INNER BELTWAY

R/UDAT

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MD

BUILDING FROM STRENGTH

The Inner Beltway Communities

January 1992

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We're pleased to present this report of our findings, conclusions, and visions for the Inner Beltway Communities of Prince George's County. In one sense, the report represents four days' intensive work by the eight members of the R/UDAT Team. More accurately, however, the report is the Team's interpretation of the concerns, aspirations and visions of hundreds of Prince George's County residents, business persons, public officials and professionals who contributed their time and ideas through a series of communtiy forums and workshops that began last summer. Some of the findings and proposals may appear new, but all of them were expressed to us, in one form or another, by Prince Georgians.

Our Super Bowl Weekend in the Inner Beltway was most stimulating. The local R/UDAT Steering Committee planned the event carefully; County and city officials were generous with their time, and candid in their ideas; and citizens made their views and priorities very clear. Needless to say, we found many points of disagreement. But we found consensus on the most basic issues: that the quality of life in the communities of the Inner Beltway is vital to the health of the entire county, and that the area has the potential to become a model of economic development for the entire National Capital Region. We were ably assisted by students from Bowie State University, the University of Maryland and Howard University through the weekend. However, the team takes full responsibility for the contents of this report.

Please use this report as a resource document: the findings and proposals are offered as a basis for further discussion and development by the County, cities and other public agencies in partnership with citizens and the business community. On closer examination, some of the proposals may require substantial modification. Others may evolve into projects that barely resemble our sketches, while conforming to the principles we've listed. All of them merit your serious and open consideration.

Thanks for giving us the opportunity to work on this project. As a Team, we wish you every success in this revitalization effort.

Prince George's County comprises the easterly portion of the National Capital Region. Bounded generally by the District of Columbia on the west and the Patuxent River on the east, it is home to more than 730,000 people. It has the most diversified economic base and the most ethnically diverse population in the region. The county experienced explosive growth during the 1980's and, while this growth has slowed during the current recession, Prince George's County's strategic location in the Atlantic Corridor, excellent transportation infrastructure, affordable land and proximity to Washington, D.C. vividly illustrate its potential for long-term economic growth.

The crescent-shaped area bounded by the District of Columbia and the Capital Beltway (I-495), known as the Inner Beltway, comprises less than one-third of the county's 487 square miles and houses nearly two-thirds of its population. This area contains most of the older communities in the county, and has not enjoyed its share of the benefits of the area's general prosperity. While much of the Inner Beltway remains attractive and vital, signs of physical and social decay are very apparent. County and Inner Beltway community leaders have recognized that extraordinary efforts would be needed to stimulate revitalization, and to correct incipient problems before they reached the crisis stage.

To begin the process, the County Executive issued Executive Order No. 89-29 in June 1989, creating a broad-based Revitalization Task Force. Among the charges to the Task Force was the direction to identify the actions required to effect a successful revitalization program.

The Task Force defined "revitalization" as

> "...a revival of the physical, social and economic vitality of a community. It improves the quality of life for citizens and businesses. Revitalization efforts should not be limited to physical improvements only -- such as a new highrise office building -- but should include a community's social and business concerns, as well as address regulatory issues."

The Task Force issued its final report in late 1990. That report contained several specific recommendations aimed at focusing public and private investment on the Inner Beltway. The Task force also recommended that:

> "To further develop and implement its Revitalization Program, the County should

sponsor a <u>Regional Urban Design Assistance Team</u> (R/UDAT) event."

The R/UDAT program is a public service of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). A R/UDAT event is a fast-paced, four-day workshop led by a multi-disciplinary team of volunteer professionals recruited from throughout the country -- urban designers, planners, architects, economists, and other specialists -- that collaborates with a community to analyze its challenges and opportunities and to generate creative, workable solutions. The AIA has conducted R/UDAT projects in more than 100 communities since 1967. Each R/UDAT team is tailored to suit the issues presented by a particular project.

In response to the Task Force, the County Executive signed Executive Order No. 91-15 on February 27, 1991, establishing a R/UDAT Steering Committee to plan and conduct the event. After months of planning by the Committee, the team members arrived in Prince George's County on January 23 to begin work.

The result of the event is <u>not</u> a comprehensive plan. We sifted through the wealth of information presented, and selected a limited number of issues which appeared to have broad interest and general applicability, and which lent themselves to the R/UDAT process. We also attempted to delineate the basic concepts

and assumptions that underlie our proposals, so that they can be applied to issues and areas not specifically covered by this report.

We recognize that Inner Beltway communities do not lack for studies and plans. For example, according to one county official, the Route 1 Corridor has been the subject of more than 100 studies. Instead, our proposals emphasize consensus-building and implementation.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

After listening to dozens of Prince George's County citizens, business persons and public officials, and reviewing background materials and studies on the county and Inner Beltway, we came to four fundamental conclusions. These guided the remainder of our work. We strongly recommend that they become the guidelines for refining and implementing the Inner Beltway revitalization program.

The confidence gap between the Inner Beltway residents and businesses and the Prince George's County government and Planning Commission must be closed or at least narrowed. We could not help but notice how both organizations were referred to as "They", remote from and often unresponsive to local needs. Their procedures even their office locations are inaccessible. Conversely, we sensed that many citizens expected these governments to address their problems without their (citizen) active involvement. One citizen perceptively noted that "we have to trust each other more." We emphatically agree.

There is no Inner Beltway; there are many Inner Beltway communities. Most of these communities existed long before the Beltway was constructed; they have much in common, but also many differences. More important, their residents identify primarily with their local communities. To us, "Inner Beltway" seems be a label of governmental convenience. Its use glosses over the diversity which exists among the communities.

Any program to revitalize Inner Beltway communities must recognize that they and Prince George's County as a whole, are competing with neighboring counties and states for economic development. Despite the area's basic strengths and attractions, Prince George's County faces aggressive competition for new jobs and investment that will become more intense in the future. Meeting the competition requires county economic development interests to assume a business like attitude toward understanding and pursuing their markets.

Prince George's County and the Inner Beltway communities have some very obvious chains holding them back. The natural economic development advantages that the county and its communities have are partly offset by at least three chains, which they have the power to break:

> Crime and the fear of crime, which have dramatically affected economic and social behavior, and the image of the county by its own residents as well as neighboring counties.

> Mis-regulation, which has resulted in misguided development, high costs and uncertainty that discourages potential investors.

Inferiority complex, which we found to be unwarranted. Prince George's County has the most balanced economy and the richest diversity of any in the region. Its features would be the envy of most counties in the United States. Its problems will be effectively managed when its public agencies, businesses and citizens decide to work together.

The people of Prince George's County and especially the Inner Beltway communities, have the opportunity and an imperative, to formulate a vision of their future, for them to pursue with the active support of their governmental institution. We believe that a revitalization program should be guided by this vision. With a clear picture of their possible future, devising and implementing a revitalization program will be relatively simple. The resources are here to do it.

Most Prince Georgians, including Inner Beltway residents, live here by choice. Prince George's County is a destination. It offers the widest range of housing choices in the region. Most of the people we talked with were either long-term residents, or had chosen to move here recently from other parts of the region. While acknowledging the Inner Beltway's problems, these residents are strongly committed to solutions rather than moving away.

The key strength of the county, especially the Inner Beltway area is its diversity. By almost any measure, the Inner Beltway is microcosm of America's diversity. The county economy is the most balanced in the metropolitan area; its population has the richest ethnic mix. It supports the full spectrum of housing types and price ranges. It has densely developed land, permanent open space and large tracts of land suitable for development. This diversity has insulated the area from the full impact of the forces tacting against its economic health and will facilitate recovery with a revitalization program.

The extension of the Metro Transit System through the Inner Beltway area will stimulate development near the new stations. Although Metro station siting and design has not been as well integrated with development opportunities here as it has been in other counties in the region, the Metro system will have a positive impact by permitting greater densities and mixed-use projects in station vicinities; and by improving linkages with the rest of the region.

Residents in the Inner Beltway identify more with their local communities than with the Inner Beltway as a whole. The Inner Beltway is really a collection of several communities, each with a distinct history; most of them pre-date construction of the Beltway. This suggests that revitalization efforts that focus on the distinctive conditions of each community will engender more public support than an areawide program.

The principal asset of the Inner Beltway is its location. Its proximity and access to the District of Columbia and the principal north-south rail and highway transportation routes of the East Coast are strong long-term attraction for a variety of economic activities.

The Inner Beltway can accommodate substantial new development and redevelopment with its current infrastructure. The area has the capacity, and the available land, to take advantage of opportunities resulting from a revitalization program. The challenge is how best to direct development. The risk of dislocating existing activities is low. Displace and gentrification are low risks because there is not a major disparity between old and new residents in the area.

The Inner Beltway contains a variety of natural amenities and historic and cultural assets. These include stream parks, varied topography and excellent views, and special places like Bladensburg's Port, College Park Airport Museum and the Calvert Mansion. While these assets can be developed and enhanced, they add value to the area's other assets.

The Prince George's County government has a record of pragmatic organizational responses to issues it considers to be of high priority. The County government, assisted by the Maryland General Assembly when necessary, has addressed past challenges by creating organizations to carry out priority programs. Examples include the County Parking Authority and the Economic Development Corporation. From this tradition, we believe that the County would be receptive to changes that can effect Inner Beltway community revitalization.

Inner Beltway municipalities have demonstrated the ability to join together to pursue common objectives. The "magnificent seven" association of cities along the Route 1 corridor is the most prominent example. If the cities and the County can agree on a revitalization strategy, they have the capacity to establish mechanisms to carry it out.

The professional staffs of Prince George's County and some Inner Beltway municipalities have been very innovative in providing resources to support economic development projects. Although these programs have not, for the most part, been focused on specific target areas, professional staff here are very sophisticated at securing and tailoring available resources to support priority projects.

The Inner Beltway communities are becoming urban places, but they are governed by suburban development standards. When inappropriate standards are applied, inappropriate development - or no development - is the result. The only relief now available are variances and waivers, which are costly to applicants and regulators, of which and can lead to arbitrary and inconsistent decisions.

The most pervasive concern in the Inner Beltway Communities is fear of crime. Although the incidence of crime varies widely among Inner Beltway communities, the fear of crime is widespread. This fear affects shopping and social patterns, and investment and business location decisions. It is probably one of the most significant factors causing the deterioration of Inner Beltway commercial centers.

There is an oversupply of retail and service space in the Inner Beltway. We estimate that the existing retail space exceeds current 5-year projected demand by at least 30%. Much of this space is obsolete, poorly designed and mis-located. The result is blight, cash flows insufficient to support adequate maintenance, reluctance of major stores to commit facilities to the area, and excessive energy consumption by shoppers.

The County government and Planning Commission are perceived - with some justification - as unresponsive to local citizen and business requirements. We observed and heard about a number of contributing factors, including unresponsive staffs; remote or inaccessible government offices; fragmented, overlapping and conflicting regulatory requirements; and lack of clear lines of accountability. There is a clear sense of the County and Planning Commission as "they" to the citizen "we".

The Inner Beltway communities hide their attractiveness and character from the casual visitor and traveler passing through. Upgrading the quality and appearance of major thoroughfares would dramatically change the image of the Inner Beltway. Except for the Suitland and Baltimore-Washington Parkways, most principal thoroughfares in the Inner Beltway are largely bounded by strip commercial development, broad expanses of asphalt parking lots and warehouse/distribution facilities. Only when the traveller ventures away from major streets do the attractive residential areas and office parks emerge.

Housing and social service programs are lagging behind the growth of the area senior citizen population. We were told that populations of many Inner Beltway communities are growing older and that services to seniors including housing and health care are already inadequate. While we did not validate these

assertions, neither did we encounter any disagreement.

The transportation facilities and services in the Inner Beltway are designed primarily to move people between Prince George's County and Washington, D.C.; but the percentage of cross-county and inter-county trips, already large, is growing rapidly. The revitalization program must include facilities to move people and goods efficiently across the county inside the Beltway, by transit and bicycle as well as by car and truck.

TOWN CENTERS

THE WHY AND HOW OF CREATING NEW COMMUNITY
FOCAL PLACES

Since mankind began to make permanent
settlements, there has been at the heart of
every successful city, village, or
neighborhood, a place where people come
together to celebrate the joy of belonging,
of sharing their most mutually important
values, hopes, and dreams.

This place is home to the activities and
rituals of daily societal life, and in its
shape and spaces, it communicates to both
residents and others the transcendent
meaning and importance of those activities
which bind a loosely connected group of
individuals into a true community.

With such a place at its center, the
community can help define what those who
comprise it believe and treasure. The place
serves as a constant reminder that being in
the company of others, acting in concert to
achieve a common goal, or simply to enjoy
life, is often more satisfying than facing
the world alone.

Creating such a place does not always
require a massive expenditure or lengthy
plans, but it does take imagination, energy,
a commitment to the public good, and enough
faith in the future to believe that dreams
can indeed come true. It also requires a few
strategies that have proven to be of help
in the creation and sustenance of some of
the world's great civic places.
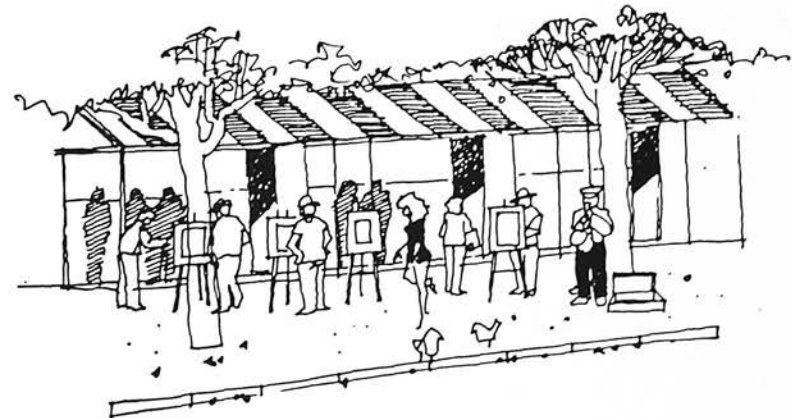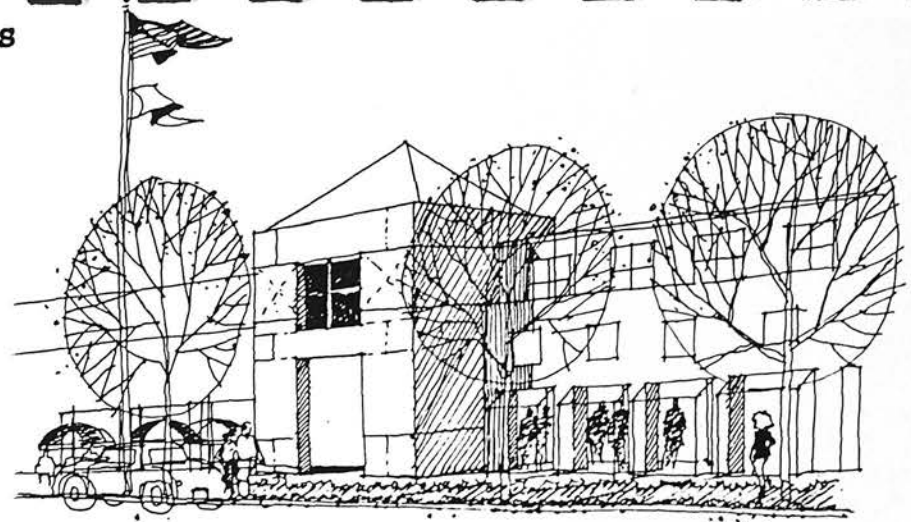
GOALS: "ARE WE THERE YET, DADDY?"

To know where we are going, we must have some idea of how we will know we have arrived. Indeed, a quality of every great civic place, modest or elaborate, is that it has a clear sense of presence as distinct from "everyplace else". You know when you're there.

We will know we have created a true place because it will help to:

> Enhance the identity of the community it serves.
>
> Increase the sense of concern among residents for their mutual well being.
>
> Encourage the community's government and businesses to better serve their respective customers.
>
> Show how to preserve the things that work, and manage change for those that don't.
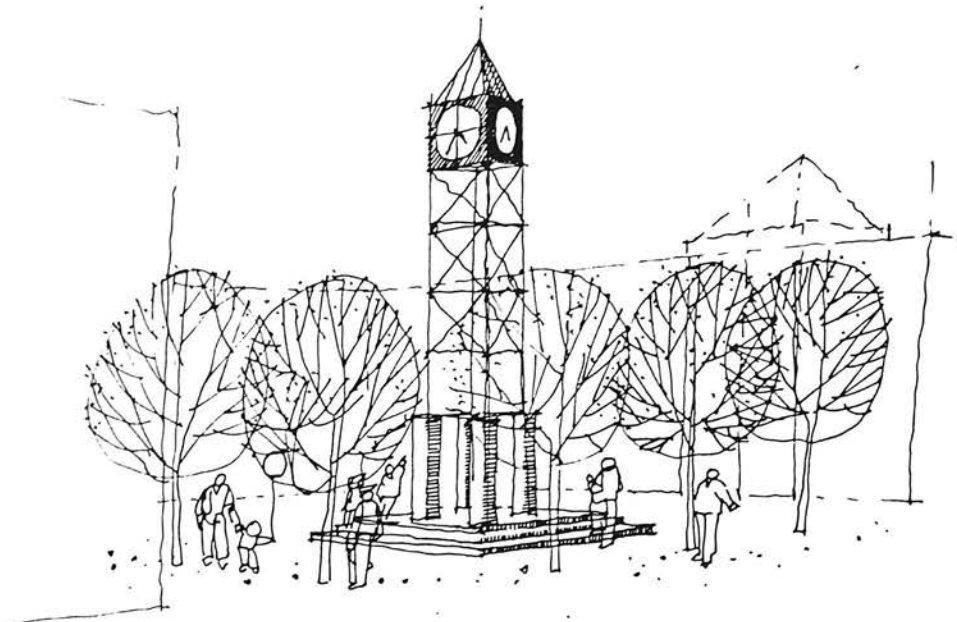
PLANNING PRINCIPLES THAT WORK

Some constant characteristics of good spaces repeatedly appear in great civic places. By using the appropriate combinations, any community can help itself ensure the success of its new center.

These principles are presented in relationship to the overall goals they serve to satisfy.

Identity

Establishing community centers in convenient locations helps foster community identity.

Well-defined spaces create a sense of ownership over a place.

Rediscovering and featuring hidden treasures (buildings and places) can bring pleasure and surprise, and connect today's generation with its past.

Consistency without conformity gives identity with energy.

Consistency helps establish identity. If it looks like it belongs, it probably does. If we both belong, we do not fear each other.

Community Building

Providing a central town meeting space can encourage participation in neighborhood affairs, and foster a sense of community among people with similar concerns.

Kids like to be where other kids are, and usually at the center of activity whenever possible. It is both good business and responsible parenting to create opportunities in the heart of the community for kids to have fun, positive experiences and activities with their peers.

People feel safer when there are more people on the streets who look, talk, act, and believe like they do themselves.

Successful neighborhoods are built around the serving the needs of the family first.

If you want more people to populate a place, give them something interesting to do or watch, and a comfortable place to sit, and maybe something to eat.

People like to live where they can have control over their daily lives.

People seek to maximize their choices. Both good businesses and good governments maximize choices, not by regulation, but by offering opportunities for convenience, comfort, and fun.

Better Service

Don't try to fix what isn't really broken just because someone else told you you're supposed to.

People attract people. Activity generates activity.

To turn drivers into shoppers, give them a pleasant place to walk, and a continuous experience of things to see and do while walking.

Good neighborhoods contain:
      Places to eat
      Places to meet
      Things to watch
      Things to do
      Places which satisfy daily needs for goods and services Institutions of community-wide importance

By keeping through traffic off local residential streets, they become safer for those who live there. When strangers are obvious, they are more conspicuous.

Trouble loves concealment. Eliminating hiding places and escape routes makes places safer.

Screening quarries, car lots, and junkyards adds consistency to roadscape, eliminates negative images, and improves the view, adding quality to the experience of living.

Highly visible landmarks help people know where they are.

Beauty lends an air of order,joy, and contentment to a place, and adds to the satisfaction of being there.

When a place is well maintained, it shows that someone cares about it, and that can make it seem both safer and higher in quality.

Successful places attract people because they are convenient, comfortable, and fun.

New Meeting Hall

Commons

Perimeter Parking

Placemaker

New Edge Building
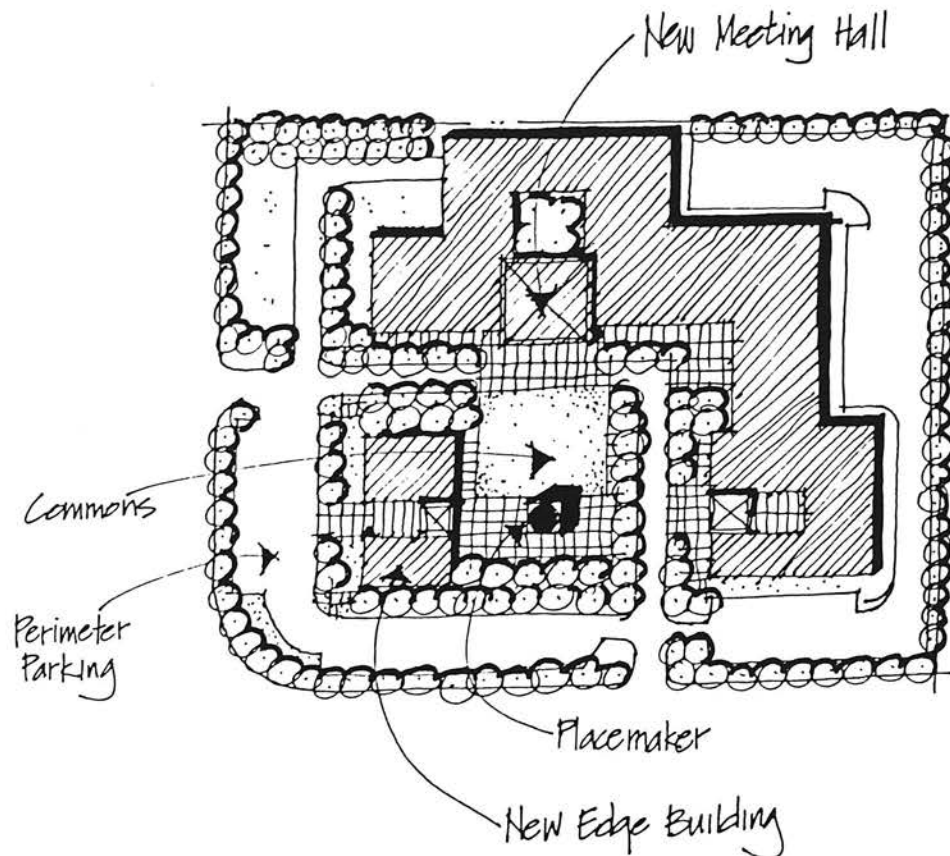
STRATEGIES: SOME WAYS TO BEGIN

There is no single way to create a wonderful civic place. Some are quite deliberately structured and fail miserably. Others just seem to happen by themselves and are great successes. Although there are never guarantees, taking some of these actions can help ensure the place will work.

Set the goal to establish in each community a neighborhood center which includes:

A suitably sized public open space for community celebrations

Adjacent to the public space, a civic center either newly constructed, or placed in existing surplus commercial space, and which would contain space for community groups to meet, and for the entire community to gather to make decisions of community-wide significance -- a true town meeting hall.

The civic center may also contain neighborhood businesses and services such as:
hardware store
post office
neighborhood bar/restaurant
neighborhood "cinema"

library
satellite police station
cleaners
shoe repair
ice cream parlor
jazz bar
bookstore
r e s a l e   (s e c o n d   h a n d)
clothing/jewelry
branch bank
professional offices
cultural activities (concerts, dance recitals, etc.)
indoor/outdoor cafe
local offices of municipality
news stand
local offices of individual community groups
other activities of neighborhood importance.

In short, the civic center may encompass the functions of both local government and marketplace.

Program the public civic space for celebrations of the community's unique character.

Develop and fund a program of matching grants for facade improvements to spur merchant investment.

Develop and fund a network of local Community Development Corporations to encourage local control over development, acquire property in the public interest, and, if necessary, purchase the property of owners unwilling to participate in revitalization activities.

Establish maintenance standards for all commercial buildings. If the owner is uncooperative, use public funds to maintain the building and charge the cost against his tax bill.

Create a comprehensive management, marketing, security, and maintenance strategy for all businesses within the district. Establish, train, and support a merchant's association for the district.

In inexpensive space reclaimed on upper floors of commercial buildings, or above storefronts, establish:

apartments
loft spaces for living and working
professional offices for neighborhood doctor, dentist, lawyer, accountant, private detective, etc.

Change the appropriate regulations and ordinances to facilitate rather than inhibit change. Allow for some "creative rule-breaking". Develop incentives (more carrots than sticks).

Plant flowers in the median and/or sidewalks to improve the human quality of the pedestrian environment.

Establish creative cultural and business

opportunities such as an open air gallery including a sculpture garden and changing exhibits of paintings.

Include facilities for alternative transportation such as bike racks at convenient locations.

Provide frequent and convenient business directories which explain the place and orient visitors to their opportunities.

Create a warm, properly illuminated, inviting environment by installing appropriately scaled and spaced street and area lighting.

Implement a program of small scale, cheap, easy, quick urban interventions such as tables and chairs placed on sidewalks to improve the sense of street level activity and encourage the everyday use of public space.

Ensure that those businesses which directly serve the needs of the neighborhood remain healthy through appropriate legal controls.

Consider how to maintain the right mix of uses. One way is to establish a mechanism to regularly review the complement of existing uses, and to evaluate both existing and proposed uses against likely viability and local area market trends.

Provide creative streetscaping that is not merely the tired old formulas of "What People Do To Streets These Days".

Selectively demolish some surplus space only if there is a sensible and necessary alternative. Otherwise, think of a creative re-use.

Take steps to make empty space appear lively, even if it just means turning on all the lights. Unboard windows and install displays in empty storefronts.

Make every decision a commitment to excellence.
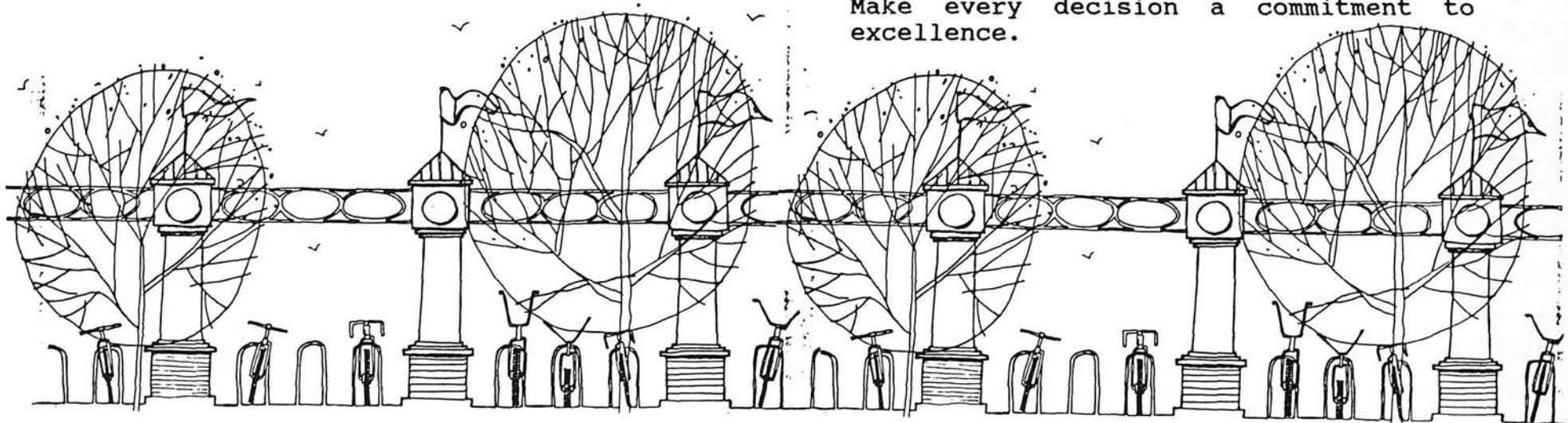
COMMUNITY DESIGN
SEAT PLEASANT EXAMPLE

CONCEPT

The Prince George's County R/UDAT Team selected Seat Pleasant as a model to illustrate a revitalization strategy that can grow out of the community's vision and committment. Our information was gained from the R/UDAT Central Area Community Forum, the comments presented to the R/UDAT Team by Seat Pleasant Mayor Frank Blackwell and from the challenge to the Team by County Executive Parris Glendening to seek ways to "create communities and not simply produce economic development."

THE PLACE

Seat Pleasant is an incorporated jurisdiction of over 5,000 people. It is a strategically located 3/4 square mile area in Prince George's County, Maryland at the eastern corner point of Washington, DC. Comprised mostly of well maintained single family homes, the town has exceptional transit related facilities including METRO, bus and arterial highways.

The traditional Town Center historically has been focused on the irregular intersection of Eastern Ave. and Martin Luther King Highway. As the former terminus of the trolley line and site of a demolished railroad round house, the area has developed a unique radial street pattern shaped by

early 20th century commercial buildings.

At the southern boundary of Seat Pleasant, the Addison Road METRO station has created a new commercial focus on Central Avenue at Addison Road. While currently underdeveloped, the area offers great potential as a transit related commercial center.

The Town's eastern boundary is formed by Cabin Branch creek. Its northern boundary extends generally from one to three blocks north of Martin Luther King Highway

PROBLEMS & ISSUES

o   The METRO Area remains largely underdeveloped.
o   Lack of convenient, safe pedestrian connection across Central Avenue from the METRO to Seat Pleasant.
o   Eastern Ave./Martin Luther King Highway have declined as the traditional Town Center.

o   The traditional town center and Metro station are not adjacent and are located in opposite corners of the town.
o   Pockets of decline appear around the established residential neighborhood areas in a few garden

apartment complexes. (Seat Pleasant also contains an award winning revitalized garden apartment complex that includes Section 8 units).

o   There is a growing need for expanded and new community services with a family and youth orientation.

VISION

Seat Pleasant is a community with a strong small town neighborhood character that offers the potential to develop as a self-contained community situated in a major urban center served by exceptional regional transportation.

GOALS

o   To conserve and strengthen Seat Pleasant's unique community characteristics

o   To foster regional economic development opportunities to support the vitality of the community.

o   To encourage community services, facilities, programs and activities that support, nurture and inspire the people of Seat Pleasant.

o   To create a district pedestrian neighborhood structure that takes maximum advantage of the opportunities presented by the METRO and regional transportation system.

III TOWN CENTER AREA

II CENTRAL PARK AREA

I METRO CENTER AREA

SEAT PLEASANT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AREAS
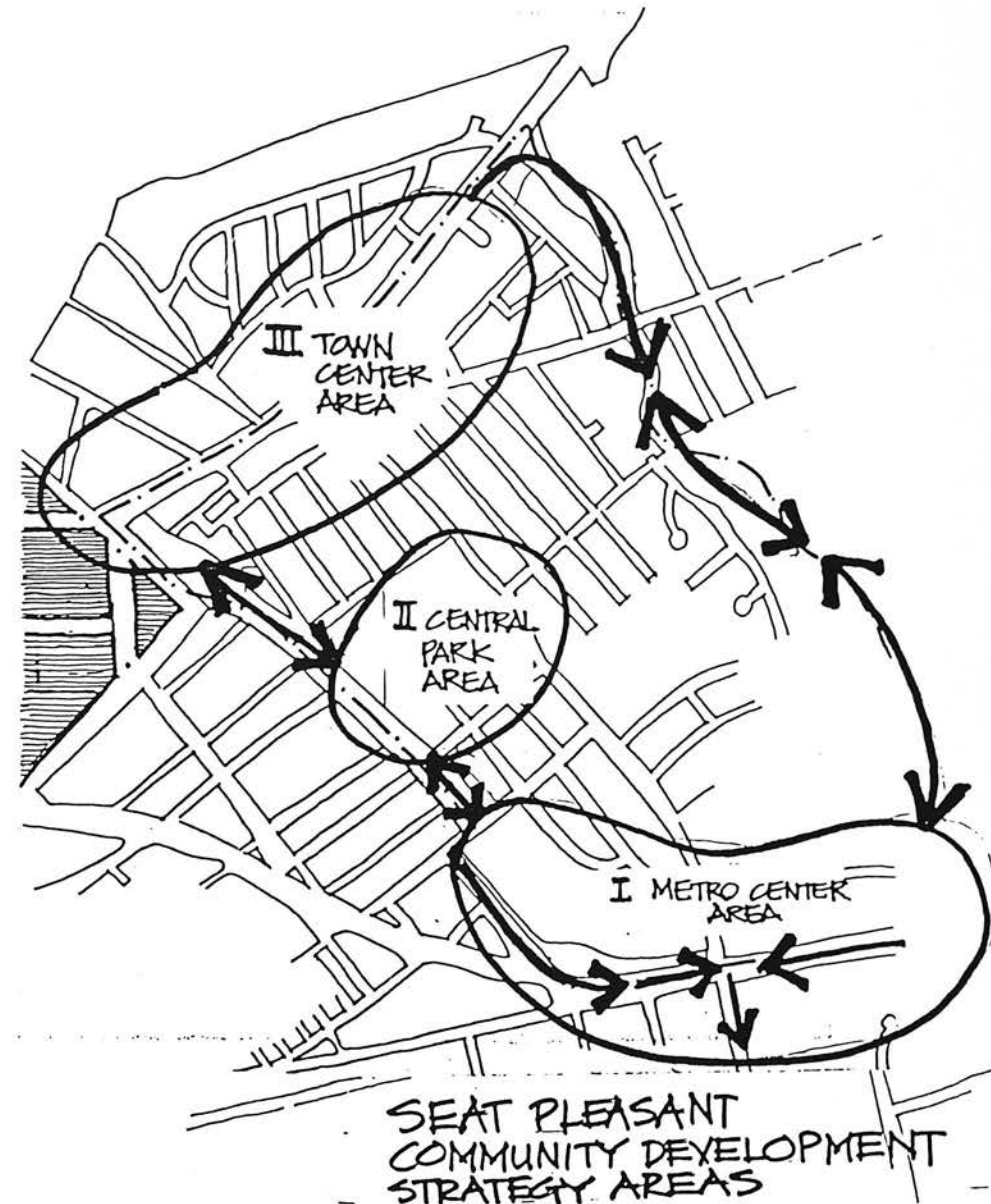
STRATEGY I - SEAT PLEASANT METRO CENTER
(A Commercial-Retail Economic Development
Strategy)

ACTION

1. Plan, assemble and implement a mixed-
    use office/commercial development along
    Central Avenue between Sopor St. and
    Addison Rd.

2. Encourage and create incentives to
    redevelop the existing concrete plant
    at East Capitol and Central as an
    office campus complex.

3. Make grade-separated pedestrian
    connections from METRO to new mixed use
    development in Seat Pleasant

4. Design links between new office complex
    and planned 17 acre residential
    development at Addison Rd. and Adel St.

5. Design and implement boulevard style
    street improvements and landscaping
    along both sides of Central Ave. from
    East Capitol Street to Sopor St.

6. Create landmark/fountain/public art in
    a public space extending from old City
    Hall to Central Ave. Use joint
    development funding from public-private
    development to acquire and develop a
    central public space and town symbol.

STRATEGY II - SEAT PLEASANT CENTRAL PARK
(Public Park and Civic Center Strategy)

ACTION

1. Develop community service, life-
    long learning, health and arts
    programs for the Greendale School
    Center. (See Neighborhood Center
    Program Ideas)

2. Rehabilitate school building for
    immediate use. Improve and enlarge
    as programs develop and expand.

3. Produce detailed design for park
    including a mix of recreation
    opportunities, landscapes and
    activities.

4. Master plan Central Park to include
    new City Hall, Greendale School and
    other future community service needs
    such as a library, arts center and
    family health center.

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER
PROGRAM IDEAS

The Greendale School is currently
being underutilized by Seat Pleasant
but has excellent possibilities for
use as a "Neighborhood Center," a
gathering place for the children
and the adults of the community. The
program ideas were sparked by a
comment from County Councilman Jim

Fletcher, new term Councilmember, "we must attempt to revitalize lives, not just the physical environment." Elaboration of the ideas came from listening and talking with elected officials, community members, and particularly with Eugene Grant, the guiding force behind Mid-County Youth Services Incorporated, a non-profit organization of volunteers.

The Neighborhood Center will be dedicated to bringing people together as partners to provide alternatives to crime and drugs, to improve education and job skills, to encourage artistic expressions and creativity, and to promote physical and emotional health.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS:

LEARNING CENTER. To promote the use and understanding of technology, the Learning Center will have 20-30 computers and educational software that is compatible with the equipment used by public schools. The Learning Center can also be converted into a computer game room. The current multi-purpose room would be a good site for this component.

EDUCATION AND TUTORING PROGRAM. Senior volunteers can work with children to improve basic skills. Classes for teens can be offered to reduce substance abuse and teen pregnancy, to complete job applications, learn how to write resumes, and interview for jobs. Classes for parents

may include developing parenting skills, and learning about volunteer opportunities in the neighborhood.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES:
(1)   Arts and crafts classes for eniors.
(2)   Dance studio for ballet, modern dance classes. Room to accomodate parents for small performances.
(3)   Music studio. Two or three small rooms with pianos for volunteers to give music lessons and a place for the students to practice.

DAY CARE CENTER. The center will include an outdoor play area for children as well as accomodations for after school activities for elementary school children.

HEALTH CLINIC. The Health Clinic will serve the local community but could have a mobile van so that home-bound seniors could be served as well.

COMMUNITY POLICING SATELLITE OFFICE. An officer could be available during specified hours to meet with community members.

VOLUNTEER OFFICE. The Center could be managed by a Board of Volunteers appointed by the Council. This promotes citizen involvement and ownership of the quality of the community.

STRATEGY III - SEAT PLEASANT TOWN CENTER
(Residential retail strategy)

ACTION

1. Develop Eastern/Martin Luther
    King/Foote Triangle
    - mid-rise urban apartments for
    professionals and couples.
    - Include street level commercial
    - create town square at point of
    Eastern triangle.

2. Extend commercial main street
    revitalization and development along
    both sides of Martin Luther King to F
    Street and revitalize hardware store.

3. Include apartments over new main
    street commercial development.

4. Plan, redevelop and market existing
    strip commercial along Martin Luther
    King from F Street to 69th Pl. as urban
    commercial office. Design with
    appropriate residential edge. Site new
    development to create a continuous
    street edge of active retail commercial
    development.

5. Actively cooperate with DC to
    revitalize Eastern Ave. commercial
    facades on District side of the street.
    Contact the Design Arts Program of the
    DC Commission on the Arts and
    Humanities to explore possiblity a hold
    a community design charette on this

SEAT PLEASANT
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY AREAS
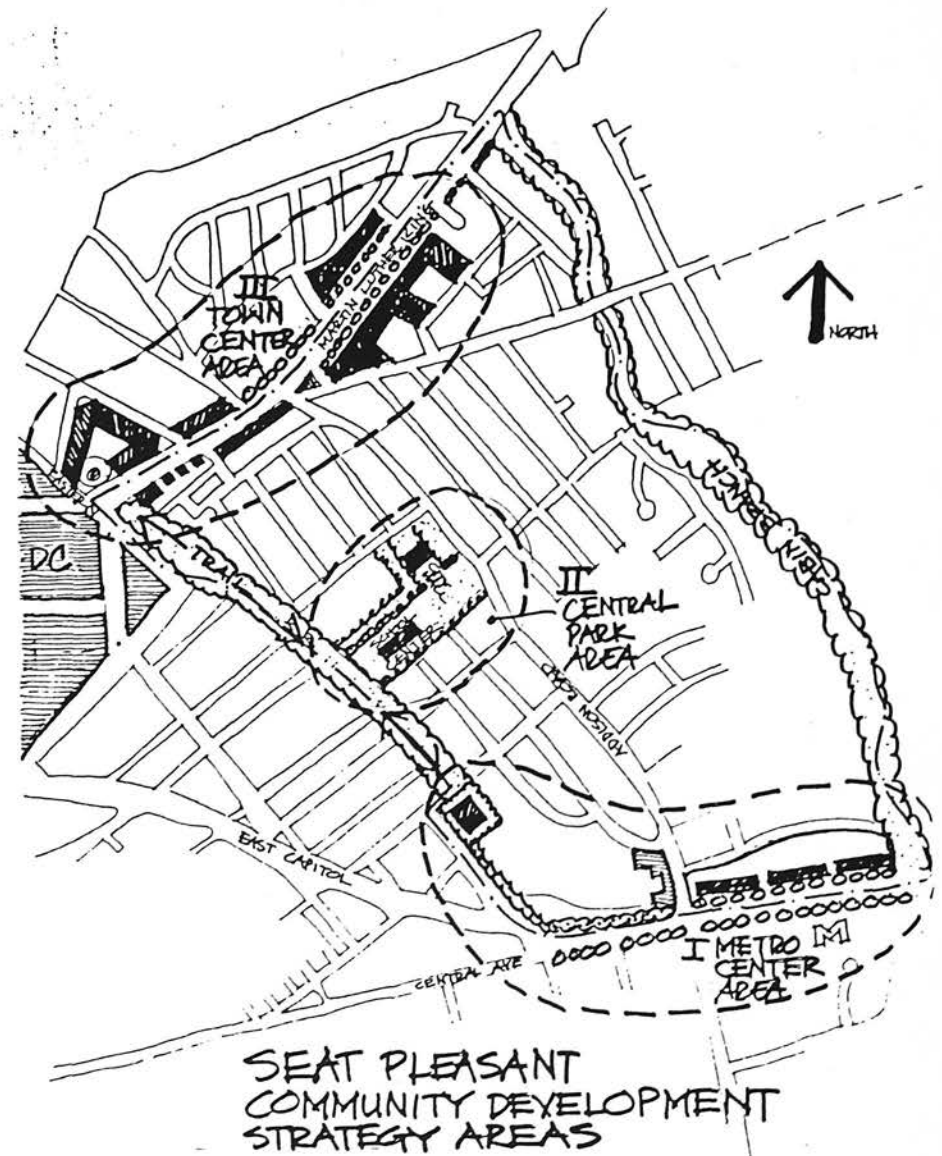
joint community problem. Al Dobbins, DC Planning Director is an advocate of these type of collaborative process.

STRATEGY IV - SEAT PLEASANT PEDESTRIAN GREENBELT
(Open space and trail network strategy)

ACTION

1. Develop bike path and trail walk along abandoned rail line on the western border of Seat Pleasant connecting the Town Center, Central Park and METRO Center.

2. Create a foot path/nature trail along Seat Pleasant's eastern b o u n d a r y formed by Cabin Branch creek.

3. Pedestrian street improvements along Central and Martin Luther King will create a continuous loop walkway around the edge of Seat Pleasant.

4. Protect and enhance Seat Pleasant's established neighborhoods

PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS:
COMMUNITY-BASED VISION & STRATEGIC PLAN

Seat Pleasant has the opportunity to take charge of its futre. With it's own elected town government and close ties with the county, the community can become whatever it cares to be...if it has a vision. But what is a vision and how do you go about getting it?

While dreams are based on fantasy, vision are grounded in the possible. Vision Planning is a way for every community to move beyond its ordinary bounds and discover a better future. When we seek to create a vision that will touch others we are challenged to look beyond our individual wants and embrace the aspirations of our shared vision that brind us together in common unity ... community. Vision Planning is different from traditional analytical planning in many ways. Vision Planning encourages us to imagine some future that we would like to happen. Some call it inventing the preferred future.

A challenging vision inspires us to committ and act, to make the vision happen. Vision planning is best done by everyone who can contribute to achieving the vision, who belienes in it and wants to make it real. It is an inclusive, creative process. Public sector analytical planning, on the other hand, is restrictive, regulatory and controlling. Both are necessary activities if we are to be in charge of

our communities' futures, but they serve very different purposes.

Once you have a vision the next setp is to form strategies that can make the vision happen. Vision Planning reaches out to the entire community and includes ordinary citizens in the Vision process. In a recent survey of its members the International City Management Association found that nearly all the respondents to a planning survey identified Vision type planning as the most important tool in helping them plan for the future.

Vision Planning is done many ways: with town meetings, through appointed task forces, by elected delegations, special workshops, and even by television. Vision planning is most successful when people chart their own course and are not controlled by someone in a position of authority. Vision planning should be expected to include, motivate and direct the best resources any community has: its people. The following steps outline how a community like Seat Pleasant coan organize itself for a community vision planning program.

ACTION STEPS

1.   Form a business leadership group.

2.   Form an Ad hoc civic and neighborhood improvement group

3.   Select planning/ design/ implementation team.

4.   Initiate a City sponsored joint revitalization steering committee including both the business and civic groups to set Seat Pleasant revitalization goals. Use R/UDAT plan as concept to begin discussion.

5.   Conduct a series of open Town Meetings to form and shape a community consensus on Seat Pleasant's future Vision and revitalization plan.

6.   Cooperate with County and align overall town and county planning recommendations.

7.   Produce Seat Pleasant redevelopment program based on community vision and professional assistance

8.   Consider organizing both the civic and business groups as permanent organizations to champion Seat Pleasant's redevelopment.

9.   Form bank and business sponsored Community Development Corporation (defined under the Community Reinvestment Act) to implement Seat Pleasant Plan.

CORRIDORS

The street is the pre-eminent public space in the city. We love our parks and plazas, but we live in the streets, walk, stroll and meet friends in the street. Their quality and character define our communities.

In the Inner Beltway area of Prince George's County, the predominant public spaces are the major roadways. Their quality and character, however, often contribute to a negative image of the community. In the automobile-oriented civilization that characterizes Prince George's County, people are likely to identify with the roadway corridors, chunks of asphalt, parking lots and buildings that they experience at 20-50 miles per hour. The defining element of our study area is itself a road, the Capital Beltway.

The challenge to us as planners, then, is to work with these strips/roadways/corridors, to try to make them the kind of defining central elements in the lives of today's citizens that central points were to earlier people. This involves planning for a combination of beauty, symbolism, functionality and economic vigor.

To illustrate how this corridor planning process might work in Prince George's County, we present in this section of the report some case examples of:

o   present corridor planning, along Route 1;

o   potential future corridor planning, which could be applied along Martin Luther King, Jr. Highway, Central Avenue, Route 450 and other corridors and of;

o   a potential new North-South transitway.

PROPOSED PROGRAM OF ACTION

In the analysis that follows, we set forth two basic premises:

o   Revitalized road corridors will create a more attractive and economically viable "Front Door" for Inner Beltway neighborhoods, one truly representative of the homes and people "one block away"

o   Inner Beltway neighborhoods should be better connected to one another and to the new Town Centers in Metro station mixed use developments.

To accomplish these goals, we propose three actions:

o   Implement a Route 1 corridor plan, including appointment of a full-time implementation "Point Person".

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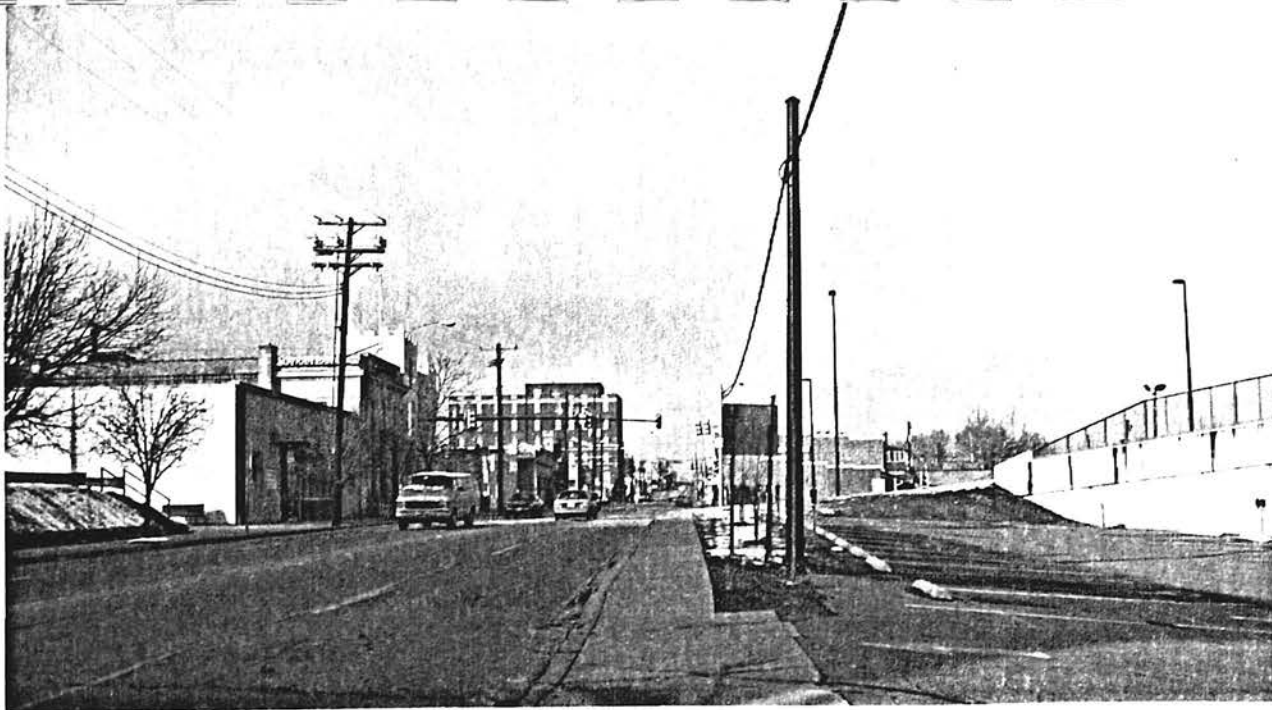
o   Develop road corridor concept plans for the other major Inner-Beltway roadways.

o   Begin the long process of developing a North-South transit way/bikeway.

ROUTE 1

Route 1, the Main Street of 1950's America, from Canada to Key West, Florida, has been celebrated in text and photography. The portion within Prince George's County is but a short segment of a much longer national resource and symbol. However, even this short segment has captured the attention and emotional involvement of local planners and citizen groups. Working together, they have prepared a series of more than 100 studies, proposed to:

o   preserve unique aspects of the strip's history

o   improve its present usefulness and economic strength;

o   establish local identities along its course; and

o   adapt its resources to modern market realities.

In October, 1991, the mayors of the seven communities stretching from Mt. Rainier to College Park adopted a statement defining their vision:

"To make the historic Route One corridor a healthy vibrant place to live, work, shop and visit and to retain the cultural and community center heritage of its earlier years."

Since then a set of twenty specific corridor recommendations and design guidelines have been developed for the Mayors. It is not our intent to focus on design issues, but one point deserves mention. We say: resist the temptation to "unify" Route 1 from the District line to the Beltway with common design elements and a consistent set of design guidelines. Route 1 is the soul of diversity and, from Maine to Florida, its appearance ranges from tree-lined boulevards to neon jungles. Its appearance, width, architecture and spatial quality varies in the seven Inner Beltway municipalities as well, and we say simply: Celebrate the Differences!

From Plans to Implementation

The challenge now is to take the best of these ideas, and to mobilize local resources to implement an Action Plan for the corridor. This will require different actors, and techniques, from those used to date.

For example, what will the county government's role in responding to and working with the seven-city coalition? It is unrealistic to expect that municipal representatives can or should understand how to navigate the county bureaucratic maze.

A New Role

We recommend that the Planning Commission appoint a Senior Planner or Urban Designer to a position which we suggest should be only the first of a number of pro-active, implementation management roles.

This is a "Point Person for Route One implementation" - the one person accountable for insuring that Route One plans become reality. He or she works on behalf of the seven municipal executives and reports directly to the Director of Planning.

This person would:

o   Coordinate technical work (planning, zoning, urban design, etc.) within the Planning Department.

o   Insure that necessary permits and approvals are obtained.

o   Coordinate technical work required of other governmental agencies (County Public Works, State Highway Department, etc).

o   Lead the effort to identify and secure funding for all components of the plan.

o   Function as liaison between the seven municipal officials and the Planning Director.

Implementing a successful Corridor Revitalization Program is a complex and time consuming effort. Route One needs a full time "shepherd", someone who can speak for Commission policy-makers, cover all bases technically and be held accountable for results.

We view this "Point Person" as the model for others to follow as corridor and town center revitalization plans move into the implementation phase.

THE OTHER ROADWAY CORRIDORS

The transportation routes of the Inner Beltway are well designed to move people into, out of and across the area. Now that we are developing a new focus on establishing a sense of community within the Inner Beltway, it is appropriate to turn planning attention to the redesign of these roadway corridors.

These major roads vary considerably in width, land use and physical character but many are six lane arterials bordered with parking lots and low buildings set back from the road. The overall impression is one of an amorphous, undefined, trash littered asphalt desert.

The Bus Ride

We began our overview of the Inner Beltway communities with a long bus ride along many of the commercial arterial roadways. Our guides spoke of handsome neighborhoods, "just one block over", and of historical buildings "just behind that shopping center" and of parks, "well... you can almost see it from here".

What we did see were the roads and the shopping centers and the parking lots. We returned later on our own to see the neighborhoods and parks and learned that, as we suspected, the roads did not reflect the character of the "hidden" community. This section of our report expresses our desire to see it put right.

Roadway Design

We have many models for roadway corridors, parkways lined with trees and landscaped embankments, urban commercial streets lined with active retail buildings built to the edge of a property line, urban boulevards with landscaped medians framed by the uniform walls of low apartment buildings and the auto oriented commercial strip with buildings set back from the roads and a seemingly endless forest of tall signs lining the road's edge. It is not our intent to propose design solutions. But a few design principles are useful to set a frame work for discussion.

A Few Design Principles

o   Establish a sense of entry into the community at the gateways on the District Line and at the beltway interchanges

o   Celebrate the diversity of these roadways; emphasize the unique or special qualities of each; recognize the early historic roads; acknowledge the importance of a 20th century memorial - The Martin Luther King, Jr. Highway

o   Resist the temptation to use shopworn cliches: uniform (and boring) landscape screens and rigorous (and banal) sign codes. Recognize that Prince George's County is a unique place and stretch for the most appropriate and creative expression of its character.

o   Design these roadways as pathways for orientation to the Inner Beltway's diverse neighborhoods, historical sites and cultural activities. Signs are good; symbols are better.

In brief: take the predominant open space, the roadways, the one piece of Prince George's County that deserves to be called "an ugly sister to Washington". Take them and turn them into a source of community pride. Here's how:

The Corridor Planning Process

Most of these roadway corridors stretch east to west from the beltway to the District line and pass through different municipalities, business districts, neighborhoods, and park lands. A planning process for change begins with all of these folks, the abutters coming together to define problems and find solutions.

We recommend:

o   Corridor planning and design commissions for each of the roadways, an advisory body composed of all the parties who abut the corridor. They will assist with the design program and will give guidance to design consultants and design professionals on the planning commission staff.

o   A designated "Point Person" within the commission for each of the corridors.

The process should be similar to that of the Route 1 corridor - but developed from the outset as a collaborative effort between the County and the Community. Clearly, this is a massive effort; these kinds of changes occur incrementally over a long period of time. We merely suggest that redefining the physical image of this community begins with a redesign of these corridors. Start with Route 1 and keep on trucking.

LINKING THE INNER BELTWAY COMMUNITIES

Prince George's County is unique among the four counties surrounding the District of Columbia in the level and diversity of service provided to it by Metro. Two of the counties (Alexandria and Fairfax) each have one Metro line; Montgomery County has two (in reality two ends of the same line). Prince George's County, by contrast, will soon have four lines (Orange, Blue and both ends of the Green Line). This remarkable access to the District and to the balance of the region has many advantages for Inner Beltway communities but has led to the perception that these lines have created a "pass through" zone for residents outside the Beltway commuting to jobs in the District.

Prince George's County now has the opportunity to generate internal growth use its Metro access. A number of the existing and proposed Metro station sites (New Carrollton, West Hyattsville, Prince George's Plaza, Greenbelt and Branch Avenue, for example) are mixed use joint development areas. Several of these sites are already included in TDOZs (Transit Development Overlay Zones). This creates two opportunities: First these mixed use developments are potentially major employment centers; for example, joint development at the Branch Avenue site is projected to generate as many as 18,000 jobs. Secondly, the area adjacent to the transit station entrance

can be designed to function as a new town center. This should be a concentrated area of community based retail and service uses, fronting on an active street, connecting the street to the Metro entrance, and serving as a major pedestrian entrance to the transit system. This public space should be a focus for community activity and feature programmed events. Plans developed for the Prince George's Plaza Station illustrate such a plaza.

Jobs and community life -- worthy goals; but herein lies the problem: You can't get there from here. In Prince George's County, the roads as well as the transit lines are radial corridors fanning out from the District to the suburbs. This reflects historical patterns, and historically there was no need for major north-south roadway connections. This legacy gives Prince George's County residents a plethora of transit and roadway routes for east-west travel but virtually none for north-south movement: all warp and no woof.

We propose a continuous north-south feeder bus system connecting many of the most heavily populated communities with the major stations on the four transit lines. The WMATA bus lines feed riders into the stations from nearby neighborhoods. This longer north-south line would be a linear corridor connecting many Inner Beltway neighborhoods to one another and to the employment centers and town centers (see diagram).

Ideally, these bus transit corridors would be exclusively for buses and bicycles, built on new rights-of-way and grade separated from major east-west roads. There may be some limited opportunity for exclusive busways but, in the main, existing road rights-of-way would be used.

Connecting the Inner Beltway communities along a north-south transit corridor will be expensive, but benefits will be high, in return. There are many precedents for such systems throughout the country. Among the financing mechanisms which should be explored is an "employer's tax" on those businesses locating in the new mixed use Metro station development areas; they will benefit from the improved access.

But the real beneficiaries will be the residents of the Inner Beltway communities -- who have been separated from one another by mobility patterns that divided rather than united them.

LEGEND
—— PROPOSED BUS CONNECTOR
····· EXISTING METRORAIL
····· FUNDED FOR CONSTRUCTION OR PLANNED

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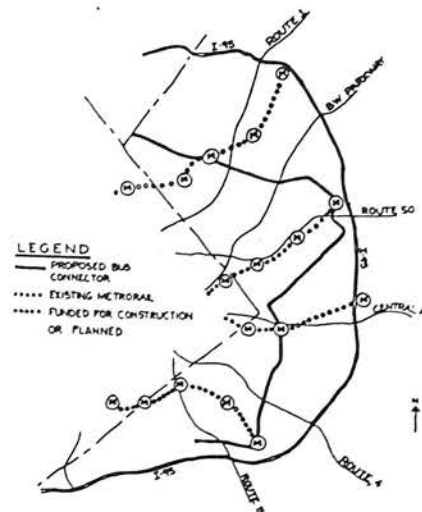
COMMERCIAL RE-USE

The Inner Beltway has an abundance of commercial space of varying quality, age and character. Some of it is fully and effectively utilized at the present time, some is mis-utilized or under-utilized, and some is obsolete and vacant. We here present strategies for optimal use of this space, employing a combination of public and private actors to achieve multiple objectives. Certain strategies may be appropriate for partially occupied or under-occupied buildings; other strategies for totally vacant properties.

The risk is that, in the absence of a serious re-use strategy, existing under-used or mis-used properties will:

- suffer premature obsolescence;
- blight their neighbors and the appearance/image of the area more generally;
- require premature demolition; or
- depress market values in the vicinity

Thus, in one way or another, properties might be lost as resources which could be used to aid in broader programs of neighborhood revitalization.

There appear to be difficulties in attracting new construction investment to the Inner Beltway, especially on small or isolated parcels. This makes it all the more imperative to try, wherever possible, to extend the useful lives of properties.

OBJECTIVES

The commercial re-use program seeks to achieve a number of public and private objectives, including but not limited to the following:

- Maximize return to property owners.
- Improve business climate/conditions for retail tenants.
- Achieve neighborhood level provision of social services.
- Develop "hands-on" sensitivity in County government: offices where the problems are.
- Make most effective use of public funding.
- Achieve energy conservation, reduced vehicle trips; work and shopping and services closer to home.
- Provide work and training opportunities for the hidden, immobile, under-utilized labor force (for example, single parents with day care needs, seniors, handicapped).
- Enhance appearance and attraction of commercial facilities

WHY RE-USE RATHER THAN DEMOLITION?

The initial assumption of the strategy is that re-use potential should usually be considered before existing commercial properties are demolished. Preservation of existing stock is to be favored for at least the following reasons.

First, these properties help to maintain a community's fabric, and often serve as familiar or architecturally significant landmarks or identity symbols. This structural uniqueness would not be likely to be duplicated by new replacement structures, and the community would be the loser.

Cost calculations also enter the equation. More and different uses, and a wider variety of them, can survive, and make money, in older, lower cost space. Construction costs of replacement space would be markedly higher than that of existing space. The cost differential could mean that new construction would not take place.

The importance of rapid action is also a factor. Programs can be implemented immediately in existing, in-place space.

Finally, flexibility of existing space can be an asset to a multi-faceted program of neighborhood revitalization. Temporary uses can be staged through previously vacant space, serving as a flexible "bridging" resource, meeting a number of different needs, one after the other, as the neighborhood returns to economic health.

Not all properties, of course, can be effectively reused. In some cases, demolition of obsolete properties will be the right answer. Selective demolition should be used, where required, to remove unsafe or otherwise blighting conditions. It should also be used when the result would be to contribute to the integrity and vitality of adjacent properties and neighborhood areas - for example, when remaining vacant space might be used for parking, open space, or landscape features.

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

Implementation of the commercial reuse strategy calls for a variety of activities on the part of local government staff. Some of these are activities traditionally within the purview of local government. Others are less often undertaken by government staff, but are more often the responsibility of those in the real estate or property management field. Some of the more important activities required in implementation of the strategy are discussed below under three headings: land use planning/economic issues; property owner negotiation issues, and administrative issues.

Land Use Planning/Economic Issues

Commercial reuse requires, first of all, a diagnostic analysis. This property survey identifies appropriate and inappropriate uses, and may call for

rearrangement of tenancies to better cluster viable uses for maximum marketing impact, and free up space for alternate uses. The analysis also assesses potential complementarily of uses, extending to include possible "public benefit" uses that may bring with them unique or specialized operating characteristics.

The analysis may also cover "defensive space design" - those changes in the structure and its surrounding environment that might decrease its susceptibility to crime. This type of design may be quite critical when the property will include new and different operating hours or types of people (e.g., children or the elderly).

Analysis of such characteristics as market areas and income groups served by tenants, and traffic and circulation patterns, provides the background for later development of physical plans and marketing programs and strategies.

Negotiation Issues in Dealing with Property Owners

When specifics of a reuse strategy have been developed, a number of important technical issues remain to be addressed. While many of these issues occur in all lease negotiations, representatives of the public sector must be prepared to deal with concerns such as those discussed below.

Achieving the desired flexibility of space use requires clear definition of conditions under which space use can be expanded or contracted (for example, to deal with seasonal peaks and valleys in activity). Flexible use of space also makes more complicated the subject of fixturing, as partitions and similar equipment are less likely to be permanently affixed within the structure.

Changes in hours of use and profile of use are likely to affect liability insurance coverage, security and utility costs. More intense office use may create special electrical wiring needs.

This sample of issues illustrates that, although the benefits of a commercial reuse strategy may be significant, they are not achieved without cost, or without the requirement of skilled negotiators representing public as well as private sector tenant interests.

Administrative Issues

A series of administrative issues will usually be confronted during implementation of a commercial reuse strategy. The first and most important is that of responsibility and accountability for program operation. Such a program provides an opportunity for cooperative agency interaction, between, for example,

o   county planning and social service provision agencies
o   school system(s)
o   training institutions, public and private

o   Economic Development Corporation
o   minority business agencies
o   police and other criminal justice
    agencies

While agency interaction is important, one
agency should be clearly assigned "lead
agency" for implementation of the strategy.
In the case of Prince George's County, one
suitable candidate for this role is the
Economic Development Corporation.   Its
combination of private sector skills and
sensitivity to the concerns of the public
sector qualify it well for this
responsibility.

Access to financing is another important
area, and one where agencies with knowledge
of program eligibility requirements will
be helpful in packaging the optimal
financial strategy for each reuse property.

It is not clear from our analysis to date
whether the County regulatory structure -
zoning, health and safety codes, sign
ordinances, etc., would act to facilitate or
hinder commercial reuse efforts.   These
concerns should be addressed in the initial
stages of program implementation. Revisions
in County ordinances or flexibility in
administration of regulations may be called
for in some instances.

A final administrative issue involves
potential availability to the commercial
reuse effort of properties owned or managed
on behalf of the federal government (e.g.,
Resolution Trust Corporation, FDIC).   These
agencies' transfer and sale procedures may
in some cases favor certain types of
public purchasers.

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE USES

Mixed use facilities can include a wide
variety of uses. Those listed below are
just some of the more likely
possibilities.

o   Neighborhood centers (multi-
    function)

o   Recreation centers

o   Senior citizen facilities

o   Libraries

o   Child care facilities

o   Schools (temporary or special
    purpose)

o   University extension

o   Community policing satellite offices

o   Neighborhood work centers (a/k/a
    telecommuting centers)

o   Tutoring facilities

o   Job training centers

o   State, county or municipal
    government neighborhood, storefront
    offices, covering various functions
    and activities

HOW TO BEGIN?

This section outlines a suggested program for achieving the objectives of the commercial re-use strategy.

1) Develop project work plan, with checklists, and presentation materials, to use in explaining project to neighborhood groups, in general introductory publicity and in training. Some material in this proposal can be adapted and expanded for use in such a project plan document.

2) Designate and train program personnel: outreach people, diagnostic analysts, negotiators who will be responsible for operation of the public sector portion of the program.

3) Initial rollout - describe and publicize program, solicit expressions of neighborhood and property owner interest, develop inventories of space needs from the types of agencies and institutions listed in the section above

4) Select initial target properties for implementation. Selection criteria might include:

o significant neighborhood involvement (has the program been invited in and locally supported and endorsed?)

o variety of uses (in the initial portfolio, not necessarily in any one property)

o range of settings - geographic, neighborhood character, high, medium and low pathology rankings

5) Sponsor cooperative programs to market, promote and advertise the activities of the commercial reuse areas. These programs should involve, at minimum, merchants, civic associations, and commercial realtors. Such programs market and publicize groups of establishments, reducing to some degree the need for individual signs and marketing programs.

6) Implement, monitor, adapt, repeat, publicize and expand.

The program will change character over time as lessons are learned, staff becomes more experienced, different neighborhood challenges are confronted. It is important that feedback be ongoing and thorough, so that positives may be replicated and emerging problems dealt with quickly.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

Before land can be developed or buildings rehabilitated, permission to develop these properties must be obtained from the County government. In the more urban (or built up) areas the most important permits that must be obtained are zoning and building permits. The zoning code determines where buildings and uses can be located.

Prince George's County's code is more than forty years old. It zoning needs to be scrapped and replaced by a vastly simplified, easily understood code.

The new code must serve the diverse needs of the public, including owners of mom and pop businesses with limited resources as well as established business people. Citizens must be encouraged to participate in review processes; it's their homes and workplaces that are being shaped by these rules.

Government must strike a balance in the new code, between the need to regulate to protect the area's special qualities and the tendency to overregulate and discourage revitalization efforts. Regulations should not be promoted for their own sake; they must guide, not impede desired development.

The last time Prince George's County's zoning code was comprehensively revised was 1949. Imagine what the County was like at that time. World War II had recently ended.

Development patterns in the County were for the most part, suburban, occurring along the major thoroughfares in existence at the time.

These suburbs reflected the dreams of families of veterans returning from the war. Those Ozzie and Harriet dreams were for a house of one's own, and a life of stability, peace, and contentment.

Much has happened in the last four decades. That dream has faded, replaced with real life fears of Hill Street Blues' crime and insecurity, apartment complexes, less open space and a new Metro system.

During the 1960's the Capital Beltway was completed; the area inside it is now more urban than suburban. People no longer just live in this area; they work there as well. Former tobacco farms are now covered with offices, roads, and new transit stations. Not to be forgotten are the small municipalities, many in the northern section of the Inner Beltway area, developed as streetcar suburbs with small shops serving residents' needs. While these areas retain their marvelous sense of history and place, some are now in need of revitalization.

Despite these dramatic changes, the zoning code provisions are still suburban. In the no-longer-suburban Inner Beltway area, variances and special

exceptions are all too familiar components of development review. Small land or building owners are therefore required to participate in time consuming, costly, public hearing processes.

The zoning code needs to accommodate what is currently happening in the real estate market and provide signals to the market about future opportunities. Perhaps most important is to allow for mixed use development projects where applicants do not have to run the gauntlet of numerous public hearings and interdepartmental review processes. Equally important are incentives to revitalize and in some instances create town centers providing some coherence and identity to life in Inner Beltway communities.

Changes also have occurred in the way communities use zoning to regulate land development, new techniques have been developed and new approaches can now be applied to many of the urban issues fared by Inner Beltway Communities. Why use an ax, now that scalpels have been invented?

Also significant, is the fact that the policy goals government is seeking to achieve today are not those of yesterday. A new code created by representatives of all of the County's constituents, could, in a strategic fashion, further these new goals.

What People Told Us:

When speaking with Prince Georgians and reviewing reports and studies about the Inner Beltway communities, people told us that the permitting process is:

Time consuming

Complex

Difficult to understand, especially for small property owners

Suburb-oriented; it does not distinguish between areas that are developed or undeveloped

Single-use oriented; it does not accommodate mixed use development

Too expensive; certain fee requirements in transit zone overlay districts are too high and costs of preparing applications for small projects are prohibitive

County-government oriented; it does not encourage citizen involvement or provide any significant role for municipal government

Our Perceptions

In many instances zoning code requirements reflect development patterns that no longer predominate in Inner Beltway areas. The code accommodates suburban development; much of the Inner

While it is customary for counties to have the authority to zone in unincorporated areas, it is unusual for them to have the authority to adopt and implement zoning in municipalities. Some of the larger municipalities in our study areas strongly advocated for a role in developing their own plans and zoning ordinances.

While the zoning code is in fact, complex, and should be simplified and made more readable, it is not all that different from codes of other urban communities of its size.

Our general comments about the zoning code are as follows:

It is complex; it's a patchwork quilt of amendments made over time. For example, there are about 100 different uses that require special exceptions.

The parking, yard, and landscaping requirements are too stringent when applied in the built out area.

Small property owners, trying to do small infill or rehab projects, must go through a public hearing process that is onerous.

There are no mandatory time limits on processing zoning permits.

It does not allow for mixed use development projects without rezoning or using relatively complex regulatory

processes.

In the current development climate facilities fee requirements in the transit zone overlay districts are high.

There is little, if any, role for local governments in reviewing applications for zoning permits or in creating zoning regulations for their communities.

Ways to Address Community Concerns About Development Review Process

There are a number of improvements that can and should be made to the zoning code. There are also many things that can be done to improve public perception of the zoning process. Our suggestions include:

Create a new zoning code that reflects current development patterns; paying special attention to the developed areas in the Inner Beltway.

Allow the larger local governments the option to do their own zoning; require local zoning to conform to county plans.

Create a "user-friendly" citizens' guide to the zoning process that

focuses on the urban areas, explaining how to go through the permitting process and where to get information. Actively disseminate the guide through publicity and mass mailings

Establish time limits for zoning review process and require that applicants bear the cost of processing by charging fees based on project size. Exempt smaller projects from fee requirements.

Change parking, yard and landscaping requirements so that applicants seeking approval for small rehab or new development projects do not need to go through a public hearing process

Create an ombudsperson position to assist applicants for small projects in permit review

Establish community-based zoning information centers, which include easy-to-use computer programs that allow citizens to immediately find out what zone their property is located in and what steps they must take to obtain permits

Provide that fees assessed pursuant to adequate public facilities ordinance should be paid over a period of years, instead of up front, and should also be used to cover health, elderly and child care services (if state statute allows for this coverage).

Refocus plans and zoning ordinances so they emphasize places for people such as schools and child, elderly, health care, recreation, community policing and job training centers

Use trained educators and/or facilitators to train government staff to ensure a consumer-oriented focus

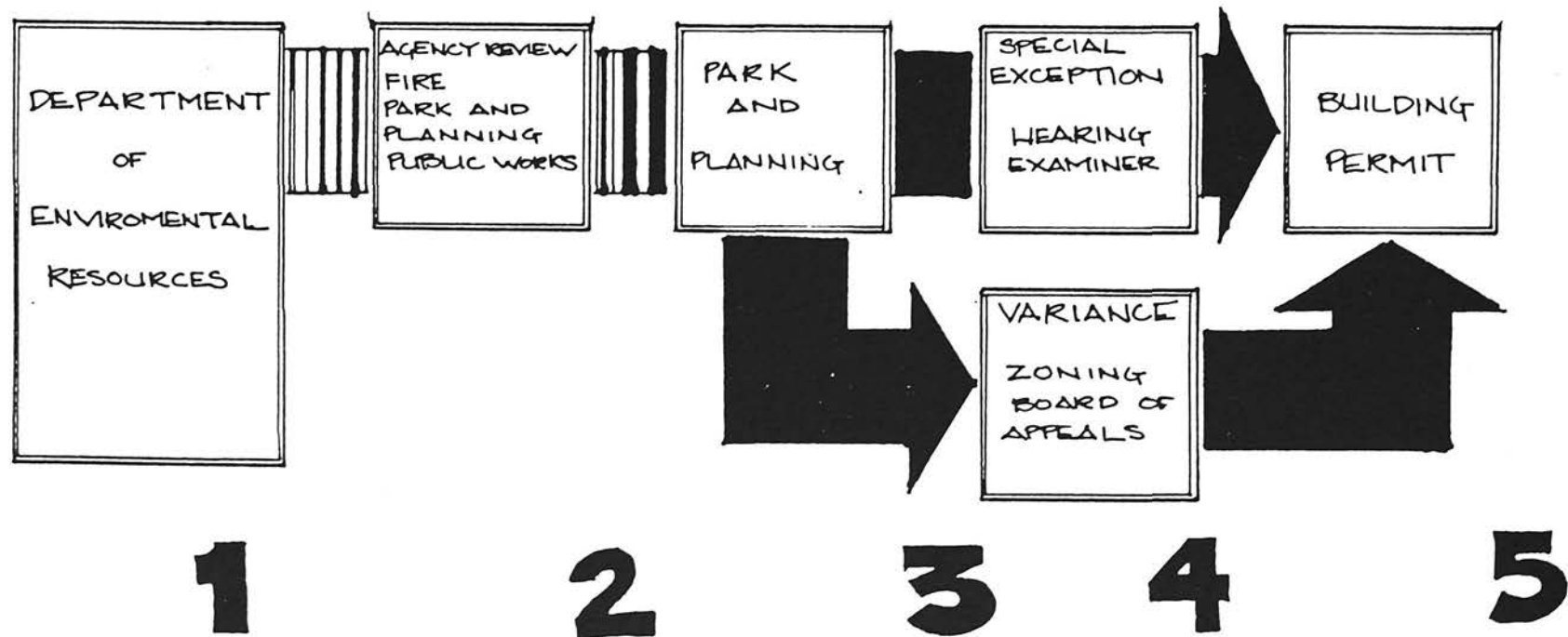# TYPICAL REVIEW PROCESS FOR SMALL URBAN INFILL PROJECT

A property owner who wants to build a small fast food restaurant that does not comply with dimensional and use requirements must do the following to obtain permission to build:

1. Seek a building permit at the Department of Environmental Resources (DER)

2. DER then will typically deny the application because the property does not comply with parking, yard or landscaping requirements of the zoning code

3. DER forwards the application for agency review, typically the Department of Public Works, Fire, and Park & Planning

4. Park & Planning tells the applicant to seek a variance and a special exception

5. Once the variance and special exception are granted, applicant seeks a building permit from DER

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIROMENTAL RESOURCES

AGENCY REVIEW FIRE PARK AND PLANNING PUBLIC WORKS

PARK AND PLANNING

SPECIAL EXCEPTION HEARING EXAMINER

BUILDING PERMIT

VARIANCE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

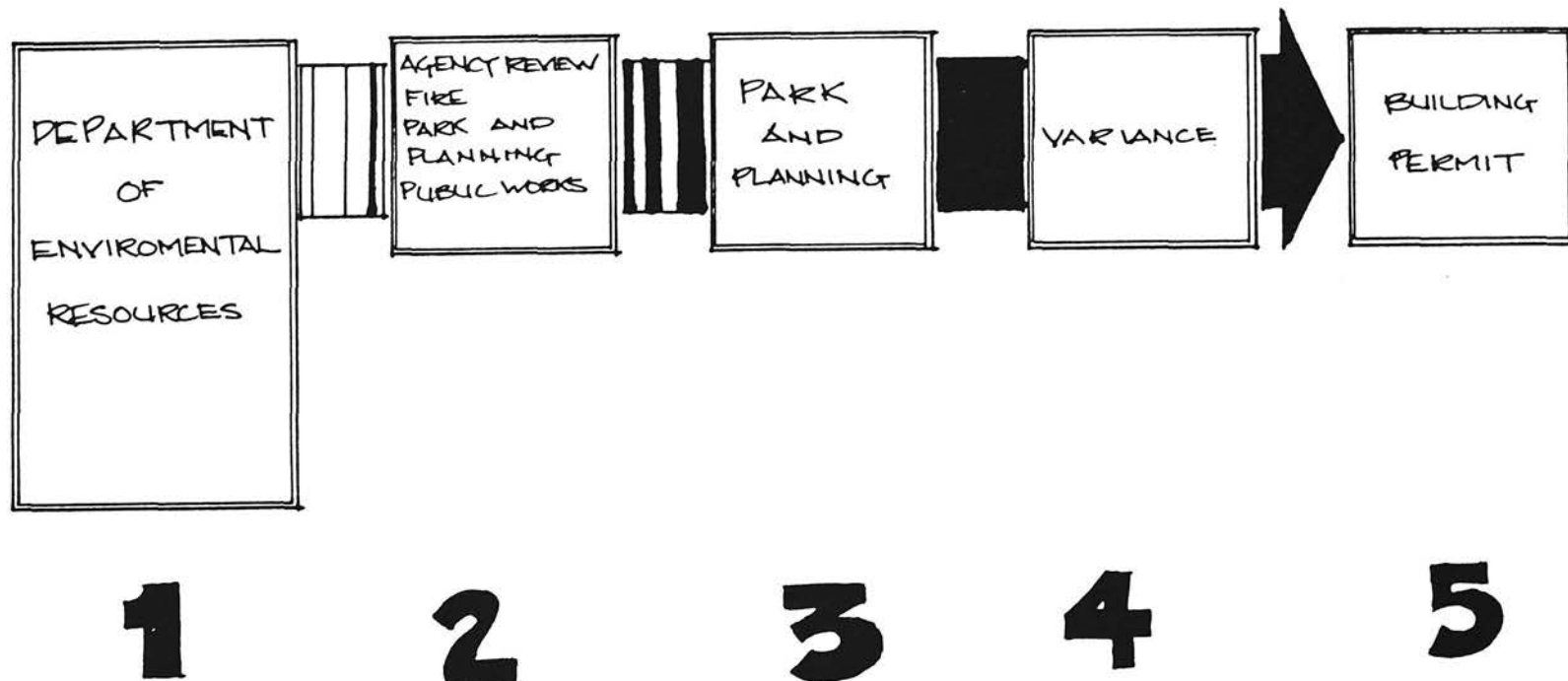# TYPICAL REVIEW PROCESS FOR SMALL URBAN REHAB PROJECT

A property owner who wants to build a small shop must do the following to obtain permission to build:

1. Seek a building permit at the Department of Environmental Resources (DER)

2. DER then will typically deny the application because the property does not comply with parking, yard or landscaping requirements of the zoning code

3. DER forwards the application for agency review, typically the Department of Public Works, Fire, and Park & Planning

4. Park & Planning tells the applicant to seek a variance with the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

5. Once the variance is granted, applicant seeks a building permit from DER

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POLICE PROBLEM SOLVING

A common theme we've heard from Prince George's County residents is that crime, or the fear of crime, is a reality for them. "If we don't do something about crime, there will be no change in our County," said one resident at the R/UDAT community forum. Yet a number of changes are occurring in Prince George's. The question is what impact these changes will have on improving community life.

For example, we saw an apartment complex here where drug deals were common; suspects fled easily from police through open passageways in the buildings. After rolled barbed wire was placed at the top of high fences surrounding the entire complex the illegal activity has stopped. The complex is well maintained and residents feel more secure. The fence is shiny and new and keeps people in or out.

In another part of the County, a large number of garden apartments were refurbished with federal assistance. Still, illegal activity continued. Today, a blue sign marks the apartment office that houses a community policing officer who is responsible for helping residents to police their complex. The officer makes routine "home visits" to get to know residents, to learn about their problems, and to gather crime information. The officer walks around the complex to observe activity and check on residents. "Hooking and booking" is still recognized as a strategy for dealing

with crime, but officers have been trained to use "problem solving" as a policing strategy as well. Calls for service have been greatly reduced. The blue sign mixes well with the old red brick.

The shiny barbed wire fence changes the community in one way--using more enforcement and more physical barriers to keep the bad element away. The integration of police into neighborhoods changes it in a much different way. Partnerships between citizens and police are formed when officers gain respect for citizens and citizens appreciate the difficulties of being an officer. Partnerships result in police and citizens jointly policing their communities, moving away from a traditional police mentality that promotes the police as expert "crimefighter." Crimefighters can patch up things for the moment, can put a "band-aid" on a problem until it erupts again. But police and community working together can find long-term solutions to problems. The choice of barbed wire or police-community partnerhips belongs to the citizens.

Community residents point with pride to the blue signs that mark satellite offices for community policing officers. They like having "their own" community policing officer. There are 14 community

policing officers in Prince George's County. There are over 700,000 residents.

PHILOSOPHY MUST BE SUPPORTED BY STRATEGY

Community policing can be easily understood as a philosophy that supports the idea that the police and community must work as partners if crime problems are to be resolved on a long-term basis. The Prince George's Police Department supports that philosophy. The primary strategy that supports community policing, that makes philosophy a reality is problem solving. Without problem solving, community policing is a merely a phrase that makes the community "feel good" about their police department. The Community Policing Officers have been trained to use problem solving as a primary policing strategy. That training bodes well for the Department.

Officers around the country who are asked to interact more closely with the community often feel uncomfortable with this new approach. They wonder if they are doing "real police work." Certainly the reinforcement they get from other officers who are not "community policing officers" is that they are not being real cops. An interesting phenomenon occurs, however, when police managers and supervisors emphasize problem solving and not "feel good" strategies. As officers become more involved in problem solving, they begin to realize for themselves that they need citizen input and participation in order to maintain positive changes in neighborhoods.

There is a natural evolution from problem solving to community policing. The emphasis, then, for police managers and supervisors must be to promote excellence in problem solving with their officers.

THINKING BEYOND THE PROJECT

The Department has been actively involved in implementing Community Policing as a federal grant project for less than a year and has achieved early success demonstrated by positive feedback from the community. The willingness to consider fundamental changes to the police organization and then to bring about such change must be commended. There are some remaining challenges that may be useful for the Department to consider.

At present, only 14 officers out of over 1200 are engaged in community policing. This makes them a team of specialized officers set apart from routine patrol operations. According to Dr. Herman Goldstein, the "father" of Problem Oriented Policing, over 80% of routine patrol work involves non-crime activity (traffic, noise, fights, etc.). This is activity that must be resolved in some way other than using the criminal justice system. That translates into only 20% of routine patrol work that involves traditional policing strategies such as arrests or issuing warnings or citations, strategies which front load the criminal justice system.

Patrol officers, touted as the "backbone" of the police organization, deal with the 80% of routine patrol problems that do not require an enforcement response. While patrol officers are responsive to the radio and may have occasion when they move from call to call, they often have uncommitted time in which they employ the strategy of "random patrol" hoping to find a major crime in progress. They seldom do.

The organization cannot be fully engaged in community policing unless every employee in the Department understands and supports both the philosophy of police and community partnerships, and the strategy of problem solving. At every level, from police manager to the officer on the street, inviting and participating with citizens in identifying and solving their own problems involves thinking differently about the delivery of police services. Officers will not think differently unless they are given opportunities and good reasons for doing so.

Priorities for specialized teams often change as the needs of the Department or the interests of policy makers responding to constituents dictate redeployment of officers. Members of these teams are inherently alienated from regular patrol officers. No matter how strongly these factors are resisted, they pose a constant struggle for the Department. Certainly the level of resources given to each community policing officer with the federal support currently available will not be given to every officer added to the ranks of the 14. How will the Department expand its commitment to community policing given these constraints?

Patrol officers can use problem solving. Emergency calls are the first priority. That should never change. But officers on the street are excellent sources of information and ideas about how to solve community problems. Try this example. On a four hour bus tour of the County, the R/UDAT Team was driven by the Landover Mall where the tour hosts commented on the problem with crime at the Mall. One host mentioned that he didn't want his family members to go there because of the crime. The Mall was mentioned by others as a place to avoid.

Enter problem solving. Typically in police work, two questions are asked. Question one is "what is the problem?" Question two is "what are we going to do about it?" The strategy of police problem solving requires that another question be posed. Question two becomes "what do we need to know about the problem before we decide what to do about it?"

After the bus tour, two team members went out in a patrol car to meet with local officers. The team members asked questions about the mall. Here's a look at part of the process:

Q: Is the Mall patrolled by private security?

A: Yes.

Q: Does security patrol by foot or in cars?

A: I rarely see the security. I'm not sure.

Q: What do you think contributes to crime in the Mall?

A: The apartment complex next to the Mall.

Q: Why?

A: There is no fence or barrier between the Mall and the complex. Suspects can easily rob a victim in the parking lot and run right to the complex.

Q: How would you do things differently?

A: I wouldn't move the victims right next to the perpetrators, or I would create a barrier between the two areas.

This is the beginning of a good analysis which suggests solutions.

Patrol officers need to be recognized as a valuable resource, a wealth of information, as innovative thinkers who are frustrated by handling repeat calls for service, and can see the value in taking care of recurring incidents so they don't have to keep going back to the same location time after time. When the Department includes every officer in the problem solving process, they will move closer to Chief Mitchell's goal of "ensuring that you (the citizen) receive the best police service possible."

PROMOTING COUNTY WIDE PROBLEM SOLVING

When officers are asked to move beyond the criminal justice system to deal with police problems, they turn to other public and private agencies for assistance. Collaborative relationships must be developed and turf issues must be avoided at all costs, if community problems are to be handled effectively. The following suggestions are made to ensure this effectiveness:

POLICE SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE COUNTY PLANNING PROCESS.

As the Landover Mall example illustrates, the police can provide a valuable perspective in preventing crime through identifying flaws or problems in environmental design.

ESTABLISH A NEIGHBORHOOD CODE ENFORCEMENT TEAM.

The lack of enforcement of zoning codes was cited repeatedly by citizens as contributing to unsightly neighborhoods. A Team comprised of police, and inspectors from fire, zoning, building, health, and litter working regularly to identify and enforce codes and laws could make an impact on neighborhood eyesores. The police role is to identify problems and provide support for inspectors. If code violations are a problem for the community, they should also be a problem for County services.

STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH FEAR

Fear of crime was also a recurring theme in the testimony presented to the R/UDAT Team. The Police are employing a variety of strategies to reduce fear, such as making home visits, walking in neighborhoods, and increasing patrol in high crime areas.

Whose problem is fear, anyway? Several of the citizens acknowledged that the police can't do much more than they're doing given the limited resources. There was also recognition by several citizens that it is the responsibility of individuals to make a difference in their own community. The spirit and courage of one young woman who is part of the nightly street vigils discouraging drug dealers from staying in Mt. Rainer said, "get out on your corner and make a difference." The danger of that alternative may not fit for every frustrated citizen. But, getting out in your community in another way, showing you care about what happens where you live, is important. It is the only way that neighborhoods will be cleaned up permanently.

One option that may be examined is a revamping of Neighborhood Watch. While not every person with a story to tell was asked about Neighborhood Watch, those who were asked said that it had no vitality in their neighborhood. The historic role of Neighborhood Watch has been one of a passive "eyes and ears" of the police. That role does not fit with the active participation required for breaking the cycle of crime in some neighborhoods. Community Police

Officers may wish to consider working with a small number of Neighborhood Watch groups in higher crime areas to teach the groups problem solving skills, and facilitate them in identifying and solving their own problems. Who knows better how to solve a problem than the person who has to live with it day after day?

Market the successes of the officers and the citizens who deal effectively with crime problems. There are no failures in problem solving because when people dare to risk and try something different that should always be rewarded. But the community needs to know when there has been a change for the better in the quality of lives as a result of problem solving. Share those stories regularly inside and outside of the Department.

A FINAL NOTE ON CUSTOMER SERVICE

There are good things happening here in the delivery of police services. The police, as with other County services, need to continually remind themselves of the value of customer service, stated by Prince George's Police Department in this way, "we are committed to providing competent and effective delivery of service in response to community concerns." This can be accomplished in one way which is not stated in the Police Department's statement of values: "a commitment to excellence through applying the strategy of problem solving." The practice of problem solving in the

Department has a strong start through your
current efforts. The expansion of community
policing through problem solving for every
Department employee can have a beneficial
impact   on   Prince   George's   County
revitalization efforts.

THE R/UDAT TEAM

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Cliff is President of Grigsby/Graves, an environmental consulting firm established in 1988 with offices in San Diego and San Francisco. A R/UDAT veteran, he has chaired projects in North Philadelphia, Albuquerque and Portsmith, Virginia, and participated in eight others dating back to 1971. He was Chief Administrative Officer of the County of San Diego from 1978 to 1985 and also spent seven years in Washington, DC with the United States Office of Management and Budget and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. He holds Bachelor of Arts and Master of City Planning degrees from the University of California at Berkeley.

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Since 1971, Mr. Brown has maintained an independent architectural practice in Dayton, Ohio. He has been a city planner and educator, and currently specializes in urban design, and is involved in strategic planning for public schools. This is his second R/UDAT, although he has either led or participated in three other design charettes in the Midwest.

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Reese Fayde, President of Real Estate Enterprises, Inc., New York, NY, operates a business management and real estate development consulting firm. Reese has worked on several multi-disciplinary team reviews like this R/UDAT in Seneca Falls, New York and Cleveland, Ohio. Reese's consulting work has included an evaluation of the Philadelphia Housing Authority for the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, program reviews for the Ford Foundations and the MacArthur Foundation and financial packaging of real estate projects for community development corporations. Reese conducts training programs in property management for state agencies in Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey and Maryland. Reese has a BA degree from Clark University, a planning degree from Boston College and was a Loeb Fellow at Harvard University School of Design.

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Nancy McPherson is the Project Consultant for the Problem Oriented Policing (POP) program at the San Diego Police Department. In 1988, she started POP in San Diego as the Field Coordinator for the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), an association of law enforcement executives in Washington, DC. Nancy was appointed by the California State Attorney General to his Advisory Board on Community Policing and Problem Solving. She was also recently appointed to the Implementation Advisory Committee on Community Policing for the Los Angeles

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Edith M. Netter, a land use attorney and planner, heads Edith M. Netter & Associates, Boston, a land use law and consulting firm and is a principal in Land Accord, a land use and environmental mediation firm. As a former Assistant Director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, she supervised Boston's planning, rezoning and environmental permitting processes. Netter has edited <u>Land Use Law: Issues for the Eighties</u> and <u>A Planner's Guide to Land Use Law</u> and has lectured on or taught land use law at the universities of Illinois, Connecticut and Maryland, UCLA, Harvard, Berkeley and MIT. Netter has assisted more than 30 communities in redrafting their zoning codes.

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Skip Smallridge is Urban Design Director of Wallace, Floyd Associates Inc., a planning and design firm with offices in Boston and Maine. Specializing in transportation related land use and urban design, he was the Urban Design Director of the Central Transportation Planning Staff in Boston and Project Urban Designer for the CBD at the Boston Redevelopment Authority. He has most recently served as the Urban Design Manager for Boston's Central Artery Project, a $5 Billion Urban Highway revitalization and Joint Development Project. He was adjunct Professor of Urban Design at Boston University and has taught or lectured on Urban Design at Yale, Harvard, MIT, Carneige-Mellon and the University of Quebec.

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Ronald Thomas is founder of Community Design Exchange, a nonprofit community planning organization based in Seattle, WA. With 20 years experience helping people participate in planning and local government, he has directed community-based vision and strategic planning programs in Roanoke, VA.; Richmond, VA.; Michigan City In.; Everett, WA and Savannah, GA. The Savannah Vision 20/20 program received a 1991 National League of Cities Award for Excellence in Regional Urban Innovation for use of television. He has written extensively on citizen-based design and planning including the publications Cities by Design, Design For Low Income Neighborhoods and Taking Charge: How Communities Are Planning Their Futures. Mr. Thomas is a certified planner with a professional architecture degree from the University of Oklahoma, and he has completed masters degree work in communications at Syracuse University and a management program at Harvard University.

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Ron Lipford, AIA
Mayor Margaret Mallino, University Park
Mark Maves, AIA
Mark Mazz
Regina McNeill, Planning Board Member
Eric Morsicato
Dennis Murphy, EDC
Robert Nash, FAIA
Matt Neitzey
Alvin Nichols, DCAO
Jill Norair
Jim Odgers, Parking Authority

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Genevieve O'Toole
Anne Palumbo
Robert Patten
Robert Patterson
Susan Pearl, M-NCPPC
Fern Piret, Director of Planning
Councilwoman Mary Prangley, Hyattsville
Joseph Pressley, EDC
Joe Puhalla, PIC
Charles Ratcliffe
Major Riddick, CAO
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Steven Rogers
Councilmember Fred Sissine, Mount Rainier
Essie Shorter
Lee Skilman
Ray Skinner, Housing Authority & DH&CD
Holly Slaugh
John Spearman
Mayor Ben Stevenson, Bladensburg
Charles Stolting
Kathy Synder, Chamber of Commerce
Barbara S. Tilghman
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Morris Tranen
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Tammy Vitale
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Myra Williams
Pat Williams
Louis Wilson
Mayor Marvin Wilson, Glenarden
Eva B. Wimberly
Beverly Woods
Clifford L. Woods
Marti Whoshtil
Clarence L. Wright
Susanna Yatman