

GERMANTOWN STREETSCAPE CONCEPT PLAN

APPROVED CONCEPT & GUIDELINES FOR THE GERMANTOWN COMMUNITY

- REINFORCE COMMUNITY IDENTITY ■ REDUCE VISUAL CLUTTER ■
- INCREASE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND AMENITY ■ REINFORCE THE
- ROADWAY HIERARCHY ■ IMPROVE VISUAL COMPATIBILITY ■ IN-
- SURE ADEQUATE PEDESTRIAN AND BIKEWAY ACCESS ■



the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
DESIGN, ZONING AND PRESERVATION DIVISION
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

MARCH 1994

**GERMANTOWN
STREETSCAPE
CONCEPT PLAN
AND
GUIDELINES**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Germantown Streetscape Concept strives for a balance between the need for the community to have an attractive roadway character and the scarcity of public and private resources. The concept calls for the majority of roads to receive the current County standards. In areas, however, where zoning requires a higher level of amenity such as the PD, RMX and TS zones, the concept calls for a special streetscape emphasis. The commercial and mixed use Village Centers (Kingsview, Clopper, Middlebrook, and Gunner's Lake) and Great Seneca Highway are areas where special streetscape emphasis is recommended. A special streetscape emphasis for the Town Center and the Neelsville Village Center (Milestone) already have been approved by the Planning Board.

The concept and guidelines have been developed in coordination with Montgomery County Department of Transportation and with citizen participation. Citizens have participated in two public forums held in the latter half of 1992 when the concept and issues were discussed. A consensus was reached on the need to balance fiscal concerns with the need to improve community character. There also was support for the concept which limits the areas where special streetscape treatment is required. Technical concerns raised by MCDOT also have been addressed.

This document should be used by developers and others in their submittal of zoning, special exceptions, subdivision, site plan, and project plan applications. The guidelines will also serve to guide county agencies and others in mandatory referral submissions. The guidelines are purposely conceptual in nature in order to provide flexibility in the development of specific plans while still achieving a coherent framework. Specific decisions regarding type of street lights, paving materials, and landscape material should be determined at the time of site plan review and coordinated by M-NCPPC staff in conjunction with MCDOT. Maintenance of areas recommended for special streetscape emphasis may be required of developers and adjacent property owners if public funds are not available.

The streetscape plan is called for in the Approved and Adopted Germantown Master Plan, July 1989 (p. 25) to improve community character and identity. The purpose of this plan is to provide a comprehensive guide for the development of streetscape character within the right-of-way. The streetscape elements addressed in this plan are the landscape treatment; lighting; pedestrian/bikeway travel including type of pavement, and other features, such as bus shelters, benches, bike racks, and signage. While these elements contribute to overall character, streetscape character is determined primarily by the type of adjacent land use, the architectural style and location of buildings which frame the roadway corridor, and the type of the roadway which serves the area. The Master Plan has established the pattern or framework for both the land use and the roadway. This streetscape plan will seek to complement and enhance this pattern or framework.

The major objectives of the streetscape plan as stated in the Master Plan, page 25, are:

- o To design a streetscape plan that creates a clear, positive image of Germantown, reinforcing its community identity.
- o To develop a streetscape plan that will reduce the visual clutter and provide order.
- o To develop a streetscape plan that will increase pedestrian amenities and pedestrian safety.
- o To develop a streetscape plan that reinforces the hierarchy of streets throughout Germantown.

In addition to the Master Plan objectives, this plan also seeks:

- o To improve visual compatibility of adjacent land uses as viewed from the roadways, and
- o To ensure adequate pedestrian and bikeway access.

The proposed streetscape concept and guidelines classify the roadway network into different streetscape categories such as town center or residential areas which reflect the underlying character of adjacent land uses. A specific streetscape character is recommended for each category which compliments and reinforces the land use.

The guidelines address the roads in the Master Plan, including I-270, and old MD. 118. I-270 is included in the concept because it has a significant impact upon the perception of Germantown. Although the State Highway Administration developed a conceptual master plan for I-270 which was endorsed by the Planning Board, this plan needs to be expanded in order to provide sufficient guidance for landscape designs. Old MD. 118 is included because it offers a unique opportunity to create a stronger pedestrian and bicycle link to the MARC transit station from the Town Center and other surrounding villages. It also gives streetscape guidance to local streets which serve the Village Centers and residential neighborhoods.

The streetscape guidelines deal primarily with pedestrian, landscaping and lighting treatments that are appropriate and feasible within the available space established by the master plan. It does not address road alignment, width of right-of-way (ROW) and function of the road since these issues were determined by the master plan. Nor does it resolve how to provide needed streetscape elements such as pathways and street trees within the open section roadway. New design standards for the open section roadways should be developed outside the context of this document.

The concept plan and guidelines endorse the streetscape plans already approved by the Planning Board for the Germantown Town Center and Milestone Village Center. These summaries of approved streetscape plans are included in this plan in order to consolidate all streetscape plans in one document.

2.0 THE VISION

Germantown has the opportunity to become an attractive community of well defined commercial centers surrounded by equally attractive residential neighborhoods. By providing streetscape improvements where appropriate, the positive images within the community can be strengthened and new ones can be created. The future character of Germantown might be experienced as follows:

Imagine yourself walking down an attractive, tree-lined street within your neighborhood on your way to the bus stop. Pedestrian access is convenient, pleasant and shaded from the sun. The public sidewalk also allows for neighborhood children to play games and meet friends. You enjoy the walk even though it involves crossing a major roadway. There is a safe and convenient crosswalk at a traffic light and the walking distance across the roadway is not a long one. It does not discourage you from taking the bus to work.

As you wait for the bus, you can sit on a comfortable bench under a canopy and enjoy a spontaneous conversation with a neighbor. The opportunity to meet your neighbors improves your sense of community. The bus arrives, you board and it takes you out of your neighborhood towards the nearby Village Center where you work. The bus passes through several village centers on its route and each one looks distinct and different. It is easy to know where you are.

When you arrive at your stop, you step off the bus onto a street which feels like a traditional "main street" due to the arrangement of buildings with retail storefronts. There are also outdoor places to sit within the Village Center. It is not simply a row of stores surrounded by seas of parking lots like so many suburban retail centers. You enjoy the choices and conveniences that the village center offers in such an attractive and walkable setting. It was not so long ago that you worked in an office park and had to drive your car even to have lunch.

In another Village Center nearby, several older children park their bikes in front of the grocery store. Their parents sent them on the errand because it was safe and convenient. Several store owners have installed bike racks to accommodate the increased number of bicycles due to the completion of the new bikeways.

At the end of your day, you take the bus home. You leave the more commercial atmosphere of the village center and watch the scenery change as the bus turns onto one of the roadways with more rural character. It is one of your favorite roads due to its parkway character. Last year, the fall color of the deciduous trees along this road was spectacular. It is obvious that some thought has been given to how the roadways should look.

This vision of Germantown can be achieved if coherent streetscape guidelines are approved and implemented. In order to be financially feasible, implementation might take place in phases over time. However, the benefits to both the residents and the business community will be worth the wait.

3.0 PROPOSED STREETScape CONCEPT PLAN AND GUIDELINES

3.1 The Concept

The proposed streetscape concept echoes the organizational framework of Germantown as established in the Approved and Adopted Master Plan. This framework consists of the Town Center as the major focus of commercial and cultural activities surrounded by less intense village centers which provide convenient shopping to nearby residential neighborhoods. The residential neighborhoods are within convenient walking distances to the village centers. The boundaries of the town are clearly defined by an encircling greenbelt of woodland and farms. I-270 divides Germantown geographically into two sections, forming an east and west side. (See the Community Concept Plan, Figure 1.)

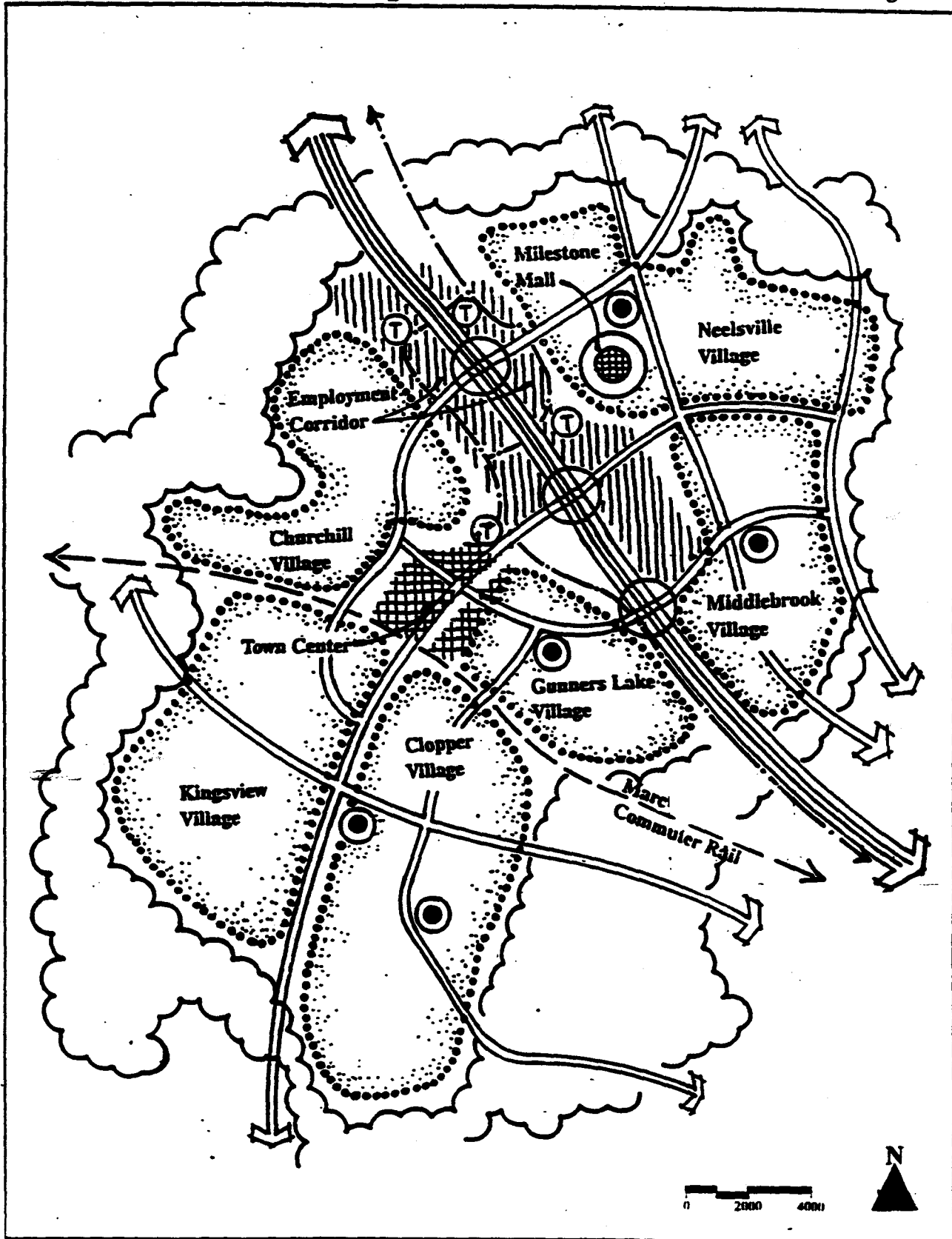
The streetscape concept classifies the roadway network into different streetscape categories or types which reflect the character of adjacent land uses and the roadway classification. The streetscape types are: Town Center, Village Center, Milestone Mall Area, Roadways adjacent to Woodlands or Open Areas, Roadways in Residential and Employment Areas and between Village Centers, Historic Old Md 118, I-270, and streetscape for non-master planned roadways. An appropriate character for each streetscape type is recommended within each section.

The streetscape concept reinforces the pattern of existing and future land uses. The Town Center is designated to receive the most urban character within Germantown as per the approved Town Center Design Study. Urban character is achieved by placing street trees in cut-outs within the sidewalk, using pedestrian-scaled street lighting and providing more pedestrian amenities such as benches, planters and artwork. Village Centers shall be developed with a formal character but with less of an urban emphasis than the Town Center. A formal character consists of street trees in straight instead of irregularly spaced, more natural groupings of trees. Beyond the centers, a more informal, naturalized character is recommended for roadways which pass through the greenbelt or are adjacent to woodlands or open fields. Residential neighborhoods and employment areas outside the mixed-use centers shall receive a traditional streetscape pattern of tree-lined streets achieved with a single row of trees.

The contrast in character between the centers and surrounding areas will help improve community identity and orientation. The contrast also will achieve a higher pedestrian and visual emphasis at the centers than in the surrounding areas. Businesses and retailers will benefit from this more formal style of streetscape because it can greatly improve the visual appeal, identity and pedestrian enjoyment of the centers. Lack of Village Center identity is pointed out in the Master Plan as one of the major problems with the existing centers (p. 28). Residents will benefit from the difference in streetscape character between centers and neighborhoods in that it will help establish a positive community identity (See the Streetscape Concept Plan, Figure 2).

Community Concept Plan

Figure 1



Germantown Streetscape Concept Plan and Guidelines

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Winter, 1994

3.2 Town Center

The Germantown Town Center Design Study, approved by the Planning Board, and reviewed by County Council, calls for a hierarchy of streetscapes within the Town Center. This streetscape plan incorporates the approved concepts for the Town Center in order to consolidate streetscape plans into one document. The major concepts of the Town Center's Streetscape Plan are summarized as follows:

MD 118 and Father Hurley Boulevard are identified as the principle highways. MD 118 is to achieve a formal, monumental character with a double row of shade trees in lawn panels framing the pedestrian/bike trails. A single row of shade trees is located in the median. Father Hurley Boulevard is to achieve a more informal, natural character due to its less commercial nature (Germantown Town Center Design Study, pp. 89-101).

Secondary roadways are identified as Middlebrook Road, Crystal Rock Drive, and Wisteria Drive. These roadways are to achieve a formal but less monumental character than MD 118. A single row of street trees in lawn panels is envisioned (Germantown Town Center Design Study, pp. 98 & 105).

Local streets are identified as Locbury Drive, Waters Road, and portions of Old MD 118 (Walter Johnson Drive). These streets are to receive a single row of trees adjacent to the curb, achieving different characters due to the adjacent land uses. Old MD 118, which will become a local street after the new MD 118 is completed provides a special opportunity to achieve a historic streetscape through the uses of special lighting, pavement and street furniture (Germantown Town Center Design Study, pp. 106-109).

Local streets internal to the core of the Town Center, TC-1, are identified as Town Center Boulevard and Main Street. These streets are more urban in character due to on-street parking and sidewalks extended out to the street curb with trees planted in pavement cut-outs. The plan calls for special lighting, sidewalk pavement and street furniture to achieve an attractive, pedestrian-friendly character (Germantown Town Center Design Study, pp. 110-127).

The Town Center Design Study recommends the addition of several new streets as an amendment to the Approved and Adopted Germantown Master Plan. These streets are listed on p.129 of the approved Town Center Design Study. The Streetscape Concept Plan does not revise any of the Planning Board approved recommendations of the Town Center Design Study.

3.3 Village Centers (Clopper, Kingsview, Gunner's Lake, Neelsville and Middlebrook)

Village Centers are recommended for a formal character but with somewhat less of an urban quality to best complement the Centers' mixed-use, commercial character. Village Centers are served primarily by major highways and arterials with local streets providing internal access. A formal character along these roadways is achieved by planting straight alignments of street trees in lawn

strips as opposed to a less formal or naturalistic arrangement of trees. Village Centers are an important part of a community's life and frequently visited by residents on a daily basis. For a description of recommended guidelines, see Section 4.1. (For an illustration, see Figures 3, 4, and 5).

Special street lighting, sidewalk pavement and pedestrian amenities shall be determined at the time of mandatory review, project plan or site plan. Special zones, including planned development zones and optional method zones are used in the Village Centers. These zones encourage innovative design and provide for maintenance.

3.4 Milestone Mall Area (Neelsville Village Center)

A streetscape plan for the Milestone Mall within Neelsville's Village Center was approved by the Planning Board and MCDOT as a public benefit associated with the optional method development of the Milestone Mall. This streetscape plan incorporates the Milestone streetscape plan. One of the major concepts of the Milestone streetscape plan is to achieve a hierarchy in visual emphasis for the roadways serving the village. Father Hurley Boulevard and MD 355 are identified as visually and functionally important roads serving the village. The plan calls for a formal treatment for both roads with a double row of trees lining Father Hurley Boulevard to achieve an even more monumental appearance than along MD 355. Observation Drive and Shakespeare Boulevard are to be developed with a more informal, naturalized landscape character. The intersections of Father Hurley Boulevard at Observation Drive and MD 355 are ultimately to be grade-separated interchanges, landscaped with flowering trees in an orchard-like arrangement to provide a gateway statement (See the approved Milestone Streetscape Plan for more detailed discussion).

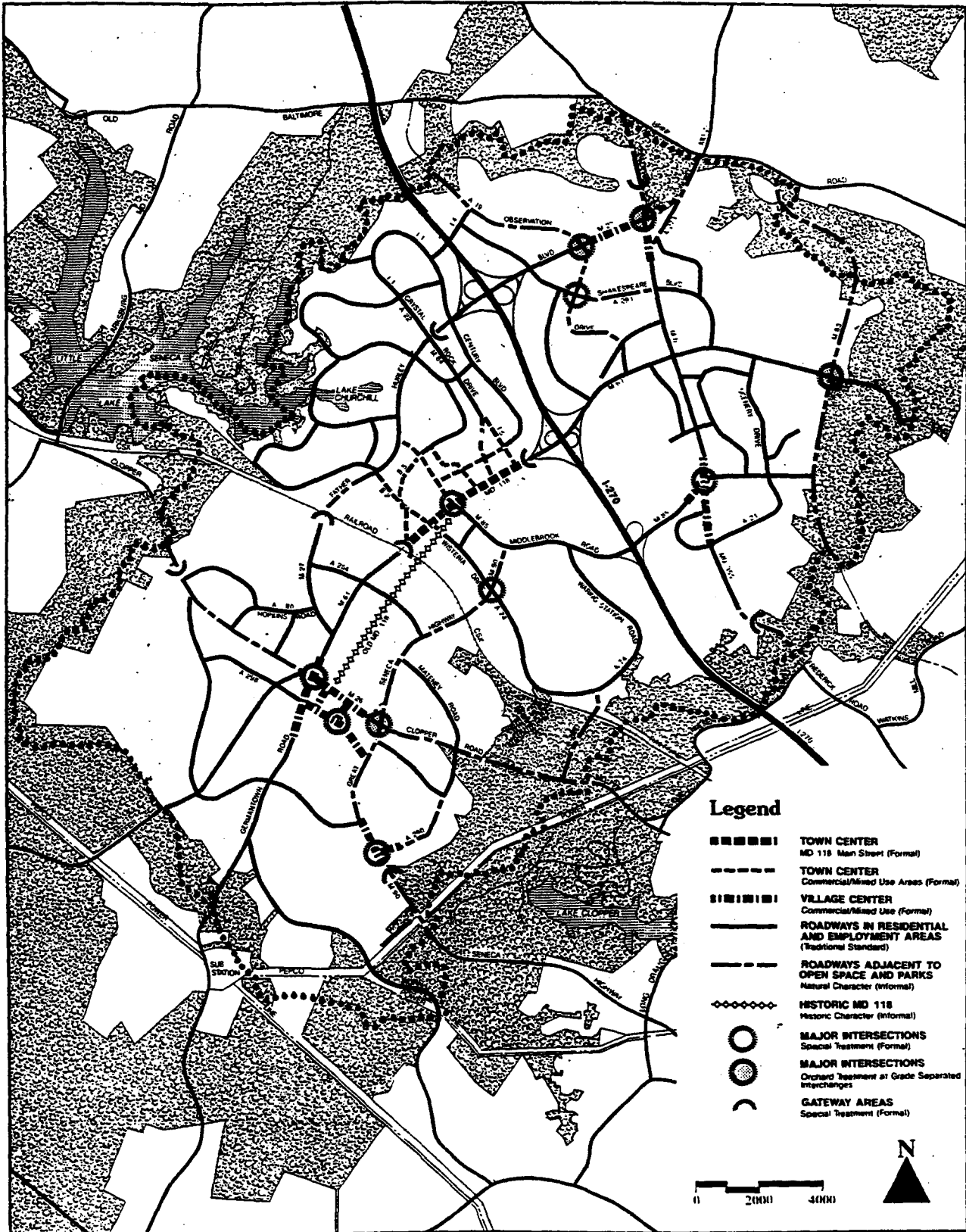
3.5 Roadways Adjacent to Woodlands or Open Areas

Major highways and arterials which pass through or are adjacent to naturalized areas such as the greenbelt or open fields are recommended for a more informal, naturalized character in contrast with those roadways located within the villages and Town Center. This character is achieved by planting a mixture of hardwoods and evergreens in more random patterns similar to natural areas. Use of native plant material is encouraged (See Figures 6 and 7 for an illustration of informal character). This contrast in character between the centers and surrounding areas will help improve orientation and achieve a higher visual emphasis at the centers.

A minimum level of treatment for the majority of such roadways is appropriate because, in many cases, the adjacent woodlands can provide the naturalized character. However, for those roadways which are visually open to nearby development or non-wooded areas, additional plantings may be necessary to establish a desirable character. An example of such a road is Great Seneca Highway which is visually quite open to nearby development. Any landscaping proposal for Great Seneca Highway especially within the median must address MCDOT's concerns for traffic safety. Additional naturalized plantings and afforestation along Great Seneca Highway would greatly improve the visual character of this highly traveled roadway.

Streetscape Concept Plan

Figure 2



Germantown Streetscape Concept Plan and Guidelines

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Winter, 1994

3.6 Roadways in Residential and Employment Areas and Roadways Between Village Centers

This category represents the majority of roads in Germantown. Roadways which serve residential neighborhoods and employment areas are treated with the traditional standard of a single row of street trees adjacent to the curb to establish an attractive, unified character for the area. The traditional standard provides for street trees approximately 45 feet on center, concrete sidewalks and County Standard lighting. This level of treatment is considered a minimum standard. Roadways between Village Centers also are treated with the traditional, minimum standard of a single row of trees because special treatment outside the Town Center and Village Centers is not warranted. A consistent species is the preferred recommendation for each street to achieve a unified effect. Horticultural diversity is achieved by providing a different species for each street in the network of streets. Exceptions to providing a consistent species may be reviewed on a case by case basis if a superior design is achieved.

In residential areas where development backs up to the roadway, adequate evergreen screening is recommended in some cases outside the public right of way to improve visual compatibility. Evergreen screening also is recommended along all roadways throughout Germantown which abut residential rear yards or other incompatible land uses (For an illustration, see Figures 8, 9, 10, and 11).

3.7 Historic Old MD 118 (Walter Johnson Drive)

Old MD 118 will be divided into two segments when the bridge over CSX Railroad is closed to motorized vehicular traffic as called for in the Master Plan. The northern end of Old MD 118, from the CSX Railroad bridge to Germantown Square Park, located at the intersection of relocated MD 118 and Middlebrook Road, falls within the Town Center. For this portion of the road, the approved Town Center Streetscape Plan calls for a special historic character to be achieved (Germantown Town Center Design Study, pp. 108-109). This plan endorses the Design Study's concept and recommends that pedestrian-scaled street lighting, special sidewalk pavement and landscaping complementary to the existing character of the MARC Station be selected at the time of mandatory referral, project plan or site plan.

A special treatment for Old MD 118 is warranted because this street provides an important pedestrian link from the core of the Town Center to the regional transit station. It also represents an opportunity to reinforce the historic character which occurs in various areas along the road.

The southern portion of the road from the railroad bridge to Clopper Road has a more rural character due to adjacent land uses than the northern segment which lies within the Town Center. This plan recommends that the southern portion of Old MD 118 retain its rural character. As such, the historic character recommended for the northern segment should not extend south past the MARC Station. A more rural character for the southern portion of the road is recommended by establishing informal alignments of shade trees, asphalt pathways for pedestrian access and street lighting limited only to intersections or where safety dictates.

3.8 I-270

The concept for landscaping within the I-270 ROW calls for a more open, naturalized landscape treatment as recommended in the State Highway Administration's I-270 Master Plan Design Guidelines. A visually more open landscape character permits distant views of adjacent development and heightens the contrast between the enclosed views of the surrounding greenbelt and the more open views of corporate landscapes within Germantown. A visually more open character is achieved by planting informal, naturalized groves of mixed hardwoods and evergreens with visual breaks between the groves to permit framed views where appropriate. This naturalized character should be extended into the corporate landscapes of adjacent development to achieve a consistent and complementary character for the entire view corridor.

Significant landscaping at interchanges should be achieved in order to create a naturalized woodland setting and buffer surrounding developments from I-270 traffic. However, good visibility of corporate sites should not be obscured by proposed landscape treatment within the I-270 ROW.

It is anticipated that landscaping within the I-270 ROW will be primarily the State Highway Administration's responsibility. Aforestation within the I-270 ROW may be permitted if acceptable to SHA to help supplement the primary landscaping. (See Figure 12.)

3.9 Streetscapes for Non-Master Planned Roadways

All streetscapes for non-master planned, local streets should receive a minimum standard of public sidewalks, street trees and adequate lighting in order to achieve a good transit and pedestrian orientation. For those existing communities which are in need of public sidewalks or street trees, this plan endorses current County policy to fund retrofit projects. While the focus of these streetscape guidelines are the creation of new streetscapes, the streetscape needs of existing local roadways should not be deferred.

3.10 Level of Treatment

The proposed concept provides a variety of streetscape character complimentary to adjacent land uses and is achieved in a manner which acknowledges fiscal constraints. The guidelines recommend that the County's minimum design standards be used for the majority of roadways in Germantown. This minimum standard provides for street trees planted 45 feet on center, concrete sidewalks and County Standard street lighting.

However, within gathering places such as Village Centers, a special emphasis is recommended. This level includes streetscape improvements, such as a tighter spacing of street trees, special paving and street lighting, and a moderate amount of pedestrian amenities such as benches. For Great Seneca Highway, the level of treatment would also represent an increase in the amount of landscaping above the County's minimum standards (See Figure 13 for an illustration of areas recommended for upgraded streetscapes). This recommendation does not modify the level of treatment previously approved for the Town Center and the Milestone Regional Mall.

This level of treatment for the gathering places within Germantown will improve community identity and character as required by the Master Plan. Although the standards are higher in the Village Centers, they are the same level of streetscape improvements enjoyed by other parts of the county such as Shady Grove, Olney and Damascus. The additional level of treatment recommended for the centers represents a balance between the need to improve streetscapes in critical areas and the need to consider fiscal impacts.

The Village Centers also are recommended for special zoning which requires approval of a Development Plan or Project Plan in addition to approval of a Preliminary Plan and Site Plan. As part of this approval process for the Village Centers, the applicants are expected to establish innovative designs and creative methods of maintenance of streetscape above the more standard method of development.

4.0 PROPOSED STREETSCAPE GUIDELINES

This section provides guidelines regarding tree spacings, pavement material, street lighting, and other streetscape. The level of information is intended to guide development of streetscape plans without specifying actual materials.

4.1 Guidelines for Specific Areas (See Figures 3 - 12)

1. Village Centers:

- o Plant a single row of 2 1/2 inch caliper shade trees in lawn panels at 30 feet on-center, with a double row of trees provided within approximately 200 feet of intersections. (See Fig. 5.)
- o In medians, plant a single row of 2 1/2 inch caliper shade trees 30 feet on center.
- o Provide concrete sidewalks and asphalt bike trails along roadways except where storefront commercial or mixed use development directly fronts the local private or public internal streets. Provide special unit pavers in such situations.
- o Provide County standard lighting along major roadways except for local internal streets where special lighting shall be provided.
- o Provide a moderate level of pedestrian amenities adjacent to development that includes public seating, special trash receptacles and landscaped planters.
- o For Village Centers such as Clopper, Kingsview and Gunner's Lake which are bordered by major highways, special streetscape treatment should be confined to those roadways which directly serve the centers, such as the arterials and internal streets. Village Centers such as Middlebrook, which are bisected by major highways, should receive special streetscape treatment along the highways in addition to the internal streets.

2. Roadways Adjacent to Woodlands and Open Areas

- o Plant 2 1/2 inch caliper mixed hardwoods and 5 to 6 foot high evergreens in naturalized groves and in amounts comparable to a 45-foot on-center spacing pattern for the majority of roadways. However, for Great Seneca Highway which does not have any landscaping for the majority of the road, increase the amount of plant material comparable to a 30 foot on-center spacing pattern. Aforestation also may be allowed within the ROW if acceptable to MCDOT to supplement the naturalized character of adjacent, existing woodland.
- o Provide asphalt pathways to achieve an informal character.
- o Provide street lighting with high mount poles and cut off fixtures in a manner which is coordinated with the naturalized landscaping. If safety standards require increased lighting for pedestrian usage, pedestrian scaled lighting on separate

poles adjacent to hiker/biker trails should be provided. Both the high mount fixtures and the low level, pedestrian lighting should be selected to complement the rural character the natural setting of these roads.

3. Roadways in Residential and Employment Areas and Between Centers

- o Provide the County's minimum standards which provides for street trees 45 feet on center within a lawn panel, concrete sidewalks, and high-mount lighting in commercial areas and lower pole lighting within residential areas.

4. Old MD 118 (Walter Johnson Drive)

For the northern segment from the CSX Railroad bridge to Germantown Square Park:

- o Plant 2 1/2 inch caliper shade trees within lawn panels in a random, irregular pattern.
- o Provide special pavement for all sidewalks.
- o Provide special street lighting similar in character to the lighting at the MARC Station.
- o Provide a moderate level of pedestrian amenities such as benches, special trash receptacles and planters.

For the southern segment from CSX Railroad bridge to Clopper Road:

- o Plant 2 1/5 inch caliper shade trees in an informal pattern at in amounts comparable to a 45 foot spacing.
- o Provide asphalt pathway with a non-standard width to retrofit a path within the limited ROW.
- o Provide County standard street lighting only at intersections if safety standards permit.
- o No special pedestrian amenities shall be required.

5. Interstate I-270

- o Plant 2 1/2 inch caliper mixed hardwoods and 5 to 6 foot high evergreens in a naturalized pattern. Visual edges created by the landscaping will frame attractive views and screen undesirable ones. The amount of landscape necessary to achieve this objective is significant and should be provided primarily within the State's ROW. Aforestation should also be permitted prior to installation of the primary landscape.

6. Marriott Property adjacent to Milestone Properties

- o Plant 2 1/2 minimum caliper shade trees in a formal alignment along main streets with closer spacing than the standard 45 ft. on-center spacing.

- o Provide special pavement where development fronts on to main streets or where sidewalks connect to transit stops.
- o Provide special lighting along main streets and internal roads.
- o Provide a moderate level of pedestrian amenities along main streets adjacent to development such as public seating, special trash receptacles and landscape planters.

4.2 Proposed Changes to County Standards

- o Allow standards for tree spacing in CBD's (ie. 30' oc.) and other areas to be used in Village Centers and along Great Seneca Highway where special zones are used.
- o Allow standards for informal planting versus straight alignments with equal spacing.
- o Allow double row of street trees to be planted within 200' of intersections within Village Centers.
- o Allow special pavement to be used in front of retail shops within Village Centers.
- o Allow special lighting to be used along internal streets serving the Village Centers.

5.0 PROPOSED GUIDELINES PEDESTRIAN AND BIKEWAY NETWORK

5.1 Existing and Master Plan Approved Pedestrian and Bikeway Network

The existing and master planned network of sidewalks and pathways is designed to "provide pedestrian connections between residences and such destinations as parks, schools, shopping areas, transit stops, employment areas and community centers" (p. 217 of the Approved and Adopted Master Plan). This concept is achieved through the recommended sidewalk and hiker/biker trail system in the Master Plan. The system reflects a comprehensive, interconnected network which facilitates safe and convenient access throughout Germantown.

5.2 Identification of Gaps

The master planned network is extensive and to a great degree effective in achieving an interconnected system. However, analysis of the existing and planned facilities has revealed several minor gaps. These gaps need to be addressed in order to completely connect the network. Most of the gaps can be eliminated by extending the sidewalks and hiker/biker trails to achieve desired connections (See Table 1). The proposed sidewalks and bikeways will require an amendment to the approved Master Plan.

5.3 Minor Modifications to Approved Network

In three cases, minor modifications are recommended which affect roadway projects which are currently under design by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation. The roadway projects affected are located along M-83, relocated MD- 118 and Observation Drive. These projects already have received design approval from reviewing agencies. Staff from MCDOT and M-NCPPC should review these identified gaps and determine whether it is appropriate and physically feasible to construct the connections recommended in this plan. These guidelines recognize that MCDOT decides on how to implement these recommendations in coordination with M-NCPPC. If revision to current designed plans is not feasible, or if construction of the road is completed, staff recommends that a retrofit be considered in the future to achieve the desired connections.

6.0 PROPOSED SIGNAGE GUIDELINES

The number, size and location of commercial and traffic-related signs which occur within and adjacent to the ROW have a major visual impact upon the character of the roadway. Unfortunately, the cumulative effect of numerous signs both public and private can result in a visually chaotic, unattractive view that also undermines the effectiveness of the individual message. While this plan recognizes that the placement of the public signs is often dictated by approved design standards which must be followed, there is a need to provide additional design guidelines for both private and public signs which can help improve the character of the roadway and achieve a more coordinated and effective placement of signs.

6.1 Public Traffic Related Signage

The following public signage guidelines are general in nature and are intended to improve coordination between traffic signage and proposed streetscape elements found within the right-of-way. The guidelines also suggest ways in which to arrange public signage to improve their visual appearance and readability. The guidelines should be viewed as additional considerations which go beyond satisfying the standard regulatory requirements. If a conflict occurs between County regulatory standards and the proposed guidelines, the regulated standards take precedent.

Public signage is often a difficult element to integrate with the existing curbside environment because it typically is added after streetscapes have been designed and sometimes over a long period of time. Consequently, several problems can occur. Visual clutter can result when too many uncoordinated signs are installed on either too many separate poles or when too many signs share the same pole. Signs also can obstruct pedestrian and access for the handicapped if they are placed within the sidewalk area. This can occur when there are conflicting sign regulations. Also, unpruned street trees can contribute to poor visibility of signs.

The following guidelines are intended to solve some of these problems and shall apply to public signage located within the right-of-way:

1. Minimize whenever possible the number of poles required by utilizing the street light and traffic signal poles for mounting of traffic signs. Visual clutter can be reduced by mounting on existing poles as opposed to adding more poles.
2. Minimize visual clutter by mounting no more than 2 or 3 signs on one pole or support. The visual message can be lost if too many messages are presented.
3. When feasible, arrange signs on a single pole in a manner which aligns the signs and information in a visually balanced and attractive manner. The County standards for horizontal sign placement will be appropriate in many cases. However, vertical alignments also should be considered where appropriate.

4. Where feasible, arrange signs on a single pole in a manner that places the larger signs at the lower end of the pole and the smaller signs on the top. This places the visually heavier, larger sign at the lower level, which visually achieves a more comfortable balance than if the larger sign were perched on top of a smaller sign.
5. Install signage within the tree lawn strip with the same alignment as the street trees, approximately 2'-3' from the face of curb. In cases where a 5-foot or less sidewalk is located directly adjacent to the curb, place the sign behind the sidewalk. Avoid locating the pole within the sidewalk, which would obstruct pedestrian or access for the handicapped.
6. Locate signs, where possible, in front of street trees to maintain clear sight lines for the sign. Street trees should be pruned to ensure a clear view of the traffic signage.

6.2 Private Signage

The Germantown Master Plan calls for a strict signage policy for Germantown's main street (MD 118) by requiring monumental design styles of 14 feet or less (See Figure 16 for an illustration of the master plan approved sign for MD 118). Signage for other commercial areas of Germantown is not addressed in the master plan other than to reference the signage regulations found in Section 59-F-1, of the Zoning Ordinance.

This streetscape plan recommends that all commercial signage located in Town Center or at Village Centers should be restricted in height, similar to MD 118, in order to ensure visibility under the canopy of the street trees and to achieve a more attractive streetscape. Signage which is taller than 14 feet will not only be obscured from view by the growth of street trees but also will contribute to visual clutter and competing roadside information (See Figure 16 for appropriate design styles which remain under 14 feet in height). Exceptions to this guideline will be considered on a case by case basis if it achieves a superior design that complements architectural elements and reduces visual clutter.

7.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The proposed streetscape plan is viewed as a guide for the design of roadways by public and private sectors who will be implementing the plan. It establishes an overall general framework for streetscape treatment. Specific materials and details will be determined within the context of individual regulatory and mandatory reviews.

Implementation of the streetscape guidelines will be achieved through both private and public development of the roadways. For those roadways developed by the private sector, the guidelines will be used by the Planning Board for development that either abuts existing roadways or includes part of the public road network. This approach represents a continuation of current County policy to have adjacent developers provide streetscape improvements in association with proposed developments.

For roadways that are developed by the public sector, the streetscape guidelines should be funded primarily through C.I.P. allocations for roadway improvements. Project planning for streetscapes should take place at the same time as the roadway design takes place in order to accommodate and coordinate all the streetscape features which achieve the desired character. Sufficient ROW's should be achieved in order to accommodate the recommended streetscapes. Planting plans should be developed at the same time as the roadway design because grading, storm drain locations, and the position of the sidewalk or hiker/biker trails can become limiting features when the landscape is left until last. (See Table 2 for a list of the status of landscaping plans for approved roadway projects.)

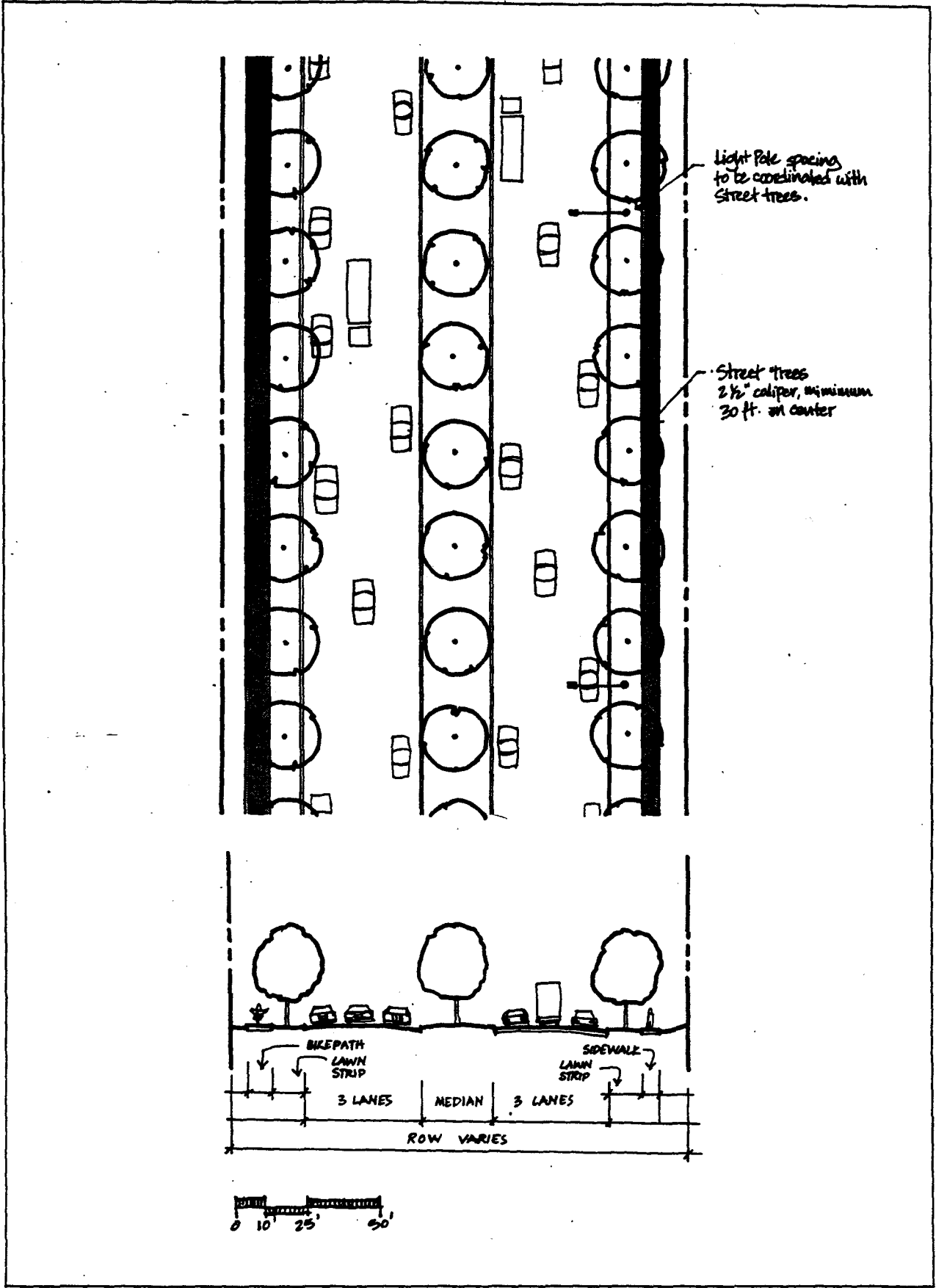
Installation of streetscape elements should be achieved at the time of roadway construction. Delays in providing streetscape undermine the community's character and are often more difficult to implement after construction of the road. The guidelines do not include a staging element because the development of roadways in Germantown is the result of negotiations between Montgomery County Department of Transportation and the development community.

The following measures for reducing costs should be explored:

1. Project Plan and Development Plan applicants public or private may be required to install and maintain streetscapes until other funding sources are available. (ie. Town Center, Milestone and Village Centers)
2. Adopt a highway program.
3. Develop maintenance districts. (ie. similiar to the down-county Urban Districts)
4. Expand the Suburban District.

Major Highways Within Village Centers

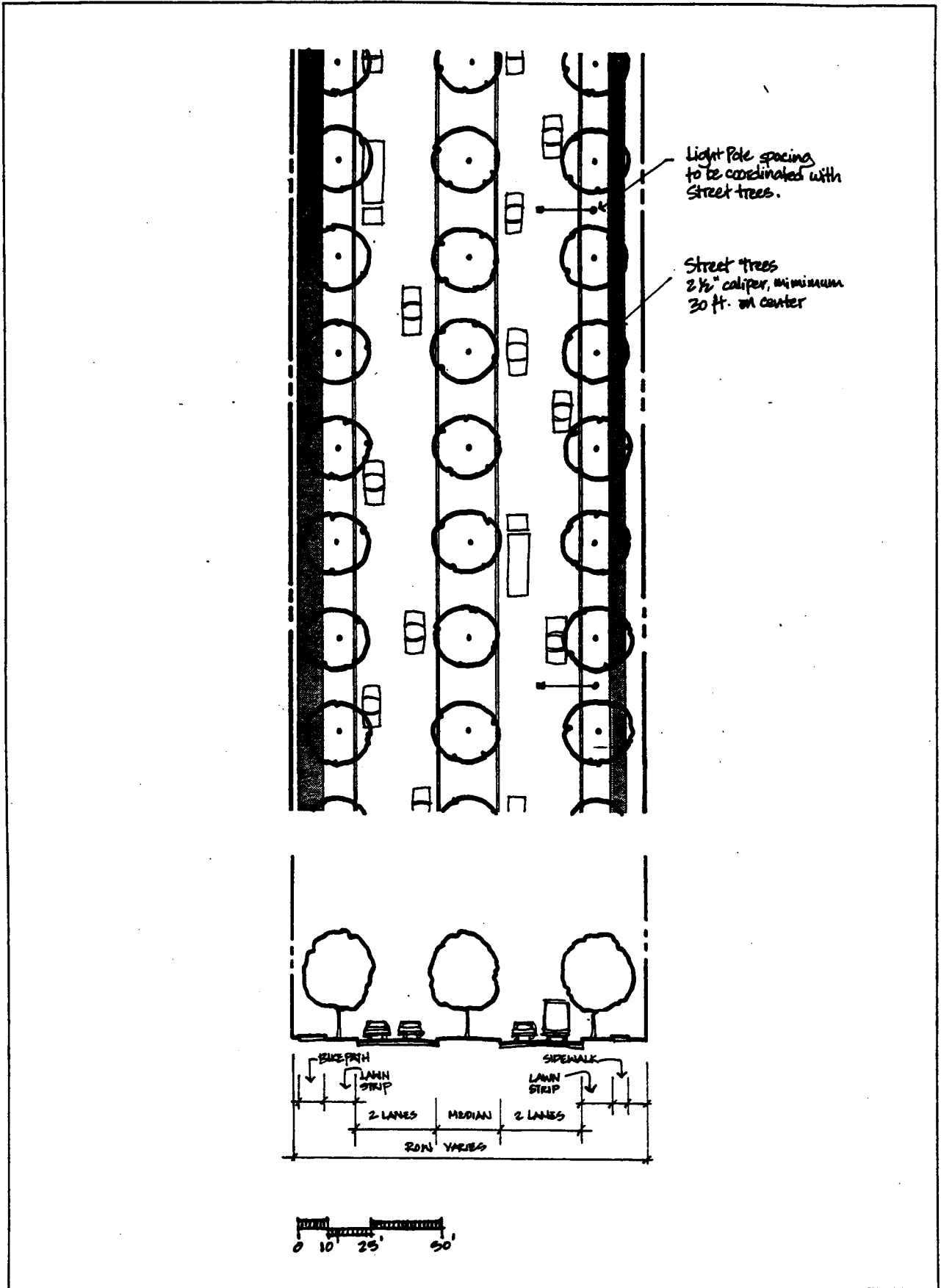
Figure 3



Germantown Streetscape Concept Plan and Guidelines

Arterials Within Village Centers

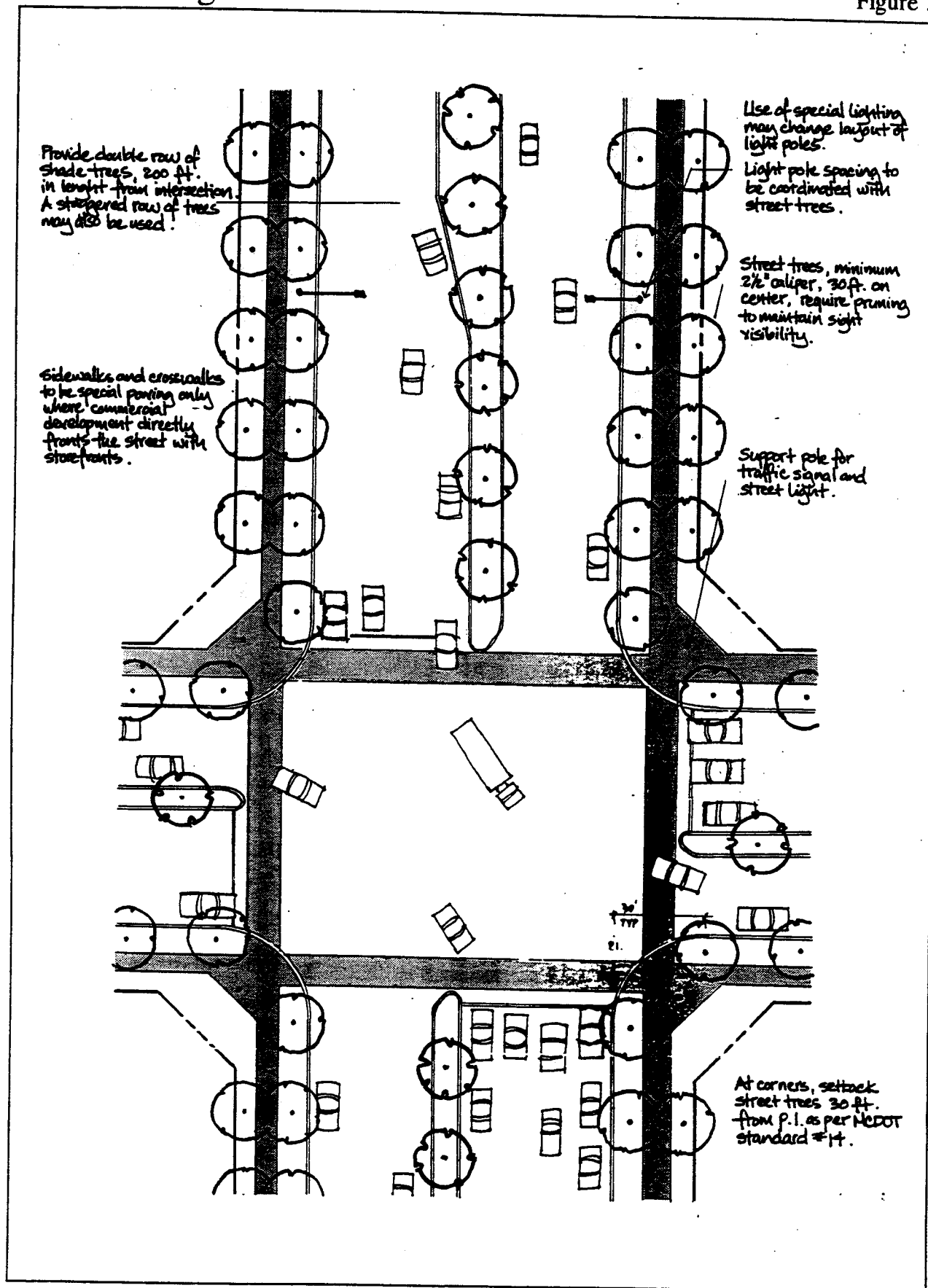
Figure 4



Germantown Streetscape Concept Plan and Guidelines

Major Intersections Within Village Centers

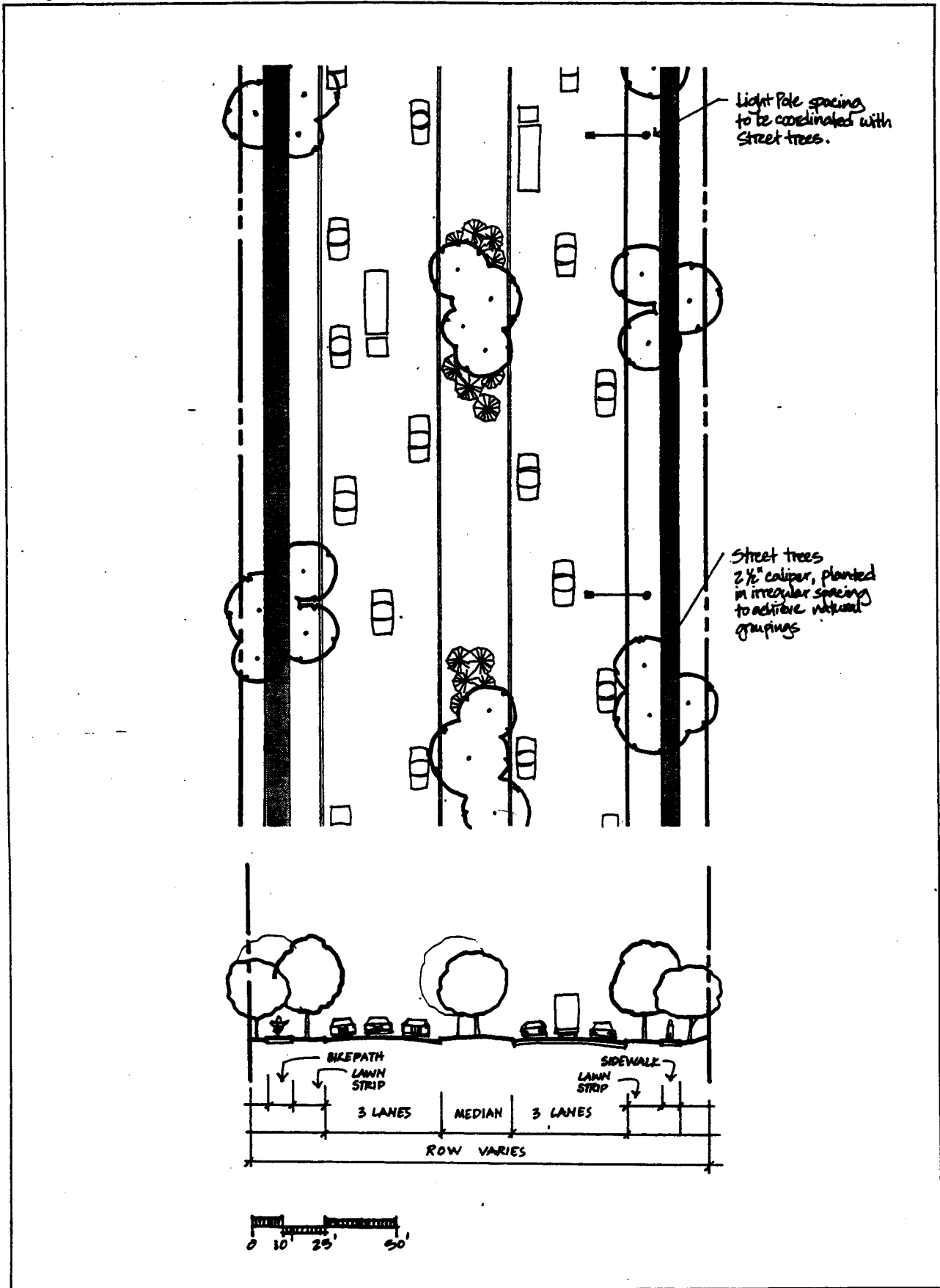
Figure 5



Germantown Streetscape Concept Plan and Guidelines

Major Highways Adj. to Woodlands & Open Space

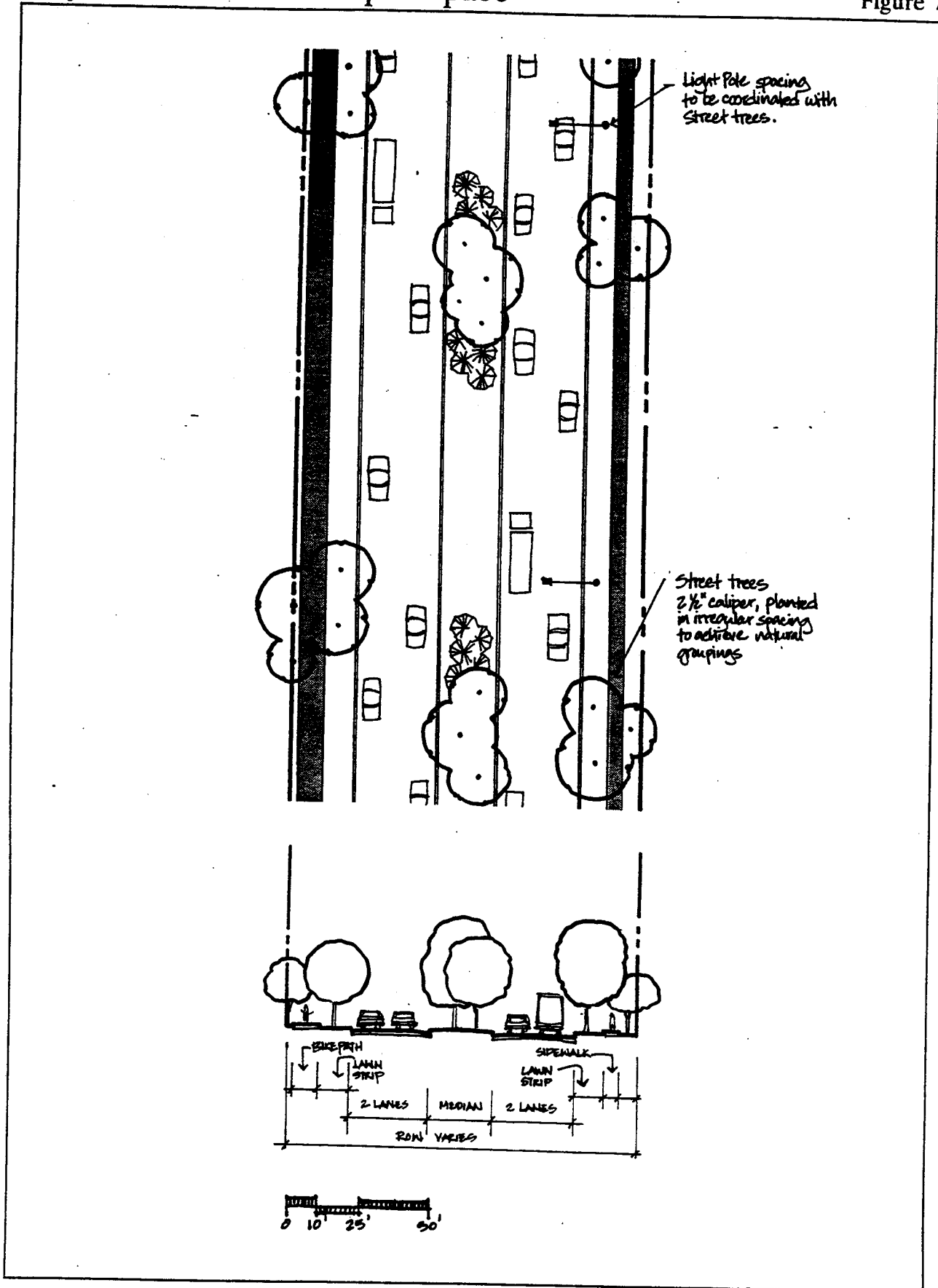
Figure 6



Germantown Streetscape Concept Plan and Guidelines

Divided Arterials Adj. to Woodlands & Open Space

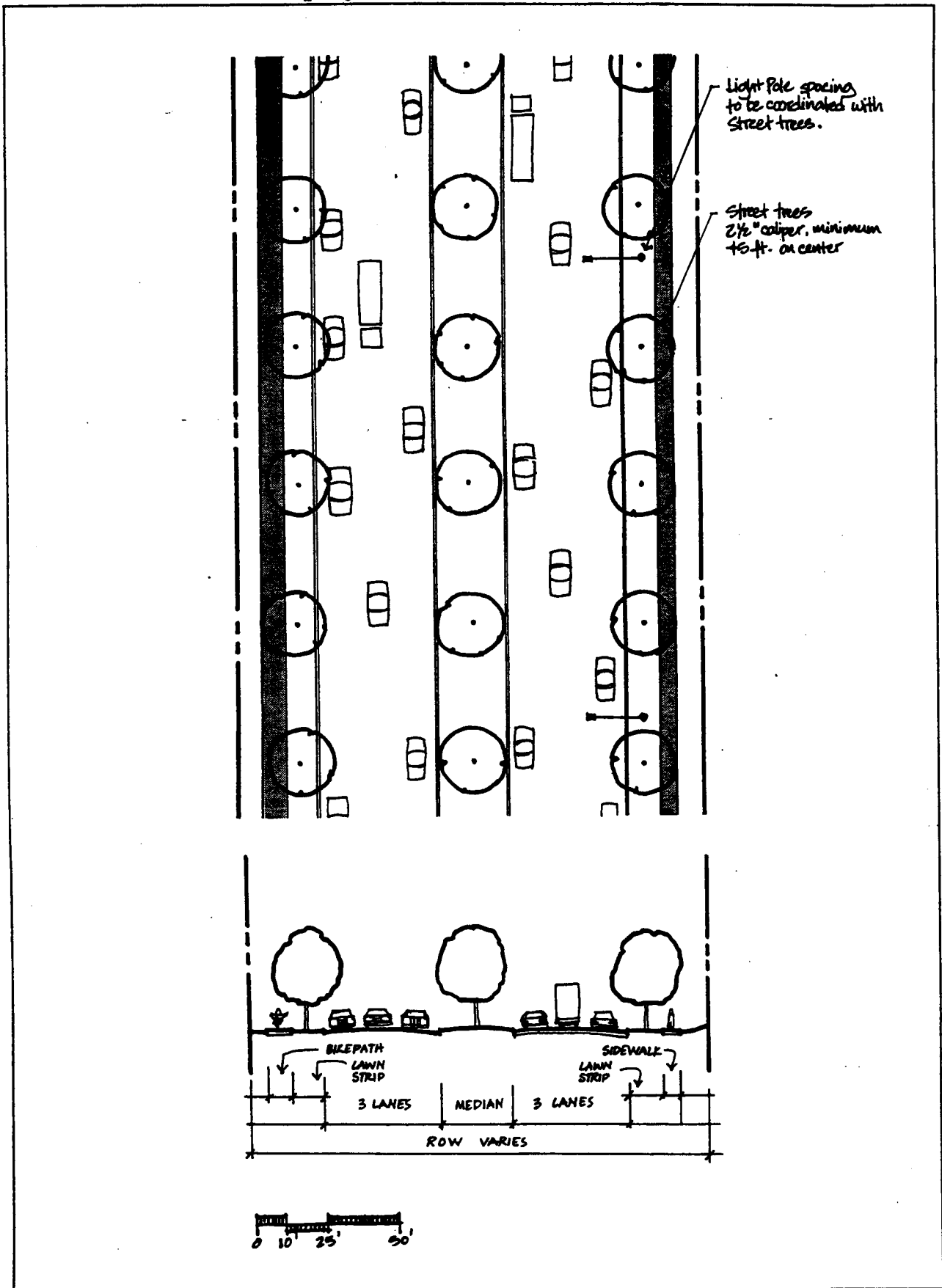
Figure 7



Germantown Streetscape Concept Plan and Guidelines

Major Highways In Residential & Employment Areas

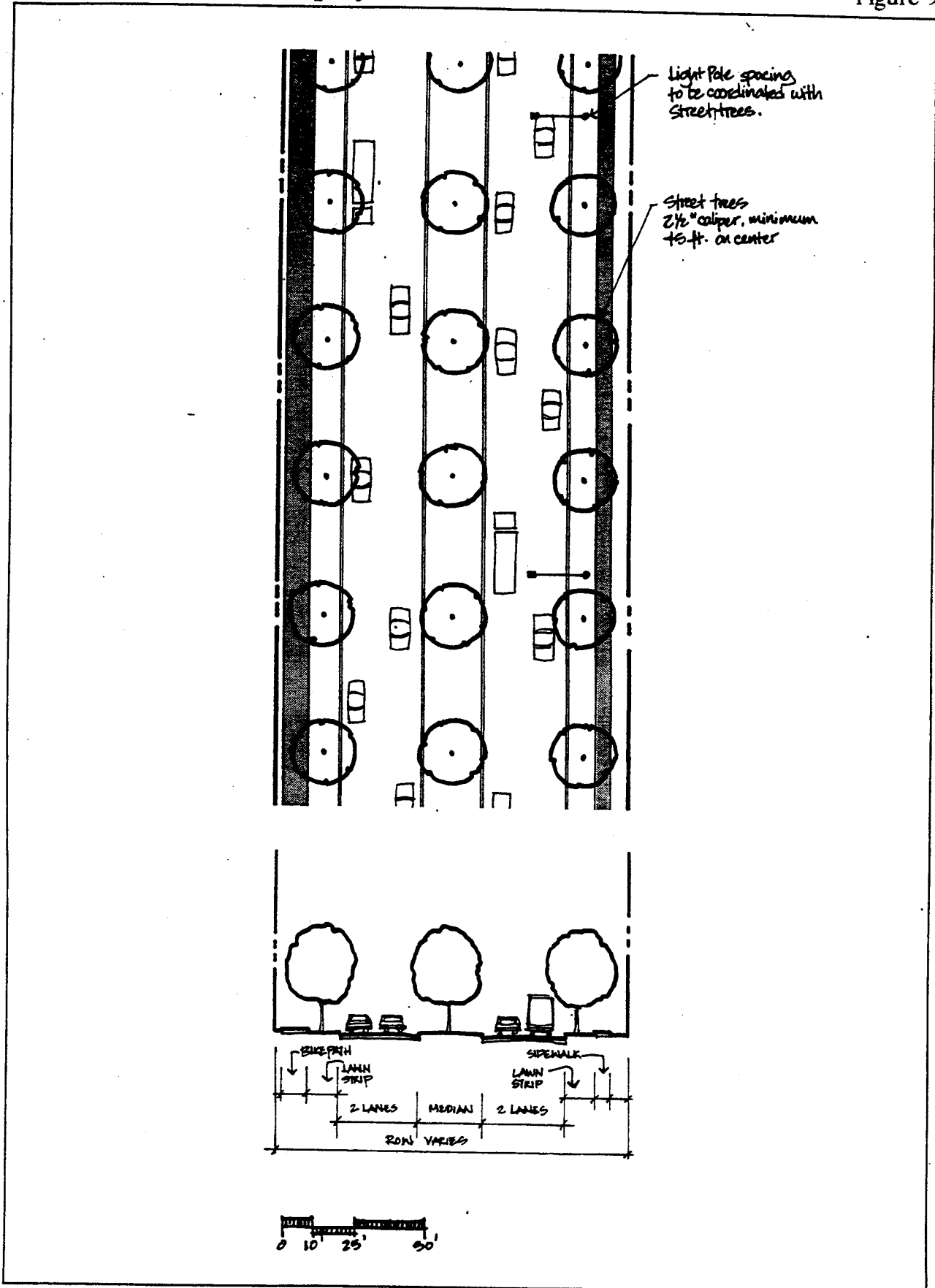
Figure 8



Germantown Streetscape Concept Plan and Guidelines

Divided Arterials In Residential & Employment Areas

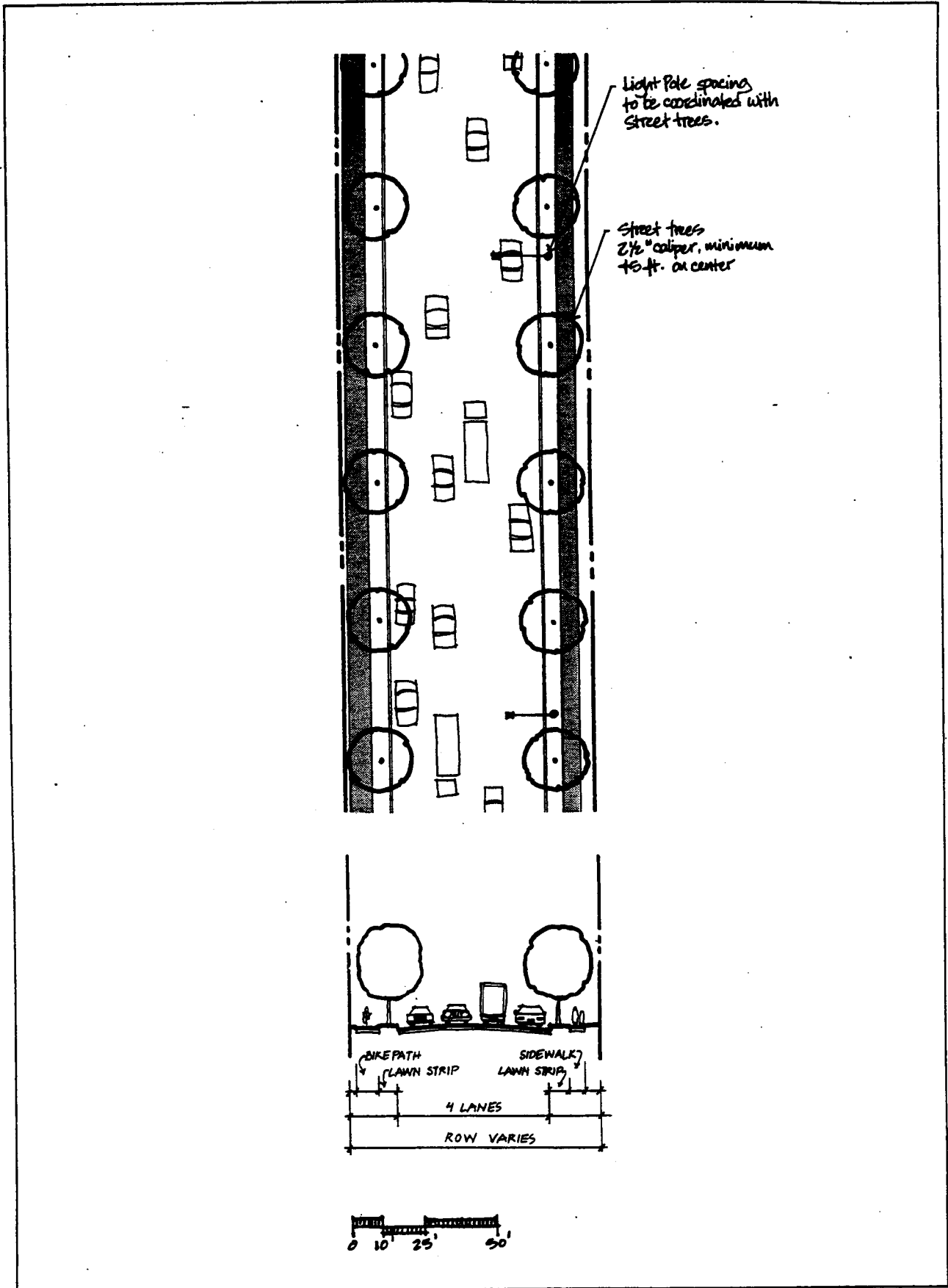
Figure 9



Germantown Streetscape Concept Plan and Guidelines

Undivided Arterials In Residential & Employment Areas

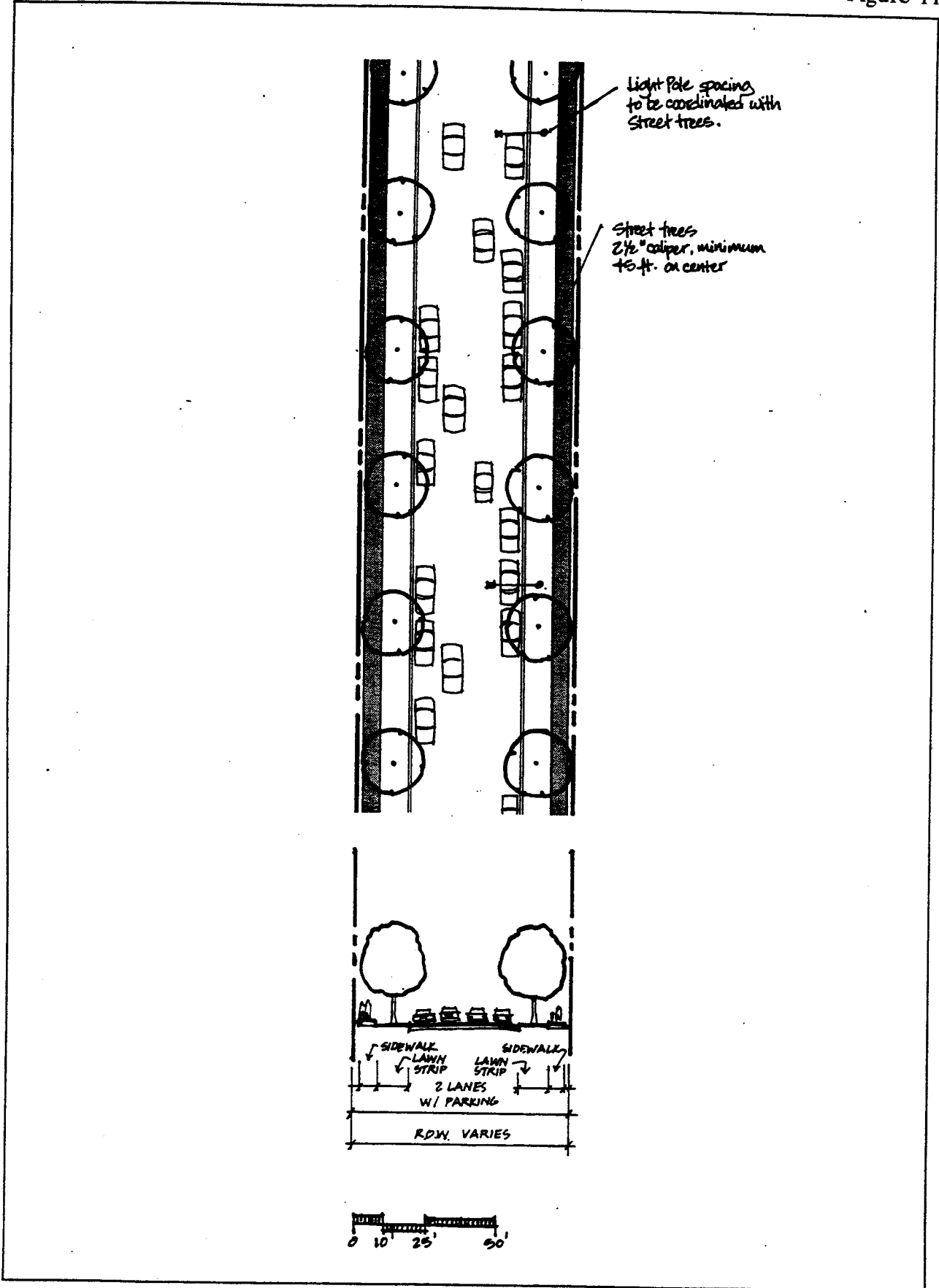
Figure 10



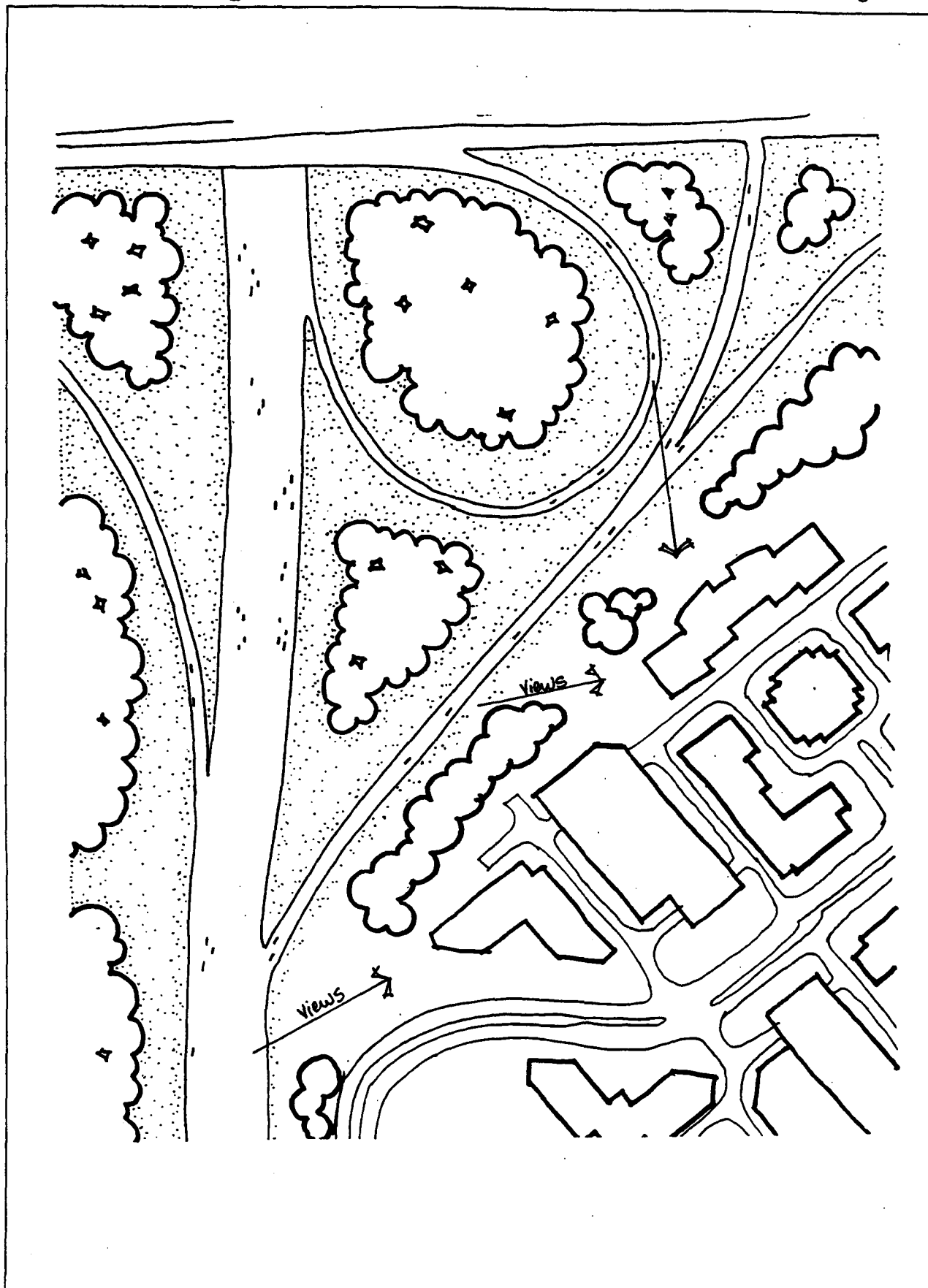
Germantown Streetscape Concept Plan and Guidelines

Primary Streets In Residential Areas

Figure 11



Germantown Streetscape Concept Plan and Guidelines



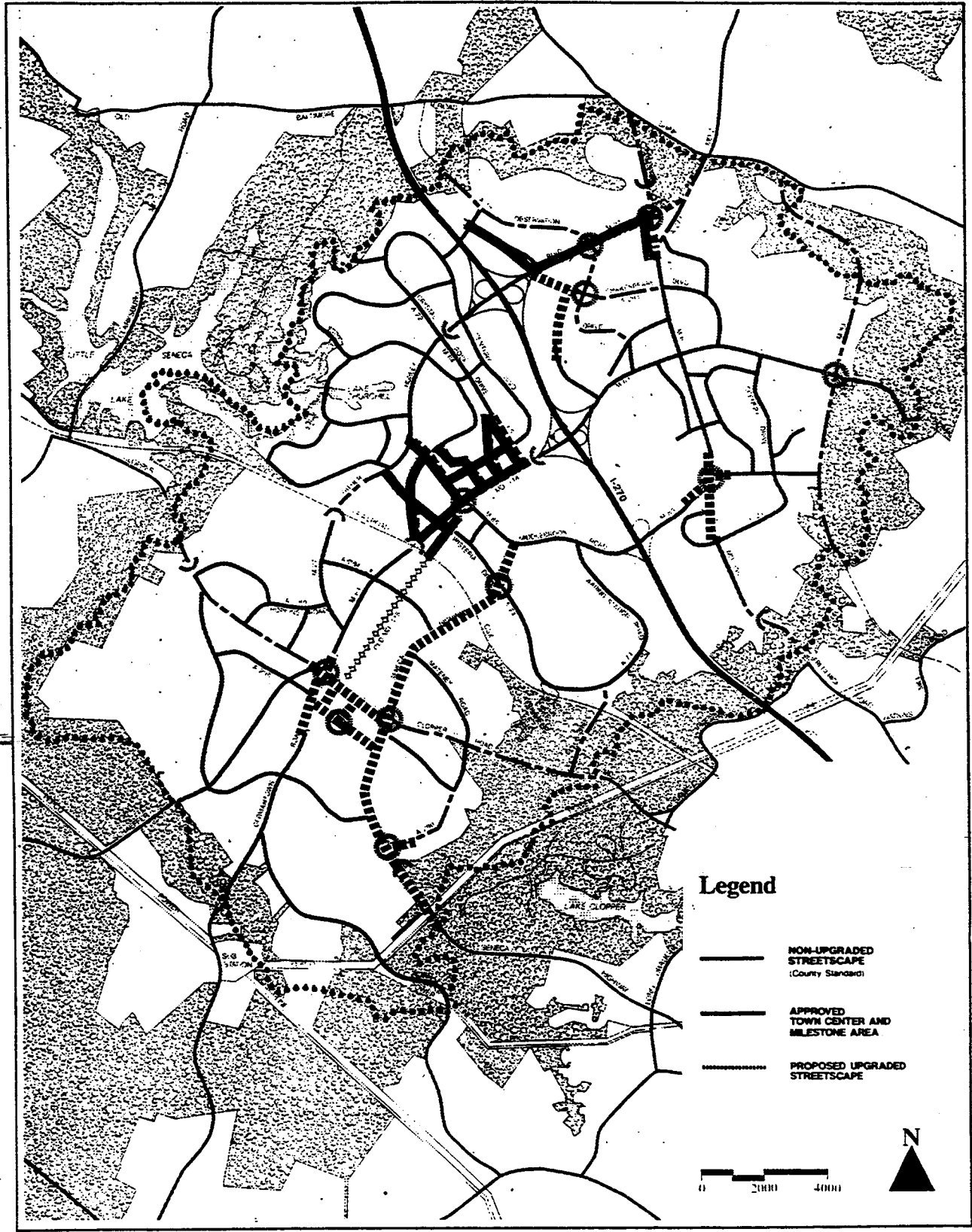
Germantown Streetscape Concept Plan and Guidelines

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

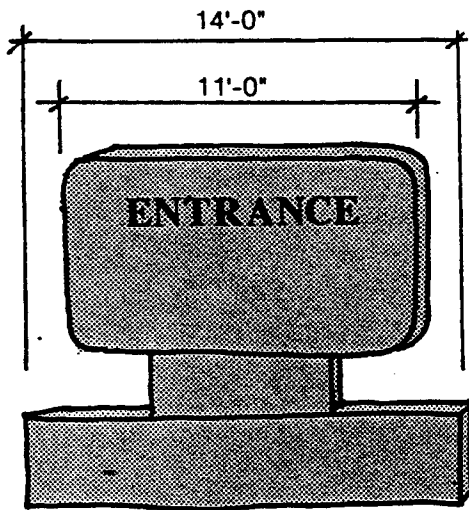
Winter, 1994

Upgraded Streetscape Areas

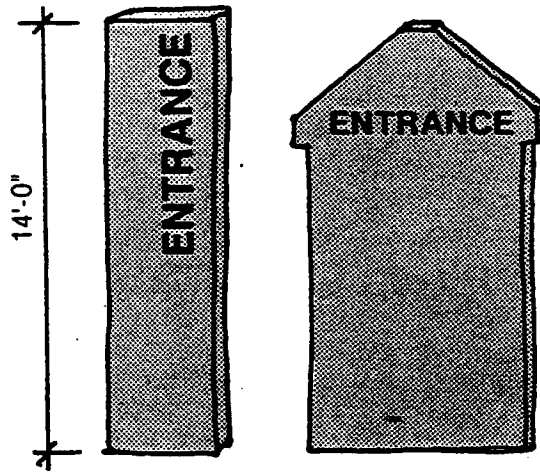
Figure 13



Germantown Streetscape Concept Plan and Guidelines



Monumental Signage
(Approved in Master Plan)



Vertical Monumental Signage
(Acceptable Signage Styles
in addition to Master Plan Approved Sign)



Germantown Streetscape Concept Plan and Guidelines

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Winter, 1994

TABLE 1: PROPOSED SIDEWALKS AND BIKEWAY REVISIONS TO THE 1989 GERMANTOWN MASTER PLAN

* = Roadway Projects in various stages of design by MCDOT and that have received MCPB Mandatory Referral Approval

Master Plan Roadway No.	Roadway Name	Limits	Sidewalk Need	Bike Path Need	Other Comments/Recommendations
M-83	Mid-County Highway	(1) MD 118 North to Planning Area Boundary		East Side - 7500 ft.	Keep Planned bike path on west side. Construct additional bike path on east side as part of ultimate road construction to provide consistency with bike path south of MD 118.
M-61	Germentown-Darnestown Road* (MD 118)	(2) 1-3 to MD 355		North Side - 3000 ft.	Mandatory referral shows sidewalks both sides. However, a bikepath is needed to connect I-3, Montgomery College and MD 355. Roadway is constructed. Future retrofit will be required.
		(3) Old MD 118 to MD 117		West Side - 2000 ft.	Mandatory referral shows sidewalks both sides. However, a gap in the bike system occurs here. Design and Landscape plan are completed.
		(4) M-27 to MD 117		West Side - 1500 ft.	Needed to connect proposed route connecting Kingsview Village area to west side of town center and beyond to cross I-270.
None	Old Germentown Road/Walter Johnson Road (Old MD 118)	(5) MD 117 to Germentown Square Park		Both Sides - 7500 ft.	A logical route to Germentown Elementary School and linking Village Centers to Town Center along historic street. An on street Bike Route (Class III bikeway) is proposed for 7500 ft.
A-291	Shakespeare Drive	(6) Observation Drive to MD 355	North Side - 2000 ft.	South Side - 2000 ft.	A necessary link between MD 355 and Observation Drive.

Note: Bikepaths are Class I bikeways unless otherwise noted.

Master Plan Roadway No.	Roadway Name	Limits	Sidewalk Need	Bike Path Need	Other Comments/Recommendations
M-27	Father Hurley Boulevard	(8) Wisteria Drive to MD 118		West Side - 6000 ft.	Master plan shows sidewalks both sides. However, a link is needed from bike path to be retrofitted north of Wisteria Drive, southward to MD 118.
		(8) Crystal Rock Drive to Wisteria Drive	East Side - 2000 ft	West Side - 5000 ft	Sidewalks exist both sides in some sections. Retrofit bike path on north/west and a sidewalk wherever missing on south/east side.
M-85	Middlebrook Road	(9) Father Hurley Boulevard to Locbury Drive, MD 118 to Great Seneca Highway, I-270 to MD 355		North Side - 7500 ft.	Needed to create continuous bikepath on the north side from Father Hurley Boulevard to MD 355.
A-289	Waring Station Road	(10) CSX tracks to Wisteria Drive	East Side - 600 ft.	West Side - 600 ft.	Gap between Wisteria Drive bikepath and planned bikepath south of CSX tracks. Retrofit of existing road.
A-74	Wisteria Drive	(11) Manegarden Drive to Father Hurley Boulevard	North Side - 2000 ft.		Needed to connect residential area to Father Hurley Boulevard and the Town Center. Already developed area.
A-19	Observation Drive*	(12) Old MD 118 to New MD 118		West side 1000 ft.	Existing roadway has sidewalks on both sides. A bikepath needed here and on MD 118 to connect Observation Drive bikepath to MD 355 bikepath.
None	Neelsville Church Road	(13) MD 355 to Shakespear Boulevard	South Side - 1800 ft.		Needed to provide safe access to King Middle school in already developed area. Construct asphalt path due to existing open section road.

Master Plan Roadway No.	Roadway Name	Limits	Sidewalk Need	Bike Path Need	Other Comments/Recommendations
A-254	Dawson Farm Road*	(14) M-27 to Great Seneca Highway	North side - 1500 ft.	South Side - 4000 ft.	Needed to provide a link between Great Seneca Highway and MD 118, to Germantown Elementary School and to Father Hurley Boulevard.
None	Waldorf Drive	(15) Intersection with Wynnfield Drive	West Side - 100 ft.		Gap in already developed area.
None	Wynnfield Drive	(16) Intersection with Waters Landing Drive	West Side - 300 ft.		Gap in already developed area.
None	Waters Landing Drive	(17) At Waters Landing Local Park	South Side - 600 ft.		Gap in already developed area. Coordinate with Parks Department to locate on Parks property if necessary.
A-36	Brink Road	(18) MD 355 to MD 27 MD 27 to MD 83		South Side - 5000 ft.	Link M-27 to M-83 along Greenbelt Coordinate with Parks Department to design and build concurrently with Parks property. Developer is providing bikepath on southside from MD 27 to Seneca Crossing Drive.
I-4	New Road	(19) Crystal Park Drive to Observation Drive		North Side - 2000 ft.	A logical route for linking two sides of I-270
None	Transitway	(20) Century Blvd. to Observation Drive		7000 ft.	A logical route for linking two sides of I-270
I-3	Goldenrod Land	(21) MD 118 to Transitway		East Side - 2000 ft.	A logical route to Montgomery College
I-1	Century Blvd.	(22) Transitway north to I-2	North Side - 2000 ft.	West Side - 1000 ft.	Needed to connect with planned bikeway on the north end of I-1

TABLE 2: Status of Landscape Plan Review of Roadways

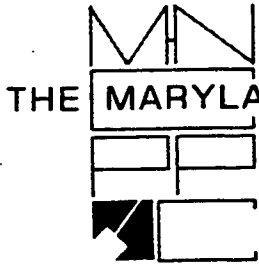
ROADWAY PROJECTS APPROVED BY THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD (THROUGH MANDATORY REFERRAL) IN THE GERMANTOWN PLANNING AREA

Master Plan Roadway No.	Roadway Name	From	Limits	To	Remarks	Status of Landscaping Plan
M-27	Father Hurley Blvd./ Relocated Ridge Rd.	Crystal Rock Drive	East of MD 355		Bike path on north side. Sidewalk on south side.	Separate landscaping contract to be awarded by MCDOT between Crystal Rock Drive and I-270. No design has been submitted. Developers to fund landscaping plan between I-270 and east of MD 355. No design has been submitted.
M-61	Relocated MD 118	South of Clopper Rd.	Wisteria Dr.		Sidewalk on both sides	Developers to fund a portion of landscaping plan. Design is 95% complete.
M-61	Relocated MD 118	I-270	MD 355		Sidewalk on both sides	Separate landscaping contract to be awarded by MCDOT. No design has been submitted.
M-61	Relocated MD 118	MD 355	Scenery Dr.		Bikepath on north side. Sidewalk on south side	Developers to fund a portion of landscaping plan. No design has been submitted.
M-26	Clopper Road (Part of Relocated MD 118 Project)	West of Schaeffer Rd.	East of Existing MD 118		Bikepath on both sides	Developers to fund landscaping plan. Design is 95% complete.
M-26	Clopper Road	East of Existing MD 118	Great Seneca Highway		Bikepath on both sides	Developers to fund landscaping plan. No design has been submitted.
M-85	Middlebrook Road	Great Seneca Highway	I-270		Bikepath on north side. Sidewalk on south side.	Separate landscaping contract to be awarded by MCDOT. No design has been submitted.

Master Plan Roadway No.	Roadway Name	From	Limits	To	Remarks	Status of Landscaping Plan
M-85	Middlebrook Road	I-270	MD 355	MD 355	Bikepath on south side. Sidewalk on north side.	Separate landscaping contract to be awarded by MCDOT. No design has been submitted.
M-90	Great Seneca Highway	Planning Boundary Line	Middlebrook Road	Middlebrook Road	Bikepath on east side	Street trees to be provided by MCDOT - Highway Maintenance Section.
M-6	MD 355	South of Middlebrook Rd.	South of Brink Rd.	South of Brink Rd.	Bikepath on west side. Sidewalk on east side	Developers to fund landscaping plan. No design has been submitted.
A-19	Observation Dr.	Existing MD 118	North of I-4	North of I-4	Bikepath on west side. Sidewalk on east side	Developers to fund landscaping plan. No design has been submitted.

Source: M-NCPPC
Transportation Planning Division
10/31/91

DW:kcw/birdwaypro



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
8787 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
OPINION

GERMANTOWN STREETScape CONCEPT PLAN AND GUIDELINES

Germantown Streetscape Concept Plan
and Guidelines for Staff Use

Date Mailed: 3/16/94

Action: (Motion was made by Commissioner Floreen, seconded by Commissioner Richardson with a vote of 5-0, Commissioners Hussmann, Aron, Richardson, Baptiste and Floreen voting for.)

On March 10, 1994, staff presented to the Planning Board the Germantown Streetscape Concept Plan and Guidelines and requested approval of the guidelines for staff use. The concept plan and guidelines were called for in the approved and adopted Germantown Master Plan.

The concept plan provides guidance for developers and others in their submittal of zoning, special exceptions, subdivision, site plan, and project plan applications. The document also will serve to guide county agencies and others in mandatory referral submissions. The concept plan is intended to achieve a more coherent and attractive treatment of roadways in Germantown than would be achieved otherwise.



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GERMANTOWN ST SCAPE