

INTRODUCTION

The geographical area for this project is Maryland's 42-mile section of the I-95/I-495 Capital Beltway. The historic context was developed for applicability in the broad area encompassed within the Beltway. The survey of historic resources was applied to a more limited corridor along I-495, where resources abutting the Beltway ranged from neighborhoods of simple Cape Cods to large-scale Colonial Revival neighborhoods.

The process of preparing this Suburbanization Context consisted of:

- conducting an initial reconnaissance survey to establish the extant resources in the project area;
- developing a history of suburbanization, including a study of community design in the suburbs and building patterns within them;
- defining and delineating anticipated suburban property types;
- developing a framework for evaluating their significance;
- proposing a survey methodology tailored to these property types;
- and conducting a survey and National Register evaluation of resources within the limited corridor along I-495.

The historic context was planned and executed according to the following goals:

- to briefly cover the trends which influenced suburbanization throughout the United States and to illustrate examples which highlight the trends;
- to present more detail in statewide trends, which focused on Baltimore as the primary area of earliest and typical suburban growth within the state;
- and, to focus at a more detailed level on the local suburbanization development trends in the Washington, D.C. suburbs, particularly the Maryland counties of Montgomery and Prince George's. Although related to transportation routes such as railroad lines, trolley lines, and highways and freeways, the location and layout of Washington's suburbs were influenced by the special nature of the Capital city and its dependence on a growing bureaucracy and not the typical urban industrial base.

The historic context was developed with the intent that it could be used for any type of survey within the broad area that included suburban resources built through the defined modern period. While the survey of historic resources stopped at the construction date of 1953, the historic context was extended through 1960 in order that its applicability would extend another ten years after completion.

Within the historic context, the history of suburbanization was structured to fit within the Chronological/Developmental Periods defined by the Maryland Historical Trust, the applicable periods being the Agricultural-Industrial Transition Period (1815-1870), the Industrial/Urban Dominance Period (1870-1930) and the Modern Period (1930-1960).

Through historic map research, neighborhoods/communities were identified within the broad project area. Further research was conducted and a set of community profiles in the broad project area was established—these were presented in a format termed “community summary sheets”. These community summary sheets are located in Volume II. To assist in the analysis, a chronological sequence of development was plotted and color-coded. These are presented in pages B-25 through B-54 of Volume I.

From this research broad property types were conceptualized and their characteristics were delineated; anticipated resources to be found within them were then defined.

Delineated Property Types

There are three broad property types related to the community, grouping, or clustering of resources:

- unplanned suburban neighborhoods and isolated residences,
- planned suburban neighborhoods,
- and planned suburban developments.

First, the term *neighborhood* (in contrast to *development*)—was defined as a community of associated structures, including residential, commercial, industrial, municipal, etc. constructed by a variety of individuals over a period of time ranging from a few years to a number of decades. A single individual may have been associated with the purchase of the land and/or the layout of the community but would have a limited or no role in the construction of individual structures or infrastructure.

In contrast, *development* was defined as a completed real estate improvement project, including buildings, landscaping, and infrastructure constructed by a single developer during a distinct lifetime.

Further distinctions were defined for the purpose of clearly distinguishing property types for the context. *Unplanned Suburban Neighborhoods* consist of clusters of buildings not conceived as a planned neighborhood or planned development and characterized by various architectural styles and functions, built within a wide date range. To be eligible, this property type must be a cohesive cluster of buildings with a recognizable association with early or random growth. It must be recognizable through physical community characteristics resulting from lack of deed restrictions or zoning regulations, including varied setbacks, sizes, materials, and functions. It must possess excellent integrity of materials, design of individual components, and integrity of feeling and setting to represent an association with the suburban movement.

Planned Suburban Neighborhoods consist of land subdivided into lots and sold by speculators and/or developers with owner-built housing, characterized by consistent design features, harmonious building types and gridded or curvilinear street pattern. These neighborhoods played a key role in the standardization of suburban community design, were the first planned communities to offer land to minorities and working class; lessons learned from marketing of these communities evolved into an increasing role for the developer in suburban developments. Characteristics include: consistent lot sizes, building setbacks, cohesive grouping of buildings by function, date and architectural style, landscape features as part of the plan, and community amenities such as social halls, schools, parks and community centers. To be eligible, the characteristics of this property type must be intact, particularly its community amenities, and it must possess excellent integrity of materials, design of individual components, and integrity of feeling and setting.

The third community type, *Planned Suburban Developments* consist of residential developments that are comprehensively planned and constructed by developers, characterized by standardized residential building styles and floor plans and incorporating infrastructure and community amenities. The developer was involved from the planning of the community to the construction of the houses, resulting in a cohesive community, united aesthetically by plan or physical development. To be eligible, the characteristics of this property type must be intact, and these resources must include community infrastructure design including streets, pathways, and public space.

These property types are discussed and illustrated in Section D.

Eligibility of all these community types requires the integrity of the community elements as well as the integrity of the building stock within the community, and for this reason, we delineated anticipated residential and non-residential building stock/property types within the community types

Survey Methodology

First, a preliminary survey identified areas which are cohesive and seem to fit within a broad property type. These areas were roughly delineated on maps and then subdivision plats were researched to verify actual configuration, community or subdivision names, associated individuals, and dates. Tax records were checked to verify dates of construction within the communities.

Intensive survey commenced, identifying elements of community and property types within it. Streetscapes, landscape features, infrastructure and other amenities were photographed and the property types with the neighborhood or development were broken down. Representative examples of each property type were photographed and addresses were provided for them.

National Register eligibility was evaluated based on the themes of the context (including social, cultural, socioeconomic, ethnic, regional planning ideals, transportation and Federal city growth); property types found the community types; the presence of community features/amenities; and integrity of delineated character-defining elements. This resulted in recommendations for NR eligibility on 17 resources. Forms for these resources are located in a separate report, *Historic Resources Survey and Determination of Eligibility Report*, I-495/I-95 Capital Beltway Corridor Transportation Study, Maryland Department of Transportation, State Highway Administration (KCI Technologies, Inc., May 2000).