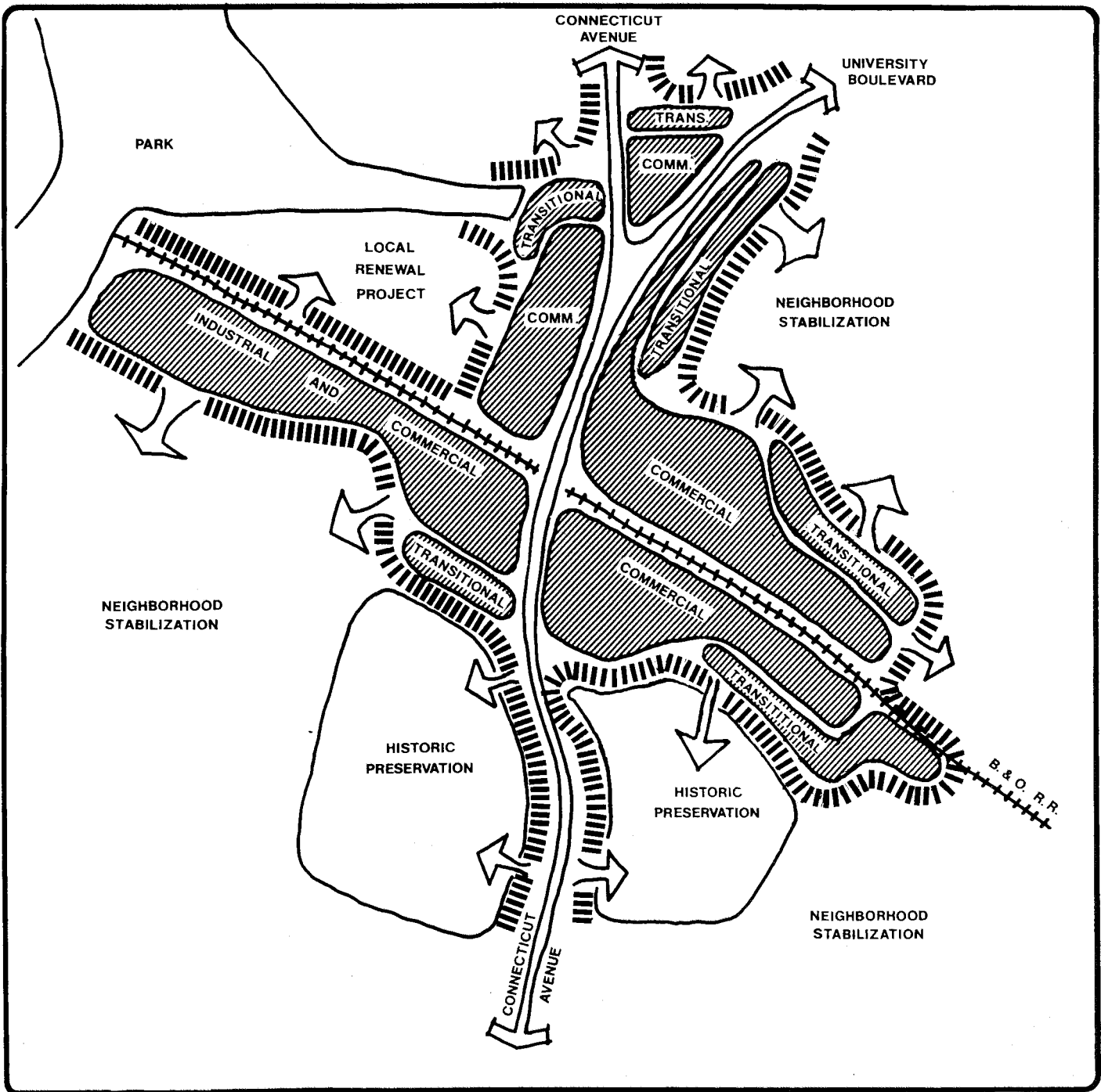


FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING **4**



CONCEPT PLAN

KENSINGTON



MAY
1978

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SECTOR PLAN

KW
PLANNING AREA

4. FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING

4.1 CHALLENGE

Kensington is a small, mature community with a minimum of vacant land available for new development. The configurations and types of residential, commercial, and industrial areas are well established; significant changes in these basic land use elements are unlikely for the foreseeable future. Community facilities can, with minor alterations, be made adequate to serve the existing and proposed population.

Kensington's business district offers an interesting array of goods and services. Most everyday shopping needs can be satisfied in the food stores, drug stores, supermarkets, and other retail facilities in Kensington. The major role of the Kensington business district, however, is as an antique center. Antique shops and associated businesses occupy a major portion of the commercial space, giving it a unique character which enhances Kensington's small-town image.

Residential uses in Kensington include single-family homes and apartments. Apartments are, in general, located next to business areas where they serve as transitional uses between commercial buildings and single-family homes. Apartment uses, however, constitute only a small portion of Kensington's housing stock. The majority of housing in Kensington is single-family residential ranging from an extensive area of large, expensive Victorian homes in the southern portion of Kensington, to smaller and more modestly priced homes in the northern portion of the town. Some residential deterioration has occurred in Ken-Gar, west of the town; this deterioration is being corrected, however, through a county funded and administered renewal plan currently in progress.

Like many small, older communities Kensington suffers a number of basic constraints. Because of an inadequate street and highway system, Kensington is faced with automobile congestion, air pollution, and vehicle penetration into residential areas. Portions of the business district are showing signs of age and deterioration. Some single-family homes are blighted, particularly those next to commercial areas, and some commercial uses threaten to spread into residential areas. In addition, aging industrial and commercial uses at some locations are no longer compatible with surrounding land uses.

On the other hand, the town has several notable assets upon which the Sector Plan can build. Kensington's location in lower Montgomery County gives convenient access to major county subcenters and to the District of Columbia. The town is well served by bus and commuter rail transportation. Kensington has many fine old homes and an interesting and vital business area. It has a unique small-town character and atmosphere worth preserving.

4.2 RESPONSE

The Sector Plan has focused its attention on several areas of basic concern, expressed in the following statements of community goals. These goals form a policy framework within which the community's specific planning problems can be addressed:

- Kensington's traditional character as a mainly single-family residential "small-town" community should be maintained. Because of a lack of vacant land, significant expansion of residential units is unlikely. It is reasonable to assume that no drastic land use changes will occur in soundly maintained existing residential areas. The Sector Plan should, therefore, reflect the permanence of the town's residential areas; further development within such areas should be limited to "infill" housing and low-intensity transitional residential or commercial uses. Such transitional uses should be located at strategic points such as parcels between existing high-density development and homes, and major vacant parcels at the fringes of the business area.
- For substandard areas and properties, rehabilitation should be encouraged and action should be taken to prevent deterioration of other properties.
- Additions to Kensington's business area should be low intensity in character. Commercial additions at the edges of the business area should be located so as to establish a clear demarkation between residential and non-residential uses. These commercial additions should be designed to serve as transitional uses in order to effectively stabilize both residential and non-residential areas. The visual appearance of the Kensington business area should be improved to enhance the total character of the town. The Urban Design section (Appendix B) provides recommendations on visual improvements.
- Adequate local community facilities and services within the community should be provided. Access to regional or specialized community facilities outside the Sector Plan Area should be available. Community facilities currently located within the Sector Plan Area should be protected and preserved; their continued existence should be assured through regular programs for their use, through enhanced access, and by use of mechanisms such as landscaping and expansion of user parking where appropriate.
- A comprehensive system of transportation services should be provided including:
 - a system of roadways which will separate through and local traffic and reduce traffic congestion within the community,
 - local and regional transit service, accommodating travel needs of the community, and
 - a network of pedestrian and bicycle routes designed for maximum safety and utility, linking homes with schools, commercial areas and community facilities.

The statement of goals above portrays the possible future of Kensington in terms of a general pattern of development. These goals provide a dependable foundation upon which the Sector Plan is based. The text which follows further develops these goals into specific proposals and recommendations for land use, community facilities, transportation systems, and zoning upon which public and private development decisions can be made.