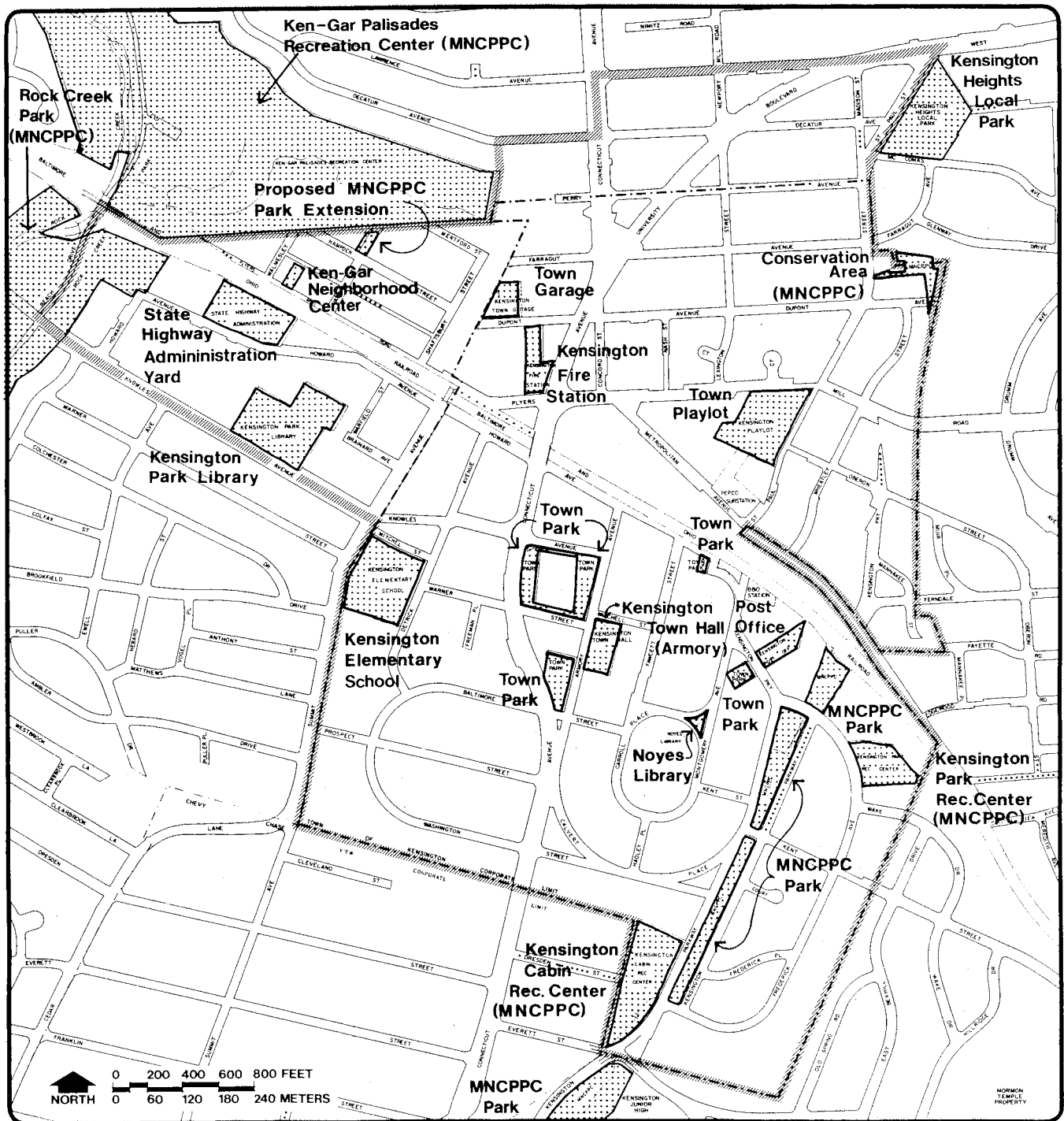


**THE PUBLIC  
FACILITIES PLAN**

**7**



## PUBLIC FACILITIES

# KENSINGTON

SECTOR PLAN BOUNDARY  
TOWN OF KENSINGTON BOUNDARY



MAY  
1978

17  
FIGURE

SECTOR PLAN  
**KW**  
PLANNING AREA

## 7. THE PUBLIC FACILITIES PLAN

### 7.1 OVERVIEW

Public facilities, such as parks and recreation areas, community service centers, health care centers, schools, fire and police stations, libraries, and other government buildings, are an integral component in a community's ability to provide its residents with a desirable "quality of life."

The Town of Kensington is serviced by facilities and programs operating both within the Sector Plan boundaries and beyond, serving a population larger than that of the Kensington area itself.

The development concept proposed in this Sector Plan generates little demand for additions to or reorientation of public facilities for Kensington. This results because:

- Kensington already has a wide range of public facilities either within or close to the Sector Plan Area.
- The Sector Plan proposals would add only a few hundred people to Kensington's population.
- Kensington and the surrounding area is built up and is not expected to generate enough additional population to create a demand for significant additions to the system of public facilities.

The town government has recently acquired the former National Guard Armory in the center of Kensington and is currently renovating it for use as a municipal center. This new center should complete the network of community service facilities for this area. The Sector Plan, therefore, does not propose major new public facilities; rather, it recommends modest additions and the preservation and protection of Kensington's existing public uses. Also, the Sector Plan recognizes needs for programs for the elderly and economically disadvantaged. Existing facilities provide space where these programs can be carried forward. However, actions taken to implement the physical proposals of the Sector Plan should be coordinated with the social programs of public and private agencies for the benefit of the community.

### 7.2 PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Among a community's most important public facilities are its parks and playgrounds. This is particularly true in a suburban municipality such as Kensington, which derives much of its attractiveness from its relatively uncrowded character. The value of outdoor recreation for people of all ages is well established, and its importance is bound to increase in the future as advances in technology give the average person greater amounts of leisure time. Similarly, in preserving the character of a community such as Kensington, which, in time, can only develop to a greater degree of intensity, the establishment and preservation of permanently open, landscaped spaces will assume an ever increasing importance.

The park and open space proposals of the Sector Plan focus upon the location and types of park and open space uses rather than detailed plans for their development and operation. The adequacy of present facilities and their ability to satisfy present and future park and recreation needs in all of Montgomery County has been assessed in the recently adopted Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. New parks proposed by the Kensington Sector Plan consist of the currently programmed Kensington Heights Local Park, and a small parcel of land recommended in the Ken-Gar Renewal Plan for addition to existing parkland.

#### 7.21 Existing Parks

Both the Town of Kensington and The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission own and operate parks in Kensington. The town owned playlot is located at Plyers Mill Road and St. Paul Street and provides active recreation space for nearby residents. The town also owns several small parks which provide an attractive setting and a place for quiet, passive recreation within easy walking distance of homes and the business area. These small parks are located on Howard Avenue, on Kensington Parkway, and in the two blocks west of the Armory.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's parks include portions of the Rock Creek and Kensington Parkway stream valley parks, Ken-Gar Palisades Recreation Center, Kensington Cabin Recreation Center, Kensington Park Recreation Center, and a conservation area for stream protection near the St. Paul-Dupont Street intersection (Figure 17).

Ken-Gar Palisades and Kensington Cabin Recreation Center both contain multi-use courts, tennis courts, playing fields for softball and football, playground equipment, and community buildings. Kensington Park Recreation Center features a community building, picnic area, and playground equipment. The Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission has recently provided an improved pedestrian access to the Ken-Gar Palisades park area from the Ken-Gar community.

Additional recreational facilities such as playing fields, multi-use courts, tennis courts, and playground equipment are to be found at all of the neighboring area schools. Although located beyond the Sector Plan boundaries, the Capitol View-Homewood Recreation Center on Plyers Mill Road provides additional recreational facilities easily accessible to many Kensington residents.

#### 7.22 Proposed Parks

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission has recently acquired a four acre parcel of land on the east side of St. Paul Street between University Boulevard and McComas Avenue for the Kensington Heights Local Park. The park will provide active recreation space at the northeastern edge of the Kensington area for residents of a neighborhood not currently served by active recreation facilities.

The Sector Plan recommends adding a parcel of approximately one-fifth acre of land to the adjacent passive area of Rock Creek Park, Unit 4, in the Ken-Gar community. The parcel consists of the unbuilt portion of Vaughn Street north of

Hampden Street and is recommended for park use in the Ken-Gar Renewal Plan. Existing and proposed parks are shown in Figure 17.

### 7.3 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan Area and adjacent residential communities are served by five elementary schools, two junior high schools, and a senior high school. Except for the Kensington Elementary School, the schools are located outside the Sector Plan Area. In addition to basic educational functions, schools, in general, provide recreational facilities including gymnasiums, playgrounds, and meeting rooms, as well as various educational, social, and recreational programs.

All schools serving the Kensington area are currently operating well below pupil capacity as can be seen on Table 25.

Projected new residential development, in the Sector Plan Area and in adjacent areas served by the schools, is not expected to provide significant additional enrollment. It is expected that enrollments will continue to decrease, even as new residential units contemplated in this Plan are added. The Board of Education, in its Fiscal Year 1978 Budget Request, cited Montgomery County's declining birthrate as a major factor in decreased public school enrollments. (The county's birthrate has declined from 24.0 births per 1,000 residents in 1960 to 10.8 in 1975.) Additional factors in declining enrollments are the current sewer moratorium and the tight money market which have reduced housing construction in the county.

The effect of the lower birthrate on elementary school enrollment has resulted in a growing number of "small schools," primarily in the down-county areas. Most of the elementary schools serving the Kensington area are examples of the small school phenomenon. Secondary schools also are now being affected by the lower birthrate, housing industry slow-down, the energy crisis, and early graduation from high school.

The problems of small schools, declining enrollments, and school closures require major decisions of educational policy by the Board of Education. In the event Kensington Elementary is recommended for closure, coordinative efforts among town officials, citizens, and affected agencies will be needed to arrive at acceptable reuse recommendations for the school building and grounds.

### 7.4 LIBRARIES

The Kensington area is provided library service by two facilities: the Kensington Park Library located on Knowles Avenue, and the Noyes Library, located at Carroll Place and Montgomery Avenue. The Noyes Library is the only library facility in Montgomery County that provides reading material and other informational resources exclusively for the very young reader. With a total of over 9,000 books, the library also provides such services as penny theatre, story hour, and childrens' films, combined with Headstart Program, a nursery school program, and a handicapped childrens' nursery school program. Basic improvements have recently been made to the Noyes Library. The improvements included installation of new roofing, re-painting of the entire building, installation of a new heating,

TABLE 25

KENSINGTON AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS---SITE SIZE,  
PUPIL CAPACITY, AND ENROLLMENT

School	Grades Served	Site Acreage	Pupil Capacity	Teach. Sta.	Actual 1977	Enrollment September 30					
						Est. 1978	Est. 1979	Est. 1980	Est. 1981	Est. 1982	Est. 1983
Kensington Elem.	HS-6*	3.9	350-430	15	227	224	229	227	221	225	233
Larchmont Elem.	3-6	11.4**	275-330	11	203	187	181	159	155	153	155
Oakland Terrace Elem.	K-6	9.5**	585-700	24	607	542	505	492	475	458	459
Parkwood Elem.	K-6	9.9	360-430	15	302	270	263	255	256	249	243
Rock Creek Palisades Elem.	HS-6*	7.4	635-790	29	405	399	379	368	357	355	356
Kensington Jr. High	7-9	21.7**	1075	43	630	552	480	455	429	431	405
Newport Jr. High	7-9	8.4**	1080	44	873	780	700	632	649	614	556
Einstein Sr. High	10-12	25.7**	1705	69	1158	1052	1017	960	871	784	742

\* Head Start.

\*\* School site adjoins park. Site acreage includes school and park.

Source: Montgomery County Board of Education.

ventilation and air conditioning system, and new grading and walkways.

The Noyes Library, established in 1893 by Crosby Noyes, editor and publisher at that time of the Washington Star, and Brainard Warner, is the oldest library building in the Washington metropolitan area. A mechanism to preserve historic structures including the library is discussed in the Implementation section, page 131.

The Kensington Park Library contains 73,000 books and has an average monthly circulation of over 32,000 books. With its predominant theme being literature, the library sponsors a childrens' book club, penny theatre, and story hour. For adults, there are guest speakers and a do-it-yourself home improvement program.

Recently, improvements were made to the library's parking area. No additional building or site improvements are contemplated at this time.

## 7.5 FIRE, RESCUE, AND POLICE SERVICES

Fire protection and ambulance service is provided to the Kensington Area by Kensington Fire Station Number 5 at Connecticut Avenue and Plyers Mill Road. This station serves a 7-square-mile area of 32,000 people with two engines, one ladder truck, and an ambulance. Additional service is provided by Kensington Station Number 21, approximately 2½ miles away on Veirs Mill Road at Parkland Drive, and by Kensington Station 18, approximately 2½ miles away in Glenmont. In addition, supplementary ambulance service is provided by the Wheaton Rescue Squad approximately 1½ miles distant in Wheaton.

Kensington Station Number 5 has recently built an addition to its existing structure. An additional fire and rescue facility is proposed to be built at Georgia and Connecticut Avenues, approximately 3½ miles north of Kensington.

Police protection for Kensington is provided by the Bethesda, Silver Spring, and Wheaton-Glenmont Police Stations. In addition, the Town of Kensington employs one policeman for patrol duty within the town. Police protection is adequate at the present time and existing facilities are expected to meet the anticipated police protection needs for the foreseeable future.

## 7.6 HEALTH SERVICES

Health care is provided to residents of Kensington by numerous nearby private facilities, by hospitals in Bethesda and Silver Spring, and by the Montgomery County Health Department. Health Department facilities include the Wheaton, Bethesda, and Silver Spring Community Health Centers. The Wheaton Health Center recently opened in the new Wheaton Community Services Center.

The Montgomery County Health Department is responsible for protecting the public health and preventing disease among county residents. Supplementing the health resources of individuals and families, the Department provides services covering a wide variety of needs, including maternal health and family planning, child health, day care consultation, childrens' specialty clinics, school health, youth services, alcoholism services, drug abuse services, dental health services, rehabili-

tation services, community mental health services, institutional and medical care programs, and communicable disease programs.

#### 7.7 WHEATON COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER

Montgomery County has traditionally provided certain services to its citizens on a local basis: libraries, police services, health services, fire and rescue services. The county is now attempting to meet the complex and growing needs of its citizens by opening local centers to provide a wide range of government services to people in their own neighborhoods. The Silver Spring Center was the first local facility and the Wheaton Center, which opened in March 1978 on Reedy Drive in Wheaton, is the second.

The goal of the community service center program is to bring the services of county government physically and psychologically closer to its citizens. The Wheaton Center provides, in a single location, an array of services tailored to the needs of the community. These services include the dissemination of information on all county programs, a referral service to a wide variety of public and private agencies which serve the public, and complaint intake and follow-up. Agencies operating in the Center include the Department of Social Services, the Health Department, the Recreation Department, and others.

#### 7.8 KENSINGTON ARMORY

The Kensington town government has recently purchased the former National Guard Armory, located at Armory Avenue and Mitchell Street, from the State of Maryland. The Armory is currently being refurbished for use as the Kensington Town Hall.

The Mayor and Council have asked town residents to suggest uses for the new Town Hall. So far, citizens have suggested using it for community theatre productions, a senior citizen center, library displays, art exhibits, a rifle range, antique shows, and similar uses. Space within the Town Hall is flexible enough to make it suitable for a wide variety of changing uses, programs, and services as needed by the community.

#### 7.9 KEN-GAR NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

As part of the Urban Renewal Plan for Ken-Gar, a frame structure fronting on Plyers Mill Road, originally built in 1919 as a school, has been renovated by the county as a neighborhood center. The renovated facility provides a large meeting hall and several smaller consultation rooms. Funding for the renovation was programmed by the county as part of the Community Development Block Grant from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

#### 7.10 POSTAL FACILITIES

Postal service is provided by the Kensington Post Office located on Kensington Parkway. Postal service is adequate for the Kensington area at present and for the



foreseeable future. There are no immediate plans to expand the existing facility, nor to build another post office in the Kensington area. There may be a need for increased parking which would require Postal Service program funds for parking expansion.

#### 7.11 KENSINGTON TOWN GARAGE

The Kensington town garage is located on Dupont Avenue west of Connecticut Avenue. It is a one-story wooden structure with a storage yard covering approximately 3/4 acre of land. The garage serves as a depot for trucks owned by the Town of Kensington. There are no plans at present for renovations or expansion of the facility.

The Kensington town garage lies adjacent to the Ken-Gar Renewal Project. Due to its proximity to this residential community, the garage may need to be further screened by additional tree plantings to lessen its impact on Ken-Gar.

#### 7.12 STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION YARD

The Maryland State Highway Administration yard is located on Howard Avenue, adjacent to commercial and light industrial uses, with the B & O Railroad tracks to the north. The yard serves as a supply station for down-county work crews, with approximately five trucks working out of the facility daily. During the winter months, the Howard Avenue yard serves as the main depot for snow removal equipment and supplies for the entire down-county area. There are no proposed renovations for the storage yard.