

Kensington Sector Plan (KSP) Frequently Asked Questions (as of March 16, 2012)

What is the Kensington Sector Plan (KSP)? The KSP generally determines what buildings can be built at what heights in the Town of Kensington. It is a blueprint that property owners are required to follow, in conjunction with the Commercial/Residential Zones and Design Guidelines, when submitting applications to develop. The last Sector Plan for Kensington passed in 1978 when the Town was zoned for primarily commercial building in the core. One reason development in Town has been static until now is the commercial zoning. Many builders seek residential development to maximize their investment. In the new KSP, the core area is zoned for mixed-use, meaning residential building is allowed for the first time for this part of Town.

What has happened since the January 2012? In the February 28 and March 6 work sessions, County Council members amended the KSP language to make a few changes in response to concerns raised by residents in and around the Town. The changes support step-downs for edge properties to develop at a scale more appropriate for Kensington's lack of Metro proximity and overburdened traffic and schools and to preserve the Town character. The Council also added language to support mixed-use for first-floor retail on commercial streets so that we don't get only large apartment buildings along desired retail frontage streets.

On March 6, four Council members (Berliner, Andrews, Elrich and Leventhal) announced they will co-sponsor changes to the Commercial/Residential (CR) Zones (ZTA 12-06) to clarify that a MARC station should not be considered the same as a Metro station under the CR zones. If this bill passes as proposed, properties located near a MARC station would not qualify for transit proximity benefits or a reduction in parking requirements. Five votes are needed to adopt this change. The public hearing for this Zoning Text Amendment is scheduled for April 10, 2012 at 1:30 pm in Rockville.

When was the KSP approved? The Montgomery County Council voted (8-1 with Councilmember Marc Elrich voting against) to approve the Kensington Sector Plan (KSP) on March 20, 2012.

Will passing the Plan 'get rid of all the gas stations'? The County Council is not getting rid of or bringing in any new business to Kensington by passing the Plan. This legislation simply provides the framework for any of the roughly 35 properties governed by the Kensington Sector Plan to submit applications to the Planning Board for permits to develop their property. So whether a gas station or any other property owner decides to develop depends on their own economics and their bottom line cost/benefit analysis. No one can promise that the gas stations will go away or that great restaurants or shops will be built or that they won't. Once the legislation passes, we will know the maximum heights and densities allowed, as well as what amenities are required or recommended, if or when a property owner decides to develop over the next 20 years of the Plan.

Are any properties ready to build? The first property owner, Konterra, has been working with the Town and requested to build a 75' building on Metropolitan Ave where the zone calls for a 60' maximum height. The Konterra property is next to the historic train station across from antique row, but away from the Conn Ave core where the rest of the 75' heights are zoned. The Town of Kensington Council passed a resolution requesting the County Council to allow them to work with Konterra to host a charrette to envision the proposed building in this setting and to work with the Planning Board to determine the appropriate height for this property. The process is underway now to schedule the charrette which includes representatives from the Kensington Town and neighboring communities.

Where can I learn more? More information from the County can be found at the Montgomery Planning site (<http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/kensington/>). This FAQ was created by Parkwood resident Gail Dalferes (gail.dalferes@gmail.com) based on participation in Council and TOK meetings on the Plan since Fall 2010; reading the draft Kensington Sector Plans and appendices, CR Zones and Design Guidelines; work with Planning staff and fellow residents on text amendments to achieve promises made to residents; many discussions with experts on what residents can expect from the Plan and the permitting process that will follow. Gail is a member of the Committee to Save Kensington (www.savekensington.com). The CSK is made up of residents of the Town of Kensington as well as 10 neighboring communities seeking to educate themselves and their communities on the Kensington Sector Plan. The web site is the main vehicle for sharing this information.