

CITY OF GAITHERSBURG
SMART GROWTH POLICY

A MASTER PLAN ELEMENT



Gaithersburg

A CHARACTER COUNTS! CITY

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PLANNING AND CODE ADMINISTRATION
31 South Summit Avenue
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877
Telephone: 301-258-6330
Fax: 301-258-6336
plancode@ci.gaithersburg.md.us

CITY OF GAITHERSBURG

SMART GROWTH POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This policy is intended to provide overall guidance in the City's Master Plan as it addresses various elements including land use and zoning, transportation, capital improvements, and funding priorities. It is intended to provide clear and specific guidance in these areas and shall act as an umbrella policy over all other elements of the City's Master Plan. The language contained herein complements and works in tandem with the existing adopted elements of the Master Plan and further provides a strong message to the community at large as to the quality of development which this policy both encourages and anticipates for the City's future.

BACKGROUND

In May 1997, the State of Maryland passed the Neighborhood Conservation and Smart Growth Initiative. Building on the "Growth Act" of 1992, the Smart Growth Act is billed with the goal of halting suburban sprawl. The initiative uses fiscal and programmatic resources to *"improve the health and vitality of our cities and towns and preserve our rural landscapes, while assuring that our growing and diverse population have a variety of attractive places to live and work."* The City of Gaithersburg has many examples of this initiative within its programs and strategic planning activities. The City's central location in Montgomery County, a pivotal suburb of the nation's capital, is an important aspect of the Smart Growth Initiative.

The City, while experiencing many of the problems of suburban communities across the country, is working diligently toward effective solutions and has been recognized for achieving many successes. The City is known for taking a leadership role in innovative development strategies that can enhance economic growth and community vitality.

The State Smart Growth Initiative outlines various goals for "developed areas and areas planned for growth." The first goal is to ***designate areas appropriate for development, including Priority Funding Areas; periodically review plans and local actions, and update them to meet the needs of the community.*** The City has already taken steps to meet this goal and has recently updated all of its neighborhood master plans. While under the definitions of the Smart Growth Bill the entire City of Gaithersburg is considered to be an "area appropriate for development," the City has specifically designated the Olde Towne District as a Priority Funding Area. It has adopted measures to encourage new development in this area under the Central Business District Zone. The concept of "Smart Growth" is expected to foster continued improvements in the Olde Towne District and this policy document will also work toward the above stated goal.

In October 1997, the Mayor and City Council of Gaithersburg appointed a Smart Growth Committee to study all relevant issues associated with land use planning and urban design within the City, to analyze similar policies developed in other jurisdictions, and to report its findings to the Planning Commission and Mayor and City Council. The committee consists of representatives from both the development industry and the residential community of the City.

The Committee began by refining their charge which became: "to develop a Smart Growth Policy document that is general in nature but provides clear guidance for the community and gives incentives for development to be in a manner consistent with the policies that are set forth." The Committee then developed the policy document which is divided into six general areas:

1. Principles for Development
2. Neighborhood Conservation and Enhancement Guidelines
3. Priority Funding Areas
4. Priority Transportation and Infrastructure Projects
5. Smart Growth Incentives
6. Implementation

The Smart Growth Committee reviewed various policy documents that are known to be innovative and focused on addressing issues related to Smart Growth. Some of them include: *Sustainable Suburbs Study: Creating more fiscally, socially and environmentally sustainable communities*, by the City of Calgary; *Building Livable Communities: A policy maker's guide to infill development*, and *The Ahwahnee Principles*, both by the Center for Livable Communities; and *The Congress for the New Urbanism Charter*. The committee incorporated the best ideas from these documents into the City of Gaithersburg's Smart Growth Policy, using the Ahwahnee Principles as the basis. The principles have been adapted to meet the needs, goals, and characteristics specific to Gaithersburg. The policy document also includes a set of implementation strategies for use on the local level. It is anticipated that once endorsed, these principles will be used to guide the City's future by using them for making decisions on development proposals, funding priorities, master plan amendments, zoning map amendments, and in developing the City's Strategic Plan.

In order to better comprehend the City of Gaithersburg's role in the Smart Growth arena, the municipality's posture within Montgomery County must first be examined.

SMART GROWTH ISSUES IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

There has been substantial development on the fringe of Gaithersburg within unincorporated portions of Montgomery County. Added to this growth around the City is the continued expansion to the north in upper Montgomery County, Frederick County, and westward in Washington County and West Virginia. This growth in residential development has created the large amount of commuting traffic into and through Gaithersburg on such roads as Interstate 270, Great Seneca Highway, Midcounty Highway, Maryland Route 28, Maryland Route 117, Maryland Route 355, Goshen Road, and Maryland Route 124. Much of the traffic congestion and concern about over development *in* the City may be rooted in the growth that has occurred *outside* Gaithersburg. Today, Gaithersburg exists in the midst of expanding growth along the northwest corridor of the greater Washington metropolitan area.

Map p. 3

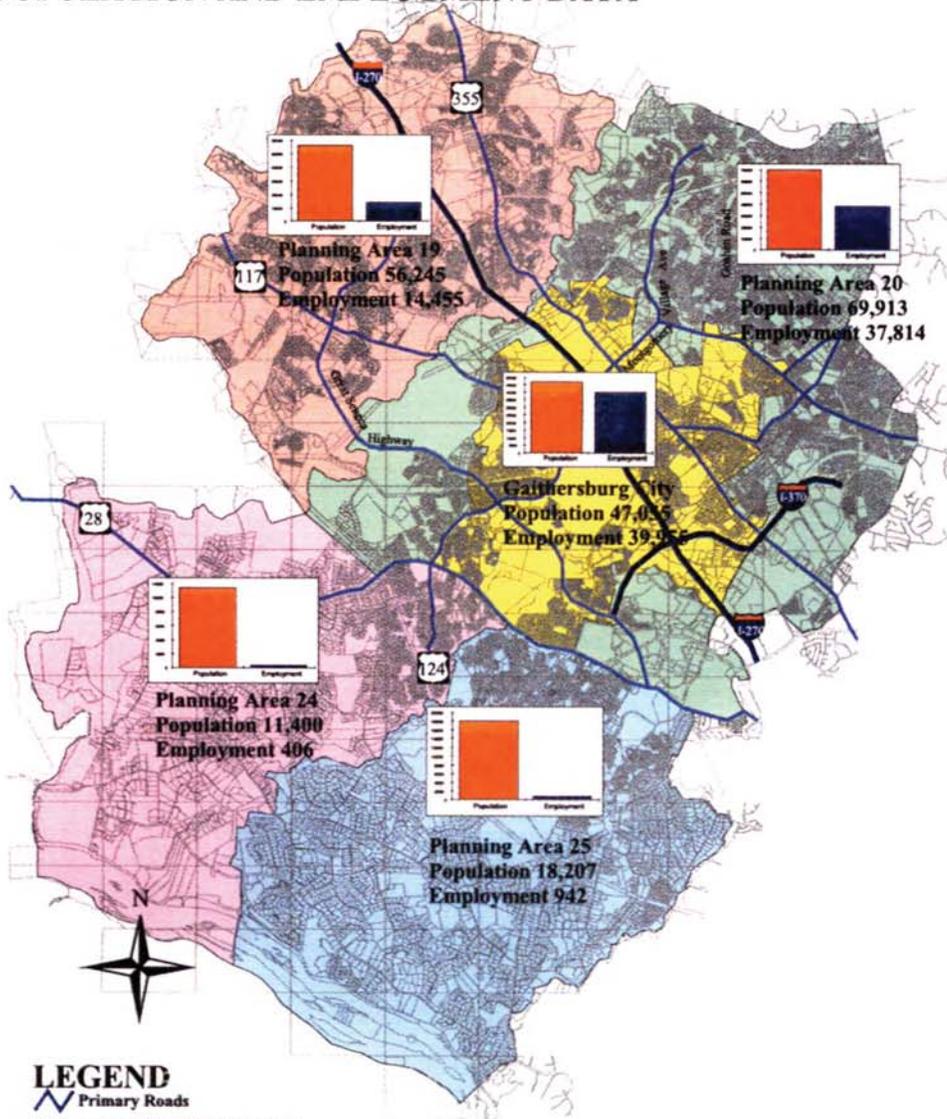
Map p. 4

At the same time, the County has developed an excellent program to preserve farmland in the up-county through Transferable Development Rights (TDRs). The County's Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program also provides greater housing opportunities within the County encouraging residents not to move farther north for affordable home ownership. The County's recent efforts in revitalizing Silver Spring and building density around the Bethesda Metro Station are other examples of Smart Growth at the county level.

In terms of transportation, the County's Ride-On Bus system has provided public transportation for Gaithersburg and county residents alike for many years. It continues to be the focus of improved and enhanced transit for the County and the City. The future Shady Grove-Clarksburg Transitway is another important transportation facility for both the County and City. This busway/light rail line will provide the necessary transportation capacity for much of the City in the future. The connection between quality transit and economically sustainable suburbs has been well documented, making this transitway very important to both Gaithersburg and Montgomery County.

GROWTH SURROUNDING GAITHERSBURG

POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT DATA



LEGEND

- Primary Roads
- Montgomery County Planning Areas
 - 19-Germantown
 - 20-Gaithersburg & Vicinity
 - Gaithersburg City
 - 24-Darnestown
 - 25-Travilah

Source : Montgomery County Department of Parks and Planning
1995 Data Intermediate At Place-Employment Forecast

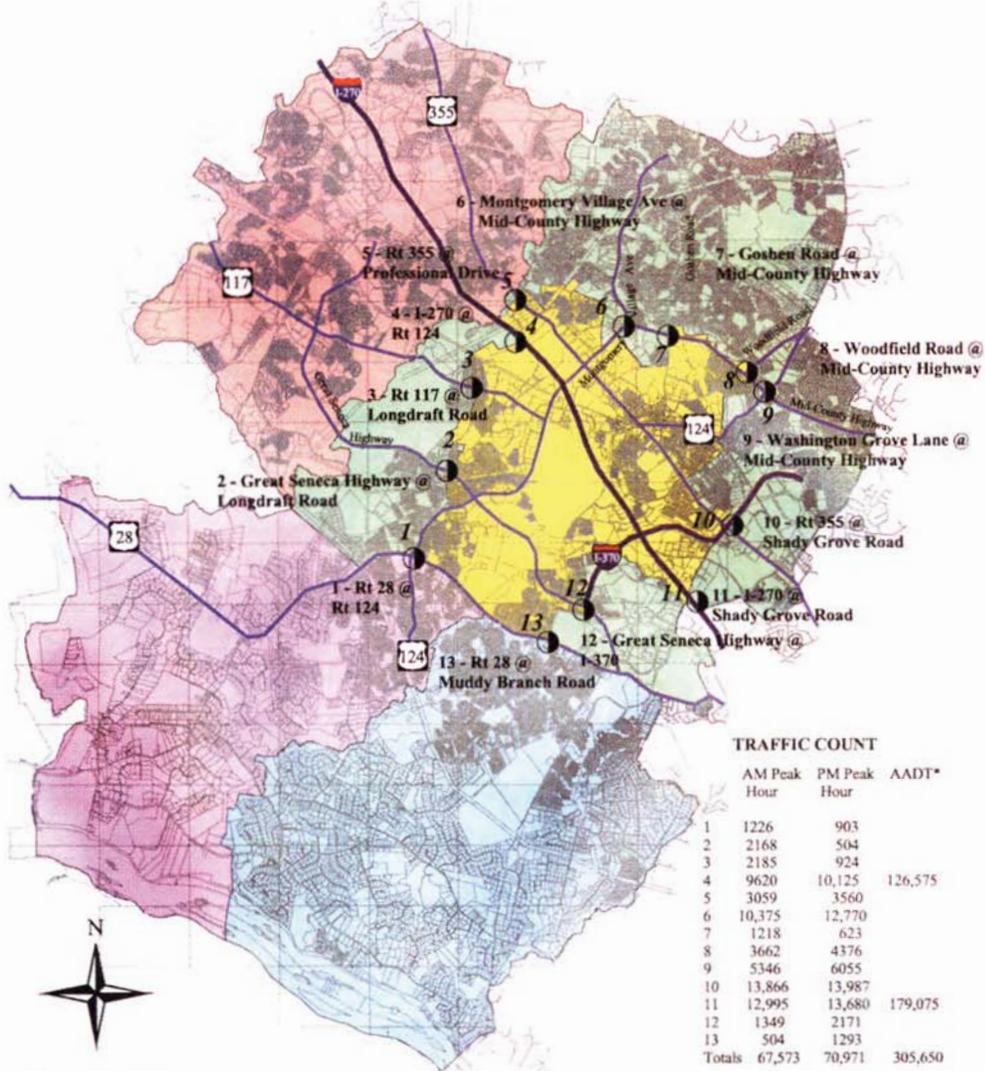


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TRAFFIC IMPACT OF GROWTH SURROUNDING GAITHERSBURG



TRAFFIC COUNT

	AM Peak Hour	PM Peak Hour	AADT*
1	1226	903	
2	2168	504	
3	2185	924	
4	9620	10,125	126,575
5	3059	3560	
6	10,375	12,770	
7	1218	623	
8	3662	4376	
9	5346	6055	
10	13,866	13,987	
11	12,995	13,680	179,075
12	1349	2171	
13	504	1293	
Totals	67,573	70,971	305,650

*Note : AADT = Average Annual Daily Traffic

LEGEND

- Montgomery County Planning Areas
- 19-Germantown
 - 20-Gaithersburg & Vicinity
 - Gaithersburg City
 - 24-Darnestown
 - 25-Travilah

Source :
 1-Montgomery County Department of Parks and Planning
 2-Maryland Department of Transportation (SHA) (1996)



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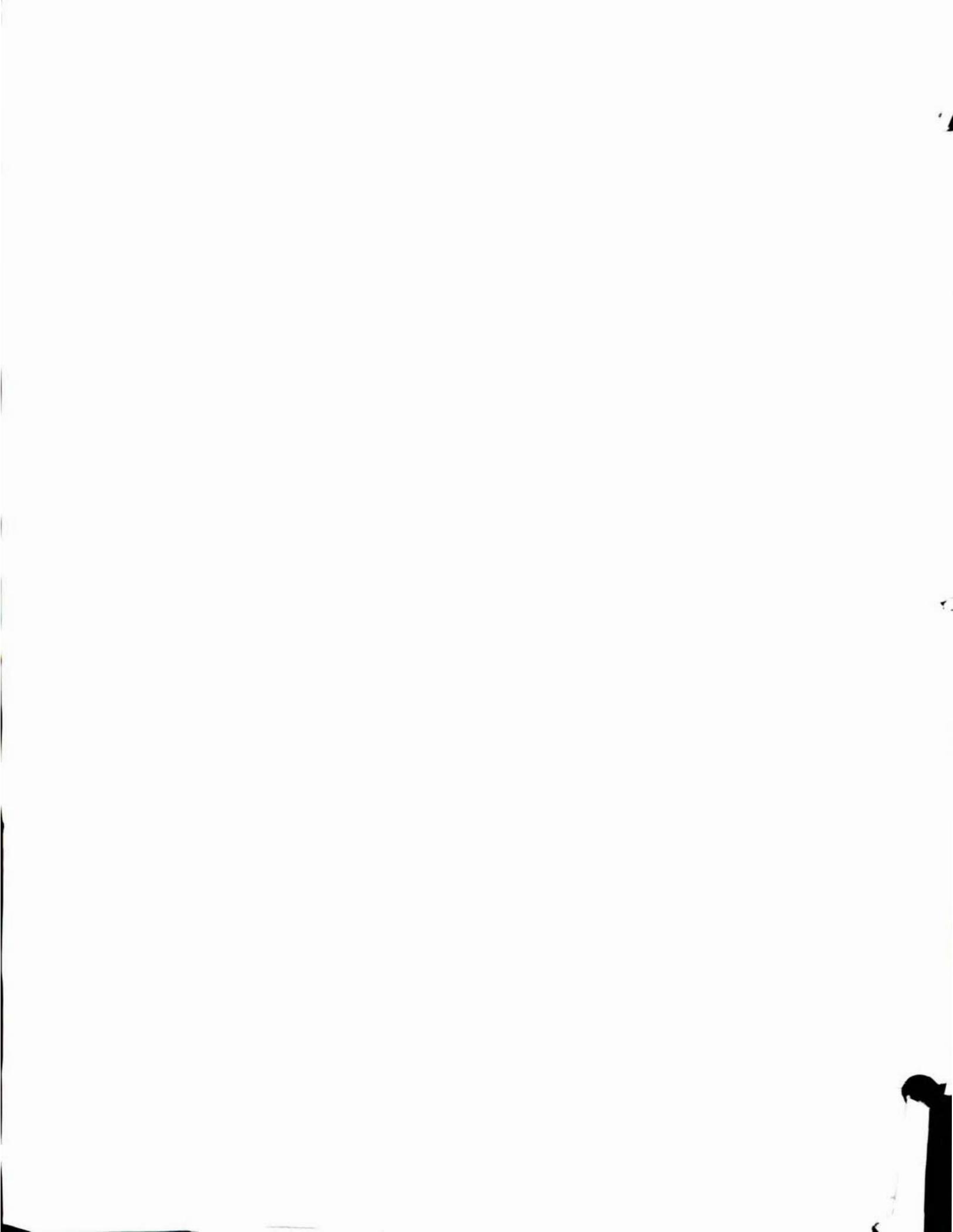
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SMART GROWTH POLICY
Adopted July 1999

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Chip Burton, Peter Fosselman, Peter Geiling
Jody Kline, Page Lansdale, Pamela Lindstrom
Robert Mauri, Victor McDonald, Thomas Natelli
Scott Reed, Jennifer Russel, Eileen Schlichting, Jon Stang
Steve Virostek, Clark Wagner, Mike Watkins

PLANNING AND CODE ADMINISTRATION

Jennifer Russel, Director
Clark Wagner, Urban Design Director*

Publication Team:
Patricia Patula, Publication Coordinator
Maria Fullerton, Publication Layout
Manisha Tewari, Geographic Information System

* Principal Author

The neighboring municipalities of Washington Grove and Rockville will also be important partners in meeting Smart Growth goals. The Shady Grove Transportation Management District (TMD) is an example of areas in the County, i.e., Rockville and Gaithersburg, where municipalities are envisioned sharing the responsibility of creating a district that crosses each jurisdiction's boundaries in an effort to collectively deal with transportation issues.

In light of the many county-wide and regional issues, it is imperative that the City and County develop a strong working relationship in an effort to bring to fruition the success of both County Smart Growth efforts, such as the ones mentioned above, as well as the goals of the City's Smart Growth Policy.

SMART GROWTH IS OCCURRING IN GAITHERSBURG

The City's strategic planning effort, which includes a vision, guiding principles and strategic directions developed by the Mayor and City Council and staff, along with other City policies and programs, are good examples of Smart Growth. The City's inclusive governing attitude and empowerment of neighborhoods through the Council in the Communities program are examples that foster a strong sense of community identity and belonging.

The City's commitment to revitalize Olde Towne as the City's true downtown is the strongest link to the concept of Smart Growth. Olde Towne is the historic center of commerce and civic activity for Gaithersburg. Its importance as the central focus in this respect must continue amidst other competing commercial centers within the City.

Historic preservation, fostering a sense of community and bolstering economic sustainability, is an active policy in Gaithersburg as exemplified by the establishment of two residential historic districts. Further impetus for this policy is provided by the presence within the City of some of the more unique historic sites in Montgomery County.

Other efforts in Gaithersburg which serve as good examples of Smart Growth include the following:

- The adoption of *Environmental Standards* and the Sensitive Areas element of the *Master Plan* which protect and enhance the City's sensitive areas
- The adoption of flexible ordinances and zoning districts, such as the parking ordinance and Mixed Use Development Zone
- The acceptance and encouragement of traditional neighborhood design
- The encouragement of the *Master Plan* for new and expanded public transit facilities
- The promotion of a "sense of place" through many programs, such as *CHARACTER COUNTS!*; recreation programs for children and adults; and streetscape improvements, such as the flower beds in medians
- The rental housing inspection program and redevelopment incentives for areas with declining housing
- The Police Department's community policing program
- The support of public schools including a grant program and Adopt-A-School program
- The Senior Center facility and programs
- The commitment to continued economic development
- The commitment to providing recreational parks throughout its neighborhoods

SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

The core of Smart Growth is the concept that all planning and development must consider and respond to the environmental, transportation, economic, social and civic needs of the community. Growth must not only serve today's needs, but must also address the obligation to future generations. Smart Growth means that what is special about the City today can be preserved through the planning process. It can also ensure that new development enhances and strengthens the City of Gaithersburg.

PRINCIPLES

1. Planning and development must be connected.

- a. All planning should be done in an effort to provide **complete and integrated communities** containing housing, shops, work places, schools, parks, and civic facilities essential to the daily life of the residents. The design of the community should contribute to the quality of life for residents of **all** ages.
- b. Future annexations into the City should be consistent with the Smart Growth Policy.

Figure p. 7

2. Planning and development must address transportation needs.

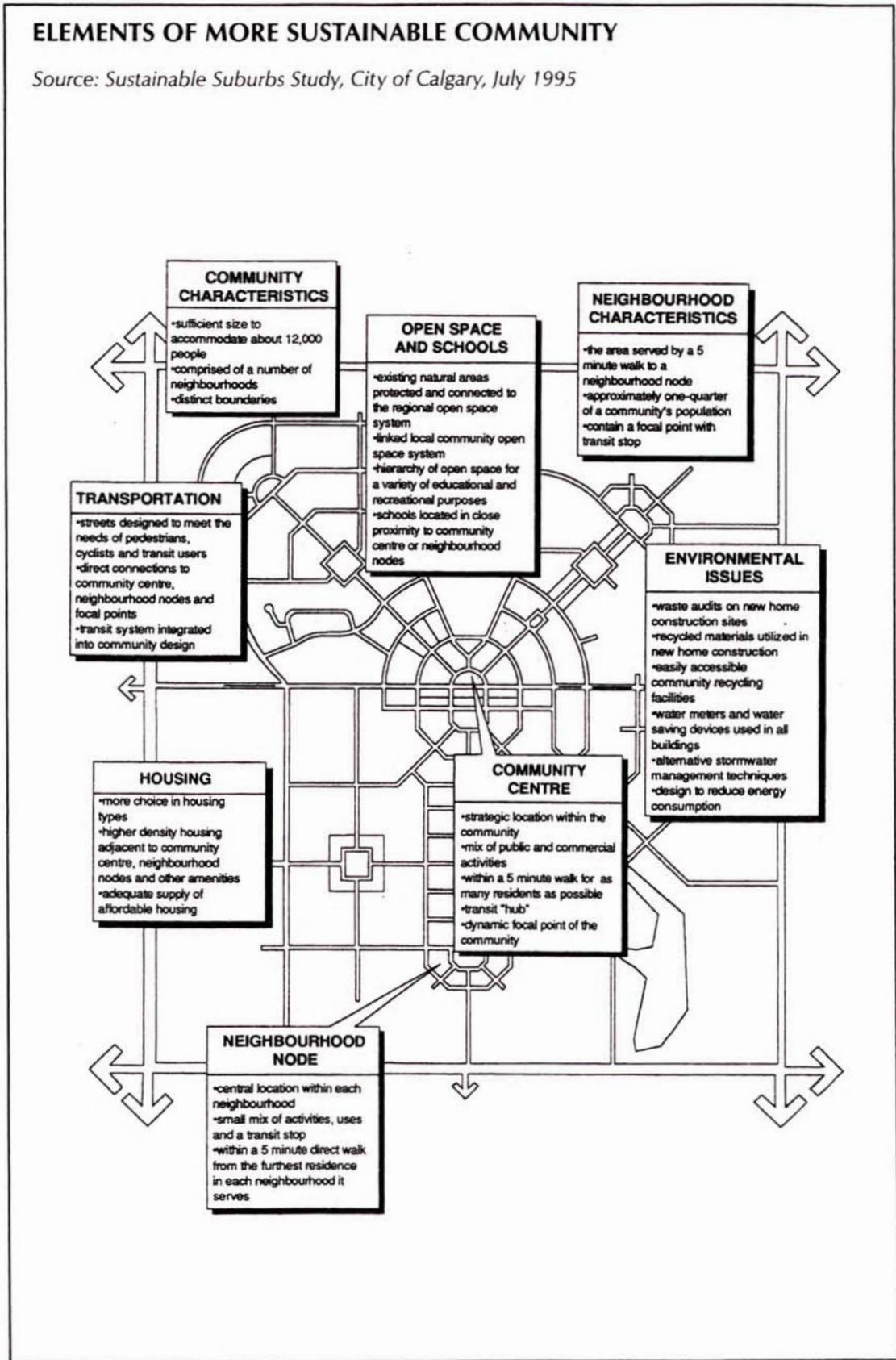
- a. **Community size** should encourage walking and bicycling and should be structured so that housing, schools, jobs, daily needs, and other activities can be within easy walking distance of each other.
- b. The **location and character of the community** should be consistent within a larger transit network pursuant to the City's Transportation Element of the *Master Plan*.
- c. The **network of streets, pedestrian paths, and bike paths** should contribute to a system of **fully connected, safe, and interesting routes** to all destinations. Their design should encourage pedestrian and bicycle use by being small, manageable in size, and spatially defined by buildings, trees and lighting, and by discouraging high speed traffic.

Map p. 9, 10, 11

Map p. 12

ELEMENTS OF MORE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

Source: Sustainable Suburbs Study, City of Calgary, July 1995



3. *Planning and development must encourage economic growth.*

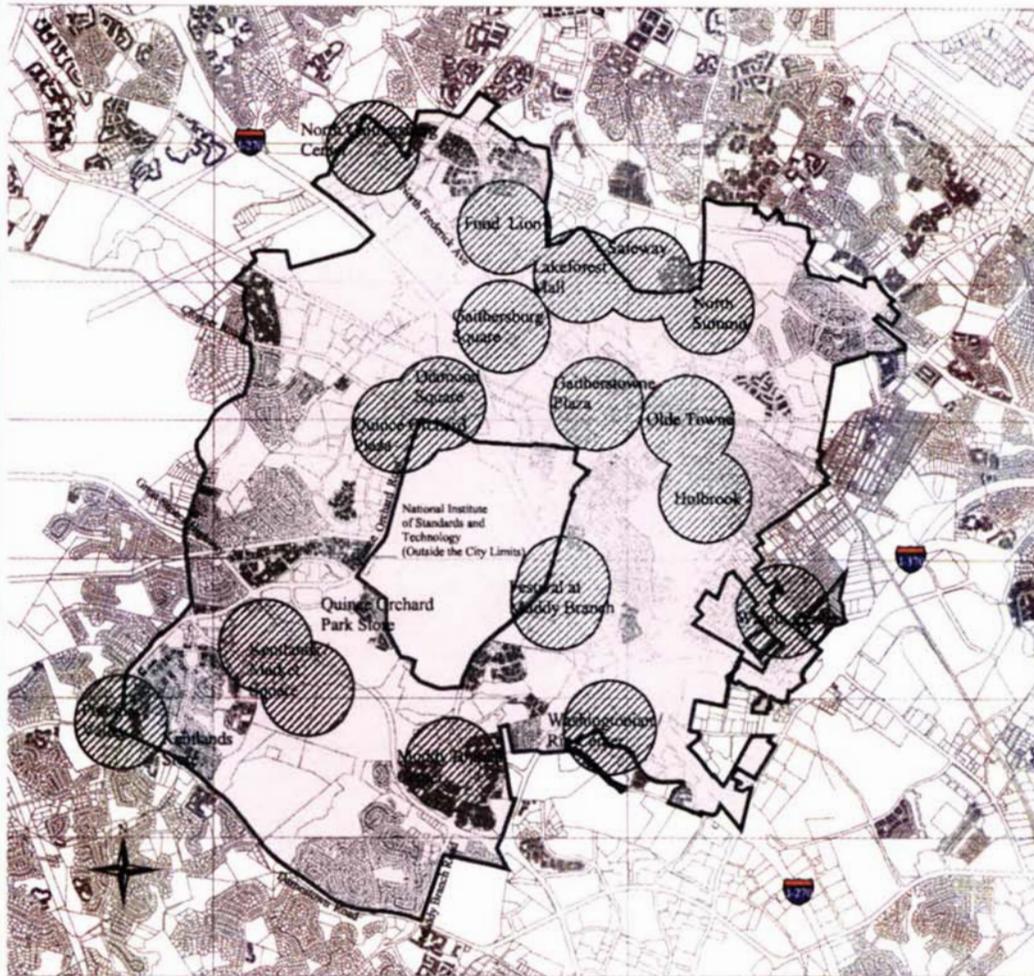
- a. Existing **businesses** should be encouraged to expand, and new businesses should be encouraged to locate within the City. The City's business community should seek to provide a range of job types as well as participate in the overall stewardship of Gaithersburg.

4. *Planning and development must strengthen community diversity.*

- Map p. 13 a. The City should contain a **diversity of housing** types to enable citizens from a wide range of economic levels and age groups to live within its boundaries.

WALKABILITY MAP

AREA WITHIN 1/4 MILE RADIUS OR 5 MINUTE WALK FROM RETAIL SERVICES



LEGEND

- Property
- City Boundary
- Existing 1/4 Mile Radius - 5 Minute Walk
(Approx 5000 Units - 25%)
- Future 1/4 Mile Radius-5 minute walk
(Approx 688 Units - 3.5%)
- Area Not Within Walking Distance of Retail Services
(Approx. 14327 Units - 75 %)

Note : The total number of dwelling units on January, 1998 was 19,327



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WALKABILITY MAP

AREA WITHIN 1/4 MILE RADIUS OR 5 MINUTE WALK FROM BUS STOPS



LEGEND

-  Five Minute Walk Radius From Bus Stops
-  Shady Grove Station
-  Lakeforest Transit Stop
-  MARC Station
-  Stops



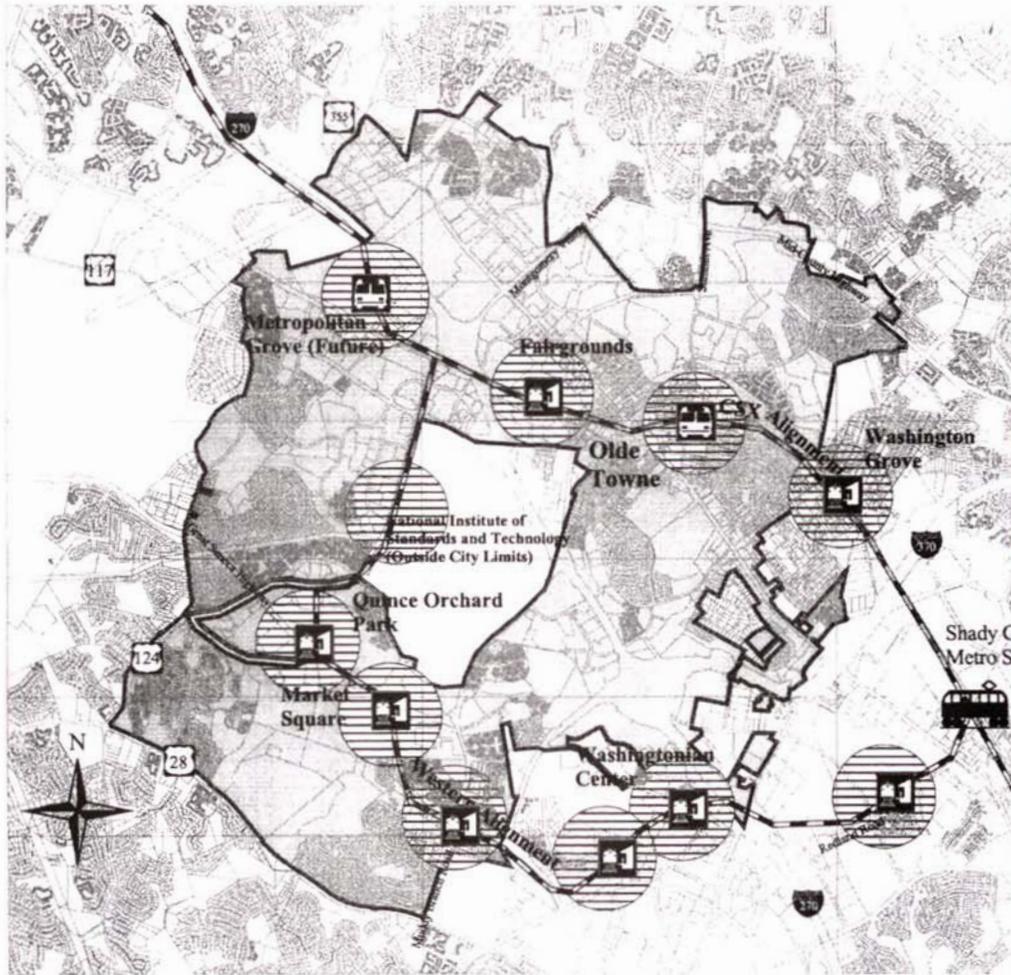
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WALKABILITY MAP

AREA WITHIN 1/4 MILE RADIUS OR
5 MINUTE WALK FROM TRANSIT STATIONS



LEGEND

-  Five Minute Walk Radius from Transit Stations
-  Proposed Transitway
-  Alternate Transit Route
-  Proposed Transit Stations
-  Existing MARC Stations

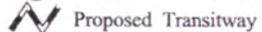
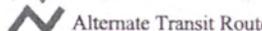


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GAITHERSBURG TOWN CENTERS AND FUTURE TRANSITWAY

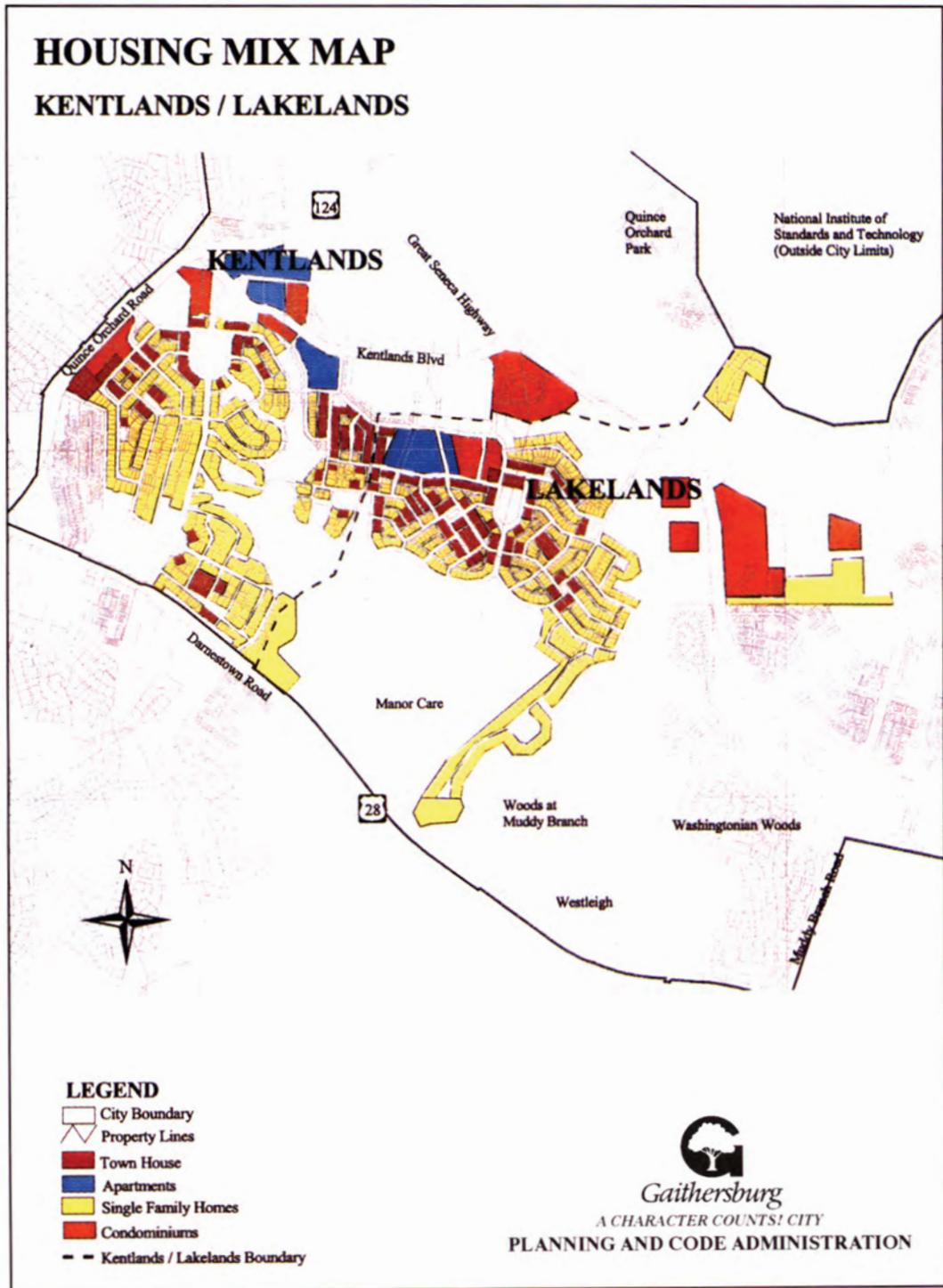


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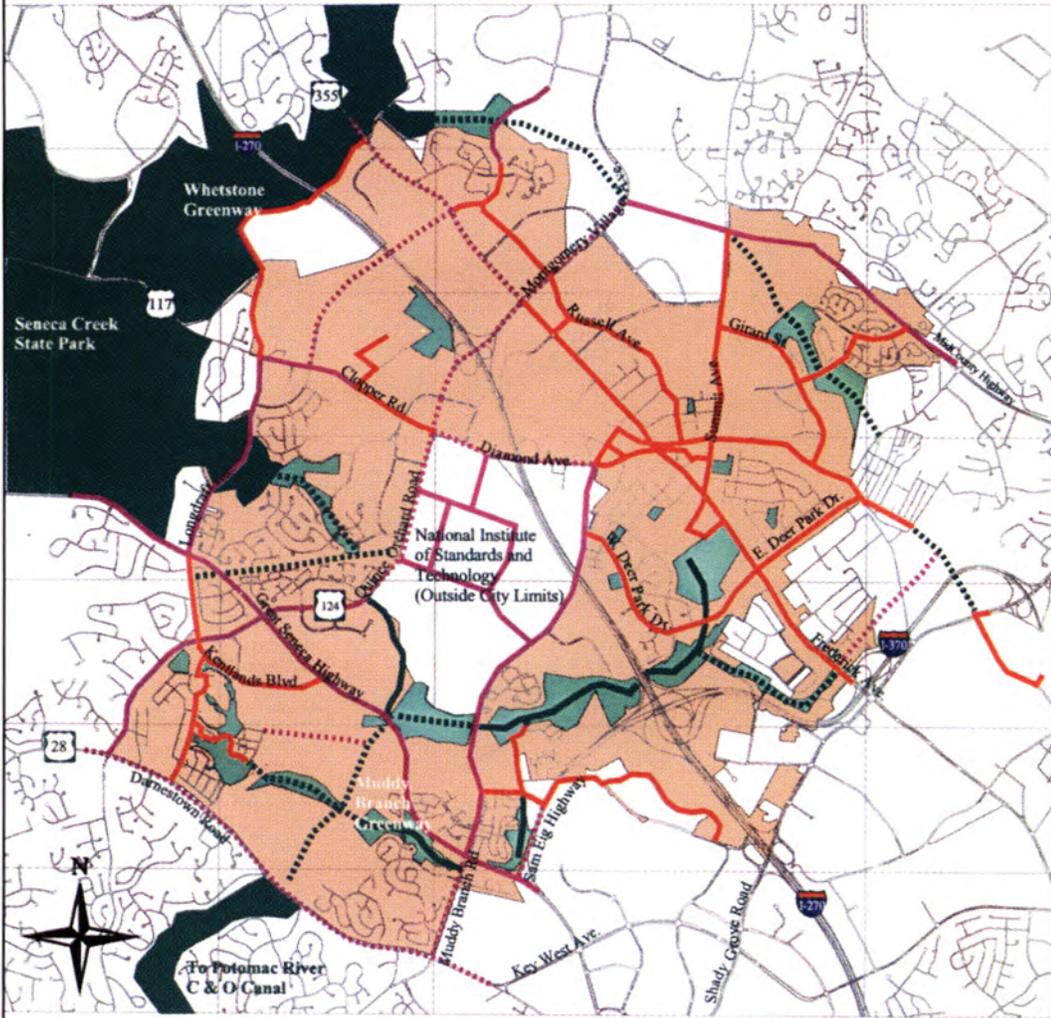
-  5 Minute Walk Radius from Town Centers
-  Proposed Transitway
-  Alternate Transit Route
-  Proposed Transit Stations
-  Existing MARC Stations



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CITY OF GAITHERSBURG GREENWAYS MAP



LEGEND

-  On-Street Bike Lane
-  Existing Bike Lane/Trails
-  Existing Greenways Path
-  Proposed Greenways Trail
-  Proposed Bike Trail
-  City Parks
-  County/State Parks



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5. Planning and development must provide for the environment with public green spaces and environmental stewardship.

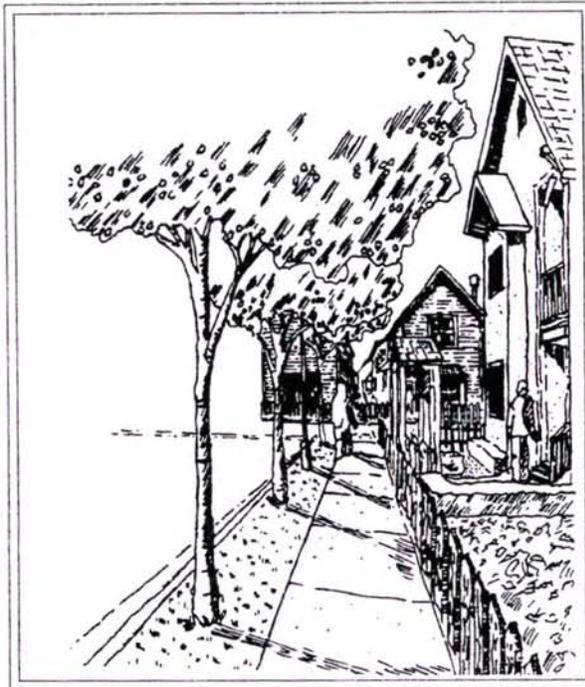
- a. All future development should foster the protection and enhancement of the City's **natural environment** through the adherence to the *Environmental Standards*. Both the residential and business community should embrace a stewardship of the City's sensitive areas recognizing the important role the City plays in the regional Chesapeake Bay Watershed.
- b. The street orientation, placement of buildings, and use of shading should contribute to **energy efficiency** within the City. *Figure p. 16*
- c. Wherever possible, the **natural resources**, such as terrain, drainage, and vegetation, should be preserved via superior examples retained within parks or green belts. The community design should help conserve resources and minimize waste. *Map p. 14*
- d. The City as a whole should have a **well-defined edge**, where possible, as well as a continuous **system of green ways** or wildlife corridors permanently protected from development. *Map p. 14*
- e. The City should contain an ample supply of specialized **open space** in the form of squares, greens and parks, whose frequent use and accessibility to non-drivers is encouraged through placement and design. *Figure p. 17*

6. Planning must enhance the City's identity and unique character.

- a. **New construction** within the City should be specific to the region, exhibiting continuity of history and culture and compatibility with the climate to encourage the development of local character and reinforce City identity. *Figure p. 18*
- b. The City should retain and reinforce **Olde Towne as its spiritual heart** or downtown, while combining commercial, civic, cultural, residential, and recreational uses. *Figure p. 18*

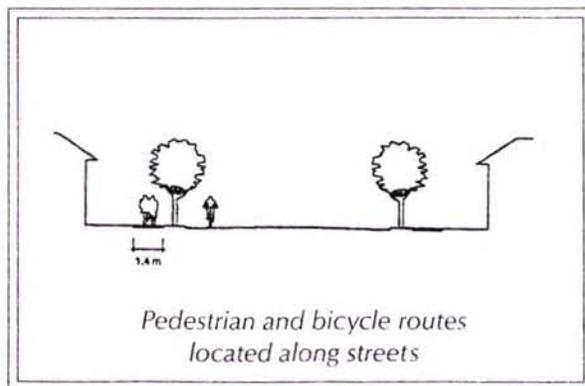
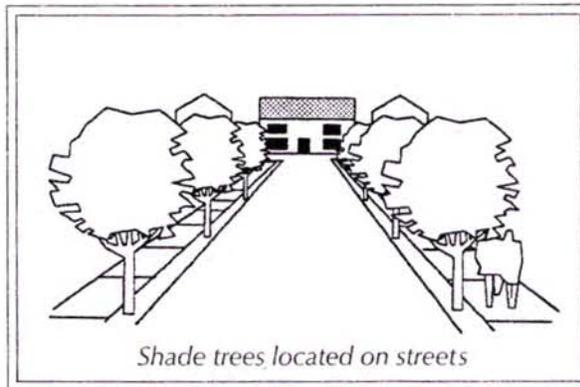
NEW COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES

Source: *Sustainable Suburbs Study*, City of Calgary, July 1995

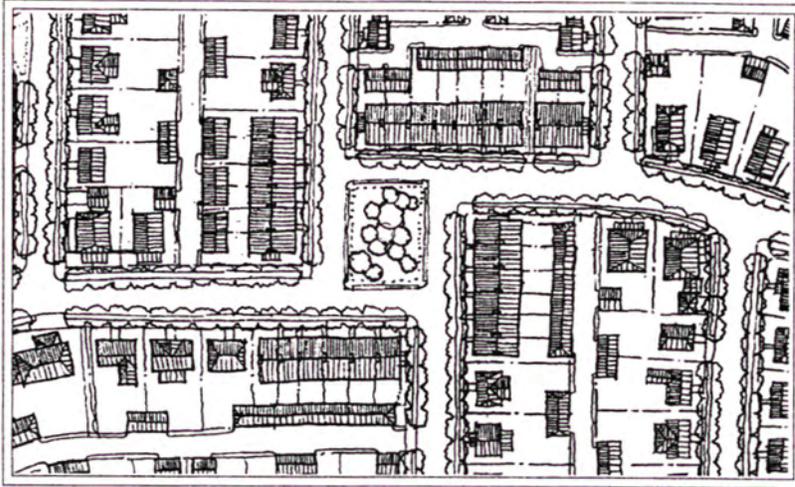


The following guidelines are suggestions to be considered when designing new communities:

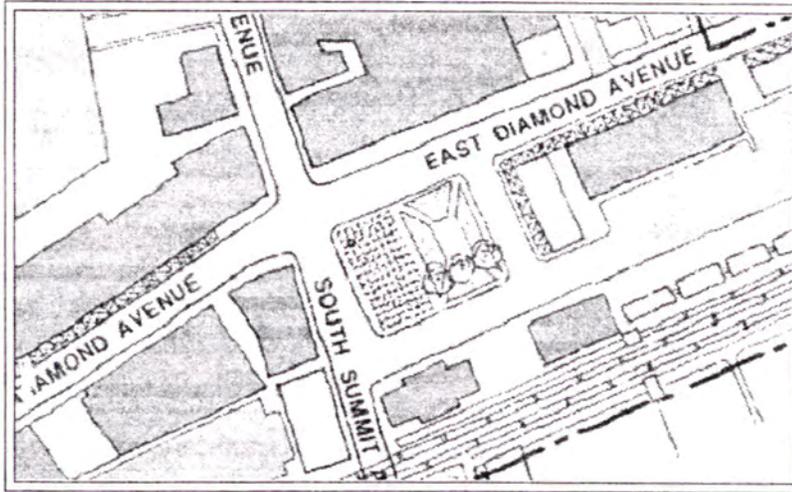
- The streetscape should incorporate features that are aesthetically pleasing and provide more of a public presence ("eyes on the street"): buildings which front on the street, porches, front windows, small front yard setbacks and shade trees along the street.
- Rear lanes and/or shared driveways should be considered in residential areas for garage access.
- Where possible, streets should frame vistas of the community centre, parks and natural features.
- Pedestrian routes should be bordered by residential frontages, public parks, plazas or commercial uses.
- Local pedestrian and cyclist routes on the street are preferred to rear and sideyard pathways.



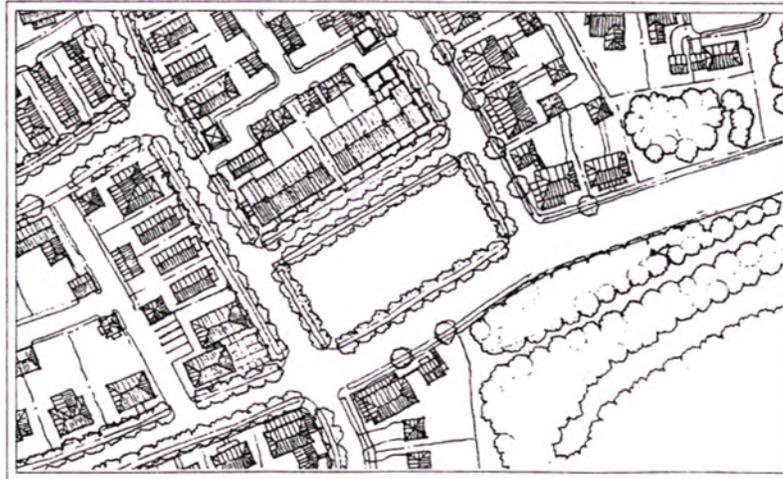
PUBLIC GREEN SPACES



Lakelands and Midtown, neighborhood greens

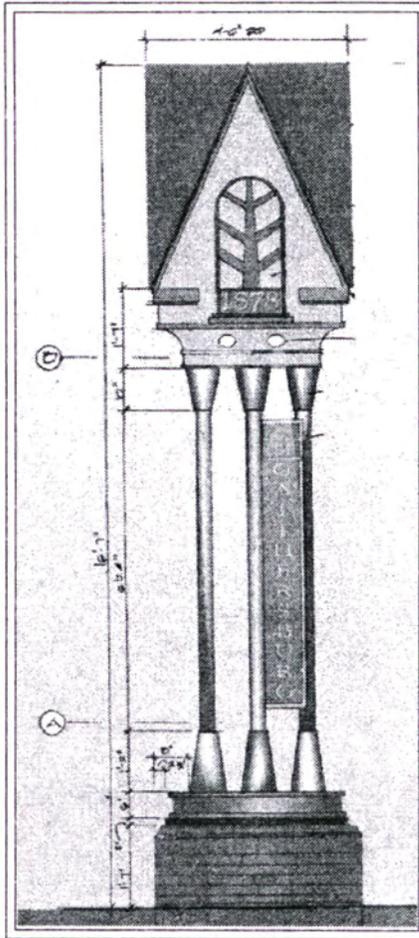


Olde Towne plaza



Lakelands and Midtown, entrance square

CITY'S IDENTITY AND UNIQUE CHARACTER



City's entry marker



B&O railroad station

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT GUIDELINES

A menu of strategies, improvements, and enhancements from which communities can choose is included herein to guide individual neighborhoods in an effort to further improve quality of life and sustain themselves economically over the long term. It has been demonstrated throughout the country that characteristics such as ease in walking to daily activities by mixing land uses, and creating a strong community design has contributed to sustaining suburbs and reversing suburban decline. The City may, at the request of any neighborhood within its corporate boundaries, take the following steps under this Neighborhood Conservation and Enhancement Program:

- Hold a planning charrette or similar forum with the neighborhood
- Prepare an enhancement plan
- Provide implementation assistance and advice

Possible neighborhood enhancements are as follows:

Figure p. 20

- Add street trees
- Add islands along the street to narrow the drive lanes and provide traffic-calming, e.g., West Deer Park Road in the Brighton neighborhood
- Develop and implement other traffic-calming strategies
- Add sidewalks by using existing, unneeded road pavement in lieu of removing green space
- Add entrance signage/markers reinforcing neighborhood identity
- Add amenities such as tot lots, playground equipment, pathways, benches, bus shelters, etc.
- Improve street lighting with additional lights, where needed, or new and more attractive fixtures

The City is in the process of partnering with the State of Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development to create a comprehensive program to address the issues related to aging multi-family housing. The City is experiencing a decline in the quality of some of its rental housing and condominium neighborhoods that is demonstrated by various factors including: increase in code violations, increase in criminal activity, decrease in property values, aging and deteriorating structures, increasing functional obsolescence in the marketplace, stagnant rents, etc. In part, the process for addressing this issue should be similar to that approach described above, which would be upon request from any property owner or condominium association. However, it is also anticipated that future financial, mortgaging, and incentivizing assistance must be ultimately channeled to these multi-family properties by the State via the City's administration.

POSSIBLE COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENTS

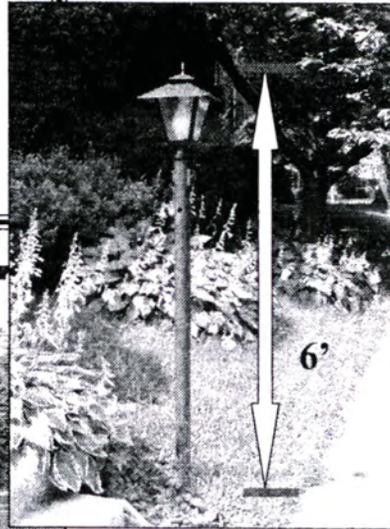
Bennington

A Plan For Community Enhancement

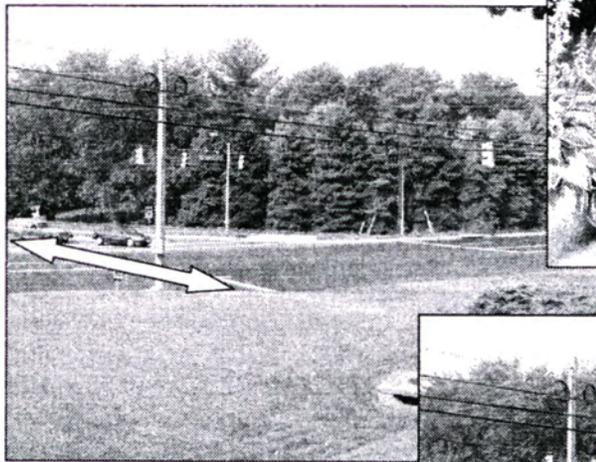
June 1998



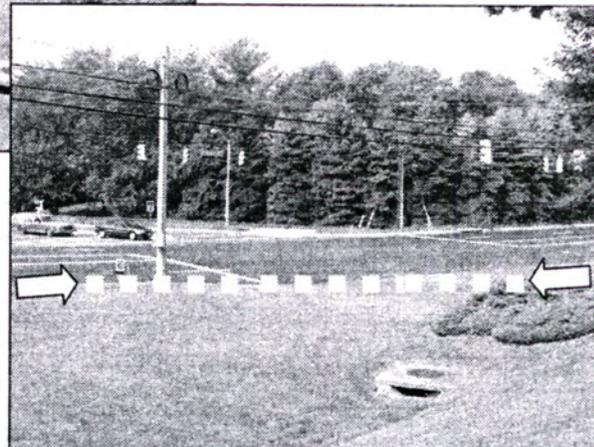
Published by the City of Gaithersburg
Urban Design & Neighborhood Services Teams
Department of Planning and Code Administration



New lighting



Crosswalk improvements



Addition of sidewalk

Currently, the City is implementing several actions to deal with this problem as a part of the strategic planning effort:

- A study was completed in 1995 of current conditions in multi-family housing
- A housing round table event was held to discuss relevant issues
- A paint give-away program has been established
- A fee-credit program has been established to allow multi-family property owners to divert rental licensing fees toward improvements to their property
- A Neighborhood Enhancement Coordinator position in the Department of Planning and Code Administration has been created
- Increased enforcement activity has been directed at problem apartments
- The Olde Towne Apartments have been demolished, via the creation of a public-private partnership, for redevelopment of the land and relocation of the residents to better housing in Gaithersburg

Other goals of the City's strategic planning effort include acquiring additional sources of funding, such as matching grants and housing rehabilitation loans, which will aid in the implementation of the overall program.

PRIORITY FUNDING AREAS

The Smart Growth Committee discussed the entire City in determining priority areas for funding. However, the City had previously established the Olde Towne district as the initial priority for State, County, and City funding of various revitalization projects. This funding was well underway prior to the drafting of this document and the Committee is in agreement with the previous selection of Olde Towne as the top priority for funding. However, the Committee did choose a second area known as the Frederick Avenue Corridor for priority funding. The Corridor was mainly chosen due to its present importance to the City as a major thoroughfare and entrance road, as well as its role in providing employment and homes for many of the City's residents. Priority funding designation will be finalized by the Mayor and City Council following the adoption of the Frederick Avenue Corridor Plan. The master plan for Neighborhood One also strongly recommended that the Corridor be studied for needed changes to its streetscape and to provide development opportunities through zoning and land use revisions.

In addition, funding in areas of the City that are outside the two priority areas should be encouraged if they relate to other sections of this policy document, such as neighborhood conservation, transportation, and infrastructure. It is not the intent to limit all government funding to these two specific areas, whether local, state or federal. The intent is, however, to make these two areas the highest priorities in the funding of projects related to development, infrastructure, and programs contained herein.

OLDE TOWNE

The Olde Towne district continues to hold the mantle for priority funding within the City. This neighborhood is one of the most historic, unique, and well-designed areas in the City, and is characterized by a high degree of transit service with the presence of the MARC rail station and the Ride-On bus system. Its ability to act as the heart of Gaithersburg's commercial, civic, and cultural activities remains the highest priority for the City, making its ultimate revitalization through economic development very important. A substantial amount of City, County, and State funding has been allocated to the district over the next several years. This funding is needed to carry out the many expensive infrastructure projects identified by the Olde Towne Community Development Corporation, including land acquisition for redevelopment, construction of public parking facilities, major road network improvements to facilitate greater access and circulation, undergrounding of overhead utility lines, incentivizing construction of additional commercial and residential densities, major streetscape improvements, and continued City-funding of programs for recreation and entertainment.

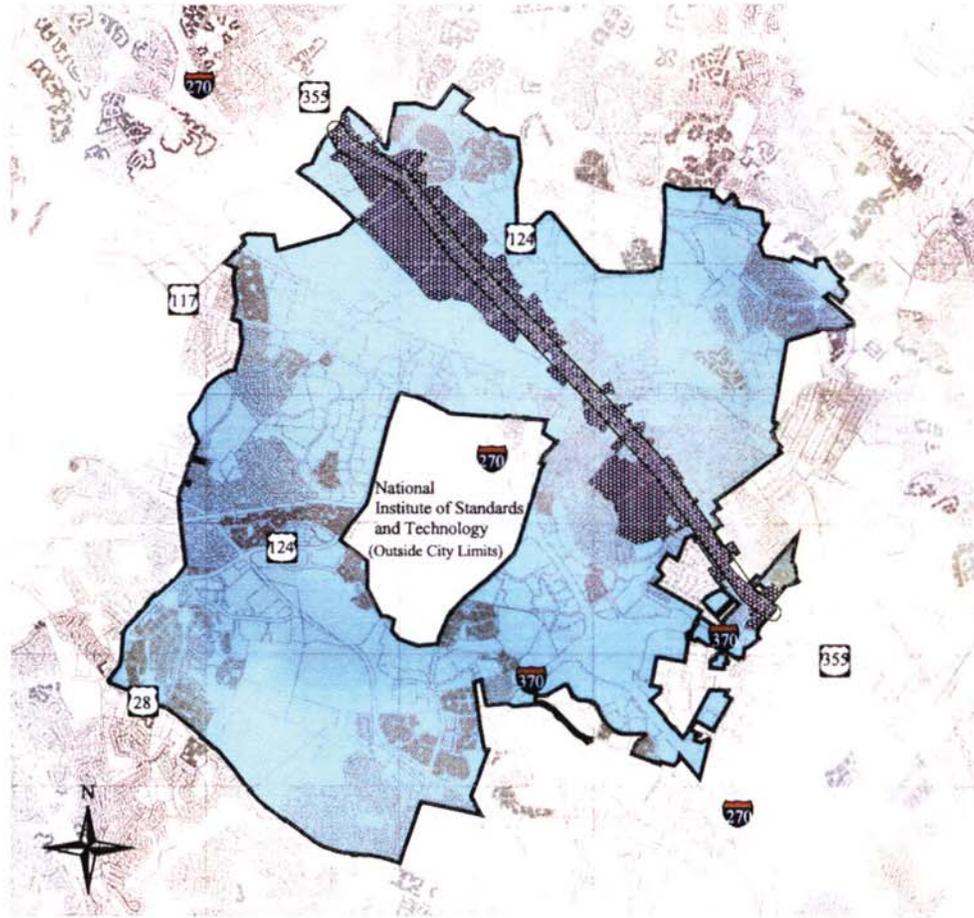
Map p. 23

FREDERICK AVENUE CORRIDOR

The Frederick Avenue Corridor Plan is a separate document and will become part of the Smart Growth Policy once the Corridor Plan is adopted by the Mayor and Council.

Map p. 24

FREDERICK AVENUE CORRIDOR



LEGEND

-  Frederick Ave Moratorium Area
-  Area within 200 ft of Rt 355
-  Gaithersburg City Boundary


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PRIORITY TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Many studies of successful communities indicate that in order for a city to realize its highest degree of long-term sustainability through Smart Growth, a high level of transit service is mandatory. This goal, which is real and achievable for the City of Gaithersburg, will help to alleviate traffic congestion, provide greater transportation capacity for new growth, and will enhance mobility for all City residents and workers. It should also be stressed that improving the overall connectivity, both internally and externally (regionally), is also a major goal for the City. In addition, there are various road projects that will also serve to increase the transportation capacity of the City, and the Gaithersburg area as a whole, which are outlined in this portion of the policy document.

The goal of improving the level of transit service can be realized through three priority transportation projects:

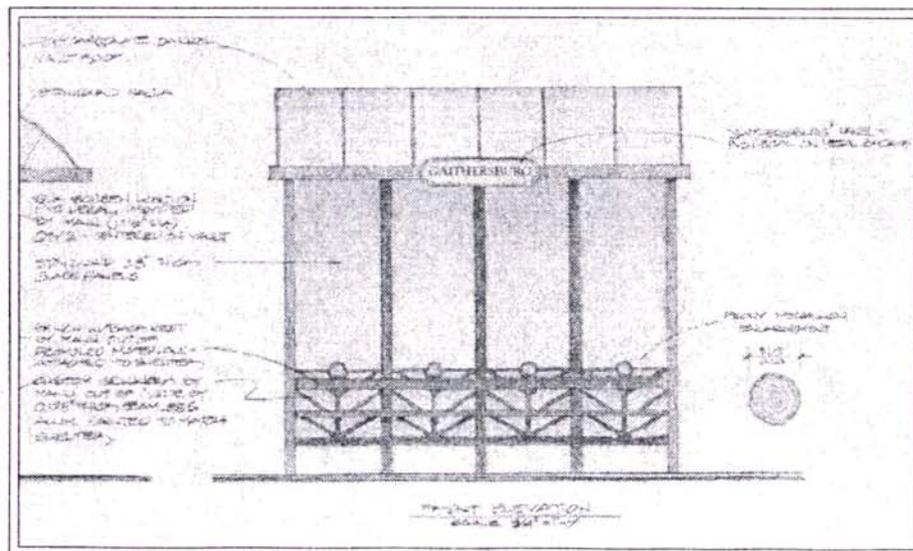
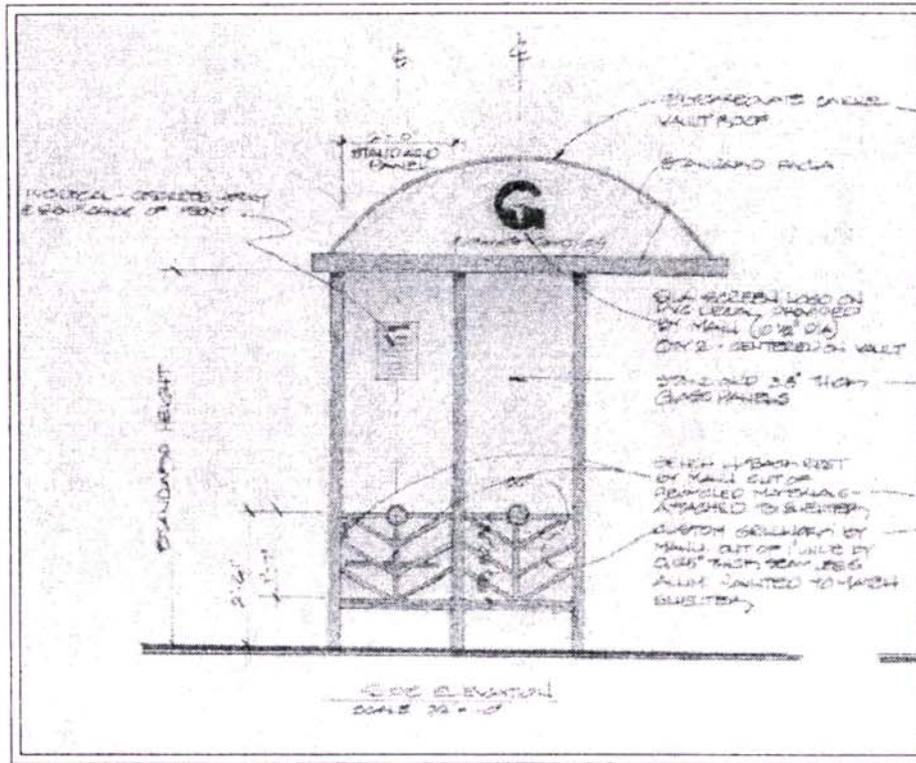
1. **The County's Ride-On Bus Service** which, in the short term, should be enhanced through improved access and general quality of the overall system for its ridership as well as strategic placement of unique City bus shelters; *Figure p. 26*
2. **The Corridor Cities Transitway** which, in the long term, should be initially constructed through the western portion of the City serving density nodes such as the Washingtonian Center, Lakelands, Kentlands, and Quince Orchard Park, and ending at a transit station in the future mixed use development located in Neighborhood Five on the Casey property. *Map p. 27*
3. **The Extension of Metro Rail's** main line or light rail to Olde Towne (and eventually to the future Metropolitan Grove light rail station), is an equally important transit project that could also serve the North Frederick Avenue Corridor and other properties along its alignment. A light rail extension along the railroad could provide a continuous loop through the City from the Shady Grove Metro Station to the Metropolitan Grove Station and back. *Map p. 27*

The City will have to summon the courage to permit the densities at key transportation nodes that will not only facilitate the construction of these expensive projects, but will ensure their operational success. The phasing of development must also be directly connected to the provision of the added transportation capacity. Elevating densities at the nodes thereby providing the transit ridership necessary to achieve success, may require some difficult or unpopular decisions. These density nodes should be designed to provide the highest possible quality of life for residents and workers in these areas, which includes providing all necessary public facilities, particularly schools. This high quality of life at higher densities can be achieved by adhering to the principles set forth in this policy document and by the City demanding the highest quality of public spaces in its review of development proposals.

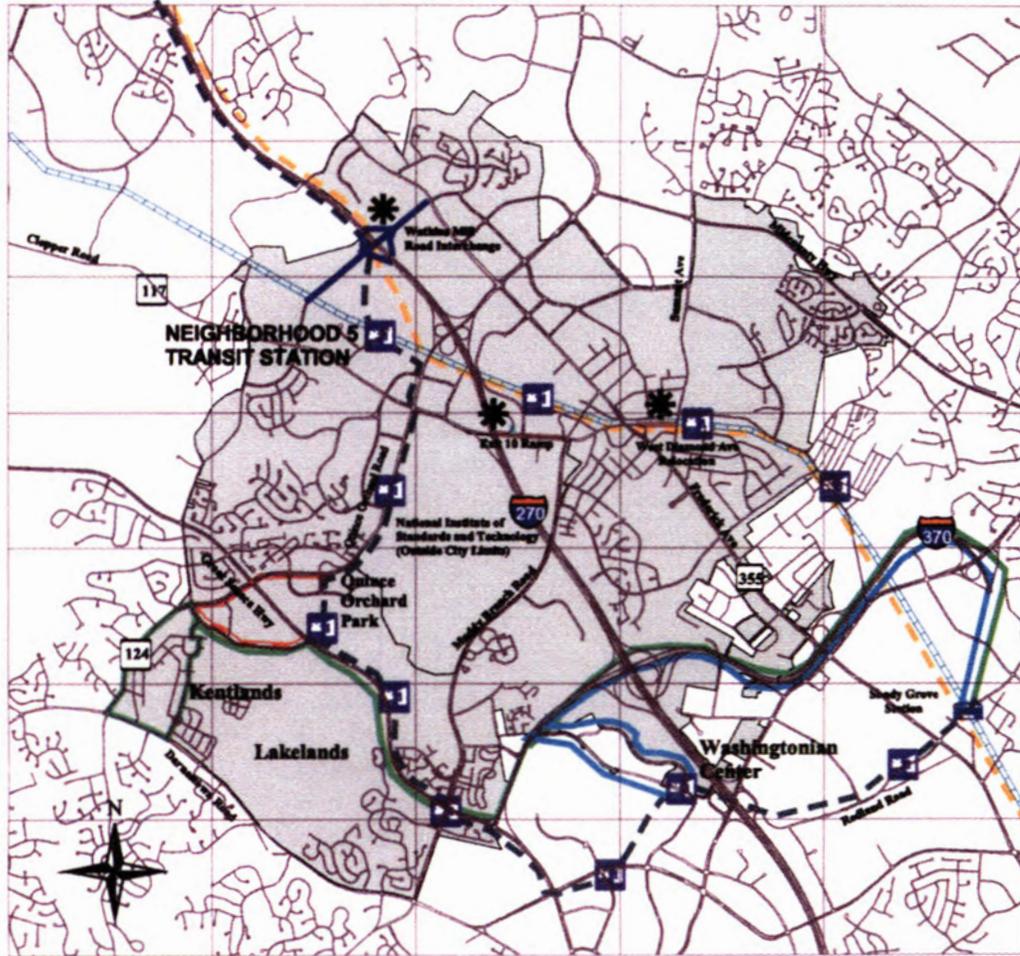
The City has, for several years, established priority road projects that will help improve the general road network, as well as increase access to Olde Towne and other developing areas of Gaithersburg. These projects are integral to the Smart Growth Policy in that they will help facilitate the growth of the City to its full potential, as well as help to reduce traffic congestion and increase vehicular accessibility to all parts of the City. The specific projects include: *Map p. 27*

- West Diamond Avenue (Maryland Route 117) Relocated.
- Modification to Interstate 270 Exit 10 (Maryland Route 117).
- New interchange on Interstate-270 at Watkins Mill Road-Extended.

CITY'S BUS SHELTER



PRIORITY TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS



LEGEND

1. RIDE-ON BUS SERVICE

- New Shuttle Route # 67
- Kentlands/Lakelands/Washingtonian Shuttle Route # 76

2. CORRIDOR CITIES TRANSITWAY

- Alternate Transit Route
- Corridor Cities Transitway Alignment

3. EXTENSION OF METRO RAIL

- CSX Transitway Alignment
- CSX Railroad

* - PRIORITY ROAD PROJECTS

- West Diamond Avenue Relocation
- Watkins Mill Road Interchange
- Exit 10 Ramp

Shady Grove Station

Future Transit



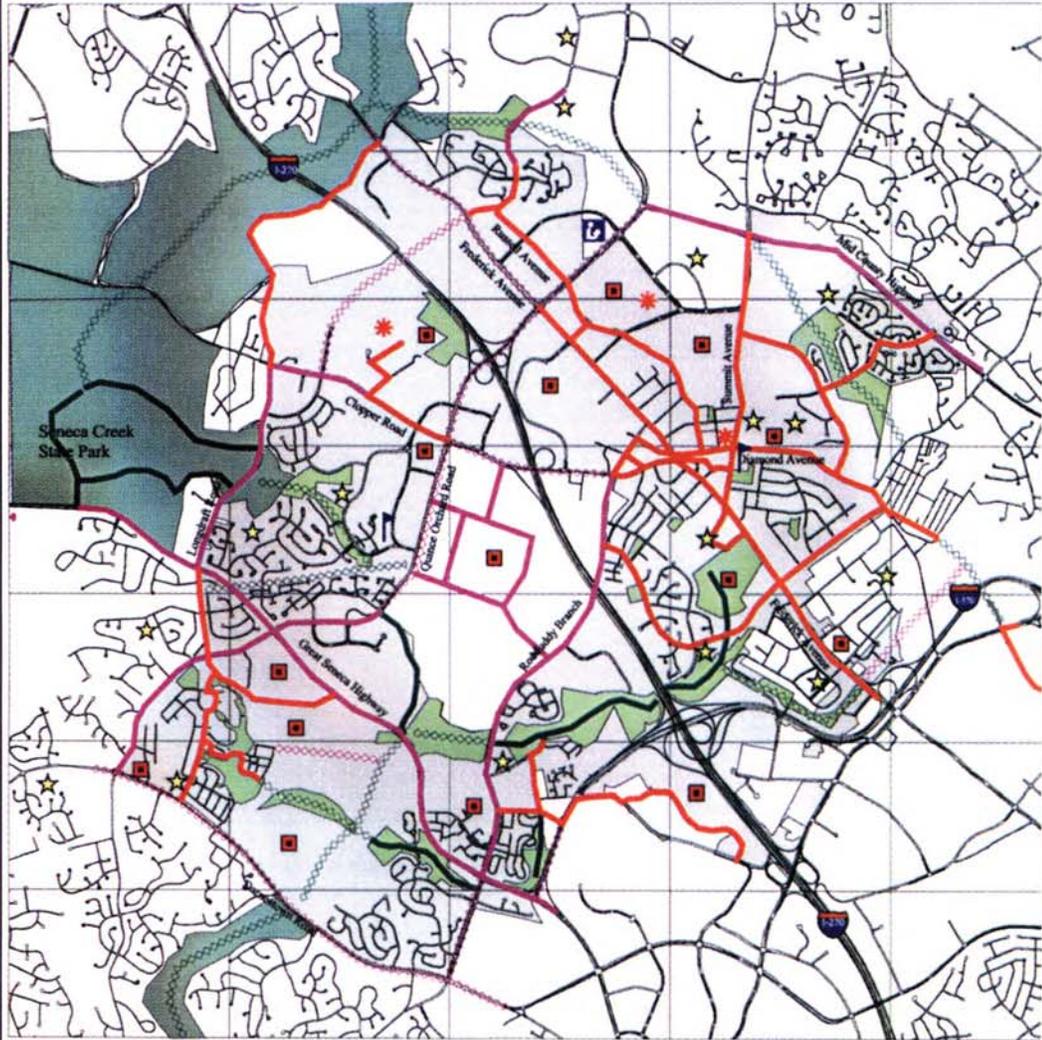
Gaithersburg

A CHARACTER COUNTS! CITY

PLANNING AND CODE ADMINISTRATION

Gaithersburg Bikeways and Pedestrian Plan

Overall Bikeways Map



-  Schools
-  Post Office
-  Transit Center
-  Major Destination
-  Library
-  On-Street Bike Lane
-  Existing Bike Lane/Trails
-  Proposed Bike Trails
-  Proposed Greenways Trail
-  Existing Greenways Path
-  City Parks
-  County/State Park



Gaithersburg

A CHARACTER COUNTS! CITY

PLANNING AND CODE ADMINISTRATION

Other priority infrastructure projects are:

- The continued planting of street trees.
- The continued expansion and enhancement of the City's pedestrian path and sidewalk network, with focus on connections over and under Interstate 270.
- The continued expansion and enhancement of the City's bike path system, also with focus on connections under Interstate 270.
- The continued enhancement of the City's environment through storm water management improvements and stream restoration projects.
- The installation of new City prototype bus shelters.

Figure p. 26

All of these projects are being funded by the City and should be the subject of State grants and budget allocations in order to bolster the overall transportation infrastructure of Gaithersburg. Pedestrians, bicyclists, and street trees have been lower priorities in the past when many of the State roads in the City were planned and constructed. In addition, the width and speed limits of many State and County roads in Gaithersburg have made travel by pedestrians very difficult and have made the connectivity of the City substandard.

The City is currently working on a comprehensive bikeways and pedestrian plan as an element of the *Master Plan*. This plan will propose future bike routes and pedestrian facilities that will meet the future needs of City residents. Therefore, the effort to improve both pedestrian and bike systems, and thereby improve connectivity, is a high priority for the City in seeking funding from State and County sources.

Map p. 28

The provision of street trees through reforestation efforts required of developers and the City's Capital Improvements Program is an important aspect of the street tree portion of the *Master Plan*, (see the chapter on *Sensitive Areas*), and should also be a high priority for the City in meeting Smart Growth objectives.

The City has established a commitment to the environment. Funding has been allocated for the retrofitting of existing storm water management facilities so that they perform at a higher level of environmental protection. A strong effort has been established to restore City streams to a higher level of functional and aesthetic quality. The Environmental Affairs Committee, acting as a guardian of the City's environment, is working diligently toward the goals established in the *Master Plan*. This committee has also embarked on a trial program to meet requirements to fulfill the standard known as ISO 14001 (International Standards Organization, Environmental Standard 14001). This program seeks to establish environmental standards for many City activities and will allow the City to set an example for the private sector and other local governments.

SMART GROWTH INCENTIVES

There is a wide range of possibilities for creating incentives for Smart Growth. Prior to the adoption of these incentives, a specific set of criteria must be established in order to determine if a development proposal can be designated as a Smart Growth Project. These criteria, along with a specific Smart Growth checklist, largely based on the principles contained above, will be developed as part of the policy's implementation. The checklist will accompany a written statement of how a particular development proposes to meet the stated principles of Smart Growth.

DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Overall development plans should be prepared as a guide for the physical development of the City. Plans for those portions of the City that are under multiple ownership, such as Olde Towne and the Frederick Avenue Corridor, should be prepared by the City as a guide for developers wishing to develop or redevelop pieces of the plan. However, plans for properties that are largely under single ownership and are of strategic importance to the City should be prepared by developers. Several major properties fit into this latter category, such as the Casey-City-McGowan tract in the Metropolitan Grove area, the Casey-Goshen Tract at Goshen Road and Midcounty Highway, and the Casey tract along North Frederick Avenue at Watkins Mill Road. These tracts are largely vacant parcels that should have comprehensive physical development plans.

Both types of plans should illustrate street network, land use and building locations in concept, and should adhere to the design principles established herein. They must, however, be flexible to change by developers who are providing a land use mix and a specific design that will realistically meet ever-changing market demands and principles set forth by the City. Development proposals that are consistent with these plans and the Smart Growth Principles and criteria established herein will be designated Smart Growth projects.

INCENTIVES

1. Smart Growth Designation and Fast-Track Process

Proposals that adhere to the principles contained herein and to the City's *Master Plan* will be reviewed and approved under a fast-track process that includes a single review by the Planning Commission at the concept stage, and further review of final site development plans by the City's Development Review Team (DRT). Designation as a Smart Growth Project will be determined by the City's Planning Commission at the time of concept plan review. For plans in the Mixed Use Development (MXD) Zone, the Mayor and City Council will approve the concept plan following a joint public hearing with the Planning Commission and a recommendation of approval from the Planning Commission.

2. 90-Day Plan Review Period

A proposal submitted to the City that receives the Smart Growth Project designation will be scheduled for concept plan approval within a 30-day time period of the date of submittal, and for final site plan approval within a 60-day time period of the date of submittal. The City will make every effort

to review and process plans for approval within these time frames, acknowledging that the review period is largely dependent on the applicant's timely response to City comments.

3. *30-Day Permit Review Period*

Site permits submitted to the City for projects receiving the Smart Growth Project designation will be scheduled for permit issuance within 30 days of final plan approval, and building permits will be scheduled for issuance within 45 days after final plan approval. Once again, the City will make every effort to review and process permits for approval within this time frame, acknowledging that the review period is largely dependent on the applicant's timely response to City comments.

OTHER INCENTIVES

Mention State programs in Smart Growth booklet:

- Gaithersburg Facade Easement Program
- Tax Increment Financing
- Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRBs)
- Low cost loans

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

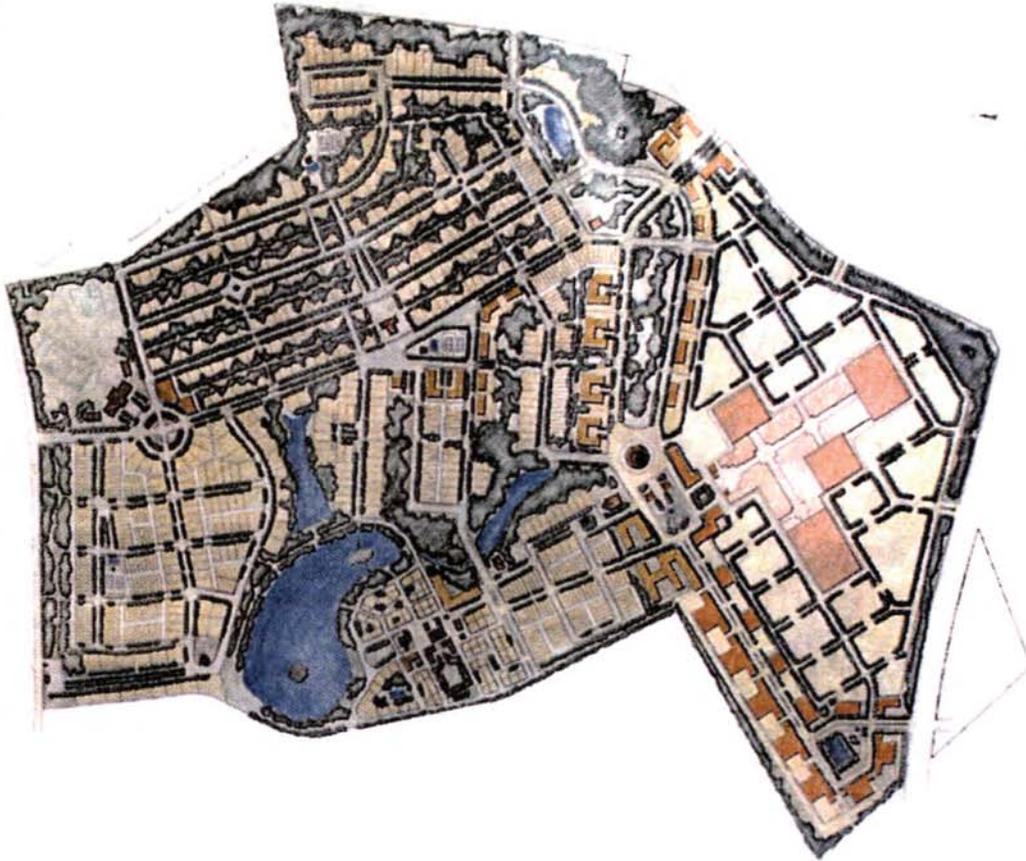
1. The City *Master Plan* should be updated to incorporate the above principles within the Visions element of the plan.
2. The City should continue to direct the planning process, rather than allowing developer-initiated, piecemeal development, while at the same time recognizing the need for flexibility to address an ever-changing market. The *Master Plan* should designate where new growth, infill or redevelopment will be allowed to occur.
3. Prior to any development within an area designated for development or redevelopment, a specific plan should be prepared by a developer, or the City, based on the Smart Growth Principles. With the adoption of specific plans, complying projects should proceed accordingly with minimal delay.
4. Plans should be developed through an open process which requires the production of effective visual models of all planning proposals.

Map p. 23, 33, 34

SMART GROWTH IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

DATE	TASK	STATUS	
1998	Aug	Visual Preference Survey Results	Completed
	Oct	Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) Ordinance to Public Hearing	Completed
	Dec	Adopt TND Ordinance	Completed
		Street Design Symposium Frederick Avenue Corridor Plan Completed by End of Calendar Year	Completed Completed
1999	Aug	Adopt Smart Growth Policy Document	Completed
		Publish Smart Growth Principles Brochure	
	Oct	Brainstorm Creative Public and Private Partnerships	
		Transit Symposium	
Nov	Smart Growth Designation Checklist		
	Visions Element of Master Plan Published		
Dec	Develop Template: Smart Growth Designation Agreement		
2000	Jan	Visions Element to Public Hearing	
	Apr	Develop Design Manual	
	May	"Fast-Track Process" Ordinance to Public Hearing	
		Additional Education Efforts Visions Element Adopted	
	Jul	Publish "Fast-Track Process" Pamphlet	
		Ombudsman for Smart Growth	
Sep	Develop Detailed List of Funding Sources for Smart Growth		

THE PLAN OF
KENTLANDS
GAITHERSBURG, MARYLAND



KENTLANDS
GAITHERSBURG, MARYLAND

Joseph Alfandre & Co., Inc.
Owner

Andres Duany & Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk



SMART GROWTH POLICY

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