

GLENMONT SECTOR PLAN APPROVED AND ADOPTED

Comprehensive Amendment to the July 1978 Sector Plan for the Glenmont Transit Impact Area and Vicinity

I. INTRODUCTION

A. GEOGRAPHY

The term "master plan area" is used to define the area covered by an individual master plan. A "sector plan area" is a subset of a master plan area, i.e., it covers only a portion of the master plan area. (See Figure 2.) Typically, sector plans are done for central business districts or transit station impact areas. Sector plan area boundaries are established to respond to common issues, natural boundaries, community affiliation, or other characteristics. Sector plan areas often differ from other geographic boundaries used in Montgomery County such as "policy areas" that have been established by the County Council for other purposes.

The Glenmont Sector Plan area contains approximately 568 acres exclusive of public rights-of-way. It is generally bordered by Middlevale Lane on the east, Weller Road on the north, Denley Road and Lindell Street on the west, and the Glenmont Forest Apartments and Randolph Road on the south. To the southeast of the Glenmont Sector Plan area are Wheaton Regional Park and Brookside Gardens.

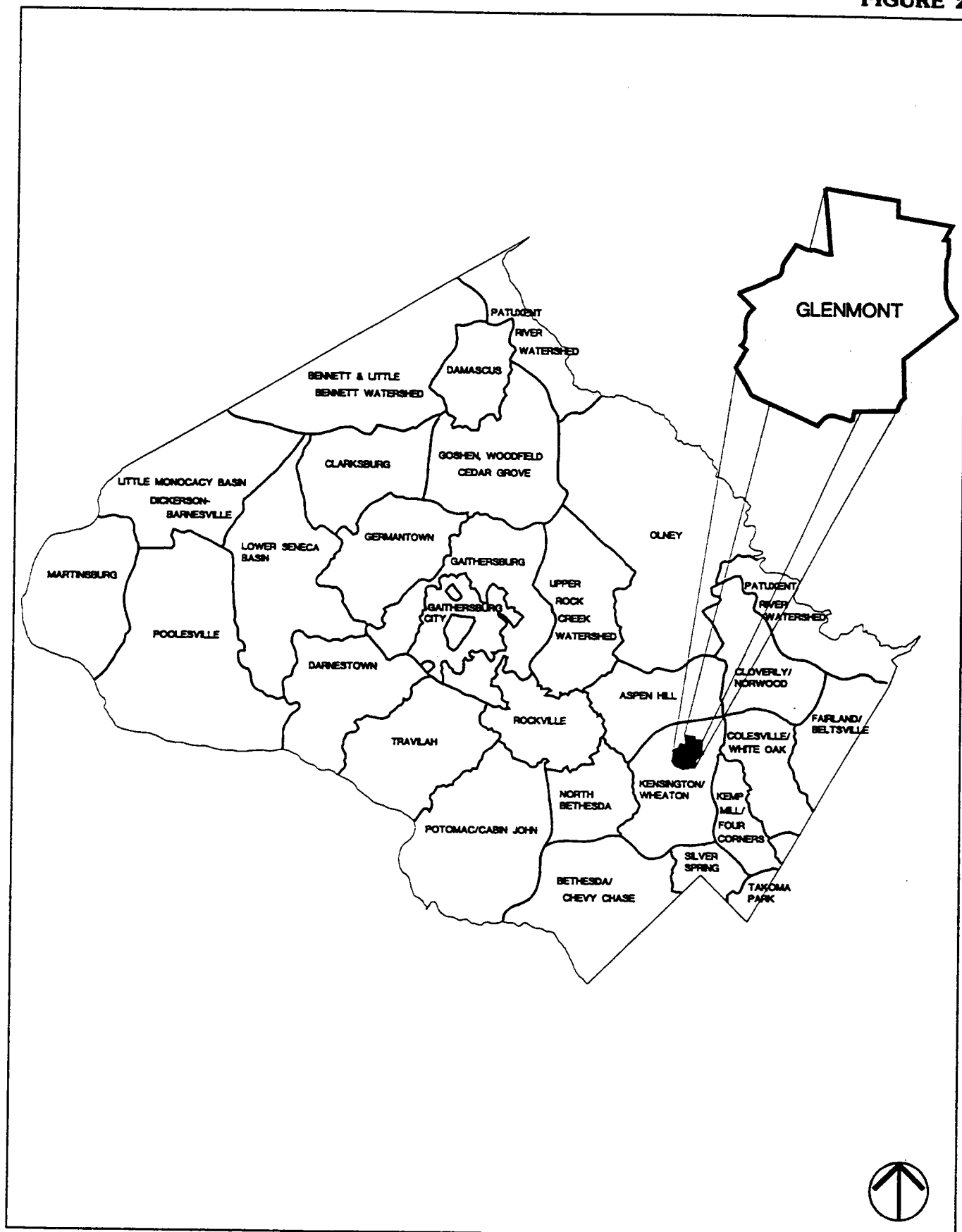
Although the recommendations in this Plan focus on this limited geographic area, the Glenmont Sector Plan area must also be considered within the context of the greater Glenmont community. This Plan focuses on the transit station impact area surrounding the new Glenmont Metro station, but the recommendations contained herein—and the extent to which they are implemented—will impact a much broader area than the Glenmont Sector Plan area alone.

B. PLANNING PROCESS

Appointment of a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is the first step in the master/sector plan process. The CAC for the Glenmont Sector Plan was appointed by the Montgomery County Planning Board in October 1993. CACs comprise individuals who represent residents, neighborhood associations, civic groups, businesses, landowners, developers, and other special interests. CAC members help identify important planning issues and areas of concern in the community. They have the responsibility to represent their constituencies, bring their concerns to the table for discussion, and keep them informed of the Sector Plan's progress and proposals.

LOCATION MAP

FIGURE 2



The Montgomery County Planning staff works with the CACs to help frame the issues, provide technical information and research data, and assist with the preparation of this and future documents. The community's concerns, as expressed through the CAC members, became the foundation for the May 1994 Issues Report for the Glenmont Transit Impact Area and Vicinity Sector Plan. (See Figure 1 for an overview of the master plan development process. This process is the same for sector plans.)

The next step in the master/sector plan process is the development of the Staff Draft Plan. The Staff Draft Plan, like the Issues Report, is designed to be a cooperative effort between the CAC and the Montgomery County Planning staff. The Staff Draft Plan examines the concerns raised in the Issues Report and presents alternative courses of action through specific recommendations. It provides a vision for the sector plan area and a "road map" for its achievement.

The Staff Draft Plan is presented to the Planning Board by the Montgomery County Planning staff with the CAC present for comment. The Planning Board's review of the document generally focuses on whether the draft is ready to be the subject of a public hearing. The Planning Board makes whatever modifications it deems necessary and a Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan is prepared. The Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan is a formal proposal to amend an adopted master or sector plan. A public hearing is then held by the Planning Board for the purpose of receiving testimony on the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan.

After the public hearing is held, the Planning Board holds open worksessions to review testimony and revise the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan. The number of worksessions varies with the degree of complexity and consensus on the issues. During this time, the Planning Board discusses the sector plan recommendations on specific issues. A joint review with the Executive staff regarding the fiscal impacts of the proposed plan also takes place during the worksessions. Once the worksessions are completed, the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan is amended by the Planning Board and republished as the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan. It is then transmitted to the County Council and the County Executive.

The County Executive has 60 days to comment on the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan and prepare a fiscal impact analysis for the County Council. After the County Council receives the Executive's comments and fiscal analysis, a public hearing is held. Similar to the Planning Board, open worksessions are conducted to review the testimony from the public hearing and revise the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan. After the worksessions are complete, the County Council adopts a resolution approving the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan, as revised.

Once approved by the County Council, the sector plan is formally adopted by the full Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (the Montgomery and Prince George's Counties' Planning Boards). Following the approval and adoption process, the Montgomery County Planning staff assumes responsibility for publishing an approved and adopted sector plan, formally filing it with the Clerk of the Circuit Court, and making it available to the public. The Montgomery County Planning staff is typically instructed to prepare a sectional map amendment for the area. A sectional map amendment is a comprehensive rezoning of the sector plan area to implement the zoning recommendations of the sector plan.

The recommendations of Master or Sector Plans are implemented through a variety of public and private actions. Members of the community are encouraged to participate in public process to help monitor and guide Master or Sector Plan facilitation. Their participation is important. Individuals and community groups can do a great deal to improve their communities and address the quality of life issues in general. Community identity can be heightened through a wide variety of actions ranging from monitoring community needs to volunteering for community improvements.

C. PLANNING HISTORY

1. 1964 GENERAL PLAN AND 1969 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

In 1964, a Bi-County plan for Montgomery County and Prince George's County was adopted, *...On Wedges and Corridors, a General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties*. The General Plan was updated in 1969 with more specific goals and guidelines for the wedges and corridors concept in Montgomery County. For more than two decades, the General Plan has guided the land use pattern and the transportation system in Montgomery County. Its name, *...On Wedges and Corridors*, comes from the regional land use pattern it recommends. The concept is based on six corridors of urban development radiating out, like spokes of a wheel, from the existing land use patterns in Washington, D.C. The corridors of development are separated by wedges of open space, farmland, and lower density residential uses. The concept has shaped the County's land use pattern by channeling growth into development and transportation corridors, with the Urban Ring in lower Montgomery County close to Washington, D.C.

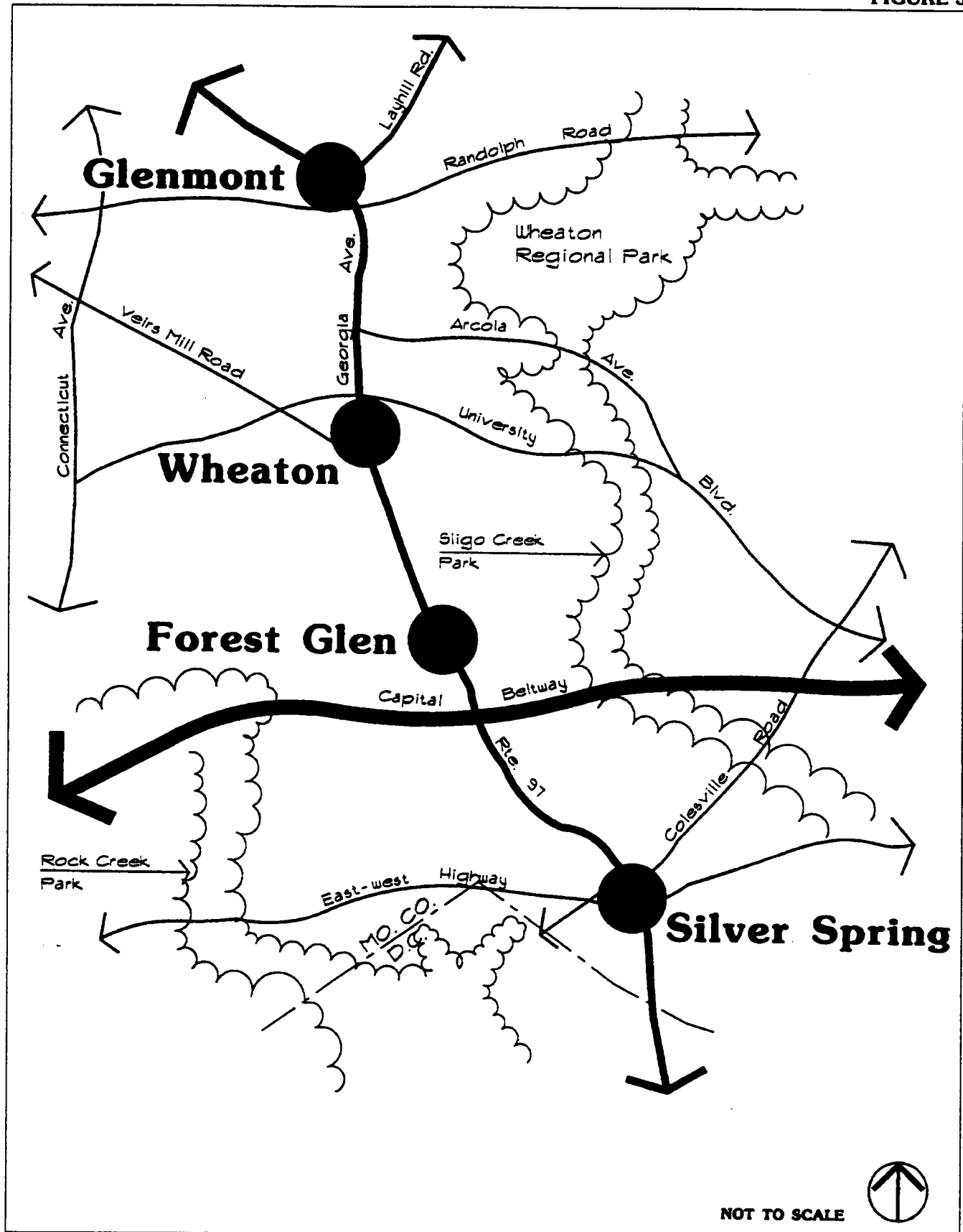
2. 1978 SECTOR PLAN FOR GLENMONT TRANSIT IMPACT AREA

Specific guidance for the Glenmont Sector Plan area is currently contained in the 1978 *Sector Plan for the Glenmont Transit Impact Area and Vicinity*. The 1978 Plan was adopted as a result of the planning work which had begun in 1976 on the eastern leg of the Metro Red Line. (A *Sector Plan for the Forest Glen Transit Impact Area and Vicinity* was done at the same time as the Glenmont Sector Plan.) Since Glenmont is planned to be the eastern terminus of the Red Line (see Figure 3), the 1978 Sector Plan provided for a rail storage yard as well as the Metro station, bus bays, and parking, as called for in the 1968 *Adopted Regional System*. The inclusion of the Glenmont rail yard meant that Metro cars could be stored at both ends of the Red Line during non-service hours, thereby eliminating the need for "dead-heading" (i.e., the need to run empty trains from Shady Grove to Glenmont in the early morning so that cars would be waiting at both ends of the Red Line to begin morning service). Although the 1978 Glenmont Sector Plan included the rail yard, it did modify earlier plans by deleting a loop track at the facility; this change reflected the elimination of heavy-duty maintenance as a major function of the storage yard.

The 1978 Sector Plan for the Glenmont Transit Impact Area sought to allow additional development around the future Metro station, although not at the highest (i.e., Central Business District, also referred to as CBD) densities; these higher densities are focused in the Silver Spring CBD and, to a lesser extent, in the Wheaton CBD. (Since 1978, Montgomery County has

GEORGIA AVENUE - METRO STATIONS

FIGURE 3



continued to reserve CBD status for Silver Spring and Wheaton, as well as Bethesda and Friendship Heights on the western side of the County.) The 1978 Plan stated the following with regard to new development:

It would appear that there is little opportunity for new development in Glenmont, beyond that permitted by existing zoning. . . Moreover, it is the stated policy of Montgomery County to channel new major commercial development in the Glenmont Corridor into Silver Spring and, to a lesser degree, Wheaton.

However, it is necessary to recognize that certain conditions—especially the present traffic volumes along major roadways, and the construction of the METRO station, its related parking and METRO storage yard—are factors which simply by virtue of their presence could encourage a gradual shift in land use to higher intensity and to non-residential activities. (p. 49)

In the face of anticipated pressure for redevelopment, the 1978 Sector Plan sought to prevent high density development and commercial intrusion into existing residential areas. The 1978 Sector Plan recommended that “the predominantly low-to-moderate intensity residential nature of the Glenmont area should be maintained. . . (and) be consistent in. . . nature with the existing development in the area.” (p. 51) It therefore provided for the Metro station and storage yard, medium density residential development near Metro, upgrading of the existing commercial center, and the continuation of the surrounding low-density residential neighborhoods.

Since the 1978 Sector Plan, the residential character of Glenmont has, in fact, been maintained. Glenmont continues to exhibit a commercial center surrounded on three sides by multi-family residential developments. Although a new wing was added to the Glenmont Shopping Center, the bulk of the center (and its parking lot) has not been upgraded as called for by the 1978 Sector Plan. A new 1,800-space Metro parking garage has been completed, however, and construction of the new Metro station and Metro storage yards are well along.

The actual opening of the Glenmont Metro station, anticipated to be in mid-1998, is now in sight. It is therefore an opportune time to revisit the 1978 Glenmont Sector Plan. This Plan asserts that the new transit facilities, and the new transit-oriented development which will surround the station, will form the future image of Glenmont. This Plan seeks to use the momentum created by the new transit facilities to rejuvenate the entire Glenmont Sector area. If the County and the community fail to capitalize on this watershed event, the decline evidenced at the Glenmont Shopping Center and further south along Georgia Avenue could negatively impact Glenmont for years to come.

3. 1989 MASTER PLAN FOR THE COMMUNITIES OF KENSINGTON-WHEATON

Glenmont is one of five sector plan areas lying within the boundary of the Kensington-Wheaton Planning Area. (See Figure 4.) With one exception (a rezoning in the Town of Kensington and Vicinity sector plan area), the sector plan areas were not examined in the 1989 Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan.

The major points in the Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan which affect Glenmont are summarized below.

- The Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan reflected the view that there should be a relationship between land uses within the sector plan area and those within the contiguous master plan area. The linkage of neighborhoods and commercial areas through the use of the common framework of parallel design treatment is a major objective of the Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan. For example, similar building scale, height, and landscaping treatments can be used to assure compatibility between different land uses.
- The Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan emphasized the preservation of residential communities. For example, the Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan specifically confirmed the existing zoning of residential properties abutting major highways, with only limited exceptions.
- The Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan sought to protect residential areas from the effects of nonresidential activities located inside and outside the boundaries of the sector plan areas within Kensington-Wheaton. This policy has been implemented by making the sector plan areas large enough to provide a buffer from the effects of commercial activity. The Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan also sought to improve the relationship between residential communities and commercial areas not located within sector plan area boundaries (e.g., the existing commercial uses along the major highways).
- One of the land use goals in the Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan was “to preserve the identity of residential areas along major highway corridors, to soften the impact of major highways on adjacent homes and to strengthen the distinction between commercial and residential uses.” An implementation technique for achieving this goal is described in the section of the Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan called “Green Corridors Policy.” In addition to creating more attractive corridors, the “Green Corridors Policy” was intended to enhance commercial stability by ameliorating the impact of these highways on residential areas. In Glenmont, this policy should be considered for those portions of Randolph Road, Georgia Avenue, and Layhill Road within the Sector Plan area.

KENSINGTON-WHEATON AREA

FIGURE 4

