

RECOMMENDATIONS

AREA PLANS

The plan has been developed in response to citizen preferences, public policy guidelines, economic realities, and legitimate private sector concerns and intersects. A broad, generalized, land use pattern does emerge which serves as the context for the more detailed land use and functional recommendations.

New compatible residential infill and the preservation of existing stable neighborhoods are the major planning policies for the eastern part of the County—Planning Areas I, II, and IV. In the less developed Area III, west of Difficult Run in the Upper Potomac Planning District and South Run in the Pohick Planning District, the residential pattern changes dramatically. Stable neighborhoods are still preserved, but in the western part of the County, apart from planned development centers, the dense residential and commercial development that characterizes the closer-in areas does not appear. Also, many western County stable areas such as Great Falls include large tracts of undeveloped land and areas of environmental conservation.

Growth centers, generally referred to as planned development centers, are strategically located throughout the County and are designed to house the increased population which is not absorbed by infill of stable areas. In the eastern part of the County, these planned development centers are large undeveloped areas usually enclosed by existing surrounding development, such as the Tysons Corner quadrangle. In the west, the land designated for planned development centers is by and large presently undeveloped with substantial areas nearby which are planned for environmental conservation and very low-density residential. Reston is already developing as a planned development center and by 1990 is expected to have a population of 75,000.

By 1990, roughly 100,000 more people will be employed in Fairfax County. Nonetheless, the region's core will continue to be the dominant employment location for Fairfax County residents. Major planned industrial development, especially in the western portions of the county, locates future basic employment activity where it will have less impact on the congested eastern parts of the County. This location will encourage reverse commuting in the opposite direction of existing rush-hour traffic and will tend to intercept and tap the labor force in the Routes 7, 50, I-66, and I-395/I-95 corridors. Major regional commercial centers are located near major transportation resources, planned development centers, and relatively high-density stable areas.

Mass transit improvements and new highway construction are recommended to serve the population increase. Radial roads, which are often planned to be widened and provided with new intersections and service roads, are supplemented by new and improved circumferential and cross-County roads such as Route 28. In the highly developed eastern part of Fairfax County, Areas II and IV, rapid rail stations are located and selectively accompanied by high densities in their immediate vicinities. Throughout the entire County, a heavy reliance has been placed upon the use of bus transit.

Land Use Planning Objectives

The growth and land use pattern planned for Fairfax County to 1990 is guided by six key objectives supplemented by major functional recommendations. The significance of each varies in different parts of the County, but taken together, they produce the broad development pattern described earlier. These concepts are:

- general land use classifications;
- preservation of existing neighborhoods;

- growth of planned development centers;
- implementation of environmental protection and preservation programs;
- development of economic growth areas; and
- creation of a responsive transportation network.

Subsequent amendments to the Comprehensive Plan will further address the achievement of these objectives through the time phasing of development.

General Land Use Classifications

The Comprehensive Plan, by incorporating the four area plans, contains detailed land use evaluations and recommendations. Identification of land areas into stable, complex, and option areas shapes the major policy framework of the plans.

All infill shall be of a type and density which is compatible with the affected area. All buffering measures between different uses and densities shall consist of preserving, maintaining, and utilizing natural vegetation, particularly trees, as buffers to the maximum extent physically possible and whatever other measures are necessary.

Stable Areas

Stable areas cover most of the County where existing residential and commercial development make infill with compatible land uses an appropriate planning solution. The recognition that an area is stable does not mean a policy of inaction. Actions such as infill density control, buffer requirements, and public facility provision must be taken to insure that this stability is maintained.

Complex Areas

Complex areas are those faced with many land use problems at once, where commercial or industrial development pushes against residential sections, or where pressure for high-density development threatens an environmentally sensitive area or would require major new public facilities. The Plan establishes policy guidelines and make significant recommendations. Decisions in most complex areas must be made soon, before it is too late for choosing. Complex area development must provide for effective and suitable traditional uses within the complex area as it relates to surrounding stable communities.

Option Areas

Option areas are those where relatively little development has taken place. A range of choices for future uses of the land is available but decisions are less urgent than in complex areas. Option areas make up the remainder of the developable land after stable and complex areas have been delineated. The Plan examines available alternatives and make specific land use policy recommendations in option areas.

Preservation of Existing Neighborhoods

The eastern part of Fairfax County, roughly the area east of Route 123 and Difficult Run, is largely developed, and a policy of protecting and enhancing existing stable neighborhoods is a prime objective in Area I, II, and IV plans. In these areas, infill development, which is usually residential, is normally of a compatible type and density. In Area III where most of the vacant and undeveloped land is located, stable neighborhoods include areas of much lower density and open space. This conservation land is classified as stable, with areas such as the western Pohick with its five- and ten-acre estates included in this classification. In stable areas, the Plan encourages buffering between potentially conflicting land uses, reduction of through-traffic on neighborhood streets, the con-

tainment of commercial expansion, and the protection of environmentally valued resources.

Planned Development Centers

The planned development center, a concept that was successfully pioneered in Reston, is a means of clustering and concentrating growth in order to achieve a balance between new development and protection of the environment. It offers a mixture of housing types and densities, rather than the usual low-density sprawl, and encourages a coordinated mixture of land uses including open space, public facilities, and commercial development. The concept encourages the expansion of job opportunities and less reliance on the automobile for long-distance commuting, thus reducing noise and air pollution, and contributing to the quality of living.

Large undeveloped areas in the eastern part of the County, such as the Chiles and Lehigh tracts, the Fairfax Center Area and the area near Tysons Corner, are often treated as potential planned development centers with a mixture of land uses at relatively high densities. Development centers in the western part of the County consist of the major ones at Reston/Herndon and Centreville and less extensive developments at Chantilly and Burke. However, it is estimated that the residential stable infill in Area II outside of development centers will absorb much of the projected population growth prior to 1990, since the planned development centers, with the exception of Reston, will be in the early stages of development.

Planned Development Housing

Whereas a planned development center required hundreds and even thousands of acres, planned development housing (PDH) is a county goal that can be accomplished within a comparatively small area. In PDH zoning, just as in the larger planned development centers, construction is clustered so as to leave greater open space than is possible with conventional single-family development. Further, a mix of housing types is possible.

Environmental Preservation

Environmental protection and preservation is important throughout the County. In eastern Fairfax County, much of the significant land has already been developed. Stream valleys such as Cameron Run, Accotink Creek, Mason Neck, and Pimmit Run are to be preserved either through private conservation and/or public actions.

In the western part of Fairfax County, sensitive environmental areas such as the Potomac and Occoquan shorelines, the Difficult Run stream valley, and large parts of the Pohick Planning District are potentially threatened by inappropriate development.

The Plan uses the concept of environmental quality corridors (EQCs) as a way of coordinating some major objectives of environmental planning. The EQCs represent and relate areas which form a significant environmental pattern. Principally, the EQCs are lineal open space areas comprised of a number of natural and cultural resource features. Streams, their floodplains, wetlands, and public parks form the core of the system. Prime wildlife habitats, historic features, rights of way, and citizen-identified environmental resources are additional components which may not necessarily coincide with the lineal, stream-based pattern. The EQCs are designed first and foremost to protect sensitive environmental features from harmful degradation, thus preserving these amenities, but the system of EQCs also functions in the overall land use plan as a network of natural buffer areas of limited development which serve to

define and space more developed communities. Where appropriate, they may provide recreational opportunities, though care must be taken not to conflict with the main environmental protection function of the corridor system.

Economic Growth Centers

Areas of employment growth are located throughout the County in areas with access to available labor and a good existing, or potential, transportation system. They are usually located near population centers like Reston and prime interchanges and transportation nodes as at Tysons Corner and Dulles. Rail and automobile corridors such as Burke and the I-95/I-395 corridor are also key areas for this kind of development. The I-95/I-395 corridor, Dulles Airport, and Reston vicinity will provide the areas of greatest potential economic growth, although to realize this potential, the transportation deficiencies of the Dulles area must be overcome. One of the key concepts in the location of these centers is to encourage work-trip movement away from the congested eastern parts of Fairfax and to reduce travel times and trip lengths for commuter work trips.

To provide for the needs of planned population growth and to complement existing regional commercial development, six new or expanded regional-scale centers are recommended for Fairfax County: Reston, Fairfax Center Area, Centreville, Springfield Mall, Tysons Corner, and possibly Hybla Valley. The last three are expansions of existing centers. The timing of these regional shop-

ping centers will depend on a number of factors such as the location and timing of new housing developments, transportation improvements, and the adequate provision of public facilities. All will have good accessibility to the market areas which they will primarily serve.

Transportation

The proposed transportation network is designed to improve existing roads and mass transit, and to provide acceptable service for stable infill development, planned development centers, and economic growth areas. Potential air pollution problems are a factor in assessing development density proposals, new highway alignments, and consideration of alternative transportation modes; e.g., rapid rail transit. The Plan moves to solve transportation needs generated by the population increase with four major approaches:

- Radial roads to Washington and the highly developed eastern part of the County; (e.g., Routes 7 and 50) are improved or widened for improved transit operations.
- Circumferential roads, in addition to I-495, are proposed to be constructed or improved. Principal primary circumferential routes shown on the Plan are I-495 and Routes 123 and 28. Complementing these are additional circumferential highway improvements, including the Springfield Bypass route.
- Secondary roads are improved to provide safety and a level of convenience to the popu-

lation they serve, while preserving neighborhood, scenic, and environmental features.

- Mass transit as an alternative to the automobile is given strong emphasis in the plan. New bus, rapid rail, and commuter rail proposals are made with special attention given bus transit in the next 10 years. In the period 1975-1985, the provision of rapid rail transit will be limited to the more developed eastern portions of the County, although allowance has been made for possible extension after 1985 in the western part of Fairfax County to Reston and Centreville.

Population Forecasts

The Plan is based upon a forecasted population of 686,000 in 1990. This forecast will be revised on an annual basis as changing demographic factors affect the County's growth rate. More importantly, as the Metropolitan Growth Policy Program develops annual growth policy statements, the forecasts will be revised to reflect new policies. When the changes affect other aspects of the plan, such changes will be made in the course of the plan update.

Purpose of Area Plans

Area plans have a target year of 1990. The policies which guide them are consistent with the adopted interim development and redevelopment policies and with the policies and objectives developed under other components of the planning process, especially on the countywide level.

The countywide and area plans have been developed in tandem. Planning has proceeded from both the overall countywide and small-area perspectives simultaneously, thus resulting in a healthy tension as the general countywide concepts have pressed against the localized and detailed requirements of the area plans. The area plans were developed within the guidelines set by the *Countywide Alternative* document and were, in turn, used as the foundation for this countywide Plan document.

The area plans, which reflect existing conditions and address specific issues in each area, and which are responsive to the needs and desires articulated by the citizens of each area, generally present detailed recommendations. In some cases, however, the plans highlight alternative choices available to citizens and public officials. In these situations, the plans generally discuss the alternatives and then point the way toward selection of the most desirable alternative.

The area plans do not fully specify, nor should they, the County's complete program of action for the next 15 years. They do present a 15-year picture of the desirable future, which provides a framework for thinking about the future as the decisions which shape it are made.

The area plans will be reviewed on an annual basis. As this occurs, the revised area plans will reflect the changes in the countywide, and other, plans made in response to changing conditions.

Geographical Organization of Area Plans

Prior to PLUS, the County was organized for planning purposes into fourteen planning districts. Most of these were covered by comprehensive plans. The plans, however, were out of date or were becoming so; and they addressed different issues in a variety of ways over a period of years without ever coming to grips in a coordinated manner with the problems facing the County's local areas.

The planning districts, usually, with only a slight modification to follow subcensus tract boundaries, were combined for the PLUS effort into four planning areas to limit the areas being replanned to a manageable number and to simplify the coordination of local area planning. Portions of the County in each of the planning areas are indicated in the accompanying planning districts and areas map.

