



Image Credit: MVA Architects

# 7

# USES REQUIRING SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

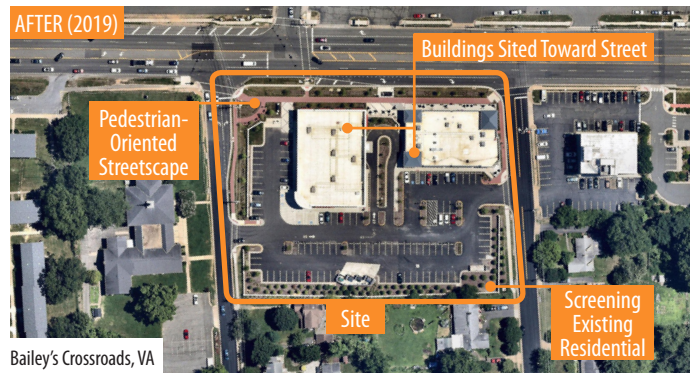
- 7A Drive-Throughs
- 7B Service Stations
- 7C Retail Sales Establishment - Large
- 7D Landscaping and Transitioning Between Uses
- 7E Interim Street Conditions

# 7

## USES REQUIRING SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

As the Richmond Highway area transitions into a more urban environment, it will be necessary to understand how to integrate certain uses - such as drive-throughs, service stations, and large retail establishments into the corridor's future vision. Generally, such uses should follow the architecture of adjacent buildings while minimizing corporate-branded architecture.

This chapter provides design strategies for accommodating these uses and identifies ways that they can fit within and support a more compact and walkable form of development consistent with the vision for the corridor. Recommendations in this chapter apply to CBCs and, to the extent feasible, to SNAs.



### TOP & BOTTOM

An example of an infill shopping center that accommodates more auto-oriented uses within a more compact urban form

Image Credit: Nearmap

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

**Auto-oriented uses and large retail establishments should be adapted to fit within a more urban, pedestrian-oriented context.** This can be achieved through design techniques such as siting decisions that locate auto-oriented uses and infrastructure to the side or rear of a site; incorporating auto-oriented uses within urban structures with active, pedestrian-oriented street frontage; and locating automobile access points off of secondary streets or service alleys.

**Siting is crucial to accommodating auto-oriented uses within a more compact urban form.** The buildings serving these uses should be oriented toward the street, should utilize as much street frontage as possible, and should be sited in prominent locations such as street corners. Facilities such as gas pumps and parking areas should be shielded from view and located to the rear of a site, wherever possible.

**New developments should incorporate landscape and architectural screening to ensure compatible transitions between uses and densities.** Screening techniques can be adapted for smaller and narrower sites as long as development-related impacts are addressed. The County's Zoning Ordinance typically requires a barrier, such as a wall or fence, an unbroken strip of open space alongside the barrier, and landscaping (e.g., trees or shrubs) at the property's boundaries. To the extent possible, auto-oriented uses and large retail uses should be integrated into buildings that contribute to the compact urban form envisioned by the Comprehensive Plan.

NOTE: Some of the guidelines in this chapter include strategies that are listed in order of preference. In such instances, developers should first pursue the strategy listed as "Preference #1." If the developer can demonstrate that the preferred strategy cannot be achieved, other listed strategies may be explored, starting with "Preference #2." Recognizing that needs and conditions will vary from development to development, these guidelines provide developers with a range of options, and emphasize preferred design approaches and techniques whenever possible.

Drive-through uses are those which contain designated outdoor locations to place an order, pick-up, and/or drop-off items to minimize the need for people to exit their vehicles. These uses are common along Richmond Highway today. The design and placement of future drive-through uses should employ strategies that provide a more cohesive, efficient, safe, and visually-pleasing environment consistent with the Comprehensive Plan vision. Auto-oriented uses such as drive-throughs are discouraged in the Comprehensive Plan unless they can meet certain design objectives.

## DESIGN STRATEGIES

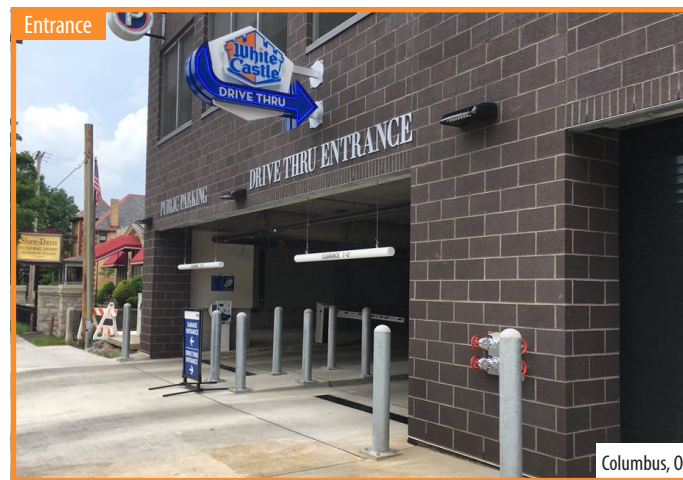
### 1 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

- A. Instead of dedicated drive-through lanes and drive-up windows, designated delivery or pick-up areas should be provided, where possible. These should be integrated within on-street parking spaces or off-street parking lots located behind buildings.

### 2 LOCATION AND INTEGRATION

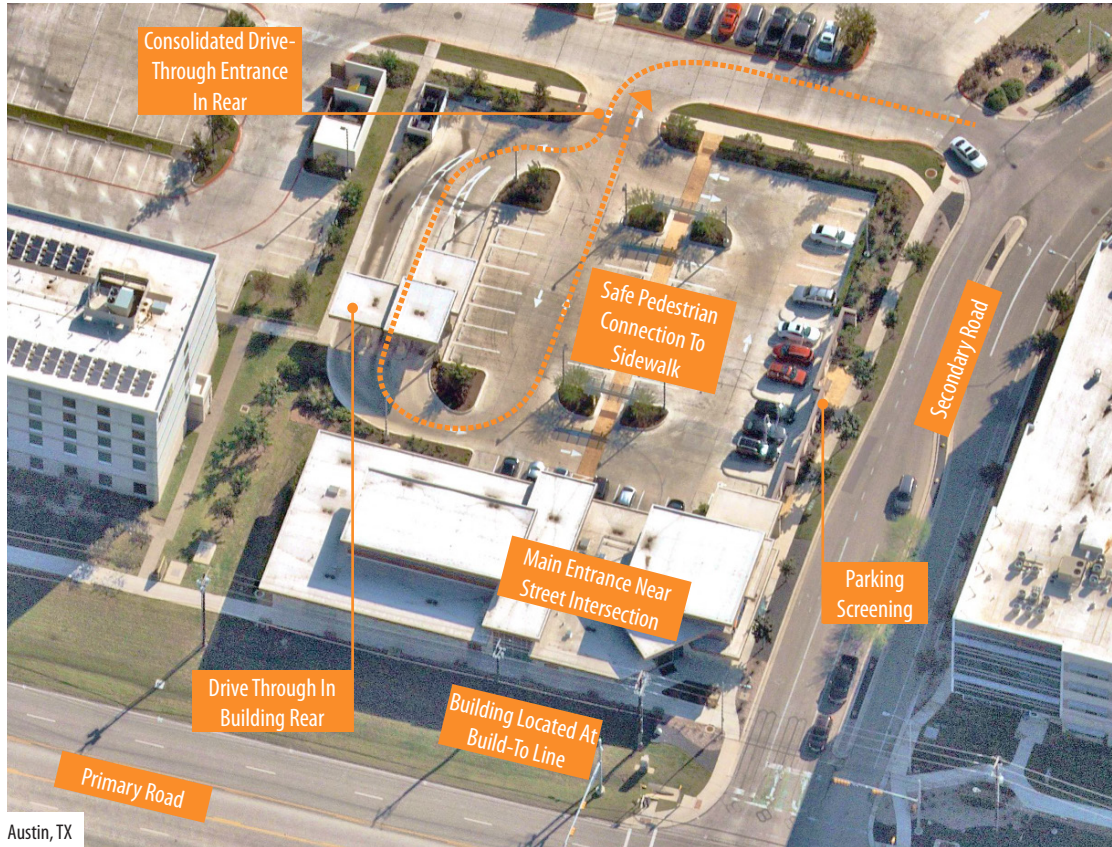
- A. Prioritize drive-through locations as follows:
- i. Preference #1: Integrate into larger commercial/mixed-use buildings.
  - ii. Preference #2: Locate at the edges of strip commercial center buildings.
  - iii. Preference #3: Integrate with at least one additional commercial use rather than as a single, stand-alone use.
- B. Stand-alone drive-through uses are discouraged in the Comprehensive Plan.

# 7A DRIVE-THROUGHS

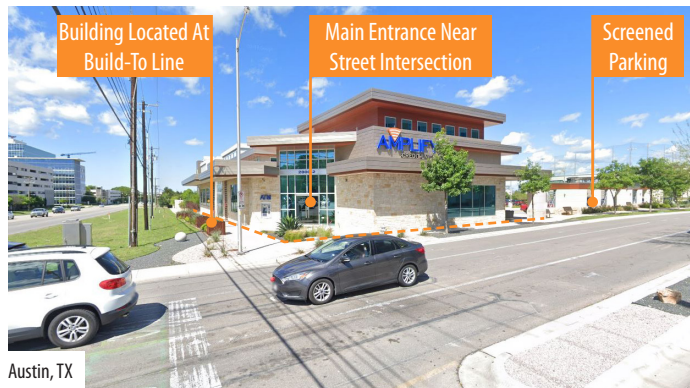


#### LEFT & RIGHT

A restaurant (White Castle) integrated into a mixed-use building with a drive-through facility that is accessed via a parking garage  
Image Credit: Google Streetview, Neil Flanagan (Twitter)



Austin, TX



Austin, TX

**TOP & BOTTOM**

A drive-through bank located along primary street frontage with a prominent corner entrance and architectural and landscape screening  
Image Credit: Nearmap, Google Streetview

**DESIGN STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)**

**3 SITE LAYOUT/ORGANIZATION**

- A. Buildings with integrated drive-through facilities should be located at the build-to line along Richmond Highway.
- B. Pick-up windows, order boxes, trash receptacles, and service areas should not be visible from Richmond Highway. Ideally, these will be located at the back of buildings.
- C. Waiting/queuing lanes/ordering stations/pick-up points:
  - i. Should be integrated into rear or side service alleys, with access provided from the back of buildings.
  - ii. Should not be visible from Richmond Highway or Livability Spines.
  - iii. Should not be visible from neighborhood parks or similar public plazas and open spaces.
  - iv. Should be separated from vehicle drive lanes/aisles via a curbed median or painted buffer.

**4 BUILT FORM**

- A. Building design should align with the Comprehensive Plan vision for buildings/architecture, as described in the Urban Design section of the Plan. Corporate branded architecture should be minimized.
- B. To promote an active street frontage along primary streets, interior seating and activity areas should be clearly visible through front building facades and coordinated with outdoor areas for customer seating and play spaces.
- C. Canopies over pick-up areas along the building side (covering order boxes or pick-up windows) should be minimal in size and visually unassuming. They should blend in and be integrated into the design of the entire building.

## DESIGN STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

### 5 PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY

- A. The site should include safe and accessible connections from sidewalks to main building entrances.
- B. Vehicle drive lanes and waiting/queuing lanes should avoid crossing pedestrian walkways.
- C. In cases where pedestrian connections across vehicle drive lanes cannot be avoided, a crosswalk with landscaped pedestrian waiting areas on either side of the crosswalk should be provided. Sidewalk/walkway material (e.g. concrete) should be continuous across driveways.
- D. Where possible, pedestrian crosswalks should be raised to match sidewalk grades.



Springfield, VA

- E. Pedestrian walkways should be separated from drive-through lanes by low-height architectural walls, fences, bollards, and/or landscaping.

### 6 LANDSCAPING, SCREENING, AND BUFFERING

- A. Low-height architectural screens (30"-48") and plantings should be provided on both sides of drive-through lanes to guide pedestrians to crosswalks and soften the visual impact of drive-through lanes.



Tampa, FL

#### LEFT

A drive-through facility incorporated within an alley between commercial buildings; the use of architectural fences guide pedestrians toward crosswalks

Image Credit: Google Maps

#### RIGHT

A drive-through facility incorporated on one end of a strip commercial center with canopies above drive-through lanes; the canopy is context-compatible with the primary building

Image Credit: Fairfax County

# 7B SERVICE STATIONS

Service stations and associated convenience stores are a necessary part of the Richmond Highway area. However, if not designed well, these sites can be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan vision; as such, the design of service stations and related structures should consider the strategies detailed in this chapter.

Convenience stores and service stations should be integrated into other uses to the extent feasible; stand-alone buildings should be minimized. The design of buildings and site elements should mimic the form and materiality of nearby buildings, or the future character of the area, and minimize corporate branded architecture. Landscaping/screening, canopy design, lighting, and signage should complement the surrounding areas.

## DESIGN STRATEGIES

### 1 LOCATION AND INTEGRATION

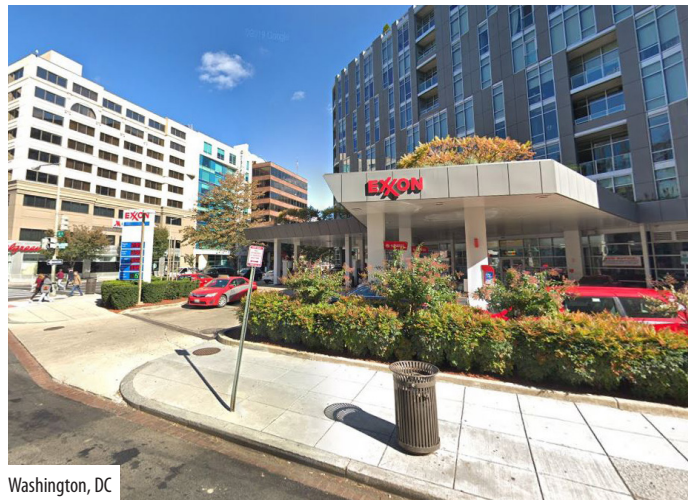
- A. Service stations and related convenience stores should be located using the following order of preference:
  - i. Preference #1: Integrate within mixed-use buildings.
  - ii. Preference #2: Locate associated buildings along the primary road's frontage or at street intersections, with the service station canopy areas located in a less conspicuous location, such as the side or rear of the convenience store building.
- B. Locate service bay garage doors at the building rear or in less conspicuous places.

### 2 LANDSCAPING, SCREENING, AND BUFFERS

- A. A combination of hardscaping and a constructed screen should be included as an effective means of visually screening vehicle areas.

#### LEFT

A service station integrated into a mixed-use building; canopy design incorporating green roofs and associated planting  
Image Credit: Google Maps



Washington, DC

#### RIGHT

A service station convenience store built along build-to lines  
Image Credit: Strongtowns



Milwaukee, WI

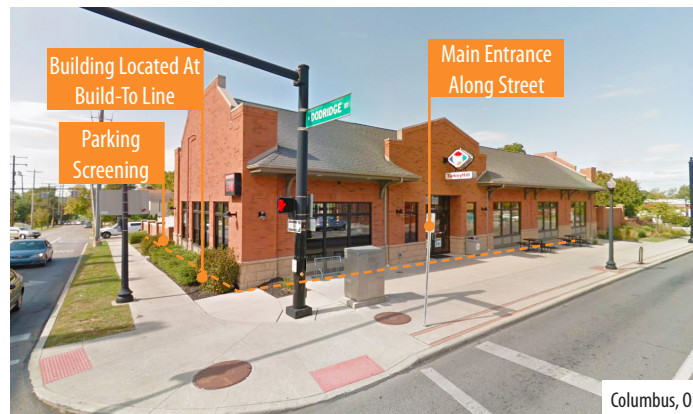
## DESIGN STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

- B. Landscaped screens should be applied along the edges of the build-to line particularly where the gas pumps and canopies are located. Such landscaping should blend in with the predominant plant materials of adjoining properties, be high-quality, and should include groundcover, shrubs, and mature trees to soften the harsh appearance of the service stations.
- C. Service areas, utility boxes, trash enclosures, etc. should be screened by dense plantings.
- D. Low-height architectural walls (30"-48") and decorative fencing should be integrated with landscaping to further create an edge and buffer between adjoining properties as well as public roads/streetscapes.
- E. Raised planters can be used to soften the visual appearance of the site.
- F. Fuel truck maneuvering area should be considered when service stations are integrated into mixed-use developments.

### 3 BUILT FORM

- A. Service Station Canopies
  - i. Canopy design and architectural detailing should be consistent with the design of other buildings on the site to ensure a cohesive appearance.
  - ii. Canopy columns should be made of a material similar to the building. The integration of green roofs and similar green features is encouraged.
  - iii. Alternative technology within canopy design should be creatively integrated. For example, the roof of the canopy can be utilized for the location of solar panels.
  - iv. Lighting and signage on the canopy fascia should be minimized. Application of corporate colors should also be minimized.

- v. Breaking down monolithic canopy structures into a series of smaller canopy structures is encouraged. Example approaches include variations in roof form and pillars supporting the canopies. Such canopies could incorporate public art where opportunities exist.
- vi. The height of the canopy should be limited to 16' from the ground-level to the top of the canopy. This height limitation excludes any vegetation/green roof treatment above the canopy.



#### TOP & BOTTOM

A service station and convenience store with architectural features that are consistent with surrounding buildings. This site layout is appropriate for instances in which a service station property abuts non-residential uses at the rear of the property  
Image Credit: Nearmap, Google Streetview



## DESIGN STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

- B. Convenience Store, Car Wash and Auto-Repair Buildings
- i. Convenience store building façades that face public rights-of-way should be transparent with glazing on the ground floor for at least 60% of the facade so that increased views of interior activities and displays create interest along the streetscape.
  - ii. Service bay locations for car wash and auto-repair buildings should not front Richmond Highway, Livability Spines, or Ecological Spines. Service bay doors should include high-quality materials with architectural details that complement adjoining commercial/mixed-use buildings.
  - iii. Site and building design associated with auto-repair uses and car washes should provide shaded waiting areas for patrons.

## 4 SIGNAGE AND LIGHTING

- A. Free-standing business identity or gas pricing signs should be ground-mounted, monument styles and should include cladding materials that are consistent with the building design
- B. Repetitive usage of, or oversized commercial signage, such as corporate logos on canopies and buildings, should be minimized or avoided completely.
- C. Site lighting (including canopy lighting, corporate signage, and storefront lighting) should minimize light pollution beyond property boundaries, use downward-directed cut-off light fixtures, and be Dark Sky compliant - an outdoor lighting criteria developed by the International Dark Sky Places (IDSP) Program.



LEFT

A ground-mounted monument sign with cladding that is consistent with the development's buildings  
Image Credit: BrightMLS

Riverdale Park, MD



REFERENCE FOR INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY PLACES (IDSP) PROGRAM:

<https://www.darksky.org/>

“Retail Sales Establishment-Large” applies to retail establishments over 80,000 gross square feet. To the extent feasible, guidance should apply to other these large format retail uses that fall under this size. Large retail sales establishments are convenient but often are large-footprint, sprawling, single-story, warehouse-style formats. However, more urban footprints have begun to emerge. As the Richmond Highway area redevelops, large retail that is new or relocated should have a more urban-format and high-quality design that responds to each CBC’s planned design character.

## DESIGN STRATEGIES

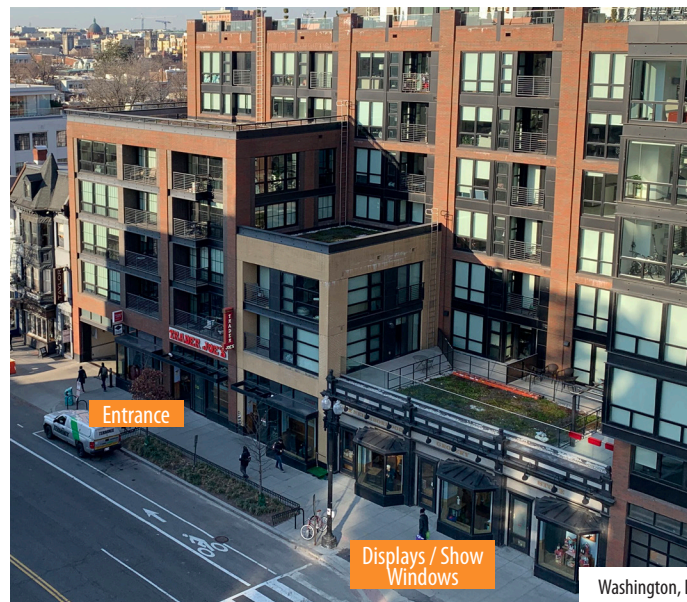
### 1 LOCATION AND INTEGRATION

- A. Large retail structures should be located using the following in order for preference:
  - i. Preference #1: Integrate stores into larger commercial/mixed-use buildings. Internal square footages are encouraged to be subdivided into multiple floors to reduce the building footprint.
  - ii. Preference #2: Locate stand-alone, smaller footprint retail buildings so that they conform to the street grid recommended in the Comprehensive Plan.

# 7C RETAIL SALES ESTABLISHMENT -LARGE



Washington, DC



Washington, DC

**LEFT**  
A grocery store integrated within a mixed-use building; a corner entrance is highlighted with architectural awnings  
Image Credit: Bright Media

**RIGHT**  
A grocery store with storefront display windows along the streetscape  
Image Credit: Wikimedia

**TOP**

Parking garage access, via stairs, elevators and escalators, are integrated into the building and have special entrance features at the ground level  
Image Credit: Wikimedia



Merrifield, VA

**BOTTOM**

Parking garage and entrance creatively designed to integrate with building form and materiality  
Image Credit: Rhodeside & Harwell



Alexandria, VA

**DESIGN STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)**

- B. Large retail stores should have internalized structured parking or, at a minimum, heavily screened and landscaped surface lots.
- C. Ground floors should be placed along build-to lines and coordinated with the building façades of adjacent buildings to create a cohesive streetscape environment. Refer to *Volume I*, Chapter 4: Building Design, for building placement and form.

**2 BUILDING CHARACTER**

- A. Building façade forms and material applications should be compatible with desired future character of buildings, and should avoid corporate branding façade treatments, when possible. See Chapter 4 for more specific Richmond Highway building design guidance. Refer to *Volume I* for additional Countywide Commercial Revitalization Area/District building design information.
- B. Pedestrian access to internalized parking structures should follow with entry feature guidelines in *Volume I*, Chapter 4C.1: Non-Residential Ground Floors. These entry features can include canopies or awnings or should highlight entrances with special materials and architectural treatments.
- C. Entrances should be located along primary streetscape frontages and not exclusively at internal parking structures or rear parking areas.
- D. Ground floor façades along build-to lines should be, at a minimum, 60% transparent; storefront and clear glass windows should provide views of showrooms, displays, internal activity spaces, and related interior uses from the streetscape.
- E. Parking garage access, loading and related back-of house operations should be located along service streets, or be located interior to the site or underground.
- F. Decals and posters should not obstruct views into the store.



**TOP & BOTTOM**  
Parking access for a large retail establishment located along a secondary street  
Image Credit: Rhodeside & Harwell

# 7D LANDSCAPING AND TRANSITIONING BETWEEN USES

Within the CBCs, the Comprehensive Plan calls for a range of medium- to high-density buildings that include a mix of residential and non-residential uses. Surrounding the CBCs, residential neighborhoods are intended to remain. Providing effective transitions between different uses and varying densities and intensities, and limiting visual impacts to adjacent residential properties, is key to creating well-designed urban environments.

The guidelines are not intended to supersede Chapter 13 of the Zoning Ordinance, which regulates transitional screening. However, more urban strategies for screening between uses may be appropriate because of the dense conditions planned for the CBCs. **This section provides unique design strategies for transitioning between uses that can be used in conjunction with the requirements in the Zoning Ordinance, depending on site conditions.**

## DESIGN STRATEGIES

### 1 FEATURES AND AMENITIES

- A. Certain features may serve as effective transitions by providing space between uses while also offering amenities or encouraging the space to be multi-purpose and functional. They should be considered as a supplement to other screening measures. These features or amenities may include:

**LEFT**  
Stepped walls with high-quality materials, landscaping and public art provide screening for an adjacent residential community  
Image Credit: Google Streetview

**RIGHT**  
Trees maintained at an appropriate height along with a masonry wall provide screening between different land uses  
Image Credit: Fairfax County



- i. Streetscapes with landscaping in both the landscape panel and behind the sidewalk
- ii. Public art
- iii. Linear parks and trails
- iv. Pedestrian connections between buildings
- v. Pocket parks
- vi. Decorative walls and fences
- vii. Other amenities as deemed appropriate or contributing to the vibrancy of the CBC or adjacent community.

### 2 LANDSCAPE DESIGN

- A. Preserve existing mature or canopy trees and wooded areas within buffers.
- B. Landscaping should be provided on both sides of the barrier to soften its visual impact.

## DESIGN STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

### 3 DESIGN OF WALLS AND FENCES

- A. A masonry wall or powder-coated aluminum fencing is recommended. Cladding materials that match the design of buildings within the new development or are context-sensitive to the neighboring properties should be incorporated, as appropriate.
- B. Wood and/or PVC fencing should generally be avoided unless combined with other high quality materials.
- C. The creative design of barriers, such as serpentine walls, should be considered.
- D. Barriers should work around existing, healthy trees and established landscaping. Wall foundations should be designed to avoid impacts from established and future tree root systems. In areas where existing trees and vegetation are to be preserved, or where the transitional screening area is limited in width, masonry walls should be constructed with a 'pile and grade beam' design.
- E. Barriers should not inhibit nor obstruct stormwater flow.

### 4 PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

- A. Pedestrian access points should be provided between screening areas in locations where connections between buildings or developments are desired.
- B. Pedestrian access points from adjacent areas should connect to sidewalk areas in the CBC streetscape network.



#### TOP

Landscaping design that includes ornamental trees, shrubs and understory planting provides a consistent buffer along off-street parking areas and the sidewalk (Note: tree planting techniques shown in this image do not meet certain Fairfax County tree-planting standards)  
Image Credit: Fairfax County



#### BOTTOM

Trees and understory planting on both sides of an alley provide enhanced access and transitional screening between different land uses  
Image Credit: Fairfax County



#### REFERENCE FOR LANDSCAPING AND TRANSITIONING

[Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance Article 13-330 – Transitional Screening and Barriers](#)

# 7E INTERIM STREET CONDITIONS

Achieving the vision of the Comprehensive Plan will occur over time, and therefore, interim street conditions may occur as the “grid of streets” is established. “Interim street conditions” refer to a portion of a street’s ultimate cross-section being completed with redevelopment, including the typical two travel lanes and the streetscape (Landscape Panel, Sidewalk, and Building Zone) on the side of the street that is being redeveloped. The construction of the remainder of the street will occur with future development/redevelopment on the other side of the street to create the ultimate condition. This allows abutting property owners to share in the provision of the ultimate roadway. The interim street condition should ensure two-way vehicle travel and establish the permanent location of the curb and street trees on the property of the side being redeveloped so that these features do not have to be replaced as part of future projects. See *Volume I* for additional guidance on interim streets and streetscapes.

## DESIGN STRATEGIES

### 1 PLACEMENT AND CHARACTER

- A. Interim street conditions should be consistent with the streetscape zones, paving, furnishings, trees, and signage in the public realm of the ultimate street and streetscape design.
- B. The cross-section should establish minimum travel lanes, and streetscape design and curb/gutter on the redeveloping side of the street.
- C. Gateway Streetscapes should avoid being developed as half streets, where possible.

*The following description and the illustrations provide an example of dimensional requirements for interim street implementation on two lane streets. The transportation needs of each street should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.*

#### RIGHT

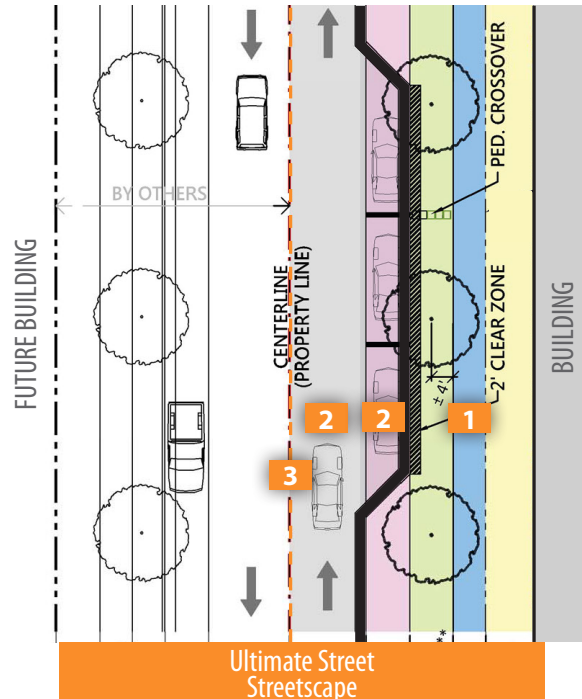
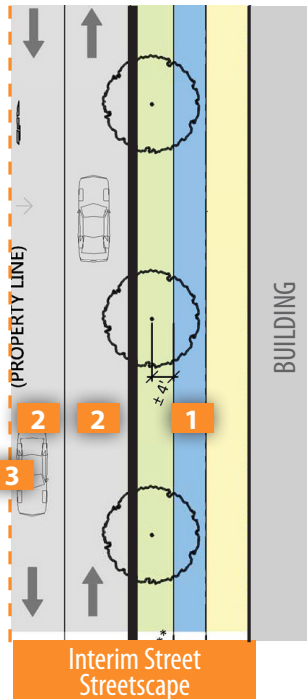
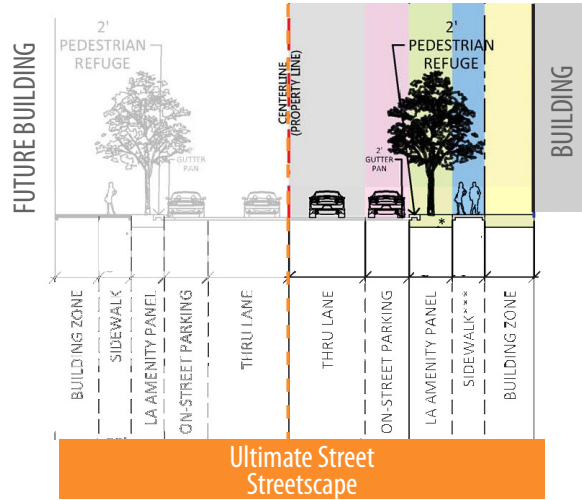
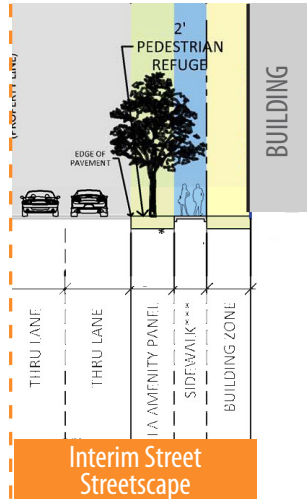
A development site that includes “interim street” grid segments (travel lanes and streetscape) on the side of the street being redeveloped. Future adjoining development projects convert these “interim” streets into ultimate “complete streets” as they are implemented

Image Credit: Nearmap

1. An interim street cross-section should:
  - Set the curb, and everything behind the curb, as the permanent condition on the redeveloping side
  - Accommodate two-way travel
  - Accommodate bicycle facilities as appropriate on the side of the street being redeveloped
  - Install street trees in the permanent locations on the side of the street being redeveloped
2. The ultimate cross-section should:
  - Provide the remaining street elements needed to achieve the ultimate street cross-section
  - Set the curb and the accompanying streetscape for the remainder of the street
  - Re-stripe the interim street portion as appropriate



## INTERIM 2-LANE STREET SECTION AND ULTIMATE 2-LANE STREET SECTION



- 1 Interim streets incorporate the permanent construction of one side of a street's curb and should include a complete streetscape on the redeveloping property
- 2 Interim streets require at least two travel lanes, one of which can be converted into on-street parking with bulb-outs when the ultimate street is built
- 3 Property lines can function as roadway centerlines for a future ultimate street

**KEY**

- Building
- Building Zone
- Sidewalk
- Landscape Panel / Amenity Zone
- Travel Lane
- On-street Parking / Bulb-out
- Curb line
- Roadway Centerline

**LEFT**  
 Example sections and plans depicting the design and potential phasing of half and full streets  
 Image Credit: Gordon Civil Engineering

**NOTE: Some interim streets may include bicycle facilities.**





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