

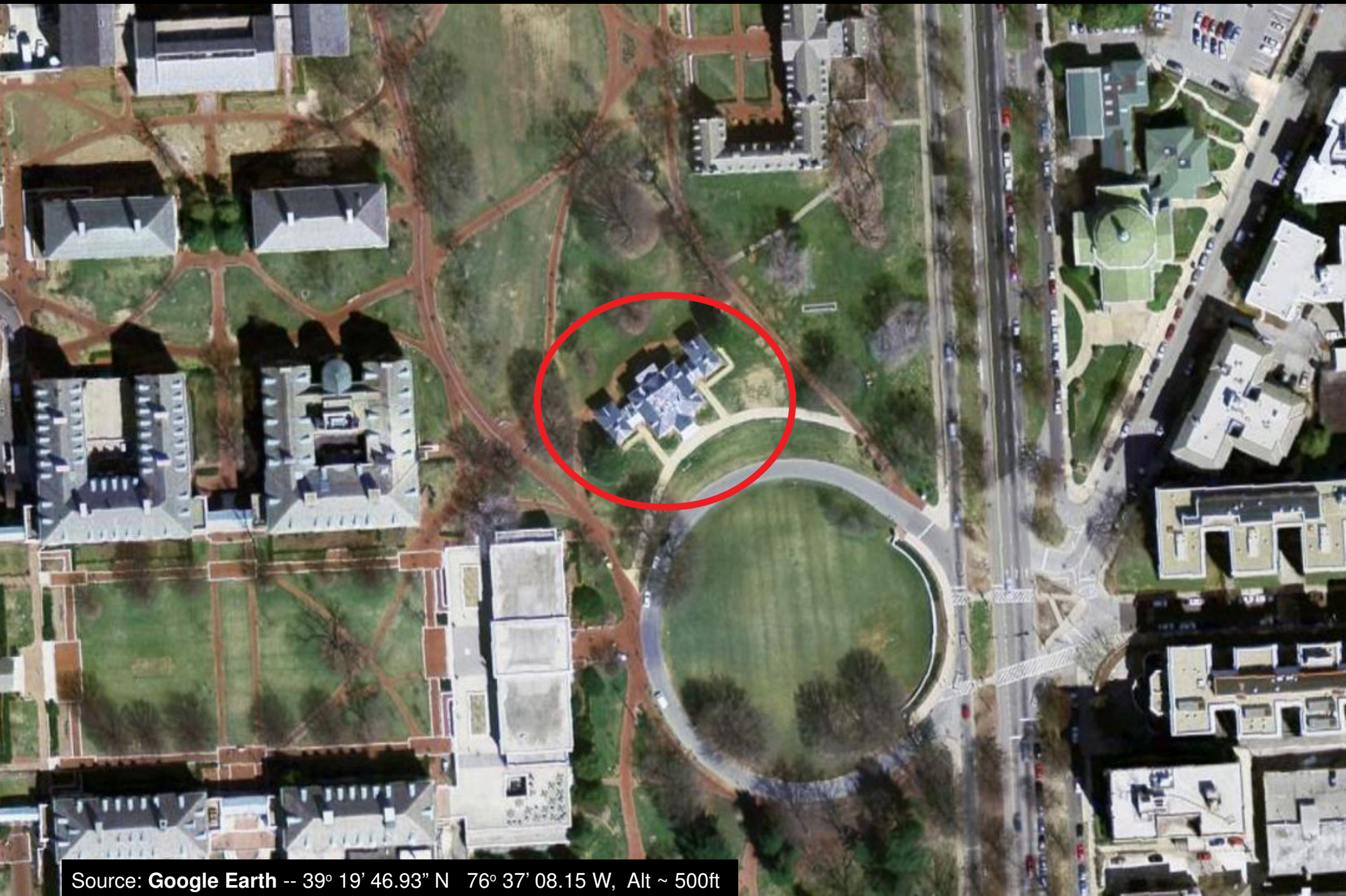
Recent writing about sustainable design emphasizes the need to see “beyond the envelope,” that is, to acknowledge each building’s connection to the elements, to landscapes, and to far-reaching systems outside its four walls.



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Source: Google Earth -- 39° 19' 46.93" N 76° 37' 08.15 W, Alt ~ 500ft

Here we see Homewood in an aerial view, within today's immediate surroundings.

But although Charles Carroll Jr.'s original residence was in many ways self-sufficient, its lessons for us depend significantly upon Homewood's relationship with the growing city of Baltimore, throughout its history.



In fact, tracking Homewood's place within a changing urban environment affords us fascinating lessons — for better and for worse — about our own time's planning for a sustainable future.

But how might we do so?

A useful way to the study of these changes is to turn to maps for illustration.

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Historic maps, many of which are held by the Johns Hopkins University's Sheridan Libraries, show Homewood's evolving connection to a city whose boundaries, both political and social, continue to change today.

Here we have a Trolley Map, dated 1910, which includes Homewood as a featured destination for riders leaving the City's center. Similar illustrations, showing municipal boundaries, water-supply infrastructure, sanitation, electrification, and other transportation systems, provide important contextual information about Homewood's own physical development.

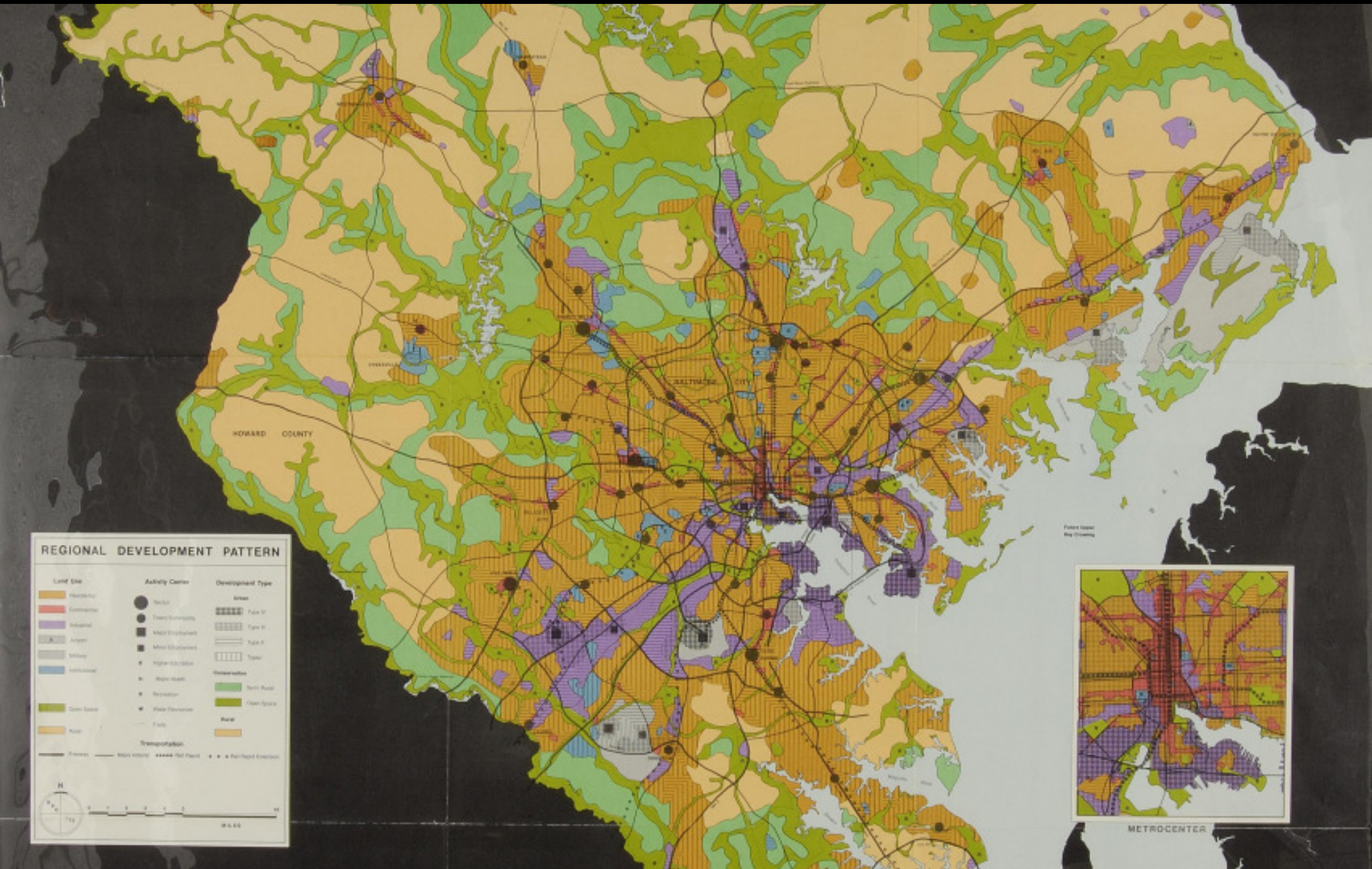


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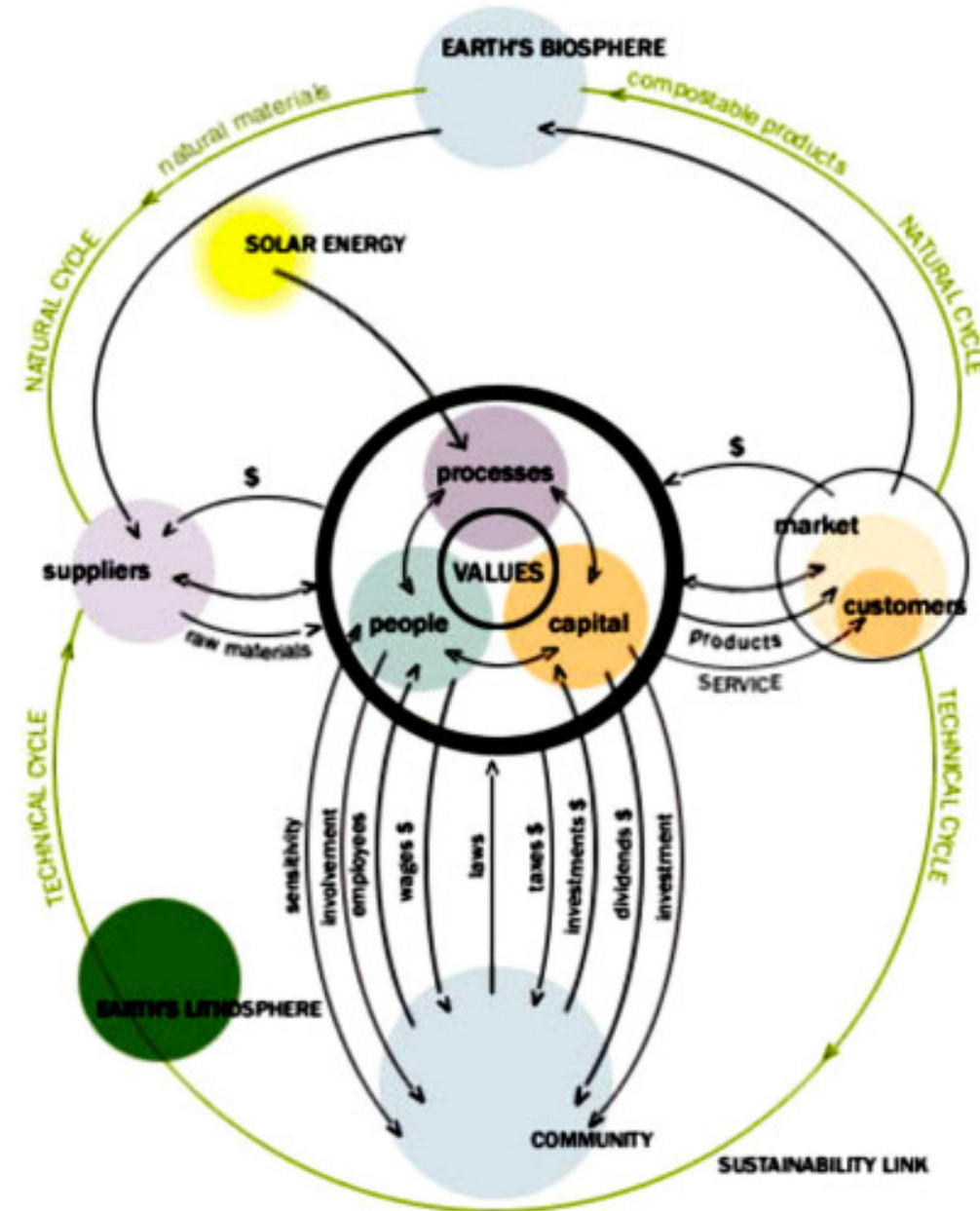
Furthermore, as one may infer cynically from this Regional Development Map of Baltimore, dating to 1972, a plan for Green Homewood will be realized only within both a “greener” Baltimore and a rethought approach to regional planning.





Now, for all its roots in ecology and in our sensitivity for the natural world, thinking “Green” is thinking about *design* — and as this image reminds us, design reaches into our lives from the large scale to the intimate.

Victor Papanek, a well-known designer, usefully paraphrased the word: Design is a “futures-oriented, trial-and-error process for making meaningful order.” And he insisted that examples of this process have been similar throughout history, but that “only our questions change. We no longer ask, ‘How does it look?’ or ‘How does it work?’ We are more interested now in the answer to, ‘How does it relate?’ “



Relationships, some of which are illustrated here, are key to considering what Homewood has to teach us about Sustainability, and not just because the building and its architectural appurtenances consume energy from a variety of sources.

Sustainable Development:

*Improving the quality of human life
while living within the carrying capacity
of supporting eco-systems.*

What are the eco-systems to which this citation refers?

We should acknowledge, for instance, that supporting ecologies may be defined to include man-made constituents; and we should consider, too, that systems subject to sustainable development may be entirely artificial, and even non-material.

In the context of Homewood House, what are examples of these supporting eco-systems?

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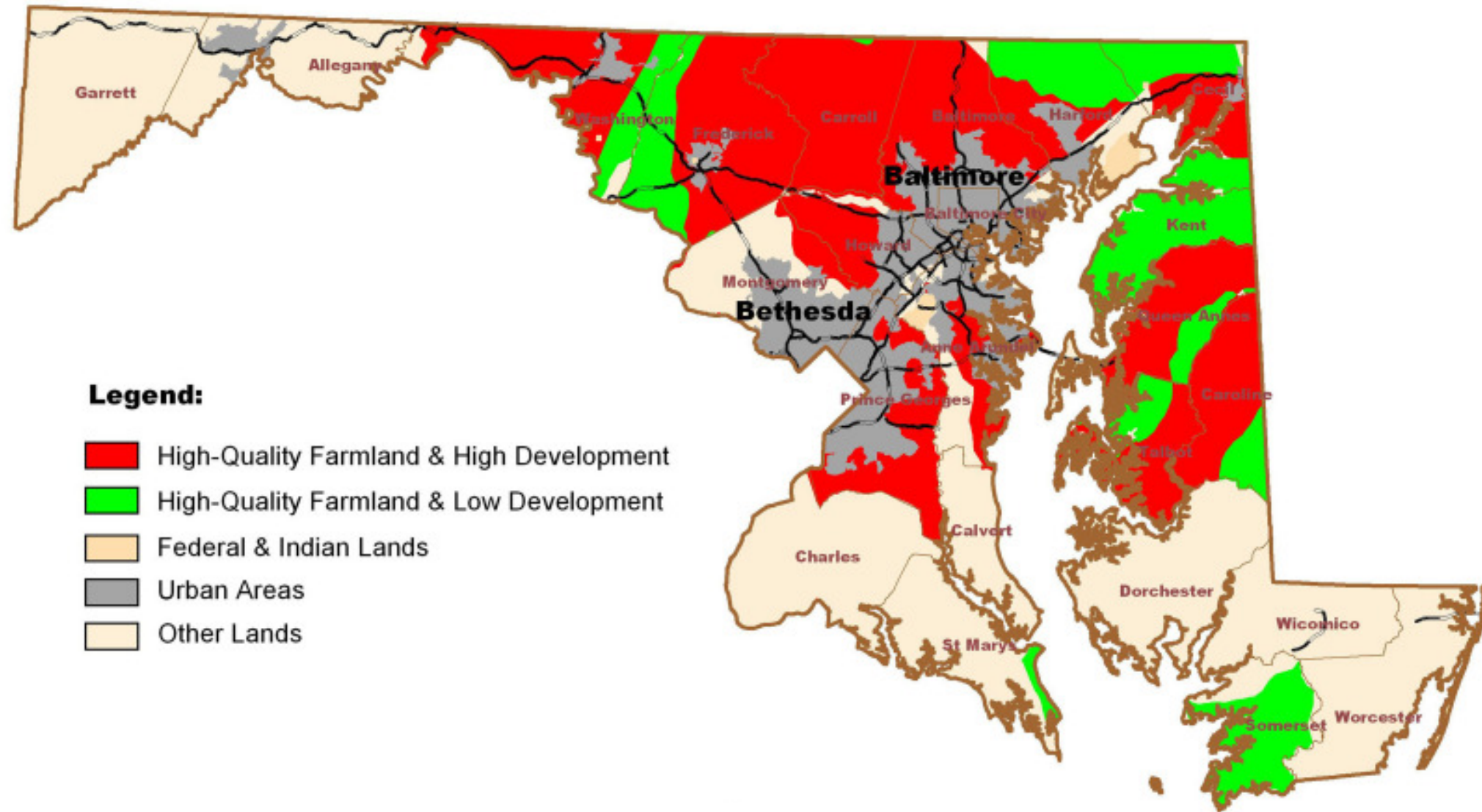


The natural environment is the most obvious example.

This system includes the geology of the hill upon which Homewood stands, and it includes too the planted landscape which surrounds the House. No one can mistake the manicured lawn of the Ellipse or the cultivated trees to the north of the house for anything but the results of human design.

But: *So what?*

These features are a part of Homewood's contemporary botanical ecosystem, and its maintenance must together be weighed in our considerations about a sustainable future.



Other systems, although material, depend upon greater abstraction for their definition. “Sustenance and Waste Management” describes a chain of relationships which include both natural and human participants.

This recent map shows, roughly, the spatial coincidence in Maryland of farmland and development. Baltimore, Washington, and most of the territory in between are designated as “urban” areas. We can see that Homewood’s present location is far removed from most local food production.



These days, as we all know, food might come regularly from as far away as Fiji or Brazil. But even in 1800, foodstuffs (and alcohol) were brought to Homewood to supplement the food produced on its grounds and nearby.

Likewise, the history of how water was delivered to Homewood's inhabitants is very much the story of how our contemporary lives have become increasingly bound to technical innovations for water transport and purification.

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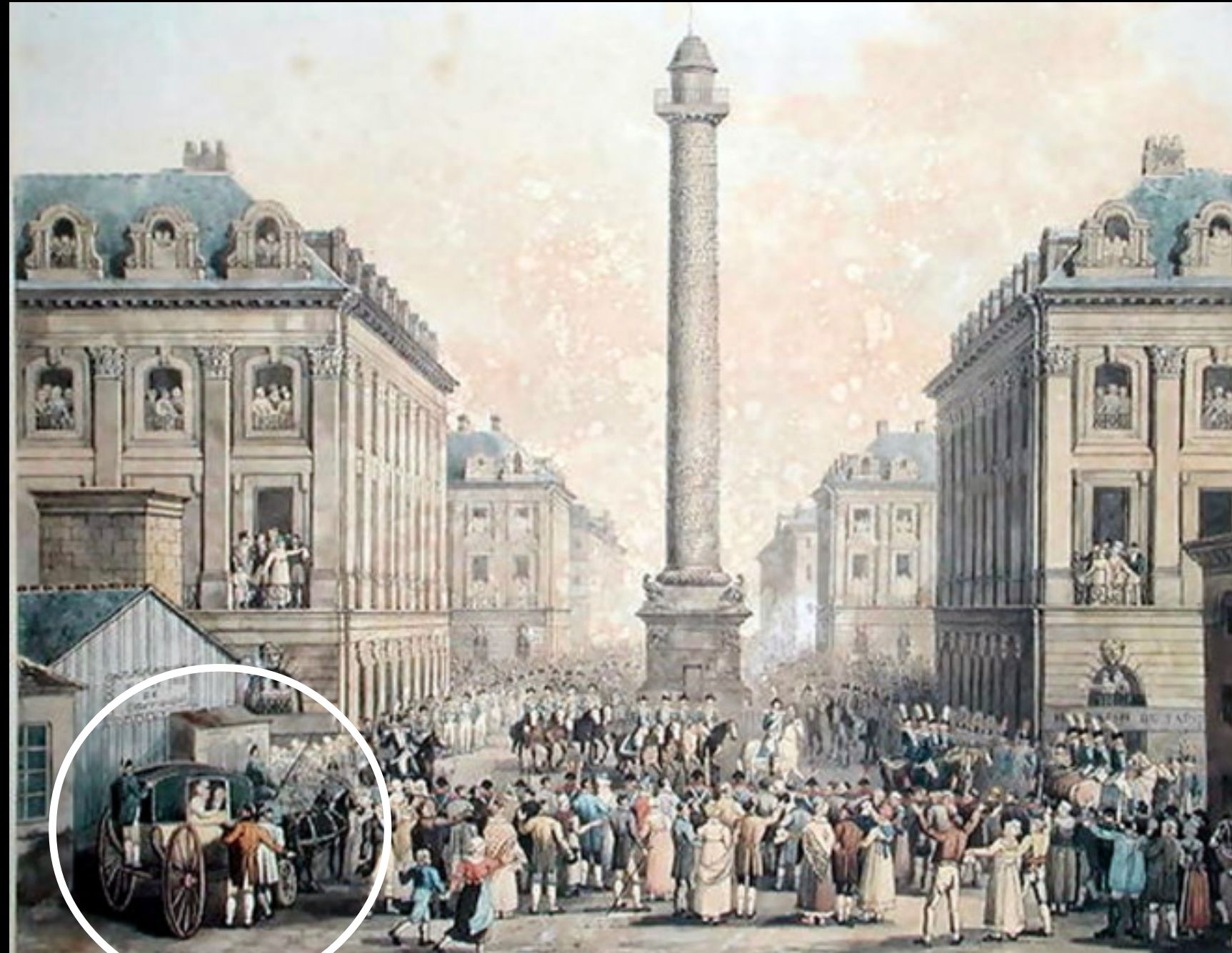
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The process of getting to and from Homewood has seen radical change since Charles Carroll of Carrollton might have arrived by carriage to visit his son.

The transportation of persons and of goods is fundamental to considerations of sustainable development, whether in the microcosm of a single house or in the management of mass transit. We can easily understand how Baltimore's early roads made habitation at Homewood possible for members of the city's elite society.

(This is *not* a painting of Baltimore's dedication of its Washington Monument, an event which the Carrolls might well have attended. Instead, this image shows the column at Paris' *Place Vendome*, a perfectly respectable substitute, more or less contemporary with Homewood's own construction.)



Charles-Ferdinand de France...Place Vendome, 1814, Nicolas Joseph Verdnaux

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Yet we need only look at our own travel to Homewood today to see that this place stands amidst a complex web of transit systems.

Surely, their changing geography over these last two hundred years has something to teach us about the next two hundred.



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Changing geography is reflected, too, by the Homewood estate's present role as Johns Hopkins University's campus. Here we have an early plan for the campus, in which Homewood Mansion attends the link between the academic buildings and the dormitories, more or less as it does today.

A university such as Hopkins might be considered, in general terms, to be an "institution of thought," serving as a lens by which many immaterial systems of knowledge and belief might be disseminated.

How might such "institutions of thought" provide for better stewardship of their supporting resources?

