

CHAPTER 6: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

OVERVIEW

This chapter addresses the less tangible dimensions of growth and development known as community character. Community character is less quantifiable than other aspects of land use and public facilities, but it is equally important to the creation of livable communities. Community character can be defined as the combined effect of the built, natural, historic and social features within a neighborhood. It encompasses the physical and social attributes that make one neighborhood different from another. This chapter provides guidance for creating appropriate community character in Henrico County. Community character takes land use recommendations and moves beyond the concept of “where” and “how much” and addresses the “quality” of the land use.

Achieving the right balance between the quantity and quality of new development and redevelopment is important. This Plan provides guidance for the creation and maintenance of specific identities for the different land use groups in the county. Unique and identifiable neighborhoods contribute to a sense of place and help create pride in the community, which in turn encourages higher levels of quality and maintenance. Henrico is a growing and evolving community where the community character is not static or easily definable within a single type; however, it is important to maintain local traditions and historic architectural styles to perpetuate a character that is distinctly Henrico.

Except for the preservation of historic sites and areas of archeological or cultural interest or the creation of historic districts (*Code of Virginia §15.2-2306*), state law does not permit the county to specifically regulate architectural standards. However, the county can provide guidance to developers to promote new neighborhoods, infrastructure, and buildings which contribute to the positive image of the county and promote a higher quality of life. Including this guidance in the county’s Comprehensive Plan provides details of the county’s expectations in terms of character and quality of development, increasing the chances that future development will contribute to the county’s vision for its future.

This chapter includes a description of the features that define the character of five (5) of the six (6) Land Use Groups described in Chapter 5: Land Use. The Civic Land Use Group, which includes Government and Semi-Public uses, is explained more fully in Chapter 11: Public Facilities & Utilities and is not included here. The Land Use Groups addressed in this chapter include the following:

- Rural
- Residential
- Mixed-Use
- Office/Service/Industrial
- Retail/Commercial

The physical components of community character generally include the following design elements:

- Street patterns
- Streetscape elements (landscaping, light fixtures, street furniture, etc.)
- Layout and design of individual building sites
- Architectural elements and style
- Open spaces and preserved resources

The way these essential elements of community character are used creates different communities ranging from rural to urban. The qualities of each of these elements are described for the five (5) Land Use Groups listed in this chapter. This chapter describes how the community can use each of these elements to achieve the desired character in each of the five (5) Land Use Groups. These concepts have been expanded on and detailed guidelines will be included in the *Design Guidelines Manual*.

In addition to the individual descriptions of the Land Use Groups, this chapter also provides an overview of the process for development of cluster subdivisions, and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards, which contribute to community character and safety.

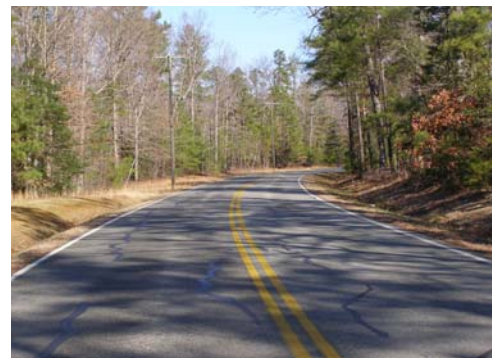
CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES OF THE LAND USE GROUPS

RURAL

These areas are characterized by agriculture, open spaces, large tract development patterns, preserved wooded areas and some historic sites. Rural areas should incorporate the design features described below to maintain rural character while providing reasonable development opportunities.

Access and Circulation

Access and circulation systems should be provided for pedestrians, bicycles and automobiles. Trails, sidewalks, and roads should be designed to provide ease of movement and emergency access, but should retain an informal appearance. The location of new roads and driveways should be designed to avoid negative impacts on Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas and Resource Management Areas, and other natural and cultural resources. Shared driveways should be encouraged to reduce the visible number of curb cuts along major roads.



Roads without curbs or gutters enhance the Rural character.

Streets in Rural areas should be configured to maintain the rural character by having a narrow cross-section width for two-way streets unless site conditions require wider pavement with adequate shoulders and ditch sections.

Pedestrian circulation should be provided via unpaved, informal paths and trails. Whenever possible, new development should include pedestrian access to rivers, historic and cultural resources, and significant natural features, which should be preserved when sites are developed. These pedestrian trails should be extended to the perimeter of the site and should connect to a broader network to serve as a rural trail system. When designed to safely accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists, these paths may serve a dual purpose.

Streetscape Design

Streetscape design in Rural areas should promote the rural character. Roads should be designed without curbs and gutters, and street lights and on-street parking should be avoided. Rural streets should be paved, but lane striping is generally discouraged. Widths should be flexible and reviewed on a case by case basis. The general configuration of streets should be designed to maximize scenic views into and across open spaces and natural areas. To achieve this, curvilinear roads should be encouraged. By providing a variety of distances between intersections, an informal rural road network can be created to aid in the maintenance of the rural character. Single-loaded streets can also be employed to provide variation and preservation of open spaces along roadways.

Broad vistas and views of open space are important characteristics of Rural areas. Utilities should be placed underground or out of the sight lines of the streets to maintain these views. Other obstructive features such as opaque fencing should be discouraged along rural roadways.

Site Layout & Building Organization

Sites and buildings in Rural areas should be configured to maintain the impression of low density, undisturbed lands, and agricultural activity. New residential development proposed in the Rural areas should take place on individual lots of one (1) or more acres or be within cluster subdivisions, which permanently preserve large areas of open space and cluster the building lots onto the most appropriate areas of a site.

Because the placement of a building on the site can have a significant effect on the rural character, dwellings should be situated outside of scenic views from off-site streets or other public lands. The visibility of off-street parking should be minimized by placing parking areas to the side or rear of houses. Appropriate vegetative buffering should be employed to reduce the impact of development on views from off-site roads.

Building Design and Character (Architectural Quality and Style)

Building design and character in Rural areas can be very diverse while still maintaining rural character. Because Rural areas are typically much less dense than urban ones, the relationship between the various buildings in a given area is less important than in locations where buildings are in close proximity to one another. Rural areas can accommodate agricultural buildings and single-family homes of various styles while maintaining rural character.

Open Space and Resource Conservation

Open space and resource conservation are essential elements in the perpetuation of rural character. A portion of development sites in the Rural areas should be reserved as private, common open space during the subdivision or site plan review process to preserve the rural character and protect Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas. Open space areas should be designed to conserve open land, retain and protect significant wetlands, link open spaces, maintain active agricultural uses, and promote rural character.

When considering areas to conserve, priority should be given to features that best preserve the rural character, including the following:

- Open space that allows views of historic farm houses or structures
- Riparian corridors or wetlands
- Mature forest areas
- Significant trees and fence rows
- Ridgelines and hilltops
- Historic and cultural resources



Examples of conserved open space.

Open space can be a separate lot or integrated into existing lots and restricted for the proposed open space uses. Appropriate uses in preserved open spaces include the following:

- Agricultural activities
- Uses supportive of passive recreation
- Active recreation (that does not conflict with the protection of natural resources)

Cluster or Conservation Subdivisions

The *Code of Virginia §15.2-2286.1* requires local governments to make provisions for the creation of cluster subdivisions in the Zoning and Subdivision

Ordinances. This technique is considered one of the best ways to achieve quality residential development in Rural areas while preserving rural character. These subdivision forms allow development of detached single-family homes clustered on smaller lots than generally permitted in the underlying zoning district, but at the same gross density, while preserving large areas of open space or historic features.

Cluster subdivisions allow the location of buildings on land best suited for construction, while permanently preserving valuable resources without changing the gross density permitted on the development site. This creative and flexible subdivision approach encourages building sites with attractive views, both from off-site roads and on-site buildings; encourages efficiency in the development of roads and utilities (shorter roads because there is less frontage per unit); and contributes to the variety of housing choices in the county.

Other Considerations

There are other issues which must be considered in the design of a cluster or conservation subdivision. The following highlights the primary issues:

Location of Sewer Treatment Facilities

Dwelling units in a cluster subdivision can typically be served by private on-site well and septic systems, or be served by sanitary sewer and water lines.

Ultimate Use of Open Space

There are several ways to use the conserved open space: maintain it in its natural state, use it as pasture or cropland, or provide passive or active recreation.

Permanent Protection of Common Spaces

There are three (3) typical ways to permanently preserve the conserved spaces in the subdivision: a conservation easement, a deed restriction or a covenant. The land may be controlled by a home owners' association or be part of a privately owned lot or parcel.

Density Bonuses

In some cases, the county may decide to allow a density bonus as an incentive to use conservation or cluster subdivisions rather than a by-right traditional subdivision. As a general rule, the gross density (total number of units per acre) of the cluster subdivision should not exceed the permitted density of the zoning district where the land is located unless a significant amount of the site (70% or more) is preserved. Densities exceeding one-hundred twenty-five percent (125%) of those permitted in the underlying zoning districts should be discouraged.

The four (4) step process described in the Cluster/Conservation Subdivision Process Tool Box (**see Figure CC-1**) can be applied to the development review process in Henrico County. This process would need to be added to the front end of all Plan of Development (POD) and Subdivision applications in regard to the subdivision of land in

the Rural areas when the cluster option is desired. These steps would precede the design and submission of site layout plans, tree protection plans, schematic landscape plans, grading and drainage plans and subdivision plats for all land proposed for cluster/conservation subdivisions. The conservation plan developed in step 4 would be the foundation for any subsequent submissions for development approval.

FIGURE CC-1: CLUSTER/CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROCESS TOOL BOX

Cluster/Conservation Subdivision Process Tool Box

Step 1: Site Analysis Map

A map of potential conservation areas should begin with the information available from the County's mapping services, and from this Plan. The maps and aerial photos should be used to identify the primary and secondary conservation areas on the site and the features on surrounding properties. The primary conservation areas should include the most severely constrained lands, where development would typically be restricted under current codes, such as wetlands and floodplains. Secondary conservation areas should include locally significant features of the existing landscape. These secondary areas may include the following features:

- Mature woodlands
- Hedgerows, freestanding trees or tree groups
- Wildlife habitats and travel corridors
- Prime farmland
- Groundwater recharge areas
- Greenways and trails
- River and stream corridors
- Historic sites and buildings
- Scenic view sheds

This information should be combined to identify the areas on the site that are the best candidates for preservation/conservation. While it is not an exact process, this step allows the County and developer to identify the areas with the most potential to contribute to the rural character of the area.

Step 2: Site Inspection

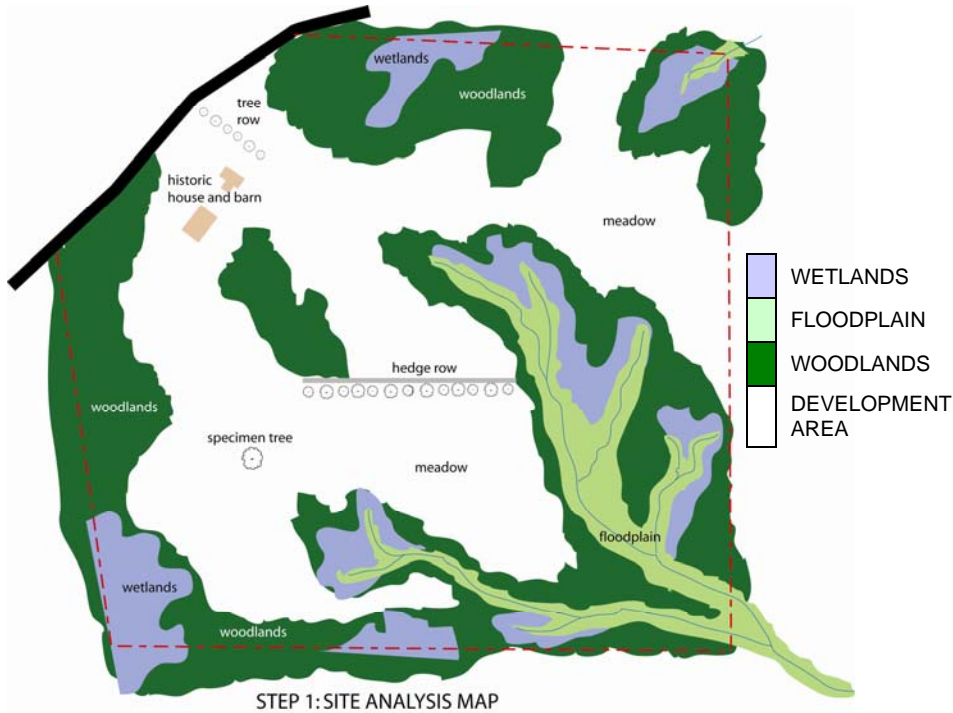
After the mapping analysis of the site, the applicant and County staff should conduct a site inspection to confirm the site analysis map and identify additional unmapped features that may be present. This step is especially important for identifying scenic view sheds.

Step 3: Conservation and Development Areas Map

Once the mapping and visual inventory of resources have been completed, the applicant should provide a map illustrating the areas to be conserved (Conservation Areas) and the land area available for building sites (Development Areas). This map will serve as the basis for the final site plan. This map should designate at least fifty percent (50%) of the site area for conservation.

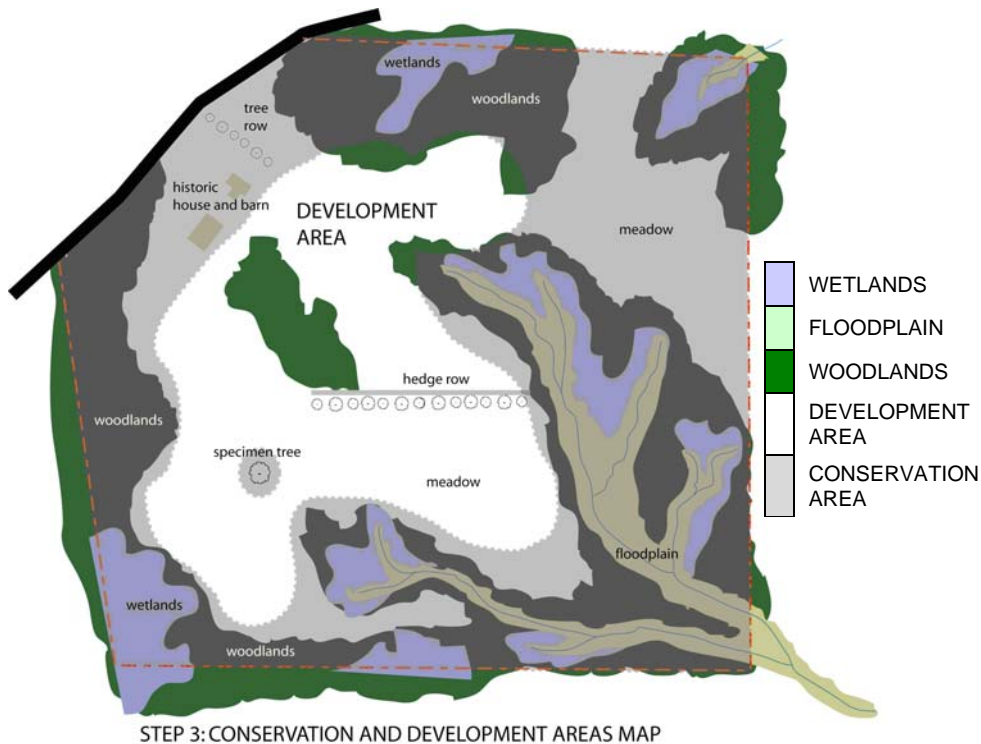
Step 4: Conservation Plan

Finally, the applicant should prepare a conservation plan. Because the conservation plan is not driven by a prescribed lot size, the most efficient and rural design can be accomplished by first locating the houses to capitalize on the best views and buffering from the off-site roads. Then the house sites should be connected with roads and trails, which minimize the amount of roads to be developed while still safely providing access to each building. Finally, the lot lines should be drawn.

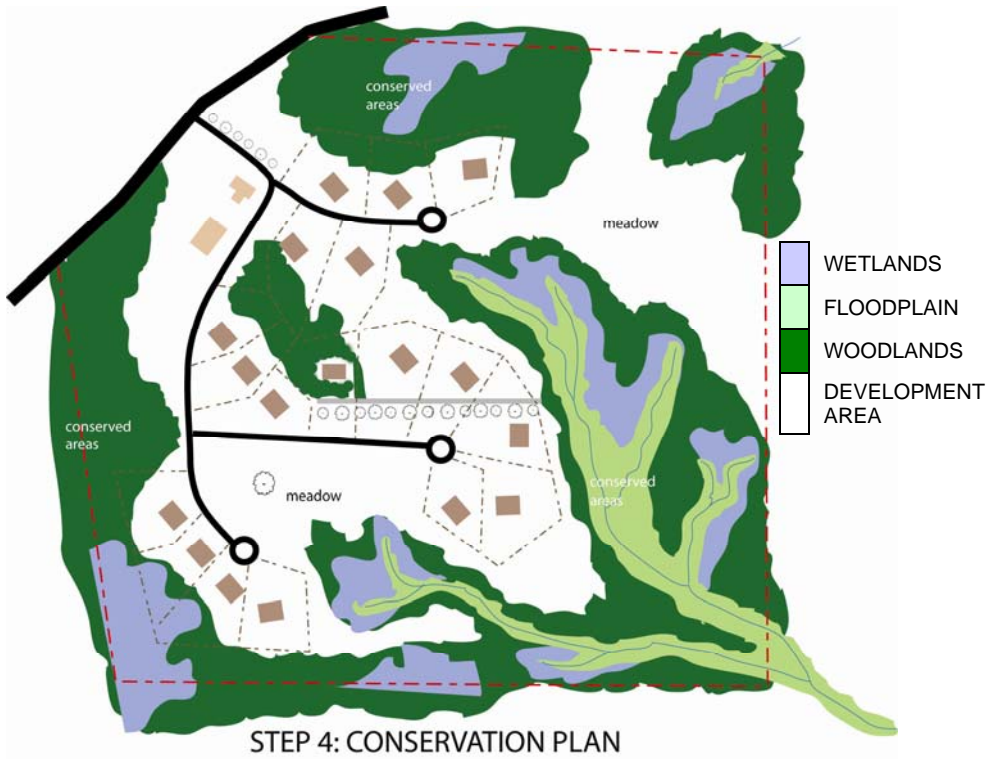


This Figure illustrates the first step in the site analysis in the Conservation Subdivision Process. The resources on the subject site should be mapped.

The Cluster Subdivision Process is described in more detail in the Toolbox on the previous page. Step 2 in the process requires onsite visits and evaluation and is not a mapping exercise; therefore it is not illustrated in this chapter.



Step 3 involves mapping the areas for conservation and the area to be considered for development after the field visit in Step 2.



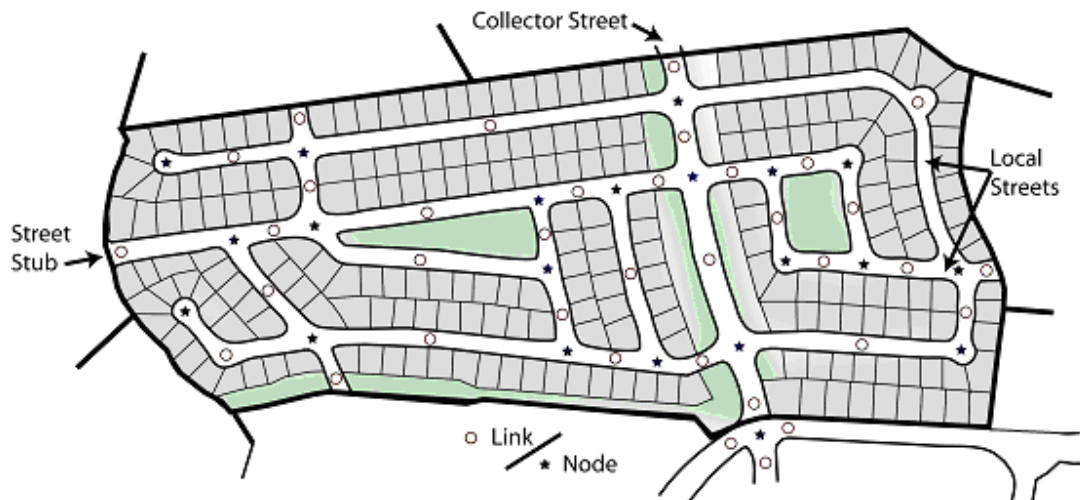
Step 4 is the final result of the design process. The buildings are located first in the development areas, and then streets are designed to connect them. Finally, the parcel lines are created.

RESIDENTIAL

A mix of detached, attached, and multi-family homes organized into distinctive communities or neighborhoods should prevail in Residential areas. While the Residential areas will have close relationships with other types of uses, they are primarily districts in which people live. The character of these areas should be safe and inviting for pedestrians and bicyclists and they should promote healthy living conditions. The Residential areas also address the character for Suburban Mixed-Use areas, which should have a decidedly “residential” character when compared to the other Mixed-Use categories in this Plan. Residential areas should have the design features described below.

Access and Circulation

Access and circulation systems should be provided for pedestrians, bicyclists and automobiles. In Residential areas, the street network should be designed to be well-integrated with surrounding roadways, both existing and planned, and should provide interconnection and alternative routes to alleviate congestion and impact on the major off-site roadways. Although cul-de-sacs are popular in Suburban Residential development, the termination of streets at the edge of a site is counter to the goals and objectives of the Land Use Plan. Cul-de-sacs should be used only when they are necessary to accommodate natural features, established development patterns, or other site constraints.



This is an example of an inter-connected street network.

One way to create a more pedestrian friendly environment is to use alleys for rear access to individual lots for vehicles, deliveries, trash receptacles and other services. Relocating vehicular access to alleys would reduce the number of curb cuts on the interior streets and will promote a safer environment for pedestrians. Alleys are particularly appropriate in the Urban Residential areas.

Pedestrian circulation should be provided through an internal network of sidewalks, paths, and trails connected to off-site sidewalks, pedestrian paths, and other public facilities.

Streetscape Design

Residential streetscape design should help define individual neighborhoods, promote safety, and create a transition from public to private spaces. The character of a residential streetscape may vary from one neighborhood to the next, but a residential streetscape design should generally include the following features:

- **Sidewalks** - Sidewalks should be separated from automobile traffic by raised curbs and/or tree lawns; they should also meet all accessibility standards.
- **Tree lawns and street trees** - Tree lawns and street trees should provide a natural buffer between pedestrians and automobiles. These lawns should be wide enough to support the growth of trees, and the trees should be provided at a regular intervals and located in a manner that will not conflict with utility lines (water, sewer, power, cable, etc.).
- **Street furniture** - Street furnishings should be coordinated in design and type with the overall character of the neighborhood. All street furniture should be located outside of the right-of-way.
- **Entry signage** - Entry signage should be coordinated with the unique character of the neighborhood through the use of appropriate materials, colors and architectural elements.
- **Street widths** - To help reduce travel speeds and increase safety in residential areas, streets should have reduced widths, and include on-street parking, street trees and medians.

Site Layout & Building Organization

The site design and building organization in residential developments should promote a high quality of life by emphasizing a consistent character for the neighborhood, ensuring safety, and providing appropriate transitions to adjacent land uses. Residential buildings should be designed to have the primary visual entrance facing the adjacent streets, not toward off-street parking areas. The orientation of the primary entrance and general building configuration should be consistent with that of adjacent structures.



The garage is placed behind the façade of the house placing emphasis on the primary entrance of the home.

The visual impact of garages and parking structures should be subordinate to the primary entrance to the structures through the use of side-, rear- or alley-loaded garages or street-facing garages recessed behind the front façade of the building. Variation in the location and type of garages within a development helps to avoid monotony. Off-street parking should be encouraged in the interior of multi-family developments.

Residential neighborhoods should be appropriately landscaped. Developments should include landscaping on individual building lots and buffers between any adjacent, higher-density developments.

In established residential areas, infill designs should be sensitive to the site characteristics, relationship to adjacent housing, and character of the surrounding neighborhood. To maintain the established characteristics of the neighborhood, adjacent structures should determine the appropriate massing, scale and setbacks for new buildings.

Building Design and Character (Architectural Quality and Style)

A mix of housing types, building materials and architectural design within a residential neighborhood help avoid “cookie cutter” development associated with large concentrations of identically designed houses. Residential development should have variety and creativity in the design of dwellings to ensure visual interest and internal compatibility. The mix of housing types within a neighborhood should be compatible with the neighborhood’s size, location, and surrounding context. Urban Residential neighborhoods should have the widest range of housing types. Variety in housing types and sizes is important in providing a range of housing options for the citizens of Henrico County. Homogenous building styles do not provide adequate opportunities for diverse households.

The materials used in residential construction should include the following attributes:

- Durability for low maintenance and a long life
- Sound insulating to reduce outside noise impacts in areas where noise is a concern
- Design compatibility to enhance the appearance of the structure

All residential structures should have semi-private spaces, such as covered porches for single-family attached and detached housing and balconies for multi-family dwellings.

Open Space and Resource Conservation

Common open spaces and resource conservation in Residential areas contribute to the aesthetic character of the neighborhood, and provide recreational opportunities and resource protection. Residential development designs should

incorporate open spaces as an integral part of the project. Incorporation of open space features will contribute to the long-term sustainability of a neighborhood by providing “green” areas in a developed area. These areas should protect natural and historic features in accordance with the other chapters of this Plan, and when possible, they should provide recreational opportunities.

MIXED-USE

This section applies to Traditional Neighborhood Developments and the Urban Mixed-Use areas. The Suburban Mixed-Use areas should be subject to the recommendations of the Residential section above. While the Suburban Mixed-Use land use category allows for integration of uses in Chapter 5: Land Use, the character of these areas as addressed in this chapter is more residential in nature.

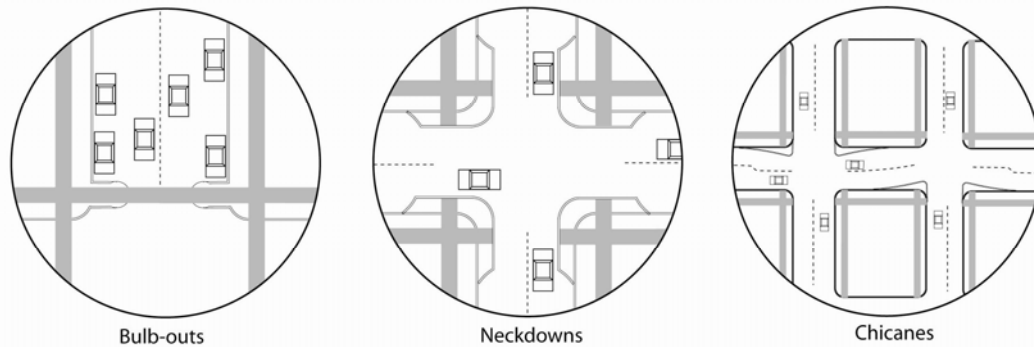
One of the major characteristics of Mixed-Use developments is the significantly higher intensity and density. Intensities of population and employment generate a critical mass of people that demand a different environment and neighborhood character than less urban forms of development. Mixed-Use areas should have the design features described below.

Access and Circulation

Mixed-Use areas should have a street and sidewalk network that provides multiple routes and frequent intersections to alleviate the impact on surrounding off-site roads and connects with existing and proposed roads and sidewalks of surrounding development. The accommodation of future mass transit service should also be addressed in the design of Mixed-Use developments. Mixed-Use areas should be pedestrian-friendly and walkable while also accommodating bicycle traffic in a safe manner.

Traffic calming techniques can contribute to the built character of a Mixed-Use development, as well as improve the safety for pedestrians in the area. Calming techniques consistent with the desired character of Mixed-Use areas include the following:

- Narrow street widths
- Frequent pedestrian crossings
- Short block lengths (between 400 and 600 feet)
- On-street parking
- Roundabouts
- Raised pedestrian crosswalks (varied materials)
- Curvilinear street segments incorporated within a grid street system
- Bulb-outs at intersections to reduce pedestrian travel distances
- Neck-downs, chicanes, or other design techniques requiring vehicles to slow down



The Figures above illustrate three (3) of the traffic calming techniques that could be employed in Mixed-Use areas to slow traffic and enhance safety for pedestrians.

Streetscape Design

Street and sidewalk cross-sections may vary from one part of a development to another. Generally, a hierarchy of cross-sections may be applied. The following are features that should be included to create the desired character in Mixed-Use areas:

- Sidewalks should be fairly wide (five (5) to fifteen (15) feet depending on the context) to accommodate large volumes of pedestrian traffic as well as potential outdoor seating, service items, displays, planters, street trees and other amenities. The sidewalks should be separated from the curb by a tree lawn or planters. Various pavement types should be used to accent building entrances, crosswalks or gateway elements
- On-street parking should be encouraged to provide a buffer between pedestrian areas and moving automobile traffic
- Curbs should be included in the design of the cross-section design for public rights-of-way

The street hierarchy in a Mixed-Use development should generally include the following:

- A main street
- Large streets to serve activity centers and connect and collect from the smaller local streets
- A network of local streets in a grid or modified grid
- Alleys to provide rear access to individual parcels and buildings for loading and services

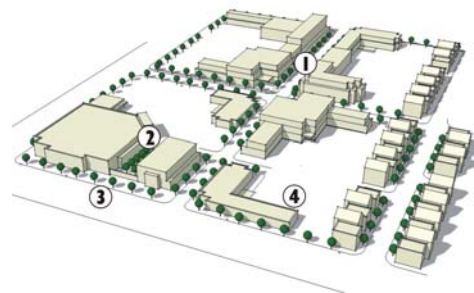
Mixed-Use developments may be fairly large, and development may be planned in a series of phases. These phases of development should be unified using a consistent set of streetscape elements.



Examples of streetscape design for Mixed- Use areas

Site Layout & Building Organization

The organization and layout of buildings within a Mixed-Use development should focus on reducing the perceived scale of the development and creating a strong street wall by locating uses close to the street. Grouping complementary uses together creates a more inviting environment for pedestrians, lessens the need for patrons to drive from one use to another and minimizes the visual presence of parking in the development.



Buildings in Mixed-Use developments should be organized to reinforce a pattern of individual blocks.

A strong street wall can be created by placing the buildings at the back of the sidewalk’s edge and using the buildings to create walls that frame and enclose the public spaces. Buildings on corner lots should have special treatments or architectural features such as towers to emphasize the intersections and create a sense of place. Buildings should be situated on sites in a way that reinforces the structure of individual blocks. Buildings should be oriented so that their primary entrance faces onto the adjacent street. Large uses such as grocery stores that abut a street and have parking or another outdoor open space to the rear should have multiple entrances.

The visibility of parking lots and parking structures should be limited; instead, the focus should be on the pedestrian environment and the buildings themselves. Parking lots and parking structures should be located to the rear of buildings or within integrated, architecturally-detailed buildings.

Buildings incorporating a mix of uses in a single structure are strongly encouraged. A vertical Mixed-Use structure incorporates two (2) or more uses into a single structure. Typically, the lower floors of these buildings should contain commercial and office uses, while the upper floors should contain residential uses. These vertical Mixed-Use buildings promote a critical mass that generates more pedestrian activities. Because pedestrian activity is desirable at

the street level, building configurations which promote and encourage street level activity are strongly encouraged. To increase the potential for pedestrian activities at the street level and reduce the visual impact of parking structures on the streetscape, buildings with commercial storefronts on the first floor and parking decks on upper stories are also appropriate.

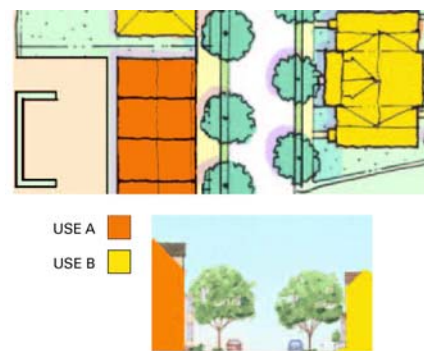
While vertically mixed-uses are preferred, they are not always practical. Horizontal mixed-uses can also be appropriate in Urban Mixed-Use areas and Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TNDs). When uses are mixed in a horizontal manner, they should be cohesively designed with centrally located parking.

The design of Urban Mixed-Use areas should incorporate a mix of retail, service, office and multi-family residential uses. TNDs should include a mix of these same uses with the addition of attached single-family homes in the form of townhouses and appropriately designed detached, single-family homes. When Mixed-Use development is proposed as infill, the lot configurations should reflect the established character of the surrounding uses.

Outdoor gathering spaces, squares or plazas should form the nucleus of a Mixed-Use development. A central gathering space promotes activity and provides amenities for the public, contributing to the sense of place within the development. The location and design of these amenities in combination with the proposed street layout should be utilized to create view corridors, terminal vistas and other features that enhance the built environment. Roundabouts, planted medians and other traffic calming features mentioned above can be employed to create variation in the views throughout a Mixed-Use development by providing green spaces and terminating views along corridors. When properly employed these devices create a more interesting and safe experience for the people using the space.

Building Design and Character (Architectural Quality and Style)

The building design and character in Mixed-Use areas should reflect a high level of detail at the street level to engage the pedestrian in the built environment. No particular architectural style is applicable to all Mixed-Use developments; however, each site should be developed with an internally compatible style respecting the surrounding development in scale and massing. Appropriate transitions in building height and massing should be provided from the central, most intense areas of a Mixed-Use development, to the surrounding single-use area of a development. Within a given type of housing (detached single-



This image demonstrates how the façade height of an office building (Use A) can be configured to be in scale with the opposing façade of Use B. Taller buildings could be located behind Use A.

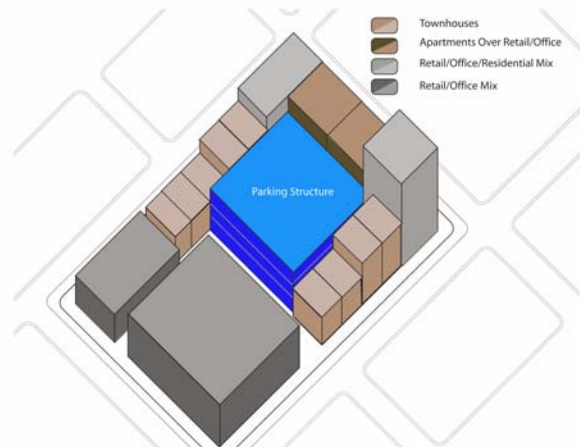
family, townhouses, multi-family), a variety of models, floor plans, garage configurations and façades are encouraged to provide various housing opportunities within the development. Larger scale developments should incorporate the widest variety of housing choices while smaller infill sites could be less broad in their variation.

Variation in housing type and façades along a single street should be encouraged to create a more interesting street character. Detailed and durable architectural design elements should be encouraged. Buildings should be finished with durable materials that complement and enhance the architectural style of the building. All façades of a building should receive the same level of quality and architectural detail to present a finished and attractive character to the public spaces.



A mixture of housing types and façade styles create a more visually interesting street.

Large monolithic buildings are not compatible with the desired character of a Mixed-Use development. Large buildings should be modulated and incorporate architectural elements that articulate their scale and help relate them to the human scale and other buildings in the district. Although parking structures are often essential to the development of an urban environment, their placement along the sidewalk does not produce viable pedestrian activity. One technique which can be employed to reduce the presence of parking structures is to wrap them in structures with a more active use, such as stores, restaurants and apartments.



This diagram illustrates how wrapping a parking structure with other active uses such as homes and mixed-use structures is possible to reduce the appearance of parking in a Mixed-Use area, while keeping the active uses at street level.

Open Space and Resource Conservation

Mixed-Use developments are inherently more urban in nature than the Residential and Rural areas; however, the protection of natural and historic resources and incorporation of open space is an important component to the design of the development. Mixed-Use developments should provide a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the site as open spaces. These open spaces may include resource protection, historic features, or formal spaces intended for public gathering. In Urban Mixed-Use areas, the open space is more appropriate in the form of a formal plaza, square, or town green. TNDs should have a network of smaller informal spaces and a limited number of formal outdoor spaces.

OFFICE/SERVICE/INDUSTRIAL

The general character of these areas should reflect and respect the surrounding context, and use appropriate transitions to buffer the impacts of higher-activity uses on surrounding residences. Office/Service/Industrial areas should be identifiable by a unified street network and architectural style. The development should be designed to accommodate heavy traffic generated by areas of employment and distribution. The architecture of the buildings should be of high quality and incorporate detailing to relate the buildings to the pedestrian scale and utilize durable and attractive materials. These areas should be co-located with other services to reduce the need for auto travel in and out of the development during regular business hours. Access to these sites should be adequate to handle the high volumes of morning and evening traffic, as well as delivery and truck traffic associated with warehousing uses. Office/Service/Industrial areas should have the design features described below.

Access and Circulation

Multi-building and multi-phase developments should be designed to include an interconnected, interior street network. The network must be designed to handle the type of traffic associated with the potential uses in the development. If heavy truck traffic is anticipated, the roadways must be designed to accommodate large vehicles without disrupting the regular traffic flow.

Loading, service, and delivery areas should be separate from customer parking and pedestrian areas. These service areas should also be well screened from adjacent residential developments to reduce their impacts.

Pedestrian circulation should be provided through sidewalks and trails connected with existing and planned off-site paths.

Streetscape Design

The general streetscape for a roadway in an Office/Service/Industrial development should include detached sidewalks separated from the back of the curb by a tree lawn and street trees. Additional landscaping should be employed to soften and unify the appearance of the developments from the street. Unique entrance features should be utilized to create an identity for the development.

Site Layout & Building Organization

The site layout and building organization in these areas should observe the natural topography of the site and extensive grading and removal of existing trees should be minimized. The primary entrances to buildings should face the adjacent street. When multiple buildings are proposed in the same development, the site should be broken into a series of blocks. The buildings should be configured to reduce the appearance of operations from off-site locations, and service areas should be well screened from off-site visibility.

Parking lots should include perimeter and interior landscaping to soften their appearance, provide shade over the parking areas, and separate them from pedestrian circulation. These areas should be designed to include central outdoor gathering spaces such as patios, plazas or walking trails to facilitate outdoor activities.

Building Design and Character (Architectural Quality and Style)

The general building character of these areas should be of high quality, and constructed of durable materials appropriate to the architectural style of the building. Large monolithic architecture not reflective of the local character and quality of Henrico County should be discouraged in favor of buildings that create visual interest and relate the structure to the pedestrian scale.

Larger buildings should include modulation to break large surfaces into smaller components, reducing blank walls and creating visual interest. Variations in roof forms, changes in materials, pronounced wall recesses and projections can achieve these ends. Genuine transparent windows and façade openings are strongly encouraged to promote visual interest and provide visibility. Faux windows are not appropriate. All sides of buildings, including the rear if visible from public areas, should have the same level of architectural detail.

There should be a transition in the height and mass of buildings to reduce the impact of the development on adjacent lower intensity uses. When tall or large buildings are proposed, they should be located in the interior of the site or near other tall structures, with smaller scale buildings located closer to the Residential areas.

Open Space and Resource Conservation

Existing stands of trees or specimen trees should be preserved during and after construction to maintain an established character for the development. The site design should reflect the natural pre-construction features of the site, and riparian areas or historical and cultural resources should be incorporated into the site design.

RETAIL/COMMERCIAL

Retail/Commercial areas should have architecturally detailed buildings arranged in compact clusters that reflect a local style and provide efficient and safe access to

minimize the impact on major off-site roads. The site configuration should provide adequate visibility from major thoroughfares to attract appropriate volumes of users to maintain their viability. The architecture of the buildings should be of high quality and utilize durable and attractive materials and incorporate architectural detailing to relate the buildings to the pedestrian scale. Retail/Commercial areas should incorporate site design that creates clusters of development rather than stripping along major corridors. Retail/Commercial areas should have the design features described below.

Access and Circulation

Access and circulation in Retail/Commercial areas should be designed to encourage safe and efficient on-site circulation and interconnectivity with adjacent uses, especially commercial development, to help reduce the number of access points along major corridors. The creation of a principal connecting driveway that serves as a parallel roadway along major corridors to help alleviate traffic should also be encouraged.

Areas dedicated to loading and service facilities associated with the Retail/Commercial uses should be separate from the customer parking and pedestrian areas. They should be configured to avoid disruption of primary vehicular access and circulation both on and off the site.

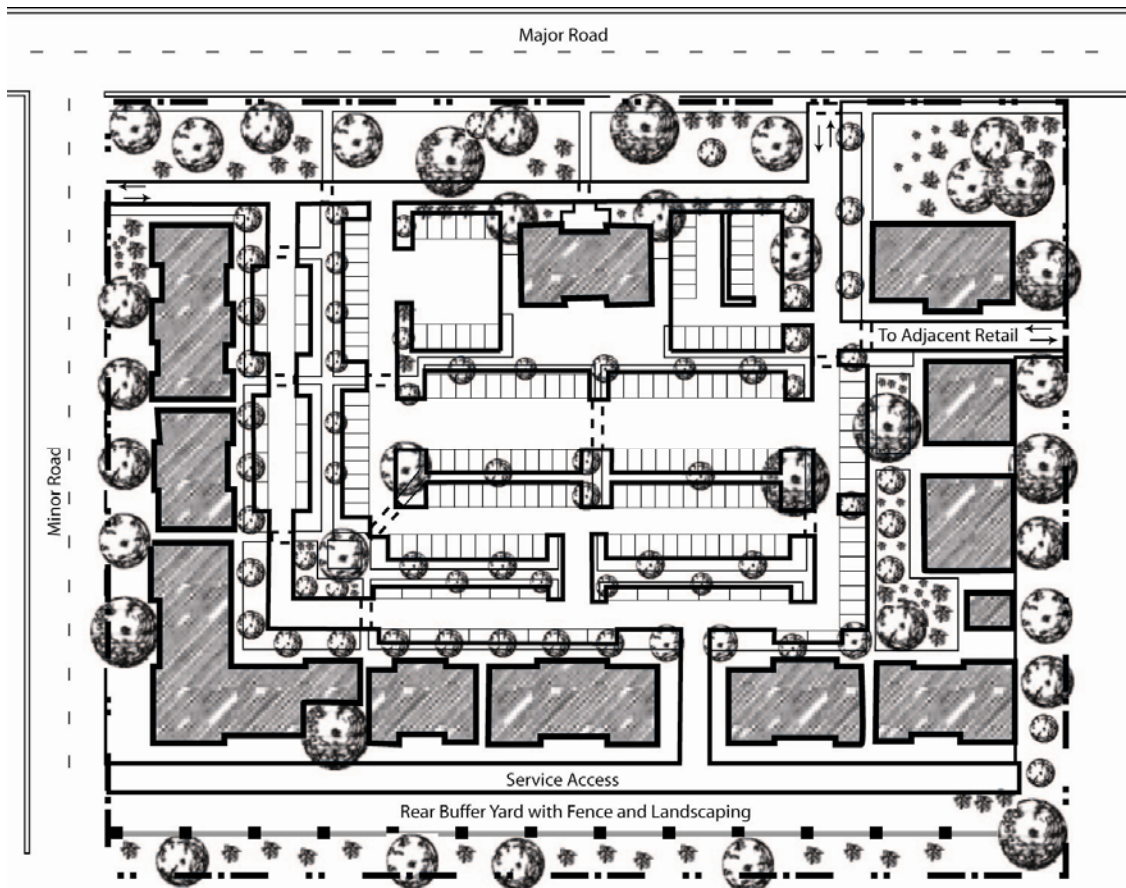
Pedestrian circulation should be provided through on-site walkways connected to adjacent public sidewalks and uses. Paths should be designed to provide safe access between parking areas and primary building entrances. Pedestrian paths crossing vehicular routes should be clearly identified by variations in paving type or color, raised areas, decorative bollards, or raised medians buffered by landscaping.

Streetscape Design & Landscaping

Retail/Commercial areas should incorporate perimeter and interior landscaping that softens the appearance of the development by including regular placement of planting materials. Landscaping should be used to help accentuate the entrances to parking areas and buildings within a Retail/Commercial development. Fences and screening walls can be incorporated into the perimeter landscaping of Retail/Commercial development to create a cohesive streetscape. When possible, the site design should preserve existing mature trees to help maintain a vegetative covering. As in other areas of the county, the location of trees should be planned in coordination with the placement of utilities.

Site Layout & Building Organization

Effective site layout and building organization allows Retail/Commercial development to fit into its surroundings and create an identifiable image for the development. Buildings should be configured on sites to create clusters of development rather than “stripping” a corridor with buildings located side-by-side. The natural topographical features should be used to guide the site layout. Extensive grading to allow for generic design or layout should be discouraged.



This diagram illustrates how a commercial site can be developed with several buildings in a configuration providing adequate buffering on the perimeters of the site, and reducing appearance of parking while still allowing visibility to the individual tenants.

While clusters or centers of development are preferred, there may be times when Retail/Commercial development is appropriate in a single building development. Individual buildings should be oriented so the primary façade faces the primary adjacent street. Multi-building developments should be designed so the overall layout is broken into a series of blocks defined by on-site streets to reduce the overall scale and massing. This technique also helps to alleviate the “sea” of parking often associated with large scale Retail/Commercial developments.

Retail/Commercial developments having multiple large structures should be designed so buildings complement one another and the surrounding uses. Buildings should frame a central open or green area, which may include surface

parking, allowing uses to be clustered while still providing high visibility for individual tenants. Any surface parking provided in this central area of the site should be broken up through the use of internal landscaping islands and pedestrian walkways.

Out-parcel development should be configured to reinforce rather than obscure the identity and function of a regional- or community-scale Retail/Commercial development. The outdoor areas on out-parcels should be improved for use by pedestrians to provide outdoor activity within the development.

The visual impact of parking lots should be minimized by breaking parking surfaces into smaller components through the use of planting areas. When possible parking should also be encouraged to be broken up and located on different areas of the site. Some of the parking (such as spaces reserved for employees) should be located to the rear or side of the buildings. The perimeter of all parking lots should be screened from adjacent off-site uses to reduce the impact of noise and light overflow.

Retail/Commercial areas should have outdoor gathering spaces as a functional part of the site design. Outdoor patios and eating areas or small pocket parks are strongly encouraged to promote outdoor activities within the site.

Building Design and Character (Architectural Quality and Style)

The general character for Retail/Commercial buildings should be of high quality. Buildings should be constructed out of durable materials appropriate to the architectural style of the building. Large monolithic architecture that does not reflect the local character and quality of Henrico County should be discouraged in favor of buildings with architectural features to create visual interest and reduce the monotony often associated with franchise architecture.

Identity is important in Retail/Commercial development; however, an architectural design theme should be created for a Retail/Commercial development. All the buildings in a development should incorporate consistent character, materials, texture, color and scale.

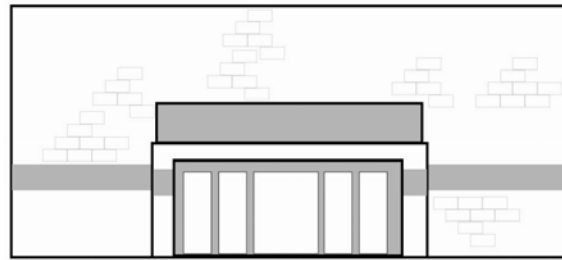
Larger buildings should include modulation to break large surfaces into smaller components, thus reducing blank walls, and creating visual interest. Modulation or articulation of a building's façade involves applying design elements to produce variation and a reduction of the overall bulk of buildings. Variations in roof forms, façade heights, prominent building entrances, changes in materials, trims and belt courses, pronounced wall recesses and projections, and transparent windows and doors are elements typically applied to create modulation.

Genuine transparent windows and façade openings are strongly encouraged to promote visual interest and provide visibility into public areas. Faux windows are not appropriate. All sides of buildings visible from public areas should have the same level of architectural detail found on the primary façade.

Open Space and Resource Conservation

Existing stands of trees or specimen trees should be preserved during and after construction to maintain an established character for the development. The site design should reflect the natural pre-construction features of the site, and riparian areas or historical and cultural resources should be incorporated into the site design.

Not Acceptable



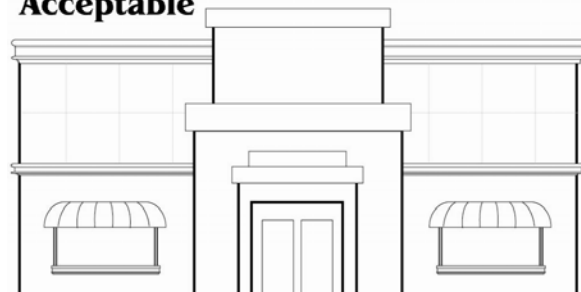
Façade is a flat plane with no visual breaks, no architectural details used, and a flat roof. Building appears to be horizontally long and does not incorporate human scale elements.

Acceptable



Façade is broken up horizontally by the placement of windows and doors and the projection of the central portion of the façade. The use of different rooflines, a belt course and two levels of windows break up the vertical bulk of the building, relating it to the pedestrian with smaller human scale elements.

Acceptable



Façade is broken up horizontally by the placement of windows and doors and the projection of the central entrance. The use of different rooflines, cornices, scoring of the exterior material and awnings break up the vertical bulk of the building, relating it the pedestrian with smaller human scale elements.

CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is the process of designing security into planning and urban design. The primary intent of CPTED is to reduce the fear of stranger-to-stranger predatory crimes. CPTED design practices can be employed to take advantage of opportunities to control access to the private realm, to provide surveillance, and reinforce territories. The CPTED concepts can be applied at the community level for both residential and nonresidential developments. CPTED strategies are typically implemented through three (3) methods: Electronic, Design and Organizational. The Design method is the only one that applies to the community character aspect of development and is therefore the only method addressed in the Plan. This chapter provides only a brief overview of the techniques used. A full description of CPTED standards can be acquired from the Henrico County Division of Police.

Division of Police

The following concepts are the foundation of the CPTED guidelines:

Defensible Space

Defensible Space is the concept that the residents or “owners” of the space have control over what happens in the space. The feeling of control reduces fear and heightens the safety of an area.

Natural Access Control

Natural Access Control is the premise of denying access to potential crime targets and thereby increasing the perception of risk to offenders. It employs structural indicators of private and public areas and discourages access to private areas. Examples include community entrances, sidewalks and the location of building entrances.

Natural Surveillance

Natural Surveillance is the concept that allows intruders to be easily identified. This concept is promoted through the design of buildings that have many windows or doors that look into public areas, streets, parking areas and entrances. Examples of building features that would promote Natural Surveillance include windows facing streets, parks, and parking areas; well-lit, pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and streets; homes and apartments with front porches or balconies; and adequate nighttime lighting.

Territorial Reinforcement

Territorial Reinforcement is tightly linked to the concept of Defensible Space. Simply stated, Territorial Reinforcement includes community design features that help define the boundaries of public and private spaces. These features include landscape plantings, pavement design, gateway treatments and fencing.

The objectives of CPTED can be achieved by promoting community design that:

1. Encourages positive activities with a significant number of people in the space. More people in an area means more eyes on the street. Areas of high positive activity are generally safer environments.
2. Encourages visibility of public and semi-public areas from private areas. Well-lit areas and building design that allow for constant surveillance of semi-public and public areas from the road, sidewalk and other buildings discourages potential threats.
3. Encourages clear delineation of private and public spaces. The use of landscaping and structural elements to clearly demarcate private spaces discourages intruders from entering into the private areas by eliminating confusion between the public and private spaces.

