

Appendix B

Design Guidelines for New Neighborhoods

A guide to creation of Smart Neighborhoods in support of the
Chester/Stevensville Community Plan

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INTRODUCTION

With the Neighborhood Conservation and Smart Growth Act of 1997, the State of Maryland directed its resources to revitalize established communities, support new development within priority funding areas, and preserve valuable resource and open space lands. Maryland has withdrawn its support for inefficient and expensive sprawl development, but we still need to use land that is developed inside the priority funding areas more efficiently, and to build communities that offer people an attractive alternative to single-use, low-density developments. In 2000, recognizing that local governments maintain control over the pattern and character of development through comprehensive plans and development regulations, the General Assembly passed legislation directing the Maryland Department of Planning to prepare models and guidelines for smart neighborhoods and infill and redevelopment. The models and guidelines will help local governments transform smart growth from the realm of the theoretical to brick and mortar reality. Smart Neighborhoods Models and Guidelines expands on a 1994 Maryland Office of Planning publication, Design Characteristics of Maryland's Traditional Settlements, which examined the characteristics of existing traditional neighborhoods from throughout the state and contained model ordinances. These guidelines are designed to support the development of lands as recommended in the Chester/Stevensville Community Plan.

SMART NEIGHBORHOODS DEFINED

Smart neighborhoods are relatively self-contained new communities with a compact mix of residential, commercial, employment/office, and civic land uses and range of housing choices, with a design that fosters pedestrian and bicycle activity, public safety, environmental protection, long-term investment, efficient use of infrastructure, and efficient provision of public services. Although the principles that govern smart neighborhoods also apply to redevelopment sites with a substantial new development component, smart neighborhoods generally refers to new development on large infill and greenfield sites, located within priority funding areas and consistent with the local government's master plan.

INTENT OF SMART NEIGHBORHOODS

The myriad goals of smart neighborhoods are:

1. Efficient use of infrastructure · Proximity to existing or programmed infrastructure can minimize demand for new services, and compact, mixed-use design reduces the cost of on-site infrastructure
2. Socioeconomic diversity · Provision of a range of housing types encourages socioeconomic diversity within communities and brings people closer to jobs.
3. Transportation choice · Compact, mixed-use design improves access to daily destinations for people who cannot or do not wish to drive. Development design treats pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile travel as equally important.
4. Environmental quality · Compact, mixed-use design reduces excess consumption of land and loss of natural resources, reduces regional vehicle miles traveled, and improves regional air and water quality.
5. Sustained economic health · Compact, mixed-use design creates a mutually reinforcing relationship between residential and commercial uses. Residents provide a market and employees for businesses, and in turn, businesses provide desired amenities and employment opportunities for residents.
6. Sense of community · Compact, mixed-use design helps create a level of connection to a mix of housing, and commercial, retail and cultural amenities and promotes pedestrian orientation, which can enhance a sense of community.
7. Logical extension and integration of communities · The connectivity of pedestrian and vehicular networks, natural systems, and open space networks can disperse traffic, promote efficient movement for all modes of transportation, enhance environmental protection, increase access to nature and recreation, and provide existing communities with needed amenities. Provision of civic, commercial, employment/office, residential, and open space uses can fill unmet needs of surrounding communities.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SMART NEIGHBORHOODS

In order to achieve the goals listed above, smart neighborhoods should exhibit all of the following characteristics:

1. Integrated mix of uses, including residential, commercial, employment/office, civic, and open space;
2. Range of housing types and densities;
3. Compact design;
4. Interconnected streets designed to balance the needs of all users, with sidewalks and on-street parking;
5. Open spaces integral to the community; and
6. Location adjacent to and extended fabric of existing development.

BENEFITS OF SMART NEIGHBORHOODS

All too often, developments occur in haphazard fashion with no forethought about the relationship of individual developments to each other, to needed services, or to the natural environment. Smart neighborhoods are designed to provide an alternative to single-use, low-density developments, and to accommodate growth while minimizing the effects of growth on the environment and the cost of infrastructure. A comparison of smart neighborhoods to single-use developments can best illuminate the benefits of smart neighborhoods.

SMART NEIGHBORHOODS

- ✓ Transportation choice and walkability
- ✓ Community interaction and civic life
- ✓ Efficient use of land
- ✓ Supports regional environmental goals- reduced land consumption, improved regional air and water quality
- ✓ Integration of on-site environmental features
- ✓ Planned open space
- ✓ Efficient use of infrastructure
- ✓ Synergistic effect of mixed-use, in which residential and commercial uses support each other and contribute to long-term vitality
- ✓ Enhances and complements existing community
- ✓ Linked to adjacent communities

TYPICAL OR SINGLE-USE DEVELOPMENTS

- ✓ Automobile dependence
- ✓ Little community interaction or civic life
- ✓ Excess consumption of land
- ✓ Contributes to regional environmental degradation-increased land consumption and diminished air and water quality
- ✓ Environmental features created as obstacles
- ✓ Residual open space
- ✓ Inefficient use of infrastructure
- ✓ Commercial uses have no built-in market, and residential uses have no nearby amenities
- ✓ Detracts from or ignores existing community
- ✓ Developed separately from adjacent communities

THE ZONING ORDINANCE SHOULD SUPPORT SMART NEIGHBORHOODS.

1. The zoning ordinance should allow smart neighborhoods by right in certain designated areas.
2. The zone can either be a Euclidean zone or an overlay zone.
3. Text and illustrations should express the intent of the zoning ordinance.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN STANDARDS FOR NEW NEIGHBORHOODS

SECTION 1: INTENT

These standards are established to foster the development of comprehensively planned, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods. This is to be accomplished by promoting a variety of land uses, housing types, and density, and by requiring skillful architectural and landscape design in creating buildings and open spaces. This district is also created to avoid the negative impacts of suburban sprawl by minimizing infrastructure costs, traffic congestion, and environmental degradation.

The design of the neighborhood should reflect the principles of noteworthy town development found in this country prior to the 1940s, including:

1. Architectural harmony, including compatibility in styles, materials, colors, and building size and setbacks;
2. Variety in housing types, density, and cost;
3. Parks, squares, and other common open spaces for residents to interact and recreate, and to provide a setting for the architecture of the development;
4. Neighborhood centers and civic spaces, which, depending on the scale of the development, can include places to shop, work, learn, or worship;
5. An interconnected street system which is based on a modified grid system (for generally level terrain or areas adjacent to pre-1940 neighborhoods) or is composed of interconnecting, curvilinear streets, designed to conform to the topography (for sloping terrain or for areas adjacent to curvilinear streets).
6. Sidewalks, street trees, and substantial on-street parking, providing distinct separation between pedestrians and traffic;
7. Streets and sidewalks that are spatially defined by buildings in a regular pattern, unbroken by parking lots;
8. Traffic calming, including more narrow streets with shorter turning radii than suburban streets, and medians, circles and related features along prominent streets;
9. Lighting which is designed for safe walking and signage which has a pedestrian orientation.
10. A system of land subdivision and development which links one neighborhood to another and can logically be extended.

SECTION 2: DISTRICT SIZE

GOAL

The smart neighborhood functions as a full-service community and reinforces a regional or countywide framework for growth and transportation.

OBJECTIVE

Size guidelines ensure that destinations are all within an easy walk, and that the development functions as a full-service community.

STANDARD

Size of site.

A Smart Neighborhood Village shall not have a minimum or maximum size; however it generally would be about forty (40) to two hundred (200) acres. Parcels significantly larger than two hundred (200) acres should be developed as multiple villages, with each village designed to be integrated into an overall plan and the total site subject to all the provisions. Applications for sites significantly less than 40 acres shall be considered when adjacent to or integrated with an existing Village (e.g. Chester).

SECTION 3: USES PERMITTED

GOAL

Smart neighborhoods provide for the daily needs of residents and contribute to housing stock diversity, either within the project boundaries or within the context of the community that surrounds the project.

OBJECTIVE

A variety of land uses provide for the daily shopping, recreational, and other needs of residents.

The following uses shall be permitted:

1. Residential uses including single-family detached dwellings, single-family attached dwellings and multiple-family dwellings. A maximum of 20% of the land area of the neighborhood may be allocated to multi-family housing.

2. The following open space uses shall be permitted in conjunction with the residential development: community parks; recreational facilities and playgrounds; bicycle paths; greens and squares; or linkages to regional recreation and open space systems.

3. Institutional and Civic uses and structures

Developments for such uses will be permitted provided that such uses do not exceed 25% of the gross land area up to a maximum of 10 acres. Such uses may include but not be limited to the following:

- a. Fire station with assembly hall.
- b. Day care centers.
- c. Community centers.
- d. Civic service clubs.
- e. Private schools.

4. Neighborhood development may include the following additional permitted uses:

a. Residential

- i. Country inns
- ii. Nursing homes and assisted living facilities

b. Commercial

Any commercial uses proposed in a residential district shall be part of an overall redevelopment or development plan. Total land area in commercial use may not occupy more than 15% of the total land area within the proposed neighborhood.

Development for these uses will be permitted provided that such individual uses do not exceed 1,500 square feet of gross floor area for every 100 dwelling units. The inclusion of the following business uses shall not affect the overall residential density calculations.

- i. Neighborhood Market
- ii. Specialty shops
- iii. Antique shops, art galleries and museums
- iv. Health services and medical clinics
- v. Personal services
- vi. Professional services
- vii. Restaurants.

SECTION 4: GENERAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

A. PHYSICAL DISTRIBUTION OF LAND USES

GOAL

The physical distribution of land uses in smart neighborhoods creates a pedestrian atmosphere and sense of place.

OBJECTIVE #1

A mix of uses within blocks and buildings creates opportunities for people to walk and a sense of place.

OBJECTIVE #2

The physical distribution of different housing types throughout the development provides visual interest and ensures the graceful blend of affordable housing into the community.

STANDARDS:

A range of residential unit types and lot sizes is required and shall be mixed throughout the Neighborhood Proper and Neighborhood Fringe, with small lot units located closer to the center of common of the village. Density shall decrease from the center to the periphery of the Village Proper. Lot sizes and frontage shall vary inasmuch as possible according to a random pattern of a traditional village.

B. MIX OF HOUSING TYPES

GOAL

Smart neighborhoods support economic diversity and serve people with different housing needs.

OBJECTIVE

Housing affordable to people with a range of incomes supports economic diversity.

STANDARDS:

10% of the dwelling units in the neighborhood shall be moderately priced units.

C. DENSITY

GOAL

Smart neighborhoods density creates a sense of place, encourages pedestrian activity, and uses infrastructure efficiently.

Note: Maryland's Smart Growth Areas Act requires a minimum average permitted density of 3.5 units per acre (net) inside priority funding areas.

STANDARDS:

Residential density shall create a sense of place, encourage pedestrian activity, and use infrastructure efficiently. Density shall not exceed 3.5 units per acre for the entire site proposed for development. For portions of the site located within the development envelope density shall not exceed 4.5 units per acre. All areas identified as greenbelt shall remain undisturbed as open space.

D. LOGICAL EXTENSION OF COMMUNITIES

GOAL

Smart neighborhoods respect and reinforce the existing pattern of development through connections, spatial hierarchy, and well-defined edges.

OBJECTIVE

New developments should be an extension of the overall village development pattern rather than stand in contrast to it.

STANDARDS:

Pedestrian and vehicular connections shall be provided between existing and future development to disperse traffic flow and provide route options.

Design shall provide for continuity of protected on-and off-site environmental features to increase environmental protection, connect on and off-site wildlife habitat and support the community benefits provided by natural systems.

The extent, physical distribution, and design of open space shall contribute to the development of a regional spatial hierarchy of open spaces.

E. BUILDING DESIGN AND MASSING

GOAL and OBJECTIVE

Building design and massing in smart neighborhoods achieves a graceful mix of uses and housing types, ensures privacy and safety, and contributes to the long-term desirability of the community.

STANDARDS:

Architectural Compatibility

- A. A building must incorporate architectural styles, building materials, and colors used in surrounding buildings.
- B. Residential design styles should reflect vernacular architecture.
- C. A building greater than one story should clearly delineate the boundary between each floor of the structure through belt courses, cornice lines, or similar architectural detailing.
- D. Attached buildings within the same block must maintain consistent cornice lines in buildings of the same height within multi-family, townhome, non-residential, or mixed-use structures.
- E. Porch frontages shall be encouraged on all single family detached homes.
- F. In Mixed Residential Areas, roof lines must be pitched or gabled Overhanging eaves must be provided to the greatest extent possible.
- G. Multi-family structures shall appear as large single-family units. Small groups of townhouses (four or less) may be designed to appear as large single-family structures.
- H. Signs shall be limited to wall, awning, or hanging signs.
- I. Significant departures from “off-the-shelf” standardized franchise building design may be required to meet these standards.

Human Scale Design

- A. Doorways, windows, and other openings in the façade of a building should be proportioned to reflect pedestrian scale and movement, and to encourage interest at the street level.
- B. A building shall avoid long, monotonous, uninterrupted walls or roof planes. The façade of a building should be divided into distinct modules no longer than 100 feet.
- C. A building that is located on the periphery of the Neighborhood Center shall generally not exceed twice the height and massing of adjacent structures located outside the Neighborhood Center.

Encouragement of Pedestrian Activity

- A. A parking lot must be located to the rear or side of the structure. If located at the side of the structure, the parking must be screened through the use of solid streetwalls or landscaping. Streetwalls should not exceed 4 feet in height.
- B. Awnings, covered walkways, open colonnades, or similar weather protection must be provided by commercial structures.
- C. A commercial use must provide a minimum 50 percent of the front façade on the ground floor as clear or lightly tinted windows, doors, or other treatments sufficiently transparent to provide views into the interior of buildings.
- D. A residential structure with a front setback of 5 to 15 feet, must provide a front porch or stoop on the front façade of the structure. Minimum width of a porch is 4 feet.
- E. Rear access from an alley is required unless otherwise approved by the Planning Commission. If driveway access is provided from the street, the garage or carport may not face the street, unless it is located a minimum 20 feet behind the front façade of the principal structure.

Buildings that relate to and are oriented toward the street and surrounding buildings

- A. The structure must be located at the required setback line.
- B. The main entrance of a structure must face the street and be clearly articulated through the use of architectural detailing.
- C. Windows and doors on the front facade of a building should create lines of sight between the building and the street.
- D. The height and massing of a building shall not exceed twice the height and massing of structures adjacent to or across the street.
- E. A building at an entrance to a Smart Neighborhood District, an entrance to the Neighborhood Center, or an intersection of a main street or other significant intersection should use special architectural features to emphasize the importance of the location. Special architectural features include corner towers, cupolas, clock towers, spires, balconies, colonnades, or other similar architectural features.
- F. Structures that are located on, or adjacent to a Neighborhood Square shall be a minimum of 2 stories.

F. OPEN SPACE

GOAL

Neighborhoods provide open space to meet the recreational and emotional needs of residents and residents of nearby communities; preserve important natural assets; and reinforce the design of the development.

OBJECTIVE

The *physical distribution* of open space amenities gives all residents visual and functional access to nature and recreational opportunities.

STANDARDS

1. Each neighborhood shall contain as its central focus, at least one square or park no smaller than 1/4 acre, and no greater than 1 acre. This square shall be within 600 ft of the geographic center of the neighborhood.
2. The remaining public use areas, parks and greens shall be located and distributed such that no portion of the neighborhood is further than 600 ft from a park or square.
3. Design and location of open space shall reinforce the built environment. and make an explicit connection between buildings and squares.
4. For at least one square, hereinafter referred to as the mandatory square, shopfront uses shall be permitted on all the surrounding lots. Squares shall have length-to-width ratio of no greater than three to one.
5. Within the proposed neighborhood a minimum of fifteen percent of the gross land area shall be permanently dedicated to open space. Such open space shall be made of greens parks, squares, ponds, active recreation areas and buffer areas that are open to the public. One-third of the fifteen percent of such open space shall be devoted to active and passive recreation.

Outside the proposed neighborhood open space shall be provided to establish an edge or greenbelt separating the neighborhood from areas located outside the designated development district. Such open space shall represent no less than 20% of the land area constituting the neighborhood. The design and location of open space shall protect important natural assets, features and sensitive environmental features.

Such Open Space shall establish a natural edge which may include wilderness preserves for wildlife and marine habitats, parks protecting the natural vegetation, greenbelts, hybrid parks, and undisturbed shoreline areas.

G. LANDSCAPING

GOAL

Use landscaping to accentuate the natural and built environment, establish visual connectivity and community identity, and provide environmental and public health benefits.

OBJECTIVE

Landscaping accentuates the appearance and improves the function of the public realm, including streets and open spaces.

STANDARDS

1. Street trees of a minimum 3-inch caliper shall be planted at 30-foot intervals along sidewalks. Shrubs or planters may be used when street trees are not feasible.
2. Trees shall not be required when an arcade is provided.
3. Trees shall be used as a design element to provide visual identity to the neighborhood and reinforce the hierarchy of streets.
4. On any Neighborhood Boulevard, median trees and landscaping are required. Median trees should be a minimum 1 ½ inch caliper, spaced 20 feet on center. Medians may also contain shrubs and plant groundcover.
5. Plantings in immediate proximity to buildings in front and side yards shall respect architectural lines (should be seen as extension of architectural walls.)
6. Landscaping shall be used to improve the quality of the natural environment and to improve the quality of groundwater recharge.
7. Islands and other landscaping alternatives shall be incorporated into parking areas to add visual interest. The use of islands and perimeter gardens designed and landscaped to serve as bioretention facilities is encouraged.
8. For all parking lots with more than six spaces, the landscaped area shall be comprised of a minimum of 20 percent of the total parking area. One native shade tree which grows to a minimum height of 40 feet at maturity shall be required for each three hundred square feet of the above required open space. Native shade trees shall have a minimum caliper of 2 ½ inches at time of planting.
9. Landscaping shall be provided to screen facilities for refuse disposal. Facilities for refuse disposal shall be enclosed by solid fence or walls, and landscaping shall be installed around the perimeter.

H. ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

GOAL

Smart neighborhoods balance the mobility, safety, and other needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicular traffic.

OBJECTIVE

Pedestrian walkways, bicycle lanes, and other amenities enhance the possibility and desirability of walking and bicycling.

STANDARDS

1. Pedestrian ways shall be continuous, direct, and convenient with grade separation where necessary.
2. Pedestrian ways shall be secure, well lighted, and have good visibility.
3. Pedestrian Pathways include a planting or buffer strip to separate pedestrians from the street and provide room for street light poles, pedestrian amenities, street trees, etc.
4. Sidewalks at least 5 feet in width (except for main street districts) shall be provided and constructed of similar materials consistent with adjacent sites.
5. Pedestrian-scale streetlights (12 feet high) shall be provided at no greater than 80 feet intervals along sidewalks and parking areas.
6. Sidewalks at least 10 feet in width shall be provided the entire length of property fronting the main street core commercial areas. Connections to existing sidewalks adjacent to the property shall be provided when appropriate.
7. All non-residential buildings shall include an area for parking bicycles. This area may be designated parking space within the parking lot near the building or an area outside the parking lot adjacent to the building. The bike parking area must include a bike rack.
8. Neighborhood design shall provide a streetscape interesting to pedestrians that encourages more people to walk.
9. Restaurants shall be permitted to operate outdoor cafes on sidewalks, including areas within the public right of way and in courtyards provided that pedestrian circulation and access to store entrances shall not be impaired.
10. Buildings shall be oriented to face the street, with entrances and display windows at the street level.
11. The location and design of garages, carports and parked cars shall not dominate the view of the dwelling from the street.
12. Interconnected streets shall be designed to encourage people to walk and provide a variety of route options.

13. All streets and alleys shall terminate at other streets within the neighborhood and where appropriate connect to existing and projected through streets outside the development.
14. The average perimeter of all blocks within the neighborhood shall not exceed 1,350 feet. No block face shall have a length greater than 500 feet without a dedicated alley or pathway providing through access.
15. Street design shall meet the multifaceted needs of drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
16. The long axis of neighborhood streets shall have appropriate termination with either a public monument, specifically designed building façade, or a gateway to the ensuing space.
17. There shall be a continuous network of service lanes to the rear of land uses occupied by shop fronts and attached houses.

SECTION 5: LOT DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

GOAL

Lot development standards in smart neighborhoods contribute to the development of a continuous streetscape and pedestrian atmosphere.

OBJECTIVE

Front setbacks in residential areas create an inviting and safe pedestrian atmosphere.

STANDARDS

1. Build-to-lines shall include appropriate variations to encourage neighborhood identity and creativity.
2. Lot widths within individual areas shall range between 20 and 80 feet in width and should be varied. Orientation of housing can also vary.
3. Lot widths shall be designed to ensure that garages do not dominate the front facade of residential structures.
4. Stoops, and front porches may encroach up to ten feet into the front setbacks.
5. Build-to lines for commercial buildings create a continuous streetscape and interesting environment for pedestrians.
6. Buildings on shopfront lots shall have the façade built directly on the build to line along at least 70% of its length. The unbuilt portion of the build-to line shall have a street wall directly upon it.
7. Lot sizes shall be designed to keep houses close to each other and to the street.