

## **Proposed Sign Regulations**

Public Record Held Open

Deadline: **4:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 21.**

See more details at end of slideshow.

These are the images of Calvert County we project on the County website.



We don't show images like this.





But this was what visitors saw and residents lived with before the adoption of Architectural Review.



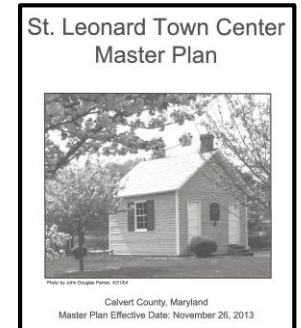
Today, all of our Town Center Master Plans and Zoning Ordinances identify appearance as a central objective – with strong public support .

Dunkirk – “distinctive identity” “Gateway to Calvert County” “unified attractive aspect”



Huntingtown - “preserve small town character: “ensure that signs enhance, not detract, from the town’s appearance”

Lusby, Owings, St. Leonard – “The overall appearance of a community bears a direct relationship to the social well-being of its residents and to property values.”



Prince Frederick – “establish standards for signs that will minimize clutter and promote an attractive appearance along roadways”

Solomons – “Support and enhance a mix of uses in the Solomons Island Village Core that are family-friendly, encourage year round activity, and are visually compatible with Solomons architectural heritage that makes it a distinctive destination.”

One of the Visions of the Comprehensive Plan states:

*“Our Town Centers are attractive, convenient, and interesting places to live, work and shop.”*

An Action Item states:

*“As Master Plans are revised, look for ways to preserve and enhance the unique character of each town center.”*



# What else does the Comprehensive Plan say about the Town Centers?

Prince Frederick: *“Prince Frederick is the seat of County government and is the logical location for governmental, educational and legal services.”*



Solomons: *“Solomon’s unique geography, location on the water, and historic atmosphere makes it well suited as a recreation destination.”*

## What else does the Comprehensive Plan say about the Town Centers?

Dunkirk: *“Dunkirk has the potential to be one of the County’s major employment centers due to its proximity to Washington, D.C. and the area’s airports, interstate highways, and metropolitan centers. Dunkirk currently serves as a retail and services center and significant commercial growth in this area is anticipated.”*



Lusby: *“Lusby is emerging as a place for high-technology development.”*



Other Town Centers: *“Minor town centers are to serve as local convenience centers unless individual town center master plans determine otherwise.”*





Slowly, we've been making progress with the use of Architectural Review criteria unique to each Town Center.

Before



After





Before



Most tall pole signs have been replaced with lower signs on bases.

After







Before

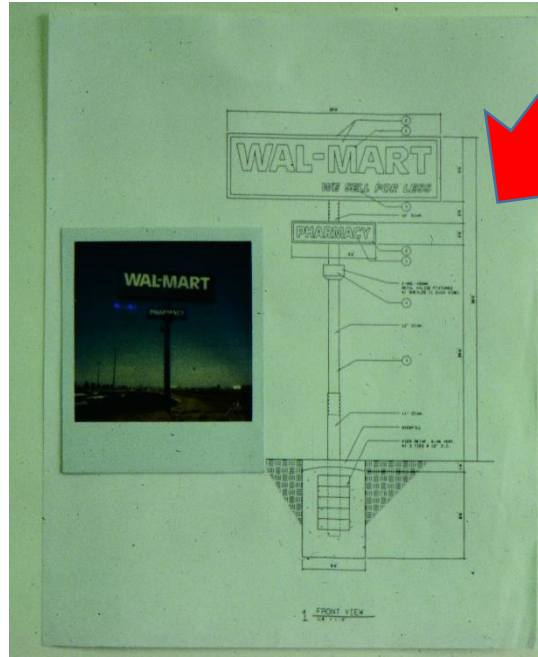


After





This is the plan  
Wal-mart submitted.



This is what the sign would have  
looked like without current sign regulations.



This is what the sign looks like today,  
thanks to Architectural Review.





Why would we greet visitors with signs like this when even corporate chains are perfectly willing to comply with local regulations?







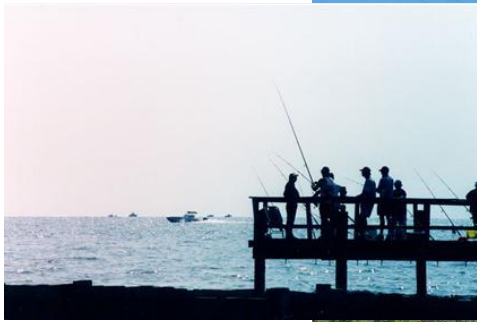
We're seeing freestanding signs that are a bit more compatible with their buildings. Like this....







If we stay on course and maintain our commitment to making all of our Town Centers worthy of our beautiful natural, cultural and historical resources, we will enhance our economy while enjoying this wonderful County.



But the proposed sign regulations can change all that, moving us backward, not forward.

... not only in our Town Centers, but County-wide.



**Building Sign Design**

1. Every building sign shall be designed as an integral architectural element of the building.

2. Signs on buildings shall not obstruct architectural features of the building. Signs shall not be mounted on roofs, extend above the roof line or above the second story of the building.

3. 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 complimentary) background colors (where applicable)

c) being of the same material.

4. The number of graphic elements (i.e., words and/or symbols) on a sign shall be held to the minimum needed to convey the sign's major message. A rule of thumb is to limit the number of syllables and symbols to 10.

**M. Freestanding Sign Design**

1. Every freestanding sign shall be compatible with the building(s) to which it relates in terms of style, color, proportion and scale.

2. All individual signs on a freestanding base shall be uniform in design. Uniformity is defined as:

a) having the same (or similar) dimensions or proportions

b) having the same (or complimentary) background colors (where applicable)

c) being of the same material.

3. Reader boards shall be limited to two lines and shall have the same background color and width dimensions as the primary sign.



Example of uniform sign design within a shopping center.

Almost all current design standards will be gone in all Town Centers.

~~1. Every building sign shall be designed as an integral architectural element of the building.~~

~~1. Every freestanding sign shall be compatible with the building(s) to which it relates in terms of style, color, proportion and scale.~~



All Town Centers currently require bases and/or frames for freestanding signs. The proposed regulations will delete this requirement.





We'll see signs like this again.



The following slides summarize the proposed sign regulations.

There are links at the end to download this slideshow and the draft regulations.



# Sign Types Proposed – Permanent Free-Standing Signs

Copy of slide created by Dept. of Planning & Zoning and presented at Aug. 22<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing:

## Permanent Freestanding Signs

Directional, Drive-Up, Other Freestanding, Subdivision



Directional



Drive-Up



Other Freestanding



Subdivision



These are attractive examples, BUT ...

The proposed sign regulations will take us back to signs like this.



Tall pole signs will be back in all Town Centers. In Prince Frederick, the height proposed is 22'.

The Prince Frederick charrette report recommended a maximum height of 10 feet. Current regulations allow a maximum of 14 feet.



This is about what a 22 foot tall sign looks like.



**Sign, approximately 20 feet tall**

**Sally, approximately 5 feet 5 inches**

# Sign Types Proposed – Permanent Building Signs

Copy of slide created by Dept. of Planning & Zoning and presented at Aug. 22<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing:

## Permanent Building Signs

Awning, Canopy, Projecting, Wall



Awning



Canopy



Wall



Projecting



These are attractive examples, BUT ...



Since the proposal is to eliminate design criteria, building signs can go back to being any combination of sizes, styles and lighting.






# Sign Types Proposed – Electronic Message Signs & Reader Boards

Copy of slide created by Dept. of Planning & Zoning and presented at Aug. 22<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing:

## Sign Types

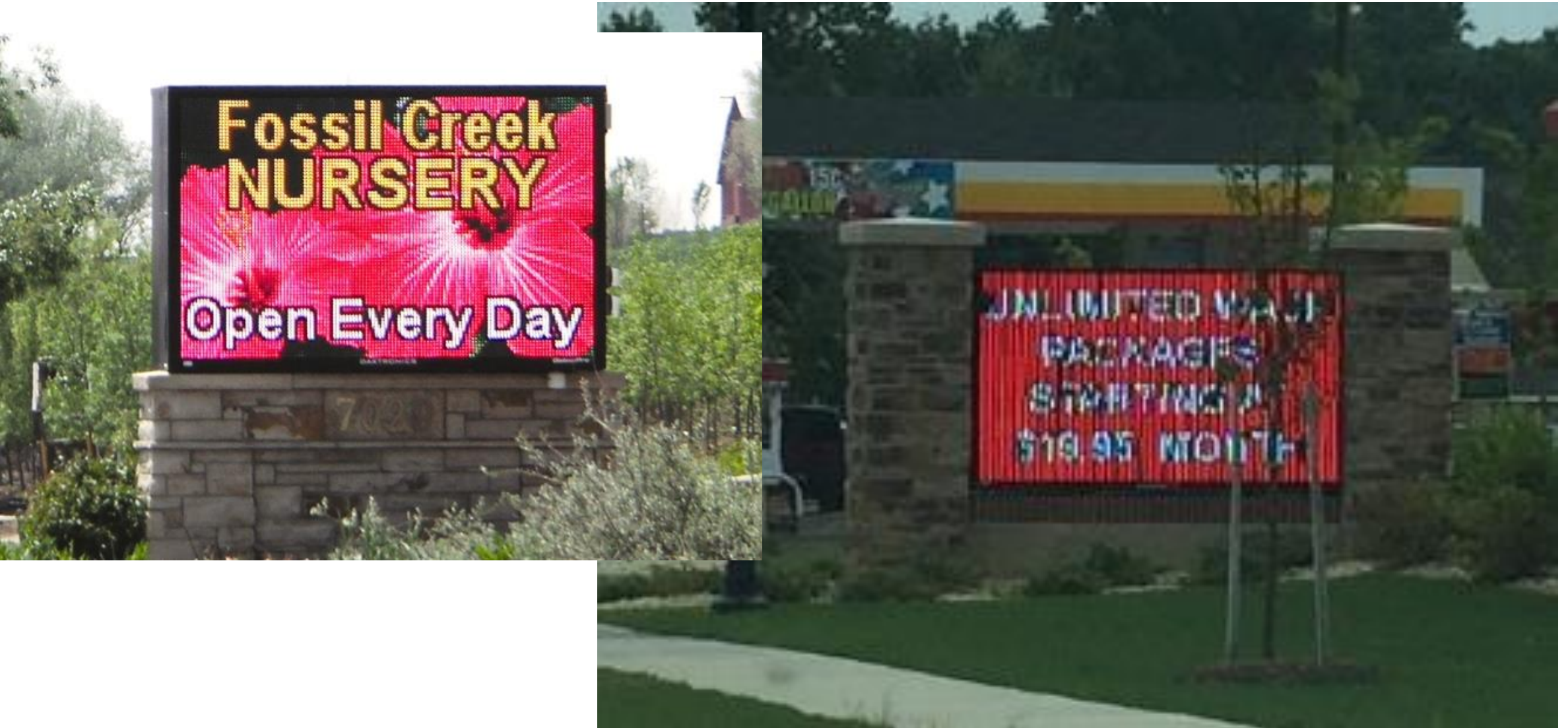
### Electronic Message Centers and Reader Boards



12



Electronic Messaging Center (EMC) signs may be permitted in all or most Town Centers and in Industrial Parks.



# Sign Types Proposed – Electronic Message Signs

Copy of slide created by Dept. of Planning & Zoning and presented at Aug. 22<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing:

Options for  
where EMCs  
can be  
located

| Electronic Message Centers   |                                   |  |   |                   |                    |                              |                           |   |   |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| Sign Type  | Town Center, District or Area [1] |  |   |                   |                    |                              |                           |   |   |                                   |
| Symbols  |                                   |  |   |                   |                    |                              |                           |   |   |                                   |
| P-A = Permitted with Architectural Design Review                       |                                   |  |   |                   |                    |                              |                           |   |   |                                   |
| P = Permitted without Architectural Design Review                      |                                   |  |   |                   |                    |                              |                           |   |   |                                   |
| X = Not Permitted  |                                   |  |   |                   |                    |                              |                           |   |   |                                   |
| S = Permitted with Special Exception                                   |                                   |  |   |                   |                    |                              |                           |   |   |                                   |
| SA = Permitted with Special Exception with Architectural Design Review |                                   |  |   |                   |                    |                              |                           |   |   |                                   |
|  | Dunkirk Town Center               | Huntingtown Town Center - Mixed Use District | Huntingtown Town Center - All Other Districts [2] | Lusby Town Center | Owings Town Center | Prince Frederick Town Center | Saint Leonard Town Center | Solomons Town Center - North of Lore Road | Solomons Town Center - South of Lore Road | Signs Outside of Town Centers [1] |
| Electronic Message Centers and Reader Boards [3]                       |                                   |  |   |                   |                    |                              |                           |   |   |                                   |
| Electronic Message Centers OPTION A                                    | X                                 | P-A  | P-A   | P-A               | P-A                | P-A                          | P-A                       | X   | X   | P-A [4]                           |
| Electronic Message Centers OPTION B                                    | X                                 | X  | X   | P-A               | P-A                | P-A                          | P-A                       | X   | X   | P-A [4]                           |
| Electronic Message Centers OPTION C                                    | S-A                               | P-A  | P-A   | P-A               | P-A                | P-A                          | P-A                       | S-A                                       | S-A                                       | P-A [4]                           |
| Electronic Message Centers OPTION D                                    | X                                 | X  | X   | X                 | X                  | X                            | X                         | X   | X   | X                                 |
| Reader Boards  | P-A                               | P-A  | P-A   | P-A               | P-A                | P-A                          | P-A                       | P-A                                       | P-A                                       | P-A                               |

[1] Signs in the Rural Commercial District and Town Centers are subject to architectural review according to applicable design guidelines, as amended from time to time. [2] Nonresidential permitted uses in the other Huntingtown Town Center districts (Neighborhood District and Residential District) shall comply with all the requirements of the Mixed Use District. Nonresidential uses allowed by conditional use or special exception shall comply with the sign requirements of the Mixed Use District unless more stringent requirements are set as part of the conditional use or special exception approval. [3] This subsection of Table 6-1 identifies where electronic message centers and reader boards are permitted as a portion of a permitted freestanding or building sign in accordance with the provisions of Section 6-8.07. Such signs shall not be permitted in addition to any other permitted signs. [4] Outside of any Town Center, electronic message centers shall only be permitted on property zoned I-1.





# Sign Types Proposed – “Temporary” Signs

Copy of slide created by Dept. of Planning & Zoning and presented at Aug. 22<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing:

## Temporary Signs

Air-Activated, Balloon, Banner, Blade,  
Pennants, Yard



Photo credit (above and right): Wendy E. Moeller

Two temporary signs (air-activated, balloons, banners, blades, etc.) will be permitted on each parcel in all Town Centers and any non-residential use outside the Town Centers. There is no time limit on temporary signs.





## Sign Types Proposed – Window Signs

Copy of slide created by Dept. of Planning & Zoning and presented at Aug. 22<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing:

# Window Signs

- 1<sup>st</sup> draft proposed regulations allowed up to 25% of glass area to be covered with signage
- 2<sup>nd</sup> draft proposed to allow up to 50%
- Public Hearing proposes window signs to be allowed with no restriction on the amount of window area covered by window signs



## Why have windows?

# Sign Types Proposed – Directional/Off-Premise Signs

In the proposed regulations, no distinction is being made between on-premise and off-premise signs, and no restrictions are proposed for “Litter On A Stick”.



Directional Sign Conditions are being relaxed by eliminating the requirement that only businesses catering to the travelling public can have them.

Proposed Conditions:

- 1 sign per driveway entrance w/any public road.
- Max sign area 5 sq. ft.
- Max height 3'



# Sign Types Proposed – Portable Signs

Copy of slide created by Dept. of Planning & Zoning and presented at Aug. 22<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing:

Where Permitted: Inside &  
Outside Town Centers

Size: 12 sq. ft., maximum width  
of 3' & maximum height of 4'

Number Permitted: 1 per site  
Other restrictions apply.

## Portable Signs

### T-Frame and A-Frame



# Sign Types Proposed – Signs on Bus Shelters

Copy of slide created by Dept. of Planning & Zoning and presented at Aug. 22<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing:

## Signs on Bus Shelters

- Option A: Prohibit signs on bus shelters\*
- Option B: Delete prohibition; allow signs on bus shelters, regulate as a permanent building sign with a temporary message

\* Existing bus shelters with signage would be considered a nonconforming use and may continue to be used, regardless of change in content, until the sign structure is sought to be replaced, expanded or relocated.



Actual sign concealed, BUT ...



# Sign Types Proposed – Signs on Bus Shelters

... there's nothing in the proposed regulations to prevent signs like this, and not just on bus shelters, but everywhere ...



FYI - Bus shelters without signs are permitted just about anywhere.

The new sign regulations propose to allow all of the types of signs described in this slideshow (except electronic) that are permitted within the Town Centers to also be permitted OUTSIDE the Town Centers.

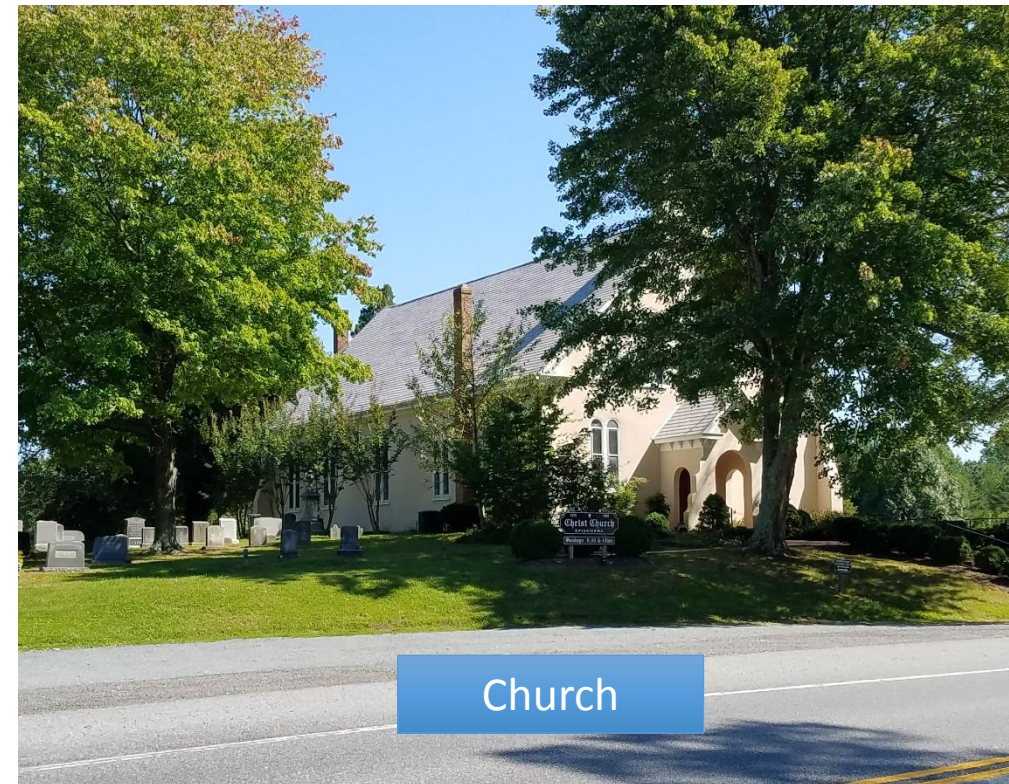


Farm Stand w/o permanent structures



There are at least 97 non-residential uses permitted outside the Town Centers that might want to erect larger signs (both permanent and “temporary”) without being required to comply with Architectural Review criteria.

Here are just a few of such non-residential uses ...





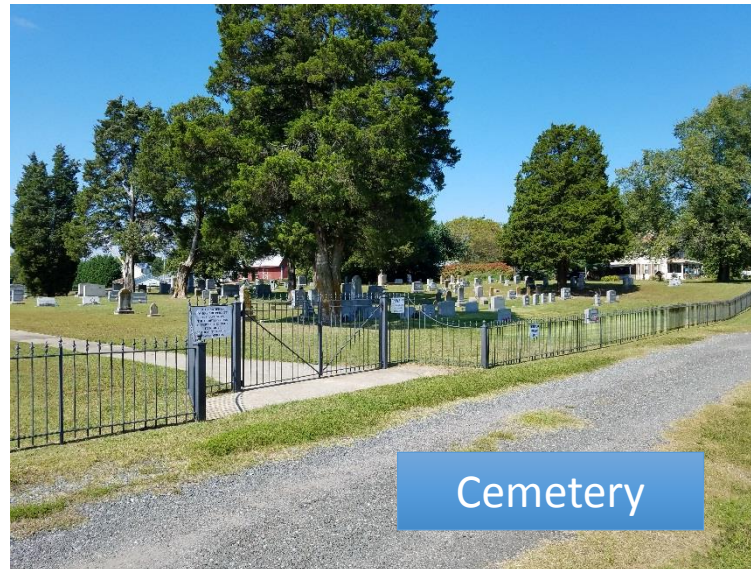
These are a few more examples of uses permitted outside the Town Centers. They currently display tasteful, unobtrusive signs (or no signs at all), **BUT ...**



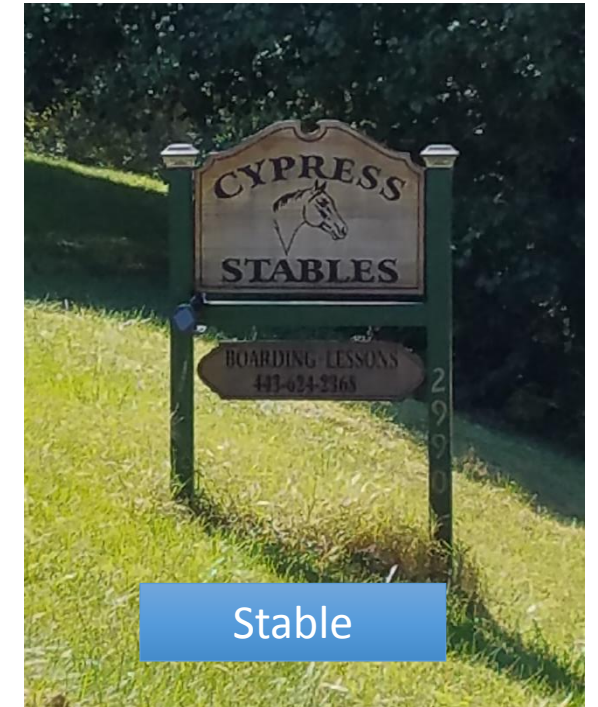
Kennel



Farm



Cemetery



Stable



... the proposed regulations will allow all of these types of signs OUTSIDE the Town Centers... with NO Architectural Review criteria.



Banners



Balloon Signs



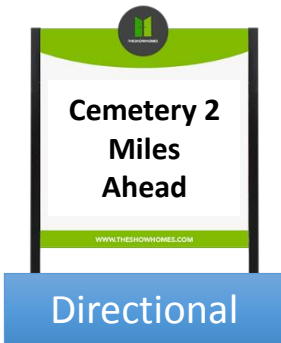
Blades



Air-Activated



Portable



Directional



Awning Sign

We were starting to look a little better...



....why change all that now???



# **Proposed Sign Regulations**

## **PUBLIC RECORD HELD OPEN**

Citizens may submit written comments to the Planning Commission and County Commissioners in via email/mail/fax by the close of the record at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 21.

**Submit Your Comments to:**

- Calvert County Commissioners, 175 Main Street, Prince Frederick, MD 20678
- Email: [commiss@calvertcountymd.gov](mailto:commiss@calvertcountymd.gov)
- Fax: 410-535-5594

Have Questions? Email [Jenny Plummer-Welker](#) at the Dept. of Planning & Zoning or call: (410) 535-1600 ext. 2356

*Thank you for viewing  
this slideshow.*

Please visit the Calvert Coalition for Smart Growth at [www.calvertcoalitionforsmartgrowth.com](http://www.calvertcoalitionforsmartgrowth.com), where you can:

- Take a quick survey about the sign regulations
- Download this slideshow
- Download the proposed sign regulations

*The End.*