

**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING  
CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE GUIDE**

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**SIGN REGULATIONS & PERMITS**

REVISED MAY 2006

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Sign regulations are described in Section 6-8 of the Calvert County Zoning Ordinance (attached, see pages 2 through 9 of this Guide). Sign regulations vary in each Town Center. Consult the corresponding Town Center Zoning Ordinance for additional information.

**SIGNS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE A PERMIT**

**Note: All of the following signs are subject to conditions - See Section 6-8.05**

- A. Official traffic signs
- B. Home occupation signs
- C. Temporary real estate signs
- D. Farm signs
- E. Temporary political signs subject to State regulations.
- F. Temporary construction signs
- G. Portable signs
- H. Temporary public or quasi-public directional or informational signs
- I. "Grand Opening" signs for subdivisions, developments, or shopping centers

**SIGNS THAT ARE PROHIBITED**

**(See Section 6-8.02)**

- A. Off-premise signs, excluding directional signs for the traveling public
- B. Signs containing moving parts or intermittent or flashing lights (unless approved by the Zoning Officer)
- C. Signs implying the existence of danger
- D. Signs that interfere with traffic visibility or road drainage
- E. Signs of an obscene nature
- F. Signs placed on rocks, trees, or public utility poles
- G. Signs over 18' in height
- H. Signs that extend over the roof line
- I. New Billboards
- J. New Bus Shelters with Signs

**SIGNS THAT ARE PERMITTED (With Sign Permits - See Page 8 of this Guide)**

**Note: All of the following signs are subject to conditions - See Section 6-8.06**

- A. On-premise business signs
- B. Permanent public or quasi-public directional or informational signs
- C. Subdivision Entrance Signs
- D. Off-premise directional signs intended to indicate the distance or direction to a service-type business, developing subdivisions, shopping center, etc.

## SIGN PERMIT PROCESS

**STEP 1:** Complete a sign permit application and include the following information:

- Architectural Review Committee approval, if the sign is located within any of the Town Centers.

Contact: Department of Planning and Zoning  
County Services Plaza, Suite 304  
150 Main Street  
Prince Frederick, MD 20678  
Phone: 410-535-2348

- State Highway Administration approval, if sign is to be located on property along a State road.

Contact: State Highway Administration  
P.O. Box 717  
Baltimore, MD 21203  
410-841-5464

- Scaled plot plan of property showing the location of all existing and proposed signs.
- Scaled drawing of all existing and proposed signs with dimensions and wording (including total square footage).

**STEP 2:** Submit a completed application and fee to Inspections and Permits. **FEE: \$30**

Division of Inspections & Permits  
County Services Plaza, Suite 201  
150 Main Street  
Prince Frederick, MD 20678  
Phone: 410-535-1600, ext. 2515 or 2552

***Application numbers (AP#) are assigned by the Division of Inspections & Permits when the application is accepted. The status of the application can then be checked on-line at:***

***[www.co.cal.md.us/perm/kups/default.aspx](http://www.co.cal.md.us/perm/kups/default.aspx)***

**STEP 3:** Erect sign only after receiving a signed permit.

***This publication has been approved by:                      Date:***

**Gregory A. Bowen, Director  
Planning and Zoning**

**Douglas A. Parran  
County Administrator**

## 6-8.01 Purpose

### **6-8 SIGNS**

#### 6-8.01 Purpose

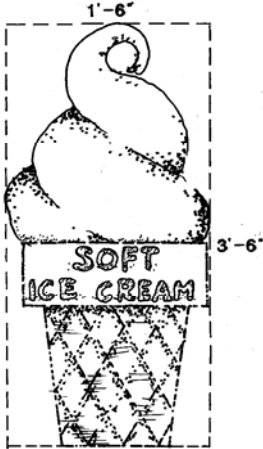
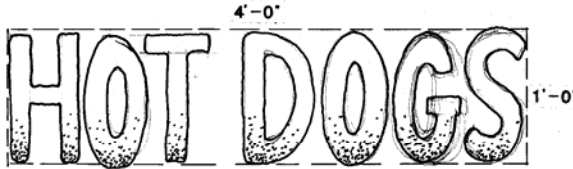
The purpose of this article is to regulate signs and to promote County businesses without significantly impacting overall County aesthetics, property values, public safety, or impinging on free speech.

SEE CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE GUIDE ENTITLED, "SIGN REGULATIONS AND PERMITS", AVAILABLE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING, FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

#### 6-8.02 General Sign Provisions

In addition to any other regulations imposed by this Ordinance, all signs shall be subject to the following conditions:

- A. Signs shall not be internally illuminated. Materials for sign faces and frames shall be limited to wood or a material that has the appearance of wood.
- B. No sign shall have moving parts or project any intermittent or flashing illumination without approval of the Zoning Officer. Such approval may be granted only if it is determined that the sign will not adversely impact adjoining properties and/or traffic.
- C. No sign shall be displayed which uses the words "Stop" or "Danger" or presents or implies the need or requirement of stopping or the existence of danger as part of an advertising sign.
- D. No sign shall be located where it will interfere with traffic visibility on the right-of-way of any road.
- E. No sign shall be permitted which contains statements, words or pictures of an obscene character.
- F. No sign shall be placed on rocks, trees, or on poles maintained by public utilities.
- G. No sign shall be permitted which becomes unsafe or endangers the safety of a building, premise, or person. The Zoning Officer shall order such signs to be made safe or repaired or removed, such order to be complied with within 15 days of the receipt of such order.
- H. When a sign structure does not include current or up-to-date advertising information for a period of 120 continuous days, such sign structure shall be deemed a violation and shall be removed.
- I. All non-conforming signs shall be removed when:
  1. when the business, enterprise, etc. advertised ceases to exist, or
  2. at the expiration date specified in the permit for erection.Removal shall be the responsibility of the owner of the property on which the sign is located.
- J. Calculation of sign area in square feet. Sign area shall normally be the area of the face of the sign, except for the following situation:
  1. If the sign consists only of letters or figures, the area shall be calculated as if a rectangle were drawn around the exterior of the letters or figures.



(06/03/08)

K. Sign height shall be measured from the average elevation of the finished grade at the front of the sign and/or structure facing the street to the highest point of the sign and/or structure. The use of berms, grading, or other means in order to achieve a greater sign height shall not be permitted unless site conditions are such that the proposed sign location is below the grade of the adjacent roadway. In such cases, a berm, grading or other means may be used to raise the elevation of the land on which the sign is to be placed to the elevation of the adjacent roadway.

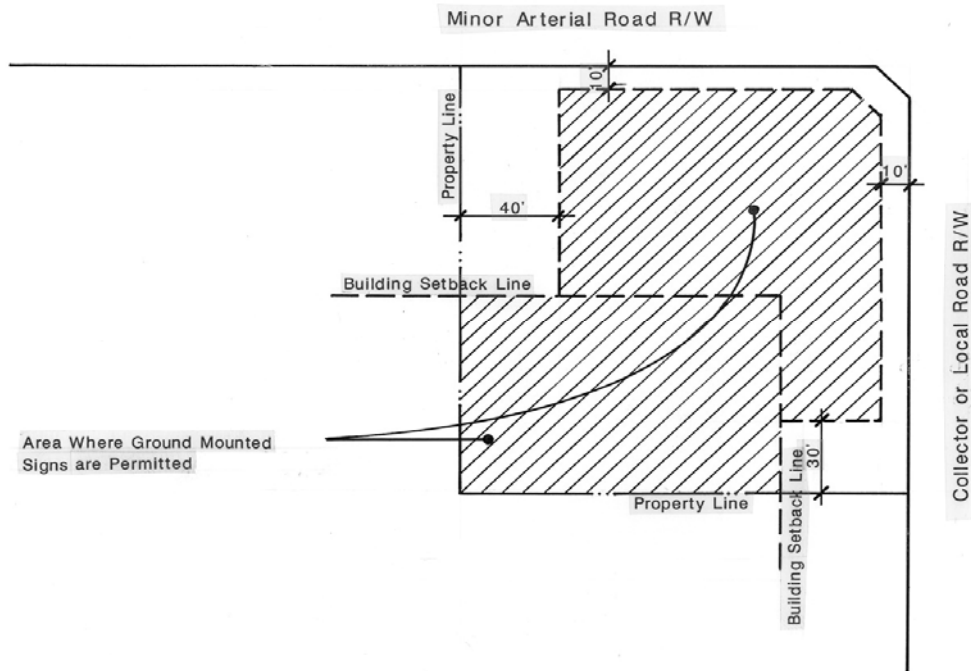
(06/03/08)

L. Signs attached to vehicles are allowed under the following conditions:

1. The vehicle is parked at the business location and the vehicle is operable, tagged and parked in an approved parking space, or
2. If the vehicle is not parked at the business, it cannot be parked on property zoned FFD, RCD, or RD, unless the vehicle is parked at the driver's residence and it is the resident's primary means of transportation to and from his or her place of work.

6-8.03 Freestanding Signs

- A. No freestanding sign shall exceed 18 feet in height unless approved by the Board of Appeals as a special exception.
- B. Only one freestanding sign is permitted per parcel of record as of the date of adoption of this Ordinance. Additional signs may be approved by the Planning Commission in cases where a site is over five acres, provided that signs are architecturally integrated with each other and with the buildings on the site.
- C. Freestanding signs shall be compatible with the building(s) to which it relates in terms of style, colors, proportion and scale.
- D. All individual signs on a freestanding base shall be uniform in design. Uniformity is defined as:
  1. Having the same (or similar) dimensions or proportions;
  2. Having the same (or similar) background colors;
  3. Being of the same material;
- E. Reader boards on individual signs on a freestanding base shall be limited to two lines and shall have the same background color and width dimensions as the primary sign.
- F. Freestanding signs shall not be centered on single poles. Signs may be mounted on the side of a single pole, between two poles, or within a sign frame constructed of solid wood or a material that has the appearance of wood, or brick.



Section 6-8.03 –Freestanding Signs

- G. **Setback Requirements for Freestanding Signs.** The setback requirement for freestanding signs shall be a minimum of ten feet from the right-of-way except in the following instances:
1. Any sign which is attached to the ground located on an arterial road and within 40 feet of the side lot line shall adhere to the front setback requirement for the district in which it is located (so that, e.g., views from neighboring properties are not obstructed).
  2. If located on a collector or local road and within 30 feet of the side lot line, the sign shall conform to the front setback requirement for the district in which it is located.

**6-8.04 Building Sign Design**

- A. All Building Signs shall meet the following design criteria:
1. Every building sign shall be designed as an integral architectural element of the building; and
  2. Signs on buildings shall not obstruct architectural features of the building; and
  3. Signs shall not be mounted on roofs or extend above the roof line.
  4. All signs for buildings within a shopping center, office complex, commercial park, or business center shall be uniform in design. Uniformity is defined as:
    - a. having the same (or similar) dimensions or proportions;
    - b. having the same (or similar) background colors;
    - c. being of the same material.

### 6-8.05 Signs Permitted Without A Zoning Permit

The following signs are permitted without a zoning permit in any district:

- A. Official traffic signs or sign structures, when erected by a governmental agency.
- B. Signs indicating the name and/or premises or the accessory use of a home for a home occupation of professional purpose, provided such signs meet the following conditions:
  - 1. Such signs shall not exceed four square feet in size;
  - 2. The maximum height of home occupation signs shall be six feet;
  - 3. Materials shall be limited to wood or a material that has the appearance of wood;
  - 4. No window signs shall be permitted.
  - 5. No internally illuminated signs are permitted.
- C. Temporary real estate signs, located on and advertising subject property for sale, lease or rental, provided such signs do not exceed ten square feet in size. However, if the subject property is larger than ten acres, the sign may be as large as 16 square feet in size. Temporary real estate signs shall be removed after the property is sold and settlement has taken place.
- D. Signs located on a farm advertising farm products grown primarily on the premises or an agritourism, ecotourism, or heritage tourism use, shall be permitted with the following conditions:
  - 1. Such signs shall not exceed 30 square feet in area
  - 2. For farms that do not have frontage along an arterial road, one additional sign, that gives direction to the farm, lists products available for sale during the active selling season and does not exceed 20 square feet, shall be permitted per farm off premises.
  - 3. Written permission shall be obtained from the property owner if not on the seller's property.
  - 4. These signs shall be located off the road right-of-way and shall not interfere with traffic visibility.
  - 5. These signs are to be temporary and shall be removed after the selling/business season is over.
- E. Temporary political signs are permitted, subject to State regulations.
- F. A temporary construction sign is permitted, advertising the general contractor, subcontractor, architect, and/or other professional persons, firms, or organizations engaged in or associated with the lawful construction, alteration, remodeling, or demolition of any building or use provided that such sign:
  - 1. is limited to one listing for each person, firm, or organization involved.
  - 2. is removed within 30 days after the completion by the general contractor.
  - 3. Is less than 20 square feet in size.

## 6-8.05 Signs Permitted Without A Zoning Permit

- G. All portable signs shall be limited as follows:
1. Hot air balloons and search lights are allowed for promotions only, not to exceed 72 hours in a year.
  2. Pennants and banners are permitted for display periods not to exceed 14 days prior to an event, and not to exceed 30 days per year.
  3. One sandwich type (A-frame) sign is permitted per business on premises, subject to the following:
    - a. Each sign board face shall not exceed nine square feet.
    - b. The total height is not to exceed 48 inches.
    - c. The sign shall be located so as not to restrict sight distance below that called for in ASHTO standards. NOTE: The County will provide drawings depicting ASHTO standards. Applicants will be responsible for meeting those standards.
    - d. The sign shall either be constructed and maintained according to the adopted specifications or receive special approval from the Architectural Review Committee for the Town.
    - e. The owner shall obtain a permit for the sign; however, the size of the sign will not count against the total signage allowed under Section 6-8.07 of the Zoning Ordinance.
    - f. For roads with posted speed limits greater than 30 miles an hour, the sign shall be at least 50 feet from the right-of-way. NOTE: These signs are not effective on high speed roads, and they present a greater danger.
- H. Directional or informational signs of a public or quasi-public nature, such as those containing the meeting date of a community or civic club, or the advertising of an event of public interest, shall be permitted subject to the following conditions:
1. Temporary informational or directional signs which are erected for the purpose of advertising a special event shall be limited to no more than 32 square feet in size.
  2. Such signs shall not be erected more than 30 days prior to the event and shall be removed within seven days after the event has occurred.
- (05/12/09)
- I. One temporary sign, located to advertise the opening of a new subdivision, development or shopping center, provided that the sign:
1. does not exceed 100 square feet, and
  2. is not illuminated, and
  3. is located not less than 25 feet from any road right-of-way or less than 100 feet from the line of any adjacent lot on which a dwelling is located, and
  4. one additional temporary sign shall be permitted within 1,000 feet of frontage or portion thereof along each road upon which the subdivision, development, or shopping center is located, and
  5. is removed 9 months after it is erected.

(08/07/07) 6-8.06 Signs Requiring Zoning Permits

- A. Signs referred to in this Section shall also be subject to the provisions of Section 6-8.03, Freestanding Signs, and Section 6-8.04, Building Sign Design, depending on their type of construction.
- B. The following signs are permitted in accordance with zoning district regulations and require a zoning permit. Any sign erected without a zoning permit shall constitute a Zoning Violation, which shall be enforced in accordance with Section 1-7.
  - 1. Business and Institutional Signs – Business and Institutional signs pertaining to the "use on the premises" are permitted as an accessory use in all districts, provided that the total square foot area of all signs shall be based on Table 6-4, Maximum Sign Areas.

TABLE 6-4 MAXIMUM SIGN AREAS	
Length of Front Building Wall (ft.)	Maximum Square Footage of Sign (sq. ft.)
10-19	30
20-29	50
30-39	70
40-49	90
50-59	110
60-69	125
70-79	140
80-89	155
90-99	170
>100	See Note 3 Below
	NOTE 1: Fractions will be rounded off to the closest integral number.
	NOTE 2: A cumulative measurement shall be taken for businesses or institutional uses sharing party walls.
	NOTE 3: For building walls which are longer than 100 feet, add one square foot of signage for every linear foot over 100 feet.
	NOTE 4: For each side of a building that has public entrances, the signage shall be calculated for the length of that building wall and the signs shall be located only on that side of the building.
	NOTE 5: Buildings with separate businesses or institutional uses on two or more stories are permitted 50 percent more signage.
	NOTE 6: For businesses or institutional uses having no permanent buildings, a maximum of 50 square feet of signage is permitted.
	NOTE 7: On a corner lot, the building wall facing each road shall be used to compute the square footage for signage on that road.
	NOTE 8: This table does not apply to signs for which square footage limitations are specified (i.e., Home Occupation signs).

- 2. Directional Signs Erected by the County - The purpose of directional signs erected by the County is to provide an attractive format for advertising businesses not located on major roads. Sign structures may be erected at intersections by the County on County rights-of-way and shall be designed to provide for advertising the name, location, type of business and/or principal products, under the following provisions:

- a. A uniform County format is to be designed by and approved by the County.
  - b. The structures are to be located at road intersections with arterials and/or major collector roads, as designated by the County Commissioners.
  - c. The permit fees for individual business signs will be used to defray cost of the sign structure.
3. Permanent directional or informational signs of a public or quasi-public nature, such as those containing the meeting date of a community or civic club, or the advertising of an event of public interest, shall be permitted subject to the condition that such a sign shall not exceed 16 square feet in size.
- (06/03/08) 4. Subdivision Entrance Signs shall be subject to the following requirements:
- a. Such signs shall be set back 15 feet from the right-of-way of any adjoining arterial or collector roads; zero feet from the right-of-way of a subdivision road; and five feet from all other property lines.
  - b. The subdivision entrance sign shall be located at the primary entrance of the subdivision being identified, and shall be limited to no more than two permanent signs.
  - c. Such signs shall be designed and placed so as not to obstruct sight distance along the adjoining roads.
  - d. The size of each sign face shall not exceed 35 square feet in area.
  - e. The size of the structure containing a sign face shall not exceed 200 square feet in area, excluding the sign face.
  - f. The height of the structure containing a sign face shall be no more than seven feet and shall comply with the requirements of Section 6-8.02.K of this Zoning Ordinance.
  - g. The signs shall include the name of the subdivision (as recorded in the Land Records) only, and shall not include any advertising of any kind.
  - h. Maintenance of the sign shall be the responsibility of the developer of the subdivision and/or the developer's assigns.
- (06/03/08) 5. Directional Signs, Other - These directional signs are intended for the sole purpose of indicating distance and/or direction to service-type businesses located in Calvert County. They shall be permitted in all districts subject to the following provisions:
- a. Signs shall be subject to a minimum setback of ten feet from the road right-of-way.
  - b. Signs shall be limited to those service-type businesses serving the traveling public, such as filling stations, restaurants, motels, marinas, etc., but not businesses primarily occupied with local needs such as furniture, jewelry, shoes, etc.
  - c. Signs shall be limited to two in number for any one business, and shall not be located more than ten miles from the subject use.
  - d. Each sign shall be limited to 16 square feet in area.
6. Billboards - No new billboards shall be permitted after adoption of this amendment (February 27, 1992). Existing billboards may not be expanded as of the date of this amendment.

7. Bus Shelters - With the exception of signs on bus shelters in existence as of the effective date of this amendment (May 6, 1997), no signs shall be displayed on bus shelters. Existing signs on bus shelters may be replaced but not expanded. Any bus shelter with signs which ceases being used as a bus stop either for schools or public transportation shall be removed pursuant to the following procedure:
  - a. By September 15 of each year, the Zoning Officer shall identify any shelters which are not located at sites which are either school bus stops for the current school year or bus stops for public transportation.
  - b. The Zoning Officer shall notify the owner of the shelter as well as the owner of the property upon which the unused shelter is located that the shelter shall be removed in its entirety within 60 days of the notice date.
  - c. The decision of the Zoning Officer may be appealed to the Board of Appeals under Section 11-1.04 of the Zoning Ordinance. Such an appeal shall be taken within thirty (30) days of the date of the above notice.
  - d. Any bus shelter which is removed because of non-use may be relocated to a location used as a bus stop either for schools or public transportation within the 60-day period contained in the notice described above. The right to relocate shall be forfeited if not exercised within the 60-day period.
8. Town Center Entrance Signs
  - a. The County Commissioners shall adopt guidelines governing the design and financing of Town Center entrance signs considering the recommendations of the Department of Planning & Zoning and the Planning Commission.
  - b. All Town Center entrance signs shall be erected and maintained by the County or its designee.

#### 6-8.07 Violations

Any violation of this Section shall be enforced in accordance with the procedures contained in Section 1-7 of this Ordinance. The Zoning Officer shall have the authority to remove any sign that is determined to be a zoning violation, after proper notification is given, as required by Section 1-7.01.C. Any cost associated with any such removal shall be paid by the property owner.

### **6-9 CAMPGROUNDS & RECREATIONAL VEHICLE CAMPS**

#### 6-9.01 Regulations

The following regulations shall apply to the creation of any new campground or recreational vehicle camp, or the enlargement of any lawfully existing camp approved by the Board of Appeals. Campgrounds and recreational vehicle camps shall be referred to as "camps" in this Section.

##### A. Ownership and Subdivision

A camp established as a special exception shall remain under one ownership and subdivision shall not be permitted except as provided by the County Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.



**CALVERT COUNTY  
PLANNING COMMISSION**

**150 Main Street, Suite 304  
Prince Frederick, MD 20678  
Office Phone: 410-535-1600 ext. 2356  
Fax Phone: 410-414-3092  
Email: [pz@co.cal.md.us](mailto:pz@co.cal.md.us)**

**ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW APPLICATION**

**NAME OF PROJECT:** \_\_\_\_\_

Town Center: (please check one)

Dunkirk \_\_\_ Owings \_\_\_ Huntingtown \_\_\_ Prince Frederick \_\_\_ St. Leonard \_\_\_ Lusby \_\_\_ Solomons \_\_\_

**PART I – GENERAL INFORMATION:**

Project Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Name and Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Owner Name & Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Authorization by Owner or Agent)*

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Office Use Only: County Case # \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received \_\_\_\_\_*

## **PART II – PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

### **A. Building**

Commercial: \_\_\_\_\_ Residential: \_\_\_\_\_ New Construction: \_\_\_\_\_ Addition: \_\_\_\_\_ Renovation: \_\_\_\_\_ Case Revision: \_\_\_\_\_

Building Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Roof Pitch: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Foundation:**

Material: \_\_\_\_\_ Style/Manufacturer: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Exterior Finish:**

Siding: \_\_\_\_\_ Style: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Brick: \_\_\_\_\_ Style/Manufacturer: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Stucco: \_\_\_\_\_ Style/Manufacturer: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_ Description: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Roofing:**

Asphalt Shingle: \_\_\_\_\_ Style/Manufacturer: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Metal: \_\_\_\_\_ Style/Manufacturer: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_ Description: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

**Windows:** Material: \_\_\_\_\_ Style/Manufacturer: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

**Doors:** Material: \_\_\_\_\_ Style/Manufacturer: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

**Shutters:** Material: \_\_\_\_\_ Style/Manufacturer: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

**Trim:** Material: \_\_\_\_\_ Style/Manufacturer: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

**Fence:** Material: \_\_\_\_\_ Dimensions: \_\_\_\_\_

Style/Manufacturer: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Outdoor Lighting:**

Material: \_\_\_\_\_ Style/Manufacturer: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Other:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**B. Sign**

Type: Freestanding Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Wall Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Window Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

Dimensions: \_\_\_\_\_ Materials: \_\_\_\_\_ Installed Height: \_\_\_\_\_

Illumination: None: \_\_\_\_\_ Internal: \_\_\_\_\_ Halo: \_\_\_\_\_ Projecting onto Sign Face: \_\_\_\_\_

Internal Lighting of Lettering/Logo with Opaque Sign Face: \_\_\_\_\_

Description:

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**PART III – REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS:**

\_\_\_\_\_ 8 1/2” x 11” elevations (to scale)  
Building elevations shall show all sides of building and shall include (where applicable) windows and door designs and locations, shutters, corner boards, ornamentation and trim, porch/deck railing design, fence design, utility screening and outdoor lighting design to scale. Sign elevations shall show dimensions and exact wording, lettering and logo style.

\_\_\_\_\_ Map showing project location

\_\_\_\_\_ Site Plan

**PART IV – PRESENTATION MATERIALS (for review at Committee Meeting)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Samples of materials and colors  
(Note: For larger projects, presentation boards are recommended.)

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Huntingtown, Solomons and Prince Frederick Town Centers	Jenny Plummer-Welker 410-535-1600 x 2333
Dunkirk, Lusby, Owings and St. Leonard Town Centers	Patricia “Pat” Haddon 410-535-1600 x 2631
General Information	Judy Holt 410-535-1600 x 2356