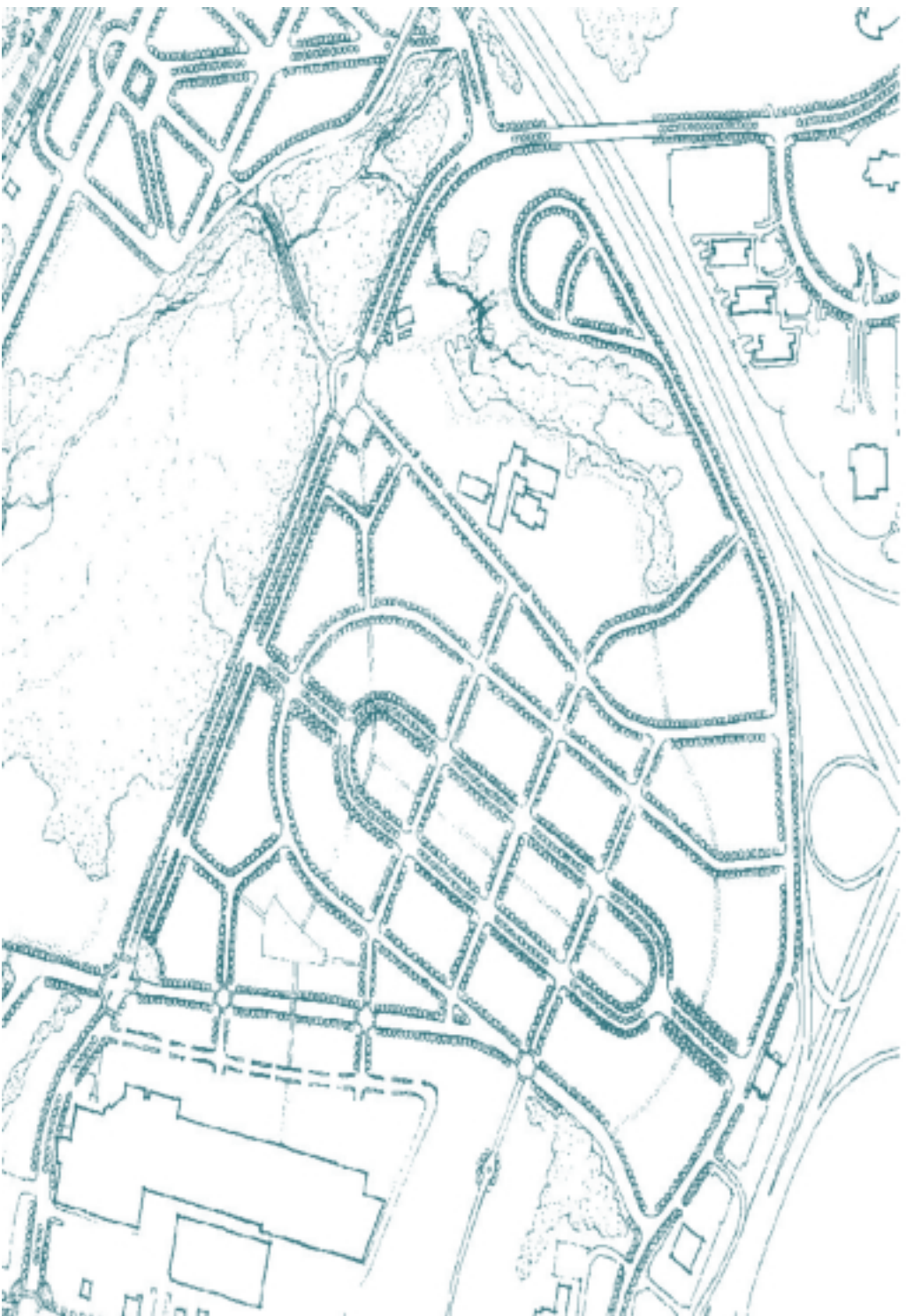


Approved General Plan
Part 11: Development Pattern Element



Development Pattern

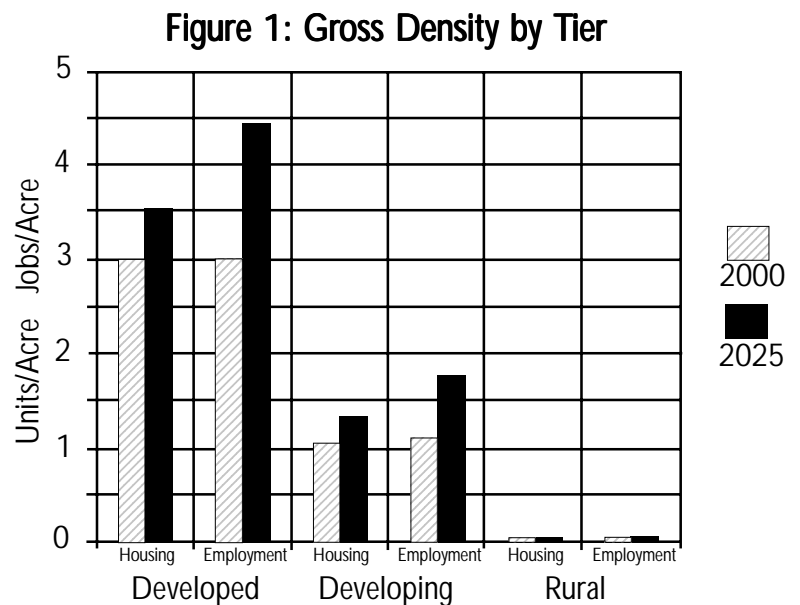
The Development Pattern goals are to:

- Promote economic vitality
- Promote a sustainable pattern of development that encourages economic vitality
- Encourage efficient use of existing and proposed public facilities
- Enhance the quality and character of communities and neighborhoods
- Protect environmentally sensitive lands
- Preserve rural, agricultural and scenic areas

Overview

Development in Prince George's County represents more than 300 years of evolution from rural homesteads and plantations, small towns, and streetcar suburbs to automobile-oriented subdivisions and urban areas. The present-day development pattern provides a variety of opportunities for the county to grow in accordance with its goals. This General Plan designates three policy Tiers, each with unique characteristics and opportunities: the Developed Tier, the Developing Tier, and the Rural Tier (Map 1).

Each Tier is characterized by the intensity of residential and employment development as shown in Figure 1. In 2000, the Developed Tier had the largest number of dwelling units and jobs per acre and the Rural Tier the least. This relationship continues through 2025, under the growth objectives of the General Plan defined as the Preferred Development Alternative.



Objectives

This General Plan makes a clear distinction between the character of the Developed Tier and that of the Developing Tier and the Rural Tier. Within the Developed and Developing Tiers, a policy overlay for Centers and Corridors focuses on specific areas where more intense development is encouraged to take advantage of public investments in transportation facilities. Although there will be some overlap, the history of each Tier, and the opportunities for the future in each Tier, require different orientations and strategies.

This General Plan establishes objectives or benchmark measures that will be used to gauge the success of its implementation. Table 1 summarizes the county's objectives and their relationship to each of the Tiers, the Centers and the Corridors. The sections that follow describe the county's policies and strategies to achieve these objectives.

This General Plan establishes objectives or benchmark measures that will be used to gauge the success of its implementation.

Table 1: General Plan Objectives

Objectives	Tiers			Centers and Corridors
	Developed	Developing	Rural	
Development Pattern				
Capture a designated percentage of the county's dwelling unit growth by 2025 within each Tier.	>33%	<66%	<1%	
Capture a designated percentage of each Tier's housing growth by 2025 in Centers or Corridors.	>50%	>20%		
Incorporate appropriate pedestrian, bicycle and mass transit-oriented features in all new development within Centers and Corridors.				●
Protect a countywide average of 1,500 acres per year of agricultural, strategic forest, or other sensitive lands through the use of the Rural Legacy Program, county-funded acquisitions, and other conservation programs.	●	●	●	
Environmental Infrastructure				
Protect, preserve, enhance and/or restore designated green infrastructure components by 2025.	●	●	●	●
Protect and enhance water quality in watersheds by, at a minimum, maintaining the 2001 condition ratings of all watersheds countywide.	●	●	●	●
Meet or exceed the following forest and tree cover goals within each Tier and countywide by 2025.	26%	38%	60%	

Objectives	Tiers			Centers and Corridors
	Developed	Developing	Rural	
Promote an awareness of environmental issues related to land use through the provision of environmental education and/or stewardship programs.	●	●	●	●
Transportation Systems				
Increase average automobile occupancy by 25 percent by 2025.	●	●	●	●
Reduce average commuter vehicle miles traveled countywide by 25 percent by 2025.	●	●	●	●
Increase the proportion of transit trips by 25 percent by 2025.	●	●		●
Reduce private automobile dependency, particularly for single-occupant vehicle (SOV) trips.	●	●	●	●
Site and plan new development and revitalization to generate transit ridership that helps achieve the cost recovery targets established by the county Five-Year Transit Master Plan (TMP).	●	●		●
Increase public funding of transportation infrastructure in the Developed Tier.	●			
Increase public funding and attract and encourage more private funding of transportation infrastructure in Developing Tier Centers and Corridors.				●
Encourage and increase the proportion of private sector funding of needed transportation infrastructure in the Developing and Rural Tiers outside of Centers and Corridors.		●	●	
Incorporate appropriate pedestrian, bicycle and transit-oriented design (TOD) and transit-supporting design (TSD) features in all new development within Centers and Corridors.				●
Plan new development to help achieve the objectives of the Countywide Trails Plan and Equestrian Addendum.	●	●	●	●
Ensure funding to achieve the objectives of the Trails Plan and State Priority List.	●	●	●	●
Increase trails funding by one percent of the total county transportation budget (excluding developer funding). Give priority to trails that function as transportation facilities or as links to other transportation facilities.	●	●	●	●

Objectives	Tiers			Centers and Corridors
	Developed	Developing	Rural	
Provide opportunities for, and recognize the contribution of, telecommuting to reduce auto trips, particularly during the peak commute.	●	●	●	●
Reduce average vehicle miles traveled by 2025.	●	●	●	●
Public Facilities				
Provide fire and emergency medical facilities throughout the county in order to ensure that each residence and business is within the adopted travel time standards (listed in Public Facilities section).	●	●	●	●
Achieve a school system in which each school is operating at 100 percent or less of its capacity.	●	●	●	●
Provide library facilities in the county to meet the circulation guidelines (listed in Public Facilities section).	●	●	●	●
Provide police facilities that meet the facility size guidelines listed in the Public Facilities section.	●	●	●	●
Provide enough transmission, storage and treatment plant capacity for a ten-year period.	●	●		●
Provide a minimum of 15 acres of M-NCPPC local parkland per 1,000 population (or the equivalent amenity in terms of parks and recreation service) and 20 acres of regional, countywide and special M-NCPPC parks per 1,000 population.	●	●	●	●
Economic Development				
Increase the jobs to population ratio by 39 percent over the next 25 years.	●	●	●	●
Close the gap between Prince George's County and similar jurisdictions for fiscal and economic measures of condition: median home sales price, average wage per job, per capita income, and assessable base per capita.	●	●	●	●

Objectives	Tiers			Centers and Corridors
	Developed	Developing	Rural	
Housing				
Increase the average home value in Prince George's County.	●	●	●	●
Increase opportunities for higher density multifamily dwellings in Centers and Corridors.				●
Reduce high concentrations of distressed, low-income rental housing by 30 percent by 2025.	●			
Increase the percentage of mixed-use development so that 1 in 10 new dwellings are located in a mixed-use development by 2005; 2 in 10 new dwellings by 2015; and 3 in 10 by 2025.	●	●		●
Revitalization				
Revitalize a countywide total of 15 Revitalization Overlay areas by 2025.	●	●	●	●
Historic Preservation				
Identify and evaluate all historic resources for designation as Historic Sites or as contributing to historic districts.	●	●	●	●

Developed Tier

The Developed Tier is an 86-square-mile area located between the boundary of the county with the District of Columbia and, more or less, the Capital Beltway. Containing more than half of the county's existing households and just under half the employment, it possesses a wide variety of community characteristics. All but four of the county's municipalities are at least partially located in the Developed Tier. Historic traditional neighborhoods and contemporary subdivisions are found here, as are three-fourths of the county's multifamily development. This area also possesses a variety of market challenges and opportunities. Parts of the Developed Tier are characterized by stretches of deteriorated commercial-strip properties that front its major roadways. Some multifamily areas and older neighborhoods are in need of reinvestment and revitalization.

Land within this area was generally developed prior to today's environmental regulations. Impervious surfaces have claimed much of the land area and some streams, particularly the Anacostia River, have been channelized. Much of the previously existing forest cover has been removed and only isolated forests remain.

The Developed Tier contains most of the nonmotorized and transit system capacity in the county. It is largely characterized by a grid street pattern and lacks unused right-of-way with which to expand road capacity. Because nonmotorized modes of travel—walking and biking—are viable access options, particularly where they contribute to increasing transit ridership, these modes, supported by public investment in the transit system and pedestrian and bike facilities, should afford most of the access to the development this General Plan envisions. The Developed Tier road system will be planned as an efficient complement to the transit-oriented (TOD) and transit-supporting development (TSD) on which this General Plan is predicated.

The vision for the Developed Tier is a network of sustainable, transit-supporting, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, medium- to high-density neighborhoods.

The goals in the Developed Tier are to:

- Strengthen existing neighborhoods.
- Encourage appropriate infill.
- Encourage more intense, high-quality housing and economic development in Centers and Corridors.
- Preserve, restore and enhance sensitive features and provide open space.
- Expand tree cover through the increased planting of trees and landscaping.
- Capitalize on investments in transportation and other infrastructure.

The vision for the Developed Tier is a network of sustainable, transit-supporting, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, medium- to high-density neighborhoods.

The challenge is to ensure that new development or redevelopment enhances established communities.

- Maintain/renovate existing public infrastructure.
- Promote transit-supporting, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods.
- Renew/redevelop commercial strips.
- Enhance industrial employment areas.
- Design and site public facilities in accordance with appropriate development patterns.

In keeping with this vision and the opportunities presented by public investments in the environmental infrastructure, transportation system, and public facilities, this General Plan promotes capturing a greater share of the county’s total forecast residential and employment growth in the Developed Tier as a preferred, or desired, development alternative. The challenge is to ensure that new development or redevelopment enhances established communities, includes more mixed-use and more intense development in designated Centers and Corridors, and offers an attractive alternative to the suburban neighborhoods in the Developing Tier.

POLICY 1:

Encourage medium to high density, mixed-use, transit- and pedestrian-oriented development

Strategies

- I. Develop incentives for infill/redevelopment such as:
 - Financial Incentives—Encourage private investment by providing public funds and/or deferring tax increases that would result from new development. Consider seeking authority for a split-rate system of property taxation.
 - Redevelopment Assistance—Focus the programs of the county’s Redevelopment Authority (such as land assembly and public/private partnerships) on targeted areas.
- II. Develop land use regulations and processes for infill/redevelopment such as:
 - Rezoning—Where necessary, rezone vacant or underutilized lands through county initiation (instead of property owner application) to achieve planned densities.
 - Flexible Development Standards—Provide flexibility in building requirements when reusing or rehabilitating older buildings, as recommended by state “Smart Codes” programs.
 - Zoning Code—Revise existing regulations to accommodate the development pattern of older communities and to remove obstacles to quality infill and redevelopment.
 - Simplify or Streamline Development Review Processes—Eliminate cumbersome or unnecessary processes to encourage compatible infill and redevelopment.

- III. Develop a marketing program for targeted areas in the Developed Tier communities to attract developers skilled at developing high-quality, compact mixed-use projects.
- IV. Improve the image and mix of uses along major roadways not designated as Corridors by:
 - Developing design guidelines and standards for new development.
 - Encouraging infill and redevelopment that contribute to the character and quality of the community.
 - Limiting zoning that allows new commercial development.
 - Implementing an incentive package for commercial-strip owners to physically upgrade projects that have proven market feasibility. Priority shall be given to owners/businesses that improve their mix of goods and services or reuse commercial space for another appropriate use.
 - Encouraging land assembly and redevelopment of excess commercial for other types of land use.

POLICY 2:

Preserve, restore and enhance environmental features and green infrastructure elements.

Strategies

- I. Encourage the use of innovative technologies to meet the intent of environmental regulations while encouraging the desired development pattern and implementing the green infrastructure recommendations.
- II. Provide additional tree cover within the Developed Tier to intercept rainwater, reduce heat island effects, and improve air quality.
- III. Provide tree cover guidelines as part of the character design elements in future area master plans and sector plans.
- IV. Provide flexibility in the Woodland Conservation Ordinance for sites in the Developed Tier to allow for use of street trees and landscape trees.
- V. Revise the Woodland Conservation Ordinance to require the use of woodland conservation fee-in-lieu funds collected in the Developed Tier for woodland conservation within the Developed Tier.

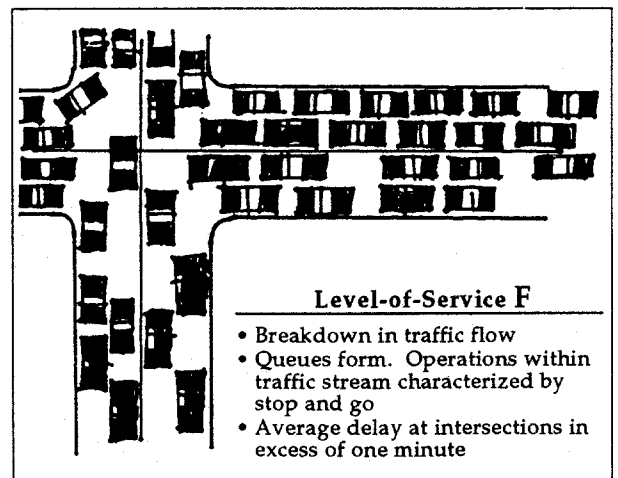
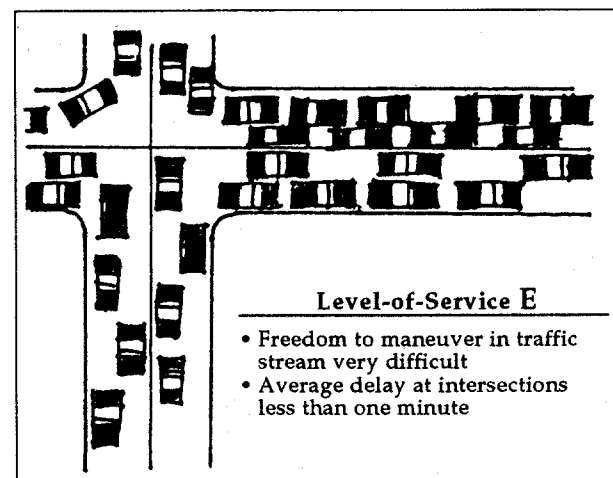
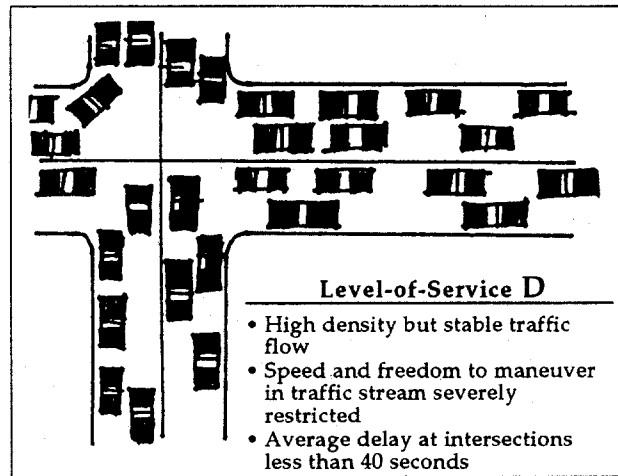
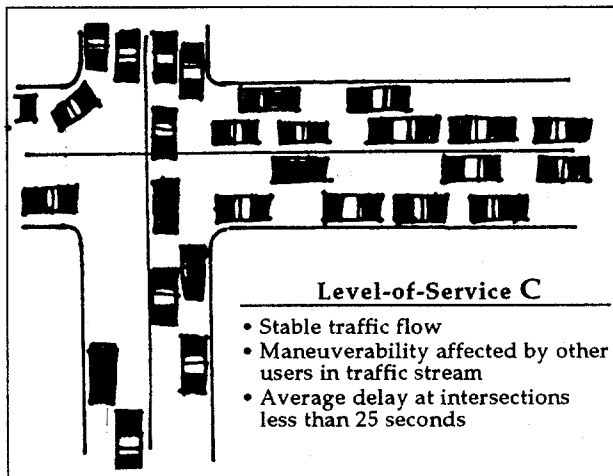
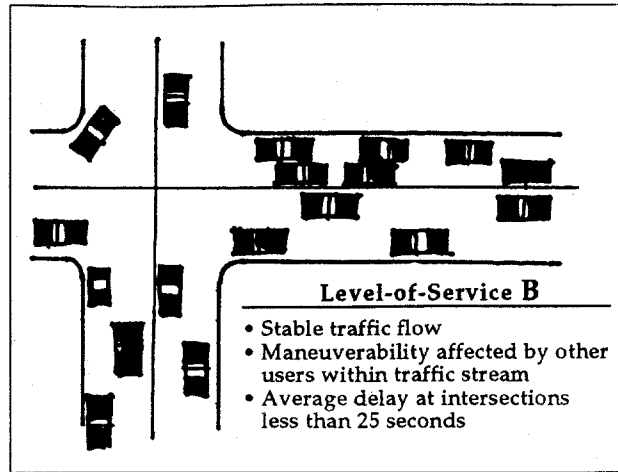
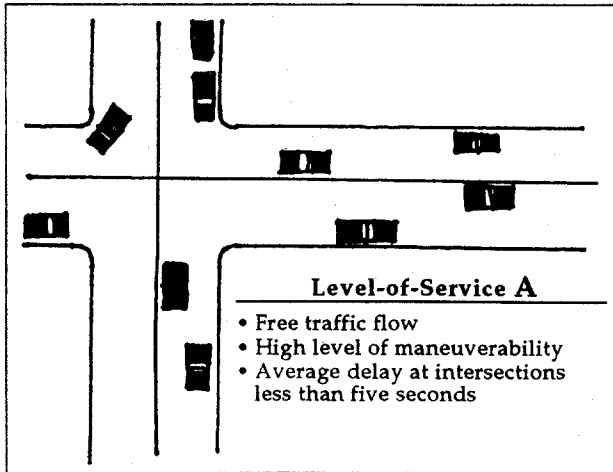


FIGURE 2 LEVEL-OF-SERVICE GUIDE TO TRAFFIC AT SIGNALIZED INTERSECTIONS

POLICY 3:

Provide a transportation system that is integrated with and promotes development and revitalization.

Strategies

- I. Encourage optimum use of all nonautomotive mobility options for and in all new development, including light and heavy (regional) rail, bus transit, and integrated and safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- II. Assign high priority in the county Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and Maryland Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) to Developed Tier pedestrian and transit infrastructure improvements.
- III. Provide an integrated sidewalk, trail and bikeway network to divert as many short trips as possible from auto travel.
- IV. Protect local neighborhoods and their residential streets from excessive or high speed through-traffic by measures such as traffic calming initiatives and pedestrian-oriented design requirements for new development.
- V. Use traffic Level-of-Service (LOS) E (see Figure 2) as the minimum acceptable standard for road and street network capacity, wherever possible.
- VI. Develop TOD and TSD criteria as part of transportation system analyses, the Biennial Growth Policy updates and future Developed Tier master and small area plans, that ensure the maximum possible integration of pedestrian and biker access and transit service with future development.
- VII. Establish transit-based auto trip reduction initiatives to maximize the diversion of SOV trips to transit and nonmotorized travel.

POLICY 4:

Plan and provide public facilities to support and fit into the Developed Tier's development pattern.

Strategies

- I. Place a high priority on public sector provision of new or renovated public facilities needed to serve existing and future development.
- II. Develop multilevel schools, two or more stories where feasible, rather than building outward in areas where limited land is available.
- III. Consider the adaptive reuse of underutilized/obsolete public, commercial and industrial buildings to provide school space. Also, consider the adaptive reuse of boarded-up buildings seen as community eyesores.
- IV. Seek opportunities for providing outdoor recreation areas through the development review process, acquisition of obsolete or unused industrial or commercial land, and through acquisition of the remaining stream valley parkland. Continue to provide new indoor recreational facilities.

Developing Tier

The vision for the Developing Tier is to maintain a pattern of low- to moderate-density suburban residential communities, distinct commercial Centers, and employment areas that are increasingly transit serviceable.

The Developing Tier encompasses the middle section of the county, approximately 237 square miles, which has been most subject to recent suburban expansion. Containing just under half of the county's households and half the employment, it is still an evolving pattern of farms, residential subdivisions, employment parks, and automobile-oriented commercial centers. This large area has experienced the greatest amount of recent residential growth and will continue to experience the greatest market pressures for residential community development. It is anticipated that two of every three new homes and three of every five new jobs in the county will be in the Developing Tier. However, the dispersed, low-density housing and employment pattern create dependence on the automobile, resulting in increasingly congested roadways and disproportionate costs in providing adequate public facilities.

Woodlands, streams, floodplains and wetlands exist in abundance within the Developing Tier. Both environmental preservation and enhancement are envisioned as integral components of future development in this Tier, not only for their inherent value, but also to provide opportunities for interaction with nature for the people who will live and work in communities in all Tiers.

Transit options are more limited than in the Developed Tier. Bus service is the only major transit option and Largo Town Center is the only Metrorail station planned for this Tier.³ Maintaining road and street connectivity is a key transportation systems issue. Outside the Centers and Corridors, the automobile remains the predominant mobility option. Measures such as increased feeder bus service and park and ride facilities are important to encourage Developing Tier residents to use transit instead of driving to work.

A key challenge for the Developing Tier is to balance the pace of development for new communities and businesses with the demands for adequate roads and public facilities. It is anticipated that the private sector will pay a greater share of the costs for those facilities. A corresponding challenge is to direct growth in order to encourage design of new communities and neighborhoods, and existing communities to be more land efficient, more environmentally sensitive, and more transit supporting than conventional subdivisions.

The vision for the Developing Tier is to maintain a pattern of low- to moderate-density suburban residential communities, distinct commercial Centers, and employment areas that are increasingly transit serviceable.

³ The state is evaluating the possible provision of rail transit or dedicated bus lanes on Branch Avenue (MD 5) through the Developing Tier, to the Charles County border and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes are proposed for US 50 to the Anne Arundel County border.

The goals in the Developing Tier are to:

- Maintain low- to moderate-density land uses (except in Centers and Corridors).
- Develop compact, higher-intensity, mixed-uses in Centers and Corridors.
- Reinforce existing suburban residential neighborhoods.
- Reinforce planned commercial centers as community focal points.
- Develop compact, planned employment areas.
- Preserve and enhance environmentally sensitive areas.
- Increase utilization of transit.
- Balance the pace of development with the ability of the private sector to provide adequate transportation and public facilities.
- Encourage contiguous expansion of development where public facilities and services can be more efficiently provided.

POLICY 1:

Encourage low- to moderate-density, transit- and pedestrian-oriented development.

Strategies

- I. Promote a greater mix of uses and housing choices in neighborhoods and communities focused around human-scale, mixed-use centers accessible by multiple transportation modes.
- II. Revise master plans, sector plan, and land use regulations to encourage compact neighborhood development on large sites.
- III. Discourage new isolated commercial activities and promote new commercial development primarily in designated Centers and Corridors. Encourage the revitalization and redevelopment of existing, underutilized commercial areas.
- IV. Streamline development review processes to encourage revitalization and redevelopment projects, brownfields development, transit-oriented development, and pedestrian-oriented development.
- V. Encourage low residential densities in future area and sector plans within those portions of the Developing Tier within the Mattawoman basin (with the exception of the Brandywine Future Center) in order to limit impervious surfaces and retain woodland.



POLICY 2:

Preserve and enhance environmental features and green infrastructure elements.

Strategies

- I. Continue to implement all applicable environmental regulations to protect sensitive environmental features and implement the green infrastructure recommendations.
- II. Evaluate the effectiveness of current ordinance and regulations regarding stream and wetland buffer widths within the context of the development pattern.

POLICY 3:

Provide as many multimodal options as possible for new development to reduce the need for new arterial or major collector roads.

Strategies

- I. Ensure that the road and street capacity improvements proposed in Developing Tier area/sector plans outside Centers and Corridors improve the transportation system's ability to support the desired development pattern.
- II. Assign high priority in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the Maryland Consolidated Transit Program (CTP) to transit improvements such as bus, bike and pedestrian facilities, and park and ride lots that improve multimodal mobility between Developing Tier Centers and Corridors.
- III. Assign medium priority in the county CIP and the Maryland CTP to highway facilities or improvements needed to accommodate the preferred development pattern.
- IV. Encourage private sector financial support of the transportation system facilities or services that accommodate the preferred pattern of development.
- V. Establish traffic LOS D as the minimum acceptable transportation system standard. (The level of service for Centers within the Developing Tier may vary—see Centers and Corridors section.)

POLICY 4:

Plan and provide public facilities to support the planned development pattern.

Strategies

- I. Require the private sector to fund a greater proportion of the infrastructure needed to serve new development in the Developing Tier, such as through developer agreements or special taxing districts.
- II. Develop multilevel schools, two or more stories where feasible, rather than building outward in areas where limited land is available.
- III. Consider the adaptive reuse of underutilized/obsolete public, commercial and industrial buildings to provide school space. Also, consider the adaptive reuse of boarded-up buildings seen as community eyesores.
- IV. Place a medium priority on public sector provision of capital improvements within Priority Funding Areas in the Developing Tier. For other portions of the Developing Tier, place a low priority on public sector provision of capital improvements.
- V. Revise water and sewer category change criteria to require that new development in the Developing Tier must meet three criteria: (1) be adjacent to an existing urban or suburban development, (2) be located within 1,500 feet of existing or funded public water and/or wastewater systems, and (3) have roadways capable of supporting demands from the proposed development.
- VI. Require developers to bear the full responsibility of the costs of on-site and off-site public facilities if noncontiguous development is authorized.
- VII. Establish programs and criteria for rebate or payback programs and/or special infrastructure assessment districts that ensure high quality contiguous development when developers expand public infrastructure capacity.



Rural Tier

The vision for the Rural Tier is protection of large amounts of land for woodland, wildlife habitat, recreation and agriculture pursuits, and preservation of the rural character and vistas that now exist.

The Rural Tier is comprised of the eastern and southern portions of the county in the Patuxent River, Potomac River, and Mattawoman Creek watersheds. It encompasses approximately 150 square miles, or approximately 32 percent of the county's total land area. The Rural Tier is the most scenic part of the county and is characterized by fine landscapes, most of the county's remaining farms, extensive woodlands, numerous streams, and diverse wildlife habitat. Development activity includes mining and widely dispersed, large-lot residential home sites. The community structure dates back over 300 years and historic roadways and structures dot the landscape. Public land holdings account for large portions of the Rural Tier, including extensive park and federal agency properties. Although large-lot estate development is anticipated in this Tier, it needs to be carefully balanced with agricultural pursuits and preservation to maintain its rural character. The preservation of the remaining environmentally sensitive features in this Tier is a priority for any future development.

Transportation system policies seek to ensure the operational integrity of the road network for a development pattern that is envisioned as remaining essentially as it is today. The hiker and biker trails system in this Tier is principally recreational in purpose and design. Transportation system improvements will reflect this automobile orientation. Such improvements, however, will not receive the same priority as road system improvements that are necessary to accommodate higher priority development in the Developed or Developing Tier.

The vision for the Rural Tier is protection of large amounts of land for woodland, wildlife habitat, recreation and agriculture pursuits, and preservation of the rural character and vistas that now exist. The goals in the Rural Tier are to:

- Preserve environmentally sensitive features.
- Retain sustainable agricultural land.
- Maintain rural character.
- Allow large-lot estate residences.
- Limit nonagricultural land uses.
- Protect landowners' equity in their land.
- Maintain the integrity of a rural transportation system.

Historically, the main features of rural areas, and the ones that yield their distinctive character, are forests and agriculture. In metropolitan settings, however, rural areas are increasingly composed of large home sites for those who do not farm. Land use,

environmental, transportation and public facilities policies recommended for the Rural Tier are intended to balance the ever-increasing pressure for residential development and landowners' equity with the desire to maintain rural environments and character. The policies encourage allowed residential development to occur in ways that help preserve the features that contribute to rural character.

POLICY 1:

Retain or enhance environmentally sensitive features and agricultural resources.

Strategies

- I. Consider revisions to tax regulations to provide for a reduced tax assessment for all protected, not just agricultural, land in the Rural Tier.
- II. Consider creating a county program to purchase development rights that would supplement the state's Rural Legacy and other programs to protect valuable agricultural and environmental resources in the Rural Tier (and other Tiers as appropriate).
- III. Investigate options for establishing a transfer of development rights (TDR) program to protect both land in the Rural Tier and important environmental properties in the Developed and Developing Tiers. This investigation should consider the following criteria:
 - "Sending areas" include the Rural Tier and green infrastructure areas in Developed and Developing Tiers.
 - "Receiving areas" are the Centers and Corridors.
 - Density increases are limited to no more than 10 percent over the maximum density that is otherwise permitted.
 - No Adequate Public Facilities (APF) evaluation for transportation would be required for the density increment permitted by the transfer of development rights.
- IV. Develop programs to sustain agriculture as a viable industry and help farmers respond to changing market conditions and consumer demands.
- V. Reinforce programs that promote agricultural industries that are successful in metropolitan locations, such as the nursery and greenhouse business, vegetable and specialty crop production, and the horse industry.
- VI. Utilize agricultural preservation and advisory groups, such as the Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board and the Agricultural Resources Advisory Committee, as a conduit for addressing agricultural land preservation issues.



POLICY 2:

Design future development to retain and enhance rural character.

Strategies

- I. Adopt rural design guidelines and standards to ensure that public and private development projects are designed and constructed consistent with the prevailing character of rural areas including roadway design, setbacks, buffering, tree retention, fencing, screening and building bulk standards.
- II. Identify appropriate locations for large-lot estate development through future master plans and sector plans.

POLICY 3:

Provide for a Rural Tier transportation system that helps protect open space, rural character, and environmental features and resources.

Strategies

- I. Consider the preservation of the rural, scenic and historically significant characteristics of this Tier during the planning, design and construction of any transportation facilities or capacity improvements.
- II. Establish traffic LOS C as the minimum acceptable standard for the transportation system throughout the Rural Tier.
- III. Evaluate measures, such as the use of special impact financing or assessment programs, to encourage or require developer funding of any local road or street facilities or local capacity improvements that are needed to accommodate residential development that is approved in the Rural Tier.
- IV. Assign low priority in the county's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and Maryland's Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) to transportation system improvements needed to accommodate the preferred development pattern.

POLICY 4:

Public funds should not encourage further development in the Rural Tier.

Strategies

- I. Assign minimal priority to public sector capital improvements in or for the Rural Tier.
- II. Require the private sector to fund a greater portion of needed infrastructure.
- III. Prohibit extension of water and sewer services into the Rural Tier unless necessary to address existing health problems or if found to be consistent with other county growth policies.
- IV. Designate water and sewer line extension into the Rural Tier as controlled access only.

Centers and Corridors

This General Plan specifically targets growth toward a limited number of designated Centers and Corridors. Development and redevelopment here can capitalize on existing infrastructure by locating homes, jobs and shopping closer to transit services. These are areas where the benefits to the county for future development can far outweigh the costs to the county. Overall, they are intended for a mix of higher intensity nonresidential and residential uses that are consistent with existing or planned investments in the public infrastructure. It is recommended that in addition to transit services (rail or bus), pedestrian and trail facilities be provided within these Centers and Corridors. This is intended both to minimize traffic congestion and to provide multimodal transportation support for new economic development that the county will attract to these areas.

- More than two dozen Centers (see Appendix II) are designated as focal points for increased efforts to concentrate development that can take advantage of existing or future investments in high-capacity mass transit services. The scope of these Centers varies both in scale and in timing depending on market forces and the individual characteristics.
- Seven Corridors where more intensive development should be encouraged are designated by this General Plan. The purpose of the Corridors is to provide for more intensive uses at appropriate locations within one-quarter mile of these key transportation routes in the county. Policies will differ for Corridors and Corridor segments within each Tier.

The Developed Tier Centers represent a concentration of mass transportation, particularly Metrorail and commuter rail service. This makes it desirable to plan development that generates enough commuter and pedestrian traffic to produce sufficient ridership to justify the expense of maintaining transit service. The Centers in the Developing Tier should be developed at densities that are high enough to generate ridership that justifies the cost of extending rail transit. Developing Tier Centers and Corridors should be developed at sufficient intensities with integrated mixed land uses, sustain existing bus service, and create additional opportunities for more walk-, bike-, or drive-to-transit commuting.

The vision for the Centers and Corridors is mixed residential and nonresidential uses at moderate to high densities and intensities, with a strong emphasis on transit-oriented development.

The vision for the Centers and Corridors is mixed residential and nonresidential uses at moderate to high densities and intensities, with a strong emphasis on transit-oriented development.

Capitalizing on the combined transportation and development advantages of these stations is a central theme and a high priority of this General Plan.

The goals of the Centers and Corridors are to:

- Capitalize on public investment in existing transportation system.
- Promote compact, mixed-use development at moderate to high densities.
- Ensure transit-supportive and transit-serviceable development.
- Require pedestrian-oriented and transit-oriented design.
- Ensure compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods.

Metrorail-oriented Centers, in particular, are the product of large public investments in the transit system, yielding significant opportunities for residents and employees to use transit, thereby reducing reliance on automobile trips. Capitalizing on the combined transportation and development advantages of these stations is a central theme and a high priority of this General Plan. Future planning to maximize the return on the massive public investments required to build mass transit systems is crucial.

Concepts that focus appropriate development at these locations, such as transit-oriented development (TOD), are strongly advocated by this General Plan. TOD seeks to increase transit use and reduce automobile dependency by:

- Locating homes, jobs and shopping closer to transit services.
- Locating the mix of critical land uses (live/work/shop) in closer proximity to one another.
- Establishing land use/transit linkages that make it easier to use transit (rail and bus).

Many of the characteristics and goals of TOD overlap with pedestrian-oriented design (POD) and new urbanist or traditional neighborhood development principles that focus on reducing automobile dependency by increasing the potential for bicyclists and pedestrians. Three key elements of each of these development concepts are density, diversity and design.⁴

Density

The density or intensity of development has a significant influence on the potential for transit use and tendencies for automobile dependency. For mass transit to be effective, there must be a mass of riders. Under favorable conditions, transit use will more than double each time density doubles. Employment densities have an even greater positive impact on transit use than residential densities. Concentrated employment areas offer the most significant opportunity to increase ridership on public transportation.

⁴ Concepts for transit-oriented development are based on a technical report entitled, "Recommendations for Transit-Oriented Development in Centers and Corridors," by Planning Works and Freilich, Leitner and Carlisle, dated February 2002.

Diversity—Mix of Land Uses

The mix of land uses is a critical element of TOD and POD. Given the diversity of the physical and neighborhood characteristics of Centers within the county, there is no single ideal mix of uses. However, research has supported the following principles:

- A more balanced mix of residential, retail, employment and community service uses will decrease automobile trips.
- Dense, mixed-use suburban Centers average more than 20 times as many transit-commute trips as low-density, single-use office parks.
- Retail and entertainment uses can most effectively promote transit use if located at ground level.
- The better integrated the uses, the more effective the mix will be in reducing trips. The greater the horizontal distance between uses, the more likely individuals will be to drive between the uses.
- Balancing uses with peak-hour demands (e.g., residential and office uses) with those generating off-peak demands (e.g., retail, entertainment and institutional uses) leads to more efficient transit service and utilization of parking facilities.
- Complementary land uses (e.g., day care, pharmacies, cleaners, restaurants, retail and other services) near stations can promote transit ridership.
- Retail uses selling large items (e.g., appliance stores) or high volumes (e.g., discount warehouse stores) or auto-related uses do not generally promote transit ridership.

Design

Design is the third critical element of TOD. Regardless of density and diversity of land uses, a development may not be transit supportive if it lacks appropriate design. Although the design requirements will differ for different types of transit service, the following design issues are key to successful TOD:

- Land uses are within a reasonable walking distance of transit facilities.
- Transit facilities are linked to land uses by pedestrian-friendly walkways.
- Land uses are oriented to the transit facility linkages.
- Building bulk and setbacks are pedestrian-friendly.
- Parking facilities encourage transit use.

TOD Feasibility Assessment

When developing the transit station area master plans, the county should involve planners, real estate professionals, developers, municipal officials, neighborhood groups, and other stakeholders to evaluate the impacts of the following interrelated factors:

- Densities
- Infrastructure capacity
- Infrastructure costs and funding
- Product flexibility
- Market depth
- Use integration
- Residential value
- Retail health
- Parcelization
- Physical constraints

Centers

This General Plan identifies 26 Centers in the county as existing or possible future priorities for concentrations of medium to high intensity, mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented development. The majority of the Centers have rail transit facilities, either Metrorail or MARC lines, as the key feature. There are several designated Centers that are not oriented to existing or planned rail transit system. Regardless, mixed-use and transit-oriented development concepts are equally important for future planning and development of these areas. Mass transit linkages via bus feeder routes should be a central theme for each of these areas, and may evolve into future extensions of rail systems.

The designated Centers are categorized according to three broad market orientations, e.g., Metropolitan, Regional or Community, on the basis of existing or anticipated components and characteristics. Map 2 shows the Centers that fall into these classifications. Some of the Centers are drawn on Map 2 to conform with specific street and project boundaries such as approved Transit Districts, major development proposals, or areas that include a number of major developments. These boundaries should be confirmed or revised when master plans or sector plans are prepared to implement the General Plan.

- **Metropolitan Centers** have a high concentration of land uses and economic activities that attract employers, workers and customers from other parts of the metropolitan Washington area, such as large government service or major employment centers, major educational complexes, or high-intensity commercial uses. High-density residential development may also be located in or very near Metropolitan Centers. Metropolitan Centers can effectively be served by mass transit.
- **Regional Centers** are locations for regionally marketed commercial and retail centers, office and employment areas, some higher educational facilities, and possibly sports and recreation complexes primarily serving Prince George’s County. High-density residential development may be an option at these Centers if the needed public facilities and services, particularly schools and transit, can be provided. Regional Centers should be served by rail or bus mass transit systems.

This General Plan identifies 26 Centers in the county as existing or possible future priorities for concentrations of medium to high intensity, mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented development.

Essential elements to consider in the design of a successful Center include definition of core areas, appropriate land uses, the mix of uses, the intensity of development, and other TOD design characteristics.

- **Community Centers** are concentrations of activities, services and land uses that serve the immediate community near these Centers. These typically include a variety of public facilities and services—integrated commercial, office and some residential development—and can include mixed-use and higher-intensity redevelopment in some communities. Community Centers should also be served by mass transit.

All of the Metrorail-oriented Centers are suitable for urban TOD concepts ranging from moderate to high intensities. Nonrail-oriented Centers may be suitable for either urban or lower-intensity neighborhood scale TOD development, depending on their location and features. The characteristics of each type of Center will vary from location to location based on physical and market conditions. Orientation to rail, express bus, or feeder bus stops are essential features of the development concept. Essential elements to consider in the design of a successful Center include definition of core areas, appropriate land uses, the mix of uses, the intensity of development, and other TOD design characteristics.

- **Defining Core Areas for Centers**—to ensure that the most intensive development occurs in close proximity to and is supportive of the mass transportation facility, with less intensive development radiating out to the edges. The distinction between the core area and the edge is most significant in the Centers with rail transit stations. In these Centers, the core, in most cases, should generally include the area that is between one-quarter and one-third of a mile walking distance from a transit station or stop. The edge of a Center, in most cases, will generally be located an additional one-quarter to one-third mile walking distance beyond the primary core. Rather than being concentric circles, Center boundaries should be adjusted to follow physical features or barriers, and parcel boundaries wherever possible. Boundaries also should generally reflect distances based on the shortest walking routes, but may be adjusted to account for local transit shuttles or people-mover facilities. At more land-extensive Centers, the edges may extend farther and may require implementation of local transit shuttles or people movers to link the area together.
- **Identifying Appropriate Land Uses in Centers**—to ensure that inappropriate, land-extensive uses that cannot be developed at sufficient densities to support transit use are not developed at key locations. Examples of inappropriate uses in the primary core areas include single-family residences, drive-in restaurants or oil change businesses, lumberyards or large-appliance stores.
- **Defining Appropriate Land Use Mix in Centers**—to ensure diversity of uses that generate transit ridership throughout the day, as well as promote walking trips within the Center. Although the precise mix of uses will respond to market conditions, Table 2 lists the general parameters for the percentage for each type of land use in each type of Center. Generally, the Metropolitan and Regional Centers will have a greater proportion of nonresidential development than will Community Centers that serve a smaller geographical area and population. Conversely, Community Centers will tend to include a higher percentage of residential development than Metropolitan or Regional Centers. Metropolitan Centers will have greater proportions of employment development than the other types of Centers. In each type of Center, public uses (e.g., transit stations, schools, parks, etc.) should comprise 10 to 20 percent of the total area.

Table 2: Recommended Range for Land Use Mixes in Centers*

Land Use Mix	Metropolitan Center	Regional Center	Community Center
Residential	15-60%	20-70%	20-80%
Retail and Services	10-50%	10-60%	5-50%
Employment	20-60%	10-60%	5-50%
Public Uses	10-20%	10-20%	10-20%

**Numbers reflect the ideal percentage of acreage that should be devoted to each class of use or, for mixed-use sites, the percentage of floor area.*

- **Establishing Appropriate Development Intensity in Centers**—to ensure that uses with sufficient intensity locate at the core to support transit use, and those with lesser intensities locate at the edges. Table 3 indicates the maximum and minimum densities and intensities to ensure a broad range of residential and nonresidential development options.

Table 3: Development Intensity Targets in Centers

Land Use	Metropolitan Center		Regional Center		Community Center	
	Core	Edge	Core	Edge	Core	Edge
Residential Density						
Minimum (DU/Ac)	30	20	24	8	15	4
Maximum (DU/Ac)	NA	40	NA	30	30	20
Nonresidential Intensity						
Minimum (FAR)	2.0	0.5	1.0	0.5	0.25	0.15
Maximum (FAR)	NA	1.5	NA	1.5	1.0	0.30
Employment Density (Emp/A)	100	NA	50	NA	25	NA

(DU/Ac means dwelling units per acre, FAR means floor area ratio, Emp/Ac means employees per acre, NA means there is no specified figure)

- **Defining Desired Transit-Oriented Development Characteristics in Centers**—to ensure that the design for each type of Center reinforces the function of TOD. These characteristics include minimum densities, mixed land uses, street connectivity standards, continuous sidewalks, maximum setbacks, bus stops, public spaces, traffic calming, streetscaping, architectural standards, street furniture, public art, bike parking and lockers.

The plan promotes development and redevelopment of higher intensity residential and nonresidential mixed uses at appropriate locations along key transportation routes.

Corridors

Seven Corridors where more intensive development and redevelopment should be encouraged are designated by this General Plan, as illustrated on Map 2. The plan promotes development and redevelopment of higher intensity residential and nonresidential mixed uses at appropriate locations along key transportation routes. This development should occur at local centers and other appropriate nodes within one-quarter mile of major intersections or major transit stops along the Corridor, in concert with existing and planned investments in public infrastructure. Compatibility of higher intensity development with existing communities is essential, thus close attention needs to be paid to design and land use relationships within and surrounding each project. Accordingly, it is anticipated that policies will differ for Corridors and Corridor segments within each Tier.

- *Developed Tier Corridors:* Generally contain a higher intensity of residential and nonresidential land uses, and a greater mix of uses that are regional in scope, than the Developing Tier Corridors. This development should occur at selected Corridor nodes and be planned as a transit-oriented development.
- *Developing Tier Corridors:* Generally contain less intense residential and nonresidential land uses, than the Developed Tier Corridors and with a mix of uses that are more community-oriented in scope. This development should occur at designated Corridor nodes and be planned as transit-oriented development.

In particular, it should be noted that when a limited access highway is designated as a Corridor, nodes extend one-quarter mile from designated interchanges. Also, when a Corridor passes through an approved county historic district, development within that Corridor should be compatible with the desired character of the historic district. Finally, Corridor-related development should not extend into the Rural Tier.

POLICY 1:

Promote development of mixed residential and nonresidential uses at moderate to high densities and intensities in context with surrounding neighborhoods and with a strong emphasis on transit-oriented design.

Strategies

- I. Designate Centers at Metrorail stations as one of the highest priorities for development planning, marketing and promotion, development incentives, regulatory streamlining, and capital projects.
- II. Evaluate and revise existing master plans, sector plans, and zoning techniques for compliance with the principles for effective transit-oriented development, and to identify procedural or regulatory barriers that need to be removed.
- III. Create development concept plans to guide future development in designated Centers and Corridors as part of the planning process. These plans should include design guidelines and development standards to ensure transit-oriented development with character and quality.

- IV. The boundaries for plans in Centers and Corridors should reflect the concepts for core areas in this General Plan.
- V. Establish minimum density (for residential), minimum intensity (for nonresidential) and mixed-use requirements for new development through planning and regulatory processes while promoting flexibility and innovative, high-quality design and construction.
- VI. Provide the incentives listed below for projects that meet the plan's criteria. Projects that mix residential and nonresidential development may receive a higher level of, or receive priority for, these incentives:
- Financial incentives;
 - Simplified process that eliminates cumbersome or unnecessary development review;
 - Revised development regulations that are easy to understand, equitable, and reduce development costs;
 - Redevelopment assistance;
 - Preferential fee structuring;
 - Rezoning through county initiation instead of property owner application for vacant or underutilized land to achieve planned densities;
 - An increase in density as a transfer of development rights receiving area;
 - Site design/building flexibility including state Smart Codes programs and resources, where applicable.
- VII. Facilitate structured parking at Metro stations and in revitalization areas, through financial incentives and through state and county private infrastructure investment. Incentives may include implementation of Special Tax Districts, the revenue growth from which would be utilized to finance structured parking infrastructure.



POLICY 2:

Provide for a multimodal pedestrian-friendly transportation system at Centers and Corridors that is integrated with the desired development pattern.

Strategies

- I. Use the following traffic levels of service (LOS) as the minimum acceptable standard for road and street network capacity:

	<i>In the Developed Tier</i>	<i>In the Developing Tier</i>
Metropolitan Centers	E	E
Regional Centers	E	E
Community Centers	E	D
Corridors	E	D

- II. Develop TOD and TSD criteria as part of transportation system analyses, the Biennial Growth Policy updates, and future master and small area plans that ensure the maximum possible integration of pedestrian and biker access and transit service with future development.
- III. Establish transit-based trip reduction initiatives that maximize the diversion of SOV trips to transit, such as encouraging or increasing developer support of pedestrian and biker access facilities, and of expanded transit service, and that reduce the need to expand street and road capacity, particularly in the Developing Tier, solely to accommodate new development.
- IV. Provide for the mobility needs of transit-dependent Prince George's County residents that commute to job opportunities in neighboring jurisdictions, particularly in future plans for Metrorail stations that border other jurisdictions.



POLICY 3:

Plan and provide public facilities to support Centers and Corridors development.

Strategies

- I. Establish priorities in the capital improvement program for public sector provision of capital improvements serving Centers and Corridors as follows:

	<i>In the Developed Tier</i>	<i>In the Developing Tier</i>
Metropolitan Centers	High	High
Regional Centers	High	Medium
Community Centers	High	Medium
Corridors	High	Medium

- II. Encourage the placement of new libraries, schools, police substations, recreation centers and urban parks within Centers.



