

# **NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS PLAN**

## **Including:**

- **URBAN DEVELOPMENT AREAS**
- **REDEVELOPMENT AREAS**
- **PLANNED DEVELOPMENTS**
- **ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN**

**Stafford County Comprehensive Plan**

**STAFFORD COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

September 19, 2012



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Board of Supervisors Resolution R12-348  
Board of Supervisors Resolution R07-171

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*Neighborhood Development Standards Plan*  
*Stafford County Comprehensive Plan*

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF STAFFORD  
STAFFORD, VIRGINIA

RESOLUTION

At a regular meeting of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors (the Board) held in the Board Chambers, Stafford County Administration Center, Stafford, Virginia, on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2012:

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<u>MEMBERS:</u>	<u>VOTE:</u>
Susan B. Stimpson, Chairman	Yes
Cord A. Sterling, Vice Chairman	Yes
Jack R. Cavalier	Yes
Paul V. Milde III	Yes
Ty A. Schieber	Yes
Gary F. Snellings	Yes
Robert "Bob" Thomas, Jr.	Yes

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On motion of Mr. Milde, seconded by Mr. Sterling, which carried by a vote of 7 to 0, the following was adopted:

A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE STAFFORD COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15.2-2229 OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA (1950), AS AMENDED, BY ADOPTING THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS, AS ADVERTISED, TO THE TEXTUAL DOCUMENT ENTITLED, "TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN," DATED APRIL 18, 2007, RETITLING THE SECTION "NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN STANDARDS PLAN," DATED SEPTEMBER 19, 2012

WHEREAS, under Virginia Code § 15.2-2229, the Board may amend its Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, under Virginia Code § 15.2-2229, the Planning Commission ("Commission") was directed by the Board, pursuant to Resolution R12-68, to conduct a public hearing, and provide its recommendations to the Board on certain Comprehensive Plan amendments ("the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments"); and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Resolution R12-68, the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments propose, among other things, to amend the Traditional Neighborhood Development Plan (TND Plan), an element of the Comprehensive Plan, to include architectural design guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the Commission held a public hearing on October 24, 2012, on the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments; received a recommendation from County staff supporting approval of the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments; received and considered public testimony; and recommended approval of the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments by a vote of 7-0, and forwarded its recommendation to the Board; and

WHEREAS, the Board carefully considered the recommendations of the Planning Commission, staff, and the testimony, if any, at the public hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Board concludes that adoption of the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments, as advertised, will guide and accomplish a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development in the County, which will, in accordance with the present and probable future needs and resources of the County, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of the citizens of the County, including the elderly and persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Board concludes that adoption of the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments, as advertised, is consistent with good planning practices;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Stafford County Board of Supervisors on this the 4th day of December, 2012, that it be and hereby does approve and adopt the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments, dated September 19, 2012, as advertised.

A Copy, teste:



Anthony J. Romanello, ICMA-CM  
County Administrator

AJR:JAH:mz

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF STAFFORD  
STAFFORD, VIRGINIA

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Anthony J. Romanello, ICMA-CM  
County Administrator

AJR:JAH:mz

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Background**

The Stafford County Land Use Plan, a chapter of the County's Comprehensive Plan, provides goals and objectives for the future development of the County. The Plan recommends various land uses that include desired development densities and location criteria. Specifically, the Plan encourages a majority of future growth to occur inside the Urban Services Area in Suburban, Business and Industry, and Urban Development Areas. In these areas, the Plan recommends general criteria regarding use, location, and densities of this type of development.

As an Objective in the Plan, the County is encouraging an approach to land use planning that promotes the development or redevelopment of traditional style neighborhoods that are pedestrian friendly; includes a mix of uses, housing types, lot sizes and densities, and architectural variety; incorporates civic uses, and includes a network of streets and alleys that may include on street parking and defined development edges.

The purpose of this Urban Development Standards Plan is to provide more detailed guideline recommendations supporting this type of planned development in more compact urban areas as well as conventional suburban areas.

### **B. Planning Process**

On July 17, 2007, the Stafford County Board of Supervisors adopted Ordinance O07-171 which approved the Planned-Traditional Neighborhood Development Plan as a component of the Comprehensive Plan. The plan was developed by a Traditional Neighborhood Development subcommittee, consisting of the Chairman of the Planning Commission, Chairman of the Ordinance Committee, County Attorney's office, developers, civil engineers, land use attorneys and County staff members.

Since the adoption of the Traditional Neighborhood Development Plan, several Comprehensive Plan documents and ordinances were adopted to

further recommend and permit more compact, urban, and traditional forms of development. The “Comprehensive Plan 2010 – 2030” document recommends seven Urban Development Areas. The Implementation Plan, a chapter of the 2010 – 2030 Plan, recommends review and amendment of the TND Plan. The Redevelopment Plan, which applies to four areas of the County where Economic Development efforts are focused, encourages traditional neighborhood design principles. In addition to the P-TND zoning district, other zoning districts were approved with the same purpose of creating a traditional development pattern. These zoning districts include the RDA-1, Redevelopment Area 1 – Boswell’s Corner and UD, Urban Development. The recommendations in this Plan could apply to any of these areas. Staff began review and update to this document in the spring of 2012.

With the Comprehensive Plan recommending more compact development areas, a desire expressed by the Board of Supervisors was to establish design standards for future development. Design Guidelines are being incorporated into amendments to this Plan. To seek public input, during a two week period in the summer of 2012, staff conducted a Visual Preference Survey. The results of the survey helped to shape the recommendations.

### **C. Needs Assessment**

Stafford County has had a comparatively rapid growth rate. According to recent statistics, the County is one of the fastest growing localities in the Commonwealth. Without properly managing growth, the form of development may take on a sprawling pattern. Indicators of sprawling development include large lot sizes, generous setbacks of buildings from property lines, and separation of land uses. Standards for excessively wide roads and large parking areas widen the distances even further. Low density and spread-out building patterns limit opportunities for travel by walking or mass transit, forcing residents to rely on auto travel for an average of 12 auto trips per day for each household. While on average, sprawling development densities are low, this development pattern frequently contains higher density developments in the form of clustered single-family homes and townhouses. More often than not, these higher densities are scattered across the land. Each project stands alone without the ability to support transit and without the convenience

of nearby services. Living in “town-homes” without a town, residents experience urban densities without the advantage of urban living.

#### Traditional Neighborhood Development Defined

A method of managing growth could be obtained by implementing traditional neighborhood development, or traditional development. Traditional development is compact. It uses land efficiently. Streets are narrow. Buildings are clustered together and front closely on the street. Yard space is concentrated in deep back yards where it is most useable. Yet the density may be no more than that of a typical modern townhouse development.

In traditional development, homes of all types, shops, and workplaces intermingle, even within a building. This mixing of land uses and a pedestrian-friendly street environment encourages walking and bicycling. Densities also support transit service. The availability of transportation options reduces the demand for high-volume roads and parking.

Traditional development’s efficient use of land and reduced auto infrastructure pay off in a significant reduction in impervious surfaces. In a comparison of equivalent traditional development and sprawl development on the same size tracts, the traditional development occupied a third as much land, contained half as much impervious surface area, and yielded 43 percent less storm water runoff.

This Plan has been approved to provide guidelines for Traditional Neighborhood Development, by requiring the mixing of land uses and a pedestrian-friendly street environment, reduce impervious surface area and yield less storm water runoff.

### **D. Relationship to Other County Documents**

Stafford County’s Comprehensive Plan consists of the Comprehensive Plan 2010 – 2030 document “2010 – 2030 Plan”, several area management and strategic plans, and other related documents. The 2010 – 2030 Plan provides the goals, objectives and policies for the management of growth and development throughout the County. Area management and strategic plans outline more specific strategies for local planning areas and particular issues. The Traditional Development policies contained in this

Plan are a strategic plan consisting of objectives, policies and guidelines for the design of Traditional Neighborhood Development.

## **II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **A. Goals**

Stafford County recognizes the need to better manage growth and sprawl and develop objectives, policies and guidelines for the location and design of more compact urban development and the appearance of conventional development in more populated areas of the County.

### **B. Objectives**

1. To identify those areas within the County appropriate for Traditional Neighborhood Development.
2. To encourage the use of mixed types of land use and develop a pedestrian-friendly street environment.
3. To protect the cultural and environmental resources by allowing larger intensity of development within less sensitive areas.
4. To reduce the impervious area of a project, reducing the amount of storm water run-off.
5. To encourage the use of transit systems.
6. To promote the public health, welfare and safety within a Traditional Neighborhood Development.
7. To promote enhanced architectural design for commercial and residential development in more densely populated areas.

### **III. APPLICABILITY**

#### **Traditional Neighborhoods**

The recommendations in this Plan regarding traditional neighborhood development shall apply to new development or redevelopment within locations designated as an “Urban Development Area” or “Redevelopment Area” on the Future Land Use map in the Comprehensive Plan. This Plan’s recommendations may also apply to Planned Development projects that wish to incorporate traditional development design features within areas designated Suburban on the Future Land Use Map.

New development located within the applicable areas is encouraged to incorporate these guidelines in the layout and design.

#### **Architectural Design Guidelines**

The Architectural Design Guidelines in this Plan are recommended for any new residential and/or commercial development inside the Urban Services Area that requires a zoning reclassification.

#### **IV. TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN STANDARDS**

The purpose of this section of the Plan is to state the County' intent or policies toward the concept of Traditional Neighborhoods. The Policies address the Community level and the Block and Buildings level and Street Design. The Community pertains to the neighborhood or subdivision level. The Block and building includes the elements that make up our neighborhoods. The County should enable, encourage and qualify the implementation of the following policies:

##### **A. The Community**

1. That the "development" within a Traditional Neighborhood Development should be compact, pedestrian-oriented and mixed-use.
2. That Neighborhoods and Regional Centers should be the preferred pattern of development and that a district specializing in a single-use should be the exception.
3. That ordinary activities of daily living should occur within walking distance of most dwellings, allowing independence to those who do not drive.
4. That inter-connective network of thoroughfares should be designed to disperse and reduce the length of automobile trips.
5. That within the development, a range of housing types and price levels should be provided to accommodate diverse ages and incomes except for redevelopment or infill, whereas a limited range of housing types may be provided.
6. That appropriate building densities and land uses should be provided within walking distance of public transit stops.
7. That civic, institutional, and commercial activity should be embedded in a village or town center area and isolated in remote single-use complexes.
8. That when a school is part of the development, the school should be sized and located to enable children to walk or bicycle to them.
9. That a range of open space including parks, squares, and playgrounds should be distributed within the development.

##### **B. The Block and Building**

1. That buildings and landscaping should contribute to the physical definition of the thoroughfares as civic places.

2. That development should adequately accommodate automobiles while respecting the pedestrian and the spatial form of public space.
3. That the design of streets and buildings should reinforce safe environments, but not at the expense of accessibility.
4. That architecture and landscape design should grow from local climate, topography, history, and building practice.
5. That all buildings should provide their inhabitants with a clear sense of geography and climate through energy efficient methods.
6. That civic buildings and public gathering places should be provided in locations that reinforce community identity and support self-government.
7. That all civic buildings and uses should be distinctive and appropriate to a role more important than other buildings that constitute the fabric of the neighborhood.
8. That the preservation and renewal of historic buildings should be facilitated to affirm the continuity and evolution of society.
9. That the harmonious and orderly evolution of urban areas should be secured through graphic codes that serve as guides for change.

### **C. Street Design**

1. Intent  
Development within a Traditional Neighborhood shall use the narrowest width of streets permitted to present the traditional town center environment, reduce the speed of vehicles and encourage pedestrian access through developments. Traditional neighborhoods are recommended to incorporate the following type of street categories and associated guidelines.
2. Street Categories
  - (a) Primary street.
    - i. A street defined by VDOT as a primary street.
    - ii. Parallel and angled on-street parking is prohibited.
    - iii. Access from a lot is restricted.
    - iv. A primary street may bisect and/or may be adjacent to the development.
    - v. Sidewalks are required.
    - vi. Bicycle trail may be permitted if within the design standards for VDOT. If a bicycle trail is provided and is not within the

pavement of the travel lanes then a sidewalk will not be required.

- vii. Development within a traditional neighborhood is not required to be adjacent to a primary street.
- viii. Maximum speed limit determined by VDOT.

(b) Collector street.

- i. A street defines by VDOT as a collector street, major and minor.
- ii. A collector street may bisect and/or may be adjacent to a traditional neighborhood.
- iii. On-street parking is prohibited.
- iv. Access from a lot is limited to special commercial districts (or SD Transect Zones in the P-TND district) only, access from lots within all other transect zones are restricted.
- v. Sidewalks are required.
- vi. Bicycle trail may be permitted if within the design standards for VDOT. If a bicycle trail is provided and is not within the pavement of the travel lanes then a sidewalk will not be required.
- vii. Development in a traditional neighborhood is not required to be adjacent to a collector street.
- viii. Maximum speed limit determined by VDOT.

(c) Parkway.

- i. A parkway may be similar to a primary street as defined by VDOT.
- ii. A parkway is recommended for large traditional neighborhoods to connect various pedestrian sheds and communities.
- iii. A parkway shall have a minimum of four (4) driving lanes and a median.
- iv. On-street parallel parking is prohibited.
- v. There may be more than one parkway bisecting or adjacent to a traditional neighborhood.
- vi. In lieu of sidewalks, a bicycle trail shall be required and shall not be within the pavement of the travel lanes.
- vii. Access from a lot is limited to the urban core or special commercial districts (or T6 and SD Transect Zones in the P-TND district) only, access from lots within all other transect zones are restricted.

- viii. A parkway may be required for development in a traditional neighborhood based on the overall tract size of the development.
- ix. Maximum speed limit is 45 mph unless VDOT requires a lower maximum speed.

(d) Principal street.

- i. The principal street shall be the main street(s) of the TND. It may have the highest volume of traffic within the TND, other than a parkway, and the location of the most intense commercial activity.
- ii. The principal street may have no more than four (4) driving lanes.
- iii. The principal street may have a median.
- iv. On-street parallel parking is permitted.
- v. Access from a lot is limited to the urban core or special commercial districts (or T6 and SD Transect Zones in the P-TND districts) only, access from lots within all other transect zones are restricted.
- vi. Sidewalks are required.
- vii. Round-a-bouts, stop signs or traffic lights may be warranted when intersecting with another principal street.
- viii. Pedestrian crossings shall be identified by using brick, stamped-painted asphalt or similar material and slightly raised from the grade of the street.
- ix. Maximum speed limit is 30 mph unless VDOT requires a lower maximum speed.

(e) Village street.

- i. The village street is the “offshoot” from the principal street.
- ii. It is intended to provide vehicle access to the parking and loading areas for majority of the commercial and large residential uses.
- iii. Direct vehicle access to single family attached units is permitted.
- iv. Direct vehicle access to single family detached units is restricted.
- v. Access to alleys to serve single family detached and attached units is permitted.
- vi. The village street may have no more than two (2) travel lanes.

- vii. A median may be used to restrict access when near the intersection to a principle street.
  - viii. Center left lanes are not required but may be necessary when access is near the intersection to a principal street to prevent stacking problems.
  - ix. Parallel parking is permitted. On-street angled parking is prohibited.
  - x. Sidewalks are required.
  - xi. Round-a-bout or stop signs may be required when intersecting with another secondary street.
  - xii. Pedestrian crossing shall be identified by using brick, stamped-painted asphalt or similar material and slightly raised from the grade of the street.
  - xii. Maximum speed limit is 25 mph unless VDOT requires a lower maximum speed.
- (f) Neighborhood street.
- i. Narrow, quiet and designed for low vehicle speed. Neighborhood streets serve residential attached and detached units and civic open spaces.
  - ii. The neighborhood street shall have no more than two (2) travel lanes.
  - iii. Median and center left turn lanes are prohibited.
  - iv. Recommended for access to alleys.
  - v. Direct vehicle access to all lots is permitted.
  - vi. On-street parallel parking is permitted.
  - vii. Sidewalks are required.
  - viii. Round-a-bouts or stop signs may be required when intersecting with another neighborhood street.
  - ix. Traffic calming devices, such as speed humps, may be required depending on length of blocks.
  - x. Maximum speed limit is 25 mph unless VDOT requires a lower maximum speed.
- (g) Rural street.
- i. Rural streets are narrow and designed to serve large single family residential lots or large tract of open space areas. Not intended to serve high density or intensity areas.
  - ii. The rural street shall have no more than two (2) travel lanes.
  - iii. Medians and center left turn lanes are determined by VDOT.

- iv. Direct access for all lots is permitted.
- v. Parallel and on-street angle parking is prohibited.
- vi. Rural streets may have sidewalk if within a pedestrian shed to access a civic open space.
- vii. Round-a-bouts and traffic calming devices are prohibited.
- vii. Traffic stop signs may be required at intersections.
- viii. Maximum speed to be determined by VDOT.

#### **D. Form Based Codes / Transect Zones**

Form based codes are a type of zoning regulation that focuses more on the form of development of the land and less on the uses on the land. The “Form” addressed in these types of codes include building height, setback, open space, parking requirements and street width. The intensity is regulated within sub-areas or transect zones. The P-TND ordinance in Stafford includes transect zones that range from T-1 to T-6. T-1 equates to open land preservation area. T-6 is the most intense area that in effect permits an urban form of development. The type of transect zone is established upon rezoning of a given tract of land.

On-line resources are available for more information on form-based codes and transect zones.

Form-Based Codes Institute: <http://formbasedcodes.org>

A link to the definition of form-based codes is on the right side of the home page.

Center for Applied Transect Studies: <http://www.transect.org/transect.html>

## **V. ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The purpose of this section is to guide the design and character of buildings, including residential and commercial building types, in the designated Urban Services Areas of the County. The guidelines specify the materials and details of the buildings in addition to design criteria for the other elements of a development, including: parking, lighting, signage, and other features.

The design guidelines are general in nature and are intended to provide guidance for the desired appearance of future development. The guidelines help to ensure that future development is high quality and lasting. It is not the intent of these guidelines to recommend that every building look the same. The standards are general enough to allow for variety in design from one building to the next. The standards address details relating to buildings and the features accessory to buildings, including parking, landscaping, and mechanical and refuse. The images in these guidelines are intended to provide a general representation of the recommended design features and should not be construed as controlling the specific appearance of buildings and amenities.

### Special Areas

These guidelines are not appropriate in all situations. Development proposals within or adjacent to historic districts and/or structures should be designed to fit in with the context of the established development pattern. Consideration should be given to any Small Area Plan recommendations and guidelines that have been adopted and apply to other special planning areas, including, but not limited to any of the Urban Development Areas and Redevelopment Areas.

### Traditional Neighborhood Images

The guidelines would apply to the development of traditional neighborhoods. The images provided on the following page are representative of the style of development the guidelines would promote.



*Neighborhood Development Standards Plan  
Stafford County Comprehensive Plan*



*West Broad Village  
Glen Allen, Virginia*



*Lantern Hill  
Doylestown, Pennsylvania*



*The Market Common  
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina*



*Kentlands  
Gaithersburg, Maryland*

## A. Residential Uses

### 1. Multi-family Dwellings

- a. The Base of the buildings should consist of brick, stone or other masonry materials.
- b. Other materials along a façade shall consist of: brick, stone, cast stone, wood, synthetic wood, architectural concrete masonry unit (e.g., regal stone, split-face, precision, ground-face), precast concrete panels, or architectural metal panels.
- c. The use of aluminum or vinyl siding as a primary building material is discouraged.
- d. Facades should be broken up horizontally with recesses and projections and vertically with material changes.



*Example of an apartment building utilizing material changes and recesses and projections to break up the façade.*

- e. All sides of buildings facing a street or parking area shall have decorative elements or similar facades.
- f. Buildings should be oriented to the street.
- g. On street parallel parking or common parking lots to the rear of the buildings is encouraged. Ninety degree parking in front of the buildings is discouraged.
- h. Common trash receptacle areas shall be provided in close proximity to the dwelling units.

- i. Trash receptacles should be enclosed with an opaque wall consisting of similar materials as the primary buildings or maintenance-free materials. Chain link fencing with slats and wood materials are discouraged.
- j. Sidewalks, parking areas, and common areas shall contain consistent lighting levels. Sporadic lighting coverage that creates dark pockets should be avoided. The location of lighting shall be coordinated with landscaping so trees are not blocking the flow of light.

## 2. Townhouse Dwellings

- a. Provide varying style and/or building materials and wall plane recesses and projections from one unit to the next within a row of townhomes.
- b. Provide varying roof lines and materials from one unit to the next. Roof lines can be broken up by the use of dormers or other decorative features.
- c. Continuous uninterrupted facades and roof lines are discouraged.
- d. Flat roofs should be screened by a parapet wall or sloping roof tall enough to conceal mechanical equipment.
- e. A raised front stoop or porch is encouraged to separate private from public spaces.
- f. The Base of the buildings should consist of brick, stone or other masonry materials.
- g. Parking in front of units should be limited. On-street parallel parking in front of the units and parking to the rear of the units is encouraged.



### 3. Single Family Dwellings

- a. Utilize front porches or raised stoops to define the entry to a home.
- b. Mass, scale, and style of buildings within a block should be similar.
- c. Setbacks for dwellings should be consistent along a street.
- d. Provide slight variations in roof lines from one building to the next to avoid the appearance of a continuous roof plane.
- e. Avoid long, unadorned wall planes, which make buildings appear larger.
- f. Openings above the first story, as seen from the principal street, should not exceed fifty (50) percent of the total building wall area, with each façade being calculated independently.
- g. Pitched roofs, if provided, should be symmetrically sloped no less than 5:12, except that porches and attached sheds may be no less than 2:12.
- h. The Base of the buildings should consist of brick, stone or other masonry materials.
- i. Provide an interconnected network of sidewalks.
- j. Parking and driveways should be designed to avoid sidewalks from being blocked by overhanging vehicles.
- k. Minimize impacts of parking with the following:
  - Garages should be set back to the rear or behind the dwelling.
  - Where possible, orient access off of alleys to the rear or side of the dwelling.
  - Provide on-street parallel parking.
- l. Avoid large expanses of asphalt and provide landscaping in front of homes.
- m. Utilize landscaping or decorative fencing between the front of the home and the sidewalk to separate public from private space.



## **B. Commercial, Mixed Use and Civic Uses**

It is the intent that these design guidelines may be applied to a wide variety of commercial uses, including stand-alone commercial retail or office buildings, suburban commercial shopping centers, and mixed-use town centers, with the overall intent of meeting the goal of ensuring high quality lasting development in the County.

### Mixed Use

Mixed use development is typically found in town center or downtown environments where development is more compact and pedestrian oriented. Mixed use buildings



typically will consist of ground floor retail where the building fronts on primary streets with either residential units or office space above. Parking is accommodated in shared surface or multi-level parking decks and with on-street angled or parallel parking.

### Commercial Uses

For the purpose of these guidelines, commercial uses are considered those within free-standing commercial buildings, office buildings, or shopping centers. These types of developments may include retail, restaurant, grocery or office uses. They may be located within a single parcel of land or be on an outparcel that is part of a shopping center, or within an office complex. These sites are typically located in close proximity to arterial or collector roads and are more automobile dependent.

#### 1. Massing / Scale

- a. New construction shall complement or be compatible with existing surrounding architecture and buildings.
- b. Scale (width and height) should not dwarf existing adjacent buildings.

#### 2. Roofs and Parapet Walls

- a. Similar rooflines should be incorporated into the design of buildings within the same block.

- b. Sloped Roofs should incorporate the following design features:
- materials should consist of: wood shingles, slate, clay tiles, concrete tiles, standing seam metal, or composition shingles.
  - roof color shall consist of natural or muted shades.
  - utilize overhanging eaves, extending from 6" to 18" past the supporting walls.
  - maintain a slope between 1:3 and 1:1 (rise:run) along the primary building façade.
  - Subtle breaks and fluctuations in the roof line or raised accent elements such as dormer windows, gables and chimneys are encouraged to highlight important areas such as entrances and break up longer runs of roof area.
- c. Flat roofs shall incorporate the following design features:
- Flat roofs shall use parapet walls and cornices.
  - All rooftop mechanical equipment such as heating and cooling, antennas and telecommunication equipment should be screened through the use of parapets or other opaque walls constructed of materials complementary to the supporting walls.
  - The average height of such parapets should not exceed fifteen (15) percent of the height of the supporting wall and such parapets should not at any point exceed one-third (1/3) of the height of the supporting wall.
  - Such parapets shall feature three (3) dimensional cornice treatment.
  - Cornices should complement the building in scale, size and materials.
  - Cornices shall be continuous or wrap around the wall.
  - Break up continuous parapets with a change in height and similar decorative elements.



### 3. Site Design

- a. Shopping centers should orient buildings closer together along a primary street that may or may not permit vehicle traffic. A primary street through the center may include parallel or angled parking spaces with the remainder of the parking to the rear or side of the buildings.
- b. Free-standing commercial buildings along highway corridors, including retail and office uses, should orient buildings toward the street with parking oriented away from the street.

### 4. Façades

- a. Location - Facades facing the primary street should be located along a consistent setback.
- b. Materials - Any building or unit, including other buildings or units within its group or center, shall be faced on all sides with a combination of durable, attractive, high quality primary and accent materials.
  - Approved primary materials should include: brick, stone, cast stone, wood, synthetic wood, architectural concrete masonry unit (e.g., regal stone, split-face, precision, ground-face), precast concrete panels, or architectural metal panels.
  - In no instance shall Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems (EIFS), corrugated or channeled metal, pre-engineered metal or exposed metal wall system or unfinished/smooth face concrete block or simulated masonry or vinyl siding be used as a primary exterior façade.
- c. Color – Colors should complement and tie building elements together.
  - Limit bright colors to accent details.
  - Primary colors shall be low reflectance, subtle, and neutral or earth tone colors (e.g., such as colors of beige, sage or forest greens, grays, browns, terracotta, etc.) and shall not include high intensity, metallic, black, bright white or fluorescent tones. Neon tubing shall not be used as an accent feature.



d. Design –

- Ground floor facades that face a primary street shall have arcades, display windows, entry areas, awnings, or other such features along no less than sixty (60) percent of their horizontal length.
- Facades shall be broken up with detailed entrances and human scale architectural elements such as doors, windows, awnings, columns and arcades.
- Larger retail structures, with facades greater than one hundred (100) feet in length, measured horizontally are encouraged to incorporate vertical elements such as wall plane projections or recesses having a depth of at least three (3) percent of the façade length, and extending at least twenty (20) percent of the façade length. In no case shall an uninterrupted façade length exceed one hundred (100) feet. Each projection or recess should show a change in color, texture or pattern.
- 360 Architecture - All sides of buildings facing a public street or parking area should have decorative elements and similar facades. Blank facades are discouraged.
- Buildings four stories or taller should be broken up to define a “top”, “middle” and “base”. The “Top” is defined with cornices, sloping roofs with projections. The “Base” is defined with thicker walls, ledges or sills, textured, painted, or other materials such as stone or masonry.



**Top**

**Middle**

**Base**

- Mechanical equipment such as gutters, meters, and other utilities should match or complement the primary color of the building.
- Corner buildings with high visibility should incorporate enhanced details such as raised parapets, increased building height or tower feature, and other building articulation.



*Enhanced details are incorporated into this corner building*

5. Entrances

- a. Doors for public use shall be orientated toward the public street or primary road.

- b. Each principle building on a site shall have clearly defined, highly visible customer entrances.
  - Entrances should featuring no less than three of the following: canopies or porticos; awnings; overhangs; recesses or projections; arcades; raised corniced parapets over the door; peaked roof forms; arches; outdoor patios; display windows; architectural details such as tile work and moldings which are integrated into the building structures and design; or, integral planters or wing walls that incorporated landscaped areas and/or places for sitting.
  - Where additional stores will be located in the principal building, each such store shall have at least one (1) exterior customer entrance, which shall conform to this requirement.

6. Windows

- a. Windows should be vertically aligned with lower windows and doors along the building facade.
- b. Windows without trim should have window frames at least 2" wide.
- c. Facades for retail uses along a principal street should be glazed with clear glass no less than 70 percent of the first floor along the street frontage.

7. Gutters, Scuppers, Downspouts

- a. Gutters shall not be visible on parapet walls
- b. Parapets and cornices shall be continuous above a scupper
- c. Scuppers should be used on facades not visible from the primary street or public spaces.
- d. Downspouts shall be located on interior corners



*Scuppers collect rainwater from flat roofs behind parapet walls*

## 8. Awnings

a. Awnings should incorporate the following design criteria:

- Awnings should be pedestrian scaled and complement the building.
- Awnings should not be backlit.
- Awnings should be no longer than a storefront.
- Materials should consist of fabric, metal or glass.
- The bottom of the awning should not be higher than the top of the window and typically no higher than 9' above the exterior average grade.



## 9. Stairways

- a. Stairways should be incorporated into the building or made an architectural feature in massing and form.
- b. Prefabricated stairs are discouraged.

## C. Architectural Standards for Signage

### 1. General Standards

- a. Lighting of signs shall be shielded to prevent spillover into residential areas.
- b. Corporate branding shall be permitted in a manner that blends in with the design of the building. Bright oversized corporate logos should be discouraged.
- c. Signage should be secondary to the architectural elements of the building.
- d. Business names are appropriate on wall signs, but not extraneous information such as business address, website address, or phone number.
- e. Neighborhoods should be defined with entry signage.
- f. Illumination of wall signs with external lighting is encouraged.
- g. The use of Electronic Message Center (EMC) signage should be closely evaluated, consistent with the zoning ordinance standards, taking into account the characteristics of the neighborhood and frequency and number of EMC signs. EMC signs should be incorporated into monument or wall signs in a manner that avoids negatively impacting adjacent properties or creating a distraction to the driving public.

### 2. Signage in Mixed Use Town Centers

- a. Signage should be at an appropriate scale to the building.
- b. Signage should not dominate the façade but rather complement the building and its surroundings.
- c. Externally lighted wall signs are encouraged.
- d. Directional signage should be of a coordinated design.



### 3. Monument Signage

- a. Monument style signs are encouraged over pole mounted signs.
- b. Sign materials and colors should be compatible with the materials and colors found on the primary building.
- c. Incorporation of landscaping around monument signs are encouraged to establish a sense of place.



### 4. Signage for Shopping Centers

- a. Shopping center signs should be sized for sufficient visibility and business identification without becoming a dominant part of the landscape or interfering with vehicular movement along adjacent streets.
- b. Directional signage should be of a coordinated design.

## **D. Design Standards for Screening and Landscaping**

### **1. Screening / Landscaping**

- a. Should be used to help hide trash, recycling, loading areas, mechanical equipment, utilities and other unsightly objects.
- b. Walls and fences utilized for screening should incorporate similar materials and colors as the primary building.



- c. Materials and landscaping should hide the objects but also enhance the street scape and principal building
- d. Board-on-board fencing should consist of low maintenance vinyl or other similar materials with subtle, earth tone colors.
- e. Slatted chain link fence is discouraged for screening.
- f. Outdoor storage shall be screened from view of any principal street by a streetscreen.
- g. Architectural elements added to a streetscreen should match the same architectural elements of the façade.
- h. Transitional buffers between conflicting uses should include a mix of evergreen trees with deciduous trees to provide year-round screening.



- i. Board-on-board fencing in transitional buffers should be enhanced with landscaping.

## E. Design Standards for Parking

### 1. General Standards

- a. Inter-parcel connections are encouraged.
- b. Large parking lots should be avoided. Smaller, connected parking lots are recommended.
- c. When large parking areas cannot be avoided, they should be broken up by landscaping areas and pedestrian walkways.
- d. Motorcycle parking and Bicycle racks shall be provided.
- e. Shared parking between businesses is encouraged.
- f. In addition to car circulation, pedestrian circulation is recommended.
- g. Landscaping will help define the area with shade trees, lighting and sidewalks. These should enhance the architectural detail of the buildings.
- h. Lighting shall be designed to provide consistent light coverage over all parking and pedestrian facilities.
- i. Underutilized, overflow parking should consist of pervious pavement where feasible.



Discouraged

### 2. Location

- a. In town centers and shopping centers, parallel or angled parking along the primary commercial street and adjacent to the businesses is encouraged.
- b. Other parking should be behind buildings and in the rear of the property.
- c. Entrances to parking lots should be located on side streets or alleyways away from pedestrian movement.



Recommended

### 3. Parking Structures

- a. Where parking structures are used, they should blend into the site. The exterior facades shall be compatible with respect to materials, accents, and color of adjacent facades.
- b. The first level of parking structures should not include parking that fronts on primary commercial streets. Retail uses are encouraged in these locations.



This parking garage along the primary street has includes retail uses along the first floor.

## F. Design Standards for Other Amenities

### 1. Lighting

- a. Decorative lighting fixtures are preferred over standard light poles.
- b. Lighting shall be Dark Sky compliant.
- c. Lighting should be directed downward and inward onto the site and away from adjacent property lines and streets.
- d. Accent lighting on building facades is encouraged to enhance building design.
- e. Lighting should be designed in accordance with Crime Prevention through Environmental Design guidelines.



### 2. Other Amenities

- a. In town centers, shopping centers, and neighborhood parks, the following amenities should be provided:
  - Benches, with intermediate armrests
  - Stationary Trash Containers
  - Bike Racks, located close to building entrances
  - If located along a transit route, include bus stop shelters, designed to fit into the character of the surrounding area.
- b. Amenities should be durable, attractive and follow a coordinated design within a community.
- c. Public Art, such as fountains or sculptures, should be incorporated as centerpieces of a town center or shopping center.



## **VI. IMPLEMENTATION**

The following implementation policies provide the County with the recommended strategies in executing this Plan. These strategies serve as a guide to applicants proposing reclassification to develop a Traditional Neighborhood or residential or commercial development projects inside the Urban Services Area as well as an outline of future actions which need to be taken by the County in order to facilitate implementation of these policies.

- A. The County should develop Zoning Ordinance amendments which comply with this Plan.
- B. The County should pursue local VDOT support of the recommended street designs.
- C. Applications for new P-TND districts or other Redevelopment Area or Urban Development Area zoning districts will be evaluated on their ability to demonstrate that the County's location policies and design standards have been followed.
- D. Applications for new residential or commercial developments will be evaluated on their ability to demonstrate compliance with the architectural design guidelines in this Plan.