Creating Commercial Areas with Character

Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

general commercial district
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Introduction

Retailers and developers are constantly adjusting to new trends and consumer demands. They frequently build new stores or expand existing ones in response to fashion, business, and financial needs. This puts pressure on local municipalities to provide commercial zoning for new retail development, even if the community already has extensive commercial areas.

This publication is designed to help municipalities get the best commercial development they can. The publication is divided into four distinct parts. Part 1 focuses on critical planning issues, including how much commercial zoning to have and where to put this zoning. Part 2 illustrates important design elements for good commercial development. Part 3 contains the model general commercial ordinance, which incorporates the design elements described in Part 2. Part 4, the Appendices, contains supplemental zoning and subdivision ordinance standards.

Benefits of Appropriate Commercial Zoning

Many of Montgomery County’s commercial zoning ordinances were written before the latest retail trends began. Local municipalities can stay on top of these trends by updating their commercial zoning to get the type of development they want.

- Good commercial zoning provides an appropriate amount of land for commercial development, based on the municipality’s goals.

Municipalities should decide how much commercial development they want. Sometimes, when the market is allowed to build as much retail space as possible, the retail sector gets overbuilt. This is primarily a problem in other parts of the country, but has occurred in southern New Jersey, where there are many vacant retail sites.

Some municipalities welcome commercial zoning for the tax revenue benefits. While it is true that retail commercial zoning has a strong positive fiscal impact on school districts, it often has a slight negative fiscal impact on municipal government, partially due to the need for additional police coverage.

- Retail areas should be concentrated in nodes on busy roads where they will have a minimal impact on residential neighborhoods.

Too often, commercial zoning is stripped out along roads, which creates traffic conflicts and increases the number of residential properties adversely impacted by the retail development.

- Commercial development must be compatible with its surroundings. Through building design and landscaping standards, commercial zoning can require new retail development to be compatible with neighboring downtown, village, and residential properties.

There are many examples around the county of retail development that clashes with its surroundings, such as a gas station in the middle of a downtown or highway commercial uses in a residential neighborhood.
Well-designed retail development should allow people to walk, take transit, or drive safely to the store.

Much of the county’s retail commercial development is unwalkable from neighboring residential properties or transit stops. And, many existing commercial uses have multiple driveways and confusing entrance layouts that create traffic congestion and hazards.

Good commercial zoning must meet the requirements of the state Municipalities Planning Code. This Code requires all municipalities or multi-municipal regions to provide the full range of zoning classifications, including commercial zoning.

Types of Retail Centers

Before the 1950s, almost all retail development was in downtown or village settings. Since then, retail has changed dramatically, becoming very car oriented. New retail development built in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s falls into four general categories:

- Stand-alone stores, which are often developed sequentially along busy arterial roads.
- Neighborhood shopping centers, which typically include a supermarket as the anchor store, with a number of personal service and convenience stores as well.
- Community shopping centers, which originally included one or more junior department stores as anchors, but now may include a supermarket as well, and/or a home improvement store or some other big box retailer.
- Regional malls, which might include one to four major department store anchors, while super-regional malls would include three or more major department store anchors with significant additional retail space. Regional malls in
Montgomery County include Plymouth Meeting Mall, Willow Grove Mall, and Montgomery Mall. Montgomery County has one super-regional mall, the King of Prussia Court and Plaza.

Over the last few decades, the amount of retail space per person in the nation and county has continuously gone up, while the amount of money spent per square foot has gone down.

During the last ten to twenty years, new types of retail centers have appeared, including:

- Power centers, which typically include multiple big box retailers offering different products such as a Circuit City, Borders Book store, Home Depot, and Old Navy clothing store. These big box retailers are also called category killers because they specialize in one type of product and often eliminate smaller specialty stores. The Metroplex in Plymouth and the Montgomery Square Shopping Center in Montgomeryville are examples of Power Centers.

- Outlet malls, which consist of a number of retailers that are discount versions of full line manufacturers such as Timberland, Nike, Polo, Black & Decker, etc.

- Lifestyle centers, the latest retail incarnation, which are often designed around a “Main Street” or outdoor pedestrian plazas. They usually include a combination of big box stores, smaller retailers, entertainment retailers, restaurants, and movie theaters. Lifestyle centers with entertainment uses and themes are one market response to increasing consumer spending on entertainment.
Future Trends

The future of retail development is difficult to predict, except to note that retail areas will evolve and change. Over the last 100 or more years, retail development and shopping trends have been incredibly dynamic. A particular store or chain might be dominant one decade and bankrupt the next. A type of shopping, such as indoor malls, might be the only way to shop in one year and then one of many choices in later years.

Because of the dynamic nature of retail development, local municipalities should expect their retail areas to change. To prepare for this change, municipalities should adopt up-to-date commercial zoning requirements, using the model ordinance in this report as a guide."
planning for retail development
Part 1
Planning for Retail Development

Part 1 of this publication discusses important planning issues for retail commercial zoning. Before writing a commercial zoning ordinance, municipalities should consider the desired character for the zoning district, possible locations of the district, and the appropriate size of the district. All of these issues can affect specific zoning standards.
Types of Commercial Zoning Districts

When planning for retail uses, municipal officials should examine the character of their community and adopt commercial zoning that is appropriate for the existing or desired character. Some areas, such as traditional downtowns and villages, should never have general commercial zoning applied to them. These distinct places need specialized zoning. Other areas, such as transitional areas near residences, might warrant a limited commercial approach. Different types of commercial zoning are described below. This publication focuses on one in particular - general commercial zoning.

There are six types of commercial zoning districts—Town Center, Village Commercial, Office Commercial, Limited Commercial, General Commercial, and Shopping Center districts. The General Commercial district is usually the least restrictive overall. The Office Commercial district is the most restrictive for permitted uses, while the Village Commercial and Town Center districts usually have the most restrictive site design and bulk requirements.

**Town Center** - This district, which is most appropriate for historic downtown areas, is intended to encourage walking. Buildings are typically close to the street with ground floor windows and a front door on the street. (The county’s 2006 model ordinance, *Creating New Opportunities, Town Center District*, provides a guide for town center zoning.)

**Village Commercial** - This zoning district is designed to retain a village atmosphere. This can be done by preserving existing historic buildings and requiring new development to match the village character. Residential uses and commercial establishments that do not attract large volumes of traffic or continuous customer turnover are permitted. (The county’s 2000 model ordinance, *Creating a Small Town Character, Model Ordinance for Mixed Use Development*, has standards that can be used for village commercial zoning.)

**Office Commercial** - This district typically allow professional and medical office uses. Office Commercial districts may have additional landscaping, parking, and building requirements that Limited and General Commercial zoning districts lack. (The county’s 2006 publication, *Advisory Guidelines for the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan*, describes possible office commercial or limited commercial standards in the Limited Commercial-Residential section.)
Types of Commercial Zoning

**Limited Commercial** - This zoning district is less restrictive than either the Village or Office Commercial districts, but more restrictive than General Commercial zoning. Limited Commercial districts allows a wider range of permitted uses than Office Commercial zoning, such as personal service shops and small scale retail stores. Auto-oriented uses and large stores are usually prohibited. Limited Commercial districts generally have landscaping, driveway, parking and building design requirements that are more restrictive than those found in General Commercial districts. (The model ordinance in this publication for general commercial zoning can be modified to create a limited commercial district.)

**General Commercial** - This zoning district is the most common type of commercial zoning district, and it allows the widest range of permitted uses. These uses include more intense types of commercial establishments such as gas stations, fast food restaurants, car washes, new and used car lots, or movie theaters. Typically, General Commercial zoning ordinances also contain provisions for shopping centers, usually for community and neighborhood level shopping centers.

**Shopping Center** - Shopping center districts are typically used for large scale community shopping centers, power centers, lifestyle centers, and malls. (The county’s 2006 publication, *Advisory Guidelines for the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan*, 2006, describes possible shopping center standards under the Regional Shopping District section.)
Montgomery County’s 2005 comprehensive plan - *Shaping Our Future: A Comprehensive Plan for Montgomery County* - provides local municipalities with guidance on land use policy. It can be used to determine the most appropriate places for general commercial zoning.

The land use map in the comprehensive plan groups land uses by the intensity, function, and characteristics of an area. This map includes one land use category - the Community Mixed Use and Services land use - that is the most appropriate area for a General Commercial district. These areas are local community focal points that typically have a significant retail or institutional element with surrounding residential uses. Community Mixed Use and Services areas are located on major roads within the community and usually have a suburban character.

The Suburban Center land use category might also contain general commercial zoning as well as shopping center zoning. Over time, the general commercial areas in Suburban Centers might intensify, becoming office developments, mixed use developments, or regional shopping.

Areas chosen for general commercial zoning should be consistent with the county and municipal comprehensive plans.
This drug store in Narberth was required to be compatible with a historic Friends Meeting House across the street.

Because of the proximity of nearby downtown areas, Lower Merion encourages buildings to be pedestrian-friendly by bringing them up to the street.

The zoning in Lower Salford, a rural/suburban township, that permitted this car wash requires pitched roofs to fit in with abutting homes and extensive green space to reflect the semi-rural character.

Determining Desired Character

Individual communities have a choice concerning the character of their general commercial areas. Some communities may prefer a more automobile oriented commercial setting, while other communities may prefer a more pedestrian centered commercial atmosphere. Pedestrian oriented areas might require buildings to be close to the street, with parking to the side, while auto-oriented commercial areas might allow some parking in front of buildings.

Good commercial developments should fit harmoniously into the visual fabric of the community. This can be achieved by encouraging architectural styles and treatments that are consistent with the surrounding area. These might include pitched roofs and the use of specific building materials.

In addition to architectural style, there are some basic ordinance requirements that can reflect the character of a community. For example, a rural community might choose a relatively low impervious coverage, perhaps 50%; a more urban community might choose a higher one, perhaps 85%; and a suburban community might choose something in between, such as 70%.
Over the last 40 to 50 years, commercial development has moved from central core areas of communities to outlying areas. This has often resulted in long strips of development along major highways.

The alternative to this commercial development pattern is for large commercial uses to be built in clusters. This minimizes traffic congestion on main roads by reducing the length of road impacted by commercial driveways.

General commercial areas should be concentrated in nodes at the intersection of two arterial streets or possibly the intersection of an arterial and collector street.

In addition, commercial areas should be next to towns and higher density residential areas; however, they should not be in historic downtowns or village areas. These places should have town center or village commercial zoning.

Generally, Upper Dublin’s retail commercial areas are concentrated in nodes rather than stripped out along roads.

The Dresher Triangle retail commercial area in Upper Dublin is relatively compact.
Each community must determine its desired scale of development, based on several factors—community size; proximity to other significant commercial development; shopping habits of municipal residents; access to major highways; market forces; and community goals.

Individual communities must also decide if their customer base would realistically support a specific scale of commercial development. To do this, communities may want to conduct a formal market study to determine retail demand in the community.

Market studies help communities determine whether they can be a regional, community, or neighborhood draw, and therefore help determine the amount of land to zone for general commercial development. To be a regional draw, a municipality will zone much more land for commercial uses than it would if only serving local neighborhood needs.

Even if it has the capacity to support a specific level of commercial development, a community may not wish to zone for that level of development because the unique character and desires of residents call for a different type of commercial development.
Planning for Traffic Impacts

To limit potential traffic impacts on existing streets and residential neighborhoods, general commercial zoning should be concentrated in nodes at intersections of arterial streets.

When a development occurs on a state-owned road, PennDOT will require the applicant to make improvements along its frontage to maintain the same level of service on the road. However, sometimes proposed retail developments are not on state roads or will impact roads not directly adjacent to the development. For these situations, municipalities can take a number of steps, including:

- Requiring traffic studies for proposed retail developments. These studies can be used in negotiations with the developer to get improvements on nearby roads that will be affected by the proposed development.
- Creating transportation impact fees. Municipalities can charge impact fees to developments in order to make off-site road improvements. To do this, communities must prepare transportation capital improvement plans, as outlined in the Municipalities Planning Code.
- Creating a Transportation Development District. Municipalities can also create transportation development districts that allow the community to assess all properties for road improvements being made within the district.
design elements

Part 2
Part 2
Design Elements

Part 2 of this publication introduces design elements that are featured throughout the General Commercial District. This section is intended to illustrate concepts of the model ordinance found in Part 3 of this publication.
Conditional Uses

Conditional uses, which are allowed by the state planning code, are permitted uses that must be specially approved by the elected governing body, which can impose extra conditions on the development for the use.

This commercial model ordinance has designated more intrusive uses, such as drive through restaurants and banks, gasoline service stations and mini-marts, car washes, and auto sales and repair establishments, as conditional uses. These more intrusive uses must meet a number of special regulations designed to limit the adverse impact of the use on adjacent properties and roads.

Some examples of these conditional use regulations include a minimum number of stacking lanes for drive-through uses; larger setbacks for gas pumps at gas stations; and soundproofing for kennels. A minimum number of stacking lanes for drive-through uses ensures adequate room for vehicles to safely maneuver. Larger setbacks for gas pumps lessen the probability of an accident while reducing the negative visual impact of these facilities. Extra soundproofing for kennels prevents these facilities from becoming a nuisance to neighboring properties.
Dimensional Standards

Dimensional standards regulate how far buildings, parking areas, and related facilities must be set back from abutting property lines. Areas for trash storage and pickup, and for loading and unloading should be set back from abutting residential properties, due to negative noise and visual impacts.

The “Dimensional Standards” section of the model ordinance contains larger setbacks from neighboring residential areas for outdoor trash storage areas, parking areas, and buildings than normally found in many commercial zoning ordinances.
Building Design Standards

Building design standards control the visual and functional impact commercial buildings have on neighboring properties. These standards focus on how well new commercial buildings fit in with the architecture of the surrounding area.

For large scale commercial buildings, these design standards require variations in facades and roof lines.

New buildings are encouraged to use materials, windows, and doors that are compatible with surrounding buildings.

Service station canopies are required to have a reasonable size, height, and appearance.
Driveway Design Standards

To reduce traffic conflicts on main roads, this ordinance limits small to medium size commercial properties to one driveway access per road. It also requires abutting commercial properties to provide interconnections between their parking areas. The regulations in Appendix 1 take this a step further by requiring consolidated driveways for groups of small commercial properties.

The ordinance also addresses driveway design for larger commercial properties. When the distance between the driveway entrance and the first parking space or cross-driveway is too short, conflicts occur between vehicles entering the parking lot and vehicles backing out of spaces. To prevent these traffic hazards, this ordinance requires a minimum distance between the driveway entrance and the first parking space.

This internal driveway in Bryn Mawr connects a small shopping center with an office development, allowing traffic to move freely to a nearby traffic signal.

This driveway in Plymouth Meeting has a number of good design features, including a proper depth, landscaped median, and identifiable crosswalk.

Plan of sample retail use showing driveway design
Interconnections of Properties

Contiguous or adjoining commercial properties often do not have interconnected parking lots. This creates safety and congestion concerns when vehicles loop back onto a major road to get to a neighboring commercial property. To alleviate this problem, this model ordinance requires abutting commercial properties to have interconnected parking lots.

These two drawings show how a lightly-developed commercial area could redevelop over time. The design of the redeveloped lots improves traffic flow and pedestrian access.
Parking Lot Design Standards

Parking lot design standards help control the potential negative impacts of parking areas by establishing safer circulation patterns, accommodating pedestrians, and providing landscaping.

Safer circulation patterns are accomplished by using landscaped islands and medians to funnel traffic into driveways. Pedestrian circulation is made safer and easier by installing walkways in landscaped strips and by clearly delineating pedestrian crossings near building entrances. Landscaping features such as planting islands at the end of parking rows and planting strips containing trees and shrubs help improve water runoff, moderate temperatures, reduce glare and dust, and improve the appearance of parking lots.

To help pedestrians reach store entrances, parking lots should incorporate traffic calming features that slow cars and clearly give pedestrians the right-of-way. Some shopping centers have done this by using speed tables, different paving materials, and narrower driveways between parking spaces and building entrances.
Pedestrian Access

Pedestrian access is a critical aspect of good commercial design. Commercial developments should make it easy and appealing for pedestrians to walk within the development, to abutting roads and transit stops, and to nearby residential neighborhoods and destinations.

Pedestrian walkways should connect directly with building entrances in as straight a route as possible. Sidewalks should be located within landscaped strips, and crosswalks should be emphasized.

This bank in Skippack Village is easily accessible for both cars and pedestrians.

The Main Street at Exton shopping center includes crosswalks designed to slow cars and give priority to pedestrians.

Landscaped walkways through parking lots are much safer for pedestrians.
Lighting

Lighting of commercial developments can often be a nuisance to surrounding properties, especially residential properties. This ordinance requires screening of brightly lit commercial developments from adjacent residential areas and greater setbacks for lighting along a residential property line. The ordinance also prohibits lighting that can be distracting to drivers, such as intermittent and flashing lights.

Noise Control

One of the most noticeable impacts of commercial properties is excessive noise produced by delivery trucks, trash compaction, loud music, and other sources. This model ordinance contains standards which limit delivery times to daytime and early evening hours. Noise levels on commercial properties may only exceed normal background levels by 10 decibels during daytime hours and 5 decibels during nighttime hours.

The Suburban Square Shopping Center in Ardmore has ornamental pedestrian lights.

This internal street light is in the Spring House Village Center, Lower Gwynedd.

The Main Street at Exton Shopping Center uses traditional light fixtures to create a welcoming walking experience.
This trash storage area in Kulpsville is made of materials that match the office building.

Shopping center trash storage areas can be attractive, as illustrated by this example in Ardmore.

Because of its proximity to abutting homes, this convenience store has no external trash storage. Trash is removed through a normal door.

Loading and Outdoor Trash Storage

Outdoor loading docks, trash storage areas, and equipment storage areas can have detrimental impacts on neighboring properties in the form of noise, negative visual impacts, and noxious odors. This model ordinance contains standards which minimize these impacts by requiring screening and additional setbacks.
Landscaping

Landscaping is a key component in ensuring that developments are attractive and compatible with the surrounding community.

One of the most important design elements is landscaping and screening of parking lots. This model ordinance includes regulations which require landscaped strips to be installed in every fourth parking row within parking lots and landscaped islands at the ends of all parking rows. This not only beautifies the parking lot, reducing the impact on nearby residential property values, but also saves energy, reduces heat, cleans the air, mitigates stormwater runoff, and improves safety by funneling traffic.

Stormwater control facilities within commercial developments should be designed according to best management practices. These practices use naturalized and landscaped detention basins, swales, and parking lot islands to improve stormwater quality and infiltration rates.

Buffers and planted screens are critical when a retail use abuts residential properties. This example from Narberth uses existing trees, new plantings, a wide buffer area, and a berm to screen the retail use.

Planting strips and shade trees reduce heat, improve stormwater quality, and beautify retail areas, especially when designed as naturalized infiltration areas.

Landscaped islands help differentiate parking areas from storefront driveways. The landscaping next to the blank wall on this store will soften the wall over time.

Landscaping in front of shopping centers, when combined with low walls and decorative streetlights, help retail centers fit into the overall community.
Signs

Signs in commercial developments can have a major impact on the visual appeal of a property. The quantity, placement, and lighting of signs can result in either an attractive development or a cluttered one. One type of sign in particular, "monument" signs, is usually more attractive. These signs are at eye level, limited in size and surface area, and built of materials that match the principal buildings.

A small number of strategically placed signs can identify a specific commercial establishment better than many large signs which create too much visual clutter. Although this model ordinance does not include sign standards, communities should carefully review their sign standards to make sure they are adequate.

Required Parking

Although not a part of this model ordinance, required parking standards are an important consideration. Appendix 2 has suggested minimum parking standards for most commercial uses. In general, these standards are less restrictive than those found in many general commercial zoning districts, which often require too much parking. Appendix 2 also has a standard for reserve parking. Reserve parking is not required to be built initially but can be required at a later date if needed.
model ordinance
Part 3
Model Ordinance

Part 3 of this publication presents the model ordinance, with comments and illustrations included in the right column. The General Commercial District should be adopted as a freestanding separate zoning district.
GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Section 1
LEGISLATIVE INTENT
The following is an expansion of the Statement of Community Development Objectives contained in Section ____, of this Chapter. It is the intent of this article to provide regulations for well-designed commercial land uses in conformance with the goals of the ______Comprehensive Plan, and the following objectives:

A. Provide the broadest range of commercial uses in the Township/Borough.

B. Encourage the retention of the existing community character of ____ Township/Borough by preserving the existing buildings and landscaped spaces to the greatest extent possible.

C. Discourage strip-style commercial development which requires incongruous architectural styles, excessive paved areas, and numerous curb cuts.

D. Encourage consolidation of driveways, parking, and curb cuts to provide more efficient and economical access and parking.

E. Encourage a coordinated pedestrian path system to provide efficient and convenient pedestrian access from parking areas to and among the various permitted uses, and to neighboring residential areas.

G. Discourage the overdevelopment of lots by limiting the maximum permitted building and impervious coverages.

H. Assure suitable design to protect the character and property values of adjacent and nearby neighborhoods.

I. Provide regulations that minimize congestion and hazardous traffic conditions.

J. Allow existing commercial properties to be appropriately redeveloped.

K. Encourage the location of commercial buildings so they are accessible by public transportation.

Legislative Intent:
This section describes elements of the ordinance intended to accomplish specific public benefits. It should be tailored to meet the goals and objectives of individual communities.
PERMITTED USES

A lot may be used for one or more of the following uses, in compliance with the standards and requirements contained in this article:

A. By Right Permitted Uses

   The following uses are permitted by right, provided no drive-through facilities are proposed.

1. Retail stores offering: dry goods, variety merchandise, clothing, groceries, baked goods, beverages, flowers, plants, drugs, books, furnishings or other household supplies, antiques, hardware, jewelry, clocks, optical goods, cameras, home appliances, electronic equipment, videos, scientific and professional instruments, and/or similar goods. Shopping centers, as defined in this ordinance, are only permitted as a Class Two Conditional Use.

2. Convenience stores, without fuel pumps.

3. Personal service shop including but not limited to: barbershop and/or hairdresser, shoe repair, tailor, nail salon, tanning salon, dry cleaning (pick-up establishments only).

4. Business or professional offices.

5. Offices of doctor, dentist, and other healthcare providers.

6. Studio for dance, art, music, photography, or exercise.

7. Indoor sports facility; bowling alley, racquet sports, health club.

8. Business services establishments including copy centers, retail printing and duplication services, computer rental and copying centers, mailbox rental and shipping, cartage, express and parcel delivery services.

9. Bank or financial institution, excluding drive-through facilities.

10. Restaurant, excluding drive-through facilities. Outdoor dining is permitted.
11. Bar or tavern.

12. Emergency service facilities such as ambulance and fire services.

13. Municipal buildings, offices, and uses.

14. Open space and low intensity outdoor recreational uses such as ball fields, ball courts, bicycle paths, and pedestrian paths, provided that proposed uses do not exceed a maximum building coverage of 1%, or a maximum impervious coverage of 10%.

15. Laundromat, provided that there are adequate provisions made for water disposal.

16. Post office.

17. Bed and breakfast, provided that:
   a. The principal building must be a single family dwelling; and the owner of the Bed and Breakfast must live in the dwelling as his/her primary residence.
   b. There shall be no more than 6 guest bedrooms, accommodating no more than 12 guests at any one time; no paying guest shall stay on any one visit for more than 30 days.
   c. The rented rooms shall not contain kitchen facilities and shall not constitute separate dwelling units.

18. Club or fraternal organization.

19. Day care center.

20. Technical schools and training centers.

21. Accessory use on the same lot with and customarily incidental to the use permitted and utilized. Accessory uses shall meet all requirements for permitted uses.
Section 3
CONDITIONAL USES
The following uses may be permitted by the (Board of Supervisors/Commissioners, Borough Council) as conditional uses in accordance with the conditional use criteria of Section 4 of this district, the standards listed below, and all other regulations of the General Commercial District:

A. Class One Conditional Uses

On lots with a minimum area of 40,000 square feet and a minimum width at the building line of 100 feet, the following uses are permitted as class one conditional uses:

1. Uses with drive through facilities, including restaurants, drug stores, banks and financial institutions, and other uses listed in Section 2, provided:
   a. The use provides sufficient on-site stacking lanes to accommodate a minimum of six (6) automobiles leading to the first drive-through window, bank teller window, remote teller window, or drive through automatic teller machine on the site, and two (2) automobiles for each additional drive-through facility on the site.
   b. These stacking lanes shall not interfere with parking spaces or the internal and external circulation of the site.
   c. Drive through windows shall face the rear or side yard of the site. Drive through windows shall not face a public street.

2. Car washes, provided:
   a. All automated washing and drying facilities are located entirely within an enclosed and roofed building.
   b. Automatic car wash facilities provide sufficient on-site stacking lanes to accommodate a minimum of ten (10) automobiles for the first washing bay on site and two (2) automobiles for each additional washing bay on the site.
   c. Self-service car wash facilities provide sufficient on-site stacking lanes to accommodate a minimum of four (4) automobiles for the first washing bay on the site and one (1) automobile for each additional washing bay on the site.
   d. Car wash facilities contain on-site drainage systems designed to prevent water runoff and freezing on streets and adjoining properties.

Conditional Uses:
The uses listed in this section have a greater potential negative impact on neighboring properties and the surrounding area than permitted uses. Class One Conditional Uses are generally located on smaller lots than class two conditional uses.

Drive-through uses should have their service windows facing either a rear or side lot line, rather than fronting on a public street. This presents the finished side of the building to the street and provides more room for waiting cars. Drive-through uses need sufficient stacking or waiting lanes for vehicles. When too few stacking lanes are provided, lines of waiting vehicles back onto a public street, which can disrupt traffic and become a safety issue.
3. Oil change and lube facilities provided:
   a. All activities are performed within a completely enclosed building. Outdoor storage is not permitted.
   b. Sufficient on-site stacking lanes are provided to accommodate a minimum of four (4) automobiles for the first maintenance bay on the site and one (1) automobile for each additional maintenance bay.

4. Gas stations, mini-marts, convenience stores with fuel pumps and any other use with fuel pumps, provided:
   a. All activities except those to be performed at the fuel or air pumps are performed within a completely enclosed building. Outdoor storage is not permitted.
   b. Minimum setback of pump islands is fifty (50) feet from street ultimate rights-of-way, eighty (80) feet from residential property lines, and thirty (30) feet from all other property lines.
   c. Minimum setback of parking (any portion) from fuel pumps is thirty (30) feet.
   d. The fuel pump area does not interfere with parking spaces or internal circulation. In developments with multiple uses, the fuel pump area shall be separated from the parking and internal circulation of other uses.
   e. Body repairs and/or painting shall not be permitted, unless the site meets the requirements of section 3.B.8.
   f. Canopies meet the following requirements:
      (i) Canopies shall be set back at least fifteen (15) feet from property lines and ultimate rights-of-way lines and fifty (50) feet from abutting residentially zoned properties.
      (ii) Canopies shall have a maximum height of 16 feet measured to the underside of the canopy. For slanted canopies, this 16-foot maximum can be measured at the portion of the canopy closest to the street.
      (iii) Individual canopies shall have a maximum area of 3,600 square feet; multiple canopies shall be separated by a minimum distance of 15 feet.
      (iv) Lighting for canopies shall be recessed so that the bottom of the lighting fixture is flush with the underside of the canopy, using a full cutoff flat lense luminaire.
      (v) Canopies shall be designed to be architecturally compatible with structures in the surrounding area with regard to color and building materials. Colors shall be

Gasoline stations can have adverse impacts on neighboring properties due to fumes, noise, and glare. To limit any potential negative impacts, this ordinance requires setbacks for gas pumps and design standards for canopies, including a requirement for recessed lights to reduce glare.

The permitted size of canopies is smaller than what is allowed in most commercial districts, which reduces the number of pump islands per canopy. A canopy size of 3,600 square feet will easily allow 4 islands with 8 pumps. Some new large-scale gas stations have 10 or 12 islands under the canopy.

The maximum height to the underside of canopies of 16 feet is related to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials’ standards for height to the underside of bridges, which varies from 14 to 16 feet, depending on the type of street. This height should be adequate for all normal types of vehicles.

This gas station in Gladwyne has small pump canopies designed to fit into the historic character of the village.
compatible with buildings in the neighborhood, and pitched roofs shall be used wherever possible.

5. Repair shop, excluding repair of automobiles, other vehicles, and large equipment, provided:
   a. All items must be repaired on the premises in an enclosed and roofed building.
   b. No outside storage is permitted.

6. Radio and/or television studios.

7. Funeral home or mortuary.

8. Apartments above first floor retail or office uses provided:
   a. There shall be separate entrances to the residential portions of the buildings.
   b. Apartments shall conform to the density standards of Chapter____, the Multifamily Residential District.

9. Conversion of existing buildings to apartments, provided:
   a. There shall be no external alteration of the building except as may be necessary for reasons of safety. Fire escapes and outside stairways shall be located to the rear of the building. When a rear location is not feasible, fire escapes and outside stairways may be located on the side of buildings.
   b. Buildings converted to apartment units shall be located within one hundred (100) feet of a residential zoning district.
   c. Apartments shall conform to the density standards of Chapter____, the Multifamily Residential District.

10. Apartments and townhouses provided:
    a. Apartments and townhouse properties are located within one hundred (100) feet of a residential zoning district.
    b. Apartment and townhouse developments conform to all standards of Chapter____, the Multifamily Residential District.

11. Research and development facility.
12. Uses of the same general character as those found in the permitted uses section may be permitted by the Board of Commissioners/ Supervisors/ Borough Council as a Class One conditional use.

B. Class Two Conditional Uses

On lots with a minimum area of 100,000 square feet and a minimum width at the building line of two hundred (200) feet, the following uses are permitted as Class Two conditional uses:

1. Shopping center, in accordance with the additional standards in section 7.

2. Veterinarian’s office or commercial kennel, provided:
   a. Buildings are adequately soundproofed so that sounds generated within the building cannot be perceived at the lot boundary.
   b. No shelter, run, or structure that will contain animals at night is located within 100 feet of any property line or street line.

3. Motel, hotel.

4. Indoor theater and other indoor amusement centers provided:
   a. Pick-up and drop-off areas are provided with at least one (1) automobile waiting space per screen or amusement center, up to a maximum of 6 spaces.

5. Tool and equipment rental, and truck parking establishments, provided:
   a. Tools, equipment, and commercial vehicles are located at least sixty (60) feet from residential property lines and street ultimate right-of-way lines.

6. Moving vehicle rental and supply establishments, provided:
   a. Commercial vehicles and related supplies are located at least sixty (60) feet from residential property lines and street ultimate right-of-way lines.

7. Motor vehicle or recreation vehicle sales/ rental and service facility, in accordance with the following regulations:
   a. The sale of gasoline shall be prohibited.
   b. No temporary storage of these vehicles is allowed on the abutting roadway, or within the street ultimate right-of-way line.

Shopping centers are included as a conditional use because of their size, the potential impact on the community, and the need for additional design standards. Section 7 of this ordinance, Design Standards, includes a variety of special requirements for shopping centers.

Pickup and drop-off areas for indoor movie theaters allow disabled individuals and others to easily access theater entrances without having to cross a parking area. The standard of 1 automobile waiting space per screen of a theater, up to a maximum of 6 spaces, provides adequate space for pickup and drop-off areas. However, this standard may not be reasonable for every site and may need to be lowered in certain situations.
c. Vehicles shall not be displayed on above-ground platforms and shall be displayed to appear similar to customer parking.

d. Parking, storage, and/or display of vehicles or supplies shall be set back at least twenty five (25) feet from the street ultimate right-of-way line.

e. No more than one third of the vehicles on display shall be visible from the street. An opaque landscaped screen composed of shrubs at least three (3) feet in height, a masonry or brick wall of 2.5 to 3.5 feet in height, a combination of the two types of screening devices, or a similar screening device approved by the Board of Commissioners/ Supervisors/ Borough Council shall be installed.

f. Streamers, festoon lighting, flashing lights, moving lights, and intermittent lights are not permitted.

g. The magnitude of the lighting is subject to approval of the Board of Commissioners/ Supervisors/ Borough Council.

h. All repairs, maintenance, and service activities shall be conducted within a completely enclosed building.

8. Shop for motor vehicle repair, maintenance, body, upholstery, or restoration work. Shops for motor vehicle repair, maintenance, body, upholstery and restoration work shall be subject to the same additional provisions as listed for motor vehicle sales facilities in use number 7 above, with the following addition:

a. All parts, dismantled vehicles, and similar articles shall be stored within a completely enclosed and roofed building.

9. Outdoor theaters including movie theaters and outdoor performing arts centers, provided:

a. Glare from screens and lighting standards is completely screened from adjacent properties.

b. Parking/viewing areas are designed to allow adequate vehicular circulation between parking rows, and also to provide adequate ingress and egress from the site onto adjacent roadways.

c. All buildings, structures and parking are set back at least 100 feet from residentially zoned properties.

Motor vehicle or recreation vehicle sales facilities are one of the larger commercial uses found in general commercial zoning districts. They often have a number of associated negative visual impacts, especially light pollution.
10. Outdoor amusement facilities such as golf courses, batting cages, miniature golf courses, golf driving ranges, amusement parks and similar uses, in accordance with the following:

a. Driving Ranges, provided:
   (i) A minimum lot area of five (5) acres is provided.
   (ii) Protective screens to stop stray golf balls from crossing property lines are installed, unless the Board of Commissioners/Supervisors/Borough Council determines that screens are unnecessary. Protective screens over six (6) feet in height are located at least 100 feet from the property line.
   (iii) A fifty (50) foot wide landscaped buffer area is installed along all street ultimate right-of-way lines and along all property lines abutting a nonresidential use, and a one hundred (100) foot buffer is installed along all property lines abutting a residential use. The buffer area shall be landscaped in accordance with Chapter _____ of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

b. Amusement Parks
   (i) The lot area is at least twenty (20) acres.

11. Assisted living facilities and nursing homes, in accordance with the requirements of Section _____, of Chapter _____, the I Institutional District, provided:
   a. Assisted living facilities and nursing homes are located within one hundred (100) feet of a residential zoning district.

12. Institutional uses in compliance with Chapter ____, Institutional Use Regulations.

13. Building supply center, lumber yard and contractor’s business, including masonry, carpentry, remodeling, electrical, house cleaning, plumbing, painting, roofing, landscaping contractor, wholesale establishment for the sale and distribution of supplies and general merchandise provided that:
   a. Outdoor storage areas are limited to 50% of the total site area and are screened from public roads and residential properties.
   b. All products stored outdoors are stored and displayed behind areas that are clearly defined for such purpose, such as completely enclosed fences, walls or other structures.
c. The display of goods and merchandise is not located between the building and the 
street and meets the minimum required rear and side yard setbacks.
d. Such uses have a defined pick-up area that does not interfere with the flow of internal 
traffic or required parking areas.
e. Commercial vehicles and outdoor storage areas are at least sixty (60) feet from 
residential property lines and street ultimate right-of-way lines.
f. A ten (10) foot wide landscaped buffer area is provided along all property lines.

14. Nursery, garden center, or greenhouse provided:
   a. Outdoor storage is limited to 75% of the total site area.
   b. All non-plant materials are stored and displayed behind areas that are clearly defined 
for such purpose, and are screened from public roads and residential properties.
   c. Such uses have a defined pick-up area that does not interfere with the flow of internal 
traffic or required parking areas.
   d. Commercial vehicles and outdoor storage areas are at least sixty (60) feet from 
residential property lines and street ultimate right-of-way lines.

Section 4
CONDITIONAL USE CRITERIA
General Commercial uses that are permitted as a conditional use shall meet the following 
conditional use standards:

A. Buildings, driveways, parking areas, loading areas, outdoor activity areas, light sources, 
trash areas, and other potential nuisances shall be located and designed to minimize 
adverse impacts on abutting residential properties. In order to limit the adverse impact of a 
proposed general commercial use, the Board of Supervisors/Commissioners/Borough 
Council may require alternative site layouts, including increased setbacks from residential 
property lines, different locations of buildings, parking areas, and driveways, the 
incorporation of loading and trash collection areas as part of the principal building design, 
and increased screening for light sources and outdoor activity areas.

B. Driveway intersections with streets and traffic circulation patterns within lots shall be located 
and designed to minimize congestion and safety problems on adjacent streets and nearby 
intersections. The Board of Supervisors/Commissioners/Borough Council may require 
alternative driveway locations and site design in order to alleviate potential congestion or 
safety problems.

Conditional Use Criteria
The governing body of a community 
may want to address specific impacts 
of a proposed commercial 
development on abutting properties 
and adjacent roads by imposing 
additional conditions.
Section 5
DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS
Permitted Uses, Class One Conditional Uses, and Class Two Conditional Uses shall meet the following dimensional standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection 5.A</th>
<th>Minimum Net Lot Size</th>
<th>Permitted Uses</th>
<th>Class One Conditional Uses</th>
<th>Class Two Conditional Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40,000 sf</td>
<td>40,000 sf</td>
<td>100,000 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsection 5.B</td>
<td>Minimum Lot Width</td>
<td>100 feet</td>
<td>100 feet</td>
<td>200 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsection 5.C</td>
<td>Maximum Building Coverage</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsection 5.D</td>
<td>Maximum Impervious Coverage</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsection 5.E</td>
<td>Minimum Front Yard Setback</td>
<td>30 feet</td>
<td>30 feet</td>
<td>50 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsection 5.F</td>
<td>Minimum Side Yard Setback</td>
<td>15 feet</td>
<td>15 feet</td>
<td>40 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsection 5.G</td>
<td>Minimum Rear Yard Setback</td>
<td>15 feet</td>
<td>20 feet</td>
<td>40 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsection 5.H</td>
<td>Minimum Building Setback from Abutting Residentially Zoned Properties</td>
<td>40 feet</td>
<td>50 feet</td>
<td>65 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsection 5.I</td>
<td>Minimum Parking Setback from Street Ultimate Right-of-Way Line</td>
<td>10 feet</td>
<td>15 feet</td>
<td>25 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsection 5.J</td>
<td>Minimum Parking Setback from Nonresidential Property Lines</td>
<td>10 feet</td>
<td>10 feet</td>
<td>15 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsection 5.K</td>
<td>Minimum Parking Setback from Residential Property Lines</td>
<td>30 feet</td>
<td>35 feet</td>
<td>40 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsection 5.L</td>
<td>Minimum Setback of Outdoor Loading and Trash Storage Areas from Abutting Residentially Zoned Properties</td>
<td>50 feet</td>
<td>50 feet</td>
<td>50 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsection 5.M</td>
<td>Maximum Building Height</td>
<td>40 feet</td>
<td>40 feet</td>
<td>40 feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dimensional Standards
This model ordinance includes larger setbacks from abutting residential property lines for buildings, parking spaces, and trash storage and loading areas. Larger setbacks leave room for additional landscaping and screening buffers, which shield neighboring residential properties from the noise, odors, bright lights and vehicular air pollution associated with commercial properties.

Communities that want to encourage apartments over retail stores, such as this example from Florida, should increase the maximum height.
Section 6
GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

A. All development in the GC General Commercial District shall be served by public sewer and public water facilities.

B. Off-street parking shall be provided in accordance with Chapter____.

C. Signs shall meet the requirements of Chapter____. Signage located on buildings shall be consistent in size, location and materials throughout a specific development, and should be consistent with the character of signage of structures in the surrounding area.

D. Landscaping and buffers shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of Section ____ of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

E. Applicants proposing any use which is expected to generate 2,500 or more average vehicle trip ends per day, in accordance with the most recent edition of the Trip Generation manual by the Institute of Transportation Engineers, shall be required to prepare a traffic impact study in compliance with Chapter____ of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

Section 7
DESIGN STANDARDS

A. Building Design Standards

All buildings shall meet the following standards:

1. Rear and side facades shall be of finished quality and shall be of color and materials that are similar to the front facade and blend with structures within the development as well as with structures in the surrounding area. Any property with more than one building on the site shall have a common and coherent architectural theme throughout the development.

2. Building facades must be interrupted at least once within every one hundred (100) horizontal feet, with offsets of four (4) or more feet in depth along any building facade facing a public street or public parking. Offsets shall be continuous from grade to the roofline.

3. Building facades of two hundred (200) feet or more which face public streets or public parking shall, in addition to offsets, include other design elements to break up the façade.

General Requirements
There are a variety of standards, such as parking, signs, and landscaping, that are typically addressed in other parts of a municipal zoning or subdivision ordinance. The “General Requirements” section provides a reference to these other requirements.

Parking. Sample parking ratios and design standards are shown in Appendix 2.

Signs. Municipalities should establish criteria in their sign ordinance that encourage signs to be compatible with their surroundings. Because too many competing signs can create confusion and visual clutter, the sign ordinance should strictly regulate the number and size of signs.

Traffic Impact Studies. Traffic impact studies can be a good guide to needed improvements in front of a proposed development. Some municipalities may want to vary the minimum traffic generation that triggers a study to reflect the development and traffic characteristics of that individual community. A generation rate of 2,500 trips per day is approximately equal to a 60,000 square foot shopping center.

Offsets in building facades are only one way of improving building design. Communities also should consider other architectural techniques to improve design.
such as awnings, porches, canopies, towers, balconies, bays, changes in building materials, gables, and planted trellises.

4. Principal buildings shall have clearly defined, highly visible customer entrances with features such as canopies, porticoes, arches, and integral planters that incorporate landscaped areas and/ or areas for sitting.

5. Rooftlines shall be varied to add visual interest, to reduce the scale of larger buildings, and to create consistency with buildings in the surrounding area.
   a. Buildings with less than 15,000 square feet of building area on the ground floor that are located within one hundred (100) feet of a residential zoning district shall have pitched roofs covering at least 80 percent of the building with a pitch of at least 6 vertical inches to every 12 horizontal inches.
   b. Buildings with more than 15,000 square feet on the ground floor shall meet one of the following roof requirements:
      (i) The same roof requirement as outlined above in Section 7.A.5.a.
      (ii) Parapets or mansard roofs that conceal flat roofs and rooftop equipment such as HVAC units along all roof edges.
   c. For all buildings, building ridgelines or roof planes facing public streets and public parking lots must be interrupted at least once every one hundred (100) feet by a vertical change of five (5) feet, the inclusion of a new gable, or the inclusion of a dormer.

6. All shopping centers and other retail establishments with 100,000 square feet or more in gross floor area shall meet the following additional requirements:
   a. Ground floor facades that face public streets shall have arcades, display windows, entry areas, awnings or other such features along no less than sixty (60) percent of their horizontal length. To qualify for this requirement, display windows shall begin between 12 to 24 inches above ground level and shall end between 78 inches and 108 inches above ground level.
   b. Large buildings and shopping centers shall have clearly defined, highly visible customer entrances for primary buildings featuring no less than three (3) of the following: canopies or porticoes; overhangs; recesses/ projections; arcades; raised corniced parapets over the door; peaked roof forms; arches; outdoor patios; and display windows.
c. Storefront landscaping shall be provided between the foundations of buildings and driveways/parking areas. A minimum of 25 percent of the area between the building foundation and driveways/parking areas shall be landscaped in accordance with Chapter ____ of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

d. All sides of shopping centers and retail establishments with 50,000 square feet or more of floor area that directly face an abutting public street shall feature at least one (1) customer entrance. This requirement can be met for two sides of a shopping center or large retail establishment by a corner entrance that is visible from both sides.

B. Common Use Area

Shopping centers or large retail establishments of 100,000 square feet or more of gross building floor area shall contain a common use area that will serve as a focal point for the center and provide walkways, seating, and landscaping. Water features, courtyards, mini-parks and plazas are encouraged. The common use area shall meet the following requirements:

1. It shall generally be located between the street and the front facade of the primary shopping center or large retail establishment building, within 200 feet of this building.

2. It shall be equal to or greater in size than five (5) percent of the gross floor area of the shopping center or large retail establishment.

3. It shall be directly connected to the sidewalk in front of the shopping center or large retail establishment, without intervening driveways or streets.

4. It shall consist of one contiguous area, and the shape and location of the common use area shall be approved by the Board of Supervisors/Board of Commissioners/Borough Council in consultation with the Township/Borough Planning Commission.

5. It shall be improved with either a gazebo, pavilion, clock tower, or paved patio area with a fountain to help identify this area as the central gathering place for the development. This improvement shall be a minimum of 300 square feet in size.

6. It shall contain shade trees, ornamental plantings, and seating; it may also contain outdoor dining areas.

C. Parking and Driveway Design Standards

Parking lots shall be landscaped according to the following regulations:

When shopping centers are located next to walkable streets or neighborhoods, the local municipality can encourage walking by requiring part of the shopping center to be built up to the street with windows and doors in the façade next to the street.

This type of design could lead to an “L” shaped building, with the end of the “L” next to the street. Alternatively, the end of a shopping center building next to a side street could have stores directly facing the side street.
1. The ends of all parking rows shall be divided from drives by planting islands.

2. There shall be no more than 15 contiguous parking stalls in a row without a planting island.

3. Planting islands shall be a minimum of ten (10) feet by twenty (20) feet in area, underlain by soil (not base course material) and shall be protected by curbing, wheel stops, or bollards. Each planting island shall contain at least one (1) shade tree plus low growing shrubs and/ or groundcover to cover the entire area at maturity.

4. Parking lots shall be divided by planting strips placed at intervals of one (1) for every four (4) or fewer rows of parking. These planting strips shall meet the following requirements:
   a. At least half of the planting strips shall be a minimum of 15 feet in width, and contain a 5 foot paved walkway leading towards the building, with 5 feet provided for plantings on both sides of the walkway.
   b. All other planting strips shall be a minimum of ten feet in width, with all ten feet for plantings.
   c. Strips shall run the length of the parking row, be underlain by soil, and be protected by curbs, wheel stops or bollards.
   d. Planting strips shall contain plantings of one (1) canopy tree every twenty five (25) feet, two (2) shrubs per tree, and groundcover/shrubs to cover the entire remaining unplanted area at maturity.

5. A perimeter planting area at least 10 feet in width shall be provided along all property lines and street ultimate rights-of-way lines.

6. The maximum depth of a parking area located within the front yard of a general commercial building with less than 20,000 square feet of building area shall be sixty five (65) feet, measured perpendicular or radial to the street ultimate right-of-way line.

7. Each commercial use shall provide access easements for its parking aisles and driveways guaranteeing access to all abutting lots zoned General Commercial, unless all possible interconnections between two abutting lots must cross twenty (20) linear feet or more of wetlands, floodplain, or natural slopes of 15% or more. Parking areas on adjacent lots shall be directly connected by a driveway. These interconnections shall be constructed during the initial land development.
8. Large retail uses and shopping centers with over 100,000 square feet of gross building floor area shall provide the following:
   a. A pickup area for public transportation located between the street and the front façade of the large retail use or shopping center. The pickup area must include a ten (10) foot by twenty (20) foot waiting area that is separated from other sidewalks in the development. The pickup area must also include an area where a forty-foot bus can park without blocking any lanes of the development’s driveways.
   b. Driveways and a parking area that can handle and are designed for the weight and length of a forty-foot passenger bus.

9. Properties with frontages of 600 feet or less on any individual street are only permitted one driveway intersection per street. Properties with frontages greater than 600 feet may be permitted a maximum of two driveways per street frontage, provided that such driveways are at least 300 feet apart. Regardless of frontage, a development may be restricted to a single driveway depending on usage and interior and exterior traffic patterns.

10. Parking areas containing 50 or more cars shall have a minimum driveway length of fifty (50) feet provided between the road ultimate right-of-way line and the first parking space or internal driveway intersection. Parking areas containing less than 50 cars shall have a minimum driveway length of twenty (20) feet provided between the road ultimate right-of-way line and the first parking space or internal driveway intersection.

D. Pedestrian Circulation Design Standards

1. There shall be clear grade separated pedestrian connections between all parking areas and all buildings. The sidewalks required within planting strips by section 7.C.4 may be used to meet this requirement.

2. Continuous internal pedestrian walkways, no less than 5 feet in width, shall provide a direct link from the public sidewalk or street right-of-way to the principal customer entrance of all principal retail establishments on the site. Walkways shall also connect focal points of pedestrian activity such as, but not limited to, transit stops, street crossings, and building and store entry points. The sidewalks required within planting strips by section 7.C.4 may be used to meet this requirement.

3. Unobstructed sidewalks, no less than 6 feet in width, shall be provided along the full length of the building along any façade featuring a customer entrance, and along any façade abutting public parking areas. Along facades with building entrances, the
required 6-foot wide sidewalk area shall be set back from the façade by a 3 foot area that either contains planting beds or additional sidewalk width.

4. All internal pedestrian walkways and crosswalks shall be distinguished from driving surfaces through the use of durable, low maintenance surface materials such as pavers, bricks or scored concrete to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort.

5. Buildings and sidewalks shall be handicapped accessible.

E. Lighting Standards

1. Lighting shall be shielded to meet the following requirements:
   a. No light shall shine directly into the windows of a building on abutting property.
   b. No light shall shine directly from a light source onto the ground or improvements of an abutting property, although incidental light may be permitted to fall on abutting property. Such lighting shall not exceed one-half an ISO foot candle at ground level on the abutting property.
   c. No light shall shine directly onto public roads.

2. Where the abutting property is residentially zoned or used, nonresidential uses shall direct light fixtures toward the proposed development and shield the residential properties from direct lighting or glare. The light source itself must not be visible from the abutting residential property.

3. No parking lot lighting standard or building fixture shall exceed twenty-five (25) feet in height from grade level, and no pedestrian lighting standard shall exceed fourteen (14) feet in height from grade level.

4. Light fixtures located closer to a side or rear lot line than the side or rear yard setback, shall be no more than ten (10) feet high, and shall direct the light source away from the property line.

5. Light fixtures located along a residential property line shall be setback a minimum of twenty (20) feet from the property line.

6. No streamers or festoon lighting, comprising a group of incandescent light bulbs, shall be hung or strung on a building or any other structure.

Pedestrian Circulation

Safe pedestrian circulation between parking lots and buildings should be clearly separated from driving areas. One method of distinguishing driving surfaces from pedestrian surfaces within parking areas is to use raised speed tables at primary customer entrances.

Lighting Standards

This ordinance contains regulations which govern the design and placement of lighting fixtures on commercial properties. Municipalities which regulate lighting elsewhere in their zoning code should delete the “Lighting Standards” section and replace it with a reference to the other lighting regulations.
7. No flashing or intermittent or moving lights, including lights on signs, shall be permitted.

F. Noise Control

1. No person shall cause, suffer, allow, or permit the operation of any sound source on a commercial property or public space or right-of-way in such a manner as to create a sound level that exceeds the background sound level by 10 dBC during daytime (7:00 AM to 9:00 PM) hours and by 5 dBC during nighttime (9:00 PM to 7:00 AM) hours when measured at or within the property line of the receiving property.

2. No delivery, loading, trash removal or compaction or other such operations shall be permitted between the hours of 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM unless the applicant submits evidence that sound barriers between all areas for such operations effectively reduce noise emissions to a level of forty five (45) dB, as measured at the lot line of any adjoining property.

G. Other Requirements

1. Loading docks, utility meters, HVAC equipment, trash dumpsters and other service functions shall be incorporated into the overall design theme of the building so that the architectural design is continuous. These areas shall be located and screened so that the visual and acoustic impacts of these functions are fully contained and out of view from adjacent properties and public streets.

2. Outdoor sales and storage areas shall conform to the following requirements:
   a. Outdoor sales and storage areas shall not be located within twenty (20) feet of any public street or public sidewalk.
   b. These areas shall be screened so that the visual and acoustic impacts of these functions are fully contained and out of view from adjacent properties and public streets.
   c. Outdoor areas for the storage and sale of seasonal inventory shall be permanently defined and screened with walls or fences. Materials, colors and design of screening walls or fences shall conform to those used as predominant materials and colors of the building. If such areas are to be covered, then the covering shall conform to those used as predominant materials and colors of the building.
   d. Outdoor storage areas shall not exceed 10% of the gross building floor area of any uses, except as noted in subsections 3.B.13 and 14.
appendices

Part 4
Part 4
Appendices

Part 4 of this publication contains supplemental zoning and subdivision and land development regulations that complement the General Commercial District. These appendices cover driveway placement, parking ratios, definitions, shopping center parking lot design, and chain store design.
Appendix 1

Model Vehicular Access Standards

A. All tracts of land to be developed in the GC General Commercial District shall share access with an adjacent GC District property when available, consistent with subsection 2 below. If shared access cannot be provided by an existing driveway, the applicant shall provide access in a way that maximizes the potential for shared access in the future, consistent with subsection 3 below. When the requirements of subsections 2 and 3 cannot be satisfied, an independent access may be permitted consistent with subsection 4 below. Multiple access points may be provided when the requirements of subsection 5 are satisfied.

1. Existing Driveways. All existing driveways providing access to the property from public roads shall be eliminated, unless they meet the requirements in subsection 3 or 4 below.

2. Shared Access via Existing Driveways on Adjacent Properties.
   a. When the nearest edge of an existing driveway on an adjacent nonresidential property zoned GC General Commercial having frontage on the same street is within 50 feet of the subject tract, that subject tract shall utilize the driveway on the adjacent tract as a shared access, provided that an easement granting access to the subject tract has been recorded.
   b. The shared access shall be the sole access to the site unless a second driveway is permitted consistent with subsection 5, herein.
   c. Shared access shall not be required when all possible interconnections between the two abutting lots would cross twenty (20) linear feet or more of wetlands, floodplains, and/or slopes of 15% or more.
   d. Shared access may be entirely located on one lot or split along a common lot line.
   e. Each property with a nonresidential use shall provide an access easement guaranteeing internal vehicular access to all abutting lots zoned GC Commercial.

3. Shared Access via New or Existing Driveway on the Property.
   a. When shared access cannot be provided via an existing driveway consistent with subsection 2 above, a maximum of one driveway intersection shall be permitted per street frontage.

COMMENTARY

The regulations in this section are designed to control the number and location of driveways along major roads.

These regulations are most appropriate for commercial areas with smaller lots that are in the beginning stages of development or redevelopment, or areas rezoned from a residential district to a commercial district. These standards are intended to limit the number of conflicts between vehicles turning into commercial properties and vehicles continuing through on the road.

These objectives are accomplished by:

- Eliminating existing driveways and requiring abutting properties to share a new driveway. The new driveway will be located near the property lines between the abutting properties; and
- Requiring abutting commercially zoned uses to interconnect their properties and to grant access easements for these interconnections.

These standards could be added to either a municipal zoning ordinance or subdivision and land development ordinance.
b. This driveway shall be located on a side lot line bordering a property zoned GC General Commercial. In order to accommodate required sight distances, or preserve environmental features, the driveway may be set back from the side lot line no greater than 50 feet. Shared access shall not be required when all possible interconnections between the two abutting lots would cross twenty (20) linear feet or more of wetlands, floodplains, and/or slopes of 15% or more.

c. Each property with a nonresidential use shall provide an access easement for this driveway guaranteeing access to all abutting lots zoned GC Commercial. In addition, the access easement shall provide access from the closest adjacent property line to the driveway. The easement between the driveway and the closest adjacent lot shall have a minimum width of 35 feet and shall be located between 50 and 100 feet from the street ultimate right-of-way line.

d. The location of the driveway intersection and the easement connection to the closest adjacent lot shall be subject to approval by the Board of Supervisors/Commissioners/Borough Council based on its ability to minimize the need for future driveways and/or maximize the distance from existing street and driveway intersections, including consideration for safe site distances.

   a. When future shared access cannot be provided consistent with subsection 2 or 3 above, a maximum of one driveway intersection per street shall be permitted.
   b. The driveway intersection shall be separated from existing driveway intersections by a minimum of 300 feet.

5. Dual Access.
   a. A second driveway intersection per street may be permitted when it is located at least 300 feet from the first driveway intersection and at least 300 feet from adjacent property lines.
   b. When a second driveway can be permitted consistent with subsection 5.a. above, a separation from adjacent property lines may be reduced in order to provide future shared access, provided the second driveway is located within 50 feet of an adjacent property line and at least 300 feet from any other driveway intersection. The adjacent property must be zoned GC General Commercial and the potential interconnection shall not cross twenty (20) linear feet or more of wetlands, floodplains, or slopes of 15% or more. Each property with a nonresidential use shall provide access easements to all abutting lots zoned GC General Commercial consistent with subsection 3.c.

The ordinance also contains exceptions for situations where an interconnection and common driveway is not feasible.

To improve safety on higher volume roads, such as arterials and collectors, driveways are required to be 300 feet apart.
An Example of How Model Vehicular Access Standards Might Work

Property 3 Develops. There are no existing access easements for this property to use. One new driveway near property 4. Property 3 grants access easements to properties 2 and 4.
Property 1 Redevelops. No existing access easements for this property to use. All existing driveways are closed. New driveway on Main Street near property 2. Driveways on Street A consolidated into one driveway. Property 1 grants access easement to property 2.

Property 4 Redevelops. Along Main Street, property 4 must use the access provided by property 3 while closing the existing driveway. On Street B, property 4 keeps its existing driveway. Property 4 grants access easement to property 3.
Property 2 Redevelops. Property 2 gets access through property 1. Property 2 must close its two existing driveways. Property 2 may also use the driveway located on property 3. Property 2 grants access easements to properties 1 and 3.

Final Condition. When all development is finished, five driveways on Main Street have been reduced to two driveways and moved further from the road intersections.
## Appendix 2

### Commercial Parking Standards

**A. Parking Ratios.** Any building or structure erected, altered, or used and any lot used or occupied for any of the following purposes shall be provided with the minimum number of parking spaces set forth below, unless reserve parking or shared parking are being used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Amusement park.</td>
<td>1 space per 200 square feet of gross floor area within enclosed buildings, plus 1 space per every three persons that the outdoor facilities are designed to accommodate when used to the maximum capacity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bank or financial institution.</td>
<td>1 space per 250 square feet of gross floor area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Bar or tavern.</td>
<td>1 space per 75 square feet of gross floor area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Barbershop, hairdresser, tailor, etc.</td>
<td>1 space per 200 square feet of gross floor area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bed &amp; breakfast.</td>
<td>1 space per guest room, plus 2 spaces for the primary dwelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Bowling alley.</td>
<td>4 spaces per lane, plus 1 space per 100 gross square feet of accessory uses (i.e. bars, restaurants, game rooms etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Car wash, automatic.</td>
<td>3 spaces per bay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Carwash, self service.</td>
<td>2 spaces per bay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Club or fraternal organization.</td>
<td>1 space per 100 square feet of gross floor area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Convenience store</td>
<td>1 space per 200 square feet of gross floor area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Day care center.</td>
<td>1 space per employee on largest shift, plus 1 space per 10 pupils designed for the safe and convenient loading and unloading of pupils.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENTARY**

This section contains a list of suggested parking requirements for a wide variety of commercial uses. All of the uses in this section are contained in this model ordinance. The uses listed here were derived from a number of sources including the American Planning Association’s Planning Advisory Service Report Number 510/511, “Parking Standards.”
12. Doctor, dentist, veterinarian’s office. 1 space per 250 square feet of gross floor area.
13. Dry cleaners. 1 space per 300 square feet of gross floor area.
14. Funeral home or mortuary. 1 space per 4 seats, plus 1 space per 2 employees, plus 1 space per hearse, ambulance, and/or company vehicle.
15. Furniture store. 1 space per 600 square feet of gross floor area.
16. Gas station, full service. 1 space per gas pump, plus 1 space per 250 square feet of gross floor area.
17. Golf course. 1 space per 2 employees, plus 3 per golf hole.
18. Golf driving range. 1 space per tee, plus 1 space per employee on largest shift.
19. Grocery store. 1 space per 300 square feet of gross floor area.
20. Hotel, motel. 1 space per rented unit, plus 1 space per employee on the largest shift.
21. Indoor amusement, theaters, churches, auditoriums. 1 space per 100 square feet of gross floor area, or 1 space per 5 seats, whichever is greater.
22. Indoor sports facilities:
   Racquet sports 2 spaces per court, plus 1 space per employee.
   Health club 1 space per 250 square feet of gross floor area.
23. Kennel. 1 space per employee, plus 1 space per 500 square feet of gross floor area.
24. Laundromat. 1 space per 250 square feet of gross floor area.
25. Miniature golf course. 1 space per hole, plus 1 space per employee on the largest shift.

The parking ratios included in this section are suggested ratios. Individual municipalities should tailor their ratios to their unique situation. For example, more urbanized places and areas served by extensive public transportation networks may want to require less parking.
26. Motor vehicle sales and service facility. 1 space per 500 square feet of enclosed sales area, plus 1 space per 4,500 square feet of outdoor display area.

27. Motor vehicle repair shop. 3 spaces per service bay.

28. Nursery or greenhouse. 1 space per 300 square feet of gross floor area.

29. Offices. 1 space per 250 square feet of gross floor area.

30. Oil change facility. 2 spaces per service bay.

31. Outdoor theater. 1 space per 4 seats.

32. Plumbing and heating supply. 1 space per 500 square feet of gross floor area, plus 1 space per employee, plus 1 space per company vehicle.

33. Post office. 1 space per 300 square feet of gross floor area.

34. Research and development facility. 1 space per 400 square feet of gross floor area.

35. Rental equipment. 1 space per 200 square feet of gross floor area.

36. Repair shop, appliances. 1 space per 300 square feet of gross floor area.

37. Restaurants, sit down. 1 space per 120 square feet of gross floor area.

38. Restaurants, drive-in. 1 space per 120 square feet of gross floor area, minimum 25 spaces.

39. Retail store. 1 space per 200 square feet of gross floor area.

40. Self storage facility. 1 space per 100 individual storage units, plus 1 space for the manager, plus 1 space per additional employee. A minimum of 3 spaces shall be provided.

41. Shopping center. 1 space per 250 square feet of gross floor area.
42. Studio for dance, art, music or photography. 1 space per 5 students, plus 1 space per employee.

43. Wholesale business, contractor’s yard, lumber yard, landscaping business. 1 space per 500 square feet of gross floor area.

44. Other uses. 1 space per 250 square feet of gross floor area.

B. Parking Held in Reserve. If the number of spaces required above is substantially larger than the number of spaces anticipated by the applicant, then the applicant may hold some of the parking in reserve in order to avoid unnecessary paving while ensuring adequate area for potential parking demands.

1. Suitable area must be available on the site for one hundred percent (100%) of the parking required above.

2. The number of spaces which must be paved initially may be reduced by up to fifty percent (50%) by the Township Supervisors/ Commissioners/ Borough Council, upon recommendation of the Township/ Borough Planning Commission. All stormwater engineering shall be designed based on total parking requirements, including the reserve.

3. Applicants that anticipate a need for more than one hundred twenty (120%) of the required parking spaces should design their developments with suitable area for the balance of the total number of spaces required. These spaces shall be held in reserve. The reserve parking spaces shall be constructed by the applicant if and when determined necessary by the Supervisors/ Commissioners/ Council, upon recommendation of the Township/ Borough Zoning Officer.

4. The Supervisors/ Commissioners/ Council may require installation of these parking spaces under the following conditions:

   a. When there is evidence of a continued overflow of parking as installed by the applicant.

   b. When a re-evaluation of the parking capacity by the Zoning Officer shows that future parking needs will not be met. The parking capacity shall be re-evaluated whenever there is a change in use, ownership, number of employees, number of residents, building size, and/or land area.

Reserve parking lets applicants reduce the amount of parking they must build initially. This can have a positive impact on both the natural and built environments. However, the regulations do require that an appropriate area be set aside for the reserve parking, in case the municipality determines that this parking is needed after all.
C. Maximum Parking. The maximum amount of permitted parking shall be 120% of the minimum required parking, unless the Supervisors/Commissioners/Council require installation of additional parking, as outlined in section B above.

D. Shared Parking.

1. The parking spaces required in the above standards may be reduced when two or more establishments share the same parking area, whether on the same lot or on abutting lots, subject to the following conditions:
   a. That some portion of the shared off-street parking area lies within 200 feet of an entrance, regularly used by patrons, into the buildings served by the shared parking facilities.
   b. That access and parking easements are prepared and recorded for each property affected by the shared parking.

2. The minimum amount of shared parking required shall be calculated according to the following formula:
   a. Calculate the minimum amount of parking required for each land use as if it were a separate use.
   b. To determine peak parking requirements, multiply the minimum parking required for each proposed land use by the corresponding percentage in the table below for each of the five time periods.
   c. Calculate the column total for each of the five time periods.
   d. The column (time period) with the highest value shall be the minimum shared parking requirement.

Some developers build much more parking than needed to meet the actual needs of chain stores. This unnecessary parking creates more stormwater runoff, increases pollution, and reduces the amount of useful development that can occur. To avoid these problems, municipalities may want to cap the amount of parking by having a maximum parking ratio. For example, the zoning ordinance could cap parking at 120% of the minimum required parking. For a 10,000 square foot retail use, the minimum amount of parking is 50 spaces. Therefore, the maximum number of parking spaces for this use would be 60 spaces.

Shared Parking. Different types of commercial uses have different peaks of demand for parking. For example, most parking for offices takes place during the day, while most of the parking for movie theaters takes place in the evenings and on weekends. These two uses-office and a movie theater-could share their parking, reducing the total amount of parking to be built.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>WEEKDAY</th>
<th></th>
<th>WEEKEND</th>
<th></th>
<th>Other</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Day (9AM-4PM)</td>
<td>Evening (6PM-Midnight)</td>
<td>Day (9AM-4PM)</td>
<td>Evening (6PM-Midnight)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other (Midnight-6AM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel/ Motel</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment/ Recreation</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Definitions

Unless a contrary intention clearly appears in any specific section of this ordinance, the following words and phrases shall have, for the purpose of this ordinance, the meanings given in the following clauses.

ARCADE – An area contiguous to a street or plaza that is open and unobstructed to a height of not less than 12 feet and that is accessible to the public at all times. Any portion of an arcade occupied by building columns, landscaping, statuary, pools, or fountains shall be considered part of the arcade for the purpose of computing floor area.

BUILDING FACADE – That portion of any exterior elevation on the building extending from grade to top of the parapet, wall, or eaves and the entire width of the building elevation.

CANOPY – A roof-like structure, including an awning, that projects from a wall of a building over a door, entrance or window; or a free standing or projecting cover above an outdoor service area, such as at a gasoline service station.

CORNICE – Any horizontal member, structural or nonstructural, of any building, projecting outward from the exterior walls at the roofline, including eaves and other roof overhangs.

DECIBEL (DbC, dB, dBA) – A unit for describing the amplitude of sound as measured on a sound level meter.

EAVES – The projecting lower edges of a roof overhanging the wall of a building.

FESTOON LIGHTING – A chain or strip of lights hanging between two points.

PARAPET – That portion of a wall which extends above the roofline.

PARKING ROW – A unit of parking area larger than a single parking space, where all spaces get access from the same side of a driveway/parking aisle, and are bounded by parking islands, within a parking lot.

PATIO – A level, surfaced area directly adjacent to a principal building at or within three feet of the finished grade, without a permanent roof intended for outdoor lounging, dining or the like.

COMMENTARY

This appendix includes definitions of words used in the General Commercial District which might not normally be found in a municipality's definition section. Communities may wish to add the definitions in this appendix to the definitions section in their current zoning ordinance. Uses not defined specifically should be attributed to the general dictionary definition.

The definitions included in this section were derived from existing zoning ordinances and the American Planning Association's Planning Advisory Service Report Number 521/522, "A Planners Dictionary."
RESIDENTIAL CONVERSION – The remodeling or alteration of a non-residential structure into a dwelling unit(s) for at least one family; and the modification of a single family structure to accommodate more units than originally intended.

ROOFLINE – A horizontal line intersecting the highest point or points of a roof.

ROOF, PITCHED – A shed, gabled, or hipped roof having a slope or pitch of at least one foot rise for each four feet of horizontal distance in the direction of the slope or pitch of the roof.

RESERVE PARKING - Off-street parking that is not constructed initially but may be required to be constructed at a later date.

SHARED PARKING – A parking lot shared by two or more abutting establishments, whether on the same lot or abutting lots.

SHOPPING CENTER – A retail center containing a group of three or more stores; with at least one anchor store of at least 20,000 square feet in size; planned and designed for the site on which it is built and functioning as a unit.

STACKING LANE – A paved surface designed to accommodate a motor vehicle waiting for entry to any drive-in facility or auto-oriented use, which is located in such a way that a parking space or access to a parking space is not obstructed.
Appendix 4

Shopping Center Driveway Standards

Shopping center driveways and parking areas shall meet the following requirements:

A. Entrance Driveways

1. The primary function is to provide access from external streets to distribution driveways, which lead to and from parking aisles. A secondary function may be to provide access to storefront driveways.

2. All shopping centers shall have at least one primary entrance driveway, which is designed to carry the largest volume of traffic.

3. Not more than two entrance driveways may be located along each street frontage of the shopping center. Vehicular access to all uses and buildings within the shopping center shall be from interior driveways only, with no independent driveway access to public streets.

4. Entrance driveway separation distances.
   a. Primary entrance driveway access points onto arterial streets shall be located at least 500 feet from the intersection of other streets with the arterial street. Primary entrance driveway access points onto external streets other than arterial streets shall be located at least 300 feet from the intersection of the external street with any other street or another entrance driveway.
   b. Secondary entrance driveway access points to an external street shall be located at least 300 feet from any street intersection or intersection of other entrance driveways with a street.
   c. To reduce hazards and congestion, no internal driveway intersections shall be permitted along primary entrance driveways within 100 feet of the ultimate right-of-way of the street from which access is taken and 75 feet for secondary entrance driveways.
   d. Entrance driveways shall be a minimum of 28 feet wide for two-way traffic, widened appropriately for turning lanes at intersections. Right-turn-only entrance drives shall be a minimum of 15 feet wide for each right-turn movement.

COMMENTARY

Communities may wish to add design standards for shopping center driveways, particularly for larger shopping centers of 80,000 square feet or more.

These standards, which should be added to the subdivision and land development ordinance, describe the functions of different types of driveways within large shopping centers and regulate the width and location of these different driveway types.

For regional shopping areas, such as malls and shopping centers with 500,000 square feet or more, municipalities can require greater distances between driveways and longer uninterrupted driveway entrances.
B. Distribution driveways
   1. The primary function is to distribute traffic between entrance driveways and parking aisle driveways. Distribution driveways should be generally parallel to the storefront driveway.
   2. Parking is prohibited along distribution driveways.

C. Parking aisle driveways
   1. The primary function is to provide direct access to parking spaces within parking areas.
   2. Excessively long parking aisle driveways shall be divided by distribution driveways at intervals of 30 parking spaces (each side).

D. Storefront driveways
   1. The primary function is to provide access to storefronts of principal buildings for drop-off and pick-up and to facilitate internal traffic flow from other driveways. To reduce interference with pedestrian traffic crossing the storefront driveway, storefront driveways shall not be used as entrance driveways.
   2. Parking is prohibited along storefront driveways, but drop-off and pick-up areas shall be provided as pull-off lanes in convenient locations, a minimum of 6 feet wide by 40 feet long.
   3. Minimum cartway width: 30 feet.

E. Service driveways
   1. The primary function is to provide access to loading and other service facilities while minimizing interference with customer traffic circulation.
   2. Only employee parking may be located along these driveways, to the side or rear of principal buildings.
   3. Minimum cartway width: 30 feet.
Appendix 5

Chain Stores and Community Character

The design of most national chain stores and many highway commercial uses, including fast food restaurants, gas stations, and drive-through banks, is intended to draw attention while minimizing building costs. To accomplish this, chain businesses might use oversized signage with brightly colored plastic and building styles that emphasize a modern, flat-roofed, box-like appearance. Although these types of designs may fit into areas with existing highway-oriented commercial uses, they do not fit in with commercial areas that have a historic character or local flavor.

Often, national and regional chain store developers claim they must follow a particular design and layout and cannot vary from a specific formula; however, there are many examples around the nation and the region where chain stores have altered their design and layout to fit the character of the local area. This section provides a number of examples, many found in Montgomery County.

This car wash in Plymouth has an attractive stone façade, a pitched roof, and appropriately scaled signage.

This fast food restaurant in Lower Merion reused a historic building.
A chain drug store and a nursery in Narberth were designed to be compatible with a historic Friends Meeting House across the street. The drug store has a roofed arcade, parapet, corner tower, and screening wall.

This drive-through bank in Skippack uses pitched roofs, a stone façade, and roof gables to mimic the character of Skippack Village.

Convenience stores, such as this one in Worcester, can use residential styling and materials to fit in with a rural residential area.

Unique architectural elements, such as this colonnade on a bank in Lower Gwynedd, are important design features.

This chain drug store in Upper Uchlan, Chester County matches the historic Victorian character of Eagle Village.
More examples of distinctive and well-designed chain stores.

Bank in Chester County.

State liquor store in Exton, Chester County.

Housewares store in Exton, Chester County.

Chain bookstore in Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia.

Fast food restaurant in Virginia.
Supermarket in Ardmore, Lower Merion.

Doughnut shop in Pennsburg.

Drug store in Fairview Village, Worcester.

Drug store in Pennsburg.
Appendix 6

Sources for Additional Information

The following publications and organizations are a good starting point for further information on commercial development:

Chain Store Age – News for Retail Executives
www.chainstoreage.com
425 Park Avenue
NY, NY 10022
(212) 756-5261

National Association of Chain Drug Stores
www.nacds.org
413 North Lee Street
P.O. Box 1417-D49
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1480
(703) 549-3001 p
(703) 836-4869 f

National Grocers Association
www.nationalgrocers.org
1005 N. Glebe Road, Suite 250
Arlington, Virginia 22201-5758
(703) 516-0700 p
(703) 516-0115 f

National Restaurant Association
www.restaurant.org
1200 17th St., NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 331-5900

National Real Estate Investor
www.nreionline.com
(for subscriptions)
nrcs@pbsub.com
(866) 505-7173

ICSC – International Council of Shopping Centers
www.icsc.org
1221 Avenue of the Americas, 41st floor
New York, NY 10020-1099
(646) 728-3800 p
(732) 694-1755 f

ULI – Urban Land Institute
www.uli.org
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW
Suite 500 West
Washington, DC 20007
(202) 624-7000 p
(202) 624-7140 f