Area Guidelines

Germantown’s districts should be developed as distinct communities with unique features that are supported through the guidelines. The guidelines not only help distinguish these districts but also provide a cohesive landscape concept for the I-270 right-of-way achieving a pastoral natural setting for the I-270 Technology Corridor.

Town Center
Gateway
Cloverleaf District
North End District – West Side and Milestone North
Seneca Meadows
Montgomery College
Fox Chapel
I-270 Landscape Concept

The urban design concepts for each district illustrate the urban character, interconnected streets and desired locations of the open spaces. In the Town Center District, open spaces are specified, but in other transit-served districts, the Plan recommends floating facilities that will be landed as elements in proposed developments. Unless specified, sizes and amenities for privately developed public use space will be determined by regulatory review. All streets should have standards and streetscape improvements specified in the Area Wide Guidelines on Streets and Streetscape Plan.
**Town Center**

The Sector Plan views the Town Center as an emerging up-County cultural center, the heart of Germantown with civic uses, restaurants, entertainment, and retail shops. Attractive design of its public realm is critical to strengthening the Town Center’s economic vitality, social life, and sense of place.

The Town Center is comprised of the Core Neighborhood and West End. Each block shown on the illustrative Urban Design Concept reflects the Sector Plan’s recommendations.

**Block 1**  
Redevelop this block as a single project integrating the transit station, housing, and office buildings. Locate residential buildings with ground floor retail along Century Boulevard that define the green common and transit plaza open spaces. Develop a promenade along Century Boulevard. Allow building heights up to 100 feet along MD 118.

**Block 2**  
Redevelop the public uses as a single project integrating an expanded police and fire station with housing and ground floor retail along Century Boulevard. Step down building heights to 50 feet with a bonus density in the northern end of the block adjacent to residential neighbors.

**Block 3**  
Integrate the cinema use into a mixed-use redevelopment. Orient housing along a new street connecting Aircraft Drive with Century Boulevard. Terminate the view east down Century Boulevard with a vertical building element. Relate the building form to the curve of Century Boulevard.

**Block 4**  
Redevelop properties to define the gateway into the Town Center from I-270. Encourage property assemblage. Terminate views down Century Boulevard with signature buildings on the Matan Property. Provide extensive informal landscape treatment along I-270 to screen the base of garages, and create a setback of green space along I-270.

**Block 5**  
Existing multifamily residential units are expected to remain.

**Block 6**  
Improvements to the library, BlackRock Center for the Arts, and the Town Center Urban Park should encourage public use, provide safety, and strengthen the sense of place. Provide additional seating and interactive elements such as musical chimes, climbing rocks, or a splash fountain if maintenance responsibilities are identified.

**Block 7**  
Existing housing is expected to remain. The redevelopment of commercial frontage along Century Boulevard should integrate housing with ground floor retail.

**Block 8**  
Provide a grocery store use, if feasible, and redevelop with retail uses that line Century Boulevard. Provide a street connecting the Safeway property to Pinnacle Street. Locate a signature building fronting the intersection of MD 118 and Middlebrook Road. Develop the promenade along Century Boulevard with wide sidewalks.

**Block 9**  
Develop a consistent building line along MD 118, encourage shared access, and connect an internal private drive behind buildings. Allow 100-foot building heights along MD 118 and step down buildings to 50 feet with a housing bonus adjacent to the existing residential community.

**Block 10**  
Redevelop the shopping centers creating new blocks with private streets. Terminate views down Century Boulevard with vertical building elements. Design the new urban park with interactive play equipment, streetscape, and lighting. Locate structured public parking at the Upcounty Regional Services Center.
Block 11
The existing mix of commercial townhouses, veterinary clinic, and church is not expected to redevelop. If redevelopment occurs, follow area wide design guidelines.

Block 12
Locate new development with housing oriented to Waters Road and Waterford Hills Boulevard. Allow development of the hillside along MD 118 if development fronts the boulevard. Step down building heights to 50 feet including a bonus density adjacent to the existing residences.

Block 13
Redevelop the County commuter parking lot with two buildings located along MD 118. Building heights should not exceed 40 feet (three stories). Along Walter Johnson Drive, develop new housing with architectural elements and materials that are compatible with the adjacent historic Pumphrey-Matney House.

Block 14
Locate new commercial office buildings along Middlebrook Road and residential buildings along Wisteria Drive. Redevelopment along MD 118 is not expected, but if redevelopment occurs, follow the area wide design guidelines. Connect pedestrian sidewalks along Walter Johnson Drive to Middlebrook Road.
**Streets**
The Sector Plan calls for an interconnected street network that facilitates vehicle and pedestrian circulation and transit access within a hierarchy of street types. Century Boulevard is the main pedestrian oriented street within the Town Center.
Open Spaces
The Sector Plan identifies an open space network for the Town Center that includes the Town Center Urban Park, the proposed Urban Play Park, a variety of urban plazas, a transit plaza, and Century Boulevard’s promenade. These open spaces will support economic vitality, encourage social gathering, and meet recreational needs of residents and workers.

The proposed Urban Play Park should be at least one half acre. The existing Town Commons needs an irrigation system with maintenance and management becoming M-NCPCC’s responsibility when the Urban District is created. Programs should be scheduled at a minimum of three times a year and partnerships with other organizations are encouraged. The urban plazas’ sizes are not specified and should be determined through development review.

The Crystal Rock Drive Promenade should create a linear urban space developed with wide sidewalks, extensive public seating with benches and moveable tables and chairs, and special pavement with artwork. The Transit Sidewalk Loop should be created connecting all open spaces and destinations to transit. It should be a minimum of eight feet wide and have special paving.
Building Lines
Building lines should define the public realm and all streets. Deviation from the building line is allowed to create urban space, wide sidewalks for outdoor cafes, or accent building entrances. As a general guide, building setbacks should be as follows:

- Along major highways, set back buildings 30 to 35 feet from the curb.
- Along arterials and commercial business streets, setback buildings 20 to 25 feet from the curb.
- Along right of ways of less than 80 feet in width, set back buildings 15 to 20 feet from the curb.
- Along the Century Boulevard Promenade, to be developed with outdoor cafes along the public sidewalk, set back buildings 22 to 25 feet from the curb to ensure adequate pedestrian passage.
- Along I-270, set back buildings 200 feet from the existing right-of-way. Maintain the existing building setback if the I-270 right-of-way widens.

Landmark Sites
Landmark sites are prominent locations offering important views or cultural significance. Building design should terminate the view with elements such as towers or other vertical features calling attention to the building.
**Building Heights**

The Sector Plan provides height guidance for several areas within Town Center. It locates the tallest buildings in Germantown within the Town Center, providing the main focus and center in the planning area. The adjacent building height map illustrates the different zones of building heights that will create this sense of center.

Setback buildings 200 feet from I-270’s right-of-way and maintain existing building line along I-270 if the right-of-way expands.

At the edges of the district adjacent to existing residential areas, building heights are limited to 50 feet including a bonus density to achieve compatible transitions. The MARC station parking lot development should not exceed 40 feet (three stories) to achieve a compatible relationship with the Historic District.
**Retail Locations**

Retail, restaurants, and other activating uses should be concentrated along the Century Boulevard Promenade to strengthen the existing pattern of retail and enliven the street. Permit on-street parking along streets designated for retail.

Town Center primary retail locations are in accordance with the Sector Plan and intended to strengthen retail synergy and enliven the Promenade. MD 118 is not a primary retail street although office serving retail uses will be allowed.
**Gateway District**

The Gateway District is a mix of industrial and commercial uses along I-270 and Middlebrook Road. It is a gateway to the Town Center from I-270 and its buildings and site design should mark this entrance.

Rolling Hills, a residential property adjacent to the CSX Rail line, is one of the few residential properties likely to redevelop. Along Great Seneca Highway, just outside the Sector Plan’s boundary line, is the community’s retail shopping center.

**Block 1  Rolling Hills Property**
If redeveloped, locate single-family attached units along Wisteria Drive and multifamily units within the property’s interior. Provide over 50 percent of the units north of the existing stream valley within walking distance of the MARC transit station.

**Block 2 Seneca Valley High School**
Construct future expansions of Seneca High School as multilevel buildings, minimizing the loss of play fields and open spaces. Renovations should be oriented to the front of the school along Crystal Rock Drive.

**Commercial Properties along Middlebrook Road**
Orient commercial and industrial redevelopment to front Middlebrook Road with rear service and parking areas.

**Industrial Properties along I-270** (not shown in illustration)
Locate signature office, technology or biomedical buildings along the I-270 frontage and design them with two-sided front facades to take advantage of I-270 visibility.
Streets
Middlebrook Road and Great Seneca Highway are the two major roadways serving the district. Both should be treated as boulevards given their width and importance as gateways to the Town Center.

Wisteria Avenue and Crystal Rock Drive are designated as Main Streets that distribute traffic and pedestrians to nearby destinations such as the high school, shopping center along Great Seneca Highway, and the MARC station. Safe and clearly marked pedestrian crossings are important.

Local streets within the redeveloped Rolling Hills Property should be interconnected with several access points along Wisteria Avenue and one along Great Seneca Highway. The street layout for Rolling Hills should locate a loop street along the edge of the stream valley to provide access and views of the open space. The precise layout illustrated is not required but should be determined during regulatory review.
Open Spaces

The existing stream valleys, the high school playing fields, and the local park just outside the Plan boundary along Great Seneca Highway provide the district with a variety of open spaces. Though not useable for recreation, the existing open spaces along I-270 should be filled with trees, creating an informal, natural landscape along the I-270 highway.

The following guidelines apply:

- **Rolling Hills Property**
  - Preserve the existing, internal open spaces created by the stream valley buffer. Existing mature trees within the stream buffer, along the CSX rail line, and along Great Seneca Highway should be preserved.
  - On site recreation facilities within the Rolling Hills Property should include children’s multi-age play areas, a swimming pool, a community center and a loop, paved pathway around the central open space with seating areas.
  - Provide a paved pedestrian walk to the MARC station.
  - Preserve existing trees along the I-270 right-of-way (not illustrated) and screen parking structures.
  - Improve the street character of Middlebrook Road by planting a double row of street trees on both sides and replanting the south hillside with native trees. Improve the street character of Great Seneca Highway by planting an informal arrangement of native trees and shrubs.
**Building Lines**
Existing building lines within the district are varied and setback considerably from the streets. Rolling Hill’s buildings should setback 25 feet from the curb of Wisteria Drive and a minimum of 50 feet from Great Seneca Highway’s right-of-way. Along Middlebrook Road, buildings should be setback a minimum of 30 feet from the right-of-way and parking and service areas should be located behind the buildings. Building setbacks from I-270 should be 200 feet from the existing right-of-way. Maintain existing building line along I-270 if the right-of-way widens.

**Heights**
The Gateway District is a low-rise area characterized by one to three story buildings. Along Middlebrook Road, achieve compatibility with the surrounding residential communities with a building height limit of 65 feet (five stories). On Rolling Hills, allow up to 90 feet (eight residential stories) in the property’s interior to locate density close to the MARC station. Along I-270 frontage, allow 100 feet (eight stories) to accommodate signature office and technology development.

**Retail**
The existing shopping center along Great Seneca Highway should remain the district’s retail focus. A very limited amount of retail is permitted on the Rolling Hills Property along Wisteria Drive near the Town Center.
Cloverleaf District

Cloverleaf is a mixed-use, transit-served neighborhood of predominately employment and technology uses. The Sector Plan recommends this neighborhood to have housing and some limited amount of retail near the transit station. The highest density and tallest buildings will be clustered around the transit station. The neighborhood’s main assets are the future transit station, a linear recreational open space along Crystal Rock Drive, and excellent visibility from I-270.

Block 1
Redevelop along Century Boulevard with mixed uses. Establish a route for the Phase II transitway in the median of Century Boulevard, and provide a transit bridge over I-270.

Block 2
Redevelop along Century Boulevard with mixed uses and establish a new local street that connects to Crystal Rock Drive. Provide extensive native landscape plantings along adjacent stream valley open space.

Block 3
Locate office buildings along I-270 and mixed-use residential buildings within the block and along Century Boulevard. Create a network of local streets and short blocks. Provide a range of housing types. Locate a neighborhood green here if not provided on Blocks 5 or 8.

Block 4
Redevelop Century Boulevard frontage with mixed-use development. Locate the tallest mixed-use building close to the transit station at the corner of Cloverleaf Center Drive and Century Boulevard. Extend a new local street through the block.
Block 5
Cluster mixed-use density adjacent to the transit station. Locate office buildings along I-270 and mixed-use residential buildings within the block and along Century Boulevard. Create a network of local streets and short blocks. Provide a range of housing types. Locate a neighborhood green here if not provided on Blocks 3 or 8.

Block 6
Redevelop and cluster density adjacent to the transit station along Century Boulevard and Cloverleaf Center Drive.

Block 7
Redevelop with mixed uses oriented toward Century Boulevard. Provide several new local streets connecting Crystal Rock Drive to Century Boulevard.

Block 8
Existing office buildings are anticipated to remain. Locate new housing along Century Boulevard. Locate a neighborhood green along Century Boulevard if not provided on Blocks 3 or 5.

Cloverleaf Urban Design Concept
The Cloverleaf District should have an urban character created by interconnected streets and open spaces.
Streets
The Century Boulevard Transitway’s alignment and Cloverleaf Center Drive form the district’s two main streets where significant development will occur. An expanded network of local streets and walkable blocks is designed to improve circulation and transit access. Century Boulevard and Cloverleaf Center Drive should have short blocks to encourage pedestrian and transit use. Streetscape improvements are required along all streets and should include closely spaced street trees. The transitway should be designed as an integral element of Century Boulevard with a tree planted median and easy pedestrian access to the center platforms.
Open Space
A variety of open spaces including the existing open space along I-270, a series of stormwater ponds along Crystal Rock Drive, a variety of plazas and gathering places along Century Boulevard, and a transit station plaza will define the area. The existing open spaces along I-270 and Crystal Rock Drive frame and define the buildable area within the district. The following guidelines apply to all properties.

- Provide a green, landscaped character along I-270 and screen parking structures.
- Develop the Crystal Rock Greenway as a linear recreation area with a winding eight-foot wide path, groves of trees, and recreational facilities. Facilities may be provided by private development and supplemented by a capital improvement project.
- Improve the existing, private stormwater open space facilities with natural, informal landscape using native species.
- Locate public use spaces such as urban plazas and at least one half acre neighborhood green along Century Boulevard where retail uses will activate the spaces. The neighborhood green may be located anywhere along Century Boulevard where it serves adjacent residential development and provides good visibility.
Building Lines
Building lines should define the street network and help establish the Century Boulevard Transitway and Cloverleaf Center Drive as Main Streets. Deviation from the building line is allowed to create urban open space, wide sidewalks for outdoor cafes, and to accent building entrances. Set back buildings 200 feet from I-270’s right-of-way. Maintain existing building line along I-270 if the right-of-way expands.

Heights
The Sector Plan establishes the tallest buildings (12 stories) adjacent to the transit station, creating a focus for the district. The following guidelines apply to all properties:

- Allow 125 feet (eight to ten stories) along the frontage of I-270 with taller buildings clustered around the transit station.
- Vary building heights throughout the district to create a visually interesting skyline.
- Step down buildings to 60 feet (five to six stories) along the Crystal Rock stormwater open space to ensure a compatible transition to nearby residential areas.

Retail
- Locate retail along Cloverleaf Center Drive and Century Boulevard near to the transit station.
North End District – West Side

The North End straddles I-270 and is bordered by Germantown’s greenbelt park. The district’s two transit stations on either side of I-270 create an opportunity to cluster mixed-use development near each station. On the West Side, the Sector Plan envisions a mix of signature office along I-270 and housing. Black Hill Regional Park, north of the Lerner Property is an important asset offering recreation and scenic views.

Block 1
Locate office and technology development adjacent to the I-270 Interchange and residential development adjacent to Kinster Drive. Screen parking from I-270 and locate garages in the middle of the block.

Block 2
Locate commercial mixed-use and hotel uses adjacent to the transit station. Cluster the highest density and tallest buildings at the corner of Dorsey Mill Road and the transitway. Provide public transit parking near the station.

Block 3
Provide office, technology, and hotel uses along the I-270 frontage. Locate mixed-use commercial space along Century Boulevard to create a retail street just north of the transit station. Screen parking.

Block 4
Develop predominately with low-rise, residential buildings and retail along Century Boulevard. Place parking in a mid-block location.

Block 5
Develop low- and high rise residential buildings to take advantage of proximity to the park. Locate parking in the middle of the block.
Streets
The Sector Plan establishes Century Boulevard as the West Side neighborhood’s main street running north alongside the transitway and curving west at Black Hill Regional Park to meet Crystal Rock Drive. Near the transit station, Century Boulevard will be lined with mixed-use commercial and residential buildings. The new local street network creates a series of walkable blocks designed to improve circulation and transit access. Century Boulevard’s curving alignment along adjacent woodland may be straightened to preserve woodland.

The Crystal Rock Greenway, identified in the Sector Plan, provides an important connection to the Black Hill Regional Park’s trail system. An eight-foot wide pathway should be located on the east side, crossing over to the park’s at its entrance road.
Open Space

The West Side is bordered by significant open spaces: Black Hill Regional Park to the north, the stream valley to the west, and the landscaped areas of I-270 to the east that are preserved by the Sector Plan. Open spaces created through private redevelopment, including a series of plazas along Century Boulevard, a transit station plaza, and a neighborhood green also are required.

- Provide the I-270 landscape treatment along the highway and screen parking structures.
- Contribute to the development of the Crystal Rock Greenway.
- Landscape the existing stormwater management ponds to recreate a natural, informal landscape using native species.
- Locate public use spaces, such as urban plazas, primarily along Century Boulevard where adjacent retail uses will activate the spaces. The neighborhood green defined by streets should be located close to residential development.
- Preserve existing forest adjacent to Black Hill Regional Park as required by the Sector Plan.
- Provide the transit sidewalk loop with special paving.
**Building Lines**  
Buildings should front the Century Boulevard Transitway, Dorsey Mill Road, and all local streets. Deviations from the building line are allowed to create urban open space, accommodate sidewalk cafes, and accent building entrances. Along I-270, building facades should be designed to take advantage of the significant I-270 view. Along I-270, set buildings back 200 feet from the existing right-of-way. Maintain existing building line if I-270’s right-of-way expands.

**Heights**  
The Sector Plan calls for the tallest buildings, up to 143 feet (12 stories) to be located at the transit station, creating a focus for the district.

- Allow 125 feet (8 to 10 stories) along the I-270 frontage with the predominant building height to be 8 stories, determined by project plan approval.
- Vary building heights to create a visually interesting skyline.
- Step down buildings to 72 feet (four and six stories) along Century Boulevard adjacent to Kinster Drive to ensure a compatible transition to nearby residential areas.

**Retail**  
- Locate retail close to the transit station along Century Boulevard.
North End District – Milestone North

The Sector Plan envisions Milestone North, on the east side of I-270, as predominately an employment area with some residential uses. Its proximity to the Dorsey Mill Road transit station offers an opportunity to create a mixed-use center that enjoys I-270 visibility.

Block 1
Locate signature office, technology, or biomedical buildings along I-270 designed with two front facades to take advantage of I-270 visibility. Parking should be located in garages and screened from I-270. Maintain the existing neighborhood green and orient new urban open space along Milestone Drive.

Block 2
Locate residential development along the east side of Milestone Drive adjacent to the transitway. Provide transitional building heights adjacent to existing multifamily residences. Screen residential views of the transitway.

Block 3
Locate mixed-use commercial and hotel uses near the transit station. Parking garages should be screened from I-270 views.

Block 4
Any redevelopment of the Wabtec Electronic property should follow area wide design guidelines.
Streets

Milestone Drive is the main street serving Milestone North. The Sector Plan recommends extending Dorsey Mill Road over I-270 and creating a new street connection bridging Father Hurley Boulevard and providing access to the south.

The transitway’s western and eastern alignments converge at the Dorsey Mill Transit Station. The station is located north of development along Milestone Drive and development should include pedestrian access to the station. Local streets are limited to residential areas and the existing private street defining the green. A private, internal street with sidewalks connecting all the parking areas to development and open spaces should be provided.
Open Space
Milestone North enjoys an existing neighborhood common located along Milestone Drive. New plazas, gathering places, and a transit plaza are required of new development.

- Provide I-270 landscape treatment along the highway and screen all parking and parking structures.
- Contribute to the development of the transit station plaza.
- Locate public use spaces primarily along Milestone Drive where adjacent retail uses will activate the spaces.
- Provide the transit sidewalk loop with special paving.
- Outdoor residential recreation space should be located close to residential development and within the linear open space defined by the local street network.
Building Lines
Buildings should front Milestone Drive. Buildings along I-270 building should have two front facades to take advantage of the significant I-270 views. Set buildings back 200 feet from I-270's existing right-of-way. Maintain existing building line if I-270’s right-of-way is expanded. On other streets, building should setback a minimum of 25 feet from curb.

Heights
Building heights should create a focus with the tallest buildings located along Milestone Drive near the I-270 Interchange.

The following guidelines apply to all properties.

- Allow up to 125 feet (eight to ten stories) along the frontage of I-270 with a predominant building height of eight stories.
- Vary building heights to create a visually interesting skyline.
- Step down buildings to four stories adjacent to existing residential areas to the east to ensure a compatible transition.

Retail
- Allow limited retail uses to support commercial and residential development. Locate retail uses along Milestone Drive adjacent to the existing neighborhood green.