PROPOSED
TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY DISTRICT

DESIGN GUIDELINES

NORTH COVENTRY TOWNSHIP
CHESTER COUNTY, PA

FINAL DRAFT

November 15, 2013

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GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

This section outlines a set of encouraged design guidelines to help guide the character of new development in the Traditional Neighborhood Development Overlay District. The design guidelines cover the following elements:

- Building Mass and Scale
- Building Materials and Appearance
- Building Setbacks
- Enhancing the Pedestrian Environment

- Parking Areas
- Landscaping
- Signage
- Lighting
- Gateway Features

PURPOSE OF THE DESIGN GUIDELINES

These guidelines present visual examples of ideal building and design elements to be used in new construction. These guidelines are directly rooted in the Northern Chester County Gateway Master Plan of 2009. Regarding the function and appearance of new buildings and developments, these guidelines are intended to act as a visual starting point to be used in the land development process.

APPLICATION OF THE GUIDELINES

Article VII-A of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code enables municipalities to set forth standards, conditions and regulations for a traditional neighborhood development (TND) and to adopt a manual of written and graphic design guidelines to assist applicants in the preparation of proposals for the TND.

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BUILDING MASS AND SCALE

INTENT

Generally, buildings should be similar in mass and scale. Variation of shape and height should be employed to break the monotony created by large structures. All buildings should be designed with interesting architectural features that help create character, a sense of place, and a sense of community.

Building design should also promote the comfortable transition between the outdoor and indoor environments and encourage increased pedestrian traffic.

GUIDELINES

The following guidelines address these goals for the scale and intensity of building in the TND Overlay District.

- Maintain a design scheme that blends new construction with existing structures compatible with the TND Overlay District's goals.

- Varied building stories (within the limits established in Article XIX), roofline pitch and height within areas of similar architecture are acceptable and in commercial areas preferred.

- A sense of pattern and rhythm should occur between the individual buildings. This can be accomplished through a recurring theme of shapes and forms in the façades.

- Building facades should be varied in mass and projection to add to the character and appearance of the streetscape. Uninterrupted flat walls are prohibited.

- Design elements such as columns, cornices, common porches, awnings and pergolas should be used to enhance the pedestrian experience, ease the transition from exterior to interior environments, and bring larger buildings to a more pedestrian scale. Blank facades on structures are prohibited.

EXAMPLES

RETAI L CHAIN STORES

Shopping Center, Annapolis MD: Incorporation of varying roofline styles and dormers consistent with the rural character of the location.

National Chain Store, Eagle, PA: Made to look distinctive, the mass of a medium sized retail store has been broken up, creating the illusion of several smaller buildings attached by a covered porch. Note the use of windows, shutters, and "clock tower" feature, extending the second floor.

LARGER BUILDINGS

Three Story Mixed Use Building, Hanover, NH: Varied window patterns, awnings and street lighting helps achieve a pedestrian scale, enhancing the streetscape.

Supermarket, Summit, NJ: With its varied roof line, pergola, cupola, front-facing windows, and other architectural details, this large market looks much smaller and more pedestrian-scaled than a typical suburban store.

Commercial/Office Building, James County, VA: Massing and variation in the façade help create a structure that adds greatly to the character and appearance of the streetscape.

SMALLER BUILDINGS AND PAD SITES

Small Building Pad Site, Annapolis, MD: Smaller buildings should enhance the village character of the Township. This example shows the use of varied roof line and covered entrance.

Small Buidling, Eagle, PA: This bank emulates the design (front porch, gable roof, small scale) of the historic building next door

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BUILDING MATERIALS AND APPEARANCE

INTENT

This section's intent is to set forth examples of the desired appreance of, and desired building materials used for new construction of commercial buildings in the TND Overlay District. Building materials and appearance should invoke the rural character of Northern Chester County.

Appropriate examples of building materials and building appearance are shown below. It should be noted that these photos are examples of achievable deviations from prototypical commercial buildings—it is not the intention of the Township to duplicate the character of any other community.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Building materials and appearance should conform to the following:

- Building materials should reflect and compliment the aesthetic, rural nature of Northern Chester County.

- Building materials and coloring should be similar in appearance to other historical structures in the close vicinity in order to acheive neighborhood continuity and enhance one's sense of place.

- Combinations of building materials for each structure add aesthetic value to the community. Brick and stone are effective for facades. Metal and wooden fixtures such as lights, shutters, dormers, cupolas, aluminum roofing are encouraged combinations.

- Accessory features to buildings (i.e. lighting, awnings, windows, moveable shutters, and doors) are effective in enhancing not only the scale of the building but add an attractive element to streetscapes.

EXAMPLES

Pad Site Bank, Concordville, PA: The combined use of brick and stone, invoke the aesthetic of a rural Chester County village.

Small Scale Commercial/Retail, Ludwig's Corner, PA: The use of stone in combination with a metal roof and cupolas reflects a complimentary "barn-like" structure common to rural Chester County.

Commercial Area James City County, VA: Brick with wood used as an accent, is also appropriate for commercial nodes in North Coventry.

Small Scale Commercial, Ludwig's Corner, Chester County: The standing seam metal roof, dormers, and clapboard walls complement the rural aesthetic of Chester County.

Small Scale Commercial, Route 100, Eagle, PA: The use of dormers, clapboard, slate roof and ornamental clock extenuate the rustic look of this small scale commercial business.

Small Scale Commercial, Ludwig's Corner, Chester County: Varied building materials in the same development (stone to clapboard, shingle to aluminum roofs) gives a rural flavor to commercial developments.

Small Scale Commercial Village of Eagle, Chester County: The village atmosphere is enhanced with the use of local materials and common traditional design elements.

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BUILDING SETBACKS

INTENT

Minimum and maximum building setbacks are intended to create a streetwall that encourages pedestrian circulation.

GUIDELINES

- Setbacks should be small in order to create a streetwall and promote a walkable environment.

- Inclusion of landscaping and interconnected pathways in setbacks should be employed to create a pedestrian friendly environment.

- Planting and landscaping should be used to beautify the space between commercial uses and the roadway.

EXAMPLES

Eagle, PA: Buildings along Route 100 form a streetwall.

Lansdale, PA: The space used in the setback provides a landscaped and walkable environment with the inclusion of sidewalks and pathways.

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PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

INTENT

The intent of this section is to promote the development of an improved pedestrian environment within the TND Overlay District.

GUIDELINES

- Incorporate innovative road crossing techniques to protect and invite pedestrians.

- Pedestrian safety features should be employed both within and on the periphery of land developments.

- An emphasis on social interaction and pedestrian activities should be made in commercial sections of the corridor.

- Connect to and enhance the North Coventry Township and regional trail networks.

EXAMPLES

CROSSWALKS ACROSS MAJOR ROADS

West Whiteland Township, Chester County: The white board fence both protects pedestrians and compliments the area's rural character.

West Whiteland Township, Chester County: Close-up of the pedestrian crossing shows how this fenced median creates a safe environment for pedestrians crossing the divided road.

West Whiteland Township, PA: Example of a pedestrian crossing across a busy section of Route 100. This example shows well marked crossing design a safe area between the right turn lane and flow of traffic.

West Whiteland Township, PA: A second view of the crossing shown above. This photo shows clearly marked controls for pedestrian crossing lights.

Millburn, NJ: Crosswalks across busy intersections should be simple, safe, inviting, and clearly marked.

Keith Valley Rd, Horsham Township, PA: A pedestrian underpass may be a viable option for moving people under Route 100.

CROSSWALK WITHIN COMMERCIAL NODES

Annapolis, MD: Distinctive markings and color enhance this crosswalk's visibility and create a sense of place.

PEDESTRIAN PATHS ALONG MAJOR ROADS

Chester Valley Trail, Exton, Chester County: A pedestrian path separated from a busy road by 10-15 feet of green space, reinforces setbacks and creates a recreational amenity.

Route 100, Exton, Chester County: Separation from the road and use of guardrails promote a feeling of safety, while. Elements such as ornamental light poles and trees help create a pleasing pedestrian environment. This design also reinforces the Route 100 setback.

Sycamore Street, Newtown Township, PA: Parking curb cuts and planters provide pedestrian protection on this busy secondary street. Welcoming amenities for pedestrians (benches and trash containers) are also provided.

Centerville, DE: This example shows a brick sidewalk separated from traffic by a parking and bicycle lane. A mid-block pedestrian crossing is also provided to enhance pedestrian access to the other side of the street.

SIDEWALKS WITHIN COMMERCIAL AREAS

Commercial Area Covered Sidewalk: Covered arcades act as an appealing transitional area between exterior and interior spaces. This design promites inviting experiences that can draw shoppers to strip commercial centers.

Clarendon, VA: Brick sidewalks and classic streetscape features (row trees, cast iron, benches and trash recepticles) add a historical village aesthetic to the community.

STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS ALONG SIDEWALKS

Annapolis, MD: Sidewalk café areas encourage pedestrian and economic interest. This design also promotes human interaction by providing an outdoor "meeting place".

Summit, NJ: Benches, planters and awnings enhance the pedestrian experience in commercial areas.

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PARKING AREAS

INTENT

The parking area guidelines are intended to: 1) eliminate large "seas" of parking in front of commercial and/or mixed use establishments by locating parking to the side or rear of buildings; 2) enhance traffic flow and safety by minimizing the number of curb cuts along Route 100 and other roads in the TND Overlay District; 3) maximize stormwater infiltration and shading with landscaping; and 4) provide safe pedestrian circulation within parking areas.

GUIDELINES

- Parking areas should be placed and designed with an appropriate village and pedestrian scale. Large expanses of parking are discouraged. Landscaping within parking areas should break up the scale of the parking area and provide stormwater infiltration and shading.

- Parking lots should be located to the rear of the establishment and be shared by as many establishments as possible to reduce the number of curb cuts along Route 100 and other higher volume roads.

- Clearly designated pedestrian pathways should be installed within parking areas to provide pedestrians with safe access from the parking area to their destination.

EXAMPLES

Ludwig's Corner, Chester County: Buildings face inward to a small interior access road and parking stalls. This orientation creates a strong sense of place and enhances the "village" feel for the shopping complex.

Route 100, Eagle, Chester County: Wherever possible, parking lots should be located behind stores. In addition, parking areas should be broken up by large planting areas that assist in infiltration of stormwater runoff and provide shade.

Route 100, Eagle, Chester County: Rear parking lots should be shared whenever possible. Access to the development should minimize curb cuts on busy streets, often achieved by shared access between developments.

**Eagle, Chester County:** Use of a side parking lot for a commercial establishment.

Newtown Square, PA: When and where it is unavoidable, surface parking should be well screened, particularly in areas of major intersections.

Newtown Township, PA: Newly created parallel parking appropriately designed for a secondary road .

Parking Lot Swales: Stormwater management swales should be integrated into parking lot medians to control runoff and create a pleasing visual amenity.
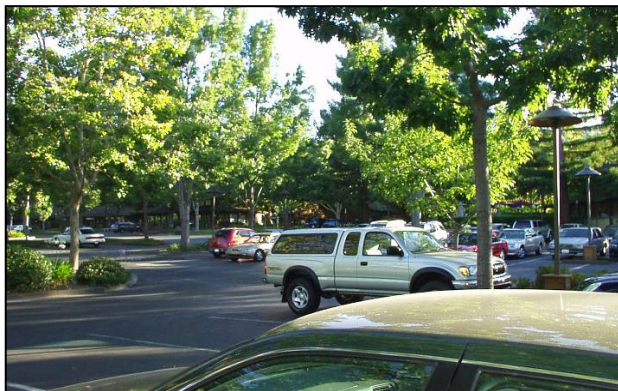
Shading of Parking Areas: Establishment of expansive tree canopies is essential to a pleasant pedestrian parking lot experience. Sufficient tree cover can also shield heat absorbent paving materials, protecting cars and people from direct sunlight, and improving animal/bird habitats.

West Chester, Chester County: Pedestrian pathways should be interweaved in the design of parking areas. This should be done in order to increase safety, provide aesthetic value, add shading, and increase mobility to and from parking spaces.

Ludwig's Corner, Chester County: Use of details (i.e. antique farm equipment) can add aesthetic value. This farm equipment is indicative of the agricultural heritage of Chester County.

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PLANTINGS

INTENT

The following planting strategy for the TND Overlay District identifies five key landscape types.

- Route 100 Corridor landscape
- Neighborhood streetscape
- Stormwater management
- Parking lot plantings
- Storefront plantings

GENERAL GUIDLINES

- New mass plantings should imitate the existing meadows, old fields, hedgerows and woodlands in pattern, form and species composition.

- Where possible, buffer zones and adjacent areas should feature woodlands and meadow areas favored by native fauna to help new developments fit in with the character of the landscape while also improving habitat.

- Street trees should be planted at regular intervals along all streets. Mature street trees will provide shade and separation between vehicles and pedestrians. They also enhance traffic calming by creating a pedestrian friendly atmosphere.

- Stormwater management areas including parking area swales, parking lot islands, rain gardens, basins and other areas, should utilize species native to the North Coventry area. Native plant species are well adapted to intermittently wet conditions and contribute to the aesthetic beauty of the site.

- Parking lots should have amply vegetated islands, edges and buffers featuring large shade trees, understory shrubs and groundcovers.

- Parking areas should utilize landscaping which improves the visual quality of the walk from car to destination.

- Storefront plantings should create a continuous landscape appropriate to and harmonious with the rural aesthetic of the Township.

The following planting selections are chosen as character examples from the North Coventry Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO). Other suitable trees and shrubs which may enhance the character described for each landscape type can be found in the SALDO. For herbaceous and ground cover plantings, a selection of examples is provided to suggest character and suitability for

the different landscape areas. The following guidelines are presented for specific locations and uses in the TND Overlay District.

GUIDELINES FOR THE ROUTE 100 CORRIDOR

Trail and sidewalk connections between Route 100 and side streets are encouraged to promote pedestrian use. Increased pedestrian use slows traffic and creates a sense of place around commercial areas that draws in shoppers.

Forest restoration is encouraged to preserve and improve the existing visual appeal of the Route 100 corridor. Mutli-leveled, complex forest is encouraged as part of development to act as a visual buffer, stream protection, adjacent trail landscape, and connective zone that increases the ecological value of remnant forest patches.

Multi-use trails promote alternative means of transportation and encourage a diversity of pedestrian and recreational uses along Route 100.

In order to mitigate impacts of development, large-scale landscape gestures such as creation of hedgerows and reforestation areas, are encouraged. These landscapes preserve, augment, and link valuable ecological and aesthetic amenities such as successional forest patches and vegetated corridors.

RECOMMENDED PLANT TYPES FOR ROUTE 100 CORRIDOR

Shagbark Hickory
Carya ovata

Allegheny Pachysandra
Pachysandra procumbens

Pennsylvania Sedge
Carex pennsylvanica

Jack in the Pulpit
Arisaema triphyllum

White Oak
Quercus alba

Flowering Dogwood
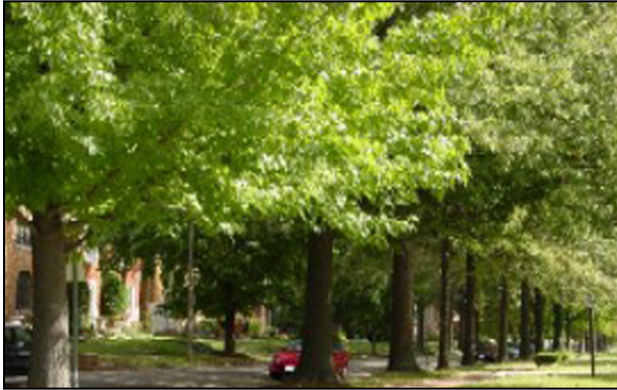*Cornus florida*

Eastern White Pine
Pinus strobus

Witch Hazel
Hamamelis

Christmas Fern
Polystichum acrostichoides

GUIDELINES FOR NEIGHBORHOOD STREET TREES

Street trees should be planted at regular intervals along all streets. Mature street trees will provide shade, separation between the vehicles and pedestrians and will help calm traffic, creating a pedestrian friendly atmosphere.

Areas along side roads should serve multiple functions (i.e. creating habitat, stormwater infiltration and visual interest). Once established, these areas help create the impression that new roads and developments were carefully situated into an existing landscape of high ecological and visual quality.
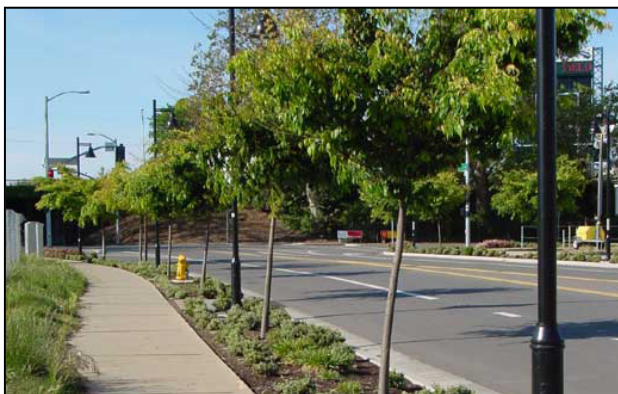
Native groundcover and shrub layers can be used beneath the street trees to simplify maintenance, improve visual interest and create a greater feeling of safety for pedestrians. Use of plants other than turfgrass helps to decrease runoff, increase evapotranspiration and create more habitat for birds and animals.

RECOMMENDED NEIGHBORHOOD STREET TREE TYPES

Eastern Redbud
Cercis canadensis

American Linden
Tilia americana

Thornless Honey Locust
Gleditsia triacanthos inermis

London Planetree
Platanus acerifolia

Northern Red Oak
Quercus rubra

Common Hackberry
Celtis occidentalis

American Elm Princeton
Ulmus americana

Red Maple
Acer rubrum

Sugar Maple
Acer

GUIDELINES FOR SWALES

Incorporation of vegetation in swales is particularly useful in controlling runoff from parking areas. In these areas the swale detains water while creating a more pleasing environment.

Vegetated swales should be incorporated into new developments where mown lawn is not necessary. New streets, parking lots, and rights of way should incorporate surface drainage swales that detain, infiltrate and treat stormwater. Such swales should be planted with native, low-maintenance, wet-tolerant species that create visual interest, new habitat, and continuity between natural and developed areas.

Heavily planted swales should be used around parking lots and roadways as a visual buffer and to protect adjacent areas from potentially contaminated runoff.

RECOMMENDED PLANT TYPES FOR STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

New York Aster
Aster panicum
Canadian Goldenrod
Solidago canadensis

Swamp White Oak
Quercus bicolor

Pinkster Flower Azalea
Rhododendron Periclymenoides

Christmas Fern
Polystichum acrostichoides

Square Stemmed Monkey Flower
Mimulus ringens

Lobelia
Lobelia spp.

Redosier Dogwood
Cornus sericea

River Birch
*Betula nigra*

Swamp Azalea
Azalea visconsum

GUIDELINES FOR PARKING LOT VEGETATION

Vegetated stormwater management swales should be integrated into parking lot medians to control runoff and create a pleasing visual amenity.

Use of densely planted parking lot medians, edges and buffer zones create a multifunctional landscape. Developers should use a "low use" approach that employs space to treat stormwater, create habitats, and lessen the environmental and psychological impact of paved areas.
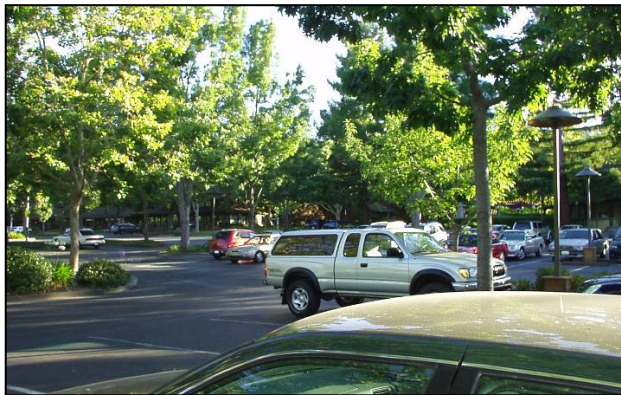
Establishment of expansive tree canopies is essential to a pleasant pedestrian parking lot experience. Sufficient tree cover can shield heat absorbent paving materials, protecting cars and people from direct sunlight, and improve animal/bird habitats.

RECOMMENDED PLANT TYPES FOR PARKING LOTS

Sweetbay Magnolia
Magnolia virginiana

River Birch
Betula nigra

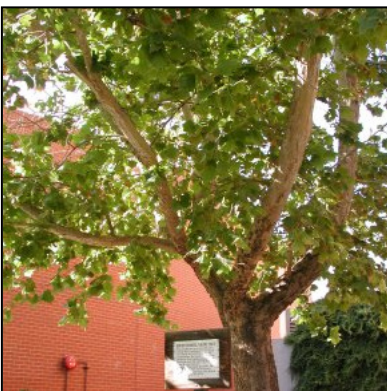Serviceberry
Amelanchier

Joe Pye Weed
Eupatorium dubium

Giant Sunflower
Helianthus giganteus

Thornless Honey Locust
Gleditsia triancanthos inermis.

Border Grass
Liriope muscari

London Planetree
Platanus acerifolia

Oakleaf Hydrangea
Hydrangea quercifolia

GUIDELINES FOR STOREFRONTS

Storefront plantings should employ layers of native species. A range of pleasing textures, colors, forms and seasonal interests is encouraged.

Plants should be chosen for visual appeal, habitat value, ease of maintenance, and availability. Native plants are usually drought tolerant, fit well with local landscapes and can require less maintenance.

Buildings should be integrated into the landscape, which should be holistically designed, from grading and stormwater management to circulation and planting. Vegetation types like riparian, meadow, or woodland species used in buffer zones should be incorporated into retail zones to create a sense of continuity with the valued local landscape.

RECOMMENDED PLANT TYPES FOR STOREFRONTS
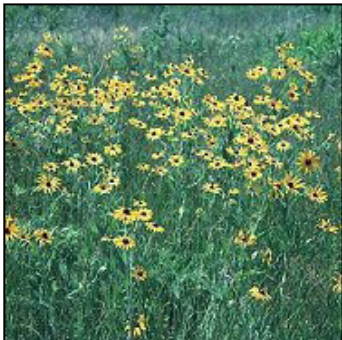
Flowering Dogwood
Cornus florida

Lowbush Blueberry
Vaccinium angustifolium

Wild Columbine
Aquilegia canadensis

Golden Alexanders
Zizia aurea

Black-eyed Susan
Rudbeckia hirta

Viburnum (Anowood, Witherod, Blackhaw) *Viburnum spp.*

Canadian Serviceberry
Amelanchier canadensis

New York Ironweed
Vernonia noveboracensis

Little Bluestem
Schizachyrium scoparium

Eastern Redbud
Cercis canadensis

Mayapple
Podophyllum peltatum

Blue Cohosh
Caulophyllum thalictroides

Native Hawthornes
Crataegus viridis (example)

Appalachian Sedge
Carex appalachia

Joe Pye Weed
Eutrochium purpureum

Great Laurel
Rhododendron maximum

Umbrella Magnolia
Magnolia tripetala

Black Alder
Viburnum nudum

Arrowwood Viburnmum
Viburnum dentatum

Buttonbush
Cephalanthus occidentalis

SIGNAGE

INTENT

The establishment of good precedents for signage can have a positive effect on the character of North Coventry Township. Guidelines for use of appropriate signage in the TND Overlay District are intended to help create a rural community aesthetic appropriate for the Township.

GUIDELINES

- Design of signs should be complimentary to the building designs, using similar color schemes and appropriate text designs.

- Signs should be designed to invoke a rural village character.

- Lighting of signs shall be designed to protect neighbors and the night sky from nuisance glare and light trespass.

EXAMPLES
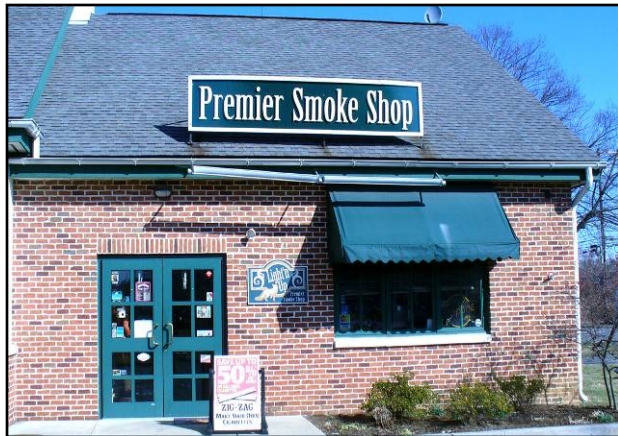
Ludwig's Corner, Chester County: Commercial establishments should use painted (rather than backlit) signs.

Ludwig's Corner, Chester County: Appropriate and discrete sign complimentary of the architectural features (dormers, cupola, awnings).

Annapolis MD area: Acceptable use of plastic sign. Use of down-lighting instead of backlighting.

Ludwigs Corner, Chester County: Additional examples of painted, molded, or printed signs above store entrances. Along with being attractive, the location of these signs makes them very easy to read.

Corning, NY: Hanging "pendant" signs are encouraged as long as they are not plastic or backlit. This example above a restaurant creates a distinctive entrance.
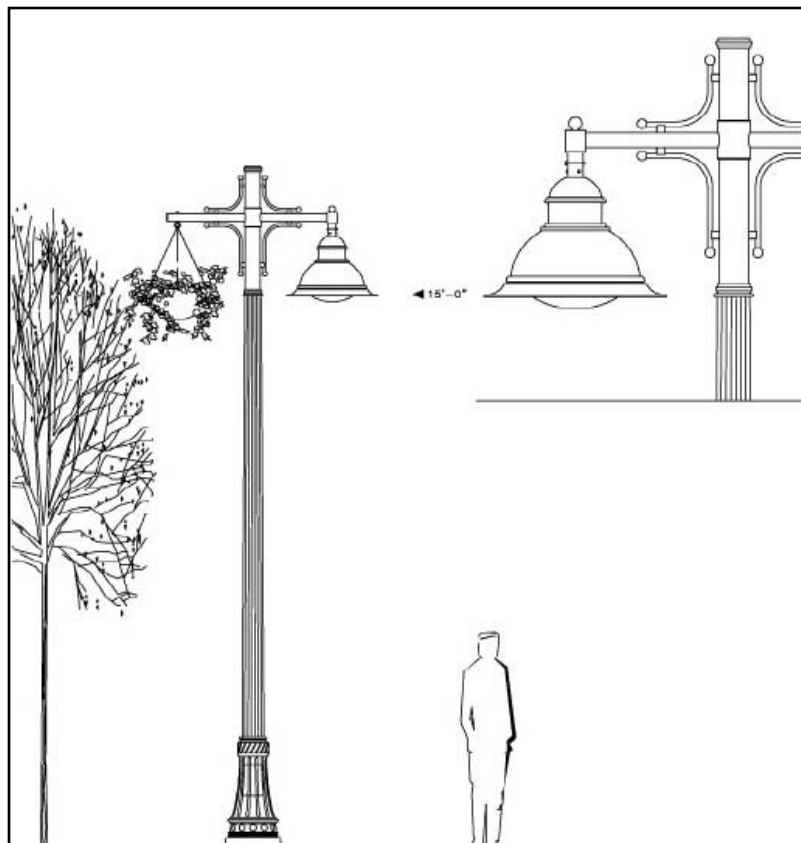
LIGHTING

Lighting, while serving an essential safety function, is also a streetscape element that can create a distinctive sense of place. North Coventry, along with having a township lighting consultant, has an existing light standard that is approved for use in new subdivisions.

GUIDELINES

North CoventryTownship's light standard is included below. It is the Lumec Domus DMS50. A very versatile fixture, it could easily be adapted to various sized poles, wall installation and for use of varying wattage of bulbs. These configurations meet four Township based light uses: 1) a pole height/wattage for use along Route 100 and Route 724; 2) The existing approved 15 foot standard use in residential subdivisions and walkways outside commercial establishments; 3) a pole height/wattage for use along secondary streets and in parking lots; and 4) a wall fixture for use on the outside of commercial buildings.

The Lumec Domus DMS50: The current Township lighting fixture approved for use in new residential subdivisions.

EXAMPLES

Cedarmill Crossing, North Coventry Township: Use of the DMS50 light fixture (and matching North Coventry pole and bracket).

Concordville, Delaware County: Use of DMS50 on a 15-foot pole. This application along commercial walkways and sidewalks could unify the streetscape in North Coventry.

Concordville, Delaware County: Use of the DMS50 fixute on a higher pole to illuminate secondary/access roads. The same fixture and pole could be used to illuminate commercial parking areas in North Coventry Township. Further, note the use of decorative flags on the pole to enhance sense of community identity.

The DMS50 being used as a wall mounted fixture.

Example of pole and wall mounted DMS50 fixtures used in tandem.

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GATEWAY FEATURES

Entrance features consisting of distinctive signage, plantings and islands can serve as important gateway elements that help alert visitors that they have arrived at a distinctive place. They can also help generate a sense of pride among community residents.

GUIDELINES

- Gateway features such as boulevard islands, bollards, brick surface work, signage, and ornamental plantings should be used at the major entry and exit points of TND Overlay District areas along the Route 100 corridor.

- Gateway features should be placed on either the median or on the side of the road facing oncoming traffic.

EXAMPLES

(Route 52, Kennett Pike) Centerville, DE: This gateway island, sign, and plantings would be appropriate at both the northern and southern ends of the Route 100 Corridor.

A second gateway feature shows how this amenity can add a community scale and feel to a busy roadway.

This example of a boulevard island would be appropriate for Route 100. It can break up a large mass of asphalt and add character to a busy roadway. Street trees planted in the island would further enhance appearance.

Centerville, DE: Close up views showing trees, shrubs, bollards, and brick paving used to mark the entrance to the community. This may once again be an appropriate treatment at both ends of the Route 100 Corridor.

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