



Mt. Airy Business Improvement District Zoning Guidelines

Mt. Airy has greatly benefited by the thoughtful planning and foresight of past community leaders and stakeholders. Mt. Airy's history of community planning and organizing helped prevent redlining and the type of disinvestment and neighborhood decline experienced in other urban communities. This resulted in the establishment of a racially and economically diverse neighborhood with historic treasures, ensuring that Mt. Airy would be a safe and attractive place to live, work and enjoy for years to come.

The most recent planning process took place from 2015 to 2016, facilitated by Mt. Airy CDC in collaboration with East Mt. Airy Neighbors, West Mt. Airy Neighbors, Chew and Belfield Neighbors, the 6300 Block Business Alliance, and the Mt. Airy Business Improvement District (BID). The process involved numerous public meetings and hundreds of residential surveys, and resulted in a 10-year vision for the community that addressed neighborhood retail and commerce goals. This process worked to ensure that Mt. Airy's commercial corridor will remain vibrant, clean and thriving, meeting the needs of its residents and attracting and nurturing entrepreneurs.

As a result of these past and present efforts, the Mt. Airy commercial corridor is receiving increased attention from developers, investors and entrepreneurs. Recognizing that it has an important role to serve in developing a unified set of principles to guide development along the commercial corridor, the Mt. Airy BID, in June 2018, sought and received approval as a Registered Community Organization (RCO). This allows and authorizes the Mt. Airy BID to review zoning applications for projects proposed within its geographic boundaries and offer recommendations to the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA).

In developing and promoting the following zoning guidelines, the Mt. Airy BID seeks to meet the following objectives:

- Ensure that the community vision, articulated in Mt. Airy 2025, is kept at the forefront of decision-making.
- Represent business interests and concerns when evaluating what is good for the community and acceptable.
- Facilitate communication with potential developers and business owners early, and often, during the development process.

Zoning Committee Guiding Principles

1. To preserve what is unique, and special about the Germantown Avenue commercial corridor:

There are many special qualities and characteristics about our neighborhood, and we want to work

to actively preserve what makes Mt. Airy unique and desirable. Germantown Avenue has many important historical and architecturally significant properties. These properties should be protected when feasible. Mt. Airy also has an identity focused on inclusiveness and acceptance of diversity and differences, and it is as important to preserve that identity as it is to preserve the community's historic assets. Diversity of architectural styles and periods is good. Diversity of racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds is desired. Development that supports these ends will be supported.

2. **To actively seek to green and beautify Germantown Avenue:** We support development that strengthens the civic fabric of the neighborhood. We encourage projects that create common spaces for community members to engage with one another, that add to the beauty of the community and enhance the overall aesthetic qualities of Mt. Airy. New development must fit into the Mt. Airy landscape and be consistent with existing commercial buildings and structures. New development is acceptable and encouraged but it should be consistent, in scope and design, with the existing fabric of our community.
3. **To encourage continued growth and development along Germantown Avenue:** Growth in both residential and commercial density along Germantown Avenue is good for the community as a whole. Increased density will result in greater demand for goods and services and, hence, the establishment of new jobs and businesses, and the strengthening of existing businesses. Greater safety along the Avenue, more diversity of products and services and a higher tax base to support City and Mt. Airy services will be just a few of the positive results and improvements. Our goal is to encourage commercial uses on the first floor of all new projects along Germantown Avenue. Projects that offer residential on the first floor of buildings along the commercial corridor will be rejected.
4. **To make Germantown Avenue a more multi-modal friendly district:** Neighborhoods and communities should be designed for people, not for automobiles. We want to encourage utilization of a wide range of transportation options, all of which are readily available in Mt. Airy. We believe that tailoring the commercial district to cater to cars and parking is fundamentally a flawed idea. Parking is a consideration but equal consideration should be provided to other forms of transportation including pedestrian, public transit, ride sharing and biking.