
CHAPTER EIGHT: COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES

A person's perception of his or her community comes from experiences that are in part shaped by the structure and elements of the public realm. A tree-lined street provides peaceful setting for evening walks. Main Street and Park Avenue host festive community parades. The mere presence of religious and civic buildings can both comfort and inspire as well as historic sites recalling the roots to our past. All of these elements of the built environment serve a purpose greater than the bricks, mortar, or landscaping from which they are made. It is this ability of the man-made environment to evoke emotional responses that obligates us to manage the public realm in a responsible and thoughtful manner.

The public realm is the network of places, spaces, and buildings of which many people in the community feel a part. It is not enough for new development solely to provide good roads, expand water and sewer systems, or meet building codes. New development should respect the qualities of the town and contribute new features designed to be compatible with the old, and contribute to citizens pride in their community.

The Master Plan can play a central guiding role in enhancing the public realm by speaking generally as to the existing qualities in order to preserve them, by identifying needed missing elements of the community and planning for their provision, and by requiring future growth to respect and contribute to the Town character.

DESIGNING FOR THE SHARED VISION OF THE COMMUNITY

In response to the policy recommendations set forth in the 2003 Comprehensive Master Plan, The Town adopted Design Guidelines in 2010. *The Design Guidelines: Additions and New Construction for Town of Mount Airy Maryland*, and the companion document *Design Guidelines: Rehabilitation of Historic Properties in Town of Mount Airy, Maryland* were created.

Through the Design Guidelines, the community has identified the vision, as well as the specific design elements and values that are desired. This vision is supported by the findings revealed in the 2008 Mount Airy Town Survey.

While the primary objective of the guidelines is to encourage aesthetic compatibility in building design, the same values extend to overall site design, public walks, landscaping, signage, and

roadway connections. These documents serve as descriptive guiding principles that work in concert with the Subdivision and Zoning Regulations to maximize the value benefits of both form and function.

CHAPTER EIGHT: MAJOR GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: Reinforce the significance of Main Street to the Community by creating "gateways" to Main Street, encouraging streetscape improvements, supporting downtown preservation, and revitalization opportunities. Partner with the SHA for continued improvements to Main Street.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- Designate the Main Street and Center Street Corridor as priority development areas.
- Concentrate the placement of pedestrian and bikeways that connect to the Town Center.

GOAL 2: Develop a linear park along an east-west route to interconnect new development, existing Town parks, the historic B & O Railroad right-of-way, and the South Branch of the Patapsco River.

GOAL 3: Improve the quality of new development through greater attention to site development, enhanced streetscapes and lot designs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- Incorporate the Design Guidelines principles into all proposed site development plans.
- Employ all available tools to promote and enhance the Town's cultural and historic resources and structures.
- Reinforce the "small town" attribute in the design in new commercial, residential, and mixed use areas.
- Showcase local talent and incorporate into the community design.
- Include a variety of artwork and arts activities in public places, such as parks, public buildings and plazas.
- Support efforts to expand arts resources in the community, such as arts and crafts learning opportunities, art exhibits, shows, and competitions

- Partner with local businesses to showcase community artwork.
- Partner with local businesses, residents and developers to design the gateway corridors of the community so that that will become attractive entrances into the Town of Mount Airy.
- Design and implement a continuity of opportunity to support the Downtown area as the Town’s preferred destination.
- Develop a Route 27 Corridor Master Plan to ensure orderly and compatible development in keeping with the Town’s vision to retain its small town charm.
- Evaluate available mechanisms to secure, improve, or redevelop uninhabitable abandoned structures with significant historic value, rather than allow the demolition thereof.
- Monitor the condition and occupancy of “at-risk” buildings with significant historic value and intervene as appropriate. Develop public-private partnerships as appropriate in order to preserve important structures

GOAL 4: Review opportunities with existing neighborhood developments that will provide a measure of continuity and integration greater than currently exists within the development.