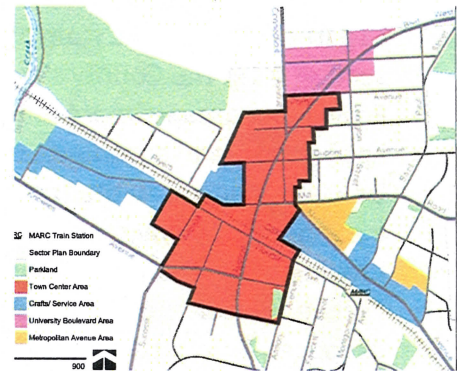


Town Center

Kensington's business district is now 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 consist 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 as well. 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 buildings along Connecticut Avenue. Properties that do not mix uses would have street activating retail and services in one- or two-story buildings. 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 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 less height, to ensure gradual transitions of building to the adjoining residential neighborhoods.

A new CR use district, currently under development, will enable mixing of uses at a range of allowable floor area ratios. This Plan recommends FARs of 2.0 for the Burka and Huggins properties, discussed below, and FARs of 1.5 for other properties in the Town Center.

Concept: Enhance Connecticut Avenue and University Boulevard to provide better safety and function for all modes of transportation. The development of these boulevards should recognize that streets are a component of the open space system.



The Plan makes these recommendations:

- Separate pedestrians from moving traffic with buffers, as shown in the urban road cross section from the County's context-sensitive design standards;
- Provide landscape improvements including street trees and green medians that enhance the 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;
- Pursue further study of the intersection of Connecticut Avenue, University Boulevard and the proposed Summit Avenue extension to ensure comfortable crossing for pedestrians;
- Provide an informal gathering space with high visibility along the corridor.

Concept: Develop Howard Avenue as a continuous pedestrian street that generates an active street life achieved through the mix and intensity of land uses, as well as high quality site and architectural design.

- Introduce sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities west of Connecticut Avenue to provide a safe, comfortable experience for non-vehicular 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 safe and comfortable crossing for pedestrians at the intersection of Connecticut Avenue and Howard Avenue. Support signal warrant study for SHA and/or circulation study;
- Promote public amenities near the train station;
- Evaluate potential for shared uses, including parking, should SHA's West Howard Avenue property redevelop.



Connectivity

- Designate Howard Avenue, Concord Street, Dupont Avenue, Plyers Mill Road west of Connecticut 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 pedestrian underpass at the train station. A 12-foot-wide underpass located to the east of the existing at-grade crossing, in line with Wheatley Street, is appropriate.

Individual Properties

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.



A hypothetical mixed-use development on this property, with 20 percent commercial space and 80 percent residential space, would total 55,000 square feet of commercial space and 200 units.

Huggins Property

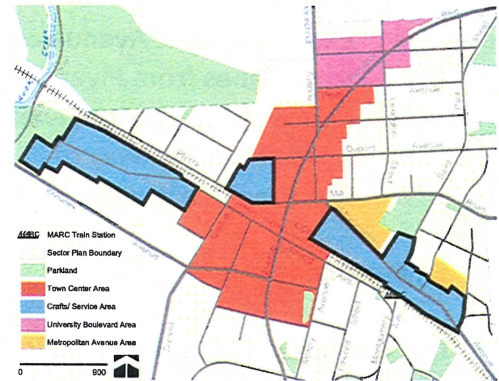
The one-acre Huggins property, currently zoned C-2, may also support mixed-use development. Any development should include street-level shops on Connecticut Avenue and Plyers Mill Road. Parking facilities for this property should be to the rear, with access from Plyers Mill Road. Joint development of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



A hypothetical mixed-use development on this property, with 20 percent commercial space and 80 percent residential space, would total 18,500 square feet of commercial space and 67 units.

Crafts/Services District

The Crafts/Services area 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 zones do not wholly reflect the mix of light industrial, service retail and specialty retail activities in this district. The West Howard Avenue area is now in the Light Industrial (I-1) Zone, while the portion of the district on Metropolitan Avenue is in the C-2 Zone. Many buildings have a single floor of work space, although some may be the equivalent of two stories tall.

This Plan proposes to preserve this district. Aesthetic and environmental improvements will enhance the area's look and function without compromising its eclectic nature. Should a new use district similar to the CR district be developed, this area would be suitable. The portion of this district on the south side of Metropolitan Avenue is recommended for the CR use district, with FARs of 1.5.

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 allow parking where needed. This Plan also recommends required front windows or transparent loading doors and direct entrances from the street to increase pedestrian activity on the street.

The State Highway Administration property on West Howard Avenue is suitable for additional public parking.



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.
- Classify Metropolitan Avenue as a Business District Street with a 70-foot right-of-way from Kensington Parkway to Plyers Mill Road and two travel lanes. Allow on-street parking on Metropolitan Avenue.

Environment

Use the Green Factor included in the proposed CR use district to offer a variety of landscaping options to provide tree planting, infiltration, energy efficiency, water conservation, stormwater treatment, and layered landscaping.

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 to parkland at the base of the avenue. At the discharge point, runoff undercuts the forested slope and severely erodes the asphalt and stream buffer.

- Provide stormwater management through innovative low impact development (LID) quality and quantity control measures to encourage groundwater recharge. Techniques include a combination of one or more of the following: infiltration trenches, bioretention, bioswales, permeable pavement, and extended retention.
- Provide where possible onsite quantity control of roof runoff by installing French drains, cisterns, vaults, planting wells, and/or green roofs. Explore opportunities for local, State, and federal assistance for the installation of green roofs.
- Protect forest on parkland at the base of West Howard Avenue through impervious reduction techniques and pollution control measures. A stormwater management treatment facility on parkland is not recommended.
- Include tree planting in LID treatment areas where feasible.

Silver Creek

- Collaborate with the County's Departments of Environmental Protection 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.
- Conduct a feasibility study for the removal of the concrete stream channel replacing it with a natural streambed substrate and buffer.



Konterra Limited Partnership Property

This former concrete plant should be redeveloped with a pedestrian and bicycle crossing of the railroad to increase connectivity between the two parts of the town. An open space should be provided at this location adjacent to, or with clear views of the historic train station. Concrete plant redevelopment should provide a direct and convenient pedestrian and bicyclist connection between Howard Avenue and Metropolitan Avenue. Redevelopment should include additional public and commuter parking. This Plan recommends mixed uses in the new CR district, with an FAR of 1.5.

