

INTRODUCTION

MASTER PLAN AREA BOUNDARY

The boundaries of the *Kemp Mill Master Plan*, a comprehensive update to the *1967 Kemp Mill-Four Corners and Vicinity Master Plan*, encompass those contiguous areas not amended since 1967 (Figure 2). The boundaries of the 1967 Master Plan extended north to Randolph Road and south to Piney Branch Road (Figure 3). The total land area of the 1967 Plan was about 4,200 acres. After 1967, portions of the master plan area were amended by other master plans. Portions south of the I-495 were included in the 2000 *North Silver Spring Sector Plan* and the 2001 *Silver Spring East Plan*. A southeastern portion was included in both the *1986 Four Corners Sector Plan* and the *1996 Four Corners Master Plan*.

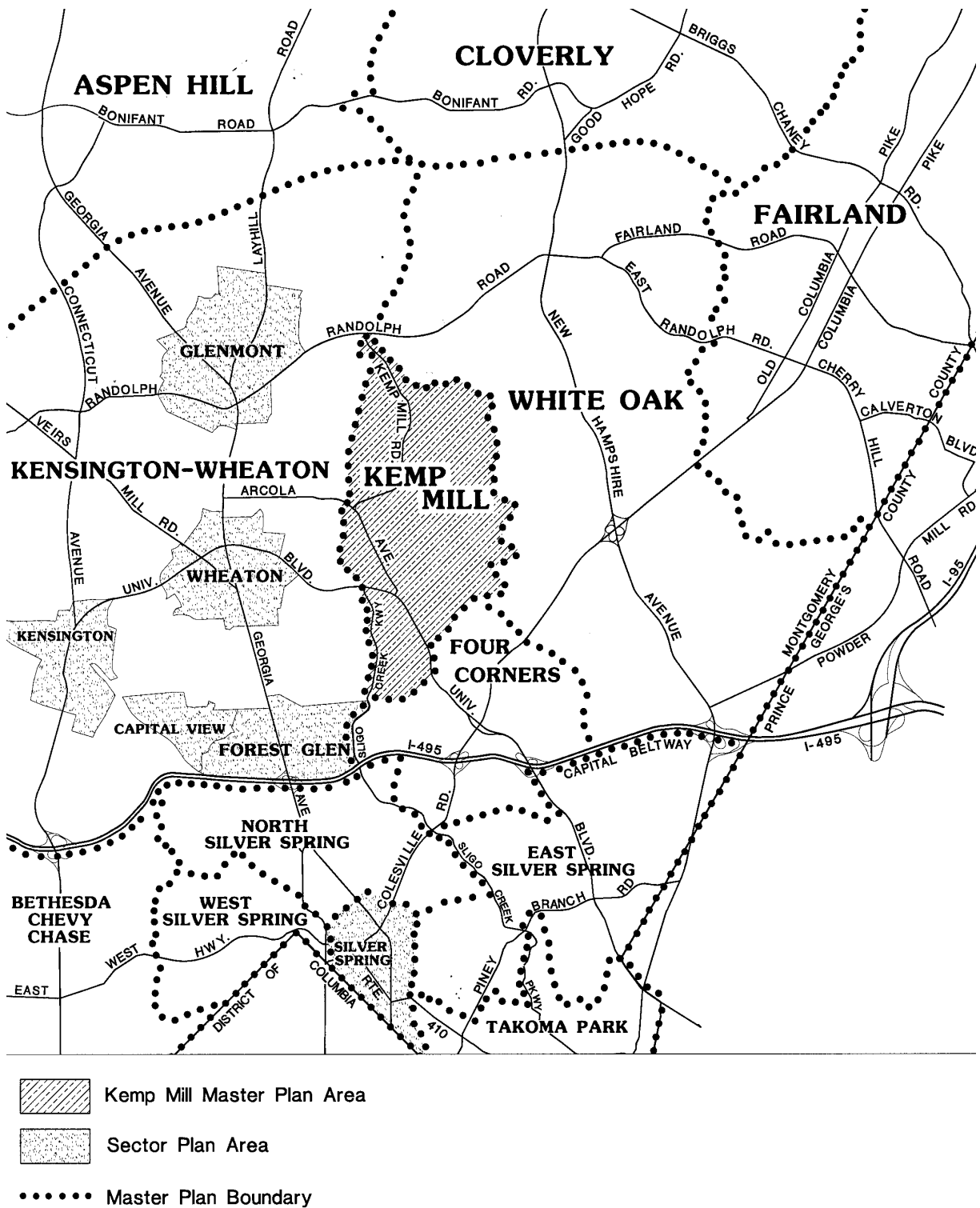
The boundaries of this *Kemp Mill Master Plan* are Dennis Avenue and Eisner Street on the south, Sligo Creek and Wheaton Regional Parks on the west and north, and the Northwest Branch Park on the east. The Kemp Mill master plan area is located east of Georgia Avenue in the eastern part of the county and follows the boundaries of the adjoining master plans: the *1997 White Oak Master Plan*, the *1989 Communities of Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan*, the *1986 Four Corners Sector Plan* and the *1996 Four Corners Master Plan* (Figure 4).

A SHORT DEVELOPMENT HISTORY OF THE KEMP MILL MASTER PLAN AREA

MID-EIGHTEENTH TO NINETEENTH CENTURY

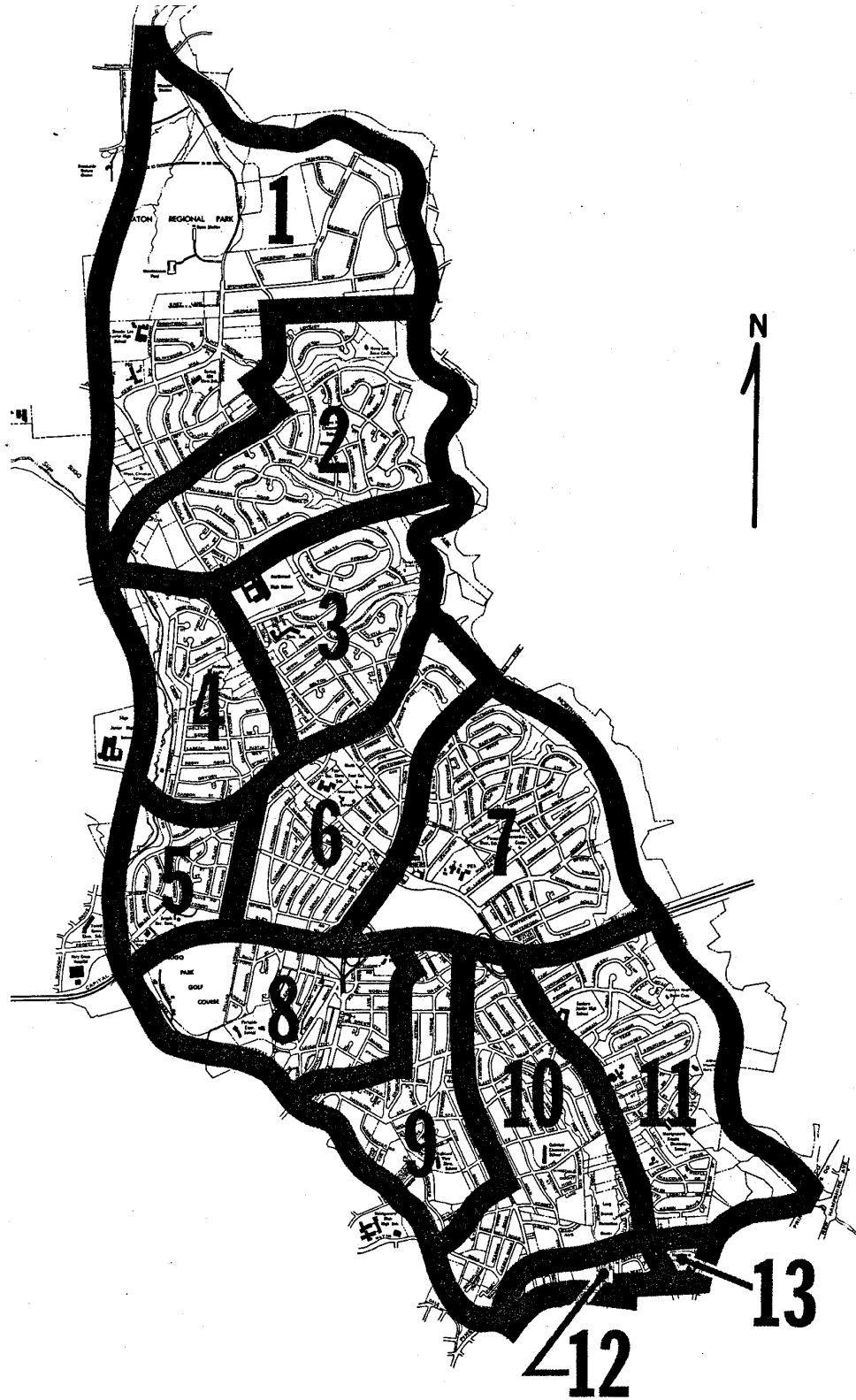
Settlement in the Kemp Mill area dates to the mid-eighteenth century. The historical land use in Kemp Mill and adjoining White Oak was agricultural until about 1920. This part of the county lies within the Piedmont geological province and is characterized by rolling topography, deep soils, and streams with noticeable changes in gradient. The soils supported forests and the gradient of the streams enabled settlers to build homesteads and water-powered industries. Settlers built saw, grist and flour mills along the stretches of the Northwest Branch where the water flow provided sufficient hydropower. There were a number of mill sites in the general vicinity including Kemp Mill and Burnt Mills. Burnt Mills, built in the mid-eighteenth century, was situated where the Northwest Branch crossed Colesville Road. The mill operated continuously from 1745 until the 1920s.

Figure 2: Kemp Mill Master Plan Area



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Figure 3: 1967 Master Plan Neighborhoods



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Kemp Mill, or Kemp's Mill, was located where the Northwest Branch crossed Randolph Road, otherwise known as Old Annapolis Road. Kemp Mill, built in the mid-nineteenth century, was used for lumber and grist until it ceased operation in the 1920s.

TWENTIETH CENTURY

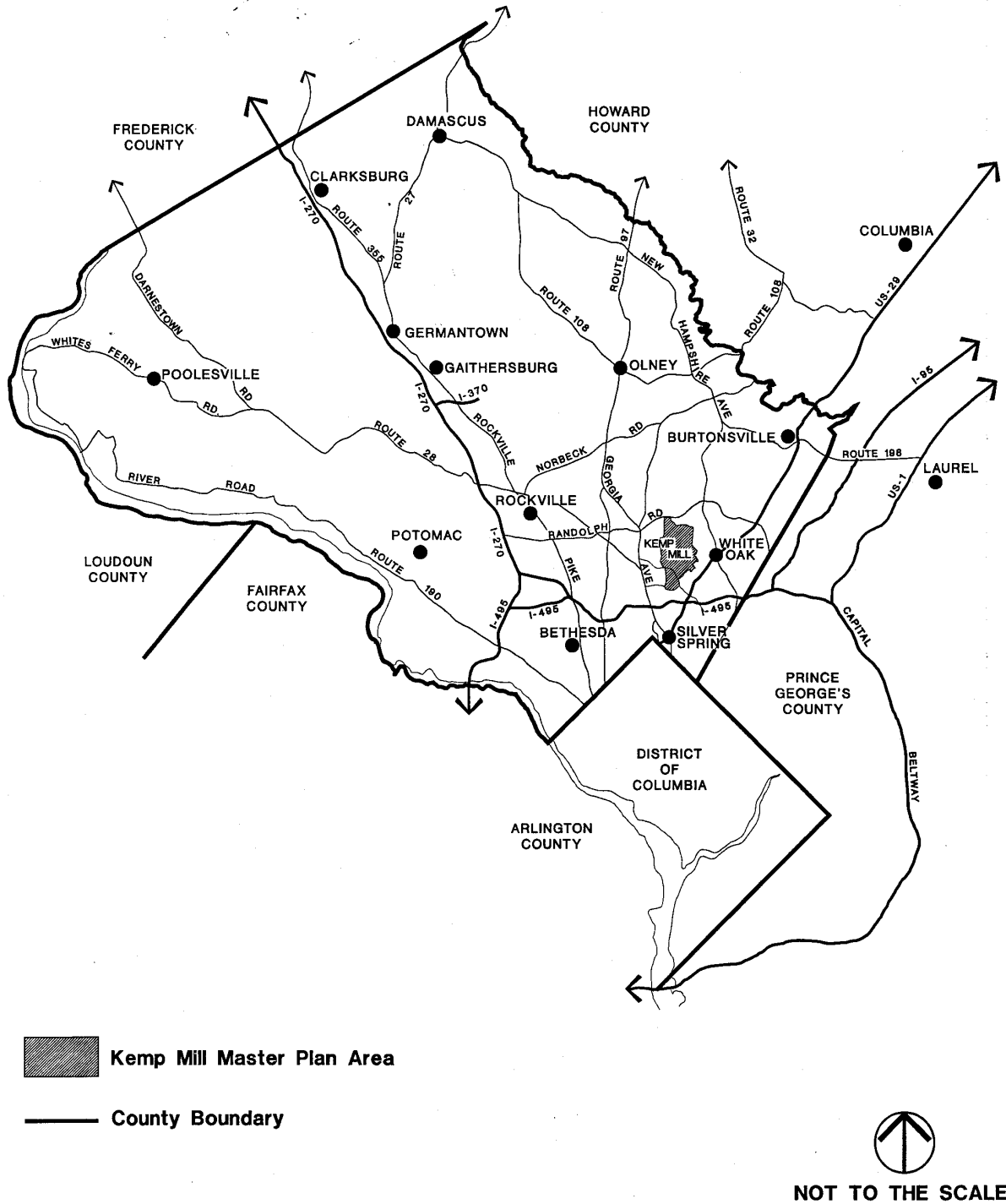
The shift from agricultural uses to residential development in Montgomery County began at the turn of the twentieth century. Proximity to growth pressures emanating from the ever-growing federal presence in the District of Columbia generated interest in land use planning within Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. In 1927, the Maryland General Assembly passed enabling legislation creating a planning agency, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). The bi-county agency was given the mandate to prepare comprehensive plans, specifically park and transportation plans, for Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. The land area under the jurisdiction of the new agency was identified as the Maryland-Washington Metropolitan District and extended as far north as Kemp Mill.

In 1931, the M-NCPPC completed a large map entitled the *Preliminary Master Plan of Highways and Parks* depicting a system of parks, parkways and highways. Two of the parks proposed in the plan followed the Northwest Branch and Sligo Creek. Land for Sligo Creek Parkway was purchased and developed from the county-line to University Boulevard during the 1930s and 1940s. In 1957, the M-NCPPC acquired 110 acres along the Northwest Branch including the Kemp Mill site. Today, these two parks are within the eastern and western boundaries of the Kemp Mill master plan area.

Subdivision development within Kemp Mill began shortly after the 1931 Plan. One of the promotional ideas developers used for advertising new residential communities was the concept of creating neighborhoods within a park-like setting since there was a proposed public park and parkway system. Gray's Estates and Yeatman Parkway in Kemp Mill and Burnt Mills Hills in White Oak were part of the first wave of ex-urban five-acre lot subdivision development built before World War II. After the war, smaller lot subdivisions, such as Springbrook Forest, were built following the same "living in the park" concept. The lots in Springbrook Forest were sized at one acre or more in order to accommodate septic fields and private wells, although the possibility of future public sewer in the Northwest Branch was noted on the record plats. The ambience of this subdivision with its wooded setting, narrow streets, large lots and homes tucked in between the large trees remains park like today.

Between 1940 and 1960, developers built residential subdivisions throughout the master plan area as well as a small neighborhood shopping center at Arcola Avenue and Lamberton Drive. More than three-quarters of the land within the Kemp Mill master plan area was improved during the two decades. When the M-NCPPC decided to prepare a local master plan in 1966, there was already a thriving community and comparatively little vacant land.

Figure 4: Regional Location



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PLANNING CONTEXT

“...ON WEDGES AND CORRIDORS”

In 1964, the M-NCPPC adopted the first Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the entirety of Montgomery County, “...on wedges and corridors, *The General Plan for Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties.*” The General Plan laid forth a land use image of alternating development and green space, the spokes of a wheel centered on the Capital City. Once the General Plan was completed, work began on area master plans to “provide a blueprint for future development” in keeping with the wedges and corridors concept. In 1969, the District Councils for Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties approved revisions and the M-NCPPC adopted the revised plan.

THE 1967 KEMP MILL-FOUR CORNERS AND VICINITY PLAN

The purpose of the *1967 Kemp Mill-Four Corners and Vicinity Master Plan* was to provide “a comprehensive guide to help produce a more satisfactory environment for its residents” while acknowledging the master plan’s role in the National Capital Region. The building blocks for the master plan were the neighborhoods shown in Figure 3. The 1967 Plan describes the location of Kemp Mill as the base of the Central Wedge and an area of transition from urban to rural densities. This description reflected the fact that Kemp Mill already contained small and large-lot single-family development and high-rise apartment buildings. The 1967 Plan recommended townhouse zoning for properties between the apartments and shopping center along Arcola Avenue and recast the shopping center into the Arcola Center, an urban park/shopping center complex (Figure 8). The Plan reconfirmed the zoning on the vacant acres that eventually developed in the 1970s and 1980s as residential subdivisions under the cluster method.

THE GENERAL PLAN AND THE 1993 GENERAL PLAN REFINEMENT

The 1967 plan characterized Kemp Mill as part of the Central Wedge in the broad context of the wedges and corridors concept of the General Plan. The General Plan was revised in 1993. The *1993 General Plan Refinement of the Goals and Objectives for Montgomery County* clarified and modernized the concepts of the 1969 General Plan. The 1969 General Plan defined two patterns of land use: the urban pattern with the urban ring and the corridor cities; and the rural pattern with non-urban land uses, parks and open space, and watershed resources. The 1993 Plan divided the county into four geographic components: Urban Ring, the Corridor, the Suburban Communities and the Wedge, to reflect the existing land use patterns that had developed since the 1960s. Kemp Mill is located within the Urban Ring, as defined by the 1993 Refinement. The Urban Ring is characterized by strong residential neighborhoods, varied transportation options, relatively dense development, active public and private reinvestment and well-established lively centers with jobs and housing opportunities.

The challenges facing the Urban Ring include: accommodating selective additional development, expanding transportation options while accommodating pedestrian needs, preserving existing neighborhoods, maintaining and enhancing public facilities, enhancing park and recreation linkages and protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

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THE STATE OF MARYLAND 1992 PLANNING ACT AND SMART GROWTH

The Maryland General Assembly enacted the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992 to reshape the way citizens, developers, and State, counties and towns addressed planned growth and resource protection. The Act established statewide planning objectives that were to be implemented through local master plans. These objectives were embodied in the following visions:

- Development is concentrated in suitable areas
- Sensitive Areas are protected
- In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resources are protected
- Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic
- Conservation of resources including a reduction in resource consumption is practiced
- To assure the achievement of (1) through (5), economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms streamlined
- Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions

Since 1997, the Maryland General Assembly adopted several specific funding programs that together form the Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation initiatives. Used collectively, these initiatives direct State resources to revitalize older developed areas; preserve some of Maryland's valuable resource and open spaces; and discourage the continuation of sprawling development into rural areas.

TABLE 1: Smart Growth Program Areas

<p style="text-align: center;">Smart Growth Goals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) Save valuable remaining natural resources before they are forever lost;(2) Support existing communities and neighborhoods by targeting state resources in areas where infrastructure is already in place or planned to support it; and(3) Save taxpayers millions of dollars in the unnecessary cost of building the infrastructure required to support sprawl.
<p style="text-align: center;">Program Areas</p> <p><i>Priority Funding Areas</i> are locations where the State and local government want to target funding efforts to encourage and support economic development and new growth.</p> <p><i>Rural Legacy Areas</i> redirect existing State funds into a focused and dedicated land preservation program specifically designed to limit the adverse impacts of sprawl on agricultural lands and natural resources.</p> <p><i>The Brownfields' Law</i> limits liability for those redeveloping unused or abandoned brownfields that are contaminated or perceived to be contaminated, unless they exacerbate contamination or create new pollution. The law creates a voluntary clean-up program and provides an opportunity for public participation.</p> <p><i>Live Near Your Work Program</i> encourages employees of Maryland's businesses and institutions to buy homes near their workplace. This will help stabilize neighborhoods surrounding the State's major employers by stimulating home ownership in targeted communities.</p> <p><i>Job Creation Tax Credit Program</i> encourages mid-sized and smaller businesses to invest in Smart Growth Areas around the State.</p> <p>Source: www.op.state.md.us/smartgrowth</p>

MASTER PLAN AREA TODAY

Large parks bound the Kemp Mill master plan area on the east and west. A defining characteristic of Kemp Mill is that open space and greenery is always a backdrop to development. There are long stretches along both sides of Kemp Mill Road where there is abundant greenery. Northwest Branch Park is the greenery on the east and Wheaton Regional Park is on the west side. The high-rise apartments are visible past the trees in Sligo Creek Park. There are approximately 600 acres of forest in the Kemp Mill area almost all of which are located in parkland.

Tree-lined streets and sidewalks characterize much of the master plan area north of University Boulevard. As one walks along the streets, one can note the differences in sizes and styles of the homes. Institutional uses, such as a nursing home, synagogues, churches, schools, and the Kemp Mill Shopping Center, are located along Arcola Avenue and Kemp Mill Road, the two major arteries. The portion of the Kemp Mill master plan area lying between University Boulevard, Sligo Creek Park and Dennis Avenue is exclusively residential in the interior.

As noted earlier, by 1967 the master plan area was 90 percent developed; today, there is no vacant land. The development pattern emerged in the 1950s and early 1960s prior to the approval of a local area master plan. Land use regulations then consisted of the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations and the General Plan. Despite not having a local area master plan, the Kemp Mill area has all the characteristics of being planned, such as: housing options, transportation options, a commercial core and extensive recreation opportunities within walking distance of all the neighborhoods. These characteristics are today embodied in the “smart growth” philosophy. Even more important than the academic question of having been planned or not planned, it is obvious that the master plan area has matured and revitalized through private initiatives.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The Kemp Mill area has some notable demographic characteristics. There is a high percentage of retirees, approximately 26 percent of the population. The population is less diverse than typically countywide and is approximately 90 percent white. More children, 56 percent, attend private school than is typical countywide. The apartment dwellers remain almost twice as long as is typical countywide, about seven years compared to four years.

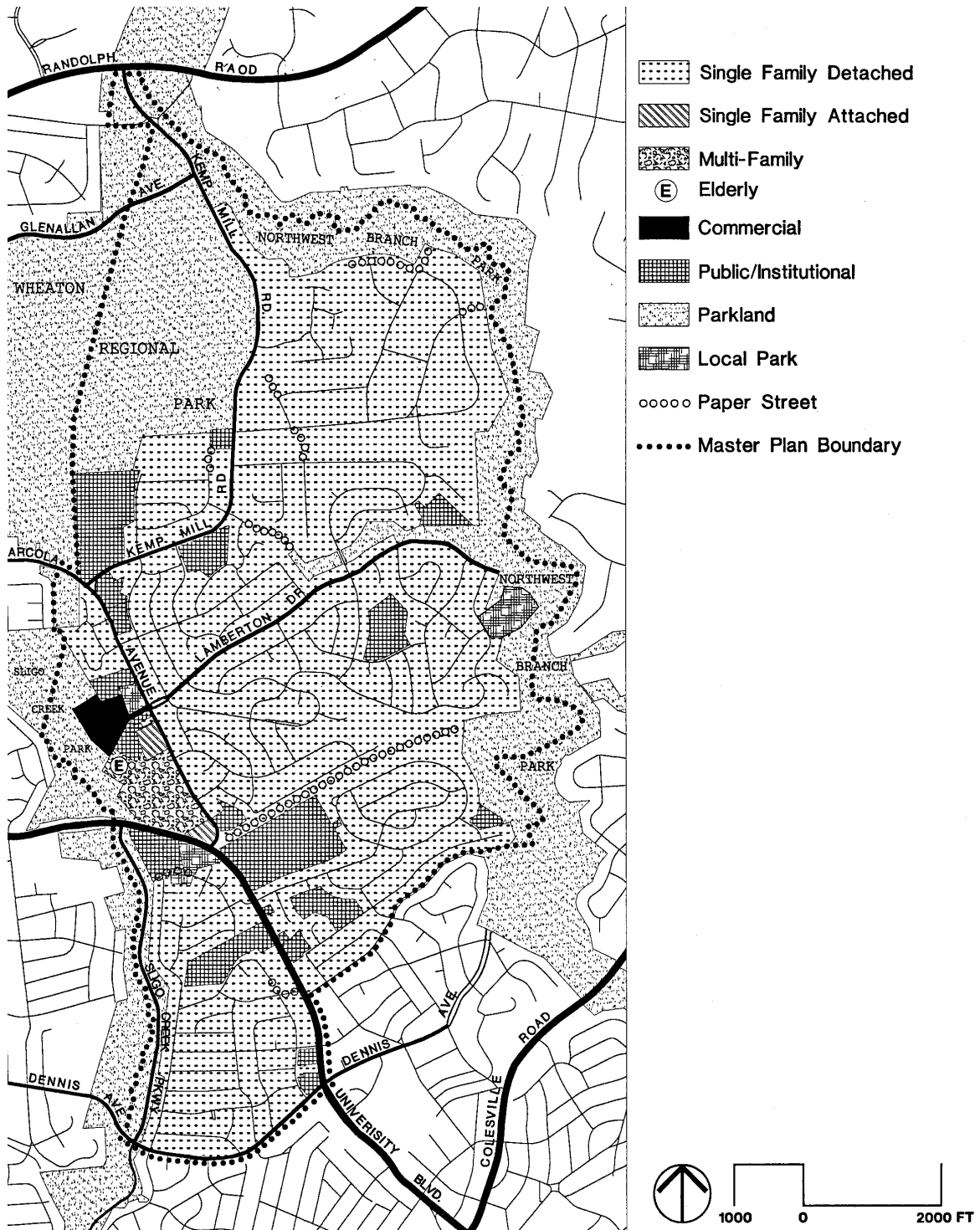
The population has not grown since 1990 and the potential for adding new residential units is limited by the lack of vacant land. The overall population could grow if the number of persons per households increased, or shrank, if the reverse occurred. For example, if the percentage of retirees grew smaller and families moved into apartments previously occupied by retirees, there might be an increase in the population.

The housing stock on average is affordable and there are many housing types available to accommodate a variety of life-styles. One can rent or buy apartments, town homes, small

homes, medium-sized homes or large homes. The median sales price for single-family detached home in 1997 was \$169,000. The median condominium price in 1997 was \$75,000.

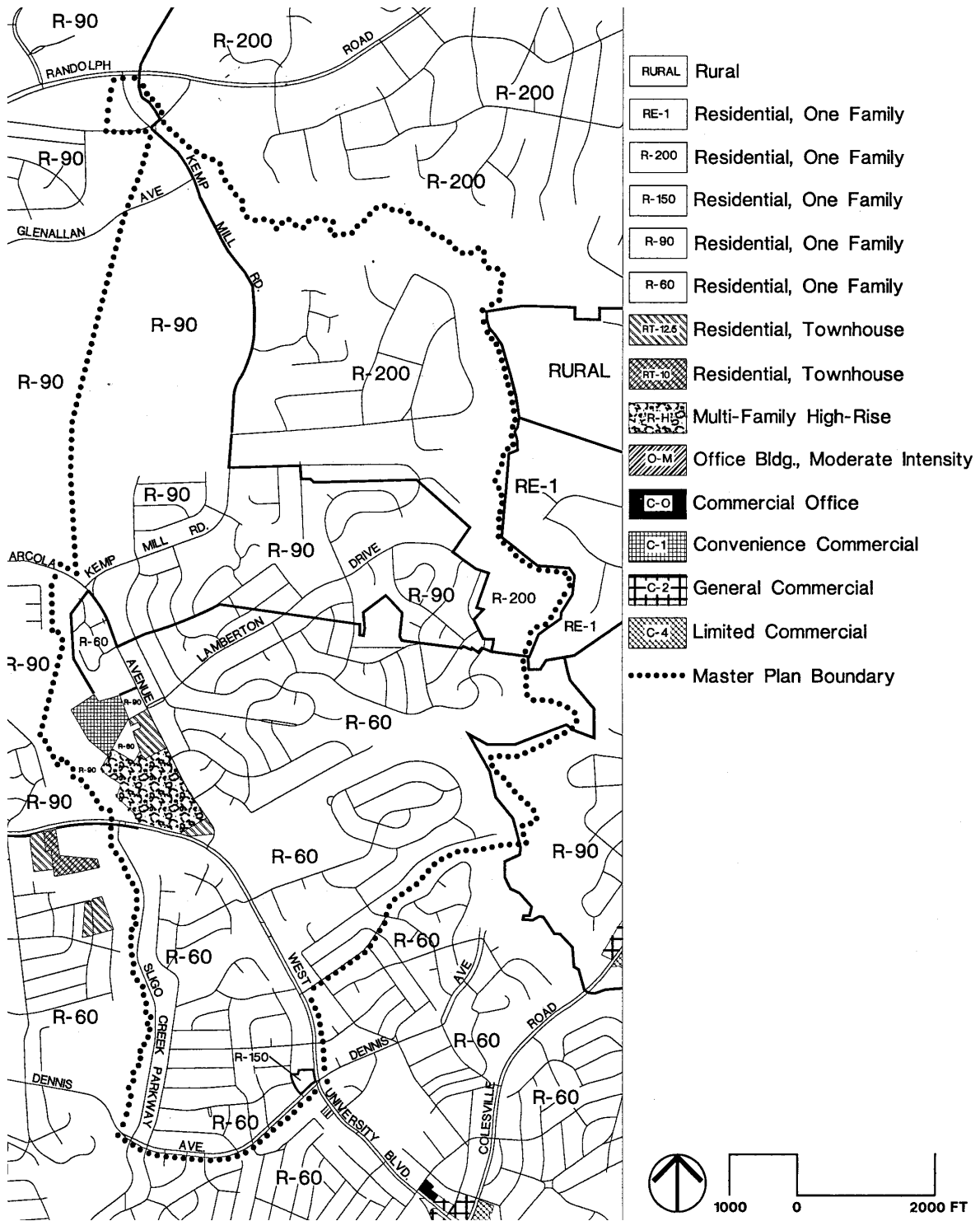
Kemp Mill offers an ideal mix of housing so that residents can remain in the community from the time they first form a household through their retirement years. There are starter homes and apartments for young adults, larger homes for growing families, and a number of choices for older adults. Older residents who want smaller quarters can choose among subsidized age-restricted housing, rental apartments, and moderately priced condominiums. The age profile of the area indicates that many residents take advantage of these opportunities to stay in Kemp Mill as their housing needs and life styles change.

Figure 5: Existing Land Use



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Figure 6: Existing Zoning



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