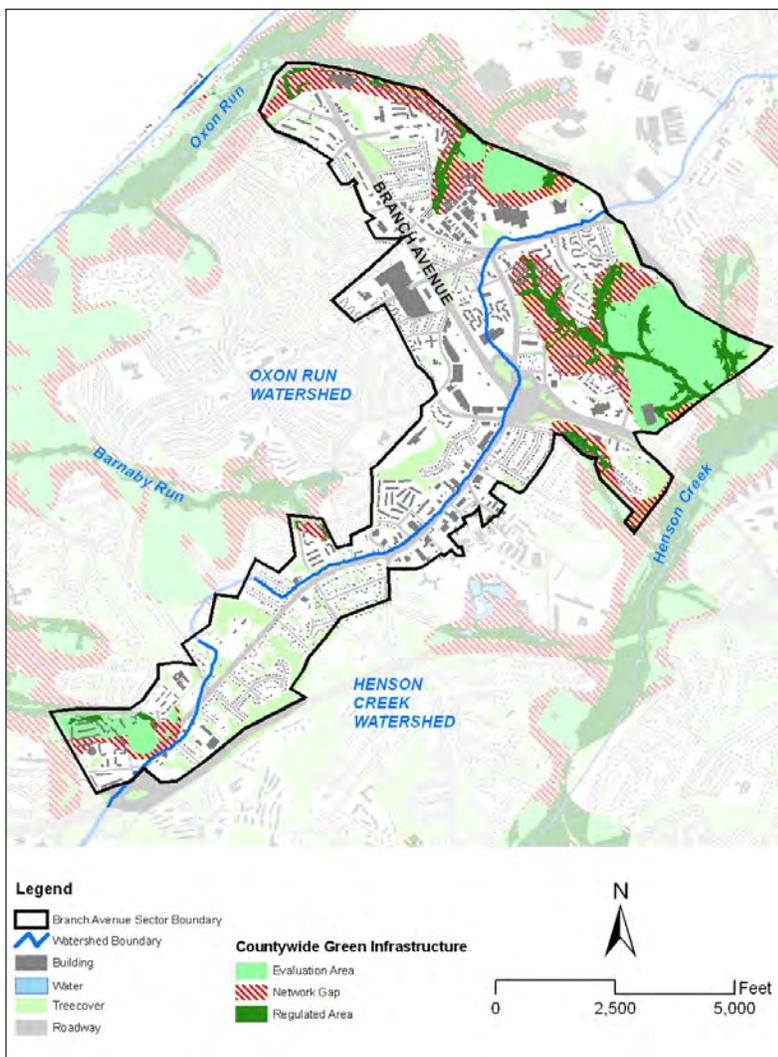


should be given consideration during the development of adjacent properties for impacts to its natural and aesthetic qualities and resources. The Suitland Parkway is owned and operated by the National Park Service. Part parkway and part greenway, the parkway is located between the Washington, D.C., line, Southern Avenue, and MD 4 (Pennsylvania Avenue) in Prince George’s County. In addition, this parkway is planned and partially designed for a multiuse trail that will connect Washington, D.C., and Prince George’s County. It will link to several existing and planned trails in both jurisdictions and form part of the planned regional trails network. Development plans in the sector plan area should consider the impact on the viewshed from the parkway and its trails. Design details should address buffers, where appropriate, to maintain the integrity of this greenway.)

The 2004 *Approved Countywide Green Infrastructure Plan* provided a comprehensive vision for conserving significant environmental ecosystems in Prince George’s County. It includes a map of interconnected sensitive habitats of countywide significance. With this network as a guide, specific recommendations for preserving and strengthening the local green infrastructure system have been developed for the Branch Avenue Corridor Sector Plan and secondary market area. (See Map 7 below.)

Map 7: Existing Green Infrastructure Plan



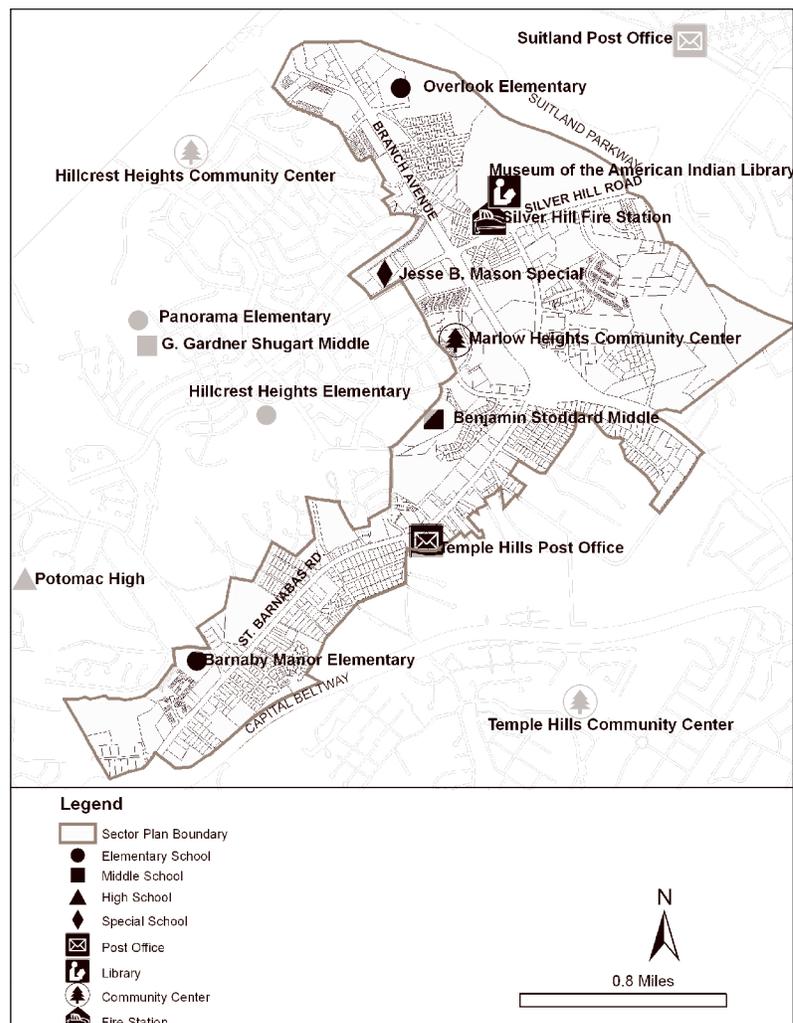
The designated green infrastructure network is divided into three environmental assessment categories: regulated areas, evaluation areas, and network gaps. Regulated areas contain environmentally sensitive features such as streams, wetlands, buffers, the 100-year floodplain, and steep slopes that are currently regulated (i.e., protected) during the land development process. The regulated environmentally sensitive features include areas near the Capital Beltway; around the Barnaby Run Stream; around Henson Creek; and behind Lassie Avenue. Evaluation areas contain environmentally sensitive features such as interior forests, colonial waterbird nesting sites, and unique habitats that are not currently regulated (i.e., protected) during the development review process. Network gaps comprise areas that are critical to the connection of regulated and evaluation areas and are targeted for restoration in order to support the overall function and connectivity of the green infrastructure network. These network gaps are found in the sector area between portions of Henson Creek and Lassie Avenue, as well as in two additional areas of Henson Creek. These three categories of green infrastructure provide an important

framework for defining ways to preserve and enhance environmental quality in the sector area. In addition to these main elements of the green infrastructure network, special conservation areas (SCAs) of countywide significance were designated. The only SCA of countywide significance influencing the sector plan, the Suitland Bog, is adjacent to the study area. The Suitland Bog and Natural Area include approximately 60 acres of unique wetland habitat, which is a small remnant of the *Magnolia virginiana* bogs that were once more extensive in the region. Of these 30 bogs known to have existed in the Washington metropolitan area, only the Suitland Bog remains. The site is owned by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and is located inside the Beltway. Suitland Bog is known for its rare plant life and a variety of carnivorous plants, as well as rare and threatened plants.

The three most important impacts that could affect Suitland Bog are direct encroachment causing habitat loss, sedimentation, and alteration of surface and/or groundwater flow patterns.¹ Activities within the Suitland Bog watershed should maintain ground water flow to the bog, limit surface water flooding of the bog, and reduce or eliminate sediment reaching the bog.

¹ Management Strategies for Critical Areas—Suitland Bog, June 1984, Natural Resource Division, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Map 8: Existing Public Facilities



Public Facilities

Public facilities are an integral part of a community and good facilities and services are key to the quality of life. As part of the planning process, the adequacy of public schools, fire and rescue facilities, and libraries to provide services to the existing and future population were assessed. **Map 8 on the facing page** shows the location of the facilities serving the sector plan area, many of which are outside the area, including the District IV police station located in the Eastover Shopping Center to the south on Indian Head Highway at the District of Columbia boundary line.

There are two elementary schools, one middle school, and a special education center within the sector plan area. Most of the schools that serve students living within the sector plan area are located outside the project area. **Table 4** shows 2007 enrollment and capacity numbers; **Table 5** shows 2013 projected enrollment numbers. **Table 6** presents information on the physical conditions of these school facilities.

Table 4: Branch Avenue Corridor Sector Plan Schools Capacity and Enrollment				
School Name	Address	Enrollment (7/07)	Capacity	Percent Capacity
Barnaby Manor Elementary School*	2411 Owens Road	509	689	73.9
Hillcrest Heights Elementary School	4305 22nd Place	461	566	81.4
Overlook Elementary School*	3298 Curtis Drive	317	544	58.3
Panorama Elementary School	2002 Callaway Street	678	779	87.0
Benjamin Stoddert Middle School*	2501 Olson Street	770	711	108.3
G. Gardner Shugart Middle School	2000 Calloway Street	616	668	92.2
Potomac High School	5211 Boydell Avenue	1,372	1,271	107.9
Jesse B. Mason Regional Special Education Center*	2720 Iverson Street	35	96	36.5
*Schools within the sector plan area				
Source: Prince George’s County Public Schools				

Table 5: 2013 Projected Branch Avenue Corridor Sector Plan Schools Capacity and Enrollment

School Name	2013 Projected Enrollment	2013 Projected Capacity	Projected Percent Capacity	2007-2013 Enrollment Change	2013 Available Seats
Barnaby Manor Elementary School*	525	689	76.2	16	164
Hillcrest Heights Elementary School	513	566	90.6	52	53
Overlook Elementary School*	360	544	66.2	43	184
Panorama Elementary School	1004	779	128.9	326	-225
Benjamin Stoddert Middle School*	503	711	70.7	-267	208
G. Gardner Shugart Middle School	395	668	59.1	-221	273
Potomac High School	898	1,871	48.0	-474	973
Jesse B. Mason Regional Special Education Center*	33	96	34.4	-2	63
*Schools within the sector plan area					
Source: Prince George's County Public Schools					

Silver Hill Company 29 is the only fire station in the sector area and is scheduled for improvement or relocation. The existing station lacks office space, it is not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and its mechanical, electrical, and ventilation systems are inadequate.

The sector plan area is currently served by the Hillcrest Heights and Oxon Hill branches of the Prince George's County Memorial Library System. The Hillcrest Heights Branch Library is located just outside the Branch Avenue Corridor sector plan area on Iverson Street. This older facility is small with limited parking. It has limited electrical capacity and lacks the modern space necessary to accommodate increasing demand for computing and internet services. The community has also expressed concerns about the location of the Hillcrest Heights library and its proximity to a perceived crime "hotspot" along Iverson Street.

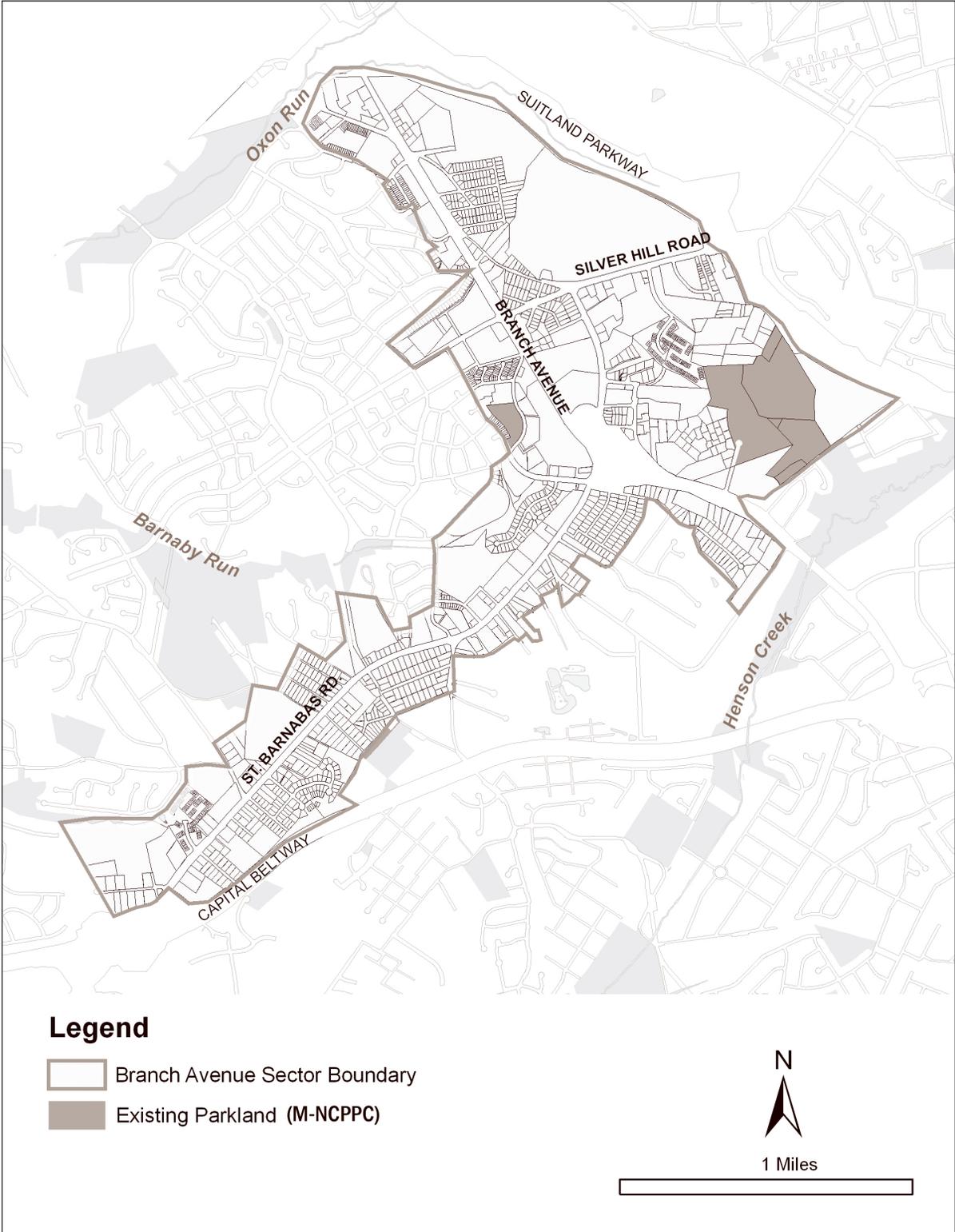
Citizens in the community workshops that were held for this plan and Smithsonian Institution facility staff noted the frequency of power outages in the sector plan area. These outages can be very disruptive to the operations of the Smithsonian facility (which houses rare collections that necessitate special environmental controls) and to activities of the residents and businesses. The lack of power in the evening also creates increased opportunities for crime. It appears that the area may lack sufficient electrical power to support the needs of the area's residents and businesses. It is important that adequate power be supplied to the sector plan area to provide for current and future needs.

Table 6: Branch Avenue Corridor Sector Plan School Facilities Scores					
School Name	Building Size	Site Acreage	Year Built	Major Renovations	2001 3D/International Facilities Condition Score**
Barnaby Manor Elementary School*	56,550	9.3	1964	1994, 2000	129
Hillcrest Heights Elementary School	70,800	18.5	1952	1999	182
Overlook Elementary School*	47,969	9	1969		74
Panorama Elementary School	89,712	10	1966	2002	NR
Benjamin Stoddert Middle School*	101,862	13.3	1957	1963, 1995	191
G. Gardner Shugart Middle School	100,018	14.8	1965		37
Potomac High School	210,130	45.8	1965	1968, 1978, 1981, 2003, 2006, 2007	61
Jesse B. Mason Regional Special Education Center*	32,174	6.1	1963	1965, 1981	162
*Schools within the sector plan area					
Source: Prince George's County Public Schools, 3D/International					
NR = Not Ranked					

** In 2001, 3D/International conducted a facilities study for PGCPs. Schools were ranked 1 (worst) to 193 (best) for the ability of the facility to support the educational mission.

The challenge, therefore, is how to balance future development with the necessary public facilities in locations that efficiently serve the existing and future population. Many of the current facilities, particularly the Hillcrest Heights Branch Library and the Silver Hill Fire Station, are older and not built to adequately accommodate today's service needs. In addition, a new urban school model must be used to plan for new schools in the sector plan area because of the limited land available for new schools in this mostly developed area. It is also important to consider future locations for the provision of more modern public facilities in the new development along the Branch Avenue Corridor, particularly in the centers that are being proposed in this plan, to help create strong mixed-use centers for the community.

Map 9: Existing Parkland



Parks and Recreation

The sector plan area is served by a network of parks that consists primarily of the three stream valley parks abutting the corridor. (See Map 9 on the facing page.) To the south is the Henson Creek Stream Valley Park, which contains a 5.5-mile hiker/biker/equestrian trail running from Temple Hill Road to Oxon Hill Road with several park facilities along the trail, including Henson Creek Neighborhood Park, Bock Road Archery Range, Tucker Road Community Center and Ice Rink, and Henson Creek Golf Course. There are plans to connect the trail all the way to the Branch Avenue Metro Station and to the passive park that is located south of Silver Hill Road. The Barnaby Run stream valley park is north of St. Barnabas Road and includes the North Barnaby Park and Aquatic Facility. The Branch Avenue Neighborhood Playground is also located within the sector plan area. It is recommended that this site be incorporated into new development along the corridor and that appropriate use of the site be determined, including an assessment as to whether additional property is needed to expand this 1.4-acre undeveloped site.

The Branch Avenue Corridor falls within the Heights Master Plan, which was approved and adopted in 2000. An analysis was done as part of this plan to determine the additional park acreage that would be needed to serve the population forecast in the Heights land use plan. The Heights plan identified five areas for future parkland, which comprise almost 200 acres of additional parkland. Since the adoption of the Heights plan, two recommended areas have been acquired for parkland, including approximately 100 acres located south of Suitland Parkway and Silver Hill Road and a nine-acre parcel that is located north of Crisfield Drive. Approximately 29 acres of the 100-acre site were acquired by the National Park Service as an extension of the Suitland Parkway.

The analysis completed for this sector plan determined that M-NCPPC currently owns 576± acres of parkland within the Heights planning area. Additionally, the Board of Education owns 472± acres of property, of which 157± acres will serve as public open space. Within the Branch Avenue Corridor, M-NCPPC owns 154 acres of parkland, and the Board of Education owns 37± acres, of which 12± acres (or one-third) can be counted as parkland. This analysis will help to create an inventory of existing parkland and to assess what park and recreational facilities are needed for the future residential development proposed in new mixed-use centers along the corridor.

M-NCPPC recognizes the need to acquire additional parkland and to develop additional recreational facilities within and outside the sector area. Marlow Heights Community Center and Hillcrest Heights Community Center are both slated for renovations and/or expansions in the next five years to meet increased demand for programmed recreational activities. Development of a variety of park and recreational facilities based on community needs and interests will be essential for the redevelopment of the sector plan area into a more urban environment. The use of urban plazas to count as open space (as defined by the conventional formula for determining parks and open space requirements) should be explored as infill/redevelopment occurs. The development of an improved pedestrian network to serve the sector plan area will necessitate both completion of the trail network in the stream valley trails as well as a new linear park along Branch Avenue.

Quality of Life

In reviewing the workshop participants' assessment of their community, a number of community strengths were discussed. Residents value the residential neighborhoods that many of them have occupied for a long time. Strong local civic associations exist in the area, and they meet on a monthly basis to discuss improvement of residents' quality of life. On the other hand, no organized merchants or business associations are working toward common concerns. Long-time leaders are often overworked because they are continually relied upon to represent their members and neighborhoods in many activities. Many voiced the desire to have more community members actively involved in addressing the many needs of the community. Achieving the goal of a revitalized community will depend upon actions that would keep a blend of the existing community with new development and social activity. All seemed to value the close proximity of shopping facilities; however, the quality and types of local shops has declined significantly over the years. This decline was particularly evident in the limited options for eating out in the Branch Avenue Corridor sector plan area.

Fast food is dominant in this area. A revitalized community must include a mix of uses that will contribute to creating a healthy community. An outreach program that includes incentives to attract restaurants and food stores to broaden the availability of healthy food for citizens is critical. In addition, increased opportunities for exercise should be part of the plans for an improved corridor with an attractive and safe pedestrian network; wider sidewalks, safe road crossings, roadway traffic-calming devices, enhanced pedestrian lighting, and total connectivity throughout are important. New development must also be oriented to the pedestrian, not to vehicles, and must include convenient community facilities that promote healthy activities as well. The corridor should present a positive image, one that will be inviting and safe with a choice of not only shops and facilities but numerous gathering places for all to socialize and enjoy a high quality of life.

Crime and public safety were raised by the residents and business owners alike as most significant concerns. The community identified areas that seemed particularly unsafe due to their isolation and poor appearance (which often result in unwanted gatherings and anti-social behavior): the area around the Naylor Road Metro Station, including a nearby concentration of liquor establishments, a condominium, and a nightclub; Iverson Street between Branch Avenue and 23rd Parkway; some of the apartments behind the Marlow

Heights shopping center; and some areas along St. Barnabas Road. Crime statistics from the Police Department supported these community observations.

During the Branch Avenue Corridor sector plan process, volunteers from the workshops, including leaders from local community organizations, worked with Planning Department staff to form a public safety work group that included police and business owners to develop a plan to make the area safer. The group

Iverson Mall Garage is underutilized, poses a security risk for patrons, and presents opportunities for illegal activities.





determined that an intensive and collaborative process focusing on a broad range of items is necessary to adequately address public safety concerns. Wider and more intensive community involvement is critical to the success of these efforts. The consensus was a need for both public and private investment and the active involvement of county agencies in dealing with crime and public safety issues.



In addition to the physical condition of properties, the physical design of the commercial areas often creates opportunities for crime. These include numerous large, isolated, and poorly lit parking lots such as the Iverson Mall shopping center parking garage and the parking lot behind Pep Boys on St. Barnabas Road. These were specifically pointed out by residents as attracting gatherings that lead to unsafe and criminal activity. These areas and others lack the natural surveillance opportunities and legitimate activity that make it more difficult for criminals to operate.



Tenants have often devised quick-fix solutions that are unattractive and defy the proper functioning of space, such as the new barriers used by Iverson Mall to control access to its parking lot on Branch Avenue. Others use different devices to protect their properties. An example is the use of wrought-iron bars on windows and doors. These unconventional protective devices and practices portray the image of an unsafe environment and are not inviting or encouraging to newcomers, though perhaps effective in deterring some crime.

Much of the discussion at the work group's meetings focused on what the community can do and what the public sector, particularly the police, must do. On the public side, new regulations might be necessary to address property maintenance standards, development design, and land uses that can contribute to creating unsafe communities. It was also concluded that although police enforcement is a critical part of the solution, the community also has a major role to play in making the community uninviting for criminal activities. Showing that the community cares—by keeping properties well maintained and well lit and reporting suspicious activities—is essential to creating an uninviting environment for criminals. This will require a community outreach effort aimed at encouraging a large collaborative effort to foster an anti-crime message.

TOP: Barbed-wire fencing, uncoordinated signage, and lack of maintenance contribute to a decline in the business environment.
CENTER: Unused, neglected parking lots are havens for illegal activities
BOTTOM: Tall, barbed-wire fencing detracts from an area's positive aesthetic value.

Historic Preservation

Historic communities and buildings provide an appealing “sense of place” that is often absent in newer areas and buildings. The sector plan area contains two designated historic properties—County Historic Site 76A-004, the St. Barnabas Episcopal Church and Cemetery at 5203 St. Barnabas Road, and a National Register Site, the Suitland Parkway, County Historic Site 76A-022. A historic site is defined as a historic resource that has been evaluated using the criteria of the Historic Preservation Ordinance of Prince George’s County and found to meet criteria of architectural and historical significance. These sites are protected by the Historic Preservation Ordinance. The underlying concept of the county’s historic preservation program is that preserving the community’s heritage involves a commitment from private property owners as well as the public sector. The St. Barnabas Episcopal Church was built in 1851 as a chapel for St. John’s Episcopal Church at Broad Creek to replace the original 1830 mission chapel. The historic site is an important landmark along St. Barnabas Road. The buildings, the cemetery, and open space provide a visual oasis for the community along this heavily traveled roadway.

The National Register of Historic Places is the federal government’s list of the nation’s cultural resources that are significant at the national, state or local level. Listing in the National Register is achieved through a federally legislated nomination process. Listing provides recognition and gives protection if federal or state funding or licensing would affect the property. Because the county’s criteria for historic site designation are based on the National Register criteria, any property listed in the National Register is recognized as a historic site of Prince George’s County. The Suitland Parkway was constructed in 1943 to link Joint Base Andrews to Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, D.C., to improve transportation for defense industry employees, and provide a route for diplomatic processions. This park corridor serves as a major transportation route within a scenic environment, with attractive bridges, trails, culverts, landscape architectural elements, and natural topographic features. The viewshed of this important park corridor should be preserved as development occurs in the sector plan area, particularly along Silver Hill Road where more intensive development is recommended. In addition, this sector plan is not intended to alter the development guidelines included in the Heights Master Plan for the preservation, protection and enhancement of these two historic sites.

A third historic site within the sector plan area was designated as a historic site through the 2000 Heights Master Plan—the Ridgeway-Hagen House (PG 76A-1). At the time, this property was privately owned; the house, constructed circa 1830, was found to be a good example of early 19th century vernacular architecture. It had been abandoned, and was in a seriously deteriorated condition. The Department of Parks and Recreation was able to purchase the property for additional parkland; however, the condition of the home has deteriorated so significantly that it is beyond rehabilitation. It is expected the forthcoming Historic Site and Districts Plan Amendment will reconsider this building’s remaining significance.



County Historic
Site 76A-004,
the St. Barnabas
Episcopal Church.

Map 10: Plan Concept

