

Item 7 - Correspondence

From: [Kira Lueders](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Fw: Preliminary Plan #120200160
Date: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 7:26:51 PM

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Kira Lueders <kklarl@yahoo.com>
To: Tamika.Graham@montgomeryplanning.org <tamika.graham@montgomeryplanning.org>
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2020, 07:15:47 PM EDT
Subject: Preliminary Plan #120200160

I received notice of the Planning Board hearing for this plan on June 25, 2020. My neighborhood had sent representatives to several public meetings about this development over the past 7 months to inform our residents. When I received notice of the hearing, I posted it on our listserv. Upon reading the Planning Board description of the development, I was surprised to see that the plans included narrowing of lanes on Knowles Ave. This information had not been mentioned in any of the reports we had received from our representatives. I've now learned that Deepak Somarajan, of the Development Review Team of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation recommended that the applicant revise the plan to show the narrowing of Knowles Ave in an April 16, 2020 letter to you. That revision now seems to be part of the plan on which the Planning Board will hold a hearing on July 2, 2020, even though in his letter Mr. Somarajan further said deference should be paid to Maryland State Highway Administration (MDSHA) for final decision regarding changes to Knowles Ave. When I questioned what the decision of MDSHA had been, I was informed by Kwesi Woodroffe, District 3 Access Management Regional Engineer on June 26, 2020 that he "reviewed this concept and was okay with the lane reduction, pending a formal submittal and review of detailed engineering plans".

The part of Knowles Ave under consideration is part of an extremely busy intersection with Summit Avenue. Three Ride-On buses use this road, including the #34 bus which makes a left turn from the middle lane of Knowles Ave (to be narrowed by one foot) into Summit Ave, and a tight right turn from Summit Ave into Knowles Ave (to be narrowed by 4 feet). An important change, such as permitting a developer to narrow a State road, is about to be decided at this Planning Board hearing. Space from the road is being taken to accommodate a future bike path, but considering several other housing developments are planned for this block, alternative locations for the bike path deserve study. Residents of my neighborhood have had only one week to understand and to comment on this proposed plan. That is not sufficient time.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns,
Kira Lueders, president, Parkwood Residents Association
10112 Wildwood Rd
Kensington, MD 20895

From: [jamie keller](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: approve Knowles and Summit sidewalk expansion
Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 7:56:19 AM

Please approve 4000 Knowles Ave project. MCDOT has taken active steps since 2017 to undermine pedestrian safety in the area, adding a travel lane to Summit between Prospect and Brookfield and removing a shoulder. Any project that improves pedestrian/cyclist/scooter/wheelchair user access in the area should be supported and approved. Any project that reduces public space allocated for motor vehicles in the area should be supported and approved to mitigate the egregious actions taken by MCDOT. MCDOT cannot be trusted to work in the best interest of the public, so please see that their work is overseen and actual work completed according to specifications on the Summit Ave portion (and likewise for State highway portion of Knowles).

Sincerely,
Jamie Keller
10319 Summit Ave, Kensington, MD 20895

From: [Joette Alkire](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Residences at Knowles Station: Preliminary Plan No. 120200160
Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 9:23:05 AM

Ladies/Gentlemen:

With regard to the subject proposal, I am concerned that it does not reflect the current and possible future reality respecting the coronavirus pandemic vis-a-vis the limitation of parking on the property.

It is clear that the reasoning for reducing available parking from 2 spaces to 1 space is based upon the proximity to the MARC Station in Kensington. I believe the council must take into account the fact that fewer people, especially those at-risk, are at all comfortable using public transportation, whether it be buses or trains. In any event, limiting parking to 1 space per townhouse must take into account the Maryland Accessibility Code and the ADA. I further believe that it is unrealistic that any family which is able to afford these townhouses will limit themselves to one vehicle, regardless of access to public transportation. Providing only one parking place per townhouse will result in excess demand for parking, whether on-street or in other available lots.

Any narrowing of Knowles Ave, as is proposed, will result in increased traffic problems in this area. Please consider that buses and other large vehicles will need to make the right turn from Summit Ave onto Knowles Ave, and the effect the narrower lanes will have on them.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joette and Stephen Alkire
3601 Plyers Mill Road
Kensington, MD 20895

From: [toby emerson](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: for plan hearing on 7-2-20 ref : Residences at Knowles Station, Preliminary Plan No. 120200160
Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 10:14:05 AM

Could you please add these for the board meeting tomorrow . July 2, 9 AM, item number 7 on the calendar for consideration by the planning board.

Thank You

Toby Emerson
4114 Knowles Ave,
Kensington MD 20895

Thank You for allowing for my entry into record.

I have my concerns over the development if this property, here are a couple:

Page number 20, section B of the planning dept docs states: "Master-Planned Bikeway The 2018 Bicycle Master Plan recommends the construction of two-way separated bike lanes on the south side of Knowles Avenue along the Site's frontage. However, the Master Plan recommended bike lanes would not be installed under this Application, but with either a future Capital Improvement Project (CIP), or a developer contribution in the future. As an interim condition, this Application is narrowing lanes on Knowles Avenue and extending the curb along the Site's frontage by 15 feet to provide the right-of-way for a bicycle facility."

This appears to be different from the documentation i have access too. According to the planning dept final draft available to the public (<http://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Bicycle-Master-Plan-PB-Draft-Final-Web2.pdf>) pg 304 reads :

--- "Knowles Ave (MD 547) - Rock Creek Trail to Connecticut Ave (MD 185) Separated Bikeway **Sidepath** (West Side)---"

This document does not mention of anything on the Southside as stated above. Nowhere in this 377 page document does it mention anything about **two-way separated bike lanes** on Knowles. It does mention the other side of Connecticut (pg 304) - "Knowles Ave (MD 547) Connecticut Ave (MD 185) to Armory Ave Separated Bikeway Separated Bike Lanes (TwoWay, West Side)"

The only place i could find mention of a two way bike lane in front of the property on the mc atlas site - <https://mcatlas.org/bikeplan/> by zooming in to the planed trail in front of the property , and even there it states - " Separated Bike Lanes (Two-Way, West Side)**From:** Summit Ave, - **To:** Connecticut Ave (MD 185)" **nothing about anything on the south side.**

(Basically what i am speaking too is that it appears what is being said, and what i can find, are 2 different things. My understanding is that a 2 way separated bike lane takes up much more room than a separated. And was one of the reasoning behind moving the curbs 5 feet into the street)

I think MCDOT needs to look into this. It may be small inaccuracies / outdated info or clerical errors, however with the significant issues we have with traffic control in this area, a slight oversight could result in significant more issues. Its possible that a change was made in the system when Knowles Station was built, and the sidewalk on that side was non-existent, and now it is. Its possible that changes was made to the bike plan with the Elder care facility thats is going through this process as well 2 doors down. I am hoping that these site plans were looked into to ensure this all ties in together? There is so much planning going on in this area, with no tangible data on how each project may impact the other. The rush to get this area built, with the 3 major projects scopes out there seems a bit reckless, given how sensitive this area is to traffic.

The idea of moving the curb so much further out will inevitably lead to more congestion and accidents. I went out to the corner this afternoon and waited for the 34 Bus (comes by every 15 mins at rush hour) the right turn from Summit onto Knowles is practically impossible for them to make now. Its a far right lane, onto another far right lane with no room for error. i have noticed several times in the past, as i did tonight, it already swings into the left hand turn lane (from

Knowles to Summit) . The drawings do not do it justice, as to how really tight it already is, let alone making the alterations submitted to have it even more difficult. These changes will not only make it unsafe for the busses, but also for smaller trucks making that right that do not have the same issues the busses have now.

If nothing else, i believe these should be looked into more deeply, as there seems to be some inconsistencies. This area is extremely fragile as it is will all the traffic, building and bad parking that accompanies these changes. The idea of squeezing 6 trendy looking townhomes in a .19 acre plot (which is exactly what most of us have on our street) with traffic altering changes, on a state maintained road, should not be taken lightly.

I am not sure how the builder thinks this design will " enhance the diversity of architecture in Kensington by interpreting existing elements in a new way " . Absolutely nothing in this area , even new houses being built, incorporates box like modern design , let alone anything that is this close to the traffic street. nowhere on this street. It will look weird and out of place. I site 4115 Knowles and 4109 Knowles. Both are brand new construction on this road and keep to the proper architecture of the area. It will look weird and odd to the area to have the only modern design, clustered, street hugged property on the whole street . None the less, if it has to happen, i request the traffic control items be looked into. Us across the street from the property (or Summit Ave) are not incorporated into the TOK, so their endorsement of this property should not reflect on the whole encompassing area. Please take this into consideration, as the traffic affects us vastly more than those in the TOK. I'm assuming the HOA's are aware of this project, those of us on Knowles are not incorporated into any HOA's as well, so i speak as a independent homeowner. (i am not sure if this project legally had to go out to the HOA's, and elicited a response)

Thank you for your consideration.

Toby

From: [Al Carr](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Graham, Tamika](#)
Subject: Preliminary Plan #120200160 (4000 Knowles Ave)
Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 11:37:29 AM

Dear Chairman Anderson and Commissioners,

I wanted to take this opportunity to provide some thoughts and to amplify some of the community feedback I've been hearing about what is proposed in the staff report.

Based on what I've heard, I suggest the planning board might want to consider refraining from making any final decisions about the configuration of Knowles Ave.

Community Notice for proposal to Narrow of Knowles Avenue

MCDOT and planning staff propose that the applicant be required to relocate the south side curb on Knowles Ave 5 feet inward. This would be accomplished by narrowing the eastbound lane from 15 feet to 11 feet and by narrowing the westbound left turn lane from 11 feet to 10 feet. This would only be for 1/2 of the block. Without judging the merits of this proposal, the unfortunate fact is that the affected community has had very little notice. There is nothing in the Kensington Sector Plan that recommends such a change to Knowles Ave. The approved and adopted Bicycle Master Plan entry for this road segment recommends "Separated Bike Lanes (Two-Way, West Side)" which is erroneous because Knowles Ave runs east to west. None of the public meetings for this project mentioned altering the roadway configuration in this way. Ride on Route 34 buses turn here and may need the full 15 foot lane width close to the corner.

Relationship to surrounding properties

On the block between Summit and Detrick, there are four properties on Knowles Ave. The current sidewalks there are 4 feet wide and placed at the curb. One property was recently redeveloped (Knowles Station, 10414 Detrick) using the standard method which did not require any dedication of right of way. This was a missed opportunity to bring that stretch of sidewalk up to MDOT SHA standards. Is there a way to remedy this as 4000 Knowles and 10509 Summit are considered and to provide high quality pedestrian infrastructure on BOTH sides of Knowles Ave?

Of the three remaining properties, two are far along in redevelopment (4000 Knowles and 10509 Summit Ave) and are controlled by the same owner/developer as 10414 Detrick Avenue.

The fourth property (10408 Detrick) is currently zoned residential (R60) and the sector plan recommends it be zoned for mixed use (CRN) after evaluation for historic designation. This property was advertised for sale about 5 years ago as a commercial property. The owner/developer of the other 3 properties has publicly presented a vision/desire to also acquire and develop 10408 Detrick Ave into townhomes. Will the planning department fulfill its commitment to evaluate this property for historic designation as required by the sector plan and promised to the county council?

Should decisions about the configuration Knowles Ave wait until decisions on the other properties are further along? Is there a way to consider whether lightly traveled Mitchell Street/Kaiser Place can serve as the bike route for this block?

Thank you for allowing me to comment.

Al Carr
3904 Washington St
Kensington MD