



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

July 18, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Glenn Kreger, Acting Chief, Area 2 Planning Division *GK*
Khalid Afzal, Team Leader, East County Team, Area 2 Planning Division *KA*

FROM: Michael Brown, Senior Planner/Designer (301/495-4566) *MB*
East County Team, Area 2 Planning Division

SUBJECT: Draft Urban Design Guidelines for the Kensington Sector Plan

RECOMMENDATION: Review and approve the Draft Urban Design Guidelines for the Kensington Sector Plan

Summary

The purpose of the Urban Design Guidelines is to illustrate how key design related recommendations of the Sector Plan might be addressed. They will also serve to clarify general design expectations and most importantly, to provide applicants and staff with a framework for project review, and a tool to help achieve an enhanced public realm in Kensington.

Organization

Planning staff has continued to refine the organizational structure of the guidelines, which are organized in four sections:

- Section 1: Introduction – Purpose and limitations of the guidelines
- Section 2: Context – Relationship to Sector Plan, description of issues
- Section 3: Guidelines – Goals and strategies to achieve them
- Section 4: Resources – County Code and other relevant information that would be useful for implementation purposes

Outreach

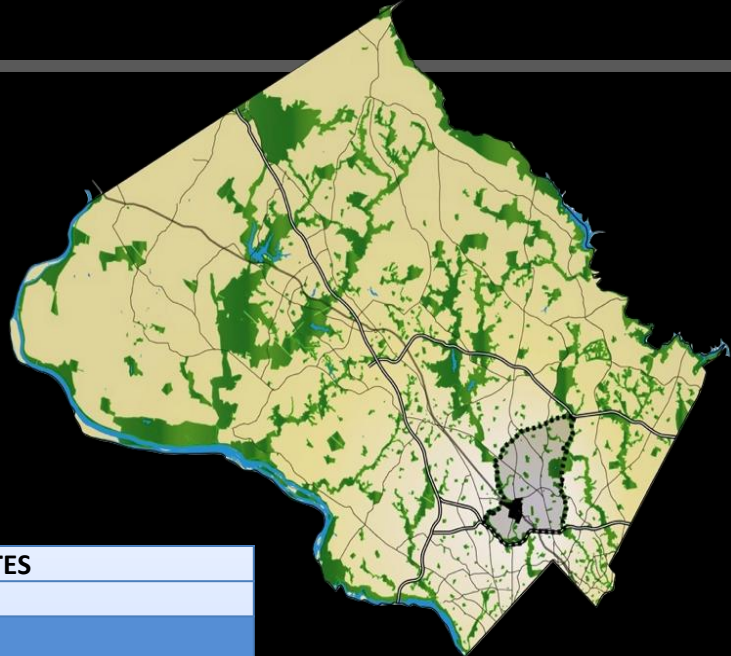
Staff presented the draft guidelines to the Town of Kensington Mayor and Revitalization Committee July 12. A meeting before the Mayor and Town Council is scheduled for July 25. We will continue to work with the Town and interested parties on the preparation of the Urban Design Guidelines for the Kensington Sector Plan between now and the approval of the Sector Plan by the County Council. Thereafter, staff will prepare the guidelines for final review and approval by the Planning Board.

MB:ha: M:\AREA 2\Brown, Michael\Kensington UDG Cover.docx
Attachment: Draft Kensington Urban Design Guidelines (Power Point Presentation)



KENSINGTON

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES



schedule

DATE	TASK	DELIVERABLE	NOTES
July 12	Town of Kensington (TOK) Revitalization Committee	POWERPOINT STORYBOARD – REVISED	
July 21	Planning Board Packet	Memo and PPT	
July 25	TOK Council Meeting	POWERPOINT STORYBOARD – REVISED	
July 28	Planning Board Meeting	POWERPOINT STORYBOARD – REVISED	
August 12	Document Production		
September 2	Draft Document Post to Website	PDF – DRAFT	

Section **ONE**: Introduction

Section **TWO**: Context

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

Section **FOUR**: Resources





Section **ONE**: Introduction



PURPOSE

- To illustrate how Sector Plan recommendations and principles might be satisfied
- To inform applicants of design expectations and provide resources to accomplish it
- To provide staff with a framework for review and a basis for obtaining enhanced design and related amenities.



LIMITATIONS

The Urban Design Guidelines:

- **DO NOT** substitute for zoning code requirements
- **ARE** subordinate to “higher” regulatory mechanisms
- **DO NOT** amend recommendations of the Sector Plan
- **DO NOT** set architectural styles
- **ARE ONLY** applicable during discretionary reviews



LIMITATIONS

The Urban Design Guidelines:

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COUNTY CODE

for example

- Zoning Ordinance
- Forest Conservation Law
- Subdivision Regulations
- Signage Ordinance

Sector Plan

Urban Design Guidelines

Section **TWO**: Context





Sector Plan Area



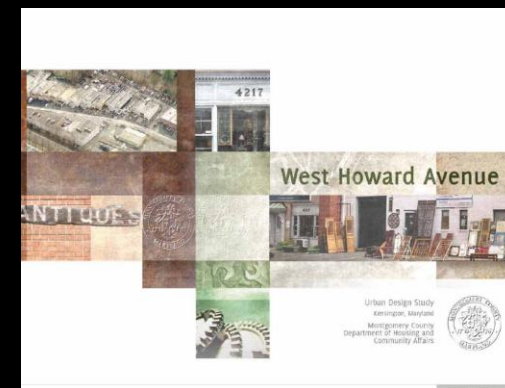
Sector Plan Area

- Historic District



Sector Plan Area

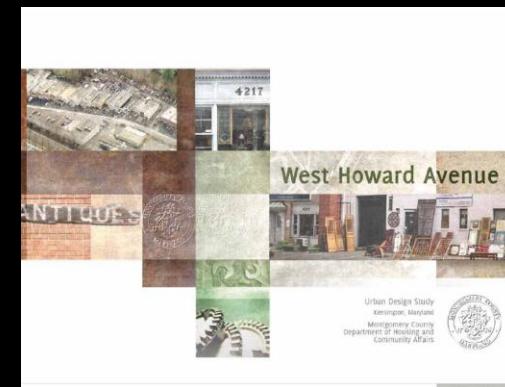
- Historic District
- West Howard Avenue Urban Design Study





Sector Plan Area

- Historic District
- West Howard Avenue Urban Design Study
- Single Family Development

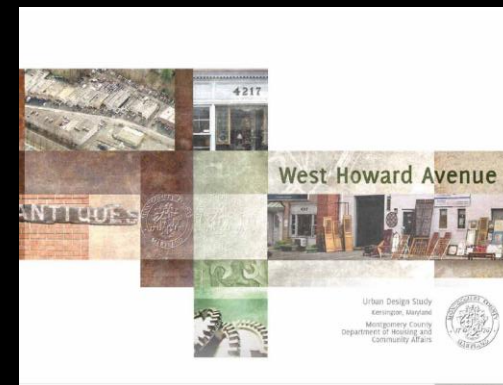




Sector Plan Area

- Historic District
- West Howard Avenue Urban Design Study
- Single Family Development

Guideline Emphasis:
Areas of zoning changes



GENERAL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS are not site specific. They are applicable on all locations with the purpose of transforming transitional suburban development into active neighborhood centers. Their goal is to encourage building design for pedestrians and the creation of attractive gathering places. General considerations include:

Buildings

Streets

Open Space

Section TWO: Context

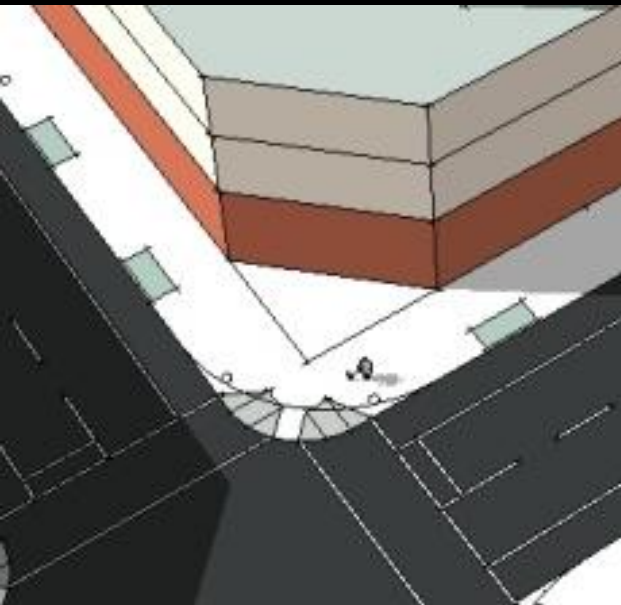
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- Promote urban environments
- Create consistent street walls
- Conceal parking

Streets

Open Space



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- Create consistent street walls
- Conceal parking

Streets

- Create active pedestrian environments
- Promote pedestrian safety
- Encourage undergrounding of utilities

Open Space



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Buildings

- Promote urban environments
- Create consistent street walls
- Conceal parking

Streets

- Create active pedestrian environments
- Promote pedestrian safety
- Encourage undergrounding of utilities

Open Space

- Create networks of open spaces
- Create activated gathering spaces
- Promote consolidation





Sector Plan Design Concepts

- Enhance Connecticut Avenue and University Boulevard with mixed uses and provide better safety and function for all modes of transportation.
- Develop Howard Avenue as an active, pedestrian-friendly street, generating active street life.
- Create a mixed residential and commercial thoroughfare along Metropolitan Avenue.



Development Opportunities



Design Goals

- Emphasize pedestrian connections.
- Relate to the scale and context of existing residential neighborhoods.
- Design buildings that strengthen the public realm.
- Preserve, enhance and create local character.

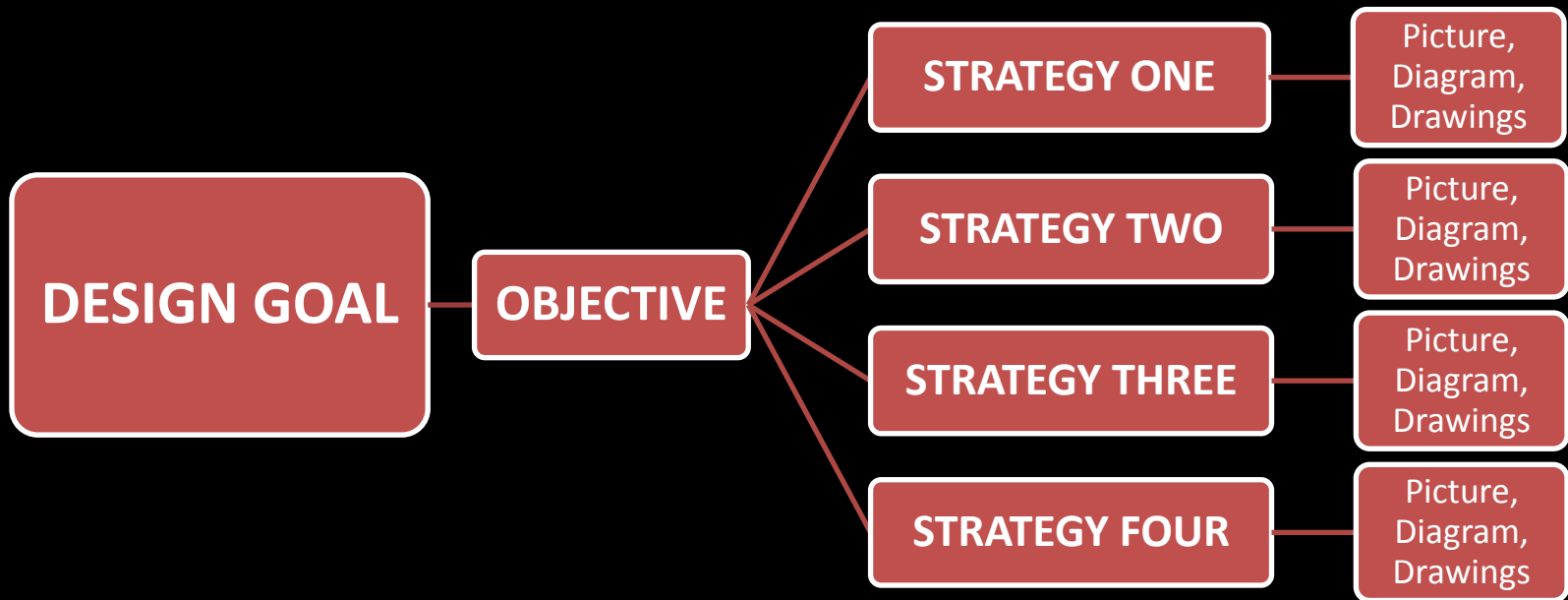


KENSINGTON

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

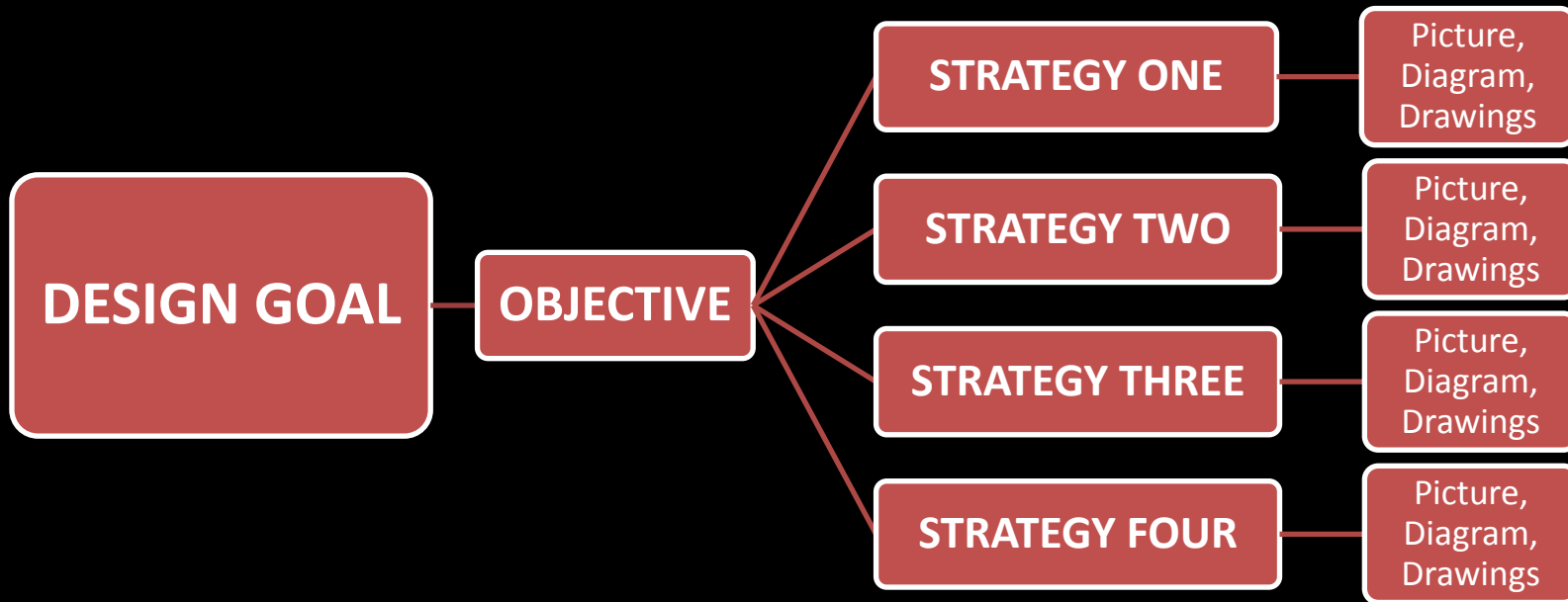
Section **THREE**: Guidelines





GOAL:
OBJECTIVE:

STRATEGIES:



GOAL: EMPHASIZE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

OBJECTIVE: Create a high-quality pedestrian network system

STRATEGIES:

1. Provide direct and safe routes for pedestrian travel.
2. Design intersections to provide safe crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists.
3. Ensure accessibility and enjoyment for users of all ages and ranges of mobile abilities.
4. Introduce elements of nature to soften the hardscape.
5. Incorporate amenities and attractions for pedestrians.
6. Provide street-activating uses.

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: EMPHASIZE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

OBJECTIVE: Create a high-quality pedestrian network system

1. Provide direct and safe routes for pedestrian travel

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Developing defined zones of sidewalk: building frontage zone, movement zone, planting/street furniture zone, and curb.



Connecticut Avenue near Plyers Mill Rd



West Howard along Burka Property

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

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Illustration of strategy at West Howard along Burka Property

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Illustration of strategy at West Howard along Burka Property

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GOAL: EMPHASIZE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

OBJECTIVE: Create a high-quality pedestrian network system

1. Provide direct and safe routes for pedestrian travel

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Providing ample landscaping to screen and buffer the vehicular zone abutting the public right-of-way.



Example of suitable landscape buffer along Georgia Avenue



Existing condition along Plyers Mill Road at Higgins Property

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

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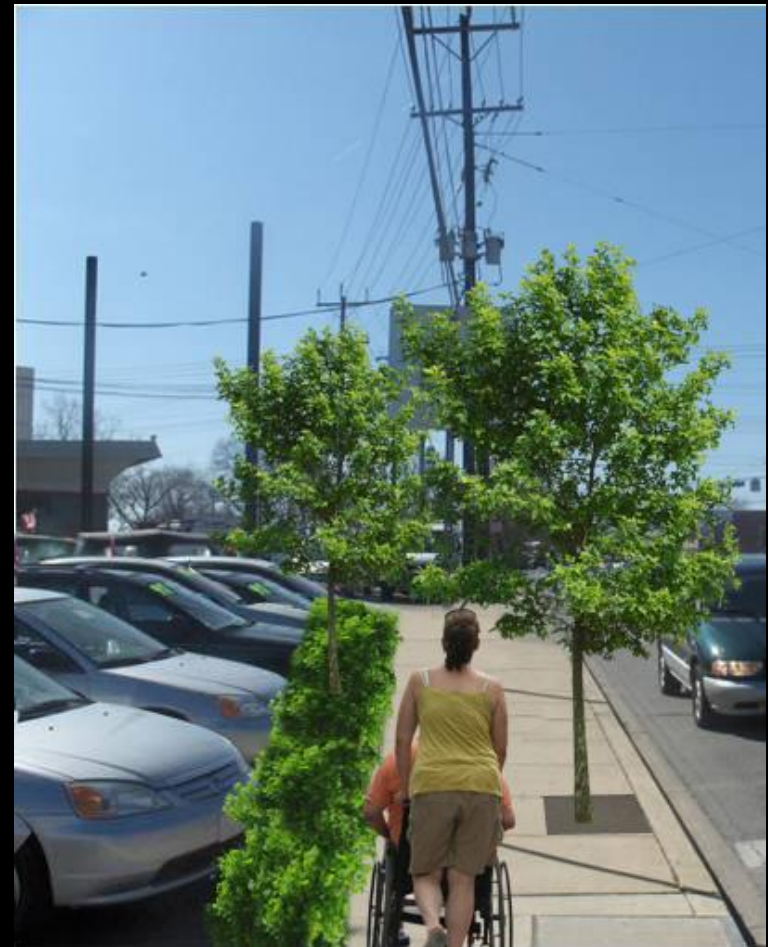


Illustration of improvements along Plyers Mill Road

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: EMPHASIZE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

OBJECTIVE: Create a high-quality pedestrian network system

4. Introduce elements of nature to soften the hardscape

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Using trees, understory plantings, and above-ground plantings

Increasing tree canopy cover along streets and within medians to provide shade for pedestrians



Understory plantings at Howard Park



Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: EMPHASIZE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

OBJECTIVE: Create a high-quality pedestrian network system

5. Incorporate amenities and attractions for pedestrians

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Projections such as awnings and canopies are encouraged. They provide weather protection for pedestrians and strengthen the image of individual businesses.



Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: EMPHASIZE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

OBJECTIVE: Create a high-quality pedestrian network system

5. Incorporate amenities and attractions for pedestrians

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Displaying goods for sale outside of a storefront is an excellent technique to add visual interest to the street.



Vendors along Antique Row



Vendors along Antique Row

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: EMPHASIZE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

OBJECTIVE: Create a high-quality pedestrian network system

5. Incorporate amenities and attractions for pedestrians

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Maintaining line of building facades and storefronts to define sidewalk edge.

Incorporating display windows to encourage stopping and browsing.



Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: EMPHASIZE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

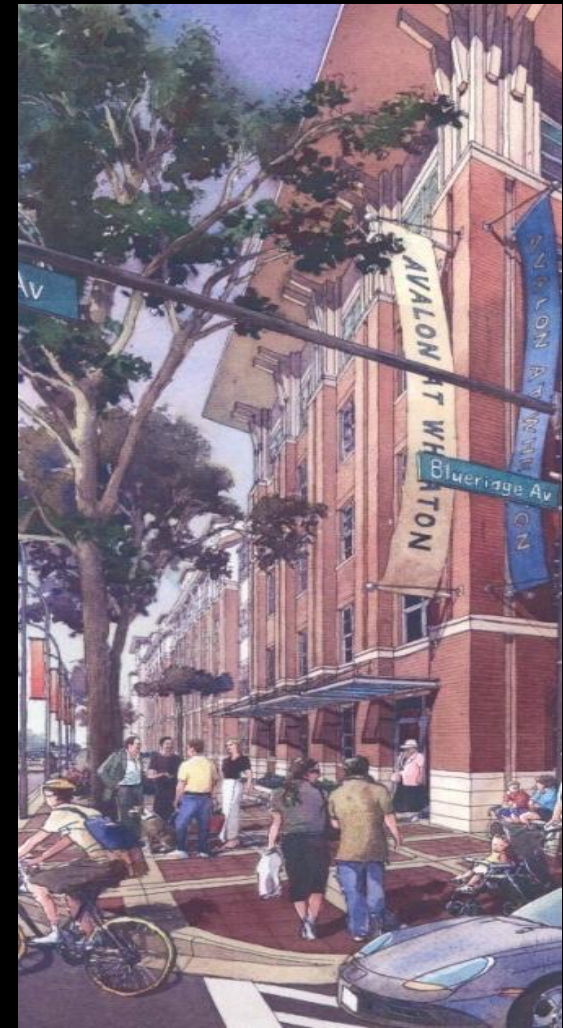
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Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: EMPHASIZE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

OBJECTIVE: Create a high-quality pedestrian network system

6. Provide street-activating uses

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Locating street-activating uses along the principal streets. They are also encouraged along some adjacent streets.

Encouraging outdoor eating. Such spaces should be well defined with railing and/or planters.



— Preferred building lines with activate street edges



Safeway Kensington along Armory Avenue

K

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

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Safeway Kensington along Armory Avenue

GOAL: EMPHASIZE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

OBJECTIVE: Create public use space where neighbors socialize

STRATEGIES:

1. Make space inviting at the sidewalk.
2. Locate space in areas of high visibility.
3. Incorporate seating.
4. Design flexible space to accommodate a variety of activities

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: EMPHASIZE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

OBJECTIVE: Create public use space where neighbors socialize

1. Make space inviting at the sidewalk

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:



Walls and planting should not block or screen space from the sidewalk.

Space should be at grade with the sidewalk. Elevation changes can create barriers.

Ensure accessibility and enjoyment for users of all ages and ranges of mobile abilities.

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: EMPHASIZE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

OBJECTIVE: Create public use space where neighbors socialize

2. Locate open space in areas of high visibility

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:



Public use open space should be in highly visible locations that are animated by adjacent land uses. Location should provide opportunities for casual monitoring from its perimeter and abutting developments.

Public use open space should not be in areas continuously shaded by surrounding buildings.

Lighting should be provided for visibility.

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: EMPHASIZE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

OBJECTIVE: Create public use space where neighbors socialize

3. Incorporate seating

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:



Incorporate seating in choice locations: near building entrances, in shade, in sun, toward street, near activity/amenity.

A variety of seating types: single/couple/groups; fixed and moveable.

Comfortable.

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: EMPHASIZE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

OBJECTIVE: Create public use space where neighbors socialize

4. Design flexible space to accommodate a variety of activities

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Provide infrastructure to support events (electrical, water supply, lighting).

Provide amenities appropriate for the size and program(s) (water features, game tables, play equipment, kiosks, tables).

Drinking fountains and waste receptacles are practical, essential amenities.

Interactive public art is an effective way to activate small spaces.



Barren plaza at 10401 Connecticut Avenue

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: EMPHASIZE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

OBJECTIVE: Create public use space where neighbors socialize

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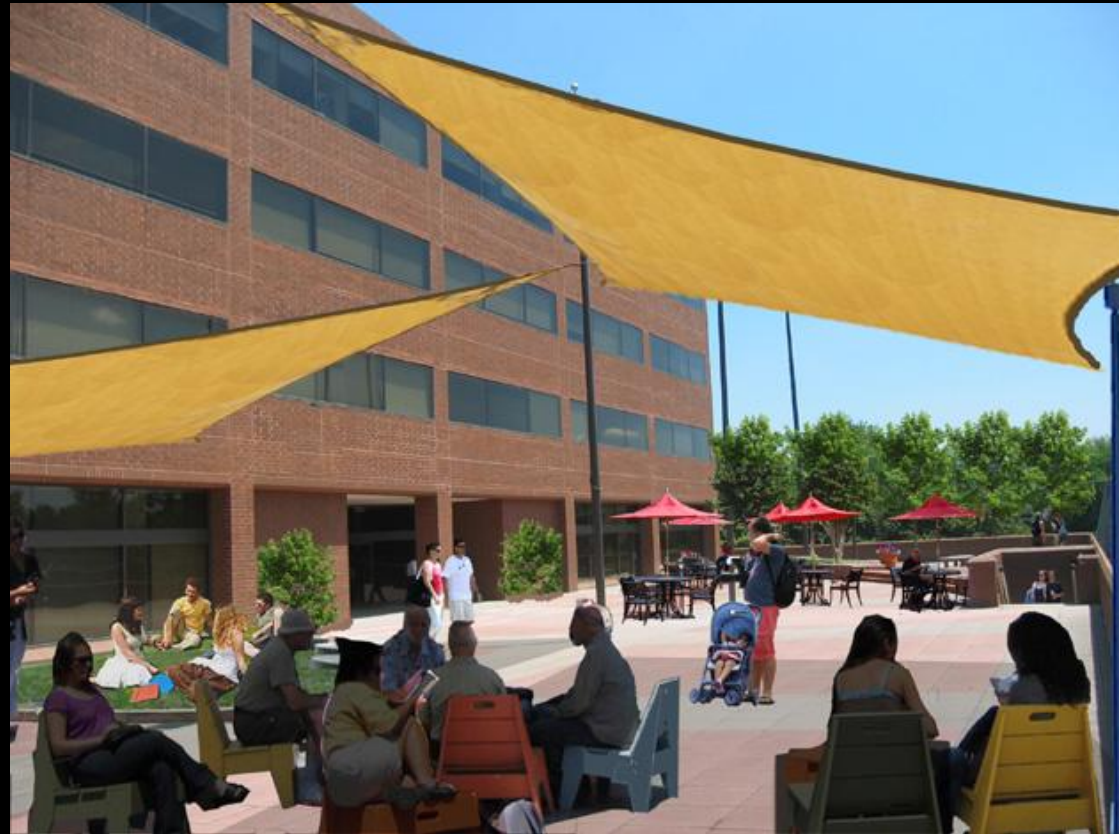


Illustration of 10401 Connecticut Avenue

GOAL: DESIGN BUILDING FORMS TO SUPPORT PUBLIC REALM

OBJECTIVE: Design structures that enhance the pedestrian experience

STRATEGIES:

1. Orient building elements to face the sidewalk.
2. Consider building massing along sidewalk.
3. Reduce the visual impact of auto-oriented uses.

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: DESIGN BUILDING FORMS TO SUPPORT PUBLIC REALM

OBJECTIVE: Design structures that enhance the pedestrian experience

1. Orient building elements to face the sidewalk

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Providing the main entrance of buildings directly from the street. Entries can be articulated through the use of building massing, special architectural features, or changes in the roof line.

Providing an entrance to portions of the building above the ground floor shall be through a street level entrance.



Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: DESIGN BUILDING FORMS TO SUPPORT PUBLIC REALM

OBJECTIVE: Design structures that enhance the pedestrian experience

2. Consider building massing along the sidewalk

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

For scale and visual interest, break down building mass into a hierarchy of volumes. Avoid creating large monolithic structures.

Considering a building entry, additional building massing, or distinctive architectural elements at the corner.



Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: DESIGN BUILDING FORMS TO SUPPORT PUBLIC REALM

OBJECTIVE: Design structures that enhance the pedestrian experience

3. Reduce the visual impact of auto-oriented uses

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Using consolidated, shared underground parking or parking structures over surface parking lots.

Locating parking facilities in the rear or side yard with vehicular access from side streets. Parking structures facing the street should have active ground level uses with pedestrian details.

Providing vegetative layering screening through green roofs, rooftop gardens and green walls.



Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: DESIGN BUILDING FORMS TO SUPPORT PUBLIC REALM

OBJECTIVE: Design structures that enhance the pedestrian experience

3. Reduce the visual impact of auto-oriented uses

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:



Connecticut Avenue

Locating gas station structures such as convenience stores and car washes close to the street help to define the street edge.

Providing an entrance with transparent windows and doors from street sidewalk.

Using clear windows for car wash facades facing public streets. They animate the street with interesting interior views into the car wash.

Providing wide landscaped buffers to separate parking areas, driveways and stacking lanes from the sidewalk. Trees, shrubs, and low planting walls should be used to screen the visibility of cars.

Providing ground mounted monumental signs are preferred over signs on the station canopy.

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

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GOAL: RELATE TO THE SCALE AND CONTEXT OF EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS

OBJECTIVE: New development should respect the character of residential neighborhoods

STRATEGIES:

1. Building massing and orientation should step down to transition to smaller-scaled buildings.
2. Shadows and lighting glare should be mitigated on neighboring residential buildings.

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: RELATE TO THE SCALE AND CONTEXT OF EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS

OBJECTIVE: New development should respect the character of residential neighborhoods

1. Building massing and orientation should step down to transition to smaller-scaled buildings

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Maintain compatible height with adjacent and confronting buildings.



Newer development adjacent to existing structure along Howard Avenue

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: RELATE TO THE SCALE AND CONTEXT OF EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS

OBJECTIVE: New development should respect the character of residential neighborhoods

1. Building massing and orientation should step down to transition to smaller-scaled buildings

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Open space can provide a transition between differing uses and building heights.



Reinhart Park between BCTGM Union building and structures along Armory Avenue



70' height approx
Reinhart Park

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: RELATE TO THE SCALE AND CONTEXT OF EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS

OBJECTIVE: New development should respect the character of residential neighborhoods

1. Building massing and orientation should step down to transition to smaller-scaled buildings

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Infill and redevelopment of properties located directly opposite of historic district resources, including Warner Street and Armory Avenue, should consider scale, massing and setback.



Illustration of transition development along Warner Street

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: RELATE TO THE SCALE AND CONTEXT OF EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS

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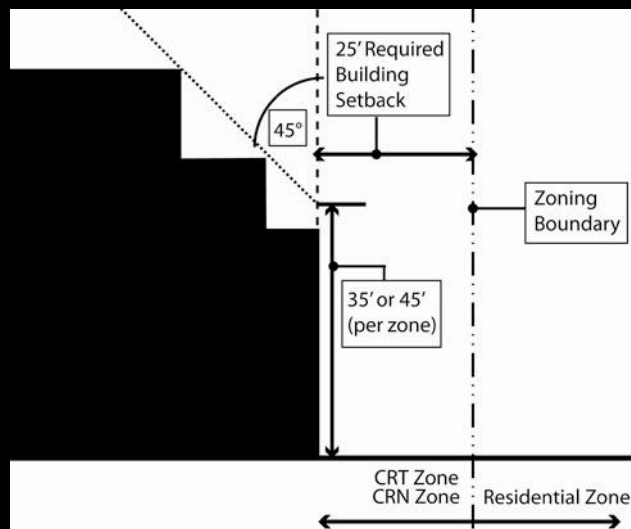
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MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Where a property is adjacent to a lot or parcel in an applicable residential zone, any building

- (1) *must have a minimum setback of 25 feet or the setback required by the adjacent property, whichever is greater; and*
- (2) *must not project beyond a 45 degree angular plane 45 feet in CRT zones or 35 feet in CRN zones*

59-C-15.72 Setbacks



Shared boundaries between residential zones and CRN/CRT

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: RELATE TO THE SCALE AND CONTEXT OF EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS

OBJECTIVE: New development should respect the character of residential neighborhoods

2. Shadows and lighting glare should be mitigated on neighboring residential buildings

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Providing trees and hedges to screen and create separation between commercial and residential uses.

Using lighting fixtures with shields.



Landscape buffer between commercial parking and resident

GOAL: PRESERVE, ENHANCE AND CREATE LOCAL CHARACTER

OBJECTIVE: Highlight themes relevant to Kensington

STRATEGIES:

1. Manage and protect elements that are important to Kensington's identity.
2. Reinforce the garden suburb theme of Kensington in open space design.
3. Express local history and identity through design elements and works of public art.
4. Consider how texture and pattern of building materials will be perceived.

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: PRESERVE, ENHANCE AND CREATE LOCAL CHARACTER

OBJECTIVE: Highlight themes relevant to Kensington

1. Manage and protect elements that are important to Kensington's identity

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Maintain, replace or renew identifying architectural elements such as construction materials, windows, doors or façade ornamentation distinctive to Kensington.

Consider adaptive reuse, rehabilitation and restoration of buildings that contribute to the area's character.

Consider reuse of existing structures, materials and other building components to reduce construction waste. Deconstruction practices are strongly encouraged.

Distinguish new development from historic resources. Imitating historic designs may diminish the singularity of the historic original.



Illustrations from West Howard Avenue Urban Design Study



Building reuse at 10412 Montgomery Avenue

Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: PRESERVE, ENHANCE AND CREATE LOCAL CHARACTER

OBJECTIVE: Highlight themes relevant to Kensington

2. Reinforce the garden suburb theme of Kensington in open space design

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Increasing tree canopy cover along streets and within medians, within existing neighborhoods, commercial areas, and on parkland.

Providing a natural complement to and respite from the built environment. Use trees, understory plantings, and above-ground plantings.



Section **THREE**: Guidelines

GOAL: PRESERVE, ENHANCE AND CREATE LOCAL CHARACTER

OBJECTIVE: Highlight themes relevant to Kensington

3. Express local history and identity through design elements and public art

MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Incorporating new public art in building design and public use spaces with a visible street presence. New projects are strongly encouraged to incorporate the artist into the development team at the conceptual stage.

Including public art into major public infrastructure projects such as bridges, transit systems, railroads or roadways. The integration of artists, architects, landscape architects and other designers into the design team for major infrastructural projects is strongly encouraged.

Incorporating traditional façade elements in new building design.





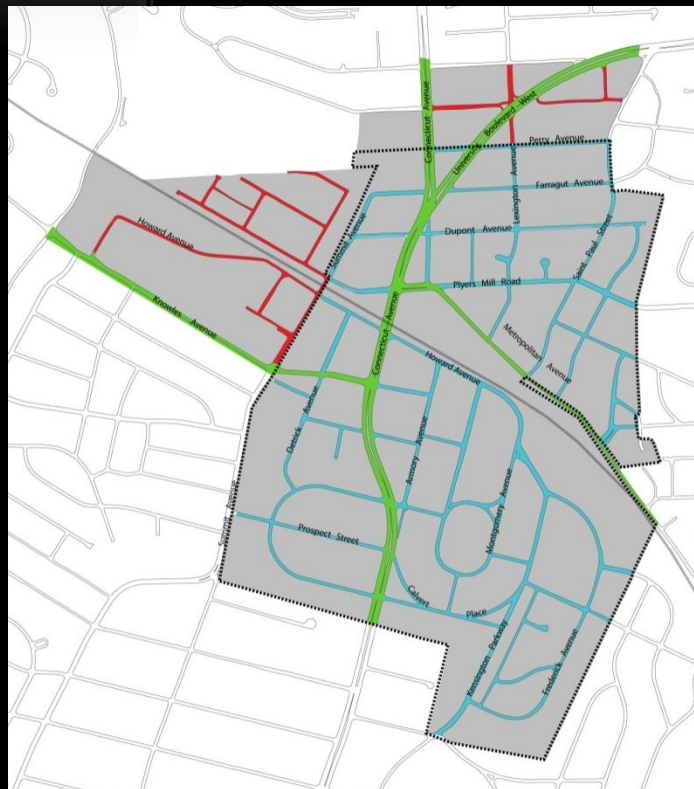
KENSINGTON

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Section **FOUR**: Resources



STREETS - Agency Jurisdiction



TOK – Town of Kensington
MSHA – State Highway Administration
MC DOT – Department of Transportation



Section FOUR: Resources

Town of Kensington Approved Streetscape Furniture

Street lighting:
Spring City Washington
Series in Federal Green
or approved other



Bike Storage:
BK 4 and BKR 35
Victor Stanley in
Federal Green or
approved other



Benches:
C10 Victor Stanley in
Federal Green or
approved other



Waste Receptacles:
PRS 36 (24 Gallon) Victor
Stanley in Federal Green or
approved other



Town of Kensington Preferred Materials List

Preferred Exterior Finishes

Brick and stone masonry
Wood details such as windows
Finished lumber
Finished painted metal
Ceramic tiles
Brick, clay and ceramic pavers
Slate, finished metal, glazed ceramic and tile roofs
Concrete and stone lintels
Concrete or wood columns
Embossed metals

Generally Inappropriate Exterior Finishes

Stucco surfaces
Exterior Insulation Finish System (EIFS)
Imitation wood siding or stone
Excessive metal cladding
Excessive glass curtain wall
Vinyl or aluminum siding
Wood shingles and shakes

Montgomery County

Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance

Chapter 59 http://www.amlegal.com/montgomery_county_md/

Montgomery County Code

http://www.amlegal.com/montgomery_county_md/

Chapter 19 Erosions, Sediment Control and Stormwater Management

Chapter 22A Forest Conservation-Trees

Chapter 47 Vendors

Chapter 49 Streets and Roads

Chapter 50 Subdivision

DHCA West Howard Avenue Urban Design Study

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/dhca/West_Howard/west_howard_avenue_book_final_100609_low_res_landscape.pdf

DPS Outdoor Café Seating Guide

<http://permittingservices.montgomerycountymd.gov/permitting/pdf/OutdoorCafeSeating.pdf>

DPS Sidewalk Vendor Operation and License

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/council/pdf/SCANNED_D_OCS/20070227_16-61.pdf

DPS Building Construction – Building Codes & Standards

<http://permittingservices.montgomerycountymd.gov/dpstmpl.asp?url=/permitting/bc/nfbldc.asp>

DOT Pedestrian Safety

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dottmpl.asp?url=/Content/dot/dir/pedsafety/index.asp>

Town of Kensington

Forms, Permits & Fees

<http://www.tok.md.gov/c/257/permits-regulations>

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

M-NCPPC Kensington Sector Plan

<http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/kensington/index.shtm>

M-NCPPC County Bikeways Functional Master Plan

http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/transportation/bikeways/A_A/contents.shtm

M-NCPPC Development Manual

http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/development/development_manual/index.shtm

M-NCPPC Commercial Residential Zone Overview

http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/development/com_res_zones.shtm



KENSINGTON

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Contact Us

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