

# plan highlights

## kensington and vicinity sector plan



The Montgomery County Planning Board will revise the zoning recommendations in the Kensington Sector Plan later this spring. This Q&A presents Plan highlights and includes a map of new, draft zoning recommendations. The Planning Board will hold a public hearing on the revised zoning recommendations in April 2011. Learn more at [www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/kensington](http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/kensington)

### will the new sector plan allow high rises in kensington?

- The Draft Sector Plan allows buildings up to 75 feet high. That maximum height already is allowed in the current Plan's C-2 zoning, which covers most of the commercial properties in Kensington (see page 31). In fact, the Draft Plan reduces the area and the number of properties where 75-foot high buildings would be allowed. It recommends maximum 75-foot heights only for properties along Connecticut Avenue between Knowles Avenue and Plyers Mill Road. Two existing office buildings in this area are already 65 feet or higher. The design guidelines will provide further guidance on the tallest buildings and how new buildings might help smooth the transition to surrounding properties.



“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 lower height, to ensure gradual transitions of building to the adjoining residential neighborhoods.” (see October 2009 Plan, page 19)

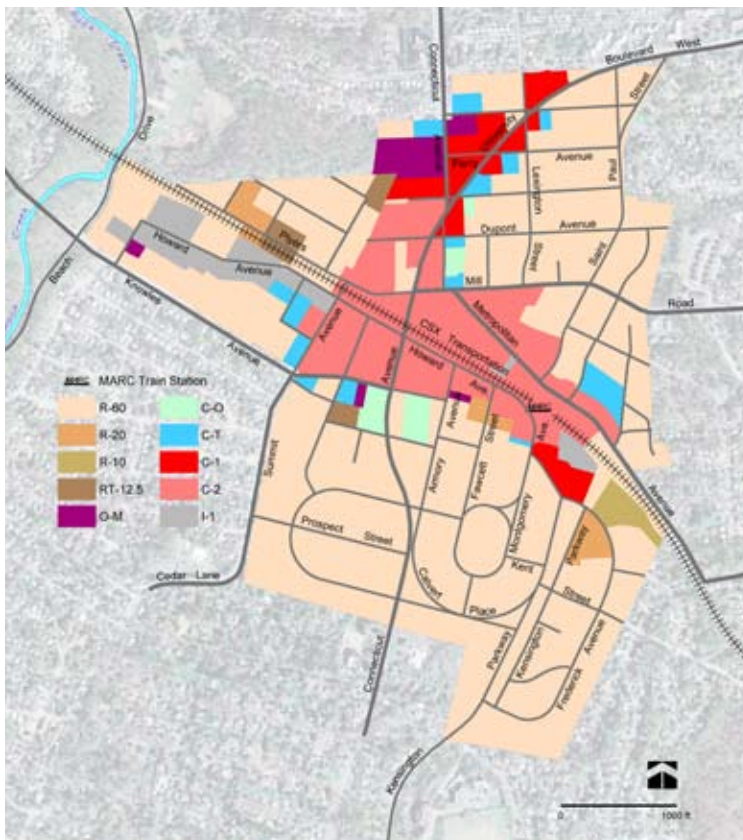
The CRN Zones are applied on the edges of the existing Town Center, where lower densities and building heights are appropriate. The CRT Zones are applied in the rest of the Town Center, reflecting the Plan's goal of creating a mixed-use district that encourages revitalization.

### will there be more multifamily housing units in kensington?

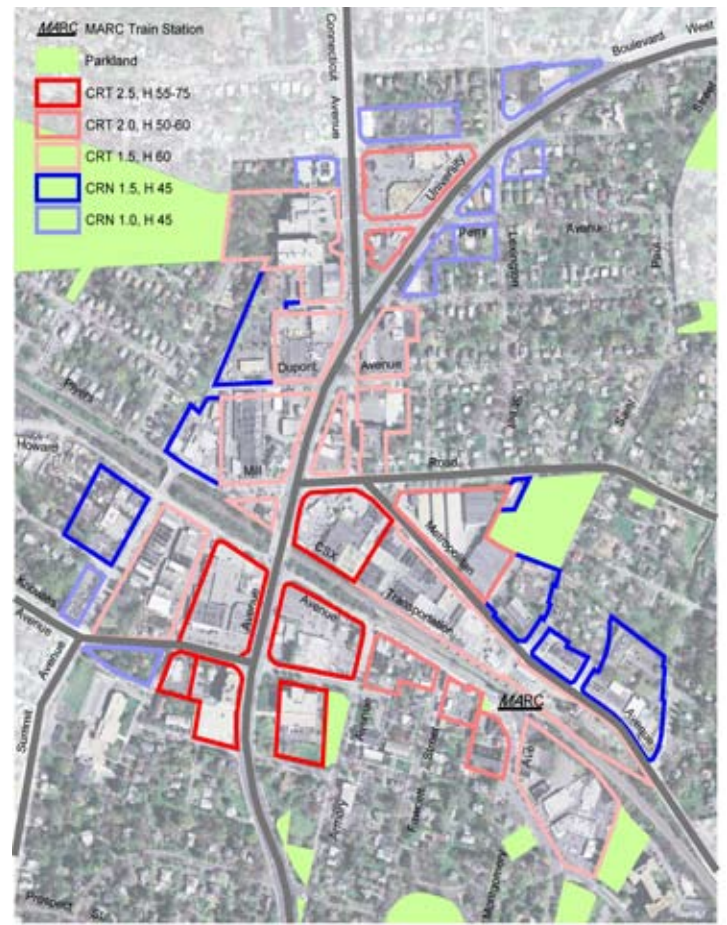
- The Draft Plan allows mixed-use developments with residential units in the commercial center of Kensington where the current plan allows only commercial development. However, only a few properties will be able to develop to the maximum development potential due to parcel size and other constraints. Residences in the Town Center are more desirable because of their proximity to shops and services.

More housing in the town center “will mean livelier and more active streets that are attractive for residents, shoppers, and visitors. It will increase the diversity of housing choices as well. The Plan proposes modest increases in density in the exclusively commercial center of Kensington to encourage mixing of uses while continuing to allow the range of retail and commercial uses now available.” (see October 2009 Plan, page 17)

**existing zoning**



**proposed CRN and CRT zones**



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**will the new sector plan cause school overcrowding?**

School populations fluctuate based on many factors, such as changes in family size and families with school-age kids moving into an area. New development makes only a small difference in school populations.

- Over the life of the Sector Plan, even the upper range of possible development scenarios will not yield enough students to warrant an additional school. Any estimate of future development will occur over a number of years, which means that student generation will be spread out over many years, and therefore will not cause a surge in enrollment.

| Dwelling Units | Elementary Students | Middle School Students | High School Students |
|----------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 624            | 26                  | 24                     | 21                   |

**will the new sector plan cause more traffic in kensington?**

- Traffic will increase in Kensington regardless of the Sector Plan's recommendations. About a third of the projected traffic increase is generated by development outside Kensington. In fact, the proposed plan would increase residential development rather than commercial development, generating less traffic. Weekday evening rush hour traffic is projected to increase from 12,400 vehicles today to 15,050 vehicles in 2030, if all potentially redevelopable properties—not just the most likely ones—build to their allowed maximums.

**will the new sector plan’s reduced parking requirements create a parking shortage in the town center?**

- The proposed Plan allows a small reduction in required parking to accommodate mixed uses in the Town Center. Reducing parking encourages more people to walk, cycle or take public transportation.

The Draft Plan seeks to “reduce dependence on the automobile by encouraging development that integrates a balanced combination of housing types, mobility options, commercial services, and public facilities and amenities.” (see October 2009 Plan, page 28)



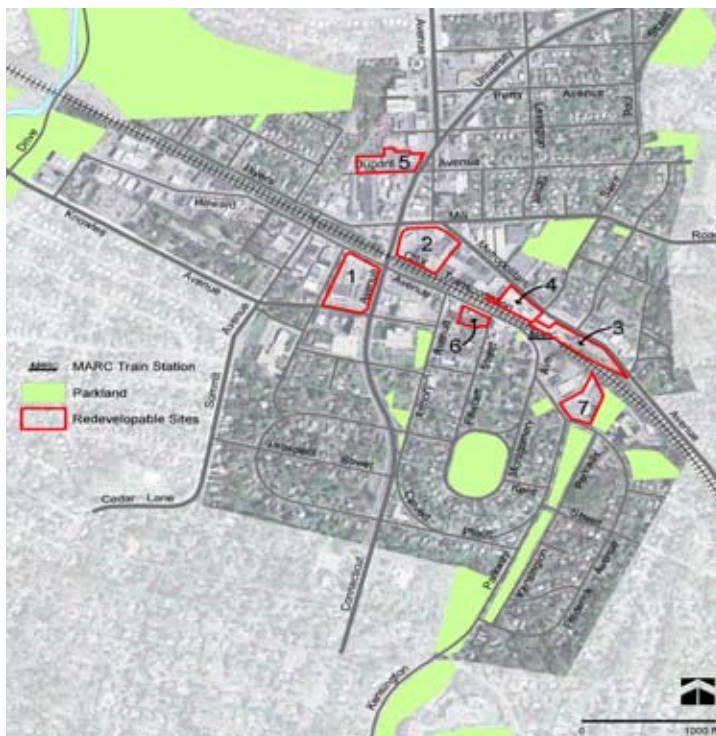
**will the new sector plan allow more development than allowed now?**

Under existing zoning, more than 800,000 square feet of commercial space could be built. Most of the Town’s current zones are commercial, limiting future development to that use and precluding new residential units. In reality, development does not ever reach the maximum square footage allowed under zoning and is likely to be considerably less than specified in either the existing or the proposed zones.

Planners predict that two properties may develop in the early years of the Sector Plan, and five more may develop over time. If all seven develop to the allowable maximum it is possible that up to about 600 new dwelling units—most likely in multifamily buildings—and 370,000 square feet of commercial space could be built in Kensington over the next decade or so. That is in the upper range of the likely development scenario.

- In the 30-year life of the current Kensington Sector Plan, the Planning Board approved approximately 330,000 square feet of commercial space.

**likely redevelopment sites**



*Auto-oriented businesses along major thoroughfares are the most visible feature of Kensington’s town center. The Plan encourages revitalization that preserves both scale and historic character.*

|   | Existing        |         |            | Proposed |            |       |
|---|-----------------|---------|------------|----------|------------|-------|
|   | Property        | Size    | Floor Area | Units    | Floor Area | Units |
| 1 | Burka           | 138,000 | 207,000    | 0        | 69,000     | 221   |
| 2 | Levin-Huggins   | 126,250 | 189,375    | 0        | 63,125     | 202   |
| 3 | Konterra        | 84,071  | 126,107    | 0        | 21,018     | 84    |
| 4 | Mizell          | 56,500  | 56,500     | 0        | 14,125     | 56    |
| 5 | Calomaris       | 76,600  | 114,900    | 0        | 114,900    | 0     |
| 6 | Antique Village | 29,800  | 44,700     | 0        | 59,600     | 0     |
| 7 | Johnson         | 70,000  | 70,000     | 0        | 28,000     | 61    |
|   |                 | 581,221 | 808,582    | 0        | 369,768    | 624   |

## how can the town monitor development once the sector plan is approved?

- The Planning Board is responsible for preparing master plans and implementing them through subdivision or site plan review processes. The Town of Kensington reviews subdivisions and site plans and forwards recommendations to the Planning Board to be included in Board deliberations on an application. The Town can use its public meetings to determine its position on an application. The Planning Board may approve plans over the formal objections of the Town, but must have a two-thirds majority of members present and participating to override the Town recommendation.

“A carbon analysis for Kensington factored in existing and projected embodied energy, transportation energy, and building energy. The results show that carbon dioxide output will nearly triple unless fossil fuel consumption is reduced.” (see October 2009 Plan, page 5)



## next steps

In April, the Montgomery County Planning Board expects to hold a public hearing on a revised draft of the Sector Plan, and interested residents are encouraged to attend and be heard. Sign up to speak at [www.montgomeryapps.org/planning\\_board/testify.asp](http://www.montgomeryapps.org/planning_board/testify.asp) or send written testimony to [MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org). After worksessions in May, the Planning Board will transmit a revised Planning Board Draft to the County Executive and County Council in June. The County Council expects to hold a public hearing in September, at which interested residents may again comment on the new Plan.

Questions? Contact Fred Boyd at (301) 495-4654 or at [fred.boyd@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:fred.boyd@mncppc-mc.org).

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Montgomery County Planning Department  
M-NCPPC  
[montgomeryplanning.org](http://montgomeryplanning.org)