

**Summit Avenue Extension – MCDOT Facility Planning Study, Town of Kensington**



Stephen Aldrich, Master Planner/Supervisor, FP&P, [stephen.aldrich@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:stephen.aldrich@montgomeryplanning.org), 301-495-4528



Walker Freer, Transportation Planner, Area 2, [walker.freer@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:walker.freer@montgomeryplanning.org), 301-459-4651



Pamela Dunn, Chief, FP&P, [pamela.dunn@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:pamela.dunn@montgomeryplanning.org), 301-650-5649

**Description**

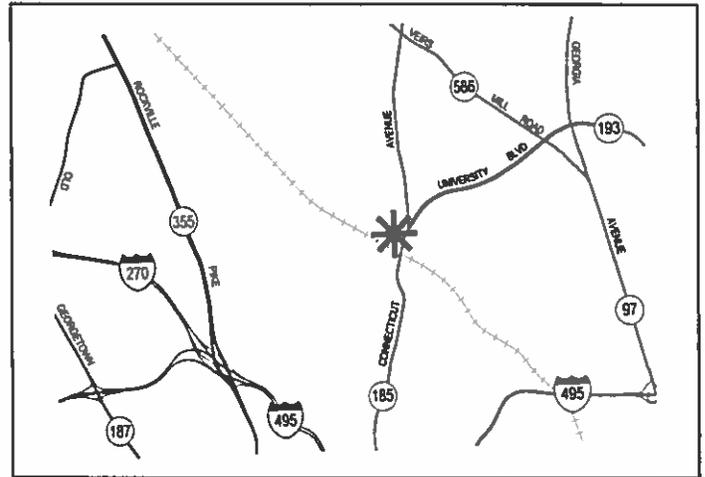
Completed: 08/29/2018

**Summit Avenue Extension, Kensington**  
Facility Planning Phase 1 study of Summit Avenue Extension, Town of Kensington

Master Plan: 2013 Kensington Sector Plan

Applicant: Montgomery County Department of Transportation

**MCDOT is seeking Planning Board comments on the alternatives prepared in this study**



**Executive Summary**

The purpose of this project is to conduct a Facility Planning Phase 1 study of the Summit Ave Extension as recommended in the 2013 Kensington Sector Plan. The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) has conducted a detailed study and is now evaluating three short-term and three long-term options. MCDOT will request direction from the County Council’s Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment (T&E) Committee on the proposed alternatives in October 2018. This agenda item provides the Planning Board the opportunity to transmit comments to the T&E Committee.

**Recommendation**

**Support the completion of Summit Avenue Extension with either Alternative L1 (Connection via Farragut Avenue) or L2 (Connection via Dupont Avenue), with the following comments to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation:**

**Long-Term Alternatives**

1. Alternative L1 (Connection via Farragut Avenue) is most consistent with the Kensington Sector Plan recommendations; however, staff prefers Alternative L2 (Connection via Dupont Avenue) as it accomplishes most of the same benefits at a reduced cost, provides redevelopment potential by providing a new business district street, does not further complicate the Connecticut Avenue/

University Boulevard intersection and provides an additional pedestrian crossing opportunity on Connecticut Avenue at Dupont Avenue.

2. The Option B typical cross section shown for Summit Avenue Extension with two-way separated bicycle lanes on the west side of the street should be selected for this project. Option B is consistent with the Planning Board Draft of the Bicycle Master Plan now under consideration by the County Council.
3. Alternative L3 (Connecticut Avenue widening) is not recommended. This alternative did not include two-way separated bike lanes on both sides of Connecticut Avenue as included in the Planning Board Draft of the Bicycle Master Plan now under consideration by the County Council. Any future bridge widening over the railroad tracks should include space for these master-planned facilities. Connecticut Avenue already has the number of through lanes planned in the Kensington Sector Plan.

#### **Short-Term Alternatives**

4. Alternative S-A: The northbound right-turn lane proposed on Connecticut Avenue at Plyers Mill Road should not be designed as a channelized right-turn lane with a triangular island. This is problematic for pedestrians crossing and inconsistent with the urban road code and the town character within Kensington. The corner radius should be tightened to conform to the urban road code and the triangular island eliminated.
5. Alternative S-B: More traffic operations analysis may be needed to ensure that the intersection of Plyers Mill Road with Metropolitan Avenue will truly benefit from signalization/coordination. Based on past experiences, caution is advised in adding a three-color traffic signal at this location without significant traffic simulation using VISSM for multiple time periods to ensure that the improvement will be more beneficial than the existing traffic control.
6. Alternative S-C is recommended.

#### **General Comment**

7. The Concord Street conceptual improvement option identified by the County Council in the Kensington Sector plan should be considered as part of this study. This improvement was intended to reduce turning traffic on Connecticut Avenue between Plyer's Mill Road and the Connecticut Avenue/University Boulevard intersection by shifting the Metropolitan Avenue to Connecticut Avenue north desire line onto Concord Street. This option should be evaluated in detail, including the development of a new short-term or long-term alternative. This option would require the signalization of Plyers Mill Road with Metropolitan Avenue and Concord Street and modifications to the existing signal on Connecticut Avenue with University Boulevard.

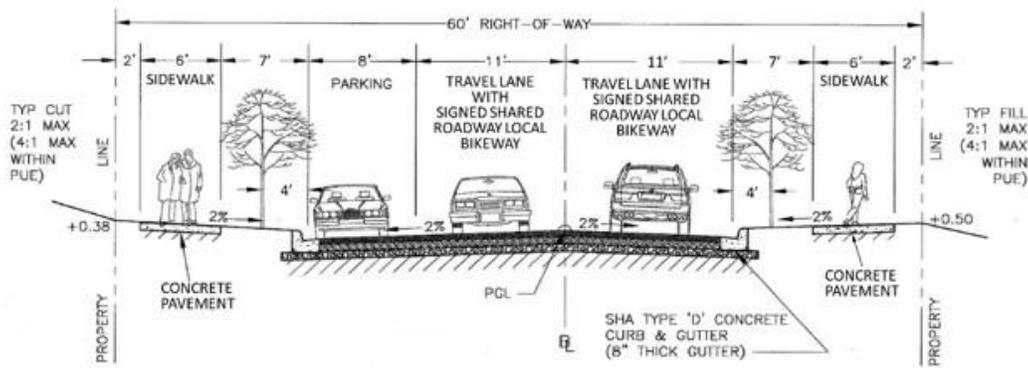
### **Project Description**

Summit Avenue, between Knowles Avenue and Plyers Mill Road, is a two-lane, two-way business district street that runs in a north-south direction in the Town of Kensington. Summit Avenue currently terminates at Plyers Mill Road. A planned extension of this road between Plyers Mill Road and Connecticut Avenue was a recommendation in the 2013 Kensington Sector Plan. The location of the planned road extension is displayed in Figure 1.

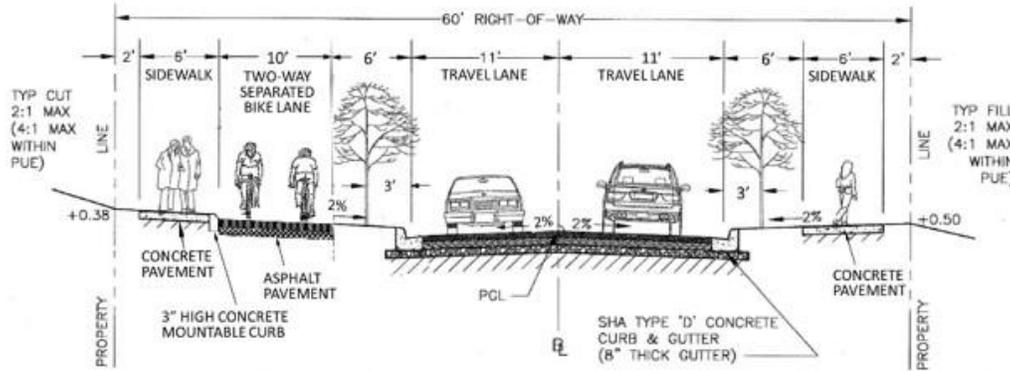


**Figure 1: Project Limits and Site Vicinity**

The Summit Avenue Extension project is currently being studied by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation in a Facility Planning Stage 1 study. The project has evolved since it was first presented to the public in 2017 at two public meetings. The current concept plans include three long-term alternatives and three short-term alternatives. For the construction of the Summit Avenue Extension, two alternative cross section options have been proposed by MCDOT for Summit Avenue Extension and these are shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3.



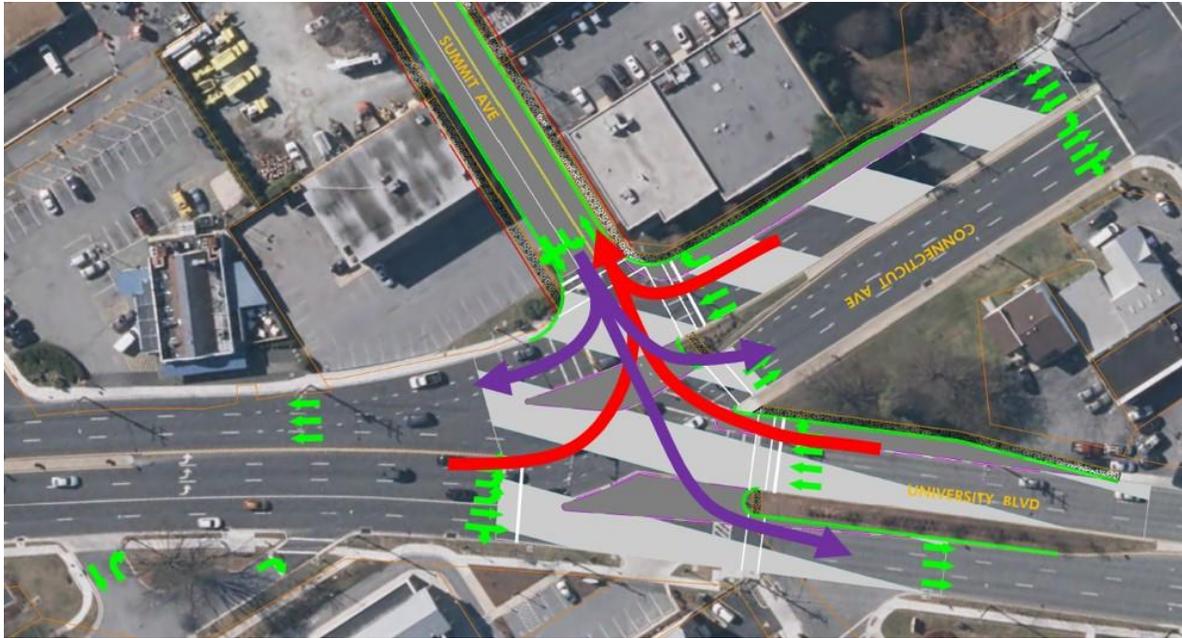
**Figure 2: Summit Avenue Extension Typical Section Option A**



**Figure 3: Summit Avenue Extension Typical Section Option B**

MCDOT is currently considering three long-term and three short-term improvement options. These are described below (Concept Plans for these alternatives are included as Attachment A).

- Long-Term Alternative L1 constructs the Summit Avenue Extension along the alignment of Farragut Avenue between Plyers Mill Road and Connecticut Avenue. This would allow full movement at the intersection of Connecticut Avenue with University Boulevard through modifications to the existing signalized intersection. For Alternative L1, the termination of the planned Summit Avenue Extension would occur along the alignment of existing Farragut Avenue at the intersection of Connecticut Avenue with University Boulevard. This would require geometric modifications at the intersection to provide full ingress and egress for Summit Avenue Extension. A snapshot of these turning movements are shown in Figure 4 with outbound shown in purple and inbound in red.



**Figure 4: Summit Avenue Extension Connection at Connecticut Avenue/University Boulevard Intersection**

- Long-Term Improvement L2 is a variant of L1 but only extends Summit Avenue as far north as Dupont Avenue. A new signalized intersection would be provided on Connecticut Avenue at Dupont Avenue. L2 has a much higher benefit/cost index than L1, per MCDOT.
- Long-Term Improvement L3 does not extend Summit Avenue at all. Instead, it focuses on improving capacity by widening the Connecticut Avenue bridge over the CSX tracks and adding one lane in each direction on Connecticut Avenue between Knowles Avenue and Plyers Mill Road.
- Short-Term Alternative S-A focuses on improvements to Connecticut Avenue between University Boulevard and Knowles Avenue that could be implemented in the short-term without the need to widen the Connecticut Avenue bridge over the CSX tracks.
- Short-Term Alternative S-B focuses on improvements to the Plyers Mills Road intersections with Connecticut Avenue and Metropolitan Avenue to improve operations and efficiency.
- Short-Term Alternative S-C focuses on improvements to the eastbound Knowles Avenue left-turn lane at Summit Avenue and includes pavement rehabilitation on Summit between Knowles Avenue and Plyers Mill Road.

### **Presentation of MCDOT Materials**

A summary of the Kensington Area Improvement Costs and Benefits, provided by MCDOT, is attached with this staff report as Attachment B. This describes the improvements under consideration, estimated opinion of probable construction cost, summary of benefits, and MCDOT priority (ranking for the short-term improvements only). A comment letter submitted by the Town of Kensington to MCDOT on April 8, 2018 is attached as Attachment C.

## Public Outreach

For this project, there has been considerable public involvement with public meetings and public outreach efforts on the following dates:

- June 13, 2017: Public workshop at Kensington Town Hall.
- September 14, 2017: Public workshop at Kensington Town Hall.
- Posting of project materials on the MCDOT website.
- Meetings with Town officials, Kensington Volunteer Fire Department and the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service in 2017.
- March 12, 2018: Presentation to the Kensington Town Council

## Master Plan Consistency

The following master plan recommendations are relevant for this project:

- The 2018 Master Plan of Highways and Transitways recommended Summit Avenue Extension between Plyers Mill Road and Connecticut Avenue as a two-lane business district street with a 60-foot wide right of way.
- The 2018 Master Plan of Highways and Transitways added the Connecticut Avenue corridor as an Urban Road Code and Bicycle-Pedestrian Priority Area. All county roads within this designated area are subject to the County's Context-Sensitive Design Standards.
- The Planning Board Draft of the Bicycle Master Plan now under consideration by the County Council proposes two-way separated bike lanes on the Summit Avenue Extension on the west side of the street.
- The Planning Board Draft of the Bicycle Master Plan now under consideration by the County Council recommends two-way separated bike lanes on both sides of Connecticut Avenue between Knowles Avenue and University Boulevard.
- The 2013 Kensington Sector Plan recommended that the use of Concord Street be studied in the Council Resolution to the adopted sector plan, as follows: "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, with a focus on the proposed redesigned intersection at Connecticut Avenue, Farragut Avenue and University Boulevard, including evaluation of Concord Street as an alternative between southbound Connecticut Avenue and east Plyers Mill Road as well as other improvements that would benefit pedestrian movement across Connecticut Avenue."

The Option B typical cross section shown for Summit Avenue Extension with two-way separated bicycle lanes on the west side of the street (could be used for Long-Term Alternatives L1 or L2) is consistent with the Planning Board Draft of the Bicycle Master Plan now under consideration by the County Council.

Long-Term Alternative L1 is most consistent with the Kensington Sector Plan recommendations; however, staff prefers Long-Term Alternative L2 (Connection via Dupont Avenue) as it accomplishes most of the same benefits at a reduced cost, provides redevelopment potential by providing a new business district street, does not further complicate the Connecticut Avenue/ University Boulevard intersection and provides an additional pedestrian crossing opportunity on Connecticut Avenue at

Dupont Avenue. Long-term Alternative L2 is also consistent with the 2013 Council resolution addition in that it provides an additional pedestrian crossing across Connecticut Avenue at Dupont Avenue.

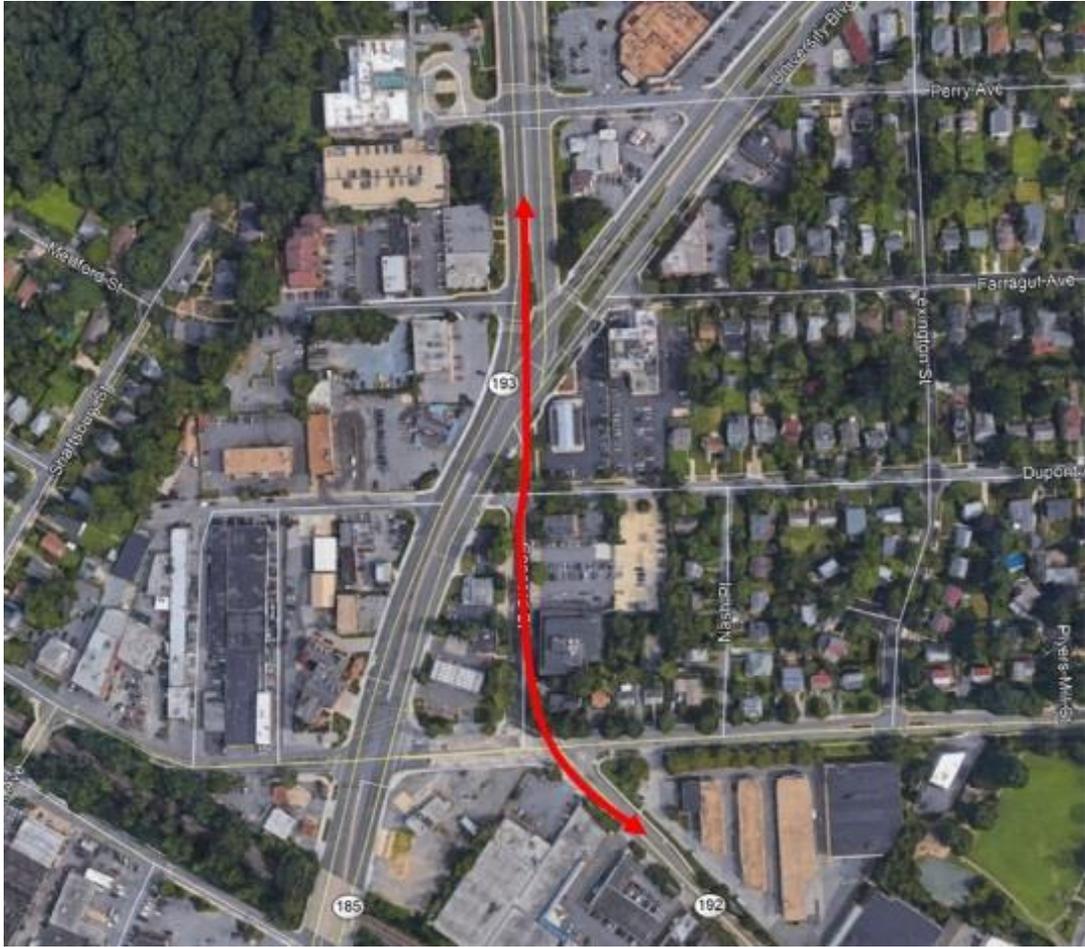
Long-Term Alternative L3 (Connecticut Avenue widening) is inconsistent with the master plan recommendations as it does not include two-way separated bike lanes on both sides of Connecticut Avenue. Any future bridge widening over the railroad tracks should include space for these master-planned facilities.

Short-Term Alternative S-A is inconsistent with the master plan recommendations by proposing a channelized right-turn lane with a triangular island on the northbound Connecticut Avenue approach to Plyers Mill Road. This is problematic for pedestrians crossing and inconsistent with the urban road code and the town character within Kensington. The use of tighter curb radii and elimination of the triangular island is desired.

Short-Term Alternative S-B is consistent with the master plan recommendations.

Short-Term Alternative S-C is consistent with the master plan recommendations.

The exclusion of a Concord Street conceptual improvement option and/or evaluation is inconsistent with the master plan recommendations. This improvement could reduce turning traffic on Connecticut Avenue between Plyer's Mill Road and the Connecticut Avenue/University Boulevard intersection by shifting the Metropolitan Avenue to Connecticut Avenue north desire line onto Concord Street. This potential traffic path is depicted in Figure 5. This option should be evaluated in detail, including the development of a new short-term or long-term alternative. This option would require the signalization of Plyers Mill Road with Metropolitan Avenue and Concord Street.



**Figure 5: Kensington Sector Plan: Use of Concord Street**

**ATTACHMENT A: Concept Plans: Short and Long-Term Improvements**

**ATTACHMENT B: MCDOT Summary of Long and Short-Term Improvement Costs and Benefits**

**ATTACHMENT C: April 6, 2018 Letter to MCDOT from Town of Kensington**