

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

MCPB
Item # 10
5/21/09

May 13, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Glenn Kreger, Acting Chief *GK*
Vision Division

Khalid Afzal, Team Leader *KA*
Vision Division

FROM: Frederick Vernon Boyd, Community Planner (301.495.4654)
East Transit Corridor Team *FVB*
Vision Division

SUBJECT: Draft Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approve the Draft Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan as the Public Hearing Draft Plan and schedule a Public Hearing for July 9, 2009

BACKGROUND

The draft Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan comprehensively updates the 1978 Sector Plan for the Town of Kensington and Vicinity. The Sector Plan promotes the creation of a mixed-use Town Center in an area now exclusively commercial. It envisions lively and active streets connecting the Town Center to the surrounding residential communities that are reachable on foot or by bicycle. The Town Center will also broaden housing choices for a wide array of ages and incomes. The Sector Plan will set the stage for revitalization consistent with County policies for sustainable development, design excellence, and diversity of housing choice.

Staff reviewed with the Planning Board a scope of work for the sector plan process in September 2008; presented a status report in December 2008; and discussed preliminary recommendations in April 2009. Over the past year, staff has conducted two community meetings, in June 2008 and March 2009 and has held twice monthly sessions at Kensington's Town Hall so that residents could discuss planning issues with the staff in a less formal setting. Staff has attended meetings of the Mayor and Council of Kensington and met with the Coalition of Kensington Communities, an umbrella organization of civic groups.

This Plan reflects the broad participation of these interested parties. It makes these key recommendations:

Connectivity

- Acknowledging the “commuter” status of Connecticut Avenue while creating new pathways for neighbors to move “car free” throughout the town, enjoying a healthier, more sustainable community;

Diversity

- Creating an active Town Center with new residential uses;
- Promoting the heritage of the community through its buildings, spaces and people;

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 scale and character of Kensington;

Environment

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

NEXT STEPS

Planning staff has scheduled a tour of Kensington for Planning Board members on May 19, 2009.

The draft Sector Plan will undergo significant document redesign and formatting, following approval of a Public Hearing Draft. Further community meetings are possible, and the Town’s Mayor and Council will prepare testimony for the public hearing. Council staff has indicated that, in order for the Council to review the Sector Plan prior to the 2010 elections, it must be transmitted to the Executive and Council prior to October 10, 2009. With a July 9 public hearing, this schedule permits just two Planning Board worksessions, one in late July prior to the Board’s August recess and one in early September.

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Attachment: Draft Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan

May 2009



Public Hearing Draft
Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan
An Amendment to the 1978 Sector Plan for the Town of Kensington and Vicinity

Prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Department
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver spring, MD 20910

www.montgomeryplanning.org

Public Hearing Draft

Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan

An Amendment to the 1978 *Approved and Adopted Sector Plan for the Town of Kensington and Vicinity*, Montgomery County, Maryland

ABSTRACT

This plan for the Town of Kensington and Vicinity contains the text and supporting maps for a comprehensive amendment to the 1978 *Sector Plan for the Town of Kensington and Vicinity* and the *General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties*, as amended.

This Plan makes recommendations for land use, zoning, urban design, transportation, environment, and community facilities.

SOURCE OF COPIES

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760
Also available at www.montgomeryplanning.org

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is a bi-county agency created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927. The Commission's geographic authority extends to the great majority of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties; the Maryland-Washington Regional District (M-NCPPC planning jurisdiction) comprises 1,001 square miles, while the Metropolitan District (parks) comprises 919 square miles, in the two counties.

The Commission is charged with preparing, adopting, and amending or extending *The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties*. The Commission operates in each county through Planning Boards appointed by the county government. The Boards are responsible for all local plans, zoning amendments, subdivision regulations, and administration of parks.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission encourages the involvement and participation of individuals with disabilities, and its facilities are accessible. For assistance with special needs (e.g., large print materials, listening devices, sign language interpretation, etc.), please contact the Community Outreach and Media Relations Division, 301-495-4600 or TDD 301-495-1331.

May 2009

Public Hearing Draft
Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan
An Amendment to the 1978 Sector Plan for the Town of Kensington and Vicinity

Prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Department
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver spring, MD 20910

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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;

Diversity

- Creating an active Town Center with new residential uses;
- Promoting the community's heritage through its buildings, spaces and people;

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;

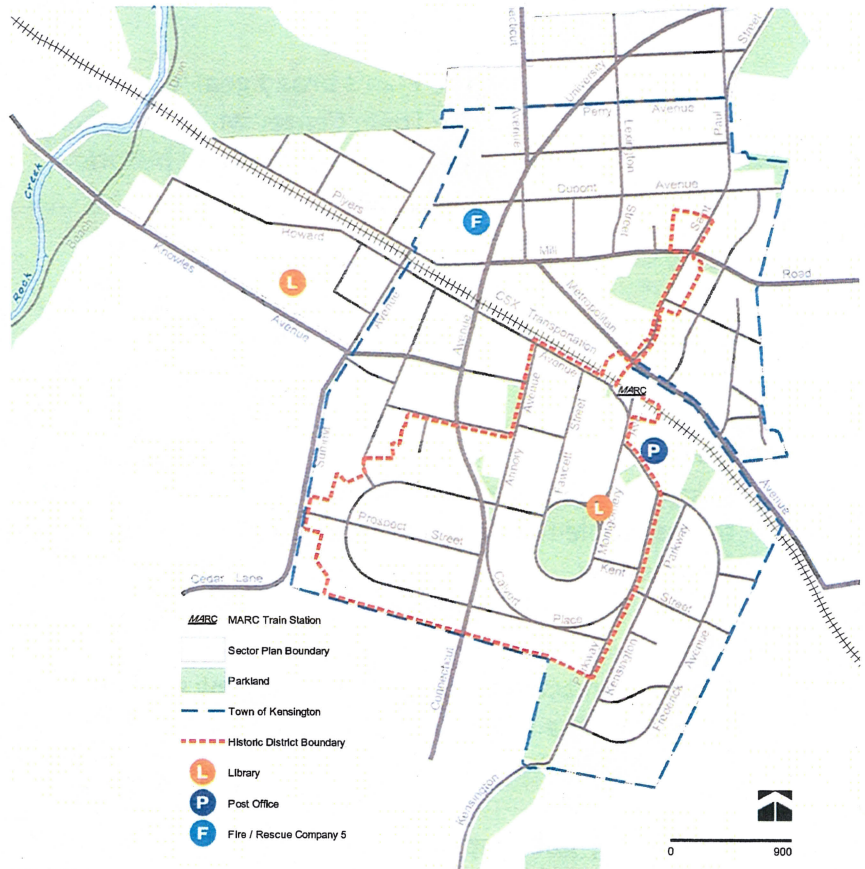
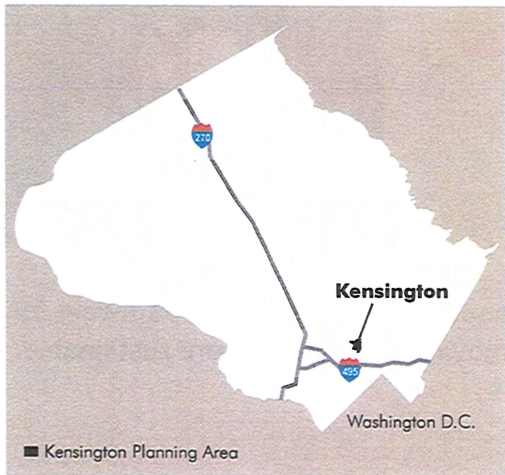
Environment

- 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 future generations to become stewards of the environment.

Assets and Challenges

Design

Kensington offers a full range of neighborhood service and retail opportunities. Two important neighborhood shopping destinations—Safeway and the Kensington Shopping Center—sit opposite each other at Connecticut and Knowles Avenues. A third, smaller 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 as 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 White Flint Metro Station.

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