



**McLean District Design  
Guidelines  
Advisory Group Meeting #11**

**Community Feedback**

May 24, 2023



# Agenda

- A. Review Data from Survey and Open House
- B. Review Comments for Discussion + Select Other Comments
- C. Next Steps

## Comments for Discussion

1. Building transitions
2. Double row of trees on Avenues
3. 'Urban Trail' on Old Dominion
4. 'Green Avenues' + 'Main Streets' (Beverly/Elm)
5. Framework Plan revisions
6. Brick pavers and accessibility
7. Chapter 5 Park Comments
8. Surface parking lot screening
9. 'Commercial Retrofit Building Frontage' example
10. "Historical block patterns" guiding development
11. Incorporation of local history
12. Define 'vernacular architecture'

## Select 'other' Comments

1. Beverly building setbacks
2. Description of Comp. Plan heights
3. Eliminate "minimums" from dimensions
4. VDOT maintenance buffer
5. On-street parking guidance
6. "Contributing Structures"
7. Use of non-native tree and plant species

# Survey and Open House Results

2

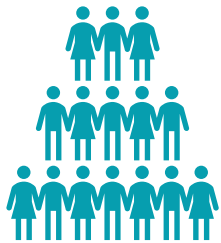
Letters Received from MCA P&Z  
+ McLean Landowners Assoc



268 Completed  
Surveys

How well does the  
Design Guidelines  
vision  
**statement**  
represent your  
vision for McLean?

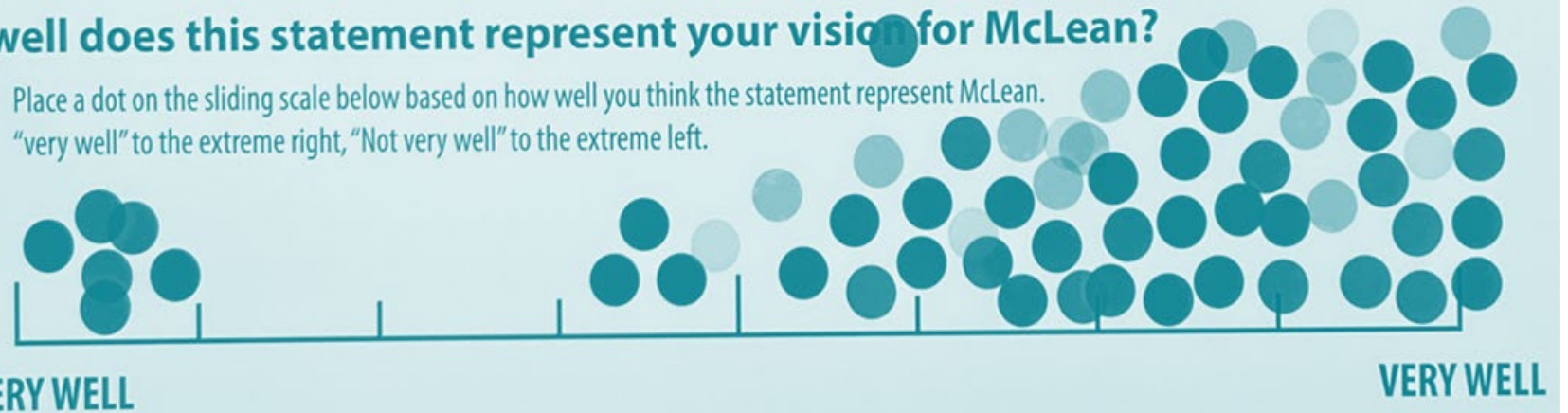
64%



200 Open House  
Attendees

How well does this statement represent your vision for McLean?

Place a dot on the sliding scale below based on how well you think the statement represent McLean.  
"very well" to the extreme right, "Not very well" to the extreme left.



# Survey and Open House Results - Vision for McLean

## Features to Promote

- Small town feel
- More retail & restaurants
- A vibrant destination
- More mixed use
- More communal and green spaces
- Sustainability is important
- Pedestrian-friendly environment
- Highlight McLean history

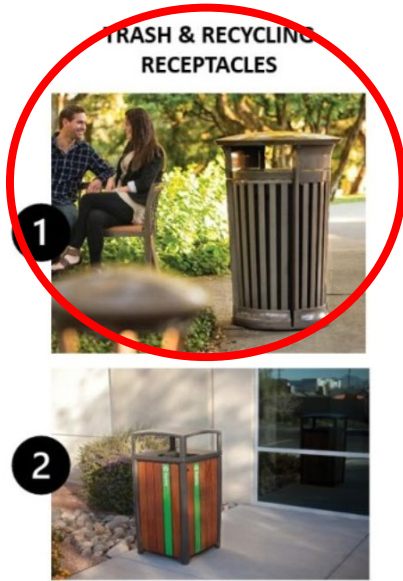
## Dislikes

- Don't let McLean become urban
- Not Tysons or Bethesda
- Too much pavement
- Avoid faux town centers
- Do not like Mosaic District
- Concerned about traffic congestion
- Concerned parking won't be convenient, available, and free
- Avoid big box retail

# Survey and Open House Results - Streetscape

1. Prefer wide sidewalks
2. Concerned about brick pavers
3. Increase trees and native species
4. Trees on Avenues may be too densely planted
5. EV charging along on-street parking spaces
6. Less impervious surface
7. More outdoor dining that is buffered from traffic

# Survey and Open House Results - Street Furnishings



Online

vs

Open House

**A** Select the furnishings that you would want to see in McLean. You can select as many as you like. Place a dot in the space next to the image of your selection.


# Survey and Open House Results - Building Frontages



# Open House Results - Vernacular Architecture Preferences

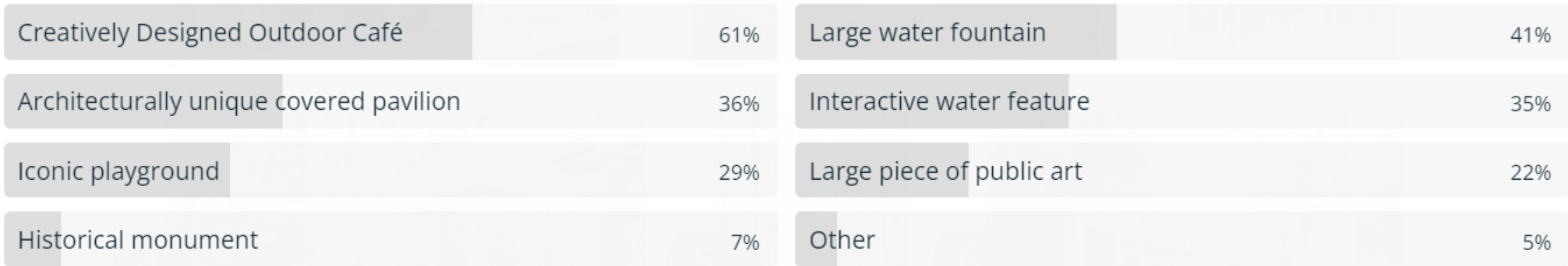
1. Majority of people like Evans Farm structures and The Signet
2. Old Town and Georgetown is not McLean
3. Mid-century modern is missing





# Survey and Open House Results - Parks

**A focal point in the Signature Park will be an iconic feature that defines the park's identity. What type of focal point would you like to see?** Select up to three (3).



Closed to responses | 147 Responses



# Community Comments for Discussion

12 topics



# A note to clarify the Guidelines' Language and Intent

1. The Guidelines are not requirements
2. The Comprehensive Plan doesn't always get into the level of details in the Guidelines, so just because a design concept isn't overtly written in the Comp Plan, doesn't mean it didn't intend to allow for it.
3. There are several instances in the Guidelines where staff will soften the language to make it clear that it is recommendation, not a regulatory standard.

# 1

## Architectural Transitions

Comment: Guidelines disregard the hierarchy in the Comprehensive Plan to determine when architectural transitions should be used.

Proposed Solution: The Comprehensive Plan's development zones already establish a tiered transition in building heights. However, the plan also calls for architectural transitions in certain instances. The guidelines can help by showing strategies for incorporating architectural transitions consistent with the Plan.

There are three types of situations that the Comp Plan describes as needing transitions:

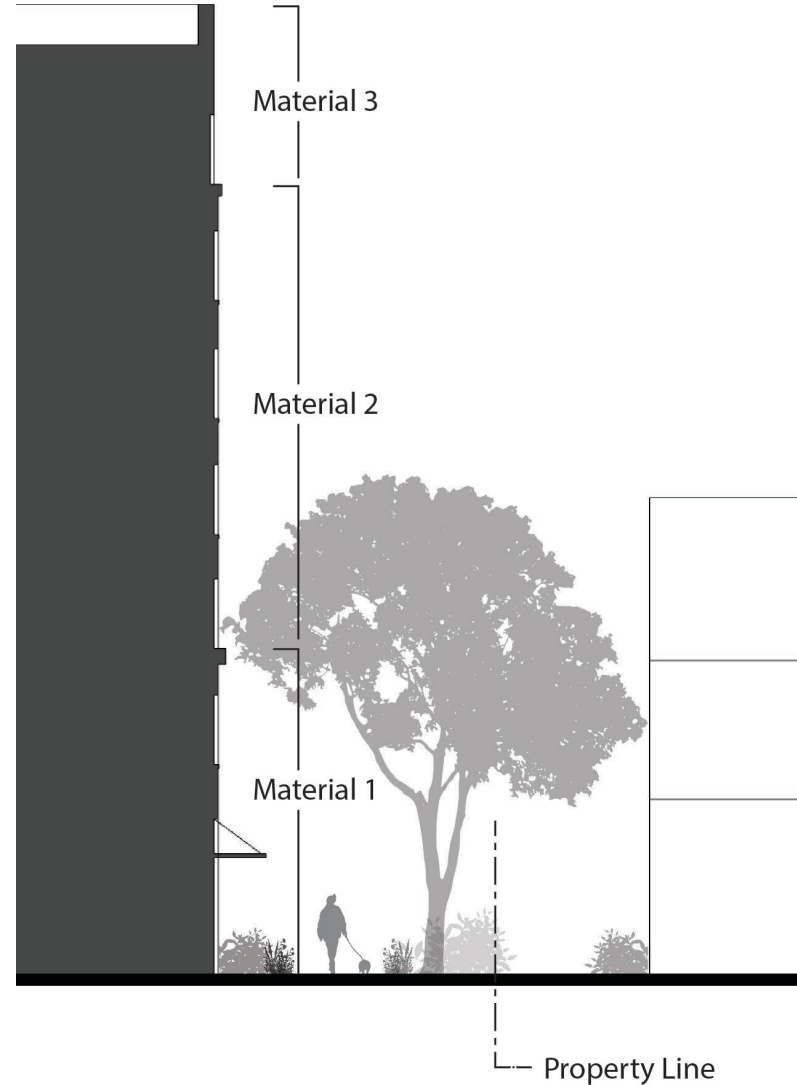
1. Between the zones within the CBC
2. When new General Zone developments abut the boundary of the CBC, adjacent to single-family homes
3. Center Zone to Edge Zone height differential

# 1

## Transitions

### Between the Zones within the CBC

1. Express Base-Middle-Top to visually bridge the gap between different heights.
2. Consider coursings and material changes.
3. No stepping in massing is expected.



# 1 Transitions

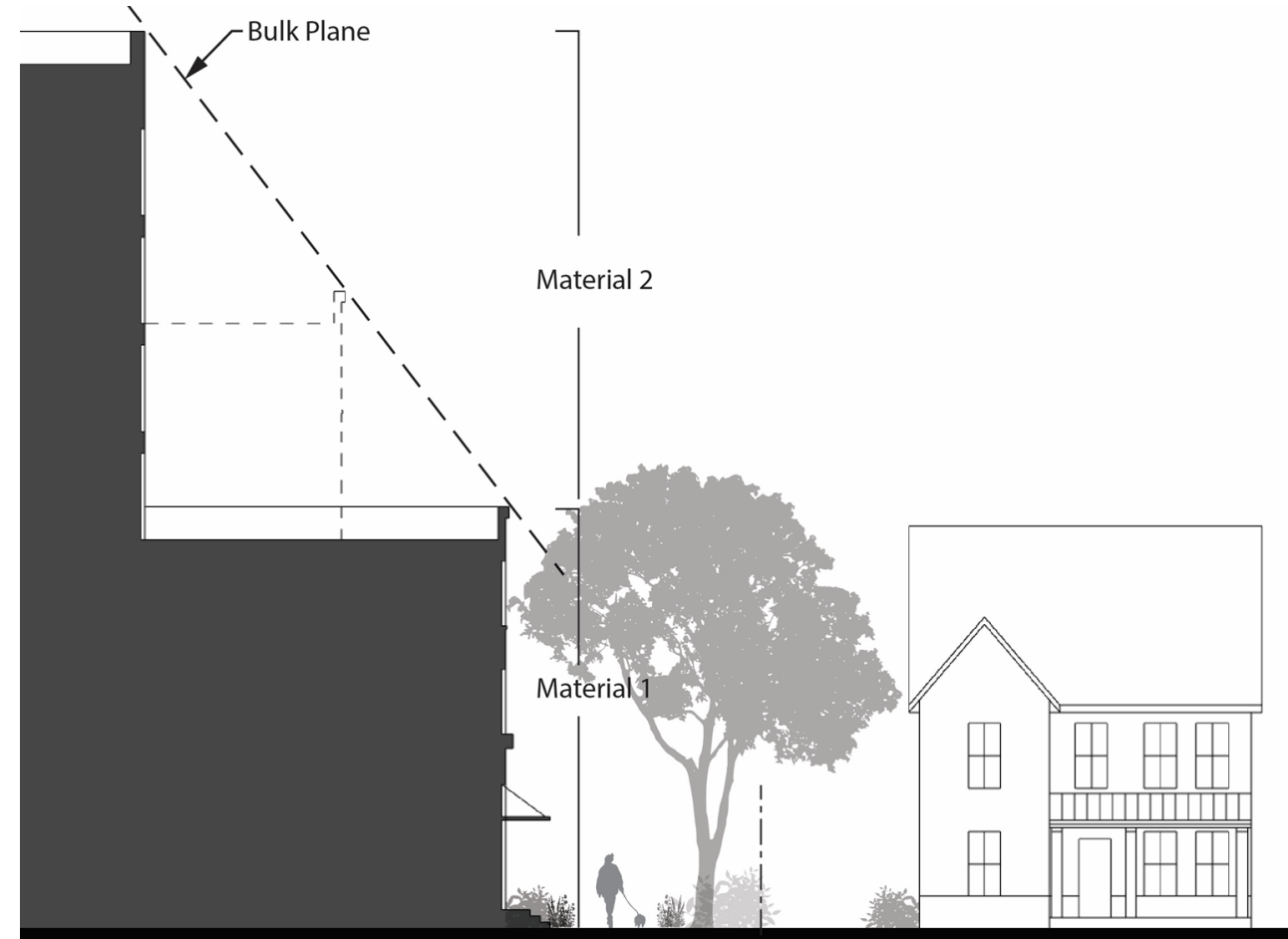
## CBC Zones Next to Single-Family Dwellings

1. Step back multiple floors to reduce building scale
2. Consider material changes and/or roof expression to “hide” top floors
3. Vegetated buffers



General Zone

Property Line or  
Edge of CBC



Center Zone

Property Line or  
Edge of CBC

# 1

## Transitions

Examples of  
roofline and  
material changes or  
step-backs.



# 2

## Allée of Trees

Comment: Double Row of Trees on Avenues is inconsistent with the Comp. Plan because the minimum building zone dimension is not large enough to accommodate. There are also concerns that trees affect commercial visibility from roadway.

### Proposed Solution:

1. Clarify: Comp Plan dimensions are not changing. Also, Comp Plan encourages trees in building zone, especially residential.
2. Increase flexibility in the text to explain that trees in the Building Zone is not a requirement and should only be included when there is sufficient room - i.e. at least 8-feet for an ornamental or fastigate type tree.
3. Make it clear in the Guidelines: if the min. Comp Plan dimension (4-feet) is provided for commercial uses, trees are not expected in the Building Zone.



# 3

## Urban Trail vs. Pathway

Comment: The Guidelines refer to the 'Pedestrian and Bicycle Pathway' as a "Urban Trail" on Old Dominion. The term Urban Trail is not used in the Comp Plan.

Comment: Comp Plan states that the pathway is delineated for cyclists and pedestrians but does not state how delineation occurs.

### Proposed Solution:

1. Clarify: Comp Plan dimensions are not changing. There is no difference between the recommendations in the Plan vs. Guidelines.
2. Using the term 'Urban Trail' provides greater clarity and consistency for countywide planning and transportation purposes. 'Urban Trail' will help engineers select the right construction details for this facility.
3. Delineation is recommended to occur via facility signage and/or pavement markings. [already included in the UDGs]

# 4

## Green Avenues + Main Streets

Comment: The terms "Green Avenues" and "Main Streets" are new taxonomies. Why is greening and buffering particularly important on the Avenues and why is "character" important along Beverly and Elm"?

### Proposed Solution:

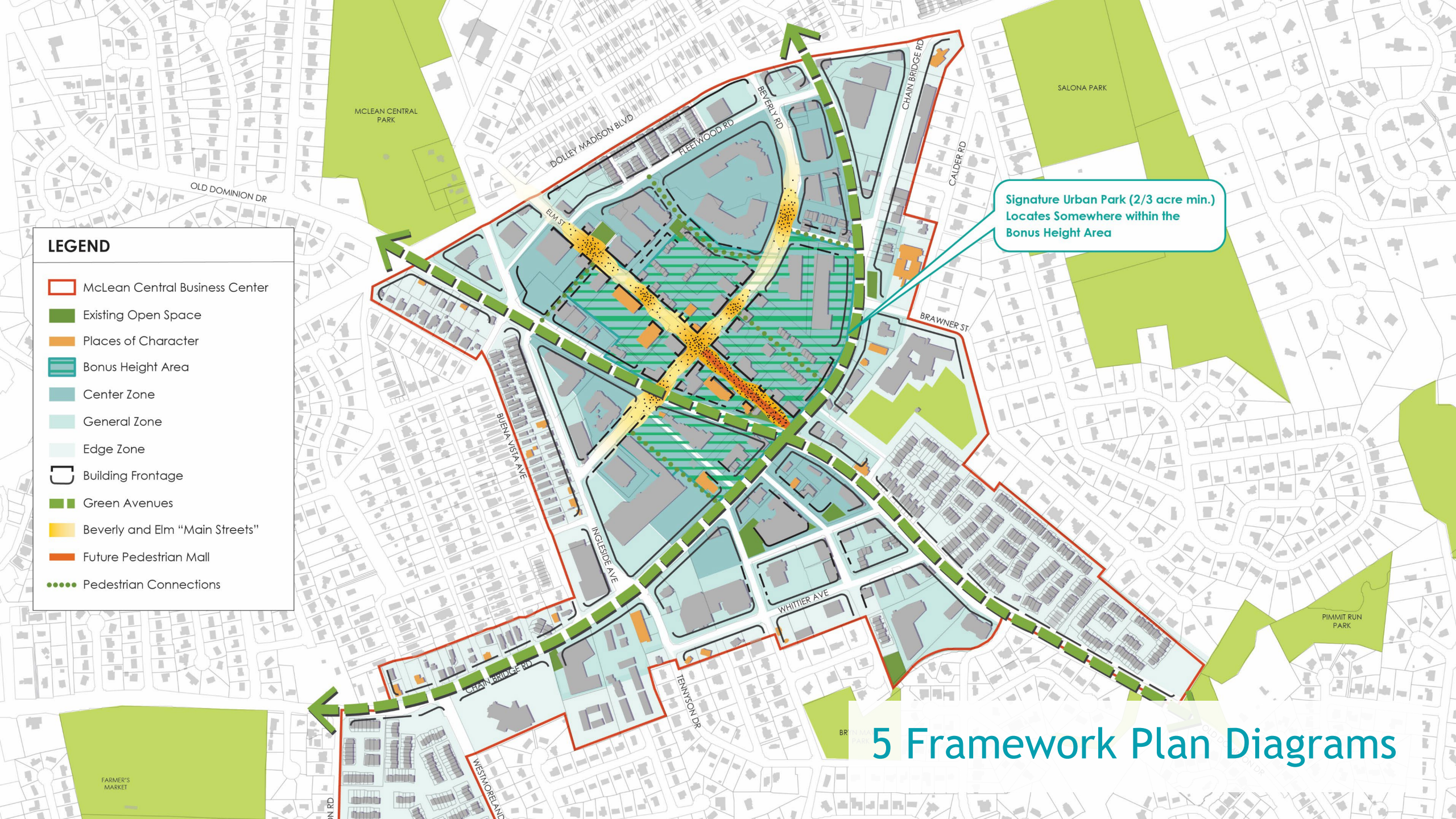
1. Clarify: Comp Plan dimensions are not changing.
2. These new terms are a further elaboration of the Plan's intent. The plan has distinctive cross-sections for these 4 streets. It focuses on Beverly and Elm as the center of the redevelopment. It refers to using streets as green corridors.
3. The term "Main Street" is used to further elaborate on the type of character to be fostered.

**LEGEND**

- McLean Central Business Center
- Existing Open Space
- Places of Character
- Bonus Height Area
- Center Zone
- General Zone
- Edge Zone
- Building Frontage
- Green Avenues
- Beverly and Elm "Main Streets"
- Future Pedestrian Mall
- Pedestrian Connections

Signature Urban Park (2/3 acre min.)  
Locates Somewhere within the  
Bonus Height Area

# 5 Framework Plan Diagrams



# 5

## Framework Plan Diagrams

### Street Network

**LEGEND**

- McLean Community Business Center
- Open Space
- Community Business Center Parks
- Beverly & Elm Street (Local)
- Avenues
- Boulevards
- Local Streets
- Gateways and Nodes
- Building Frontage
- Bonus Height Area
- Center Zone
- General Zone
- Edge Zone



# 6

## Brick Sidewalks

Comment: Concern that brick pavers cause accessibility issues for elderly and people with disabilities. Most like the look of brick but want an even surface.

- Slippery when wet
- Uneven, and settles over time to create tripping hazards.

### Proposed Solution:

1. No recommended change.
2. According to Technical Bulletins, ADA, and PROWAG, the key to accessible sidewalks is:
  - Material: The AG, staff, and consultants carefully considered the paver specifications, so they would NOT be slippery when wet: wire-cut (squarer, and textured, not mold-formed) with a friction co-efficient of >0.6.
  - Installation method: We prepared an installation detail that addresses the concern of settlement and low vibration using tight joints

# 7 Parks Chapter - Page 01

Minimum of 1/10 acre for pocket parks and some expectations for linear parks.

- There is an important distinction between a plaza/open space vs. what is classified as a park according to the county's policy on '*urban parks framework*'

Lack of substance in the Pocket Parks and Linear Parks Design principles.

- Integrated into Volume I (*Additional detail regarding park design themes and principals provided*)

Interparcel collaboration on park design.

- Agree

If the development within the bonus height is phased, at a minimum, a substantial portion of the signature park should be delivered with the initial phase of development.

- Substantial portion should be defined as including the parks "focal point" as part of phase 1

# 7 Parks Chapter - Page 02

A simple walkway with some benches should not be classified as a linear park.

- Should include a balance of active and passive recreational amenities.

Active uses in linear parks could be the trail.

- Provided it's the appropriate width to allow Bikers and Joggers to pass safely and is supported by fitness stations and/or distance markers, seating, etc. Will make this clear.

Scale of some of the case studies seems too large.

- scale is not as relevant in this design focus... the purpose is to demonstrate a strength of the design theme and arrangement of the elements (i.e. focal points, nodes, lawns, perimeter buffer, etc.)
- Question: Do you think Bryant Park should be eliminated? NYC population density requires the larger park.

Updated graphics in framework plan. *(see next page)*

# 7

## Framework Plan Diagrams

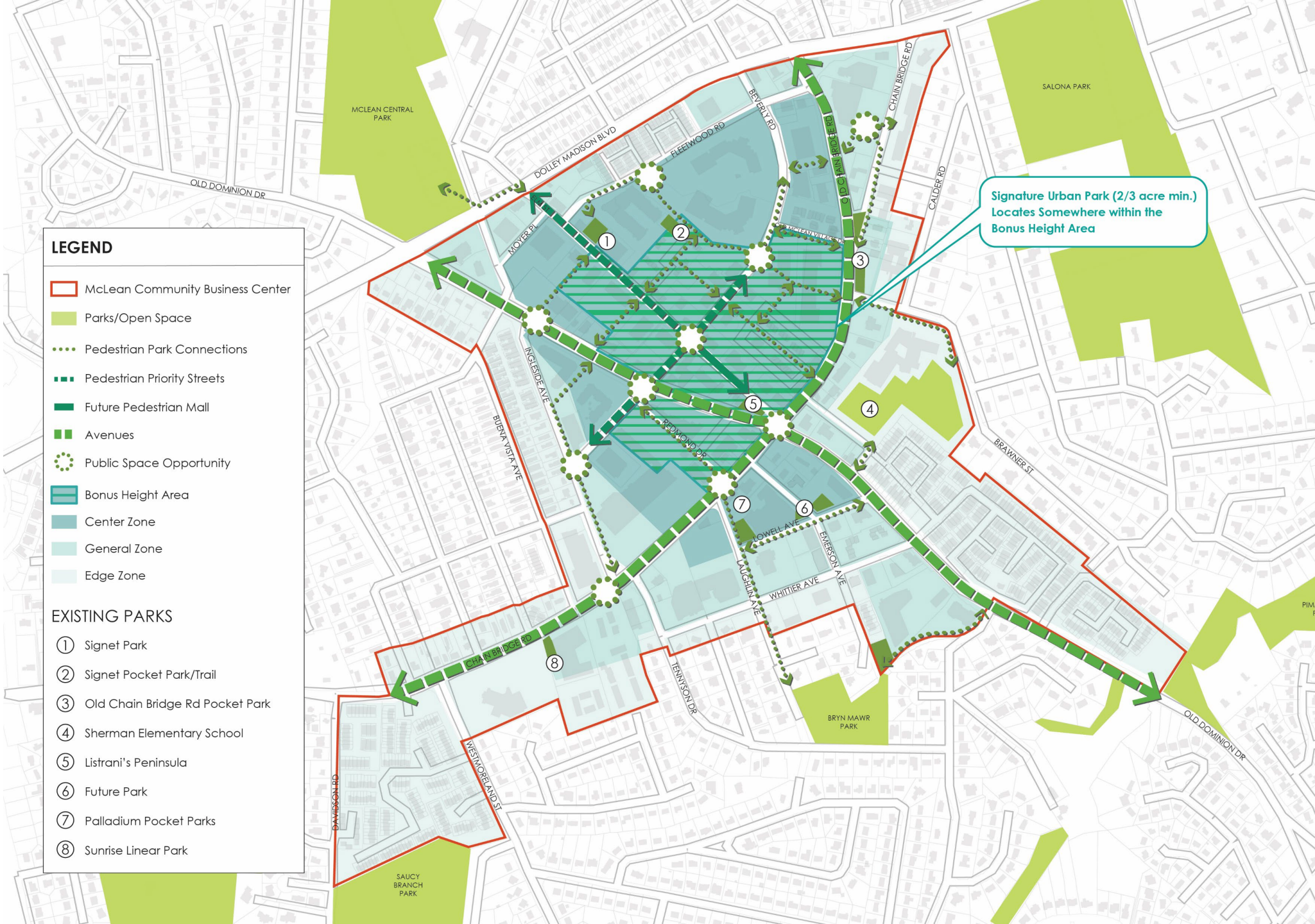
### Park Network

**LEGEND**

- McLean Community Business Center
- Parks/Open Space
- Pedestrian Park Connections
- Pedestrian Priority Streets
- Future Pedestrian Mall
- Avenues
- Public Space Opportunity
- Bonus Height Area
- Center Zone
- General Zone
- Edge Zone

**EXISTING PARKS**

- ① Signet Park
- ② Signet Pocket Park/Trail
- ③ Old Chain Bridge Rd Pocket Park
- ④ Sherman Elementary School
- ⑤ Listrani's Peninsula
- ⑥ Future Park
- ⑦ Palladium Pocket Parks
- ⑧ Sunrise Linear Park





# 8

## Surface Parking

### Question:

Retain Guidelines recommendation of “*two or more*” or change to “*one or ideally several*”?

Comment: Replace the recommendation for: "multi-layered surface lot screening with at least two of the following elements..." with one, or ideally several (the list includes low, masonry walls; landscape berms, decorative screens or other screening devices, ornamental or shade trees, continuous row of shrubs)



# 9

## Commercial Building Retrofit

Comment: When do recommendations for the retrofit of a commercial building exterior apply? (Figure 4-7) Concern that minor changes such as a special use permit or minor building modifications will trigger expensive exterior/site improvements.

### Proposed Solution:

Make it clearer in the Guidelines that this type of retrofit is not an expectation but a suggestion for when expansive sitework is planned.

Note: The intent of this section is to articulate that even if a property owner is not demolishing a building, there are strategies to make its frontage fit with the desired walkable and active character for the area.

#### PUBLIC REALM: OFFICE ENLARGEMENT

##### TREE PLANTING

Create buffer between public realm and office building

##### BIORETENTION

Performs stormwater management, integrated seating, and green space

##### STREET ORIENTED ACCESS

Creates a sense of arrival and hierarchy with architecture features and paving

##### BIKE RACKS

Provide parking for bikes to encourage multimodal transportation



##### INTEGRATED SEATING

Provide pedestrians and office users a place to sit near green spaces

##### EXPANDED PEDESTRIAN ZONE

Pedestrian paving expands to create an engaged public realm

##### PLANTING AREA

Add green space to buffer sidewalk from traffic

##### STREETSCAPE FURNISHINGS

Provide seating for pedestrians

# 10

## Historical Block Patterns

Comment: The following text - Development should follow "historical block patterns" and "reflect the scale, mass, and heights from buildings in neighboring blocks" and "to avoid 'walls of buildings'" conflicts with the building zone, height, and massing guidance in the Comp Plan, or with other policies in the draft Design Guidelines (for example, the requirement for 75% of building frontage to be located at the build-to line).

### Proposed Solution:

1. Change “follow” to “consider”
2. Replace “scale, mass and heights” with “architectural treatments, materials, and the rooflines of buildings in neighboring blocks, while also be in keeping with other guideline suggestions”
3. The “walls of buildings” guidance is not mandatory and speaks to other guidance about ways to break-up large expanses of facades.

# 11

## Historical References

Comment: 1. While there is a summary of McLean's history in the Introduction, and reference to the use of historical markers in Chapter 6 - Gateways, Public Art, Wayfinding and Interpretive Signs, more opportunities to address McLean's unique history should be deployed to further highlight McLean's sense of place.

2. The chronology needs improvement.

### Proposed Solutions:

- Edits on the origin story + throughout.
- Focus on both ideas for **physical designs** and the **social capital** that has built the rich history of McLean.
  1. Physical design: Add more ideas tied to McLean's history and ensure ideas are integrated as part of the project planning phase.
  2. Story-telling on McLean's Social Capital: tributes to the civic leaders who have made McLean a beloved community.



# 12

## Vernacular Architecture

Comment: The term ‘vernacular’ in reference to McLean’s architectural style is unclear as there is no singular style in the CBC. Staff should either eliminate this term or further delve into architecture and architectural features common to McLean’s history that at build-out would give character to McLean.

### Proposed Solution:

1. Do not include style expectations in the Guidelines.
2. Focus on performance-based guidance articulating sound architectural principles that are desired in McLean:
  - Balanced Proportions
  - High-quality Materials
  - Well-articulated Details

# 12

## Vernacular Architecture

### McLean Existing Architectural Assets

1. Rustic originals
2. Colonial traditions
3. Mid-century modern cleanliness and proportions



# 12

## Key Architectural Elements

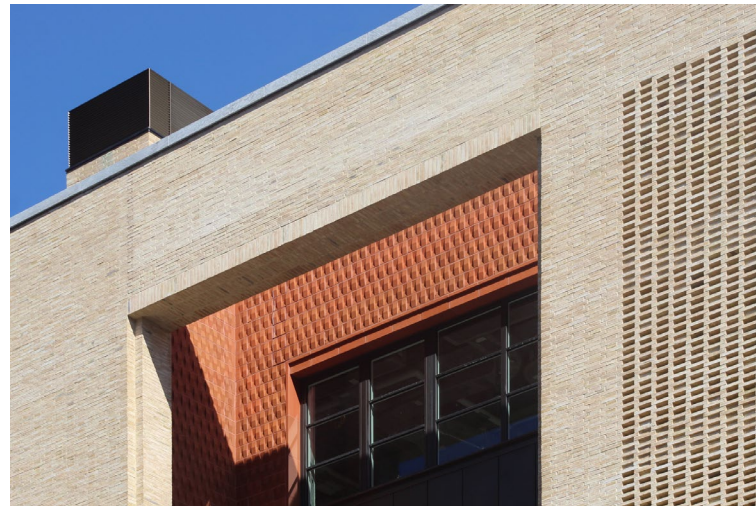
### 1. Balanced Proportions



# 12

## Key Architectural Elements

1. Balanced Proportions
2. High Quality Materials





# 12

## Key Architectural Elements

1. Balanced Proportions
2. High Quality Materials
3. Well Articulated Details





# Briefing on Select Other Comments



# Select Other Comments

- 1 Beverly Road Building Setbacks
- 2 Description of Comp Plan Zones and Heights
- 3 Elimination of “minimums” from Streetscape Dimensions
- 4 VDOT Maintenance Buffer
- 5 On-street Parking Guidance
- 6 “Contributing Structures” to “Places of Character” with explanation
- 7 Use of Non-native Tree and Plant Species

# Updated Timeline to Completion

MONTH	DATE + ACTIONS
May	5/24: Advisory Group Meeting #11
June	6/12: Staff publish a revised draft 6/12: MPC and community begin review of the revised draft
July	7/7: Comment period closes and staff makes final revisions
Sept	9/12: BOS Endorsement

