



Image Credit: Gensler

# 4

# BUILDING ZONE & FRONTAGE DESIGN

- 4A Introduction
- 4B Design Principles on Site Design and Architecture
- 4C Design Strategies - Building Zones and Ground Floors
  - 4C.1 Building Frontage: Residential
  - 4C.2 Building Frontage: Office
  - 4C.3 Building Frontage: Retail and Restaurants
  - 4C.4 Building Frontage Retrofit
  - 4C.5 Building Zones on Old Dominion Drive and Chain Bridge Road
  - 4C.6 Building Zones on Elm Street and Beverly Road
- 4D Design Strategies - Parking Design

## BUILDING ZONE & FRONTAGE DESIGN

### 4A INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan envisions a visually cohesive built environment across the McLean CBC. Central to implementing this vision is building design - how buildings relate to the street and public spaces, how they integrate with and transition to surrounding land uses, and how they combine to contribute to the CBC's character. Especially important is how the space between the public streetscape and building façade, known as the Building Zone, is designed. Building Zone treatments should be influenced by the building's use(s) and the adjacent street's character. This chapter addresses the design of building frontages as well as how buildings should relate to their context. Building heights are described in the Vision and Guiding Planning Principles of the McLean Comprehensive Plan.

The design principles and strategies to follow are not intended as an "architectural check list". Since each site and building are unique, applicants and their project designers should work with DPD staff and McLean community organizations to ensure that proposed building architecture is context-sensitive and achieves community design goals.

Zoning and site plan submissions should include elevation drawings of all sides of the building architecture and include the surrounding context in plans, sections, and elevations. Three-dimensional street level and bird's eye views are also valuable in conveying the overall design and context-sensitive features of the project.

#### References and Notes

- Volume I Urban Design Guidelines (Sections 4A, 4C; see also 2E, 2H, 5A, 5C)
- American Bird Conservancy, *Bird Friendly Building Design Guidelines*
- US HUD Noise Abatement and Control
- Fairfax County's Policy Plan Environment Element, Objective 4
- All recommendations in this chapter are in addition to Fairfax County's Zoning Ordinance, in particular, [Article 5, Development Standards](#).

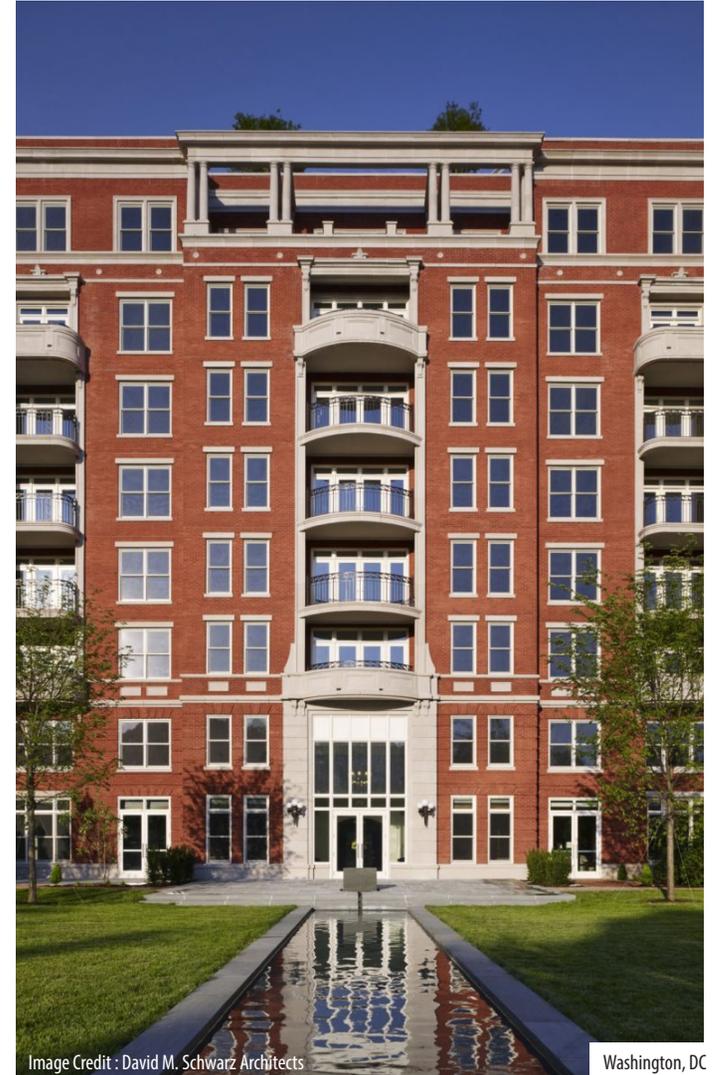


Image Credit : David M. Schwarz Architects

Washington, DC

## 4B DESIGN PRINCIPLES ON SITE DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE

### 1. Block Pattern and Scale

The architecture of McLean should be considered at multiple scales. To promote the Neighborhood Village concept, new developments should consider historical block patterns when designing their project.

Buildings in the CBC are envisioned to support a pedestrian-oriented environment by being located close to the sidewalk. Buildings should be sited and designed to create a sense of enclosure for pedestrians, with connections to create blocks that are a walkable scale. Typically, active storefronts and other uses that can engage pedestrians such as outdoor seating should be located close to the sidewalk. Existing buildings will not necessarily conform to the building setback established by an adjacent proposed development. Development proposals, especially projects that are phased, should incorporate visual and physical linkages to existing buildings to create a high-quality pedestrian realm. New buildings may also use landscaping or other architectural features to visually align with existing buildings.



Arlington, VA

### 2. On-site Parks and Mid-block Connections

Figures 12 and 15 in the McLean Comprehensive Plan as well as the Park Network Map in Chapter 5 of these Guidelines illustrate the generalized locations of parks and pedestrian mid-block connections in the CBC. These facilities should be incorporated into site designs from project conception and not considered as an afterthought. Designers should identify opportunities to connect to existing open spaces and pedestrian pathways so that individual site improvements are part of the greater whole.

When both retail and an urban park are proposed within a project, they are encouraged to be co-located to promote park use and increase social opportunities.



Bethesda, MD

#### TOP

Example of buildings with a context sensitive design, incorporating undulating roof lines and step-backs to respond to existing townhomes across the street  
Image Credit: David M. Schwarz Architects

#### BOTTOM

Retail lined pedestrian mews is a main feature of the Bethesda Row development  
Image Credit: visitmontgomery.com

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES ON SITE DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE (CONT'D)

### RIGHT

The design for the building on the left employs step-backs and material changes to reconcile with shorter buildings on the right

- 1 Eight story multifamily building
- 2 Four story townhomes

Image Credit: Squire Partners

### 3. Context and Transitions

#### Context

Sites should be designed to achieve the desired building height and/or intensity goals while remaining sensitive to the impact on the surrounding built environment and context. New buildings that are proposed to have long façades should consider employing one or several of the following: a variety of materials, façade divisions, and architectural projections or recessions, such as bay windows, balconies or canopies.

#### Transitions - Methods

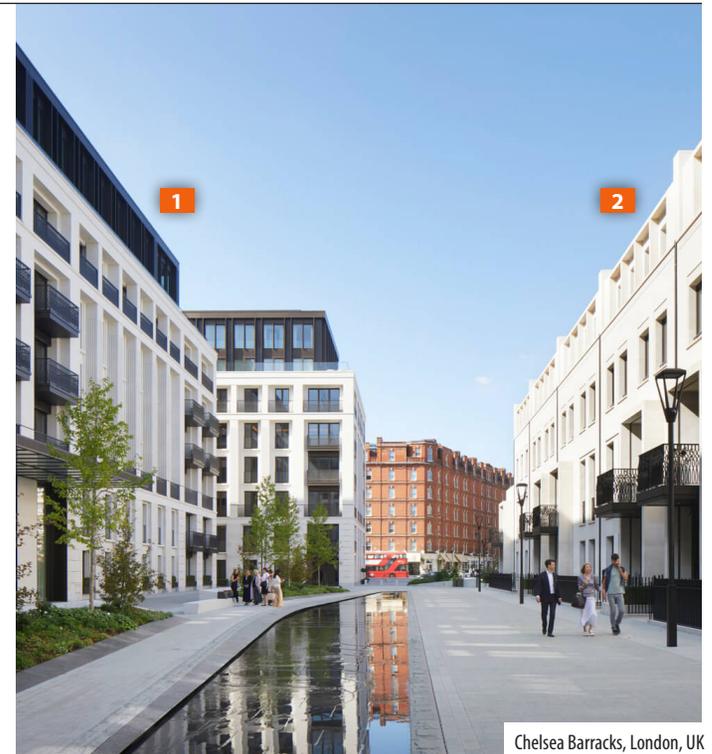
Appropriate transitions between buildings can be an important aspect of context sensitive design. One or more of the following transition methods should be considered for new developments to achieve compatible transitions when adjacent to a lower-intensity zone. Depending on the location and adjacent use, there are different recommendations for integrating appropriate transitions into the site and building design. Generally, these treatments do not impact the project's density.

#### Façade Change

- **Facade articulation** – expression of base, middle, and top of a building, coursing, carrying datum lines, cladding material and other treatments such as overhangs, canopies, and architectural details.
- **Roof line modulation/top floor** – changes in the expression of the building's roof line or integration of the top floor(s) to reduce the perceived height of the building.

#### Massing Change

- **Vertical articulation (step-downs)** – modulate the apparent size and scale of a building by stepping a portion of the building mass upward or downward from the predominant building height.
- **Building breaks (step-backs)** – divide the building horizontally or vertically by employing a step-back in the facade so that some portion of the building shifts behind



Chelsea Barracks, London, UK

the build-to line. For large building sites, consider multiple buildings or create a breezeway at the ground floor, especially where mid-block pedestrian connections are envisioned.

#### Vegetative Buffer

- A vegetated buffer can be integrated into the space between the building and the property line to soften the building edge. Consider incorporating trails and active recreation uses with the vegetated buffer.

#### Transitions - Where to Apply

The following conditions are generally described in the Comprehensive Plan as locations where transitions are desired.

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES ON SITE DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE (CONT'D)

- 1. Developments that abut the CBC boundary but are four stories or less in height:** Consider façade changes to integrate transitions to developments outside the CBC.
- 2. Developments at the edges of the Comprehensive Plan's development zones:** Consider façade change. If the proposed building is more than two stories taller than the planned height of adjacent development, consider a massing change.
- 3. Projects greater than four (4) stories in height that abut detached single-family residential outside of the CBC:** Consider both façade and massing changes.



Washington, DC



Alexandria, VA

- 4. Consolidated Development within the Bonus Height Area adjacent to significantly lower height buildings:** Consider transitions for the bottom floors using a similar treatment as buildings in the Center/General Zones. In addition, floors that exceed the planned height of the surrounding buildings by more than two stories should step-back. Consider also top floor or roof line treatment.

In addition, all developments adjacent to single-family residential or required by the Zoning Ordinance (Z.O. 5108) should include a vegetative buffer.

Figure 4-1 depicts a series of cross-sections as examples of architectural transitions.

### LEFT

Use of coursing that expresses the base-middle-top to visually reduce building scale.

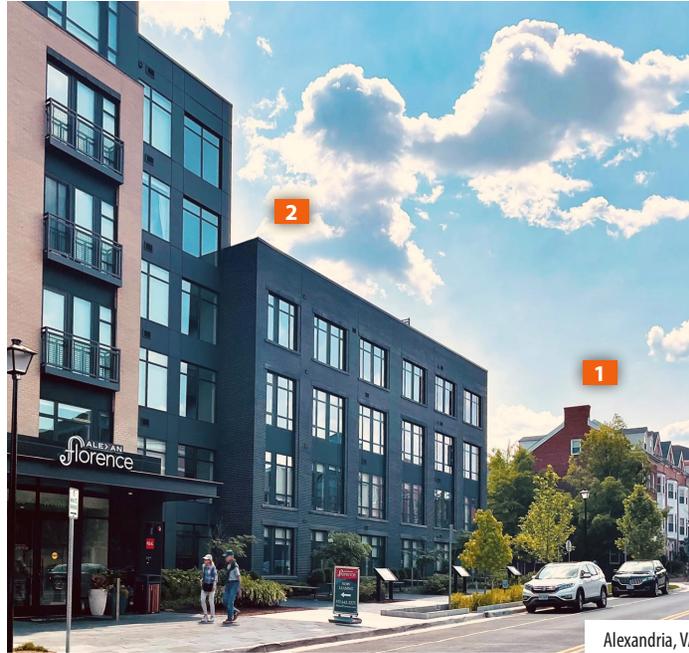
Image Credit: Torti Gallas Partners

### TOP RIGHT

Example of using step-backs, facade modulation, and material changes to transition to the historic architecture across the street.

Image Credit: Fairfax County

**DESIGN PRINCIPLES ON SITE DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE (CONT'D)**



Alexandria, VA



Washington, DC

**TOP**  
 The massing of this residential building is stepped down to transition to lower height existing, adjacent residences  
 1 Existing townhomes  
 2 New multifamily building  
 Image Credit: Fairfax County

**BOTTOM**  
 Roof expressions on the top floor reduce the scale of the four-story building  
 Image Credit: Gensler

**FIGURE 4-1: EXAMPLE TRANSITION METHODS**

**A: Facade Change**

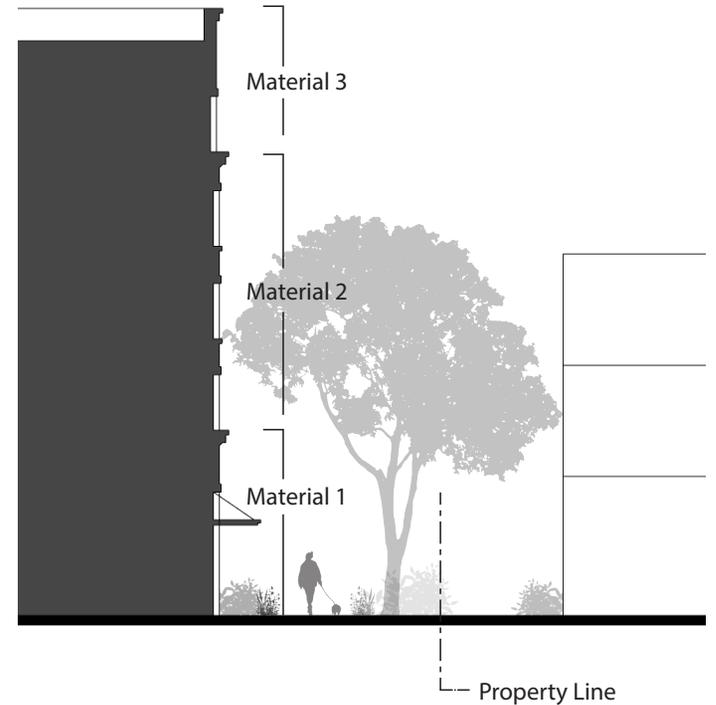
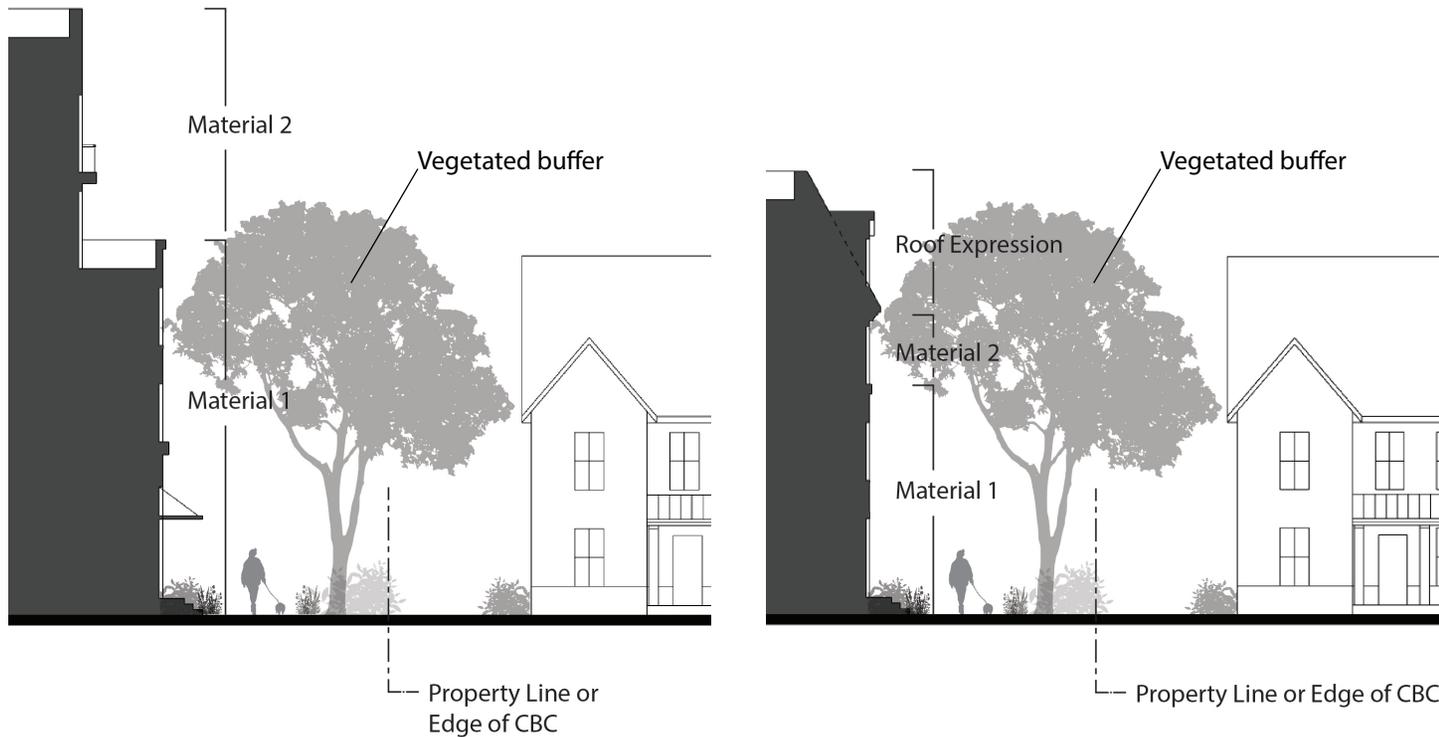


Figure 4.1 is intended to be illustrative, not prescriptive.

**FIGURE 4-1: EXAMPLE TRANSITION METHODS (CONT'D)**

**B: Massing Change: Upper floor(s) step back**

**C: Massing Change: Roof expression on the top floor(s)**



*Figure 4.1 is intended to be illustrative, not prescriptive.*

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES ON SITE DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE (CONT'D)

### 4. Developments in the Edge Zone

New projects within the Edge Zone (See Figure 2-1) should carefully study the relationship between the proposed building and existing neighborhoods that are outside of but adjacent to the CBC. New, taller buildings should transition next to existing residential outside of the CBC. Although heights do not need to match, they should be within 1 to 2 stories of the adjacent existing building height.

Plan submissions should include cross-sections that depict the relationship between the proposal and adjacent buildings highlighting the context-sensitive techniques that are integrated into the design.



Alexandria, VA

#### TOP RIGHT

The building steps down to three story volume to stay harmonious with the adjacent low rise residential buildings

Image Credit: Fairfax County

#### BOTTOM RIGHT

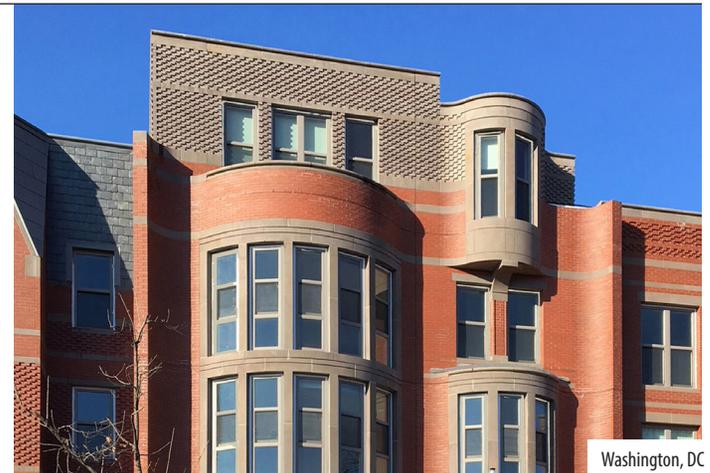
High-quality material and timeless architectural design contributes to the character of McLean CBC

Image Credit: Gensler

### 5. Style and Materiality

Diversity and excellence in architectural design and building materials is encouraged as long as there are common themes related to the overall context of McLean. New development should be designed to be context-sensitive but avoid sameness from building to building. Individual buildings should contribute to the overall character of McLean CBC. Special attention should be paid to architectural features such as balanced proportions, material expression and well-articulated details. Quality materials should be employed in both architecture and site features, especially those that are natural or authentic.

Avoid franchise architecture which uses corporate identity features to market a company brand.



Washington, DC

**RIGHT**  
**McLean Existing Architectural Assets**

- 1. Early farm houses
- 2. Traditional colonial style
- 3. Mid-Century modern style

**BELOW**  
**Key Architectural Considerations**

- Balanced proportions
- Quality materials
- Well-articulated details

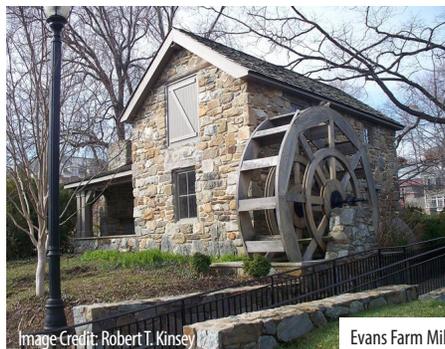


Image Credit: Robert T. Kinsey

Evans Farm Mill



Image Credit: Bright MLS

Evans Farm



Image Credit: Fairfax County

McLean Post Office



Image Credit: Squire Partners

Chelsea Barracks, London, UK



Image Credit: ArchiEXPO.com

Terra Cotta Rainscreen



Image Credit: Robert A. M. Stern Architects

LoveJoy Wharf, Boston, MA

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES ON SITE DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE (CONT'D)

### 6. Façade Articulation

Building exteriors should be well-proportioned and articulated to create a human-scaled pattern. Consider the role of shade, shadow, and depth to form dynamic façades, particularly around fenestration. Employ designs that frame, add depth, or create shadow lines around windows, doors, and other openings. Material patterning also is encouraged. Avoid flat buildings, particularly with wood frame construction, where windows are flush or nearly flush with the façade.

Long expanses of blank walls without windows or entrances detract from the pedestrian experience and are discouraged. If blank façades cannot be avoided, strategies should be used to mitigate their impact on the public realm.



Brooklyn, NY

### 7. Build-to Lines

Proposed developments should adhere to build-to lines (In McLean, the build-to line is the edge of the Building Zone) as recommended for each street type in the McLean Comprehensive Plan. The build-to line indicates where the building ground floor should be located. It ensures that all buildings on a block are generally in line with one another. The build-to line generally applies to the podium (or base) of the building structure and excludes upper levels, which may be set back further to allow light and air to reach the street.

Exceptions to the build-to line are permitted for outdoor dining, special displays, plazas, parks, or spaces for public art; all resulting in pushing the building face somewhat farther back from the street. The build-to line may also be adjusted in instances where existing trees should be preserved or existing conditions warrant a greater setback, so long as the setback is not used to accommodate parking.



Falls Church, VA

#### TOP RIGHT

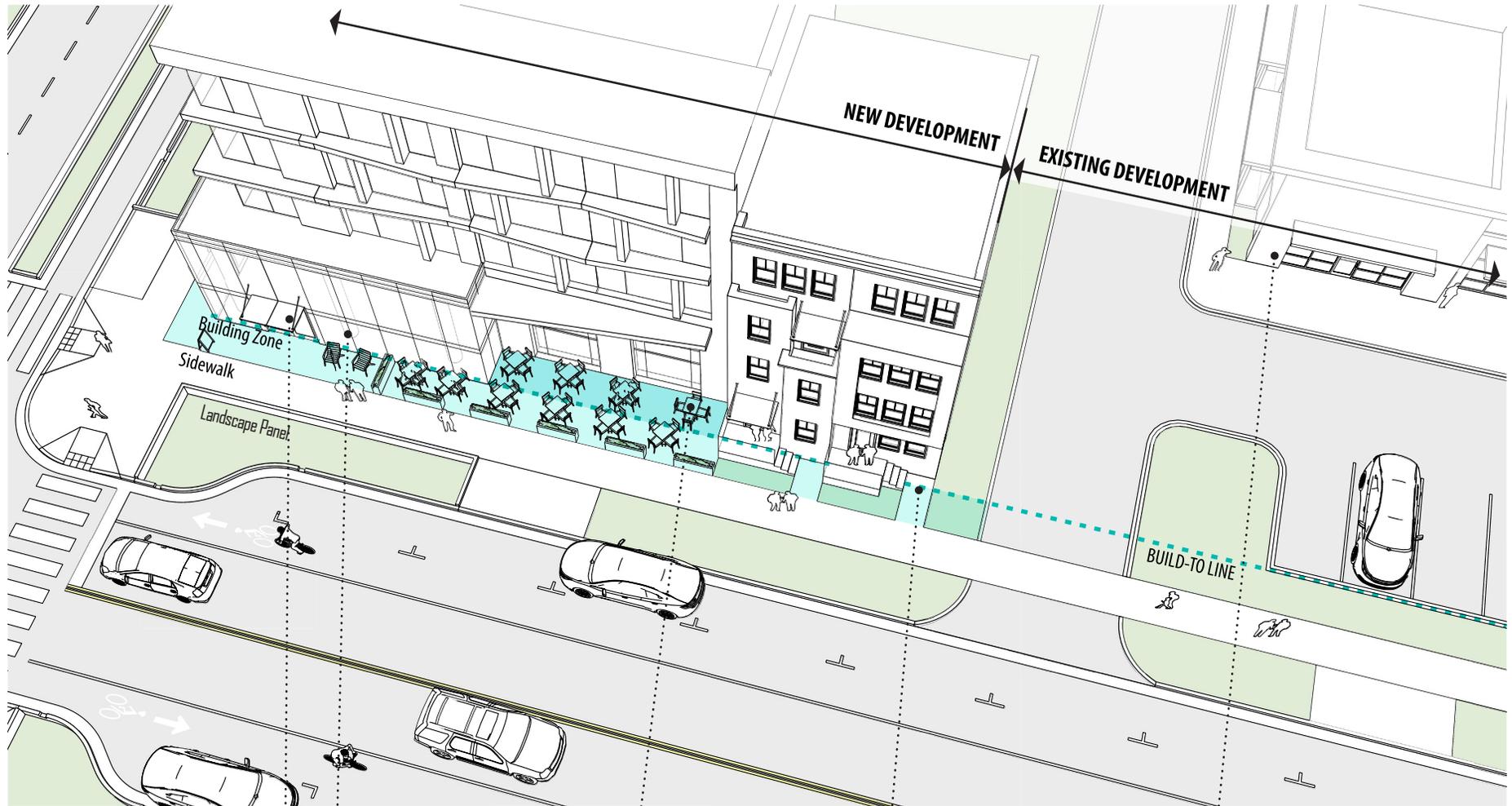
Well articulated façades are encouraged in McLean CBC

Image Credit: Robert A.M. Stern Architects

#### BOTTOM RIGHT

- 1 Building modulation on upper floors
  - 2 Consistent street edge along ground floor
- Image Credit: Bozzuto

**FIGURE 4-2: BUILDING PLACEMENT**



**BUILDING PROJECTIONS**

Canopies, or other building overhangs, can project into the Building Zone

**FENESTRATION**

At least 60% of the commercial ground floor facade should be transparent

**AMENITY SPACE**

Buildings can be set back to accommodate additional amenities or building entrances

**BUILD-TO LINE**

At least 75% of the commercial building frontage should be located at the build-to line

**EXISTING DEVELOPMENT**

Existing buildings are often set back from the street; new buildings should adhere to build-to lines as described in the Volume II: District Design Guidelines

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES ON SITE DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE (CONT'D)

### TOP RIGHT

- 1 Façade treatment, overhang, and lighting highlight and distinguish the entrance
- 2 Street furnishings and plantings enhance the character of the streetscape

Image Credit: Pennon Construction

### BOTTOM RIGHT

- 1 Grade separation of residences from street provides privacy
- 2 Stoops and overhangs highlight entrances and add rhythm to the streetscape

Image Credit: Seattle.gov

## 8. Design Building Zones for Public Interaction

Important to the village feel in McLean is using the Building Zone (space between the sidewalk and building face) and other semi-public or semi-private spaces for public activities. They should be designed for social interaction and to conduct passive activities such as people watching, eating lunch outdoors, or chatting with friends. Such activities encourage a neighborly environment, promotes pedestrian foot-traffic, and help businesses thrive.

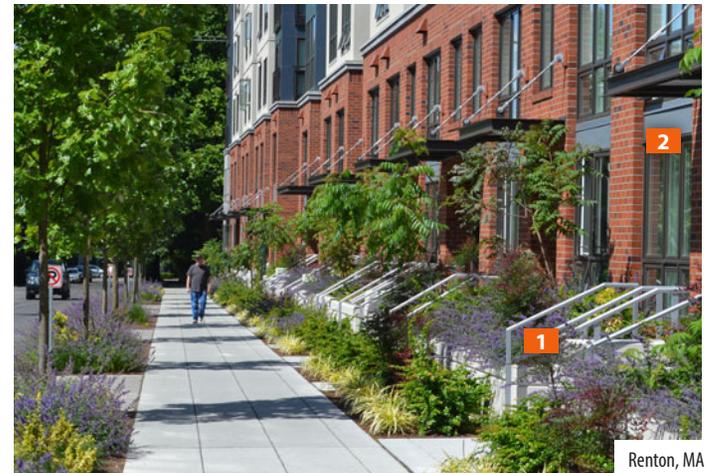
Parking lots and garages should be avoided along public streets. Generally, parking should be located internal to the site.

Residential uses with ground floor retail and other types of mixed-use buildings should incorporate Building Zone design strategies that match the use of the ground floor, or portion thereof.

- **Non-residential** – Large retail browsing zones and canopies for shade promote storefront activity. Demarcating these spaces to differentiate them from public sidewalks makes them more welcoming to use. Outdoor dining and outdoor seating with small courtyards or arcades where the building and the Building Zone can bleed into each other are strongly encouraged.
- **Residential** – Porches, large stoops, gardens, and outdoor common spaces promote interaction. Raising the ground elevation of the building and/or features located within the Building Zone from the sidewalk is an effective tool for differentiating public (i.e. sidewalk) and semi-public spaces (Building Zones).



Seattle, WA



Renton, MA

## 9. Active Building Fronts

Building ground floors (first 20-feet of building height) should engage the adjacent street or public space and have active uses or pedestrian-oriented facades employing human-scale designs.

- **Non-residential** – Designers should consider evoking a pattern of small storefronts in the shape and arrangement of a building's fenestration. The facades of ground floor uses should have entry doors and be primarily transparent, generally comprising 60 percent or more of the ground floor facade.
- **Residential** – Ground floor facades such as lobbies and common spaces, should be primarily transparent, however the degree of transparency on the ground floor façade should consider private uses, such as living areas. Individual unit entrances are encouraged on the ground floors of townhome and multifamily developments. The use of stoops, bays, porches, or entries that establish a transition between a private residential use and the public realm is encouraged. When grade separation cannot be achieved, a landscaped Building Zone should be provided between the residence and the public sidewalk or public space.



Rockville, MD

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES ON SITE DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE (CONT'D)

## 10. McLean Specific Features - Arcades, Colonnades, and Low Walls

These design features are evident in the existing architecture of McLean, such as at the McLean Commerce Center on Chain Bridge Road. Incorporating them into new developments should be considered due to their attractiveness and functionality. Retail uses can benefit from covered arcades and colonnades as outdoor space that is shaded from the elements. When employed, arcades and colonnades should be deep enough to be occupied and are encouraged to be designed for seating or dining. When employed, the ground floors of arcades or colonnades may occupy the entirety of the Building Zone, and upper stories may be brought forward up to the minimum setback.

Low walls are typically defined as under 4-feet in height. Seat walls are 18 to 24 inches in height, and a minimum of 18 inches deep.



Rosemary Beach, FL

### TOP

- 1 Different materials and architectural treatments on the first two floors
- 2 Upper floors step back to reduce building scale

Image Credit: Ruppert Landscape

### BOTTOM

12-foot wide arcade provides covered, outdoor space that is deep enough for dining and retail browsing  
Image Credit: Amavida.com

**FIGURE 4-3: PRIORITIZATION FRONTAGES**



## 4C DESIGN STRATEGIES - BUILDING ZONES & GROUND FLOORS

Building Zones are key to creating a strong threshold between the building and the adjacent street or public realm. In general, simply landscaping the Building Zone is insufficient for creating a vibrant neighborhood village environment. Features should be incorporated to make use of the space for building occupants and pedestrians. It should be considered as an extension of the building's uses such as outdoor dining adjacent to a restaurant or as an extension of the public sidewalk (see Figure 4-7 Office Retrofit, as an example of a sidewalk expansion).

### **Paving in the Building Zone:**

Hardscape paving should be distinguishable from the public sidewalk. Using a different brick pattern or different material delineates the Building Zone from the public right-of-way so that it remains clear of furnishings or obstructions commonly included in the Building Zone. Building Zone paving is encouraged to coordinate with site designs and building architecture.

### **Suggested Building Zone Amenities and Uses:**

As stated, the Building Zone should include amenities beyond landscaping to promote activity and permeability. Amenities may complement the principal or ground floor building uses or help expand the sidewalk, creating a larger public realm. The employment of one or more of the following uses and amenities is encouraged in the Building Zone.

- **Dining Patios:** On Beverly Road and Elm Street, dining areas should generally be 8-feet in depth. On Avenues and other local streets, outdoor dining areas should be a minimum of 8 feet deep, and are recommended to utilize the maximum Building Zone depth of 12 feet. They should be delineated from the public sidewalk through the use of one or several of the following: different paving, placement within arcades or colonnades, low-height enclosure fencing or walls, canopies, and other features. Movable seating and outdoor ambient lighting are strongly encouraged.
- **Bioretention:** When designed as aesthetically attractive and when appropriate given adjacent uses, stormwater collection and treatment facilities are recommended in Building Zones. Low walls framing bioretention and creative elements such as boulders and other natural features are encouraged.
- **Public Art, Wayfinding and Interpretive Signs:** See Chapter 6. incorporate historical elements such as influential names, building materials, and educational signage. Interactive “touchable” art in particular is encouraged. Art can also be used in the Building Zone to call attention to a building entrance or a focal point on the property.
- **Building Signage and Wayfinding:** Building signage in Building Zones should be ground-mounted and include signage that is oriented to both vehicles and pedestrians. See Chapter 6 for more information on wayfinding signs.
- **Bicycle Parking:** Bicycle parking is permitted in the Building Zone. See Fairfax County’s Bicycle Parking regulations.
- **Seating, Planters, and Other Furnishings:** Furnishings in the Building Zone are encouraged to be uniquely designed to complement site design and architecture. They do not need to match those recommended for the streetscape in Chapter 3.
- **Low Walls:** Low walls can increase the sense of enclosure, and can also function as seating. Low walls should be constructed with brick or stone. If contextually appropriate given the site, uses and adjacencies, low walls between 18 and 24 inches high and at least 18 inches deep are encouraged to be capped with integrated seating (see Chapter 3 for more information).
- **Supplemental Plantings:** Shade and flowering trees, shrubs, flowering plants, ground cover, and ornamental grasses are appropriate for the Building Zone.

## DESIGN STRATEGIES - BUILDING ZONES & GROUND FLOORS (CONT'D)

### 4C.1 Building Frontage: Residential (See Figure 4-4 and 4-5)

- Size:** A Building Zone of 8 to 12-feet in width is recommended for an effective transition and privacy between the public sidewalk and residences. On Beverly Road and Elm Street, a narrower 8-foot Building Zone is encouraged in order to create a sense of enclosure for pedestrians and to achieve a consistent Build-to Line. Typically, the Building Zone should not exceed 12-feet in width. Exceptions to the Building Zone width may occur where existing trees, plazas, urban parks, or spaces for public art are located. Upper levels of a building may be set back further than the ground floor.
- Primary Entrances:** Buildings should incorporate urban design strategies to bring people to the fronts of buildings. Buildings should have their primary pedestrian entrances facing public streets. If a building has frontage along two or more streets, both frontages should be activated.
- Unit Entrances:** Buildings with residential uses on the ground floor are encouraged to include individual unit entrances where adjacent to a public road, trail, park or private walkway. On multifamily buildings, these would be in addition to the primary entrance. They should be frequently spaced and should be celebrated with adjacent stoops, overhangs, porches, patios, low walls or raised planters.
- Porches, Patios and Stoops:** Occupiable spaces adjacent to entrances are important to fostering social interaction and provide opportunities for personalization, gardening, and increasing the usable space of residences. Porches and patios should be a minimum of 6-feet deep to allow sufficient space for seating.
- Grade Separation:** Individual entrances should be grade-separated from the public sidewalk to provide some privacy, ideally by 2 to 4-feet. When grade separation cannot be achieved, a landscaped Building Zone should be provided between the residence and the public sidewalk.

#### TOP

Classic architectural motifs and decorative overhang highlight the building entrance

Image Credit: David M. Schwarz Architects

#### BOTTOM

Decorative fences, stoops and plantings define building zone and provide a welcoming front door

Image Credit: Fairfax County



Washington, DC



Boston, MA

**FIGURE 4-4: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT - MULTIFAMILY**

**PRIVATE TERRACE**  
Provide private entry and outdoor space for residents

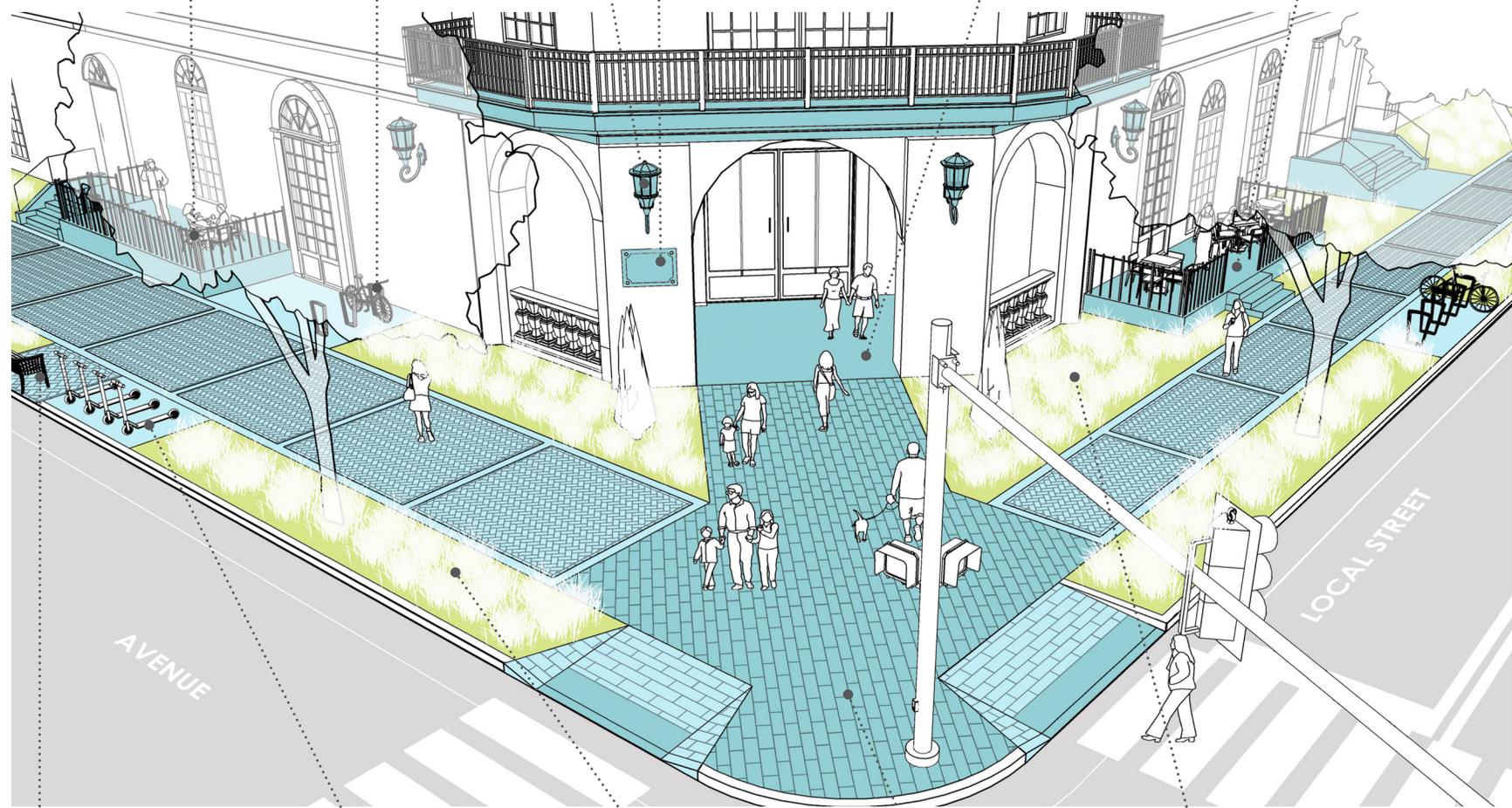
**BIKE RACKS**  
Provide parking for bikes to encourage multimodal transportation

**FACADE LIGHTING**  
Provide lighting for residents and the public realm

**BUILDING MOUNTED SIGNAGE**  
Provide informational signage on building facade

**STREET ORIENTED ACCESS**  
Create a sense of arrival and hierarchy with architectural features and paving

**PRIVATE TERRACE**  
Provide private outdoor space for residents



**STREETSCAPE FURNISHINGS**  
Provide seating for pedestrians

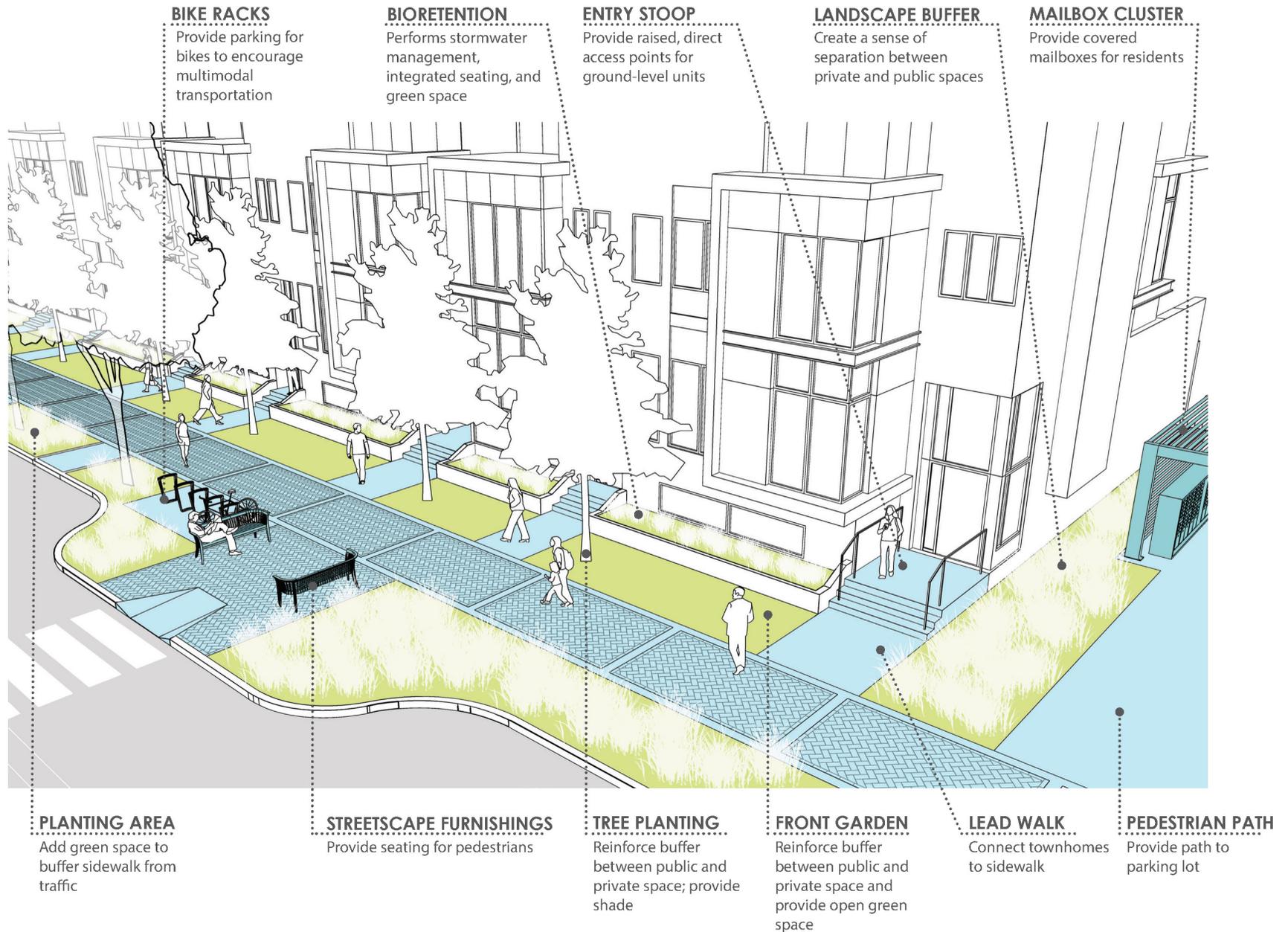
**MULTIMODAL PARKING**  
Provide parking for multimodal transportation

**PLANTING AREA**  
Add green space to buffer sidewalk from traffic

**INTERSECTION PLAZA**  
Add paving to make corner a distinct destination

**LANDSCAPE BUFFER**  
Provide foundation plantings at buildings to soften scale for pedestrians; create a sense of separation between private and public spaces

**FIGURE 4-5: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT - TOWN HOMES**



## DESIGN STRATEGIES - BUILDING ZONES & GROUND FLOORS (CONT'D)

### 4C.2 Building Frontage: Office (See Figure 4-6)

- **Size:** A Building Zone 4 to 8-feet in width is recommended.
- **Primary Entrances:** Buildings should incorporate urban design strategies to bring people to the fronts of buildings. Buildings should have their primary pedestrian entrances facing public streets. If a building has frontage along two or more streets, both or all frontages should be activated.
- **Outdoor Workspaces and Dining Areas:** Outdoor workspaces with moveable furnishings, public wi-fi, and electric outlets are encouraged.

### 4C.3 Building Frontage: Retail and Restaurants (See Figure 4-7)

- **Size:** *Beverly Road and Elm Street (Local Street Type 1):* Developments incorporating any ground floor active uses should utilize the entirety of the maximum Building Zone depth of 8-feet.

*Avenues and Local Street Type 2:* Developments incorporating ground floor retail and restaurants without outdoor dining should provide a Building Zone of at least 4-feet. Where outdoor dining is envisioned, developments should provide a Building Zone of a minimum of 8-feet deep, and are recommended to utilize the maximum Building Zone depth of 12-feet.

*In all cases:* Exceptions to the recommended Building Zone widths may occur where plazas, urban parks, or spaces for public art are located. Upper levels of a building may be set back further than the ground floor. Alternatively, if an arcade or colonnade is provided in the Building Zone, upper stories may be brought forward to the edge of the Building Zone up to the required minimum setback. Overhangs may extend into the Building Zone.

- **Primary Entrances:** Buildings should have their primary pedestrian entrances facing public streets. If a building has frontage along two or more streets, both or all should be activated. If parking is located on the side or rear of the building, pedestrian circulation from the parking to the retail or restaurant entrance should be clearly delineated, and is strongly encouraged to bring them to the street front, not to a secondary side or rear entrance.

### 4C.4 Building Frontage Retrofit (See Figure 4-8)

The Building Zone can play an important role in improving the relationship between an existing building and the public realm when the façade design may not encourage such a relationship. For example, in the McLean CBC some of the office buildings that date to the 1970s and 1980s have limited fenestration along the street frontage.

Figure 4-8 depicts some strategies that can make an existing Building Zone more attractive. Specific improvements are dependent upon the design of the existing building, existing site features, and the level of renovation being undertaken. For example, the public sidewalk can be expanded into the Building Zone and lined with a seat wall, shade trees and landscaping. This forms a quasi-park space in front of the building and creates more usable space for pedestrians. Other examples for retrofitting the frontage of buildings to be more attractive to pedestrians include providing outdoor dining, outdoor workspaces, and pollinator gardens.



Houston, TX

#### BOTTOM

A deep canopy (~6-feet deep) and outdoor seating helps define the Building Zone at a street corner in River Oaks District of Houston, TX  
Image Credit: Gensler

**FIGURE 4-6: OFFICE DEVELOPMENT**

**PATIO STYLE SEATING**  
Provide outdoor patio seating for office users

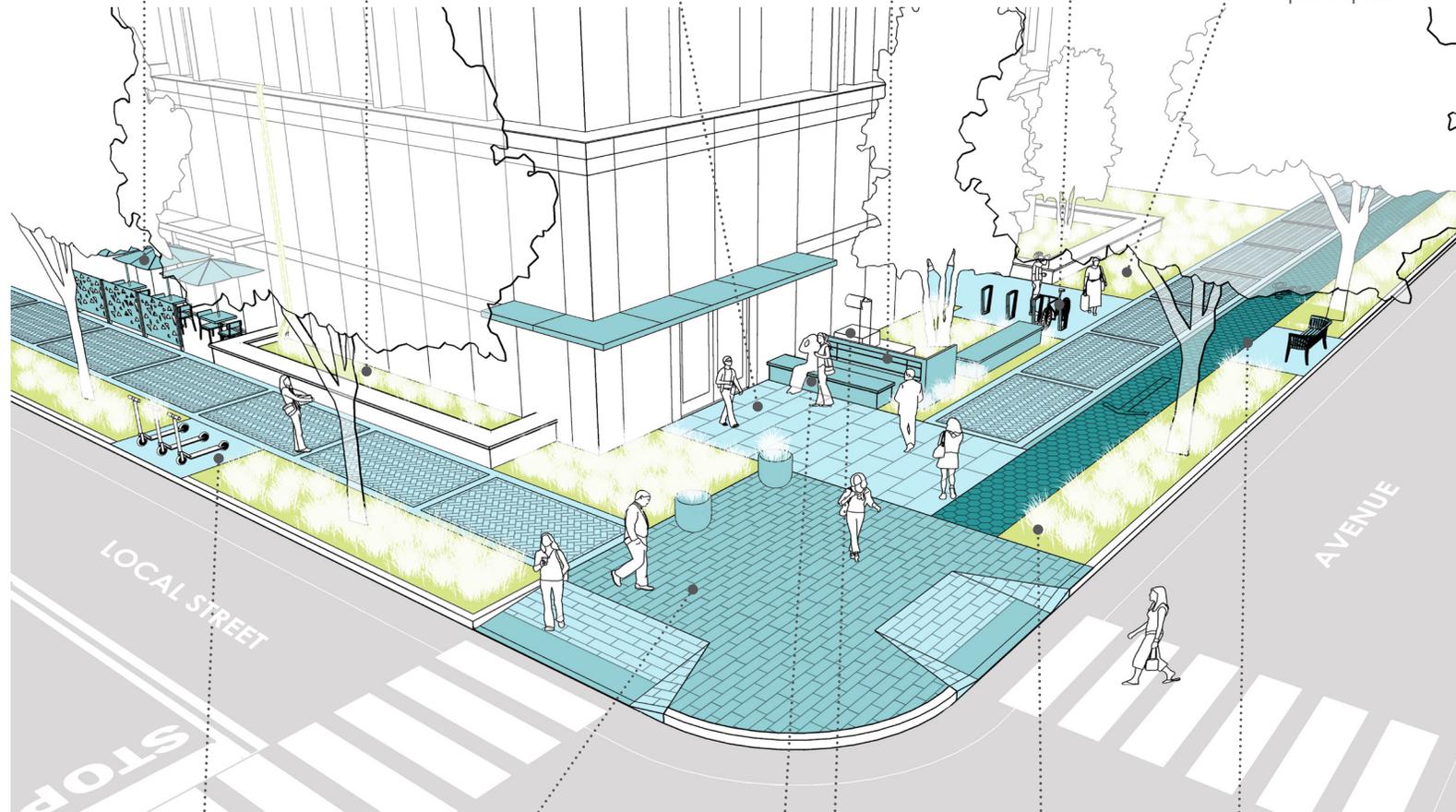
**BIORETENTION**  
Performs stormwater management, integrated seating, and green space

**STREET ORIENTED ACCESS**  
Create a sense of arrival and hierarchy with architectural features and paving

**MONUMENT SIGN**  
Provide pedestrian-scaled signage

**BIKE RACKS**  
Provide parking for bikes to encourage multimodal transportation

**LANDSCAPE BUFFER**  
Provide foundation plantings at buildings to soften scale for pedestrians; create a sense of separation between private and public spaces



**MULTIMODAL PARKING**  
Provide parking for multimodal transportation

**INTERSECTION PLAZA**  
Add paving and amenities to make corner a distinct destination

**INTEGRATED SEATING**  
Provide pedestrians and office users a place to sit near green spaces

**SHIELD UTILITIES**  
Keep utilities within building zone and shield

**PLANTING AREA**  
Add green space to buffer sidewalk from traffic

**STREETSCAPE FURNISHINGS**  
Provide seating for pedestrians

**FIGURE 4-7: RETAIL & RESTAURANTS**

**SCREEN PANEL**

Enclose outdoor dining areas with a low feature

**BIKE RACKS**

Provide parking for bikes to encourage multimodal transportation

**FESTIVAL LIGHTS**

Provide lighting specific to outdoor dining areas

**RAISED PLANTER**

Enclose outdoor dining areas with a low feature and add to green space

**STREET ORIENTED ACCESS**

Creates a sense of arrival and hierarchy with architecture features, paving, and signage

**WALL MURAL**

Introduce public art in business areas

**BIORETENTION**

Performs stormwater management, integrated seating, and green space



**LANDSCAPE BUFFER**

Provide plantings between businesses and parking lot to soften scale for pedestrians; create a sense of separation between private and public spaces

**STREETScape FURNISHINGS**

Provide seating for pedestrians

**PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING**

Provide lighting for businesses and the public realm

**DINING PATIO**

Create an outdoor patio for businesses with paving and furnishings

**FIGURE 4-8: BUILDING RETROFIT**

**TREE PLANTING**  
Create buffer between public realm and office building

**BIORETENTION**  
Performs stormwater management, integrated seating, and green space

**STREET ORIENTED ACCESS**  
Creates a sense of arrival and hierarchy with architecture features and paving

**BIKE RACKS**  
Provide parking for bikes to encourage multimodal transportation



**INTEGRATED SEATING**  
Provide pedestrians and office users a place to sit near green spaces

**EXPANDED PEDESTRIAN ZONE**  
Pedestrian paving expands to create an engaged public realm

**PLANTING AREA**  
Add green space to buffer sidewalk from traffic

**STREETSCAPE FURNISHINGS**  
Provide seating for pedestrians

#### 4C.5 Building Zones on Old Dominion Drive and Chain Bridge Road

For Building Zones located along Old Dominion Drive and Chain Bridge Road there are additional considerations:

- 1. Allée Design:** When space is available (at least 8 feet), consider including a second row of trees in the Building Zone (in addition to the Landscape Panel) to create an allée effect. The Building Zone may be enlarged to accommodate a tree and other Building Zone uses, if desired. Tree planting should be aligned with the sidewalk and should be staggered with those in the Landscape Panel. Species are encouraged to be different than those specified for the Landscape Panel in the right-of-way. Use tree species recommendations in the [Appendix of the Volume I Urban Design Guidelines](#). See Chapter 3 for more information on tree planting locations.

If the Building Zone is less than 8-feet in width or there are concerns about retail visibility, a second row of trees is not expected. Other landscaping, included plantings in stand-alone containers is encouraged.

- 2. Grade Separation:** Where feasible and especially where topography permits, consider employing a grade separation, typically 2 to 3-feet in width, between the sidewalk and Building Zone to mitigate the impacts of vehicular noise and traffic. This will create a sense of privacy and delineation between the roadway and the semi-private realm of the Building Zone. *Note: ADA standards must be adhered to for universal access.*

#### 4C.5 Building Zones on Elm Street and Beverly Road

The recommended Building Zone width is 8 feet. A handful of existing mature trees grace these streets. Development applications are encouraged to explore their preservation. To aid in doing so, elements of the streetscape design may be rearranged, as discussed in *Section 3H – Transitions and Flexibility for Existing Conditions*. Alternatively, the Building Zone may be enlarged in places to preserve mature trees.



Vancouver, WA

## DESIGN STRATEGIES - BUILDING ZONES & GROUND FLOORS (CONT'D)

### TOP RIGHT

Second row of trees in the Building Zone creates an “allée” effect in the streetscape

Image Credit: Brent Toderian



Rockville, MD

### BOTTOM RIGHT

**1** Grade separation mitigates the impact from vehicular traffic and delineates the Building Zone

Image Credit: Ruppert Landscape

**FIGURE 4-9: TYPES OF BUILDING FRONTAGES**



**PRIVATE: ENCLOSED**



**PRIVATE: RAISED**



**SEMI-PRIVATE: RAISED**

## TYPES OF BUILDING FRONTAGES



**SEMI-PUBLIC: PARTIAL ENCLOSED**



**PUBLIC: OVERHANG**



**PUBLIC: ARCADE**

## 4D DESIGN STRATEGIES - PARKING DESIGN

The McLean Comprehensive Plan and Chapter 5 of the Volume I Design Guidelines provides significant detail about the location and design of parking. The intent of the recommendations is to minimize the visual impact of parking on the character of McLean while providing convenient access to neighborhood-serving retail, offices, and other uses.

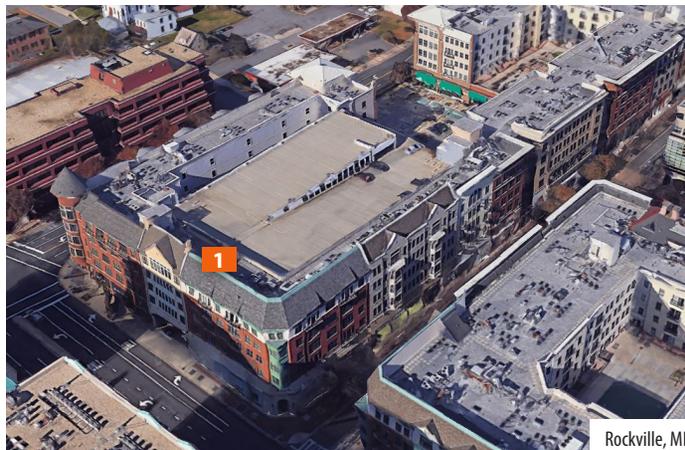
### Structured and Underground Parking:

Throughout the CBC, structured and underground parking is primarily envisioned with the optional level of development.

- Structures are strongly encouraged to be integrated into buildings, and, where higher volumes of pedestrian activity are anticipated, should not be visible, but, rather, should be lined with more active uses.
- Architectural detailing, lighting and landscaping should be employed to mitigate negative visual impacts from any exposed parking structure facades.
- Exposed parking structure facades are highly discouraged adjacent to parks and plazas.

#### LEFT

- 1 Residential liner units wraps the parking garage so that it is shielded from view  
Image Credit: Google



Rockville, MD

#### RIGHT

- Decorative short masonry wall screens the surface parking lot from public sidewalk  
Image Credit: Fairfax County



Fairfax, VA

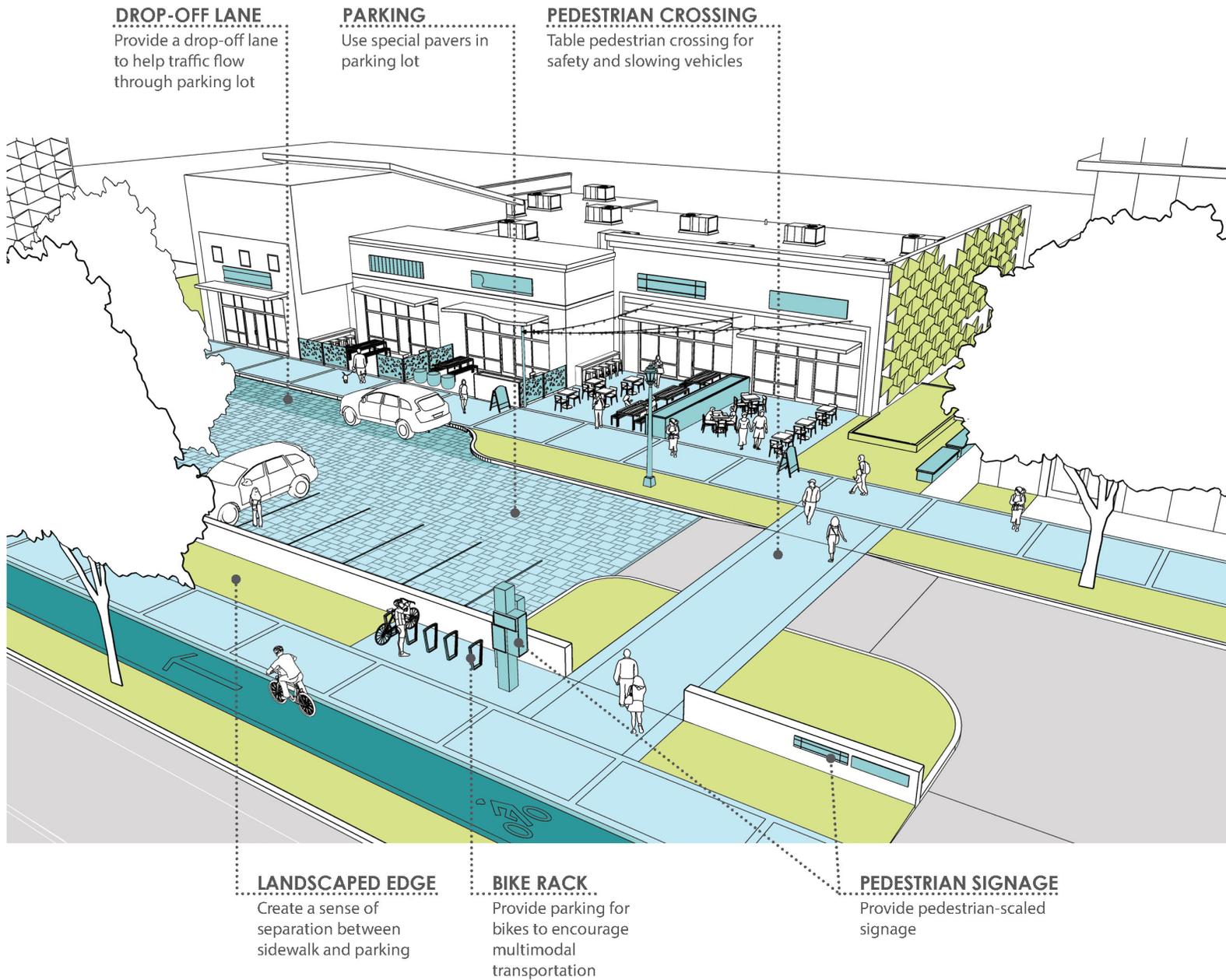
- Entrances into parking structures should be attractive and coordinated with the architecture of the building through the use of architectural treatments on doors, where applicable. Entrance openings should not exceed the minimum required size.

### Parking Garage Lighting:

Lighting within above-ground parking garages should be designed to prevent as much external light pollution from the building and vehicle headlamps as possible. Techniques to minimize light pollution include:

- Use full cut-off fixtures.
- Incorporate decorative screens or mesh fabric panels on garage openings where lighting is anticipated to be exposed to streets, parks or neighboring residential properties.
- Locate ceiling-mounted lights towards the center of the garage.
- Add directional shielding to lights to mitigate impacts to specific adjacent properties.
- On rooftops, minimize lighting to the extent feasible. Limit the height of any pole mounted lights to a maximum of 12-feet.
- For commercial garages, put lights on a motion sensor after business hours or dimming lights after close.

**FIGURE 4-10: PARKING LOT TREATMENT**



## DESIGN STRATEGIES - PARKING DESIGN & UTILITIES (CONT'D)

### Surface Parking Lot Locations:

Where proposed, surface parking:

- Is generally preferred to be located to the side or rear of a building, although a single row of teaser parking may be appropriate in front of non-residential uses;
- Should include pedestrian pathways through the parking lot to the building entrance(s);
- Should be well-landscaped and well-lit; and,
- Should be designed to support onsite stormwater management by using elements such as planter areas for bioretention and permeable paving in the parking stalls.

### Surface Parking Lot Design:

Developments proposing surface parking are encouraged to employ one, or, ideally, several, of the following means for screening parking areas from the streetscape:

- Low, masonry walls (30 to 48 inches high). See Chapter 3 Streetscape Furnishings for more details on the design and cladding materials of low walls.
- Landscape berms.
- Decorative screens or other devices that visually hide parked vehicles.
- Ornamental or shade trees spaced 20-30 feet apart.
- Low, continuous row of shrubs or ornamental grasses (30 to 48-inches high).

### Parking Lot Lighting:

Full cut-off light fixtures should be provided. Lighting should first be designed for pedestrian safety by ensuring adequate lighting of pedestrian pathways through parking lots. Bollard lights are recommended along these paths. A photometric study should be

provided to the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, streetlight staff, at the time of site plan review to ensure uniform lighting levels.

### Parking Configurations by Zone:

The Comprehensive Plan provides specific guidance for parking accommodations in the three development zones.

- Center Zone: Parking is predominantly provided underground or in structured garages with some “teaser” surface parking permitted. In Fairfax County, teaser parking is defined as one row of parking and a drive aisle for convenience needs and is not intended to meet all on-site parking requirements. Teaser parking is preferred to be located on the side of the building, rather than in front. If provided in front, the row of parking should be adjacent to the public streetscape and should include a pedestrian pathway between the public sidewalk and the building frontage. It is encouraged to be designed in a manner that permits other uses, such as a plaza space for weekend activities (see example of a well-designed teaser parking area in Figure 4-8).
- General Zone: Parking may be provided underground, in structured garages or in surface lots. It is generally preferable to locate surface parking to the side or rear of a building. Surface parking is encouraged to be screened using one or several of the above-mentioned methods. See notes about teaser parking in the Center Zone.
- Edge Zone: Parking may be provided underground or in structured garages, but is generally anticipated to be provided in surface lots. Surface parking is encouraged to be screened using one or several of the above-mentioned methods.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK