

Connectivity

The Plan's recommendations for better connections for Kensington will give pedestrians a 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. The Plan's makes these recommendations:

- 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;
- Upgrade lighting along major highways, arterials, business district streets and connections to residential areas to provide adequate lighting for pedestrians and bicyclists;
- Provide extensive markings for pedestrian crosswalks, clearly identifying the "pedestrian zone;"
- Provide storage lockers and racks at appropriate locations, specifically within the Town Center and near the train station;
- Lead pedestrians to the important places in Kensington with clear signs.

Environment

This Plan proposes to protect and enhance the environment by:

- reducing the amount of hard surfaces that prevents the absorption of rainwater;
- reducing the amount of carbon emissions, both in buildings and vehicles;
- encouraging the practice of sustainable building.

Implementing these objectives can not only enhance Kensington's green factor, but can provide leadership to other communities.

Stormwater Management

- Evaluate a stormwater fee program in the Town or consider joining the County's program to fund water quality improvements throughout the Plan area;
- Incorporate open section roadway swales rather than conventional curbs where allowed by design standards. Where curbs are deemed necessary to protect the roadway edge, allow perforated curbs that direct runoff to flow into swales for stormwater treatment;
- Permit permeable paving for roads, road shoulders, parking lots, and parking lanes;
- Encourage sidewalk design and construction that disconnects runoff from conventional storm drain systems;
- Reduce the amount of hard surfaces areas to maximize infiltration of stormwater and reduce runoff;
- Encourage Kensington residents and property owners to participate in local and State programs for on-site stormwater treatments such as rain gardens, cisterns, and green roofs;
- Collaborate with the Montgomery County Department of Environment Protection and Department of Permitting Services and the Town of Kensington on a comprehensive study that identifies ways to eliminate flooding at the culvert under Oberon Street;
- Conduct a feasibility study for removing the concrete stream channel in Silver Creek, replacing it with a natural streambed substrate and buffer;
- Initiate Town, County or State pilot projects in the areas listed to provide innovative, aesthetic, and planted low impact development (LID) stormwater treatments;(bioretention) within the road right-of-way to meet new County design standards to accommodate a percentage of stormwater runoff within the right-of-way. The objectives are to 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 and attractive respite areas, and improve community livability.
 - Metropolitan Avenue between Plyers Mill Road and Lexington Avenue
 - Howard Avenue between Summit Avenue and Rock Creek Park
 - Plyers Mill Road between Metropolitan and Lexington Avenues
 - Kensington Parkway near intersection of Metropolitan and Lexington Avenues
 - Intersection of University Boulevard and Connecticut Avenue

Although many of the recommendations can be applied effectively during the redevelopment process, there are many federal, State, and local models, incentives, and programs that encourage a more sustainable lifestyle through neighborhood participation in decreasing carbon emissions, promoting energy generation and conservation, reducing and treating stormwater.

Carbon Reduction

- Create incentives for building to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold standards including the installation of on site energy production through geothermal and solar panels and encourage design advantages such as solar orientation;
- Educate property owners on the advantages of high efficiency HVAC systems in reducing carbon emissions;
- Encourage community and homeowner involvement in reducing energy consumption through the promotion of existing federal, State, and local programs for energy audits, retrofits, upgrades, insulation, and alternative energy applications;
- Encourage residents to use local products and services to reduce their carbon footprint;
- Expand the use of alternative transportation modes such as public transit, carpooling, car-sharing, bicycling, and walking to reduce carbon emissions;
- Incentivize green roofs and encourage the use of reflective (albedo) paving and roofing materials to reduce local heat island effects and building temperatures;
- Encourage collaborative efforts among public and private landowners to remove invasive species and plant native herbaceous, shrub, and canopy trees along the Silver Creek Stream valley;
- In Kensington Park, owned by the Town of Kensington, consider using a kiosk or other public information to educate citizens on sustainable design features;
- Encourage collaborative efforts among public and private landowners to allow community gardens in a variety of neighborhoods;
- 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;
- Encourage the installation of vegetative layering through tree preservation and planting, green roofs, vegetated walls, and planted bioinfiltration during redevelopment;
- Encourage use of captured stormwater for watering landscapes and promoting groundwater recharge;

Encourage the reuse of existing structures for property undergoing redevelopment by:

- re-using building elements/assemblies and other components
- applying deconstruction practices
- reducing construction waste.

Design

Scale is a fundamental tenet of urban design and defines how people think about the spaces they move through and how people 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
- mass or size of a structure
- setbacks
- separation distances.

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



Urban Design

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 pedestrian scale lighting that illuminates the sidewalk;
- Provide street trees and furniture to improve aesthetics and functionality for pedestrians;

- Provide street lighting 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 parked cars and encourage on street parking;
- Provide a pedestrian path along the southern boundary 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 strip and street trees to mitigate the adverse traffic impacts of 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.

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

- 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-1940s.
- Kensington Estates: West of Summit Avenue, this residential neighborhood includes small scale houses built largely in the post World War II era.
- 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:

- Kensington Cabin, 10000 Kensington Parkway: This log cabin was constructed 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.
- 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.

Parks

Kensington is well-served by parks within its boundaries, including seven Town Parks and four Montgomery County Parks. This Plan recommends preserving the existing County parks in the Sector Plan: Kensington Cabin Local Park, Warner Circle Special Park, Edith Throckmorton Neighborhood Park, and Kensington Parkway Stream Valley Park.



- 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;
- Rehabilitate Kensington Cabin to recognize its historic significance;
- Examine the existing Edith Throckmorton Neighborhood Park for future renovation.

Open Space System

- Preserve existing designated open space in the Sector Plan area.
- Enhance connectivity with pedestrian priority streets, 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 acquiring land for additional open space, it identifies sites for additional open space to be created during redevelopment:

- An open space should be provided with the redevelopment of the concrete plant.
- Redevelopment of the Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission property along Summit Avenue should include informal play and exercise space.
- Unused green space behind the library parking on Knowles Avenue should be considered for use as public space and stormwater treatment.

Potential Redevelopment Areas

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.

