

Chestnut Hill Community Association

CHESTNUT HILL LAND USE GUIDELINES



Chestnut Hill Land Use Guidelines

Chestnut Hill Community Association
Land Use Planning Committee
Winter 1982

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I. Introduction

The Chestnut Hill Community Association has been active for many years in preserving and enhancing the physical character of Chestnut Hill. In 1976, its Land Use Planning Committee prepared, and the Community Association adopted and published, the "Land Use Planning Guidelines." The Guidelines established general policies concerning the nature of future development. While these policies have served the community well, changing circumstances suggest that a limited revision to the Guidelines was warranted. In addition, the document has been out-of-print for some time. The present document, therefore, revises and expands the original Guidelines, while maintaining its original format.

A GOAL

The Chestnut Hill Community Association has as a goal the preservation and enhancement of the physical character of Chestnut Hill: Its beauty and convenience, the harmonious joining of its residential, commercial, and institutional land uses, its generous endowment of green open spaces in balance with the intimacy of smaller, more contained urban spaces; its fine architectural tradition; and its excellent service by public transportation. Beyond this, the Association understands that the existing strong sense of community is partly responsible for the high quality of the physical environment, and partly a consequence of the attractiveness of the area.

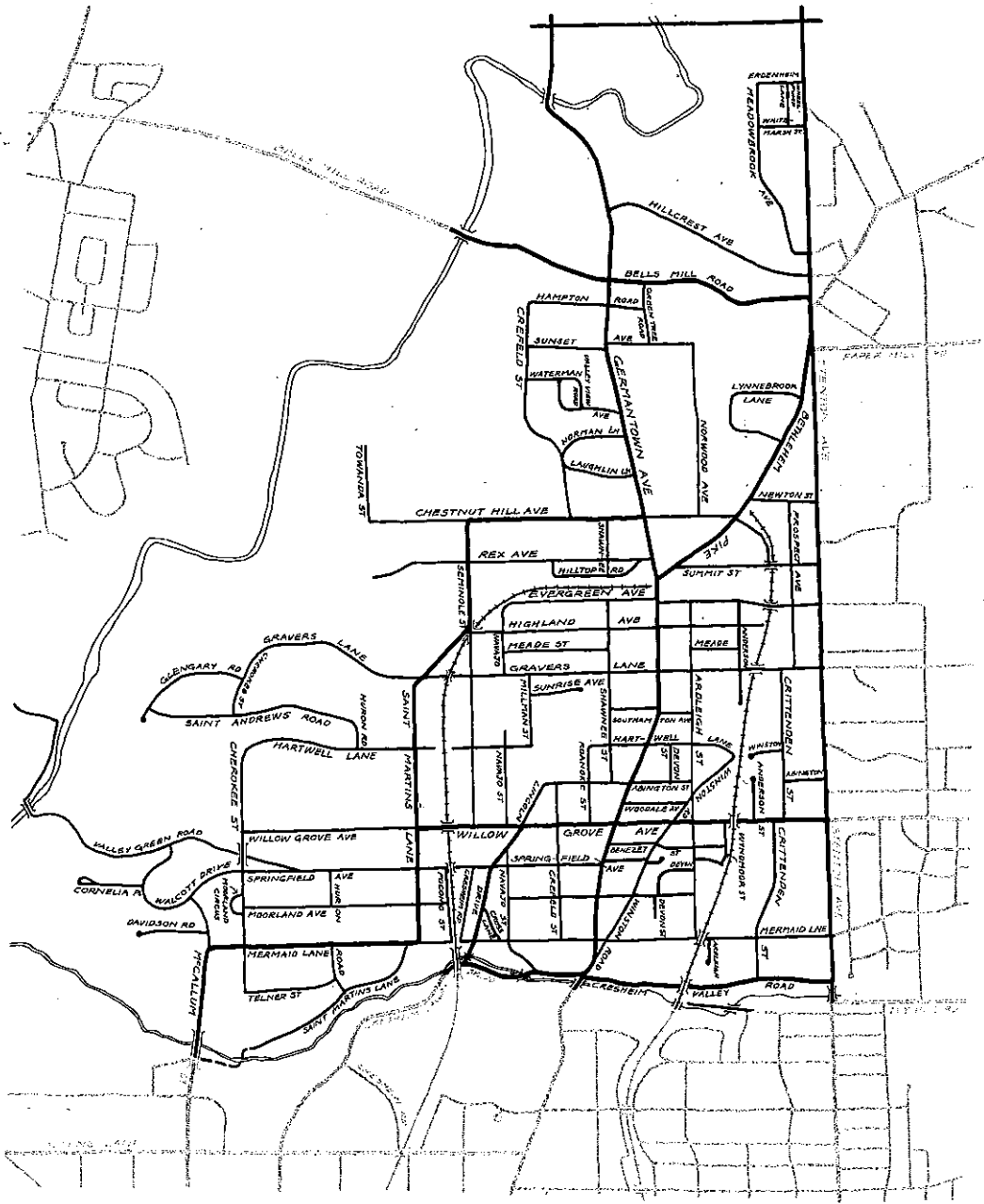
Chestnut Hill's future is affected by that of its neighbors; Upper Roxborough, Mt. Airy and Wyndmoor. Therefore, while the planning guidelines are intended for application in Chestnut Hill alone, it is recognized that close cooperation with these communities, on matters of material interest, is essential. For example, the maintenance and improvement of the Wissahickon and Cresheim Valley creeks, two major open space corridors, are of equal importance to neighboring communities.

B USES OF GUIDELINES

The Guidelines have been developed in order to:

1. Make available a set of policy statements which can be used by the community and anyone proposing new development in the community.
2. Foster and encourage community awareness of the significance of development alternatives; their impact upon the existing environment and the degree to which they reflect community values and aspirations.
3. Encourage design in public and private development which is compatible with and enhances the recognized character of Chestnut Hill.

Chestnut Hill



C COMMUNITY ATTITUDES AND VALUES

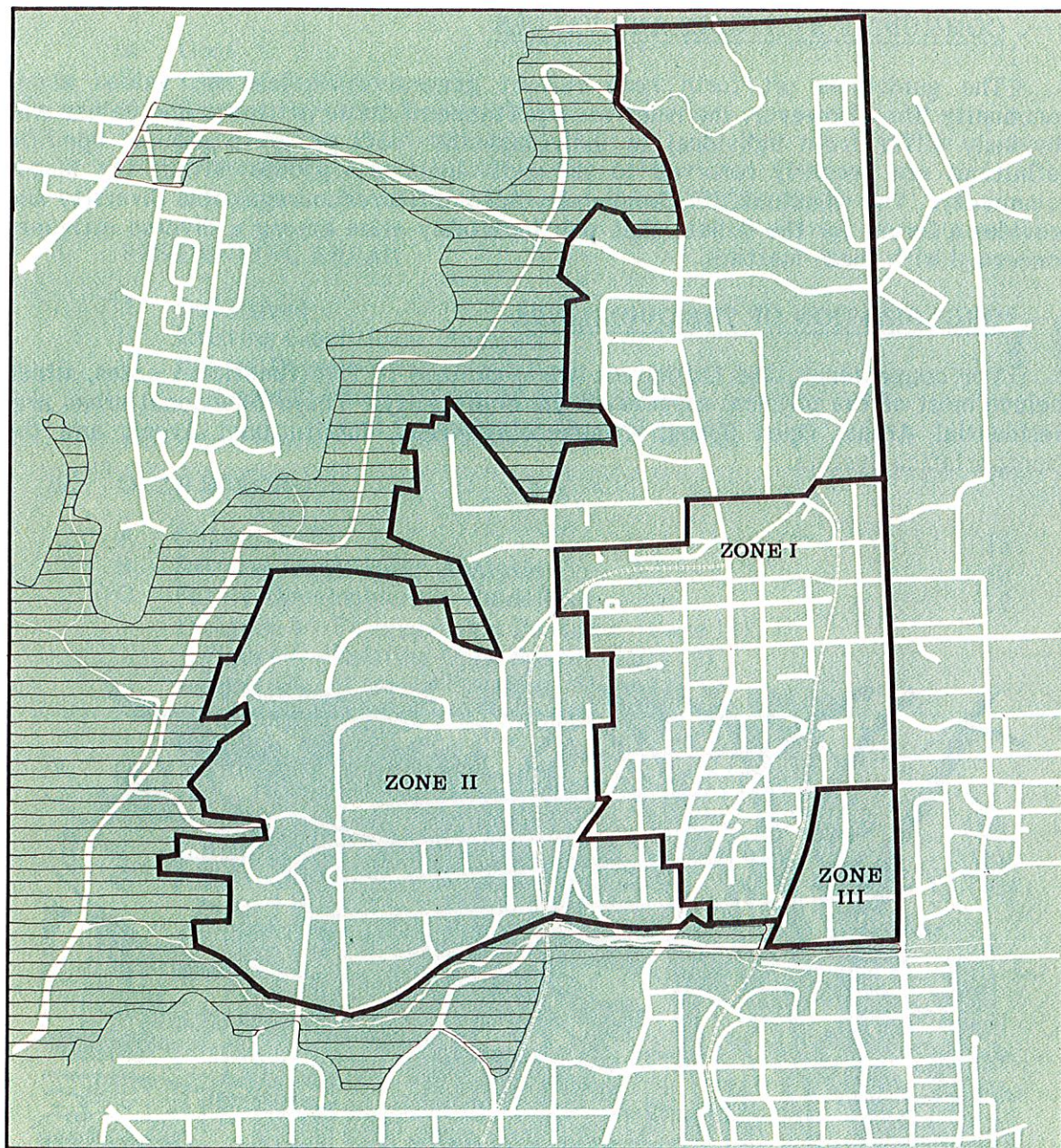
The guidelines set forth here reflect general attitudes and values about community life. However, the relative importance of those attitudes and values will obviously differ from individual to individual and from group to group. Specific definitions are properly reserved to the individuals and groups within the larger community. The Chestnut Hill Community Association encourages this diversity and provides a forum for the debate that will inevitably arise among a diverse citizenry concerned with these matters.

D ORGANIZATION OF THE GUIDELINES

For convenience, the Guidelines are organized in five functional areas, which include most of the physical aspects of the community. These functional areas are: Residential Areas, Open Space, Commercial Areas, Institutional Areas, and the Transportation System.



Figure 1
Residential Zones of Chestnut Hill



 PARK LAND



II. Residential Areas

OBJECTIVES

A All future changes to the physical environment of the residential areas of Chestnut Hill should serve the following general objectives:

1. To foster among neighbors a feeling of personal commitment to each other for help, security, the sharing of common experiences and to enhance the resident's sense of commitment to the wider community of Chestnut Hill.
2. To maintain a variety of physical housing types as now exists, including large and small freestanding houses, apartments, row houses and duplexes; and to encourage a range of housing prices.
3. To preserve the relative differences in residential densities between Zone I and Zone II.
4. To preserve the unique character of streets with houses of special architectural or historical interest.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: ANALYSIS

B While many neighborhoods can be identified within Chestnut Hill which relate to function, social characters and geography, only three areas need be described in order to set policies to achieve these objectives. (See Figure 1). These areas are:

1. Zone I. The pedestrian-oriented area adjoining the Germantown Avenue commercial spine which contained mixed housing types at higher densities.
2. Zone II. The automobile-oriented areas at the edges of the community, which generally include large homes and open spaces.
3. Zone III. Chestnut Hill Village, a sub-center of mostly apartments with its own commercial area.

Zone I corresponds approximately with the area where sidewalks exist in Chestnut Hill. It generally is within an acceptable walking distance of Germantown Avenue (5 minutes) and is limited by the sharp slopes of the streets to the north and west, which hinder easy walking. Zone I is also the area of most dense development: more streets and alleys, smaller spaces between buildings, or apartments, and a far greater variety of housing types (small and large free-standing single-family houses,

apartment buildings, row houses, semi-detached houses). In the commercial areas, second and third floor dwelling units are found along with non-residential uses. Building volume is rather large in relation to surrounding open spaces (including streets).



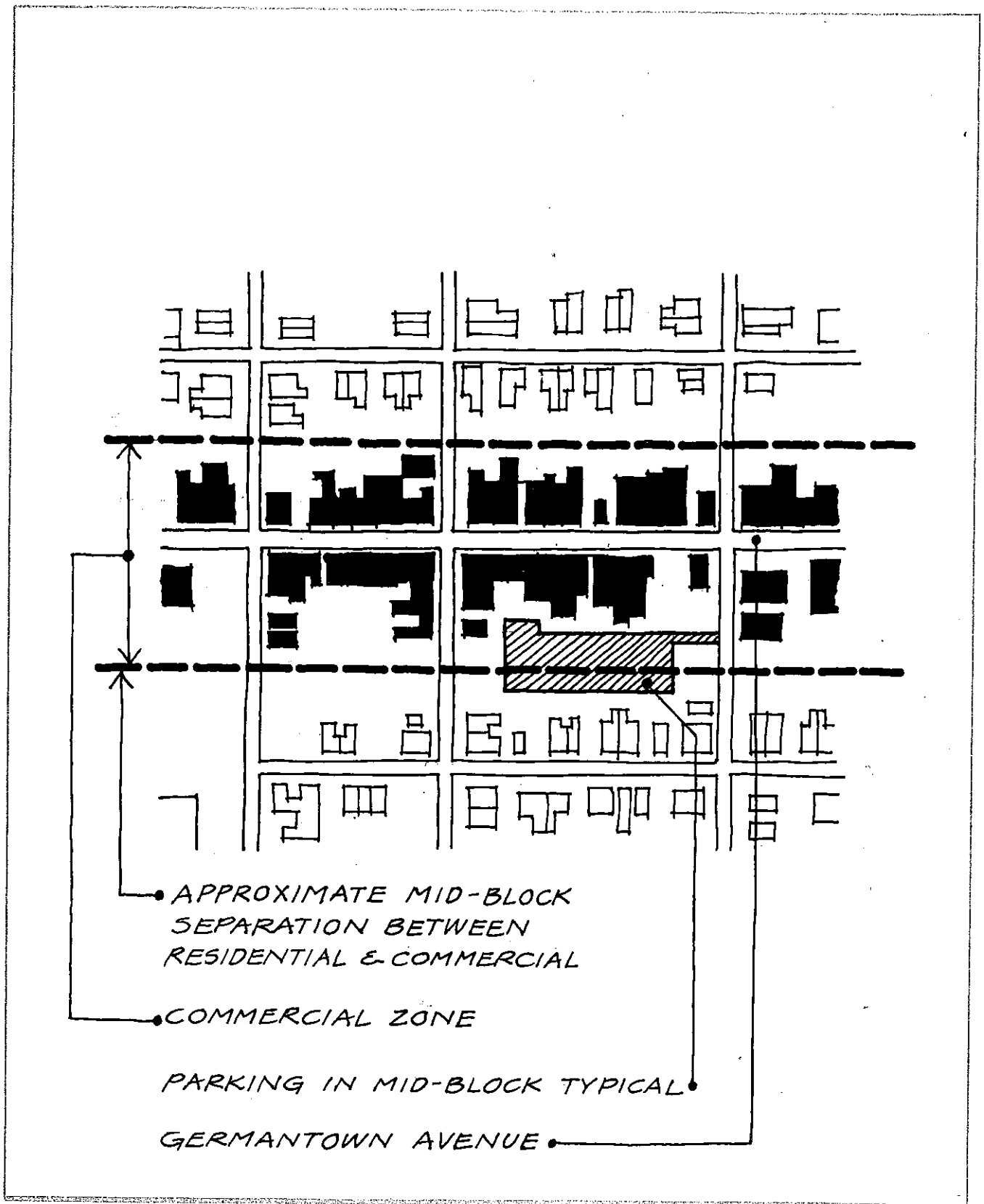
There is a great variety of architectural style in this area: both flat roofs and sloped roofs (including "Mansard") are abundant; stone and stucco are the dominant exterior materials, but brick has occasionally been used. Buildings vary in height from 2-story to 4-story in single family houses, to an isolated example of 11 stories in the Hill House apartment building. Buildings are often located quite close (10' -20') to the front property lines; front porches are common. All city modes of public transportation are available within walking distances. Much of the area is zoned R-4 or R-5 (minimum lot size of 2500 square feet).

Zone II, on the other hand, is generally an area of large residential properties beyond easy walking distance to commercial areas. Virtually no public transportation is available. The area has few sidewalks, and consists almost entirely of single-family houses on large lots (Cherokee Apartments being the dominant exception). Large private open spaces are common, buildings are set far back from the front property line, often 75' or more, and front porches are unusual. It is, therefore, not a pedestrian-oriented area, since large distances result in nearly complete dependence on the automobile. Zone II is characterized by a variety of building materials, color, and heights — including one-story buildings which rarely occur in Zone I. For the most part, however, the buildings in Zone II have pitched roofs and are large both in size of whole building and in the sizes of the building's parts (doors, windows, etc.). Zoning is generally R-1 (minimum lot size is 10,000 square feet).

It must be pointed out that, although a line can be drawn on a map which indicates an edge between Zones I and II, there is in fact no clear division: the edge is actually a mix of small and large homes that forms a broad transition area between those two zones. West Springfield, West Willow Grove, and West Highland avenues are excellent examples of this side-by-side relationship of housing types that are usually considered to be conflicting. West Highland has, in one-half block, an apartment building, row houses, semi-detached houses, and both large and small single-family homes.

Zone III is Chestnut Hill Village, which is physically separated from the rest of Chestnut Hill by the Reading Railroad tracks. It has a high ratio of open space to building coverage, due to the height of the buildings. Virtually all dwellings are rental. The Market Square shopping area is within easy walking distance of all parts of the area.

Figure 2
Relationship of Residential & Commercial Areas



C FUTURE DEVELOPMENT: GUIDELINES

The Community Association has the opportunity to influence future residential development in two ways. First, where a developer can execute a project under current zoning, the Association encourages owners to study these guidelines which describe general principles that promote the harmonious relationship between new and existing development. Second, where a developer seeks Association support for a zoning variance, the Association has the responsibility to ensure, through legal agreement, if necessary, that in return for its support the project fosters the objectives described earlier.

1. Zone 1

Zone 1 is largely developed. New development is likely to occur either as infilling in small empty parcels or as conversion of large single-family houses to multi-family use. These two situations will be treated separately.

New Construction

New construction in Zone 1 should preserve the stylistic and spatial variety that is the significant characteristics of the area. No historic style dominates, in spite of a large number of Victorian-era houses. The design elements that should be considered in reviewing new development include the building mass (volume) in relation to adjacent structures, building set-back from the street, roof line, and scale (the harmonious subdivision of building surfaces). In order to review these design elements it is essential that the developer submit to the Land Use Planning Committee carefully drawn perspective views, as well as accurate site and building plans. Design excellence is an important community objective.

It is of great importance for the stability of residential areas in Zone I, as well as for the continued economic well-being of the commercial areas, that the two uses do not interfere with each other. Generally the boundary between residential and commercial uses should be in the middle of a block; this creates a transition where the inactive edges of properties adjoin. (See Figure 2). A street does not usually function well as a buffer for different land uses.

Building Conversion

Throughout Philadelphia there are substantial numbers of owner occupied residences converted from one to multi-family dwellings each year. Houses in Zone I and Zone II are experiencing pressures for conversion, especially since they are convenient to good public transportation and are in safe and attractive neighborhoods. To encourage owner occupied residences, and to discourage conversion of existing single family houses in zoning districts R-4 and R-5, guidelines for evaluating proposals have been established. These are very restrictive and only a small number of houses in Zone I can be expected to meet them. The guidelines are: A maximum of two units per house will be considered; neither unit should have less than 1200

square feet of net floor area; one new additional off-street parking space must be provided beside or at the rear of the building but Zoning Code site coverage cannot be exceeded; the owner must live on the premises; the number of exterior entrances will not be increased.

There are six commuter and railroad stations in Chestnut Hill, and five are in Zone I. Modest increases in density should be considered for land adjacent to the Zone I stations so as to facilitate transit ridership, reduce housing costs, thus slowing the population decline of Chestnut Hill (from 10,608 in 1970 to 10,168 in 1980). Higher densities should ensure that there is no increase of on-street parking; new structures should be compatible in scale and building materials with their neighbors; the average size of the units should be at least 50 percent of the average of nearby units; and 50 percent of the site should be open space.

2. Zone II

Zone II is characterized by low residential density, substantial free-standing houses, many with large lots and some with extensive grounds. The uniqueness and charm of Zone II is a function of the relationship between the buildings and open space, together with the extensive landscaping. An important residential objective in Zone II is to maintain the current low density of development. As in Zone I, Zone II faces pressures for new construction and building conversion.

New Construction

There are many buildable lots in Zone II for which no zoning changes are needed. R-1, the largest zoning district in the Philadelphia code, is only 10,000 square feet. Zoning laws, therefore, cannot prevent the subdivision of most land parcels in Zone II. Since subdivision sometimes occurs as a result of economic necessity, multi-family conversion of existing buildings under certain circumstances is a preferable solution which is discussed later. However, when new construction takes place it is important that special attention be given to both the architectural harmony with adjacent structures, which may be of considerable historic merit, and to the preservation and proper landscaping of the open space. In Zone I the buildings are the dominant visual element, but in Zone II open spaces have the greatest visual impact. While most new construction that occurs in Zone II will not be reviewed by the Community Association, land owners and developers are encouraged to discuss their plans with the Land Use Planning Committee.

Building Conversion

It is not possible to identify every situation in which the conversion of a large house to multi-family use might be appropriate. The following guidelines, however, will serve as guidelines to the Community Association in its evaluation of a proposal. Since all conversions require a zoning variance, the Association has a good

opportunity to ensure that its support is given only for projects of outstanding merit.

- o The number of dwelling units shall not exceed that permitted under existing zoning, with a limit of three, and these must be located within the existing structure.
- o All parking shall be off-street and additional paved surface shall be kept to a minimum.
- o The property shall be under single ownership and be owner-occupied.
- o The owner shall enter into a legal agreement with the Association that the property will not be subdivided for the duration of the variance.

Two special situations occur where either there is a free-standing auxiliary structure on the property which the owner wishes to rent, or where a very large house, say over 8,500 square feet, is proposed for condominium use. In the former case, the use of auxiliary buildings for apartments is a widely practiced tradition in Chestnut Hill and should be supported. Multi-unit condominiums, however, raise complex issues. Large house are most appropriate for condominium use; the average size of the units must be at least 1,500 square feet; and the number of units should be no greater than permitted on the site under R-1 zoning. It is recommended that attention be given to the interior layout of the units and to such matters as traffic circulation and open space preservation. However, it is stressed that any condominium proposal must clearly demonstrate that it is an asset to the community. The burden of proof rests with the developer.

Development of Large Estates

While the preservation of Chestnut Hill's large estates is an important community objective for environmental, aesthetic and historical reasons discussed elsewhere in the Guidelines, the residential development of some of these can be expected to occur in the future. In general, the goal of the Community Association is to preserve the existing structures and retain the most aesthetic and ecologically sensitive land as open space. This may require for economic reasons the conversion of the house to multi-family units, preferably owner occupied, and the clustering of new buildings such as has been done at Driem Moir. The principles and guidelines for good development, discussed in the section on new construction and building conversion should apply to estate development where appropriate.

An issue of major importance is whether a developer, in return for meeting the community's objectives on the preservation of existing structures and conservation of open space, should be allowed a greater site density than permitted under the Zoning Code. On this matter, the controlling factor should be the nature of the site, its carrying capacity, as determined by environmental factors on and off the site. For example, drainage, topography and the quality of the landscaping may

significantly limit desirable coverage. Off site, traffic considerations may be the controlling factor. Such considerations must be evaluated in determining if additional density should be supported, and what the increment should be. As in the case of building conversions, the burden of proof rests with the developer. The Land Use Planning Committee encourages developers to work with the Committee as early as possible in site plan preparation.

3. Zone III

Zone III (Chestnut Hill Village) is now completely developed. Greater use of walkways, sitting areas, children's play areas, gardens, and improved pedestrian access to the shopping area should be encouraged. These improvements could promote an environment conducive to developing a sense of neighborliness among the residents.



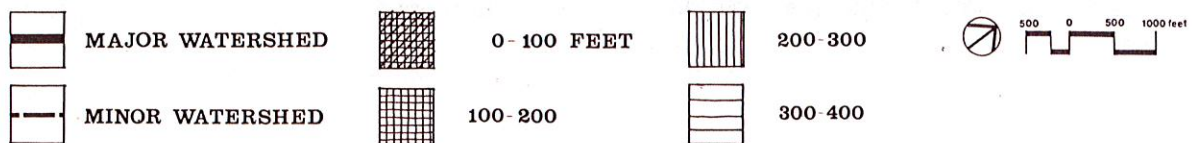
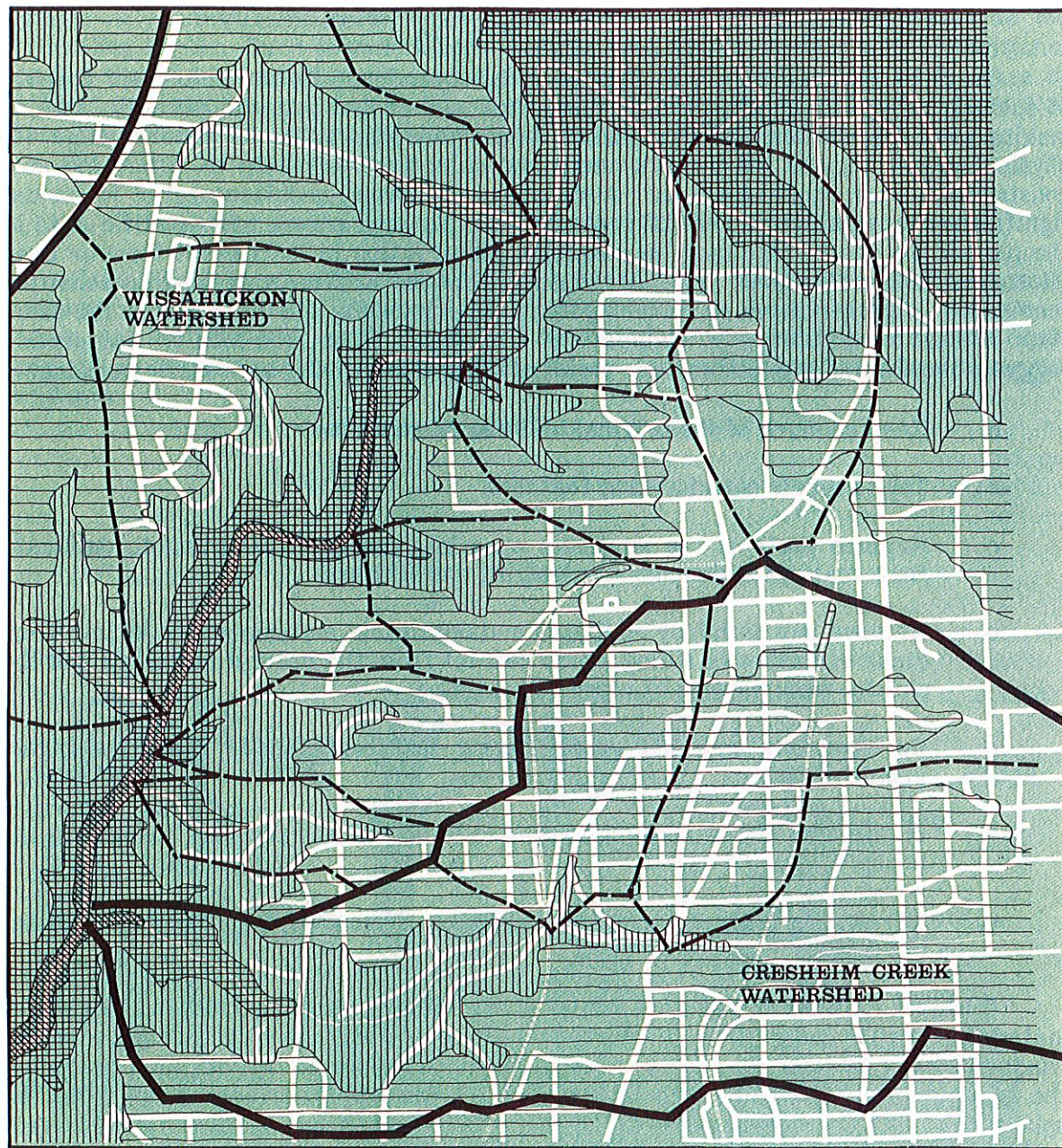
4. Guidelines for Maintaining Buildings of Historical Interest

Chestnut Hill has many buildings of architectural and historic interest. Owners of such buildings are caretakers for the future and should proceed carefully before making any changes. Such information as its architectural style, its historic value, its physical condition, and the owner's needs and objectives will help to determine how construction work should be done. A structure of unusual architectural or historical significance may call for a careful restoration to its appearance at a specific date in the past while another building may require preservation in its present form or even allow new interpretations. Most structures, however, will respond best to sensitive renovation — preservation or restoring their distinguishing qualities and at the same time adding compatible new elements if necessary. The Community Association suggests the following guidelines for maintaining and improving an historic building:

- o Keep as much of the original building as possible.
- o Try to repair deteriorating features.
- o Replace parts of the structure as a last resort, attempting to duplicate their materials, dimensions, designs, and finishes.
- o Remove any unsightly additions and unsuitable materials such as imitation stone and asbestos siding which detract from the natural materials and the skillful workmanship of older buildings.
- o Be especially cautious when altering the front facade and other highly visible areas.
- o Maintain a written and photographic record of any physical changes to the house.
- o Harmonize landscaping, gardens, walks, driveways, and fencing with the building.

Consider an older building as a vital contributor to the neighborhood. Its style, materials, height, and width, setback from the street, colors, various components like windows, doors, dormer, or porches, and its physical condition can augment or distort the impression received of the neighborhood. A careful, informed approach to the upkeep of each older structure in Chestnut Hill will increase the aesthetic and economic value of that building, enhance the neighborhood, and encourage other owners to do similar sensitive work on their own buildings.

Figure 3
Physiographic Features



III. Open Space

Few people see the interiors of more than a small fraction of the buildings in their communities. Most of what they experience as they walk or drive around is the street, the square, the park, views into private yards and gardens — in other words, the open space between and surrounding the buildings. It is the nature of this external space that gives a community its character as much as the style and quality of the architecture. This is particularly true of Chestnut Hill where the natural and man-made landscapes form a rich fabric.

OBJECTIVES

A Chestnut Hill is a community with a special character of its own. The purpose of the open space guidelines is to ensure the preservation and enhancement of this character, specifically:

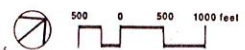
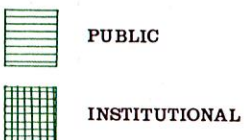
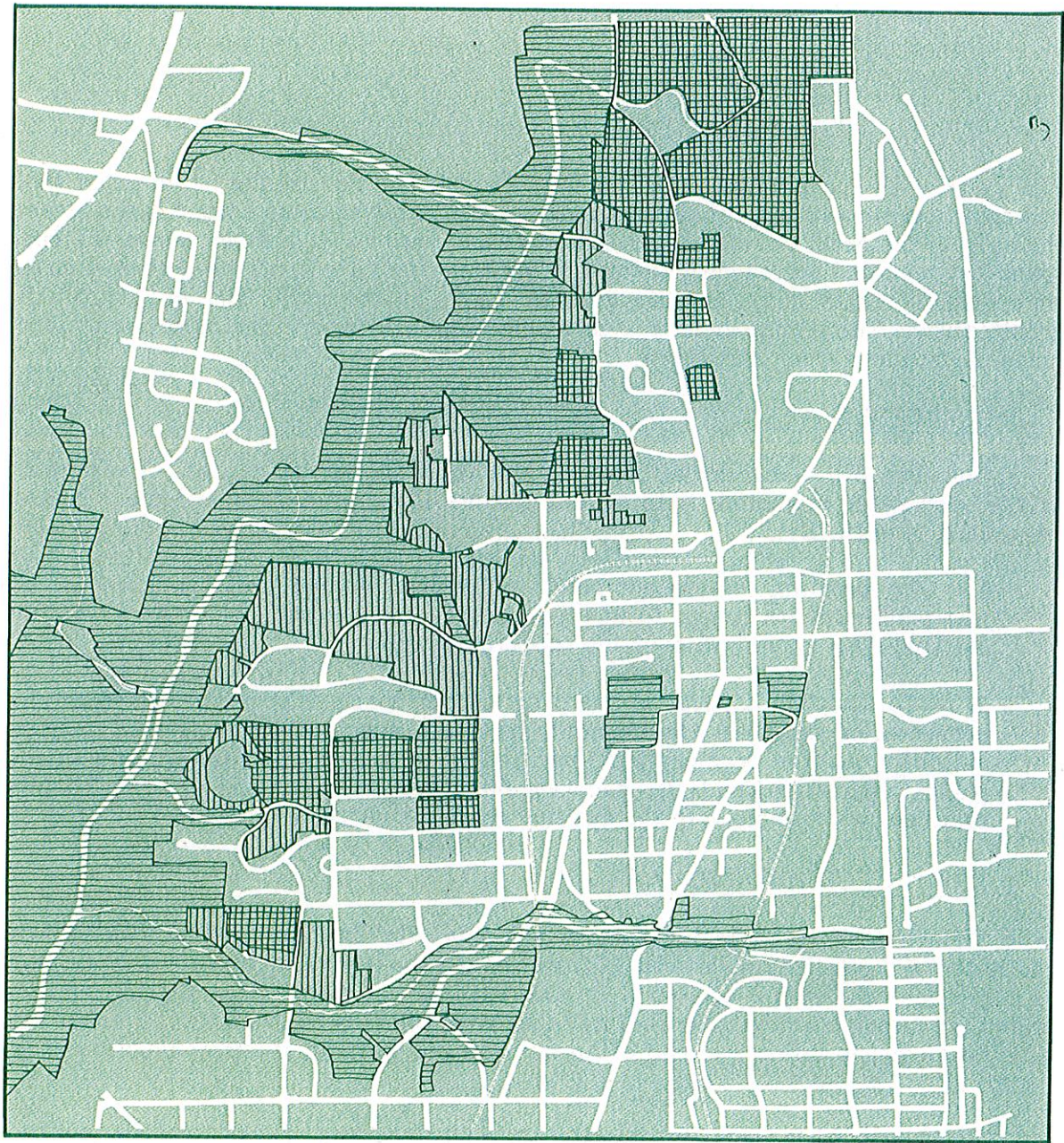
1. To maintain the present public open space in the best condition for the many benefits it brings to the community and to enhance and extend the existing open space whenever the opportunity arises.
2. To maintain as much of the private open space as possible by encouraging conservation-oriented development practices such as the reuse of existing buildings, cluster development, creation of scenic easements, land donations, public acquisition, and the encouragement of site planning and landscaping practices compatible with the existing character of the community.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: ANALYSIS

B Though technically within the Philadelphia city limits, Chestnut Hill has the character of a small country town. To understand the nature of this community, both as a physical and social entity, it is necessary to remember that the hill and the ravine are strong physiographic features that gave impetus to the first settlement and have continuously influenced and often inspired the building of the community. (See Figure 3).

Fairmount Park along the Wissahickon and Cresheim creeks form the western and southern boundaries of the community. With the coming of the commuter railroads, Chestnut Hill started to develop as a residential neighborhood. Many of the most attractive developments on the Hill were done at this time. These developments had an intrinsic, strong element of altruism and were done with conviction and style using local materials and imaginative layouts which included a good deal of open

Figure 4
Existing Open Space



space. After World War I, local architects inspired by what they had seen in Europe, started a new tradition of residential design which represents some of the best architecture and landscape in the region. Later many large estates became institutions and the open space has been preserved. An example is the Morris Arboretum which formed the northern boundary to Chestnut Hill.

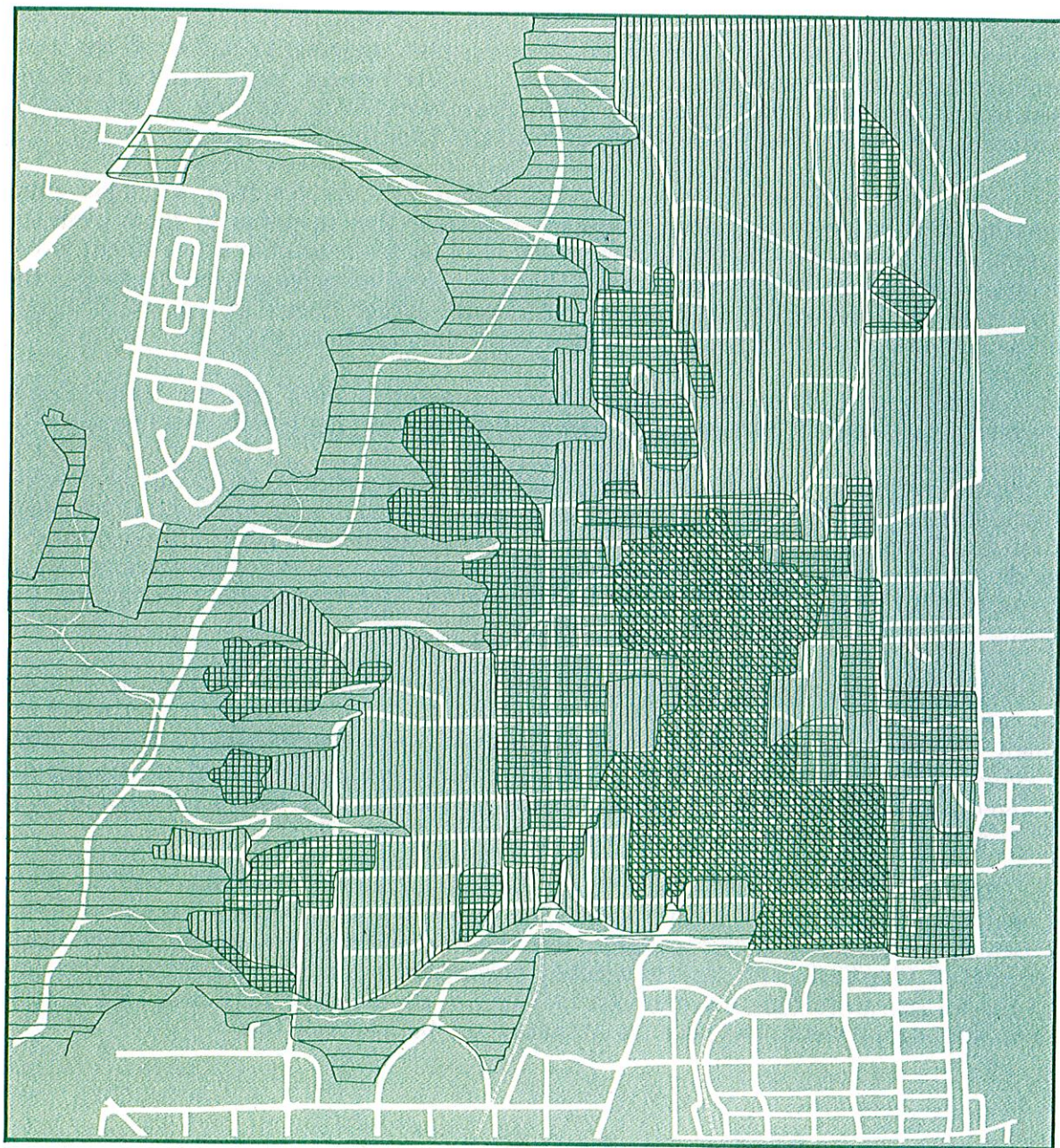
The present forested character of Chestnut Hill derives from a unique combination of existing natural amenities and an imaginative response to them over the years. (See Figure 4). The Wissahickon Valley, a park of regional importance, is the primary open space in the community. Larger tracts of private land bordering the park give the feeling that the park is considerably larger than it actually is although in many places the park boundary is only a short distance from the river.

Other public lands in Chestnut Hill are Pastorius Park and the Water Tower playground. These are essentially neighborhood parks serving mostly local needs. The next largest areas of open space in Chestnut Hill are the institutions which are semi-public in character, such as the Morris Arboretum, Kresheim, Philadelphia Cricket Club, the Crefeld School, Chestnut Hill Academy, and the Sugar Loaf Conference Center. The aims of these institutions in preserving their open land vary considerably as do the standards of grounds management. While such tracts of land are generally thought of as being more stable than similar tracts of private land, institutions also change and this can have physical consequences.

Private large tracts, particularly of five acres or more, contribute enormously to the wooded character of the Hill. Throughout the rest of Chestnut Hill there are many smaller properties which nevertheless still contribute heavily to the green feeling of the community by having rich and attractive gardens planted with species indigenous to the Wissahickon Valley. Many of these are on only a one-quarter acre or less, and often the tiniest of yards burgeon with greenery.

Streets are also public land. A tradition of street tree planting has given Chestnut Hill an unrivaled street landscape. The best were planted with native forest trees which give the street a dignity and scale matching that of the forest itself. Several of Chestnut Hill's streets actually border the parks and seem like extensions of the forest. Unfortunately, the vast majority of street trees were planted a century or so ago; age, disease, and poor maintenance are taking their toll.

Figure 5
Wildness Gradient



PARK LAND



LOW DENSITY
'FOREST GARDEN'



MEDIUM DENSITY
'SUBURBAN GARDEN'



HIGH DENSITY
'URBAN GARDEN'



500 0 500 1000 feet

C FUTURE DEVELOPMENT: GUIDELINES

1. The Overall Fabric

The principal distinguishing characteristic of Chestnut Hill is the continuous interweaving of the natural landscape with the built-up areas. The preservation of this characteristic should be a prime objective and affect all decisions regarding new development and the disposition of open space. There is a 'wildness gradient' which starts with the natural areas of Wissahickon Park and becomes more urban as one progresses east across the community. Figure 5 shows this gradient broken down into a series of component areas within which the landscapes have the same general characteristics.

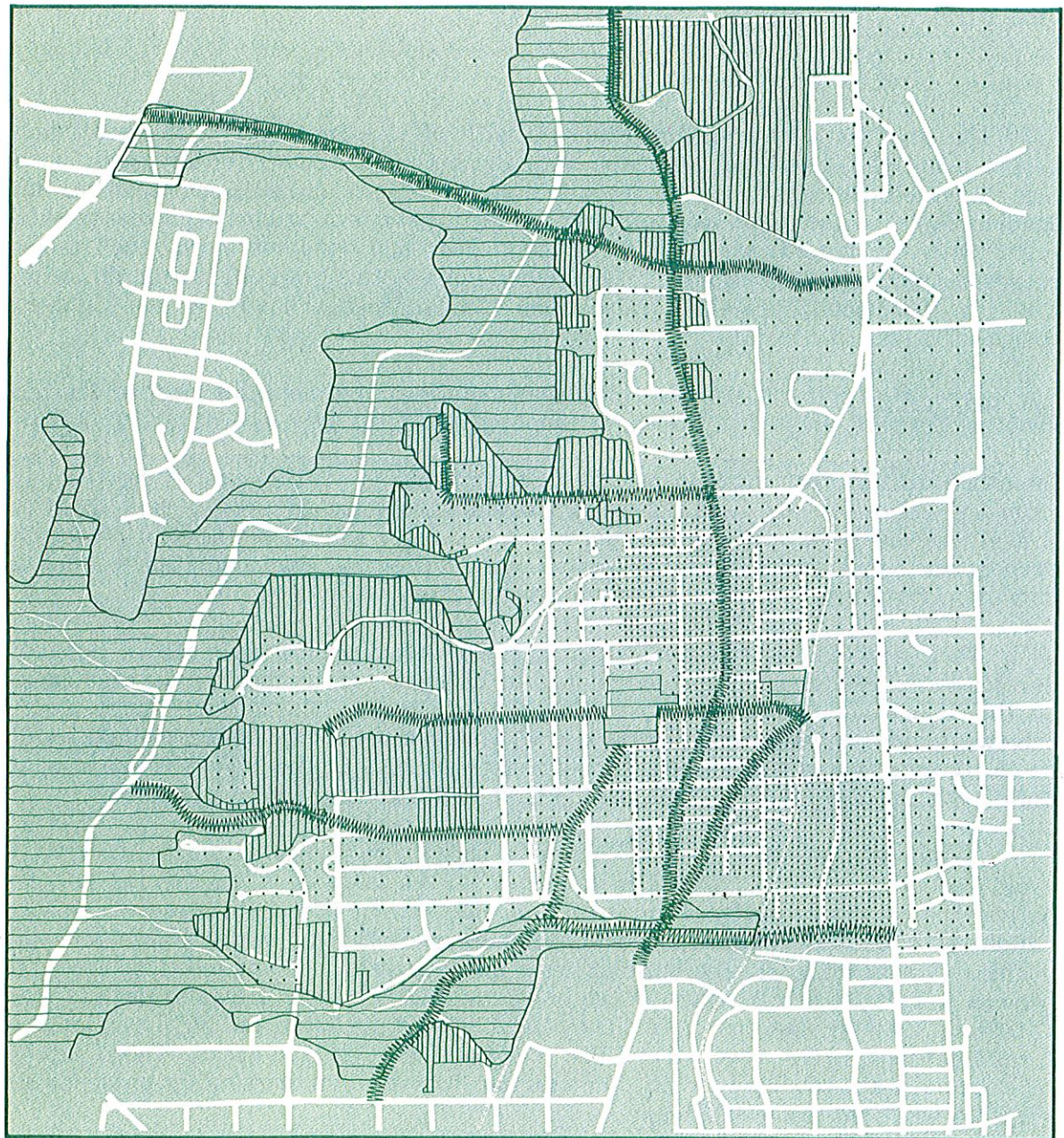
Area one begins at the edge of Wissahickon Park and contains most of the land abutting the park, as well as the major proportion of large private estates. This is the lowest density area of the Hill and this low density is important in maintaining a smooth transition from park to private development, as well as protecting the park from excessive run-off with its accompanying problems of erosion and siltation. Everything should be done to maintain this low density and all methods of preserving open space should be encouraged before development is contemplated — such as outright donations of land to the park or conservation easements.

When development does take place, every effort should be made to persuade developers to adopt innovative techniques of building which preserve the open space on their land and reduce disturbance to the minimum. Existing buildings, roads, driveways, and landscapes should be reused whenever possible. New buildings should be clustered or attached or otherwise concentrated, leaving the bulk of the land open. Buildings should be accommodated to the land, and extensive grading avoided.

In general, new landscapes in this area should use plants native to the area to avoid abrupt visual transitions and to avoid the invasion of alien species into the native woods. Traditionally within this area where steep slopes are frequent, existing buildings have used changes of level, terraces, courtyards, walls and other built devices to help integrate the building with the landscape. These solutions should be used as models for new building. Much of the character of this area also derives from the fact that over the years, as money became less available for highly maintained formal gardens, native vegetation filled many of the neglected areas. These patches of 'successional' woodlands where the original forest is reasserting its presence are valuable additions to the landscape.

In Area two, roughly that part of the residential zone of medium density to the east of area one, but not including the village core, the landscape has a different character. Gardens are conceived more as usable spaces than display for the house. The typical suburban front lawn and foundation planting is rarely seen. Most gardens have hedges, fences, or walls, over which native forest trees tower impressively. The nature forest is characteristically structured in layers with a canopy of large trees —

Figure 6
Open Space Structure



PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

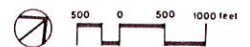
OTHER OPEN SPACE



WILDNESS GRADIENT



STREETS SIGNIFICANT TO
STRUCTURE



maples, beeches — below which is another layer of understory trees — dogwoods, hornbeams — and below that a layer of shrubs and finally a ground layer of vines and herbaceous plants. This layering is also a characteristic of the gardens of this part of the Hill with many native species such as dogwood and laurel used in their appropriate places.

2. The Structure of Open Space

The open space character of Chestnut Hill is the result of a combination of many factors, both natural and human, operating over time. The dramatic physiography of steep ravines and level plateaux (Figure 3) determined the distribution of both public and private open space (Figure 4) which in turn has influenced the density of development resulting in the wildness gradient (Figure 5). The resulting pattern and opportunities for future development are shown in Figure 6, the overall structure.

Natural Structure. Rivers with their tributary streams, form a natural pattern of open space and most of the natural drainage pattern in Chestnut Hill remains. To preserve water quality, reduce erosion and siltation, reduce flooding and destruction of vegetation, it is imperative that these drainageways are protected. The best way to ensure the long-term stability of the drainage system is to maintain it in natural vegetation. Storm run-off can be reduced by removing unnecessary paving, providing for infiltration where new paving is needed, and by using porous paving.

Narrow corridors such as Cresheim Creek are more vulnerable to deterioration than the wider Wissahickon. Cresheim Creek is in poor shape, intercepting run-off from the densest part of the Hill, it has eroding banks, dying trees, and undermined bridges and abutments. Particular attention should be given to the landscape and maintenance of abutting properties, and development proposals within the watershed should be viewed very carefully to avoid conditions which might worsen the situation.

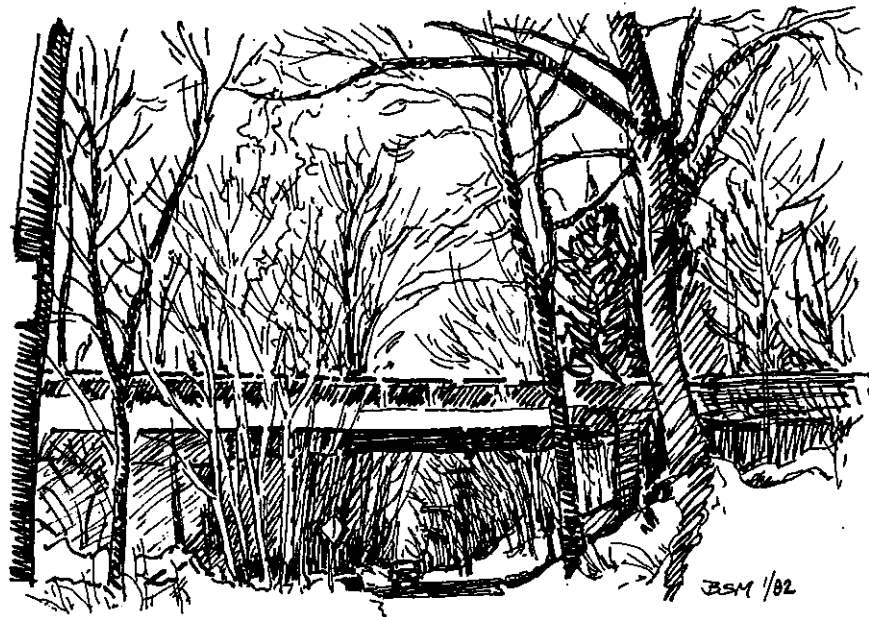
Future Extensions of the Natural Systems. There are several opportunities for extensions or improvements in the natural drainage patterns of the open space structure. Interestingly, both the Water Tower Recreation Center and Pastorius Park sit at the head of drainageways which have been developed as roads — Winston Road and Lincoln Drive respectively. Both roads have opportunities for becoming more park-like.

At the other end of the spectrum is the stream valley that runs through northeast Chestnut Hill, down what was Ravine Avenue, across Bell's Mill and Hillcrest, and into the Morris Arboretum. This little stream is entirely on private land and a scenic or conservation easement could protect both the stream and the neighborhood while ensuring that the rights of the owners were respected. Finally, there are several other roads which run down stream valleys which should receive special attention to planting character and drainage details. Such roads are Bell's Mill and Valley Green Roads, both important entrances to the Park, and Rex Avenue and Hartwell Lane are other examples.

Other Green Space Links — Water Tower and Pastorius Park. Other possible open space links, though not intrinsically part of natural system, are nevertheless opportunities for enhancing the community. The link between the Water Tower Recreation Center, Buckley Park, Pastorius Park, Wissahickon Park along Hartwell Lane has long been recognized and special attention should be paid here to street tree planting. Should the use of the Koelle Ford property ever change, a potential for a major improvement along this route is possible.

Streets. Streets are open space links, many of which by virtue of splendid street trees are green space as well. Germantown Avenue, a special case, has received much attention in the way of street tree maintenance and planting. Further enhancement is possible however, particularly in the form of additional planting on immediately adjacent properties where buildings are set back or have gaps between them. The creation of small urban plazas with trees and sitting areas would be a valuable addition to the commercial area. Many opportunities exist for this type of improvement, particularly in conjunction with the parking areas.

Inter-Community Links. Several important potential links to neighboring communities exist within the present open space system. One link, if completed, would enable a cyclist to go from Fort Washington State Park all the way to the Art Museum without having to ride on a road. The route which runs along the Wissahickon, past the Morris Arboretum and out through Montgomery County to Fort Washington State Park lacks only a few critical connections. Another possible route through the Wissahickon Park up Bell's Mill Road to Ridge Avenue and across the Schuylkill has long been discussed. Support should be given to completing these inter-community green space links.



IV. Commercial Areas

A OBJECTIVES

The primary community objectives for commercial activities on the Hill are:

1. To make goods and services conveniently available to the residents.
2. To foster a healthy marketing environment for the merchants and to promote owner-operated businesses.
3. To encourage the development of the unique character of the Chestnut Hill shopping areas. This unique character can be defined as having:
 - o A strong pedestrian character.
 - o A "village" scale and intimacy.
 - o A richness of material and depth of architectural detail.
4. To ensure a harmonious relationship between commercial and residential areas by promoting land use and design concepts that promote the needs of both activities.

The residential community is better off if the commercial area is economically viable, and the merchants are better off if the residential area is sound: both residents and merchants depend upon each other. But as merchants serve a wider and wider market area, the relative importance to them of the local residential community becomes lessened. Therefore, commercial expansion and change must be evaluated against the proviso that it must not have a negative impact on the the Chestnut Hill residential community.

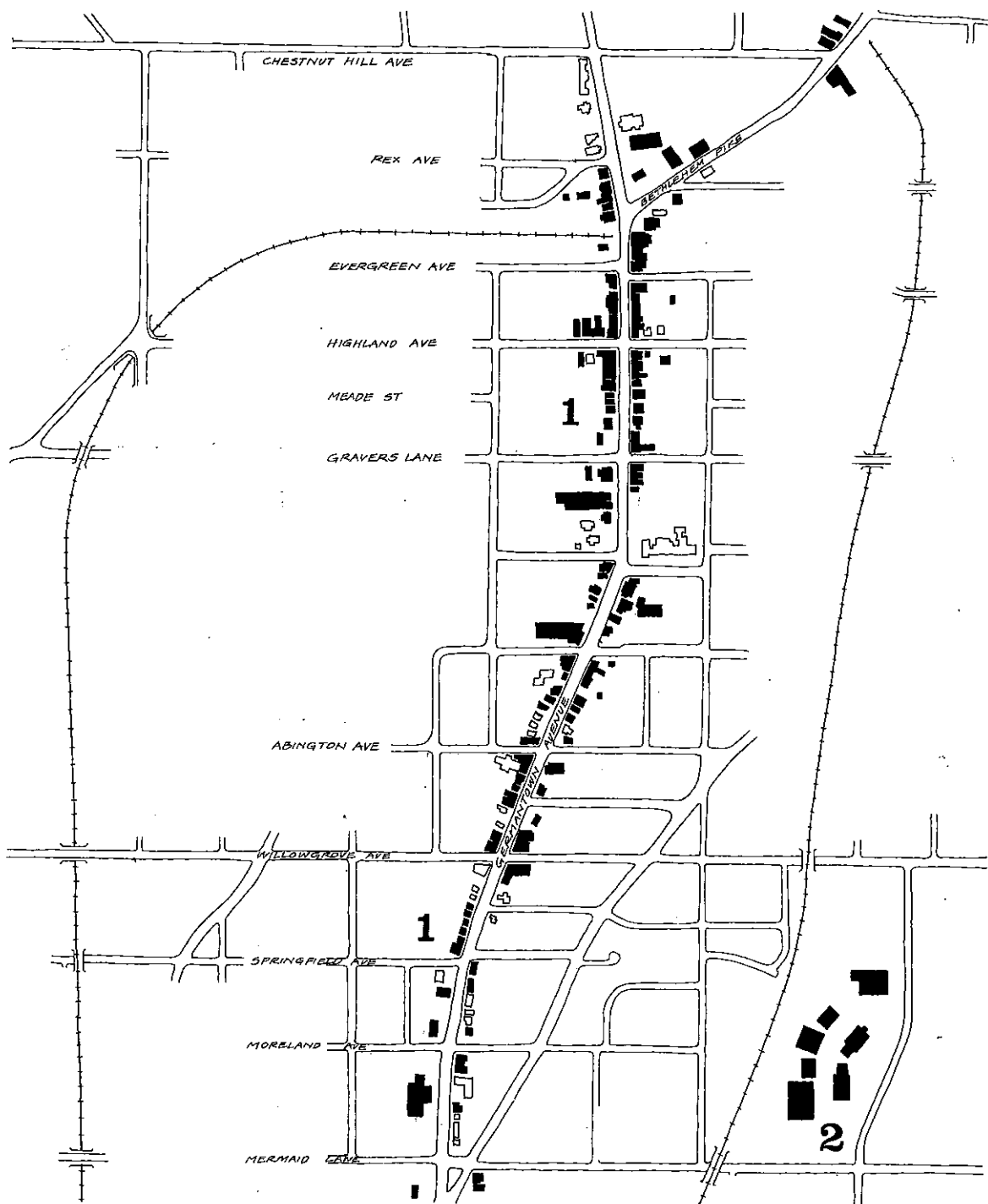
B EXISTING CONDITIONS: ANALYSIS

There are two distinct commercial areas in Chestnut Hill. (See Figure 7)

1. Germantown Avenue between Rex Avenue and Cresheim Valley Drive.

Germantown Avenue is Chestnut Hill's main commercial spine. Commercial activity along the Avenue is mixed with residential and institutional land uses. There has been a steady decline in residential use as commercial activity has expanded. The commercial expansion is characterized by the reuse of existing buildings.

Figure 7
Commercial Areas



While the commercial spine is about two miles long, it contains clusters of retail activity which serve as pedestrian-oriented shopping areas. The most intensely developed cluster is between the Jenks School and the Top-of-the-Hill trolley loop. This three block area contains over one-half of the business on Germantown Avenue, and has excellent transportation access, including trolley, bus and train service, as well as extensive, well buffered off-street parking. Another cluster of shops extends from the Chestnut Hill Hotel to Springfield Avenue, a distance of four blocks. The commercial activity is less intense and there is more residential use. In general, no off-street parking is provided. Below Springfield Avenue, residential use predominates on the east side of Germantown Avenue, and commercial uses on the west. This area is still in the process of developing a distinct mixed use character. There is also a small commercial area at the intersection of Bethlehem Pike and East Chestnut Hill Avenue.

The buildings along Germantown Avenue are generally two and three stories, with commercial activity below and residential above. Below the Jenks School the facades are not continuous with side yards and breaks created by set-back uses. Where off-street parking exists, it is generally tucked in behind the commercial building. A number of courtyard commercial areas exist.

Parallel to Germantown Avenue, boundaries between commercial and residential properties have generally been set in the middle of blocks where garages, fences and planting can create a visually and psychologically effective separation of uses. Such boundaries cause far less intrusion into residential neighborhoods than if the different land uses were separated by streets.

2. Market Square Shopping Center

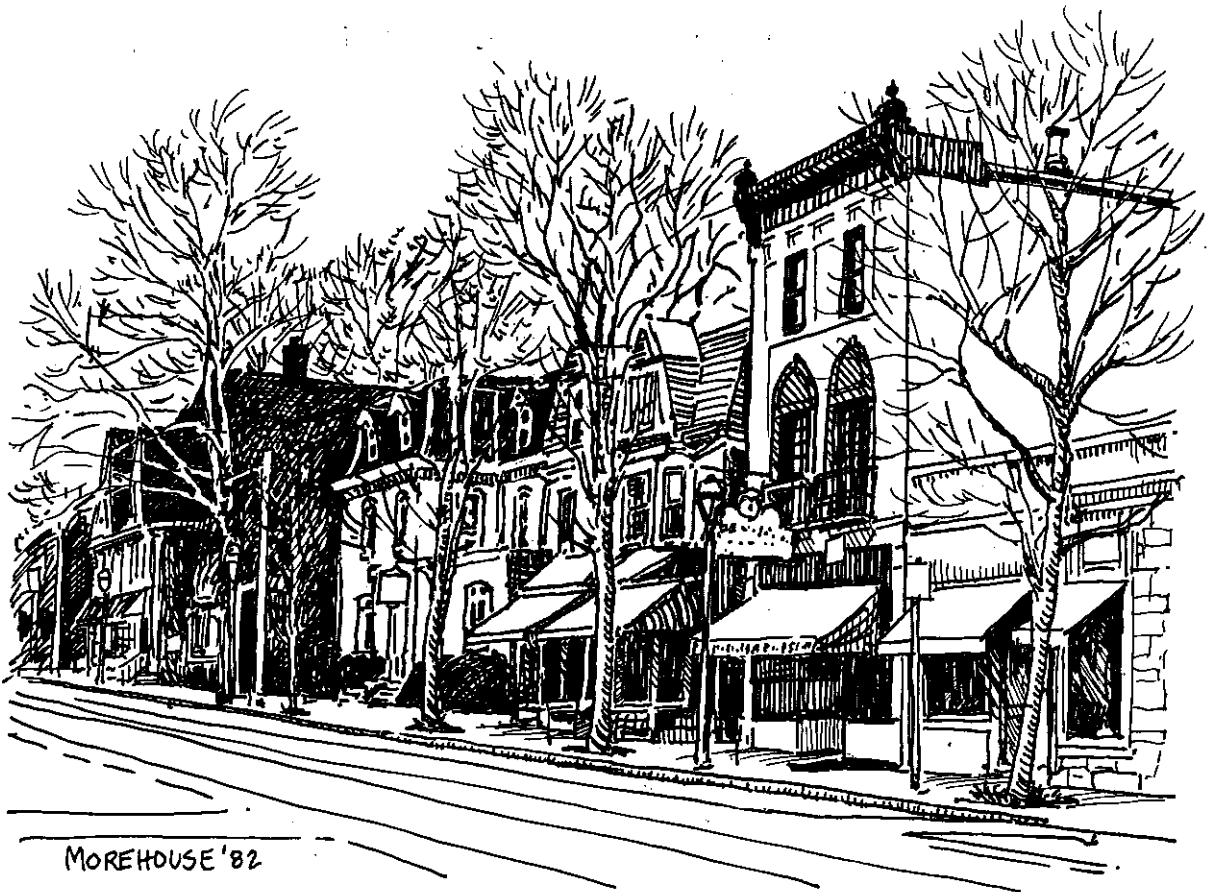
Market Square was designed as a unit, with automobile access as a primary consideration. Market Square functions reasonably well in the suburban model. However, it is separated from the rest of Chestnut Hill by its location, physical barriers, and type of residential units. The businesses in Market Square are generally not owner-operated establishments.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT: GUIDELINES

Increased commercial development along Germantown Avenue will occur in the mixed residential/commercial areas if the well-established areas continue to prosper. Demand for commercial space will keep pace with the increase in prosperity of these established areas. It is important that the conversion and renovation of existing structures occur in a manner that is compatible with the existing commercial uses. Proprietor-operated businesses should be encouraged. Most buildings along Germantown Avenue are zoned C-1 so that the owners have the right to conduct commercial activity consistent with the provisions of the zoning code.

In general, major proposals to expand the commercial activity in the spine should be examined by both the residents and merchants with great care. New commercial facilities should be discouraged which demand a substantially higher volume of automobile traffic access, and therefore, require a substantially greater number of parking spaces than existing retail/parking/traffic patterns. The community goal is to balance the otherwise conflicting objectives of residents and merchants: the residents wish to avoid the negative impacts (traffic, noise, etc.) of commercial activities on residential areas, while the merchants require a physical environment (access, parking, etc.) that permits them to maintain adequate sales and profits.

It must be understood, moreover, that the residential and commercial areas need each other for continued stability: for continued satisfactory retail sales, for the maintenance of the physical beauty and variety of the neighborhood, and for the



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joy of having a center that gives service, a sense of place and the opportunities of neighborliness and friendship.

1. The Main Commercial Spine

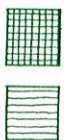
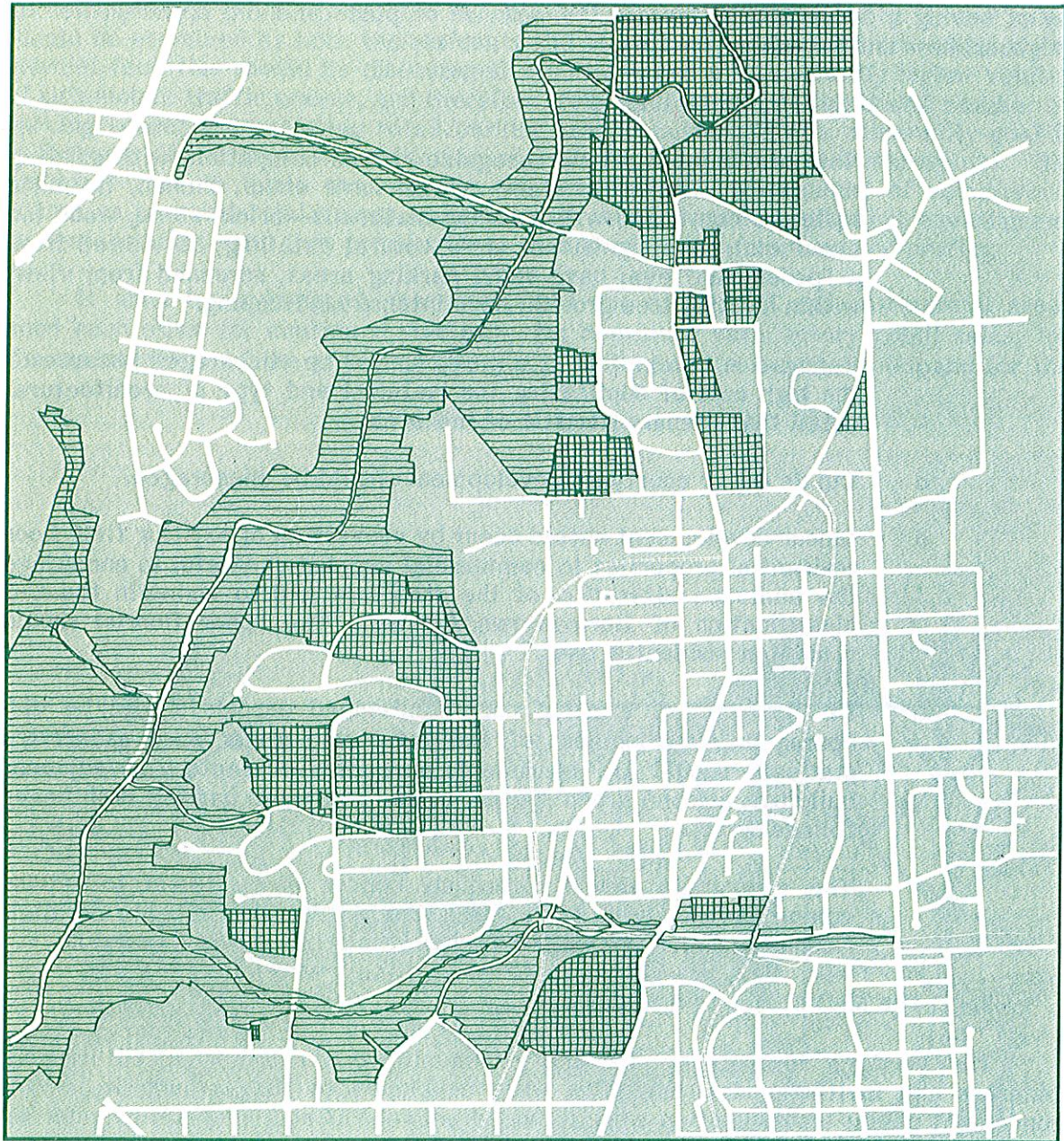
- o New construction should recognize and be compatible with existing structures. These structures should have small, human, intimate scale; be consistent with existing materials—brick, stone, wood (no aluminum); have significant architectural detailing; be viewed from a "pedestrian" eye; have small parking areas, screened from view, within existing tree growth; have intense landscaping.
- o Renovation of existing structures should be encouraged because of the high cost of duplicating the material and type of architectural detail that is characteristic of this area.
- o Cul de sac or courtyard development should be encouraged.
- o Linear development should occur by conversion of existing first floor residential properties to commercial use, being careful to encourage the minimum alteration of the structure and to maintain the C-1 classification of Germantown Avenue. The upper floor(s) should remain in residential use.
- o Development of existing open landscaped parcels should be discouraged. Development of existing paved areas (such as service stations) should be consistent with the character of adjacent buildings, as open green spaces, or as landscaped parking with heavy foliage screens.
- o The community should vigorously oppose any attempt to expand commercial activity beyond the C-1 zone which roughly parallels Germantown Avenue on either side at mid-block (see Figure 7).

2. The Market Square Shopping Center

The Center's integration into the community could be enhanced if more generous and inviting pedestrian paths were developed to and through it, and if convenient public transportation were provided between it and the main commercial area.

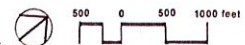
The apparent vastness of the parking areas could be reduced to a more human scale through the introduction of pedestrian paths and by additional planting. The design of the central grassed mall could also be improved in order to achieve a less empty aspect, and to make possible a less restrained pedestrian circulation pattern.

Figure 8
Institutional & Park Lands



INSTITUTIONAL LAND

PARK LAND



V. Institutional Areas

OBJECTIVES

A The primary community objectives of institutional land use as treated in these guidelines are:

1. To serve the human needs of the community and to promote vitality and richness of its life.
2. To encourage institutions to be stable and responsible caretakers of the physical environment.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: ANALYSIS

B Institutions are one of the major uses of land in Chestnut Hill. (See Figure 8). Approximately two-thirds of the institutions on the Hill and most of the Hill's institutional area is located in Zone II, the automobile-oriented area.

Many institutions are in buildings specifically designed for their use (for example, churches, the Jenks and Springside schools). Other institutions are in old estate houses or other buildings which have been altered to suit institutional uses.

In considering the community's existing rich variety of institutions, their expansion, and the introduction of new institutions, it is useful to distinguish between institutions which primarily serve the Chestnut Hill community, and those which serve a wider community. (An institution can be said to serve the Chestnut Hill community when one or more of its principal objectives is to meet a community need and the portion of the community to be served agrees that the specified needs will be met by the institution). In general, community-serving institutions include: churches, schools, the library, post office, the six railroad stations, public and private recreational facilities, nursing and elderly residences, religious residences, and private clubs.

Institutions which primarily serve the public beyond the community include a hospital, two colleges, and religious conference centers. In general, community-serving institutions tend to be controlled by directors who live in the community. Their decisions are more likely to consider the good of the community as well as the good of the institution. This cannot necessarily be said for institutions which serve a wider public.

C FUTURE DEVELOPMENT: GUIDELINES

The establishment or expansion of institutions which primarily serve the residents of Chestnut Hill should be supported where there is no conflict with other objectives. Institutions which do not primarily serve residents generally should not be encouraged to settle in Chestnut Hill or expand their activities since they tend to add to traffic throughout the community and are often located in large estate houses, diverting them from residential use, and thereby weaken the residential fabric of the community.

Many of the policies in the other sections of these Guidelines may be applied to questions concerning the expansion of existing institutional uses or the introduction of new institutions. For example, institutions can function as excellent buffer zones on arterial streets.

Because of the number and size of institutional holdings in Chestnut Hill, the Community Association has adopted a policy regarding the need for institutional long range planning. Significant amounts of land in Chestnut Hill are owned by institutions. Representatives of these institutions periodically request Community support for zoning changes and land development schemes. Experience in evaluating such requests had led to the conclusion that wise decisions cannot be made, and the community's interest adequately protected, without placing the proposed change within the context of an institution's long range plan.

A policy has therefore been established that all institutions seeking Community Association support for development proposals should present them as part of a long range plan. The Community Association realizes that such plans can be difficult and expensive to prepare. Therefore, it will take into account in its discussions with a petitioner the nature, scope and potential impacts of the project. In general, where a project is judged to significantly affect adjacent land uses, traffic patterns and/or the natural environment, the Association will request a long range plan as essential background information. This plan, at a minimum, should describe the change in the level or nature of activity at the institution over the next 10-20 years, and all associated building and site modifications. To prevent delays in the review process, institutions are encouraged to consult early with the Association to determine if a long range plan is needed. The early consultation may serve also to identify potential issues and facilitate their timely resolution.

VI. Transportation System

A OBJECTIVES

The primary community objectives for the transportation systems are as follows:

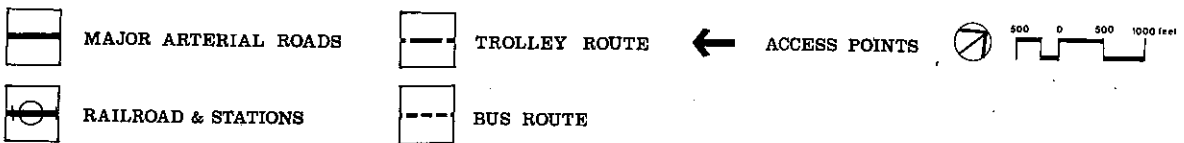
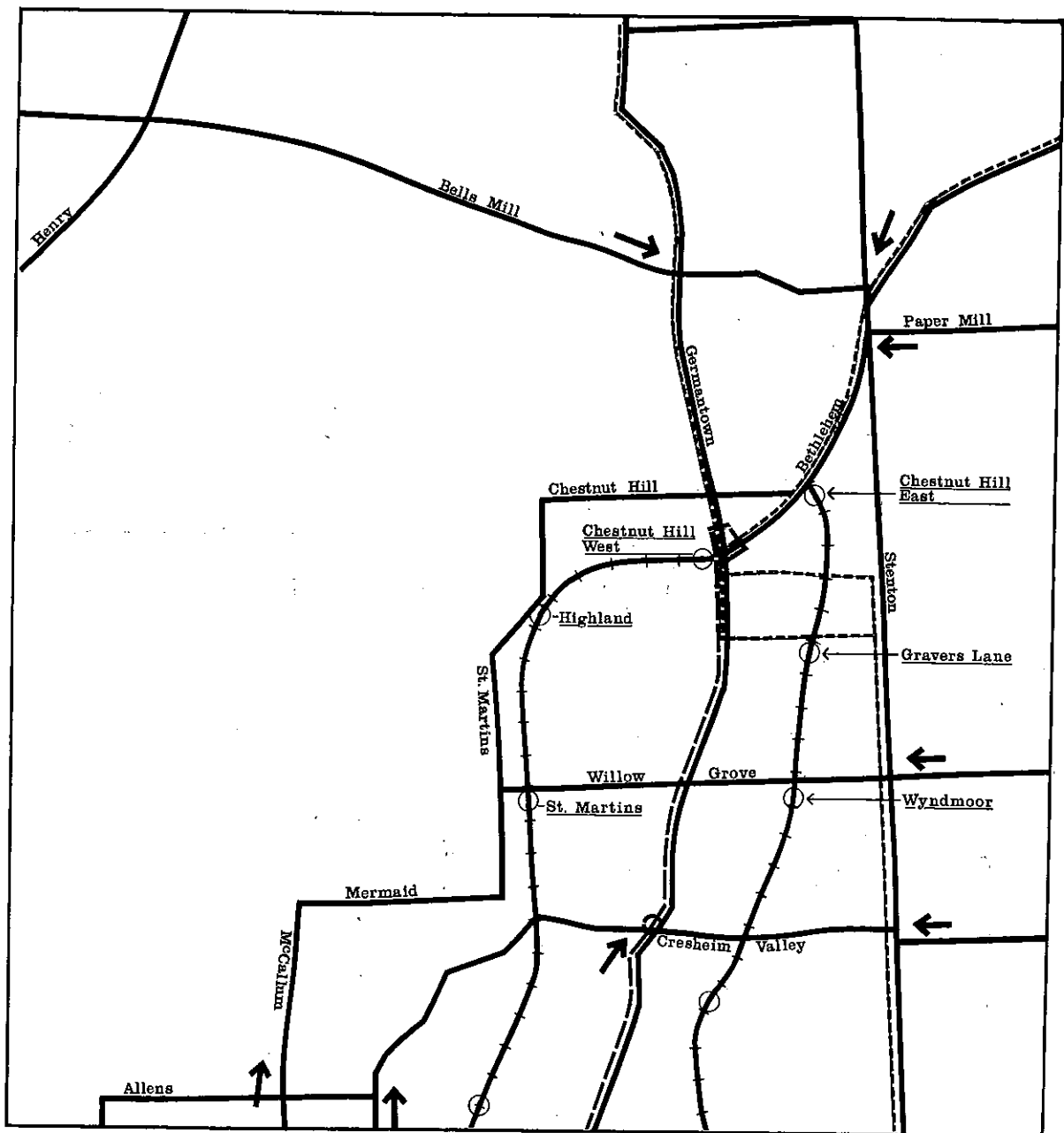
1. To make travel for residents of Chestnut Hill convenient and safe.
2. To provide access to commercial areas.
3. To ensure continued good public transportation services.
4. To promote opportunities for neighborly interaction.
5. To minimize the intrusion of unnecessary outside traffic on the community.

B EXISTING CONDITIONS: ANALYSIS

The sense of identity of Chestnut Hill and its quiet residential character is due in part to its isolation and limited access (see Figure 9). It is in many ways a "backwater" protected from heavy traffic on three sides by the Wissahickon Park, the Morris Arboretum, and Cresheim Park along the Glenside railroad spur. These parks act as a verdant barrier to potential street traffic. Access points occur only at the McCallum Street Bridge, Cresheim Valley Drive and Germantown Avenue on the east and at Bells Mill Road and Germantown Pike on the west. From the north, Bethlehem Pike, Paper Mill Road, Willow Grove Avenue and Ivy Hill Road form the main access points. There is presently no vehicular access from the south since the closing of Wise's Mill Road. As a result, Chestnut Hill has been protected from the congestion, pollution and noise which its wide streets would otherwise attract. This boundary system should be reinforced and protected, and automobile traffic without origin or destination in Chestnut Hill should be encouraged to utilize the arterial by-pass systems (see Figure 9) and go around the Hill and not through it.

Chestnut Hill has better rail service than any part of Philadelphia except Center City, this is also shown on Figure 9. Six stations on two lines put commuter rail service within walking distance of most residents. Rail service is heavily used by center city workers and by students. Chestnut Hill's commercial spine is also served by a light rail system (the trolley) which is the longest in the country. This facility's potential for providing accessibility among commercial clusters along Germantown Avenue is reduced because of the long headways. In addition to the rail service, Chestnut Hill is served by several bus routes, connecting it with Montgomery County.

Figure 9 Transportation System



While the commuter rail lines are of great benefit to Chestnut Hill residents, they also have created some problems. Substantial numbers of riders live outside the community and drive to the stations. Most of these have off-street parking, but only enough to meet about one-half of the demand. Therefore, there are large numbers of cars parking at curb-side, competing with residents for available spaces. In addition, these commuters are responsible for a significant portion of the traffic in Chestnut Hill on the secondary streets.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT: GUIDELINES

The sparsely populated periphery of Chestnut Hill (Zone II), with its open, undeveloped spaces, is always under considerable pressure for development. These areas rely on the automobile for almost all transportation needs. Thus, more intensive land use in these areas is certain to cause an increase in the number of vehicles the street system will be required to handle. Growth in the outlying area of Zone II should be strongly discouraged. Less traffic congestion would be caused by growth near the villages or rail stations since more modes of travel are available there as alternatives to the automobile.

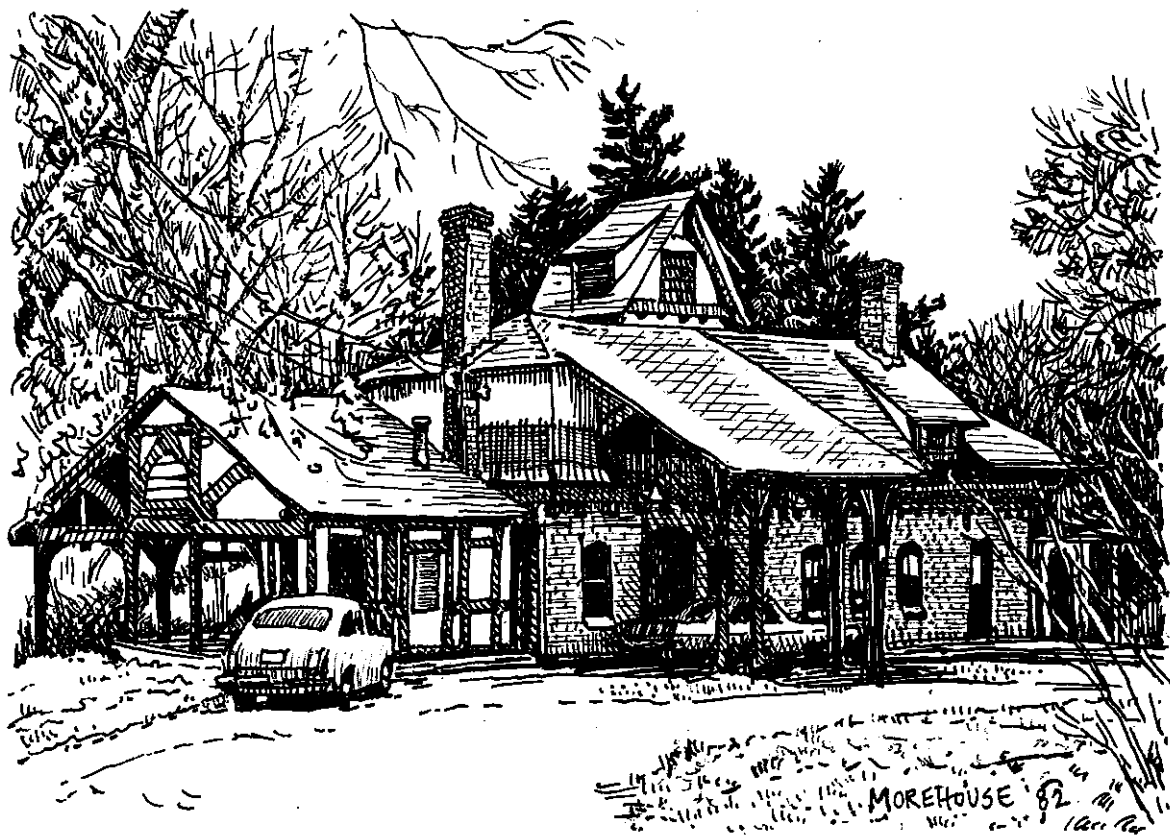
Increased use of shopping areas (and commuter stations) by people who live beyond walking distance will increase the need for additional parking facilities. As was stated in the Commercial Area guidelines, retail parking facilities should be contiguous to commercial land uses but the open, continuous areas of parking adjoining the normal suburban shopping center is to be prevented.

The overall community objectives on this issue are to both support the merchants' goals of increased sales, and at the same time to prevent dramatic changes in the existing parking patterns. Therefore, efforts should be made to increase the volume of sales per parking space, rather than making substantial increases in the number of parking spaces. The "top of the hill" serves as an excellent model of a commercial area with good transit accessibility and adequate parking to support automobile trips. In the commercial area along Germantown Avenue from Jenks School to Top of Hill Mall there are 3.9 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of retail space.

Parking charges are another mechanism used to manage automobile traffic in the area. The lots operated by the Parking Foundation require users to pay a minimal fee. The parking charge is reimbursed to shoppers who make a purchase at one of the stores.

In summary, if non-resident traffic is diverted to the periphery and kept moving smoothly, if the population growth of Chestnut Hill occurs primarily in the pedestrian area (Zone I), and if commercial growth is characterized by quality rather than quantity, then the streets of the Hill may retain their character and convenience for future generations.

A comprehensive transportation systems policy must also recognize and seek to prevent hazards to community residents. The most serious hazards are fast traffic adjacent to heavily populated pedestrian-oriented areas, especially when there is a large population of children. Family residential development should be discouraged adjacent to arterial by-pass routes. Where pedestrian concentrations occur adjacent to heavy traffic streams, great care must be taken to separate the two. Curbs and even low walls or planted spaces might be considered as positive separations. Pedestrian crosswalks should be clearly defined. Traffic should be engineered to move smoothly to avoid frustrating situations which would encourage dangerous driving behavior.



Finally, a wide range of travel "modes" should be made available to residents. Although the automobile is the dominant means of travel, it is desirable to substitute other modes to the extent possible. Travel by trolley, bus, train, bicycle or foot causes less air pollution, requires less expenditure of energy, reduces traffic congestion, and affords more possibilities for informal social contact. In addition, such modes are vital to those who are too old or young, or too infirm to drive or who do not own an automobile.

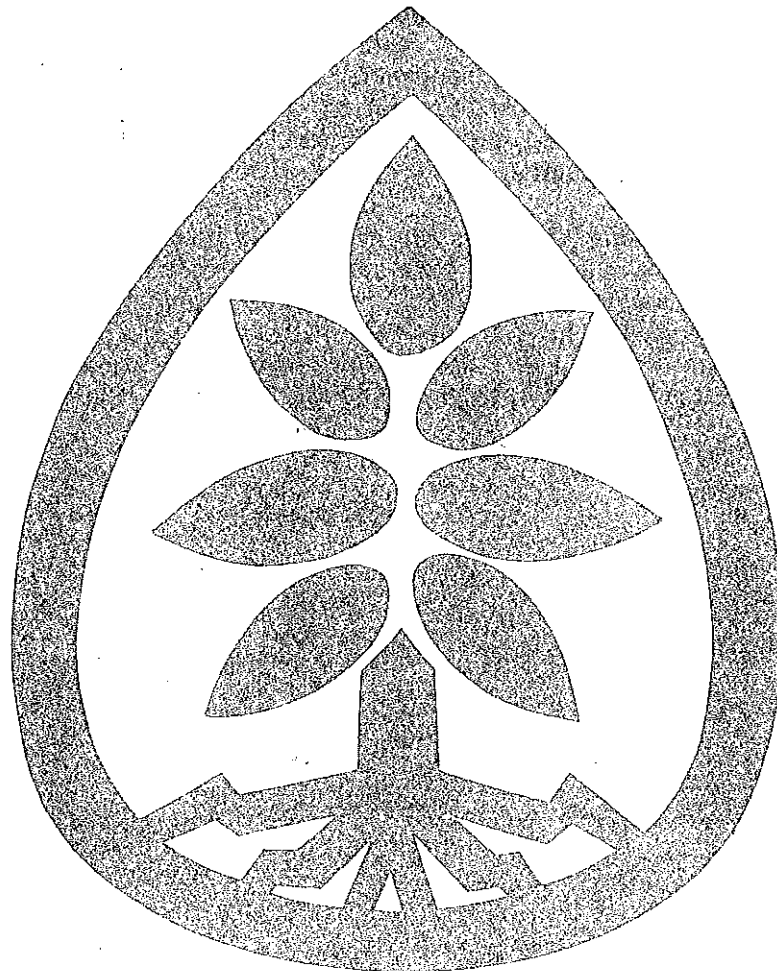
The maintenance of public transportation facilities should be given high priority. If necessary, this function should be supported by the community in cooperation with the transit operators. As an example, commuter rail stations are currently being leased by the community so that high maintenance standards can be achieved. Any proposal to significantly reduce or eliminate commuter rail service to Chestnut Hill should be vigorously opposed.

To ensure that the entire transportation system operates efficiently, the traffic committee should monitor all facilities and performance on a regular basis and be available to review recommendations from residents. Transportation problems including deteriorated conditions on roadways, bicycle paths, pedestrian areas, and transit facilities, increased traffic congestion and lower levels of on-time performance on public transportation, and safety hazards should be brought promptly to the attention of operating agencies.

All links in the transportation system are closely interrelated. They also affect and are affected by changes in the pattern and density of land uses. Therefore, it is important to think through carefully any proposed changes to the transportation system and any proposed changes to the pattern of residential, commercial, institutional or open space use. Any proposed change should be examined to determine how it is likely to affect the objectives stated in the various sections of these Guidelines.

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