

CHAPTER 11-COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES

■ INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Chapter is to provide general guidelines for the development of efficient and well designed commercial, industrial, residential and community projects in Fauquier County. Special emphasis is provided for those areas located in the designated service districts where more compact development is anticipated in the future. Chapter 6 presents the future land uses and phasing planned for each service district, while the Chapter 11 guidelines, general standards and recommended implementation strategies present design approaches to development within those districts, their villages, settlements, and the undeveloped lands.

This section should be used as a design guide in the decision making process for the review and approval of applications for amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, rezoning, special exception, special permit, subdivision and site plans. The following goal and implementation policies and strategies will assist in that decision making process.

■ GOAL

Encourage sustainable service districts, which offer a mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses, a complement of essential public services and facilities, and amenities which support a high quality of life through design standards that are sensitive to existing development scale, culture and natural environments.

■ POLICIES & ACTION STRATEGIES

1. Encourage architectural, signage, landscape and site designs that complement the scale and character of existing and planned development within the service districts, villages and rural areas.
2. Provide special design attention for the renewed focus on the towns, villages, and the integration of new residential and well designed mixed use business centers within the County's designated service districts.
3. Community Business Centers need to provide a mix and hierarchy of office, retail, employment and residential development opportunities at a scale similar to that found in the County's existing towns and villages within the established service district.

Implementation Strategies

- a. A community business center must be designed as an integrated activity location within a

hierarchy of towns and villages. Note that not all communities need to have an equal number and range of facilities, due to differences in location, community expectations, suitability size, and development history and demands.

- b. Require development plans submitted in conjunction with rezoning, special exception, and special use permit applications, and, where appropriate, public facility reviews to include architectural, sign, lighting, and landscape concepts for all employment areas, mixed use development, and shopping centers.
- c. Review and update Residential Village (V) and Commercial Village (CV) Zoning District standards.
- d. Location and design in the designated services districts must be responsive to the historic settlement patterns, established architecture and traditional streetscape scale.
- e. The proportion of the street, building setbacks, provision of street trees, and the definition of pedestrian linkages are all important and interrelated in the expansion of any village or the design of a new business center.
- f. Adopt guidelines and standards for tree canopy coverage, landscaping and buffering for new commercial, industrial, and residential projects.
- g. Prepare, in cooperation with VDOT and the private sector, landscape plans to improve the scenic quality of high visible areas along interstate and major state thoroughfares, including existing and future Highway Corridor Overlay Districts. Note that within the County's key gateway areas such as Routes 17, 28, 29, 50, 211, and 215 designated stretches can be required to have greater building and parking setbacks from the established rights-of-way in order to preserve the rural character, views of mountains, historic places and other valued resources. These setbacks can create space between parking areas for business and the r-o-w which allows for the preserving of woodlands and a corridor viewshed, as well as allowing for essential tree pruning and the needed signage (see [Figure 11.1](#)).
- h. Ensure that signs for individual uses in shopping centers, planned development projects are designed and installed consistent with the established project-wide sign program.
- i. Encourage the development of a hierarchy of appropriately scaled entry and directional signs.
- j. Encourage the incorporation of signs into a development's landscape plans

- k. Review and update, as appropriate, the sign regulations contained in the Zoning Ordinance on a periodic basis.
4. Encourage site, building and landscape designs that result in the creation of safe accessible vehicular, pedestrian circulation and community open space.

Implementation Strategies

- a. Plan and provide roadway networks that is a grid in design, modified by geographic and neighborhood constraints, for the business centers, towns and villages within the service districts, while in low density residential areas, cul-de-sac and looped roads are encouraged.
- b. Access to villages should occur off the main arterial roads, and any new or expanded business centers must be designed to complete or create a network of small two lane streets connected to the main roads.
- c. Encourage the location of public open spaces in new developments close to active uses, such as commercial areas, community services, employment uses, and schools. Note that parks and recreation facilities in proximity to the latter areas are ideal for facilitating community and neighborhood points of interaction which are valued characteristics within the county.
- d. Add the residential lane option, illustrated as follows, to the Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances. Refer to Appendix 1 for the suggested standards and a conceptual layout.
- e. New roads and streets shall be consistent with the transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan or the associated service district.
- f. New development must construct and make provision for connection to the pedestrian/bicycle trail system proposed in the respective service district and consistent with plan guidelines.
- g. Provide pedestrian/bicycle paths, including clearly marked cross walks and in the construction or reconstruction of existing roads and bridges.
- h. Encourage the provision of pedestrian “movement network” through sidewalks, bikepaths and trails serving as linkages between commercial properties, community facilities, and nearby residential neighborhoods.
- i. Encourage the clear delineation of pedestrian ways in commercial parking lots and other thoroughfares for public use, through the use of landscaping, lighting, signage, contrasting pavement, pavement markings, or through other innovative treatments.

- j. Encourage the provision of wider than required sidewalks in nonresidential areas with high levels of pedestrian activity.
5. Incorporate the Community Design Plan into the County's Development Application review and approval processes.

Implementation Strategies

- a. Require development proposed through rezonings, special exception, comprehensive plan amendments and public facilities to address the principles and standards presented in the Community Design Guidelines.
 - b. Require subdivision and site plan approval to be based on the design principles and standards presented in the Facilities Standards Manual (FSM). Refer to Appendix 2 for the attached and proposed FSM table of contents.
6. Encourage the design and development of well related residential and commercial areas, and the improvement and enhancement of existing residential and commercial areas.

Implementation Strategies

- a. Prepare a Facility Standards Manual which includes more detailed design guidelines addressing community-wide landscaping and buffering, lighting, and signage requirements. [Figure 11.2](#) provides examples of parking lot landscape design details. Enclosed are draft outlines for the tree canopy and landscape ordinance and lighting standards ordinance (refer to Appendix 3 and 4 for details).
- b. Locate, as applicable, new public buildings and associated public space in the center of the designated service districts, village and settlement activity areas, for the purpose of encouraging economically viable, pedestrian scaled mixed use community centers.
- c. Service districts need to have a community core focus, which provide:
 - A balance of residential and nonresidential uses;
 - Civic and social facilities;
 - Design standards for streetscape and facades; and a
 - Central location opportunity for bus and transit related services.
- d. Community design should consider:

- Commercial uses should be contained in multi-story, mixed use structures with the commercial/retail uses on the ground level, residential apartment units or offices on the upper levels.
- Buildings can vary in terms of footprint and architectural elevations; the maximum ground level footprint should consistent with residential or neighborhood scale.
- Restaurant locations should be permitted to operate outside cafes on sidewalks, provided that pedestrian circulation and access to store entrances is not impaired, for example (refer to [Figure 11.3](#)):
 - i. Provision of a minimum of 5-feet of sidewalk from the back of curb, which is maintained free from tables and associated encumbrances;
 - ii. Planters or other removable enclosures are encouraged for definition of café service area;
 - iii. Extended awnings, canopies, or umbrellas shall be permitted and located to provide shade;
 - iv. Tables, chairs, planters and trash receptacles shall be compatible with the architectural character of the associated building;
 - v. The operators shall be responsible for maintaining a clean, litter free, and well kept appearance within and immediately adjacent to the area of their operation; and
 - vi. Outdoor cafes shall not be entitled to additional signage, beyond what is permitted for this type of use.
- Buildings should define the streetscape through setbacks formed by the build to the line concept; the streetscape is further reinforced by planted shade trees, hedges, walls or fences.
- Exterior public and semi-public spaces, such as courtyards or plazas, should be designed to enhance surrounding buildings and uses in the form of textured paving, landscaping, lighting, trees, benches, and similar treatment methods (refer to [Figure 11.4](#) and [Figure 11.5](#)).
- Buildings shall be oriented to the front and related to public streets, both functionally and visually, to the greatest extent possible. Buildings shall not be oriented to front toward a parking lot.
- Residential net density shall generally decrease from the center core area towards the periphery of the village or settlement.

- Smaller lots and higher residential density are generally located closer to the main street commercial/business center.
 - A range of residential dwelling types should be provided in these village communities, with single-family detached ranging from a minimum of 65% to a maximum of 90%. The remainder should be duplexes, townhouse, apartments or accessory dwellings.
- e. For service districts, establish perimeter setbacks in the Zoning Ordinance for proposed residential subdivision which require:
- A buffer setback of 100 feet for homes on lots adjacent to rural zoning districts.
 - A 50 foot perimeter setback for homes on lots adjacent to a residential district with a lower allowable density (e.g., R-2 adjacent to R-1, or R-4 and R-2).
7. Encourage, in Service District areas, the orientation of new commercial buildings closer to existing public rights-of-way in order to create well defined public streets and spaces for commercial and other associated employment and service activities.

Implementation Strategies

- a. All buildings should front directly onto a street; none should be set back from the street with an intervening parking lot in front.
- b. Encourage the placement of a portion of the required parking to the rear of commercial buildings, with clear access to those buildings; parallel street parking would be allowed.
- c. Develop a Facilities Standards Manual which includes design and engineering standards for alleys, rear and side yard parking areas.
- d. Encourage the location of new buildings close to the street to minimize the scale of new arterial and collector streets.
- e. Discourage the location of large expanses of parking between public streets and building entrances.
8. Preserve and enhance the unique architectural and landscape qualities of the County's Service Districts, villages and rural areas.

Implementation Strategies

- a. Design new commercial and residential buildings within the villages and settlements at a scale consistent with the existing buildings and uses, as well as architecture (refer to [Figure 11.6](#)).
- b. Use appropriate indigenous plant materials and traditional planting patterns in areas visible

from public thoroughfares so that new buildings blend into their natural surroundings.

- c. Provide site plans and building designs that protect the existing visual quality and natural resource values that make these locations distinctive.
 - d. Encourage commercial and residential development in the village, settlement and service district area to provide design compatibility between new and existing development.
 - e. Encourage any new development within the village and settlement areas to preserve the visual character of the rural landscape by providing appropriate building setbacks, with landscaped/preserved open space occupying the setback area; and preserving important scenic resources, such as, hedgerows, mature trees, farm buildings, walls and fences, and open fields.
9. Encourage plans and building designs for new development, or new uses of existing buildings, that enhance the settings of the County's architectural and cultural resources within the service districts, village and settlements.

Implementation Strategies

- a. Require consideration of the architectural and landscape features of archeological and historic sites and structures when developing adjacent properties.
 - b. Encourage the preservation of views to and from historic properties through the protection of farm fields, meadows and woodlands. Note here that communities need to place priority on any new building design which enhances the view to important landscape vistas and features.
10. Design new development into the natural landforms.

Implementation Strategies

- a. Preserve, protect and restore, wherever possible and practical in new development, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation.
- b. Encourage the integration of public open space areas into neighboring properties to avoid fragmentation of open spaces and natural areas.
- c. Minimize clearing and cut and fill operations. Encourage the placement of buildings to minimize the need for excessive grading.
- d. Avoid disturbance of steep slopes, particularly up slope of important natural resource areas.
- e. Align new roads to follow the natural contours of the land.

The single family subdivision design presented in the [Appendix](#) presents an alternative to the cul-de-sac subdivision, and provides more internal open space which can be used for neighborhood active and passive recreation activities and serve to preserve valued tree canopy and other associated site amenities.

	Residential Loop Lane Options*
Lane Width	
One-way	12 feet/width
Two-way	18 feet/width
Lane Turning Radius	
Inside	30 feet. Allows fire and rescue vehicles easy access, and Exceeds the turning radii required by garage trucks and moving vans.
Minimum Number of Homes Served	7 Single Family Detached
Guest Parking	Parking spaces can be added at the end of the loop lane.
Minimum Separation Between Loop Lane Connection with Public Street	60 feet
Utilities	Any utility pedestals located within the loop open space must be placed along the edge so that they do not interfere with neighborhood opportunities.
Front Setbacks	No sidewalks are required with this street option, and the following front setbacks from the right-of-way will be permitted considered in lieu of those established for R-1, R-2 and R-4 Districts.
Porch	15 feet
House	20 feet
Garage	20 feet
Maintenance	The land should be designed in order to be accepted into the State system for maintenance. The critical common or open space should be retained and maintained through a homeowners association.