Design Guidelines:

Additions and New Construction
for
Town of Mount Airy, Maryland

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Downtown Mount Airy

Introduction

Since the 1970s over 3,000 communities have created design guidelines to assist in enhancing the quality of the environment as well as protect property values, preserve the quality of existing buildings, enhance the design of additions and new buildings, and contribute to citizens' pride in their community. In addition, design guidelines assist in the orderly and objective decision-making processes for development in a community, providing an understanding of the existing character that should be emulated in the design of additions and new buildings as well as be retained in rehabilitating existing buildings.

The *Design Guidelines: Additions and New Construction for Town of Mount Airy Maryland,* along with their companion *Design Guidelines: Rehabilitation of Historic Properties in Town of Mount Airy, Maryland,* have been created to provide property owners, architects, developers, and others involved in developing new buildings in Mount Airy, and rehabilitating historic buildings, with an understanding of how its citizens wish their community to be viewed and change. Both guidelines seek to reinforce the best visual, architectural and site planning characteristics of the community, while encouraging appropriate growth and change. This document focuses on additions to existing buildings and new construction throughout the town. The companion document, *Design Guidelines: Rehabilitation of Historic Properties in Town of*

Mount Airy, Maryland, focuses on the rehabilitation of buildings within the Mount Airy Historic District. They are in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, allowing property owners to access state and federal tax credits for rehabilitation of contributing historic structures.

The Town of Mount Airy is within the growth ring of the Baltimore/Washington metropolitan area. Located in both Carroll and Frederick counties, Mount Airy's population increased 35% between 2000 and 2007, fueling the construction of new residential, commercial, industrial, and religious buildings. While a few recent additions and new buildings show an affinity for Mount Airy's historic architecture and visual character, many unfortunately do not. They could have easily been constructed almost anywhere in the country.

This lack of attention to the existing community character has caused many of Mount Airy's citizens and leaders to become increasingly concerned that their community will loose its unique qualities. To begin to address this concern, Mount Airy created the Growth and Development Task Force in 2006 to provide advice and assistance to the Town Council and Planning Commission on planning issues, with a special focus on citizen involvement. The Task Force's goals are to consider best practices and new ideas for planning, open space, and future development through processes that include citizen involvement. In 2007, the Growth and Development Task Force conducted the *Mount Airy Town Survey*, which garnered responses from thousands of citizens. Overwhelmingly, citizens wanted to retain the small town and rural qualities of Mount Airy and supported limiting growth to help maintain that character.

Continuing the effort to manage its future, the Town of Mount Airy commissioned the creation of the *Design Guidelines: Additions and New Construction for Town of Mount Airy Maryland* to assist in maintaining and enhancing the small town qualities that our citizens cherish. It should be noted, however, that while these design guidelines are **not regulatory** they have been designed to work in concert with Mount Airy's Zoning Ordinance, providing those involved in changing our community detailed guidance as to what types of changes are recommended and what types are not.

Ridge Presbyterian Church, 1846

Brief History of Mount Airy

The settlement that became Mount Airy was founded in 1830. It was located along the extension of the National Pike (current MD Rt 144) connecting Cumberland, the Pike's eastern terminus, to Baltimore. Eight years after the community was founded, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad constructed a depot in 1838 on Main Street. In 1846 the Ridge Presbyterian Church, the oldest extant building in Mount Airy was constructed on Main Street approximately half way between the National Pike and the B & O station.

For its first decade or so, the town does not appear to have had an official name, it was simply known as the settlement along Parr's Ridge. Legend has it that an Irish brakeman with the B & O railroad bestowed the name Mount Airy on the settlement due to the cold air on the ridge during winter. The town grew slowly throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, from a few hundred to a few thousand inhabitants. Its Main Street grew primarily south from the B & O station where the land was relatively flat, although still challenging for construction. In keeping with most rural towns in Maryland, buildings were constructed to the front property lines with little or no side yards. Most were two or three stories high with mercantile enterprises on the ground floor and residential units or offices above. Surrounding the commercial center, single-family houses, churches, and a school were constructed in popular vernacular as well as architectural styles of the time, including two-story, three-bay I-houses popular during the 19th century, and American Foursquare, Bungalows, Second Empire, and Queen Anne styles in the early part of the 20th century.

Wood construction was prevalent in the area due to the availability of materials locally. Brick and stone were used sparingly during this period because of the cost of transporting to the town. Unfortunately, the use of wood construction led to a pair of disastrous fires in downtown Mount Airy in the early 20th century. The first in 1903 destroyed most of the business district south of the B & O station. A mere 11 years later, most of the businesses north of the station were also destroyed by fire. Thus, except for the current B & O station itself, which was constructed 1882, most of the commercial district dates from the first two decades of the 20th century. Masonry rather than wood became the preferred rebuilding material to lessen the possibility of fire.

From the early 1900s until the 1950s Mount Airy continued to grow slowly and organically. Occasionally older buildings were demolished or burned making room for new ones typically constructed in the architectural style of the day. Large and more modest single–family homes were built along Main, Park and other established streets, typically one or two at a time, sometimes on speculation but often commissioned by their first occupants. With the end of the Second World War, small subdivisions of 15 or 20 single-family or town houses, such as Warfield Acres and Friendly Acres began to appear. While the buildings tended to be more uniform in character than previously, most of these developments still conformed to the existing topography.

In the early 1970s, the town was beginning to experience rapid growth as well as change in its existing small town character. After more than a decade of debate, Mount Airy constructed its first sewer system. In 1973, the first shopping center outside of downtown opened at the intersection of Routes 27 and 144, and in 1975, Prospect Park, the town's first municipal park opened. The 1970s was also a period of growth through annexation, driven primarily by the request of surrounding areas for access to the town's water and sewer systems. Suburban type growth, commercial, residential and light industrial, with its disregard for existing topography and natural environment continued through the 1980s. In 1993, partially in reaction to how the town was changing character, Mount Airy created its first comprehensive plan. As noted in *A Vision of Home: Centennial History of Mount Airy, Maryland 1894 – 1994* "Mount Airy had done well to avoid many development-related problems: however, there is a real concern that the qualities of Mount Airy that attract new residents are becoming endangered by the development that accommodates this growth".

Downtown Commercial Buildings, 2007

Review Process

All new construction within Mount Airy's town limits that requires a site plan review, plot plan, or a building permit is subject to the criteria in the *Design Guidelines: Additions and New Construction for Town of Mount Airy, Maryland.* All additions to existing buildings that increase the footprint or square footage 50% or more are also subject to these guidelines. In addition all exterior changes to buildings within Mount Airy's National Register Historic District are also subject to the *Design Guidelines: Rehabilitation of Historic Properties in Town of Mount Airy, Maryland.*

The Mount Airy Planning Commission is responsible for reviewing all proposed additions and new construction within the town. The Commission is also responsible for reviewing proposed exterior changes to existing buildings within the Mount Airy Historic District. Operating under the authority of Article 66B, Annotated Code of Maryland, the Planning Commission is charged with making and approving plans to serve as a guide to public and private plans and decisions to insure the development of public and private property that:

1. Guides the development, economic, and social well being of the jurisdiction;
2. Shows appropriate and desirable patterns for future land use and community character;

3. Contains a transportation element that shows appropriate and desirable locations for roads, bicycle paths, sidewalks, and other transportation corridors;
4. Contains a community facilities element; and
5. Protects the environment as well as other elements of community well being.

The Mount Airy Planning Commission typically meets on the last Monday of each month. Developers and others, except residential owner occupants, wishing to construct additions or new buildings subject to these guidelines must schedule a pre-submittal meeting with the Town Planner to discuss scope of proposed project. Be prepared with the following information:

1. Photographs of existing site and surrounding parcels, buildings, roads and other important features. Photographic or digital 4" x 6" color prints will be accepted. Mount or print images on 8½" x 11" paper with space in between images for photograph description. Clearly label each photograph, i.e., "123 Main Street, front elevation".

2. Concept Plan/Site Plan showing the location of the proposed new construction and any existing buildings on the site. The Site Plan should be, at minimum, 1" = 50' scale.

3. Drawings and plans of proposed new construction, at a minimum, are to include elevations of all sides relevant to the project, plans of all floors, and any additional drawings of the project necessary to fully explain the proposal, all at ¼" = 1' scale.

4. A list and samples of all primary exterior materials, including product information on all primary assemblies, such as windows, doors, railing systems, and other relevant exterior features.

Residential owner occupants who wish to construct additions to their homes that are subject to these guidelines must schedule a pre-submittal meeting with the Town Planner to discuss scope of proposed project. Be prepared with the following information:

1. Photographs of existing site and surrounding parcels, buildings, roads and other relevant features, clearly labeled with the property's street address.

2. Sketches or drawings of proposed exterior changes, including additions to buildings or construction of new buildings on the same property, drawn, if possible, to the aforementioned scales.

3. A list and samples of all primary exterior materials, including product information on all primary assemblies, such as windows, doors, railing systems, and other relevant exterior features.

Character Defining Features of Mount Airy

Understanding the architectural and community character of Mount Airy is the first step in designing additions or new buildings that are consistent with the *Design Guidelines for Additions and New Construction Town of Mount Airy.* This is accomplished through observing and analyzing the setbacks, scale, proportion, materials, details and other architectural aspects of existing buildings, and site plan elements, such as topography, existing landscapes, sidewalks and transportation routes and storage areas. That understanding is interpreted in the site plan and exterior design of the proposed new construction and rehabilitation of existing historic buildings.

Interpreting the existing character of the community does not, however, mean simply imitating the design of existing buildings, their materials or site plans. Rather, additions and new buildings should incorporate the character-defining elements of the existing architecture and landscapes in new ways that show the continued evolution of Mount Airy, linking its past to its future.

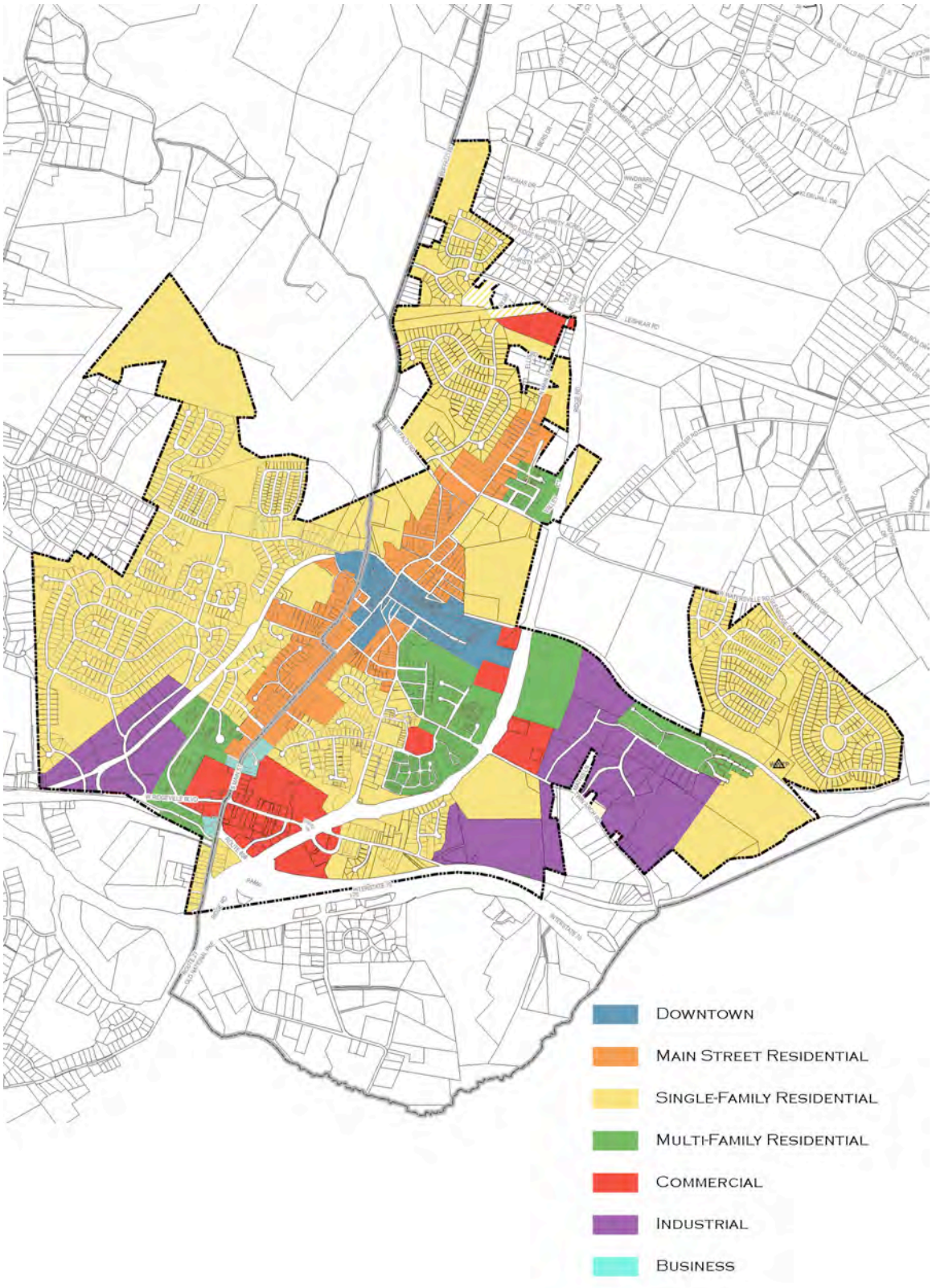
The architectural and community character of Mount Airy changes from neighborhood to neighborhood, influenced by the age of the buildings, their architectural styles and materials, building use, landscape and topography. Subtle and not so subtle differences in character are important to retain in additions and new construction within developed areas to help insure visual compatibility with the existing neighborhood character. In undeveloped areas visual continuity with the architectural and community character that makes Mount Airy unique is important to maintaining the overall character of the town.

To assist residents, developers, architects, engineers, contractors and others involved in physical changes in Mount Airy, the following brief overview of the architectural and community character of Mount Airy's Downtown, Main Street Residential, Single-family Residential, Multi-family Residential, Commercial, Business and Industrial areas is provided (see Map page 9). While site planning and architectural characteristics within each of the community character areas, which are closely related to the Mount Airy Zoning Map are essential (see Map page 10), it is important that a detailed study of the existing character of the area immediately surrounding a proposed project be studied to determine which elements of the existing character should be retained or emulated.

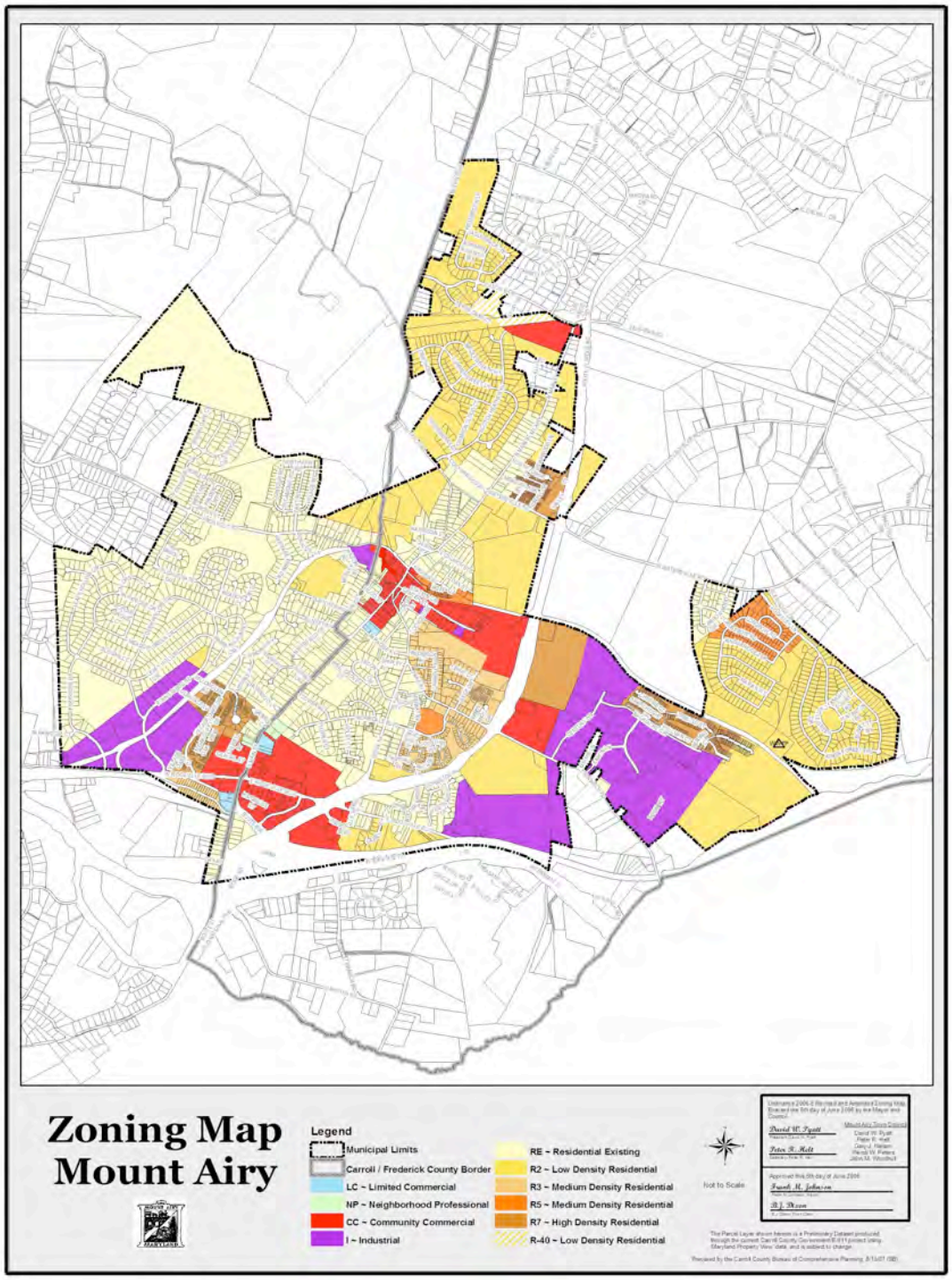
Downtown Mount Airy

Downtown

The majority of buildings in the Downtown area are built to the front and side property lines. They are two- or three-story commercial structures distinguished by open storefronts at the ground level opening directly onto the street with regularly spaced windows above. The ground floors typically house commercial businesses with residences or offices above. Parking is provided on the street as well as in surface lots located behind many of the buildings. Principal facades tend to be of brick or stucco with some in wood. The streets and buildings conform to existing topography, with many buildings having at grade entries on two different levels. Natural landscaping is minimal, giving the district a low-density village character. The Downtown area is also the location of the Town Hall, an important community-gathering place.



Mount Airy Architectural and Community Character Areas



Mount Airy Zoning Map **Source: Town of Mount Airy**

Main Street Residential

Main Street Residential

Located north and south of Downtown, Main Street Residential areas consist primarily of large homes set back from the street on generously sized lots along Main Street and smaller homes and lots along other streets within the area. Except for a few recent infill houses and additions, most were constructed prior to the Second World War. Typically, the single-family residences contain mature landscaping. Many of the houses, particularly larger ones along Main Street, contain garages and other secondary buildings located to the rear of the principal structure. Prevalent exterior materials include masonry and wood siding. As with the Downtown area, the buildings conform to the existing topography with their primary facades oriented toward the street. Some Main Street Residential areas are connected to the Downtown by sidewalks while others are not.

Single-family Residential

Single-family Residential

Most Single-family Residential areas in Mount Airy were constructed in the 20th Century, with the majority built after the Second World War. They typically reflect national housing development trends with curvilinear and cul-de-sac streets lined by one and two story single-family homes. Most Single-family Residential areas have public sidewalks. Those areas constructed between the early 1950s and late 1970s tend to have small houses on larger lots, while those constructed later have larger houses on smaller lots. The early houses also tend to respect the original topography and have more mature landscaping than those constructed in later years. Typical exterior materials include brick, wood, and metal and vinyl siding.

Multi-family Residential

Multi-family Residential

Most of the Multi-family Residential areas in Mount Airy were constructed after the mid-1970s. They reflect evolving trends in suburban townhouse development, with a number of different front facade materials (brick, stone and vinyl), porch coverings, and roof projections adding variety to the same floor plan. Rear facades and those on the sides of end units tend to use vinyl siding. The original topography is often graded level resulting in the loss of most if not all of the original mature landscape. Parking lots, sidewalks and small front yards tend to dominate front facades.

Business

Business

The Business areas form transitions between Residential and Commercial areas of Mount Airy. As such the buildings and site plans have affinity with those found in both areas - some resemble Single-family and Main Street Residential buildings and site plans, while others are closer to Commercial buildings and their site plans. Typically, the buildings in the Business areas are stand-alone structures with limited parking on site. Those that were once residential structures tend to conform to the original topography and have some mature landscaping on site, while those that are purpose-built commercial structures tend to be located on graded sites with only minimal landscaping. Sidewalks connect the Business areas to other adjacent Residential and Commercial areas.

Commercial

Commercial

Most Commercial areas consist of one or two story freestanding masonry boxes with flat roofs, surrounded by parking, or suburban style shopping centers, with large expanses of

surface parking. A few smaller commercial buildings have attempted to retain a more residential character with gabled roofs and asymmetrical facades. In all cases, the original topography has been graded level and all original mature landscaping removed. Sidewalks separate facades from parking areas, but typically do not connect the Commercial areas to surrounding Residential and Business areas.

Industrial

Industrial

The Industrial areas in Mount Airy typically consist of one-story masonry or metal buildings with flat or low-pitched roofs. Most are located on graded sites, devoid of original mature landscaping. Typically surface parking, loading and storage areas surround the buildings. Some industrial areas have monument signs associated with each building.

Downtown Mount Airy

Part One: Design Guidelines for Additions and New Construction

Design guidelines provide everyone involved in the design of additions and new buildings with a clear set of parameters. For builders and designers, guidelines explain the context within which design changes should take place and outline significant characteristics to be retained or emulated in new construction. For property owners, guidelines help insure that future design changes will enhance the value of existing property. For the citizens of Mount Airy as a whole, design guidelines increase the likelihood that their community's unique character will be retained while it grows and changes.

As helpful as guidelines may be to enhancing a community's character, they cannot guarantee good design by themselves. The quality of the end product depends in large part on the skill of the designer, how well he or she understands the existing character of Mount Airy, and the importance of retaining and emulating that character in the design of additions and new buildings. The quality of new design also depends on how sensitive property owners, developers, contractors and craftspeople are to incorporating the best existing characteristics of the community in additions and new buildings. Finally, the quality of new

construction depends on how successful the community's design review process is in encouraging appropriate changes to Mount Airy.

Design guidelines should describe the character of site plans, buildings and landscapes, as well as desired results, rather than specifying styles, requirements or designs. In this way, design guidelines allow flexibility and creativity in the design of additions and new buildings, while helping to ensure that the result will be compatible with the existing environment.

The key to designing a compatible new building is based on interpreting the character-defining elements of traditional buildings, including site planning; building setback, and orientation to principal streets; the scale, proportion, rhythm, and massing of principal facades; building height and roof shape; and exterior materials, details and ornamentation. Equally important is the interpretation of character-defining natural and constructed landscapes surrounding the new buildings.

The location of buildings on their sites and setbacks from the street are important to defining the character of Mount Airy

Site Planning and Setback

Site planning for additions and new buildings should reinforce the traditional community character of Mount Airy, beginning with respecting the existing topography, protecting environmentally sensitive areas, and retaining as much mature landscaping as possible. Site plans for new developments should also reinforce how pedestrians and vehicles have been traditionally accommodated in Mount Airy's older commercial and residential areas, as well as insure that bicycle transportation is safely accommodated. All new construction should reinforce the use of traditional site elements, such as fences and walls, sidewalks, benches, streetlights, street signs, signage and other items of street furniture where appropriate as part of the overall appearance of the addition, new building or development.

Existing Character: Site Planning and Setback

Downtown

- Primarily zero lot line, party wall buildings
- Conforms to existing topography
- Parallel parking on street and in lots at the rear of buildings
- Minimum natural landscape
- Pedestrian sidewalks used to connect buildings together, places for chance encounters with fellow citizens with occasional displays of goods and services

Main Street Residential

- Located on Main Street
  - Buildings centered on large lots
  - Conforms to existing topography
  - Driveways leading to side or rear of lot
  - Pedestrian sidewalks connecting to Downtown

    - Mature landscaping
- Located on other streets
    - Buildings on small lots with shallow front and side yards
    - Conforms to existing topography
    - Parking on street or driveway leading to side of lot
    - Mature landscaping

Single-family Residential

- Small lots with deep front yards along principal streets and shallow front yards along secondary streets
- Buildings centered on lots
- Driveway leading to side or rear of lot
- Public sidewalks connecting Single-family Residential areas to other areas
- Areas developed before mid-1970s tend to conform to existing topography and contain mature landscaping
- Areas developed after mid-1970s tend to grade existing topography and contain immature landscaping

Multi-family Residential

- Townhouses grouped in less than block long rows with shallow front yards
- Parking lots in front of buildings separated from front yards by sidewalks
- Existing topography graded level
- Isolated water retention and recharge areas that do not contribute to overall site plan design
- Lack of mature trees

Commercial and Business

- Adaptively reused Single-family and Main Street Residential buildings tend to conform to the existing topography, have mature landscaping and minimal parking on site
- Purpose-built commercial buildings tend to be on graded level sites with expanses of parking
- Typically no public sidewalks connecting Commercial and Business areas to other areas

Industrial

- Stand-alone buildings fronted by parking, loading, and/or surface storage areas
- Existing topography graded level with minimum landscaping
- Public sidewalks in most areas

Design Guidelines: Site Planning and Setback

Downtown

- Locate new buildings on the front property line
- Locate additions at the rear if possible, or if located on the side of an existing building, they should respect the existing setback of the building to which they are attached
- Minimize the alteration of the existing topography to accommodate new buildings and parking areas as much as possible, particularly adjacent to streets and sidewalks
- Parallel parking on street is allowed
- Locate parking lots or structures to rear of buildings
- Public sidewalks should connect buildings together, as places for chance encounters with fellow citizens, and occasional displays of goods and services

Main Street Residential

- Locate new buildings on lots similar to the location and setbacks of adjacent buildings
- Locate additions at the rear if possible, or if located on the side of an existing building, they should respect the existing setback of the building to which they are attached
- Minimize the alteration of the existing topography to accommodate new buildings as much as possible, particularly adjacent to streets and sidewalks
- Locate driveways similar to the location of driveways of adjacent lots
- Public sidewalks should connect buildings together as well as to adjacent areas
- Maintain as much of the existing mature landscaping as possible

Single-family Residential

- Locate new buildings on lots similar to the location of adjacent buildings
- Locate additions at the rear if possible, or if located on the side of an existing building, they should respect the existing setback of the building to which they are attached
- Concentrate new units in a compact area to create open spaces elsewhere in a subdivision
- Locate open spaces so they are as contiguous as possible
- Minimize the alteration of the existing topography to accommodate new buildings as much as possible, particularly adjacent to streets and sidewalks
- Locate driveways similar to the location of driveways of adjacent lots
- Locate garages on sides or rear of new buildings
- Public sidewalks should connect buildings together as well as to adjacent areas

- Accommodate bikeways in all new subdivisions
- Maintain as much of the existing mature landscaping as possible

Multi-family Residential

- Locate additions to existing Multi-family Residential buildings in the rear
- Provide usable front yards for new townhouses

- Minimize parking at front of new buildings, locating as much parking as possible in the rear
- Minimize the alteration of the existing topography to accommodate new buildings and parking as much as possible, particularly adjacent to streets and sidewalks
- Locate open spaces so they are as contiguous as possible
- Public sidewalks should connect buildings together as well as to adjacent areas
- Provide areas for bikeways
- Maintain as much of the existing mature landscaping as possible
- Incorporate the design of water retention and recharge areas into the overall design of the development

Commercial and Business

- Locate additions to existing Commercial and Business buildings so they are compatible with the setbacks and site planning of the existing building to which they are attached
- Locate buildings to be compatible with the locations of adjacent buildings
- Minimize the alteration of the existing topography to accommodate new buildings and parking as much as possible, particularly adjacent to streets and sidewalks
- Minimize parking at front of new buildings, locating as much as possible in the rear
- Public sidewalks should connect buildings together as well as to adjacent areas
- Provide areas for bikeways
- Maintain as much of the existing mature landscaping as possible.

Industrial

- Locate additions to existing Industrial buildings so they are compatible with the setbacks and site planning of the existing building to which they are attached
- Locate buildings to be compatible with the locations of adjacent buildings and surrounding zones
- Minimize parking, loading and storage areas at front of new buildings, locating as much as possible in the rear
- Minimize the alteration of the existing topography to accommodate new buildings and parking as much as possible, particularly adjacent to streets and sidewalks
- Public sidewalks should connect buildings together as well as to adjacent areas
- Provide areas for bikeways
- Maintain as much of the existing mature landscaping as possible

The orientation of buildings to the street is important to defining the character of Mount Airy

Orientation

A building's orientation is the direction its principal facade faces the street. The location of the building's main entrance, composition of all facades visible from public rights-of-way, and slope of roofs also reinforces its orientation.

Existing Character: Orientation

- Most existing buildings are oriented to the principal street

Design Guidelines: Orientation

- Orient new buildings to be compatible with the orientation of adjacent buildings
- Orient additions to existing buildings to be compatible with the existing orientation
- The main entry of new buildings should be oriented to the principal street

Scale is the apparent size of a building in relation to a well know object such as a person. Proportion is the size of building elements such as windows and doors to each other. Both are important in defining the character of Mount Airy.

Scale and Proportion

Scale is the relative or apparent size of a building in relation to its neighbors, typically perceived by the size of building elements, such as windows, doors, storefronts, porches, cornices, surface materials and other exterior features. Most buildings are designed to be human in scale; that is, they appear to be of a size appropriate for human occupancy and use. A few buildings, particularly those designed for civic or religious purposes, are monumental in scale giving them physical and symbolic importance. Other buildings, particularly commercial and industrial buildings constructed after the mid-1970s lack a sense of scale.

Proportion is the relation of elements of a building, such as its doors, windows, storefront, porches, and cornices to each other and to the facades. Often proportions can be expressed as mathematical ratios, drawn from the architectural theories of ancient Greece and Renaissance Italy. For example, many historic buildings designed in the Classical Revival style use mathematical proportions to locate and size windows, doors, columns, cornices, and other building elements.

Existing Character: Scale and Proportion

Downtown, Main Street Residential, Single-family Residential, and Multi-family Residential

- Most existing buildings are of human scale
- The proportions of most buildings constructed prior to the mid-1970s are derived from a mathematical system

- The proportions of most buildings constructed after the mid-1970s are not derived from any mathematical system

Commercial and Business

- Adaptively used Residential buildings are typically human in scale and derive their proportions from a mathematical system
- Most purpose-built Commercial and Business buildings lack scale and are not well-proportioned

Industrial

- Most Industrial buildings lack scale and are not well-proportioned

Many older buildings in Mount Airy are based on mathematical proportions

Design Guidelines: Scale and Proportion

Downtown, Main Street Residential, Single-family Residential, and Multi-family Residential

- Scale of new buildings should be compatible to the scale of adjacent buildings
- Scale of additions should be similar to the scale of the buildings to which they are attached
- Proportions of principal facades of new buildings should be compatible with the principal facades of adjacent buildings
- Proportions of facades of additions should be similar to the proportions of the buildings to which they are attached

Commercial and Business

- Scale of new buildings should be compatible with the scale of Downtown buildings
- Scale of additions should be similar to the scale of the buildings to which they are attached
- Proportions of principal facades of new buildings should be compatible with proportions of Downtown buildings
- Proportions of facades of additions should be similar to the proportions of the buildings to which they are attached
- Proportions of Downtown commercial should be designed based on mathematical systems appropriate for the building

Industrial

- New Industrial buildings and additions to existing Industrial buildings should have a human scale and be well-proportioned

The rhythm and massing of facades contributes to the character of Mount Airy

Rhythm and Massing

The vertical and horizontal spacing and repetition of facade elements such as storefronts, windows, doors, cornices and the like, give a facade its rhythm. The space between freestanding buildings, or lack of space between party walls, helps establish the rhythm of a street.

A building's massing is derived from the articulation of its facade through the use of dormers, towers, bays, porches, steps and other elements. A building's massing significantly contributes to its character and that of its street, particularly for party wall buildings built to the front property line.

Existing Character: Rhythm and Massing

Downtown

- Front facade rhythms are similar throughout the Downtown except where commercial building storefronts or upper story windows have been filled in
- Most buildings have a single massing

Main Street Residential

- Facade rhythms are similar for most older residential buildings
- Massing varies depending on the use of porches, turrets, bay windows, and other façade projections

Single-family Residential

- Facade rhythms and massing tend to be simple for buildings constructed prior to the mid-1970s
- Facade rhythms and massing tend to be more complex for buildings constructed after the mid-1970s

Multi-family Residential

- Facade rhythms and massing tend to be very similar within each development

Commercial and Business

- Facade rhythms and massing for adaptively reused buildings tend to be similar to Main Street or Single-family Residential buildings
- Facades of purpose-built buildings tend to lack rhythm and be a single massing

Industrial

- Facades typically lack rhythm and tend to be a single massing

Design Guidelines: Rhythm and Massing

Downtown, Main Street Residential, Single-family Residential, and Multi-family Residential

- Rhythm and massing of facades of new buildings should be compatible with the facades of adjacent buildings
- Rhythm and massing of additions to existing buildings should be similar to the rhythm and massing of the buildings to which they are attached

Commercial and Business

- Rhythm and massing of front facades of new buildings should be compatible with the rhythm and massing of the front facades of Downtown buildings
- Rhythm and massing of additions to existing buildings should be similar to the rhythm and massing of the buildings to which they are attached

Industrial

- New buildings should break up long expanses of wall surfaces by the use of appropriate rhythm and massing
- Rhythm and massing of additions to existing buildings should be similar to the rhythm and massing of the buildings to which they are attached

The height and roof shapes of additions should be compatible with the existing structure

Height and Roof Shape

The height of facades and their cornices along with rooflines, and projections such as chimneys, and towers contributes to the character of buildings and streets. The shape, slope and orientation of roofs are also important to defining the character of buildings.

Existing Character: Height and Roof Shape

Downtown

- Typically two-story buildings with flat roofs and pronounced cornices

Main Street Residential

- Typically two-story buildings with gable, cross-gable and hip roofs, many with dormers

Single-family Residential

- Typically two-story buildings with gable roofs, some with dormers

Multi-family Residential

- Typically two-story buildings with gable roofs

Commercial and Business

- Adaptively reused buildings are typically two-story with gable roofs
- Purpose-built buildings are typically one-story with flat roofs and minimal cornices

Industrial

- Typically one-story buildings with shallow sloped gable or hipped roofs with minimal cornices

Design Guidelines: Height and Roof Shape

Downtown

- Height of front facades of new buildings and shape of their roofs should be compatible with the heights of the front facades and roof shapes of adjacent buildings
- Height of additions and their roof shapes should be similar to the height and roof shape of the building to which they are attached
- The height of front facades should not vary more than one story from the heights of the front facades of adjacent buildings

Main Street Residential, Single-family Residential, and Multi-family Residential

- Heights and roof shapes of new buildings should be compatible with the heights and roof shapes of the front facades of adjacent buildings
- Heights and roof shapes of additions should be compatible with the height and roof shapes of the buildings to which they are attached

Commercial & Business

- Height of front facades of new buildings should be a minimum of 20 feet
- Height of additions should be similar to the height of buildings to which they are attached
- Principal facades of new buildings should appear to be a minimum of two stories high
- Roof shapes of new buildings should be compatible with the roof shapes of adjacent buildings
- Roof shapes of additions should be similar to the roof shapes of the buildings to which they are attached

Industrial

- Height of front facades of new buildings should be a minimum of 20 feet
- Height and roof shapes of additions should be similar to the height and roof shapes of the buildings to which they are attached
- Avoid the use of low-pitched sloped gable roofs
- Consider the use of hipped roofs, dormers or gable roofs with slopes of 4 in 12 or greater

Exterior materials used on buildings are important to defining the character of Mount Airy

Exterior Materials

The type, size, texture, surface finish, and other defining characteristics of exterior materials are important to defining the overall character of a building.

Existing Character: Exterior Materials

Downtown

- Facades typically of masonry; some with horizontal wood siding

Main Street Residential and Single-family Residential

- Facades typically of horizontal siding or brick
- Roofs typically of asphalt or cedar shingles, with a few of slate or standing seam metal

Multi-family Residential

- Front facades typically brick or vinyl
- Rear and side facades typically of vinyl

Commercial and Business

- Adaptively reused buildings typically have facades of horizontal wood siding
- Purpose-built buildings typically have facades of brick

Industrial

- Facades typically of metal or stucco with some of masonry

Design Guidelines: Exterior Materials

Downtown, Main Street Residential and Single-family Residential

- Exterior materials of new buildings should be compatible with the exterior materials of adjacent buildings
- Exterior materials of additions should be compatible with the exterior materials of the buildings to which they are attached

Multi-family Residential

- Exterior materials on principal facades should be masonry, horizontal wood siding or wood substitute material such as cementious boards that have the same reflectivity, texture, size, and scale as horizontal wood siding
- Avoid the use of non-traditional materials, such as EIFS, vinyl and metal siding, textured plywood, oversized brick, concrete block, and the like on principal facades
- Exterior materials of additions should be compatible with the exterior materials of the buildings to which they are attached

Commercial and Business

- Exterior materials of adaptively reused buildings should be compatible with the exterior materials of adjacent buildings
- Exterior materials of purpose-built buildings should be brick, excluding oversized brick
- Exterior materials of additions should be compatible with the exterior materials of the buildings to which they are attached

Industrial

- Principal facades may be stucco, brick, metal, EIFS or similar materials
- Avoid the use of vinyl siding, textured plywood, oversized brick, concrete block, and other high maintenance or out of scale materials on principle facades
- Exterior materials of additions should be compatible with the exterior materials of the buildings to which they are attached

Details such as porch railings and brackets, shutters and other ornamentations are important to defining the character of Mount Airy

Details and Ornamentation

Details such as the shape and texture of siding or types of brick courses used for a wall, configuration of cornices, location and appearance of chimneys, and ornamentations such as porch brackets, scrolls, corbels, and the like, significantly add to the character of a facade.

Existing Character: Details and Ornamentation

Downtown

- Traditional details and ornamentation, such as cornice brackets, dentil moldings and the like are typically found on building and storefront cornices on principal facades

Main Street Residential

- Traditional details and ornamentation, such as brackets, dentil moldings, profiled cornices, and the like are typically found on porches and roofs
- Window shutters are often found on front facades

Single-family Residential and Multi-family Residential

- Plain details and restrained ornamentation are found on roofs on buildings built prior to mid-1970s
- Traditionally derived details and ornamentation are found on widow surrounds, gable ends, cornices and other locations on facades of buildings built after mid-1970s

- Some window shutters are found on front facades

Commercial and Business

- Traditional details and ornamentation, such as cornice brackets, dentil moldings and the like are typically found on buildings constructed prior to the mid-1970s.
- Plain details and restrained ornamentation are found on buildings built after mid-1970s

Industrial

- Plain details and restrained ornamentation are found on buildings built after mid-1970s

Design Guidelines: Details and Ornamentation

Downtown, Main Street Residential, Single-family Residential and Multi-family Residential

- Details and ornamentation on additions and new buildings should be well proportioned and scaled to the facade on which they occur
- Details and ornamentation on new buildings should be compatible with those of neighboring buildings
- Details and ornamentation on additions should be compatible to the details and ornamentation found on the buildings to which they are attached

Commercial, Business and Industrial

- Details and ornamentation on additions and new buildings should be restrained, well-proportioned and scaled to the facade on which they occur

Part Two: Design Guidelines for Landscape

Landscape design associated with additions and new buildings that can be seen from public rights-of-way are important character defining features of Mount Airy. This includes not only ground cover, flowering plants, shrubs, and tress, but also fences, retaining walls, ponds, walkways, and other built elements of landscapes. Similarly, the design of landscapes associated with the public right-of-way, parks, streambeds, and environmentally sensitive areas are important to defining the overall character of Mount Airy.

The landscape and topography define the character of Mount Airy

Natural Landscape

The natural landscape consists of both undisturbed and disturbed land and plant material including trees, shrubs, flowering plants, and ground cover. One of the most important character-defining features of Mount Airy is the close integration between most of the older buildings and the original topography surrounded by mature landscapes. On the other hand, most buildings and developments constructed after the mid-1970s drastically transformed the existing topography removing most or all of the mature trees in the process. These developments do not reinforce the unique character of Mount Airy.

Existing Character: Natural Landscape

Downtown

- Buildings and site planning conform to existing topography
- Minimum natural landscape except along streambeds and steep slopes

Main Street Residential, Single-family Residential and Multi-family Residential Areas

- Buildings and site planning conform to existing topography
- Minimum natural landscape except along streambeds and steep slopes

Single-family Residential and Multi-family Residential Areas

- Areas developed before mid-1970s tend to conform to existing topography and contain mature landscaping
- Areas developed after mid-1970s tend to grade existing topography and contain immature natural landscaping

Commercial and Business

- Adaptively reused Single-family and Main Street Residential buildings tend to conform to the existing topography and have mature landscaping
- Purpose-built Commercial and Business buildings tend to be on graded level sites with minimal, immature natural landscaping

Industrial

- Existing topography graded level
- Minimal, immature natural landscaping

Design Guidelines: Natural Landscape

Downtown

- New buildings and additions to existing buildings, and their associated site plans, should conform to existing topography as much as possible
- Typically slopes over 30% should not be built upon
- Provide minimum natural landscaping except in environmentally sensitive areas
- In environmental sensitive areas, such as streambeds and steep slopes, maintain dense native landscaping

Main Street Residential, Single-family Residential and Multi-family Residential

- New buildings and additions to existing buildings, and their associated site plans. should conform to existing topography as much as possible
- Typically slopes over 30% should not be built upon
- Retain as much existing mature natural landscaping as possible, particularly in environmentally sensitive areas such as streambeds and steep slopes

Commercial, Business and Industrial

- New buildings and additions, and their associated site plans, should conform to existing topography as much as possible
- Typically slopes over 30% should not be built upon
- Retain as much existing mature natural landscaping as possible, particularly in environmentally sensitive areas, such as streambeds and steep slopes

The design of parking lots, sidewalks, streets and other elements of constructed landscapes contribute to the character of Mount Airy

Constructed Landscapes

Constructed landscapes include sidewalks, driveways, bikeways, parking lots, patios, decks, fences, and other constructed elements, such as satellite dishes.

Sidewalks and driveways are important to defining the character of Mount Airy

Sidewalks and Driveways

Public sidewalks connecting residential neighborhoods and commercial districts together are an important character-defining feature of Mount Airy that contributes to its small town atmosphere. Similarly, private sidewalks connecting the front door of residential, commercial, and some industrial buildings to public sidewalks contribute significantly to that quality.

Existing Character: Sidewalks and Driveways

Downtown

- Public sidewalks are used to connect buildings together, and as places for chance encounters with fellow citizens as well as occasional displays of goods and services

Main Street Residential

- Driveways leading to side or rear of lots
- Some public sidewalks connect the residential neighborhoods to Downtown
- Private sidewalks connect the front doors of residences to the public sidewalks

Single-family Residential

- Driveways leading to side or rear of lots
- In most residential areas constructed prior to the mid-1970s, public sidewalks connect them with surrounding areas

- In most residential areas constructed prior to the mid-1970s, private sidewalks connect the front of residences to the public sidewalks
- In some residential areas developed after the mid-1970s, public sidewalks connect them with surrounding areas
- In most residential areas developed after the mid-1970s, private sidewalks connect front doors to the residence's driveway

Multi-family Residential

- Sidewalks are used to connect parking lots in the front of buildings
- Typically, there is a lack of public sidewalks connecting the Multi-family Residential areas to other areas

Commercial and Business

- Adaptively reused Single-family and Main Street Residential buildings typically have private sidewalks connecting the buildings to public sidewalks with driveways leading to the side or rear of the lots
- Purpose-built Commercial and Business buildings typically lack public sidewalks and have private sidewalks that separate buildings from parking lots

Industrial

- Public sidewalks internal to each development existing in most areas
- Public sidewalks connecting Industrial areas to other areas typically do not exist

Design Guidelines: Sidewalks and Driveways

Downtown

- Design public sidewalks to connect buildings together, as places for chance encounters with fellow citizens and for occasional displays of goods and services

Main Street Residential, Single-family Residential, and Multi-family Residential

- Driveways should lead to side or rear of lots
- Public sidewalks should connect the residential areas to surrounding areas
- Private sidewalks should connect the front doors of residences to the public sidewalks as well as to driveways

Commercial and Business

- Adaptively reused buildings should have private sidewalks that connect to public sidewalks with driveways leading to the side or rear of the lots
- Purpose-built Commercial and Business buildings should have private sidewalks connected to public sidewalks
- Public sidewalks should connect Commercial and Business areas to surrounding areas

Industrial

- Private sidewalks should be connected to public sidewalks, which in turn should link these areas to other areas

Roads and bikeways contribute to defining the character of Mount Airy

Roads and Bikeways

Mount Airy's principal and secondary roads form the network that connects motorists to all areas of the community and beyond. Bikeways have recently been added in some new developments and existing roads, providing citizens with an alternative means of traveling from one area of the town to others.

Existing Character: Roads and Bikeways

Downtown

- Narrow one and two lane roads, some with parking on one or both sides
- Lack of dedicated bikeways

Main Street Residential and Single-family Residential

- Narrow one and two lane roads, some with parking on one or both sides
- Some areas have dedicated bikeways

Multi-family Residential

- Two lane roads

- Lack of dedicated bikeways

Commercial and Business

- Two lane roads
- Lack of dedicated bikeways

Industrial

- Two lane roads, some with parking on one or both sides
- Lack of dedicated bikeways

Design Guidelines: Roads and Bikeways

Downtown

- Maintain existing character of roads
- Add dedicated bikeways where possible

Main Street Residential, Single-family Residential and Multi-family Residential

- Maintain existing character of roads
- Add dedicated bikeways where possible

Commercial and Business

- Maintain existing character of roads
- Add dedicated bikeways where possible

Industrial

- Maintain existing character of roads
- Add dedicated bikeways where possible

Parking lots, loading and storage areas should be screened

Parking Lots, Loading and Storage Areas

The number of parking spaces required for new residential, commercial, business and industrial uses is defined in the Mt Airy zoning code. Parking lots with 50 or more spaces should be improved by adding landscaping internally as well as a landscape buffer to mask them from principal streets and roads.

Existing Character: Parking Lots, Loading and Storage Areas

Downtown

- On street parking and loading
- Surface parking lots located at the rear of buildings

Main Street Residential and Single-family Residential

- On street and off street parking in most areas

Multi-family Residential

- Surface parking lots in front of principal facades

Commercial and Business

- Adaptively reused buildings tend to have limited on site parking
- Purpose-built buildings have surface parking lots in front, and often on side and rear of building
- Suburban shopping centers have large expanses of surface parking in front of buildings, many with loading and surface storage areas at rear

Industrial

- Surface parking in front, and sometimes at sides and rears of buildings, many with loading and surface storage areas

Design Guidelines: Parking Lots, Loading and Storage Areas

Downtown

- Continue to allow on street parking
- Locate parking lots at rear of buildings
- Surface lots should be landscaped with 300 SF of internal landscaping for every 50 spaces
- Landscape buffers should be located at edges of surface parking lots

Main Street Residential and Single-family Residential

- Provide new parking that is similar in location to existing parking

Multi-family Residential

- Surface lots should be landscaped with 300 SF of internal landscaping for every 50 spaces
- Landscape buffers should be located at edges of surface parking lots

Commercial & Business

- Surface lots should be landscaped with 300 SF of internal landscaping for every 50 spaces
- Landscape buffers should be located at edges of surface parking lots

Industrial

- Landscape buffers should be located at edges of surface parking lots

Seating, trash cans, street signs and other types of street furniture should be designed to contribute to the character of Mount Airy

Street Furniture

Street furniture is the general term used to describe benches, trash receptacles, streetlights, and other elements found in residential and commercial districts. Street furniture should combine good design appropriate to the architectural and community character of the area in which it is located providing functionality and low maintenance.

Existing Character: Street Furniture

Downtown

- Overhead wires on wooden telephone poles with a few benches, trash receptacles and planter boxes

Main Street Residential and Single-family Residential

- Most areas constructed prior to the mid-1970s have overhead wires on wooden telephone poles, some with cobra head street lights attached
- Many areas constructed after the mid-1970s have underground wires and small scale street lights that are consistent in design throughout each development

Multi-family Residential

- Most areas constructed after the mid-1970s have underground wires and small scale street lights that are consistent in design throughout each development

Commercial and Business

- Most areas constructed prior to the mid-1970s have overhead wires on wooden telephone poles
- Many areas constructed after the mid-1970s have underground wires and small scale street lights that are consistent in design throughout each development

Industrial

- Most areas constructed after the mid-1970s have underground wires and small scale street lights that are consistent in design throughout each development

Design Guidelines: Street Furniture

Downtown

- Install underground wires or at rear of buildings wherever possible
- Install appropriately placed and designed benches, trash receptacles, planter boxes, and pedestrian scale lighting to enhance the small town atmosphere

Main Street Residential

- Install pedestrian scale lighting along main public sidewalks linking area to downtown

Single-family Residential and Multi-family Residential

- Install underground wires and well-scaled street lighting

Commercial & Business

- Install underground wires and well-scaled street lighting
- Install appropriately placed and designed benches, trash receptacles

Industrial

- Install underground wires and well-scaled street lighting

B & O Railroad Station, 1903

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