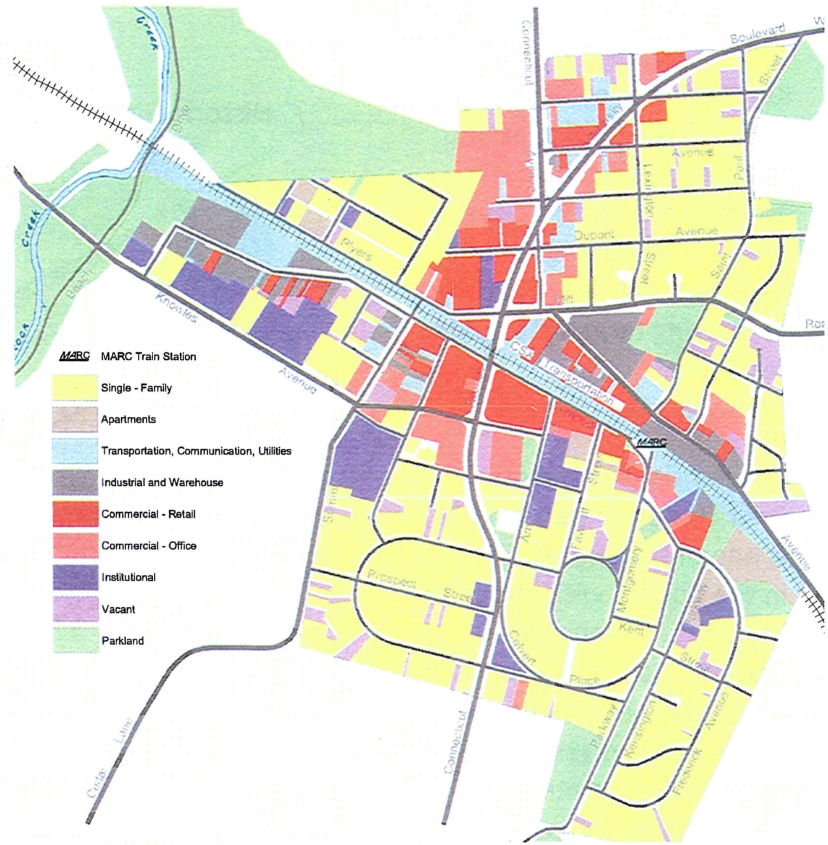


Connectivity

Kensington is located at a critical bottleneck in the area's road network. An informal, but important east-west road system crosses Connecticut Avenue, a vital north-south artery, in the center of town. The east-west network includes University Boulevard, Plyers Mill Road, Metropolitan, Knowles and Strathmore Avenues. The east-west crossing requires travelers to use Connecticut Avenue between Plyers Mill Road and Knowles Avenue to complete their east- or westbound journey. For this short segment, east-west travelers and north-south travelers must use the same roadway.



Street grids in Kensington's neighborhoods generally provide good pedestrian access and circulation. Many, but not all streets have sidewalks, and there are paths and trails connecting the neighborhoods to parkland east and west of Kensington.

Connecticut Avenue and the CSX rail right-of-way pose significant barriers to pedestrian and bicyclist movement through the Plan area. There are only three pedestrian connections across the tracks separating the north and south sections of the Town—Summit Avenue, Connecticut Avenue, and the at-grade track crossing at Kensington Station. The first two are barely adequate; the track crossing is inconvenient and inhospitable. The nearest crossings outside the Plan area are Beach Drive and the Rock Creek Trail, almost a half-mile to the west of Summit Avenue, and Stoneybrook Drive, about two-thirds of a mile to the east.

Diversity

Kensington provides housing for a full range of ages and incomes, from small apartments near Antique Row to stately single-family houses in the historic district to housing targeted to older residents.

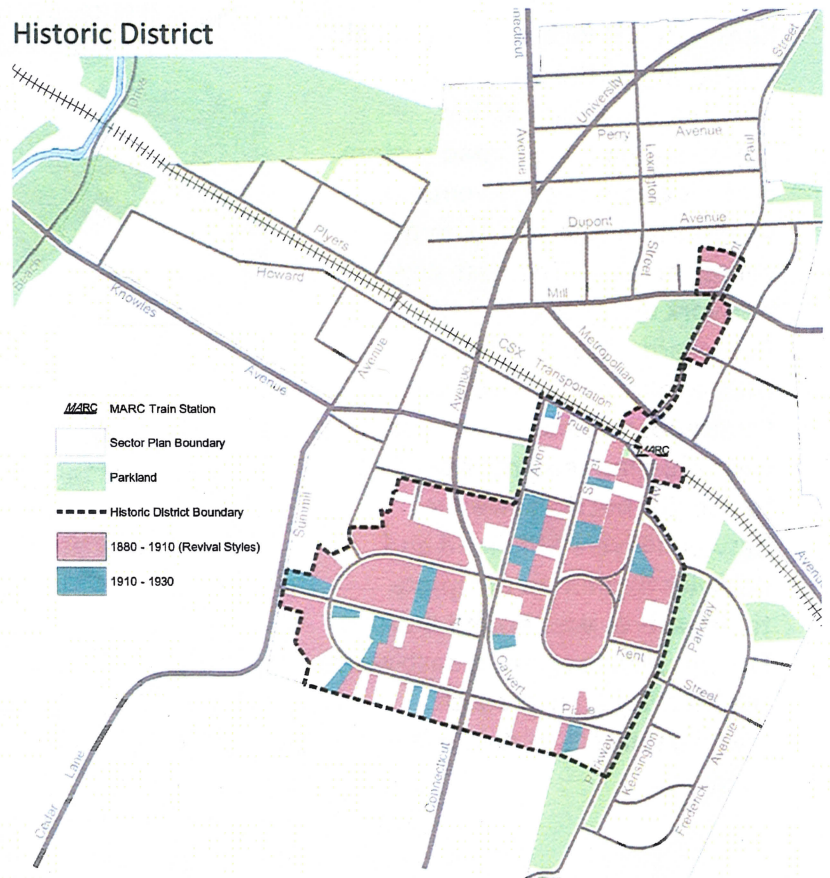
The Kensington Historic District, designated in 1986, is one of the largest districts in the County with about 180 buildings. A Kensington Historic District is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places (1980). The Historic Preservation Commission reviews proposed exterior changes for structures in the district and has developed guidelines for new construction within the existing district.

There are 834 single-family houses in the Plan area, 78 percent of the total number of units. Twenty-two percent, 235 units, are multifamily.

A key Plan objective is to introduce housing into Kensington's Town Center, which will increase the inventory of multifamily housing in the Plan area and increase the range of housing choices for County residents

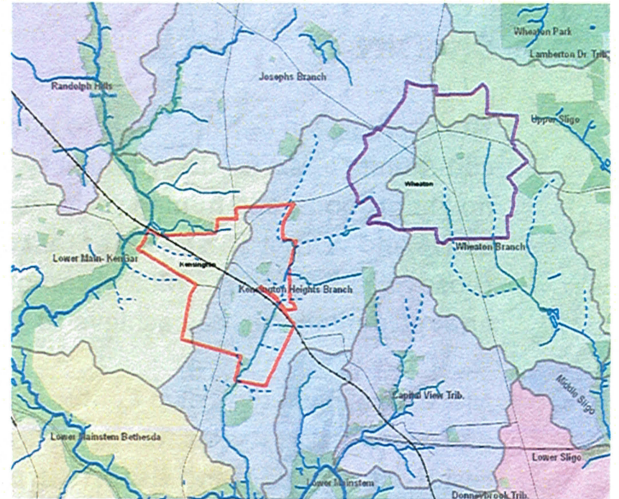
Kensington is also home to a number of antiques and furnishings businesses that attract shoppers from all of metropolitan Washington. On Howard Avenue east of Connecticut Avenue is historic Antique Row. Other antique retailers have located among the warehouses and services on West Howard.

Historic District



Environment

The Plan area straddles two subwatersheds of Rock Creek: Kensington Heights and Lower Main Ken-Gar. Beginning in Wheaton, the Kensington Heights watershed flows into a stream the town residents call Silver Creek. The Lower Main Ken-Gar subwatershed partially drains into two drainage swales and a small tributary that flows west into the mainstem of Rock Creek

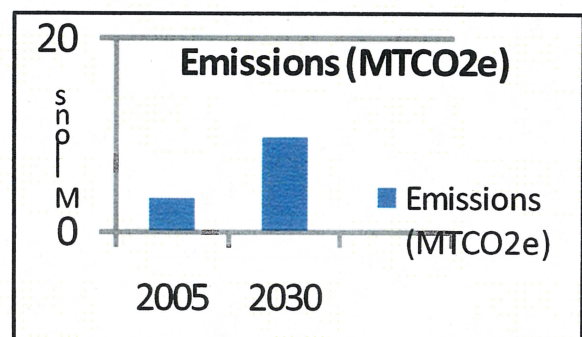


The 2003 Countywide Stream Protection Strategy determined that Silver Creek has poor water quality and stream conditions. The natural stream bed was previously converted to a concrete channel or piped underground in order to transport stormwater swiftly. During large storm events the culvert at Oberon Street exceeds its capacity, flooding properties in the neighborhood.

Kensington's residential communities have an impervious cover of 30 percent, while the commercial core has 80 percent impervious cover. This high impervious cover contributes to poor water quality. In addition, Kensington was developed prior to stormwater management requirements that would otherwise curb stream degradation, diminished water quality, and periodic flooding.

Approximately 24 percent of the Plan area is covered with tree canopy. The majority of canopy is from street trees and landscaping on private lots with the exception of about three acres of forested parkland. Residential neighborhoods contribute approximately 21 percent of the canopy in the Plan area. Two percent of the canopy area is within commercial and industrial areas. Lack of tree cover, in combination with the intensive impervious levels, contributes to the poor water quality found in the streams within the Plan area, increased ambient air temperatures, higher energy consumption and diminished visual appeal.

County law requires all master plans to include greenhouse gas emissions evaluations. A carbon analysis for Kensington factored in existing and projected embodied energy, transportation energy, and building energy. The results show that carbon dioxide output will nearly triple unless fossil fuel consumption is reduced.



Area Wide Recommendations

Diversity

The challenge in Kensington is to build on the community's assets—its rich history, cohesive neighborhoods, and human scale—to create an active and vibrant Town Center that is connected those neighborhoods. Mixing commercial, office, and residential uses can achieve this vision.

More housing in the Town Center will mean livelier and more active streets that are attractive for residents, shoppers and visitors. It will increase the diversity of housing choices as well. The Plan proposes modest increases in density in the exclusively commercial center of Kensington to encourage mixing of uses while continuing to allow the range of retail and commercial uses now available.



Protect existing residential and historic areas of Kensington. Maintain the R-60 Zone for the residential properties outside the Plan's area identified redevelopment areas.

This Plan proposes a new Commercial Residential (CR) use district for the Town Center. (A fuller description may be found in the Implementation Section.) The new district will allow commercial and residential uses to be mixed at varying densities that will be determined by individual property developers. This Plan will make three recommendations for properties and areas under study: total FAR; non-residential and residential FAR and; building height.

Proposed FAR

