

### III. Commercial Development Within The Urban-Rural Demarcation Line

#### **C. Shopping Center/Mall**

# III. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE URBAN-RURAL DEMARCATION LINE

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#### C. SHOPPING CENTER/MALL



##### a. SHOPPING CENTER/MALL CONCEPT

Several types of shopping areas have evolved over time in Baltimore County. The first type is commonly known as a strip mall or center and is arranged in a row, with a sidewalk in front. It may have an “L” or “U” shape. Open canopies may connect the store fronts, but a strip center does not have enclosed walkways linking the stores. These centers, typically developed as a unit, are characterized by large setbacks, large areas of parking in the front, and high-mast, automobile-oriented signage. Many of them face major traffic arterials and tend to be self-contained with few pedestrian connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and other commercial businesses. Some strip malls function as community shopping centers that provide general merchandise or convenience-oriented offerings of wider range of apparel and other soft goods. Smaller strip malls may be called mini-malls.

When the size of strip malls become bigger, they are considered to be big-box centers (or power centers).

These centers are often anchored on one end by a big box national retailer and/or by a large supermarket on the other. These centers also include other types of retailers but vary from center to center, such as electronics stores, dollar stores, and boutiques.

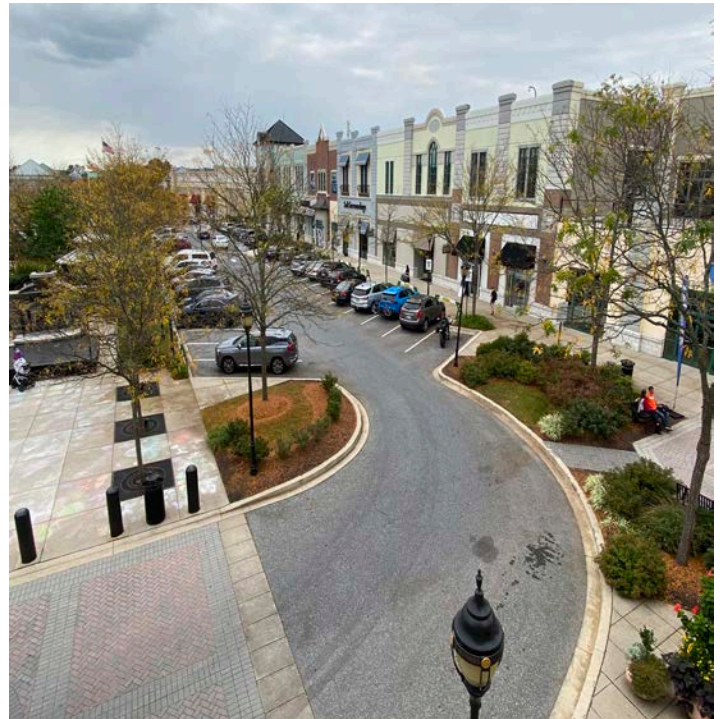
The third type of shopping development is Shopping Malls. Traditionally, these malls are developed as enclosed developments. Pursuant to §101.1 of BCZR, “Enclosed Mall” is defined as a shopping center containing an enclosed pedestrian concourse or connecting enclosed pedestrian concourses to which at least 75 percent of the establishments therein front onto and have their only direct access (except as required for emergency use). An example of such development is Towson Town Center.

In recent years, existing or new malls are being, and have been, transformed and developed into lifestyle centers or regional outdoor malls. This new type of shopping mall adopts the form and design of an old-town Main Street. As a result, shops and retail stores are lined along the “Main Street” to create and replicate that type of atmosphere. Open spaces such as squares or plazas are incorporated for patrons and visitors to gather as well as to facilitate programmed activities. To enhance the shopping experience, these malls are not only anchored by department stores but with popular restaurants, bars, salons, cinemas, and fitness centers. According to the classification of International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC), the new form of malls can be also called: factory outlet centers and theme/festival centers. In Baltimore County, examples of these new type of malls are the Hunt Valley Towne Centre and the Avenue at White Marsh.



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#### b. SITE PLANNING

##### 1. Develop a sense of street edge.

- (a) Locate or center the largest user on the site to provide a focal point for design.
- (b) Group buildings together to form a unified complex. Buildings may be organized to form a campus-like setting that are surrounded by attractively landscaped parking areas. Buildings should be arranged to create some open spaces along the pathways that could facilitate social activities and programmed activities and events
- (c) Locate pad sites close to the street to provide a sense of street edge. These pad sites should allow the establishment of small-scale retail spaces or mobile vending activities.
- (d) If located at the intersection of two arterial streets, the site development should incorporate a special feature or focal point at the corner of the site. If not at an intersection, a special feature should be considered in conjunction with a transit stop or at the primary access point to the site.
- (e) Large sites should allow for smaller out-parcel development of pad sites close to the street, particularly at corners. If a bus stop is located within the same block, out-parcel development

should consider to incorporate it as part of the design.

- (f) New development should provide parking areas that are beside and behind, as well as in front of buildings. This would allow the placement of buildings closer to the street and expanses of parking to be broken up.
- (g) The furthest parking lot space should generally not be more than 300 feet from the building facade and no more than 500 feet from a building entrance.
- (h) Design the site circulation system as a hierarchical system. The entry should feed a collector road / Public Transit which feeds the parking areas. The entry design should include a landscaped median to separate incoming and outgoing traffic and provide visual relief from the width of the paving.
- (i) Landscaping along the street frontage should not adversely impact the sight distance of vehicular and pedestrian users entering and exiting the site.

##### 2. Provide pedestrian accessibility.

- (a) Buildings should be located to facilitate safe and comfortable pedestrian movement between them. If the adjacent site is developed, locate the building to facilitate pedestrian and vehicular connections to the developed sites.

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- (b) Design all sidewalks as a continuous circulation system and connect the sidewalks with the pedestrian ways in the vicinity.
- (c) Safe pedestrian access from the public right-of-way to the front entrance should be provided.
- (d) Striped crossings should be provided to promote safe pedestrian circulation.

#### 3. Protect adjacent residential areas by appropriate placement of commercial buildings.

- (a) Buildings should be arranged to reduce the effects of noise, odors, trash, light spillage, and circulation on the adjoining residences.
- (b) Screen mechanical and utility equipment, trash dumpsters and other similar items from view.
- (c) Loading and dumpster areas should be located and designed to be away from the road with little visual impact and easily accessible without adversely disturbing the parking layout.
- (d) Adequate landscaping should be provided to reduce impacts on to adjoining residences, and meet or exceed the BC landscape manual requirements

#### C. LANDSCAPING AND OPEN SPACE

The Baltimore County Landscape Manual is to be used in companion with the CMDP Guidelines with the same emphasis and importance.

#### LANDSCAPING

#### 1. Create an attractively landscaped right-of-way and maintain sense of streetwall.

- (a) Provide landscaping between the building facade and sidewalk where possible. Landscaping along the building will provide additional visual interest.
- (b) Plant the strip between the major road and the site development with plant materials that continue the overall streetscape design.
- (c) Locate street trees and other landscape features along the sidewalk system.
- (d) Following existing grade changes between different sections of a parking lot is an excellent way to break the uniformity and expanse. Avoid level grading of the entire lot. Use of retaining walls, which allow the maintenance of existing slope areas, is preferred over graded artificial slopes.



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- (e) Landscaped islands in the parking lot with curb cuts and shade trees are required by zoning and will help break the parking lot into more attractive, smaller scale areas as well as provide shade and areas for snow removal.
- (f) If planting islands are staggered within the parking lots, then only one island break for every 14 parking spaces will be required. Islands should have a minimum of two trees.
- (g) Tree-lined medians should be designed with an appropriate width in order to ensure a healthy establishment of shade trees and should be used to separate parking aisles and/or the internal collector street.
- (h) Coordinate placement of landscaping, benches, and lighting with the location of out-parcel development to improve the streetscape.
- (i) Combine seating areas with seasonal color planting areas, and sculpture or water features to serve as a focal point.
- (j) Landscape areas should be provided to integrate pad sites with surrounding land uses.

#### 2. Provide buffers and screens for adjacent streets and residential areas.

- (a) Plant evergreen trees where topography lessens the screening effect of a fence or wall.

- (b) Screening should be an extension of the development's architectural treatment and consistent in color and design. Walls should be constructed of quality materials consistent with the building facade material.
- (c) Screen service facilities from the remainder of the project, adjacent land uses and roads.
- (d) Dumpsters should be clustered and screened on all sides, especially when they are visible from neighboring properties or streets.
- (e) Utility metering should be located within a designated service area and screened from the project and adjacent land uses.

#### 3. Use landscaping to enhance a healthy and safe environment.

- (a) Create landscaping with native plantings that provide ornamental qualities, color and attractiveness as well as local habitat.
- (b) Include larger shade trees strategically throughout the parking lot since they can provide two to six times more shade than small trees.
- (c) Incorporate landscaping design such as naturalized drainages, raingardens and bioswales for stormwater management. Tree plantings in these areas shall have root systems that can withstand submerged conditions.



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- (d) Design landscape islands in the parking lot to be landscaped bioretention areas as stormwater management that are interconnected to capture, slow, clean, and infiltrate stormwater, fulfilling both aesthetic and functional purposes.
- (e) Avoid trees and shrubs blocking key sight lines of motorists at important areas in the parking lot as well as of passersby from adjacent sidewalks.
- (b) Shade should be provided either through trees or man-made structures (e.g., gazebo or canopies).
- (c) Provide amenities including tables and chairs, trash receptacles, and planter boxes that grow seasonal flowers and plants, and lighting.
- (d) For larger spaces, area should be incorporated to allow communal gathering and flexibility for uses such as Farmers Markets and small outdoor festivals.

#### OPEN SPACE

##### 1. Provide open space for employees and patrons.

- (a) Provide an outdoor, landscaped area for employees to take a break, eat lunch, wait for a ride, or meet someone.
- (b) In projects where undeveloped land remains and where appropriate, use these areas as passive open space and provide pedestrian access.

##### 2. Create gathering spaces that enhance shopping centers' public function.

- (a) Locations of these spaces shall be connected to adjacent sidewalks and are accessible physically. They provide attractiveness for pedestrians to gather and serve as focal points for the community.

#### d. CIRCULATION AND PARKING

##### 1. Promote pedestrian accessibility and connectivity.

- (a) On the facades which provide public access into the building, walkways should be wide enough to allow for sidewalk seating areas as well as pedestrian travel. Weather protection should be provided at the entrance area and, if appropriate, along the entire building walkway.
- (b) A pedestrian network should be provided within the parking lot to transit stops, out-parcel development and to neighboring developments to increase accessibility from surrounding uses.



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- (c) Sidewalks along the front of commercial developments should be connected to the sidewalk along the street. At a minimum, walkways should connect focal points of pedestrian activity such as transit stops and street crossings to the major building entry points.
- (d) The sidewalk system should be designed and developed to avoid making customers walk across expanses of asphalt.
- (e) Walkways should be provided along the full length of the building on any side which provides building access to the public or where public parking is available.
- (f) Transit, bus shelters, and bike storages shall be incorporated into parking lots' design.
- (g) Provide sidewalks along the parking lot side of the collector street. The extensive use of sidewalks is not required, but should be adequate to ensure a safe pedestrian environment.

#### 2. Design for pedestrian and vehicular safety.

- (a) Design an internal collector street which fronts a majority of the building entrances. This concept will have buildings on one side of the street and parking areas on the other.

- (b) Internal walkway surfaces should be designed to be visually attractive and enhance pedestrian comfort and safety. They should be distinguishable from driving surfaces through the use of contrasting materials such as pavers, bricks or scored concrete.
- (c) Whenever feasible, add traffic calming devices to reduce vehicle speeds as well as give pedestrian the right-of-way, such as speed bumps, speed tables, the use of difference pavement materials, and stop signs.
- (d) Use landscaped islands and medians to help separate and define the roadway network.

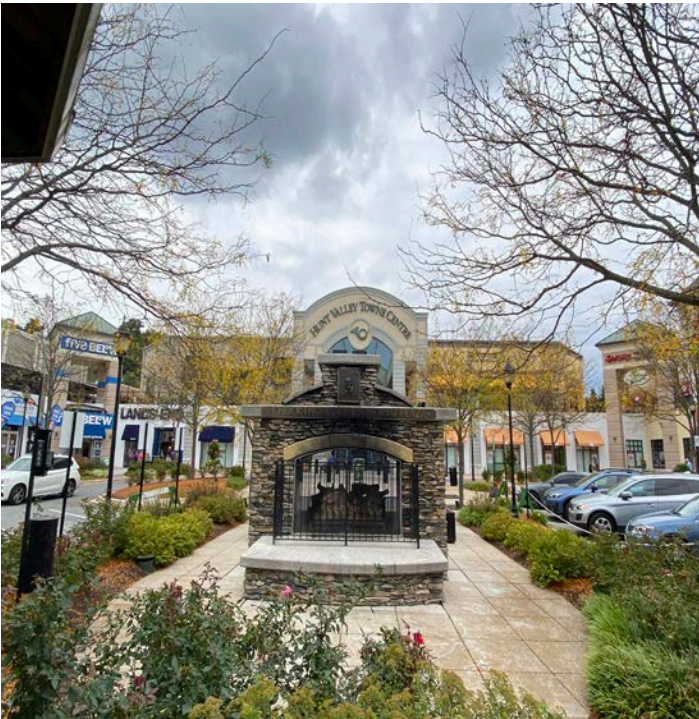
#### 3. Minimize vehicular conflicts.

- (a) Where feasible and desirable, consolidate curb cuts with a principal curb cut located at a mid-block location.
- (b) No more than one curb cut per side street for secondary entrances should be provided.
- (c) The driveway should be at least 200 feet from the intersection of major thoroughfares (arterials) unless a one-way traffic flow is used.
- (d) Locate service facilities in a central area to be used by several retail establishments, separate from the main circulation and parking functions.



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- (e) Clearly define the circulation pattern throughout the parking lot with pavement markings.

#### 4. Enhance environmental protection.

- (a) Use innovative stormwater management practices, vegetation, and sustainable paving systems to mitigate adverse environmental impacts of large expanses of paving.
- (b) Incorporate permeable paving materials to infiltrate and manage stormwater onsite, such as reinforced grass/gravel pavement systems, porous asphalt and concrete, and permeable interlocking concrete pavers.
- (c) Install electric vehicle charging stations, where appropriate.
- (d) Incorporate intelligent lighting systems that dim and shut off parking lot lights when no longer needed to reduce electric use and minimize impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

#### 5. Reinforce community social activities.

- (a) Enable the layout design of parking lots to accommodate multiple temporary programmed activities such as event spaces for farmers' markets, carnivals, outdoor theaters, food truck areas, or other types of social functions.

- (b) Allocate parking spaces for carsharing services, which can benefit residents who need to rent cars for short periods of time without obtaining a car ownership.

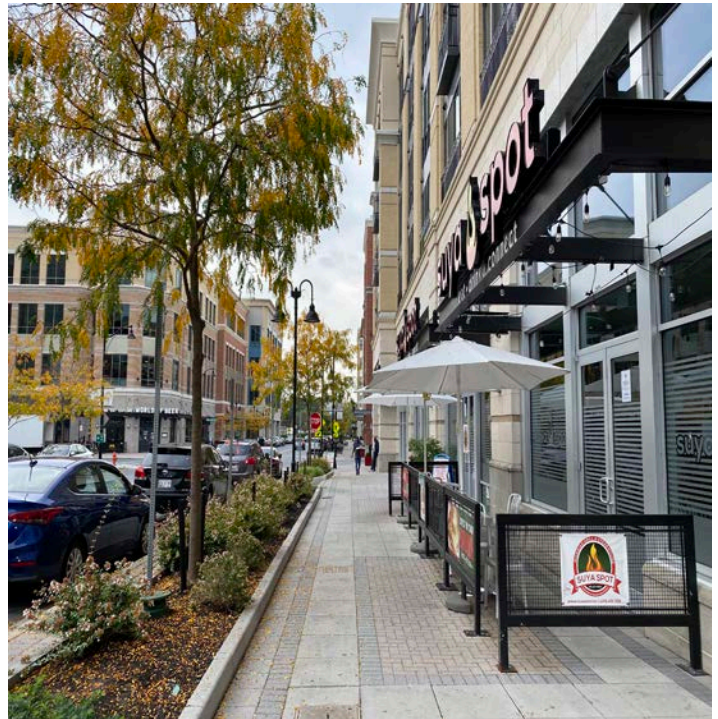
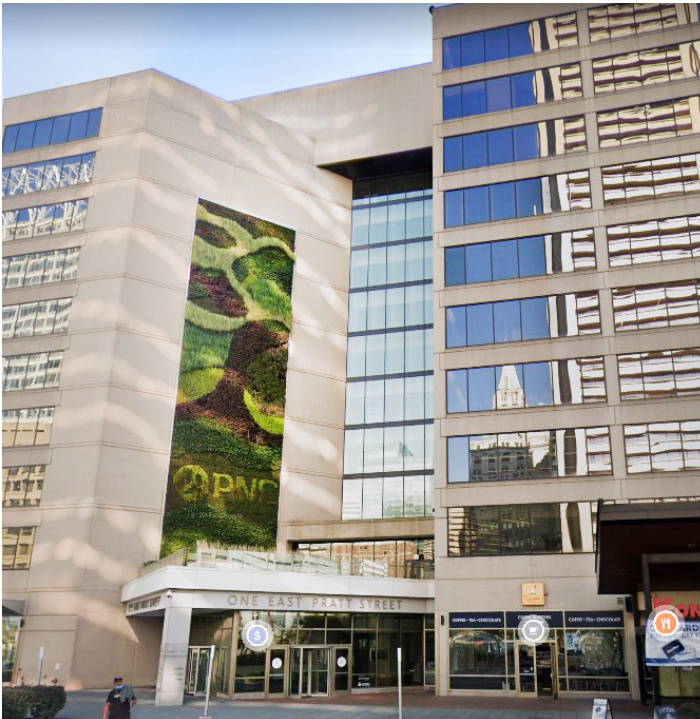
#### 6. Support alternative transportation

- (a) All developments should meet Complete Streets requirements: <https://resources.baltimorecountymd.gov/Documents/Planning/cmdp/bcompletestreets.pdf>
- (b) Provisions for transit facilities where feasible shall be included.
- (c) Establish bicycle lanes where sufficient space is available. Provide bicycle racks. (See [BCZR § 409.14. Bicycle parking.](#))
- (d) Baltimore County's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan shall be considered when Main Street development is designed: <https://baltimorecountybikeped.weebly.com/>
- (e) Create a pedestrian-friendly environment through uniform paving texture and identification of pedestrian crosswalks.
- (f) Install electric vehicle charging stations where feasible.



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#### e. ARCHITECTURE/BUILDING FEATURES

##### 1. Sustainability.

- (a) Developments should be designed to achieve green building standards equivalent to the silver standard of either the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or the National Green Building Standards (NGBS).
- (b) Incorporate solar panels, water recycle systems or other systems in architectural design to mitigate energy and water consumption and optimize energy use.
- (c) Consider design of living green walls to promote an environment-friendly design approach as well as to create a visual attraction. on large facades.

##### 2. Develop a sense of street edge.

- (a) Encourage vertical elements higher than the typical one-story building through mixed uses on the site such as a second floor for offices or residences. This gives the building a stronger presence on the street and adds variety to the architecture.
- (b) Main entrances to parking lots should provide architectural elements such as a gateway, arch or tower to create identity and sense of streetwall.

- (c) Storefronts along walkways are encouraged.
- (d) Façade of buildings and tenant space must be transparent at the street level.
- (e) Provide windows along the sidewalk edge to aid visual interest, give scale and provide a sense of “window shopping” and information about what is sold in the centers.

##### 3. Respect the character of the adjacent area in the design of buildings.

- (a) Buildings within a multi-building complex should exhibit a unity of design through the use of similar elements such as rooflines, materials, window arrangement, sign location and details which respect neighboring residential areas.
- (b) Roof lines, overhangs, and the front fascia should be extended to the rear of the building where appropriate.
- (c) Rear and side facades should be of finished quality and of the same color and materials as the front of the building.

##### 4. Promote visual interest.

- (a) Buildings should be architecturally related with design and materials.



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- (b) New or remodeled buildings should incorporate architectural forms such as offsets, exaggerated parapets, and highly articulated entrances. Create variation along the façade of long buildings to enhance a visual rhythm and interest, such as midblock connections, entrances, and pedestrian amenities.
- (c) A consistent, uniform architectural theme is desired for the development.
- (d) Large expanses of flat monotonous material should be minimized through the use of bands of accent color, recessed or protruding belt courses, wide reveals or combinations thereof.
- (e) Divide the overall massing to avoid or break up overly large forms.
- (f) Buildings over 100 feet in length should incorporate recesses/off-sets, angular forms or other features (e.g. arcades) to provide a visually interesting shape. Arcades help articulate building mass and public entrances. Roof lines that help break up building frontages should be varied with the incorporation of a major focal point, such as a gable or projected wall features. A single uninterrupted length of facade should not exceed 100 feet.
- (g) Avoid large, flat roofs without using accents in the parapet line. Height differentiation provides visual relief of otherwise straight boxes.
- (h) Colors are encouraged for trim as accents, but are discouraged for the main portions of the buildings.
- (i) Mechanical equipment, if located on the building, shall be located within the roof form of the building or enclosed within a screening structure, the design of which is consistent with the design of the building.
- (j) Entrances to the main tenants should be articulated from the building mass using such means as a raised parapet and distinct materials or colors.
- (k) Different materials, textures and colors should be utilized to add visual interest to the façade. Quality materials that reduce maintenance costs over the life of the building and reinforce the character of the community shall be preferred.
- (l) The rear facades and loading areas should not be visible from the major street. Loading and service areas should be completely screened with the use of landscaping, decorative fencing or walls.

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#### f. SIGNAGE AND LIGHTING

##### SIGNAGE

##### 1. Create a consistent line of vision through the placement and orientation of signage.

- (a) Development projects should include a plan that specifies location, size, materials and lighting for all shopping center and individual signs.
- (b) Signage should be consistent in size, location, material, and graphic design throughout the project.
- (c) Outdoor advertising (billboard) is inappropriate in shopping center parking lots.
- (d) One freestanding sign should be used to identify the shopping center, rather than several signs.

##### 2. Signage should be integrated with the building design.

- (a) Signage should incorporate the architectural elements of the commercial development to bring identity of the building to the streetwall.

##### 3. Signage should provide visual relief from the building facade(s).

- (a) Signs should be wall-mounted and not extend above the building facade(s).
- (b) The building signs should have a consistent color palette and lettering style.

##### LIGHTING

##### 1. Create a safe environment, reduce glare and spillage of light to adjoining properties and streets and provide attractive site elements.

- (a) All lighting fixtures should incorporate cutoff shields to prevent the spillover of light to adjoining properties.
- (b) Place utility poles evenly and plumb.
- (c) Consider special lighting to emphasize landscape such as uplighting or special lights in trees
- (d) Architecturally compatible, low-level light fixtures for pedestrians or for ambience are preferred. Lighting adjacent to residential areas should not exceed 18 feet in height.



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#### 2. Enhance pedestrian safety.

- (a) Provide pedestrian-scale lighting to illuminate crosswalks, sidewalks, ADA curb-ramps, signs and potential hazards for safety.

#### 3. Enhance architectural and signage design.

- (a) Light fixtures should be consistent with building designs of a uniform design throughout the development.

#### 4. Use sustainable light and energy practices.

- (a) Solar powered lighting is encouraged.
- (b) Incorporate energy-efficient lighting options, such as LED (Light Emitting Diode), sodium vapor, metal halide, T fluorescent, and compact fluorescent.