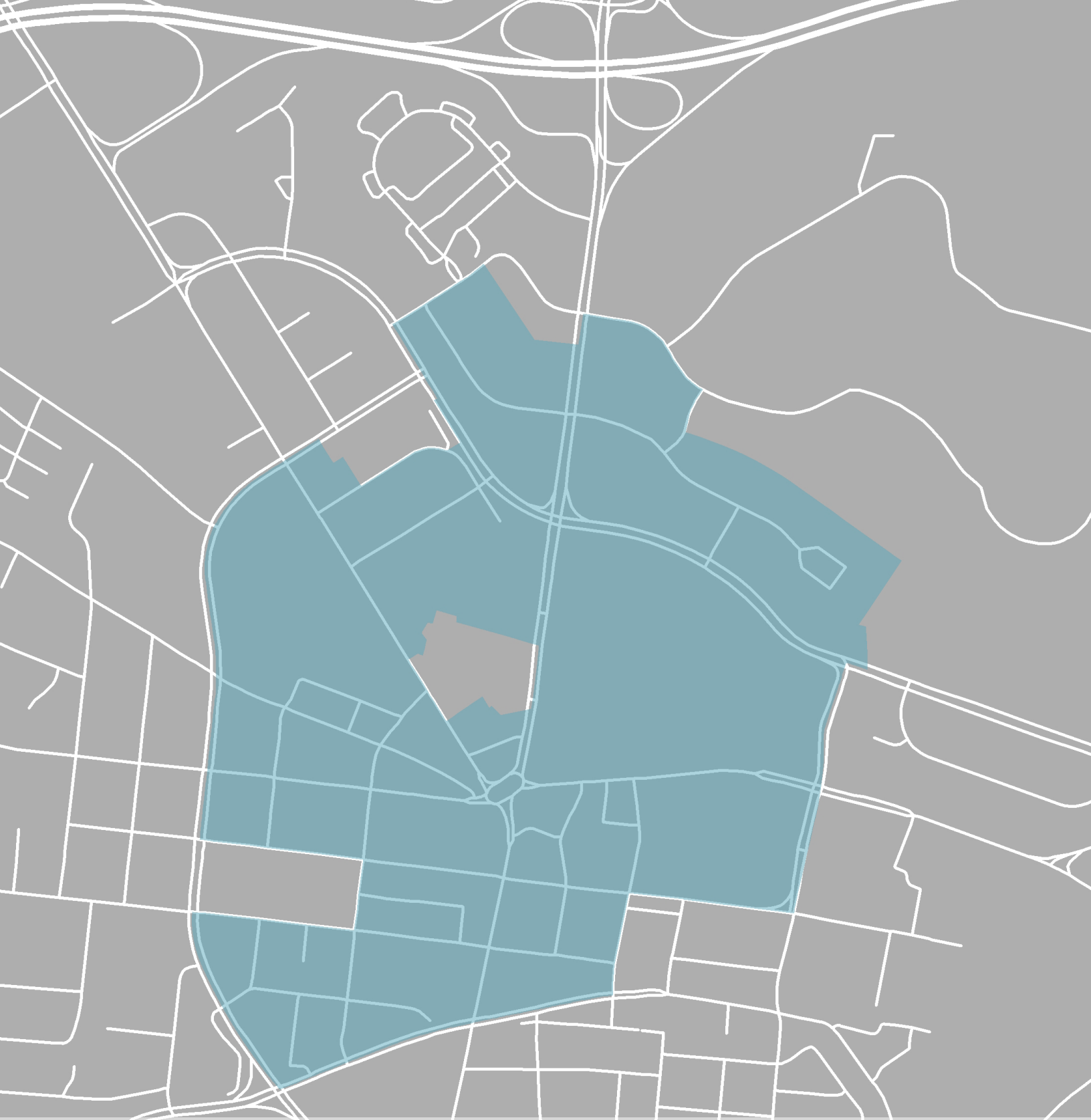


DOWNTOWN TOWSON DISTRICT
Guidelines & Standards

Baltimore County Department of Planning

Draft adopted by the Baltimore County Planning Board September 17, 2015
Draft adopted by Baltimore County Council Bill 86-16 November 21, 2016

DOWNTOWN TOWSON DISTRICT *GUIDELINES*

1.0 INTENT

BCZR 259.16 Downtown Towson District
Master Plan 2020 identifies Towson as the urban center of Baltimore County and lists policies and actions that foster the redevelopment of Towson into a premier, walkable, mixed-use hub of activity. The following regu lations are designed to help foster redevelopment and implement the goals of Master Plan 2020.

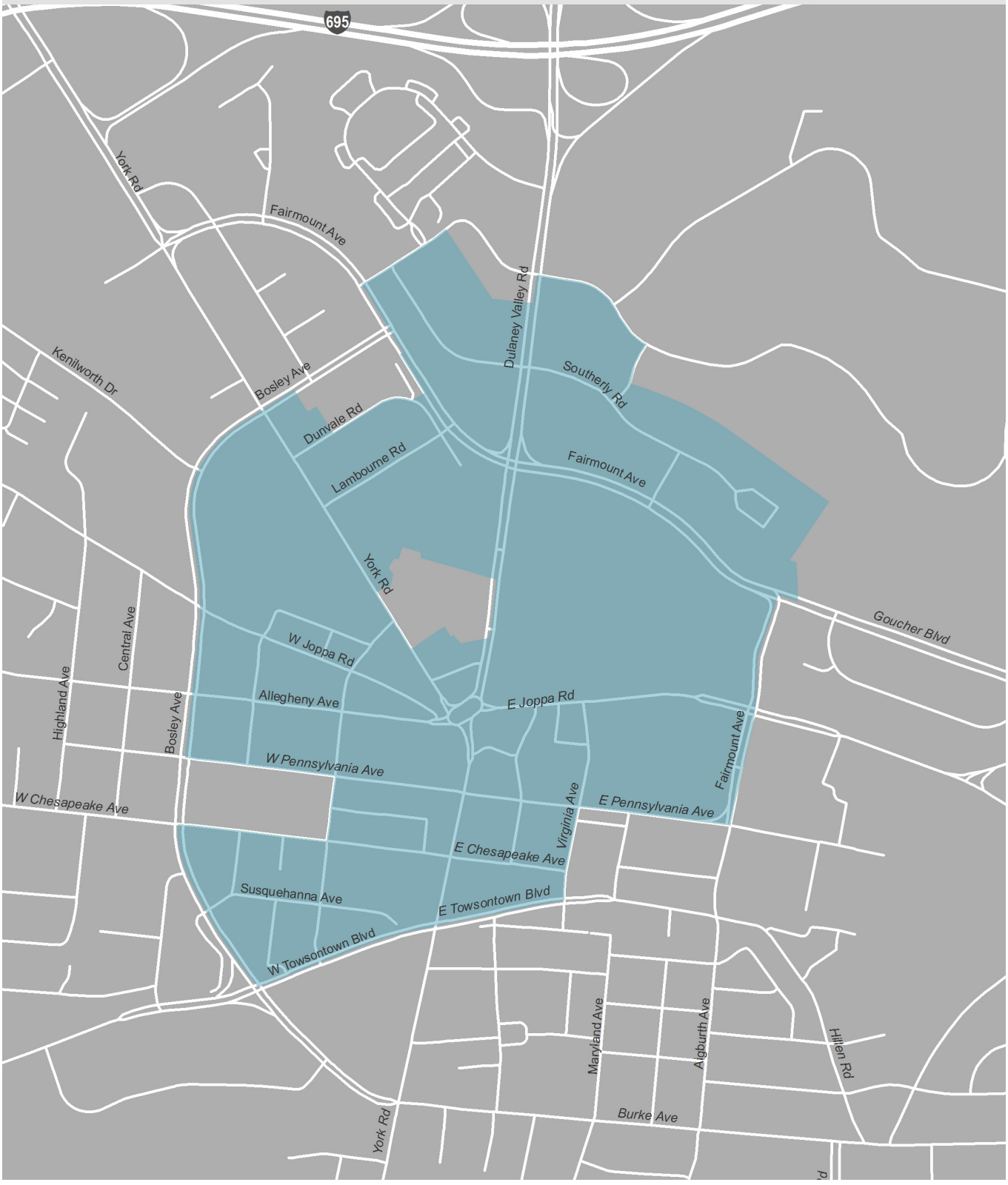
In 2016, Baltimore County Council adopted a new comprehensive review process for Towson's urban center in the form of an overlay district that is design-oriented. This approach builds upon and unifies the various plans and regulations that have successively recognized the importance of high-quality urban design in Towson.

As the Downtown Towson District (DTD) evolves, the role for high quality design is critical. As Master Plan 2020 suggests, the downtown is poised to be a dynamic, economically viable commercial center. This requires thoughful architectural design, buildings and spaces with character, efficient pedestrian movement, variety in design that is contextual and complementary, and active street frontages and sidewalks.

Each new development and/or building will contribute significantly to the comprehensive look and cohesive feel of the district. The creation of the DTD overlay district seeks to achieve this high quality and functioning environment through the use of project review by design professionals as part of the County's Design Review Panel (DRP) process.

1.0 INTENT

DOWNTOWN TOWSON DISTRICT



2.0 DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

THE DESIGN REVIEW PANEL WILL EVAULATE EACH DEVELOPMENT BASED ON FIVE CRITERIA

How does the project relate in scale, height, massing, and design with the surrounding context of downtown Towson which is evolving substantially?

How is the public realm defined and connected with proposed street and sidewalk patterns?

Is the landscape and site design appropriate for the surrounding context and proposed uses?

Does the design positively improve Towson's existing character?

Does the project take an innovative approach to design, materials, public art, economic opportunities, environmental sustainability, and living opportunities for a diverse population?

Development within the DTD will be processed through the Administrative Law Judge.

Limited Exemptions, CRG or JSPC amendments or refinements,façade improvements, and certain building permits will be subject to Design Guidelines.

The goal of the Design Review Panel (DRP) is to provide the Administrative Law Judge and the Department of Planning with design expertise in the areas of urban design, architecture, and landscape design for all proposed development and redevelopment projects. In the DTD overlay, all development will require mandatory design review at either an administrative level or by convening the DRP.

The DRP will use a set of guidelines by which to evaluate projects. Specifically, they will examine site planning, circulation, building elevations and materials, landscaping and civic space.

All applications shall be processed through the Department of Permits, Approvals and Inspections.

Projects involving **FULL** Design Review Panel review will require a $300 fee for review.

The Administrative Review shall be conducted by the Depart ment of Planning's DRP Coordinator and the DRP chairperson.

All comments and approvals of the Administrative Review will be rendered by the DRP Chairperson and the DRP Coordinator.

2.0

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

TABLE A: ALL DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN TOWSON DISTRICT		
	PROCESS	
TYPE	DESIGN REVIEW PANEL	ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW
Limited Exemptions *	o	
Full process development plans	o	
PUDs	o	
Signage		
Rooftop, facade or freestanding	o	
Changeable copy	o	
Comprehensive sign packages	o	
Temporary signs		o
Replacement awning, canopy or facade		o
Other		o
Comprehensive exterior facade alterations	o	
Parking facilities	o	
Comprehensive landscape plans	o	
Exterior painting		o
New windows		o
Deck		o
Outdoor seating		o
Fences		o
Roof replacement (without change to roofline)		o
New building lighting		o
Solar roofs/green roofs/cool roofs		o
Murals		o
Public Right-of-Way		
Tree removal and/or tree planting		o
New street lighting		o
Bike racks/storage		o
Street furniture		o

*** Additions and facade improvements, in terms of size, location, and the extend of changes will be evaluated by the Department of Planning on a case-by-case basis as to whether they shall be an administrative or full DRP review.**

3.0 DESIGN GUIDELINES

In this section

Guidelines

BCZR 259.16.A.6 Design Guidelines
The purpose of the design guidelines for the Downtown Towson District is to provide clear, comprehensive guid ance outlining the considerations the DRP and Depart ment of Planning must undertake when reviewing and making recommendations about development in the Downtown Towson District. The guidelines acknowledge the evolving mixed-use, urban character of Downtown Towson. The Guidelines are not mandatory, and some may be inapplicable or unachievable for certain projects. In these cases, the Applicant shall explain how the overall objectives will be met.

3.1 Environmental Sustainability

BCZR 259.16.A.6.a
Environmental Sustainability

(1) 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). While LEED or NGBS Silver certifications are not required, information sustantiating compliance with LEED or NGBS standards shall be provided to the DRP upon request by the DRP.

(2) Stormwater management shall be incorporated into all development projects to reduce run-off, improve water quality, and increase groundwater recharge.

(3) Preservation of existing trees is strongly encouraged in all proposed development projects. Mature trees, with a diameter of breast heigh (DBH) of ten inches or more shall be retained, except where the tree is:

(a) Dead, diseased, or injured beyond restoration as determined by a certified arborist or licensed forester.

(b) Interferes with the location of a structure, utilities, other critical site improvements, or construction access.

(c) If a mature tree is removed as defined in this section, multiple trees with diameters that add up to the diameter of the tree being removed shall be planted on site or elsewhere in the D.T., provided a location is available. If another location is not available, a fee-in-lieu shall be paid to cover the cost of the replacement trees and for installation of the trees only, which fee shall be used within the Downtown Towson Overlay District.

(4) Any proposed planting areas and species selection for street trees shall conform to urban street tree best practices including adequate root trenches to accomodate new soil volume and minimum soil depth that ensures the long term health of the trees being planted. The interior dimension of tree pits or planting strips should be a minimum of ten feet long and six feet wide if there is sufficient sidewalk width for pedestrian traffic. The requirements or locations for plantings may be eliminated or precluded by the location of signage, utilities, street lights, and other preexisting and proposed infrastructure. If installation of new street trees is precluded, a fee-in-lieu shall be paid and used as required in Subsection A.6.a(3).

(5) The use of light colored or high albedo surfaces are suggested to reduce the heat island effect on the top level of parking structures and surface parking lots.

(6) The use of native canopy trees is strongly encouraged in parking lots, downtown open spaces, and streetscapes.

(7) When designing and developing outdoor spaces, sustainable practices should be used to reduce energy and water use, minimize run-off, and improve stormwater quality, prevent air pollution, reduce the heat island effect, and include green space to provide relief from the built environment.

(8) The use of green roofs, cool roofs, and solar panels should be considered for both aesthetic and environmental benefits.

3.2

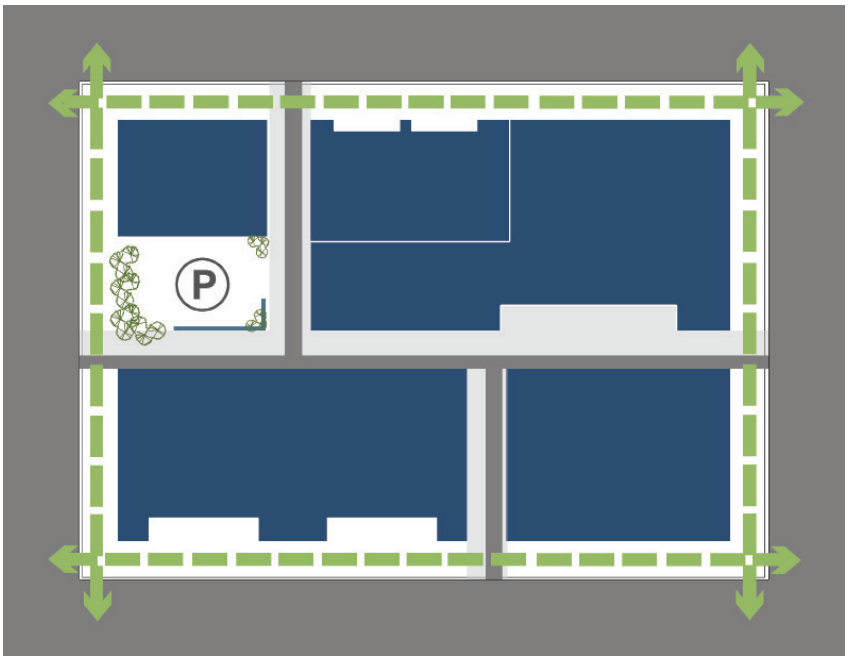
Block Configuration & Site Design

Pedestrian Circulation

Vehicular Circulation

Service Access

Parking



BCZR 259.16.A.6.b
Block Configuration & Site Design

(1) Block configuration should respect adjacent buildings and should result in a cohesive pedestrian realm along streets and alleys.

(2) Primary building facades should be oriented toward the street and the pedestrian realm.

(3) Buildings should line the sidewalk and frame the public realm.

(4) Parking areas should be screened by architectural and landscape treatments.

(5) Corners of blocks should be given specific design consideration and should be emphasized by locating unique architectural features, entrances, or special streetscape features at corner locations.

(6) Where there are midblock connections, pedestrian amenities and entrances to uses should be included to break up large building wall expanses.

(7) Pathways from parking areas to the street should have purpose, be safe and be visually interesting.

(8) The number of curb cuts should be minimized to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.

3.3 Parking

BCZR 259.16.A.6.c
Parking Structures

(1) Parking Structures

(a) The design of parking structures should be architecturally integrated with the design and structure of the buildings they serve.

(b) Facades of a parking structure that should be visible to the public should be treated in such a way as to maintain a high level of architectural design and finish, minimizing blank walls.

(c) Facades on parking structures should be activated with ground floor uses and/or pedestrian amenities.

(d) Parking structures should have signage that clearly identify parking opportunities.

(e) The horizontal and vertical elements of the parking structure façade should complement those of adjacent on-site structures.

(f) Parking structures should be designed to conceal, as much as possible the view of all parked cars and angled ramps from adjacent plazas, public rights of way, private streets and plazas or open space.

(g) The location of all parking garage access points should be placed to minimize the impact to the public realm or adjacent uses.

(2) Off-Street Surface Parking

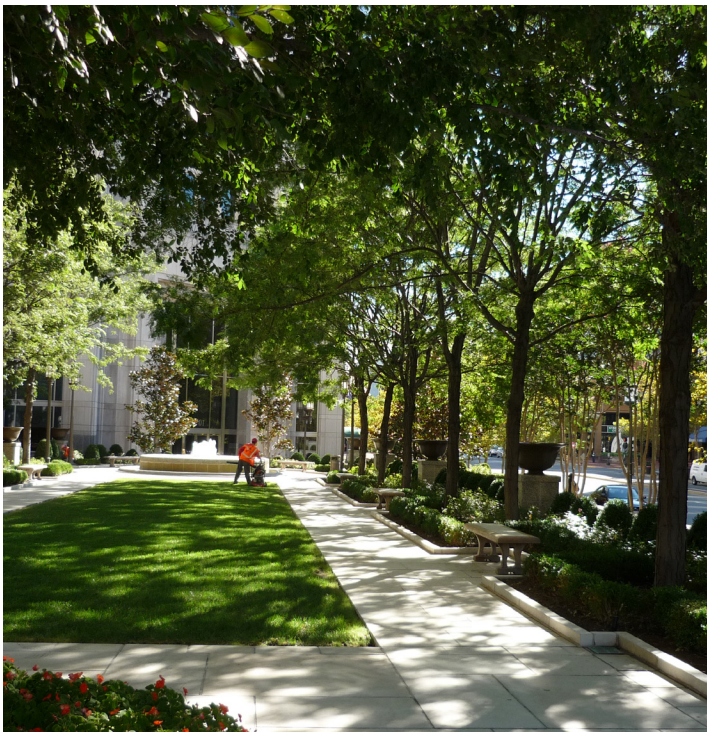
(a) Shade trees should be located throughout all surface parking areas. The use of native canopy trees is encouraged.

(b) Proposed surface parking areas should be landscaped to meet Class B standards as a specified in the Baltimore County Landscape Manual, with sceening walls or fences.

(c) Proposed landscaping, walls, or fences shared reflect the urban character of the Downtown Towson District.

3.4

Downtown Open Space



BCZR 259.16.A.6.d
Downtown Open Space

The DRP shall require, to the greatest extent possible, projects to incorporate downtown open space that include aesthetics, recreation, or green infrastructure at the street level, with a goal of providing 5 percent of gross acreage of the site. However, the DRP should determine the quantity and quality of the downtown open space by using the following objectives, including the size of the site and useability of the space or other reasonable criteria.

(1) Downtown open space is exterior and open to the public and may include plazas, public courtyards, pathways, planters, streetscapes, civic spaces, or green spaces that allow for gathering, cafe seating, entertainment, or art. If the width from building facade to face of curb includes sidewalk and exceeds seven feet, the width in excess of seven feet qualifies as downtown open space, including any sidewalks. However, the cost of sidewalks along public roads may not be used to reduce open space fees.

(2) Downtown open space should be located on-site and when feasible connected to neighboring properties to create a cohesive open space network serving people who live, work, and shop downtown.

(3) Downtown open space should be provided to give relief and interest to the streetscape.

(4) Downtown open space should be appropriate to the scale and character of the development.

(5) Downtown open space should be designed to be easily accessible to the public and provide year round use where possible.

(6) Downtown open space should be made comfortable by using architectural and landscape elements to create a sense of place, enclosure and security.

(7) Blank walls shall be limited and downtown open space should be considered an integrated part of the design.

(8) The development of downtown open space for building users should be integrated into all design.

(9) Trash and recycling receptacles should be strategically placed.

(10) Downtown open space should feature entrances

to retail/restaurant spaces along their perimeters to activate the space.

(11) Paving material of varied physical texture, color and pattern should be used to guide movement and define functional areas.

(12) The use of trees for shading and cooling is encouraged.

(13) Downtown open space should be designed for all ages.

(14) Bicycle racks and storage shall be incorporated into the design of proposed developments.

(15) A consistent framework of materials and treatment is suggested for the public realm of the DTD in order to blend with what has already been built and landscaped. These standards are taken from Section F (Towson Streetscape Standards) of the Comprehensive Manual of Development Policies (CMDP) and are as follows:

(a) Street trees: 30 feet to 50 feet on center

(b) Brick paving edge along the curb:16 inches in width.

(c) Decorative lighting: 60 feet on center.

(16) Local open space fees generated from residential development in the D.T. District shall be used in the D.T. District.

3.5

Building Principles & Architecture

BCZR 259.16.A.6.e
Building Principles & Architecture

(1) A wide variety of appropriate architectural styles, materials and details throughout the district are encouraged to create a thriving, attractive district.

(2) New buildings should fit within the context in terms of mass and scale to enhance the character of a block or street, where practical.

(3) Variation in building scaling and detail should relate to the scale and function of pedestrian active uses along the streets.

(4) All visible sides of the building should be given design consideration, including the roofs.

(5) All building sides should be designed purposefully.

(6) New buildings should fit within the context in terms of mass and scale to enhance the character of a block or street, where practical.

(7) The location of buildings should define and contain the street space in order to concentrate and reinforce pedestrian activity.

(8) Portions of the building that are not aligned with the right of way line should be related to the building uses that complement pedestrian activities along the street such as plazas, patios, and building entries.

(9) Design of new development that is directly contiguous to single family residential communities should respect the scale, form, and development pattern of the existing community. Specifically:

(a) Architectural massing and site design should be carefully considered to ensure an effective transition between the D.T. and the directly contiguous community.

(b) The scale of the buldings that directly border a single family residential community should be reduced by stepping back the upper stories of the building to reduce the impact on adjacent properties.

(c) Building lighting and/or street lighting fixtures that directly abut single family residential communities shall be sited in such a way to minimize light spillage into the residential community.

(10) Use of structural bays, expressed columns, window mullions, horizontal fenestration, etc., should be utilized to promote a pedestrian scale.

(11) Rooftop equipment should be fully screened from horizontal view. Screenings should be expressed as part of the buildings' composition and fully integrated architecturally.

(12) Building corners should be given special treatment. This may include signature entries, special roof shapes and taller, iconic architectural elements.

(13) Variations in fenestration patterns should be used to emphasize building features such as entries, shifts in building form or differences in function and use.

(14) Building rooftops and parapets should enhance the character of the skyline and strengthen the identity of individual buildings.

(15) Ground floor use should be activated and activities in new developments should be integrated with existing retail uses and activities along the street front and provide flexibility for changing market demands.

(16) The ground level of buildings should be developed to provide visual interest to pedestrians. This means either outdoor dining areas, retail display windows or service oriented activities that can be viewed through storefront glazing. If the building face at the sidewalk edge cannot be glazed, then the blank wall should be treated in an interesting way with architectural finishes, screens, display cases, sculpture, murals or plant material.

(17) If the façade wall is to be set back from the property line to create courtyards or niches, then other elements (such as columns, planters, changes in paving materials, or railings) should be used to define the street wall.

3.6 Building Materials

BCZR 259.16.A.6.f
Building Materials

(1) Innovative use of high quality materials should be encouraged.

(2) The character and image should be reinforced by using high quality materials, texture, patterns, and colors in well-designed innovative ways including the utilization of natural materials that will age well.

(3) Finishes and materials should reinforce those used in that architectural style originally, where practical.

(4) The consistent use of quality materials appropriate to the urban environment should be ensured.

(5) Human-scale buildings should be encouraged through the use of well-detailed and articulated materials, individually and in combination. Material selection on the ground floor should be given careful consideration to aid in creating a pleasing pedestrian environment in addition to being able to weather well.

(6) All visible facades of a building from the public realm should be treated equally in terms of materials, color and design detail, where practical. The building should have a finished appearance on all sides.

(7) The use of replacement materials that imitate or falsely replicate natural material applications should be avoided.

3.7 Lighting & Signage

BCZR 259.16.A.6.g Lighting

(1) Lighting should be used to provide illumination that complements the aesthetic appeal and safety, thereby promoting comfortable, safe pedestrian activity at night.

(2) Highlighting of significant architectural features, trees and artwork with accent lighting should be considered.

(3) Fixtures should be designed and installed in scale and context with the architecture of the building.

(4) Light sources on private development should complement lighting within the public realm of the district.

(5) Lighting as a nighttime amenity should be considered.

(6) Lighting associated with signage on the upper stories of a building or a rooftop should not become overwhelming or dominant in the skyline.

(7) Fixtures shall minimize skyglow, glare, and light trespass and conform to best practices as identified by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America.

BCZR 259.16.A.6.h Signage

(1) Signs shall be oriented towards and scaled for the pedestrian realm.

(2) Signs should be integrated within the architectural features of the façade and complement the building's architecture.

(3) Signs should not be designed to maximize square footage but instead be to enhance their graphic impact to the public (pedestrian realm).

(4) Signs should add visual interest, facilitate way finding and enhance the character of the area.

(5) Signs on rooftops and the upper stories of a building should have a proportional relationship between the size of the building and the size of the sign. These types of signs should have a corresponding design to the building architecture and not become overwhelming or dominant in the skyline.

(6) Signage should be located and designed to avoid conflicts with street trees and street lights.

4.0

TOWSON STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

BCZR
Towson Streetscape Standards

The DTD overlay guidelines specifies many design components that further create areas intended to be more pedestrian friendly, or “walkable”, through streetscape design as well as other design principles.

The following pages detail the elements and street furniture details that will be required.

These illustrations are presented for the implementation of the streetscape system. When development projects are proposed within the DTD, the County should use the streetscape guidelines to review all development proposals within this area.

Streets in the central business district have different functions. Every central business district requires an area where retail, restaurants, and other entertainment uses are concentrated to generate a critical mass of foot traffic. An area of this type is often referred to as a “main street,” area (referring to a street type, not the street’s name).

Other streets and blocks may be strictly residential or office, or a combination. Some urban design principles vary with the street type while other design principles apply for all areas intended to be pedestrian friendly, or “walkable.” The principles should be applied to both sides of a street to create a distinct urban place.

4.0 TOWSON STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

Several design elements should occur within the DTD streetscape. These are:

1. Street trees, 30-50 feet on center.

2. Brick paving edge along the curb, 16 inches in width.

3. Decorative lighting, approximately 40 to 60 feet on center, within the designated Decorative Lighting Area (Map 2, page 21).

Note: Subject to safety (sight-distance) standards, street trees may be grouped at street corners or building entries to add interest and provide variety.

The following illustrations and details will be used as part of the development review process as well as guide Baltimore County in any capital improvement program. These are included as follows:

Other details may be required as part of the development review process. Modifications may occur depending on site conditions.

In order to establish uniform, pedestrian scale lighting for the DTD district, the adjacent lighting fixture is to be the standard used for these areas.

The lighting should be held to consistent standards in terms of spacing frequency and the foot-candle/brightness of the actual lighting fixture itself.

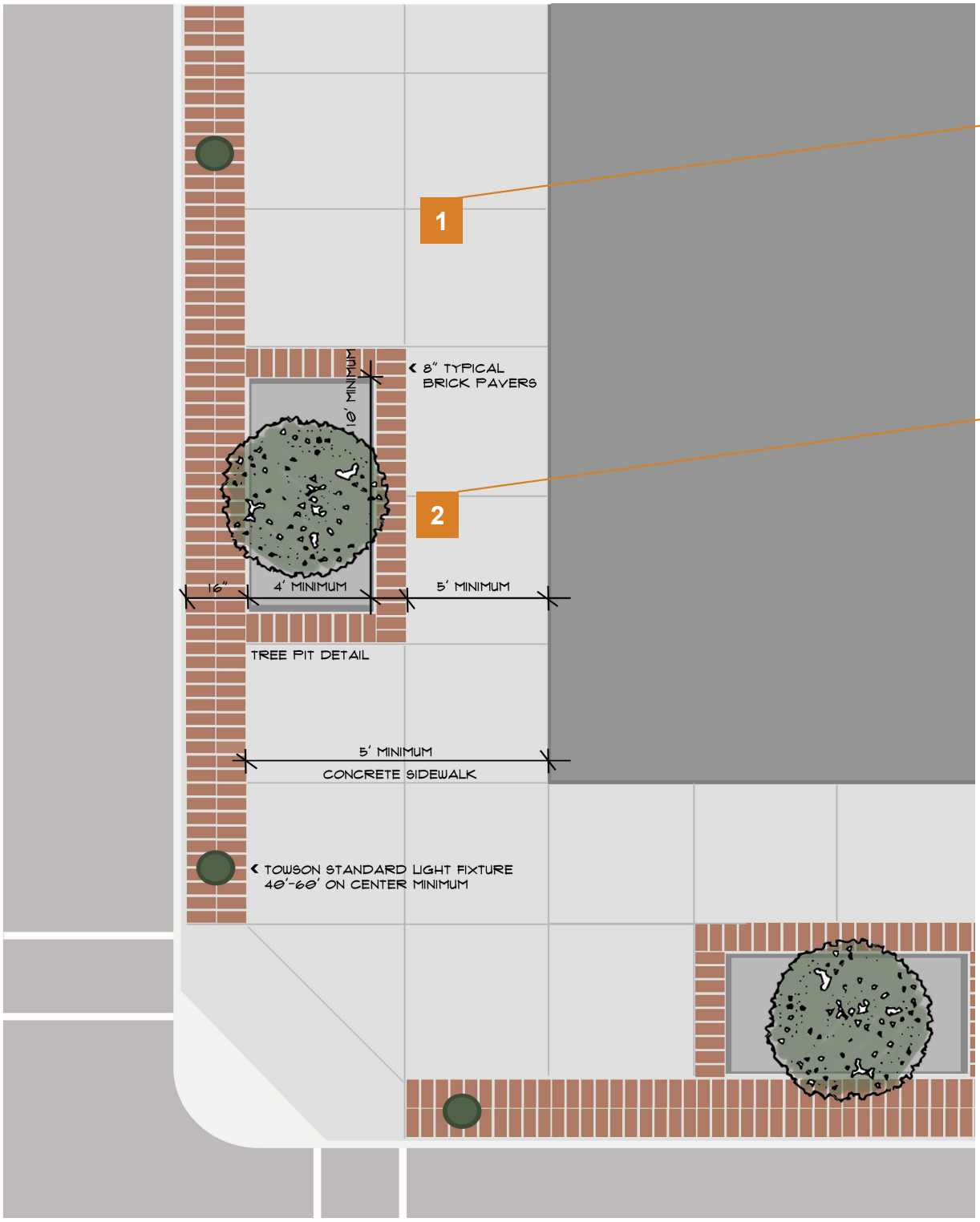
Spacing shall be held to 40'-60' on center, minimum.

Foot-candles/brightness shall be determined based on the standards of the Pedestrian Scale.

4.0

TOWSON STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

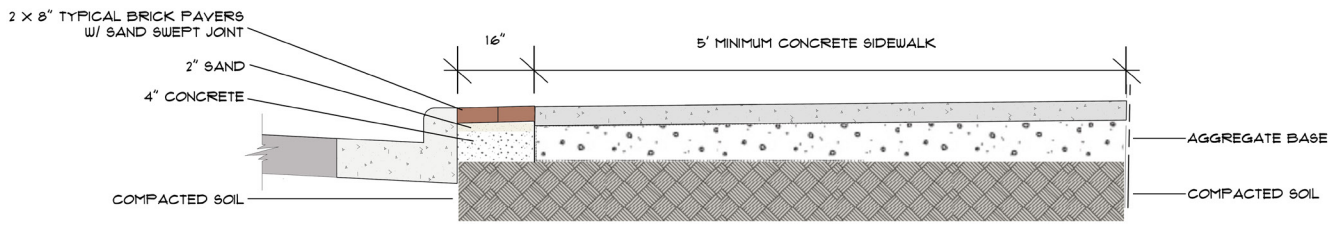
SIDEWALK/STREETSCAPE PLAN DETAIL



4.0 TOWSON STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

STREETSCAPE SECTION DETAIL

1



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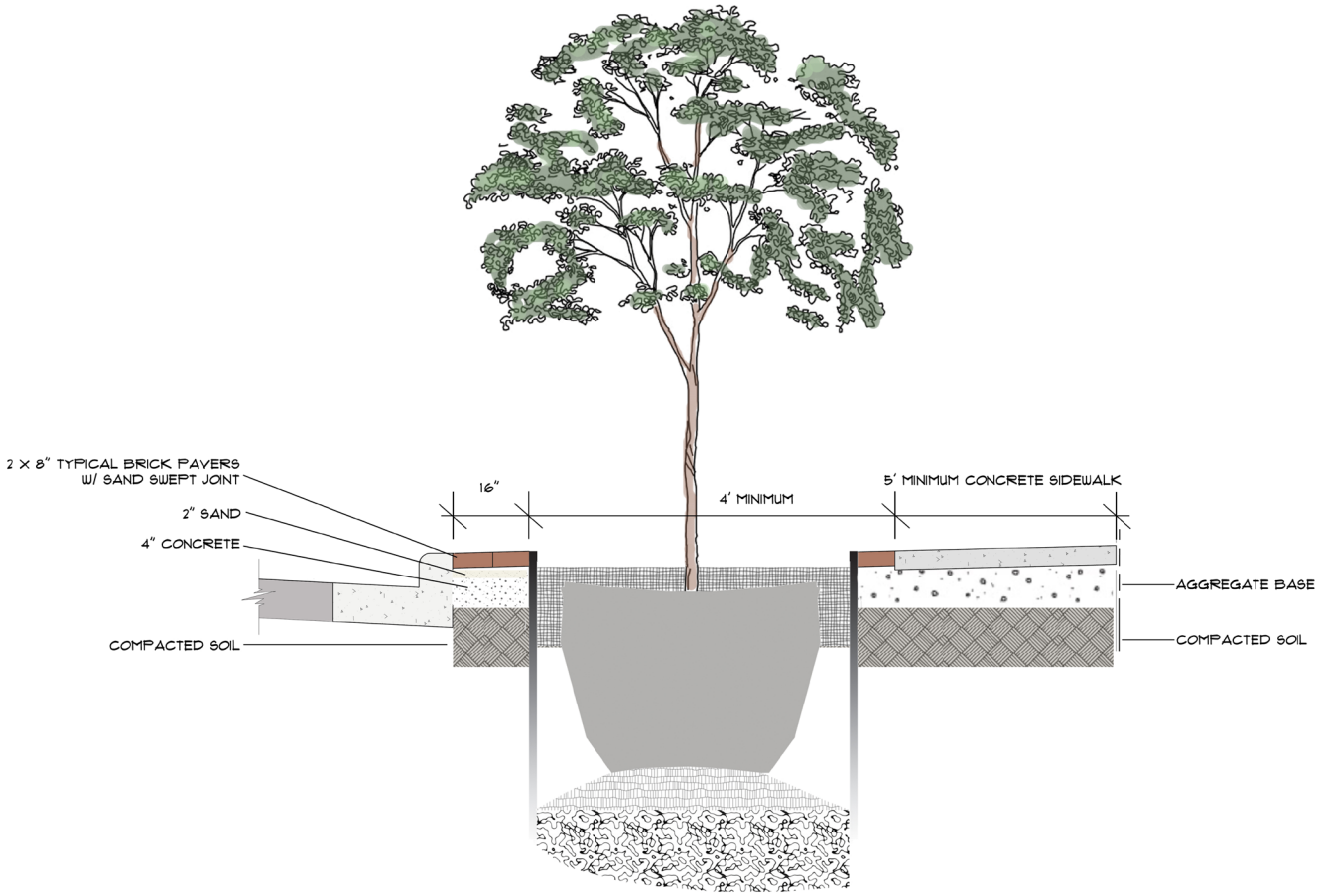
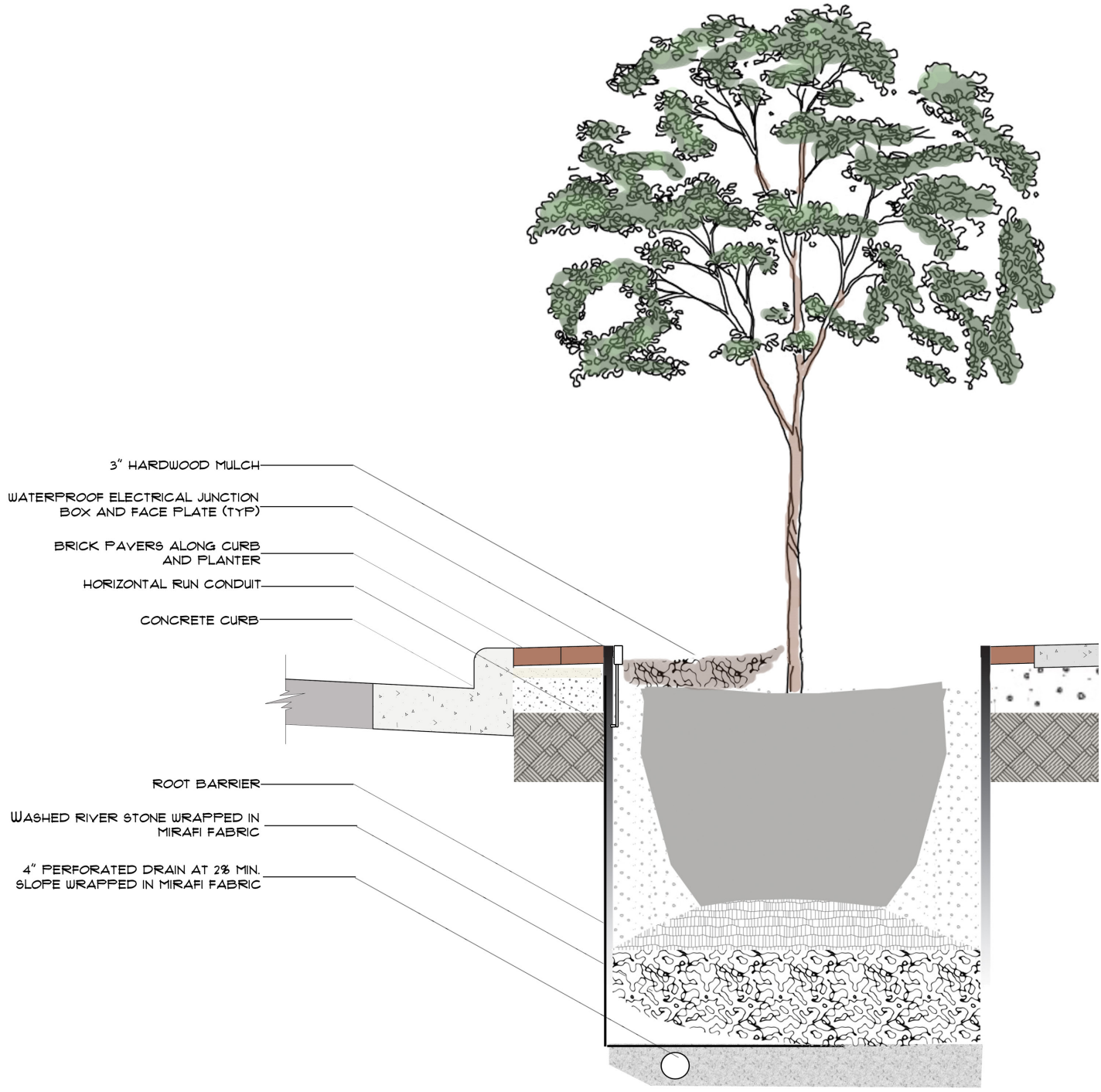


4.0

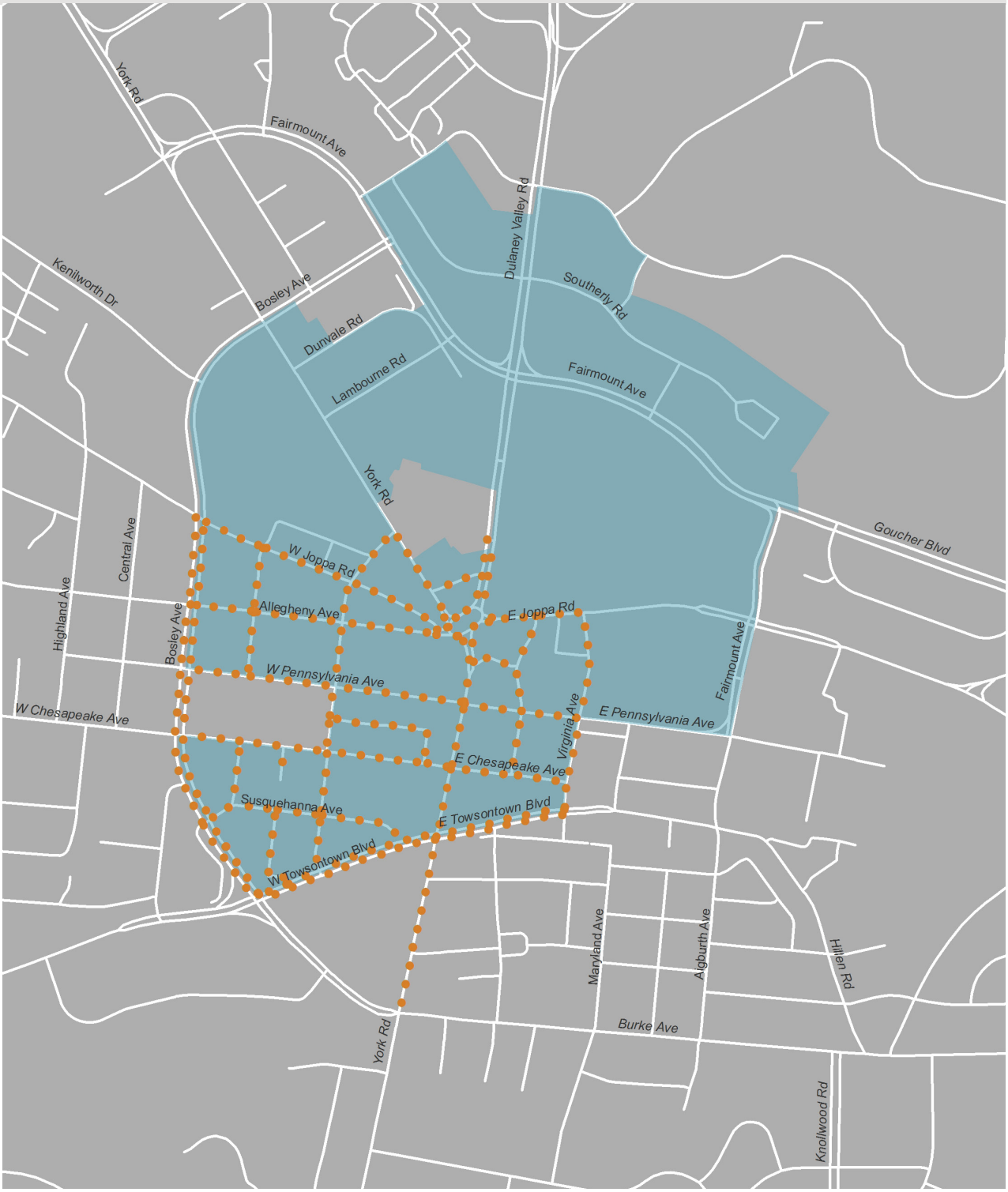
TOWSON STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

STREET TREE PLANTER DETAIL



4.0 TOWSON STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

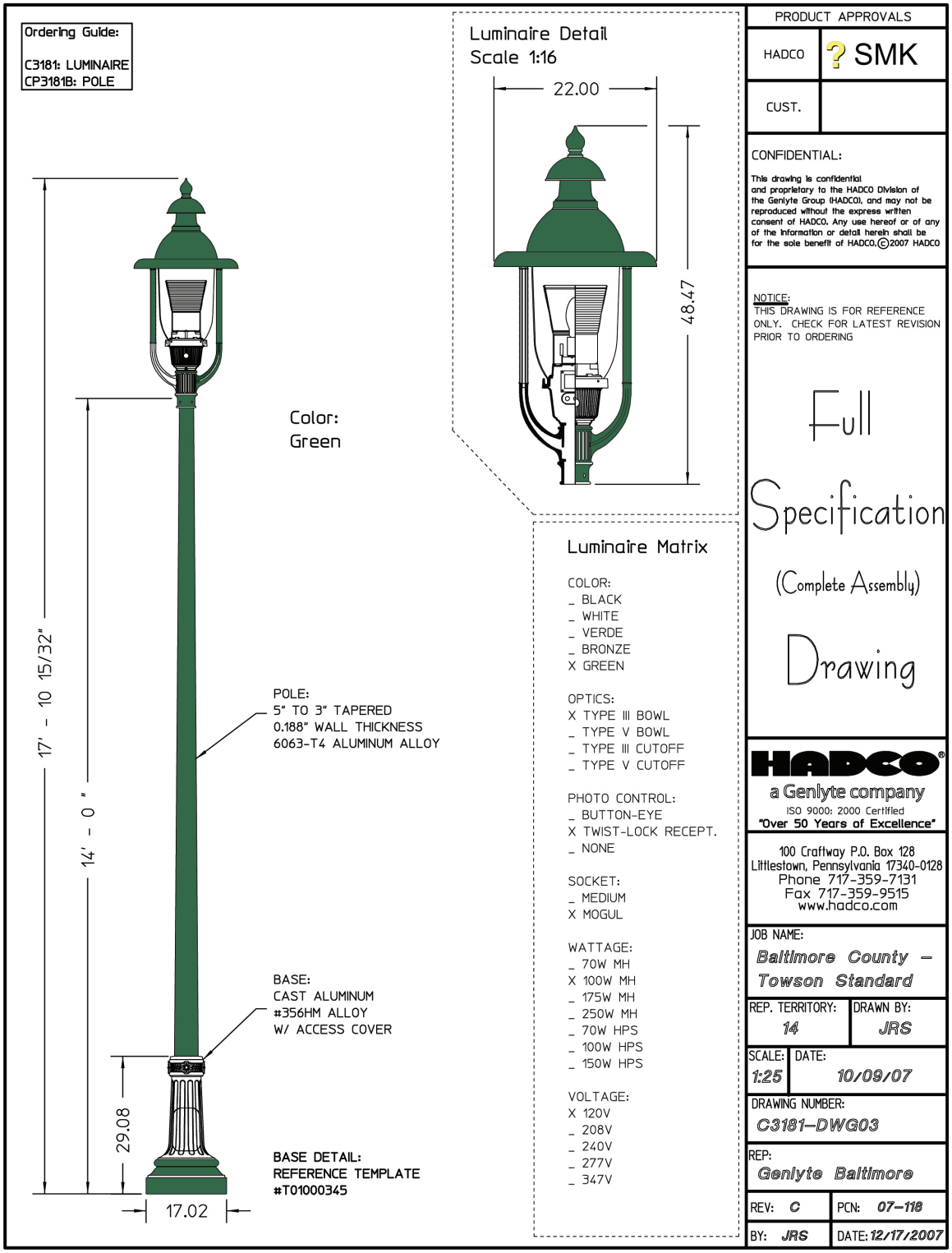
DECORATIVE LIGHTING AREA

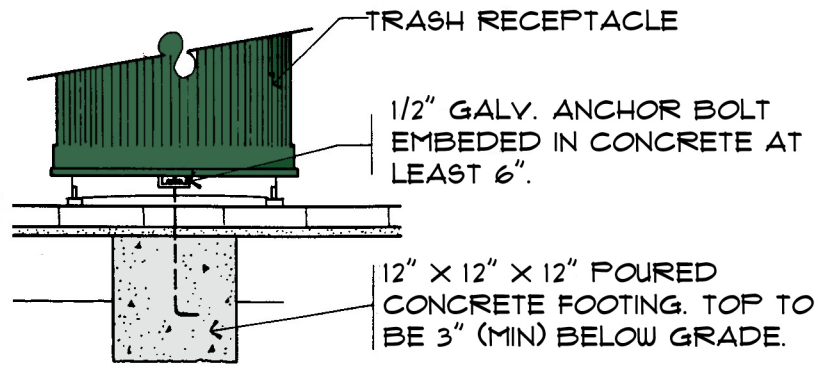


4.0

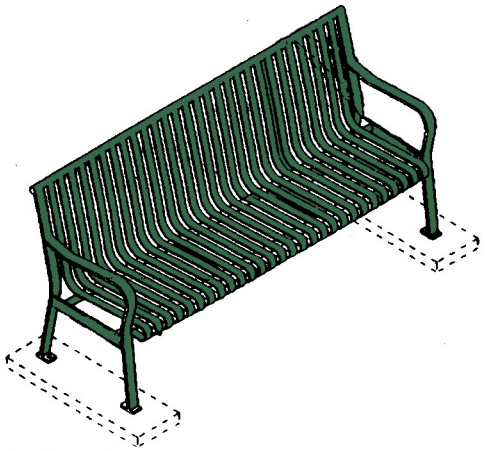
TOWSON STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

DECORATIVE LIGHTING





TRASH RECEPTACLE
VICTOR STANLEY INC IRONSITES,
BETHESDA SERIES #5-42 WITH STANDARD STEEL TAPERED LID, DARK GREEN FINISH AND GALVANIZED STEEL LINER, BLACK IN COLOR, WITH 1/2" HOLES IN BOTTOM FOR DRAINAGE.

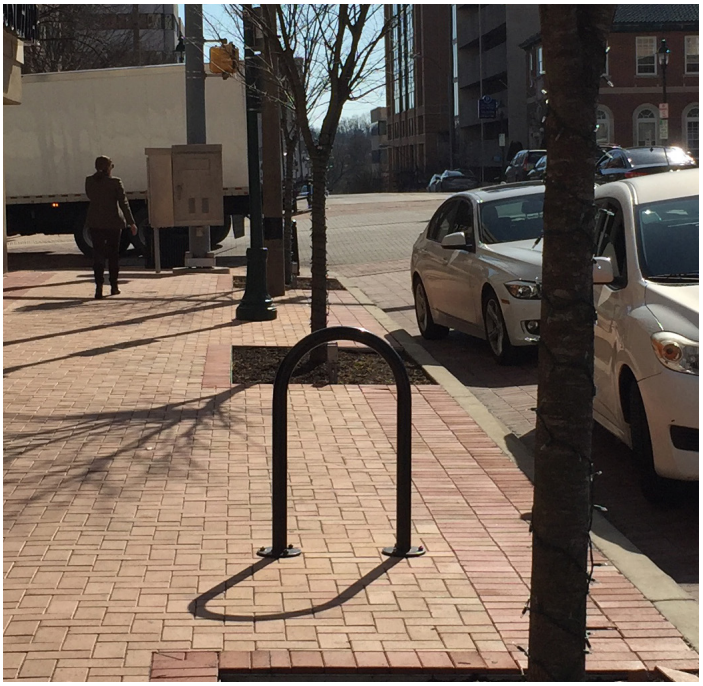


BENCH
VICTOR STANLEY INC
RB-28 RIBBON SERIES ALL STEEL CONTOURED 6' LONG BENCH OR APPROVED EQUAL, TO BEBOLTED INTO CONCRETE AND SECURED WITH EXPOXY.

4.0

TOWSON STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

Bicycle Racks & Tree Guards



Bicycle Rack

Loop Bicycle Rack
Model BRWS 101, Surface Mount

Frame shall be 2-3/8 inch x 6 inch diameter steel plate, and 1/2 inch x 3-3/4 inch plated expansion anchor bolts and 10 gauge steel spinning surface mount covers shall be provided by the manufacturer for surface mounting the loop rack.

Finish shall be a coating with zinc-rich epoxy, finished with polyester powder coating. Color shall be black.

Manufactured by Victor Stanley
PO Drawer 330
Dunkirk, Maryland
800-368-2573

Tree Guard/Fencing

Style: Hawk

The fencing shall be installed around the entire perimeter of the tree wells, unless otherwise noted, with posts in each corner and at the midpoint on the long side of the planter. Posts shall be sunken and secured into a sleeve in the brick edge.

The fencing shall be fabricated of powder-coated steel with three horizontal rails, top rail flush, 24 inch height, black in color.

Manufactured by National Fence Systems
1033 Route 1
Avenel, New Jersey 07001
877-484-6953
intredpidsteel.com