



An Introduction to Urban Design Guidelines

1/26/2022

Who uses Design Guidelines and When?

- **Design concept phase (pre-submission)** When property owners approach the county, typically before the project is fully designed, staff introduces them to the Design Guidelines.
- **All stages of zoning and plan review** County staff, especially Community Revitalization, use the Design Guidelines throughout the rezoning and site plan review processes.



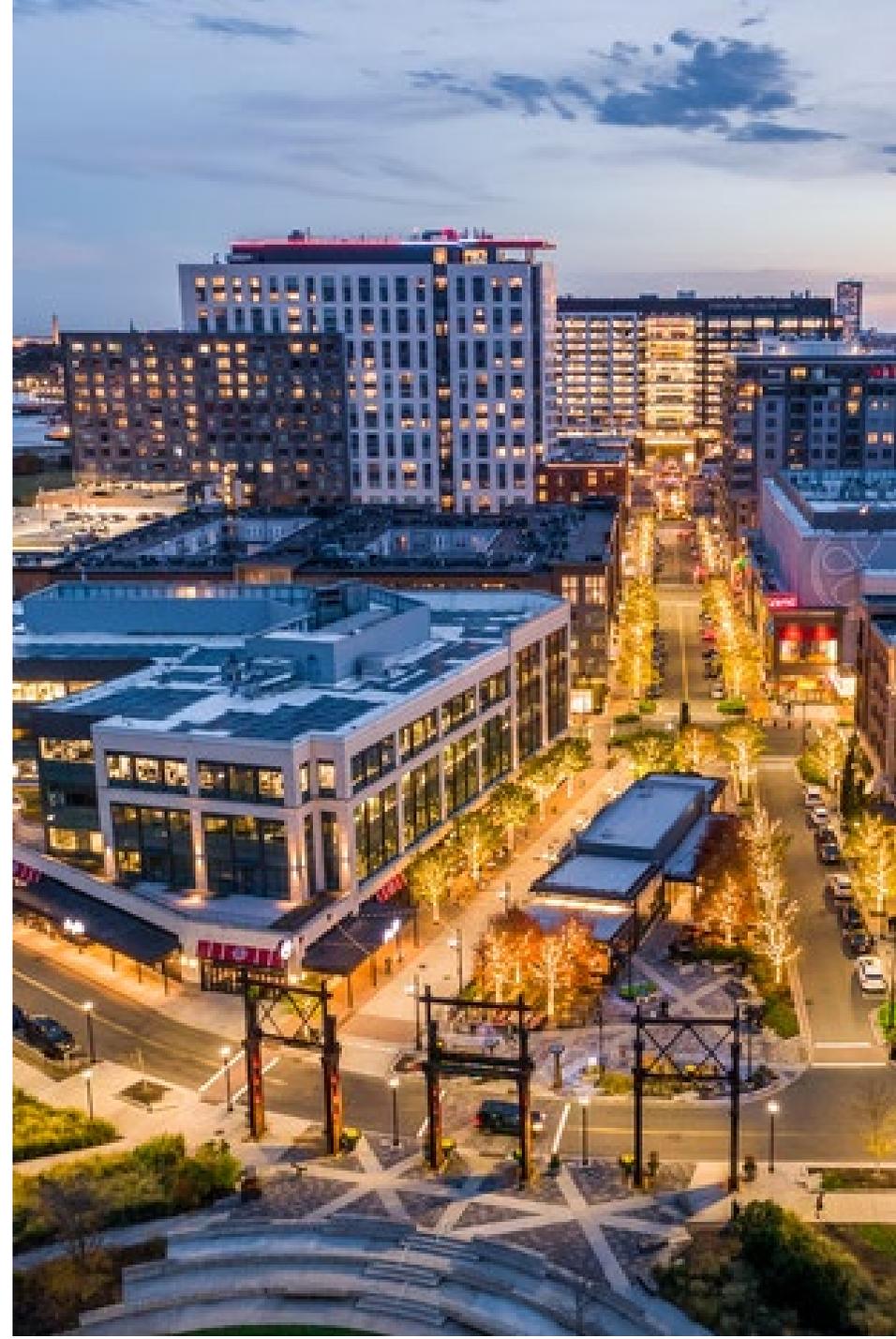
How are they Organized?

- Tysons and Reston each have their own stand-alone Design Guidelines.
- Revitalization districts are a two-volume set:
 - **Volume I** (approved 11/18) applies to all revitalization districts and includes broad design recommendations
 - **Volume II** is district-specific
- Both volumes must be used together!



How do they work with other County Regulations?

- Developed with input from many County agencies.
- Help implement aspects of the Comprehensive Plan and work in conjunction with the Zoning Ordinance and the Public Facilities Manual (PFM).
- PFM was updated to allow Design Guidelines to supersede its regulations (with justification) so that special designs can be implemented. Developers still need to follow other building and zoning codes.



Here's where you get involved.

Each chapter is organized using the following structure:

- **Intent** (overarching purpose and intent of the Chapter)
- **Topical Sections**
 - **Design Principles** (define the goals and conditions needed to achieve desired outcomes)
 - **Design Strategies** (details on how to implement the design principles, including in some instances specific materials and dimensions)



Volume I Table of Contents

1. Introduction on how to use the Guidelines
2. Street and Streetscape Design
3. Open Space
4. Site Design
5. Parking and Access
6. Placemaking Elements
7. Interim Development
8. Appendix



Questions for you to consider

What design features are most important in McLean?

What makes McLean special today that we want to ensure is replicated?

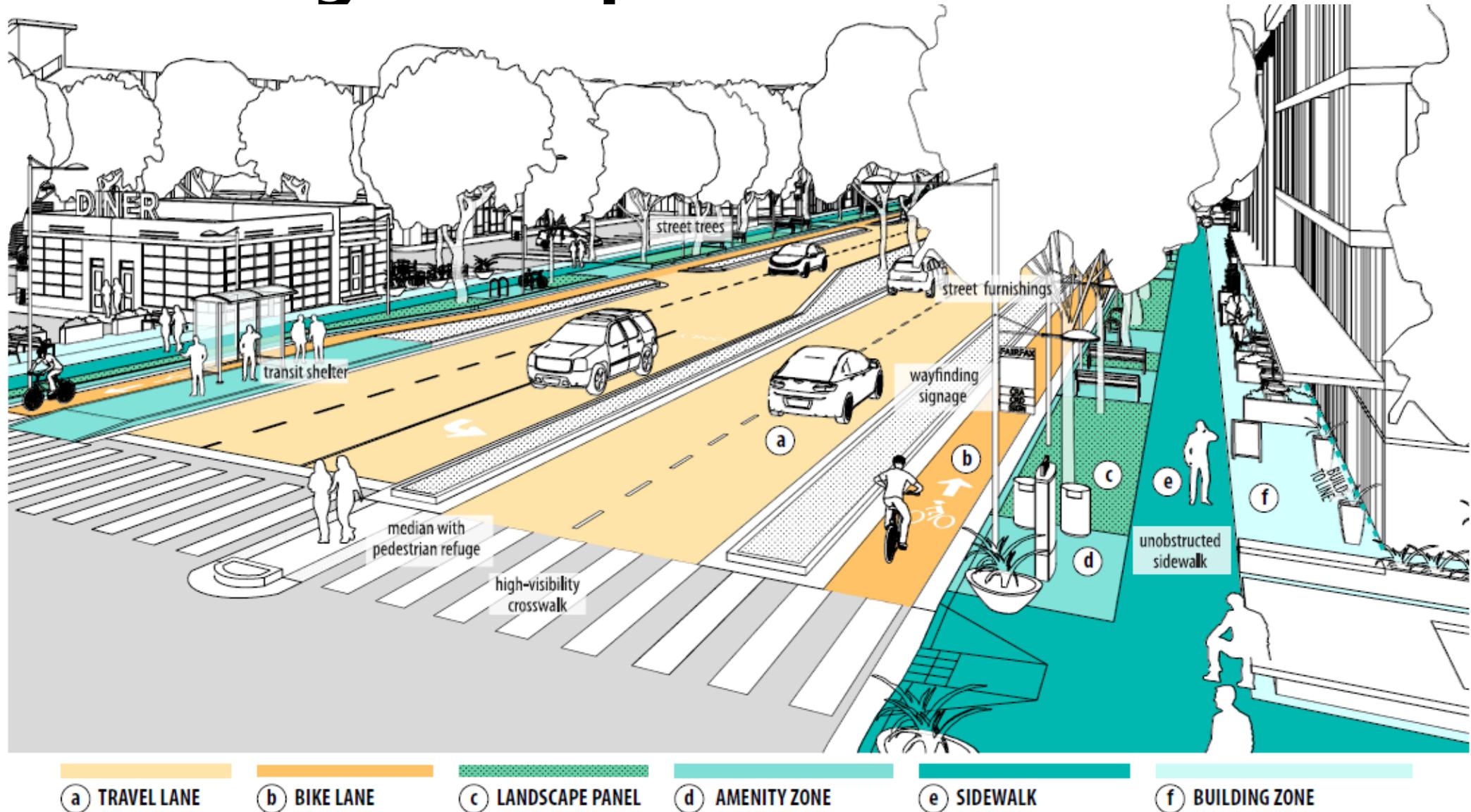
Is there something missing in Volume I that we should consider including in the Volume II for McLean?



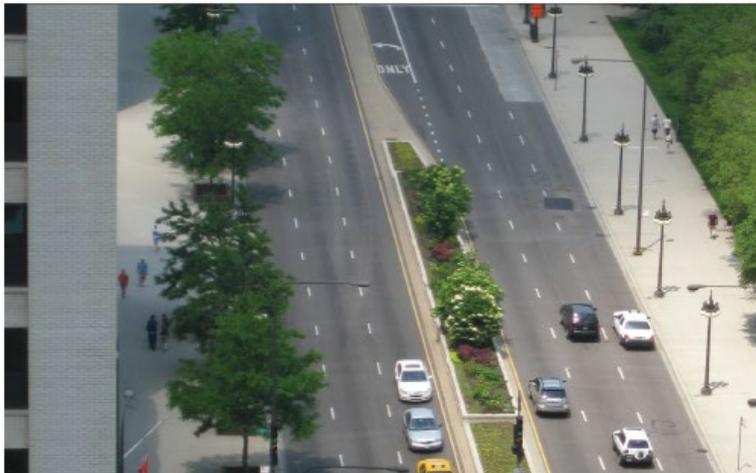
Typical Fairfax Streetscape



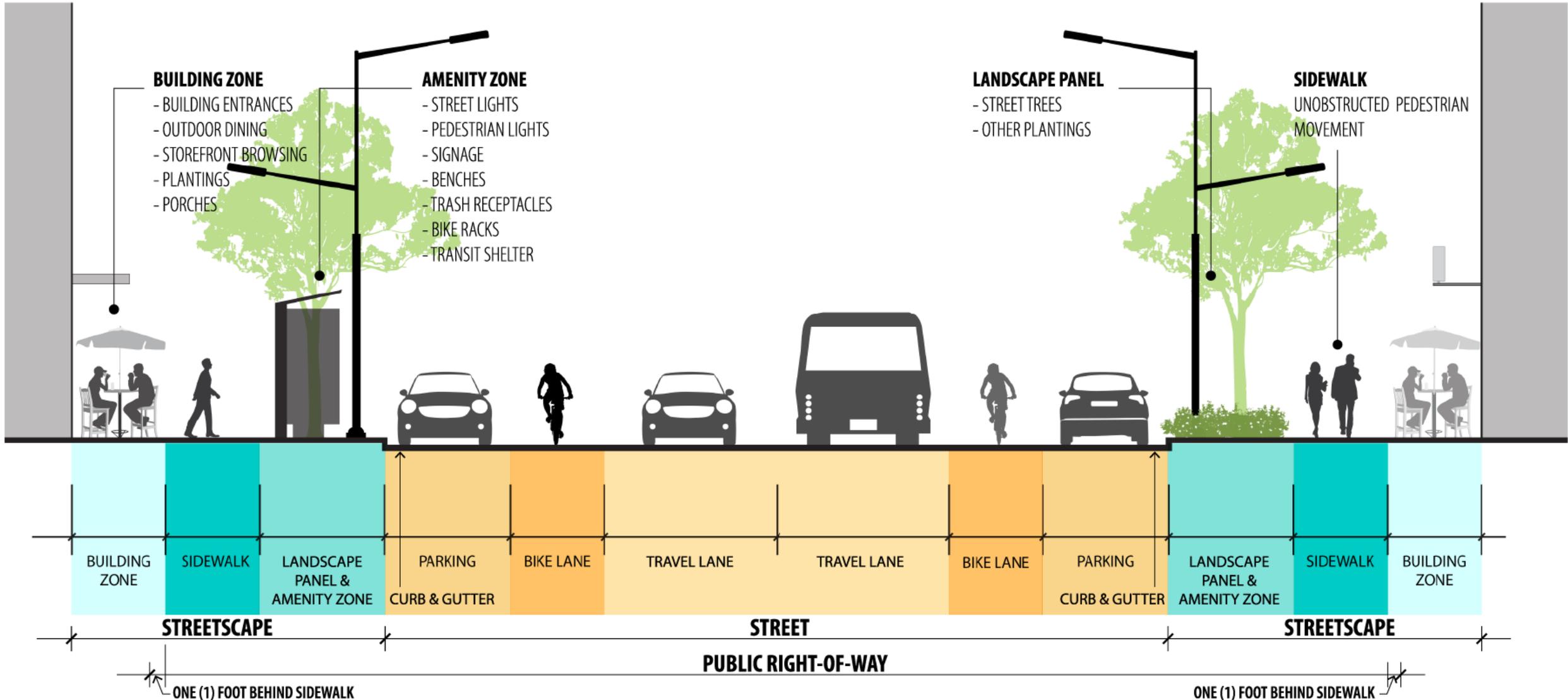
Street Design: Complete Streets



Street Design: Multimodal Streets



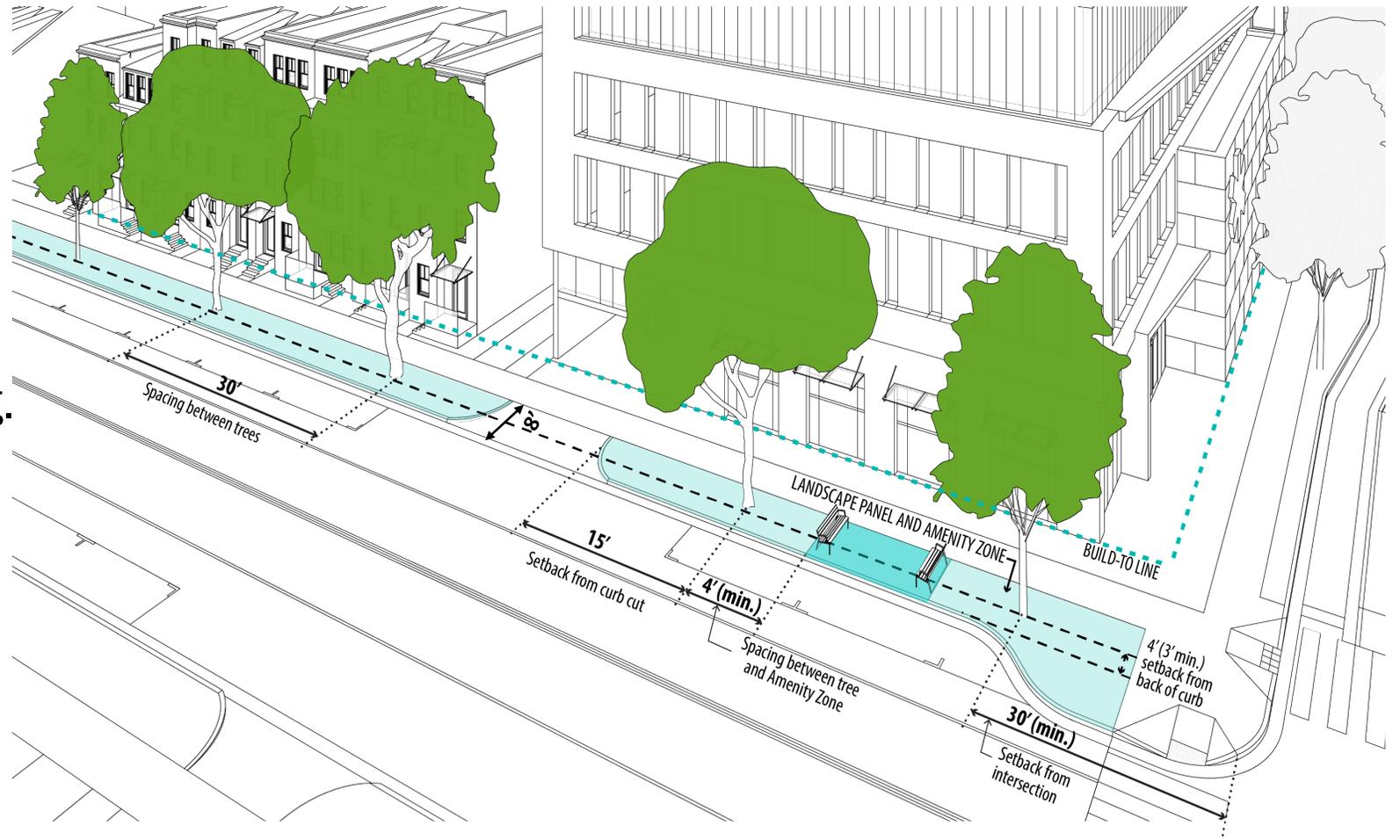
Streetscape: Components



Streetscape Element: Tree Planting

KEY POINTS

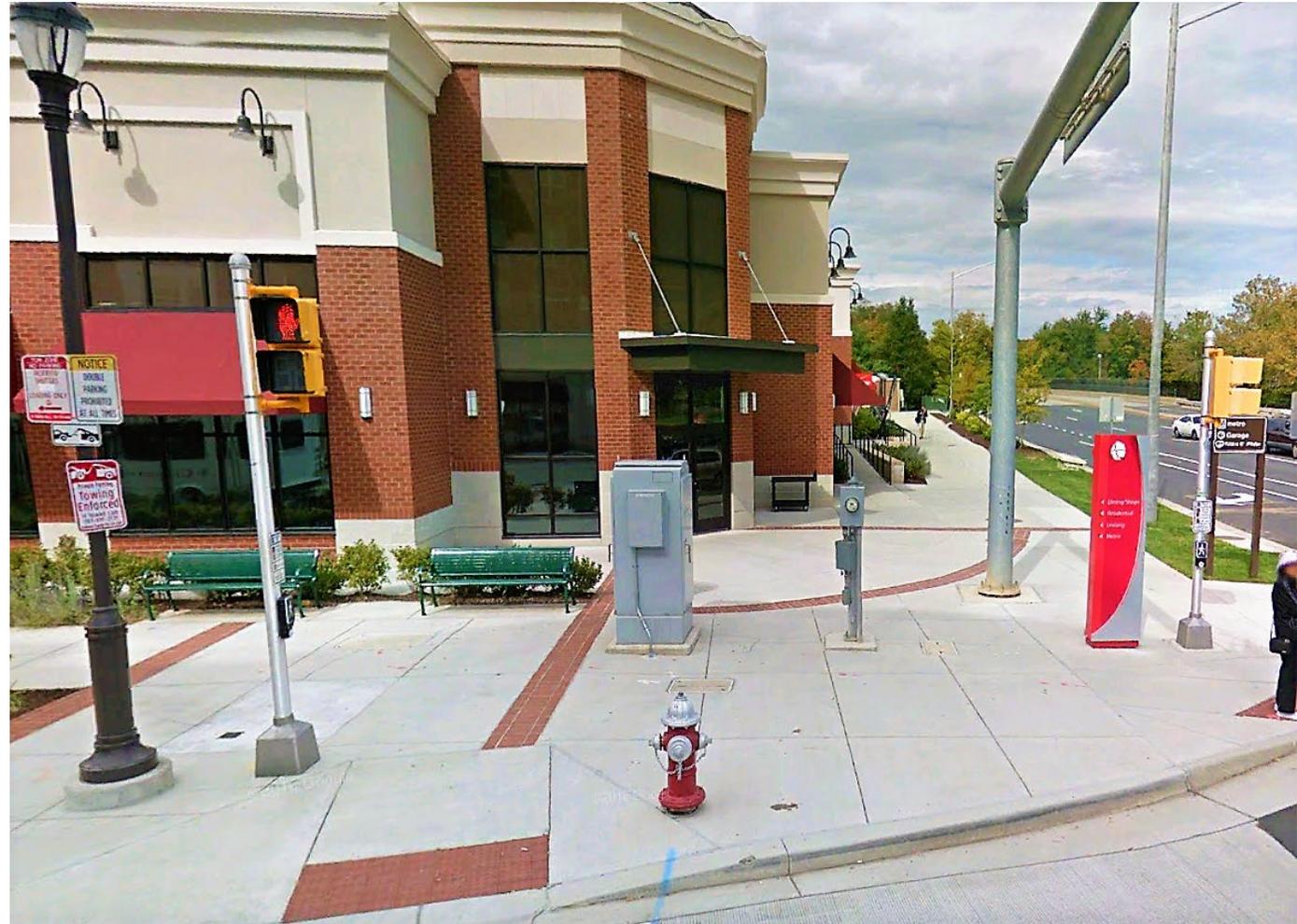
- Street trees are critical for the environment, pedestrian comfort, and economic vitality.
- Should be planted between the curb and the sidewalk for max benefit. Consistent tight spacing.
- Options for how to plant trees in constrained areas.
- Incorporate VDOT standards
- Some species work are more conducive to thriving in urban areas



Streetscape Element: Utilities

KEY POINTS

- Utility planning should occur early in the design process.
- Utility lines should be undergrounded under the sidewalk – avoid landscape panels.
- Locate utility cabinets and vaults in the building zone only.



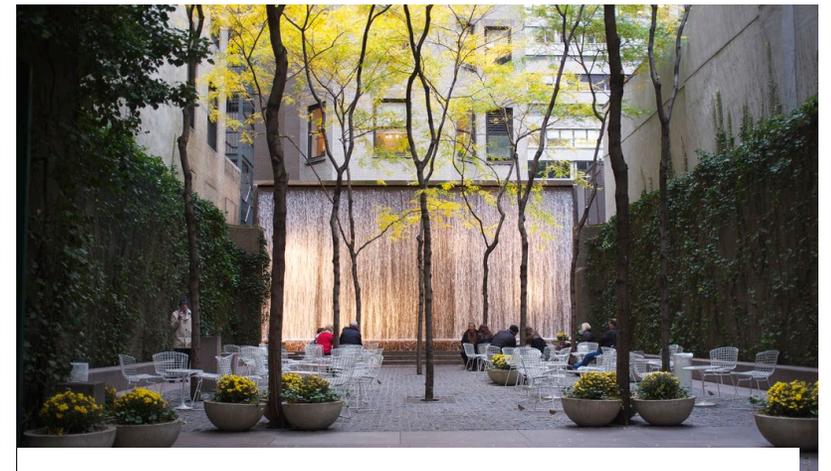
Open Space: Parks and Plazas

KEY POINTS

- 5 Main Park types (County's Urban Parks Framework) – explains each type
- Parks should contribute to a larger park network
- Contribute to a Sense of Place and Pride
- Program parks to support recreation, education and public events



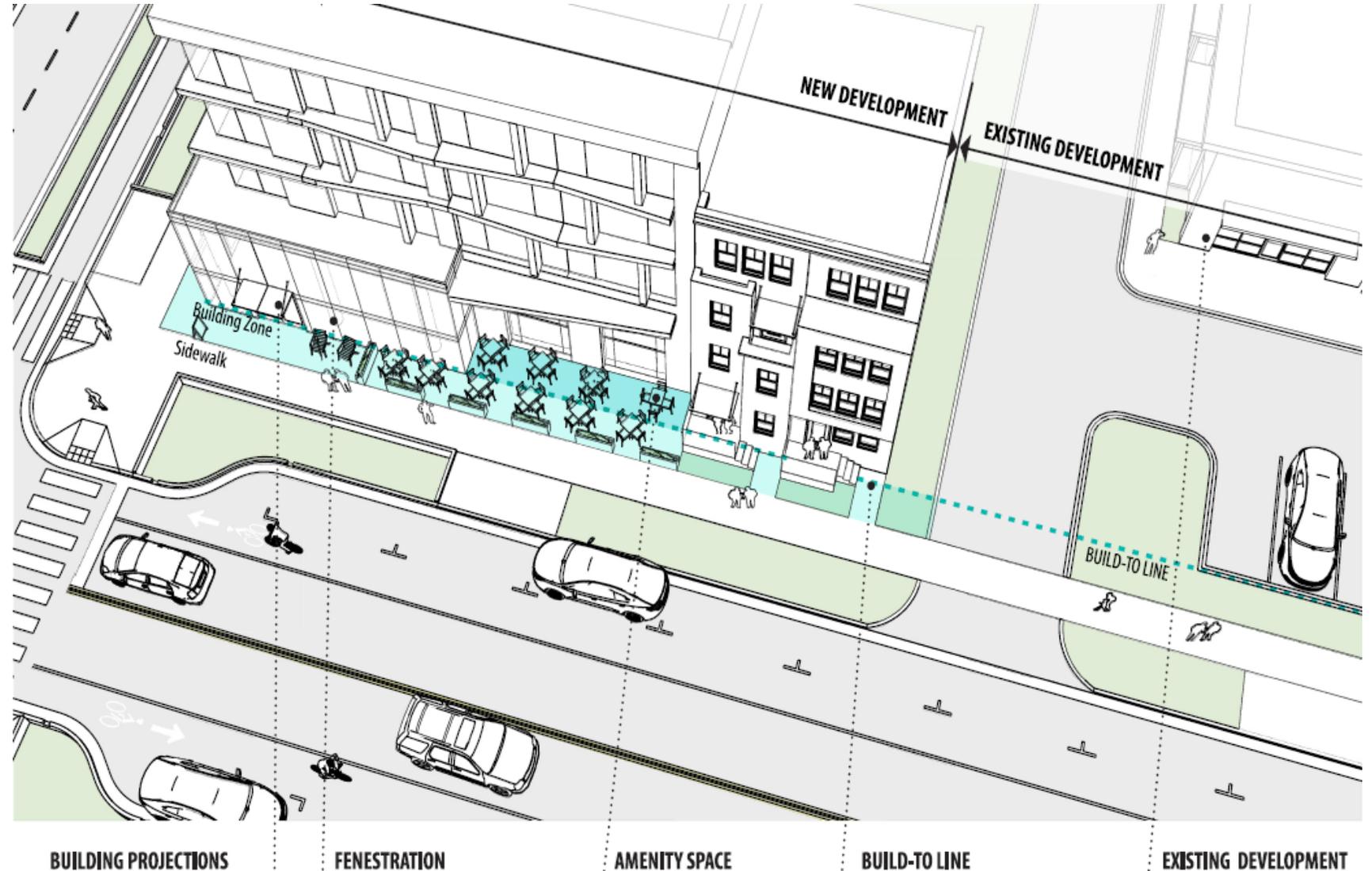
Recreation-focused



Site Design: Building Placement

KEY POINTS

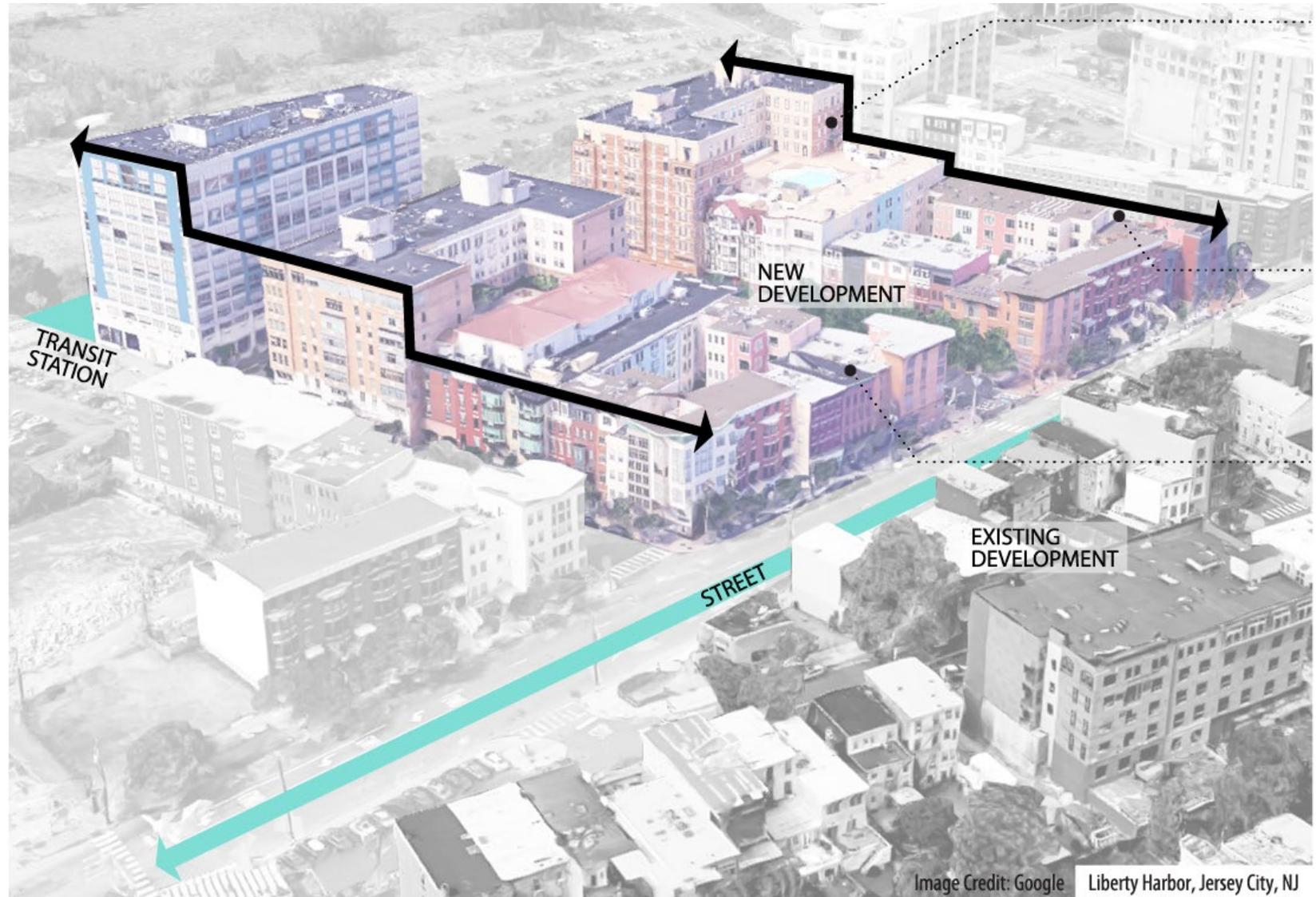
- Build-to Line (locating buildings close to the street)
- Allowance for Amenity Spaces
- Building Fenestration (60% rule of thumb)
- Building Projections



Site Design: Building Transitions

KEY POINTS

- Building modulation keeps an interesting skyline
- Contextual design is important
- Step backs reduce height along street edge to avoid large shadows on ground
- Building step down to align with the context
- Building height-to-street width ratio should be considered.



Site Design: Ground Floor Design

KEY POINTS

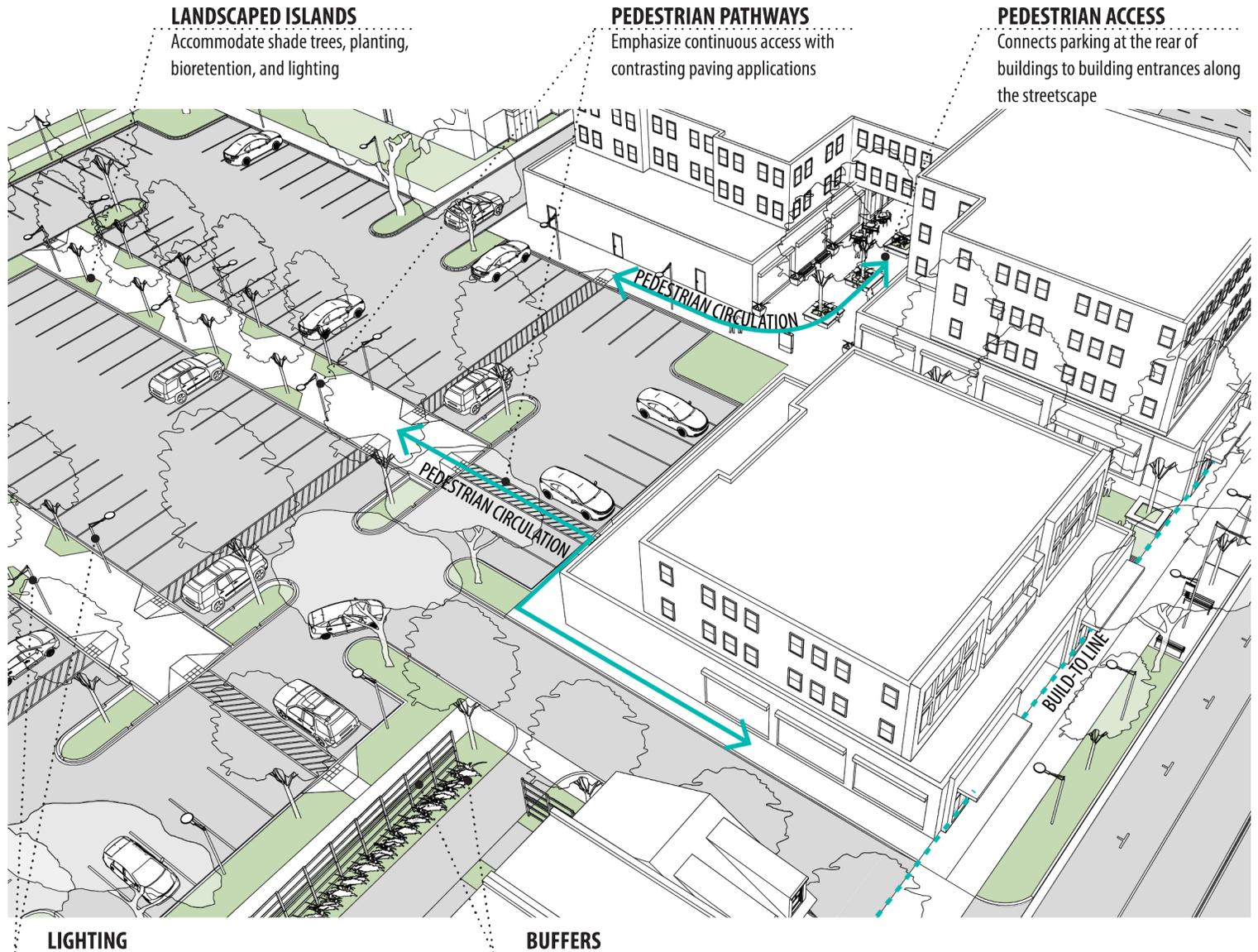
- Different design needs for residential and commercial uses.
- Commercial ground floors should be both visually interesting and pedestrian-scaled: consider materials, building form and step-backs, special corner designs, and façade elements such as transparency, modulation, building entries, and cornice lines.
- Residential ground floors should consider the need for both privacy and “eyes on the street.”



Parking and Access

KEY POINTS

- Minimize visual impacts of parking
- Placement preference order:
 - On-street
 - Structured Parking
 - Underground
 - Podium or Wrapped
 - Surface lot
 - Rear of site
 - Side of building
 - Front teaser parking
- Make driveways “pedestrian friendly”



Parking and Access: Structured



Parking garage hidden by an active facade



Parking with ground floor retail and sculptural features

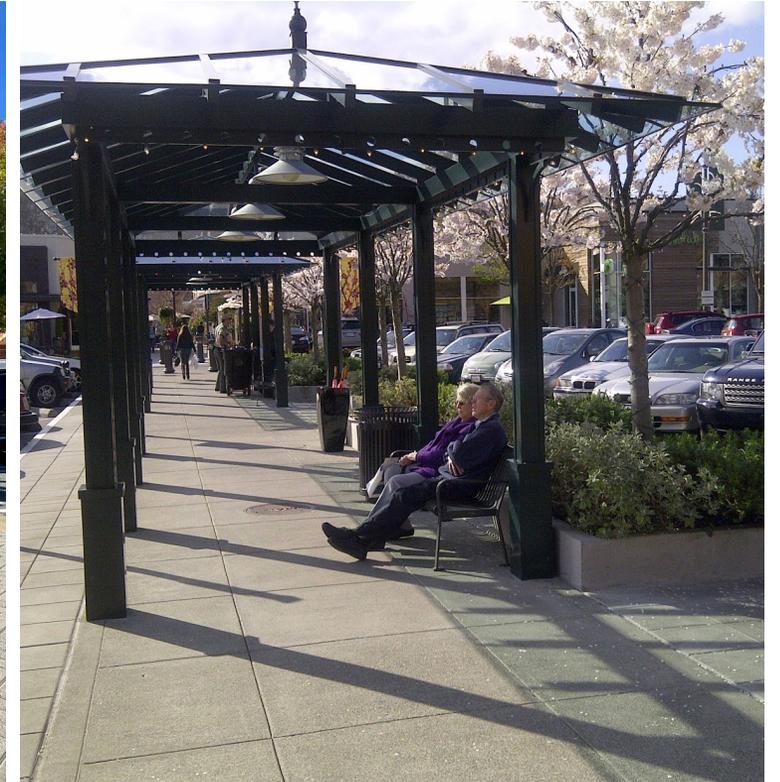
Parking and Access: Surface



Parking area hidden to side of building



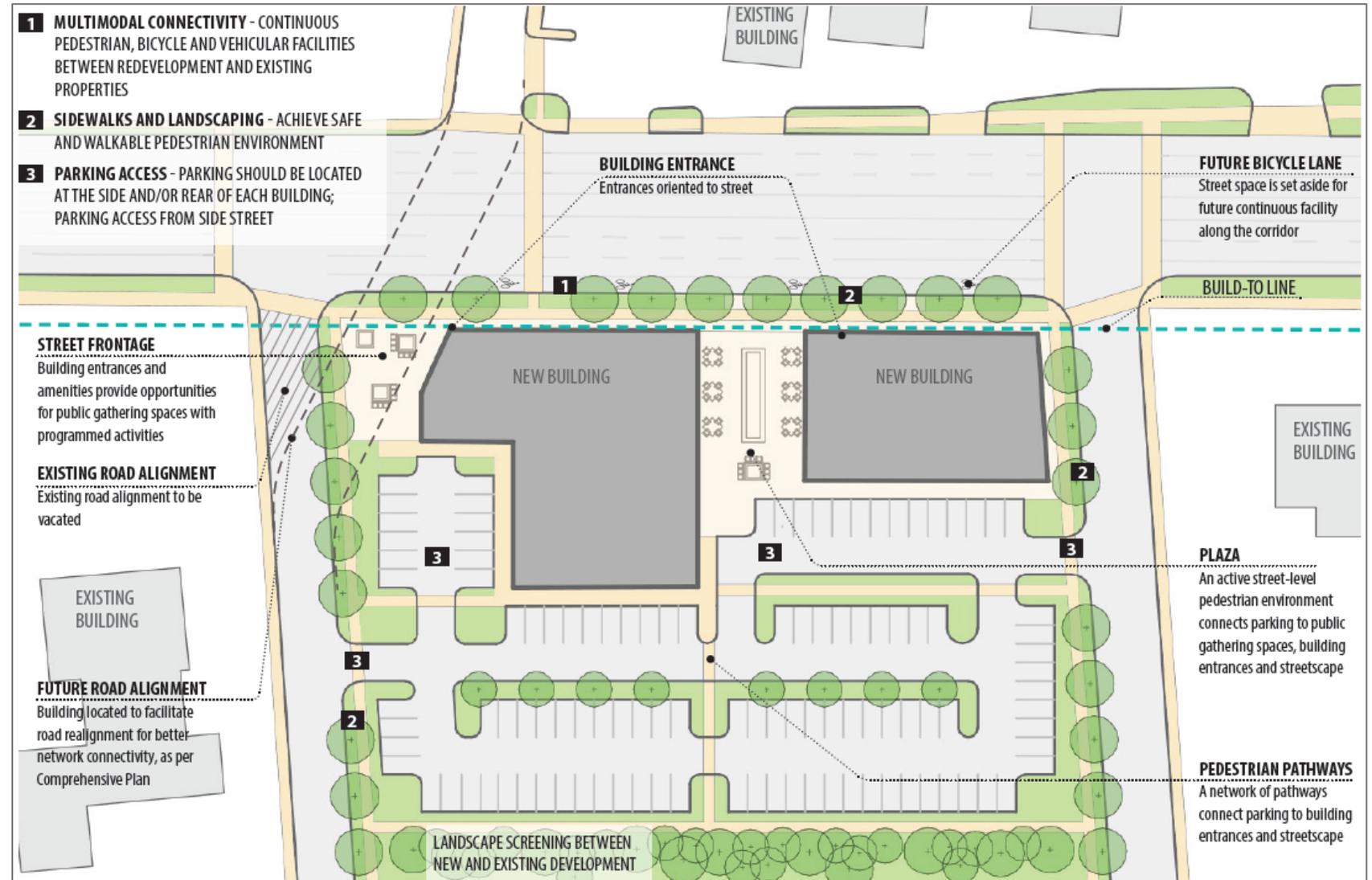
Surface parking with pedestrian walkway



By-Right and Small Scale

KEY POINTS

- Building Orientation
“Build-to Line”
- Parking Location and Access
- Multimodal Connectivity
- Streetscape
- Plazas & Park Spaces
- Interim and Future Plans
- Transition to Existing Uses



Placemaking: Gateways

KEY POINTS

Create a sense of arrival and a memorable visual impression of an area.

Incorporate signature elements that are iconic, creative, and innovative:

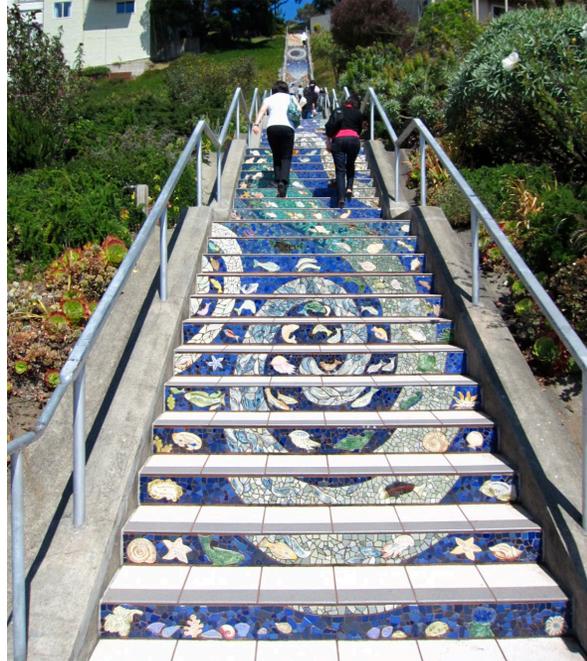
- Signature architecture
- Specialty signage that is consistent with an established logo/brand
- Streetscapes that reflect the prevailing design language of an area
- Distinctive landscaping patterns
- Public art



Placemaking: Public Art

KEY POINTS

- Contextual - honor, celebrate and give visual expression to the local history and diversity of experiences
- Can serve multiple purposes, from ornamental and functional to playful and interactive.
- Public art should reflect, and be informed by, the population it serves.



VOLUME II
McLEAN DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

OUTLINE

VOL. II McLEAN DISTRICT GUIDELINES

Five Chapters:

I. Introduction

II. Streetscape Types and Specifications

III. Building Frontage and Parking

IV. Signature Urban Park and Environmental Features

V. Appendix

VOL. II McLEAN DISTRICT GUIDELINES

I. Introduction

- **Goals of Urban Design Guidelines**
- **Structure of Design Guidelines**
- **How to Use the Standards**
- **Relationship to Other Plans**
- **Flexibility in Applying Design Guidance**
- **Future Amendments**
- **Urban Design Framework for McLean** (*Map: Urban Design Concept*)
 - Elements that make the CBC distinct
 - Village concept (distinct retail offerings)
 - Solid architecture: masonry, brick, stone and natural materials, cedar shake, architectural detailing, proportion, arcades, seat walls and other regional materials
 - Emphasis on the environment (trees, GSI)

VOL. II McLEAN DISTRICT GUIDELINES

II. Streetscape Types and Specifications

- **Avenues** (*Diagram: Axonometric view of Avenue streetscape*)
- **Local Streets** (*Diagram: Axonometric view of Local streetscape*)
- **CBC Gateways** (Map: Gateway locations)
- **Streetscape Specifications** (include locations)
 - Streetlights
 - Benches
 - Low Walls and Edge Planters
 - Bicycle Racks
 - Trash and Recycling Cans
 - Bus Shelters
 - Wayfinding Signs
 - Paving Materials
 - On-street Parking and Step-off Zones
 - Utilities (access panels and transformers)
 - Public Art and Special Moments (Map: Existing and Desired Public Art Locations (could also include historically important architecture))

VOL. II McLEAN DISTRICT GUIDELINES

III. Building Frontage

- **Building Zone Variations Based on Use** (Single family attached, Multifamily, retail, restaurant, office)
- **Ground Floor Design** [bottom 30-feet]
 - Multifamily Residential (*Diagram: ground floor features*)
 - Townhome and Stacked Townhome (*Diagram: ground floor features*)
 - Retail and Office (*Diagram: ground floor features*)
- **Retail Hierarchy** (*Map: Desired retail focus areas*)
- **Parking Design and Screening**

VOL. II McLEAN DISTRICT GUIDELINES

IV. Signature Urban Park and Environmental Features

- **Signature Urban Park Features and Activities** (*Diagram: Park Concept Sketch*)
- **Environment**
 - Stormwater
 - Trees and landscaping

V. Appendix

- **Index: Volume I and volume II cross-reference**
- **Tree type Image Collection** (by streetscape type)



The Guidelines are
online:
www.fcrevit.org
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QUESTIONS