

# Pittsylvania County Zoning Ordinance Update

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Joint Worksession #6

*August 10, 2023*





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# Agenda

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- Schedule and Progress to Date
- Article Review
  - Article 8, Community Design Standards
- Next Steps

# Project Progress

 **COMPLETE**

- Investigation and Public Engagement*
- ✓ Kick-off with Staff
  - ✓ Document Review
  - ✓ Joint PC and BOS Work Session
- Public Outreach:*
- ✓ Stakeholder Sessions
  - ✓ Public Workshops
  - ✓ Public Survey

- Content Development*
- ✓ General & Administrative Provisions
  - ✓ Permits & Applications
  - ✓ District Standards
  - ✓ Overlay Districts
  - ✓ Use Matrix
  - ✓ Use Performance Standards
  - Community Design Standards
  - ✓ Nonconformities

**Worksession #6:**  
*Community Design Standards*

- Adoption*
- Public Open House
  - Pre-Adoption PC and BOS Work Session(s)
  - Incorporate Final Revisions
  - Public Hearings and Adoption

# What are Community Design Standards?

- Provide regulations for elements that pertain to the character of development in the County, such as lighting and landscaping
- Intended to promote consistent community aesthetics, safety, and enforceability

## GUIDE TO LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS

### What Are Landscaping Requirements?

Landscaping requirements are one of the tools Virginia localities have available to them to enhance community character, protect environmental resources, and reduce the impact of potentially incompatible uses. Local ordinances often require landscaping and screening as part of development or land disturbing activities. These requirements are typically reviewed through an application which includes a landscape plan submitted as a part of development approval. Specific requirements focus on site design, transitional areas, and screening. In doing so, these requirements are intended to preserve and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of a community. This guide introduces different landscaping options that can be applied and modified as appropriate for each locality.

#### Essential Landscaping Requirements:

- ▷ The land owner is responsible for installation, maintenance, repair, and replacement of required landscaping.
- ▷ Encourage the use of native, drought-tolerant vegetation known to thrive in Virginia.
- ▷ All plant material should be maintained in a healthy condition, replaced when necessary, and kept free of debris.
- ▷ Existing vegetation should be preserved whenever possible as a part of required landscaping.
- ▷ Any change of use or intensity of use at an existing development should be subject to landscaping standards.
- ▷ Plans must identify the location, size and description of all existing and proposed landscaping materials.

#### Right-of-Way Landscaping



**Purpose:** Lessen the adverse impacts of roadways and vehicle movement in proximity to developments and enhance community character.

**Options:** An area of 3-50 ft bordering a right-of-way with staggered mix of shrubs and trees. Trees can be of 1.5-3 in caliper planted every 40-50 ft. Shrubs not always mandated.

**Applicability:** Along road frontages, public right of ways, access easements, and specific corridors.

**Deviations:** May vary for specific corridors or road classifications. Number and spacing of required plantings and size of landscaped area also vary.

#### Foundation Landscaping



**Purpose:** Soften the visual impact of building foundations and provide for the even dispersal of evergreen and deciduous shrubs along building walls facing streets.

**Options:** Planted within 3 ft of a building foundation and evenly distributed along walls. Evergreen or deciduous shrubs 3-6 ft in height every 5-10 ft. Planters or decorative pots may be used.

**Applicability:** Typically used in commercial and industrial districts for new development. This can apply to entire building or just walls that face the streets.

**Deviations:** If foundation is within 1-20 ft. of right-of-way, landscaping requirements may be different. Sidewalk can allow landscaping to be spaced farther away from building.

#### On-Site Screening



**Purpose:** Shield view of on-site functions, such as loading areas, dumpsters and trash collection, outside storage areas, maintenance areas, and mechanical equipment.

**Options:** 3-6 ft evergreen shrub or combination of shrub and 3 ft berm, or use of an architectural element compatible with building.

**Applicability:** Any exterior mechanical equipment (HVAC, tanks, transformers), dumpsters or loading areas visible from adjacent properties and streets.

**Deviations:** Generally consistent with site landscaping, but architectural elements, such as building walls or fences, may also be used.

The Border Group, LLC



# Article 8 – Community Design Standards

## Article Content:

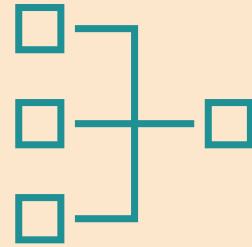
- Visibility Clearance
- **Lighting**
- **Landscaping and Screening**
- Walls and Fences
- Parking and Loading
- Signs
- Open Space

# Article 8 – Community Design Standards *Drafting*



## Based on Best Practices

- Standards that are considered a best practice



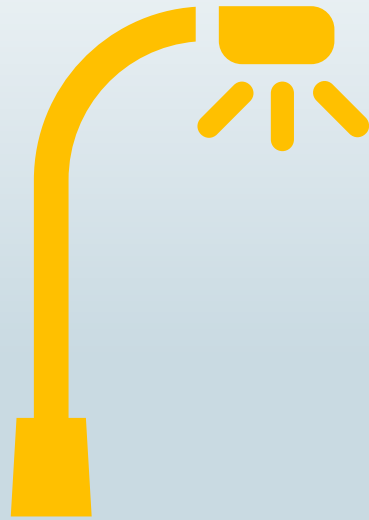
## General Reorganization

- Restructured and/or simplified existing standards



## Based on Public Engagement and Staff Direction

- Updates to reflect needs and desires of community and staff



Lighting

# Lighting

- Completely new Ordinance standards
- Additions are based on best practice and include:
  - Purpose and Intent
  - Applicability
  - Standards
  - Modifications and Compliance



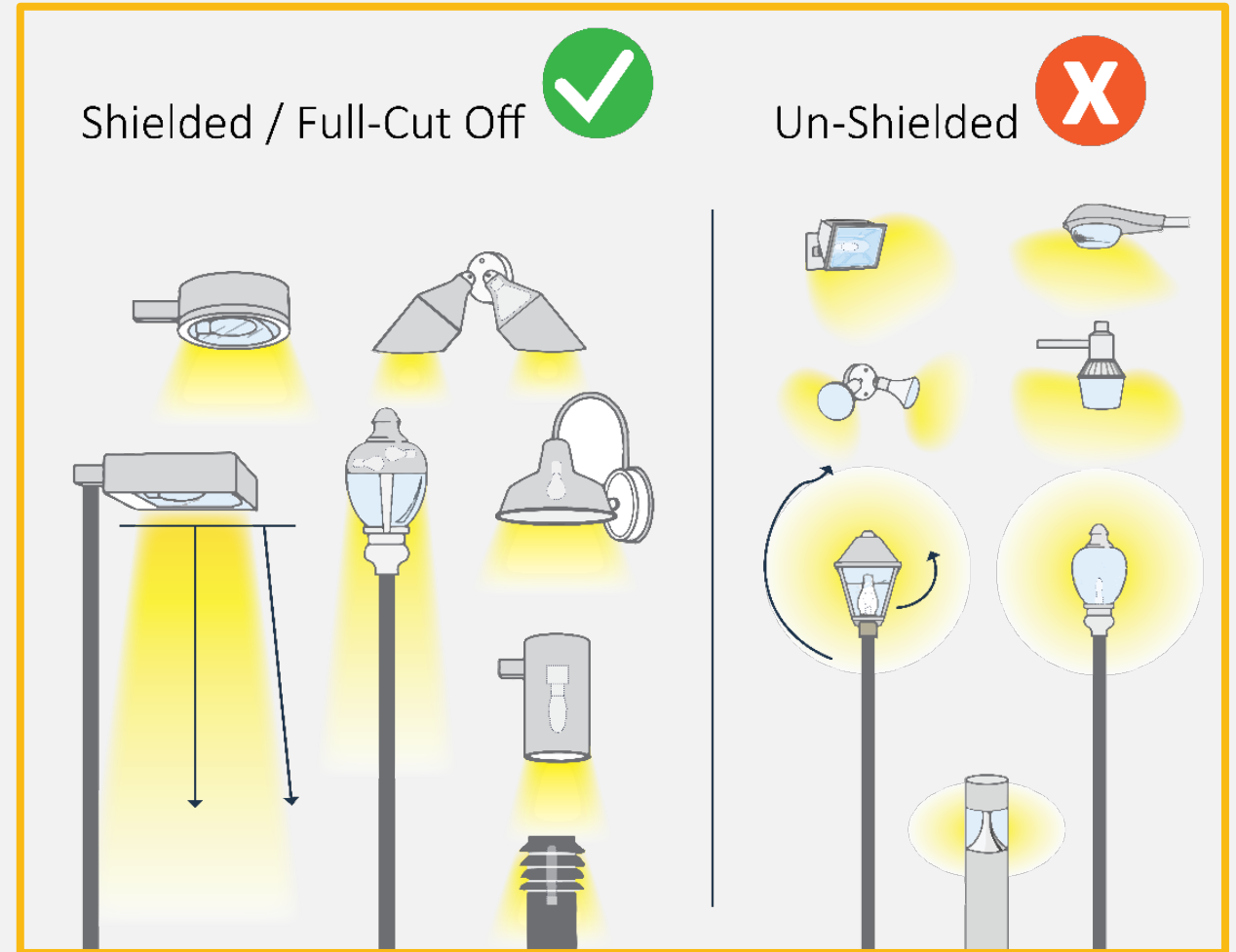


# Lighting

- Applies to all commercial zoning districts, RMF, RPD, and any property used for non-residential purposes, either as permitted or through a SUP
- Exemptions:
  - Lighting for agricultural uses
  - Lighting for streets
  - Single- and two-family residential lighting
  - Lighting exempt under state or federal law, or used for public monuments
  - Lighting required by building code
  - Emergency, security, field, architectural or holiday lighting
  - Construction lighting
  - Temporary lighting for Special Event uses

# Lighting

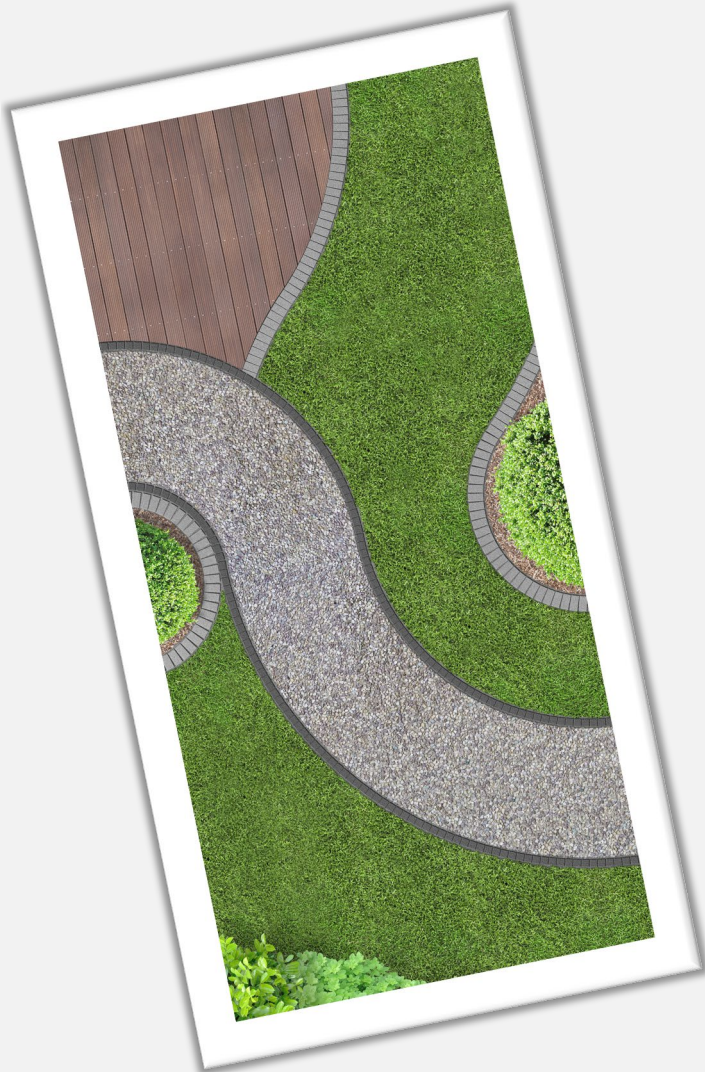
- Standards address several topics, including:
  - Hours of Illumination
  - Uniformity
  - Shielding
  - Height





# Landscaping and Screening

# Landscaping and Screening



- Completely new Ordinance standards
- Additions are based on best practice and include:
  - Purpose and Intent
  - Applicability
  - Landscape Plan Requirements
  - General Standards
  - Transitional Buffers
  - Parking Lot Landscaping
  - Screening and Enclosures
  - Modifications

## • Transitional Buffers

- Applies to all new development unless otherwise specifically exempted
- Required for uses based on the adjacent zoning districts
- Applicant can propose a screening alternative that can be approved administratively if certain criteria are met

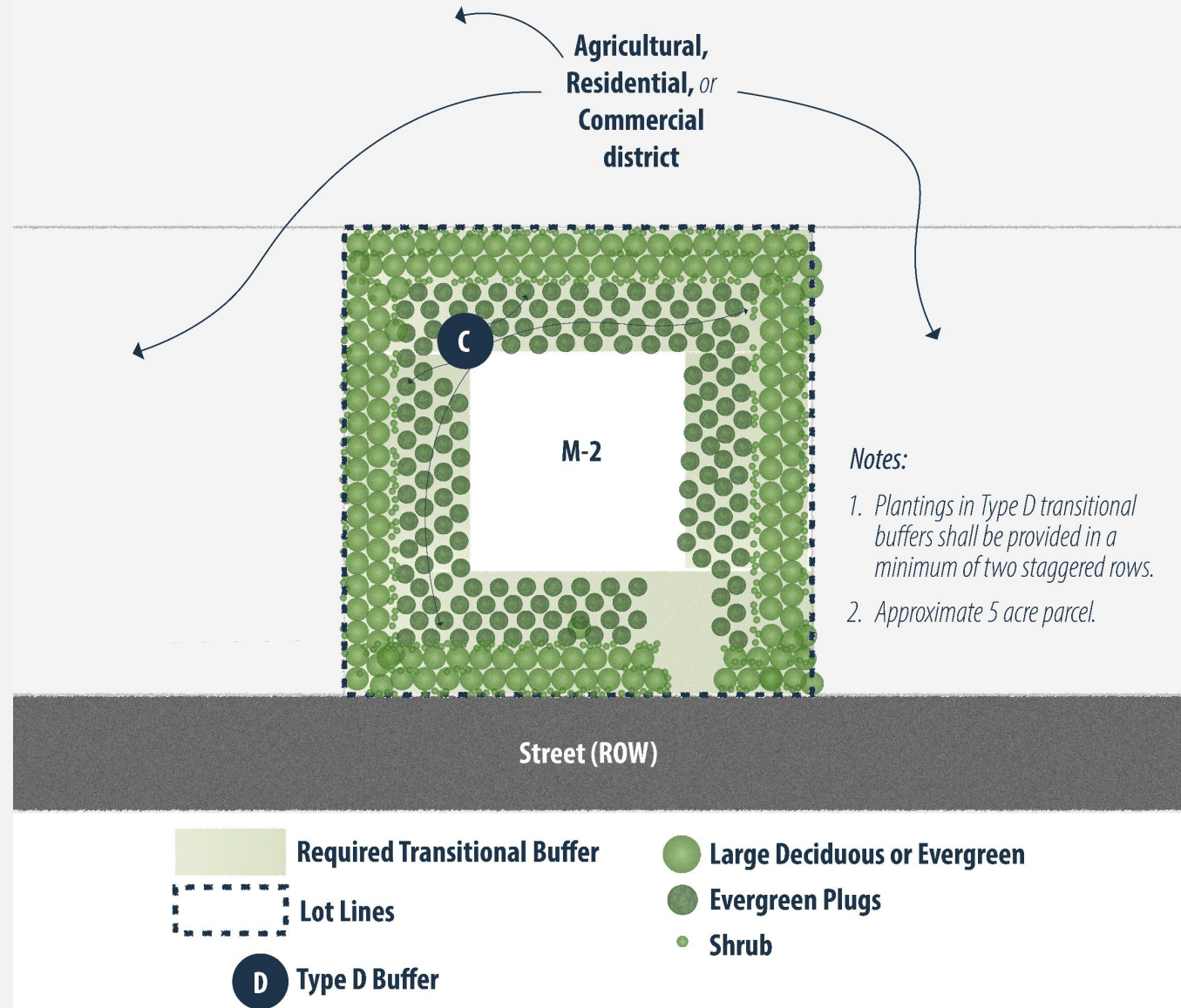
Buffer Type	Minimum Buffer Width (in feet)	Number of Required Large Deciduous or Evergreen Trees (per 100 linear feet) <sup>1</sup>	Number of Required Ornamental or Understory Trees (per 100 linear feet) <sup>1</sup>	Required Shrubs (per 100 linear feet) <sup>1</sup>
A	10	2	1	3
B	20	3	5	5
C	30	8	8	10
D <sup>2</sup>	100	10	0	20

District of Proposed Development		Adjacent Property/Development/District				
		A-1, C-1, RE	R-1 RC-1	RMF MHP	B-1 B-2	M-1 M-2
Major Subdivisions		Type B	Type A	Type A	n/a	
A-1, C-1, RE, R-1, RC-1	non- residential uses	Type B	Type B	Type B	n/a	
	all other uses	n/a				
MHP		Type B	Type B	Type A	n/a	n/a
RMF		Type A	Type A	n/a	n/a	n/a
B-1, B-2		Type B	Type B	Type B	n/a	n/a
M-1		Type C	Type C	Type C	Type C	n/a
M-2		Type D	Type D	Type D	Type C	n/a
n/a = transitional buffer not required						

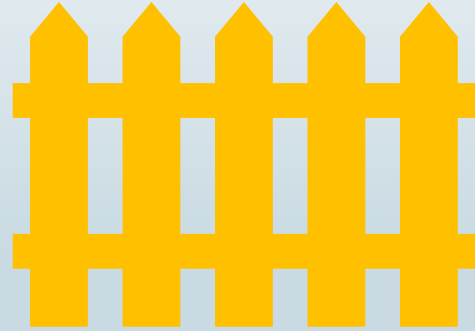
- **Buffer Example: Type D**

- Applies to heavy industry (M-2) and utility scale solar facilities

Buffer Type	Minimum Buffer Width (in feet)	Number of Required Large Deciduous or Evergreen Trees (per 100 linear feet) <sup>1</sup>	Number of Required Ornamental or Understory Trees (per 100 linear feet) <sup>1</sup>	Required Shrubs (per 100 linear feet) <sup>1</sup>
A	10	2	1	3
B	20	3	5	5
C	30	8	8	10
D <sup>2</sup>	100	10	0	20







# Walls and Fences

- **Applicability**

- New, reconstructed, or replaced walls and fences in R-1, RC-1, MHP, RMF, RPD, commercial, and industrial, except:
  - Walls/fences for building support, temp. construction, soil erosion control, or tree protection
  - Landscaping berms
  - Walls/fences at government-owned facilities
  - Walls/fences for livestock or other agriculture uses

- **Location *CANNOT be located:***

- In ROW
- To block natural drainage flow or sightlines for vehicles/pedestrians
- To prevent access to hydrants and the like
- CAN be located within setbacks and yards

- **Height**

- Maximum 4 ft. if between street and front of building
- Unless SUP is granted, maximum:
  - R-1, RC-1, RMF, RPD: 7 ft.
  - Commercial districts: 8 ft.
  - Industrial districts: 10 ft.

- **Materials**

- *Permitted:*

- Wood/composite wood
- Wrought iron
- Decorative metal
- Brick, stone, masonry
- Must be uniform along a lot line

- *Not Permitted:*

- Rolled plastic, sheet metal, plywood, barbed wire, waste materials
  - *Unless recycled to resemble permitted materials*



# Prohibited





- **Materials**

- Chain link fencing

- Permitted in agricultural, conservation, R-1, RE, RC-1, MHP districts
- If in other residential, commercial or industrial:
  - Must be coated with vinyl
  - If opaque fencing required, can be slats



A-1  
C-1  
R-1  
R-E  
RC-1  
MHP



RMF  
RPD  
Commercial  
Industrial



# Parking and Loading



# Parking and Loading

- Edited based on best practices
- Added clarifying and informative text:
  - Joint use of space
  - Reduction
  - Design standards (surfacing, marking, and maintenance)
  - Interpretation of requirements



- **Location to Use**

- All parking lots must be on the same lot as the principal use or building, except that:
  - Remote parking lots may be permitted administratively, as long as:
    - The lot is no further than 600 ft. from the use or building
    - The lot has an existing pedestrian pathway
    - The lot is established by a recorded covenant or agreement

- **Joint or Shared Parking**

- Joint parking between 2 or more buildings or uses is permitted, provided the following requirements are met:
  - Cannot meet more than 75% of the required off-street parking requirement
  - Must be for uses that the normal periods of peak use are different than the shared use
  - Must be within 600 ft. of the uses/buildings



- **Parking Design Standards**

- Parking areas with 10 or more spaces must have an improved surface, striped, and maintained
- Must have handicap accessible parking as required by the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code
- Dimensions for individual parking spaces and interior drive aisles are outlined
- Adequate lighting shall be provided for parking areas with 10 or more spaces
- Screening required if parking is in or adjacent to a residential district



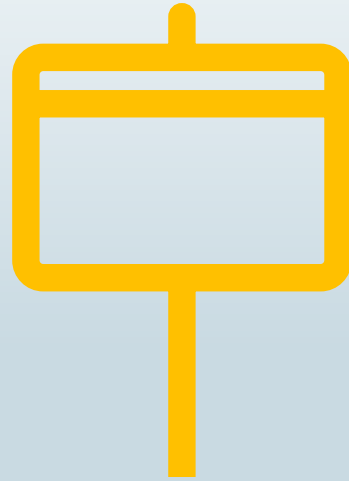
- **Recreational Vehicle and Boat Parking**

- No more than two RVs or boats are allowed to park externally on lots with a principal structure
- Cannot park a RV, boat, or trailer on a vacant lot
- Must meet minimum side and rear setbacks for underlying zoning district



- Off-Street Loading Design Standards

Use(s)	Floor Area (in sq. ft.)	Loading Space(s) Required
Commercial and Industrial Uses (except those listed below)	0-2,999	0
	3,000-10,000	1
	10,001-100,000	1 space, plus 1 space for each 10,000 sq. ft.
	<i>each 40,000 over 100,000</i>	1 additional for each
Dwelling, Multi-family; Funeral Home; Hotel; Office; Hospital or similar institutions	0-2,999	0
	3,000-10,000	1
	10,001-100,000	2
	100,001-200,000	3
	<i>each 100,000 over 200,000</i>	1 additional for each



# Signs



# Signs

- *Reed v. Town of Gilbert (2015)*: Requires sign regulations to be content-neutral



What IS A Content-Neutral Regulation?

- Sign Area
- Sign Type (e.g., window, temporary)
- Underlying Zoning District



What IS NOT A Content-Neutral Regulation?

- Sign Messaging (e.g., political, religious)

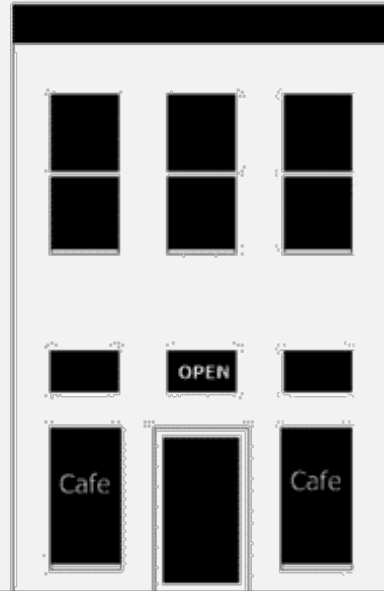
- Added clarifying and informative text:

- Administration/Enforcement
- Exempted and prohibited signs
- General standards and measurements for signs
- Permitted signs by zoning district
- Nonconformities
- Maintenance

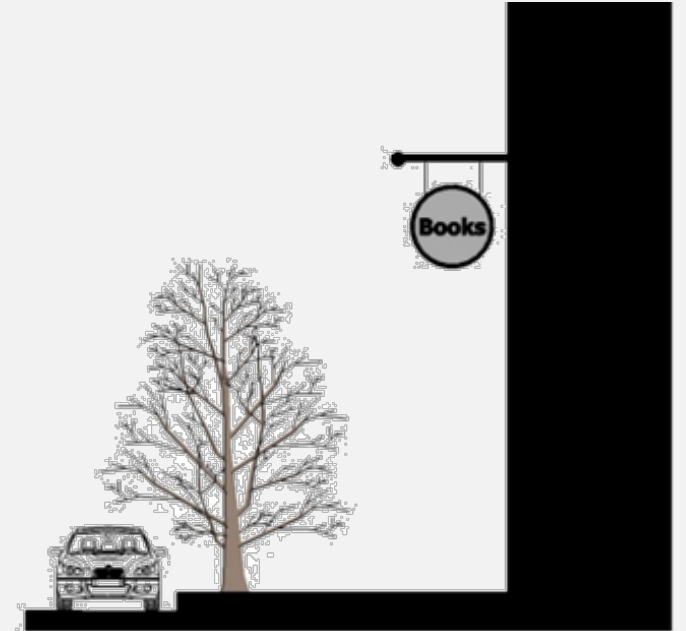




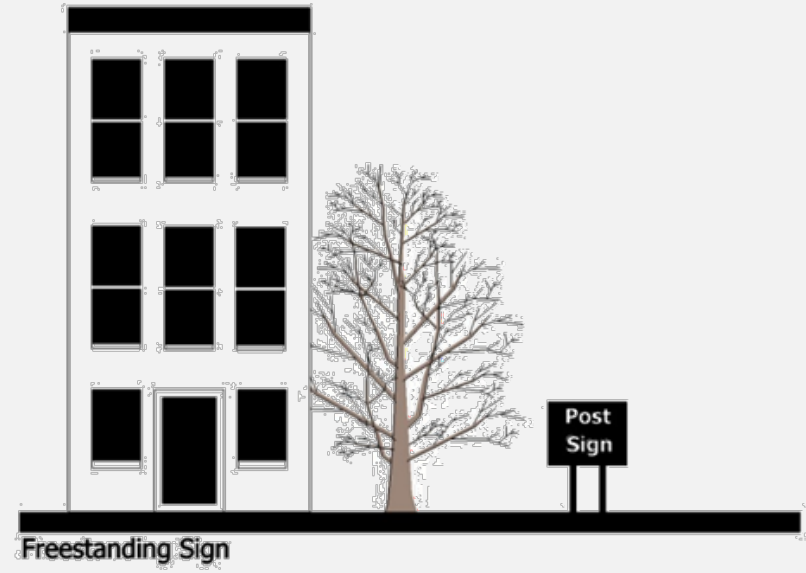
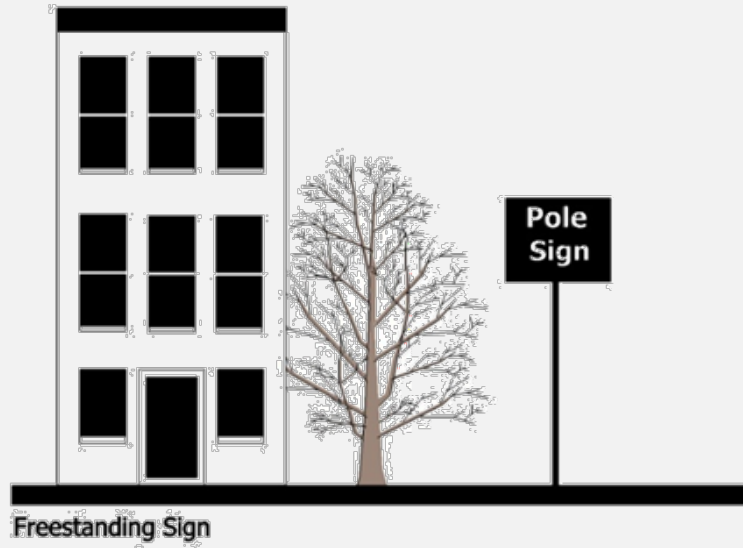
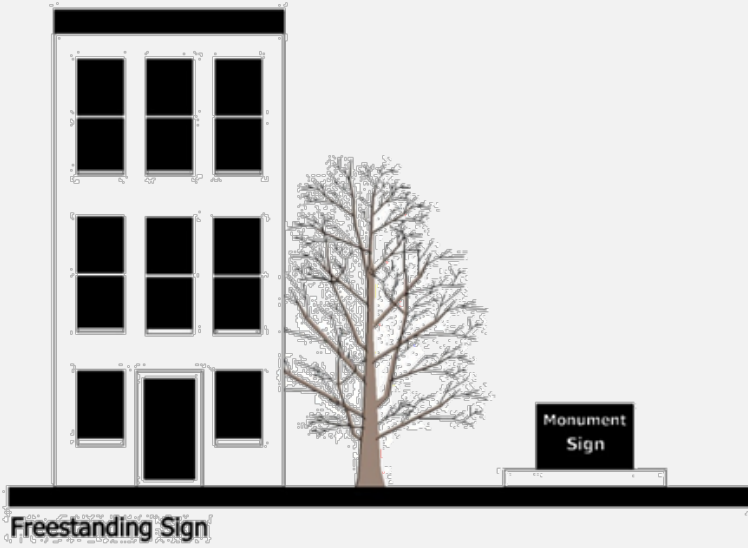
Wall Sign



Window Sign



Projecting/Hanging Sign



## Examples of Exempt Signs:



## Examples of Prohibited Signs:





## Agricultural and Conservation Districts

Sign Type	Residential Uses			Non-Residential Uses		
	Number	Area <i>(square feet)</i>	Height <i>(feet)</i>	Number	Area <i>(square feet)</i>	Height <i>(feet)</i>
<b>Freestanding</b>	1 per street frontage; 2 permitted if for subdivision entrance	16	3	2 per street frontage	32	6
<b>Wall</b>	1 per street frontage	16	N/A	2 per street frontage	16	N/A

## Residential Districts

Sign Type	Residential Uses			Non-Residential Uses		
	Number	Area <i>(square feet)</i>	Height <i>(feet)</i>	Number	Area <i>(square feet)</i>	Height <i>(feet)</i>
<b>Freestanding</b>	1 per street frontage; 2 permitted if for subdivision entrance	6	3	1 per street frontage	32	3
<b>Wall</b>	1 per street frontage	12	N/A	1 per street frontage	16	N/A



# Open Space

# Open Space

- Purpose of open space standards intended to ensure that:
  - Natural resources are preserved
  - Open spaces can be provided & used as active and passive recreation
  - “Heat island” effect of developed areas is reduced
  - Public is provided with meeting space
  - Enhances stormwater management



- **Applicability**
  - All new development within MHP, RMF, and RPD
- **Amount of Open Space Required**

<b>District</b>	<b>Standard Development</b>
<b>MHP</b>	<p>30%</p> <p><i>Includes requirement of 10% of the total park area required to be dedicated to recreational use. See Section 4-5-3 of this Ordinance.</i></p>
<b>RMF</b>	<p>25%;</p> <p><i>of that 25%, a minimum of 5,000 sq. ft per 2 acres shall be for active or passive recreation</i></p>
<b>RPD</b>	<p>30%</p> <p>See Section 4-8-1 of this Ordinance.</p>



- *Areas Counted as Open Space*

- **Natural Features**

- 50% limit



- **Passive Recreation**



- **Active Recreation**



- **Required Landscaping and Buffers**



- *Areas Counted as Open Space*

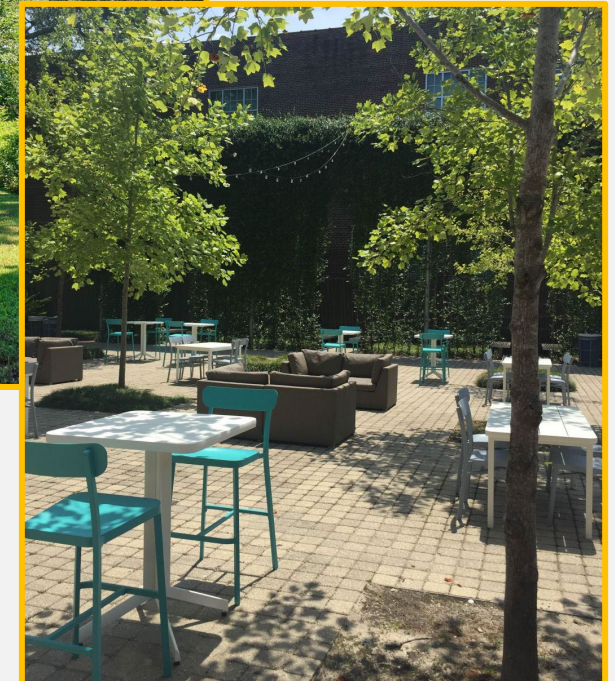
- Stormwater Management Areas/Facilities Treated as Site Amenities

- Maximum of 75% of stormwater management area
- Must support/include passive recreation



- Public Access Easements

- Squares and Plazas



- **Areas NOT Counted as Open Space**

- More than 50% of natural features for all residential districts and RPD
- Yards of single- , two-family and manufactured dwellings
- ROWs, private easements, utility easements, sidewalks not integral to active/passive recreation
- Parking areas and driveways
- Land covered, unless for active/passive recreation
- Outdoor storage areas
- Stormwater management areas not designed as a site feature

- **Design and Development Standards**

- Must be accessible to residents/users of development
- Minimum of 40% of open space shall be contiguous
- Must attempt to connect to existing open space/recreation areas



## Article 8

# *DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS*

- *Clarification on any of the standards?*
- *Should any community design standards be changed?*

# Next Steps

Complete Ordinance Review

- Joint Kickoff Work Session
- Public Survey
- Public Workshop
- Stakeholder Listening Sessions
- Draft Worksessions
- FINAL WORKSESSION: October 11, 2023
- Public Open House and Review
- Pre-Adoption Worksession – February 2024
- Final Revisions
- Public Hearings & Adoption – Spring 2024