

JULY 1993

White Oak Master Plan

Issues Report



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ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT: This report is the first document in the master plan process for the White Oak Master Plan area. This report identifies issues to be addressed in the White Oak Master Plan. It contains issues identified by the White Oak Master Plan Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Montgomery County Planning Department staff in its meetings during the spring and summer of 1993. The White Oak Master Plan will serve as a comprehensive amendment to the 1981 *Eastern Montgomery County Master Plan*, as amended in 1990.

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WHITE OAK MASTER PLAN ISSUES REPORT

July 1993

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Montgomery County Planning Department
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

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White Oak Master Plan Citizens Advisory Committee

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White Oak Master Plan Issues Report

I. INTRODUCTION

This report contains issues identified by the White Oak Master Plan Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Planning Department staff in open meetings held during the spring of 1993. The Master Plan will serve as an amendment to the *1981 Master Plan for the Eastern Montgomery County Planning Area: Cloverly, Fairland, White Oak*, as amended in 1990, and the General Plan for Montgomery County. The purpose of this report is two-fold: to foster discussion and dialogue in regard to the community's concerns, and to outline the issues that will ultimately be addressed in the Master Plan. As the first document prepared in the master plan process, this Report does not present options, solutions, or recommendations to issues, as these will be addressed in later stages of the master plan process through the development of additional documents.

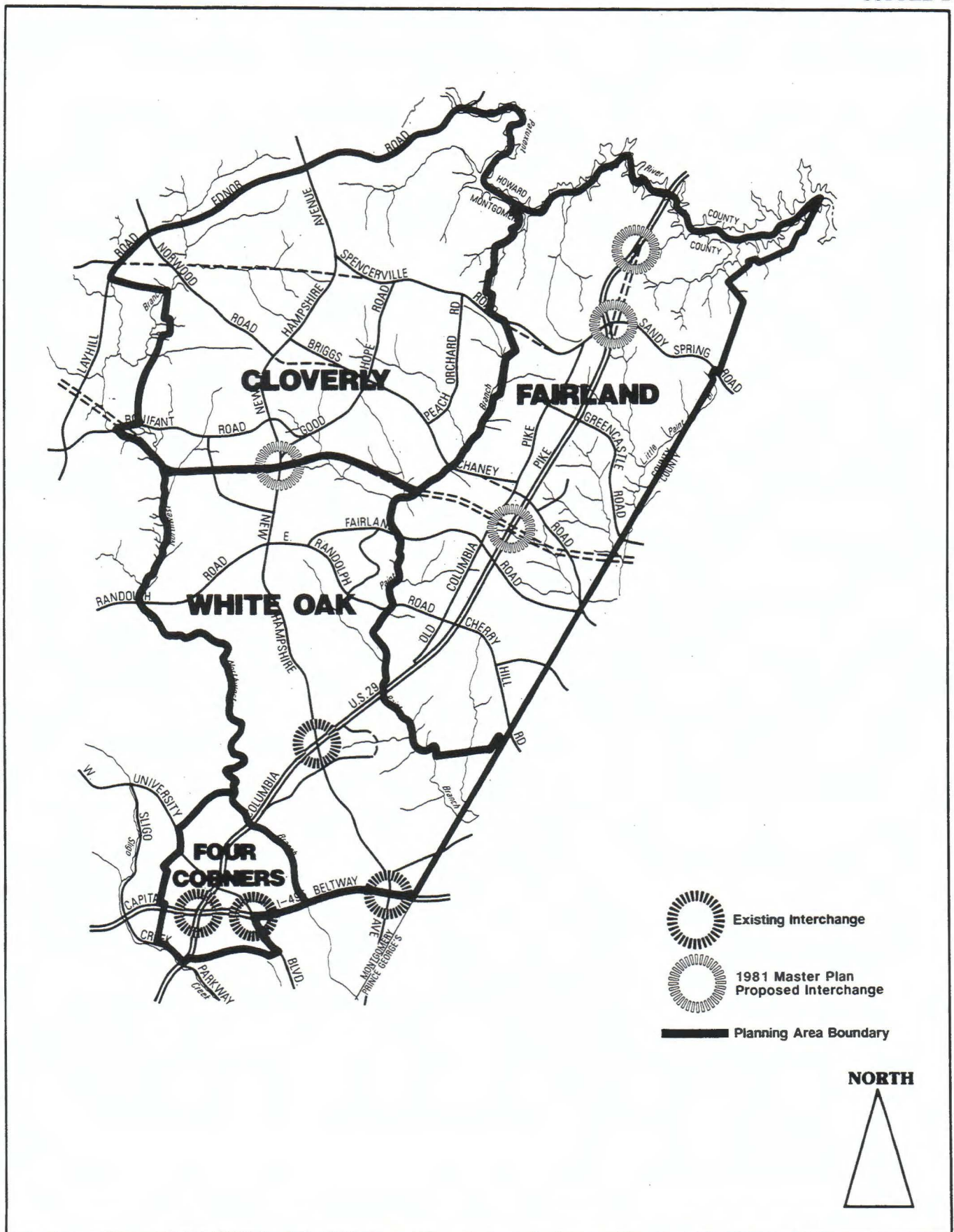
What is an issue? *The Random House College Dictionary* defines an issue as "a point in question or a matter that is in dispute... the decision of which is of special or public importance...." In developing an issues report, the opportunity to identify major concerns, or "issues," of the people who live, work, and shop in the White Oak Master Plan area is provided. Although the Master Plan area is made up of various communities, they shall be referred to as White Oak for the purposes of this document.

This report gives a comprehensive overview of White Oak: its problems and opportunities. The Issues Report will be presented to the Planning Board by the CAC and the Planning Department staff to ensure that its scope is consistent with the Commission's approved work program.

This report is presented in four sections: Introduction, Planning Process, Background, and Planning Issues. Following the Introduction, the second section, Planning Process, provides a description of the master plan process and an explanation of the modifications to the standard procedures that are being applied and an overview of the relationship between the Eastern Montgomery County master plan updates. The Background section describes the geography of the area, provides planning history, and presents a general description of the demographic profile of White Oak today. The fourth section, Planning Issues, presents the issues identified by the CAC and the Planning Department staff. These issues include the categories of Land Use, Transportation, Environment, Community Identity and Design, Housing, Community Facilities and Services, and Other Issues. The Other Issues category contains issues that are important to the White Oak residents but may be outside the authority of the Master Plan or may be resolved prior to the adoption of the Master Plan.

EASTERN MONTGOMERY COUNTY MASTER PLAN AREAS

FIGURE 1



White Oak Master Plan Issues Report

II. PLANNING PROCESS

To initiate a new master plan amendment for the White Oak Master Plan area, the White Oak Master Plan Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was appointed by the Montgomery County Planning Board in March 1993. Four master plans for the entire eastern portion of Montgomery County are being undertaken simultaneously (see Figure 1). In addition to the White Oak CAC, the Fairland, Four Corners, and Cloverly CACs were appointed using a process that was designed specifically for these plans to improve the nature of citizen participation in the master plan process. This section describes the generic master plan process, followed by a summary of the modifications to the process that are being applied to the Eastern Montgomery County master plans. Issues that are common to all four master plan areas are also described in this section.

The term "master plan area" is used to define the area covered by an individual master plan. The master plan area boundaries are established to respond to common issues, natural boundaries, community affiliations, or other characteristics. Master plan areas often differ from other geographic boundaries used in Montgomery County such as "planning areas" and "policy areas" that have been established by the County Council for other purposes.

A. MASTER PLAN PROCESS

Appointment of CAC members is the first step in the master plan process. CACs comprise individuals who represent residents, neighborhood associations, civic groups, businesses, landowners, developers, and other special interests. CAC members help identify important planning issues and areas of concern in the community. They have the responsibility to represent their constituencies, bring their concerns to the table for discussion, and keep them informed of the master plan's progress and proposals.

The Planning Department staff work with the CACs to help frame the issues, provide technical information and research data, and assist with the preparation of this and future documents. See Figure 2 for an overview of the master plan development process. The community's concerns, as expressed through the CAC members, become the foundation for the Issues Report.

The next step in the master plan process is the development of the Staff Draft Plan. The Staff Draft Plan, like the Issues Report, is designed to be a cooperative effort between the CAC and the Planning Department staff. The Staff Draft Plan examines the concerns raised in the Issues Report and presents alternative courses of action through specific recommendations. It provides a vision for the master plan area and a "road map" for its achievement. The Staff Draft Plan also includes a fiscal impact analysis, which is prepared by the County's Office of Planning Implementation.

The Staff Draft Plan is presented to the Planning Board by the Planning Department staff with the CAC present for comment. The Planning Board's review of the document generally focuses on whether the draft is ready to be presented at a public hearing. The Planning Board makes whatever modifications it deems necessary and a Public Hearing

Montgomery County Master Plan Development Process

Planning Board submits, and Council approves:

Annual Work Program

Planning staff initiates community participation and prepares:

Issues Report

Planning staff reviews Issues Report with Planning Board,
and then prepares:

Staff Draft Plan

Planning Board reviews Staff Draft, and, with modification as
necessary, approves plan as suitable for public hearing.

Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan

Planning Board reviews public hearing testimony,
receives Executive comments at Board worksessions,
and adjusts Public Hearing Draft to become:

Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan

Executive reviews Planning Board Draft and forwards fiscal
impact analysis and comments to County Council.

Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan Transmitted to County Council

Council holds public hearing and worksessions and approves,
disapproves, or amends Planning Board Draft,
which is forwarded to M-NCPPC to become:

Approved and Adopted Master Plan

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(Preliminary) Draft Plan is prepared. The Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan is a formal proposal to amend an adopted master or sector plan. A public hearing is then held by the Planning Board for the purpose of receiving testimony on the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan.

After the public hearing is held, the Planning Board holds open worksessions to review testimony and revise the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan. The number of worksessions varies with the degree of complexity and consensus on the issues. During this time, the Planning Board discusses the master plan recommendations on specific issues. A joint review with the Executive staff regarding the fiscal impacts of the proposed Plan also takes place during the worksessions. Once the worksessions are completed, the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan is amended by the Planning Board and republished as the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan. It is then transmitted to the County Council and the County Executive.

The County Executive has 60 days to comment on the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan and prepare a fiscal impact analysis for the County Council. After the County Council receives the Executive's comments and fiscal analysis, a public hearing is held. Similar to the Planning Board, open worksessions are conducted to review the testimony from the public hearing and revise the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan. After the worksessions are complete, the County Council adopts a resolution approving the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan, as revised.

Once approved by the County Council, the master plan is formally adopted by the full Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (the Montgomery and Prince George's County Planning Boards). Following the approval and adoption process, the Planning Department staff assumes responsibility for publishing an approved and adopted master plan, formally filing it with the Clerk of the Circuit Court, and making it available to the public. The Planning Department staff is typically instructed to prepare a sectional map amendment for the area. A sectional map amendment is a comprehensive rezoning of the master plan area to implement the zoning recommendations of the master plan.

B. MODIFICATIONS TO THE MASTER PLAN PROCESS FOR EASTERN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

In May 1992, at the direction of the County Council, the Planning Board selected the Concordia Systems Group and the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution as consultants to review the citizen participation process used in the development of master plans. The consultants were specifically instructed to propose a new process for citizen involvement in the preparation of comprehensive amendments to the four Eastern Montgomery County master plans.

The consultant's work consisted of a series of interviews, surveys, reports, responses to the reports, general meetings, and smaller focus groups. Early on, interviews with Eastern Montgomery County residents confirmed the feelings of local dissatisfaction that had been recognized and acknowledged by public officials when the consultant was hired. Individuals contacted by the consultant agreed that the role of the CAC is an advisory one,

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and that the final decision on a master plan rests with the Planning Board, the County Executive, and the County Council. However, there was also agreement that the citizen participation process should be revised to one that is more constructive and collaborative.

Six major concerns were identified in the consultant's report that should be resolved through the citizen participation process:

Fairness - Citizens expressed a concern that local issues and needs often get overlooked and that persons appointed to the CAC should adequately represent the interests of those who live in the area.

Diversity - CACs should represent a wide range of diverse views from a mix of experienced and knowledgeable individuals as well as from some new faces.

Voice and Influence - Citizens want to know that their concerns are being heard, acknowledged, and respected, and that the plans they have helped to produce have a reasonable chance of being implemented.

Efficiency - The process should include an honest attempt to resolve issues but should not increase the time required to develop a plan.

Accountability - Citizens expressed strong feelings about the "missing link" between planning and implementation. Plans should show a realistic balance between the implementation of public infrastructure and private development. Plans should not be changed unilaterally once they are adopted.

History Repeating Itself - There was a range of past CAC experiences and a concern that the lack of consistent and fair management of the process could result in a repeat of the negative experiences.

The consultant's recommendations for a prototypical citizen participation process were presented to the Planning Board in December 1992. The Planning Board endorsed the report's suggestions toward creating a more effective and cooperative method for citizen participation in the development of new master plans for Eastern Montgomery County.

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To create a more constructive and cooperative process, the changes to the CAC procedures that are being applied to the Eastern Montgomery County master plans include:

1. Appointment of four separate CACs with linkage mechanisms to one another;
2. Appointment of CAC members who live in the area or have a long term, major stake in the area;
3. Selection of a Chair by the CAC members, with approval by the Planning Board;
4. Communication between the Planning Board and the CACs throughout the process;
5. Development of the Issues Report and subsequent master plan drafts as a collaborative effort between the Planning Department staff and the CAC;
6. Presentation of the Issues Report and subsequent drafts to the Planning Board by the CAC and the Planning Department staff (previously, the Staff Draft Plan was the first document that went to the Planning Board and it was presented only by the Planning Department staff);
7. Extension of the life of the CACs through adoption of the Plan by the County Council; and
8. Communication among the Planning Board, the Executive branch, and the former CAC members on the status of implementation of the Plan after formal adoption and approval.

C. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER EASTERN MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANS

Although each of the four Eastern Montgomery County master plans will address separate and unique planning issues, several matters cross area boundaries. These common issues fall primarily in the areas of transportation, environment, and public facilities, and they affect two, three, or all four master plan areas.

1. The Proposed Intercounty Connector

The 1981 *Eastern Montgomery County Master Plan* alignment for the proposed Intercounty Connector (ICC) is located in central Fairland and forms the boundary between White Oak and Cloverly. Montgomery County is currently involved with state and federal agencies in developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project. Of concern in all three areas is the relationship between the EIS and the master plan process. The issue

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for the Cloverly, Fairland, and White Oak Master Plans is the extent to which the plans are able to influence issues on the proposed ICC and the ability to coordinate EIS findings with the master plan process. In addition, the impact of the proposed ICC on east-west travel is a concern in Cloverly, Fairland, Four Corners, and White Oak.

2. US 29

US 29 is the primary north-south transportation artery in Eastern Montgomery County, running through Four Corners, White Oak, and Fairland. The State Highway Administration (SHA) is studying US 29 from Sligo Creek Parkway to the Howard County line at the Patuxent River. This study, which is nearly complete, has been developing the engineering and environmental aspects of alternatives that would ensure that sufficient, safe roadway capacity will be provided to accommodate existing and projected traffic growth. Extensive development has occurred along US 29 in the past 10 years, yet improvements to the existing roadway network have not kept pace with traffic generated by the growth.

The function of US 29 as an access route for local residents, as well as a through route for regional commuters, is of particular concern. In addition, the decision to make at-grade improvements to the US 29 and University Boulevard intersection in Four Corners, rather than construct an underpass, may have consequences in White Oak and Fairland. SHA is proposing the grade separation of all US 29 intersections north of New Hampshire Avenue in Montgomery County; the land use, community character, and transportation consequences of this proposal will be evaluated by the Fairland, Four Corners, and White Oak Master Plans. The Cloverly Master Plan will need to consider the impacts of SHA-proposed US 29 interchanges at Spencerville Road and Briggs Chaney Road on east-west traffic through Cloverly.

The Fairland, Four Corners, and White Oak Master Plans also will address transit issues along US 29. The potential provision of transit service along this artery is of critical importance in making land use recommendations, and the issue must be sensitively handled because the possibility for conflict is high. In White Oak, transit options may be a workable solution to congestion on US 29, but some concerns have been raised about transit's viability south of New Hampshire Avenue where the character of US 29 changes and the right-of-way becomes more constrained. In Fairland, there are fundamental reservations about transit serviceability as a policy.

3. The Transitway and High-Occupancy Vehicle Network Master Plan

The *Issues Report for the Transitway and High-Occupancy Vehicle Network Master Plan* identifies several routes in the Cloverly, Fairland, Four Corners, and White Oak Master Plan areas as potential transitways, bus lanes, or HOV lanes. The issue for each master plan is how it will relate to this functional master plan.

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4. New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650)

New Hampshire Avenue is an important north-south transportation artery that serves White Oak and Cloverly. The planned widening of New Hampshire Avenue is a concern in White Oak and Cloverly. Transit issues along New Hampshire Avenue are likely to be addressed in the White Oak Master Plan. In Cloverly, New Hampshire Avenue's transformation over time from a rural road to a suburban highway with a mix of residential and non-residential uses has given rise to concerns about its character. The road's character and configuration should be addressed in the White Oak and Cloverly Master Plans.

5. Spencerville Road - Sandy Spring Road (MD 198)

MD 198 is an important east-west artery connecting Prince George's County, Fairland, and Cloverly. Its function and character in Fairland and Cloverly are issues that will be addressed in those plans. The Fairland Master Plan must evaluate these issues for the Burtonsville area, while in Cloverly, the purpose and character of the proposed Norbeck Road-Spencerville Road Connector and MD 198 through Spencerville will be an issue to examine.

6. Watershed Protection

The 1981 *Eastern Montgomery County Master Plan* stressed the importance of watershed protection, which includes protection and enhancement of both land and water habitats. Specific zoning strategies were recommended to protect the drinking water supply of the Patuxent, trout spawning areas of the Paint Branch, and the water quality of the Northwest Branch. The headwaters tributaries of Paint Branch (in Cloverly, Fairland, and White Oak), which support a self-sustaining, naturally reproducing brown trout population, are under stress from development. The Patuxent River Reservoir serves as a drinking water supply and supports a variety of fish, bird, and other animal species. In addition, the Reservoir and surrounding lands provide a variety of recreational opportunities. Concerns expressed in all four master plan areas suggest the need to examine the health of the Anacostia watershed, including Little Paint Branch, Northwest Branch, Paint Branch, Sligo Creek, and the Patuxent River watershed (see Figure 3). The plans should also evaluate land use, zoning, and transportation recommendations in these watersheds to determine the effects of watershed protection policies from the 1981 Plan. All four master plans will consider greenways and in-stream improvements to address habitat issues.



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7. Stormwater Management

All four master plans share stormwater management issues. Stormwater management is used to control erosion, sedimentation, and improve water quality. In White Oak, Cloverly, and Fairland, retrofitting facilities to bring them into line with new quality and quantity standards and to enhance watershed protection should be examined. Opportunities for new stormwater facilities in developed areas and other stream enhancement measures should be examined. In Four Corners, on-site stormwater management will likely be necessary on the property known as the "Kay Tract," as recommended in the 1986 *Sector Plan for Four Corners and Vicinity*.

8. Water Quality

An issue for the four master plan areas is the extent of land use and septic system impacts on water quality. The Cloverly and Fairland Master Plans will address impacts to the drinking water supply from both wells and the Patuxent Reservoir.

9. Forest Conservation

The quality and character of remaining forest lands is an issue in all four areas. The County Forest Conservation Law requires the conservation of forests and trees during development. The four master plans may evaluate areas that could be suitable for reforestation or afforestation by private or public interests and for forest preservation beyond the regulatory stream buffer areas.

10. Clean Air Act

The greater metropolitan Washington area currently is not meeting Clean Air Act standards for ozone and has isolated areas of carbon monoxide pollution. All four plans should examine actions that can help the region meet its obligations under the Act.

11. Commercial Areas

All four master plan areas are served by commercial districts, and each plan will address issues in these areas. The four master plans will explore the use of design techniques in commercial districts to enhance community focus and encourage compatibility. In addition, the 1981 *Eastern Montgomery County Master Plan* recommended that commercial development should be concentrated in existing commercially zoned areas. The Cloverly and White Oak Master Plans will consider if the need exists for additional commercial areas. In Four Corners and White Oak, potential strategies for commercial revitalization will be evaluated.

12. Public Facilities

Currently, many public facilities are inadequate to serve the residents of Eastern Montgomery County. In response to this issue, a number of facilities are planned for construction and site selection studies are under way for new public facilities, including a northeast high school, a recreation center, elevated water storage facilities, and a government center. While several of these studies may be completed before adoption of the master plans, the extent to which the planning process can influence site selection is an issue for the plans in Cloverly, White Oak, and Fairland. An overall strategy is necessary for locating future public facilities in all four master plan areas. In Four Corners, the ability of the master plan to influence the provision of recreational facilities and playing fields is important.

13. Maryland Planning Act of 1992

The 1992 State Planning Act articulates seven visions for managing land use: concentrating development in suitable areas; protecting sensitive areas; directing growth in rural areas to existing population centers and protecting resource areas; declaring that stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay is a universal ethic; conserving resources, including reductions of consumption; encouraging economic growth and streamlining regulation; and creating funding mechanisms to achieve objectives. The issue for each master plan will be to determine appropriate ways to comply with the visions.

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III. BACKGROUND: WHITE OAK MASTER PLAN AREA

A. DESCRIPTION

The White Oak Master Plan area contains approximately 5,981 acres, roughly 10.4 square miles. It is bordered by the Beltway to the south, the Northwest Branch to the west, the Paint Branch to the east, and the ICC right-of-way to the north. US 29, New Hampshire Avenue, and Randolph Road are the major arterials that transect the area. See Figure 4 for the White Oak Master Plan area boundaries.

The majority of the land area is devoted to single-family residential use; however, there is a concentration of apartments along Lockwood Drive, April Lane, Stewart Lane, and Old Columbia Pike. Some townhouse development is scattered within the single-family neighborhoods. There are currently commercial centers in the communities of Hillandale, Burnt Mills, White Oak, Meadowood, and Colesville. The only industrially-zoned development in the area is the Dow Jones offices located on Old Columbia Pike (I-3) and the Coca Cola bottling plant on Elton Road (I-1).

The focal points or landmarks that are particular to this area include: the WSSC buildings and dam along the Northwest Branch at US 29, the Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC), the Harry Diamond Laboratory (also known as the Adelphi Laboratory), the White Oak Library, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Park.

B. PLANNING HISTORY

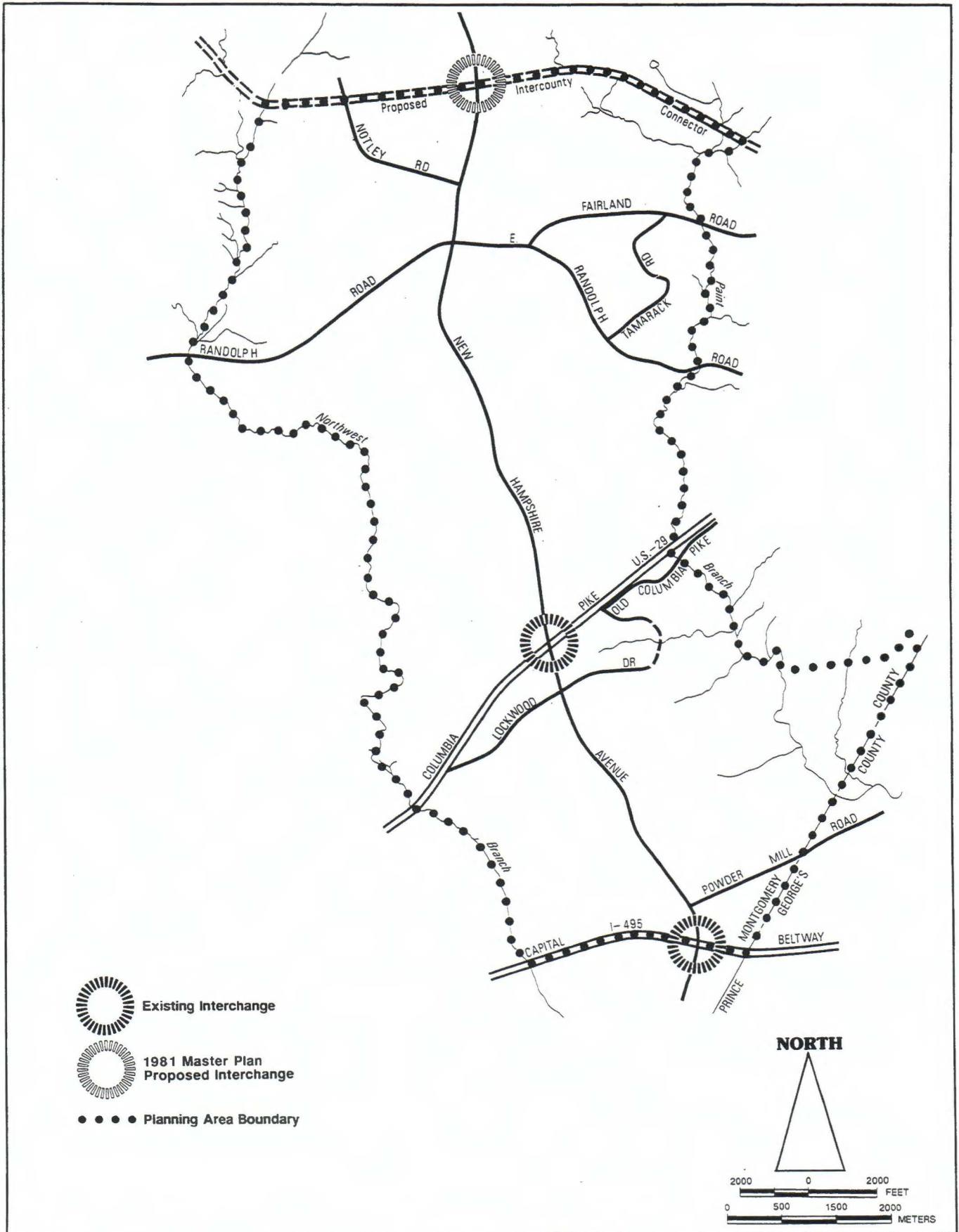
Zoning for the White Oak Master Plan area was first adopted in 1928. The area was rural in nature and comprised mostly residential zoning with some scattered areas of commercial zoning where businesses existed along the major thoroughfares and crossroads. The only platted residential subdivision at that time was Hollywood (platted in 1924). It wasn't until after World War II, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, that suburban residential development really accelerated. By the late 1960s, the communities of Hillandale, Quaint Acres, Hollywood, and Paint Branch Farms were on their way to being well established.

When the *Upper Northwest Branch Watershed Master Plan* was adopted in 1961, the Planning Commission stipulated that the area surrounding the interchange at US 29 and New Hampshire Avenue, north of the Naval Surface Warfare Center (known then as the Naval Ordnance Laboratory), be studied in further detail. The study determined the most appropriate use of the remaining three undeveloped land quadrants surrounding the U.S. 29 and New Hampshire Avenue interchange. The result of the study was the *White Oak and Vicinity Plan*, which was adopted in 1962 and amended the Master Plan for the Upper Northwest Branch Watershed. The most significant change to the Upper Northwest Branch Watershed Plan was the Residential R-20 Zone (garden apartments) proposed to the east of the White Oak Shopping Center.

The 1964 General Plan, "*On Wedges and Corridors*," guided the region's growth pattern by channeling development into six radial corridors and an urban ring centered on

WHITE OAK MASTER PLAN AREA

FIGURE 4



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Washington, DC. Wedges of rural open space, farmland, lower density residential uses, and resource-oriented uses were located between the corridors. Higher density residential development was planned primarily for the centers of the Corridor Cities. The only corridor located in Montgomery County was the I-270 Corridor. The General Plan envisioned a Corridor City straddling the Montgomery County-Prince George's County border in the Fairland-Beltsville area. A portion of Fairland east of US 29 formed one edge of the Corridor City.

The *Hillandale and Vicinity Plan* followed the adoption of the 1964 General Plan in 1965. This Plan examined how projected density recommended in the 1964 General Plan could be accommodated on the vacant land in the Hillandale area and what infrastructure improvements and expansions would be needed to serve the planned development. The Hillandale Plan realized that the proposed growth could only be absorbed on vacant land up to 1980; after that, it would become necessary to convert existing land uses to higher density if growth occurred as projected. The Plan proposed the expansion of existing multi-family medium density zoning and the use of residential high-rise zoning as a transition between the existing single-family areas and the commercial areas. The commercial areas were allowed to expand slightly so that they could continue to function as neighborhood commercial centers, yet not jeopardize the adjoining single-family residential areas.

In 1969, the General Plan was revised to reflect new statistical information; changes in planning policy and theory, particularly the introduction of staging strategies in master plans; transportation decisions; and changes in County plans. The update specified detailed goals and objectives for the 1964 General Plan in Montgomery County.

In 1970, the Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene imposed a sewer moratorium, which affected most of Eastern Montgomery County. No new development requiring sewer could proceed. In 1978, the County Council, seeing the changes in market conditions and the imminent end of the sewer moratorium, directed the Planning Board to develop a new Master Plan for Eastern Montgomery County. This new master plan would address public policies and future growth potential. Later that year, the moratorium was lifted completely and a new plan was initiated.

The *Master Plan for the Eastern Montgomery County Planning Area* was adopted in 1981. This Plan includes Cloverly, Fairland, and White Oak Master Plan areas; it is the current Master Plan for the area. The Plan incorporated the guidelines of the amended 1969 General Plan with a number of County policies, including the provision of affordable housing, the preservation of agricultural land, and the protection of natural resources. The 1981 Plan removed the Corridor City designated by the Fairland-Beltsville Plan, which reflected a decision to emphasize the redevelopment of Silver Spring.

One of the underlying land use planning concepts in the 1981 Plan is "transit serviceability," defined as a policy of "encouraging a pattern of development which is not entirely automobile dependent." The 1981 Master Plan recommended fringe parking facilities in strategic locations along US 29 and one in Colesville "to encourage both transit ridership and ridesharing, and to help maintain a balance between the projected traffic and the design capacity of the highway network." The lots recommended in the White Oak

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community (one in Colesville and one at the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and US 29) were recommended for first priority as the most likely to succeed due to their existing levels of traffic and their strategic proximity to downtown Silver Spring and the District of Columbia. Ride-On service was recommended to be extended from the White Oak community along New Hampshire Avenue to Colesville. With respect to White Oak, the 1981 Master Plan proposed to:

- o focus development along US 29
- o concentrate commercial development at the White Oak and Colesville areas
- o increase residential densities adjacent to commercial and industrial centers where transit service and roads could support more intensive uses
- o encourage a mix of housing types, including apartments
- o encourage the use of cluster development to provide additional watershed protection throughout the area
- o use planned-development (PD) zoning to encourage site assembly, housing mix, and higher standards of design and site layout
- o designate low-density residential uses in the upper Paint Branch and Northwest Branch watersheds to protect stream systems

The 1981 Master Plan also recommended the designation of transferable development rights (TDR) receiving areas along US 29 to help preserve agricultural lands in other parts of the County; however, no TDR receiving areas were recommended in White Oak.

By 1985, Eastern Montgomery County was experiencing a lag between approved residential and non-residential development and the improvement of roads, schools, sewers, and libraries. This problem was not unique to Eastern Montgomery County and led to the Council adoption of the Annual Growth Policy (AGP) in 1986. The AGP is designed to, "match the timing of private development with the availability of public facilities." A ceiling cap is set annually in the AGP so that new development does not out-pace the ability of a policy area to absorb growth with respect to public infrastructure.

By 1990, the only development that could be approved in the Fairland/White Oak Policy Area was limited residential development, which occurred under the special affordable housing allocation provision for policy areas determined to be in a negative growth situation. Traffic congestion along US 29, New Hampshire Avenue, and MD 198 reached unacceptable levels due to development mostly outside the White Oak Master Plan area. This led the County Council to adopt the Trip Reduction Amendment to the Eastern Montgomery County Master Plan in 1990. This was an interim measure to reduce potential future growth until a comprehensive master plan could be undertaken. The amendment reduced the densities proposed for the Fairland Master Plan area and implemented a voluntary trip reduction agreement program. In 1991, the County Council adopted a policy in the *FY 92 Annual Growth Policy* that exempted the Fairland/White Oak Policy Area from receiving additional units through the affordable housing special ceiling allocation.

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In 1993, the Planning Board transmitted a refinement to the General Plan to the County Council for its consideration. The "Planning Board (Final) Draft General Plan Refinement" reaffirms the Wedges and Corridors concept and provides further definition to distinct geographic components within the County. The Refinement expands the definition of the Urban Ring and the Corridor, adds Suburban Communities, and defines two distinct sub-areas of the Wedge: the Residential Wedge and the Agricultural Wedge. Each geographic component is discussed in terms of appropriate land uses, scale, intensity, and function.

C. WHITE OAK TODAY

In 1980, the White Oak Master Plan area was approximately 75 percent developed. Today, less than 9 percent of the developable land area remains undeveloped or underutilized. Although the population of White Oak increased at a slower rate than the County since the 1980 Census, it has reached the 1981 Eastern Montgomery County Master Plan high population projection of 32,000 and exceeded the high household projection of 11,500 by 300 units.

The White Oak Master Plan area has generally developed consistent with the 1981 Master Plan recommendations. Mixed residential housing types have been constructed despite the removal of the PD recommendations in the 1981 Master Plan by the 1990 Trip Reduction Amendment. Commercial development is concentrated in the existing commercial centers and has not spread into the surrounding neighborhoods. Traffic on US 29 in White Oak has increased due to development that has occurred in Howard County and Fairland through the 1981 Master Plan.

White Oak is residential in nature. It has well-established residential neighborhoods consisting of mostly single-family detached housing generally built in the early 1960s and 1970s. Data from the Maryland State Department of Assessment and Taxation Parcel File of June 1992 indicates that approximately 37 percent of the dwelling units in White Oak are multi-family units; 72 percent of the multi-family units are concentrated along Lockwood Drive, Old Columbia Pike, and in the April-Stewart Lanes area. Townhouses make up approximately 7 percent of the housing units in White Oak and are dispersed throughout the area. The majority of the townhouses have been built in the last 13 years.

According to the Population and Household Profile developed for the White Oak Master Plan area by the Montgomery County Planning Department, Research and Information Systems Division, the average White Oak household is made up of residents in their late twenties and thirties who are college-educated, married, and have one child. They live in a detached single-family home, which was purchased prior to 1985. Their household income exceeds \$55,000 a year. Of the employed residents in White Oak, 55 percent work outside of the County and 69 percent drive to work alone.

The White Oak Master Plan area is located between the Paint Branch and the Northwest Branch Stream Valleys and is narrow and elongated. East-west movement to adjoining areas is limited to Fairland Road, Randolph Road, US 29, Powder Mill Road, and the Capital Beltway (I-495). The community is physically separated from adjoining master plan communities by the Northwest Branch and Paint Branch, the ICC right-of-way, and the

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Capital Beltway. The neighborhoods in the White Oak Master Plan area are served by a network of residential streets branching from major through roads, such as Randolph Road, New Hampshire Avenue, and US 29. There are a limited number of connections between neighborhoods and between through roads. There is also a lack of interconnected sidewalks, particularly on primary residential streets and major arteries throughout the White Oak Master Plan area. This road and sidewalk network often requires residents to use their cars for short trips. There are also limited road and sidewalk connections between major portions of the Master Plan area.

WHITE OAK FACTS

Committed Land	4,833 Acres
Undeveloped Land	317 Acres
Parks/Recreation Land	830 Acres
Master Plan Land Area (Does not include Rights-of-way)	5,980 Acres
Population	31,903 persons

The Population and Housing Profile for the White Oak Master Plan area is a separate demographic profile developed by the Montgomery County Planning Department, Research and Information Systems Division. It was published in April 1993 and was based on the 1990 Census. Some of the key points of the profile are:

- * White Oak's population increased by 23% between 1980 and 1990. The County-wide population increased by 31%.
- * White Oak is more racially diverse than the County.
- * 57% of the housing stock in White Oak is single-family detached, compared to 52% County-wide.
- * White Oak's share of multi-family units is higher than the County's share, 35% compared to 30% County-wide.
- * Housing prices in White Oak tend to be higher than County-wide housing prices.
- * White Oak residents are well educated. One in four residents has received a graduate or professional degree.
- * White Oak's employed residents' commuting patterns are similar to County-wide patterns. Over two-thirds of the commuters drive alone. The percent of carpoolers is slightly higher than the County's, while the percentage using public transit is lower.

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IV. PLANNING ISSUES

The following potential issues have been identified by the White Oak Master Plan CAC and the Planning Department staff. This section is divided into seven subsections: Land Use, Transportation, Environment, Community Identity, Housing, Community Facilities and Services, and Other Issues. Each subsection has an introduction of the topic as it relates to the White Oak Master Plan area.

The issues have been presented in the form of a question. Some of the issues may be outside the authority of the Master Plan; however, it is felt that these issues are important to the residents and give context to the concerns of the community. These issues have been included in the Other Issues section.

A. LAND USE

The 1993 Final Draft General Plan Refinement describes the lower portion of White Oak as part of the Urban Ring and the balance of White Oak as part of the Suburban Communities. The Urban Ring is characterized as well-established, lively centers with job and housing opportunities, strong residential neighborhoods, varied transportation options, relatively dense development, active public investment, and commercial revitalization. The Suburban Communities are generally characterized as moderate density land uses, which are transit serviceable along major arteries and have increasing transportation options, suburban residential neighborhoods, distinct centers, and appropriate public investment.

The 1981 Master Plan addressed the "forces of change which could affect" the commercial centers and their surroundings. In brief, the 1981 Master Plan recommended that new development be compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods, that existing neighborhoods be protected with low density residential zoning, and that transitional uses be used as buffers to existing communities. It recommended safeguards to protect the established residential communities from adverse impacts.

1. General Land Use

- * How well has development in White Oak followed the Wedges and Corridors concept?
- * Should the current zoning be re-assessed to reflect present constraints to development?
- * Is there a need to reduce zoning density in areas? Are there areas appropriate for increased density or PD zones?
- * Greater accessibility to the northern part of White Oak due to the proposed ICC is likely to increase development pressures, particularly in the vicinity of the proposed New Hampshire interchange. Is the current zoning appropriate along the Alternate G Modified alignment (ICC)? (RE-2C and R-200)

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- * The 1981 *Eastern Montgomery County Master Plan* recommended no TDR receiving areas in White Oak. Are there areas in White Oak appropriate for TDR receiving areas?
- * Cluster development was recommended in the 1981 Plan as a means to provide additional watershed protection throughout the area. Should cluster development continue to be encouraged?
- * Should a mixed land use concentration (commercial, office, and residential) be looked at as it relates to transit service in the area?
- * Are there other uses needed in White Oak that don't already exist or are not allowed by zoning?
- * How do the existing land use recommendations relate to the changing character of the community? Do they address the needs of the residential complete life cycle?
- * As land use changes are considered, especially in the Good Hope tributary watershed, how can watershed and wildlife habitat protection be addressed?

2. Non-residential Development

The 1981 Master Plan recommended that the commercial development be concentrated in existing commercially zoned areas. A number of projects have been completed in the White Oak Master Plan area since 1981 and there is no vacant commercially-zoned land currently available for development. There is one vacant lot zoned for industrial use.

- * Should the Master Plan recommendation of concentrating commercial development on existing commercially zoned areas be re-evaluated? Is there a need for more commercial or industrial zoning? If so, where can it be located and what character should be recommended?
- * Is there a need for commercial revitalization? If so, are there ways to encourage revitalization of the commercial area located along New Hampshire Avenue and east of Old Columbia Pike?
- * Is there a need for additional retail space, taking into consideration future household growth? Is there enough retail diversity in White Oak? How much retail space is currently supportable in the area? Is there a sufficient amount of land available for future retail development?
- * Special exceptions and home occupations are a concern to the community from a safety and aesthetic point of view. What kinds of criteria can this Plan recommend to control how these uses impact the community?

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- * What controls could be developed to assure that non-residential uses allowed in residential zones are compatible with the character of the neighborhood? For example, churches are a permitted use in all residential zones.
- * Is there a need for more restaurants and entertainment facilities (theaters)? Where could they be provided?

3. Federal Facilities

There are two federal facilities located in White Oak: the Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC) on New Hampshire Avenue, and the Adelphi Laboratory (formerly known as the Harry S. Diamond Laboratory) on Powder Mill Road.

- * The Secretary of Defense has proposed relocating the Naval Sea Systems Command to the NSWC. This could potentially increase the number of personnel working at NSWC from 1,450 to approximately 3,800 people. The maximum number of employees working at NSWC in the past was 3,200 people. What impact will the proposed changes at NSWC have on the area?
- * The Adelphi Laboratory plans to construct new laboratory space as part of their reorganization. There will be an over-all reduction of personnel. What impact will the proposed changes to the Adelphi Laboratory have on the Hillandale area, if any?

4. Specific Parcels

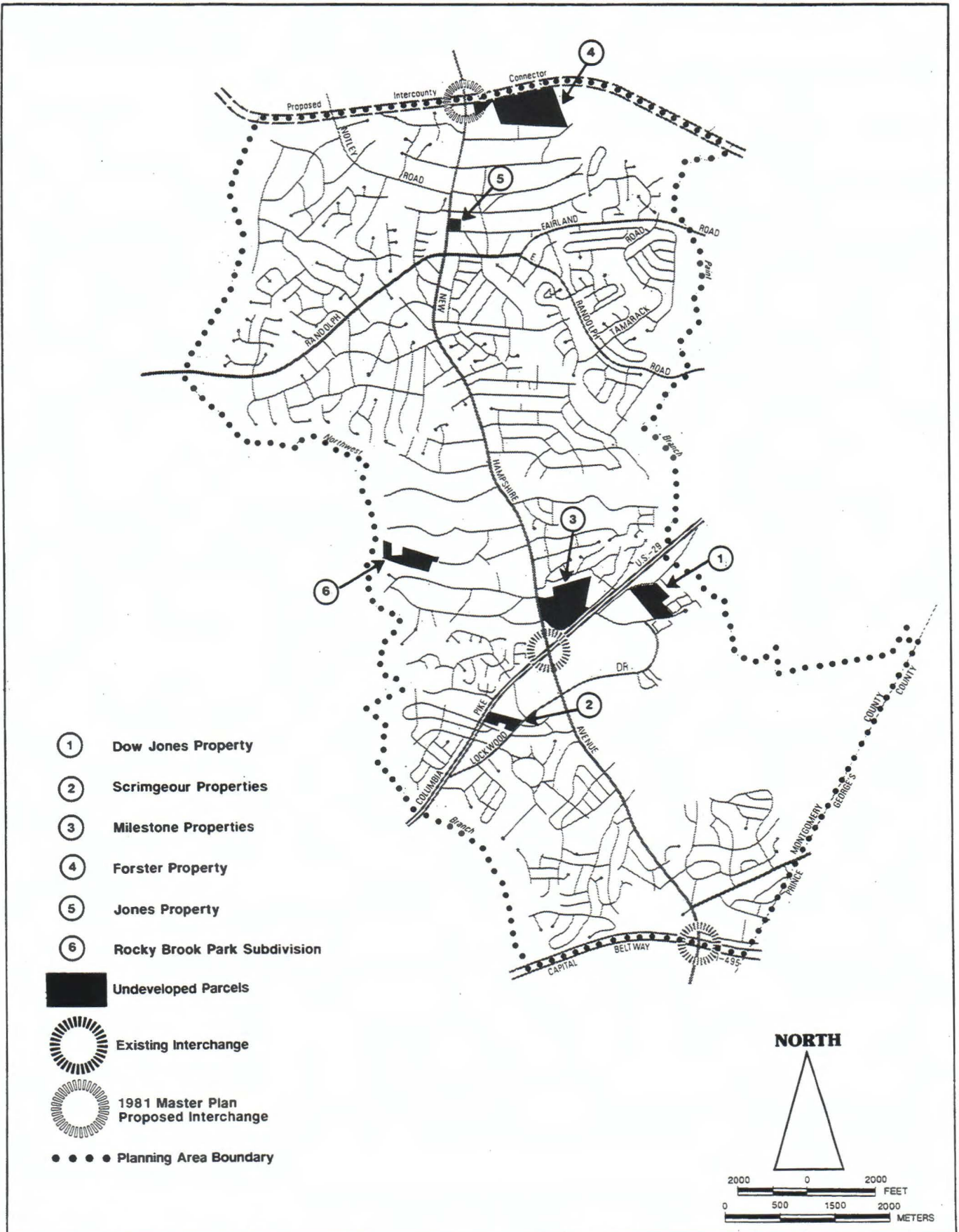
There are only a few large undeveloped land areas in White Oak that could be considered for development other than single-family residential. These parcels are listed below. Some questions were also raised regarding the existing zoning and allowed uses on specific parcels. See Figure 5 for the location of parcels.

- * Is the current zoning and recommended use appropriate for specific undeveloped parcels in White Oak?

<u>Property</u>	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
Dow Jones Property	I-3, Technology and Business Park	16
Scrimgeour Properties	RT-8, Single-Family Residential Townhouse, 8 DU/Acre	7
Milestone Properties	R-90, Single-Family Residential, 1/4 Acres lots	40
Forster Property	RE-2C, Single-Family Residential cluster .4 DU/Acre	50
Jones Property	RE-1, Single-Family Residential 1 DU/Acre	2

SPECIFIC UNDEVELOPED PARCELS

FIGURE 5



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- * Should the Hines-Rinaldi Funeral Parlor property and the adjacent parcel, which are currently zoned R-200 (1/2 Acre lots), be rezoned to be consistent with the remainder of the surrounding area? (RE-1)

- * The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) has vacated two of its buildings located on US 29 at the Northwest Branch. The property on the east side of US 29 will be sold. The property on the west side of US 29 will be retained by WSSC. The western property, in the past, has been used as parking by hikers in the Northwest Branch. Currently, the parking is fenced off. How should these parcels be addressed in the Master Plan? (R-90)

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B. TRANSPORTATION

The transportation goal of the *1993 Final Draft General Plan Refinement* is to "provide a safe and efficient transportation system that serves the environmental, economic, social, and land use needs of the County and provides a framework for development." The transportation system that meets this goal should be multi-modal, compatible, and integrated into the land use fabric. Determining the balance between supply and demand, auto and transit, and regional and local travel needs will be a key challenge of this Master Plan.

The transportation component of the 1981 Master Plan reflects many constraints: fiscal, physical, and political. Some of the recommendations of the Plan were implemented, others remain unbuilt. Transit service is less than desired by some residents. It is now desirable to revisit the recommendations of the 1981 Master Plan and re-evaluate transportation needs and constraints to develop effective solutions.

1. Road Network

The northern boundary of the White Oak Master Plan area is the proposed Intercounty Connector (ICC) right-of-way and the southern boundary is the Capital Beltway (I-495). The spine of White Oak is New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650), while the community is bisected by US 29.

a. Proposed Intercounty Connector (ICC)

The ICC is a road that has, under several names, been proposed to link I-95 with I-270. The 1981 Master Plan recommended that a 300-foot-wide right-of-way be reserved pending the outcome of a state study to determine an alignment. This study recommended the current, or Master Plan alignment (also known as Alternate G Modified). This proposed alignment links Laurel with Gaithersburg and serves as the northern boundary of White Oak.

Montgomery County is currently participating with federal and state agencies in re-evaluating the ICC through an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This effort will involve the creation of a "purpose and need" statement, which in turn will lead to the investigation and evaluation of alternatives, and finally to the designation of a preferred alternative and mode(s) of travel. In a worksession on the *Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Aspen Hill Master Plan*, the Montgomery County Planning Board indicated that the current Master Plan alignment (Alternate G Modified) was one of the alternatives under consideration but would continue to be carried in the Master Plan to preserve right-of-way pending the outcome of the EIS. The EIS, rather than the Master Plan, will be the primary process to address many of the issues related to the ICC.

- * What influence will this Master Plan have on determining the exact alignment, nature, purpose, and character of the proposed ICC? What is the relationship between this on-going EIS effort and the Master Plan process?

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- * Can the upgrading of any existing roads be considered in lieu of the proposed ICC? What trade-off studies have been done for east-west traffic? Are they available?
- * If the construction of the proposed ICC were to be phased and opened to traffic in segments (i.e., temporarily end at New Hampshire Avenue), what effect would this have on transportation recommendations?
- * Should the Master Plan be revisited once the ICC study is complete if the recommended alignment is different from the 1981 Master Plan recommended alignment?

b. US 29

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) has been studying US 29 improvements for the last eight years. The study is proposing grade separations at all intersections between the Howard County line and New Hampshire Avenue. Most of these intersections would be replaced with interchanges. SHA has also initiated a project that entails running a bus-only lane along the shoulder of the road from MD 198 to Randolph Road.

The County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is programmed to begin a US 29 Transitway Study in FY 94. It will be necessary for this study to coordinate with the on-going development of the Transitway and HOV Network Plan and the Eastern Montgomery County master plans.

- * Should HOV, light rail transit, dedicated bus lane, or a busway be planned for US 29? How will this work south of New Hampshire Avenue?
- * How is US 29 congestion going to be addressed in relation to the flow of traffic through White Oak from points north (e.g., Howard County) and south (e.g., Four Corners)? What impact would an improved US 29 in Fairland have on traffic in White Oak?
- * SHA has proposed the removal of the median on US 29 between University Boulevard (MD 193) and New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650) to run a reversible bus lane. When this proposal was first suggested, it generated many pedestrian safety concerns in the surrounding community, which ultimately led to the abandonment of the proposal. Now that a new transitway study is being proposed in the County Recommended CIP for FY 94, how should the Master Plan address the concerns about pedestrian safety and impact on the character of the community?
- * How will the SHA proposed interchange at US 29 and Stewart Lane impact the surrounding land uses? How should local vehicular and pedestrian circulation be addressed?
- * Dumont Oaks and Burnt Mills Village are only accessible via US 29 and have no interconnection. How can accessibility to these communities be improved?

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- * There is concern that the proposed widening of the US 29 bridge over New Hampshire Avenue will not help the current traffic situation. How can concerns about merging and weaving at this interchange be addressed? How can pedestrian circulation and safety be improved in this area?

c. New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650)

The state will be widening New Hampshire Avenue between Randolph Road and the proposed ICC right-of-way to a six-lane closed-section divided road. From the ICC right-of-way to MD 198, New Hampshire Avenue will be widened to four lanes.

- * What traffic impact will the widening of New Hampshire Avenue north of Randolph Road have on White Oak?

d. Randolph Road

East Randolph Road will be reconstructed to a four-lane roadway with a center turning lane between Old Columbia Pike and Fairland Road.

- * Are the improvement plans for East Randolph Road near the Paint Branch Stream Valley inadequate for pedestrian crossing and vehicular sight distance because of the curves in the road and elevation change? How can concerns about the safety of this section of roadway be addressed?
- * Aside from the proposed ICC, what east-west road connections could be provided to ease traffic on Randolph Road and the Beltway?

e. Other Residential and Commercial Streets

- * "Cut-through" traffic is a major concern of the community. How can interconnected local streets provide local access to public facilities without encouraging "cut-through" traffic? What can be done to discourage "cut-through" traffic on residential streets?
- * What physical changes can be made to reduce speeding on residential streets? Which roads or classes of roads should qualify for traffic calming techniques?
- * What changes may be needed to accommodate future traffic increases due to new or expanded government facilities such as the Naval Surface Warfare Center on New Hampshire Avenue, the Adelphi Laboratory on Powder Mill Road, the new National Archives building on Adelphi Road, and the University of Maryland?
- * How can the current road network be improved to provide better access for local traffic to shopping, schools, recreational areas, and other public services?
- * How can intersections in White Oak be improved for pedestrian and vehicular circulation? Should grade separations be considered?

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- * There are a large number of existing rights-of-way for unbuilt streets (known as "paper streets") in White Oak. What are the impacts of building, not building, or abandoning these streets? If they are not used for roads, should they be considered for public uses such as greenways, bike paths, transitways, parkland, or reforestation areas?
- * Which existing County roads should be widened, reconstructed, closed, or extended for safety and capacity reasons? Are there roads that should be reclassified?

2. Transit and Park-and-Ride

A number of transit routes serve the White Oak Master Plan area; most are oriented radially toward Silver Spring and downtown Washington, DC. In the adjacent Kensington-Wheaton Planning Area, the Glenmont Metro station is anticipated to open in 1998, providing the final station on the Red Line. This station's market area includes the Colesville section of the White Oak Master Plan area and may result in changes in some transit service.

A goal of the 1981 Eastern Montgomery County Master Plan was to provide a level of transit service in Eastern Montgomery County as the population base grew in number and density. A major concern of the White Oak communities is to provide transportation choices, including transit.

- * What level of transit service is needed for the approved and built densities in the White Oak Master Plan area?
- * What physical improvements can be recommended in the Master Plan to improve the comfort, safety, and convenience for transit riders?
- * How can the bus system be modified and the Park-and-Ride lots be located to take advantage of the Glenmont Metro station?
- * The Transitway and High-Occupancy Vehicle Network Master Plan Issues Report identifies for consideration transitways, bus lanes, or HOV lanes in White Oak. What relationship will the Transitway and High-Occupancy Vehicle Network Master Plan have on White Oak and vice versa?
- * How can the government or private sector best provide transportation facilities for those without access to an automobile?
- * Is there a need for more Park-and-Ride lots and how can they be made more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood through better accessibility and aesthetics?
- * How well are existing Park-and-Ride lots utilized? How can they be made more effective? Should the need for the 1981 Master Plan proposed White Oak Park-and-Ride lot be re-examined?

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- * The public transportation system needs to serve commuters within the County and between counties. How can public transit policy best serve inter-and intra-county trips as well as suburb to central city trips?

3. Sidewalks, Bikeways and Trails

Sidewalks, bikeways, and trails are used both for recreation and transportation. They are particularly important for the transit commuter who needs to walk from home to a transit stop and for children who are not old enough to drive but still need to travel (e.g., go to school or visit friends). The White Oak Master Plan area lacks adequate sidewalk connections between residential, commercial, and community facilities. This lack of sidewalks makes short trips difficult, and in some cases, dangerous for the pedestrian.

- * Where should additional sidewalks, bikeways, and paths be constructed for safer and easier access to public transportation, shopping, employment, recreation, schools, and residential areas?
- * How can existing sidewalks, bikeways, and trails be made more attractive and safe for users?
- * How can pedestrian street crossings be improved?
- * Should more hiker/biker trails be developed along the stream valley parks?

4. Implementation

- * Development has been allowed to occur based upon anticipation of the timely construction of roads programmed in the County's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Currently, if a road is programmed to be completed within the first four years of the County CIP or State Consolidated Transportation Program, it is counted for the purposes of the Annual Growth Policy. Due to fiscal and environmental constraints, some roads have been deferred after development has been approved. How can the Master Plan better tie the provision of public facilities to development approvals? How can the AGP be made more accountable?
- * Trip mitigation programs are designed to permit development to proceed provided they meet a goal of eliminating the same number of peak hour trips from the road network that their site produces. These programs have been implemented throughout Eastern Montgomery County because of the moratorium on new subdivision approvals in the Annual Growth Policy as well as requirements of other legislation. How well are these trip mitigation programs working? What happens when they expire?
- * How will the Federal Clean Water and Clean Air Acts affect the transportation, land use, and environment sections of the Master Plan?

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C. ENVIRONMENT

The 1981 Master Plan dealt extensively with environmental issues and recognized the sensitivity of the Paint Branch and Northwest Branch stream systems and the brown trout habitat. Many of the 1981 Master Plan's recommendations on watershed protection and development have been incorporated in today's standard environmental management guidelines, which apply to all new subdivisions. For example, stream buffer and forest preservation requirements have been adopted, and clustering and phasing of development are available management techniques. Combined with tighter regulations for floodplain and wetlands preservation, stormwater management, and sediment control, many of the Master Plan's environmental objectives were achievable for development occurring after the mid-1980s. However, some of the 1981 Master Plan recommendations have been difficult to implement, such as the long-range water quality sampling program for the Paint Branch.

Eastern Montgomery County's natural resources are increasingly stressed by the effects of development, which include tree loss, baseflow reduction, higher stream temperatures, increased runoff, sediment and nutrient loads to streams, and poorer quality habitat. Stream quality is affected by the surrounding land uses and protective measures employed within and outside of the White Oak Master Plan area. Many watershed improvements, such as stormwater management retrofit and stream habitat protection, need to be discussed in a broader context.

Most of the White Oak Master Plan area underwent development prior to the start of the environmental requirements described in the 1981 Plan. Seventy-five percent of the White Oak Master Plan area was developed by 1981, according to the Plan. Less than 9 percent of the remaining developable area outside of parkland remains undeveloped or underutilized, so opportunities to significantly improve existing conditions are limited.

It is important to note that White Oak's streams have their own hierarchy. Northwest Branch is classified by Maryland Department of the Environment as a Use IV stream, suitable for recreational trout fishing (put and take). It can accommodate slightly higher temperatures than the Paint Branch watershed, which is a Use III (naturally reproducing trout) stream. Even within this framework, the state's Fisheries Division and other environmental agencies recognize that some tributaries are more crucial than others in maintaining the function of the state's Use classification. One instance of this is the valuable spawning areas of the Good Hope tributary of the Paint Branch that enters the Master Plan area at its northern boundary.

Plant and wildlife habitats have been affected by the extensive development of the Master Plan area. Low density residential areas provide habitat for a variety of common species, while parkland can provide a more naturalized habitat for a wider variety and larger number of plants and animals. The area's stream valley parks provide a much needed but limited greenway for animal migration.

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1. Environmental Policy

- * The 1981 Master Plan made a number of environmental recommendations to protect streams and fisheries, promote environmentally sensitive development, provide adequate public water and sewer services, and mitigate noise and air pollution effects. What is working and not working that was recommended in the 1981 Plan?
- * How can growth, development, and transportation needs be balanced with strong environmental protection?

2. Stream Quality and Protection

The 1981 Master Plan had an extensive list of recommendations that called for both physical preservation of resources such as streams, floodplains, and wetlands, and detailed methods for preserving healthy functioning of streams and their fisheries. Many of these recommendations applied to sediment control and stormwater management of new development, as well as site layout. Performance criteria for Paint Branch watershed development were included in the 1981 Master Plan Appendix to provide for more thorough analysis and better protection of the hydrology and water quality components.

The Paint Branch and Northwest Branch are part of the Anacostia River watershed, which covers parts of Montgomery County outside of the Eastern Montgomery County Master Plan area, as well as portions of Prince George's County. The Anacostia River is part of the Potomac River system, one of the main tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay. There are substantial efforts, as part of the Bay Restoration Program, to develop tributary strategies for the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, along with other tributary river systems. The Anacostia Watershed Restoration Committee has developed an approach to the restoration and sponsors a work group dealing specifically with the Paint Branch. See Figure 3 for the watershed boundaries.

- * What efforts beyond the 1981 Plan recommendations are needed to halt the decline, and protect and improve the water quality and aquatic ecosystems of Paint Branch, Northwest Branch, and their tributaries? How can this contribute to, and be coordinated with, watershed and Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts?
- * As stated in the Introduction, new development must preserve a stream buffer around floodplains, wetlands, and stream valleys for all perennial and intermittent streams. The County has also implemented a forest conservation law that requires a developer to maintain or replant a percentage of the site in woods. Should streams and trees be better protected from development? How can we achieve a forested buffer for streams that flow through Eastern Montgomery County?
- * Public ownership and control of forested and open space buffers along the headwater streams are major environmental, water quality, and fisheries tools and determinants. What additional acquisition of these habitats is possible? Are any other tools as effective but not as costly?

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3. Stormwater Management

The 1981 Master Plan supported stormwater management strategies that would maximize pollutant removal and prevent erosion from increased storm flows. The Plan called for stormwater conveyance and treatment designs that would not eradicate or degrade natural stream systems. Some of the recommendations have become standard practice.

- * Older stormwater management facilities (primarily ponds) can be retrofit, or reconstructed, to bring them up to today's standards for water quality and quantity control. Are the current stormwater management facilities adequate for the developed areas of White Oak? If not, how can they be increased or made more effective?
- * How can existing stormwater management problems in areas not served by stormwater management facilities be addressed?
- * What can be done to improve maintenance of stormwater management facilities?

4. Sensitive Areas Protection

The 1981 Master Plan recognized that Eastern Montgomery County's stream valleys, floodplains, endangered species habitats, and steep slopes are natural resources in need of protection and recommended that these areas be adequately preserved by undisturbed stream buffers and other means. The 1992 Maryland Planning Act now requires that this be a component of all master plans.

- * What are environmentally-sensitive areas and how should they be protected? Is there a need to incorporate more of these areas in greenway links or park acquisition areas in White Oak? Is there a need to further buffer these areas from adjacent uses?
- * How can encroachment from private property onto environmentally-sensitive areas in parkland and common open space be prevented?
- * The 13-lot Rocky Brook Park subdivision was approved and recorded in the land records in 1945, but never built. The property is bisected by a steep, wooded stream valley with associated floodplain and wetlands. Since the vacant lots are on environmentally-sensitive areas that need protection based on today's development standards, the lots' value and useability are affected. What is a satisfactory resolution to both the environmental needs and the property owners' needs of the Rocky Brook Park Subdivision problem? See Figure 5 for location of subdivision.

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5. Water and Sewerage Issues

The Master Plan recommended that adequate public water and sewer systems should be provided to Eastern Montgomery County and that protection of the Duckett Water Supply Reservoir on the Patuxent River is important. Almost all of the White Oak Master Plan area is within the W-1 and S-1 categories, which means it is appropriate for public water and sewer service. The Master Plan area has an extensive network of public water and sewer lines. The County also has a sludge composting facility (known as Site 2) located in the Fairland Master Plan area.

- * Some houses still remain on private well or septic systems. There is a concern that septic tank overflow is a possible source of ground water and stream pollution. Are there any widespread areas where wells or septic systems are failing? If so, what can be done to prevent the public health risk and to protect water resources?
- * Is there a need to extend water and sewer service to unserved areas?
- * Do the Paint Branch and Northwest Branch sewer have adequate capacity for existing and planned growth? If not, what impact would the improvements have on White Oak and how should they be addressed in the Master Plan?

6. Air Pollution

The 1981 Master Plan identified auto exhaust as the main source of air pollution, and recommended that sensitive land uses (such as residences, schools, and nursing homes) not be located near major intersections if possible.

- * What can be done in the White Oak Master Plan to minimize or mitigate air pollution in cooperation with regional and state compliance with the Clean Air Act?

7. Noise

The Master Plan discussed noise impacts from the major road corridors in Eastern Montgomery County and supported noise attenuation methods for new development using a hierarchy of house setbacks from the road, site layout, and physical structures to reduce the impacts to residences. These measures are implemented as part of subdivision review.

- * There is a concern about increasing noise levels, especially as the areas around White Oak develop and traffic increases. What can be done to minimize noise levels along major thoroughfares?

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8. Solid and Hazardous Waste

The 1981 Plan recommended a number of water quality protection measures, including a street cleaning program, education on proper application of fertilizers and pesticides, and appropriate disposal of used motor oil and yard waste. It also suggested that accidental spill control plans be filed with the County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for regular commercial carriers of pollutants and toxins.

- * Can toxic substances be better managed to prevent contamination of the environment?

9. Plant and Animal Habitat

- * How can habitats for plants and animals be expanded to increase their variety and numbers in the Master Plan area?
- * How can stream habitat enhancement improve the spawning of brown trout (and the health of other aquatic species) in Paint Branch tributaries?

D. COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND DESIGN

Community identity is derived from the physical character of an area, as reflected in the natural and built environment as well as from the social and cultural aspects of the community. The land use, layout, and design of development or the visual character of natural features such as woodlands and stream valleys collectively contribute to an overall impression or identity. A community's identity should be unique and separate from other areas.

White Oak's identity is strongly defined by the adjacent stream valleys. The network of major roadways such as the Beltway, US 29, and New Hampshire Avenue define and separate the community into distinct areas. Established residential neighborhoods border the stream valleys and benefit from the changing topography and woodland terrain. Since most residents and travelers experience White Oak primarily along the roadways, decisions that affect land use, layout, and design of existing and future development, as well as roadway design, will have a major impact upon community identity.

1. Neighborhoods

White Oak's residential neighborhoods vary in character from the high-rise and garden apartments near the White Oak Shopping Center to low density, single-family residential neighborhoods that border the stream valleys.

- * What can the neighborhoods do to better define their identity? What land use, facilities, and design recommendations foster a sense of community?
- * What design recommendations can be made to ensure that neighborhoods have safe and adequate pedestrian and vehicular access to shopping, schools, and recreation areas?
- * Are physical elements that contribute to community identity, such as open space, parks, sidewalks and street trees, adequate within existing neighborhoods?

2. Commercial Centers

White Oak's three major commercial centers are Hillandale, White Oak, and the Colesville Shopping Centers. The physical character or identity of each one is different and unique due to its size, type of stores, arrangement of parking and buildings, level of landscaping, and architectural style. The relationship of the commercial centers to adjacent roadways also affects the character of the development.

- * What measures can the Plan recommend to better define, add focus, and enhance the community identity in the commercial areas? What can the individual communities do to better define their identity?
- * Should commercial zoning requirements be analyzed for possible modification to help improve the physical character of the commercial areas?

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3. Townscape and Streetscape

Community identity is directly affected by the physical planning or arrangement of buildings, streets, parking, and open spaces. Townscape is a term used to describe the physical plan of a community. One experiences the townscape of a community primarily in the view from the road. Master plans can incorporate townscape plans for special areas to provide design guidance for redevelopment or future growth.

Community identity is also affected by the design of physical elements within the roadway itself, such as street trees, sidewalks, street and traffic lights, benches, and trash receptacles. Streetscape planning can provide a comprehensive approach to the character of the community's roadways and complement adjacent development.

- * Are there areas of the community that should have a townscape plan developed as a part of the Master Plan? What design guidelines could help improve community identity?
- * What should be the streetscape character along the major roadways: New Hampshire Avenue, US 29, Randolph Road, Fairland Road, and Lockwood Drive?
- * What guidance can the Master Plan provide to achieve better coordination between and within residential developments and between residential and commercial areas?
- * Are there existing design elements, such as architectural styles, fences, signage, etc., or natural elements which contribute to community identity and should be preserved and enhanced?
- * How can site planning and design complement transportation goals and objectives?

4. Historic Resources

There were 11 historic resources originally identified in the *Locational Atlas Index of Historic Sites* in the White Oak Master Plan area. Five of the 11 resources are currently in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, four have been removed from the *Locational Atlas Index of Historic Sites*, and two are in the *Locational Atlas Index of Historic Sites* but have not yet been evaluated for inclusion in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

- * Are there sites in the White Oak Master Plan area that should be researched for historic significance that are not in the *Locational Atlas Index of Historic Sites*?
- * Should the two *Locational Atlas*' properties that have yet to be evaluated warrant Master Plan designation?

White Oak Master Plan Issues Report

- * There is an 7-acre tract along Lockwood Drive zoned RT-8 that is bordered by high density residential development (RT-12.5) to the north and single-family residential development (R-90) to the south. The Master Plan currently recommends townhouse development; however, it encourages that the existing dwelling and trees be retained to the extent feasible within the site development plan for the property. Should this property be evaluated for historic significance? Does the current Master Plan recommendation for development adequately address the historic setting for the existing house?

White Oak Master Plan Issues Report

E. HOUSING

Issues in this section focus on the characteristics of future housing development as well as County policies which shape housing development in the area. Concerns over future housing include housing mix, prices, densities, and public infrastructure needed to support potential development. County policies shaping the character of housing in the area are sometimes seen by residents as being inconsistent with what is recommended in the Master Plan. The 1981 Master Plan recommended that a mix of housing types, including apartments, be located along US 29 and at White Oak, and low density residential uses be located in the upper Paint Branch and Northwest Branch watersheds to protect the stream systems.

- * The White Oak Master Plan area has a high number of multi-family housing units and townhouse complexes within a very concentrated area. Should new high density residential development be better distributed across the County and the White Oak region?
- * What is the appropriate mix of housing types for the remaining undeveloped residentially-zoned sites in White Oak?
- * Are there places in White Oak where moderately-priced housing could be added?
- * Is there a need for more elderly housing in White Oak?
- * Are there unmet housing needs for the disabled?

White Oak Master Plan Issues Report

F. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

A number of studies are under way to locate public facilities in Eastern Montgomery County, including a new Northeast High School, two elevated water storage facilities, sewage and water transmission lines, two recreation centers, and a government center. At the time of the 1981 Master Plan, the County had closed several school sites in White Oak due to a decline in enrollment. The Master Plan anticipated that the existing schools would be able to continue to serve White Oak's needs. The Master Plan anticipated the completion of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Park and the acquisition of additional stream valley parkland. The Master Plan also recommended a new library to serve the eastern part of the County. The proposed expansion of the White Oak library is mentioned, but no recommendation was made in the Master Plan. Police service was deemed to be adequate.

1. Public Services

- * Is there a need for a senior citizens community center similar to the one on Forest Glen Road?
- * Is there a need for additional community gathering locations in the communities in the White Oak Master Plan area?
- * There has been discussion about police response time in the eastern part of the County. Is there a need for a substation and County center to be located in White Oak?
- * Will the future fire protection services be adequate?
- * What other public services/social services are needed for the increasingly diverse population in the area?
- * The White Oak Library is adjacent to a large vacant tract of land. Could the White Oak Library be expanded into a regional library?
- * What guidance can the Master Plan give to improve the efficiency and final results of the site selection process for public facilities?
- * What can the Master Plan do to guide the County Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the State Consolidated Transportation Plan (CTP)?

White Oak Master Plan Issues Report

2. Schools

- * What impact will further development and demographic changes have on the schools when Springbrook High School is at the projected capacity after it reopens (proposed for 1994) and the Jackson Road Elementary School is at capacity? Are current school facilities adequate for future requirements?

3. Parks and Recreation

- * Where can more ball fields and gyms be placed, since the existing ones are very heavily used?
- * Should additional indoor/outdoor facilities be added to Martin Luther King, Jr. Park?
- * Are there adequate recreational facilities and green space for the needs of the community?
- * How can public parking and access to parkland through the WSSC property on the west side of US 29 be provided ?
- * What additional park facilities are needed in White Oak?
- * Do any of the older parks in the White Oak Master Plan area need renovation or upgrading?
- * There is a problem with the use of off-road vehicles along the stream valleys, damaging the natural vegetation and tearing up the trails. What alternatives can be looked at to address this problem?
- * How can the neighborhood recreation needs of the high density apartment areas in White Oak be met?
- * What greenway connections are possible to link parks in the White Oak Master Plan area? Is there a possibility of connecting the Paint Branch Stream Valley through NSWC?

White Oak Master Plan Issues Report

G. OTHER ISSUES

The following issues were found to be important to the White Oak residents. These issues are typically addressed outside of the Master Plan. This can be due to limits on the authority of the Master Plan or that the project will be completed before the Master Plan is adopted. These issues provide insight and perspective into the concerns in the White Oak Master Plan area.

- * What additional steps can be taken to increase citizen knowledge, influence, and input into the Master Plan development and implementation?
- * Residents are concerned that provisions of the AGP and the political process have created too many ways to develop under the moratorium. Should there be any exceptions allowed to the development moratorium?
- * There is a concern among residents that provisions of the zoning ordinance have created too many ways to develop in ways that appear to be inconsistent with the zoning or the 1981 Master Plan (MPDUs, HOC bonuses). Should density bonuses be given in certain zoning designations? Are they appropriate?
- * Should increased building density be allowed on a sector of one property to compensate for the inability to construct on wetlands and steep slopes on that same property? If so, how can the appropriate zoning be determined to achieve an acceptable level of development on the developable area?
- * The increasing number of County provisions to encourage and provide affordable housing (HOC, MPDUs, productivity housing) and group homes are a concern in that they allow an increased density beyond what the zoning allows. Should the Master Plan determine the location, distribution, and concentration of County-wide affordable housing?
- * Developers have sometimes made road improvements to obtain Adequate Public Facilities (APF) approval. Due to jurisdictional, fiscal, and environmental constraints, some public facilities have not been constructed in an efficient manner. Can the Master Plan improve the coordination and financing to provide public facilities by both the public and private sectors?
- * There is a concern about smells from the Site 2 sludge composting facility. What can be done to control the odors?
- * When group homes are planned, the measures taken to prepare the community or neighborhood in which the home is to be located are inadequate. Are there ways to improve the site location and approval process?

White Oak Master Plan Issues Report

- * Is there an appropriate place in White Oak to locate the new Northeast High School so that it benefits and serves the surrounding community while, at the same time, it limits the impacts on traffic and the environment?



**THE
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