



Shaping The Finksburg Gateway

to Carroll County, MD



MD 140 Corridor at Finksburg

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Carroll County Department of Planning

2013

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FINKSBURG CORRIDOR DESIGN GUIDELINES

****NOTE – These design guidelines are referenced in the 2013 Finksburg Corridor Plan. They are for advisory purposes only and are not regulatory.**

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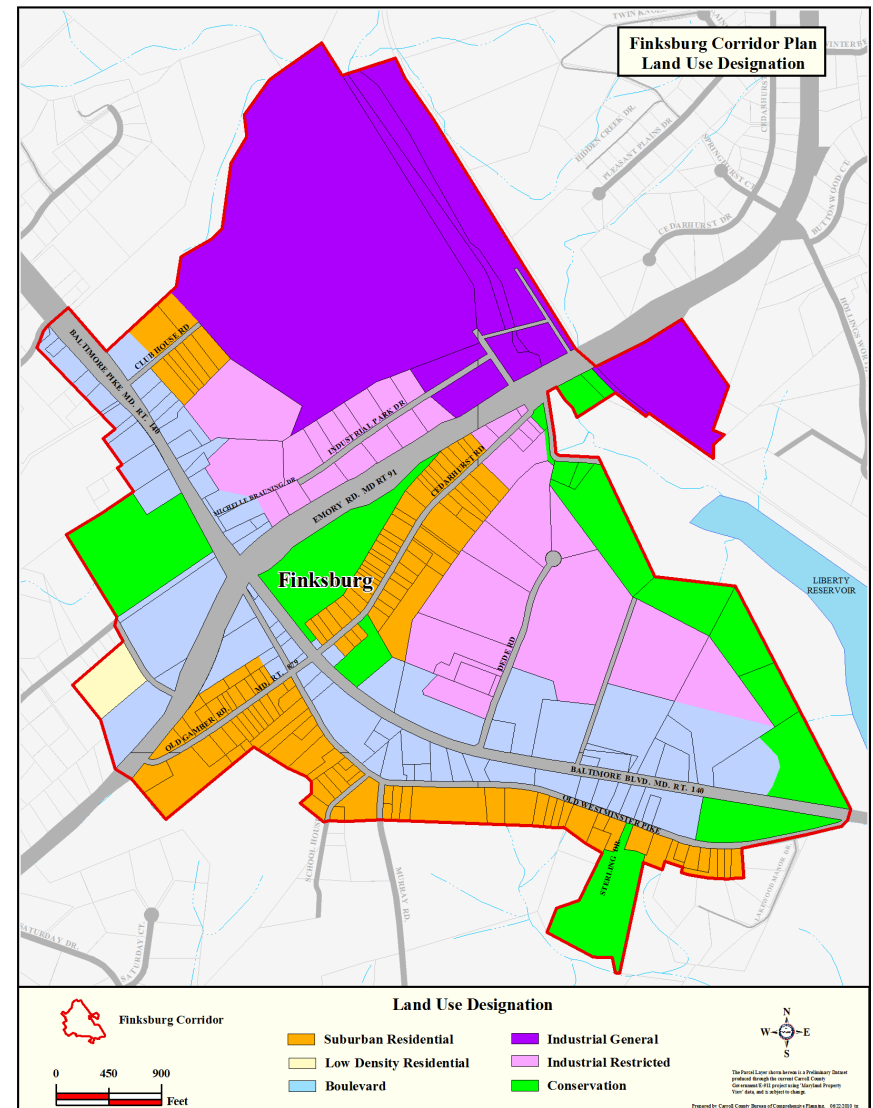
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PREFACE

MD 140, the most heavily traveled Gateway to the County, enters the County just southeast of the Finksburg commercial and industrial core. What travelers see along this route in Finksburg provides their first impression of Carroll County. Just like the rest of Carroll County, Finksburg's rural setting and convenient location has made it a desirable place to live and do business. Despite the tremendous amount of growth and development that has occurred here over the years, much of the Finksburg area retains its natural beauty and rural charm. At the same time, portions of the MD 140 corridor immediately adjacent to the roadway have suffered from poor development patterns. The result is that the Finksburg area essentially has "two faces:" one that is immediately perceptible to drivers traveling MD 140, and one that waits to be discovered just outside the corridor. Unfortunately, the image that most people have of Finksburg is from MD 140, and it is not an especially positive one. These Design Guidelines seek to change that – to bring about positive improvements to the built environment that will generate greater investment in the corridor, create a more pleasant environment in which to live and do business, and ultimately shape an attractive and vibrant Gateway for the County that will leave a lasting and favorable impression on all those who travel the corridor.

This set of design guidelines is written specifically for new development and redevelopment within the zoning districts of Boulevard, Business General, Neighborhood Retail Business, Industrial General, and Industrial Restricted that lie within the Finksburg Corridor as defined in the Finksburg Corridor Plan. This area generally encompasses land adjacent to MD 140 from the Baltimore/Carroll County line to Brown Road.

Using the design guidelines to guide private development and redevelopment will result in a much improved visual appearance along the MD 140 corridor in Finksburg. A safer and more pedestrian-friendly environment, coupled with improved design of the street frontage, buildings and signs of properties, will project a more positive and inviting image for both Finksburg and Carroll County. The net effect will be a perception of Finksburg, and Carroll County in general, as a prosperous place to do business, a comfortable and safe place to live, and an enticing place to visit.



INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Design Guidelines

Although this set of guidelines provides specific guidance for site planning as well as site, building and signage design, it is not the intent of the Design Guidelines to dictate design. Instead, these guidelines are approaches to achieve basic design objectives that are identified in the Finksburg Corridor Plan.

The Design Guidelines provide written guides, prototypical plans, illustrations, and photographs of good development that are envisioned in the zoning districts of Boulevard, Business General, Neighborhood Retail Business, Industrial General, and Industrial Restricted. The graphics and photographs are intended to help property owners, developers and residents better understand the design expectations of Carroll County. They suggest how development and redevelopment could occur differently from the existing development patterns, and provide guidance for improving properties and fulfilling the vision for the Corridor held by the citizens of Finksburg and Carroll County in general.

The main goal of the Design Guidelines is to enhance the image and function of the MD 140 Corridor through clearly articulated site planning/design and building design recommendations. The Design Guidelines also have guides for the treatment of the street frontage of properties adjacent to MD 140 and other intersecting streets, which significantly impacts the visual quality and function of these roads.

The goals of the Design Guidelines are:

- a. Improve the overall visual appearance of the Corridor.
- b. Enhance the appearance and value of individual properties in the Corridor.
- c. Establish the desired design characters for the Corridor.
- d. Achieve better land use and function by using land more intensively and efficiently.
- e. Minimize the conflict of pedestrians and vehicular traffic to improve pedestrian and vehicular accessibility and mobility in the Corridor.
- f. Create opportunities for new economic development and for more concentrated multi-use development.
- g. Ensure improvements made for the redevelopment and expansion of existing businesses will result in high quality aesthetics for office, business, and industrial uses

Design Guidelines Components

The Design Guidelines were prepared based upon the evaluation of the existing characteristics of the MD 140 corridor in Finksburg, issues and concerns of the community, development goals as set forth jointly by the Department of Planning and FPACC, and goals and objectives contained in the Finksburg Corridor Plan.

The Design Guidelines document is divided into four (4) sections, including guidelines for site planning, site design, building design and sign design. The Guidelines are applicable to properties outside of the public right-of-way.

Section 1 Site Planning addresses important site plan issues that have significant impacts on goals as set forth by the Guidelines, including topography, building location in relation to MD 140, parking, access to the property, pedestrian circulation and safety, green spaces, and stormwater management facility location.

Section 2 Site Design provides detailed design guidance related to street frontage, entrances, buffers/screening, parking, car display, drive-thru aisles, storage and service areas, landforms, universal design, lighting, site furniture, stormwater management, and town centers/community centers/shopping centers. These are all important design elements that have significant impact on shaping the development quality along the MD 140 corridor.

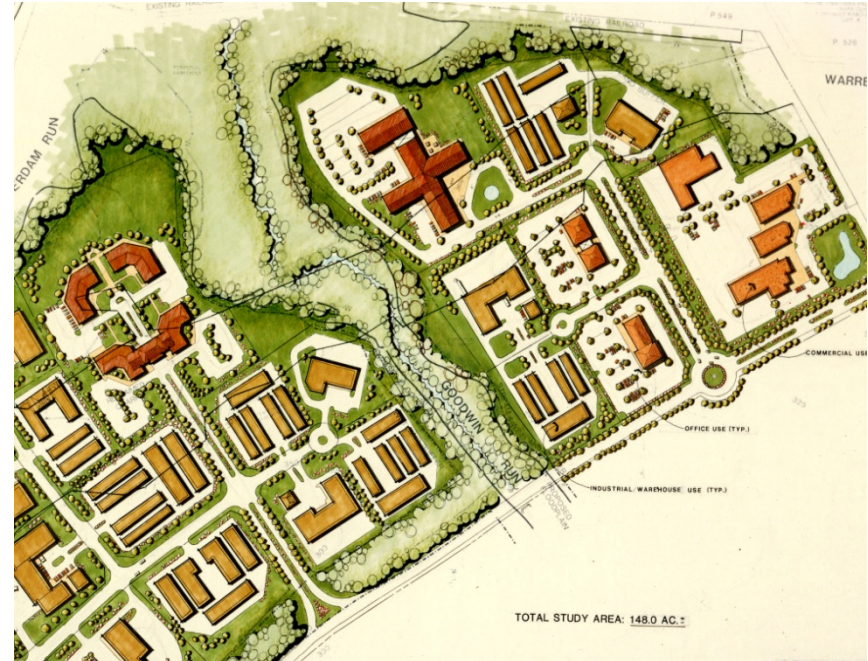
Section 3 Building Design includes design guidelines related to building mass, articulation, height, façade, walls/windows/doors, roofs, material and landscaping. The guidelines are for commercial, institutional, office, and industrial building. Residential uses are not included, except when they are part of a mixed-use development (as allowed by the Zoning Ordinance).

Section 4 Sign Design provides design guidance for signage related to color, letters and symbols, illumination, lighting, and placement. Issues related to billboards are not included in the Guidelines.

GUIDELINES

1 Site Planning

A site plan is the development framework of a property. It has significant impacts on the proper function, visual quality, physical environment, vehicular and pedestrian safety, universal accessibility, and social environment of a proposed development. The Design Guidelines developed in this document address only the issues/problems pertinent to and prevalent along the MD 140 corridor, based upon the evaluation of the existing conditions. Common problems observed include excessive cut and fill, inconsistent building setbacks and low building height that diminish the definition of the corridor space, numerous curb cuts within a very short distance, inadequate pedestrian amenities, confusing interior vehicular circulation, inappropriate locations of utility features, storage, and loading, and stormwater management facilities, to name just a few. The Guidelines were developed focusing on these issues.



(Above) A good site plan should be all encompassing, including natural features and creating open spaces. Circulation should be provided for vehicles and pedestrians. (P.E.L.A.)

1.1 Site Topography and Features

a. Objectives

- 1) Protect water resources within the Liberty Reservoir watershed.
- 2) Create a development pattern that is respectful of the existing land form/topography and environment.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas such as woods, wetlands, etc.
- 2) Make an effort to balance cut and fill within a property.
- 3) Use planted slopes in lieu of walls to accommodate grade change.
- 4) Preserve or restore any buildings of architectural significance on property, where possible/feasible.



(Above) Planted slopes accommodate grade changes and help to soften the site features. (P.E.L.A.)

1.2 Building Locations

a. Objectives

- 1) Locate buildings to preserve or enhance views.
- 2) Maintain the continuity of building-to-street and building-to-building setback relationships.
- 3) Use buildings to better define street edges.
- 4) Create physical or visual linkages among buildings in multi-building complexes.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Situate buildings on the property to take advantage of attractive views to and from the site.
- 2) Orient building front entrance(s) toward public access streets.
- 3) As much as possible, maintain consistent building setbacks to frame the street and reinforce the spatial relationship between buildings.
- 4) Encourage buildings that are more than one story in height to better define the street space and add affordable business and commercial space.
- 5) Use consistent architecture and landscaping, pedestrian walkways, interconnected parking areas, and building location to reinforce linkages when more than one building occupies a site.



(Above) A commercial use with its front façade and primary entrances oriented towards the major arterial road. (P.E.L.A)

1.3 Parking Lots

a. Objectives

- 1) Minimize adverse visual impact of parking lots.
- 2) Respond to existing topography.
- 3) Ensure pedestrian safety in the parking lot.
- 4) Provide continuous links between parking lots of contiguous premises.
- 5) Maintain cohesiveness among adjacent properties.
- 6) Provide a clear sense of direction.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Where parking must abut a street, provide buffering and screening. Also see Section 2 Site Design and Carroll County Landscape Design Manual.
- 2) Place the majority of parking to the rear of the building to minimize the public views of parking lot.
- 3) Locate handicapped parking spaces near the building front entrance.
- 4) Provide crosswalks at designated crossing locations to allow safe pedestrian access from the parking lot to shops and offices.
- 5) Provide sidewalks that lead from the parking lots to the main building entrances.
- 6) Create a coordinated landscape scheme with cohesiveness among adjacent properties.
- 7) Use planting medians or islands to separate the entranceway and interior roads from the parking bays and to indicate the changes in aisle and parking bay orientation.



(Above) A landscaped buffer separates parking areas from the main road. (P.E.L.A)

(Below) Pedestrian connections between parking areas and buildings allow for safe movement around the site. (P.E.L.A)



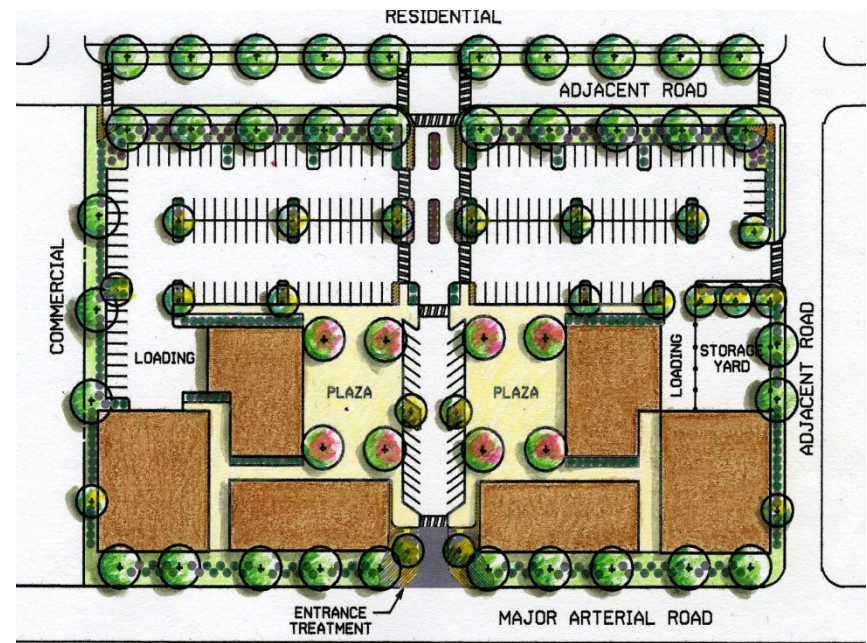
1.4 Vehicular Access

a. Objectives

- 1) Minimize the number of vehicular accesses onto adjacent streets.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Combine accesses for multiple premises where feasible.
- 2) Utilize the smallest number of access points possible, with the goal being to have no more than one driveway per street frontage.



(Above) A single entrance can safely and attractively serve multiple buildings on a site. (P.E.L.A)

1.5 On-site Vehicular Circulation

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide a safe, continuous, and easy to follow vehicular circulation system.
- 2) Clearly delineate vehicular and pedestrian travel ways.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide a simple and direct circulation pattern, making use of signs, striping, paving, medians and other visual cues to indicate the intended direction of traffic flow.
- 2) Clearly delineate the entranceway using planting, medians, signs, lights, etc.
- 3) Where space permits, provide pedestrian walkways that are separated from vehicular travel lanes.



(Above) Paving materials of different types and colors help to distinguish pedestrian circulation from vehicular travel areas.

1.6 On-site Pedestrian Circulation and Amenities

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide outdoor spaces that create physical and visual connections between buildings and function as pedestrian amenities.
- 2) Maintain continuous connectivity and universal accessibility for all pedestrians.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Define a continuous accessible pedestrian route throughout the site: neighborhood to shops, parking lot to building, parking lot to parking lot, building to building, etc.
- 2) In multi-building complexes, design internal landscaped areas that connect the buildings. Accent the walks and open areas with landscaping that provides seasonal interest and color. Take maximum advantage of landscaping by providing outdoor eating areas and plazas between buildings for congregation or special events.
- 3) Provide bicycle racks in all new retail and office developments to support multi-modal circulation.
- 4) Provide sidewalks in the right-of-way of secondary roads to link individual sites with a wider pedestrian network.



(Above and below) Safe pedestrian circulation and attractive on-site amenities create a pleasing environment for patrons. (P.E.L.A)



1.7 Green Spaces

a. Objective

- 1) Minimize the impervious area of sites.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Limit impervious surfaces to maximum of 80 percent. Required buffers and unpaved stormwater management facilities (ponds, bio-retention areas, infiltration trenches, etc.) may be considered green space.
- 2) Enhance the attractiveness and ecological advantages of the green space through the use of trees, shrubs, and groundcovers.
- 3) Explore the use of pervious paving materials where appropriate, given anticipated use patterns.
- 4) Use native and/or drought-tolerant plant species (per the Carroll County Landscape Manual) whenever possible.



(Above and below) Raingardens can be used to help absorb stormwater runoff. (P.E.L.A)



1.8 Utilities

a. Objective

- 1) Minimize visual intrusion of utilities.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Place all electrical, telephone and cable television transmission lines underground or along the rear property line where feasible.



(Above) An abundance of signs and utility poles adds to visual chaos. (P.E.L.A)

2 Site Design

Site design is critical to the visual quality, ambience and function of each property, as well as that of the MD 140 corridor as a whole through Finksburg. As stated in the Preface, it is evident that the development quality of the Corridor has not lived up to the expectations of the citizens and the County. Significant improvements must take place to ensure better quality development and re-development in the future. As expressed by the citizens and the County, a number of site design issues must be addressed in order to achieve the goals of these Guidelines and create a positive image of the County at this significant Gateway.

A windshield survey of properties along the corridor reveals an uncoordinated and generally unattractive approach to building treatments, parking, signage, and landscaping. The predominate features of the streetscape include utility poles, unscreened parking areas, multiple curb cuts and obscured entries, chaotic signage, and little to no site landscaping. Buildings themselves tend to show little attention to design detail, quality of materials, or neighborhood context. Little consideration is given to pedestrian safety or comfort.

In order to address these concerns, the following site design guidelines were developed. Included in this section are guidelines for street frontages, entrances and entranceways, buffers/screens, parking lots, automotive display areas, and drive-thru lanes. Issues related to storage areas, loading areas, dumpsters and ground-mounted electrical/mechanical equipment are also addressed, as are slopes and embankments. In addition, design guidelines were developed for universal accessibility, site lighting, site furniture, stormwater management facilities, as well as town centers/community centers/shopping centers. These guidelines support the Carroll County Landscape Manual.



(Above) Site design can be strengthened by deemphasizing parking areas and providing appropriate landscaping and buffering. (P.E.L.A)

2.1 Street Frontage

a. Objectives

- 1) Create a continuous landscaped edge with a cohesive image along the street to better define the street, improve the visual quality along the right-of-way line and enhance the streetscape.
- 2) Present an attractive façade to the public realm.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide a minimum of 6' wide planting buffer along the right-of-way containing trees and shrubs per the Carroll County Landscape Manual.
- 2) Provide shrubs, low fences or walls to screen unsightly site features along the street frontage that can not be relocated.
- 3) Use the existing topography/land form along the street frontage to effectively screen the parking lot.
- 4) Integrate sidewalks into the overall design of the street frontage along secondary streets. For safety reasons, sidewalks are discouraged along MD 140 frontage.
- 5) Provide a well- designed front yard with landscaping, decorative paving, lighting, and signage



*(Above) Articulated facades, landscaping, lighting, and pavers make for a varied appearance. (P.E.L.A)
(Below) Plantings, low walls, and street trees provide good parking lot buffering when it is not otherwise available.*



2.2 Entrances and Entranceways

a. Objectives

- 1) Ensure entrance design is compatible/respectful of the surrounding area and buildings to maintain cohesiveness.
- 2) Clearly delineate the entrance and entranceway.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide planting or planting island/median along the entranceway to enhance the sense of arrival.
- 2) At vehicular access points, provide a durable drive apron using concrete or decorative pavers to clearly delineate the access locations.
- 3) Use planting, lighting, bollards, signs and other features to enhance the sense of entrance.



*(Above) An attractive and well-landscaped entryway helps guide visitors to their destination and creates a sense of arrival. (P.E.L.A)
(Below) Lighting, landscaping, and distinctive paving help to emphasize entryways. (P.E.L.A)*



2.3 Buffering and Screening

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide effective and compatible buffers, particularly between residential uses and other more intensive uses such as commercial and industrial uses.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Comply with screen planting requirements in Carroll County Landscape Manual, latest edition.



A good parking lot buffer using a variety of plant material and a berm.

2.4 Parking Lots

a. Objectives

- 1) Minimize the adverse visual impact of parking lots on public right-of-ways and adjacent residential uses.
- 2) Provide shade and visual relief for parking lots through landscaping.

b. Guidelines

- 1) See guidelines in 2.3 Buffering/Screening.
- 2) Provide interior planting as required by the Carroll County Landscape Manual.
- 3) Incorporate larger planting areas to allow planting in groves and into existing woods/planting areas and preserve specimen trees.
- 4) Use planting slope in lieu of walls to accommodate grade changes.



(Above and below) Landscaped buffers act to screen parking lots from view and to soften the internal environment within the parking lot itself. (above, City of Lynnwood, WA: http://www.ci.lynnwood.wa.us/Imgs/parking%201_p3.jpg; below, http://www.smmgardens.com/transformations/posite/posite_after.jpg)



2.5 Automotive Dealer Display Areas

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide visual relief from the number of automobiles and the expansive paved area.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide planting buffer along street frontage, as specified in Carroll County Landscape Manual, latest edition.
- 2) Provide wheel stops along the edge of the planting area and buffer/screen.
- 3) Comply with interior planting requirements, as specified in Carroll County Landscape Manual, latest edition.



(Above) Car dealerships can add visual appeal to their sites through low landscaping that softens the “parking lot” effect while still allowing for display of the merchandise. (Toothman Ford: www.toothmanford.com)

2.7 Storage and Loading Areas, Dumpsters and Ground Mounted Electrical/Mechanical Equipment

a. Objectives

- 1) Minimize the adverse visual impact of service area site features.
- 2) Minimize the conflict between parking areas and service area site features.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Locate dumpsters, loading areas, storage areas, utility and mechanical features in the rear of the building away from the public street.
- 2) Avoid direct sight lines into these features from adjacent roads and entrance drives. Make best use of existing topography or create earth berms with landscaping for screening.
- 3) Where possible, conceal these site features from all adjacent properties and public and private roads. Design enclosures to be consistent with the materials, color and design of the building.
- 4) Provide adequate screening of all service area site features, in accordance with the Design Guidelines.
- 5) Design site circulation to minimize conflict between loading areas, parking areas and pedestrian access.



(Above and below) Utility areas, loading areas, and dumpsters are easily screened with walls using building materials similar to those of the building and with landscaping that is similar to that used throughout the site. (P.E.L.A.)



2.8 Slopes, Embankments and Retaining Walls

a. Objectives

- 1) Avoid extreme grade modifications that are visible from the public right-of-way and may impact on adjacent properties.
- 2) Use topography to enhance visual quality.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Terrace slopes, building and parking lots to reduce the height of embankments, especially along property lines.
- 2) Incorporate distinctive site features into site design.
- 3) Coordinate site grading with landscaping.



(Above) Ground covers help to stabilize slopes while street trees in tree lawns provide shade and form.

2.9 Universal Design

Universal design, which is related to "inclusive design" and "design for all," is an approach to the design of products, services and environments to be usable by as many people as possible regardless of age, ability or circumstance. Universal design is a relatively new term that emerged from "barrier free" or "accessible design". Barrier free design and accessible design provide a level of accessibility for people with disability.

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide a universally accessible environment in all new development.
- 2) Provide a universally accessible environment in all redevelopment/renovation, without creating an extreme financial hardship.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide stable, firm and slip resistant walkway surfaces.
- 2) Maintain a cross slope of 2% to 4% for any walkway surface.
- 3) Provide adequate clearance near the entrance door, planting beds and other site features.
- 4) Limit pavement edge heights to ¼". Use a slope of 2:1 and an elevation difference of less than ½" on beveled edges.
- 5) Limit openings of drainage inlets or metal tree grates within any walking area to less than ½." Orient the length of the opening to be perpendicular to the travel direction.
- 6) Leave the space between 27" to 80" above ground clear of obstruction.
- 7) Where possible, eliminate the curb at building entrances, use fully accessible sidewalk along building and use bollards and/or planting to ensure pedestrian safety.



(Above) This shopping center demonstrates the application of universal design features, using a flush curb edge and bollards to create a safe and barrier-free pedestrian way.

2.10 Site lighting

a. Objectives

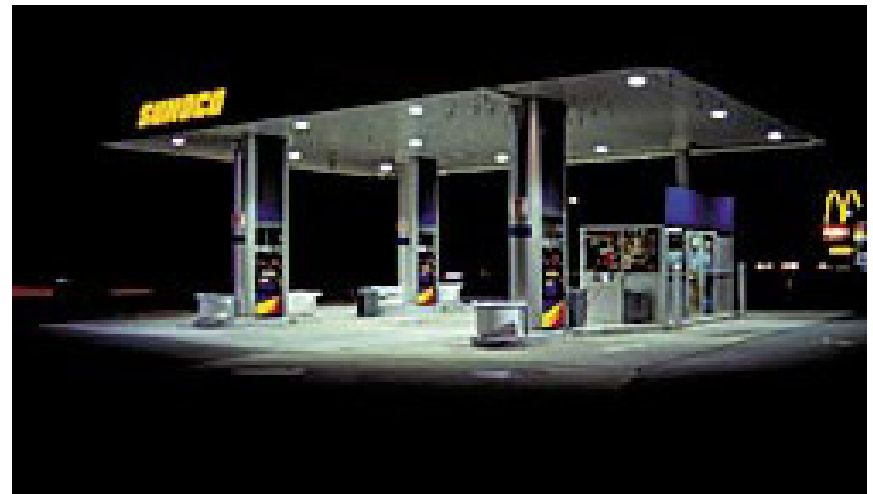
- 1) Provide a safe pedestrian environment.
- 2) Avoid light pollution. Keep the glare of lighting off public roadways and on the site.
- 3) Use light fixtures to maintain cohesiveness of the site design.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide adequate illumination to ensure pedestrian safety.
- 2) Select light fixtures that are compatible in design with the building and other site features and use the same style of light fixtures throughout the entire site when possible.
- 3) Use full cut-off lights with flat lenses to reduce light trespass.
- 4) Refrain from the following lighting types: yard lighting, floodlights, gang floodlights, wall pack lights, non-cutoff shoebox lights, and cobra-head cluster lights.
- 5) Recess canopy lighting within the structure. Ensure that the edge of the canopy protrudes below the surface area of the light.
- 6) Refer to Carroll County's "Design Expectations" document for recommended lighting types.



(Above and below) The incorporation of recessed, cut-off lights in canopies can make a significant difference in the amount of light glare and trespass. (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute via www.skyandtelescope.com/resources/darksky/Bright_Lights_Big_nbsp_Problems.htm)



2.11 Site furniture

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide a comfortable and convenient environment for pedestrians, patrons, and employees.
- 2) Use site furniture to enhance the image and identity of a property or a town center.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide site furniture at proper locations such as by the building entrance, along the sidewalk, in the plaza, park, or sitting areas.
- 2) Select site furniture that is related to the character of the buildings.
- 3) Choose the same, similar or complimentary style for benches, trash receptacles, bollards, planters, fencing, newspaper corrals, and light standards.
- 4) Use the same site furniture style within a development.
- 5) Avoid cluttering a site with too much site furniture.



(Above and below) Site furniture such as benches, trash cans, planters, and ornamental features help to create lively and comfortable pedestrian environments. (P.E.L.A.)



2.12 Stormwater Management

a. Objectives

- 1) For redevelopment, increase pervious area where possible.
- 2) Incorporate stormwater management facilities into the landscape setting and as amenities.

b. Guidelines

- 1) For redevelopment, provide planting areas where possible to increase pervious/landscape area and reduce the existing impervious area.
- 2) Consider conversion of planting islands into bio-retention areas/rain gardens.
- 3) Utilize stormwater management facilities as site amenities.
- 4) Utilize underground infiltration structures to reduce or eliminate surface stormwater management facilities.



(Above) Raingardens allow for the infiltration of stormwater runoff and can be attractive landscaping elements in and of themselves. (P.E.L.A.)

2.13 Community Centers

a. Objectives

- 1) Reinforce the development as a “community activity center” and gathering spot.
- 2) Provide a pedestrian-friendly environment within the center.
- 3) Minimize pedestrian and vehicle conflicts
- 4) Create a “main street” ambience and a unique sense of place

b. Guidelines

- 1) In addition to sidewalks, provide amenity spaces with seating and landscaping between buildings, in front of building entrances, or any other locations within the Center for congregation, relaxation, or programmed festive activities.
- 2) Incorporate comfortable gathering spots such as plazas, seating areas, and green spaces into the design of the Center.
- 3) Provide sidewalks, trees, ornamental lights, and site furniture along the frontage of buildings to enliven the pedestrian area and provide separation from the vehicular areas.
- 4) Provide parallel or angled parking in front of buildings and locate parking lots to the rear of buildings.
- 5) Provide a system of continuous walkways with crosswalks and adequate lighting within the Center to minimize vehicular and pedestrian conflicts and to ensure pedestrian safety.
- 6) Use two story structures to frame the street, create a “Main Street”-type atmosphere, and reduce the footprint of large buildings.



(Above) Inviting and well-landscaped public spaces, with places of seating and other pedestrian amenities, help to create a sense of community and uniqueness.

3 Building Design

Building design has a profound impact on the functionality and appearance of a property, street corridors, and the surrounding neighborhood. Building facades that provide visual interest, especially on the first floor, are important in pedestrian-oriented areas. A distinctive identity for a corridor can also be created through a common palette of materials, forms, height and features forging a coordinated and inviting ambience.

The Design Guidelines formulated in this section are not intended to restrict imagination or innovation, but to emphasize design principles that will lead to a more attractive and welcoming built environment.

The Guidelines promote new development patterns that allow for more intensive and efficient use of prime sites. An emphasis on multi-story buildings and greater pedestrian orientation is a departure from the current pattern found in both business and industrial zoning districts. Ultimately, buildings should have a character that is compatible with that of the Finksburg community.



3.1 Contextual Compatibility

a. Objective

- 1) Ensure the character and design features of buildings in either infill or new developments are compatible with adjacent buildings, the neighborhood and the Finksburg Community as a whole. Refer to the “Design Expectations” handbook for examples of regional architecture.
- 2) Discourage the use of the standardized “franchise”-style building by using vernacular architecture as a base.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Design buildings that respect the characteristics of adjacent properties. Avoid jarring contrast in building scale, forms, materials, or styles when making transitions.
- 2) Strive to achieve the goals of the Guidelines rather than repeat inappropriate design features on existing buildings.
- 3) Apply the same guidelines to corporate or franchise design as are applicable to other buildings, while still allowing for corporate identity.
- 4) Integrate parking structures with their associated buildings. If the parking structure is freestanding, apply the same design concepts listed in the Design Guidelines.



(Above) National franchise restaurants can be contextual while still retaining their brand identity.

(Below) This veterinarian clinic in rural Maryland uses color, material, form and scale to fit in with the surrounding area.



3.2 Mass and Articulation

a. Objectives

- 1) Form a more town center/community center character at street intersections along the corridor.
- 2) Provide a well-coordinated architectural design.
- 3) Ensure a sense of harmony of building character along the Corridor.
- 4) Reduce the perceived volume or massing of the building and promote architectural interest.
- 5) Promote pedestrian friendliness.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Locate new, multistory buildings nearer to the streets of major intersections.
- 2) Pay special attention to the building's proportion, height and width, as well as the relationship of various design elements, such as windows and doors, to the entire building.
- 3) Achieve a balance of size and proportion between the proposed building and that of other surrounding buildings
- 4) Design new, multistory buildings with three distinct components: base, middle and top. Architectural details are important at the base. Define each component by horizontal and/or vertical articulation.
- 5) Articulate the corner on corner buildings. Treat corner entry architecture distinctively, to enliven intersections and facilitate pedestrian flow around the corner. Examples of treatments include angled or rounded corners, corner entries, towers, arches, and other architectural elements.
- 6) Articulate the building materials and openings. Carefully design the rhythm or repetition of windows, columns, indentations or projections in the facade to create a cohesive pattern.
- 7) Avoid large expanses of highly reflective surface and mirror glass exterior walls, to prevent heat and glare impacts on the adjacent public streets and properties.
- 8) Avoid bright colors, particularly primary colors; limit them to trim and accents. Avoid bright white or off-white for buildings.
- 9) Use structural elements to lend the appearance of separate bays when commercial buildings have over 50 feet of building frontage.



(Above) The varied roofline, corner tower, and gabled roof with dormers on this bank help to reduce the bulk of the building and break up the mass of surfaces.

3.3 Height and Width

Multistory buildings help create and reinforce a street wall, thus better defining the street corridor space than lower buildings do. Multi-story buildings have traditionally been used to house many different uses in a compact area and therefore can make more efficient use of land.

a. Objectives

- 1) Encourage the construction of multi-story buildings.
- 2) Maintain consistent or compatible building heights and widths.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Encourage buildings with at least 2 stories. Steep rooflines, false fronts, clerestory windows or other such architectural devices can also be used to give the appearance of two-story height.
- 2) Dedicate at least 50% of the primary street frontage of a property to building frontage.
- 3) Respect the massing, height, and width of the existing neighborhood buildings when designing the height and massing of new buildings.



(Above) Multi-story buildings help to establish a sense of enclosure along Main Streets, but they also provide for the vertical mixing of uses. (Jim Johnson)

(Below) Even the illusion of a second story helps to define space.



3.4 Facade

Building facades that have variety and visual interest, especially on the first floor, are crucial in creating pedestrian friendliness.

a. Objectives

- 1) Promote thoughtful building façade treatment at ground/street level that is pedestrian friendly and inviting.
- 2) Highlight the building's main entrance.
- 3) Use various architectural elements to create visual interest and avoid blank walls.
- 4) Articulate the building facades of warehouses or other similar buildings with architectural design details.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Allow views to the exterior by providing windows on ground floor façades, visible from abutting street or parking lot.
- 2) Use open arcades to provide a pleasant, inviting pedestrian experience.
- 3) Use lighting, landscaping, porches, awnings, signs, arcades, etc. to highlight the sense of building entrance.
- 4) Use window design in terms of size, shape, type, and pattern to break up the sense of massiveness on the façade.
- 5) Use corners, belt courses, bay divisions, and variations in wall plane to enhance the visual interest of the façade.
- 6) If the building's function requires a basic, box-like building form, introduce exterior articulation such as changes in color, material or plane for facades that are visible from public streets.
- 7) If the façade is more than 100 feet in length, use recesses and offsets, angular forms, or other features to provide visual interest.



(Above) The varied roofline and facade help to break up the building plane and create a pedestrian-friendly experience. (Below) With adequate width and proper amenities, covered walkways can function as public space.



3.5 Walls/Windows/Doors

a. Objectives

- 1) Use doors and windows to add to the attractiveness of a building, encourage pedestrian activity, enliven the streetscape, and make streets and buildings safer.
- 2) Make rear entrances as attractive and inviting as the front entrance.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide street-oriented primary entrances. Dual entry areas are also acceptable, with entries oriented to the street and to parking at the back or side of the building.
- 2) Maximize transparency and windows on the ground floor for pedestrian interest. Use at least 40% of the building façade for windows or window display areas. Avoid windowless walls along the public street.
- 3) Establish recesses for entries and for outdoor eating or display areas. Besides providing gathering areas, these recesses can create visual interest along the street. Planters or landscaping may be incorporated into such recesses, but must not extend into the public sidewalk or right-of-way.
- 4) Use the same design guides above for the rear building entrance.



(Above) Rear entrances can be as welcoming as the primary ones. (Below) The public realm is enlivened when windows allow for the visual connection between indoors and outdoors. (P.E.L.A.)



3.6 Roof

a. Objective

- 1) Design building roofs to be an integral part of the overall building design. They are an important element contributing to the visual interest of a building.
- 2) Design roofs to screen rooftop mechanical equipment.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Integrate parapets and roof screens into the roof design of new buildings and new additions. The material and color of roof screens shall appear identical to those in the roof or building.
- 2) Break up long horizontal rooflines by providing articulations in roof design and the facades of new buildings. These articulations include change in the height or slopes of portions of roofs, or change in color, material, forms, etc.
- 3) Encourage the use of equipment wells for sloped or pitched roofs.
- 4) Consider the use of decorative roof elements, such as projecting cornices, to enhance roof edges, especially for mixed-use buildings and buildings that include retail uses.
- 5) Screen on-roof mechanical equipment by solid building elements. Wherever possible, cluster roof equipment and include in one screen.



(Above) This pitched roof provides visual interest and is compatible with the architecture of the surrounding area.

(Below) Parapet walls can be used to screen rooftop equipment.



3.7 Exterior Building Material

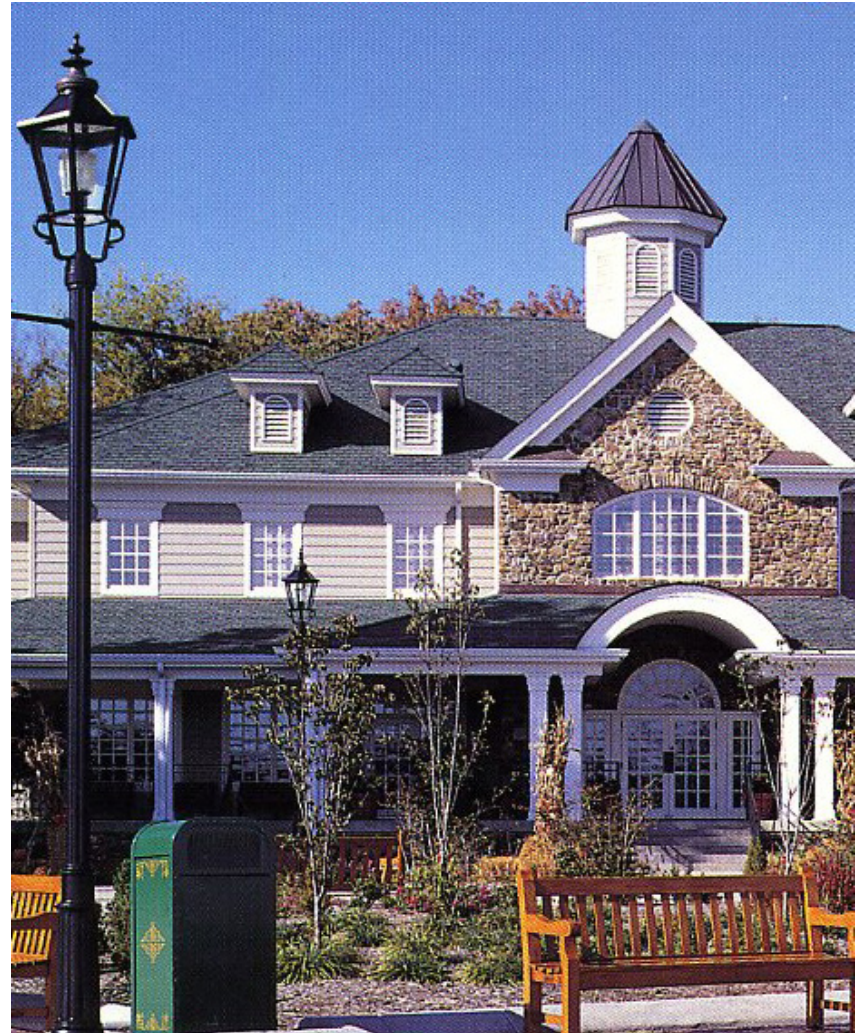
The finish of a building provides a statement for a particular business within and a visual interest for the Corridor as a whole. Quality building materials emphasizes a sense of pride for the corridor, the County, and its residents.

a. Objectives

- 1) Use quality building materials to create an identity for the Corridor and engender pride in its appearance.
- 2) Use building materials to enhance business image and identity and improve the visual quality of the site.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Use one or a combination of the following materials as a first choice within the Corridor:
 - Finish face brick.
 - Ground face and split face concrete block.
 - Natural stone
 - Stucco and simulated stucco finishes such as 'Exterior Insulated Finish Systems' (EIFS).
 - Horizontal or vertical cement board siding (or similar material) and natural wood siding.
 - Cement board shake siding (or similar material) and natural cedar shake wood siding.
- 2) Avoid the following materials within the Corridor:
 - Vinyl siding in any form.
 - Concrete block.
 - Painted concrete block or painted brick.



(Above) Using a variety of quality building materials enhances the image of the establishment as well as the community as a whole.

3.8 Awnings

a. Objectives

- 1) Encourage the use of awnings to create visual interest and provide shade.
- 2) Coordinate the design of the awning with the building in terms of placement, color, shape, and size.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Mount awnings in locations that respect the design of the building.
- 2) Avoid awnings that could obscure transom windows, grille work, piers, pilasters, and other ornamental features.
- 3) In openings with transoms, mount the awnings below the transom on the horizontal framing element separating the storefront window from the transom.
- 4) Design awnings to project over individual window and door openings (i.e., mounted in the reveals of openings).
- 5) Avoid awnings that are a continuous feature, extending over several windows, doors, masonry piers, or arches.
- 6) Mount awnings on the wood or metal framing within a door or window opening (and not on the wall surrounding the opening).
- 7) Use shed awnings, with no end panels, when possible. Shed awnings are visually lighter and simpler, and they are more traditional in appearance than convex (bull nose) or box awnings.
- 8) Use convex-shaped (domed) awnings for locations with round-arched window/door openings.
- 9) Use simple horizontal valances on awnings. Scalloped or decorative valences are discouraged.
- 10) Use awnings with a single, solid color. Use awning colors that complement the colors of the building. Colors that call more attention to the awning than the building are inappropriate.
- 11) Install awnings that are retractable (or appear to be retractable), so they may be used seasonally and will appear as temporary features on a building instead of fixed architectural elements.



(Above) These awnings reinforce the building design and product branding, but also contribute to a pleasant outdoor seating area. (P.E.L.A.)

3.9 Landscaping

a. Objective

- 1) Use landscaping and hardscape treatments to soften the surface of structures and to add year-round visual interest

b. Guidelines

- 1) Use plant material and landscaping features to accentuate the principal entrance of buildings.
- 2) Use a combination of annual and perennial plants to lend visual variety to the site.
- 3) Create amenity spaces with hardscaping, water features, and plant material.



(Above and below) Well-designed and maintained landscaping can transform the pedestrian realm.



4 Signage

The intent of signage design guidelines is to provide guidance for the ways signs are designed, constructed, and mounted. Signage plays a significant role in creating either a positive or negative visual image for the individual property as well as the corridor. A well-designed sign can be attention-getting and convey information about the business, while at the same time in keeping with the characteristics of Finksburg's rural and residential appeal.

The Route 140 corridor, being an older commercial and industrial corridor, has many freestanding, pole-mounted signs. Over time, the cumulative effect of these signs has created a chaotic appearance. The existing signage and billboards along the Route 140 corridor has a significant impact on the overall impression of the corridor as unattractive. Providing a more consistent placement and orientation of signage with better design quality would reduce the visual clutter as well as project a more positive image.

The following guidelines for signs are meant to provide additional guidance for the design and installation of signs within the Finksburg corridor that will be both functional and attractive. They are not meant to replace the sign regulations contained in the County Zoning Ordinance.



4.1 Design

a. Objectives

- 1) Achieve design consistency and harmony with the scale and architecture of the building to which the sign relates.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Ensure that the size and shape of signs are appropriate for the building on which they are placed and the area in which they are located.
- 2) Design signs so that they are integrated with the design of the building. A well-designed building facade or storefront is created by the careful coordination of sign and architectural design and a coordinated color scheme.
- 3) Design signs in multiple tenant buildings to complement or enhance other signs on the building.
- 4) Limit the size of sign panels to the width of the architectural support elements of the sign.



(Above and below) A uniform sign area can still allow for unique sign design and branding.



4.2 Color

a. Objective

- 1) Convey a positive and appropriate image of a business.
- 2) Attract viewer's attention without distraction or visual clutter.
- 3) Provide adequate and legible information to the viewer.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Selected colors that contribute to legibility and design integrity. Color contrast has significant impact on the legibility of signs. Provide a substantial contrast between the color and material of the background and the letters or symbols, to make the sign easier to read in both day and night. Light letters on a dark background or dark letters on a light background are most legible. Light letters on a dark background work best for both day and night time use.
- 2) Use small accents of several colors to make a sign unique and attractive. The competition of large areas of many different colors often decreases readability.
- 3) Use sign colors that complement the colors used on the building wall, adjacent buildings and the site as a whole.



(Above and below) Allowing for a variety of colors can lead to visually exciting and creative signs, as well as subdued and sophisticated signs.



4.3 Letters and words

a. Objective

- 1) Ensure legibility of the information on sign.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Space letters and words for maximum readability. Crowding of letters, words, or lines will make any sign more difficult to read. Conversely, excessive spacing of these elements causes the viewer to read each item individually, again obscuring the message. As a general rule, dedicate no more than 75 percent of the sign panel area to letters.
- 2) Limit the number of lettering styles that are used on a sign in order to increase legibility. As a general rule, limit the number of different letter types to no more than two for small signs and three for larger signs.



(Above) Legibility and simplicity of lettering styles helps readers identify with a product or business easily. (P.E.L.A.)

4.4 Symbols and Logos

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide a distinct identity for the business.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Use symbols and logos in place of words whenever appropriate.
- 2) Use pictographic images that convey the nature and character of the business.
- 3) Use franchise logos, rather than extensive signage, to capitalize on regional or national recognition.



Logos establish a brand identity that allows businesses to be recognized instantly.

4.5 Illumination

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide adequate illumination and minimize the adverse impact of excessive lighting.
- 2) Enhance the architectural features of the building.
- 3) Avoid light trespass onto adjacent properties.
- 4) Provide nighttime legibility.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Whenever possible, focus lighting down and inwards toward the sign to avoid light glare and trespass issues while providing maximum nighttime legibility.
- 2) If they are to be internally illuminated, design freestanding monument signs so that the sign copy is the only portion that is illuminated. Make the sign background or field opaque.
- 3) Use small, unobtrusive fixtures for external (projection) lighting. Avoid the use of oversized fixtures that are out of scale with the sign and structure.



(Above) This monument sign makes good use of internal illumination for only the lettering portion of the sign.

(Below) Down lighting is simple, effective, and attractive.



4.6 Wall Signs

a. Objectives

- 1) Use wall signs in a manner that reinforces facade rhythm, scale, and proportion and complements other building features.
- 2) Minimize the visual clutter of signs on walls.

b. Guidelines

- 1) On buildings that have a monolithic or plain facade, place signs so that they establish or continue appropriate design rhythm, scale, and proportion.
- 2) Integrate wall and projecting signs into the building design to minimize visual clutter and help achieve a more consistent, attractive and pleasing view from public streets.
- 3) Mount signage to fit within architectural elements. Do not allow signs to hide or obscure building details or features.
- 4) Locate wall signs so that they emphasize elements of the façade itself.



(Above and below) Wall signs should be compatible with and reinforce building facades and architectural elements.



4.7 Window Signs

a. Objective

- 1) Allow for the use of windows for business identification and limited advertisement without obscuring the function of the window for light and display.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Avoid the use of window signs as the primary signage for the business.
- 2) When window signs are used, paint on the surface of the window and in a permanent nature. Generally follow the same design guidelines that apply to building mounted signs.
- 3) Avoid the use of temporary materials such as banners, cardboard or paper, and advertisements for specific products or brands sold on the premises.
- 4) Limit window signs to no more than 20% of the total window glass area of each business on the first floor facing the street.
- 5) Limit window signs to retail uses only; they are not appropriate for office and industrial uses.



(Above) Window signs should be painted and allow for ample display of goods and visibility. (East End Salon, Philadelphia, PA – www.urbanblight.org)

4.8 Monument Signs

a. Objectives

- 1) Design monument signs to be compatible with the building design.
- 2) Provide adequate business information.
- 3) Enhance business identity.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Limit monument signs to a maximum height of six (6) feet above road grade.
- 2) Design individual tenant sign panels to be uniform in size, recognizing that the major tenant or the name of the center may have a slightly larger sign panel.
- 3) Locate signage on the property of the business it relates to.
- 4) Coordinate materials and colors for freestanding monument signs with the materials and design elements/character of the principal buildings on the site. This helps enhance the identity of the building at the street edge.



(Above) Monument sign materials can reflect regional character through the choice of materials. (P.E.L.A.)

(Below) Monument signs should be compatible with the buildings they are supporting. This sign also reinforces the local sense of place.



4.9 *Discouraged Signs*

LED/LCD signs.

Neon signs.

Revolving signs.

Sequential or continuous flashing light signs.

Pylon or pole-mounted signs.

Signs or lettering painted directly onto a building's façade.

Bulk pennants, banners, streamers, clusters of flags, propellers or strings of twirlers, or flares.

Tethered balloons or any inflatable signs.

Portable or "sandwich board" signs.

Roof signage.

Billboards / off-premise signs of any type or form.

Mobile or large movable signs.

APPLICATION OF DESIGN GUIDELINES

The majority of properties with business and industrial zoning in the Finksburg corridor have previously been developed. As a result, goals set forth by the Design Guidelines will be achieved over time by applying the Guidelines as uses are altered or expanded and properties are redeveloped.

These Guidelines augment the Finksburg Corridor Plan with respect to non-residential uses. Adherence to these Guidelines ideally will result in a more complete realization of the plan's vision for the Finksburg corridor.

2013 Finksburg Corridor Plan,

"These Guidelines will be provided to all developers, property owners, applicants, etc. expressing interest in submitting plans for new development, re-development or major alterations. These design guidelines established as a stand-alone document provide helpful advice and support for developers and property owners as plans for future projects are developed, as well as objective and meaningful review and evaluation assistance for the Planning Commission without having to resort to rigid, "one-size-fits-all" regulatory enactments. As a stand-alone guidance document, the Planning & Zoning Commission encourages the incorporation of applicable design elements from the document as a benefit to developers and redevelopers. Development projects incorporating features from the Guidelines are likely to experience expedited reviews and more rapid approvals. The final development review is also likely to be more cost efficient and successful in its commercial purpose. Failure to include appropriate functional elements could result in delays, plan amendments and site plan modifications. As such, the design guidelines developed as part of the plan preparation process will be accorded the level of sincere consideration and applicability that they deserve. Regardless, a recommendation or guideline shall not prohibit actions to the contrary by the property owner."