing in the I-270 Corridor and make recommendations that seek to provide an appropriate balance.

- Provide an appropriate balance of jobs and housing.
- Provide more housing choices and more affordable housing units.
- Provide additional housing opportunities, especially near transit.
- Analyze sites previously recommended for housing to explore whether additional densities can be provided.
- Analyze the feasibility of adding housing to employment centers.

## **B. Mobility Issues**

Traffic congestion is a major source of frustration in Montgomery County and the Gaithersburg Vicinity area is no exception. Traffic-related issues are probably the single most compelling concern among community members. Residents complain that increasing traffic congestion is compromising quality of life and motorist and pedestrian safety are also major concerns.

A number of high volume roads traverse Gaithersburg Vicinity, including I-270, Shady Grove Road, Great Seneca Highway, and Muddy Branch Road. (See Figure 3.) Two regional transportation facilities are planned to serve this area. The Corridor Cities Transitway and the Intercounty Connector have both been identified in earlier plans and master plans will continue to preserve right-of-way for both facilities. Furthermore, both projects are currently under study by the Maryland Department of Transportation.

This Plan will explore means to improve accessibility and mobility for all modes of travel. The Plan will be informed by the Planning Board's Transportation Policy Report (TPR), published in January 2002. The TPR developed countywide recommendations for land use and transportation planning to guide the Department's subsequent community-based master plan updates and amendments. The TPR contains specific language that supports and endorses the Master Plan of Highways recommendations for the Corridor Cities Transitway, I-270, and the Intercounty Connector.

This Plan will explore adjustments to jobs and housing levels, transit ridership, road improvements, additional bus routes, and operational adjustments that could ease congestion and increase capacity, balanced with a safe pedestrian environment and the need to reserve space for future transit extensions. The Plan will also explore ways to improve transportation access, capacity, and transit serviceability, as well as enhance and expand the pedestrian and bicycle environment.

## Rail

CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT) owns and operates a freight rail line that traverses the Gaithersburg Vicinity area. This rail line also serves the Maryland Rail Commuter (MARC) passenger service. The 1990 *Shady Grove Study Area Master Plan* includes a transit easement along the CSXT right-of-way. The Master Plan update should determine whether this transit easement should be retained or whether any future rail system expansion in the CSXT corridor should be contained within the current right-of-way.

## Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT)

The Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) is a master-planned facility exclusively reserved for transit use between the Shady Grove Metrorail Station and Frederick County. The Maryland Department of Transportation is currently studying the portion of the CCT traversing Gaithersburg Vicinity, with a locally preferred alternate to be developed during 2003. The primary issue to be resolved during the state study is whether the CCT should be designed as a light rail facility or a busway. If light rail is the preferred mode, yard-and-shop facilities adjacent to the transitway must also be established. The Gaithersburg Vicinity Plan update will encourage transit-oriented land uses with higher development densities and pedestrian-friendly designs at CCT stations. Design of the transit line should minimize impact on existing development and the environment and maximize benefits from transit stops/stations.

- Locate stops at hubs of higher density, wherever possible
- Create a pedestrian friendly environment around transit stations
- Maximize development around transit stations
- Develop sites along transit routes such as the Crown Farm and Banks Farm

## Buses

A multi-modal integrated transit system should include buses as part of the overall transit plan. The 1990 *Shady Grove Study Area Master Plan* recommended high priority bus routes and neighborhood bus loops. The area should have increased bus use in high priority areas.

- Design streets to accommodate priority bus lanes
- Provide efficient pedestrian connections to bus stops
- Design streets for pedestrians
- Provide bus shelters

## Highways

### *I-270*

To the south of Gaithersburg, the design of I-270 includes a high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane and a system of collector-distributor lanes (sometimes described as “express” and “local” lanes). The 1990 *Shady Grove Study Area Master Plan* recommended that this typical cross-section be extended through the planning area. The Maryland Department of Transportation is studying this design concurrently with the study of the Corridor Cities Transitway. The Gaithersburg Vicinity Plan update will include the planned I-270 interchange with Watkins Mill Road (already in the City of Gaithersburg’s Master Plan) as well as consider direct ramp connections to the HOV lanes at I-370 and in the vicinity of Metropolitan Grove.

### *Intercounty Connector (ICC)*

The Intercounty Connector (ICC) is a master-planned, 18-mile long freeway that would connect I-270 at I-370 to I-95 and US 1 in Prince George’s County. The Maryland State Highway Administration has restarted project planning for this proposed highway. The Master Plan alignment for the ICC does not traverse the Gaithersburg Vicinity area, but alternative study options examined in the 1997 Draft Environmental Impact Statement, if pursued, would affect Master Plan recommendations for portions of Midcounty Highway and Muncaster Mill Road.

### *Midcounty Highway Extended (M-83)*

Midcounty Highway (M-83) is a master-planned, major highway that would connect Shady Grove to Clarksburg parallel to and east of MD 355. The portion between Shady Grove Road and Montgomery Village Avenue (MD 124) has been constructed. Current master plans recommend extensions; both toward the southeast, to connect to the ICC and to the northwest, to connect to Ridge Road (MD 27) in Germantown. The TPR recommended that the northwestern extension of M-83 be removed from the Master Plan. The TPR recommendation is stated “reluctantly,” since the removal of M-83 affects transportation capacity and connectivity; however, consensus for a solution is lacking. The 1990 *Shady Grove Study Area Master Plan* recommended increasing

capacity on portions of parallel roads, such as Watkins Mill Road and Wightman Road, in addition to building M-83. However, each of these proposals has undesirable adverse environmental and/or community impacts. A focal point of the transportation recommendations in the Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan update will be how to balance land use and transportation in the vicinity of Seneca Creek.

### Pedestrians and Bikeways

The Department of Park and Planning staff is currently updating the 1978 Master Plan of Bikeways, which will be coordinated with the Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan update. Bikeway issues specific to Gaithersburg Vicinity will be analyzed and addressed in the Master Plan update. The recommended future bikeway system will focus on connecting existing segments of bike paths and bike lanes, addressing current routes used by cyclists, and examining and analyzing ways to connect residential areas with transit, employment, and activity centers. The bikeway system will be a tool that allows the County to focus and prioritize its implementation efforts. The Plan will attempt to strike a balance between recommended improvements for both off-road (bike paths) and on-road bikeways (bike lanes, shared roadways). The Plan will also encourage more people to travel to work and transit by bicycle. The City of Gaithersburg is updating its bicycle master plan as well and the Department of Park and Planning staff will work closely with the City planners to coordinate and plan for a comprehensive bikeway network.

### **C. Community Character and Identity**

One of the major challenges for the Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan is the issue of community character and identity; the planning area is comprised of a series of disconnected, noncontiguous neighborhoods. Gaithersburg Vicinity is a collection of communities that surround the incorporated City of Gaithersburg. (See Figure 4.) There is no cohesiveness, no real, identifiable center or sense of place. The activity centers for residents and workers in Gaithersburg Vicinity may actually be located in the City of Gaithersburg. For planning purposes, the boundaries are concrete between the City and the County, but for practical, functional purposes, these lines probably mean very little to the people who live and/or work in this area. The challenge for planners of the two jurisdictions is to create a seamless, complementary transition between the localities.

### Montgomery Village

Montgomery Village is a planned community developed in the mid-1960s by one company that assembled over 2,000 acres for a "new town" based on the concept of the Corridor City envisioned in the County's General Plan. As a large planned town, Montgomery Village has an established sense of character and identity. While this is generally positive, since the Montgomery Village Foundation can speak with one voice representing a large population, some neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the Village feel overshadowed and overlooked, especially regarding decisions about existing and planned roads.

The Montgomery Village Foundation has identified and requested that several issues be considered in the Master Plan update. The most significant issue involves removing Highway M-83 (Midcounty Highway) between Montgomery Village Avenue and Great Seneca Creek Park from the Master Plan. The Greater Goshen Civic Association (adjacent to and north of Montgomery Village) would like for M-83 to remain in the Master Plan. As stated above, the Master Plan update will analyze the issues surrounding the extension of M-83. Montgomery Village has also requested that the Master Plan change the recommended number of lanes on Goshen Road and Montgomery Village Avenue (within Montgomery Village) from four to six lanes to four lanes only. In addition, Stedwick Road is requested to be changed from four lanes to two lanes only.

The Montgomery Village Foundation would like the Master Plan to remove the I-4 zoning classification from the 133-acre Webb Tract and to recommend that the property be purchased by the M-NCPPC and combined with the Lois Y. Green Conservation Park to create a regional park. The Foundation requested that the Master Plan update retain the current Plan's recommendations against any future extension of the runway at Montgomery Airpark. The Foundation also requests that the Town Sector Zone for Montgomery Village be recognized and reconfirmed.

- Review roadway reclassification requests from the Montgomery Village Foundation.
- Assess the appropriate zoning for the Webb Tract and analyze land use options.
- Evaluate whether the Town Sector Zone for Montgomery Village should be reconfirmed.

### Montgomery County Airpark

The Montgomery County Airpark is located near Woodfield Road and Snouffer School Road, about seven miles from I-270. The Airpark was established and began operations in 1960 with a 99-year lease on property that was sold to the Montgomery County Revenue Authority, a public corporation. The 130-acre Airpark is one of 143 airports in Maryland and is currently the fourth busiest airport in the state. The Federal Aviation Administration's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) identifies the Montgomery County Airpark as one of 260 general aviation, reliever airports in the country. Reliever airports contribute to the efficient functioning of the airport system by providing an alternative to the large and medium hub airports in addition to supporting general aviation in the region. Functions include flight training, passenger and cargo charters, and civil aircraft operations. The Airpark had 140,616 operations (take-offs and landings) in 2000, with 248 based aircraft.

In general, demand for aviation opportunities provided by small airports like the Airpark have increased. Business location decisions increasingly revolve around whether there are nearby facilities for corporate jets. The Revenue Authority conducted a \$200,000 Airport Layout Plan (ALP) update over a two-year period. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approved the ALP in July 2002. The planning process involved representatives of airport management, the Revenue Authority, the Montgomery County

Executive, the Montgomery County Council, the Planning Board, and the community. The technical steering group worked with the consultant and routinely briefed the Airpark Liaison Committee and community organizations in the vicinity of the Airpark. The Montgomery County Revenue Authority has recently updated its Airpark Layout Plan, which projects a modest rate of growth and recommends a \$32 million improvement program over a 20-year period.

The 1985 Master Plan recognized that residential uses would not be appropriate adjacent to the Airpark due to noise impacts and safety concerns. Non-residential uses have been located immediately adjacent to the Airpark: both ends of the runway are parkland while the other two sides of the Airpark are surrounded by light industrial uses. These light industrial uses and parkland areas also provide a buffer for the nearby residential communities. The Master Plan update will explore the long-term plans for the Airpark and what, if any, current issues need to be addressed, including existing noise abatement plans and what can be done to improve operations so that the Airpark can continue to be a good neighbor.

- What are the long-term plans for the Airpark?
- Are residents satisfied with current noise abatement plans?
- What can be done to improve operations so that the Airpark can continue to be a good neighbor?

#### Other Established Residential Neighborhoods

There are many well-established residential neighborhoods on the east side of I-270 with a mix of single-family detached homes, townhomes, and some apartments. The Plan update will focus on maintaining, preserving, and enhancing the existing residential neighborhoods to ensure a good quality of life for area residents. Concerns expressed by residents have focused on transportation issues, including the amount of traffic on local roads, truck traffic, the pros and cons of proposed roads, and protecting local streets from cut-through traffic.

On the west side of I-270, the residential neighborhoods of Gaithersburg Vicinity are generally located between Seneca Creek State Park (on the east) and the boundary of the City of Gaithersburg (the city is east of Quince Orchard Road and Longdraft Road). These are stable residential neighborhoods with an established land use pattern that will remain the same. The intent of the Master Plan will be to maintain and preserve these existing residential neighborhoods.

- Explore ways to strengthen existing neighborhoods and protect them from the impacts of new development, where feasible.
- Analyze pedestrian access issues and community connectivity and recommend improvements, if necessary.
- Explore ways to reduce traffic on neighborhood (secondary) streets.
- Explore ways to reduce auto dependency and encourage walking, cycling, and transit use.



## D. Sites with Development Potential

There are relatively few vacant sites remaining in Gaithersburg Vicinity. (See Figure 5.) This section provides background on the remaining sites with development potential in the planning area and summarizes the issues that the Master Plan will address. Four sites within the Research and Development (R&D) Village, located west of I-270, are discussed: the Life Sciences Center and the Public Service Training Academy may have redevelopment potential, while the Crown Farm and the Banks Farm/Johns Hopkins Belward Campus are vacant. Metropolitan Grove is a small parcel on Game Preserve Road adjacent to I-270 and the City of Gaithersburg. East of I-270, there is only one parcel of significant size, the Webb Tract, located near the Airpark on Snouffer School Road and adjacent to the Lois Y. Green Conservation Park.

### 1. Research and Development Village

Montgomery County created the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center (LSC) in the early 1980s. (See Figure 6.) The County was a logical location for the emerging biotechnology industry given the strong presence of federally supported scientific research institutions. Recognizing that academic institutions are integral to successful biotech communities, the County donated land in the LSC to Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland for their Montgomery County campuses. Today, Montgomery County is one of the most important centers for the biotechnology industry in the country. There are 24 biotechnology firms in or adjacent to the LSC and the County has sold or leased land to a dozen biotech entities. There are currently no vacant parcels left to sell or lease in the LSC and the County is actively exploring options to provide additional space for biotechnology firms.

#### a. *Shady Grove Life Sciences Center (270 acres)*

The Shady Grove Life Sciences Center Development Plan, which is approved by the Planning Board and the County Council, governs site development criteria and review procedures. The area is currently developed at densities under 0.3 FAR in an auto-oriented pattern. Since the area is substantially built-out, there is interest in increasing the densities at the Life Sciences Center and the County has been studying this issue. The 1990 *Shady Grove Study Area Master Plan* supported a future modification of the Development Plan to increase overall density to 0.5 FAR if the Plan's recommendation for a transitway loop around the LSC is implemented.

- Should the Life Sciences Center (LSC) Zone be amended to ensure that new development follows transit and pedestrian-friendly patterns?
- Should the LSC zone permit R&D uses as well as a mix of other uses to support the R&D community?
- How can transit service be improved at this site?
- Can an efficient bus route with priority lanes be designed?
- What are the appropriate densities for the site?

b. *Public Service Training Academy (52 acres)*

The Public Service Training Academy is located at Great Seneca Highway and Key West Avenue. (See Figure 6.) The PSTA occupies a prime site, between the Life Sciences Center and the Banks Farm, which could contribute to an increase of housing and jobs in an area that is planned for transit service. With the success of the Life Sciences Center and its employment, health services, and education focus, this Master Plan update will consider whether there are any opportunities for additional development of this strategic site as part of the R&D Village.

- Analyze the existing PSTA site to determine if a more efficient use of this location is possible.
- Analyze redevelopment options for the site.

c. *Crown Farm (180 acres)*

The Crown Farm is located south of Fields Road between Omega Drive and Sam Eig Highway. (See Figure 6.) The 1990 *Shady Grove Study Area Master Plan* designated the Crown Farm as a component of the R&D Village and recommended the development of a residential community with a mix of types (with R-200 and R-60/TDR-10 zoning) that would provide housing near jobs at the Life Sciences Center. Two Corridor Cities Transitway stops are planned on the Crown Farm site with a local park near the planned high-density residential area and the proposed transit stop adjacent to Fields Road. An elementary school was also recommended for the Crown Farm in the 1990 Plan. The site also includes a historic resource, the England/Crown Farm House, which is on the County's *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. The Victorian-style structure is representative of a Maryland farmstead with a log tenant house. This historic site must be appropriately incorporated into the future development of this property.

- Should housing densities be increased from those recommended in the 1990 Plan in order to balance the jobs/housing ratio in the I-270 Corridor?
- How can transit be planned through this site?
- Can this site accommodate both private sector development as well as a greater share of public facilities, including schools and recreational facilities, than were recommended in the 1990 Plan?

d. *Banks Farm/Johns Hopkins Belward Campus (138 acres)*

The Banks Farm/Belward Campus site occupies a strategic location along Key West Avenue. (See Figure 6.) The 1990 *Shady Grove Study Area Master Plan* designated the Banks Farm as a component of the R&D Village and recommended higher density development be clustered near the proposed station for the Corridor Cities Transitway in the northeastern portion of the property. The property is in the Research & Development (R&D) Zone. When the Banks Farm was sold to Johns Hopkins University, a covenant was placed on the property that limits the types of uses to academic, research and development, health and medical care services, and

agricultural uses. The site includes a historic resource, the Belward Farm/Ward House, which is on the County's *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. This historic farmstead and its environmental setting must be appropriately incorporated into any future design and development of the site. This site has an approved Preliminary Plan for research and development uses.

- How can design of the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) best be accommodated on this site?
- Should land use recommendations be changed to add housing and community facilities to the site?

## 2. Metropolitan Grove (60 acres)

The Metropolitan Grove site is located near I-270, the CSX rail line, and the PEPCO transmission line. (See Figure 5.) Approximately 60 acres of the site is within the Master Plan area and about 170 acres is in the City of Gaithersburg. The County portion is zoned I-3 and the City of Gaithersburg portion is zoned for mixed-use development. The City of Gaithersburg is currently updating their master plan and analyzing options for this site, including the County portion. Access is limited, but there are plans to extend Watkins Mill Road from its terminus north of Clopper Road to MD 355. The Metropolitan Grove Station of the MARC rail line is located in this area, as is a future stop for the proposed Corridor Cities Transitway.

- What would be the most appropriate use for the County's portion of the site?
- Should Metro be extended to provide a station at Metropolitan Grove?

## 3. Webb Tract (130 acres)

The Webb Tract is a 130-acre parcel with light industrial zoning located on Snouffer School Road adjacent to the undeveloped Lois Y. Green Conservation Park. (See Figure 5.) The 1985 Master Plan rezoned the parcel from residential to light industrial use (from R-90 to I-4) due to its proximity to the Montgomery County Airpark. Temporary uses at the Webb Tract have included a golf driving range and a private recycling facility.

The Webb Tract is listed in the appendix of the *Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan*. As master plans are being updated, Legacy staff are reviewing sites in the appendix and placing recommendations for their Legacy status in the plans. An implementation study is currently underway as part of the Legacy Open Space Program to examine the need for and potential location of a new regional park. The Webb Tract is one of many properties that have been suggested to staff to consider as part of this study. A team of park planners and other staff is developing a needs assessment and criteria for a new park, and will then evaluate specific properties. In addition, the Webb Tract is being discussed as a possible site to relocate uses from the Shady Grove Metro Station in order to implement recommendations that are being considered in the Sector Plan to transform land uses around the Metro station to higher density, in keeping with the County's land use policy for Metro stations.

The 2001 *Lois Y. Green Conservation Park Master Plan* also discussed the Webb Tract. This undeveloped 250-acre conservation park was dedicated to the M-NCPPC in 1975 and the 2001 park master plan proposes a plan for its development. The Plan states that the major constraint to greater public enjoyment of the park is access. Three scenarios are proposed to improve access, including acquisition of a part or all of the Webb Tract. If the entire site were purchased, the park plan recommends that the Webb site become parkland and references the potential need for a new regional park in the mid-County area.

- What is the appropriate land use for the Webb Tract?
- What would the appropriate mix of uses be, should there be more than one land use recommended for the Webb Tract?
- Is the Webb Tract an appropriate location for a regional park?
- Should the Webb Tract, or a portion of it, be used to accommodate relocation of light industrial uses from the Shady Grove Metro Station in order to allow for redevelopment at the Metro?

## **E. Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities**

Community facilities – parks, schools, recreation centers, and libraries – are essential elements of community life that establish neighborhood identity and provide valuable services and programs. Their location, condition, and accessibility contribute to neighborhood character and quality of life. In addition to their primary, functional purpose, public facilities in a neighborhood provide places for community interaction and foster a sense of belonging and commitment.

### Parks and Trails

The M-NCPPC made an early commitment to environmental stewardship and conservation when it was first formed in 1927 and began acquiring land surrounding the stream valley parks. This commitment provided the policy framework for the “Wedges and Corridors” concept in the 1964 General Plan (and subsequent 1993 General Plan Refinement) and has become an important principle that guides a wide range of planning and regulatory programs and projects.

Park development is closely coordinated with master planning. *The Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan* (PROS Plan) is updated every five years and provides a comprehensive set of recommendations and guidelines for future recreation and parkland needs. During the process of updating community master plans such as Gaithersburg Vicinity, park and natural resource issues are reviewed and recommendations are provided. Implementation of park recommendations identified in the PROS Plan and the master plans occur through the subdivision process, the County’s Capital Improvements Program, private dedication, and the State’s Program Open Space plan.

The 1998 *Countywide Park Trails Plan* proposed a 250-mile interconnected system of hard surface and natural surface trails in eight greenway corridors throughout Montgomery County. The Seneca Greenway Corridor was identified for Seneca Creek State Park, which forms the western boundary of the Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan area. The Trails Plan recommended a continuous, 25-mile natural surface trail, the Seneca Greenway, along Seneca Creek from the Potomac River to the Patuxent River. About half of this greenway corridor, from the Potomac River to MD 355, is within Seneca Creek State Park; much of the portion northeast of MD 355 is owned by the M-NCPPC as Great Seneca Extension Park.

In addition to trails, the *Countywide Park Trails Plan* addressed bikeways and other non-park trail connectors. The Trails Plan identified the I-270 Corridor Bikeway as an essential part of the overall Plan because bikeway facilities in this area will connect the down-County and up-County hard surface park trails. According to the Plan, the opportunity exists to create a continuous bikepath, separate from major roads, the entire length of the I-270 Corridor from the Capital Crescent Trail to the Clarksburg Town Center. The proposed Corridor Cities Transitway, from the Shady Grove Metro Station to Clarksburg, will include a separate bike path, linking destinations such as the Shady Grove Life Sciences area, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, Germantown, and Clarksburg.

Gaithersburg Vicinity currently has nine local parks, three neighborhood parks, three neighborhood conservation areas, and three stream valley parks for a total of approximately 700 acres of parkland. (See Figure 7.) Since the 1985 Master Plan was adopted, five new parks have been opened in Gaithersburg Vicinity. Parks currently under development include the 20-acre Montgomery Village local park and the 50-acre Laytonia Recreational Park, both of which will include active recreational facilities, and Muncaster Recreational Park, primarily a passive park. The City of Gaithersburg, the Town of Washington Grove, and the planned community of Montgomery Village provide additional recreational facilities.

An important issue for a master plan update to assess is whether the existing recreational facilities are adequate and whether new resources should be provided for existing and future users. As the County nears build-out and vacant land becomes scarce, it is critical for master plans to address the active and passive recreational needs of the area and determine whether there are any available and appropriate sites for parkland acquisition to meet future needs.

- Are existing parks and those planned for development adequate to meet the recreational needs of current and future residents in Gaithersburg Vicinity? If not, how can additional parkland be provided?
- Do existing parks need renovation or redevelopment to better meet community needs?
- If residential densities are increased on vacant land west of I-270, what additional recreational facilities should be provided and where?
- How can a network of connected open spaces and parks be created that also links major destinations?

- How can communities in the planning area be provided greater access to trails in the Seneca Creek Greenway and the Rock Creek Stream Valley Park? Can an east-west trail connection between these two major trail corridors be provided in the planning area?
- How can bikeways be integrated with trails to provide an interconnected system for pedestrians and cyclists?

#### Community Facilities: Public School Capacity

Public schools are an integral part of the fabric of any community. Montgomery County's public schools are divided into 21 high school clusters. Cluster boundaries are generally drawn to serve surrounding residential communities and maintain socio-economic balance among the school populations. The service areas for six high school clusters serve portions of Gaithersburg Vicinity, Shady Grove, and the City of Gaithersburg, including the Gaithersburg cluster, Magruder, Richard Montgomery, Northwest, Quince Orchard, and Watkins Mill. (See Figure 8.)

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is responsible for developing and analyzing the enrollment forecasts used to determine the need for new schools or modernizations to existing schools that will meet increasing demand. MCPS does forecasts for individual schools by "aging" the student population through each grade level to the target year, generally six years away, using grade-by-grade enrollment histories for the school that are updated each year. These projections also consider population trends in the communities served by the school. One such trend, migration, is incorporated into forecasts by tracking the pace of residential development, through the subdivision process, construction, and sales activity in an area. When forecasters have an idea of a subdivision's building schedule, they are able to estimate the number of students the new community will yield in each year of a six-year forecast.

School capacity and planning issues will be given careful consideration in the Gaithersburg Vicinity and Shady Grove Plan updates. Close coordination between these master plan efforts will ensure that any proposed increase in residential land use densities will be accompanied by recommendations for new schools to accommodate planned growth. The master plan's role in planning for new schools involves identifying future needs as well as potential future school sites. With the close cooperation of MCPS demographers and planners, the Plan will evaluate existing conditions and future development for their impact on school enrollments. This evaluation will provide the basis for land use recommendations, which will ensure adequacy and land availability for the public school system.

## **F. Environmental Protection**

The natural environment of Montgomery County – streams, rivers, wetlands, wildlife, woodland and forest – offers a quiet refuge, environmental protection, as well as recreational and interpretational opportunities to its residents. The County's environment defines its character, quality of life, and visual appeal. The environment also protects the agricultural economy, activates urban neighborhoods, and revitalizes suburban communities. Due to its proximity to the nation's capital, Montgomery County is expected to continue its rapid pace of development. The critical concern is how to protect the County's natural environment while managing growth and encouraging environmentally sensitive, sustainable development.

Environmental planners evaluate forest resources, stream conditions, wetlands, greenways, wildlife corridors, and conduct noise analyses. Environmental staff advise the planning team on appropriate zoning intensities to maintain stream conditions, protect existing natural resources, increase the potential for resource enhancement, improve air quality through alternative means of transportation, and mitigate noise impacts.

### Watersheds

The Gaithersburg Vicinity area encompasses parts of the Muddy Branch, Middle Great Seneca Creek, and Lower Great Seneca Creek watersheds. The area includes the headwaters of Cabin Branch, Whetstone Run, Long Draught Branch, Rock Creek, Muddy Branch, Piney Branch, and Watts Branch. Muddy Branch itself originates in the City of Gaithersburg. As a tributary of the mid-Potomac basin in Montgomery County, the stream has been influenced by early, largely uncontrolled development along main transportation corridors such as Rockville Pike (Route 355) and the railroad. The Muddy Branch watershed's headwaters contain developed areas with very high levels of imperviousness. The Maryland Biological Stream Survey (MBSS) lists development densities as decreasing steadily as one moves downstream. As a result, stream conditions also recover as one moves downstream.

The Muddy Branch watershed has seen an accelerated pace of housing and other development since 1972. Many of the communities in the lower part of the watershed have included some provision for environmental protection in their development although only the most recent ones have incorporated the full range of stream valley buffers and on-site stormwater controls. A number of regional stormwater ponds were built along the eastern tributaries in the headwaters of the watershed. These control much of the high imperviousness associated with the Shady Grove and Gaithersburg commercial corridors. However, the watershed hydrology is still adjusting to the relatively new developments and land use changes, and areas of instability are common.

## Forests and Parklands

The largest blocks of contiguous forest in the Master Plan area are part of Seneca Creek State Park along the western boundary, and riparian forests in Muddy Branch Park in the southern part. Other forested open space is scattered in small pockets mainly in the northeast (around Washington Grove), west of Sam Eig Highway (Borer, Morris, and Malcolm parks), and in Metropolitan Grove. The M-NCPPC has purchased large areas of the Muddy Branch stream valley as parkland to protect adjacent landowners from flooding, and to provide a valuable natural resource in a largely urban area.

## Noise

The Master Plan area is the location of many heavily traveled roadways as well as the Montgomery County Airpark. The Master Plan will determine the extent of roadway noise impact on developable and redevelopable properties along all major roadways. Of particular concern are new roadways and those proposed for improvements, including Goshen Road, the proposed Midcounty Highway extension, Watkins Mill Road extension, and the proposed new interchange with I-270.

The Montgomery County Airpark is a busy general aviation airport. While the areas of most significant noise impact off the end of the runway are developed in compatible industrial and park uses, residents anywhere under the Airpark's flight patterns can expect to experience the effects of aircraft overflights on a continuing basis.

- Maximize the use of public transit.
- Minimize auto dependency and sprawl.
- Preserve forests, stream valleys, wildlife corridors, and other natural features.
- Protect residents from the affects of noise and pollution, where possible.