



*SECTION 2*  
**DEFINING** the **CONTEXT**

The East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan contains policies and strategies for achieving the vision and goals described in Chapter 1. This section contains a summary of the history of the sector plan area, the existing conditions on the ground, relevant County and state plans and policies, and the critical stakeholder and community input that collectively inform this plan and its recommendations.

## HISTORY

The East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan area was predominantly rural through the end of the nineteenth century. Historic assets from this era include the 1896 Browning-Baines House at 5601 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Historic Site 69-019) and the 1884-1940 Cherry Hill Cemetery at 6821 Ingraham Street (Historic Site 69-021). The frame house was home to the families associated with the Browning and Baines Coffee Company of Washington, D.C., while the cemetery was founded as burial ground for free African Americans.

Development of the sector plan area occurred in waves associated with major transportation investments. The Town of Riverdale Park experienced its primary period of development

following the extension of electric streetcar service around 1900. As the portion of the town reached the Northeast Branch of the Anacostia River, development began on the east side of the river with the development of the Greta Addition to Riverdale (1910), Riverdale Hills (1915), and Riverdale Heights (1919) subdivisions. Even though these communities north of Riverdale Road were platted before 1920, the plan area retained its rural character for decades.

Well-preserved examples of popular Sears, Roebuck and Company catalog houses (sold as “Sears Modern Homes” from 1908-1940) can be found at 6409 63<sup>rd</sup> Place and 6301 Sheridan Street (the “Vallonia” model) and 6109 63<sup>rd</sup> Street (the “Crescent” model). The 1928 Riverdale Baptist Church at 6200 Riverdale Road (Historic Site 69-012) was founded by members of a Baptist congregation in Hyattsville. Undocumented, but worthy of mention, is a striking Georgian Revival house from this period at 6010 Carter’s Lane.

The construction of major highways through the area spurred another wave of development. Built between 1942-1954, the Baltimore-Washington Parkway bisects the plan area; it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991

and simultaneously designated Historic Site 69-026. Construction of the parkway and its interchange with Riverdale Road contributed to the development of Templeton Knolls (1950), Beacon Heights (1953), and Riverdale Woods (1955).

Beacon Heights likely takes its name from a College Park Airport rotating beacon. The beacon tower once stood on a hill roughly where Beacon Place meets Ingraham Street, just across the street from Cherry Hill Cemetery. The airport beacon appears on topographical maps and aeronautical charts from the 1930s.

Construction of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, the transformation of Edmonston Road into today’s MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue) in 1957, and the opening of East West Highway in 1968 spurred development of 17 of the sector plan area’s 19 apartment complexes (containing over 2,300 residential units) between 1959-1970. During this time frame, Eastpines Shopping Center (1954-1959, developed by the Ecole des Beaux Arts-trained architect Cushing Daniel, Jr.) and the Riverdale Plaza Shopping Center (1964), were constructed to meet the growing area’s shopping needs.

The Plaza Del Alamo originated as a 1956 Acme Supermarket flanked by a Peoples Drug and a High's Dairy Store. It takes its present name and distinctive c. 2005 architecture from the adjacent Alamo Restaurant. The Alamo was opened in 1954 on Route 1 in College Park by the John Vandeputte family, who moved to the Washington, D.C. area from Texas that same year. The Vandeputtes moved the restaurant to its present location in East Riverdale in the mid-1960s, after the Acme building was expanded to the south.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Kenilworth Avenue corridor became an attractive location for suburban office campuses. In 1959 local architect Edwin F. Ball, AIA, designed a headquarters for the survey firm Greenhorne and O'Mara at 6715 Kenilworth Avenue (PG:69-61). Known as the "Celtic Building" from its inception, as originally built it featured a glass-enclosed stair and mural that was illuminated at night.

Ball followed in 1964 with his masterpiece, M-NCPPC's Regional Headquarters (PG:68-101) at 6600 Kenilworth Avenue across the street. Raised on a rustic stone podium, the glass and marble building is a pristine example of International-Style architecture in an



undisturbed woodland setting. Ball was an early advocate of barrier-free architecture: the ramps on the garden elevation are an original feature. Undocumented but worthy of mention is the 1964 Mid-Atlantic Trucking Association headquarters (PG:68-113) at 6410 Kenilworth Avenue, now the First Korean Presbyterian Church of Maryland. A distinctive feature of this building is its second-story mesh screening wall.

Prolific local midcentury architects Walton and Madden, AIA, designed the exuberantly

modern 1963 St. Bernard of Clairvaux Roman Catholic Church at 5809 Riverdale Road (PG:69-52). The supermarket at 5801 Riverdale Road (PG:69-67) was originally built in 1956 as a Food Fair and was designed by Alfred M. Rinaudot & Associates of Bethesda. Described at the time as being of "California ranch" style, its appealing and enduring Japanese-Modern/Frank Lloyd-Wright-like design makes it a landmark in the plan area, and links it aesthetically to two other Wright-inspired buildings nearby, 1958's Marenka House at 7300 Radcliffe

Drive in College Park (Historic Site 66-076; National Register) and the National Register-eligible Ernest Maier, Inc. (PG:69-39) at 4700 Annapolis Road in Bladensburg. These buildings have tentatively been attributed to an architect working for the midcentury firm Kea, Shaw Associates, AIA, in Hyattsville.

With the exception of a handful of medical office buildings and four small residential subdivisions, development in the sector plan area has been stagnant since approximately 1970.

## SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The following section contains a summary of existing conditions in the East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan area as they relate to the policies and strategies contained in Chapter 3.

### LAND USE AND ZONING

The sector plan area developed like many first- or second-tier suburbs: an initial wave of speculative residential suburbanization after the extension of streetcar lines and the mass production of cars, a post-war residential boom, and retail and offices that “followed the rooftops.” All the commercial development abuts

MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue) and Riverdale Road. All 19 apartment complexes lie within 3 blocks of these 2 roads. The existing land use and existing zoning maps (see Map 3 and Map 4) show several nodes/corridors of concentrated single-use development:

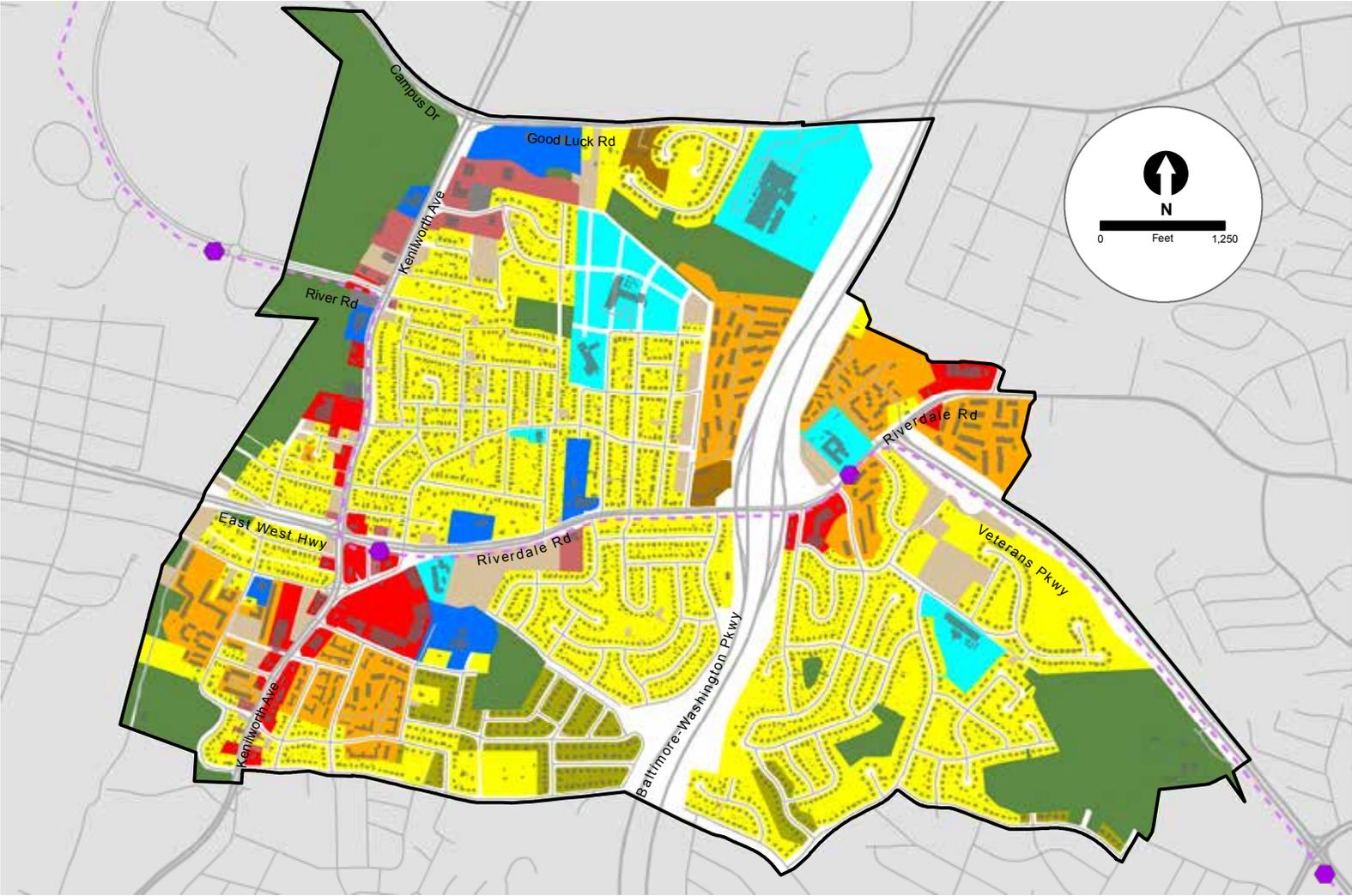
1. Strip commercial retail and services along MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue) between Carter’s Lane and River Road.
2. Apartment buildings along 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and Riverdale Road.
3. Suburban office buildings along MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue) north of River Road.
4. Duplexes south of Greenvale Parkway, west of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway.
5. Parkland along the Northeast Branch of the Anacostia River.

Approximately 42.5 percent of the sector plan area contains residential land uses, including the 31 percent containing single-family detached residential neighborhoods. Approximately 19 percent of the sector plan area is either vacant, parkland, or protected open space. Eight percent of the sector plan area consists of institutional and mass assembly uses, and five percent is commercial.

Given that only four percent of the sector plan area is vacant, zoning classifications in the area generally reflect the current land use. Forty-three percent of the sector plan area is zoned for single-family detached residential uses, nine percent for multifamily uses, and three percent for single-family attached housing. Fourteen percent of the sector plan area is publicly owned parkland in the Reserved Open Space (R-O-S) zone. Approximately six percent of the sector plan area is zoned for commercial uses.

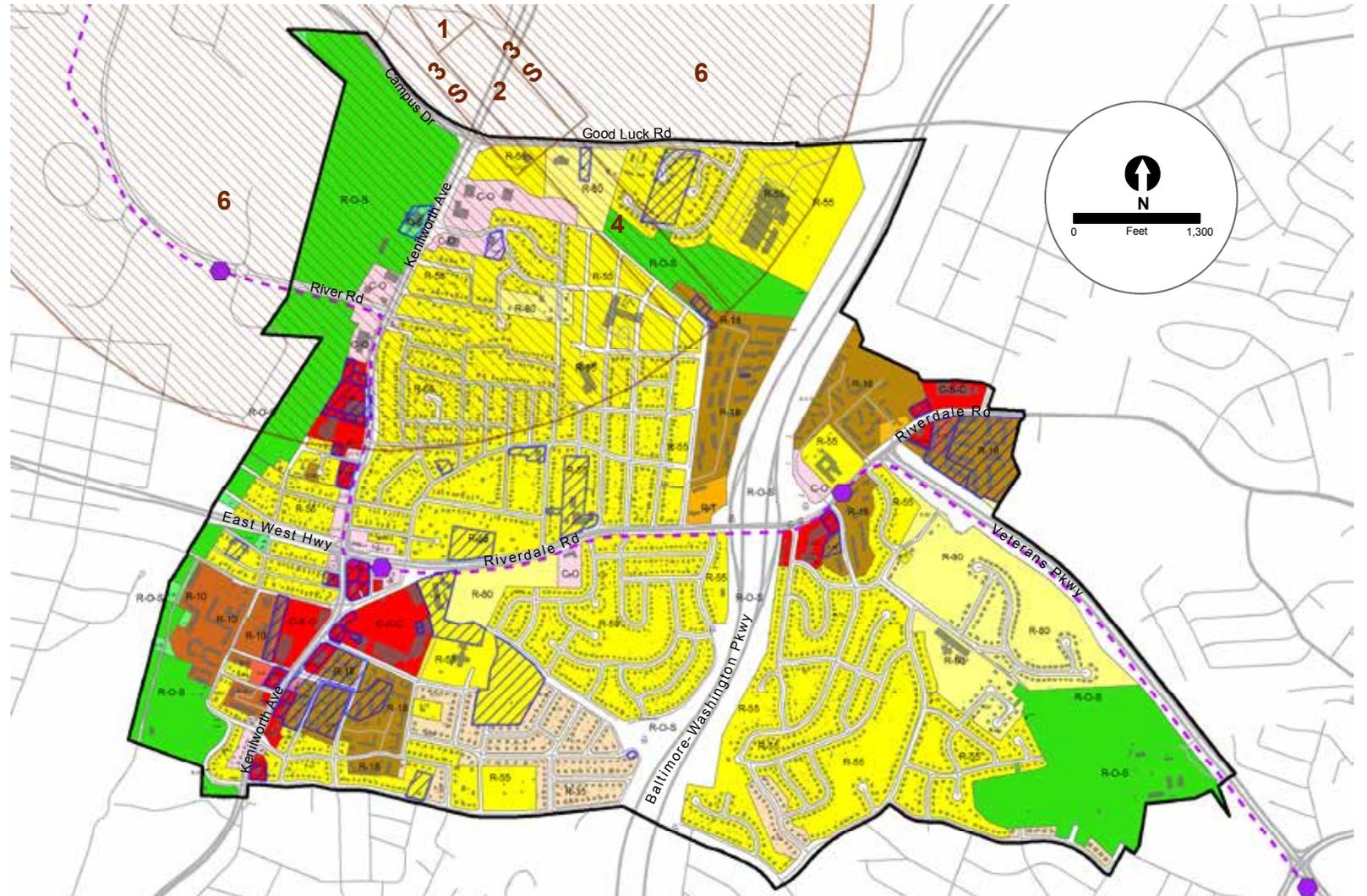
No part of the sector plan area is currently zoned for mixed-use development.

Map 3. Existing Land Use



		Land Use (Percentage of Sector Plan Area)			
East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan Boundary	Buildings	Commercial (3.10%)	Residential, Single Family (31.23%)	Parks and Open Space (17.59%)	
Purple Line and Stations (MTA)	Primary Road	Office (1.51%)	Residential, Attached (2.65%)	Vacant (4.18%)	
	Secondary Road	Institutional (5.69%)	Residential, Townhouse (0.55%)	Transportation and Utilities (0.22%)	
		Mass Assembly (2.32%)	Residential, Multifamily (8.01%)		

Map 4. Existing Zoning



- Purple Line and Stations (MTA)
- East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan Boundary
- Aviation Policy Areas
- Special Exception
- C-2 (General Commercial, Existing)
- C-A (Ancillary Commercial)
- C-M (Commercial Miscellaneous)
- C-O (Commercial Office)
- C-S-C (Commercial Shopping Center)
- O-S (Open Space)
- R-10 (Multifamily High Density Residential)
- R-18 (Multifamily Medium Density Residential)
- R-20 (One-Family Triple-Attached Residential)
- R-35 (One-Family Semidetached, and Two-Family Detached, Residential)
- R-55 (One-Family Detached Residential)
- R-80 (One-Family Detached Residential)
- R-O-S (Reserved Open Space)
- R-T (Townhouse)

## AVIATION POLICY AREAS

In 2005, Prince George's County established aviation policy areas (APAs) around its general aviation airports. The APAs are intended to ensure the protection of airspace around airports essential to the success of airport operations and the safety of people and structures around airports. Portions of the northwest quadrant of the East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan area are located southeast of the College Park Airport, within APA-4, APA-5, and APA-6, which contain property owner notification requirements and height restrictions that may require review of new structures by the Maryland Aviation Administration and Federal Aviation Administration.

- APA-4, the Outer Safety Area, is defined as a rectangular area abutting APA-2, centered on and parallel to the extended runway centerline, extending two thousand, five hundred (2,500) feet in length and two hundred twenty-five (225) feet in width on either side of the centerline. Each APA-4 comprises twenty-six (26) acres. Each runway has two APA-4s, one at each end of the runway, for a total of approximately fifty-two (52) acres at each airport.
- APA-5, the Sideline Safety Area, is defined by two lines on either side of, parallel to, and five hundred (500) feet from the runway centerline, between the APA-3 areas at each end of the runway. Due to varying runway lengths, the acreage of each APA-5 differs at each airport, ranging from seventy-three (73) to ninety (90) acres. The length of the College Park runway is 2,610 feet.
- APA-6, the Traffic Pattern Area, is an oblong area with rounded ends, extending five thousand (5,000) feet from each point along the centerline of the airport runway. The APA-1 through APA-5 areas are excluded from the area for APA-6.

## STATION AREAS

This sector plan focuses on redevelopment opportunities at the Riverdale Park and Beacon Heights-East Pines Purple Line Stations.

### RIVERDALE PARK-KENILWORTH STATION

The Riverdale Park-Kenilworth Station will be constructed at the northern terminus of 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue where it dead-ends just short of MD 410 (East West Highway). The station will be located in a triangular area bordered by Riverdale Road on the southeast, MD 410 (East West Highway) on the north, and MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue) on the west. The “Riverdale triangle” is currently home to several small businesses, including a bank, a gas station, and a fast-food restaurant. Several businesses in the triangle are slated for acquisition and demolition as part of the Purple Line project.

Immediately across MD 410 (East West Highway) from the planned station are a fast-casual restaurant, an insurance office, and several single-family detached dwellings. The south side of Riverdale Road, north of Captain John’s Branch, contains the former St. Bernard’s School, which currently fronts

Riverdale Road but whose access to and visibility from Riverdale Road will be completely blocked by the east abutment for the elevated portion of the Purple Line. West of the former school lies the architecturally significant 1956 Food Fair Supermarket (now MegaMart), a cultural landmark identified repeatedly during stakeholder outreach as a critical community amenity worthy of preservation.

The 11-acre Riverdale Plaza Shopping Center represents the primary redevelopment opportunity at the Riverdale Park-Kenilworth Station. Although located on a well-situated parcel elevated above the floodplain, this shopping center struggles to attract customers and is poorly regarded by residents. A ten-acre vacant parcel, owned by the Refreshing Spring Church of God, sits immediately east of St. Bernard’s Church and is the largest developable vacant property in the sector plan area. Construction of the Purple Line may block easy access to this parcel.

South of, and uphill from, Riverdale Plaza Shopping Center are several apartment complexes. These complexes present unique opportunities; if they are preserved, they are a prime source of location-efficient, affordable workforce housing; if they are redeveloped, they

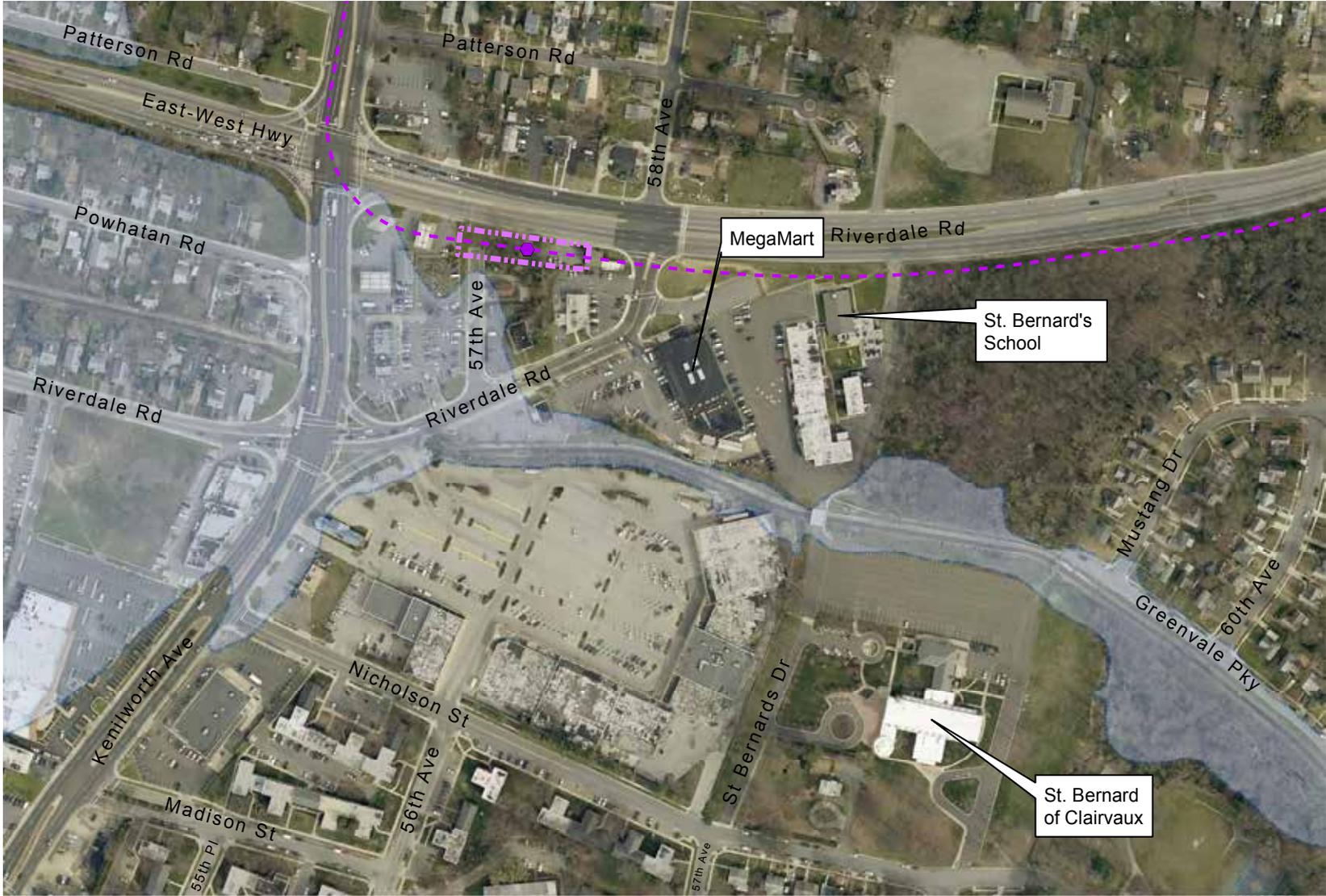
offer a prime location within walking distance from the station, and could offer expansive views of Hyattsville and northeast Washington, D.C.

### BEACON HEIGHTS-EAST PINES STATION

The Beacon Heights-East Pines Station will be constructed on the south side of MD 410 (Riverdale Road), just east of 67<sup>th</sup> Avenue, at East Pines Terrace Apartments. Construction of the station presents an opportunity for the redevelopment of East Pines Terrace.

Immediately across the street from the station is the former headquarters of the Maryland-National Capital Park Police at 6700 Riverdale Road. Abutting the former Park Police headquarters to its east is New Carrollton Woods Apartments. The owners of this property and Prince Georgetown Apartments to the north indicated during the plan development process their intent to redevelop these properties with a dense mix of transit-supportive uses.

Map 5. Riverdale Park-Kenilworth Station Area

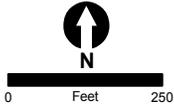


East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan Boundary

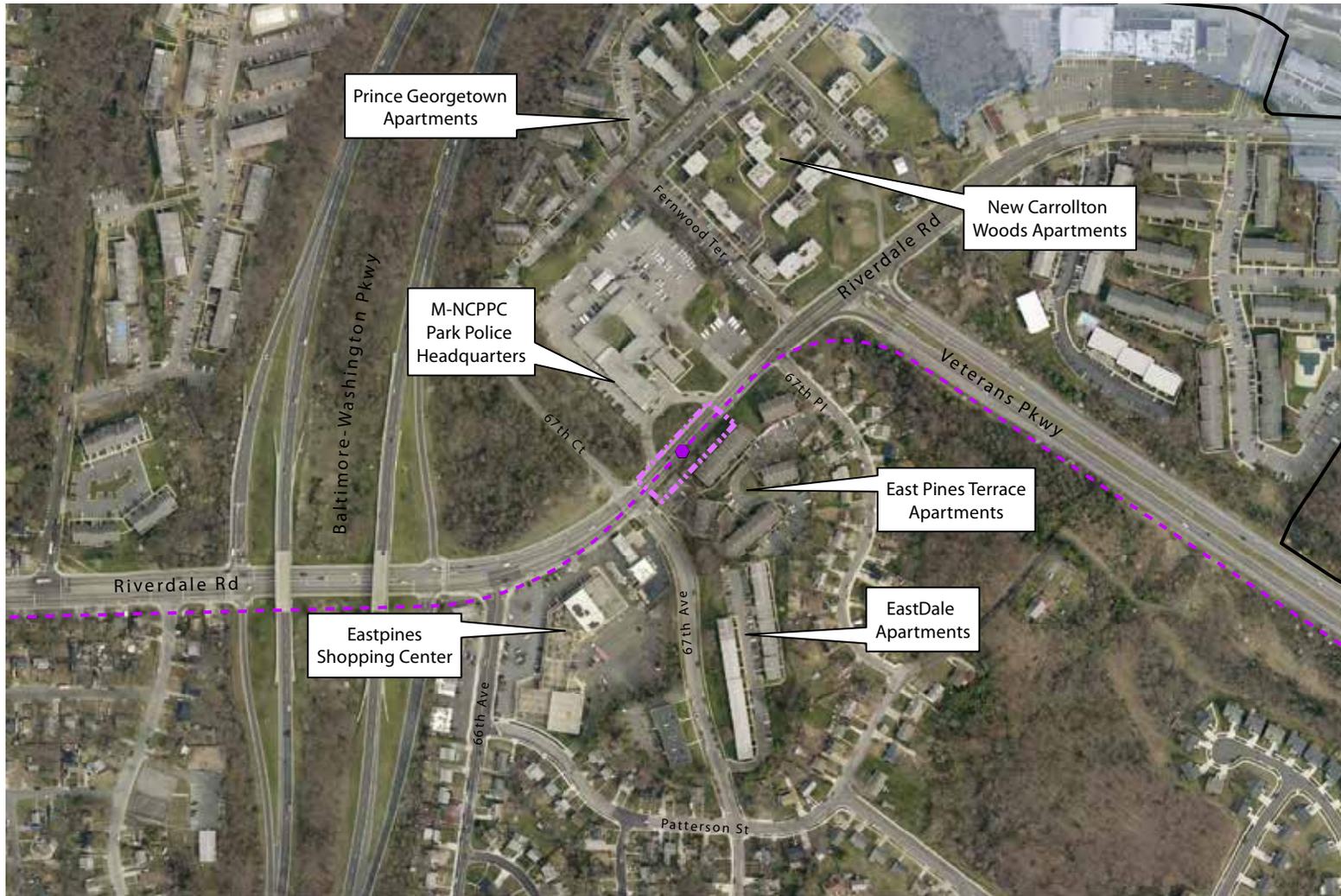
Purple Line and Station (MTA)

Riverdale Park-Kenilworth Purple Line Station Location (MTA)

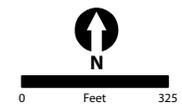
1989 Prince George's County Floodplain Study Area



**Map 6. Beacon Heights-East Pines Station Area**



-  East Riverdale Beacon Heights Sector Plan Boundary
-  Beacon Heights-East Pines Purple Line Station Location (MTA)
-  Purple Line and Station (MTA)
-  1989 Prince George's County Floodplain Study Area



# SECTOR PLAN AREA WORKERS



**Restaurant**  
8.8%



**Service**  
26%



**Retail**  
9.7%



**Unemployed**  
10%



**Blue Collar**  
32%

# HOUSEHOLDS

The sector plan area exceeds the County average in the following categories:



- \$15,000 – \$24,999
- \$25,000 – \$34,999
- \$35,000 – \$49,999
- \$50,000 – \$74,999

Percentage of Households in these income categories.



**Owner-Occupied Housing Value**  
\$100,000–\$149,999  
\$150,000–\$199,999



Families Below the Poverty Line



Average Household Income



Median Household Income



0–1 Vehicle Households

See Appendix 1 for more data on the sector plan area and its residents.

## ECONOMICS

In 2017, there were 347 businesses with 2,647 employees in the sector plan area. The leading employment sectors are public administration (14.9 percent), healthcare and social assistance (14.5 percent), and educational services (12.2 percent). These numbers reflect concentrations of employment at The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's Executive Office Building, the headquarters of the M-NCPPC's Department of Parks and Recreation, Parkdale High School, William Wirt Middle School, and several medical office buildings near the intersection of MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue) and River Road. There are 48 doctors' offices and 39 additional medical offices in the sector plan area.

## TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

### TRAVEL PATTERNS

In 2015, 24 percent of workers carpooled to work and 19.2 percent took public transportation. This exceeds the County average for both modes. Only 53 percent of workers

drove alone to work, considerably below the County average.

### ROADS

The sector plan area was developed along two major roadways: MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue) and Riverdale Road. All the area's commercial development lies along these two roads, along with much of the multifamily development. Several major roadways provide access to the sector plan area and connect it to neighboring communities and regional destinations.

There are several roadway segments and intersections within the sector plan area that experience congestion, especially during peak hours. These include MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue) and MD 410 (East West Highway), MD 410 (Riverdale Road) and 66<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and MD 410 (Veterans Parkway) and Riverdale Road. Stakeholders and residents reported that several other intersections, including Riverdale Road intersections with Auburn Avenue and MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue), experience spot congestion and that, in general, access onto MD 201 and MD 410 from unsignalized intersections is challenging most hours of the day.

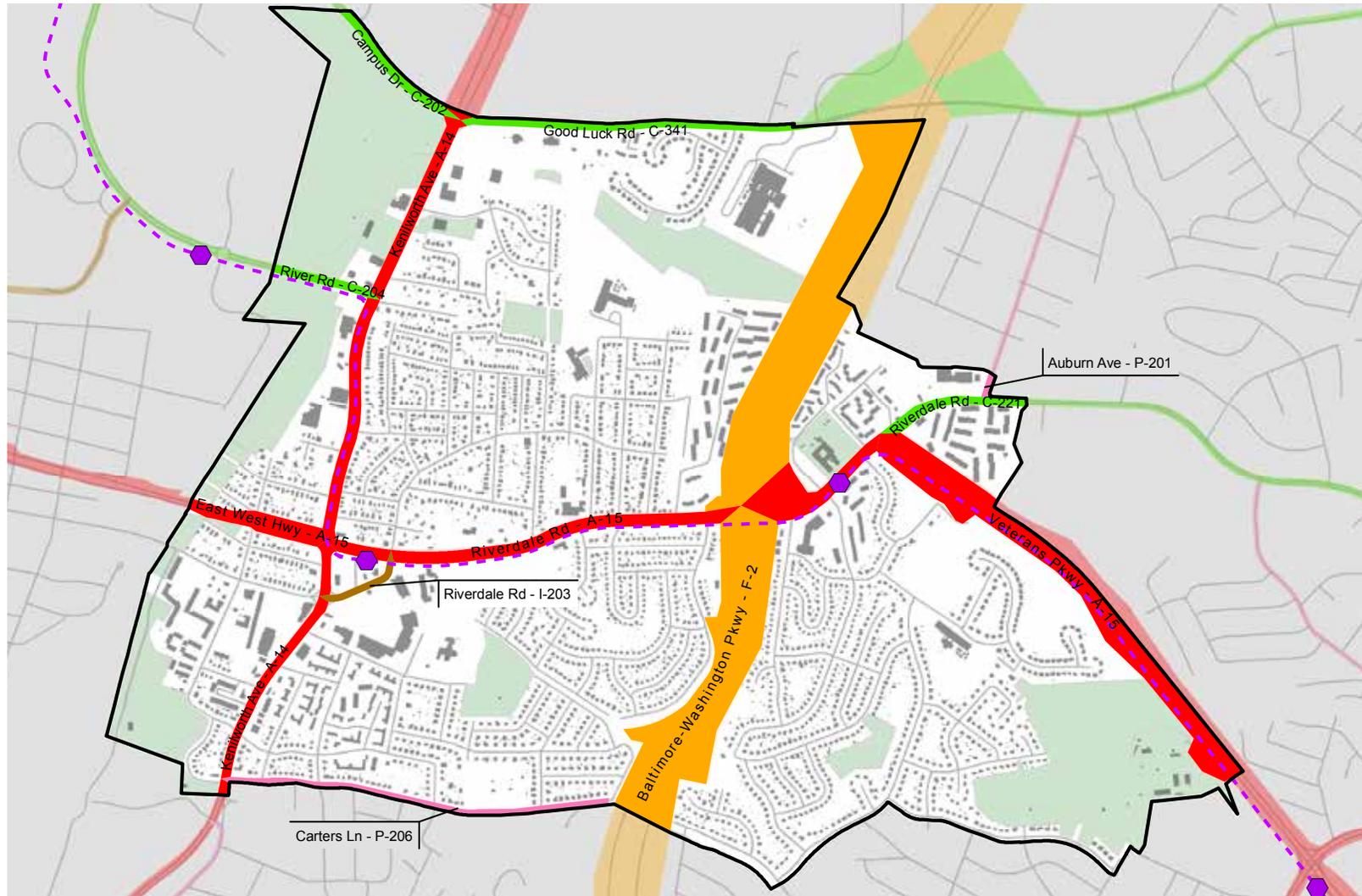
The Prince George's County Transportation Review Guidelines define "capacity" of a roadway link as "the maximum number of vehicles that can pass a given point during a defined period of time under prevailing roadway and traffic conditions." Prince George's County, like most jurisdictions, uses a Level of Service measurement to describe the quality of operational conditions along a roadway segment or through an intersection.

Plan 2035 established the County's policy on roadway capacity: the system should function at Level of Service "E" within Transportation Service Area 1, which includes the entire sector plan area. Level of Service E is defined as a volume-to-capacity ratio of 0.845 to 1.0 and clear lane volume through an intersection of 1,600 vehicles per hour. The Planning Board may require mitigation of traffic to achieve Level of Service E at the time of subdivision; this may include operational and capital improvements to roadways and intersections.

**Table 1. Major Roadways in the Sector Plan Area**

<b>Street Name</b>	<b>Master Plan ID</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Route</b>	<b>Functional Classification</b>	<b>Connections</b>
Baltimore-Washington Parkway	F2	Southern Boundary	Northern Boundary		Freeway	Baltimore, Washington, D.C.
Kenilworth Avenue	A-14	Southern Boundary	Northern Boundary	MD 201	Arterial	Greenbelt, Washington, D.C.
Veterans Parkway	A-15	Riverdale Road	Eastern Boundary	MD 410	Arterial	Cheverly, Annapolis, Washington, D.C., via US 50
East West Highway	A-15	Riverdale Road	Western Boundary	MD 410	Arterial	Hyattsville, Takoma Park
Riverdale Road	A-15	East West Highway	Veterans Parkway	MD 410	Arterial	
Riverdale Road	C-221	Veterans Parkway	Eastern Boundary		Collector	New Carrollton
Riverdale Road		East West Highway	Western Boundary		Secondary	Riverdale Park
Campus Drive	C-202	Kenilworth Avenue	Western Boundary		Collector	College Park, University of Maryland
River Road	C-204	Kenilworth Avenue	Western Boundary		Collector	College Park, Discovery District, University of Maryland
Auburn Avenue	P-201	Riverdale Road	Eastern Boundary		Primary	
Carter's Lane	P-206	Kenilworth Avenue	Greenvale Parkway		Primary	

**Map 7. Master Plan Rights-of-Way, 2009 Approved Countywide Master Plan of Transportation**



East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan Boundary	Purple Line and Stations (MTA)	Freeway F-2 - Baltimore-Washington Pkwy	Collector C-202 - Campus Dr C-204 - River Rd C-221 - Riverdale Rd C-341 - Good Luck Rd	Primary P-201 - Auburn Ave P-206 - Carters Ln	 0 Feet 1,300
Buildings	Secondary Road	Arterial A-14 - Kenilworth Ave A-15 - East-West Hwy / Riverdale Rd / Veterans Pkwy	Industrial I-203 - Riverdale Rd		
Parkland					

**Table 2. Average Daily Traffic Counts**

<b>Road</b>	<b>ADT</b>	<b>Year</b>
Baltimore-Washington Parkway	108,200	2014
MD 410 (East West Highway)	45,691	2014
Riverdale Road West of MD 410	42,961	2011
MD 201 North of MD 410	39,410	2014
MD 201 South of MD 410	32,842	2014
MD 410 (Veterans Parkway)	21,741	2014
Good Luck Road East of MD 201	16,398	2013
Campus Drive West of MD 201	12,706	2013
River Road West of MD 201	9,505	2013

Source: MD 201, MD 410 (East West Highway and Veterans Parkway), and Baltimore-Washington Parkway totals from State Highway Administration, Prince George's County Traffic Volume Map (2014). All others courtesy of Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation, Average Daily Traffic Count List.

## TRANSIT

This sector plan is predicated on the construction of the MTA Purple Line, a 16-mile light rail line running between the New Carrollton Transit Center and downtown Bethesda. The Purple Line will have stations at the northern terminus of 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Riverdale Park), where it meets MD 410 (East West Highway) and along the south side of MD 410 (Riverdale Road), just east of 67<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Beacon Heights). This line will connect the region to sector plan area residents, and vice versa, directly and through transfers to other transit modes. Key destinations along the Purple Line include New Carrollton Transit Center, the University of Maryland, College Park campus and its Discovery District, Silver Spring, and Bethesda.



**Map 8. Bus Stops and Routes**

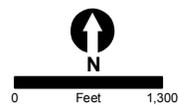


East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan Boundary  
 Buildings  
 Parkland

■ Purple Line and Stations (MTA)  
 Primary Road  
 Secondary Road  
🚌 Existing Bus Stops

**Metro Bus Lines (WMATA)**  
— F4    — T14  
— F6    — R12

**County Bus Lines (The Bus)**  
— Route 14



**Table 3. Transit and Intercity Rail Connections via the Purple Line<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Route</b>	<b>Operator</b>	<b>Connection Point</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Via</b>
Northeast Regional	Amtrak	New Carrollton	Newport News, VA Norfolk, VA Lynchburg, VA	Boston, MA Springfield, MA	Richmond, VA Baltimore, MD Philadelphia, PA Newark, NJ New York, NY
Silver Star/Silver Meteor	Amtrak	New Carrollton	Miami, FL Tampa, FL	New York, NY	Orlando, FL Charleston, SC
Palmetto	Amtrak	New Carrollton	Savannah, GA	New York, NY	
Vermont	Amtrak	New Carrollton	Washington, D.C.	St. Albans, VT	New Haven, CT Hartford, CT Montpelier, VT
Penn Line	MARC	New Carrollton	Washington, D.C.	Perryville, MD	BWI Airport Baltimore, MD
Camden Line	MARC	College Park	Washington, D.C.	Baltimore, MD	
Brunswick Line	MARC	Silver Spring	Washington, D.C.	Martinsburg, WV Frederick, MD	Rockville, MD
Orange Line	WMATA	New Carrollton	New Carrollton, MD	Vienna, VA	Washington, D.C. Arlington, VA
Red Line	WMATA	Silver Spring Bethesda	Olney, MD (Glenmont)	Derwood, MD (Shady Grove)	Washington, D.C.

<sup>1</sup> These connections are all currently available via bus.

Current transit service to the sector plan area is provided by four Metrobus lines operated by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and one line of The Bus, operated by Prince George's County.

**Table 4. Current Bus Routes**

<b>Route</b>	<b>Operator</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Via</b>
F4	WMATA	New Carrollton Transit Center	Silver Spring Transit Center	Prince George's Plaza Regional Transit District
F6	WMATA	New Carrollton Transit Center	Fort Totten Metro Station	College Park-Riverdale Park-M Square Regional Transit District Prince George's Plaza Regional Transit District West Hyattsville Local Transit Center
R12	WMATA	Deanwood Metro Station	Greenbelt Metro Station	College Park-Riverdale Park-M Square Regional Transit District
T14	WMATA	New Carrollton Transit Center	Rhode Island Avenue Metro Station	Mount Rainier Transit Center Port Towns Neighborhood Center
14	The Bus	College Park-University of Maryland Metro Station	Prince George's Plaza Metro Station	

Additional information about bus stops is available in Appendix 1.

## BICYCLE

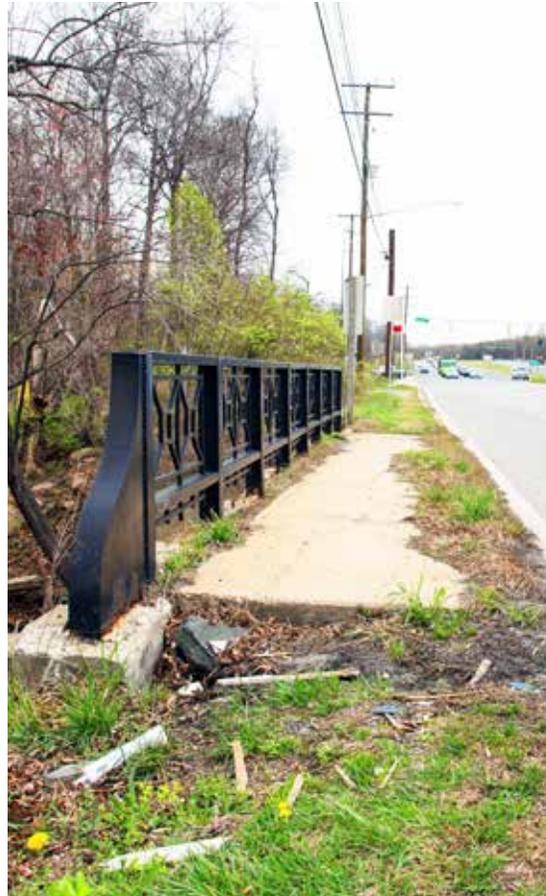
The sector plan area is located across the Northeast Branch of the Anacostia River from the Anacostia River Trail Network, with connections north and south along the Anacostia River to Washington, D.C. This is a growing recreational, local, and commuter bicycle route connecting a variety of destinations in the Anacostia River watershed. On-street bicycle accommodation is virtually non-existent.

## PEDESTRIAN

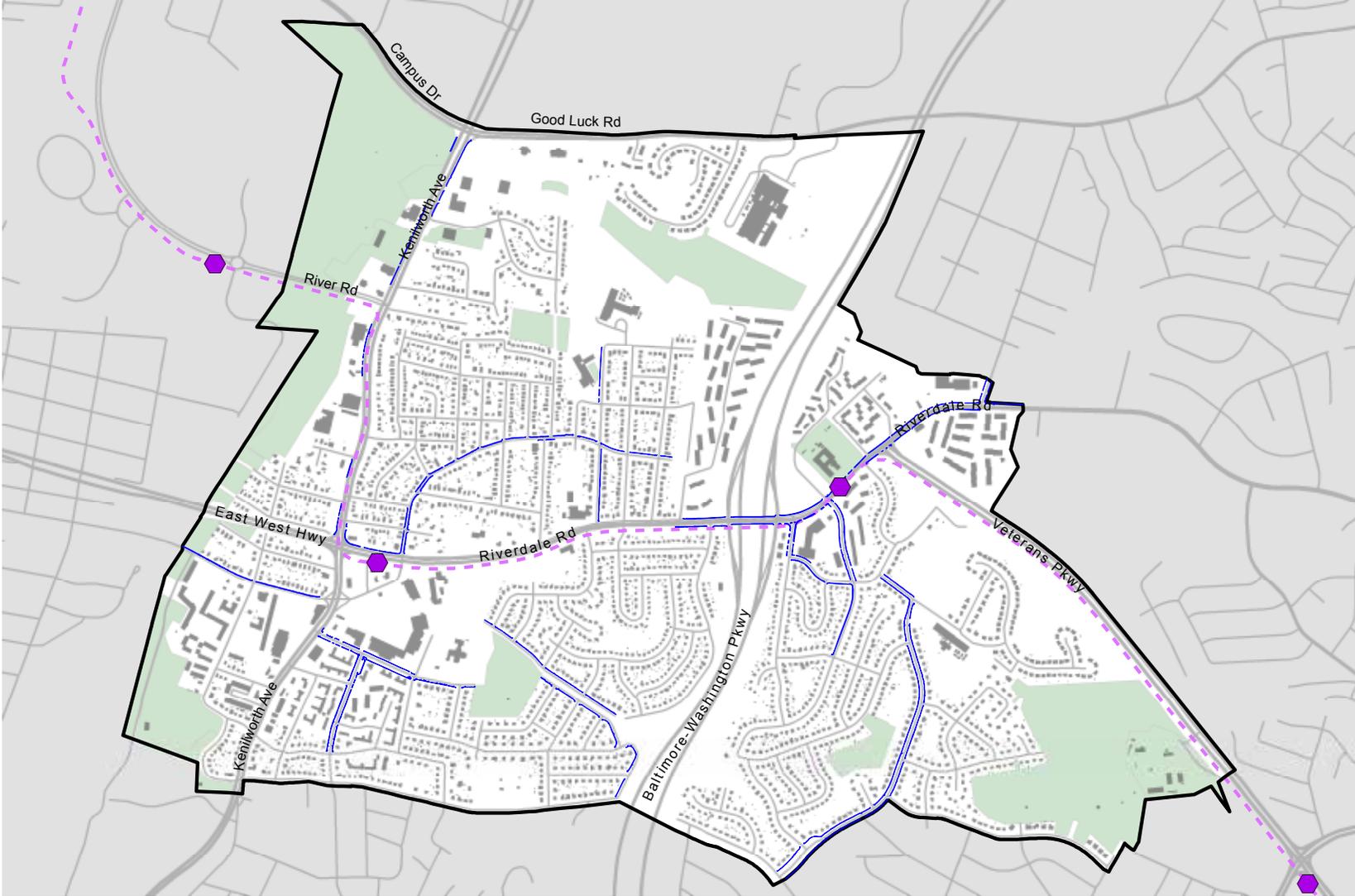
Opportunities for hiking exist within Greenbelt Park, and, to a lesser extent, within Glenridge Park.

The pedestrian infrastructure in the sector plan area is simultaneously deficient and heavily utilized. Numerous desire lines (sometimes referred to as “goat paths”) identify commonly used pedestrian shortcuts where no infrastructure exists. Several large residential neighborhoods were constructed without sidewalks, forcing pedestrians to walk in the street. Several neighborhoods without sidewalks were platted with sufficient right-of-way to support sidewalk construction, and, over the past decade, Prince George’s County has constructed several sidewalks in the sector plan

area. However, many key pedestrian commuter routes lack sidewalks; none of these are more apparent than the gaps in the sidewalk network leading to William Wirt Middle School.

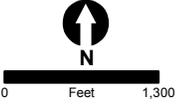


Map 9. Existing Sidewalks



- East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan Boundary
- Buildings
- Parkland
- Purple Line and Stations (MTA)
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road

Existing Sidewalk



## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Additional background information and data on the Natural Environment can be found in Appendix 1.

The dominant environmental features of the sector plan area are the Northeast Branch of the Anacostia River and two of its tributaries: Captain John's Branch (often referred to as "Greenvale Canal") that runs east-west through the southern portion of the sector plan area, and Brier's Mill Run, which runs east-west through the northern portion. Wetlands, floodplains, and other regulated environmental features are associated with these streams.<sup>1</sup>

A major environmental constraint to development and redevelopment is the presence of floodplains. These are areas that are subject to flooding during major precipitation and snowmelt events or a failure of the flood control system. Much of the sector plan area west of MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue), including government facilities, more than 1,400 dwelling units, dozens of businesses, and the area surrounding the Riverdale Park-Kenilworth Purple Line Station, are located within the one-percent floodplain

identified in the County's 1989 Floodplain Study of the Anacostia River.

As much of the sector plan area was constructed prior to 1970, it predates floodplain and stormwater management regulations. Such development has been designated by Prince George's County as "existing development" and "grandfathered," or allowed to continue, because it was legal when it was built. Waivers are sometimes granted for redevelopment, as well as new development of unimproved and developed land in the floodplain, if the underlying land is determined to be "developed" or "existing development." As flooding has become an ever-increasing challenge within the sector plan area and elsewhere in the Anacostia Watershed, often resulting in property damage and unsafe/hazardous conditions, new processes and regulatory approaches are needed for designating land in the floodplain as "developed" or "undeveloped" to curtail development within floodplains.

Captain John's Branch and portions of Brier's Mill Run/Brier's Mill Run were channelized into concrete stormwater control facilities in the 1950s as part of the Anacostia River Flood Control and Navigation Project. This practice, common

at the time, increases the risk of downstream flooding, increases water temperatures, and allows pollutants unfettered access to the Anacostia River. Restoration activities, such as those underway along Brier's Mill Run, can restore streams to their natural states, re-establishing habitats, infiltration, and natural beauty that can serve as an amenity for residents and visitors. See Policy NE 3 for more information.

Another key environmental feature that warrants consideration is a hilly topography that makes walking and biking challenging for many residents and, among other mitigation activities, requires the Riverdale Park-Kenilworth Purple Line station to be elevated.

The sector plan area's tree canopy coverage is relatively high at 44 percent, which is more than the 40 percent recommended for sustainable communities, and significantly more than in other Established Communities that typically have canopy coverage in the mid-twenty percent range.

1. A small, 16-acre portion of the sector plan area along Good Luck Road drains north into the Upper Northeast Branch subwatershed.

**Map 10. Existing Trails and Parks**



- |  |                                |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan Boundary | Purple Line and Stations (MTA) | Greenbelt Park                                 | M-NCPPC Parks                        |
| Buildings  | Primary Road                   | Existing Park Trail and Shared Use Path        | 1 Anacostia River Stream Valley Park |
| Secondary Road                                     | 2 Kenilworth Roadside Park     | 4 Riverdale Hills Neighborhood Park            | 6 Fletcher's Field Park              |
|  | 3 Madison Hill Park            | 5 Parks and Recreation Administration Building | 7 Browning's Grove Park              |
|  |                                | 8 Cherry Hill Cemetery                         | 9 Glenridge Park                     |

## Stream Names

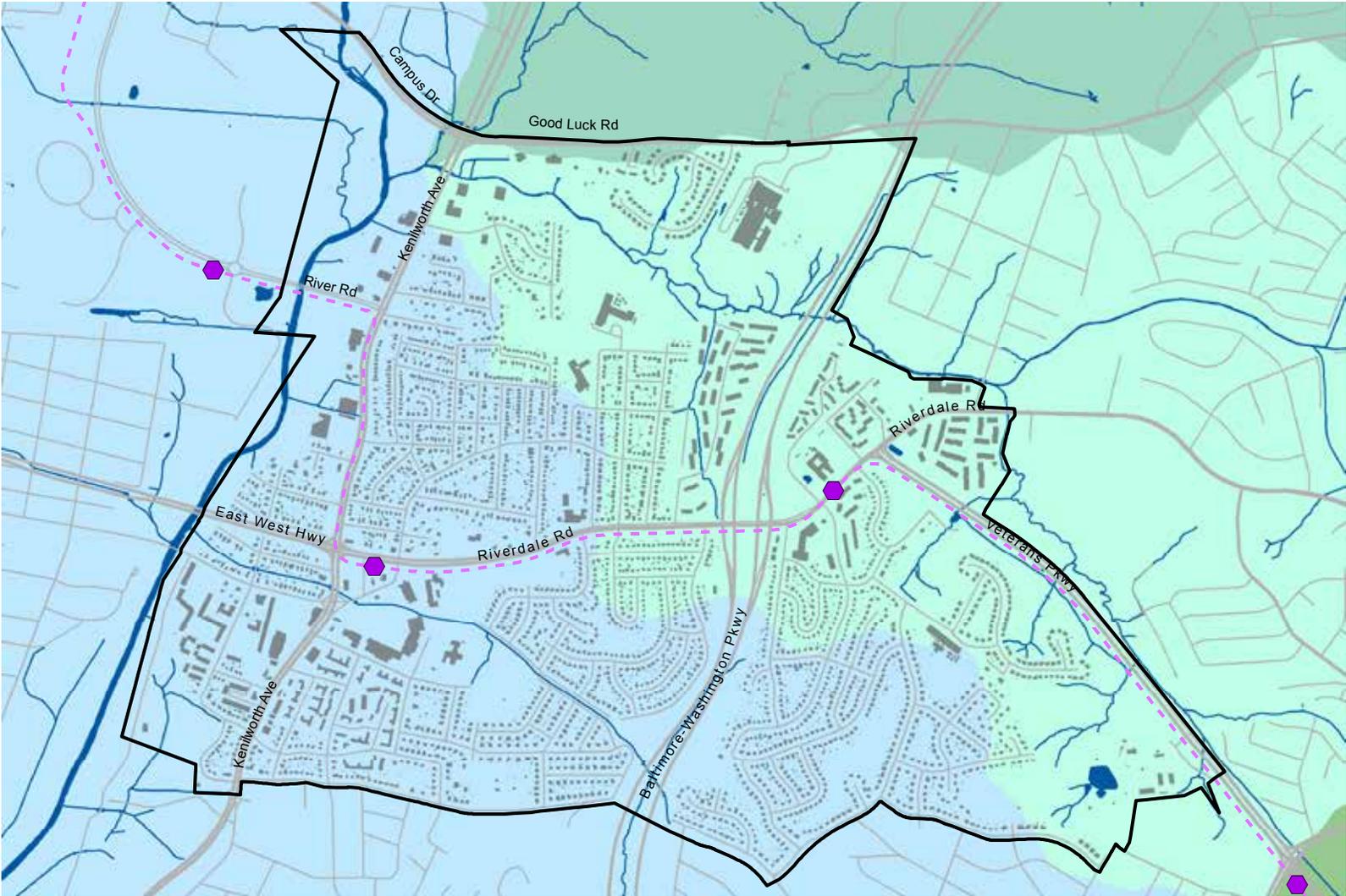
The two main tributaries of the Northeast Branch of the Anacostia River have been locally known by a number of names.

Brier's Mill Run was officially known as "Brier Ditch" for decades. In an effort to increase community awareness of this valuable natural resource and restoration opportunity, stakeholders renamed the stream several years ago. This name is not official but reflects the community's vision for this tributary.

The southern tributary that traverses the sector plan area has many names, yet no commonly used name. During the early development of this sector plan, several community residents called it the "Greenvale Canal." The Department of the Environment identifies this stream as Captain John's Branch.



Map 11. Watersheds

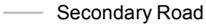


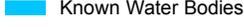
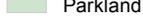
- East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan Boundary
- Buildings
- Purple Line and Stations (MTA)
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road
- Upper Northeast Branch (Anacostia)
- Brier's Mill Run
- Lower Northeast Branch (Anacostia)
- Streams

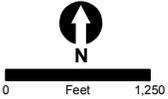
Map 12. 1989 Floodplain Study



 East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan Boundary  
 Proposed Purple Line and Stations (MTA)

 Buildings  
 Primary Road  
 Secondary Road

 1989 Prince George's County Floodplain Study Area  
 Known Wetland (MD DNR)  
 Known Water Bodies  
 Parkland



## Floodplains

Floodplains are delineated in several ways.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) periodically creates maps showing areas that are in or out of the “100-year floodplain,” meaning areas that have a one-percent chance of flooding in a given year. The FEMA floodplain is based on current conditions and existing land uses and is used for insurance purposes.

The second type of floodplain delineation, called a “floodplain study,” considers both existing conditions and projected future development within the watershed based on the zoning of property. This delineation identifies the “development floodplain,” used for development purposes. Floodplain studies usually result in a wider area of floodplain delineation than the FEMA floodplain because their analysis is based on ultimate development or build-out conditions.

For example, according to FEMA, there are 166 acres of the 100-year floodplain within the sector plan area, while the 1989 County Floodplain Study of the Anacostia River and its tributaries shows 257 acres.

Development and redevelopment in this area is regulated by Subtitle 32 of the County

Code, with additional regulations contained in Subtitle 24, the Subdivision Ordinance. The Planning Department’s Environmental Technical Manual notes that development applications must use a floodplain study approved by the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T), preferably less than ten years old, to determine the presence of 100-year floodplain on a site.

For the purposes of this sector plan, the 1989 County Floodplain Study of the Anacostia River and its tributaries was used to identify the applicable 100-year floodplain. DPW&T ultimately determines the applicable floodplain study for each development application.

Historical records show the area’s tree canopy coverage has remained largely constant since 1938. This is important (and remarkable), especially with the significant economic, social, and environmental benefits that trees provide. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the addition of just three trees can save a household between \$100 and \$250 in energy costs, annually.<sup>1</sup> In Washington, D.C., shade trees reportedly reduce air conditioning costs by more than \$2.6 million annually, while houses shaded by trees sell for 10 to 20 percent more in urban areas throughout the nation.<sup>2</sup> Forests also contribute to good air quality by trapping dust and particulates, absorbing odors and pollutant gases, and breaking up “heat islands” (localized surface and air temperatures that are significantly higher than in rural areas).

There are pockets of woodlands within the sector plan area along the Northeast Branch, at the Refreshing Spring Church of God property on Riverdale Road, south of Parkdale High School, and within the Baltimore-Washington Parkway right-of-way that appear to have been already wooded in 1938 aerial photographs. The southern edge of Greenbelt Park is another

area of special importance as a significant forested area that defines the northern perimeter of the plan area. These woodlands should be protected to the maximum extent possible including restricting tree removal for right-of-way clearance.

The East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan area faces several ecological challenges that must be addressed to meet local, regional and state-mandated environmental goals. Impervious surfaces cover nearly 34 percent, with some large properties almost totally covered by impervious surfaces. Numerous studies have shown that water quality in receiving streams begins to deteriorate when imperviousness in a watershed exceeds 10 percent. Moreover, less than 3 percent (2.7 percent) of the impervious surfaces within the plan area are shaded (by vegetation). Unshaded impervious surfaces absorb and emit heat, creating surface, air and stormwater temperatures that are significantly higher than in rural areas. Heated stormwater runoff mixing with, and increasing the base temperature of the receiving streams, significantly impacts stream ecology.

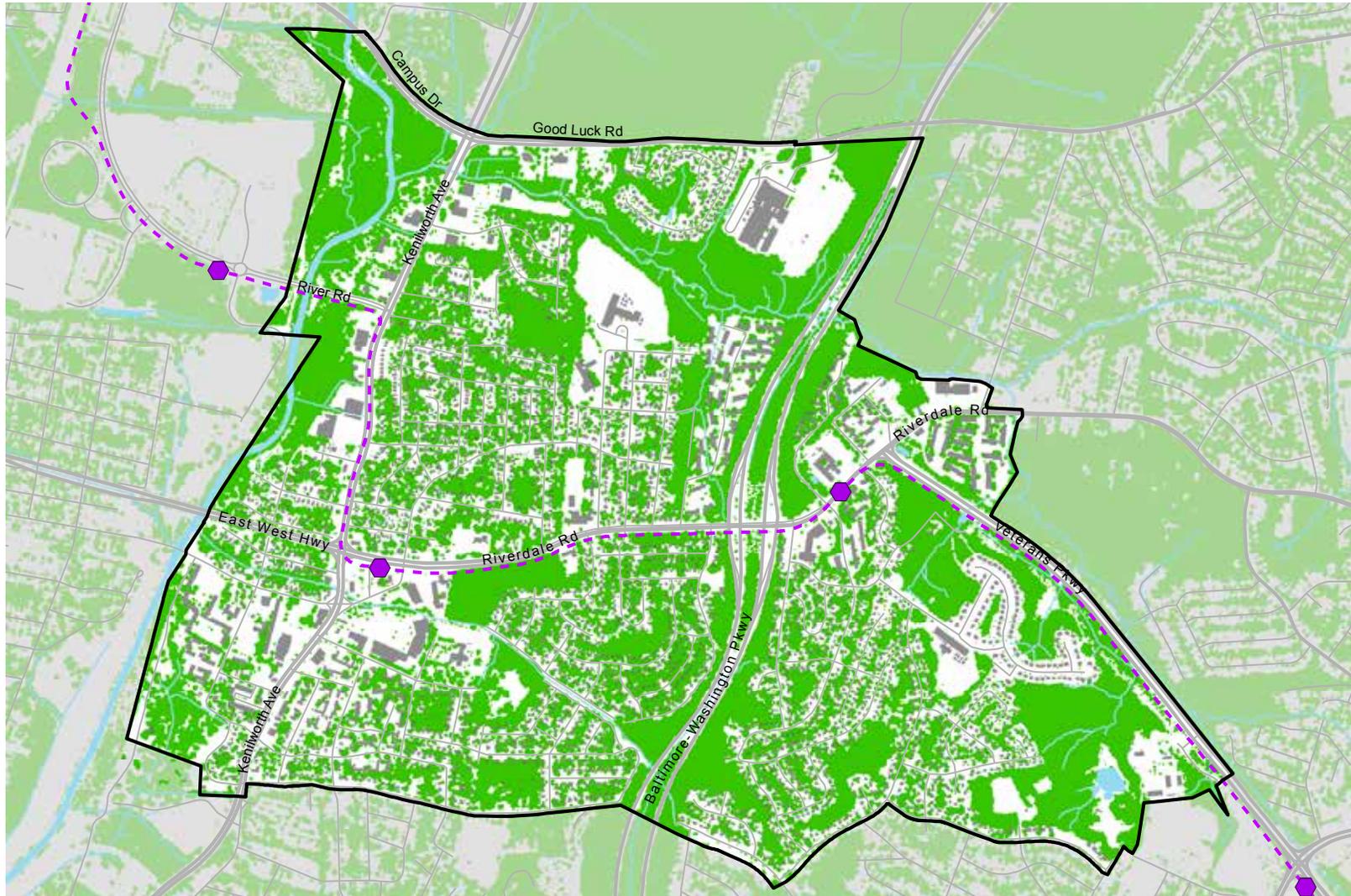
The predominant soil group in the study area is the Christiana series. Christiana series soils are typically categorized in hydrologic soil

group D (see Appendix 1) and have very poor infiltration properties. The soils throughout the sector plan area, in general, exhibit less desirable percolation properties and this will be a significant consideration when proposing various Environmental Site Design practices (such as micro-bioretenion). To have a reasonable expectation that facilities, such as rain gardens, will function as intended, the soil's ability to allow effective infiltration is a critical factor. In hydrologic soil group D soils, it is common for bioretention installations to be outfitted with underdrains so that water has an outlet in the event that poor percolation causes some degree of ponding.

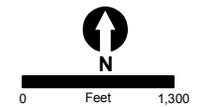
Similarly, while current stormwater regulations require stormwater management facilities that allow for natural retention and infiltration, retrofits will be needed on many older sites developed before the enactment of today's environmental regulations. There are few stormwater management facilities in the sector plan area and high volumes of untreated stormwater runoff enter the receiving streams directly or via a system of storm drains and concrete swales, contributing to "poor" watershed condition ratings for the Northeast Branch watershed.<sup>3</sup> This level of degradation requires significant measures to facilitate

improvement. At the very least, stormwater quantity and quality must be managed on-site as the area develops, and forested areas in good condition along the preserved streams, must be retained to help improve the area's water quality.

**Map 13. Tree Canopy Cover**



- East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan Boundary
- Primary Road
- Tree Canopy (Univ. of Vermont, 2014)
- Purple Line and Stations (MTA)
- Secondary Road
- Buildings



In 2017, the District Council approved the Resource Conservation Plan. This plan combines the related elements of green infrastructure planning and rural and agricultural conservation into one functional master plan in order to streamline the plan preparation process, meet state requirements for planning elements, and more efficiently update existing plans and maps. The Resource Conservation Plan consists of three functional master plans: the County's Agriculture Conservation Plan, its Rural Character Conservation Plan, and a new Green Infrastructure Plan that replaces the 2005 *Approved Countywide Green Infrastructure Plan*.

The 2017 *Resource Conservation Plan* includes an update to the Countywide Green Infrastructure Network. The Green Infrastructure Network contains three main features: Regulated Areas, Evaluation Areas, and Network Gaps. The 2017 Regulated Area includes floodplains, but does not include the full extent of the 100-year (or one percent) floodplain as delineated by the 1989 Prince George's County floodplain study of the Anacostia River and its tributaries. The Prince George's County Environmental Technical Manual, the guide for environmental documentation associated with development applications, requires a more recent study of the floodplain, approved by the Department of Public Works and Transportation, to determine the extent of the floodplain as part of the required Natural Resource Inventory.

The 2017 *Approved Resource Conservation Plan* recommends that, in the future, Network Gaps be evaluated and mapped during master and sector plan processes. Because the Resource Conservation Plan was approved so late in the development of this sector plan, Network Gaps will be evaluated as part of a future planning process. See Strategy NE 8.2.

## 2017 Countywide Green Infrastructure Network

**Regulated Areas** represent a conceptual delineation of connected regulated environmental features including streams, wetlands and their buffers, the 100-year floodplain, and their adjacent steep slopes. The features shown are the known locations of regulated features at a large scale. This delineation should not be used for land development purposes. Approval of a Natural Resource Inventory is required to confirm the locations of regulated environmental features (streams, wetlands, floodplains).

**Evaluation Areas** include patches of land known to contain one or more sensitive environmental features of concern such as interior forests (to focus connectivity on the largest remaining blocks of forests), areas of predicted wetland migration (to address climate change), and protected lands (to ensure connectivity to previous conservation efforts). Evaluation Areas are used to look more closely at the role the location plays in conserving sensitive resources and preserving or establishing land-based connections within the network.

### Mapping Criteria for Evaluation Area:

- To be included in the Evaluation Area, patches must be:
- 1 acre or greater in size
  - within 200 feet of another patch inside the Beltway
  - within 600 feet of another patch outside the Beltway
- and
- at least 50 feet wide outside the Beltway and no minimum width inside the Beltway

### Legend

Regulated Area  
Evaluation Area



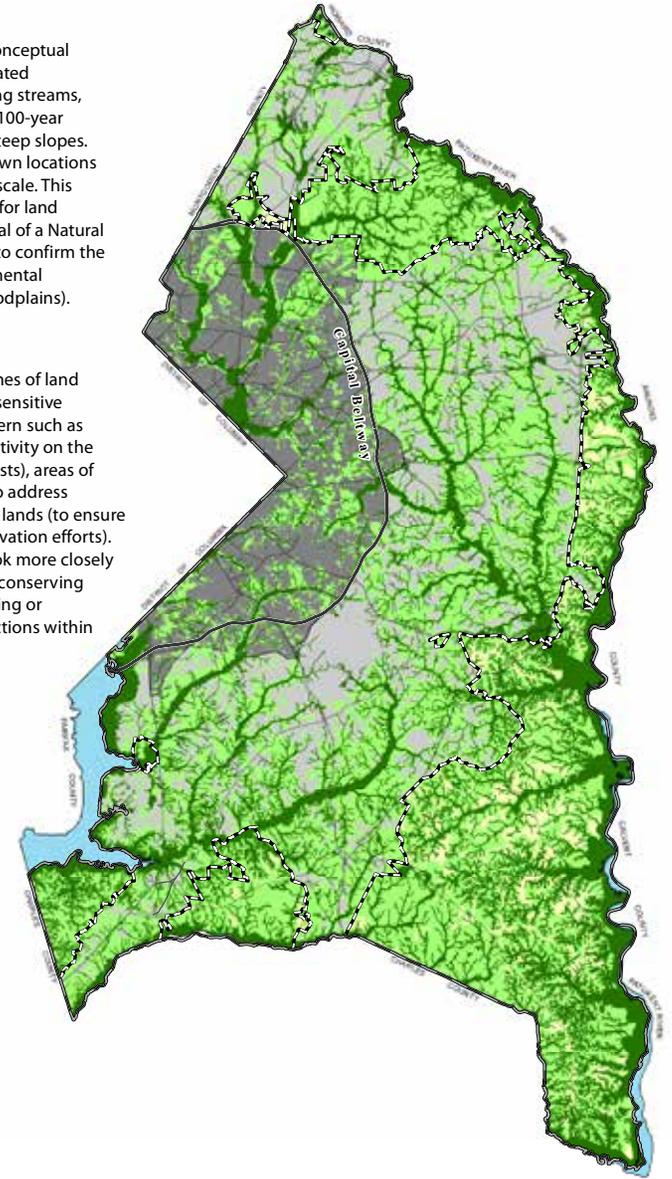
Plan 2035 Growth Boundary

Inside the Beltway

Outside the Beltway, within the Growth Boundary

Outside the Growth Boundary (Rural and Agricultural Area)

Miles 0 1 2 3 4 5



## HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

The sector plan area contains several neighborhoods and apartment complexes.

The neighborhoods comprise primarily single-family detached residential dwellings, single-family attached duplexes, townhouses, garden apartments, and mid-rise elevator-serviced apartment buildings.

In 2015, the sector plan area had 5,070 dwelling units containing approximately 4,673 households, an occupancy rate of over 92 percent. Forty-six percent of the dwelling units are one-family detached dwellings and 44 percent are within multifamily complexes. The median year of housing construction was 1961. Nearly 76 percent of households are families, 49 percent of the family households contain children. The average household size is 3.69.

Renter-occupied dwelling units comprise 52.7 percent of the housing stock; only 47.2 percent are owner-occupied. For owner-occupants, the average length of residence is 16.2 years. For renters, the average length of residence is 7.7 years. Both figures indicate a stable community and are equal to the County average.

As indicated in Table 5 and Appendix 1, over 69 percent of dwelling units in the sector plan area were constructed prior to 1970, indicating a potential need for maintenance and rehabilitation to strengthen and support housing prices over time.



**Table 5. Sector Plan Area Neighborhoods**

<b>Community Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Year Platted/ Built</b>	<b>Community Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Year Platted/ Built</b>
Gretta's Addition	Single-Family	1910	Prince Georgetown	Multifamily	1962
Riverdale Hills	Single-Family	1915	New Carrollton Woods Apartments	Multifamily	1962
Riverdale Heights	Single-Family	1919	River Crossing	Multifamily	1963
Green Manor	Single-Family	1935	Riverwood Apartments	Multifamily	1963
Springbrook Terrace	Single-Family	1936	Jefferson Hall Apartments	Multifamily	1964
Crestwood	Single-Family	1939	Auburn Manor	Multifamily	1964
Oak Ridge Apartments	Multifamily	1940	Riverdale Towers	Multifamily	1965
Eastpines	Single-Family	1942	Parkview Gardens	Multifamily	1965
Cardinal Hill Apartments	Multifamily	1950	Park Tanglewood	Multifamily	1965
Templeton Knolls	Single-Family	1950	Lilly Garden Apartments	Multifamily	1965
Beacon Heights	Single-Family	1953	East Pines Terrace	Multifamily	1968
Riverdale Woods	Single-Family	1955	Kennedy House Apartments	Multifamily	1969
Terrace Hill Apartments	Multifamily	1959	Wildercroft Terrace	Multifamily	1970
Riverdale Village	Multifamily	1959	Madison Hill	Single-Family	1992
Eastdale Apartments	Multifamily	1961	Roswil	Single-Family	2005
East Pines Gardens	Multifamily	1962			

## COMMUNITY HEALTH

In 2012, the Prince George’s County Health Department released the *Prince George’s County Health Improvement Plan for 2012–2014 and Beyond*. It provides guidelines for creating new and innovative health programs, enhancing existing services, and making health system changes at the local level. It also includes strategies designed to help individuals “adopt behaviors that lead to healthier lifestyles and greater quality of life for themselves, their families, and their neighbors.”

The sector plan area lacks the type of pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to open space that supports community health and wellness. The east side of the sector plan area lacks relatively easy/fast access to healthy food. Residents and stakeholders have expressed a need for pedestrian safety improvements, additional bicycle trail connections and open space to support a sustainable and active community. They also expressed a desire for the retention of local businesses that sell fresh produce.

In 2015, The Prince George’s County Planning Department released *Healthy Food for All Prince Georgians: An Assessment of Access to Healthy Food in Prince George’s County, Maryland*. The

study analyzed access to healthy food in Prince George’s County, with a focus on Greenbelt, Oxon Hill and communities located inside the Capital Beltway. A focus group in Riverdale reported that food hygiene is bad—buying healthy food in only one store is expensive, transportation to food alternatives was a challenge, and there was no access to farmers markets year-round. The report found that the Healthy Food Availability Index rating for both food markets in the sector plan area was in the “fair” rating. The report identified the area north of Riverdale Road and east of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway a “food desert:” an area with low incomes greater than one mile from a supermarket.

In 2011, the Reinvestment Fund conducted research to identify areas with inadequate access to supermarkets and identified the area north of MD 410 (East West Highway) and west of MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue) as a Limited Supermarket Access area.<sup>4</sup>

In 2016, to improve access to healthy food in the County, the Prince George’s County Council unanimously approved Council Bill (CB) 25-2016, legislation that amended the definition and zoning categories for Urban Farms in Prince George’s County, and allowed more urban

farming activities. It intended to broaden the definition of an urban farm and ensure access to fresh foods.

There are two hospitals located within an approximately two-mile radius of the plan area: Doctors Community Hospital, located at 8118 Good Luck Road in Lanham, and Prince George’s Hospital Center, located at 3001 Hospital Drive in Cheverly.



## COMMUNITY HERITAGE AND CULTURE

Many participants in the public and stakeholder outreach for this sector plan pointed to the diversity of the sector plan area as an asset and an opportunity. 56.8 percent of sector plan area residents are Hispanic or Latino; 43.2 percent are not. Just under 70 percent of residents speak only English at home; 30 percent speak another language. Several businesses and institutions were identified by stakeholders as cultural institutions worthy of preservation. Several businesses in the Kenilworth Avenue corridor cater to the Hispanic and Latino market; this was identified by a number of stakeholders as an opportunity to create a unique, niche market for East Riverdale.

Examples of high-quality, historically significant, or otherwise notable architecture are identified in the Community Heritage and Culture Element.

## URBAN DESIGN

The public realm consists of the building frontages, sidewalks, streetscapes, public plazas and open spaces, and other places where

people gather and interact. A high-quality public realm encourages social interaction and economic activity. As an area with relatively few improvements since 1970, there is very little in the sector plan area that qualifies as a functioning or ideal public realm worthy of preservation. Notable exceptions to this include the streetscape in front of 5600-5620 Kenilworth Avenue, and Fletcher's Field Park.

## PUBLIC FACILITIES

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

There are 17 public schools (11 elementary, 3 middle, and 2 high schools) that serve the sector plan area. Three of these (Beacon Heights Elementary, William Wirt Middle, and Parkdale High) are located within the sector plan boundaries. Fifteen of the 17 schools are at, or above, enrollment capacity. (PGCPS recommends 80-95% capacity as optimal as per the Board-approved FY 17 EFMP). The FY 17 EFMP recommends the following improvements to public schools that serve the sector plan area:

- Replacement of William Wirt Middle School
- Full renovation or replacement with addition to:

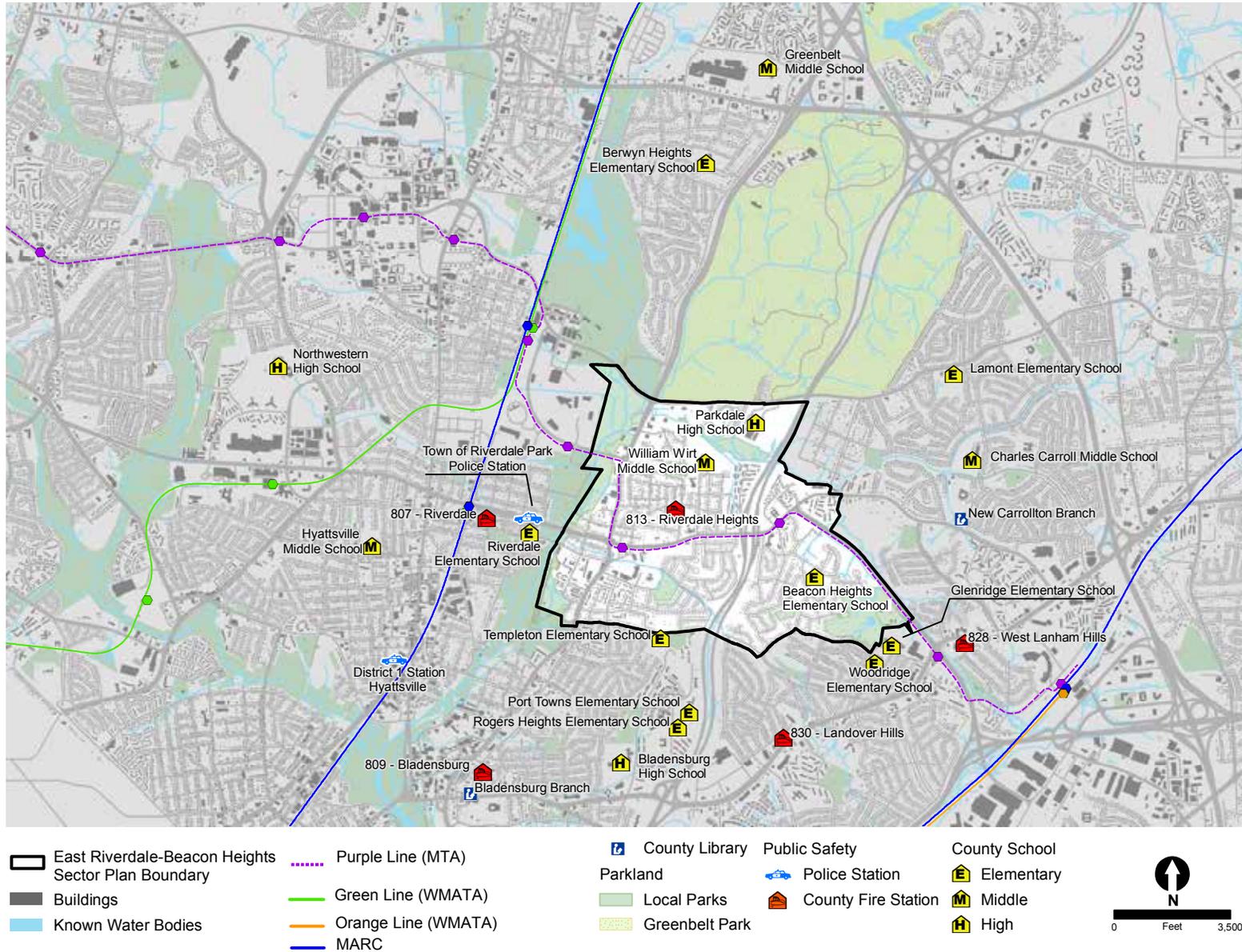
- » Beacon Heights Elementary School
- » Hyattsville Elementary School
- » Lamont Elementary School
- » Riverdale Elementary School
- » Templeton Elementary School
- » Woodridge Elementary School
- » Hyattsville Middle School
- » Parkdale High School
- » Margaret Brent Regional School

- Limited Renovation with addition to Cooper Lane Elementary School
- Systems replacement with addition to Rogers Heights Elementary School
- Limited renovation to Paint Branch elementary School
- Addition to Bladensburg High School
- Additions and boundary changes to adjacent area schools
- Construct new middle and high schools in the northern part of the County.
- Addition of a new middle school adjacent to the sector plan area.

### LIBRARIES

The Prince George's County Memorial Library System operates two libraries that serve the sector plan area: the Bladensburg Branch library at 4820 Annapolis Road and New Carrollton Branch Library at 7414 Riverdale

**Map 14. Existing Public Facilities**



Road. The FY 2017-2022 Approved Capital Improvement Program provides funding for design and construction of a new 25,000 square foot library to replace the Bladensburg Library and rehabilitation of the New Carrollton Branch Library.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

The Maryland-National Capital Park Police and the Prince George's County Police Department's Special Operations Division were formerly headquartered at 6700 Riverdale Road. They have relocated to facilities outside of the sector plan area. The Riverdale Heights Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Station #813 is located at 6101 Roanoke Avenue. The CIP recommends consolidation of this station with the Riverdale Fire/EMS Station #807 somewhere within the sector plan area. In addition, the sector plan area is served by several public safety facilities outside the sector plan area, including:

- Riverdale Fire/EMS Station #807, Riverdale Park
- Bladensburg Fire/EMS Station #809, Bladensburg
- West Lanham Hills Fire/EMS Station #828, Lanham

- Landover Hills Fire/EMS Station #830, Landover Hills
- Prince George's County Police Department District 1 Station, Hyattsville
- Town of Riverdale Park Police Department

## PARKS AND RECREATION

Within the boundaries of the East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan, planning, developing, operating and policing a system of recreation and open space areas is the primary responsibility of the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

(M-NCPPC). The primary mission of the Prince George's County DPR is to "provide, in partnership with our citizens, comprehensive park and recreation programs, facilities and services which respond to changing recreation needs within our communities. DPR strives to preserve, enhance, and protect our open spaces, enrich the quality of life for present and future generations in a safe and secure environment."

DPR's vision for parks and recreation includes:

- Providing stewardship of our County's natural, cultural and historical resources;



- Fostering the need of our citizens for recreational pursuits in a leisure environment, and;
- Providing the highest standard of excellence in public service through cooperative partnership with our diverse community.

Through these precepts and the goals and objectives set forth in Plan 2035 and the *Formula 2040: Functional Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space*, M-NCPPC has clear direction for future decision making for parks and recreation in our communities. There are three main goals in the Formula 2040 Plan: Connectivity, Health and Wellness, and Economic Development.

In the year 2040, the County is projected to have more than 990,000 residents. According to the direction set forth in Formula 2040, DPR will construct and maintain nine multigenerational community recreation centers. One center is to be located in each of the nine subregions, or service areas of the County. Under this plan, a multigenerational center is to be located in, or very near to, the southeast corner of the East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan area. While the exact property for this feature has yet to be identified, the Formula 2040 Plan locates this feature at the corner of MD 450 (Old Landover Road) and MD 410 (Veterans Highway).

Multigenerational centers include indoor recreation facilities like gymnasiums, swimming pools and walking tracks along with multi-purpose rooms and amenities such as a computer lab or similar feature. In this format, DPR can deliver efficient and effective recreation services and provide state-of-the-art facilities to our citizens.

Currently, there are 11 M-NCPPC parks within the sector plan boundaries and there are two large regional parks, Greenbelt Park (owned and operated by the National Park Service) and the Anacostia River Stream Valley Park, immediately adjacent to the sector plan area. There is also an outdoor pool, an ice arena, tennis center, the Anacostia Tributary Trail and several sites dedicated to aviation located a short distance away from the sector plan area perimeter. These facilities add considerably to the open space and recreation opportunities available to the residents. Along with the need to provide better access to these existing facilities, multimodal transportation will be carefully considered.

As redevelopment occurs around the Riverdale Park-Kenilworth and Beacon Heights-East Pines Purple Line stations, it will be important to implement key policy recommendations in Formula 2040 regarding new urban parks. Integrating and adopting the Formula 2040

Urban Park Typology will support the County’s parks and recreation goals. Parks and plazas constructed at the time of redevelopment will create dynamic new public spaces that integrate seamlessly into the fabric of the community. New parks should meet the Urban Park Typology and Guidelines found in Formula 2040. Clarifying ownership and management arrangements for publicly and privately owned, managed, and maintained parks will ensure public access and benefit residents and visitors to the area.

**Table 6. M-NCPPC Parks Located Within the Sector Plan Area**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Anacostia River Stream Valley Park*	73.16
Browning’s Grove Park	9.00
Center for Educational Partnership	0.25
Cherry Hill Cemetery Historic Site	5.79
Fletcher’s Field Park	19.38
Glenridge Community Park	48.59
Kenilworth Roadside Park	1.00
Madison Hill Park	21.39
Riverdale Hills Neighborhood Playground	4.19
Total	182.75

\* Portion of park located in the sector plan area.

## PLANNING FOUNDATIONS

### PLAN 2035

In 2014, the County Council approved Plan 2035, the County's General Plan. Plan 2035 addresses existing, changing, and new priorities such as transit-oriented development, sustainability, neighborhood reinvestment, and agricultural protection. Plan 2035 contains two maps that establish the framework for achieving the Plan 2035 vision—the Growth Policy Map and the Strategic Investment Map. The Growth Policy Map designates 34 centers for growth and development and divides them into Regional Transit Districts and Local Centers.

### *Growth Policy Map*

Plan 2035 prioritizes eight Regional Transit Districts as focus areas for new growth and development, recommending that half of new dwelling units and jobs locate in these areas over the next 25 years. The College Park/UM Metro/M Square Purple Line Regional Transit District lies immediately across the Northeast Branch of the Anacostia River from the northern part of this sector plan area. The New Carrollton Regional Transit District lies two miles to the

east. The sector plan area will be connected to both Regional Transit Districts by the Purple Line. In addition, the Prince George's Plaza Regional Transit District lies two miles to the west along MD 410 and is easily accessible by bus.

Plan 2035 categorizes Local Centers into four categories: Local Transit Centers, Neighborhood Centers, Campus Centers, and Town Centers, based on the anticipated land uses, density, and levels of transit service. Both the Riverdale Park-Kenilworth and Beacon Heights-East Pines Stations are designated **Neighborhood Centers**.

**Neighborhood Centers are defined as “primarily residential areas that are often lower in density. These areas generally have fewer transit options and offer neighborhood-serving retail and office uses.”**

### *Strategic Investment Map*

Plan 2035 defines **Neighborhood Revitalization Areas** as neighborhoods that “have experienced a marked decline in property values, critical services, neighborhood amenities, and an increase in crime. These issues are due, in large part, to a lack of public investment. Neighborhood Revitalization Areas include Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative areas.

## Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative

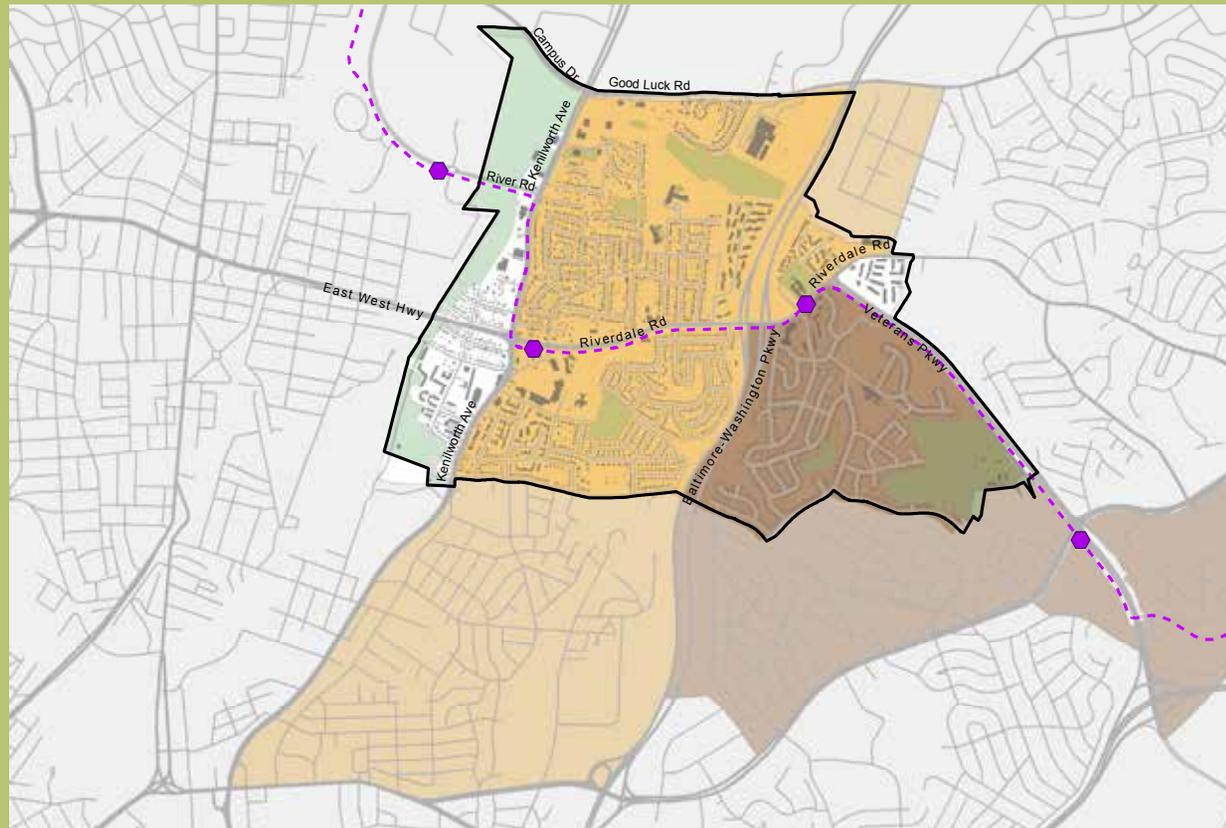
In 2011, Prince George’s County established the Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative (TNI). This initiative is a countywide effort that focuses on uplifting neighborhoods that face significant economic, health, public safety, and educational challenges by, in part, prioritizing delivery of County resources and services to areas highest in need.

In April 2012, the neighborhoods within the East Riverdale/Bladensburg Area were selected for inclusion into the initiative, which aims to improve their quality of life while identifying ways to improve service delivery to its residents. In 2016, the Woodlawn/Lanham communities were selected for inclusion in TNI. Designed on the premise of data driven decision-making, the TNI makes use of fourteen key indicators of neighborhood health in the East Riverdale/Bladensburg Area.

In order of most challenged to least challenged these indicators are:

- 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Retention Rate
- Median Income
- Houses built Pre-1980
- High School Absentee Rate
- Domestic Violence Cases
- Households with SNAP
- Building Permits Issued
- Kindergarten Readiness
- Property Violations
- Foreclosures
- Litter 3-1-1 CSRs
- Unemployment Rate w/o High School Diploma
- Vacant Houses
- Total Crime Rate

**Map 15. TNI Areas Within the Sector Plan Boundary**



East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan Boundary  
Buildings

Purple Line and Stations (MTA)  
Primary Road  
Secondary Road

East Riverdale-Bladensburg TNI Area  
Woodlawn-Lanham TNI Area  
Parkland



## 2013 PURPLE LINE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

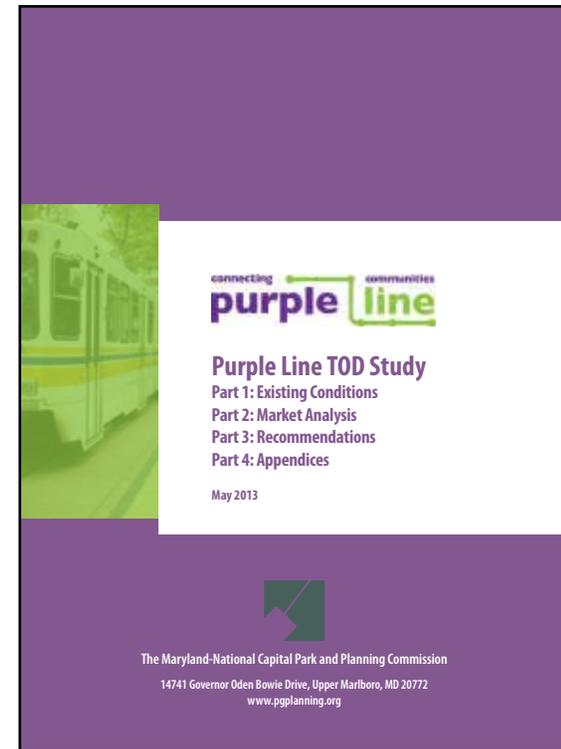
In 2013, the Prince George's County Planning Department issued the Purple Line Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Study. This sector plan grew out of this study, which evaluated five Purple Line stations located outside of areas covered by recently approved sector and transit district development plans. The recommendations of this study form the baseline of the East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan; most of its recommendations are carried forward in this plan.

The study goals included advancing the long-term goals defined by the 2009 *Approved Countywide Master Plan of Transportation* and informing and coordinating with the efforts of the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) in refining the Purple Line alignment, station location and design, and environmental impact statement. Building on the completed Purple Line 2010 Bicycle Access and Bicycle Hub Location Study, the 2011 Corridor Access Study (CAST), and the 2009 Central Kenilworth Avenue Revitalization Study, the Purple Line TOD Study evaluated current conditions and

market prospects within a half-mile radius of the five stations. The study presented several recommendations for future transit-oriented development and pedestrian and bicycle improvements at these locations.

During stakeholder engagement for the Purple Line TOD Study, the community provided valuable input concerning the Riverdale Park-Kenilworth and Beacon Heights-East Pines Stations; the highlights of that feedback can be found on the following pages. As a result of this input, the study made several recommendations that remain relevant to this day: these recommendations are carried forward in this sector plan.

Chapters of this study pertaining to the Riverdale Park-Kenilworth and Beacon Heights-East Pines Stations may be found in their entirety in Appendix 5.



## 2013 PURPLE LINE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

**Community Input Summary: Beacon Heights-East Pines Station****Use Type and Architectural Character**

The County and Park Police Headquarters site was identified by stakeholders as a potential location for recreation/fitness center or other uses. Small-scale development with ground-level shops and two–three stories of residential or office above was preferred. The stakeholders wanted to retain and relocate the tenants of the Eastpines Shopping Center.

**Amenities and Open Spaces**

The stakeholders noted the need for open space for children such as a park or playground. A farmers' market was desired as another amenity for the area. Stakeholders preferred gathering spaces buffered from roads.

**Streetscape Character**

Stakeholders preferred wider sidewalks with a vegetated planting strip along the street, particularly Riverdale Road. Parallel parking was also desired to provide spaces and shield pedestrians from traffic. At the intersection of MD 410 (East West Highway) and Riverdale Road, the stakeholders wanted to establish a gateway or landmark with lighting.

**Mobility Choices Connectivity and Access**

Bicycle lanes along Veterans Parkway and Riverdale Road were desired along with bike storage and possibly a bike-share program. Stakeholders wanted sidewalks leading to the Purple Line Station and curb cuts at the pedestrian crossings. With

access from 67<sup>th</sup> Place to Riverdale Road proposed to be closed to accommodate steep grades and the rail line, stakeholders noted concern for vehicular access through the neighborhood. They would also like shuttle service to extend to MD 450, Capital Plaza, and Furman Parkway.

**Station Character/Identity**

Stakeholders identified lighting and shelters as important concerns. They also noted the importance of maintaining the area and keeping it clean.

*2013 Purple Line TOD Study, Page 164*

## 2013 PURPLE LINE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

# Community Input Summary: Riverdale Park-Kenilworth Station

### Use Type and Architectural Character

Commercial development should focus on anchor businesses. Redevelopment strategy plans should include retaining and renovating existing business (e.g., Bowling Center) where possible as well as encourage adding new businesses to the area. Stakeholders preferred four-story average building heights within the study area and mixed-use development with residential or office over ground-level retail. Additional single-family dwellings were desired as well.

### Amenities and Open Spaces

Stakeholders wanted a central civic square with lawn space that would be identified with the proposed station. Parks with seating areas that allow for family and youth activities were also desired by the stakeholders.

### Streetscape Character

Stakeholders noted the need for a walkable environment, including safe sidewalks buffered from traffic, shaded with trees and with pedestrian amenities such as benches and lighting.

### Mobility Choices Connectivity and Access

Stakeholders wanted to close a section of Riverdale Road, between Kenilworth Avenue and East West Highway. They also noted the need for safe, pedestrian-friendly connections through Riverdale Plaza as well as improved sidewalks and pedestrian

access throughout the study area, accommodating ADA requirements and promoting additional accessibility.

### Station Character/Identity

A gateway element that is well-lighted and possibly includes a water feature was suggested by the stakeholders. There was also a strong desire to retain the community's character, building on the diversity of people and architectural styles within the study area.

*2013 Purple Line TOD Study, page 182*

## 2013 PURPLE LINE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

**Purple Line TOD Study Recommendations Carried Forward in This Sector Plan****Riverdale Park-Kenilworth**

- Ensuring the design of the station reflects the cultural diversity and vibrancy of the surrounding communities.
- Encouraging redevelopment opportunities to capitalize on the elevated nature of the Riverdale Park-Kenilworth Station.
- Concentrating new two- to five-story, mixed-use development within a core four-block area.
- Lining Kenilworth Avenue, Riverdale Road Extended, and the proposed extension of 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue with ground-floor retail and populating upper floors of new development along Kenilworth Avenue with neighborhood-serving office.
- Ensuring a balanced mix of housing types designed to meet the needs of residents at all stages of life.
- Transforming Riverdale Road Extended to Greenvale Parkway into an east-west greenway and public amenity, connecting the area to the Anacostia Tributary Trail System.
- Integrating new public spaces, such as a plaza and pocket park near the proposed station and a community green opposite St. Bernard's Roman Catholic Church.
- Retaining and strengthening existing businesses through coordinated planning, technical and financial assistance, and marketing programs.
- In the short-term, converting Kenilworth Avenue into a shared-use street with wide outside travel lanes for shared vehicular and bicycle use and widened sidewalks; improving lighting, landscaping, and bus stops; and redesigning the intersection at Rittenhouse Street.

- In the longer-term, incorporating designated bike lanes onto Kenilworth Avenue, East West Highway, and Riverdale Road.
- Converting the Greenvale Canal to a greenway.
- Extending Riverdale Road east and 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue south to form a grid.

**Beacon Heights-East Pines**

- Constructing an at-grade station that is accessible, well-lighted, and connected to local bus and shuttle services.
- Over the medium- to long-term, redeveloping the Police Department's Special Operations Division and Park Police Headquarters facility and the existing Eastpines Shopping Center with pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development, featuring two- to five-story multifamily residential over targeted ground-floor retail.
- Concentrating new neighborhood-serving commercial uses along Riverdale Road between 67<sup>th</sup> Court and Fernwood Terrace and between 66<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 67<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Integrating new public spaces as redevelopment occurs, including a station plaza at the intersection of Riverdale Road and 67<sup>th</sup> Avenue and a community square at the police facility site.

## 2008 CENTRAL KENILWORTH AVENUE REVITALIZATION STUDY

Students at the University of Maryland Urban Studies and Planning Program reviewed elements of MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue) within the sector plan area and conducted inclusive and informative stakeholder meetings. This study is notable for the quality and prescience of the feedback received. Elements reviewed included cultural features, pedestrian activity, community demographics, roadway dimensions, building typologies, open spaces, vegetative cover, and elevation and drainage. Based on site visits, community meetings, and research, the students provided best practices images and created detailed plans for nine revitalization and development areas. The study contains an action plan with recommendations for the following areas:

- MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue) Streetscaping and Amenities
- Kenilfair Shopping Center
- Riverdale Park-Kenilworth Station
- Northeast Branch Tributary (Captain John's Branch) Restoration
- Multifamily Areas Along 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Riverdale Plaza Shopping Center and the "Riverdale triangle"
- Madison Hill Park

This study developed several recommendations that were carried forward into this sector plan. These include, but are not limited to:

- Providing bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue)
- Redevelopment of Riverdale Plaza Shopping Center, including extension of 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Riverdale Road to form a grid.
- Improved access to the Northeast Branch from a redeveloped Kenilfair Plaza.
- Restoration of Captain John's Branch as a greenway.
- Improvements to, and activation of, Madison Hill Park, including pedestrian improvements between Parkdale High School and William Wirt Middle School.

This study can be found in its entirety in Appendix 6.

## PLANNING CONTEXT

The Prince George's County Council, sitting as the District Council, initiated this sector plan on October 12, 2015, through CR-63-2015. The plan was adopted by the Prince George's County Planning Board (PGCPB No. 17-118) on September 14, 2017 and approved by the District Council on November 14, 2017 (CR-95-2017).

The East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan amends the 2014 *Prince George's 2035 Approved General Plan* by defining the Beacon Heights and Riverdale Park Neighborhood Centers. This sector plan replaces the 1994 *Approved Master Plan for Planning Area 68* and the 1994 *Approved Master Plan for Bladensburg-New Carrollton and Vicinity (Planning Area 69)* for the portions of Planning Areas 68 and 69 within the sector plan boundaries. In addition, this sector plan amends the 2001 *Approved Anacostia Trails Heritage Area Management Plan: A Functional Master Plan for Heritage Tourism*, the 2008 *Approved Public Safety Facilities Master Plan*, the 2009 *Approved Countywide Master Plan of Transportation, Formula 2040: Functional Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space*, and the 2017 *Approved Resource Conservation Plan*.

Brief summaries of these and other applicable area and functional master plans can be found in Appendix 2.

## REGULATORY CONTEXT

### SUBTITLE 23: ROADS AND SIDEWALKS

In 2016, the Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation led a multi-agency effort to update the County's road and sidewalk code. A key element of this effort was the creation of urban street standards for use in designated centers. One result of this effort will be new standards and specifications for the construction of streets, sidewalks, and on-street bicycle facilities within redeveloping areas of the County looking to attract and support walkable urban development. The County Council endorsed the new standards through CR-85-2016 on October 25, 2016.

### SUBTITLE 24: SUBDIVISION

The Prince George's County Planning Department is leading an effort to rewrite the County's subdivision regulations. The new regulations will update and streamline the County's approach to the subdivision of land and adequacy of public facilities. This project is scheduled for completion in the near future.<sup>1</sup>

### SUBTITLES 27 AND 27A: ZONING

The Prince George's County Planning Department is shepherding an effort to rewrite the County zoning ordinance. First codified in 1949, this zoning ordinance includes a number of outdated and complicated regulations, requirements, and processes. Zones created to regulate suburban development often do not work in urban and rural areas. While the single-use commercial and low-density residential zones that comprise the East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan area may be appropriate for auto-dominated suburban areas of the County, they are inappropriate for areas around a rail transit station.

The rewrite of the zoning ordinance aims to create a more predictable, equitable, and streamlined process for entitlement and a more consistent set of zones, development standards, and use regulations for the County. This effort will necessitate a complete rezoning of Prince George's County in the near future. It is anticipated that zoning changes necessary to implement this sector plan will be approved through that effort.

This sector plan is predicated on several key assumptions about zoning:

1. The County will have a new zoning ordinance in 2019.<sup>2</sup>
2. The vision, goals, policies, and strategies contained within this sector plan cannot be realized through the zoning that will exist on the date of approval of this plan.
3. If a new zoning ordinance is not enacted, a stand-alone sectional map amendment will be necessary to rezone properties within this sector plan area.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the development of this sector plan, the project team engaged residents, workers, business owners, public agencies, and community organizations in an dialogue concerning the future of their community. Immeasurable assistance, input, and vetting was provided by the East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan Steering Advisory Committee. Drawn from a cross section of civic leaders, this committee gave the project team vital guidance, feedback, and direction throughout the course of the project. See page 250 for a list of committee members.

1. UPDATE: Subsequent to approval of this sector plan but prior to its publication, the District Council adopted CB-15-2018, creating entirely new Subdivision Regulations for Prince George's County.

2. UPDATE: Subsequent to approval of this sector plan but prior to its publication, the District Council adopted CB-13-2018, creating a new Zoning Ordinance for Prince George's County.

Though this process involved dozens of meetings with stakeholders, the most important engagement exercise was the Community Charrette, an intensive, hands-on planning and design exercise where residents, business owners, nonprofit entities, and other interested persons came together to discuss issues and potential solutions. The Charrette was held March 7–10, 2016.

Feedback received from stakeholders was critical in developing a sector plan for this area that reflects the community’s vision, addresses identified challenges, and takes advantage of opportunities. As this sector plan is implemented, community input will remain a valuable part of this process.

## KEY ASSETS OF AREA

### PEOPLE

The area’s demographic and cultural diversity welcomes newcomers from around the world and nourishes a broad range of cultural, institutional, entrepreneurial, and retail opportunities for a cross-section of the region’s population.

### LOCATION

The area is located at a key intersection of State highways, the Purple Line, and the Baltimore-

Washington Parkway, offering easy access to and from Washington, D.C., College Park, New Carrollton, Hyattsville, Greenbelt, and Baltimore.

### NEIGHBORHOODS

Surrounding these key transportation corridors are a range of neighborhoods, from traditional single-family suburban housing tracts to 1950s and 1960s garden apartments. Each neighborhood fosters a sense of civic pride, shared interest in the future, and opportunities to attract new residents to the area.

### RETAIL

The area is home to a lively and varied collection of small businesses, many of which cater to the area’s growing Hispanic and Latino population. This increases the area’s potential to brand itself as a regional center of Hispanic and Latin American culture.

### SCHOOLS

The community takes great pride in its schools, which serve as key centers of civic activity.

### ACCESS TO PARKS, TRAILS, AND WATERWAYS

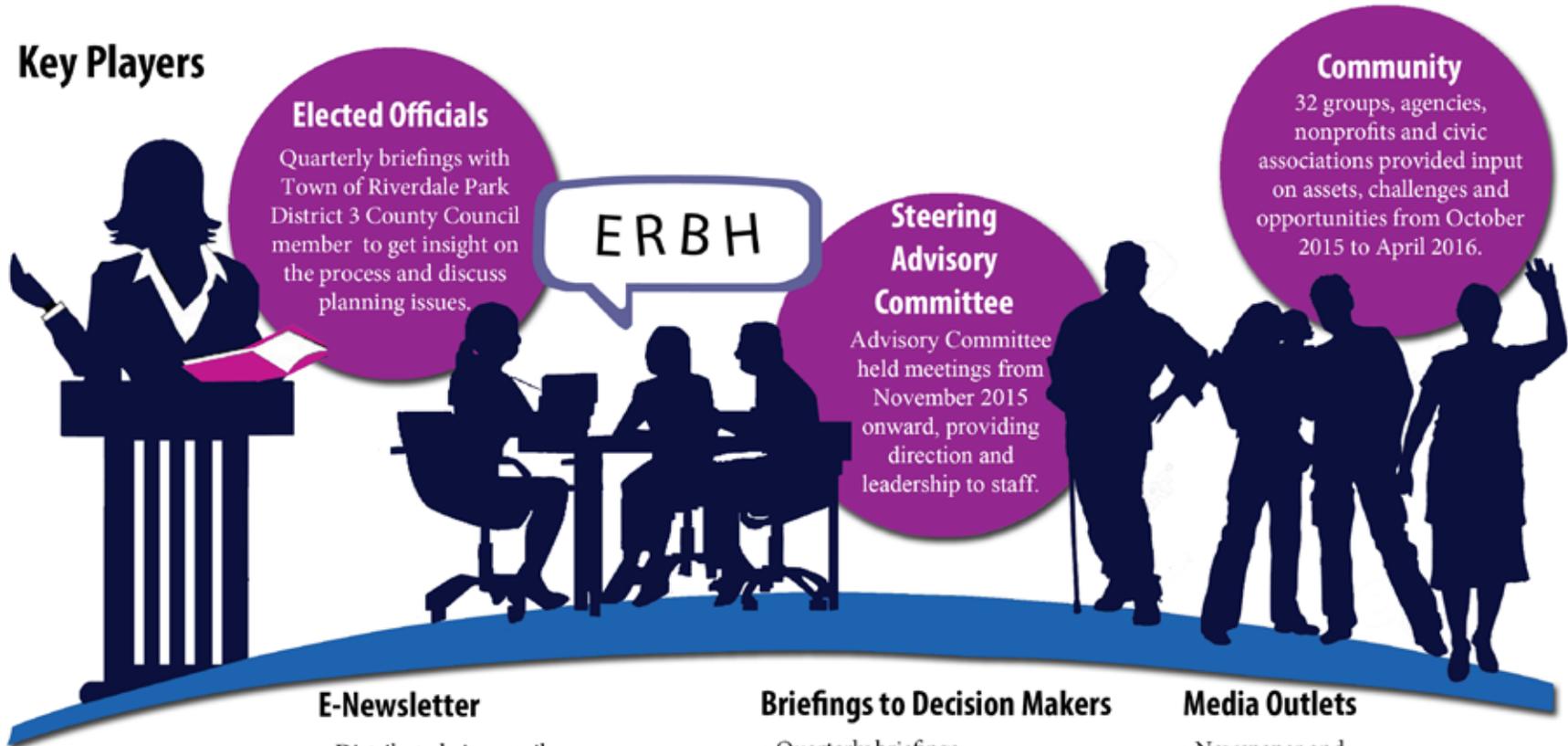
The East Riverdale community’s proximity to parks, trails, open space, and waterways is one

of the key assets of the area. The community overwhelmingly identified parks as the leading positive attribute of the area. The sector plan area is bordered by regional and national parks. These parks provide a variety of natural and suburban park experiences, and are accessible by vehicle, bicycle, and foot. The Anacostia Stream Valley Park and Northeast Branch Trail border the Sector Plan area’s western side and provide local and regional trail connectivity to nearby transit districts, including College Park, the University of Maryland, Hyattsville, and Riverdale Park. Greenbelt Park and a host of County parks serve as prime gathering places for families, community groups, and the general public.

# Community Engagement

Public outreach began in August 2015 to facilitate comprehensive participation among residents, community organizations, nonprofit institutions, civic leaders, and other stakeholders in the planning area. All information was provided in both English and Spanish.

## Key Players



## Engagement Tools:

### E-Newsletter

- Distributed via e-mail bimonthly
- Progress updates

10

### Public Notifications

- Posters, press releases and social media



### Briefings to Decision Makers

- Quarterly briefings with elected officials

6

### Wikimap Planning Tool

- Online map for suggested improvements



### Media Outlets

- Newspaper and cable news interviews

2

### Website

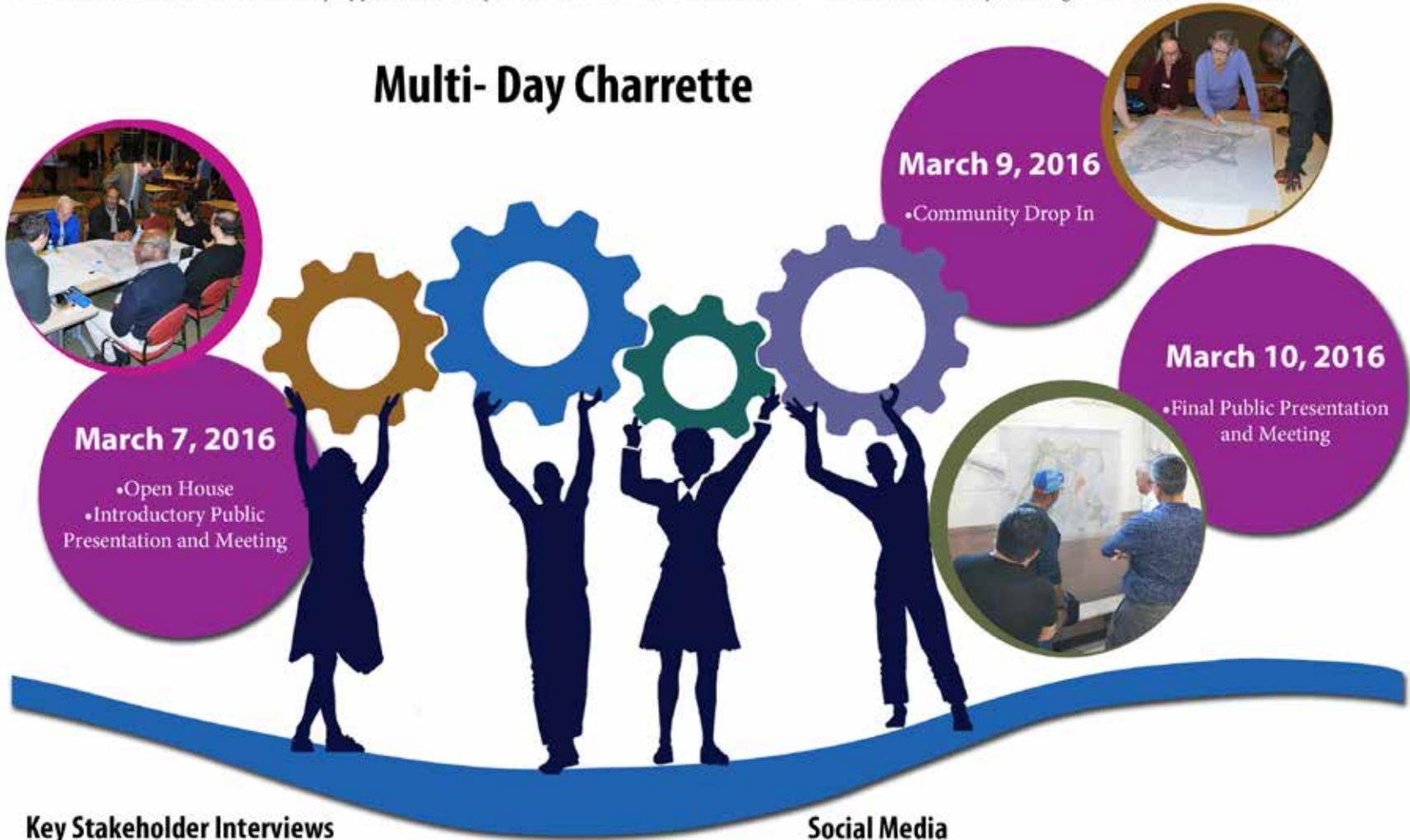
- Primary source of public information



# Community Engagement

The charrette offered the community opportunities to provide staff and the consultant team with direction on key challenges and recommendations.

## Multi- Day Charrette



### Key Stakeholder Interviews

- Discussions with consultant, staff agencies and local stakeholders



### Social Media

- Facebook
- Twitter



## CHALLENGES

### FLOODING

Much of the sector plan area west of MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue) and the area south and west of the Riverdale Park-Kenilworth Station is within the 100-year floodplain. As development continues, and is encouraged, upstream of the sector plan area, and as climate change continues to contribute to more intense precipitation events, significant flooding may threaten lives, public safety, and property. Strengthening the existing flood control system along the Northeast Branch of the Anacostia River is expensive and could intensify downstream flooding.

### OFFICE MARKET

The market in Prince George's County for Class A office space suffers from a 21.6 percent vacancy rate, and a considerable amount of Class A space is filled with traditional Class B-or-below users. The MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue) corridor had a 35.3 percent office vacancy rate between 2010-2015 and has several aged and underutilized office buildings located on the fringes of Purple Line accessibility. There are no Class A office tenants in the sector plan area. Many of these buildings have reached the end of their useful lives and are located on land that is

environmentally constrained.

### RESIDENTIAL/OFFICE MARKET DILUTION AND COMPETITION

The area's proximity to three Regional Transit Districts, plus Washington, D.C., downtown Riverdale Park, and the Gateway Arts District can be a competitive disadvantage in the broader residential and commercial real estate market. A unique place, and a unique market, must be created that distinguishes the sector plan area from its neighbors.

### RETAIL MARKET DILUTION AND COMPETITION

The area's affordable stock of retail spaces encourages start-up, family-owned, and small businesses. Encouraging such business growth is a critical element of this sector plan; however, the margins for success for start-up businesses can be very slim, and small businesses may turn over faster than more established regional and national chains, leaving vacant storefronts and the resulting impacts on perception, appearance, and marketability.

### POTENTIAL FOR DISPLACEMENT

Redevelopment that accompanies completion of the Purple Line could displace renters unable

to afford new housing options in the sector plan area. This could also affect family-owned and start-up businesses whose rents could increase due to redevelopment.

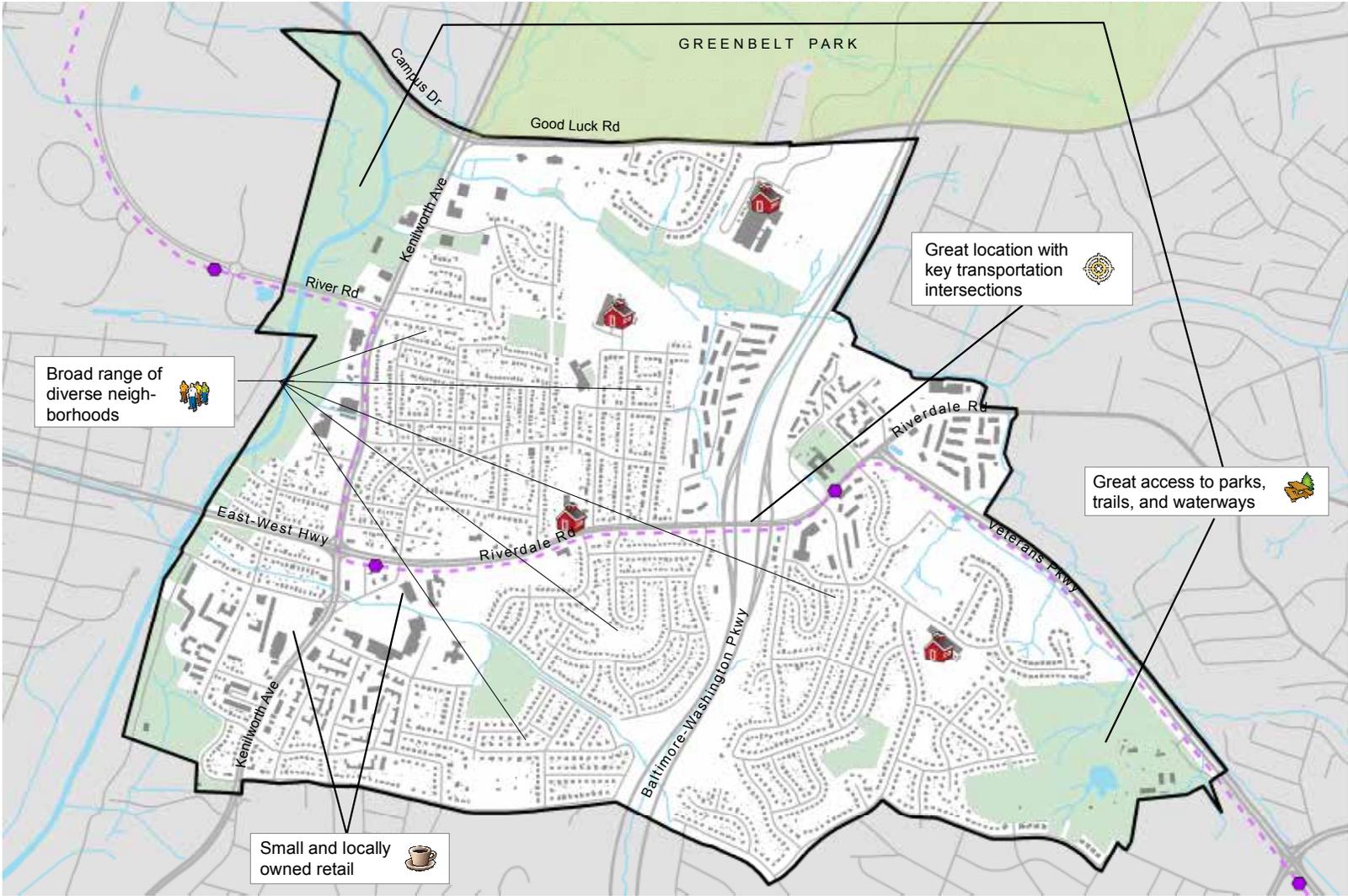
### BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO TRANSIT

The area's existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is inadequate to support transit use. The capital expense required to retrofit the sector plan area with safe and visible pedestrian pathways, sidewalks, crosswalks, signage, and signalization could strain town, County, and state resources in the short-term, when the Purple Line needs to attract riders.

### BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO PARKS

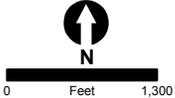
Although the East Riverdale/Beacon Heights community is proximate to a variety of local and regional parks, enhanced bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, improved accessibility, and added programming would benefit community residents and support increased park usage. Many of the neighborhood's parks would benefit from new and improved trails and sidewalk connections. Residents and visitors to the area

Map 16. Assets



- East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan Boundary
- Purple Line and Stations (MTA)
- Buildings
- Parkland
- Known Water Bodies
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road

Schools are sources of community pride and are centers of civic activity



would benefit from improved signage and wayfinding to guide users to and through parks.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- The Purple Line has the potential to increase and improve access to jobs and educational opportunities as well as attract new residents, consumers, and visitors.
- The strategic addition of a mix of residential units provides an opportunity to serve all household types throughout a lifetime, allowing for families to mature and grow old in the same community.
- Ethnic retail/service businesses, especially those catering to the region's growing Hispanic and Latino population, and cultural institutions form a distinct marketplace for goods and services that can attract visitors and shoppers from around the Washington, D.C., area.
- The existing office stock can provide an affordable, accessible, and attractive setting for incubation, entrepreneurship, healthcare, and small businesses.
- Easy access to the University of Maryland, College Park, provides a wealth of

educational, research, and development (as well as job) opportunities.

From well-preserved neighborhoods to new and exciting transit-oriented apartments and townhouses, the entire sector plan area can enjoy safe and easy access to an expanded park system, including Greenbelt Park, and the region's bicycle and pedestrian trail network.

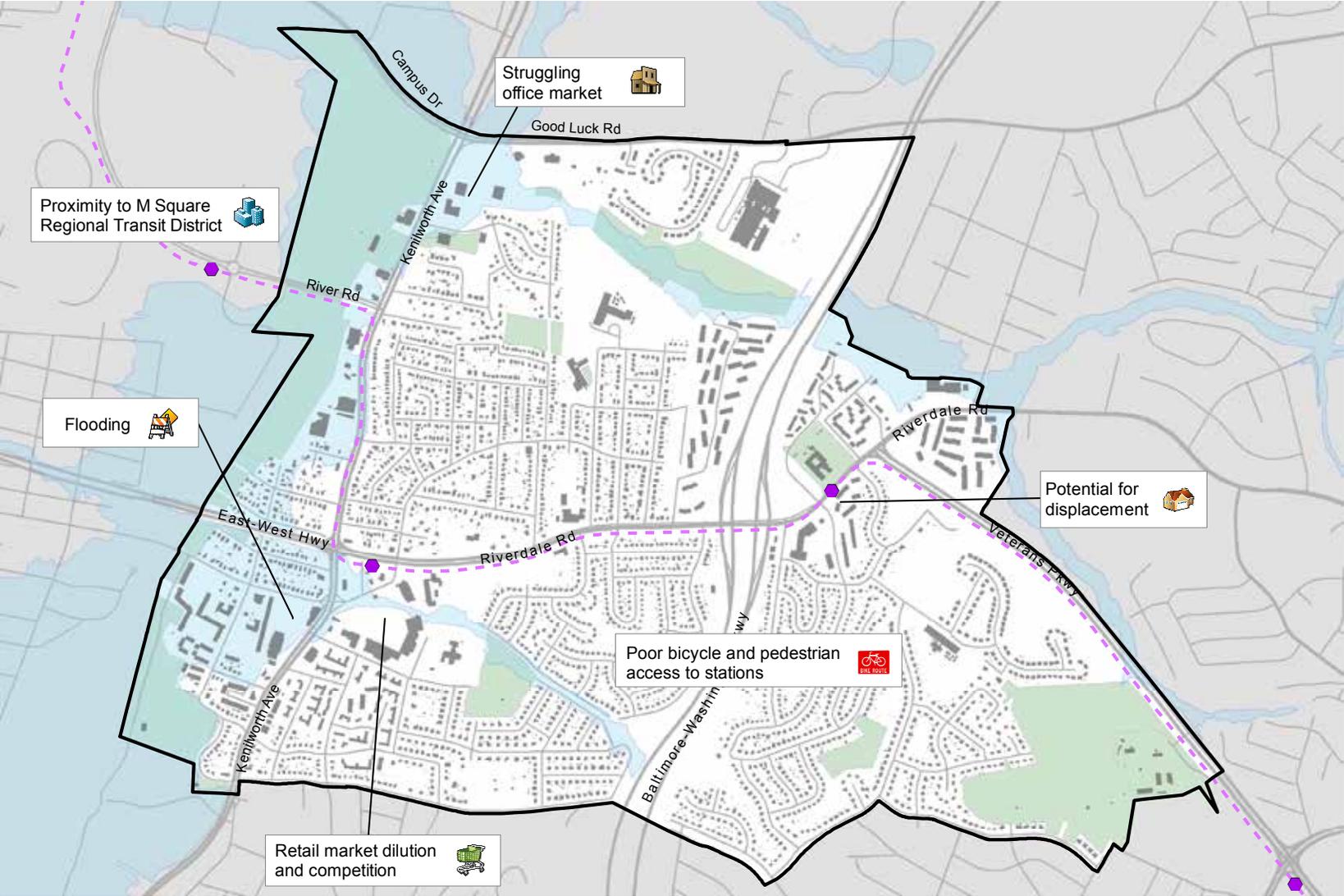
- Public-private partnerships should assist with financing this infrastructure as redevelopment moves forward.
- Area parks present incredible opportunities to strengthen and improve the overall health and wellness of the community. Parks provide opportunities to reflect a community's collective desires for identity, recreation, and leisure. A well-used park can strengthen the sense of place, and provide needed public gathering spaces to promote community interaction and expression.
- Improved bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to and within the parks, together with additional park programming, recreational amenities, and wayfinding, can increase park usage. In addition, there are opportunities to formalize the existing trail

network and strengthen the quality and frequency of trail connections.

### Sector Plan Boundary Amendment

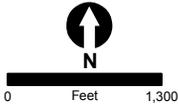
The Prince George's County Council, sitting as the District Council, approved CR-63-2015 on October 12, 2015, initiating this sector plan. CR-63-2015 contained a proposed sector plan boundary. The original proposed boundary included portions of Fletcher's Field Park within the Town of Edmonston and subject to the 2010 *Approved Port Towns Sector Plan*, and portions of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway within the City of Greenbelt. The final approved boundary of the sector plan excludes any land within the City of Greenbelt or Town of Edmonston.

Map 17. Challenges



- East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan Boundary
- Buildings
- Parkland
- 1989 Prince George's County Floodplain Study

- Purple Line and Stations (MTA)
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road



## ENDNOTES

- 1 National Renewable Energy Laboratory, *Landscaping for Energy Efficiency*, April 1995, p. 1.
- 2 Casey Trees, *Reasons to Plant Trees*, <http://caseytrees.org/resources/reasons/>, 2017.
- 3 2017 Approved Resource Conservation Plan, p. 39.
- 4 The Reinvestment Fund, *Searching for Markets: The Geography of Inequitable Access to Healthy & Affordable Food in the United States*, 2011.