

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES / DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

**FINAL REPORT**

***FIRCREST SCHOOL MASTER PLAN***

MARCH 1993

NBBJ

## *I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY*

### *A. STUDY PURPOSE*

The purpose of this study has been to provide the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and its Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) with planning direction for how the Fircrest School Campus should be best utilized in the future. Several current issues make this study a timely one:

- ▶ The continued emphasis on shifting Residential Habilitation Center (RHC) residents to community settings in response to meeting criteria for federal funding and to provide developmentally disabled clients and their families with more choices about their living environment.
- ▶ Changing needs of individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) in not only the RHCs but also in community settings.
- ▶ The physical condition of the facilities and infrastructure on the Fircrest School Campus.
- ▶ Pressure for development on the Fircrest School Campus by non-DD users.

Given these issues, this study was designed to provide:

- ▶ Information on the physical condition and the related economics to maintaining Fircrest School in good condition that will help in decision making related to:
  - ▶ Continued operations at existing levels
  - ▶ Operations at reduced sizes
  - ▶ When Fircrest should consider alternative options for providing support services
- ▶ Market responsive land use concepts that address:
  - ▶ Economic impacts
  - ▶ Sound planning and urban design precepts suggested by study participants
  - ▶ Maximum flexibility for future directions

The study outputs must make policy analysis possible via "if, then" type scenarios since future policy, funding, care, treatment, and population needs relevant to the developmental disabled population are in constant flux. Much of the detailed technical analysis that provided input to the Fircrest Master Plan is provided in the following documents, prepared as a part of the same study effort:

- ▶ Fircrest Ten-Year Capital Improvement Report, September 1992
- ▶ Residential Habilitation Centers Utilization Analysis, September 1992

## *B. MASTER PLAN SUMMARY*

The trend in recent years, both nationally and within Washington State, has been to downsize the institutional centers for the developmentally disabled. However, how the State chooses to manage the developmentally disabled population by location in the future is an open question. For that reason, difficulties arise in developing a detailed facility and site master plan for the Fircrest Campus. The strategy applied to this particular effort was to show "zones of development" and offer county zoning designation changes to support the suggested uses.

Figure 1 displays the many existing Fircrest tenants. Several tenants occupy Navy buildings, constructed in the 1940s as "temporary" structures, and for obvious reasons need to consider new facilities. Figure 2, the suggested master plan, shows replacement of all the Navy buildings while allowing existing tenants to expand for additional development to occur as well.

It should be noted that the plan shown is conceptual in nature and should be used accordingly. Street access to the Campus is shown in different locations as currently exists in order to improve circulation within the Campus. These changes need to be studied in more detail. Also, pedestrian and bicycle linkages with Hamlin Park are offered as suggestions. These ideas would also need to be studied in more detail.

The zones of development are summarized below.

### *Residential Zone*

The northern section of the Campus is suggested to continue in its residential character. Along with additional residential development, community oriented developments are envisioned as occurring along the area bordered by 15th Avenue N.W. Efforts could be made to maintain wooded areas and greenbelts to provide a campus-like setting.

### *Commercial Zone*

The southwest area of the Campus, the most visible and accessible, is suggested for more intensive commercial development such as a multi-story office building with ground floor retail. The master plan shows vehicular access via the existing fire lane, however that access could easily be from 15th. Additional commercial development could occur along N.E. 150th to the east of the lab.

### *Laboratory Zone*

The laboratory zone is anchored by the existing Washington State Public Health Laboratory. Future expansion is shown to the north and east along N.E. 150th. Expansion to the west (overlapping the Commercial Zone) would be a third opportunity, depending on how the fire lane to the west of the lab is handled. Laboratories along 15th Avenue N.E. would be compatible with surrounding uses.

### *Industrial*

The existing industrial uses east of the Lab remain in place in the master plan. Additional industrial uses that require large vehicle access is not suggested given the incompatibility with surrounding land uses.

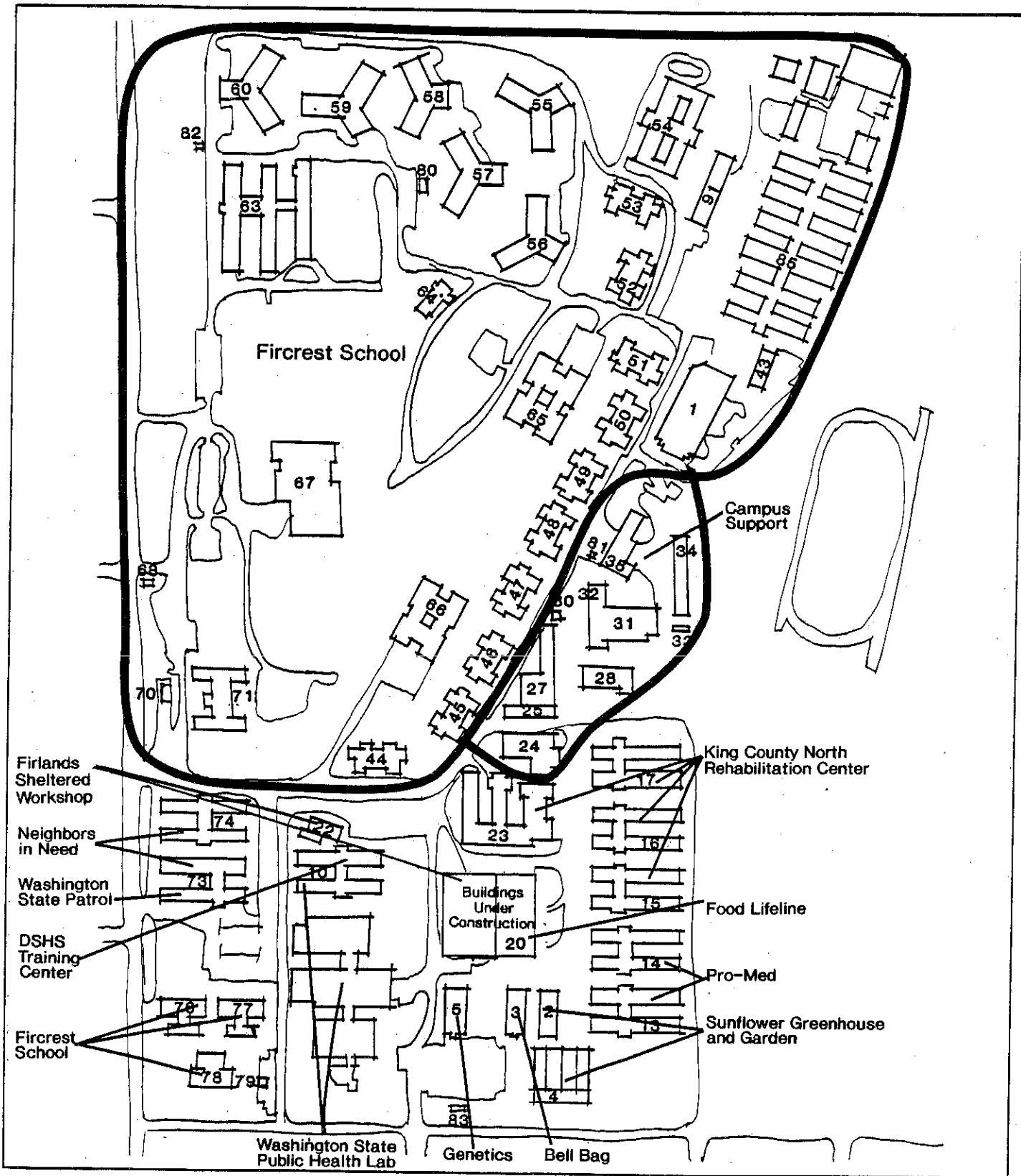


Figure 1  
 Building Use  
 Fircrest Campus

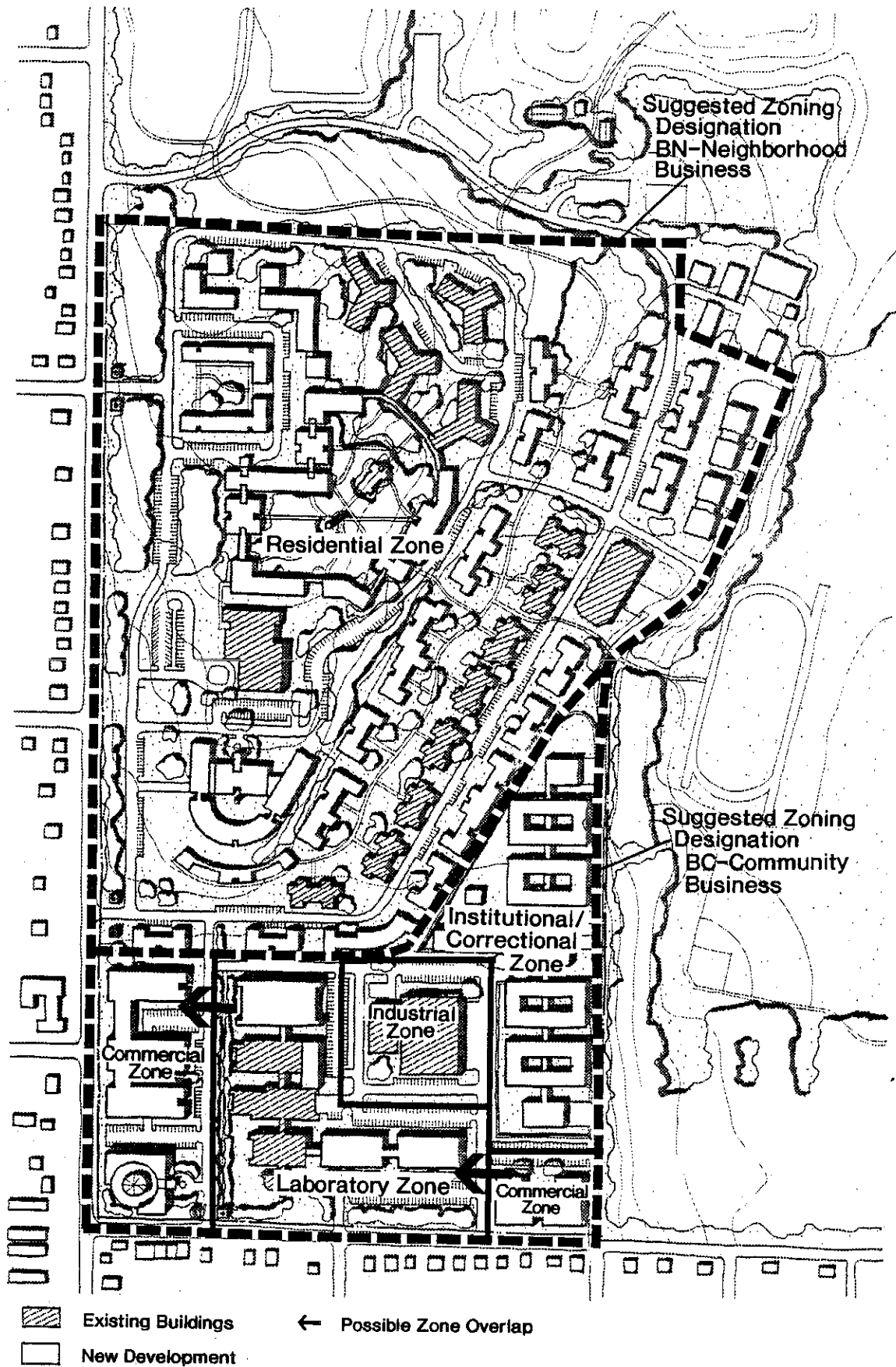


Figure 2  
 Fircrest Suggested Master Plan

*Institutional/Correctional*

It is suggested the current King County Rehabilitation facilities be replaced in roughly the same area. Expansion is possible to the north where current Fircrest School maintenance facilities are located. Keeping the correctional facilities toward the interior of the site is desirable.

A zoning change that would allow the suggested master plan uses to comply with zoning outright is being initiated. Because of the uncertainty regarding the future use of all areas of the Fircrest Campus, the goal is to provide maximum flexibility for future development.

## *II. EXISTING CONDITIONS*

### *A. PHYSICAL CONDITIONS*

The Fircrest campus is located north of the City of Seattle within King County. The site boundaries include 15th Avenue N.E. to the west, N.E. 150th to the South, Hamlin Park to the North, and 20th Ave. N.E. and Shorecrest High School to the east. As shown in Figure 3, the campus ownership is divided between DSHS and the C.E.P. and R.I. Trust which is administered by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). DSHS occupies the C.E.P and R.I. parcel under a Master Lease agreement and acts as a landlord for a number of non-DD tenants. In total, the site is nearly 90 acres.

The site is within a five minute drive of I-5. The main access to the site from 15th Avenue N.E. at N.E. 155th Street is signaled but does not allow a left turn when coming from the north on 15th Avenue. Service vehicles enter the south part of the site from 150th at 20th Avenue N.E.

The topography of the site helps define distinct areas of the campus and contributes to creating natural buffers between functions. The site's high point is between the "Y" Buildings and the Activities Building and generally slopes downhill as one moves south and east.

Areas of the site have stands of mature trees in forested areas, which adds beauty and a secluded feel to those parts of the site. There are no apparent environmentally sensitive areas. However, it is possible that because some parts of the sites are former building sites, there may be poorly compacted soil fill.

Fircrest School currently serves about 400 clients in a mix of buildings on about 90 acres. The site was intensively developed in 1942 as a 1,200-bed "temporary" Navy Hospital. As uses on the site changed and evolved over the years, many of the original Navy buildings were demolished and new buildings erected. A number of Navy buildings are still occupied and great efforts are needed to maintain them so they can be continued to be used. They have surpassed their useful and functional life and due to their age and condition should be demolished in the near future.

The newer facilities vary in their functional adequacy and condition. The "Y" Buildings are perhaps the least appropriate for providing the clients with a "normalized" (rather than institutional) environment. From a physical standpoint, the most significant deficiencies for the newer buildings used by Fircrest School relate to fixing roofs and installing sprinklers and fire alarm systems.

The infrastructure systems show a few problems that can be fixed with relative ease. The major issue on the site seems to be the North Condensate Loop system which needs repair, replacement or to be scrapped for that part of the site and individual units installed.

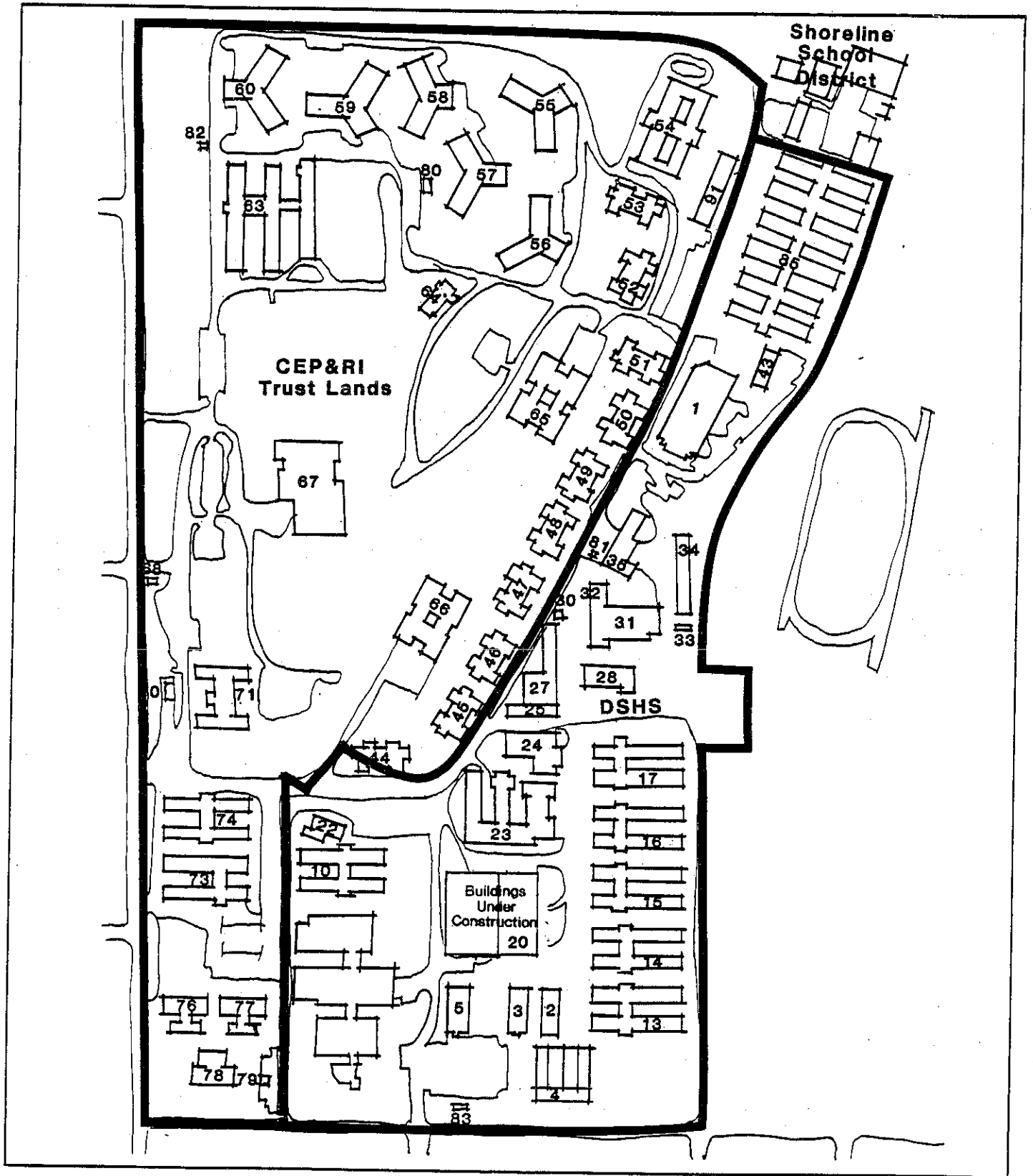


Figure 3  
**Property Ownership**

**Fircrest School**

Developmental Disabled Residential Habilitation Centers Master Plan.





**B. LAND USES**

The Fircrest School Campus currently accommodates a mix of tenants summarized below:

- ▶ Fircrest School
- ▶ Washington State Health Lab
- ▶ King County North Rehabilitation Center
- ▶ Washington State Patrol
- ▶ DSHS Training Center
- ▶ Sunflower Greenhouse and Garden
- ▶ Food Lifeline Distribution Center
- ▶ Several Social Service Programs
- ▶ Various manufacturing enterprises

The existing tenants should be considered in the master plan along with other uses that suggest themselves based on the market assessment and interest from other sources. Future tenants for consideration include:

- ▶ Multi-family housing
- ▶ Other laboratory users belonging to other state, University and/or local agencies
- ▶ Other social services programs for DD clients as well as others in need
- ▶ Other commercial and office tenants, public or private sector
- ▶ A conference center that can be shared by the tenants and other users

### C. REGULATORY ANALYSIS

The Fircrest Campus is located in the Shoreline Community planning area of King County. A Community Plan for Shoreline was adopted in 1980, which includes land use designations and recommended zoning classifications, and is intended to guide development decisions over a 6 to 19 year period. The plan has not been updated. The Fircrest Campus designation within the plan is for "Community Facilities." Permitted uses include cemeteries, public schools and junior colleges. The underlying zoning of the site is RS-7200, which is a single-family residential designation.

Development resulting in a change from current use on the site requires a change in zoning or a conditional use permit. With the passage of the Growth Management Act,<sup>1</sup> each county with a population of 50,000 or more or ones that have had a 10% population increase in the last ten years must prepare a comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plans must meet goals relating to managing growth and ensuring concurrency in land use plans with capital plans for infrastructure. Section 4 of the Act requires State agencies to comply with the Comprehensive Plans. What this means for Fircrest is that any change of use must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the zoning therein. As the County updates their Comprehensive Plan, the State has the opportunity to influence changes from the existing designations.

### D. POTENTIALS AND CONSTRAINTS

The following is a summary of the site potentials at the Fircrest Campus:

- ▶ Good access from I-5.
- ▶ Varied topography creates buffers.
- ▶ Stands of mature trees enhance the landscape and quality of the environment.
- ▶ No environmentally sensitive areas are known to exist.

The following are key physical constraints associated with the site:

- ▶ There is a single access point from 15th Avenue N.E.
- ▶ No left-turn coming south on 15th Avenue N.E.
- ▶ Topography creates some difficulty for pedestrians.
- ▶ Possibility of poorly compacted soil fill on former building sites.
- ▶ Underlying zoning is single-family residential.
- ▶ A change in use will require a change in zoning or a conditional use permit.

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<sup>1</sup> Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 2929 (April 24, 1990)/Re-Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 1025 (July 16, 1991).

### **III. DEVELOPMENT ASSUMPTIONS AND GOALS**

Key assumptions and goals to be considered in this study include the following:

- ▶ The number of Fircrest clients will not exceed 434 clients (census in July '91).
- ▶ Plan on the continued shift from Fircrest to community settings based on family choice (goals and timeframe for this shift has not been determined).
- ▶ Use of the Fircrest Campus should benefit developmentally disabled clients.
  - ▶ Develop revenue producing uses that benefit the DD population.
  - ▶ Use the site as a resource for the DD community-based population.
- ▶ Build on synergies, existing and potential, between the tenants. Examples include:
  - ▶ Employment opportunities for Fircrest clients and King County North Rehabilitation Facility inmates provided by other tenants.
  - ▶ Opportunities for sharing on-site facilities like the Activities Building, laundry and food service, a conference center, parking, etc.
- ▶ Build on the best of what exists at Fircrest.
- ▶ Future development on the Fircrest Campus should benefit the surrounding community:
  - ▶ Aesthetically
  - ▶ Via increased access to site amenities and facilities
  - ▶ Mitigating adverse impacts of particular users/building types
- ▶ Open campus to community
- ▶ Create a greenbelt linkage
- ▶ Use economics to guide master plan directions.
- ▶ Provide flexibility in the master plan.
- ▶ Ensure planning outputs correspond to needs of Growth Management Act.
- ▶ Maintain "residential" uses on North Campus
- ▶ Use South Campus for continued "governmental" uses
  - ▶ Lab expansion
  - ▶ King County North Rehabilitation Facility
  - ▶ Offices
  - ▶ Food Lifeline

#### *IV. MASTER PLAN ZONES OF DEVELOPMENTS*

Because of the uncertainty in identifying precisely what development would need to be accommodate in the future, this study identified zones of development rather than specific building placement and capacity.

Those zones, considered in two broad regions of the campus -- North and South -- are shown in Figure 2.

##### *A. NORTH CAMPUS*

Given that the timing and future Fircrest School size are unknown at this time, the concept shows a "residential zone" in the north campus that can be occupied by differing blends of:

- ▶ Fircrest School
- ▶ Other public sector and/or non-profit tenants that have facility needs that are residential in character (like Children's Hospital uses, possibly an AIDS Hospice, housing for other special populations -- including DD "community" type homes).
- ▶ "Co-Housing" type development
- ▶ Normal multifamily tenants (could include Fircrest parents)

The site has capacity for additional residential development as well as for community-oriented development to support both the on-site residents and the surrounding community. A "village center" is suggested in the wooded area surrounding the chapel.

##### *B. SOUTH CAMPUS*

The State Health Lab, King County North Rehabilitation Facility (NRF), and Food Lifeline were identified as tenants that would remain on-site. A replacement facility for Firlands Sheltered Workshop is currently under construction. Future expansion for the Lab must be considered along with replacement facilities for the NRF.

The remainder of the south campus could be available for:

- ▶ Additional lab space, perhaps creating a "consolidated lab campus".
- ▶ Commercial office space along 150th and/or 15th that could be occupied by some of the existing "office" tenants (DSHS Training Center, social service programs, government offices, etc.).
- ▶ Retail space along 150th and/or 15th that could be occupied by existing tenants and/or new tenants.

The suggested zones of development include:

▶ **Residential Zone**

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▶ **Commercial Zone**

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▶ **Institutional/Correctional**

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- ▶ The "SO" suffix (Special District Overlay designation) under the proposed zoning is like the PUD designation in that it is an overlay to the underlying zoning.

The purpose of the "SO" suffix is to carry out Comprehensive Plan and community plan policies for special opportunities for achieving public benefits by permitting or requiring alternative uses and development standards that differ from the code. Within the SO designation, there are three sub-designations:

- ▶ Pedestrian Oriented Commercial Development
- ▶ Office/Research Park Development
- ▶ Master Plan Development

The Master Plan Development sub-designation appears to be comparable to the Planned Unit Development in the existing zoning. One important restriction is that the parcel must be at least 80 acres in order to do the SO-MPD overlay. If the intent is to develop the site as a planned development, going for the rezone and the overlay would make sense.

The suggested zone designation changes would allow the types of development discussed in this study to occur outright without having to obtain conditional use permits. This would provide greater development predictability for the owner and consistency between the comprehensive plan and the underlying zoning.