

THE BOROUGH OF AMBLER, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA

ORDINANCE NUMBER 1145

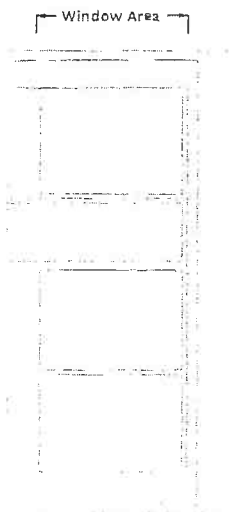
AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF AMBLER AMENDING THE BOROUGH ZONING ORDINANCE (CHAPTER 27 OF THE BOROUGH CODIFIED ORDINANCES), AT PARTS 2 (DEFINITIONS), 13 (COMMERCIAL DISTRICT) AND 28 (DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT), CLARIFYING AND AMENDING MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT IN THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT, PROVIDING BUILDING STANDARDS AND STREETScape STANDARDS INCLUDING PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES AND BICYCLE PARKING REQUIREMENTS IN BOTH THE COMMERCIAL AND DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICTS; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND REPEALER AND SEVERANCE CLAUSES

Ambler Borough Council, upon the recommendation of its Planning Commission and the Montgomery County Planning Commission, and with an intention of remaining sensitive to the need to have the zoning ordinance meaningfully address infill development and redevelopment to keep it consistent with the existing Borough environment, hereby amends the zoning ordinance in the following respects:

- I. Section 27-202 of the zoning ordinance, Definitions, "Gasoline Service Station", is amended as follows:
The existing language is deleted and is replaced with the following: "Vehicle Fueling Station- any area of land, including structures thereon, or any building or part thereof that is used for the sales of gasoline or other motor vehicle fuel (such as electricity provided by an electric vehicle charging station) or accessories, and which may or may not include facilities for lubricating, washing or otherwise servicing motor vehicles but which shall not include painting or body and fender repairs."
- II. Section 27-1302.3, conditional uses, is amended at subparagraph "A" by removing the existing sentence and replacing it with the following: "Vehicle fueling station with or without automobile servicing and/or mini-market."
- III. Section 27-1304. 1 is amended by deleting the existing sentence and replacing it with: "Vehicle fueling stations with or without automobile servicing and/or mini-market."
- IV. Part 13 of the zoning ordinance is amended by the addition of a new section, 27-1306, Building Design Standards, the text of which is as follows:
 1. Overall design.
 - A. All buildings within a single project shall have a unified or complementary architectural character. Developments shall create focal points with respect to avenues of approach, or other buildings, and relate open space between all existing and proposed buildings.
 - B. Blank walls shall not be permitted along any exterior wall facing a street,

parking area, or walking area. Walls or portions of walls where windows are not provided shall have architectural treatments that are similar to the front facade, including materials, colors, and details.

- C. When flat roofs are proposed, a parapet wall or projecting cornice shall be included on the front façade(s).
 - D. Convenient pedestrian connections shall be provided from all building entrances to parking areas, open space, and recreational areas.
2. Building materials.
- A. All façades of new buildings visible from a public or private street, parking area, or public gathering space shall consist of quality building materials, such as brick, stone, concrete, and glass, to create visual interest and enhance the quality of the development.
 - B. The following building materials are prohibited: exterior insulation and finishing systems (EIFS); aluminum or vinyl siding or shutters; white, tan, or painted brick; concrete block; T-111 or other similar plywood siding.
3. Building orientation and entrances.
- A. Front facades of buildings shall be oriented toward Main Street or Butler Avenue, whichever immediately abuts the property frontage. Such entrances shall be usable and well-defined through the use of architectural features (e.g., utilizing porticos, pediments, colonnades, canopies, or overhangs).
 - B. Each façade of a building with frontage along a public or private street, parking area, or public gathering space shall feature at least one clearly-defined and highly- visible pedestrian entrance with a direct sidewalk connection to the abutting street. A building with multiple street frontages may locate a pedestrian entrance on the corner of the building where the two streets intersect to fulfill this requirement.
 - C. Storefront entrance doors shall be recessed a sufficient distance to allow doors to swing out without conflicting with pedestrian flow on the sidewalk.
4. Windows.
- A. The ground floor of any building along a primary street shall have a minimum clear window area of 60%, with windows providing views of display areas or the inside of the building. Window areas shall be between 12 inches and eight feet off the ground.



- B. For corner buildings with multiple frontages, the ground floor primary street transparency requirement shall wrap on to the ground floor of secondary frontages for a minimum distance equal to at least 25% of the length of the building facade along the secondary frontage, as measured from the corner of the primary and secondary frontages.
- C. The upper floors of any building along a primary street shall have a minimum clear window area of 35%.
- D. Smoked, reflective, or black glass in windows is prohibited.
5. Building Façade Elements. All buildings shall include a variety of architectural design elements to provide visual interest and to mitigate the apparent scale and mass of large buildings and facades. Any building façade along a public or private street, parking area, or public gathering space that is greater than 50 feet long shall be articulated with façade breaks of a minimum depth of three (3) feet for every 50 feet of building façade length. In addition to breaks in the façade, other architectural elements that provide façade articulation shall be utilized no less than every 50 feet on average:
- A. Masonry;
 - B. Concrete or Masonry plinth at the base of walls;
 - C. Belt courses of a different texture or color;
 - D. Projecting or decorative cornices;
 - E. Quoins;
 - F. Decorative tile work;
 - G. Trellis containing planting;
 - H. Medallions;
 - I. Bay windows;
 - J. Oriel windows;
 - K. Vertical articulation;

- L. Stylized lighting fixtures;
 - M. Porticos;
 - N. Balconies;
 - O. Recessed entryways; and/or
 - P. Building extensions.
- V. Part 13 of the zoning ordinance is amended by the addition of a new section, 27-1307, Streetscape standards, the text of which is as follows:
1. Pedestrian Design Standards. Public and private pedestrian access and circulation shall be included in all development proposals. Pedestrian access links shall be provided for all uses as specified on the Redevelopment Area Plan for access to open space areas and principal destinations such as the Ambler Borough Main Street Corridor, the SEPTA train station and the Wissahickon Conservation Corridor. The following standards shall apply throughout the C:
 - A. Where feasible, sidewalks with an unimpeded pedestrian pathway width of at least eight (8) feet shall be provided along all existing and proposed streets and driveways within the C. Where adjacent sidewalk is less than eight (8) feet, sidewalks with an unimpeded pedestrian pathway width of no less than six (6) feet shall be provided along all existing and proposed streets and driveways within the district.
 - B. Paved pedestrian walkways, sidewalks, trails or equivalent with a minimum width of five (5) feet shall connect road frontage sidewalks to building entries, parking area(s) and other significant destination areas (i.e., passenger rail station, major open space areas and/or historically or culturally important sites).
 - C. Sidewalks shall connect to existing sidewalks on abutting tracts and other nearby pedestrian destination points and transit stops. Unpaved walking trails may be substituted for paved sidewalks in cases where the developer has proven that such trails would be more appropriate to the development's surroundings (i.e., along a watercourse, connection to an existing trail network, etc.).
 - D. All pedestrian amenities shall be designed in accordance with the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
 - E. Walkways between office buildings, retail establishments and housing areas shall facilitate "walkability." Direct pedestrian connections to public transit stops and adjacent properties shall be accommodated within the overall land use plan.
 - F. Sidewalks and pedestrian access links shall be constructed of a hard, durable, all-weather surface. Alternative paving materials, such as high density concrete pavers, may be utilized but must be of a color and texture matching that existing elsewhere in the Borough's Main Street and/or development areas

and must be approved by the Borough.

- G. For frontages on Main Street and Butler Avenue, a four (4) foot wide verge shall be provided between the sidewalk and curbline which may be either landscaped or hardscaped. For frontages other than Main Street and Butler Avenue, a two (2) foot wide verge shall be provided between the sidewalk and curbline which may be either landscaped or hardscaped.
- H. Crosswalks. Crosswalks shall be clearly delineated at all intersections and marked to the width of the largest contributing sidewalk or internal pedestrian pathway. In no case shall the width of the crosswalk be less than six (6) feet. Furthermore, pedestrian signalization shall be provided at intersections where traffic signals exist.

2. Street furnishings.

A. Applicability.

- (1) Properties or developments with a frontage exceeding 100 feet on Main Street or Butler Avenue shall provide, at minimum, one (1) bench, one (1) trash receptacle, and one (1) recycling receptacle.
- (2) Properties or developments with a frontage exceeding 200 feet on Main Street or Butler Avenue shall provide, at minimum, two (2) benches, one (1) trash receptacle, and one (1) recycling receptacle.

B. Location. Street furniture shall be located adjacent to the building façade, unless on- street parking is present, in which case street furniture may be located along the curb. Such amenities shall be maintained in perpetuity by the property owner.

C. Existing amenities, such as an existing bench or refuse receptacle, may be counted towards meeting the requirement.

D. Fee in-lieu.

- (1) An applicant may choose to contribute a fee in lieu of providing the street furnishings that would have otherwise been required by this section when there are site constraints that make the provision thereof infeasible or impractical. The Borough Zoning Officer and Borough Engineer shall confirm that the provision of required street furnishings is infeasible or impractical.
- (2) The amount of the fee shall be equal to the fair market value of the streetscape furnishings that otherwise would have been required by this section. Fair market value shall be determined by agreement of Borough Council and the applicant.

3. Bicycle parking required.

- A. Applicability. Any property undergoing subdivision or land development, as defined in **Chapter 22, Subdivision and Land Development**, shall require the installation of the requisite number of bicycle parking spaces pursuant to Subsection B, below.
- B. Number of bicycle parking spaces required.

- (1) One bicycle parking space shall be provided for every three dwelling units. When less than three dwelling units are located on a lot, no bicycle parking facilities shall be required.
- (2) One bicycle parking space shall be provided for every 10 vehicle parking spaces required for any nonresidential use. Uses requiring less than 10 parking spaces shall not be required to provide bicycle parking facilities.

C. Design.

- (1) Bicycle facilities shall be provided either interior and/or exterior to the building and be convenient for use by employees, patrons, residents and/or visitors.
- (2) Bicycle parking facilities should include a secure device to which the bicycle frame and one wheel of the bicycle can be attached with a cable or locking device. The device should be suitable to keep bicycles erect when they are locked to it.
- (3) Bicycle parking design and location shall be in conformance with the most recent published standards of the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals, and shall not impede the pedestrian clear path of any public sidewalk

4. Lighting facilities.

- A. All nonpublic sidewalk, walkway, parking and building lighting fixtures shall be of a style and design that is either consistent with or complementary to those utilized throughout the C Commercial District.
- B. Lamp posts for all existing and proposed streets shall match existing lamp posts utilized throughout the C Commercial District. The specifications for existing lamp posts may be requested from the Borough Engineer.
- C. Adherence to §27-412, Lighting Criteria Applicable to All Zoning Districts, is required.

5. Bus stops.

- A. The developer shall coordinate with SEPTA, or any other public transit provider, on providing or improving existing bus stops when a public bus transit route operates or has a stop located on a public or private street frontage directly abutting a development within the C.
- B. The developer shall coordinate with SEPTA on the stop design. The appropriate transit stop improvements and shelter shall be provided meeting the most recent SEPTA Bus Stop Design Guidelines. Transit stops shall include, at a minimum, a shelter or enclosure, seating, and schedule information.
- C. The developer shall sign a perpetual maintenance agreement with Ambler Borough demonstrating that the applicant is responsible for the maintenance of the bus shelter and associated amenities.

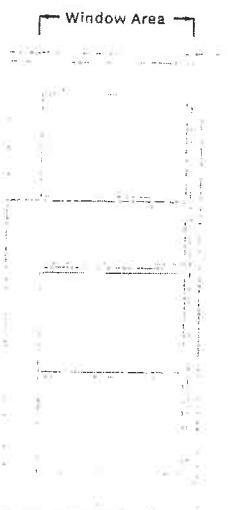
- VI. Section 27-2802.3.A of the zoning ordinance is amended by deleting the existing sentence and replacing it with the following: "Vehicle fueling station with or without automobile servicing and/or mini-market."
- VII. Section 27-2803.3, Height Regulations, is amended by deleting the existing language and replacing it with the following: "Height Regulations. Three stories maximum, and not to exceed forty feet regardless the number of stories."
- VIII. Section 27-2805, Conditional Use Standards, is amended at subsection 2805A by removing the first sentence and replacing it with the following: "Vehicle fueling stations with or without automobile servicing and/or mini-market." The existing subparagraphs (1) through (6) remain.
- IX. Section 27-2806, Limitations on Lots Abutting Residential Districts, is amended by the addition of a new paragraph "4", which reads as follows: "All mixed-use or nonresidential developments shall provide a permanent landscaped planting area of at least 10 feet in depth (inclusive of curb, but not sidewalk, of up to one foot in width) along all property lines adjacent to a residentially zoned property. The buffer shall meet the requirements of §100.4. Buffers and Screens.
- X. Part 28 of the zoning ordinance is amended by the addition of a new section 27-2807, Building Design Standards, the text of which is as follows:
 - 1. Overall design.
 - A. All buildings within a single project shall have a unified or complementary architectural character. Developments shall create focal points with respect to avenues of approach, or other buildings, and relate open space between all existing and proposed buildings.
 - B. Blank walls shall not be permitted along any exterior wall facing a street, parking area, or walking area. Walls or portions of walls where windows are not provided shall have architectural treatments that are similar to the front facade, including materials, colors, and details.
 - C. When flat roofs are proposed, a parapet wall or projecting cornice shall be included on the front façade(s).
 - D. Convenient pedestrian connections shall be provided from all building entrances to parking areas, open space, and recreational areas.
 - 2. Building materials.
 - A. All façades of new buildings visible from a public or private street, parking area, or public gathering space shall consist of quality building materials, such as brick, stone, concrete, and glass, to create visual interest and enhance the quality of the development.
 - B. The following building materials are prohibited: exterior insulation and finishing systems (EIFS); aluminum or vinyl siding or shutters; white, tan, or painted brick; concrete block; T-111 or other similar plywood siding.

3. Building orientation and entrances.

- A. Front facades of buildings shall be oriented toward Main Street or Butler Avenue, whichever immediately abuts the property frontage. Such entrances shall be usable and well-defined through the use of architectural features (e.g., utilizing porticos, pediments, colonnades, canopies, or overhangs).
- B. Each façade of a building with frontage along a public or private street, parking area, or public gathering space shall feature at least one clearly-defined and highly-visible pedestrian entrance with a direct sidewalk connection to the abutting street. A building with multiple street frontages may locate a pedestrian entrance on the corner of the building where the two streets intersect to fulfill this requirement.
- C. Storefront entrance doors shall be recessed a sufficient distance to allow doors to swing out without conflicting with pedestrian flow on the sidewalk.

4. Windows.

- A. The ground floor of any building along a primary street shall have a minimum clear window area of 60%, with windows providing views of display areas or the inside of the building. Window areas shall be between 12 inches and eight feet off the ground.



- B. For corner buildings with multiple frontages, the ground floor primary street transparency requirement shall wrap on to the ground floor of secondary frontages for a minimum distance equal to at least 25% of the length of the building façade along the secondary frontage, as measured from the corner of the primary and secondary frontages.
 - C. The upper floors of any building along a primary street shall have a minimum clear window area of 35%.
 - D. Smoked, reflective, or black glass in windows is prohibited.
 - 5. Building Façade Elements. All buildings shall include a variety of architectural design elements to provide visual interest and to mitigate the apparent scale and mass of large buildings and facades. Any building façade along a public or private street, parking area, or public gathering space that is greater than 30 feet long shall be articulated with façade breaks of a minimum depth of three (3) feet for every 30 feet of building façade length. In addition to breaks in the façade, other architectural elements that provide façade articulation shall be utilized no less than every 50 feet on average:
- A. Masonry;

- B. Concrete or Masonry plinth at the base of walls;
 - C. Belt courses of a different texture or color;
 - D. Projecting or decorative cornices;
 - E. Quoins;
 - F. Decorative tile work;
 - G. Trellis containing planting;
 - H. Medallions;
 - I. Bay windows;
 - J. Oriel windows;
 - K. Vertical articulation;
 - L. Stylized lighting fixtures;
 - M. Porticos;
 - N. Balconies;
 - O. Recessed entryways; and/or
 - P. Building extensions.
- XI. Part 28 of the zoning ordinance is amended by the addition of a new section 27-2808, Streetscape Standards, the text of which is as follows:
- 1. Pedestrian Design Standards. Public and private pedestrian access and circulation shall be included in all development proposals. Pedestrian access links shall be provided for all uses as specified on the Redevelopment Area Plan for access to open space areas and principal destinations such as the Ambler Borough Main Street Corridor, the SEPTA train station and the Wissahickon Conservation Corridor. The following standards shall apply throughout the DC:
 - A. Where feasible, sidewalks with an unimpeded pedestrian pathway width of at least eight (8) feet shall be provided along all existing and proposed streets and driveways within the DC. Where adjacent sidewalk is less than eight (8) feet, sidewalks with an unimpeded pedestrian pathway width of no less than six (6) feet shall be provided along all existing and proposed streets and driveways within the DC
 - B. Paved pedestrian walkways, sidewalks, trails or equivalent with a minimum width of five
 - (1) feet shall connect road frontage sidewalks to building entries, parking area(s) and other significant destination areas (i.e., passenger rail station, major open space areas and/or historically or culturally important sites).
 - C. Sidewalks shall connect to existing sidewalks on abutting tracts and other nearby pedestrian destination points and transit stops. Unpaved walking trails may be substituted for paved sidewalks in cases where the developer has proven that such trails would be more appropriate to the development's surroundings (i.e., along a watercourse, connection to an existing trail network, etc.).
 - D. All pedestrian amenities shall be designed in accordance with the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- E. Walkways between office buildings, retail establishments and housing areas shall facilitate "walkability." Direct pedestrian connections to public transit stops and adjacent properties shall be accommodated within the overall land use plan.
 - F. Sidewalks and pedestrian access links shall be constructed of a hard, durable, all- weather surface. Alternative paving materials, such as high density concrete pavers, may be utilized but must be of a color and texture matching that existing elsewhere in the Borough's Main Street and/or development areas and must be approved by the Borough.
 - G. For frontages on Main Street and Butler Avenue, a four (4) foot wide verge shall be provided between the sidewalk and curblin which may be either landscaped or hardscaped. For frontages other than Main Street and Butler Avenue, a two (2) foot wide verge shall be provided between the sidewalk and curblin which may be either landscaped or hardscaped.
 - H. Crosswalks. Crosswalks shall be clearly delineated at all intersections and marked to the width of the largest contributing sidewalk or internal pedestrian pathway. In no case shall the width of the crosswalk be less than six (6) feet. Furthermore, pedestrian signalization shall be provided at intersections where traffic signals exist.
2. Street furnishings.
- A. Applicability.
 - (1) Properties or developments with a frontage exceeding 100 feet on Main Street or Butler Avenue shall provide, at minimum, one (1) bench, one (1) trash receptacle, and one (1) recycling receptacle.
 - (2) Properties or developments with a frontage exceeding 200 feet on Main Street or Butler Avenue shall provide, at minimum, two (2) benches, one (1) trash receptacle, and one (1) recycling receptacle.
 - B. Location. Street furniture shall be located adjacent to the building façade, unless on- street parking is present, in which case street furniture may be located along the curb. Such amenities shall be maintained in perpetuity by the property owner.
 - C. Existing amenities, such as an existing bench or refuse receptacle, may be counted towards meeting the requirement.
 - D. Fee in-lieu.
 - (1) An applicant may choose to contribute a fee in lieu of providing the street furnishings that would have otherwise been required by this section when there are site constraints that make the provision thereof infeasible or impractical. The Borough Zoning Officer and Borough Engineer shall confirm that the provision of required street furnishings is infeasible or impractical.

- (2) The amount of the fee shall be equal to the fair market value of the streetscape furnishings that otherwise would have been required by this section. Fair market value shall be determined by agreement of Borough Council and the applicant.
3. Bicycle parking required.
 - A. Applicability. Any property undergoing subdivision or land development, as defined in Chapter 22, Subdivision and Land Development, shall require the installation of the requisite number of bicycle parking spaces pursuant to Subsection B, below.
 - B. Number of bicycle parking spaces required.
 - (1) One bicycle parking space shall be provided for every three dwelling units. When less than three dwelling units are located on a lot, no bicycle parking facilities shall be required.
 - (2) One bicycle parking space shall be provided for every 10 vehicle parking spaces required for any nonresidential use. Uses requiring less than 10 parking spaces shall not be required to provide bicycle parking facilities.
 - C. Design.
 - (1) Bicycle facilities shall be provided either interior and/or exterior to the building and be convenient for use by employees, patrons, residents and/or visitors.
 - (2) Bicycle parking facilities should include a secure device to which the bicycle frame and one wheel of the bicycle can be attached with a cable or locking device. The device should be suitable to keep bicycles erect when they are locked to it.
 - (3) Bicycle parking design and location shall be in conformance with the most recent published standards of the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals, and shall not impede the pedestrian clear path of any public sidewalk.
4. Lighting facilities.
 - A. All nonpublic sidewalk, walkway, parking and building lighting fixtures shall be of a style and design that is either consistent with or complementary to those utilized throughout the DC.
 - B. Lamp posts for all existing and proposed streets shall match existing lamp posts utilized throughout the DC. The specifications for existing lamp posts may be requested from the Borough Engineer.
 - C. Strict adherence to §27-412, Lighting Criteria Applicable to All Zoning Districts, is required.
5. Bus stops.
 - A. The developer shall coordinate with SEPTA, or any other public transit provider, on providing or improving existing bus stops when a public bus transit route operates or has a stop located on a public or private street frontage directly abutting a development within the DC.

- B. The developer shall coordinate with SEPTA on the stop design. The appropriate transit stop improvements and shelter shall be provided meeting the most recent SEPTA Bus Stop Design Guidelines. Transit stops shall include, at a minimum, a shelter or enclosure, seating, and schedule information.
- C. The developer shall sign a perpetual maintenance agreement with Ambler Borough demonstrating that the applicant is responsible for the maintenance of the bus shelter and associated amenities.

XII. Miscellaneous.

- 1. Any existing ordinance containing provisions inconsistent with this ordinance is, to the extent of such inconsistency, repealed.
- 2. Should any provision of this ordinance be found invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalid portion shall be, to the extent reasonably possible, severed from the remainder of the ordinance, which shall continue in full force and effect.
- 3. This ordinance is effective on the earliest applicable date set forth in section 3301 of the Pennsylvania Borough Code.

SO ORDAINED this 20th day of May, 2025.



Glynnis Siskind, Council President

Attest: 

Kyle Detweiler, Secretary

APPROVED: 

Jeanne Sorg, Mayor