II. Mixed-use and Infill Development in the Urban Overlay District
The Urban Overlay District, containing generally the City’s older urbanized area north of the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal, has been designated for development at higher densities. The historical development pattern has resulted in this district’s current mixture of stable, older neighborhoods, waterfront industrial areas, and aging commercial corridors. These guidelines address mixed-use and infill development within the Urban Overlay District.

A mixed-use development is a single unified development that incorporates two or more different uses within walking distance of one another and may include a variety of housing types. There are generally two types of mixed-use development: vertical mixed-use, the provision of multiple uses within a building, and horizontal mixed-use, the arrangement of multiple uses on a site in a complex of related buildings. Connectivity among uses should be achieved with an open space system of streetscapes and parks. As pedestrian-oriented communities, mixed-use and infill developments are intended to reduce sprawl and automobile trips.

Mixed-use development may be regionally or locally focused. A regional mixed-use development is highly accessible from major highways and includes a mix of uses, such as retail, restaurants, entertainment, and hotels, to create a destination that attracts users from a broad area. Regional mixed-use development may be co-located with special attractions, such as a waterfront promenade, a marina, an historic site, or other natural and cultural resources. Local mixed-use development provides a mix of services for the convenience of the users and residents of the development and adjacent neighborhoods.

Mixed-use development within the Urban Overlay District should meet the standards for urban planned unit development (PUD-U) as approved by city council.
Infill development should contribute to the revitalization of the existing community and neighborhood where such development is proposed. Existing infrastructure, including roads and utilities, proximity to a variety of existing uses, and the desirability of being part of an established neighborhood are incentives for the construction of new buildings or the expansion of existing buildings within older neighborhoods. Infill development within the Urban Overlay District should meet the standards for urban planned unit development (PUD-U).

Mixed use and infill developments and gateways are especially well suited in relation to transportation corridors, accessible waterfronts, transportation facilities and multi-modal transit hubs, town centers, and areas designated for revitalization. Critical factors associated with mixed use and infill developments are land use and density, careful planning, phasing, the economic climate, and construction costs.

Redevelopment that could occur as part of mixed-use and infill development may require upgrading of the existing infrastructure system including roads, utilities or other services. These issues should be addressed as part of the planning and design process.

Mixed used and infill development and gateways can help to “reduce the negatives,” such as under-utilized or abandoned buildings, unsafe areas, and dilapidated streetscapes. They should create appealing built environments in which to live, work, and play.
Land uses in mixed-use and infill areas include commercial office, retail, restaurant and entertainment, hotel, and a variety of residential types, including single-family, townhouse, and multi-family. A mix of uses is encouraged to provide a diverse and compatible development. Ground level retail, restaurants, and businesses accessible by sidewalk with residential and/or commercial uses above provides services for the daily needs of the immediate neighborhood.

The land use(s) of infill development should be compatible with the adjacent land use(s). Infill development may include one or a combination of two or more of the following land uses: commercial office/hotel, retail, restaurant and entertainment, and a variety of residential types, including single-family, townhouse, and multi-family.

The goal for the mix of land uses in the urban overlay district (and suburban district) is to achieve a balance of uses to provide for housing, employment and retail. The specific mix will vary from project to project based on the site, location, and relationship to infrastructure. It is recommended that the following range of percentages for the mix be achieved where possible:

- 10% to 30% commercial office/hotel
- 10% to 30% retail
- 20% to 80% residential

Residential densities should be no more than 30 dwelling units per acre.

Within an infill project depending on the size and location, it is possible to consider not only the infill project but also adjacent properties when addressing the target for the mix of uses. A key factor in considering adjacent parcels is the potential for including direct connections between the parcels to allow for both pedestrian and vehicular integration of uses.
A neighborhood framework is defined by the arrangement of streets and blocks. Within the Urban Overlay District, there are two existing frameworks: a rectilinear street grid, such as in the South Norfolk neighborhood, and a curvilinear pattern typical of the neighborhoods developed in the late twentieth century. To strengthen this district’s distinctive character, mixed-use and infill developments should have frameworks with the following characteristics:

- A hierarchy of street widths that provides multiple travel options and multiple points of connection to existing streets (dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs should be avoided);
- Blocks not longer than 500 feet;
- Buildings with consistent setbacks facing the primary street with limited side yards;
- Minimum street widths to support fire apparatus;
- On-street parking that contributes to traffic-calming;
- Parking lots located primarily at the rear of buildings;
- Residential garages should be deemphasized by locating them as separate buildings or setting back from the primary façade of the house;
- Alleys that provide separate access to parking and garages, and also accommodate fire apparatus;
- Sense of community identity as either a stand-alone project or as an integral part of an existing neighborhood;
- Pedestrian-friendly sidewalks for convenient access to residences, businesses, shops and restaurants, schools and cultural attractions, and active and passive open space; and
- Adjustments in the street pattern to preserve the natural environment should be permitted.
Neighborhood Framework

STREET CONNECTIVITY

- Infill development within an existing neighborhood can range in size from a single lot to multiple lots within a block, to multiple blocks.
- Existing neighborhoods with a strong pattern of streets, blocks, and building fabric should be enhanced and revitalized with compatible infill development which reinforces the existing pattern.
- In an existing neighborhood that lacks a strong development pattern, infill development should develop its own neighborhood framework of streets and blocks, introduce build-to lines, adopt parking strategies, and create multiple connections to establish a pedestrian-friendly urban environment.
• Parking located in the side or rear yard of each single-family residence;
• Connectivity with existing land uses and open space;
• Pedestrian-friendly streetscapes;
• On-street parking;
• Where possible, parking areas should be located primarily at the rear of buildings;
• Reduced curb-cuts through shared access drives;
• Pedestrian connectivity to neighboring uses;
• Pocket parks or plazas that provide gathering places along the commercial corridor; and
• Transit stops to encourage non-vehicular access.

In accordance with the growth management goal of the 2026 Comprehensive Plan, mixed-use and infill development site plans should also:
• minimize impact on and preserve natural areas as much as possible; and
• co-locate development with public utilities, facilities, roads, and transit.
Site Planning

- Establish a system of interconnected roadway networks, pedestrian circulation systems and trails within a development and with adjoining developments.

- Establish an internal hierarchy of streets that are dependent on the anticipated amount of traffic volumes that would be carried.

- Avoid cul-de-sacs unless site conditions, such as topography, easements, and/or property configurations, offer no practical alternatives for connectivity. In such cases, pedestrian and bike connections with adjoining streets or developments should be provided if possible.

- Provide street stubs within development adjacent to vacant land to provide for future connections.

- Provide short and direct pedestrian and bicycle connections between residential uses and nearby existing and planned commercial uses, transit nodes, schools, parks, and other neighborhood facilities.

- Design the pedestrian system to accommodate the needs of a broad range of users, including people with disabilities, older pedestrians, and children.

Boardwalks provide public access along waterfronts.

This sidewalk allows for multiple types of users to take advantage of the well-designed pedestrian-friendly system.

A landscaped median distinguishes the main street within this planned community’s downtown.

Bicycle paths give people an alternative way to move about their neighborhood and encourage healthy lifestyles.
CITY OF CHESAPEAKE, VIRGINIA — DESIGN GUIDELINES MANUAL

PLACEMAKING

- Develop the area with a unified image.

- Provide a range of open space including parks, squares, and playgrounds and distribute these throughout the development. Incorporate existing natural features, such as streams and other water bodies, into the open space system.

- Provide continuous public access along waterfront areas.

- Locate destination uses such as parks, restaurants, or marinas that draw people to the waterfront. Where appropriate, locate these destinations at the terminus of a street.

- Design intersections that interrupt straight internal streets to disperse traffic flow and reduce speeds. Terminate vistas with significant natural features, buildings, pocket parks, or other public spaces.

- Establish blocks that range from 300 to 500 linear feet between cross streets.

- In high visibility areas, provide destination land uses such as retail, restaurants, entertainment, and hotels that would benefit from and contribute to the vibrancy of the area. Complement signature tower buildings with lower buildings to provide street level visual interest and comfortable transitions to adjacent areas.

- Develop a cohesive parking strategy including on-street parking, surface lots, and parking structures. Shared parking opportunities should be explored.

Site Planning

Carlyle, in Alexandria, Virginia, has a distinctive interconnected system of streets and blocks, sidewalks, trails, and open space. Letters A, B, and C key the plan to the details on the right.

A. Federal Courthouse Square

B. U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

C. African American Heritage Park
Mixed-use and infill development should maintain the existing character of the neighborhood and promote a safe, livable community. It should reinforce the existing architectural and landscape character. Streetscape design should provide and encourage safe pedestrian as well as vehicular travel.

**VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION**

Mixed-use and infill developments in an urban environment should include multiple vehicular and pedestrian connections to adjacent roads and neighborhoods. Pavement widths should comply with local requirements for access. The area of impervious pavement should be minimized to reduce environmental impacts such as surface storm water run-off.

**Streetscape and Open Space**

Locate benches near a major intersection where people tend to gather.

This perspective sketch communicates the intended character and quality of a proposed streetscape design.

Seating and lighting provide comfort and safety for pedestrians in this retail plaza. Planters and shade trees add life and color.

This pocket park attracts pedestrians with its colorful plantings and intimate areas which are shaded by an arbor and trees.
STREETSCAPE

- **Rights-of-Way**: Landscape located within a right-of-way should be arranged in an organized fashion suited to the linear and generally limited available space. Planting patterns should be in keeping and in scale with the surrounding architectural and street character.

- **Public Plazas**: Public plazas should incorporate planting areas for shade trees, flowering ornamentals, and low shrub and ground cover plantings to provide texture and permeable areas.

- **Front Yards**: Within an urban environment, front yard landscapes are limited in size and therefore should involve low plantings with a garden or courtyard appearance.

- **Planting Areas**: Urban planting areas should incorporate shade trees protected by structural tree enclosures such as decorative fencing, curbs, or tree grates, especially in areas of heavy pedestrian traffic. Ground cover, low plantings, and gravel or mulch under trees should take the place of lawn.

- **Medians**: Landscaping in urban medians should include shade or flowering trees and low shrubs and ground cover if an adequate water and drainage system can be provided. Branches that extend beyond the curb into the median should be pruned 13’ above the pavement to avoid conflicts with vehicles.

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Street trees in planting areas combined with parallel parking provide a safer and more comfortable environment for pedestrians.

Medians and planting areas can be used to designate different zones of activity.

Brick paving, light poles, planted tree boxes and planters, and cafe furniture create an inviting place for people to shop on this mixed-use street in Norfolk, Virginia.
SITE FURNITURE

• **Location:** Street furniture should be provided wherever there is pedestrian traffic as it enhances the aesthetics, comfort, and safety of the pedestrian environment. In an urban area, it is commonly located within the sidewalk’s curb zone, near transit stops and building entrances, and at intersections where pedestrians are waiting to cross.

• **Type:** Bike racks, benches, trash receptacles, newspaper racks, bollards, transit stop shelters, and streetscape amenities like chairs, tables, planters, and displays.

• **Materials:** Site furniture selected for mixed-use and infill developments in the Urban Overlay District should be compatible with traditional and historic design features of both existing site furnishings and surrounding architecture. For newly established areas, a consistent furniture style should be provided.

• **Placement:** Trash receptacles, bike racks, newspaper boxes, transit stops, and bollards should be located in the curb zone while benches and other streetscape amenities like cafe tables and planters can be located in the building zone. A cluttered look should be avoided. Spacing of these elements varies with design intent, but all elements combined should provide a harmonious balance of space that results in a comfortable, convenient, safe, and aesthetically pleasing pedestrian environment.

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Cafe style seating and benches, shaded by street trees allow pedestrians ample seating in this small plaza.

Use planters to introduce seasonal color and locate them near benches to invite people to gather and linger outdoors.

The style and materials of site furniture should be consistent within a neighborhood to establish a strong local identity.
**Pedestrian Paths**

- **Location:** Pedestrian walkways safely interconnect pedestrian traffic with parking, open space, and buildings. Therefore, pedestrian walkways should be located wherever there is a strong pedestrian presence. Pedestrian linkages to potential transit stop locations and to the waterfront should also be established or maintained within the Urban Overlay District.

- **Type:** Types of pedestrian walkways in an urban environment range from quiet narrow residential paths to wide promenades, lively with crowds of pedestrians and accommodated by street furniture and other amenities.

- **Materials:** Safety and pedestrian comfort should be enhanced through the use of durable low maintenance surface materials such as brick, pavers, or scored concrete. Within the Urban Overlay District, colored and textured materials (in keeping with the historic or established new character of an area) should be used to draw attention to building entrances and areas of intense pedestrian activity, as well as street crossings and other pedestrian points of interest (such as transit stops).

- **Width:** Pavement widths, which may vary, are related to the adjacent land uses and their requirements to accommodate local pedestrian traffic and amenities such as planting areas, furniture, and signage.

- **Crosswalks:** Crosswalks should be provided at every intersection for safety purposes. Crosswalks should be ADA accessible, and have distinguishing paving characteristics and textures to draw the pedestrian’s and driver’s attention. Medians should act as a refuge zone for pedestrians.
VEHICULAR PARKING

- **Location:** Parking facilities should be located primarily to the side and rear of the buildings which they serve. Structured parking, on-street parking, and shared parking are encouraged as alternatives to surface parking lots. Refer to the architectural section in this document for structured parking guidance. Where the parking lot perimeter is adjacent to an abutting lot, landscaping strip at least 6 feet in width shall be located between the parking lot or any associated paved surfaces, and abutting property lines.

- **Type:** Parking surfaces should be broken into modules separated by planting areas, footpaths, seating areas, or other pedestrian-oriented features. Continuous internal pedestrian walkways should be provided. All focal points of pedestrian activity should be interconnected.

- **Materials:** While the common material for a parking surface is asphalt, concrete, or similar impervious surface, there are opportunities for incorporating permeable surfaces into parking lot design such as porous paving, bio-swale plantings, gravel, and lawn for overflow parking.

- **Size:** Parking facility sizes should meet the requirements of the building use, while the pavement area should be minimized.

This mixed-use retail street provides on-street parallel and diagonal parking. The comfortably wide sidewalk accommodates trees, lighting, signage, and benches as well as people exiting and entering their cars.

This structured parking garage entrance uses materials consistent with the adjacent building and pocket park in this Alexandria, Virginia, development.

Streetscape and Open Space

This site plan illustrates the location, organization, and landscape design for parking lots located to the sides and rear of buildings.

Where the parking lot perimeter is adjacent to an abutting lot, a landscaping strip at least 6 feet in width shall be located between the parking lot or any associated paved surfaces, and abutting property lines.
UTILITY PLACEMENT

- **Location**: Utility lines should be placed underground and separate from the tree planting zone wherever possible. Refer to the screening and fencing section of this document for guidance on screening above ground utility equipment.

- **Type**: Water, electric, gas, sanitary, storm water, and communications, and lines.

- **Easement**: Required easements for utilities should be observed when locating planting areas.

- **Capacity**: Redevelopment in certain areas of the City may require utility line upgrades to support increased densities.
COMMON AREA LANDSCAPING

- **Location:** Locations of common area landscaping in the Urban Overlay District can range from plazas and courtyards to landscaped gathering places along streets. Other urban locations for common area landscaping are community parks, neighborhood pocket parks, recreational facilities, and playgrounds.

- **Type:** Common area landscaping should always include trees for shade, a mixture of ornamental and evergreen trees, shrubs, and groundcover to add textural interest and variety, as well as to define and contrast gathering areas.

- **Size:** The size of planting masses in common areas should be in keeping with the scale of the surrounding existing or proposed buildings and pedestrian pathways. All building, pedestrian pathway, and common area landscaping elements combined should result in a harmonious

**LANDSCAPING**

**Definition and Purpose:** A landscaped open space system should allow pedestrians convenient access to parks, public gathering areas, recreation spaces, and natural areas. Landscaping should be prevalent within an integrated open space framework and should be used to provide connective elements while also relating to natural resources and enhancing the urban framework. Planting and selection of landscape materials should allow sight lines to remain open and clear, reducing opportunities for concealment. Existing vegetation and groves of mature trees should be retained wherever possible.

Greenways are systems of parks and open space which connect communities and contribute to the health of the environment. Greenways should incorporate preserves of natural resources, including mature trees. Greenways should improve access to waterfronts and recreational areas with pedestrian and bicycle paths and trails.

A landscaped open space system should allow pedestrians convenient access to parks, public gathering areas, recreation spaces, and natural areas.

The size of planting masses in common areas should be in keeping with the scale of adjacent buildings and pedestrian pathways.

This landscape provides a comfortable, safe, and aesthetically pleasing pedestrian environment. A railing separates the outdoor dining area from the busy street.

Locations of common area landscaping ranges from plazas and courtyards to landscaped gathering places along streets.
balance of space. This landscaping should provide for a comfortable, safe and aesthetically pleasing pedestrian environment.

- **Placement**: Placement of plants should be close together so that future health and growth of the plants will create massing and drifts of textures and heights which will result in a lush landscape. Plant spacing requirements are dependent upon species varieties and needs as well as design intent.

**STREET TREES**

- **Location**: Street trees should line all public and private streets where pedestrians will be present on a regular basis. The location of street trees, however, should avoid utility lines and easements above and below grade.

- **Type and Species**: Street tree species in urban environments should be selected for tolerance to polluted and drought conditions. Maintenance needs and potential for disease and pests should also be considered. Tree species in retail areas should also be chosen to accommodate owner requirements for retail signage and store window visibility. Retail trees should be limbed up over first floor signs and have an open leaf habit. Trees should be selected to encourage biodiversity.

- **Size**: Tree planters and pits should be at least 6’x8’ (or 3’x3’ minimum if approved by the City Arborist). As with planting areas, an effort should be made to design these as generous in size as possible. Street trees shall be planted in accordance with the city ordinance.

- **Spacing**: Street trees should be spaced approximately 25’ and no farther apart than 40’ on center in order to create shade and comfort. It is possible to space street trees as close as 12’ on center in an urban setting if conducive to the tree species and design intent.

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On retail streets, select trees with an upright and open growth habit. Professional pruning to limb up trees maintains visibility of retail signs and storefronts.

Street trees provide shade to create an inviting and comfortable environment for outdoor dining and window shopping.

Rows of street trees and hedges screen parking and create a safer environment for pedestrians.
SCREENING AND FENCING

- **Location:** Screening should be used to detract from service, utility, or other unattractive views.

- **Type:** Fences, walls, berms, plantings, or a combination of one or more of the above.

- **Materials:** Screening and fencing materials should be appropriate to the local context, compatible with the architecture, and attractive, durable, and easy to maintain. These materials include brick, metal, precast concrete, wood, recycled material, earthen berms, and planting. Black vinyl-coated chain link fence may be used in areas of low visibility.

- **Height:** Screening height should be in keeping and in scale with the surrounding architectural structures and dimensions of the area. All screening fences, walls, and hedges are subject to height limitations as determined by the City of Chesapeake. Current zoning regulations should be consulted.

- **Incorporate buffers such as walls, berms, and planting where new development property lines abut sensitive areas of parkland and residential neighborhoods.**
STORM WATER MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES

- **Purpose:** Innovative storm water management systems slow the velocity of water, reduce erosion, and filter pollutants. Some examples of innovative storm water management systems include bioswales, green roofs, and created wetlands.

- **Location:** Storm water management systems should provide connectivity of natural and man-made implementation techniques, and existing and proposed drainage systems.

- **Type:** Street trees and landscape plantings, permeable pavement, curbs, swales, detention basins, and street tree pits and planter strips.

- **Materials:** Traditional storm water management systems involve man-made materials such as culverts, piping, and drainage basins. Natural storm water management systems should utilize plant materials and drainage solutions to create a channel for water flow along a watershed.

- **Storm water retention and detention systems should be integrated within a development as landscape amenities, such as an entrance feature or as part of the natural setting. Storm water facilities should appear natural.**

This storm water pond with extensive shoreline planting filters runoff and creates an aesthetically pleasing place for people.
Signage

An integrated, coordinated signage system at both pedestrian and vehicular scales will contribute to the overall image of the community, bringing clear directions and information to pedestrians and drivers alike. These design guidelines outline the following elements of a successful signage system: Programming Messages, Materials, Type Faces, and Hierarchy of Sign Types.

• **Programming Messages**: Use light text on dark backgrounds for readability and for reflective text on roadway signage. At a maximum, six messages can be comprehended by drivers in a moving vehicle while pedestrian signs can accommodate more messages, since users can linger and read. In both cases, destinations should be listed in the order that they will be encountered.

• **Materials**: Coordinate color and material selection to complement the overall development.

• **Type Faces**: Type faces should be consistent throughout the development and selected based on readability and style.

The text used on all signage should be clear and concise, with lettering that stands out from the background colors.

A city-wide system of signs and site furnishings contributes to the community sense of identity.

Well designed, user friendly signs become familiar identifiers and markers, such as this stop on a local public transportation network.

Signage can promote tourism and community pride with information about the city’s cultural heritage and historic sites.
Hierarchy of Sign Types: Signs within a sign hierarchy system should be unobtrusive in size and color and should complement the character of the architecture. This hierarchy of elements is to be developed as part of an overall sequence. Signs of similar hierarchical rank should be consistent and uniform and appropriate in size to their purpose. The sequence should begin upon entering the development and follows with drop-off and parking locations, and then on to specific building, office, or tourist destinations. Where possible, signage should be presented in groupings in order to minimize individual free standing or pole signs. It is important to provide information in small amounts and with brevity, the fewest possible words, and a clear message. For a more in-depth explanation of signage regulations within the City of Chesapeake, see section 14-700 of the Zoning Ordinance.
Lighting should be designed as a coordinated system that is attractive, energy efficient, cost effective, and easy to maintain. Lighting should be a key element in promoting safe and efficient pedestrian and vehicular travel. It should also be considered as part of the family of site furnishings that is complementary to the architectural character of the development. Lighting can also serve as gateway elements and intersection markers on suburban streets.

Road hierarchy also determines the overall size, selection, and organization of lighting.

- **Location:** Three basic types of lighting should be provided within a development: street lighting, pedestrian lighting, and building mounted lighting.

- **Type:** Selected lighting should blend with surrounding architectural styles to be complementary, while also being coordinated with street trees. The Director of Public Works should be involved in the preliminary plan approval process in order to make provisions for light fixtures that require higher maintenance than City standard streetlights. Lighting types should be selected to provide ambience to the overall streetscape, while minimizing night pollution and glare.

- **Size:** The height should be proportional to surrounding structures and in no case should exceed 35’.

Typical Street Lighting Height: 18’.

Typical Pedestrian Lighting Height: 12’.
Well-designed buildings organized within a strong site plan and combined with an attractive landscape and streetscape design are necessary to create a vibrant environment in which to live, work, and play. A development of new buildings should present a consistent and distinctive overall identity. Architectural design should express the unity of the mixed-use and infill development and articulate the variety of uses and their functions.

Locate buildings in an orderly arrangement with human scale elements visible both from a distance and at street level. Relate the buildings through similar and compatible architectural features including building massing, rooflines, and palette of materials, finishes and colors.

Architectural design of infill development should express the unity of the mixed-use or infill development and the variety of uses and their functions.

COMPATIBILITY WITH CONTEXT

Building form and design of new buildings and additions to existing buildings should be compatible with buildings on adjacent property and respect visual and historic characteristics of the area.
Architecture

BUILDING HEIGHT

In accordance with the zoning ordinance, building height is the vertical distance measured from the level of the curb or the established curb grade opposite the middle of the front of the structure to the highest point of the roof if a flat roof; to the deck line of a mansard roof; to the mean height level between the eaves and ridge of a gable, hip or gambrel roof; or to the highest point of any other structure. For buildings set back from the street line, the height shall be measured from the average elevation of the ground surface along the front of the building.

**Low-rise building:** Maximum 35 feet in height measured above the ground plane or 3 floors.

**Mid-rise building:** Maximum 75 feet in height measured above the ground plane or 6 floors.

**High-rise building:** High-rise buildings above 75 feet may be allowed within a planned unit development (PUD) or with the approval of a conditional use permit by City Council. For high-rise buildings, setbacks of upper levels should be considered to provide light, air, and views at street level.

There should be a transition in building height to minimize negative impacts of tall buildings on adjacent streets, open spaces, and buildings that are lower in height. Rooftop embellishments such as cupolas and bell towers may be approved by the city council with the approval of the master development plan.

New buildings should be constructed to a height compatible with existing adjacent buildings. New buildings should be within 10 percent of the average height of existing buildings as seen from the street and publicly accessible areas. Abrupt and overwhelming variations in building height should not be allowed.

Rooftop embellishments such as cupolas and bell towers may be allowed as specified by zoning ordinance.

Buildings of varying height should be organized to create a visually distinctive, balanced, and memorable overall form.

Use compatible building heights and setbacks of upper floors to integrate new buildings with old.
BUILDING MASSING

Building massing—the building size, relationship of height to width, and overall shape of a building's volume—is influenced by the building's use, physical and legal site constraints (zoned height limitations and required setbacks), and existing adjacent buildings. Massing should express the building's function, respect the local context and scale of adjacent buildings, and contribute to a pedestrian-friendly environment. Massing should be compatible with the size, height, and shape of existing adjacent buildings as seen from the street and public areas and safeguard the provision of light, air, and views at street level. Where appropriate, building form should be compatible with existing adjacent buildings and reflect the prevailing local architecture.

Use consistent and/or complementary building materials.

Use horizontal expression lines to visually define the base, middle, and top and integrate perceptible human scale devices.

Step down to the street / step back from the build-to line with increasing heights.

Use building massing to define the street space, frame views, and establish gateways.

Buildings of varying height should be organized to create a visually distinctive, balanced, and memorable overall form when viewed from a distance.

Building massing should provide light, air, and views at street level. Organize buildings to control the impact of shadows and mitigate against the impact of wind.

Architecture

These buildings present a unified form when viewed from a distance.

Building corners may be articulated with balconies and distinctive roof forms, materials, colors, and signage.

Use building massing to define the street space, frame views, and establish gateways.
LOCATION AND ORIENTATION

The location and orientation of a new building should reinforce the existing rhythm and orientation of buildings and the spaces between them.

BUILD-TO LINES

Build-to lines should be established to define the pedestrian environment at street level, provide buildings with greater presence on the street, and provide adequate sidewalk space for pedestrian circulation and development of a streetscape that is appropriate to the building uses. The placement of a new building should reinforce the prevailing average setbacks of adjacent buildings and should be similar to prevailing side, rear, and topographic conditions.

BUILDING FACADES

Building façades should be composed to relate all of the parts (wall, doors, windows) to provide variety and interest, relate comfortably to human scale, and create a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Façades should be organized by horizontal expression lines incorporated between the base, middle, and top of the façade. Façades should be articulated by the spacing of openings, expression of structure, and surface relief such as projecting bays and pilasters. The selection of materials, finish, and color should reinforce the composition.

Buildings fronting on more than one street should address the streets with a consistent façade treatment. Building corners should be articulated. The street level façade should be the primary orientation and access for pedestrians and provide continuity of visual interest. The street level use at commercial street corners should be non-residential. Building exteriors visible to a public right-of-way or any property zoned or used for residential purposes should be consistent in architectural
quality, materials, appearance, and detail to any other exterior of the same building. The rhythm of windows, doors, porches, or other projections should present a pleasing pattern and should vary along the street block to avoid a monotonous and uninteresting appearance.

Façades of new buildings located adjacent to existing buildings should relate to the pattern of existing façades and contribute to a consistent rhythm and continuity of features along the street. On streets where the majority of existing buildings have front porches, incorporation of porches in a new building should be considered as a compatible design feature to reinforce the prevailing architectural character and façade treatment.

The directional expression of façades of new buildings, generally determined by the building structure and height, the placement and proportion of openings, and architectural detailing should be compatible with existing adjacent buildings, whether that expression be vertical, horizontal, or non-directional. The proportion, or ratio of width to height, of a new building’s windows and doors should relate to the proportions of openings of existing adjacent buildings visible from the street and public areas. The pattern of solids and voids, of wall surfaces and the openings between them, and the proportion of openings to

wall surface should be compatible with existing adjacent buildings.

Doors and windows should be spaced to create a pleasing pattern. Classical proportions should be followed to guide the design of fenestration. At least 60-percent of the street level façade should be glazed area (i.e., windows and doors). Main entrances should be clearly identifiable. Retail, restaurant, and business entrances should be on the street level to encourage pedestrian activity. Service entrances and loading docks should be located on side or rear façades and appropriately screened or located behind roll-down doors.
Architecture

FAÇADE ARTICULATION

Architectural detail affects the play of light and shadow on a building façade, articulates the pedestrian environment at street level, and defines the skyline. Such details may include lintels, cornices, arches, chimneys, porches, overhanging roof eaves and other projections, and ironwork. Ground level façades should have the greatest level of detail where it is most visible to the pedestrian. Wall plane projections or recesses should be incorporated to modulate façades greater than 100 feet in length measured horizontally and visible to a public right-of-way or any property zoned or used for residential purposes.

LOWER LEVEL FACADES

Ground floor façades should have the greatest level of detail where it is most visible to the pedestrian. Provide the maximum amount of glazing at the ground and second floor levels. At a minimum, ground floor façades should be transparent between the heights of three feet and eight feet above the public walkway for no less than 60 percent of the horizontal length of the building façade. Ground floor façades facing public streets should incorporate a variety of the following features: recesses or projections, overhangs, articulated roof forms, raised corniced parapets, arcades, arches, display windows, parapets over entrances, awnings, and/or integrated landscaping such as planters or seat walls.

BUILDING ENTRANCES

All sides of a principal building that directly face an abutting street should feature at least one entrance. Where the principal building directly faces more than two abutting streets, this requirement should apply only to two sides of the building, including the side of the building facing the primary street and another side of the building facing a second street. Entryway design elements and variations are encouraged. Each principal building on a site should have clearly defined and highly visible entrances featuring not less than three
Awnings and canopies should be of a design, material, form, construction, and color appropriate to the architectural style and function of the building.

AWNINGS AND CANOPIES

Awnings and canopies shade windows and doors and provide cover for the pedestrian and outdoor seating and dining areas. Awnings and canopies should be of a design, material, form, construction, and color appropriate to the architectural style and function of the building and visually integrated and in harmony with other buildings and sites in the district.

BUILDING CORNERS

Building corners located at street corners may be articulated with chamfered or curved walls, vertical elements such as towers and cupolas, or bay windows.

MATERIALS AND FINISHES

Materials should be high quality, attractive, and durable. Primary materials should be brick veneer, natural stone, architectural metal, architectural precast, cementitious siding, stucco or stucco-like materials such as EIFS, wood clapboard, wood shingles, board and batten wood siding, smooth-face synthetic siding such as Hardiplank, or glass. Where permitted, synthetic siding to simulate clapboard siding may be used. Textured or “wood grained” siding is discouraged. Use of alternative materials to the above listed preferred materials is subject to approval by the Planning Director. The selection of materials and textures for a new building should relate to the materials and textures used in the surrounding area and on existing adjacent buildings. In areas where strong continuity of materials and textures is a factor, the continued use of those materials should be strongly considered. Trim should not exceed 2 inches in actual thickness, be at

Each principal building on a site should have clearly defined and highly visible entrances.

Entryway design elements and variations are encouraged.
Building corners provide opportunities to create community icons, such as bell towers, projecting bay windows, and porches

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least 6 inches in width at corners and at least 4 inches in width around openings.

COLOR

The selection of colors for a new building should relate to the use of color in the surrounding area and on existing adjacent buildings. In areas where strong continuity of color is present, the continued use of existing colors should be considered. Exterior color should be low reflectance; the use of high intensity, metallic, black, or fluorescent colors is discouraged. Exterior colors should be subtle, neutral, or natural tones; bright colors should be used only as accents. Mortar and caulking colors should be compatible with the predominant material.

ROOFS AND ROOFLINES

Roofs should provide visual interest and become positive additions to the skyline. Roofs may vary from flat to sloping. Use of similar roof forms will create a more unified and cohesive development. Roof forms and heights should be appropriate to the architectural style of the development. Varying roof forms and heights to create an interesting skyline should be considered. The visual impact of roofs, roof overhangs, and parapets on adjacent open space, streetscape, and other buildings should be considered.

Roofs should be gable, hip, gambrel, or a combination, or flat if concealed from view by a parapet. Gable roof ends should have a minimum roof overhang of 12 inches. The roofs of new buildings visible from the street and public areas should relate in shape, pitch, and materials to the roofs of existing adjacent buildings. Overhanging eaves should extend no less than 3 feet past the supporting wall for no less than 30 percent of the building perimeter. Sloping roofs should not exceed the average height of the supporting wall, with an average slope greater than or equal to 1 foot of vertical rise for every 3 feet of horizontal run and less than or equal to 1 foot of vertical rise for every 1 foot of horizontal run. The average height of parapets should not exceed 15 percent of the height of the supporting...
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wall and should not exceed at any point one-third of the height of the supporting wall. Parapets should feature three dimensional cornices to provide visual interest and shadow lines, and should not be of a constant height for a distance greater than 150 feet. Dormers, cupolas, and other rooftop elements are encouraged to create interest, introduce human scale, and relieve building mass. The roofscape defined by the roofline of a building or buildings should be an integral part of the design with respect to form, material, and color. Sloped roof materials should be wood, tin, slate, terra cotta, standing seam metal, or dimensional fiberglass shingles. Porches and bay windows should have metal roofing. Roof penetrations should be on the rear slope of roofs and painted to match the color of the roof. Skylights should not be visible from any public area.

ROOFTOP EQUIPMENT

Rooftop mechanical units, flues, vents, or any other equipment should be organized and screened from views, including from adjacent buildings. Accessible rooftops and green roofs are encouraged.

Above are illustrations of a variety of roofs within a community with a mix of residential types.

The central clock tower is a community icon on the pedestrian plaza. In contrast, note the flat parapet on the roof flanking the tower.

Rooftop overhangs, towers, and cupolas create a varied and interesting skyline adjacent to this public waterfront.
Lighting

Building-mounted lighting should be designed as an integral part of the architecture and should not direct or reflect illumination on adjacent properties.

Parking Structures

Parking structures provide convenient and sheltered parking adjacent to the uses that they support. When the cost to build parking structures is justified by the density of the development and site constraints, the design of the structures should be designed to integrate well with the adjacent buildings. Structured parking may be accommodated in garages within buildings or in free-standing parking decks. Visible façades should be treated with materials, colors, finishes, and signage consistent with the overall quality and character of the development.

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In this mixed-use and infill development in Alexandria, Virginia, the ground floor parking garage is located beneath the apartment buildings and behind the retail/office buildings (left).

The pavilion marks the entrance to additional shops as well as both surface and structured parking located behind this retail street in Shirlington, Virginia.

In this office and retail complex in Alexandria, Virginia, retail parking is accommodated beneath a motor court.

This two-level parking deck is located behind the retail shops with offices and apartments on the upper floors.