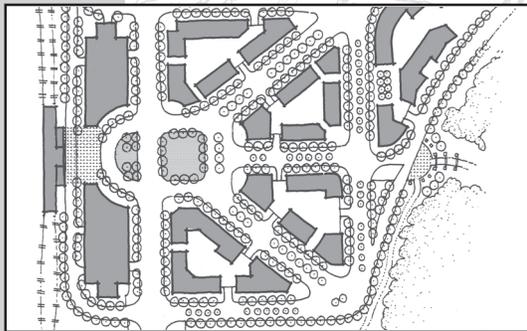
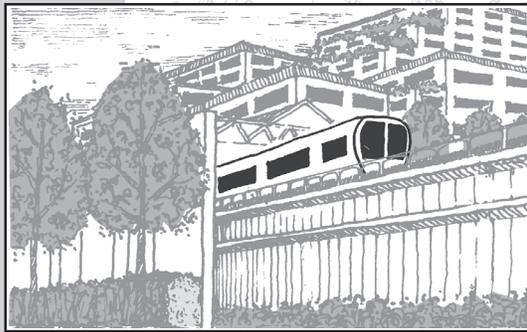


# Introduction and Background





## How To Use This Document

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This document is organized into three key sections: (1) the Introduction and Background section, (2) the Plan section, and (3) the Sectional Map Amendment section. Taken together, the three key sections comprehensively address the purpose of the plan, the public participation process, an analysis of existing conditions and issues, and the plan's recommendations, design policies, guidelines, zoning changes, development standards and permitted uses. The Plan section and the Sectional Map Amendment section are most likely to be frequently used by property owners, developers, builders and plan reviewers. Others may choose to focus on the document as a whole.

The Plan section is organized in two parts: (1) *Sector-Wide Vision and Recommendations* and (2) *Subarea Design Policies and Guidelines*. The part *Sector-Wide Vision and Recommendations* outlines objectives, issues and recommendations for the entire sector as they relate to functional plan elements such as: land use, transportation and circulation, environment, cultural heritage, recreation and open space, public facilities and economics and market. This part provides a broad understanding of the issues, policy objectives and recommendations proposed throughout the plan.

Specific concepts, issues, recommendations, design policies and guidelines pertaining to each of the six Subareas are found in the part *Subarea Design Policies and Guidelines*. The *Subarea Design Policies and Guidelines* provide framework for the *Development District Standards and Uses Permitted List* found in the Sectional Map Amendment section of this document. The *Development District Standards and Uses Permitted List* are only applied to those areas within the Development District Overlay Zone (DDOZ).

In all cases, the *Development District Standards and Uses Permitted List* are mandatory requirements. While *Subarea Design Policies and Guidelines* are not mandatory, they ex-

press the plan's intent and should be applied to the extent possible during the development review process.

The Sectional Map Amendment section describes the zoning tools that implement the land use plan. It is essential that property owners, developers, builders, and plan reviewers refer to this section to understand zoning changes and their associated applications. Development plans submitted within the DDOZ are required to find conformance with the applicable *Development District Standards and Uses Permitted List* and the intent of the *Subarea Design Policies and Guidelines*.

The use of the word "shall" in this text indicates that the action proposed reflects an ordinance (i.e., clearly mandated by either State or County law) such as the Development District Standards or reflects County policy regarding land development or other planning considerations. The use of the word "should," while not necessarily legally binding, reflects a positive statement or action of the Planning Board that these proposals will be followed in all instances where there are no extraordinary circumstances which would mitigate against it.

## PURPOSE OF THE SECTOR PLAN

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In 1990, the Prince George's County District Council approved the *Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* (SMA). The master plan and SMA recommended mixed-used development around the transit station and, in anticipation of a Transit District Development Plan for the area, retained all existing zones. However, specific boundaries for a sector plan were never established because the proposed Greenbelt Transit District Development Plan was never undertaken.

In recent years, the local communities and municipalities suggested that a planning effort for this area was necessary and should include neighborhoods beyond the one-half mile walking distance traditionally used to define the impact area for a rapid rail transit facility. This extended boundary would make it possible to first, address development, revitalization and land use issues related to transit such as community linkages and, second, provide tools to enhance the overall image of the Sector Plan Area.

In January 1996, the Prince George's County Planning Board initiated a two-phase planning effort for the Greenbelt Metro Area. The *Greenbelt Metro Area Study* (GMAS) was initiated as a preliminary phase to determine study area boundaries, identify stakeholders and issues, form a focus group to involve the community and municipalities, outline a vision, determine planning objectives and recommend appropriate planning techniques and approaches. The GMAS, completed in January 1998, developed the basic strategies for land use planning near the Greenbelt Metrorail and MARC rail station. (See Figure 1.)

The GMAS process concluded that a sector plan and SMA would be the most effective tool for carrying out the planning strategies proposed by this study. These strategies were endorsed by the Prince George's County Planning Board and the District Council. (See *Public Participation Program* in the Background chapter.)

The development of this sector plan and SMA was intended as an open and inclusive process, beginning with the GMAS in 1996, continuing with the Planning Board's public forum in May 1998 and concluding with planning workshops and plan development review meetings through the expansion of the original GMAS focus group into a larger sector planning group.

Sector planning objectives:

- **Involve the Community and Stakeholders**

The sector plan process includes many community residents and stakeholders and provides them with many opportunities for participation. The approved sector plan's Public Participation Program includes representatives from 3 municipalities — Berwyn Heights, College Park and Greenbelt — and a 23-member sector planning group consisting of area residents, property owners, civic, business and community association representatives and developers.

- **Define A Common Vision**

The sector planning group defines a common vision for the area as encouraging quality, integrated, multimodal and transit-oriented development while preserving existing vital features such as environmental and cultural assets.

- **Address Area-Wide Issues**

To achieve this common vision, the sector plan identifies area-wide planning issues and develops appropriate recommendations.

- **Manage Potential Changes**

The sector plan process defines community interests and stakeholders' goals and recommends policies, strategies

and actions to guide changes in this area. The Sector Plan Area is part of a dynamic urban center in northern Prince George's County. Unguided growth in this part of the County could adversely affect the surrounding communities by increasing congestion, harming fragile, cultural and natural assets, and encouraging uncoordinated piecemeal development.

#### ■ Recommend Appropriate Land Uses

The sector plan recommends a variety of land uses. The land use elements recommend basic policies which frame the SMA proposals (comprehensive rezoning proposal). These policies include major public facility investments in land development and options to encourage private investment in quality land development.

#### ■ Guide Local Planning Policies and Decision Making

The sector plan considers local planning policies to ensure that local decision-makers are guided by the sector plan recommendations.

The Greenbelt Metro Area Sector Plan is an official policy guide for both short- and long-range change, development and revitalization in the Sector Plan Area. This document will guide the Sector Plan Area development for 20 to 30 years through the 6-year cycle of plan review, realizing that the vision and goals can be approached in stages dependent on market activity. The corresponding SMA of the official Zoning Map, may require periodic updates to the standards to remain consistent with the Land Use Concept and ensure orderly and coordinated development of this area.

The intent of the sector plan is to develop a visionary approach to building or rebuilding communities around or near the Greenbelt station. The plan is grounded in practicality to ensure smooth implementation of the plan. A flexible framework of policy, design standards and guidelines for guiding Sector Plan Area change will allow the plan to be more effective in fluctuating market conditions.

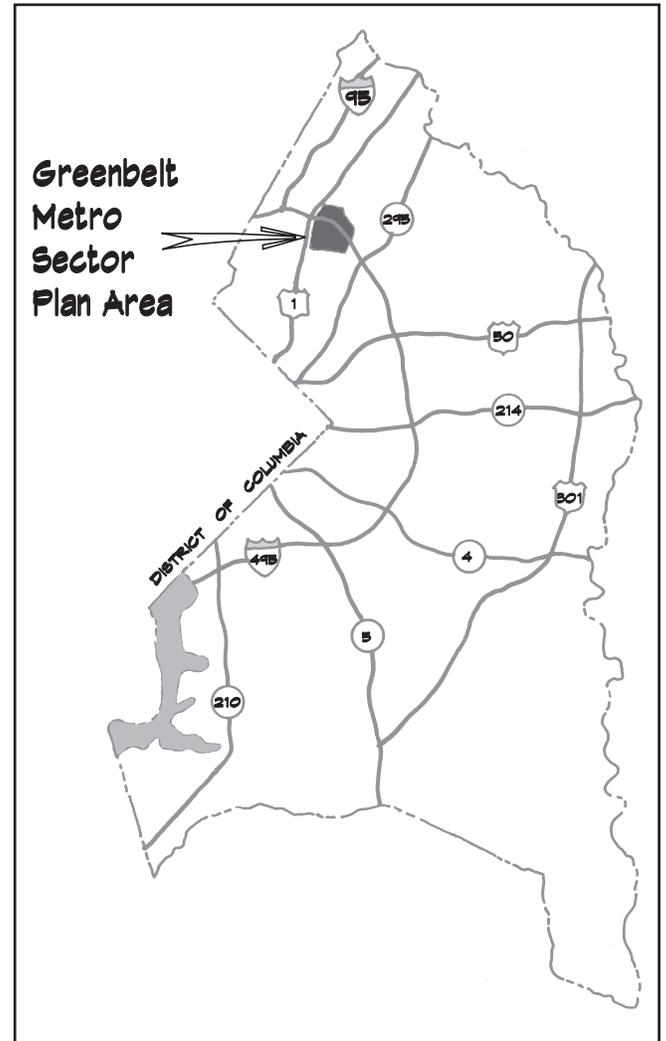


Figure 1. The Greenbelt Metro Sector Plan Area is located in the northern portion of the County.

## BACKGROUND

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### EXISTING PLANS, GROWTH POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Several plans, policies and programs frame this sector plan and provide a basis for small-area planning.

**The Prince George's County Interim General Plan**—In November 2000 the County Council passed CB-97-2000, which adopted the first Biennial Growth Policy Plan (BGPP) as the Interim General Plan (IGP).

The IGP grew out of a two-year review of Countywide growth management opportunities, challenges and issues, undertaken by Commission 2000. This broadly based, 53-member advisory panel of citizens, municipalities, business and property owners and other stakeholders was established by the Council to recommend goals and policies to guide the County's growth and development over the next 20 to 25 years. Commission 2000's final report to the Council became the foundation for the first BGPP and subsequently for the IGP.

Both plans represent a comprehensive Smart Growth initiative that uses a system of growth Tiers, Centers and Corridors to manage growth and to implement County growth and development policies. Both plans also place emphasis on attracting growth and encouraging redevelopment at Metrorail stations. This approach—**transit-oriented development (TOD) planning**—seeks to capitalize on existing public investment in transportation infrastructure and other public facilities. Encouraging growth at these nodes reduces the need for new public facilities (particularly road, transit, school and public safety facilities) that is created by more, lower-density development in "greenfield" areas of the County. By concentrating new development—particularly additional housing—at transit facilities, TOD planning also increases transit usage and reduces auto-dependency, particularly for the peak-hour commute.

The IGP took note of the work underway on this sector plan and recommended that the General Plan either consider or incorporate the sector plan recommendations for Greenbelt. Commission 2000 recommended that the Greenbelt Metrorail Station area be classified as a **regional growth policy center**.

Regional centers are sites for development that combine commercial, retail, office and institutional land uses that are intended to attract workers, customers and clients from all parts of the County and possibly other areas of the metropolitan area. The IGP also recommends that, if the needed public facilities and infrastructure—particularly schools—are available or can be cost-effectively provided, higher density residential development be located at regional centers. Concentrating higher density, higher quality residential development also encourages more citizens to live near where they shop and work and to encourage regionally marketed retailers and employers to create more higher-valued added employment in the County.

Greenbelt is particularly important to implementation of the growth management policies. It also has considerable potential to attract the transit-oriented development envisioned for Prince George's County by the IGP. It is a multimodal transportation facility, with potentially good access to the Beltway as well as rail transit (Metrorail), commuter rail (MARC), and regional (Metrobus) and County bus service (THE BUS). It is also located in the part of the County that the IGP has designated as the Developed Tier. This part of the County is envisioned for major redevelopment and revitalization, concentrated at growth centers such as Greenbelt that are also transit stations.

**1989 Langley Park-College Park- Greenbelt Approved Master Plan**—This master plan recommended mixed-use development for the “core area” surrounding the Greenbelt station and the industrial land south of the station

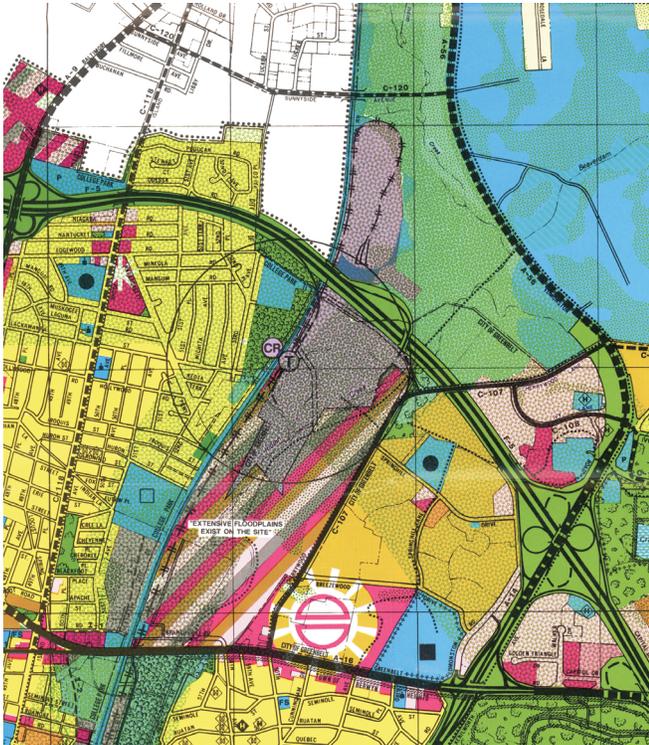


Figure 2. The 1989 Approved Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt land use plan recommended mixed-use development for the area adjacent to the Greenbelt Metro Station.

site, to include retail, office, residential and employment uses. The master plan estimated the development buildout potential in this area to be two million square feet of mixed-use development in the immediate vicinity of the station site once the northern Metro Green Line was completed.

The recommendation was based primarily on the capacity of the 1988 existing and proposed road network in the general area. The master plan suggested that the total figure could increase to 2.5 million square feet if access from the Beltway to the station site was enhanced, the subject of the recently concluded (September 1999) Greenbelt/Beltway Access Enhancement Study. (See Transportation and Circulation chapter.) The 1989 master plan did not fully consider environmental constraints such as wetlands, floodplain impacts and woodland conservation. (See Figure 2.)

**Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act**—The Greenbelt Metro Area Sector Plan applies the policy visions of the 1992 Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act. This act established general land use policies for local consideration, and possible implementation, throughout Maryland. The policies in this Act as amended are stated as eight visions:

1. Development shall be concentrated in suitable areas.
2. Sensitive areas shall be protected.

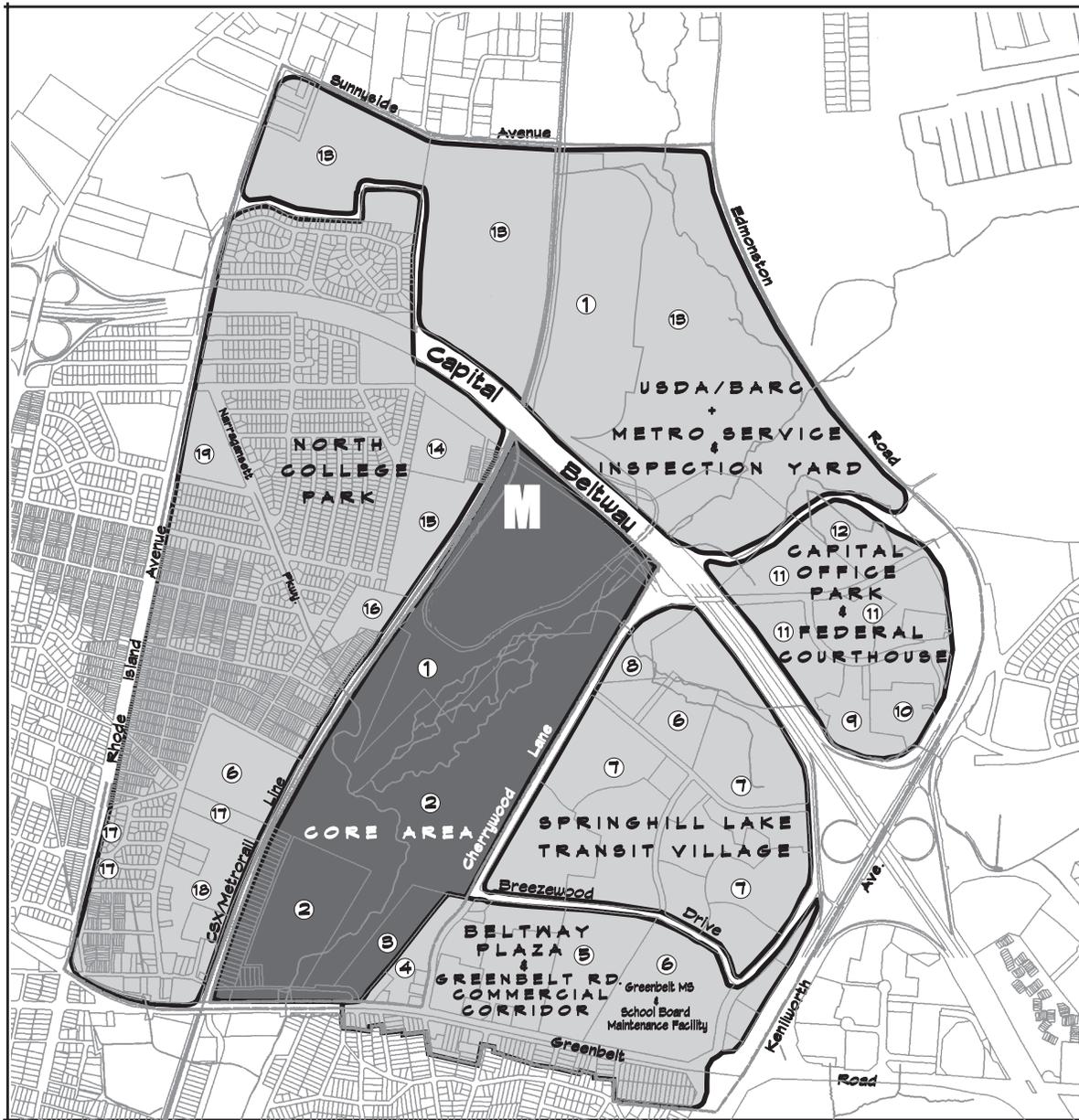
3. In rural areas, growth shall be directed to existing population centers and resource areas shall be protected.
4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and of the land shall be a universal ethic.
5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, shall be practiced.
6. To encourage the achievement of paragraphs 1 through 5 of this subsection, economic growth shall be encouraged and regulatory mechanisms shall be streamlined.
7. Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under the control of the County or municipal corporation are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur.
8. Funding mechanisms shall be addressed to achieve this policy.

The Planning Act adopted these visions as official State policy and as a comprehensive set of principles on how and where growth and development should occur. The Planning Act also requires local governments to periodically update their comprehensive plans to reflect these visions.

**The 1997 Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Initiative**—The 1997 Maryland General Assembly adopted several specific programs, which together form the Smart Growth initiatives. These initiatives build on the tradition of local government comprehensive planning and the framework and guidance of State law, including the visions established by the Planning Act of 1992. The initiatives recognize the important role local governments play in managing growth and determining the locations for State-funded projects.

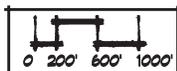
The centerpiece program of the 1997 Smart Growth initiatives is the “Priority Funding Areas” legislation, which limits State infrastructure funding and economic development, housing and other program monies to Smart Growth Areas. The legislation established certain Priority Funding Areas and allows the counties to designate additional areas subject to specified requirements. Statewide Priority Funding Areas established by the 1997 legislation include municipalities, Baltimore City, areas inside the Baltimore and Washington Beltways, revitalization areas designated by the State Department of Housing and Community Development, enterprise zones and heritage areas.

The Greenbelt Metro Area Sector Plan and its respective subareas, lying inside the Capital Beltway and adjacent to the Metro and MARC stations are, therefore, designated as Priority Funding Areas. Three subareas of this Sector Plan



**Major Land Holdings**

- |                          |  |                               |
|--------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. WMATA                 | 8. City of Greenbelt                       | 14. Al Huda School            |
| 2. A. H. Smith Property  | 9. Marriott Corporation                    | 15. M-NCPPC Property          |
| 3. Prince George's Scrap | 10. State Highway Administration           | 16. Endelmann Property        |
| 4. Beltway Plaza West    | 11. Capital Office Park                    | 17. City of College Park      |
| 5. Beltway Plaza         | 12. Federal Property ( Federal Courthouse) | 18. Stone Industrial Company  |
| 6. School Board Property | 13. Federal Property (USDA/BARC)           | 19. Hollywood Shopping Center |
| 7. Springhill Lake       |  |                               |



**Sector Plan Boundary/Subareas**

Map 1

Area (Core Area, Springhill Lake and Greenbelt Road corridor) collectively represent a major opportunity and potential for Smart Growth to achieve the Sector Plan's vision of quality mixed-use and transit-oriented developments and neighborhoods linked to the Greenbelt station.

### **The Smart Growth Transit Program (SGTP)—**

This program was recently initiated by the State of Maryland to encourage short-term, small-scale community revitalization and development in areas close to Metrorail or the Maryland Rail Commuter (MARC) service. The SGTP also supports transit-oriented development, such as the transit village concept of mixed-use development, discussed further in *The Plan* section of this document.

The SGTP promotes more intensive commercial and residential transit-oriented development in close proximity (one-quarter-mile) to existing stations and in "secondary" service areas up to one mile away, depending on the characteristics and planning opportunities specific to the area. In this context, the plan recommends "secondary" area transit-oriented market development outside the North Core Area in Springhill Lake and the South Core area.

The SGTP assists local jurisdiction projects that support comprehensive land use plans, designate areas near transit facilities for development or redevelopment and facilitate local governments to coordinate their medium- and long-term planning with private sector development activities around major, high-value infrastructure nodes, particularly transit facilities.

## **PLAN BOUNDARY**

The Sector Plan Area contains areas that are within the municipal boundaries of the Town of Berwyn Heights and the cities of College Park and Greenbelt (see Map 1). It is generally bordered by Rhode Island Avenue on the west, Sunnyside Avenue and Edmonston Road on the north, Edmonston Road and Kenilworth Avenue on the east, and Greenbelt Road on the south (including all commercially zoned property on both sides of Greenbelt Road between the CSX/Metro railroad tracks and Kenilworth Avenue).

Some recommendations in the sector plan concern issues or communities beyond these geographic boundaries to ensure adequate consideration of area-wide issues such as natural resources, stormwater management, transportation, transit, recreation and trails.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM**

The plan's Public Participation Program consisted of two planning phases.

**Greenbelt Metro Area Study—**During the preplanning study, in-depth contact with local communities occurred to comprehensively identify issues and concerns and to develop a strategy for land use changes. Under the direction of a staff team:

- Stakeholders were interviewed
- A community workshop was held to solicit and organize stakeholders' and citizens' development issues and concerns through a technique that outlined planning area strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- A focus group was formed and included private citizens, citizen advocates, property owners' representatives and County and local government representatives
- The focus group and staff team synthesized concerns into four major planning themes: redevelopment and/or revitalization; environmentally sensitive development; Metro access and community linkages; and open space planning

The focus group expanded upon the themes and developed an umbrella vision and goals for the transit station area. These four themes were later carried over into the sector plan process.

The preplanning phase concluded with the release of *The Greenbelt Metro Area Study/An Interim Report*, dated December 1997. This report recommended the initiation of a sector plan and SMA for the study area and identified the Goals, Concepts and Guidelines and Public Participation Program for the sector plan process.

### **Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment—**

The opportunity to amend an area master plan and sectional map amendment is provided in the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance (*Sections 27-639 and 27-221*). This sector plan and its concurrent SMA amend a small portion of the previously approved master plan and zoning maps. The



*A session with the sector planning group to review the Land Use Concept.*

sector plan process proceeds from preliminary plan formulation, through a public hearing, to approval of the plan by the Planning Board and adoption of the plan by the District Council. Figure 3 illustrates key steps of the sector plan process.

**Public Forum**—A public forum was held on May 28, 1998, to inform citizens of the Planning Board’s intent to concurrently initiate a sector plan and sectional map amendment. In this forum, the staff presented the planning issues identified in the Greenbelt Metro Area Study and invited public comment.

**Plan and SMA Preparation**

**District Council Action**—The District Council adopted Council Resolution 17-1998 on February 17, 1998, and initiated the sector plan and sectional map amendment process on July 21, 1998, by accepting the Public Participation Program and Goals, Concepts and Guidelines.

**Planning Group Charrettes**—The Public Participation Program, approved by the District Council, created a sector planning group which included most of the previous study’s focus group members and other interested parties. Every effort was made to create a sector planning group that represented the entire Sector Plan Area.

Four charrettes, intensive workshop sessions to identify, analyze and develop strategies for planning and design solutions, were held in the second half of 1998. These charrettes were facilitated by the staff team to formulate concepts and plan proposals in conjunction with the sector planning group.

The four charrettes involved the following tasks.

- Evaluate the basic planning elements of four alternative concepts based on the defined vision for the Sector Plan Area

- Develop a preferred land use concept plan
- Review specific planning elements such as land use, transportation, environment and public facilities
- Reach consensus on certain details of the land use concept

**Development of the Land Use Concept**—The Land Use Concept, shown as Map 2, was a result of the intense charrette series. The sector planning group analyzed and developed several land use concept alternatives.

One concept was selected because it was the least disruptive to environmentally sensitive and constrained land within the Core Area, such as floodplain, wetlands, woodlands and other environmental areas. The Core Area directly surrounds the Metrorail/MARC station area to the south and east. Alternative concept plans varied land use mixes and intensity levels and included different Environmental Envelopes, road alignments and design features. All of the land use concepts recommended redevelopment of the industrial uses in the southern Core Area with mixed-uses.

In the consensus building process, the sector planning group was divided into two teams. Each team developed a separate concept based upon the vision generated in the preplanning phase. Both teams reached a consensus that:

- A large Environmental Envelope in the Core Area should be preserved
- Beltway access improvements are essential for the success of any mixed-use development at the Metro station site
- Reasonable traffic control on existing roads near the Metro site should occur

In order to preserve the environmentally sensitive land, the sector planning group suggested that a higher density mixed-use development be clustered on the North Core Area, if a submitted site plan satisfies the Adequacy of Public Facilities (APF) Ordinance requirements.

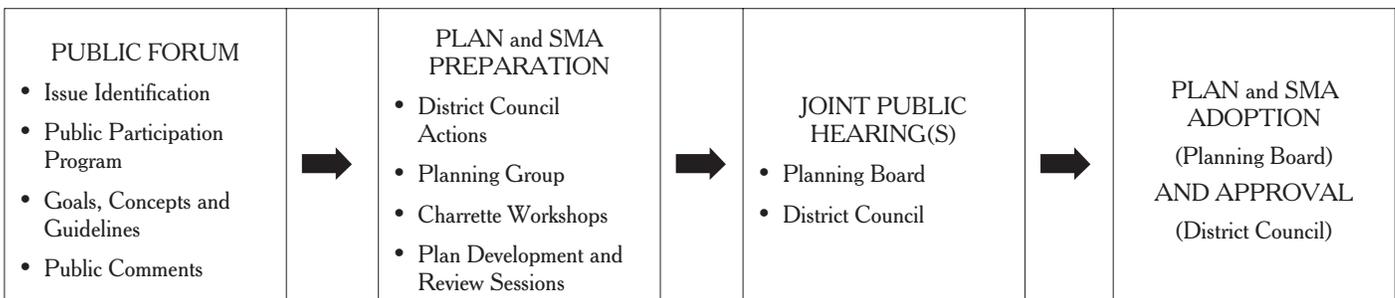


Figure 3. Sector plan process.

The sector planning group recommended several modifications to the concept as a way to preserve environmentally sensitive or constrained areas.

- A major transportation access improvement between the Beltway and the transit station
- More intensive mixed-use development in the already disturbed areas of the core

This modified concept is reflected as the Land Use Concept.

**Plan Development and Review Sessions**—After the charrette process concluded, staff developed a preliminary draft plan to reflect the Land Use Concept plan. From April to November 1999, a series of text review sessions were held to review and refine the plan text. The preliminary sector plan and proposed sectional map amendment was submitted to the Planning Board for permission to print and the preliminary plan was available to the general public for review prior to the joint public hearing.

**Joint Public Hearing**—The Planning Board and District Council held a joint public hearing on the sector plan and SMA on June 19, 2000. After the hearing, the staff prepared a digest and analysis of the testimony with staff comments and recommendations for the Planning Board. The Planning Board reviewed the testimony and staff recommendations. Appropriate changes were made to the plan under direction of the Planning Board.

**Plan and SMA Adoption by Planning Board**—After the Planning Board reviewed the staff transcript analysis and recommendations, the Board adopted the sector plan and endorsed the SMA with amendments, as described in Prince George's County Planning Board Resolution PGCPB No. 00-226, on December 7, 2000. Subsequently, the adopted sector plan and endorsed SMA were transmitted to the District Council on January 31, 2001.

**Plan and SMA Approval by District Council**—The District Council conducted a worksession to review the adopted sector plan and endorsed SMA and added new amendments on April 3, 2001. The District Council referred the amendments to the Planning Board on May 17, 2001. The District Council held a public hearing on June 18, 2001, on the proposed amendments, as described in Council Resolution CR-13-2001. Subsequently, the District Council conducted a worksession on September 19, 2001, to review public hearing testimony. On October 16, 2001, the District Council approved the sector plan and the SMA with amendments, as described in Council Resolution CR-63-2001.