

Kensington Sector Plan
Planning Board Draft
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Many of the photographs in this Plan were taken as part of the A Day in the Life of Kensington photo contest. Credits accompany these photos.

| **1** Sector Plan Area

vision

To promote a mixed-use Town Center with pedestrian-friendly connections to the vibrant neighborhoods that define Kensington.

Kensington's Town Center will be a lively and active place with streets that are welcoming and comfortable for residents, workers, and visitors. It will be reachable by walking and bicycle from Kensington's neighborhoods, which can reduce vehicle miles travelled, conserve energy, and reduce carbon emissions. The Town Center will also broaden housing choices for an array of ages and incomes.

The Plan protects Kensington's stable residential neighborhoods by maintaining their residential zones and preserves the Town's historic character by recommending additional areas and sites to be evaluated for addition to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

The Plan's broad goal is to reinvigorate the Town Center while preserving Kensington's scale and historic character.

recommendations

Connectivity

- Acknowledging the "commuter" status of Connecticut Avenue while creating new pathways for townspeople to move car free throughout the Town, enjoying a healthier, more sustainable community.

Design

- Redefining public spaces for people and creating activity along sidewalks through smart design of buildings and the spaces around them.
- Defining new public spaces that will exemplify the unique scale and character of Kensington.

Environment

- Promoting sustainable infill and reuse, with a goal of creating a neighborhood with the lowest feasible carbon footprint.
- Implementing effective environmental practices that will inspire current residents and future generations to become stewards of the environment.

Diversity

- ~~Creating an active Town Center~~ Transforming Kensington's exclusively commercial business district into an active Town Center with new residential uses.
- Promoting the community's heritage through its buildings, spaces, and people.

Existing Land Use

assets and challenges

Connectivity

Kensington is located at a critical crossroads 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 many travelers to use Connecticut Avenue between Plyers Mill Road and Knowles Avenue in order to complete their eastbound or westbound journey. For this short segment, east-west travelers and north-south travelers use the same roadway.

Street grids in Kensington's neighborhoods provide good access and circulation for pedestrians. Many 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 between the north and south sections of the Town—Summit Avenue, Connecticut Avenue, and the at-grade track crossing at Kensington Station, which is used informally. 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. Improving pedestrian connections across the tracks is a critical challenge for this Plan.

Design

Kensington offers a full range of neighborhood service and retail opportunities. Two neighborhood shopping destinations—Safeway and the Kensington Shopping Center—sit opposite each other at Connecticut and Knowles Avenues. A third neighborhood center lies near the junction of Connecticut Avenue and University Boulevard. To the east of Connecticut Avenue, along Kensington Parkway and Montgomery Avenue, there are banks, drycleaners, and other businesses. On Howard Avenue west of Connecticut, there are auto repair businesses and well as plumbers, landscapers, and craft workers.

Kensington is located between the Wheaton and White Flint Metro Stations. The Town is about two miles from the Wheaton Metro Station and about three miles from the White Flint Metro Station.

Kensington's commercial center depends on the automobile. It offers surface parking away from streets. Some areas have no sidewalks, so that shoppers often drive from shop to shop along the same street. The ~~scale~~ character of the auto-centered commercial center is in conflict with the more intimate ~~scale~~ character of the historic neighborhoods. **In addition, the commercial center**

currently excludes housing, which deprives the area of a ready source of street activity: residents who live where they can work, shop, and play.

3 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 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.

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.

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 and housing targeted to older residents.

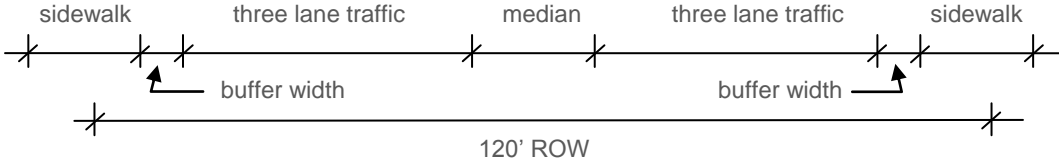
The Kensington Historic District, designated in 1986, is one of the largest districts in the County with about 180 buildings. The Kensington Historic District is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places (1980). The Historic Preservation Commission reviews proposed exterior changes for structures in the district and has developed guidelines for new construction within the 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 the metropolitan Washington area. On Howard Avenue east of Connecticut Avenue is historic Antique Row. Other antique retailers have located among the warehouses and services on West Howard Avenue.

Proposed Connecticut Avenue Cross Section



area wide recommendations

Connectivity

To ensure a balance between land use and transportation, the County determines the adequacy of public facilities (the transportation and other public infrastructure) to accommodate development using procedures adopted in the biennial Growth Policy. The Growth Policy consists of an area component, Policy Area Mobility Review (PAMR), that determines the relative mobility within policy areas, and a local component, Local Area Transportation Review, that determines the congestion levels at relevant intersections. Both components assess the ability of existing and programmed roadway and transit networks to provide adequate capacity for demand associated with future development. Using the results from these analyses, planners recommend appropriate strategies to accommodate future demand by providing sufficient transit and roadway capacity to serve a proposed land use.

For Kensington, the PAMR analysis uses regional forecasts of jobs and housing growth, including that proposed in the White Flint Sector Plan. The analysis concluded that relative mobility in Kensington and vicinity—the relationship during weekday peak and non-peak periods between auto travel and roadway capacity, and the relationship between journey-to-work travel times by auto and transit—satisfies the parameters in the Growth Policy for the long-range balance between land use and transportation.

Local area analysis determines the congestion levels at intersections in and adjacent to the Plan area. The result of this analysis for Kensington is that most intersections satisfy **approved** congestion standards. The Sector Plan recommends improvements that improve accessibility and mobility, but would result in forecast congestion levels slightly exceeding capacity at two intersections: Connecticut Avenue at Plyers Mill Road (seven percent over standard) and Connecticut Avenue at Knowles Avenue (four percent over standard). Congestion levels slightly above the standard can be considered indicative of a land use and transportation balance for the purpose of a 20-year forecast. As redevelopment occurs, projects will be required to mitigate the increase in traffic congestion directly attributable to them, following the Growth Policy in effect at the time of development.

The Transportation Appendix contains detailed discussions of both analyses and further detail on connectivity recommendations.

The Plan's recommendations for better connections in Kensington will give pedestrians priority, especially in the Town Center. Physical and operational improvements can easily accommodate current traffic flows while giving residents the ability to move safely and efficiently through Kensington. Improvements in MARC commuter rail service over the life of this Plan—including service enhancements, increased parking, and improved pedestrian

connections to the station—can make an important contribution to reducing vehicle trips in Kensington.

Finally, Montgomery County is studying the feasibility of bus rapid transit systems along a number of highway corridors, including Connecticut Avenue. Using dedicated rights-of-way along these routes for high occupancy buses could offer a significant alternative for commuters and contribute to sustainable development. Bus rapid transit planning results completed to date indicate that the Plan’s recommended typical section is appropriate, although additional right-of-way needs may be identified for bus priority treatments at specific locations in the Plan area during subsequent design studies.

The Plan recommends:

- **Extend Summit Avenue as a Business District Street with a 60-foot right-of-way and two travel lanes from Plyers Mill Road to Connecticut Avenue, via Farragut Avenue.**
- Reduce the target speed of Connecticut Avenue in Kensington to 30 miles per hour to enhance pedestrian comfort and safety.
- Encourage pedestrian-centered urban design by using narrower urban road sections from the County’s context-sensitive design standards.
- Refrain from widening roadway intersections to accommodate through-vehicle traffic.
- Confirm the *Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan* for signed, shared roadways on routes in the Plan area.
- Provide energy efficient lighting, where appropriate, along major highways, arterials, business district streets, and connections to residential areas to provide adequate lighting for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Provide clear and bold markings for pedestrian crosswalks, clearly identifying the pedestrian zone.
- Provide storage lockers and bicycle racks at appropriate locations, specifically within the Town Center and near the train station.
- Direct pedestrians to the important places in Kensington with clear signs.

5 Town Center Illustrative

The Plan envisions a reinvigorated, pedestrian-oriented, and safe mixed-use Town Center that respects and builds on Kensington's historic character and modest scale, with active streets, new public spaces, well-designed buildings, and enhanced streetscape.

Design

Scale is a fundamental tenet of urban design and defines how people think about the spaces they move through and how they perceive the built environment. The neighborhoods of Kensington and its Antique Row illustrate the Town's scale.

Scale is a function of many factors:

- street width
- height
- structure mass or size
- setbacks
- separation distances.

This Plan's design ~~principles~~ framework, defined through zoning and **illustrated** **by** urban design guidelines, can help shape and blend Kensington into a walkable and livable community.

Street-Oriented Development

Streets should be safe, pedestrian-oriented environments that create an animated community life along the sidewalks to encourage high levels of pedestrian activity.

- Orient buildings to the sidewalk with display windows and entrances.
- Encourage pedestrian-level ornamentation, signage, and architectural details.
- Minimize curb cuts to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.
- Provide street trees and furniture to improve aesthetics and functionality for pedestrians.
- Provide energy efficient street lighting, where appropriate, to improve safety and security along Major Highways, Arterials, and Business District Streets. Areas of high pedestrian activity or primary pedestrian routes should have pedestrian-scale lighting to illuminate the sidewalk.
- Minimize conflicts with motorists, transit buses, and pedestrians through low target speeds for vehicles, access management, and reduced curb cuts.
- Provide adequate parking for proposed land uses while using strategies to reduce demand, consolidate supply, and use space efficiently. Minimize the visual impact of parking facilities and encourage on-street parking.
- Provide a pedestrian path in the area of the Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission headquarters on Summit Avenue to improve pedestrian connectivity.

Historic Preservation

- Adopt pedestrian-oriented design guidelines for Connecticut Avenue including crosswalks, median strips, and street trees to mitigate the adverse traffic impacts on Connecticut Avenue, which bisects the historic district.
- For infill and redevelopment of properties located directly opposite historic district resources, including Warner Street and Armory Avenue, consider compatibility of scale, massing, and setback.

- Re-evaluate the boundaries of the Kensington Historic District and amend as appropriate, paying particular attention to reconciling discrepancies between National Register and local designations, including properties on Detrick Avenue.
- Assess the historic district boundary north of the railroad tracks and expand as appropriate.
- Several historic district properties have preservation easements that protect the open space that characterizes this garden suburb; support donation of additional preservation easements for privately owned open space.

This site is proposed for inclusion in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*:

- **Include** Kensington Cabin, 10000 Kensington Parkway, in the *Master Plan of for Historic Resources Preservation in Montgomery County*. This log cabin was constructed in 1933-34 using funding from a New Deal program and from M-NCPPC. The rustic structure is representative of early recreation buildings in the first stream valley parks, including Rock Creek, Sligo Creek, and Cabin John.

The following potential historic resources merit evaluation for designation on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*:

- **Evaluate the following potential historic resources for designation on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation:**
 1. North Kensington: This residential district is north of Plyers Mill Road and west of St. Paul Street. The area has a rich variety of Victorian and period revival houses dating primarily from the 1890s to the 1940s.
 2. Kensington Estates: West of Summit Avenue, this residential neighborhood includes small scale houses built largely in the post-World War II era.
 3. Frederick Avenue: This residential neighborhood, located east of Kensington Parkway, contains several structures more than a century old.
 4. Ken-Gar: Bounded by Plyers Mill Road and Rock Creek Park, Ken-Gar is a historically African-American community and includes community buildings and residences dating from the early 1900s.

Potential individual sites to be evaluated:

- **Evaluate the following individual sites for potential historic designation:**
 - Kensington Fire Station, 10620 Connecticut Avenue: Built in 1947, this Colonial Revival structure houses the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department, organized in 1922. When constructed, the building was the largest fire station in Maryland. It exemplifies the growth of the Kensington community in the post-World War II era.
 - Ken-Gar Rosenwald School, 4111 Plyers Mill Road: One of only eight surviving Rosenwald Schools in the County, the Ken-Gar School was built in 1927-28. The Julius Rosenwald Fund sponsored construction of elementary schools for African-American children in the south. The building exemplifies the challenges in the black community to obtain a good education in the era of segregation. The building was later converted for use as a community center.

- 10115 Connecticut Avenue: This single-family structure merits further evaluation to determine the extent of its contribution to the historic district.

Parks

Kensington is well-served by parks, including seven Town parks and six Montgomery County Parks. This Plan recommends preserving the existing County parks: Kensington Cabin Local Park, Warner Circle Special Park, Edith Throckmorton Neighborhood Park, Kensington Parkway Stream Valley Park, Kensington-Frederick Avenue Neighborhood Park, and the St. Paul Neighborhood Conservation Area.

- Rehabilitate the Warner Circle historic buildings for public use and the historic landscaped grounds on the Warner Circle property for use as an important public open space within the Kensington Historic District. An adaptive reuse planning process for Warner Circle will determine appropriate use of the open space.
- Work cooperatively with the Town of Kensington to develop a viable program and means of operation to revitalize Kensington Cabin.
- Examine the existing Edith Throckmorton Neighborhood Park for future renovation.

Open Space System

- Preserve existing designated open space in the Plan area.
- Enhance connectivity with ~~pedestrian priority streets~~ sidewalks, bikeways, and trails.
- With the redevelopment of properties in the Town Center, create additional open space for social interaction.

Although the Plan does not recommend land for additional open space, it identifies sites for additional open space to be created during redevelopment.

- ~~An open space should be provided~~ Provide an open space with the redevelopment of the Konterra property.
- ~~Redevelopment of the Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission property along Summit Avenue should include~~ Include an informal play and exercise space on the Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission property ~~along Summit Avenue.~~
- ~~Consider the unused~~ green space behind the library parking on Knowles Avenue ~~should be considered~~ for use as public space and stormwater treatment ~~. This Plan's recommendations for this space should be considered in light of potential future expansion.~~ with any future expansion of the library.

Environment

All private and public development should practice sustainable design and building to protect and enhance the environment. A high priority should be placed on the following goals:

- reducing the amount of impervious surfaces
- treating stormwater runoff with environmentally sensitive design (ESD) or low impact development (LID)
- reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions, through green building design and reduced vehicle use.

Pursuing these goals will not only enhance Kensington’s air and water quality, but improve the quality of life for all citizens.

Stormwater Management

- Establish a stormwater fee program in the Town or join the County’s program to fund water quality improvements.
- Incorporate open section roadway swales rather than conventional curbs where allowed by design standards. Where curbs are necessary to protect the roadway edge, allow perforated curbs that direct runoff into swales for stormwater treatment.
- Use, where feasible, permeable paving for roads, road shoulders, parking lots, and parking lanes.
- Design and construct sidewalks that disconnect runoff from conventional storm drain systems.
- Reduce the amount of impervious surface areas to maximize infiltration of stormwater and reduce runoff.
- Use the CRT and CRN Zones to provide incentives for a variety of landscaping options such as: green roofs and walls, rooftop gardens, tree planting.
- Initiate Town, County, or State pilot projects in the areas listed below to provide innovative and aesthetic low impact development (LID) stormwater treatments and bioretention within the road right-of-way to meet new County design standards to accommodate stormwater runoff. Such projects can reduce the volume and improve the water quality of runoff to Silver and Rock Creeks, provide tree canopy cover in the road medians, enhance the streetscape, provide safe, attractive respite areas, and improve community livability.

Roads Proposed for Low Impact Development Pilot Projects

Road	Existing Typical Paved Width	Existing Typical ROW Width	Operation
Metropolitan Avenue between Plyers Mill Road and Lexington Avenue	25'	70'	State, Town

Howard Avenue between Summit Avenue and M-NCPPC park	25'	55'	County, Town
Plyers Mill Road between Metropolitan and Lexington Avenues	33'	70-100'	County, Town
Kensington Parkway's intersection with Metropolitan Avenue	62'	110'	Town
University Boulevard and Connecticut Avenue Intersection	85'	300'	State, Town

Carbon Reduction

- Use the CRT and CRN zones to provide incentives for exceeding energy efficiency standards, including the installation of onsite energy production through geothermal, solar panels or wind.
- Design new projects to take advantage of solar orientation and construct high energy efficient buildings.
- Expand access to alternative transportation modes such as public transit, carpooling, car-sharing, bicycling, and walking to reduce carbon emissions.
- Use the CRT and CRN Zones to provide incentives for the use of reflective paving and roofing materials to reduce local heat island effects and building temperatures.

Environmental Sustainability

- Support Town of Kensington and Department of Parks collaborative efforts to remove invasive species and plant native herbaceous, shrub, and canopy trees along the Silver Creek stream valley.
- Provide opportunities for collaborative efforts among public and private landowners to establish community gardens.
- Establish green corridors to connect parks, stream valleys, and trails with neighborhoods and destinations such as public facilities, civic places, shopping districts and institutions.
- Increase tree canopy cover along streets and within medians, within existing neighborhoods, commercial areas, and on parkland.
- Use the CRT and CRN Zones to provide incentives for vegetative layering through tree preservation and planting, green roofs, rooftop gardens, vegetated walls, planted bioinfiltration.

Although many of the recommendations can be applied effectively during the redevelopment process, this Plan supports the use of federal, State, and local models, incentives, and programs that encourage neighborhood and citizen participation in decreasing carbon emissions, promoting energy generation and conservation, and reducing and treating stormwater.

| 7 Watersheds

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 to 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.

~~This Plan proposes Commercial Residential (CR) Zones 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 makes three recommendations for properties and areas under study: total FAR, non-residential and residential FAR, and building height.~~

~~This Plan proposes two Commercial Residential Zones for the Town Center—CRT (Town) and CRN (Neighborhood). The new zones will allow commercial and residential uses to be mixed at varying densities within the maximum floor area allowed for each site. (A fuller description may be found in the Implementation section.)~~

This Plan makes recommendations for four distinct areas that make up the Kensington community—the Town Center, the Crafts/Services area, Metropolitan Avenue, and the Connecticut/University commercial area. Recommendations for individual properties outside these areas follow as well.

Potential Redevelopment Areas

Protect existing residential and historic area of Kensington.

Maintain the R-60 Zone for the residential properties outside the Plan area’s identified redevelopment districts.

Districts and specific properties

Town Center

In 2009, Kensington’s business district was exclusively commercial, with properties in the Neighborhood Commercial (C-1), General Commercial (C-2), Commercial Transition (C-T), Commercial Office (C-O) and Commercial Office-Moderate (O-M) zones. The auto-oriented retail centers largely consisted of one- and two-story structures, with adjacent surface parking. There are scattered four-to-six story office buildings with adjacent surface parking in the business area. Floor area ratios (FARs) are relatively low, with most buildings having FARs in the vicinity of 0.5.

The Town Center is envisioned as a walkable attractive place with local convenience retail, housing, dining and entertainment, offices, and neighborhood services in a compact development pattern ~~of five to six story~~ with a variety of buildings along Connecticut Avenue. ~~Properties with the potential to support mixed use developments with parking structures could have five- to six-story buildings, while most other p~~Properties that do not mix uses would have street activating retail and services in one- or two-story buildings ~~with surface parking~~. Buildings along Town Center streets should be set back 15 to 25 feet from the curb to provide adequate space for sidewalks separated from traffic by a green panel or trees. This Plan encourages the retention of existing businesses.

This Plan recommends taller buildings in the “core” of the Town Center—Connecticut Avenue, Knowles Avenue, and Plyers Mill Road. Buildings at the edges of the Town Center are recommended for lower height, to ensure gradual transitions of building to the adjoining residential neighborhoods. Design guidelines will help ensure that new development steps down toward residential and historic neighborhoods, and that new buildings adjacent to these neighborhoods are of compatible height and mass.

CRT and CRN Zones enable mixing of uses at a range of allowable floor area ratios. This Plan recommends ~~total maximum mixed use~~ FARs of up to 2.5 for the Town Center core, ~~an FAR of~~ 2.0 for the eastern portion of Howard Avenue ~~and the triangle bounded by Connecticut Avenue, University Boulevard, and Perry Avenue;~~ and ~~FARS of~~ 1.5 for other properties in the Town Center (page ~~34~~-X).

Concept Goal: Enhance Connecticut Avenue and University Boulevard to provide better safety and function for all modes of transportation. The development of these roads as boulevards should recognize that streets are a component of the public realm.

- Provide sidewalk improvements to separate pedestrians from automobile traffic with trees and other buffers along the curb. ~~as shown in the urban road cross sections from the County's context sensitive design standards.~~
- Provide landscape improvements including street trees and green medians that enhance appearance and contribute to stormwater management.
- Develop medians without conventional curbs to allow water to flow into bioswales for treatment (see Environment recommendations).
- Provide pedestrian refuges in medians at intersections to shorten crosswalk distances.
- Redesign the intersection of Connecticut Avenue, University Boulevard, and the proposed Summit Avenue extension to enhance the pedestrian atmosphere and improve vehicular circulation.
- Provide an informal gathering space with high visibility along Connecticut Avenue ~~the corridor.~~
- Study, with the State Highway Administration, the Department of Transportation, and the Town of Kensington, pedestrian and vehicular circulation north of the CSX right-of-way, to determine the most appropriate connection point for an extended Summit Avenue to Connecticut Avenue and to evaluate other improvements that would benefit pedestrian movement across Connecticut Avenue.

Concept Goal: Develop Howard Avenue as a continuous active pedestrian street on both sides of Connecticut Avenue. It should generate an active street life through the mix and intensity of land uses, as well as through high quality site and building design.

- Introduce sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities west of Connecticut Avenue to provide a safe, comfortable experience for users.
- Develop the blocks along Howard Avenue between Warfield Street and Connecticut Avenue with mixed uses at higher densities and encourage residential uses on upper floors.
- Provide a safe and comfortable crossing for pedestrians at the intersection of Connecticut Avenue and Howard Avenue. Support a signal warrant study by SHA and/or a circulation study.
- Provide a public open space amenities near the train station as private properties redevelop.

Connectivity

- ~~Extend Summit Avenue as a Business District Street with a 60-foot right-of-way and two travel lanes from Plyers Mill Road to Connecticut Avenue, via Farragut Avenue.~~
- ~~Study, with the State Highway Administration, the Department of Transportation, and the Town of Kensington, pedestrian and vehicular circulation north of the CSX right of way to determine the most appropriate connection point for an extended Summit Avenue and to evaluate other improvements that would benefit pedestrian movement across Connecticut Avenue.~~

- ~~Designate Concord Street and Dupont Avenue as Business District Streets with 70-foot rights-of-way.~~
- ~~Designate Howard Avenue east of Connecticut Avenue, Summit Avenue from Howard Avenue to Knowles Avenue, and Kensington Parkway from Howard Avenue to Frederick Avenue as Business District Streets with 70-foot rights-of-way.~~
- Pursue with CSX a ~~potential suitable~~ pedestrian ~~underpass crossing~~ at the train station. ~~A 12-foot wide underpass located to the east of the existing at-grade crossing would be appropriate.~~

Burka Property

The approximately three-acre Burka property, ~~currently zoned C-2~~, has significant redevelopment potential. Development on this site should provide street-level shops along Connecticut, Knowles and Howard Avenues, with residential and/or office above. A significant public open space at the corner of Connecticut and Knowles Avenues would be an appropriate complement to the existing open space at the southeast corner of that intersection. Additional public use space in the form of widened sidewalks that can accommodate café seating is appropriate on Knowles and Howard Avenues. ~~A public-private partnership development to create a public parking component on this site should be explored at the time of redevelopment.~~

This property is recommended for CRT 2.5: C 2.0, R 2.0, H 75.

Huggins Property

The ~~approximately~~ one-acre Huggins property, currently zoned C-2, may also support mixed-use development. Any development should include street-level shops on Connecticut Avenue and Plyers Mill Road. Parking facilities for this property should be to the rear, with access from Plyers Mill Road. Joint development of this property and the adjoining properties to the east, for a single, mixed-use development, would be desirable.

This property is recommended for CRT 2.5: C 2.0, R 2.0, H 75.

Burka Property

Proposed Building Heights

Crafts/Services District

The Crafts/Services District includes the West Howard Antiques District and service industrial activities on the south side of Metropolitan Avenue. Many businesses in this area provide essential services to the area residents. Others, notably the antique shops, have a regional customer base.

The existing zoning (I-1 west of Connecticut Avenue and C-2 along Metropolitan Avenue) does not wholly reflect the mix of light industrial, service retail, and specialty retail activities in this district.

This Plan proposes to preserve this district. Aesthetic and environmental improvements will enhance the area's look and function without compromising its eclectic nature. The portion of this district on the south side of Metropolitan Avenue is recommended for the CRT Zone, with total maximum FARs of 1.5. The West Howard portion of this district should remain in the I-1 Zone.

The district's property pattern, which includes deep lots that support businesses along West Howard Avenue as well as to the rear of the lots, requires deeper setbacks—35 feet maximum from curb to building front—that will accommodate parking in front if desired by property owners. This Plan also recommends front windows and direct entrances from the street to increase pedestrian activity on ~~the~~ streets in the district.

Design

- Introduce sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities west of Connecticut Avenue to provide a safe, comfortable experience for users.
- Evaluate potential for shared uses, including parking, should SHA's West Howard Avenue property redevelop.

Connectivity

- ~~Extend Summit Avenue as a Business District Street with a 60-foot right-of-way and two travel lanes from Plyers Mill Road to Connecticut Avenue, via Farragut Avenue.~~
- ~~Designate Howard Avenue west of Connecticut Avenue as a Business District Street with a 60-foot right-of-way.~~
- ~~Designate Plyers Mill Road between Connecticut and Summit Avenues as a Business District Street with a 70-foot right-of-way.~~
- ~~Designate Metropolitan Avenue as a Business District Street with a 70-foot right-of-way and two travel lanes from Kensington Parkway to Plyers Mill Road. Allow on-street parking on Metropolitan Avenue.~~

West Howard Avenue

West Howard Avenue ~~is burdened by nearly 76 percent impervious cover and it~~ entirely lacks stormwater management. Uncontrolled stormwater cascades down the street slope from the top of West Howard Avenue, ~~near Summit Avenue,~~ to parkland at the base of the avenue ~~towards Beach Drive.~~ At the discharge point, runoff undercuts the forested slope and severely erodes the asphalt and stream buffer.

- Provide stormwater management through innovative environmentally sensitive design (ESD) or low impact development (LID) to encourage groundwater recharge on private property and within rights-of-way. Techniques may include a combination of one or more of the following: infiltration trenches, bioretention, bioswales, permeable pavement, and extended retention.
- Provide on-site quantity control of roof runoff by installing French drains, cisterns, vaults, planting wells, and green roofs. Explore opportunities for local, State, and federal assistance for installing green roofs.
- Reduce imperviousness and institute water pollution control measures in this area. A stormwater management treatment facility on parkland at the foot of West Howard Avenue is not recommended.
- Include tree planting in stormwater treatment areas, where feasible.

Silver Creek

Silver Creek

- Collaborate with the County's Departments of Transportation and Permitting Services and the Town of Kensington to undertake a comprehensive study that will identify ways to eliminate flooding at the culvert under Oberon Street.
- Remove the concrete stream channel in Silver Creek, replacing it with a natural streambed substrate and buffer.

Metropolitan Avenue Area

The north side of Metropolitan Avenue is a mix of neighborhood retail and office uses with service uses **some of which** are included in the Crafts/Services District. The area is largely in the C-2 Zone, although uses include some light industrial activities. Much of the area consists of single-story buildings, although topography in some areas allows some buildings to mix one- and two-story portions. Floor area ratios in this area are in the 0.5 range, **with the exception of although** the self-storage facility at 3700 Plyers Mill Road at **approximately** 1.5 FAR.

This Plan recommends the CRT Zone for 3700 Plyers Mill Road, as noted below. For the rest of the north side of Metropolitan Avenue, this Plan recommends CRN 1.5: C 1.5, R 1.5, H 45. The remainder of this area is recommended for CRT 1.5: C 1.5, R 1.5, H 60.

Concept Goal: Create a mixed residential and commercial thoroughfare with a distinct pedestrian orientation on both sides of Metropolitan Avenue. While residential uses may predominate, some retail activity on the north side of the street is appropriate.

Connectivity

- ~~Extend Lexington Street to Metropolitan Avenue, with a 60-foot right-of-way.~~

Environment

~~As property redevelops, it Redeveloping properties should use the~~

- Use environmental incentives in the CRT Zones on redeveloping properties to provide a variety of landscaping options to provide tree planting, infiltration, energy efficiency, water conservation, stormwater treatment, and layered landscaping.

3700 Plyers Mill Road LLC Property

This approximately 3.6-acre property, at the intersection of Metropolitan Avenue and Plyers Mill Road in the C-2 Zone, is close to the MARC station and offers a significant opportunity for a largely residential project, if it redevelops. Single-family attached units are appropriate along Plyers Mill Road, where they would face an existing one-family neighborhood. Multifamily units could be placed in the site's interior, with some retail uses along Metropolitan Avenue, where they would face retail and crafts/services uses across the street and along the Plan's proposed extension of Lexington Avenue. An open space should be provided at the intersection of Metropolitan Avenue and Plyers Mill Road. The Plan recommends CRT 2.0: C 1.0, R 1.5, H 60.

Konterra Property

Konterra Limited Partnership Property

The Town plans to use a portion of this former concrete plant for additional commuter parking and for other civic uses. This Plan's recommended CSX pedestrian ~~underpass-crossing~~ should be located on a portion of this property. This Plan recommends the CRT Zone to accommodate redevelopment of the portion not used for parking and civic space. Revitalization in this area should incorporate additional open space and use best management practices for stormwater management.

This property is recommended for CRT 1.5: C 1.5, R 1.5, H 60.

Connecticut Avenue/University Boulevard Area

This neighborhood commercial area is bounded by Connecticut Avenue, University Boulevard, Perry Avenue, and Lawrence Avenue. It is in the C-1 and C-2 Zones, and is largely made up of auto-oriented retail centers, with adjacent surface parking. Buildings are largely single story, although there are small office buildings with several floors of space. Floor area ratios are in the range of 0.5 to 1.0.

Stubbs Property

This approximately 1.2-acre property, now a neighborhood shopping center, is currently zoned C-1. This property is in single ownership and is suitable for mixed uses. Its location at the gateway to Kensington makes it suitable for additional height.

This Plan proposes CRT 2.0: C 1.5, R 1.5, H 60 for the Stubbs property and the rest of the block bounded by Connecticut Avenue, University Boulevard, Decatur Avenue, and Perry Street. Except for some single-family houses along Lawrence Avenue, the remaining properties in this district are recommended for CRN 1.0, C 1.0, R 0.5, H 45 to provide a transition to the residential neighborhoods to the north (page ~~34~~X).

Other Areas

Ken-Gar

Ken-Gar is ~~an~~ historically African-American community of about one hundred homes lying north of the CSX right-of-way and west of Connecticut Avenue. The 1978 Plan incorporated a community renewal plan created by Ken-Gar residents and Montgomery County government. The 1978 Plan made land use and zoning recommendations that furthered the goals of the renewal plan.

Ken-Gar is a stable residential community. This Plan confirms the existing land uses and zoning. It recommends that the neighborhood be evaluated for inclusion on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and that its community center, a Rosenwald school built in the late 1920s, be evaluated as an individual historic resource.

Housing Opportunities Commission Property

The Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) maintains its administrative offices in a former elementary school on Detrick Avenue. The property lies between the Town Center and the largely historic residential blocks west of Connecticut Avenue and is in the R-60 Zone. The County is currently evaluating sites for a recreation center in the Kensington area. Should HOC decide to move its administrative activities, ~~and should it not be needed for educational purposes~~, this property is suitable for recreation. Open space on the property could be used for informal recreation and for such community-building activities as community gardens. The property should remain in a residential zone, which will allow recreational uses or, if there are no recreational needs in this area, allow residential development that is compatible with the existing residential community to the south. ~~This Plan recommends constructing a pedestrian path on the property to connect Summit and Detrick Avenues and improve links to the adjacent residential community.~~

- Provide a pedestrian path on the property to connect Summit and Detrick Avenues and improve links to the adjacent residential community.

implementation

Zoning

Recommendations for the Town Center, Metropolitan Avenue and University/Connecticut districts will be implemented through use of ~~Commercial Residential (CR) zones~~ **CRT and CRN Zones**, to encourage mixed-use development and promote increased diversity of housing choice, environmentally sound buildings, active streets that connect communities, and innovative design.

These **CR** zones are designed to:

- implement the goals and objectives of applicable master and sector plans
- target opportunities for the redevelopment of commercial strips and surface parking lots with a **sustainable** mix of uses
- reduce auto dependence by encouraging development that integrates a combination of housing types, mobility options, services, and amenities
- encourage an appropriate balance of employment and housing opportunities and compatible relationships with adjoining neighborhoods
- provide certainty with regard to maximum density and building height in each zone while allowing flexibility in site design and mix of uses
- define the facilities and amenities required by private development to support the allowed optional method densities and heights **in the CRT Zones**.

The **CRT** Zones provide both a standard and an optional method of development. The standard method limits overall density to a 1.50 FAR. The optional method creates incentives to provide public amenities and benefits, thereby earning additional density. Projects in the redevelopment areas proposed **for CRT Zones** in this Plan can also achieve additional density using the optional method because of their proximity to the MARC station or well-served public transit.

The **CRT and CRN** Zones require public use space for **all** development of **certain size and configuration**. Public use spaces may be privately owned but must be accessible to the public, ~~–The public use space and~~ should be located on site. This Plan assumes that much of the public space system will be obtained through this requirement.

In addition to public use space, the **CRT** Zones require optional method projects to provide public facilities and amenities on-site, or contribute an equivalent amount to an off-site amenity project. In Kensington, creating open space, providing active recreation space, and reconstructing the existing public streets to accommodate pedestrians and street trees are important public facilities and amenities that benefit the entire Plan area.

The Planning Board must adopt urban design guidelines to help implement this Plan. The ~~guidelines provide detailed information on street classifications, types~~

~~and functions, building form, orientation and massing and open space. They~~ are designed to guide developers, regulatory reviewers and the Planning Board as they design, analyze and approve projects devised over the life of this Plan. The ~~CRT zones proposed for this Plan~~ **CRT Zones** require ~~new optional~~ method projects to address design guidelines during ~~their development~~ the site plan review process.

Priority Retail Streets

The figure on page ~~30X~~ shows ~~priority~~ desired retail streets proposed in this Plan. This designation reflects the Plan's fundamental goal of enlivening the Town Center by creating a lively, pedestrian-centered atmosphere on Kensington's shopping streets. New and revitalization projects on these streets should ~~provide street-facing retail on these streets and~~ pay particular attention to the street-oriented development guidelines put forth in this plan and ~~in~~ the accompanying Design Guidelines.

Parking

This Plan endorses creation by the Town of a parking district or shared parking program, which would, with the cooperation of landowners, enable redevelopment projects in the Town Center to draw on existing parking spaces for all or part of their parking requirements. To encourage redevelopment in parts of Kensington with significant numbers of individually owned small lots, this Plan encourages use of CR zone provisions that allow parking requirements to be met in a variety of ways, including on-street, shared and other forms of publicly available parking.

The Zoning Ordinance also provides for waivers of parking requirements. In the commercial portions of the Historic District, waivers of parking requirements should be considered as one way to maintain historic character while encouraging revitalization and redevelopment. Other areas recommended in this Plan for mixed-use development ~~in the CR zones~~ are predominantly made up of smaller lots that have many separate owners. Revitalization in these areas could benefit from shared parking arrangements or parking waivers, which could allow well-designed redevelopment on small lots, enable modest mixing of uses and provide appropriate levels of parking in a cooperative arrangement.

More broadly, the Plan recommends that the Town explore ways to construct parking structures in appropriate locations. ~~A public parking facility west~~ **Public parking facilities on both the east and west sides** of Connecticut Avenue, ~~perhaps as part of a new project on the Burka property,~~ could support revitalization in ~~the Town that area~~. Resolution of parking issues and provision of significant amounts of new or shared spaces would provide the most important public benefit of Kensington's revitalization.

Regulatory Review

Article 28 of the Annotated Code of Maryland governs the activities of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. This article includes provisions that affect land use and zoning decisions made in the Town of Kensington. ~~Section 7.117.2 and Section 8.112.2 of Article 28 outline those provisions.~~ Section 7.117.2 requires applications for regulatory review to be referred to the Town for its review and comment and, for resubdivision applications, requires two-thirds majority votes of the Planning Board to override a Town recommendation of denial. Section 8.112.2 requires two-thirds majority votes of the Planning Board and County Council to take actions on land use planning or zoning that are contrary to resolutions approved by the Town’s Mayor and Council.

Public Schools

The Sector Plan area is located in the Walter Johnson High School Cluster. Kensington-Parkwood Elementary School, located just outside the Plan area, and North Bethesda Middle School, serve area residents. Development proposed by this Plan is not expected to result in the need for additional schools. ~~In the event that an additional school is needed, Montgomery County Public Schools could consider reopening the former Kensington Elementary School to accommodate development proposed for White Flint.~~

Libraries

Kensington is served by the Kensington Park Library and the Noyes Library for Young Children. The Kensington Park Library serves Kensington, Garrett Park, and the adjacent communities. The 16,000 square foot facility opened in 1969 and underwent renovation during the 1990s. The historic Noyes Library, considered the oldest “public” library in the metropolitan area, was built in 1893 and is open part-time to serve children less than five years old and their parents. It is located on Carroll Place in the heart of the historic district.

This Plan recognizes that land use recommendations in White Flint may have an impact on demand at Kensington Park Library.

Public Safety

The existing and proposed development in the Plan area would be adequately served by the existing facilities. No additional facilities would be needed to accommodate the development proposed in the Plan.

Capital Improvements

Capital improvement projects are necessary to implement the Plan’s recommendations for new road connections and for major improvements to stormwater management systems. Innovative, cooperative pilot projects for low impact stormwater management will require public funding as well. Should the

Town create a parking district, additional taxes will need to be levied.

The Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs is currently exploring streetscape, building façade, and stormwater management improvements for West Howard Avenue, in the Crafts/Services District. Capital improvement projects may be created to put the Department's recommendations and initiatives into place.

| 10 Desired Retail Streets and Open Spaces

| 11 Existing Zones

| 12 Proposed Zones

The CR Zones are based on a total allowed floor area ratio (FAR), maximum non-residential FAR, maximum residential FAR, and maximum building height.

| [13](#) Proposed CR Zones

| [Proposed14](#) Bikeways

County Wide Table 2 Countywide and Local Bikeways

Countywide Bikeways					
Route Number	Name	Type	Plan Limits	Status	Description
SR-17	Connecticut Ave Corridor	Signed, shared roadway and wide sidewalks	Plan Boundary to Kensington Pkwy	Proposed	Connects Plan area to Matthew Henson Trail. Includes segment with wide sidewalk across east side of CSX Bridge
SR-18	Knowles Ave-Strathmore Ave	Signed, shared roadway	Plan Boundary to Connecticut Ave	Proposed	Provides important connection to Grosvenor Metro Station and Beach Drive-Rock Creek Park trail; requires only signage improvements
SR-24	Plyers Mill Rd	Signed, shared roadway	Rock Creek Park (via Ken Gar Park) to Plan Boundary	Proposed Section of trail exists in Ken Gar Park	Part of connection from Kensington to Wheaton CBD as well as between Rock Creek Park and Trail and Kensington MARC. MARC connection would be provided via Saint Paul Street and redevelopment of the cement plant along Metropolitan Avenue
SR-29	Kensington Pkwy	Signed, shared roadway	Plan Boundary to Howard Ave	Proposed	Important connection to Rock Creek Trail and Beach Drive from Town of Kensington Provides alternative to Connecticut Avenue, connects to Jones Bridge Road bikeway, requires signage improvements
SR-54	Summit Ave-Cedar Ave	Signed, shared roadway	Plan Boundary to Plyers Mill Rd	Proposed	Important on-road connection from Kensington to NIH and Bethesda

Local Bikeways

Route Number	Name	Type	Plan Limits	Status	Description
B-1	Connecticut Avenue	Shared Use Path	Plan Boundary to Howard Avenue	Proposed r.o.w. in place Wide sidewalks may suffice in Town Center area	West side of road Connects Town Center to northwest quadrant of Kensington
B-2	Summit Avenue	Signed, shared roadway	Plyers Mill Road to Connecticut Avenue	Proposed	Important on road connection from Kensington to NIH and Bethesda
B-3	Knowles Avenue-Armory Avenue	Signed, shared roadway	Connecticut Avenue to Howard Avenue	Proposed	Connects two County wide bikeways in Town Center
B-4	Kent Street	Signed, shared roadway	Kensington Parkway to Plan Boundary	Proposed	
B-5	Metropolitan Avenue	Signed, shared roadway	Plan Boundary to Plyers Mill (via Lexington extension)	Proposed	
B-6	Saint Paul Street	Signed, shared roadway	Howard Avenue-Montgomery Avenue to University Blvd.	Proposed	Section of Saint Paul Street, classified as historic

| [15](#) Highway Classifications

Table 3 Master Plan of Highways Roadway Classifications

Plan Road Number	Name/Route Number	Limits	ROW	Travel Lanes	Target Speed	Design Std.
Major Highways						
M-7	Connecticut Ave/MD 185	Plan Boundaries	120'	6D	30 mph	2008.01
M-19	University Blvd West/MD 193	Connecticut Ave to Plan Boundary	120'	6D	30 mph	2008.01
Arterials						
A-62	Plyers Mill Rd	Plan Boundary to Metropolitan Ave	80'	2	25 mph	as built
A-62	Plyers Mill Rd/MD 192	Connecticut Ave to Metropolitan Ave	100'	2	25 mph	2004.05
A-66	Knowles Ave/MD 547	Summit Ave to Connecticut Ave	80'	2	30 mph	2004.01
A-67	Summit Ave	Cedar Ln to Knowles Ave	80'	2	25 mph	2004.02
Business District Streets						
B-1	Plyers Mill Rd	Summit Ave to Connecticut Ave	70'	2	25 mph	2005.02
B-2	Summit Ave	Knowles Ave to Plyers Mill Rd	70'	2	25 mph	2005.02
B-3	Summit Ave extension	Plyers Mill Rd to Farragut Ave (to Connecticut Ave)	60'	2	25 mph	2005.01
B-4	Metropolitan Ave/MD 192	Plyers Mill Rd to Capitol View Ave	70'	2	30 mph	2005.02
B-5	Lexington Ave extension	Metropolitan Ave to Plyers Mill Rd	60'	1	25 mph	2005.01
B-6	Howard Ave	Connecticut Ave to Knowles Ave	60'	2	25 mph	2005.02
B-7	Howard Ave	Kensington Pkwy to Connecticut Ave	60'	2	25 mph	2005.01
B-8	Concord St	Plyers Mill Rd to University Blvd	70'	2	25 mph	2005.02
B-9	Dupont Ave	Connecticut Ave to Nash Pl	70'	2	25 mph	2005.02
B-10	Kensington Pkwy	Howard Ave to Frederick Ave	60'	2	25 mph	2005.01
Primary Residential Streets						
P-1	Newport Mill Rd	University Blvd to Parker Ave	70'	2	30 mph	2003.01
P-2	Kensington Pkwy	Kensington Pkwy	60'	2	25 mph	2005.01
P-4	Kensington Pkwy	Kensington Pkwy	70'	2	30 mph	2003.01
P-6	Saint Paul St	Metropolitan Ave to Plyers Mill Rd	70'	2	25 mph	as built

Notes:

- Travel lanes are through lanes and don't include turning, parking, acceleration, deceleration or other auxiliary lanes.
- The Lexington Avenue extension is proposed to be one-way, northbound to reduce the travel lanes on Metropolitan Avenue to the west.
- The Saint Paul Street right-of-way is a designated historic district.

The Plan Process~~A master or sector~~

A plan provides comprehensive recommendations for the use of public and private land. Each plan reflects a vision of the future that responds to the unique character of the local community within the context of a countywide perspective. Together with relevant policies, plans should be referred to by public officials and private individuals when making land use decisions.

The Plan Process

The PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT PLAN is the formal proposal to amend an adopted master plan or sector plan. Its recommendations are not necessarily those of the Planning Board; it is prepared for the purpose of receiving public testimony. The Planning Board holds a public hearing and receives testimony, after which it holds public worksessions to review the testimony and revise the Public Hearing Draft Plan as appropriate. When the Planning Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Planning Board Draft Plan.

The PLANNING BOARD DRAFT PLAN is the Board's recommended Plan and reflects their revisions to the Public Hearing Draft Plan. The Regional District Act requires the Planning Board to transmit a sector plan to the County Council with copies to the County Executive who must, within sixty days, prepare and transmit a fiscal impact analysis of the Planning Board Draft Plan to the County Council. The County Executive may also forward to the County Council other comments and recommendations.

After receiving the Executive's fiscal impact analysis and comments, the County Council holds a public hearing to receive public testimony. After the hearing record is closed, the Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee holds public worksessions to review the testimony and makes recommendations to the County Council. The Council holds its own worksessions, then adopts a resolution approving the Planning Board Draft Plan, as revised.

After Council approval, the plan is forwarded to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for adoption. Once adopted by the Commission, the plan officially amends the master plans, functional plans, and sector plans cited in the Commission's adoption resolution.

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Phil Andrews
Marc Elrich
Nancy Floreen
Michael Knapp
George L. Leventhal
Nancy Navarro
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County Executive

Isiah Leggett

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Samuel J. Parker, Jr., Chairman
Francoise Carrier, Vice Chairman

Commissioners

Montgomery County
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Bar code 6110000015

(cd 6110000016)

Add date: June 2006

Add logo

kensington and vicinity sector plan
Planning Board Draft

The Maryland-National Capital
Park and Montgomery County Planning
Commission Department
M-NCPPC

