

ARLINGTON COUNTY VIRGINIA

AUGUST 1999

Bluemont

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PLAN





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Dedicated to JOHN WHITE

**A Bluemont resident since 1961 and former Association president,
who has made our neighborhood a better place.**



Acknowledgments

Many Bluemont residents helped create this plan. They include:

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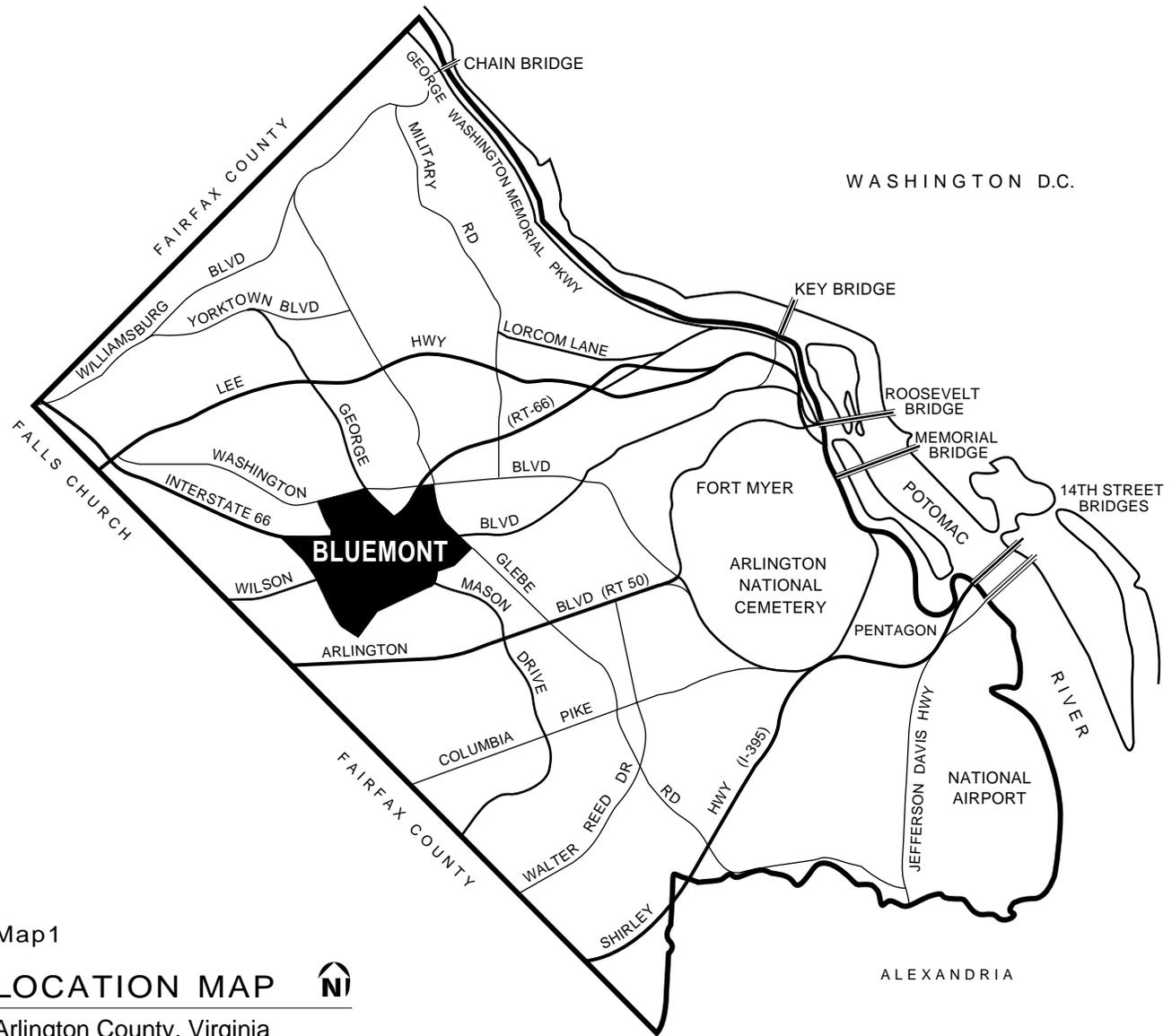
Alan Wright

Many Arlington County employees also provided crucial guidance or assistance. The neighborhood's special thanks go to Robert Collins, Chris Nixon, Jeff Sikes, Jim Allen, Nancy Michael and Jennifer King.



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Map1

LOCATION MAP



Arlington County, Virginia



Introduction

Executive Summary

Bluemont is a vibrant, friendly community of more than 5,000 people in west central Arlington County. The neighborhood's special attractions include prize-winning flower gardens, a wetlands refuge and beaver pond, streams, stands of heritage trees, noted schools, historic sites, a university campus, unique shops, and some of the finest bicycle trails in the Eastern U.S. When residents were asked what they liked most about the neighborhood, though, the most common response was parks. Indeed, no fewer than six popular County parks are wholly or partially located in Bluemont.

In contrast to neighboring Ballston, ninety percent of Bluemont's land is devoted to low-density residential development, low-density commercial development, or parks. Neighborhood residents want this land use pattern to continue. Detached homes of varying ages and styles give Bluemont its predominant character. There are also a number of apartments, including one high-rise building complex, which provides one out of every seven housing units in the neighborhood. Like many traditional urban neighborhoods, Bluemont has its own commercial district of small shops and stores. Bluemont's second commercial area, part of the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor, contains higher-density development.

On balance, Bluemont is a great place to live. But the community faces challenges. The most pressing

problem is dangerous streets. When surveyed in 1998, Bluemont residents gave more than six hundred specific comments on various street hazards. Independent street design criteria confirm there is good reason to be dissatisfied. Four out of every five through-streets are missing sidewalks on one or both sides. Most streets are far wider than necessary, which encourages speeding and increases the risk of injury-causing accidents. Finally, almost every minor-street intersection in Bluemont is designed to favor fast moving through-traffic instead of the needs of local residents.

These unfriendly streets are out of character for a progressive and affluent municipality like Arlington. They stand in particularly stark contrast to the vision presented by the Arlington County Board Chair in his January 1998 quality of life initiative, which is based on "good urban design, with walkable residential areas and pedestrian-friendly commercial centers."

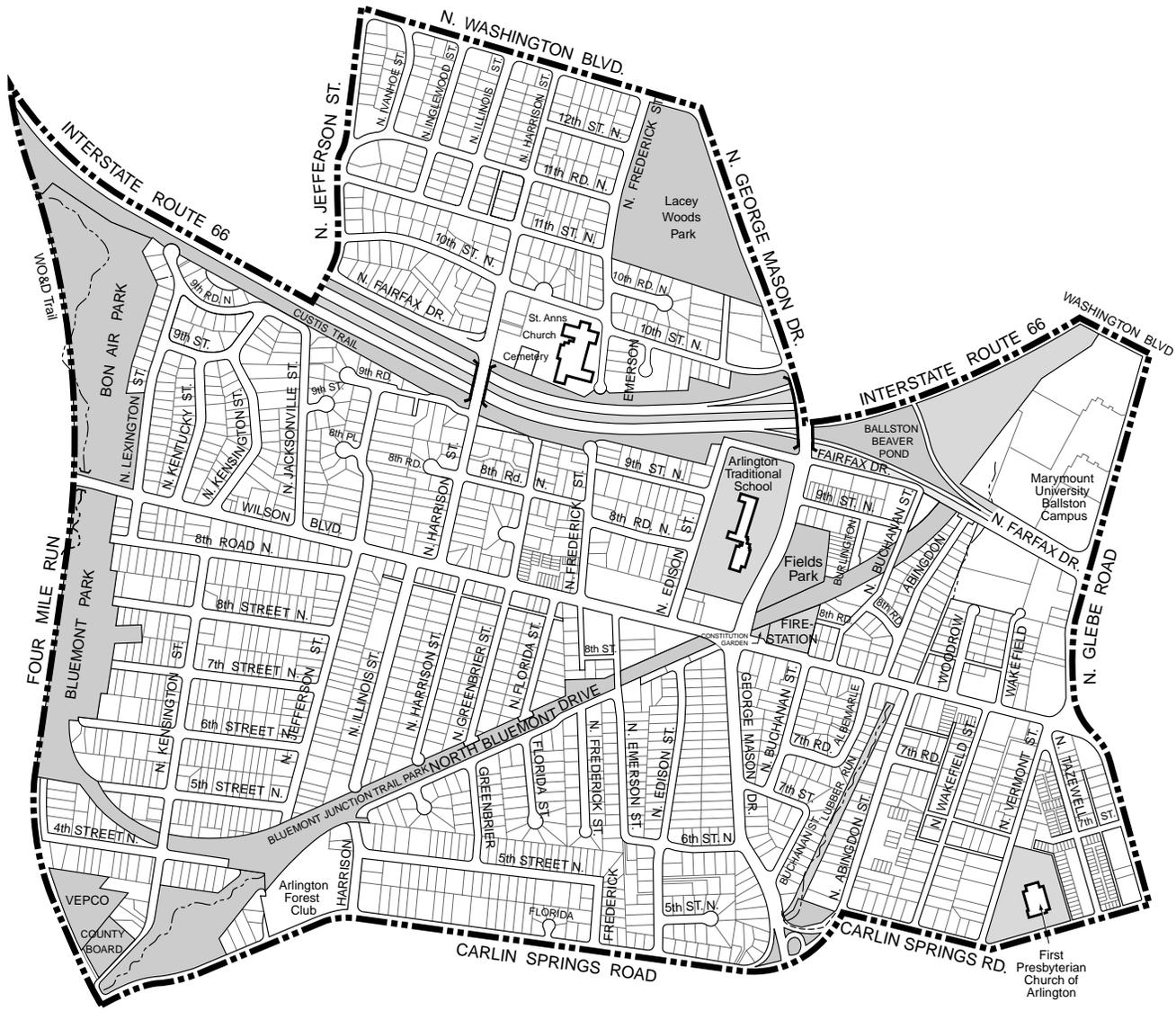
A primary purpose of this neighborhood conservation plan is to help us, the residents of Bluemont, to reclaim our streets. We ask the County's support in building the infrastructure of a true urban village, featuring fluid but slow-moving traffic and a network of sidewalks that encourages people of all ages to walk anywhere in the neighborhood. The specifics of such a program are laid out in the section on Streets and Street Safety and in Appendix A, Recommended Projects.

We also make a number of other important recommendations. We ask that the County generally maintain local land use and zoning designations so that for generations to come Bluemont will remain a residential neighborhood of primarily detached homes. Land use and zoning patterns are especially important to the many of us who are carefully watching the Ballston development boom. In this document, we also make suggestions for maintaining or improving our fine local parks and for making the Wilson Boulevard Commercial Area more attractive and more accessible.

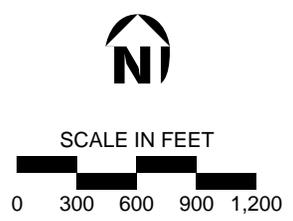
Finally, this conservation plan introduces Bluemont. Until 1998, our neighborhood was known as Stonewall Jackson. We now have a new name and an invigorated civic association membership. With this plan as a blueprint, we're moving forward.

Development of the Bluemont Neighborhood Conservation Plan

Many Bluemont residents were actively involved in creating this plan. Indeed, it was a former neighborhood leader, Hal Gibson, who decades ago was instrumental in the founding of the Arlington County neighborhood conservation program. In February 1992, the neighborhood formally committed itself to formulating a conservation plan. The neighborhood reactivated this commitment in 1997, forming a



Map 2.
 Bluemont
 Neighborhood
 Boundaries



neighborhood conservation committee. The Civic Association in the spring of 1998 distributed to local residences and businesses a survey posing questions on land use, zoning, streets, sidewalks, traffic, parks, community services and other neighborhood issues. Approximately 200 surveys were completed and returned. More than fifty residents volunteered for committees that subsequently examined and made recommendations on a variety of issues. Other volunteers tabulated survey results or helped draft the final report. Still more residents gave additional input at 1998 and 1999 Civic Association meetings and via neighbors serving on conservation plan committees. The plan represents the consensus views of residents on what is best for their community.

Balls Crossing Conservation Plan. The Bluemont neighborhood includes the area known as Balls Crossing, which in 1987 obtained County Board approval of its own Neighborhood Conservation Plan. The 1999 Bluemont Neighborhood Conservation Plan encompasses Balls Crossing, and therefore replaces the 1987 Balls Crossing plan.

Nomenclature. For brevity, the qualifier “North” is not used when referring to neighborhood streets. The unqualified term “Association” refers to the Bluemont Civic Association (or its predecessor, the Stonewall Jackson Citizens Association), and the unqualified term “County” refers to Arlington County.



Demographics at a Glance

Data from the 1990 census portray Bluemont as a relatively educated, affluent and mobile community. At that time, most Bluemont adults held a bachelor’s degree or higher. Median household income was \$52,979. Only one in five of its residents at that time were born in Virginia. In 1990, 60% of neighborhood residents had moved into their homes within the previous 5 years. The average household size in 1989 was 2.4 people, and two out of three housing units were occupied by their owners. Since 1970, the percentage of rented housing has increased and the average household size has decreased.



Bluemont Population and Housing Statistics Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Population:	4,657
Population (1998 estimate):	5,350
Born in U.S.	86%
Born in Virginia:	20%
White:	88%
Asian or Pacific Islander:	7%
Black:	2%
Hispanic (independent of racial identification):	5%
High school grad. or higher (of age 25 and up):	87%
Bachelor’s degree or higher (of age 25 and up):	55%
Workers self-employed:	7%
Workers classified as government workers:	29%
Median Household Income:	\$52,979
Families below Poverty Level:	2%
Housing Structures Built 1949 or earlier:	43%
Housing Structures Built 1950 to 1979	33%
Housing Structures Built 1980 to March 1990:	25%



The skyline of eastern Bluemont, part of the Rosslyn-Ballston development corridor.



The Constitution Bicentennial Bell is rung on New Year's Eve and other holidays.



History of Bluemont

Prehistoric Through 1700 AD

The area's first settlers arrived some 10,000 years ago at the close of the Ice Age. Their descendants saw the effects of global warming as conifer forests were replaced by oak, hickory and chestnut, and as the sea level rose and flooded river valleys to form the Chesapeake Bay. By 1600, the area that would become Arlington was a crossroads between trading routes that followed the Fall Line north and south and those that followed the Potomac east and west. In addition, the Potomac was an important food resource, especially during spring migrations when fish collected at Little Falls.

The written record of Native American settlements in our area is limited to the observations of early English explorers and traders sailing up the Potomac. Archaeologists have identified Native American village sites near Long Branch Nature Center, East Falls Church, and a quarry along Four Mile Run. The spread of English settlements up the Potomac River was stalled around Stafford County by conflict with the Native Americans during the late 1600's. By 1700 the area was vacant due to the effects of disease, warfare and migration on the original residents.

Colonial Period: 1700-1780

The dawn of the 18th century saw the advance of English settlement as waves of woodsmen, specula-

tors, squatters and tobacco planters spread across the land. At the time, Arlington was part of the Northern Neck Proprietorship owned by Lord Fairfax in England. In 1739, the Bluemont area was included in the second largest land grant made within the confines of today's county. The new owner was a tobacco planter named John Colville, who named his 1,321 acre parcel "The Lubber Tract" after its location next to Lubber Run. Colville was born into a merchant family, and after arriving in the area on his own ship in 1733, decided to settle on Great Hunting Creek near Alexandria in an estate called Cleesh. He promptly entered into the elite ranks of local society, holding offices in the County Court, Militia, Truro Parish Vestry, and House of Burgesses. Colville bought and sold land tracts of tens of thousands of acres in his dealings with William Fairfax, Lord Fairfax's brother and land agent in Virginia. By 1749, Colville was the third largest slaveowner in Fairfax County.

The extent to which Colville planted the Lubber Tract is uncertain. In 1754 he received permission from the Fairfax County Court to build a mill on the Lubber Tract. Meanwhile, the crossroads of the 'Road from Falls Church to Awbrey's Ferry' (Wilson Boulevard) and the 'Road from Alexandria to Little Falls' (Glebe Road) had been developed with a tavern. Colville died in 1755 and his last will left the tract to a cousin's husband, The Earl of Tankerville. After the American Revolution, the Earl of

Geological History of Bluemont

When the African and North American continents collided 300 million years ago forming the Appalachian Mountains, a piece of ocean sediment was carried along. The bedrock under Bluemont is part of that sedimentary rock. Over the millennia, the rise and fall of the seas sculpted Bluemont's surface into the level terrace along Wilson Boulevard, drained by Four Mile and Lubber runs to either side.

Tankerville had the Lubber Tract divided into lots and sold at auction in 1789. Some of the lot lines survive today as Carlin Springs Road, Wilson Boulevard, 11th Street, and 16th Street.

Antebellum: 1780-1860

Tobacco cultivation depleted the land, and by the time of Colville's death, planters in the area were seeking alternate ways to maintain their incomes. The buyers of the Lubber Tract lots faced the obstacles of worn-out fields and an unstable national economy. The early 1800's saw a collapse of agricultural land values in Virginia. Between 1817 and 1829 the assessed value of land in the state fell from \$207 million to \$90 million. Squeezed by poor prices, shrinking assets and tight credit, many farmers lost their land to foreclosure. About 1 million Virginians packed up and migrated

to new lands in the West. Those families that held on survived by growing grain or planting orchards and through improved agricultural practices like crop rotation and the use of fertilizers.

Prospects for area farmers improved by the 1850's as the growth of Washington, DC and the construction of the Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire Railroad opened up new markets for their produce. By the eve of the Civil War, local families included the Wilkinsons, Cathcarts, O'Reilleys and Schneiders. North of the Falls Church Road (*Wilson Boulevard*), William R. Birch farmed the inheritance of his wife Julia Shreve, a descendant of an original Lubber Tract lot owner. West of the Birch farm (*beyond the line of Edison Street*), Julia's uncle Samuel Shreve had sold his portion to Richard and Frances Southern. Richard Southern was an English immigrant and horticulturist who had once managed the gardens of the John Mason estate on what is today called Roosevelt Island. He called his farm Poplar Grove and is known for being one of the first to popularize the use of the tomato as a food. The memory of both farms persists in the form of family cemeteries. Birch's is now an empty lot on Abingdon Street, and the Southern-Shreve cemetery is marked today near St. Ann Church.

Civil War: 1860-1865

The night after Virginia voted to secede from the Union on May 23, 1861, army units crossed the Potomac and occupied the shoreline of what is now Arlington County. One detachment marched out the Georgetown Wagon Road to the railroad, stopped a train, and arrested everyone on board as "secessionists." In August and September of 1861, after the battle at Manassas / Bull Run, the

Bluemont area became a no man's land between frontlines. Units of the two armies scouted and skirmished from Hall's Hill to Baileys Crossroads. For the remainder of the war, the County was a staging area and occasional home for the Army of the Potomac.

The area was transformed by the presence of thousands of soldiers, living and foraging on the land. Fields, produce, forests, and buildings were confiscated by the troops. By the end of the war, wood and timber were so scarce that the army imported them from Loudoun. Many of the rural residents left the area, replaced by sutlers, camp followers, and former slaves.

Reconstruction: 1865-1890

A mix of old and new families helped rebuild the area after the war. North of today's 11th Street, a Union Army officer from Ohio named Robert S. Lacey stayed to settle. The heirs of Thomas J. Cathcart occupied the summer home their father had bought in 1859 southwest of Ball's Crossroads (*Wilson Boulevard and Glebe Road*). The Cathcarts were descendants of American diplomat James Leander Cathcart, who negotiated treaties with the Barbary Coast 'pirates' of Algiers, Tripoli and Tunis. Along the south side of the Georgetown Road (*Wilson Boulevard*), from Lubber Run to Four Mile, the family of George and Mary Adams bought up a large farm at a foreclosure auction.

The Maria O'Reilley, Richard Southern, and William Birch families held on to their farms between today's Wilson Boulevard and 11th Street. Over time, the lands were divided up among the different family members. Margaret Birch married Confederate veteran George Veitch

and the couple resided west of Veitch Road (*Harrison Street*). The Bluemont area's first landowner of African descent was Joshua DeVaughn, who in 1884 was given land along Four Mile Run in return for taking care of an aging Mary Carlin.

The growth of the community around the intersection of Wilson Boulevard and Glebe Road prompted construction of the first church in our area. The First Presbyterian congregation dedicated a building in 1876 on the northwest corner of Ball's Crossroads. William Birch served as a trustee for the Walker School in Ballston, established in 1870. In 1881, neighborhood resident George R. Adams became the first school superintendent dedicated solely to Alexandria County. His predecessor Richard Carne had divided his services between both the City and the County. (*Note that Alexandria originally referred to the combined area of what is now Arlington County and the City of Alexandria.*)

Streetcar Suburb: 1890 to 1945

In 1912, the Washington & Old Dominion Rail Road completed the connection between Georgetown and its older line along Four Mile Run. At the junction, passengers could catch a train to the railroad's terminus at the town of Bluemont in Loudoun County. This tiny town on the Blue Ridge gave its name to a division of the rail line, the railroad junction, and eventually to a street, park, bicycle trail, civic association, and neighborhood. The Washington, Arlington & Falls Church Electric Railway had already constructed a trolley line through the Bluemont area in the 1890's with stops at Lacey (*Glebe Road*), Sunnyside (*Edison Street*), Mulhall (*Frederick Street*) and Veitch Summit

(Harrison Street).

William R. Birch died in 1916 at the age of 100. Over the course of his life, he had fought Native Americans in the old Southwest Territory, survived the chaos of the Civil War, and lived to see electric trains and automobiles. Among his descendants living in the area were the families of Harry and Julia Thomas on Jefferson Street, and Howard and Cora Fields who lived nearby at the intersection of Wilson and the W&OD Railroad. Howard B. Fields served 24 years as Sheriff of the County before retiring in 1943. Harry R. Thomas and his son Homer both served as judges on the Arlington County Circuit Court.

Postwar Urbanization: 1946 to the Present

The Bluemont neighborhood filled up quickly after World War II and was essentially built out by 1960. The new suburbanites participated in establishing institutions such as Saint Ann's church, Saint Michael's church, and the Arlington Forest Club. In 1951, the First Presbyterian congregation moved into their new building on Carlin Springs

Road. The new community became dependent on the automobile after the trolley, and then the W&OD discontinued passenger service. Across Glebe Road, the Parkington Shopping Center featured a Hecht's Department Store and the "world's largest parking garage." Other merchants followed their customers as a commercial strip developed along Wilson Boulevard.

The 1950's and 60's saw a great deal of civic action as residents dealt with issues such as school improvement, integration, civil rights, and a proposal to build an interstate highway through the neighborhood. In 1969, St. Michael's church member Barbara Kuehn started the Arlington Hotline as a volunteer outreach program for the parish. Her effort expanded into the Northern Virginia Hotline, a comprehensive referral service and the second oldest continuous hotline in the nation.

By 1980, the Bluemont area had become a relatively affordable, family-oriented community convenient to nearby parks, schools and shopping. As the baby boom grew up and moved out, Stonewall

Jackson School was closed, and most neighborhood children were reassigned to Ashlawn School. In one typical bungalow on a quiet side street, Rudolph Wendelin lived through this era, raising a family, improving his home, and going into work at the Department of Interior, where he created and rendered the character 'Smoky the Bear' for over 30 years.

In 1979 the Metro Orange Line was opened between Washington DC and Ballston. Three years later, the Custis Memorial Parkway (Interstate 66) was opened along the former trolley and railroad right-of-ways. The subsequent redevelopment of Ballston as a major employment center has affected the Bluemont area. Parking space has grown tighter and traffic more congested. Property values have risen. Apartment and townhouse development has spread westward across Glebe Road. Throughout the neighborhood, many older houses on large lots have been redeveloped with infill housing.



The Wilson Boulevard commercial area hosts unique businesses such as this shop specializing in used historical books.



This caboose, located on the site of the former Bluemont Junction Station, now serves as a park police substation.



Arlington Memorial Rose Garden in Bon Air Park often hosts wedding ceremonies.



Land Use and Zoning

Land Use

Residential areas make up about 70% of the neighborhood, while parks and other public or semi-public places make up about 20%. Commercial and mixed-use areas make up the remaining 10% of Bluemont's land. Residents strongly favor the continuation of this land use pattern.

The great majority of Bluemont's residential areas are classified as Low Residential in the County General Land Use Plan (*GLUP*), with a corresponding density of 1 to 10 units per acre and a zoning classification of R-6 or R-5. Most of the dwellings in these Low Residential areas are single-family detached homes, with lesser numbers of duplexes and townhouses.

A few areas in the neighborhood contain low-rise apartment buildings, classified as Low-Medium Residential in the *GLUP*. Bluemont also hosts a single high-rise apartment complex, the Avalon at Ballston, located at Glebe Road and Washington Boulevard. This area is classified as a mixture of High-Medium Residential and Medium Office-Apartment-Hotel.

Bluemont's public areas include County parks and off-road trails. The neighborhood's two sizable semi-public areas are the St. Ann's Church property and the Arlington Forest Club property. (*See Parks and Other Open Areas.*)

Bluemont's primary business district runs through the center of the neighborhood along Wilson

Boulevard between Glebe Road and Jefferson Street. Much of this commercial strip is classified in the *GLUP* as Service Commercial. Businesses here are mostly personal-oriented establishments including restaurants, service stations, barber shops, and a supermarket. (*See Wilson Boulevard Commercial Area.*)

Bluemont's secondary commercial area is the western part of the Ballston commercial district. This commercial area is located along Glebe Road and Fairfax Drive at the eastern edge of the neighborhood. Land use classifications here include Medium Office-Apartment-Hotel and High-Medium Residential Mixed Use. This area has grown along with the rest of Ballston, and hosts a number of new or recently refurbished buildings including Ballston Plaza, Ballston One, and the Holiday Inn Arlington at Ballston. Also found here are Marymount University (*Ballston Campus*), Rosenthal Mazda, and Bob Peck Chevrolet, a forty-year neighborhood resident.

Ballston

Commercial and residential development of the Rosslyn-Ballston Metro Corridor — particularly the Ballston end — has moved at a dizzying pace in recent years.

In many ways, this development is good for Bluemont. Ballston has brought new jobs, shopping, and entertainment, not to mention enhanced property values for the surrounding neighborhoods. Many Bluemonters find it exciting to live

Voices of Bluemont: Land Use

A sampling of neighborhood conservation plan survey comments on land use:

"Our concern is that the building spree in Ballston will encroach on our neighborhood."

"Commercial development should be restrained, pedestrian friendly, and not encroach further upon housing."

"Am happy to see a lot of apartments mixed with commercial development."

"Keep undeveloped land."

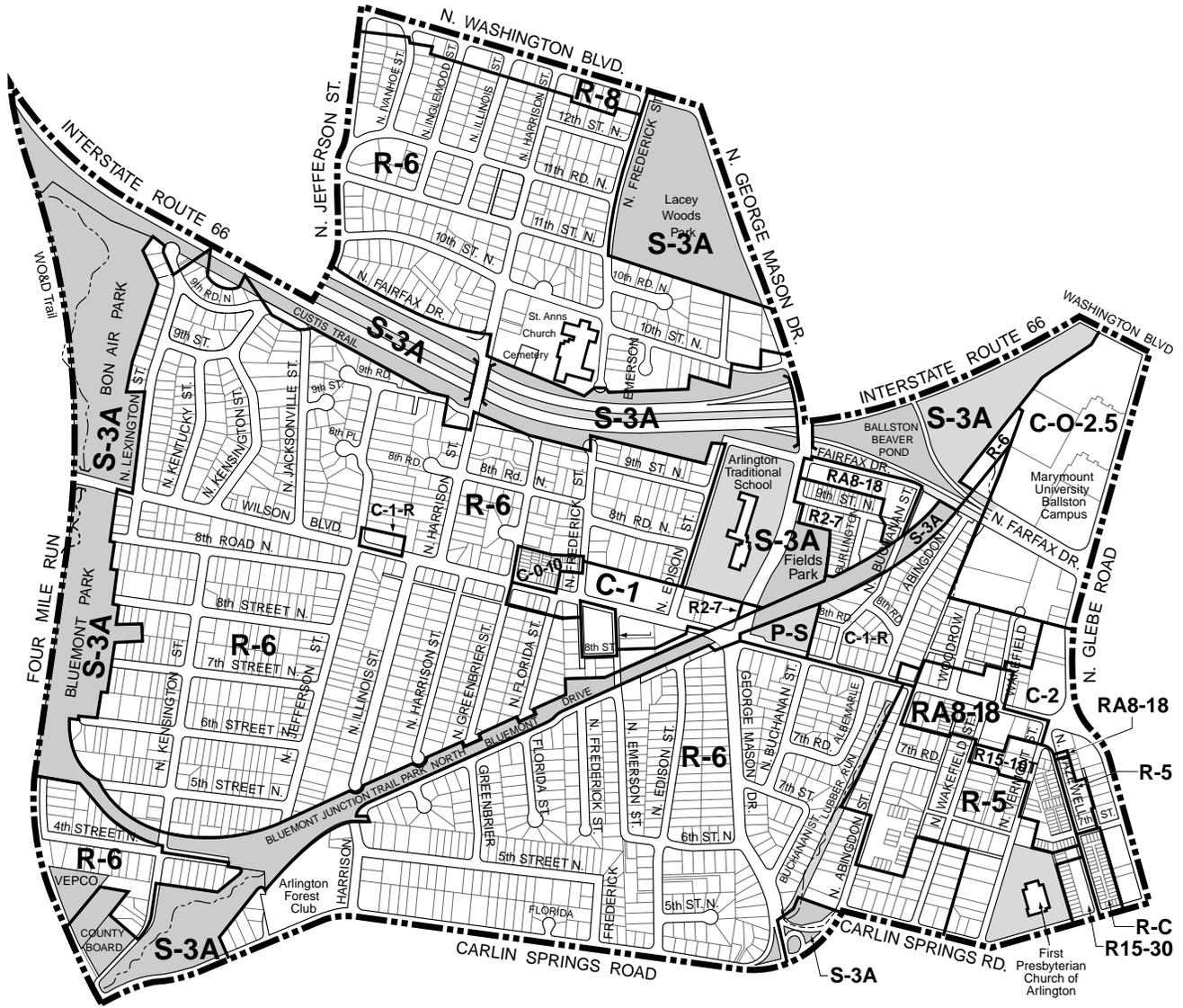
"Good mixed use development is to be encouraged."

"Let's not overpopulate our area. Let's keep it nature friendly."

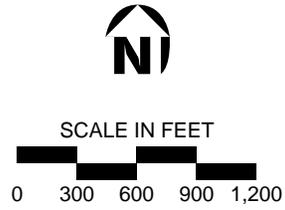
within walking distance of an area that has been praised nationally as a model of smart urban growth.

But the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor also brings challenges and concerns for Bluemont. County officials should appreciate that while many Bluemont residents enjoy living near Ballston, they have made the conscious choice not to live in Ballston. Neighborhood residents worry that developers will look more and more at Bluemont as a potential site for high-density commercial or residential projects.

Bluemonters want to have a voice in the decision-making process for the Rosslyn-Ballston development corridor. Land use and zoning in the corridor affect Bluemont even when the concerned properties are not within the neighborhood's



Map 3.
Zoning Map



boundaries. For example, the neighborhood could be negatively affected by exceptions to Ballston's "step-down" zoning pattern, which allows for the tallest buildings to be built only in areas adjacent to the Ballston Metro station. The Association notes with concern that developers regularly seek exceptions to this pattern in an effort to build high-rises at Ballston locations away from the Metro station.

The County is currently considering a proposal to improve access to the Ballston Metro station, with the possible addition of an entrance on Fairfax Drive closer to Glebe Road. Bluemont would appreciate the continuing opportunity to have a say in this process.

Recommendation 1. In order to preserve Bluemont as a predominantly residential neighborhood of detached homes, the Association will work with the County to maintain in broad form the prevailing land use and zoning patterns of the neighborhood. The neighborhood recommends specifically that residents' views be given due consideration in adjudicating any rezoning request or zoning variance request that would allow additional commercial development or higher density development in the neighborhood.

Recommendation 2. Working with the Association, the County should actively solicit the opinions of Bluemont residents on prospective modifications to the Ballston Sector Plan that include a part of the neighborhood. The County should welcome Bluemont's input on other prospective Ballston projects, including Metro station access projects.

Zoning Issues

The Association believes that as long as newly built homes are attractive, well constructed, and

conform to the letter and the spirit of County ordinances, they make Bluemont a better neighborhood.

At the same time, many residents have noted with concern that developers have often sought to speculatively purchase County residential properties with the intent of seeking GLUP and zoning changes to allow them to build higher-density housing. Such actions could change Bluemont's predominant land use pattern.

Residential construction, whether for new homes or additions, affects the Four Mile Run watershed because most projects end up replacing vegetation with impermeable surfaces. (*See Parks and Other Areas, Waterways and Wetlands.*) The Zoning Ordinance Review Committee, in their November 1998 Interim Report of the Infill-Residential Development Study, indicated that only a few residential constructions approach the current maximum lot coverage level of 56%. Therefore, a modest decrease in the lot coverage maximum level would preclude only those few projects that have the most effect on storm drainage.

Recommendation 3. In order to diminish runoff and erosion problems, particularly with regard to Four Mile Run, the County should revise building codes and zoning ordinances for any residential construction (*including home additions and infill development*) to: a) reduce surface area of residential lots permitted to be covered by structures or other impermeable entities (*e.g. reduce to the 50% coverage level suggested by the Civic Federation*); and b) require that new land uses do not create drainage problems for adjacent property owners.

Other Issues

Ordinance Violations. Through the

Bluemont Remembers: Land Use

"We desire the opportunity to plan our neighborhood's future as a residential community adjacent to the Ballston and Buckingham areas of intensive development. This effort is being endangered by real estate promotion along Wilson Boulevard and now George Mason Drive...Spot zoning attempts of this nature are attempts at economic block-busting and should be resisted by all county instrumentalities concerned with orderly development."

Edward R. O'Conner, *President*
Stonewall Jackson Civic
Association

August 1971.

1998 neighborhood survey, many residents expressed concerns over violations of various County ordinances, including those regarding abandoned cars, care of premises, improper residence occupancy, improper parking, and residence-based enterprises such as auto repair. Some residents also expressed concern over disruptive noises, including dog barking and Interstate 66 traffic noise.

Recommendation 4. Working with the Association as appropriate, the County should be responsive to residents' requests for enforcement of County ordinances on residential use, residential care, parking, noise, and other health and quality of life issues. In acting on such requests, the County should balance potential risks to health, safety, and welfare with the privacy rights of local residents. The County is to be commended for initiating a program to investigate reported violations at night and on weekends, since those times are often the only opportunities to observe certain violations.

Changes to County Property. The

neighborhood would appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on any planned changes to County property. Although County property is not subject to site plan development requirements, the neighborhood encourages the County to proceed as if site plans were needed.

Recommendation 5. For all prospective changes to County property within the neighborhood, the County is encouraged to proceed as if site plan development requirements applied.

Zoning - GLUP Discrepancies.

There exist inconsistencies between the General Land Use Plan and the Zoning pattern in the Bluemont neighborhood, including with regard to parkland. The Association welcomes the continuing efforts of County staff to eliminate these inconsistencies.



Many of Bluemont's single-family homes were built prior to World War II.



Grey House Potters, an artisans' cooperative, is a Bluemont landmark.



Streets and Street Safety

Bluemont residents responding to the 1998 neighborhood survey gave more than 600 comments regarding the safety of the neighborhood's streets. About 200 of these were requests for new or improved sidewalks or other pedestrian facilities. There were also about 100 complaints on each of the issues of speeding vehicles, cut-through traffic, and unsafe or problematic intersections. These comments made up by far the largest category of concerns expressed in the survey. They represent the community's collective request for neighborhood streets that favor the needs of residents, not the convenience of through traffic.

Guidelines of the Institute of Transportation Engineers indicate that correctly designed streets do not normally need to be retrofitted with traffic calming measures like speed humps, nubs, stop signs, or traffic circles.¹ Regrettably, many of Bluemont's streets don't have any of the most important characteristics of a safe street. For the benefit of pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists, the neighborhood believes that the first order of business should be to correct these fundamental design flaws.

At the same time, the need for the County to fix Bluemont's street design problems should not delay or preclude the implementation of other measures to make neighborhood streets safer. The Association appreciates that County officials have met with neighborhood residents to discuss the application

of retrofitted traffic calming measures. (See Section B below). Retrofitted traffic calming measures should also be considered for neighborhood streets that are commonly used by motorists to avoid arterial intersections. (See "Voices of Bluemont").

Neighborhood Street Design

Pedestrian Networks. Interconnected sidewalks are of paramount importance to pedestrians. Missing or unsafe sidewalks on either side of a street restrict the range in which a resident feels comfortable walking. Many people can't or won't walk even a short distance in an unsafe or unwelcoming area — they'll simply drive, never again to consider making the trip on foot. For children, seniors, and people with special needs, continuous and safe sidewalks are even more crucial.

In Bluemont, unfriendly streets are the rule. Of the neighborhood's 51 street segments that aren't dead ends, 40 are missing sidewalks on all or portions of one or both sides. Six more streets have sidewalks on both sides that don't meet minimal safety standards. Only five of Bluemont's through streets have sidewalks on both sides that meet minimal safety standards. Examples of the 40 streets with missing sidewalks include every one of Bluemont's neighborhood principal routes — Kensington Street, Jefferson Street, and Harrison Street — as well as a principal arterial road, Washington Boule-

Voices of Bluemont: Street Safety

In the 1998 neighborhood conservation survey, approximately three of every four households answering the question described themselves as "very concerned" or "somewhat concerned" about vehicles speeding in the neighborhood. Most respondents thought that the lack of sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities created hazards for schoolchildren and other pedestrians. Better sidewalks were identified as the type of enhancement that was most likely to get people to use their car less. A sampling of the more than 600 comments on street safety:

"People might walk more if they felt it were safer."

"We'd like to see new sidewalks on through roads and better speed limit controls and enforcement."

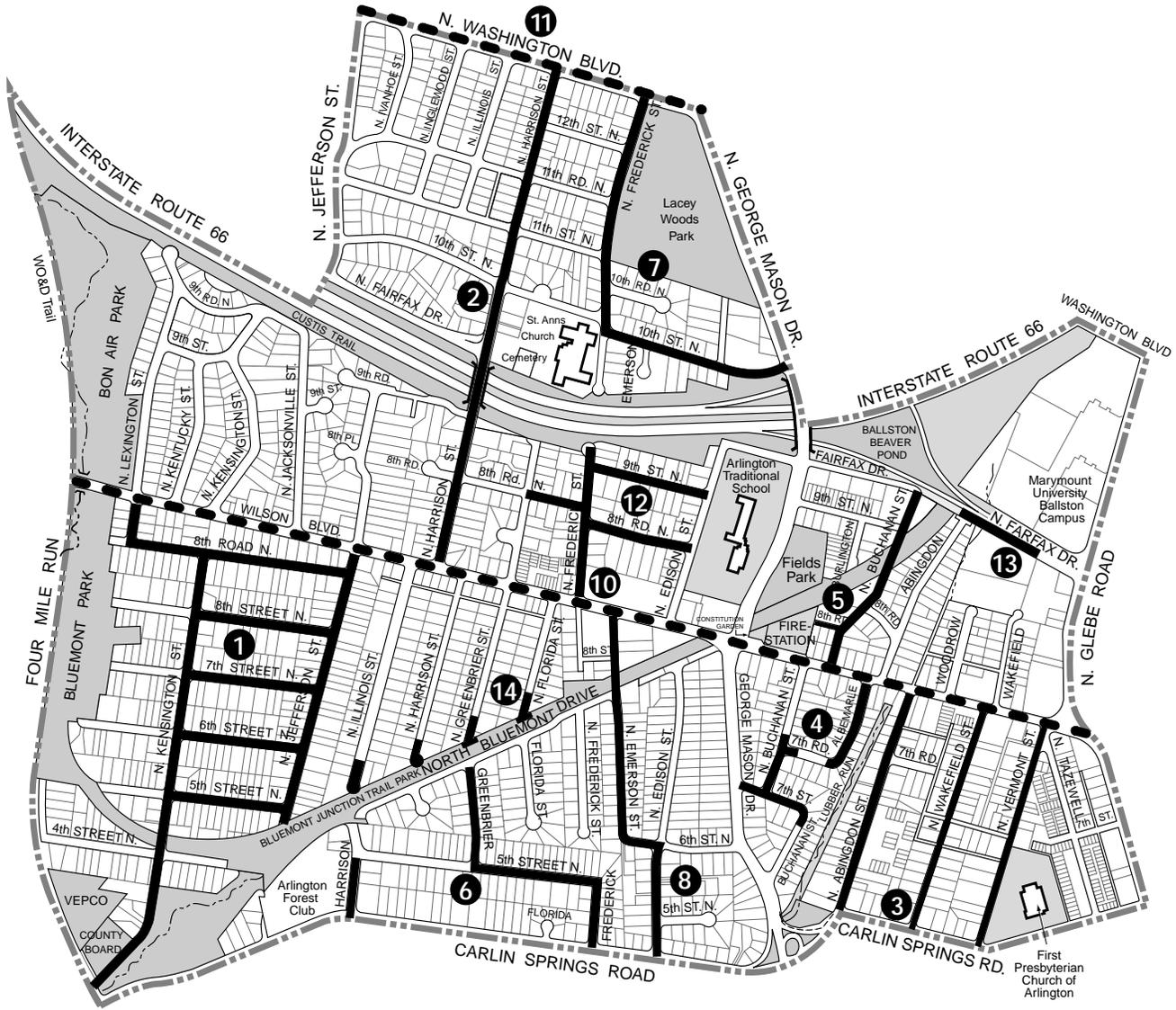
"It's only a matter of time before someone is seriously injured or killed crossing Glebe Road"

"The 25 mph speed limit is frequently violated."

"We need sidewalks! Especially since we get so much cut through traffic and kids walking to school."

"Cars go way too fast."

"We don't have continuous sidewalks on either side so pedestrians are having to cross the street every two blocks."



Map 4.

Major Pedestrian Safety Projects

Note: See Appendix B for project description.



SCALE IN FEET



vard. Streets with grossly inadequate sidewalks include what should be the neighborhood's "Main Street", Wilson Boulevard.

Recommendation 6. In cooperation with the Association, the County should build a safe and continuous pedestrian network in Bluemont. With the exception of streets with very minimal traffic where residents specifically oppose the construction of sidewalks, the County should construct curbs and sidewalks on both sides of every neighborhood street. Sidewalks of extra width should accompany every arterial road. The County should use the reclaimed land from street right-sizing (see Recommendation 7) to locate sidewalks and accompanying planting strips. (See also Appendix A, Recommended Projects.)

Street Width. Injury-causing accidents are four times more likely on 36-foot wide streets than on 24 foot-wide streets². The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) street design guidelines indicate that properly designed narrower streets with two-sided parking will cause drivers to automatically choose lower speeds and less aggressive behaviors. According to ITE, such roads can be safer for all users, including bicyclists and

children, notwithstanding the fact that children can be prone to darting out from behind parked cars³. Furthermore, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials design guidelines indicate that in areas where single-family homes prevail, narrower streets with two-sided parking can accommodate two-way traffic with a "remarkably low" level of inconvenience for motorists⁴.

Many of Bluemont's neighborhood streets, including numerous dead ends and others with very low traffic volumes, are 36 feet wide. While street width in Bluemont does not correlate with traffic volume, street width does correlate with local speeding. In the Bluemont neighborhood survey, the ten streets most identified by residents as having speeding problem were all 35 feet wide or more. On the other hand, none of the neighborhood's 26-foot wide streets were in the top ten speeding list even though several of these narrower streets, including Wakefield Street and Emerson Street, have elevated levels of traffic.

Recommendation 7. To make streets safer for all users and reclaim greenspace while continuing to accommodate two-way traffic and emergency vehicles, the County (in cooperation with the Association) should prescribe for neighborhood minor streets a curb-to-curb width of between 24 and 26 feet with parking on both sides. For neighborhood principal streets, the County should prescribe the minimum curb-to-curb width consistent with national street design guidelines for traditional neighborhoods, which should be less than 36 feet. (See Appendix A, Recommended Projects.)

Intersections. Intersection design affects vehicle speed and pedestrian safety. Minor intersections in many traditional neighborhoods have curb return radii of 5 or 10 feet, which means that pedestrian crossing distances are minimized and vehicles need to slow down when turning. (The curb return radius is a measure of how far curbs extend into the intersection.) Most intersections in Bluemont have curb return radii between 15 and 35 feet. This means pedestrian crossing distances are much bigger, often over 50 feet. Cars, meanwhile, can turn with ease at higher speeds. The intersection of Edison Street and 5th Street, for example, has a curb radius of 35 feet, allowing vehicles to make what traffic engineers call a free right turn. So does the intersection of Emerson Street and Bluemont Drive. Intersections the length of Kensington Street and Jefferson Street south of Wilson Boulevard have curb return radii between 18 and 35 feet. These intersections encourage unsafe speeds and unnecessarily increase the risk of accident.

Recommendation 8. To enhance vehicular and pedestrian safety while continuing to allow for emergency vehicle access, the

What are all those poles doing in the middle of the Wilson Boulevard sidewalk?

The more appropriate question is, what is a sidewalk doing in the middle of all those poles? A proper sidewalk is more than a walkway. It should contain a planting strip to buffer pedestrians from traffic. The wider the street, the wider the planting strip and sidewalk should be. Planting strips can also be used to locate signs, fire hydrants and other roadside necessities. Wilson Boulevard and many other local streets are particularly dangerous and obstructed for pedestrians because they have no planting strip at all. A narrow sidewalk without a planting strip will also dip whenever it crosses a driveway, since there is no transition area in which the driveway can rise from street level to the slightly higher level of adjacent property.

Bluemont Street Classifications

Controlled Access Roads (1) - Interstate 66

Other Principal Arterial Roads (5) Carlin Springs Road between Kensington Street to George Mason Drive; Wilson Boulevard, Washington Boulevard; George Mason Drive; and Glebe Road. All of these are four lane roads except Washington Boulevard, which has two lanes.

Minor Arterial (1) Carlin Springs Road between George Mason Drive and Glebe Road.

Neighborhood Principal (2) - Kensington Street from Carlin Springs Road to 7th Street, continuing on 7th Street to Jefferson Street, continuing on Jefferson Street to Wilson Boulevard; and Harrison Street from Wilson Boulevard to 10th Street.

Neighborhood Minor (37) All or portions of other remaining streets in the community.

County (*in cooperation with the Association*) should prescribe a standard curb return radius of 10 feet for intersections of all non-arterial neighborhood streets in Bluemont. (*See Appendix A, Recommended Projects.*)

Traffic Calming Measures for Neighborhood Principal Streets and Wilson Boulevard

In central Arlington County, there is no north-south arterial road west of George Mason Drive. Therefore, motorists often use Jefferson and Kensington Streets or Harrison Street to go between Route 50 and Wilson Boulevard or between Wilson Boulevard and Washington Boulevard, respectively. A 1997 County study found approximately 2,300 vehicles per day travel at an average speed over the speed limit along the Kensington/Jefferson route, which includes the connector streets of 5th, 6th, 7th, or 8th Streets or 8th Road. Similarly, Harrison Street has a significant speeding problem, which is exacer-

bated by a steep southbound downslope. In the neighborhood survey, Harrison was also the street most cited by residents as having poor visibility because of overgrown vegetation at intersections and because of the street's slope.

Speeding occurs on Wilson Boulevard on its entire length through the neighborhood. The situation is exacerbated by the steep hill near where Wilson passes Bluemont and Bon Air parks.

As part of the preparation of this conservation plan, neighborhood residents met with the County Department of Public Works officials to discuss traffic calming measures for areas throughout the neighborhood. The neighborhood appreciates the County's responsiveness to residents' concerns over these streets and looks forward to the implementation of appropriate traffic-calming measures independent of prospective street design improvements.

Recommendation 9. In cooperation with the Association, the County should apply appropriate County-approved retrofitted traffic calming measures to: a) the length

of Wilson Boulevard in the neighborhood; b) Kensington Street and Jefferson Street (*and their connector streets*) between Carlin Springs Road and Wilson Boulevard; and c) Harrison Street, between Wilson Boulevard and Washington Boulevard, 10th Street between Harrison and George Mason Drive, and Frederick Street between Washington Boulevard and the Custis Trail. (*See also Appendix A, Recommended Projects.*)

Recommendation 10. In cooperation with the Association, the County should take necessary action to correct problems of limited visibility caused by vegetation or other obstructions on Harrison Street between Washington and Wilson Boulevards. The County should respond expeditiously to other requests from residents regarding sight obstructions from vegetation or other obstacles. The Association encourages neighborhood residents to proactively trim vegetation on their property as appropriate.

Arterial Intersections and Inappropriate Use of Neighborhood Minor Streets

As many residents noted in the neighborhood survey, when drivers can't move with ease along arterial streets, many will instead use neighborhood streets. This causes noise, vibrations and emissions in residential areas, in addition to making streets more hazardous.

George Mason Drive (GMD) and Wilson Boulevard. Drivers who use Bluemont minor streets to avoid this intersection affect the adjacent neighborhoods.

Examples of Bluemont Street Design Hazards

Kensington Street, Jefferson Street, and their connector streets of 5th Street, 6th Street, 8th Street and 8th Road between Wilson Boulevard and Carlin Springs Road are each 36 feet wide and have curb return radii of between 18 and 35 feet, encouraging speeding. Each of these streets is missing sidewalks, forcing children and other pedestrians to walk in the roadway to get to and from Ashlawn School, Bluemont Park, or Bluemont Junction Park. According to a December 1997 County Police study, approximately 2,300 vehicles per day travel these streets, with an 85th percentile speed of seven miles per hour over the speed limit.

Harrison Street is one of only two north-south streets running through most of the neighborhood, yet it has almost no sidewalks on its East side between Wilson and Washington Boulevards. On its West side, Harrison has a narrow, unbuffered sidewalk in which there are 26 poles and other obstructions. Harrison's excessive travel lane widths encourage speeding, with curb-to-curb widths of 36 feet (two sided parking), 31 feet (one sided parking) and 26 feet (no parking). Unbuffered, walled pedestrian paths over Interstate 66 are hazardous and unwelcoming to pedestrians. Harrison's slope exacerbates southbound vehicle speeding. Notwithstanding these hazards, there are school bus stops on this street, and it is also frequented by children and other pedestrians going to and from Swanson and St. Ann schools, and the Wilson Boulevard commercial district.

Vermont Street and Abingdon Street between Wilson Boulevard and Carlin Springs Road are 36 feet wide, encouraging speeding and through traffic. Sidewalks are missing on Vermont Street and nearby Wakefield Street. Abingdon Street has unbuffered, obstructed, narrow sidewalks. Turn lane design on Carlin Springs Road "slingshots" motorists turning onto Abingdon Street, encouraging speeding.

Washington Boulevard, a principal arterial road, has no South side sidewalk between Frederick Street and Ivanhoe Streets.

10th Street between Emerson Street and Edison Street, a frequent pedestrian route, is missing sidewalks and curbs on both sides. Thirty-six foot widths on 10th Street and nearby Frederick Street and a 31-foot wide, restricted-parking portion of Frederick Street encourage speeding and encourage drivers to avoid the intersection at Washington Boulevard and George Mason Drive. Excessive curb radii on 10th and Frederick Streets encourage unsafe turns and greatly increase pedestrian crossing distances. Twenty-five foot curb radii at the 10th Road cul-de-sac and the Emerson Street cul-de-sac result in pedestrian crossing distances of 50 feet at each location. Frederick Street on its West side has an unbuffered, obstructed, narrow sidewalk.

6th Street between Edison and Emerson Streets, a frequent passage point for pedestrians and bicyclists going to and from Bluemont Junction Trail or the Wilson Boulevard stores, is missing a sidewalk. This area is made more hazardous because of sidewalks. Thirty-five foot curb return radii at intersection of Bluemont Drive and Emerson Street and at intersection of Edison Street and 6th street encourage speeding and through traffic.

Fairfax Drive near Abingdon Street and the Holiday Inn, a major travel route for pedestrians and bicyclists to and from Ballston has a narrow, unbuffered, obstructed sidewalk. The wide turn-in circle for Holiday Inn makes the sidewalk disappear for long stretches. Pedestrian and bicycle passages are constricted where the Bluemont Junction Trail ends near Abingdon Street. This area is made even more hazardous because drivers come off Interstate 66 at high speeds and flow directly onto Fairfax Drive, with visibility limited by the adjacent sound barriers. Pedestrians and bicyclists often risk injury or death by crossing Fairfax Drive in the unmarked area immediately after the sound barriers in order to avoid the sidewalk in front of the Holiday Inn

Drivers traveling between Wilson Boulevard and Carlin Springs Road can avoid GMD altogether by using any of the following:

The swiftest traveler is he who goes afoot.
-Thoreau

- Vermont Street, Wakefield Street, or Abingdon Street;
- Emerson Street combined with Edison Street;
- Harrison Street or Frederick Street, combined with 5th Street, Greenbrier Street, Bluemont Drive, and Emerson Street. There are also several neighborhood streets negatively affected by congestion at the intersection of GMD and Wilson;
- Many drivers use 6th Street and Emerson Street to avoid queuing to turn left from GMD northbound to Wilson Boulevard westbound;
- Combinations of 7th Street, 7th Road, Buchanan Street, and Albemarle Street are used to avoid turning left from Wilson westbound to GMD southbound or to avoid turning right from GMD northbound to Wilson eastbound.

None of these cut-through streets are designated neighborhood principals, and Bluemont residents oppose making them so.

Recommendation 11. To make Bluemont safer and more livable, the County (*in cooperation with the Association*) should improve the traffic control system and/or design of the intersection at George Mason Drive (*GMD*) and Wilson Boulevard. Particular consideration should be given to accommodating left turns from GMD northbound to Wilson westbound, and to accommodating left turns from Wilson westbound to GMD southbound. Changes to the

intersection should be made at the same time to make it safer and easier for pedestrians and bicycles to cross, especially since this intersection is a crucial part of the Bluemont Junction Trail connecting the neighborhood to Ballston. Pedestrian crosswalks should be shortened as much as possible and be better marked.

Glebe Road and Wilson Boulevard. This intersection endangers drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians. Lanes on Wilson Boulevard are unclear. As a result of the oblique angles of the crossing and the location of the islands segregating the right-hand turn lanes, cars tend to drift into the crosswalks or the other lane. Walk signals do not allow sufficient time for crossing in any direction, and it is necessary to cross the uncontrolled right-turn lanes to reach the call buttons. Turning left from Wilson eastbound to Glebe northbound is difficult, and the intersection is so wide that cars are sometimes left stranded after the light has turned red. Turning left from Wilson Boulevard westbound to Glebe Road southbound is prohibited during the afternoon rush hour. This encourages motorists to turn left on Vermont Street, backing up traffic during rush hour - the "Do Not Block Intersection" sign there is often ignored. Nearby Tazewell Street is one way northbound, but if heading west on Wilson or entering Tazewell from the adjacent Mazda dealership, drivers may not realize this until they have already turned onto the street.

Recommendation 12. At the intersection of Glebe Road and Wilson Boulevard, the County (*in cooperation with the Association*) should lessen crossing distances by right-sizing vehicle travel lanes, better mark crosswalks, and otherwise make the intersection safer and

friendlier for pedestrians and bicyclists. To allow for the safer and easier flow of vehicles, lanes should be better marked and consideration should be given to the addition of left-turn arrows. Left turns from Wilson Boulevard westbound to Glebe Road southbound should be permitted at all times, including afternoon rush hours. Consideration should be given to restricting afternoon rush hour left turns from Wilson Boulevard westbound to Vermont Street southbound to residents only. At Tazewell Street, signs should be added across from the Mazda dealership to preclude inadvertent left turns.

Glebe Road and Fairfax Drive. Users of the Bluemont Junction Trail and the Custis Trail going to or from Ballston, as well as many

**Bluemont Remembers:
Interstate 66**

Excerpts from the Arlington County Public Library 1990 Oral History Interview of Mr. Henry Hulme, Arlington County Director of Public Works, 1977-1989:

Interviewer: The decision to depress the road [Interstate 66] to reduce the noise was one of the latest concessions, wasn't it?

Mr. Hulme:...Hal Gibson [of the Stonewall Jackson Civic Association] was in the forefront and I would say, probably opened the eyes to a lot of people about what could be done to soften the impact of the highway, particularly from the standpoint of sound walls and from the standpoint of lowering it. The state was very, very reluctant to lower I-66 in the Glebe Road-Washington Boulevard area primarily because when you lower it, you had to make sure that you cleared the top of Lubber Run....Then you had to make it so that...you could then get under Washington Boulevard....That's why Washington Boulevard bridge is so high...

other pedestrians, pass through this intersection. Long distances and tiny safety islands make for a frightening and dangerous crossing. As Ballston continues to grow, pedestrian and traffic volumes at this intersection will continue to increase.

Recommendation 13. To allow residents to travel safely on foot or bicycle to and from Ballston, the County (in cooperation with the Association) should make the intersection of Glebe Road and Fairfax Drive pedestrian-friendly. Crosswalks should be better marked, medians (with curb cuts) should extend into the crosswalk, and islands and medians should be expanded, lanes narrowed, or crossing distances otherwise minimized.

Other Crossings.

Residents identified also identified other areas, noted below, that are particularly dangerous crossing points for pedestrians.

Recommendation 14. In cooperation with the Association, the County should improve or create pedestrian crossing locations: a) at and around the intersection of Carlin Springs Road and Glebe Road, as well as other locations along Carlin Springs Road; b) across George Mason Drive at Fairfax Drive; and c) across Wilson Boulevard at Emerson Street (*near the Safeway*) and across Wilson Boulevard at the bus stop near Kensington Street. In all cases, consideration should be given to well-marked crosswalks and other measures that would alert drivers to go slower.

Urban Village Action Program

Bluemont welcomes the County Board's vision of Arlington as an urban village. But this alone won't build the friendly streets and

sidewalks that are the foundation of a livable urban community. Even if the entire Capital Improvement Program (*CIP*) were implemented according to plan, the County's sidewalk mileage would increase by just 1.5%. In the CIP plan running through the year 2005, there are just two modest sidewalk projects planned for all of Bluemont. At this rate, it would take about 115 years to build the pedestrian infrastructure that Bluemont needs to become a walkable community. Even the addition of substantial neighborhood conservation funds is unlikely to make Bluemont walkable within our lifetime.

In recognition of the fact that safe streets and pedestrian facilities are a primary element of a model urban village, Bluemont urges the County to implement the recommendations contained in this section and in Appendix A, Recommended Projects.

Recommendation 15. In recognition of the fact that a) safe streets and pedestrian facilities are a primary element of a model urban village, and b) Bluemont's hazardous streets and inadequate pedestrian facilities are inconsistent with the prevailing character of the neighborhood and the County as a whole, the County (*in cooperation with the Association*) should rebuild neighborhood streets to favor slow-moving local traffic, improve the flow of arterial roads, and build safe and continuous pedestrian and bicycle networks. To this end, the County should seek supplementary funding from State and Federal sources.

Other Issues

Parking. As Ballston develops, parking is becoming scarce in some areas of Bluemont. People who work in Ballston increasingly park for the day in the Eastern part of Bluemont and walk to and from

their offices. Furthermore, many Metro riders drive in from more distant suburbs, park in Bluemont, and walk to the Ballston Metro station. Some areas in Bluemont have already sought and received County permission to establish neighborhood restricted parking zones. The Association expects these requests to continue. This will be all the more true if an additional entrance to the Ballston Metro is built near the intersection of Fairfax Drive and Vermont Street, as County and Metro officials are considering. Such an entrance would effectively push the range of Ballston-area parking 1000 feet to the west, encompassing more areas of Bluemont.

Recommendation 16. In cooperation with the Association, the County should respond expeditiously and favorably to residents' requests to establish or expand restricted neighborhood parking zones in those portions of the neighborhood that are most heavily affected by non-resident parking.

Recommendation 17. To alleviate weekend, weeknight and summer-time parking problems around Arlington Traditional School, the County (in cooperation with the Association) should allow users of

Bluemont Remembers: 1920's Streets

Excerpts from the Arlington County Public Library 1985 Oral History Interview of Mr. William N. Garrett:

Interviewer: Do you remember when the streets were paved around here? In the 1920's, were the streets paved?

Mr. Garrett: Must have been in the '20's, latter part of the '20's because Carlin Springs Road was a dirt road then when I left here... Mrs. Miles used to serve mail on there with a horse and buggy...Rural Free Delivery.

Arlington County Ad Hoc Committee on Neighborhood Traffic Calming

Proposed Array of Measures

Active, non-restrictive measures that employ regulations or physical buffers to calm traffic.

- Flat-top speed humps: 3.5 inches high and 22 feet long, these raised sections of roadway should not be confused with speed humps or speed bumps.
- Raised crosswalks: essentially flat-top speed humps used as crosswalks. They often have a different surface than the roadway, such as brick pavers.
- Chicanes: staggered, triangular curb extensions that transform the traffic movement from straight to curving.
- Nubs or chokers: curb extensions installed at intersections or midblock that allow on-street parking while visually narrowing the roadway.
- Intersection geometry changes: modify and control traffic through channelization, re-direction and tightening of turning radii.
- Left turn lanes and left turn signals: reduce cut-through traffic on neighborhood streets that are adjacent to busy intersections. By facilitating left turns, motorists are discouraged from bypassing intersections by cutting through neighborhood streets.
- Medians: raised or flush islands can be used to narrow the roadway, channelize traffic, control turning movement or provide pedestrians mid-road safe refuge.
- Multiway stop signs: intended to assign right of way at intersections. County staff apply strict criteria before implementing this solution, due to evidence that it loses effect when used as a traffic calming measure.
- Traffic circles: a small island placed in the middle of an intersection (usually four-way). Generally used in series to address speeding and thus reduce cut-through traffic.
- Speeding fine notice signs: indicate that motorists exceeding the posted speed limit could be liable for fines of up to \$200.

Passive, non-restrictive measures that employ voluntary or subliminal means to calm traffic.

- Street narrowing: Street width directly corresponds with prevailing vehicle speed. As street width increases, the rate of injury-causing accidents rises exponentially⁵.
- Gateway treatments: create a noticeable transition from an arterial street to a neighborhood street, alerting the driver to the fact that a neighborhood has been entered. Gateway treatments include road pavers, landscaping, signage and narrowed street entrance.
- Rumble strips: thermoplastic strips or grooves cut into the roadway that cause a rumbling sound when driven over at high speeds.
- Roadway markings: crosswalks, stop bars at stop signs, bicycle and parking lanes, cross-hatchings at lane narrowings, centerlines and curb lines. Markings can also be used to clarify the path of lanes across complex intersections.
- Woonef: a residential street treatment where the roadway is made of brick pavers, and curbs and sidewalks are dispensed with, giving the sense that the motorist is in a driveway.
- Speed display units (*SMART set*): a portable, self-contained speed display units make motorists aware of the speed they are traveling and the posted speed limit. Compliance is voluntary.

Restrictive measures that employ regulations or physical obstructions to restrict traffic.

- Truck restrictions: trucks over 7500 pounds could be restricted from certain streets, except for the purpose of receiving loads or making deliveries.
- Full or half street closure: a physical barrier closing the street to through traffic and creating a midblock or intersection cul-de-sac.
- Diverter and diagonal street closure: a barrier installed diagonally across a four-way intersection, converting it into two opposing right-angle turns, but allowing no straight-through traffic.
- One-way street designations: vehicle access is partially restricted in order to break up cut-through routes.
- Turn and access restrictions: "Do Not Enter" and "No Turn" signs.

the school grounds and nearby Fields Park to park in the school lot and on Edison Street. Signs should be changed accordingly.

Alleys. Traditional neighborhood design encourages the use of alleys. Regrettably, a lack of routine cleaning and maintenance has affected some of Bluemont's alleys. The alley south of Wilson Boulevard between Wakefield and Abingdon Street has a tree blocking any prospective vehicular traffic.

Recommendation 18. In cooperation with the Association as appropriate, the County should clean and maintain Bluemont's alleys more regularly.

Lighting

Residents have requested the installation of street lamps at several locations that are lacking in sufficient lighting of any kind. In addition, the Association welcomes the replacement of arched streetlights with Coach-style lamps or Carlisle lamps at any location where residents so desire.

Recommendation 19. To enhance safety in the neighborhood, the County (in cooperation with the Association) should install attractive nighttime lighting at the locations specified in Appendix B, Recommended Projects A20 through A27.

Notes

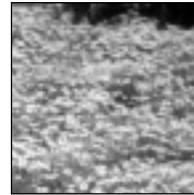
¹*Traditional Neighborhood Development Street Design Guidelines.* Institute of Transportation Engineers Transportation Planning Council Committee 5P-8, Washington, D.C., 1997.

²P. Swift, D. Painter, M. Goldstein. *Residential Street Typology and Injury Accident Frequency.* 1997, Swift and Associates, Longmont Colorado.

³ITE, *supra*.

⁴*AASHTO Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, 1990.* American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Washington, D.C. 1990.

⁵Swift, *supra*.



The Custis Trail runs through Bluemont on its way to Key Bridge.



Parks and Open Space

Overview

Bluemont enjoys a relative abundance of parks and other open space. Within this small urban neighborhood are Bluemont Junction Park, Fields Park, Lacey Woods Park, half of Bluemont Park, half of Bon Air Park, part of Lubber Run Park, a wetlands preserve known as Beaver Pond, historic Southern-Shreve Cemetery, and Arlington Constitutional Garden and Bicentennial Bell. Passing through the neighborhood are Four Mile Run and Lubber Run, as well as three of the area's premier bike trails, the Custis Trail, the Washington & Old Dominion Trail, and the Bluemont Junction Trail. Together, these parks and other open spaces offer a wide range of recreational and nature-oriented activities, from bird-watching and bicycling to tennis and trout fishing.

The people of Bluemont cherish these open spaces. Overwhelmingly, they support the County's continuing efforts to preserve and maintain them. At the same time, many residents think that a good thing can be made even better. Their specific suggestions to improve parks and other open areas are described below. In addition, many residents wonder more generally whether the neighborhood's open spaces are getting too popular for their own good. With more and more people making use of Bluemont's parks and trails, conflicts occur over limited space. Accordingly, many residents encourage the County to increase the supply of parkland by acquiring

Voices of Bluemont: Parks and Open Spaces

Three out of four households responding to the neighborhood conservation plan survey thought neighborhood parks were adequate and well maintained. Almost 90% of survey respondents supported the preservation of neighborhood trees and green space. A sampling of survey comments follows.

"Maintain the parks we have — they're a real treasure!"

"We live near Bon Air Park and Bluemont Park. What more could we want!"

"Let's preserve trees and green space anywhere we have left!"

"The parks are already excellent. It would not be sensible to seek further improvement."

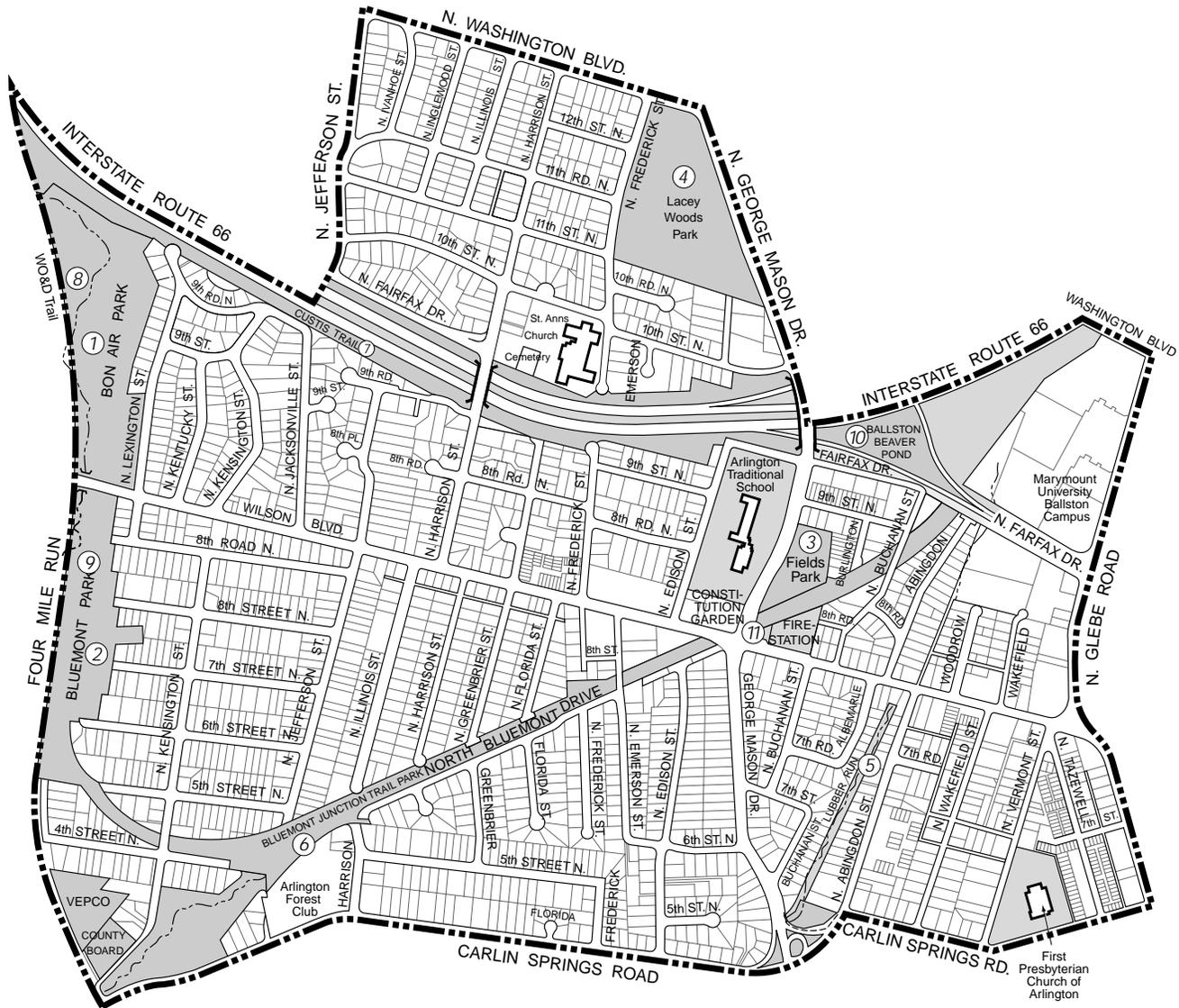
"As the use of parks increases. It's harder to keep parks from becoming tired."

some of the few remaining parcels of undeveloped neighborhood or County land.

Recommendation 20. Recognizing that recreational, historical, and natural space is of critical importance to the well-being of the community and to the livability of the neighborhood, the people of Bluemont encourage the County to maintain the highest standards for the neighborhood's parks and other public spaces. As the number of park and trail users continues to grow, the County should (pursuant to the Open Space Master Plan) seek to improve and expand existing green space so that the next generation of residents can continue to enjoy a wide range of recreational, historical, and natural resources.

Recommendation 21. Recognizing the value of mature trees and other flora, the Association encourages





Map 5.
Parks and
Open Space

- 1 Bon Air Park
- 2 Bluemont Park
- 3 Fields Park
- 4 Lacey Woods Park
- 5 Lubber Run Park
- 6 Bluemont Junction Trail Park
- 7 Custis Trail
- 8 WO&D Trail
- 9 Four Mile Run
- 10 Ballston Beaver Pond
- 11 Constitution Garden



SCALE IN FEET



the County to a) vigorously enforce site plan procedures meant to safeguard trees and other vegetation; b) control nonnative vines that threaten trees; and c) collaborate with Virginia Power to properly train tree trimming crews and to ensure the strictest quality standards.

Waterways and Wetlands

Four Mile Run passes through the center of Bon Air Park and Bluemont Park on its way to the Potomac River. Mature trees line both stream banks, shading the stream and its wildlife. The Arlington County Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Resources, in conjunction with the Northern Virginia chapter of Trout Unlimited and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries each spring stocks the stream with trout, giving residents and visitors a unique urban fishing opportunity.

Like other Northern Virginia waterways, the health of Four Mile Run is threatened by pollutants. Also, as impermeable material replaces vegetation in much of the stream's watershed, unfiltered storm runoff causes erosion. (See *Recommendation 3 on lot coverage*) Four Mile Run does not currently meet Federal and State water quality standards.

Recommendation 22. The Association commends Arlington County for joining Fairfax County and the Cities of Alexandria and Falls Church in creating a new monitoring system for Four Mile Run. The Association encourages additional vigorous efforts to restore the health of the stream, its wildlife, and its vegetation.

Lubber Run flows south-southeast through the eastern edge of the neighborhood. The northern edge of Lubber Run Park is within the

Bluemont neighborhood. The stream joins Four Mile Run in Arlington Forest, one-half mile south of the neighborhood. Beaver Pond Park, classified as Natural Resource Open Space, is a wetland area built as a storm water retention area for Interstate 66 between Washington Boulevard and Fairfax Drive. The pond overflows into Lubber Run. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officials working at that agency's Ballston office have volunteered their expertise to protect Beaver Pond Park's wildlife, which includes not only beavers but a number of native birds.

Off-Road Trails

Bluemont hosts three paved off-road trails, each of which is an important part of the exemplary Northern Virginia multi-use trail network. Bluemont's trails are often filled with walkers, joggers, in-line skaters, and recreational and commuter bicyclists. But the very popularity of the trails presents new challenges. Heavy usage becomes even more of a problem when some trail-users speed or otherwise ignore trail guidelines.

Recommendation 23. The neighborhood urges more frequent, year-round bike patrol policing of neighborhood parks and trails to encourage trail etiquette and to enhance trail and park safety. Furthermore, the County should respond expeditiously to residents' reports of non-permitted consumption of alcohol, drug-using or other nefarious activity in neighborhood parks or trails.

The Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail, located on the site of the former railroad bed, runs continuously from Purcellville, Virginia to the Potomac River. The trail passes on the western edge of the Bluemont neighborhood, running along Four Mile Run through Bon Air Park and Bluemont

Park. The W&OD trail is up to 12 feet wide and is maintained by the County and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority.

At the Northern end of Bon Air Park, the W&OD connects to the starting point of the **Custis Trail**, a County-maintained pathway running through the Bluemont neighborhood along the North side of Interstate 66 on its way to Washington, D.C.. The trail is lighted and about 9 feet wide. Mature oaks and other old growth trees line parts of the trail, especially in the Western portion between Harrison Street and Bon Air Park. The county has planted additional trees in the area near George Mason Drive. However, nonnative vines threaten many trees. Graffiti is a persistent problem along the Custis Trail. The County is to be commended for its quick efforts to remove or paint over the graffiti.

Bluemont Remembers

Excerpts from the Arlington County Public Library 1985 Oral History Interview of Mr. William N. Garrett.

Mr. Garrett: There's water all around us here. Tiber Creek, I got a call from the County one time, said they never heard of it. I said, "What? Never heard of Tiber Creek?" You go to George Mason Drive here at Lubber Run, see there's a culvert there, and if I ain't mistaken it's still over behind those houses on Abingdon Street. It's still open. On Wilson Boulevard there's a culvert there that goes over it. Tiber Creek goes on... where the hospital is over there. Comes down there and intercepts with Lubber Run... At that time there was a one way bridge across there known as McCarthy's bridge... It used to be an open branch until they put that other street in there or paved the road.

Interviewer: You mean, George Mason?

Mr. Garrett: George Mason. Yeah, George Mason.

Bluemont Junction Trail runs 1.3 miles from the W&OD trail in Bluemont Park to Fairfax Drive in Ballston. More and more people are using the trail not only for recreation but to get to the booming commercial district of Ballston. Regrettably, going to or from Ballston is difficult and dangerous because of the trail's crossing at the intersection of Wilson Boulevard and George Mason Drive. This intersection is dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists because it is wide, poorly marked, and because a right-turn lane (going from Wilson eastbound to George Mason Drive southbound), encourages motorists to turn on red without checking for people in the crosswalk. (See *Recommendation 11.*)

Pedestrians and bicyclists face additional hazards where the trail ends near Fairfax Drive. The trail is constricted by a guard rail near Abingdon Street, and then gives way to a narrow, unbuffered, obstructed sidewalk in front of the Holiday Inn. This area is made even more hazardous because drivers come off Interstate 66 at high speeds and flow directly onto Fairfax Drive. Motorists' visibility is limited by the adjacent sound barriers. (See *Appendix A, Recommended Projects*)

Parks

Bluemont Park, classified by the County as community open space, is located between Wilson Boulevard, Carlin Springs Road and Manchester Street. This large park has a number of recreational, natural, and historical attractions that are popular with neighborhood residents and visitors. Many residents believe that some specific projects would make the park even better.

The Northwest portion of Bluemont Park includes lighted tennis courts

and a parking lot. A well-worn dirt path crosses from the southeastern corner of the parking lot to the Four Mile Run Trail.

The Northeast portion of Bluemont Park includes an athletic field, and a train caboose and exhibit commemorating the site of the former Bluemont rail junction. Arlington County youth soccer leagues as well as a private school lacrosse team often use the field. The western central portion of the park is a large open area that includes three baseball diamonds. Often, the fields are used all day, with several games of the same or various sports going on at a time. The Southwest portion of the park contains a lighted basketball court, a children's playground, a Disc Golf Course, picnic tables, barbecue pits, and another parking lot entered from Manchester Street. This portion of the park is populated with mature trees.

The Southeast portion of the park is predominately an open athletic field surrounded by a forest of mature trees, and includes a picnic pavilion and a tree-covered picnic area. The area is accessed by low concrete footbridge that fords Four Mile Run and is designed to allow water from the stream to overflow the bridge during heavy rain. The area is a popular spot for group picnics with over 50 picnic tables and eight barbecue grills.

Open metal mesh trash cans are located in adequate numbers throughout Bluemont Park. But because these cans are uncovered, they attract rats and other vermin, which scatter trash about the park and stream especially near picnic areas. Residents have noted similar vermin problems in other neighborhood parks.

Recommendation 24. The County should consider replacing all trash cans in neighborhood parks with a type similar to those used by the

National Park Service, with curved tops and pull down flap openings in order to control vermin and reduce the amount of scattered trash.

Bluemont Junction Park. While the Bluemont Junction Trail (see above) is the highlight of this park, there are also grassy areas wide enough to host informal athletic activities. Residents believe the park would be enhanced by the construction between Emerson Street and Kensington Street of a tot lot and playground area to accommodate the many children living nearby. The large number of park and trail users would also benefit from other modest improvements including the addition of a drinking fountain and tables or benches. While the park was once planted with wildflowers, it is now relatively bare between Emerson and Kensington Streets. Replanting wildflowers and adding other appropriate landscaping would improve the park's appearance, especially in the years it will take until the park's many young trees become mature. Many people use the trail after dark, but it is poorly lit in some areas, particularly between Fairfax Drive and George Mason Boulevard. Residents believe that the completion of all of these modest improvements would not alter the park's character as a predominantly open and unimproved area.

Recommendation 25. In Bluemont Junction Park between Emerson Street and Kensington Street the County (*in cooperation with the Association*) should construct a tot lot and a playground, and install a drinking fountain and additional benches or tables. Wildflowers and other appropriate landscaping should also be added to improve the park's appearance between Emerson Street and Kensington Street. The County should also install - as needed along the length of the trail - additional nighttime

lighting sufficient to eliminate dark spots but not so bright as to disturb adjacent residents. The viability of safety phones should also be considered for this trail as well as other trails in the neighborhood. Residents believe that the completion of all of these modest improvements would not alter the park's character as a predominantly open and unimproved area. (See Appendix A, Recommended Projects)

There are persistent fears among some residents that the soil near Kensington Street and Carlin Springs Road by the Virginia Power substation was contaminated with toxic polychlorinated biphenols (or PCB's). Some residents are also concerned that PCB contamination in Bluemont Junction Park may have resulted from overhead electric transformers, which, before they were placed underground, would occasionally explode.

Recommendation 26. The County should thoroughly investigate and take appropriate action in response to concerns over the possibility of toxic waste in the soil of Bluemont Park near the Virginia Power substation and in Bluemont Junction Park near the location of former overhead electric transformers.

Bon Air Park's 23.9 acres are classified by the County as community open space. The park is bounded by Wilson Boulevard, Arlington Mill Drive, Interstate 66, and Lexington Street. Bon Air is a popular location for group picnics as well as family gatherings and individual respites. It is also used for events such as Arbor Day and Arlington Neighborhood Day. In addition to Four Mile Run and the W&OD Trail, the park contains two tennis courts, a basketball court, a baseball diamond, a volleyball court, playgrounds, and picnic tables and grills. Bon Air also hosts the following horticultural attrac-

tions, which draw visitors from throughout the area:

Arlington Memorial Rose Garden, one of the finest collections of roses in the region, which contains some 3,500 rose bushes of 157 varieties, 32 of which have been awarded the American Rose Society's award for excellence. The garden was established in 1944 with donations from individuals whose families included members who had served in the armed forces in World War II. The garden moved to Bon Air in 1961 from its original site at Arlington Hospital. The Potomac Rose Society and other groups periodically give presentations in the garden on the culture and care of roses. Wedding ceremonies are often held here;

The Azalea Garden, which includes camellias and rhododendrons and a large variety of azaleas. In early spring, extensive plantings of narcissi provide a striking display;

Sunny and Shade Gardens, which contain extensive demonstration plantings of bulbs, perennials, wildflowers and other plants that are suited to local growing conditions. The Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia maintain the gardens.

Residents are concerned over traffic congestion and parking problems in the park on weekends, especially when there are large group or family picnics and soccer games. Neighbors are also concerned over loitering and possible drug dealing in the parking lot after the park is closed. Restricting the parking lot pay phone to allow outgoing calls only could help reduce such inappropriate after-hours activities.

Fields Park, classified as neighborhood open space, is located near the intersection of George Mason Drive and Wilson Boulevard next to the Bluemont Junction Trail and the

Constitutional Garden and Bicentennial Bell. A stone marker in the park is inscribed, "In memory of Maryanna Fields 1922 - 1985." The park consists primarily of a Bermuda-grass athletic field used mostly for youth soccer. There are also small bleachers and two picnic tables. Trees line the park on its East, West and North sides. Adjacent private property is separated from the park by a chain-link fence with lock and gate entrances for each property owner

The County is to be commended for its maintenance of the split-rail fence surrounding much of the park and for controlling weeds and vines that are prone to grow on the fence. This is important because the wooded area which abuts the athletic field is filled with poison ivy, wild raspberries with thorns, pokeberry (*liked by birds but poisonous to humans*), and invasive wild grape vine.

Lacey Woods Park, classified as community open space, is regarded by residents and visitors as a small treasure of urban forestry. The park is located southwest of George Mason Drive and Washington Boulevard. While only about 13 acres, Lacey Woods Park contains one of the largest and most important concentrations of woods in the neighborhood and County. Lacey Woods Park contains a heavily used basketball court and an athletic field. The park also has a popular children's playground. A garden and benches are to be added. The park has two picnic shelters and a fire ring that is put to use by local scout troops and during the neighborhood's annual Halloween celebration. Parking is available on adjacent streets. Residents have noted that some dog owners fail to leash their pets or to clean up after them.

Recommendation 27. In Lacey Woods Park and other neighbor-

hood parks and trails, the County (*in cooperation with the Association*) should seek to better enforce ordinances requiring dog owners to leash their pets and to clean up after them. The County should inform owners of relevant ordinances when owners register their pets.

A privately owned parcel of woodland stands on the Northeast corner of George Mason Drive and Washington Boulevard, catty-corner from Lacey Woods Park. This parcel is within the Waycroft-Woodlawn Neighborhood

Recommendation 28. In accordance with the preference of the majority of Waycroft-Woodlawn residents responding to that neighborhood's recent conservation plan survey, the County should acquire the parcel on the Northeast corner of George Mason Drive and Washington Boulevard and maintain it as a natural-woods County park land similar to neighboring Lacey Woods Park.

Other Open Spaces

Arlington Constitutional Garden and the Constitutional Bicentennial Bell, classified by the County as neighborhood open space, is located at the corner of Wilson Boulevard and George Mason Drive. The garden plot measures just 70 by 15 feet but is planted with approximately 900 flowering plants in the spring, summer and fall. The garden and bell commemorate the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution. They were established in 1987 as a joint effort of the Arlington Beautification Project and the County. The project received a certificate of official recognition from the State of Virginia under the Living Legacy program. Local residents and many passers-by have complimented the garden's County-maintained colorful display of annual flowers. The bronze

Bicentennial Bell weighs 250 pounds and has a 30-pound clapper that is inserted to ring the bell on ceremonial occasions such as the Fourth of July, federal holidays and at midnight on New Year's Eve.

The Arlington Metaphysical Chapel, dating from 1981, is located on Wilson Boulevard near Jefferson Street. Its quaint white frame building blends in with the surrounding residences.

Arlington Traditional School, classified as neighborhood open space, is a public magnet elementary school located west of George Mason Drive, just north of Wilson Boulevard. On the large lot surrounding the school are playgrounds, a basketball hoop, and an athletic field with backstop that is used for both ball games and soccer. (*See also recommendation 17 on parking at Arlington Traditional School.*)

Arlington Forest Club, classified by the County as semi-public land, lies south of Bluemont Junction Park at the corner of Harrison Street and Carlin Springs Road. This private recreation association offers its members pool and lighted tennis facilities. Because the club's mature trees and landscaping make such a contribution to the neighborhood, the Association encourages the club to maintain its greenery and to consider adding trees or other landscaping along Harrison Street.

Bon Air Baptist Church, established in the early 1900's, is a attractive, well-maintained facility located in the middle of 800 Illinois Street, a residential block. The front of the church is nicely landscaped with seasonal plants year round, while the back area has been converted into a parking lot extending to Jefferson Street.

First Presbyterian Church The First Presbyterian congregation,

started in 1872, moved to its present location at the corner of Carlin Springs Road and Vermont Street in 1950. The tall white-spired church, parking lot, and playground sit on a 3 acre site, one of the largest remaining green spaces in the Ballston area.

Saint Ann Catholic Church and School celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1997. Its large lot, bounded by 10th Street, Custis Trail, Frederick Street and Harrison Street, contains an attractive slate-roofed, Flemish-bond church and various other church and school buildings. Most of the lot not covered by buildings is paved over for parking. The church lot also contains two basketball hoops and a children's playground.

Saint Michael's Episcopal Church, built in 1948 of native Virginia stone, is located at Ivanhoe Street and 11th Road. The church's chimes can be heard across the northern portion of the neighborhood. The attractively landscaped grounds include an education building, outdoor altar, memorial garden, and children's playground.

Southern-Shreve Cemetery, classified by the County as a Historic Resource, is located along with an accompanying marker south of Saint Ann Church at Fairfax Drive and Harrison Street. (*See Historic Section notes on the Shreve and Southern families, early settlers to the area.*)

Neighborhood Beautification

Streets are the most visible and important public spaces in neighborhoods. Unfortunately, Bluemont's attractive parks stand in stark contrast to its streets, where concrete and power lines are far more visible than vegetation. The Association encourages County

effort to build more attractive, landscaped streetscapes, particularly along arterial roads.

The neighborhood's above-ground utilities are an impediment to improved street landscaping. Utility lines and poles are not only unattractive themselves, but are especially unkind to trees. Regrettably, burying utilities throughout the neighborhood is prohibitively expensive at this time. However, as with other Arlington neighborhoods, a partnership between the County and local businesses could conceivably produce sufficient funding to bury utilities along Wilson Boulevard. (*See Wilson Boulevard Commercial Area.*)

There are minimal buffer and transition areas between commercial facilities and adjacent residential neighborhoods in much of the neighborhood. This is particularly true for buildings with older site plans. Examples in the Glebe Road Commercial Area include the Holiday Inn and Bob Peck Chevrolet. In the Wilson Boulevard Commercial Area, there is a particular lack of landscaping at the Safeway and the former Balmar Printing and Graphics facility. In each of these cases, commercial activities take place directly adjacent to or across from residential dwellings with minimal or no benefit from landscaping or other forms of screening.

Recommendation 29. The Association encourages local businesses to develop and maintain attractive landscaping, especially in those areas adjacent to residential areas. The Association welcomes the involvement of County business development offices in encouraging such practices even if not specifically required by County ordinance.

Residents also oppose the prospective construction of any telecommunication towers or facilities on county parks or other land. The

Association believes this is a reasonable position in view of the fact that commercial buildings in Ballston are at a higher elevation than any neighborhood location and could accommodate such towers or facilities more efficiently than any stand-alone structure in Bluemont neighborhood.

Recommendation 30. The County should not permit the installation of telecommunications towers or facilities in the neighborhood.

Recommendation 31. Provide neighborhood identification signs with plantings at designated entry points into the community and/or at public space within the neighborhood.



The Beaver Pond is a refuge for many native birds and mammals.



Four Mile Run in Bluemont Park is stocked with trout each year.



Four Mile Run forms the Western boundary of Bluemont, and provides a scenic focal point in Bluemont Park.

Wilson Boulevard Commercial Area

Overview

The Wilson Boulevard commercial area is Bluemont's downtown. Residents generally appreciate Wilson's blend of small businesses, craft shops, and a few chain establishments. But while neighbors don't want to turn the area into a continuation of Ballston, they are also generally supportive of making the Wilson Boulevard commercial area more cohesive, more attractive, and more pedestrian-friendly. In keeping with the urban village concept, aesthetic and access improvements to Wilson's commercial strip could go a long way toward establishing a traditional town center that pulls together the community.

The Wilson Boulevard Commercial Area extends from Glebe Road west to Jefferson Street. It consists of a narrow strip of commercially zoned properties interspersed with apartments, townhouses, and single family homes. The businesses located here are spread out either in single buildings or in buildings housing two to five businesses. The area includes family restaurants, service stations, barber and beauty shops, dry cleaners, a video store, a convenience store, a former printshop and warehouse, a bakery, a funeral home, an electronic appliance repair shop, and professional offices.

There are also a number of businesses within the Wilson Boulevard Commercial Area that are unique. These include a pottery consignment shop, a well-regarded used book store, a leather and shoe

repair shop, a skate board and roller blade shop, a T-shirt and shoe store, an animal hospital, and a commercial door service company. The main centers of commercial activity in this area are the Safeway grocery store and the McDonald's Restaurant at the intersection of Wilson Boulevard and George Mason Drive.

Challenges

Pedestrian Safety. Wilson Boulevard is grossly unsafe for pedestrians. Local businesses and residents suffer as a result. Many residents have noted specifically that after having made one trial walk to the Safeway, they now drive to non-local stores even for small items. Name a pedestrian hazard, and Wilson's got it: speeding traffic; wide, insufficiently marked crossing points; front-of-store diagonal

parking; and sidewalks that are narrow, obstructed and lacking even the most minimal buffer from traffic. In addition to the 105 telephone poles and other obstructions along Wilson Boulevard, there are 50 dips in the sidewalks for driveways and parking lots, not including curb cuts at street intersections. Wilson Boulevard's sidewalks are impassable for people with special needs, and are hazardous to anyone else who ventures on them. Crossing Wilson Boulevard is dangerous throughout the neighborhood, though residents think that the crossings at Emerson Street (*by the Safeway*) and by the bus stops near Kensington Street are in particular need of improvements.

Store and Parking Alignment. Parking is generally restricted to the area directly in front of the

Voices of Bluemont: Wilson Boulevard Commercial Area

Two out of three households responding to the neighborhood conservation plan survey thought local commercial establishments met their daily shopping needs, were clean and well maintained, and made a positive contribution to the community. Still, many people suggested improvements. A sampling of survey comments:

"We're fortunate to have small businesses. Let's support them, not destroy them."

"I go to the Lee/Harrison shopping area because the Wilson area seems dreary and seedy."

"Improve pedestrian and bike access."

"Wilson Boulevard shops are cut off from those residents north of them."

"Storefronts look bad, but the services are good."

"Just plant more trees and gardens."

business storefronts. Drivers going in and out of these parking areas can endanger themselves as well as nearby pedestrians, especially if the drivers have to back into traffic on Wilson Boulevard. Front-of-store parking is also a reason the area is generally unattractive.

Appearance. In addition to blocking the path of pedestrians and the sight-lines of drivers, Wilson's Boulevard's forest of telephone poles and utility lines is unsightly. And in a commercial area, appearances count. An almost total lack of landscaping adds to a bleak, uninviting look. There are whole blocks of Wilson Boulevard with no green at all.

The Association understands that at some point the Safeway at Wilson and Edison may be renovated or expanded. Such a project would be an ideal opportunity for owners to make the store more attractive and pedestrian friendly. A renovated Safeway reconfigured on its existing property to allow for behind-store parking, attractive landscaping, and good pedestrian access could serve

as a model for the other businesses of the Wilson Commercial Area.

For all its shortcomings, the Wilson Boulevard Commercial Area is valued as one of the few remaining locations in Arlington County where small businesses, sole proprietors, and crafts-people can still find affordable commercial space. Most neighborhood residents regard Wilson Boulevard as a unique resource that needs to be nurtured, not replaced. Along this line, the Association believes these businesses would become even more of an asset to the community if access were improved and the area given a more inviting look.

Recommendation 32. The County, in partnership with local business owners and the Association, should develop a phased urban village action plan to improve the appearance of the Wilson Boulevard Commercial Area, to enhance vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian access, and to generally encourage the establishment of a traditional town center that pulls together the community. Goals of the plan

should include: burying utility lines using the combined resources of the County, commercial area property owners, and Virginia Power; development of consolidated behind-store parking wherever possible; construction of sidewalks and planting strips on both sides of Wilson Boulevard between Glebe Road and Jefferson Street of sufficient width and design to meet national standards for traditional neighborhood business areas; the addition of trees and other landscaping wherever possible; and the replacement of streetlights with attractive street lamps.

Recommendation 33. Should Safeway company officials decide to renovate or expand the store at Wilson Boulevard and Edison Street, the neighborhood encourages consideration of a new design that is more pedestrian friendly and has more curb appeal. Behind-store parking, attractive landscaping, and welcoming pedestrian walkways should be considered.

Bluemont Remembers

Excerpts from the Arlington County Public Library Oral History Interview in 1989 of Ms. Sarah B. Brugh.

Interviewer: ... We have a map in front of us that shows Stonewall Jackson [school, now Arlington Traditional School]. It's a 1938 map of Arlington County and index of streets and what-not.

Ms. Brugh: The farmhouse was down on Wilson Boulevard right there where McDonald's is now. There was a farm there. Pastures, they had a barn and the pasture was right behind the barn that came up by the school... Then when George Mason [Drive] was built it was on the last addition that they put the principal's office, the nurse's office, the conference room and the gymnasium... When I first came to Arlington, I walked along the cornfield which is now the Stonewall Jackson ballfield playground

Landscapers Help Spruce Up Main Street

Small Cities Regain Charm and Business at a Low Cost

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By Lucinda Harper,
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

VALDOSTA, Ga. - Four hundred trees, 45 park benches, 234 lampposts, one old-fashioned street clock. That's all it took. For more than a decade, this small city has been trying to revitalize its downtown: It gave funds for facade restoration, discounts on electric bills and sponsored concerts on the courthouse lawn. Nothing seemed to do the trick.

Upscale Businesses

But two years ago, Valdosta decided to invest \$9 million on new landscaping, a large sum for a town of 48,000. Most existing trees in an eight-block radius were uprooted. New elm, oak and magnolia trees, as well as azalea, holly and juniper bushes, were put in their place. Sidewalks were widened and streets were narrowed, bringing back an ambiance of Southern charm that had left the district many, many years before.

The result: New, hip and trendy businesses cropped up in once-abandoned buildings even before the project was completely finished a few weeks ago, and people are coming from surrounding areas to shop.

"Before, the downtown was old-timey. Not old-timey enough to be cute, but old-timey enough to be tacky," says Becky Myers, who started an upscale children's clothing boutique here in March.

Carol McDonald, who opened an antique shop with her sister here recently, agrees. "Basically, people used to come downtown for a reason, and then they left, she says. "Now, people stroll around just to look, and they are really enjoying it."

Call it economic development on the cheap. But some smaller cities and towns are discovering that new trees and lush greenery can be more effective than tax breaks, abatements and other economic incentives when it comes to luring new businesses and shoppers.

'A Sense of Community'

With a strong economy leaving many municipalities flush with cash from tax revenues, more cities than ever are trying to spruce up their surroundings in hope that the facelift will keep middle-income taxpayers from moving to newer communities. "Many small towns are fighting to keep people there, and landscaping is a way to build a sense of community," says Richard Spurber, president of suburban-Los Angeles-based Valley Crest, which provided the landscaping for Valdosta and some other small towns looking to freshen their image.

Of course, redesigning shabby downtowns isn't new. Large cities have been turning decaying neighborhoods into festive marketplaces and waterfront pavilions for decades. But those projects often required massive new infrastructure and costly construction, far too expensive for small towns.

Landscaping, on the other hand, is relatively inexpensive. Urban planner say if a city has proper infrastructure, viable activities and commercial investment, but still no real spark, a bit of fresh landscaping may be just what the doctor ordered.

"Landscaping is not the answer to economic development, but it is a critical part of the answer," says David Godschalk, professor of city and regional planning at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He cautions, though, that there is no clear way to measure the impact. "You can't say that if you put down 100 trees, you'll get X as a return."

Still, many small towns are plugging away. Some are trying to create a sense of nostalgia to appeal to baby boomers. The city of Temucula, Calif., is remodeling the center of its downtown to resemble a frontier town in the Old West. Aside from the planting of new California Sycamore trees, landscapers are replacing boring concrete sidewalks with wooden boardwalks, installing hitching posts and putting in oak trash barrels -all at a cost of \$5 million.

John Meyer, housing and redevelopment manager for the city of 48,000, says the theme was chosen to keep in line with the town's history as a stage stop on the Overland Stage mail route and a large cattle ranch.

"Once this is completed, there will be more reason for commercial building, and the quality of the buildings will be better," Mr. Meyer predicts.

In an extremely poor area in Newport News, Va., the community opted to spend \$4 million on new landscaping along an 18-acre tract of waterfront property rather than build high-priced condominiums or an industrial Park.

"This is probably one of the last undeveloped pieces of waterfront between New York and Florida," says Shaun Brown, chairman of the Hampton Roads Waterfront Task Force. "But the feeling is that if we let the park go" to development, the community would flounder, she said.

Knoxville, Tenn. is working to revitalize its riverfront, industrial area and old city area. Knoxville's Department of Administration director, Ellen Adcock, cautions cities that are using heavy landscaping as a development tool to remember safety. "Sometimes, people end up feeling unsafe with a lot of shrubbery," she says, noting that criminals can hide behind it. "It is important that you pay attention to lighting and the positioning of trees."

Still, trees are an integral part of Knoxville's redevelopment efforts. "The mayor (*Victor Ashe*) is very tree-oriented," Ms. Adcock says. "Before a tree is cut down on any piece of public property, he has to be personally notified."

Before the landscaping project started two years ago in Valdosta, the tax base downtown was declining. It is now on the rise, says the town's Main Street director, Mara Register.

Ms. Register also points out that seven new businesses opened downtown in 1997, among them an engineering firm and a trendy coffee house, despite the fact that landscaping and street construction were at their peak, and it was often difficult to walk around the city streets.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Recommended Projects

A1. Kensington Street between Carlin Springs Road and 8th Road; Jefferson Street between 5th Street and Wilson Boulevard; 5th Street, 6th Street, 7th Street, and 8th Street between Kensington Street and Jefferson Street; and 8th Road between Jefferson Street and Lexington Street.

Design recommendations. The County should a) construct sidewalks with planting strips on both sides of each street, using reclaimed land from street right-sizing; b) right-size 8th Road and 5th Street to 26 foot curb-to-curb width, right-size Kensington Street and Jefferson Street to 30 foot curb-to-curb width or other width as determined by prevailing national standards for traditional neighborhood street design; c) maintain two sided parking on each street; and d) reduce curb return radii at all minor road intersections to 10 feet.

Other recommendations. Improve pedestrian path from Kensington Street dead-end at Wilson Boulevard toward the Wilson Boulevard bus stop. Construct differently textured, differently colored, and/or raised crosswalk where Bluemont trail bike path crosses Kensington Street. Consider marking bike lanes on Jefferson Street. Implement appropriate County-approved retrofitted traffic calming measures such as flat-top speed humps, traffic circles or other physical restraints as discussed with County officials. Consider changing the yield sign on Lexington Street at 8th Road to a stop sign to ensure drivers have enough time to properly gauge oncoming traffic.

A2. Harrison Street between Washington Boulevard and Wilson Boulevard.

No-cost recommendations. Consistent with County-approved traffic calming measures, the County should immediately allow one sided parking in 26 foot wide sections and immediately allow two sided parking in 30 or 31 foot wide sections, subject to line-of-sight, grade and other safety considerations and with consideration given to rush-hour parking restrictions.

Design recommendations. The County should a) right-size 36 foot curb-to-curb width to 30 feet or other appropriate width, maintaining two sided parking,

and right-size 26-foot width to 23 foot width maintaining parking prohibitions on both sides; b) construct sidewalks on east side, using reclaimed land from street right-sizing; and c) widen or otherwise improve pedestrian pathway over I-66, or add landscaped buffer of contained plantings.

Other Recommendations. As discussed with County officials the County should implement County-approved retrofitted traffic calming measures including measures to control speed, such as increased police enforcement and use of SMART sets, a permanent SMART set or speed warning sign, or flat-top speed humps and 4-way stops.

A3. Vermont Street, Abingdon Street and Wakefield Street, all between Wilson Boulevard and Carlin Springs Road.

Design recommendations. The County should a) right-size Vermont Street and Abingdon Street to 26 foot curb-to-curb width maintaining parking on both sides; b) construct sidewalks with planting strips on both sides of each street where sidewalks are missing, using reclaimed land from street right-sizing; c) reduce curb return radii at minor road intersections to 10 feet; and d) redesign turn lane for Carlin Springs Road onto Abingdon Street to discourage speeding.

A4. 7th Street between Buchanan Street and George Mason Drive; Buchanan Street between 7th Road and 7th Street; Albemarle Street between Wilson Boulevard and 7th Road.

Design recommendations. The County should a) construct sidewalks with planting strips on both sides of each street where missing; and b) reduce curb return radii at minor road intersections to 10 feet.

A5. Buchanan Street, between Fairfax Drive and Wilson Boulevard; 8th Road between Fields Park and Buchanan Street.

Design recommendations. The County should a) construct curbs and sidewalks with planting strips on both sides of each street; and b) reduce curb return radii at intersections to 10 feet.

A6. 5th Street, between Greenbrier Street and

Frederick Street; Frederick Street and Harrison Street between 5th Street and Carlin Springs Road; Illinois Street between 5th Street and Bluemont Drive; Greenbrier Street between 5th Street and Bluemont Drive.

Design recommendations. The County should a) right-size each street to 26 foot curb-to-curb width; and b) construct curbs and sidewalks with planting strips on both sides of each street where sidewalks are missing, using reclaimed land from street right-sizing; and c) reduce curb return radii to 10 feet.

A7. 10th Street between Frederick Street and George Mason Drive; Frederick Street between 10th Street and Washington Boulevard.

No-cost recommendations. To alleviate parking problems and slow traffic while still allowing for fluid through traffic, the County should immediately allow two sided parking in the 31 foot wide section of Frederick Street, consistent with County-approved traffic calming measures.

Design recommendations. For both 10th Street and Frederick Street the County should a) right-size both streets to 26 foot curb-to-curb widths maintaining parking on both sides; b) construct sidewalks with planting strips where missing on both sides of each street using reclaimed land from street right-sizing; and c) reduce curb return radii at minor road intersections to 10 feet. Note that the County Department of Public Works in 1997 declined the request of local residents for retrofitted traffic calming measures on Frederick Street, citing the fact that daily traffic volume was low. In view of this low traffic volume, the County will presumably not object to the removal of parking restrictions or to the right-sizing of these streets.

Other recommendations. Pending the completion of street design recommendations, the County should consider County-approved retrofitted traffic calming measures including flat top speed humps, 4-way stops, or curb nubs.

A8. 6th Street between Edison and Emerson Streets, Edison Street between Carlin Springs Road and 6th Street; Emerson Street between 6th Street and Wilson Boulevard.

Design recommendations. The County should a) construct sidewalks with planting strips parkway where sidewalks are missing, maintaining parking on both sides of each street; b) right-size 6th Street between Edison and Emerson to 26 feet, using reclaimed land for sidewalk and parkway; and c) reduce curb return radii at minor road intersections

to 10 feet.

A9. Bluemont Junction Park.

Recommended improvements. Between Emerson Street and Kensington Street the County should construct a tot lot and a playground, and install a drinking fountain and additional benches or tables. Wildflowers and other appropriate landscaping should also be added to improve the park's appearance between Emerson Street and Kensington Street. The County should also install as needed along the length of the trail additional nighttime lighting sufficient to eliminate dark spots but not so bright as to disturb adjacent residents. The viability of safety phones should also be considered for this trail as well as other trails in the neighborhood. Residents believe that the completion of all of these modest improvements would not alter the park's character as a predominantly open and unimproved area.

A10. Wilson Boulevard between Glebe Road and Four Mile Run.

Design recommendations. For the length of Wilson Boulevard through the neighborhood, the County should construct buffered, landscaped sidewalks of a width consistent with prevailing street design guidelines for traditional neighborhoods.

Other recommendations. The County should enhance enforcement measures and implement passive methods such as SMART sets to discourage vehicular speeding.

A11. Washington Boulevard between Ivanhoe Street and Frederick Street.

Design recommendations. The State of Virginia should construct curb and sidewalk with planting strip of a width consistent with prevailing street design guidelines for traditional neighborhoods. To enhance pedestrian safety and accommodate adjacent property owners, two-sided parking should be maintained.

A12. Frederick Street between its dead end at Interstate 66 and Wilson Boulevard; 9th Street between Frederick and Edison; 8th Road between Greenbrier and Edison streets.

Design recommendations. The County should construct sidewalks as follows: Frederick Street, both sides where missing between its dead end at Interstate 66 and Wilson Boulevard; 9th Street, south side between Frederick and Edison streets (curbs only to be built on north side); 8th Road, both sides where missing between Greenbrier and Edison streets.

A13. Fairfax Drive near Abingdon Street and the Holiday Inn.

Street design recommendations: The County should construct a sufficiently wide, landscaped sidewalk in front of the Holiday Inn. The Holiday Inn turn-in circle entryways should be narrowed. Pedestrian and bicycle paths should be separated and widened at their merge point near Abingdon Street. Note also Appendix A, Recommended Project A20.

A14. Florida, Greenbrier, Harrison and Illinois Street cul-de-sacs at Bluemont Junction Park.

Street design recommendations: The County should construct curbs and attractive entryways that allow for passage by bicycles, pedestrians, or people with strollers.

At the following locations, curbs and gutters should be constructed or storm drains improved:

A15. 12th Street between Frederick Street and Harrison Street (curb/gutter).

A16. 11th Road between Frederick Street and Illinois Street (curb/gutter).

A17. Bluemont Drive where missing between Illinois and Frederick Streets (curb/gutter). The end of Bluemont Drive at Illinois Street should also be neatened and repaired.

A18. Greenbrier Street cul-de-sac at Interstate 66 (curb/gutter).

A19. 9th Street between George Mason Drive and Buchanan Street (improvement of storm drains).

At the following locations, nighttime lighting should be installed or improved:

A20. Fairfax Drive at George Mason Drive through the area near Fairfax Drive at the Holiday Inn.

A21. 8th Road near Kensington Street.

A22. Frederick Street between its dead end at Interstate 66 and Wilson Boulevard; 9th Street between Frederick and Edison Streets.

A23. 7th Street between Tazewell and Wakefield Streets; Tazewell Street between 7th Street and Wilson Boulevard.

A24. Albemarle Street between Wilson Boulevard and 7th Street.

A25. Exit ramp from Carlin Springs Road west-bound onto George Mason northbound.

A26. Greenbrier Street between Bluemont Drive and 5th Street, including at Bluemont bike path.

A27. 7th Road near Abingdon Street.

APPENDIX B

Summary of Policy Recommendations

Land Use and Zoning

1. In order to preserve Bluemont as a predominantly residential neighborhood of detached homes, the Association will work with the County to maintain in broad form the prevailing land use and zoning patterns of the neighborhood. The neighborhood recommends specifically that residents' views be given due consideration in adjudicating any rezoning request or zoning variance request that would allow additional commercial development or higher density development in the neighborhood.
2. Working with the Association, the County should actively solicit the opinions of Bluemont residents on prospective modifications to the Ballston Sector Plan that include a part of the neighborhood. The County should welcome Bluemont's input on other prospective Ballston projects, including Metro station access projects.
3. In order to diminish runoff and erosion problems, particularly with regard to Four Mile Run, the County should revise building codes and zoning ordinances for any residential construction (*including home additions and infill development*) to: a) reduce surface area of residential lots permitted to be covered by structures or other impermeable entities (*e.g. reduce to the 50% coverage level suggested by the Civic Federation*); and b) require that new land uses do not create drainage problems for adjacent property owners.
4. Working with the Association as appropriate, the County should be responsive to residents' requests for enforcement of County ordinances on residential use, residential care, parking, noise, and other health and quality of life issues. In acting on such requests, the County should balance potential risks to health, safety, and welfare with the privacy rights of local residents. The County is to be commended for initiating a program to investigate reported violations at night and on weekends, since those times are often the only opportunities to observe certain violations.

5. For all prospective changes to County property within the neighborhood, the County is encouraged to proceed as if site plan development requirements applied.

Streets and Street Safety

6. In cooperation with the Association, the County should build a safe and continuous pedestrian network in Bluemont. With the exception of streets with very minimal traffic where residents specifically oppose the construction of sidewalks, the County should construct curbs and sidewalks on both sides of every neighborhood street. Sidewalks of extra width should accompany every arterial road. The County should use the reclaimed land from street right-sizing (*see Recommendation 7*) to locate sidewalks and accompanying planting strips. (*See also Appendix A, Recommended Projects.*)
7. To make streets safer for all users and reclaim greenspace while continuing to accommodate two-way traffic and emergency vehicles, the County (*in cooperation with the Association*) should prescribe for neighborhood minor streets a curb-to-curb width of between 24 and 26 feet with parking on both sides. For neighborhood principal streets, the County should prescribe the minimum curb-to-curb width consistent with national street design guidelines for traditional neighborhoods, which should be less than 36 feet. (*See Appendix A, Recommended Projects.*)
8. To enhance vehicular and pedestrian safety while continuing to allow for emergency vehicle access, the County (*in cooperation with the Association*) should prescribe a standard curb return radius of 10 feet for intersections of all non-arterial neighborhood streets in Bluemont. (*See Appendix A, Recommended Projects.*)
9. In cooperation with the Association, the County should apply appropriate County-approved retrofitted traffic calming measures to: a) the length of Wilson Boulevard in the neighborhood; b) Kensington Street and Jefferson Street (and

- their connector streets) between Carlin Springs Road and Wilson Boulevard; and c) Harrison Street, between Wilson Boulevard and Washington Boulevard, 10th Street between Harrison and George Mason Drive, and Frederick Street between Washington Boulevard and the Custis Trail. (See also Appendix A, *Recommended Projects*.)
10. In cooperation with the Association, the County should take necessary action to correct problems of limited visibility caused by vegetation or other obstructions on Harrison Street between Washington and Wilson Boulevards. The County should respond expeditiously to other requests from residents regarding sight obstructions from vegetation or other obstacles. The Association encourages neighborhood residents to proactively trim vegetation on their property as appropriate.
 11. To make Bluemont safer and more livable, the County (*in cooperation with the Association*) should improve the traffic control system and/or design of the intersection at George Mason Drive (GMD) and Wilson Boulevard. Particular consideration should be given to accommodating left turns from GMD northbound to Wilson westbound, and to accommodating left turns from Wilson westbound to GMD southbound. Changes to the intersection should at the same time make it safer and easier for pedestrians and bicycles to cross, especially since this intersection is a crucial part of the Bluemont Junction Trail connecting the neighborhood to Ballston. Pedestrian crosswalks should be shortened as much as possible and be better marked.
 12. At the intersection of Glebe Road and Wilson Boulevard, the County (*in cooperation with the Association*) should lessen crossing distances by right-sizing vehicle travel lanes, better mark crosswalks, and otherwise make the intersection safer and friendlier for pedestrians and bicyclists. To allow for the safer and easier flow of vehicles, lanes should be better marked and consideration should be given to the addition of left-turn arrows. Left turns from Wilson Boulevard westbound to Glebe Road southbound should be permitted at all times, including afternoon rush hours. Consideration should be given to restricting afternoon rush hour left turns from Wilson Boulevard westbound to Vermont Street southbound to residents only. At Tazewell Street, signs should be added across from the Mazda dealership to preclude inadvertent left turns.
 13. To allow residents to travel safely on foot or bicycle to and from Ballston, the County (*in cooperation with the Association*) should make the intersection of Glebe Road and Fairfax Drive pedestrian-friendly. Crosswalks should be better marked, medians (*with curb cuts*) should extend into the crosswalk, and islands and medians should be expanded, lanes narrowed, or crossing distances otherwise minimized.
 14. In cooperation with the Association, the County should improve or create pedestrian crossing locations: a) at and around the intersection of Carlin Springs Road and Glebe Road, as well as other locations along Carlin Springs Road; b) across George Mason Drive at Fairfax Drive; and c) across Wilson Boulevard at Emerson Street (*near the Safeway*) and across Wilson Boulevard at the bus stop near Kensington Street. In all cases, consideration should be given to well-marked crosswalks and other measures that would alert drivers to go slower.
 15. In recognition of the fact that a) safe streets and pedestrian facilities are a primary element of a model urban village, and b) Bluemont's hazardous streets and inadequate pedestrian facilities are inconsistent with the prevailing character of the neighborhood and the County as a whole, the County (*in cooperation with the Association*) should rebuild neighborhood streets to favor slow-moving local traffic, improve the flow of arterial roads, and build safe and continuous pedestrian and bicycle networks. To this end, the County should seek supplementary funding from State and Federal sources.
 16. In cooperation with the Association, the County should respond expeditiously and favorably to residents' requests to establish or expand restricted neighborhood parking zones in those portions of the neighborhood that are most heavily affected by non-resident parking.
 17. To alleviate weekend, weeknight and summertime parking problems around Arlington Traditional School, the County (*in cooperation with the Association*) should allow users of the school grounds and nearby Fields Park to park in the school lot and on Edison Street. Signs should be changed accordingly.
 18. In cooperation with the Association as appropriate, the County should clean and maintain Bluemont's alleys more regularly.
 19. To enhance safety in the neighborhood, the County (*in cooperation with the Association*)

should install attractive nighttime lighting at the locations specified in Appendix A, Recommended Projects A20 through A28.

Parks and Open Spaces

20. Recognizing that recreational, historical, and natural space is of critical importance to the well-being of the community and to the livability of the neighborhood, the people of Blue-mont encourage the County to maintain the highest standards for the neighborhood's parks and other public spaces. As the number of park and trail users continues to grow, the County should (*pursuant to the Open Space Master Plan*) seek to improve and expand existing green space so that the next generation of residents can continue to enjoy a wide range of recreational, historical, and natural resources.
21. Recognizing the value of mature trees and other flora, the Association encourages the County to a) vigorously enforce site plan procedures meant to safeguard trees and other vegetation; b) control nonnative vines that threaten trees; and c) collaborate with Virginia Power to properly train tree trimming crews and to ensure the strictest quality standards.
22. The Association commends Arlington County for joining Fairfax County and the Cities of Alexandria and Falls Church in creating a new monitoring system for Four Mile Run. The Association encourages additional vigorous efforts to restore the health of the stream, its wildlife, and its vegetation.
23. The neighborhood urges more frequent, year-round bike patrol policing of neighborhood parks and trails to encourage trail etiquette and to enhance trail and park safety. Furthermore, the County should respond expeditiously to residents' reports of non-permitted consumption of alcohol, drug-using or other nefarious activity in neighborhood parks or trails.
24. The County should consider replacing all trash cans in neighborhood parks with a type similar to those used by the National Park Service, with curved tops and pull down flap openings in order to control vermin and reduce the amount of scattered trash.
25. In Bluemont Junction Park between Emerson Street and Kensington Street the County (*in cooperation with the Association*) should construct a tot lot and a playground, and install a drinking fountain and additional benches or tables. Wildflowers and other appropriate landscaping should also be added to improve the park's appearance between Emerson Street and Kensington Street. The County should also install - as needed along the length of the trail - additional nighttime lighting sufficient to eliminate dark spots but not so bright as to disturb adjacent residents. The viability of safety phones should also be considered for this trail as well as other trails in the neighborhood. Residents believe that the completion of all of these modest improvements would not alter the park's character as a predominantly open and unimproved area. (*See Appendix A, Recommended Projects*)
26. The County should thoroughly investigate and take appropriate action in response to concerns over the possibility of toxic waste in the soil of Bluemont Park near the Virginia Power substation and in Bluemont Junction Park near the location of former overhead electric transformers.
27. In Lacey Woods Park and other neighborhood parks and trails, the County (*in cooperation with the Association*) should seek to better enforce ordinances requiring dog owners to leash their pets and to clean up after them. The County should inform owners of relevant ordinances when owners register their pets.
28. In accordance with the preference of the majority of Waycroft-Woodlawn residents responding to that neighborhood's recent conservation plan survey, the County should acquire the parcel on the Northeast corner of George Mason Drive and Washington Boulevard and maintain it as a natural-woods County park land similar to neighboring Lacey Woods Park.
29. The Association encourages local businesses to develop and maintain attractive landscaping, especially in those areas adjacent to residential areas. The Association welcomes the involvement of County business development offices in encouraging such practices even if not specifically required by County ordinance.
30. The County should not permit the installation of telecommunications towers or facilities in the neighborhood.
31. Provide neighborhood identification signs with plantings at designated entry points into the community and/or at public space within the neighborhood.

Wilson Boulevard Commercial Area

32. The County, in partnership with local business owners and the Association, should develop a phased urban village action plan to improve the appearance of the Wilson Boulevard Commercial Area, to enhance vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian access, and to generally encourage the establishment of a traditional town center that pulls together the community. Goals of the plan should include: burying utility lines using the combined resources of the County, commercial area property owners, and Virginia Power; development of consolidated behind-store parking wherever possible; construction of sidewalks and planting strips on both sides of Wilson Boulevard between Glebe Road and Jefferson Street of sufficient width and design to meet national standards for traditional neighborhood business areas; the addition of trees and other landscaping wherever possible; and the replacement of streetlights with attractive street lamps.
33. Should Safeway company officials decide to renovate or expand the store at Wilson Boulevard and Edison Street, the neighborhood encourages consideration of a new design that is more pedestrian friendly and has more curb appeal. Behind-store parking, attractive landscaping, and welcoming pedestrian walkways should be considered.

Appendix C

ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

August 25, 1999

TO: The County Board of Arlington, Virginia
FROM: William T. Donahue, County Manager
SUBJECT: Bluemont Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Plan

RECOMMENDATION: Accept the Bluemont Neighborhood Conservation Plan with the comments specified in this report.

ISSUES: The Plan makes specific recommendations regarding neighborhood traffic problems that will require further study. Should property owners and the County concur with the project recommendations (*i.e., sidewalks on both sides of the street or the numerous street width narrowings*), many projects will be extremely costly to implement due to demolition of existing curb, gutter, and sidewalk.

SUMMARY: The Bluemont neighborhood is a community of more than 5,000 residents, located in west central Arlington, immediately west of Ballston. The neighborhood straddles I-66 and is bounded on the south by Carlin Springs Road and on the north by I-66, except between N. Jefferson Street and George Mason where Washington Boulevard is the northern boundary. The western boundary is Four Mile Run from Carlin Springs Road to I-66 and N. Jefferson Street from I-66 to Washington Boulevard. The neighborhood's eastern boundary is Glebe Road south of I-66 and George Mason Drive to the north of I-66 (*See map – Attachment I*). The neighborhood is comprised mostly of single-family detached homes of varying styles and some apartment buildings. Small shops and stores make up the commercial development along Wilson Boulevard. Bluemont is fortunate to have six popular parks within or adjacent to the community.

The Bluemont neighborhood has stated that "A primary purpose of this neighborhood conservation plan is to help us, the residents of Bluemont, to reclaim our streets." The neighborhood desires to have County support "in building the infrastructure of a true urban village, featuring fluid, but slow-moving traffic and a network of sidewalks that encourages people of all ages to walk anywhere in the neighborhood."

STAFF: Nancy Michael, Neighborhood Conservation Planner, Office of Neighborhood Services, DCPHD

Reviewed by County Attorney: _____

In addition to street and sidewalk recommendations, a number of other goals are presented in the plan including:

- Maintaining land use and zoning designations to preserve the single-family detached residential nature of Bluemont
- Maintaining and improving local parks
- Improving the accessibility and attractiveness of the Wilson Boulevard commercial area

The Bluemont NC plan references 32 policy and 27 project recommendations that the citizens consider important to the continual improvement of the neighborhood. Staff has provided comments on several of the recommendations or concepts included in the plan. Staff generally supports the plan and recommends County Board acceptance of the Bluemont Neighborhood Conservation Plan.

BACKGROUND:

Known at the time as the Stonewall Jackson Civic Association, residents of Bluemont formally committed to developing an NC plan in 1992. The neighborhood recommitted itself in 1997 and distributed a survey to all Bluemont residents and business owners in Spring, 1998, which returned about 200 responses. Over 50 resident volunteers actively participated on committees that subsequently yielded the recommendations included in the plan. The Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee reviewed the document on June 10, 1999 and recommended it be forwarded to the County Board and Planning Commission for acceptance.

DISCUSSION:

The Bluemont NC Plan makes recommendations covering a broad spectrum of topics. NC staff and the staff from other appropriate County departments will work to implement the community projects as initiated by the neighborhood, subject to funding availability and/or NCAC approval. For non-capital recommendations, NC staff will act as a liaison between the community and other County agencies. To follow are staff comments, listed by Department, on various sections in the Bluemont NC Plan where additional explanation or information is useful. This memorandum will be printed and bound with the NC plan when it is published.

Priority Issue Recommendation Number or Heading Page Numbers	Plan Recommendation	Comment (Department)
Land Use and Zoning Recommendation 1 Page 14	The neighborhood recommends specifically that residents' views be given due consideration in adjudicating any rezoning request or zoning variance request that would allow additional commercial development or higher density development in the neighborhood.	The Planning Division agrees. For variances, the Board of Zoning Appeals must find that the request "will not be of substantial detriment to adjacent properties nor will it change the character of the zone district." <i>(DCPHD- Planning)</i>

**Priority Issue
Recommendation
Number or Heading
Page Numbers**

Plan Recommendation

Comment (Department)

Land Use and Zoning
Recommendation 2
Page 14

The County should actively solicit the opinions of Bluemont residents on prospective modifications to the Ballston Sector Plan....

As in the past with the Balls Crossing NC Plan, County staff will defer to the Bluemont NC Plan (upon its acceptance by the County Board) for recommendations related to Bluemont and its environs, including the Ballston area. The County will review the Bluemont NC Plan should any modifications to the Ballston Sector Plan arise. (DCPHD- Planning and ONS)

Land Use and Zoning
Recommendation 3
Page 15

In order to diminish runoff and erosion problems...the County should revise building codes and zoning ordinances for any residential construction... to a) reduce surface area of residential lots permitted to be covered by structures or other impermeable entities...; and b) require that new land uses do not create drainage problems for adjacent property owners.

Coverage in residential development will be addressed in zoning ordinance amendments for the purpose of con-trolling infill development, in order to preserve neighborhood character. The County's Stormwater Detention, Chesapeake Bay, and Erosion & Sediment Control ordinances regulate runoff and erosion. (DCPHD- Planning)

Land Use and Zoning
Recommendation 4
Page 15

The County should be responsive to residents' requests for enforcement of County ordinances on residential use, residential care, parking, noise, and other health and quality of life issues.

The Code Enforcement Section will inspect for violations on request. The County has increased Code enforcement staff recently in response to citizen needs. (DCPHD- Planning)

Land Use and Zoning
Recommendation 5
Page 16

For all prospective changes to County property within the neighborhood, the County is encouraged to proceed as if site plan development requirements applied.

The County uses this type of process for major facilities, but employs other public processes depending on the particular change proposed. Some changes, such as rezoning applications, require public processes. (DCPHD- Planning)

Streets and Street Safety
Recommendation 6
Page 18

Except where resident's oppose it or on very minimally trafficked streets...the County should construct sidewalks on both sides of every neighborhood street...

Because of funding constraints, design limitations and unexpected resident opposition, a more realistic approach might be to attempt to install a sidewalk on at least one side of every street to build a continuous sidewalk network. (DPW)

Streets and Street Safety
Recommendation 7
Page 19

To make streets safer for all users and reclaim greenspace while continuing to accommodate two-way traffic and emergency vehicles, the County (in cooperation with the Association) should prescribe for neighborhood minor streets a curb-to-curb width of between 24 and 26 feet with parking on both sides. For neighborhood principal streets, the County should prescribe the minimum curb-to-curb width consistent with national street design guidelines for traditional neighborhoods, which should be less than 36 feet.

DPW will continue to work with neighborhoods to define the appropriate street width for neighborhood street improvement projects given the existing conditions, safety concerns, and desires of residents.

A street width of 24 to 26 feet (measured curb-to-curb) is too narrow to allow parking on both sides of neighborhood streets. Streets this narrow would allow no room for a motorist to maneuver should a child or pet run out between parked cars. (DPW)

Streets and Street Safety
Recommendation 8
Page 19

...the County should prescribe a standard curb return radius of 10 feet for intersection of all non-arterial neighborhood streets in Bluemont.

The County has recently adopted modified design standards for curb return radii at intersections of neighborhood streets, which can be as low as 15 feet. The 10-foot curb return radii are too tight and would create turning conflicts at intersections, especially when the streets are narrow. (DPW)

**Priority Issue
Recommendation
Number or Heading
Page Numbers**

Plan Recommendation

Comment (Department)

Streets and Street
Safety Recommendation
9
Page 21

...the County should apply appropriate
County approved retro-fitted traffic
calming measures to [various Bluemont
streets]...

Traffic calming measures can be considered
on neighborhood streets provided the criteria
have been met. The criteria for specific traffic
calming measures are being developed
currently, but are not complete yet. County
staff and the Neighborhood Traffic Calming
(NTC) sub-committee will also develop a
problem severity ranking system to rank
problem locations on a County-wide basis.
The county will address the most severe NTC
problems first. (DPW)

Streets and Street Safety
Recommendation 11
Page 22

...the County...should improve the
traffic control system and/or design of the
intersection at George Mason Drive
and Wilson Blvd.

It is difficult to make improvements to the
intersection of George Mason Drive and
Wilson Blvd. because of the limited right-of-
way available. This is especially true for the
northbound-to-westbound movement.
A leading left-turn arrow was recently installed
on northbound N. George Mason Drive at
Wilson Blvd. to facilitate left turns and reduce
the length of the back up traffic approaching
the signal. A left turn lane on eastbound
Wilson Blvd. at N. George Mason Drive was
painted within the past year.

Staff is investigating this intersection to
improve pedestrian and bicyclist crossing.
Crossings may be improved with more
prominent crosswalks, better curb ramps,
and refuge islands. (DPW)

Streets and Street Safety
Recommendations 12, 13,
and 14
Page 23

Pedestrian and bicycle crossing is difficult along
Glebe Road at the intersections of Fairfax Drive,
Wilson Boulevard, and Carlin Springs Road.

A citizen committee is reviewing the
pedestrian crossing issues along Glebe
Road with the intent to find ways to make
improvements. There are both County staff
and Bluemont neighborhood representatives
on the committee. (DPW)

Parks and Open Space
Recommendation 21
Page 27

...the Association encourages the County
to...vigorously enforce site plan procedures
meant to safeguard trees and other
vegetation;

The Zoning Office enforces site plan
conditions, including those related to
landscaping. (DCPHD- Planning)

Parks and Open Space
First paragraph
Page 30

Unbuffered, obstructed sidewalk in front of
the Holiday Inn that serves as part of the
Bluemont Junction bike trail.

Staff is currently working on the widening of
the trail at this location. However, walls and
private property will limit the amount of
widening that can be done. (DPW)

Parks & Open Space
Recommendation 24
Page 30

Replace trash cans in parks with ones that have
curved tops and pull-down flap opening to
control vermin and reduce scattered trash.

The County is pilot testing these type of cans
now, but recognizes significant maintenance
impacts. (DPRCR)

Parks & Open Space
Recommendation 25
Page 31

Various improvements to Bluemont Junction
Park including the construction of tot lot/
playground and the installation of a drinking
fountain, additional benches or tables,
lighting along trail, and landscaping. The
installation of safety phones should also be
considered along trail.

A master plan process should be considered
in this situation to help ensure a coordinated
approach to design and installation. Bluemont
Junction Park, per se, is not currently on
PRCR's master plan list. However, Bluemont
Park will be looked at next year by PRCR and
Bluemont Junction Park may be able to be
considered at the same time. (DPRCR and
DCPHD-ONS)

Priority Issue Recommendation Number or Heading Page Numbers	Plan Recommendation	Comment (Department)
Parks and Open Space Recommendation 30 Page 35	The County should not permit the installation of telecommunications towers or facilities in the neighborhood.	Federal law prohibits local governments from banning these facilities altogether. Arlington can control these facilities to some extent by requiring use permits and imposing conditions. (DCPHD- Planning)
Wilson Boulevard Commercial Area Recommendation 32 Page 38	Should Safeway company officials decide to renovate or expand the store at Wilson Boulevard and Edison Street, the neighborhood encourages consideration of a new design that is more pedestrian friendly and has more curb appeal. Behind-store parking, attractive landscaping, and welcoming pedestrian walkways should be considered.	The Planning Division agrees. If Safeway submits plans that require Planning Division review, staff will encourage this type of design. (DCPHD- Planning)
Recommended Projects Project A1 Page 45	Portions of Kensington Street, Jefferson Street, 5 th Street, 6 th Street, 7 th Street, 8 th Street and 8 th Road to be improved by redesigning the street to right-size street width, installing sidewalks and planting strips, maintaining two-sided parking on all roads, and reducing curb radii to 10 feet.	This project is quite large as proposed and would require major redesign of many streets and intersections. A sidewalk project is included in the CIP for FY 2003 that will provide sidewalk improvements along N. Kensington Street. However, major street reconstruction as proposed by the neighborhood will greatly exceed funds available for this project. The intersection of Lexington Street and 8 th Road has a good safety record, with no reported accidents in the past five years. The yield signs work well at three-way intersections, especially when almost all the turns are to the left, and the west side of the intersection is a dead end stub.
Recommended Projects Project A1 Page 45	Missing sidewalks on North Kensington Street.	DPW supports a raised crosswalk for the bike trail crossing of Kensington Street south of Fifth Street North. (DPW) A project to install sidewalks is included in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for FY 2003 funding. (DPW)
Recommended Projects Project A2 Page 45	Missing sidewalks on North Harrison Street.	A sidewalk project was constructed in the mid-1980s to provide curb, gutter and side-walk on the west side of Harrison between Washington Blvd. and N. 11 th St. There was insufficient right of way to provide for parking or a sidewalk on the east side. Because the right-of-way increases south of 11 th Street, it may be possible to add a sidewalk on the east side of Harrison. (DPW)
Recommended Projects Project A2 Page 45	Alternative recommendations for Harrison Street related to traffic calming, right-sizing street widths, allowing one- or two-sided parking, constructing sidewalk, improving the pedestrian pathway over I-66, and/or adding landscaping.	For safety reasons, DPW does not support one-sided parking on North Harrison Street where the width is 26 feet. Police enforcement or deployment of the Smart Set can be requested directly by residents by calling the Special Operations Sections at 228.4141. (DPW)

Priority Issue Recommendation Number or Heading Page Numbers	Plan Recommendation	Comment (Department)
Recommended Projects Project A3 Page 45	Portions of Vermont, Abingdon, and Wakefield Streets. Recommends that the County right-size Vermont and Abingdon Streets to 26 feet in width with parking on both sides; construct sidewalks and planting strips from reclaimed land on both sides of street; reduce curb return radii to 10 feet; and redesign turn lane on Carlin Springs going to Abingdon Street.	Because of existing traffic volumes on these streets, it would not be prudent to narrow these streets. There is probably some right of way available for a continuous walk on Vermont Street. (DPW)
Recommended Projects Project A7 Page 46	Alternative recommendations for traffic calming on 10 th Street and Frederick Street. Includes recommendations related to one- and two-sided parking on Frederick Street; right-sizing street widths to 26 feet with two-sided parking; constructing sidewalks and planting strips with reclaimed land; reducing curb radii to 10 feet; or installing other traffic calming measures such as flat top speed humps, 4-way stops, or curb nubs.	DPW does not support allowing parking on both sides of Frederick Street where the cross section is 31 feet because of sight distance problems. Traffic calming devices can be considered if these streets meet the criteria to be developed by the NTC sub-committee. (DPW)
Recommended Projects Project A10 Page 47	Inadequate sidewalks on Wilson Boulevard.	There is insufficient right of way on Wilson Boulevard to widen the width of the sidewalks. Wilson Boulevard is a heavily traveled arterial street and already has narrower than standard 11-foot lanes. (DPW)
Recommended Projects Project A11 Page 47	Missing sidewalk on Washington Boulevard between Frederick Street and Ivanhoe Street.	A project was funded for this in FY 1999. (DPW)

FINANCIAL IMPACT: The acceptance of the Bluemont Neighborhood Conservation Plan does not have any immediate fiscal impact upon County operations. If recommendations from this plan requiring funding or staff resources outside of the NC bond allocation are brought forward for implementation, they will each be analyzed as part of the County budget process.

CONCLUSION: Staff generally supports the Bluemont Neighborhood Conservation Plan and recommends County Board acceptance.

Standard Motion

County Board Acceptance of Neighborhood Conservation Plans

Whereas, the County Board created the Neighborhood Conservation Program in 1964 to encourage neighborhoods to carry out neighborhood improvement plans and provide dedicated funding to implement those plans; and

Whereas the Neighborhood Conservation Program is a mechanism for improvement and maintenance of areas where residents indicate a desire to achieve an improved neighborhood and fulfill a broader vision of the modern “urban village” through coordination of public and private efforts; and

Whereas, these plans are initiated and prepared by the neighborhoods, who work with the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee and County staff; and

Whereas, Neighborhood Conservation Plans have three purposes:

- 1) To build a neighborhood vision and consensus on issues affecting the neighborhood, to evaluate County service delivery and the state of the neighborhood, and to suggest policies and projects that will improve the neighborhood
- 2) To establish eligibility for Neighborhood Conservation funding
- 3) To provide guidance to the County Board, Commissions, Departments and staff concerning issues in neighborhoods; and

Whereas, the County Board created the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) to guide the Neighborhood Conservation Program, and the NCAC reviewed this new, updated or amended Neighborhood Conservation Plan and recommends plan acceptance; and

Whereas the Planning Commission also recommended acceptance of this plan.

Now, therefore be it resolved that after careful consideration of the recommendations of the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee, the County Board hereby accepts the Bluemont Neighborhood Conservation Plan as a statement of the neighborhood and directs the County Manager to ensure that the recommendations of this plan are considered in decision-making and actions that affect Bluemont.



**Department of Community Planning,
Housing and Development**

Office of Neighborhood Services
Neighborhood Conservation Program

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