



## Design Standards

### Goal

To create a human-scale town center through attractive development that creates a sense of place and supports commercial and residential vitality.

### Applicability

The design standards apply to all new development and improvements on properties located within the Mixed-Use-Town Center Zone, unless otherwise noted, including:

- Buildings
- Additions
- Exterior renovations
- New entrance and window treatments
- Signs
- Fencing

The design standards replace requirements that are set forth in the Zoning Ordinance and the *Landscape Manual*. These standards set requirements for site, building, and public space design, including build-to lines, fencing, buffers, landscaping, parking, streetscape, building height, massing and openings, signage, lighting, stormwater management, parks, and plazas. Subdivisions shall be reviewed for compliance with relevant standards such as those affecting circulation.

Streetscape improvements on private land and the provision of easements shall be the responsibility of the applicant and must be coordinated with the Town of Riverdale Park and other appropriate agencies.

Development that increases existing gross floor area (GFA) by 15 percent or 7,500 square feet, whichever is smaller, shall subject the site to full review for compliance with the design standards. Lesser changes to the site, and additions to single-family residential dwellings, shall not subject the entire site to review for compliance, only the portion impacted by the improvement.



The following are exempt from the full or partial review for conformance with the design standards:

*Additions of less than 250 square feet in gross floor area.*  
Additions of less than 250 square feet GFA and additions to single-family residential dwellings shall be exempt from the requirements of the Building Placement and Streetscape Section.

*Routine maintenance.*  
Routine repainting or repair of legally existing development or improvements shall not be subject to the design standards.

## How to Use

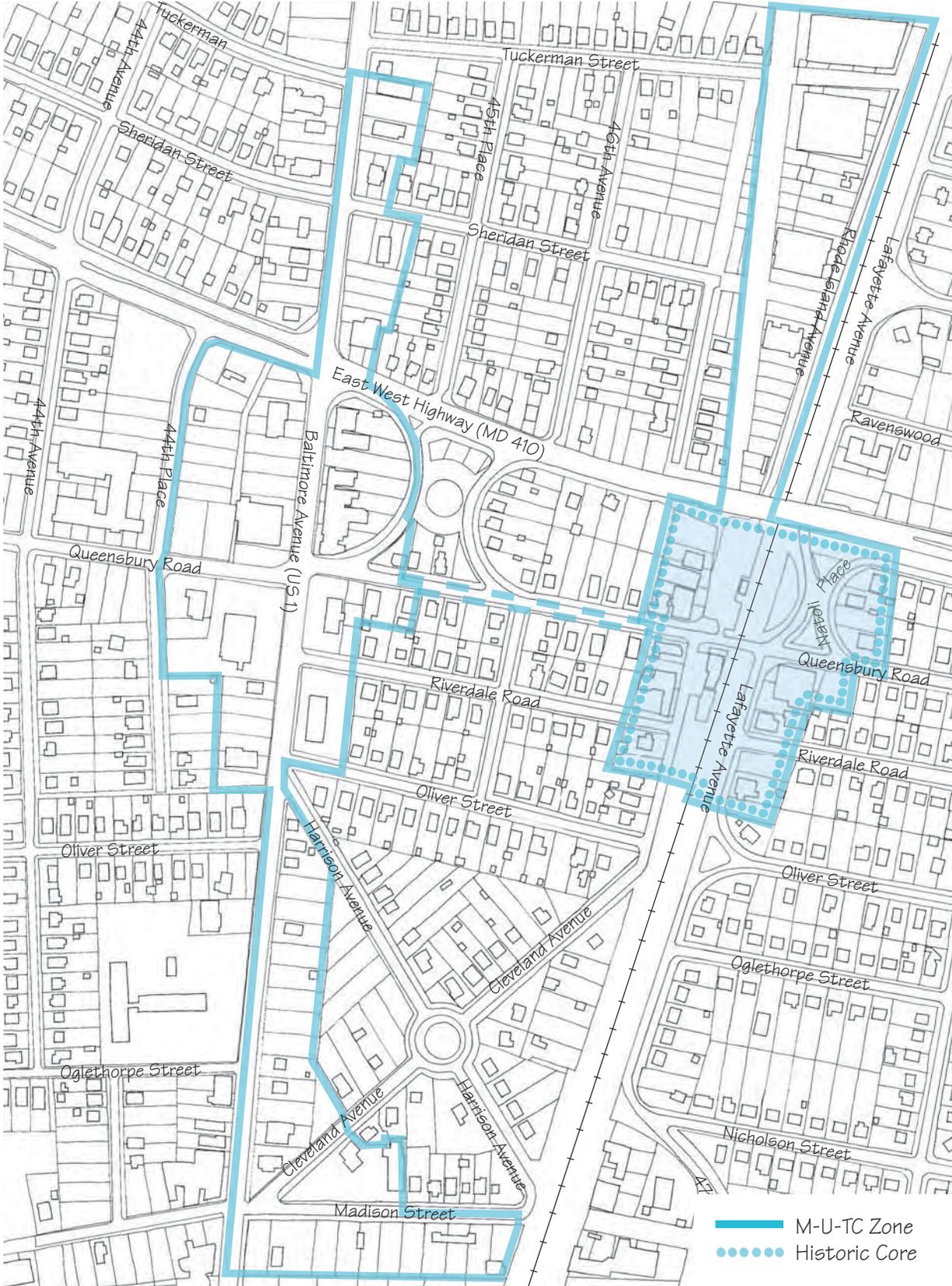
The M-U-TC Zone is intended to be flexible and allow the applicant alternatives to strict application of all of the design standards when developing in accordance with the goal, design principles, and intent statements of the development plan. These shall be used to evaluate the conformance of each

proposal with specific standards in the M-U-TC development plan. The term "applicant" in the design standards shall include the developer and the applicant's heirs, successors, and/or assignees.

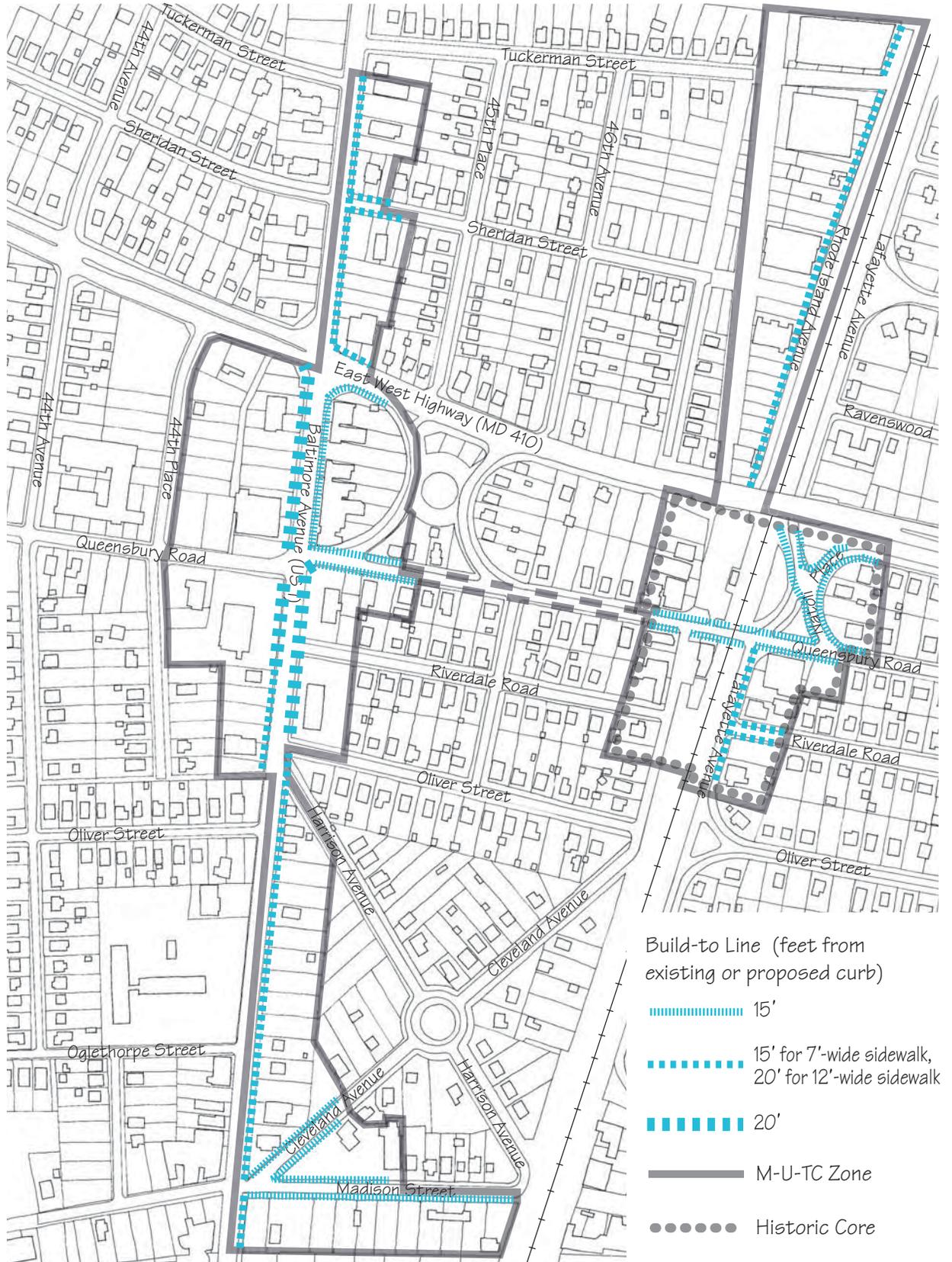
As set forth in Section 27-108.01 of the Zoning Ordinance, "the words 'shall,' 'must,' 'may only,' or 'may not' are always mandatory standards and not discretionary. The word 'may' is permissive. The words 'including' and 'such as' do not limit a term to the specified examples, but are intended to extend its meaning to all other instances or circumstances of like kind or character."

***Items in bold italics apply only to the historic core as shown on Map 5: Riverdale Park M-U-TC Design Areas. Items not italicized apply to all areas of the town center, unless otherwise noted.***

# Map 5: Riverdale Park M-U-TC Design Areas



## Map 6: Riverdale Park M-U-TC Build-To Line



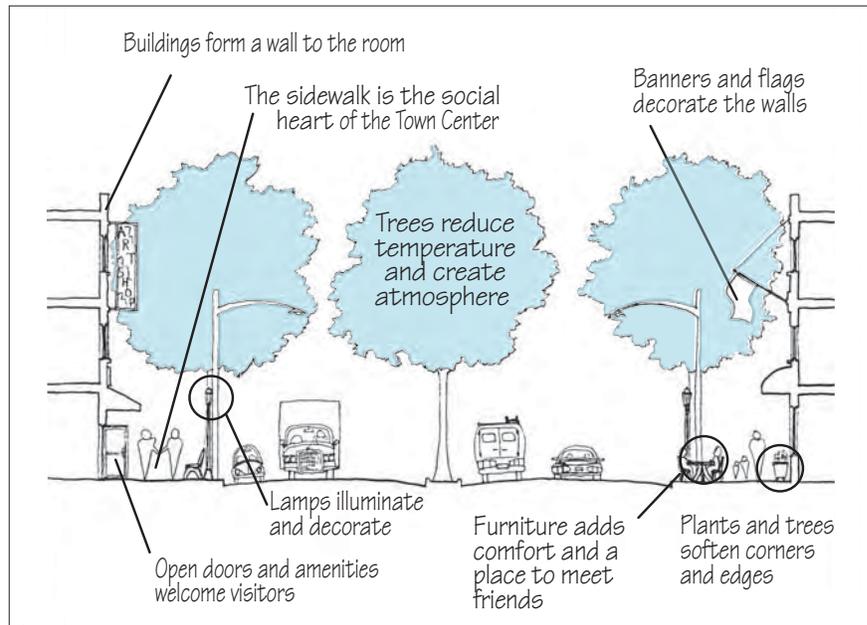


## Build-To Line

### Intent

To retain and create a consistent street wall (abutting buildings aligned along a build-to line) that promotes a sense of enclosure (a street room), defines the sidewalk, and frames the street.

Allow the development of porches, stoops and front gardens to distinguish residential property as a private use. Allow institutional and public uses and large buildings to provide a "green" or "plaza."



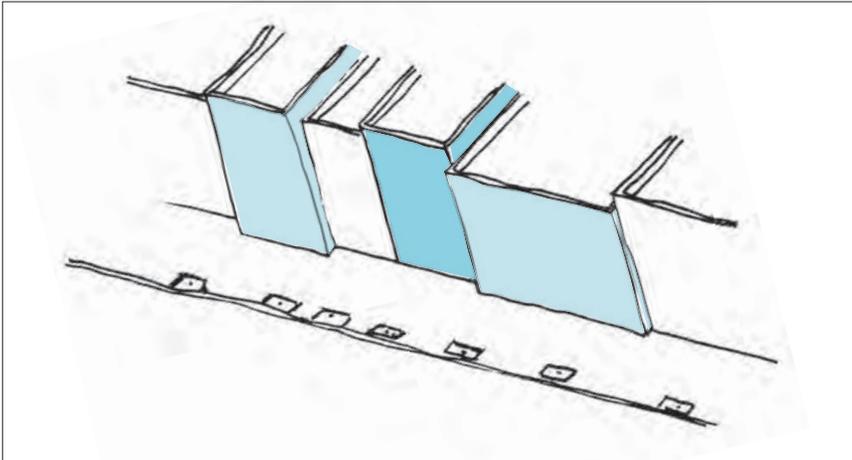
Street walls combined with amenities create town living rooms.

### Standards

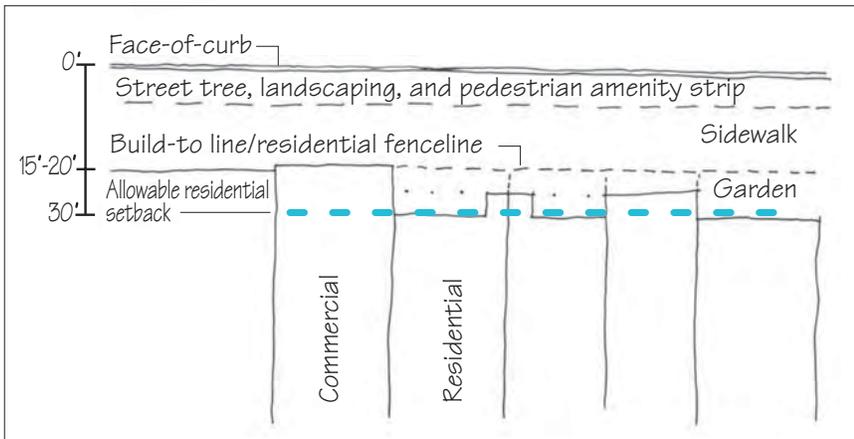
**Table 4: Build-To Line (Distance from Face-of-Curb) and Allowable Variation**

Location and/or Use	Build-to Line	Allowable Variation +/-
East side of US 1, north of Queensbury Rd., Lafayette St., and Natoli Pl.	15' for 7' sidewalk 20' for 12' sidewalk	+ 4'
West side of US 1, south of MD 410, and north of Oliver St. and east side of US 1, south of Queensbury Rd. and north of Oliver St.	20'	+/-4'
Madison St., Queensbury Rd., Rhode Island Ave.	15'	+/-4'
All residential uses with addition of front garden, terrace, steps, front porch, stairwell to basement, where individual units have an entrance onto the street	Same as adjacent	+ 14'
Properties in the historic core on streets not specified	15' or previous structure footprint	+ 5'
Residential uses in the historic core	Same as commercial	+ Similar to neighboring residential facades
Institutional and public uses and large buildings with the addition of a park, plaza, or garden	Same as commercial	+ As requested
Gas station	Same as commercial	+ 30 feet

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Create a street wall by placing buildings adjacent to each other and built to the sidewalk.



Residential buildings are allowed an additional ten-foot setback for semiprivate space in the form of porches, stoops, gardens, steps, and basement stairwells.



Define large structures and institutions with a usable and attractive forecourt.

1. All new buildings shall be built within a specified distance (the build-to line) of the face-of-curb depending upon location, plus or minus the allowable variation. See Map 6: Riverdale Park M-U-TC Build-to Lines for specific locations. The build-to line shall be measured on US 1 from the projected face-of-curb contained in the recommended configuration on Map 4: US 1 Concept and Table 3: US 1 Proposed Roadbed and Streetscape Dimensions until a new plan has been approved by SHA. For all other locations, use existing face-of-curbs. The allowable variation in build-to-line is found in Table 4.

2. All new buildings with commercial uses on the first story shall be located adjacent to the sidewalk.

**3. All new building sidewalks shall abut the sidewalks of adjacent buildings except for the provision of passages in enclosed blocks. A maximum of two passages are permitted per block. Each passage shall have a maximum width of eight feet.**

4. All new developments with residential uses in the first story may add a maximum of 14 feet to the build-to line (see Table 4) for the installation of a combination of landscaping, terraces, basement access wells, porches, and entrance stairs/ramps, and stoops.

**5. Buildings with a residential use on the ground floor may be set back similar to adjacent residentially zoned properties.**

6. Institutional uses or buildings with over 120 feet of frontage on one public street may place a forecourt between the building and sidewalk that follows the Parks and Plazas Section of the design standards.

7. Gas stations may add a maximum of 30 feet to the build-to line in order to place a pump between the station and the sidewalk. The additional setback may not be used for customer parking, loading or outdoor storage.

8. New buildings may not be built within 100 feet of a railroad track.

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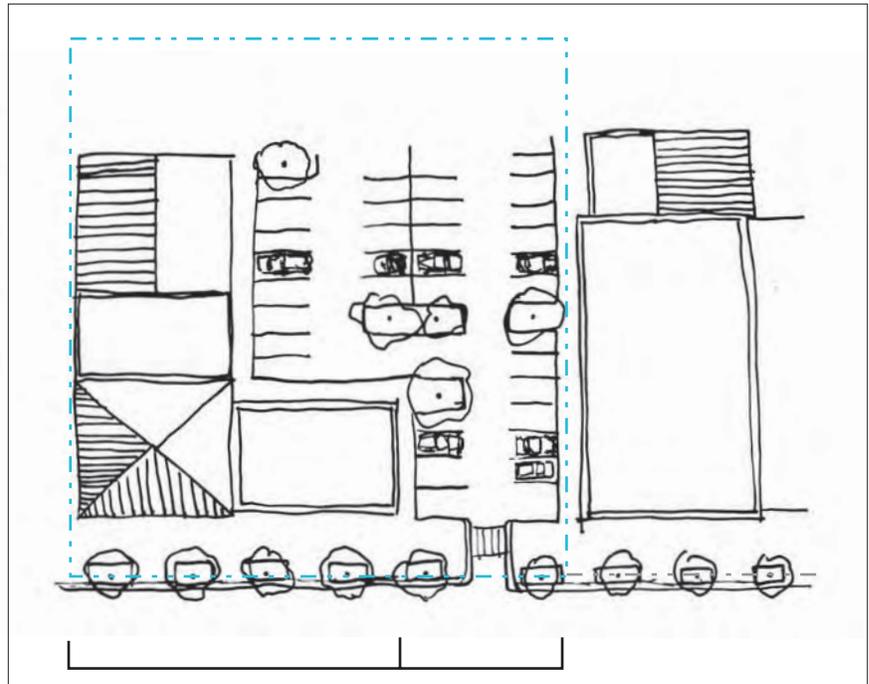
### Building Placement and Streetscape

#### Intent

Enhance the town center's sense of place by developing a coherent identity through buildings that relate to the street. Create a street wall that encloses the street and encourages close proximity of retail, offices, residential units, and services.

#### Standards

1. Buildings shall occupy a minimum of 50 percent of the net lot area.
2. The building facade shall occupy a minimum of 66 percent of the build-to line, except in the historic core.
3. **The building facade shall occupy 100 percent of the frontage width of the lot, unless the lot contains one of the two allowed mid-block alley or a walk-through connection. In this case, the building shall abut the alley or walk-through.**
4. Buildings shall be built flush to adjacent buildings, if possible, on adjacent lots when parking is accessed from the rear or off-site unless there is a public walk-through that connects the sidewalk to rear parking or public outdoor use.
5. Gas stations shall share sidewalls with, or be located within eight feet of, the adjacent property.
6. The streetscape shall be located between the face-of-curb and the build-to line, residential fence line, or institutional use/large building park or plaza forecourt. All applicants shall be responsible for streetscape improvements located on their property in coordination with the Town of Riverdale Park and where applicable, the State Highway Administration.
7. Streetscape improvements shall be designed in conformance with the Streetscape standards in the Public Space Section.



*Building occupies a minimum of two-thirds of lot frontage.*



*This streetscape provides a place for walking, shopping and visiting.*

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*Screen trash and dumpster areas with structures that are compatible with the main building.*



*This fence and landscaping inadequately screen the mechanical equipment.*

## Fencing, Screening, and Buffering

### *Intent*

Use fencing to delineate private property without creating security risks by allowing natural surveillance of public and private areas. Screen unsightly elements and buffer transitional properties.

### *Standards*

***1. Commercial uses on transitional properties in the historic core shall have a minimum 20-foot-wide side bufferyard and a minimum 7-foot-wide rear bufferyard adjacent to all residentially zoned properties.***

a. A hedge, decorative fence, or dense shrubs shall be placed along the adjacent properties.

b. This setback shall remain a bufferyard with appropriate landscaping.

***c. Any existing parking spaces located within this yard may remain, as long as parked cars are adequately screened from residential properties.***

2. Appropriate screening materials shall be wood, brick, stone, masonry stucco, or any combination thereof that complements the main structure.

3. Chain-link fence, razor wire, and barbed wire are inappropriate in a town center and shall not be used for fencing, screening or security, except where chain link is used to surround athletic courts.

4. Dumpsters, HVAC units, and utility mechanical equipment shall be completely screened so as not to be visible from sidewalks.

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5. When parking lots are adjacent to single-family residential uses, parking and parking access shall be screened so that vehicles are not visible from the residential lot. Appropriate screening may include attractive fencing (see standard 2), or a landscaped grade change. All other fencing shall be visually permeable above three and a half feet. Blank walls facing onto an alley or customer parking should be avoided by the use of architectural detail or screened with climbing vegetation such as vines.

6. Decorative fencing and gates (a minimum of three feet and a maximum of four feet in height) may enclose residential terraces, courtyards and gardens adjacent to a mid-block walk-through or side/rear parking lot sidewalk.

7. Decorative fencing and gates (a minimum of three feet and a maximum of four feet in height) shall enclose residential terraces, courtyards and gardens adjacent to a public street sidewalk. If the residential yard is less than seven feet in depth or contains a porch, no fence is required.

8. Parking lots adjacent to other parking lots, streets or alleys should not be separated by a wall or fence. If this is unavoidable, an operable gate or fence opening shall be provided to connect the lot to the street, adjacent alley or parking lot for pedestrian and bicycle access. The fence shall have a maximum height of three feet.

9. Outdoor storage is inappropriate in the town center and is not permitted except in the rear of the property, with appropriate screening that does not obscure visual access to the site above three and a half feet. Outdoor storage adjacent to a single-family residential use shall be completely screened.



*Separate semiprivate front gardens from the public street with a low fence.*

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*Mid-block alleys provide shortcuts for pedestrians, provide access to parking, and reduce curb cuts across the sidewalk caused by driveways.*

## Access and Circulation

### *Intent*

Reduce curb cuts and improve access and circulation throughout the town center. Provide access to parking and loading spaces from the side or rear of properties along arterial and primary streets.

### *Standards*

1. Alleys should be part of new developments and shall be created in accordance with the Riverdale Park town center concept (see Map 3).
- 2. *New alleys in the historic core should be eight feet wide.***
3. All new gas stations shall have a maximum of two 18-foot-wide driveways.
4. Gas stations should minimize the area of impermeable surface.
5. Car repair businesses may have a maximum of two curb cuts that are a maximum width of ten feet each.
6. Drive-through windows are inconsistent with the pedestrian orientation of the town center and are strongly discouraged. Drive-through windows may only be considered if accessed by alleys and located on the rear of the property.
7. Window services with pedestrian access only are permissible and encouraged.
8. ATMs may be located on the front or side of the building, but may not have vehicular access.
9. A minimum four-foot-wide sidewalk shall provide access from parking lots to the rear entrances and other public on-site access areas, such as outside seating.

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### Services, Utilities, and Stormwater Management

#### *Intent*

Locate unsightly elements to the rear of properties with appropriate screening and avoid detracting from the overall visual appearance of the streetscape. Place utilities and HVAC units where they are not visible from the street.

#### *Standards*

1. All new development on sites greater than two acres in size shall place utility lines underground or relocate them to the rear of the property. Development on smaller sites should relocate utility lines to the rear of the property. Utilities shall include, but are not limited to, electric, natural gas, fiber optic, cable television, telephone, water and sewer service.
2. Dumpsters shall be located on the side of or behind a building; these shall not be located in front of a building or adjacent to a rear public entrance. Dumpsters on adjacent properties should be consolidated, whenever possible.
3. HVAC units shall be located beside, behind or on top of a building (to the rear behind a parapet wall or other facade or roof treatment); these features shall not be located in front of a building or adjacent to a rear public entrance.
4. Window HVAC units shall not be allowed on facades facing streets.
5. Micromanagement stormwater treatment systems should be used for all new buildings. Micromanagement stormwater treatment includes the use of rain barrels, street trees, landscaping, and roof gardens designed for this purpose. A landscape strip may be installed for this purpose within the streetscape in the public right-of-way in coordination with the Town of Riverdale Park, the county Department of Environmental Resources, and other applicable agencies.



*Locate unsightly utility lines at the rear of the property.*



*Direct stormwater to irrigate street trees and flower boxes.*

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## Parking and Loading Provision

### *Intent*

To provide flexible approaches to parking provisions that support multimodal transportation, shared parking lots, and maximum use of land for development, parks and plazas.

### *Standards*

#### *Nonresidential Development*

1. The maximum number of off-street surface parking spaces permitted for each land use type shall be equal to 80 percent of the minimum number of required off-street parking spaces in accordance with Section 27-568(a) of the Zoning Ordinance. If structured parking is provided, this maximum number may be increased.
2. The minimum number of off-street surface parking spaces permitted for each land use type shall be reduced 50 percent from the minimum number of required off-street parking spaces in accordance with Section 27-568(a) of the Zoning Ordinance. If off-site shared parking is utilized in accordance with the off-site shared parking requirements, then the minimum required for off-street surface parking may be waived.
3. Off-site shared parking should be used to the greatest extent possible to meet parking requirements.
4. Where shared parking is utilized, the applicant shall provide details of the development's proposed uses and required parking. The applicant shall then demonstrate that the available shared parking is adequate to meet all or part of the parking needs of the proposed uses in addition to any other development being served by the shared parking lot. The applicant shall also

provide information on the times when the uses operate so as to demonstrate the lack of potential conflict between multiple uses. The shared parking facility must be within a walkable distance (approximately a quarter mile) to the primary entrances of all uses being served. Copies of this documentation must be presented to the Town of Riverdale Park, which will maintain copies of all shared parking documentation.<sup>3</sup>

5. To encourage the construction of off-street structured parking facilities in the town center and to promote economic development, the establishment of a parking district in accordance with the requirements of Division 27, Section 399-413 of the Prince George's County Code is recommended. Applicants within an established parking district may have the minimum off-street parking requirements reduced or waived provided that the applicant agrees to pay a fee-in-lieu for the required number of off-street parking spaces that are to be waived and/or a special assessment as defined by the parking district.
6. Wherever possible, incentives should be provided to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation other than single-occupancy vehicles. These incentives can be used to reduce the minimum off-street parking requirements between 5 and 20 percent. The alternatives include contributing to the county and/or city ride-sharing program, providing private incentives for car- and van-pooling, encouraging bicycle use, participating in usage of public transportation programs such as WMATA's Metrochek and MTA's TransitPlus 2000, or provision of private shuttle bus service. Verifiable data must be produced that supports the desired reductions in the minimum off-street parking.

7. When off-site parking is necessary to meet the parking requirements, the applicant will need to provide satisfactory documentation such as affidavits, leases, or other agreements to show that parking is provided off site.

8. Loading facilities and spaces shall be provided that meet the needs of the proposed development without unreasonably interrupting the flow of traffic.

#### *Residential Development*

1. The maximum number of off-street surface parking spaces permitted for residential development shall be 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit and the minimum shall be 1.25 parking spaces per dwelling. Additional parking may be considered if structured.
2. Multifamily housing for the elderly or physically handicapped shall provide a minimum of .66 off-street parking spaces for each dwelling unit.
3. Loading facilities and spaces shall be provided that meet the needs of the proposed development without unreasonably interrupting the flow of traffic.
4. Each 20 linear feet of legal on-street parallel parking along the frontage of new residential development (as deemed by the Town of Riverdale Park) may be considered as one off-street space to be counted toward the required off-street parking.

<sup>3</sup> The Town of Riverdale Park shall maintain an up-to-date inventory of shared parking facilities with accurate data on shared parking agreements and remaining capacity of shared parking facilities, until another entity is designated through the establishment of a parking district.

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## Design Standards/Site Design

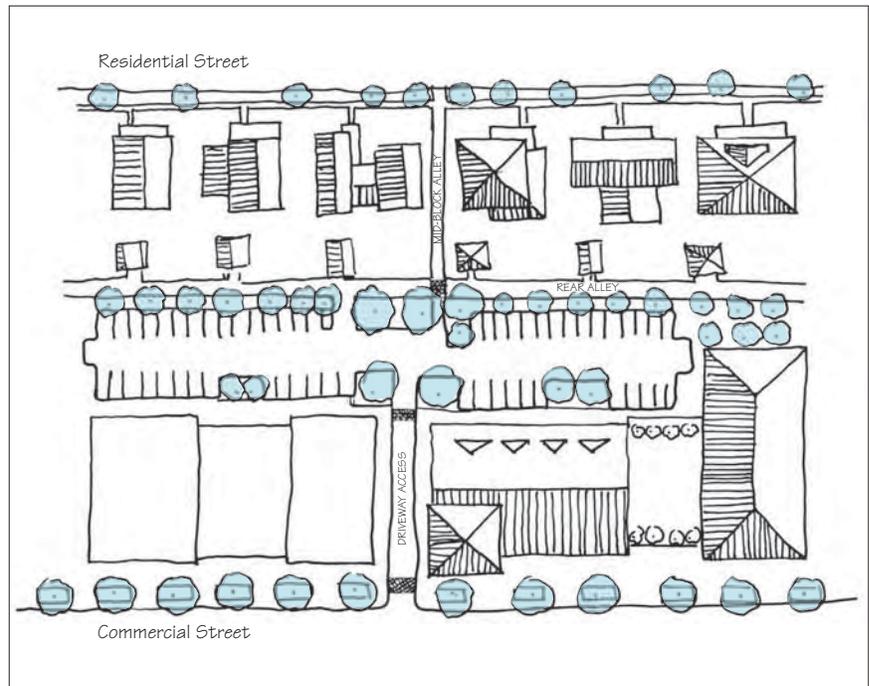
### Parking and Loading Design

#### Intent

To create a pedestrian-friendly environment that supports multimodal transportation while providing adequate parking, use of shared parking lots, and minimal curb cuts onto main streets, especially US 1. To avoid negative environmental impacts of large expanses of asphalt through the use of shade trees and planted islands and to ensure visibility between parking lots and the uses they serve.

#### Standards

1. Lots with more than two rows of parking spaces shall include curbed islands for trees. Parking shall be provided behind, beside, or under the building or in a nearby common lot.
2. Parking shall be accessed from an alley, side street, or if appropriate, adjacent shared parking.
3. Parking for multifamily housing shall be located under units on the rear of the lot, in structured parking, or at the rear of the lot (behind the building) and, where possible, accessed from a rear or mid-block alley.
4. Parking lots shall retain or relocate existing trees, to the greatest extent possible at the time of construction, to appropriate locations within the lot.
5. The tree-to-parking-space ratio shall be one shade tree per ten spaces. The trees shall be a minimum of 2- to 2½-inch caliper.
6. Tree boxes shall be located in the corners of and/or along the edge of the lot, and if needed, in islands and of dimensions similar to streetscape tree boxes.
7. Parking shall be adequately signed from the street in coordination with the Town of Riverdale Park.
8. Car repair businesses may not store vehicles in front of or alongside the building, but may store cars inside or in the rear, with appropriate screening if adjacent to a residential use.



*Parking goes below, behind, and beside the building, or on the street, but never in front of the building. Shared access to lots is encouraged, as well as shared lots. Connect adjacent lots to facilitate pedestrian and vehicular access.*



*These garages are tucked under the building and accessed from the side.*

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*This structured parking is highly visible, attractive, and wrapped by commercial development.*

9. All parking lots are strongly encouraged to be connected to and shared by adjacent commercial properties.

10. Consideration for multiple uses on surface parking through a plaza-like design is encouraged.

11. Curb radii and driveway widths should be minimized for ease of pedestrian crossing and safety.

12. Structured parking facing a public street shall be considered a building (conforming to applicable standards) and be designed to visually screen cars. Greenery and architectural embellishment are encouraged.

***13. Structured parking shall not obstruct the view of, or negatively impact any views of, single-family buildings, landmarks or historically significant buildings or the MARC station from Queensbury Road or Rhode Island Avenue.***

14. The ground level of structured parking facing a public street should be wrapped by retail, office, or residential use.

15. Loading areas shall be attractive and well maintained.

16. New development shall provide adequate loading spaces to the rear of the building with access from alleys, side streets or shared curb cuts.

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## Signage

### *Intent*

Encourage a positive and attractive identity for businesses and the town center and make the street more interesting for pedestrians. Allow creative commercial expression and visual variety without creating clutter or overwhelming the streetscape.

### *Standards*

1. Commercial signs may only identify businesses and products located on site, except in cases where preexisting commercial signs hold historic or aesthetic value that enhances the streetscape.

2. Commercial signs shall be building-mounted only. Freestanding signs shall not be allowed, unless they provide directional information marking the way to parking, historic sites, maps of the area, and other amenities. In these cases, such signage may only be provided in coordination with the Town of Riverdale Park and any other applicable agency and may not include commercial or product information.

3. One temporary A-frame/sandwich board per business, not to exceed 2.5 by 3.5 feet and located on the sidewalk adjacent to a commercial entrance or outdoor café seating, may be provided.

4. Movable stands (with the business logo and name) containing menus as part of an outdoor café are allowed and shall not exceed 2 by 2.5 feet.

5. ***Awning, umbrella and facade color schemes should be chosen so as not to clash with nearby commercial establishments or detract from the town center's historic character.***



*A-frame signs attract attention and slow down pedestrians, giving them time to glance into the storefront.*



*Use café umbrellas and other signage to give restaurants and cafés a street presence and identity.*

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*Coordinate all street lamps with the Town of Riverdale Park.*

## Lighting

### *Intent*

Create an inviting nighttime environment, to evenly illuminate the area with low-level lighting that avoids creating intense shadows or blinding glare, and to encourage appropriate lighting by both the public and private sectors.

### *Standards*

1. Primary entrances for all uses, except single-family dwellings, on public streets shall be well illuminated by a shielded light with a high color rendering index.
2. Alleys, parking, dumpsters, and service entrances shall be illuminated with shielded pedestrian-oriented lighting located no greater than 14 feet above ground level.
3. Fixtures shall be located so that light does not spill from a parking lot or service area onto an adjacent residential property.
4. All lighting shall be shielded and of an intensity that minimizes light pollution.
5. Avoid illumination that creates glare on building walls, signs, sidewalks, and other items.
6. Storefronts are strongly encouraged to illuminate windows at night from the interior so that the sidewalk is lit up indirectly, giving the town center a "glow" effect.
7. Additional lights under awnings or canopies may be used to further illuminate sidewalks.
8. Consider using low-level, up-lighting in tree boxes to illuminate trees and decorative shrubs.

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## Design Standards/Site Design

### Landscaping

See Appendix B for the recommended species and cultivars list.

### Intent

Create a positive, healthy environment through the provision of landscape material and well-maintained gardens that invites pedestrians to the area and increases the property value in the town center through a green identity.

### Standards

1. The required tree coverage for each property shall be ten percent of the gross site area, measured by the projected ten-year coverage provided by a tree. The tree coverage should be accomplished through the provision of shade rather than ornamental trees. In lieu of meeting this standard, the applicant may plant street trees in conformance with the streetscape standards (see Public Space Section) either on the property or within the abutting right-of-way.

2. Healthy trees shall be preserved. Where they cannot be preserved on site, a professional arborist may transplant them to a new location within Riverdale Park.

3. The property owner shall install hose bibs on the outside of new buildings in locations appropriate for watering street trees and landscaping.

4. A licensed landscape supply company, landscape architect, or arborist shall be contracted for installation and to certify the health of trees, landscape materials, and guarantee survival.

5. Trees chosen should be compatible with the historic character of the street or building and the use.

6. Appropriate landscaping includes a variety of mulched perennials, annuals, biennials, and shrubs a maximum of three feet in height (see Appendix B).



*Flowers add identity to this business and the sidewalk.*

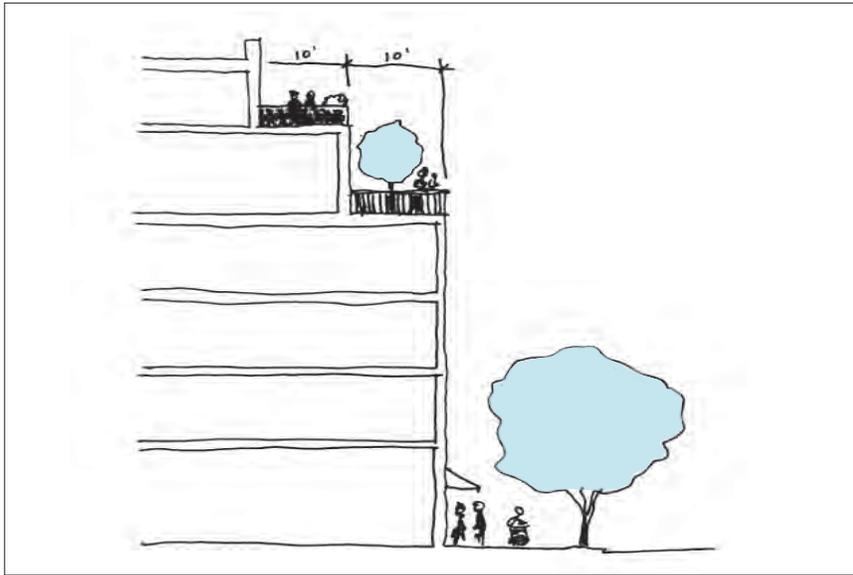


*This business has chosen a street tree, landscaping, and paving strip planting design that expresses its identity.*



*This double row of trees softens the modern building it flanks while emphasizing its importance.*

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*Step back additional stories so that they are not visible to pedestrians on the sidewalk.*

## Building Height

### Intent

Create comfortable pedestrian-scaled spaces, enhance the sense of enclosure and avoid overwhelming the streetscape.

### Standards

1. Building height shall conform to Table 5.
2. An additional two stories may be considered if each story is stepped back ten feet from the previous and the following conditions are satisfied:
  - a. The step back will successfully prevent the building from visually overwhelming any adjacent landmark properties or residential neighborhoods.
  - b. The project meets the design principles and substantially enhances the town center.
  - c. The property is not located in the historic core or on Rhode Island Avenue south of the channelized stream.

**Table 5: Building Height by Location (in Number of Stories)**

Location	Minimum/Maximum
US 1, north of MD 410 (East West Hwy) Queensbury Road. Historic core	2-3
US 1, south of MD 410 (East West Highway) and north of Harrison Avenue Madison Street 44th Place	2-4
US 1, south of Harrison Avenue	3-6
Rhode Island Avenue, north of MD 410 (East West Highway)	4-6
Rhode Island Avenue, south of MD 410 (East West Highway)	2-4

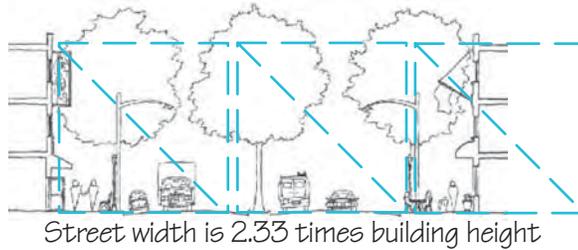
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## Design Standards/Building Design

3. The height of buildings should be a minimum of one-third the width of the street and streetscape to create a ratio of 1:3 between the width of the street and the height of the building.

4. *Building heights should not vary more than 15 percent from the average height of abutting/attached buildings.*



*Comfortable town centers have a tight ratio of building height to street and streetscape width (a maximum of 1:3 or living room dimensions) for pedestrian comfort and to slow traffic.*



*Similar building heights within blocks give the town center a cohesive appearance.*

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*Franklin's in nearby Hyattsville blends traditional elements of the adjoining historic building with newer materials.*



*Compose buildings vertically in three parts: roof, middle, and ground floor.*

## Architecture

### Intent

Unify the town center through repetition, rhythm, and variety of architectural materials and details. Promote commercial and multi-family residential buildings with designs that are sensitive to nearby single-family detached homes and are an attractive addition to the streetscape. Increase the natural surveillance of public areas and improve public safety.

*Guide the renovation and restoration of historic buildings and promote new facades that complement adjacent and nearby historic buildings while incorporating interesting and unique detailing and design.*

### Standards

1. Buildings shall have a tripartite (three-part) composition, where the base (pedestrian-level detail), middle (articulated with windows and/or balconies), and top (cornice, roof or pediment) are distinct parts of the whole building on all public faces. It is appropriate to add height to the middle tier to create taller buildings. Buildings without a tripartite design may only be permitted outside the historic core if they (a) are architecturally unique and (b) enhance the overall appearance of the town center through conformance to the Riverdale Park's M-U-TC development plan's overall design principles.

***2. Buildings shall maintain horizontal divisions between the street level and upper floors through the use of design features such as aligned windows, awnings, brick banding, and cornices.***

3. Trademark buildings shall conform in full to the building design standards; departures are not allowed.

*Items in bold italics apply only to the historic core as shown on Map 5: Riverdale Park M-U-TC Design Areas. Items not italicized apply to all areas of the town center, unless otherwise noted.*



## Design Standards/Building Design

4. Buildings that exceed 60 feet in street frontage and are primarily horizontal in composition (that exceed a 1:1 ratio of width to height) shall be articulated so as to read as multiple buildings through a combination of techniques such as:

a. **Massing Changes**—Change both the facade build-to line and height to a minimum of an additional two feet.

b. **Material Changes**—Divide the building into vertical bays that use alternating materials or colors.

c. **Vocabulary Changes**—Alternate the details or shapes of windows and doors, the cornice, roofline or pediment, the relationship of solids to voids, the relationship of projections to recesses, and the vertical and horizontal bands, so that the building and its bays are understood as several different buildings.

5. Facades facing a street shall not contain vinyl siding. Materials on facades facing a street should be composed primarily of brick, stone and articulated stucco with concrete, metal and wood details.

**6. Building facades shall be compatible, e.g., have massing, window and door openings, rooflines, and detailing that complement existing structures and are strongly encouraged to have individual character.**

**7. Synthetic modern sidings shall not be used. Materials facing buildings in this area, such as masonry, brick, wood, and clear glass, should be historically appropriate and generally reflect an early twentieth-century character. Alternative materials may be approved if (a) material samples and examples of existing buildings that use such materials in the proposed way are submitted and (b) it is found that they satisfy the condition of appearing to be constructed of pre-modern materials.**



*The differing window patterns, architectural detailing, colors, and heights of each section make this single structure look like three buildings constructed separately.*



*This residential building is divided into vertical bays that alternate materials so that each unit "reads" as a separate structure.*

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*This apartment building looks like large homes found in nearby single-family neighborhoods.*

**8. The historic character of buildings shall be maintained. Alterations to buildings should preserve or restore historic architectural details, such as the openings, cornices, lintels, arches, stamped metal, and ironwork of the original building, when appropriate.**

9. All new multifamily housing developments shall incorporate characteristics of larger surrounding single-family homes (but may develop an individual style) as per the following:

a. There shall be high visibility between the street/sidewalk and residential units via windows, bays, porches, balconies, terraces, and entrance stoops.

b. Within a single building all roof pitches should match, except porch, bay, cupola, and portico roofs.

c. Massing changes in the front facade and roofline should reflect the proportions of existing Riverdale Park residential buildings.

d. Windows should be vertical in shape and similar to buildings in the surrounding residential community.

e. Roof pitch should mimic that of nearby residences.

10. Ground level residential units shall be a minimum of three feet above grade.

11. Ground level residential units adjacent to the primary street sidewalk should each have a separate entrance onto the sidewalk.

12. Residences are strongly encouraged to have porches (eight feet by six feet minimum) and units adjacent to a sidewalk shall at a minimum have stoops (six feet by six feet minimum), raised off the ground a minimum of one foot, except where the building style would dictate otherwise.



*Incorporate the positive aspects of area single-family homes into new residential for compatibility.*

**Items in bold italics apply only to the historic core as shown on Map 5: Riverdale Park M-U-TC Design Areas.** Items not italicized apply to all areas of the town center, unless otherwise noted.



## Design Standards/Building Design

13. Vertical and horizontal integration of uses within a building should be signaled through architectural details and window and door shapes.

**14. Architectural detailing should be compatible with the historic, built, and natural conditions.**

15. All multifamily residential development shall use high-quality building materials and double-glazed windows.

16. All multifamily residential units shall include a variety of amenities such as a washer and dryer, solid-core counter tops, wood floors, a fireplace, spacious bathrooms, and walk-in closets.

17. All multifamily residential development shall include a quality common area such as a recreation room, swimming pool, rooftop terrace with landscaping, or park area that conforms to the Parks and Plazas Section of the design standards. Substantial improvements to a public park or plaza within 800 feet of the development may be substituted for an on-site, quality common area.



*Highlight entrances by adding awnings, a legible street number, facade detailing, and plantings so that visitors may find them.*



*Mix uses horizontally and vertically.*

*Items in bold italics apply only to the historic core as shown on Map 5: Riverdale Park M-U-TC Design Areas. Items not italicized apply to all areas of the town center, unless otherwise noted.*



## Map 7: Transitional Properties

■ ■ ■ Transitional Properties



## Additional Design Standards for Transitional Properties in the Historic Core

### Intent

These properties represent an expansion of the traditional town center and their proximity to the single-family neighborhood necessitates careful and sensitive design. The design must emphasize the positive architectural characteristics of the historic residential neighborhoods so that new development can be successfully incorporated into both the historic core of the town center and adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Note: The transitional properties in the historic core are shown on Map 7 and include only those fronting Natoli Place (Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 and the center property fronting Lafayette Avenue between Riverdale Road and Oliver Street [Lot 23].) See the Site Design Section for additional standards specifically affecting these properties.

### Standards

1. All new buildings and additions shall incorporate traditional design elements from the eras and regions of the original residential buildings and the adjacent historic neighborhood so that they are architecturally compatible, regionally responsive, and historically sensitive. The following elements shall be included:

- a. Similar roof pitches and styles to the residential neighborhoods and deep overhangs on roofs.
- b. Vertical windows with double-hung panes.
- c. Appropriate architectural framing and detailing on all openings.
- d. Usable porches and balconies with a minimum size of six feet by eight feet.
- e. Formal primary entrances raised a minimum of three feet and maximum of four feet from ground level.



*Usable porches and balconies enable residents to meet their neighbors and allow natural surveillance of the street.*

**Items in bold italics apply only to the historic core as shown on Map 5: Riverdale Park M-U-TC Design Areas.** Items not italicized apply to all areas of the town center, unless otherwise noted.



## Design Standards/Building Design

2. Any dormers shall be compatible with the overall style of the building and the historic character of adjacent residential neighborhoods, avoiding excessive variation in pitch, embellishment, or number.
3. Buildings larger than adjacent residences shall mitigate this through massing and material changes that simulate and echo the scale of the smaller buildings.
4. The confusion and proliferation of styles and eras represented in a single building should be avoided.



*Match dormers, roof pitches, and detailing to existing neighborhood styles.*

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*The CSX train is an important Town Center attraction.*

## Noise Mitigation

### Intent

To encourage high-quality apartments, townhouses, condominiums, and lofts adjacent to both US 1 and the railroad. To incorporate the railroad as an important element of the town center identity. To expand residential opportunities that support the town center's economic vitality.

### Standards

1. HVAC units shall be surrounded on all sides by a wall to buffer adjacent uses from the noise created. The use of "quiet-rated" HVAC systems is encouraged.
2. The sound from the exterior to within the interior of all residences shall not exceed 45 dBA (Ldn) and should not exceed 35 dBA (Ldn). This is to be achieved through material and design changes, including, but not limited to:
  - a. Double-glazed windows/double-pane windows.
  - b. Above-normal insulation in the roof and walls.
  - c. Above-normal insulation in doors and other construction elements.
  - d. The use of high mass construction materials such as concrete, masonry, and stone.



### Building Openings

#### *Intent*

Design user-friendly buildings through attention to the shape, position, and detailing of entrances and windows. These elements should clearly indicate the character (use) and entrance of the building. Improve the safety of pedestrians and parked vehicles through a strong visual connection from inside to the outside of the buildings through ample windows that overlook streets, alleys and parking lots.

#### *Standards*

1. Commercial facades at ground level facing a street shall be visually permeable (clear glass windows, doors, etc.) in such a way that pedestrians may view the interior and those inside the building may view the street. This is to be achieved through a minimum of 60 percent of the ground floor facade being constructed of transparent material (glass). ***In the historic core, this minimum shall be 70 percent.***
2. Transparent material shall be primarily located across the length of the facade in the area between 2½ to 9 feet in height.
3. ***Windows shall have a vertical orientation, except at the ground floor where square/horizontal windows are appropriate for storefronts.***
4. ***Mirrored, reflective, or tinted windows may not be used.***
5. Storefront security devices shall not be allowed that are either (a) opaque or (b) permanently visible on the interior or exterior of the storefront windows. This includes, but is not limited to, bars and roll-down, accordion, or sliding grates, grilles, bars, shutters, and doors. Attractive and visually permeable roll-down and accordion security devices may only be placed on the exterior of the facade if hidden by appropriate architectural detailing, awnings or signage.



*Glass storefronts enable shoppers and storekeepers to keep an eye on large items left outside.*



*Secure buildings do not require bars and gates.*

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*Add lamps, plantings, and other decorative elements to the public entrance.*



*Buildings at street intersections orient doors, windows, and architectural details toward the corner to maximize neighborly interaction and economic potential.*



*The windows on this second story granny flat are well articulated with frames, sills, and correctly proportioned shutters with shutter hooks.*

6. A working door that serves as the main entrance shall be located on a public street, not on an alley, side street, or parking lot on units adjacent to the public street.

7. The main entrance shall be articulated through a combination of material changes and architectural, decorative, and informative elements to mark its importance such as transom windows, recessed entries, lighting features, architectural detailing, signs, awnings, and canopies.

8. Public rear entrances shall be articulated with a combination of awnings, signs, lighting, and plantings.

9. Buildings located at street intersections should be built or renovated, if practical, to address the corner through a primary public entrance oriented toward the corner featuring distinctive architectural elements.

10. Walls facing public streets or to the rear shall have windows that occupy at least 40 percent of the wall area.

11. Walls facing a mid-block walk-through sidewalk, mid-block alley, side parking lot, parking lot access, or side yard (excepting walls facing a public street), shall have several windows on each story above ground level (25 percent of wall square footage at minimum). At the ground level, windows shall occupy a minimum of 10 percent of the wall.

12. Windows on new residential units shall be at a minimum 30 percent operable (able to be opened to the exterior).

13. Windows on the first floor shall be articulated with sills, frames, and other architectural details as appropriate to the style of the building.

14. Windows on new residential units shall be primarily vertical so as to be compatible with Riverdale Park single-family residential neighborhoods, except where the location and architectural style would suggest otherwise.

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# Design Standards/Building Design

## Signage

### Intent

To encourage a positive and attractive identity for businesses and the town center, make the street more interesting for pedestrians, and allow creative commercial expression and visual variety.

### Standards

1. Commercial signs may only relate to businesses and products located on site, except in cases where preexisting commercial signs hold historic or aesthetic value that enhance the streetscape.

2. Unique neon signs, internally lit signs, and signs with moving parts or blinking lights may only be approved for creative value that enhances the town center in areas outside of the historic core.

**3. Plastic and neon are not appropriate signage material and shall not be permitted.**

4. All commercial enterprises shall have a minimum of one permanent sign oriented toward pedestrians. Blade and bracket signs are strongly encouraged.

**5. Historically accurate styles of signage from the early twentieth century are strongly encouraged, such as blade and bracket signs and pin lettering.**

6. Facade and rear public entry signage shall include flat board, relief sculpture, blade and bracket, or pin letters that fit into the architectural design of the building, be located above the storefront or adjacent to the door, solidly attached to the building facade, and not obscure or interfere with architectural detailing of the facade.

7. Blade and bracket signs should not exceed three feet by three feet.

8. Signage shall be lit externally, so that the light does not exceed the area of the sign or spill onto the building facade.



Blade signs face pedestrians as they walk along the sidewalk.



These are two examples of pin letters, signage attached to the face of a building by pins.



Use signage that relates to pedestrians and fits the overall design of the building.

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*This banner calls attention to the pet shop and enlivens the street.*



*Attractive signs painted on windows add character to the street and brand the business.*



*Murals make the alley a friendlier and more interesting place.*

**9. Signs shall be complementary in color, shape and materials of adjacent establishments and the overall design themes of the historic core.**

10. Vertically suspended commercial banners braced perpendicular to the building are appropriate. Banner signs should use logos or other graphics rather than words. Banners temporarily suspended from the exterior of the building (without permanent braces to hold the banners perpendicular to the facade) shall not be allowed.

11. Signs mounted above the building shall be allowed only if the sign enhances the appearance and pedestrian orientation of the town center, and the sign does not exceed the height of the roofline by more than three feet.

**12. Signs mounted above buildings shall not be allowed.**

13. Signs painted onto side facades may cover a maximum of 30 percent of the facade area; murals without letters may cover the entire wall.

**14. Signs painted onto side facades shall reflect the early twentieth century history of the town center through sensitive design, color, and lettering.**

15. Awnings may have no more than 30 percent of its surface area covered by a business logo and name that is an integral part of the design.

**16. Awnings should be of sturdy cloth or fabric construction. The color and design should be carefully considered so as not to clash with adjacent establishments.**

**17. Awnings should be placed on the top of openings, such as windows and doors, and shall relate to the opening shape.**

18. Metal awnings that simulate cloth awnings are not appropriate and shall not be allowed.

19. Letters and logos painted on storefront windows/doors shall not exceed 25 percent of the window/door area.

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# Design Standards/Public Space

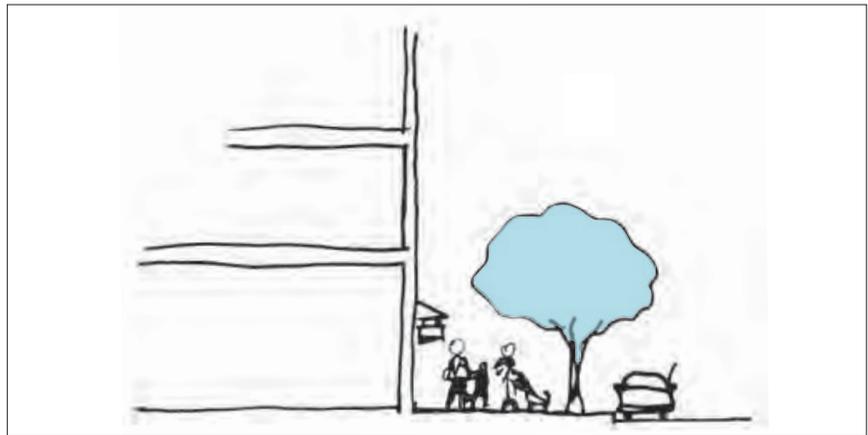
## Streetscape

### Intent

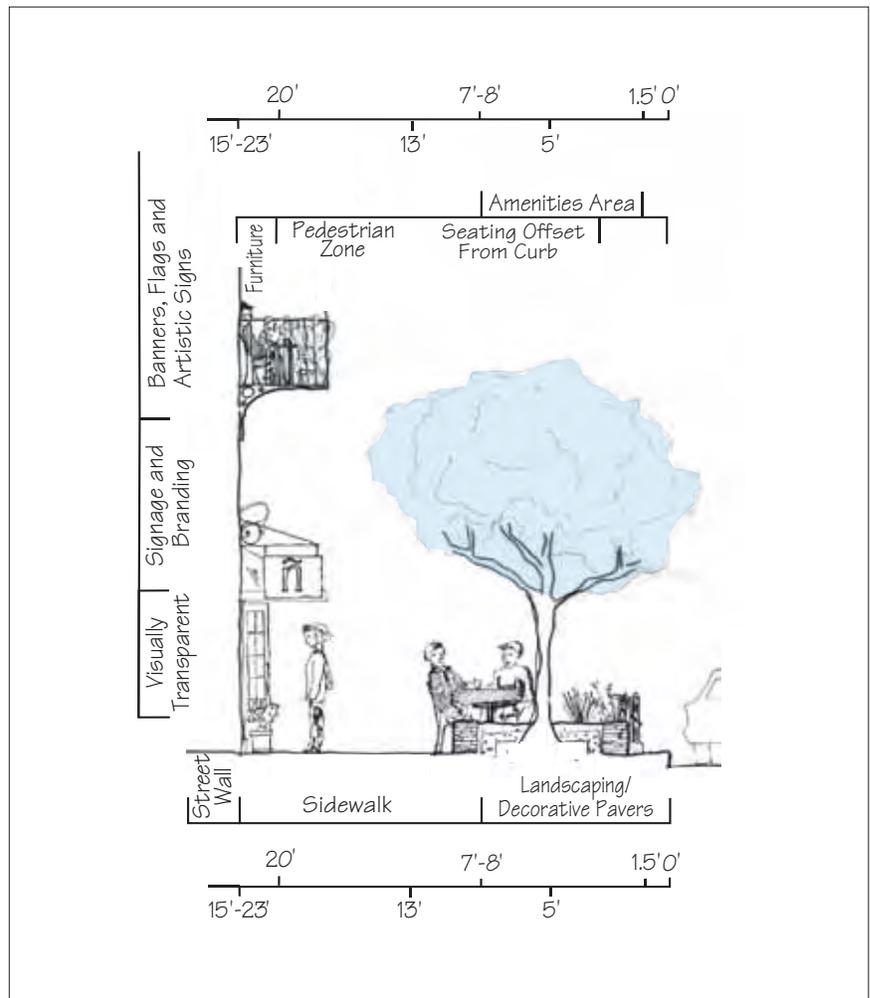
Provide an attractive streetscape consisting of a wider sidewalk and a strip containing street trees, landscaping and paved areas with pedestrian amenities. Increase the town center's visual appeal through colorful landscaping, paving patterns, and creatively displayed goods, window boxes, and benches. Create continuous sidewalks wide enough for two to four adults to walk abreast and provide space for outdoor cafés and sidewalk sales, where appropriate. The landscaping/pedestrian amenity strip buffers pedestrians from traffic and extends the green and shaded identity of Riverdale Park's historic neighborhoods to the town center.

### Standards

1. All applicants shall be responsible for streetscape improvements located on their property in coordination with the Town of Riverdale Park and where applicable, the State Highway Administration.
2. The required width of the streetscape for specific properties shall be found on Map 4: US 1 Concept and Table 2: Public Space Recommendations. The streetscape shall be located between the face-of-curb and the build-to line, residential fence line, or institutional use/large building park and plaza forecourt. Where expansion of the US 1 roadbed is recommended, the area between the existing face-of-curb and the future face-of-curb shall be treated as an extension of the landscaping/pedestrian amenity strip.

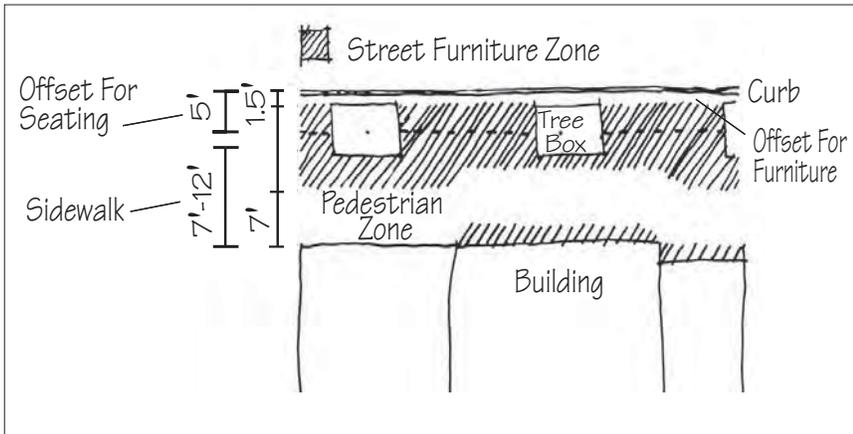


*Design streetscapes so that pedestrians are buffered from cars, not the storefronts.*



*Use the streetscape to welcome pedestrians to the town center.*

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Place furniture in the appropriate area of the streetscape.



Keep a seven-foot unobstructed right-of-way near storefronts.



Flower pots and seating invite customers.



Set seating back from the curb a minimum of five feet.

## Sidewalks

1. The sidewalk shall be constructed between the landscaping/pedestrian amenity strip and the build-to line. A seven-foot pedestrian zone shall be preserved unobstructed; the remainder of the sidewalk may contain street furniture.

2. The minimum seven-foot-wide walkway shall be located a maximum of three feet from the build-to line. The three-foot area adjacent to storefronts may be used for street furniture and retail product displays. Street furniture includes café seating, flowerpots, water elements, benches, sidewalk sales, and product displays for merchandise such as flowers, clothing, fruit and vegetables.

3. The pattern, material and slope of the sidewalk shall continue across driveways and alleys to signal that pedestrians and bicyclists may be present in the crosswalk and shall have priority.

## Landscaping and Pedestrian Amenity Zone

1. A minimum eight-foot wide landscaping/pedestrian amenity strip shall be installed along US 1 between the sidewalk edge and the proposed face-of-curb. This strip should be enlarged to include the area between the existing curb and the proposed curb. All other streets shall have a minimum six-foot-wide landscaping/pedestrian amenity strip installed between the sidewalk edge and the street curb. In coordination with the Town of Riverdale Park and any other applicable agencies, street furniture and landscaping may be placed in this zone, including bike racks, gardens, street trees, lighting, kiosks, trash receptacles, bollards, water elements, bus stop structures, benches, and café seating.

2. Street furniture shall be easy to maintain, durable in construction, of high quality, and manufactured to withstand an outdoor setting.

3. All items, including landscaping and tree boxes, shall be offset from the curb a minimum of 1.5 feet to avoid car door

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## Design Standards/Public Space

obstruction and may be located in the sidewalk, outside of the seven-foot-wide walkway. Furniture intended for seating shall be set back from the curb a minimum of five feet.

4. Businesses are encouraged to provide a minimum of one bicycle rack. Bicycle racks shall be located so that bikes do not extend from the landscaping/pedestrian amenity strip into the pedestrian right-of-way or into the street.

5. All landscaping and tree boxes shall have a low-impact stormwater system that stores and redirects sidewalk or building stormwater for reuse as irrigation.

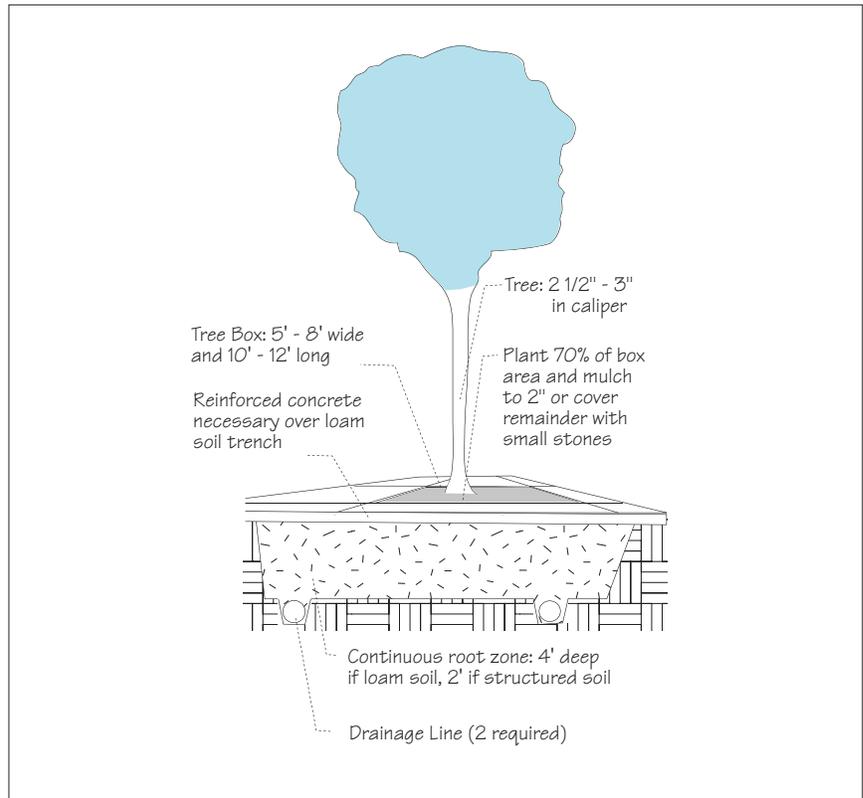
6. Street trees to be planted in the US 1, Queensbury Road, East West Highway, and the Rhode Island Avenue landscaping/pedestrian amenity strip shall be located every 30 to 40 feet (relative to full growth size), and shall be a minimum of 2½- to 3-inch caliper.

7. Tree boxes shall be a minimum of 5 feet wide and 10 feet long, a maximum of 8 feet wide by 12 feet in length, and a minimum of 4 feet in depth unless a greater depth is recommended for the tree's survival. A raised pedestrian and bicycle barrier of 3–12 inches should be provided around the perimeter of the tree box and a permeable, attractive material such as stones or two inches of mulch shall be used to protect tree roots. Under the sidewalk paving between tree boxes and any access driveways, a continuous root zone area shall be provided with a minimum of two feet in depth and a minimum of five feet in width.

8. On all new construction, tree boxes and the continuous root zone under the sidewalk between tree boxes shall be filled with structured soil to a minimum depth of two feet below the paving material and a minimum width of eight feet and drained with a minimum of two drainage lines. Structured soil should be provided at a rate of three cubic feet per square foot of canopy provided by the projected ten-year tree cover area.



*Low barriers protect tree roots and soil in high traffic areas.*



*Street trees shade the sidewalk and give the town center a positive identity.*

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*Low walls can protect trees and flower beds while providing an inviting place to sit.*

Structured soil is a commercially available soil that resists compaction and is strong enough to support sidewalks and driveways. This extends the life of the street trees and reduces the damage roots otherwise cause to paving.

9. Landscape strips do not require structured soil and shall be a minimum of seven feet wide along US 1 and a minimum of five feet wide in all other places, with a minimum depth of four feet.

10. Removable grates are discouraged except in the historic core.

11. Appropriate landscaping includes mulched perennials, annuals, biennials, and shrubs that do not exceed three feet in height. Turf grass is not acceptable.

12. Landscaping at full growth shall cover a minimum of 70 percent of each landscape box or strip, and the remainder shall be adequately mulched.

13. Landscaping with low water requirements is encouraged.

14. A seat wall may be used to surround tree boxes to provide pedestrian seating. The seat wall shall be constructed a maximum of 18 inches above sidewalks and set back from the curb a minimum of 2 feet. It must be a minimum of 18 inches wide.

15. A low-intensity, high-quality, pedestrian-oriented light fixture a maximum of 14 feet in height should be placed at intersections and every 50 feet in the landscaping/pedestrian amenity strip between intersections.

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## Parks and Plazas

### Intent

Provide enjoyment to the general public through the provision of parks and plazas that are publicly or privately created and maintained, as shown on Map 3: Riverdale Park Town Center Concept. To create a positive, attractive identity for Riverdale Park through enhanced views and beautified gateways to the town center. Increase safety and the sense of discovery experienced by residents and visitors.

### Standards

1. Plazas and parks should visually echo adjacent residential neighborhoods by incorporating an image of greenery through the use of shade trees.
2. At a minimum, one 2½- to 3-inch caliper shade tree, or one 2- to 2½-inch caliper ornamental tree, shall be planted per 500 square feet of area.
3. Parks and plazas shall be lit along walkways in the evening.
4. A minimum of five linear feet of seating, such as a bench or cluster of chairs, shall be provided for every 400 square feet of park or plaza area on public or private land, excluding landscaped town center gateway features at heavily traveled intersections (marked as such on Map 3). See the Seating Section for design standards.
5. For the safety of more vulnerable users, parks or plazas intended for active use by children and seniors should be located adjacent to, or on the path to, areas of higher foot traffic such as cafés, stores, and higher density residential units and contain an element that attracts widespread use, such as a fountain.



*Enclosed spaces make people feel safer; gardens soften spaces for rest and relaxation.*



*Design public spaces with built-in natural surveillance by multiple users for senior and child safety.*

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*Water attracts people and delights children.*



*Extra amenities create identity in the town center.*

6. At least half the park or plaza area should be at the adjacent sidewalk level.
7. Small parks and plazas generally should be visually permeable from three to nine feet in height.
8. Parks and plazas should have defined edges and a sense of enclosure provided through adjacent building walls, landscaping, and/or other vertical elements including columns and trellises.
9. Water elements are strongly encouraged.
10. Unique design and visual features are strongly encouraged.
11. Extra amenities to be considered may include but are not limited to: a dog run, a drinking fountain (one per 5,000 square feet), trellis or pergola, gazebo, public art, playground, tot lot, and public performance space.

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## Design Standards/Public Space

### Seating

#### *Intent*

Create a comfortable town center that provides for rest and contemplation. Organize seating so that multiple users enjoy it. Give users a sense of security, ownership, and a wide view of other people and activities.

#### *Standards*

1. Seating may be placed in clusters at 90- to 120-degree angles, but not face-to-face except across a table.
2. The majority of seating in any public space shall be located so that the user has a wide view of approaching pedestrians and bicyclists.
3. Seating shall be located so that it may be observed from the street and should be clustered with other amenities (a retail establishment, fountain, kiosk, a bus stop, newsstand, trash receptacle, etc.).
4. Seating should back up to a wall, thick hedge, or other impenetrable object and not to empty space.
5. Seating shall be set back 24 inches from the pedestrian flow of traffic to provide a foot rest area.
6. The bulk of seating on any site should be located in the shade and sheltered from wind.
7. Movable public seating is highly encouraged.



*Provide a place for people to sit, see, and be seen.*



*Some things are more easily done while sitting.*

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