

Chapter 27. Zoning

Part 12. "SC" SPECIAL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

§ 27-1201. Purpose.

[Ord. No. 2020-01, 1/6/2020]

To control development of flood-prone areas. To recognize other areas of significant environmental sensitivity that should not be intensely developed. To allow reasonable uses of these lands that would still result in a large proportion of the land remaining open. To steer more intense development to districts that are closer to community facilities and services, are more naturally suited for development, and are more easily served by public sewers. To protect and enhance the Delaware and Lehigh Canal Corridor.

§ 27-1202. Township and Municipal Authority Exemption.

[Ord. No. 2020-01, 1/6/2020]

The requirements of this chapter shall not apply to uses, buildings, or structures owned by Williams Township, or for municipal authorities created solely by Williams Township.

§ 27-1203. Permitted-by-Right Uses.

[Ord. No. 2020-01, 1/6/2020]

Only the following uses are permitted by right in the SC District, provided that the requirements for specific uses of Part **14** are met:

A. The following uses within the requirements of this district:

(1) Crop farming.

(2) Forestry activities.

[Added by Ord. No. 2023-2, 8/9/2023^[1]]

[1] *Editor's Note: This ordinance also redesignated former Subsection A(2) through (8) as Subsection A(3) through (9), respectively.*

(3) Membership club.

(4) Picnic grove.*

(5) Plant nursery.*

(6) Publicly owned recreation.

(7) Single-family detached dwelling.

(8) Township-owned use.

(9) Wildlife sanctuary.

NOTE:

* See additional requirements in § 27-1402.

B. The following accessory uses, within the requirements of § 27-1403:

- (1) Accessory use or structure clearly customary and incidental to a permitted by right.
- (2) Accessory use or structure permitted by § 27-1403C.**
- (3) Approved special exception or conditional use.**
- (4) Essential services.**
- (5) Forestry activities.

[Added by Ord. No. 2023-2, 8/9/2023^[2]]

[2] *Editor's Note: This ordinance also redesignated former Subsection B(5) through (12) as Subsection B(6) through (13), respectively.*

- (6) Geothermal systems.**
- (7) Home-based business, no-impact.
- (8) Leaf composting.**
- (9) Outdoor solid-fuel-burning appliance as an accessory to a single-family dwelling.**
- (10) Recreational facilities limited to use by residents of a development and their occasional guests.
- (11) Solar energy system, on-site usage.**
[Amended by Ord. No. 2022-02, 5/11/2022]
- (12) Swimming pool, private.**
- (13) Wind mills/wind turbines.**

NOTE:

** See additional requirements in § 27-1403.

§ 27-1204. Special Exception Uses.

[Ord. No. 2020-01, 1/6/2020; as amended by Ord. No. 2024-2, 2/14/2024]

Only the following uses are permitted by special exception in the SC District, provided that the requirements for specific uses of Part 14 are met:

- A. Bed-and-breakfast use.**
- B. Home occupation.**
- C. In-law suite.**

NOTE:

** See additional requirements in § 27-1403.

§ 27-1205. Conditional Uses.

[Ord. No. 2020-01, 1/6/2020]

Only the following uses are permitted conditional uses in the SC District, provided that the requirements for specific uses in Part 14 are met:

- A. Municipal sewage treatment plant.
- B. Any construction within floodplain area.

§ 27-1206. Specifically Prohibited Uses.

[Ord. No. 2020-01, 1/6/2020]

All uses not specifically permitted are prohibited.

§ 27-1207. Lot and Setback Regulations.

[Ord. No. 2020-01, 1/6/2020]

Lot and setback regulations in the SC District shall be as follows, unless a more restrictive requirement is stated in Part **14** for a particular use, or elsewhere in this chapter. See definitions of these terms in Part **2**.

- A. Minimum lot area: two acres (87,120 square feet).
- B. Minimum lot depth: 150 feet.
- C. Minimum lot width: 150 feet.
- D. Maximum building coverage: 10%.
- E. Maximum impervious coverage: 12.5% (see allowance for common open space to be dedicated in definition of "impervious coverage" in Part **2**).
- F. Minimum front yard setback: 50 feet from the future street right-of-way for both principal and accessory structures.
- G. Minimum side yard setback: 20 feet for each of two side yards for both principal and accessory structures.
- H. Minimum rear yard setback: 40 feet for a principal structure; 20 feet for an accessory structure.
- I. Maximum height: 3 1/2 stories or 35 feet, whichever is less.
- J. Minimum principal building setback from Industrial Districts: 100 feet for a dwelling, from an LI/B or GI boundary.

§ 27-1208. Additional Requirements.

[Ord. No. 2020-01, 1/6/2020]

- A. Parking. See Part **16**.
- B. Signs. See Part **17**.
- C. Site Plan Review. See § **27-1311**, which requires a site plan review by the Planning Commission for nonresidential building expansions.
- D. Special environmental protection within canal corridors.
 - (1) Buffer Yards Along Canals.
 - (a) Twenty-foot-wide buffer yard with evergreen screening shall be required in any of the following situations:

When any of the following uses:		Are adjacent to or across the street from and visible from the following:
Any proposed or expanded:		Delaware Canal Park or Lehigh Canal, or Delaware and Lehigh Canal Corridor
a)	commercial or industrial use; or	
b)	outdoor commercial or industrial storage area; or	
c)	area routinely used for the parking, loading, or unloading of 2 or more tractor trailer trucks; or	
d)	any stormwater detention basin of more than 20,000 square feet in maximum water retention area (other than a basin that is to be planted in grass and is suitable for being mowed or will clearly resemble a natural pond)	
Any newly developed or expanded:		Abutting the existing right-of-way of a "scenic road" as designated in the Williams Township Comprehensive Plan.
a)	commercial or industrial use; or	
b)	outdoor commercial or industrial storage area; or	
c)	area routinely used for the parking, loading, or unloading of 2 or more tractor trailer trucks; or	
d)	any stormwater detention basin of more than 20,000 square feet in maximum water retention area (other than a basin that is to be planted in grass and is suitable for being mowed or will clearly resemble a natural pond)	

(2) Standards for Buffer Yards.

- (a) The buffer yard shall be a landscaped area free from structures, dumpsters, commercial or industrial storage or display, manufacturing or processing activity, materials, loading and unloading area or vehicular parking. No new driveways or streets shall be permitted in the buffer yards except at points of ingress or egress.
- (b) If a substantial natural berm or slope or dense vegetation will be maintained and will be substantial enough to meet the buffer provisions of this section, or if topographic conditions or the creation of berming by the developer would clearly relieve the need and cause for screening, the Zoning Officer may waive the required evergreen screening.
- (c) Fence. Any fence that may be constructed shall be on the inside of any required evergreen screening.
- (d) Each buffer yard shall include a planting screen of evergreen (as opposed to deciduous) trees or shrubs extending the full length of the required buffer yard.

[1] Required plant materials shall have a minimum height when planted of three feet.

[2] Plant materials used in the planting screen shall be of species, spacing and size as can be reasonably be expected to produce, within five years, a solid year-round visual screen at least six feet in height.

(3) Special Sign Regulations in Commercial and Industrial Districts Within 800 feet of the Delaware and Lehigh Canals.

- (a) The following regulations shall apply to any signs within 800 feet of:

- [1] The centerline of the intended waterway of the Delaware Canal or the Lehigh Canal;
or
- [2] Unless the applicant clearly proves to satisfaction of the Zoning Officer that such a sign clearly would not partially or wholly be visible from:
 - [a] Any portion of the Delaware Canal State Park; or
 - [b] The Lehigh Canal.
- (b) Wall Signs. The area of all wall signs on any one side of a building shall not be greater than 5% of the total vertical area of the building face (not including the area of any slanted roof) on which the sign(s) is located. Such signs shall be located on a maximum of two faces of the building. Such signs and/or their backing shall not project above the structural roof line of the building to which they are attached.
- (c) Freestanding Sign. There shall be a maximum of one freestanding sign structure per lot or principal use, whichever is most restrictive, with the maximum total sign area of 20 square feet on each of two sides. This sign structure may consist of several attached signs, with the total permitted square footage. Such sign shall have a maximum total height of nine feet above the average ground level surrounding the sign.
- (d) Freestanding signs on a mobile stand that are not permanently attached to the ground and that could be towed from one location to another are prohibited.
- (e) Off-premises signs are prohibited, except for signs specifically erected by an authorized federal, state, county, or municipal entity for a valid public purpose.
- (4) Special Minimum Setbacks for New Accessory and Principal Buildings along Canals. The setback regulations along the Delaware and Lehigh Canals shall be as follows, unless a more restrictive requirement is stated elsewhere in this chapter.
 - (a) Special minimum setbacks for proposed or expanded accessory and principal buildings: 150 feet from the center of the intended waterway of the Delaware Canal, and 125 feet from either the Lehigh Canal (the southern shoreline of the Lehigh River), or 75 feet from the existing right-of-way of PA S.R. 611.

E. Special environmental protection within canal corridors and along scenic roads.

(1) Buffer Yards Along Canals and Scenic Road.

- (a) Twenty-foot-wide buffer yard with evergreen screening shall be required in any of the following situations:

When any of the following uses:		Are adjacent to or across the street from and visible from the following:
Any proposed or expanded:		Delaware Canal Park or Lehigh Canal, or Delaware and Lehigh Canal Corridor
a)	commercial or industrial use; or	
b)	outdoor commercial or industrial storage area; or	
c)	area routinely used for the parking, loading, or unloading of 2 or more tractor trailer trucks; or	
d)	any stormwater detention basin of more than 20,000 square feet in maximum water retention area (other than a basin that is to be planted in grass and is suitable for being mowed or will clearly resemble a natural pond)	

When any of the following uses:		Are adjacent to or across the street from and visible from the following:
Any newly developed or expanded:		Abutting the existing right-of-way of a "scenic road" as designated in the Williams Township Comprehensive Plan
a)	commercial or industrial use; or	
b)	outdoor commercial or industrial storage area; or	
c)	area routinely used for the parking, loading, or unloading of 2 or more tractor trailer trucks; or	
d)	any stormwater detention basin of more than 20,000 square feet in maximum water retention area (other than a basin that is to be planted in grass and is suitable for being mowed or will clearly resemble a natural pond)	

(2) Standards for Buffer Yards.

- (a) The buffer yard shall be a landscaped area free from structures, dumpsters, commercial or industrial storage or display, manufacturing or processing activity, materials, loading and unloading area or vehicular parking. No new driveways or streets shall be permitted in the buffer yards except at points of ingress or egress.
- (b) If a substantial natural berm or slope or dense vegetation will be maintained and will be substantial enough to meet the buffer provisions of this section, or if topographic conditions or the creation of berming by the developer would clearly relieve the need and cause for screening, the Zoning Officer may waive the required evergreen screening.
- (c) Fence. Any fence that may be constructed shall be on the inside of any required evergreen screening.
- (d) Each buffer yard shall include a planting screen of evergreen (as opposed to deciduous) trees or shrubs extending the full length of the required buffer yard.

[1] Required plant materials shall have a minimum height when planted of three feet.

[2] Plant materials used in the planting screen shall be of species, spacing and size as can be reasonably be expected to produce, within five years, a solid year-round visual screen at least six feet in height.

(3) Special Sign Regulations in Commercial and Industrial Districts Within 800 feet of the Delaware and Lehigh Canals or a Scenic Road.

- (a) The following regulations shall apply to any signs within 800 feet of:

[1] The centerline of the intended waterway of the Delaware Canal or the Lehigh Canal; or

[2] The existing right-of-way of a scenic road identified in the Williams Township Street Classification Plan, unless stricter requirements are established elsewhere; or

[3] Unless the applicant clearly proves to satisfaction of the Zoning Officer that such a sign clearly would not partially or wholly be visible from:

[a] Any portion of such scenic road;

[b] Any portion of the Delaware Canal State Park; or

[c] The Lehigh Canal.

- (b) Wall Signs. The area of all wall signs on any one side of a building shall not be greater than 5% of the total vertical area of the building face (not including the area of any slanted roof) on which the sign(s) is located. Such signs shall be located on a maximum of two faces of the building. Such signs and/or their backing shall not project above the structural roof line of the building to which they are attached.
 - (c) Freestanding Sign. There shall be a maximum of one freestanding sign structure per lot or principal use, whichever is most restrictive, with the maximum total sign area of 20 square feet on each of two sides. This sign structure may consist of several attached signs, with the total permitted square footage. Such sign shall have a maximum total height of nine feet above the average ground level surrounding the sign.
 - (d) Freestanding signs on a mobile stand that are not permanently attached to the ground and that could be towed from one location to another are prohibited.
 - (e) Off-premises signs are prohibited, except for signs specifically erected by an authorized federal, state, county, or municipal entity for a valid public purpose.
- (4) Special Minimum Setbacks for New Accessory and Principal Buildings along Canals. The setback regulations along the Delaware and Lehigh Canals shall be as follows, unless a more restrictive requirement is stated elsewhere in this chapter.
- (a) Special minimum setbacks for proposed or expanded accessory and principal buildings: 150 feet from the center of the intended waterway of the Delaware Canal, and 125 feet from either the Lehigh Canal (the southern shoreline of the Lehigh River), or 75 feet from the existing right-of-way of PA S.R. 611.