

# I. Introduction



## Introduction

“Chesapeake is a combination of an old county, a city, and many villages and settlements.”

“In Chesapeake, natural landforms and the location of waterways have always influenced the pattern of settlement and development and continue to do so today.”

“The City is very diverse in terms of its land use patterns. ...urban, suburban, or rural in nature, the City exhibits all three.”

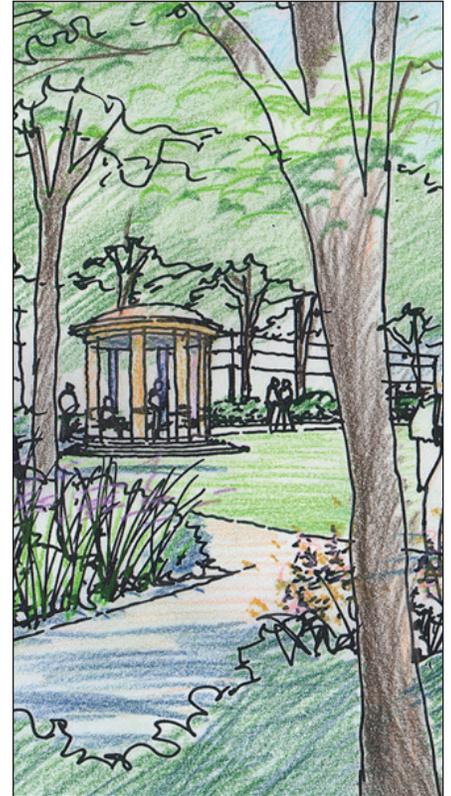
- 2026 Comprehensive Plan

This design guidelines manual has been created to guide future development and redevelopment in Chesapeake, in accordance with the City’s 2026 Comprehensive Plan. The manual provides guidelines that are specific to mixed-use development, infill development, design of gateways and rural areas. These guidelines differ based on whether the development or redevelopment would occur in the City’s Urban, Suburban, or Rural Overlay District.

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.

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.



**Executive Summary**

The Design Guidelines Manual has been created to guide future development and redevelopment in Chesapeake, in accordance with the City’s 2026 Comprehensive Plan. The manual provides guidance on site planning, streetscape design, architecture, and landscape design associated with mixed-use development, infill development, and gateway design in the City of Chesapeake’s Urban and Suburban, overlay districts. A chapter on the Rural Overlay District is included to protect the character of the City’s rural areas.

The manual contains information for land owners, developers, architects, landscape architects, engineers, and

city staff builders on the physical forms that should contribute to making the City a vibrant and desirable place to live, work, and play consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The manual provides a design framework and communicates the “ground rules” to facilitate discussions with the City about proposed development plans, provides a check list on conformance with the design guidelines during the plan review process, and is a road map to the plan approvals process.

Issues addressed in the manual include land use and building density, neighborhood framework design (grid or curvilinear), site planning (build to lines,

building siting, and parking accommodation), streetscape and open space design (landscape, street furniture, and public art), architecture (building height and massing, materials, facade design, and rooflines), and the location and design of signage and lighting.

The manual provides guidelines that are specific to mixed-use development, infill development, and the design of gateways.

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.

## Executive Summary

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.

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).

Gateways provide a unique sense of identity, transition, and anticipation. They should relate to the region's natural resources, scenic views, and local cultural heritage. Gateways identify entrance points to the city and key destinations as well as its neighborhoods. Several opportunities for gate-

## Executive Summary

ways exist in the City of Chesapeake. Gateways may have a variety of configurations and scales. From regional to community to the neighborhood scale, gateways can be created through a variety of styles, including architectural, monumental, or landscape.

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 plan-

ning, phasing, the economic climate, and construction costs.

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.

These guidelines differ based on whether the development or redevelopment would occur in the City’s Urban, Suburban, or Rural 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.

The Suburban Overlay District, largely consisting of more recent development that includes single-family neighborhoods, shopping centers, and business parks, is primarily comprised of Western Branch, Deep Creek, Great Bridge, Edinburgh, and the Etheridge Manor area.

## Executive Summary

The Rural Overlay District lies south of the city's urban service boundary and has been historically agricultural in nature. This district also contains the Northwest River, a major drinking water supply for the city, as well as U. S. Naval Air Landing Field (NALF) Fentress. The 2026 Comprehensive Plan envisions this district as an area of preserved farmland, natural areas, and small-scale rural communities and compatible employment uses. These guidelines address appropriate development within the rural overlay district.

Features essential to preservation of the rural character of the City of Chesapeake include distant views of

the countryside, topography, natural drainage patterns, country roads, open space including agricultural fields and pastures, fences and hedgerows, barns and other farm buildings. Preservation of agriculture as a continual economic activity is different from the retention of the visual character of agriculture.

The purpose of the Rural Overlay District is to preserve Chesapeake's rural character and to provide a regulatory mechanism through which development can occur with minimal environmental impact. Toward this goal, the City of Chesapeake encourages creative development techniques and flexibility not generally found in conventional subdivision ordinances.

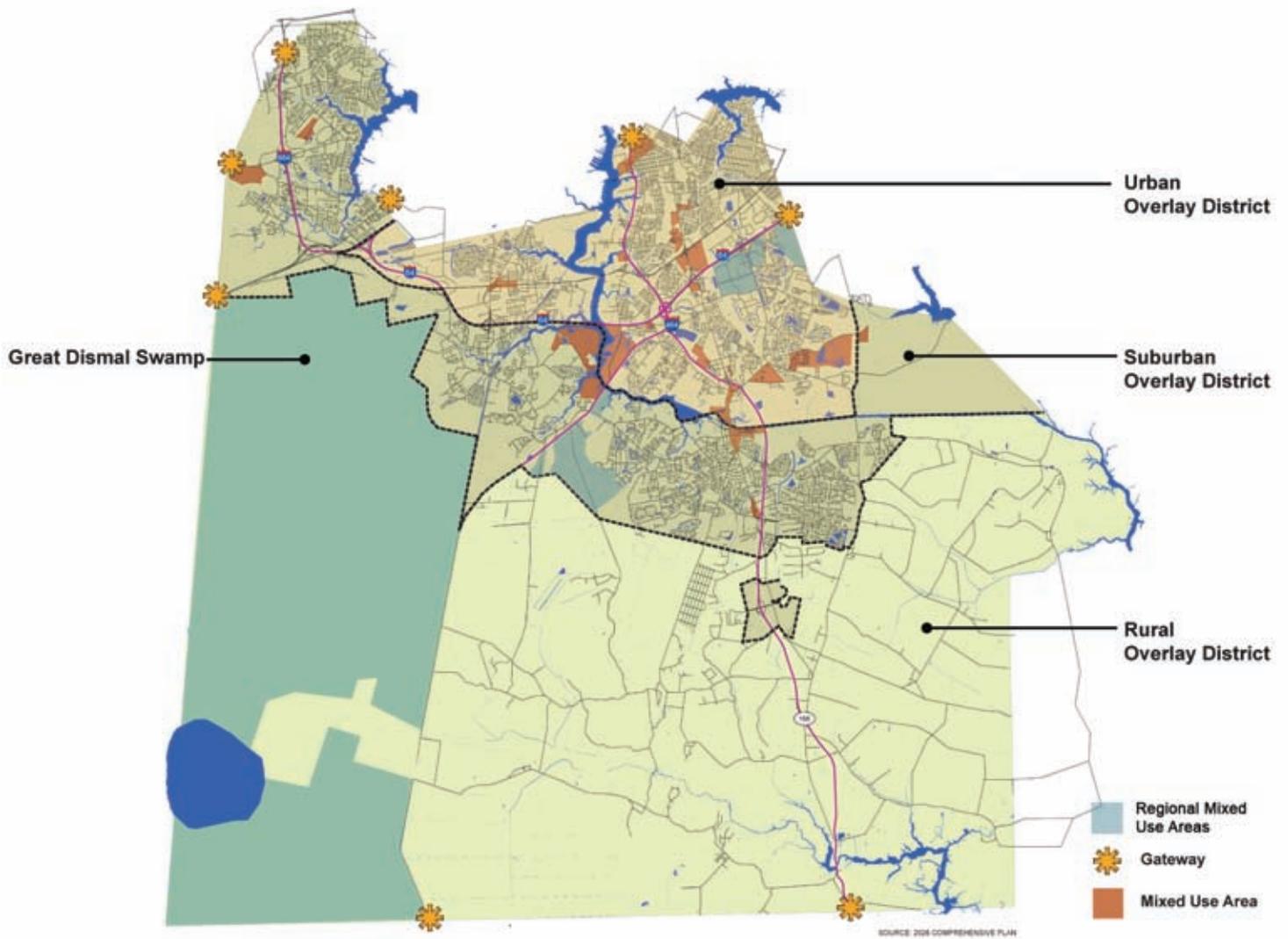
The manual includes guidelines for incorporation of artwork in public space. The intention of public art is to provide visitors and residents of the city of Chesapeake with a visual landmark, large or small, that inspires a sense of identity, pride and creativity.

Like gateways, public art may have a variety of configurations and scales, although it should be sensitive to the human scale. Public art can be placed in a variety of places, on a variety of surfaces, and composed of a variety of materials. It should be consistent and coordinated with surrounding architectural features, street furniture, and events.



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## Three Overlay Districts

### URBAN OVERLAY DISTRICT

The Urban Overlay District, 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.

### SUBURBAN OVERLAY DISTRICT

- The Suburban Overlay District includes single-family neighborhoods, shopping centers and business parks in areas such as Western Branch, Deep Creek, Great Bridge, Edinburgh, and the Etheridge Manor area.

Edinburgh, and the Etheridge Manor area.

### RURAL OVERLAY DISTRICT

- The Rural Overlay District lies south of the City's urban service boundary and has been historically agricultural in nature. This district also contains the Northwest River, a major drinking water supply for the City, as well as Naval Air Landing Field (NALF) Fentress. The Comprehensive Plan envisions this district as an area of preserved farmland, natural areas, and small-scale rural communities.

### GATEWAYS

The Comprehensive Plan envisions distinctive gateways at the City's key entry points. According to the Plan, "the quality of Chesapeake's gateways, edges, and main transportation corridors leaves an important impression on visitors and residents alike." Enhanced gateways provide an opportunity to, "strengthen Chesapeake's image and identity."

### PUBLIC ART

Guidelines for incorporating public art in community open spaces are provided in Chapter VI.



## Purpose of the Manual

This Design Guidelines Manual provides guidance on site planning, streetscape design, architecture, and landscape design associated with mixed-use development, infill development, and gateway design in the City of Chesapeake’s Urban and Suburban overlay districts. Rural character guidelines are included for the Rural overlay district.

The manual contains information for land owners, developers, builders, architects, engineers, and city staff on the physical forms that should contribute to making the City a vibrant and desirable place to live, work, and

play consistent with the goals of the 2026 Comprehensive Plan.

The manual provides a design framework and communicates the “ground rules” to facilitate discussions with the City about proposed development plans, provides a check list on conformance with the design guidelines during the plan review process, and is a road map to the plan approvals process.

Issues addressed in the manual include land use and building density, neighborhood framework design (grid or curvilinear), site planning (build to lines, building siting, and parking accommodation), streetscape and open space

design (landscape, street furniture, and public art), architecture (building height and massing, materials, facade design, and rooflines), and the location and design of signage and lighting.

These guidelines represent policy only. To the extent that any provision in these guidelines conflicts with the Chesapeake City Code or the Chesapeake Zoning Ordinance, such conflicting guidelines shall be considered aspirational only. In every case of conflict or inconsistency, the provisions in the City Code and Zoning Ordinance shall control.

CITY OF CHESAPEAKE, VIRGINIA

# Chesapeake Design Guidelines

## Visual Preference Survey

March 28 – April 24, 2006

- Rank what you like most about living in Chesapeake.
- Rank each photo of residential architecture.
- Rank each photo of a place to go shopping.
- Rank each photo of a new house which might be built in South Norfolk.
- Rank each photo of a new single family residential neighborhood.
- Rank each photo of a townhouse neighborhood.
- Rank each photo of an apartment or condominium neighborhood.
- Rank each photo of a walkable community where people can live, work, and play.
- Rank each photo of a residential parking location.
- Rank each photo of parking near shops.
- Rank each photo of leisure time activity outdoors.
- Rank each photo of screening method.
- Rank each photo of street lighting on a main street.
- Rank each photo of a roadside commercial sign.
- Rank each photo of painting on a residential street.
- Rank each photo of a public sidewalk.
- Rank each photo of a town center development.
- Rank each photo of a drainage feature.
- Rank each photo of a new park.
- Rank each photo of a gateway to Chesapeake when entering the city from one of the adjacent cities: Suffolk, Portsmouth, Norfolk, or Virginia Beach.
- Rank each photo of a gateway to Chesapeake when entering the city from North Carolina.

The City of Chesapeake is issuing a Design Guidelines Manual to help inform and guide development in the City. The Manual is a key component of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the Manual is to provide guidance and direction to the City for the review of proposed structures, site amenities, landscaping, and streetscape improvements. Guidelines provide a design context for site planning, building design, and landscape plans. They are intended to provide flexibility to allow for individual diversity but at the same time provide a comprehensive framework to promote a unique and identifiable character for the City and its neighborhoods. Design inspiration should be drawn from the local geography, climate, vegetation, history, and the City's social and cultural patterns. As the City continues to thrive and grow, future development and redevelopment should be appropriate to Chesapeake's history, culture, and natural setting.

You can also pick up copies of the survey at all Chesapeake Public Libraries and the Chesapeake Planning Department located in City Hall.

What are we looking for? We need your input for the Manual - send a letter back to us, call us, or email us. Thank you for your input!

You can access the survey on line at [www.cityofchesapeake.net](http://www.cityofchesapeake.net)

EDAW

CITY OF CHESAPEAKE, VIRGINIA

# Chesapeake Design Guidelines

## Visual Preference Survey

March 28 – April 24, 2006

*"Chesapeake is a combination of an old county, a city, and many villages and settlements."*

*"In Chesapeake, natural landforms and the location of waterways have always influenced the pattern of settlement and development and continue to do so today."*

*"The City is very diverse in terms of its land use patterns... urban, suburban, or rural in nature, the City exhibits all three."*

### Why Design Guidelines?

Design guidelines provide a consistent framework for high quality development and redevelopment within the City of Chesapeake. Chesapeake is a city composed of villages, neighborhoods, and districts that often have distinct settings and separate design characters. By emphasizing quality in the design of the built environment, these disparate places can be enhanced and harmonized with the look of the City as a whole.

Chesapeake's 2026 Comprehensive Plan contains a goal to create a distinctive and high quality design for the City in order to strengthen the city's economic base and long term desirability as a place to live, work, and play. To best reflect the City's development pattern, the Comprehensive Plan establishes three character districts: Urban, Suburban, and Rural. Given the unique character of each of these districts, the Comprehensive Plan calls for the City to develop distinct design guidelines for the mixed use and infill areas within each of the districts.

In addition to the three character districts, the Comprehensive Plan calls for the establishment of distinctive gateways at key entry points into the City. The quality of Chesapeake's gateways, edges, and main transportation corridors leaves an important impression on visitors and residents alike. The current sameness and lack of visual distinctiveness to much of the City's gateways and corridors presents a key opportunity to strengthen Chesapeake's image and identity.

The Design Guidelines project will establish the design principles and standards in a cohesive manual to give guidance and direction to the City for the review of proposed structures, site amenities, landscaping, and streetscape improvements. Guidelines provide a design context for site planning, building design, and landscape plans. They are intended to provide flexibility to allow for individual diversity but at the same time provide a comprehensive framework to promote a unique and identifiable character for the City and its neighborhoods. Design inspiration should be drawn from the local geography, climate, vegetation, history, and the City's social and cultural patterns. As the City continues to thrive and grow, future development and redevelopment should be appropriate to Chesapeake's history, culture, and natural setting.

EDAW

## Development of the Manual

This Design Guidelines Manual was developed through a collaborative process led by the City of Chesapeake Planning Department and EDWA. EDWA reviewed existing documents, reports, and studies, including the 2026 Comprehensive Plan and specific area plans including the Transportation Corridor Overlay District, Historic and Cultural Preservation Overlay District Design Guidelines for South Norfolk, South Military Highway Corridor Study, Western Branch Study, Poindexter Corridor Strategic Plan and Design Guidelines, Great Bridge Village Master Plan, and the Zoning Ordinance.

Public participation was key to the development of the guidelines. Public agencies, the two city council liaisons with the Planning Department, local residents, and community representatives participated in the process. Stakeholder interviews were conducted by EDWA with both public agency officials and representatives of the business community. On March 28, 2006, a community open house was held at the Central Library to introduce the project and the Visual Preference Survey to citizens. Following the meeting, the survey was conducted over a period of four weeks, concluding on April 24, 2006 (see Appendix A).

The survey consisted of 23 questions and was made available on the City's web site and at listening stations located in City Hall and the six public libraries. A total of 460 citizens completed the survey. Images of open space, green areas, preservation of mature trees, consistent design, and quality development were themes that emerged. The survey results and the draft outline of this manual were presented at a second community open house held on June 8, 2006, at the Indian River Library. The presentation was also posted on the city's website.

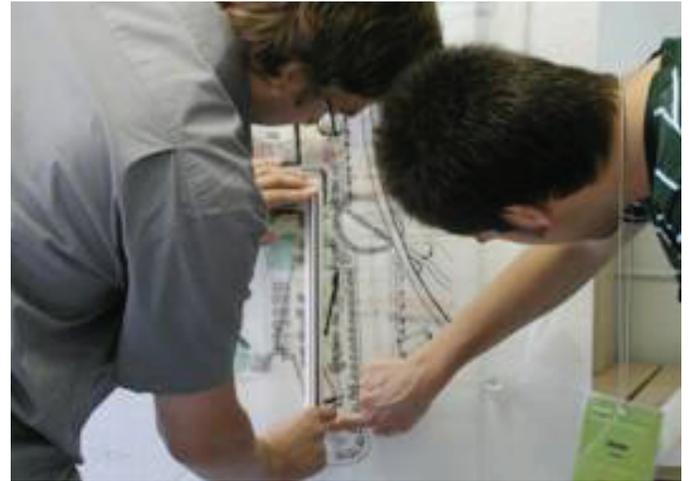


## Development of the Manual

Based on the results of the survey and input from City staff, EDAW developed an Initial Draft and Final Draft of the proposed guidelines for review and comment. The public was invited to provide comment via the City's web site. Advertisements were published in the Chesapeake Clipper describing how the public could review the document and provide comment.

A second Stakeholder Workshop was held on January 12, 2007. This all-day workshop allowed City staff, the business community, and neighborhood representatives to review the draft document and provide comment.

Based on this input offered by the community and stakeholders, EDAW refined the guidelines. Planning Commission and City Council work sessions were scheduled for March 28, 2007, and April 10, 2007, respectively, to consider possible adoption of the manual as an amendment to the 2026 Comprehensive Plan. Planning Commission and City Council public hearings on amendments were scheduled for April 11, 2007, and May 15, 2007, respectively. The City Council adopted the guidelines as an amendment to the City's 2026 Comprehensive Plan on May 15, 2007.



## How to Use the Manual

The users of this manual are both private sector individuals and groups and public agencies. The private sector should reference the document throughout the process of planning new developments. City Planning staff should use the design guidelines as a checklist of City objectives to facilitate the review of plans.

The manual is organized in chapters. Each chapter is identified by its own distinctive color bar on each page. Chapter II (orange) addresses mixed use and infill development in the Urban Overlay District. Chapter III (blue) addresses mixed use and infill development in the Suburban Overlay District. Chapter IV (green) addresses limited,

primarily residential development in the Rural Overlay District.

To use this manual, first determine where the proposed mixed-use or infill development is located according to the 2026 Comprehensive Plan boundaries. Consult Chapter V (red) if the project site is associated with one of the City's gateways. The following nine steps should then be followed in the preparation and review of development plans:

1. Understand the site context, both natural and manmade.
2. Create a site plan and consider several alternatives.

3. Establish a framework for circulation, buildings, and connections to greenways, waterways, and other open spaces..
4. Explore design alternatives for streetscape and open space systems.
5. Locate a signage and wayfinding system.
6. Design a lighting system inclusive of both vehicular and pedestrian lighting.
7. Prepare architectural plans and elevations.

Guidelines for the design of gateways are provided in Chapter V. Consider including public art as addressed in Chapter VI (magenta). The Site Design and Architectural Review Process is described in Chapter VII (yellow).

## Definitions

**Arcade:** A series of arches supported by columns or piers, a building or part of a building with a series of arches; a roofed passageway, especially one with shops on either side.

**Arch:** A curved or pointed opening in a wall, usually masonry, supported on either end by pillars and spanning a passageway or open space.

**Awning:** A retractable, roof-like shelter fitted over windows, doors, etc., to provide protection from the sun, rain and reduce heat gain through windows.

**Buffer:** An area of land, including landscaping, berms, walls, fences, and building setbacks, that is located between land uses of different character and is intended to mitigate negative impacts of the more intense use on a residential or vacant parcel.

**Building Massing:** The size, relationship of height to width, and overall form of the building.

**Build-To-Line:** A zoning device that controls the location of buildings to create consistent streetwalls, or define public spaces. Unlike a setback, which establishes a minimum distance from a prop-

erty line or street, a build-to-line establishes the maximum permitted setback or exact location of a building façade.

**Canopy:** The more or less continuous cover of branches and foliage formed collectively by the crown of adjacent trees.

**Circulation System:** A network of transit, automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian rights-of-way that connect origins and destinations.

**Common Area:** Shared community open space that may be public or private.

## Definitions

**Cornice:** In classical architecture, the upper projection of an entablature; an ornamental molding along the top of a building or wall.

**Cupola:** A dome-shaped roof on a circular base, often set on the ridge of a roof.

**Curb Zone:** The portion of the sidewalk corridor that physically separates the sidewalk from the roadway.

**Dormer:** A dormer is a window which is set vertically on a sloping roof. The dormer has its own roof, which may be flat, arched, or pointed.

**Eave:** Overhanging Roof Eaves: The overhang at the lower edge of a roof.

**Gable Roof:** The triangular portion of the end of a wall under a pitched roof.

**Gambrel Roof:** A pitched roof form where two flat roof surfaces joint at a straight ridge forming gables at both ends.

**Gateway:** An entrance corridor that heralds the approach of a new landscape and defines the arrival point as a destination.

**Greenway:** A system of parks (open space) that connects communities and contributes to the health of the environment.

**Hip Roof:** A roof with slopes on all four, instead of two sides.

**Horizontal mixed-use:** The arrangement of multiple uses on a site to create a complex of related buildings.

**Infill:** The utilization of vacant land in previously-developed areas for buildings, parking lots, recreational facilities, and other uses.

## Definitions

**Lintel:** A horizontal beam over an opening carrying the weight of the wall.

**Mixed-use:** 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 office, hotel, retail, public entertainment, and public uses, and a variety of housing types.

**Open Space:** Any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use for the purposes of (1) the preservation or restoration of natural resources, (2) the managed produc-

tion of resources, (3) outdoor recreation, or (4) public health and safety.

**Parapet:** A low wall that rises above a roof line, terrace, or porch.

**Pilaster:** A pier attached to a wall with a shouldow depth and sometimes treated as a classical column with a base, shaft, and capital.

**Planned Unit Development (PUD):** A description of a proposed unified development, consisting at a minimum of a map and adopted ordinance setting forth the regulations governing, and the location and phasing, of all proposed uses and

improvements to be included in the development.

**Portico:** A major porch usually with a pedimented roof supported by classical columns.

**Bay window:** A large window or series of windows projecting from the outer wall of a building.

**Revitalization:** The renewal of older commercial and residential areas through programs and actions that facilitate private and public investment.

## Definitions

**Rural:** A land use pattern characterized by sparsely developed areas where the land is primarily used for farming, forestry, resource extraction, very low density residential uses (e.g., one unit per three acres or more), or open space systems.

**Setback:** (1.) An architectural expedient in which the upper stories of a tall building are stepped back from the lower stories; in order to permit more light to reach the street level. (2.) The minimum distance by which any building or structure must be separated from a street right-of-way or lot line.

**Shared Parking:** A public or private parking area used jointly by two or more uses.

**Side Yard:** Yard between the side lot line or side street line and the nearest part of a main building (or its enclosed or covered projection).

**Site Furnishings:** Those features associated with a street that are intended to enhance that street's physical character and use by pedestrians, such as benches, trash receptacles, kiosks, lights, newspaper racks.

**Sight Line:** The line of sight from a given point, such as a driver's view from a roadway intersection.

**Site Plan:** The physical organization of a development on the ground plane; establishes the relationship between land uses and the circulation system that helps to create a vibrant and identifiable community.

**Sprawl:** Low-density land-use patterns that are automobile-dependent, energy and land consumptive, and require a very high ratio of road service to development served. The landscape created by sprawl generally has four dimensions: (1) a popu-

## Definitions

lation that is widely dispersed in low density development; (2) rigidly separated homes, shops, and workplaces; (3) a network of roads marked by huge blocks and poor access; and (4) a lack of well-defined, thriving activity centers. Features usually associated with sprawl are the results of these conditions.

**Streetscape:** The distinguishing character of a particular street as created by its width, degree of curvature, paving materials, design of the street furniture, and forms of surrounding buildings.

**Suburban:** Low- to medium-density development patterns that surround the urban areas of a city.

**Tree Pit:** A tree planting area located within a paved area.

**Urban:** Of, relating to, characteristic of, or constituting a city. Urban areas are generally characterized by moderate and higher density residential development (i.e., three or more dwelling units per acre), commercial development, and industrial development, and the availability of public services required for that development, specifically central water and sewer, an extensive road network, public

transit, and other such services (e.g., safety and emergency response).

**Vertical Mixed-use:** The provision of multiple uses within a building.

**Wing Wall:** An extension of a wall which projects out beyond the building itself.