

Suburban Landscapes Design Guide

Chester County, PA





Prepared by the Chester County Planning Commission
December 2021

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This is the third of six design guides the Planning Commission is preparing for Chester County's Landscape categories. The framework for each guide will be the same to support your community's objectives, values, and priorities in regards to the character of new development.

Purpose

Chester County is committed to quality of design in its built environment.

Quality design of new development is characterized by context sensitivity and the thoughtful arrangement of details that define streets, public spaces, and communities. Ultimately, quality design improves a community's function and appearance by unifying diverse elements.

The purpose of this guide is to:

- Foster new development that is compatible with community and historic character
- Protect residential neighborhoods from adverse impacts
- Encourage walkability and alternative modes of transportation
- Protect and restore the environment
- Guide appropriate development

The design elements in this guide are focused on locations where new development is most likely to occur—neighborhood centers, sites with lot consolidation opportunities, greenfields with sensitive infill potential, and areas close to public utilities and transportation.



Aerial view of a residential cluster development in Kennett Township..

Long-term Vision

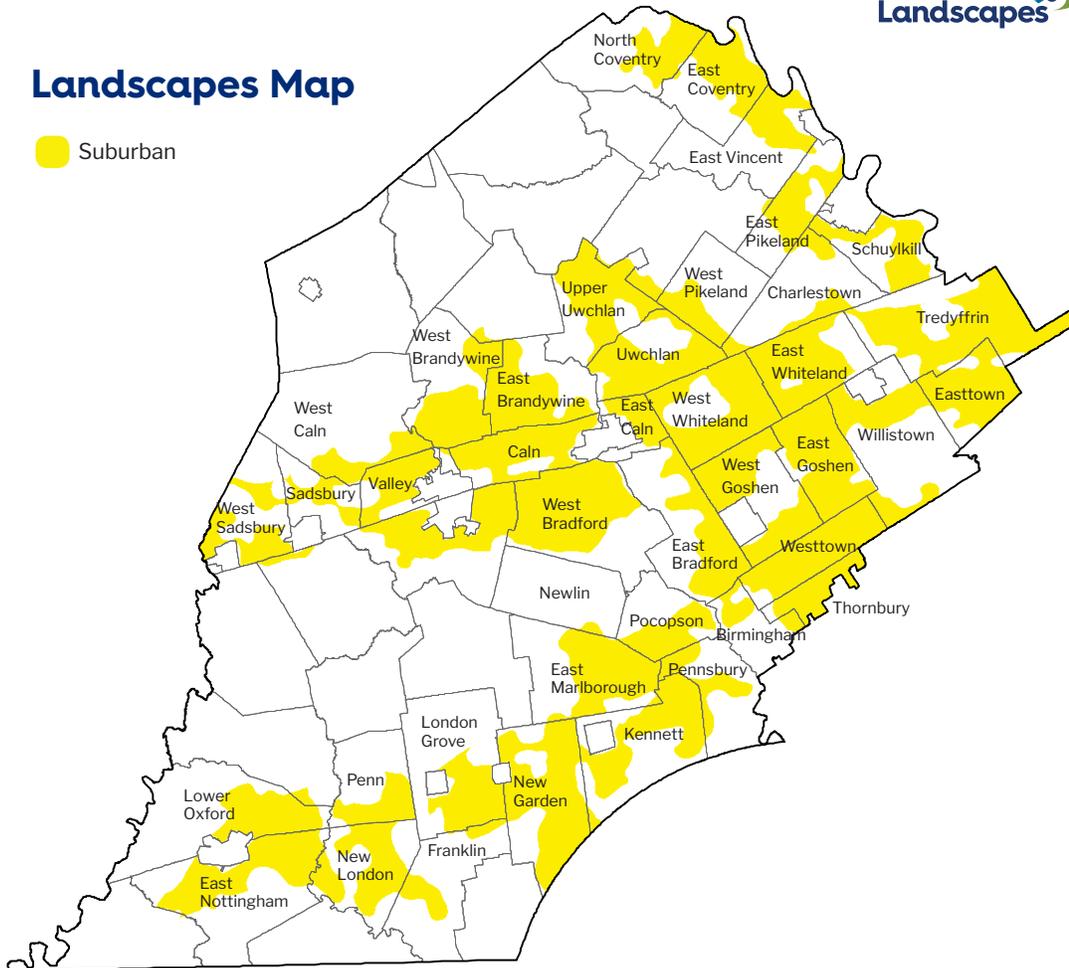
The vision for Suburban landscapes is predominantly residential communities with locally-oriented commercial uses and community facilities. The Suburban landscapes will accommodate growth at a medium density that retains a focus on residential neighborhoods, with enhancements in housing types and affordability. Neighborhoods are inter-connected by roads, sidewalks, and paths with convenient access to parks and community facilities.

Suburban landscapes are located near transportation corridors, particularly highways, and are in proximity to many of Chester County’s urban and suburban centers.



Landscapes Map

Suburban



Format

The planning principles and design elements established in the *Landscapes3* vision for the Suburban landscapes serve as the basis for the format of this guide.

Planning Principles

The key objectives, values, and priorities to consider when creating long range plans, investing in infrastructure, or evaluating proposed development.

This section has four themes: **Growth Outlook, Preservation Focus, Land Use Patterns,** and **Infrastructure.** The importance of each principle is discussed and examples of supportive policies that guide municipal action and facilitate private investment are listed. For further information, a link to on-line resources is provided.

Design Elements

The guidelines for the treatment of development and related features based on well-established patterns of building and quality design.

This section has three themes: **Building Character, Site Amenities,** and **Transportation.** Each guideline is introduced with an overview of “why” it is important to the health, safety, and welfare of the county’s Suburban landscapes. The overview is followed by an illustration or graphic to express design considerations and best practices to carry out each design element. A regulatory strategy from a local or national source is found at the bottom of each topic as well as a link to additional on-line resources.

CHAPTER 2 Planning Principles

PLANNING THEME — INFRASTRUCTURE

PRINCIPLE & RATIONALE — **Expanded public access to parks and trails**
Having access to parks and trails provides places for physical activity, improving mental health, reducing stress, connecting to nature, and increasing social interactions.

COUNTY EXAMPLE — 
Unionville Community Park in East Marlborough Township provides convenient access to public open space and trails.

SUPPORTIVE POLICIES — **Example Policies**

- Provide safe and convenient access to natural and recreational areas.
- Protect natural areas while providing community access that does not negatively impact riparian habitats, fragile soils, and native vegetation.
- Plan for and implement trail connections between existing neighborhoods and key destinations.
- Connect parks to existing protected areas of the county’s natural landscapes.
- Set aside funding for strategic linking of natural areas and trails.
- Seek funding to improve existing parks to meet a wide variety of recreation needs.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Ensure the Township’s regulatory ordinances promote trail connectivity between existing and proposed land uses as part of any new development/redevelopment or road construction projects and specify trail design standards.

New Garden Township Comprehensive Plan Update, 2018; p. 24. ▶

MUNICIPAL PLAN EXAMPLE POLICY —

ONLINE TOOL —

INFRASTRUCTURE
Planned extension of sewer and water infrastructure for new development that does not leapfrog greenfield sites
Developing vacant land and redevelopment or revitalization of deteriorated land before extending sewer and water infrastructure saves on unnecessary expansion and maintenance costs.


The Reserve at Glenn Loch in West Whiteband Township is conveniently located near downtown West Chester and has easy access to Routes 202, 100, 30, and the PA Turnpike.

Example Policies

- Ensure adequate and safe water supply and support expansion of public water facilities as necessary.
- The extension of water and sewer within identified growth areas will be done only after careful consideration of cost benefit ratios, based upon the land use policies of diversification.
- Focus on the complete development of identified growth areas before the further extension of public water and sewer.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Plan for expansion of central sewage capacities and extensions of the area of the central water and sewer service in accordance with the existing Act 537 Plan.

East Whiteband Township Comprehensive Plan Update, 2016; p. 43. ▶

Toolbox
Compact Development Design ▶

CHAPTER 3 Design Elements

TRANSPORTATION — **Interconnected parking lots and common driveways**
Interconnected parking lots in office and commercial areas help minimize traffic congestion and maximize convenience for drivers. Common driveways can improve traffic and pedestrian safety and reduce potential traffic congestion but must take into account sufficient distances from street intersections and sight distances.

DESIGN THEMES — **DESIGN ELEMENT & RATIONALE**

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS — 

- Connect to adjacent lots**
Planning for future connectors to adjacent properties allows for driver to move from one property to the next and reduce traffic on adjacent streets.
- Utilize common driveways**
Design for common driveways when driveways are closer than 50 feet apart.

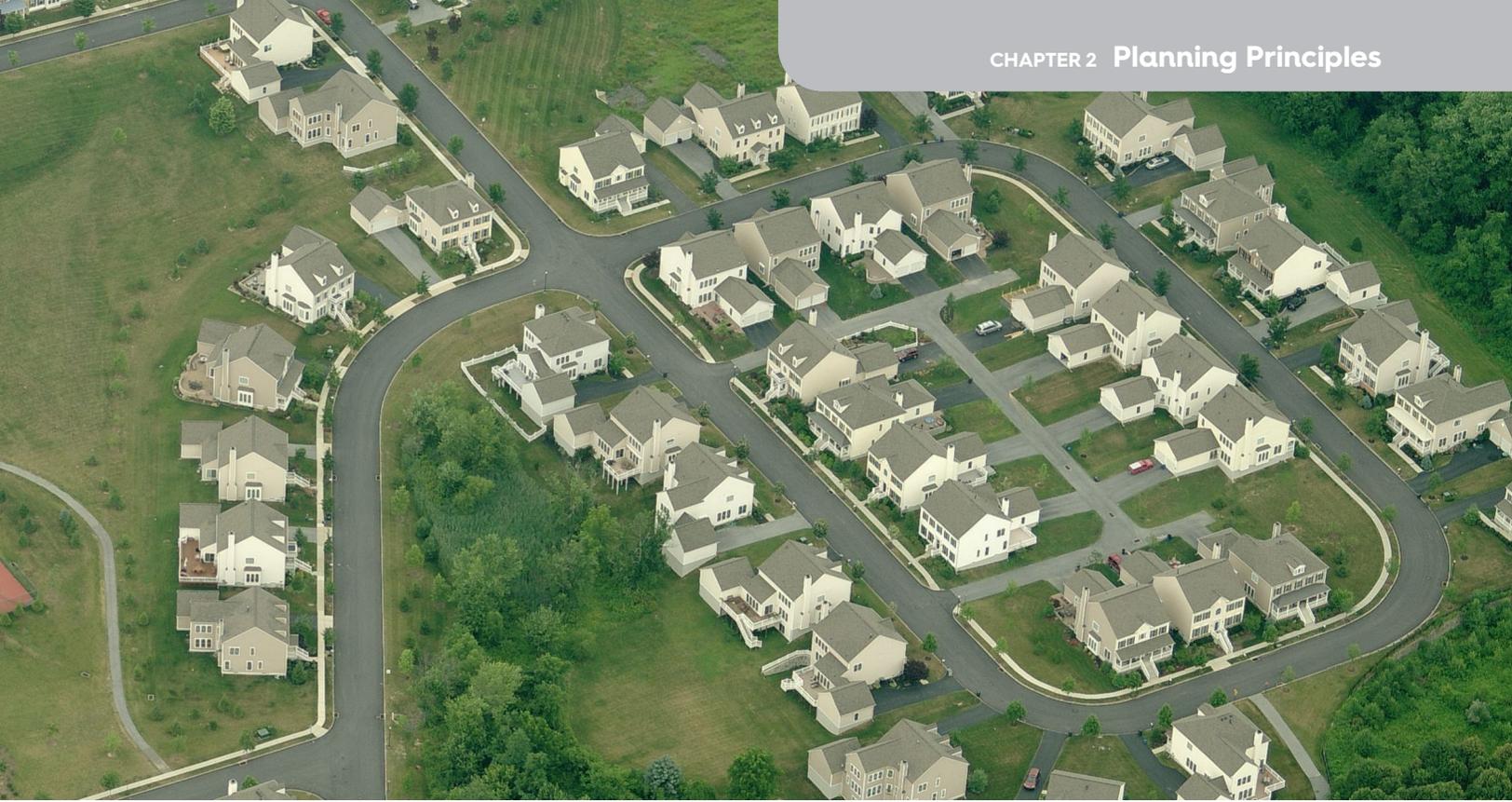
REGULATORY STRATEGY — **Shared parking incentives**
Permeable surface shared parking shall not count toward allowable impervious cover. Nonresidential uses may provide six (6) parking spaces for off-site uses in lieu of each 1,000 square feet of courtyard space.
East Pikeband Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 1105.4.D. ▶

Shared parking arrangements
Newly created adjacent lots shall have shared driveways and/or access cross easements.
East Pikeband Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 1105.2.E. ▶

Common driveways
Each use shall have not more than two accessways to any one public street for each 300 feet of frontage. Where possible, access to parking areas shall be provided by a common service driveway or minor street in order to avoid direct access on a major street.
Tredyffrin Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 208.102.C.1. ▶

ONLINE TOOL — **Toolbox**
Chester County Multimodal Handbook ▶





Planning Principles

Key objectives, values, and priorities to consider when creating long range plans, investing in infrastructure, or evaluating proposed development

GROWTH OUTLOOK
PRESERVATION FOCUS
LAND USE PATTERNS
INFRASTRUCTURE

GROWTH OUTLOOK

Future growth

The county’s Suburban landscapes will accommodate growth at a medium density that retains a focus on residential neighborhoods that are interconnected by roads, sidewalks, and paths with convenient access to parks and community facilities.



Pickering Crossing in Charlestown Township is a residential development that includes attractive townhouses with convenient access to schools, offices, and major transportation routes.

Example Policies

- Ensure new subdivisions and neighborhoods are developed with sustainable qualities that promote connectivity, walkability, and a sense of identity.
- Ensure that commercial development does not detract from the quality of life in adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Ensure non-residential buildings are well-constructed, attractive, and designed so as to allow them to be reconfigured as their programs change over time.
- Support and participate in multi-municipal planning initiatives for compatible development, continuation of historic community patterns, natural resource protection, and coordination of infrastructure development.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Guide the location and intensity of future development to protect existing neighborhoods, public spaces, and commercial facilities.

Thornbury Township, Comprehensive Plan, 2018; p.3-2. ▶

Toolbox

- Smart Growth ▶
- Official Map ▶

GROWTH OUTLOOK

Growth occurs as a natural extension of existing development rather than leapfrogging to isolated greenfield sites

Developing vacant or underutilized lands adjacent to existing development prevents dispersed and haphazard development patterns that consume large amounts of land.



Lochiel Farm in West Whiteland Township is an example residential development inserted along East Lincoln Highway in close proximity to existing amenities, such as the Chester Valley Trail and Exton Park.

Example Policies

- Direct growth to under-utilized land in already developed areas first before developing rural areas.
- Promote infill and reinvent underutilized shapeless places with walkable spaces, public amenities, and cultural experiences.
- Support traditional type development to use land efficiently.
- Promote mixed land uses that will create housing within walking distance of jobs, neighborhood services, schools, and recreation.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Discourage unplanned, scattered development by directing new land uses toward existing centers of development, areas with adequate infrastructure (i.e., sewer, water, and transportation), and lands with limited site constraints.

Kennett Township, Comprehensive Plan, 2015; p.2-2. ▶

Toolbox

- Growth Boundaries ▶
- Greenways ▶

PRESERVATION FOCUS**Preservation and reuse of historic buildings in their historic context**

Preserving historic buildings is essential to connect with a community's past, provide a sense of continuity and permanence, and maintain character. Reuse of historic buildings helps support sustainability by reducing the need to obtain additional resources for new building construction.



Adaptive reuse of this barn in Pennsbury Township created an economic development opportunity that is in keeping with the context of the Suburban landscape.

Example Policies

- Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings rather than demolition.
- Encourage restoration and maintenance of historic properties through code flexibility, fee reductions, and other regulatory and financial incentives.
- Encourage proper maintenance and continued integrity of historic resources and villages within their historic landscape contexts.
- Strengthen and protect older residential neighborhoods, with an emphasis on encouraging homeownership, rehabilitating older buildings, and avoiding incompatible development.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Require historic reviews for properties listed as Class 1 or Class 2 on the Township Historic Resources Inventory Map.

Thornbury Township Comprehensive Plan, 2018; p.3-4. ▶

Toolbox

Adaptive Reuse ▶

Historic Resource Protection Standards ▶

PRESERVATION FOCUS**Villages and hamlets**

The quaint, compact form of the county's villages and hamlets contributes to the unique character and quality of life that residents cherish. Conservation and a revival of their development form maintains and enhances the county's community-oriented places.



Kimberton in East Pikeland Township is an example of a village with historic characteristics.

Example Policies

- Preserve existing patterns of use in villages and hamlets.
- Develop a plan for potential future infrastructure requirements in villages and hamlets with specific review of access to commercial areas, parking, pedestrian walkways, sewers, and water systems.
- Consider development of specific zoning to identify and manage preservation and growth of villages and hamlets.
- Provide shared parking opportunities for smaller commercial establishments in villages and hamlets.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Maintain the character of the Village of Berwyn, reflecting the heritage, historic and cultural resources, and medium density and scale of existing development.

Easttown Township Comprehensive Plan, 2018; p. 42. ▶

Toolbox

Traditional Neighborhood Development ▶

Zoning Overlays ▶

PRESERVATION FOCUS**Protection and restoration of natural areas, nature preserves, and cultural landscapes**

Critical natural areas, nature preserves, and cultural landscapes are important contributors to the county's high quality of life. Protecting and restoring these features can lessen potential hazards to public health and safety, minimize disturbance to ecological functions, and improve livability for humans and wildlife.



The Cool Valley Preserve in Tredyffrin Township consists of 33 acres of meadows, woodlands, and a trail system. This site helps protect sensitive floodplain and steep slope areas.

Example Policies

- Protect important natural features, including creek valleys, wetlands, steeply sloped woodlands, and groundwater and surface water supplies.
- Encourage clustered development while preserving adjacent open space.
- Ensure regulations continue to preserve and protect natural resources throughout the development process.
- Educate and encourage private landowners to participate in resource protection and conservation measures, with special attention to homeowners associations that manage open space.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Consider action to support funding for open space land conservation, including initiation of a referendum to allow Township residents to decide about the establishment of a dedicated revenue source for open space preservation.

Westtown Township Comprehensive Plan, 2019; p. 12-1. ►

Toolbox

Natural Resource Protection Standards ►

LAND USE PATTERNS

Low to medium density mixed use development and infill development

Mixing low to medium density residential and nonresidential uses within a walkable, bicycle-friendly, transit, and car accessible compact development pattern allows for infill opportunities and supports a diverse and vibrant landscape.



Hersheys Mill Village Square in East Goshen Township provides walkable access to commercial services to several types of residential developments.

Example Policies

- Apply mixed-use zoning to create desirable neighborhoods, maintain compatible scale, respect views, and enhance the streetscape and pedestrian environment.
- Encourage mixes of land uses in a way that reduces dependence on motor vehicles for everyday needs and to promote a more enjoyable and healthy lifestyle.
- Identify areas and appropriate uses for infill development.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- To accommodate future growth, and given housing trends, the Township should consider expanding opportunities for multi-family and mixed-use development, targeted to areas with existing infrastructure, and including areas with redevelopment potential.

West Goshen Township Comprehensive Plan, 2019; p. 64. ▶

Toolbox

- Mixed-use Development ▶
- Infill Development ▶

LAND USE PATTERNS

Revitalization of brownfields, greyfields, and business parks

Revitalization of these sites protects the environment and strengthens the economic base of a community. In areas with existing development, reuse and revitalization can enhance walkability by providing additional services close to other amenities.



An underutilized 12.6 acre commercial property at the northwest corner of South Matlack Street and Route 202 in West Goshen Township was redeveloped into a 230 unit apartment building in 2012.

Example Policies

- Prepare redevelopment plans that include elements such as land use, building intensity and location, roads, trail and sidewalks, open space, utilities, transit, and funding and financing.
- Provide flexibility in regulations to promote reinvestment in business parks.
- Promote the redevelopment of aging single-use campuses and high vacancy shopping centers into mixed-use developments with housing, commercial, and public recreation facilities.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Consider allowing non-traditional and “makerspace” uses, whether as permitted, accessory, or temporary uses, in vacant spaces, such as small scale industrial, craft brewery/distillery, as well as indoor recreation.
- Valley Township Comprehensive Plan Update, 2020; p. 25. ▶*

Toolbox

- Brownfield Redevelopment ▶
- Greyfield Redevelopment ▶
- Commercial Landscape Series ▶

LAND USE PATTERNS

A variety of housing types, including accessory housing units and small-scale infill multi-family residences, at a variety of price points

Allowing a variety of housing types compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes can provide housing choices for the county’s growing population, accommodate changing demographics, and increase affordability.



The Reserve at West Goshen is a 28 unit townhouse development offering a range of square footage to accommodate single persons and families.

Example Policies

- Consider updating residential zoning districts to allow Missing Middle Housing, smaller residential lots, multi-generational homes, and principal and accessory residential dwellings on the same lot.
- Accommodate higher-density residential housing through zoning, especially near existing or planned commercial areas and where infrastructure capacity exists or is planned.
- Encourage mixed-income developments on the same site, development, or immediate neighborhood.
- Encourage housing that provides easy access to public transit and other efficient modes of transportation.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Provide areas for a range of housing types and densities, to meet the needs of various types of households.
Caln Township Comprehensive Plan, 2017; p. 3. ▶

Toolbox

- Housing Diversity ▶
- Affordably-priced Homes ▶
- Residential Conversions ▶

LAND USE PATTERNS

Land available for new industrial and heavy commercial uses in appropriate locations

Accommodating for industry and heavy commercial uses helps create a balanced and diversified economy. The long-term viability of these uses is dependent on the availability of sites and conditions that encourage investment.



To diversify its economy and provide valuable employment opportunities in the region, Valley Township supports industrial uses, such as the Valley View Business Park, which is developing 250,000 square feet of new industrial space.

Example Policies

- Recognize the importance of industrial land to the economy of the region and ensure zoning regulations and land use decisions protect active and viable industrial land uses.
- Create opportunity for more compatible or co-dependent uses, building expansion, and expanded amenities in existing industrial parks.
- Consider adopting industrial subdistricts into the existing zoning framework to reflect differences in character, development patterns, and overall context.
- Strengthen industrial zoning district design standards and require sidewalks, screening, and Complete Streets improvements.
- Limit residential development intrusions into designated industrial areas.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Promote expansion and increased utilization of the rail freight system to support regional business and industry.
Oxford Region Comprehensive Plan, 2014; p. 7-2. ▶

LAND USE PATTERNS

Retail and offices that support residential neighborhoods

Smaller retail and office spaces in Suburban landscapes that are oriented toward residential development help create balanced communities and allow people to shop and work without having to drive far.



The Willowdale Town Center in East Marlborough Township offers retail destinations and office space.

Example Policies

- Seek neighborhood and community scale businesses and service opportunities that are conveniently available for residents.
- Ensure some convenience retail and services for employees, including daycare, is easily available and potentially within walking distance.
- Affordable housing options should be in close proximity to jobs, retail and services, public transportation, and walking and biking paths to increase accessibility and reduce commuting costs.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Ensure the locations of commercial areas are convenient to residential areas and provide easy access for customers, employees, and suppliers.
Uwchlan Township Comprehensive Plan, 2010; p. 3-2. ►

LAND USE PATTERNS

Community institutional uses, such as schools and senior housing

Integrating institutions and different housing facilities creates land use diversity and intergenerational neighborhoods that adds to the overall feeling of community and quality of life.



Conestoga High School in Tredyffrin Township is surrounded by residences and is accessible by sidewalks. Schools can serve as centers for communities by hosting sporting events, theater performances, and community-directed events.

Example Policies

- Identify appropriate sites for new or future expansion and development of institutions and community service facilities.
- Include institutional and community services as part of large developments and make them focal points.
- Connect new or expanded institutions and community services with other uses via universally accessible sidewalks, trails, and other transportation modes.
- Use an official map to identify sites for public and quasi-public purposes that are of sufficient size to meet current and future needs.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Accommodate a range of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural including mushroom farming and specialized agriculture, and institutional land uses and, through appropriate land use regulations, ensure their compatibility with the existing Township character.
Kennett Township Comprehensive Plan, 2015; p. 2-2. ►

LAND USE PATTERNS

Diverse agricultural activities

Encouraging and facilitating appropriate agricultural activities in Suburban landscapes provides greater access to health, social, and economic benefits, such as healthier eating habits, educational opportunities, and lower food distribution costs.



Va La Vineyards in New Garden Township is an example agricultural business occurring in the Suburban landscape.

Example Policies

- Amend ordinances to reduce potential regulatory barriers to agricultural related businesses and respond to evolving agricultural industry trends, such as accessory farm businesses and agritainment.
- Provide zoning use incentives for agri-business and agri-tourism to help keep remaining farm properties viable.
- Protect prime agricultural land and promote the establishment of agricultural security areas, and encourage the continuity, development, and mobility of agricultural operations to the extent feasible.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Continue to support and permit a wide range of agriculture related businesses (wineries, farm to table, and growers market).

New Garden Township Comprehensive Plan Update, 2019; p. 7. ▶

Toolbox

Secondary Farm Business ▶

INFRASTRUCTURE

Improved pedestrian and bicyclist safety and mobility via traffic calming, sidewalks, bike lanes, and increased street interconnections

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities with opportunities to connect between all elements of the built environment create safer communities, healthier people, and more economically viable places.



In West Whiteland Township, the Chester Valley Trail enhances connectivity in the community by passing through a variety of suburban land uses.

Example Policies

- Create a bike and pedestrian plan.
- Consider a set of improvement standards for on-road bicycle facilities, utilizing established recommendations for road width and conditions.
- Establish connectivity requirements for all development and redevelopment projects.
- Build sidewalks and fill in missing gaps in the sidewalk network impacting access to schools, shopping areas, bus stops, and other critical destinations.
- Identify targeted traffic calming measures.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Incorporate requirements into zoning ordinances to encourage that new development and redevelopment create pedestrian connections (trails and/or sidewalks) to surrounding neighborhoods.

Westtown Township Comprehensive Plan Update, 2019; p. 11-4. ►

Toolbox

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities: Policy ►
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities: Design ►
- Chester County Transportation Policies ►

INFRASTRUCTURE

Appropriately scaled roadways

Appropriately scaled roadways are context sensitive, limit the use of excess materials, and provide for non-vehicular travel.



The roundabout at the intersection of Route 82 and Doe Run in East Marlborough Township is an example of a safety and circulation improvement appropriately scaled to the surrounding context.

Example Policies

- Maintain a roadway network that safely and effectively accommodates vehicular traffic supporting other community objectives for pedestrian and bicycle mobility as well as agricultural needs.
- Consider retrofitting streets to incorporate complete streets principles that place a priority on pedestrian and bicycle travel and traffic calming.
- Reduce impervious pavement surfaces by narrowing neighborhood road widths.
- Support and participate in regional transportation plans and projects.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Facilitate a system of collector roads that can efficiently carry local traffic between residential areas, and to and from arterial highways through the subdivision and land development process.

Uwchlan Township Comprehensive Plan Update, 2020; p. 3-3. ►

Toolbox

- Multimodal Circulation Handbook for Chester County, PA ►

INFRASTRUCTURE

Expanded public access to parks and trails

Having access to parks and trails provides places for physical activity, improving mental health, reducing stress, connecting to nature, and increasing social interactions.



Unionville Community Park in East Marlborough Township provides convenient access to public open space and trails.

Example Policies

- Provide safe and convenient access to natural and recreational areas.
- Protect natural areas while providing community access that does not negatively impact riparian habitats, fragile soils, and native vegetation.
- Plan for and implement trail connections between existing neighborhoods and key destinations.
- Connect parks to existing protected areas of the county’s natural landscapes.
- Set aside funding for strategic linking of natural areas and trails.
- Seek funding to improve existing parks to meet a wide variety of recreation needs.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Ensure the Township’s regulatory ordinances promote trail connectivity between existing and proposed land uses as part of any new development/redevelopment or road construction projects and specify trail design standards.

New Garden Township Comprehensive Plan Update, 2018; p. 24. ▶

INFRASTRUCTURE

Planned extension of sewer and water infrastructure for new development that does not leapfrog greenfield sites

Developing vacant land and redevelopment or revitalization of deteriorated land before extending sewer and water infrastructure saves on unnecessary expansion and maintenance costs.



The Reserve at Glenn Loch in West Whiteland Township is a recent townhouse development that connected to existing public sewer and water infrastructure and did not require extension of the services.

Example Policies

- Ensure adequate and safe water supply and support expansion of public water facilities as necessary.
- Coordinate the Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan with the Future Land Use Plan.
- Before the extension of water and sewer within identified growth areas, carefully evaluate cost benefit ratios, based upon land use diversification policies.
- Focus on the complete development of identified growth areas before the further extension of public water and sewer.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Plan for expansion of central sewage capacities and extensions of the area of the central water and sewer service in accordance with the existing Act 537 Plan.
- East Whiteland Township Comprehensive Plan Update, 2016; p. 43. ▶**

Toolbox

Compact Development Design ▶

INFRASTRUCTURE

Modern communications infrastructure

Modern high quality communication infrastructure (wireless networks, fiber optics, and broadband telecommunications) is important to residents and businesses, and is vital to economic development.



Significant demographic and cultural changes, such as the aging population, diversification, shrinking households, domestic migration, and remote work and school highlight the need for modern communication infrastructure, including 5G, to connect people and communities.

Example Policies

- Promote digital infrastructure that provides broadband data communications to residents.
- Simplify and shorten the process for obtaining necessary permits for communication facilities while protecting the visual character of the community.
- Support the expansion and development of sophisticated communication facilities and networks required by businesses that use advanced technology.
- Establish provisions to place cables and wires underground, wherever feasible.

MUNICIPAL EXAMPLE

- Continually assess Township ordinance and other standards in light of increasing technology innovations, needs, and accessibility as well as growing and changing alternative energy sources.

Kennett Township Comprehensive Plan, 2015; p. 2-4. ►





Design Elements

Guidelines for the treatment of development and related features based on well-established patterns of building and quality design

BUILDING CHARACTER

SITE AMENITIES

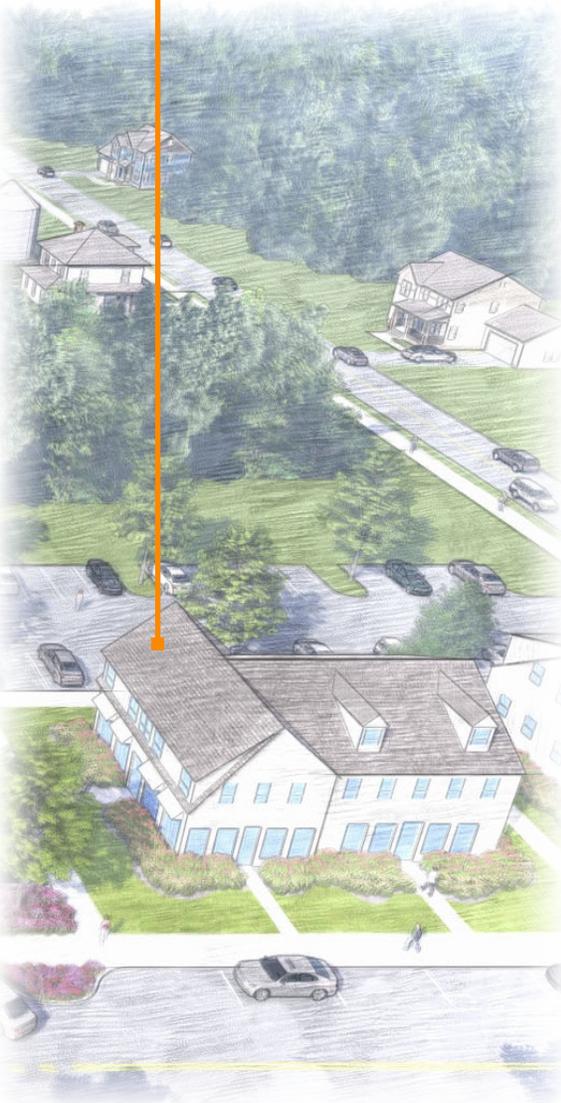
TRANSPORTATION

■ Clustering of buildings to preserve unique historic, cultural, and environmental resources

■ Deemphasis of garage doors and visibility of off-street parking



Residential character for commercial and institutional uses based on existing building scale, roof lines, materials, and window patterns



BUILDING CHARACTER

High quality architecture and design contributes to sense of place, supports walkability, and enhances the public realm. This section provides guidance on how the design of new buildings should relate to their surrounding context and engage people in the streetscape.

BUILDING CHARACTER

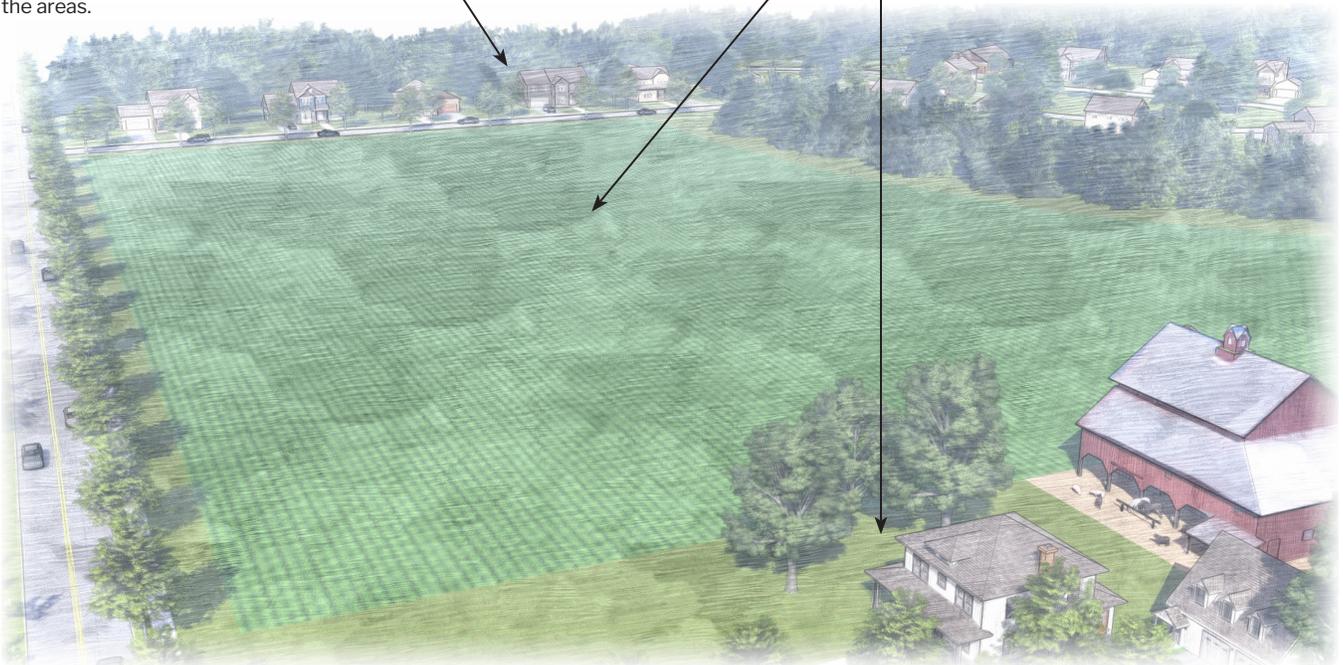
Clustering of buildings to preserve unique historic, cultural, and environmental resources

Cluster development preserves open space and directs development away from natural, scenic, historic, and agricultural areas by limiting construction to defined areas. Open space is preserved in perpetuity for the benefit of residents, the general public, or as protected natural areas. Cluster designs typically result in lower infrastructure and maintenance costs due to shorter roads, sidewalks, and water and sewer lines.

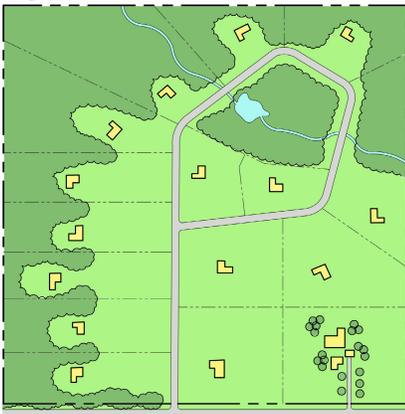
Single-Family Residential Example

Orient buildings toward the open space
Housing and other buildings that face open space provide passive surveillance over the areas.

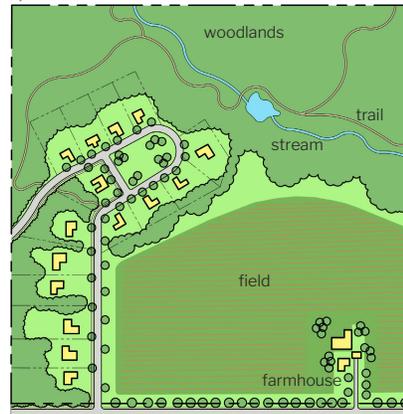
Protect existing character
Maintain historic spatial integrity of cultural landscapes, such as the core farmstead and surrounding fields in this example, to protect views that define community character.



NOT RECOMMENDED



RECOMMENDED



Protect existing character

This illustration compares a conventional subdivision (left) versus cluster subdivision layout for 16 residential lots. The cluster subdivision protects the existing field, stream corridor, woodlands, and spatial integrity of the farm house from development. Effective cluster subdivision ordinances require at least 50 percent open space.

Cluster Design

To provide for single-family attached housing in a cluster design enabling the protection of significant natural features, including but not limited to the stream valley of an exceptional value stream, at least 75 percent of the gross tract area shall be preserved as open space.

West Bradford Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 450-37, E. ▶

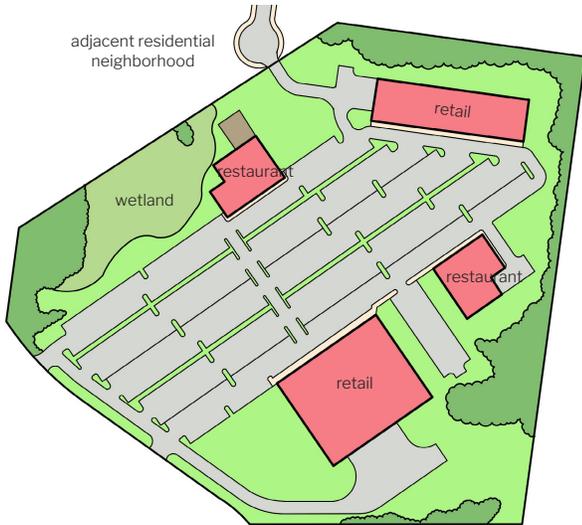
Toolbox

Cluster Development ▶

Site Analysis Plan ▶

Commercial Example

NOT RECOMMENDED



RECOMMENDED

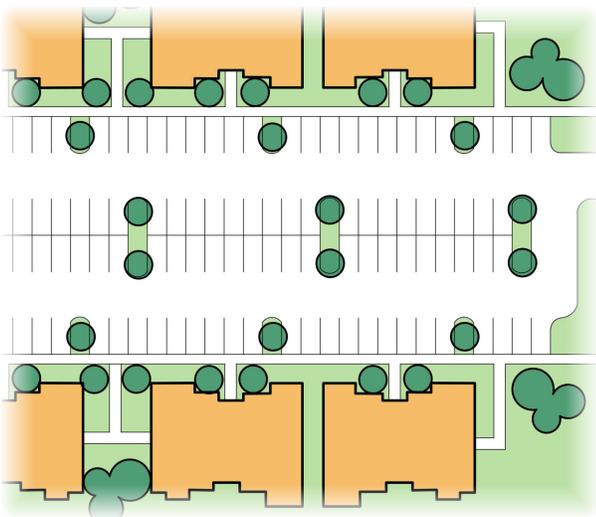


Create compact pedestrian-oriented development

This illustration compares a conventional (left) versus cluster (right) layout for a four building non-residential development. The cluster layout is compact and pedestrian-oriented with building entrances oriented to street sidewalks and pathways and landscaping in parking areas to provide direct, safe, and comfortable universal access to buildings.

Multi-Family Residential Example

NOT RECOMMENDED



RECOMMENDED



Create useful and well-integrated open spaces

This illustration compares a conventional (left) versus cluster (right) layout for a multi-family residential development. The cluster layout uses varied building shapes and sizes to create meaningful and visually interesting spaces. On-site open spaces located around buildings that would get little use should be avoided.

Toolbox
Compact Development Design ▶

BUILDING CHARACTER

Residential character for commercial and institutional uses based on existing building scale, roof lines, materials, and window patterns

Because Suburban landscapes are primarily residential, new commercial and institutional buildings can enhance the qualities and services of an existing neighborhood or area if designed to complement community character. Consistency of building scale, roof lines, materials, and window patterns ensures new development has an attractive street appearance.



Use variable roof forms
Avoid a boxy appearance of buildings by incorporating pitched roofs, changes in roof heights, offsets, change in direction of roof slope, dormers, etc.

Minimize the bulk of buildings
Limit building footprint and length or incorporate changes in roof form and height and design horizontal and vertical setbacks to help break the building into smaller discrete masses.

Differentiate first floor facades for visibility
Have a greater percentage of window openings on first floor facades for visibility and display purposes. Also, orient main building entrances toward the primary street.

Create a cohesive development identity
For multiple-building commercial development, including pad site buildings, use similar building materials and architectural details to create unified and harmonious building compositions.

Layout and Massing

The layout and massing of commercial buildings shall reflect a residential scale. Commercial buildings larger than 4,000 SF in first floor building footprint shall be deemphasized in a variety of ways, including the use of projecting and recessed sections to reduce their apparent overall bulk and volume. Breaks in facades and roof lines should occur not more frequently than 20 feet, nor less frequently than 80 feet.

Pocopson Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 250-26, I, 8, e. ▶

Maximum Height

No building or other structure erected, altered, or enlarged in the TND-1 District shall exceed a height of four stories or 45 feet, whichever is less; provided, however, that no more than 15% of the total footprint of all buildings on any property in the TND-1 District may exceed three stories or a height of 35 feet; no such building shall exceed 45 feet in height.

East Brandywine Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 399-40, H. ▶

Build-to-line

Establish build-to lines to facilitate a sense of enclosure in mixed use areas and even along streets in lower-density areas. Build-to lines provide a method of creating visually interesting, pedestrian-oriented streetscapes by positioning buildings and entrances to the front of lots.

Kennett Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 240-1302, D, 8. ▶

Toolbox

Mixed-use Development ▶

Traditional Neighborhood Development ▶

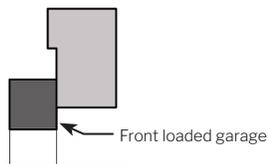
BUILDING CHARACTER

Deemphasis of garage doors and visibility of off-street parking

Ideally, garage doors should not directly face onto streets. For lots without access to an alley, garages should be located to the rear of the lot and behind the facade of the building to ensure the public streetscape emphasizes pedestrian scaled elements like porches, stoops, front doors, and landscaping. Limiting the visibility of off-street parking through side yard or rear yard parking and landscaping creates more attractive development appearance from the public right-of-way.

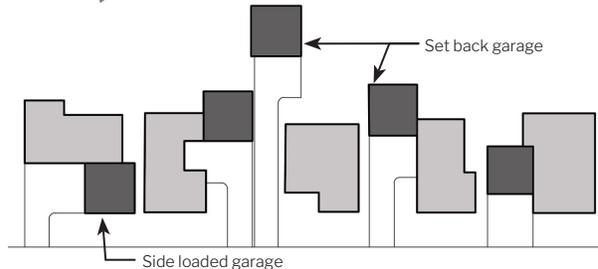
Garage Location and Orientation

NOT RECOMMENDED



Front loaded garages dominate building facades and create an unwelcoming pedestrian environment.

RECOMMENDED



Create an attractive street appearance

Garages set back from the front facade and garages with side entries are recommended. Garages recessed behind the front wall plane of the ground floor living area or covered porch allow the entry of a dwelling to become the prominent feature.

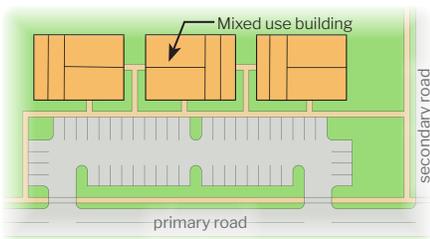


Recess garage doors

Alternatively, design the second floor to overhang beyond the garage door.

Off-street Parking Placement

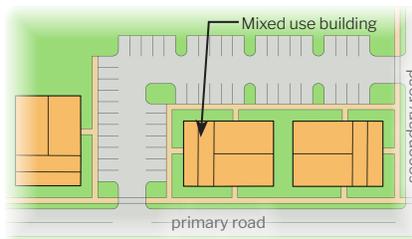
NOT RECOMMENDED



Place parking lots behind or to the side of buildings

Parking lots placed in front of buildings (left) reduces the pedestrian experience because the parking lot has to be crossed to get to the building entrance. Parking lots behind or to the side of buildings minimizes its impact on street frontage and pedestrian experience.

RECOMMENDED



Screen surface parking and service areas

For parking lots placed along a frontage area, a combination of landscaping and fencing or low walls should be used to effectively screen parked vehicles and service areas from public view.

Garage Location and Orientation

For single family dwellings and non-residential buildings, attached garages shall be side entry or rear entry only. Multi-family dwellings may have side entry garages only on end units. Interior units may have front facing garages, provided the garage door occupies no more than 40% of the unit width and that the garage front is set a minimum 5 feet behind the front building façade. Detached garages may have front facing doors, but shall be located behind the rear façade of the building.

East Pikeland Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 1504, 7, F. ▶

Landscaping

If parking areas are visible from the street, they shall be screened. A low wall or evergreen hedge of 36 and not greater than 42 inches in height shall be installed and permanently maintained at the street wall line to screen parking areas to help maintain streetscape character.

Charlestown Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 27-2203, M, 4. ▶

Toolbox

Form Based Codes and Zoning Ordinances ▶

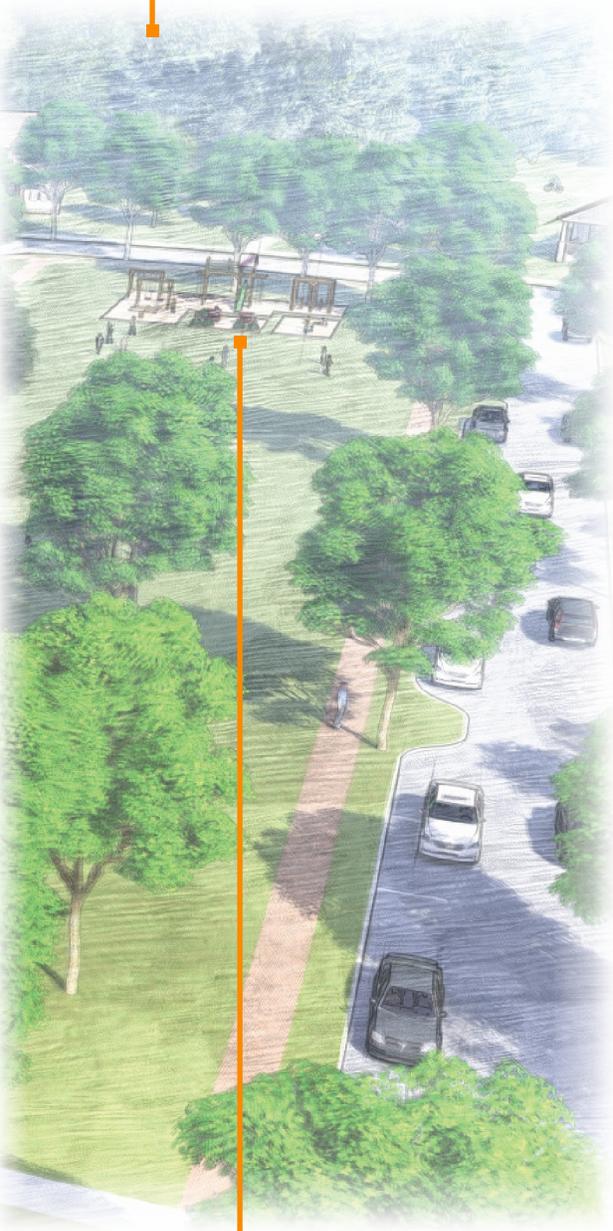
Extensive landscaping in parking lots

Effective buffering of non-residential uses next to homes



Green infrastructure, including innovative stormwater management control

■ **Interconnected
open space systems**



■ **Active recreation
facilities and central
greens in residential
developments**

SITE AMENITIES

Site amenities enable social interaction, create inviting, equitable, and accessible public spaces, and promote environmental sustainability. This section provides guidance on the site amenities that add to the function and vitality of the human environment.

SITE AMENITIES

Interconnected open space systems

Interconnected parks, nature preserves, woodlands, stream corridors, and other natural or restored lands provide benefits for people, wildlife, and the economy. Coordinating the continuity of these features between adjacent parcels maintains the effectiveness of natural systems such as stormwater and habitat, preserves a sense of place, and serves as a basis for trail corridors and other passive recreation opportunities.

Weave open space through development

Preserve existing natural features and provide space for passive and active recreation amenities as close to all residences as possible.

Connect to natural areas

Connect natural areas with neighborhood parks and trail networks.



Link development with open space

Design and layout streets to avoid large existing natural features. Design single-loaded frontage roads around open space to prevent the resource from becoming “privatized” in backyards.

Open space design standards

Areas designated as common open space shall be configured so as to create Township-wide open space networks and trails through coordinated site planning with adjacent developments, consistent with the most recent Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Plan, and the Township Comprehensive Plan.

Franklin Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 27-1611, 6, A, 1, f. ▶

Toolbox
Greenways ▶

Open Space Linkage Examples



Link open space on and between parcels

Link open space (woodlands, water, and other natural resources) on individual parcels to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of natural systems, such as stormwater management and wildlife habitat. Coordinate open space on adjacent parcels to create and connect to a community open space network.



- A. **Connect to regional open space**
Integrate development with regional green corridors to provide movement for people and wildlife, within and beyond a development.
- B. **Maintain open space buffer areas**
Protect existing open space character along roadways and minimize visual impacts of new development.
- C. **Create internal open space connections**
Provide multiple internal open space corridors for low key recreational routes through a development.

Woodland conservation

Woodlands and other natural vegetation that remain undisturbed shall interconnect with woodlands or wooded areas of adjacent properties, where they exist, to preserve continuous woodland corridors and allow for the normal movement, dispersion, and migration of wildlife. The applicant shall consider the impacts, in terms of functions and values to wildlife, of separating, dividing, or encroaching on wildlife travel corridors or extensive habitat areas, especially woodlands exceeding 10 acres in area.

North Coventry Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 370-29, B, 7, b, 3, e. ▶

SITE AMENITIES

Active recreation facilities and central greens in residential developments

Common open space in central locations of residential developments provides access to light and fresh air, a sense of openness, and space for recreation and relaxation. The open space should be usable (not for stormwater management and utilities only), in scale with the development, and accessible by all residents.



Centrally locate common open space

Locate open space in central locations, in addition to rear yard and buffer locations, as close to all residences as possible. Link with greenways leading to major recreation spaces.

Provide amenities

Include seating areas and other amenities such as tables, gardens, and playgrounds to facilitate interaction among neighbors.

Usable common open space

Areas designated as common open space shall be configured so as to provide a place that could be utilized by people in the form of a small park, green, garden, or other civic amenity.

Franklin Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 27-1611, 6, A, 1, d. ▶

Minimum open space for recreation

At least 10% of the minimum required open space area, but not less than one acre, shall be usable for active recreational uses, such as play fields, and shall have a finished grade of less than 5% slope.

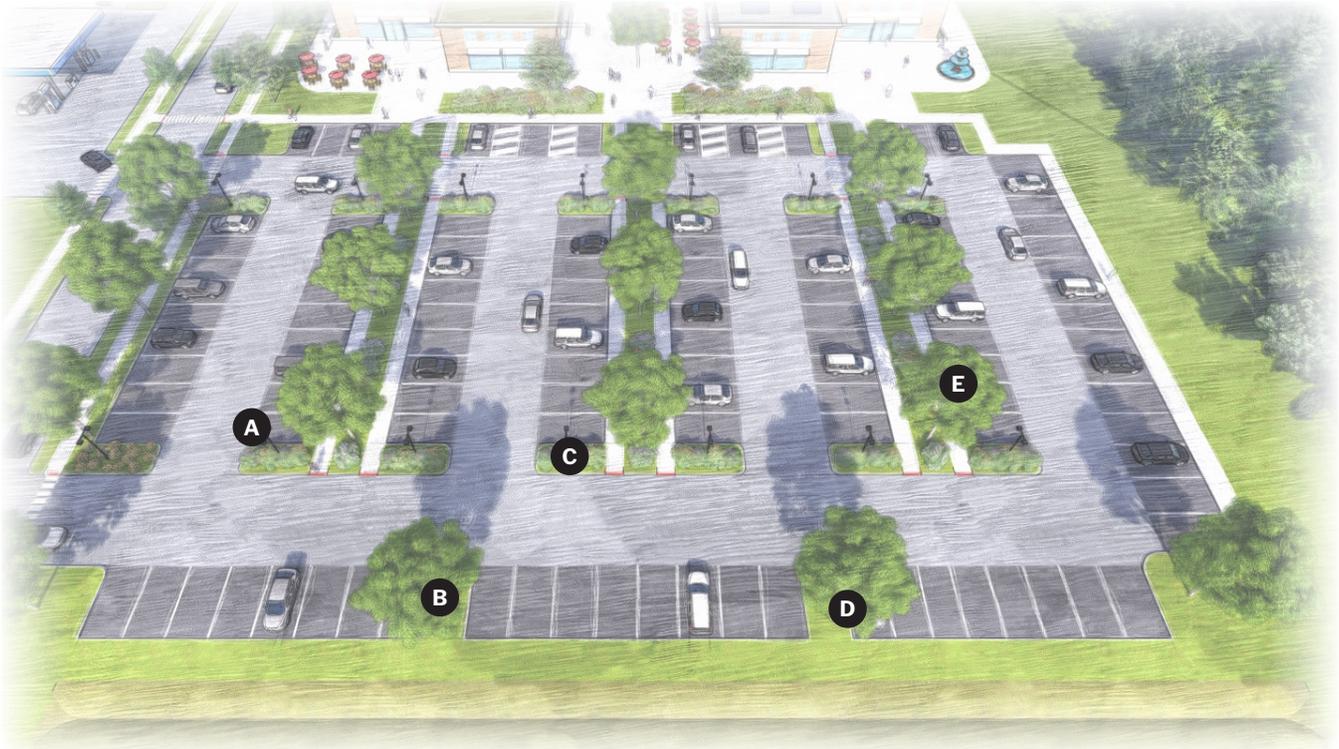
Franklin Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 27-1611, 6, B, 11. ▶

Toolbox
Community Gardens ▶

SITE AMENITIES

Extensive landscaping in parking lots

Providing good quality soil and generous landscaped areas in parking lots provides numerous benefits, including water absorption and filtration, cleaner air, shading, visual buffers, reduced noise, and a more attractive setting for users of the lot, users of nearby properties, and passersby.



- A. Landscape islands at ends of rows**
Terminate parking rows with a parking lot island or landscaped area.
- B. Landscape islands within long rows**
Provide a parking island between at least every 15 parking spaces.
- C. Landscape islands with generous width**
Provide parking lot islands that are the same dimension or greater than the parking stalls to support sufficient growing space.
- D. Strategically located shade trees**
Provide a minimum of one shade tree for every parking lot island or landscaped area. Plant large canopy trees to provide maximum shade. In addition, plant shrubs, ground cover, perennials, or ornamental grasses on a minimum of 60% of every parking lot island.
- E. Landscape medians in large lots**
Provide landscaped medians at least ten feet wide and at least every fourth row. Also, provide landscaped medians along major parking drives.

Parking lot landscaping

Landscaped islands provided at the end of parking space rows and between parking spaces shall be the length of the parking spaces in the row and at least nine feet in width. There shall be a landscape strip incorporated for at least every four rows of parking spaces. Such landscape strip shall run parallel to parking rows and should have a minimum width of 10 feet if there are parking spaces on both sides of the landscape strip, or seven feet if parking spaces are only on one side of the landscape strip.

Valley Township, Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, Section 22-603, 3, B&D. ▶

Toolbox

Parking Facilities: Design ▶

Native Plants and Controlling Invasive Species ▶

SITE AMENITIES

Green infrastructure, including innovative stormwater control

Green infrastructure design mimics nature and uses vegetation to help mitigate the impacts of impervious surfaces and urbanization. Integrating green infrastructure into the built environment helps preserve ecological function, manage stormwater, provide wildlife habitat, create a more beautiful landscape, and act as amenity for users.

Residential Applications



A. Naturalized detention and retention

Minimize the use of rip rap and other devices that do not appear natural in character. Use native plants instead of mowed lawn. Use naturalistic form for basin layouts.

B. Rain Gardens/Bioretenation

A system that manages and treats stormwater runoff in a shallow depression filled with a soil bed and planting materials to filter runoff. These facilities help provide greater site utilization and attractive landscape areas while protecting water quality.

Commercial Applications



C. Pervious pavement

Surfaces specially designed to allow water to soak through the pavement and into the ground. This replenishes aquifers, filters out pollutants, and helps keep street trees healthy.

D. Bioswales and vegetated swales

Linear bioretention systems used to partially treat water while also conveying flows to larger bioretention or other stormwater management systems.

E. Green roofs

Vegetated roofs that help detain, filter, and absorb rainfall. They protect the underlying roof, reduce solar gain during the summer months, and provide habitat for wildlife. If located on a lower roof of the building, they can also be a visual amenity to higher floors or adjacent developments.

Innovative stormwater management systems incentives

Allow building footprint or building height bonuses if installing innovative stormwater best management practices, such as green roof buildings capable of managing small storm events through rooftop landscaping or bioretention facilities and rain gardens as complementary landscape features.

Tredyffrin Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 208-71, C. ▶

Toolbox

Stormwater Management:
Best Management Practices ▶

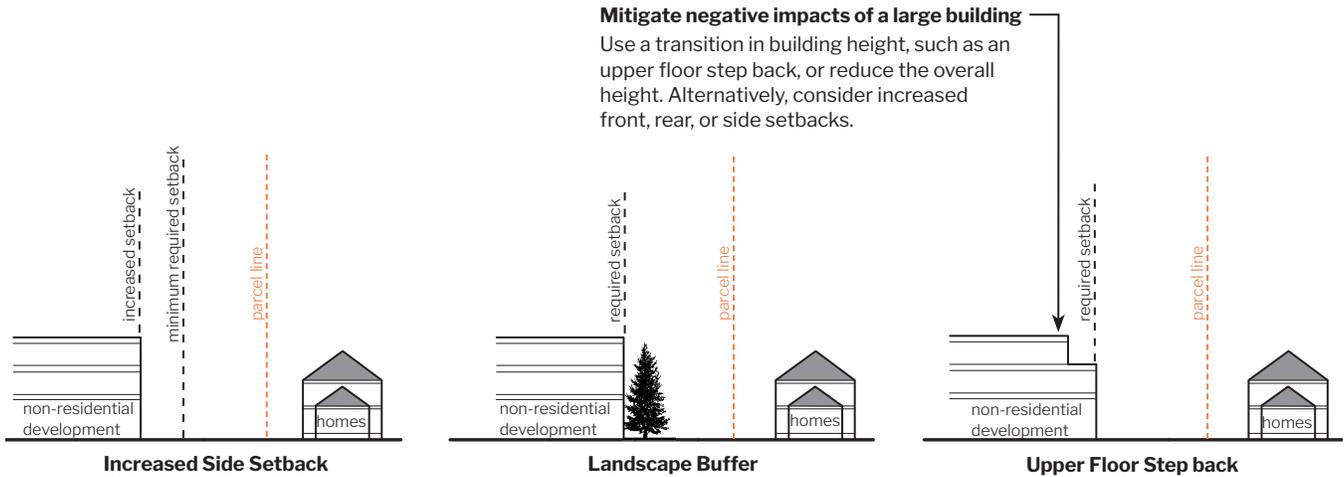
Green Roofs ▶

Street Trees ▶

SITE AMENITIES

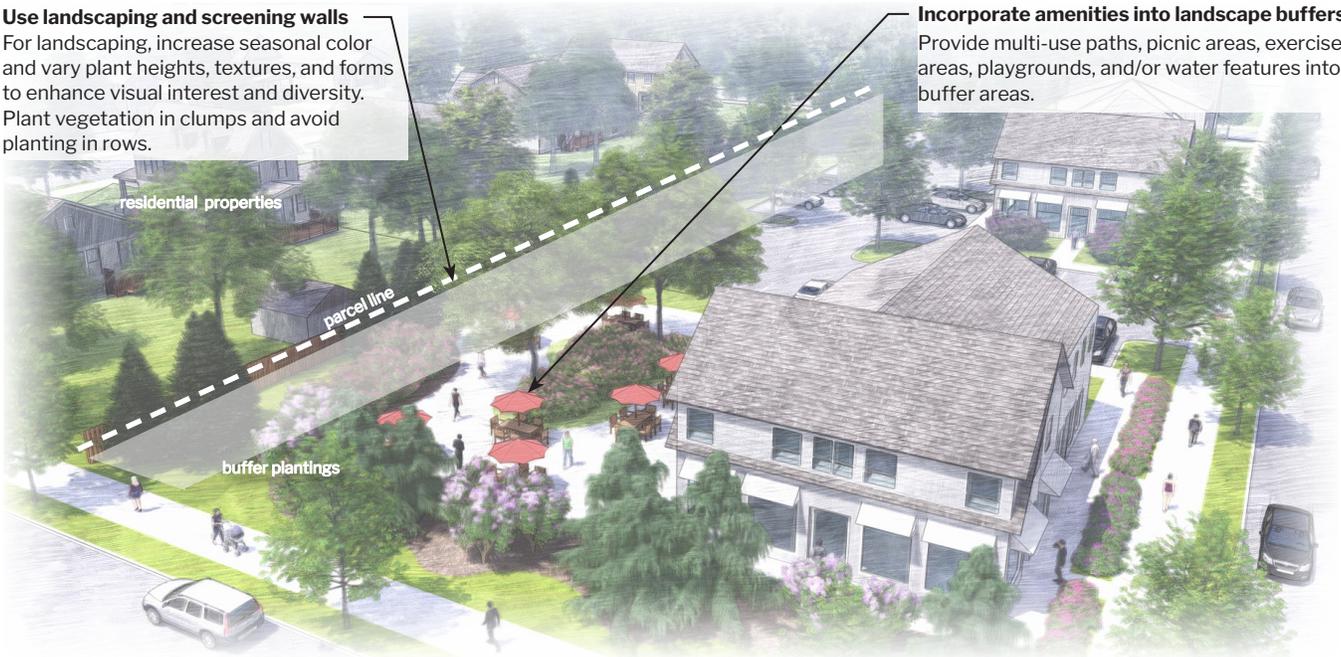
Effective buffering of non-residential uses next to homes

Significant contrast in scale and land use can occur between new non-residential and adjacent residential development. A sensitive transition between these types of properties minimizes potential negative impacts, such as looming walls, limited solar access, and disrupted established setback patterns.



Use landscaping and screening walls
For landscaping, increase seasonal color and vary plant heights, textures, and forms to enhance visual interest and diversity. Plant vegetation in clumps and avoid planting in rows.

Incorporate amenities into landscape buffers
Provide multi-use paths, picnic areas, exercise areas, playgrounds, and/or water features into buffer areas.



Landscaped buffers

There shall be a landscaped buffer along all property lines which abut a residential use or district boundary. Plantings within the buffer shall have a minimum depth of 30 feet. Earthen berms in buffer areas may be required where vehicle lights would shine onto residential properties.

Pocopson Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 250-30,A,4. ▶

Toolbox
In-fill Development ▶



Well designed and compatible vehicular and pedestrian access

Fully interconnected street system that discourages dead end streets

Extensive sidewalk and trail network

Interconnected parking lots and common driveways

Bus shelters with sidewalk access

■ Appropriate truck access to industrial uses

■ Limited parking in front of buildings



■ On-street parking

TRANSPORTATION

A safe, comfortable, and efficient transportation network incorporates design that reinforces walkability, enhances connectivity, and improves the quality of life for users. This section provides guidance on the design of elements supporting pedestrian safety, multimodal accessibility, and the use of public transportation.

TRANSPORTATION

Well designed and compatible vehicular and pedestrian access

Designing and operating roadways and rights of way with all users in mind creates a safer and more efficient transportation network. This means a network compatible among people of all ages and abilities traveling by vehicle, walking, biking, or public transportation. A Complete Streets approach provides traffic calming, and well designed multimodal infrastructure reduces motor vehicle-related crashes and pedestrian and bicyclist risk. This approach to providing safer places for physical activity also improves public health.

Provide direct pedestrian connections

Provide paved walkways from building entrances to primary sidewalks, parking areas, transit stops, and adjacent uses on the same lot.

Minimize interference with street traffic

Locate driveways as far away as possible from street intersections to minimize congestion and potential interference with the flow of street traffic.



Reduce potential conflicts at driveways

Minimize pedestrian exposure during street crossings by shortening the crossing distance and maximizing visibility of pedestrians before crossing.

Design streets according to expected traffic volume and type

Relate street design to traffic that will actually use the street and the expected long-term traffic demand. Streets with an expected high percentage of trucks or buses may require wider street lanes or longer pull-outs.

Traffic calming

Traffic calming techniques such as horizontal and vertical deflections in road geometry, speed tables, curb bulb-outs, and roundabouts shall be utilized.

East Brandywine Township, Zoning Ordinance, Appendix B, Section 3.7. ▶

Minimize curb cuts

Curb cuts along main accessways shall be minimized to the extent practical.

East Brandywine Township, Zoning Ordinance, Appendix B, Section 3.8. ▶

Crosswalks

Crosswalks shall be installed where sidewalks cross all cartways and at entrances to common parking areas.

East Brandywine Township, Zoning Ordinance, Appendix B, Section 3.8. ▶

Toolbox

Chester County Multimodal Handbook ▶

TRANSPORTATION

Fully interconnected street system that discourages dead end streets

A fully interconnected street system emphasizes pedestrian, vehicle, and transit mobility. Increased connectivity promotes better distribution of vehicular traffic and offers the potential for more trips by walking, bicycling, or using transit because shorter travel distances can be created by linking sidewalks or streets to destinations. A fully connected street system also encourages slow, cautious driving since drivers encounter cross traffic at frequent intervals. In addition, a connected street system increases the efficiency of deliveries and services like snow plowing, street cleaning, and trash collection.

Limit the size of blocks

Ideally residential blocks should be no longer than 660 feet (one-eighth mile). Frequent intersections provides at least two means of access to a residence.



Design streets based on local conditions

Street layouts should always respond to local conditions such as topography, watercourses, greenways, and existing street systems on adjacent properties. Preserve the natural drainage features on the landscape as much as possible. Plan for future connections to abutting properties with sensitivity towards existing natural resources.



Limit the use of cul-de-sacs

Seek alternatives to disconnected cul-de-sacs with layouts using loop streets and common greens. If cul-de-sacs are used, ensure their layout accommodates future connections to abutting properties.

Official map

Ensure that development is compatible with and supportive of public goals through the use of an official map. Guide improvements such as connecting and improving the local street network, including widening, narrowing, and extensions.

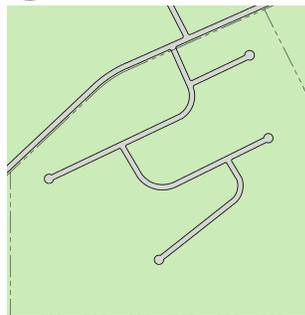
West Whiteland Township, Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, Section 281-23, A. ▶

Street layout

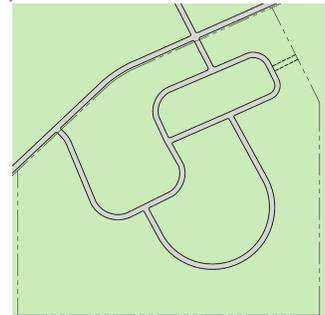
The village shall be designed with an interconnected and broadly rectilinear pattern of blocks and streets and alleys, bikeways, brick or concrete brick paver sidewalks and trails, facilitating safe and convenient pedestrian, bicycle and motor vehicle circulation.

Pocopson Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 250-26, I, 2. ▶

NOT RECOMMENDED



RECOMMENDED



Provide varied routes and cross connections

Street systems should have multiple connections and routes of travel.

Toolbox

Roadway Connectivity ▶

TRANSPORTATION

Extensive sidewalk and trail network

Sidewalks and trails provide safe transportation options between local destinations and reduce traffic congestion and pollution by providing an alternate means to vehicular travel. Sidewalks and trails also provide enjoyable recreational opportunities that encourage healthy lifestyles and enhance the quality of life within a community. New development should help create a more active and inter-connected environment.

Create a continuous pedestrian network

Install and maintain sidewalks on both sides of primary corridors.

Design trails for visibility and access to increase use

Locate trails so users can see and be seen by others to increase safety.



Create highly visible crosswalks

Install and maintain crosswalks across all curb cuts, driveways, intersections, or breaks in a sidewalk network.

Promote a pedestrian-friendly environment

Create pedestrian gathering areas with shade trees, plantings, and benches on public or private land.

Sidewalk standards

Sidewalks of five (5) feet minimum width shall be provided on both sides of all streets, within the road right-of-way. Where existing buildings or other permanent conditions prevent installation of the minimum sidewalk width, the required sidewalk shall be provided to the extent possible, which may consist of the provision of an alternate pedestrian route through a property.

East Pikeland Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 1105, 2, A. ▶

Trail plan implementation

The Township Trail Plan shall be implemented through the construction of trails and required connections.

East Pikeland Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 1105, 2, D. ▶

Toolbox

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities: Design ▶

Chester County Multimodal Handbook ▶

TRANSPORTATION

Interconnected parking lots and common driveways

Interconnected parking lots in office and commercial areas help minimize traffic congestion and maximize convenience for drivers. Common driveways can improve traffic and pedestrian safety and reduce potential traffic congestion but must take into account sufficient distances from street intersections and sight distances.



Connect to adjacent lots

Planning for future connections to adjacent properties allows for drivers to move from one property to the next and reduce traffic on adjacent streets.

Utilize common driveways

Design for common driveways when driveways are closer than 50 feet apart.

Shared parking incentives

Permeable surface shared parking shall not count toward allowable impervious cover. Nonresidential uses may provide six (6) parking spaces for off-site uses in lieu of each 1,000 square feet of courtyard space.

East Pikeland Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 1105, 4, D. ▶

Shared parking arrangements

Newly created adjacent lots shall have shared driveways and/or access cross easements.

East Pikeland Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 1105, 2, E. ▶

Common driveways

Each use shall have not more than two accessways to any one public street for each 300 feet of frontage. Where possible, access to parking areas shall be provided by a common service driveway or minor street in order to avoid direct access on a major street.

Tredyffrin Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 208-102, C, 1. ▶

Toolbox

Chester County Multimodal Handbook ▶

TRANSPORTATION

Bus shelters with sidewalk access

Bus shelters improve the public transportation experience by providing riders with a safe waiting area, protection from the sun and inclement weather, and service information. The shelter structure also increases the visibility of bus stops.



Site bus stops in highly visible locations
 Locate stops near supporting land uses, community destinations, and important intersections. Stops may be needed on either side of the roadway or intersection to provide for access to each direction.

Create inviting shelters
 All bus shelters should have a roof and be enclosed on three sides. Integrate lighting, maps, and schedules as part of the design.

Provide sidewalk connections
 Bus stops should have paved sidewalks with direct access to adjacent development and parking lots.

Enhance or facilitate access

Enhance or facilitate access to all existing public transportation stops on the tract including replacing existing stops with SEPTA's cooperation. If the development parcel can accommodate a bus pull-off lane without affecting interior project layout and public sidewalk location, and SEPTA agrees, then the pull-off land shall be built in but shall not be counted when calculating building or parking setbacks, impervious coverage ratios, and minimum planting buffers.

East Pikeland Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 2604, 7. ▶

Bus shelter location

Determine locations following consultation with the public transit provider. Require shelters to be located far enough away from streets, access drives, driveways, and intersections to maintain a clear sight triangle for drivers of vehicles using those thoroughfares.

Tredyffrin Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 208-122. ▶

Toolbox

Transit Stops and Centers ▶

SEPTA Bus Stop Design Guidelines ▶

TRANSPORTATION

Limited parking in front of buildings

Locating parking areas at the side or rear of commercial, industrial, or institutional uses improves the pedestrian experience along public frontages, fits with historic and residential characteristics better, and improves the appearance of a development viewed from the public right-of-way. When site constraints prevent positioning parking at the side or rear, parking lots in the front should have attractive landscaping to screen views of parked vehicles from the public right-of-way.



Consider alternatives to front yard parking

Parked vehicles should not dominate the view of a building from the street. Parking areas placed to the side or rear of the building create space for additional front yard landscaping and a more attractive appearance.

Off-street parking

Off-street parking for nonresidential buildings, townhouses, and multifamily dwellings shall be located at the rear of buildings and accessed only by alleys or rear access lanes. Parking at the side of buildings shall be set back at least as far as the front facade of the principal building and shall be screened.

North Coventry Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 370-34.4, J, 5, a, 1. ▶

Rear side parking incentive

Authorize an increase in the maximum size of a building if at least 40% of the required and provided parking is placed to the rear of the building, so that the view from street frontage or, in the case of multiple street frontages, the principal frontage, is shielded by the building and landscaped areas.

East Marlborough Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 803, A, 3. ▶

Reserve parking

Allow developments to reduce the amount of parking they must build initially to help reduce initial construction costs, limit the creation of impervious surfaces, and increase opportunities for landscaping. Require that an appropriate area be set aside for the reserve parking in case the municipality determines that this parking is needed after all.

East Whiteland Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 200-71. ▶

Toolbox

Parking Facilities: Policy ▶

Parking Facilities: Design ▶

TRANSPORTATION

On-street parking

The allocation of on-street parking on lower speed roadways, such as residential streets, reduces the need for off-street parking, calms traffic, and provides a buffer between pedestrians and moving vehicles. Consideration of on-street parking may require the study of operating speeds, traffic volume, drainage concerns, sight lines, and available right-of-way.



Define on-street parallel parking

Create curbed bump-outs at intersections and delineate parking spaces with striping.

Promote short-term parking near businesses

In business districts, or on adjacent streets in residential areas where adequate parking exists, encourage short-term parking and turnover.

On-street parking

On-street parking shall be provided for all dwelling units having rear access from an alley and for all dwelling units having an individual driveway less than 50 feet in length. On-street parking spaces along the front lot line shall count toward the minimum number of parking spaces required for the use on that lot.

North Coventry Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 370-34.4, J, 5, b, 1 and 7. ▶

Insulate pedestrian traffic from vehicular traffic

On-street parking bays shall have bulb-outs to widen the sidewalk to provide opportunities for sidewalk cafes in commercial areas, for street trees, and for pedestrian plazas.

Charlestown Township, Zoning Ordinance, Section 27-2203, J, 4. ▶

Toolbox

Parking Facilities: Policy ▶

Parking Facilities: Design ▶

TRANSPORTATION

Appropriate truck access to industrial uses

Industrial uses in the Suburban landscape contribute to the regional economy and strengthen local communities. Many suburban locations offer access to highway interchanges and larger available suburban campuses and facilities can more easily accommodate large trucks. A balanced truck access and movement strategy is needed to ensure community character is maintained along with safety of walking, biking, or other active transportation modes.



A. Design travel lanes for truck and multimodal access

Travel lane designs should consider the impacts to all users, and the prevalence of each user on the roadway, including bicyclists, passenger vehicles, heavy trucks, buses, and emergency vehicles.

B. Accommodate truck turning

Design right and left turn radii for freight mobility while providing pedestrian safety, convenience, and comfort. Avoid inadequate curb-return radii where large vehicles frequently turn to avoid having trucks regularly swing up on top of the curb where pedestrians wait to cross the road.

C. Improve intersection approach configurations

Balance the design of turn lanes for reduced vehicular delay with the design of safe pedestrian movement.

D. Truck routes and wayfinding systems

Freight movement and protection of residential areas can be facilitated by the designation of a truck route network and wayfinding signage identifying the most direct paths to major highways. Truck routes should be designated outside of or on a minimum number of streets in walkable areas to reduce the impact of large turning radii. Ensure consistency and advanced notice to drivers when utilizing truck restriction signage.

Vehicular access

Vehicular access shall be arranged as to minimize danger and congestion along adjoining roads and to avoid the creation of nuisances to nearby properties. Access drives used by trucks shall only intersect with collector or arterial roads.

Upper Leacock Township, PA, Zoning Ordinance, Section 453.G. ▶

Internal circulation

Driveways and drive aisles shall be designed with adequate turning radii to allow tractor-trailers to complete turning maneuvers within their designated lanes.

Lower Macungie Township, PA, Zoning Ordinance, Section 27-2406, MM, 5. ▶

Acceptable routes

Truck drivers shall be instructed regarding acceptable routes between the facility and the nearest expressway with respect to the class of vehicle accessing the facility.

Lower Macungie Township, PA, Zoning Ordinance, Section 27-2406, MM, 6. ▶

Toolbox

Chester County Multimodal Handbook ▶

Adaptive Reuse

The process of repurposing existing buildings for viable new uses and modern day functions, rather than demolishing them. Reuse allows for a building's continued use and helps it remain a viable community asset. For more information: [Chesco Planning, Adaptive Reuse](#) ►

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

A federal Act that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in regard to employment, transportation, public accommodations, communications, and access to state and local government programs and services. For more information: [U.S. Department of Labor](#) ►

Best Management Practice

A technique to most appropriately manage natural resources on a site, based on unique site conditions, planning, and engineering requirements. A BMP involves site development design that incorporates the most suitable technique, or combination of techniques, to best manage the resource.

For more information: [StormwaterPA](#) ►

Brownfields

Abandoned or underutilized industrial and commercial sites that have, or may potentially have, some environmental contamination. Brownfields are most often located in developed areas with existing utilities and transportation facilities. Because of environmental problems and costs associated with clean up, brownfields are often passed over for development while large investments are made to convert greenfields into industrial and commercial uses. (See also Greyfields) For more information: [Chesco Planning, Redevelopment](#) ►

Complete Streets

A transportation approach where the design enables safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. For more information: [National Complete Streets Coalition](#) ►

Greyfields

Economically obsolescent, outdated, or underutilized retail commercial lands such as older retail malls or strip centers that no longer attract adequate investment or tenants. Greyfields typically are not environmentally contaminated, but may contain older types of infrastructure that needs to be replaced or significantly updated. (See also Brownfields) For more information: [Chesco Planning, Redevelopment](#) ►

Growth Area, Designated Growth Area

A region described in a comprehensive plan that includes and surrounds a city, borough or village, and within which: residential and mixed use development is permitted or planned for at densities of one unit to the acre or more; commercial, industrial, and institutional uses are permitted or planned for; and public infrastructure services are provided or planned. In *Landscapes3*, this area is comprised of the Urban Center, Suburban Center, Suburban, and Rural Center landscapes. For more information: [Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code](#) ►

Multimodal

Involving several modes of transportation, including vehicular, pedestrian, bicyclist, public transit, and ride hailing services. For more information: [Chesco Planning, Transportation Planning](#) ▶

Multi-use Trail

Facilities commonly used by bicyclists, pedestrians, and other non-motorized modes of travel such as equestrians, cross country skiers, rollerbladers, baby strollers, and those utilizing wheelchairs. Multi-use trails are primarily found within state parks, county or municipal parks, or as regional trails such as Chester County's Chester Valley and Struble trails. For more information: [Chesco Planning, Transportation Planning](#) ▶

Smart Growth

An approach to development that encourages a mix of building types and uses, diverse housing and transportation options, development within existing neighborhoods, and community engagement. For more information: [Smart Growth America](#) ▶

Universal Design

Process and associated features that remove barriers to access and seek to create buildings and public spaces that are inherently accessible to all people, including the elderly and people with disabilities. For more information: [Government Services Administration](#) ▶

Walkability

A measure of how friendly a place or area is to walking. Walkability is an important concept in sustainable urban design. For more information: [Smart Growth America](#) ▶



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