

T&E COMMITTEE #3  
October 11, 2018

MEMORANDUM

October 9, 2018

TO: Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment Committee  
FROM: Glenn Orlin, <sup>GO</sup>Deputy Director  
SUBJECT: Summit Avenue Extended  
PURPOSE: Facility planning review

The Council has programmed \$1,285,000 under the Facility Planning—Transportation project for the Department of Transportation (DOT) for the planning of the master-planned northern extension of Summit Avenue between Plyers Mill Road and Connecticut Avenue (MD 185) in Kensington. During the past two years DOT has completed Phase I of facility planning for this project—the feasibility study stage—for which \$215,000 had been appropriated: \$58,000 in staff charges and \$157,000 in consultant funding.

This worksession is the opportunity for Committee members and other interested Councilmembers to provide informal feedback to DOT as to whether to proceed to Phase II of facility planning—the detailed planning stage—that would produce the precise project scope and develop reliable estimates of cost and community and environmental impact, and if so, what should be studied. DOT could proceed to Phase II soon after this review; its programmed cost is \$480,000: \$80,000 in staff charges and \$400,000 in consultant costs. If the Phase II study goes forward according to the funding schedule in the current capital program, a Summit Avenue Extended Capital Improvements Program (CIP) project may be a candidate for inclusion in the FY21-26 CIP.

John “JT” Thomas, DOT’s facility planning manager, will brief the Committee on the Department’s findings and recommendations. Steve Aldrich of the Planning staff will summarize the Planning Board’s views. Council staff will conclude with analysis and recommendations. After the Committee has explored the issues it will be asked for its guidance to DOT, which subsequently will be transmitted in a memorandum from the Committee Chair to the DOT Director.

**Alternatives studied.** DOT examined four long-term alternatives in some detail (in addition to the no-build alternative).

- Alternative L1, the master-planned option, would extend Summit Avenue two blocks north to Farragut Street, which in turn connects to the intersection of Connecticut Avenue and University Boulevard; cost = \$19.0 million.\*
- Alternative L2 would extend Summit Avenue only one block north to Dupont Street, which in turn would intersect Connecticut Avenue at a new signalized intersection midway between University Boulevard and Plyers Mill Road; cost = \$7.1 million.\*
- Alternative L3 would widen the Connecticut Avenue bridge over CSX by two lanes, adding a southbound right-turn lane onto Howard Avenue and a northbound right-turn lane onto Plyers Mill Road, as well as extending the eastbound left-turn lane on Plyers Mill Road; cost = \$6.0 million.
- Alternative L4 would provide a reversible lane in the middle of Connecticut Avenue, running southbound in the morning, northbound in the evening; cost = \$2.8 million.\*

The 2013 Kensington Sector Plan also called for studying using Concord Street as a means for conveying traffic between the Plyers Mill Road/Metropolitan Avenue intersection and the Connecticut Avenue/University Boulevard intersection, thus diverting traffic from the Connecticut Avenue/Plyers Mill Road intersection. This element was not incorporated with any of the alternatives. In addition, DOT has developed three sets of short-term options, which could be implemented individually or in combination. Most of the changes involve lengthening turn lanes which have few (if any) property impacts. The total cost of these improvements is about \$3.1 million. A chart summarizing the long- and short-term improvement alternatives are on ©1.

**Recommendations.** The Planning staff recommends either L1 or L2 as the long-term alternative to be carried forward in Phase II of facility planning. They oppose L3 now because the widening of the bridge over CSX would not leave room for the two-way separated bike lanes recommended for in Tier 2 of the Draft Bicycle Master Plan. Should the bridge ever need to be replaced, then L3 could be considered if it left room for the bikeway. The staff is also concerned about L4 which, by removing the median, would render the pedestrian crossing of Connecticut Avenue more difficult. They support adding Concord Street to the mix in the Phase II study. They support the short-term improvements, except that right-turn lane from northbound Connecticut Avenue to eastbound Plyers Mill Road should not be channelized. The Planning staff's memorandum is on ©2-8, and the memo (with plan diagrams) are in Attachment A of their packet. Both can be found at:

<http://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Summit-Avenue-Extension-Sept-06-201.pdf>

[http://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/item14\\_Attachment-A.pdf](http://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/item14_Attachment-A.pdf)

The Planning Board generally concurs with its staff, except that it clearly recommends L1 as the long-term alternative. The Board's letter is on ©9-10. The Town of Kensington also supports L1, especially in the light of pending redevelopment projects in the vicinity, and it is favorable to all the short-term options (©11-12).

\* Cost estimates for the long-term alternatives do not include final design and construction management costs.

**Benefits and costs of long-range alternatives.** Travel time benefits of the long-term alternatives vary according to the routes taken through Kensington. The following chart shows the estimated travel time today and in Year 2040 for the No Build, L1, and L2 alternatives:

Route during AM or PM weekday peak, in minutes	Today*	No Build	L1	L2
SB Connecticut Ave, Denfield Ave to Washington St (AM)		7.0	5.8	5.9
NB Connecticut Ave, Washington St to Denfield Ave (PM)	6.2	9.0	6.7	8.6
SB University/Connecticut, St. Paul St to Washington St (AM)		13.0	4.5	6.9
NB Connecticut/University, Washington St to St Paul St (PM)	6.0	8.7	6.2	8.0
SB Connecticut @ Denfield to Summit @ Knowles, via Connecticut (AM)		6.9	5.8	5.9
NB from Summit @ Knowles to Connecticut @ Denfield, via Conn. (PM)	6.6	7.2	5.0	5.2
SB Connecticut @ Denfield to Summit @ Knowles, via L1 (AM)		-	5.2	5.3
NB from Summit @ Knowles to Connecticut @ Denfield, via L1 (PM)	-	-	4.0	4.3
SB University @ St. Paul to Summit @ Knowles, via Connecticut (AM)		12.9	4.6	6.9
NB Summit @ Knowles to University @ St. Paul, via Connecticut (PM)	6.3	7.0	4.5	5.2
SB University @ St. Paul to Summit @ Knowles, via L1 (AM)		-	4.2	6.3
NB Summit @ Knowles to University @ St. Paul, via L1 (PM)	-	-	3.7	3.9

\* The only existing travel time data from the study is for NB in the PM peak.

The forecast shows that L1 would provide significant—for some routes, substantial—travel time savings compared to the No Build in 2040. The travel time savings under L2 are also very good, although consistently less than for L1. L1, L2, and L3 have nearly the same property impacts: 7-8 displacements, comprising about 2.7 acres.

DOT has received informal input from the State Highway Administration (SHA) about these alternatives. SHA's concurrence is critical, because of how the build alternatives tie into Connecticut Avenue (MD 185). SHA is concerned about the close spacing of signalized intersections on Connecticut Avenue under L2, which would have a new signal and median break at Dupont Street. L2 would also shorten the left-turn lane for southbound Connecticut Avenue traffic heading eastbound on Plyers Mill Road and Metropolitan Avenue.

The short-term build alternatives also provide travel time improvements, such as from Level of Service E to D at Connecticut Avenue/Plyers Mill Road and from C to B at Plyers Mill Road/Metropolitan Avenue. The impacts are minimal, primarily the relocation of some utilities.

**Council staff recommendation:** Concur with the Planning Board and the Town of Kensington to proceed with long-term Alternative L1 in Phase II of facility planning. Phase II should also examine how a connection to Concord Street could be made to address all or most of the traffic between Plyers Mill Road/Metropolitan Avenue. More than two-thirds of the cost of L1 (about \$14 million) is for right-of-way. DOT should complete the Phase II study to produce plans that will provide guidance to the Planning Board and developers when the area north of Plyers Mill Road and west of Connecticut Avenue redevelops. If timed with the redevelopment, the County's land acquisition cost will be much reduced.

In the meantime, the County should look to implement all the short-term improvements as soon as possible, with the caveats noted by the Planning Board. Together these improvements will provide measurable relief in the short run.

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## Kensington Area Improvement Cost and Benefits

### Short Term Improvements

#	Location	Proposed Improvement	Cost	Benefit (with Existing Condition)	Priority
S-A	Southbound and Northbound approaches at MD 185/ Plyers Mill Road intersection, bus stops on MD 185 Northbound at Safeway and former Shell station, and signals along MD 185 corridor.	<p>Lengthen southbound left turn lane (400 feet) at Plyers Mill Road and reduce the northbound leftmost left turn lane at the MD 185/MD 193 intersection</p> <p>Add a northbound right turn lane requiring northbound Connecticut Avenue widening north of the railroad bridge (125 feet). Will have some utility impacts</p> <p>Remove the bus stop at Shell Station and consolidate with the MD 185 bus stop at Safeway (Planned Summer 2018)</p> <p>Consider Adaptive Traffic Management "Smart" Signal Technology - collaborate with MDOT SHA to add to corridor to program.</p>	\$2,140,000	<p>1 - Remove occurrences of Southbound MD 185 thru traffic blocked by left turn queue at Plyers Mill Road in AM peak</p> <p>2 - Reduce Southbound MD 185 travel times between 8-38% in AM peak and Northbound MD 185 travel times between 28-30% in PM</p> <p>3 - Improve the PM intersection LOS from E to D for MD 185 at Plyers Mill Road</p> <p>4 - Reduce interference with MD 185 Northbound traffic from stopped buses</p> <p>5 - Maximize efficiency of signal system along MD 185</p>	1
S-B	Eastbound approach at MD 185/ Plyers Mill Road intersection and Plyers Mill Road at Metropolitan Avenue (MD 192) intersection	<p>Lengthen eastbound left turn lane at MD 185 (200 feet) requiring widening of south side of the Plyers Mill Road</p> <p>Convert traffic signal from flashing operation to full operation, coordinating with MD 185/Plyers Mill Road signal</p> <p>Signing and marking improvements</p>	\$330,000	<p>1 - Reduce Eastbound Plyers Mill queueing at MD 185, including the average queue by 190 feet in PM peak</p> <p>2 - Improve overall MD 192/Plyers Mill intersection LOS from C to B in AM peak, Eastbound approach from C to B in PM peak</p> <p>3 - Reduce the eastbound right turn queues onto MD 192 within available storage space on Plyers Mill Road in PM peak</p>	2
S-C	Eastbound approach of MD 547/ Summit Avenue Intersection and Summit Avenue between Knowles Avenue and Howard Avenue	<p>Lengthen the eastbound left turn lane (200 feet) on Knowles Avenue to Summit Avenue via restriping</p> <p>"Clean Up" Summit Avenue by rehabilitating pavement</p>	\$650,000	<p>1 - Reduce Eastbound MD 547 queues at Summit Avenue by 20-30% in the PM peak</p> <p>2 - Improved traveling conditions along Summit Avenue</p>	3

### Long Term Improvements

#	Proposed Improvement	Cost	Benefit (with 2040 Condition)
L1	<p>Extend Summit Avenue from Plyers Mill Road to MD 193 - Original Alternative 1</p> <p>High cost and potential impacts</p>	\$19.0M	<p>Improve intersection LOS (MD 185/Plyers Mill : F to E in AM, MD 185/MD 547: D to C in PM), other intersection delay reductions along MD 185</p> <p>Reduce Southbound travel times by 17%-65% in AM peak, and Northbound travel times by 25%-35% in PM peak</p>
L2	<p>Extend Summit Avenue from Plyers Mill Road to Dupont Avenue and provide signal at MD 185/ Dupont Avenue</p> <p>High cost and potential impacts</p>	\$7.1M	<p>Improve intersection LOS (MD 185/Plyers Mill : F to E in AM, MD 185/MD 547: D to C in PM), intersection delay reductions along MD 185</p> <p>Reduce Southbound travel times by 15%-47% in AM peak, and Northbound travel times by 4-27% in PM peak</p>
L3	<p>Widen MD 185 railroad bridge with addition of MD 185 Northbound right turn lane at Plyers Mill Road, addition of MD 185 Southbound right turn lane at Howard Avenue, and with an extension of Plyers Mill Eastbound left turn lane by 250 feet</p> <p>Consider for long-term improvement consistent with bridge replacement needs</p>	<p>\$6.0M</p> <p>(NO ROW based on GIS)</p>	<p>Improve intersection LOS (MD 185/Plyers Mill : F to E in PM)</p> <p>Reduce Southbound travel times by 6%-40% in AM peak, with Southbound diversion along Howard Avenue, and Northbound travel times by 12%-28% in PM peak</p>
L4	<p>Provide Dynamic Reversible Lane Operation on MD 185 between Knowles Avenue and MD 193</p> <p>Consider for long-term improvement in cooperation with MDOT State Highway Administration. Potential Negative Impacts to pedestrian crossings of MD 185</p>	\$2.8M	<p>Improve intersection LOS (MD 185/Plyers Mill : F to D in AM, F to E in PM)</p> <p>Reduce Southbound travel times by 40-70%, and increase Northbound by 12-26% in AM peak. Reduce Northbound travel times by 35%-50%, and increase Southbound by 6-9% in PM peak.</p>

①

**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**

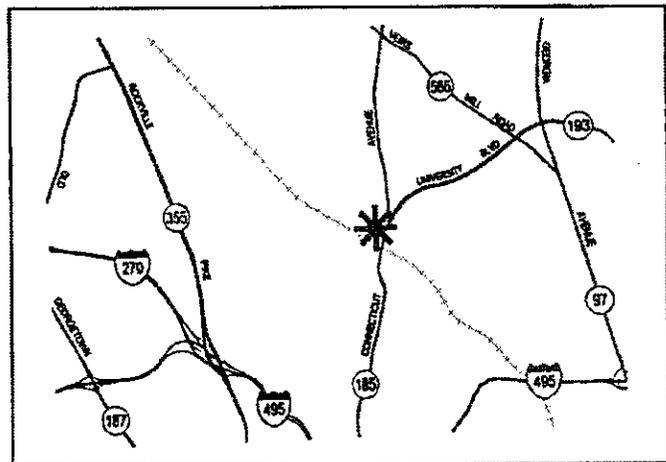
Completed: 08/29/2018

**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.

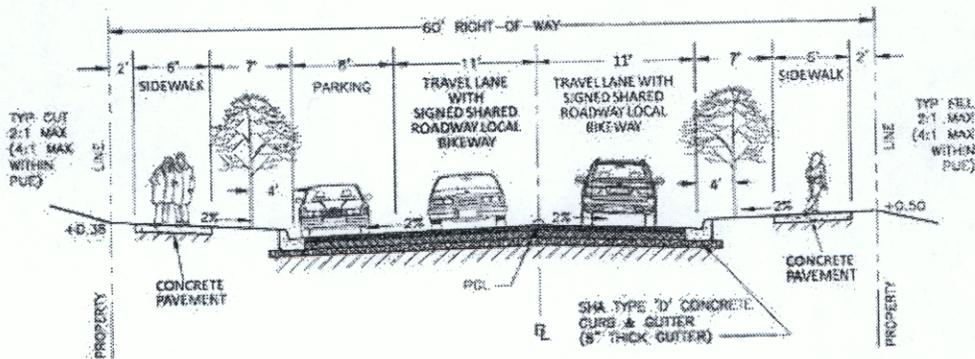
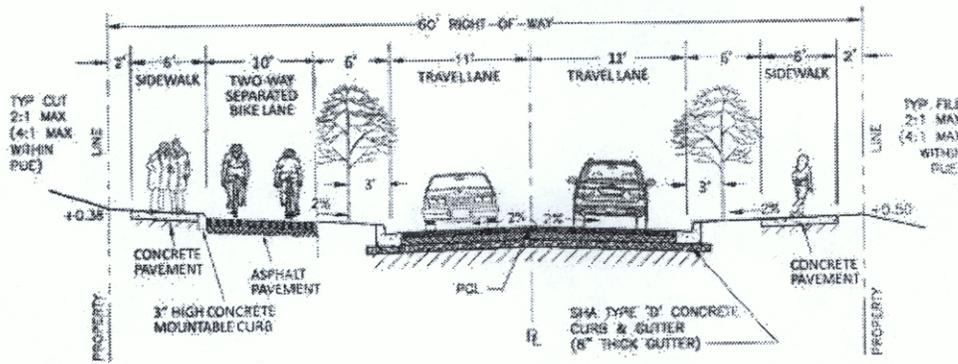


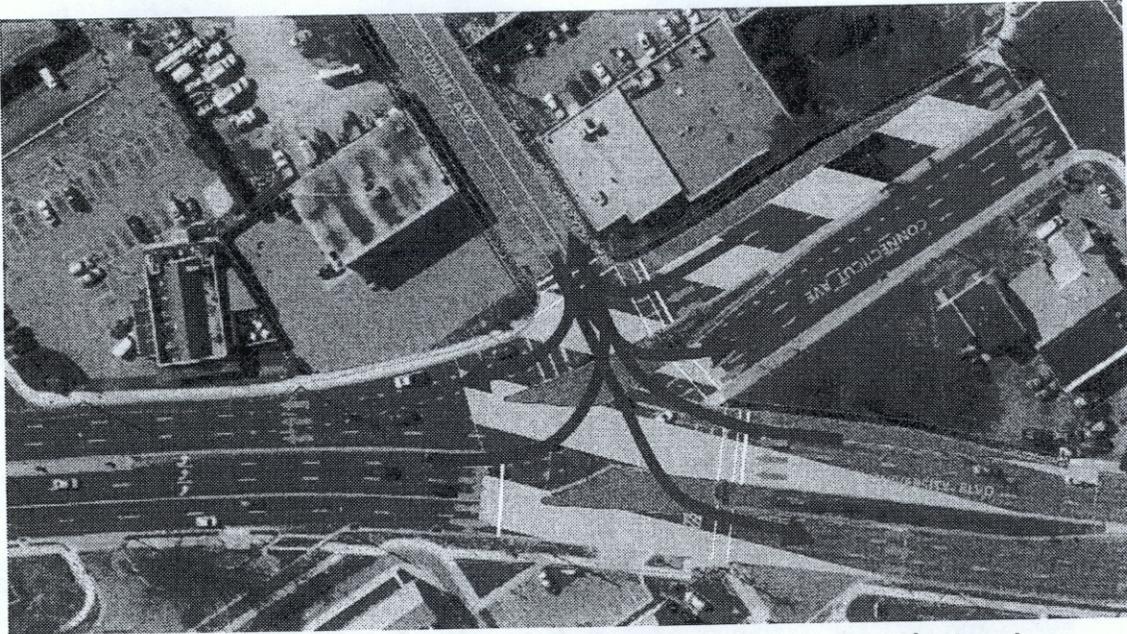
Figure 2: Summit Avenue Extension Typical Section Option A



**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.



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

September 17, 2018

Mr. Al Roshdieh  
Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
101 Monroe Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

**SUBJECT: Summit Avenue Extension – Facility Planning Phase 1 Study: Request for Planning Board feedback on conceptual alternatives**

Dear Mr. Roshdieh:

At its regularly scheduled meeting on September 6, 2018, the Montgomery County Planning Board reviewed short- and long-term improvement concepts developed by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) as part of their Facility Planning Phase 1 Study for the Summit Avenue Extension project, located in Kensington, Maryland. The Board heard a presentation from the technical staff and discussed the project with the staff and with representatives of MCDOT, the applicant for the project. The Board offers the following comments:

The Board supports this project with the insistence that access for bicycles and pedestrians be prioritized in favor of continually widening roadways and that the improvements developed be consistent with the vision of the Kensington Sector Plan recommendations, the Bicycle Master Plan, and the County's Vision Zero Action Plan. We offer the following specific comments:

**Long-Term Alternatives**

1. Alternative L1 (Connection via Farragut Avenue) is recommended by the Planning Board. This long-term alternative is most consistent with the Kensington Sector Plan recommendation. Alternative L2 (Connection via Dupont Avenue) is worthy of consideration in the event Alternative L1 cannot be pursued.
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.

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**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 analyses 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 VISSIM 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.

The Planning Board appreciates the opportunity to review this proposal and looks forward to working closely with MCDOT on future projects. If you have questions, please contact Stephen Aldrich at 301-495-4528 or [Stephen.Aldrich@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:Stephen.Aldrich@montgomeryplanning.org).

Sincerely,



Casey Anderson  
Chair

**Attachments:**

Technical Staff Report dated September 6, 2018

cc: Stephen Aldrich, Master Planner/Supervisor, M-NCPPC  
Pamela Dunn, Chief, M-NCPPC  
John Thomas, MCDOT  
Christopher Conklin, MCDOT

Mayor Tracey Furman

Council Member Darin Bartram  
Council Member Sean McMullen



Council Member Conor Crimmins  
Council Member Duane Rollins

April 6, 2018

Mr. John Thomas, PTP  
Planning Section Manager, Division of Transportation Engineering  
Montgomery County DOT  
100 Edison Park Drive, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor SE  
Gaithersburg MD 20878

**Re: Summit Avenue Extension Project  
Town of Kensington**

Dear Mr. Thomas: JT

On behalf of the Town Council, we would like to thank you for presenting the alternative improvement options for the proposed Summit Avenue Extension project at our March 12<sup>th</sup> Town Council Meeting. In discussing the proposed alternatives with the Council, we understand the benefit and cost analysis of extending Summit Avenue compared to the proposed alternatives; however, with pending redevelopment projects on Knowles, Plyers Mill, and Summit, we believe that the Summit Avenue Extension project should remain under active consideration within the County's CIP.

With respect to the short-term alternatives presented, the Council and I are very favorable towards all three (S-A, S-B, and S-C) proposals. Although we do have reservations on converting the existing traffic signal at Plyers Mill Road and 192 Metropolitan Avenue from flashing to fully operational, as this was done previously with deleterious results. In addition, we would like to see ADA sidewalks installed between Connecticut and Summit Avenue and pedestrian crosswalk improvements between Connecticut and Howard Avenue as we continually hear from our residents about safety concerns.

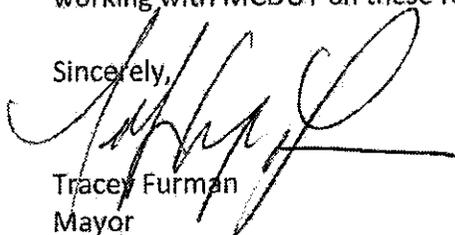
As for the long term improvements, we hope that MCDOT will continue to consider the extension of Summit Avenue (L1), as previously noted. We are encouraged by the possible benefits of widening Connecticut Avenue along the CSX Bridge (L3) by providing a dedicated turn lane from Howard Avenue to Plyers Mill Road. However, we have some concerns about L4 and would need additional information before supporting alternative lanes on Connecticut between Knowles and Plyers Mill

Town of Kensington 3710 Mitchell Street Kensington, MD 20895  
Phone 301.949.2424 Fax 301.949.4925  
[www.tok.md.gov](http://www.tok.md.gov)

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Thank you again for presenting these alternatives to the Town Council, as we look forward to working with MCDOT on these future projects to help alleviate traffic congestion within the Town.

Sincerely,



Tracey Furman  
Mayor

Cc: Kensington Town Council  
Bruce Johnston, P.E. Division Chief  
Hans Riemer, County Council President