



Prepared by the  
Montgomery County Planning Commission

Creating New Opportunities

town center district

## **Montgomery County Commissioners**

Thomas J. Ellis, *Esq., Chairman*

James R. Matthews

Ruth S. Damsker

## **Montgomery County Planning Commission Board**

P. Gregory Shelly, *Chair*

Scott Exley, *Vice Chair*

Dulcie F. Flaharty

Henry P. Jacquelin

Pasquale N. Mascaro

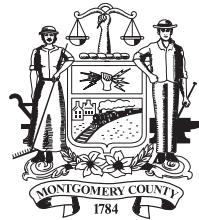
Megan M. McDonough, *Esq.*

Roy Rodriguez, Jr.

Charles J. Tornetta

V. Scott Zelov

Kenneth B. Hughes, *Director*



# town center district

Creating New Opportunities

Prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Commission  
February, 2006



# Table of Contents

## Introduction

The Traditional Main Street Character.....	2
Sense of Identity, Character, and Place .....	2
Historic Character .....	3
Mix of Uses .....	3
Pedestrian-Friendly Environment .....	4

## Design Elements

Mix of Uses .....	7
Historic Structures .....	8
Surface Parking Location.....	9
Build-To-Line .....	10
Building Height.....	11
Floor Area Ratio (FAR) .....	12
Exterior Lighting.....	13
Screening of Refuse Areas.....	14
Outdoor Dining.....	15
Streetscape Elements.....	16
Greening Elements .....	17
Urban Garden, Plaza, Square, or Courtyard .....	18
Pedestrian Design Standards .....	19
Nonresidential Footprints .....	20
Building Orientation and Entrances .....	21
Blank Walls .....	22

Windows .....	23
Roofs .....	24
Architectural Rhythm .....	25
Massing .....	26
Street Trees .....	27
Parking Lot Landscaping .....	28
Signage.....	29
Reduction of Parking and Shared Parking.....	30
Parking Structures .....	31

## Model Ordinance

Section 1. Intent.....	35
Section 2. Uses.....	35
Section 3. Development Standards .....	40
Section 4. General Requirements.....	41
Section 5. Streetscape and Green Area Standards.....	44
Section 6. Bonus Provisions .....	47
Section 7. Design Standards .....	48

<b>Appendix 1</b> Definitions.....	55
------------------------------------	----

<b>Appendix 2</b> Landscaping .....	59
-------------------------------------	----

<b>Appendix 3</b> Signs .....	63
-------------------------------	----

<b>Appendix 4</b> Parking and Access.....	67
---	----



*Ambler, Pennsylvania*



*Keswick, Pennsylvania*

# Town Center District

Montgomery County's traditional downtown and Main Street areas were once thriving destinations. They were the focal point of a community, providing shopping, dining, services, and entertainment. Over the years, these areas have suffered due to a variety of trends. Major contributing trends involved loss of industry and a shift in shopping habits. Malls and shopping centers became popular places for shoppers who once patronized downtown and Main Street areas. Many areas were greatly affected, and some experienced a substantial level of decline. Fortunately, we are seeing a renewed focus on the revitalization of these areas. These communities, whether large or small boroughs or downtown areas within our developed townships, share many common issues and challenges. These challenges include encouraging economic development and accommodating infill development and adaptive reuse while preserving historic character.

We created the Town Center District model zoning ordinance and design guidelines to help communities in their revitalization efforts. The intent of this publication is to provide illustrative examples of design concepts that can enhance, and even transform, older downtown areas. Photographs and sketches are provided to illustrate the concepts discussed in the design elements and ordinance sections.

This publication includes an introduction that focuses on Main Street characteristics, a section that highlights design elements of traditional downtown and Main Street areas, and the Town Center District model zoning ordinance. This ordinance allows for a variety of commercial uses while providing flexible standards to encourage and support ongoing revitalization efforts. It focuses on promoting good design, enhancing the

pedestrian experience, and protecting a downtown's Main Street character.

## Who should use this ordinance?

There are approximately 35 major downtown and Main Street areas identified in Montgomery County's comprehensive plan. The Town Center District is intended for central commercial areas. The district applies to larger boroughs with downtown Main Streets (such as Norristown, Pottstown, and Lansdale) and smaller communities (such as Schwenksville, Pennsbury, Souderton, and Telford). It also applies to downtown areas like Glenside in Cheltenham and Abington Townships and Ardmore in Lower Merion Township. These communities, and others like them, have a defined center with traditional Main Street retail. They are pedestrian-oriented, with buildings situated close to the street.

## How should this ordinance be used?

The Town Center District is intended to be adopted as a separate zoning district. The appendices list supplemental zoning or subdivision and land development regulations. We suggest these standards, if needed, be adopted along with the Town Center District. While this district is intended for Main Street or downtown areas, we recognize that additional zoning districts will be needed to address transitional areas between the central business district and surrounding areas in the community. The Town Center District is encouraged to be used in conjunction with other planning efforts, such as revitalization, economic development, or streetscape plans.

## The Traditional Main Street Character

Our Main Streets and downtowns are places that are constantly evolving. These changes can either enhance or diminish a community's sense of character and place. The challenge is to direct these changes to revitalize our communities by supporting the traditional Main Street character that makes these areas unique. The design elements that embody a traditional Main Street character are a distinct sense of place, the preservation of historic buildings, a mix of uses, and a pedestrian-friendly environment. As many of our communities are undergoing revitalization efforts, it is important that new zoning regulations enhance the elements that comprise a traditional Main Street character and match a community's goals.

## Sense of Identity, Character, and Place

What makes our Main Streets and downtowns special is their sense of character and identity. These areas may differ in their size, location, or history, but each has its own distinctive sense of place. Protecting and building on this individual identity by enhancing the traditional Main Street environment is essential to keep these places interesting and thriving.



*Narberth, Pennsylvania*



*Pottstown, Pennsylvania*



*Souderton, Pennsylvania*

## Historic Character

One factor that makes downtown areas distinctive is their sense of history. Historic structures are an essential part of what makes these areas different and unique. Historic buildings contribute to the quality of the downtown environment by connecting the community to its past and creating a sense of time and place. By retaining, restoring, and reusing these buildings, a community can capitalize on one of its greatest assets.

## Mix of Uses

A mix of uses in our downtowns is necessary to encourage street activity and contribute to the economic success of downtown. The diversity of uses may include apartments above retail, professional offices, banks, and theaters, among others. Providing residential dwellings in our downtowns is a key component to ensuring a local customer base for area businesses, as well as providing a vibrant 24-hour environment with outdoor dining and entertainment options.



*Pottstown, Pennsylvania*



*Conshohocken, Pennsylvania*

## Pedestrian-Friendly Environment

A pedestrian-friendly environment begins with a compatible streetscape. How buildings relate to the street—their placement, scale, and massing—helps define the streetscape. Sidewalks, street trees, landscaping, and pedestrian amenities all add to the pedestrian experience. The design of building façades, including the architectural rhythm of building entrances, and the placement of windows help create a more walkable community and enhances the traditional Main Street character.



*Columbus, Ohio*



*Seattle, Washington*



# *design elements* *Part* 1

Part I of this publication introduces design elements that are featured throughout the Town Center District. This section is intended to illustrate concepts of the model ordinance found in Part II of this publication.



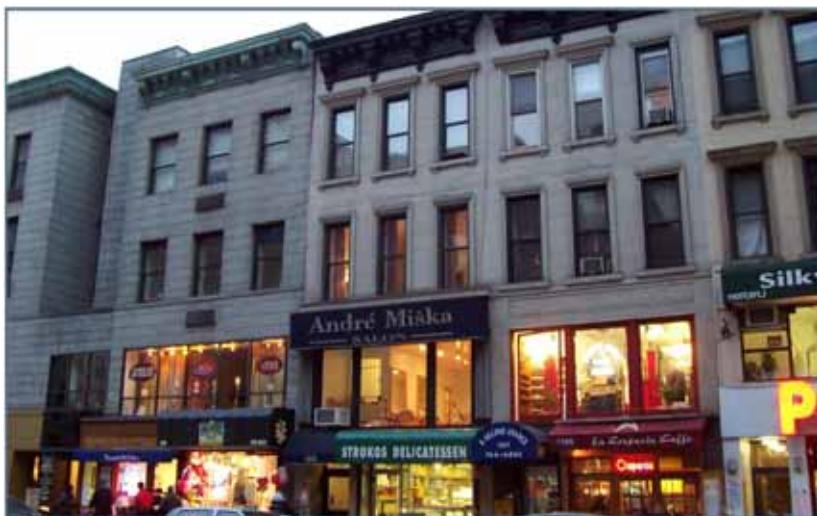
*Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania*



*Souderton, Pennsylvania*



*Kentlands, Maryland*



*Manhattan, New York*

## Mix of Uses

A mix of uses on Main Street is necessary to encourage street activity and to enhance community vitality. The Town Center District allows a diversity of uses that support our daily lives, provide employment, and offer recreation and civic opportunities that contribute to the economic success of downtown. Uses, such as restaurants with outdoor dining, theaters, coffee houses, and residential dwellings, extend and promote activity during both day and evening hours.

Residential units located above shops provide a consumer market for retailers. A successful downtown has businesses open through the evening hours and provides entertainment options that keep people in town.



*Ambler, Pennsylvania*



*Norristown, Pennsylvania*



*Elkins Park, Pennsylvania*



*Norristown, Pennsylvania*

## Historic Structures

Historic structures are an essential part of what makes Main Street areas unique. They contribute to the quality of the downtown and Main Street environment by connecting the community to its past. To help retain these structures, the Town Center District requires a conditional use procedure. This ensures that a number of specific conditions are followed if buildings are removed. In addition, the ordinance requires adherence to specific design standards and the provision of a public feature, such as a plaza or urban garden, if buildings are replaced.



*Ambler, Pennsylvania*



*Seattle, Washington*



*Narberth, Pennsylvania*

## Surface Parking Location

Parking areas with large expanses of paving are unattractive and break up the existing building line along Main Streets. They also disrupt the pedestrian experience. Surface parking should be designed in such a way that does not distract from the pedestrian environment.

The Town Center District has the following parking location standards:

- Parking is permitted to the rear of the principal building or to the side (however, parking should not be located between a building and the street).
- Parking is not permitted on corner lots that are located on collector or arterial roads.
- Parking areas should not extend more than 70 feet in width along any pedestrian street frontage without providing for a pedestrian-scale amenity, such as an outdoor café, urban garden, plaza, square, courtyard, or landscape feature with seating.



*Collegeville, Pennsylvania*



*Jenkintown, Pennsylvania*



*Sausalito, California*

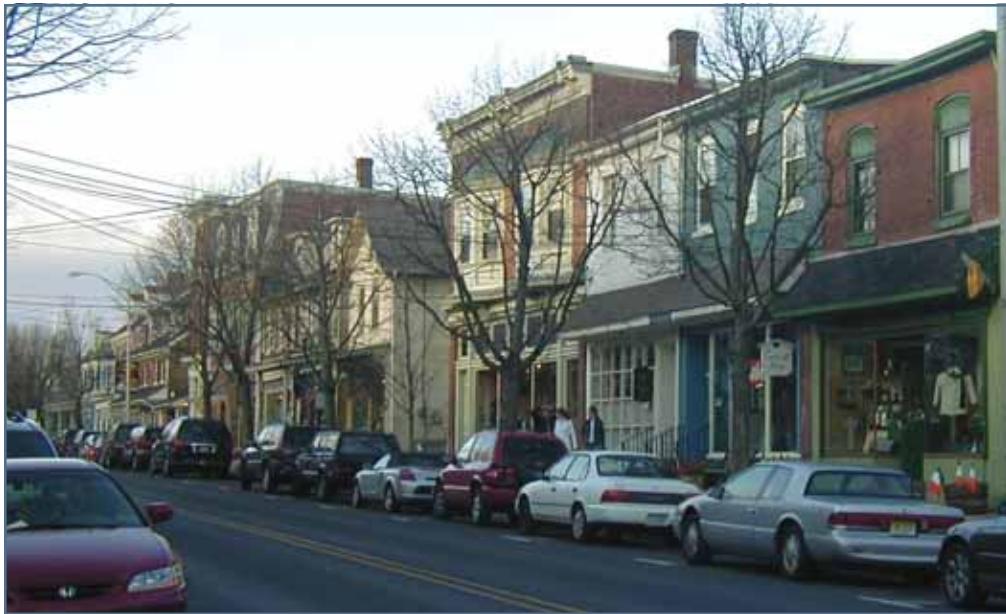
## Build-To-Line

Traditionally, buildings have been built to the sidewalk in downtown areas. Placing buildings at the edge of the sidewalk continues the existing building line, or street wall, and enriches the streetscape creating a vibrant pedestrian experience.

A build-to-line is defined as a line extending through the lot, is generally parallel to the front property line, and denotes the location of the building front. The adjacent photographs illustrate the build-to-line concept.

To help maintain the existing character of Main Streets and downtowns and encourage pedestrian-friendly environments, buildings are required to be placed along the sidewalk in the Town Center District. In the Town Center District buildings should be:

- Built to the sidewalk; or
- The setback should be the average of the two closest structures on the same side of the street with a maximum setback of 20 feet; or
- Setback from the sidewalk 10-20 feet for purposes of a plaza, square, courtyard, recessed entrance, or outdoor dining.



*Newtown, Pennsylvania*



*Conshohocken, Pennsylvania*

## Building Height

To ensure new buildings are compatible with the traditional Main Street environment a minimum building height of two stories is required within the Town Center District. The maximum allowable building height is 65 feet, with the provision of a 10-foot setback (on average) after the third story, provided the streetscape and green area standards are met.

Providing a setback for the upper stories helps reduce and minimize the bulk of taller buildings, which contributes to the pedestrian scale of the streetscape.



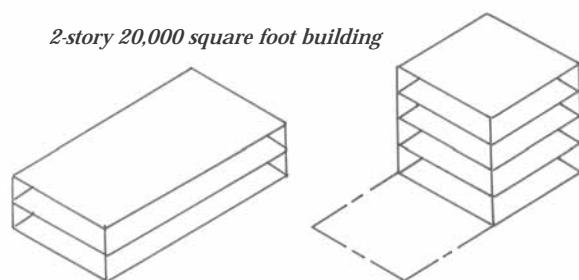
*Norristown, Pennsylvania*



*Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania*

*4-story 20,000 square foot building*

*2-story 20,000 square foot building*



*2.0 FAR on 10,000 square foot lot*

## Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

It is often very difficult for a community to determine how much development is appropriate on a site. Using floor area ratio often addresses the intensity of a site more effectively than using typical building coverage standards. FAR relates the building size to the lot area and should be set high enough to achieve downtown infill and redevelopment goals.

Floor area is the sum of the gross horizontal areas of each floor of a building, measured from the exterior walls or from the center line of party walls. (The term does not usually include any area used exclusively for the parking of motor vehicles.)

Floor area ratio is the ratio of gross building floor area to the total lot area. For example, if a 10,000 square foot lot has a FAR of 2.0, then a developer can only construct a building that has a total floor area of 20,000 square feet.

The illustrations at left demonstrate these concepts.



*Keswick, Pennsylvania*



*Pottstown, Pennsylvania*



*Brooklyn, New York*

## Exterior Lighting

Exterior lighting should be designed to enhance the site, emphasize a building's architecture and entrances, and provide safety and security for pedestrians. All exterior lighting should be designed to prevent glare onto adjacent properties. The Town Center District has the following additional standards regarding lighting:

- All off-street parking areas and pedestrian walkways should be well lit.
- Light fixtures are required to be 20 feet high for parking lots and 14 feet high for pedestrian walkways.



*Doylestown, Pennsylvania*



*Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania*



*Conshohocken, Pennsylvania*

## Screening of Refuse Areas

Screening of refuse areas reduces their visual impact and improves the appearance of our communities. Screening may be accomplished using wooden fencing, building extensions, or a combination of decorative walls or fencing with plantings, as shown in the adjacent examples. In the Town Center District screening should be accomplished by the following:

- The storage of refuse should be within buildings or within an outdoor area that is enclosed by walls or opaque fencing.
- Outdoor refuse areas should be designed to be architecturally compatible with the building and should not be located in front of the building.
- The refuse area should be screened by a fence or enclosure that is at least 6 feet in height.



*Hatboro, Pennsylvania*



*Doylestown, Pennsylvania*



*San Francisco, California*

## Outdoor Dining

Outdoor dining helps create pedestrian activity along the sidewalk and adds a sense of human scale to our communities. It fosters social interaction and creates areas of activity. Outdoor dining generates more people on the street, increasing liveliness, and a sense of safety in our downtowns. The Town Center District includes the following outdoor dining standards:

- Outdoor furnishings include tables, chairs, and umbrellas.
- Outdoor furniture should be stored inside the restaurant after normal operating hours.
- Planters, posts with ropes, or other removable enclosures are encouraged to define the dining area.
- Refuse facilities should be provided.
- Advertising or promotional features should be limited to umbrellas and canopies.
- Table placement should not impede the pedestrian traffic flow.



*Kulpsville, Pennsylvania*



*Lansdale, Pennsylvania*



*Jenkintown, Pennsylvania*



*Keswick, Pennsylvania*



*Ardmore, Pennsylvania*

## Streetscape Elements

Streetscape elements enrich the pedestrian experience by adding seating, visual interest, gathering places, and other public amenities. The Town Center District requires the addition of streetscape elements for new buildings and additions and alterations along the street frontage. The ordinance offers a variety of options to meet the requirements, including:

- Decorative banners/flags
- Seating
- Public art or decorative murals
- Clock tower
- Kiosk/bulletin board
- Urban garden
- Plaza, square, or courtyard
- Lighting
- Water feature



Moorestown, New Jersey



Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania



Narberth, Pennsylvania



Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Hatboro, Pennsylvania



Haverford, Pennsylvania

## Greening Elements

Requiring greening elements in our downtowns and Main Streets helps ensure that some type of plantings will be added to these existing built environments. Adding greening elements, such as hanging baskets, planters, and window boxes, can provide a decorative accent to buildings and adds an overall attractiveness to these areas.

The Town Center District requires greening elements for new buildings and additions and alterations along the street frontage. The ordinance provides various options to meet these greening requirements, including:

- Window boxes
- Hanging baskets
- Raised planting beds
- Planting in curb extensions
- Additional planting areas including shrubs, trees, groundcovers, or flowers



*Ardmore, Pennsylvania*



*Norristown, Pennsylvania*



*Portland, Oregon*

## Urban Garden, Plaza, Square, or Courtyard

The Town Center District allows the creation of an urban garden, plaza, square, or courtyard as an option to satisfy the requirements of the Streetscape and Green Area Standards for new developments and additions/alterations that are along the street frontage.

Urban gardens should include the following features:

- The garden should be at least 300 square feet in size.
- It should be located at the street level, adjacent to the sidewalk or pedestrian passage.
- Plant material should comprise 60 percent of the garden.
- It should include a water feature, where appropriate, and one seating space for each 30 square feet of garden area.

Public plazas, squares, and courtyards should include the following features:

- They should be at least 500 square feet in size.
- Plant material should comprise 30 percent of the area.
- One seating space is required for each 30 square feet of plaza area.
- Trash containers, lighting, and shade trees should be provided.



*Los Gatos, California*



*Annapolis, Maryland*



*Venice, Florida*

## Pedestrian Design Standards

Creating a continuous sidewalk system is vital to the success of our downtown areas. Providing appropriate sidewalk connections, including crosswalks and bulb outs, as shown in the adjacent photographs, helps create a pedestrian-friendly and walkable community. The Town Center District recommends the following standards:

- Sidewalks should be required along all street frontages with a minimum width of 8 feet and should connect to all front building entrances, parking areas, central open space, and any other destination that generates pedestrian traffic.
- Sidewalks should connect to existing pedestrian walkways on abutting tracts and other nearby pedestrian destination points and transit stops.



*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*



*Boston, Massachusetts*



*Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania*

## Nonresidential Footprints

A maximum nonresidential footprint is included in the Town Center District. This encourages downtowns and Main Streets to accommodate smaller pedestrian-scaled buildings rather than larger suburban-sized nonresidential uses. The maximum allowable building footprint of nonresidential buildings is no larger than 10,000 square feet.

As illustrated to the left, many typical chain stores can be accommodated within this footprint requirement.



*Columbus, Ohio*



*Hanover, New Hampshire*



*Pottstown, Pennsylvania*

## Building Orientation and Entrances

Buildings should be placed along the sidewalk with the front door facing the street. Building entrances should be easily identified and visible from adjacent streets and sidewalks. Prominent entrances that are oriented to the street provide a welcoming façade for pedestrians. The Town Center District requires the following:

- All main public entrances should be in the front façade.
- When a building is located on the corner, the entrance should be on the corner and designed with an articulation such as a chamfered corner, turret, canopy, or other similar feature.
- All primary building entrances should be accentuated with features such as recessed or protruding canopy, portico, or an overhang entrance.



*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*



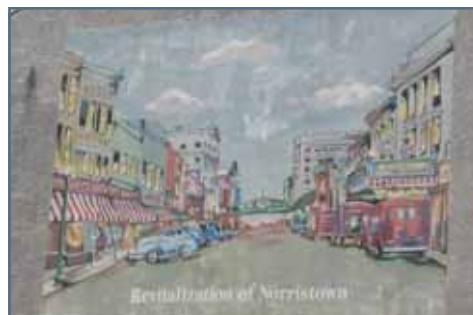
*Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania*



*Conshohocken, Pennsylvania*



*Doylestown, Pennsylvania*



*Norristown, Pennsylvania*

## Blank Walls

Blank walls along streets create an uninviting pedestrian environment. They offer little interaction between the public outdoor space and the indoor space. Blank walls without windows are not permitted along any wall facing a street, parking, or pedestrian area in the Town Center District. To encourage a pedestrian-friendly streetscape, walls without windows should contain architectural treatments that create visual interest.

Using architectural treatments that are similar in materials, colors, and details to the front building façade is recommended. The images to the left illustrate the use of architectural treatments that may adorn a blank wall such as a trellis with plantings or murals. At least four of the following architectural treatments are required:

- Masonry (excluding flat concrete block)
- Concrete or masonry plinth at the base of the wall
- Belt courses of a different texture or color
- Projecting cornice
- Decorative tile work or medallions
- Trellis with plantings
- Opaque or translucent glass
- Artwork
- Vertical articulation
- Lighting fixtures
- Other architectural element



*Ardmore, Pennsylvania*



*Pottstown, Pennsylvania*



*Norristown, Pennsylvania*

## Windows

Windows provide a visual connection between activities inside a building and the pedestrians strolling outside. Visibility is key to drawing potential customers into shops. Blank walls are not permitted in the Town Center District along any wall facing a street, parking, or pedestrian area. The following design standards help contribute to the visibility of the building façade:

- The ground floor front façades that are visible to pedestrians should have a minimum of 60 percent window area and a maximum of 75 percent. Ground floor windows are to be located a maximum of 12 inches to 20 inches above the sidewalk.
- Upper-story windows of front façades are not to be boarded or covered and should have a minimum of 35 percent window area and a maximum of 75 percent.
- Smoked, reflective, or black glass in windows is not permitted.



*Keswick, Pennsylvania*



*Lansdale, Pennsylvania*



*Skippack, Pennsylvania*

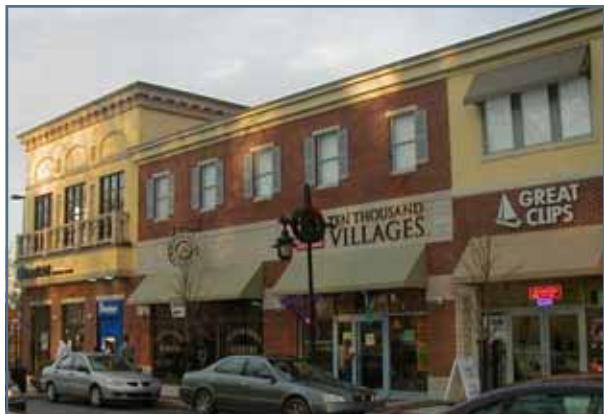
## Roofs

Roofline standards are necessary to create a distinct profile along the street. These standards also help maintain and enhance the existing character of Main Street.

Rooflines should be consistent with the character of adjacent buildings or have pitched roofs. In the Town Center District, pitched roofs should have a minimum slope of 4:12 and a maximum slope of 12:12.



*Kentlands, Maryland*



*Exton, Pennsylvania*



*Norristown, Pennsylvania*

## Architectural Rhythm

To ensure compatible development, new buildings should retain the historic architectural rhythm of existing building openings, such as windows and entries. Infill buildings should maintain the horizontal rhythm of Main Street façades by using similar alignment and proportions of windows, floor spacing, roof treatments, and materials. To accomplish this, in the Town Center District the following are recommended:

- Architectural rhythm should be achieved by aligning the top, middle, and base floors.
- Buildings should have a distinct base at ground level, using articulation or materials such as stone, masonry, or decorative concrete.
- The top level should be treated with a distinct outline that incorporates elements such as a parapet, cornice, or other projections.



*Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania*



*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*



*Exton, Pennsylvania*

## Massing

Massing is the three-dimensional shape of a building(s) height, width, and depth. The following massing standards are intended to reflect the traditional Main Street character of a community:

- Buildings should be of similar height and size or be articulated and subdivided so that the building massing is proportional to adjacent structures. Consistent and complementary building massing maintains the architectural rhythm of the street.
- The massing of the façade should not exceed 50 feet (horizontal dimension). Requirements for shop fronts may be broken down even further. For example, a 30 foot building façade is preferred.
- Nonresidential buildings must have at least a 3- to 5- foot break in depth in all street façades for every 50 feet of continuous façade. This break can be accomplished by providing bay windows, porches, porticos, building extensions, towers, recessed doorways, and other architectural treatments.



*Narberth, Pennsylvania*



*Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania*



*Moorestown, New Jersey*



*Ambler, Pennsylvania*

## Street Trees

Street trees provide a unifying element. They enhance the pedestrian streetscape by helping to mitigate the negative impacts of automobile traffic, provide cooling shade, screen sun glare, reduce reflective heat, filter the air, and aid drainage. Street trees provide a strong visual connection along a street as well as between building frontages, sidewalks, and curbs.

It is important to provide a variety of tree species to avoid disease. A suitable amount of tree species should be planted within the downtown to create uniformity and interest. Appropriate street tree species should be chosen based on their maintenance requirements, hardiness, salt tolerance, shape and form, and subsurface growing conditions. The Town Center District recommends the following:

- Street trees should be spaced no less than 20 feet apart with a maximum spacing of 30 feet. In spacing trees, consideration should be made for driveways, street lights, utility poles, underground utilities, traffic light poles and other obstructions, the existing streetscape, as well as future placement of trees in front of adjacent properties.
- Trees should be planted at a size of 3.5 inches in caliper.



*Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania*



*Norristown, Pennsylvania*



*Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania*



*Doylestown, Pennsylvania*

## Parking Lot Landscaping

Landscaped parking lots help diminish the negative effect of large areas of paving in our downtowns. Screening parking from adjacent streets provides some visual “green” relief and contributes to a more pedestrian-friendly streetscape.

The ordinance recommends the following landscape requirements:

- Interior landscaping should be required for parking areas of 20 or more spaces. One shade tree, at a caliper of 2.5 inches, should be provided for every 10 parking spaces.
- Perimeter landscaping is required for parking lots that are visible from the street. It should consist of a landscaped area of 3 feet in width and meet all screening requirements.

## Signage

Signage in the Town Center District should be attractive, interesting, and pedestrian-oriented to entice shoppers inside downtown businesses. In addition, all signage should be carefully integrated into the overall building design and with maximum sizes adapted to each community. The use of monument and freestanding signs may not be appropriate in all locations.



*Keswick, Pennsylvania*



*Collegeville, Pennsylvania*



*Souderton, Pennsylvania*



*Ambler, Pennsylvania*



*Jenkintown, Pennsylvania*



*Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania*

## Reduction of Parking and Shared Parking

This ordinance encourages shared parking and other measures to reduce the amount of parking provided and the visual impact of a series of parking lots. The Town Center District provides instructions on how to calculate parking requirements when shared parking is used. A 100 percent parking reduction is permitted if the following standards are applicable:

- The use is within walking distance (400 feet) of a public parking facility.
- On-street parking in front of the building is sufficient.
- Shared parking meets the requirements.
- The use is within 400 feet of a transit facility.



*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*



*Hanover, New Hampshire*



*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

## Parking Structures

Parking structures should be built to complement and blend into the existing streetscape of our downtowns. Designing parking garages as mixed-use buildings with storefronts or business uses at the street level encourages pedestrian activity and helps reduce visual impact. Any building façade facing a street should be designed with vertical articulation and architectural details that reflect the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

The examples to the left show various ways to integrate parking structures into our Main Streets and downtowns through screening and use of retail.





# *model ordinance* *Part* 2

town center district

Part II of this publication presents the model ordinance.  
The Town Center District is intended to be adopted as a separate zoning district.



Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania



Norristown, Pennsylvania



Santa Rosa, California

## Section 1. Intent

The intent of the Town Center District is to:

- A. Encourage economic development through the establishment of flexible standards that maintain the traditional Main Street environment and the community's unique identity.
- B. Encourage the retention of the historic Main Street streetscape by preserving the existing buildings to the greatest extent possible.
- C. Promote the reuse of existing structures in a manner that maintains the visual character and architectural scale.
- D. Ensure that new buildings, additions, and renovations are consistent with and enhance the surrounding streetscape.
- E. Encourage lively, human-scaled activity areas, and gathering places for the community through encouraging a mix of uses.
- F. Establish a walkable community by promoting pedestrian orientation of streets and buildings and providing a safe and convenient interconnected sidewalk network.
- G. Accommodate parking in a convenient manner that does not interfere with the rhythm of the street.
- H. Encourage new buildings to locate adjacent to transit.
- I. Promote the implementation of \_\_\_\_'s revitalization/downtown plans.

## Section 2. Uses

### A. Permitted Uses:

1. A mix of uses described in Section 2.A.

### Legislative Intent:

*This section is intended as a model that reflects important elements of the ordinance. Individual municipalities should tailor this section to fit the goals and objectives for their community.*

### Uses:

*Section 2 is designed to include uses that are typical in a Main Street or town center area. Each individual municipality should ensure that these uses are appropriate for their community.*



Conshohocken, Pennsylvania



Keswick, Pennsylvania

2. Apartments, on the second floor and above (with the exception of Apartment Buildings described in Section 2.B.1).
3. Small scale retail establishment for the sale of dry goods, variety and general merchandise, clothing, food, drugs, household supplies, beverages, hardware, furnishings, antiques, baked goods, greeting cards, plants and flowers; and the sale and repair of jewelry, watches, clocks, optical goods, musical, professional or scientific instruments, but excluding drive-through facilities.
4. Business office, such as real estate sales, travel agency, insurance sales, advertising, or retail copying and printing services.
5. Professional office, such as those for the practice of medicine or other health services, or for law, engineering, architecture, or accounting.
6. Personal service shop, such as tailor, barber, beauty salon, shoe repair, dressmaker, or dry cleaner (provided that no cleaning operations are performed on the premises); excluding massage parlors.
7. Establishment serving food or beverages to the general public, such as restaurant, café, taproom, tavern, retail baker, confectionery or ice cream shop, including walk-up windows, but excluding drive-through facilities.
8. Financial institution, such as a bank or savings and loan association, but excluding drive-through facilities.
9. Religious institutions and their ancillary uses.
10. Private clubs and fraternal organizations.
11. Studio for dance, music, fitness, art or photography.

*Communities may also consider prohibiting **professional office** uses on the first floor. In order to increase pedestrian activity and vitality along Main Street, it is important that retail uses (rather than office uses) are located on the ground level.*



Media, Pennsylvania



Norristown, Pennsylvania



Boca Raton, Florida

12. Gallery and museum.
13. Theater, including motion pictures and stage plays.
14. Bed and breakfast inn and bed and breakfast house.
15. Hotel.
16. Government administration uses, post office, community center, public library, offices for public utilities.
17. Transit facilities.
18. Public park, plaza, square, courtyard, urban garden, and public recreation areas.
19. Outdoor dining.
20. Pedestrian take-out window.
21. Street vendors.
22. Farmer's market.

B. Conditional Uses:

1. Apartment buildings provided that the following is included:
  - a. Twenty percent of the first floor of the building located along the street frontage shall be office or retail uses.
  - b. Apartment buildings should follow the standards of Section 7.B.
2. Undertaking establishments and funeral homes.
3. Parking garages.
4. Demolition of buildings listed or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
  - a. In order for a building to be demolished, all of the following

**Standards for plaza, square, courtyard, and urban garden are found in Section 5.**

**Outdoor dining** could be a conditional use procedure should a community want further regulations. Standards for outdoor dining are found in Section 4.

**Standards for street vendors** should be specified through the community's permitting process.

**The process for obtaining a conditional use** should be outlined in a community's zoning ordinance.

**Parking garages** shall meet the standards in Appendix 4.



*Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania*

conditions need to be demonstrated:

- i. The building is structurally unsound and cannot be stabilized as determined by a professional structural engineer specializing in historic structures.
- ii. The Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC) has been notified of the intent of demolition. The applicant must provide documentation of notification to the PHMC.

b. Replacement buildings must meet the following conditions:

- i. Provide a public amenity as described in Section 5.A.3 and 4.
- ii. Any new building on the site must be constructed of natural materials typically found along a Main Street. Natural materials include such materials as stone, brick, wood siding, shingles, slate, etc. Industrial or artificial materials such as raw concrete finish, anodized or galvanized metal, tinted glass, plastics, vinyls, etc. are prohibited unless such materials are used in such a way as to resemble historic characteristics.
- iii. Meet the standards of Section 7.
- iv. The applicant shall submit sufficient information in the form of architectural elevations and sketches of buildings in order to determine to what extent the Section 7, Design Standards are being followed.
- v. Cross-access easements for parking lots between adjacent nonresidential properties shall

*The intent of this section on historic buildings is to acknowledge the heritage of a Main Street area. We encourage all historic buildings to be adaptively reused. If the entire building is unable to be reused, we encourage the preservation and enhancement of the building façade. However, if this is not possible, the conditional use procedure allows for a more critical review of the demolition of historic resources. Replacement buildings should also be in keeping with the architectural character of a community.*

*Communities could also consider implementing a demolition ordinance to protect historic buildings. The Montgomery County Planning Commission can provide further information on historic preservation ordinances.*



Norristown, Pennsylvania

be provided before an occupancy permit is issued for the newly constructed building. The parking area shall be so designed to readily accommodate shared access.

5. Demolition of buildings included on the community's local historic resource inventory.
  - a. In order for a building to be demolished, all of the following conditions need to be demonstrated:
    - i. Building is structurally unsound and cannot be stabilized as determined by a professional structural engineer specializing in historic structures.
    - b. Replacement buildings must meet the conditions of Section 2.B.4.b.
6. Uses determined by the governing body to be of a similar nature to the uses permitted by right in Section 2.B, herein when located in a principal or accessory building.

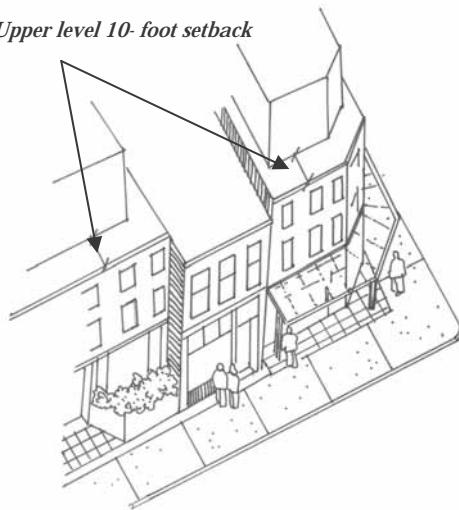
C. Prohibited Uses:

1. Automobile or other vehicle sales service, or repair establishments, including vehicle body repair, vehicle painting, or washing.
2. Gasoline service station and filling station.
3. Drive-through window or facilities.
4. Self-service storage facilities (mini-warehouses).
5. Adult entertainment uses.
6. Any use not permitted in this district.
7. Uses determined by the governing body to be of similar nature to the prohibited uses listed in this Section.

*The prohibited uses consist of typical uses more conducive to auto-oriented areas. Main Street areas should contain uses that encourage pedestrian activity.*

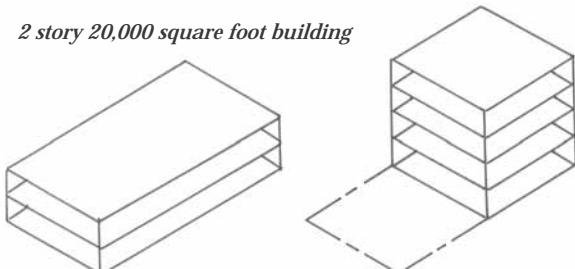


Upper level 10- foot setback



4 story 20,000 square foot building

2 story 20,000 square foot building



2.0 FAR on 10,000 square foot lot

## Section 3. Development Standards

- A. Minimum Lot Size: 2,500 square feet.
- B. Minimum Lot Width: 25 feet.
- C. Build-to-Line. Buildings shall be:
  - 1. Built to the sidewalk; or
  - 2. The setback should be the average of the two closest structures on the same side of the street with a maximum setback of 20 feet; or
  - 3. Setback from the sidewalk 10-20 feet for purposes of a plaza, square, courtyard, recessed entrance, or outdoor dining.
- D. Side Yard Setback. There shall be no side yard setback for buildings that share a party wall. The setback between buildings shall be 10 feet (5 feet per each building) when not sharing a party wall.
- E. Maximum Impervious Coverage: 100 percent.
- F. Building Height. Buildings shall be a minimum of two stories or a maximum of 65 feet (if there is a 10 foot setback (on average) after the third story and provided the streetscape and green area standards in Section 5 are followed).
- G. Maximum Building Footprint for Nonresidential Buildings: 10,000 square feet.
- H. Floor Area Ratio (FAR): 2.0. See Section 6, Bonus Provisions, for conditions when a 2.5 FAR is permitted.

### Development Standards:

*These regulations are model community standards. Individual municipalities may modify these development standards to meet their needs.*

**Build-to-lines** contributes to the street life of an area by ensuring that building fronts are built to the street.

**Floor Area Ratio (FAR)** is the ratio of gross building floor area to the total lot area. The advantage of using FAR is that it is more effective in regulating the intensity of a site than building coverage.

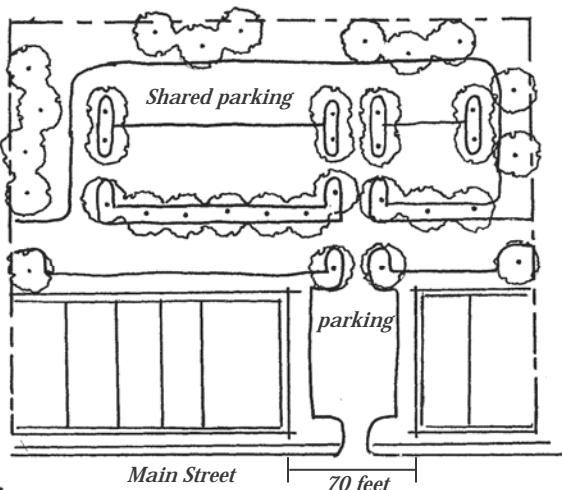
For example, if a 10,000 square foot lot has a FAR of 2.0 then a developer can construct a building that has a total floor area of 20,000 square feet.

## Section 4. General Requirements

- A. Historic buildings can not be demolished unless following a conditional use procedure as described in Section 2.B.
- B. Public Utilities. All uses shall be served by public water and sewer facilities.
- C. Surface Parking.
  - 1. General Surface Parking Standards:
    - a. Vehicular Access. Vehicular access to surface parking shall be from a alley or side street where possible.
    - b. Pedestrian Access. Safe provisions for pedestrian access to and through a parking lot shall be required. Surface parking areas and pedestrian walkways connecting to them shall be well-lit.
    - c. Location of Surface Parking:
      - i. Surface parking shall be located to the rear of the principal building or to the side (however, parking shall not be located between a building and the street). Parking shall be set back 10 feet from the legal right-of-way.
      - ii. Corner Lots. Surface parking shall not be permitted on corner lots that are located on collector or arterial roads.
      - iii. Off-street surface parking shall not extend more than 70 feet in width along any pedestrian street frontage without an outdoor cafe, urban garden, plaza, square, courtyard, or landscaping feature with seating.



Ardmore, Pennsylvania



*The boroughs and urbanized townships in Montgomery County often struggle with parking as an issue. Parking is often perceived as being difficult in these communities. The key is to make parking a known quantity to visitors. Typical suburban parking standards are not appropriate for Main Street destinations. It is important, however, to use signage and other methods to make parking easily identifiable and accessible.*

*The reason for not extending parking more than 70 feet along Main Street ensures that the walking experience is not broken up by large expanses of parking. Seventy feet is equivalent to approximately two bays of parking.*

2. Interconnected Parking Areas:

- a. Parking areas on abutting nonresidential lots shall be interconnected by access driveways.
- b. Each nonresidential lot shall provide cross-access easements for its parking areas and access driveways guaranteeing access to adjacent lots. Interconnections shall be logically placed and easily identifiable to ensure convenient traffic flow.

3. Parking. Parking shall be provided in accordance with Section \_\_, Off-street Parking and Loading, of the Zoning Ordinance.

D. Exterior Lighting. All exterior lighting shall be designed to prevent glare onto adjacent properties. Pedestrian pathways need to be clearly marked and well lit. Lighting should be sufficient for security and identification without allowing light to trespass onto adjacent sites. The height of fixtures shall be a maximum of 20 feet for parking lots and 14 feet for pedestrian walkways.

E. Refuse Areas. The storage of refuse shall be provided inside the building(s) or within an outdoor area enclosed by either walls or opaque fencing. Any refuse area outside of the building shall be designed to be architecturally compatible with the building(s), shall not be located in the front of the building, and be entirely screened by a fence or enclosure which is at least 6 feet high.

F. Screening:

1. All wall-mounted mechanical, electrical, communication, and service equipment, including satellite dishes and vent pipes shall be screened from public view by parapets, walls, fences, landscaping, or other approved means.
2. All rooftop mechanical equipment and other appurtenances shall be concealed by or integrated within the roof form or screened from view at ground level of nearby streets. The following, when above the roofline, requires screening: stair wells, elevator shafts, air



Cheltenham, Pennsylvania

*Exterior lighting should be in keeping with a community's adopted streetscape plan. Communities may want to consider encouraging appropriate period lighting for their downtown area. Additionally, parking lot lighting should complement the street lighting.*



*Doylestown, Pennsylvania*



*Columbus, Ohio*

conditioning units, large vents, heat pumps and mechanical equipment.

3. Parking lots visible from a street shall be continuously screened by a 3-foot-high wall/fence or plantings. Parking lots adjacent to a residential use shall be continuously screened by a 6-foot-high wall/fence or plantings. Screening shall include:
  - a. Hedges, installed at 36 inches in height; or
  - b. Mixed planting (trees and shrubs); or
  - c. Wall sections, with no wall break of more than 9 feet, and landscaping to provide a continuous screen.
4. Service and loading areas must be visually screened from street and pedestrian ways. For new construction, service and loading areas must be behind the building. Loading docks shall not be on the Main Street but to the side and rear of the building.

G. Signs. Signage in the Town Center District shall conform to the standards of Section \_\_\_\_ of the Zoning Ordinance.

H. Street Trees. Street trees are required in accordance with Section \_\_\_\_ of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

I. Outdoor Dining:

1. Outdoor furnishings are limited to tables, chairs, and umbrellas.
2. Outdoor furniture shall be stored inside the restaurant after normal operating hours.
3. Planters, posts with ropes, or other removable enclosures, as well as a reservation podium are encouraged and shall be used as a way of defining the area occupied by the café.
4. Refuse facilities should be provided.

*Loading is recommended from alleys if applicable.*

*Outdoor dining could be allowed as a conditional use should a community want further regulations than those at left.*



Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania

5. Advertising or promotional features shall be limited to umbrellas and canopies.
6. Outdoor dining can not impede pedestrian traffic flow. A minimum pathway of at least 5 feet free of obstacles shall be maintained.

## Section 5. Streetscape and Green Area Standards

A. The following streetscape and green area standards are required for all new developments and additions/alterations along the street frontage:

1. Streetscape and green area standards should relate to \_\_\_\_'s streetscape design and be reviewed by the governing body. The applicant shall demonstrate that these standards are met through elevations and conceptual sketches.
2. Figure 1, indicates the categories and minimum requirements for streetscape and green area standards. Category A, contains planting and greening elements. Category B, includes more elaborate greening elements as well as street furniture and other streetscape elements. Category C, includes more extensive building elements, streetscape improvements, and open space elements. Figure 2, presents the streetscape and green area items within each category.

**Figure 1**  
Streetscape and Green Area Categories

Building Additions and Alterations	Two-story New Developments of 2,500—4,999 gross sq. ft. in size.	Two-story New Developments of 5,000—9,999 gross sq. ft. in size.	New Developments of 10,000 gross sq. ft. and over in size and/or new buildings greater than two stories
4 points from Category A (no more than three of one item)	4 points from Category A (no more than three of one item)	5 points from A, 4 points from B	7 points from A, 5 points from B, and 6 points from C

**The streetscape and green area standards are needed to add some green relief to these more urbanized areas. These standards should be in keeping with the adopted streetscape plan for the community if applicable. Additionally, communities may want to require that the developer ensure the health of plant materials for 18 months or establish volunteer groups who are responsible for the maintenance of plant materials.**

*Examples of using these standards:*

*A new development of 2,500 square feet and/or a building with an addition needs 4 points from A: Additional planting areas and two decorative banners meets the requirements (4 points from A).*

*A new development of 7,500 square feet needs 5 points from A and 4 points from B: Two window boxes, two street planters, and one flag (5 points from A). Two awnings for doors and windows and one bench meets the requirements (4 points from B).*

*A new 3-story development of 15,000 square feet needs 7 points from A, 5 points from B, and 6 points from C: Two window boxes, one decorative banner, and one street planter (7 points from A), one trash receptacle, one bench, and building decorative lighting (5 points from B), and a plaza (6 points from C) meets the requirements.*

**Figure 2**  
**Streetscape and Green Area Items**

Category	Item	Points
A	Hanging Basket (minimum size 12 inches in diameter)	1
A	Decorative Banners/Flags	1
A	Window Box (as wide as window sill and a minimum size 6 inches wide by 6 inches deep)	2
A	Additional planting area including shrubs, trees, groundcovers, or flowers	2
A	Street planter (minimum size 24 inches in diameter)	2
B	Building Decorative Lighting	1
B	Bench (at least 5 feet in length)	2
B	Trash Receptacle	2
B	Raised Planting Bed	2
B	Public Art/Mural	2
B	Trellis, Arbor or Pergola (planted with vines or shrubs)	2
B	Awning for Window or Door	2
B	Kiosk	3
C	Drinking Fountain	2
C	Decorative Paving	2
C	Water Feature (Fountain)	2
C	Balconies	3
C	Street Lighting	3
C	Planting in Curb Extension (Planted Bulb outs/Large Planters)	3
C	Urban Garden (See requirements in Section 5.3)	3
C	Roof Garden	3
C	Bus Shelter	3
C	Clock Tower	3
C	Decorative Architectural Treatments	4
C	Plaza/Square/Courtyard (See requirements in Section 5.4)	6
C	Façade Restoration	6
C	Other Amenity Approved by Governing Body	3-6

Please see **Appendix 2** for more information on standards for hanging baskets, window boxes, and street planters, as well as street trees.



*Haverford, Pennsylvania*



*Pottstown, Pennsylvania*

3. Urban Garden Standards:
  - a. Minimum size required is 300 sq. ft.
  - b. An urban garden shall be located where it is visible and accessible from either a public sidewalk or pedestrian connection.
  - c. 60 percent of the garden shall be of plant materials such as trees, vines, shrubs, and seasonal flowers with year round interest. All trees shall be 3.5 inches in caliper.
  - d. A water feature is encouraged.
  - e. One seating space is required for each 30 sq. ft. of garden area.
4. Public Plazas/Squares/Courtyards Standards:
  - a. The minimum size required is 500 sq. ft.
  - b. The plaza shall be located where it is visible and accessible from either a public sidewalk or pedestrian connection.
  - c. 30 percent of the plaza shall be landscaped with trees, shrubs, and mixed plantings with year round interest.
  - d. The plaza shall use the following paving materials: unit pavers, paving stones, or concrete. No more than 20 percent of the plaza shall be concrete.
  - e. One seating space is required for each 30 sq. ft. of plaza area.
  - f. The plaza shall not be used for parking, loading, or vehicular access (excluding emergency vehicular access).

*Communities may also consider specifying certain paving materials to be used in plazas or as required by the streetscape or revitalization plan. Also, providing space for vendors may be considered.*



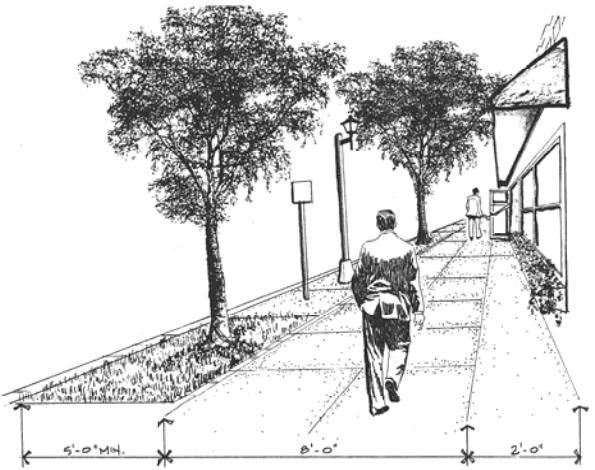
Lansdale, Pennsylvania

- g. Public art and fountains are encouraged.
- h. Trash containers shall be distributed throughout plaza.
- i. The plaza shall provide shade by using the following elements: trees, canopies, trellises, umbrellas, or building walls.
- j. One tree is required for every 500 sq. ft. Trees shall be of 3.5 inches in caliper.
- k. Lighting shall be provided.
- l. Plazas shall connect to other activities such as outdoor cafes, restaurants, and building entries.
- m. Plazas shall be located if possible to have maximum direct sunlight with a south or west orientation.
- n. Plazas, if constructed by a private entity, shall have an agreement with the community for public access.

## Section 6. Bonus Provisions

- A. Bonus Provisions. An increase of 0.5 FAR for a total Floor Area Ratio of 2.5 is permitted for the following:
  - 1. If an historic structure is preserved and enhanced and/or the façade is maintained and enhanced following the conditional use standards of Section 2.B.4.b, and the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
  - 2. For buildings located within 400 feet of a transit facility or a public parking facility.

*An increased FAR will be allowed if historic structures are preserved and enhanced or if the building is located within 400 feet of a transit facility or public parking facility.*



Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania



Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania

## Section 7. Design Standards

### A. Pedestrian Design Standards:

1. Sidewalks are required along all street frontages with a minimum width of eight feet.
2. Sidewalks are required to connect the street frontage to all front building entrances, parking areas, central open space, and any other destination that generates pedestrian traffic. Sidewalks shall connect to existing sidewalks on abutting tracts and other nearby pedestrian destination points and transit stops.
3. The sidewalk pattern shall continue across driveways.

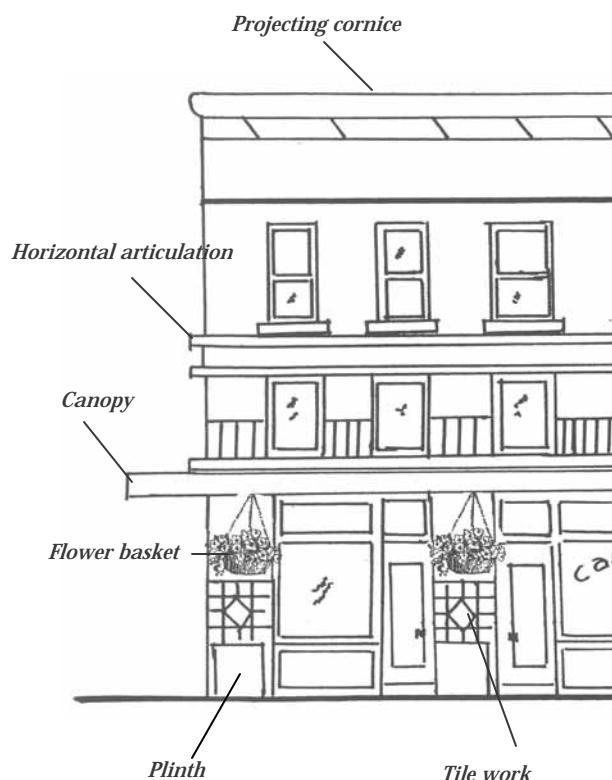
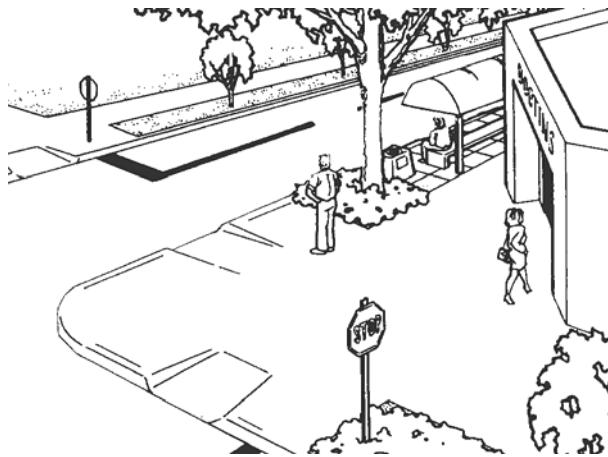
### B. Building Design Standards. Nonresidential buildings and apartment buildings shall meet the following requirements:

1. Building Footprint. The maximum building footprint of nonresidential buildings shall not exceed ten thousand (10,000) square feet.
2. Building Orientation and Entrances:
  - a. The front façade of buildings shall be oriented towards commercial/Main Streets, with an every day public entrance in this front façade.
  - b. When buildings are located on corners, the entrance shall be located on the corner with an appropriate building articulation, such as a chamfered corner, turret, canopy, or other similar building feature. The municipal governing body may allow front façades to face existing side streets, when these façades will extend an existing commercial district along this existing side street.

The **design standards** can be tailored to the needs of an individual community.

**Sidewalks should be wide enough to allow for outdoor dining, window shopping, etc. Our recommended minimum width for Main Street areas is 8 feet, with wider widths when significant numbers of pedestrians are likely. Sidewalks should be free of obstacles and in central business districts, should have an additional two feet of width leaving room for window shopping and door entrances. In addition, a five-foot planting strip is recommended to buffer the sidewalk from the street.**

These **building design standards** are intended to encourage street activity.

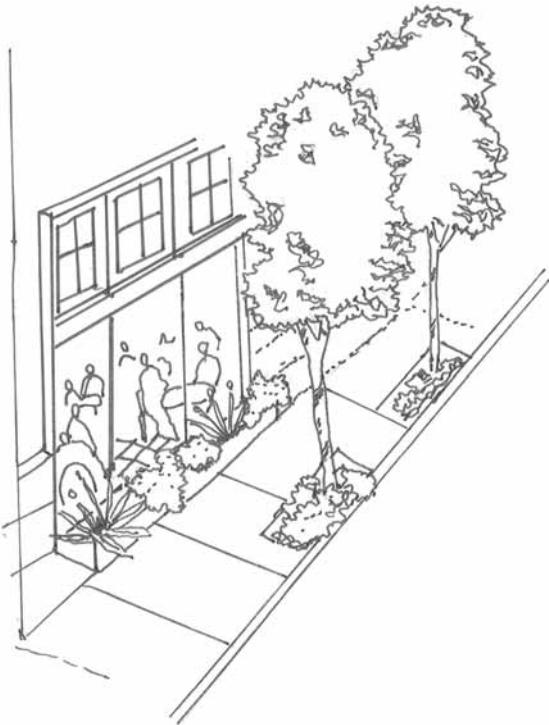


c. All primary building entrances shall be accentuated. Entrances permitted include: recessed, protruding, canopy, portico, or overhang.

3. Walls and Windows:

- a. Blank walls shall not be permitted along any exterior wall facing a street, parking area, or walking area. Walls or portions of walls where windows are not provided shall have architectural treatments that are similar to the front façade, including materials, colors, and details. At least four of the following architectural treatments shall be provided:
  - i. Masonry (but not flat concrete block).
  - ii. Concrete or masonry plinth at the base of the wall.
  - iii. Belt courses of a different texture or color.
  - iv. Projecting cornice.
  - v. Projecting metal canopy.
  - vi. Decorative tilework.
  - vii. Trellis containing planting.
  - viii. Medallions.
  - ix. Opaque or translucent glass.
  - x. Artwork.
  - xi. Vertical/horizontal articulation.
  - xii. Lighting fixtures.
  - xiii. An architectural element not listed above, as approved by the governing body, that meets the intent.

**Blank walls** along streets create an uninviting pedestrian experience. The requirements at left, encourage a vibrant streetscape experience.



b. Windows:

- i. The ground floor front façades of buildings visible from the pedestrian view shall consist of a minimum of 60 percent window area and a maximum of 75 percent, with views provided through these windows into the business. Ground floor windows shall be a maximum of 12 to 20 inches above the sidewalk.
- ii. Upper story windows of front façades shall not be boarded or covered and shall comprise a minimum of 35 percent window area in the façade above the ground floor and a maximum of 75 percent.
- iii. Smoked, reflective, or black glass in windows is prohibited.

4. Roofs. Roofs shall be in keeping with the character of adjacent buildings or shall have pitched roofs. Pitched roofs shall have a minimum slope of 4:12 and a maximum slope of 12:12.

5. Building Character. New infill development shall generally employ building types that are compatible to the historic architecture of the area in their massing and external treatment.

6. Architectural Rhythm:

- a. New infill development shall also retain the historic architectural rhythm of building openings (including windows and entries) of the same block.
- b. New infill development shall also attempt to maintain the horizontal rhythm of Main Street façades by using a similar alignment of windows,



floor spacing, cornices, awnings as well as other elements. This rhythm shall be achieved by aligning the top, middle, and base floors. Buildings shall have a distinct base at ground level using articulation or materials such as stone, masonry, or decorative concrete. The top level should be treated with a distinct outline with elements such as projecting parapet, cornice, or other projection.



7. Massing:

- a. Buildings shall be similar in height and size or articulated and subdivided into massing that is more or less proportional to adjacent structures and maintains the existing architectural rhythm.
- b. The massing of any façade should generally not exceed 50 feet maximum (horizontal dimension). Shop fronts may be broken down even further. Massing variations every 30 feet or less is preferred.
- c. Nonresidential buildings must have at least a 3- to 5-foot break in depth in all street façades for every 50 feet of continuous façade. Such breaks may be met through the use of bay windows, porches, porticos, building extensions, towers, recessed doorways, and other architectural treatments.





# *appendix* *Part* / 3

Part III of this publication are appendices intended to be supplemental zoning and subdivision and land development regulations that complement the Town Center District. We suggest these standards, if needed, be adopted along with the Town Center District.

# Appendix 1

## Definitions

- A. Bed and Breakfast House: A home occupation that provides rooms for occasional paying guests on an overnight basis.
- B. Bed and Breakfast Inn: A tourist home that provides rooms for paying guests on an overnight basis with breakfast being available on the premises at an additional cost.
- C. Build-to-Line: A line extending through the lot, which is generally parallel to the front property line and marks the location from which the vertical plane of the front building elevation must be erected; intended to create an even building façade line along a street. The build-to-line is established on the record plan.
- D. Chamfered Roof: A roof with a bevelled edge, especially to a beam.
- E. Cornice: The projection at the top of a wall or the top course or molding of a wall when it serves as a crowning member.
- F. Façade: The exterior walls of a building facing a frontage line.
- G. Farmers Market: Temporary or occasional outdoor retail sales of farm produce from vehicles or temporary stands.
- H. Fenestration: The arrangement of windows and other exterior openings on a building.
- I. Floor Area: The sum of the gross horizontal areas of each floor of a building, measured from the exterior walls or from the center line of party walls. The term does not include any area used exclusively for the parking of motor vehicles (surface parking or structured parking).



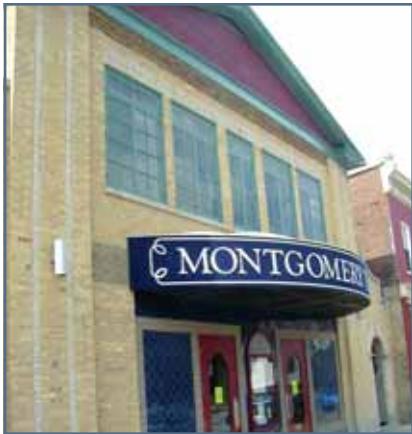
*Build-to-line in Cambridge, Massachusetts*

*These terms at left are used throughout this ordinance. If your zoning ordinance does not already have these definitions, these should be added.*

- J. Floor Area Ratio (FAR): The ratio of gross building floor area to the total lot area. For example, if a 10,000 square foot lot has a FAR of 2.0, then a developer can only construct a building that has a total floor area of 20,000 square feet.
- K. Massing: The three-dimensional shape of a building(s) height, width, and depth.
- L. Pedestrian Take-Out Window: A window opening in the façade of a commercial building used for the sale of food and/or beverages. Such a window shall be designed for the exclusive use of pedestrians, and shall be located to provide a safe waiting area, and to not disrupt or impede pedestrian movement on a sidewalk used by the public.
- M. Parapet: The portion of a wall which extends above the roofline.
- N. Personal Service Shop: A business which provides a service oriented primarily to personal needs, and not primarily involving retail sales of goods or professional advisory services. Included are tailor, barber, beauty salon, shoe repair, dressmaker, or dry cleaner (provided no cleaning operations are performed on premises); excluding massage parlors.
- O. Portico: A covered walk or porch that is supported by columns or pillars; also known as colonnade.
- P. Sign Definitions:
  - 1. Awning Sign: A sign painted on or applied to a structure made of cloth, canvas, or similar material which is affixed to and projects from a building.
  - 2. Banner Sign: A temporary sign intended to be hung either with or without frames, possessing characters, letters, illustrations or ornamentations applied to paper, plastic, or fabric of any kind.



*Awning Sign*



*Marquee sign in Souderton, Pennsylvania*



*Sandwich Board Sign*

3. Freestanding Sign: A sign permanently supported by an upright support that is anchored in the ground.
4. Marquee Sign: Any sign attached to a marquee for the purposes of identifying a theater or movie house.
5. Menu Sign: A temporary sign used to inform the public of the list of entrees, dishes, foods, and entertainment available in a restaurant.
6. Monument Sign: A sign attached to a brick, stone, or masonry wall or structure that forms a supporting base for the sign display.
7. Projecting Sign: A sign that is attached to the façade wall of a structure and projects out from that wall.
8. Sandwich Board Sign: An A-frame sign that is not permanently attached to the ground or other permanent structure.
9. Wall Sign: A sign that is affixed to a building's wall.
10. Window Sign: A sign that is either painted or attached to the inside surface of a window.

Q. Street Vendors: Any person or persons, including corporations, who engage in the activity of vending.

R. Transit Facility: A freestanding structure located on a bus or train route, which is designed to accommodate embarking and disembarking transit passengers.



# Appendix 2

## Landscaping

- A. Existing large street trees shall be retained and incorporated into the street tree design.
- B. Street trees:
  1. Spacing. Street trees shall not be spaced less than 20 feet apart; the maximum spacing should be 30 feet. In spacing trees, consideration shall be made for driveways, street lights, utility poles, underground utilities, traffic light poles and other obstructions, the existing streetscape, as well as future placement of trees in front of adjacent properties. Trees shall be of 3.5 inches in caliper.
  2. Street trees shall be planted in tree wells or a planter strip underlain by soil, providing enhanced growth and survivability rates.
    - a. Tree Wells. Tree wells shall be a minimum of 4 feet long x 4 feet wide x 3.5 feet deep below the ground surface. Larger wells are recommended and could be connected together as a continuous planting pit. Tree wells shall be covered with tree grates, concrete unit pavers and/or cobbles. A 2-foot x 2-foot opening or 2 foot diameter should be left for the tree grate.
    - b. Planter Strip. Planter strips shall not be less than 5 feet wide. If located along a parking stall or stalls, it shall be covered similar to a tree well.
3. Tree Selection:
  - a. Trees shall be selected that are appropriate for their location. The following factors shall be considered



Hanover, New Hampshire



North Wales, Pennsylvania

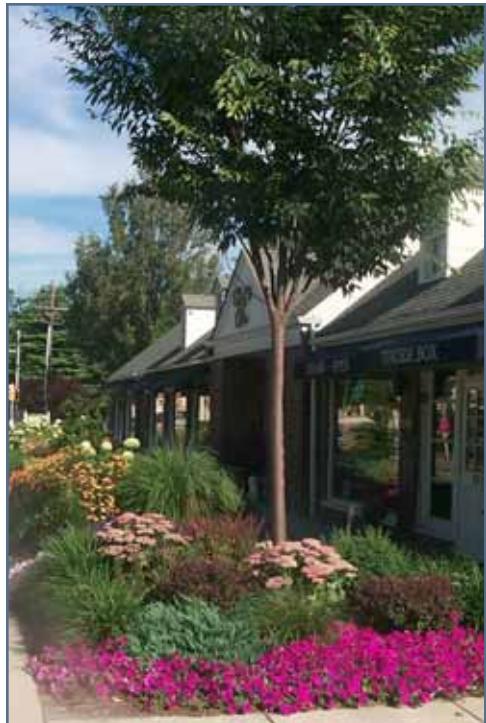
*The **landscaping** section is intended to supplement a community's existing landscape regulations in the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. The standards could apply to the Town Center District alone or be used for the entire community.*

*The Town Center District recommends **street trees** be planted at a caliper of 3.5 inches to provide a greater visual impact to a community's streetscape. In other areas, we recommend trees of 2.5 inches in caliper be planted.*

***Tree species** should be varied to avoid disease and should be in accordance with the community's streetscape plan.*



Moorestown, New Jersey



Haverford, Pennsylvania

when selecting a tree species: maintenance requirements, hardiness, salt tolerance, shape and form, and the subsurface growing conditions. The use of native species is encouraged. Invasive species are discouraged. Examples of some street trees that meet these criteria are:

- i. Sugar Maple—*Acer saccharum*
- ii. Willow Oak—*Quercus phellos*
- iii. Red Maple—*Acer rubrum*
- iv. Hackberry—*Celtis occidentalis*
- v. Green Ash—*Fraxinus*  
Pennsylvania, Patmore or  
Marshall's seedless
- vi. Thornless Honeylocust—  
*Gleditsia triacanthos* var.  
*inermis*
- vii. London Planetree—*Platanus X*  
*acerifolia*
- viii. Shingle Oak—*Quercus*  
*imbricaria*
- ix. Scarlet Oak—*Quercus coccinea*
- x. Swamp White Oak—*Quercus*  
*bicolor*
- xi. Chinese Lacebark Elm—*Ulmus*  
*parvifolia*
- xii. Japanese Zelkova—*Zelkova*  
*serrata*
- xiii. Sweet Gum (fruitless cultivar)—  
*Liquidambar styraciflua*  
"Rotundiloba"
- xiv. Pagoda Tree cultivars—  
*Sophora japonica*



Pottstown, Pennsylvania

xv. Other trees that meet the above criteria.

b. Trees Under Wires. Trees located under wires shall not be of a species that is expected to grow into the utility lines. A few examples include:

- i. Amur Maple—*Acer ginnala*
- ii. Trident Maple—*Acer buergerianum*
- iii. Hedge Maple—*Acer campestre*
- iv. Eastern Red Bud—*Cercis canadensis*
- v. Hawthorn cultivars—*Crataegus*
- vi. Crabapple cultivars—*Malus*
- vii. Japanese Tree Lilac—*Syringa reticulata*
- viii. Cherry cultivars—*Prunus serrulata* “Kwanzan” and “Okane” *Prunus X yedoensis*
- ix. Serviceberry cultivars—*Amelanchier*
- x. Kousa Dogwood cultivars—*Cornus Kousa*
- xi. Other trees that meet the above criteria.

C. Parking Lot Landscaping:

1. Interior Landscaping. All surface parking lots of 20 spaces or more shall have shade trees, with a caliper of 2.5 inches minimum. 1 shade tree per 10 spaces is required in planting islands or diamonds.
2. Perimeter landscaping for parking lots visible from a street shall have a landscaped area of a minimum width of

***Existing trees where possible should be retained. Parking spaces, aisles, or driveways should be arranged to avoid the removal of existing trees.***



*Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania*

3 feet and should meet the requirements of Section 4, General Requirements.

D. Hanging Baskets, Planters, and Window Boxes:

1. Planters shall not obstruct the sight triangles. Planters shall not encroach into the sidewalk so that less than 5 feet of passageway is available for pedestrians.
2. Window Boxes. Window boxes should be at least as wide as the window sill where they are located (at least 6 inches wide by 6 inches deep). They shall not encroach into the sidewalk unless pedestrian access to that area of the sidewalk is restricted.
3. Hanging baskets, planters, and window boxes shall contain live plantings.



Hatboro, Pennsylvania



Doylestown, Pennsylvania

# Appendix 3

## Signs

- A. Signs requiring permits: Two of any of the following signs are permitted.
  1. Wall Signs:
    - a. No wall sign shall project more than 12 inches beyond the building.
    - b. Wall signs should not exceed 10 percent of the building façade.
  2. Projecting Signs:
    - a. Projecting signs should be no lower than 8 feet above grade.
    - b. The maximum sign area shall not exceed 5 square feet.
    - c. The maximum height of the projecting sign shall not exceed the eave line or top of the parapet wall of the principal building which ever is lower.
  3. Window Signs:
    - a. Window signs shall not exceed 15 percent of the total glass area of the window.
  4. Awning Signs:
    - a. Awning signs should be traditional fabric foldout awnings and not permanently affixed, backlit awnings.
    - b. Sign lettering and/or logo shall not exceed 30 percent of the exterior surface of the awning or canopy.
    - c. A minimum height of 8 feet from the lowest point to the sidewalk is required.

### Signs:

**Signage regulations should be addressed in the Zoning Ordinance. The standards could apply to the Town Center District, or be used for the entire community.**

**Signage should be pedestrian in scale and integrated into a building's overall design. The maximum allowable sign sizes should be adapted for each community.**

**Communities may want to consider including in their sign regulations a maximum sign area permitted, or specifying the total number of signs permitted.**

**Some communities may want to allow window signs with up to 25 percent of the total glass area of the window.**

5. Freestanding Signs:
  - a. Freestanding sign supports should be made of wood or metal.
  - b. Freestanding signs shall not exceed 20 square feet.
  - c. Signs shall not exceed 5 feet in height.

6. Marquee Signs:
  - a. Marquee signs shall not exceed 150 square feet.
  - b. Marquee signs shall maintain a vertical clearance of ten feet above grade.

7. Monument Signs:
  - a. Monument signs should be constructed out of materials that compliment the building structure.
  - b. Signs shall not exceed 20 square feet.
  - c. Signs shall not exceed 5 feet in height.
  - d. Monument signs shall have landscaping around the sign base.

- B. Signs not requiring permits.
  1. Building Identification Signs:
    - a. Building identification signs shall not exceed 2 square feet bearing only the property number and/or street address.
  2. Directional Signs:
    - a. Directional signs shall not contain advertising, (including logos), not exceed 4 square feet, and not obstruct the sight triangles at internal intersections on the premises.



Tulare, California

***Freestanding signs should not be used where buildings are built up to the sidewalk.***

***Monument signs should not be used where buildings are built up to the sidewalk.***



*Banner signs in Santa Monica, California*

3. Banner Signs:

- a. Banners across streets, alleys and other public rights of ways shall be permitted to promote community events.
- b. No banner may hang below 15 feet over the street or public right of way.

4. Menus and Signs Indicating Business Hours:

- a. Signs shall not exceed 2 square feet.
- b. Signs shall be located in a permanently mounted display box on the façade of the building adjacent to the entrance, displayed within a window adjacent to the entrance, or at a podium that will be placed inside the restaurant upon closing.

5. Sandwich Board Signs:

- a. Signs shall not exceed 8 square feet.
- b. Signs are permissible along the sidewalk, provided a minimum walking distance of 5 feet shall be maintained to allow for a pathway for pedestrians.
- c. Signs shall be taken indoors at the close of each business day.
- d. Sandwich boards shall be weighted at the base so that the sign cannot be moved by strong winds; however, no sign shall be chained, tied, or otherwise affixed to any object, structure, or the ground.
- e. Only one sandwich board sign will be permitted in front of the business it advertises.



*Gooseneck lighting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*



*Exton, Pennsylvania*

C. Sign Illumination:

1. The use of flashing, pulsating, or moving lights shall be prohibited.
2. Back-lit, halo-lit illumination, or reverse channel letters with halo illumination are recommended.
3. External illumination should be unobtrusive (i.e. gooseneck lighting).
4. External lighting should be shielded to avoid glare.



On-street parking and bike rack in Hanover, New Hampshire



Bike rack in Portland, Oregon

# Appendix 4

## Parking and Access

A. Parking space requirements by use shall follow the below standards or follow the standards from Section C (Parking Reduction):

1. Bank:
  - a. 4 per indoor teller window.
  - b. With walk-up ATM (as above, plus 2 per ATM).
2. Bar or Tavern: 1 per 100 sq. ft. of patron floor, plus 1 per employee on largest shift.
3. Convenience Store: 1 space per 250 gross sq. ft. of floor area.
4. Office: No parking is required for the first 400 gross sq. ft., 1 space per each additional 300 gross sq. ft.
5. Apartments: 1.5 spaces per unit.
6. Bed & Breakfast Inn and House: 2 spaces plus 1 per guest or rental room.
7. Hotel: 1 space per rental unit, plus 1 space per 200 sq. ft. of gross floor area in common or public use (lobby, bar, meeting rooms, etc.), plus 1 per employee on the largest shift.
8. Restaurant:
  - a. Fast Food: No parking is required for the first 300 sq. ft. of patron floor area, 1 space is required per each additional 75 sq. ft. of patron floor area plus 1 per employee on the largest shift.
  - b. Other: No parking is required for the first 400 sq. ft. of patron floor area, 1 space is required per each additional

### **Parking:**

*These parking standards could apply to the Town Center District alone, or be used in the Off-Street Parking and Loading Standards in the Zoning Ordinance.*

*Communities may want to investigate the creation of a parking authority to address its parking needs. Businesses would be assessed a fee that could be used to construct parking lots or parking structures.*

*Communities may want to consider adding bicycle parking requirements (such as one bike space per 10 required parking spaces). Two uses within 200 feet of each other may choose to purchase one bike rack that provides the required number of bike spaces for each use. Alternatively, a community may install bike racks in coordination with the streetscape design and/or in public parking lots.*

100 sq. ft. of patron floor area plus 1 per employee on the largest shift.

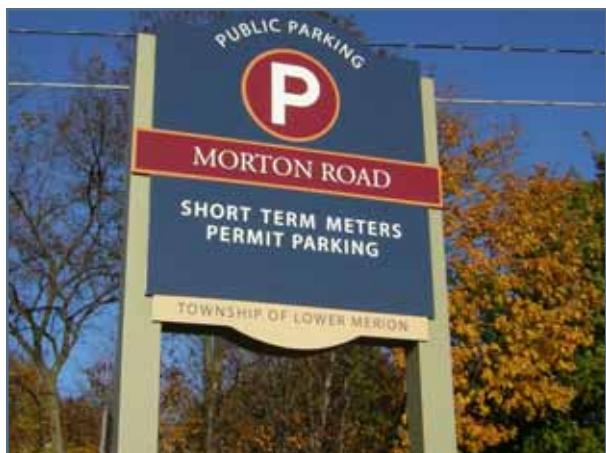
9. Retail, Personal Service: No parking is required for the first 450 gross sq. ft. of space devoted to sales/service; 1 space is required for each additional 300 gross sq. ft. of space devoted to sales/service, plus 1 per employee on the largest shift.
10. Theater: 1 per 6 seats.
11. Indoor Amusements: 1 per 200 sq. ft. of gross floor area.
12. Studios: 1 per 800 sq .ft. minimum, 1 per 300 sq. ft. maximum.
13. Private or Fraternal Clubs: 1 per 150 sq .ft. above the first 2,400 sq. ft.
14. Religious Institution: 1 per 5 seats.
15. Government Uses, Community Center, Libraries: 1 per 850 sq. ft. of gross floor area.
16. Funeral Homes: The greater of 1 per 4 seats or 1 per 50 sq. ft.
17. Home Occupation: 1 space per employee, 1 space per 100 gross sq. ft. of floor area dedication to the home occupation for those home occupations with a visiting clientele.
18. Gallery and Museum: 1 space per 850 sq. ft.

B. Maximum Parking:

1. No more than 120 percent of the required minimum parking is permitted.

C. Parking Reduction:

1. Each use may reduce the number of required spaces up to 100 percent if the requirements are met by one of the following or a combination of the following to meet the necessary requirements:



Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

*Tackling parking issues can be a challenge in many of our communities. In downtown areas, meeting the parking requirements on site can be difficult. Allowing other methods to count towards meeting the parking requirements is suggested. Utilizing the parking reduction concepts outlined to the left, will provide other options for providing parking. The municipality should ensure that parking spaces are only counted once, when the parking reduction provision is utilized. To facilitate this, communities may want to consider instituting a parking plan for the downtown area.*

- a. The use is located within 400 feet walking distance from a public parking facility.
- b. On-street parking is provided directly in front of the building.
- c. Shared parking meets the requirements of Section D.
- d. The use is within 400 feet of a transit facility.

D. Shared Parking:

- 1. Users shall be required to show shared parking is reasonably close to each use (see Section D.4, Walking Distance).
- 2. Shared Parking Agreement (2 businesses or District (more than 2 businesses) which involves contractual agreement between users is required. A shared parking agreement allows users an opportunity, if they choose, to redesign parking lots to be more efficient in serving multiple users. This may consist of making new curb cuts between parking lots, restriping lots, or redesigning internal traffic circulation and pedestrian walkways.
- 3. The minimum amount of shared parking required shall be calculated according to the following formula (see Figure 3):
  - a. Calculate the minimum amount of parking required for each land use as if it were a separate use.
  - b. To determine peak parking requirements, multiply the minimum parking required for each proposed land use by the corresponding percentage in the table below for each of the six time periods.

**Shared parking** does not create conflicts because many uses have different parking demands for different time periods. Utilizing shared parking also reduces the amount of impervious paving. Considering **walking distance** is important when evaluating the appropriate location for **shared parking** (please refer to Section D.4). When utilizing **shared parking** it is also important that accessible parking spaces are provided for people with disabilities according to applicable community and national codes.

**Figure 3**  
**Shared Parking Calculations**

Uses	Monday—Friday			Saturday and Sunday		
	8 am—6 pm	6 pm—Midnight	Midnight—8 am	8 am—6 pm	6 pm—Midnight	Midnight—8 am
Residential	60%	100%	100%	80%	100%	100%
Office	100%	10%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Commercial	90%	80%	5%	100%	60%	5%
Hotel	70%	100%	100%	70%	100%	100%
Restaurant	70%	100%	10%	70%	100%	20%
Movie Theater	40%	80%	10%	80%	100%	10%
Entertainment	40%	100%	10%	80%	100%	50%
Institutional (non-religious institution)	100%	40%	5%	10%	10%	5%
Religious institution	20%	40%	5%	100%	50%	5%



*A pedestrian street in Boston,  
Massachusetts*

- c. Calculate the column total for each of the six time periods.
- d. The column (time period) with the highest value shall be the minimum parking requirement.

4. Walking Distance:

- a. Less than 100 feet: People with disabilities, deliveries and loading, emergency services, fast food restaurant, and convenience store.
- b. Less than 800 feet: residents, grocery stores, professional services, and medical clinics.
- c. Less than 1,200 feet: general retail, restaurant, employees, entertainment center, and religious institutions.

*An example of the use of parking requirements versus **shared parking**:*

*The parking required for a 5,000 square foot restaurant with 25 employees, an office of 2,500 square feet, and 25 apartments would be 116 spaces (71 spaces for the restaurant, 7 spaces for the offices, and 38 spaces for the apartments).*

*Using the shared parking calculations, 110 spaces would be required. In order to arrive at 110 spaces, the minimum required parking was multiplied by the multiplier for each use and then totaled. The total for column one is 79.5 spaces, column two is 109.7 spaces, column 3 is 45.45 spaces, column four is 80.45 spaces, column 5 is 109.35 spaces, and column 6 is 52.55 spaces. The highest column value is equal to 109.7 spaces; therefore 110 spaces are required.*

- d. Less than 1,600 feet: Major sport or cultural event and overflow parking.

E. Parking Garages.

1. Design:

- a. Retail store fronts or other business uses on the street level shall be required on Main Streets to provide vitality.
- b. For structures not on a Main Street, parking garages shall be set back 10-15 feet from the legal right-of-way unless the frontage is occupied by a retail or business use.
- c. Utilitarian appearances of parking structures are not permitted. Structures shall have design treatments such as colonnades, arcades, awnings, landscaping, street furniture, and other public amenities to create the appearance of an occupied building. Blank walls are not permitted.
- d. Cars shall be visually screened from adjacent buildings and the street and such screening shall be in keeping with the rest of the building's architectural style and materials.

2. Vehicular access to parking garages shall be accessed from alleys, placed underground, placed in structures above the ground floor, or located behind or to the side of a building. (If located to the side of a building, the garage must be setback from the front of that building by 10-15 feet.)

F. Driveways:

- 1. Driveway entrances shall not exceed 24 feet when crossing sidewalks.



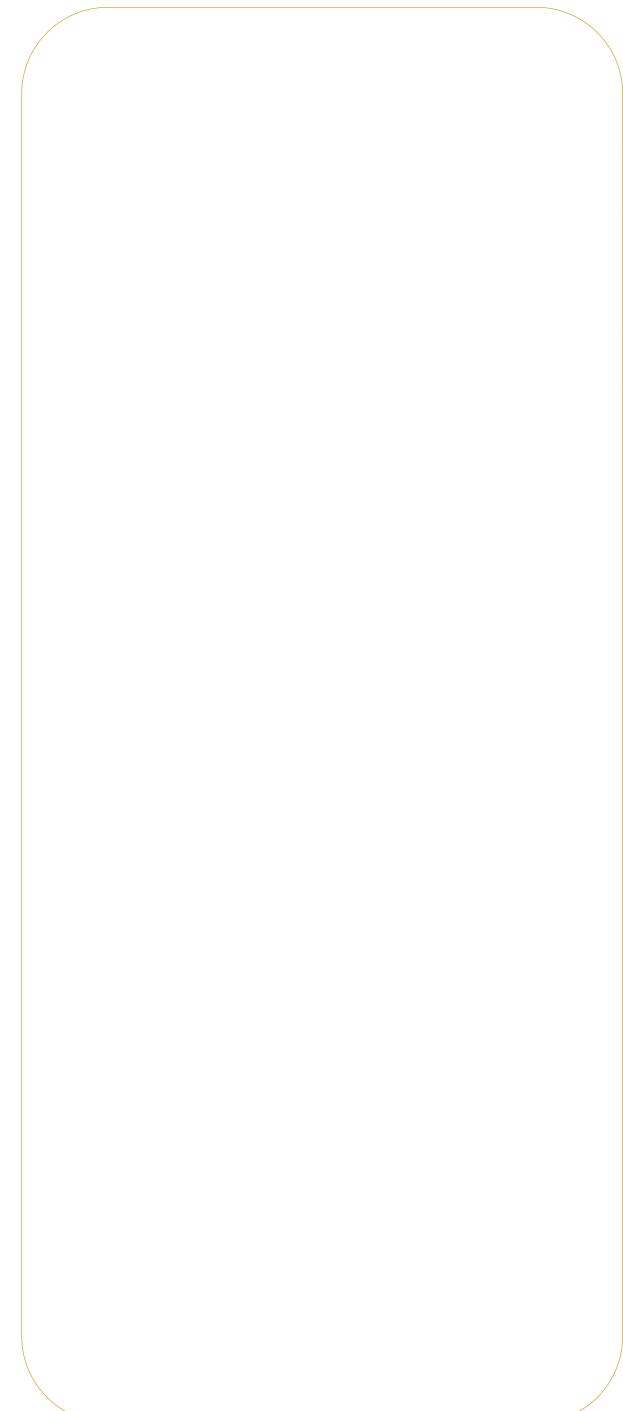
*Retail store front within a parking garage*

G. Alleys.

1. Creation of new alleys

a. Design:

- i. Dead-end alleys are prohibited.
- ii. Alleys shall be protected by wheel bumpers or curbs.
- iii. Intersections connecting alleys with other alleys are prohibited.
- iv. A maximum of 20 feet in width for two-way alleys is required; 12 feet in width for one-way alleys.



town center district

Photography provided by Montgomery County Planning Commission  
*except as noted:*

*Page 4 Columbus, Ohio - Dan Burden*

*Page 4 Seattle, Washington - Dan Burden*

*Page 9 Seattle, Washington - Dan Burden*

*Page 18 Portland, Oregon - [www.pedbikeimages.org](http://www.pedbikeimages.org)/Dan Burden*

*Page 19 Los Gatos, California - Dan Burden*

*Page 19 Annapolis, Maryland - Dan Burden*

*Page 19 Venice, Florida - [www.pedbikeimages.org](http://www.pedbikeimages.org)/Dan Burden*

*Page 21 Columbus, Ohio - Dan Burden*

*Page 35 Santa Rosa, California - [www.pedbikeimages.org](http://www.pedbikeimages.org)/Dan Burden*

*Page 43 Columbus, Ohio - [www.pedbikeimages.org](http://www.pedbikeimages.org)/Dan Burden*

*Page 55 Cambridge, Massachusetts - [www.pedbikeimages.org](http://www.pedbikeimages.org)/Dan Burden*

*Page 64 Tulare, California - [www.pedbikeimages.org](http://www.pedbikeimages.org)/Dan Burden*



Montgomery County Planning Commission  
Montgomery County Court House  
PO Box 311, Norristown, PA19404

[www.montcopa.org/plancom](http://www.montcopa.org/plancom)