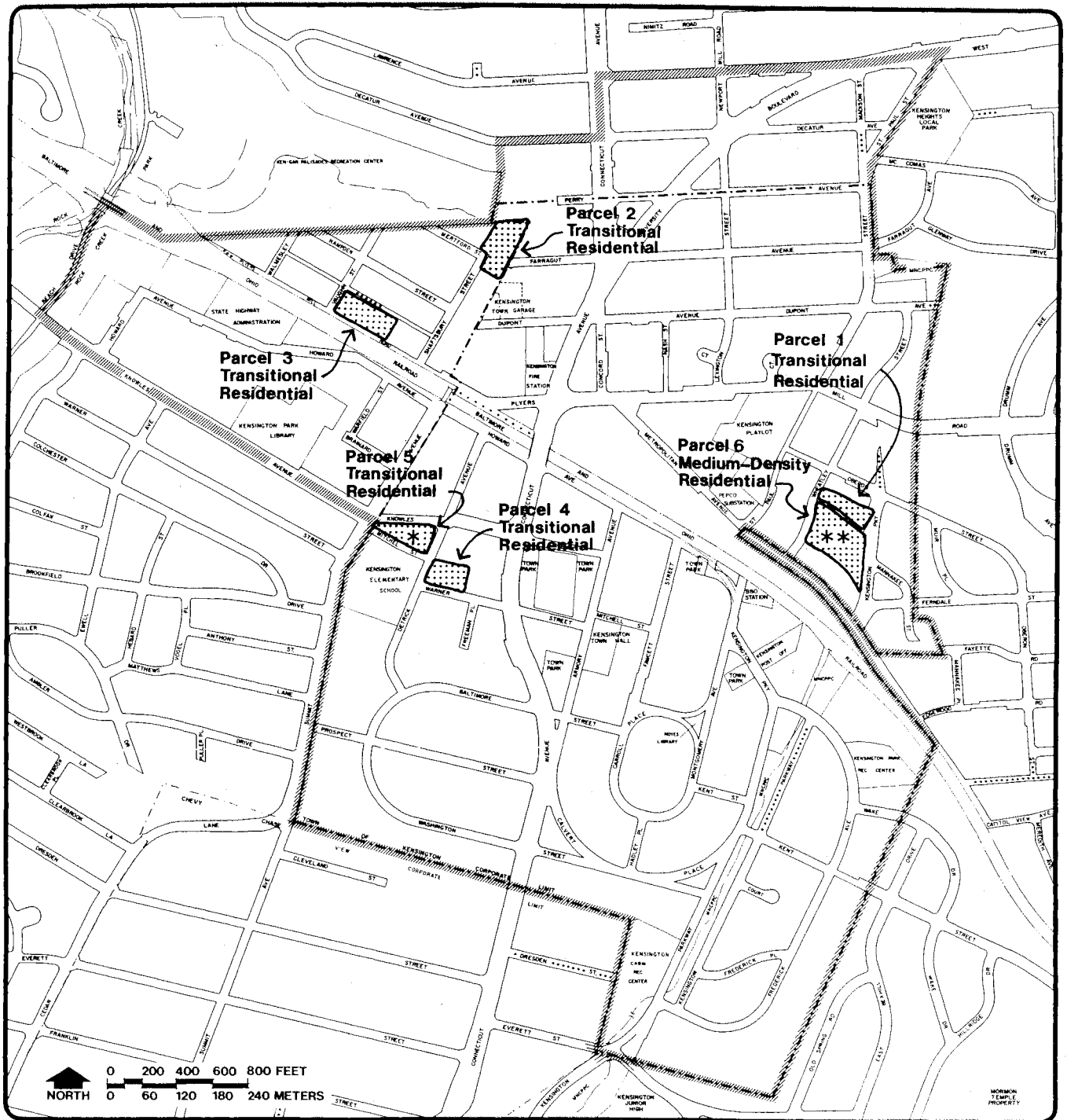


THE LAND USE PLAN 5



PROPOSED NEW RESIDENTIAL USES

- * Parcel 5 suitable for either transitional residential or transitional commercial use
- ** Parcel 6 also under consideration for commuter rail parking lot

KENSINGTON

 SECTOR PLAN BOUNDARY
 TOWN OF KENSINGTON BOUNDARY



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FIGURE

SECTOR PLAN
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 PLANNING AREA

5. THE LAND USE PLAN

5.1 RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

5.11 Overview

Kensington's residences consist of single-family homes and garden and high-rise apartments. Single-family residential uses include large Victorian homes in the southern portion of Kensington and smaller homes in the northern and western portions of the area. Apartments, in general, are located next to businesses in the southeastern portion of Kensington. Most of the housing stock is sound; an exception is the community of Ken-Gar, in the northwestern portion of the Kensington area, which has experienced some residential deterioration currently being corrected through a county renewal project.

It is not likely that significant changes to Kensington's current pattern of residential development will occur in the foreseeable future because of the few vacant tracts of land available for development. In fact, as indicated in the Demographic Profile, residential construction had effectively ceased in Kensington by 1965 because of the lack of vacant sites suitable for development.

In view of these development factors, and the desire to maintain Kensington's traditional single-family residential "small-town" character, the Residential Land Use portion of the Sector Plan:

- . recognizes and reinforces the permanence of Kensington's residential areas, limiting further development in these areas to "infill" housing,
- . provides a basis for rehabilitation of substandard or marginal residential areas,
- . recommends a mechanism to preserve and protect residential and non-residential areas of historic significance in Kensington, and
- . provides for the location of transitional land uses (residential and commercial) at key "edge" locations to separate existing high-density development and homes.

5.12 Transitional Residential

The Sector Plan recommends a number of areas as suitable for transitional residential use (townhouses). These areas are identified below and on Figure 6:

- . Parcel 1: approximately 0.8 acre located between Kensington Parkway and Wheatley Street (Lot 23, Block L, currently single-family residential).
- . Parcel 2: approximately 1.1 acres on the east side of Shaftsbury Street at Mertford Street (Parcel A, Block 1, currently vacant land).
- . Parcel 3: approximately 1.1 acres at the northeast corner of Plyers Mill Road and Vaughn Street (Lots 6-11, Block 2, currently duplex houses, abandoned store, and vacant land).

- Parcel 4: approximately 0.7 acre at the northeast corner of Warner Street and Detrick Avenue (Lots 29-32, Block 6, currently single-family residential).
- Parcel 5: approximately 0.9 acre on the south side of Knowles Avenue between Summit and Detrick Avenues (Lots 24-28, currently single-family residential and dentist's office). This parcel would be suitable for either transitional residential use (townhouses) or transitional commercial use (low-intensity offices).

In the case of Parcel 3, which is located across Plyers Mill Road from the B & O Railroad, new residential uses should utilize acoustical insulation, buffering, and site and architectural design to reduce noise impacts from the railroad. Sufficient acoustical insulation should be provided to reduce interior noise levels consistent with HUD and EPA standards, especially during nighttime hours.

5.13 Apartments

The Sector Plan recommends garden apartments for approximately 2 acres (Parcel 6, Figure 6) located between Kensington Parkway and Wheatley Street adjacent to the rear of the existing commercial area (portion of Block L). The majority of the property is already zoned for garden apartments. Garden apartments would serve as a transitional land use at this location, acting as a separator between commercial and lower-density residential areas. Because of the proximity of the railroad, apartments built on this site should use acoustical insulation, buffering, and site and architectural design to reduce noise impacts.

Although this parcel is recommended for apartment use by the Sector Plan, it is also one of the sites being considered for a parking lot for Kensington's commuter rail station. A parking lot, properly designed and screened, would be compatible with adjoining uses and would also serve as a transitional use between commercial and residential uses.

5.14 Housing for the Elderly

Although many dwelling units in Kensington are occupied by elderly residents, only one area facility - the "Rebecca," located at Connecticut and Lawrence Avenues just north of the Sector Plan Area - has been built specifically to house the elderly. Both private and public organizations and agencies may build housing for the elderly. Such development should be encouraged in Kensington within the following guidelines:

- Sites should be within easy access of public transportation.
- Sites should be within easy access of shopping and recreational facilities.
- Development should be designed to be harmonious with adjacent land uses and densities of development.

One possible site, but certainly not the only site which may be suitable for housing for the elderly in the Sector Plan Area, is located in the triangle formed by University Boulevard, St. Paul Street, and Decatur Avenue. This site, and others

that may be located on major highways or near the railroad, should utilize acoustical insulation, buffering, and site and architectural design to reduce noise impacts.

5.15 Ken-Gar Renewal Plan

Ken-Gar is a small community of about 100 families adjoining the Town of Kensington. Adjacent land uses include the B & O Railroad to the south, commercial uses to the east, and unimproved portions of the Ken-Gar Palisades park and recreation area to the north and west.

Existing land use is primarily single-family residential. Two parcels of land are developed with garden apartments, and approximately one acre of vacant land remains in scattered lots within the community. There are two churches in Ken-Gar.

In 1968, the county Community Renewal Program found three-fourths of the 75 structures in either deteriorated or dilapidated structural condition resulting from age, lack of maintenance, and from poor quality of initial construction.

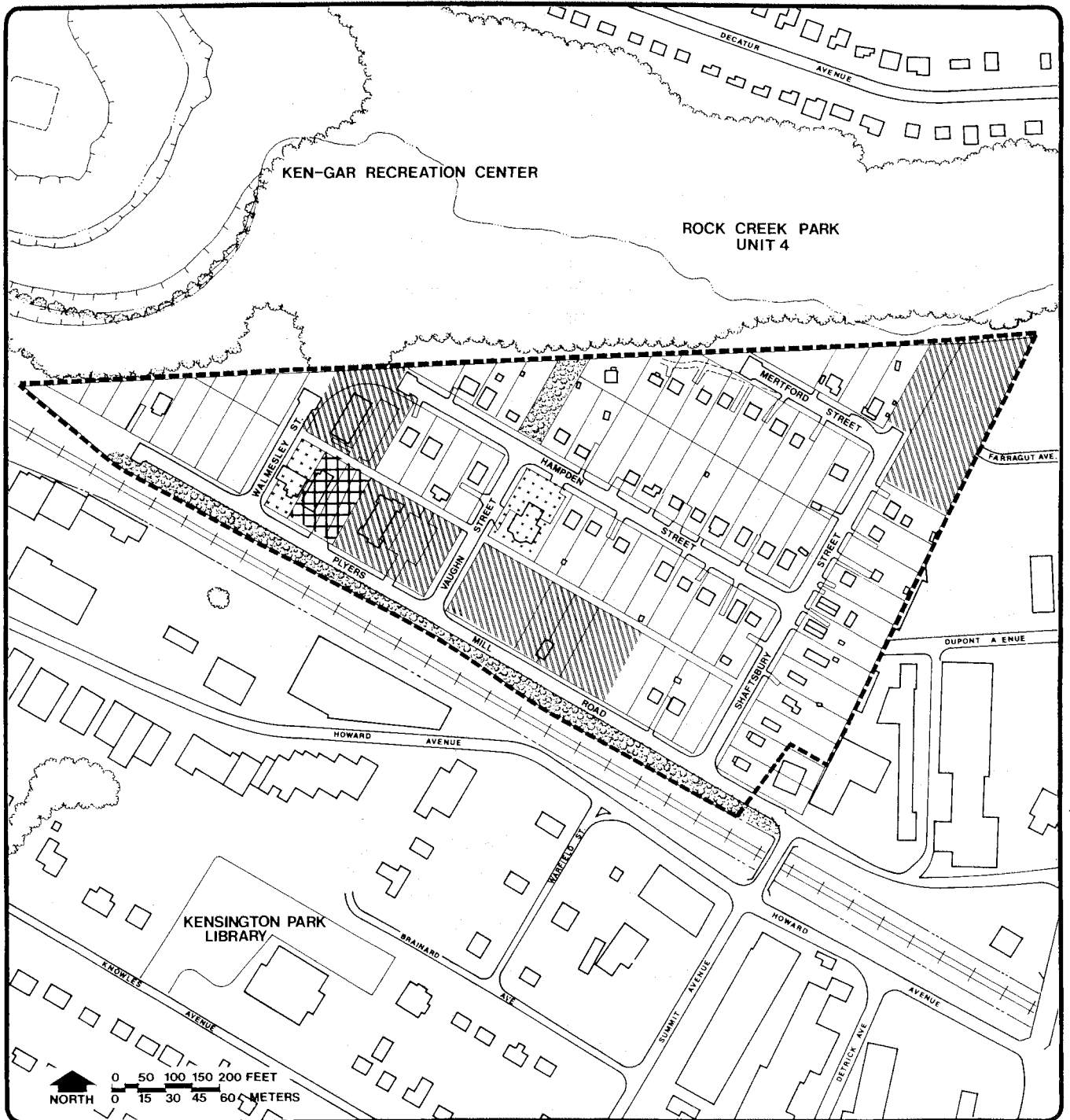
In addition, the county Community Renewal Program cited overcrowding of households, excess dwelling unit density, and undersized building lots as problems. A number of properties also had rear lot dwellings, and some buildings were in violation of setback requirements.

Citizens of Ken-Gar worked with the county government and others to develop a plan to correct these problems. In 1972, the Montgomery County Council approved a county funded and administered Renewal Plan for Ken-Gar which is endorsed by the Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan.

The basic concepts and objectives of the Ken-Gar Renewal Plan are to:

- . maintain the integrity of the existing residential community by upgrading existing housing and providing new housing units,
- . provide relocation opportunities within the Renewal Area for all residents displaced by public action,
- . upgrade and provide new public facilities to meet adequate community standards,
- . upgrade community appearance by improving internal areas and by buffering Ken-Gar from external blighting influences such as adjacent commercial areas and the railroad, and
- . demonstrate the role of citizen participation in all phases of renewal planning and development.

A Renewal Plan (Figure 7) has been prepared for Ken-Gar meeting these basic concepts and objectives. The Renewal Plan provides for a mixture of low- to medium-density residential uses which include single-family detached homes, townhouses both on individual lots and as part of a common development, and garden apartments. A neighborhood center is proposed on the old school tract on Plyers Mill Road.



KEN-GAR RENEWAL PLAN

--- Renewal Area Boundary

□ Low Density Single-Family

▨ Low Density Multi-Family

▨ Parks and Open Space

▨ Semi-Public Institutions

▨ Ken-Gar Neighborhood Center

KENSINGTON

SOURCE: MONTGOMERY COUNTY,
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT



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FIGURE

SECTOR PLAN

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PLANNING AREA

5.16 Historic Preservation

A number of residential and non-residential uses in Kensington have historic significance. The Noyes Library, the Kensington railroad station, and the area of Victorian homes constitute valuable historic and artistic testimonials to Kensington's past, present, and future. These buildings and others should be retained as points of reference, not only to recall the past, but also to help place the present and future in proper perspective.

The specific type of historic program needed for Kensington is beyond the scope of the Sector Plan. A detailed study must be undertaken to determine what should be preserved, why it should be preserved, and how it can be preserved. Accordingly, a task force should be established as soon as feasible to develop a historic preservation program for Kensington. Representation from the town government and citizens, the staff of the Montgomery County Planning Board, and the staff of the Montgomery County government would be appropriate.

5.2 COMMERCIAL LAND USE

5.21 Overview

Kensington's commercial areas serve two important functions: they provide convenient, essential services to residents and they contribute to the tax base. The prosperity and stability of this segment of the community structure is, therefore, of serious concern to the entire community.

Throughout the United States a major revolution in marketing has been taking place since World War II. One of the most significant changes has been the steady shift from small neighborhood stores to supermarkets. Another has been the development of the shopping center or mall as a comprehensively planned group of shops and services, well served by integrally developed parking areas. These developments have tended to make the older "strip" shopping streets obsolete. In many communities the shopping mall, with its attractive new stores, pleasant pedestrian environment, and convenient parking, has dealt the older commercial areas a nearly fatal blow.

The Commercial Land Use and Urban Design elements of the Sector Plan attempt to create an environment that would enable the stores on Howard Avenue, Connecticut Avenue, and Metropolitan Avenue to maintain their competitive position in relation to such regional shopping centers as Wheaton Plaza and Montgomery Mall.

Some types of commercial activity, such as gasoline stations or lumber yards, are much less compatible with residential areas than are pharmacies, variety stores, or food stores. Along Connecticut Avenue, where land is high in price, low-density commercial uses such as auto sales lots are not as appropriate as retailing, offices, and professional services doing a high volume of business per square foot. Some activities such as automotive and furniture repair services do not require direct access to a major road and do not generate high volumes of traffic; these uses can often be located in less-specialized and more "out-of-the-way" commercial areas.

A fundamental principle of the Commercial Land Use element of the Sector Plan is the proper grouping of various commercial uses by their primary functions, access, and compatibility requirements. Wherever possible, new commercial development should be consolidated into compact areas so that retail strength will not be diluted. Concentration also facilitates the provision of off-street loading and parking, which, by eliminating frequent curb cuts and curb parking, helps to reduce traffic friction.

5.22 Transitional Commercial Areas

The Sector Plan recommends six parcels of land as suitable for transitional commercial (low-intensity office) development or the conversion of existing residential structures to low-intensity office uses. These parcels (Figure 8) are intended to serve as transitional areas between more intensive commercial development and sound residential areas:

- . Parcel 5: approximately 0.9 acre on the south side of Knowles Avenue between Summit and Detrick Avenues (Lots 24-28, currently single-family residential and dentist's office). This parcel would be suitable for either transitional commercial use (low-intensity offices) or transitional residential use (townhouses).
- . Parcel 7: approximately 1 acre on the north side of Decatur Avenue between Connecticut Avenue and the existing parking lot (Lots 7-13, Block 11, currently single-family homes).
- . Parcel 8: approximately 0.5 acre on the south side of Perry Avenue east of the existing bank building (Lots 25-27, Block 5, currently offices in converted homes).
- . Parcel 9: approximately 0.2 acre at the southeast corner of Dupont Avenue and Concord Street (Lot 4, currently office in converted home).
- . Parcel 10: approximately 0.3 acre at the northeast corner of Plyers Mill Road and Concord Street (Lots 7, 8 and part of 6, currently office in converted home and single-family home).
- . Parcel 11: approximately 0.3 acre at the southeast corner of Decatur Avenue and University Boulevard (Lots 15 and 16, Block 7, currently single-family homes and parking).

Poorly executed conversions of existing residential buildings to commercial use have been responsible for some of the physical and visual problems in the town. Conversions should be required to retain the front yards for landscaping. Wherever feasible, parking should be located in the rear. The parking areas should be unified, properly landscaped, and screened so that residences to the rear would be protected. Such rear parking can achieve its full efficiency when contiguous groups of structures are converted.

5.23 Moderate-Intensity Office Areas

The Sector Plan recommends four parcels of land as suitable for moderate-intensity office development. These parcels are identified below and on Figure 8:

- . Parcel 12: approximately 0.3 acre on the south side of Knowles Avenue midway between Detrick and Connecticut Avenues (Lot 3 and part of 4, Block 6, currently single-family home).
- . Parcel 13: approximately 3.8 acres at Connecticut and Perry Avenues (Lots 1-4, 16-19 and Parcel A, Block 4). In addition, the adjoining Lots 16-20 at the southwest corner of Connecticut and Decatur Avenues would be suitable for off-street parking in connection with the office use. This site is subject to environmental constraints concerning development. See the Environmental section, page 110 for additional information.
- . Parcel 14: approximately 1.8 acres comprising the interior portion of Block 6 bounded by Connecticut Avenue, Knowles Avenue, Armory Avenue and Warner Street. This portion of the block is currently zoned for offices (C-O).
- . Parcel 15: approximately 0.7 acre at the southeast corner of Connecticut and Decatur Avenues (Lots 16-20, Block 8).

5.24 Antique Shops

One notable sector of Kensington's commercial center is its assembly of antique shops and related businesses. Collectively, they represent a significant and unique cluster of activities which contribute to the small-town flavor for which Kensington is well noted. While many of these businesses have existed for a substantial period of time, the last several years have seen the addition of numerous new establishments. Many of these represent new residents attracted to Kensington, while others represent craftsmen living in the area who have recently entered the business world.

The establishment of a substantial center of businesses dealing in antiques has created a feature worthy of public recognition and encouragement. To some degree, the town has responded positively with public improvements including street furniture, landscaping, parking, and screening. These improvements have helped to create a setting attractive to both businesses and shoppers which has fostered growth in the antiques business community.

Because of the positive contributions being made by antique shops and related businesses to the attractiveness of Kensington, both as a place to live and a place to shop, additional public encouragement is warranted. Consideration should be given to additional improvements to the street furniture, landscaping, and screening already in place. Attention should be given to expansion of parking facilities, where feasible, and to the improvement of the pedestrian system to facilitate walking amongst the various shops. These improvements are most critical for the portion of the antiques market west of Connecticut Avenue; sidewalks are almost nonexistent in this area. Consideration should be given to the placement of directional signs along major roadways to assist newcomers in finding their way to this market area. Additional recommendations for improving the business area are contained in the Urban Design section (Appendix B).

5.25 General Commercial Areas

Areas recommended for general commercial uses are appropriate for both locally oriented and highway-oriented commercial activities. For the most part,

the commercially designated areas along Connecticut Avenue, Metropolitan Avenue, and parts of Howard Avenue reflect the existing development pattern. Commercial expansion is limited by the sound residential neighborhoods adjacent to existing development.

The existing general commercial development will continue to provide needed services to town and area residents for the foreseeable future. The Urban Design section (Appendix B) analyzes the existing physical design problems in the commercial areas and suggests a general approach which might be utilized in creating an environment more in keeping with Kensington's character.

Two parcels of land in the triangle formed by Metropolitan Avenue, Plyers Mill Road, and St. Paul Street are recommended for general commercial use (see Parcels 16 and 17, Figure 8). Both parcels are currently zoned for general commercial use (C-2 zoning). At present, a portion of Parcel 16 is used for auto storage and a portion is vacant. Parcel 17 currently includes two commercial buildings and a single-family house.

The Sector Plan proposes that land currently in use as an asphalt plant (approximately 1.5 acres) between Metropolitan Avenue and the B & O Railroad east of St. Paul Street be changed to general commercial use in the future, most likely beyond the 6-10 year sector plan period. It is felt that general commercial use is more compatible with adjacent residential uses than the industrial asphalt plant. (See Parcel 18, Figure 8, also see pp. 69 and 70 for additional discussion concerning the asphalt plant parcel.)

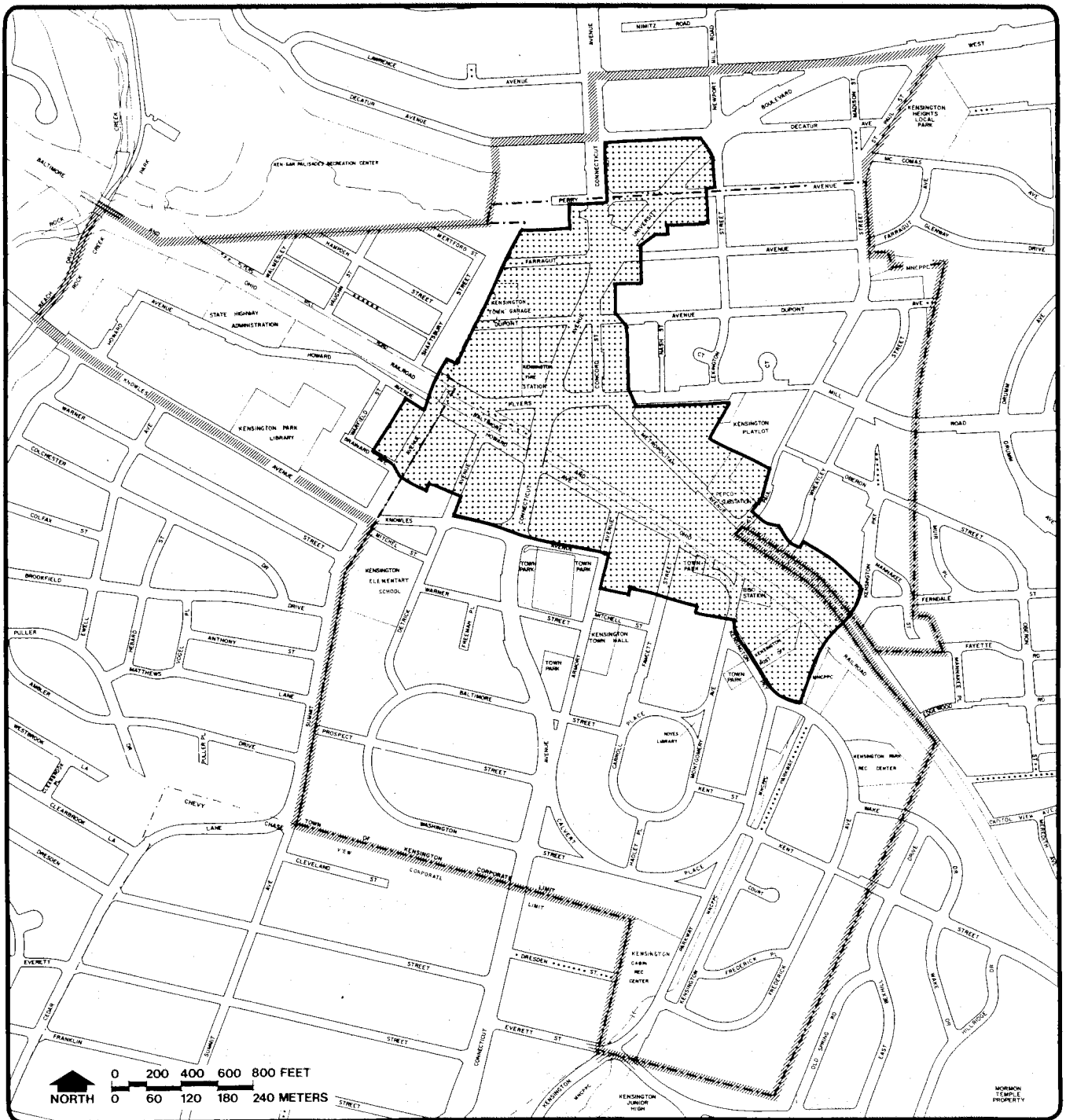
--In addition to the parcels above, development of infill commercial is proposed for vacant commercially zoned properties.

5.26 Kensington's Central Business District Classification

In 1966, Kensington was designated a Central Business District (CBD) along with Silver Spring, Wheaton, Bethesda, and Friendship Heights. The Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance indicates, in general, that zones designed for CBDs¹¹ are intended to provide for development of residential and commercial uses in the central commercial areas of the county at densities higher than those permitted elsewhere in the county.

When Kensington was designated a CBD, it was thought that the Metro transit line would run from Washington, D. C., through Silver Spring and Kensington (with a station at Kensington) to Rockville. However, in 1968, the proposed Silver Spring-Kensington-Rockville line was eliminated. The current proposed Metro system includes a line through Silver Spring and Wheaton to Glenmont and a line through Friendship Heights, Bethesda and Rockville to Shady Grove. The elimination of Kensington as a Metro transit station site has substantially reduced the desirability of designating Kensington as a location for high-density development.

¹¹ The following zones may be permitted in Central Business Districts: R-CBD zone, multiple-family, central business district residential; R-O-CBD zone, residential office central business district; CBD-R zone, central business district residential; CBD-0.5, CBD-1, CBD-2, and CBD-3, central business district zones.



CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

— Central Business District Boundary

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SECTOR PLAN BOUNDARY
TOWN OF KENSINGTON BOUNDARY



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FIGURE

SECTOR PLAN

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Without the traffic-concentrating nature of a Metro station in Kensington, little inducement exists for development of a high-intensity business district. Although a large number of commercial and industrial uses are located in Kensington, the commercial-industrial activity is of a low-intensity character. In addition, Kensington's town officials have indicated their desire to preserve the town's existing character and to keep development at a low intensity--goals that are expressed in the Sector Plan as well.

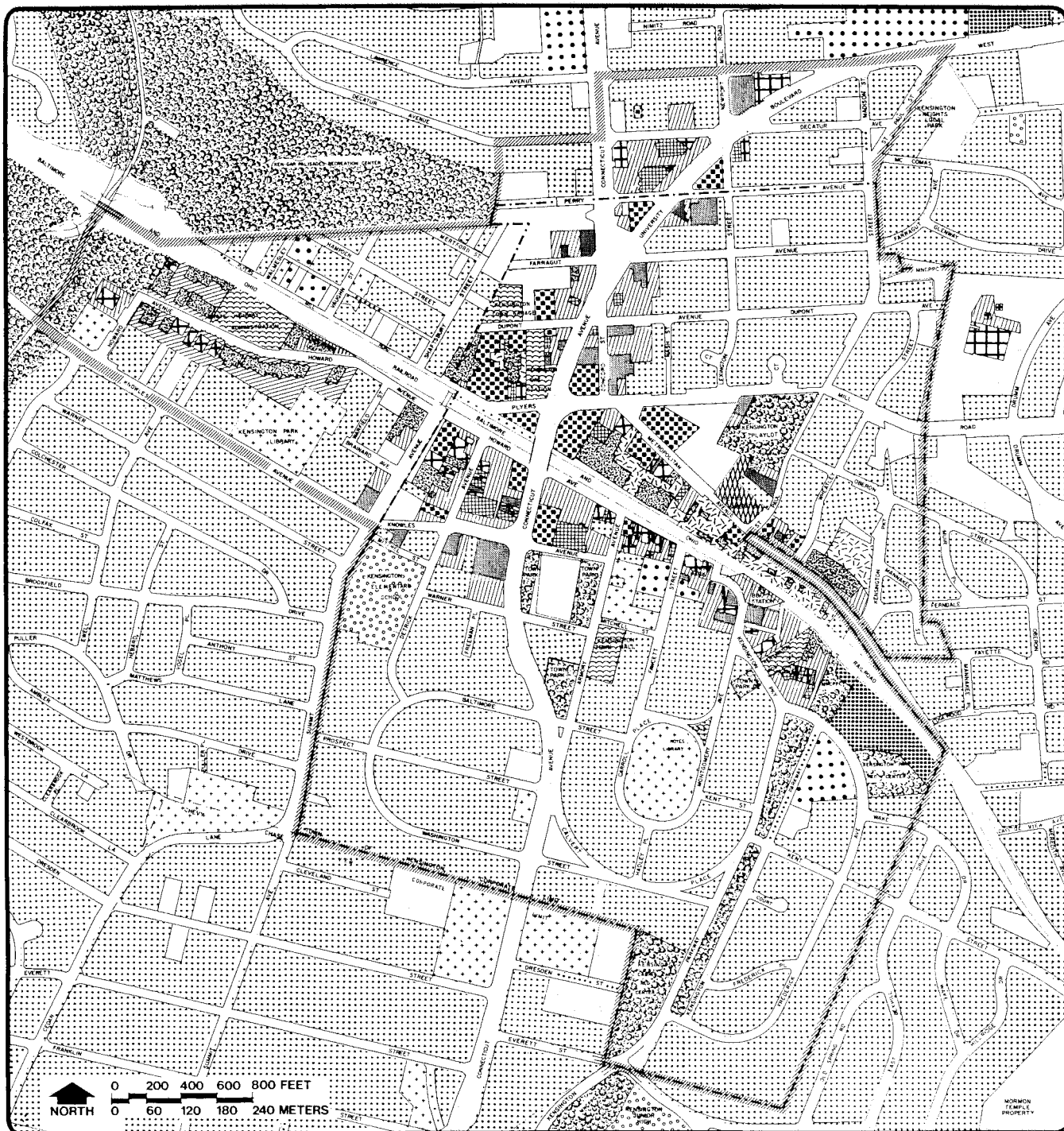
Moreover, the traffic problems currently experienced in Kensington suggest that high-intensity development in the area would require major traffic improvements beyond those recommended in the Sector Plan. The potential cost of such improvements--in terms of environmental degradation, community disruption, and dollars to be spent--is so great that maintenance of Kensington as a low-intensity community should be encouraged. Accordingly, the Sector Plan recommends elimination of the Central Business District designation for Kensington as an important step that will aid in preserving the low-intensity character of the community. (The existing Central Business District for Kensington is shown on Figure 9.)

5.3 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

A substantial amount of land in Kensington is currently devoted to light industrial uses. There are no heavy industrial uses in the area except for an asphalt mixing plant on approximately 1.5 acres of land on Metropolitan Avenue. Light industrial activities include furniture repair and refinishing; plumbing, air conditioning and electrical supply houses and contractors; plastics lamination; wholesale antiques; silver plating; warehousing; miscellaneous light manufacturing; and a State Highway Administration storage yard. The majority of these uses are concentrated along Howard Avenue and the B & O Railroad at the western end of the Sector Plan Area. Metropolitan Avenue and Plyers Mill Road also have small, but significant, amounts of light industrial uses.

Practically all land zoned for light industry in the area has been developed, making new sites for light industrial uses virtually non-existent. Moreover, many light industrial uses are being supplanted by commercial uses such as antique shops and related businesses. While it is likely that this trend will continue, it is expected that the majority of light industrial uses will remain for the foreseeable future. The Sector Plan encourages this through retention of most existing light industrial zoning in the area. Also, the Sector Plan recommends the following new light industrial sites (see Parcels 19 and 20, Figure 8): approximately 0.3 acre of land at the southeast corner of Howard Avenue and Warfield Street (Lots 13 and 14, Block 4), and approximately 0.4 acre of land at the southwest corner of the same intersection (parts of Lots 11 and 12, Block 3). The Sector Plan recognizes that the light industrial area has a number of serious problems. These problems, which include inadequate parking, poor service access, need for screening from residential areas, and absence of sidewalks, are addressed in the Urban Design section (Appendix B).

The heavy industrial asphalt mixing plant, because of problems of noise, truck traffic, fumes, and odors, is incompatible with the nearby single-family residential area. The Sector Plan, therefore, recommends replacement of the asphalt plant with a general commercial use in the future. A general commercial use (with C-2 zoning) at this location between Metropolitan Avenue and the railroad near an



EXISTING LAND USE

RESIDENTIAL

- Single-Family
- Apartment (1-4 Fls.)
- Apartment (over 4 Fls.)

COMMERCIAL

- Convenience
- General
- Office
- Automotive
- Parking

INDUSTRIAL

- Industrial
- Open Storage
- Public Park
- Public School

PUBLIC & QUASI-PUBLIC

- Governmental
- Health Care, Religious & Other
- Utility
- Vacant
- Dedicated Street - Not Constructed

KENSINGTON

SECTOR PLAN BOUNDARY
TOWN OF KENSINGTON BOUNDARY



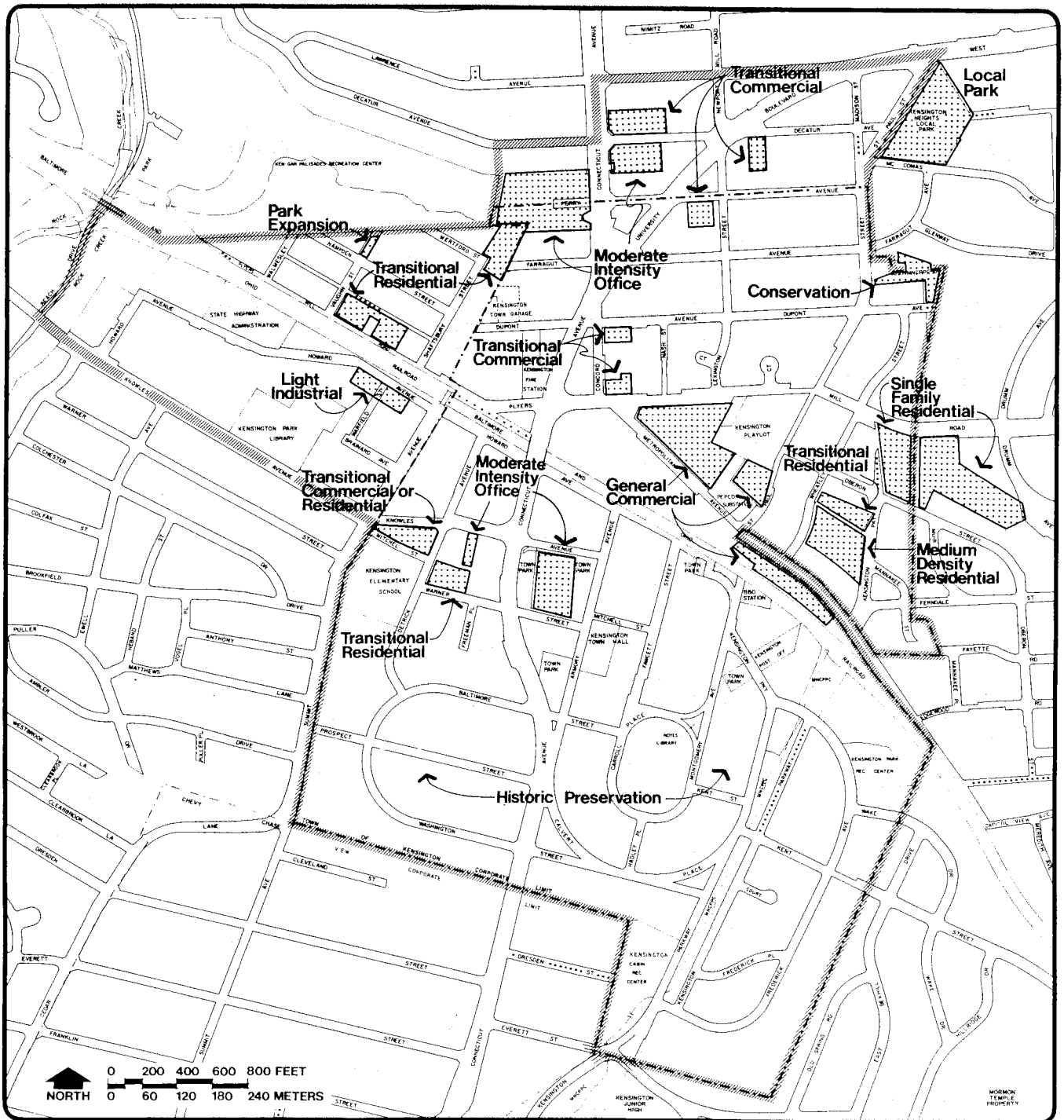
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FIGURE



zoning) at this location between Metropolitan Avenue and the railroad near an extensive single-family neighborhood, would be more in character with the community than the asphalt plant. It could also provide commercial services to the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Sector Plan, therefore, recommends that the zoning of the asphalt plant be changed from I-1 (light industrial) to C-2 (general commercial). Under C-2 zoning, the asphalt plant would become a nonconforming use. While it could remain in existence under this zoning, it would not be permitted to expand or rebuild as an asphalt plant. Therefore, at some future date, when economically feasible, it can be expected that the asphalt plant would be removed and the site would become available for redevelopment in a general commercial use.



LAND USE PLAN

NOTES:

- Except where indicated above existing land use to remain the same.
Development of infill single-family homes permitted on vacant lots.
Development of infill commercial permitted on vacant commercially zoned lots.
- The location for proposed commuter parking has not been resolved.
Four commuter parking sites on the north side of the railroad are under study.
One of these or possibly some other site on the north side of the railroad may ultimately be selected.

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SECTOR PLAN BOUNDARY
TOWN OF KENSINGTON BOUNDARY



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FIGURE

SECTOR PLAN

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