

## **SUBAREA DESIGN POLICIES and GUIDELINES**

The Core Area

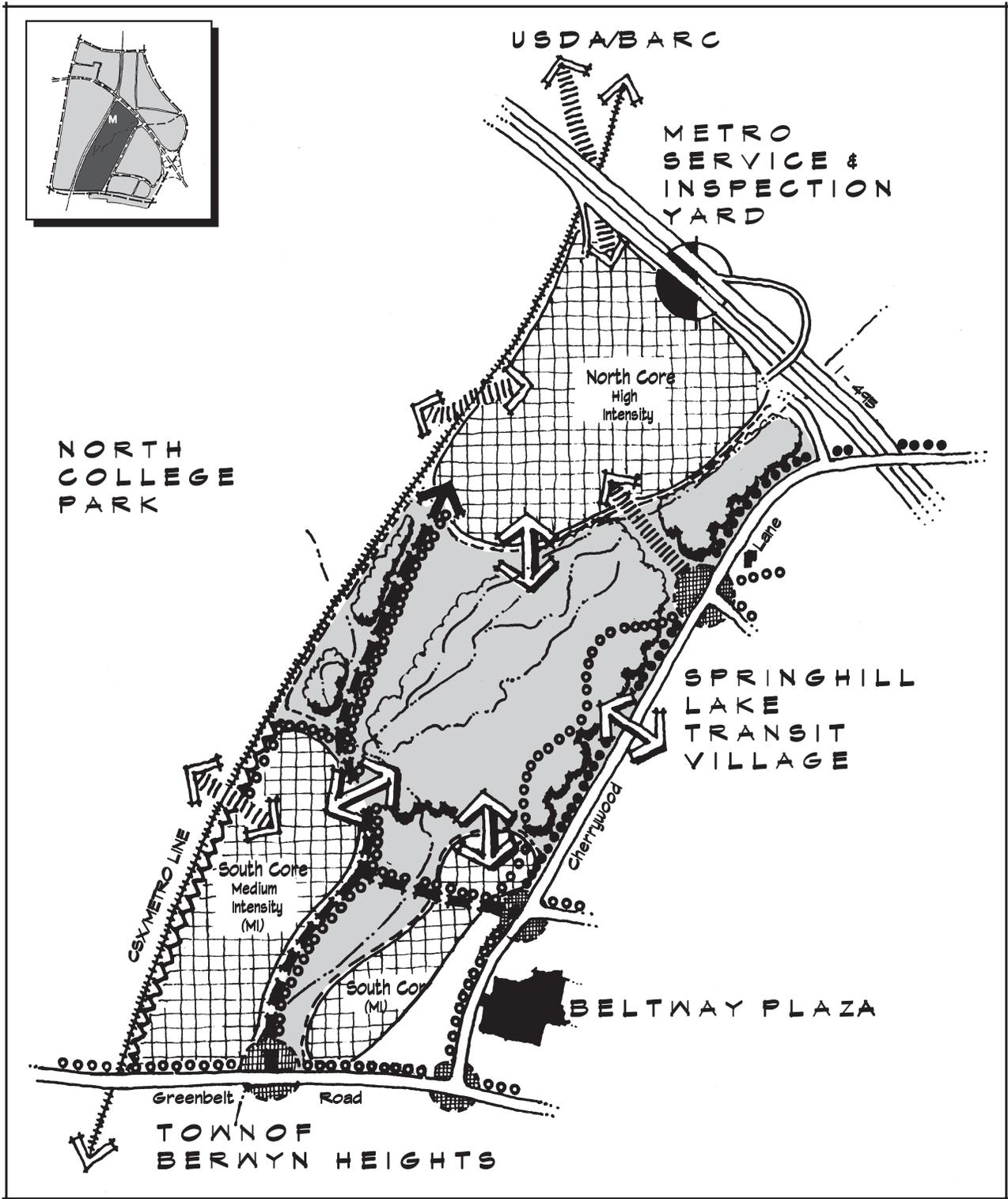
Springhill Lake

North College Park

Greenbelt Road and Beltway Plaza

Capital Office Park and Federal Courthouse

USDA/BARC and Other Federal Properties



- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|  Proposed Mixed Use Development  |  Existing On-Road Bike Lane        |  Visual Linkage  |
|  Infill Opportunity              |  Proposed Trail/Bike Lane          |  Proposed Buffer |
|  Proposed Environmental Envelope |  Major Pedestrian/Bicycle Linkages |   |
|  Proposed North-South Connector  |  Primary Gateways and Focal Points |   |
|   |  Major Transportation Improvement  |   |



**Core Area Concept**

Map 19

## THE CORE AREA

### Mixed-Use Development

---

#### CONCEPT

The Core Area is envisioned as a comprehensively planned, high-quality, mixed-use community with integrated residential, office, retail, entertainment, recreational and open space uses to create a 24-hour, transit-oriented environment. To achieve this, the Core Area is served by a multimodal circulation network with efficient linkages to key locations in the Sector Plan Area and the region. The Core Area development protects the vital environmental features providing connections with the wider regional ecological systems.

---

#### OBJECTIVES

The Core Area represents the most significant development opportunities and challenges within the Sector Plan Area. The following objectives, consistent with the overall Sector Plan Area vision and sector-wide recommendations, frame the Core Area's recommendations and design standards and seek to:

- Implement the Maryland Smart Growth and Prince George's County Interim General Plan capitalizing on the existing transportation infrastructure and this area's location in the northern portion of the County.
- Provide a high-quality, transit-oriented mixed-use development that is compatible with and does not overwhelm the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Balance development with the protection of vital environmental assets such as streams, wetlands, floodplain and woodlands. Integrate development areas and the Environmental Envelope with carefully designed edges to create vistas and permit limited access into the natural environment.
- Improve and integrate transportation services and facilities to increase transit ridership, pedestrian and bicycle mobility and minimize automobile dependence.

- Provide pedestrian, bicycle and other functional linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and activity centers.

- Ensure high-quality architecture and resource- and energy-efficient building design, materials and practices.

#### EXISTING SITUATION AND ISSUES

The Core Area is the primary focus of the sector plan because it contains the Greenbelt Metrorail and MARC station and has considerable development potential. The Core Area represents the largest underutilized and partially undeveloped land within the Sector Plan Area. This area is composed of the North Core Area — the station site, a 78-acre property in the northwest corner owned by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) — and the South Core Area — a 196-acre industrial zoned property to the south, owned by A. H. Smith. Currently, the WMATA site is a rail station and commuter parking lot only, containing approximately 3,360 parking spaces. Industrial operations primarily occupy the southern portion of the Smith tract, while the northern and central portions of this property exist as natural open space with numerous environmental resources, some of which are quality streams, wetlands and woodlands. Several other industrially and commercially zoned parcels, with multiple owners, and totaling approximately 26-acres, exist in the southeastern corner of the Core Area near Greenbelt Road

and Cherrywood Lane, including the Beltway Plaza West development. These properties include uses such as a recycling scrap metal yard, a bank, a gas station, a drug store and a car wash. Infill development opportunities are possible on these smaller parcels and the plan seeks to recommend appropriate types of development to complement the Greenbelt station area and other adjacent development.



*The Core Area has several different land uses and site characteristics: the Greenbelt Metro Station in the north, a large environmental area in the central section, and heavy industrial operations in the south.*



*Sand, gravel and asphalt processing operations occur on the southern portion of the A.H. Smith property.*

Access and environmental issues represent two major hurdles for any consequential development in the Core Area. Direct vehicular and pedestrian access to the Metrorail and MARC station is limited and operationally problematic. A partial Capital Beltway interchange exists to serve the station: the I-95/I-495 southbound ramp enters the station and a I-95/I-495 northbound ramp exits the station. Local vehicular traffic must use Cherrywood Lane and Greenbelt Metro Drive to access the station site. Direct pedestrian access to the station is not provided from either the Springhill Lake residential community or the USDA/BARC office complex north of the Capital Beltway. One pedestrian underpass, west of the platform, serves North College Park. Any changes to the land uses in the Core Area will require improvements to the existing transportation infrastructure to maintain adequate vehicular and pedestrian circulation consistent with the development envisioned by this plan.

The entire Sector Plan Area is within the Indian Creek Watershed, part of the larger Anacostia Watershed. Indian Creek, flowing north to south, bisects the Core Area and has associated quality stream tributaries, wetlands and 100-year floodplain. Mature woodlands are concentrated around the midsection and eastern edge of the Core Area, covering portions of the 100-year floodplain, wetlands, riparian zones and wildlife habitat. These woodlands cover approximately 32 percent of the Core Area and are located mostly on the Smith property. (See Environment chapter for additional information pertaining to the environmental issues within the Core Area.)

In the South Core Area, wetlands and floodplain have been disturbed by manmade influences for several decades. Over time, industrial operations and Metrorail/ MARC construction have changed the environmental character of the Core Area. Wetlands and floodplain have been filled, Indian Creek has been channelized near Greenbelt Road, concrete



*Greenbelt Metro Station and commuter parking lot.*



Prince George's Scrap (P.G. Scrap) in the South Core Area.

and cement have been dumped in several areas and nonnative plants have invaded natural wetlands. Approximately one-half of the Smith property has been used for active industrial purposes. Today, sand, gravel and asphalt processing still occur.

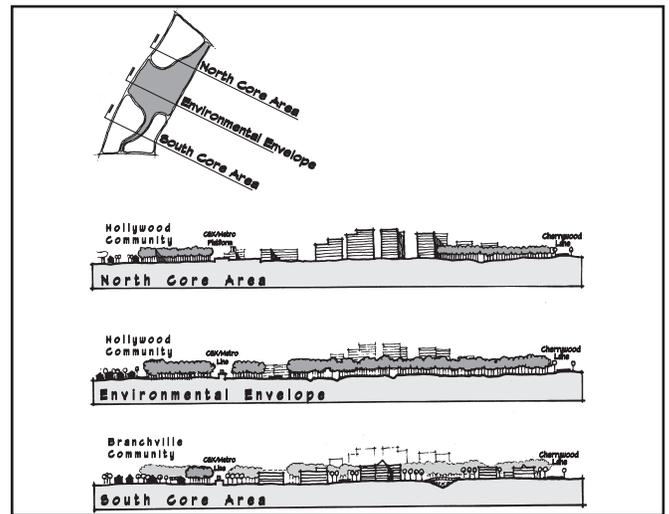
With the Core Area's extensive acreage of floodplain, its location within the Anacostia Watershed and existing runoff problems, effective stormwater management, both in quantity and quality, in the Core Area is a high priority issue.

The significant environmental features and constraints within the Core Area and the need to provide adequate multimodal access to the site present several issues that must be addressed before any development proposals are approved.

## DESIGN POLICIES

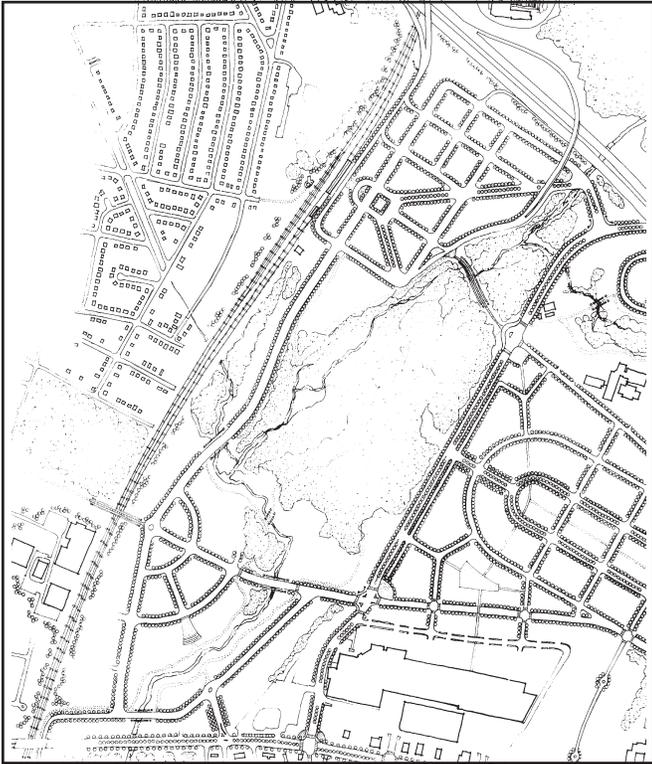
These policies, although not mandatory, guide the Core Area concept, include public-sector actions, and frame the Development District Standards contained in the SMA section for development or redevelopment in the Core Area.

1. Redevelop the existing Greenbelt station parking lot with air-rights development and phase out industrial land uses.
2. Create an integrated mixed-use development in the Core Area, consistent with Smart Growth policy initiatives, that supports transit ridership. Include a high-intensity development center in the North Core Area; a natural, recreational and open space destination in the Environmental Envelope; and a medium-intensity development center in the South Core Area. Provide upscale, high-quality design and construction in the North and South Core Areas.
3. Provide a coherent mix of civic, retail, office, residential, entertainment and recreational uses that will stimulate 24-hour, transit-oriented and pedestrian-friendly developments in the North and South Core Areas. Offer residential uses as a key component of the mixed-use centers.
4. Ensure compatibility of all development and redevelopment with surrounding communities and developments. The overall skyline image of the Core Area development and its building profiles should represent a positive landmark feature, emphasizing the approach to the Greenbelt station which will be seen from the oncoming Metro cars, Springhill Lake and North College Park neighborhoods, Cherrywood Lane and the Capital Beltway.



Illustrative sectional profiles depicting development intensities through the Core Area.

5. Incorporate public art into design concepts in the Core Area to enhance the overall image and scenery of the area. Local artisans and community resources, such as schoolchildren, senior citizens, business merchants, municipal representatives and others, should be utilized to successfully develop a public art program.
6. Meet adequate public facilities requirements in all development scenarios consistent with Commission 2000.
7. Ensure that any major improvements to the local and regional transportation system are designed, priced, staged and integrated so that the final design(s) efficiently and completely accommodate any traffic generated by development in and near the Core Area.
8. Utilize multimodal streets in the Core Area to efficiently and safely provide access for all users, pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.
9. Provide a north-south connector road between the two proposed mixed-use centers and to Greenbelt Road to alleviate any potential traffic congestion that the proposed

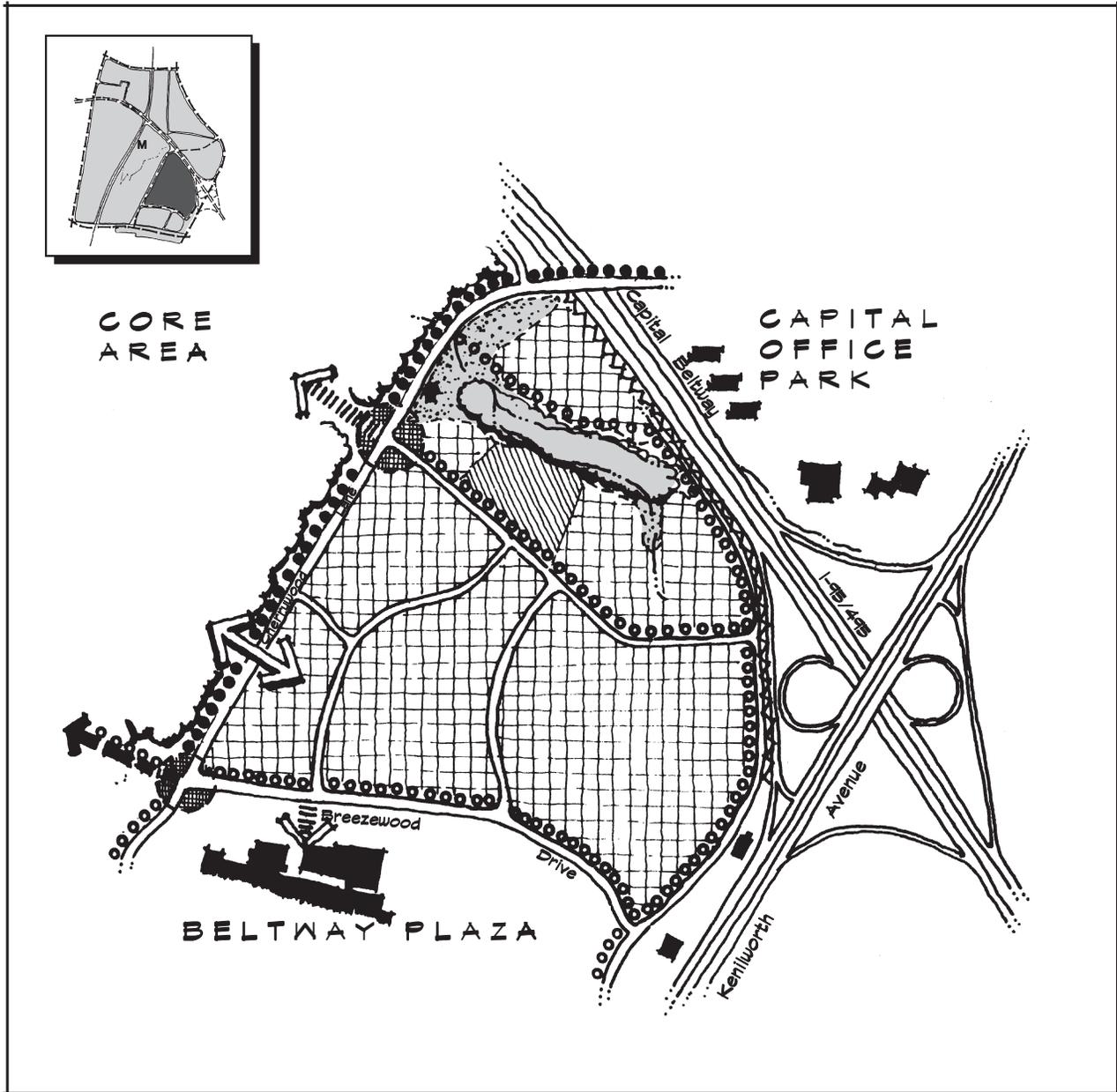


*Illustrative street pattern in the Core Area. Multimodal streets provide on-street parking, bike lanes, landscaped medians and wide sidewalks for street trees and site furnishings.*

development may generate on the existing streets in the Sector Plan Area.

10. Develop a Bicycle Friendly Areas (BFA) network in the Core Area.
11. Provide bicycle and pedestrian linkages to Springhill Lake and North College Park and establish linkages to the USDA/BARC office complex.
12. Create vistas along major streets, such as the illustrated "Boulevard" street, in the mixed-use centers to visually connect the transit station with significant focal points or structures.
13. Preserve the most environmentally sensitive features of the Environmental Envelope in a special Preservation and Conservation Management Area (PCMA). Create conservation and restoration areas in the remaining Environmental Envelope areas. Utilize the Environmental Envelope as a link in the Anacostia Stream Valley Park to connect the local and regional open space network.
14. Manage stormwater to prevent an increase in water elevations or a decrease in water quality. Explore options to improve existing stormwater problems. Consider Low-impact development (LID) techniques for future development to improve stormwater runoff. Consider Maryland Department of Planning and Maryland Department of Natural Resources Green Building program guidelines for environmentally sensitive design in growth areas. Continue to enforce the County's floodplain ordinance which regulates that any new impervious area shall not affect other downstream properties.
15. Analyze Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques when developing all site and landscape plans, including parking areas, and identify relevant techniques to be employed in the proposed development at the time of Conceptual Site Plan review.
16. Encourage the Environmental Envelope's ultimate property owner to consider public awareness and educational opportunities throughout the Environmental Envelope to highlight natural systems and cultural resources in the Core Area, such as interpretive sites with signs and displays along trails.
17. Use energy- and resource-efficient material and techniques as proposed by the Maryland Department of Planning, Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Prince George's County for building and site design.
18. Encourage the City of College Park to review and request tree plantings in North College Park, if necessary, during their review of any site plans submitted for the Core Area to effectively screen the established low-density residential neighborhood from future development in the Core Area.
19. Use native, drought-tolerant and low-maintenance plant material, when possible, to remain consistent with the region's landscape, limit the introduction of exotic plant material, and potentially reduce maintenance levels for landscaped areas.
20. Encourage public agencies to locate in the Core Area as a key component of the mixed-use center and to promote a quality and transit-supportive development.

This page is intentionally blank.



- |   |                                    |   |                                   |
|---|------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
|  | Proposed Residential Redevelopment |  | Visual Linkage                    |
|  | Environmental Envelope/Open Space  |  | Major Pedestrian/Bicycle Linkages |
|  | Existing Primary School            |  | Proposed Road                     |
|  | Existing On-Road Bike Lane         |  | Proposed Buffer/Sound Barrier     |
|  | Proposed Trail/Bike Lane           |  | Primary Gateways and Focal Points |