

# URBAN COMMUNITY

# DESIGN GUIDE

## *Chester County*



A COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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# URBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE

for

## CHESTER COUNTY

A COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

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*No rural  
community,  
no suburban  
community,  
can ever  
possess the  
distinctive  
qualities that  
city dwellers  
have for  
centuries  
given to the  
world.*

Agnes  
Repplier,  
1937

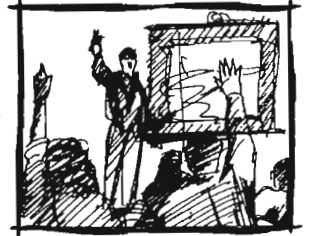


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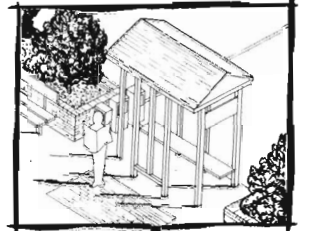
Purpose of design guide,  
process of workshops,  
design guide series.



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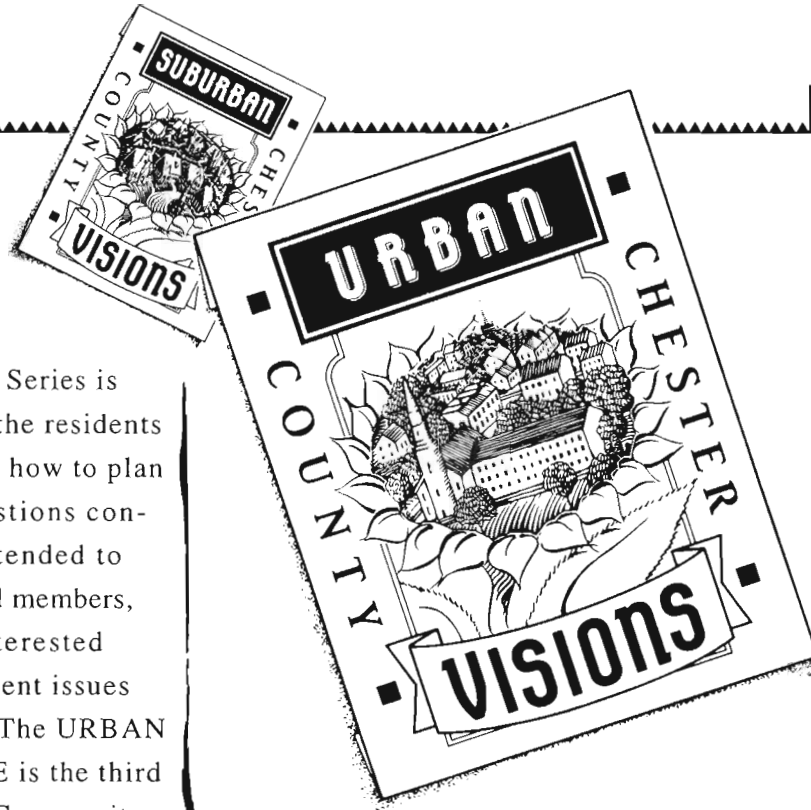
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List of participants,  
survey results,  
slide images,  
reference.





The Community Design Guide Series is part of a process that assists the residents of Chester County in rethinking how to plan our municipalities. The suggestions contained in this document are intended to assist landowners, planning board members, elected officials, and other interested citizens in addressing development issues that face the urban community. The URBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE is the third of three such documents in the Community Design Guide Series. The series is a continuation of the planning effort initiated by the County Commissioners in 1992 with the successful Year 2000, Back to the Future. Equally important, the Design Guide series serves as a component of the County Comprehensive Plan completed and adopted in 1996.



**The Community Design Guide Series is:**

**RURAL COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE**



**SUBURBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE**



**URBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE**

**PURPOSE**

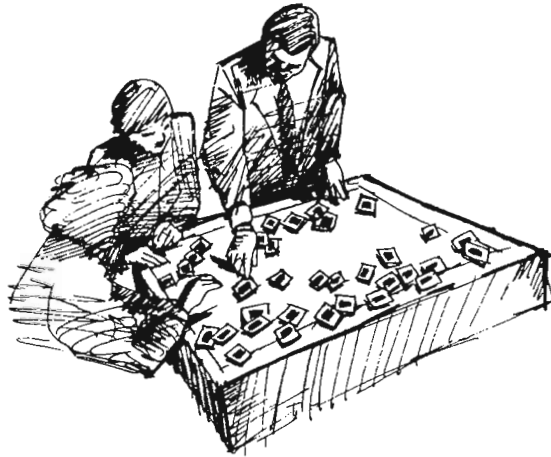
The Community Design Guides serve several useful purposes. They attempt to define the various community characteristics found in Chester County. This document focuses on the character of our urban areas, which include our 15 boroughs, the City of Coatesville, and those portions of neighboring townships that are adjacent to the boroughs and the City of Coatesville.

The Design Guide provides the mechanisms for preserving and enhancing those visual preferences that are positive and improve or correct those images that are considered negative. The Design Guide serves as a planning instrument that can be used by elected officials, municipal planning officials, citizens' groups and other organizations committed to enhancing the image of urban Chester County.

## INTRODUCTION

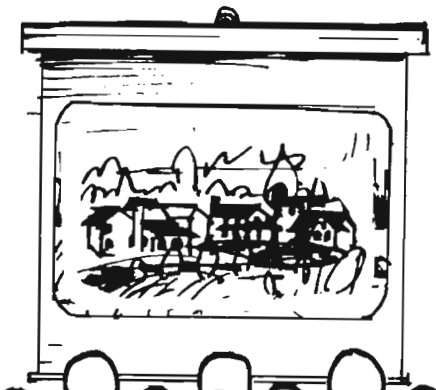
### PROCESS

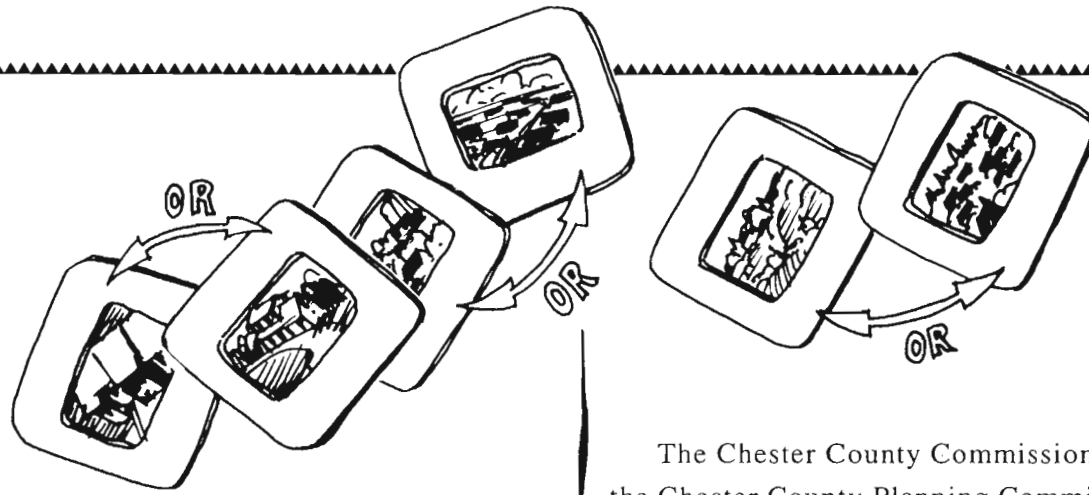
**V**isions for Urban Chester County was initiated by the County Commissioners with invitations sent to over 200 residents, representing the urban portion of the County, and asking them to participate in two workshops. Those individuals who desired to contribute returned an acceptance card and made suggestions for issues that deserved discussion. This process developed the working group and set in motion the remainder of the program.



The fundamental approach used to develop the Urban Community Design Guide was to present slide images to representatives of urban Chester County and record their preferences for the visual image for that portion of the County. After analyzing the preferences, design and implementation recommendations were created.

The Chester County Planning Commission staff took photographs of the issues affecting the physical environment. A series of 160 slide images was produced for the first workshop entitled Urban Vision Survey. Over 50 people attended the three workshops in September 1995, held at the Lukens ARC facility in South Coatesville, the Government Services Center in West Goshen Township and the Phoenixville Senior Center. Participants ranked each slide image numerically based on preference, appropriateness for Chester County, and general impressions on the content of the slide image.





The same participants assembled in October 1995 for the second workshop entitled Urban Visions Evaluation to view a selection of the slides. The attendees were asked to identify the specific components of the slide images that compelled them to rate the slide as they did. Average scores were provided for each of the selected slides as a means of stimulating discussion. The Chester County Planning Commission staff recorded the extensive conversation offered by the participants.

The Chester County Commissioners and the Chester County Planning Commission would like to thank the participants for contributing their time and knowledge for the benefit of our community. Without your efforts, this document would not be possible.



The URBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE is the product of the considerable effort expended by the participants to articulate issues and preferences for urban

### *Chester County*



Chester County. This guide is to be used by a variety of decision makers. It is also an information source for *Landscapes*, the new County Comprehensive Plan.

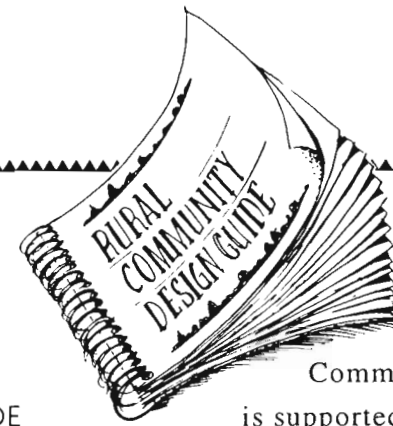
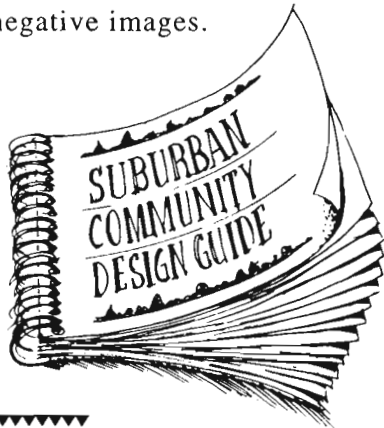
The URBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE will be distributed to all workshop participants, elected and appointed officials in urban municipalities, other agencies involved with urban Chester County, and those interested in securing the urban quality of life in the County.

## INTRODUCTION



### FORMAT

All three Community Design Guides have a similar format with adjustments made to accommodate each community type. A selected group of the slide images used in the Urban Visions Evaluation is included along with the preference rating. A brief description of the salient issues accompanies the image. Both negative and positive images are discussed with the focus on preserving the characteristics of the positive images and offering corrective measures to improve the negative images.



The URBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE addresses:

- ◆ The issues expressed by the Urban Community representatives.
- ◆ The positive elements of the images.
- ◆ Techniques suggested to improve the negative elements of the images.
- ◆ Recommendations for improving or enhancing urban design.
- ◆ Design examples to convey desired design components.
- ◆ Discussion of potential relationships among a variety of urban designs.
- ◆ Suggestions for implementing the vision for urban Chester County.

The body of the Community Design Guide is supported by a Glossary. The

Glossary contains not only definitions of key words and terms, but examples of urban design tools for enhancing the urban image of the County. Words that appear underlined and in italics notify the reader that a definition and/or a design option is available and can be found in the Glossary.

An Appendix is included and provides the names of those who participated in the Urban Visions Workshops, highlights of Preferences and Negative Perceptions, the participants' response to a 20-question survey, a copy of the Visual Preference Survey form used to develop the urban visions; and a bibliography/additional references list.

## IMPLEMENTING THE PREFERRED DESIGN FEATURES

The URBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE reflects the preferences of the urban community. The purpose of recording the preferences in a Design Guide is to assist municipalities in retaining desired preferences and adding newly articulated design features.

Municipalities may need to take additional steps to ensure that preferred design features are established. The following is a suggested list of steps that may need to be taken:

### 1. Careful identification of what is worth protecting.

Whether it is a street tree protection ordinance or a historic streetscape, the essential first step is to carefully identify what the community wants to protect.

### 2. Careful tailoring to fit local circumstances.

Municipalities need to be careful to tailor ordinances that make sense for their community. Municipal officials need to also work with the public, professionals, and business interests to determine what is appropriate and desired for the community. Economic impacts need to be addressed and incentives considered where applicable.

### 3. Explicit, detailed review standards.

Ordinances should give sufficient guidance to those using them. For example, the phrase “new construction must be compatible with existing development” may appear in an ordinance. More guidance should be given to define “compatibility” in terms of height, bulk, materials, roof pitch and similar considerations.





## INTRODUCTION

### **4. Municipal officials need adequate resources.**

Many municipalities in the urban community do not have a full-time staff to research and create design standards. Outside help, either through technical assistance or design documents, should be made available to municipal officials when creating design review standards.

### **5. Visual aids and illustrated guidebooks.**

Municipalities should prepare succinct summaries that provide a quick overview of the aesthetic regulatory process, how it works, what the key points are, and other practical pointers that are difficult to derive from reading an ordinance. Written review standards should be illustrated, to make clear what the community desires.

### **6. Integration with other planning goals and regulations.**

Care should be taken to coordinate new regulations among other municipal ordinances. For example, certain types of design standards may only be effective in areas with a historic designation and oversight by a local Historic Architectural Review Board.

*This document should be used as a source of information to direct municipal officials to the ordinance, plan or process that needs to be updated. The intent of the **URBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE** is to ensure that new development is compatible with the existing character of the community and the overall quality of life is improved.*

## RESIDENTIAL STREETSAPES

**"A variety of facades, porches, adequate setbacks, "traditional" architecture, and mature landscaping make a streetscape inviting."**



Slide #7, Evaluation +5.88

These two images of *streetscapes* in neighborhoods of detached single family residential structures were both among the highest rated images in the workshops. When discussing these images, however, participants expressed a clear preference for the softer, more mature streetscape in slide #7 over the image in the newer streetscape as seen in slide #8.

Slide #7 rated as high as any residential area shown. Participants particularly liked the variety of unique *facades*, the inviting porches, the *setbacks* from the sidewalk to the porches, the "traditional" architecture, the softening effect of the mature landscaping, and the "*pedestrian friendliness*" of this streetscape. There was a consensus that there is a

sense of "calmness" to this streetscape, largely resulting from a combination of the setback of the structures from the street and sidewalk, the pervasive greenery, and the architecture, which is varied but of a common theme. The spacing between the sidewalk and the porches seemed to be a key - the porches are close enough to the sidewalk to be inviting and personal, but distant enough to provide a sense of privacy. The mature shrubs in front of the porches accentuated this sense of privacy.

Although the image in slide #8 rated very positively, participants found a number of negatives when discussing it. There was an acknowledgement that streets like this "have a place in the urban setting" and participants liked the diversity of facades and thought the buildings were attractive and well designed. Nonetheless, there were a number of negative points raised, mostly dealing with the transition from the sidewalk to the buildings, particularly in comparison to the image to the left.

RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING  
RESIDENTIAL  
STREETSCAPES



Slide #8, Evaluation +4.20

Participants expressed that the pedestrian environment in slide #8 was too “crowded,” with porches too close to the sidewalk, too little *buffering* between the public sidewalk and private porches, and inadequate lawn area and landscaping. Many said that the proximity of the sidewalk to the porch would be uncomfortable for both pedestrians and residents. Pedestrians would “feel like they were intruding” and residents would not feel any sense of privacy on their own porches. It was acknowledged that the vertical separation between the porch and sidewalk would partially alleviate this sense of intrusion, but not nearly as much as the combination of horizontal and vertical separation in the image to the left. Although it was suggested that the maturation of the

landscaping in this image would provide additional buffering in the future, there was a concern that the landscaping area was too small to support plants large enough to create a true sense of privacy. There was also a concern that the porches were not deep enough to be truly useful to the residents, regardless of the relationship to the sidewalk. It was noted that the houses in this image are too big for the relatively small lots on which they are located.

A commonly accepted design principal holds that to create a truly *human scale* urban environment, there should be a ratio between the height of facades and the distance between opposing facades of between 1:2 and 1:4. While both of these images appear to be within that “human scale” range and both rated very highly, the discussion of these two images indicates that residents of urban Chester County are generally more comfortable with single family residential environments that are closer to the 1:4 ratio (slide #7) than the 1:2 ratio (slide #8).

- ◆ Design homes with a common theme but a variety of traditional *architectural styles*.
- ◆ Create an approximately 1:4 ratio of setback from facade height to distance between facades.
- ◆ Design porches and other amenities so that they are inviting and functional.
- ◆ Provide setbacks adequate for mature landscaping to create a buffer from sidewalk and street.

***“Architectural design, materials used, colors, offset building facades, and buffers between parking areas and buildings, are all important.”***



Slide #11, Evaluation +3.84

While there are a number of fundamental similarities between the Townhouse developments shown in these two images, slide #11 had a very positive rating, in contrast to slide #15, which rated negatively. The differences between the two primarily had to do with design details.

In slide #11, *design elements* identified as positives included the “quasi-*Georgian*” architecture, the materials used (brick facade, copper roofing, etc.), the slightly off-white color of the shutters and trim, the offset of the building facade, the sizing and variety of windows, the setback between the street and the building, and the mature and tasteful landscaping. Keeping the parking a distance from the front of the building was seen as a positive, as was

*parallel parking*, which does not cause car lights to shine into windows. The image was seen as *pedestrian friendly*, despite the lack of a buffer between the sidewalk and the curb.

The only negative comment expressed about this image was the concern that to make the front of this building as attractive as it is, “all of the stuff we don’t want to see is probably dumped in the back.” While there is an acceptance that the areas behind buildings do not generally need to be as attractive as the fronts, these areas should not be treated as wastelands because they are also visible and are part of the urban environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING  
TOWNHOUSE  
DEVELOPMENT



Slide #15, Evaluation -1.24

There were no positive comments on slide #15. The primary problem appears to be the location and configuration of the *parking area* immediately adjacent to the building. There is little transition between the blacktop and the living units - the minimal landscaping and fencing was seen as an inadequate buffer. One participant indicated “it looks like they have a macadam front lawn.” The grade separation, with the parking lot higher than the ground floor, is counterproductive - causing

automobile headlights to shine directly into windows at night. While this problem could be somewhat alleviated by moving the parking stalls to the other side of the parking lot, participants said the perceived intrusion of the parking lot into living units would remain a significant problem.

The sidewalk in the image to the right was seen as an unusable island. The minimal *planting strips* on either side of it do not provide adequate protection from the street or parking lot. This image appeared more densely developed to participants than the image to the left even though actual *densities* are fairly similar. The design and choice of building materials was also criticized, with the vinyl siding looking “cheap,” and participants seeing “no continuity between the bottom and top floors.”

- ◆ Provide traditional architectural design details.
- ◆ Provide offset between building facades.
- ◆ Provide separation and/or buffer between parking in front of building and the facade.
- ◆ Provide a wide sidewalk and a planting strip to buffer pedestrians from traffic.

***“Front  
facades are  
usually more  
attractive than  
rear facades.”***



Slide #20, Evaluation +3.40

The two slides pictured on these pages represent the front and back of the same building. The front of the building (slide #20) rated very positively and all comments about this image were positive. The back of the building (slide #17) received a strongly negative rating and several negative comments were offered, as well as suggestions for improving the rear parking area. The participants accepted that there is often a trade-off between form and function and that the rear of buildings frequently cannot be as attractive as fronts, particularly with modern parking requirements. Nonetheless, participants stated that this rear parking area could be significantly improved.

Positive comments on the front of the building concerned both the transition between the street and building and the transition between the first floor and upper floors of the building. *Street trees*, a wide sidewalk, the outdoor cafe, awnings, and an atrium were features cited as making the sidewalk environment an attractive and inviting *public space*. While some participants were somewhat negative about the adjacent *on-street parking*, seeing it as no better than a necessary evil, others expressed that it provided a necessary buffer from automobile traffic. One noted that the parking is “better than speeding cars next to pedestrian traffic.”





Slide #17, Evaluation -3.73

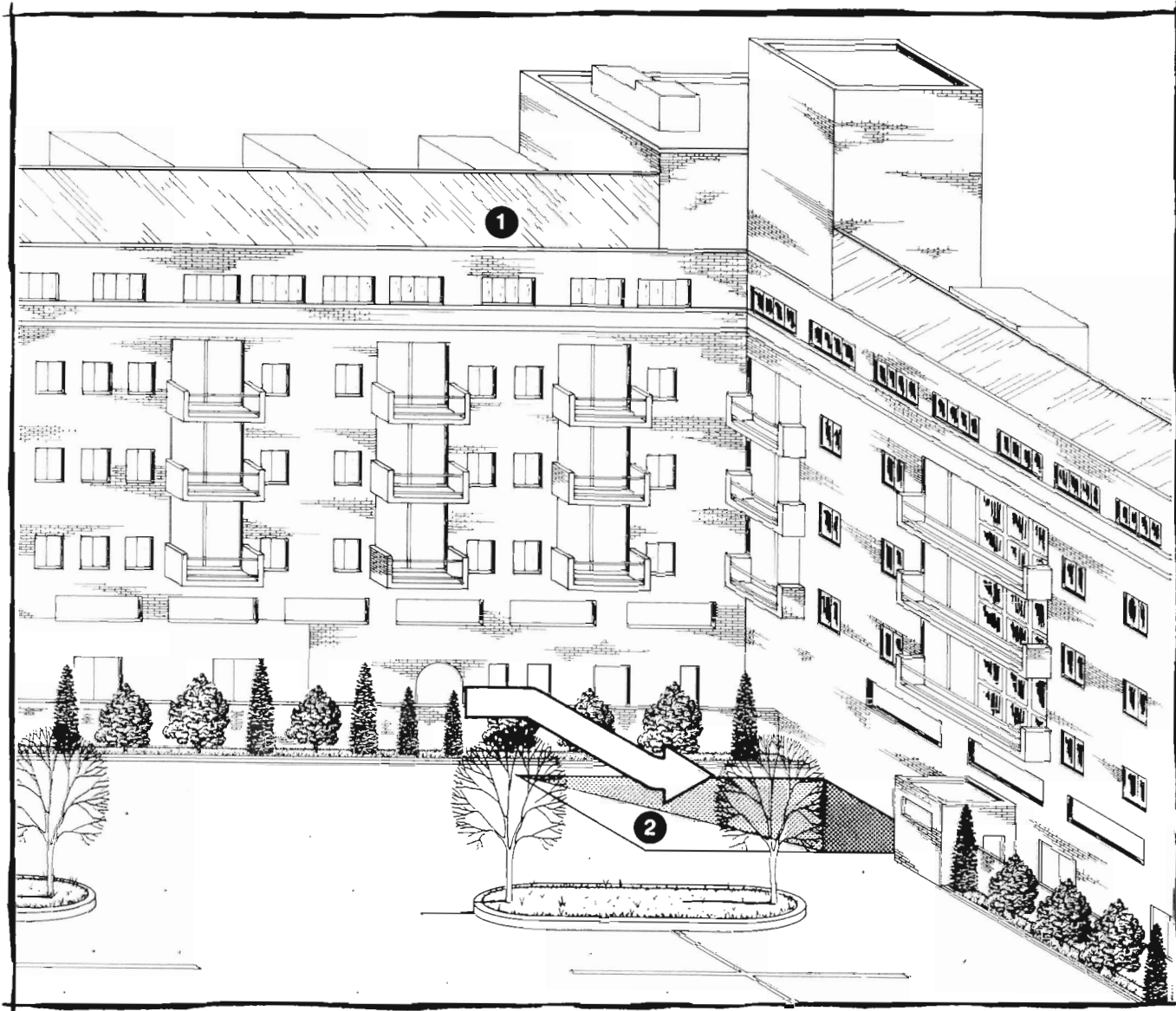
As the eye moves up from the sidewalk level, participants cited the awnings and the offset facade with a combination of bay windows, flat windows, railings, and balconies as attractive elements that kept the upper floors of the building interesting and attractive. The mix of commercial and also seen as a positive.

The parking area behind the building, however, drew a number of critical

observations, despite the understanding that “parking lots are a necessary evil.” This area was described as “stark,” “cluttered,” “disorderly,” “burned out,” “monotonous,” and “factory like.” In terms of the relationship of the building to the parking area, participants noted that the building “looks taller than it did in the front” and that inconsistent building materials and the *unscreened* mechanical equipment on the roofline made the building look industrial.

A number of suggestions were made on how to improve an area like this. These are incorporated into the accompanying sketches.

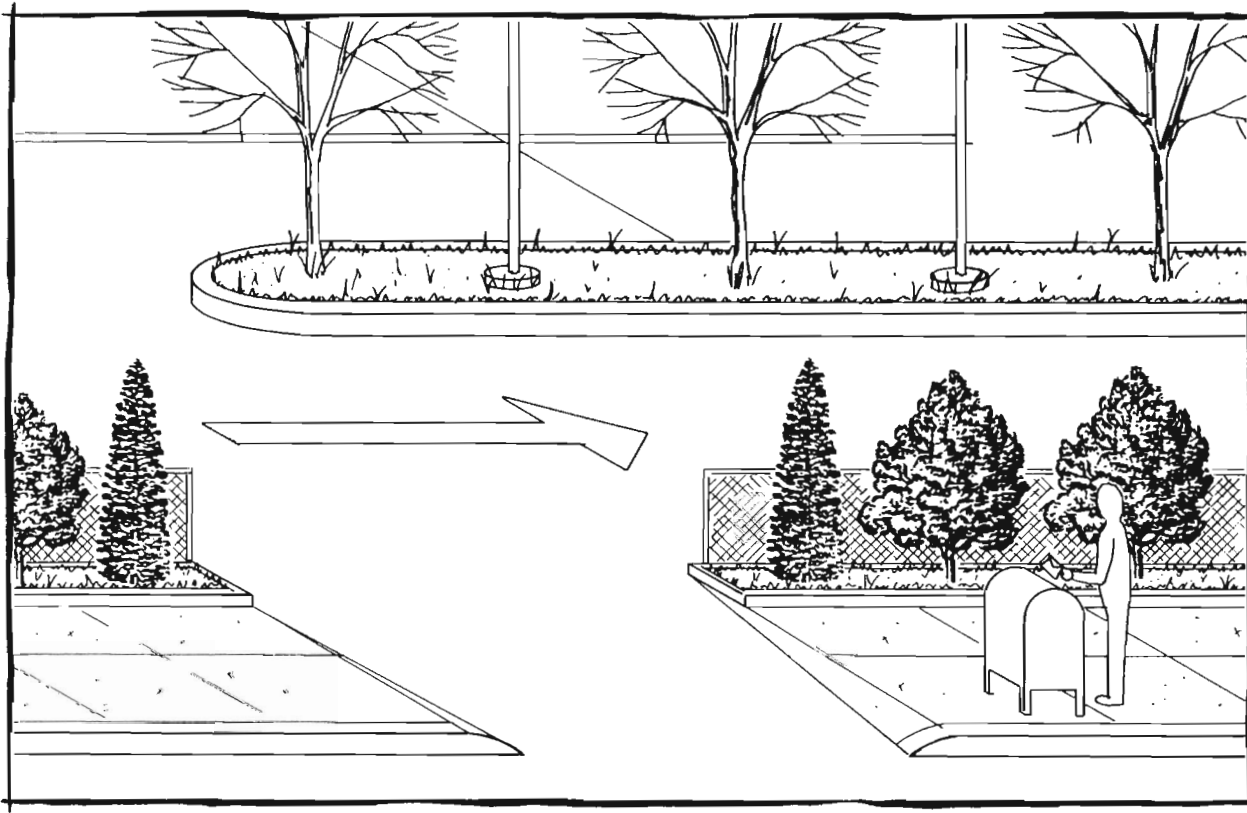
## PARKING LOTS AND REAR FACADES



The sketch above illustrates **1** the rear facade of the building where the mechanical equipment has been screened and **2** an entrance to underground parking has been created.

RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING  
PARKING LOTS AND  
REAR FACADES

- ◆ Provide underground parking wherever feasible.
- ◆ Add *parking islands*, trees and other landscaping to soften building facades and parking areas. Utilize a combination of deciduous and evergreen plant material to provide seasonal interest and permanent screening.
- ◆ Provide visual barrier (wall, *fence*) to screen roof-top mechanical equipment.
- ◆ Maintain sidewalks and vegetative screen along the edges of parking areas.
- ◆ Security fencing should be replaced or screened by vegetative borders.
- ◆ Create or maintain a one-way vehicular movement within the parking area for safe and uniform access.



**PEDESTRIAN SCALE**

The sketch above illustrates the street entrance to the parking area where the sidewalk and vegetative screen have been properly maintained and creating the relationship of the pedestrian to the sidewalk.

**"Form and function need to be balanced in alleys."**



Slide #24, Evaluation -1.46



Slide #23, Evaluation -5.19

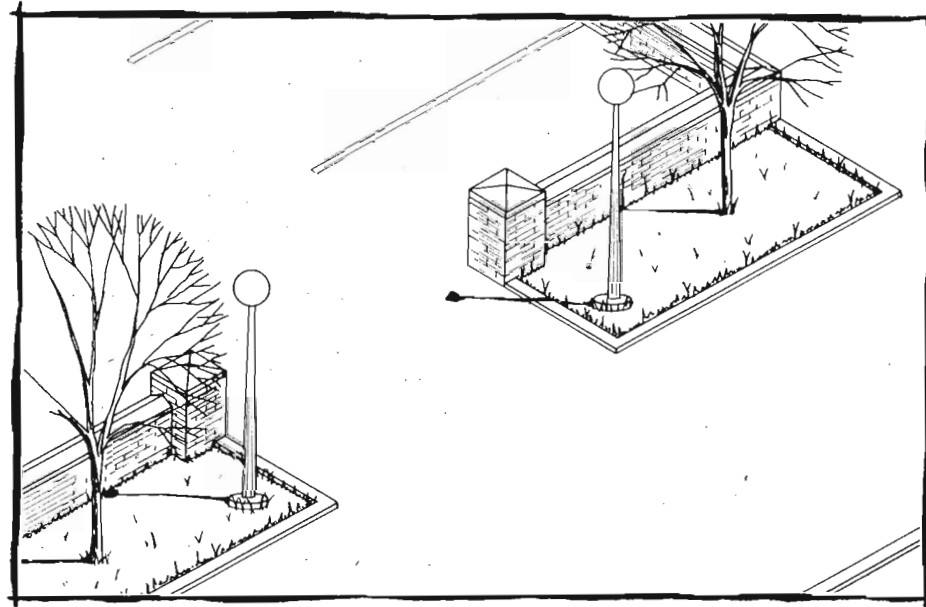
All images of *alleys* rated negatively, including these two. Slide #24 was the most positively rated of all of the alleys shown. Alleys and backs of buildings were a recurring theme in comments from participants. There was a clearly understood tradeoff between the functional aspects of alleys and the emphasis on aesthetics with the street fronts. At the same time, however, there was a desire to make alleys as attractive as possible and not completely ignore their *aesthetics* because of their functional nature. It was noted that pedestrians frequently use alleys and, while adding sidewalks would be excessive, alleys should be designed with both vehicles and pedestrians in mind.

There were a number of comments regarding slide #24 indicating that it

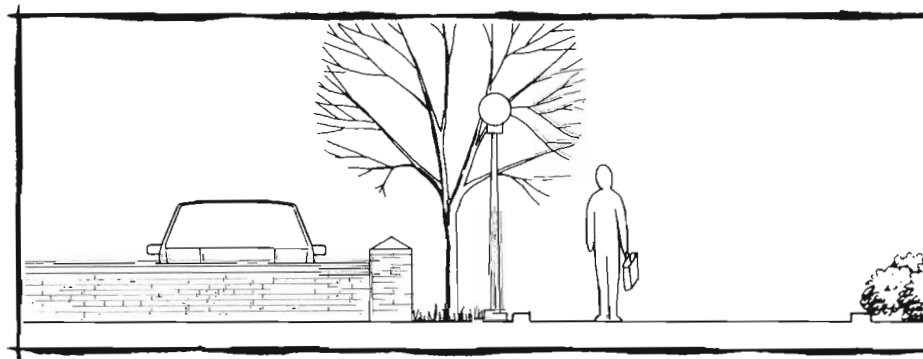
**RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING  
URBAN  
ALLEYS**

was relatively attractive for an alley, but still was not a pleasing image. Some respondents felt the garages are too close to the alleys, but understood that may have been a necessary trade-off to accommodate useable back yards. Others mentioned the lack of vegetation to soften the edges.

Slide #23 was rated very negatively. Participants expressed that the alley probably worked very well from a functional standpoint, but that the design was haphazard and clearly done without any comprehensive design direction. They had a few suggestions for improving this alley, primarily by replacing the existing guardrail with a brick wall capped with limestone, adding landscaping, and possibly adding lighting. These changes are illustrated in the sketch on this page.



*The sketch above illustrates improvements suggested by participants including the addition of street trees and other vegetation, street lighting and an attractive brick wall.*



**PEDESTRIAN SCALE**

*The elevation above represents pedestrian orientation and illustrates the human scale created by the participants' recommendations.*

- ◆ Add trees and other landscaping to soften edges and decrease impervious surfaces. Utilize a combination of deciduous and evergreen plant material to provide seasonal interest and permanent screening.
- ◆ Provide decorative walls or fences to establish edge of alley.
- ◆ Use aesthetically pleasing light fixtures where possible.

## COMMERCIAL DOWNTOWN AREAS

*"We should preserve our historic structures and streetscapes as new development continues."*



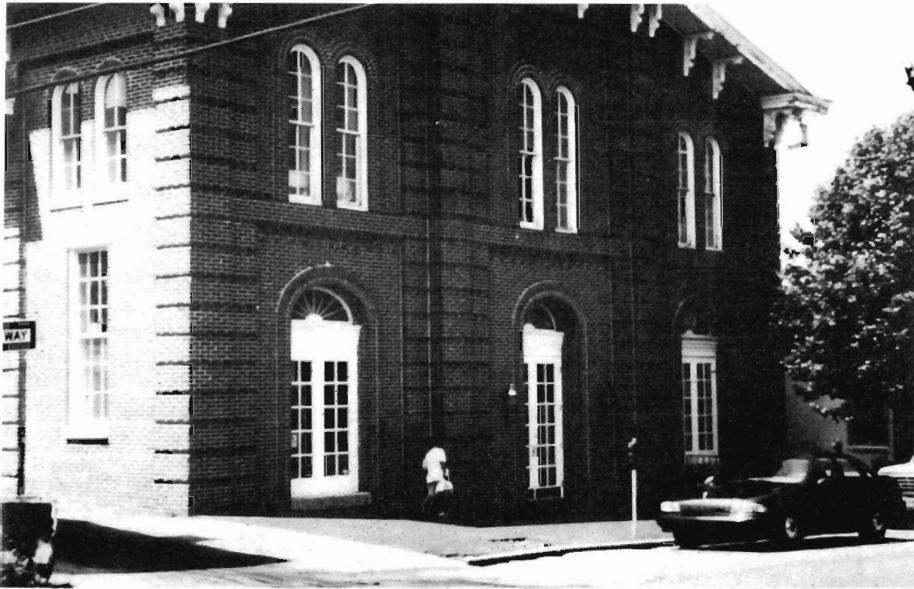
Slide #26, Evaluation +4.50

This image rated very positively and is an excellent example of a historic downtown area that is still very vibrant. There were practically no negative comments on this image. The overhead traffic sign was the only feature to draw a negative remark (it was suggested that the support pole could be painted black or brown to better fit into its surroundings).

Participants pointed to a number of features that make this image very positive, many of which could be incorporated into Chester County urban areas to improve their appearance. Key features include the presence of street trees at compatible scale; the combination of varied facade design and varied facade setbacks, which add character; the effective integration of the new design (Gap store) with the historic context, while

clearly more modern; the combination of pillars and awnings in front of Gap store; the lack of overhead wires; the historic lamp, which preserves character and defines the pedestrian area; the signs are subtle and understated, which is appropriate for a downtown where traffic moves slowly and there is significant pedestrian traffic; the continuity of facades with no major breaks for parking lots, alleys, etc.; and the clean and well maintained appearance of the area.

RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING  
COMMERCIAL  
DOWNTOWN  
AREAS



Slide #66, Evaluation +3.06

A key theme in the workshops was that of historic *preservation* and *adaptive reuse* of historic structures. Participants expressed a clear preference for well maintained older buildings over most newer structures. Most images of renovated historic structures scored well in the “Urban Visions” workshops - the image of the converted garage (slide #66) is an example of a historic renovation that rated very well. It is clear that Chester County’s rich history is one of the County’s greatest assets. Every effort should be made to preserve our historic structures, streetscapes, and landscapes, even as new development continues to occur in our urban areas.

- ◆ Provide street trees, awnings, traditional lighting fixtures, and other amenities to define the pedestrian area and create a human scale.
- ◆ Place utility lines underground.
- ◆ Design and size signs appropriately for the traditional design of the streetscape and the speed of the road.
- ◆ Provide varied facades with a common architectural theme and varying setbacks.
- ◆ Design new development to be compatible with existing traditional architectural design.



***"Commercial buildings should be close to the street, with parking in back."***



*Slide #29, Evaluation -3.44*

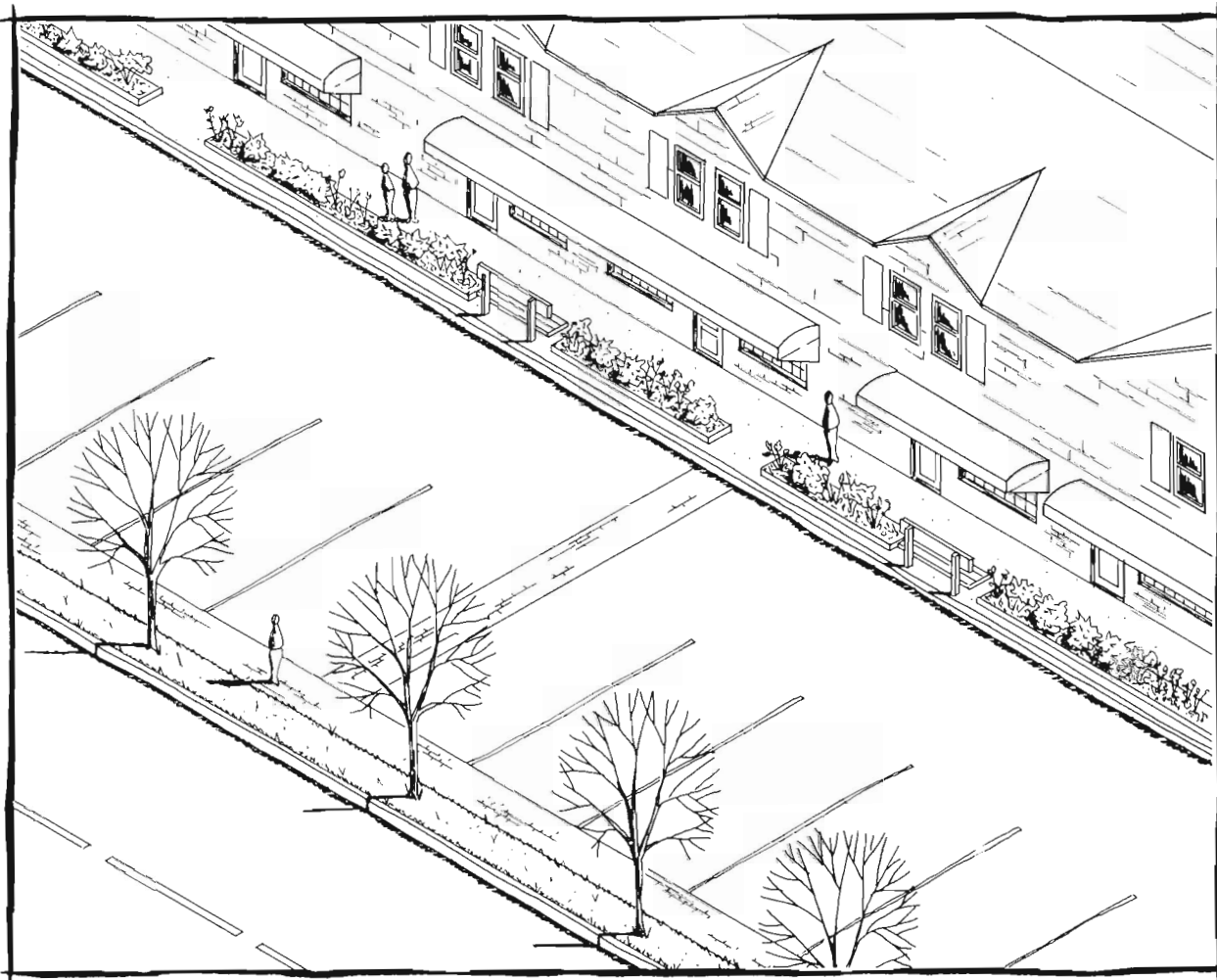
In contrast to the previous image of a commercial area, this image rated very poorly. This development was called a “60’s style strip-mall” and it was suggested that it has no place in an urban setting, particularly one with a vital downtown area. Specific objections include the lack of landscaping and color, the use of stucco, the lack of shutters or other accents around the second floor windows, and the lack of consistency between and “ugliness” of the signs. It was noted that there is nothing in the design to attract interest - “it’s a hodge-podge - there’s no curb appeal.”

The participants had several suggestions on how to improve this development. The most prevalent was to move the building closer to the street (moving the parking to the back or the side) and connect the building more to the street

and sidewalk to create an inviting pedestrian environment. In considering future developments, municipalities and developers are encouraged to emphasize the relationship between the structure and the street when designing sites, rather than emphasizing parking areas. However, participants also made a number of more limited suggestions for improving the design of existing buildings during a renovation.

To improve the appearance of the structure, dormers could be added to the second floor with shutters added to the windows, the overhang could be removed or modified, the signs could be removed from the roof and replaced with signs hung below the overhang, and the stucco siding could be replaced with a more attractive material. To improve the relationship of the building to the street, landscaping could be added to the parking lot, the parking lot could be reconfigured to move cars away from the building, a walkway could connect the storefront with the sidewalk, and a landscape feature and/or small seating area could be added between the sidewalk and building.

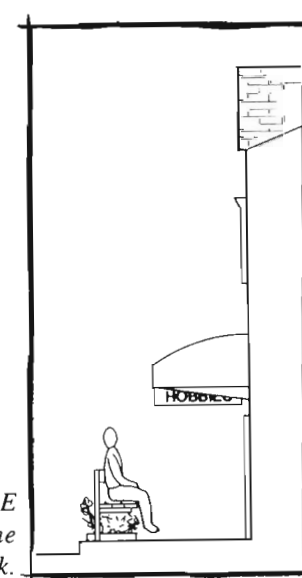
RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING  
COMMERCIAL  
STRIP-  
DEVELOPMENT



The sketch above represents improvements suggested by participants including the addition of dormers, shutters on existing windows, and a sidewalk and planting strip along street. The overhang has been removed and replaced by individual, separated awnings.

PEDESTRIAN SCALE

This elevation represents the relationship between the pedestrian and the building facade and sidewalk.



- ◆ Whenever possible, locate building close to street (with parking in rear) to create a human scale pedestrian area.
- ◆ Design dormers into second-story roofs and provide shutters on windows.
- ◆ Insure that any first-floor overhang does not create a security problem or visual "dark" zone.
- ◆ Create consistent *sign design* and hang below first-floor overhang perpendicular to facade.
- ◆ Create pedestrian areas buffered from street and parking areas by landscaping.
- ◆ Allow for apartments or offices in the second-story of retail buildings.
- ◆ When parking must be in front, design parking against the street instead of the building.

*"Signs should be sized for compatibility with buildings and slower traffic."*



Slide #31, Evaluation -2.10

While participants did not object to service stations in the urban area, this image rated negatively, primarily because of the signs and the overhead wires. The size and material of the signs, particularly the large one, were seen by participants to be inappropriate for an urban area, with its lower *design speed*, where cars and pedestrians are moving slowly enough to easily see much smaller signs. One participant commented that "we don't need a turnpike scale sign in a borough."

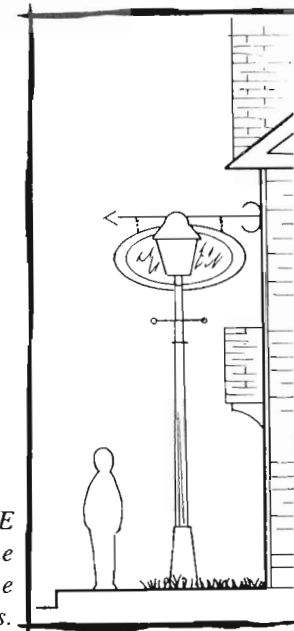
Some participants noted that the left side of the image reveals a traditional *village* or borough setting with interesting architecture and compatible signs. The right side of the image, on the other hand, is an amalgamation of suburban design elements that significantly disrupt the flow of the urban area. Suggestions for improving the image include redesigning and re-scaling the signage, moving the overhead wires to underground, using a more historically compatible type of *street lighting*, and adding vegetation.

**RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING  
COMMERCIAL  
STREETSCAPES**



*The sketch above illustrates improvements suggested by the participants. Coincidentally, nearly identical improvements were suggested by the Rural Vision Evaluation participants and included in the Rural Community Design Guide.*

**PEDESTRIAN SCALE**  
*This elevation represents the relationship between the pedestrian and the streetscape created by the suggestions of the participants.*



- ◆ Require sign designs, materials, and sizes that creates a consistent urban theme.
  - ◆ Place utilities underground.
  - ◆ Reduce size and space required for road signs.\*
  - ◆ Avoid obstructions, such as street signs, in pedestrian area.
  - ◆ Provide a planting strip between pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
  - ◆ Provide more attractive and traditional street lighting fixtures.
- \*Communities should coordinate their efforts with PennDOT to ensure that signs remain readable without being obstructive.

## COMMERCIAL STREETSAPES

***"It looks festive  
- flags, people,  
nice facades."***



*Slide #56, Evaluation +3.12*

***"Minimized  
traffic on the  
one way street  
make  
pedestrian  
crossing safer."***

**DESIGN ELEMENTS  
OF  
SUCCESSFUL  
COMMERCIAL  
STREETSCAPES**

This highly rated image of an urban streetscape received almost universal praise in the workshops. Comments like “it looks active and vibrant” and “it looks festive - flags, people, nice facades” were frequently expressed. Specific features credited with creating this inviting environment include the narrow one way street, which minimizes traffic and makes traffic easier for pedestrians to safely cross; the street trees and the canopy that they create; the tasteful signs that “blend rather than jump out at you;” and the on-street parking, which “shelters” pedestrians from moving traffic.

While overall impressions of this image were strongly positive, a few negatives were mentioned. The relative lack of parking, given the number of commercial establishments on the street, was seen as a negative for the feasibility of such an environment in Chester County. There was also concern that areas that rely on-street parking are not feasible in the winter months, when snowplows would have no place to deposit snow. Generally, though, this type of image rated much stronger than roads that were configured to eliminate these impracticalities and were seen as less visually interesting and inviting by participants.

- ◆ **Design narrower streets to slow traffic and increase safety for pedestrians.**
- ◆ **Create an inviting pedestrian area by using street trees, flags, tasteful signage, and traditional facades.**
- ◆ ***Off-street parking* should be incorporated with on-street parking for overflow.**

***"The building  
should not  
be used  
as a sign."***



*Slide #37, Evaluation -2.13*

This image rated negatively because participants did not believe the suburban design of the fast food restaurant was appropriate in an urban environment. Participants generally liked the high-rise buildings in the right side of the image, but clearly did not like the suburban image to the left. They also said that fast food uses were perfectly appropriate in urban areas, but not in the suburban form employed in this example. Specific complaints about this design include setbacks too large to “hold the edge of the street,” too much parking area surrounding the restaurant, “suburban looking” landscaping, and the one-story building in an area otherwise populated by multi-story buildings.

Participants pointed out many examples of fast food establishments better incorporated into urban areas. For example, many use space in the first floor of urban mid-rise or high-rise buildings or take up storefront space in a two- or three-story structure with housing or office space on the upper floors. While such uses can be appropriate when integrated into an urban environment consisting primarily of mid-rise and taller buildings, participants clearly expressed that placing one-story suburban buildings in the middle of such an established urban environment is inappropriate. Short of incorporating such uses into existing urban structures, participants expressed that the building should be moved closer to the road, that the drive-thru should be better incorporated into the urban environment and the parking lot should be reduced in size and/or relocated behind the building, such as in slide #39 on page 28.



**RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING  
ONE-STORY  
COMMERCIAL**



*Slide #38, Evaluation -1.71*

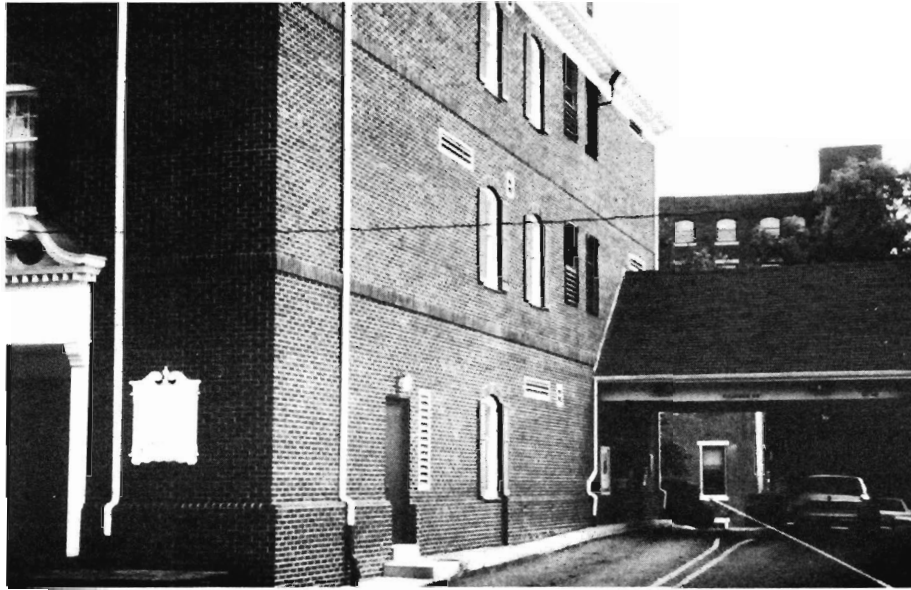
This slide also rated negatively, although somewhat less so than the previous one. The primary difference, according to participants, is that this fast food restaurant is less out of context from other buildings that are at a somewhat similar scale, when compared to the more “urban core” high-rise environment of the previous image. There were also statements that the landscaping does a slightly better job of “softening the facade” than was the case with the previous image. Many of the comments voiced about this image were similar to those for the previous slide - the restaurant is not consistent with the character of the surrounding area, it “stands out too much” visually, the parking area is too large and too dominant in the streetscape.

The strongest objection to this image was based on the signage. The pole mounted sign was criticized for being out of character with signs in the surrounding area, in terms of scale, materials used, and its backlighting. The strongest comments however, were those regarding the sign mounted to the roof. Participants objected to “using the building as a sign,” and the bright red color of the entire roof being part of the corporate image. There was an understanding of the corporate desire to design all buildings with a common theme, but many examples were raised of fast food restaurants that were tastefully incorporated into urban area and historic towns and villages with buildings and signs that were identifiable but consistent with the existing environment. Participants indicated that sign codes should be strengthened to improve design of signs.

- ◆ When possible, locate commercial uses in ground floor of mid- or high-rise buildings.
- ◆ Increase amount, height, and quality of trees and other landscaping around one-story commercial development.
- ◆ Design and scale signs appropriately for the urban environment.

## COMMERCIAL DRIVE THROUGH

***"Drive-throughs  
must be  
designed to  
fit in an  
urban  
context."***



*Slide #39, Evaluation +1.92*

***"This  
drive-through  
fits in with  
the building  
and is clean  
and functional."***

**RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING  
COMMERCIAL  
DRIVE-  
THROUGHS**

- ◆ **Set drive-through back to avoid conflicts with street traffic.**
- ◆ **Design drive-through not to detract from the urban character of the surroundings.**
- ◆ **Limit drive-through entrances to secondary roads whenever possible.**

**T**his image rated positively, despite its depiction of a use generally thought of as suburban. Participants said that this drive-through “fits in with the building” and is “clean and functional,” unlike the parking lots and drive-throughs in the previous two slides, which were much more obtrusive and seemed to practically define the building placement. In this case, the

drive-through is located between two existing structures and set back from the street, allowing it to not detract from the urban nature of the adjacent development. The rating of this image reflects the participant’s comments on the previous two images - the use is appropriate in an urban area and the design needs to fit in with the existing character of the area.

***“Zoning should allow for a gradual transition between low-rise and high-rise structures.”***



*Slide #41, Evaluation -1.33*

The negative rating for slide #41 was due more to the lack of transition between the low-rise and high-rise buildings than to the high-rise itself. Participants generally liked the high-rise and generally believed “we’re going to have to allow high-rises in the urban areas.” Participants also highly rated the more detailed image of the historic buildings immediately in front of the high-rise in slide #32, commenting on the compatibility between the designs of the building, signs, awnings, and streetlights. Despite the positive comments

about high-rises and about the specific structures in this image, the lack of transition resulted in a negative rating and a number of negative comments on this image.

Regarding the abrupt height differential, participants expressed that the image would be far more attractive if there were a more gradual transition, with a mid-rise building or two between the low-rise and high-rise buildings. It should be recognized that in the case of this image, the zoning may well provide for such a transition, but no mid-rise

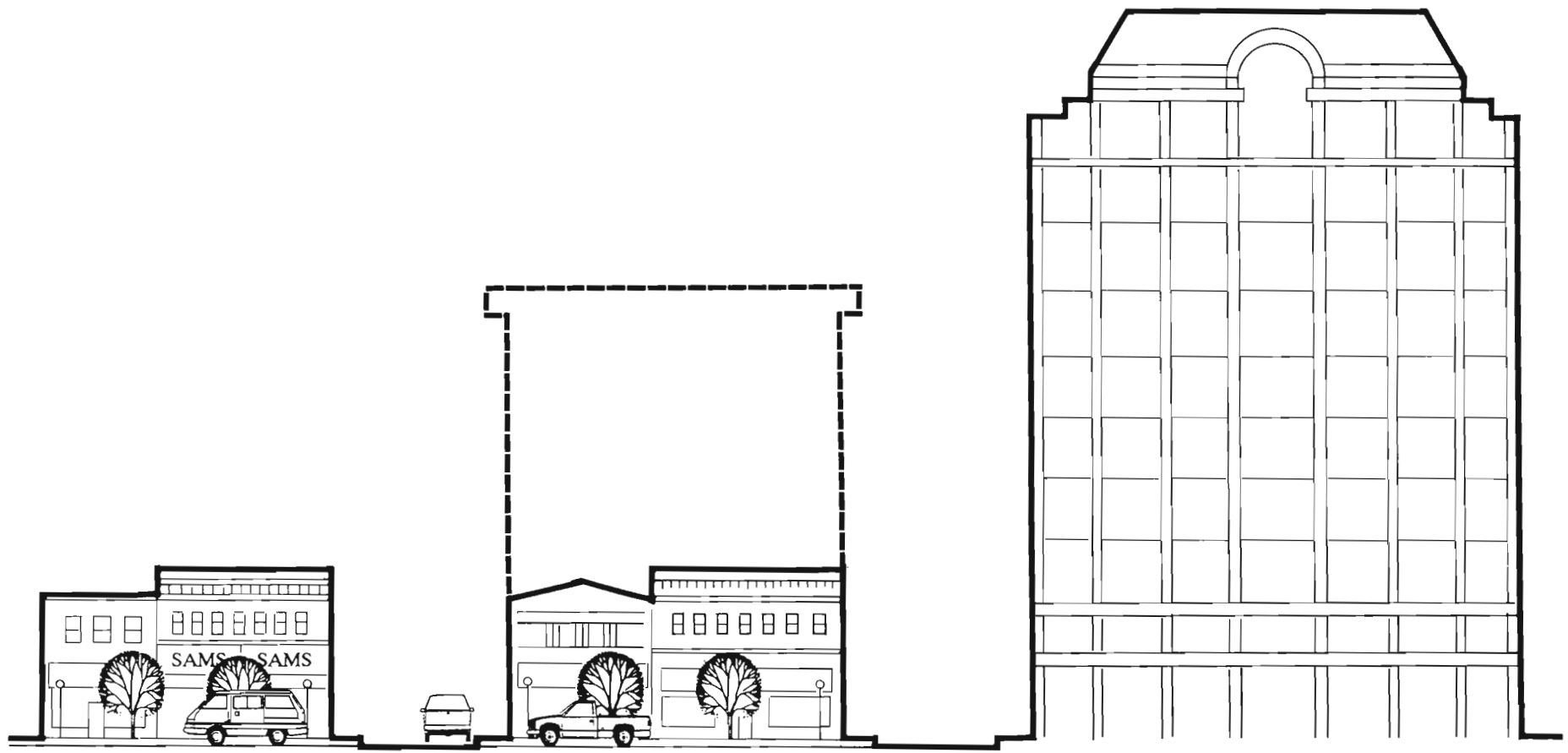


Slide #32, Evaluation +3.50

building has been constructed yet to complete the more gradual transition. Nonetheless, the abrupt change in height and scale in this image was seen as a negative by workshop participants.

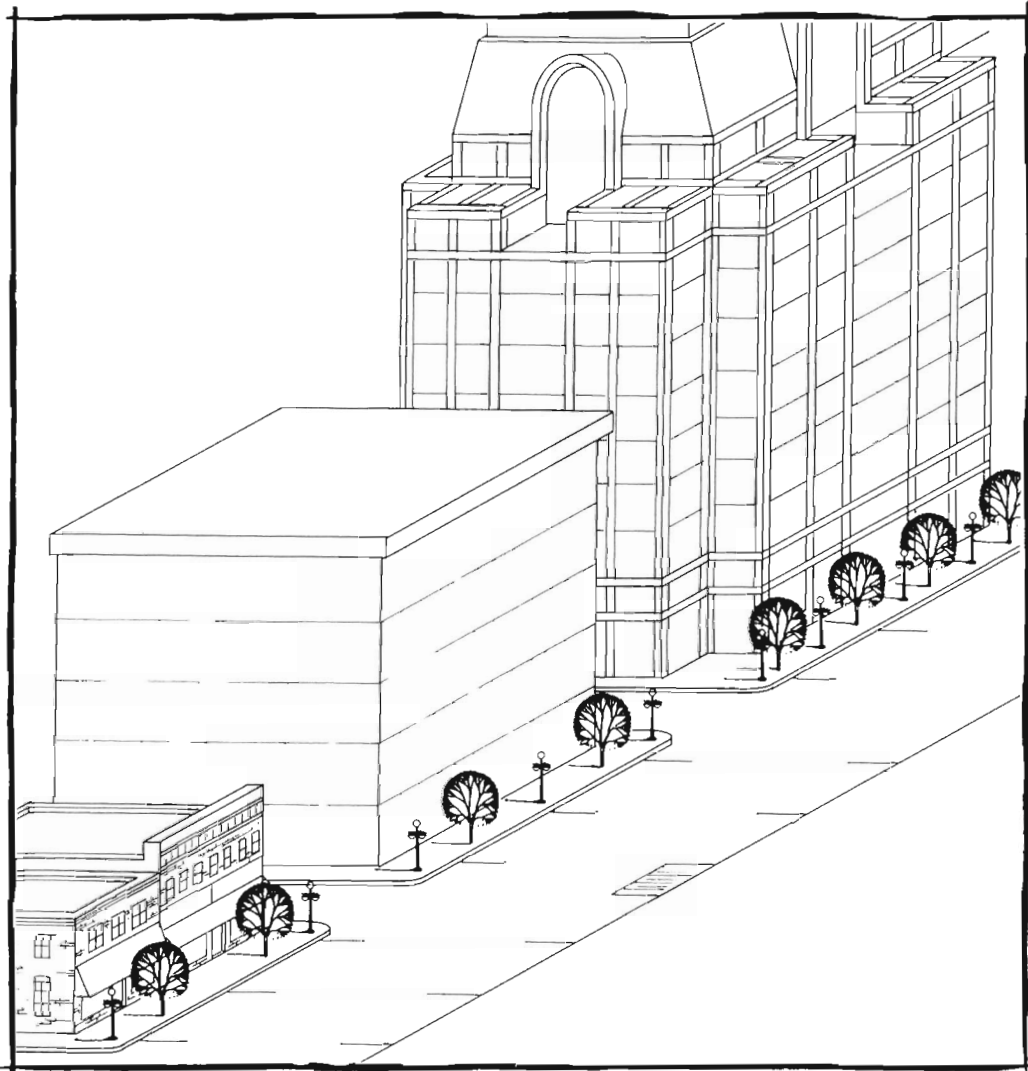
Other complaints about slide #41 included a lack of street trees and other greenery, the disruptive nature of the *perpendicular parking* on the right side of the street, and the architectural incompatibility between the building with the wooden porch in the immediate foreground and the two-story brick buildings beyond them. The following sketch illustrates how this image could look with a more gradual transition between the high-rise and the shorter buildings in front of it, with more greenery, and with parallel parking on both sides of the street.

## TRANSITIONAL COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT



*The elevation above depicts the contrast between an abrupt transition (solid line) and a more gradual transition (dashed line).*

RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING  
TRANSITIONAL  
COMMERCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT

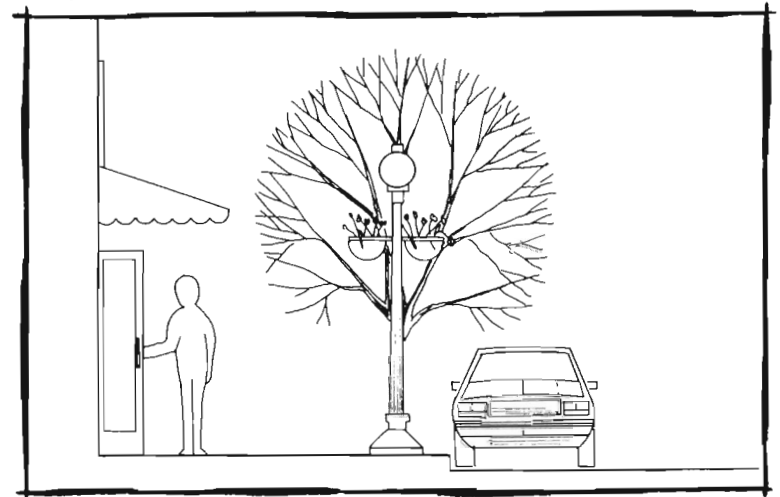


The sketch above illustrates a more gradual transition from two-story development to high-rise development and other improvements suggested by participants, including the addition of street trees and decorative street lighting.

- ◆ Encourage a gradual transition between high-rise and one or two-story development.
- ◆ Create a deeper setback with vegetative buffers in transition areas around high-rise buildings.
- ◆ Provide street trees and decorative street lighting on commercial streetscapes.

*PEDESTRIAN SCALE*

The elevation below represents the relationship between the pedestrian and the streetscape as suggested by the participants.



***"Monuments  
give a town  
an identity."***



*Slide #45, Evaluation +4.13*

This image, along with those of all other monuments shown in the workshop, received a strongly positive rating. In the workshops, comments about monuments were also very positive. "Monuments give a town an identity" as well as drawing attention to points of interest. They "make people think about the past" which leads to an understanding of common heritage. They give kids "something to climb on and remember their whole life." One participant noted that while monuments are often taken for granted on a day to day basis, "if they were not there, you would miss them." There were no negative comments on this image.



**RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING  
MONUMENTS  
AND  
MURALS**



*Slide #63, Evaluation 0.00*

The mural in this image, however, elicited a range of opinions. While its rating was a neutral “0,” the deviation in scores was the highest of any slide shown, indicating strong opinions, both positive and negative. This divergence was reflected in workshop comments. Those who liked the mural said that this type of amenity was appropriate in an urban area and shares many of the positives with other monuments. Conversely, many regarded murals as too dramatic, “too busy, too splashy,” and carrying too specific a message, and would be difficult to maintain over time.

- ◆ **Locate monuments in urban areas to foster a sense of place and community.**
- ◆ **Use low maintenance building and paving materials whenever possible.**

***“Pedestrians  
need a sense  
of security  
and separation  
from moving  
traffic.”***



*Slide #48, Evaluation +4.18*

**A**s was the case with most images of pedestrian amenities, both of these images rated quite positively. Positive features commented on for the image in slide #48 include the dedicated pedestrian alley linking two commercial streets, the use of plant materials making the pedestrian way look inviting and attractive, and the use of *bollards*, street trees, and large planters to give pedestrians a sense of security and separation from passing vehicular traffic.

Many of the same themes were mentioned on slide #49 as well. The bollards and the street trees were both mentioned. Participants also remarked on the varied paving materials seen in this image. While the roads leading to the intersection are paved with asphalt, the intersection itself is defined by brick paving. The sidewalks are also brick, but in a different pattern than the intersection, making them easily distinguishable. At the edges of the

**RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING  
PEDESTRIAN  
FACILITIES**



*Slide #49, Evaluation +2.48*

intersection, stone pavers are used to define the crosswalks, making them “look inviting, crossable.” Slate is used around the entrance to the corner store, helping to create a transition between the public and private spaces. Participants were impressed with the “human scale” of this setting and specifically commented on the nice effect created by the peaked roof, angled door and bay window in the building.

The only negatives mentioned about this image were the redundant traffic signs, the neon “Movie Rental” sign, and the need for weed control around the brick sidewalk. With the possible exception of the traffic directional signs, these are problems that could be easily remedied.

- ◆ Dedicate pedestrian alleys/pathways to link commercial streets or uses.
- ◆ Create inviting and attractive pedestrian areas through the use of street trees, bollards, planters, and other street furniture.
- ◆ Define edges and transitions in pedestrian areas through the use of varied paving materials.
- ◆ Design pedestrian areas for easy maintenance to the extent possible.

## PARKING AREAS

*"Parking lots  
are a necessary  
evil in  
urban areas."*



*Slide #53, Evaluation +1.10*

*"Amenities such  
as street trees,  
benches, brick  
pavers, and  
walls were  
unanimously  
praised."*

**RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING  
URBAN PARKING  
AREAS**

- ◆ **Screen parking lots with walls, fences, street trees and/or other landscaping.**
- ◆ **Define pedestrian spaces through the use of benches, varied paving materials, and other amenities.**
- ◆ **Avoid placing parking areas on urban corner lots.**

This image of a corner parking lot rated slightly positively, reflecting the general opinion expressed in the workshops that parking lots are “necessary evils” in urban areas, and this one is more attractive than most. Amenities in this image that were unanimously praised were the street trees, the brick wall separating (and partially screening) the parking lot from the sidewalk, and the benches on the sidewalk side of the brick wall. The small area of brick pavers around

the benches and street trees was also noted for contributing to the “sense of place” in the seating area.

While there was agreement that the use of amenities helped mitigate the inevitable negative appearance of parking lots, there was some divergence about the location of the lot on a corner. Some participants noted that corner lots were good locations for parking - others suggested that corner lots are too visually dominant a part of our communities to be used for parking areas.

## FENCES

***"Fences  
define the edge  
between private  
and public  
spaces in  
urban areas."***



*Slide #34, Evaluation +4.92*



*Slide #35, Evaluation +4.13*

**F**ences and walls are a key design element in the urban environment, three examples of which are depicted in these images. All of these images rated positively, although slide #36 rated significantly lower than the other two. While all three fences clearly define the edge between public and private spaces, the white picket and wrought iron fences in the images on the left top and bottom use materials that are traditionally associated with the urban environment. In both cases, they tend to compliment other design elements, such as brick sidewalks and landscaping and fit in with the rest of the image.

**RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR IMPROVING  
FENCES  
IN THE  
URBAN  
ENVIRONMENT**



*Slide #36, Evaluation +1.42*

In the case of slide #36, the stockade fence was judged to be less appropriate for urban environments than wrought iron and picket fences. Wrought iron and picket fences define an edge, but are relatively transparent, letting light and air through. Stockade fences tend to isolate one area from another and make already small urban spaces feel even smaller and more enclosed. While one participant felt that “there is no place for stockade fences in the urban environment,” most agreed that they were preferable to chain link and other inexpensive fence types, but should still be discouraged.

- ◆ Use fencing to define edges between public and private spaces.
- ◆ Use traditional styles of fencing such as picket or wrought iron.

## TRAIN STATIONS

***“Allowing  
commercial uses  
in historic  
train stations  
adds vibrancy.”***



Slide #58, Evaluation +4.88

The participants in the Urban Visions workshops reacted positively to all images of trains and train stations. The two train stations shown on these pages show examples of a *preserved* historic train station of urban design and a more modern, spare station with a more suburban design. While the historic station rated very high, even the image of the newer station, which shows little more than a small shelter and a parking lot, rated positively.



**RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING  
DESIGN AND  
PRESERVATION OF  
TRAIN STATIONS**



*Slide #59, Evaluation +0.58*

Comments from the participants were limited to reinforcing the theme gleaned from the ratings - that all transit is good, particularly rail transit. Given this high level of acceptance of train stations regardless of design, these images serve as examples of what can be done to make historic train stations more vibrant (augmenting them with additional commercial uses) and a type of station that is acceptable in primarily automobile served suburban areas.

- ◆ Encourage secondary commercial uses in restored historic train stations.
- ◆ Design new train stations to be easily accessible to vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

## STREETSCAPE DETAILS

***"Small details  
are often the  
difference  
between a dull  
or interesting  
urban space."***



*Slide #61, Evaluation +3.12*

***"Strategically  
placed planters,  
flower boxes,  
awnings, and  
changes in  
paving, etc.,  
are relatively  
inexpensive  
modifications  
that can make  
otherwise  
ordinary  
facades  
attractive."***

RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING  
STREETScape  
DETAILS

◆ Design areas with low maintenance pedestrian amenities such as benches, street trees, planters.

This image of large potted plants against an otherwise blank wall rated positively and is illustrative of how design details can improve the atmosphere and appearance of the urban environment. Strategically placed planters, flower boxes, awnings, changes in paving, etc., are relatively inexpensive modifications that can make otherwise ordinary facades attractive and interesting. While this image rated positively, participants commented on some negative aspects of it, such as the trees being too large for the pots (and, therefore, hard to maintain), the trees being out of scale for the area they're located in, and a

problem to care for in winter. This image was rated as very visually attractive.

Without the planters adding interest to an otherwise blank wall, without the change in paving material to draw the pedestrian to the building's entrance, and without the wall plaque further breaking up the facade, this small area would be very plain and uninteresting. Small details like these are often the difference between a plain and unattractive urban scene, and a vibrant and interesting one. It should be noted that design details like these, located in public spaces, can be initiated by either the adjacent private landowner or the public sector.

## BUS SHELTERS

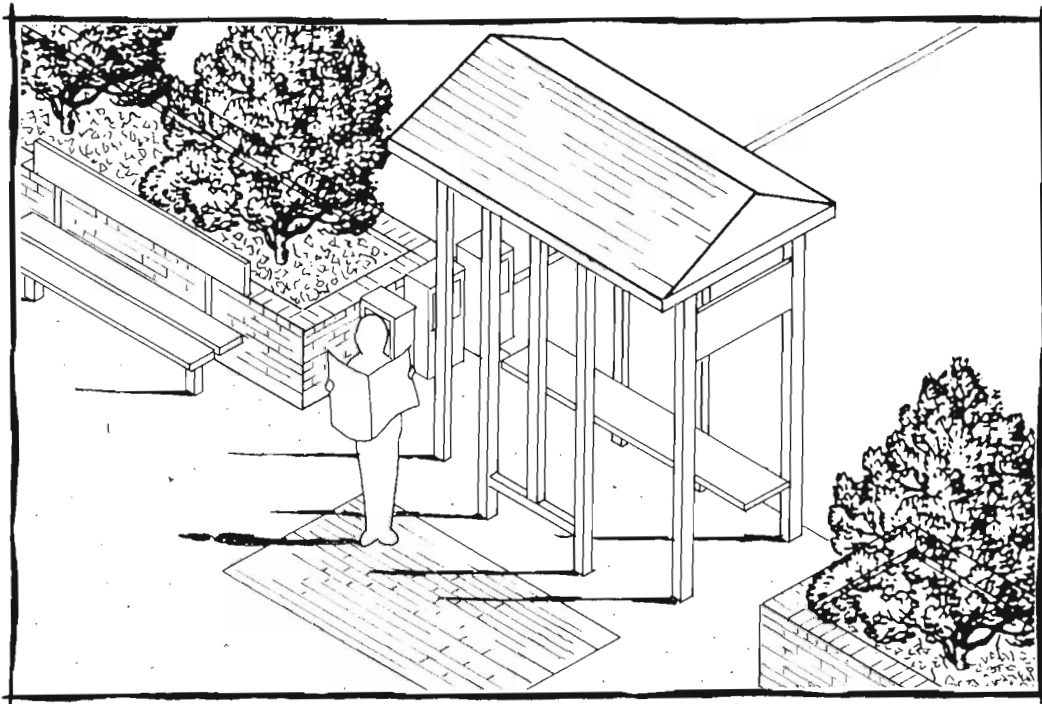
***"Surroundings  
can make  
utilitarian  
structures more  
attractive."***



*Slide #62, Evaluation -2.50*

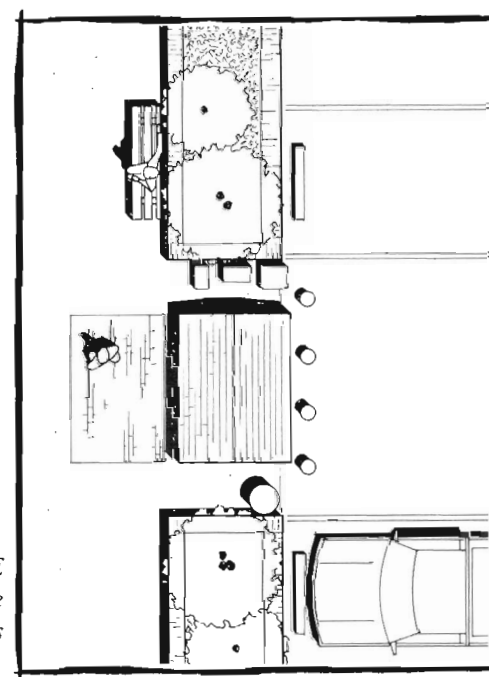
**A**lthough participants expressed strong support for buses and other mass transit, this image of a bus shelter rated negatively. The primary reason given for the negative rating was the untidy appearance of the shelter, with a disorganized mix of trash cans and newspaper vending machines surrounding a plain bus shelter and the not very well maintained appearance of the sidewalk and vegetation in the image. Despite these negatives, participants said that the use is very appropriate, that the brick wall and vegetation do an effective job of screening the parking area behind the bus shelter, and that more bus shelters are needed in urban Chester County.

RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING  
BUS  
SHELTERS



Improvements include the addition of benches, brick pavers and the organization and screening of trashcans and newspaper dispensers.

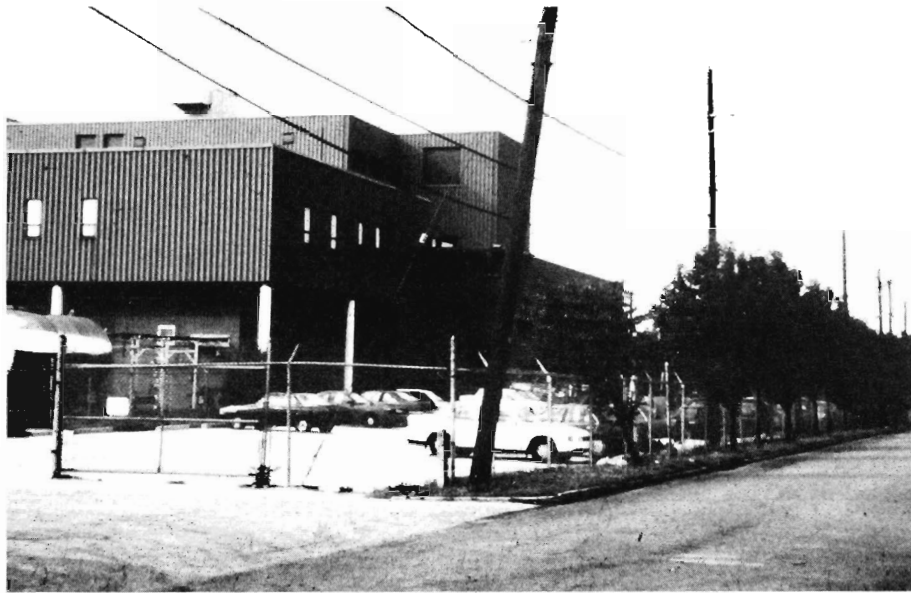
*PEDESTRIAN SCALE*  
This plan view represents the  
relationship between the pedestrian facilities  
and the vehicular parking, including protective bollards.



- ◆ Define the area around a bus shelter with contrasting paving materials.
- ◆ Maintain vegetation for both appearance and screening function.
- ◆ Minimize visual intrusiveness of newspaper dispensers and trash cans.

## INDUSTRIAL USES

***"Locate  
industrial uses  
at the edges  
of urban areas."***



*Slide #67, Evaluation -3.69*

***"There was  
a clear  
recognition that  
industry is a  
necessary and  
appropriate use  
in urban Chester  
County."***

**RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING  
URBAN  
INDUSTRIAL  
USES**

**W**hile this image of an industrial building rated very poorly, it was indicative of the industrial images shown in the workshops. Despite a few design details in this image that exceeded those found in most industrial images, participants clearly do not like the appearance of industrial development. There was a clear recognition that industry is a necessary and appropriate use in urban Chester County, but an equally clear recognition that these uses are not visually attractive. While participants made suggestions on how this image could be improved, most indicated that

the high cost of visual improvements and relatively little benefit that would result would not be cost effective or appropriate.

There was a general consensus that industrial uses are not attractive, but that they are a necessary component of the urban environment. It should be noted that while the need for economic development often results in aesthetic compromises like those associated with industrial uses, the same economic development is often crucial in enabling older or less advantaged urban areas to undertake other important aesthetic improvements.

- ◆ **Designate specific areas away from the urban core for industrial uses.**
- ◆ **Screen industrial uses from surrounding uses with landscaping and/or appropriate fencing.**

***"New neighborhoods and developments benefit from urban design features."***



*Slide #68, Evaluation +5.04*

The strongly positive rating received by this aerial image of a portion of the Kentlands development near Washington D.C. was reiterated by participants' comments in the workshops. Many of the features and design details that participants were attracted to in other images discussed in this design guide were those that either reminded them of older urban areas or were new designs that fit well with older development. Participants found many of the features they rated highly in other slides

incorporated into a complete community design in the "neo-traditional" development depicted in this image.

The "village" depicted in this image includes a mix of housing types at higher overall densities (6-10 units per acre) than found in many urban areas of Chester County, with a combination of single-family homes, townhomes, and apartments that, individually, all rated highly in the workshops. These housing types mix within single neighborhoods and, often, within single blocks. The single-family homes in this development (such as those in slides #2\* and #34\*) are located on relatively narrow streets, have small to medium setbacks from sidewalks, and have driveways and/or garages located on alleys. The townhomes are modern homes but generally with facades that resemble historic row-homes (slide #10\*). Apartments are of a more modern design, but are well integrated with the more historic



looking single-family residences and town-homes (slide #22\*). These neighborhoods also incorporate positively rated design details like fences (slide #34\*) and porches (slides #2\* and #8\*).

In addition to a mix of housing types, commercial uses and *public areas* (such as *pocket parks*) are successfully integrated in with the homes in this development. There are several small parks and sitting areas (slide #42\*) in this development, as well as a larger playground/recreational center (slide #44\*). Throughout, design details like pedestrian friendly sidewalks (slide #34\*), crosswalks (slide #49\*), and signs that are appropriately sized and designed enhance the urban environment. Residential uses are also within *walking distance* of commercial and other, complimentary, uses.

What the participants found in this image is that many of the features that they liked in other slides can be integrated

into new developments to create aesthetically pleasing and functional new environments, as well as maintaining the livability of older urban environments as they re-develop. While it is not necessary to integrate every design idea discussed in this guide into a single community, a judicious use of these features makes it possible to create new neighborhoods as pleasing as many existing historic neighborhoods and to maintain the charm and character of those older neighborhoods over time. It should also be noted that in addition to new communities, such as Kentlands, new structures can also be well integrated with existing historic structures as new development and redevelopment continues in existing urban areas.

**\*The referenced slides can be viewed in the Appendix Section of this document.**

*There are several opportunities to implement the community design guides suggested in this document. Many of the recommendations require only the review of ordinances and plans that are already in place in most municipalities. The following tables offer the link between the design guides and the tools for bringing about the desired change for the urban landscape in the County.*

### HOW TO USE IMPLEMENTATION CHARTS

Each implementation chart refers to a topic found on the top of each page in the “Preferences and Design Recommendations” section. Page numbers are provided on the implementation charts for easy reference to the topical areas.

Implementation techniques are listed in the left-hand column of the table. Check marks indicate where information can be found and which tools municipal officials can use to implement suggested design options. Many of the documents listed at the top of the chart are from the Chester County Planning Commission.

For example, the topic discussed on page 26 is “One-Story Commercial Streetscape.” One of the recommendations listed is “design and scale signs appropriately for the urban environment.” This recommendation also appears on page 27. The check marks in the chart on page 60 show resources that can be used and a combination of implementation techniques.

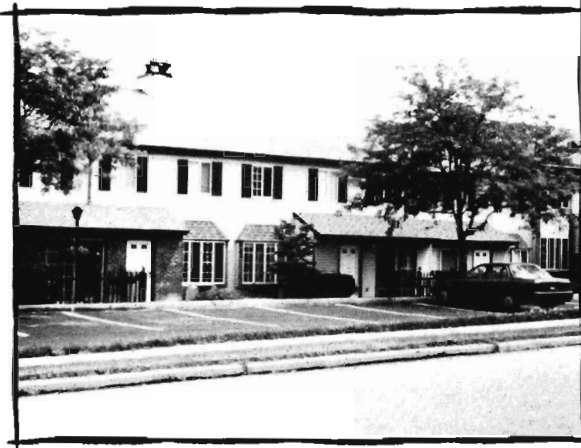
**Improving  
Residential  
Streetscapes**  
pages 8-9



	<i>Municipal Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>Municipal Zoning Ordinance</i>	<i>Municipal Subdivision Regulations</i>	<i>Sign Ordinances</i>	<i>Open Space Plan (Municipal)</i>	<i>Design Standards</i>	<i>Sketch Plan Review</i>	<i>Design Review Process</i>	<i>Special Use Districts</i>	<i>County Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>Chester County Circulation Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Village Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Open Space Plan</i>	<i>Historic Districts</i>	<i>Access Management Plans</i>	<i>Architectural Standards</i>
<b>Design with common theme, but architectural variety</b>	✓					✓	✓				✓			✓			✓
<b>Pedestrian-friendly scaling</b>	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓			✓			✓
<b>Inviting and functional porch design</b>	✓	✓				✓	✓				✓			✓			✓
<b>Setbacks allow for functional landscaping</b>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓										

# IMPLEMENTATION

## Improving Townhouse Development pages 10-11



	<i>Municipal Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>Municipal Zoning Ordinance</i>	<i>Municipal Subdivision Regulations</i>	<i>Sign Ordinances</i>	<i>Open Space Plan (Municipal)</i>	<i>Design Standards</i>	<i>Sketch Plan Review</i>	<i>Design Review Process</i>	<i>Special Use Districts</i>	<i>County Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>Chester County Circulation Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Village Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Open Space Plan</i>	<i>Historic Districts</i>	<i>Access Management Plans</i>	<i>Architectural Standards</i>
Traditional architectural design details	✓					✓	✓				✓				✓		✓
Create offset in building facade	✓	✓				✓	✓										✓
Buffer parking from facades	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓							
Adequate pedestrian facilities and buffering from traffic											✓						

**Improving  
Parking Lots  
and Rear  
Facades  
pages 12-15**



	<i>Municipal Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>Municipal Zoning Ordinance</i>	<i>Municipal Subdivision Regulations</i>	<i>Sign Ordinances</i>	<i>Open Space Plan (Municipal)</i>	<i>Design Standards</i>	<i>Sketch Plan Review</i>	<i>Design Review Process</i>	<i>Special Use Districts</i>	<i>County Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>Chester County Circulation Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Village Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Open Space Plan</i>	<i>Historic Districts</i>	<i>Access Management Plans</i>	<i>Architectural Standards</i>
<b>Provide underground parking</b>	✓	✓					✓	✓		✓							✓
<b>Use landscaping to soften facades and parking</b>			✓				✓	✓									
<b>Provide visual barriers to roof-top mechanical equipment</b>							✓	✓									✓
<b>Maintain sidewalks and vegetation along parking areas</b>			✓				✓	✓									
<b>Replace or screen security fencing with vegetative borders</b>							✓	✓									

**Improving  
Urban Alleys  
pages 16-17**



Soften the appearance with landscaping

Provide decorative walls or fences

Use aesthetically pleasing light fixtures

	<i>Municipal Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>Municipal Zoning Ordinance</i>	<i>Municipal Subdivision Regulations</i>	<i>Sign Ordinances</i>	<i>Open Space Plan (Municipal)</i>	<i>Design Standards</i>	<i>Sketch Plan Review</i>	<i>Design Review Process</i>	<i>Special Use Districts</i>	<i>County Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>Chester County Circulation Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Village Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Open Space Plan</i>	<i>Historic Districts</i>	<i>Access Management Plans</i>	<i>Architectural Standards</i>
Soften the appearance with landscaping		✓				✓	✓										
Provide decorative walls or fences		✓				✓	✓										
Use aesthetically pleasing light fixtures						✓	✓										✓

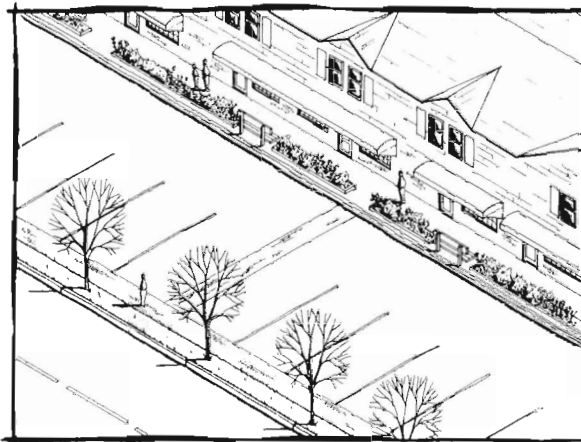
**Improving  
Commercial  
Downtown  
Areas  
pages 18-19**



	<i>Municipal Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>Municipal Zoning Ordinance</i>	<i>Municipal Subdivision Regulations</i>	<i>Sign Ordinances</i>	<i>Open Space Plan (Municipal)</i>	<i>Design Standards</i>	<i>Sketch Plan Review</i>	<i>Design Review Process</i>	<i>Special Use Districts</i>	<i>County Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>Chester County Circulation Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Village Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Open Space Plan</i>	<i>Historic Districts</i>	<i>Access Management Plans</i>	<i>Architectural Standards</i>
<b>Define the pedestrian area and create human scale</b>	✓	✓							✓					✓			✓
<b>Place utility lines underground</b>	✓	✓															
<b>Design and size signs appropriately</b>	✓		✓			✓	✓							✓			✓
<b>Provide varied facades</b>	✓	✓				✓	✓							✓			✓
<b>Use traditional architectural design</b>	✓		✓			✓	✓							✓			✓

# IMPLEMENTATION

## Improving Commercial Strip- Development pages 20-21



	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan (Municipal)	Design Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Locate building close to street when feasible	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓			✓			✓
Add second-story dormers and shutters to windows								✓									✓
Eliminate "dark" zone caused by overhang								✓									
Hang signs below first-floor overhang				✓			✓	✓									✓
Buffer pedestrian areas from vehicles by landscaping				✓			✓	✓									
Allow other upper-story uses in retail buildings	✓	✓							✓	✓		✓					
Design parking adjacent to street instead of building			✓				✓	✓									



**Improving  
Commercial  
Streetscapes**  
pages 22-23



	<i>Municipal Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>Municipal Zoning Ordinance</i>	<i>Municipal Subdivision Regulations</i>	<i>Sign Ordinances</i>	<i>Open Space Plan (Municipal)</i>	<i>Design Standards</i>	<i>Sketch Plan Review</i>	<i>Design Review Process</i>	<i>Special Use Districts</i>	<i>County Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>Chester County Circulation Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Village Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook</i>	<i>Chester County Open Space Plan</i>	<i>Historic Districts</i>	<i>Access Management Plans</i>	<i>Architectural Standards</i>
Require signs that create a consistent urban theme			✓				✓										✓
Place utilities underground	✓	✓															
Reduce size of and space required for road signs			✓					✓		✓							
Avoid obstructions in pedestrian areas										✓							
Buffer pedestrians from vehicles with planting strip	✓	✓															
Provide attractive and traditional street lighting fixtures		✓															✓

# IMPLEMENTATION

## Design Elements of Successful Commercial Streetscapes

pages 24-25



- Narrow streets slow traffic and help pedestrian safety
- Create an inviting pedestrian area
- On-street parking provides overflow for off-street

Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan (Municipal)	Design Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
✓	✓					✓	✓		✓	✓			✓			
✓	✓	✓				✓	✓									✓
✓	✓					✓	✓									

## Improving One-Story Commercial

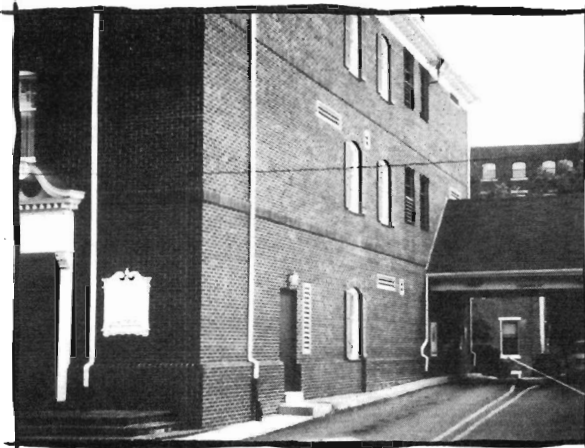
pages 26-27



- Commercial uses in ground floor of tall buildings
- Improve landscaping around one-story development
- Design and scale signs for urban environment

Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan (Municipal)	Design Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
✓	✓					✓	✓	✓								
		✓				✓	✓									
✓	✓	✓				✓	✓									✓

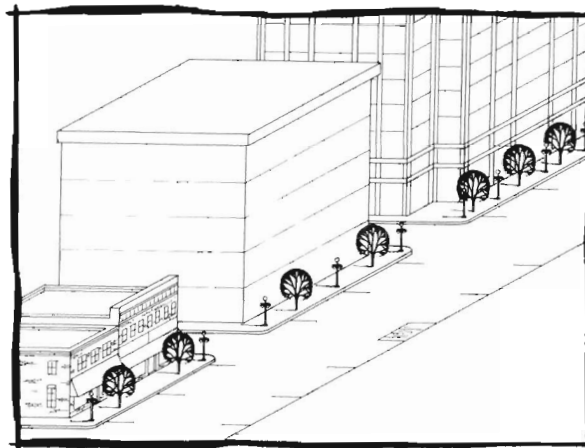
**Improving  
Commercial  
Drive-Throughs**  
pages 28-29



- Set drive-through back to avoid conflicts with street
- Drive-throughs design consistency with surroundings
- Limit drive-through entrances to secondary roads

	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan (Municipal)	Design Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Set drive-through back to avoid conflicts with street	✓					✓	✓			✓					✓		✓
Drive-throughs design consistency with surroundings						✓	✓										✓
Limit drive-through entrances to secondary roads	✓	✓								✓							

**Improving  
Transitional  
Commercial  
Development**  
pages 30-33

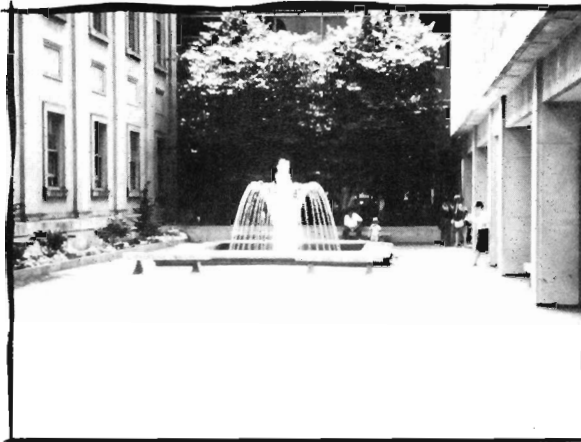


- Gradual transition between high and low-rise buildings
- Deeper vegetative buffers around high-rise buildings
- Trees and decorative lighting on commercial streetscapes

	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan (Municipal)	Design Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Gradual transition between high and low-rise buildings	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓							
Deeper vegetative buffers around high-rise buildings		✓	✓			✓	✓										
Trees and decorative lighting on commercial streetscapes	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓									✓

# IMPLEMENTATION

## Improving Monuments and Murals pages 34-35



Monuments in urban areas foster sense of community

Use low maintenance building and paving materials

- Municipal Comprehensive Plan
- Municipal Zoning Ordinance
- Municipal Subdivision Regulations
- Sign Ordinances
- Open Space Plan (Municipal)
- Design Standards
- Sketch Plan Review
- Design Review Process
- Special Use Districts
- County Comprehensive Plan
- Chester County Circulation Handbook
- Chester County Village Handbook
- Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook
- Chester County Open Space Plan
- Historic Districts
- Access Management Plans
- Architectural Standards

✓	✓									✓									
					✓	✓													

## Improving Pedestrian Facilities pages 36-37



Link commercial streets with pedestrian alleys/pathways

Design amenities create inviting pedestrian areas

Vary paving material to define pedestrian areas

Design pedestrian areas for easy maintenance

- Municipal Comprehensive Plan
- Municipal Zoning Ordinance
- Municipal Subdivision Regulations
- Sign Ordinances
- Open Space Plan (Municipal)
- Design Standards
- Sketch Plan Review
- Design Review Process
- Special Use Districts
- County Comprehensive Plan
- Chester County Circulation Handbook
- Chester County Village Handbook
- Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook
- Chester County Open Space Plan
- Historic Districts
- Access Management Plans
- Architectural Standards

✓	✓	✓								✓									
	✓							✓											✓
		✓						✓											
						✓	✓												

**Improving  
Urban Parking  
Areas**  
pages 38-39



	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan (Municipal)	Design Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Screen parking lots							✓	✓									
Define pedestrian spaces							✓	✓									
Avoid placing urban parking areas on corner lots	✓	✓							✓								

**Improving  
Fences  
in the Urban  
Environment**  
pages 40-41



	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan (Municipal)	Design Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Define public/private space edge with fencing	✓	✓						✓									
Use traditional fence styles	✓							✓									✓

**IMPLEMENTATION**

***Improving  
Design and  
Preservation of  
Train Stations***  
pages 42-43



Allow commercial uses in historic train stations

Design new train stations for easy access

- Municipal Comprehensive Plan
- Municipal Zoning Ordinance
- Municipal Subdivision Regulations
- Sign Ordinances
- Open Space Plan (Municipal)
- Design Standards
- Sketch Plan Review
- Design Review Process
- Special Use Districts
- County Comprehensive Plan
- Chester County Circulation Handbook
- Chester County Village Handbook
- Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook
- Chester County Open Space Plan
- Historic Districts
- Access Management Plans
- Architectural Standards

✓	✓													✓		
✓		✓			✓	✓										✓

***Improving  
Streetscape  
Details***  
pages 44-45

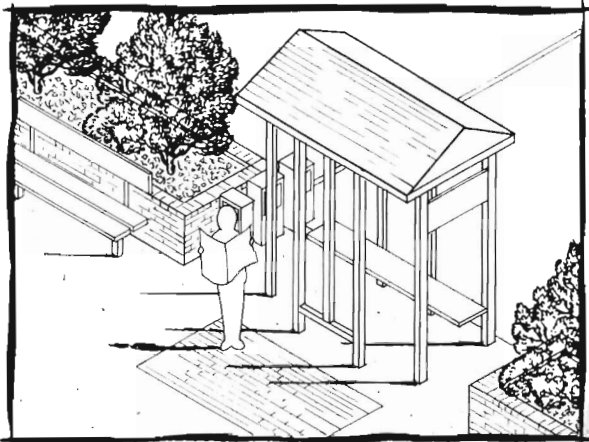


Design areas with low maintenance pedestrian amenities

- Municipal Comprehensive Plan
- Municipal Zoning Ordinance
- Municipal Subdivision Regulations
- Sign Ordinances
- Open Space Plan (Municipal)
- Design Standards
- Sketch Plan Review
- Design Review Process
- Special Use Districts
- County Comprehensive Plan
- Chester County Circulation Handbook
- Chester County Village Handbook
- Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook
- Chester County Open Space Plan
- Historic Districts
- Access Management Plans
- Architectural Standards

✓		✓														
					✓	✓										

**Improving  
Bus  
Shelters**  
pages 46-47



- Define bus shelter area with contrasting paving materials
- Maintain vegetation
- Minimize visual impact of dispensers and trash cans

Municipal Comprehensive Plan																			
Municipal Zoning Ordinance																			
Municipal Subdivision Regulations																			
Sign Ordinances																			
Open Space Plan (Municipal)																			
Design Standards																			
Sketch Plan Review																			
Design Review Process																			
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Chester County Village Handbook																			
Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook																			
Chester County Open Space Plan																			
Historic Districts																			
Access Management Plans																			
Architectural Standards																			

**Improving  
Urban  
Industrial Uses**  
pages 48-49



- Locate industrial uses away from the urban core
- Screen industrial uses from surrounding uses

Municipal Comprehensive Plan																			
Municipal Zoning Ordinance																			
Municipal Subdivision Regulations																			
Sign Ordinances																			
Open Space Plan (Municipal)																			
Design Standards																			
Sketch Plan Review																			
Design Review Process																			
Special Use Districts																			
County Comprehensive Plan																			
Chester County Circulation Handbook																			
Chester County Village Handbook																			
Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook																			
Chester County Open Space Plan																			
Historic Districts																			
Access Management Plans																			
Architectural Standards																			



**ADAPTIVE REUSE**

The development of a new use for an older building or for a building originally designed for a special or specific purpose.

**AESTHETIC**

The perception of artistic elements and/or elements in the natural or created environment that are pleasing to the eye.

**ALLEY**

A service roadway providing a secondary means of public access to abutting property and not intended for general traffic circulation.



**ARCHITECTURAL STYLES**

The characteristic form and detail of buildings, or a group of buildings or structures, including the site and landscape development, that produces a distinctive character of a particular historic period.



**BACKLIGHTING**

The characteristic form and detail of buildings, or group of buildings or structures, including the site and landscape development, that produces a distinctive character of a particular historic period.

**BOLLARD**

Any of a series of short wood, metal, or concrete posts set at intervals to allow unrestricted, barrier-free flow of pedestrians, bicycles and wheel-chairs while restricting the passage of larger vehicles such as cars or trucks.

**BUFFERS**

Open spaces, landscaped areas, fences, walls, berms, or any combination thereof used to physically separate or screen one use or property from another so as to visually shield or block noise, lights, or other nuisances.



**COURTYARD**

A court or enclosure adjacent to and/or formed by a building or group of buildings.

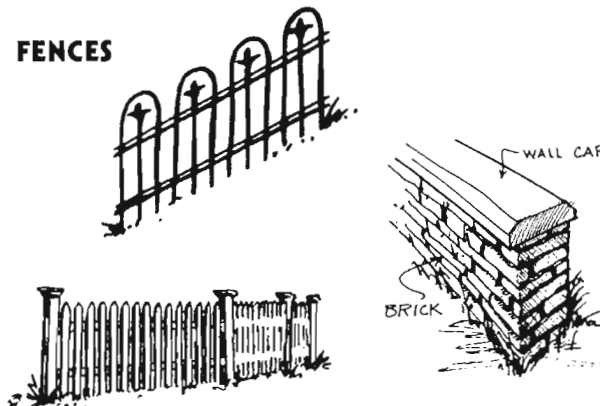
**DENSITY**

The number of dwelling units, households, or housing structures per unit of land.

**DESIGN SPEED**

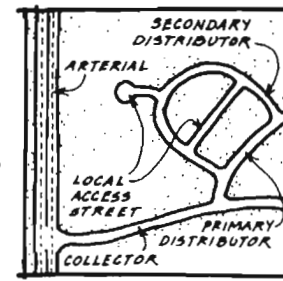
The maximum safe speed that can be maintained over a specific section of road when conditions are favorable.

**FENCES**



**FACADE**

The exterior walls of a building exposed to public view.



**FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION**

The system by which roads are classified according to their purpose, operational characteristics, and the travel demand they serve.

**GEORGIAN**

An example of early American (1720-1760) architectural style exemplified by rigid geometry, axial entrances, geometrical proportions, hipped roofs and sash windows.



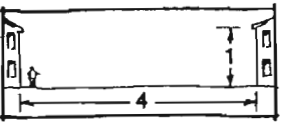
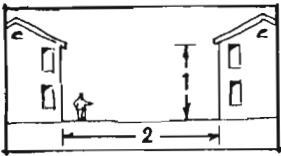
**GREEN**

A common or open area in the center of a town or village designated for conservation, preservation, recreation landscaping, or park land.



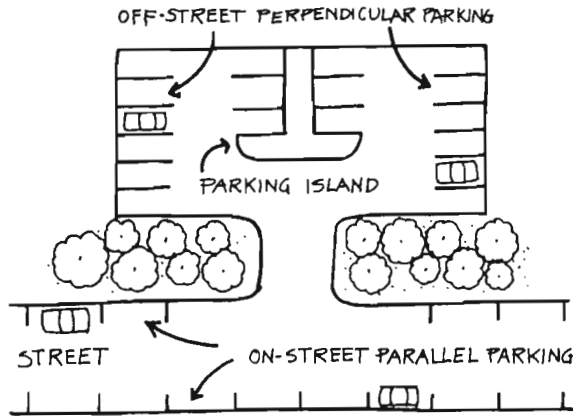
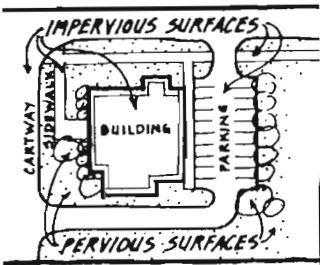
## HUMAN SCALE

The proportional relationship of a particular building, structure, or streetscape element to the human form and function.



## IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

Any material that prevents absorption of stormwater into the ground.



## OFF-STREET PARKING

A temporary storage area for a motor vehicle that is directly accessible to an access aisle and that is not located on a dedicated street right-of-way.

## ON-STREET PARKING

A temporary storage area for a motor vehicle that is located on a dedicated street right-of-way.

## PARALLEL PARKING

Vehicles parking parallel to a curb, sidewalk, or similar delineation.

## PARKING AREA

Any public or private area, under or outside of a building or structure, designed and used for parking motor vehicles including parking lots, garages, private driveways, and legally designated areas of public streets.

## PARKING ISLAND

Built-up structures, usually curbed, placed at the end or middle of parking rows as a guide to traffic and for landscaping, signing, or lighting.

## PAVING MATERIAL/PAVEMENT

A created surface, such as brick, stone, concrete, or asphalt, placed on the land to facilitate passage.



## PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY

An area, walkway etc., that is designated for use by pedestrian use because of its design, paving pattern, separation from vehicular circulation or its human scale.

## PERPENDICULAR PARKING

Vehicles parking perpendicular to a curb, sidewalk, or similar delineation.



## PLANTING STRIP

A strip or area of land within the required buffer which is landscaped with trees and shrubs and maintained accordingly.



## POCKET PARK

A small tract of land designated and used by the public for active or passive recreation, usually in an urban setting and often surrounded on some, or all, sides by commercial and/or residential development.



**PRESERVATION**

To keep an object or structure from decaying or being changed by maintaining it.

**PUBLIC AREAS**

Parks, playgrounds, trails, paths and other recreational areas and open spaces; scenic and historic sites; schools and other buildings and structures; and other places where the public is directly or indirectly invited to visit or permitted to congregate.



**RIGHT-OF-WAY**

An area of land, measured from the centerline of the cartway, that can be used by the public for travel or the location of utilities.



**SCREENING**

A method of visually shielding or obscuring one abutting or nearby structure from another by fencing, walls, berms, or densely planted vegetation.



**SETBACK**

The minimum distance between a structure and any lot line.

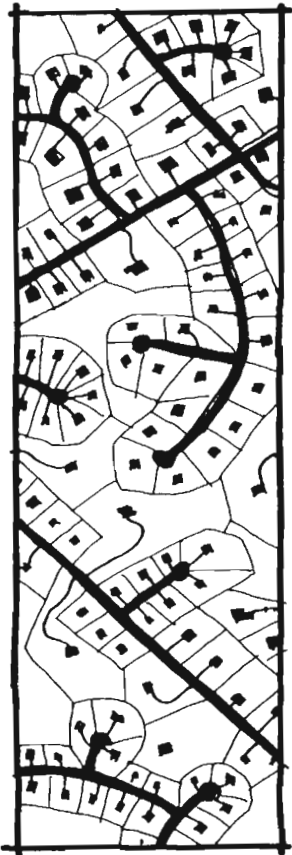
**SIGNS**

Similar to those preferred recommendations for the rural community, painted or carved wooden signs are appropriate in urban areas. However, other materials can be used if they are compatible with the design of the building and character of the area..

Letter Color	Background Color	Accent Color
Gold leaf, white, red, blue, green, cream, straw yellow	Black	White, red, green, gold leaf, blue, dark yellow
White, red	Navy blue	Black, white, straw yellow, gold leaf
Navy blue, black	Gray	White, red
Gold leaf, white, red	Emerald green	White, gold leaf, black
Gold leaf, light blue	Brown	Red, white
Navy blue, red	Cream	Black
Gold leaf, white, mustard yellow	Red	Black
Navy blue, red	Mustard yellow	Red, black

**DESIGN FACTORS FOR LETTER HEIGHT & SIGN SIZE**

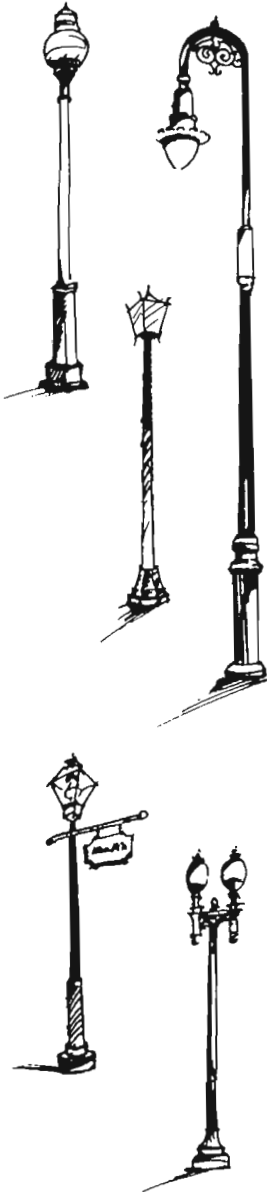
Number of lanes	Speed	Reaction Time	Distance	Letter Height	Area of Sign	
					Comm./Ind.	Rural/Res.
2	15-25 mph	8 sec.	234'	5"	15 s.f.	10 s.f.
2	30-40 mph	8 sec.	410'	8"	35 s.f.	20 s.f.
2	45-55 mph	8 sec.	586'	12"	75 s.f.	50 s.f.
4	15-25 mph	10 sec.	293'	6"	20 s.f.	15 s.f.
4	30-40 mph	10 sec.	510'	10"	50 s.f.	35 s.f.
4	45-55 mph	10 sec.	733'	15"	120 s.f.	80 s.f.
6	15-25 mph	11 sec.	322'	7"	25 s.f.	20 s.f.
6	30-40 mph	11 sec.	564'	11"	65 s.f.	40 s.f.
6	45-55 mph	11 sec.	806'	16"	130 s.f.	90 s.f.
expr.	50-55+ mph	12 sec.	1,056'	21"	200 s.f.	150 s.f.



**SPRAWL**

Unplanned or disorderly development spread over a broad area.

**STREET LIGHTING**



**STREETSCAPE**

A design term referring to all the elements that constitute the physical makeup of a street and that, as a group, define its character, including building frontage, street paving, street furniture, landscaping, trees and other plantings, awnings, marquees, signs, and lighting.

**STREET TREES**

A tree along the edge of a street within the public right-of-way. The following trees are native species to Chester County:



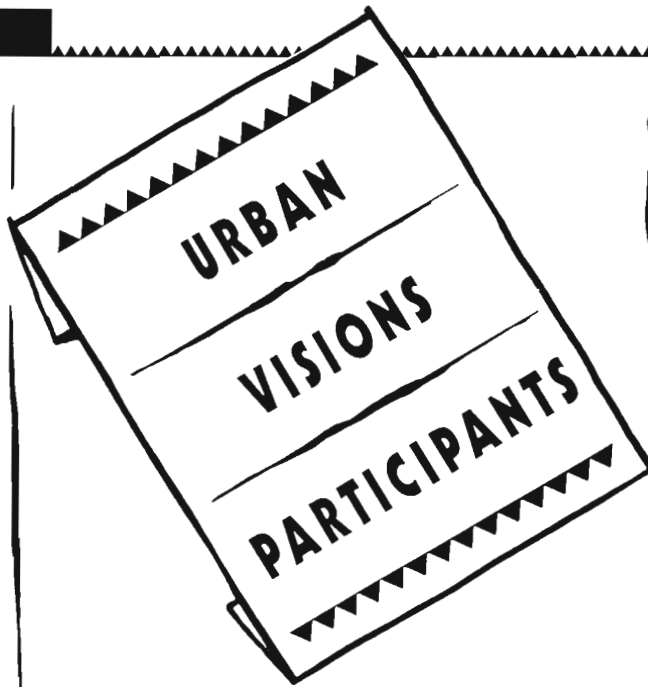
**VILLAGE**

A small, compact center of predominantly residential character but with a core of mixed-use commercial, residential, and community services.

**WALKING DISTANCE**

The distance from a residence to a specified commercial, institutional, or recreational use an average person would be willing to walk.

# APPENDIX



Milt Allen  
CAPP Board  
♦  
Louis Amici  
Phoenixville Borough Council  
♦  
Paul Andriole  
Oxford  
♦  
Louis Beccaria  
S. Houston Trust  
♦  
Charles Berger  
Phoenixville Borough Planning Commission  
♦  
Elwyn Bloodgood  
Malvern Borough Council  
♦  
Taylor Boyd  
Spring City Borough Planning Commission  
♦  
Herman Breuninger  
Calm Township Commissioner  
♦  
Michael Burg  
Tredyffrin Township Planning Commission  
♦  
Tamara Cansler  
Cansler Investment Group  
♦  
Thomas Carnevale  
Phoenixville Borough Planning Commission  
♦  
Anne Carroll  
West Chester Borough Council

Polly Chalfant  
Newlin Township  
♦  
Darlene Clapp  
West Chester  
♦  
Blaine Clemens  
CAPP Board  
♦  
Barbara Cohen  
Phoenixville Chamber of Commerce  
♦  
Greg DePedro  
Coatesville Flower Shop

Glenn Diehl  
West Chester  
♦  
Judy DiFilippo  
Tredyffrin Township Board of Supervisors  
♦  
Russell Doyle  
Oxford Borough Council  
♦  
David Evans  
Phoenixville Chamber of Commerce  
♦  
Dr. Christopher Fiorentino  
West Chester Chamber of Commerce  
♦  
Denis Forrest  
Honey Brook Borough Zoning Officer  
♦  
Carl Gregson  
Modena Borough Council  
♦  
Judith Haupt  
Exton  
♦  
Regina Horton  
CAPP  
♦  
Charles Hossack  
Lukens, Inc.  
♦  
Mary Houlihan  
♦  
Edward Hunter-Ensor  
Phoenixville Borough Planning Commission

The County Commissioners and the Planning Commission wish to thank all those who participated in the Urban Vision Survey and the Urban Vision Evaluation workshops. Over 200 individuals representing the Urban community were invited to attend. The contributions made by these individuals helped in the development of the URBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE

- Gail Jackson  
Coatesville School District
- ◆
- Gerald Jochim  
Parkesburg Borough Zoning Officer
- ◆
- James Kennedy  
South Coatesville Borough Mayor
- ◆
- Gretchen Kiernan  
Tredyffrin Township Historic and Architectural Review Board
- ◆
- Trish Kreek  
Tredyffrin Township Planning Commission
- ◆
- Paul Kusniercyk  
Modena
- ◆
- Tony Lyons  
Community Builders
- ◆
- Jack Loew  
Hough-Loew Assoc. Inc.
- ◆
- Robert McNeal  
Penguin Industries
- ◆
- John Meicht  
West Chester
- ◆
- Gabriel Milanese  
South Coatesville Borough Planning Commission
- ◆
- Sharon Nesbitt  
West Grove Borough Council

- John Newton  
Highland Corporate Center
- ◆
- Dennis O'Neil  
Coatesville
- ◆
- Rev. Mark Oliver  
Presbyterian Church
- ◆
- Teena Pescatore  
Phoenixville Borough Planning Commission
- ◆
- Linda Pyle  
Town Watch

- Cynthia Quinn  
Western Chester County Chamber of Commerce
- ◆
- Ted Reed  
City of Coatesville Authority
- ◆
- Anna Simpson  
Coatesville City Planning Commission
- ◆
- Illaria Steele  
Caln Township Commissioner
- ◆
- James Sumner  
Oxford Borough Council
- ◆
- Mary Louise Till  
Oxford Borough Council
- ◆
- Donald Weirbach  
Valley Township Planning Commission
- ◆
- Carol Wendel  
Southern Chester County Chamber of Commerce
- ◆
- Chuck Wilson  
Thornbury Township Board of Supervisors
- ◆
- Andy Witman  
Downtown Borough Planning Commission
- ◆
- Terry Woodman  
Tredyffrin Township Assistant Manager

# APPENDIX

## VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY FORM

Each participant was asked to view 160 slide images and score them based on their positive or negative preference from -10 to +10. The 20-question responses were also recorded on the VPS™ form. The form and concept are trademarks of A. Nelessen Associates, Inc., Princeton, NJ.

### Visual Preference Survey\*

\* Trademark of A. Nelessen Associates, Inc, Princeton N.J.

Tray

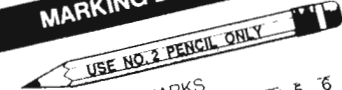
1 2 3 4 5

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### MARKING DIRECTIONS



- MAKE DARK MARKS
- EXAMPLE: I 2 ■ 4 5 6
- ERASE COMPLETELY TO CHANGE
- CODE ID NUMBER AT LEFT BY FILLING IN THE APPROPRIATE BOXES

-10

NEGATIVE

0

POSITIVE

+10

1	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
2	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
3	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
4	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
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24	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
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**RESPONSE TO URBAN VISIONS QUESTIONNAIRE**

**A**s part of the URBAN Visions Survey, participants selected their preferences to 20 questions. The responses to the questions were used in conjunction with the numerical rating of the slide images to stimulate dialogue and reach conclusions in the URBAN Vision Evaluation Workshop. The preference most frequently expressed for each question is printed in **BOLD ITALICS, AND IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS**.

1. Which one choice best describes the quality of life in URBAN Chester County?

- A. Outstanding
- B. Excellent
- C. GOOD**
- D. Fair
- E. Poor

2. What do you like best about URBAN Chester County?

- A. CONVENIENT LOCATION TO WORK/SHOPPING**
- B. Recreation/Parks
- C. Sense of community
- D. Appearance
- E. Open space

3. What do you like least about URBAN Chester County?

- A. TRAFFIC**
- B. Sense of community
- C. Appearance
- D. Safety/Security
- E. Parking

4. The newer construction in URBAN Chester County is generally attractive and compatible with surrounding older structures. Do you:

- A. Strongly agree
- B. Agree
- C. NEUTRAL**
- D. DISAGREE**
- E. Strongly disagree

5. The character of our URBAN communities is adequately protected by land use regulations. Do you:

- A. Strongly agree
- B. Agree
- C. Neutral
- D. DISAGREE**
- E. Strongly disagree

6. Which of the following do you feel best describes what the County is best known for today?

- A. The suburban residential bedroom community.
- B. A rural/farm community.
- C. An employment center.
- D. A COMMUNITY EVOLVING FROM RURAL TO SUBURBAN.**
- E. Viable Urban Communities

7. Where in the County should future development be encouraged?

- A. VILLAGES AND BOROUGHES**
- B. URBAN TOWNSHIPS**
- C. Suburban townships
- D. Rural townships
- E. Other

8. Should URBAN communities in Chester County accept additional development if it would help preserve open spaces such as wetlands, farm land and wildlife habitat elsewhere in the County?

- A. YES
- B. No

9. Assuming that your community will continue to develop, what type of development would be most acceptable?

- A. Single family residential
- B. Multifamily residential
- C. Office
- D. Retail/Commercial
- E. A MIX OF RESIDENTIAL AND NONRESIDENTIAL USES**

## APPENDIX

10. Future nonresidential development in Chester County should target...?

- A. *PROFESSIONAL AND OFFICE DEVELOPMENT*
- B. Retail commercial development
- C. Services
- D. Industrial development

11. What is the best approach to protecting the historic character in our urban areas as development continues?

- A. Purchase valuable historic resources directly.
- B. *PROVIDE INCENTIVES TO DEVELOPERS TO MAINTAIN FACADES AND OTHER HISTORIC RESOURCES.*
- C. Regulate design of new buildings in historic areas.
- D. Do nothing to protect historic character.

12. How can URBAN Chester County municipalities best accommodate future residential development?

- A. Encourage primarily single family housing.
- B. Encourage primarily multifamily housing.
- C. Encourage a mix of single family and multifamily housing.
- D. *ENCOURAGE HOUSING IN MIXED USE DEVELOPMENTS ALONG WITH SHOPPING AND/OR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT.*
- E. Encourage a variety of lot sizes and building types.

13. Of the following, which is the most important area for officials to focus transportation resources in our urban areas?

- A. Build more roads for general purpose traffic.
- B. Build more roads only for buses and carpools.
- C. Convert some existing lanes to buses and carpool only.
- D. *DEVELOP PROGRAMS AND INCENTIVES TO PROMOTE USE OF CARPOOLS AND PUBLIC TRANSIT.*
- E. Build more facilities, such as sidewalks and bike trails, to encourage alternative means of travel.

14. It is desirable that municipalities plan for concentrations of residential and commercial development to enhance the feasibility of public transit?  
Do you:

- A. *STRONGLY AGREE*
- B. *AGREE*
- C. Neutral
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly disagree

15. Which of the following types of road systems do you feel would work best for getting around in the URBAN portions of Chester County by private automobile?

- A. *A GRID SYSTEM (SUCH AS FOUND IN PHILADELPHIA AND BOROUGHES) WHERE THERE ARE MORE BUT SMALLER THROUGH STREETS WHICH PROVIDE MORE OPTIONS FOR GOING TO A DESTINATION, BUT ALSO MORE INTERSECTIONS AND LOWER SPEED LIMITS.*
- B. A system of dead end cul-de-sac and major roads which provide fewer options for going to a destination, but also fewer intersections and high speed limits.
- C. I feel they both are about the same.
- D. No opinion.

16. As Chester County develops, on which of the following capital facilities do you think municipalities will most need to focus its resources?

- A. Parks, recreation and cultural arts programs
- B. Schools
- C. *WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS*
- D. Emergency and public safety services
- E. Other:



**17. As development continues in and immediately around Chester County’s URBAN centers, what scale of development is most appropriate?**

- A. *SIMILAR TO EXISTING URBAN COMMUNITIES.*
- B. More intensive urban development, with more mid-rise and high-rise buildings (building “up,” rather than “out”).
- C. Less intensive, more auto oriented development, similar to suburban areas.
- D. Other

**18. What is your vision for the ideal relationship between your home and daily shopping needs? I would like:**

- A. *MY HOME TO BE WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF MOST OF MY DAILY SHOPPING NEEDS.*
- B. My home to be within walking distance of public transportation which would take me to my daily shopping needs.
- C. *MY HOME TO BE LOCATED IN AN AREA SEPARATE FROM MY DAILY SHOPPING NEEDS, REQUIRING TRAVEL BY PRIVATE AUTOMOBILE.*
- D. *TO LIVE IN A MIXED-USE AREA WHERE MY DAILY SHOPPING NEEDS WERE LOCATED IN THE SAME VICINITY AS MY HOME.*

**19. What do you think is the most important challenge the County will face as it continues to develop?**

- A. Meeting transportation needs.
- B. Protecting the environment/preserving open space.
- C. Meeting the need for affordable housing and human services.
- D. Meeting capital facilities requirements.
- E. *REVITALIZING URBAN CENTERS.*

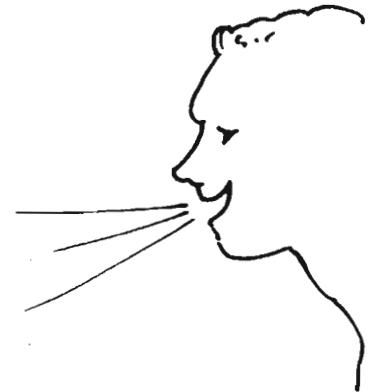
**20. A county comprehensive plan will help municipalities to better coordinate land development decision making. Do you:**

- A. Strongly agree
- B. *AGREE*
- C. Neutral
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly disagree

The following list of comments and observations were expressed by the participants in the second URBAN Visions Workshop. This provided, in part, a basis for developing the recommendations for the URBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE.

### URBAN CHESTER COUNTY IS TO ME:

- ◆ *Deterioration in the “Downtown” and other very dense areas are generally not appealing in terms of appearance and character.*
- ◆ *Streams and hills and greenery; charming and classic style homes in neighborhoods and small towns with shops and homeowners.*
- ◆ *A safe and an environmentally safe place to live.*
- ◆ *Facing accelerated growth, which needs to be controlled; generally a good blend.*
- ◆ *Presently hodge-podge of commercial and residential; would like more uniformity of uses to transition one use to the other.*
- ◆ *Full of potential for improvement. We have a strong historic character which needs to be complemented with conscientious new development that blends well while preserving this character.*
- ◆ *Not attractive enough; lacks imagination and creativity and sense of aesthetics; lacks greenery.*
- ◆ *Positive and it will be better in the future.*
- ◆ *Twenty years behind in planning. This was a wonderful event and it was nice to be able to offer input; I feel our County Planning Commission is now on the right track as evidenced by their untiring effort and sincerity regarding the future.*



- ◆ *Shopping and dining alternatives to the mall; grants to adaptively reuse/upgrade sites; green space woven into the community; planning for mass transit alternatives; tourist train between Valley Forge and Phoenixville.*
- ◆ *Trying to introduce more public transportation, more pedestrian interaction with urban environment and subsequently reducing suburban traffic congestion.*
- ◆ *Open enough to be comfortable in, but active enough to be exciting to live in.*
- ◆ *Something that requires the County's full attention in order to revitalize the existing commercial centers and preserve this open space of rural Chester County.*
- ◆ *Diverse yet unique, each HUB needs individual attention to be saved.*
- ◆ *Series of small specialty shops; problems with finding parking; beautiful, old historical buildings.*
- ◆ *A comfortable inter-mix of the densely populated areas and the needs for the community where trying to reap the "texture" of the urban area, while keeping in mind that the urban centers are varied from both ends of the spectrum.*
- ◆ *Well-designed, walkable, pedestrian-oriented, design for the pedestrian first, and all the other design issues will fall into place; work the car access into the design after the pedestrian.*





- ◆ *An area that I will probably leave at my retirement because I do not see it as evolving to an “easy living” place.*
- ◆ *Center for personal service business; center for high density residential, entertainment and cultural centers.*
- ◆ *Country; beautiful countryside, yet close to the city to go in and visit, yet come back to the country. I think King Ranch and area around Unionville is wonderful.*
- ◆ *Older houses, mature tree lined streets, green lawns, houses set back, flowers, flowering trees, signs restrained, shaded seating areas, brick and stone buildings interspersed with frame.*
- ◆ *Old brick buildings of human scale, with store fronts on the main street, punctuated by an occasional monument or official building, a park is relatively nearby, with mature trees.*
- ◆ *In dire need of this comprehensive idea you have presented, however, politics and money, and county and state grants enter in to the equation, borough planning commission should be aware of which vision it is attempting to accomplish.*
- ◆ *Becoming a “dead issue;” need motivational ideas to revive the urban areas; need to have a better cross section of population to discuss issues.*
- ◆ *In need of more high density residential facilities in order to retail open space. If we can't control the influx of people (and we can't), at least we can try to keep this from sprawling all over the landscape. No more large limited access highways which will string out development all over the countryside and encourage automobile commuting.*



- ◆ *Has some wonderful urban areas-city of West Chester is a good example-many attractive renovated or updated neighborhoods and commercial buildings. Route 30 in Devon is a poor example because of lack of compatible building; no real appealing design, although some areas are improving.*
- ◆ *A blend of old with the new; rehabilitation and new construction; a planning process which includes public input. We can retain the County's rural flavor in an urban environment; our biggest challenge will be in building manufacturing areas to blend with aesthetic desires of our residents.*
- ◆ *Community living in a dense environment; opportunities to engage in a variety of activities in a small geographical area: living, walking, shopping, recreating, eating, etc. A chance to experience history in a vital, growing setting. Thank you for these sessions. They have helped me refine my own vision.*



**RESIDENTIAL SINGLE FAMILY**



**+6.0**  
Traditional Single Family Homes  
Slide #1



**+3.06**  
Small Single Family Homes  
Slide #4



**+5.88**  
Single Homes with/Setback  
Slide #7



**+4.02**  
Single Family Homes  
Slide #2



**+2.87**  
Small Single Family Homes  
Slide #5



**+4.20**  
Single Family Homes - Facade  
Slide #8



**+3.60**  
Large Single Family Homes  
Slide #3



**+2.79**  
Manufactured Homes  
Slide #6



**+4.38**  
Single Family Homes - Narrow Lot  
Slide #9

**RESIDENTIAL TOWNHOUSE AND MULTI-FAMILY**



+4.88  
Rowhouse  
Slide #10



-1.24  
Townhouse with Parking  
Slide #15



+3.40  
Apartment/Commercial  
Slide #20



+3.84  
Setback Rowhouse  
Slide #11



-3.96  
Apartments - Corner  
Slide #16



+3.51  
Three-Story Multi-Family  
Slide #21



+1.96  
Small Rowhouse  
Slide #12



-3.73  
Mid-Rise Apartments\Parking  
Slide #17



+4.00  
Townhouse/Apartment  
Slide #22



-0.06  
Rowhouses with Garages  
Slide #13



-1.71  
Mid-Rise Apartments  
Slide #18



-0.21  
Twins  
Slide #14



+2.00  
Three-Story Apartments  
Slide #19

# APPENDIX

## ALLEYS



-5.19  
Commercial/Residential Alley  
Slide #23



-1.46  
Residential Alley - Garages  
Slide #24

## FACADES \ STREETSAPES



+5.60  
Commercial Facade  
Slide #25



+4.50  
Commercial Facade  
Slide #26



+3.40  
Commercial Facade  
Slide #27



+3.15  
Commercial Sidewalk Facade  
Slide #28



-3.44  
Commercial Facade  
Slide #29

## SIGNS



-3.19  
Storefront Signs  
Slide #30



-2.10  
Streetscape with Sign  
Slide #31



+3.50  
Commercial Facade  
Slide #32



+5.31  
Facade Projecting Sign  
Slide #33



## FENCES



+4.92  
Picket Fence  
Slide #34



+4.13  
Wrought Iron Fence  
Slide #35



+1.42  
Stockade Fence/Stucco Wall  
Slide #36

## COMMERCIAL



-2.13  
Commercial with High-Rise  
Slide #37



-1.71  
One-Story Streetscape  
Slide #38



+1.92  
Commercial Drive-Through  
Slide #39



+2.21  
Traditional Streetscape  
Slide #40



-1.33  
Changing Streetscape  
Slide #41

## GATHERING AREAS



+6.33  
Shaded Sitting Area  
Slide #42



+6.33  
Shaded Sitting Area  
Slide #43



+3.77  
Open/Town Square  
Slide #44



+4.13  
Courtyard with Fountain  
Slide #45



+4.51  
Park with Tall Monument  
Slide #46

**PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES**



+4.58  
Commercial Courtyard  
Slide #47



+4.18  
Commercial Pedestrian Alley  
Slide #48



+2.48  
Crosswalk  
Slide #49



+3.71  
Pedestrian Main Street  
Slide #50

**PARKING**



-2.63  
Surface Parking  
Slide #51



-1.90  
Parking Garage  
Slide #52



+1.10  
Surface Parking with Wall  
Slide #53



+2.76  
Parking Courtyard  
Slide #54

**STREETS**



+4.31  
Residential Street  
Slide #55



+3.12  
Streetscape with Trees  
Slide #56



-0.77  
Intersection  
Slide #57

## TRAIN STATIONS



+4.88  
Train Station  
Slide #58



+0.58  
Train Station  
Slide #59

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION



+3.06  
Office Conversion  
Slide #66

## DETAILS



-0.02  
Commercial Facade  
Slide #60



0.00  
Mural  
Slide #63

## INDUSTRIAL



-3.69  
Industrial Facility  
Slide #67



+3.12  
Large Tree Pots  
Slide #61



+4.43  
Courtyard Garden  
Slide #64

## KENTLANDS



-2.50  
Bus Shelter  
Slide #62



+2.62  
Artistic Doorway  
Slide #65



+5.04  
Kentlands  
Slide #68

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