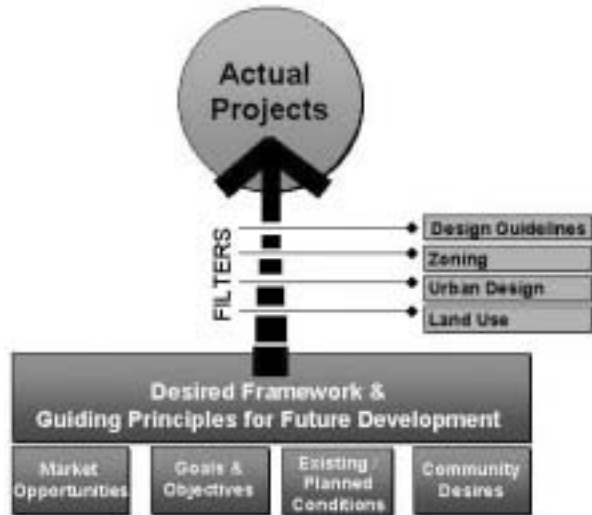




# PHYSICAL PLAN

The following chapter, in its description of the *Desired Framework*, physical improvement recommendations, and other tools for further physical planning, sets the direction, tone, and intent for the Master Plan. The *Desired Framework* represents the understanding and synthesis of the market opportunities, the *Master Plan Goal and Objectives*, existing and planned conditions, as well as community desires. These elements can be interpreted as the ‘building blocks’ of the Town Center Master Plan. They should be used as a benchmark for evaluating future development and design proposals.



*Building Blocks of the Town Center Master Plan.*

## Guiding Principles

Key to the formulation of the *Desired Framework* and the associated physical planning tools is the establishment of several guiding principles that can be used to evaluate development pro-

posals. These principles form the baseline upon which the urban design recommendations, land use recommendations, zoning and design guidelines should be based. As future development projects are planned and reviewed, it is fundamental that they adhere to these guiding principles set forth by this Master Plan. The five key *Guiding Principles for Future Development* include:

- Development in Rockville’s Town Center will be organized around an L-shaped, pedestrian-oriented spine extending from the Metro station westward along East Montgomery Avenue and a northward extension of Maryland Avenue to North Washington Street. As the primary organizational element of the Town Center, this spine would serve as the focal point for future development activities. All projects throughout the Town Center should be supportive of, and not detract from, that role. The street must exhibit outstanding streetscape, signage, landscaping, and architectural design solutions that make its centerpiece role immediately recognizable.

*Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica was plagued with rampant vacancies and substandard tenants, until the city sponsored the renovation of the pedestrian mall and negotiated development deals with cinemas. Today, it is one of the most notable pedestrian-oriented entertainment districts in the country.*

- North Washington Street will be a comfortable pedestrian and vehicular corridor that will serve as a transition area between western neighborhoods and the core of the Town Center while accommodating north-south vehicular traffic. Development along North Washington Street—particularly on its west side—will present a recognizable edge to the mid- to high-intensity uses present in the core of the Town Center.
- Connectivity between Maryland Avenue and other traffic corridors—particularly MD 355 and North Washington Street—will be provided in a manner that does not compromise the pedestrian character of Maryland Avenue or North Washington Street.
- The Metro station will have a recognizable presence in the Town Center. Redevelopment efforts including the station and area to the west are viewed as opportunities to bring the station perceptually closer by favoring development and densities of activity toward the Town Center. Connections between the station and the Town Center will be viewed as an extension of the L-shaped spine.
- As the center of the Rockville community, the Town Center will be well-connected to adjacent neighborhoods but will not use them for funneling tremendous amounts of traffic. Future development will be supportive of the economic viability of adjacent properties while not presenting dramatic conflicts in uses.
- Partnerships between property owners, businesses, citizens, civic associations, governmental entities, and other groups will be actively encouraged and supported. These groups will help support the implementation of the plan's goals and objectives. Additionally, these groups will continue to be involved in future activities by providing comments, observations, support, and encouragement.

### Desired Framework Diagram

The *Desired Framework Diagram* represents a culmination of analysis and discussion within the community regarding the 'big picture' or conceptual physical ideas behind the Town Center Master Plan. The illustration represents the planning concept for the Town Center. The *Desired Framework* is a tool for showing how the major physical pieces of the Town Center, such as connections, gateways, and neighborhood zones, should be organized in relation to the pedestrian spine. It highlights areas with predominantly similar development characteristics and patterns and suggests a hierarchy between those spaces.

The *Desired Framework Diagram* is a synthesis of concepts from many sources. Draft illustrations of both the *Existing* and *Desired Framework* diagrams were on display at the public open house for the Master Plan process held in September and at a meeting of the Town Center Action Team. Results from the Town Center Action Team meeting indicated a desire for the following:

- A major north-south spine for the Town Center along Maryland Avenue and an east-west spine along East Montgomery Avenue.
- Primarily vehicular-focused corridors along Rockville Pike, Jefferson Street, and Washington Street.
- A pedestrian-oriented character extending from City Hall northward, past Regal Cinemas all the way to the North Washington Street-Hungerford Drive split.
- Gateways (or an appropriate Town Center entry experience/announcement) as far south as South Washington Street south of Fleet Street and Rockville Pike at Wootton Parkway, as far west as the West Montgomery Avenue-West Jefferson Street intersection, and as far east as the Park Road-South Stonestreet Avenue intersection. Generally,

however, there was consensus that the northern gateway to Town Center should be apparent at the North Washington Street-Hungerford Drive split and the southern gateway at the ‘mixing bowl’ (MD 28/MD 355).

- Providing connections between the Town Center and East Rockville neighborhoods.

Participants at the public open house were asked to give their feedback on three different draft versions of a proposed *Desired Framework*. In general, participants showed support for the following:

- Enlarging the highly pedestrian-oriented area northward from East Middle Lane to extend all the way to the North Washington Street-Hungerford Drive split.
- Gateways at the ‘mixing bowl’ and the North Washington Street-Hungerford Drive split.
- East Middle Lane and Maryland Avenue as major spines or focal points for pedestrian activities.
- Connections to East Rockville.
- Greater incorporation of the Metro station into the Town Center.

In contrast to the *Existing Framework*, the proposed desired conditions as identified by the Advisory Group and described below are reflected in the *Desired Framework Diagram* after page 43.

- A much larger, L-shaped distinctive core area that shifts the focus of the Town Center northward and eastward to more strongly connect to East Rockville and to capitalize on properties to the north that are currently in transition,
- A strong pedestrian spine along the L-shaped corridor comprised of East Montgomery Avenue and an extension of Maryland Avenue,

- Greater predominance of residential neighborhood areas—within the distinctive core area but also along Rockville Pike and North Stonestreet Avenue,
- A new secondary office or ‘business center’ along North Stonestreet Avenue,
- New connections across the railroad tracks, the location and character of which will be evaluated as part of a neighborhood plan for the residential neighborhoods east of the railroad tracks,
- New connection between North Washington Street and MD 355 at Dawson Avenue immediately south of Gateway Tower,
- A better organization and linkage of focal points along Courthouse Square/East Montgomery Avenue with the Post Office at one end and the Metro station at the other,
- Distinction between the role of East Middle Lane as an important connector that functions as a balanced vehicular and pedestrian corridor and the role of Courthouse Square/East Montgomery Avenue and Maryland Avenue (north of Courthouse Square) as more pedestrian-oriented corridors,
- Gateway improvements at key entrances to Town Center, and
- Public open space in the form of a Town Square along Maryland Avenue extended.

### Tools for Further Physical Planning

As the foundation for the Town Center Master Plan, the *Desired Framework Diagram* provides a conceptual vision for the future of the Town Center; however, several tools are necessary to evaluate actual development proposals, re-development strategies, etc. These tools include:

- Land Use Recommendations,
- Urban Design Recommendations,

- Zoning Recommendations, and
- Design Guidelines Recommendations.

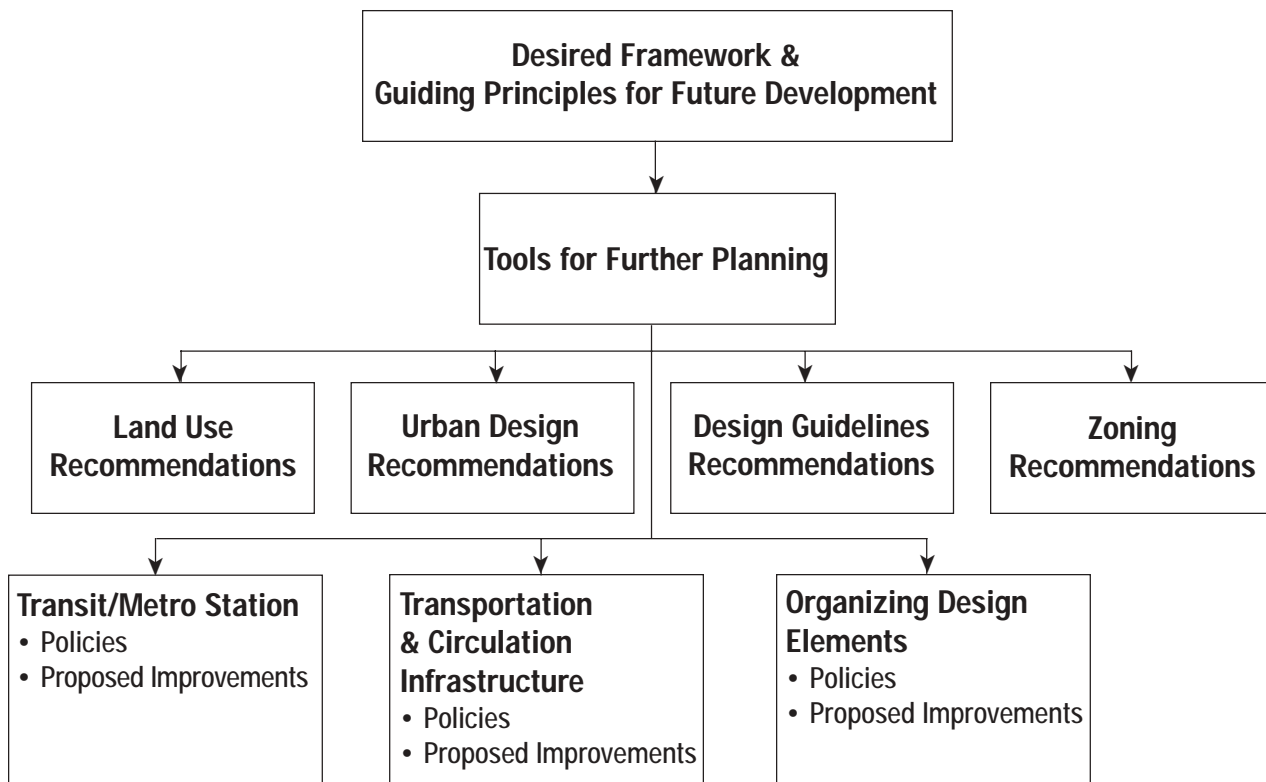
The diagram below illustrates the organization and relationship between the elements of the physical plan recommendations. The remaining section of this chapter will focus on two of these tools, land use recommendations and urban design recommendations. Zoning and design guidelines proposals are described in Chapter 7, *Regulatory Recommendations*.

### Land Use Recommendations

Having a direction for development as shown in the *Desired Framework Diagram*, the *Proposed Land Use Map* represents the next level of analysis and incorporates the discussion of design concepts that were presented to the Advisory Group (see map after page 46). This *Land Use Map* reflects not only comments from the community

but also data, such as information from the market analysis, that give direction to the land use pattern. The *Proposed Land Use Map* is intended to outline the predominate desired land use for a certain area (i.e. retail, residential, office, etc.), and not restrict development through rigid regulations. The *Land Use Map* is a two-dimensional representation of ground floor uses only. The land use recommendations do not address any suggestions regarding the density of new development; those recommended changes to existing zoning regulations are described in Chapter 7, *Regulatory Recommendations*.

Several objectives formed the basis of the *Proposed Land Use Map*. Although it is intended to be a guide, the following objectives, in conjunction with the *Guiding Principles for Future Development* (see pages 41-42) should be the criteria used for evaluating and monitoring development activity in the future:



- Create a core area with a critical mass of mixed uses and activity that support and complement each other,
- Identify locations where additional residential uses could be introduced,
- Provide future opportunities for both vertical and horizontal connectivity of uses over the rail corridor,
- Ensure economic viability of individual properties,
- Reinforce existing residential neighborhood areas, and
- Respect and build upon existing and approved developments.

In addition, the *Proposed Land Use Map* utilizes Maryland Avenue as a dynamic mixed-use, retail/entertainment corridor that acts as a division between neighborhood-friendly uses to the west and more intense uses to the east, adjacent to MD 355. The market analysis prepared as part of the Town Center master planning process provides an opportunity for framing a dis-



*Land use recommendations aim to build off of activity currently present in the Town Center and to expand those uses that will attract residents, employees, and visitors.*

cussion of the land use recommendations. The analysis stated that the challenge for the Rockville Town Center is to capitalize on the strong regional economy and the daytime popu-

lation of more than 230,000 within a 10-minute drive time trade area to create a niche that will distinguish it from other markets in Montgomery County. Even though the Montgomery County economy is strong and the incomes of Rockville residents are high and increasing, the Town Center will find it easier to capitalize on certain market segments over others. As such, the land use recommendations respond to the following information gathered during the market analysis:

- Residential development is strong in Montgomery County and in the region.
- Large-scale office development in the Town Center is difficult because of strong competition from areas without parking conditions inherent in a Town Center marketplace.
- Retail development in the Town Center could benefit from the existing name recognition of Rockville Pike but must provide a distinctive alternative to the character and uses now available along the Pike.
- Discussions with area developers indicated that the Town Center has not been a primary location for office development, but has the potential for an office component.
- The Rockville community desires more than just a 9 to 5 office center in its Town Center.

The proposed land use changes would result in an urban core area extending roughly from North Washington Street on the west, Courthouse Square and East Montgomery Avenue on the south, and the Metro/CSX tracks and Rockville Pike on the east. The core area would be organized around an L-shaped spine, containing a mix of retail and entertainment uses at the ground floor, extending along East Montgomery Avenue and Maryland Avenue extended. The L-shaped corridor is intended to identify the critical areas in which it would benefit the Town Center if there were requirements regarding uses (i.e. where is the area where retail uses must be provided at the street level).



It is expected that the land use recommendation for retail and entertainment along the L-shaped spine of East Montgomery Avenue and Maryland Avenue would result in the inclusion of those uses at the ground floors. This recommendation does not necessarily mean that the upper floors of buildings along this corridor would have retail and entertainment as the primary use. In fact, it is recommended that office and residential uses be incorporated along this spine as well. The retail and entertainment uses should be in structures of at least three stories so that there is an intensity of activity along this primary corridor of the Town Center. A further description of proposed densities is provided in Chapter 7, *Regulatory Recommendations*.

A secondary pedestrian spine along North Washington Street should be implemented to complete a 'loop' created by the East Montgomery Avenue and Maryland Avenue corridor. The loop may be reinforced by the creation of a restaurant district along the northern portion of Maryland Avenue extended and North Washington Street, between Martin's Lane and Beall Avenue. The urban core area would be complemented and 'announced' along the east side of Rockville Pike with a well-designed and landscaped open space amenity north of East Middle Lane/Park Road that would replace existing surface parking (referred to as the proposed 'linear green').



*Low to medium density office development could be appropriate for North Stonestreet Avenue.*



*Townhouses could also be appropriate for North Stonestreet Avenue.*

Transition areas between the urban core of Town Center and adjacent residential areas are necessary to protect the quality of life and character of some of Rockville's oldest neighborhoods. The Town Center Master Plan reinforces the existing transition areas west of North Washington Street, as outlined in the Coordinated Planning Area of the *West End Woodley Gardens East/West Neighborhood Plan* that provide a decrease in scale, density and height of buildings from the core of Town Center to the single family homes in adjacent residential neighborhoods. These transitional areas are intended to limit further commercial encroachment into residential neighborhoods. Additional transitional areas may be appropriate where none currently exist, including along South Washington Street south of Vinson Street, and on the east side of the Metro/CSX tracks in the North and South Stonestreet Avenue corridor. Appropriate design standards should be applied that are tailored to these specific areas. Innovative concepts such as floating zones may be employed to delineate transitional areas.

The area east of the CSX tracks, (approximately north of Park Road along CSX) is a transition area to residential neighborhoods. The introduction of office uses in this area on the west side of North Stonestreet Avenue was recom-

mended, in part, to build on the quality of the National Institutes of Health printing facility and to create opportunities for higher and better utilization of land in this area. The transitional properties on the east side of North Stonestreet Avenue are appropriate for residential uses, including single family detached, single family attached and multifamily buildings with ancillary ground floor retail. In addition, the open space could be an important link between the Town Center core area and the North Stonestreet Avenue corridor by creating a synergy of activity between the two areas. This area north of Park Road would, however, include less dense office buildings than the area west of Rockville Pike in order to facilitate a comfortable transition toward the East Rockville and Lincoln Park neighborhoods.

Other changes include residential land uses along the west side of North Washington Street. Residential uses are also introduced south of Fleet Street and on both sides of North Stonestreet Avenue north of Crabb Avenue. The proposed land use recommendations do not impact the concentration of governmental uses nor the retail area along Rockville Pike south of the ‘mixing bowl.’ It is recommended that an updated study for the Rockville Pike corridor be considered as a future project.

### Implications of Land Use Recommendations

For the most part, the proposed land use changes are intended to occur over an extended period of time through the natural evolution of uses and real estate transactions. The only exception to this is within the L-shaped area generally bounded by North Washington Street on the west, Courthouse Square on the south, and the Metro station/Rockville Pike on the east. Within this area, it is suggested that more immediate steps (which are defined in greater detail in Chapter 6, *Implementation Strategies*) be taken to actively steer the redevelopment of the

land according to the land use recommendations in order to meet the goals and vision articulated in the Town Center Master Plan.

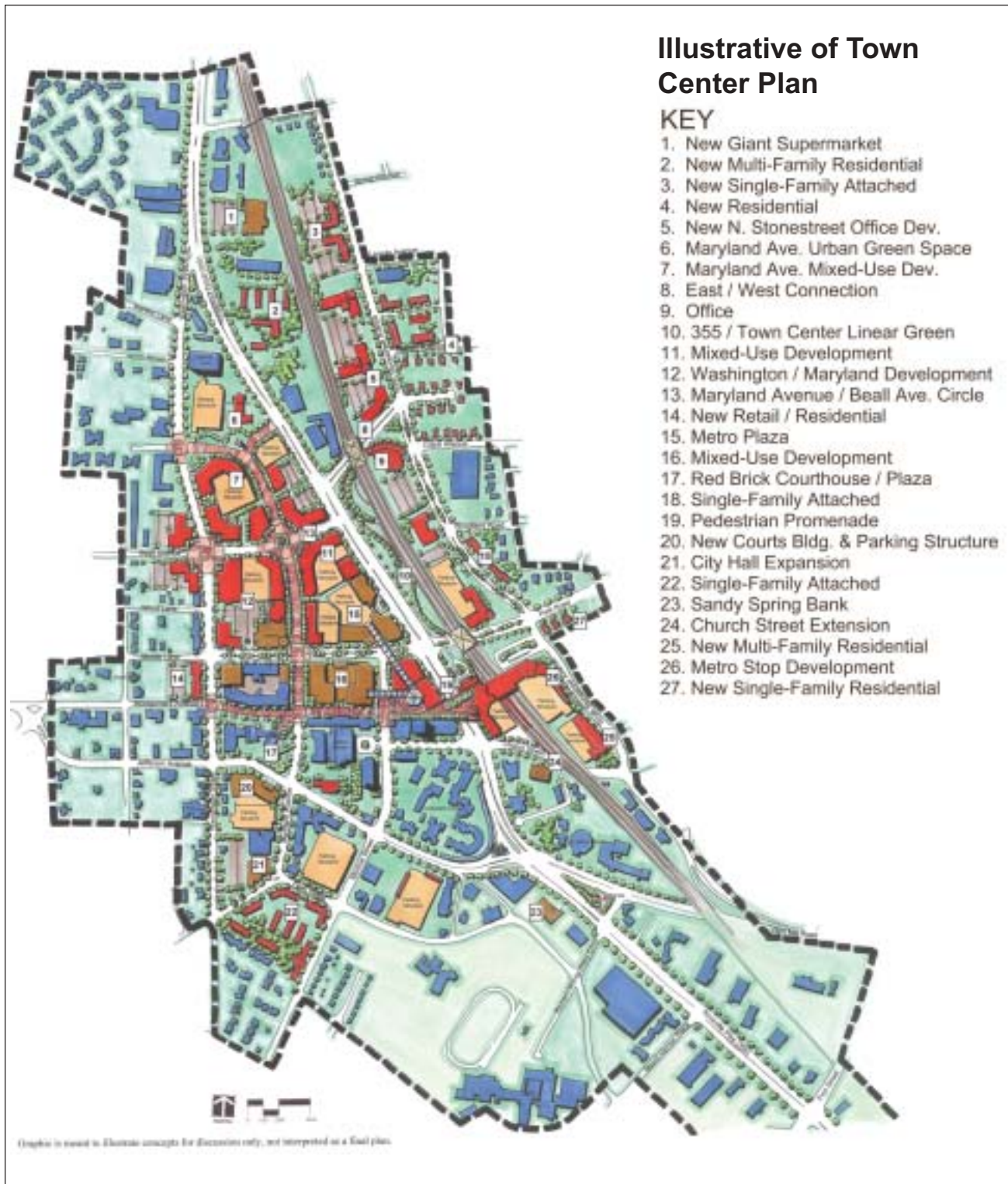
### Urban Design Recommendations

The *Proposed Land Use Map* outlined in the previous section provides broad land use and development guidance for the Town Center. This plan describes a basic framework, for the logical organization of geographic areas within the Town Center. The *Proposed Land Use Map* represents the most basic form of planning policy, and, as such, provides guidance for more specific urban design recommendations for the Town Center.

The *Illustrative Plan* (see page 48) provides one potential solution for the future of the Town Center. This illustrative plan is intended to demonstrate a possible alternative showing how the policies outlined in the Master Plan could be implemented, and should be used as another tool for evaluating future projects within the Town Center. The *Illustrative Plan* is not intended to be viewed as a site plan, but rather a concept of potential development resulting from policies and principles outlined as part of the overall plan. The purpose of this graphic is to illustrate one option demonstrating how proposed infrastructure changes, street and traffic recommendations and urban design concepts could be organized within the Town Center.

The *Illustrative Plan* drawing also provides a guide for physical improvements, showing concepts for new development and redevelopment opportunities by both public agencies and the private sector. The private sector is encouraged to work together with the public sector to develop alternative conceptual plans that support the *Guiding Principles for Future Development*.

It is important to understand that before any final decisions are made regarding new development proposals within the Town Center, a great deal of attention will be necessary for the detailed plan-



Illustrative of Town Center Plan



ning and design of those projects. Once the *Desired Framework* and *Proposed Land Use Map* are adopted in principle, design studies (by both the private and public sector) will be necessary to establish clear specifications for future development. It is anticipated that over time the Master Plan will respond to changing market conditions and dynamics, and therefore, the organization of the physical development graphically depicted in the *Illustrative Plan* will change. However, the principles and policies from which they were founded must remain intact in order to preserve the underlying conceptual vision for the Town Center.

The design concepts shown in the *Illustrative Plan* represent a synthesis of the consultant planning team's understanding of existing physical conditions, market analysis, and extensive feedback by many participants throughout the planning process. Several recommendations shown in the *Illustrative Plan* will require specific design studies. An example of such a study is the area east of North Stonestreet Avenue, which will need to be evaluated in a more in-depth neighborhood master plan. The proposed connections under the Metro/CSX rail line will require an engineering feasibility study.

In order for the future development recommendations and opportunities to be evaluated on a consistent level, specific urban design principles must be outlined for the Town Center. As such, the following describe the key urban design policies and improvements for the recommended major plan components. Those major plan components fall within one of three categories:

- Transit/Metro Station,
- Transportation & Circulation Infrastructure, and
- Organizing Design Elements.

### Transit/Metro Station Policies

The Rockville Town Center is fortunate to have a multi-modal transit station near the heart of the Town Center. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, *Existing Conditions*, the current station is not well integrated into the Town Center. High traffic volumes on MD 355 compound the problem. The Maryland State Highway Administration has been investigating ways of improving the intersection of MD 355 and East Middle Lane from a vehicular and pedestrian perspective. These studies have generated the idea of depressing MD 355 to separate through traffic from local vehicular and pedestrian traffic. This underground approach presents the ideal long-term option for improving connectivity between the Metro station and the Town Center.

In addition to being disconnected from the Town Center, the existing Metro station lacks several characteristics of a successful transit-oriented development (TOD). Most transit-oriented areas can be considered as either a place of origin (i.e. a neighborhood or residential area with a significant number of transit users) and/or a place of destination (i.e. employment, commercial, or entertainment center which draws from outside the community). The Rockville Town Center Metro Station has the opportunity to capitalize on being both a place of origin as well as a place of destination. A successful TOD design for the Town Center Metro Station should follow these planning and design principles:

- Developments at the station site should include mixed uses, typically with retail on first floor and residential or offices above.
- Station development should include a mix of uses that provide for essential daily needs, such as convenience shopping (i.e. dry cleaners, restaurants, ATMs, small grocery stores).
- The overall density should be highest in the immediate area around the transit stop and become less dense towards the edges of

the neighborhood. In order to achieve this higher density at the station, air rights development over the existing rail lines should be explored. Development should be of a higher intensity west of the rail line.

- The impact of increased densities on the adjacent residential neighborhoods should be mitigated through the use of a residential proximity slope that would require that the maximum heights of the development be lower next to the residential neighborhood.
- Strong, appealing connections to the Town Center should be made at both street level and at pedestrian promenade level.
- Pedestrian accessibility should be empha-

sized, and adequate bus, bicycle, and auto access should be accommodated.

- Accommodations should be made to encourage transfers between modes of transportation. The locations of pedestrian circulation paths, bus shelters, 'kiss and ride' stops, and bike racks is crucial; they should be located as close to the main entrances of the station as possible.
- Entrances to buildings should occur at sidewalk level, with necessary circulation cores (including escalators, elevators and stairs) to allow ease of access at necessary level changes.
- Parking structures should be incorporated adjacent to rail lines, with development at the ground floor. Any surface parking should

be shielded from view from public rights-of-way with appropriate landscaping.

- An identifying landmark visible along MD 355 should be used at the station for orientation purposes.

- Public space that can be used as a plaza for Town Center events should be incorporated into the design at or near the station.

- The station should be connected, both physically and perceptually, to the core of the Town Center and serve as an anchor and focal point of the pedestrian spine along East Montgomery Avenue.

- Streets and other public areas at the station should feel secure both during the day and at night.



*Sketch of Metro Station and promenade along Montgomery Avenue to Maryland Avenue.*

- Design of the station should be visually appealing; signage and lighting should be coordinated and prominent.
- Pedestrian accessibility between East Rockville neighborhoods and Town Center should be enhanced by provision of clear and convenient pedestrian connections provided through the Metro station site to the pedestrian promenade and to at-grade pedestrian crossings of MD 355.
- An adequate number of parking spaces to serve the Metro station site should be provided in connection with redevelopment. The current number of commuter spaces should only be replaced on a one-for-one basis after redevelopment. Because the station is not intended to be a commuter destination, the number of commuter spaces provided should not be increased due to possible neighborhood traffic conditions. Similarly, the number of spaces provided for office use on the site merits parking reductions due to the proximity of Metro. The number of spaces to be provided will be determined at the time of redevelopment of the station site and will take into account these considerations.

### Transit/Metro Station Proposed Improvements

Key proposals as shown in the Illustrative Plan for the Transit/Metro station include:

- **Pedestrian Promenade:** The proposed long-term vision for the Metro Station resolves both the safe pedestrian connection and the perception that the physical station is 'outside' the core of the Town Center. This will be accomplished by introducing new development and adding a significant promenade over MD 355 that effectively connects the station to the heart of the Town Center. The promenade should be viewed as more

than a 'pedestrian tube' like the current crossing to the station. The promenade should be a visually stimulating architectural statement that provides a positive entry at the transit site.

In conjunction with the desired long-term burial of MD 355, the pedestrian promenade would improve connections to the Town Center and highlight the east-west (East Montgomery Avenue) leg of the L-shaped pedestrian spine. The undergrounding of MD 355 could be a dynamic companion piece to the pedestrian promenade if cost and engineering logistics are resolved. The pedestrian promenade, however, can and should be pursued pending finalization of the likelihood of the undergrounding of MD 355.



*The proposed pedestrian promenade could incorporate creative paving, finishes, and landscaping.*



The proposed promenade ‘experience’ would begin at the station (see Metro Station and promenade section drawing on page 52). Upon arrival at the station, one would take an escalator or elevator up to a height (approximately 25 feet) above the tracks, which represents the entry level to the Town Center for those arriving on Metro. This lobby space would be incorporated into development, most likely including air rights development over the tracks, that would occur as part of development of the station site. From this level, pedestrians would move west toward the Town Center through an enclosed space and exit the structure onto a public plaza/pedestrian promenade above Rockville Pike. Grade adjustments to the promenade may be likely so that it may join the existing Metro promenade between the 255 Rockville Pike and 51 Monroe Street buildings.

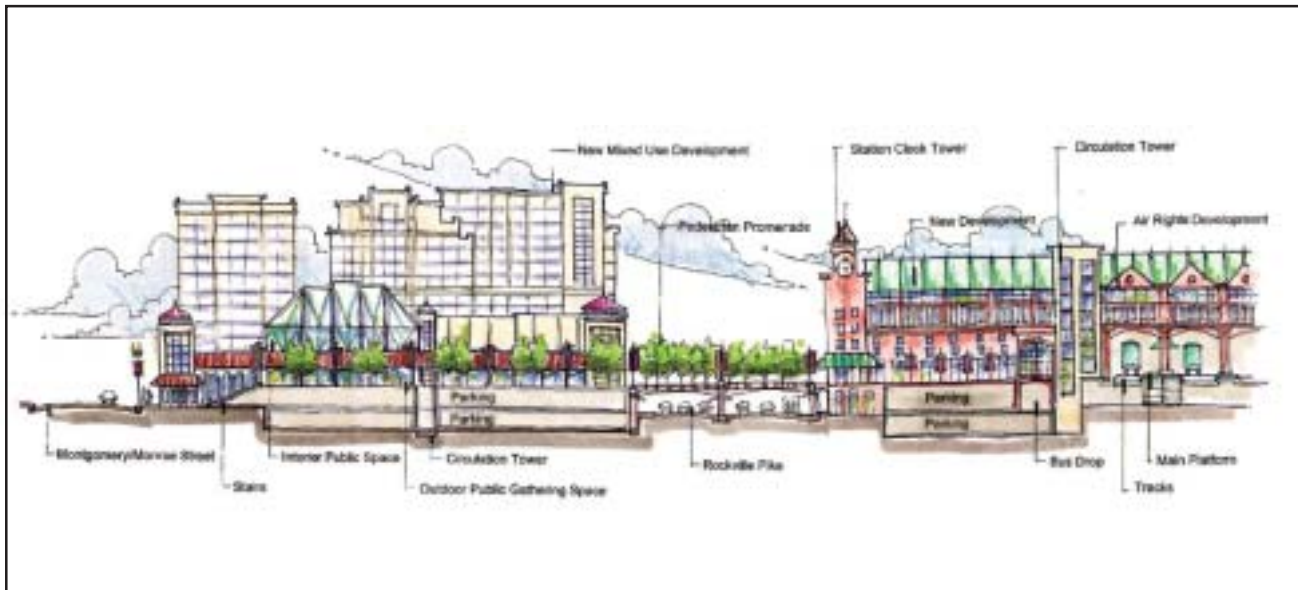
Grade and elevation changes must be accommodated, but easy access into the lobby space and promenade should be provided from the east side of the development for

residents of East Rockville. This promenade would serve as a primary pedestrian link between the Metro station/East Rockville and the Town Center. As an added benefit, it can provide public space for passive and active uses. From above Rockville Pike, the plaza would connect to the existing promenade, and thereby connect to East Montgomery Avenue, where the promenade would transition down to street level and into the heart of the Town Center.

In addition to the promenade, immediate improvements at the Transit/Metro station should include at grade pedestrian crossing enhancements of Rockville Pike.

A number of significant urban design elements should be incorporated into the public promenade and Metro station area including:

- Decorative architectural finishes and detailing,
- Significant landscaping,
- Pedestrian amenities,



Section of Metro Station and Pedestrian Promenade





*Example of how the Metro station could be highlighted through the incorporation of landmarking elements.*

- Landmark tower at Metro station and Courthouse Square terminus,
  - Public plaza at foot of promenade, and
  - Interior public gathering space.
- **New development on east portion of WMATA site:** The land adjacent to the station on its east side should be developed in such a manner that it encourages a mix of uses, with both an office and residential component. Traditional retail activity and transit-related functions should be strongly encouraged at the ground floor and at the pedestrian crossing level. Specific densities for development around the transit station are discussed in Chapter 7, *Regulatory Recommendations*.
  - **New development on west portion of WMATA site:** The land immediately west of the station site, adjacent to MD 355 should be redeveloped over time to include a higher density mixed-use structure, with a major employment or office component. This new redevelopment should also include a significant interior public space that is adjacent to the pedestrian promenade. The combination of the interior and exterior public space should be viewed as a major urban

open space within the Town Center.

Urban design standards that should be incorporated into development at the Metro Station should include the following characteristics:

- Decorative architectural finishes, with a ‘transit station’ theme. A landmark clock tower is recommended at the station to be the terminus of the pedestrian promenade and a visual feature along MD 355.
  - Enclosed parking structures.
  - Retail on ground floor
  - Residential development closest to existing neighborhoods.
  - Enforcement of residential proximity slope adjacent to Metro site on the west side of South Stonestreet Avenue to allow smooth transition between neighborhoods and denser development.
- **Parking:** Structured parking that provides for interior bus circulation and drop-off should be incorporated into any station development project.

### **Transportation and Circulation Infrastructure Policies**

It is not the intent of this plan to provide a specific transportation plan; however, the principles behind the proposed transportation and circulation recommendations should be evaluated as a basis for future transportation projects. Improvement and adjustment of the Town Center street system should complement the goals and objectives of providing safe and efficient connections to and from key Town Center locations and meet the principles outlined below:

- The creation of a new major pedestrian spine along Maryland Avenue should serve

as a primary organizational element for new development in the core of Town Center. The new corridor should offer connections to existing major thoroughfares (i.e. 355), but not become an alternative vehicular route to these major arteries.

- Maryland Avenue should provide a seamless connection or transition to North Washington Street, which will also offer a pedestrian-oriented retail environment.
- On-street parking should be provided along Maryland Avenue and in other locations, where possible.
- Bridge construction should incorporate a significant design component that allows those elements to be complementary visual elements to Town Center.
- Opportunities to improve system-wide circulation to provide alternatives to vehicular

travel, including bike routes and enhanced pedestrian walkways, should be maximized within road improvement projects.

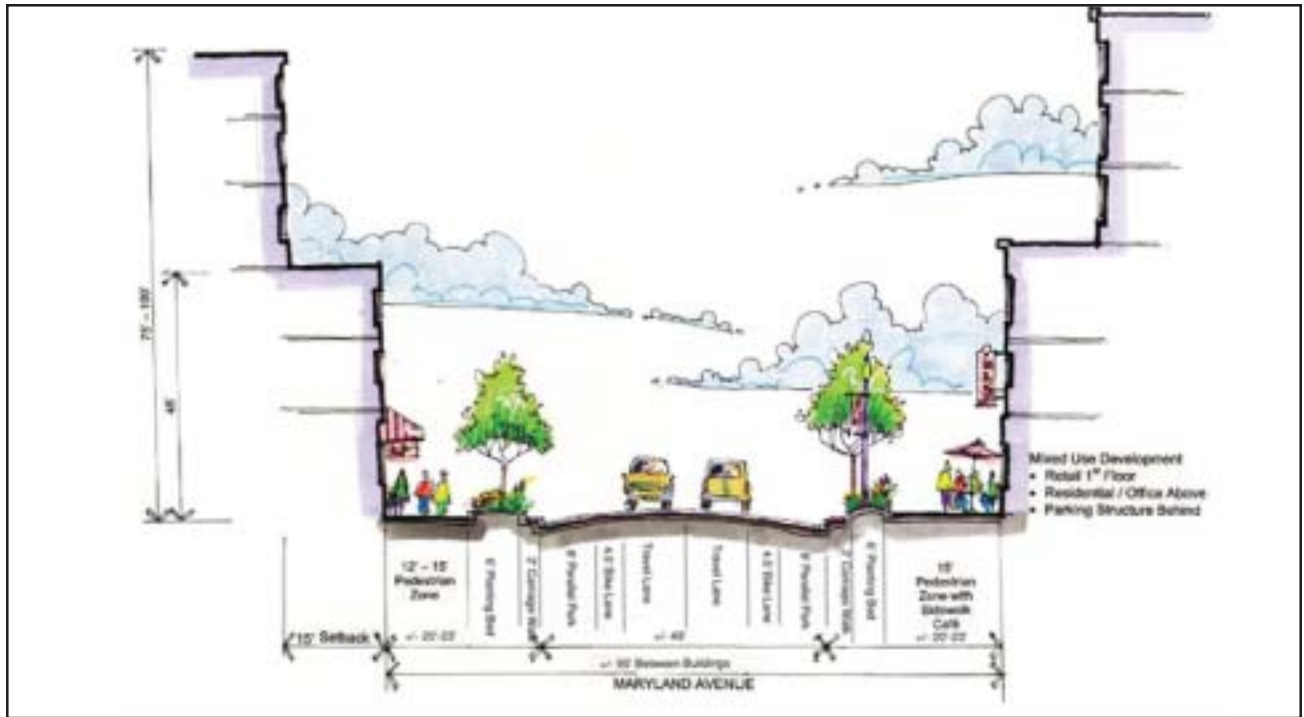
- Additional connections between the Town Center and East Rockville should be introduced and analyzed in the future. These connections should not, however, be designed to funnel significant general traffic into residential neighborhoods.
- Timing of the traffic control signals should be coordinated to facilitate through and local vehicular traffic flow balanced with pedestrian access.

### Proposed Transportation, Circulation & Infrastructure Improvements

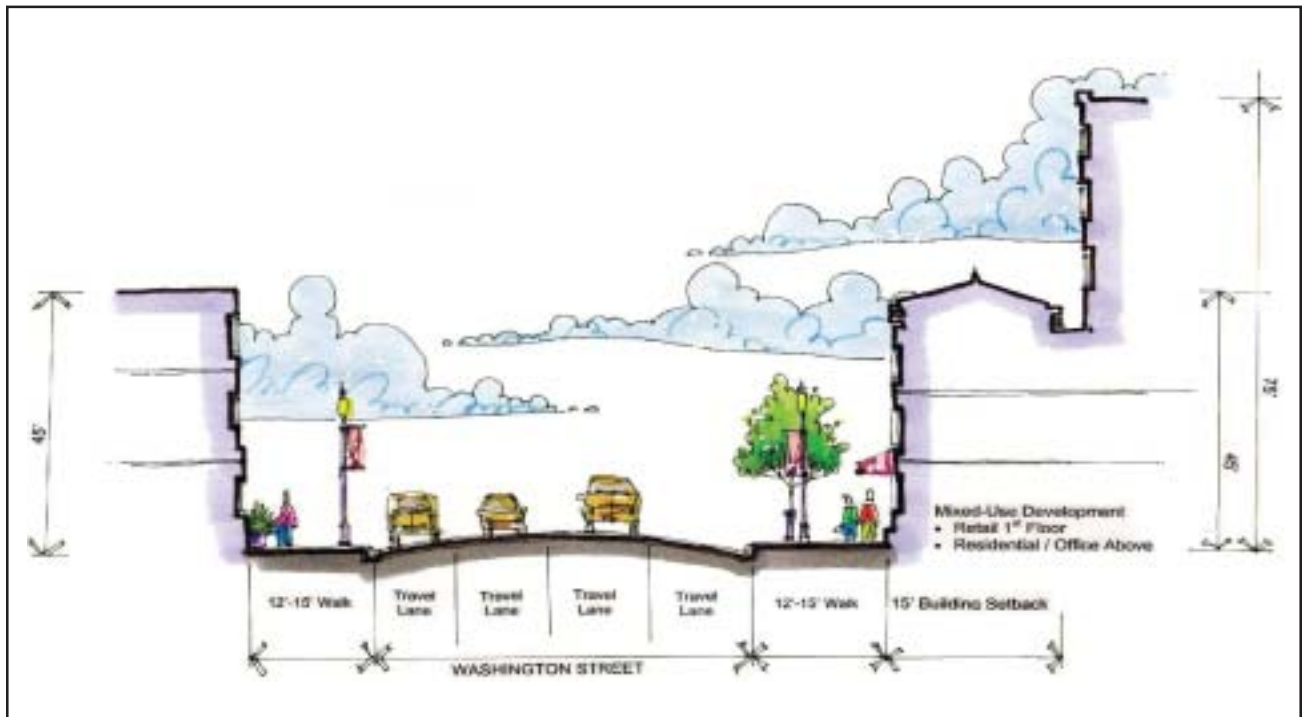
Key transportation and circulation infrastructure recommendations, highlighted as concepts on the *Illustrative Plan*, include:



Sketch looking north on Maryland Avenue towards Gateway Tower



Proposed street section on Maryland Avenue



Proposed street section on North Washington Street





*Redevelopment of the Metro station site could incorporate parking and bus drop-off underneath the pedestrian promenade.*

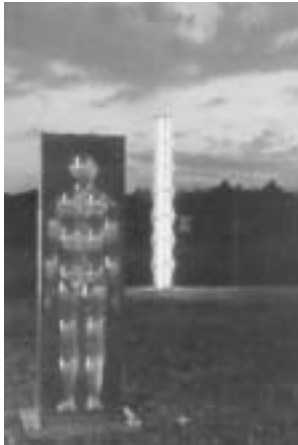
- Maryland Avenue extension northward curving slightly toward North Washington Street and intersecting with Dawson Avenue (see Proposed Maryland Avenue and North Washington street section drawings on page 55). Design elements along this new corridor should include:
  - Pedestrian amenities,
  - Wide sidewalks,
  - Significant landscaped areas and street trees,
  - Ornamental lighting,
  - Visual marker/landmark element,
  - Encouragement of outdoor cafes,
  - On-street parking, and
  - Bike lanes.
- Immediate at-grade pedestrian improvements along MD 355, especially at Middle Lane, to facilitate east-west crossings.
- Extension of Dawson Avenue to connect North Washington Street and MD 355.
- North Stonestreet Avenue shifted eastward immediately north of Park Road and westward immediately south of Park Road to create new alignment.
- Vinson Street closed and replaced with structured parking.
- Pedestrian promenade as part of new development at Metro station.
- Improved rail bridge at Park Road underpass that enhances pedestrian crossing and aesthetic appearance.
- New east/west road extensions under the rail lines from MD 355 to North Stonestreet Avenue and/or to South Stonestreet Avenue, the location, feasibility and benefits of which would be determined through a neighborhood planning effort and transportation analysis in conjunction with the State Highway Administration (SHA), Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and the City.
- New railroad bridges at east/west neighborhood connections to include significant design detailing. Examples of this type of treatment include:
  - Decorative architectural finishes & detailing,
  - Creative retaining walls/terracing,
  - Visual markers/landmark element, and
  - Unique lighting concept on structure.

### Organizing Design Elements Policies

It is important that the Town Center establish a unique identity that is unlike anywhere else in Rockville. The Town Center would benefit in many ways from features that promote a distinctive identity. These elements can also help

*Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist, an ardent advocate for good design within the urban environment, fought the state transportation department to prevent the construction of the Park East Freeway because of the negative impact it would have had on downtown Milwaukee and its relationship to the lakefront. He predicts that the great public works of the next century will be the deconstruction of freeways once economists apply themselves to the investigation of the economics of transportation.*





*Public art can be used as landmarking elements to visually anchor Maryland Avenue and the L-shaped pedestrian spine.*

to make the Town Center a cohesive district that is easily recognizable. A series of signature focal points, open space, gateways, etc. would help to reinforce this identity.

- Focal points and landmarking features should be incorporated along Town Center streets and in public spaces to create visual interest and draw pedestrians.
- Landmarking should begin at the Metro station and continue throughout the Town Center.
- Focal points at the end of Maryland Avenue and potentially at the intersection of Maryland Avenue and Beall Avenue should be utilized to visually anchor the street and reinforce the desired quality and character that will allow it to be successful as a dynamic retail and entertainment corridor.
- The Town Center should be a preferred location for cultural institutions and amenities, such as Rockville Arts Place or a Science Center, that serve the citizens of Rockville as well as provide tourism opportunities.
- A combination of architectural elements, such as sculpture, public art and unique signage should be incorporated into Town Center streetscapes.
- Small, urban ‘pocket parks’ should be used to enhance the pedestrian environment, provide key landmarks throughout the Town Center, and provide transitions between structures.
- Maryland Avenue should be designed as a continuous retail corridor. A critical mass of retail establishments should be provided, while detrimental features such as multiple curb cuts should be minimized. The central urban park to be located on Maryland Avenue, as well as various pocket parks, should be designed to complement the retail and entertainment corridor.
- Streets should be designed to encourage pedestrian interaction and activity through provision of wide sidewalks, small gathering places, and interesting ground floor uses.
- Buildings with ground level parking and blank building walls, should not be allowed along street edges (especially Maryland and East Montgomery Avenues).
- Sidewalk activity, such as cafes and other retail displays visible from the street, should be encouraged.
- Appropriate and attractive pedestrian street furniture, including bus shelters, seating, surface treatment, and lighting, should be incorporated into all major pedestrian areas.
- Streets should be designed to accommodate motor vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists appropriately.
- Facilities (bike paths, racks, etc.) for cyclists should be incorporated into street improvements and open space plans.
- Gateways, as illustrated on the *Desired*



*Sidewalk cafes will enliven Town Center streetscapes.*



*Unprogrammed linear green open spaces can provide significant visual amenities.*

*Framework Diagram*, should mark key arrival points into the Town Center. These gateways may incorporate landscaping, public art, lighting, surface paving treatment, or signage as appropriate.

- The proposed linear green along MD 355 should be viewed as an opportunity to create a significant gateway that announces arrival in the Town Center. This improvement also responds to potential future modifications to MD355. It is anticipated that over time, future expansion of the MD 355 right-of-way will impact the land immediately to the east of this roadway. These impacts will make these parcels difficult for development. The proposed linear green could provide a pleasant visual relief to the existing treatment along this corridor. As an urban design statement, this proposed concept offers an opportunity for public art, landscaping, and landmarking features.
- Above-ground utilities, particularly overhead electric lines, should be placed underground whenever feasible. Further study should be undertaken to determine both the physical and fiscal (TIF, BID, grants, or other methods) feasibility of undergrounding utilities in Town Center.

## Organizing Design Elements Proposed Improvements

Key recommendations for using design features as organizing elements in the Town Center include:

- Central Urban Park:
  - Provide public gathering space along Maryland Avenue
  - Opportunity for public art, landscaping, benches and other pedestrian amenities
  - Potential location for Farmers' Market
  - Approximately one-half acre in size
- Metro Station / Public Promenade:
  - Visual landmark along MD 355
  - Terminus to East Montgomery Avenue/ pedestrian spine
  - Architecturally significant structure that provides a fitting gateway/arrival to Town Center from MD 355 and Metro Station
- Courthouse Square:
  - Connect existing plaza and fountain to pedestrian spine along East Montgomery and Maryland Avenues
- MD 355 Linear Green
  - Pedestrian connection between Town Center and East Rockville



*The inclusion of public open space within private development should be encouraged.*

- Significant landscaping
- Road improvements
- Lighting
- Old Post Office:
  - Preserve significant architectural structure along Washington Street
- Urban Park/Plaza at Northern Terminus of Maryland Avenue:
  - Opportunity for significant landmarking element such as bell tower or water feature
  - Significant landscaping
- Various Urban Pocket Parks:
  - Small urban plazas containing pedestrian amenities, including seating, appropriate lighting and landscaping, incorporated into various development projects to provide relief to the urban environment
- Gateway Features
  - Improvements (landscaping, lighting, etc.) at North Washington Street and Hungerford Drive
  - Improvements (landscaping, lighting, etc.) at Rockville Pike and Dawson Street extension
  - Improvements (landscaping, lighting, etc.) at Rockville Pike and Beall Avenue
  - Improvements (landscaping, lighting, etc.) at Rockville Pike and East Middle Lane
  - Improvements (landscaping, lighting, etc.) at MD 28 and MD 355
  - Improvements (landscaping, lighting, etc.) at North Washington Street and Jefferson Street
  - Improvements (landscaping, lighting, etc.) at North Washington Street and Maryland Avenue
  - Improvements (landscaping, lighting, etc.) at Metro station site

### Impact of Physical Plan Recommendations

The Master Plan for Rockville's Town Center strives to describe a potential vision for the downtown that maximizes economic opportunities in a manner that is conducive to community goals and objectives. As such, a variety of uses serving both local residents, employees and area visitors are included. Also incorporated into the plan are sites for new residential development that could increase the local resident population.

A significant amount of new development is anticipated by the Master Plan recommendations. The following summary incorporates the physical plan recommendations and anticipates the potential types of uses that would be provided if 'full build-out' proceeded according to the *Illustrative Plan* drawing; however, this is only one of many possible scenarios for the Town Center.

### Office Development

Potentially more than 1.6 million new square feet at the following locations:

- In 6 new 3-story buildings along North Stonestreet Avenue,
- In mixed-use joint development at the Metro station,
- In a new building replacing the existing 255 Rockville Pike,
- In a new building on East Jefferson Street south of the County Judicial Center,
- In new building along MD 355 north of Rockville Metro Plaza, and
- On upper floors of mixed-use buildings at East Montgomery Avenue-North Washington Street, Middle Lane-North Washington Street, and along Maryland Avenue north of Beall Avenue.

### Residential Development

Potentially 1.1 million square feet (700-1,200 units) at the following locations:

- In 2-3 story attached townhomes on North

- Stonestreet Avenue north of Lincoln Avenue,
- In mixed-use joint development at the Metro station,
- As part of the Archstone development on MD 355,
- In a new multi-story building south of the Metro station,
- On the upper floors of 5 new mixed-use buildings on Maryland Avenue between East Middle Lane and Dawson Avenue, and
- On the upper floors of 5 new mixed-use buildings along North Washington Street between East Middle Lane and Dawson Avenue.

### **Retail/Entertainment Development**

Potentially 350,000 square feet at the following locations:

- On ground floors of mixed use buildings and in the ground floors of 2 garages on Maryland Avenue from East Middle Lane to Dawson Avenue (150,000 square feet),
- On ground floors of mixed use buildings on North Washington Street between East Montgomery Avenue and Dawson Avenue,
- As part of the mixed use redevelopment of 255 Rockville Pike, and
- In mixed-use joint development at the Metro station.

### **Open Space**

Although it is recommended in the design guidelines that open space amenities be incorporated and encouraged within all new private developments, the Master Plan proposes possible public open space at the following locations, if feasible:

- Public plaza on Maryland Avenue extended,
- Linear green along MD 355,
- Public plaza on pedestrian promenade connecting the Town Center with the Metro station,
- Pocket parks on Maryland Avenue, on Beall Avenue west of Maryland Avenue, and at North Washington Street and Dawson Avenue,

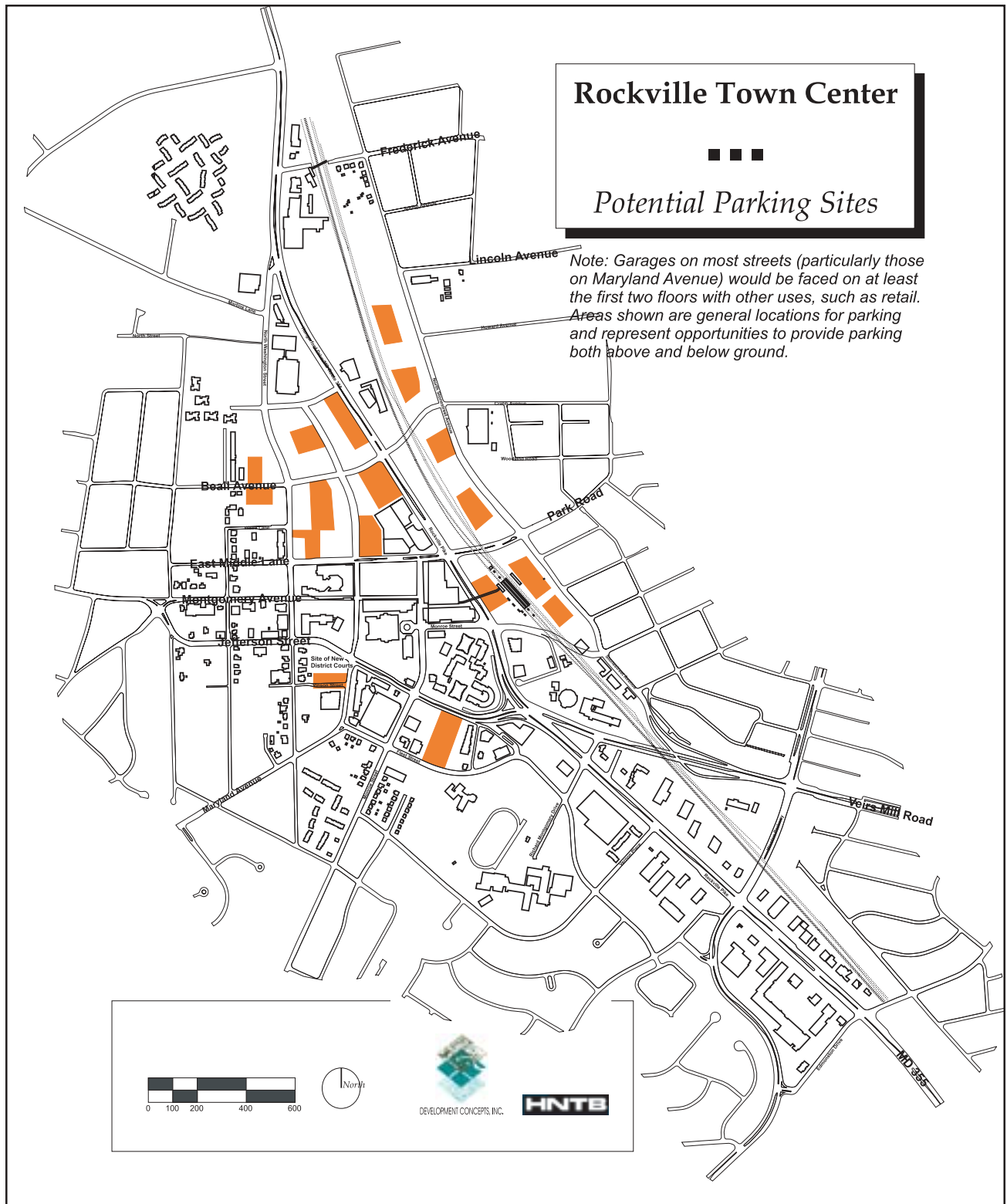
- Park with significant landmarking element at north end of Maryland Avenue and in front of garage at Gateway Tower,
- At all four corners of North Washington Street and Beall Avenue, and
- At the existing open space at Maryland Avenue and East Jefferson Street and at James Monroe Park.

### **Parking**

The above uses create a demand for nearly 8,000 new parking spaces. Potentially more than 8,500 spaces could be provided in the following general locations (see map on page 61):

- At northeast corner of Maryland Avenue and East Middle Lane (approx. 1,000 garage spaces above and below ground),
- North of Rockville Metro Plaza project (approx. 500 garage spaces),
- Along MD 355 between Beall Avenue and Dawson Avenue (approx. 100 surface spaces and 800 garage spaces),
- On west side of Maryland Avenue north of Beall Avenue (approx. 750 garage spaces),
- South of Beall Avenue between North Washington Street and Maryland Avenue (approx. 650 garage spaces),
- On both sides of Beall Avenue west of North Washington Street (approx. 100 surface spaces),
- On North Washington Street north of Middle Lane (approx. 40 surface spaces),
- Between new District Court and City Hall on vacated Vinson Street (approx. 700 garage spaces),
- On Jury lot on East Jefferson Street (approx. 800 garage spaces),
- As part of joint development of Metro station, and
- Along North Stonestreet Avenue north of Park Road (approx. 450 garage spaces and approx. 500 surface spaces in 4-6 lots).





Proposed Parking Sites

