

OWINGS TOWN CENTER

MASTER PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE



Calvert County, Maryland
2000

Adopted: June 27, 2000
Amended: December 4, 2001
Amended: October 28, 2003
Amended: December 2, 2003
Amended: May 1, 2006
Amended: March 25, 2008
Amended: May 4, 2012
Amended: January 31, 2018
Amended: January 3, 2019
Amended: February 19, 2025

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Resolution No. 22 - 00

PERTAINING TO THE ADOPTION OF THE MASTER PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE FOR THE OWINGS TOWN CENTER

WHEREAS, pursuant the authority contained in Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the Board of County Commissioners of Calvert County has the general powers to promulgate master plans and zoning ordinances; and

WHEREAS, on March 14, 2000, the Calvert County Planning Commission held a public hearing and considered the proposed Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, on March 29, 2000 the Calvert County Planning Commission approved the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance and recommended adoption of both to the Board of County Commissions; and

WHEREAS, on April 25, 2000 the Board of County Commissioners unanimously adopted both the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance with no substantive changes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Calvert County that the Owings Town Center Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance, which are attached hereto and made a part hereof, be and hereby are approved as the official Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance for the Owings Town Center.

Done, this 27th day of June, 2000 by the Board of County Commissioners of Calvert County, Maryland, sitting in regular session.

ATTEST:

Mary S. Watson
Mary S. Watson, Clerk

Approved for legal sufficiency on 6/27/00
by Emanuel Demedis

Emanuel Demedis
County Attorney

Received for Record. 28 June 28 2000
at 10:30 o'clock A. M. Same day
recorded in Liber KPS No. 12
Folio. 714 COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTION.

Garry P. Smith

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Special thanks are due the residents of the Owings area for their active participation in and commitment to the production of this master plan and zoning ordinance. Special thanks are due also to Grace Brethren Church in Owings, Maryland for generously making its facilities available for public meetings, workshops, and presentations.

RESOLUTION OF THE CALVERT COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
APPROVING THE OWINGS TOWN CENTER MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, it is the duty of the Calvert County Planning Commission, pursuant to Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, to make and approve a plan to guide the physical development of the County; and

WHEREAS, a master plan for the Owings Town Center would serve to refine and detail the adopted County Comprehensive Plan for Calvert County; and

WHEREAS, a master plan for the Owings Town Center has been prepared which has included:

1. The collection, compilation, processing and analyses of relevant demographic, economic, land use, transportation, and travel data pertaining to the Town Center;
2. The forecast of growth and change;
3. The formulation of development objectives and desired characteristics for future development;
4. The design of recommendations to guide future land development and the provision of public facilities and services throughout the Town Center; and
5. The design of recommendations, guidelines and standards to guide implementation of the plan; and

WHEREAS; the Calvert County Planning Commission has considered the plan and its supporting findings and recommendations and held of public hearing on the same; and

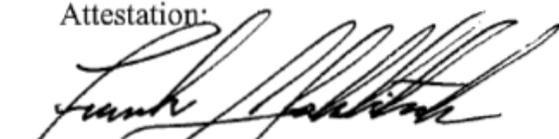
WHEREAS, the plan and its supporting findings and recommendations are set forth in the form of text, maps, charts and figures in a report entitled, A Master Plan for the Owings Town Center; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission considers the plan to be a necessary guide to the future development of the Owings Town Center;

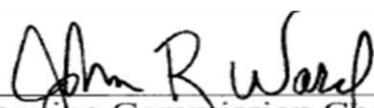
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Calvert County Planning Commission hereby approves the Master Plan for the Owings Town Center and recommends the plan to the Calvert County Board of Commissioners for adoption;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chairman of the Planning Commission transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the Calvert County Board of Commissioners.

Attestation:



Planning Commission Secretary



Planning Commission Chairman

RESOLUTION OF THE CALVERT COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF THE
OWINGS TOWN CENTER ZONING ORDINANCE

WHEREAS, it is the duty of the Calvert County Planning Commission, pursuant to Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, to make recommendations concerning the amendment of the Calvert County Zoning Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Owings Town Center Zoning Ordinance would amend the Calvert County Zoning Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Owings Town Center Zoning Ordinance has been based upon and designed to help implement the Owings Town Center Master Plan; and

WHEREAS; the Calvert County Planning Commission has considered the zoning ordinance and held a public hearing on the same; and

WHEREAS, the zoning ordinance is set forth in the form of text, maps, charts and figures in a report entitled, Owings Town Center Zoning Ordinance;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Calvert County Planning Commission hereby recommends the Owings Town Center Zoning Ordinance to the Board of County Commissioners for approval;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chairman of the Planning Commission transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the Calvert County Board of Commissioners.



Planning Commission Chairman

Attestation:


Planning Commission Secretary

Owings Town Center Master Plan

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Section 1 INTRODUCTION

The Calvert County Comprehensive Plan identifies four principal planning goals for Calvert County. These include: a) promoting sustainable development; b) encouraging a stable and enduring economic base; c) providing for safety, health and education, and d) preserving the natural, cultural and historic assets of Calvert County. Part of the strategy for achieving these goals is a Land Use Plan which has four steps associated with it. These are: 1) Reduce the total build-out, 2) Reduce the rate of residential growth, 3) Preserve the County's prime farms, forests, historic resources and sensitive areas, and 4) Direct growth to appropriate locations.

Key to accomplishing the County's objective is the fourth step outlined above: directing growth to appropriate locations. These areas should receive growth that has been redirected away from farms, forests and sensitive areas. In turn, these "receiving areas" should be attractive, and convenient places that have the vitality of rural towns and villages that are so much a part of Maryland's history. To this end, Calvert County has made a commitment to the establishment of Town Centers, in part to accomplish a number of goals:

- To avoid scattered / strip commercial development along MD 2/4:
To promote business growth by providing infrastructure and enabling businesses to benefit from proximity to each other;
- To expand the choice of housing options by providing zoning and infrastructure for multi-family development, including low and moderate income and elderly housing;
- To reduce dependency on motor vehicles; and
To reduce growth within agricultural areas.

Owings is a designated town center. To promote informed and orderly development, the County has undertaken a process of developing a master plan for each town center. The Owings Town Center Master Plan is official Calvert County policy and functions as an addendum to the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of this Master Plan is to guide the growth and development of the Owings Town Center and adjacent lands into a harmonious and efficient pattern.

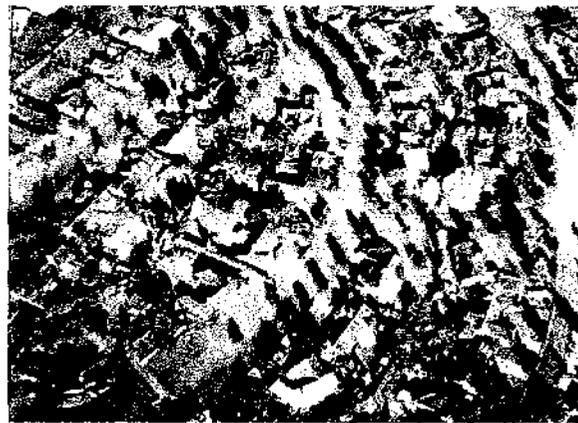


Figure 1-1 Typical North American suburb. Greenspace exists as private manicured lawns, and is controlled by individual homeowners. While pleasant to look at, it preserves no forests or open space. In suburbs of this type, there is no community center and no defined edge. This type of development is contrary to the objectives of the Town Center concept.



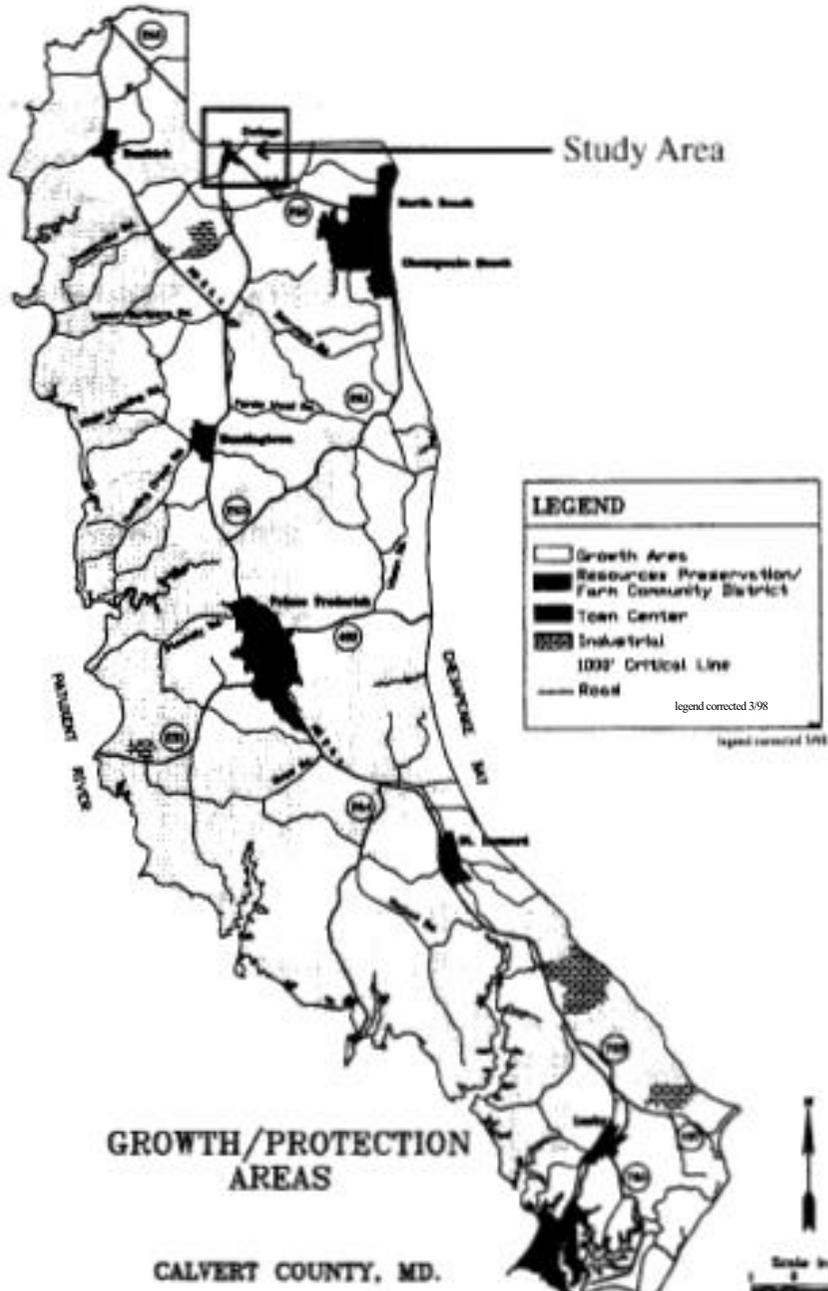
Figure 1-2 Village of Stenton, Scotland. This is a planned community with a variety of housing sizes and prices, as well as commercial establishments clustered around a village green set within rolling pastures. This practice enables retention of open space and agricultural uses. This village is consistent with the Town Center concept.

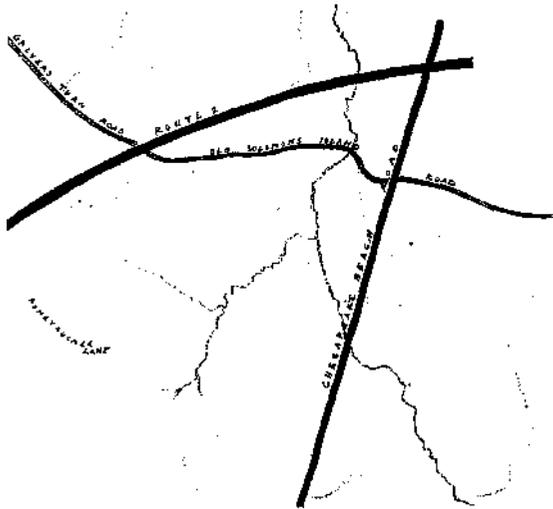
4 Physical Conditions

**Section 2
EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS**

Location:

The Owings Town Center is located along Chesapeake Beach Road and MD Route 2, just south of the Anne Arundel County line. It is approximately 35 miles southeast of Washington, DC and four-miles west of Calvert County's two municipalities, Chesapeake Beach, and North Beach. The Owings Town Center is one of eight designated town centers in Calvert County.





Site Boundaries and Major Thoroughfares

The Owings Town Center designation defines an area measuring approximately 75-acres shaped, more or less, like an arrowhead. Chesapeake Beach Road to the northeast, and MD Route 2 to the west form the top of this arrowhead while Hall Creek to the south and Old Solomon's Island Road form its bottom.

Figure 2-2: Principle Thoroughfares within or adjacent to site.

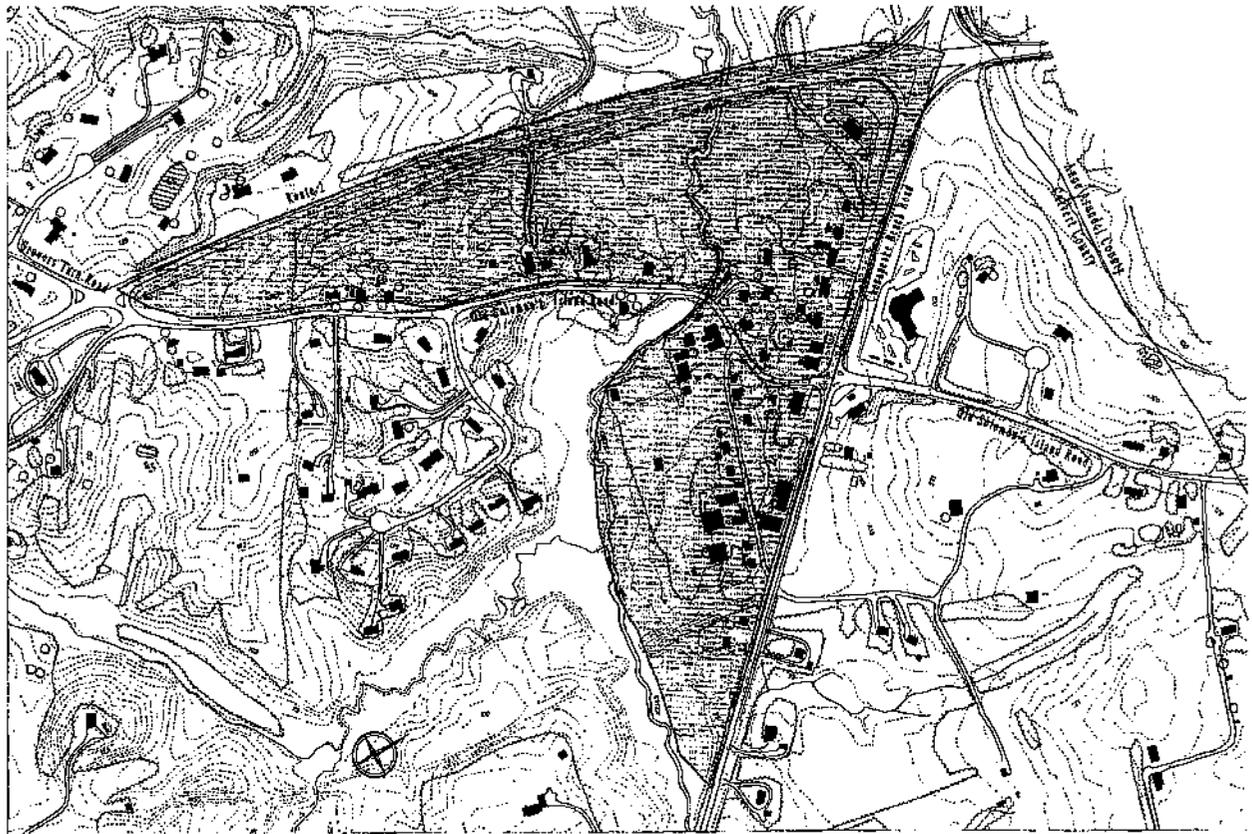


Figure 2-3: Existing Site

6 Physical Conditions

Zoning

The Calvert County Zoning Ordinance regulates land use development within the County according to the Comprehensive Plan. Under County Zoning, lands contained within the Owings Town Center designation constitute a distinct zoning district. The "town center" district allows for a mix of activities including residential, retail, office and institutional. Once the Master Plan is adopted, a more refined and detailed town center zoning ordinance may be developed to implement the Master Plan. The town center zoning ordinance would then supercede the general County Zoning Ordinance.

The Town Center district is bordered at Chesapeake Beach Road by an Employment Center Town Center district (ECTC). The ECTC district allows, primarily, for offices and other non-retail commercial development. R-1 zones border the remainder of the designated Town Center area and can be developed to a residential density of one-dwelling unit per acre. (See *Figure 2.4*)

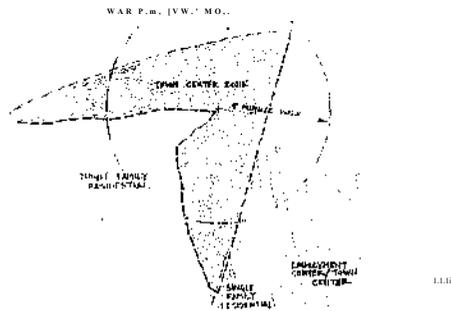


Figure 2-4: Existing Zones

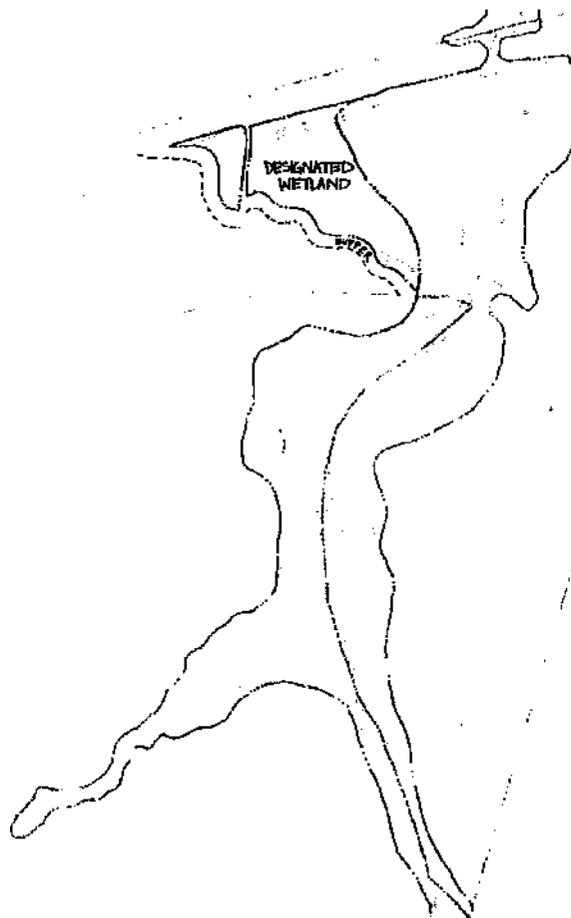


Figure 2-5: Hall Creek Flood Plain and Wetlands

Wetlands and Floodplains

Wetlands and floodplains associated with Hall Creek occupy 22.5-acres, almost one-third of the Town Center. These areas partly form a natural edge to the Town Center, but do effectively cut the southern half of the "arrowhead" from the rest of the designated Town Center area (see *Figure 2.5*).

Topography

The terrain in Owings varies from relatively flat (no more than 6 percent grade) to steep (15 percent or more). The latter condition is especially true along Route 2, where regrading for highway improvement created, in effect, a berm preventing connections to Route 2.

Parcelization

The area within the Town Center is mostly characterized by many small parcels. Where large parcels do exist, they are dominated by areas made unbuildable due to floodplains or wetlands. While this condition supports an increment of development typical of rural villages and small towns, it is not consistent with the exigencies of contemporary real estate development. Therefore, it is likely that some land assemblages will occur overtime, guided in part by the Master Plan.

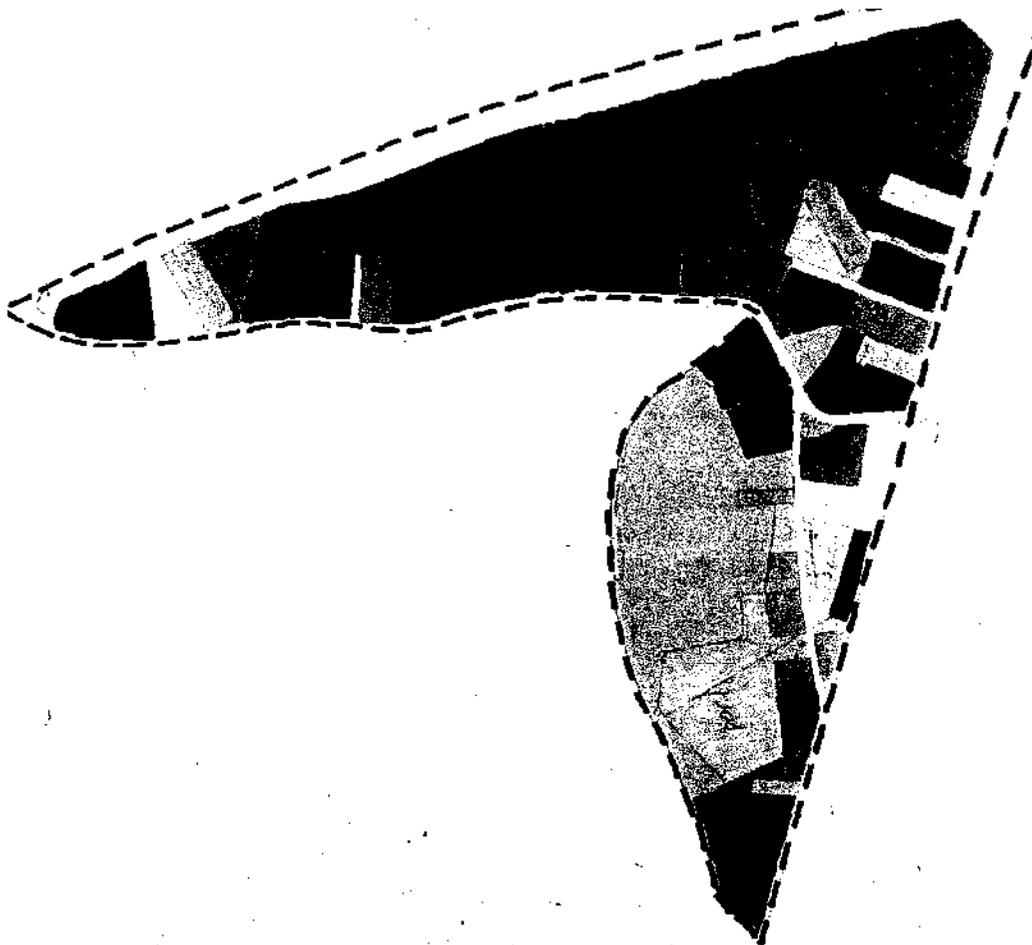


Figure 2-6: Map showing existing parcels

Section 3

THE OWINGS TOWN CENTER MASTER PLAN

The Community Vision: Devising the Owings Town Center Plan

Bringing together a cross-section of Owings Area residents and other stakeholders for a day of drawing and discussion, the Master Planning process began with a Design Workshop including residents, property owners, County officials, and other interested stakeholders. The workshop considered, among other things, methods to develop the Owings Town Center into a vital, pedestrian friendly community that preserves its rural village atmosphere, while enhancing its potential for incremental economic development.

The Quality of Life Survey:

Participants at the Design Workshop completed a Quality of Life Survey. Many of the survey's questions were designed as "indicator questions," i.e., questions whose responses suggest something of a larger phenomenon. Many dealt with automobile use and proximity to services, while others related to the physical attributes of a neighborhood that have been shown to impact community life. These questions were meant to prompt participants to consider the characteristics of their own neighborhood, particularly those that contributed to or detracted from, a "sense of community."

The survey revealed both a fondness for man-made places that evoked a "sense of place" as well as unspoiled, natural environments. In particular, desired characteristics for town centers included an intimate, walkable scale, clearly defined boundaries, civic spaces for public gatherings and the presence of small, service oriented shops (e.g. post office, bank, grocery/deli, dry cleaners, small restaurants, etc.) as opposed to the larger, generic, "big box" retailers (chain supermarkets, discount department stores, etc.).

The survey results also indicated that the rural character of the area was one of its most desirable characteristics. Concern was expressed that increased development may destroy that character and bring with it traffic problems.

A complete tabulation of the Quality of Life Survey is available upon request from the Calvert County Department of Planning and Zoning.

The Workshop

The Owings Town Center Design Workshop elicited a consensus on a preferred planning direction as well as a general sense of the community's hopes and concerns. Long time residents were proud of the village's past, pointing out that, at one time, Owings was a stop on the railway that connected Washington, DC to Chesapeake Beach. Both long time residents and newcomers expressed concern over the possibility that new development would be scaled to the highway, in a suburban "strip" form of development, serving the needs of commuters; this would diminish the unique characteristics of place. Disappointment over the move of the Post Office to its new location and building was also a common theme.

Following a brainstorming session in which participants worked in small groups to devise their own strategies for the Town Center's new development, consensus emerged on both the desired characteristics, as well as those to be avoided.

Desired Characteristics for the Town Center.

- Maintain a "small town" character for Owings.
- Provide a way for pedestrians to safely cross Chesapeake Beach Road.
 - Provide a visual and community focus for the Town Center.
- Make Thomas Avenue into a "Main Street."
- Provide park space adjacent to Hall Creek.
- Provide sidewalks along Old Solomon's Island Road and along Thomas Avenue.
- Calm traffic along Chesapeake Beach Road through the Owings Town Center.
 - Provide a mix of uses including small scale retail shops with residential lots in close proximity.
 - Provide for a community center facility, possibly in the existing structure, at intersection of Old Solomon's Island Road and Thomas Avenue.

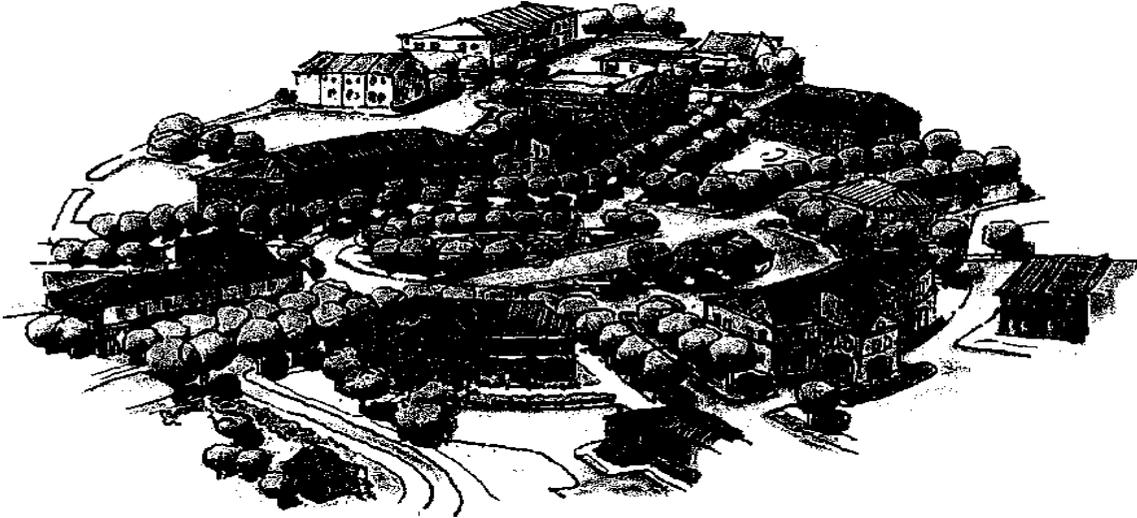


Figure 3-1. Aerial Perspective of proposed Owings Town Center. View is taken from east overlooking the proposed circle at the intersection of Chesapeake Beach Road and Thomas Avenue.

Characteristics to be avoided in the Town Center
 - "Big box" retailing, including standard supermarkets. - Suburban "strip" type development.

General Characteristics of the Town Center Plan

The Owings Town Center plan is based upon the "neighborhood" as the fundamental unit of planning. A discrete element with a finite size, the neighborhood has a recognizable center, multiple paths to any destination within its borders, and a wide variety of housing opportunities. It has civic, commercial and recreational amenities within its boundary. So essential is the neighborhood as the building block for town form, that one discerns its presence at all scales of urbanism. It is easily recognizable in rural villages and it is also embedded in the structure of the world's great cities and towns - the "quarter" in Paris, to cite one example.

The plan for the Owings Town Center recognizes this historical and sociological reality. The town center is conceived according to an idealized dimension, one based upon the distance that an average human being can walk in 5 minutes. Translated into dimensions, this measures mile, or 1,320 feet and defines the effective radius of the Owings Town Center.

Defining the Town Center's size in this way allows an overlay of the neighborhood concept atop existing zoning classifications. Thus, the Owings "neighborhood" spans both sides of Chesapeake Beach Road and includes both the Town Center and the Employment Center Town Center. It accommodates a mixing of these densities, as it does other activities, such as shopping, working, learning and playing.

More specifically, the Owings Town Center discussed in the workshop and proposed in the Master Plan has the following characteristics.

- The Town Center has a series of centers, or focal points for congregating as well as for recreation. These include a community center on Old Solomon's Island Road at the western end of Thomas Avenue, a formal circle along Chesapeake Beach Road, an informal park along the Hall Creek flood plain, and a proposal for an informal playing field / campus as part of the Employment Center Town Center. All of these areas are accessible -- that is, they are within walking distance of most properties within the Town Center.
- To the extent possible, there is an interconnectivity of streets within the Town Center in a network appropriate to the terrain, existing traffic conditions and land development potential.

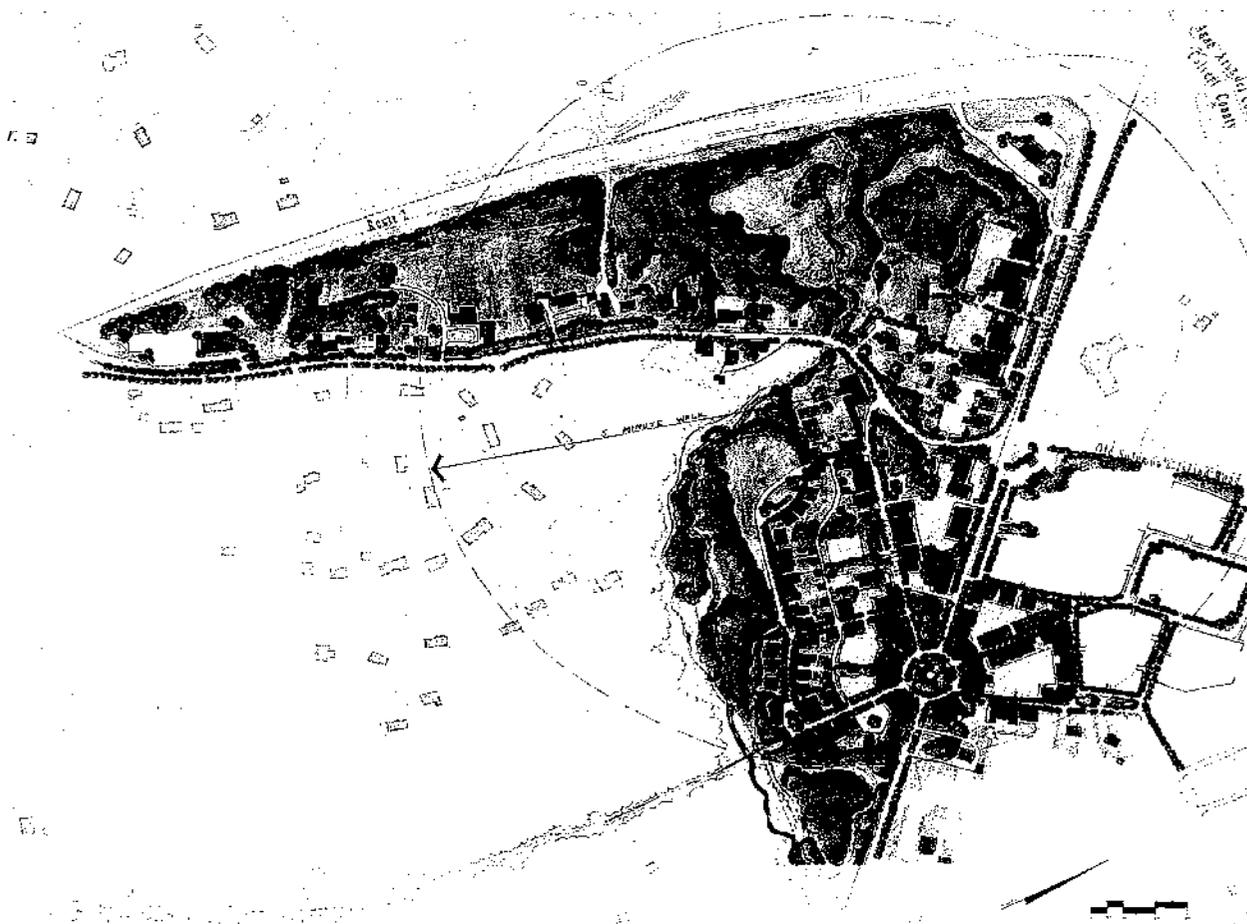


Figure 3-2. Illustrated Master Plan

- The Town Center possesses a variety of housing types accommodating a range of incomes. Affordable units are dispersed throughout the Town Center and are indistinguishable by quality from other units.
- The Town Center provides opportunities for the harmonious mixing of commercial and residential uses.
- Public space in the Town Center is shaped by the architecture. In particular, the massing, height, and positioning of buildings on the street are characteristics which help determine the scale and intimacy of the space -- the degree to which it feels good to be there. Of utmost importance, garages and parking lots are less dominant than houses and other structures on the street.
- The Town Center provides realistic accommodations for parking automobiles. Parking on the street is the norm and parking lots are provided to the rear or sides of buildings.
- Alleys or lanes provide rear access to parcels facilitating the provision of garages and utilities to the rear of houses.
- The role of streets as fundamental elements of public space within the Town Center, is emphasized with street trees and landscaping. Sidewalks or paths that connect houses to each other, houses to centers and commercial areas are the norm. Lead walks connect sidewalks to front doors and main entrances.

Description of the Town Center Master Plan

A key feature of the Owings Town Center Master Plan is a circle to be located at the intersection of Chesapeake Beach Road and Thomas Avenue. The circle provides the community's desired means for integrating the ECTC area with the Town Center, managing local circulation and minimizing conflicts between fast moving commuter through-traffic and slower moving local traffic. It also provides a place for pedestrians to cross the busy arterial highway as well as a focal point for the community (a

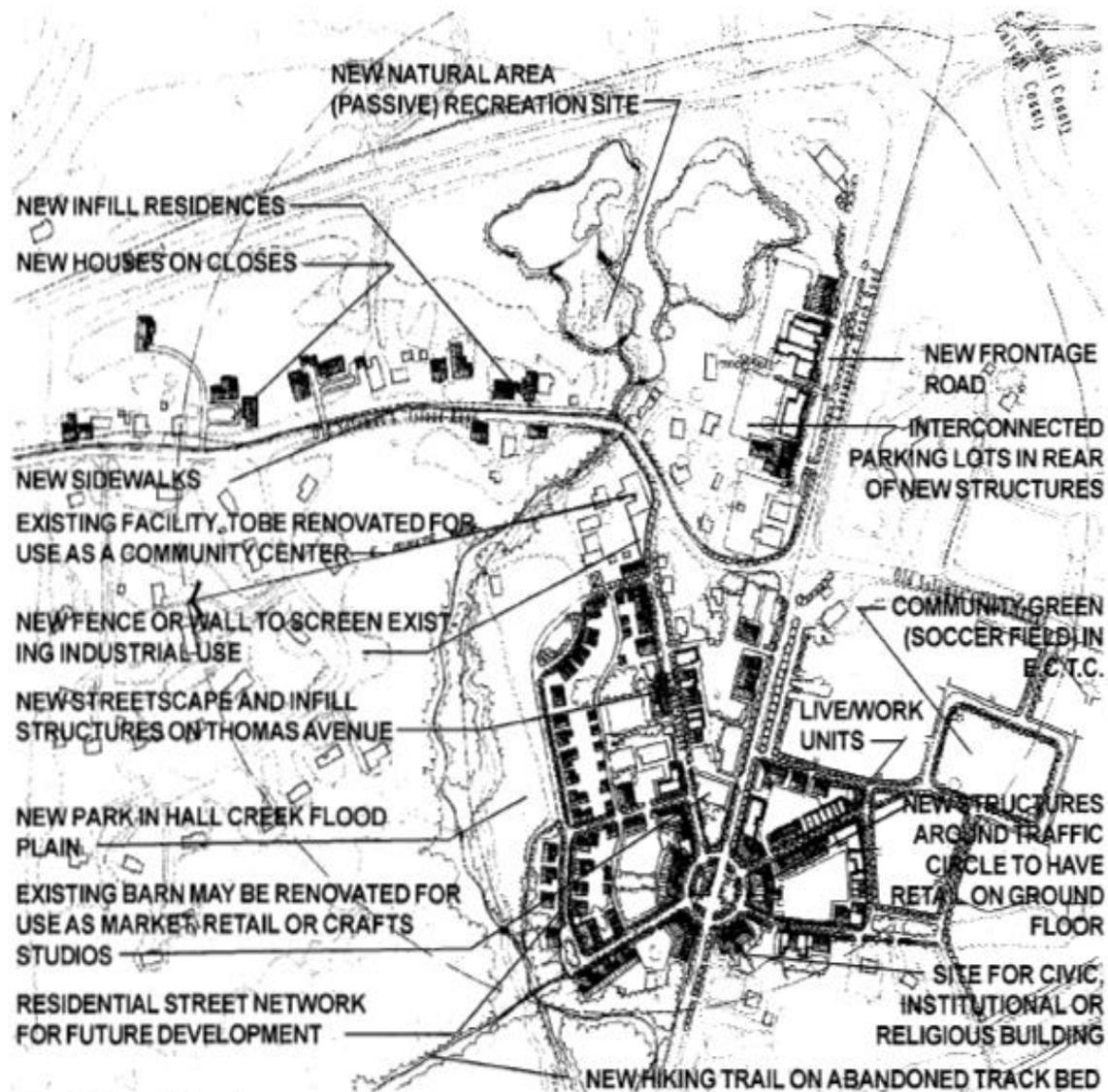


Figure 3-3. Annotated Master Plan

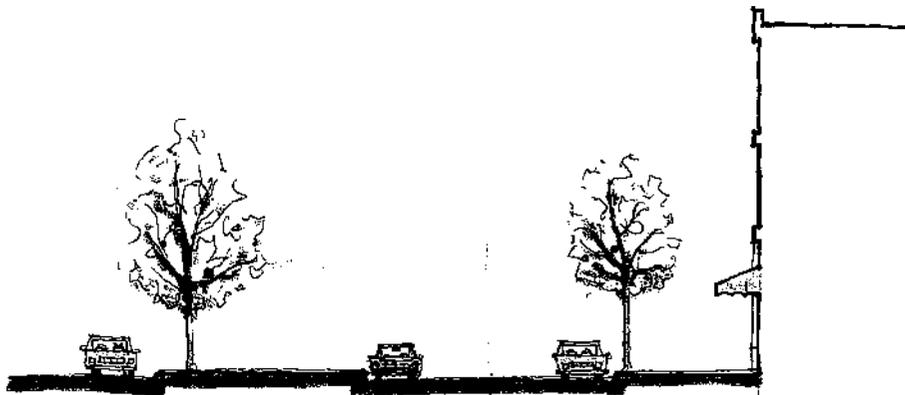
place for seasonal and holiday decorations -- as suggested in the Workshop).

In addition to Thomas Avenue, several new streets are shown radiating from the circle. One of these leads almost due south, terminating in a small green. Beyond this green is a proposed hiking trail following the path of an abandoned rail bed. Other streets radiate north and northeast into the Employment Center Town Center zoning district.

The circle itself is framed by buildings which define its edge. The exception is within the triangle of land created between Thomas Avenue and Chesapeake Beach Road. The structures aligning the circle are proposed to have

ground floor retail activity and office or residential space above. These buildings can be up to three-stories in height. The site on the far side of the circle, opposite Thomas Avenue, should be reserved for civic, recreational, institutional or religious use.

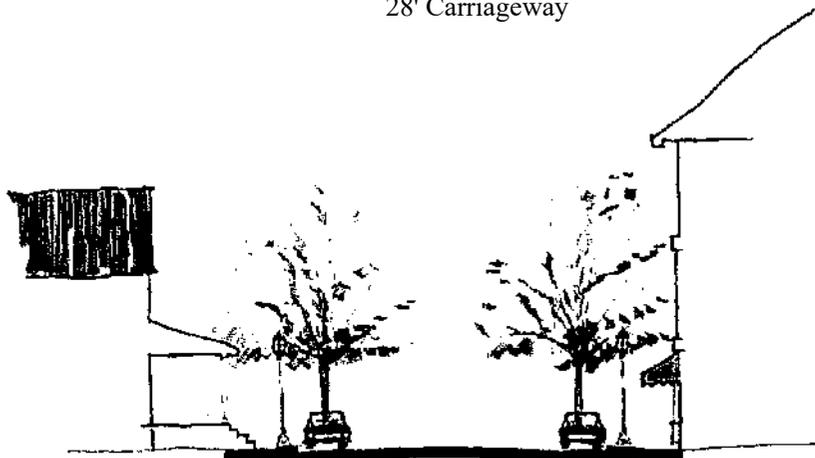
As the principal street in Owings, Thomas Avenue is widely regarded as the Town Center's "Main Street." Recognizing the difficulty in attracting major new retail uses to a street shut off to through traffic, the Master Plan envisions Thomas Avenue with a mix of small scale uses. New buildings are envisioned on empty or underutilized lots and may be exclusively residential or commercial. Alternatively, a hybrid structure known as a live/work unit, in which a dwelling unit sits atop a storefront shop or



Section of New Frontage Road along Chesapeake Beach Road
26' Carriageway



New Residential Road Section
28' Carriageway



Thomas Avenue Road Section
32' Carriageway

Figure 3-4. Street Sections

office, will be encouraged. Existing or new residents will be permitted to operate home businesses along this street. No matter the use of individual properties, the character of Thomas Avenue is conceived of as a village "Main Street," and as such, buildings are placed near the front property line. If they are residential on the ground floor, they will have raised stoops or front porches. If commercial, they will have street level, storefront entrances.

At the western end of Thomas Avenue, at its intersection with Old Solomon's Island Road, the existing structure, once the village's community center, is proposed to be returned to its original use. Retail or office uses may also be considered for this structure in order to offset some of its operating costs. Care should be taken when renovating this structure to recognize its position, terminating the vista down Thomas Avenue from the East. This building, along with the proposed civic/institutional structure on the circle, act as anchors for the Thomas Avenue redevelopment.

Parallel to Thomas Avenue, a new road is proposed overlooking a park also proposed within the Hall Creek flood plain. This street is conceived as primarily residential in character (though home businesses are allowed) with a lower density than that of Thomas Avenue. A service lane is proposed connecting this new street and Thomas Avenue.

As an arterial highway, Chesapeake Beach Road, accommodates significant amounts of commuting traffic. While this condition increases the likelihood that adjoining lands will be developed for commercial activity, Owings residents are nearly unanimous against the development of "strip" style shopping centers along this highway. Therefore, the Master Plan proposes the construction of a service lane, along the south side of this highway between Old Solomon's Island Road and Route 2. Another frontage road is shown within the ECTC on the north side of Chesapeake Beach Road, between Old Solomon's Island Road and the proposed traffic circle. These frontage roads will help secure traffic safety and minimize congestion by controlling access along Chesapeake Beach Road. They will also allow the development of pedestrian scale retail uses which can front directly onto the frontage roads.

The Employment Center Town Center (ECTC)

The relationship between the ECTC and the Town Center makes it incumbent for all concerned to consider them as two parts of a whole. To that end, the Master Plan suggests a development scenario which physically and socially links the two areas.

A key element of the ECTC area plan is a central green space large enough to accommodate a soccer field. This space, while providing a visual "campus-like" focus for employment facilities, will also provide a community amenity, assuring use seven-days a week. This space, at the heart of the ECTC, is linked to the traffic circle by a road lined with live/work units allowing small businesses to coexist with the larger businesses imagined for the ECTC. In addition, this linkage allows for retailers around the circle to supplement the local market with the employee base represented by the ECTC.

Key to the successful integration of this area with the Town Center is a strategy for urban design similar to that which is proposed for the Town Center. Buildings should be set close to their front property lines and be pedestrian scaled with appropriate ground floor detail. Streets should be lined with trees and sidewalks. Parking should be placed in the middle of blocks away from public streets.

Note: The Master Plan shown in Figures 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3 illustrates a "full build-out" of the Owings Town Center and assumes the provision of central water supply and sanitary sewer systems. However, the Regulating Plan depicted in Figure 3-5, the proposed roadway sections depicted in Figure 3-4 and the urban design concepts depicted in Section 4, are immediately applicable. While residential lot sizes in the Town Center must now reflect the densities required for individual water and septic systems, owners of these lots have the potential of subdividing them at such time as central water and sewer is provided.

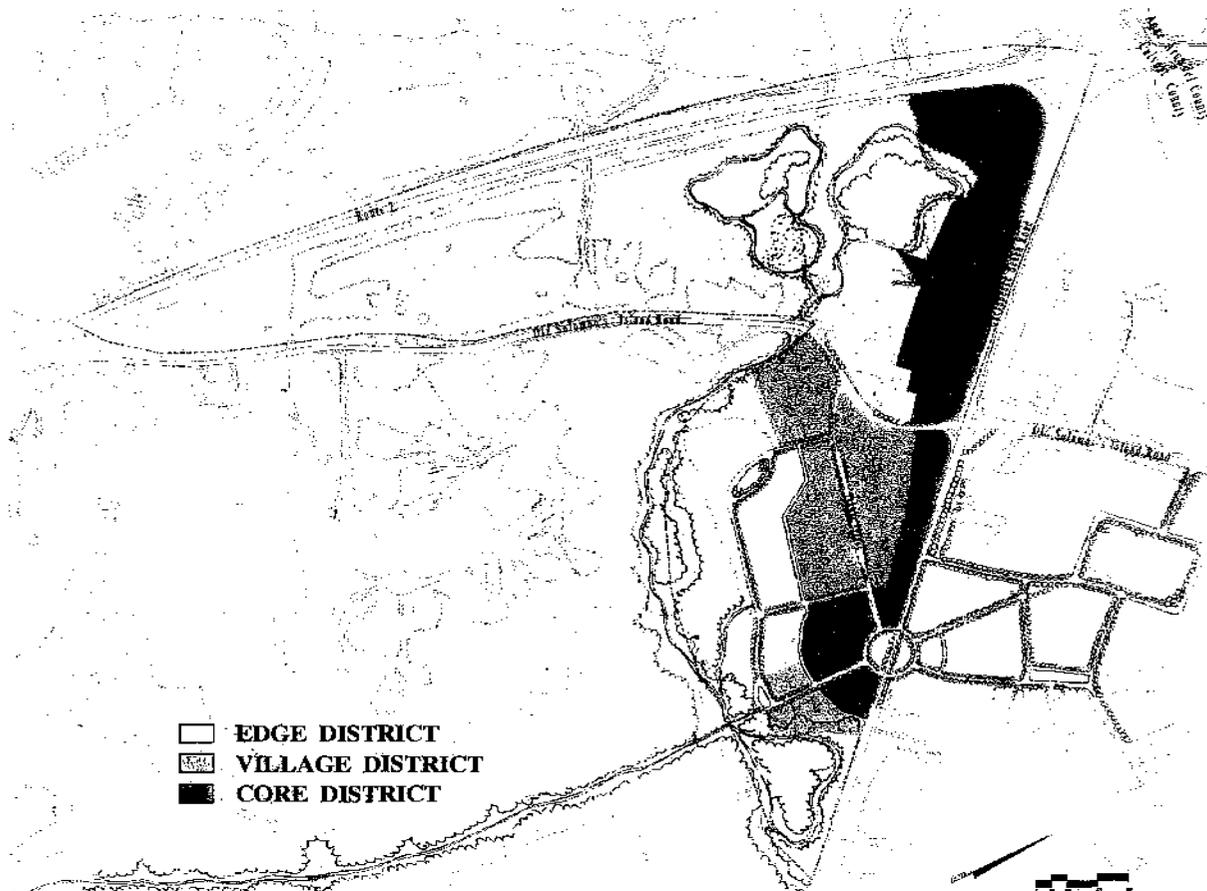


Figure 3-5. **Regulating Plan.** Where edges of districts approximate property lines, then property lines shall determine district boundaries. Where district boundaries appear to bisect properties, properties shall be considered split between the two districts. Generally such split tone pmperties front two streets of differing character and development proposals should be designed to accommodate the desired characteristic of each street as outlined in this

The Regulating Plan

The Regulating Plan provides the key to which all zoning classifications should be tied. As shown in Figure 3-5, three categories, or districts have been identified in the Owings Town Center: the Core District, the Village District and the Edge District.

In Figure 3-6. these three districts of the Town Center are correlated to the relative intensity of various land uses as

a guide to the Town Center of Owings. The physical components of community form, including lot type and frontage type are presented in Section 4 to be applied in future zoning. Architectural and Landscape Guidelines should be correlated to the three zoning districts and included as part of the Owings Town Center Zoning.

Figure 3-6. GUIDE TO LAND USE ZONING BY DISTRICT

| | Edge District - Restricted Use | Village District - Limited Use | Core District - Open Use |
|--|--|--|---|
| Residential | Restricted Residential: Detached house permitted with one other dwelling in ancillary structures. | Limited Residential: Houses, attached houses, and row houses permitted. Accessory dwellings permitted in ancillary structures. | Open Residential: Apartment buildings, houses, attached houses, and row houses permitted. Accessory dwellings permitted. Apartments above retail are encouraged. |
| Lodging | Restricted Lodging: Guest cottage permitted in ancillary structures. | Limited Lodging: Bed and breakfast inns permitted. | Open Lodging: Hotels permitted. |
| Office | Restricted Office: Home office permitted. One additional parking place/employee must be provided. | Limited Office: Home office or Neighborhood office permitted on first floor of principle structures or in ancillary structures. Parking <i>must</i> be provided. | Open Office: Corporate offices and neighborhood offices permitted. |
| Retail/Entertainment | Restricted Retail: Corner store permitted on first floor at corner locations, and small scale child care. | Limited Retail: Child care, coffee house and neighborhood convenience stores, specialty retail including galleries and craft shops permitted parking requirement is negotiated. | Open Retail: Shop front stores permitted. Service stations. must conform to frontage requirements with service bays and pumps in rear of building. |
| Manufacturing/ Distribution | Restricted Manufacturing: Home workshops, artists studios, pottery making permitted in ancillary structures only. | Limited Manufacturing: Home workshops, artist studios, woodworker shops, bicycle repair, pottery making, furniture refinishing, etc. permitted in ancillary structures only. | Open Manufacturing: All manufacturing permitted in Edge and Village Districts plus R&D. |
| Civic and Institutional Use | Restricted Civic and Institutional Uses: Not permitted. | Limited Civic and Institutional Uses: Community oriented buildings, including recreation centers and libraries, permitted. | Open Civic and Institutional Uses: Schools not permitted. All other uses permitted and encouraged. |

Specialized Uses Permitted upon approval

Gasoline Service Stations - if compliant with frontage requirements in the Zoning ordinance - pumps and service bays in the rear.
Kennels and animal husbandry.
Automotive - including sales.

Specialized Uses not Permitted

Detached signs and billboards.
Regional Retail - including "Big-Box" and others with fronting parking lots.
Industrial - emanating noise, vibration or smell beyond the boundary of its site.
Prisons except as accessories to Police Stations.
Terminals for largescale transportation including airports.
Depots for large scale storage or distribution of goods.
Scrap yards for the processing, storage, and disposal of waste materials, excepting recycling collection centers.

Section 4

THE SPACE OF THE STREET

A "sense of place" is a difficult attribute to describe, and yet it is an aspect of the built environment that Owings residents seem to strongly desire. One of the physical characteristics that is known to contribute to this quality is spatial definition. Spatial definition is created by thoughtfully relating buildings to each other and to the street as described in their section. It encompasses the scale and function of buildings and the quality of landscape or streetscape. These are intentionally designed elements of traditional towns and villages that are within the purview of Calvert County to affect.

The Owings Town Center Master Plan considers the spaces of the Town Center (the streets, circles, greens, etc.) as objects and the buildings as their edges. In this way, the Master Plan allows a "sense of place" to emerge where development or redevelopment takes place in the Town Center.

Spatial Definition

At their essence, streets, the most ubiquitous element of the public realm, are best appreciated when they are perceived as outdoor "rooms." They tend to feel right when there is a sense of enclosure, i.e., their space is well de-



Figure 4-1. This small town street demonstrates the concept of "space as object." A sense of enclosure, created by the proximity of buildings and landscape to the street, coupled with the richness of the architecture create a charming residential street.

finer. This is the reason why quaint European villages are such a joy to experience, even when they are architecturally simple, even humble.

Such spatial definition is created by building frontages, or the "walls" by which the "rooms" are formed. The



Figure 4-2 This Maryland street demonstrates many of the principles of the Town Center Concept as it pertains to the making of a well-defined street. Any number of elements including a row of street trees, a sidewalk and a white picket fence at the property line defines the space of the street. In addition, the house is set close enough to its front property line, so that conversations with passersby, are possible from the front porch.

types of frontages that are used, the widths of the streets, and the heights of buildings determine the degree of enclosure. Usually, when buildings are aligned in a coherent form and the defined space does not fall short of or exceed a certain height-to-width ratio, then spatial definition is achieved. Alignment occurs when the fronts of buildings, their facades, are arranged to form and shape the space of the urban "room." Facades can be articulated to add richness to the space.

This section outlines the types of frontages that are appropriate in order to achieve the desired spatial and social characteristics for each zoning district. As the rhythm and mass of the buildings aligning the street also effect the feeling of enclosure on the street, this section also provides a listing of lot types that are appropriate for each zoning district. These categories of lot types will be applicable on those parcels large enough to accommodate a subdivision or where an assemblage of properties leads to a resubdivision of lands previously developed for other uses.



Figure 4-3 This house on Old Solomon's Island Road in Owings utilizes a "Fence and Porch" frontage to enhance the public space of the street while clearly delineating a private front yard, a space from which to greet neighbors on a stroll.

FRONTAGE TYPES

A limited number of frontages can be discerned that support the Town Center. They are illustrated below.

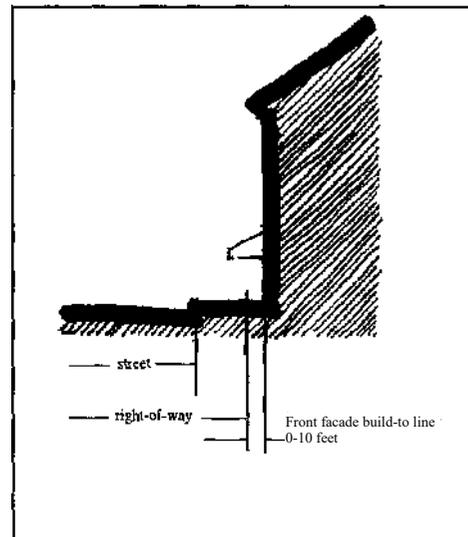
The following definition will be useful:

Front Façade "Build-to" Line: This is the line in which the primary mass of the front façade should be set. It is measured from the edge of the right-of-way; the larger the number, the greater the Front Yard. It is a line that should be consistent within a block (unless, by exception it is intentionally varied to achieve a more picturesque effect and/ or to avoid unusual site conditions), though it may vary within a District. Porches and bay windows can project from the front façade into the Front Yard.

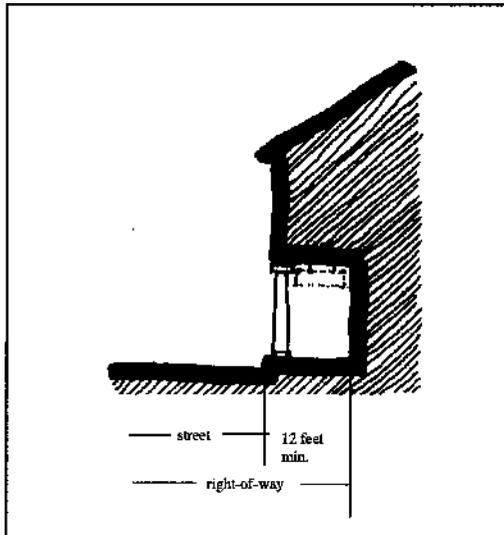
Shop Frontage

The Front Façade Build-to Line is at or near the edge of the Right-of-Way. Entrance is at the grade of the sidewalk. Common for retail frontage and live/work units, it can accommodate an awning, or cantilevered signage. Not appropriate for residential use.

Appropriate at: Core and Village Districts



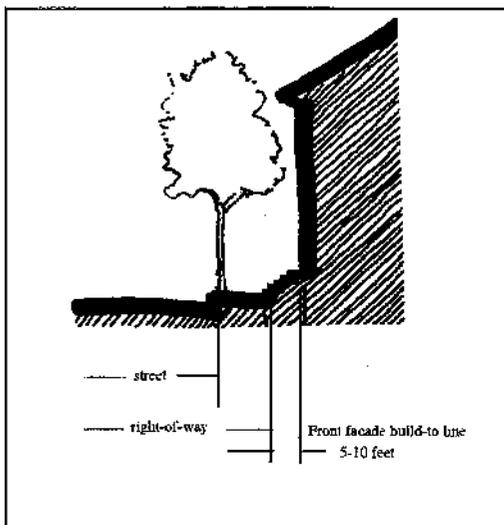
18 Frontage Types



Arcade Frontage

Similar to Shop Frontage, the building is allowed to overlap the sidewalk above, while the ground story remains set back at the Front Facade Build-to-Line (which is at or near the edge of the Right-of-Way). The sidewalk should be completely absorbed within the arcade to prevent pedestrians from bypassing it. It tends to be more useful in hotter climates, but may be used sparingly in the Town Center. It is appropriate for retail use and for Civic Buildings. It requires an easement for private use of the Right-of-Way.

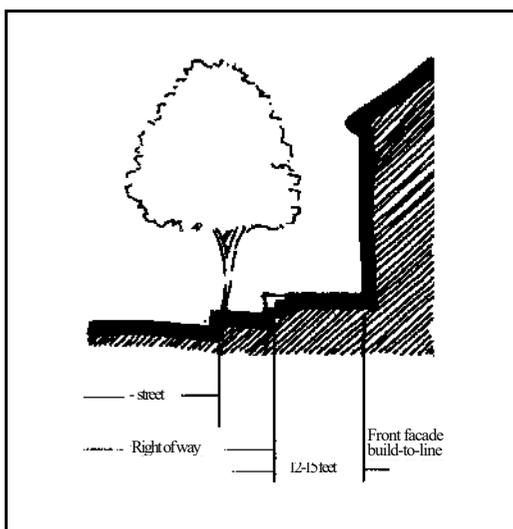
Appropriate at: Core and Village Districts



Stoop Frontage

The Front Facade Build-to Line is 0 to 10 feet from the Right-of-Way line. However, the ground floor is elevated by at least 3 feet to assure visual privacy for windows. Ground floor residential uses including single family houses, rowhouses and apartment buildings can be accommodated in this scenario. This type may be intermingled with the Shop Frontage. When set back 0- to 5-feet it is also a useful frontage for "side-yard" houses, (i.e., those houses entered off of a side garden also known as "Charleston houses")

Appropriate at: Core and Village Districts



Dooryard Frontage /Uphill Side

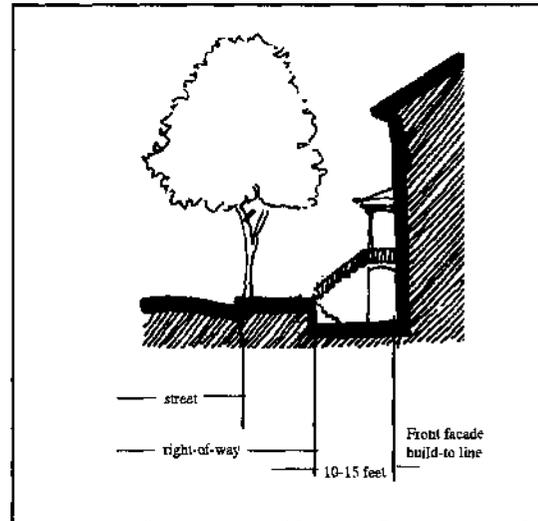
The Front Facade Build-to Line is 10 to 15 feet from the Right-of-Way line, with an elevated, lawn, garden or terrace. Effective for ground floor residential, it can be used in single family houses, town houses, or apartment buildings. In areas of steeply sloping terrain, it may be set as high as 4-feet above the sidewalk to absorb some of the grade. The terrace can be used as an outdoor eating area of a café or restaurant. Additionally, the terrace may be covered turning it into a porch (which should be a minimum of 8' in depth).

Appropriate at: Core and Village Districts

Dooryard Frontage / Downhill Side

The Front Façade Build-to Line is 10- to 15- feet from the Right-of-Way with a sunken light court in between. Effective for ground floor residential, the light court provides access for a "basement apartment." Alternatively, live/work units work well, with an office or retail space in the basement level. This type may also be effective in areas of steeply sloping terrain to absorb some of the downhill slope. It may be used opposite Dooryard Frontage /Uphill Side.

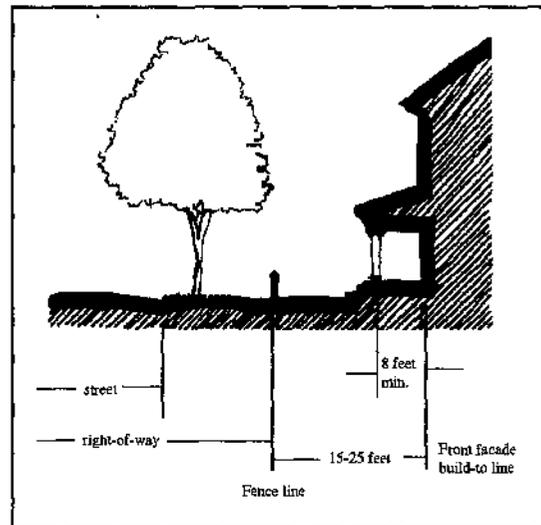
Appropriate at: Core and Village Districts



Porch and Fence Frontage

The Front Façade Build-to Line is 15- to 25-feet from the Right of Way. Porches are encouraged within the Front Yard space. A fence, wall, or hedge placed at the Right-of-Way, maintains the demarcation of the yard (Walls and hedges may be set back 1 to 2 feet to accommodate footings and roots. Porches should be no less than 8 feet wide in order to be useful. They may be one- to two-stories in height.

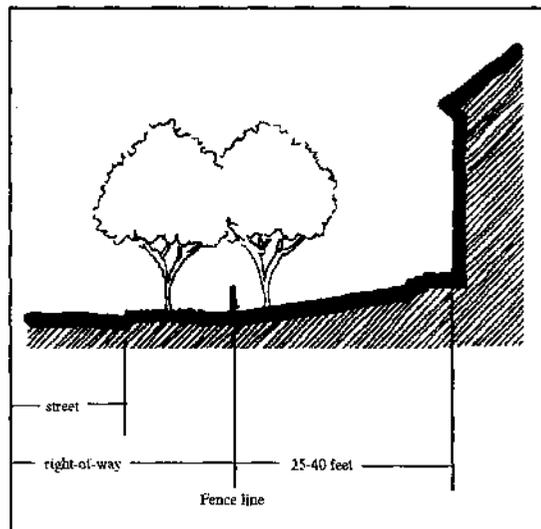
Appropriate at: Village and Edge Districts



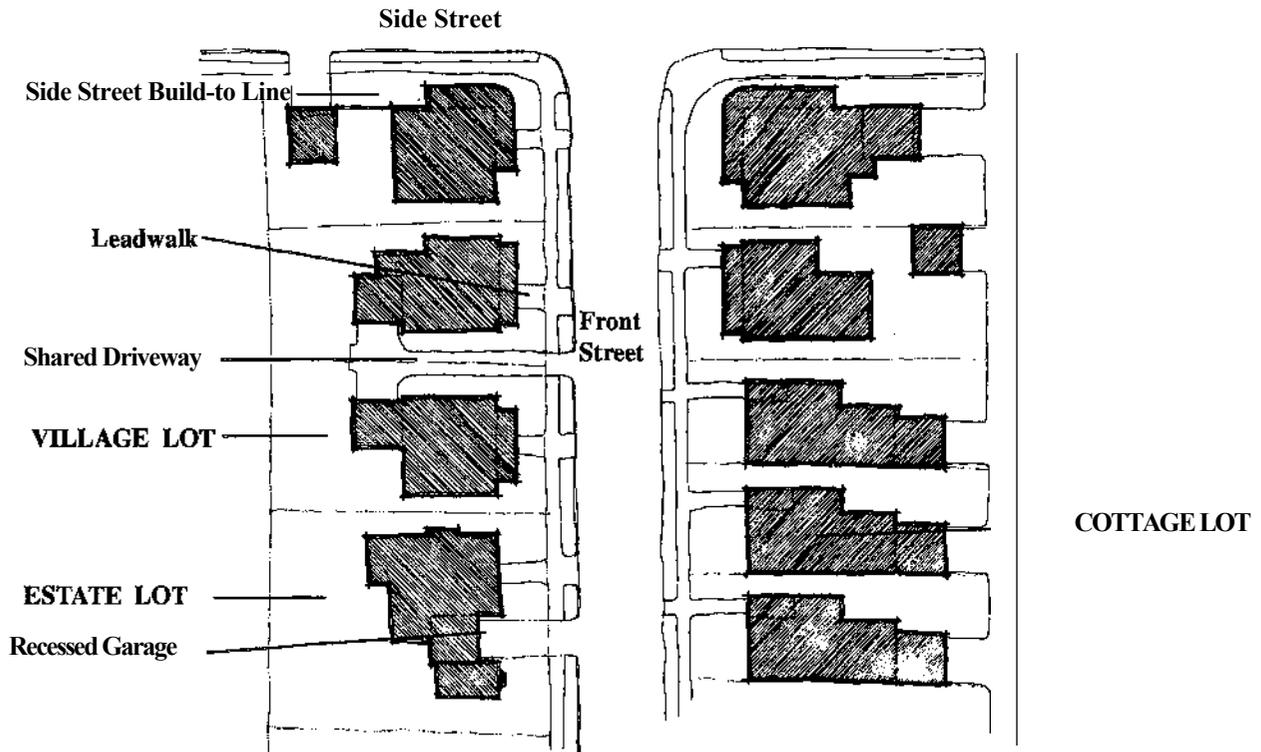
Common Lawn Frontage

The Front Façade Build-to Line is set back 25- to 40 feet from the frontage line. When the Line reaches 40 feet a front porch is not necessary since conversation from the enfronting roadway is unlikely. This type is suitable for estate lots or infill lots on Old Solomon's Island Road as the large setback provides a buffer from the traffic. The Common Lawn Frontage may be used on lots that have tree buffers.

Appropriate at: Edge District along Solomon's Island Road.



LOT TYPES: ESTATE LOTS, COTTAGE LOTS AND VILLAGE LOTS

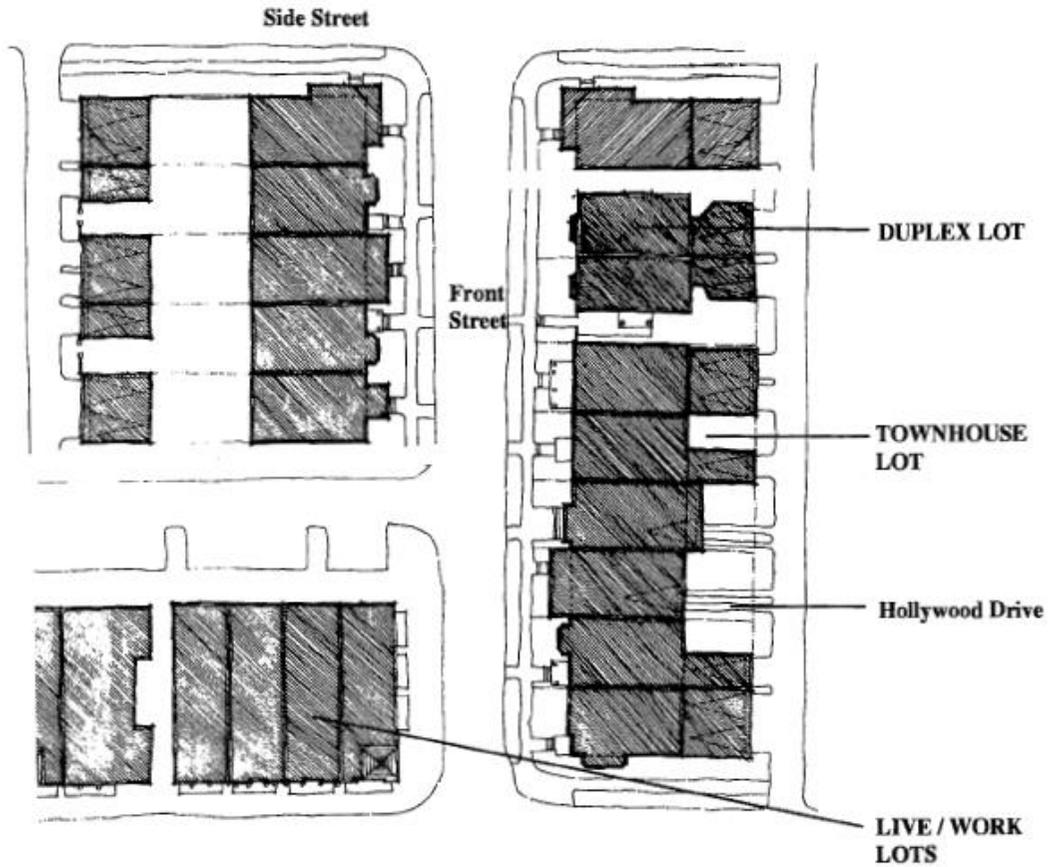


| Lot Type | Width | Depth | Garage and Parking | Min. Side Yard | **Max Width of Primary Facade |
|-------------|----------|----------|--|---|-------------------------------|
| Cottage Lot | 40'-50'* | 100-120' | Alley loaded attached or detached. Consider "Hollywood Drives." | 0' on one side. 10' on the other side. | 32' |
| Village Lot | 50'-70' | 100-150' | Alley access preferred Front access allowed, in which case Garage must be recessed min. 20' Consider shared driveways. Hollywood drives & Side-loading from side street | Garage may abut, otherwise 5' min. for structures less than 2 stories 10' min. for structures 2 stories or higher | 36' |
| Estate Lot | 70'-90' | z 110' | Alley or front access. If front access, then garage must be recessed (as in Village Lots | 5' min for structures less than 2 stories 15' min for structures 2 stories or higher | 40' |

* Add 8' to all side street lots.

** Side wings must be set back from primary facade at a distance equal to the length of the side wing. Lead walks are required at all houses

LOT TYPES: LIVE/WORK LOTS, TOWNHOUSE LOTS AND DUPLEX LOTS

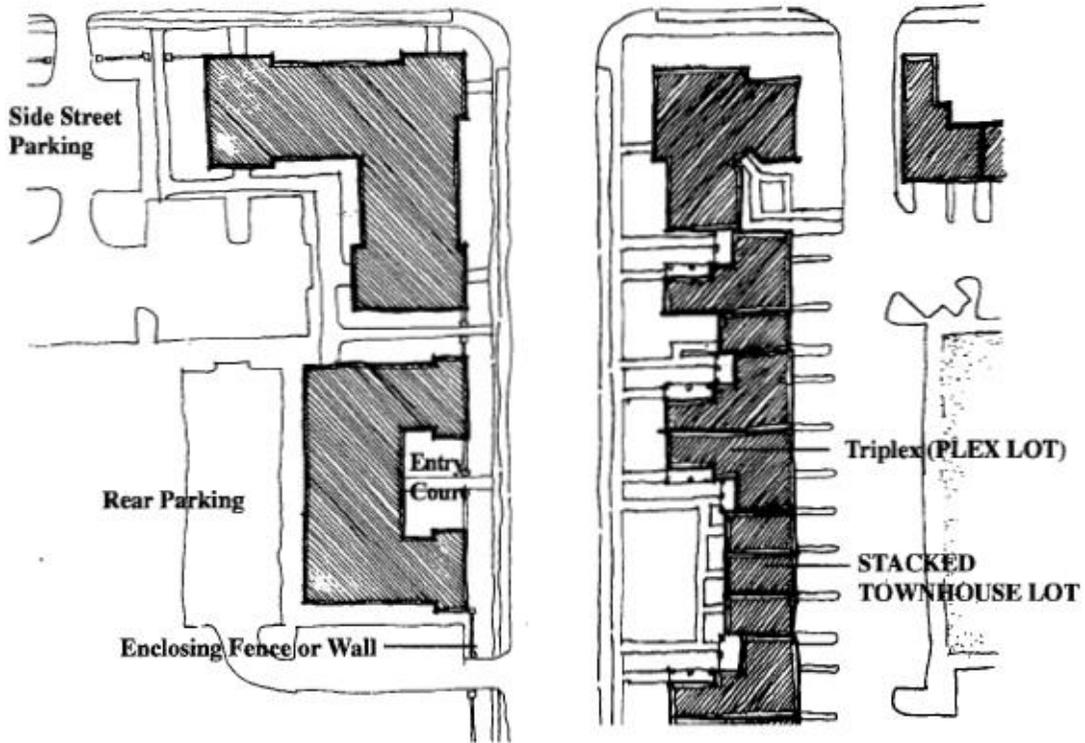


| Lot Type | Width | Depth | Garage and Parking | Min. Side Yard | Primary Facade |
|---------------|----------|---------|--|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Townhouse Lot | 16'-24'* | 70-110' | Alley access - attached or detached | N/A No max. number in a string | N/A |
| Duplex Lot | 25'-40'* | 90-110' | Alley access - attached or detached | Adjoined on one side 5' setbacks** | 32' |
| Live/work Lot | 16'-24'* | 90-110' | Alley access - Individual garages discouraged to allow for continuous parking | N/A | N/A |

* Add 8' to all side street lots.

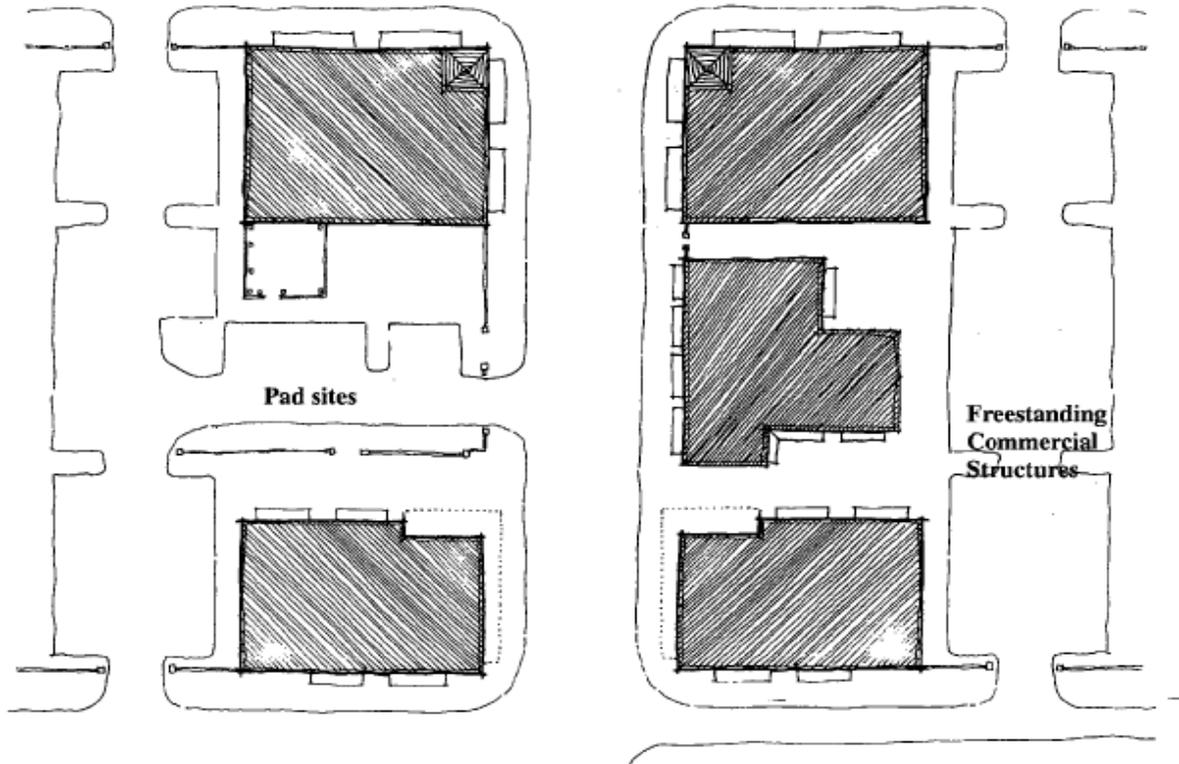
** If Fire Suppression is provided. (sprinkler).
Lead walks are required at all houses.

LOT TYPES: MULTI-FAMILY LOTS AND PLEX LOTS



| Lot Type | Width | Depth | Garage and Parking |
|------------------|-------|---|--|
| Multifamily Lots | N/A | As determined by parking requirement. Min. = 150' | In rear - can be accessed from alley, side street or front driveway |
| Plex Lots | N/A | If all units self park. can be a min. of 75' | In rear - tuck under parking, one additional tandem space- access is from alley only |

LOT TYPES: COMMERCIAL LOTS



| Lot Type | Width | Depth | Garage and Parking |
|-----------------|-------|--|---|
| Commercial Lots | N/A | Minimum 130' determined by parking requirements. | Surface or structure behind building. Some side parking is allowed. |

Section 5 INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure Recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan

The Calvert County Comprehensive Plan recommends that the County be proactive in providing infrastructure to support growth, and specifically economic development, within town centers. The Plan calls for the provision of public water and sanitary sewer facilities and services, public buildings, streets and sidewalks, and park and recreational amenities within town centers.

The Plan also recommends that public and private cost savings be achieved in developing town centers through: the development of regional storm water management systems; the advanced reservation of rights-of-way; energy efficient design and construction standards; and the design of public buildings and grounds with multiple uses in mind.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends that each town center contain a town park or village green, an in-town trail or bikeway system, outdoor public facility for active recreation, and an indoor community center.

The Comprehensive Plan also recommends that the County pursue actions to broaden the tax base by supporting commercial development by investing in infrastructure. In addition to standard infrastructure, such as water supply, sewerage, and roads, the Plan recognizes that facilities key to attracting high technical firms also include communications systems such as fiber optic networks and digital switching systems.

In order to attract quality business development to town centers, the County may need to make timely investments in support services and facilities.

Public Water and Sewer Service

The Owings Town Center has a number of environmental conditions that limit the amount of development that can take place with on-site sewerage disposals systems. A public sewerage system is fully compatible with the recommendations embodied in this Master Plan and would allow for intensive use of undeveloped Town Center lands and more intensive re-use of currently developed lands.

The Calvert County Water and Sewer Division operates as an enterprise, meaning that it operates without the direct infusion of County operating or capital funds. Infrastructure is financed by revenue bonds, which are backed by the full faith and credit of County government. Infrastructure is installed and costs of installation and debt service are assessed to the users of the system within each sanitary district. The rates charged to users are set to capture these costs.

The Division conducts an economic feasibility assessment prior to installing water and sewerage facilities. The study determines at what level rates must be set to recoup the costs of providing service in the sanitary district. If installation costs are high and the number of potential users is relatively small, the per user charge may be too high to justify providing public service. This was the conclusion of the 1999 water and sewer feasibility study for the Dunkirk Town Center.

The County has the authority to grant funds to a particular sanitary district to offset the high costs of providing service and thus to lower the rates new users must pay. County funds thus can make public water and sewerage systems more economically feasible.

Consideration should be given to the use of County funds to make water and sewage service economically feasible in the Owings Town Center. The Calvert County Water and Sewerage Plan designates the Town Center as *Programmed for Service with Three to Ten Years*. Any study should include the ECTC zoned land located adjacent to the Town Center on the north side of MD 260.

MD Route 260

MD Route 260 is a regional arterial highway and thus is intended to carry high volumes of traffic at relatively high speeds. The widening of MD 260 to four lanes is listed on the State Highway Administration's Inventory of Highway Needs, though it is not recommended in any adopted County or State Transportation Plan. It would first need to be recommended in the adopted County Transportation Plan before the State would advance the project.

Should future planning determine that MD 260 should be widened through the Town Center, the guidelines set forth in Appendix A--Roadway and Streetscape Design Standards and Guidelines--should be followed.

Thomas Avenue Upgrade

Accommodating more development in the Town Center will require that Thomas Avenue be upgraded. Improvements to Thomas Avenue should be guided by Appendix B, Roadway and Streetscape Design Standards and Guidelines and should adhere to the typical-section shown in the Owings Master Plan.

The cost of improving Thomas Avenue to the design standard set forth herein should be determined. The project should be included in the Capital Improvement Program for construction by 2010.

Should conditions change in the Owings Town Center and warrant advancing the upgrade of Thomas Avenue so as to facilitate economic development, safety, or improved circulation, the County should improve the road sooner, either on its own or with the participation of interested private sector developers and property owners.

Sidewalk on Old Solomons Island Road

A sidewalk should be constructed along Old Solomons Island Road. A detailed study should be undertaken to determine the feasibility and costs of constructing a sidewalk on one or both sides of the road. This project is eligible for funding through the MD SHA Sidewalk Retrofit Program and should be prioritized among other town center sidewalk construction projects countywide.

Open Space and Park

The park and open space shown on the Master Plan should be acquired by the County and used for passive recreation. County Park and Open Space funding may provide a viable source of funding for the purchase and development of these sites. Development of the sites should be tied into private proposals for development or redevelopment of lands within the Town Center.

Owings Town Center Community_Center

The existing and currently vacant community center building located at the intersection of Thomas Avenue and Old Solomons Island Road should be restored and reused for community center functions. The first step is to commission a feasibility study.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Roadway and Streetscape Design Standards and Guidelines

The following roadway and streetscape design standards and guidelines are to be used in concert with the Calvert County Road Ordinance in the provision of new roads, improvements to existing roads, and in the provision of sidewalks and landscaping along existing and new roads in the Owings Town Center.

MD 260 Through Town Center

- Any widening of MD 260 through the Town Center shall minimize the taking of private property and the displacement of existing structures and businesses; to the extent possible any expansion of highway capacity should be accommodated within the existing travelway.
- Any widening of MD 260 shall accommodate and support the provision of the planned traffic circle area as well as planned service roads.
- High speed movement of traffic through the Town Center is not a goal. Highway Access
- No vehicular access to private property along MD 2 shall be permitted.
- Access along MD 260 shall be strictly coordinated as shown on the Owings Town Center Master Plan Map to minimize the number of access points.

Proposed Service Roads Along MD 260

- Design of proposed service roads should be guided by the street section shown in the Owings Town Center Master Plan Report.
- Parallel service roads should be constructed as shown on the Owings Town Center Master Plan Map as a means to consolidate existing and proposed driveways, to provide on-street parking, to enhance circulation through the Town Center, and to support pedestrian scale commercial land uses.
- A planting strip should be provided between MD 260 (Chesapeake Beach Road) and the proposed service roads. The planting strip should be planted with grass and street trees at 40' centers with a minimum of 3" caliper.
- Parallel parking should be provided along both sides of proposed service roads. Paving for parallel parking should be of the same surface material as roadway.
- Curb and gutter should be provided along proposed service roads.
- A sidewalk should be provided between the curb line of the proposed service roads and the building facade.

- Traffic and directional signage along proposed service roads should conform to County and State standards, but should be mounted on 2" diameter steel poles, painted black or on streetlights.

Traffic Circle Area

- The Owings Town Center Master Plan Map shows an area at the exiting intersection of MD 260 and Thomas Avenue, referred to in the Plan as the traffic circle. While the ultimate configuration of this area must await more detailed design work and traffic studies, it is not intended to be a *roundabout*. Indeed, the Master Plan recommends that traffic on MD 260 move through the circle area rather than around the circle as would be the case with a roundabout. The roads which form the arcs of the circle are intended to be low-speed commercial service roads. The Owings traffic circle area should seek to achieve a number of important objectives. The traffic circle area should seek to calm traffic speeds through the Town Center, enable safe pedestrian crossing of MD 260 at this location, help integrate the Town Center with the land area and any new development on the opposite side of MD 260, avoid and/or postpone the need for a traffic signal as possible, play a major organizing role for site planning and development, accommodate the radial street pattern shown on the Master Plan Map, and be a major community-wide focal point.
- Tree boxes should be provided around the perimeter of the proposed traffic circle at 40' centers. Street trees with a minimum of 3" caliper should be planted within the planting strip. They shall be of one species only.
- Parallel parking should be provided along the perimeter of the proposed traffic circle. Paving for parallel parking should be of same surface material as roadway.
- Curb and gutter should be provided along perimeter of traffic circle.
- A sidewalk should be provided between the curb line of the proposed traffic circle and the building façade.
- Traffic and directional signage should conform to County and State standards, but shall be mounted on 2" diameter steel poles, painted black or on streetlights.
- The design of the traffic circle area should accommodate significant pedestrian crossing of MD

260. Thomas Avenue

- Design of an improvements to Thomas Avenue should be guided by the street section shown in the Owings Town Center Master Plan Report.
- A planting strip should be provided along both sides of Thomas Avenue at the curb line. A width of 5-feet is recommended. It should be planted with grass. Street trees at 30' centers with a minimum of 2" caliper should be planted within the planting strip.
- A sidewalk on both sides of Thomas Avenue should be provided adjacent to the planting strip. Sidewalks should be at least four feet wide but a 5-foot minimum is recommended. Lead walks shall extend from the sidewalk to all private residences.
- Parallel parking should be provided along both sides of Thomas Avenue. Paving for parallel parking should be of same surface material as roadway.

- Curb and gutter should be provided along Thomas Avenue
- Traffic and directional signage should conform to County and State standards, but should be mounted on 2" diameter steel poles, painted black or on streetlights.

Old Solomons Island Road (MD 778)

- A planting strip should be provided along the west side of Solomons Island Road, except where the road is adjacent to the park along the Hall Creek floodplain. In such situations, the road needs only a planting strip on one side, which shall be a minimum of 7-foot wide. It shall be planted with grass. Street trees at 30' centers with a minimum of 2" caliper should be planted within the planting strip.
- Traffic and directional signage should conform to County and State standards, but should be mounted on 2" diameter steel poles, painted black.
- Along Old Solomon's Island Road, significant tree stands may prevent new residential development from lining the road. Recourse to some form of private street leading to a discrete residential enclave may be necessary. In such situations, "closes" are preferred over cul-de-sacs. The close is a small green surrounded by a driveway or narrow street. Like a cul-de-sac it provides vehicular access to several buildings, however it also provides a socially useful green space that is visually accessible to the neighborhood.

Proposed New Streets

- Design of proposed service roads should be guided by the street section shown in the Owings Town Center Master Plan Report.
- A planting strip should be provided along new streets. A 5-foot width is recommended. The planting strip should be planted with grass. Street trees at 30' centers with a minimum of 2" caliper should be planted within the planting strip.
- Sidewalks should be provided adjacent to the planting strip and should be a minimum of 5-foot wide.
- Parallel parking should be provided along both sides of new streets. Paving for parallel parking should be of same surface material as roadway.
- Traffic and directional signage should conform to County standards, but should be mounted on 2" diameter steel poles, painted black.
- A planting strip should be provided along both sides of all new streets. It should be planted with grass. Street trees at 30' centers with a minimum of 2" caliper should be planted within the planting strip.