AREA PLAN OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan consists of the Policy Plan, the four Area Plans, and the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Plan maps. The Policy Plan, adopted by the Board of Supervisors on August 6, 1990, replaced the Introduction/Countywide volume of the Plan. The objectives, policies, and guidelines contained in the Policy Plan guide planning and development review considerations toward implementing county goals. The goals address the future development pattern of Fairfax County, and protection of natural and cultural resources for present and future generations.

The Area Plans are key elements for implementing the Policy Plan's goals and objectives at the more detailed Planning District and Community Planning Sector levels (see Figure 1). The Comprehensive Plan Map illustrates planned land uses, transportation improvements and public facilities. Used together, these elements comprise a dynamic document which is used by the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, county staff and the public to guide land use, transportation and public facility decision making.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA PLANS

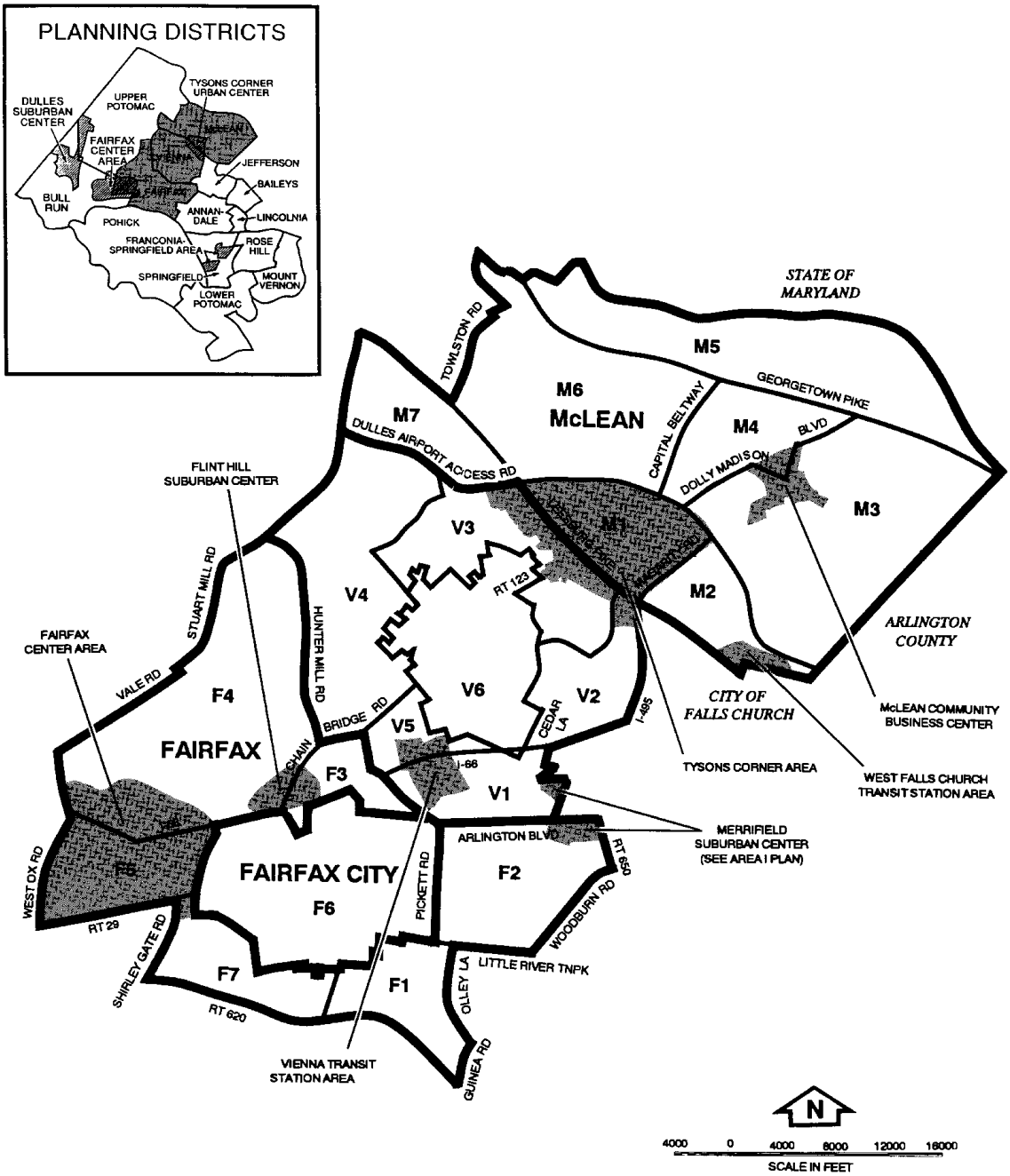
The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors designated 1988 as a Policy Review Year to review the adopted goals for the county formerly contained in the 1975 Comprehensive Plan. Based on the recommendations of the Goals Advisory Commission, the Board adopted new and revised goals for the county on October 24, 1988. The goals encompass a variety of issues, including housing, land use, transportation, public facilities and other areas and represent the broad ideals that the county should strive to achieve.

To ensure that the Comprehensive Plan includes policies, strategies and site-specific recommendations necessary to implement the revised goals, the Board directed the Planning Commission to initiate a major review of the Comprehensive Plan. The Fairfax Planning Horizons process was established as a two-phased effort aimed at achieving the following:

- Phase I: A Policy Plan for the county; and
- Phase II: Revised Area Plans that reflect the objectives of the new Policy Plan.

On August 6, 1990, the Board of Supervisors adopted the countywide objectives and policies contained in Part I of the Policy Plan for Fairfax County. This is the first volume of the five-volume Comprehensive Plan.

Phase II focused on the four Area Plan volumes of the Comprehensive Plan. The individual Planning District and Community Sector Plans which make up the Area Plans contain site-specific guidance that implement the policies adopted in Phase I. The Area Plans also seek to implement the Concept for Future Development for Fairfax County, which is described below.



AREA II **FIGURE 1**
PLANNING DISTRICTS AND SECTORS

CONCEPT FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

On August 6, 1990, the Board of Supervisors adopted the countywide objectives and policies of the Policy Plan for Fairfax County to replace the Introduction/Countywide volume of the Comprehensive Plan. At the same time, the Board adopted the Concept for Future Development and the Land Classification System, to be used as guidance during the review of the Area Plans. In 2012, the Board of Supervisors adopted updates to the Concept for Future Development so that it could continue to guide review of the Comprehensive Plan in the future.

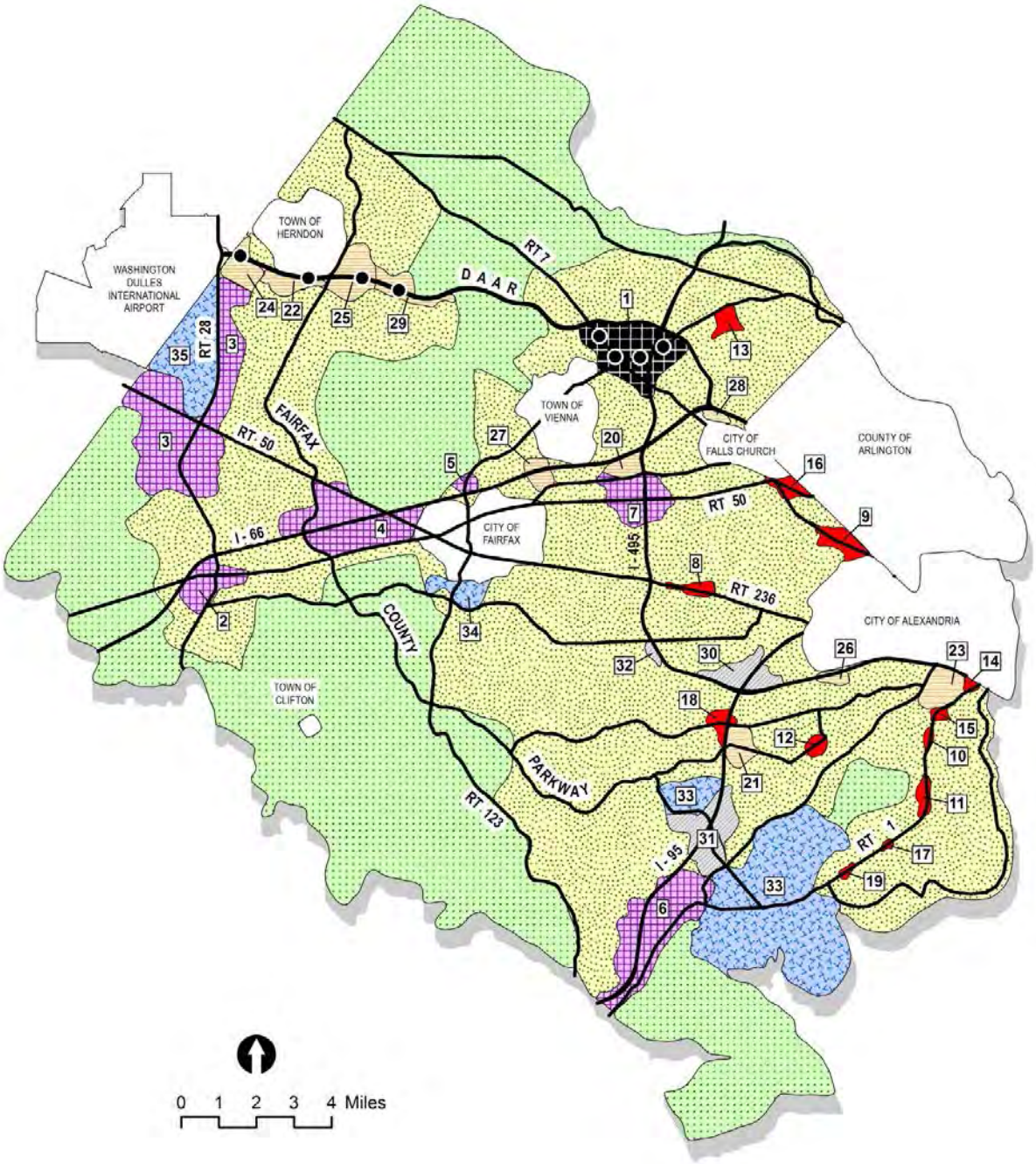
The Concept for Future Development consists of two elements: the Concept Map which shows the general location and character of future land uses and the Land Classification System which describes the desired future character for each area of the county in terms of eight broad categories as shown on the Concept Map.

The Concept for Future Development's policy direction is that almost all employment growth should occur within designated Mixed-Use Centers and Industrial Areas. When combined, these centers and areas encompass about 10 percent of the county's land area. With the exception of the Industrial Areas, some degree of mixed-use development is encouraged for each of these employment areas. This emphasis on mixed-use development is designed to introduce a substantial residential component into these employment areas. Mixed-use development is generally defined as three or more different types of uses designed to be functionally, economically and aesthetically integrated. The boundaries shown for these non-residential/ mixed-use areas coincide with the current boundaries of commercial, industrial, and mixed-use areas as generally defined by existing non-residential zoning and/or the non-residential/mixed-use boundaries traditionally identified in the Area Plans.

Within some of these employment and mixed-use oriented centers and areas, limited portions have been planned as "core" or "transit development" areas. Medium to high density development intensities within these core and transit development areas may be planned to take advantage of transportation and other functional opportunities. Lower intensities are encouraged outside the core and transit development areas in the remaining portions of these employment and mixed-use centers. Transitions are planned between core and non-core areas. These transitions are created through the tapering down of development intensity and building heights, changes in use, and through landscaping, screening and buffering treatments.

The remainder of the county is composed of Suburban Neighborhoods and Low Density Residential Areas. In general, non-residential development is not encouraged within the Low Density Residential Areas; when appropriate, neighborhood-serving commercial services and institutional uses are encouraged within the Suburban Neighborhoods if compatibly scaled with the surrounding neighborhood. The Concept Map is included on Figure 2.

In summary, the Concept for Future Development sets forth a vision and direction for guiding Fairfax County's future growth and development. This Concept for Future Development generally describes the types of land uses that are appropriate throughout the county. It has been used in conjunction with the countywide objectives and policies contained in the adopted Policy Plan to provide a foundation and framework for the Area Planning process.



CONCEPT MAP **FIGURE 2**

CONCEPT FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT MAP

LOCATIONS OF MIXED-USE CENTERS

Urban Center
1. Tysons Corner

Suburban Centers
2. Centreville
3. Dulles (Route 28 Corridor)
4. Fairfax Center
5. Flint Hill
6. Lorton-South Route 1
7. Merrifield

Community Business Centers
8. Annandale
9. Baileys Crossroads
10. Beacon/Groveton
11. Hybla Valley/Gum Springs
12. Kingstowne
13. McLean
14. North Gateway
15. Penn Daw
16. Seven Corners
17. South County Center
18. Springfield
19. Woodlawn

Transit Station Areas
20. Dunn Loring
21. Franconia-Springfield
22. Herndon
23. Huntington
24. Innovation Center
25. Reston Town Center
26. Van Dorn
27. Vienna
28. West Falls Church
29. Wiehle-Reston East

LOCATIONS OF LARGE INSTITUTIONAL AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS

Industrial Areas
30. Beltway South
31. I-95 Corridor
32. Ravensworth

Large Institutional Land Areas
33. Fort Belvoir (Main Post and North Area)
34. George Mason University
35. Washington Dulles International Airport

LEGEND

- Tysons Corner Urban Center
- Suburban Center
- Community Business Center
- Transit Station Area
- Industrial Area
- Large Institutional Land Area
- Suburban Neighborhood
- Low Density Residential Area
- Major Road
- Metro Station

SUMMARY: LAND CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Refer to the Areawide and District Recommendations for guidance on specific areas.

Tysons Corner Urban Center:

Tysons Corner is a significant economic engine to the region. The vision for Tysons Corner includes a dynamic urban center marked by the socioeconomic diversity of residents and workers; a wide range of opportunities and activities; the quality of buildings, aesthetics, and open spaces; and connections and accessibility for all. Tysons Corner includes four transit-oriented development (TOD) areas surrounding four Metrorail stations.

- Elements of the framework for the future development of Tysons Corner include: encouraging transit-oriented development, improving the jobs/housing balance, providing diverse and affordable housing, incorporating community benefits, and creating excellence in the public realm.
- A strong implementation strategy should provide the flexibility, accountability, and resources necessary to achieve the vision for Tysons Corner.

Suburban Centers:

Suburban centers are employment centers located along major arterials. These areas are evolving to include mixed-use cores such as transit station areas and town centers that are more urban in character. The core areas are generally surrounded by transitional areas of lesser intensity.

- Encourage a complementary mix of office, retail and residential uses in a cohesive moderate to high-intensity setting.
- A grid of streets and well-designed pedestrian connectivity should be established in core areas. The transitional areas outside of the core should have connectivity to core area amenities. Similarly, connectivity should be provided between transitional area amenities and core areas.
- A balance of transportation and land use in core areas is important as suburban centers evolve to be less dependent on the personal vehicle as a result of transit accessibility.

Community Business Centers:

Historically older community-serving commercial areas that emerged along major roadways, Community Business Centers (CBCs) are areas where redevelopment should encourage a mix of uses focused around a core area of higher intensity, such as a town center or main street in a pedestrian-oriented setting. Transitions in intensity and compatible land uses should protect surrounding stable residential neighborhoods.

- Appropriate revitalization and selected redevelopment advance the goal of sustaining the economic vitality in older commercial centers and adjacent neighborhoods. Revitalization efforts should also seek reinvestment in these communities and aim to foster a sense of place. There may be a particular need to address aging infrastructure.
- CBC's should emphasize design that advances pedestrian amenities and circulation.
- Given limited transportation infrastructure, a balance of retail, residential and office uses should optimize the generally older road networks that provide access to CBCs. Where appropriate, a mix of uses is encouraged to create a more vibrant environment throughout the day.

Transit Station Areas:

These areas adjacent to Metrorail Stations are directly influenced by the presence of access points to the Metrorail system. Transit station areas promote a land use pattern that supports Metrorail by encouraging a mix of uses in a compact, pedestrian-friendly urban form within walking distance of the rail station. Within the region, Metrorail provide a vital public transportation choice that enhances accessibility and reduces the reliance upon single occupancy vehicle use. Transit Station Area boundaries are strongly shaped by the area's access characteristics and the relationship of the station to surrounding stable neighborhoods.

- Refer to Appendix 11 in the Land Use section of the Policy Plan for the sixteen principles for transit-oriented development in Fairfax County.
- Generally, Transit Station Areas constitute those lands within a primary and a secondary development area. The primary development area is approximately a 5 minute walk from the station platform. The secondary development area is approximately a 10 minute walk from the station platform.
- A balance of uses and implementation of design guidelines should be achieved to create desirable neighborhoods.

Industrial Areas:

The types of uses intended for industrial areas are generally regulated more strictly due to their anticipated impacts to adjacent areas. This category is not appropriate for residential uses and limits future office uses to those which are ancillary to industrial use.

- Industrial Areas should be located near major transportation corridors such as interstate highways, railways and airports which are capable of transporting a high volume of goods and contribute to overall regional accessibility. The direct accessibility to major transportation corridors will help ensure that industrial traffic will not be routed through neighborhoods.
- Development of non-industrial uses should be discouraged. Office use generally should be limited to those parcels which are specifically designated for office use in the Area Plans.
- Development near the edges of industrial areas should include effective buffering from surrounding uses. Substantial setbacks and/or berms may be necessary in addition to vegetative screening, particularly where these areas abut residential uses. Uses that generate a minimum level of noise, glare, odors or truck traffic are preferable in transition areas and edges.

Suburban Neighborhoods:

These areas contain a broad mix of allowable residential densities, styles, parks and open space and contain the county's established residential neighborhoods. Suburban neighborhoods are considered to be stable areas of little or no change. Where appropriate, supporting neighborhood-serving commercial services, public facilities, and institutional uses are encouraged provided that the proposed intensities and character are compatible with the surrounding area.

- Parks and recreation facilities should be distributed throughout suburban neighborhoods as needed to serve residents.
- Access and internal circulation for non-residential and higher density residential uses should be designed to prevent adverse traffic impacts on nearby lower-density residential uses. Reliance on the automobile should be diminished by encouraging the provision of pedestrian accessible community-serving retail and support uses.
- For development within or adjacent to suburban neighborhoods that propose either a significantly higher intensity or a change in land use, primary access should be from major or secondary roadways which do not traverse adjacent stable residential areas. Transit service, generally bus service, should be provided to those portions of the suburban neighborhoods that are most likely to generate substantial ridership.

Low Density Residential Areas

The primary purpose of Low Density Residential Areas is to ensure the preservation of environmental resources by limiting development primarily to low density, large lot residential and open space uses. The loss of natural habitat coupled with the vital role that portions of these areas serve in protecting water quality dictates that development in these areas be minimized. These are stable areas of little or no change.

- Low Density Residential Areas typically contain large lot single family detached housing and open space. They are generally located along the Potomac River and the Difficult Run and Occoquan watersheds. Policies emphasize the preservation of significant and sensitive natural resources, especially protection of the county's water resources.
- Institutional or other neighborhood serving uses should be of a compatible scale and intensity.
- Public facilities infrastructure is to be provided at an acceptable level of service without substantial negative impacts to the natural environment. Public facilities in low density residential neighborhoods should be limited to those which are required to be located in these areas. Public water and sanitary sewer service are generally not to be provided in these areas.

Large Institutional Land Areas:

Includes publicly-owned state or federal land holdings that are not subject to the normal county development review processes. The county should encourage state and federal agencies and regional authorities to develop or redevelop their holdings only when plans are coordinated with the county. The cumulative effect of institutional uses should be considered before additional institutional and governmental uses or expansion of existing uses is developed.

PURPOSE OF THE AREA PLANS

The four Area Plans contain detailed recommendations for land use, transportation, housing, the environment, heritage resources, public facilities and parks and recreation. These recommendations refine the guidance provided in the Policy Plan and were developed within the framework of the Concept for Future Development.

Each Area Plan is subdivided into Planning Districts, which, in turn, are subdivided into Community Planning Sectors, the smallest geographical components of the Plan. The Community Planning Sector text provides details on existing development and planned land use. For purposes of development review and other land use related decisions it is emphasized that the planning guidance for each Planning District is contained in the Area Plan text; on the Area Plan map; in the Policy Plan; and in the land use guidelines contained in the Concept for Future Development and Land Classification System.

The primary planning objectives in all Area Plans are to:

- Realize the objectives and policies of the Policy Plan in planning and development decisions;
- Utilize the Concept for Future Development as a guide to land use planning decisions when Plan amendments are considered and;
- Employ site-specific guidance to review and formulate recommendations for development requests in furtherance of the public health, safety and welfare as provided in the Code of Virginia.

GENERAL PLANNING AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

Land Use

The Policy Plan contains countywide objectives for land use. These are organized under four broad categories: land use pattern; land use intensity; pace of development; and land use compatibility. The Policy Plan also contains detailed appendices which include locational guidelines for multifamily residential development, shopping centers, child care facilities and guidelines for other land use related issues such as neighborhood redevelopment. These objectives, policies and guidelines are to be used in conjunction with all of the land use recommendations contained in the Area Plans and, therefore, generally are not repeated in the Area Plans.

The Area Plans and the Plan map in concert with the Policy Plan provide site-specific land use recommendations. The Area Plan text provides detailed recommendations for areas within Planning Districts and Community Planning Sectors. Sector locater maps, included in the Area Plans, show the general locations referred to in the detailed recommendations. When the Area Plan text does not reference a specific location, the Plan map shows the recommended land use. The Plan text and map complement one another; however, in the event of a discrepancy between the specific recommendation of the text and the map, the text takes precedence.

For some parcels of land, the Area Plan recommendation provides a baseline level of density or intensity and an option for more intense development or alternative use if certain conditions are met. Where such an option is provided, all of the specific conditions must be met before the option's baseline level of development may be considered. It is not the intent of the Plan to allow an

intermediate level of development based upon fulfillment of some of the specified conditions unless an intermediate level of development is specifically provided for. Further, fulfillment of the Plan conditions related to the option does not supercede requirements of the Criteria for Assignment of Appropriate Residential Development Density or the Criteria for Assignment of Appropriate Non-residential Development Intensity outlined in the Policy Plan.

Transportation

The Policy Plan contains countywide objectives for transportation, a Transportation Plan map, and appendices outlining functional classification systems for transit systems and roadways, as well as roadway right-of-way requirements.

Highways and Highway Improvements Affecting Each Planning District

The arterial and major collector roads affecting each of the Planning Districts are shown on the respective district-wide maps. When examining these maps, the following points should be recognized:

- Most Plan elements represent expressions of need and county policy with regard to these needs. Specific and explicit guidance is incorporated in the adopted Policy Plan requiring additional analyses of individual recommendations as a prerequisite for construction (see Transportation Objective 1 Policy b).

- With few exceptions, detailed engineering design has not been accomplished, and final alignments and design features have not been established. Specific design features, such as the location of medians and turning lanes, and specific interchange configurations are determined in the design and design public hearing processes, and are not addressed in the Area Plans.

- As with design issues, many operational issues such as signalization and signage, parking, and cut-through traffic are addressed through other existing processes, and as such are not addressed in the Area Plans.

The corridor-level studies should emphasize consideration of environmental limitations, community stability and the cumulative effect of other transportation network improvements in the area. In allocating and accommodating existing and forecast travel demand generated within the area served by the transportation corridor under study, they may identify alternate and preferred routes and/or modes of travel within the area generally served by the transportation corridor under study and recommend improvements to the transportation network over and above or that differ from those identified on the adopted countywide Transportation Plan map.

Arterial roads, even if not specifically designated for widening on the adopted countywide Transportation Plan map, should be subject to corridor studies when and if severe transportation deficiencies are identified within the area served by these roads. If widening of any such roads beyond the lanes indicated on the Plan map is recommended as a result of such studies, a Plan amendment would be required.

Right-of-Way Requirements

In an effort to preserve land for roadway improvements, to decrease delays in land acquisition, and to obtain land before land values are associated with developed properties, requirements are set forth regarding right-of-way limits for roadways as shown on Table 1. This table represents a modification of the right-of-way limits shown in Appendix 2 of the Transportation element of the Policy Plan.

The rights-of-way specified therein should be obtained through the development approval process (e.g. rezoning, special exception, site plan, etc.) as applications are submitted to the county. The provision of these rights-of-way will allow for future road improvements to be constructed with adequate ancillary features such as turning lanes, trails, and buffering, while minimizing impacts on properties which are subsequently developed. It should be stressed, however, that the ultimate roadway designs will recognize available right-of-way to the extent possible; the intent of these requirements is not to impose a rigid right-of-way swath through areas or mature neighborhoods, but rather to secure additional right-of-way needed for road improvements as development or redevelopment occurs.

Freeways

Right-of-way needs along freeway facilities can be variable and extensive. The right-of-way may need to accommodate HOV treatments and rail transit as well as roadway configurations which are difficult to standardize such as collector-distributer systems. The right-of-way requirements for freeway facilities should be based upon the associated studies for each improvement. These studies could include the detailed corridor analyses, which are referred to in Transportation Objective 1, for the Shirley Highway, I-66 and Dulles Airport Access Road Corridors as well as other environmental impact studies, feasibility studies and design efforts.

Arterials

The right-of-way requirements for arterial roadways based upon the number of lanes and the type of edge treatment provided are detailed in Transportation Appendix 2 of the Policy Plan. The number of lanes refers to the designation on the Transportation Plan. Edge treatment is also more fully discussed in the Policy Plan Transportation Appendix. It is anticipated that curb-and-gutter sections will be provided throughout the county, except in some Low Density Residential Areas and in Suburban Neighborhoods, where shoulder sections may be considered as an option on an individual roadway basis.

Collectors and Locals

The rights-of-way for collector and local streets should be determined by the application of the Public Facilities Manual or other appropriate ordinances, unless proffers or other specific development conditions have been established for the affected road.

Interchanges

Interchange locations have been identified on the Transportation Plan map and are also shown as Plan elements on the district-wide map. The provision of an interchange has both land use and transportation planning implications. In terms of land use, caution must be exercised in reviewing development proposals in the immediate interchange area due to right-of-way implications. In terms of transportation planning, care must be taken to

TABLE 1

Right-of-Way Requirements (in Feet) for Roads Shown on Transportation Plan Where No Plans Exist [1,6]

	Edge Treatment	
Lanes	Curb-and-Gutter	Shoulder
2 lane	--	90
4 lane	112	158
6 lane	136	182
8 lane	160	206

Add XX feet of right-of-way for each of the following special circumstances:

	XX
Tandem Left Turn Lanes at Major [2] Intersections on All Legs	12
Right Turn Lanes at Major [2] Intersections on All Approaches	12
Enhanced Median Treatments [3]	4
Service Drives [4]	92
Parking Lanes [5]	9

Add 15 feet in ancillary easements.

Add supplemental right-of-way with transitions to avoid special features (e.g., historic properties, parks, cemeteries, wetlands, landfills, sewage and water treatment facilities, existing buildings, etc.) and/or to improve horizontal alignment. Add 40 feet radius at intersections dedicated to the chord of the radius curve.

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1 Where design plans consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and providing all anticipated future turn lane requirements are developed to a sufficient level of detail and approval, right-of-way and easement dedication requirements should be based upon them.

2 Within 500 feet of intersections of arterial roads with collectors or with other arterials unless specifically determined by a traffic study to not be needed.

3 Commercial revitalization areas or other special areas where landscaping or special design features are desired.

4 Primary Highways, except where waived.

5 On side(s) of road where residences front on the road or service drive. Does not apply to shoulder sections.

6 Where a substitute trail is to be provided in easements within the development site, the right-of-way requirements can be reduced in an amount to be determined by VDOT and DEM; however, adequate right-of-way must be retained to meet VDOT clear zone requirements.

accommodate revised access patterns in the immediate area, since the interchange ramps cause grade changes and weaving/merging traffic conflicts. Because of these interchange features, access to properties in close proximity to the intersection is often affected by interchange construction.

The amount of land needed for interchanges, and the extent to which access must be re-oriented, varies with the actual design of the interchange. Many planned interchanges have not been designed and their specific configurations are unknown. In these instances, every effort should be made to accommodate the potential access modifications associated with a future design. Toward this end, typical dimensions of potential ramps and acceleration/deceleration lanes have been established based on typical interchange design.

The interchanges shown on the sector maps identify the roadway segments of the intersecting streets where access must be restricted to accommodate these potential designs based on the typical dimensions. The restriction of access as used herein is intended to guide the manner in which access is provided to parcels in close proximity to the interchange. Any development or redevelopment of property affected by such access restrictions should recognize the need to re-orient access in anticipation of the future interchange. The design of such sites should be consistent with and oriented to the provision of alternate access. Such access may take the form of an alternative street or street system (e.g., reverse frontage), the provision of service drives or similar parallel frontage roads, or some combination thereof. In those instances where interchange designs have been approved or are in active stages of development, the maps contained in this section do not show these restricted access segments. Where an interchange project is in an active design stage, or where such designs have been approved, access in the intersection area should be planned to be consistent with such designs.

Transit and High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Facilities

Several major public transportation features are incorporated into the countywide Transportation Plan. In general, these features may be grouped either as corridor recommendations, or as specific supporting facility recommendations. They are shown on the district-wide and sector maps. These recommendations are briefly summarized below.

Corridor Recommendations

The countywide Transportation element of the Plan recognizes the need for significant public transportation improvements in many specific corridors. The Plan also recognizes, however, that the final determination of the most appropriate mode of public transportation should be based on a detailed corridor-level analysis of the various possible alternatives. Thus, the Transportation Plan identifies several "Enhanced Public Transportation Corridors" on the map, and incorporates a policy requiring the detailed analysis of alternative transportation modes within those specific corridors (see Transportation Objective 2, Policy b).

Similarly, the countywide Plan identifies several potential High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) facilities, and indicates that the ultimate determination of HOV feasibility and performance should occur after more detailed corridor-level studies are completed.

Supporting Facility Recommendations

Regardless of the mode of public transportation chosen in a specific corridor, supporting facilities such as commuter park-and-ride lots must be identified and located. Such sites could serve as parking areas for HOV or express bus collection, or as rail stations, or perhaps for

both functions as public transportation ridership increases over time. The Plan locates these sites in order that actions can be taken to preserve their availability, since the supply of potential sites is rapidly decreasing as the county continues to develop.

The countywide Transportation Plan identifies approximate locations for these facilities. The District Plans provide an opportunity to apply this countywide guidance to specific areas, so that properties affected by such recommendations can be appropriately developed, preserved, or protected in the development approval process. In some cases, the District Plans might contain alternative sites for these facilities in order to preserve flexibility until a final determination of site location is made.

The countywide Transportation Plan map contains several different symbols representing different types of supporting facilities. These are briefly discussed below:

T = *Transit Transfer Center (no parking*). These facilities consist primarily of bus loading areas and passenger waiting areas at locations where multiple transit routes and/or modes may be reasonably expected. They have good access both to nearby arterials and freeways in order to minimize transit travel times. They could be free-standing, individual facilities or could easily be integrated with the design of a building. No automobile parking lots would be provided at these locations, consistent with their intended function as transfer centers.

R = *Rail Station*. A rail station as defined on the countywide Plan map represents a location where a rail rapid transit station could be located, assuming the selection of rail as the preferred mode in the corridor (see previous discussion). For similar reasons, it should not be assumed that such stations would be extensions of the WMATA Metro system, as other rail modes may also be considered. Rail stations may or may not be accompanied by automobile parking areas, depending on the nature of the area. The rail station symbol is accompanied by the Commuter Parking (P) symbol for those sites where such parking appears to be possible.

P = *Commuter Parking Lot*. Commuter parking lots are shown on the countywide Plan Map along major highway corridors where sufficient land area having access to the highway may be available. These lots could function either as traditional commuter park-and-ride lots associated with HOV and/or express bus service, or as parking for a rail station as appropriate. The size of such lots may vary; however, these lots should generally be no smaller than 500 spaces in order to maximize their efficiency as transit collection and staging areas. These facilities must have good access to nearby arterials and freeways in order to be effective.

VRE = *Virginia Railway Express.* Virginia Railway Express Stations are identified along the Norfolk Southern and CSX rail lines where commuter rail service is provided. VRE station parking areas are generally surface lots accommodating between 200 and 800 vehicles.

Service Drives

Service drives are required by the county's Zoning Ordinance along Primary Highways. The requirement supports the county's transportation objective to maximize the efficiency of roadway facilities. Primary Highways are arterials which primarily accommodate through travel movements. However, direct access to and from these highways occurs frequently. In

general, the provision of many access points reduces the efficiency and capacity of an arterial road. This reduction is caused by the interruptions in smooth traffic flow due to turning movements into and out of the driveway entrances. Service drives provide for the separation of the access and travel functions along roadways. When correctly planned and built, their use allows the adjacent parallel roadway to operate more efficiently, with increased capacity and improved safety. At the same time, access to adjacent properties is provided and oriented to controlled access points. Service drives also allow for purely local interparcel trips to be made without disrupting the through traffic on the adjacent arterial. On the sector maps, which describe the transportation recommendations, the required application of service drives along Primary Highways is noted.

It is recognized that service drives are not without disadvantages. Operational problems are created where the service drive intersects side streets because of inadequate intersection separation. Moreover, service drives are often incomplete along a given road segment, and numerous entrances often exist between the service drive and the arterial. Both of these situations reduce the effectiveness of the service drives.

For these reasons, service drives should be minimized and alternatives to service drives should be provided whenever possible. The Zoning Ordinance allows for service drives to be waived if alternative interparcel access is available, or if other compelling circumstances are present, and such waivers are often granted. However, service drives are utilized extensively in many of the older commercial highway corridors in the county, such as Route 7 between Seven Corners and Baileys Crossroads, Route 236 through Annandale, and Route 1 between Alexandria and Fort Belvoir. The system of service drives in these commercial areas is characterized by incomplete connections which return the local traffic to the arterial mainline. The segments which are built are not necessarily in the state highway system and therefore do not meet the state's standards for construction and maintenance. Large potholes, parked vehicles, and barricades exist on many of these privately maintained service drives. It is important to complete the service drives along the Primary Highways and upgrade the substandard segments so they can be incorporated into the state's maintenance program.

Cases occur where the widening of the primary highway eliminates the service drives which preceded the widening. The Plan should anticipate these situations by providing for alternatives to the service drive, such as consolidation of entrances and provision of interparcel access through travelways, or by other means. This feature is addressed by Objective 9b of the Transportation element of the Policy Plan. Where other alternative measures may be available, they are identified in the Area Plans.

Site Access

In many instances, the Area Plans identify the primary orientation of access to a specific site or group of sites. Such recommendations are shown by arrow symbols on the sector and/or sub-sector maps. The purpose of these recommendations is to identify the primary access orientation of the area(s) in question. The symbols indicate the direction and approximate location of the primary access point(s) to the site. Where such access is identified in the Area Plans, the specific details of providing this access may be resolved at the rezoning or site plan stage of development review. Where such access orientation recommendations exist, the absence of an arrow symbol in a specific direction or to a specific road should be construed as a recommendation that access not be provided in that direction, or that any such access be secondary in nature.

Level of Service

Application of transportation levels of service is intended to be a mechanism for timing development in this Plan. For areas where the appropriate level of service (LOS) is not specified in the Area Plan, it is anticipated that a minimum LOS will be determined through future analyses. These analyses should be performed in a subsequent phase of the Planning Horizons process. The Planning Commission in conjunction with the staff should determine the best way to proceed with an appropriate process for analysis and recommended amendments to the Plan. Lower levels of service may be assigned to development centers and cores, where the Plan proposes that growth will be concentrated. Higher levels of service may be recommended in outlying areas, where the spread of development is inimical to an efficient transportation system. Applicants for new development should be required to demonstrate that their proposals will meet the level of service designated for their area. Upon adoption by the Board, these sector-specific levels of service for transportation should be inserted into the Area Plans.

In the interim, development applications will be reviewed based on the "non-degradation" and "offsetting impact" policies discussed below:

"Non-degradation" Policy: The "non-degradation" policy requires applicants to ensure that the transportation system affected by the application performs no worse after the project is developed than it would otherwise. This approach is primarily a performance based approach which requires applicants to provide improvements or other guarantees to maintain certain performance levels. These levels would be measured by levels of service or critical movement volumes or other measures as deemed appropriate by the Department of Transportation.

"Offsetting Impact" Policy: The "offsetting impact" policy requires applicants to contribute to transportation improvements. The contributions would be proportional to the traffic generated by the project and the amount of transportation capacity required to accommodate that traffic, presumably based on lane-miles. However, this policy would not ensure that the localized performance of the transportation system would be maintained. Instead, it recognizes that in some instances, it may be impossible for performance to be maintained or for one individual applicant to provide the transportation improvements which may be needed.

In general, the "non-degradation" policy would be pursued in reviewing development applications, with the "offsetting impact" policy employed in those instances where the "non-degradation" policy is not appropriate.

Housing

The Housing element of the Policy Plan contains objectives for promoting affordable housing, conserving stable neighborhoods, encouraging rehabilitation and increasing the supply of housing available to special populations.

Each Planning District within the Area Plans includes a chart which designates existing and proposed sites for assisted housing. Each district plan also includes recommendations for the preservation and conservation of stable residential areas and identifies areas where new housing development, including multi-family housing, may be appropriate. In general, higher density housing is planned to be located within or in proximity to mixed-use centers as envisioned in the Concept for Future Development.

Environment

The Environmental element of the Policy Plan provides guidance for achieving a balance between the need to protect the environment and planning for the orderly development and redevelopment of the county. This element contains objectives for preserving and improving air and water quality; minimizing noise and light pollution; minimizing exposure to environmental hazards including unstable soils, flood impact areas and pipeline and electrical transmission lines; preserving environmental resources; and protecting and enhancing the Environmental Quality Corridor (EQC) System.

Environmental objectives and policies of the Policy Plan apply throughout Fairfax County, in conjunction with the environmental policies contained in the Area Plans. Therefore, the Area Plans contain only limited additional guidance.

Text addressing areas with specialized environmental concerns, including the Difficult Run Watershed, the Occoquan Basin and the Dulles Airport Noise Impact Area is presented below. Text concerning the Difficult Run watershed is also presented in the Area II Plan.

Difficult Run Watershed

The Difficult Run Environmental Quality Corridor has been classified as a critical environmental area by the State of Virginia. Floodplains and shallow bedrock depth on valley slopes constrain development. The area contains soils with relatively good bearing capacity but the potential for severe erodibility.

Part of the Difficult Run watershed was the subject of an environmental and land use study, the Difficult Run Headwaters Land Use Study, April 1978, prepared by the Office of Comprehensive Planning, currently known as the Department of Planning and Zoning. The study area was analyzed for its ability to accept various residential densities and simultaneously maintain high-quality environmental standards. The primary environmental objectives for this area are designed to protect this fragile environment from the impacts of urbanization such as increased stormwater runoff, increased nonpoint source pollution loadings, stream channel enlargement, loss of high-quality wildlife habitats, increased number of septic fields and possible soil and groundwater contamination from septic effluent.

A detailed environmental inventory identified geologic, topographic, hydrologic, vegetative, soil, wildlife, air quality, noise and open space factors. This information was used to prepare a land use design that would minimize the impacts of development in a region that is not planned for sanitary sewer service and serves as a green space between Fairfax, Vienna, Chantilly and Reston.

An Environmental Quality Corridor (EQC) was outlined using a U.S. Forest Services water quality filter strip equation, areas of steep slopes, U.S. Geological Survey designated 100-year floodplain and existing parkland. The result is an environmentally sensitive plan with land use boundaries determined by the environmental carrying capacity of the land. The environmental factors, together with other factors such as existing and committed development in the area and site and road design controls, are reflected on the Plan map for this area.

Areas with long narrow ridge lines, thin overburden, highly erodible soils, steep topography, high quality vegetation and poor access are planned for very low density (less than one unit per five acres) uses. One unit per two to five acres is proposed for areas adjacent to streams where topography is relatively steep, overburden moderately thick (10-50 feet) and

soils moderately erodible. Areas on plateaus or ridge lines where thick overburden (50 feet or more), gently sloping topography, good septic suitability soils, mixed vegetation and varied access points are capable of accommodating somewhat higher density development are planned for .5-1 dwelling unit per acre.

Factors other than environmental considerations were also evaluated before arriving at the land use recommendations shown on the Plan map. Since adoption of the Plan recommendations, there has been some development which limits the options for planning this sensitive headwaters areas only for very low densities. Existing and committed development is used in Plan recommendations in many areas of the Difficult Run headwaters to obtain compatible densities. New development should also be compatible with the established development pattern in its vicinity with similar lot sizes, provided these lot sizes would not be detrimental to environmental amenities.

Owners of large tracts are encouraged to plan and develop these tracts as an entity. Also, owners of small parcels adjacent to large parcels should consolidate them with the larger tracts in order to create a more integrated development. Such development could produce more imaginative designs, preserve a variety of habitats, and provide recreational facilities and a variety of architectural styles.

Heritage Resources

The Heritage Resources element of the Policy Plan provides guidance in achieving a balance between physical and economic growth and preservation of the county's prehistoric and historic heritage resources. Objectives and policies focus on three general issues: identification of the resource base; protection and preservation of significant heritage resources; and promotion of community awareness and involvement.

The Area Plans identify specific heritage resources including historic, architectural and archaeological resources. Each District Plan contains a chart and map of the resources derived from the county's Inventory of Historic Sites. In some sectors, historic overlay districts are identified and special land use guidelines related to these districts are cited under the Recommendations section.

Public Facilities

The Public Facilities element of the Policy Plan provides guidance for an effective and efficient public facilities system. Public facilities are defined as those facilities required to support governmental services and functions or public utility companies. The Policy Plan contains countywide objectives for establishing a facility network which is responsive to the county's ability to pay, community expectations, the public health, safety and general welfare and neighborhood and land use impacts. Additional objectives relate to education, libraries, public safety and utilities and services.

In the Area Plans, existing public facilities are identified on a chart for each Planning District. Where a need for additional public facilities has been identified, these facilities are also included within the District Plan overview. Site-specific recommendations are included within the Community Planning Sector recommendations.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation element of the Policy Plan contains countywide objectives for the provision of a high quality, diverse park and recreation system. As defined by service areas, the county should plan, develop and maintain four primary types of parks: Neighborhood, Community, District and Countywide. These are augmented by regional, state and federal parks. The parks classification system and standards for establishment of parks and recreation facilities is contained in the Parks and Recreation Appendices of the Policy Plan.

The Area Plans identify existing and proposed parks within the Parks Classification System. A summary chart of existing public parks is included in the overview for each Planning District. Specific recommendations related to existing and proposed parks are contained in each Community Planning Sector.

Trails

Fairfax County has a comprehensive countywide trails system which supports pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian usage and provides both transportation and recreational benefits. The overall trails system is planned to ultimately connect major activity centers and key destination points to establish desirable recreational corridors. The countywide trails plan map is published at the scale of 1 inch to 4,000 feet (1”:4000’) and is depicted on Figure 2 in the Transportation component of the Policy Plan.

The trails system is being constructed primarily through site plan requirements associated with development activity, as part of new road improvement projects, or with county funds. This process dictates that the ultimate network be constructed segment-by-segment and that the public be aware of trail requirements and planned routes. The 1”:4000’ Trails Plan Map is available from the Department of Planning and Zoning and should be consulted for specific recommendations on trail location and type.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

FINDING A SPECIFIC PROPERTY IN THE PLAN TEXT

The Comprehensive Plan for Fairfax County is divided into four planning areas. See Figure 5 for the countywide map showing these four planning areas. Each planning area is divided into Planning Districts and each Planning District is subdivided into Community Planning Sectors. A map depicting each district and its sectors is found at the beginning of each Area Plan overview. In addition, sector level locator maps which correspond to land use recommendations in the text are located within the Community Planning Sectors.

In order to locate that portion of the Comprehensive Plan which pertains to a specific property, it is necessary to:

1. Determine the planning area in which the property is located.

    a. This may be accomplished by looking at Figure 3. The four planning areas are cited in Roman numerals. The heavy dotted line forms the planning district boundaries, with the planning districts indicated by name.

    b. Identify the planning area or areas in which the property is located.

    Note: Due to the nature of the planning area boundaries, it may be necessary to refer to more than one area map to determine in which planning area the property is located.

2. Find the planning district in which the property is located.

3. Determine in which community planning sector the specific property is located by referring to the district map. Once the appropriate sector is known, turn to that sector in the text.

4. If the property is located within that portion of the sector map that is shaded, this indicates that it is part of a special area to which you are referred.

5. The information in the community planning sector is organized into two sections:

    a. Character: a brief description of existing land use; and

    b. Recommendations: guidance for the future development of the sector. Specific uses, ranges of residential density or land use intensity, as well as possible alternative or optional uses, are presented for certain tracts of land within the sector.

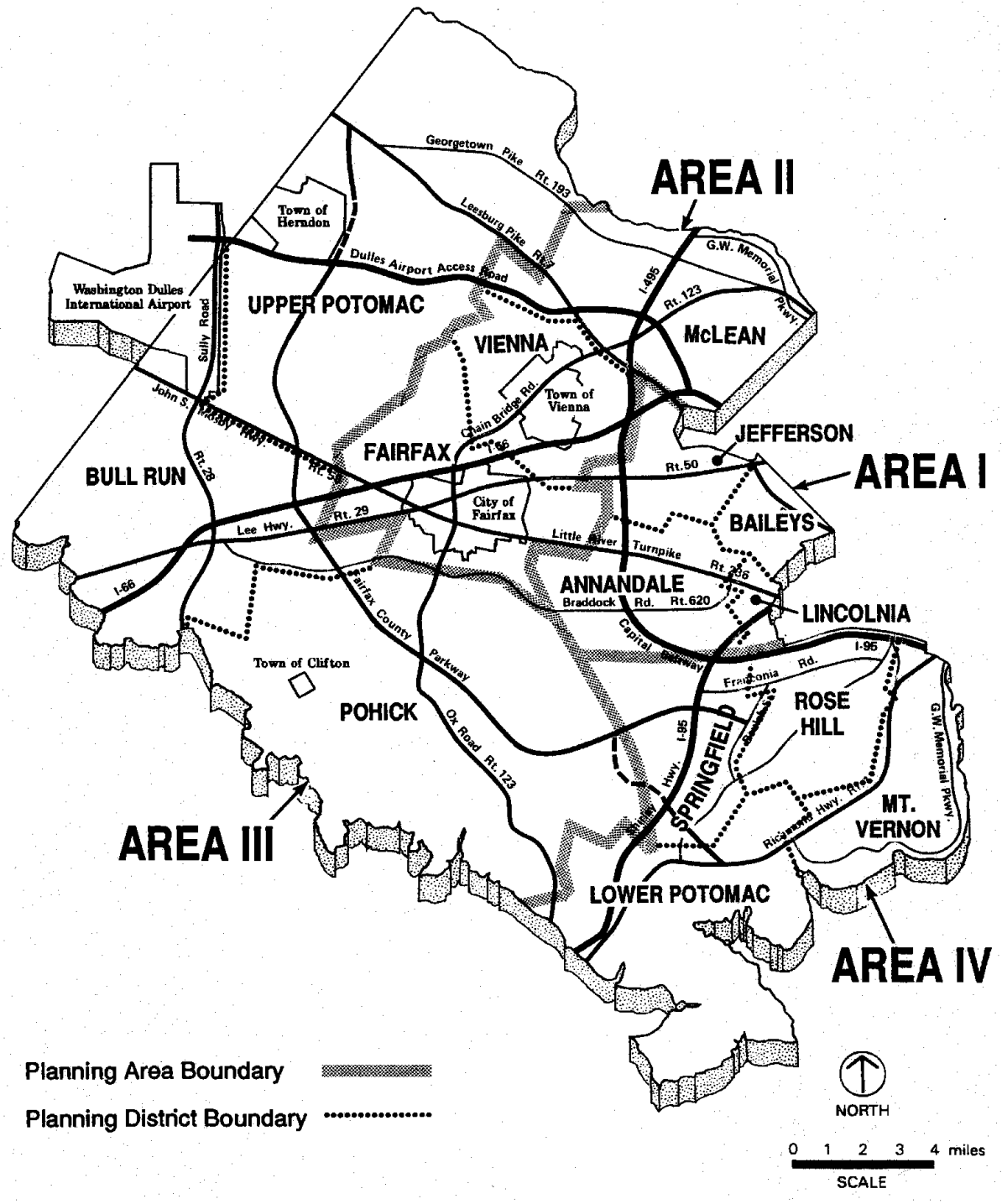
6. If no recommendation is stated in either the sector or the appropriate special area of the text for the property in question, then consult the Plan map.

FINDING A SPECIFIC PROPERTY ON THE PLAN MAP

The Comprehensive Plan includes color-coded maps for each of the four planning areas. The colors correspond to particular land use categories as noted in the legend on the Plan map. Properties can be easily located on this map by using street references or the tax map grid square system. The tax map grids are shown as an overlay on the Plan map and relate to the countywide grid location system. Grids are denoted by a hyphenated number, such as 42-4.

PLAN MAP AND TEXT RELATIONSHIP

The Plan text and Comprehensive Plan map complement one another. Often the Plan text gives detailed recommendations which are illustrated generally on the Plan map. In the event of a discrepancy between the specific recommendations of the text and the Plan map, the text takes precedence.



PLANNING AREAS AND DISTRICTS **FIGURE 3**