

City of Richmond Urban Design Guidelines



Prepared by:

Department of Community Development,
Division of Comprehensive Planning

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This document is an ongoing effort of the Richmond Urban Design Committee and is subject to change. For additional information or copies, please contact the Department of Community Development's Division of Comprehensive Planning at 646-6335.

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Introduction

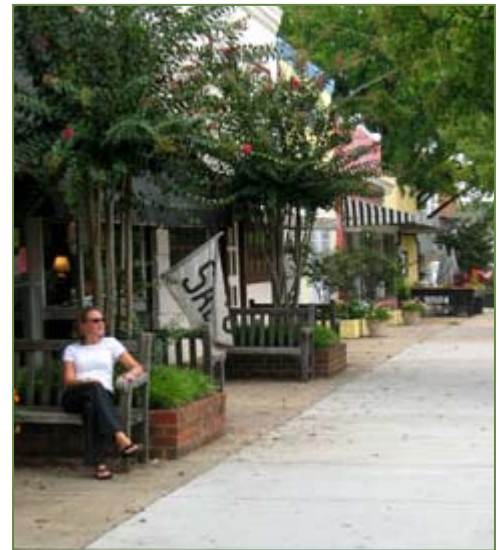
The Richmond Urban Design Committee (UDC) is a ten member advisory committee created by City Council in 1968. Its purpose is to advise the City Planning Commission on the design of City projects and private encroachments in the public right-of-way and large-scale private development projects approved through a Community Unit Plan. The UDC reviews projects for appropriateness in "location, character and extent" and for consistency with the City's Master Plan. Following review, the UDC forwards recommendations to the City Planning Commission.

The following design guidelines are used by the UDC and its staff in reviewing applications. These guidelines may also assist the applicant in understanding the Committee's design expectations. In a sense, these guidelines are an articulation of the Committee's design goals for the City.

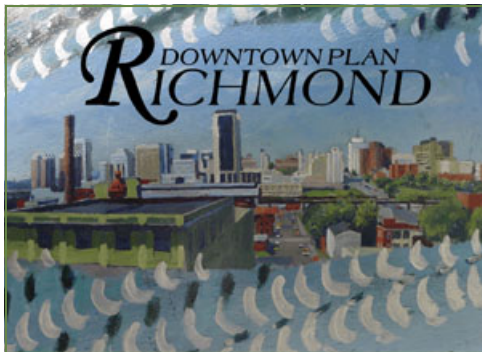
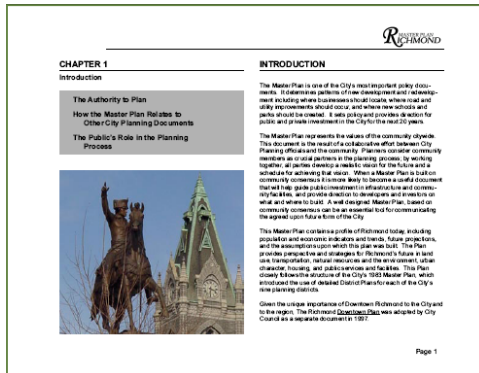
The intent of these guidelines is not to be overly specific or to dictate certain designs or styles. Not all guidelines will apply, given the infinite number of possible design situations. These guidelines are intended to provide a general design framework for the various types of applications reviewed by the Urban Design Committee to ensure high quality, well designed projects for the City of Richmond.

These guidelines do not attempt to address historic preservation goals. For properties located in City Old and Historic Districts, National Historic Districts, or which are historic in character, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings should be consulted. The City's Commission of Architectural Review has additional helpful publications that offer design assistance.

It is important to note that these guidelines are recommendations only and should not be interpreted as regulations. The guidelines are supplementary to the requirements of the City's zoning ordinance, its building codes, and all other city, state and federal regulations. If in any instance a guideline is contrary to a regulation, the regulation prevails.



General "Location, Character, and Extent"



Each proposed project should be reviewed for consistency with the City's Master Plan in "location, character, and extent." (Richmond City Charter, Section 17.07) If the project is not consistent or if the project is not addressed in the Master Plan, the sponsoring City agency should explain in detail the need for the project and its relationship to an overall plan.

The "extent" of the project should be reviewed for appropriateness. This includes all project details, the proposed end result, and the impact of the project on other urban design elements. It should be clear that the project will meet the needs of the user agency. Are there any more reasonable alternatives to achieving the end result? Can the timing of the end result be coordinated with any other projects for cost savings and other benefits? Once these and any other questions are answered, the design details of the proposal should be examined for appropriateness in "location and character."

Transportation

The City's Master Plan states that the long-range transportation policies and strategies for the City of Richmond are designed to enable the City to: function as an integral element of a safe and efficient regional multi-modal public transportation network; maintain a safe, effective and comprehensive roadway network; and develop appropriate alternative modes of transportation. The urban design guidelines that relate to transportation elements should further these long-range transportation strategies set forth in the City's Master Plan, ensuring that the City maintains a safe and efficient transportation network.

Guidelines in this document relating to transportation include paving and surface materials, parking, street design, multimodal transportation, traffic management, and handicap accessible curb cuts.

PAVING AND SURFACE MATERIALS

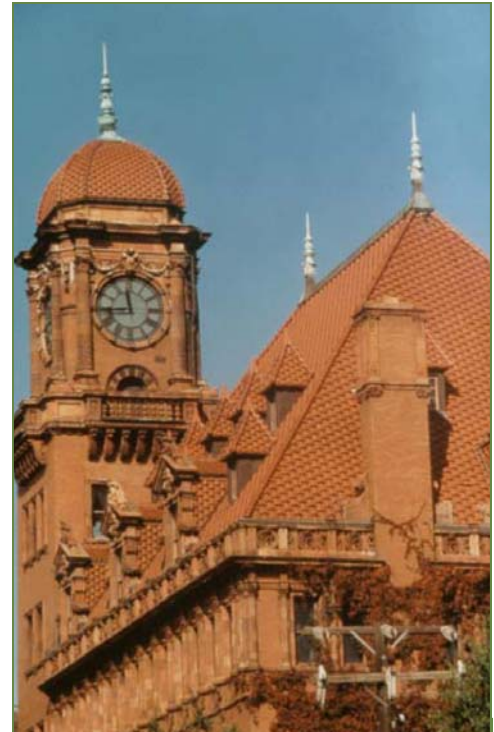
Selection. The selection of appropriate paving materials should be based upon the following: desired visual image, compatibility with adjacent paving materials, performance, durability, maintenance requirements, and cost. Consideration should be given to the massing of impervious material, the heat impact of paving material, and the stormwater runoff caused by paving material. Landscaping should be used to break up large expanses of impervious paving material.

Impervious material on a site should be minimized to limit stormwater runoff and heat gain. Preference should be given to pervious pavement materials that allow for stormwater recharge, especially in minimally used parking areas, such as park and sport facility parking areas. Pervious pavement materials that allow for stormwater recharge should also be considered for the areas used for parking in parking lots, as opposed to the travel lanes in parking lots.

Simpler paving designs are more compatible with diverse building styles and better unify the various design elements found on City streets. The color of brick and concrete pavers should coordinate with building architecture and adjacent streetscape pavements.

Colored concrete is not recommended for sidewalks. Weathering makes it nearly impossible to match colored concrete when sidewalk repairs are necessary.

Materials that have an uneven surface should be avoided in pedestrian areas. However, historic features, such as existing cobblestone streets and alleys and stone crosswalks, shall be preserved.



Historic Main Street Station

Similar materials (to the existing surrounding materials) should be encouraged to ensure architectural and urban context.
(III-22)

Structural material should be used to “soften” the edges of surface parking lots adjacent to streets. *(III-21)*

—City of Richmond 2004 Downtown Plan

Off street parking should be designed and located to accommodate multiple uses, including combinations of daytime, nighttime and weekend use. *(60)*

—City of Richmond 2000 Master Plan

Transportation

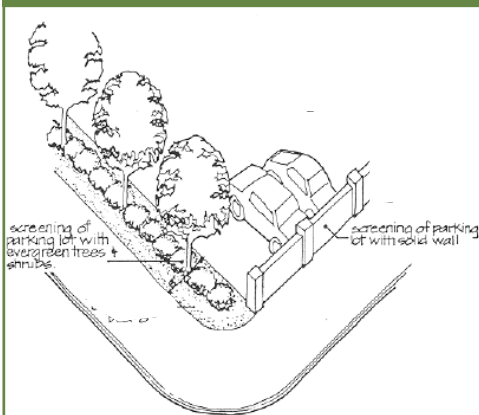
Visibility and sight lines for motorists should always be maintained for safety. (III-21)

Parking signs should be consistent in design with way-finding signs and clearly identify publicly available parking, regardless of whether it is publicly or privately owned. (III-21)

Angled parking should be considered as a means to increase the supply of on street parking spaces where width and traffic flow permit. (III-25)

Surface lots should provide landscaping, low walls, fences or facades that reflect the surrounding architectural character along the street in order to “soften” the edges of the lots adjacent to the street. (III-21)

—City of Richmond 2004 Downtown Plan



Example of a screening concept for parking areas.

Provision of New Sidewalk. New development should provide sidewalks along streets where there are currently no sidewalks or sidewalks in disrepair.

Curb Material. Existing granite curbing and stormwater inlets should be retained. Any new granite curbing should match existing curbs. Curbing should not be painted or striped. Other traffic control measures, such as signs, should be considered instead.

Curb Cuts. The number, size and location of curb cuts should be examined for potential conflicts with pedestrian and vehicular circulation. The material of new curb cuts should match the adjacent sidewalk material, except for tactile warning surfaces as required by the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). Curb cuts for handicapped accessibility should be located at intersections. Mid-block curb cuts for ADA compliance are discouraged.

PARKING

Well-designed and appropriately located parking resources are a critical element of the City’s transportation system.

Location. Parking should be relegated to remote areas of the site so that the orientation of buildings can be given a direct connection to the public right-of-way. Off street parking should be located behind a building and to the rear of the property or within the building. On street, curb parking should be retained wherever possible. Parking areas should have adequate signage to safely and efficiently direct traffic movement in and around the parking area.

Design. All parking spaces should be useable, safely and conveniently arranged, and well marked. Handicap parking spaces should be provided in large parking areas and be properly marked. The design of parking and internal circulation should give deference to existing historic and natural features in and around the site. The design of parking areas should also provide for clearly marked pedestrian routes through and around the parking area.

Site development should minimize large expanses of impervious surface. Pervious paving materials should be used whenever possible for parking areas. Landscaped islands with well maintained shade trees are encouraged to soften large paved parking areas and break large expanses of asphalt. The selection of landscaping materials should reflect the hierarchy of the circulation system within the site and context. All parking areas are subject to the landscaping requirements put forth by Article VII, Division 2.1 on the City of Richmond’s Zoning Ordinance.

Parking areas and incompatible adjacent uses, such as vacant lots, blank walls and other unattractive streetscape features, should be effectively screened with evergreen landscaping or landscape features.

Transportation

Security cameras should be installed in new parking areas, as a means for deterring crime.

Parking garages adjacent to the public-right-of way shall have pedestrian friendly design and uses on the street level.

Screening. Large parking areas should be broken up into smaller areas and screened from the public right-of-way and neighboring properties. Appropriate screening may include landscaping, walls, fences or berms.

Lighting. Off street parking should be well lit with an even distribution of a minimum of .5 to 1.0 foot candles. Lighting in parking areas should be focused downward, in order to respect adjacent properties and to effectively provide light for the safety of both the pedestrian and vehicular users of the parking area. It is important that the entrances and exits to parking areas are well lit.

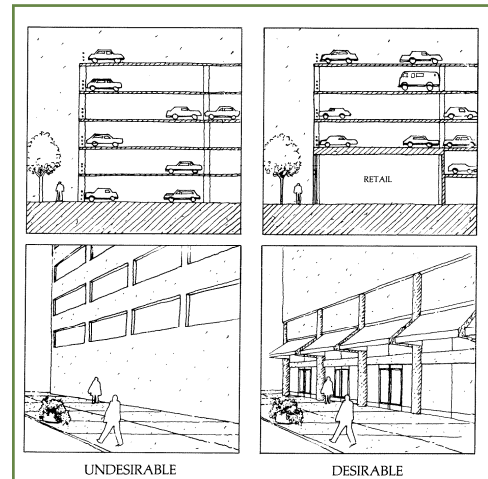
Additional Guidance. All new parking areas and lots are subject to the off-street parking improvement requirements and landscaping standards found in Article VII, Division 2.1 of the City of Richmond's Zoning Ordinance.

MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION

One of the major objectives stated in the City of Richmond's Master Plan is to increase street-level pedestrian activity, while safely and efficiently moving people and goods into and out of the City; and encourage the use of public transit and alternative means of transportation through a multimodal transportation system. In order to have a safe and efficient multimodal transportation network, it is integral to design with all modes of transportation in mind. These modes include walking, biking, public transit, as well as vehicular. It is the priority of the UDC to give deference to pedestrians over other modes of travel. Both public transit and non-motorized transportation (walking, biking, etc.) should be considered in the design and planning of all projects.

Bike Routes. Where feasible, all new roadway segments should be constructed to include bikeways. Appropriate signage should demarcate designated bikeways and delineate the bikeways from lanes of automobile traffic. Bike racks should be installed throughout the City and bike facilities should be incorporated into the design of any new public facilities. Roadways with bike routes should be enhanced with street trees or appropriate landscaping.

Pedestrian Facilities. All transportation projects should have adequate provisions to address the needs of the pedestrian in a safe and efficient manner. Streetscape elements, such as street trees and street lighting, should be used to encourage pedestrian activity.



Example of how parking garages can either strengthen the streetscape or detract from the streetscape

Parking facilities should be located on supporting streets, rather than frontage streets and behind buildings and in the middle of blocks wherever possible. (III-21)

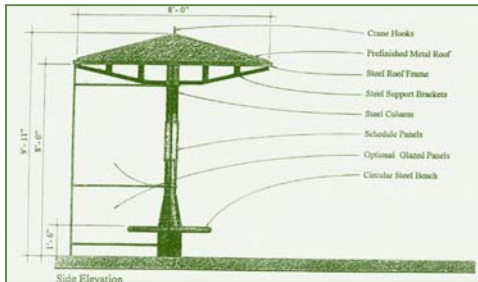
Parking structures should include street frontage commercial uses and be sensitive to the scale and design of surrounding structures. (III-21)

—City of Richmond 2004 Downtown Plan



Example of pedestrian facilities at a GRTC transit stop

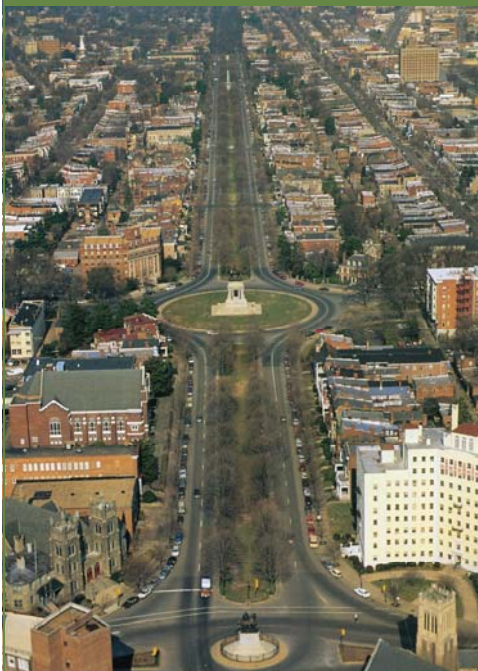
Transportation



Example of approved GRTC Transit Shelter



On-street parking and narrow lane widths provide good street design for a neighborhood street



The design of Monument Avenue, which includes a wide median, on-street parking, and prominent traffic circles, makes it one of Richmond's most famous streets

Striped crosswalks, pedestrian crosswalk signals, and other improvements that enhance safety should be installed as a standard amenity at all signalized intersections.

GRTC Transit Stops. A comfortable, safe, and quality environment should be created at transit stops. The elimination of transit stops without replacement should be discouraged. The standard bus shelters and other bus stop furniture that have been approved by the UDC, the City Planning Commission, and GRTC should be used at GRTC transit stops with high ridership. Benches installed at transit stops should have arm rests in the middle of the bench for the comfort of riders and to discourage its use for activities other than a short-term wait for the bus.

STREET DESIGN

The design of a street contributes to the perception of an area and the manner in which individuals interact with the built environment. While street design incorporates numerous details regarding geometrics and construction materials which are beyond the scope of this document, this section provides general guidance on lane widths, on-street parking, medians, pedestrian crossings and intersections. Appropriate treatments within the design of an individual project should be considered based upon the purpose and function of the street. Streetscapes, which include the furnishings, sidewalks, and landscaping contained within the right-of-way outside of the vehicle travel and parking lanes, are addressed in the Community Character chapter.

Lane width. The width of a street should respond to the volume of traffic it carries. Streets classified as local and collector should generally have widths that are narrower than arterial roadways. The provision of on-street parking, bike lanes, or traffic calming measures may impact the amount of pavement from curb to curb, but the lane widths on local and collector streets should be between 9 and 10 feet. These lane widths may also be appropriate for some arterial streets, depending on the function. Greater lane widths could be considered on local streets in instances where a queuing design is used and the travel lane is shared. An 11 foot travel lane should only be utilized along corridors designed for speeds in excess of 40 mph.

On-street parking. On-street parking is important for not only providing for some of the parking needs of adjacent uses, but also as a means of defining the character of a corridor or neighborhood. On street parking creates pedestrian activity and provides a buffer between those pedestrians and moving traffic. The width of on-street parking lanes should be between 7 and 8 feet. Wider parking lanes of 12 feet could be considered in situations where the lane is

Transportation

combined with a bicycle route. On-street parking is appropriate in both residential and commercial districts.

Medians. Medians can provide both aesthetic benefits and operational utility within the street network. Landscaped medians provide context and can assist in signaling the entrance to an area; and thus should be strongly considered in any gateway project. Neighborhood or commercial district markers and landscaping in medians should be appropriately scaled as to ensure the safety of both pedestrians and motorists. Raised medians with curbs are the standard in urban areas, but depressed medians that provide water infiltration should be considered where appropriate. A maintenance plan associated with depressed medians is necessary to ensure the long-term functioning of its storm water capacity, as well as its aesthetic appearance.

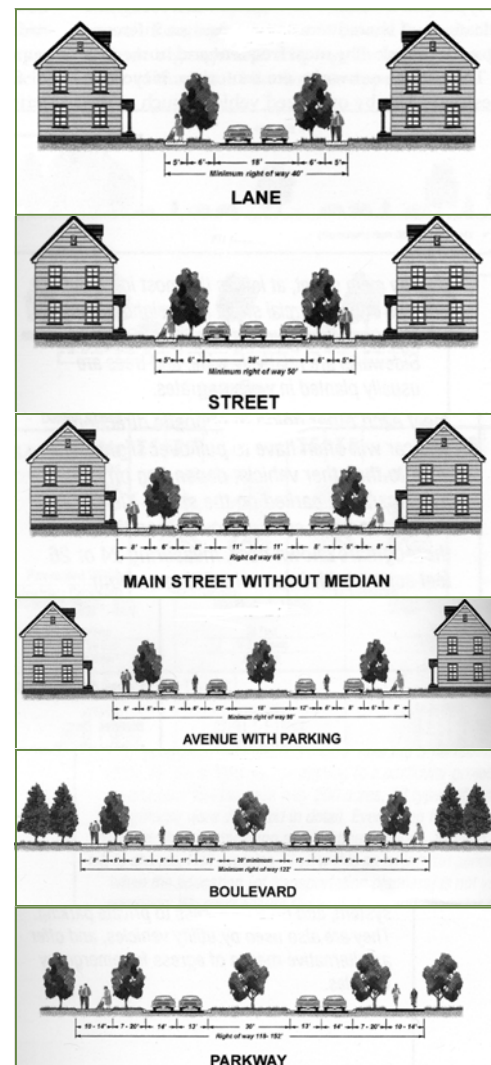
Pedestrian crossings. Pedestrian crossings should generally be confined to the corners of blocks and at signalized intersections. Midblock crosswalks should be discouraged, except for in instances of extremely long distances between intersections (block lengths of greater than 400 feet, for example). Pedestrian crossings should be clearly marked and refuge islands should be provided where the crossing distance is 60 feet or greater.

Intersections. Intersections should be designed to serve pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists in a safe manner. The capacity of an intersection should be designed to accommodate traffic reflective of its use (e.g. a local street versus a truck route). Curb radii should be small in urban areas and the use of curb extensions, or bulb-outs, is recommended where appropriate. Channelized turn lanes should only be used where absolutely necessary and should include provisions for the safe passage of pedestrians and bicyclists. Roundabouts should be considered in certain situations as an alternative to the traditional intersection.

Additional guidance. Detailed guidance regarding each of the issues contained in this section is provided in Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities, Institute of Transportation Engineers, 2006. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult this and other guidance regarding context sensitive design for roadways.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

The Urban Design Committee supports the traffic management techniques outlined in the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program developed by the City of Richmond. Traffic management techniques should slow traffic, decrease un-safe driving practices, as well as minimize cut-through traffic. Traffic management



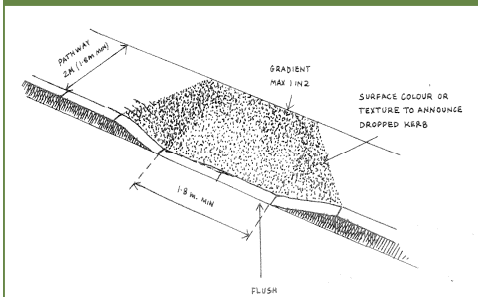
These diagrams illustrate examples of new urbanism street design, where the design of the street is based upon the intended use of the street. A Parkway with speeds of 40mph is designed much differently than a Lane with speeds of 20mph.

Pavement markings that can visually narrow the travel lane, and alternative paving surfaces, which can slow speeding drivers, can be used as traffic management techniques. (III-15)
—City of Richmond 2004 Downtown Plan

Transportation



Roundabout on Lombardy Avenue is an effective traffic calming device



Example of handicap curb cut

techniques should be used to improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists and enhance neighborhood character. Traffic calming elements, when necessary, should be well designed so that they provide for an aesthetic contribution to the urban character of the neighborhoods in which they are placed.

Additional Guidance. The 2004 Neighborhood Traffic Management Program developed by the City of Richmond provides guidance on various traffic speed and volume reduction traffic management strategies.

Also see the Right-of-Way Design Manual developed by the Department of Public Works.

HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE CURB CUTS

(also see Handicap Ramps in Public Facilities Chapter p.19)

Curb cuts for handicap accessibility should be located at intersections. Mid-block curb cuts are strongly discouraged. Curb cuts should include tactile warning surfaces as required by the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Additional Requirements. All handicap ramps must meet Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

Graphic Sources.

Main Street Guidelines publication by the National Trust for Historic Preservation entitled "Keeping Up Appearances, Storefront Guidelines"

Glendale Redevelopment Area Urban Design Guidelines published by ELS Design Group

GRTC/City of Richmond Bus Shelter Program and "Design for Maximum Access" published by London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

Richmond's Fan District by Drew St. J. Carneal published by the Historic Richmond Foundation in 1996

New Urbanism Comprehensive Report and Best Practices Guide by Robert Steuteville, Philip Langdon and Special Contributors published by New Urban News in 2003

Environment

The City's Master Plan emphasizes Richmond's commitment to accommodate high quality development with community enhancement and environmental quality in mind. The ability to maintain a high quality of urban life, thereby attracting and retaining businesses and residents, depends on how well the City preserves and protects the unique natural resources within its urban environment. Urban greening through the provision of open space is encouraged in both public and private projects throughout the City.

Guidelines in this document relating to environmental quality include design guidelines for public parks, landscaping and storm water management. Guidance regarding Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is included in Appendix 1.

PUBLIC PARKS

Public parks are integral to the quality of life found in any urban landscape. Parks should respond to the environment in which they are located and should be designed in accordance with their intended use. The design of small neighborhood parks will vary from the design of large regional parks. Passive natural parks should have adequate trails and access to accommodate intended users. Active parks should have adequate facilities (i.e. sports fields, trash receptacles, benches, running paths, etc.) to accommodate intended users.

General Characteristics. Successful public parks, both small and large, active or passive, share certain qualities, which include the ability to attract and entertain visitors, access and connectivity to surrounding areas, and safety and comfort. Specific design will vary from park to park, but should respond to all of these general characteristics.

Design Considerations. Certain design considerations should be addressed in any project, regardless of the type of park. Historic elements should be surveyed and preservation should be considered for both facilities and landscapes. Impacts to the natural landscape should be assessed and should generally be minimized when constructing man-made elements. A preference should be given toward materials and construction techniques which improve energy efficiency and water/soil quality. Lighting and landscaping should allow for surveillance and policing activities, but should be designed primarily to accommodate the intended use of the park. On-site signage should be consistent in style and convenient to visitors, but should be inconspicuously integrated into the overall landscape.

Maintenance. All park projects should include a maintenance plan which addresses all phases of the project, including both landscaping and facilities.

Additional Guidance. Case studies, research, and guidance on park design are available through The Project for Public Spaces (www.pps.org).

The provision of public plazas adjacent to office and residential developments should be encouraged. (III-22)

Quality open space can be created through landscaping, public art, and historic preservation or interpretation. (III-57)

Sunlight should be preserved where possible for public spaces, such as streetscapes, plazas and parks. (III-4)

—City of Richmond 2004 Downtown Plan

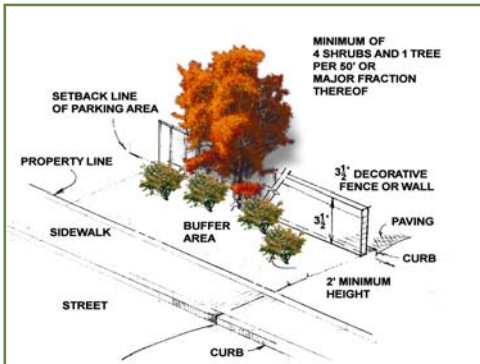


A warm summer day in the James River Park



Green roofs, like this one in New York City, can decrease storm water runoff in dense urban areas and provide pleasant views for office workers

Environment



*City of Richmond Zoning Ordinance
landscaping graphic*

Design standards for landscaping should be incorporated in order to complement adjacent residential neighborhoods and facilitate pedestrian use. (55)

—City of Richmond 2000 Master Plan



Dogwoods blooming in the spring add vibrancy to the landscape in the foreground of Richmond's Carillon in Byrd Park

LANDSCAPING

Design. Plantings should be compatible with and relate to surrounding landscapes. Site landscaping should complement and soften new construction and building architecture. Plant materials should create spaces by providing walls and canopies in outdoor areas. In addition, landscaping should provide a sense of scale and seasonal interest.

Proposed improvements located within an area covered by an approved streetscape plan should be consistent with that plan. A listing of City plans with urban design components is provided in Appendix 6.

Species Diversity. Landscape plans should include diverse plant species, including evergreen, flowering and shade tree species combined with shrubs, ground covers and annual and perennial plantings. Shade trees for pedestrian comfort should be the predominant plant material in an urban setting.

Plant Selection. Plant materials should be adaptable to existing soils, climatic and lighting conditions, and be disease resistant. Native plant species are encouraged, but not required. A listing of recommended plant species for this region is provided in Appendix 5.

Maintenance. Maintenance should be considered when selecting landscaping materials. Significant healthy trees should be preserved and maintained. Trees on public and private property should be appropriately trimmed around utility lines. Hazardous dead or dying trees on City-owned property should be removed and replaced.

The Urban Design Committee supports the City Planning Commission's Resolution, dated April 2, 1991, which requires the submission of an analysis of required maintenance for landscape materials for all City Capital Projects. (see Appendix.2) The Urban Design Committee also supports programs in which citizens or organizations can participate in the maintenance of landscapes on City-owned property. Such programs may include adopt-a-tree, adopt-a-spot, and adopt-a-park. In addition, the Urban Design Committee supports contests and award programs that recognize achievements in urban design.

Additional Guidance. Additional guidelines are provided in the [Broad Street Streetscape Design Guidelines](#).

Environment

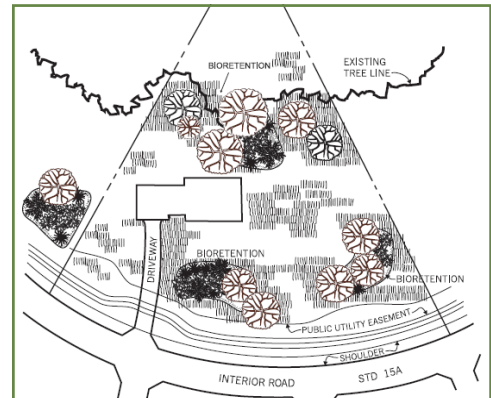
STORM WATER MANAGEMENT AND LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT

Concept. Low Impact Development (LID) is an innovative storm water management approach with a basic principle that is modeled after nature: manage rainfall at the source using uniformly distributed decentralized micro-scale controls. LID's goal is to mimic a site's predevelopment hydrology by using design techniques that infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate, and detain runoff close to its source. Almost all components of the urban environment have the potential to serve as part of the storm water management process in a Low Impact Development. This includes not only open space, but also rooftops, streetscapes, parking lots, sidewalks, and medians.

Design. Site development should take measures towards conservation of natural resources. Where feasible, developments should also promote impact minimization techniques through alternative storm water management practices. Site design should locate storm water facilities outside of streams and wetlands, maintaining natural drainages, and preserving riparian buffers; preserve the natural cover on as much of the site as possible; minimize the overall impervious cover, locate impervious cover on less permeable soils, and have impervious cover drain to pervious cover, i.e. downspouts draining to the yard, not the driveway; increase the travel time of water off of the site; utilize soil management/enhancement techniques to increase soil absorption; revegetate all cleared and graded areas; use “engineered swales” for conveyance in lieu of curb and gutter where appropriate; and utilize level spreading of flow into natural open space.

Additional Guidance. The Master Plan Environmental Element and Chapter 6 of the City’s Master Plan (Natural Resources and the Environment) provide guidance on the preservation and enhancement of the City's natural environment. Projects located within Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas must comply with the requirements of the City's Chesapeake Bay Preservation Program. Additional guidance is provided in the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Program's Public Information Manual.

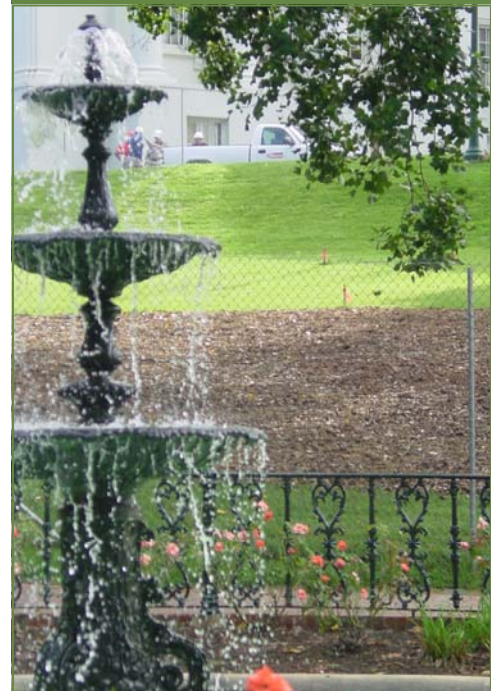
All new parking areas and lots are subject to the off-street parking improvement requirements and landscaping standards found in Article VII, Division 2.1 of the City of Richmond’s Zoning Ordinance (Section 114 of the Richmond City Code).



Sample Residential Lot with LID Features



Example of pervious paving as part of a low impact development in Austin, Texas



Water features, such as the fountain at Capitol Square, provide visual interest

Environment

Graphic Sources.

City of Richmond's Zoning Ordinance (Section 114 of the Richmond City Code)

Low Impact Development; A Tutorial and Toolkit from Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and http://www.urban-nature.org/landuse/low_impact_development.htm

Dwell Magazine, June 2001

Old Richmond Today with photography by Richard Cheek and published by the Historic Richmond Foundation in 2004

Public Facilities

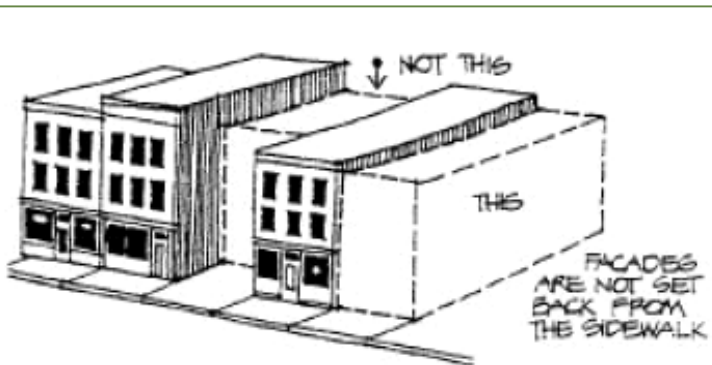
Service to the citizens of the City of Richmond is provided through a vast array of public facilities including schools, libraries, parks, recreation centers, fire stations, police precincts, public assembly and meeting spaces, and offices and complexes housing the general functions of City government. The City of Richmond's Master Plan states that it is important that these facilities are convenient, attractive, and accessible. The quality, design, and condition of all public facilities sets the image of the City, and sends a message about the values placed upon the services provided. Concentrations of large, formal buildings, which are typical of government, civic, and institutional uses, can have a positive effect on the image of the City. Green building practices, which minimize the environmental impact of buildings both in the construction phase and throughout the life of the building, should be considered in the construction of new public facilities as well as in the adaptation of existing public facilities. In general, public facilities should be designed to promote street activity and interaction with surrounding uses.

Guidelines in this document relating to the goals for public facilities found in the City of Richmond's Master Plan include guidelines for building orientation, building setback, site features, building proportion, building mass, building height, roof form, modular units, telecommunication towers, building materials, building colors, architectural details, windows, facade design, and handicap ramps.

General Site Design

BUILDING ORIENTATION

A building should be oriented toward the primary street that borders the site. Its facade should face the roadway and not appear to turn its back on the public right-of-way. It may be appropriate for a building's design to respect more than one street frontage. A building sited on a corner lot should face the larger or more traveled of the two streets. A building's entrance should be easily recognizable.



Appropriate setback versus inappropriate setback.

A building should be oriented toward a primary street that borders the site and not internal courtyards. (III-4)

A building's façade should face the roadway and not appear to turn its back to the public right-of-way. (III-4)

Sunlight and shadows should be considered when deciding building location and orientation and sunlight should be reserved where possible for public spaces, such as streetscapes, plazas, and parks. (III-4)

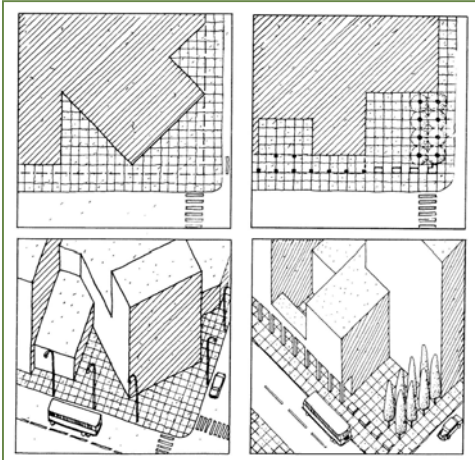
New buildings should be constructed with minimal setback to reinforce the traditional street wall. (III-4)

—City of Richmond 2004 Downtown Plan



New construction on Monument Avenue that respects the setbacks of neighboring buildings

Public Facilities



Comparison of setbacks, building massing and public plazas

Design that promotes street activity and interaction with surrounding uses should be encouraged. (III-51)

Development in gateway areas reflects the surrounding architectural and urban context by encouraging similar building massing, setbacks, materials and architectural detailing. (III-22)

—City of Richmond 2004 Downtown Plan



The plaza in front of the Science Museum of Virginia offers a pleasant transition from Broad Street

The main entrance into a public building should be at ground level. This facilitates public access and makes it easier to accommodate handicapped persons.

Energy efficiency should be considered when deciding building location and orientation.

BUILDING SETBACK

A new building should have the same or similar setback as existing buildings on the same street. There will be situations, however, where a different setback would be appropriate for the type of building and the desired environment. Examples would include larger public buildings, such as schools and recreation centers, located within urban residential areas. In certain cases, a new building should be constructed with a minimal setback to reinforce the traditional street wall.

SITE FEATURES

The site should respond to its users through its design and by providing an appropriate array of amenities to serve those users. Circulation within the site should be geared toward pedestrian movements, not vehicular. Connectivity from the site to adjacent areas should be considered during the design phase.

The use of materials and the creation of features that increase sustainability by improving air and water quality and energy efficiency are encouraged. Facilities required for the ongoing operation of the building, such as loading docks, maintenance sheds, or HVAC equipment, should be to the rear of the site and screened from view. Screening should also be used for parking areas, which should be located to the rear of buildings as well.

The provision of plazas adjacent to buildings serving the public is encouraged. The design of such plazas should avoid large changes in grade from the street. Plazas should provide a pleasant transitional environment for pedestrians from the street to the building(s) it serves. Public plazas should use landscaping, public art, and historic preservation to create inviting spaces. Adequate seating, lighting and trash receptacles should also be provided in the design of plazas.

Public Facilities

Building Design

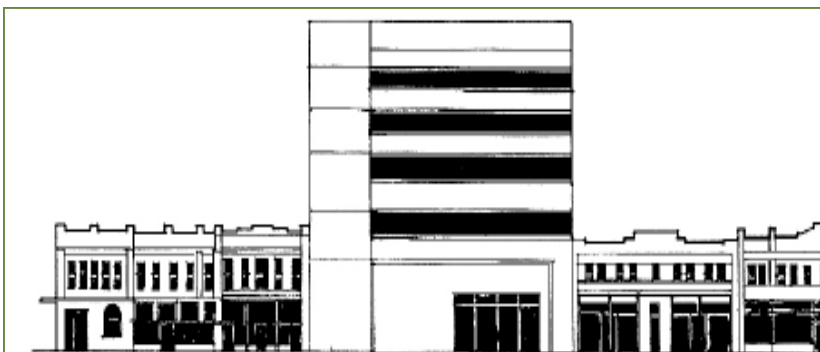
BUILDING PROPORTION

The relationship of building width to height should be compatible with neighboring buildings along the same street. Building height, width, and relationship to adjacent structures should appear balanced.

Public buildings, such as hospitals, schools, libraries and community centers, may require larger proportions than adjacent buildings. To minimize the visual impact on a neighborhood with smaller scaled structures, the public building should incorporate design techniques which strengthen its design relationship to adjacent buildings. Techniques may include: stepping back the building as it increases in height, varying the surface planes of the building, and breaking up the roof line to create smaller components.

BUILDING MASS

A building's mass should relate in shape and size to neighboring buildings. However, public buildings may have larger masses than adjacent buildings. In this case, larger scaled buildings should be designed sensitively to not overpower smaller adjacent structures. Techniques include: stepping back the building as it increases in height, varying the surface planes of the building, and breaking up the roof line to create smaller components.



Inappropriate building height, form, and massing for infill development



Appropriate building height, form, and massing for infill development



Building height, width, and relationship to adjacent structures appears balanced in Broad Street's Historic District



The public building housing the Richmond Convention Center has a much larger mass than surrounding buildings, but does not overpower the adjacent structures

Public Facilities



Building heights on East Main Street vary, but are compatible with each other with more height on the corners of the block



Rooftops on West Avenue mirror and relate to each other creating a rhythm to the street



Unightly modular units

BUILDING HEIGHT

The height of a new building should be compatible with neighboring buildings. A corner building may be taller than adjacent buildings to define a primary entrance point to the block.

ROOF FORM

A building's roof form should relate to neighboring buildings. There may be instances, however, when this is not necessary. This may be the case if there is no general design theme in the neighborhood or if neighboring buildings have been significantly or inappropriately altered over time, then a building's roof form should not relate to neighboring buildings.. A building's roof form should be proportional to the building and its facade. A corner building may use its roof form to define an entry point location to the block. Larger scaled buildings should have varied roof forms and roof lines in order to minimize monolithic visual impacts. Roof materials and colors should blend with building materials and colors.

MODULAR UNITS

The Urban Design Committee is strongly opposed to the use of temporary modular classroom units by Richmond Public Schools to meet ongoing educational needs.

The UDC supports the City Planning Commission's policy, adopted July 17, 1995, which states that all future modular unit requests, including renewals of currently approved units, will not be considered unless they are submitted with a cost analysis which compares the cost of the modular unit(s) to the cost of constructing an addition or a new school in lieu of the modular unit(s).

TELECOMMUNICATION DEVICES

Whenever possible, new telecommunication devices shall be located on existing infrastructure. Telecommunication devices that are able to be co-located on existing towers are encouraged. All telecommunication towers are subject to Article VI Division 11 of the City of Richmond's Zoning Ordinance.

Public Facilities

Building Detail Design

BUILDING MATERIALS

Selection. New building materials should be compatible with and complement adjacent buildings. New materials should be appropriate for the size and architectural style of the building. Many different materials on a single building lead to visual confusion and should be avoided. For older buildings, inappropriate building materials or inferior materials which have been added over time and detract rather than add to the character of the building should be removed. For significant older buildings, original building elements, materials, and features should be retained and repaired, as feasible. Building materials and elements from an earlier time which are not appropriate for the architecture of the building should not be added to create a false historical appearance.

Durability and Maintenance. Building materials should be aesthetically and structurally durable, of high quality, and require little maintenance. Where appropriate, substances which resist graffiti should be applied to building materials to reduce maintenance requirements.

In most cases, synthetic reinforced stucco is not an appropriate exterior building material, because of its lack of durability and maintenance requirements. Synthetic reinforced stucco should not be used on the first floor of buildings where it is subject to wear and tear and vandalism. Super-reinforced synthetic stucco, however, may be appropriate for the first eight feet of building above grade.

Building textures and their combinations should add continuity and not conflict or detract from each other. Textures should be appropriate for the size, proportion and architectural style of the building and its surroundings. Reflectivity, durability and color of the texture should be considered.

BUILDING COLORS

The selection and use of colors should be coordinated and compatible with each other and with adjacent buildings. Individual buildings should not be painted the same color as an adjacent building to allow for variety and interest along the street. The use of multiple colors may be appropriate on a building elevation. However, no more than three different colors should be used on one plane. Combinations of extremely dark colors or a monochromatic approach to painting should be avoided. The color choice should be appropriate for the building material. Bright, vibrant colors are usually more appropriate as building accents or as accent colors on signs.



These older buildings are constructed of materials that are aesthetically and structurally durable, of high quality, and require little maintenance



The selection and use of colors on these row houses are coordinated and compatible with each other and provide variety and interest along the street



The 17th Street Farmers' Market facility is the appropriate size and architectural style for its surroundings

Public Facilities



Main Street Station's elaborate architectural details

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Architectural details include cornices, roof overhangs, lintels, sills, molding, brick patterns, shutters, entrance decoration, chimneys and any other decorative indentations, projections or additions. These details add materials, textures and colors to the architecture, create shadows or highlight building focal points, and divide or define structural masses.

WINDOWS

The number, size, style and type of windows should be appropriate for the architecture of the building. The rhythm, patterns, and ratio of walls to windows should be proportional and be compatible with adjacent buildings. Too many different window variations on a building can lead to visual confusion and should be avoided. Window design is also influenced by and should be compatible with details such as sills, sashes, lintels, depth of reveal, decorative caps and shutters. If shutters are proposed, they should fit the window opening. The color of the window glass and its reflective quality should be carefully considered for its overall effect on the design. Highly reflective glass is not appropriate at street level.

Window openings should not be filled in with brick because of the difficulties in matching brick and mortar colors. If the filling of openings is unavoidable, the filled surface should be recessed from the original wall surface.

Energy efficiency should be considered in window design.

FAÇADE DESIGN

The design of new buildings should take design clues from neighboring buildings. There may be instances, however, when a building's facade design should not relate to neighboring buildings. This may be the case if there is no general design theme in the neighborhood or if neighboring buildings have been significantly or inappropriately altered over time.

A building should have an easily recognizable, inviting and accessible entrance on its facade. The use of special exterior paving, lighting and landscaping is encouraged to highlight a building's entrance.

A building's facade at ground level is paramount in establishing the vitality of a commercial district. Ground level design should be comfortable to the pedestrian. For example, there should be appropriate architectural detailing and windows at eye level.

There should be appropriate architectural detailing and windows at eye level. Display windows, where appropriate, are encouraged to provide interest along the streetscape. (III-4)

Highly reflective glass is not appropriate at street level and should be discouraged. (III-4)

A building should have an easily recognizable, inviting and accessible entrance on its facade. Ground level design should be comfortable for the pedestrian. (III-4)

—City of Richmond 2004 Downtown Plan

Public Facilities

Display windows are encouraged to provide interest along the commercial streetscape.

Large expanses of blank, undifferentiated wall are not appropriate building elevations, especially at the street level. Windows, projecting cornices, and architectural details, such as decorative masonry bands in an accent color, may be used to break up flat building planes.

Service areas should not be located along the front elevation of the building.

HANDICAP RAMPS AND WALKS (also see Handicap Curb Cuts in Transportation Chapter p.8)

Where possible, handicap ramps should be located so that they are sensitive to primary building elevations. The design of handicap ramps should relate to building architecture and exterior building materials. A ramp's base and its railings should be of an appropriate material and finish to complement the adjacent building. Unpainted wooden ramps are not acceptable. Landscaping may be planted adjacent to handicap ramps for screening. A preference is given to grade modifications that allow for handicap access through the building's primary entrance, as opposed to separate ramp facilities.

Additional Requirements. All handicap ramps must meet Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

The City of Richmond's Zoning Ordinance specifies different height, setback, and orientation requirements for buildings in each of the City's Zoning districts.

Graphic Sources.

Main Street Guidelines publication by the National Trust for Historic Preservation entitled "Keeping Up Appearances, Storefront Guidelines"

Glendale Redevelopment Area Urban Design Guidelines published by ELS Design Group and Draft Lawrence, Kansas Downtown Design Guidelines

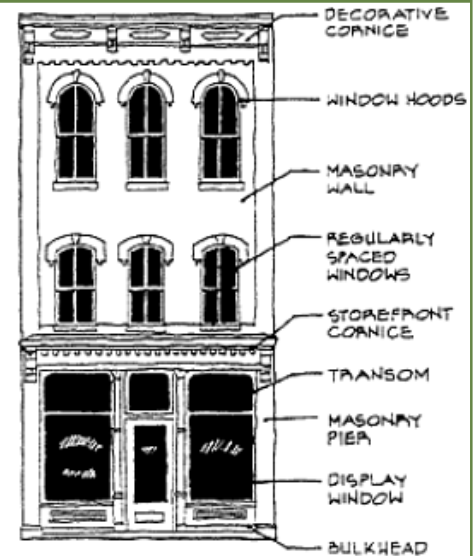
Old Richmond Today with photography by Richard Cheek and published by the Historic Richmond Foundation in 2004

Large expanses of blank, undifferentiated walls are not appropriate building elevations, especially at street level, and should be discouraged. (III-4)

A building's facade should face the roadway and not appear to turn its back to the public right-of-way. (III-4)

Security gates and doors on building facades should be discouraged, as they have a negative impact on the aesthetic quality of the streetscape. (III-7)

—City of Richmond 2004 Downtown Plan



Examples of architectural details

The main entrance to a building should be at ground level to facilitate public access, including access for handicapped persons. (III-4)

—City of Richmond 2004 Downtown Plan

Community Character

Streets should be enhanced with durable trees that provide scale, shade and color to the environment. (III-13)

Ornamental street lighting and way-finding signs should be of pedestrian scale. (III-13)

High quality furnishings including bus shelters, benches, tree grates or wells, trash receptacles and bike racks should be installed throughout Downtown. (III-13)



Pleasant streetscape in the Museum neighborhood

Improvements that enhance safety, such as pedestrian crosswalk indications, should be installed as a standard amenity at all signalized intersections. (III-13)

The Downtown pedestrian environment should be improved by enhancing Downtown streets with ornamental lighting, landscaping, trees, pedestrian crosswalk indications and street furnishings. (III-22)

—City of Richmond 2004 Downtown Plan

Good urban design can help create lively spaces with distinctive character. High-quality urban design can also create streets and public spaces that are safe, accessible, pleasant to use and human in scale. The design of everyday details, such as lighting, signs, and site furnishings, is an integral part of what defines a community's character. According to the Master Plan, Richmond's urban character and cultural resources can be a strong incentive to retain existing residents and attract new residents, businesses, and visitors.

Guidance in this document relating to the goals for community character found in the City of Richmond's Master Plan include guidelines for streetscapes, lighting, signs, site furnishings, walls, fencing, and screening.

STREETSCAPES

Streetscapes can be defined as the space between the buildings on either side of a street that defines the street's character. Streetscapes are the principal link between public and private spaces. It is important that streetscapes are designed to reflect the character of the neighborhood and to offer a safe, comfortable environment for pedestrians. The elements of a streetscape that can be used to create such environments include building facades, landscaping, sidewalks, street paving, street furniture, signs, awnings, and street lighting.

Design. Entrances and pedestrian walkways should enhance the streetscape and delineate an edge between pedestrian walkways and the street. Appropriate landscaping should be used to clearly define entrances and pedestrian walkways. In order to create attractive streetscapes, service and utility lines should be located underground if at all possible.

Sidewalk Paving Material. Simpler paving designs are more compatible with diverse building styles and better unify the various design elements found on City streets. The color of brick and concrete pavers should coordinate with building architecture and adjacent streetscape pavements.

Colored concrete is not recommended for sidewalks. Weathering makes it nearly impossible to match colored concrete when sidewalk repairs are necessary.

Materials that have an uneven surface should be avoided in pedestrian areas. However, historic features, such as existing cobblestone streets and alleys and stone crosswalks, shall be preserved.

Provision of New Sidewalk. New development should provide sidewalks along streets where there are currently no sidewalks.

Community Character

Urban Street Tree Placement. Street tree placement should respect building storefronts and signs. Trees at intersections should be planted at least 25 feet away from a corner to allow for adequate line of sight in all directions. Generally, new street trees should be located a minimum of 35 feet from each other and three feet from the curb. The distance between a street tree and a street light will depend on the type of light. Generally, a street tree should be no closer than 12 feet from a streetlight.

Plant Selection. Street tree species should be selected for performance in urban situations. For example, the root structure should be conducive to urban conditions. The height of the tree at maturity should respect any overhead utility lines. The tree's branching tendency and leaf size should be considered. Tree species that drop berries or fruit or have thorns are generally not recommended. A listing of recommended street trees for this region is provided in Appendix 5.

To create a uniform tree-lined street, generally no more than two species of street tree should be used along a single block face of a roadway. A different tree species may be used to highlight intersections, where appropriate. If two tree species are selected, they should uniformly alternate along the street.

Tree Wells. Alternatives to metal tree grates are encouraged, unless a precedent has been established in the area. If tree grates are used, they should be regularly maintained. Expansion rings should be removed as the tree trunk grows.

Hardy ground covers, such as liriopse, should be planted under street trees, where appropriate. The ground covers should be well maintained. Pea gravel alone is not an appropriate material under street trees.

Proposed development located within an area covered by an approved streetscape plan should be consistent with that plan. A listing of City plans with urban design components is provided in Appendix 6.

LIGHTING

Lighting Plan. The goal of the general lighting plan should be to achieve uniformity of light coverage, type and color of lighting, location, fixture style, appropriate lighting levels, the correct height and angles of lights, the benefits of horizontal or vertically mounted lights, and light trespass or pollution. A general lighting plan is required for plans of developments, community unit plans, and any comprehensive streetlight project. The lighting plan should differentiate in the scale of lights required for roadway (vehicular)

Standards for street lighting, sidewalk and landscaping should be incorporated to complement adjacent residential neighborhoods and facilitate pedestrian use. (55)

Streetscape improvements should be used as a means of retaining the pedestrian character of city streets as they cross interstate and traverse other overpasses. (55)

Lighting improvements can reduce crime and the fear of crime. (117)

Streetscapes should enhance the attractiveness of neighborhoods. (101)
—City of Richmond 2000 Master Plan

Ornamental street lighting and way-finding signs should be of pedestrian scale. (III-13)

Pedestrian level street lighting should be installed in pedestrian priority areas. (III-70)



Pleasant streetscape in the Jackson Ward neighborhood

Community Character



Decorative light fixture in the Fan Neighborhood



Granville light fixture on East Broad Street

and for walkway (pedestrian) lighting. Light height and spacing is generally determined by the lamp output and the desired average illumination on the roadway and pedestrian walkway. Exterior lighting should be well-conceived and properly installed according to a general lighting plan. Exterior lighting should also avoid light pollution by directing light downward.

Proposed lighting improvements located within an area covered by an approved streetscape plan should be consistent with that plan. A listing of City plans with urban design components is provided in Appendix 6.

Location. The roadway and/or pedestrian lighting should illuminate circulation and activity zones and facilitate safe pedestrian and vehicular movement. Appropriate illumination should be provided at points of decision, such as intersections, crossings, bus stops, steps, arrival points and other special features. Building facades, important architectural details, and site features, such as specimen plantings, art work and freestanding signs, may be highlighted by appropriate facility lighting.

The location of street trees may affect the consistency of illumination along the streetscape. The distance between a street tree and a street light will depend on the type of light. Generally, the center of a street tree should be no closer than 12 feet from a streetlight. The selection of lighting fixtures and street trees should be considered in conjunction with one another.

Off street parking should be well lit with an even distribution of a minimum of .5 to 1.0 foot candles.

For pedestrian areas, pedestrian light fixtures should be 10 to 15 feet above the ground. The pedestrian light poles should be placed 40 to 60 feet apart, depending on the desired light level and the photometric characteristics of the light fixture.

For vehicular areas, light fixtures should be 20 to 35 feet high, but should not be taller than the adjacent buildings, where possible.

Illumination. Consistent levels of illumination should be maintained in public areas. Safe and comfortable circulation depends more on the consistency of illumination than on the level or brightness of the lighting. All light sources should be shielded to reduce glare, spill light, and wasted light. Lighting in commercial areas should not spill over onto adjacent residential areas. The color of light source should be considered. High-pressure sodium produces a yellow colored light, and metal halide is a more natural white light.

Community Character

Fixture Design. Building, site and parking lot light fixtures should be coordinated and compatible with the architecture of the building. The design of streetlights should reinforce the character of the street. Simpler fixture styles are recommended to be compatible with the many different architectural styles found on City streets. Where compatible, City standard poles, luminaries and accessories should be used for public spaces. New light fixtures may be affixed to existing metal or concrete utility poles, for cost effectiveness and to reduce clutter on the sidewalk.

Lighting fixtures should be consistent with existing fixtures in the surrounding area. Fixture consistency shall be determined by a minimum of a three block radial survey of the area surrounding the proposed project for smaller projects. For larger lighting projects, a general lighting plan shall be required with documentation of the lighting fixture design in areas surrounding the project.

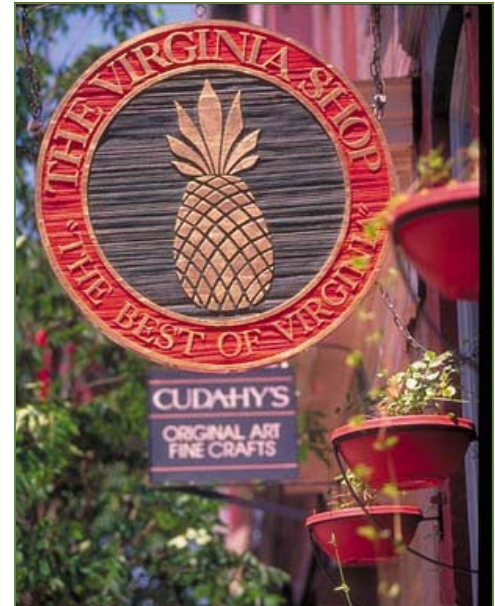
The finish on street lights and site furnishings should coordinate. The replacement of cobra-head light fixtures is encouraged by the UDC. When not replaced, the older cobra-head light fixtures and metal poles may be painted to match the site furnishings. The City standard color is DuPont Hunter Green PFG-509-S8.

Additional Requirements. Proposed lighting improvements located within an area covered by an approved streetscape plan should be consistent with that plan. All outdoor lighting is subject to Section VI, Division 8 of the City of Richmond's Zoning ordinance.

SIGNS

Placement and Size. A sign should fit the architecture of the building. A sign should not be too large for a building or overwhelm its architecture. Signs should not obstruct architectural elements and details that define a building's design. Signs should be placed so that they are sensitive to the signs of adjacent businesses. Freestanding signs should also relate to the architecture of the building. The sign's base may be constructed of like building materials. Additional traffic signs should be coordinated with existing or new poles to avoid additional clutter.

Message. A sign's message should be easy to read and direct. It should not contain too much information. The message should clearly relate to the use of the building. The use of "sponsor" advertising should be discouraged. This type of advertising has an assembly line appearance, sends a confusing message, and does not promote individual store identity.



Pedestrian-oriented sign in Shockoe slip

Signs in the Downtown should be pedestrian scaled. (III-7,13)

The identity of individual shopping districts should be reinforced with coordinated signage, store directories and information kiosks. (III-37)

—City of Richmond 2004 Downtown Plan



Attractive signage at Stony Point Fashion Park

Community Character



Attractive site furnishings in the courtyard of an adaptively reused tobacco warehouse on East Cary Street

Active use of open space can be encouraged by providing adequate seating, lighting and trash receptacles. (III-57)

Bus shelters, benches and trash cans should continue to be installed at transit transfer areas and other high volume transit stops Downtown. (III-18)

High quality furnishings including bus shelters, benches, tree grates or wells, trash receptacles and bike racks should be installed throughout

Downtown. (III-13)

—City of Richmond 2004 Downtown Plan

Lettering. Generally, sign lettering should be 4 to 14 inches high and should be in proportion to the area in which it will be displayed. One inch should be added to the lettering height for each additional 50 feet between the sign and the viewer. The lettering style should be easy to read and should reflect the image of the business it represents.

Color. Sign colors should relate to and complement the materials and color scheme of the building, including accent highlights and trim colors. The stronger the color contrast between the lettering and the background, the easier it is to read the sign. For example, light colored lettering will read better against a dark colored background.

Illumination. Internally illuminated signs are not appropriate in or adjacent to residential areas. Internally illuminated signs should have light lettering and dark, opaque backgrounds for improved readability and minimal glare. For indirectly illuminated signs, the spotlights should be shielded to minimize glare. All lighting and electrical parts should be concealed from view.

Landscaping. Freestanding signs should be landscaped with appropriate deciduous evergreen shrubs, ground cover planting, annuals and/or perennials.

Additional Requirements. All signs are subject to the applicable sign requirements set forth in Article V of the City of Richmond's Zoning Ordinance. For signs that encroach into the public right-of-way, additional guidance may be found in the "Encroachment" chapter of this document.

SITE FURNISHINGS

Design. Site furnishings, such as benches and trash receptacles, should be appropriately styled and scaled to complement building architecture and to reinforce the character of the streetscape. Streetscape furnishings and streetlights should coordinate with each other in style, color and finish. Simpler forms are recommended to be compatible with the many different architectural styles found on City streets.

The design of the furnishing should support its function. For example, a trash receptacle should be large enough and be easy to dump. Benches should be designed for comfortable seating and not for sleeping.

Decorative streetscape planters are not recommended, unless they will have plantings in them year-round and be well maintained.

Community Character

Street furnishing should be consistent with existing street furnishing in the surrounding area. Street furnishing consistency shall be determined by a minimum of a three block radial survey of the area surrounding the proposed project.

Proposed site furnishings located within an area covered by an approved streetscape plan should be consistent with that plan. A listing of adopted City plans with urban design components is provided in Appendix 6.

Placement. Site furnishings should be conveniently located for the pedestrian, but should not obstruct pedestrian circulation. Furnishings should be located where people congregate, such as at bus stops, in front of major attractions, and in parks and plazas. The placement of furnishings should not create visual clutter on the streetscape.

Furnishings may be grouped together, where appropriate. However, trash receptacles should be placed in the vicinity of bench groupings, but not directly adjacent, because of wasps and other insects in summer months.

Inappropriate existing furnishings should be removed, prior to locating new furnishings.

Durability and Maintenance. Site furnishings should be durable, both in construction and finish, and be easy to maintain and to install. Site furnishings should have vandal-resistant features. Replacement parts or components should be readily available and easily installed. Finish colors should be easily matched.

WALLS, FENCING AND SCREENING

Design. The design of walls or fences and screening should be consistent with the design, materials, colors and textures of the adjacent buildings.

Rooftop mechanical equipment should be screened by the building's roof line, with walls constructed of matching wall or roof material, or may be painted to match the roof color.

All trash receptacles, dumpsters, fuel tanks and significant building mechanical equipment on the exterior of a building should be screened.



Example of a modern bench with a center rail from Chicago, Il



Street furnishing, bicycle racks, in front of retail shops

Large expanses of blank undifferentiated walls are not appropriate building elevations, especially at street level, and should be discouraged. (III-4)

Treat I-95 as a continuous image corridor....enhance good views, improve unattractive views, or screen with vegetative buffers or fences. (III-22)

—City of Richmond 2004 Downtown Plan

Community Character



Iron fencing in front of Linden Row on East Franklin Street complements and accentuates the architecture of the buildings it surrounds



Chain-link fencing with barbed wire on West Cary Street are not appropriate fencing materials

Material and Color. Materials, colors and finishes should complement the materials, colors and finishes of the building. Masonry walls with iron gates are acceptable screening materials. Maintenance requirements should be considered when selecting fencing or screening materials.

Landscaping. Evergreen tree and/or shrub plantings should be located adjacent to walls and fences to strengthen their screening ability. Evergreen trees and/or shrubs should also be planted adjacent to large screening enclosures to improve their appearance.

Chain Link Fencing. In most instances, chain link fencing is not an appropriate fencing material. It is the policy of the City Zoning Administration not to accept chain link with blinds as an appropriate screening material. The blinds are not durable and often disappear. If chain link is required, however, for safety or security purposes, the entire structure (fabric, posts and railings) should be coated with a dark colored vinyl, preferably black, and supplemented with sufficient evergreen landscaping. Barbed wire and razor wire are not appropriate fencing materials in most situations.

Encroachments

Encroachments are any legal use of the public right-of-way by a private entity. There are many existing encroachments within the City of Richmond. Any new encroachments should be examined carefully and permitted sparingly because when allowed, they privatize the use of public space.

The encroachment process for the City of Richmond is administered by the Department of Public Works (DPW). Changes implemented in December 2004 have streamlined the process for better customer service. There are two types of encroachments based on the type of work proposed; ones that can be administratively approved, and those that only City Council can authorize.

The Urban Design Committee (UDC) provides an aesthetic recommendation to the DPW in regards to a number of types of above-grade administrative encroachments. The UDC requires its application process be followed, and reserves the right to require additional information if so needed. Encroachments preexisting 1954 are not subject to UDC review. The UDC reviews the application and makes a recommendation. When City Council is required to review an encroachment, the UDC reviews and provides a recommendation to the City Planning Commission, which then provides a recommendation to City Council.

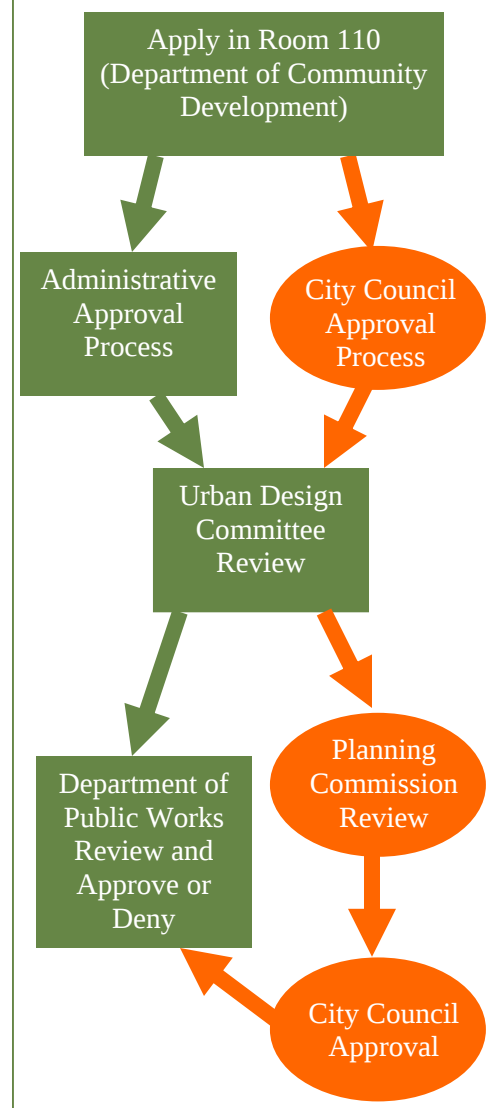
Applications for encroachments are initiated through the permitting process (building, work in streets, signs, etc.).

SIGNS (for additional guidance see Community Character Section)

Signs encroaching into the public right-of-way should be compatible in scale, style, and composition with the building or storefront design as a whole. Signs should not obscure a building's important architectural features and details that define a building's design, particularly in the case of older buildings. Signs should be placed so that they are sensitive to the signs of adjacent businesses. Freestanding signs should also relate to the architecture of the building. The base of signs may be constructed of building materials similar to the building to which it relates. Durable materials and quality manufacturing should be used for all signs. If a sign projects more than four inches into the public right-of-way, it must allow for a minimum clearance of eight feet above grade.

Additional Requirements. All signs are subject to the applicable sign requirements set forth in Article V of the City of Richmond's Zoning Ordinance.

Encroachment Process Flow Chart



Sign encroachment on Cary Street

Encroachments



Door swing in Shockoe Slip that could be a hazard for pedestrians



Outdoor dining with no barriers on Grove Avenue



Outdoor dining with barriers on Cary Street

LIGHTING (for additional guidance see Community Character Section)

Exterior building and accent lighting can be used to highlight architectural features and bring buildings to life in the evening. Exterior building and accent lighting can also improve the pedestrian environment by helping to light the sidewalk.

Design. Building-mounted light fixtures should not extend more than eighteen inches into the public right-of-way. If a fixture projects more than four inches, it must allow for a minimum clearance of eight feet above grade. Light fixtures should be shielded to prevent glare for pedestrians, motorists, adjacent businesses, residents, or tenants. Projected light or logos from canopies should be limited to shine only directly under the canopy or marquee. Moving, blinking, or strobe lights are discouraged for any light fixture encroaching into the public right-of-way. The up-lighting of trees is supported by the UDC in cases where it is respectful of the context. Lighting in tree wells should be modest in scale and not ascend beyond the crown of the tree.

Additional Requirements. Proposed lighting improvements located within an area covered by an approved streetscape plan should be consistent with that plan. All outdoor lighting is subject to Section VI, Division 8 of the City of Richmond's Zoning ordinance.

DOOR SWINGS

The Urban Design Committee does not support the encroachment of door swings into the public right-of-way. Recessed entries are encouraged. When a recessed entry is not feasible, the encroachment of the door swing into the public right-of-way should be minimized as much as possible.

PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES

The Urban Design Committee does not support the use of pedestrian bridges. If they are used, the bridge should span no more than the width of the right-of-way. Pedestrian bridges should be level, with little to no incline. The materials used for the construction of pedestrian bridges should not be opaque or made of reflective material, so as to minimize the obstruction across the public right-of-way.

OUTDOOR DINING

Outdoor dining facilities can add life and vibrancy to the streetscape. However, they can also obstruct the public right-of-way and become a safety hazard. Outdoor dining facilities that encroach into the

Encroachments

public right-of-way should only be considered when there is adequate sidewalk width to accommodate both the dining facilities and the pedestrian. Outdoor dining facilities should be maintained at street level; any change in grade between the sidewalk and the outdoor dining facility should be minimized. Outdoor dining facilities must be clearly delineated by vertical elements or fences to comply with the State of Virginia regulations for serving alcoholic beverages and to prevent the restaurants from spreading beyond their designated areas. Any barriers around the outdoor dining facilities should not be entirely solid or opaque. The materials used to delineate the dining space as well as the outdoor dining furniture and accessories should not be affixed in place, and should be brought inside when the restaurant is not operating or during inclement weather. The outdoor dining furnishings should reflect the character of the restaurant while respecting the spirit of the street design.

NEWSPAPER BOXES

One or more newspaper vending machines can create an eyesore or visual clutter in the streetscape. Therefore, newspaper vending machines should be consolidated into newspaper/utility enclosures or racks.

PLANTERS

Both hanging planters and planters placed on the ground are discouraged in the public right-of-way. Planters and the materials planted in them must be maintained at all times. All planters must be removable for periodic maintenance. Planters should be constructed of durable materials, which do not harm the streetscape. Treated wood and plastic are discouraged.

SECURITY GATES

Roll-down security gates are strongly discouraged. Security gates can have a negative impact on the character of urban shopping areas. If security gates must be used they should be located in the interior of the window in order to avert encroachments into the public right-of-way. The UDC supports the October 2, 1995 resolution of the City Planning Commission regarding a policy statement for security gates and door encroachments. This resolution can be found in Appendix 3.

AWNINGS AND CANOPIES

Type. Awnings and canopies should respect the shape of the storefront, door or window opening. Generally, fixed or retractable, sloped awnings are the traditional awning type and are appropriate for most older buildings.



Pedestrian bridges at Virginia Commonwealth University's MCV Campus



Example of newspaper enclosures



Awning color that compliments the building's color scheme

Encroachments



Professionally applied signage on an awning above an outdoor dining area in Shockoe Bottom

Banners and public art should be used to strengthen the individual identities of Downtown districts.

(III-13)

—City of Richmond 2004 Downtown Plan



Banner from Richmond Renaissance's Live, Work, Play Downtown Promotion

Size and Placement. Awnings and canopies should fit within the storefront, door or window opening. They should complement the scale of the building and should not overwhelm or dominate its facade. The size, type and placement of awnings and canopies should not interfere with signs or distinctive architectural features.

Material. The recommended material is canvas or vinyl-laminated polyester. The material should be flame retardant and should resist fading. Reflective or plastic-like fabrics are not recommended for traditional buildings or areas.

Color. Awning color should be coordinated as part of the building's overall color scheme. Buildings with complex color schemes should use subtle hues for awnings so not to overwhelm other details. Simple, unadorned buildings may use brighter colors to highlight the facade. Harsh or gaudy colors that compete for attention and detract from the building's overall image should be avoided.

Signage. Professionally applied lettering may be added to the valance area of an awning or canopy. Usually 4 to 8 inch high lettering is sufficient. The lettering should be silk-screened, heat-color transfer or hand-painted. Spray painting is not recommended, as it tends to fade more rapidly, and self-adhesive vinyl is not durable, because the adhesive loses its bonding quality over time. Sign color should complement the awning or canopy color.

Illumination. The illumination, up-lighting or backlighting, of awnings and canopies is not permitted. Backlit awnings and canopies are not appropriate, and the entire awning or canopy could be interpreted as a sign.

Maintenance. The building owner should understand maintenance requirements. Fabric awnings generally last 5 to 7 years, and should be cleaned on a regular basis.

Additional Requirements. Design regulations are set forth in the Code of the City of Richmond, Chapter 26.1, entitled "Streets, Sidewalks and Public Ways."

Awning and canopy signage is subject to the applicable signage requirements set forth in the City's zoning ordinance.

BANNERS

The Urban Design Committee, at the request of the City Administration, is the review agency for all banners proposed to be erected in the public rights-of-way. The purpose of the City's Banner Program is to enhance the visual and aesthetic character of the City. Advertising of for-profit commercial operations, political

Encroachments

statements, and personal messages will not be considered as acceptable proposals. Each proposal will be reviewed on its own merit.

Location. Banners will only be allowed in certain commercial areas and only within the City rights-of-way. Banners located on private property are not subject to review by the Urban Design Committee, unless such banners encroach into the public right-of-way. Banners will be allowed on City-owned utility poles, only after it is determined that emergency access, overhead wires, sight lines, traffic signal conflicts, vehicle clearance, etc. will not be a factor. Banners proposed on utility poles which are not owned by the City must also be reviewed by the Urban Design Committee, if such banners will encroach over the public right-of-way. The Urban Design Committee or its designee must review the proposed banner locations and the number of banners at each location.

Message and Graphic Content. No personal messages, political messages, or any other form of advertisement will be allowed, with the exception of event banners in use no longer than 30 days. Such event banners may list sponsors. The character and design suitability of geometry, shape, pattern, color, and rhythm must be reviewed by the Urban Design Committee or its designee. Written messages on banners may not exceed 40% of the surface area of the banner. No arrows or other graphic techniques used to provide direction or “trail blazing” will be allowed.

Design. Rectangular banner shapes are preferred. However, other shapes may be considered, if secure mounting can be provided. The minimum width of any single banner panel is 10 inches. The maximum width is 2-1/2 feet. The minimum length of any single banner panel is 3 feet. The maximum length is 10 feet. The maximum area of a single banner is 25 square feet. The maximum total area of all banners on a pole is 50 square feet. No more than two banners are allowed per utility pole. No colors, color combinations or designs are expressly prohibited. Each proposal will be reviewed on its own merit.

Materials and Maintenance. No materials are expressly prohibited. However, all banners must have wind relief cuts or feature similar techniques to minimize flapping, waving, and other wind load induced stresses. All banners must be maintained in an acceptable manner, regarding mounting height and security, orientation, plumb, rigidity, etc. The City shall have the right, at any time, to remove and dispose of any banner that becomes damaged, torn, stained, discolored, faded, or otherwise in such condition that the intent of the Banner Program is not being served. Each banner installation request must specify both installation and removal dates. No banner may remain in the same location for more than 12 consecutive months.



Encroachments



Unsightly overhead wires add visual clutter to a commercial streetscape

Mounting. The lowest point of any banner or mounting hardware must not be less than 12 feet above the ground level. At a minimum, the proposed mounting system must include a double rod bracket securing the proposed banner at the top and bottom. The mounting system must be safe for the public, must be removable from the utility pole with normal hand tools, and must in no way weaken or alter the physical characteristics of the utility pole. The Department of Public Utilities will determine compliance with the mounting criteria.

Additional Requirements. The regulations for the Banner Display Program, applicable to certain areas of the City, can be found in the Code of the City of Richmond, Section 90-256.

OVERHEAD WIRE AND CABLE ENCROACHMENTS

The Urban Design Committee supports the City Planning Commission's Resolution, dated February 6, 1995, which discourages new overhead wire and cable encroachments in the public right-of-way. (see Appendix 4.) All new wires and cables should be placed underground, as feasible.

The Committee advocates that all existing overhead utility wires and cables should be relocated underground, as feasible, especially in neighborhood business and residential areas.

The Committee encourages the development of a plan for a phased network of underground cable-ready infrastructure. This infrastructure would consist of a series of interconnected hollow tubing which could accommodate existing and future wires and cables. Implementation of such a plan would minimize the impact of overhead wires and cables on the visual environment, facilitate the placement of existing overhead wires and cables underground, and accommodate future wires and cables in an appropriate manner.

Graphic Sources.

<http://www.usbridge.com/bridges/used.asp>

Appendix 1

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Concept. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a crime-deterrent concept that proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in crime and fear and an improvement in the quality of life. Implementing CPTED principles help to create and maintain an environment that people perceive as being safer and that deters criminal activity, and is not intended to create landscapes void of vegetation.

The five main principles of CPTED are explained below:

Natural Surveillance. Generally, a criminal does not want to be observed while committing a crime. The design focus is to create environments where there are opportunities for people, engaged in their normal behavior, to observe the space around them. Design guidelines promoting natural surveillance include the placement of physical features, activities, and people to maximize visibility. An example would be to provide appropriate lighting in a public area, so that people in adjacent buildings could easily observe activities at night.

Activity Support. This principle recommends locating safe, active uses into problem environments, so that people involved in the activities will become part of the natural surveillance system. An example would be to place ball courts in a community park to attract neighborhood users who will displace criminal activity.

Access Control. Most criminals will try to enter an area where they will not be easily observed. Limiting access into that area and increasing natural surveillance can deter crime. Design guidelines include guiding people in and out of spaces by the deliberate placement of entrances, exits, walls, fencing, landscaping, and lighting. An example would be only permitting public access into a building through a single entrance and locating a monitor station at that entrance.

Territorial Reinforcement. Generally, people feel safest with clearly defined personal territory, and they will defend what belongs to them. This principle advocates that public and private spaces should be clearly delineated, so that ownership can be determined. A sense of ownership encourages property owners to challenge abuse of that space or any unwanted acts in that space. Property owners will take notice of strangers or intruders into that space. Design guidelines include the use of site features that express ownership, such as fences, signage, pavement treatments, and landscaping. An example would be to clearly mark public from private space by using a low hedge or fence around a front yard.

Maintenance. Appropriate maintenance is necessary for the continued use of a space for its intended purpose. There is no expression of ownership in a poorly maintained area, and negative perceptions will deter normal users from the area. Characteristics may develop which provide opportunities for crime, such as overgrown landscaping and inoperative lighting.

Appendix 2

City of Richmond
City Planning Commission



900 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219
804 • 780-6304

April 2, 1991

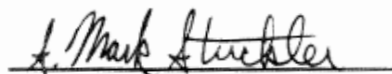
RESOLUTION OF THE RICHMOND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
APPROVING A LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE POLICY
FOR CITY CAPITAL PROJECTS

WHEREAS, The Urban Design Committee has requested that the Planning Commission adopt a policy requiring the submission of an analysis of required maintenance for landscape materials that are a part of any City Capital Project; and

WHEREAS, There have been a number of recent Capital Projects involving substantial landscaping improvements which must be maintained by the City of Richmond;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That it is the policy of the City Planning Commission that as part the approval of the "Location, Character and Extent" of any Capital Project, an analysis shall be prepared of the required maintenance of proposed landscape improvements. The analysis shall be conducted at the design schematic phase. It shall include the advice of the City agencies involved in the design and maintenance of the proposed Capital Project and shall give consideration to the selection of plant materials which are less maintenance intensive. **The analysis shall include an annual maintenance schedule, estimates of the cost of labor and equipment, and the impact on current staffing and the work program.**


CHAIRMAN


SECRETARY

Appendix 3

City of Richmond
City Planning Commission



900 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219
804 • 780-6304

October 2, 1995

RESOLUTION OF THE RICHMOND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVING A POLICY STATEMENT FOR SECURITY GATE AND DOOR ENCROACHMENTS

WHEREAS, the City Planning Commission is charged with the responsibility to approve the Location, Character and Extent of improvements and encroachments within the public right of way; and

WHEREAS, there have been an increasing number of requests for encroachments involving security gates and doors; and

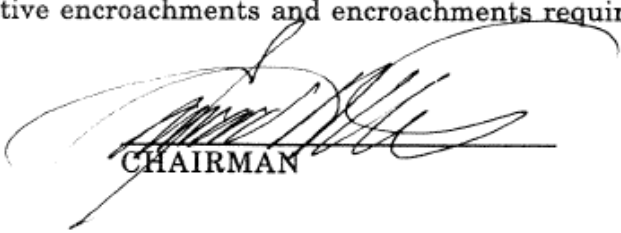
WHEREAS, the City Planning Commission has determined that security gates and doors, and in particular solid steel roll down security doors, have a negative impact on the aesthetic quality of the City's streetscape; and

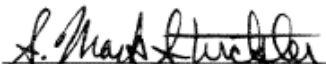
WHEREAS, there has been a request by the Leadership Council on Safety and Security in Downtown to revise the City Planning Commission's existing Security Gate and Door Encroachment Policy dated September 8, 1992;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that it shall be the policy of the City Planning Commission to discourage new encroachments for security gates and doors, and in particular encroachments for solid steel roll down security doors, as such encroachments would have a negative visual impact on the streetscape of a business or residential district. The Commission encourages replacing existing glass with polycarbonate or other attractive alternatives to security gates. Where security gates or doors are necessary, they should be of a see-through grille style installed within the building whenever possible and the use of solid steel roll down security doors should be prohibited.

It is not the intent of this policy to restrict the installation of security gates or doors that encroach into alleys, except where such gates or doors would be clearly visible from a street located in a business or residential district. Nor is it the intent of this policy to restrict the installation of security gates or doors in industrial districts, except where such gates or doors would be clearly visible from a street located in a business or residential district.

This policy applies to both administrative encroachments and encroachments requiring City Council approval.


CHAIRMAN


SECRETARY

Appendix 4

City of Richmond
City Planning Commission



900 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219
804 • 780-6304

February 6, 1995

RESOLUTION OF THE RICHMOND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
AMENDING A POLICY STATEMENT FOR
OVERHEAD WIRE AND CABLE ENCROACHMENTS

WHEREAS, the City Planning Commission is charged with the responsibility to approve the "Location, Character and Extent" of public improvements and private encroachments within the public right-of-way; and

WHEREAS, the City Planning Commission has determined that overhead wires and cables have a negative impact on the aesthetic quality of the City's streetscape; and

WHEREAS, the City Planning Commission adopted a policy statement discouraging overhead wire encroachments on March 17, 1986; and

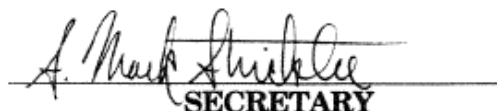
WHEREAS, there have been an increasing number of requests for encroachments involving overhead wires and cables in industrial areas; and

WHEREAS, the City Urban Design Committee has recommended that the policy discouraging overhead wire and cable encroachments be relaxed in industrial areas, with the exception of new construction; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that it shall be the policy of the City Planning Commission to discourage new overhead wire and cable encroachments within the public right-of-way, especially where such encroachments would have a negative visual impact on the right-of-way or on adjacent property. It is the intent of the Commission to apply this policy in its review of City Council ordinances proposing overhead wire and cable encroachments. It shall also be the policy of the Commission to encourage newly installed wires and cables to be located underground wherever possible and to encourage that all potential alternatives to overhead encroachments be pursued to the fullest extent possible by parties proposing such installations.

It is not the intent of this policy to restrict the installation of overhead wires and cables in areas of existing industrial character, with the exception of new industrial construction and areas which are in transition from industrial character to less intense uses.


CHAIRMAN


SECRETARY

Appendix 5

RECOMMENDED PLANT SPECIES

The following list of plants should be used as a guide and NOT limit the designer's palette:

Small Deciduous Trees:

Acer palmatum – Japanese Maple
Amalanchier arborea – Downey Serviceberry
Amalanchier laevis – Allegheny Serviceberry
Carpinus carolinia – American Hornbeam
Cercis Canadensis – Redbud
Chioanthus virginicus – Fringetree
Cornus Florida – Flowering Dogwood
Cornus Kousa – Kousa Dogwood
Cotinus coggygria – Smoketree
Crateagus spp. – Hawthorne
Elaeagnus angustifolia – Russian Olive
Koluteria paniculata – Goldenraintree
Lagerstroemia indica – Crapemyrtle
Magnolia stellata – Star magnolia
Magnolia soulangiana – Saucer Magnolia
Prunus cerasifera – Flowering Plum
Prunus sargentii – Sargents Cherry
Quercus phellos – Willow Oak
Salix babylonica – Weeping Willow
Stewartia koreana – Korean Stewartia
Stewartia ovata – Mountain Stewartia
Stryax japonicum – Japanese Snowball
Syringa reticulata – Japanese Lilac Tree

Medium Deciduous Trees:

Acer campestre – Hedge Maple
Acer ginnala – Amur maple
Carpinus betulus – European Hornbeam
Castanea molissima – Chinese Chestnut
Cercidiphyllum japonicum – Katsuratree
Ginkgo biloba – Ginkgo Maidenhair Tree, male variety only
Gymnocladus dioica – Kentucky Coffee Tree
Malus spp. – Crabapples
Prunus yedoensis – Yoshino Cherry
Pyrus calleryana 'Redspire' – Redspire Pear
Quercus robur – English Oak
Sophora japonica – Japanese Pagoda Tree
Tilia Americana – American Linden 'Redmond' or 'Legend'

Appendix 5

Large Deciduous Trees:

Acer platanoides – Norway Maple
Acer rubrum – Red Maple
Acer saccharum – Sugar Maple
Aesculus hippocastanum – Horsechestnut
Betula nigra – River Birch
Carya ovata – Shagbark Hickory
Celtis occidentalis – Hackberry
Fagus grandiflora – American Beech
Fagus sylvatica – European Beech
Fraxinus Americana – White Ash
Fraxinus pennsylvanica – Green Ash ‘Marshall’s Seedless’, ‘Patmore’ or ‘Summitt’
Gleditsia triacanthos inermis – Thornless Honeylocust ‘Imperial’, ‘Skyline’ or ‘Shademaster’
Lindodendron tulipifera – Tulip Poplar
Magnolia macrophylla – Bigleaf Magnolia
Phellodendron amurense – Amur Corktree
Platanus acerfolia – London Planetree
Platanus occidentalis – Sycamore
Pyrus calleryana – Callery Pear ‘Aristocrat’ or ‘Autumn Blaze’
Quercus acutissima – Sawtooth Oak
Quercus alba – White Oak
Quercus bicolor – Swamp White Oak
Quercus palustris – Pin Oak
Quercus rubra – Red Oak (parking lot)
Tilia cordata – Littleleaf Linden ‘Glenleven’ or ‘Greenspire’
Ulmus parvifolia – Chinese Elm
Zelkova serrata – Zelkova

Evergreens:

Chamaecyparis spp – Falsecypress
Ilex spp – Holly
Juniperus spp - Juniper
Thuja occidentalis ‘Nigra’ – Dark Green Arborvitae
Cedrus deodora – Deodar Cedar
Cryptomeria japonica – Japanese Cryptomeria
Cupressocyparis leylandii – Leyland Cypress
Picea spp – Spruce
Tsuga spp – Hemlock
Pinus spp – Pine

Appendix 5

Evergreen Shrubs:

Myrica pensylvanica – Bayberry
Leucothoe fontanesiana – Drooping Leucothoe
Pyracantha coccinea – Firethorn
Hex ssp. – Holly
Juniper ssp.- Juniper
Viburnum rhytidophyllum – Leatherleaf Viburnum
Kalmia latifolia – Mountain Laurel
Rhododendron ssp. – Rhododendron
Prunus laurocerasus ‘schip’- Schipka Laurel Cherry
Taxus ssp. – Taxus

Deciduous Shrubs:

Viburnum dentatum – Arrowwood Viburnum
Elaeagnus unbellata – Autumn Olive
Forsythia x intermedia – Border Forsythia
Viburnum burkwoodii – Burkwood Viburnum
Prunus virginiana – Chokecherry
Cornus stolonifera – Redosier Dogwood
Rosa rugosa – Rugosa Rose
Rhus glabra – Smooth Sumac
Rhus typhina – Staghorn Sumac
Rhododendron viscosum – Swamp Azalea
Forsythia suspensa – Weeping Forsythia
Hex verticillata – Winterberry Holly
Jasminum nudiflorum – Winter Jasmine

Groundcovers:

Cotoneaster dammeri – Bearberry cotoneaster
Ajuga reptans – Bugleweed
Juniperus horizontalis – Creeping Juniper
Coronilla varia – Crownvetch
Hemerocallis ssp. – Daylilly
Hedera helix – English Ivy
Liriope muscari or *spicata* – Lilyturf
Pachysandra terminalis – Pachysandra
Vinca minor – Periwinkle
Hypericum calycinum – St. Johnswort
Euonymus fortunei – Wintercreeper Euonymus

Appendix 6

City of Richmond Selected Plans Containing Urban Design Components

Richmond Master Plan 2000-2020. Approved by City Council in 2000 and amended.

Richmond Downtown Plan. Approved by City Council in 2004 and amended.

VCU 2020 Master Site Plan. 2004.

Consolidated Action Plan. Approved by City Council in 2005.

James River Corridor Policy Study. Adopted by Planning Commission in 2005.

Richmond Center City Master Plan. Approved by City Council in 2002 and amended.

Shockoe Bottom Master Plan. Approved by City Council in 2000.

West Main Street Master Plan. Approved by City Council in 1999.

West Cary Street Master Plan. Approved by City Council in 1997.

Highland Park Southern Tip Plan. Approved by City Council in 1996.

Old Manchester Plan. Approved by City Council in 1996.

Blackwell Neighborhood Revitalization Plan. Approved by City Council in 1996.

Southern Barton Heights Plan. Approved by City Council in 1995.

Richmond Riverfront Development Plan. Adopted by Planning Commission in 1993.

Broad Street Streetscape Design Guidelines. Adopted by Planning Commission in 1992.

Tobacco Row Revitalization Plan. 1983, 1987.
