

CHARLOTTESVILLE

ENTRANCE CORRIDOR DESIGN GUIDELINES

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CHARLOTTESVILLE

ENTRANCE CORRIDOR DESIGN GUIDELINES

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A. DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Charlottesville's special visual character is defined by the area's natural beauty, historic resources, architectural quality, distinctive building materials, and cultural variety expressed in the built environment. The intent of the entrance corridor guidelines and review process is to protect the City's historic, architectural and cultural resources, by ensuring a quality of development compatible with those resources through design control measures. Charlottesville's Entrance Corridor Guidelines are based on the following ten Design Principles:

- **Design For a Corridor Vision**

New building design should be compatible (in massing, scale, materials, colors) with those structures that contribute to the overall character and quality of the corridor. Existing developments should be encouraged to make upgrades consistent with the corridor vision. Site designs should contain some common elements to provide continuity along the corridor. New development, including franchise development, should complement the City's character and respect those qualities that distinguish the City's built environment.

- **Preserve History**

Preserve significant historic buildings as well as distinctive architecture from more recent periods. Encourage new contemporary design that integrates well with existing historic buildings to enhance the overall character and quality of the corridor.

- **Facilitate Pedestrian Access**

Encourage compact, walkable developments. Design pedestrian connections from sidewalk and car to buildings, between buildings, and between corridor properties and adjacent residential areas.

- **Maintain Human Scale in Buildings and Spaces**

Consider the building scale, especially height, mass, complexity of form, and architectural details, and the impact of spaces created, as it will be experienced by the people who will pass by, live, work, or shop there. The size, placement and number of doors, windows, portals and openings define human scale, as does the degree of ground-floor pedestrian access.

- **Preserve and Enhance Natural Character**

Daylight and improve streams, and retain mature trees and natural buffers. Work with topography to minimize grading and limit the introduction of impervious surfaces. Encourage plantings of diverse native species.

- **Create a Sense of Place**

In corridors where substantial pedestrian activity occurs or is encouraged, or where mixed use and multi-building projects are proposed, one goal will be creating a sense of place. Building arrangements, uses, natural features, and landscaping should contribute, where feasible, to create exterior space where people can interact.

- **Create an Inviting Public Realm**

Design inviting streetscapes and public spaces. Redevelopment of properties should enhance the existing streetscapes and create an engaging public realm.

- **Create Restrained Communications**

Private signage and advertising should be harmonious and in scale with building elements and landscaping features.

- **Screen Incompatible Uses and Appurtenances:**

Screen from adjacent properties and public view those uses and appurtenances whose visibility may be incompatible with the overall character and quality of the corridor, such as: parking lots, outdoor storage and loading areas, refuse areas, mechanical and communication equipment. Where feasible, relegate parking behind buildings. It is not the intent to require screening for utilitarian designs that are attractive, and/or purposeful.

- **Respect and Enhance Charlottesville's Character**

Charlottesville seeks new construction that reflects the unique character, history, and cultural diversity of this place. Architectural transplants from other locales, or shallow imitations of historic architectural styles, for example, are neither appropriate nor desirable. Incompatible aspects of franchise design or corporate signature buildings must be modified to fit the character of this community.

B. PLANTINGS & OPEN SPACE

1. Use street trees to provide shade, a sense of enclosure and to define edges.
2. Include appropriately scaled trees, shrubs and other plantings to provide beauty as well as shade, within a pedestrian gathering place, and as screening for parking, utilities, and service areas.
3. Maintain existing plantings in all public areas.
4. Use hardy native species that require minimal maintenance.
5. Replace damaged or missing street trees with appropriate species.
6. Avoid over-used species such as Bradford pear.
7. Use larger tree species where appropriate to space and function.
8. Expand use of seasonal color in plantings.
9. Use landscaping to create an identity within a particular corridor or sub-area by selecting specific species, sizes, colors or shape of plants and trees.
10. Use plantings to promote visual order and help integrate buildings into the corridor.
11. Refer to the Tree Planting and Preservation BMP Manual in the Charlottesville Standards and Design Manual.
12. Encourage day lighting of streams where appropriate.



A green plaza defines the corner and provides open space for pedestrians at this intersection.



This planted median provides a gateway from a corridor into a private development and includes light poles with banners.



A median with appropriately scaled plantings can help integrate a building into a corridor.



Besides screening parking lots, plantings also define the edge of this corridor.

C. PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

1. Provide, where feasible, unbroken pedestrian routes between developments. Place paths in a logical pattern where people will want to walk. Place sidewalks on both sides of streets where feasible and separate them from the curb by a minimum five (5) feet wide landscape zone if possible.
2. Within developments, identify a complete internal pedestrian pathway system linking all buildings, parking and green spaces. Ensure that this network connects to public pedestrian pathways that link schools, recreation areas, and other major destinations.
3. Add designated pedestrian pathways through larger parking lots.
4. Provide crosswalks at intersections, between major pedestrian destinations and in front of building entrances that link to parking.
5. Design crosswalks to highlight their visibility by slightly raising them, by making them wider, by constructing them of materials other than asphalt and by using bulb-out corners that reduce their length.
6. Provide breaks in large building masses to allow pedestrians to pass through, particularly through shopping centers.
7. Place sidewalks throughout residential areas.
8. Avoid excessive curb cuts for vehicular access across pedestrian ways. Where curb cuts are necessary, mark them with a change in materials, color, texture or grade.
9. Design sidewalks appropriately for the site and the expected amount of foot traffic. In commercial areas where foot traffic is expected, sidewalks should be a minimum of (10) ten feet. Sidewalks in residential areas can be five (5) feet, depending on the type of street and size of road.
10. Use brick or patterned concrete, or a combination of these materials, that relates to the existing architectural vocabulary of the corridor or sub-area.
11. Avoid concrete curbing poured in continuous strips.
12. Avoid excessive variation in sidewalk and curb materials.



Paving patterns and delineated crosswalks provide pedestrians with a well-defined, inviting pathway along this busy corridor.



This sidewalk, accented with plantings, provides a safe pathway through a large parking lot.



Brick textures add richness to this inviting sidewalk scene.

D. BICYCLE ROUTES

1. Provide for bicycle traffic along major corridors and between major destinations, with particular emphasis on connecting residential areas to schools, recreation areas, and commercial centers.
2. Provide new bike paths to connect to planned or existing municipal paths or paths of adjoining developments.
3. Provide facilities to store or lock bicycles at appropriate sites, including schools, major recreation areas, office parks, public institutions, and large commercial centers.
4. Develop an easily identifiable graphic system of signs and road markings to designate bicycle routes and crossings.



A number of Charlottesville's entrance corridors have signage to designate bicycle lanes as seen in this West Main Street example.



Several corridors have designated lanes for bicycles as shown here along Jefferson Park Avenue.



Bicycle racks are a welcome addition to the site of this public library.

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GUIDELINES FOR STREETSCAPES

E. LIGHTING

1. Use full cutoff luminaires in accordance with City lighting requirements to provide better lighting and prevent unwanted glare.
2. Where appropriate, replace modern cobra-head type lamps and poles with painted metal, traditionally designed fixtures that have a base, shaft and luminaire.
3. Consider using a different but compatible style of fixture for each of the corridors.
4. Light pedestrian areas with appropriately scaled poles.
5. Provide pedestrian lighting at transit stops and along paths to parking lots and other destinations.
6. Provide lighting of intersections in high traffic areas.
7. Include any lighting upgrades as a part of an overall streetscape plan for each corridor.



This planted median includes distinctive street light fixtures to add character to this corridor that leads to a government complex.



Traditional pedestrian-scaled streetlights such as these at Fontaine Research Park help define the street edge and light the sidewalks.



Full cutoff luminaires provide targeted lighting for commercial parking areas.



Light fixtures can also be locations to hang seasonal banners in a sub-area.

F. STREET FURNITURE

1. Develop and use a common palette of colors, materials and design.
2. Coordinate furniture along corridors. While they need not match, they should be compatible and not clash.
3. Place benches at key locations such as transit stops. Use traditional designs constructed of wood and/or painted metal.
4. Avoid placing too many elements on narrow sidewalks.



Trash receptacles should be co-located with benches at transit stops.



Consider containers suitable for year-round plantings co-located with other street furniture elements as part of an overall street furniture plan as shown in this example on the downtown mall.



Furniture placed along the street at transit stop locations provides a welcome rest for pedestrians.

II

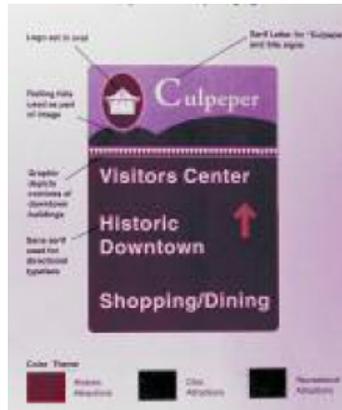
GUIDELINES FOR STREETSCAPES

G. PUBLIC SIGNS

1. Develop a system of public wayfinding and informational signs to reflect the character of Charlottesville to be used on all corridors.
2. Coordinate the colors and design of signs within a corridor.
3. Keep signs to the minimum number and size necessary for the use.
4. Scale and place signs for both automobile traffic and pedestrians.
5. Avoid placing signposts in locations where they can interfere with the opening of vehicle doors.
6. Consider using decorative color banners within a specific corridor



Many corridors have this type of gateway sign at the edge of the city as seen on Long Street.



Culpeper, Virginia has created a town-wide coordinated public wayfinding sign system to direct visitors from all entrance corridors.



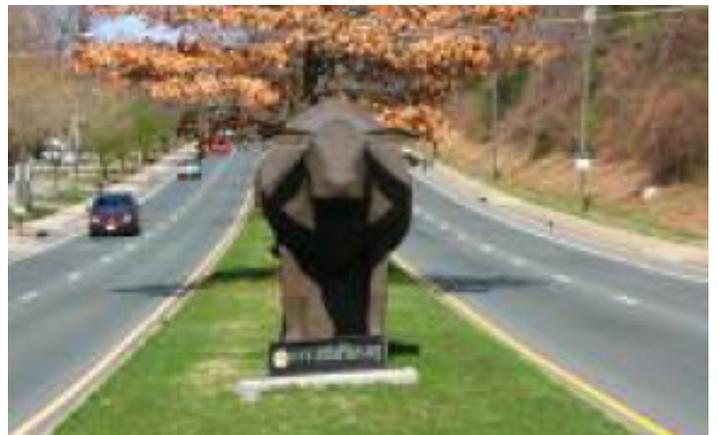
This type of entry corridor sign also serves as a general wayfinding element for downtown as seen on Preston Avenue.

H. PUBLIC ART & MONUMENTS

1. Use public art to celebrate or commemorate individuals and events important in the history of Charlottesville.
2. Use sculpture, fountains, murals, paved plaza areas and other similar features to enrich the public environment.
3. Use materials and designs that reflect the character of the corridor.
4. Continue the existing public art program and locate items where they will have the maximum impact in terms of vehicular and pedestrian visibility.



A metal tree surrounded by base plantings adds a whimsical element to the Preston Avenue corridor.



Charlottesville's public art program includes several corridor locations like this metal steer on 5th Street.



This metal sculpture of books adds interest to the site of this Williamsburg library.



A large watering can creates a sculptural element at one of Staunton, Virginia's gateways.

II GUIDELINES FOR STREETSCAPES

I. UTILITIES AND COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT

1. Locate and screen utilities to limit their visibility from the street and from nearby development.
2. Place existing and proposed utilities underground.
3. Consider integrating cellular communication towers into building design so as to appear visually unobtrusive.



Placing utilities underground reduces visual clutter and allows for the placement of street trees and other plantings.



Above ground utilities visually dominate this green median on Jefferson Park Avenue.



Cell towers are concealed within the chimneys of this hotel.

AVAILABLE GUIDELINES SECTIONS

These entrance corridor design guidelines have been divided into the following sections so that you need only read those pertinent to your project.

I. Introduction

II. Streetscape

III. Site

IV. Buildings

V. Individual Corridors

Guideline sections are available from the Charlottesville Department of Neighborhood Services. Online they may be accessed through <http://www.charlottesville.org> at the Planning Commission home page.

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