SUBURBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE

Chester County

SUBURBAN CHESTER COUNTY VISIONS

A COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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SUBURBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE
for
CHESTER COUNTY

A COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

Suburbia in Chester County to me is: ...a suburbia that preserves the traditional lifestyle, scenic appearance, open space and ecosystems.

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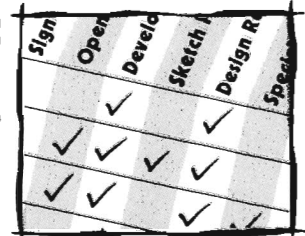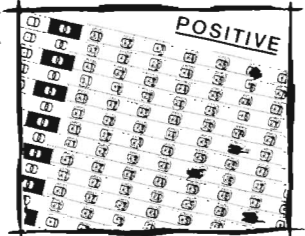
The Community Design Guide Series is part of a process that assists the residents of Chester County in rethinking how to plan our municipalities. The suggestions contained in this document are intended to assist landowners, planning board members, supervisors, and other interested citizens in addressing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

The Community Design Guide Series is:

RURAL COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE

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SUBURBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE

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URBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE
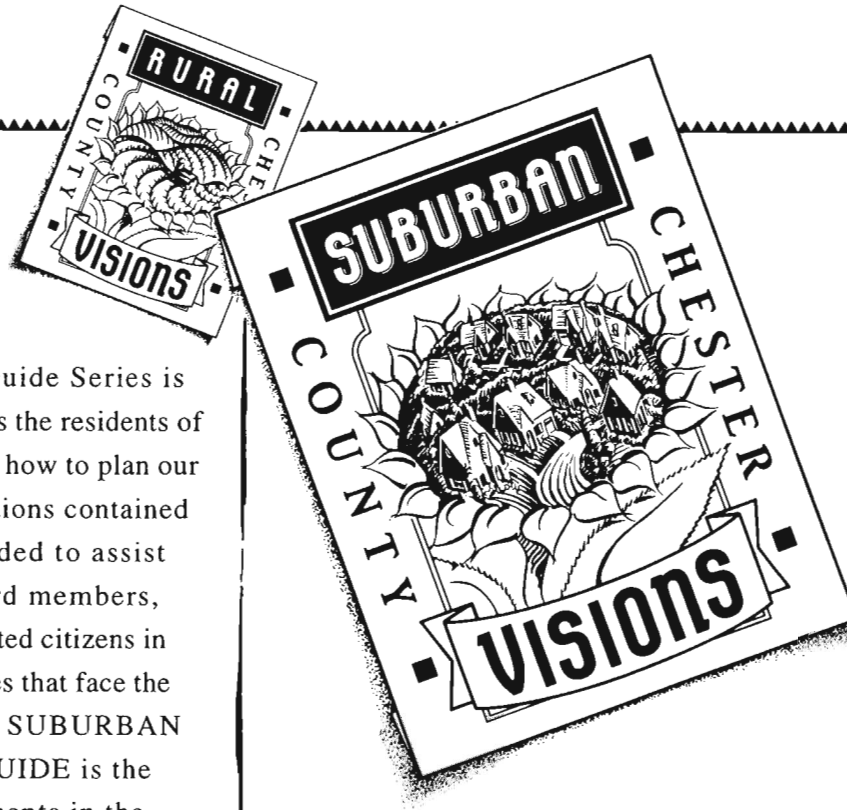
PURPOSE

The Community Design Guides serve several useful purposes. They attempt to define the various community characteristics found in Chester County. This document focuses on our suburban character. Defining the term "suburban" became a challenge as was discovered during the public participation process.

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

PROCESS

Visions for Suburban Chester County was initiated by the County Commissioners with invitations sent to over 300 residents, representing the suburban portion of the County, and asking them to participate in two workshops. Those individuals who desired to contribute returned an acceptance card and made suggestions for issues that deserved discussion. This process developed the working group and set in motion the remainder of the program.
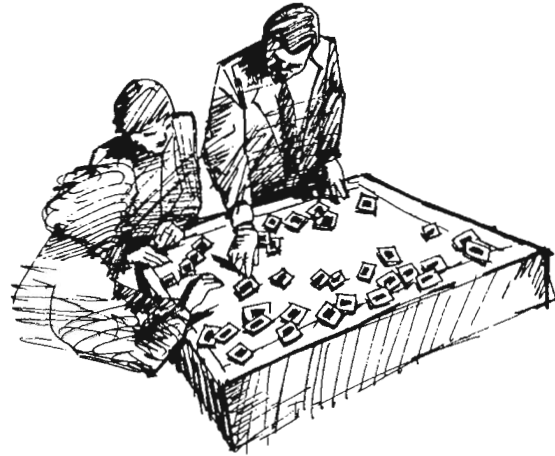
The fundamental approach used to develop the Suburban Community Design Guide was to present slide images to representatives of suburban Chester County and record their preferences for the visual image for that portion of the County. After analyzing the preferences, design and implementation recommendations were created.

The Chester County Planning Commission staff took photographs of the issues affecting the physical environment. A series of 160 slide images was produced for the first workshop entitled Suburban Vision Survey. Over 100 people attended the three workshops in September 1994, held at the PECO facility in Caln Township and the Government Services Center in West Goshen Township. Participants ranked each slide image numerically based on preference, appropriateness for Chester County, and general impressions on the content of the slide image.
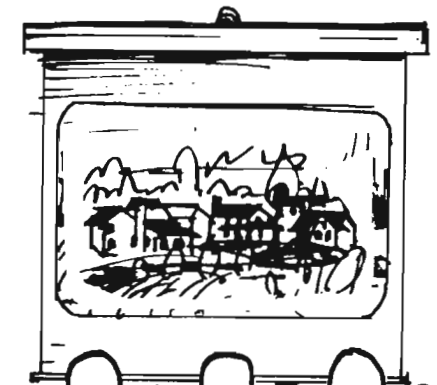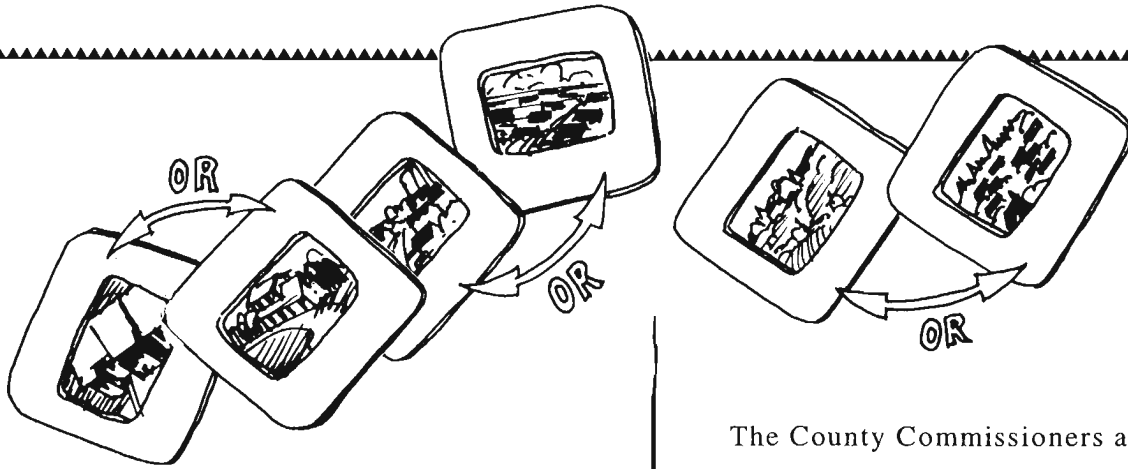
The same participants assembled in November 1994 for the second workshop entitled Suburban Visions Evaluation to view a selection of the slides. The attendees were asked to identify the specific components of the slide images that compelled them to rate the slide as they did. Average scores were provided for each of the selected slides as a means of stimulating discussion. The Chester County Planning Commission staff recorded the extensive conversation offered by the participants.
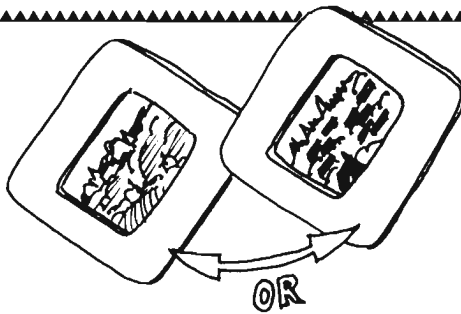
The County Commissioners and the County Planning Commission would like to thank the participants for contributing their time and knowledge for the benefit of our community. Without your efforts, this document would not be possible.

The SUBURBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE is the product of the considerable effort expended by the participants to articulate issues and preferences for suburban Chester County. This guide is to be used by a variety of decision makers. It is also an information source for **Landscapes**, the new County Comprehensive Plan.

Chester County

LANDSCAPES

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

FORMAT

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

The SUBURBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE addresses:

♦ The issues expressed by the Suburban Community representatives.

♦ The positive elements of the images.

♦ Techniques suggested to improve the negative elements of the images.

♦ Recommendations for improving or enhancing suburban design.

♦ Design examples to convey desired design components.

♦ Discussion of potential relationships among a variety of suburban designs.

♦ Suggestions for implementing the vision for suburban Chester County.

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

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

IMPLEMENTING THE PREFERRED DESIGN FEATURES

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. **Explicit, detailed review standards.**

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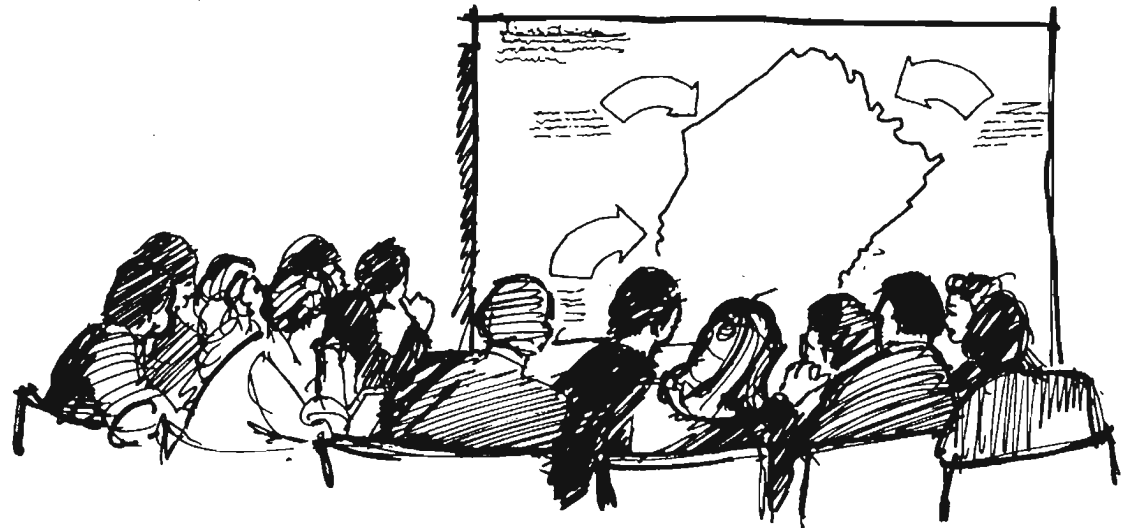
4. **Municipal officials need adequate resources.**

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

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

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

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

Care should be taken to coordinate new regulations among other municipal ordinances. For example, a tree protection ordinance may be ineffective unless pre development site clearing activities are regulated.

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

"It looks like where I grew up. It has a real home-town feel."

Image Evaluation +4.70

Participants remarked that the houses in this image looked as though they were built in the 1940's. A majority of them did not think that it was actually new construction. They thought that it reminded them of their home where they grew up. Most participants agreed that they wouldn't mind living next door to a clean and well kept house in a small town setting. According to the survey taken by participants, municipalities should encourage future residential development that has a variety of lot sizes in a *village* setting.

The varying *architectural styles* give these homes individual character and the look of a neighborhood. Single family homes are still the most desirable type of housing, according to the participants, and houses of this size make that dream even more affordable. See (A)

Mature trees would improve the houses dramatically and portray similar characteristics of older neighborhoods. The *planting strip* with the *street trees* accomplishs this. The planting strip should be carefully designed to provide enough space for tree roots in maturation. Several varieties of street trees are mentioned in the glossary. Once the trees mature, they will provide privacy to the homeowner. See (C)

The scale of the homes relative to the front yard *set back* places them harmoniously on the land. The homes are not pretentious and oversized. They reminded participants of a well-planned, nostalgic small town or village. A neighborhood such as this provides a sense of community and a family atmosphere. Individuality and personal style is created with hanging plants, landscaping, window treatments, a multi-light sash, and varying colors, yet they have a harmony in things such as similar colors and roofing materials.

The sidewalks "make" the neighborhood and can help sell houses. Participants equated sidewalks with friendliness. Sidewalks are important

on small lot development and they promote walking. The porch also adds a nice touch and is pleasing. It implies a sense of casualness and intimacy for pedestrians in the neighborhood. See (B)

A

B

C

♦ Design a rear alley for vehicular access to eliminate driveways and garage doors facing the street.
♦ Place houses close to the street which increases private backyard areas and help frame the village streetscape.
♦ Add sidewalks with wide planting strips and street trees.
♦ Add front porches to houses close to the sidewalk to encourage social interaction which promotes a sense of community.
♦ Diversify architectural styles.
♦ Relate the size of the home to the size of the lot.
♦ Vary housing materials to create individual character.
♦ Encourage a variety of price ranges for houses.

The curbing may look severe, but it serves a function. Curbs are used for drainage and to guide snow plows and trash trucks, preventing them from encroaching on the grass. They also separate vehicles from pedestrians. The lack of visible _mailboxes_ on the curb was also thought to be good.

Small lots were thought to be attractive if nicely landscaped, designed, and maintained. Large lots waste land. Narrow front yards contribute to the appeal of this image. As a result of this type of design, the backyards become larger and more functional. Small lots use land more efficiently. They require less maintenance time with mowing and fewer roads and utility lines.

Another reason this type of housing was well liked was the reduced dependency on the automobile. The garages were assumed to be in the rear _alley_ and, therefore, not visible. Driveways didn't interrupt the _streetscape_. Some _on-street parking_ may occur in a neighborhood with this type of lot design.

"*Attractive housing which is situated to preserve sensitive natural features and viewsheds, provide for alternative circulation methods and create a sense of community.*"

Image Evaluation +3.90

These 3-unit townhomes rated highly because they looked like two large single-family homes to many of the participants. The architectural style is appealing and the varied _roof lines_ give the buildings a distinctive character. The buildings don't look the same. Townhomes such as these bridge the more familiar unattractive townhouse lot layouts and building design. Land is used wisely, thereby leaving more open space. The varying setbacks provide different _viewsheds_ for each homeowner and offer an interesting exterior design.

The townhomes blend well with the terrain. They don't look like they just "popped" out of the ground. The trees in the background give it a park-like

♦ Create a variety of townhomes that impact similar visual images as single-family homes.
♦ Blend housing into the natural landscape of the lot.
♦ Landscape cul-de-sac islands.
♦ Provide off-street parking.
♦ Provide sidewalks along collector roads in clustered developments.
♦ Mailboxes and curbing should reflect local options.

appearance. Participants thought that an important element of this housing is the landscaping. Landscaping in the _cul-de-sac_ is appealing and pleasing. It provides a visual break from similarly styled housing and creates some privacy for the front of the townhomes. A critical concern in this type of design is who will maintain the cul-de-sac landscaping?

Although in this image, off-street parking creates an impression of openness, community appearance is enhanced whenever a multitude of garages do not face the street. Additional parking spaces may be needed with this design concept to accommodate visitors. Mailboxes at the end of each driveway are acceptable because they create a more rural image.

Sidewalks were thought to spoil this image. There is little through traffic to deal with on the cul-de-sac, however the participants thought sidewalks should be provided along _collector roads_ in _cluster_ developments to encourage pedestrian and neighborhood activity. Sidewalks are important for child safety, children can walk to school or bus stops and can use cul-de-sacs as limited play areas. This street design provides an incentive for activity among and between neighbors. The curbing gives definition to the cul-de-sac and the _off-street parking_. An option would be to eliminate the curbing to create a more rural or natural image.

"A mix of well-laid out residential homes on small lots with plenty of diverse open space around them to serve as a buffer, for beauty, for wildlife and recreation."
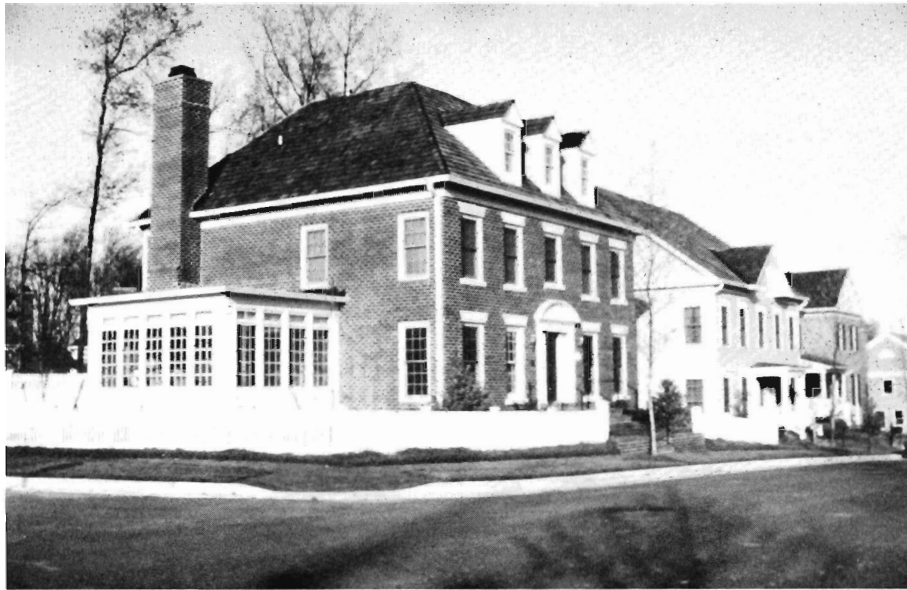

Image Evaluation +3.33

According to the participants, this type of housing and yard reflect modern lifestyles. Homeowners may be a two income family that do not want to maintain a large lot. Some participants thought that the front yard could be larger to accommodate more trees and landscaping. The participants did remark that they liked the street trees that were provided. The size of the house may also create an image that it is too close to the street.

The variety of architectural styles was appealing, the different styles of housing also looked like they belong together. It appears as though the neighborhood buildings and landscaping grew up over time. An important observation of the participants was the homes did not relate well to their surroundings. A large financial investment in homes such as these creates an atmosphere where there are so many amenities inside the home that the occupants do not spend time outside. You may not get to know your neighbors. A front porch could increase social interaction and create a sense of community by placing residents outside and near the sidewalks.

As the landscaping matures, it will improve the image. This site would be more appealing in the summer, when there are more leaves on the trees. The brick sidewalks are more attractive than concrete and better for the environment because they reduce the amount of *impervious* surfaces. The *fence* made the homes seem more friendly. Curbs are depressed at intersections to accommodate handicapped residents.
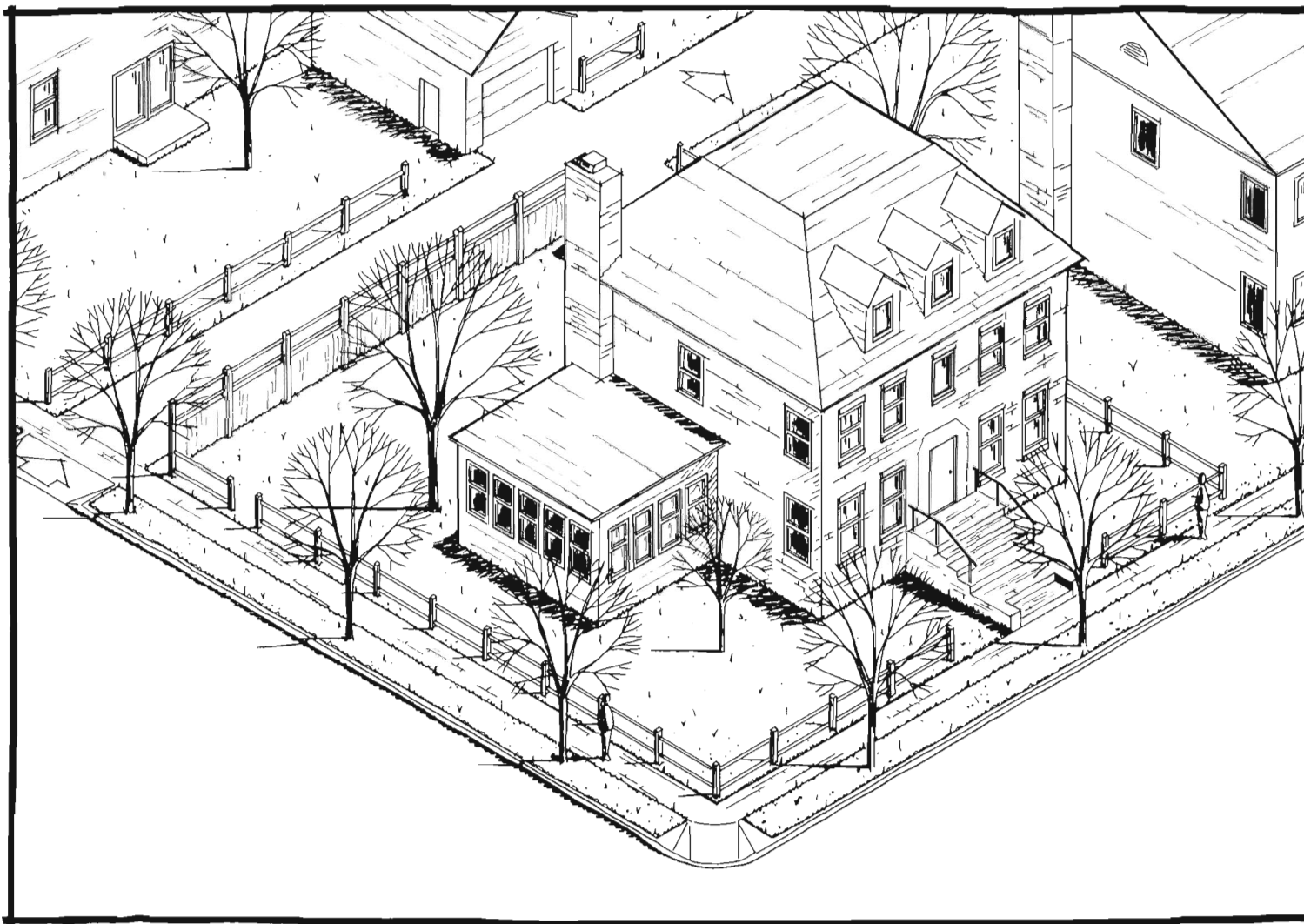
- ◆ Allow for homes on smaller lot sizes.
- ◆ Provide a variety of housing types and architectural styles.
- ◆ Create front yard setbacks that provide space for the planting of trees and shrubs.
- ◆ Plant street trees in the planting strip.
- ◆ Use a variety of paving materials to create interesting sidewalks.
- ◆ Add porches and fences to the homes to add to the sense of community.
- ◆ Parking at rear of lots adjacent to alleys, if possible.

"*People are living closer together than in a traditional rural setting, but need attributes such as sidewalks, services, stores, offices, recreation, and housing diversity.*"
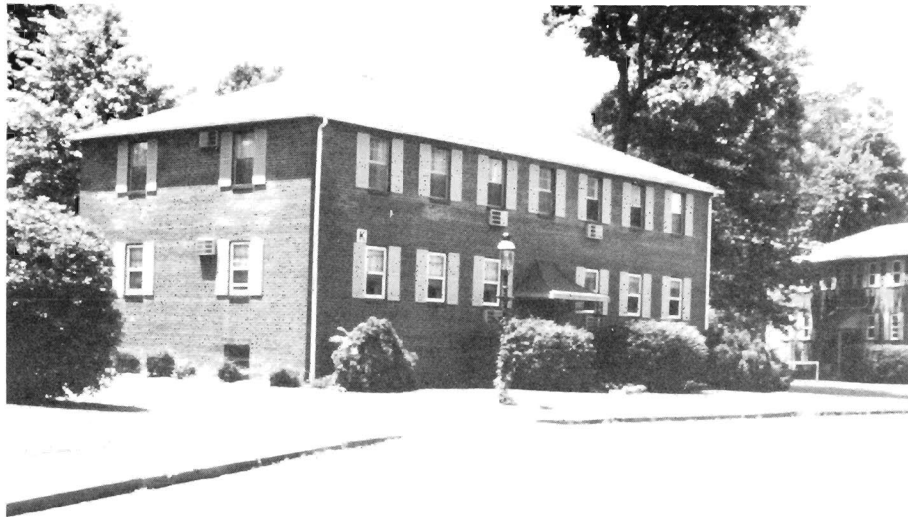
Image Evaluation -0.15

Although this image did not rate well, the participants stated that multi-family uses have a place in suburban communities. The apartments may meet affordable housing needs in the suburban community. The use provides for affordable living and is functional, but the layout was rated slightly unsatisfactory. Many suggestions were provided to help improve this image and are included in the illustration on page 15.

The setbacks of the buildings should be varied to reduce the current "barracks" image. Several buildings could be arranged into a *courtyard* setting,.creating more pedestrian interaction. The buildings do not blend well with their surroundings. The two-story height is appropriate for suburban communities and can be served by fire equipment.

The architectural style of the building is not creative. Many participants thought that it looked like military housing, while others thought it was an attempt to imitate the colonial era with 1950's architecture. The building was described as being, "flat, cold, and having no character, no variety, and low-budget landscaping." The use of the basement floor was undistinguishable.

Multi-level buildings rather than a repetitive architectural style would be better. A varied roof line would enhance this image. Street trees should be added to the planting strip. Additional landscaping should be placed in the front and sides of the building. The bushes near the front entrance are a safety problem, they should be smaller or moved closer to the sidewalk.

To improve the "box-like" structure, the building could benefit from painting the shutters, varying the roof line, or adding awnings. The windows are poorly proportioned to the size of the building and the shutters are poorly proportioned to the size of the window.

The copper awning over the door, while functional, is unattractive. The brick was seen as a positive element because it allows for low level maintenance over an extended period of time. The presence and location of the street *light fixture* was considered a positive aspect. The lack of mailboxes on the street also reduced the amount of clutter. Participants also liked parking in the rear.
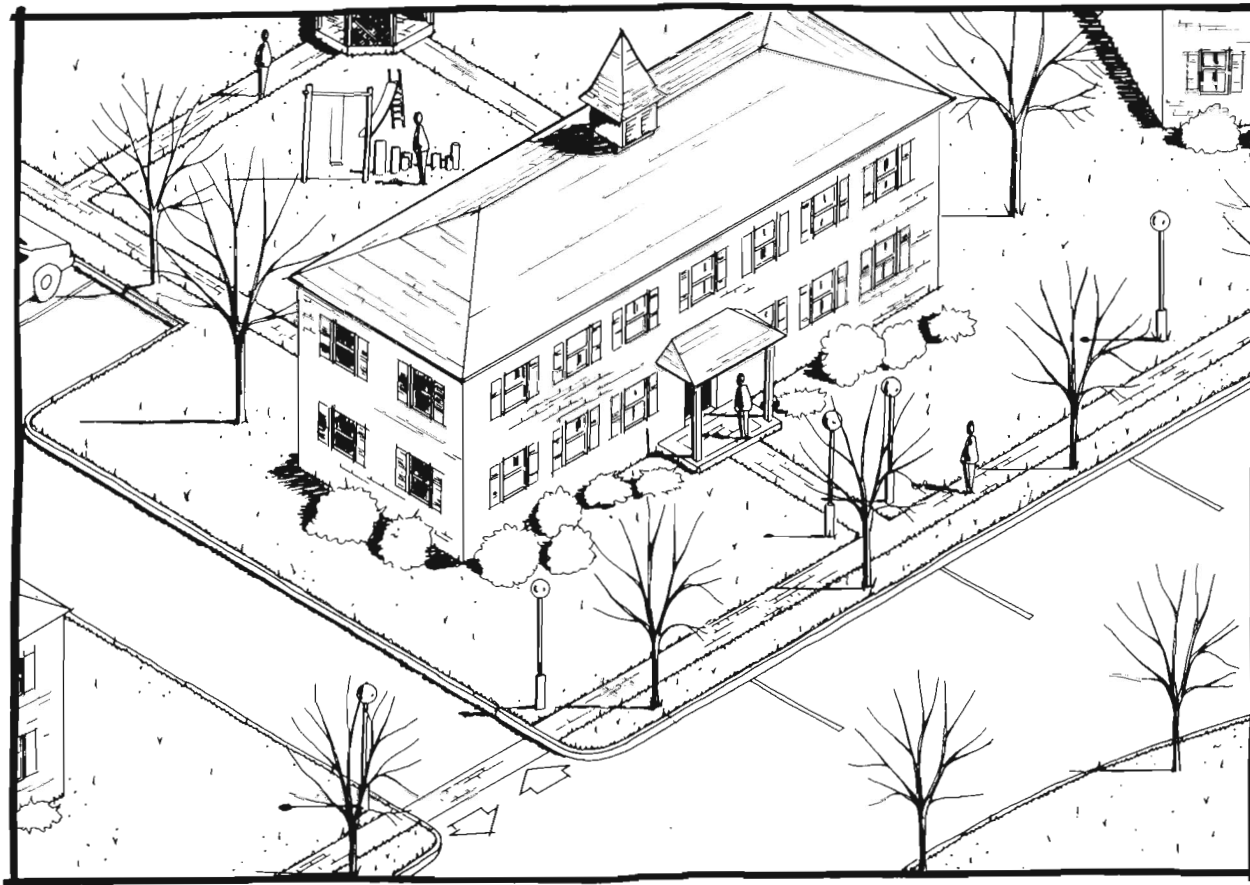
- ♦ Create a courtyard setting rather than an uncoordinated individual building layout.
- ♦ Create variety within each building by varying roof lines.
- ♦ Add landscaping in the planting strip and the front and side yards.
- ♦ Provide for parking in the rear of multi-family residences.
- ♦ Identify parking areas along frontage road.

Image Evaluation -2.30

"Mobile homes are appropriate in Chester County if they look like a permanent home."

Participants understand that *mobile homes* provide an affordable housing choice, but they thought the image could definitely be improved. Mobile home parks typically have little sense of design and conform to only a functional layout. Frequently, many lots are placed on the site without regard to layout. Each resident views the end of each mobile home as it faces the street. The mobile homes should be placed on a variety of larger lots with more landscaping and better building orientation. Parking areas should be redesigned to *screen* vehicles from sight, or to make them less prominent.

The architectural style of mobile homes is not often appealing. Low pitched roofs and almost blank walls that face the street do not enhance its appeal. Landscaping should be placed in front of blank walls, utility sheds, and any mechanical equipment to screen it from the street or *public areas*. Porches similar to the one that appears in the image should be added to enhance the sense of community and add to the architectural variety. Sidewalks should be incorporated and street trees should be placed in a planting strip. The lack of curbing creates a more relaxed street image. *Stormwater control* is important in high density mobile home areas.

Image Evaluation +0.93

◆ Encourage mobile home design in the same manner as single-family residences.
◆ Create different lot sizes and layouts.
◆ Encourage a variety of lot configurations.
◆ Plant trees and vegetation within mobile home parks.
◆ Add screening to blank walls and unsightly objects.
◆ Encourage porches to be added to mobile homes.
◆ Increase the pitch of mobile home roofs.
◆ Add a network of sidewalks within and to mobile home parks.
◆ Enhance the image of public spaces with benches and lighting.

This image received a slightly positive rating because it looks like a single family home rather than a mobile home. Mobile homes are appropriate in Chester County if they look like a permanent home. This particular mobile home gives the sense of permanence. It has more character because of the landscaping that surrounds it.

Image Evaluation -1.65

"I would like to have more of a sense of town with sidewalks and small lots with well maintained and landscaped lots."

When participants rated this image they did not know that it was *manufactured housing*. They thought that it was more aesthetically pleasing than the negatively-rated image of the mobile homes. Some even thought they were townhomes. The lighting fixtures also provide some character. One of the positive aspects of this type of housing is that it tends to be more affordable than conventional single family dwellings.

These houses received a negative rating because there was no variety in the lot layout, the architectural style was repetitive and there needed to be more variety in setbacks. Most participants agreed that the *density* was not the issue.

Image Evaluation +.75

♦ Provide a variety of lot sizes, layouts, and setbacks.
♦ Use different architectural styles.
♦ Vary colors, materials, facades, and roof angles.
♦ Add landscaping and light fixtures.
♦ Provide sidewalks with planting strips wide enough for mature street trees.
♦ Incorporate manufactured housing as permitted uses in all residential zoning districts.

The dwellings in this slide are approximately the same density as those in the previous image, however, the positive rating was based in part by the softening of the building *facades*, subtle colors, porches and landscaping. Participants suggested that higher densities are appropriate if the design creates an impression of single family homes on inviting streets.

Residential developments should vary lot layouts and setbacks, and provide a variety of architectural styles. Even the colors, materials, facades, and roof angles should vary. Uniform development should be avoided.

Participants identified the variety of trees, shrubbery, and other landscaping in the planting strip as positive elements. The use of curbs, gutters and sidewalks improves the appeal. Utilities appear to be underground - no visible overhead wires are present.

"*A tranquil place to live - not too far from commercial areas and places of work. A place where families will remain from generation to generation as the County grows.*"

Image Evaluation +3.97

This positively rated image shows a large house with a separate garage and accessory use. An _accessory use_ can be located in the garage or in the area above it. Uses can range from professional office, "granny flats," in-law suite, small craft workshop, or a variety of single use home occupations. Municipalities should consider these types of uses and plan accordingly. Families can use them to house older children or aging parents who still wish to have some independence. The additional apartment can provide an affordable living space for families throughout their many stages of life. Office space within _walking distance_ of the home reduces automobile use while reducing costs to the homeowner. This use can even be found with entrances from alleys in small towns or villages.

♦ Encourage accessory uses
in plans and ordinances.
♦ Maintain similar
architectural styles and
building materials.
♦ Select compatible
accessory uses for zoning
districts.
♦ Provide adequate, but
limited, parking if used as
a place that has visitors.

"A pleasing mix

of land uses...

incorporating

sufficient open

space within

the residential

areas to permit

all residents to

walk to the

open space

and parks."

Image Evaluation +5.90

According to the vision survey of participants, new developments should set aside a percentage of a site for open space. Also, outdoor recreational facilities should focus on developing smaller neighborhood parks. One of the most important challenges facing the county as it continues to develop will be to protect the environment and preserve open space.

Neighborhood parks are the responsibility of individual municipalities while larger, regional facilities are the responsibility of the County and State. Participants thought that neighborhood parks are appealing when an area is growing, but there is more demand on facilities when the area is developed. The demand is for active recreation such as ball fields. As the area grows the land becomes more expensive and more difficult to acquire. Municipal and county officials should continue to work together to identify need and potential sites for both neighborhood and regional facilities prior to, or in conjunction with, new development.

Image Evaluation +6.90

♦ Plan for trails in conjunction with building of homes.
♦ Locate and screen trails in the rear of houses.
♦ Connect separate land uses with a trail system.
♦ Provide trails through and connecting an open space network.
♦ Define who maintains trails.

This image of open space rated highly, in part, because it provided for active recreation. The path invites people to see the viewshed and participate in open space. Some participants commented that the *trail* can be used for either walking or bicycling and that it looks as though it connects different uses. Separate land uses should be connected by a trail network. The only question that arose was, "who maintains open space?"

Participants discussed the differences between a trail and a sidewalk in a residential area. Both provide important pedestrian access and even recreation, but there is a difference. A trail is not the same as a sidewalk. A sidewalk in the front of residences is part of public space and does not intrude on the more private parts of a home. The more private rooms within a home are located in the rear. Trails occasionally are located in the back of residential subdivisions and can be either public or limited to the residents of a particular housing area. "Sidewalks relate to the streetscape and the proportion of their surroundings, trails don't have that kind of relationship." Trails frequently provide linkages between a variety of uses, such as residential, recreation and schools.

If a trail is planned as part of a new development people may not be as concerned because the trail preceded their occupation of the home. It may actually be a reason for locating in a particular area. It is important that people know where trails are located before they buy their home. If homeowners are accustomed to people walking along designated areas, it is more acceptable. Trails through residential areas should be located in sections that provide the most efficiency, while not creating conflicts with the homeowners.

The addition of a fence establishes a buffer between the open space area and the hedgerows and is aesthetically pleasing. The fence also helps define the location of the trail.

Image Evaluation +1.52

"An undefined mix of residential and commercial uses. It should be a mix of residential uses with employment opportunities close by."

According to the participant's response, the most acceptable type of future development is a mix of residential and nonresidential uses. Participants remarked that using the floor space over ground level retail as residential is a terrific idea. In some municipalities, local ordinances will need to adjust to allow mixing of these uses. Many zoning ordinances encourage this type of development. In most suburban areas this is not a common land use practice, but it can happen in villages and small towns.

This image did not rate highly because participants thought the buildings were plain and had little charm. The two upper levels and ground level do not blend well together. The building's three stories in close proximity to the road make it appear out of scale.

Affordable housing and retail uses in a village or small town atmosphere are provided as opposed to a strip mall. A covered walkway can serve as a waiting area for users of public transit during inclement weather.

This type of development is well suited for villages or even concentrated non-residential "corner commercial" in the suburban environment.

♦ Encourage _adaptive reuse_ of historical buildings through _incentives_ (tax credits, flexible zoning, and subdivision regulations).
♦ Allow for mixed use development in certain zoning districts.
♦ Design structures that are properly scaled to their surroundings.

"We need a wide area between roads and sidewalks. Shopping centers need lots of green and controlled signage."

Image Evaluation -1.26

The building was modernized, but the parking lot appears as though it has not been changed. The parking lot improvements should have been incorporated. The parking lot layout is confusing. It is unclear where one should go when entering the site. This presents a potential safety problem. *Parking islands* should be added to direct drivers through a clear path of travel and prevent vehicles from driving across parking isles. The addition of parking islands eliminates the need for concrete *wheel stops*.

The roof line of the building should be more varied because the roof dominates the structure.

To get to this building, a person must drive. There is no way to walk to it. As designed, the grass planting strip provides little function. A sidewalk should be added in the grass strip. The sidewalk should be connected by a pathway to the shopping center. The grass strip should be widened to allow for landscaping. The lot should be improved visually by adding landscaping. Planting shrubs and trees in the islands would reduce the dominance of the asphalt. The utility lines could also be buried in the planting strip that borders the street.

The entrance was not considered attractive by the participants. The pedestal sign could be placed on a different mounting. The sign is difficult to see because of its position on the pedestal.

The overhead lights are similar to the style typically used on highways. They illuminate more area than is necessary. They should be updated with more modern and efficient lighting fixtures. Street lights would be more attractive and less obtrusive to the surrounding area.
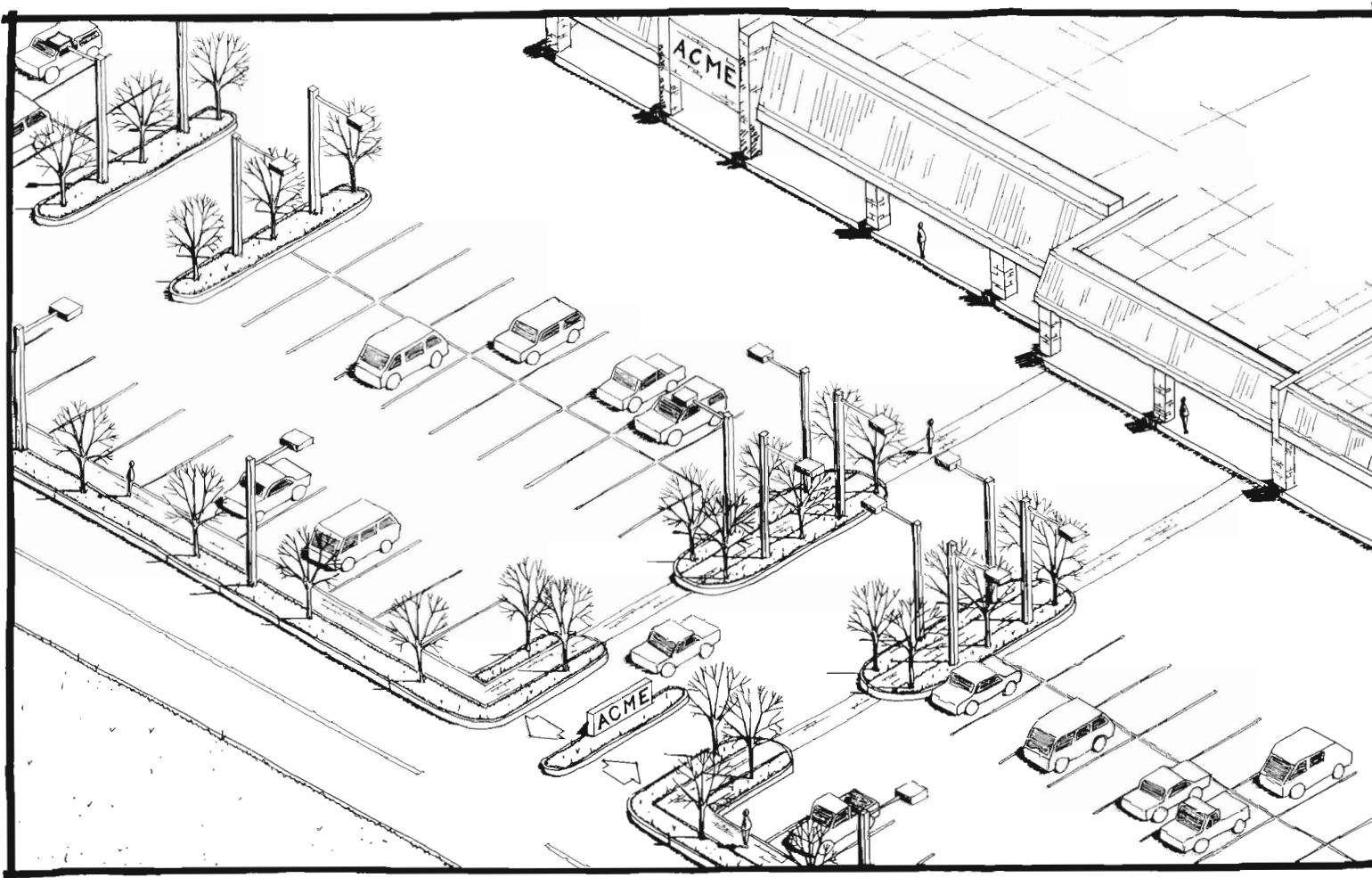
- ◆ Vary the roof line of the building.
- ◆ Redesign the entrance to improve safety for vehicular movement.
- ◆ Add sidewalks and pathways to allow pedestrian access to the site.
- ◆ Provide landscaped parking islands.
- ◆ Bury the utility lines in the planting strip.
- ◆ Place the pedestal sign lower to the ground.
- ◆ Update lighting to more attractive and efficient models.

Image Evaluation -4.14

Participants thought that this image needed a unifying theme and traffic problems needed to be addressed. This site provides the same function as strip commercial developments, but it is not as aesthetically pleasing and presents some safety issues. The owners of each building should agree to unify the theme. This image is not a good example of adaptive reuse of existing structures. The character of this area has evolved from residential to retail and some of the redeeming values of the structures have been compromised.

Safety issues are a concern. "People drive by this place because its unsafe." The only structures controlling access to this site are the telephone poles. Adding a curb in front of the telephone poles would control the location of access, and

drainage. A one-way traffic pattern should be created because of the limited depth of the parking area. Angle parking, either facing the road or the buildings, should be provided (see A). Vehicles parked facing the street allow the buildings to be seen more clearly (see B). Additional parking should be placed behind the buildings. Some parking can be in front of buildings as well as placed in the rear. The more parking provided behind the buildings in suburban shopping areas, the better the general appearance of the buildings.

If possible, the utility line should be placed underground. The telephone poles could be enclosed in a planting strip if underground installation is not possible. This would reduce the amount

A

♦ **Create a unifying theme for groups of commercial buildings.**
♦ **Add a curbed, landscaped strip to control access and increase safety.**
♦ **Reduce the amount of impervious surfaces.**
♦ **Provide angle parking suitable to the layout of the site.**
♦ **Bury utility lines.**
♦ **Add decorative landscaping and lighting.**
♦ **Provide uniform signage.**
♦ **Add parking at the rear of buildings.**

of impervious surface while providing an aesthetically pleasing element. Landscaping, flowers, and even _signs_ should be placed within the landscaped strip. Uniform signs that follow a theme were preferred by some participants while others liked the wall signs. In either case, the signs should be coordinated. If signs are placed within the landscaped strip they offer drivers the opportunity to see them more easily without having to look for them on the buildings. Another feature that could enhance the image of the buildings is facade and window treatment. A variety of colors and materials could improve the storefronts and uniform gables could create a common theme.

B

"A great deal of these areas are centered around the automobile as central to the way of life. That is what needs to change most."

Image Evaluation -3.96

This image received a strong negative rating. Participants did not like the barrier curb placed between the vehicles. If a person was physically challenged or had a baby stroller they would have to travel the entire length of the parking lot before they could access the buildings. The barrier curb does not prevent vehicles from hitting each other. Individual barrier curbs are usually placed further apart to prevent such accidents from occurring. The lack of landscaping concerned participants. The lighting poles were also considered excessively high to illuminate only the parking lot.

◆ Add trees and other landscaping to parking lots.
◆ Remove barriers that prevent users from accessing the parking facilities.
◆ Prevent automobile accidents by providing proper buffers between vehicles.
◆ Preserve existing trees and shrubbery by relocating them on the site, if possible.

"New parking lots should be well screened with high berms and dense planting - let's keep the trees."

Image Evaluation +1.45

Participants rated this image more positively. They cited the space between the vehicles and the amount of landscaping as positive elements. Parking lots, whether for office or commercial uses, should be landscaped with grass, shrubbery, and trees. Existing trees should be kept or moved to a suitable location within a parking lot instead of clearing them from the site. Stormwater runoff is reduced with planting strips and landscaped parking *buffers*.

"... no more traditional strip development - use natural materials, landscaping, pedestrian crosswalks, and attractive signs."

Image Evaluation -3.31

Suburban participants indicated that many elements of this image needed to be improved. They thought that there were too many stores for the available parking. The overhang serves no practical purpose, the downspouts are unattractive, and there is no vegetation to soften the concrete or metal in the structure.

The car bumpers encroach into walkways and are too close to the building which detracts from the visual *aesthetics*. Air quality is reduced because the tailpipe of each car is so close to the front door of each business. Concrete wheel stops would place vehicles further from the sidewalk.

There is not enough room to walk on the sidewalk because of the cars and the open doors. If the doors must open out because of fire code regulations, the sidewalk should be wider. Entrances may need to be recessed to allow the doors to open out without interfering with pedestrians. If entrances are unable to be recessed, the doors should either be kept closed or opened to be parallel with the building wall. If possible, the sidewalk should be landscaped with planters to make it more attractive.

There are too many signs on the doors and windows. Many of the signs are added after design plans are approved. *Temporary signs* are distracting because they limit the customer's view of the stores. There needs to be uniform sign design. Advertising products on temporary signs is permitted, but limitations need to be enforced.

Image Evaluation +4.10

There is no sense of urgency as in the previous image. It has a timeless architectural style that incorporates both functional and attractive design. This shopping facility looks like a village, but one still is not able to walk there. One must drive. Participants indicated the need to create places that can be reached by walking. Although the building is one color, it has character and each store has "personality" through the use of decorative elements such as flower boxes, brick sidewalks, and awnings. The shopping area creates its own character through the use of such elements as varied roof lines, the clock, attractive landscaping, and a variety of *paving materials* in the sidewalk.

If participants drive to shopping areas they like to park close to the stores. This shopping center has that feature but vehicles do not intrude into the sidewalk. Both the vegetated areas and lampposts separate the vehicles from the sidewalk.

This image has fewer signs than the previous image. The windows are free from numerous temporary signs that all vie for the attention of customers.

♦ Use architectural styles that are time-honored and adaptable.
♦ Provide wheel stops to prevent vehicles from encroaching on sidewalks.
♦ Add landscaping in front of stores, between vehicles and parking areas, and throughout the parking lot.
♦ Limit and enforce the use and number of temporary signs.
♦ Use decorative elements such as awnings, flower boxes, and textured sidewalks to create individuality and character.
♦ Treat sidewalks as the principal thoroughfare and design them accordingly.

Image Evaluation +4.73

"...buildings set back, landscaping, sidewalks and bikeways, curbs, local parks, and preserved green spaces."

Image Evaluation +5.95

ach of these _boulevards_ were rated highly by the participants. They appreciated the openness of the street and the lack of congestion. The wide swatch of green space and the deep setbacks remove the houses from the proximity to the street. Even though the areas are developed, they do not intrude onto the streetscape. The _human scale_ of the street in relation to the structures provides harmony within these images. The wide distance between the street and the sidewalk provides added safety. Sidewalks provide an excellent opportunity for walking throughout the neighborhood. Traffic circulation is separated from the sidewalks and houses. The design of new subdivisions often places sidewalks too close to the street.

The areas create the sense of a park setting. The mature trees are an important part of these images. Without the trees they would not be as effective. The green space can be used for stormwater runoff, snow storage, active or passive recreation, and as a noise buffer. The maintenance of the grass strip should be determined prior to plan adoption and construction.

♦ Determine the functional
classification of
surrounding roads to
protect other roads from
eventual widening.
♦ Develop standards for
boulevards.
♦ Reserve the proper
amount of right-of-way to
accommodate boulevards.
♦ Reserve the proper
amount of right-of-way to
accommodate boulevards
if the road will be
widened in the future.
♦ Alert homebuyers to
future plans for individual
streets.
♦ Encourage plantings
outside the right-of-way.
♦ Retain and protect
existing trees and
vegetation.
♦ Increase setbacks for
specific uses.
♦ Determine maintenance
responsibility for specific
areas within the
boulevard prior to plan
approval and
construction.

Widening such streets would destroy the residential character of these neighborhoods. If the boulevards were wider and had two more travel lanes then they could also be suitable for commercial and office uses, rather than residences.

On residential streets such as these, there should be no need to reserve additional _right-of-way_. These streets should be designed to a residential street _functional classification_. Other roads in the community should be designed to accommodate higher volumes of traffic rather than allowing these roads to evolve into highly traveled streets. If right-of-way needs to be reserved, tree plantings should be minimized within the right-of-way. Widening these roads without replacing trees would certainly detract from these images.

Creating boulevards may be a good way to reserve right-of-way. Municipalities should clearly express their intent to residents before homes are purchased and the boulevards are widened. A note should appear on the plot plans and deeds for individual properties. If roads must be widened, a boulevard should be maintained in some form. Zoning ordinances should be written to measure setback distances from the _ultimate right-of-way_ so sufficient area is reserved to accommodate future road widening.

"...signs should be sized to complement their surroundings..."

Image Evaluation -3.79

Participants thought that the sign in this image was too high. In addition, the image area is extremely large and may not be necessary given the speed of vehicles traveling by the sign. If the height of the sign is reduced, caution should be taken to accommodate proper *sight distances*.

Image Evaluation +0.77

♦ Reduce the height of highway commercial signs.
♦ Ensure proper sight distances near signs.
♦ Create signs that are adequately designed for the area and the design speed of the road.
♦ Provide attractive landscaping near signs that does not interfere with their function.
♦ Create pleasant structures to hold signs.

This image received only a slightly positive rating because many of the participants rated the commercial use of the property rather than the sign. In a residential neighborhood this is preferable. Motorists are able to discern the land use advertised by the sign. An appropriately sized sign for the *design speed* of the road and a residential neighborhood is adequate. Because of the traffic light at the intersection, many motorists will come to a stop and then notice the gasoline station without the use of an oversized sign.

Some participants indicated that the sign is informative without destroying the residential character of the neighborhood. They thought that it was subtle, well landscaped, and they liked the fact that it was low to the ground. It could be illuminated, but not distracting to motorists. Proper care should be taken to assure that the sign does not interfere with sufficient sight distances.

Image Evaluation +0.48

Although these signs received a positive rating, participants expressed many problems and offered solutions to help create a better image. The Ford sign is thought to be less tasteful because the color contrasts with the mounting. It looks artificial and unnatural. The standard corporate logo is mixed with materials that do not work well together. The landscaping is not integrated with the pedestal sign, thereby making it appear more unnatural.

Behind the Ford sign is another sign for Wayne Buick. This sign is more appropriate for suburban communities according to the participants. The sign colors look more natural because of the earth tones used with the stone mounting. Together, the signs placed in the stone mountings look coordinated. Ground signs are good, but they need to

♦ Use neutral colors and materials that complement each other for signs.
♦ Ensure the provision of adequate sight distances.
♦ Coordinate signs in suburban areas by creating themes where possible.
♦ Place vehicles not for sale in the rear or side of the lot to improve the image.
♦ Provide a landscaped buffer between the road and uses to reduce the light emanating from the lot.
♦ Provide low-level lighting to reduce light intrusion on other properties.

allow for adequate sight distances. These signs may block the clear _sight triangle_, thereby requiring drivers to encroach farther into traffic to see oncoming cars. This creates a traffic hazard. The signs should be set back to allow for proper sight distance.

The Ford dealer is a good looking car dealership. The cars are setback behind a grass strip with plantings and the low-level lighting does not create a visually unappealing image. Participants thought that there were too many vehicles parked in the front of the property. Parking in the front of the lot detracts from the image.

Image Evaluation -1.75

T he immediate reaction to this marquee sign was that it looked too much like a billboard. Shopping center signs do not need to be this large because most of the stores within the shopping center have signs that identify their business. The sign has little character and is too high.

Participants questioned the necessity of so many signs in one location. Some of the signs were thought to be unnecessary because they did not serve as a properly functioning highway commercial sign. For example, the chiropractor's sign was thought to be unnecessary. In addition to offering only a generic name, the participants thought that few motorists drive by a shopping center and stop at a doctor's office on impulse. Most motorists that travel to a doctor's office know their destination prior to leaving their house.

Signs with too much information are dangerous. Motorists stop or reduce automobile speed to read the sign, which may cause accidents. The size of the sign and the amount of information is inappropriate for the design speed of the road. Motorists are unable to read information if driving at the design speed of the roadway.

Image Evaluation -0.19

◆ Reduce the number and size of marquee signs.
◆ Develop signs that are appropriate for the design speed of the road.
◆ Ensure proper sight distances near ground signs.
◆ Limit the information on marquee signs.
◆ Provide ground signs with landscaping along building sidewalks for pedestrians and motorists.

Although this image received a negative overall rating, the participants were asked to compare the function of the signs in this image to the function of the marquee sign in the previous image. Wall signs are visible from the road or when a motorist enters the facility. Some tenants may require a marquee sign similar to the previous image, but it should be limited to the major businesses, or the name of the shopping facility.

Participants suggested that signs in this image functioned better and were more appropriate. Signs should conform to one style and character and use similar letter styles. The underhanging signs should also have one style. Participants suggested that a grass strip along the building sidewalk with uniform signs and plantings would be better than underhanging signs. Signs in a grass strip are more attractive and more functional than underhanging signs. They are also more expensive to install and maintain. They serve the needs of both pedestrians and motorists.

"Structures and infrastructure must blend with the natural environment. Keep the emphasis on nature in all development."
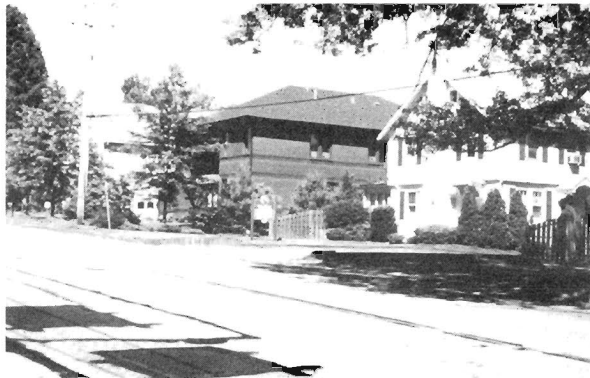
Image Evaluation +2.11

Image Evaluation +2.89

The converted office structures provide a cozy village atmosphere that has character. It has a mix of residential and office uses that blend well and are appropriate in this neighborhood. They continue to look like houses rather than offices. Offices like these make a good transition to residential areas. It is also a good example of an adaptive reuse of existing structures.

Participants liked the mature vegetation and fencing. They thought the area should have sidewalks to allow people to walk to the offices. If any lighting is used it should be low-level on both the buildings and signs to reduce its effect on neighboring residences. Utility lines should be placed underground or behind the offices if possible.

Office development provides many jobs and is part of a good tax base in any municipality. It is even better if it is attractive. Participants liked the second image with its mature trees and landscaping the office blends into the natural setting. The red brick was also appealing. This image is very prevalent in the suburban community and good building and landscape design are essential to maintaining a positive visual image.

Image Evaluation -0.15

The office building in the third image received a negative rating because it appears to cover more land than is necessary. The land use is appropriate for suburban Chester County, but the design could be improved. It might be better if it were six or seven stories. The facade is somewhat sterile, flat, and imposing. The architecture is repetitive and uses little imagination. Although it may not appeal to the participants' eye, they did indicate that it looks as though it could be well maintained over a long period of time.

A deeper setback may make this dominant structure less imposing and would provide an area to add landscaping to soften the impact of the building.

- ◆ Create a village or town setting by mixing smaller offices near residential areas.
- ◆ Reuse existing buildings or create new buildings that reflect complementary architectural themes and styles.
- ◆ Provide trees and other landscaping with all office developments.
- ◆ Blend office buildings into their natural environments rather than imposing them upon the landscape.
- ◆ Place utility lines underground.
- ◆ Create taller buildings that use less land and provide more open space.
- ◆ Build sidewalks to allow employees and clients to walk to the offices.

"Living in a community that is friendly, with controlled growth, accessible transportation for the elderly and young, as well as affordable housing..."

Image Evaluation -2.41

Some participants thought that high-rise development does not belong in suburban Chester County. Others thought that it has a place in a suburban community if properly located with the appropriate surrounding uses. High or mid-rise buildings should be placed in urbanized centers where public transit is available. The public transit should also be within walking distance for local residents. If other similar structures were added around the one that appears in this image, better building relationships could be achieved.

More land could be conserved for other uses by allowing high and mid-rise development. Development rights could be transferred from one area to another. Buildings of varying height add character to the suburban community. Today, many areas in the suburban community are a series of low-level, flat roofed buildings that occupy large areas of land.

This sketch illustrates a public transit center is easily accessible by vehicular traffic and within walking distance of surrounding mixed use development.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE USE OF TALL BUILDINGS

♦ Build taller buildings in urbanized centers and near public transportation.
♦ Encourage more than one tall building in areas to enhance their visual impact.
♦ Vary the height of individual taller buildings to avoid repetition.

Image Evaluation -2.56

Image Evaluation +2.87

"A livable environment where residents can identify with a `sense of place' not `cookie cutter, look-alike" subdivisions and shopping centers."

Participants preferred older neighborhoods that are clustered because they are more appealing than sprawling neighborhoods. Single family homes consume large areas of the landscape. Smaller lots do not impose the same impacts on the land that homes on large lots do. The entire area should be redefined.

Clustering homes should be done to save open space. Participants cautioned that preserving open space could force development farther out into rural areas. There is a need to be more selective concerning the location of residential development.

♦ Encourage the creation of villages and town design in municipal ordinances.
♦ Vary lot sizes, layout, and architectural styles.
♦ Reduce lot sizes to use less land.
♦ Cluster development to preserve open space.
♦ Encourage linkages of different but compatible land uses.

"It should have a rural atmosphere with small 'village' type boroughs, recreation, and convenient shopping."

Development in suburban Chester County needs to focus design more on village or town environment with open space nearby. Buildings should be unique and clustered together rather than identical and spread out over large areas of land. New development should not divide the land into uniform lots. There should be a variety of lot sizes, layouts, and architectural styles. People should be able to walk to their destination rather that be automobile dependent. Municipalities need to plan to accommodate village or town development. Logical choices concerning where development should be placed needs to be a part of every municipal comprehensive plan.

"The aspects of a village are most appealing. There is an opportunity to walk yet be close to open space."

Image Evaluation +2.82

This image rated favorably based on the different architectural styles, "village *green*", and a strong sense of pedestrian use. A town setting such as this image provides a sense of community for the residents. A diverse population can be accommodated in this type of community. A variety of land uses that are complementary can flourish. The housing offers a variety of styles and the smaller lots reinforce the interrelationships between uses. The porches add to the sense of community, encouraging people to come out of their homes. The gazebo also invites people to meet together on the town green.

New communities often miss the type of development found in town settings. Uses are strictly separated by zoning ordinances. Residents are unable to walk to their destination.

Participants stated that single family homes, townhomes, apartments, and commercial developments are appropriate across the street from the residences in this image.

To illustrate the potential to incorporate a variety of land uses into a village or town center concept, three different land uses could be introduced. The following three slide images received similar favorable ratings and the different land uses are appropriate on the left side of the village green as depicted in the sketches. The maintenance of the village green could be the responsibility of the Community Homeowners' Associations or be owned by the municipality.

Image Evaluation +2.77

This image reflects single family dwellings on small lots with an architectural style compatible with the dwellings in the image on the previous page. The landscaping enhances the image and provides points of interest in the front yards.

Home occupations or professional offices are appropriate on the first floor levels of the houses in this image. These uses should only be permitted in conjunction with predominantly residential uses.
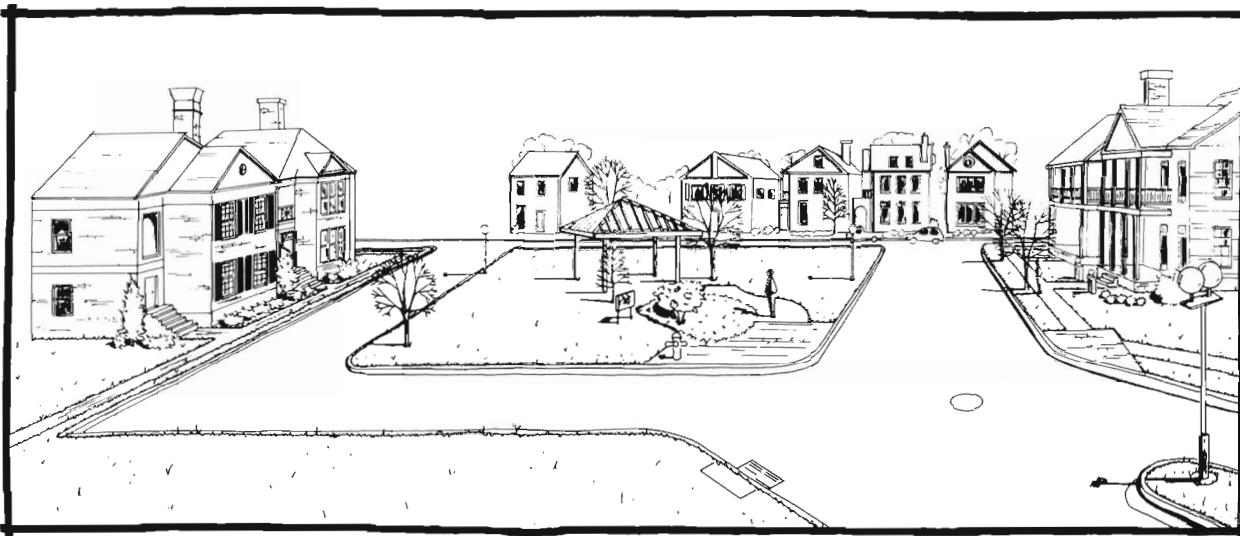
Image Evaluation +2.22

The image of a mix of apartments and townhomes also has an appeal on the village green. Parking for vehicles could be located at the rear of the structures, away from the town green. The streetscape could be enhanced by continuing the design theme of the lamp posts, paving materials, curbs and sidewalks.
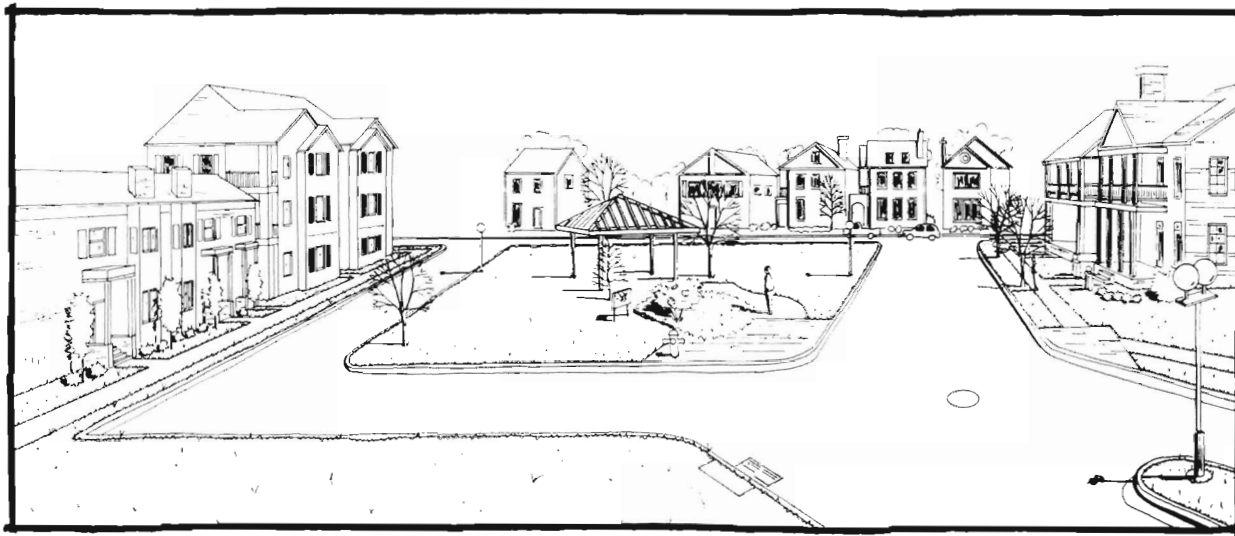
Image Evaluation +2.22

ommercial activities are also adaptable to the village green. Office or retail uses could function very well on the first floor level and residential uses could occupy the second floor level. Another option might include retail of the first floor and office uses on the second. People would have facilities within walking distance, including opportunities to walk to work. Complementing architecture creates a sense of community with a mix of uses. The streetscape remains consistent and ties all the uses together.

Offices should provide off-street parking in small parking lots or alleys based on their expected number of visitors or staff. In all cases local retail areas should be accessible to the village green. Suburban areas need to have modest community facilities close to housing. "A problem with new developments in Chester County is that you are miles and miles away from commercial needs like groceries, recreational facilities, etc. . . ."
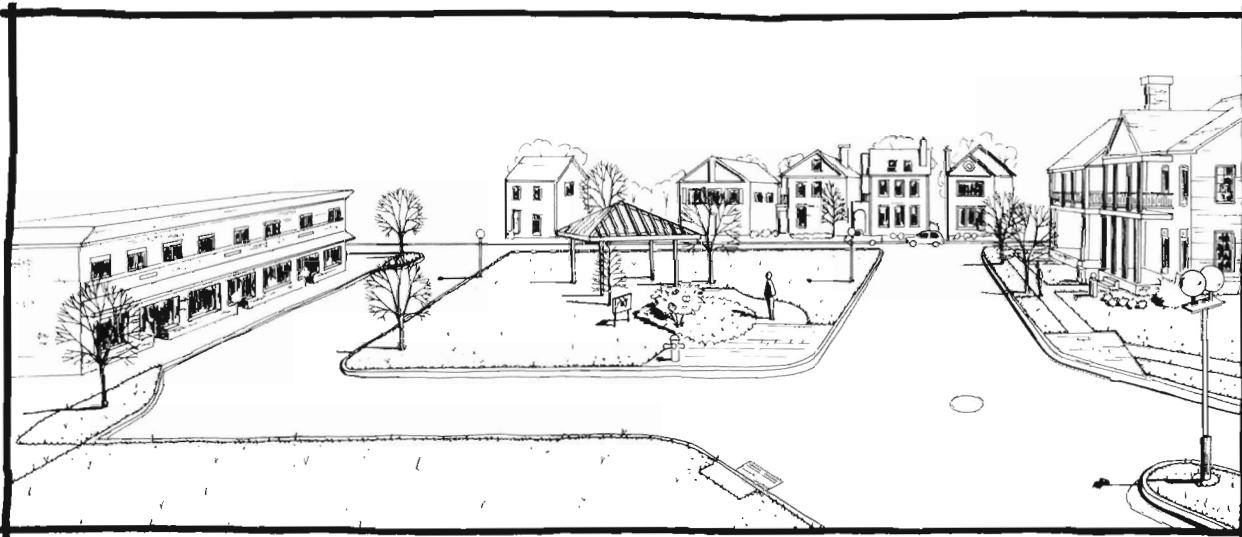
There are several opportunities to implement the community design guides suggested in this document. Many of the recommendations require only the review of ordinances and plans that are already in place in most municipalities. The following tables offer the link between the design guides and the tools for bringing about the desired change for the suburban landscape in the County.

HOW TO USE IMPLEMENTATION CHARTS

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

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

For example, the topic discussed on page 9 is "Creating residential development in a suburban setting" One of the recommendations listed is "Add sidewalks with wide planting strips and street trees" This recommendation also appears on page 53. The check marks in the chart on page 53 show resources that can be used and a combination of implementation techniques.

Residential Development in a Suburban Setting

pages 8-9

	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan	Development Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Design for rear alleys		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓	
Place house close to street	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓							✓
Add sidewalks	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓				✓	✓				
Add planting strips with trees		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓									
Add front porches	✓	✓				✓	✓									✓	
Diversify architectural styles	✓					✓	✓	✓				✓				✓	
Relate dwelling unit to lot size	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓						✓			✓	
Vary housing materials			✓										✓			✓	
Encourage a range of housing prices	✓	✓				✓										✓	

Residential Development in a Suburban Setting

pages 10-13

	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan	Development Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Create townhouses with one-unit look		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓									✓
Blend housing with landscape	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓							
Landscape cul-de-sac islands			✓			✓		✓		✓						✓	
Provide off-street parking		✓	✓			✓		✓		✓				✓		✓	
Sidewalks in clustered developments	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓				✓			✓
Mailboxes and curbs encouraged			✓			✓		✓		✓							
Houses on smaller lots	✓	✓	✓			✓											✓
Variety of housing types	✓	✓										✓			✓		✓
Landscape front yards	✓		✓				✓										
Encourage street trees	✓		✓			✓		✓			✓	✓					
Variety of sidewalk materials			✓			✓											✓
Add fences	✓		✓			✓		✓		✓							✓
Place parking at rear of lots	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓				✓					

Multi-Family Residential Development in a Suburban Setting
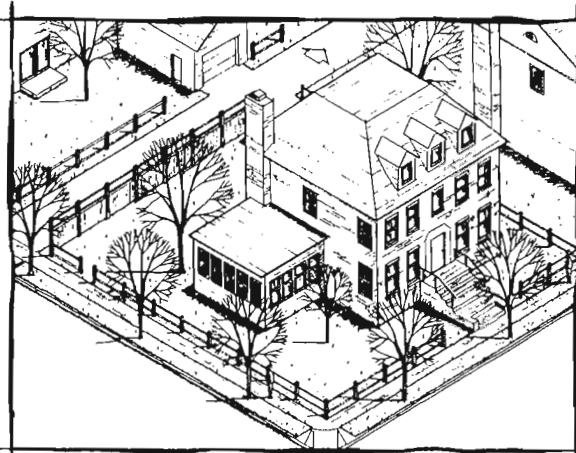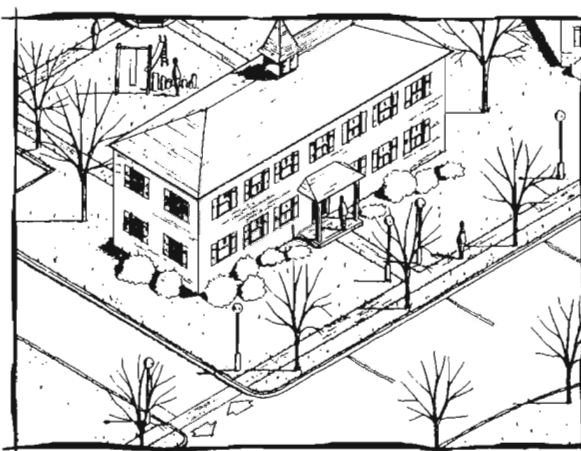
pages 14-15

	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan	Development Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Create courtyards		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓									✓
Create variety among buildings	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓				✓					
Add landscaping		✓	✓			✓		✓									
Provide parking behind buildings	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓							
Identify parking areas along frontage roads	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓						✓

Improving Mobile Home Dwelling Units

pages 16-17

	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan	Development Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Encourage better lot design	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓					✓
Create variety of lot sizes	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓									
Vary lot configurations	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓							
Provide extensive landscaping						✓	✓	✓	✓								
Add screening around utilities						✓	✓	✓									
Encourage porches on units	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓									✓
Increase pitch of roof						✓		✓	✓								✓
Provide pedestrian network	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓						
Enhance public spaces with landscaping	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓								

Improving Manufactured Housing Opportunities

	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan	Development Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Provide a variety of lot sizes/layouts	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓				✓				✓	
Use different architectural styles	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓									✓
Vary colors, materials and facades	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓									✓
Use a mix of colors	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓									✓
Add landscaping and lighting	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓									✓
Provide sidewalks with planting strips		✓	✓			✓		✓				✓					
Add manufactured housing in zoning ordinance		✓															

Improving

Accessory

Uses

pages 20-21

	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan	Development Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Encourage accessory uses in ordinances	✓	✓				✓											✓
Maintain similar architectural styles		✓	✓			✓											✓
Select compatible uses	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓							
Consider parking for uses	✓	✓				✓											

Improving Trails and Pedestrian Access

	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan	Development Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Plan trails with housing design	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓			
Locate and screen trails	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			
Connect land uses with trails	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			
Link open spaces with trails	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			
Determine trail maintenance	✓				✓	✓			✓					✓			

Revitalizing

Structures

pages 24-25

	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan	Development Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Adaptive reuse of historic buildings	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓				✓			✓		✓
Allow mixed use development	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓
Design structures that are properly scaled	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓									✓

Improving the Image of Commercial Uses

	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan	Development Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Vary building roof lines	✓					✓		✓									✓
Design entrances to improve safety	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓						✓	
Add sidewalks and pathways	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓			✓	✓					
Provide landscaped parking islands		✓				✓		✓		✓						✓	
Bury utility lines in planting strips	✓	✓				✓		✓		✓							✓
Place pedestal signs low to ground	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓						✓
Update lighting to more attractive uses		✓				✓		✓									✓

Improving the Image of Commercial Uses
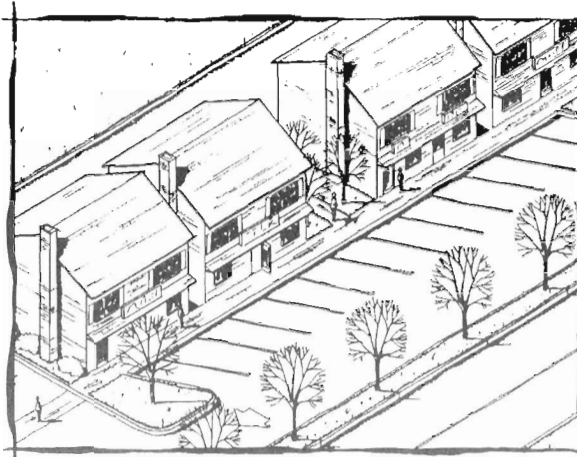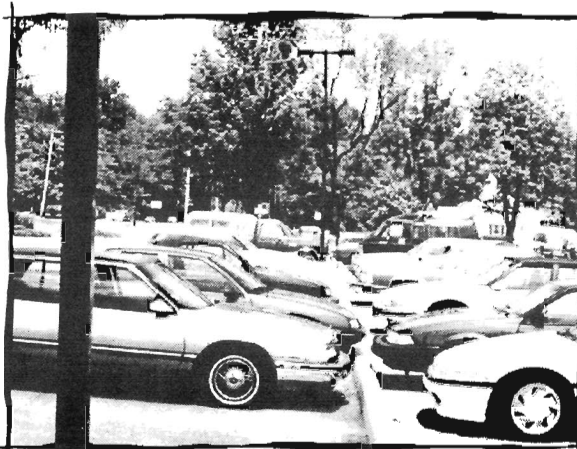
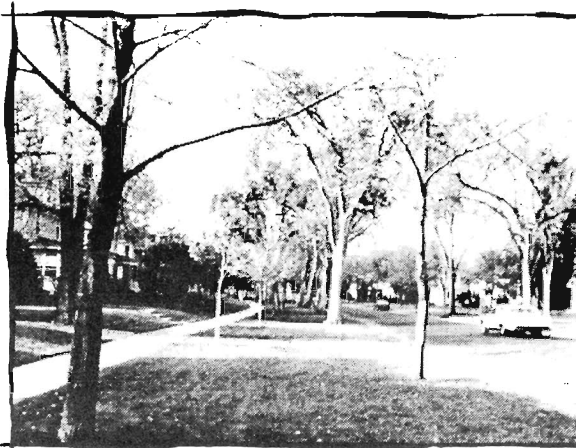| Action	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan	Development Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Create unifying building themes	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓									✓
Reduce the amount of impervious surfaces		✓	✓			✓		✓		✓							
Provide angle parking, if appropriate		✓	✓			✓		✓		✓						✓	
Add decorative landscaping/lighting		✓	✓			✓	✓										✓
Provide uniform signage		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓									✓
Add parking at rear of buildings		✓	✓			✓		✓		✓					✓		
Use time-honored architectural styles	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓							✓		✓
Provide wheel stops in parking lots			✓			✓				✓							
Add landscaping in front of stores		✓	✓			✓	✓										
Limit temporary signs		✓	✓	✓													
Treat sidewalks as a principal thoroughfare	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓							
Encourage decorative elements on buildings		✓	✓			✓		✓									✓

Improving

Parking

Lots

pages 30-31

	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan	Development Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Add landscaping to parking lots	✓	✓				✓		✓		✓	✓						
Remove barriers that restrict access		✓	✓			✓		✓		✓						✓	
Provide buffers between vehicles		✓				✓		✓		✓							
Preserve existing vegetation		✓						✓									

Creating

Boulevards

	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan	Development Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Determine functional classification	✓	✓				✓		✓		✓						✓	
Develop boulevard standards			✓			✓				✓						✓	
Preserve right-of-way area	✓	✓	✓					✓		✓	✓					✓	
Encourage street trees outside right-of-way	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓							
Retain and protect plantings	✓	✓				✓		✓									
Increase setbacks for specific uses	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓			✓					
Determine maintenance responsibilities	✓	✓						✓									

Improving Signs

pages 36-41

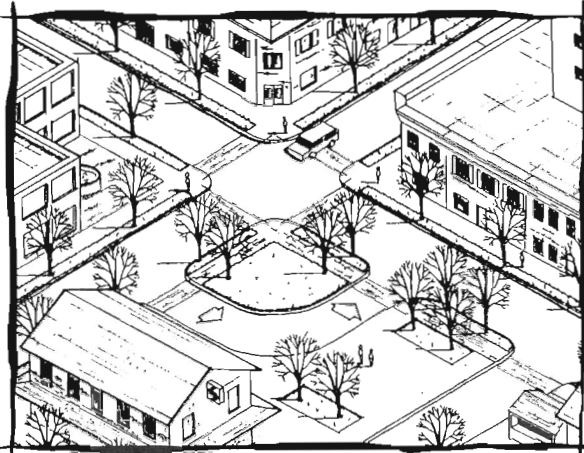|	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan	Development Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Reduce height of highway commercial signs		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓									✓
Ensure proper sight distances between signs			✓	✓		✓		✓									
Create signs compatible with traffic design speeds			✓	✓		✓		✓			✓					✓	
Provide landscaping around signs			✓	✓		✓		✓									
Create compatible structures to hold signs		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓					✓				✓
Reduce the number and size of marquee signs			✓	✓		✓		✓									
Limit information on signs		✓	✓			✓											
Use descriptive logos/characters	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓			✓					✓	
Use natural colors and materials for signs		✓	✓			✓		✓									✓
Provide adequate sight distance between driveways	✓	✓				✓		✓			✓					✓	
Create themes for multiple signs			✓			✓		✓	✓								✓
Encourage parking at rear of buildings	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓								✓	
Provide landscaped buffers between road		✓				✓		✓				✓					
Lower lighting height to reduce off-site intrusion		✓				✓		✓									

Improving Office Buildings

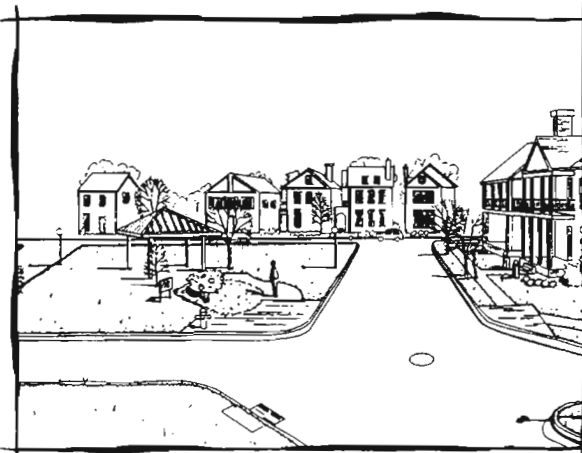|	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan	Development Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Create town or village setting	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓							
Mix smaller offices with residential	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓									✓
Reuse existing buildings	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓		✓			✓		✓
Create new buildings to complement existing buildings	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓							✓
Provide landscaping		✓				✓		✓									
Blend buildings into environment	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓							
Locate utilities underground		✓				✓		✓									
Encourage taller buildings in appropriate areas	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓							✓
Build sidewalks and pedestrian paths	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓						✓			

Use of Taller Buildings

pages 44-45

	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan	Development Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Encourage taller buildings	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓							✓
Adapt buildings to train station sites	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓							✓
Use buildings to help define town centers	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓							✓
Encourage multiple structures	✓	✓				✓			✓	✓			✓				✓
Vary height to create interest	✓	✓				✓	✓										✓
Promote a mix of uses in buildings	✓	✓				✓											✓
Determine scale of development	✓	✓				✓		✓									✓

Creating Suburban Villages and Towns

	Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Municipal Zoning Ordinance	Municipal Subdivision Regulations	Sign Ordinances	Open Space Plan	Development Standards	Sketch Plan Review	Design Review Process	Special Use Districts	County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Circulation Handbook	Chester County Village Handbook	Chester County Scenic Roads Handbook	Chester County Open Space Plan	Historic Districts	Access Management Plans	Architectural Standards
Define scale of land uses	✓	✓				✓		✓		✓							
Accommodate automobile parking		✓	✓			✓		✓			✓	✓					
Consider architectural themes	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓								✓
Provide landscaping in public areas		✓	✓			✓		✓									
Encourage village/towns by ordinance	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓									
Develop design standards for towns	✓	✓	✓			✓						✓	✓				✓
Determine appropriate locations for towns	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓			✓	✓				
Vary lot sizes, layout, architecture		✓	✓			✓		✓									✓
Reduce lot sizes	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓									
Encourage mixed uses and variety	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓								✓
Cluster development to preserve open space	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓							
Promote linkages of land uses	✓	✓	✓					✓		✓	✓						
Incorporate public transportation	✓	✓				✓		✓			✓					✓	

ACCESSORY USE

The secondary use of land or a building, or a portion thereof, located on the same lot as the principal use, ie. home office, "granny flats."

ADAPTIVE REUSE

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

AESTHETIC

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

ALLEYS

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

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

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

BOULEVARDS

A type of street having the opposing travel lanes separated by a landscaped median.

BUFFERS

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

CONVENTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

CLUSTER

A development design technique that concentrates building on a part of the site to allow the remaining land to be used for recreation, common open space, agriculture, and preservation of environmentally sensitive features.

COLLECTOR ROAD

A major street or highway which carries traffic from local streets to arterial streets See functional classification for graphic.

COURTYARD

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

CUL-DE-SAC

A local road connected to the existing road network at only one end with a special provision for turning around at the closed end.

DENSITY

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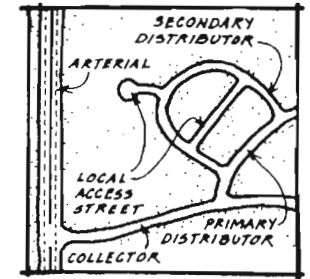
DESIGN SPEED

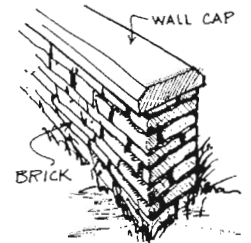The maximum safe speed that can be maintained over a specific section of road when conditions are favorable.

FACADE

The exterior walls of a building exposed to public view.

FENCES

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

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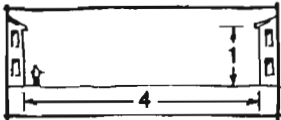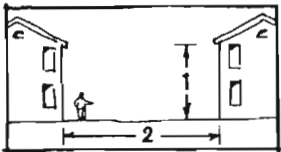
GREEN

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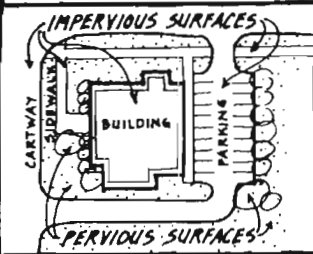
HUMAN SCALE

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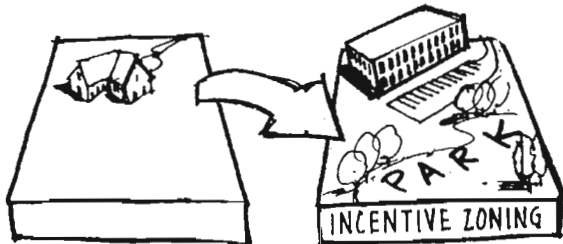
IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

Any material that prevents absorption of stormwater into the ground.
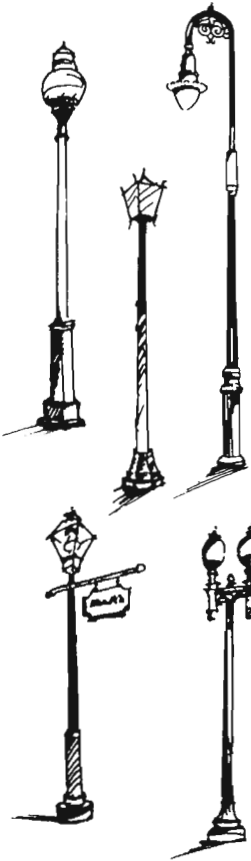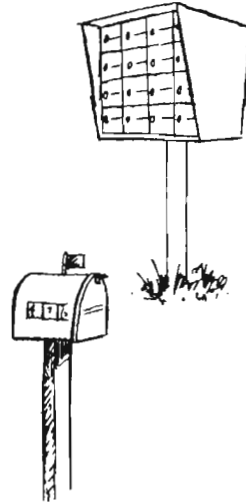

INCENTIVES

The granting by the municipality of additional benefits or variations from ordinances in exchange for the provision of a public benefit or amenity by the landowner.

INCENTIVE ZONING

LIGHTING FIXTURES/ LAMP POSTS

MAIL BOXES

MANUFACTURED HOUSING

Factory-built, single-family structures that meet the National Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act (42 U.S.C. Sec 5401), commonly known as the HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) code.

MOBILE HOMES

See Manufactured Housing.

OFF-STREET PARKING

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

ON-STREET PARKING

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

PARKING AREA

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

PARKING ISLAND

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

PARKING SPACE OFF-STREET

PARKING ISLAND

STREET

PARKING SPACE ON-STREET
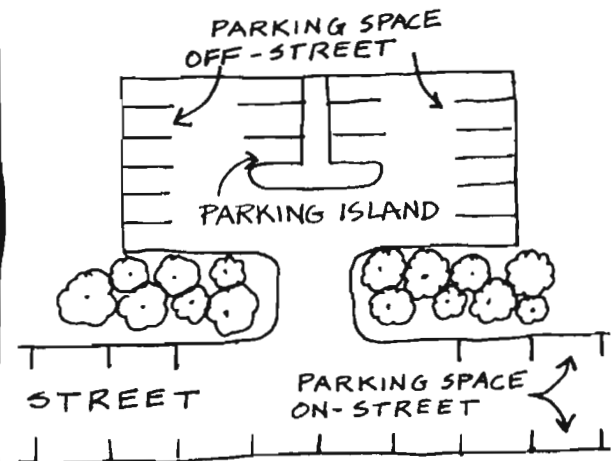
PAVING MATERIAL\ PAVEMENT

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

PLANTING STRIP

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


PUBLIC AREAS

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

RIGHT-OF-WAY
CARTWAY
CENTERLINE

RIGHT-OF-WAY

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

ROOF LINE

GABLE

FLAT

HIP

GAMBREL

SHED

MANSARD
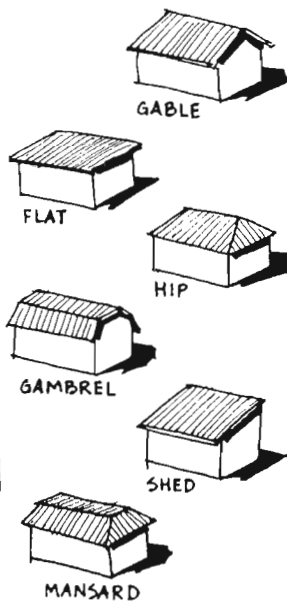
SCREENING

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

SETBACK

The minimum distance between a structure and any lot line.
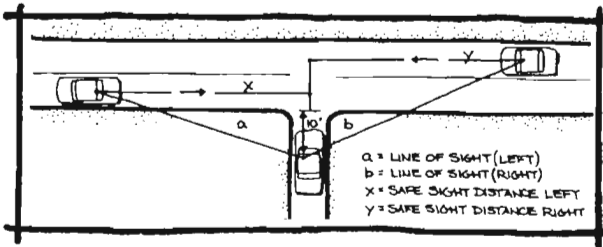

SETBACK PROPERTY LINE

SIGNS

Painted or carved wooden signs are usually most appropriate in suburban areas. Other materials can be used but only if they are compatible with the design of the building and character of the area. Plastic, backlit, or flashing signs are not appropriate in the suburban landscape.

SIGN COLORS

LETTER COLOR	BACKGROUND COLOR	ACCENT COLOR
Gold leaf white, red, blue, green, cream, straw yellow	Black	White, red, green, gold leaf, blue, dark yellow
White, red	Navy blue	Black, white, straw yellow, gold leaf
Navy blue, black	Gray	White, red
Gold leaf, white, red	Emerald green	White, gold leaf, black
Gold leaf, light blue	Brown	Red, white
Navy blue, red	Cream	Black
Gold leaf, white mustard yellow	Red	Blac
Navy blue, red	Mustard	Red, black

DESIGN FACTORS FOR LETTER HEIGHT & SIGN SIZE

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

a = LINE OF SIGHT (LEFT)
b = LINE OF SIGHT (RIGHT)
X = SAFE SIGHT DISTANCE LEFT
Y = SAFE SIGHT DISTANCE RIGHT

SIGHT DISTANCE

The minimum distance that a driver of a vehicle, situated at eye level, 3.5 feet high, and 10 feet back from the pavement edge, can continuously see along the road to another vehicle, at 4.24 feet high, approaching on the roadway.

SIGHT TRIANGLE

A triangular-shaped portion of land established at street intersections in which nothing is erected, placed, planted, or allowed to grow in such a manner as to limit or obstruct the sight distance of motorists entering or leaving the intersection.

AREA CLEAR OF OBSTRUCTIONS   AREA CLEAR OF OBSTRUCTIONS
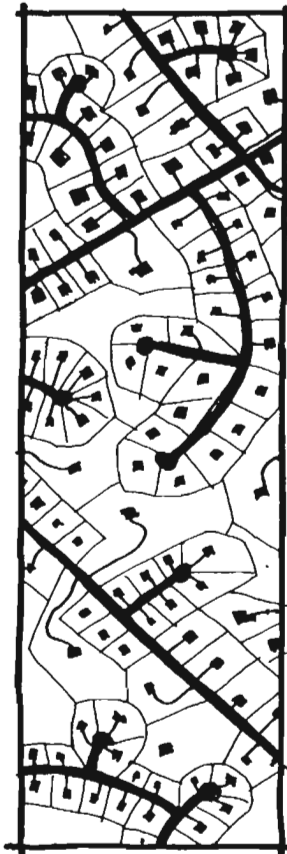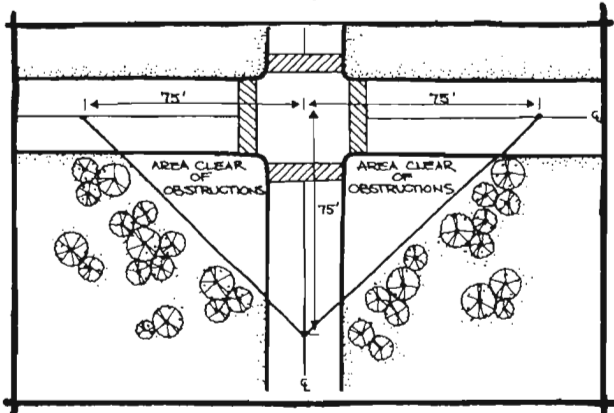
SPRAWL

Unplanned or disorderly development spread over a broad area.

STORMWATER CONTROL

The management of stormwater to minimize the detrimental effects of surface water runoff.

STREETSCAPE

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

STREET TREES

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

SUGAR MAPLE

WHITE ASH

GREEN ASH

SCARLET OAK

AMERICAN BEECH

GLOSSARY
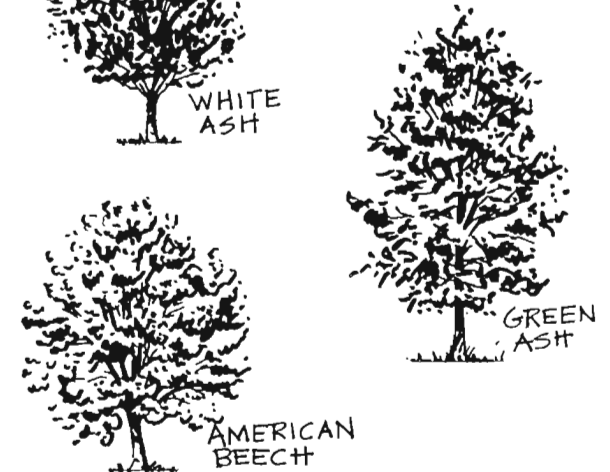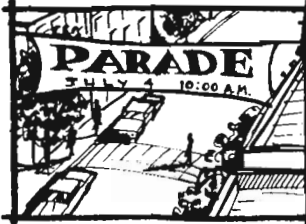
TEMPORARY SIGN

A sign or advertising display constructed of cloth, canvas, fabric, plywood, or other light material and designed or intended to be displayed for a short period of time, typically between 15 to 30 days.

TRAIL

A marked or established path or route which can vary in width, length, surface materials, and/or proximity to surrounding uses.

ULTIMATE RIGHT-OF-WAY

An area of land beyond the legal or dedicated right-of-way needed to accommodate the future widening of the roadway measured from the centerline of the cartway.

VIEWSHED

An area visible from a highway, waterway, railway, or major hiking, biking, or equestrian trail that provides vistas over water, and across expanses of land.
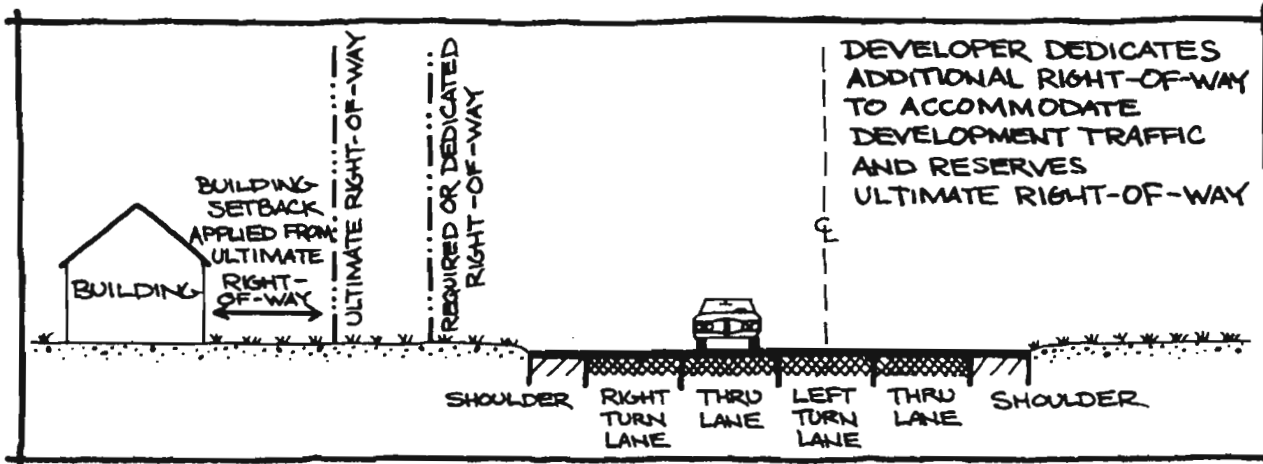
VILLAGE

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

WALKING DISTANCE

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

WHEEL STOPS/ BUMPERS

Permanent devices in each parking stall that block the wheels of a vehicle.

PRE-DEVELOPMENT CONDITION

ULTIMATE RIGHT-OF-WAY AS ESTABLISHED IN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY

SHOULDER | THRU LANE | THRU LANE | SHOULDER

DEVELOPER DEDICATES ADDITIONAL RIGHT-OF-WAY TO ACCOMMODATE DEVELOPMENT TRAFFIC AND RESERVES ULTIMATE RIGHT-OF-WAY

BUILDING SETBACK APPLIED FROM ULTIMATE RIGHT-OF-WAY

BUILDING

ULTIMATE RIGHT-OF-WAY

REQUIRED OR DEDICATED RIGHT-OF-WAY

SHOULDER | RIGHT TURN LANE | THRU LANE | LEFT TURN LANE | THRU LANE | SHOULDER

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SUBURBAN VISIONS PARTICIPANTS

Elaine Adler
Westtown Township

♦

Barbara Appleman
Phoenixville Borough

♦

William Augustine, Supervisor
East Caln Township

♦

C. Ward Braceland, Supervisor
Uwchlan Township

♦

Herman Breuninger
Thorndale Township

♦

Elizabeth Burke
Malvern Borough

♦

Donald Carlson, Supervisor
Upper Uwchlan Township

♦

Polly Chalfant
Newlin Township

♦

George Chandler
West Whiteland Township

♦

Mary Ciarone
Downingtown Chamber of Commerce

♦

Arnold Cleveland
Westtown Township

♦

Mildred Cooper
West Chester Borough

Stephen Cushman
Downingtown Borough

♦

Francis Deccerio
Thorndale Township

♦

Mary DeNadia
Chester County Open Space Committee

♦

Agnes DiEulius
Downingtown Chamber of Commerce

♦

Edward Dymek, Supervisor
East Caln Township

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Estep
Pocopson Township Planning Commission

♦

Alma Forsyth
Pennsbury Township

♦

Robert Francis
West Chester Borough

♦

Martha Carson Gentry
West Chester Area School District

♦

William Gotwals
Office of Aging Advisory Council

♦

Patricia Guernsey
West Goshen Township

♦

Jean Hagele
West Bradford Historic Commission

♦

Bob Hankin
The Hankin Group

♦

David Harper
Brandywine Conservancy

♦

Susan Hauser
Chester County Open Space Committee

♦

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Hausmann
Chester County Planning Commission

♦

William Hewton, Jr., Supervisor
Kennett Township

Edwin Hill, Manager
East Caln Township

♦

Nancy Hill
West Bradford Historic Commission

♦

Diane Hinkle
Downingtown Borough

♦

Robert Horne
PECO

♦

Gerry Hurff
League of Women Voters

♦

Steven Jakatt
West Brandywine Township

♦

Dan Jones
Downingtown Area School District

♦

Randall D. Jones, Supervisor
East Caln Township

♦

Dr. Rita Jones
Great Valley School District

♦

L. William Kay
East Brandywine Township

♦

Patrick Keeney, Supervisor
New Garden Township

♦

Trish Kreek
Chester County Open Space Committee

The County Commissioners and the Planning Commission with to thank all those who participated in the Suburban Visions Survey and the Suburban Vision Evaluation workshops. Over 180 individuals representing the suburban community were invited to attend. The contribution made by these individuals helped in the development of the SUBURBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDE.

Ronald Landon
East Brandywine Township

♦

Dale Mahle
Tri-County Chamber of Commerce

♦

Kathleen Martin
SmithKline Beecham

♦

George Martyn
Chester County Airport

♦

Jack Massau
Kennett Township

Dallas Matthews
West Chester Chamber of Commerce

♦

Joseph McDonough, Supervisor
East Goshen Township

♦

Robert McRae, CCADC
West Bradford Township

♦

Marge Miller
Chester County Open Space Committee

♦

Ronald Miller
Thornbury Township Planning Commission

♦

Eric Mitchell, Supervisor
South Coventry Township

♦

John Moore
Phoenixville Borough

♦

Norman Nields
Paoli

♦

Katie Okie
Downingtown Borough

♦

Cathy Palmquist
Religious Council of West Chester

♦

Carl Pavolic
City of Coatesville

♦

Clair Piersol
Chester County Open Space Committee

Scott Piersol
East Brandywine Township

♦

William Plummer, III
West Chester Borough

♦

Mary Powell, Supervisor
East Goshen Township

♦

Andy Quinn
Chester County Planning Commission

♦

Robert Ray
Wallace Township

♦

Elaine Reber
Easttown Township

♦

Wayne "Ted" Reed
Coatesville Municipal Authority

♦

Rita Reves
Chester County Planning Commission

♦

Mahlon Rossiter, Manager
Thornbury Township

♦

Clarence Schautz
West Chester Borough

♦

Thomas Schenarts
East Marlborough Planning Commission

Phillip Sears

♦

Martin Shane, Supervisor
East Goshen Township

♦

Judy Shuler
Chester County Open Space Committee

♦

A. Pierson Sill, Supervisor
Westtown Township

♦

Leon Slauch
Oxford Borough

♦

Norma Smith
Wallace Township

♦

S.C. Sparks
Immaculata College

♦

Milton Stith
Downingtown Chamber of Commerce

Stan Stubbe
North Coventry Township

♦

Walter Styer, Supervisor
Upper Uwchlan Township

♦

Florence Supplee
West Bradford Historic Commission

♦

Olev Taremae
Lehigh-Northampton Planning Commission

♦

Bill Tritle
Caln Township Planning Commission

♦

Remy Tshibangu

♦

Elaine Weil
Malvern Borough

♦

Charles Wilson, Supervisor
Thornbury Township

♦

Pat Wood
Tredyffrin/Easttown School Board

♦

Rev. John Woodcock
Religious Council of West Chester

♦

Bruce Yelton, Supervisor
Pocopson Township

VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY FORM

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

Visual Preference Survey*

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

Tray

Name:

Location:

Date:

MARKING DIRECTIONS

USE NO. 2 PENCIL ONLY

- MAKE DARK MARKS
- EXAMPLE:
- ERASE COMPLETELY TO CHANGE
- CODE ID NUMBER AT LEFT BY FILLING IN THE APPROPRIATE BOXES

NEGATIVE   0   POSITIVE   +10

-10

RESPONSE TO SUBURBAN VISIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

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

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

   A. Outstanding   ***B. EXCELLENT***   C. Good
   D. Fair   E. Poor

2. **What do you like best about suburban Chester County?**

   A. Convenient location to work   B. Recreation/Parks
   C. Sense of community   ***D. APPEARANCE***
   E. Open space

3. **What do you like least about suburban Chester County?**

   A. TRAFFIC   B. Lack of sense of community
   C. Appearance   D. Availability of services
   E. Increased development

4. **The newer buildings in the County are attractive and well landscaped. Do you:**

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

5. **The SUBURBAN environment is adequately protected by land use regulations. Do you:**

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

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

   A. The suburban residential bedroom community
   B. A rural/farm community
   C. An employment center
   D. A COMMUNITY EVOLVING FROM RURAL TO SUBURBAN

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

   A. VILLAGES AND BOROUGHS
   B. Urban Townships
   C. Suburban Townships
   D. Rural Townships
   E. Other

8. **Would you be willing to accept additional development in your municipality to preserve open spaces such as wetlands, rural lands and wildlife habitats elsewhere in the County?**

   A. YES   ***B. NO***

9. **If you must accept some future development in your municipality, what type of development would be most acceptable?**

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

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

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

11. What is the one best way Chester County can protect land that remains in its natural state as we develop?

A. Purchase additional land for open space
B. Allow for the transfer development rights from one piece of land to another
C. Do nothing, we have enough open space
D. REQUIRE NEW DEVELOPMENT TO SET ASIDE A PERCENTAGE OF THE SITE FOR OPEN SPACE

12. How can SUBURBAN Chester County municipalities best accommodate future residential growth?

A. Encourage primarily single family housing
B. Encourage primarily multifamily housing
C. Encourage a mix of single family and multifamily housing
D. Encourage housing in mixed use developments along with shopping and/or business development
E. ENCOURAGE A VARIETY OF LOT SIZES IN A VILLAGE SETTING

13. Of the following, which is the most important area for us to focus our transportation resources?

A. Build more roads for general purpose traffic
B. Build more roads only for buses and carpools
C. Convert some existing lanes to buses and carpool only
D. DEVELOP PROGRAMS AND INCENTIVES TO PROMOTE USE OF CARPOOLS AND PUBLIC TRANSIT
E. Promote pedestrian greenways such as bike trails

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

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

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

A. A grid system (such as found in Philadelphia and boroughs where there are more but smaller through streets which provide more options for going to a destination, but also more intersections and lower speed limits
B. A system of dead end cul-de-sac and arterials which provide fewer options for going to a destination, but also fewer intersections and high speed limits
C. I FEEL THEY BOTH ARE ABOUT THE SAME
D. No opinion

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

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

17. How should Chester County best ensure that our outdoor recreation facilities respond to needs of growth?

A. Focus on acquiring land for future park development
B. Focus on developing large community parks
C. FOCUS ON DEVELOPING SMALLER NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
D. Focus on developing more trails for bikes and walking

18. What is your vision for the ideal relationship between your home and daily shopping needs?

A. My home to be within walking distance of most of my daily shopping needs

B. My home to be within walking distance of public transportation which would take me to my daily shopping needs

C. *MY HOME TO BE LOCATED IN AN AREA SEPARATE FROM MY DAILY SHOPPING NEEDS AND TRAVEL BY PRIVATE AUTOMOBILE*

D. To live in a mixed-use area where my daily shopping needs were located in the same vicinity as my home

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

A. Meeting transportation needs

B. *PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT/PRESERVING OPEN SPACE*

C. Meeting the need for affordable housing and human services

D. Meeting capital facilities requirements

E. Other

20. A County Comprehensive Plan will help municipalities to better coordinate land development decision making. Do you:

A. *STRONGLY AGREE*

B. Agree

C. Neutral

D. Disagree

E. Strongly disagree

As part of the workshop sessions, participants were asked to complete the phrase, "Suburbia in Chester County to me is . . .". The following is a sample of the more poignant statements which provided, in part, a basis for developing the recommendations for the SUBURBAN COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDES:

SUBURBIA IN CHESTER COUNTY TO ME IS:

♦ *Clean water, clean air, beautiful countryside and friendly people - just where I want to raise my kids. Chester County is also a growth area where my business can thrive and my children can look forward to a future.*

♦ *Comfortable place to live and work. Neat, uncluttered shopping areas. Good roads and transportation.*

♦ *A tranquil place to live - not too far from commercial areas and places of work. A place where families will remain from generation to generation as the County grows. A place where some of the natural beauty - streams, ponds, woodlots, steep areas, can be preserved as much as is practical.*

♦ *Clean streams. Variety of scenery.*

♦ *A pleasing mix of different land uses, employing architecture suitable to the use, and incorporating sufficient open space within the residential areas to permit all residents to walk to the open space areas/parks.*

♦ *A harmonious blend of man's land use adapting to the pros/cons of the natural landscape for maximum protection of that landscape.*

♦ *Trees, hills, space, comfort - a more relaxed state of living.*

♦ *Open space with single family homes. Small, friendly neighborhoods. Less traffic and good public transportation. Available shopping within walking distance.*

♦ *Open space/green space, controlled growth. Enjoy quiet areas/recreation areas. Try to maintain more of the suburban setting.*

♦ *Open space in every housing development. Community parks, playgrounds, walking areas; recreation for all ages.*

♦ *An undefined mix of residential and commercial uses. Should be a mix of residential use with close-by employment opportunities.*

♦ *To keep new construction as open and as green as possible. We will have new roads. Let us hope they will have curves and hills, and wide, well planted shoulders. New parking lots should be well screened with high berms and dense planting - let us keep the trees. The new buildings will blend into the green landscape, and not look like an old factory.*

♦ *Open space along with selected housing areas. Quaint village areas with access to urban areas, if desired.*

♦ *We should try to keep Chester County as beautiful as it is. With the fast developing areas, all townships must regulate our development and try to keep as much open space as possible.*

♦ *My home and that of all four of my children and their spouses and of my five grandchildren. It must be protected, environmentally enhanced, educationally strengthened, improved in its suburban roads and other infrastructure, and hopefully, its residents feel - this is my once and likely future home.*

♦ *Maintaining the concept of the village through effective use of landscaping, open space, variety, soft colors, architectural design that promotes the feeling of comfort, safety, and the casual. Smallness rater than mega-size. Better an abundance of small villages rather than a few mega-communities.*

♦ *A mix of well-laid out residential homes on small lots with plenty of diverse open space around them to serve as a buffer, for beauty, for wildlife, etc. The surrounding area should be a mix of compatible agriculture, shopping, recreation, industrial and institutional businesses to serve the needs of the area, while preserving its environmental character for future generations. People could work near where they live.*

♦ *Village and small town development forms with outlying farmlands.*

♦ *Lots of opportunities to become involved - good environment, people, helping others.*

♦ *Something between urban and rural; houses placed a little farther apart than in urban areas; shopping places with offices and some industries; access to public transportation; small parks; some traffic congestion; places for groups to get together; school buses; lawns and sidewalks.*

♦ *Narrow country roads, farms, villages, covered bridges, country stores, orchards and produce stands, and beauty at any time of year.*

♦ *Suburbia means to me a village type rural living condition.*

♦ *Rural atmosphere, large lots, small "village" type boroughs, excellent schools and recreation, convenient shopping.*

♦ *Availability to the city in a rural or semi-rural environment, yet an entity within itself.*

♦ *Convenient commuting distance to Philadelphia. Would like to have more sense of town with sidewalks, small lots, well maintained and landscaped lots. For commercial areas - no more traditional strip development - use natural materials, landscaping, pedestrian crosswalks, attractive signs.*

♦ *Open vistas/subdivision development; historic buildings/strip centers; winding roads which once saw wagons, horses and carriages/congested traffic; a particular architectural vocabulary; Longwood Gardens and numerous preserved sites.*

♦ *Living in a community that is friendly, with controlled growth, accessible transportation for elderly and young, as well, affordable housing, with taxes based on income, not real estate ownership.*

♦ *A combination of attractive housing which is situated in a manner that considers the underlying land, preserving sensitive natural features and viewsheds, provides for alternative circulation methods and creates a sense of community.*

♦ *An area remote from big city problems and construction, yet offering as many amenities as possible available in larger cities, but better planned with respect to land use, population density and zoning categories and specifications. If manufacturing is allowed, it should be well disguised and a minimal percent of total area. Planning for suburbia should preclude the potential that it could ever slide back or get to look like a "city atmosphere." Lots of open space, lower buildings, wide roads, hidden parking, underground utilities.*
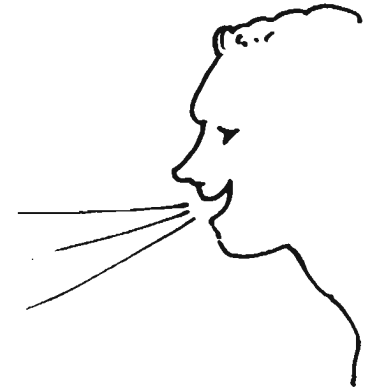
♦ *A cultural living environment that should contribute a high comfort level to my standard of living. It must provide those attributes which make me feel "good" and "secure" and a strong devotion to that culture. It becomes a vehicle to my pursuit of happiness and my fulfillment of life.*

♦ *A primary focus on the natural environment. When man-made structures and infrastructure are imposed on the natural environment, it must blend with it instead of overtaking it. Keep the emphasis on nature in all development.*

♦ *Home in a beautiful area of the country that will, hopefully, remain an attractive place to live as a result of careful zoning, planning and building of homes, infrastructure, recreational and commercial structures. It should include preservation of sensitive land areas.*

♦ *Convenient life style (i.e., shopping, transportation, churches, schools, etc.) with easy access to major city. Participant in decision-making for metropolitan regional area. Small-town ambience in proximity to urban areas. Quiet - homes, apartments, townhouses - variety of housing with convenience of neighborhoods that foster sense of community. Sense of community - essential for people to work together in harmonious units to solve issues of common concern.*

♦ *A combination or urban and rural environments with vistas and roadside green space protection being the key to preservation of the rural aspects. Keeping our local roads from being widened to keep accommodating more and more traffic will enhance the feeling of Chester County "ruralness." Low buildings on landscaped lots.*

♦ *Combination of open land; small villages; small convenience centers; no large industry in my township. Neighborhood parks.*

♦ *Lots of open space (natural), parks, trails, historic homes and historic landmarks, farms. I prefer to cluster homes, have sidewalks and trails. Need wide area between roads and sidewalks. Shopping centers need lots of green and controlled signage. Controlled commercial and industrial.*

♦ *My home for 65 years - a beautiful county. A good place to have raised our children; good schools; convenient to shopping; good restaurants; convenient to Philadelphia, and if one wants to visit Manhattan. We are also placed close to the ocean and beaches of Delaware, New Jersey and Maryland. We were also fortunate in being able to work in Chester County, within 10-15 minutes of our home.*

♦ *Open space with farmlands - small villages or towns. If we must, developments well planned with space between homes (meaning one house per acre) with open space planted and kept well groomed. Keep rural areas the way they are.*

RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

+5.43 Average response
3-Car Single Family Home
Slide #1

+5.14 Average response
Large Lot Single Family
Slide #2

+4.68 Average response
Small Lot Single Family
Slide #3

+3.74 Average response
Large Lot Single Family
Slide #4

+2.49 Average response
Large Lot on Rolling Hills
Slide #5

+1.95 Average response
New Construction-Small Lots
Slide #6

+4.70 Average response
High Density-Small Lots
Slide #7

+3.90 Average response
Townshomes
Slide #8

+3.71 Average response
Neighborhood-Small Lots
Slide #9

+3.33 Average response
Large Homes-Small Lots
Slide #10

+2.77 Average response
Narrow Lot-Single Family
Slide #11

+2.50 Average response
Multi-Unit Dwellings
Slide #12

RESIDENTIAL SUPPORTING LAND USES

-3.17 Average response
Mid-rise Multi-Units
Slide #13

+2.22 Average response
Mixed Multi-Family Units
Slide #14

-.15 Average response
Multi-Family Units
Slide #15

-2.30 Average response
Manufactured Single Family
Slide #16

-1.65 Average response
Manufactured Single Family
Slide #17

+.93 Average response
Manufactured Single Family
Slide #18

+.75 Average response
Small Lot Single Family
Slide #19

+3.97 Average response
Accessory Use
Slide #20

+5.84 Average response
Fences and Buffers
Slide #21

+3.44 Average response
Fences and Walls
Slide #22

+6.76 Average response
Stormwater Detention
Slide #23

+5.90 Average response
Active Recreation
Slide #24

+6.90 Average response
Trail/Greenways
Slide #25

COMMERCIAL LAND USES

+2.22 Average response
Retail Commercial
Slide #26

+1.52 Average response
Mixed Use Retail
Slide #27

+4.47 Average response
Retail with Public Space
Slide #28

+4.01 Average response
Retail Commercial
Slide #29

-1.26 Average response
Traditional Shopping Center
Slide #30

+2.71 Average response
Shopping Center
Slide #31

+3.30 Average response
Revitalized Commercial
Slide #32

+3.04 Average response
Mixed Use Commercial
Slide #33

-4.14 Average response
Strip Commercial
Slide #34

ROADS AND STREETS

-3.96 Average response
Commercial Parking
Slide #35

+1.45 Average response
Commercial Parking
Slide #36

-3.31 Average response
Commercial Pedestrian Space
Slide #37

+4.10 Average response
Commercial Pedestrian Space
Slide #38

+7.81 Average response
Rural Road
Slide #39

SIGNS

+2.59 Average response
Suburban Collector Road
Slide #40

-4.92 Average response
Commercial Collector Road
Slide #41

+4.48 Average response
Residential Boulevard
Slide #42

+4.73 Average response
Residential Collector Boulevard
Slide #43

+5.95 Average response
Residential with Planting Strip
Slide #44

-3.79 Average response
Commercial Pedestal Sign
Slide #45

-.66 Average response
Commercial Pedestal Sign
Slide #46

+.77 Average response
Commercial Ground
Slide #47

+.48 Average response
Commercial Ground Sign
Slide #48

-1.75 Average response
Commercial Pedestal Sign
Slide #49

-.19 Average response
Building Signs
Slide #50

OFFICE FACILITIES

+2.11 Average response
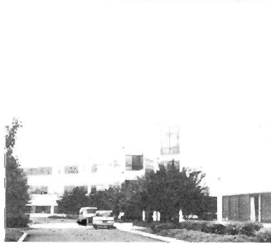Individual Offices
Slide #51

+1.69 Average response
Single Office Building
Slide #52

+2.89 Average response
Office Complex
Slide #53

+1.05 Average response
Office Park
Slide #54

-.15 Average response
Corporate Headquarters
Slide #55

-2.41 Average response
Highrise
Slide #56

MANAGING DEVELOPMENT

-2.56 Average response
Cul-de-sac Aerial Photograph
Slide #57

+2.87 Average response
Crossroads Aerial Photograph
Slide #58

+2.82 Average response
Village Square
Slide #59

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