

**FALLS CHURCH STREETScape DESIGN TASKFORCE
DRAFT GUIDELINES (AAP)**

Rev 07-14-2016

1. COVER

2. TABLE OF CONTENTS

3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

[This section should list City Council members, Streetscape Design Taskforce members, and planning staff]

4. INTRODUCTION

The City of Falls Church has witnessed three centuries of change since its founding in 1699. The spirit of community has been a constant thread throughout the City's history, and residents care passionately about their historic urban village, its beauty, and its setting. The City contains many attributes that make it vibrant, progressive and attractive. The community has, for example, a strong history of planning, a clear vision for its future, and a continuing commitment to its appearance. The aesthetic qualities of Falls Church have been the focus of discussion for many years; recently, there has been growing recognition that the City needs to ensure that future development is of a compatible aesthetic quality.

To that end, these design guidelines were created to help improve the appearance of Falls Church as the current generation passes along this unique community to the next generation. This document is intended to provide the tools necessary to plan a successful streetscape and offers helpful information about the streetscape planning process, the major building blocks and standard elements that compose a streetscape, the special circumstances that should be considered, and a variety of streetscape design examples. It also includes the City of Falls Church's palette of standard streetscape elements. This document describes design objectives as well as the desired dimensions and detailing for enhancements to the City's key corridors. They identify the typical streetscape elements, materials, furnishings, and infrastructure elements needed to create a unified character.

These guidelines are intended to help implement, and be consistent with, the recommendations of the Falls Church Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan addresses the issue of enhancement of visual character through cohesive architecture and the design of commercial districts which compliment surrounding residential neighborhoods and make the City visually distinctive from other jurisdictions. The Comprehensive Plan also recommends that the City's gateways promote a positive image and create unique and innovative combinations of pedestrian access, public plazas or squares and a balance between the built and natural environment.

While the concepts in this guide represent the best knowledge to date, this document should be periodically reviewed and updated as more streetscapes are implemented. All renderings and illustrations offered within these guidelines are intended to be conceptual in nature, and further clarify general design guideline principles. Photographs are taken from Falls Church and other communities are offered to provide examples of particular design features and elements. It is not intended for these drawings and photographs to be used literally or their designs to be copied when creating future projects within Falls Church.

5. PRIOR STREETScape PLANNING EFFORTS

[This section is intended to set forth and briefly summarize pertinent prior planning efforts]

- Streetscape Plan For West Broad Street (1987): This plan includes design standards for street furniture, such as benches, bike racks and street lights; and materials, such as brick sidewalks and crosswalks. The streetscape guidelines were adopted to respond to existing conditions, which the plan defines as, "A jumble of signs, poles, asphalt expanses, numerous curb cuts, stunted landscaping and deteriorating sidewalks and facades leaving the impression of confusion, neglect and, in some locations, decline..." which, "discourages pedestrian and business activity." Since adoption of the streetscape standards, sections of the street have been updated through public and private investment; however, certain stretches along the southern edge of West Broad Street, the northern edge of West Broad Street near St. James Church and School, and small stretches along the northern edge of West Broad Street between redevelopment projects have not yet been improved.
- Design Guidelines (2001):
- North Washington Street Streetscape Design Guidelines (2010): This plan calls for large sidewalks, street trees, and bioretention planters along either side of the North Washington Street Planning Opportunity Area. The plan also recommends a small pocket park adjacent to Christ Crossman Methodist Church, as well as gateway signage at the entrance to the City from Arlington County. It also calls for undergrounding of utilities, improved sidewalk and crosswalk paving, and pedestrian scale street signage and light fixtures. The plan recommends a six-foot bioretention planter area between North Washington Street and storefronts and eight feet of sidewalk between the planters and storefronts. Furthermore, pedestrian scale interpretive signage describing the bioretention planters and permeable pavement will serve to draw attention and provide a small attraction for pedestrians.
- Zoning Ordinance Changes (2013): This zoning ordinance change requires 20-foot setbacks along West Broad Street.
- Bus Stop and Shelter Master Plan (2013): This plan is intended to guide the placement of bus stops and bus shelters.
- Bicycle Master Plan (2014): This plan includes guidelines for the design and placement of bike racks.
- Park Avenue, A Civic Great Street (2015): This plan was adopted to transform Park Avenue into a "Civic Great Street" consistent with American Planning Association's "Great Street" recommendations. The concept plan included construction of a new plaza in front of City Hall, provision of seating along the corridor, installation of street trees, and reconstruction of intersection geometry.

6. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

[This section is intended to describe Council's passage of the charter, establishment of the taskforce, formulation of the draft, and presentation to Council]

7. PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION

[This section is intended to discuss the importance of private sector participation in realizing the streetscape]

This document anticipates that improvements will be implemented by both public and private entities. Frequently, developers of new buildings and major rehabilitation projects are required to include improvements in the public way as part of the project. This typically includes the sidewalks and immediately adjacent to the property being developed. As properties redevelop, or as new construction takes place, the frontage of those properties should be improved in accordance with the guidelines.

Additionally, maintenance is essential to the success of a streetscape project, regardless of whether the project is a result of private or public sector investment. While this guide does not attempt to outline the process landowners and developers use to obtain the various permits required for construction, many aspects of these guidelines may be helpful.

8. DIVERSITY AND LOCAL CONTEXT

[This section is intended to stress the fact that deviations from the guidelines may be permitted in certain circumstances]

The use of these guidelines is intended to provide “baseline” streetscape recommendations that can be further refined to respond to the opportunities and constraints presented by the local context for each street. Abutting land uses, surrounding street networks, neighborhood character, commercial district needs, differences in right-of-way widths between blocks, are all critical components of the urban context which may suggest variations from the preferred guidelines.

Ultimately, these guidelines must be applied in a manner that balances the particular priorities of individual developments and neighborhoods through which Falls Church’s streets pass with commuting traffic and other regional needs.

Certain streetscape elements and variations of the guidelines can highlight focal points while still relating these areas to the overall Plan. Deviations from the standard palette of plants, furniture, and colors may be permitted, for example, at the owner’s expense, to help reinforce an important motif or brand.

9. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives reflect the various economic, aesthetic, ecological, and social priorities identified by the Streetscape Design Taskforce:

- 1) To Create a Sense of Place: It is imperative that streetscape elements contribute to a “sense of place” that is enjoyable, memorable, and provides connective and harmonious outdoor spaces. This sense can be built on a mosaic of distinctive elements that creates common community feeling from a theme of common design elements.
- 2) To Create a Sense of Unity: The guidelines emphasize creating of a sense of unity and harmony by utilizing a uniform set of streetlights, street trees, pavement treatments, and street furniture.
- 3) To Offer Diversity: The guidelines anticipate periodic, subtle variations in the type of landscaping, sidewalk pavement treatments, signage, and furniture which will allow the streetscape to remain a single whole while leaving room for flexibility, individualism, and site-specific conditions, and to guard against monotony and a horticultural monoculture.
- 4) To Create A Safe, Comfortable, and Inviting Pedestrian Experience: Connecting uses and public amenities, establishing clear pedestrian and vehicular pathways, creating a physical and psychological sense of separation between pedestrian and vehicle zones, and providing sidewalks wide enough to allow for comfortable pedestrian flow is a top priority. A strong sense of community, the highly valued personal, “small-town atmosphere,” depends on having such convenient and easy access to a variety of activities and uses.

- 5) To Enhance Existing Businesses: To promote economic activity by designing streetscape that encourages visits to local businesses, and enhances the appearance and appeal of the City's retail and office structures.
- 6) To Brand The City: And promote a positive perception of the City's character and rich history.
- 7) To Create Gateways: The sense of arrival into Falls Church is a priority and can be achieved by marking entrances with signature architecture, public art, distinctive streetscape treatments and landscaping or a combination of several of those elements. Any gateway design should announce the community but should not visually overwhelm the visitor. It should reflect community character and be an appropriate statement about the City.
- 8) To Provide a Suitable Transition from Commercial to Residential Areas: Appropriate transitions between the busy, urban commercial corridors and the more contemplative residential neighborhoods is important. Transition means making adjustments in siting and in building design to ensure that new development is compatible with its neighbors, and installation of streetscape elements to provide a defined edge. The primary ways of accomplishing transitions are architectural (adapting the building) and landscaping (adding open space, edges, screening or buffers).
- 9) To Adequately Maintain Landscaping: Create a sustainable streetscape that protects and improves environmental quality. Protect the existing shade trees.
- 10) To Promote Environmental Sustainability: The streetscape should be built using materials and furnishings that are locally sourced, renewable, uniquely durable or otherwise ecologically beneficial. To promote environmental suitability – tree canopy and habitat, decrease automobile dependency, reducing carbon emissions

10. ESTABLISHMENT OF THREE-TIERED STREET TYPOLOGY

Falls Church's various streets serve different purposes and therefore have different design needs. Consequently, this document provides different design guidelines for three tiers of streets:

- 1) Major Streets: Broad Street, between the intersections of Shreve Road and E. Fairfax Street, as well as Washington Street, between its intersections with Gresham Place and Marshall Street, are the City's key commercial corridors. While each street exhibits different built environment characteristics, both are part of Northern Virginia's major arterial network. They not only serve the commercial needs of Falls Church residents, but provide visitors with their principal image of the City.

Both streets include two travel lanes in each direction, occasional turn lanes at signalized intersections, and a lack of on-street parking and dedicated bicycle lanes. Both streets also include a mix of existing or planned office, commercial, residential, and institutional uses. While some sections of Broad and Washington Streets have been enhanced or improved for pedestrian use, changes to the existing sidewalks, bus stops and landscape treatment are necessary to strengthen connectivity to existing amenities and to create an appealing gateway to the City.

- 2) Secondary Streets: [Designation of streets here] West Street, Fairfax Street, Annandale Road, Park Avenue, Maple Avenue, Little Falls Street. The existing infrastructure and size varies greatly along Secondary Streets. Sidewalk widths vary, utilities are predominantly above ground, and gaps and partial implementation of prior streetscape standards exist along a majority of these corridors.

- 3) Local Streets: Local streets serve a tertiary role largely due to their connection to residential neighborhoods. These streets need to provide safe, comfortable access to West Broad Street and Park Avenue from surrounding areas and neighborhoods. Because of their secondary nature, these other streets are also appropriate places to provide site access for automobiles, such as driveways and garage entrances.

[Graphics to include a map depicting the three tiers of streets, photos, etc.]

11. ESTABLISHMENT OF STREETSCAPE ZONES

The streetscape may include a variety of elements such as vehicle travel and parking lanes, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, street trees, tree border areas, street furniture, bicycle parking, bus stops, utility lines, accent planting and signage. Three prototypical streetscapes—each corresponding to a particular street's typology—have been defined below. Each streetscape is broken into five zones in order to achieve separation between pedestrians and vehicles, and to integrate streetscape features into the public realm:

- The Sidewalk Zone: This is the “front porch” of every business and residence. It is intended to be the place where people meet neighbors, enjoy a stroll, and access businesses. Larger sidewalk zones can also accommodate outdoor cafes, sidewalk sales, street performers and other similar uses.
- The Shy Zone: This zone describes an informal areas in which pedestrians instinctively maintain a distance from storefronts, curbs, or other objects placed in the streetscape. Such elements actually consume more space than the actual physical dimensions due to this shy zone effect. Since the overall goal in streetscape design is to create an environment in which pedestrians feel comfortable and to entice them to return, the shy zone effect must be carefully considered in the design process.
- The Buffer Zone: This zone includes planting beds, lighting, etc. *[More needed]*
- The Parking Zone: This zone allows convenient parking for residents or commercial patrons who travel by car. This zone also allows for short-term loading zones and transit stops.
- The Roadway Zone: This zone accommodates the movement of motor vehicles and bicycles through a streetscape.

While each zone is distinct, the zones often overlap and interact with each other. For example, pedestrians crossing a street interact with all of the zones. Similarly, street lighting located in the buffer zone overlaps the parking and roadway zones. Bump-outs, crosswalks, and curb ramps help define safe pedestrian crossing areas in the roadway and parking zones. Buses use the parking zone to pick up transit patrons from the sidewalk zone. Understanding the relationship and interaction of the activities each zone is vital to the successful organization of a streetscape.

The following illustrations depict how the ___ streetscape zones should be applied to each of the three prototypical streetscapes. They establish a baseline a stage for pedestrian interaction and commercial endeavor by providing an interesting, attractive, and comfortable environment along public rights-of-way. As noted above in Section ___, these are offered for illustrative guidelines purposes only.

These guidelines anticipate that exceptions should be evaluated, and may be made, depending on the unique circumstances of each property, use, and development proposal. However, excessively wide sidewalks and wide planting areas which create a suburban appearance should be avoided. Additionally, where street sections are not anticipated to redevelop in the near term, and where topography or existing buildings prohibit building the desired width until redevelopment occurs, an interim condition may be constructed to make unifying improvements in a narrower envelope.

- 1) Major Streets: The typical streetscape should consist of a 20-foot-wide area between the face of the curb and the rear edge of the public sidewalk. This 20-foot area incorporates:
 - a. A seven-foot wide clear zone public sidewalk between the face of the building and the buffer area;
 - b. Two 18-inch shy zones on both sides of the sidewalk zone; and
 - c. A six-to-eight-foot-wide buffer zone between the sidewalk zone and the roadway zone the which will include sufficient space for a planting strip, street amenities, traffic signs, and streetlights

No on-street parking or loading is anticipated along Major Thoroughfares.

- 2) Secondary Streets: *[Insert dimensions]*

- 3) Local Streets: *[Insert dimensions]*

[Graphics to include typical street sections described above]

12. GUIDELINES FOR STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

The term “streetscape” refers to the look and feel of all of the elements that make up the public realm of the areas between buildings along sidewalks and streets. Streetscape elements are those products which have been chosen to give form, decoration, flavor, and convenience to the streetscape. Such elements can provide unifying elements of design and enhance outdoor spaces. They can influence public places where individuals interact, and can help define Falls Church’s aesthetic quality, economic activity, health, and sustainability.

Streetscape guidelines typically address street furniture (e.g., benches, lights and signage), spacing and placement of streetscape elements, widths of pedestrian spaces, travel lanes, and amenity spaces, and materials for use in sidewalks, streets, and crosswalks.

The arrangement of streetscape elements must be carefully considered and harmoniously integrated to help create a streetscape identity for commercial areas. When these elements take on a very strong presence, a brand can be created which creates a unique character in the area that can be expanded beyond the streetscape to advertising and marketing which are key tools in promoting economic development.

Establishing the structure and rhythm in the streetscape is the task allocated to two major sets of streetscape elements: (1) regularly-spaced rows of trees within planting strips; and (s) uniform style and spacing of streetlights. While trees establish the daytime rhythm with foliage and canopies, lighting establishes the illumination levels and night-time visual rhythm of the streetscape. The vertical elements of lighting poles and luminaires create strong visual presences in a streetscape. Both provide a pleasing sense of enclosure for pedestrians and motorists.

12.A. TREES AND PLANT MATERIALS

Tree and plant materials add four-season color, interest, and texture to a streetscape. The goal is to efficiently manage the urban landscape to provide a better quality of life for the City’s residents and visitors. Trees, shrubs and other plantings can be used to provide beauty and shade within a pedestrian gathering place, define street edges, provide a sense of enclosure, and provide screening for parking, utilities, and service areas.

- 1) Tree Types: Use tall-growing, hardy native Northern Virginia tree species which require minimal maintenance and are appropriate for site conditions, considering available sunlight, water and root and canopy space. Trees should provide overhead canopies that provide a ceiling and sense of enclosure, but should allow for easy removal of lower branches assuring the visibility of commercial storefronts, signs, and streetlights. Replace damaged or missing street trees with appropriate species. Specific recommendations include: *[List out with photos]*
- 2) Tree Placement: Street trees should be regularly spaced approximately ___ feet apart to function as architectural elements, giving a sense of rhythm, as well as unity and identity over the course of several blocks. Tree spacing should be compatible with the spacing of street lights on a one light-per-three-tree basis.
- 3) Tree Size: The minimum-size street tree should be approximately 3 1/2 to 4 inches in diameter, though developers are encouraged to plant larger trees, especially in areas of higher density development.
- 4) Existing Trees: Existing trees are in good condition and of significant size and character should be incorporated into the streetscape design and protected during construction.
- 5) Salt Tolerance: All trees and plant materials should salt tolerant. Planting beds should be flushed out each spring to remove remaining salts that may have accumulated during winter snow events.
- 6) Additional Plant Materials: Additional plant materials should be incorporated into streetscape design. These shrubs, groundcovers and perennials, with bulbs and annuals added at focal points, will provide additional interest through their form, foliage, flower and fruit psychologically, physically and visually lessen the impact of moving and parked vehicles on the pedestrian. Plantings should be closely spaced, selected for high salt tolerance, ease of maintenance, and four-season color. Specific recommendations include: *[List out with photos]*
- 7) New Planting Beds: All trees and plant material should be located in flush, at-grade square planting beds that are six feet wide and of varying lengths, with no single planting bed being less than 15 feet in length. Planting beds should be flush with the curb to maximize pedestrian space.
- 8) Planting Bed Railings/Guards: Where more intense plantings such as annuals, perennials, and ornamental grasses are used, planting beds should be surrounded by metal tree guards which are between 12 inches and 18 inches tall, to reduce soil compactions, provide a physical barrier between the planting bed and pedestrian/vehicular zones, and protect the bed from animals, foot traffic, automobile, and bicycle abuse. *[Are there places where raised/bullnose planters would be appropriate, or are we comfortable eliminating them altogether?]*
- 9) Existing Planting Beds: As originally designed, the tree planters along West Broad Street include a 12 inch buffer to the curb line and inhibit access for transit riders and fire protection. Changes should be made to existing planters as necessary to maximize available sidewalk space and access while preserving soil volume and root protection to allow for healthy tree growth.
- 10) Planting Bed Maintenance: Periodic maintenance of trees and planting materials should occur, including spring cleanup of the prior season's growth, removal of refuse blown into planting beds, replacement of damaged or dead plant materials, watering and mulching, and periodic tending to plant installations (e.g., weeding, mulching, pruning). Street tree branches, in particular, must be consistently monitored so as not conflict with streetlight poles, commercial signs, and storefronts.
- 11) Plant Installation Technique: Street trees and additional plant materials should be installed concurrently. Care must be taken to provide an adequate underground support system for all plants. Adequate soil volume for root growth must be provided. Soil must include a mixture,

based on a soil analysis of existing soil, high quality top soil, organic matter, and select inorganic matter, to increase soil porosity and encourage horizontal root development.

- 12) Planting Bed Drainage & Irrigation: An underdrainage system connecting to the storm sewer system must be provided and, where appropriate, an irrigation system should also be considered. *[Need to discuss sufficiency of self-watering planters]*
- 13) Freestanding Planters: Planters may be placed in the public right-of-way so long as a 10-foot clear zone is provided ensuring an accessible pedestrian route. Care should be taken during installation to keep planters level. Planters may be decorated for interest in all seasons, such as pine boughs for winter and forced bulbs for spring.

[Graphics for this section include typical planting concepts and a plant palette]

[Need to address holiday lighting, plant/tree "clear zones"]

12.B. STREET LIGHTING

Streetlights perform a very important safety function. Sufficient lighting protects vehicle occupants, pedestrians, animals, and property. Streetlights are also important to the aesthetic appeal of a street.

- 1) Streetlight Style: Street lighting should be in a traditional acorn luminaire style (locally known as the "Falls Church Pole"), comprised of a 14-foot high, low-maintenance cast metal painted in a uniform color, with a base, shaft, and luminaire. The City of Falls Church seal should be incorporated into the service access plate at the base.
- 2) Streetlight Lighting Technology: Street lights should use a metal halide light source, or approval equivalent, to achieve an optimal balance of efficiency and pedestrian friendly quality of light. Street lights should meet Dark Sky Initiative criteria and be directionally focused downward to the street to prevent glare and trespass onto adjacent properties. As technology changes and new proven lamp options become available, different light sources may be considered. The light source shall have a minimum initial lumen level of 13,000 lms, a minimum lamp life expectancy of 24,000 hours and a minimum CRI of 65, or be approved by the Director of Engineering.
- 3) Streetlight Spacing: should be spaced at 50-to-55 foot intervals and should be uniformly located (as opposed to alternating) on opposite sides of the street. Street lights should be placed ___ feet from the curb line to ensure sufficient clearance zone for automobiles and protection for hanging baskets, bunting, and banners.
- 4) Signage: No signage should be attached to poles, except for those signs designated in the signage section of this document.
- 5) Existing Streetlights: Modern cobrahead-type streetlights should be replaced with streetlights recommended in these guidelines.
- 6) Streetlight Banners/Bunting/Wreaths: Bunting, banners, and holiday wreaths may be installed on streetlights and composed of metal, vinyl, natural materials, or treated fabric. These may be employed to advertise the farmers market, holidays, festivals, community groups, or to highlight City amenities. These would be placed on the poles by the City or sponsoring organizations, would be temporary, and could not be used as advertising by private businesses.
- 7) Hanging Baskets: Hanging baskets may be installed on streetlights for additional landscape opportunities. Although hanging baskets are purchased and installed by the City, the sponsoring organization has the ultimate ongoing maintenance responsibility. Hanging baskets should be

well-maintained and frequently watered. The ability of community stakeholders to maintain these elements is a critical factor in the decision to include them in the streetscape design.

12.C: TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS

[To be added; need to address style, placement, countdowns, crosswalk warning light systems/pedestrian-activated flashing crosswalk beacons]

12.D. PAVING & SIDEWALKS

One of the most important features of a successful streetscape is the ground surface. Ground surface, especially in urban areas of the City, form the floor of the outdoor environment in which people live, work, and play. The design of walking surfaces is one of the most important elements for setting the initial mood of the space.

An inviting pedestrian walkway needs to be level, well-maintained, safe, comfortable, and attractive. There must be sufficient room for pedestrians to pass each other comfortably, and space to provide the pedestrian a physical or psychological buffer from the street. This buffer between pedestrian and traffic is especially important along Broad and Washington Streets, due to the lack of on-street parking.

- 1) Pavement Materials: Sidewalks should be constructed with a paving unit, such as brick, patterned concrete, brick pavers, or a combination of these materials, that relates to the existing architectural vocabulary of the sub-area and to the existing design standards. Said paving units should be laid in a running bond pattern perpendicular to the curb.
- 2) Paver Installation Method: The traditional method of brick/paver installation which utilizes a concrete base, bituminous layer, adhesive, and sand-filled joints may not be appropriate... *[More needed]*
- 3) Diversity of Materials: While brick, patterned concrete, and brick pavers are strongly preferred along Major Thoroughfares, paving materials must be compatible with the character of the area. Brick pavers in traditional patterns, scored concrete, and swept concrete with decorative ribbing of brick pavers are examples of appropriate alternative applications along Secondary Streets and Local Streets. Color and texture of both surfaces should be carefully reviewed prior to installation.
- 4) Reduce Curb Cuts: Excessive curb cuts for vehicular access across pedestrian ways should be avoided. Any necessary curb cuts should be treated as a pedestrian surface and receive the same quality of treatment as the adjacent walkway. However, they should be designed to withstand heavy wheel loads created by refuse trucks, fire trucks, and similar vehicles. Further, they should be marked with a change in materials, color, texture or grade to alert pedestrians to the possible presence of vehicles. In areas of brick pavement, the brick should carry across the driveway.
- 5) Transition In Pavement Materials: Where two different pavement patterns or materials meet (except in the case of ribbing abutting the more dominant material) a decorative pattern should be developed as a transition. This border should not exceed a distance of eight feet and should use the colors, shapes, and textures of the adjacent pavements.
- 6) Crosswalks: All crosswalks should be constructed of brick or brick pavers, installed on a bituminous setting bed over a heavy-duty concrete underlayment. Brick crosswalks should be delineated by a minimum of four-inch beveled concrete edging band on each side of the brick/paver field to encourage slower speeds, decrease chipping, and create contrasts in texture. Any materials used in crosswalks must have a high load-carrying capacity. All of the concrete

elements should be tied into the adjacent concrete pavement underlayments to prevent differential settlement and to prolong the pavement life. Crosswalks along Major Thoroughfares should be a minimum of 12 feet in width; crosswalks along Secondary Streets or Local Streets should be a minimum of 10 feet in width. *[These could be called out in a graphic rather than specifying the distance between each crossing]*

- 7) Mid-block Crossings: In rare cases, mid-block crossings should also be considered in areas of heavy pedestrian uses where intersection crosswalks are not easily accessible, and there is a logical crossing point. Since vehicles may not expect a crossing in an area where they generally are not required to stop, these areas must be carefully studied and well-marked with high visibility pavement markings. For safety reasons, mid-block crossings should not be provided where they would interfere with the queue area of an adjacent intersection or if sight distance is substandard. *[These could be called out in a graphic]*
- 8) Curb and Gutter Style: All curb and gutter should be of a design that is a 90-degree, cast-in-place barrier curb and gutter. The typical curb is 15" deep by 7" wide and tapers into an integral 12" wide gutter.
- 9) Curb Ramps: Curb ramps should be ADA-compliant and provided at all intersections and crosswalks, including mid-block crossings. Curb ramps should align with the center of the crosswalks. A typical curb ramp consists of the ramp, side flares, approach, and a landing. Street pavement grades should be corrected, as needed, adjacent to the curb ramps. Detectable warning surfaces must be applied to all ramps to indicate the interface with the street. *[Need to discuss curb radius; do we want two curb ramps per corner (each being parallel to the crosswalks) or one large one?]*
- 10) Discouraged Designs: Large expanses of bright white or gray concrete surfaces should be avoided, as should concrete curbing poured in continuous strips. Excessive variation in sidewalk and curb materials should be discouraged.

12.E. STREET FURNITURE

Street furniture describes those elements that pedestrians, motorists and bicyclists need in the streetscape including benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks, newspaper/periodical dispensers and other accessory elements. Street furniture provides comfort and convenience and encourage pedestrian activity and interaction. Utilizing uniform street furnishings, particularly along the Major Thoroughfares, will serve as unifying elements in the streetscape.

- 1) Generally: All street furnishings should be of high grade painted metal or strong, durable, maintenance-free wood. Long-term durability under the most extreme environmental conditions should be a primary concern, and all street furnishings should require minimal maintenance. Street furnishings should generally be painted in a similar palette of colors, and should reflect classical styles, shapes, and lines that provide a timeless quality and complement Falls Church's architectural styles. While such furnishings need not match, they should be compatible and not clash with one another.
- 2) Benches: Benches should provide comfort and rest for shoppers, office workers and other pedestrians. All benches should be equipped with arms for the comfort and safety of those who require additional support. Benches should be slatted to provide for water drainage and discourage skateboard grinding. Benches should be at least six feet in length and should be constructed proposed at all focal points and locations where there is an increased likelihood for interaction between pedestrians and other modes of access (e.g., areas of heavy bicycle usage, bus stops, and other modal areas). Benches should not be placed too close to the curb, nor should they obstruct pedestrian walkways.

- 3) Accessory Uses: Accessory uses, including trash receptacles, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, and interpretive displays, should be located in close proximity to benches.
- 4) Trash Receptacles: Trash receptacles should help maintain the cleanliness and neat appearance of the area. Trash receptacles should be constructed of dark painted metal with an attractive, yet subdued style that blends well with nearby furnishings and the surrounding landscape. Two trash receptacles should be placed on each block and near, but not next to, benches. Trash receptacles should be serviced at least once a week, with receptacles of more heavy use serviced twice per week.
- 5) Bicycle Racks: Bicycle racks should be provided at the W&OO Bike Trail and at certain focal points. They should be encouraged to be incorporated into new residential developments, at commercial and office centers, as well as near any institutional uses which would attract bicyclists. *[More needed; defer to Bicycle Master Plan]*
- 6) Bus Shelters: *[More needed; defer to Bus Stop and Shelter Master Plan]*
- 7) Ash Urns: Ash urns are to be provided throughout this area at bus stops. *[Though smoking should be discouraged, we need to address this, particularly at bus stops and outside restaurants].*
- 8) Newspaper/Periodical Dispensers: Newspaper and periodical dispensers should be of painted metal, and grouped together in a pedestal design, a vending station, or in a corral. Dispensers should be located at nodes of pedestrian activity, such as bus stops and street corners.. Dispensers must not reduce pedestrian or automobile sight lines, and should not be used to display advertisements other than the name of the newspaper or periodical. *[We could require all dispensers be placed on a city-provided bollard, thereby consolidating their placement and protecting them from theft]*
- 9) Bikeshare Facilities: *[To be added; is this addressed in the Bicycle Master Plan? If so, let's defer to that]*

12.F. SIGNAGE

Signage is an important part of any commercial corridor. Due to their functional importance and aesthetic impact, this document distinguishes a number of sign types: regulatory signs, street name signs, street addresses, municipal holiday and festival banners, and private commercial signs. These signs can, and should, be a positive, integral part of the streetscape.

- 1) Regulatory Signs: Regulatory traffic signs are essential on any major street, but they often add to streetscape clutter. Haphazard placement of regulatory signs can decrease safety and increase the potential for noncompliance. Regulatory signs which are obsolete or in disrepair should be removed or replaced. Any replacement signs should utilize the latest designs in graphics and materials to increase visibility. All "No Parking" signs, and other small and medium-sized regulatory signs should be attached to street light poles. No more than two signs should be attached to any one pole. All other regulatory signs should be on standard metal posts.
- 2) Street Name Signs: All street name signs should be clearly visible and easily read. The street signs should list block numbers and should be attached to traffic light poles or street light poles whenever possible.
- 3) Cross-Street Community Identifiers: To brighten the streetscape, the use of community identifier banners across the street in select locations may be employed for the farmers market, holidays, festivals, community groups, or to highlight City amenities. These would be placed on the poles by the City, would be temporary, and could not be used as advertising by private businesses.

- 4) Interpretive Signage: Interpretive signage will describe issues of historic or symbolic importance to the City and should utilize simple construction methods. Interpretive signs should be comfortable to read, provide legible graphics and text that meets ADA guidelines, and create a unified system with subtle variations between signs.
- 5) Commercial Signage: individualized signs, hanging signs [*More needed*]

[Prior recommendations include:

- 1) *Develop public directional and informational signs to reflect the character of Falls Church.*
- 2) *Coordinate the colors and styles of signs*
- 3) *Keep signs to the minimum number and size necessary for the use.*
- 4) *Scale and place signs for both automobile traffic and pedestrians.*
- 5) *Avoid placing signposts in locations where they can interfere with the opening of vehicle doors.*
- 6) *Consider using decorative color banners in large open parking lot areas]*

12.G. PUBLIC ART, LANDMARKS, AND MONUMENTS

Public art, landmarks, and monuments in the public right-of-way is a way the City can distinguish its streetscape and is strongly encouraged. Sidewalks are viable spaces for artwork that is interesting and engaging for pedestrians and enhances the streetscape. Care should be taken to create opportunities for both temporary and permanent public art. Sculptures, sidewalk inlays and kiosk displays are examples of public art. Other examples of public art can include paintings, murals, photography, tapestry, glass and works on or of paper.

- 1) The streetscape should anticipate certain focal points, consisting of public art, landmarks, and other monuments to provide special interest.
- 2) Placement of art in the public right-of-way should be treated similarly to any other physical element on a sidewalk. Placement should be restricted to sidewalks with sufficient space, and should not be a hazard to pedestrians or vehicles.
- 1) Use public art, landmarks, and monuments to celebrate or commemorate individuals, symbols, and events important in the history of Falls Church.
- 2) Any such features should divide streetscape corridors into easily-remembered segments without destroying the overriding visual unity of the corridor.
- 3) Use sculpture, fountains, murals, paved plaza areas and other similar features to enrich the public environment.
- 4) Use materials and designs that reflect the character of the sub-area.
- 5) Locate public art where it will have the maximum impact in terms of pedestrian visibility.

12.H. UTILITIES AND COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT

Utilities are a necessary and ubiquitous element of streetscape environments. Utilities in the streetscape consist of utility poles and overhead wires, surface-mounted utility boxes, utility mains, laterals, vaults, and valves. They include sewer, water, gas, and telecommunications equipment, poles, and wires. Utility installation can occur as a new installation (on new streets or as a part of new development), retrofit or upgrade to an existing system (such as undergrounding of overhead wires or sewer upgrades), or emergency repair. Utility installations, upgrades, consolidation, rearrangements, or realignments may also occur as part of other street or sidewalk improvement projects.

Though essential, utilities often constrain the ability to locate other streetscape elements and can create a cluttered visual environment. Conversely, other streetscape elements may conflict with the ability to access and maintain utilities.

- 1) Utility Placement: Utility and communication equipment should be placed to minimize disruption to pedestrian through travel and potential planting and site furnishing locations while maintaining necessary access for maintenance and emergencies.
- 2) Place Utilities Underground: Utilities should be located underground wherever possible, as opposed to overhead or surface-mounted. New underground utilities should use durable pipe materials that are resistant to damage by tree roots, such as ductile iron, polyethylene, or polypropylene pipes. Tree removal should be avoided and minimized during the routing of large-scale utility undergrounding projects.
- 3) Screening: Locate and screen utilities to limit their visibility from the street and on nearby development.
- 4) No Pedestrian Obstruction: Utility structures should not be placed within street crossing and curb ramp areas wherever possible. If existing vaults conflict with ramp areas, vaults should be moved or modified to meet accessibility requirements as feasible as part of utility upgrades.
- 5) Utility Covers: All utility covers (e.g., manholes, water meter access plates) should be flush with the sidewalk or street surface and should be made of slip-resistant materials. Where highly-visible covers exist within sidewalk areas or within crosswalks, stealth consideration should be given to elevating said covers into the realm of public art, pursuant to utility company approval, through styles or designs which make an artistic statement.
- 6) Conflicts With Landscaping: Large-size utilities, such as a large water main or gas line, must be relocated if trees or in-ground planters are to be installed in the same location. If the utilities cannot be moved, landscape designs must be changed.
- 7) New Development: New development should incorporate alleys for vehicle, utility, and service access so as to enable a more consistent streetscape and minimize aboveground utilities. New development should also locate new utilities to minimize disruption to streetscape elements.

12.I. BOULEVARD MEDIANS

The medians along Broad and Washington Streets are places of interest of a different type. Rather than being places for people to gather, they play an important role in establishing the visual appeal of the city. These medians are highly visible to motorists and they can be further enhanced with new ornamental plantings.

- 1) Plantings should be closely spaced, selected for high salt tolerance, ease of maintenance, and four-season color. Such plantings may include bulb plantings, annuals, perennials (no evergreens), and shrubs. Such plantings should be raised for visual aesthetics, and may contained some raised natural stone visual elements or fencing.
- 2) While beautifying the street, the new groundcovers and small shrubs within the medians should be of a size that does not block drivers' views. Visual clear zones (between 2.5' and 6' above street grade) will be maintained near corners and median openings.
- 3) Median trees should reinforce the sense of arrival to the City and complement the streetscape improvements on either side of the street. Existing trees should be evaluated to ensure they

contribute to the City's gateway experience and, where appropriate, be replaced with new shade trees better suited for those conditions.

12.J. GATEWAYS

[This section is the set forth special policies for the gateways. They should be identified on a map]

- 1) Use consistent signage at all gateways to the City that incorporates the City's name and reflects the character of Falls Church.
- 2) Use landscape features as accents at all gateways and incorporate plantings with seasonal color.
- 3) Use distinctive wider paving for crosswalks at the gateway intersections.
- 4) Consider the use of public art or special features at the gateway locations, which may include sculpture.

12.K. PRIVATE STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

As outdoor dining and advertising increases in popularity, and as pedestrian activity increases across the City, many restaurateurs and businesses are gradually introducing their dining areas and merchandising into the public streetscape.

Outdoor café and restaurant seating (tables and chairs) helps to enliven the sidewalk environment and encourage economic development in the City's commercial districts. Private streetscape features, such as outdoor restaurants, tasteful outdoor displays of merchandise, and the use of interesting awnings, are encouraged. Such activities may be located on private property, or in the public right-of-way subject to zoning ordinance requirements. Outdoor dining and signage is regulated by Zoning Ordinance §§ _____ and _____, respectively. Individual businesses can apply for a permit from the City to place outdoor seating adjacent to their establishment.

It is noted that private streetscape elements must be balanced against the needs of the public traversing the streetscape with the desire to stimulate and encourage outdoor activities that bring in business and create an interpersonal, lively streetscape. Each location is unique and may have different pedestrian movements and volumes as well as physical constraints and limitations.

- 1) Respecting Clear Zones: Providing a clear, unobstructed pathway is a critical component of any sidewalk café or outdoor merchandiser. Where outdoor dining, merchandising, and advertising is permitted in the public right-of-way, businesses should maintain the respective sidewalk clear zone commensurate with the designated street typology recommendations. Where sufficient clear zones cannot be provided, outdoor dining, merchandising, and signage should be prohibited.
- 2) Ensure Safety: Care must be taken to keep sharp edges and splinters from injuring passing pedestrians or snagging clothing.
- 3) Outdoor Sandwich Board Signage: Sandwich boards should be a maximum height of four feet, a maximum of twelve square feet, and should be constructed of metal or wood. All edges should be covered with molding and constructed of MDO board or a similar quality material. All letters should be scaled to the size of the sign. No trademarks or logos should be a part of the sign other than that of the business.

13. TRANSITIONS TO RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

[This section should describe design elements/suggestions for transitioning off of Major Streets to residential neighborhoods (e.g., monument signs, decorative medians, etc.)]

14. UNIVERSAL DESIGN

When designing a streetscape, the different ability levels of all users must be considered. All sidewalks, public-use buildings, street furniture, and public open spaces must comply with the most current ADA Standards for Accessible Design and be user friendly for those with disabilities. All design elements must conform to all applicable Federal, State and Local laws and codes. Handicapped access points shall be appropriately designed and clearly marked.

15. MAINTENANCE

One of the most important considerations is the issue of budget and maintenance. Initial construction budgets may allow for certain streetscape elements, however, the downstream maintenance requirements may become cost prohibitive. This analysis of the maintenance costs is a crucial step in determining the initial streetscape elements that can be initially constructed.

[This should be its own section; we need to discuss securing dedicated source of maintenance from the City, and requiring developers to maintain landscaping elements in front of their property through maintenance agreements, etc.]

16. COLLABORATION WITH NEIGHBORING JURISDICTIONS

[This section should acknowledge the need to partner with Arlington, Fairfax, and VDOT on streetscape improvements/gateway designs (e.g., gateway entrances at Shreve/Haycock and along the south side of Lee Highway/Washington Street)]

17. SUSTAINABLE STREETScape DESIGN

[This was prominent in the oft-maligned 2010 guidelines. Certain aspects of the 2010 guidelines may be worth referencing, including discussing permeable pavements, vegetative grasses, SWM, bioswales, etc.]

- END -

ADDITIONAL TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION/NOT ADDRESSED ABOVE:

- 1) Sign Ordinance: Consider revisions to permit small hanging projecting signage
- 2) Bonus Height in exchange for more sidewalk space

- 3) Permit planting partnership agreements with adjacent owners in conjunction with approval by the City Arborist Require developers to maintain in perpetuity in front of their property. (Right now, it's a required dedication to the City in fee simple—it's required in the Lincoln. In recent projects, the City has toyed with the idea, but they're nervous. For example, the City maintains the trees and the developer maintains the rest of the landscaping.
- 4) Do we want to call out specific intersections/entrances as in the 2010 N. Washington Street guidelines?
- 5) Should we include bike lane design?
- 6) Should we discuss sustainable streetscape design as in the 2010 guidelines?
- 7) Do we want to address parking lot screening?
- 8) Do we want to address private building design?