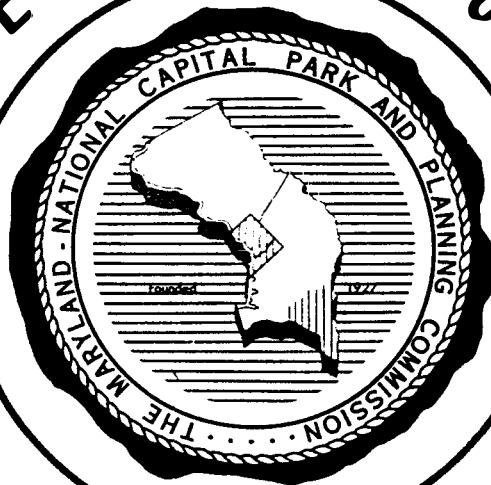


*a preliminary plan*

# WHITE OAK and vicinity



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

THE PRELIMINARY PLAN  
FOR  
WHITE OAK AND VICINITY

Prepared for  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland

Prepared by  
HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES  
City Planners, Civil Engineers, Landscape Architects  
Washington, D. C.

April, 1962

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

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This Plan is a proposed amendment to a portion of the Master Plan of the Northwest Branch Watershed, adopted by the Commission on April 26, 1961.

The Plan was prepared in its entirety by Harland Bartholomew and Associates, under contract to the Commission.

**HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES**

CITY PLANNERS - CIVIL ENGINEERS - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

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WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

DISTRICT 7-9293

Cable Address: HARPLAN

April 17, 1962

Maryland-National Capital Park and  
Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland

Gentlemen:

In accordance with our previous agreement we are pleased to submit herewith a report and a recommended plan for the development of the White Oak area.

The problems here encountered are somewhat unusual. Numerous questions arise with respect to the relationship of development here to the General Plan of the county now proposed. In this report we have considered each of these problems as discussed in the text.

We are pleased to have had the opportunity to study and analyze the planning questions involved in the White Oak area and we trust that the report and the plan will be useful to the Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES

By



Harland Bartholomew

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## INTRODUCTION

The area surrounding the interchange of U. S. 29 and New Hampshire Avenue north of the Naval Ordnance Laboratory, commonly known as White Oak, is a part of the Master Plan for Upper Northwest Branch Watershed adopted by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission in April 1961. However, the Commission, at the time of adoption, stipulated that further detailed study should be made of the White Oak area, particularly in the vicinity of the interchange where three of the four quadrants surrounding the interchange are presently undeveloped.

The purpose of this study is to determine the most appropriate use of the land which has remained undeveloped since the construction of the interchange. There are five identifiable separate tracts here to be considered as indicated on Plate 1. The questions that require consideration before the Commission takes action on the zoning of these several tracts are:

A. What are the types of land use that should be considered as shown by the General Plan of the County now being prepared?

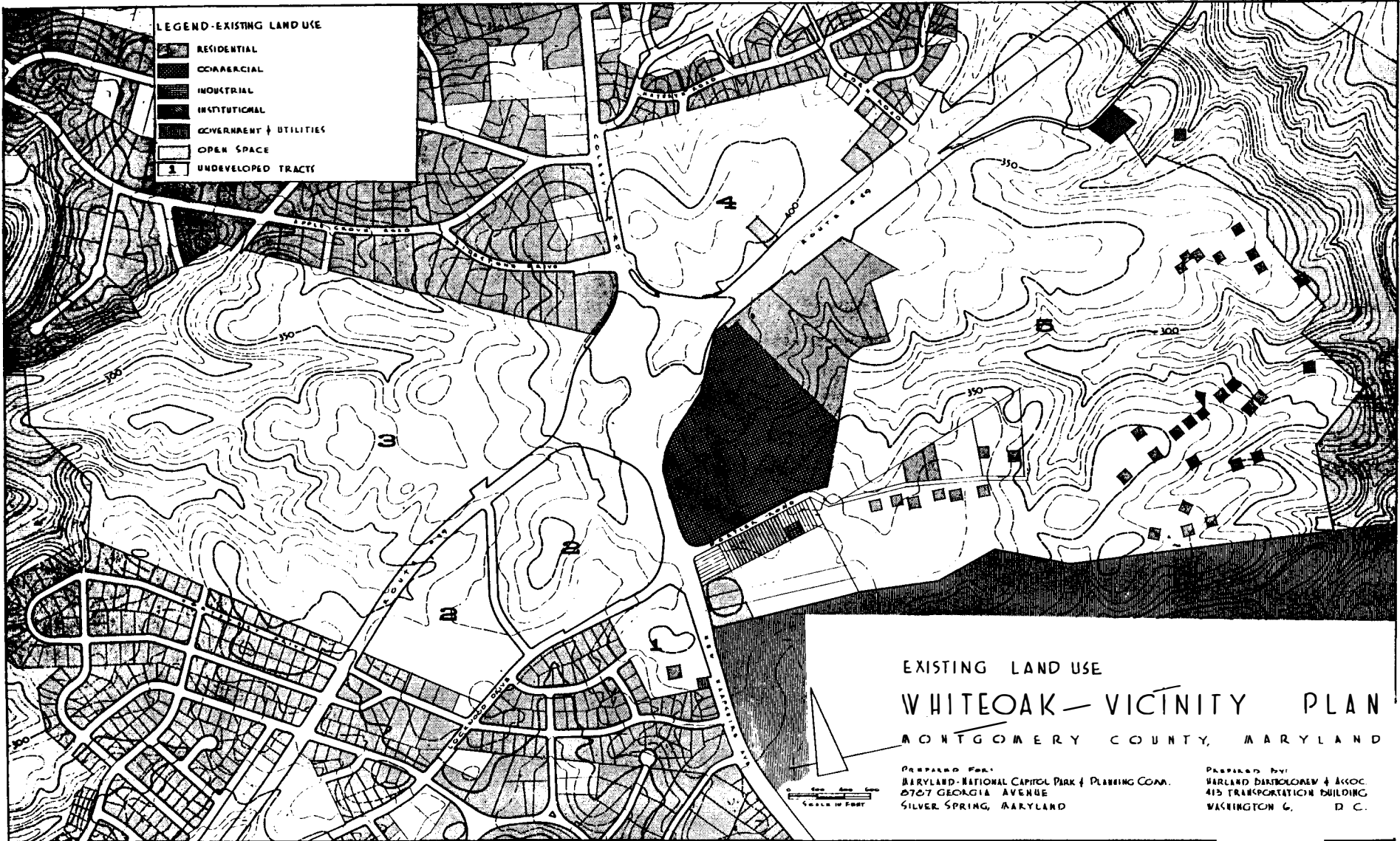
B. Does the construction of the interchange, with its large volume of traffic, justify special considerations of land use on one or more of these tracts?

C. Are these tracts of such size as to warrant consideration as independent community units?

We have attempted to answer these and other questions in this report.

LEGEND-EXISTING LAND USE

-  RESIDENTIAL
-  COMMERCIAL
-  INDUSTRIAL
-  INSTITUTIONAL
-  GOVERNMENT & UTILITIES
-  OPEN SPACE
-  UNDEVELOPED TRACTS



EXISTING LAND USE  
 WHITEOAK - VICINITY PLAN  
 MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

PREPARED FOR:  
 MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COM.  
 5707 GEORGIA AVENUE  
 SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

PREPARED BY:  
 HARLAND BARTOLOMEY & ASSOC.  
 415 TRANSPORTATION BUILDING  
 WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

## PART ONE

### Existing Conditions

#### Description of the Area

The study area surrounds the interchange of U.S. 29 and New Hampshire Avenue north of the Naval Ordinance Laboratory. The area is situated in the southernmost portion of the Upper Northwest Branch Watershed. The character of the area is generally open, rolling land with natural wooded areas following the valleys created by Northwest Branch and its tributaries. Only in Tract Number 3 are there any steep slopes and these are not so pronounced as to impede development. U.S. 29 and New Hampshire Avenue provide the primary highway access to the area.






#### Present Land Use and Zoning

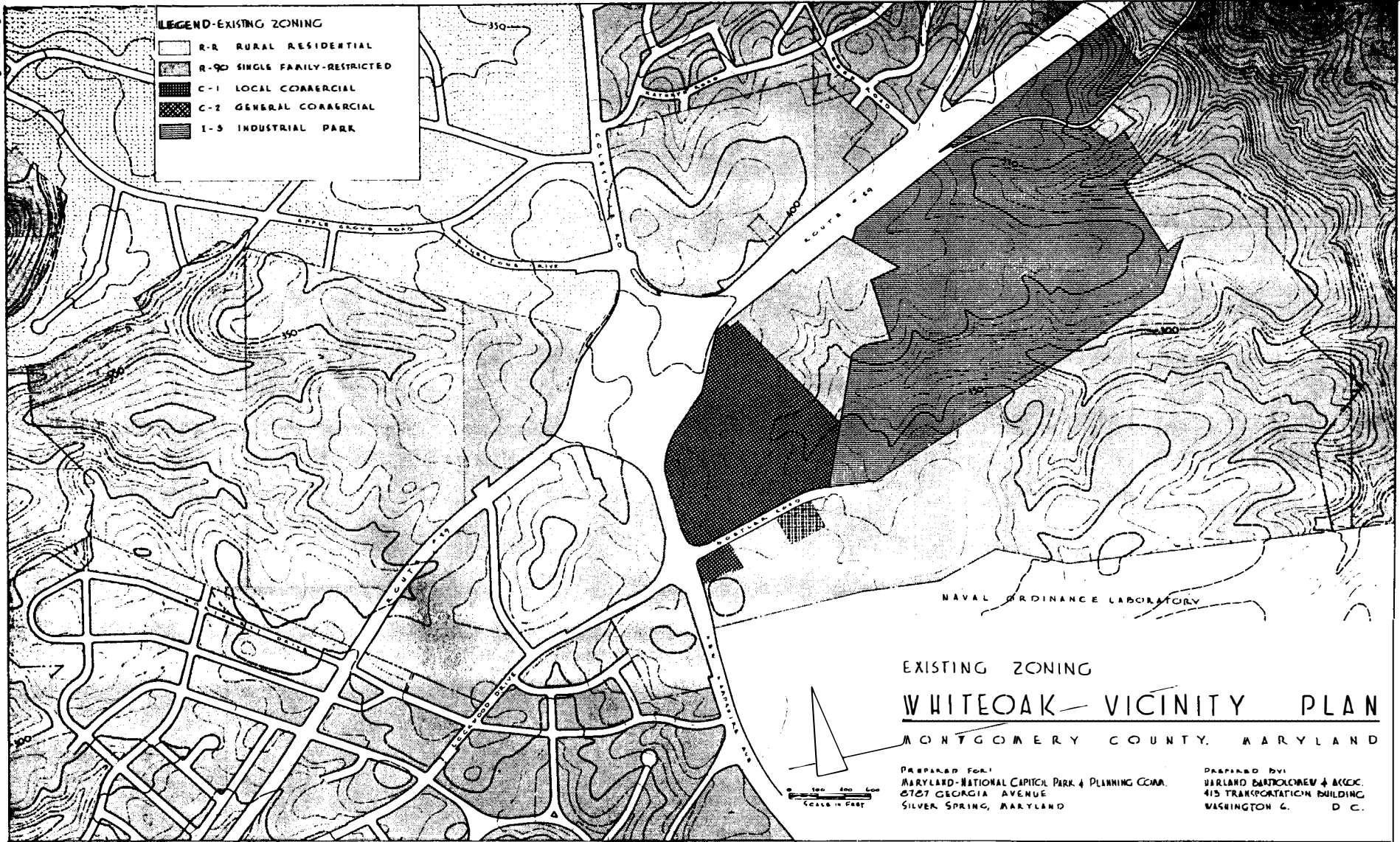
This has been a rapidly growing area in recent years, so much so, in fact, that much of the land has been developed and the character of the area quite well established. With the exception of the large Naval Ordinance Laboratory and the White Oak shopping center the development has been predominantly single family residences on medium size lots.

The existing land use pattern in the White Oak area is shown on Plate 1. The land to the west of New Hampshire Avenue particularly is extensively developed with single family homes. There are two large tracts still undeveloped between Lockwood Drive and U.S. 29 and between U.S. 29 and the rear lot line of homes fronting on Apple Grove Road shown as Tracts Number 2 and 3 on Plate 1. There is a small tract, Number 1, south of Lockwood Drive which is also vacant.

The land use pattern on the east side of New Hampshire Avenue consists of scattered residential development and a major shopping center in the southeast quadrant of the interchange. This shopping center is approximately 35 to 40 percent developed. Tract Number 4 in the northeast quadrant of the interchange is undeveloped. Tract Number 5 is very sparsely developed with single family homes, many of which are below the standard of housing found in the rest of the area. The Naval Ordinance Laboratory, a large Federal employment center on 725 acres, forms the southern boundary of Tract Number 5.



- LEGEND-EXISTING ZONING**
-  R-R RURAL RESIDENTIAL
  -  R-90 SINGLE FAMILY-RESTRICTED
  -  C-1 LOCAL COMMERCIAL
  -  C-2 GENERAL COMMERCIAL
  -  I-3 INDUSTRIAL PARK



EXISTING ZONING  
**WHITEOAK - VICINITY PLAN**  
 MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

PREPARED FOR:  
 MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COM. 8707 GEORGIA AVENUE  
 SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

PREPARED BY:  
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The present zoning in the area is shown on Plate 2. It is largely R-90; exceptions are the Quaint Acres area which is R-R, and Burnt Mills Hills which is R-A, the shopping center which is C-1, a small C-2 area across Boetler Road, and a large tract behind the shopping center which is zoned Industrial Park I-3.

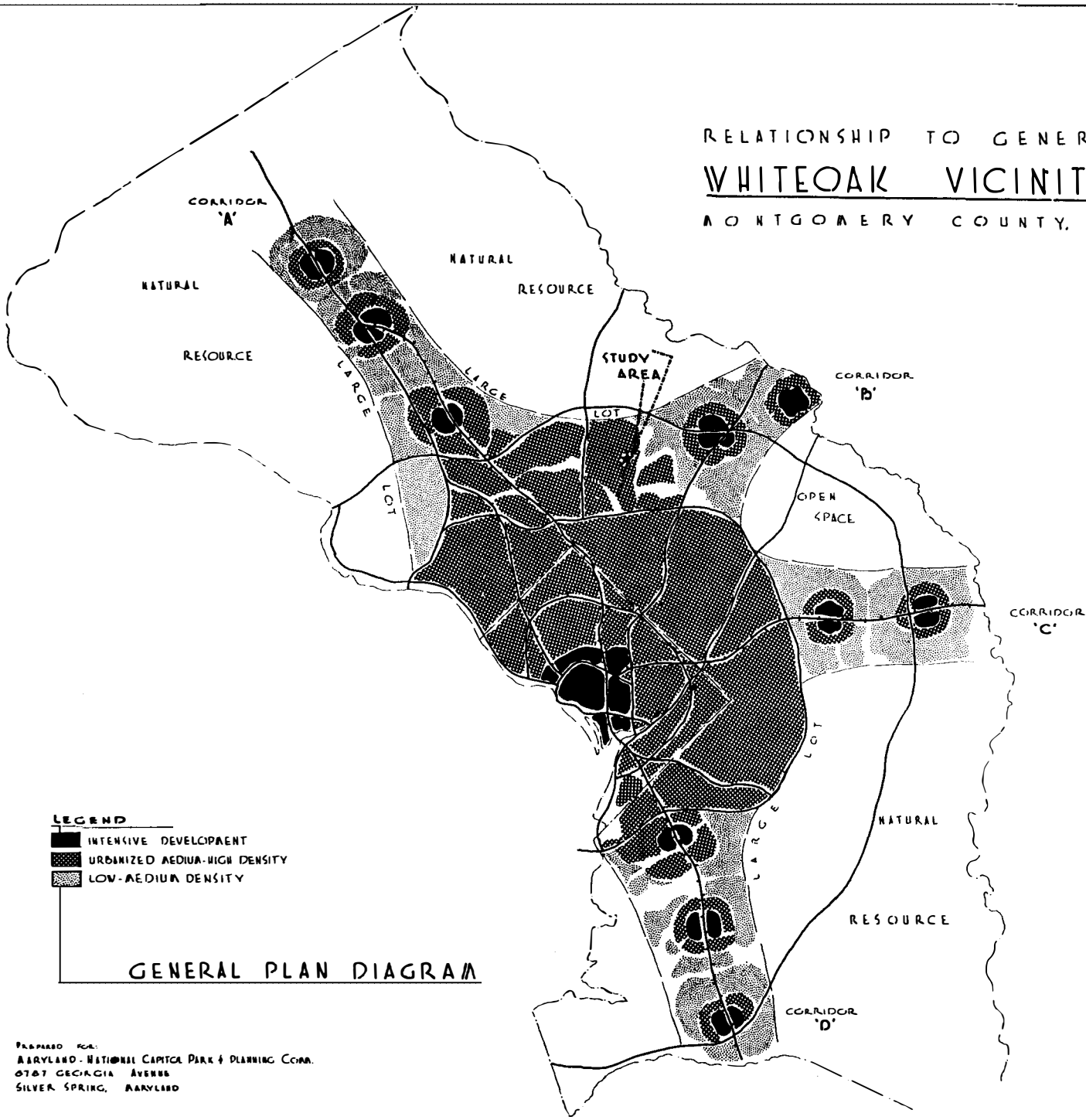
#### Existing Community Facilities

The study area is adequately served with both sewer and water by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. Trunk sewers are available in both Northwest and Paint Branch stream beds north to the vicinity of Randolph Road. A trunk water main parallels New Hampshire Avenue north to the county line.

All of the study area is served by the Hillandale and Jackson Road elementary schools. Springbrook provides the secondary school service for the area.

The Northwest Branch stream valley park provides the major park use in the area. A substantial portion of this park land has been acquired within the study area, with the remainder budgeted for acquisition during the current year.

# RELATIONSHIP TO GENERAL PLAN WHITEOAK VICINITY PLAN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND



**LEGEND**

- INTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT
- ▒ URBANIZED MEDIUM-HIGH DENSITY
- ░ LOW-MEDIUM DENSITY

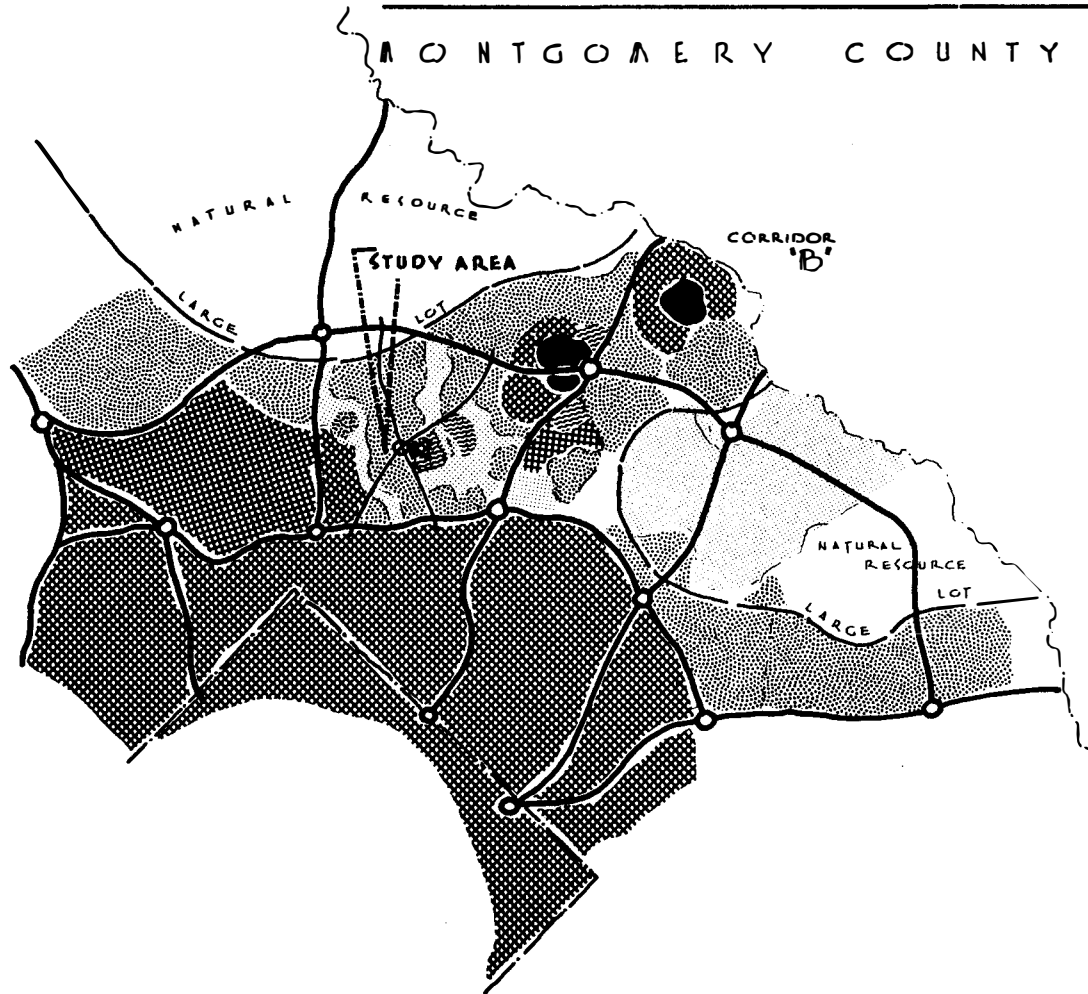
**GENERAL PLAN DIAGRAM**

PREPARED FOR:  
MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COM.  
6707 GEORGIA AVENUE  
SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND







PREPARED BY:  
HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW & ASSOCIATES  
415 TRANSPORTATION BUILDING  
WASHINGTON 6 D.C.

# RELATIONSHIP TO GENERAL PLAN WHITEOAK VICINITY PLAN

MONTGOMERY COUNTY MARYLAND



**LEGEND:**

-  INTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT
-  HIGH DENSITY
-  MEDIUM DENSITY
-  LOW DENSITY
-  PARK & GOVERNMENT LANDS
-  LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

**SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM - CORRIDOR 'B'**

PREPARED FOR  
MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITOL PARK & PLANNING COMM.  
8787 GEORGIA AVENUE  
SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

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## PART TWO

### Resolving the Questions

#### A. Relation to the Preliminary General Plan

The preliminary general plan being developed for the Regional District by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission as shown diagrammatically on Plate 3 is basically a pattern of radial corridors of development following the major transportation lines with wedges of low density development and open space between them as separators. This plan reflects the concepts set forth in the Year 2000 Plan presented by the National Capital Regional Planning Council and the National Capital Planning Commission.

There are four major radial corridors as shown on Plate 3: the 70S corridor (A) in Montgomery County to the northwest to Rockville, Gaithersburg and Germantown; the Interstate 95 corridor (B) partly in both Montgomery and Prince George's Counties to Fairland and Laurel toward Baltimore; the John Hansen Expressway corridor (C) in Prince George's County to Lanham and Bowie toward Annapolis, and the Southeast Corridor (D) to Clinton and Brandywine. The corridors extend outward from the central massive urban complex which is generally the area within the Capital Beltway.

The proposed development within the corridors centers around nucleations adjacent to the major transportation lines either expressway, rapid transit or both. The densities gradually diminish from the concentrated nucleation at the center of the corridors outward to the wedges of open space between the corridors. Rockville, Gaithersburg and Laurel are examples of existing nucleations while Germantown, Fairland, Bowie (Levittown), Clinton and Brandywine are proposed as more intensively developed centers.

The White Oak study area is located within Corridor "B", the Interstate 95 route to Baltimore as shown on Plate 4. White Oak is situated on the northerly edge of the urban fringe of this corridor and is in an area proposed for medium population density. This fringe location of medium population density corresponds most nearly to an R-90 zoning classification. This could be interpreted to include single family dwellings on medium size lots with possibly some smaller type garden apartments.

## B. A Warrant for Special Zoning?

The second question posed by the vacant land areas surrounding the interchange is whether or not the noise of the large volume of traffic, the view of this traffic, or other conditions peculiar to the interchange justify some special type of zoning. Does the fact that these tracts have remained undeveloped while the rest of the area was building up indicate special conditions or circumstances?

Field examination does not reveal that the noise from the traffic on these vacant parcels is objectionable. A large ground area was acquired for the interchange, considerably more than was used for the roadways alone. The apparent purpose of this large land area acquisition was to cushion the noise off from surrounding areas. In any event, whatever the noise or the unsightliness, which in our opinion is not significant, its effect would be the same on any type of residential development, and hence is not a factor for present consideration here.

A contributing cause for the failure of these vacant tracts to be developed sooner has been the uncertainty as to the effect of the interchange and the long period of disruption due to construction rather than to any current problems of special hardship. The very fact that such large land areas were acquired for the interchange was to remove any questions of damage to adjacent properties.

The large interchange land area is in fact more or less attractive as an open space. This is one of the objectives in modern city development. Should the reverse of the above analysis be true, i.e., that this open space is advantageous to abutting property, rather than that the interchange is a detriment, then we have the problem of whether special zoning treatment should be given to all property facing the many interchanges we must build, or in fact all open spaces of whatever nature throughout the urban area. We do not think that this is a logical assumption, or that it would be a proper basis for zoning. There is no legal basis for such assumption.

If there is any hardship, or other deprivation of an owner's use of property such as would warrant action for relief by the Board of Appeals, it is not apparent.

It is our conclusion that there is no justification for marked departure from present zoning in the survey area. So many homes have been built in accordance with present zoning regulations that we find no basis for marked change. Only in Tract Number 5, in the southeast quadrant does there seem to be any warrant for consideration of change in land use or in present zoning regulations. This will be discussed below.

C. Independent Community Unit Tract Development?

The acreage of the five parcels of unimproved land shown on Plate 1 are:

|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| Tract Number 1 - | 8 acres   |
| Tract Number 2 - | 51 acres  |
| Tract Number 3 - | 176 acres |
| Tract Number 4 - | 44 acres  |
| Tract Number 5 - | 259 acres |

A committee recently appointed in Montgomery County to study soil erosion and preservation of open spaces suggested that a tract of 200 acres would be the most desirable size for a community unit. Assuming this figure to be approximately correct it will be seen that Tracts Number 1, 2 and 4 are altogether too small for consideration for independent community unit development. We have made special studies of Tracts Number 2 and 4 and find that it would be exceedingly difficult to design them in such a way that their impact upon the adjoining single family residential areas would not be inconsequential. While they would have the advantage of overlooking the open space of the interchange their entire community life would have to be an integral part of the adjoining neighborhood. In other words they could not be independent self-sustaining units altogether isolated from the adjoining neighborhood.

Tracts Number 3 and 5 are of sufficient size for consideration for independent community unit development.

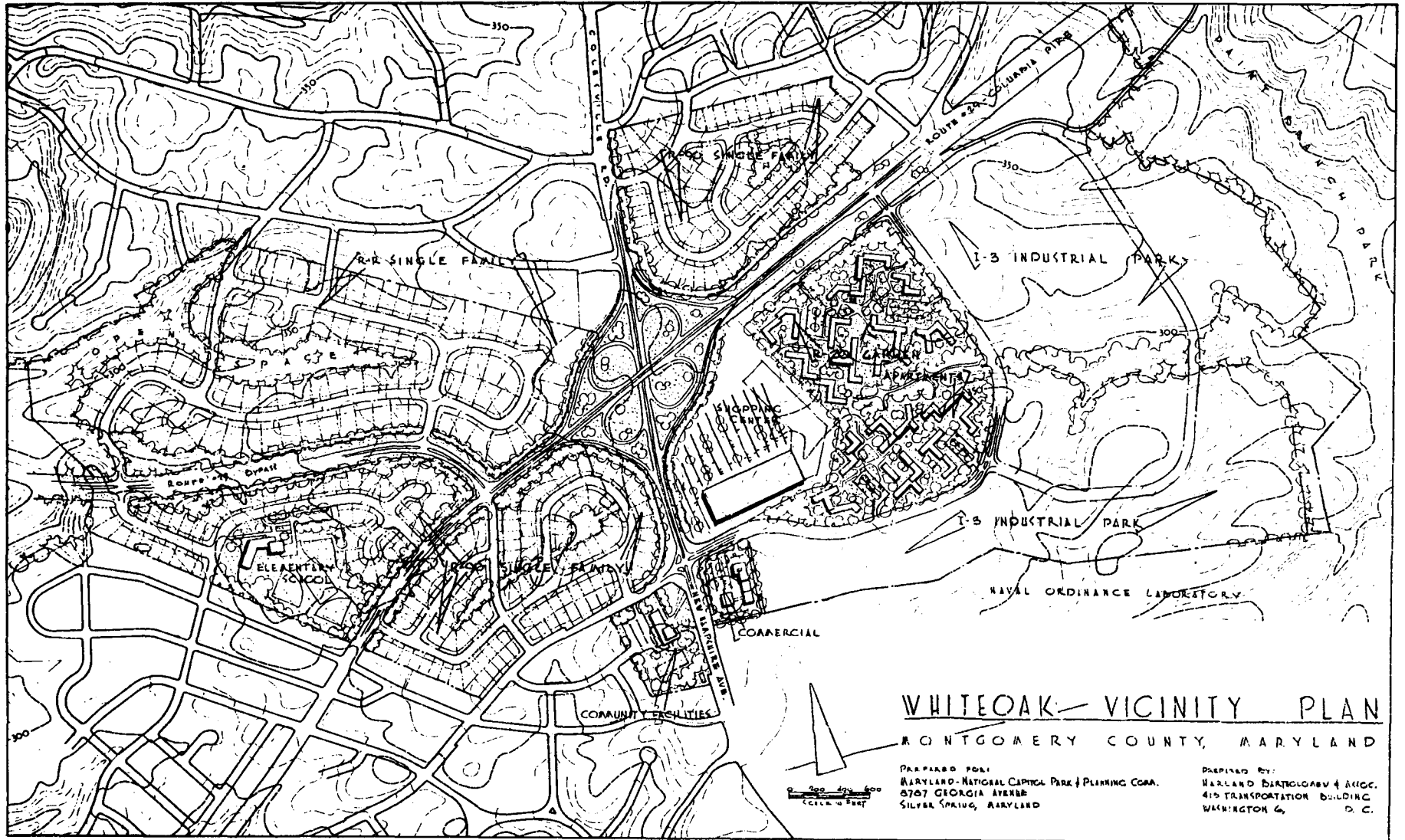
Tract Number 3, occupying the northwest quadrant, is an area of rolling land with two ravines with rather sharp sloping sides. The future highway plan in the Northwest Branch area shows that Route M-7 will more or less bisect this tract. We have studied this location and find that it cannot very well be improved sufficiently to preserve the unity of the tract as a

whole. This is an important highway which will have the effect of making two unit areas respectively, one of roughly 100 acres to the north, and the other of 75 acres to the south. Furthermore the future county plan will require a new elementary school site presumably within the boundaries of Tract Number 3. We have made various design studies for the location of this highway and the location of the elementary school.

That portion of Tract Number 3 north of M-7 contains the two ravines previously referred to. Furthermore it adjoins the Quaint Acres subdivision, a fairly recently developed subdivision of single family dwellings on lots ranging upward from three quarters of an acre in size. It is also to be noted that the approximately 100 acre northern portion of Tract Number 3 is quite elongated in shape. Its topography does not suggest independent unified development. To the contrary both topography, size and shape indicate that this tract could not be designed as an independent unit more or less isolated from existing development on the north. It must necessarily be considered as integral with the character of development in the immediate adjoining neighborhood.

The southern part of Tract Number 3 lying between M-7 and U.S. 29 is the logical location for the elementary school for reasons of accessibility. This leaves a relatively small parcel of land which would be bounded by the major highways. It is not of sufficient size, however, for consideration as an independent community unit.





# WHITEOAK - VICINITY PLAN

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

PREPARED FOR:  
 MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COM.  
 5707 GEORGIA AVENUE  
 SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

PREPARED BY:  
 HARLAND BARTOLOMEU & ASSOC.  
 415 TRANSPORTATION BUILDING  
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## PART THREE

### Recommended Plan

The plan recommended for the White Oak area is shown on Plate 5. This plan represents the most desirable land use pattern consistent with the policies set forth in the preliminary General Plan. Numerous schemes were prepared and analyzed in the process of developing the plan here recommended.

Each of the open or undeveloped tracts in the area shown on Plate 1 was given special study to indicate its best ultimate use. These studies took into consideration their size and shape, topography, relation to the interchange roads, proximity to existing development, accessibility, and use potential, (residential and non-residential) both from the standpoint of existing conditions as well as those based on the concepts set forth in the preliminary General Plan.

### Land Use and Zoning

The land use pattern shown on the recommended plan is entirely compatible with existing development. The area west of New Hampshire Avenue is recommended primarily for single family residential development consistent with the dominant existing pattern of very good single family homes.

Tract Number 1 is very small and would be most useful for some type of community facility. It could also be developed as R-90 single family.

Tract Number 2 is proposed to be developed comparable to surrounding development.

Tract Number 3, the largest completely open tract, will be split by highway M-7 when built. It will lose some of its area when the proposed Burnt Mills school site and the right-of-way for the proposed U.S. 29 by-pass M-7 are deducted. The residential development proposed for Tract Number 3 is compatible with the existing development in the Quaint Acres area to the north of M-7 and to the Burnt Mills area to the south.

The plan indicates that each of these tracts can best be subdivided in the manner shown, with buffers and lots backing onto the interchange and adjoining major thoroughfares. There would be no wastage--no poorly situated lots that would invite low standards of development.

The area east of New Hampshire Avenue does not have the same well-defined existing land use pattern as was found to the west. Tract Number 4 to the north was found to be too small for other than a continuation of the single family development in the area along Kathryn Road. Tract Number 4 could be subdivided to best advantage in the manner shown on the plan and which, to some extent, has already been anticipated.

The large commercial center in the southeast quadrant is well situated from a topographic viewpoint. A commercial area would have been required in the White Oak area and this site is the best that could have been chosen. It is of ample size to serve all needs of present and future population in the study area. The General Plan provides for additional commercial uses south of Boetler Road fronting on New Hampshire Avenue.

Tract Number 5 behind the shopping center between U.S. 29, Paint Branch Park and the Naval Ordinance Laboratory offers a unique opportunity for an independent community unit because of its size (259 acres), because of its well-defined and buffered limits, interesting topography, excellent highway access and open character. It is recommended that the area immediately east of the shopping center be developed with garden apartments. The topography of the area is such that it gives the whole tract an atmosphere of openness. Every effort should be made to stimulate good design concepts which would take full advantage of the varying topography and generous woodland now found there. The proposed design is in keeping with the philosophy of the preliminary General Plan and would be compatible with existing development.

The recommended plan, Plate 5, suggests the following zoning pattern. Tracts Number 1 and 2 would be designated R-90. The part of Tract Number 3 on the south side of M-7 would be R-90. That portion of Tract Number 3 south of Quaint Acres and north of M-7 would be R-R. Tract Number 4 would be R-90. The remainder of Tract Number 5 would be zoned I-3 except for the frontage on New Hampshire Avenue south of Boetler Road which is recommended to be C-1. The garden apartment area east of

the shopping center is recommended to be R-20. The topography of this area is such that it is ideal for cluster type development which conceivably could allow an overall density in keeping with the R-90 classification.

### Community Facilities

The recommended plan would require no perceptible change in the existing sewer and water facilities serving the study area.

The County School plan proposes a number of additions to the Montgomery County school system. Conferences were held with the staff of the Board of Education to determine the future school needs in the area. We believe that the addition of the new Burnt Mills school shown on Tract Number 3 as well as a new school on Cresthaven south of the study area, and the new White Oak junior high school north of the study area, will provide ample service to the study area as proposed.

The major park and open space needs of the recommended plan will be provided by the Northwest and Paint Branch stream valley parks. The open areas possible in the development of Tract Number 5 could be used for any needed local facilities in that area.

### Relationship to the Adopted Upper Northwest Plan

The recommended plan follows generally the concepts of the Upper Northwest Plan adopted last April except for the area behind the shopping center. The adopted plan provides that the area south of Boetler Road be zoned C-1 and the remainder of the area be zoned I-3. The recommended plan proposes that the frontage on New Hampshire Avenue south of Boetler Road be zoned C-1, the area immediately east of the shopping center be zoned R-20, and the remainder zoned I-3. While this permits additional residential development in the area at somewhat higher density, it carries out the concept of the preliminary General Plan, currently being developed.

May, 1962, 1M-F-191

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