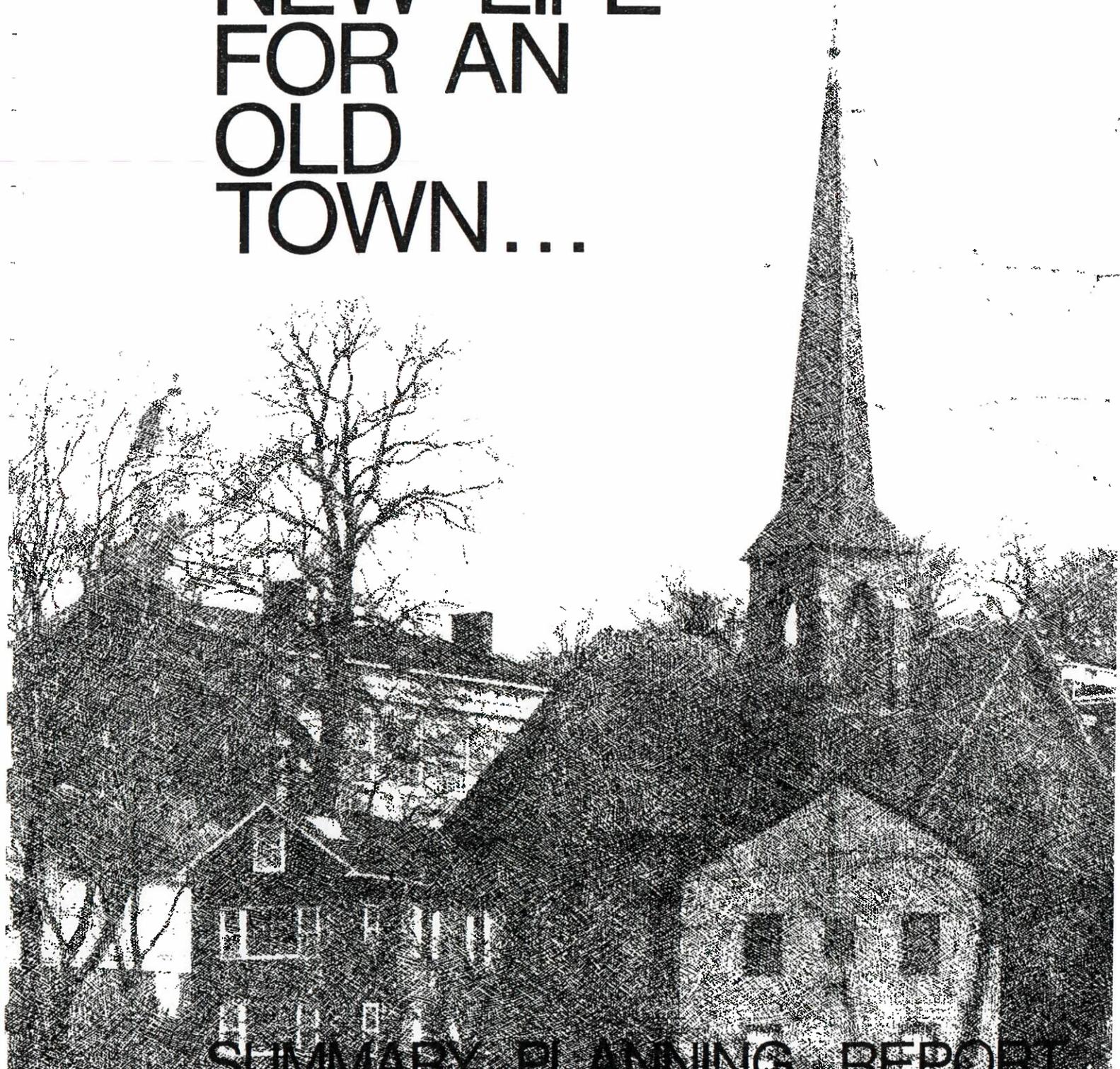


ELLICOTT CITY:

NEW LIFE
FOR AN
OLD
TOWN....



SUMMARY PLANNING REPORT

ELLICOTT CITY:

NEW LIFE FOR AN OLD TOWN...

prepared for:

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August, 1976

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SUMMARY PLANNING REPORT

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1. INTRODUCTION

ORIGINS OF THE PLAN

Among people concerned with the conservation and development of Ellicott City, it is generally agreed that the Agnes Flood of 1972 was a pivotal event in recent local history:

- The Patapsco River, flowing over twenty feet above normal levels, destroyed a number of structures which had been part of the Ellicott City and Oella communities for almost 200 years. The flood thus increased the community's appreciation for the heritage that remained, and gave impetus to serious-minded preservation efforts.
- The Tiber River, which flows through the downtown commercial area into the Patapsco, backed-up to such an extent that the water reached the second floor of many lower Main Street buildings. The flood thus provided a dramatic reminder of the ecological significance of the setting of the old town, where several streams draining over 2300 acres of developing land converge and empty into the Patapsco.
- 1972 was the bicentennial of the founding of the mill town by the Ellicott brothers, four years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Through extraordinary efforts not only to dig out from the flood damage, but also to stage a bicentennial celebration, the community demonstrated for itself and others the potential effectiveness of concerted private and public action.
- The flood washed out a number of marginal businesses and land uses, and set the stage for a series of changes in property ownership. Though harsh, the disaster served as a break from the declining trends of the post World War II years, and raised for serious consideration the questions, "Where do we go from here? What should be the goals of the colonial mill town in its third century of existence?"

THE PLANNING CONTEXT

Since the flood, the pace of events in and around Ellicott City has accelerated. Howard County has formed a Historic District Commission and designated the old town as its first Historic District. Non-profit groups concerned with historic preservation have joined forces and initiated the restoration of the old railroad terminal, among other projects. New businesses have opened, capitalizing on the unique character of the old town and its location in the midst of rapidly expanding suburbs west of Baltimore and north of Washington. Rehabilitation and new development has occurred, some compatible with the architectural and visual character of the historic district, and some not so compatible. The County has developed plans for expanding its administrative and judicial functions in the historic county seat. Community groups, representing businessmen, residential neighborhoods and other interests, have been formed, or become increasingly active in the new life of the old town. State agencies have developed plans for roads and regional parks which have important implications for the old town. An area roughly comprising the old municipality of Ellicott Mills is being considered for designation on the National Register of Historic Places.

THE SCOPE OF THE PLAN

In this context, the planning effort summarized in this report was initiated by the Howard County Office of Planning and Zoning. The purpose was to provide a "master plan", a unified framework for the efforts of all parties, private and public, local, state, and federal, in the conservation and development of Ellicott City:

- Though historic preservation was understood to be a major focus, commercial development, transportation, parking, the natural environment, and housing were also recognized as critical concerns, inescapably

interrelated with historic preservation and with each other.

- Though it was understood that the historic district and the old commercial area within the historic district would receive considerable attention, the planning area included a broad surrounding band, and relationships between the old town and its environs were recognized as critical concerns for both areas.
- Though the situation invited imaginative conceptual thinking, it was also clear that proposals needed to be practical and feasible, accompanied by preliminary cost estimates and associated with prospective funding sources.
- Finally, it was recognized that proposals needed to be associated with consideration of how to get them implemented, how to coordinate many actors with varying perspectives and priorities, and how to raise the funds to foot the bill.

DOCUMENTATION

Due to funding arrangements, the planning effort was "strung out" over a two year period, rather than one year as originally planned. This created a special need to pull together preliminary conclusions during the planning process, rather than just at the end. This was done in a series of twelve "working papers" dealing with key plan topics. The working papers constitute a background record of the planning process. In them, various data sources and planning analyses are described. Many plan proposals, as well as alternatives which were considered but rejected or modified, are discussed in greater detail than was possible in this summary. The working papers are available for review at the Office of Planning and Zoning:

- # 1 : "Preliminary Review of Development Problems, Issues, and Opportunities"; January 1974, 7 pages.
- # 2 : "Residential Development and Natural Development Constraints"; June 1974, 33 pages.
- # 3 : "The Downtown: Its Commercial Potential and Its Historic Conservation"; June 1974, 37 pages.
- # 4 : "Economic Potentials and Development Options"; September 1974, 37 pages.
- # 5 : "Housing Problems and Policies"; September 1974, 40 pages.
- # 6 : "Community Facilities Plan"; March 1975, 45 pages.
- # 7 : "Transportation: Auto Access, Parking, Pedestrians, Public Transportation"; April 1975, 132 pages.
- # 8 : "Development Controls"; July 1975, 38 pages.
- # 9 : "Preservation of Architectural and Visual Character in the Ellicott City Historic District"; June 1975, 40 pages.
- #10 : "Schedule of Projects, Project Costs, Funding Sources, Implementation Agencies"; August 1975, 19 pages.
- #11 : "Management of Plan Implementation"; July 1975, 37 pages.
- #12 : "Sign Regulations in the Historic Commercial Area"; September 1975, 16 pages.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

A special effort was made to discuss the issues facing Ellicott City with various community groups at various stages during the planning process. The first of these

discussions occurred on November 9, 1973. Many others followed. For the most part, the discussions were informal affairs, involving considerable give and take. As the contacts continued, the planners were increasingly impressed with how much serious thought and concern has been invested in Ellicott City by local residents, businessmen and other concerned citizens. While these people do not bear responsibility for the proposals presented below, it is apparent that many of the basic ideas of the plan have been in the minds of concerned citizens for a considerable period of time. The planning effort has provided background analyses and conceptual frameworks, and has suggested modifications, extensions, and interrelationships. But the basic ideas (or objectives) are not new, and they come from many concerned citizens who have contributed so generously with their time and interest.

Any listing must of necessity be incomplete. Roland Bounds, Jean Hannon, William Kirkwood, Phillip Thompson, and Mark Trager deserve special mention for their contributions throughout the planning effort. Andrew Bibo, Dennis Brown, Samuel Caplan, Andrew Clark, Edward Clark, Reverend Nicholas Dahoney, Reverend Robert Farlass, Reverend Lawrence Handwerk, Mary Lewyn Handwerk, Herbert Koerber, Patricia Leepa, Roger Marino, Melissa McMullin, Joseph Nielson, William Platt, Frederick Schultz, Reverend John Stanley, John Rattaliata, Joann Sheely, Doris Thompson, James Thomas, John Wafer, Robert Watson, and Michael Willinger are among those who provided valued advice and assistance at various stages.

Many County officials have been especially interested and helpful, including William Altman, Roland Cromwell, Gregg Dunn, William Filbert, Barbara Heine, James Kienker, Robert Gemmil, Bret Lazar, Paul Le Pore, Medaldo Loria, Dorothy Moore, John Riddle, Theodore Schaefer, Harrison Shipley, Edward Shul, Kenneth Smith, Russel Walters, Granville Wehland, and David Watts. At the State level, Kathryn Waters, Stoney Fraley, Robert Miller, Kenneth Fain and Venus Stanley provided much useful advice and support.

KEY PREMISES AND PROPOSALS

The Ellicott City Plan is intended as a framework for action in conserving and developing the old town, and in establishing appropriate relationships between the old town and its environs. These actions are based on a few key premises about the value of Ellicott City, and the context of the planning effort:

1. The area roughly comprising the old town of Ellicott Mills, including parts of Oella as well as Ellicott City, has unique historic and natural qualities of state-wide and regional significance. Being special, the area warrants special attention to preserve its character and develop its potentials.
2. In the modern setting, the environs of the old town are almost as critical as the old town itself. Actions or inactions in this context area can easily undermine major efforts and environmental values in the old town. Also, the environs of the old town have their own values deserving conservation and enhancement. For the benefit of both areas, plans for the old town's environs should be carefully evaluated for their potential impacts on the old town, and vice versa.
3. As the traditional seat of county government, Ellicott City has special local, as well as statewide and regional significance. The development of a modern center of

county government in the old county seat is a proposal which involves special opportunities and hazards. The opportunity is to develop a center of local government of unique character, conveying not only the requirements of contemporary public administration, but also the evolution and traditions of government in Howard County. The hazard is that the development of the new, unless handled with special care, could damage the character of the old governmental center and/or the town of which it is a part.

4. Though in separate jurisdictions, Oella and Ellicott City are tied by geography, historic development, governmental tradition, current problems, and functional patterns. The futures of the two communities are also closely tied. Baltimore County's proposed plan for Oella is compatible with this plan's recommendations for Ellicott City. Coordinated implementation of the two plans is clearly desirable, for, clearly, the whole can exceed the sum of the parts.
5. Ellicott City cannot become an open air museum, such as Williamsburg, Virginia, Sturbridge Village, Massachusetts, or other places developed through massive philanthropic support, primarily for educational and cultural purposes. Lacking such philanthropic support, the preservation and enhancement of Ellicott City will require the initiative of many private parties — residents, businessmen, property owners, private lending institutions — in coordination with public efforts.
6. Even if it could, Ellicott City should not become an open air museum. It should be a living, working center, which draws on its rich heritage while developing specialized roles in an expanding metropolitan context. The success of these new roles depends on the preservation of the things which make the town unique, and on the development of collective improvements to the public environment.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND ACTION PROPOSALS

The plan is intended as a working document useful to public officials and concerned citizens over many years. Each chapter presents analysis findings and policy conclusions on a major topic relating to the preservation and enhancement of Ellicott City. Here are the major findings of the several chapters, and examples of key action proposals:

1. Development actions should be based on an understanding of the relation of Ellicott City's future potentials to its past roles on the one hand, and to its expanding suburban context on the other; and on an understanding of the prerequisites for realizing the special potentials of the old town.

e.g. New zoning guidelines for the old trade district along lower Main Street:

- to provide a framework within which a diverse mix of activities can be encouraged in the old trade district, activities which are readily adaptable to the building spaces of old structures and which are compatible with one another.
- to provide one element in a guidance system for preserving the architectural and visual character of the old trade district.

2. Ellicott City's natural assets are as important as its his-

toric and cultural assets, and their conservation is equally critical to the future of the old town.

e.g. A new residential zone for the environs of the old town and for residential enclaves within the historic district:

- to ensure that residential development responds sensitively to the critical natural features of many parcels in the Ellicott City planning area.
- to protect downstream areas from the ecological impacts of development, a key element in an effective flood management program in the Tiber River drainage area.
- to retain a transitional buffer area of appropriate residential character between the hurly-burly of the regional ring roads and the historic district.

3. A practical program for controlling flood damage in the old town is a prerequisite to its future development.

4. Though less dramatic than floods, auto traffic in the old town is a more persistent drawback on its future potentials. A traffic-to-not-thru strategy is recommended.

e.g. Modifications in the major gateways and auto approaches to the historic district:

- to strongly encourage traffic not having historic district destinations to go around rather than through the old town.
- to orient traffic having historic district destinations, and to regulate traffic flows and speeds on roads approaching the historic district.
- to preserve and enhance the residential uses and neighborhood character along the approach roads.

e.g. Purchase one or more "trolley busses", and begin shuttle route operations in the old trade district:

- to "set the tone" for the development of a specialized commercial and cultural center along lower Main Street.
- a key element in the transportation and parking strategies for the downtown area.

5. Most visitors to Ellicott City will arrive by auto. The design of parking facilities should relate to the characteristics of the visitors, to the auto access system, and to the special environmental potentials in the old trade district. A system of interceptor parking facilities at major entrance locations, linked by proposed trolley bus routes, is recommended.

e.g. Development of an entrance location parking facility in Oella:

- to establish the "auto traffic interceptor" concept on the eastern approach to Ellicott City.
- to provide parking for the lower Main Street area, where the greatest current deficiencies are.
- to establish a joint development approach, applicable to other efforts in Ellicott City and Oella, between Howard and Baltimore Counties.

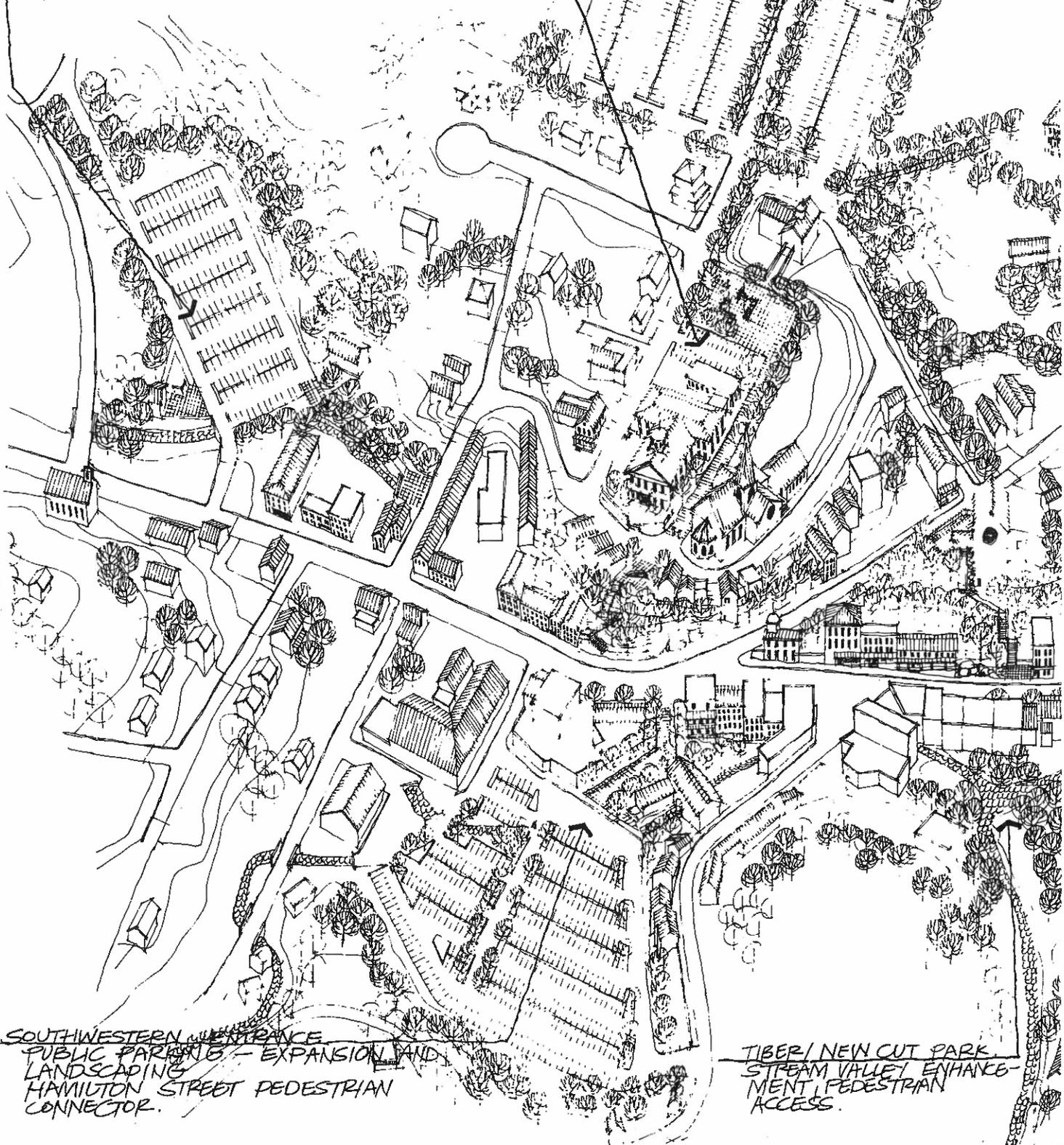
e.g. Develop an integrated design for the Post Office parking facility:

- to establish the "auto traffic interceptor" concept on the southwestern approach to Ellicott City,
- to achieve the special urban design potentials of the Tongue Row-Hamilton Street area, the major pedestrian approach to downtown.

6. The physical fabric of the old town reflects its evolution from colonial times through the early 1900's; its architectural and visual character is the town's unique asset.

WESTERN ENTRANCE
PUBLIC PARKING
TIBER RIVER-COURT ST. PEDESTRIAN
CONNECTOR.
VISITORS INFORMATION BOOTH/ TRANSIT
STOP.

COURTHOUSE HILL AREA
PUBLIC & PRIVATE PARKING ENHANCEMENT
REUSE OF JAILHOUSE.
COURTHOUSE PLAZA
PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY SYSTEM.



SOUTHWESTERN ENTRANCE
PUBLIC PARKING - EXPANSION AND
LANDSCAPING
HAMILTON STREET PEDESTRIAN
CONNECTOR.

TIBER/ NEW CUT PARK
STREAM VALLEY ENHANCE-
MENT, PEDESTRIAN
ACCESS.

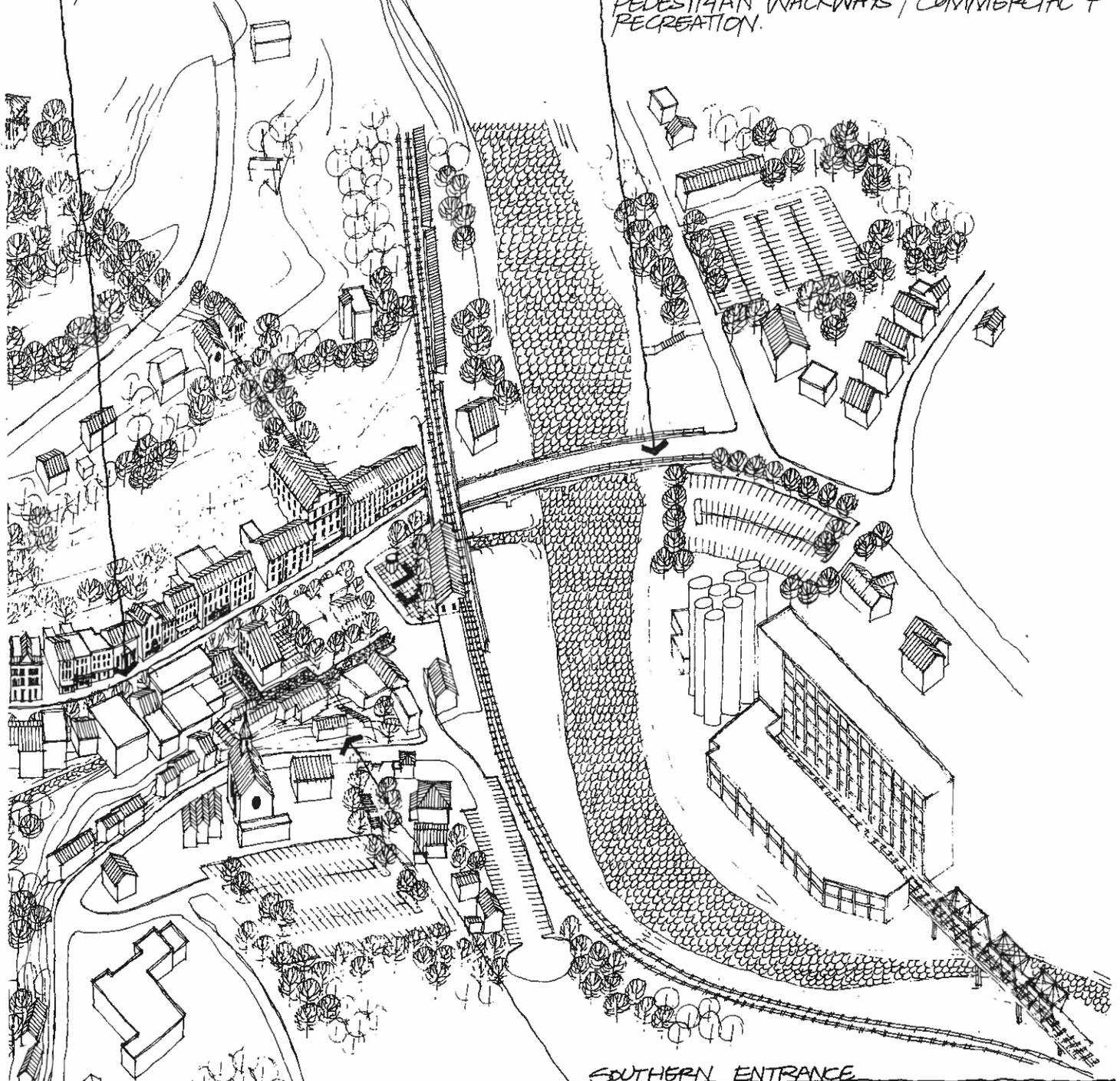
ELLICOTT CITY: DOWNTOWN SKETCH PLAN

LOWER MAIN STREET.

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS +
LANDSCAPING
PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALKS
SIGNS + LIGHTING CONTROLS.
TROLLEY BUS ROUTE
AUTO CIRCULATION + PARKING CONTROLS.

EASTERN ENTRANCE

FREDERICK ROAD IMPROVEMENTS
PUBLIC PARKING AREAS.
ELICOTT HOUSE RESTORATION
VISITORS INFORMATION CENTER / TRANSIT
STOP
RIVERFRONT PARK: BICYCLE TRAILS,
PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS, COMMERCIAL +
RECREATION.



SOUTHERN ENTRANCE

PUBLIC PARKING AREAS
HILLSIDE PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY
RAILROAD TERMINAL PLAZA.
TIBER ALLEY SHOPPING PRECINCT.
VEST POCKET PARK.

e.g. Guidelines for preservation of the architectural and visual character of the historic district:

- to provide the Historic District Commission with a set of detailed criteria for use in carrying out its legislated responsibilities in the Ellicott City Historic District.
- to preserve, not just a few notable buildings, but the fabric of the old town: a variety of building types and urban spaces, reflecting the evolution of style, function and economic roles in the colonial mill town over a 150 year period.

e.g. Creation of a tax credit policy for investments in the Ellicott City Historic District:

- to encourage high-quality rehabilitation which makes positive contributions to the architectural and visual character of the historic district.
- to enable the Historic District Commission to encourage good private development actions as well as discourage bad, a carrot as well as a stick for the job of historic preservation.

7. It is in the enlightened self-interest of the community as a whole to deal forthrightly with the problems of those who stand to lose from the processes of change that are gaining momentum in Ellicott City, and to create means by which the town's lower income residents, many of whom have deep roots in Howard County, can participate in the new life of the old town.

8. Many of Ellicott City's finest assets are hidden from view, undeveloped, or grievously neglected. The town's specialized commercial and cultural potentials require as a prerequisite a high-quality pedestrian environment. A series of sub-area design proposals are suggested to remedy current deficiencies and to relate particular opportunities to design concepts, for the town as a whole.

e.g. Enhance the Railroad Terminal Plaza:

- to meet the needs of pedestrians attracted to the Railroad Terminal Museum and other cultural and specialized commercial activities on lower Main Street.
- to extend the concept of historic preservation beyond individual buildings (the restored railroad terminal) to urban spaces.
- to create a hub, a focus of activity for the entire area between Tiber Alley and the river.

e.g. Develop a Riverfront Park:

- to provide access to the natural resource of the Patapsco River for Ellicott City residents, visitors and employees.
- to add a natural environmental dimension to the specialized commercial and cultural activities in the downtown.
- to create a hub for a series of walking and biking trails radiating from Ellicott City.

e.g. Place utility wires underground:

- to eliminate the major aesthetic blight in the downtown, an unfortunate decision made at a time when the value of the historic district environment was not generally apparent.
- a prerequisite for a series of improvements to the Main Street streetscape, and a catalyst for a Main Street streetscape plan.

9. The implementation of the plan will require new mechanisms for coordinated, cooperative action, and for financing development proposals.

e.g. Creation of a non-profit management corporation called the Ellicott Mills Preservation and Develop-

ment Corporation:

- to create a catalyzing, negotiating, coordinating agent, a consistent driving force for plan implementation,
- to provide a vehicle for coordinated action in the implementation of the Ellicott City master plan, by local business, financial, historic preservation, natural environmental and residential interests, as well as public agencies.

e.g. Creation of a special assessment district in the downtown commercial zone, and a parking validation plan:

- to provide businessmen and property owners with an effective role in determining what is done, in what manner, on what time schedule, in the downtown area.
- to provide two vehicles by which collective improvements in the downtown can be equitably shared among the public, downtown business interests, and users.

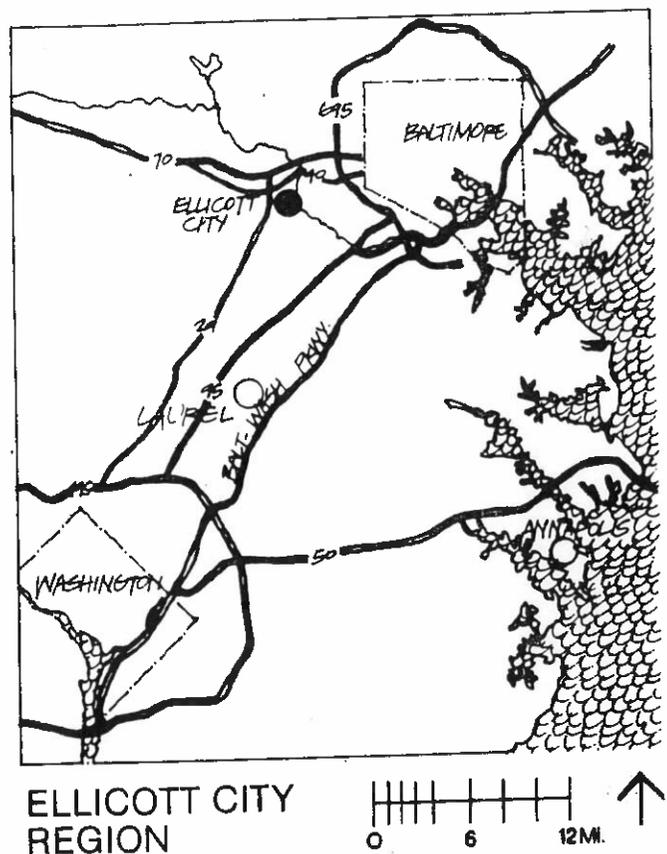
2. FUTURE POTENTIALS: A FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING IN THE OLD TOWN

PAST AND FUTURE ROLES

Since World War II, the trade district along Main Street in Ellicott City has undergone painful transition. The old role as the major commercial center in the area has been in decline. Locations with better auto access held clear advantage for many activities. In their size and layout of interior spaces, physical condition, parking availability, and delivery arrangements, downtown structures seemed unsuited for many commercial enterprises.

New roles for the downtown have been hazy at best: Some new commercial possibilities are apparent, but their total magnitudes have been unclear. Can the apparent disadvantages of the old trade district be turned into assets? To what extent should new activities accommodate themselves to the environment of the old town? To what extent should the environment of the old town be altered to accommodate potential new activities? In sum, what is the desirable and possible future of the downtown area?

The Findings in General. As part of this study, existing building uses and future economic potentials in the downtown were analyzed. It became apparent that Ellicott City lies in the heart of a growing suburban retail market area lying west of Baltimore and north of Washington, D.C. Not only is population growing, but "real" incomes are generally increasing, and spending patterns favor the kinds of specialized commercial activities most adaptable to the old structures in the historic district. Taking these factors and the competition from competing commercial centers into account, the analysis indicated substantial potential increases in retail sales in Ellicott City over the coming decade. This potential constitutes a major opportunity, for it suggests that efforts to conserve and enhance the old town can work with market forces rather than against them. With the opportunity, however, goes the hazard of damage to the very assets which create the potentials in the downtown.



The major market potential in Ellicott City is a group which might be termed visitors rather than shoppers, and which differs from the market of nearby roadside shopping centers in several important respects. Visitors will come to Ellicott City, not once or twice a week, but once or twice a

season. Some will be tourists from outside the metropolitan region. Most will be day-trippers drawn from an area within 45 minutes driving time of Ellicott City, a much broader market area than that of typical suburban centers. The visitor is more likely than the shopper to make the trip as a family group or as an outing with friends. Other centers are in a much better position to meet needs for short, efficient, single-purpose shopping trips. The visitor to Ellicott City is likely to linger awhile and to be inclined to engage in a variety of shopping, cultural, sightseeing and passive recreation activities.

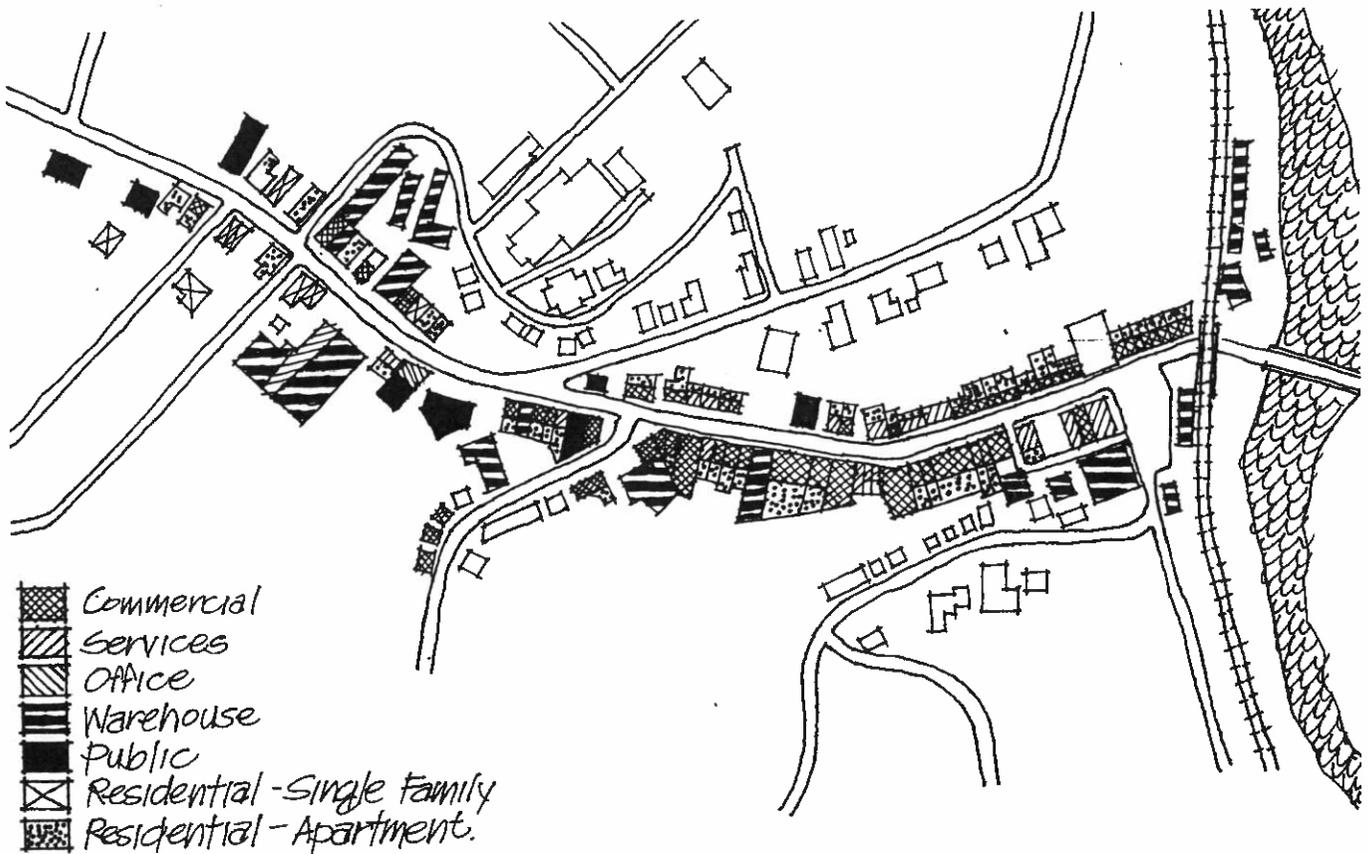
A second important market potential in Ellicott City is the growing community of public and private office employees, and visitors to office facilities. In the early days, there was considerable interchange between Courthouse Hill and Main Street, but today there is very little. Arrangements to encourage more participation in the life of downtown, at lunch hour or after work, would benefit both areas and help re-establish old ties.

Commercial Potential. Specialized commercial enterprises, similar to some of those which have opened in recent years in Ellicott City, have the best opportunity for responding to emerging market potentials and meeting the constraints imposed by historic downtown structures. These include specialized food and merchandise stores (e.g. bakeries, delicatessens, antiques, art stores, boutiques), specialized commercial services (e.g. beauty salons, photographic studios, art schools), and a variety of eating and drinking places. The analysis indicates that, over a 10 year period, the number of stores and the amount of specialized commercial space could nearly double, and retail sales could increase by 2-1/2

times. Much of the expansion of specialized commercial activity could occur through rehabilitation of existing structures. The remainder could be new development occurring in carefully controlled locations and as part of a larger urban design scheme involving the improvement of downtown amenities as well as the provision of additional retail space. Existing specialized commercial stores in Ellicott City average less than 2,000 square feet of floor space, and this scale should be maintained in the future. The specialized commercial potentials in Ellicott City are generally complementary to, rather than competitive with the existing commercial centers in the area.

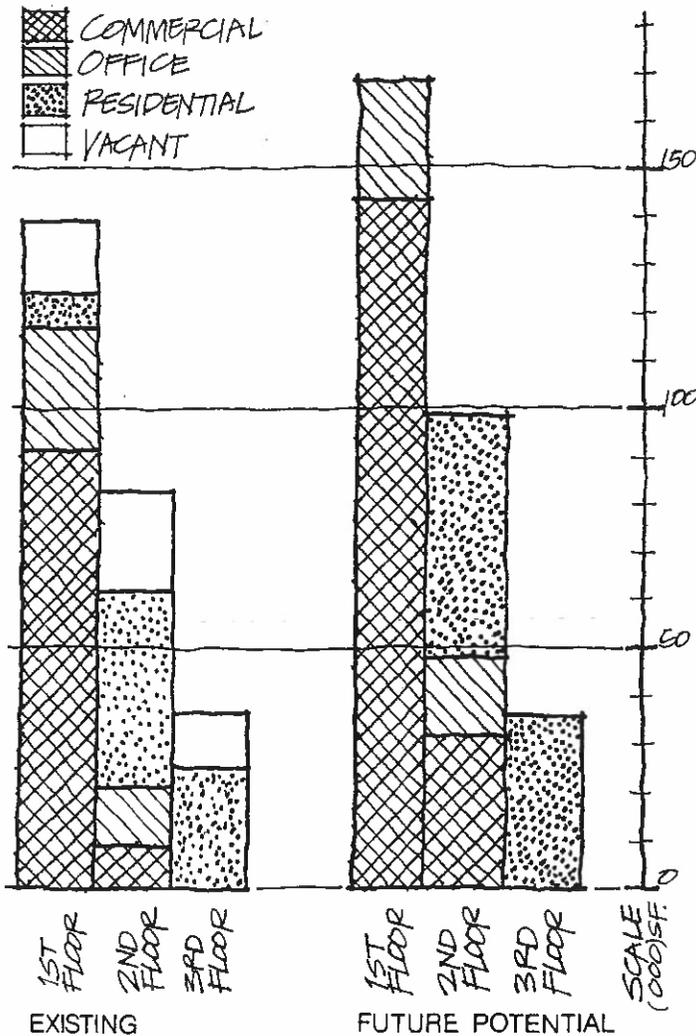
Other commercial potential, including convenience commercial activities oriented to short single-purpose shopping trips and daily needs of nearby residents, are limited in the downtown. The expansion of residential opportunities in downtown, and the protection of residential enclaves near downtown, would help existing convenience commercial enterprises "hold their own" in the future.

In the market context described above, the architectural and visual character of the historic district as a whole emerges as the major commercial asset of downtown. To a much greater extent than other retail activities, specialized retail enterprises rely on the image of the overall environment to attract prospective visitors from a broad market area. In the long-run, the viability of individual investments depends on the uniqueness and authenticity of the collective environment. Thus, high-quality specialized commercial development requires as a prerequisite the preservation of the design integrity and visual character of the entirety of the old town.



MAIN STREET BUILDING USE

DOWNTOWN BUILDING SPACE USE

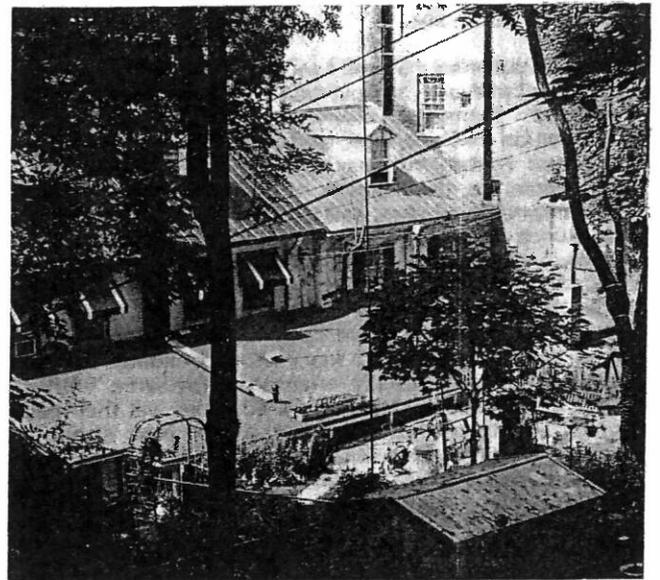


A third condition for attracting commercial potentials in Ellicott City is parking, not just the number of available spaces, but also its relationship to the auto access system, to proposed public transportation systems, and to the pedestrian environment of the old trade district.

Upper Floor Office and Residential Uses. The downtown should not and need not be dominated by specialized commercial activity at all times of the day and week. Downtown structures can provide suitable locations for office functions having limited space requirements and limited walk-in trade. For such offices, the downtown can provide a desirable and prestigious location. For the downtown, the offices can provide economic uses for second floor space, and a working dimension to downtown activity.

There are two major reasons why a serious effort is needed to expand and enhance residential uses of upper floors of downtown structures. First, it is important to the vitality of the downtown to retain residential activity along with shopping, cultural and office functions. Historically in the downtown, residential uses have been mixed with other activities. Their retention in the future can add a kind of vitality which other uses cannot. Second, the economic use of upper floors is an important factor in the rehabilitation of many downtown structures. If all levels of downtown structures, rather than the street level alone, can provide an economic return, high-quality rehabilitation investment becomes more feasible.

UPPER LEVEL RESIDENCES



Closely related to the above is the finding that the pedestrian environment and streetscape amenities are of critical importance in a specialized commercial district. Visitors to Ellicott City will wish to browse from store to store, stop for refreshments, tour a cultural attraction, enjoy a special exhibition, etc. The quality of the pedestrian environment can make these activities possible and enjoyable, or difficult and unpleasant. The critical shopping environment is the downtown as a whole (Main Street in particular) rather than the interiors of the individual stores. Present relationships between auto traffic, parking and pedestrians in the downtown form a major limitation to the realization of the specialized commercial and other development potentials identified in this report.

ELLICOTT CITY BUSINESSES: 1900

- 13 grocery stores
- 10 liquor stores
- 5 blacksmith shops
- 4 bakers
- 3 coal yards
- 1 wheelright
- 1 carriage shop
- 1 cooper
- 1 lumber company

The market for upper level downtown residences is a limited one, confined mainly to singles and childless couples desiring a unique residential environment. Even so, the expanding suburban housing market includes a sufficient number of such households to make full use of the space available in Ellicott City. The major barrier to productive residential use of upper floor space in Ellicott City is not the constraints of the market but those of building and fire codes, which are difficult to apply consistently and reasonably to structures built over a period of 200 years.

Cultural Activities. The downtown is particularly well-suited to cultural activities: Surrounding suburban residential development is steadily increasing the number of

persons interested in various cultural activities. The old mill town, with its long tradition as the cultural center of Howard County, provides an appropriate setting for the development of contemporary cultural functions. Several key buildings in the old town, now under-used or in disrepair, are attractive resources for adaption to cultural uses.

A diversity of cultural functions are possible in Ellicott City. A museum of early railroads and their role in the history of the Patapsco Valley, now being prepared for installation in the restored B&O railroad terminal, will certainly become an important cultural attraction in Ellicott City. Other possible cultural functions include: the performing arts (theater, music, dance), requiring space for rehearsals, production of sets, storage, and administrative offices, in addition to space for performances; the non-performing arts (e.g. crafts or artists studios), requiring inexpensive, well-lighted space, some in combination with residential apartments, and sales galleries for works produced on the premises; other museums focusing on the history of the textile industry in the Patapsco Valley, the history and development of the American city, or other themes; outdoor functions, such as a weekly farmer's market; lectures and community meetings.

An extraordinarily interesting set of buildings and spaces in the old town are potentially available for adaption to cultural functions. In addition to the B&O terminal, these include the original Patapsco National Bank (more recently St. Paul's Parochial School), the old Opera House, the recently-abandoned Ellicott City Elementary School, the Dickey Mill in Oella, the old cinema at the corner of Main Street and Columbia Pike, and, for outdoor functions, the railroad terminal plaza on Maryland Avenue, and the Patapsco Institute site.

A listing of potential cultural functions and buildings adaptable to cultural uses should not imply that all should be developed. Experience elsewhere suggests that the costs of restoration and adaption, and even the cost of maintenance and operations, may require at least partial subsidy. Therefore, the number of buildings which can be restored for cultural uses, and the number of cultural functions which can make a sustained contribution to Ellicott City, will of economic necessity be limited. In these cases, however, the potential contribution of cultural activities to the overall environment in Ellicott City is such that special efforts to assist their development are warranted; they would restore key historic buildings for general public access; they are oriented to the same "visitor" market as specialized commercial activities; yet their peak periods would generally fall outside of peak shopping hours, and would place minimal additional strain on parking and transportation systems.

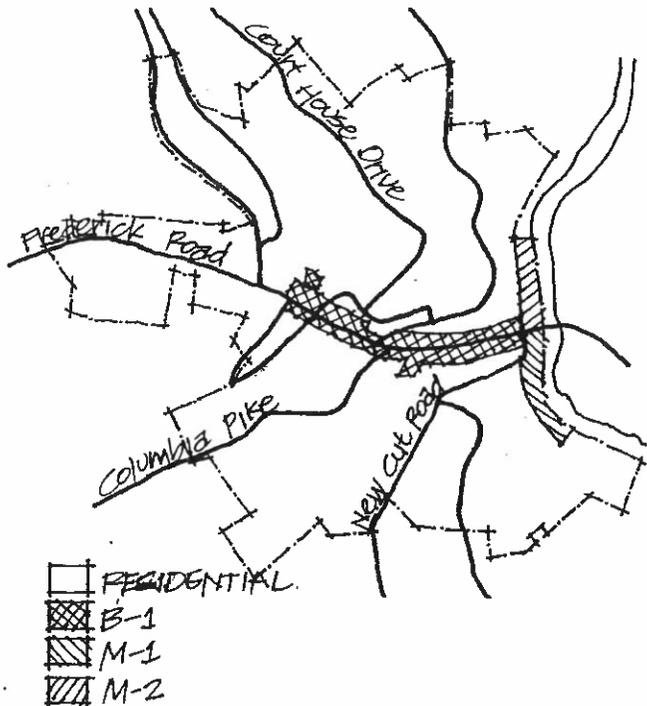
Outdoor Recreation Ellicott City and Oella have untapped potential as a hub for outdoor recreation activities: hiking, biking, picnicking, and boating. Not only is Ellicott City on the Patapsco River, but it is within walking distance of important sections of Patapsco State Park in Hollofield and Ilchester, and it is in the midst of a developing suburban area in which major natural resources are increasingly scarce. Outdoor recreation is compatible with the specialized commercial and cultural potentials discussed above. The Ellicott City-Oella area should be considered a special section in the state's plan for the Patapsco River, a section in which outdoor recreation is integrated with, rather than separated from, historic, cultural, and specialized commercial activities.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The above findings have implications regarding historic preservation, transportation, parking, streetscape amenities, financing arrangements and sub-area design which are developed in other chapters of this report. A few policy implications regarding land and building use controls are developed here.

Zoning. Howard County adopted its first zoning ordinance in 1961, primarily to guide new suburban development. Yet the old trade district in Ellicott City was virtually completely developed by the 1920's, and had undergone a century and a half of unregulated evolution before that. The attempt to fit the old trade district into new zoning categories has created some confusion: Most of the district is in the B-1 "local business" zone. Yet, uses permitted in the M-R "restricted manufacturing" zone may be approved; and yard, lot coverage, and off-street parking regulations normally required in the B-1 zone may be waived where the unique topographic aspects of the old town make compliance impossible or inordinately difficult.

DOWNTOWN ZONING: EXISTING



The current zoning policy does not really constitute a barrier to desirable development, but neither does it provide an adequate guide. Though the old trade district is of similar scale as some modern "local business" centers, it is really "local" neither in its past roles nor its future potentials. In the past, Ellicott City was a regional center, and included many functions not found in suburban convenience centers: manufacturing plants, hardware stores and lumber yards, appliance dealers, cultural and entertainment activities, religious and educational institutions, hotels, and residences. Similarly, Ellicott City's future potentials are more regional than local: while its uses must

be compatible with the physical constraints of existing structures, its patrons will be increasingly drawn from a broad surrounding market area. New guidelines* are needed:

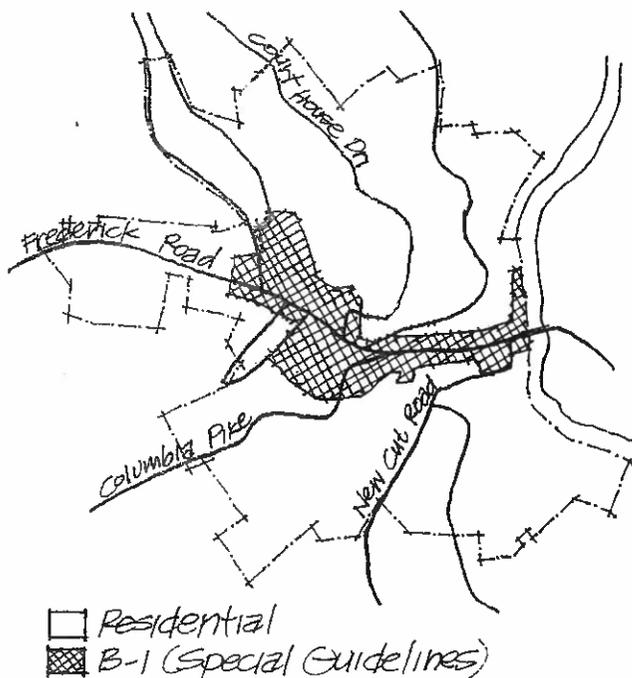
- Permitted uses in the old trade district should include some not allowed in the local business zone: e.g. residential uses, including residences as a secondary use in conjunction with retail, commercial, or office uses; hotels or hostels having 12 units or less; visitor service facilities such as information centers and comfort stations; cultural facilities such as libraries, museums, auditoriums, theaters.
- Other uses should be permitted provided that they meet guidelines which would help ensure compatibility with the physical constraints of existing structures in the downtown: e.g. there might be guidelines regarding the maximum floor area of individual business operations.
- Still other uses should be permitted only on a conditional basis, the condition being a finding that the proposed use meets overall objectives for the downtown as laid out in the master plan: e.g. open air retail functions, such as outdoor restaurants, cafes, or produce markets; theaters or restaurants with live entertainment; off-street parking facilities, at grade or in structures; large-scale (e.g. over 4,000 square feet) public or quasi-public uses.
- The topographic and historic qualities of properties in the old trade district are so unique and varied that general yard, lot coverage and even height regulations, applying equally to every situation, are of little utility in achieving planning goals. What is needed are detailed guidelines, derived from analysis of the archi-

- For similar reasons, off-street parking requirements of normal commercial zones do not apply in Ellicott City. The topography makes it impossible to develop parking facilities on a lot-by-lot basis, and the historic character makes it quite inappropriate to attempt to do so. An effective strategy requires a cooperative approach to the provision of parking for downtown uses, described in Chapter 6.
- Like parking, the improvement of streetscape amenities in the old trade district must be accomplished through cooperative effort. Therefore, the normal obligations of commercial developers to provide sidewalks, landscaping, lighting and other site improvements should not strictly apply. This conclusion does not reduce the importance of streetscape amenities as a condition for enhancement of the old trade district, but it does suggest that their development may be better accomplished through means other than private development controls.
- A new approach to commercial signs is needed, both to enhance the visual character of the historic district, and to respond to changing commercial functions of the downtown. The new approach should deal with the type, size, placement, illumination, and general design of commercial signs, and should be summarized as part of the guidelines for applying the existing B-1 zone in the old trade district.

Codes. Existing building and fire codes were developed with new construction primarily in mind, and are difficult to apply consistently to structures built and occupied over a period of 200 years. In order to make the fullest possible use of existing downtown space, particularly space on upper levels or in residential use, procedures for relaxing rigid applications to historic downtown structures, while retaining basic health and safety requirements, need to be developed. Otherwise, there will continue to be large amounts of vacant and underutilized upper level space; potential residential uses will not be realized; the economic potential and vitality of the downtown will suffer; and historic preservation efforts will be retarded. Three approaches to this problem are possible:

- The first works within the context of the existing codes and might be called the "where-there-is-a-will-there-is-a-way" approach. Property owners, elected officials, top code enforcement officers, and historic preservation and business interests would hammer out a general policy for adherence to basic code purposes, selective relaxation of certain code provisions, and encouragement of adaptive use of existing structures in the old trade district. Negotiations between individual property owners and enforcement officers could then be conducted within the context of a general policy reflecting overall goals and purposes in downtown.
- A second possible approach is the preparation and adoption of a special set of "minimum property standards for rehabilitation", the purpose of which is to develop separate sets of regulations applying to new construction and to rehabilitation, each of which is based on the same broad health and safety objectives. This approach has been used successfully in several other historic districts in the United States.
- A third approach, which might be combined with either of the first two, is the adoption of a new "performance" code for the county as a whole, a code couched in terms of purposes to be accomplished rather than specific methods to be followed.

DOWNTOWN ZONING: PROPOSED



tectural and visual character of Ellicott City specifically, and applied sensitively on a case-by-case basis. Chapter 7 is devoted to this issue.

*The suggested guidelines could be incorporated in the existing zoning ordinance through a revision of section 30.12.

3. LAND MANAGEMENT

The uniqueness of Ellicott City has as much to do with its natural qualities as its historic structures. Founded by the Ellicott brothers at a site where several streams converge and empty into the Patapsco, it is likely that the image of the old town in the minds of residents and visitors has as much to do with the rugged terrain, the rocky streams, and the character of the still-open land as with colonial mill buildings dating from the early 1800's.

Ellicott City's terrain makes typical low-density residential development extraordinarily expensive and difficult, and this provided a measure of protection for the old town during the post-World War II suburban expansion period. But today, parcels outside Ellicott City with fewer development constraints are rapidly being consumed, and future development pressures will focus on remaining parcels, including those in and near the old town. The Agnes and Eloise floods dramatized the vulnerability of the old town to damage from storm water runoff, a problem which will increase with increasing development of the 2,300 acres drained by the converging streams.

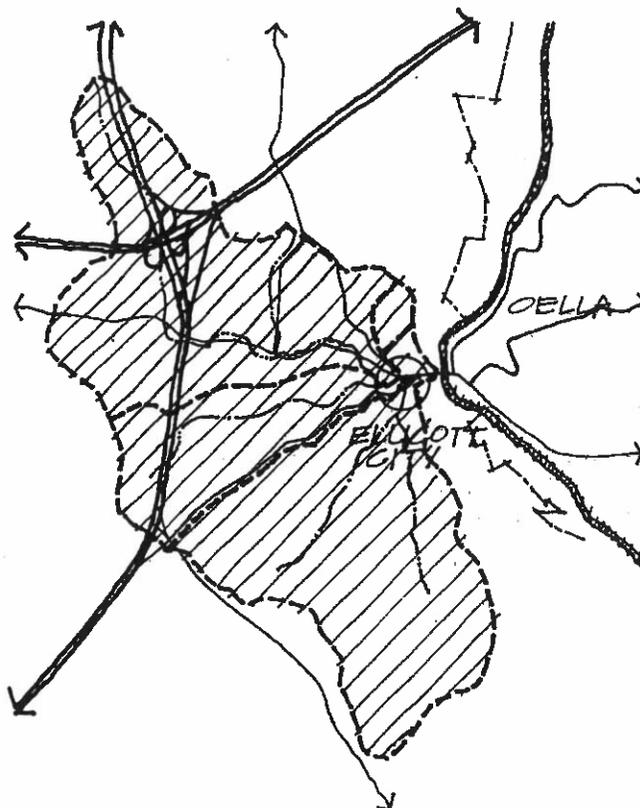
Thus, a consideration of the natural qualities of Ellicott City raises a series of important and interrelated issues:

- what should be the character of prospective residential development in the environs of the old town?
- how can the storm runoff and other ecological impacts of prospective development on downstream areas be minimized?
- how can the natural beauty of the area be preserved for future generations to enjoy?
- can a transitional buffer between the old town and nearby highway-oriented commercial and residential development be established and maintained?

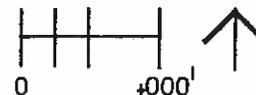
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PLANNING AREA

The study invested considerable effort in an analysis of the natural character of the old town and its environs, and

in an assessment of the implications of natural qualities for future development in the area. The findings can be summarized as follows:



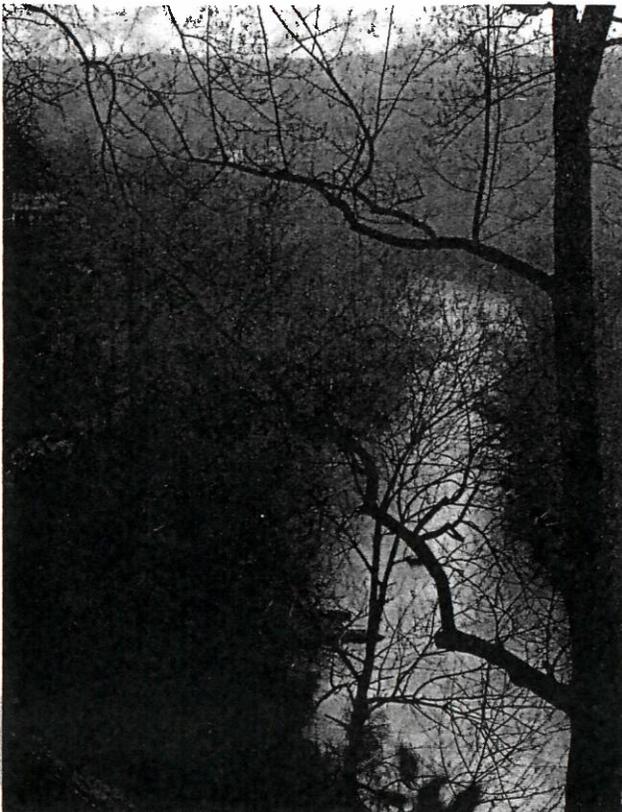
TIBER RIVER DRAINAGE AREA



ELLICOTT CITY COUNTRYSIDE



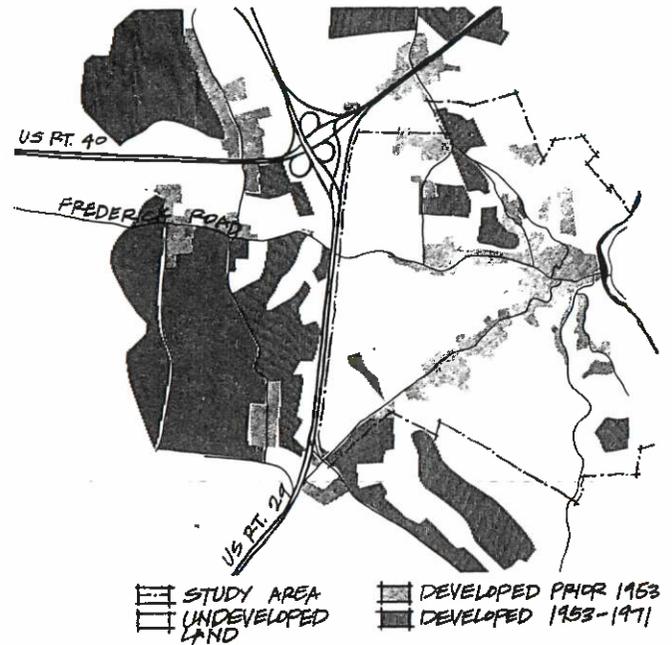
PATAPSCO RIVER, FROM CHURCH ROAD



The Drainage Area. The Tiber River flowing through the old town drains a 2,350 acre area extending west of U.S. 29, north of U.S. 40, and south of Taylor Manor Hospital; development in this area has direct impact on the old town.

The old town and its immediate environs have over 1,000 acres of undeveloped land, much of which has natural characteristics of special implications for development: 13% is flood-prone; 43% has bedrock less than 6

feet beneath the surface; 42% has slopes greater than 15%; 22% combines steep slope and shallow bedrock conditions. 22% has none of the above development constraints, but may have moderate slopes, significant soil conditions, or valuable vegetation resources.



RECENT DEVELOPMENT PATTERN; REMAINING UNDEVELOPED LAND

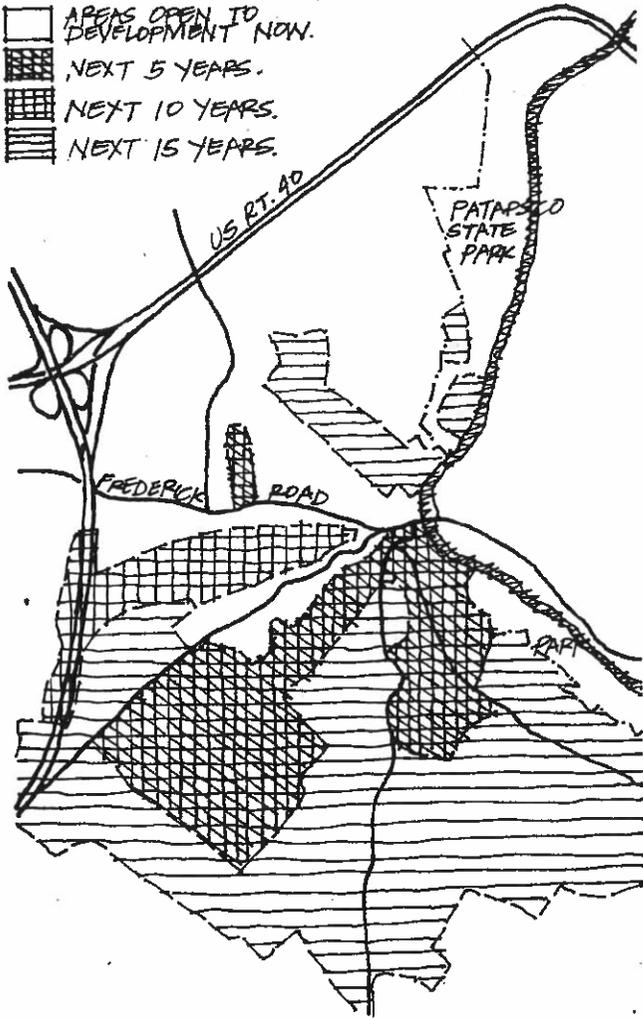
Development Prospects. Almost all of the undeveloped land is in private ownership, zoned for single-family residential subdivision development on 1/2 acre lots (R-20 zone).

Since Ellicott City is in an area facing heavy suburban development pressures, in which parcels with relatively few development constraints are rapidly being consumed; and since the county's water, sewer, and road access programs will extend major development services to most of the planning area over the next 10-20 years, it must be assumed that presently undeveloped parcels in Ellicott City will be subject to development, many in the next 10 years.

The Ecological Hazards. Development-as-usual on land with characteristics such as those in Ellicott City is highly undesirable both from the ecological and the developer's economic point of view:

- County law now prevents development within 100 year flood plains, because of potential impacts on storm runoff, soil erosion, and stream flow characteristics. Development on steep slopes also involves special complications: roads and parking areas are difficult to locate and involve extensive grading; structures are more difficult to site and the design of building entrances is more complicated; building foundations are more sophisticated and costly; the development of outside living and play areas often require expensive retaining walls, or grading to prevent flooding of the building; the provision of sewers is difficult and

AREAS OPENED TO DEVELOPMENT; CURRENT COUNTY SEWER SERVICE EXTENSION PLANS

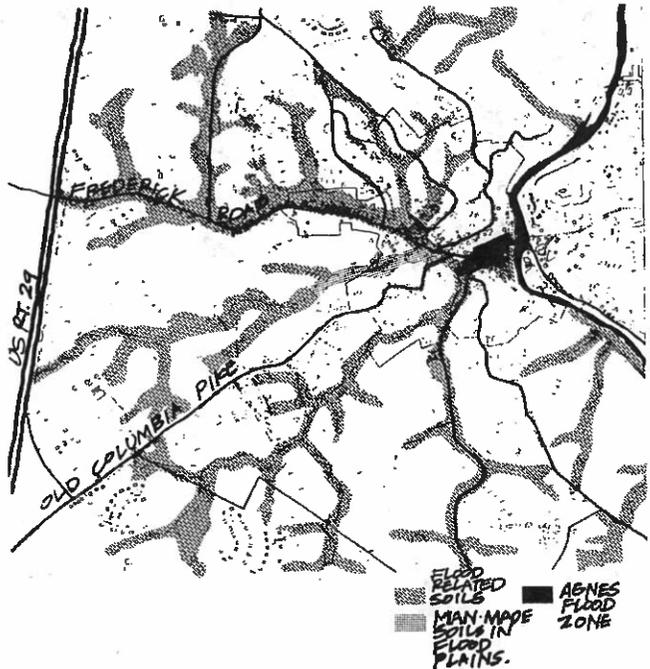


- costly due to the slope limitations on the flow within the pipes.
- Not only is development more complicated in steep slope areas, but ecological hazards for downstream areas are incurred: storm runoff, soil erosion, alterations in high and low stream flow levels, etc.
 - And, when the slopes are especially steep (e.g. above 25%), or occur in combination with shallow bedrock, as is often the case in Ellicott City, all of the problems discussed above are exacerbated.

Existing Zoning. There are three major reasons why the existing R-20 zone is inadequate as a guide for prospective future residential development in the environs of the old town, or in residential enclaves within the historic district. On many parcels, standard subdivision platting is simply impossible: slopes are too steep, flood-prone areas too extensive, bedrock too close to the surface. In these areas the county faces the problem of repeated requests for up-zoning (e.g. to RA-1), which would allow increases in density in combination with permission to build

multi-family housing types and to depart from the 1/2 acre lot development pattern.

Even where subdivision platting is possible (e.g. where shallow bedrock conditions are combined with moderate slopes of 8-15%) it is often undesirable. On a per dwelling unit basis, single-family subdivisions involve extensive



FLOOD PRONE AREAS



STEEP SLOPE AREAS

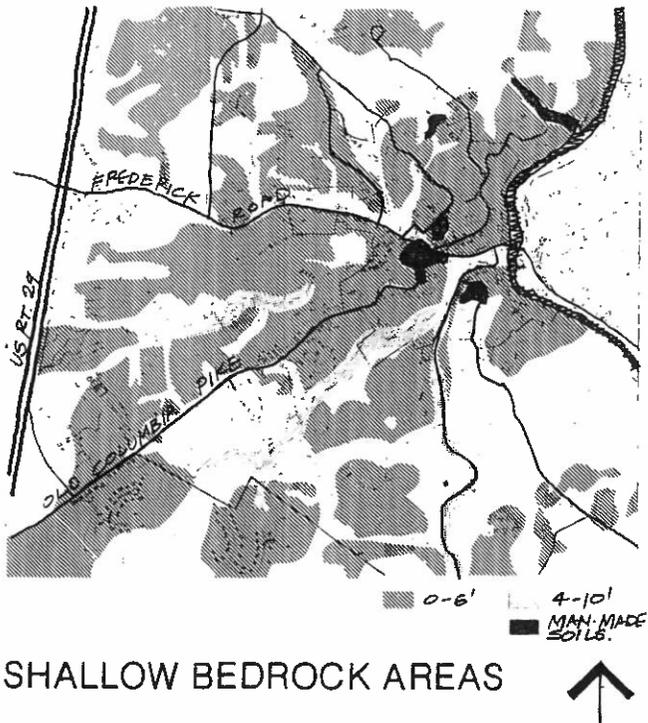


site disruption, land coverage, road and utilities networks. Even in the most developable portions of Ellicott City, such development would cause considerable damage to the parcels themselves, and threaten further damage downstream, including the downtown.

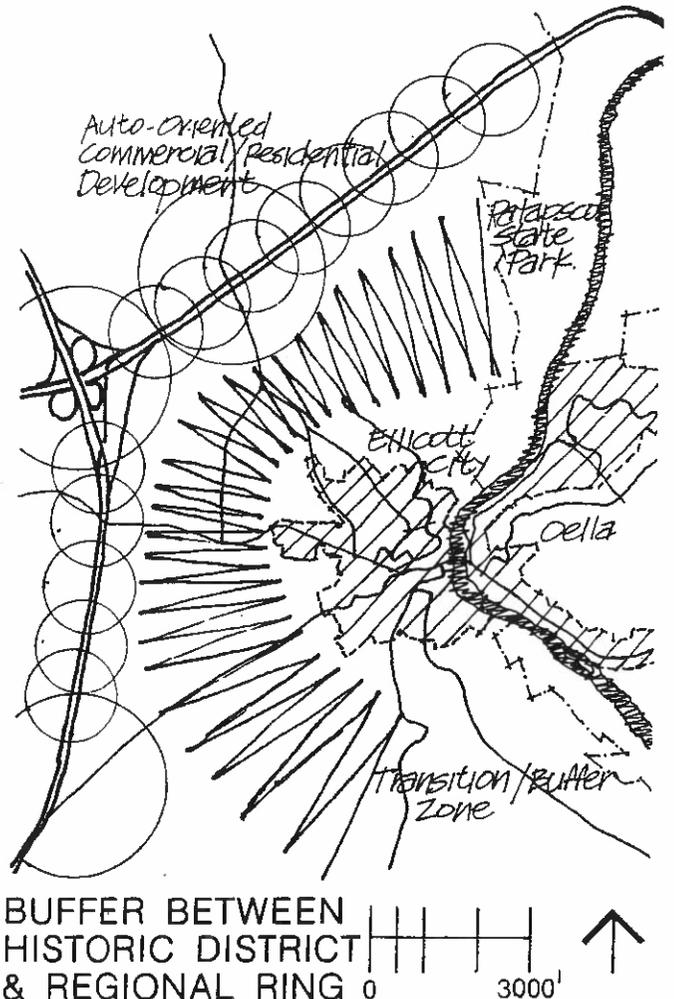
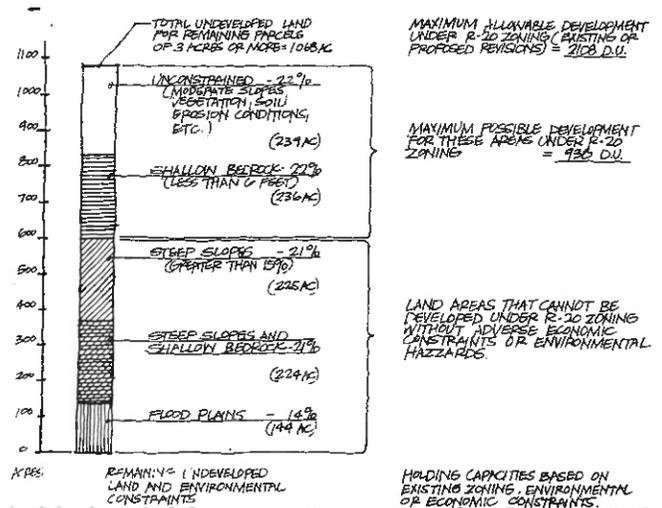
Since single family detached development (standard or clustered) cannot occur in areas with severe natural constraints, and since such areas are distributed unequally among land parcels in the planning area, Ellicott City land owners would be treated unequally should development occur under existing zoning. The planning area has 74 parcels ranging from 3 to 100 acres: on 7 parcels, 75% or more of the total units allowed under R-20 zoning could be developed without infringing on flood plain or steep slope conditions; on 47 parcels less than 50% of the allowed units could be built; and on 11 parcels less than 10% of the allowed units could be built.

Low Densities. While it is necessary to depart from standard subdivision development patterns, it is desirable to keep overall residential densities low. Not only do lower densities make possible more sensitive treatment of difficult sites, but they help maintain the preconditions for appropriate treatment of the auto approaches to the town. Much of the traffic generated by prospective residential development will find its way onto these approach roads. Low development densities in the planning area, in combination with appropriate transportation and traffic policies, will help achieve lower traffic volumes on historic district approach roads. This is part of a general transportation strategy to preserve the residential traffic uses along the approach roads, to preserve the character of the approach roads to the historic district, and to avoid major road construction expense. (See Chapter 5).

Existing Residential Areas. Prospective new development must not be allowed to damage the character of the existing residential enclaves in the old town and its environs. Many of these residences have a visual quality which is impossible to reproduce in the modern age, and



NATURAL DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS; FEASIBLE DEVELOPMENT UNDER R-20 ZONE



provide an especially appropriate approach to the special commercial and cultural district. Many, however, are on large sites, and are thus vulnerable to inappropriate infill development. In other cases, the residential structures are of extraordinary size, are therefore vulnerable to inappropriate conversion to multi-family or other uses. Measures are needed to enable these areas to adapt successfully to changing conditions while retaining their special character.

A Sense of Countryside. The open character of the environs of the old town should be retained, for urban design as well as ecological reasons. In different degree, each of the approaches to the old town retains a sense of the countryside. Trees and fields are as prominent in the visual impression as man-made elements. While the old town itself is quite urban, historically it has always been close to the surrounding countryside, and it is appropriate to retain in the future a reminder of this past relationship.

A LAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

A comprehensive land management program is needed, in the Tiber River drainage area in general, and in the Ellicott City planning area in particular. The objectives of the program are derived from the environmental assessment, and include the following:

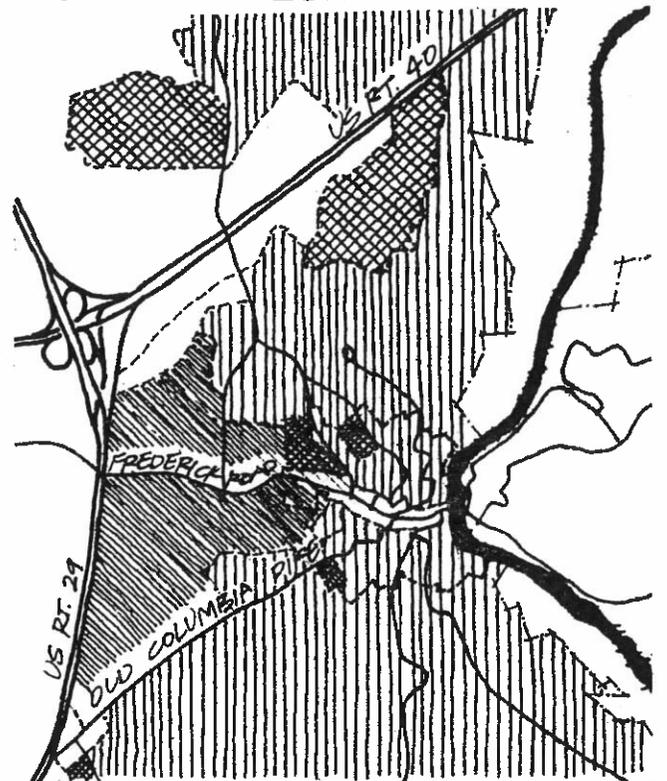
- minimize increases in storm water runoff resulting from residential development in the planning area; protect the converging streams and historic downtown from the ecological impacts of increased storm water runoff;
- provide a framework within which the character of existing residential neighborhoods can be maintained under changing conditions; preserve a sense of the countryside along the approaches to the colonial mill town and the traditional county seat;
- maintain residential traffic feeding onto the historic district approach roads within the bounds outlined in the transportation strategy;
- establish an appropriate buffer and transition between the activities oriented to regional ring roads (US 40, US 29, Md 103) and the historic district;
- encourage high quality site planning and design for residential development in and near the historic district;
- treat landowners equitably, respecting their development rights, but guarding against zoning variances for higher development densities.

The elements of the program should include special initiatives in residential zoning, residential site planning and design, storm water management, and open space planning. Before describing these, however, it should be emphasized that the land management program is an indispensable part of the program for flood damage reduction, presented in the following chapter: Without the land management program, the effectiveness of the measures proposed for the reduction of flood damage in the old trade district can quickly be reduced to nothing.

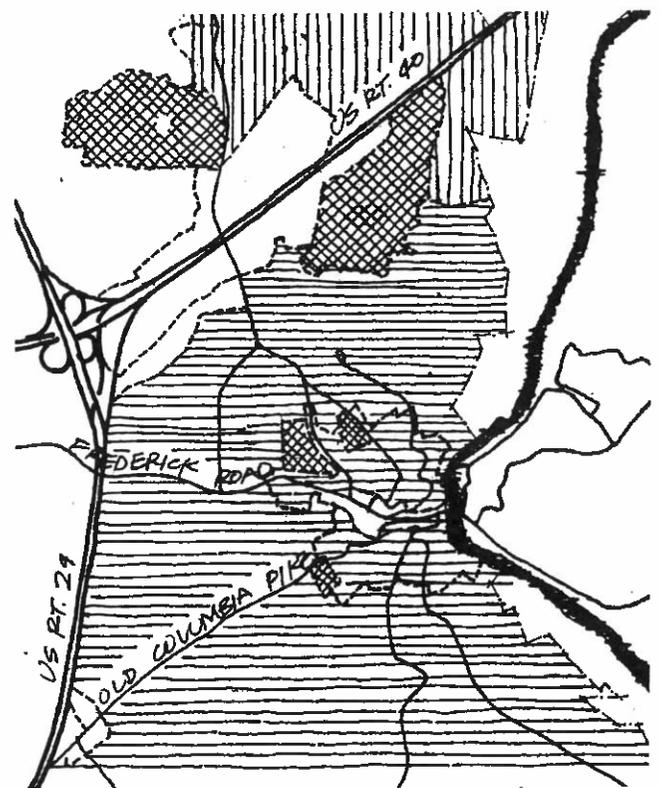
Residential Zoning. A new zone is proposed for residential areas in the historic district and its environs. The zone could be designated "R-SE" (residential, special environmental), and may be applicable in other areas with characteristics similar to those in Ellicott City. In outline, the features of the new zone would be as follows:

- On any development parcel, overall development density would be limited to 2 dwelling units per acre. The calculation of the number of dwelling units allowed would be based on the total acreage of the parcel, regardless of its natural constraints.

RESIDENTIAL ZONING:



EXISTING			RSC	CURRENT ZONING
	R-20	2 DU/ACRE		PROPOSAL 4DU/AC
	RA-1	12 DU/ACRE		MASTER PLAN
			RSE	PROPOSAL 2DU/AC



PROPOSED

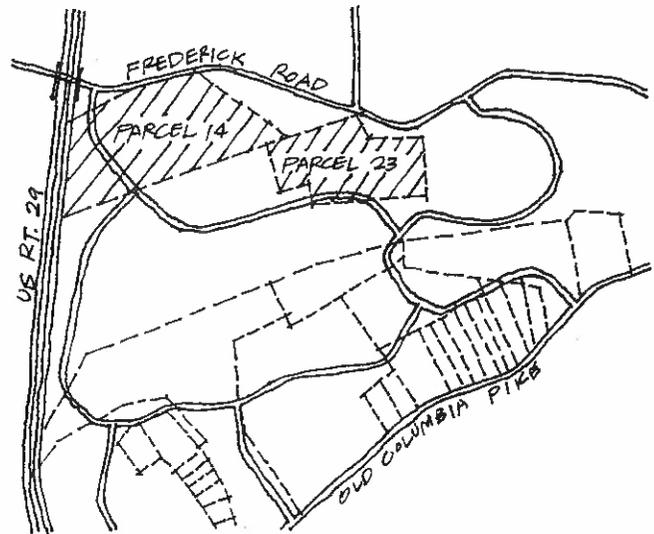
- The proportion of a parcel which could be covered by impervious surfaces would be limited to 20%. On flood-prone portions of a parcel, land coverage would be zero: i.e. no development. On portions having slopes of 25% or more, land coverage should be 10% or less. The term "land coverage" here refers to any impervious surfaces introduced as a result of development, and includes streets, sidewalks, driveways, patios, and accessory structures, as well as the residences themselves.
- Residential development proposals would have to meet a storm water management criterion, described below. The suggested criterion is consistent with the land coverage guidelines, and is aimed at protecting the downtown from the effects of a "25 year" storm, and at preserving the ecological character of the streams which converge in the downtown.
- In addition to the single family detached house (standard or clustered), fourplex and townhouse residential development types would be permitted in the R-SE zone. Note, however, that flexibility in residential development types does not imply flexibility in overall development density, which would be maintained at 2 dwelling units per acre. On a parcel developed with townhouses, 85% could be retained in natural state.
- Conversion of single-family structures to apartment or condominium use would be allowed only on a conditional basis, the condition being rigorous review of the structure, the site, and the effects on the surrounding residential neighborhood. Much of the residential character of Ellicott City is created by large residential structures, dating from the late 1800's and early 1900's, and sited on 2 to 7 acre parcels. If these structures can be allowed to adapt sensitively to changing conditions, they will be better able to withstand future pressures for redevelopment, conversion to non-residential uses, or encroachment by contemporary development of entirely different character.

Residential Site Planning. All residential development proposals in the R-SE zone would undergo site plan review. If the ecological objectives for the planning area are to be achieved, it is important not only to meet the overall density and land coverage requirements, but also to ensure that new development occurs on the most appropriate portions of sites, and that important vegetation and soil conditions are considered. This can only be done on a case-by-case basis, through site plan review. Flood plain, steep slope, bedrock, and vegetation information for 74 parcels in the planning area has been developed by this study. A developer would be responsible for refining this information for his parcel, and for showing how his plan responds to the natural features of the site. Public officials would be responsible for reviewing the site plan, clarifying the guidelines, and suggesting better ways to meet them. In the case of conditional use requests, review would extend beyond the site plan to the treatment of existing structures, and details of landscaping, parking design, and neighborhood relationships.

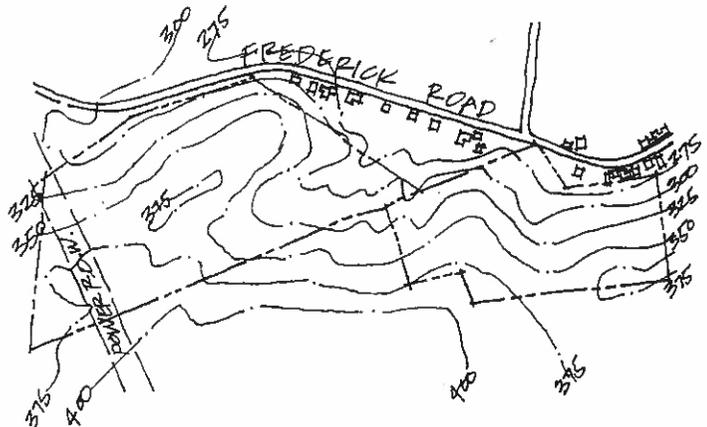
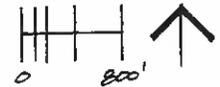
In order to meet the land coverage guidelines of the R-SE zone, certain modifications of normal subdivision requirements may be needed: e.g. narrower residential streets; the substitution of porous for impervious surfaces in the development of driveways, sidewalks, or parking facilities. Since adherence to the land coverage guidelines is a key factor in reducing storm runoff and flood damage, and because of the special relationship between the old town and its residential environs, these departures from standard practice are justified.

Storm Water Management. The Department of Public Works has recently developed criteria for storm water

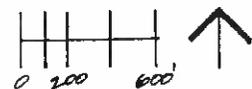
LAND MANAGEMENT CASE STUDY:



CASE STUDY PARCELS AND POSSIBLE ROAD NETWORK



TOPOGRAPHY

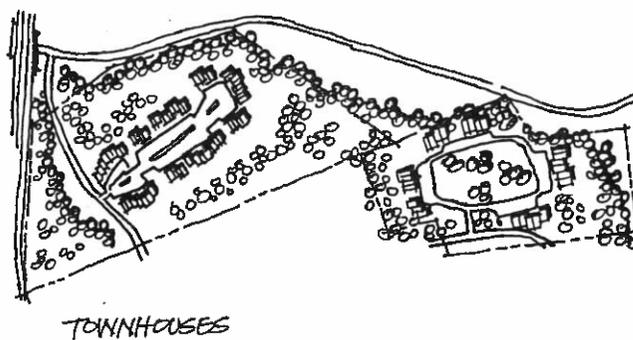
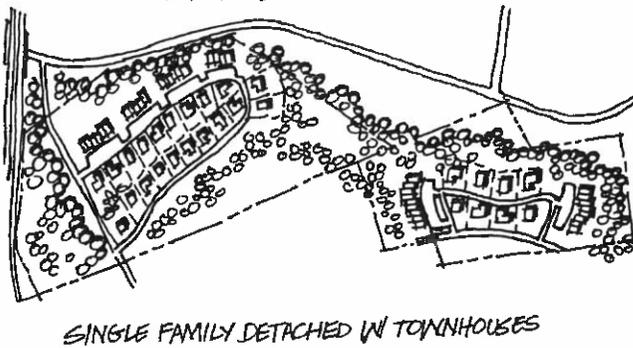
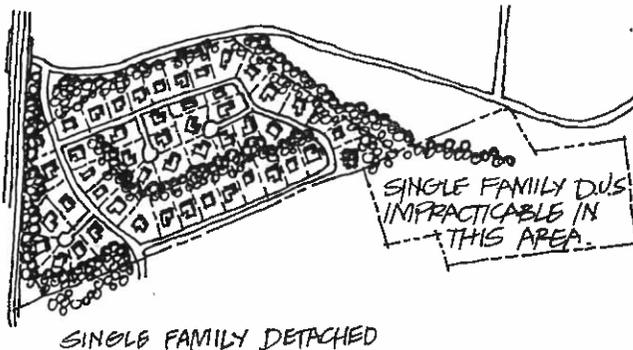


management in commercial, industrial and apartment development in the county*. Under the criteria, the storm water runoff of a two year storm on the undeveloped site is calculated and compared with the runoff of a 10 year storm under proposed development. The difference must be "retained" by the developer using engineering methods such as seepage pits, retention basins, or stilling basins.

As important as storm water management is in the county in general, it is even more important in the Tiber River drainage area. The historic district and its environs are special; because of the slope, bedrock and vegetation characteristics of the land; because of the environmental quality of the converging streams draining the land; and because of the historic and environmental value of the old trade district at the conjunction of the Tiber with the Patapsco River. Also, it is the larger, less frequent storm which threatens particular flood damage in the downtown.

* See Inter-Office Memorandum, Bureau of Engineering, January 8, 1974.

ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLANS (74 ALLOWED DWELLING UNITS ON 37 ACRES)



NOTE: EACH PLAN ILLUSTRATES
74 ALLOWED D.U.S ON
37 ACRES OF LAND.

Therefore, it is suggested that, in the Tiber River drainage area, the basis of comparison should be a 25 rather than a 10 year storm, and that the criteria should apply to single-family and office as well as other types of development. It is important that the criteria apply to single-family development, since most of the undeveloped land in the drainage area is designated for this use. Because of the land coverage guidelines, the storm runoff from a 25 year storm in the proposed R-SE zone would be similar to the runoff from a 10 year storm under the existing residential zone. Thus, the additional burden of the more rigorous storm water management criteria on residential developers in the Tiber River drainage area would be reasonable.

A special exception in the proposed "special residential, environmental" zone should be tied to additional efforts to minimize storm runoff impacts on downstream areas. Developers, who, through the use of skillful site

design or engineering measures can show that storm runoff after development would be no more than 15% greater than that before development*, should be permitted to develop at overall densities of three dwelling units per acre.

Open Space Planning. Three streams (New Cut Run, Catrocks Run, and Hudson Branch) converge in the old trade district in Ellicott City. Regarding these streams, the plan has three major objectives: The first is to preserve the streambeds themselves, to prevent the encroachment of urban development in the streambeds. Almost all of the streambeds are in 100 year flood plains and almost all are bordered by steep hillsides. The proposed R-SE zone, which would prevent development in flood-prone areas and limit land coverage in steep slope areas and other areas of special natural character, would thus be a major regulatory tool for preventing the encroachment of development in the three streambeds. If necessary, the R-SE regulations can be supplemented by another dealing with the encroachment problem, a regulation saying simply that no development will be permitted within 200 feet of the designated streams, except by special exception. If regulatory measures prove insufficient (e.g. if the R-SE zone is not enacted, or is not rigorously enforced) public acquisition will ultimately be required simply to ensure that development does not encroach on Ellicott City's major streams.

The second purpose is to preserve the "ecological character" or streamflow characteristics of Ellicott City's streams. This objective is broader than the first, and requires attention to Tiber River watershed as well as the streambeds themselves. As development in a watershed changes its storm runoff characteristics, streamflow patterns can be drastically altered. Since the volume of surface runoff is larger, more sharply "peaked", and more forceful, peak streamflows are higher, and the stream banks become scoured. Since less rainwater is absorbed into the ground, groundwater systems are less able to feed the stream during the dry periods, and low flows become even lower. The stream is transformed into a drainage ditch, full-to-brimming after a storm, a dry, scoured gully between storms.

Considering the special character of Catrocks and New Cut, this result would be especially sad in Ellicott City. The preventive involves a comprehensive land management program for the watershed, aimed at minimizing the effects of urban development in increasing storm water runoff. The zoning, site planning and storm water management recommendations are necessary measures for preserving the ecological character of Ellicott City's streams.

The third purpose is to create appropriate public uses of the streambed resources, uses related to the area-wide demand for open space resources, and to the specific characteristics and suitabilities of each streambed:

It is reasonably certain that the area-wide demand for public use of Ellicott City's open space resources will increase: Continuing suburban development will consume much presently open land and increase demand for the resources that remain, particularly resources of extraordinary quality such as those in Ellicott City. Furthermore, development of specialized commercial and cultural functions in Ellicott City could also increase its attractiveness as a center for recreation and open space activity.

*A recent study showed how, in a residential development of 12 dwelling units per acre, the increase in storm water runoff could be limited to 12.5%. *Environmental Action Strategy: Annapolis, Maryland.* pp. 42-45.

The first priority for open space development in Ellicott City is the Patapsco River shoreline, extending north towards Hollofield and south towards Ilchester on both sides of the river. Regional open space users (bikers, picnickers, campers, boaters, hikers) will quite naturally be attracted to this major natural resource, and the river shoreline should be carefully developed to accommodate them.

New Cut Run presents a different opportunity. It is one of the loveliest streambeds in the area, but it would not attract intensive regional open space use, particularly if the Patapsco shoreline were being developed for such uses. New Cut should be preserved and developed for *low intensity* open space uses: e.g. a walking trail along the west bank of the stream, a few small parking and picnic areas along New Cut Road on the east bank.

Catrocks is similar to New Cut in many natural characteristics, but it differs in that a public road was never developed in its streambed. This fact creates a different set of practical problems in the development of public open space uses. On the other hand, natural resources of the quality of Catrocks are becoming increasingly scarce in Howard County, and the question whether public access on some basis is possible and desirable will eventually require serious and objective consideration. It would seem, however, that this consideration could await development of open space uses along the Patapsco River and New Cut Run, so that it could take into account the public response to the higher priority facilities and the experience gained in their management.

Hudson Branch has extensive existing residential development close to the stream, and between it and upper Main Street. Special efforts are needed to prevent further degradation of the stream and its banks. Also, neighborhood recreation facilities, some of which might be in close proximity to the stream, should be developed along upper Main Street. However, open space facilities for general public access are neither needed nor appropriate along Hudson Branch.

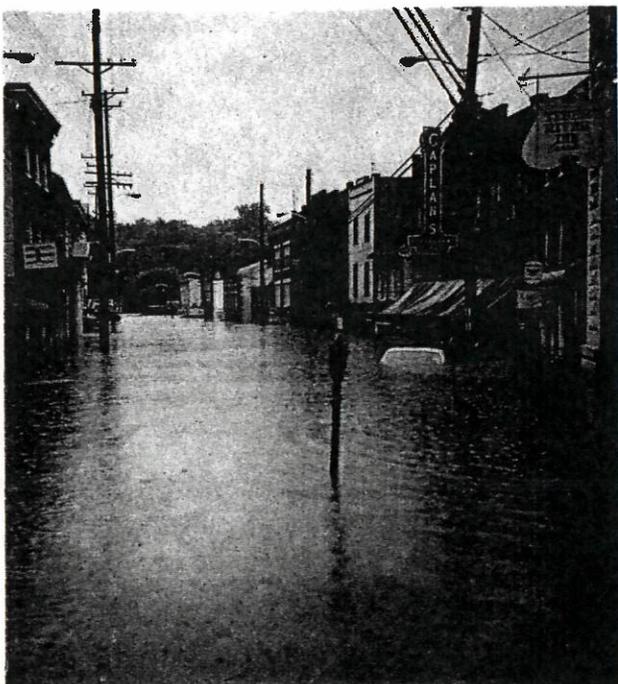
4. FLOOD DAMAGE REDUCTION

The "Agnes" Flood in 1972 and the "Eloise" Flood in 1975 caused much damage and disruption in the historic downtown area of Ellicott City. The costs of Eloise, the smaller of the two storms, included over \$100,000 in damage to private structures, and over \$20,000 in clean-up and repair of public areas, figures which do not reflect the special costs for police, fire, and social services during the flood; the disruption of the lives of downtown residents; the loss of personal property and business inventories; the

loss of business during and after the flood; or the effects of the threat of flood on the restoration and enhancement of the old trade district.

Measures to reduce the damage which would be caused by still another major storm are being considered on several fronts: The Army Corps of Engineers is conducting a long-range investigation of flooding problems in the entire Patapsco River watershed. The Division of Storm Water Management in the Department of Public Works is reviewing alternative methods of flood prevention in Ellicott City. The Ellicott City Business Association has formed a special committee to investigate specific measures for flood reduction and flood protection.

AGNES FLOOD, 1972



The treatment of flood problems in this chapter is limited to three questions. First, what exactly happens in Ellicott City as the Patapsco River rises? A detailed description will provide a basis for evaluating how effective various flood prevention measures might be in storms of various magnitudes. Second, what measures for flood prevention or flood protection are possible, and how consistent are they with the overall objectives of the Ellicott City Plan? Third, what is a feasible program of action for reducing flood damage in Ellicott City? Which program elements can be implemented now and which require further study?

HOW FLOODING OCCURS IN ELLICOTT CITY

Several characteristics of the Tiber River watershed distinguish it from others emptying into the Patapsco River: The railroad embankment crosses the mouth of the Tiber, and makes its confluence with the Patapsco a man-made rather than a natural design. The man-made development directly above and alongside the Tiber River channel exacerbates the degree of flooding that would naturally occur. The narrowness of the Tiber River chan-

nel concentrates storm water in the old trade district, and increases its forcefulness when the banks overflow. The steep rocky hillsides alongside the converging streams which make up the Tiber increase the peaking effect and forcefulness of storm water in the old trade district.

Because of its special characteristics, an effective program for reducing flood damage in the Tiber watershed must be based on a sound understanding of the hydrodynamics of major storms in this area specifically. Though no scientific analysis is available, close observation by Ellicott City residents and businessmen during the Agnes and Eloise storms makes the following description possible:

"Ten Feet". When the Patapsco reaches a level of 10'0" on the Ellicott City gauge*, water begins to back up into the storm sewers draining the north and south side of Main Street.

"Ten Feet, Seven". At 10'7", the Tiber channel begins to overflow at its mouth; water begins to creep around the eastern end of the railroad pier, flooding the lowest section of Main Street underneath the railroad bridge. At this point, the basements of the two buildings closest to the railroad embankment on the north side of Main Street begin to flood.

"Eleven, One". At 11'1", the Main Street bridge crossing the Patapsco River is full-to-brimming; the lower section of the roadway at the western end of the bridge is flooded; and flooding of basements of buildings closest to the river continues.

"Eleven, Six". At 11'6", water fills the eastern end of the channel under Maryland Avenue, and the channel constrictions immediately upstream come into play. This is a critical point for flooding in Ellicott City. As the water level on the Ellicott City gauge rises above 11'6", the level of the Tiber in its own channel rises even more rapidly, flooding Maryland Inn, Villa Food Market and other stores below the Tiber Alley Bridge.

"Thirteen Feet". When the channel fills at the eastern end of Maryland Avenue, 2 feet of clearance remain beneath the Tiber Alley bridge. At 13' on the gauge, the Tiber Alley bridge is full. As the water level rises above this point, structures along the south side of Main Street west of Tiber Alley are increasingly threatened.

Thirteen feet also marks approximately the point at which the banks overflow on the Oella side of the river. The Patapsco River waters create what might be termed a "diversion channel" between Frederick Road and the Flour Mill. Observers during major storms have noticed that the water level on the Ellicott City gauge drops sharply at this point, from 13' to about 12', before resuming its steady rise.

"Fourteen, Five". At 14'5", the Patapsco River overflows its banks in Ellicott City; the waters surmount the retaining wall along the western bank of the river, just above Frederick Road. This is a second critical point in flooding in Ellicott City. At this level, the ability of the Tiber River waters to force their way into the Patapsco decreases, and storm water from the Tiber collects in lower Main Street rather than emptying into the main stream. At 14'5", the first floor of the two buildings closest to the railroad embankment are flooded; along the south side of Main Street, basements are flooded as far up as Caplan's Store. As the

water rises above 14'5", damage on both sides of Main Street increases rapidly.

Eloise. During the Eloise Flood in October, 1975, the water reached a level of 19'0" on the Ellicott City gauge. Eloise was termed a "60 year" storm. Along the south side of Main Street, basements were flooded as far up as the Commercial and Farmers Bank, and first floors were flooded as far up as the "Your Pictured" Shop. Along the north side of Main Street, first floors were flooded as far up as the Red Cross building.

Fifty-two Years Ago. A flood in July 1923 reached a level of approximately 19'6". At this level, the flood waters were above the crossbeams of the railroad bridge. That is, the opening under the railroad bridge was filled.

Agnes. The Agnes Flood in June, 1972 reached a level of 25'. Along the south side of Main Street, basements were flooded as far up as the Old Town Clock Shop, above Leidigs Bakery; first floors were flooded as far up as Chez Fernand, just below Leidigs. Along the north side of Main Street, first floors were flooded as far up as the Owl and Pussycat antique shop.

Ninety Years Ago: the Record Flood. Reports of a flood in July 1886 indicate that the waters reached a level of 40 feet, 10 feet above the B&O railroad tracks.

MEASURES TO REDUCE FLOOD DAMAGE

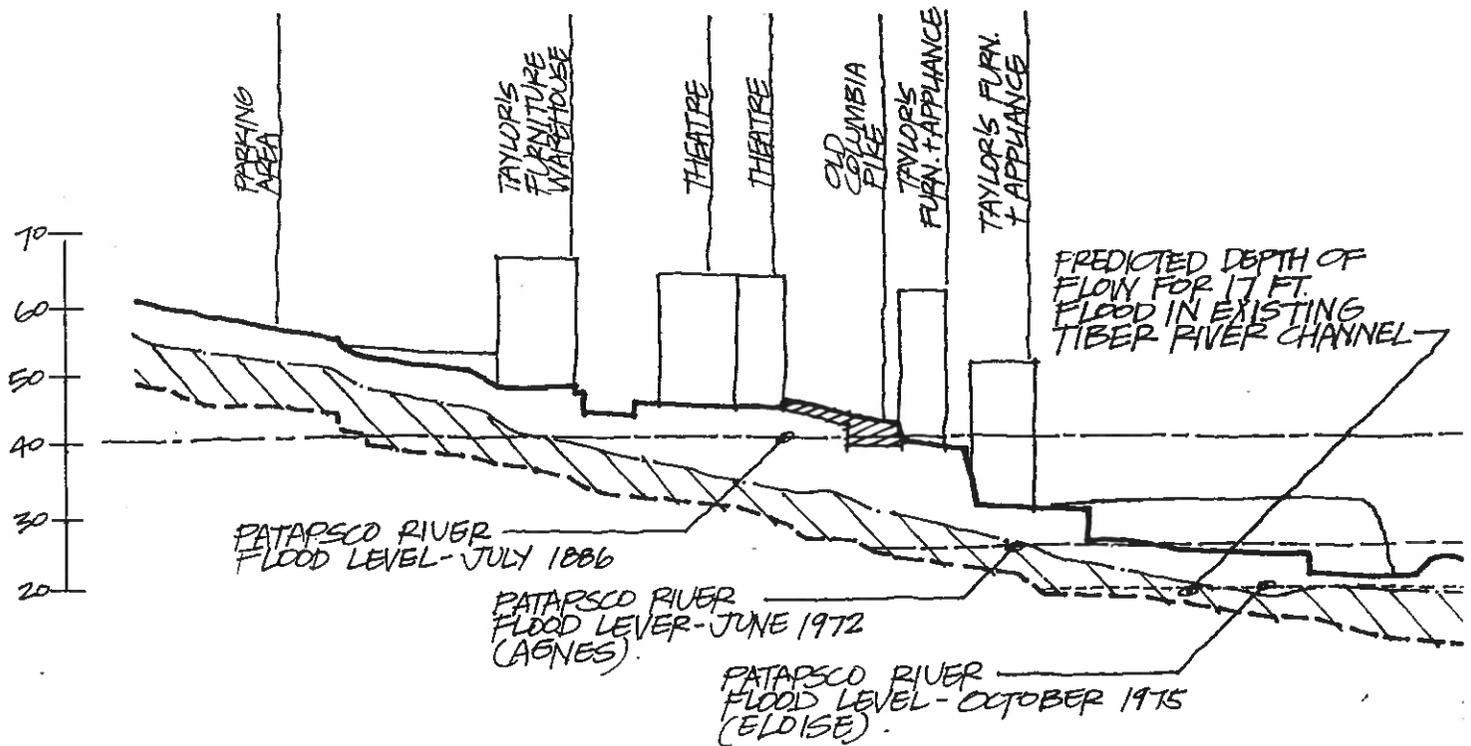
In the wake of the Agnes and Eloise floods, a number of measures for reducing flood damage in Ellicott City have been discussed. This section describes them, associating each with estimates of its effectiveness at various flood levels. It also considers the eligibility of various measures for county funding under current policy, which says that *flood prevention* measures are eligible, whether they directly involve public or private property, but that *flood protection* measures are eligible only if they directly involve public property.

Flood Prevention in Minor Storms. There are two simple measures which would prevent flooding in Ellicott City below the 11'6" level, but whose effectiveness would decrease sharply as the water level rises above 11'6". A means to close off the Main Street storm sewer outlets, coupled with a small pump to get water from the storm sewers to the Tiber, would prevent the backup of water into the storm drains, which now begins at the 10'0" level in Ellicott City. Second, a physical barrier extending from the railroad bridge pier along the Main Street bridge rail would prevent water from coming around the pier and flooding the lowest section of Main Street, which now occurs when the water is at the 10'7" level.

These measures would prevent flooding (the significant but relatively minor flooding which occurs between levels 10'0" and 11'6"), and they directly affect public rights-of-way. Therefore, their relatively small costs are eligible for public funding under current county policy.

Tiber Release Valve #1. There are two measures which would prevent flooding in Ellicott City above the 11'6" level, but whose effectiveness would decrease sharply as the water level rises above 14'5". The first is to provide a more effective "release valve" for the Tiber between Maryland Avenue and the Tiber Alley bridge. A simple means would be to replace the cinder block wall protecting the vacant lot in this section with an attractive rail

* The gauge is located on the west side of the railroad pier south of Main Street. The "zero level" on the Ellicott City gauge is the level of the Patapsco River bottom.



TIBER RIVER FLOOD PROFILE



fence*. The fence would allow water to spill out into Main Street at the vacant lot as well as at the Tiber Alley bridge. It would decrease the force of waters flooding the stores between Tiber Alley and Main Street, and would delay the back-up of storm water west of the Tiber Alley bridge. This release valve would not come into play until the river level had risen above 11'6". While it might delay the point at which the Tiber Alley bridge is filled, its effectiveness would probably decline sharply once the Patapsco overflows its banks at level 14'5".

This release valve measure would directly affect private property, not public rights-of-way, but whether it is properly termed a flood prevention or flood protection measure is questionable. However, the costs involved are small, and implementation could be undertaken by the property owner, with assistance from the business association.

Tiber Release Valve # 2. The second measure to create a more efficient release valve involves the confluence of the Tiber channel with the Patapsco River. Because of the heavy construction of the railroad embankment, this confluence is not a "natural" design but a tight "T" intersection which enables the heavy flows in the Patapsco to block-out the Tiber River waters, and causes more rapid back-up in the Tiber channel. Modifications of the Tiber channel east of the railroad embankment might create a confluence with the Patapsco more similar to what might

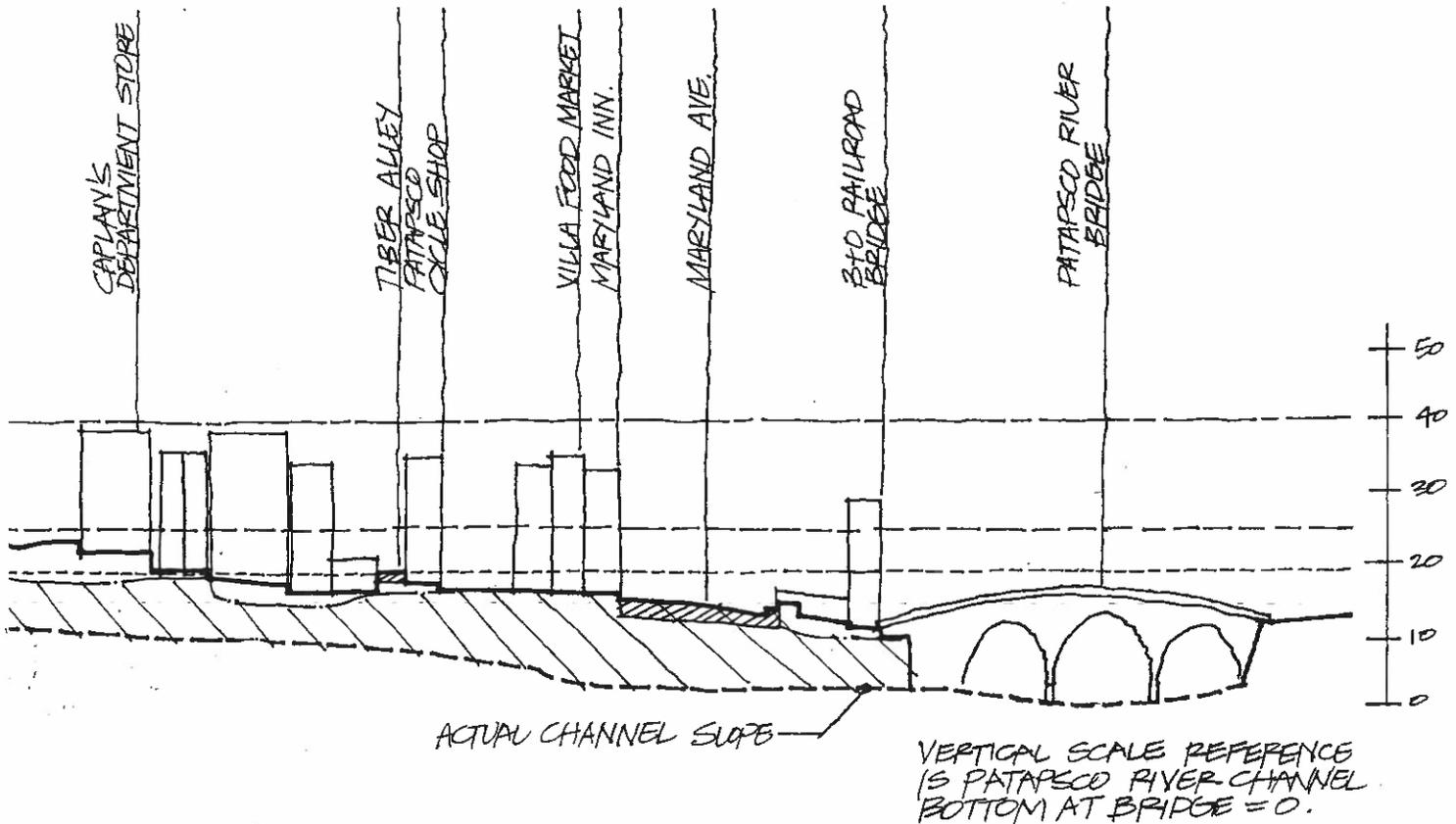
have occurred naturally, and enable the Patapsco to "draw" water from the Tiber more efficiently. It is likely that this measure would slow the back-up of the Tiber as the water level rises above 11'6", but that its effectiveness would decline as the water rises above level 14'5", when the Patapsco overflows its banks in Ellicott City.

The measure is a relatively simple construction project, but it would be considerably more expensive than the measures described above. It would prevent flooding and it directly affects public rights-of-way, so it is eligible for funding under current county policy.

Flood Protection. There is an urgent need to protect structures along the south side of lower Main Street from damage by storm water in the Tiber channel. Much of the north side of the channel is in fact the foundation walls of lower Main Street structures. Damage during Agnes and again during Eloise has weakened the foundations. Thus, a future storm of the scale of Eloise would cause considerably greater damage to these structures than did Eloise itself. Repair of the foundation walls along the north side of the Tiber channel could provide greater protection to Main Street structures in a future storm. The stream bed should be left in a natural state, and aesthetic, open space and urban design objectives for the confluence of the Tiber with New Cut Run should be incorporated*. A previous study estimated the cost of the repair at \$80,000, but inflation and the additional objectives of the master plan could bring current costs to about \$110,000.

* This measure is consistent with prospective uses of the vacant lot envisioned in the Tiber Alley Precinct urban design proposal; see Chapter 9, sub-area proposal #5.

* See Chapter 9, sub-area proposal #9.



The protection function of the wall would begin to come into play at levels of about 13' on the Ellicott City gauge. The protection which the wall would provide in a given storm would vary along its length. At its eastern end, the amount of flooding from a major storm might be similar to what would occur under existing conditions. Even so, however, the repair of the foundation walls would help prevent further structural damage.

Under current county policy, the wall would not be eligible for county funding because it directly affects private, not public, property and because it would provide protection from flood damage, but would not prevent floods from occurring. In part, the project might be supported through an assemblage of flood proofing loans* for the 20-25 properties involved. However, other sources of funds may be needed. If the streambed in this section is deeded to the county, or if the county is provided with an easement over the streambed (steps consistent with sub-area design proposals for the confluence of New Cut Run and the Tiber River), it is possible that the project can meet the conditions for county funding assistance.

MEASURES TO PREVENT FLOODS

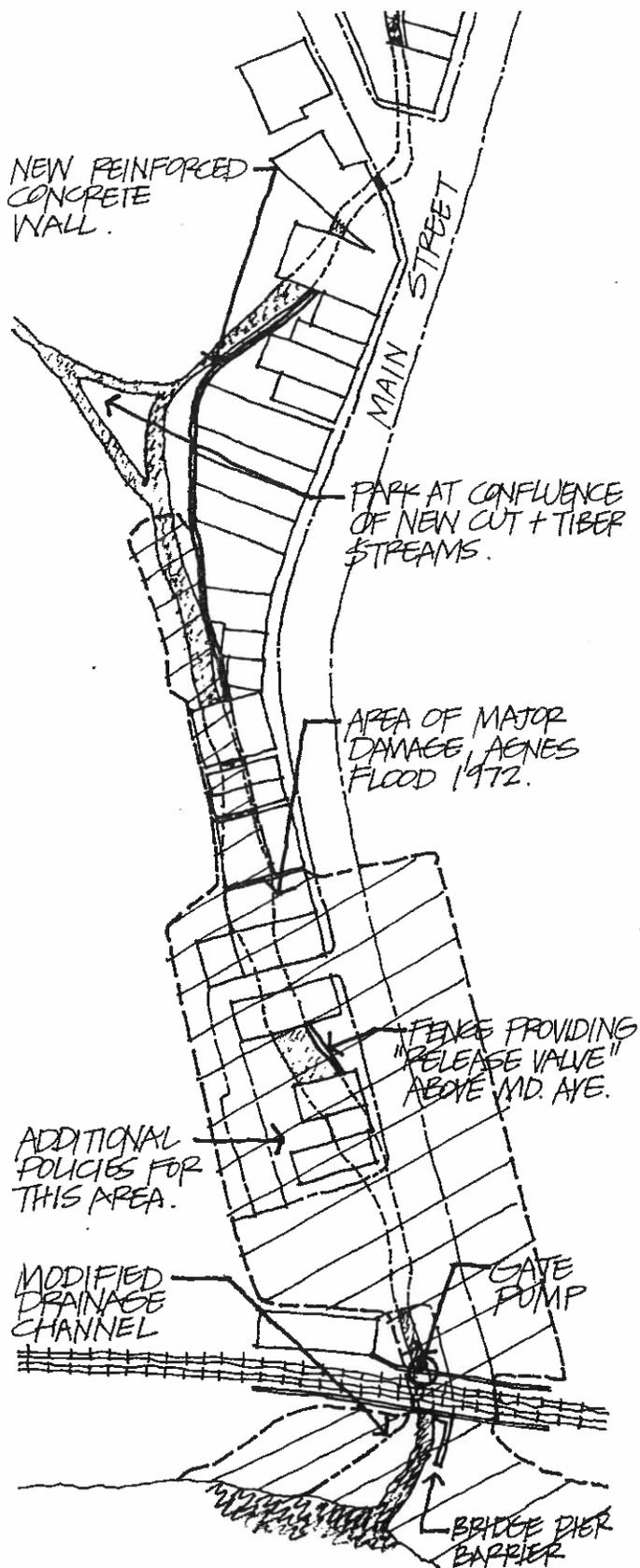
The measures discussed above would prevent flooding in minor storms and provide protection in larger storms, but none would be very effective in preventing flooding in

* Flood proofing loans are available from the county for amounts of \$6,000, for terms up to 20 years.

Ellicott City after the Patapsco River overflows its banks at level 14'5". This section reviews several conceivable approaches to prevent flooding in the old trade district at higher river levels. All are much more expensive than those discussed above. All would require considerable time to design, approve, and implement. Some are unproven with regard to their flood prevention effectiveness. Some could jeopardize other important values in Ellicott City, and other important objectives of the master plan.

Retention Dams. A series of retention dams could be placed on the tributaries of the Tiber River. The idea would be that the dams would retain the water which would otherwise back-up in the Tiber channel at high Patapsco River levels. The dams would be very expensive to construct. They would not affect the flooding in Ellicott City which is directly related to the levels of the Patapsco River. They would have major impacts on New Cut Run, Catrocks Run, and Hudson Branch, changing the ecological character of the Tiber River watershed. The retention dams, according to preliminary estimates, would retain only a portion of the storm runoff from the Tiber watershed in a major storm, perhaps 25% in a storm of the scale of Agnes. They would therefore "prevent" only a portion of the flooding during a major storm. Finally, the effectiveness of the retention dams would be tested only a few times a decade, and there would be concern whether the sense of security they might provide would be false.

Floodgates. It is possible to imagine the installation of floodgates at the railroad bridge in Ellicott City. During a major storm, the floodgates could be closed, protecting Ellicott City from the rising level of the Patapsco



FLOOD DAMAGE
REDUCTION
MEASURES

River. However, in keeping Patapsco River water out of Ellicott City, the floodgates would also dam the Tiber whose waters cause most of the flood damage in the downtown. Therefore, a huge pump would have to be installed to pump the Tiber's waters over the railroad embankment. The installation of flood gates of sufficient strength to hold back the Patapsco, and a pump of sufficient capacity to lift the Tiber River across the railroad embankment, would be extraordinarily expensive. Assuming that the system worked, it would prevent flooding in Ellicott City during storms of the magnitude of Agnes. It should be noted, however, that the system would not provide "complete" flood protection for Ellicott City; there has been one flood within the past century which would have rendered it ineffective. Between major storms, the system would allow normal traffic and activity patterns along Main Street. As other chapters point out, however, these patterns are not altogether desirable; extraordinary expenditures would have to be justified on a basis other than their retention.

Realignment of Frederick Road. An alternative to the scheme described above would substitute a realignment of Frederick Road for the installation of floodgates. After crossing the Patapsco River, Frederick Road would not continue under the railroad bridge, but would follow the railroad embankment on its eastern side and cross the railroad tracks at the upper end of Maryland Avenue. The openings under the railroad bridge would be filled in order to protect the town during major storms. The huge pump would still be required to lift the Tiber across the railroad embankment during the peak flow periods. The flood prevention effectiveness of the system would be similar, perhaps somewhat superior, to that of the floodgate alternative described above. Its cost might be less than that of the floodgate alternative, but still very large. The system would separate Ellicott City from the Patapsco River and Oella, not only during major storms but also daily between storms. The unity of the historic communities on either side of the river, would be severely, perhaps irrevocably, damaged. The system would have dramatic effects on traffic patterns within the Ellicott City/Oella enclave, and would raise many urban design opportunities and problems. The detailed exploration of these impacts, problems and opportunities is beyond the scope of this study, but it is clear that they would have to be considered very sensitively and imaginatively.

Tiber Diversion. It is conceivable that the Tiber River could be diverted from its channel, perhaps via a tunnel extending from the confluence of the Tiber with New Cut Run, under Rock Hill, to the Patapsco River in the vicinity of the flour mill bridge. Construction costs would be huge (the geology of Rock Hill is implied by its name). The diversion would not prevent the flooding on lower Main Street which is directly related to the level of the Patapsco River, rather than to storm water from the Tiber watershed.

Dredging the Patapsco. It is a frequently expressed opinion that flooding in Ellicott City cannot be prevented unless and until "something is done with the Patapsco". While the above discussion suggests that this is not completely the case, the opinion does have some basis. Barring extraordinarily expensive construction projects, measures confined to the Tiber River watershed would have limited flood prevention effects in storms of the magnitude of Agnes or even Eloise. The question is, therefore, what might be done to the Patapsco, and how effective might such measures be?

It is possible to dredge the Patapsco River in the vicinity of Ellicott City and Oella*. One suggestion would dredge

* It is also possible to dredge the Patapsco River along its entire length, a project which is being evaluated as part of a current study by the Army Corps of Engineers, and which is well beyond the scope of the Ellicott City plan, which confines itself to measures dealing with the Ellicott City area specifically.

about 1/2 mile above and below the Main Street bridge, lowering the level of the river bottom about 30 feet at the upstream end, and about 20 feet at the point that the Tiber empties into the Patapsco. By constructing spillways at either end of the dredged section, it would be possible to maintain a water depth of several feet during low flow periods, which, in turn, would open-up various water-oriented recreation opportunities in the Ellicott City/Oella area. The initial cost of the dredging and the spillways would be substantial, but probably less than the measures discussed immediately above. However, regular dredging operations would be required to maintain the river bottom at the new levels. Implementation would clearly require cooperative efforts involving state government as well as Baltimore and Howard Counties.

A critical issue regarding the dredging proposal is its effectiveness in preventing flooding during a major storm. Would the lowered river bottom mean that the Patapsco would not reach the base of the Tiber channel, even during a storm of the magnitude of Eloise? Or would there be a "ponding" effect which would quickly fill the dredged section and result in a flooding pattern very similar to that which occurred during Eloise and Agnes?

Abandonment: the Unthinkable: There is a means of preventing flooding in Ellicott City which would involve no large-scale engineering projects. This is to acquire the properties which are subject to flood during major storms, that is, virtually all of the properties east of Columbia Pike. The acquisition price would be based on "fair market value", which, using current assessments as a rough guide, might be in the order of \$2.0 million. Some of the particularly historic structures which could be moved to other locations might be. The rest would be demolished. The flood prevention objective in Ellicott City would be fully met. Of course, the old mill town would no longer exist.

The acquisition policy is probably the most "cost-effective" flood prevention measure. That is, it would prevent future flooding, even by the largest storm on record, at a cost to county taxpayers considerably less than that of engineering works providing comparable flood prevention effectiveness. On the other hand, it is clear that the objective of flood prevention cannot be pursued in isolation from all other values: e.g.

- the historic value of a mill town established on the banks of the Patapsco before the American Revolution, whose present physical fabric reflects its evolution over two centuries;
- the value of the cultural and leisure opportunities of the old mill community for residents of an expanding metropolitan region;
- the town's value as an environment for special commercial, residential and educational activities which could not be duplicated elsewhere;
- its value to county government as part of a setting evoking the traditions of local government in Howard County.

The existence of these values make it impossible to consider implementation of the most "cost-effective" means of flood prevention. The town cannot be removed from the historic setting that shaped it, just to meet flood prevention objectives.

PROGRAM FOR FLOOD DAMAGE REDUCTION

While the old mill town cannot be abandoned just to

"prevent floods", neither can it truly fulfill its potentials under constant threat of flood. While the most "cost-effective" means of flood prevention is unthinkable, alternatives costing 5, 10, or 20 times as much might provide less effective protection, and damage other values and objectives. While any measure to prevent floods would take years to plan, approve, and implement, the next few years are critical if Ellicott City is to begin to fulfill its potential as a special place in the county, state, and region. What can be done, within the next two years, at reasonable expense, and consistent with the values of Ellicott City and the goals of the Ellicott City plan?

1. Measures to reduce flood damage in Ellicott City should be implemented. These measures would not prevent flooding during a storm of the scale of Agnes or Eloise, but they would greatly improve the town's ability to survive a major storm should it occur, and to plan confidently for the future in the interim. The total cost of these measures would be under \$300,000, less than 15% that of the most cost-effective means of preventing flood damage in Ellicott City, and not much more than the major public and private costs of the Eloise flood alone. The flood damage reduction measures include:

- Measures which would prevent flooding at relatively low Patapsco River levels, including the two "release valves" for the Tiber at levels below 14'5".

The protective wall for structures along the south side of Main Street. If carefully designed and related to other plan elements, the wall could prevent further structural damage to these buildings, protect against flood damage at levels above 14'5", and help achieve the plan's open space and urban design objectives for a spot of great natural beauty. The project should be supported through a combination of flood-proofing loans and straight county appropriations.

2. Speculation that there is an effective, feasible, but uninvestigated or uncommunicated, engineering method to prevent flooding in Ellicott City can be almost as damaging to the future of the old town as the threat of flood itself. Investigation of major engineering measures should have two phases, an engineering phase and a community planning phase, with no action contemplated unless the measure meets rigorous scrutiny in both areas. Two engineering measures to prevent floods in Ellicott City emerge from the above review, and should be investigated in greater detail:

- Dredging the Patapsco in the vicinity of Ellicott City and Oella. If engineering analysis indicates that this measure would be relatively ineffective in terms of flood prevention (it may be), then it should be dropped, at least for the immediate future, whatever its other attractions. On the other hand, if it appears that dredging would be effective in terms of flood prevention, then detailed land use, facilities management, and financing plans should be considered by the appropriate state agencies and the two counties.

- Realigning Frederick Road. If the cost of this proposal is within the realm of possibility (it may not be), then its land use, commercial, environmental, and transportation impacts and opportunities should be developed by Howard County, in coordination with Baltimore County and the appropriate state agencies.

3. If detailed evaluation of the dredging and realignment proposals conclude that they are either ineffective in

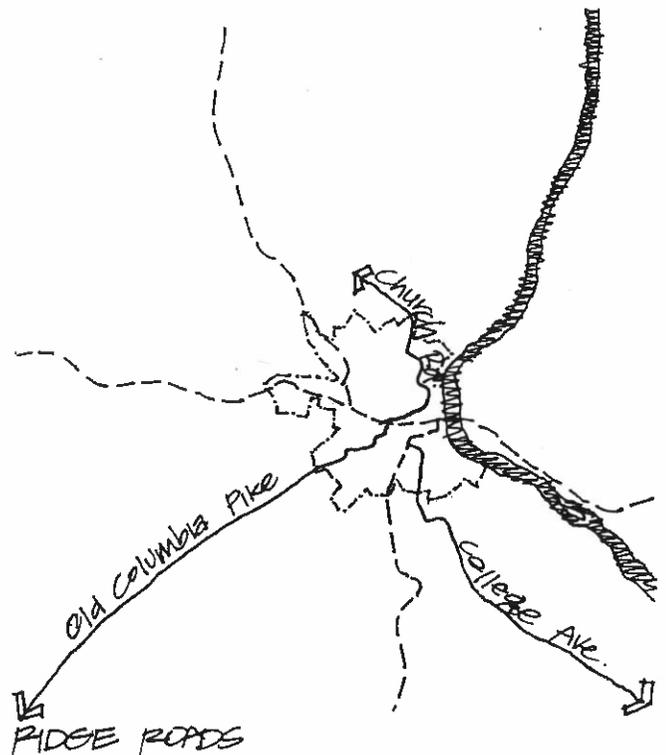
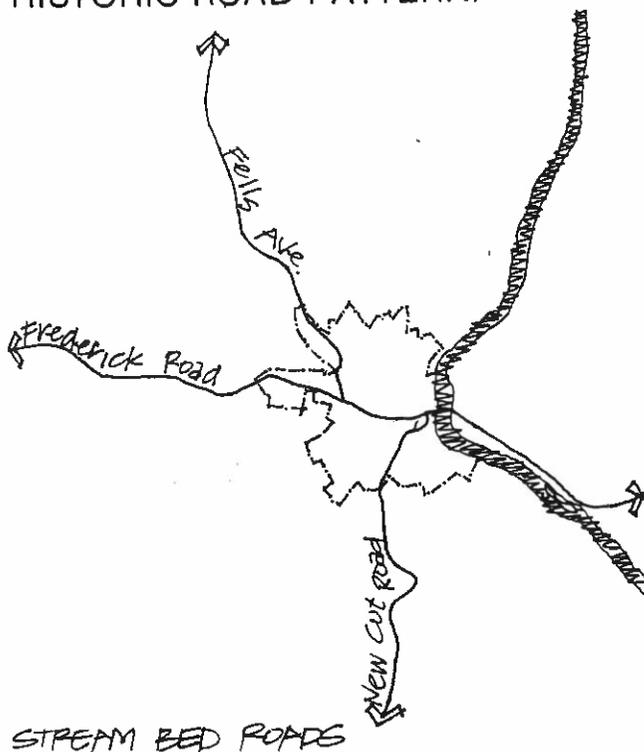
terms of flood prevention and/or infeasible in terms of costs, Ellicott City will have to face the prospect that flooding in major storms cannot be prevented in the downtown. This will be difficult, but it should not cause despair. The town has survived and thrived under these conditions for two hundred years and it is possible for it to do so in the future. There are many initiatives which can be taken to enable the town to survive future flooding with less disruption and personal loss: subsidized insurance policies dealing with aspects beyond those covered by flood insurance, further flood proofing efforts, reorganization of activities in the most flood-prone areas, etc. Given the hard choice, abandon the town because flooding cannot be completely prevented, or make the town survive and thrive even under rigorous circumstances, it is presumed that all parties would choose the latter. County support of the latter option might be keyed to what it would spend to implement the former.

5. TRANSPORTATION

Ellicott City's roads reflect its origins as a colonial mill town, a convenient crossing of the Patapsco River, and a seat of local government. Most of the present roads were in place by the end of the 18th century. Others, such as Court Avenue and Emory Street, were added in the mid-19th century, with the development of local government functions. The town developed before the era of the automobile and it is clear that the early builders had other

things in mind than the accommodation of modern auto traffic. Roads twist alongside beautiful streambeds (New Cut Road, Main Street, Fells Lane), or ascend steep rocky hillsides (Columbia Pike, Church Road, College Avenue). Historic buildings, both residential and commercial, crowd close to the roadside, often because of the physical limits on the space between the hillsides, often because proximity to the road was considered an asset, not a liability.

HISTORIC ROAD PATTERN:



In the town's heyday, many people came to Ellicott City, but few passed through without stopping. Though the activity in the old trade district was intense, traffic volumes on the approach roads were moderate. Most approached the old town at moderate speeds (they were nearing their destination, not a bottleneck on the way to somewhere else), and they usually left by the same route by which they arrived.

Today, the road system of the old mill town is a small and vulnerable element in an expanding regional system, dominated by US 40 and I 70N to the north, by Md. 103 and proposed Md. 100 to the south, by US 29 and Md. 32 to the west, and by Rolling Road and the Baltimore Beltway to the east. In a developing suburban area, the regional system carries increasing volumes of faster auto traffic over longer distances. Casual spillovers from the regional system cause drastic effects in the historic road pattern of Ellicott City.

The issue is a critical one for the future of the old town: Should the historic road pattern be altered in an attempt to accommodate spillover demand from the expanding regional system? Or should spillover demand be controlled so that the old road system can function in a manner compatible with its original purpose and design?

The following sections describe a series of findings from analyses of transportation problems in Ellicott City, a series of transportation objectives derived from the analyses, and a program of recommended transportation actions.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS FINDINGS

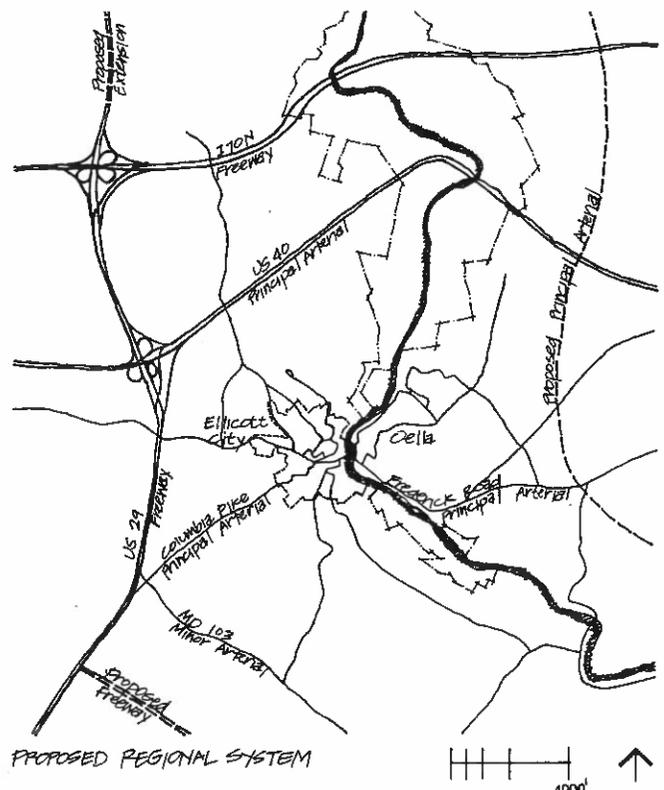
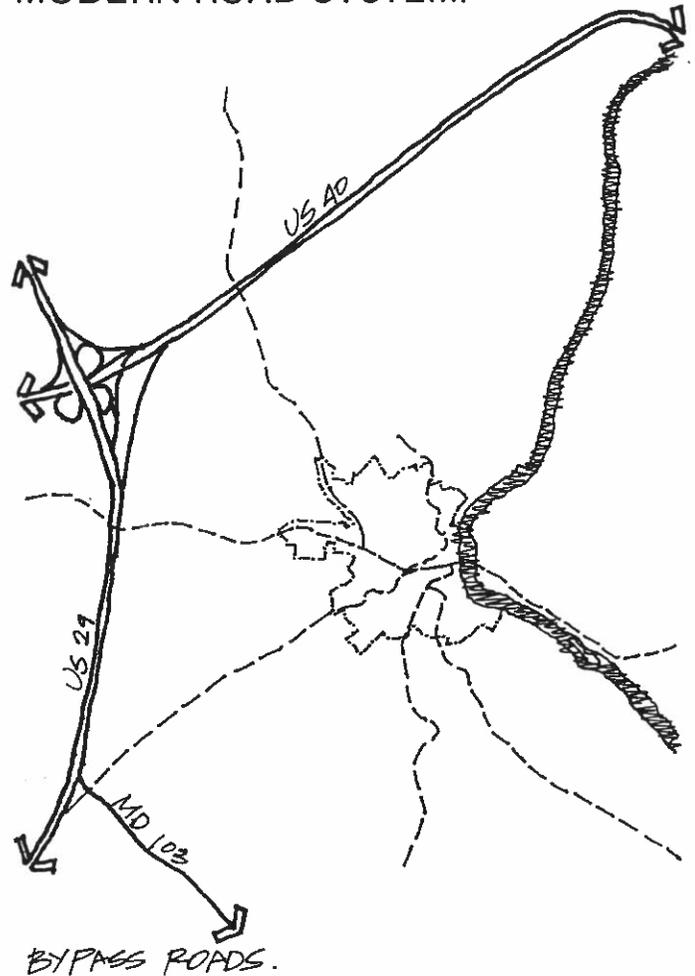
The Impacts of Increasing Traffic. Because of its historic and natural characteristics, increasing traffic volumes cause special impacts within the Ellicott City/Oella enclave:

- The congestion in the old trade district is apparent. It produces noise and pollution which degrades the specialized commercial and cultural environment which shoppers and visitors come to enjoy. Pedestrians cross Main Street at the risk of life and limb. For merchants, congestion makes deliveries difficult. For residents of upper level flats, traffic noise and pollution reduces the quality of a potentially attractive residential environment.

MAIN STREET TRAFFIC CONGESTION



MODERN ROAD SYSTEM:



— Along the approach roads to the lower Main Street traffic bottleneck (e.g. Upper Main Street, Columbia Pike), increasing volumes of auto and truck traffic cause bothersome noise, hazards to residential traffic movements, and dangers to normal pedestrian activities of children and adults in a residential neighborhood.

The Large Proportion of Through Traffic. A very large proportion of the traffic that causes congestion, safety and environmental problems is going through, not to, the downtown. A comparison of the number of trips generated by activities in the downtown area with the number of vehicles actually entering or leaving the downtown on an average weekday indicates that at least 75% is through traffic, that is, traffic passing through the downtown to get to, or from, somewhere else.

The Sources of Through Traffic. A look at regional development patterns in the surrounding area indicates why traffic problems are increasing in Ellicott City. Very simply, suburban development in Howard County is rapidly increasing the number of "trip origins" west of the Patapsco River, and non-residential development along the beltway is increasing the number of "trip destinations" east of the river. The Main Street bridge is one of three routes in the immediate vicinity by which traffic can cross from one side of the river to the other. It happens to be the oldest crossing, the one with the most severe limits on traffic capacity, and the one along which increasing traffic causes the most severe impacts on commercial, cultural, and residential activities and potentials. Yet, regional plans continue to designate Main Street as a major artery linking suburban residential development on one side of the river with suburban non-residential development on the other.

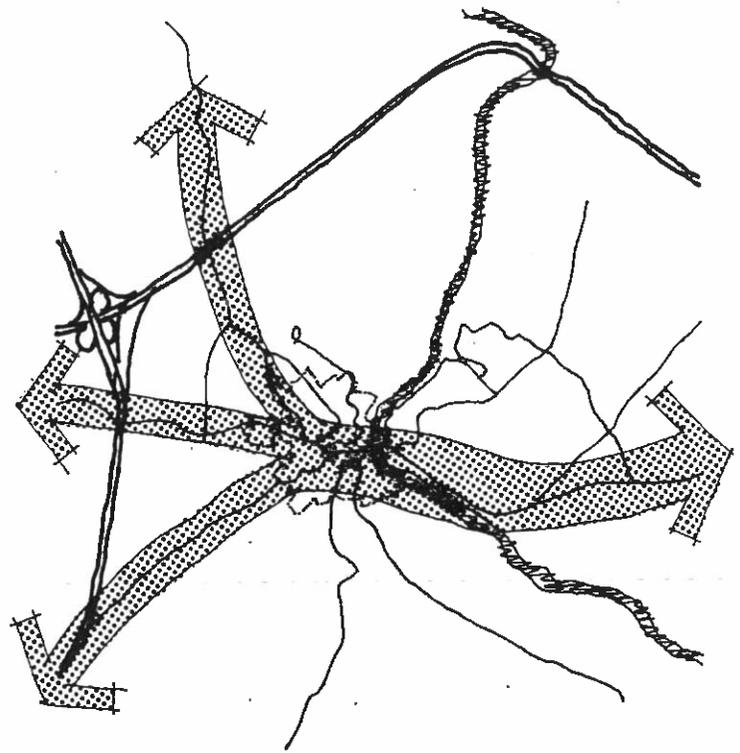
The Characteristics of Through Traffic. A closer examination of available data indicates that the bulk (80%) of the through traffic which causes disruption in Ellicott City is actually travelling between points relatively distant from the Main Street bridge: e.g. from St. Johns Lane to Rolling Road, from Columbia to Westview Shopping Center, from locations along Route 40 to Catonsville or Arbutus. For these trips, there are alternative routes available (using US 40 or the recently opened I 70) which are comparable in time and distance.

The same analysis indicates that there is a relatively small volume of river-crossing traffic which has origins or destinations quite close to the Main Street bridge. For these trips, alternative routes would cause significant inconvenience, and increases in travel time and distance.

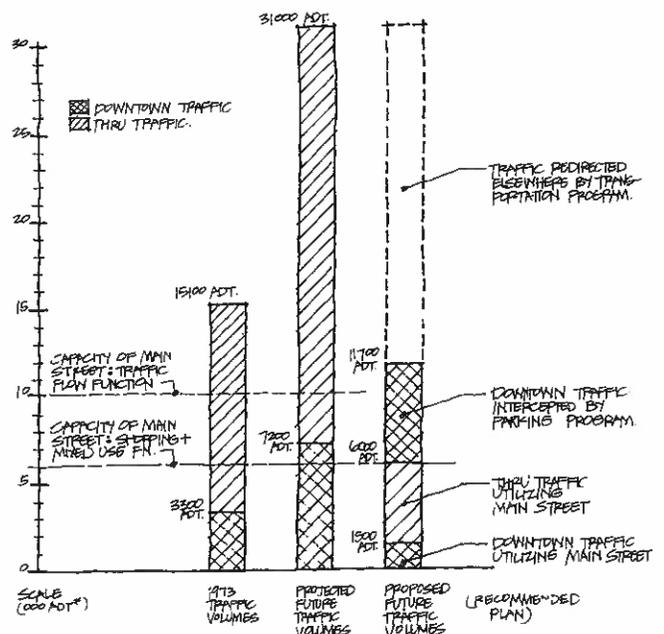
The Capacity of the Existing Road System. An analysis of the traffic-carrying capacity of the Ellicott City road system indicates that the existing road system is fully adequate to handle (a) traffic with destinations in the downtown area, under ultimate development envisioned by this plan, (b) traffic associated with residential development in the historic district and its environs, and (c) river-crossing traffic between points close to the Main Street bridge. Widening or additions to the existing road system, even if they would be effective in increasing the system's capacity*, would not be necessary to adequately handle the traffic mentioned above.

The Significance of the Regional Ring. Major roads in the vicinity of Ellicott City create, in effect, a "ring" of regional roads around the historic district and the Ellicott City/Oella enclave. Elements in the ring include US 40 and I 70N on the north, US 29 on the west, Md. 103 on the south, and Rolling Road on the east. State highway plans include proposals for increasing the capacity of existing

MAJOR THROUGH TRAFFIC FLOWS



TRAFFIC VOLUMES TO & THROUGH DOWNTOWN: EXISTING, PROJECTED, PROPOSED



* ADT = AVERAGE DAILY TRIPS.

*Which they would not because of the bottleneck at lower Main Street.

elements in the regional ring, and for new elements which would augment it.

Relatively minor spillover effects from this developing regional system could (a) permanently choke Main Street with through traffic having neither origins nor destinations in the historic district, (b) damage special residential and natural environmental values along the historic road system within the Ellicott City/Oella enclave, and (c) severely limit opportunities to fulfill the special commercial and cultural potentials of the historic mill town. On the other hand, the development of a special relationship between the historic road pattern of the Ellicott City/Oella enclave and the regional ring system is a major prerequisite for unlocking the future potentials of the old mill town.

Accommodating Through Traffic Within the Ring. Several possibilities have been advanced for allowing increasing volumes of through traffic within the regional ring, but somehow routing it around the bottleneck on lower Main Street. An examination of these possibilities indicates that all have major flaws: (a) They involve long delay, during which the traffic problems they are intended to resolve would remain unresolved and grow worse, and during which opportunities for enhancement of the historic district would be foregone. (b) They involve heavy expense, public money which could be better spent in other ways. (c) They aim at relieving traffic problems in the downtown area only, ignoring potential impacts in residential neighborhoods on approaches to downtown. (d) They do not deal effectively, if at all, with the source of the traffic problems in Ellicott City: through traffic having neither origins nor destinations in the downtown area.

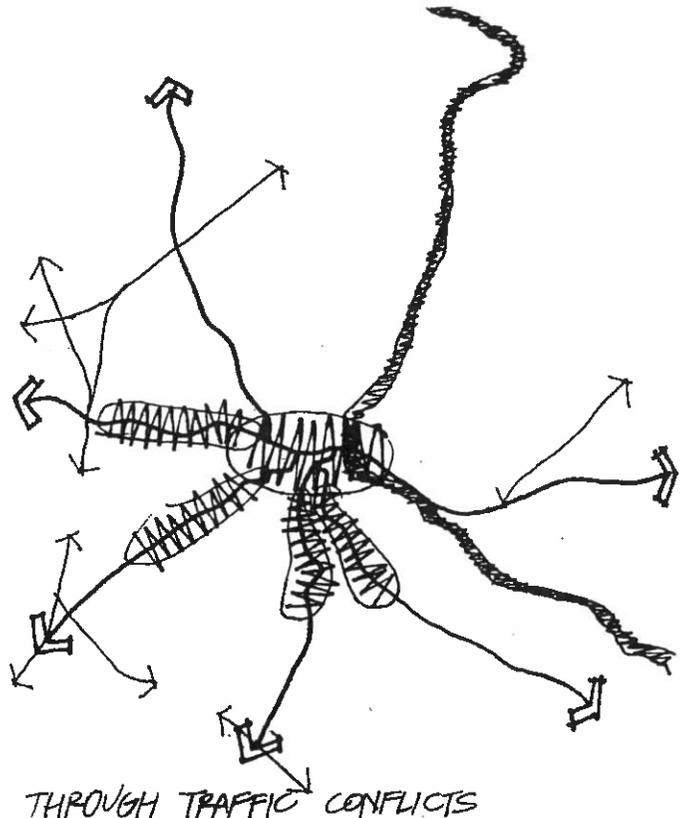
Perhaps the most feasible possibility for accommodating thru traffic within the regional ring is a link between Columbia Pike and Maryland Avenue. Though a logical extension of recent transportation policies in the Ellicott City/Oella enclave, the link illustrates their futility and the need for a new approach: (a) If the link were to carry two-way traffic, the congestion problem created at the Maryland Avenue-Main Street "dogleg" would be worse than the one relieved on lower Main Street below Columbia Pike. (b) If the link were to carry one-way traffic, future traffic flowing in the opposite direction on lower Main Street would be faster-moving than now and similar in total volume; it would be at least as damaging to the character and potentials of the old trade district as present traffic patterns. (c) The link would eliminate open space and urban design opportunities at the confluence of the Tiber and New Cut Run; it would damage potentials for enhanced residential uses of upper floors of buildings along the south side of Main Street; it would eliminate opportunities to make Maryland Avenue into a lively pedestrian-oriented plaza and the hub for cultural activities in Ellicott City. (d) In accommodating increasing volumes of thru traffic within the regional ring, the link would sacrifice the residential environment along approach roads to the historic district, and damage the natural buffer between the historic district and the hurly-burly of suburban commercial activity along U.S. 40, U.S. 29, and Md. 103. (e) The link would create some nasty traffic engineering problems. How, for example, would east-bound traffic on Main Street make connection with the proposed link? (f) The link would be expensive, and its design, approval, funding, and construction would take years. Meanwhile, traffic problems in Ellicott City would remain unresolved, and the money could have been spent for other, better purposes.

TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVES

A new transportation policy, summarized by the phrase

"traffic-to-not-thru" is needed in Ellicott City. It involves identification of various current and potential users of the Ellicott City road system (downtown visitors, Ellicott City residents and employees, river-crossing trips between points close to the Main Street bridge, river-crossing trips between points outside the regional ring). It involves consideration of historic, commercial, residential and aesthetic values as well as the value of direct and rapid auto movement. It involves weighing the claims of potential users against the alternatives available to each, and the damage which exercise of the claims would do to the special values and potentials of Ellicott City. It involves consideration of the costs of implementation (time and disruption as well as construction) as well as the ultimate system. Its major objectives are as follows:

EXISTING TRAFFIC PATTERN:



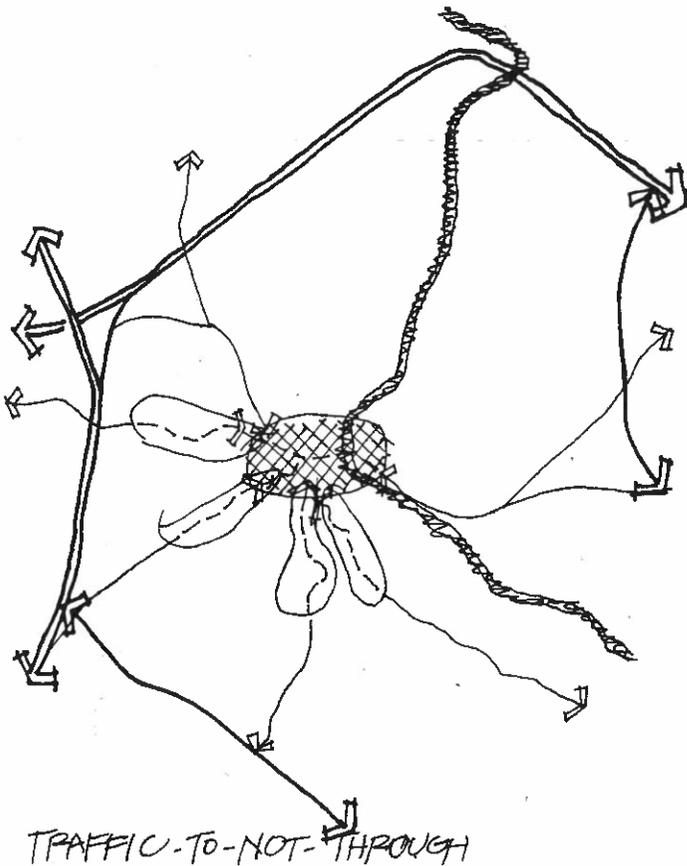
Traffic Through. Traffic having neither origins nor destinations in the downtown should be discouraged from using the historic district road system, or the Frederick Road river crossing. In particular, this applies to the traffic which has origins and destinations outside the regional ring (the bulk of existing and prospective future thru traffic in downtown). This traffic has reasonable alternative routes around the historic district using the regional ring. It is a major threat to commercial, cultural, residential and natural values in the historic district and its environs. It should be strongly encouraged to go around, rather than through, the historic district and the downtown.

A small proportion (about 20%) of river-crossing traffic has origins and destinations close to the Main Street bridge. This includes Oella residents with jobs in Ellicott

City, and Ellicott City residents with destinations in Oella. The Frederick Road river-crossing should be available, under special conditions, for these purposes.

Traffic To. Auto traffic access to downtown should be scaled to the volume of vehicle trips generated by downtown. The "ultimate" development of the Ellicott City downtown area (envisioned by this study) would generate about 2.2 times as many trips to and from the downtown as present downtown activities. Yet this "ultimate" traffic generation of downtown activities is only one-half the traffic volume which the present downtown street system attempts to accommodate each day. Thus, it can be concluded that the present street system can very comfortably handle any traffic generated by downtown activities in the future.

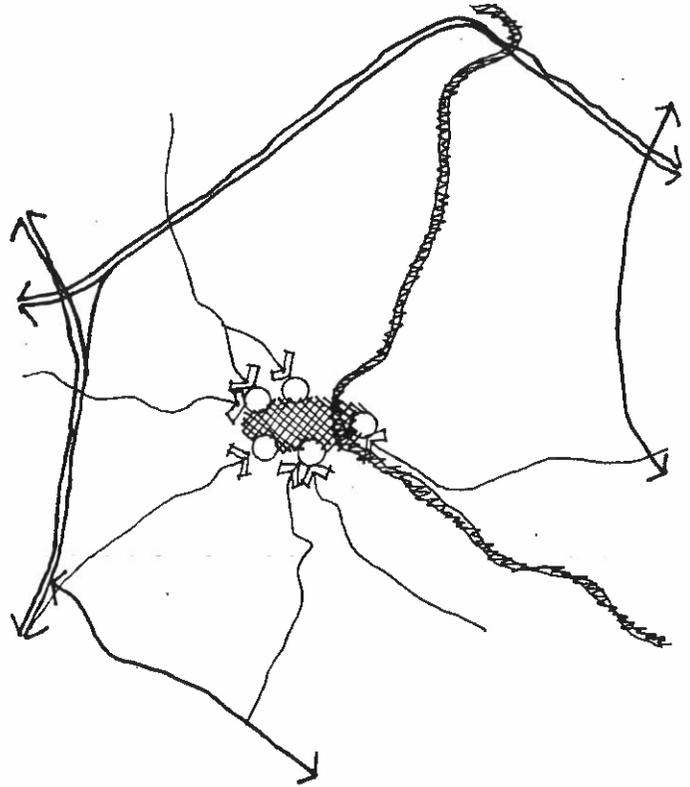
DESIRED TRAFFIC PATTERN:



Downtown Priorities. In the downtown area, historic and pedestrian environmental considerations and specialized commercial potentials should dominate over demands of moving traffic. Thus, measures which would make it easier and safer for shoppers to cross from one side of the street to another, or which would provide more freedom of movement (or alternative means of movement) for visitors to the cultural attractions of downtown, should not be rejected because they might interfere with through traffic movement.

Residential Area Priorities. In the residential areas along roads approaching the downtown, residential environmental considerations should dominate over the demands of moving any traffic not having destinations in the

ENTRANCE PARKING INTERCEPTORS; PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY ZONE



downtown. Measures to reduce traffic noise, to increase safety for pedestrians (adults and children), and to maintain the utility of these roads for residential traffic should not be rejected because they might interfere with through traffic movement.

Natural Environmental Priorities. Transportation improvement measures which would, directly or indirectly, damage environmental features of the planning area (the streambeds, the hydrology and water quality of streams, the steep hillsides, valuable vegetation areas) should be avoided. The natural assets of the planning area are almost as important as its historic assets, and complementary to them.

Implementation Expense. Implementation of the traffic-to-not-thru approach should not involve long delay, during which existing traffic problems would remain unresolved and grow worse.

Implementation Expense. As a corollary to the above, implementation of the strategy should be inexpensive, and should avoid heavy construction costs associated with the development of new road systems. It might be said that a transportation strategy for Ellicott City which is expensive cannot be implemented quickly, and if it cannot be implemented quickly, it cannot be effective, because delay will allow continued aggravation of existing traffic problems, and a period in which many historic conservation and specialized commercial potentials would be foregone.

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

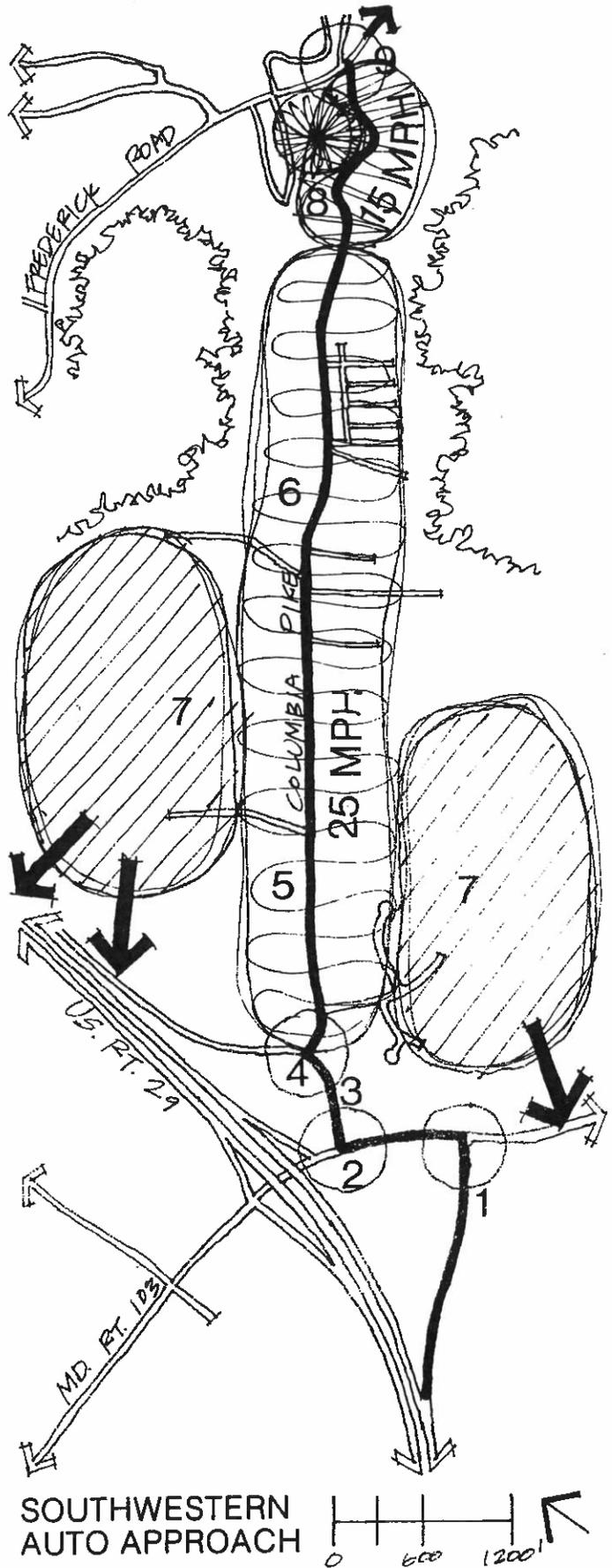
The following transportation program aims at imple-

menting the traffic-to-not-thru policy in Ellicott City. The suggestions reflect the objectives described above, and are organized by approach roads to the old trade district:

- The southwestern approach: Columbia Pike,
- The eastern approach: Frederick Road,
- The southern approach: New Cut Road and College Avenue,
- The western approach: upper Main Street,
- The northern approach: Rogers Avenue,
- The old trade district: lower Main Street
- The trolley bus: public transportation
- A transportation contingency plan.

The Southwestern Approach. Columbia Pike, between its intersections with US 29 and Main Street, is a critical approach to the historic district from Columbia and the rapidly developing Washington suburbs. It will provide an important test of the traffic-to-not-thru strategy. Aims are:

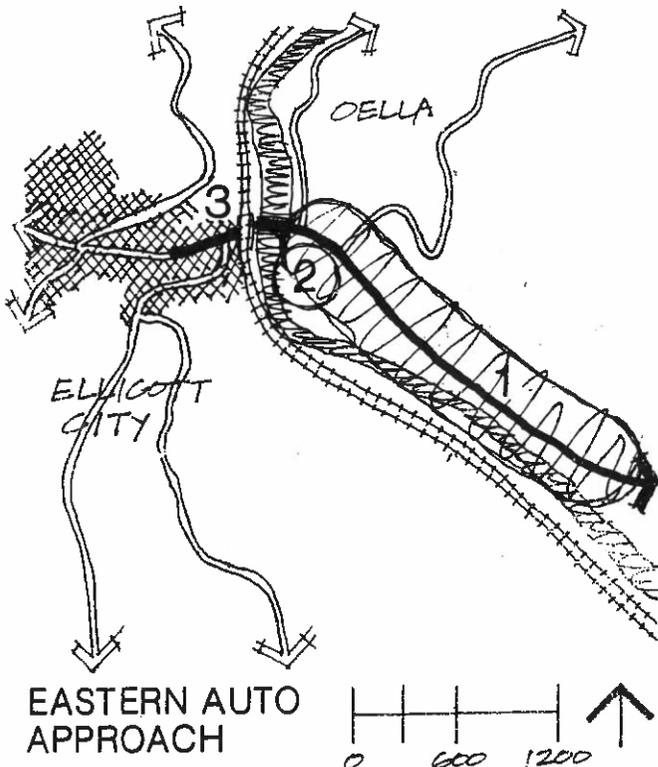
- to encourage traffic without destinations in Ellicott City to continue on the regional ring, around rather than through the historic district;
 - to properly orient traffic having destinations in the downtown; and
 - to preserve residential and natural values along the approach route.
1. State highway plans include a reconstruction of the US 29/Md. 103 intersection. The reconstruction will involve a new exit road from US 29 to Md. 103, a direct connection between Md. 103 and St. Johns Lane, and a grade separation between this route and US 29. A further purpose of this intersection should be to provide an appropriate gateway to the historic district: encouraging through traffic to go around Ellicott City; clarifying the approach to downtown for traffic with destinations there; making a clear transition from the rapid traffic movement appropriate to regional ring roads to the more sedate traffic patterns appropriate to roads approaching the historic district.
 2. With the construction of the new access road from US 29 to Maryland 103, the existing access road should be eliminated. The two turns required to get from US 29 to Columbia Pike would help discourage through traffic. The elimination of the existing access route would enable coherent development of the southeast corner of the US 29 - Maryland 103 intersection, an intersection with significant future potential for good or unfortunate development results.
 3. Columbia Pike, at its intersection with Md. 103, should be clearly a two-lane road, instead of apparently four lanes as now: the wide shoulders should be replaced with curbs and landscaping appropriate to a gateway to the historic district.
 4. The intersection of Columbia Pike with Tollhouse Road should be modified in such a way that all traffic which has a choice is encouraged to continue along the latter road, rather than the former.
 5. The modification in the roads should be accompanied by a series of signs of appropriate design which inform auto drivers that they are approaching the historic district, that the approach road is for local traffic only, that through trucks are not allowed, that county government center traffic should use Tollhouse Road rather than Columbia Pike, that slow speeds are expected along the approach, etc.
 6. Columbia Pike itself should not be widened. Appropriate landscaping and traffic engineering measures should be taken to beautify the approach to the historic district, to maintain sedate traffic speeds, and to retain residential traffic uses along Columbia Pike.



- At the same time, increases in residential traffic oriented directly onto Columbia Pike should be minimized. If at all possible, new residential development should be oriented to Tollhouse Road or Montgomery Road. If at all possible, new residential development should *not* orient directly onto Columbia Pike or New Cut Road.
- Traffic approaching the downtown should be oriented to an interceptor parking facility behind the Post Office. Access to this facility should be provided directly from Columbia Pike, rather than via the present cumbersome arrangement.
- A traffic signal of a design consistent with the character of the historic district should be installed at the Columbia Pike-Main Street intersection. The signal should include a pedestrian "scramble" phase which would give pedestrians freedom of movement in all directions. The signal would provide auto drivers wishing to make left turns onto Main Street with regular opportunities to do so, and would make turning movements safer. The signal would decrease the traffic capacity of the intersection, an effect which is compatible with the traffic-to-not-thru strategy.

The Eastern Approach. Along the Frederick Road approach to Ellicott City and Oella from Catonsville and Baltimore County, the following measures are suggested:

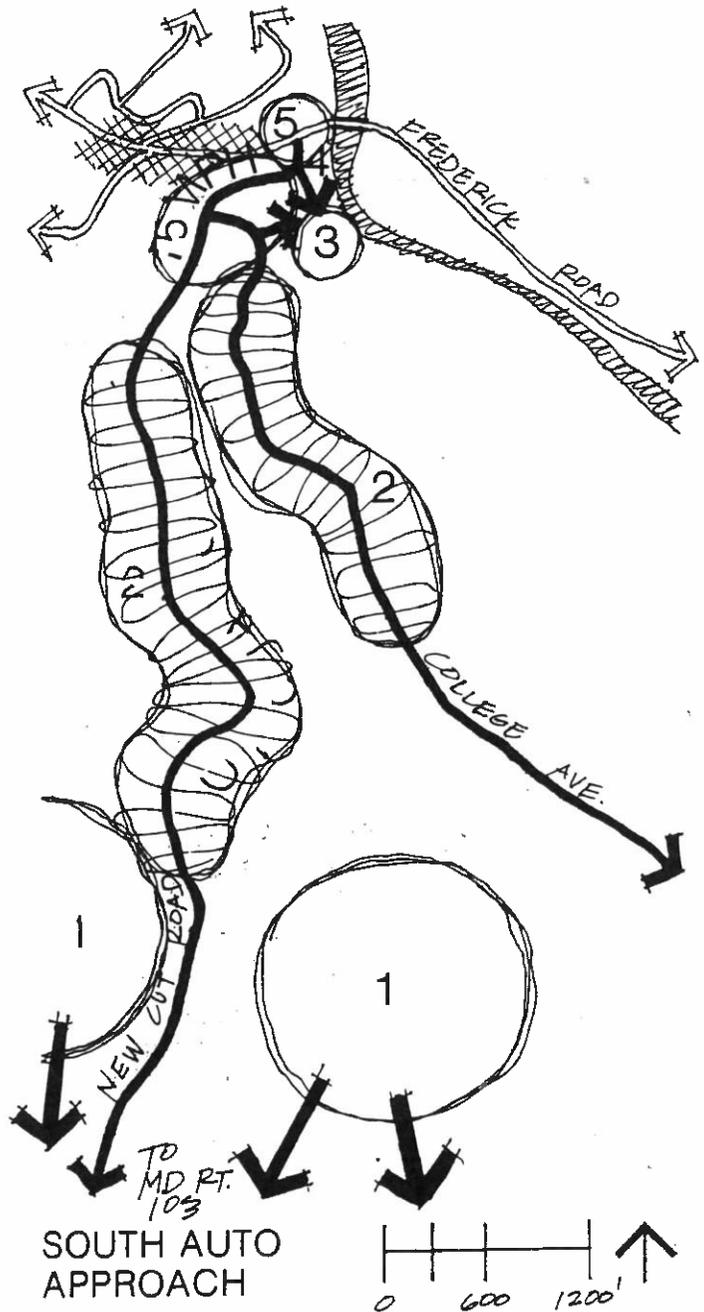
- Frederick Road need not be widened, since the widening would simply provide better access to the bottleneck along lower Main Street.
- As traffic approaches Ellicott City and Oella it should be oriented by appropriate signs to interceptor parking facilities on the east side of the river. For visitors to Ellicott City and Oella, this area should be a transition point from the moving automobile to trolley bus and pedestrian movement, a place where special tourist and commercial services are readily available.



- Traffic which wishes to continue across the bridge should be made aware that patience and consideration for pedestrians and pedestrian activities will be expected. A traffic light, with a pedestrian "scramble" phase, at the intersection of Maryland Avenue, is one of several means.

The Southern Approach. New Cut Road and College Avenue provide secondary approaches to the downtown from the south. Because of the special natural qualities of these approaches, and because of the special restrictions on traffic flow at their culmination in the downtown, future increases in traffic along these routes should be minimized:

- If at all possible, future residential development should orient to Montgomery Road rather than New Cut Road or College Avenue.



2. The natural beauty of the New Cut streambed should be preserved: the road should not be widened, or sharp turns straightened, in order to increase traffic capacity or traffic speeds along this especially scenic approach to the downtown.
3. As traffic approaches the downtown, it should be oriented to the interceptor parking facilities at St. Pauls and the Maryland Avenue "spur".
4. In the Railroad Terminal Plaza, a prospective hub of visitor activities in the downtown, special designs are proposed to enable traffic to move through without conflict with, or domination over, pedestrian-oriented activities.
5. At the Main Street intersection, a traffic signal should provide regular opportunities for left-turn movements, and a "scramble" phase allowing pedestrians freedom of movement in all directions.

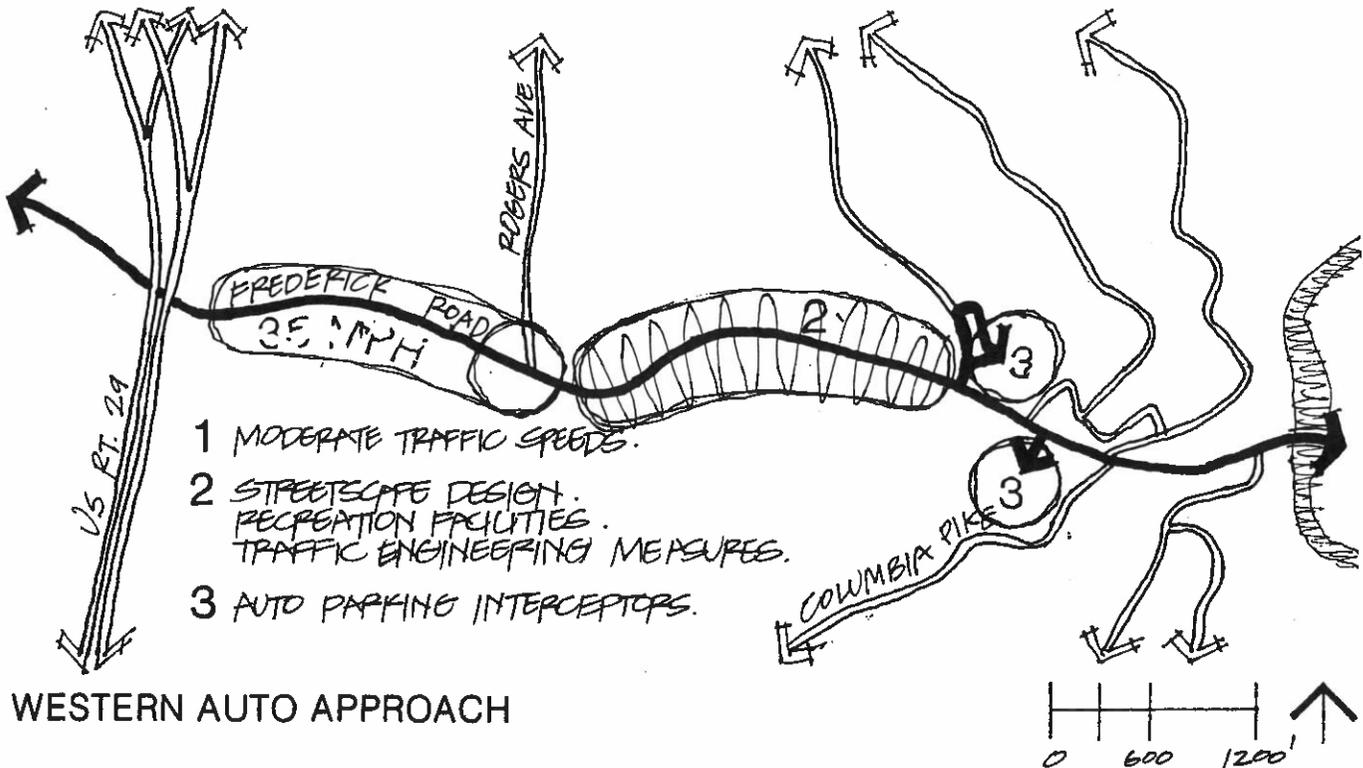
The Western Approach. Upper Main Street provides a western approach to the downtown. Much of the residential development along upper Main Street is in the historic district, and many of the old dwellings are sited close to the roadway, in the narrow space between the hillside and the Hudson Branch streambed. The portion of the roadway intended for moving traffic is not clearly defined, and moving traffic tends to infringe on residential-related functions: front-yard play areas for children, sidewalks and pedestrian safety, residential roadside parking, residential traffic movements onto and off the roadway. A special streetscape design for this area should aim at confining moving traffic to an area 12 feet on either side of the center-line, slowing traffic to a more sedate pace compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhood, and improving the utility and safety of the roadside residential functions.

The Northern Approach. Access arrangements to the county government center must effect a skillful two-stage transition: from the hurly-burly of US 29 and US 40 to the administrative center of county government and then to the special character and scale of the historic district. While providing appropriate access to the county government center, these arrangements should discourage their use as a route through the downtown, and provide appropriate orientation for traffic with destinations in the historic district. More specifically, access along the northern approach to the historic district should be:

- safe: hazardous turning movements and sight distances should be resolved,
- clear: it should be easy for county residents and others having business at the government center to find their way from major roads (US 29 and US 40) to their desired destinations,
- dignified and attractive: special attention to the visual quality of the entrance is warranted,
- scaled to the volumes of traffic actually generated by the county government center; roads should not be scaled or designed to attract southbound traffic through the downtown towards points east of the Patapsco River,
- designed to prepare visitors for the special scale, character and pace of activities in the historic district.

This study prepared a rough estimate of the traffic generated by ultimate development in areas directly served by the northern approach, including the courthouse area, professional offices around the courthouse, and possible residential development, as well as the county administrative complex. Assuming no change in commuting patterns, about 14,000 trips in and out, might be generated over an average weekday*. For traffic volumes of this

* If, in the next 10-15 years, there were increases in carpooling or use of public transportation by office employees, the number of daily trips would be less.



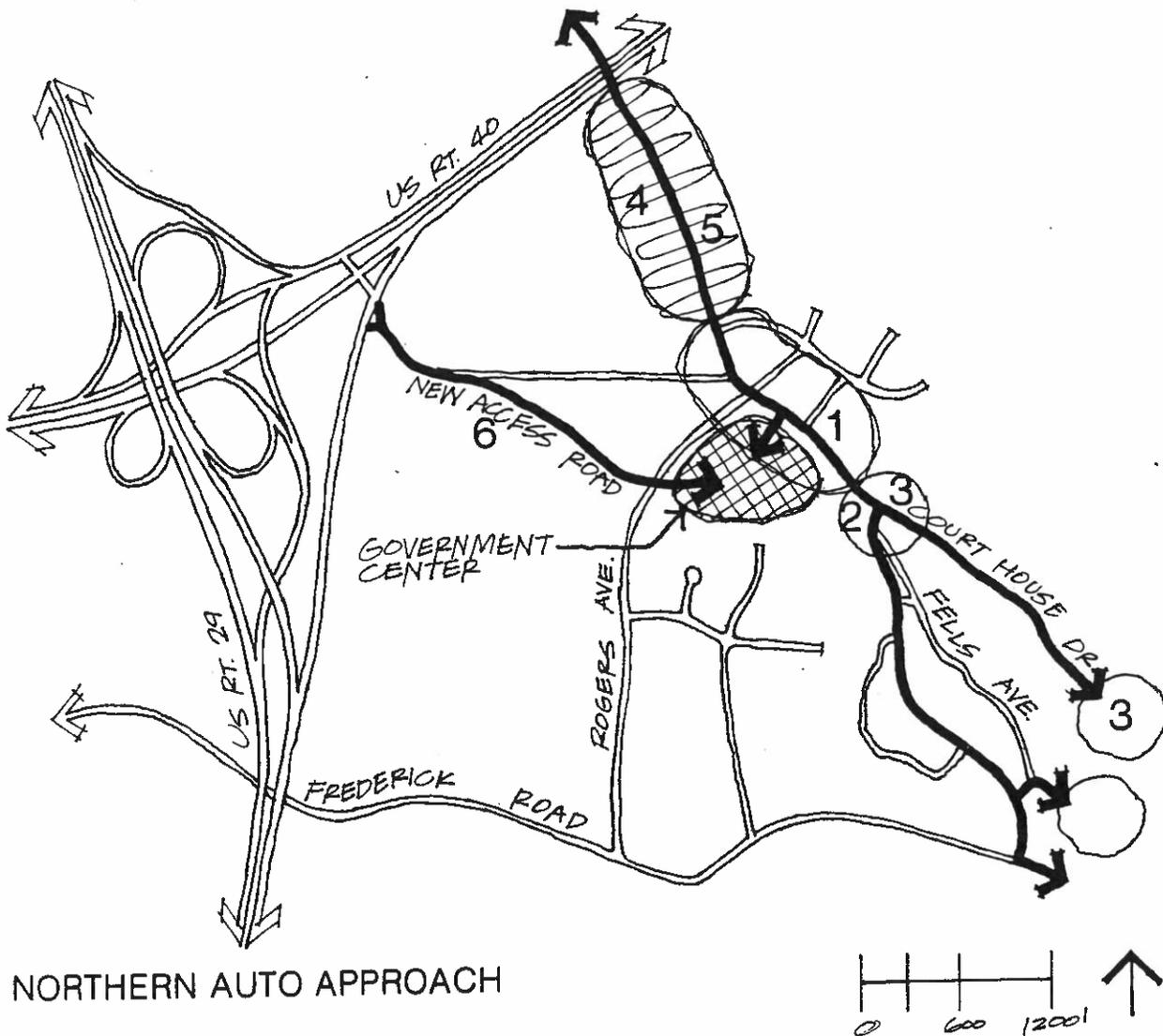
WESTERN AUTO APPROACH

magnitude, four lanes of auto access on the northern approach would perhaps be more than adequate, but two lanes would probably be inadequate. Thus, as the county and state administrative center approaches its ultimate development in Ellicott City (under current plans) two additional lanes are likely to be needed.

The difficulty with the additional lanes, from the point of view of the Ellicott City plan, is that they may attract rather than discourage thru traffic into the old trade district, thus undermining efforts to establish the traffic-to-not-thru strategy on four other historic district approaches. This is particularly the case if the additional lanes follow the present Rogers Avenue alignment, where they may attract river-crossing traffic from developing areas served by Maryland 99, north of US 40. Thus, additional traffic lanes on the northern approach could have damaging consequences in the old trade district, though it is conceded that they may be necessary as present plans for development of the government administrative complex approach completion. In the meantime, the development of a two-stage transition, from the hurly-burly of US 40 and US 29 to the administrative center, and from the administrative center to the old trade district, can be furthered by the following measures:

1. Modifications in the vertical and horizontal alignment of Courthouse Drive, between Rogers Avenue and Ellicott Mills Drive, should clarify the approach to the county government center, improve sight distances and turning movements, and increase safety.
2. At the intersection of Courthouse Drive and Ellicott Mills Drive, Courthouse Drive should have the right-of-way and the Ellicott Mills Drive road width should be "pinched-in" to approximately 24 feet at the intersection. The purpose is to discourage the use of Ellicott Mills Drive for thru traffic, and to establish a sharp and effective transition between the approaches to the county government center and the historic district.
3. Signs should clearly communicate that Ellicott Mills Drive is an approach to a historic district, for local traffic only, and that the courthouse area parking facilities are intended for use by historic district visitors during weekends*.
4. Along Rogers Avenue, between US 40 and the county administrative center, special roadside landscaping

*See Chapter 6, Proposed Parking Program, "Shared Use of Courthouse Spaces."



treatment should make this road visually distinct from any other in the county.

5. The adequacy of the present Rogers Avenue approach (as modified by suggestions 1-4 above) can be extended by several measures: Design speeds can be maintained at 30, rather than 40 or 50 miles per hour, thus increasing the traffic-carrying capacity of the existing roadway. Moderate traffic delays during the peak half-hour or peak quarter-hour can be tolerated by county government employees, thus saving the county the expense of constructing roads whose capacity would be fully used less than 5% of the day. Carpooling can be encouraged, thus reducing the average number of autos per employee and peak period traffic volumes.
6. When the development of additional lanes along the northern approach does become necessary, consideration should be given to an alignment extending more directly from US 29 to the county administrative center, an alignment which would form an auto access "loop" serving the government administrative complex, and protecting the historic district to the south and east.

The Old Trade District: One of the important characteristics of Ellicott City as a shopping center is that it is very elongated. The downtown shopping area is about one quarter the size but twice the length of the standard contemporary shopping mall. In this context, the traffic on lower Main Street has particularly unfortunate effects on the downtown shopping (and sight-seeing) environment, for it divides an already elongated center with a steady stream of traffic which pedestrians cross only at risk of life and limb.

1. The "scramble" phase of signals at Main Street intersections can help provide pedestrians with more freedom of movement in the downtown shopping area.
2. A crosswalk in the vicinity of Caplan's Store would provide pedestrians with a place to cross Main Street between the two signals*. "Caplan's crosswalk" would eliminate one parking space on each side of

*A second crosswalk might be provided at Court Avenue, where pedestrians from Ellicott Mills parking lot and the Courthouse area may have occasion to cross Main Street.

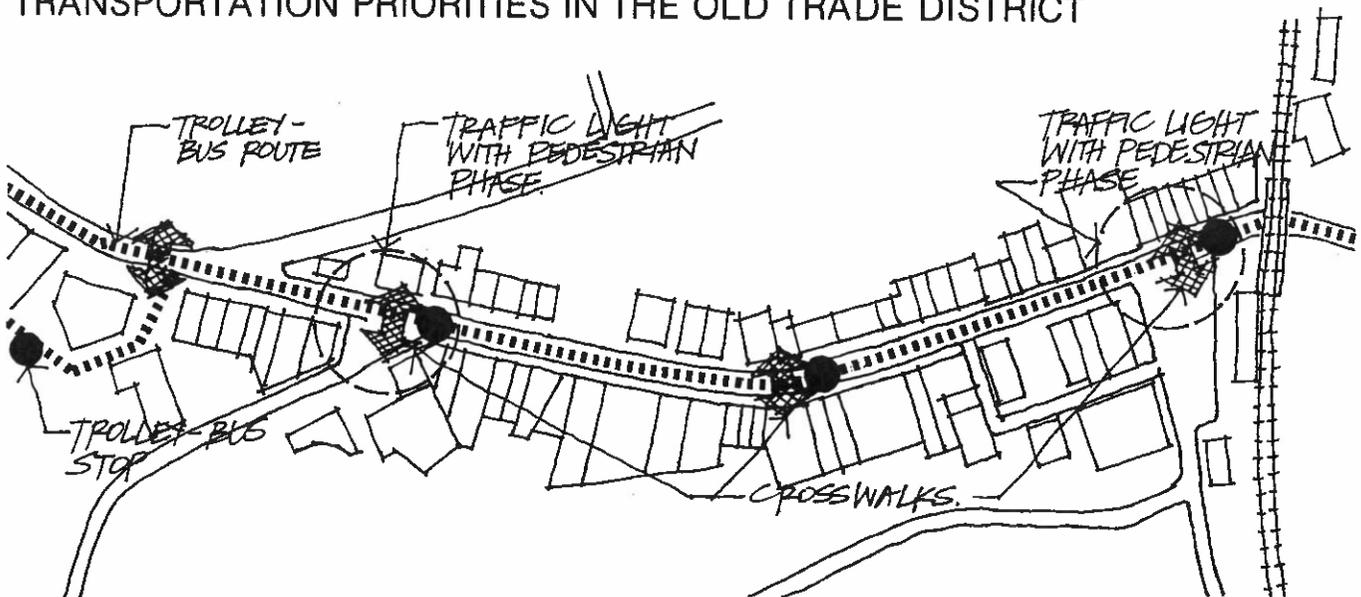
Main Street. Half of each space (a ten foot width) would be used for the crosswalk itself. The other half (a rectangle roughly 10' by 8') could be planted, or it could be protected from traffic with bollards and fitted with benches, or used as a site for a refreshment stand. The crosswalk itself should be brightly painted so as to be clearly visible from automobiles. But a signal should also be provided. Traffic studies have indicated that un signaled crosswalks can give pedestrians an unwarranted illusion of safety that can make them as hazardous as no crosswalk at all.

3. As Ellicott City develops as a specialized commercial and cultural center, there will very likely be an increasing number of "special events" (art shows, craft fairs, flower shows, special exhibitions, etc.) which will draw large crowds, especially on summer weekends. During these events, the relatively modest measures proposed to improve the downtown pedestrian environment during the average weekday will be totally inadequate. The narrow sidewalks of Ellicott City simply do not provide sufficient space so that individual members of a large group of visitors can move around and have a bit of "elbow room" and "breathing space". Provisions should be made for regularly closing lower Main Street, from Maryland Avenue to Columbia Pike, during peak visitor periods, including special events and summer weekends, times at which the necessity for use of lower Main Street for thru traffic is minimal.

The Trolley Bus. Convenient, colorful, and enjoyable public transportation within the downtown area is a key element of the downtown concept plan, the traffic-to-not-thru approach, and the proposed parking program:

- An important part of the downtown concept is to encourage people to get out of their cars and onto their feet at major entrance locations. If, having reached one of these entrance locations, an Ellicott City visitor is forced or encouraged to drive along Main Street in order to gain greater proximity to his initial destination, much of the benefit of the downtown concept will be lost: he has increased congestion and damaged the pedestrian environment critical to the full restoration and re-use of downtown structures. Public transportation should enable any

TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES IN THE OLD TRADE DISTRICT



visitor to Ellicott City to get from an entrance location to any other part of the Main Street commercial area, and to enjoy himself while doing so.

- The Main Street commercial district is too elongated to function effectively as a retail area. Most contemporary shopping malls (in centers having several times the amount of retail space found along Main Street) are no longer than 600 feet from end to end. The distance from the railroad station to the Post Office in Ellicott City is 1,200 feet, uphill. Though some visitors will come to Ellicott City to walk, it is unrealistic to expect large numbers of people to walk more in Ellicott City than they would in a major regional shopping center. Public transportation can provide an attractive alternative to walking, and can perhaps turn the liability of an elongated shopping area into an asset.
- The Main Street shopping area is well suited for public transportation service. In many already-developed commercial areas it is difficult to identify a route which takes most people close to their destinations and also is easily identifiable and understandable. This is not the case in Ellicott City, where the commercial area is confined to a narrow band along Main Street. A single "shuttle" route along Main Street can get most visitors to and from almost any destination in the specialized commercial area, once they have parked at one of the downtown entrance locations.
- Public transportation service in Ellicott City, if provided in a manner which is compatible with the historic character of the old mill town, can be a positive asset in the commercial revitalization of the downtown, not just a necessary counter-measure to an overly elongated shopping area. Using such a public

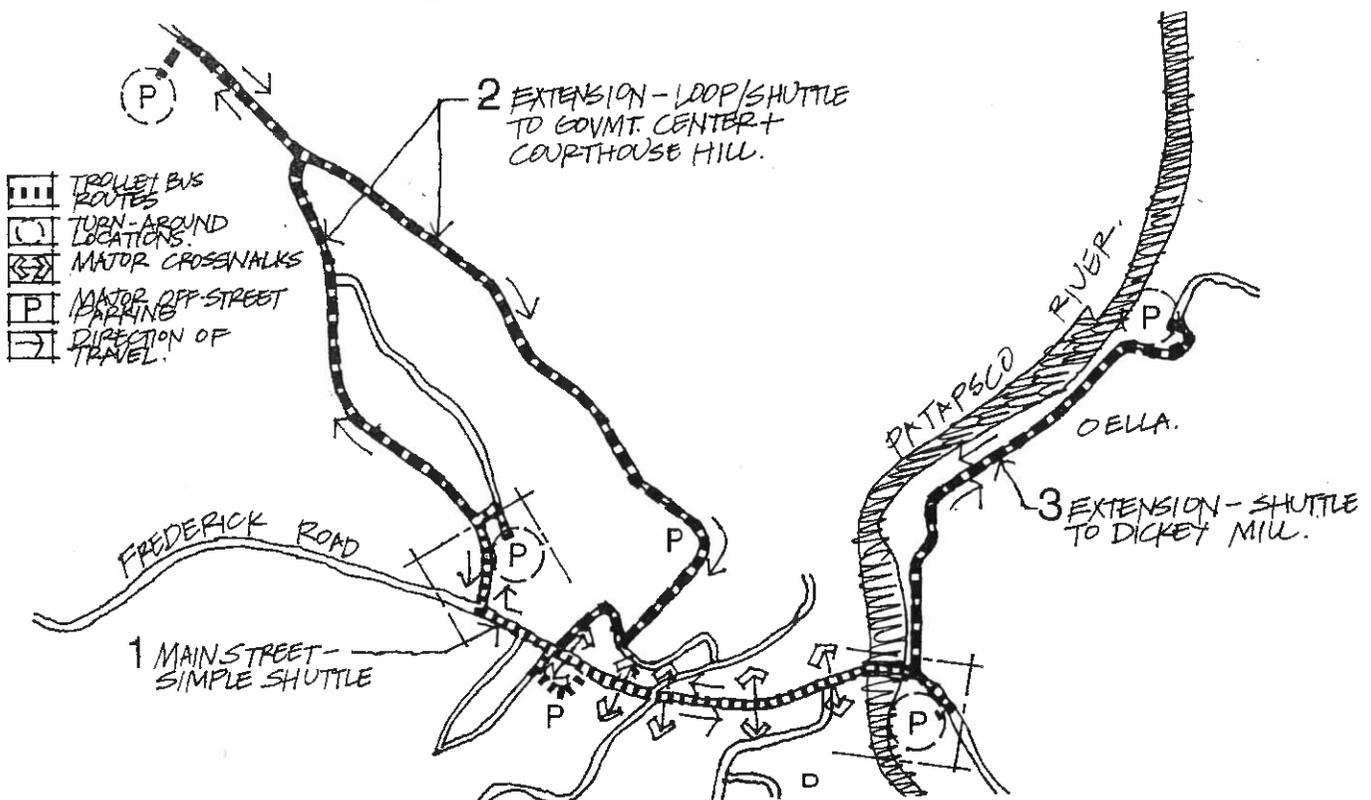
transportation system can itself be one of the attractions of Ellicott City.

- Another purpose of the downtown concept plan is to encourage the growing community of government office and associated private office workers on Courthouse Hill and in the County Office Complex to participate in the life of downtown. At present this occurs hardly at all, in part because such trips involve inconvenient auto trips and parking difficulties. During the week, the Main Street public transportation route could be modified so as to attract use by office workers.

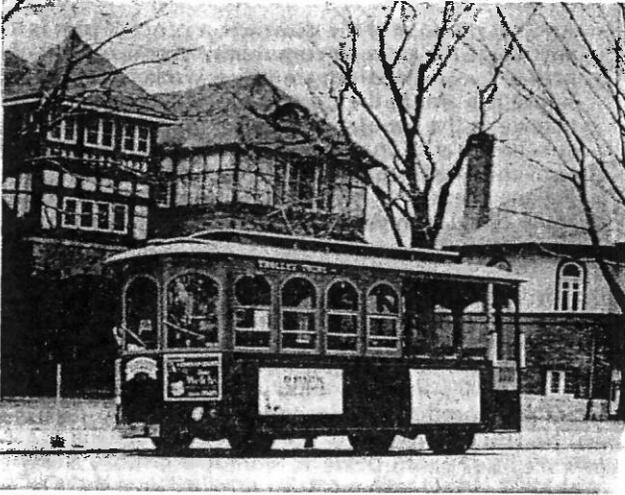
"Trolley-bus" vehicles are suggested for the proposed system. These vehicles are rubber-wheeled and use a Dodge truck chassis. The body, however, has been redesigned to resemble the real trolleys used in Ellicott City in the late 1800's and early 1900's. One version which is currently in production, is partially enclosed, partially open air, seats 26, and costs about \$30,000 per vehicle. A single trolley-bus can provide 10 minute headways along lower Main Street, between Ellicott Mills Drive and Oella, and connecting the three major interceptor parking facilities. One or more additional trolley-buses could provide links to courthouse hill, the county administrative center, and the Dickey Mill area in Oella. Trolley-buses would be compatible with the historic character of the old mill town, fun to ride in, and relatively inexpensive and flexible in their operation.

A Contingency Plan. The above suggestions are considered necessary for the implementation of the traffic-to-not-thru strategy, but their sufficiency has not been proved. If the above transportation program for Ellicott City proves insufficient to effect a judicious accommodation between conflicting objectives, a momentous

TROLLEY BUS ROUTES



TROLLEY BUS



choice must be faced: between the historic and natural character, and the special commercial, cultural and residential potentials of the Ellicott City-Oella enclave, on the one hand, and regional pressures for more convenient crossings of the Patapsco River on the other. Faced with this hard and hopefully avoidable choice, this plan would opt for the very special qualities of this small enclave within an expanding metropolitan region, and would recommend permanent closing of lower Main Street to auto traffic.

6. PARKING

Ellicott City originally developed (and flourished) at a time when the automobile and problems of storing automobiles did not exist. The nature of the economic activities of the day permitted a vital center of commercial and related services to function efficiently within the narrow space between steep hillsides. The rapid expansion of auto ownership and use after World War II precipitated the decline of Ellicott City as a regional trade center. The old town could not meet the auto's demands for space, and new development located along roads such as US 40 where the new space requirements could be met.

Today, the commercial potential in Ellicott City is based, not on general retail trade, but on specialized aspects in a greatly expanded regional market. The basic asset of the old town in attracting these potentials is the environmental qualities which it inherits from the pre-automobile era. But while commercial market potentials in Ellicott City have changed, constraints on the automobile have not. Ellicott City faces the same constraints today in meeting the demands of the auto that it did in its period of economic decline after World War II.

The situation presents a dilemma. Without adequate parking, Ellicott City cannot attract its prospective share of regional economic potential, or the private investment which can help restore and enhance the architectural quality of the downtown. Yet, improper provision of parking can destroy the very qualities which are the downtown's basic asset. What is required is a strategy for providing needed parking in a way which respects the historic, architectural and natural assets of the old trade district.

PARKING NEED

Current Inventory, Need, Deficiency. There are about 410 parking spaces in what is usually considered the downtown, of which 32% are metered on-street spaces, 52% are off-street spaces in two public lots, and 17% are

private off-street spaces of firms such as Taylor's Furniture and the Howard County Times. Based on standard indexes for retail, office and residential activities, and the amount of floor space in various downtown activities, current parking need in the downtown is about 630 spaces*. Thus, the current parking deficiency in the

DOWNTOWN PARKING NEEDS, SUPPLY, AND DEFICIENCY

	Parking Spaces:		
	"Above" Columbia Pike	"Below" Columbia Pike	Downtown Area
Current Needs	321	311	632
Current Supply			
Total	313	96	409
Off-Street	288	0	288
On-Street	25	96	121
Current Deficiency	8	215	223

* In the future, as presently vacant building space is pressed into use, as existing space is used more intensively, and as a limited amount of new space is constructed, the parking needs associated with downtown activities could double.

downtown is about 220 spaces, or approximately the number now provided in the two public lots (behind the Post Office and at Ellicott Mills Drive) combined. In the face of a deficiency of this magnitude, minor adjustments of existing on-street spaces will have negligible impact. A broader strategy is required.

The Distribution of Need. As a commercial shopping area, Main Street can be conveniently divided at Columbia Pike. This intersection marks an approximate midpoint in the elongated Main Street shopping area, within 400 feet walking distance of the Post Office parking facility. The section of downtown "above" Columbia Pike has 77% of all existing parking spaces, and virtually 100% of the off-street parking. Only 23% of the existing parking spaces are in the section "below" Columbia Pike, and shops in this area rely heavily on 100 on-street spaces.

When this distribution of existing spaces is matched against need, the results are striking: the total current parking deficiency in the downtown is concentrated in the section "below" Columbia Pike. Meeting the current parking deficiency in this area is crucial to the economic future of the old trade district.

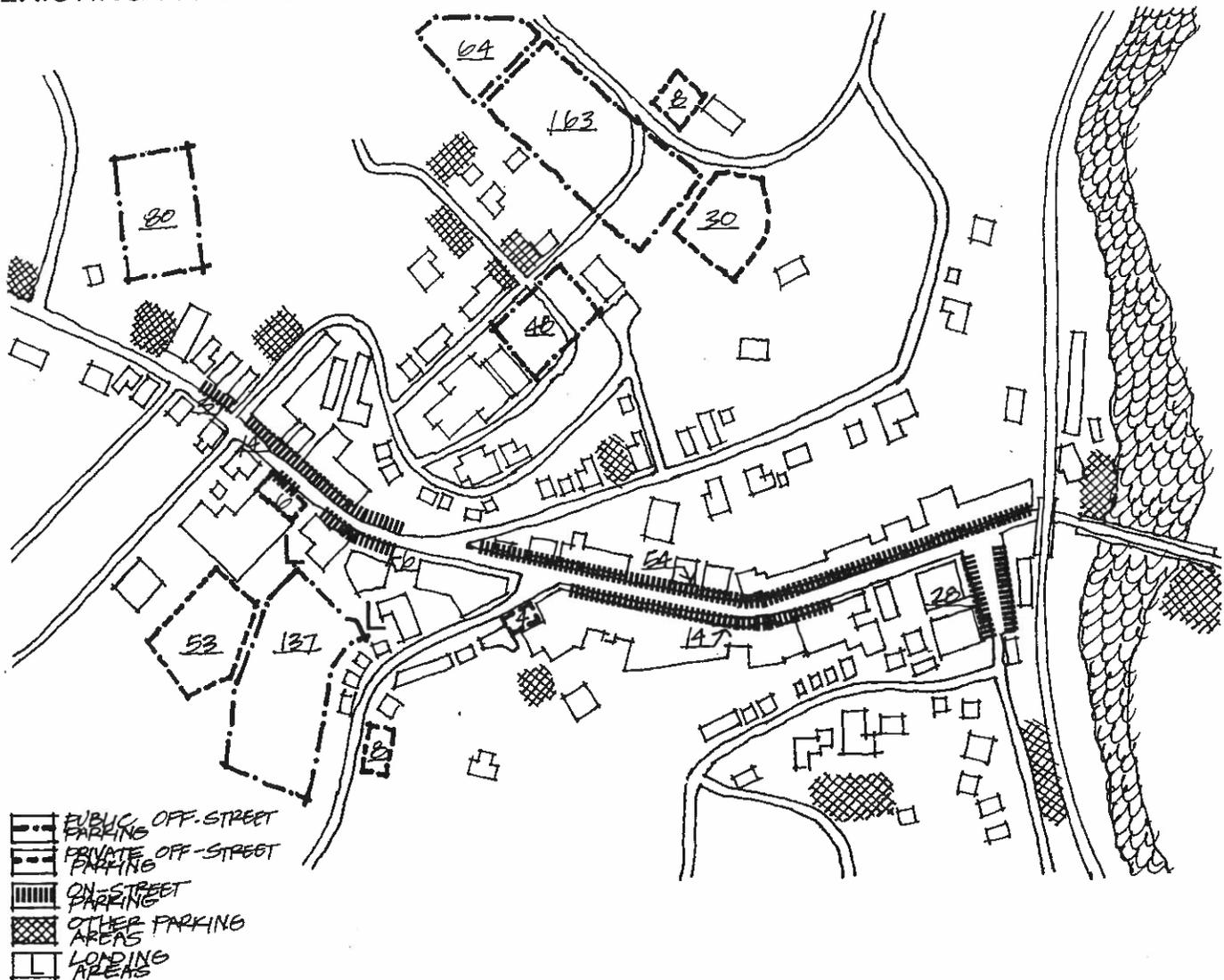
CRITERIA FOR THE PARKING PROGRAM

There are several principles which should be followed in the provision of downtown parking:

A Cooperative Approach. The topography and land use patterns in the downtown virtually dictate a cooperative approach and a coordinated effort in meeting parking needs. There are very few parcels on which parking requirements can be met on an individual basis, and even on these the parking provided is likely to be poor in certain functional respects, and/or damaging to the environmental quality of the historic district. It would be short-sighted, commercially and aesthetically, to allow parking to degrade the town's basic environmental assets.

Parking and Parkers. The parking strategy should be related to the characteristics of parkers and their needs. In Ellicott City there are essentially two groups. The first and largest group is long-term parkers. This group includes most of the prospective visitors to specialized commercial and cultural attractions in the downtown, people who will

EXISTING PARKING INVENTORY

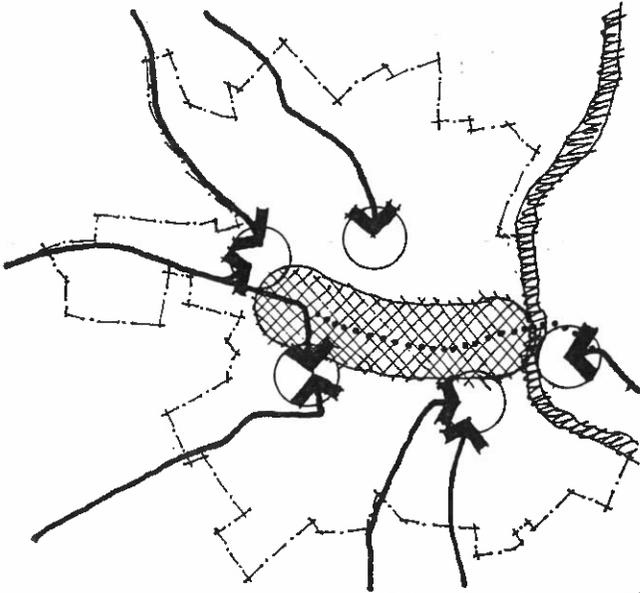


visit Ellicott City for substantial portion of a day, and engage in a variety of activities during the visit*. Downtown merchants, employees and residents are also included among long-term parkers.

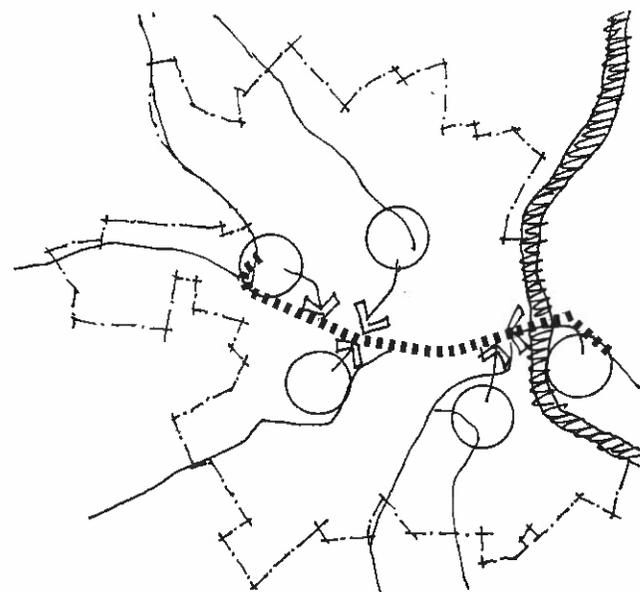
The second group are the short-term parkers, a group which includes a relatively limited number of short-term convenience shoppers*, and people engaged in "pick-ups" or deliveries.

Auto Access Relationships. In order to be effective, the parking strategy must be carefully related to the auto access system. Long-term parking facilities should be

DOWNTOWN PARKING CONCEPTS:



ENTRANCE LOCATIONS + AUTO INTERCEPTORS.



PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCES + TROLLEY SHUTTLE.

*See Chapter 2, "Commercial Potential".

placed at the entrances to the downtown, in such a way that they can intercept auto traffic before it infringes on the specialized commercial and cultural area.

Enough spaces should be provided at the entrances to meet average daily parking needs, so that a downtown visitor can have a reasonable expectation of finding a space at these points. Access to the "interceptor" parking facilities should be mainly from the access roads themselves, not from the downtown segment of Main Street.

Parking and Public Transportation. Special public transportation vehicles should be considered integral to the parking strategy. Special public transportation vehicles can assist long-term parkers get from interceptor parking facilities to downtown destinations, and can add an exciting new dimension to a visit to Ellicott City.

Pedestrian Entrances to Downtown. The pedestrian entrance for most visitors to Ellicott City will be from the interceptor parking facilities. For these visitors, it is likely that the initial and crucial visual impression of the town will be based on the walk (or public transportation ride) from the interceptor parking facility to the first downtown destination. Therefore, the urban design possibilities of the pedestrian entrances to the old trade district are important. Each proposed pedestrian entrance in Ellicott City has special design possibilities, now unrealized.

Financing Arrangements. Finally, downtown businessmen need an appropriate vehicle for helping to support the construction, operation, and maintenance of needed parking facilities. There is an adage, "He who pays the piper calls the tune". Yet downtown businessmen, who urgently need improved shared-used parking, have at present no effective means of assisting in its development, and no effective say in decisions on how much parking is provided, in what manner, and on what time schedule. A "parking validation plan" is proposed as a response to this situation. Since it is proposed as part of the package for assisting in the financing of various aspects of the master plan, the details of the proposal are described in Chapter 10 rather than here.

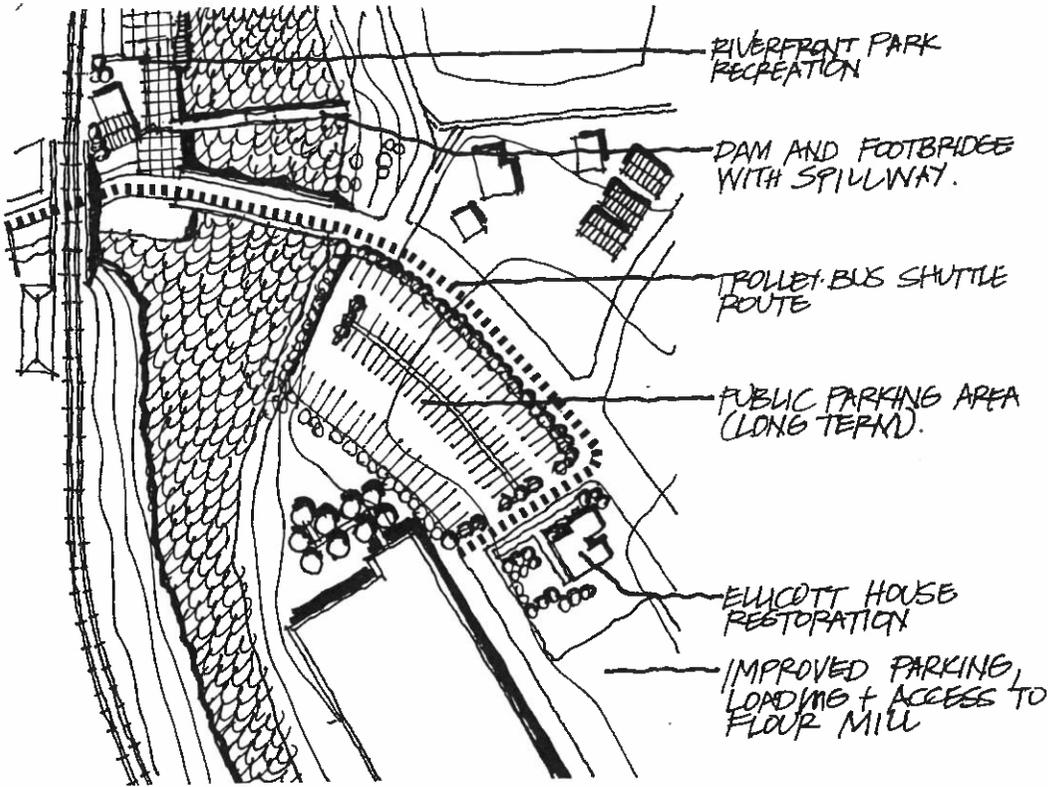
PROPOSED PARKING PROGRAM

The following parking program responds to the needs and criteria outlined above:

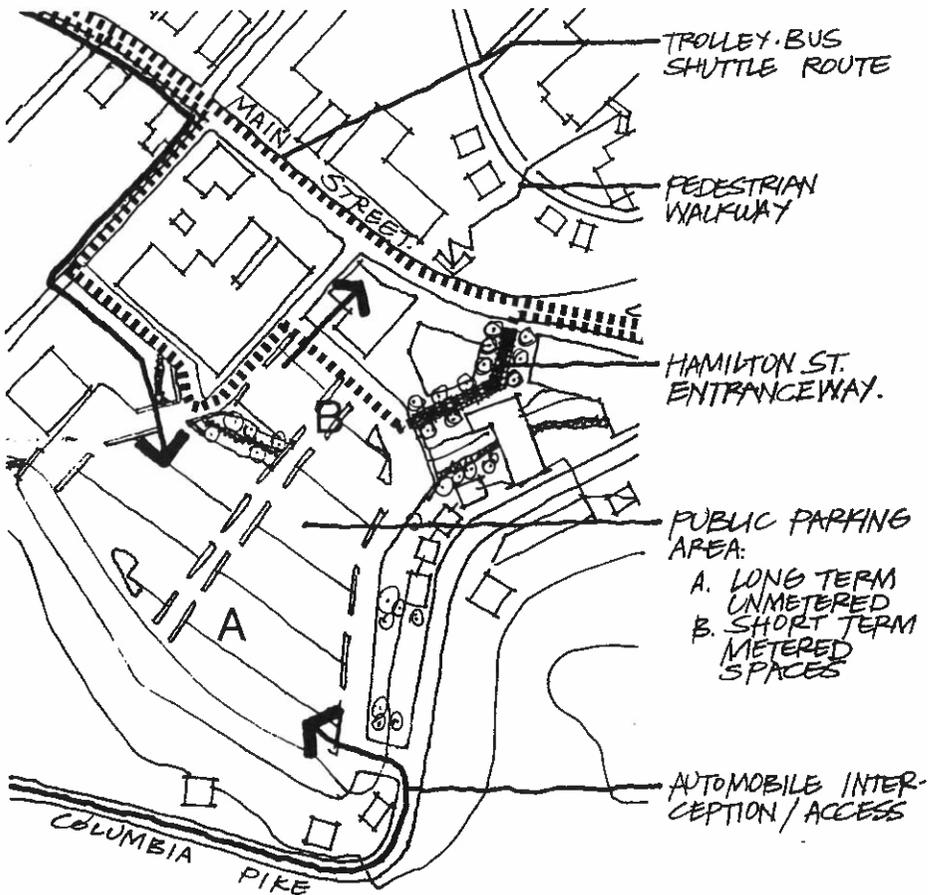
The Eastern Entrance. A parcel of about one acre, south of Frederick Road and east of the Patapsco River, should be developed as a 100 car off-street parking facility for Ellicott City and Oella visitors. The site is well located to intercept auto traffic approaching Ellicott City or Oella from the east along Frederick Road. It is within 250-300 feet of major initial destinations on lower Main Street (e.g. the railroad terminal museum). Since the railroad terminal itself is oriented away from the river, the visual impact of a parking facility at this site would be minimal. (If properly landscaped, the visual effect could be a significant improvement over the existing situation). The site is adjacent to the Ellicott House, one of the oldest and most historic in the area. A moderate-scale rehabilitation of the Ellicott House and its site could make it a pleasant place for visitors to picnic, rest, or rendezvous with other members of their party.

Parking development is also possible at other sites on the eastern approach, the site east of Oella Avenue and north of the old trolley line being perhaps the most likely location. Since the Frederick Road proposal makes possible the provision of more spaces, somewhat closer to major

DOWNTOWN ENTRANCE: FROM EAST



DOWNTOWN ENTRANCE: FROM WEST & SOUTHWEST



destinations in Ellicott City, and more directly related to the major eastern auto approach, it is given priority in the program for meeting current needs. The Oella Avenue site can help meet future needs.

The Southwestern Approach. The area behind the Post Office is adjacent to the major southwestern approach to the downtown (Columbia Pike), close to a number of important downtown destinations (Tongue Row, Taylor's Furniture, The Howard County Times), and reasonably central to the entire downtown area. The land is level, and for the most part publicly owned. It will remain a critical parking resource. The objective here is to make it more efficient, convenient, and attractive for parking use, and more compatible with adjacent activities.

- The sites now under public and private ownership should be combined, at least for design and development purposes. An integrated site plan for the two parcels can create a more efficient and attractive surface parking facility with better relationships to downtown activities. Also, re-design of the integrated site could provide 40-50 additional parking spaces.
- A special entrance should be developed to the integrated parking facility directly from Columbia Pike. At present, an auto approaching along Columbia Pike must make two left turns to gain access to the public parking facility. The proposed direct access from Columbia Pike can more effectively intercept automobiles before they infringe on the downtown itself. In combination with a program to discourage the use of Columbia Pike by thru traffic, the direct parking access will assist Tongue Row achieve its full potential as a specialized commercial and historic area.
- The redesign of the integrated surface parking facility should include an emphasis on landscaping and tree-planting. For example, tree-lined buffer strips could be placed between north-south parking rows: the resulting view from Columbia Pike would include more tree tops than automobiles or asphalt. Also, paving materials which allow rainwater to seep through into the underlying soil should be used to reduce the potential storm runoff impacts of a very large impervious surface.
- With a new entrance provided directly from Columbia Pike, the possibility of reducing auto use of Hamilton Street should be considered. Preliminary designs indicate that Forrest Street and the new access route can be linked to provide efficient access to the integrated parking facility. Hamilton Street, which enters Main Street opposite Church Road and only 200 feet from Forrest Street and Columbia Pike, can serve auto traffic poorly at best. However, with its location behind Tongue Row and its orientation towards the heart of the downtown it could become a special pedestrian entrance.*
- With the implementation of other elements of the proposed parking program, structured parking at the Columbia Pike site is not needed in the foreseeable future. Since structured parking costs 6-7 times more than surface parking, per space provided, an effort has been made to provide needed parking in well-designed, attractively landscaped surface facilities. The decision not to suggest structured parking at the Post Office site is based more on practical and programmatic than on aesthetic considerations. Though not proposed, it is felt that, with sensitive design, structured parking compatible with

the architectural and visual character of Ellicott City could be developed on the Post Office site.

The Southern Entrance. The parking area behind St. Paul's church, now held by two owners, should be re-designed as an integrated site. Preliminary designs indicate that a 5,000 square foot vest pocket park, and improved landscape treatment could be provided at the same time that the number of parking spaces is increased from the present 40-50 to 80-90. The re-design could result in better visual appearance and more parking. A pedestrian walkway should connect the parking facility to the St. Pauls School site (itself an important adaptive use possibility), and to Tiber Alley (using a space just west of Clarks Hardware Store). The improved parking facility would, of course, be available for church uses, and would provide additional parking capacity for Sunday church-goers.

The portion of Mullican Hill Lane closest to the railroad terminal plaza can be developed for more efficient parking use. This area is now regularly but inefficiently used for parking purposes. Relatively minor site alterations could increase by three times the number of parking spaces now provided on an informal basis. Furthermore, the area has several locational advantages for parking use. It is at an entrance to the downtown area, and could intercept auto traffic which might otherwise attempt left turns on Main Street in search of parking. Also, it is within 400 feet of most of the buildings around the railroad terminal plaza, and close to the railroad terminal itself, a major future traffic and parking generator.

Beyond Current Deficiencies. In combination, parking program elements described above (at Frederick Road, at the Post Office lot, at Mullican Hill Lane and St. Pauls) meet the current numerical parking space deficiency in the old trade district. There are other parking needs, however, that go beyond current numerical deficiencies, including the need to meet peak period demand, the need to improve the mobility of visitors and others within the old trade district, the need to improve the efficiency of short-term parking, and the need to meet future requirements. The following parking program elements respond to these needs.

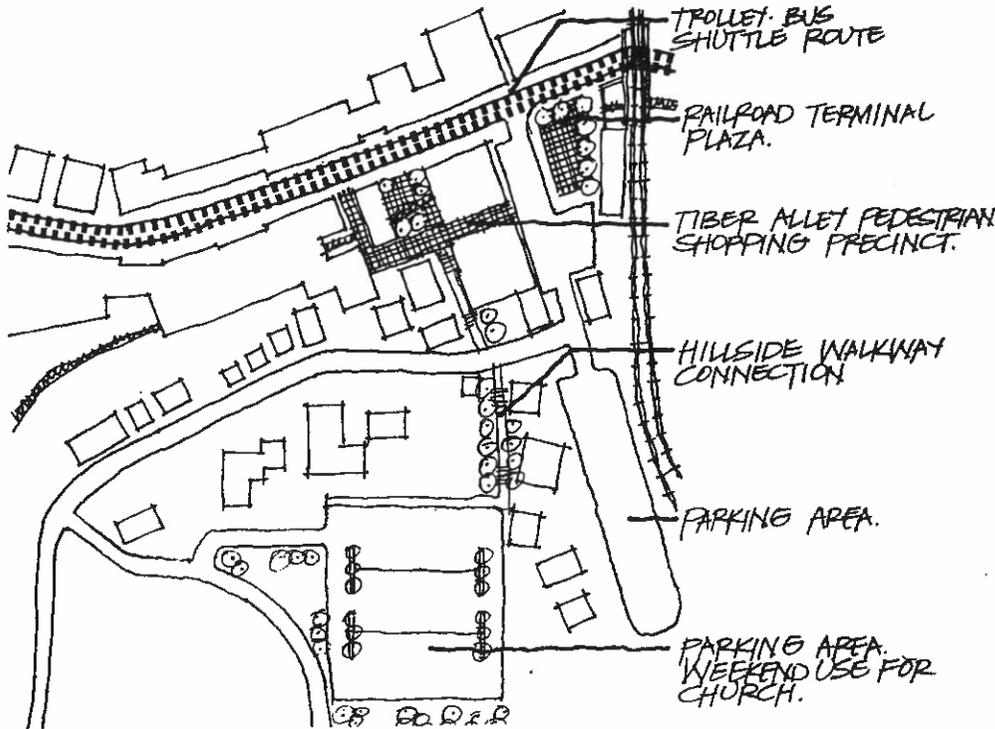
Shared Use of Courthouse Spaces. There are almost 300 public off-street parking spaces on Courthouse Hill, almost none of which are used on weekends, when parking need in the downtown is at peak levels. These spaces are not used by downtown visitors and shoppers, in part because they are not informed of and directed towards these spaces, in part because of the relatively long walking distances and very steep hillsides. The first of these difficulties can be overcome simply by placing appropriate signs on Rogers Avenue and Courthouse Drive, directing weekend visitors to the Courthouse parking spaces. The second difficulty is treated below.

The Trolley-Bus as a Parking Program Element. Many of the spaces provided by the program elements described above are beyond normal 300-400 foot walking distances to many businesses and offices between Columbia Pike and Tiber Alley. Are they, therefore, too remote to be useful in meeting parking need in this important segment of the downtown? The answer is no, not if the proposed parking facilities are linked by a special transportation system especially appropriate to the historic district environment, a system which makes it easy and fun for visitors to get from major parking facilities at entrance locations to any destination within the downtown.

One or more trolley busses could provide a shuttle service between interceptor parking facilities and destinations in

*See Chapter 9, sub-area proposal # 11.

DOWNTOWN ENTRANCE: FROM SOUTH



Ellicott City downtown or in Oella. The trolley-bus proposal is not a "frill" but an integral element of the parking program. The elongated Main Street shopping area provides a favorable setting for a shuttle bus operation. The trolley-bus could not only provide needed transportation access, but could itself become a special attraction.

More Effective Use of On-Street Spaces. The single advantage of on-street parking in Ellicott City is that it provides a limited number of spaces close to store fronts. On-street spaces cannot meet total downtown parking needs, nor are they a major factor in attracting the long-term visitors on which the downtown area will increasingly rely in the future. Since there are important competing uses for the space taken-up by on-street parking, it is important that these spaces be used with maximum efficiency for specific uses which off-street spaces are least able to serve: short-term parking for one-stop shopping trips, pick-up, and deliveries.

It is in the interest of downtown merchants and property owners to limit the use of on-street spaces for long-term parking. Statistics on parking turnover in commercial areas similar to old trade district indicate that each store owner, manager or employee making long-term use of an on-street space preempts a space which might be used by eleven convenience shoppers during the shopping day. Short term use of on-street spaces can be encouraged by several measures*: installation of 30 minute meters; setting parking meter rates above those in the interceptor parking facilities (with no eligibility for parking validation stamps); diplomatic persuasion and self-enforcement on the part of the Business Association.

Topographic imperatives and financial feasibility require that the Main Street frontage continue to be used for pick-up and delivery. However, arrangements can be made to enable these functions to occur more efficiently. Pick-up

and delivery zones could be designated on either side of Main Street. During the morning, deliveries to downtown businesses could use these zones; during the rest of the day, the zones could be used by customers picking-up large parcels.

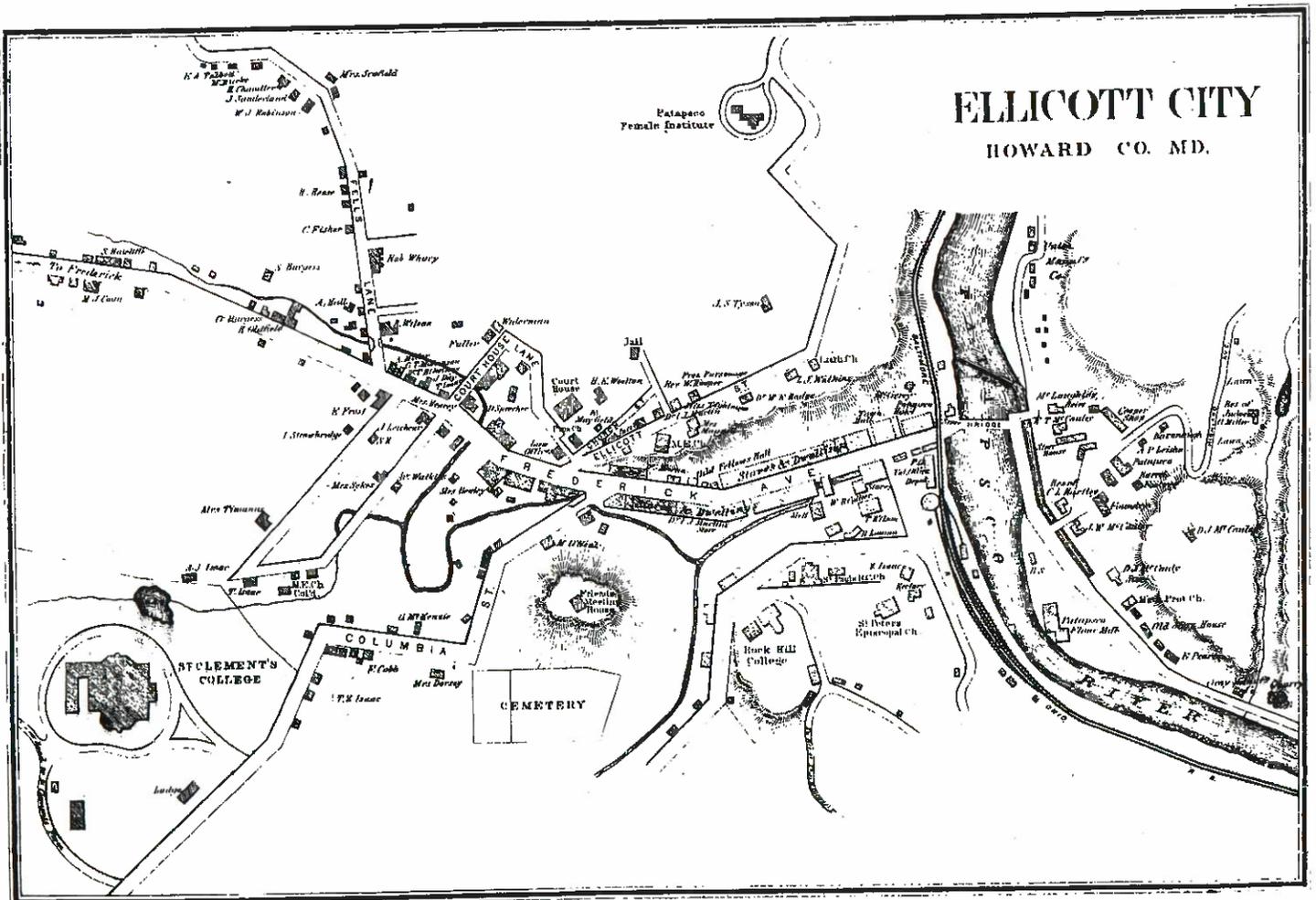
Of the total space between the storefronts on Main Street, over 35% is used for storage of automobiles, over 45% for moving automobiles, and less than 20% by people shopping, visiting, working, and living in Ellicott City. Over the long run, Ellicott City cannot fully fulfill its potential as a specialized commercial and cultural center unless greater priority is placed on the latter uses. Since the major commercial potential in Ellicott City is long-term visitors, for which on-street parking is inadequate, inappropriate and inefficient, the question naturally arises whether some portion of the space now used for the storage of automobiles might be more effectively and beneficially used by people strolling, window shopping, sightseeing and relaxing in the old trade district. The answer is yes, but there are two caveats. First, Main Street merchants and property owners have relied so heavily for so long on an inadequate number of on-street spaces, that they are wary of any proposal that would eliminate existing spaces, until they are able to see for themselves the benefits of an alternative approach to transportation and parking. Thus, alternative uses for on-street parking space should not be developed until there is concrete evidence that the transportation strategy and parking program is actually being implemented. Second, re-use of on-street parking space should not be considered in isolation from many other aspects which in combination form the environmental character of the old trade district: street furniture and street trees, street lighting, paving materials, parks and walkways, signs, etc. Thus, when alternative uses of on-street parking space are considered, they should be considered in the context of a streetscape plan for Main Street*.

* Implementation should be phased with development of interceptor parking facilities meeting current parking deficiencies.

* See Chapter 9, sub-area proposal #7.

7. PRESERVATION OF ARCHITECTURAL AND VISUAL QUALITY

ELLICOTT CITY: 1867



PRESERVATION OF ARCHITECTURAL AND VISUAL QUALITY

The Ellicott City Historic District contains buildings dating from colonial times to the depression of the 1930's, buildings constructed in a variety of styles for a variety of purposes. For the most part, the buildings are not the refined versions of period architecture which were developing from colonial times to the depression of the 1830's, buildings constructed in a variety of styles for a variety of purposes. For the most part, the buildings are not the refined versions of period architectural which were developed in administrative centers, but work-a-day structures meeting the practical purposes of a colonial manufacturing community, and a 19th (and early 20th) century trade center. The structures remaining in the historic district reflect the evolution of the town, not just one development period. They reflect the variety of interrelated activities and purposes (commercial, governmental, residential, institutional, recreational), not just one facet of life. And they reflect the lives of people in general, not just those of the well-to-do. It is this multi-faceted heritage, all concentrated in a small area of special natural quality, that is unique and worth preserving.

Recent development has often detracted from the special visual and architectural qualities of the community as it had evolved through the first 150 years of its existence. This has occurred in several ways:

- In some cases, recent development has been thoughtless of the architectural and visual heritage of the town. Of course, most earlier development was relatively unselfconscious about the "heritage" it was contributing to, but the scale of recent development and the exotic variety of contemporary building materials and construction techniques make the impacts of recent thoughtlessness more severe.
- In other cases, recent development has self-consciously attempted to create a rustic quality as a means to capitalize on the quaintness of the town, as it appears to modern eyes. But this is making over the historic community to conform to contemporary perceptions and preconceptions. Neither as a colonial mill town, nor as a regional trade center, nor as a quickie marriage and night-life spot was Ellicott City especially rustic or quaint.
- In still other cases, recent development has imported details and fashions associated with historic communities elsewhere. But to attempt to imitate the "history" of Williamsburg or Society Hill or various New England colonial communities would be embarrassingly unconvincing; better to build on the architectural heritage right here in Ellicott City.

The irony is that many of these changes have been made with good intentions and often at considerable expense. Part of the problem has been that the architectural and visual character to be preserved in Ellicott City has not been clearly defined. Part of the problem has been that guidelines for rehabilitation and new construction have not been available or broadly disseminated: inappropriate changes have been made because it has not been clear what would be better. Part of the problem has been that implementation tools have been limited; "negative" regulatory devices have not been complemented by positive inducements for high quality rehabilitation and imaginative adaption of old structures. Finally, part of the problem has been that the supportive services needed for the broadly-based preservation

efforts have not yet been fully developed, or fully coordinated with the aims of property-owners and businessmen. This chapter summarizes recommendations regarding each of these limitations.

DEFINITION OF ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

The plan has attempted to set up a framework for historic preservation in Ellicott City, a framework which encompasses the considerable diversity of building types and sizes, yet avoids the pitfalls of generality on the one hand, and particularity on the other. The result is a definition of the architectural and visual character of Ellicott City, first in terms of a set of basic building features, and second in terms of historic district sub-areas which exhibit similar building features.

Analysis of Building Features. If the "visual character" of a building can be broken into its component parts, it may be possible to move from a general impression that a proposed change is "inappropriate" or "incompatible", towards more specific and certain identification of particular features which need to be modified. It is suggested that the following set of building features be considered in reviewing applications for rehabilitation or new construction in Ellicott City Historic District*.

1. *Site Relationships.* The relationship of a building or a series of buildings to their sites.

Building setback. The space between buildings and the street; contributes to a sense of enclosure or spaciousness.

Building spacing. The spaces between buildings; Main Street, Lawyer's Row and Felis Avenue have dis-

RESIDENCES ON UPPER MAIN STREET, 1890



*The analysis of building features is described in Working Paper #9, pp. 6-25. It is based on a present-day visual survey, not on detailed historical research. It is, therefore, subject to further refinement, development and documentation. Due to space limitations, only a few illustrative findings are presented here.

tinctive building spacing patterns.

Building orientation. The angle of the building in relation to the street; most buildings in Ellicott City are oriented simply and directly to the street.

Lot coverage. The "footprint" of a building on its lot.

Landscaping. In Ellicott City, the front yards of residences with small building setbacks were often bordered with hedges. In the downtown, where there were no front yards, window boxes were common, as were street trees.

2. **Building Dimensions.** The basic dimensions of a building, leaving aside considerations regarding building materials, fenestration, facade design, etc.

Building height. Because of their ceiling heights, 2-story buildings constructed in the early 1900's are often of similar building height as 3-story buildings dating from the early 1800's. The sense of enclosure created by buildings of equal height may vary due to varying styles for roofs and upper stories at different building periods. The continuous facade along lower Main Street (uniform building setback and spacing) contributes to compatibility of buildings of varying heights.

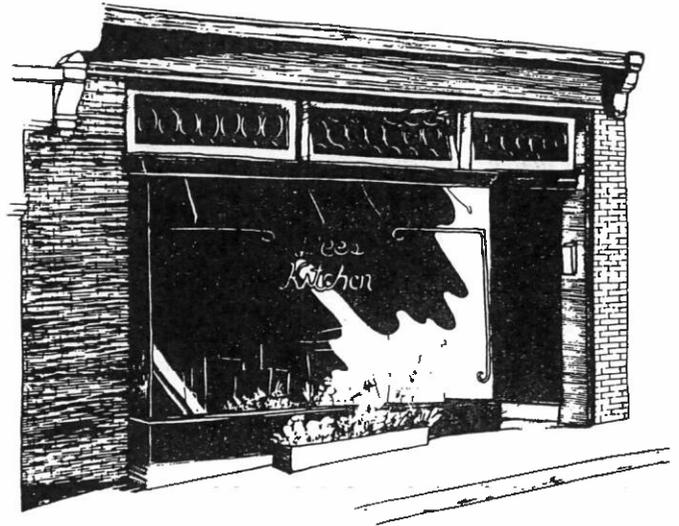
Building proportion. The relationship of a building's height to its width. Many buildings dating from the early 1800's were constructed as a pair or a series of sub-units (e.g. Ellicott Country Store, the Tongue Row structures), and can be "read" visually either as individual sub-units of vertical proportions, or an entire building of more horizontal proportions.

Building bulk. The total volume of a structure. On lower Main Street where individual buildings are part of a continuous streetfront facade, the depth of buildings (and their bulk) can vary considerably without affecting the visual character of the facade. In other sub-areas, such as Church Road and Park Avenue, buildings are viewed from many angles, and building bulk has more direct application.

3. **Building Materials.** One of the basic sources of vis-

ual coherence in historic communities was limitations in building materials. A builder used materials avail-

DEE'S KITCHEN, EARLY 1900's



MAIN STREET STRUCTURE MID 1800'S



RESIDENCE ON COURTHOUSE HILL, LATE 1800's



able from the immediate vicinity, and their characteristics dictated a general approach to construction. The result was an overall compatibility in terms of materials, construction techniques, and color, within which individual design decisions added interest and variety.

Wall materials. Granite, wood clapboard, wood shingles, smooth stucco applied over stone "rubble" walls (a technique called "pargetting" or "paring"), yellow or dark red brick, and glass (as showcase windows integral to the original design and purpose of early 1900's commercial structures) have been used as building materials during various periods.

Color. A limited range of colors is typical for various wall materials; the wood of doors, windows, cornices and trim; shutters; and roofs.

4. **Roofs.** There is a roof type which, with variations, is typical of buildings constructed in the early 1800's, late 1800's and early 1900's.

Roof pitch. Some mid-1800's buildings have mansard roofs and some early 1900's commercial structures have flat roofs, but steeply pitched roofs dominate.

Roof ridge line. Reflects the building plan underneath: simple and unbroken in early 1800's structures; more complex in later buildings.

Chimney location. Several typical chimney arrangements reflect interesting aspects of original building design, but chimneys never extend down the exterior building wall.

5. **Facade Elements.** The characteristics of windows, doors, and cornices.

Windows. The "6 over 6" windows in early 1800's structures, and the "2 over 2" windows in the later 1800's structures, have pleasing, vertical proportions.

Shutters. Many have been removed from 1800's buildings; more appropriate than awnings for controlling sunlight.

Doors. In early 1800's buildings, doors were simple, unadorned and of similar width as the windows; in the late 1800's, doors were often set into widened door jambs, but pediments and other door ornament were rarely used in Ellicott City.

Cornices. Horizontal elements found on some late 1800's and many early 1900's buildings, but not on early 1800's structures.

6. **Facade Design.** The relationships of doors, windows and cornices in the building facade.

Horizontal arrangement. Equal spacing of windows and doors is typical in the 1800's; window combinations and groupings were in style in the early 1900's.

Vertical arrangement. The vertical alignment of facade openings (together with the vertical proportions of the openings themselves and the equal widths of windows and doors) combine to emphasize the vertical dimension of early 19th century buildings: an important feature often damaged by recent

BRIDGEWATER MARKET (OLD EMPORIUM), 1780-90



rehabilitation.

Protrusions. With the exception of some porches and balconies, most protrusions from the building wall (window showcases, window awnings, pent roofs) are recent additions and damage the character of the building.

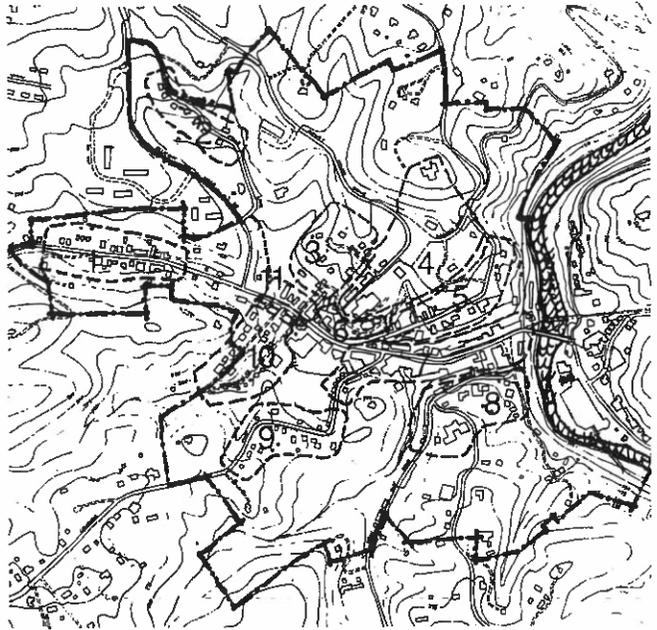
GEORGE ELLICOTT HOUSE, 1789



Architectural Sub-Areas. One of the complexities of historic preservation in Ellicott City is the town's diversity. The historic district is a conglomeration of several building types, constructed under a variety of topographic conditions for a variety of purposes over a 150 year period. Since the existing buildings are hardly compatible among themselves, it is impossible for a new structure to be compatible with all of them. Does it therefore follow that new structures need not be compatible with any existing structures? If not, how does one decide which of the several sets of architectural and visual characteristics in the historic district a new structure *should* be compatible with?

The resolution of this problem lies in the identification of sub-areas within the historic district. There are several sub-areas in which the appropriate design character is clearly established by existing development: e.g. Lawyers Row, upper Fells Avenue, the Park Avenue area, Church Road, lower Main Street. In each, a description in terms of the list of building features can provide reasonably clear guidelines for future modifications and new development. In other sub-areas, design character is less clearly established by existing development: e.g. upper Main Street, (between Forrest Street and Ellicott Mills Drive), and the Courthouse Hill Area (between the Courthouse and Mt. Ida). In these areas, large-scale new development should be preceded by urban design studies to determine what the character of the entire sub-area might be and how individual development initiatives might best contribute to it*.

ARCHITECTURAL SUB-AREAS



- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 UPPER MAIN STREET. | 6 LAWYERS ROW |
| 2 FELS AVENUE | 7 LOWER MAIN STREET |
| 3 PARK AVENUE AREA. | 8 SAINT PAULS AREA. |
| 4 COURTHOUSE HILL AREA. | 9 LOWER COLUMBIA PIKE |
| 5 CHURCH ROAD | 10 MERRIMAN/HILL STREET AREA |
| | 11 UPTOWN |

GUIDELINES FOR PRESERVATION

The recently enacted "Historic District Commission" ordinance provides general criteria for historic preservation in Howard County. Section 16.601 C3 of the ordinance says that, in reviewing applications for change, the Historic District Commission should consider:

- the historic or architectural value of the structure (its association with historic events or persons),
- its architectural features (physical characteristics, as distinct from historic associations), and
- its compatibility and interrelationships with its surroundings (urban design or sub-area character).

But exactly which architectural features, historic values, or interrelationships should be considered? And how exactly should these considerations guide decisions? Within the general criteria provided by county-wide legislation, more specific criteria need to be custom-tailored to the special characteristics of particular historic districts. The "general" and "detailed" guidelines presented below attempt to relate the Historic District Commission's legislated responsibilities to the analysis of building features and the architectural sub-areas in Ellicott City, in order to suggest how the objectives of the county-wide historic ordinance might be pursued in its first historic district.

* See Chapter 9, sub-area proposal #15.

General Guidelines. The following general guidelines for rehabilitation and new construction are suggested in Ellicott City:

1. *Historic Preservation Objective.* While adapting existing buildings for new uses, and constructing new buildings, the aim is to preserve the architectural and visual character of the old town of Ellicott Mills as it developed through the early 20th century: a mix of buildings reflecting historic roles as a colonial mill town, a mid-19th century resort, a late 19th century governmental and institutional center, and an early 20th century regional trade center.
2. *Use the Structure As Guide.* In modifying the exterior of structures, it is generally advisable to let the characteristics of the structure itself be one's guide, not what has come to be considered historic in other areas, or some preconception of styles appropriate to a specialized commercial area. In many cases, this may involve additional research regarding what the original characteristics of the structure actually were, and what major modifications have been made and when. It may involve decisions on whether to move toward the building's original character, or its character at some stage in its evolution. It may involve adjustment of contemporary commercial, office, or residential activities to the constraints imposed by the historic structure. It may involve greater rehabilitation expense, but not necessarily; many of the most inappropriate modifications are the most expensive ones.
3. *Retain Original Materials.* In rehabilitating building exteriors, retain as much of the original material and detail as possible. In general, nothing is going to look better than the original building materials and details. This general guideline is similar, but not identical, to the one above, which emphasizes design characteristics.
4. *Avoid Spurious Antiquity.* Firmly resist the impulse to make buildings look older than they really are. Such modifications are rarely convincing, and are often destructive of the true character of the original structure. For example, "Dee's Kitchen" should not be modified to look like it was built in the early 19th rather than the early 20th century; it should be retained for its own sake.
5. *Relate to Character of Sub-Area.* New structures should take many of their design cues from their surroundings. This does not mean it is necessary to copy styles, but it is important to reflect the basic design features which are the basis of the visual character of the surrounding area. (Larger scale development may stretch this rule, but should not break it. Any large scale development should be done as part of a sensitive plan which includes the surrounding area, taking into account the visual characteristics of the historic district as well as contemporary needs. Often these are not nearly as incompatible as they may seem.)
6. *The "Better" and the "Best".* A conflict can develop in historic preservation between a thorough and meticulous restoration which a historic building may "really deserve", and a partial restoration which improves the building's condition and economic viability, but which leaves it considerably short of the ultimate desired character. Often the underlying question is whether the partial restoration can validly be seen as one of a series which in combination would comprise a thorough and meticulous job, or whether the partial restoration itself makes further restoration more difficult or expensive, and therefore less likely. In general, it is advisable not to let the "best" be the enemy of the "better", unless it is appar-

ent that the better somehow preempts future progress towards the best.

Detailed Guidelines. Over 50 specific guidelines dealing with site relationships, building dimensions, building materials, roofs, facade elements and design have been suggested for the Ellicott City Historic District*. A thorough review, by the Historic District Commission and other groups interested in or affected by historic preservation, will certainly suggest a number of modifications, both in the specific guidelines themselves and in the analysis of building features on which they are based. After the necessary modifications have been made, the guidelines should be adopted by the Historic District Commission as *guidelines* for the application of its powers and responsibilities in the Ellicott City Historic District. The adopted guidelines should be publicized and communicated so that property owners will be aware of them and be able to take them into account in the initial planning of proposed changes, rather than after they have become committed to a particular design.

The adoption of the guidelines, as modified, signifies the intention of the Commission to use them as a basis for judgements in the Ellicott City Historic District. Since they are not law, the Commission may depart from them in particular instances. Also, the guidelines are open to regular revision based on continuing research into the architectural and visual character of Ellicott City, and on the experience of the Commission in applying them.

Signs. Signs are a key element in the visual character of the downtown, and visual character is a key factor in the ability of the downtown to realize its economic and building use potentials. Thus, there is a broad area of compatibility, not conflict, among aesthetic, historic preservation, pedestrian amenity and economic objectives in the old trade district in Ellicott City. Signs play a role in the town's ability to attract the visitors and shoppers that it must attract if its commercial potential is to be realized. To be effective, signs in Ellicott City must be oriented to the pedestrian and the pace of the pedestrian: the relatively small, well-designed, carefully mounted, visually interesting sign will be more commercially effective as well as more attractive, and more fitting to the architectural and visual character of the historic district.

Attempts to apply the county's general sign code provisions to the special situation in the old trade district, have led to much contention, confusion, and frustration, without providing a reasonable and consistent guide for improving the visual character, image, and economic effectiveness of the area. A special set of sign regulations is required, a set of regulations custom-tailored to the character and objectives of the historic commercial area. One purpose of the proposed regulations is to encourage diversity, imagination and craftsmanship in the design and construction of signs, and to establish a framework within which individual initiatives can contribute to the visual character and commercial viability of the entire downtown area. Another purpose is to control the proliferation of signs in the old trade district. Proliferation can render individual signs ineffective, as well as create aesthetic blight. In an area whose major commercial potential is diverse, small-scale enterprises, sign proliferation is a real danger. Therefore, its control is important, from the point of view of both aesthetics and long-term commercial effectiveness.

* See Working Paper #9, pp. 31-37. Because of space limitations, and because they are subject to review and revision, the detailed guidelines are not described in detail.

The proposed sign regulations have three aspects*: The first is guidelines regarding sign materials, illumination, information complexity, and content, which would apply to all signs. The second is guidelines regarding the size of signs and their placement on buildings, which would apply to particular types of signs (e.g. wall signs, window signs, projecting signs). The third is sign proliferation controls which relate the number of signs of various types and sizes to characteristics of particular buildings (e.g. frontage or height), to the number and types of other signs on the building, or to characteristics of the shopping district as a whole. It is suggested that the proposed sign regulations be incorporated (after review and revision) in the special land use controls for the old trade district*.

PRESERVATION TOOLS

It is sobering to note that most preservation in Ellicott City has been the result of topographic circumstance, not of conscious effort or public policy. Had not the old town been located in an enclave particularly unsuitable to auto-oriented suburban development, the county's limited tools for historic preservation might have been overwhelmed 10-15 years ago, and the heritage left to preserve would be much more meager than it is today.

At present, essentially two tools are available for the preservation of the architectural and visual character of the Ellicott City Historic District. The first is the legislated responsibility of the Historic District Commission, under which proposals for exterior changes are reviewed for their compatibility with the character of the structure itself and its surroundings. The second is the persuasive power of organizations and individuals concerned with historic preservation in Ellicott City. Both tools have made substantial contributions to historic preservation in Ellicott City. But both are limited in relation to the job that lies ahead.

Effective Review. The measures described in the previous sections (the analysis of building features, the identification of architectural sub-areas, and the suggested guidelines for rehabilitation, new construction and signs) are designed to strengthen the review and approval power of the Historic District Commission in preserving and enhancing the architectural and visual character of the old town. They do this by systematically describing the character that is to be preserved in the historic district, and by more specifically identifying actions appropriate or inappropriate in various circumstances.

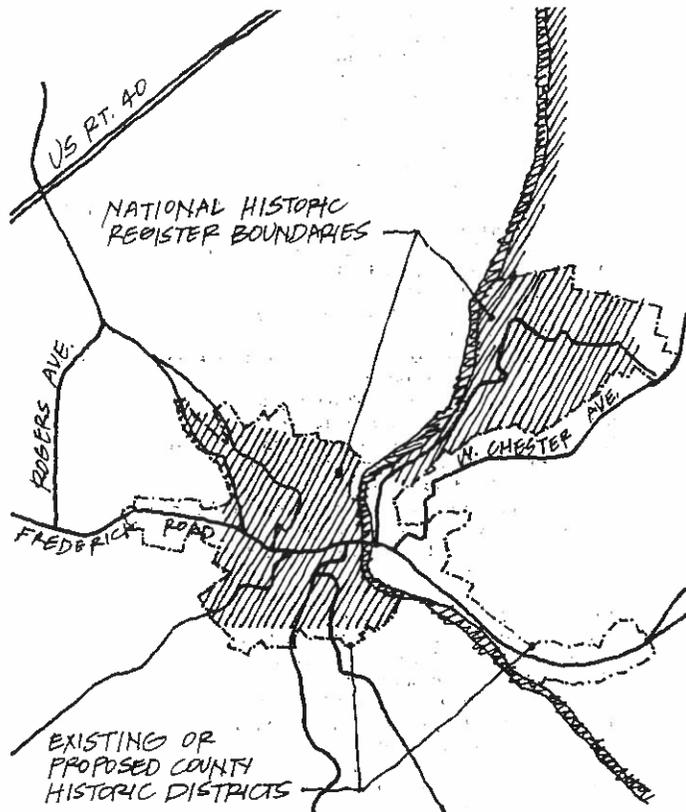
Incentives for Preservation. Effective review of private proposals for change, while necessary and important, is not sufficient. One of the limitations of present historic preservation tools is that they emphasize the prevention of actions clearly detrimental to the character of the historic district, not the encouragement of particularly appropriate actions which would enhance the historic environment. Tools to prevent detrimental actions need to be balanced by tools to encourage especially appropriate actions.

The county, the local business and financial community, and the state-wide and regional public all have legitimate interests in encouraging high quality rehabilitation and imaginative adaptive uses in Ellicott City. If these in-

terests can be effectively combined with the initiatives of individual property owners and businessmen, a powerful new force for the enhancement of the colonial mill town and the traditional seat of county government will have been created. Three measures are suggested*:

- **Tax Credit.** By providing a property tax credit for a portion of investments of particular contribution to the architectural and visual character of the historic district, the county can help encourage high quality rehabilitation in its traditional county seat. The amount of the credit (or incentive) would be keyed to the amount of the investment and its contribution to the character of the old town. The credit would encourage a larger number of high-quality rehabilitation investments, which would increase property values in the historic district. Thus, it is likely that the county's "investment" in high quality rehabilitation would be recouped over the long-term.
- **Revolving Loan Fund.** A reduced-interest loan fund for certain investments in the historic district which, though economically marginal, have community-wide benefits, would help to encourage the diverse mixture of cultural, residential and specialized commercial activities most appropriate in the Ellicott City downtown area. By helping to bring about such a mix of uses, the loan fund would contribute to an improved climate for other private investment using conventional loans.
- **National Historic Register.** The designation of Elli-

HISTORIC DISTRICTS: LOCAL & NATIONAL, EXISTING & PROPOSED



*Working Paper #12 describes in greater detail the suggested sign regulations and their underlying rationale.

* See Chapter 2, "Zoning" policy implications.

*The tax credit and the revolving loan fund are elements in a package of proposals for financing the implementation of the plan, and are described in greater detail in Chapter 10

cott City on the national register of historic places would strengthen the tools for preserving the old town in two ways. First, property owners in the historic district would become eligible to apply for 50% matching grants for restoration work. Second, a statement of impacts on the historic district could be required of federally-funded projects. Both measures are consistent with the purposes of the Ellicott City Plan.

SUPPORT FOR PRESERVATION

To be maximally effective, effective review and preservation incentives should be accompanied by a series of initiatives aimed at increasing the information base on which the Historic District Commission can draw in making its decisions, and increasing the resources available to property owners desiring to comply with the spirit as well as the letter of the guidelines. Often a major problem for

property owners inexperienced in historic preservation work is the inconvenience and time delay of gathering the resources (of materials, skills and knowledge) needed to deal appropriately with the particular problem. Making these resources available on a group basis, rather than trying to assemble them case by case, could make the process of historic preservation more efficient for all concerned.

Historical research regarding building characteristics and construction technology at various periods in the evolution of the old town can be systematized to build a file of information on each building, identifying dates of construction, original uses, modifications, etc. This research can broaden to an examination of topics particularly relevant to current historic preservation decisions: e.g. the use of wood shingles as a building material in Ellicott City, the design concepts of commercial structures in various development periods, the characteristics of commercial signs originally attached to various commercial structures.

There is a need to expand the resources on which property owners can draw in undertaking high quality rehabilitation. What are potential sources of hard-to-find building materials needed in historic preservation in Ellicott City? Which architects and contractors have proved themselves to be particularly sensitive and effective in dealing with historic rehabilitation problems? Who is available to provide professional advice on the means to resolve particular problems encountered frequently in historic preservation, but rarely in other kinds of construction work?

SOME ELLICOTT CITY DATES

- 1772 - Ellicott brothers purchased mill site
- 1774 - Ellicott Mills opened
- 1789 - Opera House constructed
- 1790 - Former Disney's Tavern (now Fabric House) built
- 1795 - Friends Meeting House constructed
- 1809 - Old National Pike opened through Ellicott City
- 1810 - Union Manufacturing Company (later Dickey Mills) opened
- 1822 - Old St. Johns Episcopal Church constructed
- 1823 - Mount Ida constructed
- 1830 - B&O railroad station constructed
 - Tom Thumb race
 - Patapsco Hotel built
 - Old Patapsco National Bank built
- 1831 - "Angelo Cottage" constructed
- 1836 - St. Paul's Church constructed
- 1837 - Patapsco Female Institute opened
 - Emory Methodist Episcopal Church built
- 1840 - Howard County Courthouse constructed
 - Howard County Times opens in Ellicott City
 - St. Charles College opens
- 1843 - Odd Fellows Hall completed
- 1844 - First Presbyterian church (now Howard County Historical Society) built
- 1847 - Emory Methodist Episcopal Church built
- 1849 - Opera auditorium added
- 1850 - Howard House built
- 1851 - Howard "District" becomes Howard County
- 1855c - Lilburn built
- 1857 - Rock Hill College constructed on site of elementary school
- 1867 - Ellicott Mills incorporated
- 1868 - Major flood; many mills destroyed
- 1870 - Saint Luke A.M.E. Church organized
- 1885 - Freight warehouse added to railroad terminal
- 1896 - Old Fire House (Reading Center) built
- 1898 - Yates Food Market opens
 - Streetcar Service between Baltimore and Ellicott City
- 1907 - Taylor Manor Hospital begun
- 1924 - Ellicott City Elementary School built
 - Present Fire House built
 - Taylor's Store built
- 1926 - Caplans Store completed
- 1928 - Miller Chevrolet opens in Ellicott City
- 1930 - Main Street Cinema constructed
- 1935 - Ellicott City charter revoked
- 1938 - US 40 opened north of Ellicott City
- 1949 - B&O passenger service discontinued
- 1955 - Streetcar service terminated
- 1958c - Electric utility lines constructed on Main Street
- 1959 - US 20 opened west of Ellicott City
- 1972 - Agnes Flood
 - Dickey Mills closed
 - I 70 N opened north of Ellicott City
- 1974 - Ellicott City Historic District established

8. HOUSING AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

In the United States, historic preservation efforts have often overlooked recent history to focus on the more romantic heritage of the distant past. And, specialized commercial enterprises naturally tend to focus on their new clientele, attracted from the metropolitan region and beyond, and to disregard local residents and their needs. Yet, the fact cannot be avoided that there are those who stand to lose from the processes of change gaining momentum in the old town. Ellicott City has an opportunity to combine historic preservation and specialized commercial development with efforts to deal directly and positively with these problems. The combination will not jeopardize historic preservation and commercial enhancement in the old town. On the contrary, it could augment and lend broader justification to historic preservation and commercial enhancement efforts. This chapter outlines the problems, and suggests a program of action.

HOUSING AND RELATED PROBLEMS

Physical Condition. About 100 housing units in the Ellicott City planning area are in substandard physical condition. They lack basic plumbing facilities or have clearly apparent exterior deficiencies. Of these units, about 30% are owner-occupied, and are therefore unaffected by the county's housing code, which applies only to renter units. Newly-enacted state rehabilitation loan programs, however, can assist lower income owner households improve their housing units.

Overcrowding. About 100 housing units in the Ellicott City planning area have one or more persons per room, and can therefore be considered "overcrowded". It is important to note that in Ellicott City, units in poor physical condition are generally not overcrowded, and units which are overcrowded are generally not in clearly substandard physical condition. This observation suggests

that the overcrowding in Ellicott City is not attributable to large family size, but results from families "doubling-up" to reduce housing costs, or to improve housing conditions in an area in which low cost housing is extremely scarce. Programs aimed at reducing the number of units in poor physical condition may inadvertently result in additional overcrowding, trading one problem for another.

Inadequate Income. Almost 150 low and moderate income renter households in the Ellicott City planning area pay over 25% of their income for housing, and many pay considerably larger percentages. It is also reasonable to assume that housing costs are beyond the means of some owner households in the area. As suggested above, problems of physical condition, overcrowding and inadequate income are interrelated. Households occupy units in poor physical condition because they are the only available units within their means. Housing units deteriorate because households do not have the resources to maintain them. And households endure overcrowded conditions in order to pool resources required for a better housing unit.

Inadequate Transportation. About 100 households in the Ellicott City planning area have no automobile. In a suburban economy such as that of Howard County, the lack of an automobile can be a severe handicap in a household's efforts to find and hold jobs, shop effectively, and take advantage of medical, educational, and other services.

Traffic Conflicts. Many of the older residences in Ellicott City were built close to the road, and increasing traffic volumes have had damaging effects on the residential environment, in terms of noise, dirt and grime, fumes, pedestrian safety, play space for children, residential parking and traffic functions, etc. It is an objective of the plan that these roadside residential areas be preserved and enhanced, first, by a transportation strategy which would reduce and slow the traffic through residential neighborhoods, and, second, by urban design measures to effect better relationships between moving traffic and adjacent residential neighborhoods. (See Chapter 5).

HOUSEHOLDS AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The Households. The low and moderate income households in Ellicott City do not conform to inner city stereotypes. Many are white; a significant proportion are home owners; many are elderly or middle-aged; many are small households of three or four persons.

To a large extent, the low and moderate income population in Ellicott City is a reflection of the rural-suburban transition in Howard County. Over the past 20 or 30 years, as farms have been mechanized or turned to suburban development, their population has trickled into Ellicott City, largely because Ellicott City has been one of the few sources of low cost housing in the area. Thus, many of the low and moderate income households in Ellicott City have ties to Howard County that go back for generations. In response to their needs, a number of religious and service institutions have developed in Ellicott City, and these institutions continue to attract former residents long after they have moved away from the old town.

The Threat of Change. Current trends in Ellicott City seem to hold little promise for the low and moderate income population, including many of the town's renters, laborers, and youths. In fact, for many, the "new Ellicott City" is a positive threat. They stand to lose, through no fault of their own, their homes, their jobs, and their sense of community belonging:

- As property values rise and rehabilitation investments are made (and are reflected in rents), they may be priced out of their homes.
- As the construction-related businesses, which employ a substantial proportion of low-skilled laborers and operatives, are replaced by specialized commercial activities and professional offices, they may lose their jobs.
- As the sleepy, "bypassed" community of the 1950's and early 1960's is increasingly dominated by tourists and visitors and those who cater to them, they may lose their sense of community belonging.

These are threats to basic human values and needs. That the threats are not overt, but implicit in the situation, does not make them easier for those threatened to deal with.

The Social Implications. The implicit threat to homes, jobs, and sense of community belonging is probably the root cause of much of the vandalism, disorderly conduct, burglary, petty harassment, loitering (drunkenness) and other anti-social behavior which has occasionally occurred in recent years in Ellicott City. It is not enough to simply deplore these incidents when they occur, though this is a reasonable and understandable response. Nor is it enough to rely on additional police protection, because this would deal only with symptoms, not causes, of only some of the conduct that is deplored. It is not enough to hope that the processes of change in Ellicott City can somehow be stopped; with or without the master plan, property values in Ellicott City will rise, investments will be made and recouped, new businesses will replace the old, tourists will visit. It is not enough, at least from the county's point of view, to hope that the "problem" or the "problem people" will simply go away, because in most cases they are in Ellicott City because of the lack of jobs or low cost housing opportunities elsewhere, or because they have lived in the area for a long time and want to remain.

A PROGRAM FOR RESPONSE

It is in the enlightened self-interest of the community as a whole to deal forthrightly and decently with the problems of those who stand to lose from the processes of change that are gaining momentum in Ellicott City. Property owners, business people, county government, and the people themselves all have much to gain from such an effort.

Social Impacts Committee. A committee should be formed to deal with the social impacts of change in Ellicott City. In addition to affected residents, the committee should include representatives of local religious and educational institutions, public agencies, and the local business/financial community. There are members of each of these groups who have valuable insights into the problems, and potential contributions to solutions.

The committee should have two basic functions. First, it should be a vehicle for the residents themselves to express their concerns regarding the future of Ellicott City. Second, it should devise practical responses to these concerns and help translate them into action. It should continually monitor the social impacts of change in Ellicott City, and formulate measures designed to transform threats into opportunities, and a sense of alienation into one of participation.

Employment Opportunity. The committee will undoubtedly be concerned with increasing local economic opportunities for Ellicott City (and Oella) residents. It is critically important that the expanding local economy (public and private) provide as many jobs as possible for local residents. The task involves job placement, skill upgrading, and opportunities for advancement. There may be some special opportunities as well: for example, local construction workers may be provided opportunities to become proficient in some of the special skills needed in historic preservation work. A job training and placement service, custom-tailored to the local economy and labor force, may be a means to transform a problem into an opportunity.

Improved Housing Conditions. There are two kinds of housing needs. One need is to improve the physical condition of existing housing while controlling rent increases, in effect, extending the service of existing units for existing residents, and reducing the need for new low cost housing. The new state rehabilitation loan program, perhaps in combination with federal community development or "Section 8" housing funds, should provide a means to improve the condition of about 10 units a year in the Ellicott City planning area, over the plan implementation period.

Replacement Housing. The other housing need is to provide replacement units for households priced out of existing housing in Ellicott City. It is estimated that about 10 replacement units will be required annually during the plan implementation period. The "tightness" of the housing market in Howard County, especially in the low and moderate cost segments, will make it difficult to find replacement housing in the existing housing stock. Much of the replacement need will therefore have to be met with new housing, using a combination of state and federal programs.

Existing relationships between places of residence and places of work for low and moderate income households suggest that some of the replacement housing need gen-

erated in Ellicott City might reasonably be located elsewhere in the county, nearer to major employment centers. On the other hand, some should be provided in the Ellicott City area: Employment opportunity is expected to increase in the western Baltimore suburbs as well as in Ellicott City, and the religious and service institutions which have evolved in Ellicott City would be difficult to replace at another location. So, the question comes down to one of desirable location. The ecological and transportation objectives of the plan suggest that residential development densities in the historic district and its environs be kept low, considerably lower than those required for low and moderate cost housing development, and that needed multi-family development be located near and oriented towards the ring road system around Ellicott City (US 40, US 29, Md. 103). It is suggested that new replacement housing be incorporated into multi-family developments at these locations, at a rate of between 5 and 10 units per year during the plan implementation period.

Transportation Services. Improved public transportation service to regional shopping facilities, employment centers, and major institutions would help many Ellicott City and Oella residents participate more fully in the suburban economy of Baltimore and Howard Counties. The extension of the bus route #23 to the county line would provide reasonably convenient access to the 40 West shopping center, the Social Security Administration and Meadow Industrial Park, and to several hospitals. Estimates of potential ridership indicate that the additional use by Ellicott City and Oella residents would justify the extension. The extension of route #23 would complement the trolley bus shuttle proposed for downtown Ellicott City, and the Community Action Agency's "Ride-On" public transportation service. The former is designed to provide a specialized transportation service within the old town. The latter is designed to provide a specialized transportation service between dispersed residential and employment locations within Howard County. With proper coordination, the Route 23 extension proposal can provide needed access to non-residential centers in Baltimore County and Baltimore City*.

Community Facilities. The facilities available to low and moderate income residents for community meeting functions are reasonably adequate, but those available for recreation functions (organized and unorganized) are relatively meager. One unit of the Hilltop housing project is used for a wide variety of community meeting functions. The reading center at Main Street and Church Road is open one afternoon and one evening a week. Various local churches are regularly used for community functions. For recreation purposes, the major existing facility is the multi-purpose room of the Ellicott City Elementary School, which is available in the evenings to local youth through a program sponsored by the Department of Recreation. But the value of the facility for teenagers is limited because most of the equipment is designed for young children.

The school offers an excellent opportunity to improve recreation facilities for Ellicott City residents in general and local youth in particular. When elementary school classes move out in Spring 1976, the multi-purpose room could be equipped for a broader range of recreation activities serving a broader range of local residents. Parts of the school site, one of the few level areas in the old town, could be developed with outdoor basketball and tennis courts.

The old Fells Avenue police station has been designed for reuse for recreation purposes. The new facility will include a swimming pool, a major need since the Rock Hill pool on New Cut Road was closed in 1972.

Small "vest-pocket" recreation facilities, oriented exclusively to the needs of nearby residents could be developed in several Ellicott City neighborhoods. Upper Main Street is one such area.

Lacking auto transportation, public transportation, and money, Ellicott City youth often feel isolated from the larger community in which they are growing up. The social impacts committee could perform a valued service by organizing regular trips to various places and events of interest to local youth.

*These and other public transportation proposals which deal less exclusively with Ellicott City needs are discussed in working paper #7.

9. SUB-AREA DESIGN

Natural characteristics and historic development patterns have made Ellicott City a conglomeration of sub-areas, each of which has unique qualities which distinguish it from other parts of the old town. Compare, for example the following sites:

- the narrow site between the Patapsco River and the Railroad embankment, north of the Main Street bridge,
- the Tiber River, at its confluence with New Cut Run, behind the Main Street storefront,
- Catrocks Run,
- the rocky precipice between the Post Office on Main Street, and the Courthouse overlooking the downtown,
- the site of the Patapsco Institute, overlooking the Patapsco River valley.

Though the sites are all within 1/3 mile of one another, they could not be more diverse, in their natural characteristics, their historic role, or their relationships to nearby activities and land uses.

Much of this report has focused on the development of broad policies for the old town and its environs, policies dealing with transportation, land management, historic preservation, parking, housing, etc. In many cases, these policies have led to proposals for specific sub-areas. But, having developed overall policies, it is useful to turn the procedure around. In this chapter, the focus will be on the sub-areas themselves, on their characteristics and potentials, and on their prospective contributions to the goals of the Ellicott City Plan.

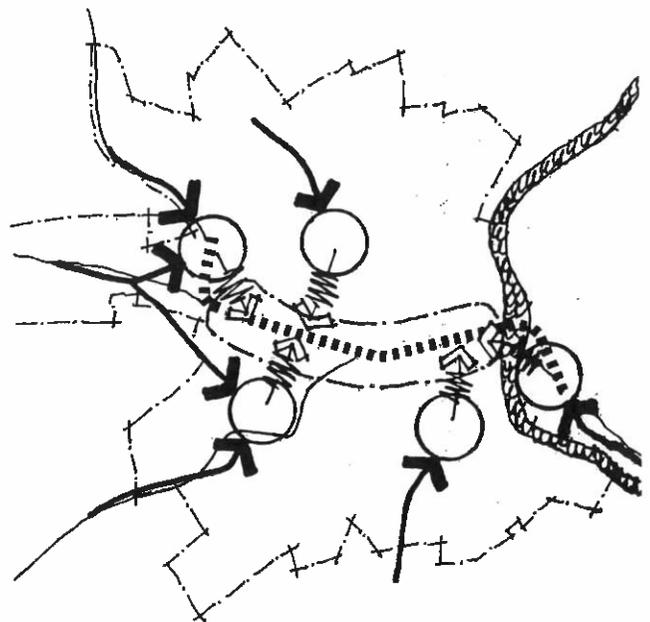
URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

Though the sub-area proposals are largely derived from the special qualities and potentials of the individual sites, there are a number of urban design themes which unify the proposals and relate them to broader objectives and policies:

The Pedestrian Entrances. As the specialized commercial and cultural center develops, an increasing proportion of downtown visitors will park in interceptor facilities and approach the downtown on foot or in special vehicles such as the trolley bus. These pedestrian entrances to downtown will therefore become increasingly

A DESIGN SEQUENCE:

- AUTO APPROACHES
- AUTO TRAFFIC INTERCEPTORS (PARKING)
- PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCES & TROLLEY BUS
- THE OLD TRADE DISTRICT

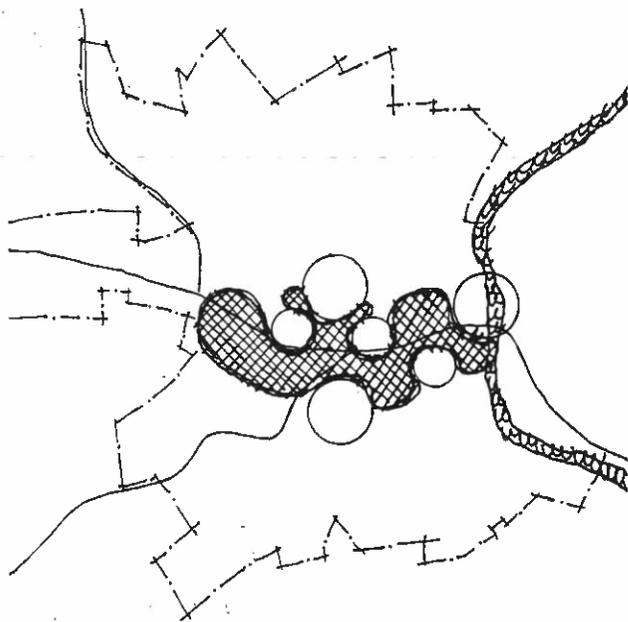


important as "staging areas" for visits to Ellicott City, areas which create initial impressions, and provide useful orientation and services. Thus the pedestrian entrances to downtown deserve special design attention.

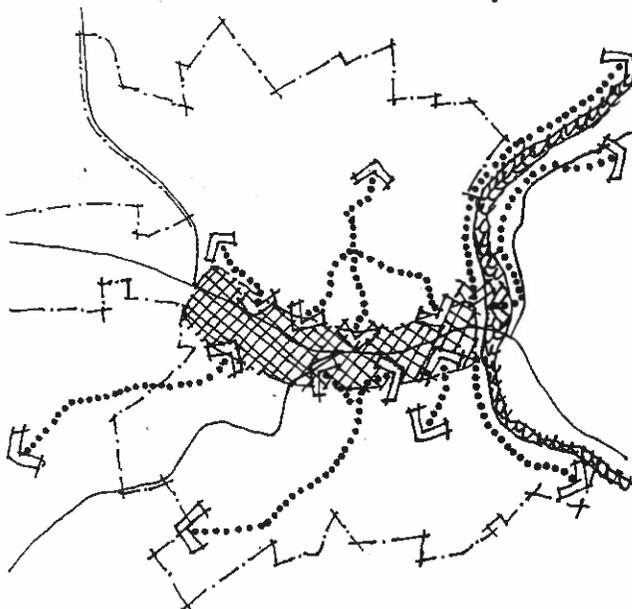
A Mix of Passive With Active Areas. In promoting a mix of compatible activities in the old town, it is desirable to complement "lively, exciting" commercial, cultural and governmental functions with places where the pace is slower and the mood is quieter. A number of small parks close to activity centers provide opportunities to do this in Ellicott City, and to preserve and enhance some sites of special natural quality.

A Walking Environment. Ellicott City could be a

MIX OF ACTIVE WITH PASSIVE AREAS



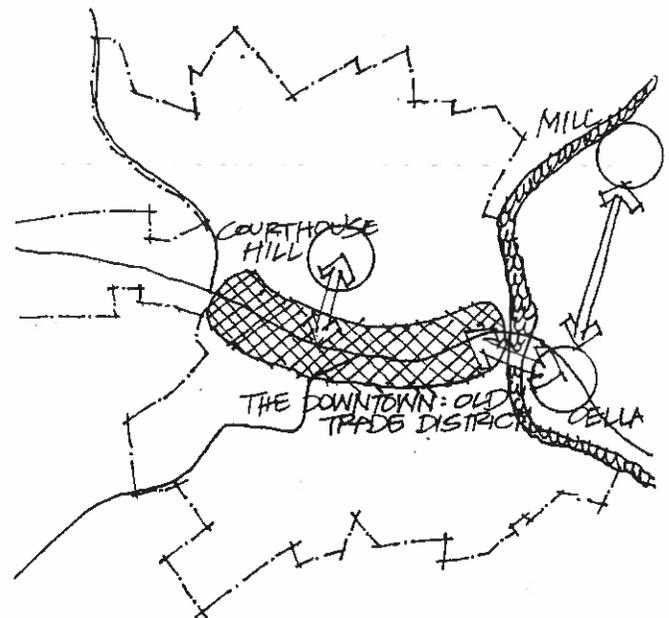
A WALKING ENVIRONMENT



much better place for walking. The value of walking opportunities, especially if they involve steep hills, may not be fully appreciated locally, because people who are in Ellicott City every day do not expect to use them regularly themselves. However, the point-of-view of the visitor is likely to be quite different. A once-a-season visitor to Ellicott City is coming to explore the town as well as patronize specific shops, and the best way to "really see" Ellicott City is on foot.

Reestablishing Historic Relationships. Ellicott City originally developed with commercial functions crammed into the narrow space along lower Main Street, and institutional functions (religious, governmental and educational) on overlooking hillsides. But the separation was a matter

HISTORIC RELATIONSHIPS



of topography, not function. The institutional activities on the hillsides and the commercial activities below were part of the same community and there was considerable traffic in both directions.

More recently, the functional relationship between the downtown commercial area and the hillside institutional areas has weakened. People work in hillside offices, others shop downtown, but few do both regularly. However, the hillsides are as much a part of the historic district (and the former town of Ellicott Mills) as the Main Street area. Closer ties between hillside institutional areas and the old trade district should be developed. And, visitors should be encouraged to explore the whole ensemble.

Linking Special Interest Sites. From a regional perspective, sites of special interest are concentrated in Ellicott City and Oella, but, from a local perspective, the sites are scattered: e.g. Dickey Mill, the old Ellicott House, the railroad terminal and old Opera, the old Patapsco National Bank, Howard House, Friends Meeting House, the old Court House, the new (1838) Court House, Mt. Ida, and the Patapsco Institute. Not only are the sites scattered, but many are not available to the public on any basis.

Tourist development efforts should work with the historic pattern, not against it. Trolley bus systems can enable visitors to explore the old town in a spontaneous and informal manner according to their own interests and inclinations. Imaginative adaptive uses (even though they involve something less than full-blown restoration) can make a larger proportion of existing sites available to the interested visitor.

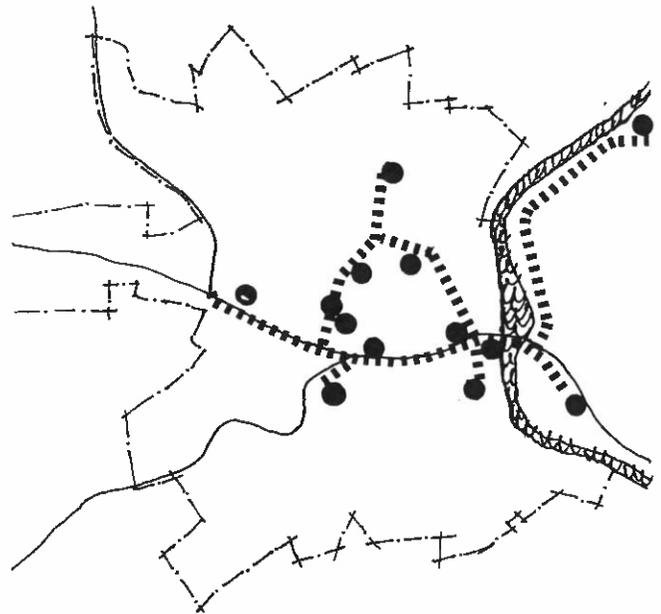
SUB-AREA PROPOSALS

This section identifies sub-areas of particular interest in Ellicott City, and suggests how their potentials might be developed. The discussion works geographically from the Patapsco River west towards Court Avenue, then up Courthouse Hill towards the Patapsco Institute.

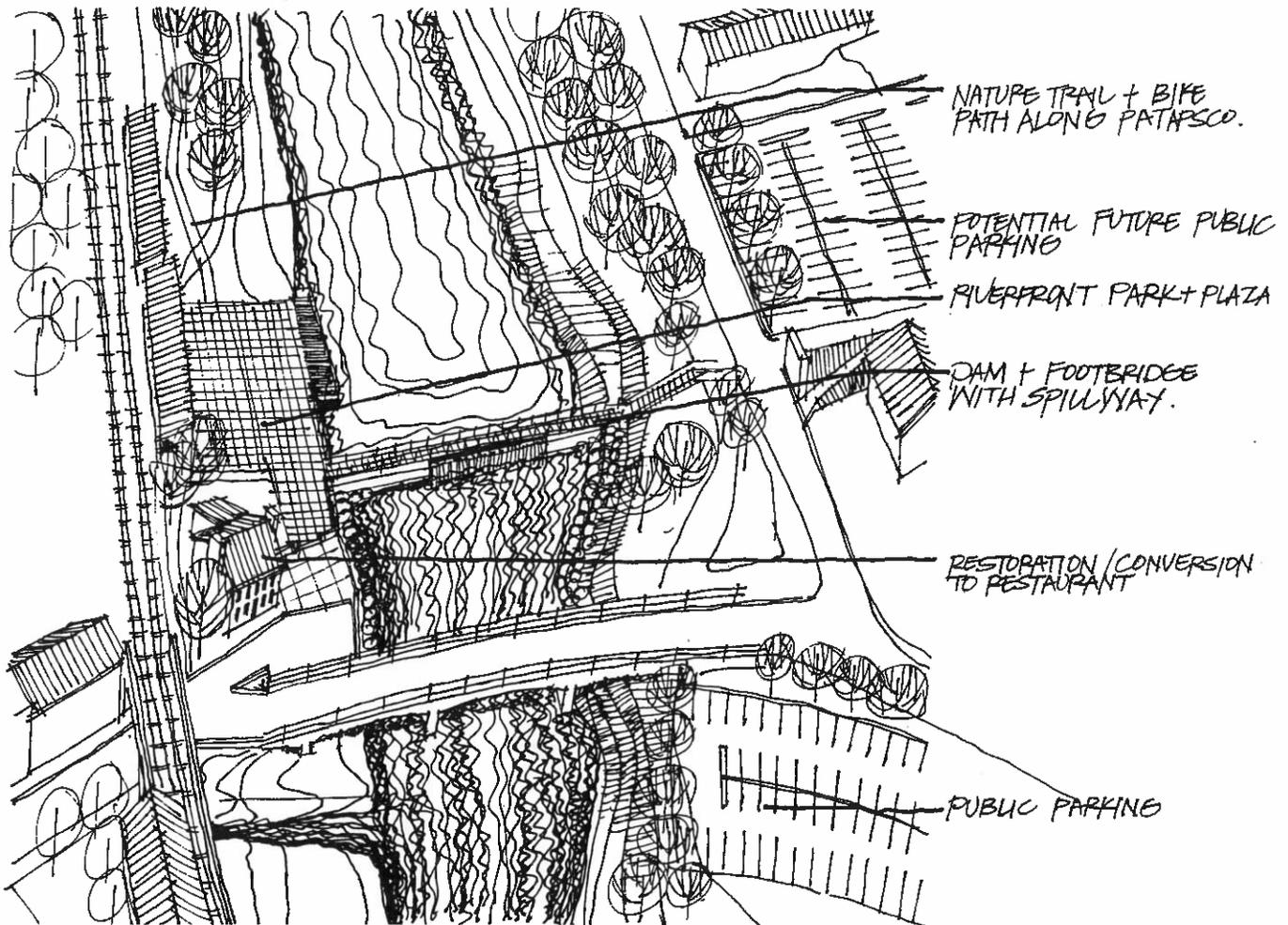
1. *Riverfront Park.* The railroad embankment effectively separates the old trade district from the river. Yet, the Patapsco River Valley is an extraordinary natural resource, and the combination of specialized commercial with water-oriented recreation and open space functions is a special opportunity in Ellicott City.

The one acre parcel north of Frederick Road, between

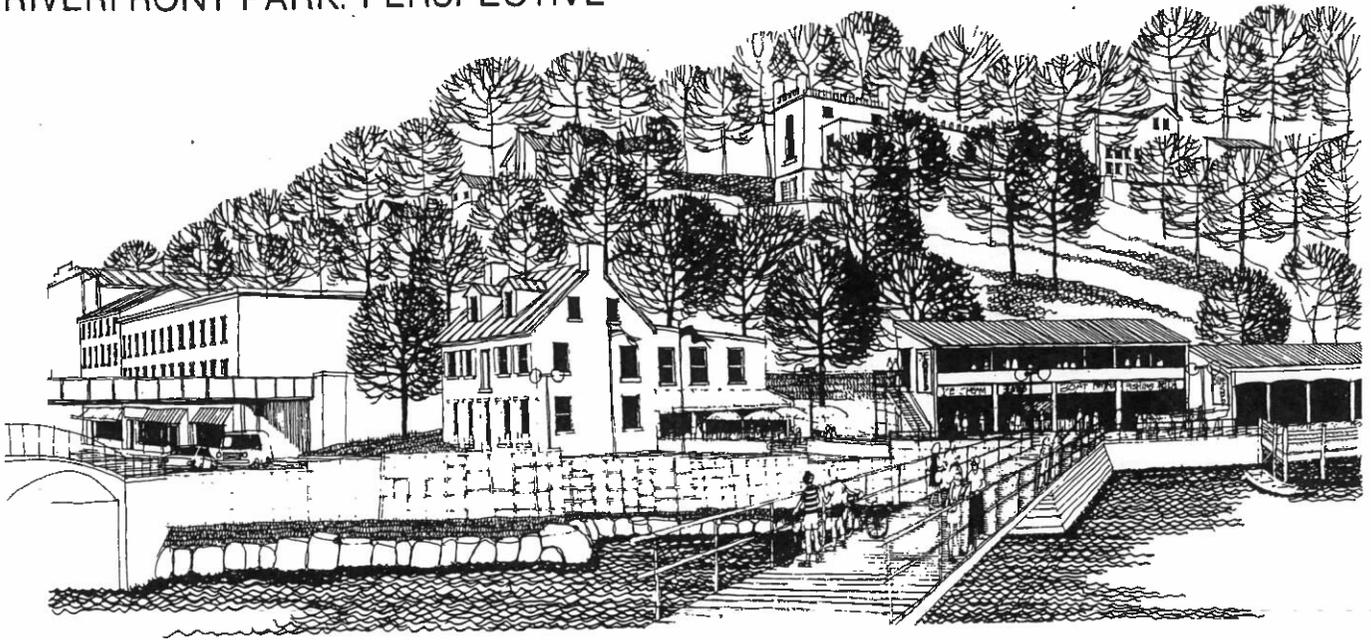
LINKAGE OF SPECIAL INTEREST SITES



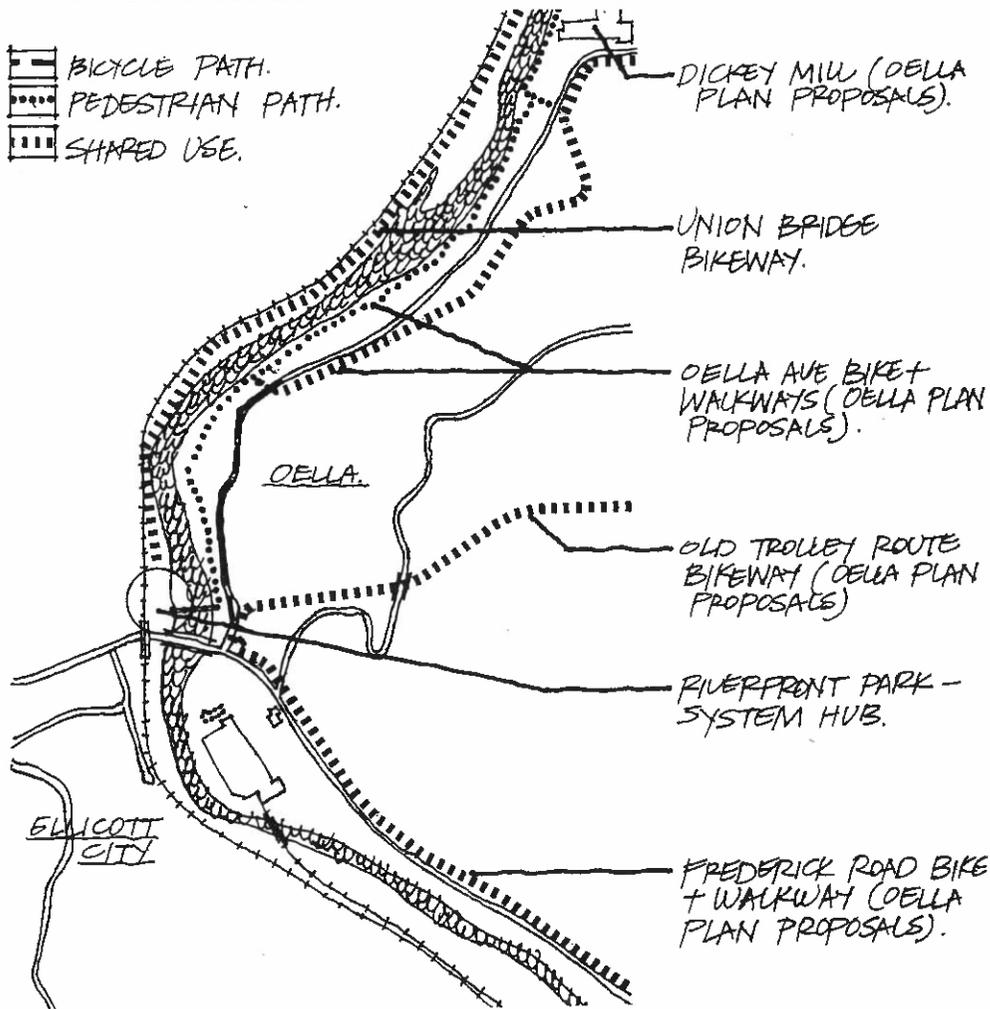
RIVERFRONT PARK & EASTERN ENTRANCE: SKETCH PLAN



RIVERFRONT PARK: PERSPECTIVE



UNION BRIDGE BIKEWAY & PATAPSCO TRAIL SYSTEM



the railroad and the river, provides an excellent opportunity to add two dimensions now lacking in the mix of activities in Ellicott City. First, it could provide access to the Patapsco River for downtown residents, employees, shoppers and visitors. Second, it could become the "hub" of a system of walking and biking trails radiating in all directions. These purposes are compatible with each other, and with the development of appropriate commercial functions in the historic "Bridgewater Market" structure and the heavily timbered loading shed behind. The design and development of the park should be a collaborative effort involving the Department of Recreation and Parks, local citizens groups, and the present owners.

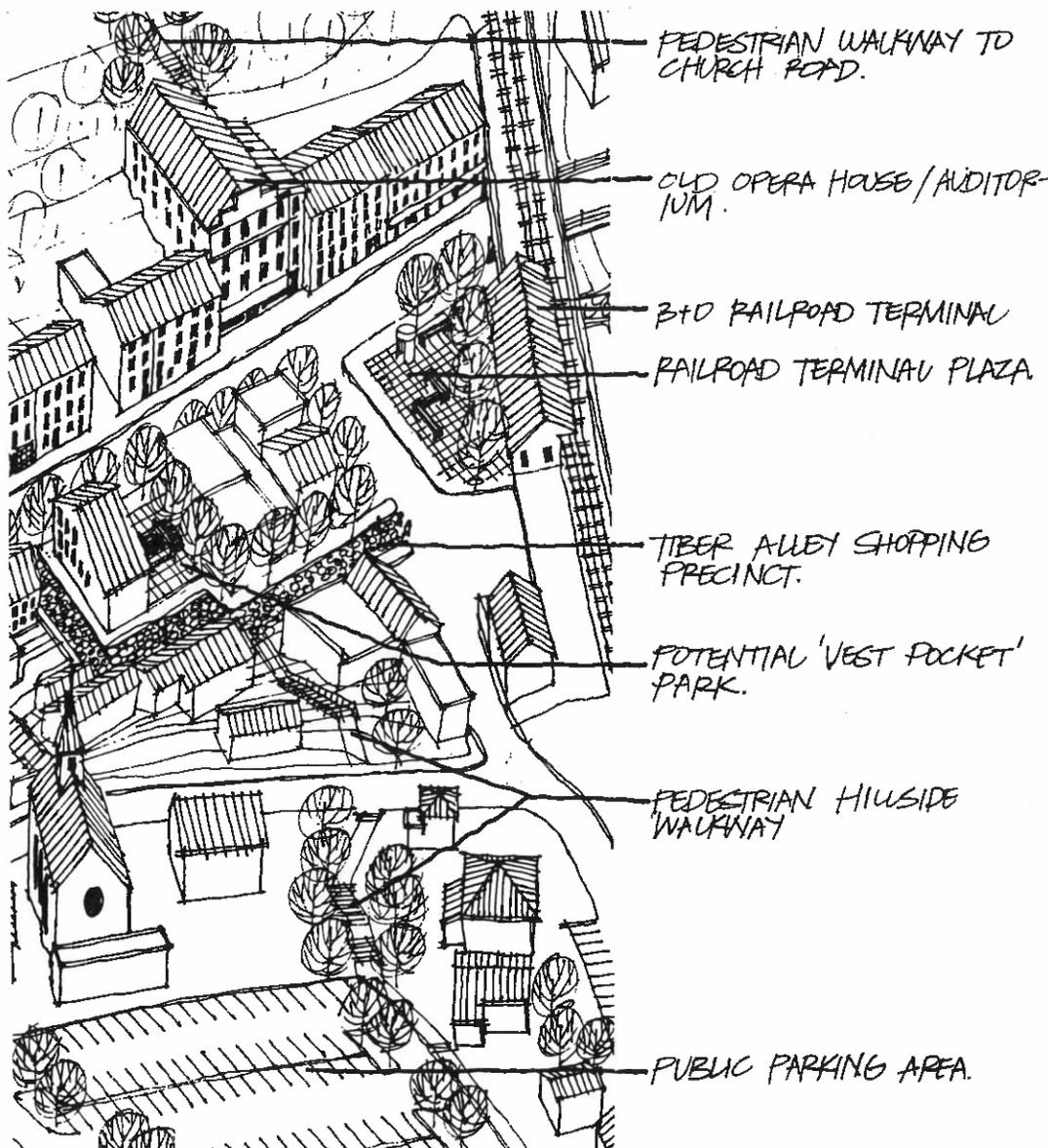
2. **Union Bridge Bikeway.** The development of the riverfront park opens a further possibility: Hollofield (the section of Patapsco State Park at US 40, and an outdoor recreation center of increasing regional importance) is only three miles up the river from the specialized commercial and cultural center in Ellicott City. A trail for biking and/or walking along the river

could link the two centers, and provide an attractive "second" destination for visitors to either.

The trail could be developed on either side of the river. The Howard County side provides possibilities for a more gently-graded trail, more attractive to less athletic walkers and bikers, with excellent picnic spots, and many fine views of Dickey Mill and Oella. However, the layout of the trail will be more complex on the Howard County side, because of the need to avoid unnecessary intrusions on the B&O right-of-way or on railroad operations. The Baltimore County side provides the resources of the old mill race, and possible linkages with a refurbished mill structure, but biking opportunities would be more limited and topographic problems somewhat more difficult. Either route would terminate at the Union Dam, a beautiful spot beneath the US 40 bridge, and either would link the outdoor recreation center at Hollofield with the specialized commercial and cultural activities in Ellicott City and Oella.

3. **Railroad Terminal Plaza.** The restoration of the railroad terminal has involved a monumental effort

RAILROAD TERMINAL PLAZA & ROCK HILL: SKETCH PLAN



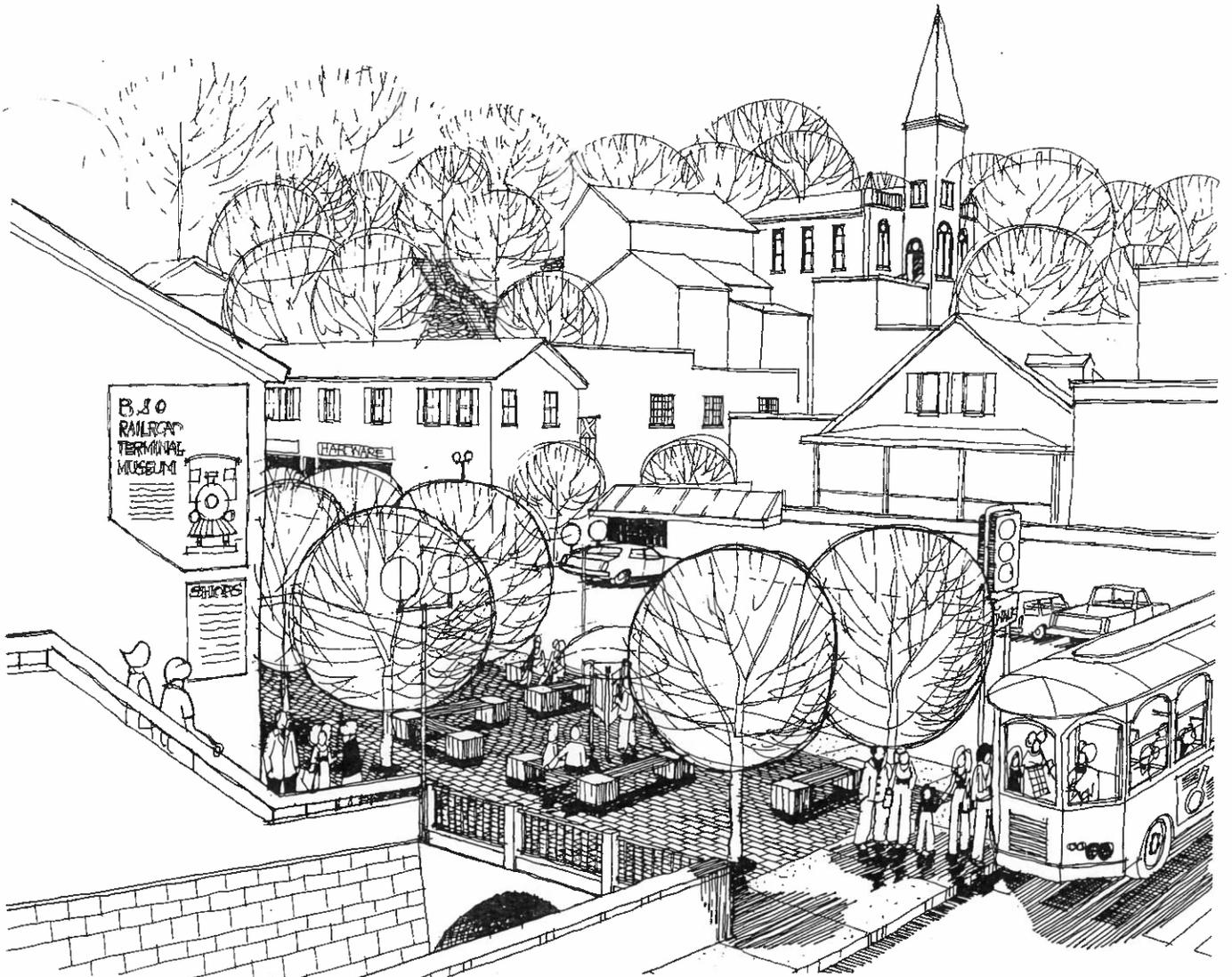
UNION BRIDGE (US 40) & UNION DAM



by many groups interested in the past and future of Ellicott City. Its development as a museum will make it a major attraction for visitors to Ellicott City. As yet, however, there has been little energy to spare for the setting of the railroad terminal, the urban space from which the museum itself will be approached and enjoyed. This setting is Maryland Avenue and the buildings surrounding it, an urban space which presents an opportunity equal to that of the railroad terminal building itself.

Maryland Avenue should become a pedestrian-oriented plaza. Neither moving traffic nor on-street parking need be excluded entirely, but it should be much easier and more enjoyable (and less dangerous) for pedestrians to use and cross this space. The museum will create a need for more pedestrian space adjacent to the railroad terminal building. Pedestrians should be able to cross easily to the museum from lower Main Street and Tiber Alley, and from the museum to the north side of Main Street. There should be places within the

RAILROAD TERMINAL PLAZA & ROCK HILL: PERSPECTIVE



plaza where pedestrians can view the railroad terminal unencumbered by parked automobiles. In addition to its strictly pedestrian uses, the plaza could become a location for special functions, such as a weekly farmer's produce market.

4. *The Opera.* The railroad terminal plaza is the natural center of visitor activity in the downtown. Among the many interesting buildings surrounding the plaza, two most clearly suggest development for public-oriented cultural uses. The first is the railroad terminal itself. The second is the old opera house, whose high-ceilinged fourth level auditorium was for many years the cultural center of Ellicott City, in various decades a place for vaudeville, cinema, or theatrical events.

The auditorium should be restored as a performance hall for theater, dance, and music. Restoration will be costly, in part because of the current condition of the space, but mainly because of the need to adapt the space to contemporary requirements of the performing arts. Despite the costs and difficulties, however, a performance hall is the appropriate long-term objective for use of this remarkable space; properly restored, the old opera could become an important center for the performing arts in Howard County.

While the reuse of all levels of the opera building should be sensitively handled, cultural objectives are more critical for the auditorium than for lower levels. Financing arrangements to support restoration for both commercial and cultural purposes may be needed. Also needed is an arrangement to provide access to the upper level auditorium separate from that serving commercial functions below.

5. *Tiber Alley and Hillside Walkway #1.* Tiber Alley should be a pedestrian shopping precinct. With its Belgium Block paving, its narrow, twisting alignment, its location at the foot of lower Main Street, and its opening directly toward the railroad terminal museum, Tiber Alley is ideally suited for development as a lively pedestrian precinct where activities normally confined inside buildings spill out into the street itself. Activities could include flower stalls, bike displays (and rental), an outdoor cafe, fruit market, and others which could open onto Tiber Alley from adjacent buildings. Motor vehicles should be banned from Tiber Alley after early morning delivery hours, and property owners should be encouraged to orient commercial activities onto the pedestrian shopping precinct as well as onto Main Street and Maryland Avenue.

The pedestrian precinct on Tiber Alley should be connected to the proposed St. Paul's parking facility by a hillside walkway, one of a series proposed to connect Main Street with key locations on the surrounding hillsides. The walkway route could descend the hill in stages, first to the old Patapsco Bank site, and then to Tiber Alley using an existing space behind Clark's store.

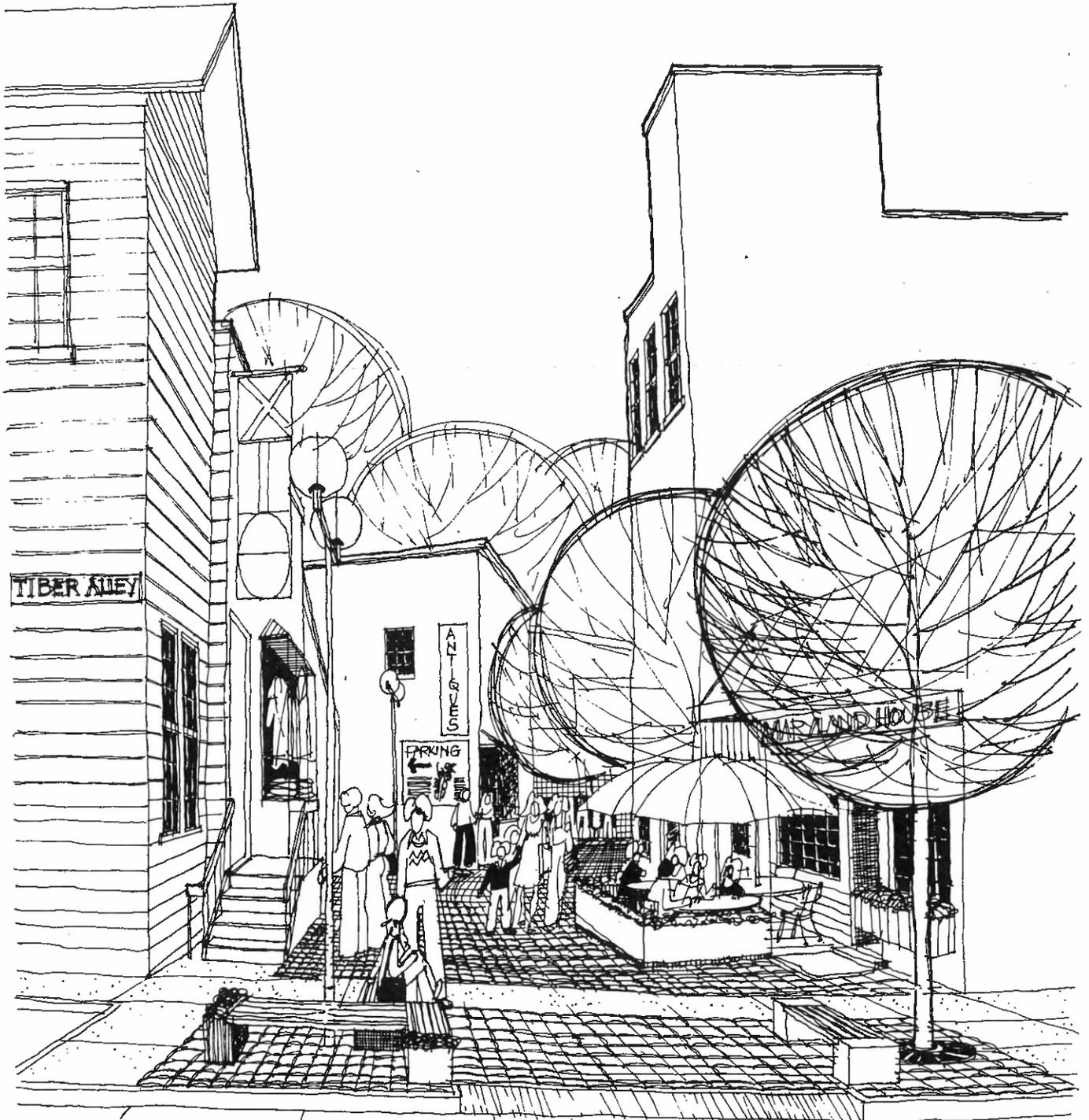
The old Patapsco Bank building was used as a parochial school for many years, and has been vacant since 1972. It housed the first bank in Ellicott City, and is a structure of special distinction. When it is adapted for new uses (professional offices are a reasonable possibility) special efforts to retain the character of the interior as well as the exterior are warranted.

6. *Ellicott City School.* Elementary school functions will move from the Ellicott City school in Spring 1976. Many reuses have been suggested for the old facility. Some, such as the storage of custodial and maintenance supplies, are related to county-wide functions of the Department of Education. Two other reuse possibilities, relating directly to the potentials of Ellicott City and the objectives of the Ellicott City plan, are briefly described here:

- Support functions for a growing community of amateur performing arts groups in Howard County: With minimal expense, parts of the old school and the storage shed at the rear of the site could be adapted to provide rehearsal space for theater, music and dance groups; facilities for set construction, painting and storage; and an administrative office, ticket and information center. For the time being, performances could continue to be held at the facilities of the community college in Columbia. In the future, as the community college requires full-time use of its facilities, the Opera House in Ellicott City may be restored for performance functions.
- Active recreation uses serving Ellicott City residents in general and local youth in particular: The newer portion of the Ellicott City school (including the multi-purpose room) and parts of the school site could be developed for active recreation purposes complementary to those programmed for the proposed recreation center on Fells Avenue, thus helping to meet a long-standing need.

7. *Main Street Streetscape.* Many of Ellicott City's specialized commercial and cultural potentials require a high quality pedestrian environment along lower Main Street. For this, an effective overall transportation strategy and parking program are preconditions, but the policies described in Chapters 5 and 6 do not in themselves constitute a detailed program for improving the pedestrian environment for visitors, shoppers, residents and employees on lower Main Street. To develop such a program, a special study called the "Main Street Streetscape Plan" is suggested to make recommendations regarding the many "details" that contribute to the comfort, convenience, safety and pleasure of downtown visitors, residents and employees, and to suggest appropriate means of financing and implementation. For example:

- *Street lighting.* The existing light standards are incompatible with the historic environment, and often shine directly into upper level residential flats.
- *Street signs.* Special sign regulations, custom-tailored to the unique visual character and specialized commercial and cultural objectives of the old commercial district, are needed. (see Chapter 7).
- *Benches.* Many visitors to Ellicott City will intend to stay for relatively long periods; they will need convenient and attractive places to "rest their weary feet".
- *Street trees.* It is noteworthy that, when Ellicott City was at its peak as a trade center, Main Street was bordered by a fine row of trees. Street trees or other plantings might also contribute to the environment of the downtown in the future.



TIBER ALLEY PEDESTRIAN SHOPPING PRECINCT: PERSPECTIVE

- *Street activities.* One of the assets of a specialized commercial district is lively activities outside as well as inside the stores themselves: e.g. special events, outdoor cafes, refreshment stands, etc. The key is to make intelligent provision for these activities so that they contribute to the overall shopping environment.

MAIN STREET STREETScape:



THEN AND....



NOW

- *Sidewalk paving.* Pedestrians spend a surprising proportion of their time gazing at what is directly underfoot. What is underfoot in Ellicott City is not particularly appropriate to the scale or character of the old town. Brick sidewalks have been long discussed in Ellicott City, and are one of several possible approaches.
- *Public toilets.* Appropriately located public toilets can contribute greatly to the comfort of visitors or shoppers.
- *Crosswalks.* Pedestrians in the downtown should be able to cross Main Street without risking life and limb. To begin to make the downtown safer and more pleasant for residents, shoppers and visitors, a pedestrian phase is proposed for traffic signals at the Main Street intersections with Columbia Pike and Maryland Avenue. Also, two crosswalks are proposed, one in front of Caplan's Store, and another at Court Avenue, linking to the Ellicott Mills parking lot.

- *On-street parking and deliveries.* The streetscape plan should be carefully coordinated with proposals for on-street parking and deliveries, and for policies for the use of parking areas at different times of the day or week. (See Chapter 6).
- *Special functions.* Policies limiting auto use of Main Street on weekends or during special events should be complemented by streetscape proposals to take maximum advantage of the street space for pedestrian-oriented activities.

8. *The Power Lines.* The overhead power lines in Ellicott City were installed during a period when the special qualities and potentials of the town were not appreciated. Today there is a broad consensus that the overhead wires blight almost every view in the downtown, and that the support poles encroach on limited sidewalk space on the north side of Main Street. For Ellicott City residents, the poles have come to symbolize a disregard for the visual character of the old town.

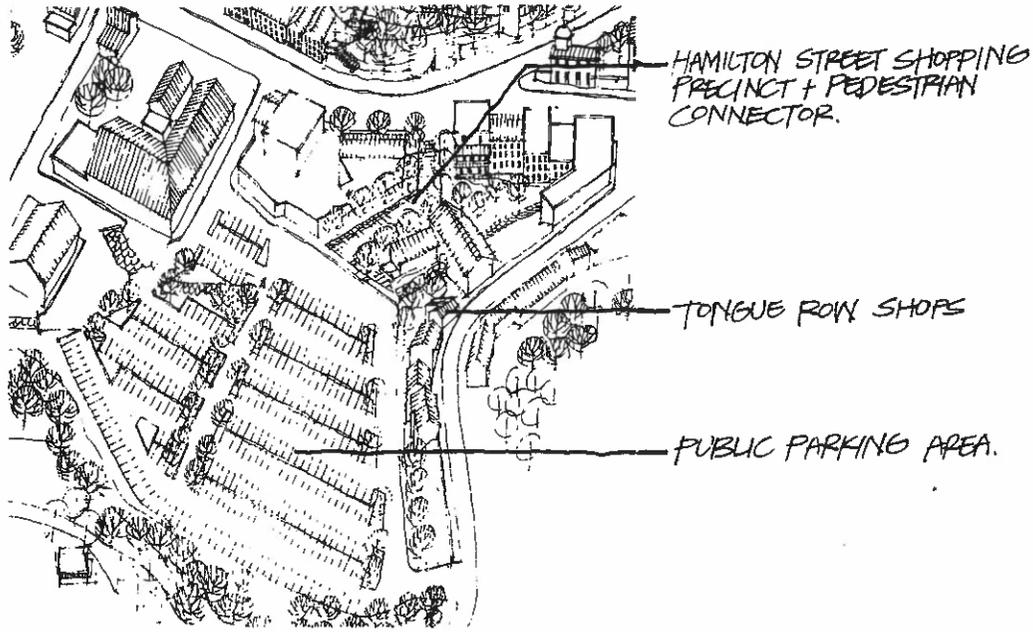
The power lines should be placed underground. While the streetscape plan is not preconditioned on the removal of the power lines, the linkage of the two proposals is most appropriate. The utility company, with assistance from the county, could remove the major aesthetic blight in the old town; downtown property owners and businessmen could contribute to plans for enhancing the Main Street streetscape.

9. *Tiber-New Cut Park.* The confluence of the Tiber and New Cut Run behind the Main Street building frontage is one of several almost forgotten, sadly neglected spots of special natural beauty in the old town. The area should be cleaned of trash and debris, and developed as a park. Pedestrian access from Main Street should be provided: there are a few narrow passages between buildings, and interesting possibilities for incorporating park access into the interior layout of selected Main Street commercial functions.

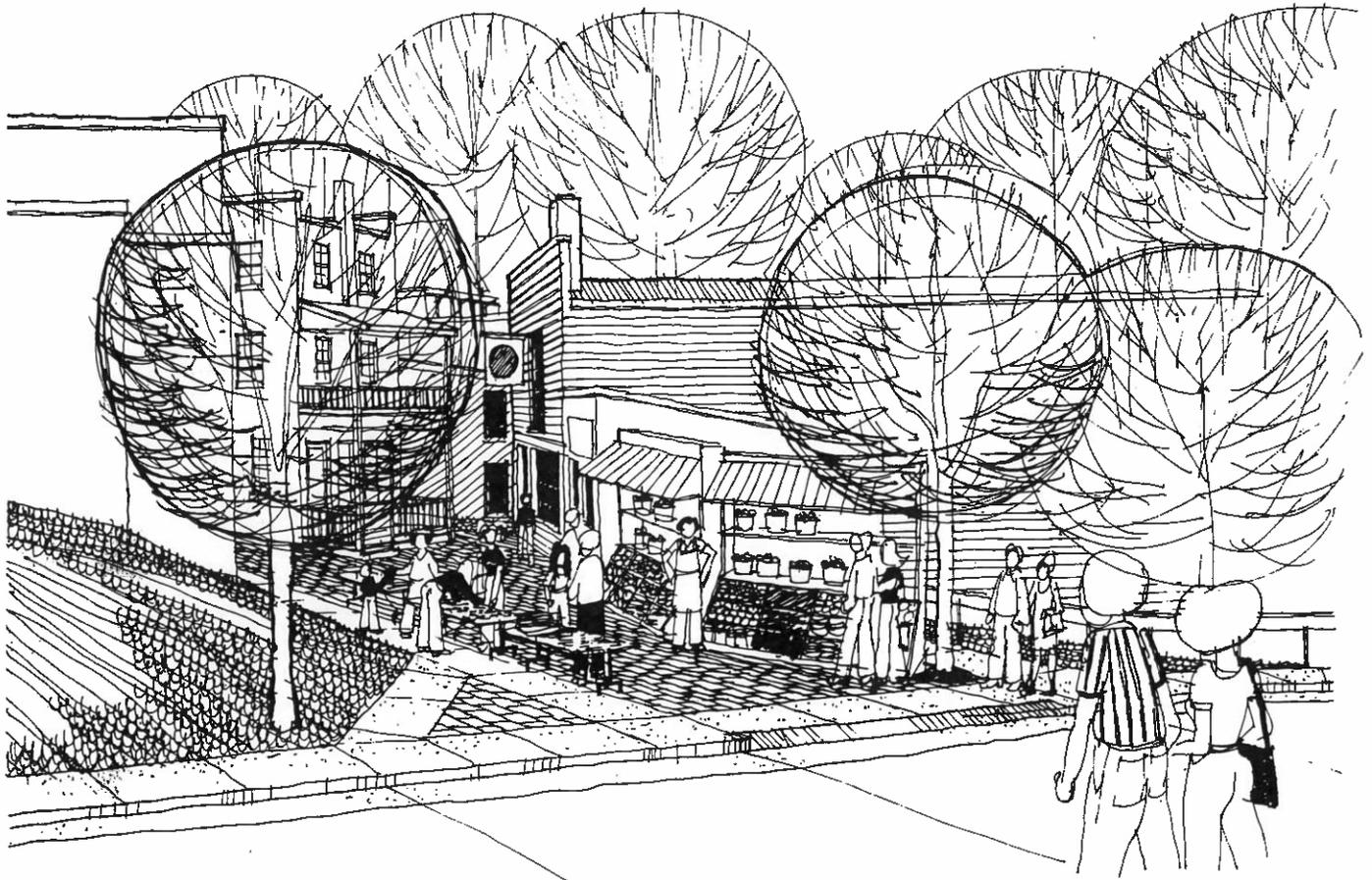
The park could become a focal point for a series of surrounding improvements: residential uses on upper levels of Main Street structures; appropriate non-residential uses on the dramatic hillside overlook behind Taylor's Store; a walking trail extending south along New Cut Run.

10. *The Main Street Cinema.* Since the "Superstar" operation was shut down in 1974, the Main Street cinema has been vacant and unused. Though several re-uses are possible, perhaps the most feasible is a modern version of the original use, a small cinema and coffee house. Intelligent marketing and management would be required, but the rehabilitation expense would be moderate. If properly handled, the new Main Street cinema could inject new vitality in the upper end of lower Main Street.
11. *Hamilton Street.* Hamilton Street is the key link between the town's major parking facility and the lower Main Street commercial and cultural area. The location of its intersection with Main Street, directly across from Church Road and close to Columbia Pike, makes it inappropriate as the main auto entrance to the parking facility, particularly for autos making left turns from Main Street. The proposed parking program suggests a new entrance to the parking facility directly from Columbia Pike,

HAMILTON STREET ENTRANCEWAY: SKETCH PLAN



HAMILTON STREET ENTRANCEWAY: PERSPECTIVE



which would make it possible to deemphasize auto use of Hamilton Street, and enhance its potential as a major pedestrian entrance to downtown. The possibilities include: a visitor information center, special landscaping treatments, water retention, and pedestrian linkages to Tongue Row, the Main Street cinema, and prospective activities off Columbia Pike overlooking the Tiber-New Cut Park. A special design study is warranted to develop these possibilities.

12. *Court Avenue Park.* A small strip of land along the Tiber, between the Ellicott Mills parking lot and Court Avenue, is the natural pedestrian approach from the interceptor parking facility to courthouse hill, as well as downtown. It should be developed as a park with a pedestrian walkway, attractive planting and landscaping. Reuse of the vacant structure on the property could be easily incorporated into this proposal.
13. *Lawyer's Row Mini-park and Hillside Walkway #2.* Because the current routes between them are so circuitous, many Ellicott City residents are probably not fully aware that the Courthouse and Main Street are actually only 150 feet from one another. The psychological distance between the commercial and cultural functions in the downtown and the governmental functions on the overlooking hillside should be reduced. A mini-park on a county-owned parcel directly across from the Courthouse could provide a fine view of the downtown, and an amenity for courthouse area employees. The construction of a hillside stairway could provide a direct pedestrian connection between the courthouse area and Main Street activities.
14. *The Old Jail and Hillside Walkway #3.* The planned construction of a new jail for Howard County creates opportunities for reuse of the existing facility, a structure of historic significance and considerable visual character, located in the midst of expanding judicial and office functions on courthouse hill. While several reuses are possible, a restaurant seems especially appropriate: restaurant facilities are lacking in this area at present; restaurant functions could make possible an imaginative rehabilitation of the existing structure; they would make an interesting structure accessible to the general public; and the cost of rehabilitation could be largely supported by private investment.

The rehabilitation of the old jail could (should) change the pattern of activity on courthouse hill, making the centrally-located structure a focus of activity rather than a void. Under these prospective conditions, the development of a third hillside walkway becomes an attractive possibility. The walkway would descend the hill in stages, from the rehabilitated jail down Emory Street, around the historic Methodist Church, and down a dramatic rock wall to the heart of the Main Street commercial area.

15. *Courthouse Hill.* Not only is courthouse hill in the historic district. On it are located five of the most architecturally significant structures in the historic district*. Also, more specifically than the Ellicott City area as a whole, courthouse hill is the traditional seat of government in Howard County.

Yet, the quality of the physical environment on courthouse hill has suffered in recent years: Surface

parking isolates the key historic structures from one another, and damages the sense of intimacy which is so crucial to the character of the traditional county seat. Amenities for public and private employees, and a considerable number of visitors, are limited. The conversion of dignified residences dating from the late 1800's has been accompanied by the removal of trees, lawns and hedges for the sake of a few conveniently located parking spaces. Neither the design of new structures nor their siting has been as compatible as it should be with the character of the old. Though the public and private functions on courthouse hill have important interrelationships, these are not manifest in the site planning of new development. The expansion of public and private functions threatens needless encroachment on nearby residential enclaves. The prominence of the five key historic structures has been diminished rather than enhanced.

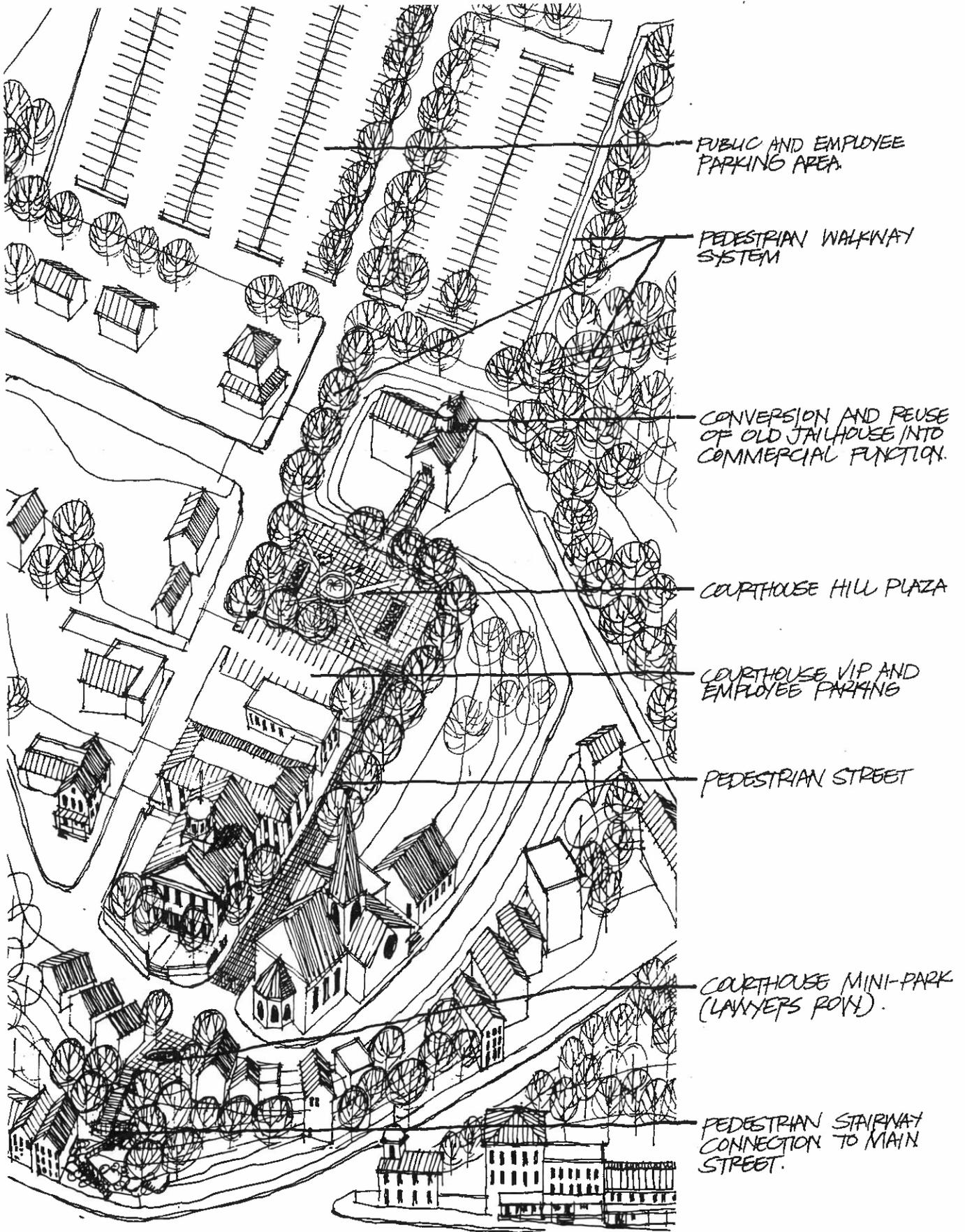
Many of these problems can be traced to the lack of a detailed urban design plan for the development and enhancement of courthouse hill. An imaginative urban design plan could not only resolve practical problems, but could have broader influence in at least two ways: First, courthouse hill is the county's opportunity to develop a center of local government of unique character, a center which conveys not only contemporary government functions, but also the evolution and traditions of government in Howard County. Second, the public and private development proposed for courthouse hill is by far the largest block of new construction envisioned in the historic district. The site planning and design of this development provides a special opportunity to demonstrate the best principles in mixing new development with old. It is both a critical test and a potential example for the remainder of the historic district and the county.

Considerations in the preparation of an urban design plan for courthouse hill should include the following:

- Parcels in both private and public ownership: Problems which cannot be resolved in proposals for separate parcels can be in designs for the courthouse hill area as a whole.
- The diverse but interrelated functions of courthouse hill: county judicial activities, private law and other professional office functions, and various visitor functions. A development plan should enable all activities to function most effectively in relation to one another, avoiding frictions and encroachment on nearby residential enclaves.
- The architectural and visual character of courthouse hill, and particularly of the five key historic structures: Can these structures, linked like a "string of pearls", become the element to which all new development relates?
- The unique auto access characteristics of courthouse hill, and the inherent problems and possibilities in this situation.
- Parking needs and parking strategies: Can or should offstreet parking continue to be supplied at current rates? What alternative solutions are possible?
- Amenities: parks, promenades, outdoor sitting and eating areas, special commercial services and facilities, special public transportation relationships, etc.

* The Courthouse, the Wier Building, the old Jail, Mt. Ida, and the Patapsco Institute.

COURTHOUSE HILL: SKETCH PLAN



PUBLIC AND EMPLOYEE
PARKING AREA.

PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY
SYSTEM

CONVERSION AND REUSE
OF OLD JAILHOUSE INTO
COMMERCIAL FUNCTION.

COURTHOUSE HILL PLAZA

COURTHOUSE VIP AND
EMPLOYEE PARKING

PEDESTRIAN STREET

COURTHOUSE MINI-PARK
(LAWYERS ROY).

PEDESTRIAN STAIRWAY
CONNECTION TO MAIN
STREET.

- Implementation: mechanisms for coordinated development action between the county and various private property owners in the area.

16. *Patapsco Institute and Hillside Walkway #4.* Through a series of unfortunate events, the once-imposing Patapsco Institute has fallen into such a state of decay that, as a safety measure, the entire site has been fenced off from public use. The ultimate use of the building and its site should be based on detailed benefit-cost analyses which are beyond the scope of this study. The following recommendations derive from two observations: First, the site itself is as imposing as ever; the large trees still stand, and the view commands the entire Patapsco River valley. Second, the site is in the historic district, and has been part of the life of the old town for 150 years.

The Patapsco Institute site should be re-integrated into the life of the historic district in such a way that desirable future alternatives are not closed-off, that nearby residential areas are not adversely affected, and that the time and expense for implementation is minimal. The following program is suggested:

- The fence should be moved close to the "ruins" themselves, particularly on the southern side.
- The site should be cleaned-up, particularly on the southern side, so that it might be used for low intensity open space purposes.
- One or more walking trails should be constructed from courthouse hill to the southern rim of

PATAPSCO INSTITUTE

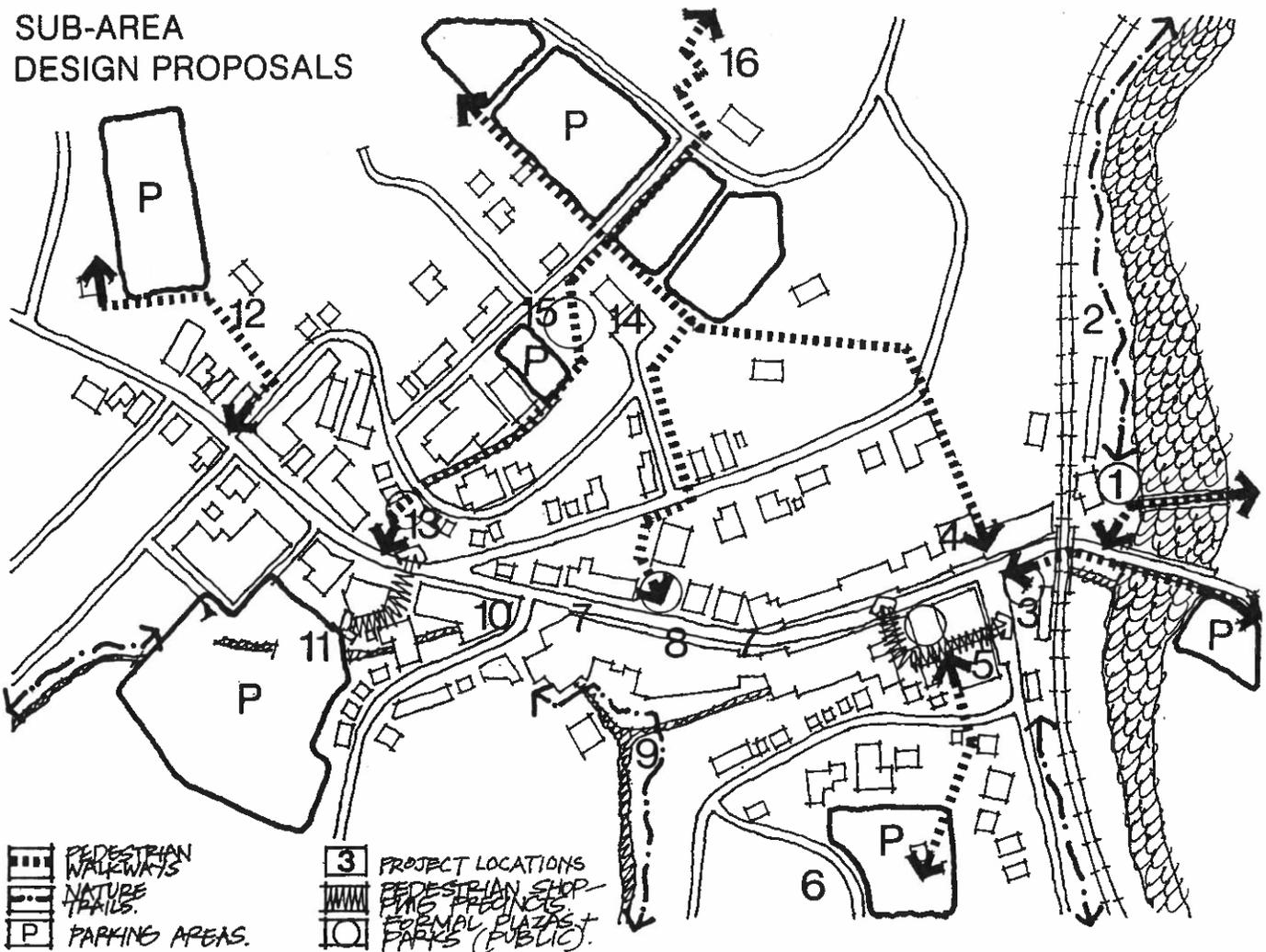


the site. These would allow visitors who are willing to make the effort to take advantage of the extraordinary view, and to safely inspect the "ruins".

- A few picnic tables and benches should be installed along the southern rim of the site for the use of park visitors.

The Patapsco Institute Park could become the terminus of a fourth walkway which could descend the hill in stages, from the Patapsco Institute overlooking the river valley, to Mt. Ida, to Church Road, around the Church of God, past the Opera Auditorium, and finally emerging at the railroad terminal plaza, a few feet from the Patapsco River itself.

SUB-AREA DESIGN PROPOSALS



10. IMPLEMENTATION

The plan has four major implementation elements: a set of public and publicly-assisted physical development projects, a set of proposed regulations and guidelines for private development in and around the historic district, a set of proposals for financing needed improvements, and a proposed organization for plan implementation. The physical development projects, and the private development regulations and guidelines have been summarized in preceding chapters*. This chapter focuses on the third and fourth implementation elements: the financing mechanisms and the implementation organization.

ORGANIZATION FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Who will implement the plan? Who will take responsibility for assembling the needed talents and resources for various projects, for hammering out detailed action proposals, and for coordinating the efforts of the varied actors?

The Need. Several special capabilities are required in the implementation of the Ellicott City Plan:

- Sustained and sensitive attention, within a limited geographic area, to an extraordinarily diverse range of considerations: historic preservation, commercial enhancement, flood damage prevention, residential development, social impacts, community facility development, natural resources conservation, auto access and auto parking, public transportation, adaptation of existing structures for special cultural purposes, county government center development, etc.
- Active involvement of many private interests (local

property owners, merchants, historic preservationists, natural environmental interests, local lending institutions, residential groups) as well as public agencies. Unlike standard renewal projects, implementation of the Ellicott City Plan is not a matter of a few, large-scale, costly projects. Rather, a series of relatively inexpensive projects are envisioned, each of which involves a somewhat different constellation of private and public agencies, and a separate catalyzing, coordinating and negotiating effort.

- Capacity to prepare detailed action plans with some assurance that they will be followed by coordinated action;
- Capacity to lobby effectively on actions outside the planning area regarding their effects in Ellicott City;
- Capacity to operate on a bi-county basis: Ellicott City and Oella share many historic and natural characteristics, and many problems and opportunities.

No single existing agency meets the criteria described above. Existing agencies are either functionally limited and not able to comprise the diversity of concerns critical to the Ellicott City plan; or "spread thin" over a large geographic area and not able to consistently focus their efforts; or lacking in relationships to the various non-public interests that must be involved in plan implementation; or lacking in relationships to public policy and authority; or some combination of the above.

The Recommendation. A non-profit management corporation should be formed to implement the broad policy and goals of the Ellicott City plan. The management corporation should have the following functions:

- Coordinate the activities of public agencies, private investors and property owners in the Historic District.
- Negotiate with private property owners and developers. (In these negotiations, it should represent the county, and interpret the plan's objectives with regard to particular development proposals).

* For further detail: working paper #10 lists proposed physical development projects, with estimated costs, funding sources, and implementation schedule; working papers #8, 9, & 12 elaborate the proposed private development regulations and guidelines.

- Supervise detailed design and construction of public facilities in the Historic District.
- Seek out funds (from state and federal agencies, and foundations) for implementation of the Ellicott City plan, and apply these to specific implementation actions and broad plan objectives.
- Act as a vehicle for coordinating and resolving the interests of various groups with a stake in the future of Ellicott City.
- Help articulate the interests of Ellicott City regarding proposed actions outside the Historic District, and the interests of Howard County as a whole in the Ellicott City resource.
- Act as a vehicle for coordinating the efforts of Howard and Baltimore Counties in implementing the Ellicott City and Oella plans.

There are several functions which the corporation need not have:

- It would not usurp the implementation roles of existing agencies. The Historic District Commission would continue to apply its guidelines. The Planning and Zoning Commission would apply zoning regulations. The Department of Recreation and Parks would continue to be responsible for park development. The roles of the Business Association, Historic Ellicott City, Inc. and residential groups would be unimpaired. The corporation would coordinate the efforts of these diverse agencies in the implementation of the Ellicott City plan.
- It would not be another permanent county agency or function. Its role specifically relates to the implementation of the Ellicott City plan, as revised and adopted. With that mission accomplished, the corporation would be disbanded.
- It would not acquire or resell land (as in the typical public redevelopment effort), and it would not undertake redevelopment itself. It is therefore called a "management", not a "development", corporation.
- It would not levy revenues; this role remains with the county.

Getting started. Experience elsewhere indicates that the management corporation will be as successful or unsuccessful as key community leaders want it to be; specific articles of incorporation are less crucial than the spirit in which they are undertaken and pursued. In one approach*, a limited group of community leaders might form the corporation and become its board of directors. The corporation would then contract with the two counties (and possibly also with the Maryland Department of Economic and Community Development) to perform the functions described above in the implementation of the Ellicott City plan. The contract agreement would support the operating costs of the corporation, approximately \$60,000 a year for professional staff services, appropriately located office space, and basic overhead expenses. The management corporation would have no capital budget.

FINANCING PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The adage "he who pays the piper calls the tune" has inescapable validity when applied to the implementation

of the Ellicott City plan. Many different groups, ranging from Howard County as a whole and larger state-wide and regional publics, to individual property owners, merchants and investors, have differing but mutually compatible stakes in the implementation of the Ellicott City plan. Many of the implementation funds will be county appropriations, allocations from state and federal programs, and private investments. However, some reorganization of financing mechanisms is required in order to effect a better match between the objectives of various groups and the funding of needed improvements: For example, the county should have a means to encourage high quality rehabilitation in its traditional seat of government, and to lend financial assistance in such efforts. Downtown merchants and property owners should have a means to assist in the development of facilities from which they collectively benefit. Some of the fees paid by visitors to the historic district might be funnelled more directly to the enhancement of the environment to which they were attracted. Special financing mechanisms might provide local lending institutions with the means to assist in the development of cultural and other activities of far-reaching benefit to the town as a whole.

Tax Credit. It is in the county's interest to encourage investment in existing structures in its historic county seat. Ellicott City contains a rich mixture of buildings constructed over a 150 year period from colonial times to the depression of the 1930's. It should be a county objective to preserve this heritage, as an appropriate context for its expanding government center, as a record of the history and traditions of the county, and as a prerequisite to future fiscal benefits.

The county has a particular interest to encourage investment if it has reasonable assurance that the investments are for high quality rehabilitation which contributes to the architectural and visual character of the historic district, rather than for short-run commercial purposes exclusively. In the establishment of the Historic District Commission and the Ellicott City Historic District, and in the development of guidelines for preserving the architectural and visual character of the historic district, the means for providing "reasonable assurance" are now in place. What is needed is a means to encourage the investment needed to preserve and enhance the historic district.

A tax credit policy is suggested. The tax credit would be calculated as a percentage of the rehabilitation or restoration costs of existing structures in the Historic District, or the construction costs of architecturally compatible new structures. The application of the tax credit can be limited to investments affecting the exterior of buildings, or to interior restoration for specified cultural or other purposes. The percentage amount of the tax credit can be varied, if desired, according to judgements on the degree to which a particular investment contributes to overall historic preservation goals.

The tax credit policy has several other advantages besides flexibility in application. First, it is keyed to actual investment; property owners must invest in their structures in order to be eligible for the credit. Second, the amount of the tax credit is keyed to the amount of the investment, not the impact of the investment on property assessment. Finally, state enabling legislation exists*; a county ordinance would be required to institute the policy in the Ellicott City Historic District.

* A revision of the approach outlined in working paper # 11.

* Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 81, Section 12 G.

The tax credit policy would represent a county investment in historic preservation and architectural quality in the historic district, an investment which fiscal assessment indicates is likely to be recouped over a ten year period.

It is suggested that administrative responsibility for the tax credit be assigned to the Historic District Commission. Though additional administrative burdens would be involved, the tax policy would make the Commission's powers more consistent with its important responsibilities. It would, in effect, provide the Commission with a "carrot" with which to encourage investments which make positive contributions to the architectural and visual quality of the historic district. The weakness of the Historic District Commission, under present arrangements, is that it does not have such a "carrot"; it only has a "stick" which its legislation suggests should be used sparingly, or not at all when real conflicts occur. The availability of a "carrot" would allow the HDC to rely less heavily on its somewhat unreliable "stick".

Parking Validation. The development, operation, and maintenance of parking facilities is a major cost item in the proposed program of downtown improvements, and one in which downtown merchants have a clear and tangible financial stake. This being the case, it is desirable to develop a separate fund-raising mechanism to help support the cost of parking improvements, reserving the special assessment district (see below) for use in the implementation of varied projects and programs of lesser cost.

A parking validation plan has worked in a number of downtown areas across the country. In Ellicott City the plan might work roughly as follows: Downtown merchants would purchase parking validation stamps. Visitors parking in interceptor parking facilities would receive a ticket. Any customer making a purchase of a specified amount would receive a stamp good for one hour of free parking. The customer would pay for any parking time not covered by validation stamps. The money raised through the purchase of parking stamps would be applied to the costs of the parking program, and could also help support facilities such as the trolley bus.

The parking validation plan has the advantage that the costs to individual merchants are in direct proportion to their retail sales. Though precise estimates of funds generated cannot be made at this stage, rough calculations based on current downtown land use and trip generation indicate that the validation plan would be an effective means of raising funds.

Special Taxing District. It is suggested that the proposed downtown commercial zone (see Chapter 1) be made a special taxing district as a means to contribute to promotional and social programs, as well as to projects which enhance the amenities of downtown. One advantage of the special taxing districts is that it makes possible flexible adjustment of charges to meet the requirements of particular improvement programs. Having established the special taxing district, the amount of the special assessment needed for particular improvement programs can easily be calculated on the basis of the total assessed value of the district. Another important advantage is that the funds raised can be used for many purposes: e.g. downtown promotion, special event expenses, sidewalk enhancement, tree-planting, trolley-bus operations, support of the non-profit management corporation, burying power lines, etc. (Downtown merchants and property owners would need to develop procedures by which they could reach collective decisions regarding support of various proposed programs.) A third advantage of the special taxing district is that collection is handled by the

county, which is already set up to do the necessary administration. The money collected, instead of being funnelled into the county's general fund, would go to a special "pool" for projects in the special taxing district.

User Charges. A number of "user charge" revenues presently or prospectively collected in the historic district could be funnelled directly towards plan implementation projects and programs. Perhaps the best example is parking meter revenues, and prospective parking fees not covered by parking validation stamps. At present these revenues flow into the county's general fund. If they could be funnelled towards the implementation of the downtown parking strategy, then this program could be funded from three sources: county appropriation, downtown merchants (through parking validations), and the users themselves. This is as it should be, since each group benefits from the preservation and enhancement of Ellicott City, a major aspect of which is the strategy for auto access and parking in the downtown area.

Another type of user charge which could be funnelled toward historic district preservation and enhancement is admission fees to special facilities such as the railroad terminal museum. The first purpose for these funds might be the maintenance and operation of the museum facility; any remaining funds could help support further restoration efforts in the Ellicott City Historic District.

Revolving Loan Fund. There are several kinds of downtown investments which have important community-wide benefits in a specialized commercial and cultural district, but which, considered in isolation, may be economically marginal. Examples may include the rehabilitation of upper levels of downtown structures for residential use, the adaption of a historic structure for cultural purposes, or the restoration of part of a historic structure while other parts are being improved for commercial uses. While these investments will often be income-producing, they may not qualify for a standard business loan. Unless special loan funds are available, the investments may not be made, and the downtown as a whole will suffer.

A special revolving loan fund has been successfully used in other communities to encourage these kinds of investments. The loan fund would make funds available at reduced interest rates for special purposes of value to the downtown as a whole. The loan fund could be administered by local lending institutions, and, through the auspices of the management corporation, could be combined with loans from other sources (e.g. the State Department of Community and Economic Development, regular business loans) to support complex improvement projects.

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