

FINDINGS: For Site Plan Review

1. *The Site Plan is consistent with an approved development plan or a project plan for the optional method of development if required.*

Neither a Development Plan nor a Project Plan is required in this zone.

2. *The Site Plan meets all of the requirements of the zone in which it is located.*

The Site Plan meets all of the requirements of the C-1 Zone and the Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone (CROZ) as demonstrated in the project Data Table above.

3. *The location of the building and structures, the open spaces, the landscaping, recreation facilities, and the pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems are adequate, safe and efficient.*

- a. **Buildings**

The three-story, L-shaped building includes 55,800 square feet(sf) of medical space including a 5,000 sf Urgent care Center, 25,000 sf of medical office space, 5,000 sf surgical center, 5,000 sf imaging center, a 10,000 sf primary/specialty care clinic, and the rest being ancillary support space. The building meets or exceeds all required setbacks and green space requirements.

When amended by the proposed conditions of approval the proposal will improve the Flower Avenue and Arliss Street streetscape contributing to and ensuring that the pedestrian circulation around the site is not only adequate, safe and efficient but also a pleasant space to walk through.

The forty-foot building height is permitted under the CROZ with a compatibility finding. When amended by the conditions the building will be compatible with the adjacent residential buildings located across Flower Avenue and Arliss Street as well as the commercial buildings in the Flower Village Center.

- b. **Open Space**

The plan proposes that approximately 18% (7,140 sf) of the site will be green space, exceeding the 10% minimum requirement. The green space consists largely of a landscape "garden" area at the foundation of the building along the Flower Avenue and Arliss Street frontages, a landscape strip and internal parking lot landscape area. The building entrances will include areas with special paving and bicycle racks will be provided near the building entrance.

The proposed stormwater management concept consists of on-site water quality control via a separator sand filter. Onsite recharge is not required since this is

considered to be redevelopment. Channel protection is not required because the post development peak discharge is less than or equal to 2.0 cfs.

c. Landscaping and Lighting

The proposed landscaping on the site as amended by the conditions above is adequate, safe and efficient. The planting consists primarily of new streetscape planting, foundation planting around the base of the building on the Flower Avenue and Arliss Street frontages, and perimeter landscape strip planting on the southern and eastern property lines.

All retaining walls will be clad with brick on both sides of all above grade portions of the walls.

The streetscape along Flower Avenue will be improved by replacing the aging Bradford Pear trees and by enlarging the tree pits and amending the planting soil. The existing exposed aggregate paving will be continued across the proposed driveway entrances to form a continuous pedestrian zone along the street. Existing street lighting will be retained along Flower Avenue. An existing electrical pole will be removed.

A new streetscape treatment has been developed by DHCA for Arliss Street. At the time of this writing, the new standards are under review by the DPWT. The treatment consists of panels of scored concrete panels within exposed aggregate concrete bands, street trees, approximately every 30 feet on center and decorative streetlights every 60 feet on center. The Applicant will use these new streetscape standards as approved by DPWT. A "neckdown" will also be added near the intersection of Arliss Street and Flower Avenue.

The lighting plan addresses safety and security issues within the site as well as the avoidance of negative glare onto the adjacent properties. On-site lighting consists of a mix of freestanding fixtures in the surface parking lot, wall-mounted fixtures on the south and east facades, recessed lighting in the building overhang and street lighting.

The Applicant has also proffered to provide all windows that face Flower Avenue and Arliss Street with light filtering Mecho shades. The developer states that the shades will be drawn every evening by the cleaning crew and will be included as a required responsibility in their cleaning contract.

d. Recreation

There is no recreation requirement for non-residential development.

e. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

As amended by the preceding conditions, vehicular and pedestrian circulation will be adequate, safe and efficient. This plan encourages the development of active urban streets and improves the quality of the pedestrian environment by providing the enhancement to the streetscape as prescribed in the new DHCA streetscape standards and as envisioned by the master plan.

Anticipating that patrons of the commercial center may park in the parking garage during times of heavy use, egress from the P-1 level of the parking garage to the Flower Avenue sidewalk will be provided in the southwest corner of the building. The streetscape improvements along Flower Avenue and Arliss Street facilitate pedestrian access between the adjacent residential neighborhood and the commercial center

4. *Each structure and use is compatible with other uses and other Site Plans and with existing and proposed adjacent development.*

The three-story office building is compatible with the two story homes across Flower Avenue and Arliss Street and with the adjacent commercial development. The building has been designed to incorporate building materials and details that are sympathetic to both the adjacent commercial buildings and to the confronting residential properties. The mass of the building and been broken down by the use of punched windows and articulation of the façade elements. Views of all sides of the building have been carefully considered. The penthouse structure housing mechanical equipment has been set back and should not be visible from the street.

All windows facing Flower Avenue and Arliss Street will include light filtering Mecho shades to prevent glare at night to adjacent homes. All illuminated signage will be backlit also to prevent glare.

The applicant also submitted a shadow study, which shows there is no detrimental impact on the adjacent community as a direct result of the height of the proposed building. The greatest impact of shadows from the proposed 3-story building will at 3 p.m. on the winter solstice where the shadow just reaches across Arliss Avenue to the front yards of the townhouses.

Parking is located behind the building or within an underground parking garage and will not be visible from the street. The exposed aggregate concrete sidewalk treatment will be extended across driveway aprons to further enhance the streetscape.

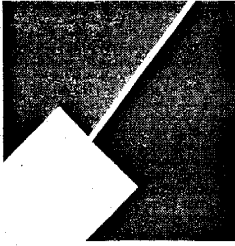
5. *The Site Plan meets all applicable requirements of Chapter 22A regarding forest conservation.*

The property is exempt from the forest conservation requirements.

APPENDICES

- A. Memorandums from Agencies
- B. Correspondence from the Community
- C. Correspondence from the Applicant

APPENDIX A



February 16, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Linda Komes, Planner Coordinator
Development Review Division

Richard Weaver, Principal Planner
Development Review Division

FROM: Glenn Kreger, Team Leader, Silver Spring/Takoma Park *gk*
Community-Based Planning Division

Miguel Iraola, ASLA, Planner Coordinator *MI*
Community-Based Planning Division

SUBJECT: Long Branch Medical Building
Site Plan #8-20060080
Preliminary Plan #1-20060240

The Community-Based Planning staff has reviewed the above-referenced plans for conformance with the December 2000 East Silver Spring Master Plan. We recommend approval of the proposed preliminary plan and site plan. We believe that this project is critical to the future revitalization of Long Branch as envisioned in the Master Plan and in subsequent reports by such groups as the Long Branch Task Force. The proposed project will foster economic vitality in the area by creating jobs, providing customers for other local businesses, and providing parking that can be used by the community during evenings and weekends. It will provide important medical services to the community and help to activate the streets, thereby contributing to public safety. The investment in new Class A space will encourage other redevelopment in the area consistent with the vision identified for Long Branch by a technical panel from the Urban Land Institute.

ZONING AND LAND USE

The subject property has a gross area of 0.91 acres (39,657 square feet) and a net area after dedications of 0.84 acres (39,344.51 square feet). It is bordered by Arliss Street to the north and Flower Avenue to the west. Arliss Street consists of 48' of pavement plus two 10' sidewalks in a 70' right-of-way. Flower Avenue consists of three travel lanes; a median that is concrete in some places and painted in others; and sidewalks on both sides in a 70' right-of-way.

The subject property is currently occupied by a surface parking lot. A mixture of commercial uses exist along Flower Avenue to the south, including a dental appliance

business; El Gavilan restaurant; the former Flower Theater, now occupied by a church; and various retailers in the Flower Village Center including a County liquor store. A second surface parking lot is also located to the south. The parking lot for the Giant food store adjoins the subject property on the east. This entire block is zoned C-1 with the Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone (CROZ).

Across Flower Avenue to the west of the subject property are single-family detached homes in the R-60 Zone. Across Arliss Street to the north is a single-family detached house at the intersection with Flower Avenue and townhouses along Arliss Street in the RT-12.5 Zone.

The proposed use on the subject property is a medical office building to be occupied by Adventist Health Care, Inc. As demonstrated in materials submitted by the applicant, it is not uncommon for office buildings to be located on the edge of commercial districts across from single-family residential uses. The proposed use is permitted under the current zoning and it is consistent with the revitalization goal of the Overlay Zone and the master plan.

Under the CROZ, site plan review is required to help achieve development that is consistent with the vision and design guidance in the master plan. Although no reduction has been requested for the subject property, the Planning Board can reduce setbacks to accomplish master plan objectives. Under the CROZ, the Planning Board can also approve building height in excess of the normal 30' in the C-1 zone; height up to 42' can be approved with a finding of neighborhood compatibility and consistency with the intent of the master plan. The proposed project would be 40' in height.

RELEVANT PUBLIC POLICIES

Enterprise Zone

The subject property is located within the Long Branch-Takoma Park Enterprise Zone. This zone was designated in 2003 to provide incentives for economic development in the target area.

Urban Land Institute (ULI) Report

The February 2005 report of the ULI Technical Assistance Panel indicated that the density and height allowed by the CROZ in the commercial core needed to be even greater than what the zone presently allows. According to the report, "The panel agrees with the County that the proposed location at the northwest edge of the study area at the corner of Flower Avenue and Arliss Street is an appropriate location for the medical office building."

Long Branch Task Force

The Long Branch Task Force endorsed the ULI recommendations in their May 2005 annual report.

Centers and Boulevards

Emerging public policy regarding the redevelopment of mature commercial centers is described in the *Planning Framework Report: Revitalizing Centers, Reshaping*

Boulevards, and Creating Great Public Spaces. This report envisions Montgomery County in transition from a large auto-dependent suburb to a more urban form. It recognizes that future growth will take the form of infill development and redevelopment away from the Agricultural Reserve. Much of this growth will be accommodated by the redevelopment of aging commercial centers and along the frontage of the roads and transit routes that connect the centers. The redevelopment of commercial centers as envisioned in the Framework Report could help return these commercial centers to their historic role as focal points of community life and provide multiple community benefits, including: community-serving retail, offices, services, market-rate and affordable housing, public spaces and linkages to the surrounding communities.

Bi-County Transitway

At least one potential alignment for the Bi-County Transitway (BCT) passes the subject property. The Maryland Mass Transit Administration (MTA) has indicated that the proposed project does not impact potential BCT alignments.

MASTER PLAN CONFORMANCE

Pursuant to the *December 2000 East Silver Spring Master Plan*, the subject property was rezoned from R-60 to C-1/CROZ. The rest of the block was rezoned from C-2 to C-1/CROZ (Attachments 1-2). This action by the County Council reflected a change in land use policy. The entire block bounded by Flower Avenue, Piney Branch Road and Arliss Street was consolidated as the commercial core for Long Branch with uniform commercial zoning. Whereas the 1977 Master Plan described the subject property—then R-60—as a buffer between the adjoining neighborhood and the C-2 property in Long Branch, the *December 2000 East Silver Spring Master Plan* describes Arliss Street as providing “a transition area between the townhouses on the north side of the street and the commercial retail activity of the Flower Village Center.” (p. 76) The Master Plan recommends that Arliss Street be streetscaped to improve its role as a transitional element.

The Master Plan envisions the Flower Village Center as “the major neighborhood center and community focal point for neighborhoods in both East Silver Spring and Takoma Park.” (p. 39) The Plan notes that sensitivity needs to be shown when adding land uses next to commercial centers: “New or expanded structures should be sensitive to the character and the scale of adjoining neighborhoods. Buildings should not be significantly larger than nearby structures.” (p. 29)

As a result of its rezoning to C-1/CROZ, the subject property is part of the commercial center, not a new use to be located next to a commercial center. Nevertheless, the Master Plan provided specific guidance to ensure that the subject property was developed in a way that is sensitive to the nearby neighborhood. Specific master plan guidance is provided on page 39 of the Master Plan; Figure 2 on page 40 illustrates potential ways to achieve the street-oriented development recommended by the Plan (attachments). The proposed medical office building resembles alternative B in these illustrations. The Master Plan states that “consideration should be given to the views of homeowners that face the site across Flower Avenue, as well as the residential

properties on Arliss Street.” (p. 39) It then identifies a number of factors that affect the relationship between the proposed medical office building and nearby homes:

1. Height and bulk

Although the Master Plan states that townhouse development on this site would be appropriate as a transition to the residences across Flower Avenue and Arliss Street, townhouses are not necessarily the only type of development that would be appropriate; other types of buildings could also be appropriate if designed to be compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhood. The proposed building will be clearly identifiable as an office building, but it has been designed to avoid appearing as a monolithic structure. The building will have two wings rather than appearing as a single mass. Building articulation and materials will be used to break up the building mass.

According to the Master Plan, the purpose of the CROZ shall be achieved in part by limiting building heights to 30'; however, the Planning Board may permit up to 42' in building height for commercial development (or up to 50' for residential development) if the Planning Board finds the proposed development to be compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with the intent of the Master Plan (p. 37). The proposed medical office building will be 40' in height. Since Flower Avenue slopes downward as it approaches Piney Branch Road, the roof will be approximately 20' taller than the top of the Flower Theater.

The roof of the proposed building will be 15' higher than the peak of the roofs on the single-family detached homes across Flower Avenue and only 12' higher than the peak of the roof on the home across Arliss Street. We find this to be an acceptable relationship given a) the 115' distance between the face of the proposed building and the existing single-family detached homes across Flower Avenue, and b) the 115'-120' distance between the face of the proposed building and the homes across Arliss Street. (The distance between the face of the proposed building and the homes on the north side of Arliss Street increases as one moves east from Flower Avenue.) The applicant's shadow study demonstrates that the building will not significantly impact the homes across either street or other commercial structures.

2. Setbacks

Setback reductions are permitted by the CROZ, but no setback reductions have been requested. Instead, the building has been pushed back further than the required 10' setback along the two street frontages, providing an opportunity for additional landscaping along the edges. The proposed building setback along Flower Avenue aligns with the face of the Flower Theater down the block. As illustrated on page 40 of the Master Plan (Attachment 3), the Plan contemplated new buildings on this site that are located close to the street.

3. Location of the Building on the Site and Entrances to the Building

As illustrated on page 40 of the Master Plan, the proposed location of the medical office building on the site was contemplated in the Plan. The proposed

building and the main entrance to the building are oriented to the street as called for by the Master Plan.

4. Neighborhood Friendly Pedestrian Access to the Building

The main entrance to the proposed medical office building is at an appropriate location on Flower Avenue. An existing concrete pedestrian refuge on Flower Avenue facilitates pedestrian crossings to the proposed medical office building. Pursuant to the Master Plan, the proposed project includes a neck down on Arliss Street at Flower Avenue. This facilitates a shorter crossing distance on Arliss Street for Long Branch residents who may wish to walk to the proposed medical office building or the other uses in the commercial core. The retention of on-street parking along Arliss Street also serves to buffer pedestrians from vehicles.

The streetscape recommendations in the Master Plan include a shared use (pedestrian and bicyclist) sidewalk along Flower Avenue. The application proposes a 15'-wide sidewalk (11' clear at the tree pits) that will accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists. The shared-use sidewalk will facilitate access to the proposed building as well as other uses on the block. A Class III bike route (signed, shared roadway) is also recommended on Flower Avenue. The site plan includes bike storage facilities at an appropriate location.

5. Vehicular Circulation and Parking on Site that is Sensitive to Pedestrians

An existing curb cut on Flower Avenue near the corner of Flower Avenue/Arliss Street will be removed to improve safety. Vehicular access points will be limited to a single entrance on Flower Avenue and a single entrance on Arliss Street—away from the Flower Avenue/Arliss Street intersection, at opposite corners of the site. Drivers who cannot find surface parking behind the building will be able to go directly into structured parking. A covered patient drop-off area that is internal to the site will remove this function from adjoining roadways.

As recommended in the Master Plan, the parking for the proposed building does not separate the building from the street. Both the parking and the loading area are screened from the residential uses across Flower Avenue and Arliss Street by the location of the proposed building.

Arliss and Flower Avenue are business streets with 70' minimum rights-of-way. No additional dedication is needed.

6. Landscaping

The mature street trees along Flower Avenue will be preserved or replaced in kind. The proposed landscaping along Flower Avenue and Arliss Street will make it more enjoyable to walk along both streets. The landscape materials along the building frontages will add color and variety throughout the year.

7. Building Materials

The proposed building will include a glass corner curtain wall; the remaining approximately 80 percent of the façade will be masonry (primarily brick) with vertical punch out windows typical of residential construction to break up the mass of the building.

8. Illumination

The applicant (not the tenant) will provide an architectural shading system for the building along both street frontages. These shades will significantly reduce the transmission of interior lighting to the exterior of the building after sunset.

9. Signage

Rather than use the neon signage typical of commercial buildings, the proposed building will use backlit signage to minimize its intrusiveness.

Based on the description above, we conclude that the proposed building will not be incompatible with either the single-family homes outside the commercial core or the other commercial buildings on the same block, many of which are likely redevelopment candidates themselves.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The applicant initiated meetings with the Sligo Branview Community Association (SBCA) last summer and has since met with them three times (October 26 and November 9, 2005 and January 31, 2006). The design of the project was revised in several ways to respond to community concerns: the building setbacks were increased; the building height was reduced by two feet; the extent of masonry in the building façade was significantly increased; and the building articulation was refined. Some members of SBCA continue to have concerns regarding the project.

The applicant presented the proposed project to the Commercial and Economic Development Committee of the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) on September 21, 2005. The full CAB considered the project on October 10, 2005, and again on February 13, 2006, but has taken no official position. The applicant also presented the proposed project to the Long Branch Business League on June 15, 2005. On January 30, 2006, the League submitted a letter of support for the proposed project.

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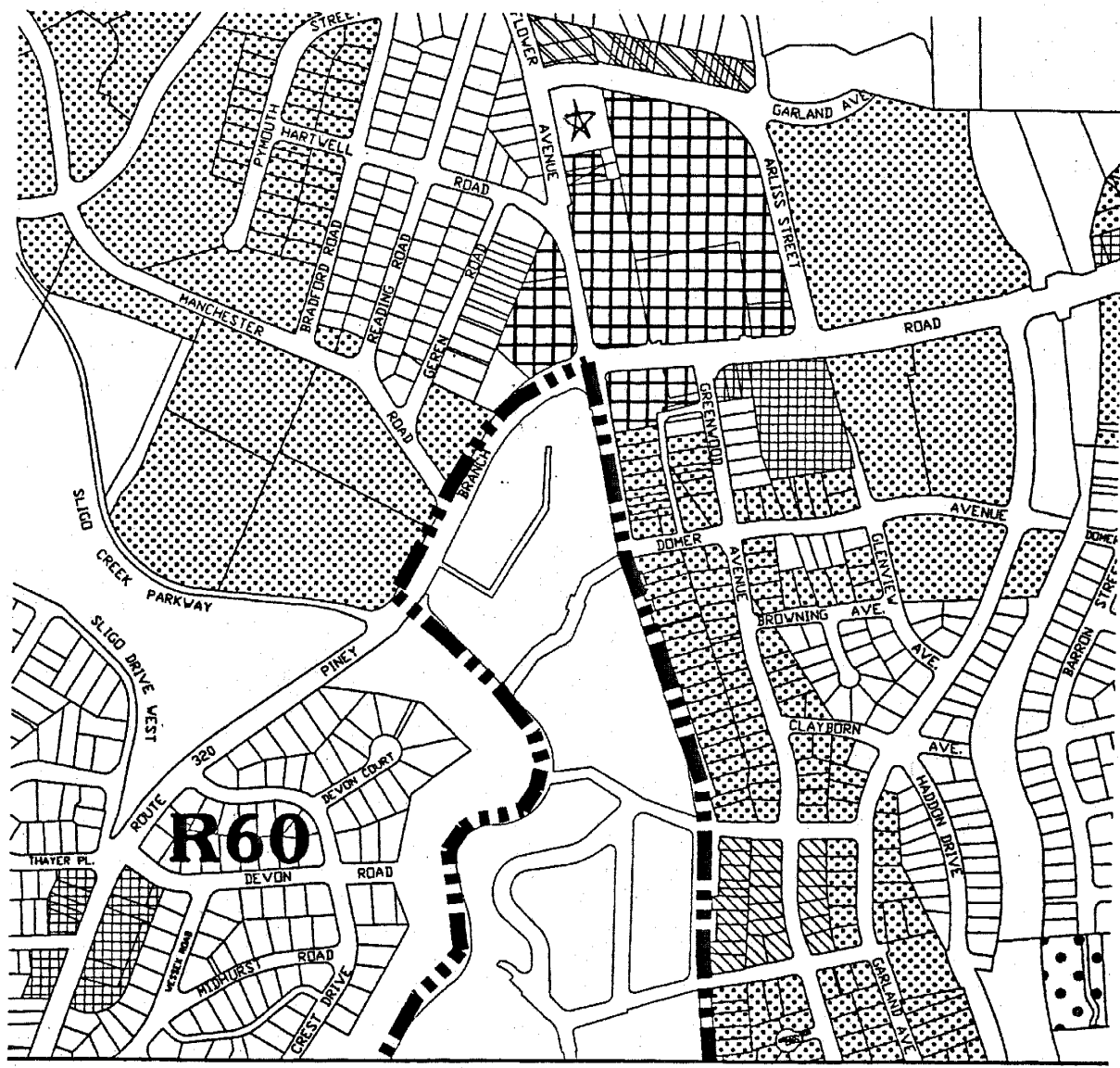
Attachment 1: Prior Zoning Map (pre-2001 zoning)

Attachment 2: Current Zoning Map

Attachment 3: Master Plan Figure 2, Illustration of Street Oriented Development
Along Flower Avenue

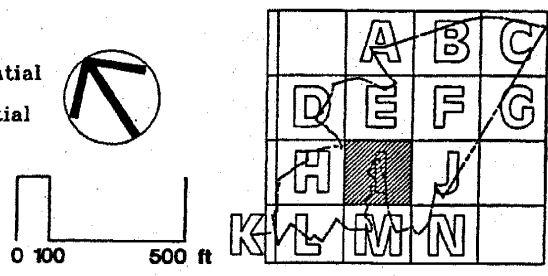
Existing Zoning - Area I
(prior to 2001)

Map 43

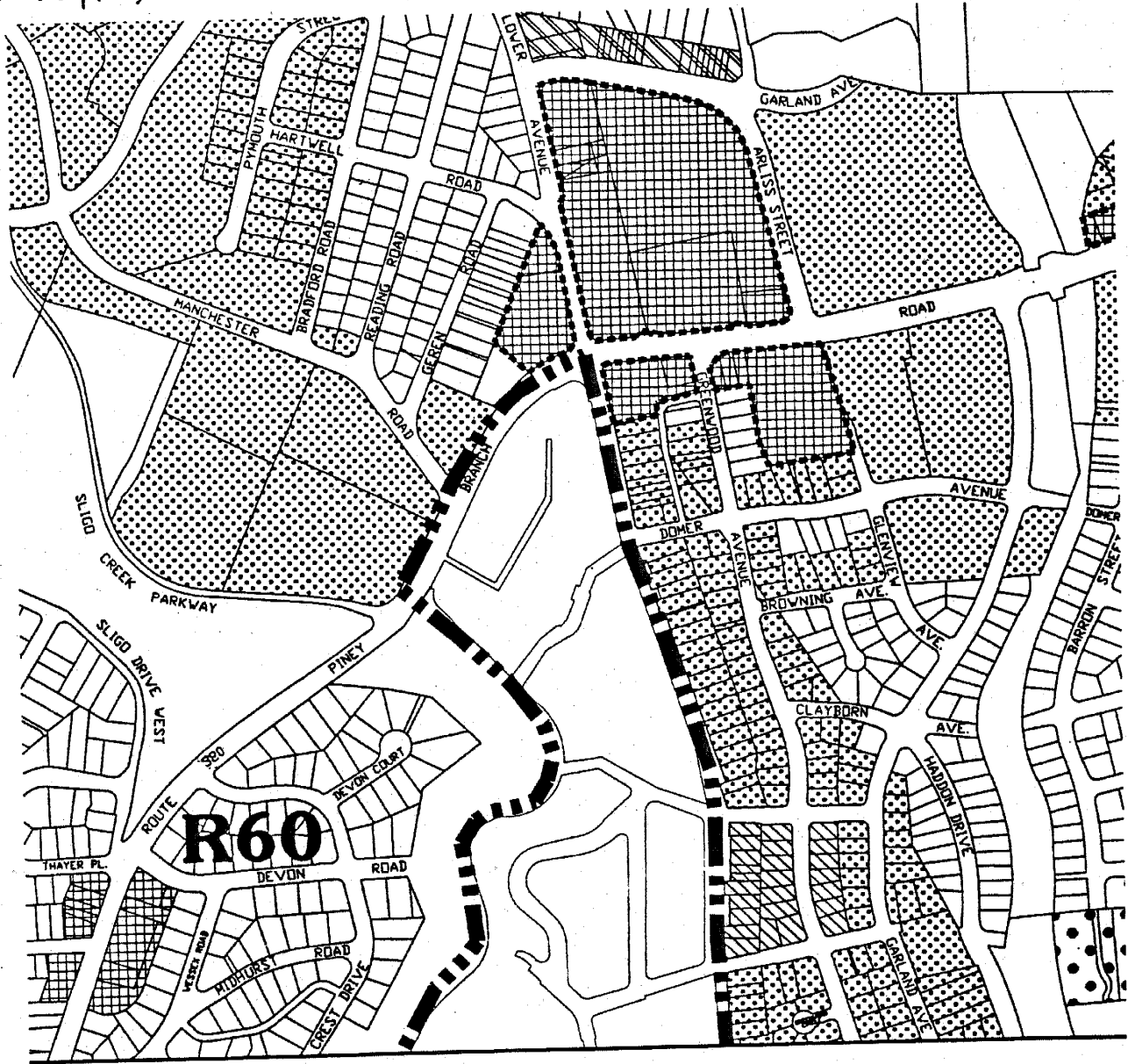


LEGEND










- ▬▬▬▬ Master Plan Boundary
- ▣▣▣▣ C-1 - Local Commercial
- ▤▤▤▤ C-2 - General Commercial
- ▧▧▧▧ R-10 - Multi-Family High Density Residential
- ▩▩▩▩ R-30 - Multi-Family Low Density Residential
- ▨▨▨▨ R-40 - One Family Semi-Detached
- ▭▭▭▭ R-60 - Single Family Residential
- ▮▮▮▮ RT-12.5 - Townhouses



Proposed Zoning - Area I
(now adopted)



LEGEND

-  Master Plan Boundary
 -  C-1 - Local Commercial
 -  C-2 - General Commercial
 -  R-10 - Multi-Family High Density Residential
 -  R-30 - Multi-Family Low Density Residential
 -  R-40 - One Family Semi-Detached
 -  R-60 - Single Family Residential
 -  RT-12.5 - Townhouses
-  CROZ - Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone

