

BOROUGH OF AMBLER TARGETED AMENDMENTS TO THE REDEVELOPMENT OVERLAY DISTRICT

AUGUST 6, 2024

Tim Konetchy, Senior Planner

Montgomery County Planning Commission

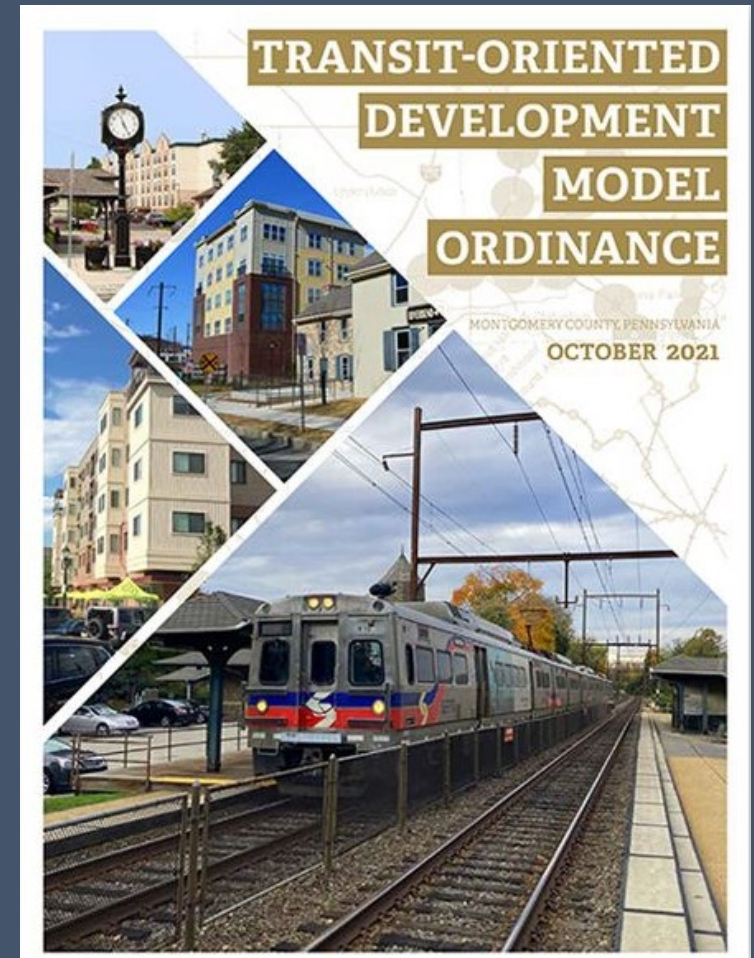


AGENDA

- 1) Transit-Oriented Development Background
- 2) Ambler's TOD Area
- 3) Project Timeline
- 4) Guiding Principles
- 5) Summary of Proposed Ordinance Amendments
- 6) Next Steps

TOD BACKGROUND

- Transit-oriented development (TOD) seeks to **capitalize on public transit access** by transforming underutilized spaces into **walkable and sustainable** communities, with a **mix of land uses**, a **vibrant public realm**, and excellent **connectivity to transit amenities**
- MCPC recognized that public transit serves a wide variety of landscapes and built environments throughout the county, so we prepared a model ordinance that addresses various station contexts and typologies



TOD BACKGROUND

- In the last decade, the following have been proposed within ½ mile of transit:
 - 8,000+ residential units
 - 5.5 million ft² of nonresidential construction
- Within ½ mile of transit there is presently:
 - 57,486 dwelling units
 - 15+ million ft² industrial
 - 11+ million ft² office
 - 30+ million ft² commercial
- Ambler is top 5 in regional rail ridership for Montgomery County (SEPTA, 2020)



PROJECT TIMELINE



- SEPTA initiates station redevelopment discussion with the borough, as part of their Transit-Oriented Communities program (TOC)

Jan. 30, 2024

- SEPTA hosts an open house in collaboration with Ambler & MCPC

Mar. 5, 2024

- SEPTA presents open house summary to Borough Council
- MCPC presents zoning proposal to Borough Council

March - July

*June 27, 2024
SEPTA board votes to begin RFP process*

- Planning Commission works with MCPC to prepare targeted updates to Zoning Ordinance Part 21, Redevelopment Overlay District

July 24, 2024

*August 6, 2024
PC's draft presented to Borough Council*

- Planning Commission votes to send the draft to Borough Council

TBD

- Borough Council to vote on public notice and schedule a public hearing
- Montgomery County Review (Act 247)
- Public hearing and adoption (at same or subsequent meeting)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- On March 5, SEPTA presented a summary report for the January 30th open house. The borough's community planner also presented a proposal for targeted zoning amendments to address community input
- After discussion, Borough Council empowered the planning commission to prepare targeted amendments to the Redevelopment Overlay District to:
 - Expand the mix of permitted uses, specifically to enable mixed-use
 - Establish an active storefront requirement
 - Establish stronger architectural standards
 - Establish stronger sidewalk and streetscaping standards
 - Review and revise dimensional standards, as needed
 - Review and revise parking requirements

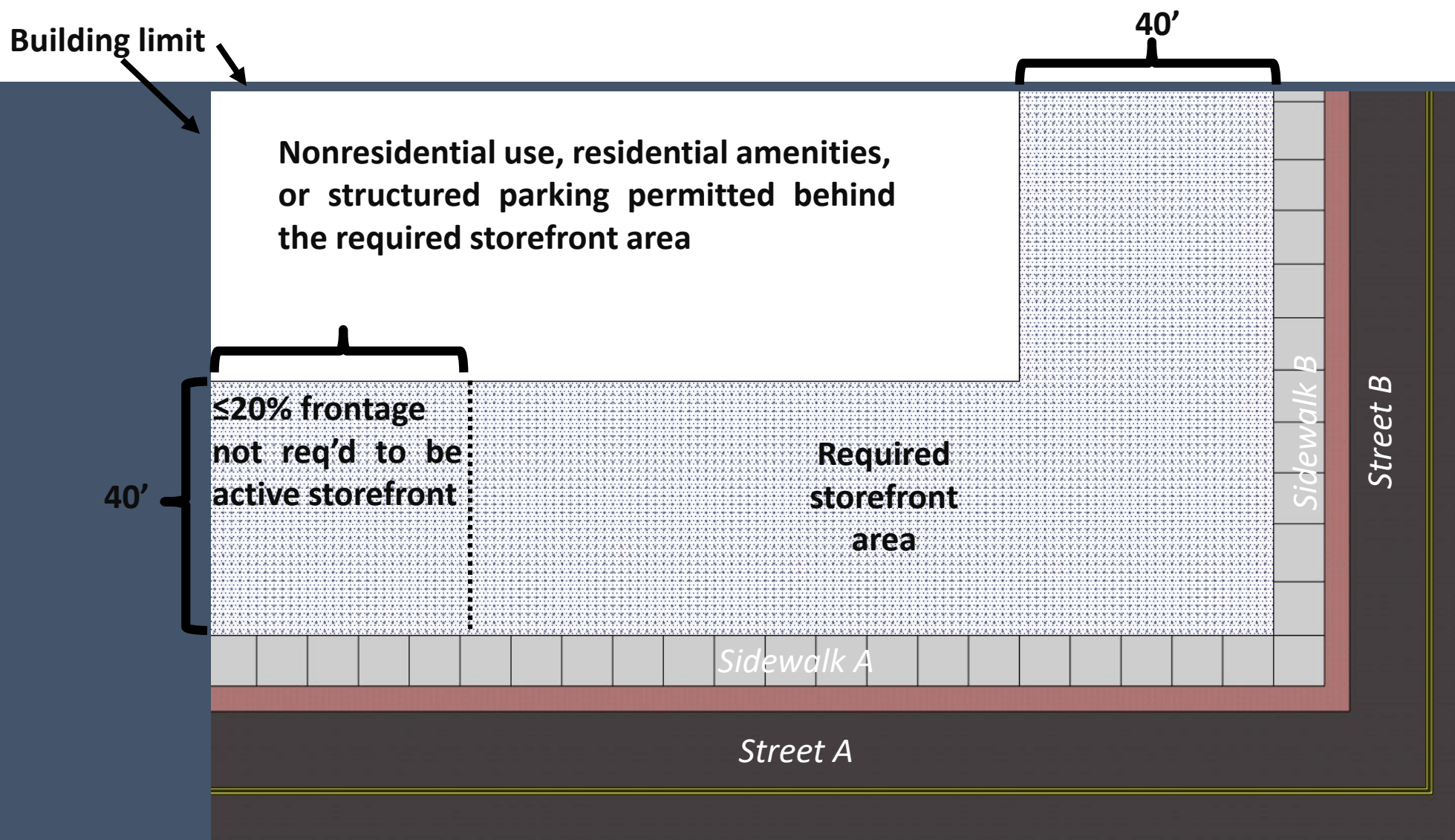
PERMITTED USES

- TOD definition updated to reflect a mix of uses
- Nonresidential uses required to occupy 80% of the building frontage, at a depth of 40 feet:
 - Retail
 - Office
 - Food and beverage service
 - Personal service
 - Indoor recreation or cultural facilities
 - Hotel or motel
 - Artisanal manufacturing (e.g., ceramics shop, woodwork)
- Parking lots and structures permitted alongside a TOD, but structured parking does not satisfy nonresidential use requirement.
- Parking structure/garage standards updated to reflect the ground floor nonresidential requirement

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)

A Transit-Oriented Development, or TOD, is an intensified development surrounding a rail or mass transit station that is compact, mixed-use, and pedestrian-friendly, and which is intended to encourage transit ridership. A TOD integrates nonresidential and residential components within the same building within a unified development, which can be of moderate to high density, and which may be developed in the form of either new construction or redevelopment.

ACTIVE STOREFRONT REQUIREMENT



EXAMPLE- THE STATION AT WILLOW GROVE



Storefront and streetscape on primary frontage



Rear parking garage accessible via alley

PERMITTED USES CONT.

- Multifamily residential development required as part of the mixed-use TOD
- Dwelling units permitted on second story and above
- Minimum dwelling unit size carried over from Downtown Commercial District:
 - 600 SF (studio) + 100SF per bedroom
- Maximum residential density of 35 dwelling units per acre (retained from current zoning regulation)



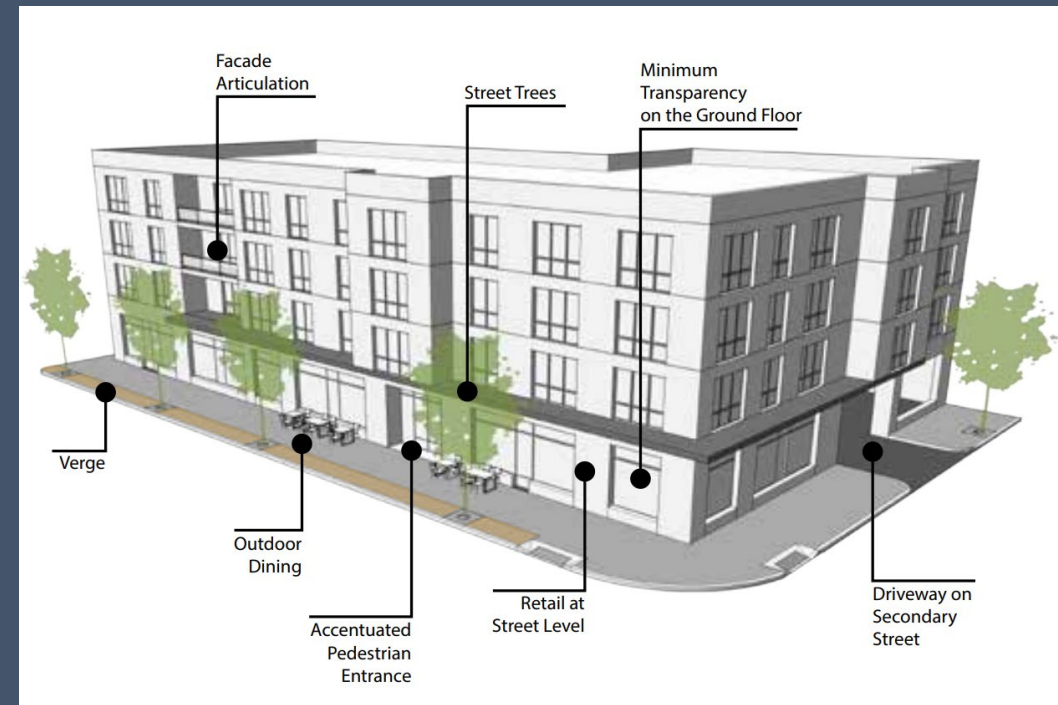
RESIDENTIAL DENSITY BONUS (§27-2704)

- When satisfied, residential density up to 50 dwelling units per acre is permitted – this is currently allowed for ROD, RSC zoning
- In order to qualify, one of the following must be satisfied:
 - The TOD is LEED Gold certified
 - The TOD provides a direct pedestrian connection from the NB-SB station platforms
 - The TOD provides 3 of 5:
 - On-site renewable energy generation (10%);
 - Income-restricted dwelling units (10%);
 - Public parking provided (5%);
 - Expanded gathering space provided (10%); and/or
 - All required parking is located within a structure

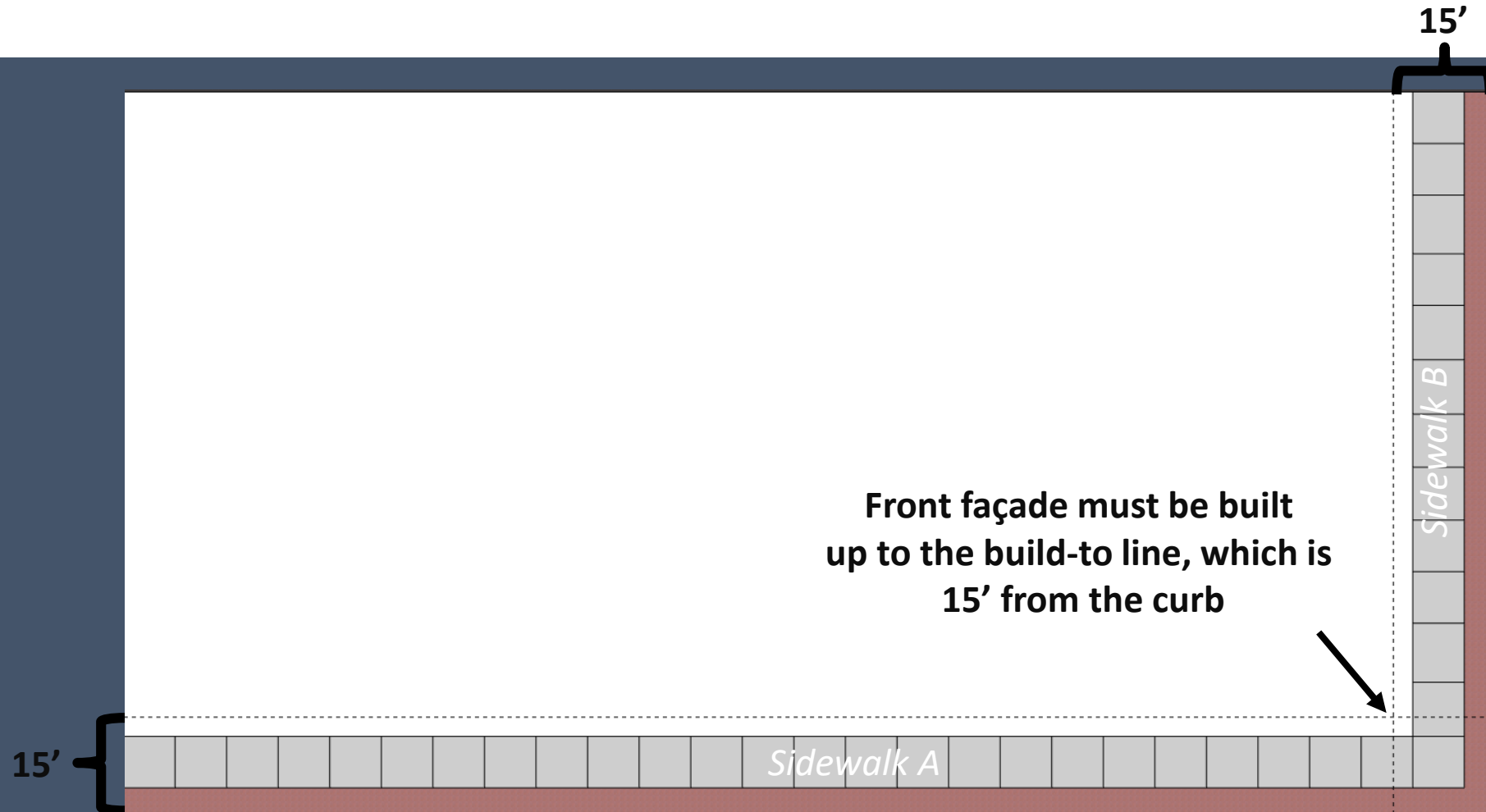


ARCHITECTURAL & DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

- Updated dimensional standards:
 - Minimum lot area set at 3 acres
 - New frontage occupation requirement of 90%
 - Maximum impervious coverage retained at 80%
 - Front setback flipped to build-to line of 15 feet, keeping buildings near the sidewalk
 - Stepback requirement above the 3rd floor (12 feet)
- Building design standards
 - Front entrance accentuation
 - Minimum storefront and upper story window %
 - Flexible architectural detailing requirements

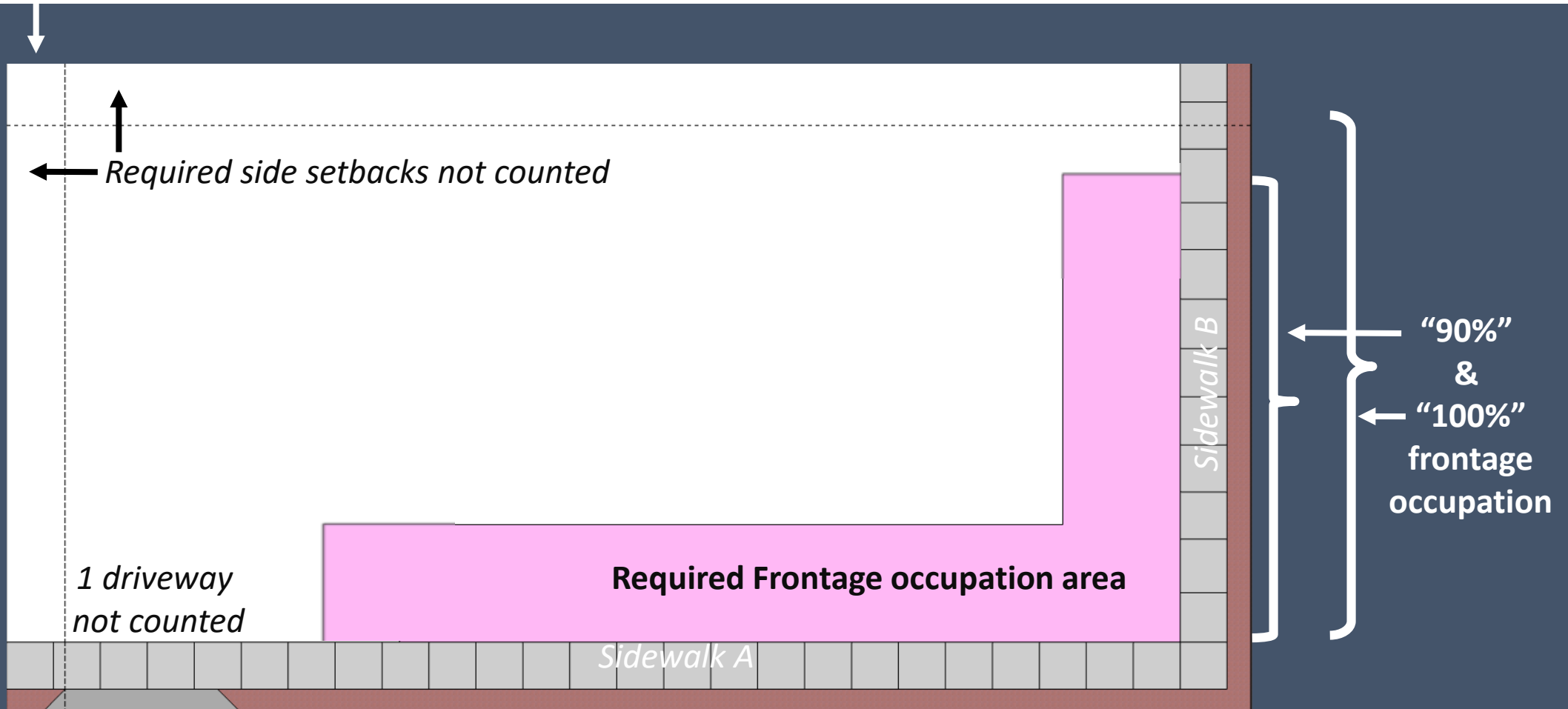


BUILD-TO LINE

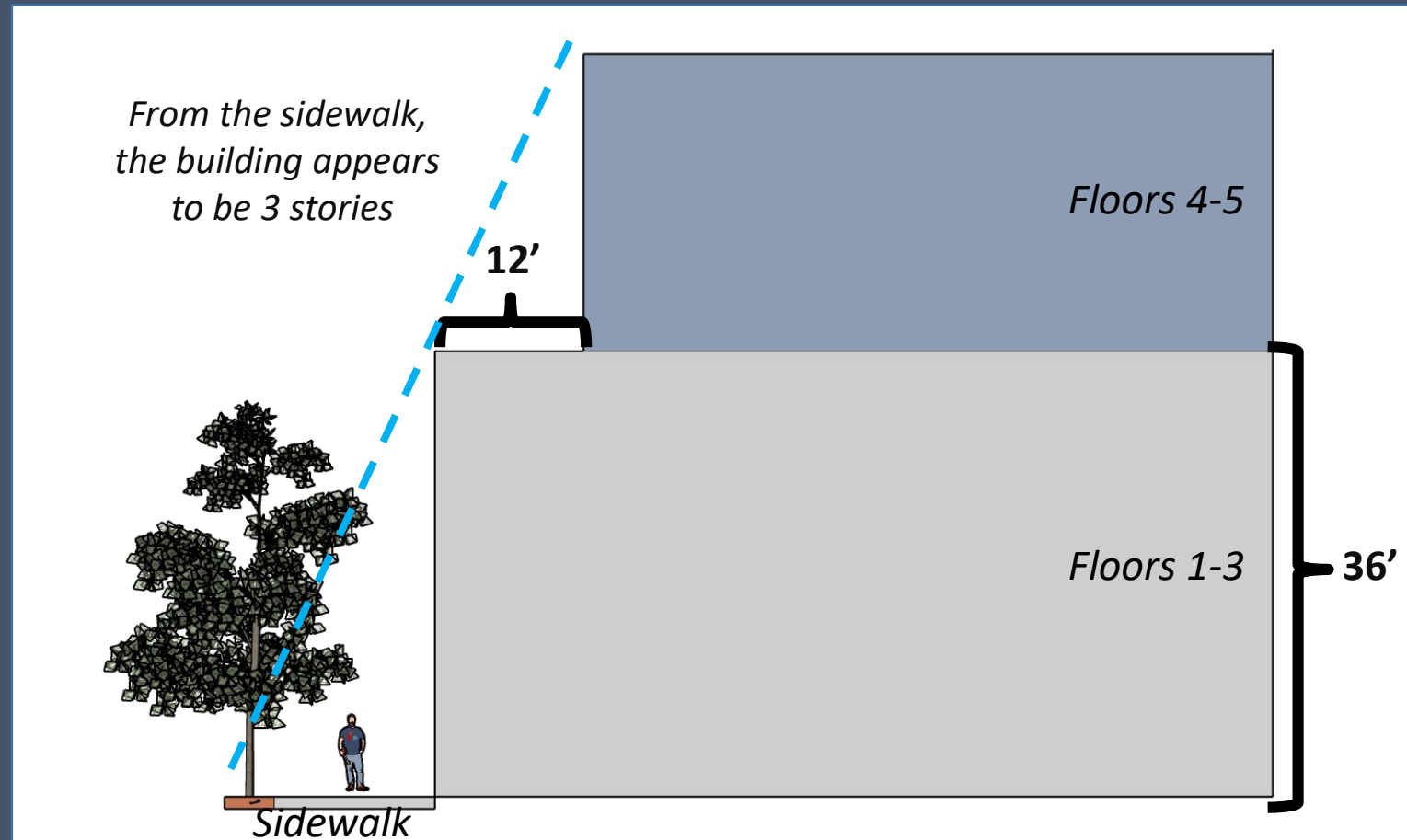


FRONTAGE OCCUPATION

Property lines



UPPER STORY STEPBACK



EXAMPLE – CRICKET FLATS, ARDMORE



Upper story step back



Streetscaping

STREETSCAPING STANDARDS

- Minimum street furnishing of two benches, one trash and one recycling bin, and one bike rack per 300 feet of frontage
- Plus, additional street furnishings required based on size of development
 - Greening: various landscaping and planter options, green roof, or green wall
 - Furnishing/art: bench, bike racks, trash/recycling bins, public art, public drinking fountain, public restrooms, display fountain, or clock tower
- Gathering space required at the sidewalk, which must be a minimum of 5% of TOD effective lot area (>6,500 SF) and has specific design standards



KEY EXAMPLE - AMBLER SQUARE

Photo credit: Gilmore & Associates



MCPC COMMUNITY PLANNERS AT AMBLER SQUARE



EXAMPLE – SORA WEST, CONSHOHOCKEN



EXAMPLE - SUBURBAN SQUARE, ARDMORE

EXAMPLE – THE MADISON, LANSDDALE



Dog park



Pedestrian plaza

SIDEWALK, STREETSCAPING, AND LANDSCAPING (ROAD-WIDE)

- Updated sidewalk and streetscaping requirements:
 - 8-foot sidewalk
 - Vegetated or masonry verge
 - Crosswalks at intersections
 - Connections required between the sidewalk and building entrances, and throughout site
- Landscaping requirements largely remain unchanged, though the text was cleaned-up:
 - Street trees required every 40 feet
 - Foundation plantings required between edge of sidewalk and front façade
 - Ten foot screening buffer required between a TOD and residential district

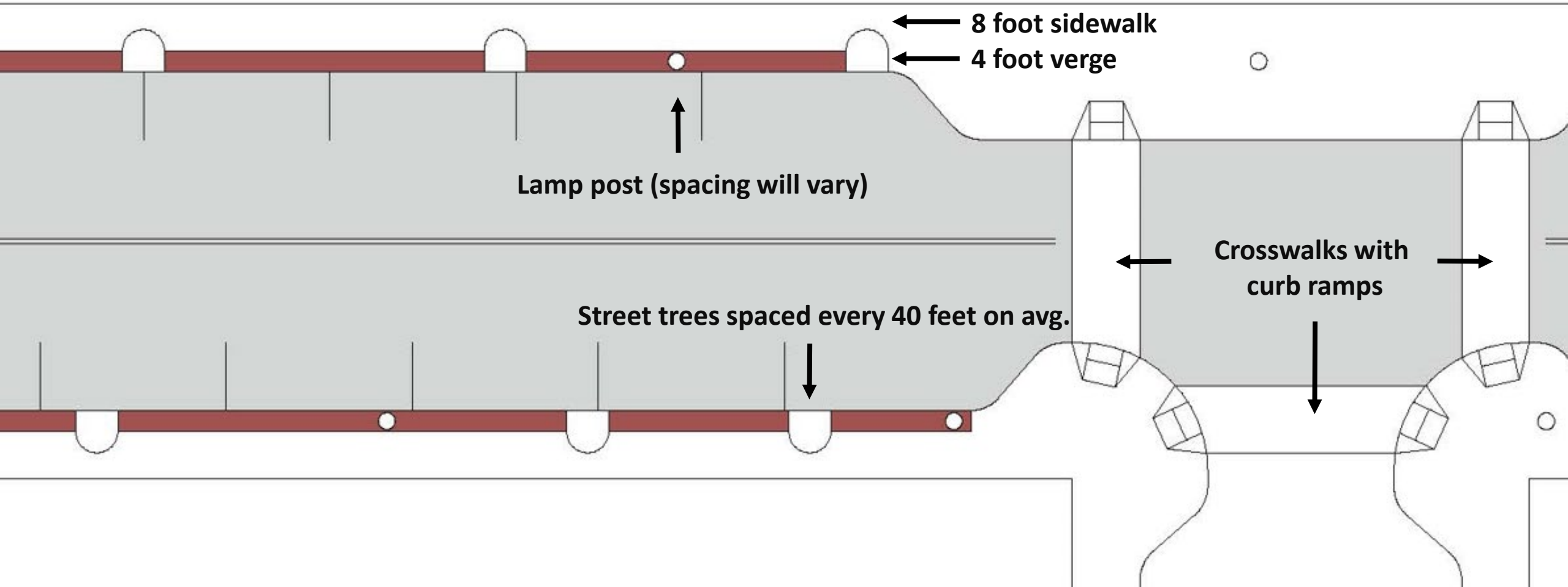


Ambler streetscape

EXAMPLE- BUTLER AVE STREETScape

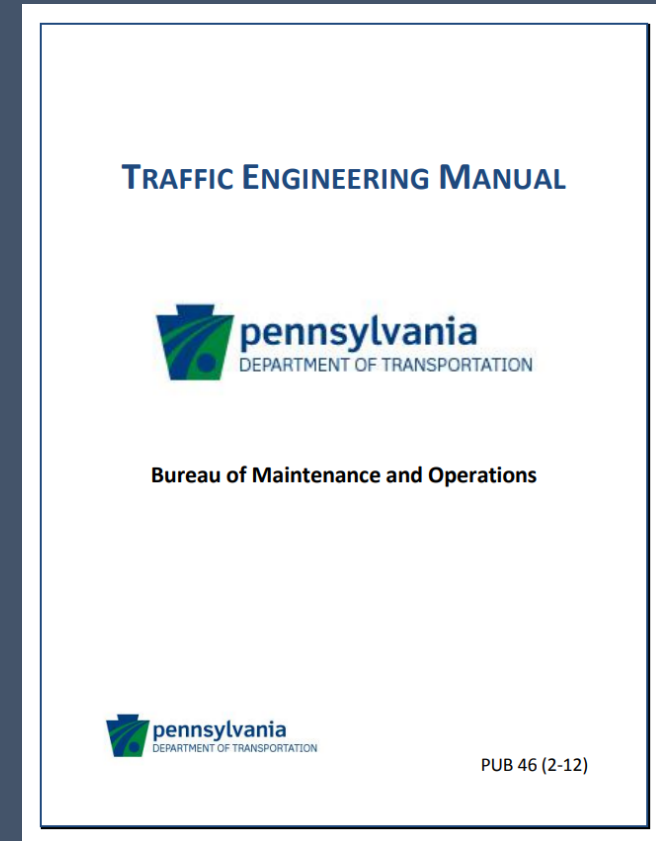


SIDEWALK AND VERGE REQUIREMENT



PARKING REQUIREMENTS

- Reduced baseline parking requirement within a TOD
- Enhanced shared parking option, whereby uses may share the same parking lot under certain circumstances
- Parking generation study required, which may be used to inform the amount of parking provided
- Transportation Impact Study required for a TOD, and the requirements were updated to reflect new PennDOT policy documents/guidelines



NEXT STEPS

1. Borough Council will need vote to on commencing with public notice for a schedule public hearing
 - Montgomery County review required (30 days)
 - Public notice must appear in the newspaper twice within 30 days of the public hearing, per MPC notice requirement
2. Public hearing will need be held at a Borough Council meeting
3. Vote will need to be held to adopt, revise, or reject the ordinance at a Borough Council meeting (same or future)

THANK YOU

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