

## Route 11/460 West Corridor Master Plan – Design Guidelines

**GOAL:** Develop a set of Design Guidelines as a component of the Corridor Master Plan that will serve as a planning tool to help achieve aesthetic and functional compatibility between new and existing development along the Route 11/460 West Corridor as improvements are made to this corridor per roadway plans prepared and implemented by the Virginia Department of Transportation.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Proactively plan for quality development along the corridor to include a mixture of residential, office, retail, institutional and industrial uses.
- Encourage aesthetic and design excellence in all public and private improvements and developments through adherence to the design guidelines included in this Master Plan. Encourage revitalization and redevelopment of properties along the corridor to create an attractive, commercially viable and functionally efficient atmosphere for the development of business centers and community focal points.
- Encourage designs that produce a desirable relationship between individual parcels, the vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems, and adjacent areas. The provision of pedestrian open spaces, such as covered walkways, plazas, courtyards and open passageways between buildings and adjoining developments, are highly desirable.
- Encourage consolidation of contiguous parcels to provide for development projects that collectively function in a well-designed and efficient manner while discouraging traditional commercial/industrial strip development patterns that require multiple access points and large expanses of parking areas and often result in clusters of architecturally-unrelated buildings. Strive to incorporate visually interesting building facades into designs that effectively engage pedestrian and business interest.
- Discourage development that creates high traffic volumes directly to and from Route 11/460 West and that contributes to the creation of a strip-commercial character along the corridor. For development that requires drive through facilities and promotes short visits, encourage the utilization of shared access points from Route 11/460 West and interior access drives that direct the main flow of traffic to controlled intersections.
- Promote the use of stormwater best management practices (BMPs) and techniques that help to preserve and/or improve the water quality of water bodies and drainage corridors, including the use of sub-regional stormwater drainage facilities. The integration of *Low Impact Development* principals is strongly encouraged. Site planning and design should consider the use of landscape areas as a method of promoting storm runoff flow paths and the construction or bio-retention systems (rain gardens) as an alternative to conventional stormwater management facilities. Create incentives to land developers or owners such as potential reduced costs of site grading, infrastructure construction and long term facility maintenance.
- Encourage the utilization and implementation of these guidelines by offering financial, zoning, stormwater, and design incentives and programs that are mutually beneficial to the business and the development of the corridor.

- Compliance is voluntary, but mandatory to receive financial incentives from the County.

## I. Analysis of Existing Conditions

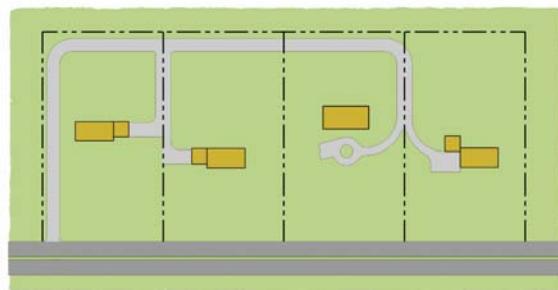
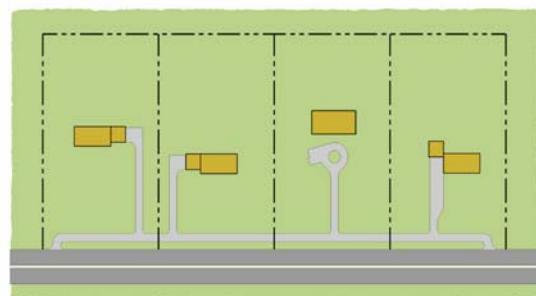
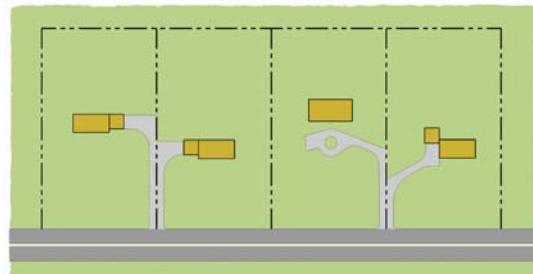
- A. The initial step in site plan formulation should be an inventory and analysis of significant natural and historically significant features that exist on the parcel. Inventory and analysis elements should include, but are not limited to, drainage corridors, areas of steep slopes and/or unstable soils, and significant vegetation. Data generated as part of the analysis should be submitted as part of a preliminary plan submission to Roanoke County for review.
- B. New development should minimize impacts to significant natural features and should strive to preserve existing individual trees over six inch (6") diameter at breast height (DBH) and tree masses that function as natural visual buffers and provide a natural setting for the construction of new buildings. All trees 24" DBH and greater should be protected, preserved and incorporated in the final site design, except where such practice severely limits the site's development options as determined by the Director of Community Development.
- C. Incorporate into design development the preservation of natural drainage corridors, views, natural ground forms and unique site features.
- D. All proposed development or alteration should reflect sensitivity to the historical character of the corridor in terms of land use and architectural integrity. New commercial development and existing structure redevelopment should integrate architectural elements that emphasize aesthetically pleasing facade and side wall components visible from the Route 11 \ 460 West corridor.

## II. Building Orientation and Location

- A. New buildings and associated structures should be located in a manner that encourages aesthetically pleasing views from the Route 11 \ 460 West corridor.
- B. Buildings should be sited with respect to the natural topography and any unique cultural, historic features of the site.
- C. The arrangement of multiple buildings on a single development parcel should be undertaken so as to define workable spaces that promote the safe and efficient interaction of site users.
- D. Multiple buildings should be arranged to reflect a unified theme for the proposed development and clustered to reinforce a neighborhood style or feeling as appropriate for the corridor.

### III. Site Access

- A. Access points along the corridor should be minimized and consolidated to the greatest extent possible in order to reduce traffic congestion and facilitate ingress and egress from sites along the corridor.
- B. Access to each development parcel should be designed so as not to impede traffic along the corridor. Where feasible, development parcels should share access points along the corridor via shared entrance and access drives, interparcel travelways and/or on-site service drives that connect adjacent parcels.
- C. Individual parcels of land that exist at the time the [Route 11/460 West Corridor Overlay District] is created should not be denied access to a public highway in the event no reasonable joint or cooperative access is possible at the time of development.
- D. Areas along the rear property lines of parcels should be enhanced to encourage access points, joint access drives and service alleys through the planning of buffer strips and easements with all new and redeveloping businesses.
- E. As a condition of project approval for new and redeveloping businesses, property owners should provide a joint easement agreement that allows cross access to and from other properties within the corridor and a unified parking and circulation plan should be formulated wherever feasible.



### IV. Site Layout, Parking and Pedestrian Circulation

- A. Site layout should stress the development of an organized pattern of roads, accessways, parking areas, service lanes and pedestrian walkways that work together to provide a safe and efficient internal vehicular and pedestrian circulation pattern. Internal roads, accessways, parking areas, service lanes and pedestrian walkways must be located outside of public right-of-ways and maintained by property owners.
- B. Provisions for connections to pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems throughout the corridor should be incorporated into site plans.

- C. Parking lot design should incorporate opportunities for interconnection to adjacent parcels within the corridor wherever feasible.
- D. Views to parking areas from the roadway corridor should be minimized by locating parking areas to the side and rear of proposed buildings. Landscaped areas should be incorporated adjacent to parking areas as stipulated by Section VI Landscaping.
- E. Smaller parking areas located throughout an individual development parcel should be deemed preferable to large expanses of parking as these smaller parking areas function to reduce visual and environmental impacts. While the location of all parking areas should be in compliance with the existing zoning ordinance requirements, parking areas are generally discouraged in the front yards of parcels. Multiple smaller parking areas with associated landscaping, sidewalks and signage comprising 30% to 50% each of total required parking is encouraged over single parking areas adequate for the entire parking demand.
- F. The provision of on-site pedestrian circulation systems should be coordinated with those systems of adjacent properties and with pedestrian circulation patterns throughout the corridor. Develop clearly defined and direct walkways to buildings that will discourage unintentional pedestrian routes that may jeopardize possible landscape opportunities.

## V. Building Style and Architectural Treatment

- A. Architectural treatment of buildings, including style, materials and color, should be compatible with the developing character of the neighborhood. Building compatibility should be achieved through the use of similar building massing, materials, scale, colors and/or other architectural features as appropriate. Creation of a strong sense of architectural continuity along the corridor is highly encouraged.
- B. Where large buildings are proposed, architectural facades and landscaping should be used to reduce their visual and aesthetic impact. The use of vast blank building walls in areas visible from the street or adjacent properties should be avoided or mitigated through the use of fenestration, building articulation, architectural detailing and/or landscape plantings. Building frontages should utilize offsets, projections and/or other distinctive architectural components to add interest to building facades and reduce the impact of expansive structures.
- C. Building materials should be selected on the basis of their harmony with the developing character of the neighborhood. Exterior materials such as exposed standard concrete block, or metal will not be allowed within 300 feet of the public right-of-way. Preferred materials should include stone, brick, architectural precast concrete, aluminum and glass. Concrete masonry should be limited to ground face, split face or burnished units.
- D. Building entrances should be designed to be clearly visible and easily recognizable from parking areas and walkways. Special attention should be given to street level design that attracts pedestrians and reinforces street activity.
- E. Building services associated with solid waste storage or mechanical units should be screened from view to minimize visual impacts from the corridor, parking areas and neighboring properties.

F. Accessory buildings associated with individual lots uses such as utility buildings, solid waste storage enclosures and storage buildings should be constructed of materials that are architecturally compatible with the main facility.

## VI. Landscaping

### A. General standards and specifications

1. Landscaping design standards and species requirements should conform to the Roanoke County Zoning Ordinance Sec. 30-92 Screening, Landscaping, and Buffer Yards with the exception of the following:

### B. Street frontages

1. Street frontages along the corridor should be devoted to building architecture, landscaping or public green spaces unless site constraints dictate otherwise and with approval of the [Director of Community Development]. Landscaping along the frontage of properties adjoining any road right-of-way should be outside of the road right-of-way and in compliance with all VDOT regulations for roadside landscaping, and should include the following:
  - a) A planting area with a minimum width of 15 feet should be established outside any road right-of-way and utility easement and maintained as open green space.
  - b) Within this planting area, a combination of trees and shrubs should be planted as follows:
    - 1) A minimum of one deciduous shade/street tree should be planted for each forty (40) feet of contiguous property line.
    - 2) A minimum of one flowering ornamental tree should be planted for each forty (40) feet of contiguous property line.
    - 3) A minimum of two deciduous shrubs should be planted for each five (5) feet of contiguous property line. At maturity, these shrubs should attain a minimum height of three (3) feet. One-third of all required shrub plantings should be of evergreen materials.
  - c) In addition, evergreen trees and shrubs, groundcover plants and/or earth berms may be combined with the required street frontage landscaping.
  - d) No uses should be permitted within the street frontage planting area except as follows: permitted entrances, necessary stormwater management facilities, utility crossings and easements, pedestrian and bike trails, and signage as allowed within the Corridor Overlay District.

### C. Parking areas should conform to the Roanoke County Zoning Ordinance Sec. 30-92 Screening, Landscaping, and Buffer Yards.

### D. Building exteriors

1. Areas along the exterior walls of buildings should be landscaped to soften the appearance of the buildings and enhance site aesthetics. Flexibility in the placement of landscape materials around building exteriors should be granted in order to promote a naturalized appearance and in recognition of the occurrence of service

areas and utility systems adjacent to buildings. Landscaping around building exteriors should be as follows:

- a) A minimum of one deciduous shade/street tree should be planted for each thirty (30) feet of side and rear exterior building walls.
- b) Foundation plantings should be provided along the front façade of buildings as follows:
  - 1) A minimum of one deciduous shade/street tree should be planted for each thirty (30) feet of front building facade.
  - 2) A minimum of one flowering ornamental tree should be planted for each thirty (30) feet of front building façade.
  - 3) A minimum of one deciduous shrub should be planted for each four (4) feet of front building façade. At maturity, these shrubs should attain a minimum height of three (3) feet. One-third of all required shrub plantings should be of evergreen materials.
- c) In addition, evergreen trees and shrubs, groundcover plants and/or earth berms may be combined with the required building exterior landscaping.
- d) Landscaped plazas may be used to meet building exterior landscaping requirements but landscaping in these areas should not exceed 50% of the minimum landscaping required for the side and rear exterior building walls and for front building facades.

#### E. Stormwater management areas

- 1. Above-ground stormwater management areas and facilities should be landscaped with plants adaptable to being temporarily inundated with water consistent with recommended engineering practices for the design of such areas and facilities. Landscaping of such areas and facilities should follow design principles compatible with other required site landscaping and should result in a landscape design that is an aesthetic asset to the overall development.
- 2. Development of stormwater retention facilities shall follow current county standards and be compliant with guidelines as outlined in the current County of Roanoke Stormwater Ordinance 8-11A and drainage standards.
- 3. Development plans that include innovative technologies for stormwater management (open space in parking areas, underground/under parking collection and infiltration, designed bio filter areas, roof collection, and stormwater recycling systems, alternative porous parking areas, velocity dissipation, and stream bank protection, green roofing systems, stormceptors, and other low impact development guidelines) in design should be encouraged when stormwater designs are required.

#### F. Buffer areas

- a) Buffer areas should be required between properties of different zoning intensities and should be located on the development parcel under consideration. The minimum buffers required between properties of different zoning intensities should conform to the Roanoke County Zoning Ordinance Sec. 30-92 Screening, Landscaping.
- 1. As required, buffer areas should be provided along the outer boundaries of development parcels except in locations where access driveways, utility easements and/or site openings are required to be located in those areas.

2. Buffer areas should be planted with a combination of landscape materials that conform to the standards stipulated in this ordinance. A mixture of large and small, deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs and groundcover plants and earth berms should be utilized to create a buffer area that effectively screens properties of different zoning intensities. Landscape plans for buffer areas are encouraged to incorporate earth berms with an average height of 3-4 feet, where physiographically feasible, and other creative landscape features into buffer area design in order to simulate a naturalized landscaped edge between adjoining properties. Where earth berms are used, berm side slopes should be no greater than 2:1; berms side slopes 3:1 or less are preferred.

## **VII. Site Lighting**

- A. Exterior site lighting should not extend beyond 75% of the height of the principal structure with the exception of buildings with a height of twenty (20') feet or less. Buildings with a height of 20' or less should have a maximum height of fifteen (15') feet for exterior lights. Path and landscape lights are encouraged where appropriate.

## **VIII. Signage**

- A. The shared use of signs is encouraged for adjacent businesses.
- B. Signage spatial allocation should meet the requirements of the Roanoke County zoning ordinance. Signage spatial allocation for shared signs should be the sum of each allowable signage area per business.
  1. Signs should be channel lit, ground lit or top lit with shielded laps placed so as to not cast light onto the path of traffic or onto any adjacent road or property.
- C. Signs should be complemented, accented and enhanced by with a combination of landscape materials that conform to the standards stipulated in this ordinance. The sign landscaped area should be at a minimum one and one-half times the total area of the sign.
- D. The following types of signs should be prohibited within the overlay district:
  1. Off premises signs
  2. Portable signs
  3. Temporary signs
  4. Roof signs

## IX. Utilities

- A. All new site utilities should be located underground unless otherwise approved.
- B. Where feasible, existing overhead utility lines along Route 11/460 West should be relocated underground or to the rear yards of buildings along the corridor.

