

How to Use These Guidelines

These guidelines are intended to implement the approved and adopted the *Germantown Employment Area Sector Plan* by providing design guidance for applicants seeking development approval or capital improvement projects. They reflect the Planning Board's expectations to create a unified place through outstanding design.

The guidelines were developed through work with property owners, residents, institutions, interest groups, and the County Executive.

These guidelines are approved by the Planning Board for use in developing and evaluating proposed building projects and applications. They will be revised to reflect new technologies or field conditions and updated comprehensively at least once every six years.

With the exception of street standards and Sector Plan-approved features, these guidelines are not regulations that mandate specific forms and locations for buildings and open space. They illustrate how Plan recommendations and principles might be met, and encourage applicants and public agencies to propose designs that create an attractive and successful public realm.

Streets – These guidelines are in conformance with the Road Code and are binding unless a waiver is granted by the Planning Board to achieve context sensitive design. Local street layouts illustrate design principles and are not mandated.

Open Space – The guidelines are illustrative except for open spaces identified in the Sector Plan.

Buildings – The guidelines are illustrative and are intended to create an urban built environment.

The Design Framework, Area Wide Design Guidelines and specific District Guidelines provide general to specific guidance in accordance with the 2009 *Sector Plan for the Germantown Employment Area*.

Applicants are encouraged to schedule informal consultations with staff while plans are in an early conceptual stage before submitting applications. Applicants also should refer to the Germantown Employment Area sector plan, the Zoning Ordinance, and other guideline documents such as the recreation and noise guidelines.

Introduction

Germantown, a corridor city located in the western end of Montgomery County along the I-270 Corridor, is evolving into a more urban place with mixed use development, tall buildings and urban open spaces. The Urban Design Guidelines assist this transformation and focus upon the public realm. The quality of Germantown's emerging public realm and built environment from lively transit centers to nature-oriented stream valleys will strengthen the long term economy, sustainability and spirit of the Germantown community.



Town Center Today, Germantown 2009



Town Center Tomorrow, Germantown

Design Framework

The Germantown Sector Plan area will be a vibrant urban center for the up-County region. Served by the MARC commuter line train station and, in the future, by the Corridor Cities Transitway, Germantown will become a walkable, transit served community.

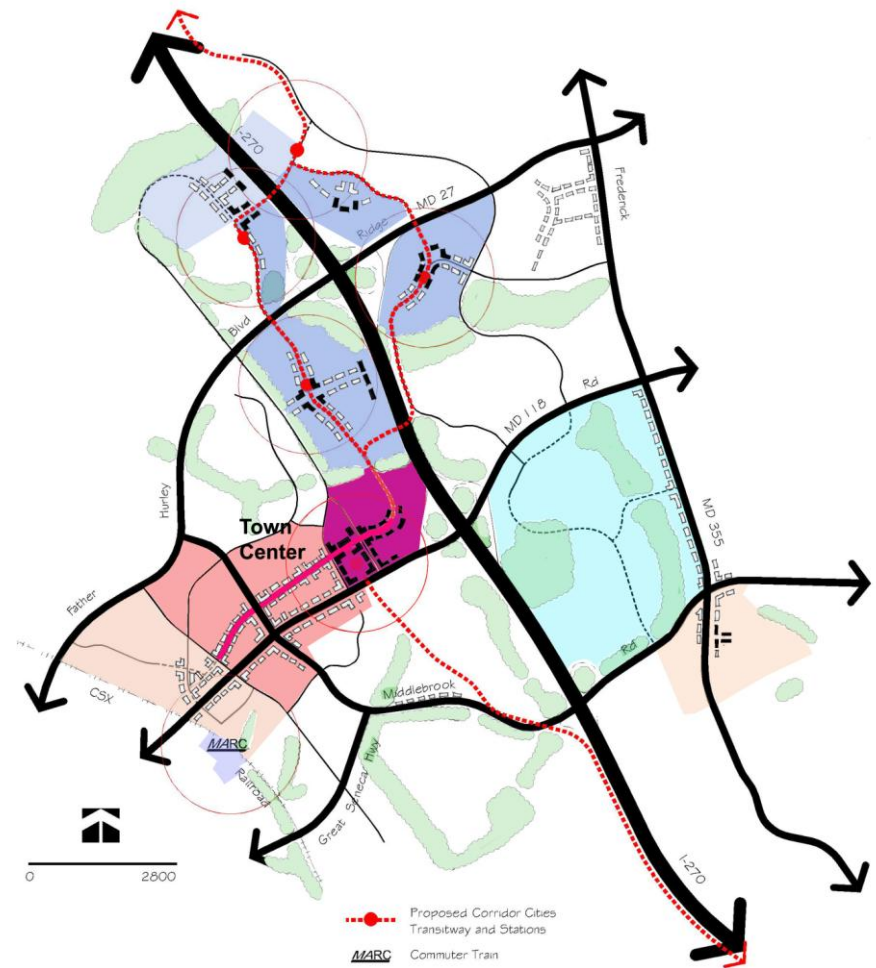
Germantown is not a blank slate. The existing residential communities that surround the Sector Plan area form a general framework to build on. The community, divided by I-270, needs a stronger Town Center, more mixed use, transit-oriented development and more design attention to the public realm.

The design framework supports the Sector Plan's goal to shift Germantown from a car oriented place to a series of walkable communities. The central principle is to cluster development around the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) stations and form distinct communities.

Germantown, a suburban community located in the western end of the County along the I-270 Corridor, is slated to transform into a more urban place with taller buildings, mixed uses and urban open spaces. The guidelines offer design direction for this evolving community focusing upon design excellence for its streets, open spaces and buildings.

On the west side of I-270, the mixed-use Town Center is identified as the major center of community life with the highest density, tallest buildings, and clustered civic uses. It the Core Neighborhood of 15-story buildings and a variety of urban open spaces and the West End, which steps down in density and building heights as a transition to nearby residential communities and the Germantown Historic District. A series of less dense, mixed-use centers are organized around the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) with signature office and technology development lining the I-270 Corridor.

On the east side of I-270, the Seneca Meadows District emerges as a less dense, mixed-use center adjacent to the existing Milestone Regional Shopping Center where little change is expected. Montgomery College will become a more walkable academic village with a compact technology and medical park that preserves significant woodland.



Wooded stream valleys run throughout the Plan area. They help define the development areas, create wildlife habitat, offer passive recreation opportunities, and contribute to the area's environmental quality.

The design framework:

- transforms existing employment areas with low-rise, surface parking into a more compact form clustered around transit stations
- integrates more urban open space in the Town Center and other districts, and preserves natural areas
- emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle connections to transit, and east-west connections across I-270
- creates a more urban, compact campus for Montgomery College
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- creates a more urban, compact campus for Montgomery College
- achieves a new, mixed-use commercial center for Fox Chapel Village Center.

Design Principles

The following design principles will help improve community identity, create walkable streets and attractive safe open spaces, develop street-oriented buildings, and achieve compatible, sustainable development.

These principles are based on the Sector Plan's vision and recommendations and the guidelines that follow are intended to implement that vision. The guidelines apply to all sites in the Plan area, with final building locations and details to be determined through site plan review.



Centers and Community Identity

Compact, mixed-use centers clustered around transit stations will strengthen the sense of place and support transit use. New development should be concentrated and compact. Physical and cultural characteristics unique to Germantown such as its natural greenbelt or the I-270 technology businesses should be celebrated within each district to achieve distinct character.

Mixed use center in Bethesda, MD



Streets

An interconnected street network in each district with distinct street characters will encourage walking and provide access to transit and other destinations. The street network and streetscaping should provide connections and increase the attractiveness of the public realm with tree-lined streets. On street parking and pedestrian friendly intersection design should be achieved where appropriate.

Pedestrian-oriented street network



Open Spaces

The open space hierarchy is intended to serve a multi-age, diverse population with a variety of recreational open spaces ranging from one quarter acre to over 10 acres. Successful open spaces should be visible, safe, accessible, and inviting. Open spaces should be connected by a system of greenways, sidewalks, and trails.

Proposed Crystal Rock Drive Greenway

Buildings

Building forms should create urban character and encourage transit use by fronting the street, locating parking behind or underground, forming a consistent street wall, and defining urban space. Pedestrian scale should be achieved by architectural design that reduces building bulk and height.

Street-oriented development with stores along the sidewalk



Transitions

Compatibility between tall buildings and existing residential communities should be achieved by stepping down building heights and by using building materials that fit the context.

Transition between high rise buildings at a transit station area and adjacent residential area



Sustainability

Protecting Germantown's environmental resources and reducing the carbon footprint of development is a major goal. New public and private buildings are required to achieve a LEED Silver rating incorporating elements such as green roofs, cisterns, wind power generators, solar panels, and other green building technology to improve sustainability.

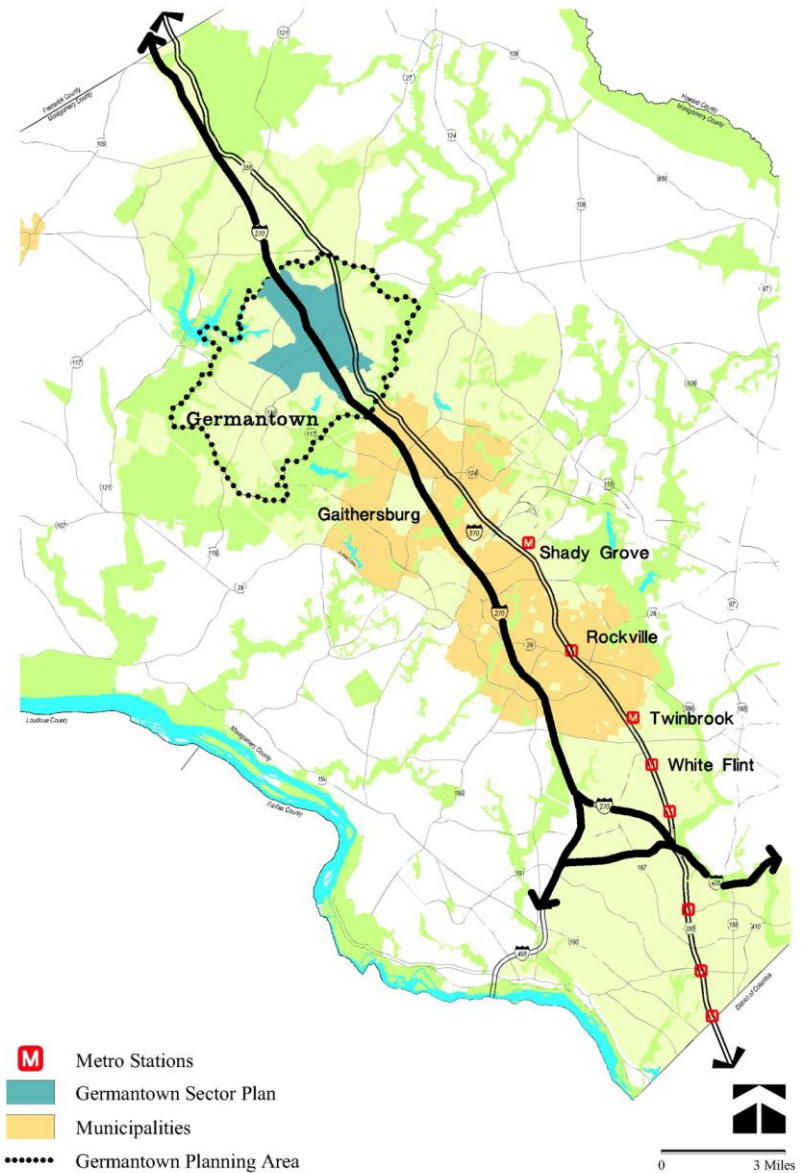
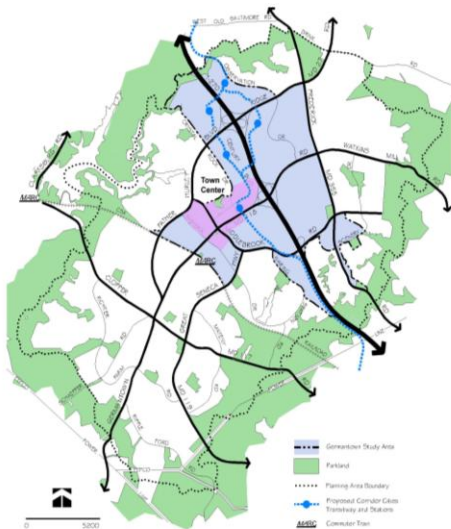
A green roof



The Germantown Planning Area covers 11,000 acres, an approximately three by five mile area, 22 miles from Washington, D.C. It is surrounded by a greenbelt of state and local parks.

The I-270 Corridor contains almost half of Montgomery County's workforce. Approximately one third of the area's employed residents commute to jobs outside the County. A significant portion of the County's future employment growth will take place on vacant or under-used sites in Germantown.

The Plan focuses on the center of Germantown, an area of approximately 2,600 acres. Its recommendations almost double the amount of housing to 15,000 dwelling units, and significantly increase non-residential square footage up to 23,000,000 square feet with an emphasis on corporate offices and advanced technology companies along I-270.



-  Metro Stations
-  Germantown Sector Plan
-  Municipalities
-  Germantown Planning Area