SILVER SPRING

DOWNTOWN AND ADJACENT COMMUNITIES PLAN

DESIGN GUIDELINES



Montgomery Planning
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SILVER SPRING
DOWNTOWN AND ADJACENT COMMUNITIES PLAN

DRAFT DESIGN GUIDELINES

M-NCPPC
Prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Department

MontgomeryPlanning.org

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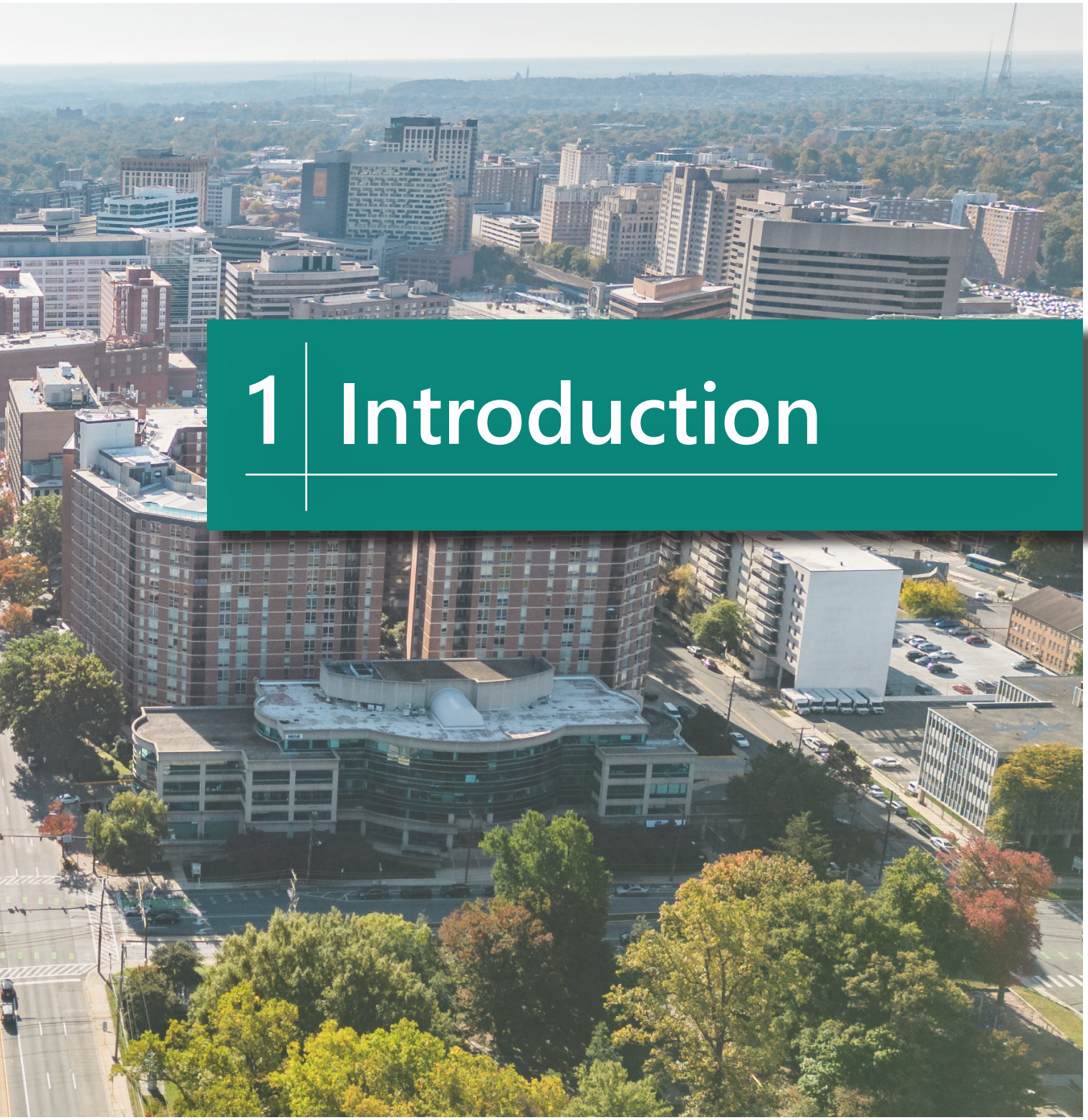
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Aerial view of downtown Silver Spring, 2022



1 Introduction

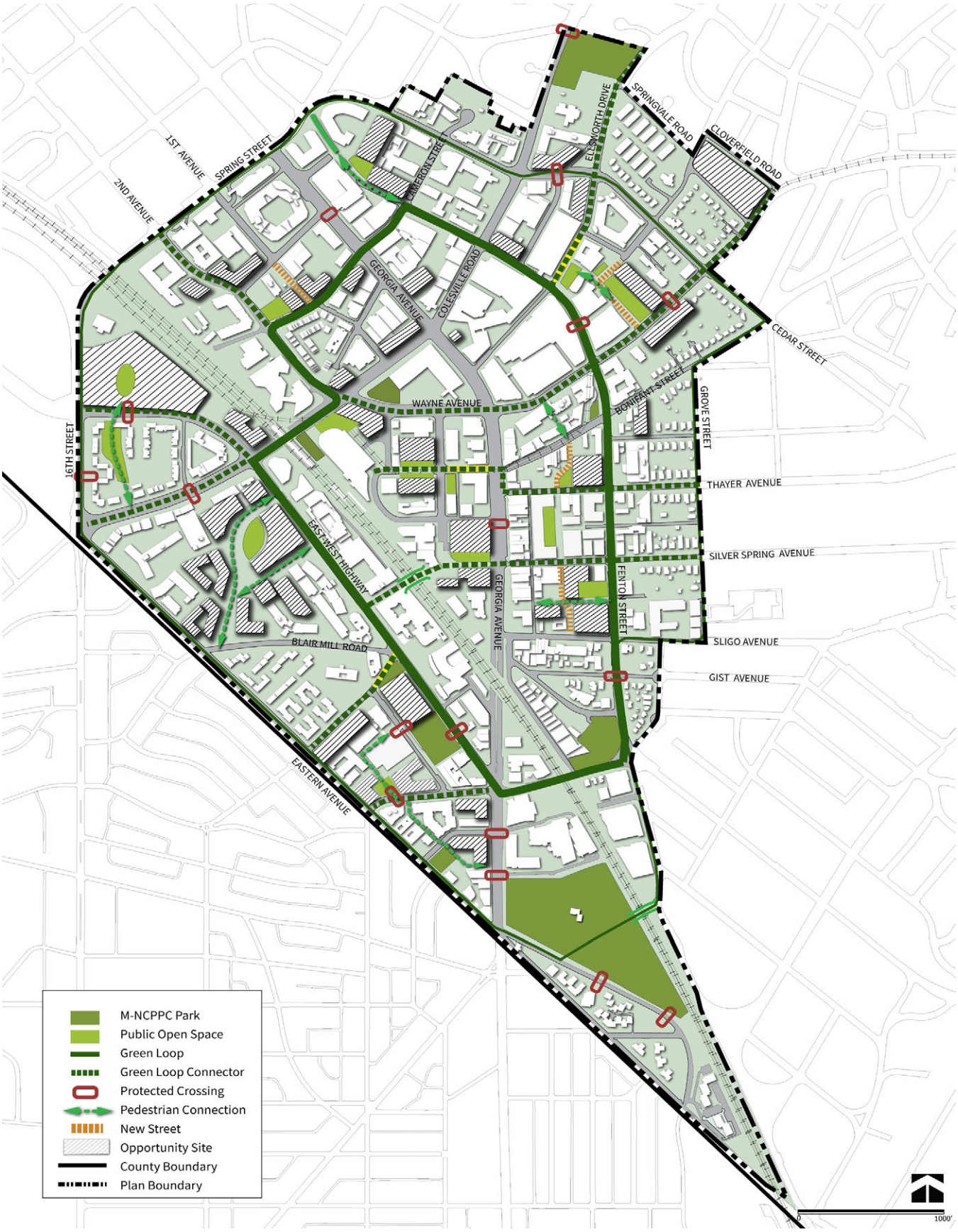


Figure 1: Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan Illustrative Diagram

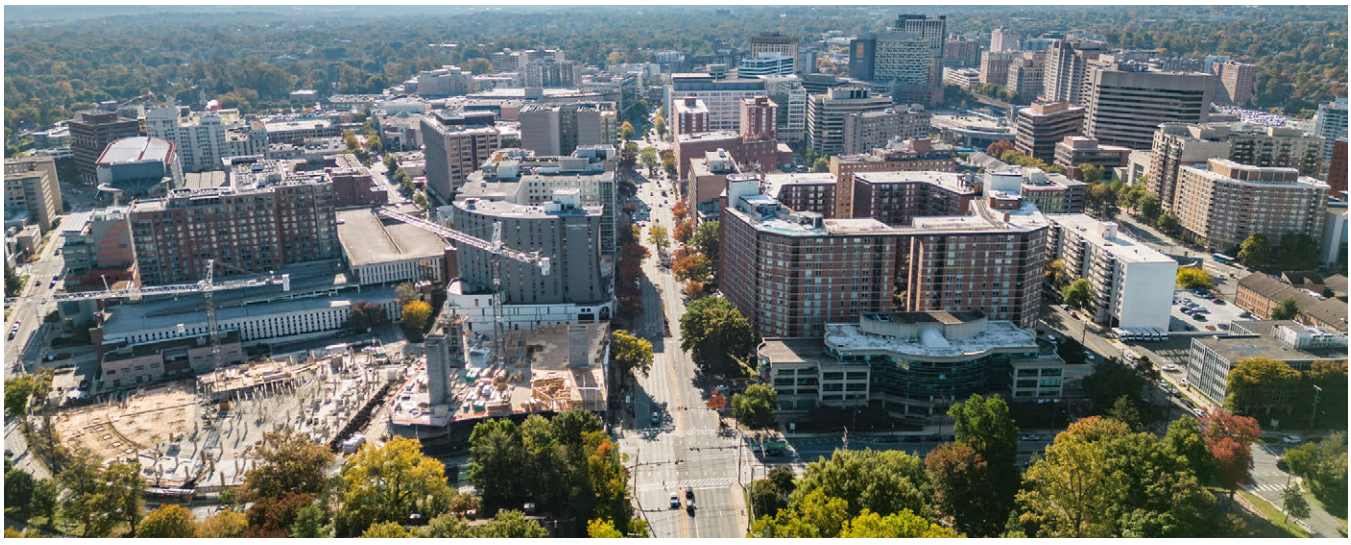
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 What are Design Guidelines?

The Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities (SSDAC) Plan Design Guidelines are a key implementation tool for the *Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan*. They will guide new building and open space development in downtown Silver Spring and will help achieve the goal of Design Excellence expressed in the Plan. The Guidelines will aid community members, property owners, applicants for development projects, Montgomery Planning regulatory staff and the Planning Board when considering new developments within the Plan boundary.

The Sector Plan recommendations support more equitable economic and civic outcomes for the downtown Silver Spring community. The Plan's themes of diversity, resiliency, connectivity, and community health inform nearly all of the Plan recommendations. The Design Guidelines reinforce these values in the physical realm by encouraging exceptional, inspiring, responsible, accessible, and resilient designs for buildings, streets, and open spaces in a thriving urban center that is welcoming to all.

These Guidelines will ensure compatibility of new development with adjacent properties and neighboring communities and will enhance the quality of life for all residents in the Silver Spring area, both inside and outside the downtown.



Aerial view of downtown Silver Spring looking south down Georgia Avenue

1.2 Design Guidelines Implementation

This document should be used in conjunction with the Sector Plan recommendations and the *Silver Spring Streetscape Standards* to guide development projects and public space improvements within the Plan area. In particular, per the Zoning Ordinance, all Commercial/Residential Zone Standard Method and Optional Method projects under Site Plan review should substantially conform with the Sector Plan recommendations and the Design Guidelines.

1.2.1 Design Advisory Panel

As recommended in the Sector Plan, a Design Advisory Panel (DAP) has been established to review and provide direction to the Planning Director and staff on downtown Silver Spring development applications submitted to the Planning Department.

The primary goal of the DAP is to provide guidance and recommendations that will heighten design excellence and improve the quality of architecture, urban design and landscape architecture in the downtown. The DAP will be a diverse group of individuals and professionals who are invested in this goal.

The DAP will be guided by the *Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan*, these Design Guidelines, and the CR Zone criteria for granting density incentives for exceptional design.

As described in the Zoning Ordinance, projects in Montgomery County may be developed via Standard Method or Optional Method of development. All Optional Method projects are required to undergo Design Review via the DAP. Though Standard Method projects under Site Plan review are not required to go to the DAP, it is highly recommended that these projects are presented to the panel.

Applicants will be required to meet with the DAP at least twice during the plan review process, typically before or during Sketch Plan review and again before Site Plan review. Applicants are strongly encouraged to go through the Concept Plan process before Sketch Plan, as an opportunity to receive the DAP's guidance at the earliest stages of project development. At Sketch Plan, the DAP will provide direction to an applicant as to whether or not they are on track to meet the minimum points for Design Excellence and what improvements are recommended to the design. In order for a project to complete the Site Plan review process, the DAP must agree via a vote that the project meets the Design Excellence public benefit requirement in the Sector Plan. The Silver Spring Downtown Overlay Zone text in the Zoning Ordinance requires 10 points for the Design Excellence public benefit.

1.2.2 Design Guidelines and Flexibility

The Planning Board may approve alternative design approaches that better meet the intent of the Design Guidelines for both buildings and open spaces. This review flexibility will allow room for truly exceptional and unexpected creative solutions to improve the downtown. Certain guidelines provide a range of recommended metrics (e.g. dimensions, number of floors) to appropriately meet the intent. These ranges are not rigid requirements but instead provide predictability for applicants as to what will be expected during development review and provide staff and the Planning Board with a framework to guide the review process. Design proposals will be evaluated during the development review process based on the surrounding context, site conditions, and how the project meets the Sector Plan goals and Design Guidelines intent. Design proposals for public open spaces will also be evaluated based on the Energized Public Spaces (EPS) Design Guidelines.

The Zoning Map sets building height limits and maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) densities, but it will be these limits and the Design Guidelines that will ultimately shape the future buildings and public spaces in the Plan area. Application of the Guidelines may, in certain cases, result in limiting the amount of density that can be built on a site. However, because of their importance in achieving the urban design goals of the Plan, these Guidelines should be met even where it may not be possible for a site to be developed to its maximum theoretical density and/or height.

1.2.3 Silver Spring Streetscape Standards

In 2019, Montgomery Planning updated the *Silver Spring Streetscape Standards*. This document was expressly intended to be a living document that would be updated and amended as necessary over time. With the adoption and approval of the SSDAC Plan, the approval of these Design Guidelines, and the completion of the *Montgomery County Complete Streets Design Guide*, several sections of the Streetscape Standards are out of date. Section 2.1 – Streets of this document overrides Chapter 3 – Standard Sidewalk Composition of the Streetscape Standards. It is expected that the Streetscape Standards will be fully updated in the future to coordinate with the SSDAC Plan and these Design Guidelines.

1.3 Sector Plan Urban Design Goals and Recommendations

The existing urban fabric of downtown Silver Spring is well established with a strong street grid and existing sidewalks nearly everywhere. There are several strong retail corridors, including along Fenton Street in Fenton Village and in the Ellsworth District with an active and lively ground-floor pedestrian experience. The buildings in the downtown range from low-rise to high-rise, with some newer construction in the Ripley District reaching heights of over 200 feet.

However, in the emerging areas of the downtown, there are still a handful of businesses in former single-family homes, and some older low-rise industrial buildings, including some of historic interest. Despite the many public open spaces in the downtown including the successful Veterans Plaza, the area is lacking in green parks for active recreation that are easily accessible to those who live and work in Silver Spring. Jesup Blair Park sits at the southern tip of the downtown and has the potential to be a major park and destination but is currently under-utilized. While much of Silver Spring is walkable and several bike facilities have been recently completed, the downtown would strongly benefit from an increased tree canopy and additional bike lanes for a safer, cooler and more comfortable experience.

The Sector Plan includes the following overall urban design goals and recommendations:

Goals

- Encourage future growth in downtown Silver Spring that takes advantage of additional allowable height and density while considering street-level experience, views and building form.
- New development should be compatible with the urban form and scale of the immediate surrounding neighborhood context.
- Design tall buildings with bases appropriate for active ground floor uses and architecturally interesting towers.
- Create a walkable environment where buildings frame the public realm and the lower floors of the building respond to the pedestrian environment at the ground floor.

Recommendations

- Prepare Design Guidelines to define Design Excellence for new development throughout the Plan area.
- Create a Design Advisory Panel (DAP). Design Review will be required for all Optional Method Development Projects in the Plan Area.
- Encourage innovative building form and allow flexibility in design. Vary tower heights, setbacks, and building materials.
- Limit bulky towers and consider architectural features, building articulation, solar building orientation, and access to light and air.
- In the Adjacent Communities, new development should be compatible in massing and form to the surrounding context regardless of use.

1.4 How These Design Guidelines are Organized

This document is divided into three major sections. Below is a brief explanation of each section:

Introduction

The first section explains the purpose of the Design Guidelines and how they support the Sector Plan. This section also elaborates on the role of the DAP and reiterates the Urban Design goals and recommendations in the Plan.

Plan-Wide Guidelines

This section addresses guidelines that apply throughout the Plan. It includes the following subsections:

Streets: This section addresses the design and layout of streetscape elements between the curb and the building face. It addresses the Green Loop proposed in the Sector Plan, stormwater management facilities in the right-of-way, recommendations to reduce heat island effect and accessibility considerations.

Site Design: This section addresses environmental site design strategies to manage stormwater on site and reduce heat island effect. It also includes guidelines for bird-safe site and lighting design, and considerations for service and loading access.

Building Form and Design: This section addresses building massing and design for low-, mid-, and high-rise buildings from the base to the upper floors to the roof; guidelines on parking structures and adaptive reuse of existing buildings; and guidance on residential development for the blocks that were rezoned from R-60 to CRN.

Parks, Trails, and Public Spaces: This section identifies all of the public spaces (both publicly and privately owned) that are recommended in the Sector Plan and review the basic design goals for each space. This section also includes guidelines for the privately-owned public spaces that will be developed in downtown Silver Spring.

Connections Over the Rail: This section includes general guidelines for the over-rail connections recommended in the Sector Plan.

Districts

This section includes guidelines that are specific to some of the districts in the Plan. It also includes site-specific considerations for a handful of significant opportunity sites identified in the Sector Plan.

Note: This document is illustrated with diagrams, precedent images and renderings that demonstrate possible ways the Design Guidelines may be implemented in downtown Silver Spring. These graphics are for illustrative purposes only unless noted otherwise.



View of Station Square from Wayne Avenue



2 Plan-Wide Guidelines

2. PLAN-WIDE GUIDELINES

This section addresses guidelines that apply to all sites throughout the Plan area. Section 3 includes additional site-specific guidelines for key opportunity sites, however the Plan-wide guidelines are still applicable to those sites unless indicated otherwise.

2.1 Streets

A well-designed public realm is a key element of a successful urban area. The SSDAC Sector Plan envisions the streets of downtown Silver Spring as a network of safe, comfortable, accessible roadways, designed with sidewalks, street trees, bike lanes and stormwater management. The street network will prioritize pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit while allowing cars to navigate safely through and around the downtown as needed, supporting the Plan goals of connectivity and community health.



Figure 2: Illustrative rendering of Georgia Avenue south of 13th Street.
This image depicts several realized recommendations from the Plan, including bus rapid transit lanes on Georgia Avenue, a protected crossing at Jesup Blair Drive and a reimagined Jesup Blair Park (rendering by DIG).

2.1.1 Complete Streets Design Guide: Street Types

In 2021, Montgomery Planning and Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) developed the *Complete Streets Design Guide* (CSDG) – a guide based on the concept of a "Complete Street." Complete Streets are roadways that are designed and operated to provide safe, accessible, and healthy travel for all users of the roadway system, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists. In the future, all master and sector plans will refer to the street types in the CSDG rather than in the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways (MPOHT). While the SSDAC Plan refers to the roadway types in the MPOHT, this Design Guidelines document will align the Sector Plan area with the CSDG, consistent with Sector Plans going forward.

The CSDG identifies two types of zones within the right-of-way for every street type—the Street Zone and the Active Zone (see Figure 3). The Street Zone is from curb to curb and includes all elements found in the roadway. The Active Zone is from curb to property line and includes pedestrian facilities, street trees, and sometimes stormwater management or street furniture, buffer zones and a frontage zone. Most streets will have an Active Zone on either side of the Street Zone. Bicycle facilities may be located in the Street Zone or the Active Zone depending on the street type and the design limitations. Section 2.1.2. reviews the CSDG street types found in the SSDAC Plan area and establishes guidelines for elements in the Active Zone. For elements in the Street Zone, refer to CSDG for Montgomery County roads. The CSDG also includes additional information on each street type.

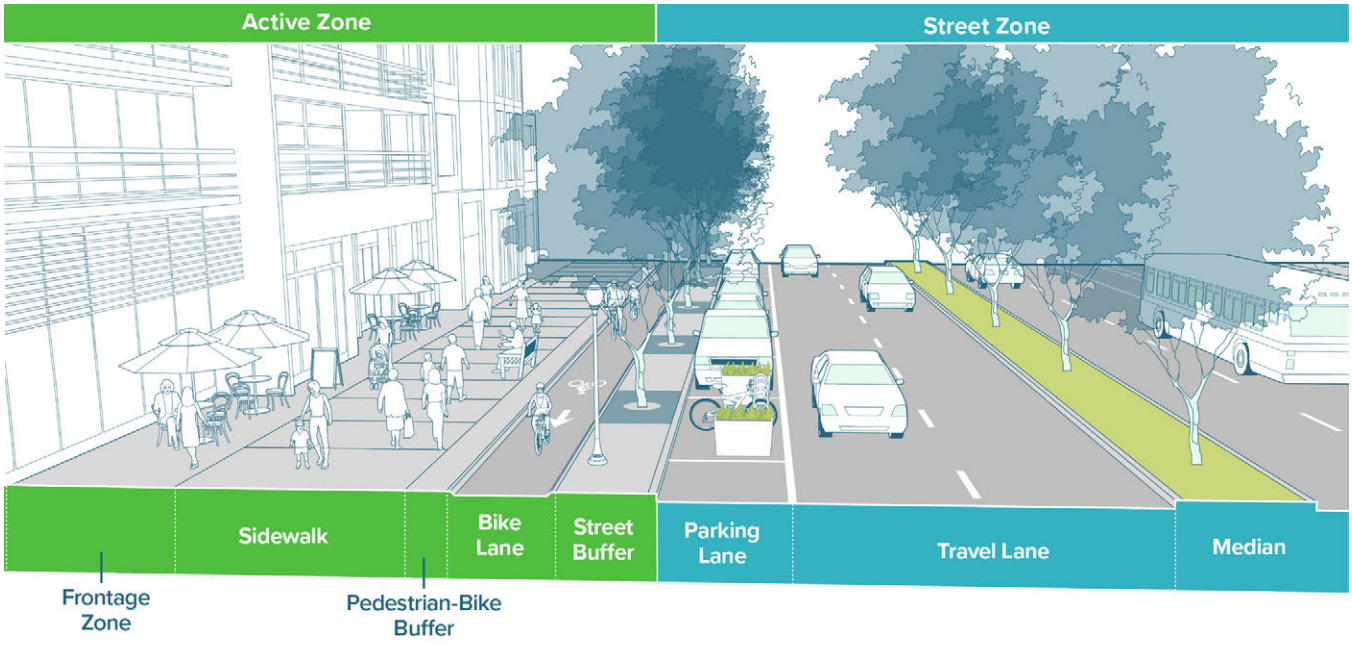


Figure 3: Active Zone and Street Zone (CSDG)

2.1.2 Street Types Guidelines

According to the street types in the CSDG, most streets in the SSDAC Plan area are Downtown Boulevards or Downtown Streets. There are a few Neighborhood/Area Connectors as well as a handful of Shared Streets. There are also several Neighborhood Streets or Neighborhood Yield Streets. Neighborhood Streets are not master planned—i.e. there is no master planned right-of-way provided for those streets in the SSDAC Plan—so they do not appear in Figure 4.

The following subsections discuss basic characteristics of the Active Zones of each street type, and provide recommended dimensions for Active Zone elements, as well as additional guidelines for each street type. Note that Downtown Streets are divided into two types—Type A and Type B, which is explained further in Section 2.1.2.B, Table 1.



Georgia Avenue, a Downtown Boulevard (top), Cameron Street, a Downtown Street (bottom)

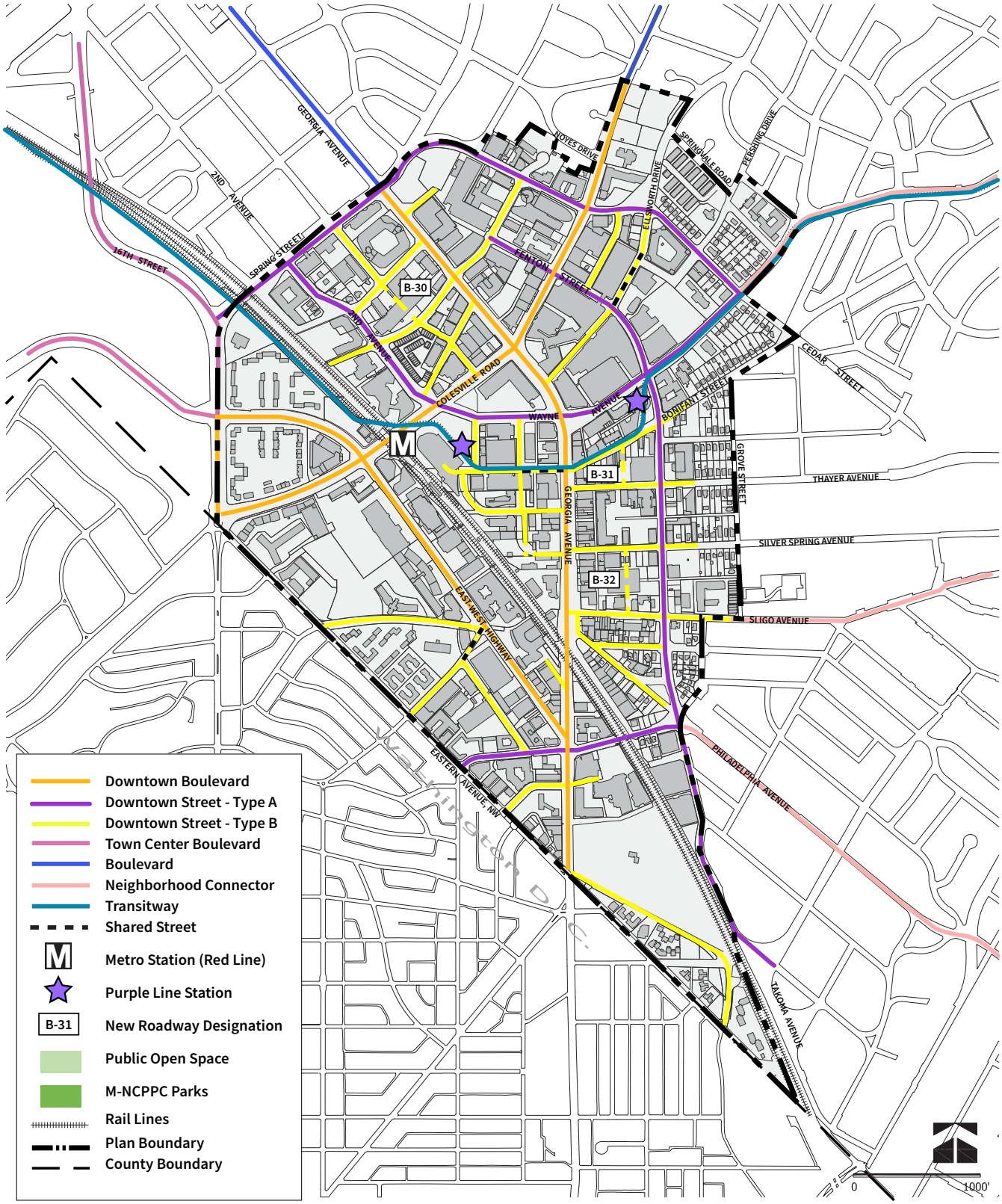


Figure 4: Complete Street Design Guide Street Types in the Plan Area

Note: Map only shows Master Planned streets; Neighborhood Streets/Neighborhood Yield Streets are not master-planned.

The table below lists all of the Downtown Streets in the Plan area and identifies whether a street segment is Type A or Type B. For full ROW information see Table 10 in the SSDAC Plan.

Table 1: Downtown Streets Table

Roadway	From	To	Downtown Street Type	Master Planned ROW (Minimum)
Downtown Street Type A				
Burlington Avenue (M-20)	Georgia Avenue	Fenton Street	Downtown Street Type A	80'
Spring Street (A-263)	16th Street (MD 390)	Fairview Road	Downtown Street Type A	100'
	Fairview Road	Cameron Street	Downtown Street Type A	80'
	Cameron Street	Colesville Road	Downtown Street Type A	100'
	Colesville Road	Wayne Ave nue (MD 594-A)	Downtown Street Type A	80'
Fenton Street (A-264)	Cameron Street	Takoma Avenue	Downtown Street Type A	80'
Wayne Avenue (A-76)	Colesville Road (MD 384)	Georgia Avenue (MD 97)	Downtown Street Type A	120'
	Georgia Avenue (US 29)	Cedar Street	Downtown Street Type A	80’
2nd Avenue (B-2)	Spring Street	Cameron Street	Downtown Street Type A	80'
	Cameron Street	Colesville Road (MD 384)	Downtown Street Type A	105'
13th Street (B-3)	Georgia Avenue	Eastern Avenue	Downtown Street Type A	80'
Downtown Street Type B				
1st Avenue (B-1)	Spring Street	Fenwick Lane	Downtown Street Type B	70'
Apple Avenue (B-4)	CSX Railroad	Second Avenue	Downtown Street Type B	60'
Blair Mill Road (B-5)	Blair Mill Way	Georgia Avenue	Downtown Street Type B	60'
Blair Road (B-6)	Georgia Avenue (MD 97)	CSX Railroad	Downtown Street Type B	60'
Bonifant Street (B-7)	CSX Railroad	Fenton Street	Downtown Street Type B	70'
	Fenton Street	Approx. 488' east of Fenton Street	Downtown Street Type B	80'
Dixon Avenue Extended (B-10)	Ripley St	Silver Spring Ave	Downtown Street Type B	80'
Ellsworth Drive	Veterans Plaza	Cedar Street	Downtown Street Type B	70'
Fenwick Lane (B-13)	Georgia Ave	Second Ave	Downtown Street Type B	80'

Roadway	From	To	Downtown Street Type	Master Planned ROW (Minimum)
Fidler Lane (B-14)	Second Ave	Georgia Ave	Downtown Street Type B	Varies
Gist Avenue (B-15)	Philadelphia Ave	Fenton St	Downtown Street Type B	70'
Kennett Street (B-16)	Newell Street	13th St	Downtown Street Type B	60'
King Street (B-17)	Eastern Avenue	50' east of Georgia Ave	Downtown Street Type B	60'
Newell Street (B-18)	Eastern Avenue	Kennett Street	Downtown Street Type B	70'
Planning Place (B-19)	Georgia Avenue	Silver Spring Parking Lot # 2	Downtown Street Type B	60'
Philadelphia Avenue (B-20)	Selim Road	Fenton St	Downtown Street Type B	70'
Ramsey Avenue (B-21)	Cameron Street	Colesville Road (MD 384)	Downtown Street Type B	54'
	Wayne Avenue	Bonifant Street	Downtown Street Type B	70'
Ripley Street (B-22)	Georgia Avenue	Bonifant Street	Downtown Street Type B	70'
Roeder Road (B-23)	Fenton Street	Cedar Street	Downtown Street Type B	60'
Selim Road (B-24)	Sligo Avenue	Philadelphia Avenue	Downtown Street Type B	70'
Blair Mill Road (B-25)	Eastern Avenue	East-West Highway (MD 410)	Downtown Street Type B	70'
Silver Spring Avenue (B-25)	Georgia Avenue	Approx. 280' east of Fenton Street	Downtown Street Type B	70'
Sligo Avenue (B-26)	Fenton Street	Approx. 149' east of Fenton Street	Downtown Street Type B	80'
	Georgia Avenue	Fenton Street	Downtown Street Type B	70'
Thayer Avenue (B-27)	Fenton Street	Approx. 288' east of Fenton Street	Downtown Street Type B	70'
	Georgia Avenue	Fenton Street	Downtown Street Type B	60'
Cameron Street (B-28)	Georgia Avenue	Spring Street	Downtown Street Type B	75'
	Second Avenue	Georgia Avenue	Downtown Street Type B	74'
Dixon Avenue (B-29)	Wayne Avenue	Ripley Street	Downtown Street Type B	80'
1st Avenue Extension (B-30)	1st Avenue	Ramsey Avenue	Downtown Street Type B	70'
New street name TBD (B-31)	Bonifant Street	Thayer Avenue	Downtown Street Type B	70'
New street name TBD (B-32)	Silver Spring Avenue	Sligo Avenue	Downtown Street Type B	70'

A. Downtown Boulevards

Downtown Boulevards are high intensity streets with a mix of vehicle traffic, transit, pedestrians, dense development and sometimes bicycles. Colesville Road, Georgia Avenue and East-West Highway are Downtown Boulevards. Street Sections for segments of those streets are included in the Sector Plan. Notably, Georgia Avenue does not include bicycle lanes, as there are parallel Downtown Streets that provide north-south bike connections, and both Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road include dedicated lanes for bus rapid transit (BRT) (Figure 5). Separated bike lanes are only proposed for a small portion of Colesville Road, to complete the Green Loop. For Downtown Boulevards, separated bike lanes should always be located in the Active Zone (Figure 6).

Additional Guidelines for Downtown Boulevards:

- Buffers with trees or stormwater management must be a minimum of 6 feet wide. In a street with both Pedestrian/Bike and Street Buffers, strive for both buffers to be 6 feet each so that street trees and stormwater management can be provided. If only one of the buffers can be provided, it must be a minimum of 6 feet wide and it must include street trees.
- Frontage zones are recommended for Downtown Boulevards. Furniture and plantings, particularly to support ground-floor retail, should be located in this zone. Frontages may be located in the right-of-way (ROW), on private property, or in both. A Frontage Zone can be minimized to provide a wider pedestrian through zone.
- For locations of recommended bicycle lanes, refer to Section 3.6.2. in the SSDAC Sector Plan.
- Note that Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road are managed by the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and any streetscape improvements on those streets must be coordinated with SHA.



East-West Highway looking north.

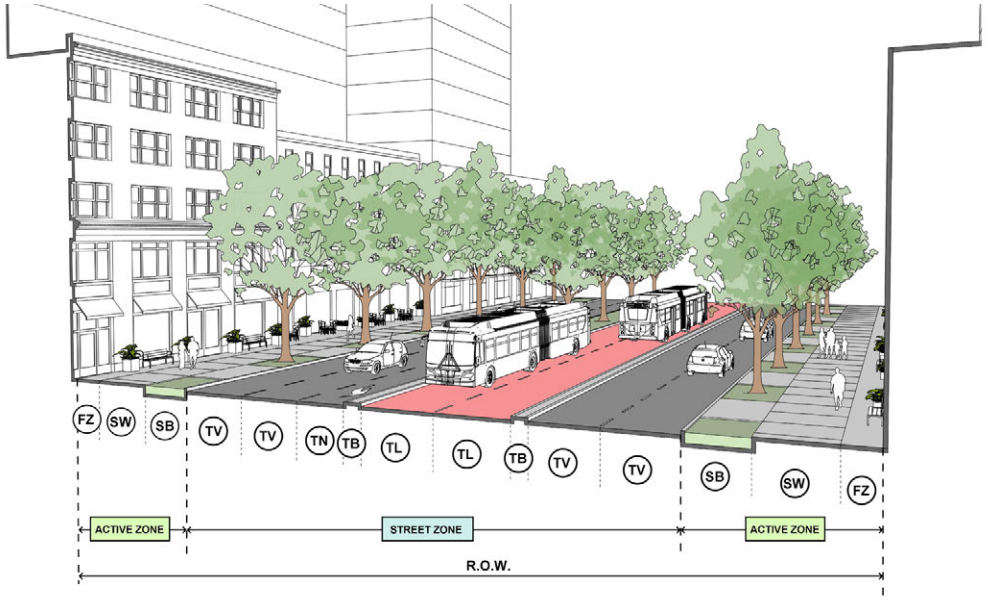


Figure 5: Downtown Boulevard with bus rapid transit

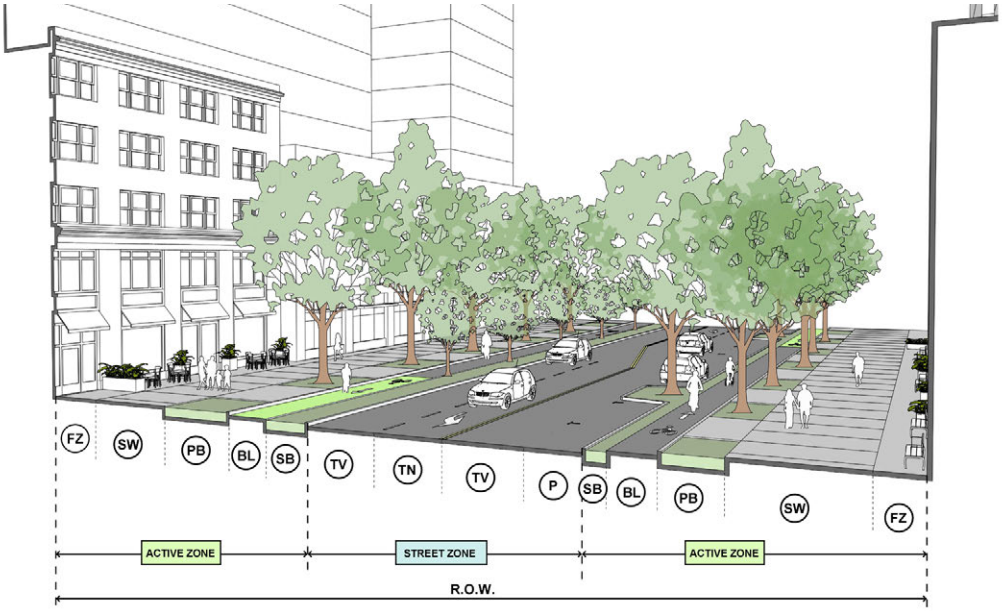


Figure 6: Downtown Boulevard with separated bike lanes

FZ Frontage Zone	SW Sidewalk	SP Sidepath	PB Pedestrian Buffer	BL Bike Lane	SB Street Buffer
P Parking	TV Travel Lane	TN Turn Lane	TB Transit Buffer	TL Transit Lane	

Table 2: Downtown Boulevard Active Zone Elements

	Active Zone Elements	Recommended Dimension Width	Notes
FZ	Frontage Zone	5′ minimum	See note below in "Additional Guidelines for Downtown Boulevards."
SW	Sidewalk	15′ default, 10′ minimum	Sidewalks should be as wide as possible.
PB	Pedestrian/Bike Buffer	2′-6′ minimum	2′ minimum without plantings. 6′ minimum to plant street types or stormwater management.
BL	Separated Bike Lane (Two-Way)	11′ default, 8′ minimum	This is for a two-way separated bike lane.
BL	Separated Bike Lane (One-Way)	6.5′ default, 5′ minimum	This is for a one-way separated bike lane.
SB	Street Buffer	6′-8′ default; 13′ minimum when transit stop is included.	Should include trees and stormwater management where possible. 6′ minimum for trees and/or stormwater management, although 8′ preferred. Where there are planned transit stops located in the buffer, buffer should be 13′ minimum.



Colesville Road between Fenton Street and Spring Street

B. Downtown Streets

Downtown Streets are also located in areas with dense development, and usually include a mix of vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic along with transit. They are typically secondary streets that connect to the Downtown Boulevards, and may have fewer travel lanes, but are more likely to have bike lanes. Most of the streets in the downtown are Downtown Streets. However, in downtown Silver Spring, Downtown Streets range from ROW widths of 48'-100', and they range from primary streets to side streets. For this reason, the Design Guidelines identify two sub-types of Downtown Streets—Type A and Type B. Downtown Streets—Type A generally have wider ROWs, more travel lanes, and tend to be streets that align with the previous 'Arterial' designation in the MPOHT. Downtown Streets—Type B tend to be narrower side streets that align with the previous 'Business' designation in the MPOHT. Note: In some sections below both an 'interim' and an 'ideal' condition is shown. An interim condition may occur when only one part of the street is being redeveloped and the final ideal condition cannot yet be realized.



Fenton Street in Fenton Village

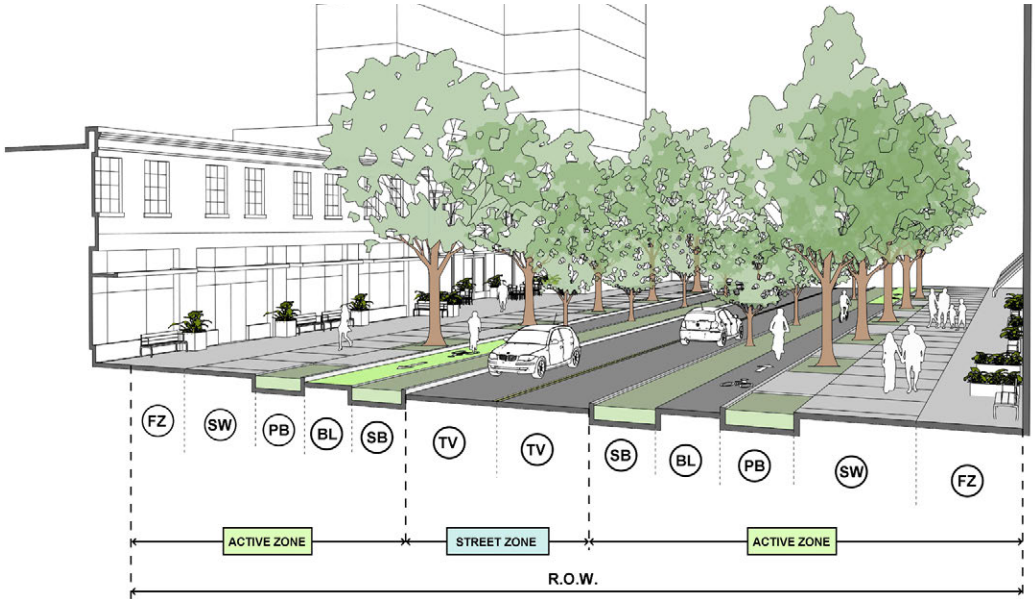


Figure 7: Downtown Street—Type A

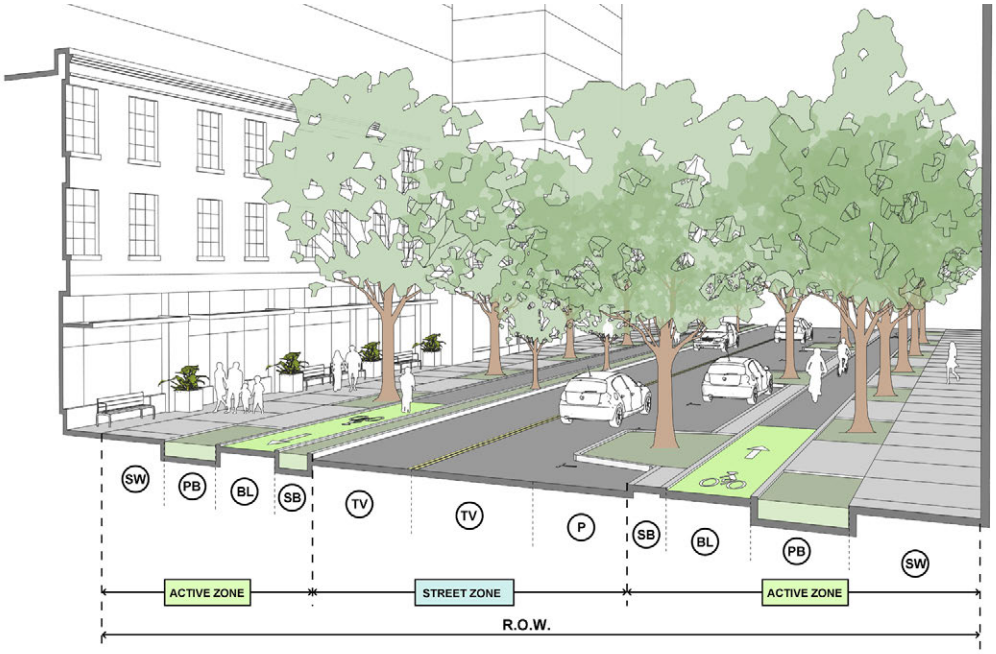


Figure 8: Downtown Street—Type B (Ideal)

FZ Frontage Zone	SW Sidewalk	SP Sidepath	PB Pedestrian Buffer	BL Bike Lane	SB Street Buffer
P Parking	TV Travel Lane	TN Turn Lane	TB Transit Buffer	TL Transit Lane	



Figure 9: Downtown Street—Type B (Interim)



Figure 10: Downtown Street—Type B (less than 70′ ROW)

FZ Frontage Zone	SW Sidewalk	SP Sidepath	PB Pedestrian Buffer	BL Bike Lane	SB Street Buffer
P Parking	TV Travel Lane	TN Turn Lane	TB Transit Buffer	TL Transit Lane	

Additional Guidelines for Downtown Streets:

- Downtown Streets with recommended bike lanes are indicated in Table 9 in the SSDAC Plan. Bicycle facilities vary by street. Some may have two-way bike lanes on one side of the street, and some may have one-way lanes with one on each side.
- Buffers with trees or stormwater management must be a minimum of 6 feet wide. In a street with both Pedestrian/Bike and Street Buffers, strive for both buffers to be 6 feet each so that street trees and stormwater management can be provided as described in Section 2.1.4. If only one of the buffers described is provided, it must be a minimum of 6 feet wide and it must include street trees.
- Frontage Zones are optional for all Downtown Streets and may require additional building setback for Downtown Streets—Type B. On Downtown Streets—Type A the Frontage Zone can be expanded to include more space for outdoor dining/seating and/or planting/furnishing. Outdoor seating needs to meet Department of Permitting Services requirements.
- On the following page, two sections for Downtown Streets—Type B are shown. Figure 9 shows an acceptable condition that would be considered interim, and Figure 8 shows the ideal condition, with both buffers accommodated.
- Some Downtown Streets that have a ROW narrower than 70 feet. Most of these streets are not recommended for separated bike facilities in the Sector Plan and thus could accommodate wider Street Buffers, allowing for a better growing environment for mature canopy trees (Figure 10).

Table 3: Downtown Street Active Zone Elements

		Downtown Street (Type A)	Downtown Streets (Type B)	
	Active Zone Elements	**Recommended Dimension Width**	**Recommended Dimension Width**	**Notes**
FZ	Frontage Zone	0'-8'	0' default	Often not included in the ROW but on private property. See notes below.
SW	Sidewalk	10' default, 12' recommended.	8' default, 10' recommended.	Sidewalks should be as wide as possible.
PB	Pedestrian/Bike Buffer	2'-6' minimum.	2'-6' minimum.	2' minimum without plantings. 6' minimum to plant street trees or stormwater management.
BL	Separated Bike Lane (Two-Way)	8' minimum, 10' default.	8' minimum, 10' default.	This is for a two-way separated bike lane.
BL	Separated Bike Lane (One-Way)	5' minimum, 6.5' default.	5' minimum, 6.5' default.	This is for a one-way separated bike lane.
SB	Street Buffer	6' minimum, 11' minimum if with on-street parking.	6' minimum, 11' minimum if with on-street parking.	For Downtown Streets street trees may be located in the Pedestrian/Bike Buffer and/or the Street Buffer.

C. Neighborhood and Area Connectors

Neighborhood/Area Connectors are residential through streets with predominantly low-rise or mid-rise residential development on either side. These streets often have bus stops and bicycle infrastructure. Examples in the SSDAC Plan area include Wayne Avenue past Cedar Street and Sligo Avenue as it heads out of the downtown (See Figures 11 and 12). The chart below includes elements that may be found in the Active Zone for Neighborhood/ Area Connectors:

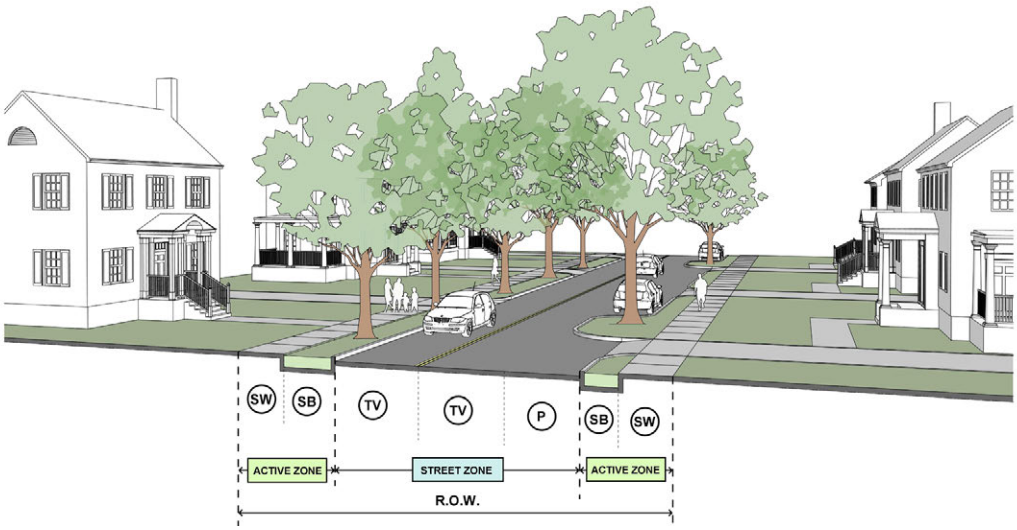


Figure 11: Neighborhood Connector (Sligo Avenue)

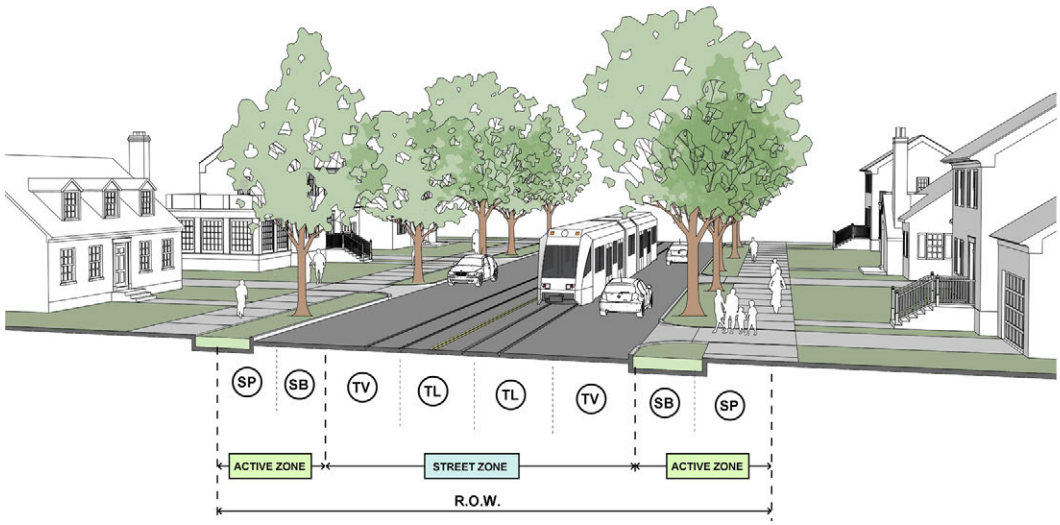


Figure 12: Area Connector (Wayne Avenue)

FZ Frontage Zone	SW Sidewalk	SP Sidepath	PB Pedestrian Buffer	BL Bike Lane	SB Street Buffer
P Parking	TV Travel Lane	TN Turn Lane	TB Transit Buffer	TL Transit Lane	

Additional Guidelines for Neighborhood/Area Connectors:

- Along Neighborhood/Area Connectors the edge of the maintenance buffer establishes the maximum build-to line, but this buffer can be reduced or eliminated if structures are built more than two feet away from the ROW line.
- Sidepaths should be provided where bicycle connections are recommended, and the ROW cannot accommodate a sidewalk and a separated bike lane.
- The front entrances to sites that are bordered by both Neighborhood Connectors and Neighborhood Streets should face the Neighborhood Connector as that is the "main" street.
- Sligo Avenue has on-street parking on the south side. This parking could be retained and integrated with a planted buffer as noted above (Figure 11).
- Wayne Avenue is a transit corridor with the planned Purple Line train running in both directions on the street. Proposed Purple Line street sections should be considered when determining Active Zone. On-street parking is not recommended for Wayne Avenue (Figure 12).

Table 4: Neighborhood and Area Connector Active Zone Elements

	Active Zone Elements	Recommended Dimension Width	Notes
	Maintenance Buffer	2' default, 0' minimum.	Only required when a structure is built close to the property line. Not shown on diagrams above.
SW	Sidewalk	10' default, 6' minimum.	
SP	Sidepath	8' default, 10' minimum.	This is a path on the side of the road that can be shared by bikes and pedestrians.
SB	Street Buffer	6' minimum; 11' minimum if with on-street parking.	If Street Buffer includes on-street parking, the portion that is inside the curb is considered in the Street Zone.

D. Shared Streets

Shared Streets are streets where pedestrians, vehicles, and bicyclists can all safely share the same space. In the SSDAC, three segments of Downtown Streets are recommended to be Shared Streets. According to the Complete Streets Design Guide, Shared Streets do not have a Street Zone and an Active Zone. Rather, since there is not as much separation between pedestrians, bikes and vehicles, there is a Frontage Zone, a Comfort Zone, and a Shared Zone. There may be a Furniture Zone between the Comfort Zone and the Shared Zone (Figure 13).

As with all street types, the Frontage Zone may be in the right-of-way, on private property, or a combination. The Comfort Zone is an obstacle-free pedestrian area. The minimum width for this area is 6 feet. The Shared Zone is where pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles share the space. Speeds should be slow (not to exceed 15 mph). Shared Streets will often be curbless, paved with an alternative material, and bookended with crosswalks. Shared Streets should be designed so it is obvious to all users that they are entering a space that is shared and where everyone needs to be aware and move slowly.



The Wharf in Washington, D.C.

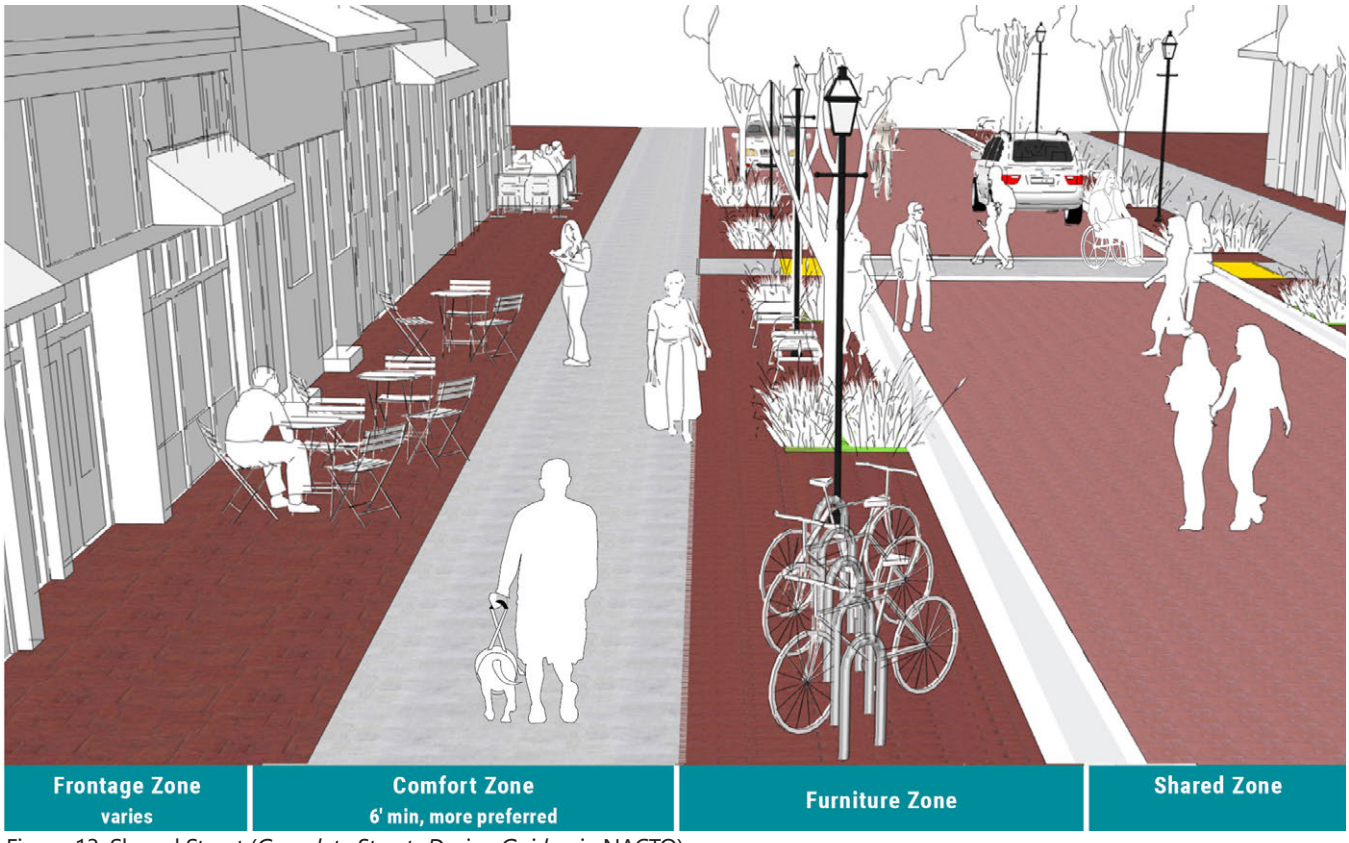


Figure 13: Shared Street (*Complete Streets Design Guide*, via NACTO)

E. Neighborhood Streets / Neighborhood Yield Streets

At the edges of the Plan area there are a handful of streets that are Neighborhood Streets or Neighborhood Yield Streets. These streets are primarily residential and have low volumes of vehicular traffic. Several are narrow and function as Neighborhood Yield Streets, where the Street Zone is not wide enough for on-street parking and two lanes of through traffic. In these instances, traffic in one direction yields to cars traveling in the opposite direction. Sidewalks and a mature tree canopy are high priorities on these streets. Today several of these streets do not have any sidewalks, or only have a sidewalk on one side of the street. The Plan recommends sidewalks on both sides. However, on a street with significant, mature trees in the ROW, sidewalks can be planned around trees and creative solutions are encouraged to maintain a safe, clear, pedestrian path while retaining the existing tree canopy (Figure 14). Neighborhood Streets/ Neighborhood Yield Streets do not have master planned rights-of-way.

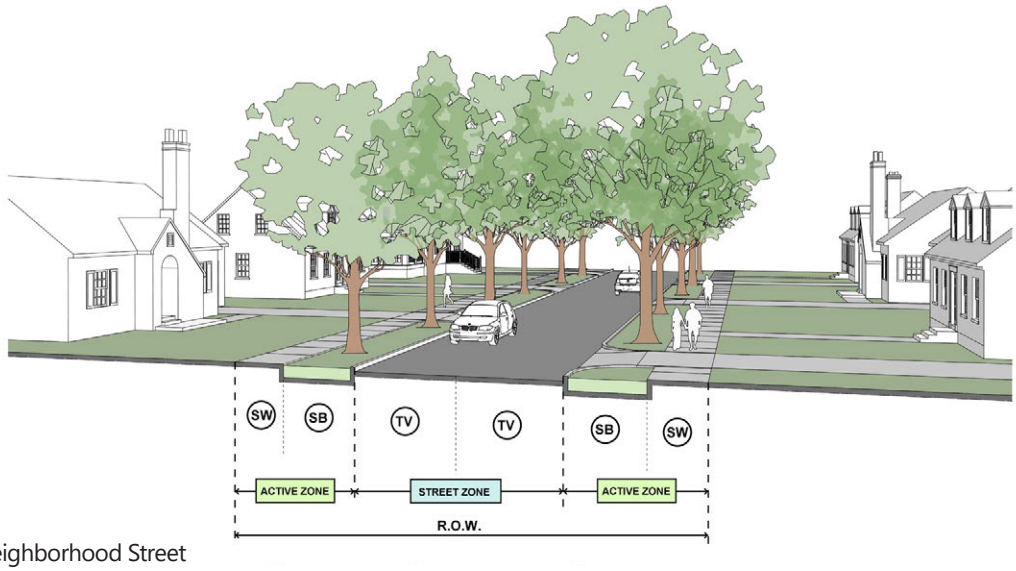


Figure 14: Neighborhood Street

FZ Frontage Zone	SW Sidewalk	SP Sidepath	PB Pedestrian Buffer	BL Bike Lane	SB Street Buffer
P Parking	TV Travel Lane	TN Turn Lane	TB Transit Buffer	TL Transit Lane	

Table 5: Neighborhood and Yield Street Active Zone Elements.

	Active Zone Elements	Recommended Dimension Width	Notes
	Maintenance Buffer	2′ default, 0′ minimum.	Required when a structure is built less than 2′ from the property line. Not shown in diagram above
SW	Sidewalk	10′ default, 6′ minimum.	On constrained streets, 5′ sidewalk is permitted.
SB	Street Buffer	6′ minimum; 11′ minimum if with on-street parking.	If Street Buffer includes on-street parking, it is included in the Street Zone. Most of the Neighborhood Streets in the Plan do NOT include on-street parking and would not be able to accommodate in the future.

F. Additional Streets Guidelines

1. Clear Zone

The CSDG defines the Clear Zone as a zone (on sidewalks or sidepaths) that is wide enough for people to pass one another comfortably, whether one is walking, pushing a stroller or using an assistive mobility device, without obstacles or obstructions. In downtown Silver Spring, ROWs can shift from one block to the next. Despite this, on full blocks (from one intersection to the next) sidewalks and sidepaths should be designed to provide a Clear Zone for pedestrians. Crosswalks should connect the Clear Zones so that everyone can enjoy a continuous obstruction-free pedestrian path. Clear Zone minimums are as follows:

- Downtown Boulevards: 8 foot minimum
- Downtown Streets (Types A and B): 6 foot minimum
- Neighborhood Connector: 6 foot minimum
- Shared Streets: 6 foot minimum area that is pedestrian only

Street Trees

Street Trees are a high priority in Silver Spring. They help cool the pedestrian environment, combat heat island effect, and contribute to lowering carbon emissions. Street Trees may be planted in the Pedestrian/Bike Buffer and/or the Street Buffer. A buffer must be a minimum of 6 feet wide to accommodate a tree, but 8 feet is preferred. For details on tree planting see the *Silver Spring Streetscape Standards*.

2. Bike Parking

Short-term bicycle parking can be located in the Street Buffer as space permits. Otherwise it may be located in a Frontage Zone or other space dedicated for bike parking. For bike parking guidelines see Appendix K of the *Bicycle Master Plan*.

3. On-Street Parking

On-Street parking may be found on some Downtown Streets and Neighborhood Connectors. It may serve as a buffer between pedestrians and bikes and passing cars, and can also provide a small amount of parking adjacent to ground-floor retail. In some cases on-street parking may be removed to accommodate master planned bikeways. On-street parking may be integrated with planted Street Buffers as described in the tables and diagrams above, and must include a tree every two or three spaces.

4. Interim vs. Ultimate Street Conditions

The SSDAC Plan includes several "interim" street sections that demonstrate how the master planned ROW can be achieved initially before the full street section is able to be realized. While the Sector Plan does not detail these options for each street, the sections in the Plan are all understood to be the ultimate goal; any improved section that takes steps toward achieving these goals may be considered "interim." Interim street design solutions may be allowed on a site-specific basis.

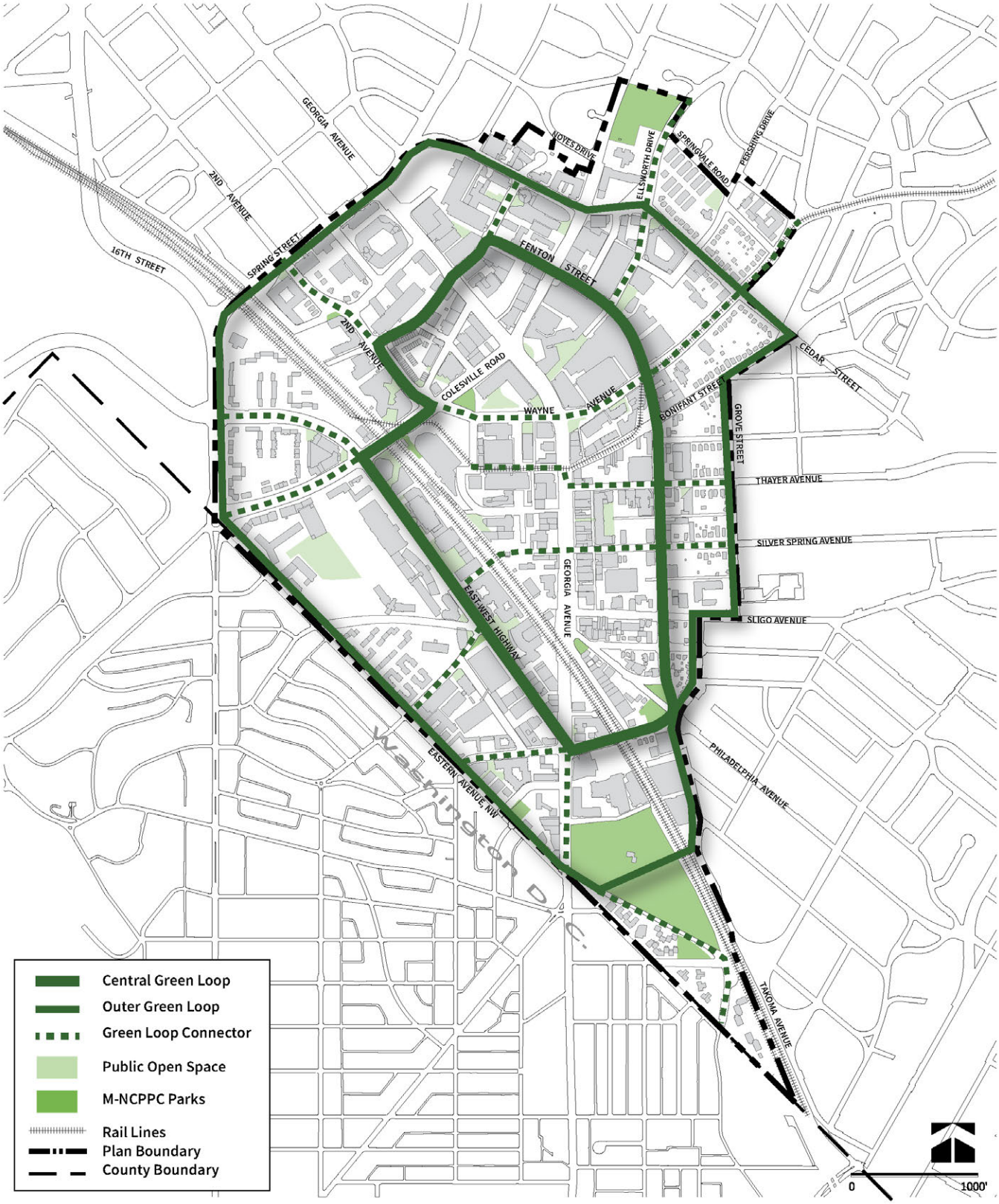


Figure 15: Map of the Green Loop

2.1.3. Green Loop

The SSDAC Plan recommends the creation of a "Green Loop" of Complete Streets in the center of downtown Silver Spring as shown on Figure 15. The goal of the Green Loop is to provide a comfortable, green, cool, consistent pedestrian experience on streets that have significant pedestrian traffic today. On roadways where bicycle infrastructure is proposed, it is a priority to ensure the bike lanes work with the other elements and are also comfortable and safe.

- The highest priority for all components in the Green Loop is mature canopy street trees that shade sidewalks and bike lanes.
- The second highest priority is stormwater infrastructure in the ROW. For the streets in the Central Green Loop, mature canopy street trees and stormwater infrastructure should both be prioritized. The dimensions in the table below override the dimensions in the previous sections for the given streetscape elements. Refer to Section 2.2.3. for diagrams on including both street trees and stormwater management in the ROW.

The Outer Green Loop is comprised of both Downtown Streets and Neighborhood Streets. For Downtown Streets, both canopy trees and stormwater management facilities are high priorities and the dimensions and guidance in the table below apply. For Neighborhood Streets, the priority is to provide a sidewalk while preserving the existing mature tree canopy to the extent possible.

- Green Loop connectors are side streets that connect to the Central and Outer Loops. These streets often have narrower rights-of-way. Canopy street trees are the highest priority on these streets. On Green Loop Connectors where separated bicycle lanes are not recommended (most of these are Downtown Streets (typical)), stormwater infrastructure should be implemented. Where separated bicycle lanes are recommended, canopy trees are highest priority and stormwater management should be integrated into the streetscape design when feasible.
- Refer to the *Silver Spring Streetscape Standards* for details on preferred tree species, spacing and soil depth for downtown Silver Spring.

Table 6: Green Loop Street Active Zone Elements

		Active Zone Elements	Recommended Dimension Width	Notes
	FZ	Frontage Zone	0'-8'	Frontage Zone may need to be located entirely outside of the ROW because of larger buffers.
	SW	Sidewalk	10' minimum	Sidewalks should be as wide as possible.
With Bike Lane	PB	Pedestrian/Bike Buffer	8' minimum	8' minimum for canopy streets adjacent to sidewalk.
	SB	Street Buffer	6' minimum	6' minimum for trees and/or stormwater management.
Without Bike Lane	SB	Street Buffer	8' minimum	8' minimum for canopy adjacent to sidewalk.

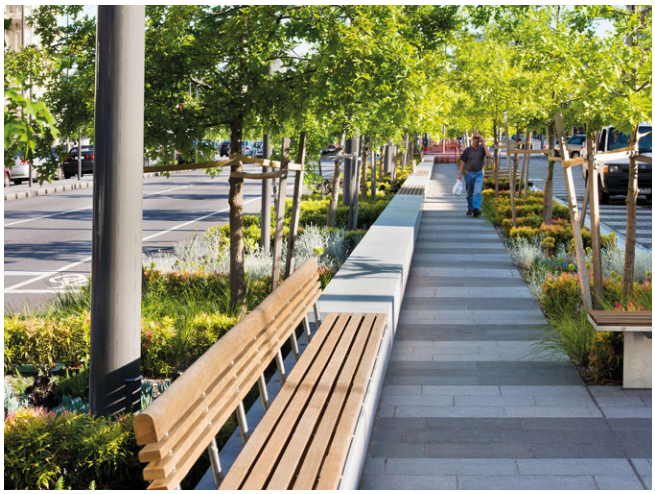
2.1.4. Stormwater Management in the Right-of-way

Stormwater management is important in roadway design to protect environmental resources, preserve water quality and minimize streambank erosion from stormwater runoff. In Silver Spring, different road configurations make it difficult to standardize stormwater treatment recommendations. During the design phase for road construction, repair, or improvements, each project must evaluate the potential for stormwater treatment within the constraints of the site such as existing street trees, slopes, site features, width, drainage area, treatment volume, and goals of the Sector Plan.

Pedestrian/Bike Buffers and Street Buffers are appropriate locations to treat stormwater where there is sufficient room (6 foot minimum). Ideally, street trees and stormwater facilities are staggered along a street, and in separate planters/basins allowing for both successful stormwater treatment and the long-term survival of street trees. Small trees can be included in stormwater systems in certain situations, however to achieve mature tree canopy in the downtown, trees and stormwater facilities should be planted separately so that tree roots are not impacted when stormwater treatment facilities are cleaned or maintained.

To maximize the limited space within the ROW, utilize suspended structured cell systems for street trees. Suspended structured cell systems are below-grade planting systems that allow support the weight of walkable surfaces at grade. The cell system accommodates a soil volume that allows tree roots to expand so that larger canopy street trees can thrive in urban areas. Suspended structural cells should be installed where the requirement of 1,000 cubic feet of soil for street trees cannot be met. Refer to *Silver Spring Streetscape Standards*.

In addition, consider using porous pavement for paved surfaces (not roadways) to allow water infiltration into soil or into the drainage network. Any use of porous pavement in the ROW must be coordinated with MCDOT or SHA, as applicable.

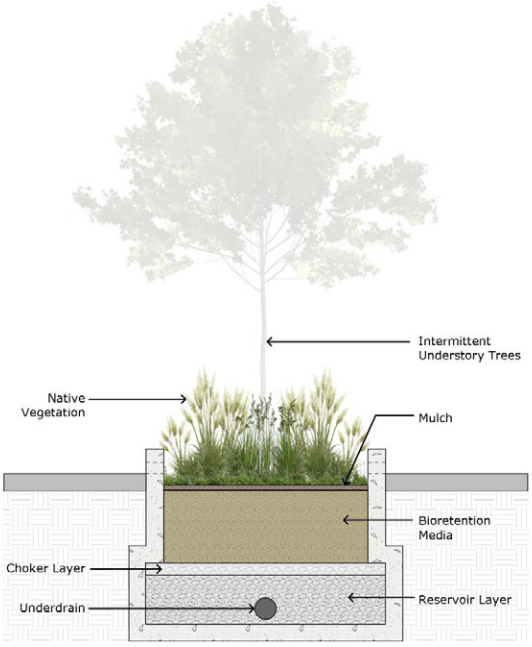




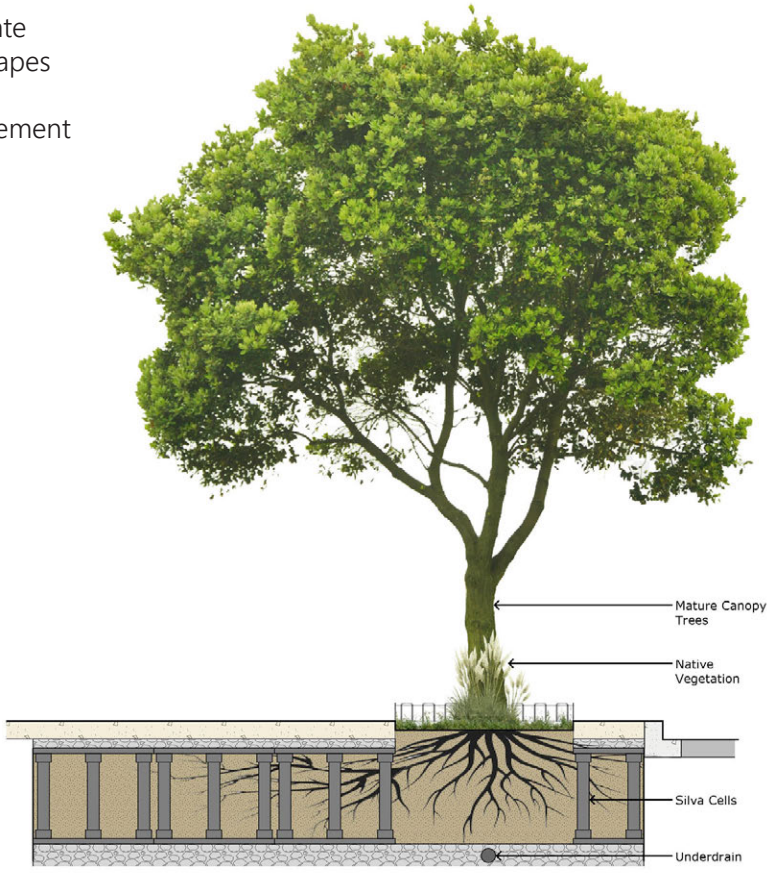


Stormwater management integrated into streetscape design (top, John Gollings) Stormwater management in the street buffer (middle, wri-india.org). Bio-retention in Constitution Square, Washington D.C. (bottom, sitephocus.com)

Figure 16 demonstrates possible ways to integrate stormwater management with different streetscapes widths and conditions as well as diagrammatic sections for street trees and stormwater management in these locations.



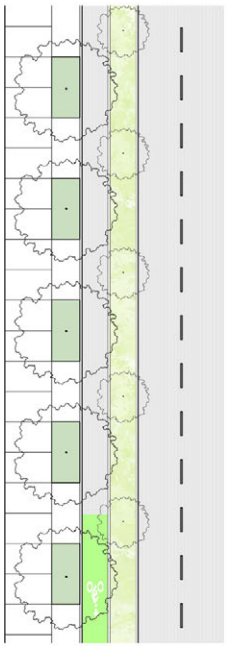
Typical stormwater management facility.



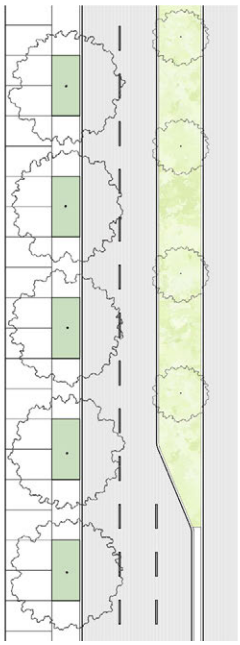
Suspended structured cell system for street tree.



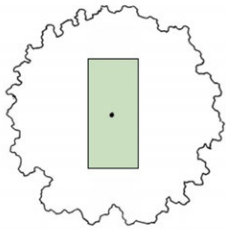
Sidewalk - Typical



Sidewalk - Dual Buffer



Sidewalk - With Median



Mature Street Tree



Stormwater Management Facility

Figure 16: Stormwater Management in the Right-of-Way

2.1.5 Design Guidelines for Cool Streets

The Sector Plan identifies downtown Silver Spring as a heat island and makes several recommendations to reduce heat island effect. In August 2022, Rhodeside and Harwell completed a *Downtown Silver Spring Cool Streets Design Guidelines* for Montgomery Planning. The study measured the Universal Thermal Climate Index (UTCI) or 'feels like' temperatures at the pedestrian level of 3 feet above the ground and found that Silver Spring experiences temperatures that are significantly above the typical level of human comfort. In addition to providing significant street tree canopy in the downtown, the report recommends the design strategies below to cool the pedestrian streetscape and reduce heat island impacts in the downtown. These strategies should be considered for all streets and are applicable to site design as well.

A. Material Recommendations

- Use light-colored paving such as concrete, asphalt, pavers, and brick with a 3-year aged solar reflectance (SR) value of at least 0.28 or an initial SR of 0.33.
- Use light-colored porous surfaces where possible on sidewalks, parking spaces and lots, pathways, courtyards, open spaces, etc.

B. Vegetation Recommendations

- Conserve large, mature trees and integrate new native trees into the public and private landscape to provide solar protection.
- Incorporate stratified herbaceous native vegetation such as grass and forbs wherever possible.
- Strategically create shaded respite areas using cluster tree plantings every 500 feet (0.1 miles) along streets.
- Install nature-based design elements throughout Silver Spring including:
    - Bioretention
    - Green Roofs
    - Urban Agriculture

C. Shading Recommendations

- Encourage shade in public spaces by using awnings and other architectural shading devices, such as street canopies or shading installations.
- Provide shaded structures in gathering areas. If possible, include photovoltaics for electric cooling capabilities.

D. Other Recommendations

- Consider evaporative spray cooling devices in key public areas in the summer.
- Where possible, avoid building barriers that block prevailing southern and western winds in the summer.



Light colored paving. (mvvainc.com)



Native grasses and vegetation. (wrtdesign.com)



Misters for evaporative cooling at the National Zoo (dcist.com)



Architectural shading of a shared street. (nytimes.com)



Shaded respite areas. (mydubai.media)

2.1.6 Accessibility: Street and Site Design

Connectivity is a major goal of the Sector Plan. All sidewalks and roads should be safe for all users, for all modes of transportation, in all communities, and for people of all ages and abilities.

A. Sidewalk Guidelines

- Sidewalks must be accessible to everyone, including people using assistive mobility devices. They must be designed to follow state and county standards for accessibility, as well as the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- On adjacent properties and ideally on full blocks, all sidewalks and sidepaths should be designed to provide a continuous Clear Zone free of obstructions. See Streets Section 2.1.2.F.1 for Clear Zone minimums by street types.
- The Clear Zone should not include any street furniture, street trees, planters, vegetation, or other vertical elements such as signposts, utility poles, traffic signal cabinets, fire hydrants, or temporary signs. Grates should also not be placed in the Clear Zone. This zone should always provide an 8 foot minimum vertical clearance for overhead elements. This zone should comply with ADA requirements, including a maximum cross slope of 2 percent.

B. Site Guidelines

- To address limitations of people with vision disabilities:
  - Use tactile, visual, and audible cues to provide navigational information. These methods should be consistent and not used for any other purpose other than navigation.
  - Design paving patterns so that differences in plane (steps, etc.) are highlighted by paving contrasts, and areas that are flat have similar colors. For example, refrain from using contrasting pavers to create a pattern with lines in an area where stairs do not exist, as these may appear to be stairs to those with vision disabilities.
- To address limitations of people with mobility challenges:
  - Consider placing seating at the top and bottom of long and/or steep changes in grade to create safe and pleasant opportunities to rest.
  - Paving should be well maintained and free of tripping hazards.
  - All internal circulation paths should meet ADA Guidelines.
- Access to and through spaces are required to meet ADA Guidelines.



When sandwich boards are placed in the middle of the sidewalk, pedestrians must navigate around them.



This sidewalk has a clearly demarcated Clear Zone. The Frontage Zone is also defined by the wall around the seating.

2.2 Site Design

The SSDAC Plan identifies a wide range of opportunity sites for future development. Some are constrained infill sites; some are larger and may accommodate multiple buildings. Several opportunity sites are recommended for open spaces or other public amenities. The following guidelines address issues to be considered in the early stages of site design and layout.

2.2.1 Environmental Site Design

Environmental Site Design (ESD) strategies are small-scale stormwater management practices that mimic nature's natural hydrologic runoff characteristics to minimize the impact of land development on water and habitat resources. They filter rainwater where it falls through a series of soil and other medians designed to slow down stormwater runoff, reduce velocity, quantity, and pollutants, and improve water quality. They work best when distributed and integrated uniformly throughout a landscape, streetscape, and community to provide widespread hydrologic benefits to the receiving streams and groundwater table. When installed throughout the urban landscape, a network of ESD facilities can create habitat corridors with many ancillary benefits that cool surface and air temperatures, reduce greenhouse gases and urban heat island effect, improve air quality, mitigate development impacts, and improve property value and community health.

Many types of treatment techniques when applied early in the design and layout process, can sharply reduce stormwater runoff and pollutants generated at the site and harmful down stream impacts.

Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation provide guidance and standards for ESD facilities. Coordination with both departments is crucial as recommendations change over time.



Environmental site design in the streetscape (wrtdesign.com).

A. ESD Tool Box

Many types of ESD tools can be used in Silver Spring depending on a site's size, orientation, and constraints. Below are a few of the most common strategies for an urban landscape and examples of where they may be used. Following that are examples of how to integrate ESDs into street cross sections for: narrow streets, wide streets, and streets with a median. While all treatments are beneficial, designs that incorporate above ground vegetation, artful, playful, and aesthetically pleasing treatment systems are preferred. The strategies below additionally support the Sector Plan goals of reducing heat island effect, improving air and water quality, and increasing green cover and native plantings in the Plan area. Note: green roofs are an ESD tool, however, the green roof guidelines are included in Section 2.3.2.E Building Roof Design.

1. Micro-Bioretention

Bioretention systems are shallow depressions within small drainage areas where rainwater is captured and treated by passing it through a filter bed mixture of sand, soil, and organic matter. Filtered stormwater flows into a conveyance system or is partially infiltrated into the soil.

Micro-bioretention facilities are appropriate for both new and redevelopment applications. They fit into relatively small spaces, making them useful in parking lot islands, open spaces, linear roadway or median filters. Micro-bioretention facilities should not be located in areas with mature trees or other environmentally sensitive site features, or where existing slopes exceed 15 percent. Due to the nature of bioretention systems, they need to be periodically cleaned out. Therefore, any trees planted within the system will be lost as well as the ecological benefits of mature canopy trees.

2. Stormwater Planter Box

Stormwater planter boxes are similar to other bioretention systems as they have a layer of gravel, soil media, and vegetation. However, they can be used adjacent to a building or structure to capture rooftop runoff.

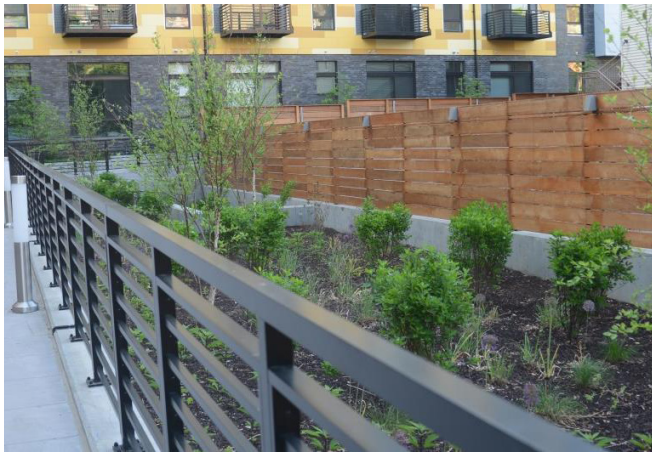
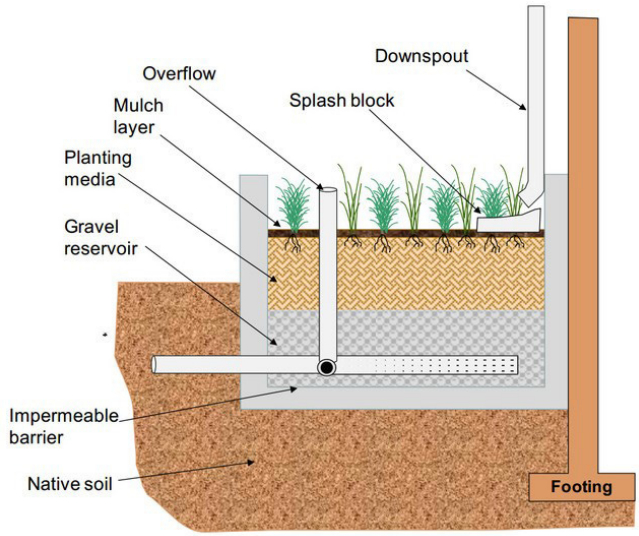


Image of a planter box (bottom).



Section of a planter box

3. Suspended Pavement and Structural Cells

Suspended pavement and structural cell systems are large void spaces that can be filled with structural soils. These systems allow the roots of street trees to expand without the confinement of typical tree panels and boxes resulting in healthier, longer lived canopy trees. The underground cells can also accommodate and treat larger quantities of stormwater volumes due to the extra space. They can be used along sidewalks, walkways, parking lots, or other areas where soil volume is limited due to site constraints. See Section 2.1.4. where this is recommended for use in the ROW.

4. Permeable Pavement

Permeable pavements are specific types of surfaces with a high porosity allowing rainwater to pass through the surface and into a gravel reservoir that filtrates slowly into the groundwater table or an underdrain. Permeable pavement is an effective alternative to dark impervious surfaces and can reduce heat island effect and high surface temperatures.

They can be used in parking lots, parking spaces, driveways, plazas, walkways, sidewalks, alleys, and if approved by MCDOT or SHA, even some roadways.

Three types of permeable pavements permitted in Montgomery County are pervious concrete, interlocking pavers, and pervious pavers.

Pervious Concrete

Concrete aggregates are coated in a cementitious material with 15-25 percent void space allowing water to filter through the material before soaking into the ground or underdrain.

Pervious/Porous Pavers

Pervious pavers are made of permeable materials placed on a gravel bed and may be separated by joints filled with small stones, sand, or soils. Water filters through both the pavers and joints into an aggregate subgrade.

Interlocking Pavers

Interlocking pavers are made of various non-permeable materials separated by joints filled with small stones, sand, or soils. Water enters the joints between the pavers and flows through a stone reservoir below.

5. Rainwater Harvesting

Rainwater harvesting is the practice of intercepting and storing rainfall for future use. Rainwater is collected in gutters and downspouts then directed into catchment cisterns where it can be used or stored when needed. The water may be used for outdoor landscape irrigation, vehicle washing, greywater (toilets, clothes washers), or other non-potable water needs. The capture and re-use of rainwater can reduce other stormwater treatment needs while promoting water conservation.



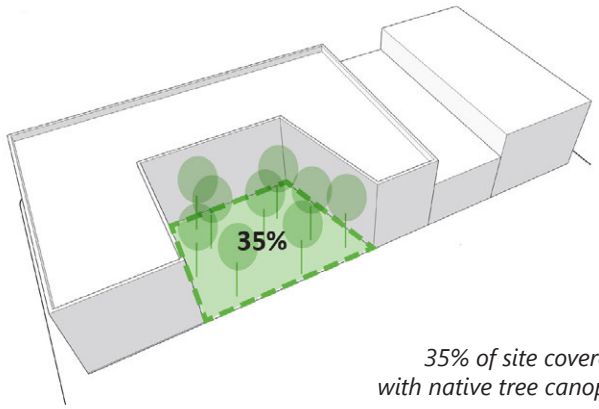
The parking lot at the Brookside Gardens Visitor Center uses permeable interlocking pavers for the parking spaces (Montgomery Parks).

2.2.2 Green Cover

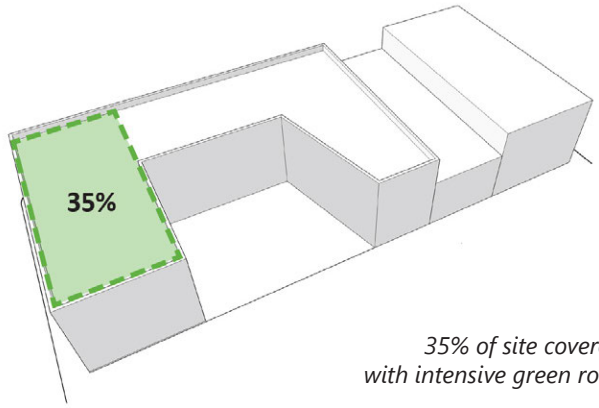
The green cover requirement in the SSDAC Plan is intended to increase overall native green vegetation throughout all public and private properties in Silver Spring.

- Require a minimum of 35 percent green cover on Optional Method Development projects. A project may achieve the 35 percent green cover requirement by:
  - Providing an intensive green roof (six inches or deeper) on the rooftop of the buildings;
  - Providing native canopy tree cover on the landscape of the project site area at ground level; and/or;
  - Providing a combination of tree canopy cover and intensive green roof for a total of 35 percent or greater on the total site.
- Site area for green cover may be reduced to accommodate on-site energy generation, other environmental site amenities, or where desirable to achieve other Sector Plan objectives.
- New rooftops not covered in green roofs or alternative or renewable energy generation should be cool roofs or active rooftop uses.
- Flexibility can be provided for unique circumstances for adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

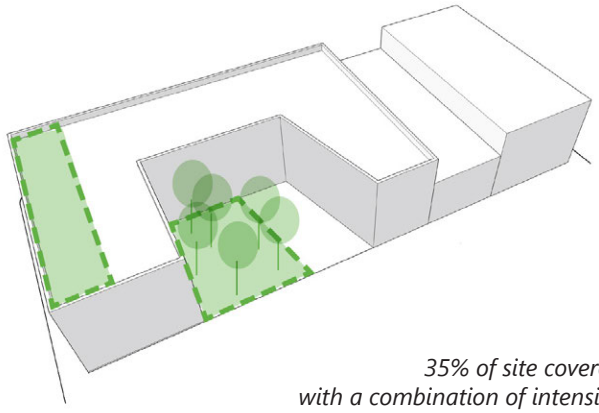
Three ways to achieve 35% green cover:



35% of site covered with native tree canopy.



35% of site covered with intensive green roof.



35% of site covered with a combination of intensive green roof and native tree canopy.

Figure 17: Achieving Green Cover

2.2.3 Building Orientation and Solar Energy

Getting to Net Zero carbon emissions by 2035 is a goal of *Montgomery County's Climate Action Plan*. Reaching net zero will require all new and existing buildings to significantly reduce their energy demands and their associated carbon emissions. One way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is to utilize the sun for heating and cooling rather than nonrenewable natural resources.

New construction offers the greatest opportunity to integrate passive and active solar energy elements early in the design process where it is most cost and mechanically effective. Passive solar design takes advantage of the sun, local climate, wind, and the site to maximize heating and cooling reductions. Active solar energy utilizes devices such as solar panels to collect solar energy before it's converted into electricity.

This section demonstrates a few site and building design strategies to consider when laying out sites and orienting buildings in order to take advantage of passive and active solar energy.

A. Site Design for Passive Solar Energy

Passive solar building orientation to maximize daylighting and thermal mass is the practice of positioning a building to capitalize on the sun's energy. An ideal orientation is within 30 degrees of true south with full exposure between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. during the winter. This may be difficult in urban areas for constrained infill sites, but downtown Silver Spring has several large opportunity sites where tower orientation can be considered. On sites large enough for more than one building to be developed, solar orientation should certainly be a factor in site design.

B. Active and Passive Solar Energy

Active solar energy utilizes solar panels, typically on rooftops. The size, shape, and slope of roof factors into the solar collection capacity. Solar panels perform best on south-facing roofs with a slope between 15 and 40 degrees. Solar panels are mounted and can be pivoted to track the sun when rooftops are not south facing.

A passive solar building utilizes the sun's rays through south-facing windows and retains it in materials that store heat, known as thermal mass. When sunlight strikes a building, the building materials reflect, transmit, or absorb the solar radiation. The goal of passive solar heating systems is to capture the sun's heat within the building's elements and to release that heat during periods when the sun is absent. A well-designed passive building will also take advantage of shading, ventilation, winds, overhangs, and awnings for cooling in the summer.

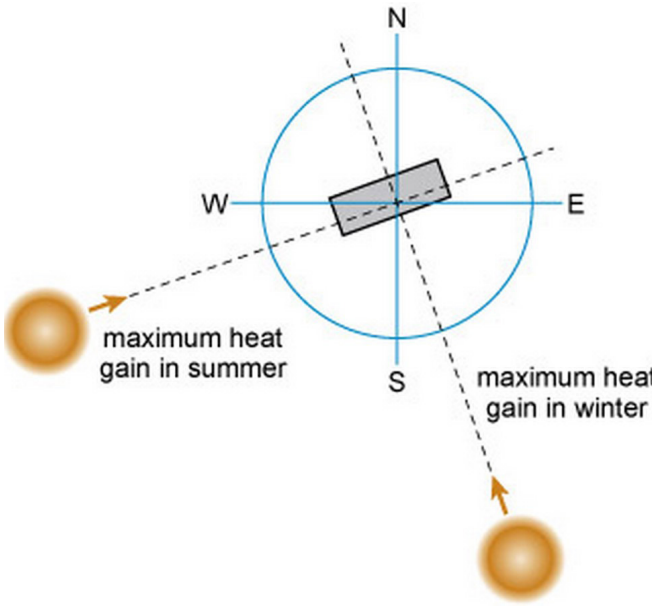


Figure 18: Building Solar Orientation Diagram

2.2.4 Bird-Safe Site Design

More than one billion birds die annually from hitting glass windows and doors. Section 2.3.2.C.2. addresses how to design building facades in order to prevent deadly collisions of local and migratory birds. This section addresses the lighting and site design considerations.

A. Site Lighting and Landscape Design

- Obtain USGBC LEED Green Building Rating Points from the category of "Bird Collision Deterrence."
- Glass windows should not reflect nearby or site vegetation, particularly large, mature trees and water. Where this is not feasible, use window treatments outlined in Section 2.3.2.C.2.
- Use soil berms, furniture, landscaping, or architectural features to prevent reflection in glazed building facades.

Lights disrupt birds' orientation inhibiting them from seeing their navigational markers like the stars and moon. Night lights and up lights (lights pointing upward) can entrap birds reluctant to fly from a lit area into a dark one.

- Eliminate unnecessary exterior lighting and use motion sensor lighting whenever possible.
- Choose down-lighting over up-lighting to keep from directing light into the night sky.
- Avoid up-lighting rooftop antennas and tall equipment as well as architectural Tops, Caps or other rooftop features.



An example of bird-friendly lighting that illuminates the ground for safety and does not direct light upward (artemide.com).

2.2.5 Through-Block Connections

There are several locations in the Plan where public through-block connections are recommended. These connections serve to break up long blocks and to provide efficient pedestrian connections to adjacent streets or destinations.

- Through-block connections should be high-quality, open to the sky and wide enough to allow pedestrians and cyclists to pass through comfortably, and others to pause and sit or access building entrances.
- They should be highlighted through landscape features, public art, signage or other design elements, which draw people into the connection from the sidewalk. Even though these connections are not public right-of-way they should be designed to be clearly publicly inviting, accessible and easily navigable (refer to Section 2.3).
- Through-block connections can be proposed on blocks where they are not recommended as long as they support the SSDAC Plan goals and meet the guidelines discussed in this section.



Through-block connection at Marriott headquarters in Bethesda.





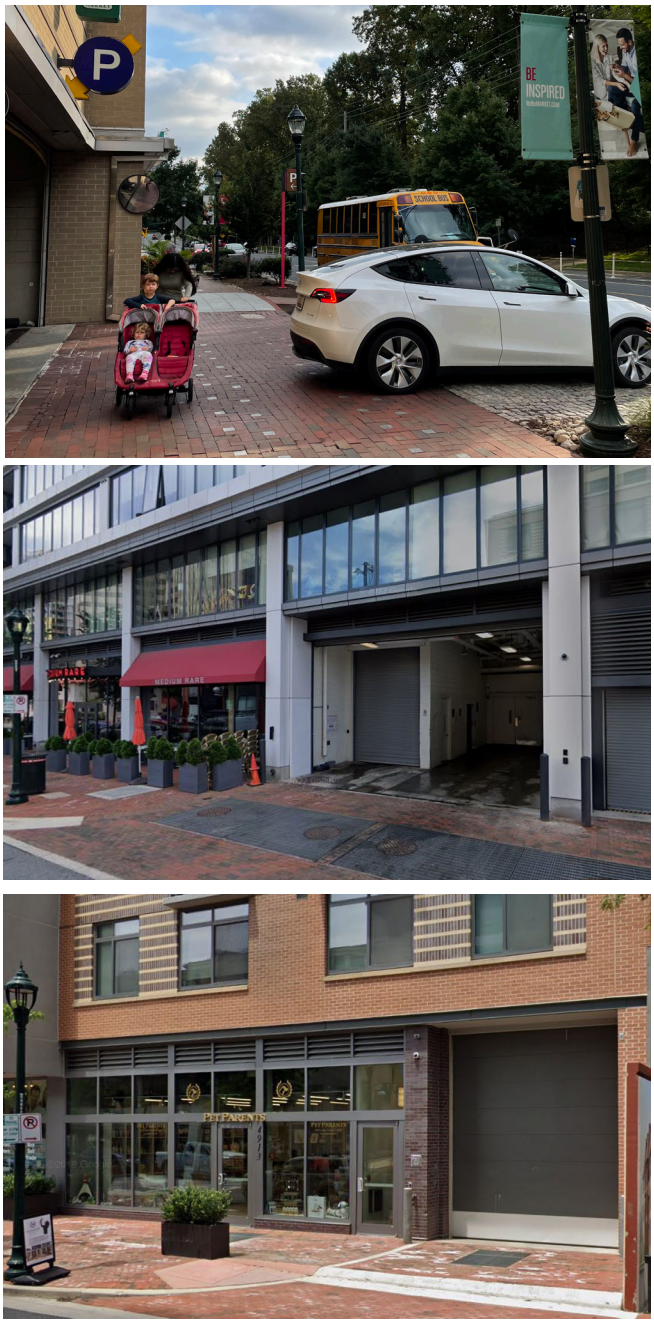
Through-block connections at City Center in DC (top), and between Wayne Avenue and Bonifant Street in downtown Silver Spring.

2.2.6 Service and Loading

Service and loading should be designed to minimize conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists and reduce the visual impacts of vehicle access and parking on the public realm. Site design should prioritize the public sidewalk and bikeways over private vehicular crossings.

Locate service and loading within the interior of a building at the rear whenever possible. Service alleys are recommended as a means to separate service and loading from pedestrian, vehicle or bicycle activity. Alleys also can be provided where setbacks are required from the side or rear property lines for building code.

- Avoid placing entries to loading docks and service areas on neighborhood residential streets when alternative access is feasible.
- Prioritize the sidewalks over intersecting service driveways by maintaining sidewalk elevation and continuing the use of sidewalk materials across the service driveway.
- Minimize the width and height of driveways and vehicular entrances. Where possible, combine loading dock and garage access.
- Screen vehicle and service access areas and trash storage with landscaping or other vertical elements. Design vehicle access doors to incorporate high-quality materials and finishes that are consistent with the building. Consider opportunities for art on loading bay doors.
- Locate service vehicle access away from public open space except in the case of through-block connections.
- Coordinate location of access points with adjacent and confronting properties where possible to ensure a comfortable sidewalk environment and limited conflicts.
- Provide loading spaces for pick-up and drop-off where feasible to reduce idling in the travel lane.



Service entrances in Bethesda. Note that the sidewalk materials are carried across the driveway entrance so the pedestrian experience is continuous.

2.3 Building Form and Design

The SSDAC Plan set new maximum heights and established the ability for all CR properties to obtain additional density via the Civic Improvement Fund. Given the potential for taller and denser development, adhering to building form guidelines will be critical to ensuring an attractive public realm. The Plan includes a variety of heights and densities that will allow for low-, mid- and high-rise development. To guide the design of buildings in the Plan area, six distinct building components are identified in Section 2.4.2, followed by design guidelines for each component. For smaller scale multi-family residential buildings in the blocks east of Fenton Village zoned CRN C-0 R-0.75 H-40, please refer to Section 2.3.3.



Aerial view (2022) looking south from the Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road intersection.

2.3.1 Determining Building Placement

Along Downtown Boulevards and Downtown Streets, building facades should create a streetwall that defines the edges of the public realm. Along these street types, buildings should be located at the edge of the Active Zone as defined in Section 2.1.2. To determine the Active Zone for a given street:

- Consult Section 3.6.9. of the SSDAC Plan to identify if the Plan recommends a street section at the development site location. If so, then that street section is the guide.
- If the SSDAC Plan does not establish a street section, then final building placement will be determined in coordination with development review staff.
- To identify Active Zone edge:
    - Find the existing curb-to-curb dimension.
    - Identify the master planned ROW from the ROW table in the SSDAC Plan (Section 3.6.5).
    - Determine required Active Zone elements from the tables in Section 2.1.2. and determine how the elements best fit between the edge of the curb and the extent of the Master Planned ROW. Master planned ROWs are typically measured from the centerline of the ROW. Examine the dedicated ROW by reviewing the most recent plat recorded for the site. (Note: If a plat has not been recorded for the site, review plats for confronting and adjacent sites to see if more information is available). Note that where Frontage Zones are required or recommended, they may be located in the ROW and/or on private property.
    - Dedication of additional ROW is often required to achieve Master Planned ROW. Sometimes an existing curb may need to be relocated.
- Building facades should be located at the edge of the Active Zone. If adjacent building facades are more than 8 feet in either direction from the edge of the Active Zone, Frontage Zones may be reduced or enlarged to maintain building streetwall. In the event that the sidewalk is expanded, a continuous Clear Zone must still be maintained. See Section 2.3.1.
- If a ground-floor use justifies an expanded Frontage Zone this is permitted for not more than two-thirds of the building frontage.
- Exceptions to the building placement guidelines include through-block connections and open spaces recommended in the Sector Plan, and entrances and articulation for architectural interest.
- Study the impacts of new development on adjacent public open spaces. Shadow studies should be done to mitigate impacts of buildings on public spaces.
- Preserve historic facades and frontages in coordination with the Historic Preservation Office and Historic Preservation Commission where applicable.

2.3.2 Building Massing Components

In urban areas the lower floors of buildings provide the streetwalls that form the edges of the public realm, while the upper floors of buildings contribute architectural interest and even distinctive skyline elements. These Building Massing Components allow new development to relate to its immediate context and urban environment. Each component should be distinguished from the adjoining components.

All new buildings in downtown Silver Spring should include some of these elements, if not all of them. Low-rise buildings will likely only have a Base, while high-rise buildings will include all elements below. Distinctive corner and entry treatments may differ from the Base, Middle and Top guidelines to enhance the building facades.

Building Massing Components (Figure 19):

- Base: The lower 2-6 floors of a building.
  - Pedestrian Level: The lowest 1-2 floors of the Base.
- Middle: Floors between the Base and the Top.
  - Tower: Middle of a building, when the total building height is over 120 feet.
- Top: Upper floors that complete the architectural form of the building.
  - Cap: Architecturally significant and unique feature of a Top in a building with a height over 120 feet.

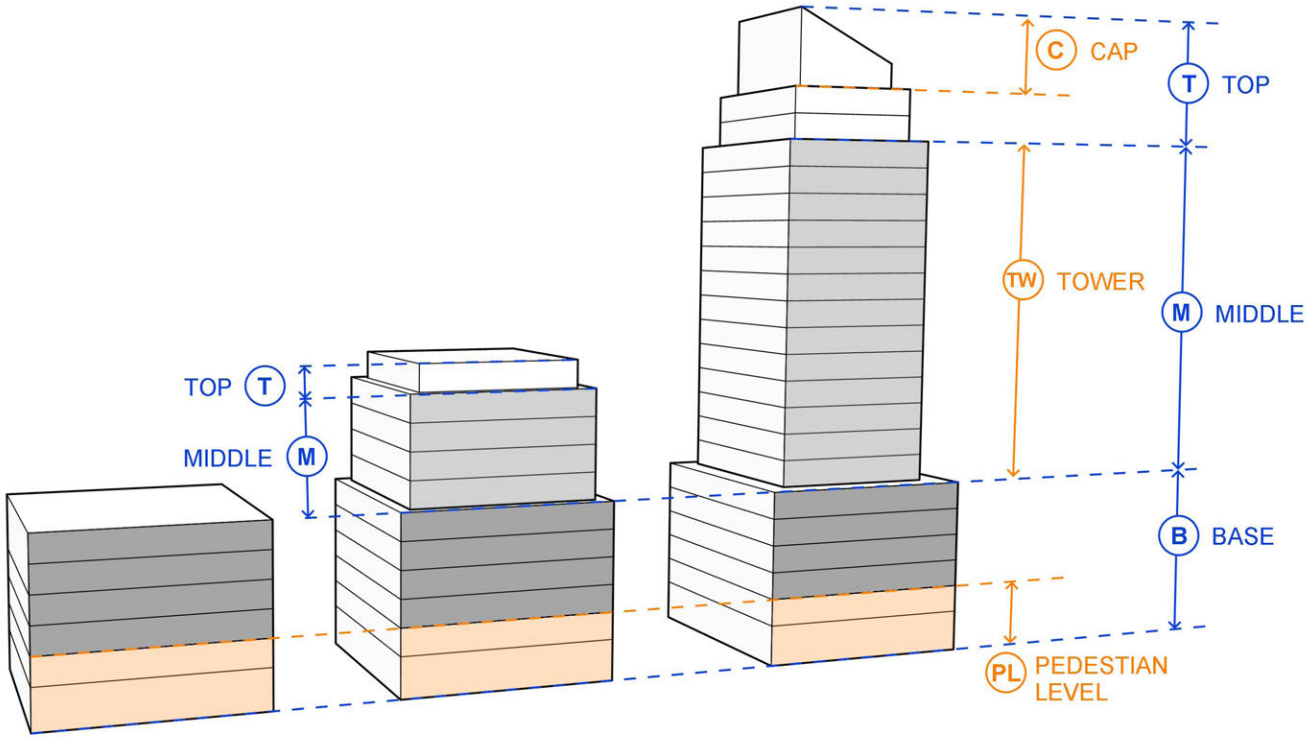


Figure 19: Building Massing Components Diagram



Examples of buildings with distinct base-middle-top. Clockwise from top left, The Alexander apartments in Philadelphia (ramsa.com), 222 Berkeley Street in Boston (ramsa.com), Mixed-use mid-rise in Columbus, OH (bizjournals.com), The Upstairs apartments on Bethesda Row.

A. Guidelines for all Massing Components

- Differentiate between adjacent Components. If a step-back is not required, then the differentiation may be an architectural element that is not in the same plane as the primary façade, or a change in color and/or material.
- Private balconies and terraces at all floor levels should be oriented toward the street to encourage interaction between the private and public realms.
- Avoid long, uniform and uninterrupted facades. Encourage variation in plane, color, material and other characteristics to break up the mass of large buildings and add visual interest.
- Avoid cantilevering the majority of the building mass over the Frontage Zone or public realm elements such as sidewalks or public open spaces.
- If the building includes a preserved façade or frontage the design should be compatible with the architecture of the preserved section of the building.



Example of differentiated Pedestrian Level, articulated facade and elements that create an active public realm (Humphreys & Partners Architects).

B. Base Guidelines

- The Base should create a continuous street wall that frames the sidewalk.
- Base heights should vary from 2-6 stories. Bases of new buildings should respond to bases of adjacent buildings, as well as to street character and width. If adjacent buildings are low or mid-rise, base of new high-rise building should respond to the lower adjacent massing to the extent possible.
- The Base should be differentiated from the Pedestrian level via façade treatment. This can be achieved through, but not limited to, elements such as awnings or canopies, architectural façade details, changes in fenestration, and changes in materials or color.



Operable walls that open to the street, along with various materials and textures. (David Baker Architects)

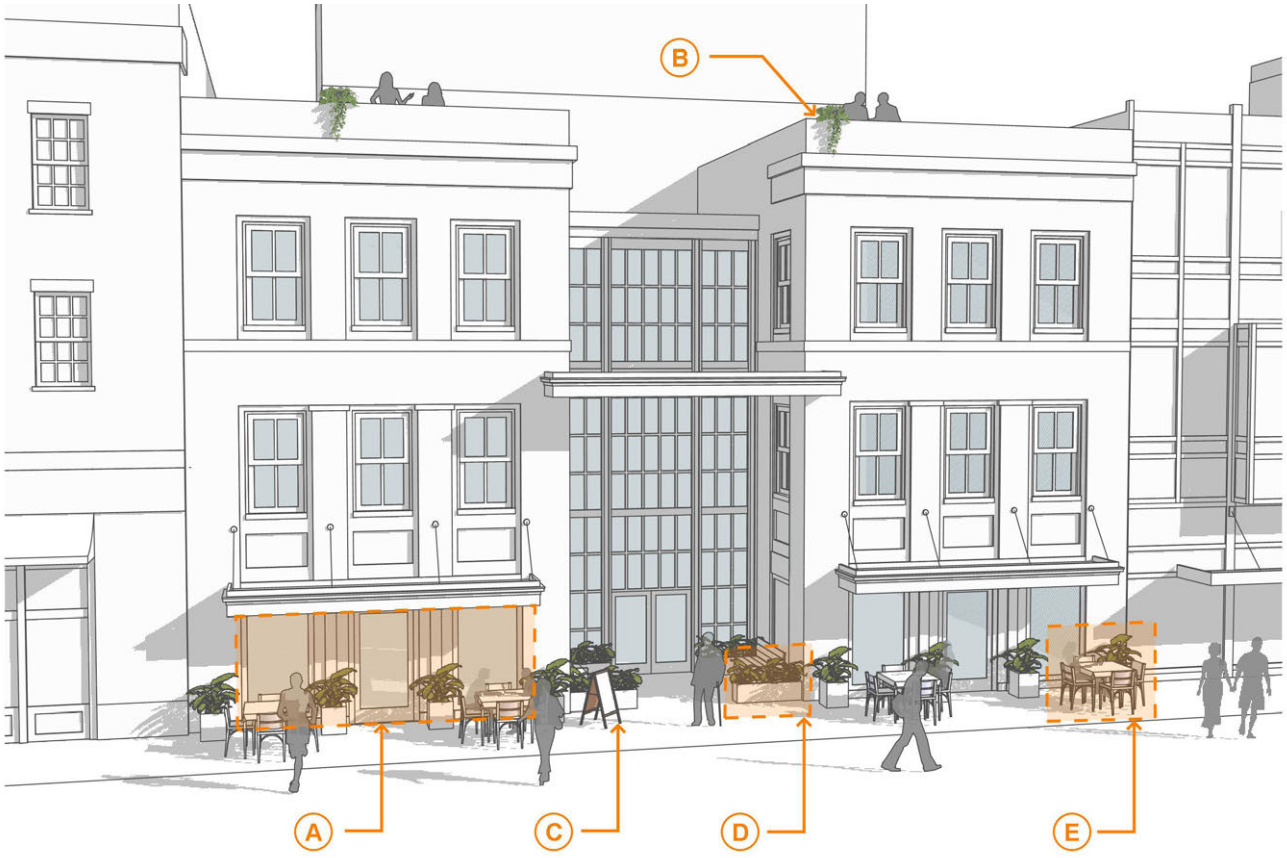


Figure 20: Pedestrian Level: Commercial Ground Floor

A. Transparent entrances and ground-floor windows

B. Orient balconies and roof terraces facing the street.

C. Awnings and signage.

D. Plantings and landscaping that is welcoming and does not obstruct entrances or windows.

E. Safe, comfortable stopping points to relax, gather and socialize.

1. Pedestrian Level

- Floors 1-2 of the Base should engage the street and respond to the pedestrian environment. Create a visually engaging building edge that frames the sidewalk.
- The Pedestrian Level should give the appearance of greater height than any single floor in the Base or Middle.
- The Pedestrian Level should be an active ground floor regardless of the ground-floor use of the building.
    - In buildings with ground-floor retail or commercial use, provide welcoming and transparent entrances and ground-floor windows. Include outdoor seating when feasible (Figure 20).
    - For primarily residential buildings, elements such as ground floor amenity spaces and entrances to individual units are encouraged. Amenities such as lobbies, gyms, and indoor gathering spaces should be located along the building frontage with plenty of windows (Figure 21).
- Avoid long blank walls along the sidewalk. Provide frequent entries, transparency, and operable walls where possible. Building entrances should be easily located and visible from the Active Zone.
- Maximize opportunities for incorporating art into the Pedestrian Level.
- On streets with an existing retail character, new ground floor retail should maintain the scale of adjacent existing retail bays. For buildings in Fenton Village, refer to Fenton Village Overlay Zone text for required sizes of ground floor retail bays.



Canopied entry at the Camden Roosevelt Apartments, Washington D.C. (camdenliving.com).



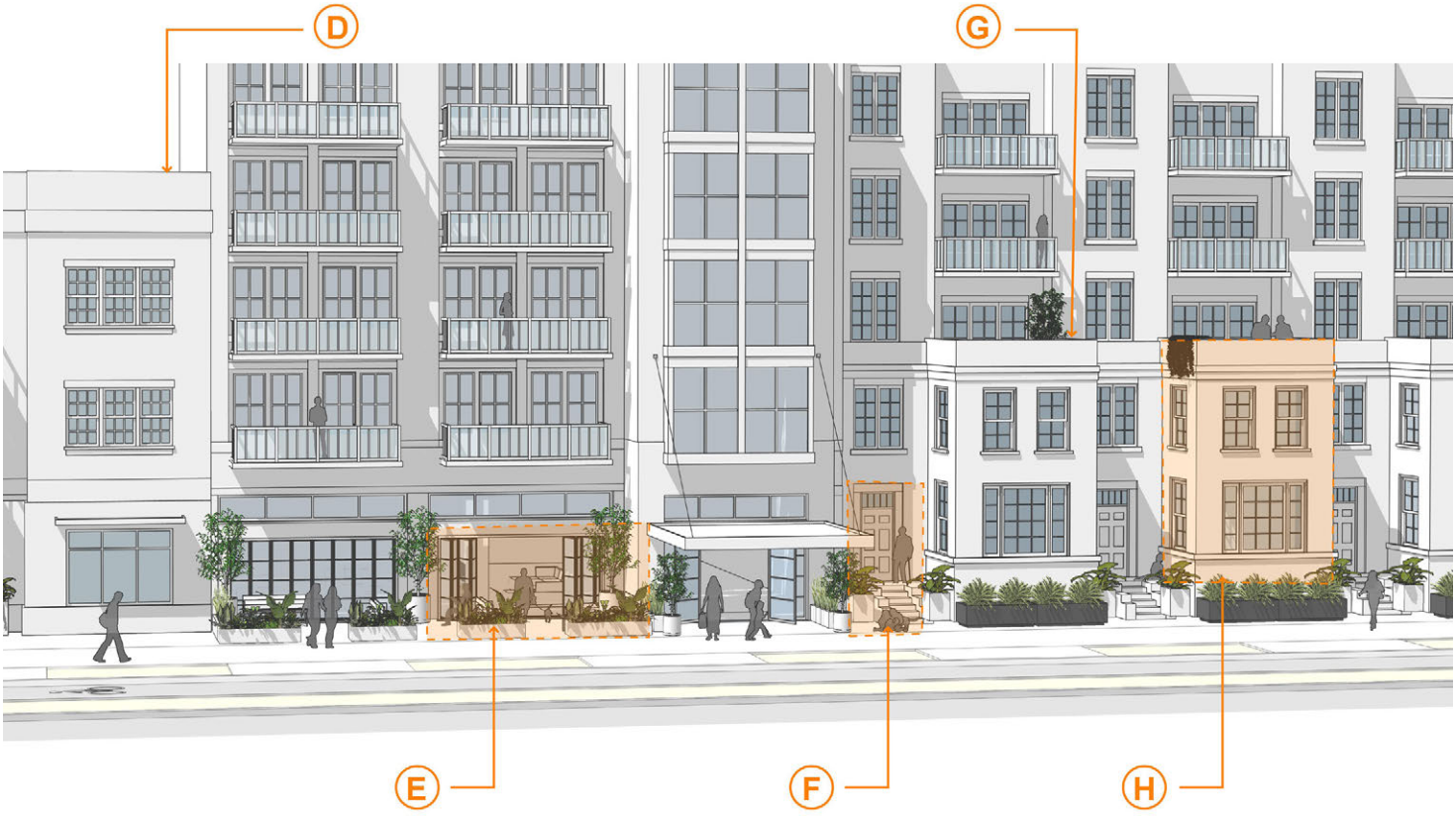
Figure 21: Pedestrian Level: Residential Ground Floor



Transparency at public spaces on the ground floor . (Hobin Architecture)



Articulated lower floors.



A. Orient balconies towards the street.
B. Include elements such as awnings and signage.

C. Include places to rest, gather, and socialize.

D. Setback above the base that can be used as public open space

E. Include elements such as ground-floor amenities, transparent and operable walls, and welcoming landscaping.

F. Include frequent entrances into individual units.

G. Orient roof terraces towards the street

H. Articulated lower floors.

C. Middle Guidelines

- Differentiate between the Base of the building and the Middle. If a step-back is not provided, then the differentiation may be an architectural element that is not in the same plane as the primary façade, or a change in color and/or material. This differentiation does not have to occur for the full length of the Base but should be a primary feature of the building massing.
- Consider varying the geometry of the buildings' upper floors relative to the Base
- Avoid creating large blank party walls. If party walls are necessary, mitigate their visual impact with elements such as public art, lighting, texture and/or patterning that provide visual interest and are appropriate to the context and architecture of the building.



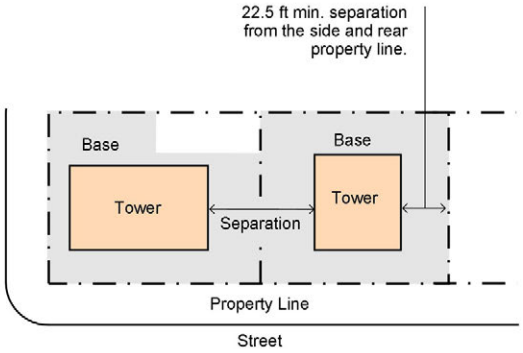


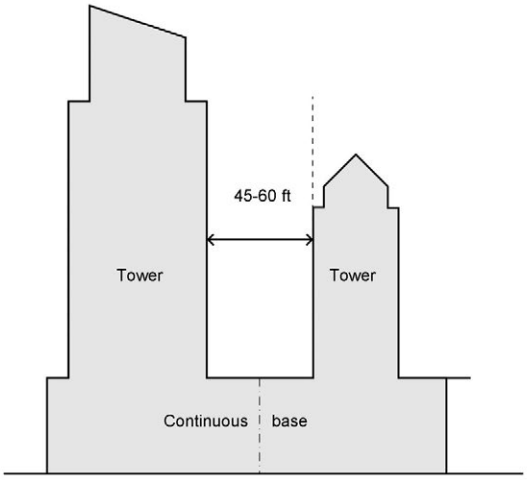


Mid-rise buildings with clearly a differentiated Pedestrian Level and Top. King George Square in Toronto, Canada (top, condos.ca), West Paces in Atlanta, GA (middle, zieglercooper.com), Crystal Flats Apartments (bottom, crystalflats.com).

1. Tower

- Provide a step-back above the Base. Step-backs should be provided across the majority of the building frontage but Towers can partially extend to the ground in important locations. Tower step-backs should be a minimum of:
  - 15 feet above the base on Downtown Boulevards and Downtown Streets (wide; ROW > 80')
  - 10 feet above the base on Downtown Streets (typical; ROW < 80 feet) and Neighborhood or Area Connectors
- Secondary upper step-backs are encouraged for buildings above 150 feet. Secondary step-backs should be several floors above the step-back that separates the Base from the Tower and should be smaller than the primary step-back above the Base.
- Separate towers by at least 45 feet (minimum of 22.5 feet from the side and rear property lines).
- Encourage undulating, curved or angled tower step-backs if the average step-back meets the guidelines for the street type. This expressive geometry can increase visual interest on prominent sites near major open spaces and corners.





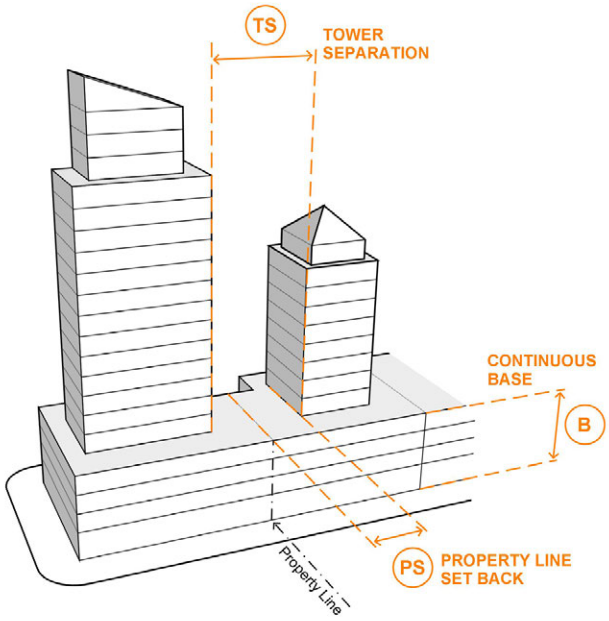


Figure 22: Tower Separation Diagrams







Examples of high-rise buildings. Credits clockwise from top left: 425 Park Avenue, New York (curbed.com), 150 East 78th Street New York (ramsa.com), One Bedford Condominiums, Toronto (strata.ca).

2. Bird Safe Design

Façade modulation, varied geometries and materials and balconies are important for achieving Design Excellence, and they also help to prevent the deaths of millions of birds. Building facades should prevent deadly collisions of local and migratory birds through smart design, materials, and technology without sacrificing attractiveness, functionality, or natural lighting. The following building features and treatments have been shown to reduce bird collisions and are encouraged:

- Awnings, louvers, grilles, screens, overhangs, balconies and balustrades;
- Opaque, translucent, stained, fritted, or etched glass, including glass angled at 20-40 degrees.

Lights disrupt birds' orientation, so it is also recommended to turn off interior lights visible from the outside during spring and fall migration periods.



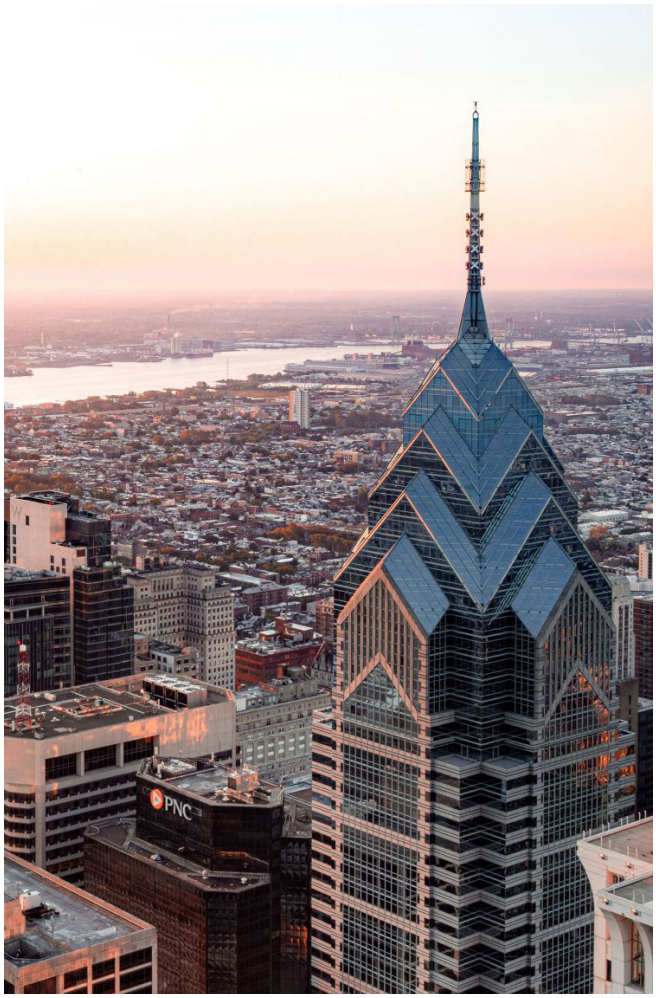
Balconies provide shadows on facades (top, Merchant Quarter Condominiums). Fritted glass (bottom) can help deter birds from flying into buildings.

D. Top Guidelines

Differentiate the upper floor(s) of the building with a Top that distinctly finishes the dominant architectural theme of the building. This can be accomplished by a step-back, a change in plane, color and/or material, or any creative treatment of the façade and/or building form. Refer to guidelines for roofs in Section 2.4.2.D

1. Cap Guidelines

- For high-rise buildings, the Top can also have a Cap which is a unique feature that adds a distinct character to the skyline.
- Expressive or sculptural Caps are encouraged for very tall buildings (over 200 feet), particularly in the Metro Center and Ripley Districts near the Transit Center.
- Refer to guidelines for roofs in Section 2.4.2.D









Examples of building Tops with expressive Caps. Clockwise from top right; Liberty Tower in Philadelphia, PA (foundstudy.com), Prudential Tower in Boston, MA (bxp.com), Shanghai World Financial Center (globalcanopy.com), Four Seasons Condominiums in Nashville, TN (zieglercooper.com).

E. Roofs

- As stated in the Sector Plan, all roofs that are not covered in green roofs or alternative or renewable energy generation should be designed as cool roofs or include active rooftop uses.
- Integrate energy efficient strategies into roof design, including solar panels and passive heating and cooling elements.
- Consider the views of the rooftop composition from adjacent buildings when designing the upper floors of Towers, Caps and roofs. Penthouses should be screened so that equipment is not visible from the street or any adjacent open space.

1. Green Roofs

Green roofs or living roofs are alternative roof surfaces that replace conventional construction materials with a planting media and vegetation. Green roofs are key to reducing heat island effect, treating stormwater, lowering energy demands for heating and cooling, providing additional habitat and improving air quality.

There are three main types of green roof systems, extensive, semi-intensive and intensive. Intensive green roofs are preferred in downtown Silver Spring and have a soil media greater than 8 inches. They support most native herbaceous perennials, grasses, vegetables, fruits, and some shrubs. They require a stronger roof structure and provide the greatest ecological and energy benefits.

In addition, intensive green roofs systems achieve higher levels of stormwater retention toward meeting the county's requirements. They also increase value and offer opportunities for uses such as gardens and urban agriculture. Semi-intensive systems generally have a soil depth of 5-7 inches, while extensive systems may only have 2-4 inches of soil depth.





Examples of green roofs.

2.3.3 Residential Development Guidelines for CRN Zoning

The Sector Plan rezones properties at the transition from Fenton Village to East Silver Spring from R-60 to CRN 0.75 C-0 R-0.75 H-40'. The intent of the Sector Plan zoning recommendations for these blocks is to allow for multifamily buildings that are similar to single-family homes in scale and architectural style and features. While development on CRN parcels can typically be achieved through Standard Method development, guidelines are included to support the goal of the Sector Plan.



Fenton Village is immediately adjacent to single-family home neighborhoods in East Silver Spring. The abrupt transition occurs mid-block between Fenton Street and Grove Street.



Figure 23: Recommended Zoning Map for the Adjacent Communities District

A. Building Placement and Massing

- Maintain the front Building Line established by the existing single-family home context on the block. This applies to all streets in the blocks zoned CRN 0.75 C-0 R-0.75 H-40.
- Recommended side setback on both sides for mid-block lots (not corner lots): 5 foot minimum.
- Recommended rear setback: 4 foot minimum, including if there is an accessory structure.
- From the street, façades of new development should appear to be compatible with the existing houses in the neighborhood, most of which are 1-2 stories tall.

B. Site Design and Parking

- Preserve as much of the existing tree canopy as possible.
- Create, preserve and/or maintain landscaped front yards that are consistent with the context of surrounding neighborhood single-family yards.
- Provide a maximum of one parking space per unit. Parking lot and/or garage doors should not be visible from the primary building frontage. Parking structures should be designed to minimize disruption to the site.
- Parking should be accessed from alleys or side streets when possible. If front loaded parking is provided, it should be in a detached parking structure at the rear of the yard accessed via a driveway.
- Consider using permeable paving materials for any surface lots or driveways.

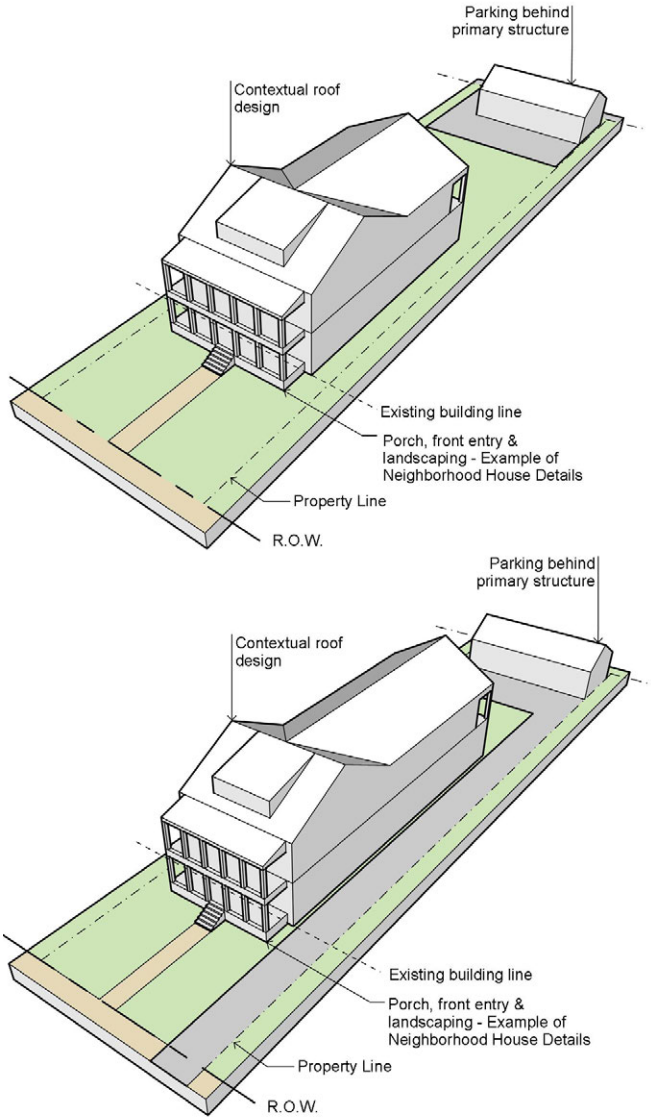


Figure 24: Illustrative massing for CRN lots.
Alley-loaded parking (top) and Street-loaded parking (bottom).



Figure 25: Illustrative street elevation for CRN block

C. Exterior and Roof Design

- Buildings should be designed to look and feel like houses.
- Encourage inclusion of neighborhood house details in the design such as, but not limited to: stairs, stoops, porches, awnings, balconies, decks, sunrooms.
- Multi-unit buildings should have at least some front entrances facing the street. Entrances should be pedestrian friendly and include adequate lighting for safety and security.
- If single lots are combined into a larger lot for redevelopment, the building façade must be articulated to appear as several distinct portions in different planes. No individual portion may be longer than 35 feet before changing plane.
- While a variety of traditional and contemporary architectural styles is encouraged, facades should relate to the neighborhood context in terms of materials, fenestration, and architectural details.
- Roofs should relate to the roof types in the immediate context. In these blocks most houses have gabled roofs that slope toward the street, sometimes with dormers that include windows for rooms on upper floors.







Examples of house-scale multifamily buildings. (missingmiddlehousing.com)

2.3.4 Parking

Downtown Silver Spring is one of Montgomery County's three areas covered by a Parking Lot District (PLD). This is a public inventory of parking spaces that benefits the entire area. The Silver Spring PLD includes garages, lots and on-street parking. The SSDAC Plan recommends the redevelopment of many of the stand-alone parking garage and lot site. However, it is assumed that required public parking would be replaced on-site via a public-private partnership between MCDOT and the entity redeveloping the site. For these projects, any MCDOT standards for structured public parking must be followed in addition to these guidelines. While structured parking should be easily accessed and clearly signed, the parking structures themselves should be as invisible as possible and integrated into the architecture.

These guidelines apply to all structured parking in Silver Spring, whether public or private.

- Structured parking should be below ground or be lined with other uses along streets and public spaces. If underground parking and/or fully lined parking is not feasible due to site constraints, line the ground floor of structured parking with retail or other uses with transparency to maintain an active building edge. Where active uses are infeasible, avoid exposed parking floors along the street through measures outlined in the Zoning Ordinance Section 6.2.9.D.1 Structured Parking Requirements.
- Design exterior of the garage portion of the building to be integrated and ideally indistinguishable from the rest of the building facade.
- Wherever possible, parking garage entrances should not be on the primary façade of a building. The parking entrance should be on a secondary façade, with access from a service alley or side street whenever feasible. The parking entrance should not be near the main pedestrian entrance to the building.
- Prioritize the sidewalks over intersecting parking access driveways by maintaining sidewalk elevation and continuing the use of sidewalk materials across the driveway.
- Surface parking is not recommended in any of the downtown districts of the SSDAC. All existing surface parking lots are considered redevelopment opportunities. In some unique cases, limited ADA parking may be allowable on site and not in a structured parking facility. Surface parking is permitted in a limited capacity in the Adjacent Communities district, particularly to serve small multi-family units that may develop on the blocks between Fenton Street and Grove Street (Section 2.3.3).





Examples of integrated parking structures. Grand River Station, La Crosse, WI (left, imegcorp.com). The Brunner Building, Columbus, OH (right, schooleycaldwell.com).

2.3.5 Adaptive Reuse of Buildings

Adaptive reuse allows communities to utilize existing buildings to realize various goals related to planning, housing, economic development, social justice, and sustainability. The reuse of historic buildings compared to new construction of equivalent size and function offers an environmental benefit over demolition and new construction while bringing new life to an old structure.

Silver Spring's historic buildings are critical to the community's character and collective memory; offer tangible connections to the past, opportunities for education and interpretation; and create a diversity of building types within the Plan area. These Design Guidelines encourage preservation and adaptive reuse of select historic buildings by means of frontage, or façade preservation. The level of preservation suggested as part of an adaptive reuse varies depending on the current protections provided to a building and its overall historic significance.

A. Adaptive Reuse of Historically Significant Buildings

- Frontage Preservation: Allows new development setback from the historic façade. The new building should be setback at least 20 feet from the façade, but more distance may be appropriate depending on site conditions. Infill development should be completed in a contextual manner, with emphasis on preserving corners and enhancing the street-level pedestrian environment.
- Façade Preservation: Permits new development setback from the historic façade, similar to frontage preservation. The new building should be setback at least 10 feet from the façade, but additional distance may be appropriate depending on the site conditions. As with frontage preservation, additions and alterations to these buildings should be considered as a matter of course.

B. Adaptive Reuse of Older Buildings

While certain older buildings may no longer continue to serve their present function, they often offer levels of craftsmanship and architectural style absent in new construction. These buildings can be updated to meet current code, accessibility, and other user requirements.

- Integrate elements such as new materials, transparency, color and enhanced landscapes in the reuse of large buildings with imposing massing and scale. These alterations add visual interest and provide an inviting pedestrian environment.
- Consider ground-floor retrofits with liner active ground-floor uses for existing buildings that do not currently have an optimal relationship to the sidewalk.
- Retrofitted buildings that add additional floors should not be required to step-back upper floors if infeasible due to existing structural design.

C. Adaptive Reuse of Garden and Mid-Rise Apartment Complexes

Seven apartments constructed between 1936 and 1943 are spread throughout the Plan area. These Garden Apartments and their historical significance is discussed in the SSDAC Plan in Section 3.9.5. These buildings exemplify the Garden City-era of planning in the United States. They typically feature 2-4 story small apartment buildings, nestled within a garden landscape of carefully placed lawns featuring a mature tree canopy, with paths connecting residents to internal courtyards and play areas, as well as to the nearby streets. Many of these complexes continue to provide market-rate affordable housing in a bucolic setting.

- Preserve the form and design of the existing buildings while incorporating new materials and technologies such as solar arrays on flat roofed buildings, compatible replacement windows, etc.
- Design within the historic framework to preserve character defining elements, upgrade existing conditions, and bring new life to building's spaces. Examples include renovating partial basement areas to provide on-site community recreation or meeting spaces, or repurposing courtyards for play equipment or community-based active or passive exercise areas.
- Consider additions to expand housing options on site that preserve existing structures, mature trees, and green space. Options include constructing bump-outs (perpendicular new construction) on existing buildings, new building wings, new stand alone buildings on existing parking lots, or new stand-alone buildings within the garden landscape.
- Protection and replacement of native shade trees is encouraged to preserve the tree canopy, protect soil and mitigate stormwater runoff, and enhance the garden landscape of the complexes.
- New additions should protect the setbacks and green buffers that currently exist between the apartments and the sidewalks and streets.
- Breaking up blocks is discouraged in these designed landscapes to preserve the pedestrian experience between the buildings and the landscaped green areas.
- Note: the Sector Plan recommends creating a Historic District that links all of the garden apartments in the Plan area. However, it also recognizes that several of these complexes eventually may come up for complete redevelopment. In that case, the guidelines about preserving open space, tree canopy and the green landscaped environment of the properties still apply. For new buildings, guidelines in Section 2.4 apply, even if buildings are built on private streets internal to the site.



Rock Creek Springs garden apartments

D. Silver Spring Locational Atlas District

The Silver Spring Locational Atlas Historic District consists of: 1) buildings individually designated in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation; 2) buildings recognized as significant to the development of the downtown, but only partially protected; 3) and non-historic buildings. The Historic Resources Preservation Ordinance protects properties listed solely in the atlas from substantial alteration. Any modifications deemed a substantial alteration require a Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP) from the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Character defining features of the district should remain intact pending evaluation for designation in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

Table 7: Silver Spring Locational Atlas Historic District

Resource	Year Built	Background	Treatment
8622-8626 Colesville Road	1953	The strip of one to two story commercial buildings are located mid-block on Colesville Road across the street from the Silver Theatre (listed in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation) and adjacent to the preserved J.C. Penney Facade. The massing and scale of the buildings contributes to the successful pedestrian experience of downtown.	Facade preservation with a focus on restoration of character defining elements of the storefronts.
8630-8632 Colesville Road	1940-1941		
8634-8638 Colesville Road	1941		
8642-8644 Colesville Road	1941		
8646 Colesville Road	1941		
8648 Colesville Road	1941		
8650 Colesville Road	1941		
The Filmore (J.C. Penney) 8656 Colesville Road	1950	The adaptive reuse of the building led to the preservation of the limestone-clad facade and demolition of the remainder of the building in 2010	

Resource	Year Built	Background	Treatment
8662-8668 Colesville Road	1950/1954	The two-story commercial building is located at the southwest corner of Colesville Road and Fenton Street. A renovation of the building in 1954 resulted in the construction of the second story. The building compliments the design of the Colemont Building, Fenton Building, and Montgomery Arms Apartments. The massing and scale of the building contributes to the successful pedestrian experience of the downtown.	Facade preservation to retain character defining elements of the massing and scale.
Fenton Building 8701-8705 Colesville Road and 8563-8551 Fenton Street	1951	The two-story commercial building is located at the northeast corner of Fenton Street and Colesville Road and comprises the entire block of Fenton between Colesville Road and Roeder Road. The design, materials, massing, and scale of the building contributes to the successful pedestrian experience of downtown.	Facade preservation to retain character defining features of the design, materials, massing, and scale.



The 8600 block of Colesville Road which includes several independent retail establishements, and The Fillmore, previously J.C. Penney, now a popular entertainment venue.

Resource	Year Built	Background	Treatment
Colemont Building 8715 Colesville Road	1951-1952	The three-story commercial building is located mid-block on Colesville Road. The design, materials, massing, and scale of the building contributes to the successful pedestrian experience of downtown.	Frontage preservation to retain character defining features of the design, materials, massing, and scale.
Hecht's Department Store 901 Ellsworth Drive	1947/1950	The architecture firm Abbot, Merkt & Company designed the three-story department store built in 1947. The immediate success led to the construction of an additional two stories three years later. The building represents Silver Spring's transition to a destination commercial and regional business center. In 1992, the Ellsworth Mall (formerly City Place Mall) development preserved the Hecht's facade.	Frontage preservation to retain character defining features of the design, materials, massing, and scale.



The Ellsworth Mall is located in a former Hecht's department store building at 901 Ellsworth Drive.

2.4 Parks, Trails and Public Spaces

Design excellence in parks and public spaces within the *Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan* will create diverse experiences that will improve the life and health of residents, employees, and visitors.

The Plan envisions a community with a network of welcoming multi-use parks, trails, and public spaces that will become key destinations in downtown Silver Spring. These parks and public spaces will make Silver Spring more attractive to people and businesses.





Existing entry to Jesup Blair Park from Georgia Avenue and Jesup Blair Park Drive (top), illustrative concept rendering of one way that entrance could be reimagined (bottom).

2.4.1 SSDAC Urban Park System - Network of Parks, Trails, and Public Spaces

Section 3.5 Parks, Trails and Public Spaces of the SSDAC Plan recommends an interconnected system of parks whose size, primary and supporting functions should be directly proportional to the projected density and land use patterns of the community. The urban design vision developed in the SSDAC Plan will help guide the service area, program, key features, size, and design of these parks.

All urban parks should be strategically located to allow access by walking and biking to and from public transit and other complementary land uses to support the goals of encouraging physical activity, facilitating social connection, accessing nature, and promoting economic prosperity.

Urban parks in the Sector Plan area should include:

- Opportunities for active, contemplative, and social gathering experiences within parks;
- Central civic spaces emphasizing social gatherings;
- Interconnected system of sidewalks and trails to connect parks and open spaces through the proposed Green Loop.

Urban parks in each District should include Recreational amenities that can be accessed by walking or biking.

Figure 28 identifies proposed locations for parks and public spaces in the Plan area. The map illustrates how the proposed green space network is connected to the Green Loop. The designation of active recreation destinations, Civic Green, Plaza, Neighborhood Green, etc., highlights the major function of each open space but does not limit other experiences.

For more information on urban parks subcategories and associated design elements, please refer to Chapter 3 of the Energized Public Spaces (EPS) Design Guidelines.

A. Design Principles

The following design principles support the vision and goals of the *Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan.* These design principles are applicable to all parks and public spaces within the Plan area, whether large or small, highlighting the area's urban character.

Access and Connectivity

Public spaces are open and inviting to everyone. Centrally located and easily accessible public spaces (within 10-minute walking distance) are framed and faced by streets and buildings and are often the focal point of a neighborhood. They are connected by sidewalks or bicycle paths, so that residents can easily travel to parks and open spaces on foot or by bicycle.

Sense of Community

Public spaces are the physical, social, cultural, and environmental heart of communities. They are the places of community identity, pride, and social interaction. They must be attractive, safe, and engaging with a range of experiences for social gatherings, relaxation and active recreation or play.

Urban Ecology

Parks and public spaces clean the air and water, keep places cooler, and contribute to community resilience and provide environmental services by acting as green infrastructure and wildlife habitat. In addition, public spaces encourage greater environmental stewardship, education, and responsible interaction with nature.

2.4.2 Area-wide Design Guidelines

These design guidelines will assist the county in creating a vibrant and welcoming public realm for the Plan's study area that is linked to other parks, trails, streets, and public spaces. For more information on each of the following design guidelines and respective case studies, please refer to Chapter 2 of the 2019 *EPS Design Guidelines*. The following table summarizes the design intent and description of each proposed design guideline. The guidelines were organized to respond to major questions when designing public spaces such as:

- "What do we have?"
- "What do we want?"
- "How do we get there, and how do we navigate?"

	Guideline	Design Intent	Topic
A.	CONTEXT	Incorporate Site Context in the Design of Public Spaces	Adjacencies Existing Conditions Planned Conditions
B.	PLACE	Celebrate and Incorporate Community Identity	Features Community-Driven Process
C.	COMFORT	Make Public Spaces Inviting	Enclosure Amenity Design and Location Safety
D.	VARIETY	Provide Flexible Spaces for a Diversity of Activities and Experiences	Space Flexibility Diverse Programming
E.	CONNECTIONS	Enhance Community Connections	Access Multiple Links Wayfinding

Figure 26: Design Guidelines table from EPS Design Guidelines

2.4.3 Urban Park Subcategories and Associated Design Elements

The 2022 *Parks, Recreation and Open Space* (PROS) Plan simplified the Parks Classification system by consolidating several types of urban parks identified in earlier PROS plans into a single Urban Park type. All proposed parks and public spaces within the SSDAC Plan fall within the consolidated Urban Park type. This change allows more flexibility during implementation, while illustrating the intent of each park.

All urban parks should provide social, active, and nature-based experiences to the extent possible. The design guidance helps define the park's character, range of amenities, predominant function, program, and associated context within a hierarchy of public spaces.

The names of the old urban park classifications are used in the Sector Plan and in these design guidelines to clarify the intended objectives of the recommended parks. They are used to provide a sense of the scale and character of each park while maintaining some flexibility on the program elements associated with them. The names have been maintained even though now these classifications are subcategories to the Urban Park type (Figure 27).

A. Design Elements

This section includes a summary of design elements for each proposed park or open space, organized by urban park subcategory. The *EPS Design Guidelines* provide additional design guidance for each park subcategory and should be consulted in conjunction with this document. The recommended sizes are consistent with the Sector Plan recommendations.

- *Function/Service Area* – describes whether the park serves primarily an entire region, sector plan or district/neighborhood.
- *Main Program* – describes the primary uses or programming of the park; that does not preclude the park having other uses if it also accommodates the main program.
- *Key Features* – describes the typical facilities that might be expected in this park's subcategory. The recommendations on potential facilities listed on this document are illustrative examples; specific amenities will be selected during the facility design process as each park is developed or renovated.
- *Site/Facility Placement* – provides guidance for locating the park site within a development parcel. If the park is existing, this guideline may address renovation of existing facilities and the relationship to other features of the park, including access for park users and maintenance staff
- *Size* - aligned with the Sector Plan's recommendations.



Figure 27: Park Classification Diagram

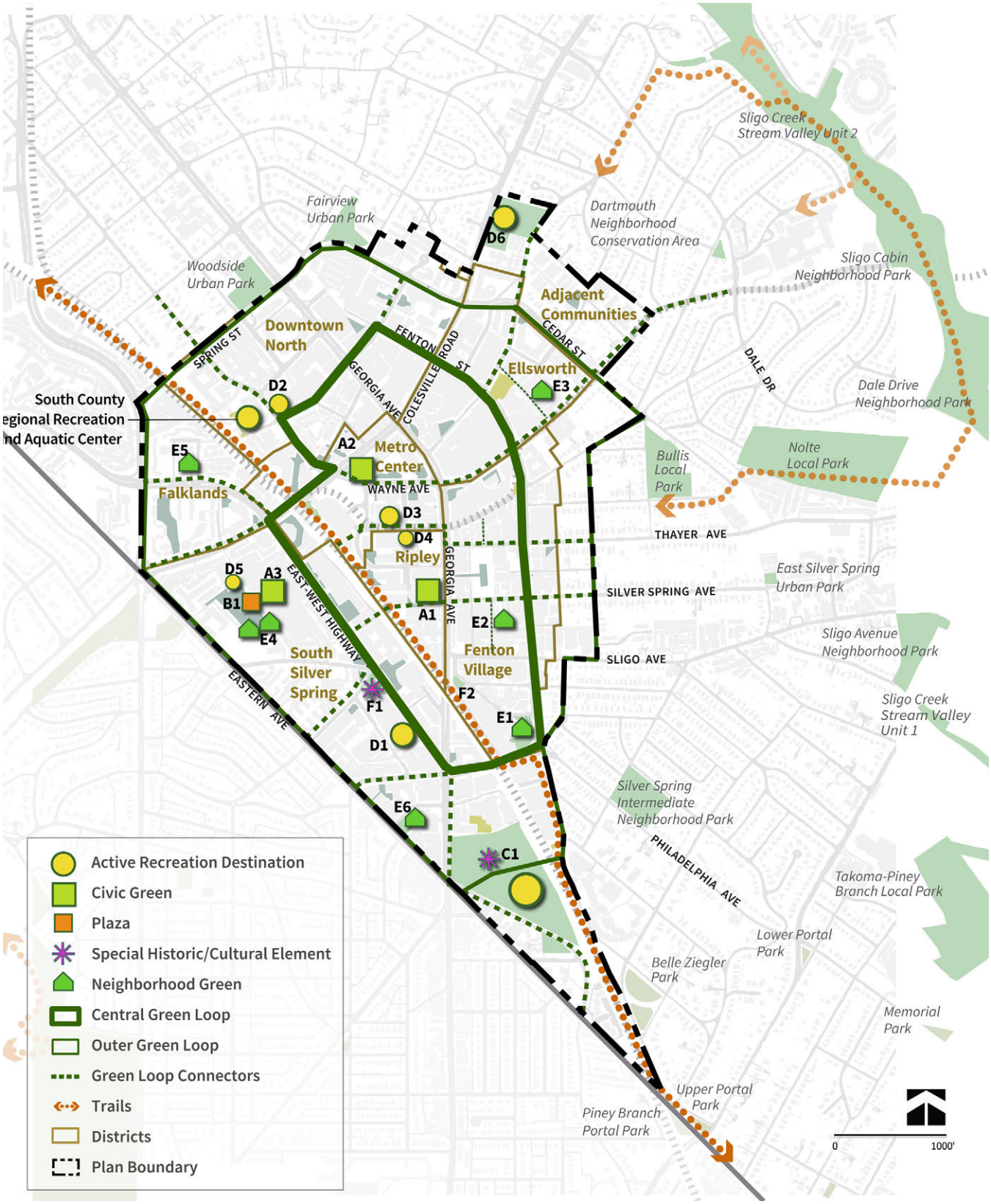


Figure 28: Map of Recommended Parks and Public Spaces

B. Design Guidance for Parks and Public Spaces

Below are design guidelines for all of the parks proposed in the Plan based on the urban park subcategories (see Figure 28). Note that the likely ownership for each space is included below as well. Refer to Section 4.3.2. Parkland Ownership in the SSDAC Plan for approach used to identify likely ownership.

A: CIVIC GREEN

A1 - Ripley District

Likely ownership: Private

- *Service Area:* Sector Plan and Ripley District.
- *Main Program:* function as an important focal point and social gathering space with variety of experiences such as community events, unstructured recreation, physical activity, contemplation, and interaction with nature.
- *Key Features:* large central lawn as focal point, balance of sunny and shaded areas with trees or shade structures; clear path to connect this park to the proposed bridge location; amenities.
- *Site Placement:* gateway between South Silver Spring and Ripley Districts; provide a clear connection (physical or visual) to proposed bridge over the rail, with potential retail storefront facing this space as well as building entrances.
- *Recommended Size:* ½ acre minimum; 1.5 acres ideal.



Crown Park, Gaithersburg, MD (smarturbanliving.com)

A2 - Gene Lynch (currently under construction)

Ownership: M-NCPPC/MCDOT

- *Service Area:* Sector Plan and Metro Center District.
- *Main Program:* function as an important focal point and social gathering space as the gateway to the commercial core of downtown Silver Spring; provide space for community events and unstructured recreation.
- *Key Features:* central lawn enclosed by lush plants and trees; variety of seating options, informal amphitheater, and bench swings.
- *Site Placement:* highly visible gateway to commercial core from Red Line/Purple Line rail stations.
- *Size:* 0.25 acre.

A3 - Blair Park/The Terrace

(currently approved under the Blairs Master Plan)

Likely ownership: Private

- *Service Area:* Sector Plan and South Silver Spring District.
- *Main Program:* accommodate community events, unstructured recreation, and places for contemplation of nature.
- *Key Features:* large central lawn as focal point, balance of sunny and shaded areas with trees or shade structures, connection to the proposed Sonny's Park through a pedestrian path. Consider opportunities for interactive installations with educational components, visitor amenities, and active recreation.
- *Site Placement:* at the heart of the Blairs development defined by retail storefronts, outdoor dining, and building entrances.
- *Size:* 0.95 acre.

B: PLAZA

B1 - Sonny's Park (approved under the Blairs Master Plan)

Likely ownership: Private

- *Service Area:* Sector Plan and South Silver Spring District.
- *Main Program:* Intended primarily for social gatherings and community events
- *Key Features:* Central hardscape as focal point, trees, and shade structures.
- *Site Placement:* locate facing streets and building frontages and connected to the proposed Blair Park described above; maximize pedestrian use and exposure and access to sunlight.
- *Size:* ~0.4 acre.

C: COUNTYWIDE URBAN RECREATIONAL PARK

C1 – Jesup Blair Park (renovation)

Ownership: M-NCPPC

- *Service Area:* Regional Destination, Sector Plan and South Silver Spring District.
- *Main Program:* active recreation, opportunities to gather and enjoy the unique historical and cultural setting of a special park designated on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.
- *Key Features:* renovated historic house, spaces for events and associated infrastructure, facilities that promote physical activity, multi-use spaces and courts, play areas, picnic areas, public art, cultural art loop, wayfinding, and signage, consider skate park and dog park, etc.
- *Facility Placement:* improve physical and visual connections to new and proposed facilities, including their relationship to the proposed cultural art loop and park entrances and pedestrian crossings; integrate existing tree canopy and shade in the placement of facilities; illustrative concept in the Sector Plan highlights the experience zones emphasizing active, social, and contemplative areas.
- *Size:* ~14.2 acres.







Veterans Plaza, Silver Spring (top), Mission Dolores Park, San Francisco, CA (middle). Jesup Blair Park, Silver Spring (bottom).

D: COMMUNITY-USE URBAN RECREATIONAL PARK

D1 - South Silver Spring Park

Ownership: M-NCPPC

- *Service Area:* South Silver Spring District.
- *Main Program:* key active recreation destination and a through-block connection between East-West Highway and Kennett Street.
- *Key Features:* facilities that promote physical activity, with supporting programming for social and contemplative opportunities; consider multi-use courts, open lawn, picnic area, multi-age play area, dog run, exercise stations, public art such as murals, etc; consider working with SHA (State Highway Administration) and MCDOT (Montgomery County Department of Transportation) to create a pedestrian loop connection between Acorn Park and this park via the existing sidewalks
- *Facility Placement:* provide locations with sunlight and shade on seating options, the Sector Plan provides a concept diagram suggesting locating active recreation amenities along Kennett Street and social gathering features along East-West Highway; provide clear access for park users and maintenance staff.
- *Size:* ~1.62 acres (when consolidated with proposed land acquisition).



A'Beckett Urban Square, Melbourne, Australia. (pps.org)

D2 – Downtown North Park

Likely ownership: Private

- *Service Area:* Sector Plan, Downtown North District.
- *Main Program*: key active recreation destination complementing indoor active recreation offered by the South Regional Recreation and Aquatic Center across the street.
- *Key Features:* facilities that promote physical activity, with supporting programming for social and contemplative opportunities; consider multi-use courts, open lawn, multi-age play area, etc.
- *Site Placement*: visible from the recreation center at the opposite corner to allow synergy of indoor and outdoor uses; entrance and façade need to be clearly visible from the street to welcome park users; provide locations with sunlight and shade on seating options, provide clear access for park users and maintenance staff.
- *Recommended Size*: minimum 0.5 acre.

D3 – Metro Center Park

Likely ownership: Private

- *Service Area:* Metro Center District
- *Main Program:* key active recreation destination for its district
- *Key Features:* facilities that promote physical activity, consider multi-use courts, and play areas
- *Site Placement:* this park will be created along with the redevelopment of the Bonifant-Dixon garage site and may be located on a lower rooftop; provide wayfinding and signage from street level
- *Recommended Size:* minimum 0.5 acre

D4 – Bonifant Park

Likely ownership: Private

- *Service Area:* Ripley District.
- *Main Program:* alternative forms of active recreation on a smaller scale.
- *Key Features:* small-scale active recreation facilities such as game tables and basketball hoops .
- *Site Placement:* adjacent to new development in Ripley District and visible and welcoming from street; building entries and/or windows facing this park.
- *Recommended Size:* minimum 0.1 acre

D5 – Fitness Park

(currently approved under the Blairs Master Plan)

Likely ownership: Private

- *Service Area:* South Silver Spring District.
- *Main Program:* active recreation destination.
- *Key Features:* outdoor fitness equipment for adults and children, sitting area for rest.
- *Site Placement:* visible to park users with entries and/or windows facing the park; connected to other public spaces proposed within this development.
- *Size:* ~0.22 acre.

D6 - Ellsworth Park (renovation)

Ownership: M-NCPPC

- *Service Area:* Adjacent Communities District.
- *Main Program:* key active recreation destination for its district.
- *Key Features:* facilities that promote physical activity, with supporting programming for social and contemplative opportunities.
- *Facility Placement:* provide locations with sunlight and shade on seating options, work with MCDOT to improve safe pedestrian crossing along Colesville road, and improve visibility of the park on reclaimed space from a brick house along this main road.
- *Size:* 3.6 acres.







Beacon Park (top), Cadence Park (middle), Irvine, CA. Latham Park Los Angeles, CA (bottom). (gpngreatlife.com)

E: NEIGHBORHOOD GREEN

E1 – Fenton Street Park (renovation/expansion)

Ownership: M-NCPPC

- *Service Area*: Fenton Village District.
- *Main Program:* active recreation and social gathering.
- *Key Features:* facilities that promote physical activity and social gathering, consider keeping and/or expanding the community garden.
- *Facility Placement:* provide locations with sunlight and shade on seating options, provide clear access for park users and maintenance staff.
- *Size:* ~1.75 acres (when consolidated with proposed land acquisition).

E2 – Fenton Village Park

Likely ownership: Private

- *Service Area:* Fenton Village District.
- *Main Program:* social gathering.
- *Key Features:* facilities that promote social gathering, place to come together and celebrate the diverse identities and cultures of the neighborhood, and a place to sit and enjoy food from the many local eateries in Fenton Village; consider urban agriculture facilities, either at the ground or as part of a green roof concept in alignment with the recommendations found in the Sector Plan.
- *Site Placement:* provide locations with sunlight and shade on seating options, provide clear visual and physical access to this park from streets and blocks nearby; locate park facing building entries and/or windows.
- *Recommended Size:* between 0.3 and 0.5 acre.







Emerald Park, Norton Commons, KY (top, jhdesignstudio.com), Seaside, FL (middle, seasidefl.com), Kentlands, MD (bottom, Montgomery Parks).

E3 – Ellsworth District Park

Likely ownership: Private

- *Service Area:* Ellsworth District
- *Main Program:* social gathering and programming that complements the Veterans Plaza's activities.
- *Key Features:* facilities that promote social gathering, with supporting programming for active and contemplative opportunities; facilities that complement those in Veterans Plaza.
- *Facility Placement:* provide locations with sunlight and shade on seating options, provide a clear visual and physical pedestrian connection with the adjacent existing plaza and civic building.
- *Recommended Size:* minimum 0.5 acre.

E4 – Rachel Carson, Blair Stomping, The Mews, and Lucy's Landing Park inside the Blairs Development (approved under The Blairs Master Plan)

Ownership: Private

- *Service Area:* South Silver Spring District.
- *Main Program:* social gathering and contemplative experiences.
- *Key Features:* pedestrian bridge, unique landscape elements (including linear bioswales), terraces, dog park (large and small), pedestrian paths that connect these spaces.
- *Site Placement:* provide locations with sunlight and shade on seating options, locate proposed parks facing buildings' entries and/or windows.
- *Size:* 1 acre (all 4 parks combined).

E5 – Falkland Park & Connect: Falkland Stream Restoration to north parcel

Ownership: Private

- *Service Area:* Falkland District.
- *Main Program:* contemplative and social gathering.
- *Key Features:* facilities that promote contemplative and social gathering experiences; consider adding wayfinding signage to address the entries to these publicly accessible spaces.
- *Site Placement:* provide locations with sunlight and shade on seating options, visual and physical connection between the stream valley renovation in the southeast quadrant of the Falklands to this consolidated public use space on the north parcel that is green and clearly public in nature.
- *Recommended Size:* minimum 0.5 acre of consolidated space.

E6 - King Street Park

Likely ownership: Private (currently leased to M-NCPPC for the use of the community garden on site)

- *Service Area:* South Silver Spring District
- *Main Program:* social gathering and contemplative experiences
- *Key Features:* facilities that promote social gathering; consider retaining the existing community garden at the western end of the site at 7980 Georgia Avenue until the parcel is redeveloped; upon redevelopment consider including a community garden program as part of the open space.
- *Site Placement:* provide locations with sunlight and shade on seating options, connect this park to the proposed through-block connection on this site and to the Outer Green Loop
- *Size:* 0.2-0.4 acre.

F: POCKET GREEN

F1 – Acorn Park (renovation)

Ownership: M-NCPPC

- *Service Area:* South Silver Spring District
- *Main Program:* contemplative and social gathering in historic setting
- *Key Features:* facilities that promote contemplative and social gathering activities, existing spring, acorn structure, benches, public art
- *Facility Placement:* provide locations with sunlight and shade on seating options, provide clear access for park users and maintenance staff.
- *Size:* 0.12 acre

F2 - Philadelphia Park

Ownership: M-NCPPC

- *Service Area:* Fenton Village District
- *Main Program:* rest space connected to the Metropolitan Branch Trail
- *Key Features:* seating and shade options, landscaping, and signage
- *Facility Placement:* provide locations with sunlight and shade on seating options, provide clear access for park users and maintenance staff, and clear connection to trail
- *Size:* 0.18 acre

2.4.4 Temporary Parks and Interim Parks

A temporary park is a type of park created for a certain period in a location that is not currently planned as a future public space. There is generally a beginning and an end time established.

An interim park is implemented in a shorter period on a site that is actively being designed for a future permanent public space. Owners and/or county staff can use these temporary facilities to collect information on programming and functions to inform the design of the long-term public space.

For design guidance on these parks, refer to the *EPS Design Guidelines*.





Examples of temporary and interim parks.

2.4.5 Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS)

Many public spaces recommended in the Sector Plan that are expected to be realized via private development. These privately owned public spaces (POPS) should be designed to be safe, usable and accessible by all potential users. They should support the Plan goals of connectivity and community health by improving the existing open space network in the downtown and by connecting to the Green Loop as appropriate. POPS should be designed to encourage several different experiences and/or activities in the space; open spaces that cannot be easily used and enjoyed by the general public should be avoided. Per the Zoning Ordinance, to avoid small "postage stamp" open spaces, only open spaces recommended by the Sector Plan are encouraged. If a project has an open space requirement, a contribution to a nearby recommended open space is encouraged as described in Section 4.9.8.C.5 of the Zoning Ordinance.

The following guidelines address several key characteristics of POPS:



Example of a signage for a POPS in Portland, Oregon. The sign identifies it as a public open space

A. Access and Safety

- Provide open lines of sight through the open space to the street or to the building.
- POPS should be well-lit if located near building entrances, or if the spaces will be used after dark.
- Entrances to the open space should be visible from the street.
- Open space should be clearly publicly accessible and should be accessible for all users. If the open space is on a slope, ensure that there is a code-compliant entry to the space for users of all abilities.
- All open spaces should have signs that clearly indicate it is a publicly accessible space. Hours of operation should be posted if applicable. The sign should be visible from the street or sidewalk.

B. Design:

- When designing the open space, consider the other nearby green spaces, parks, and public amenities. Provide a program that balances open space amenities in the nearby area.
- Consider designing spaces that can be used for different functions, including both active and passive activities.
- Design spaces that will be comfortable and usable in all seasons. Seating areas should be located in both sunny and shaded areas for different seasons. Seating should be comfortable in terms of form and material.
- Seating should be designed so that both individuals and groups will be comfortable in the space.
- Design spaces that can be easily maintained by the owner.
- Trees and plants should be from the preferred list of species found in the *Silver Spring Streetscape Standards*.
- Stormwater management facilities should be integrated into the design of the open space.











Examples of POPS. Credits clockwise from top left: Zuccotti Park (rbanomnibus.net), Paley Park (introspecs.com), New York. One Seaport (bostonseaport.com), Boston. National Harbor, MD. Apple Square Park (archpaper.com), San Francisco.

2.5 Connections Over Rail

Silver Spring is divided by the above-ground Metrorail/CSX tracks for most of the length of the downtown. These tracks both connect Silver Spring with the rest of the Washington, D.C. region but also to divide the downtown into two parts. Bridge connections over the rail can help mitigate the divide and provide key pedestrian and bicycle links to neighborhoods. In addition, a well-designed bridge could become an iconic symbols of downtown Silver Spring. Two bridges are proposed in the Plan; between East-West Highway and the Ripley District, and between the northern Falklands parcel and the Downtown North District. The bridge at the Falklands should only be implemented as a result of the redevelopment of that parcel as described in the Plan.

Additional bridge guidelines:

- Bridge connections should comply with all requirements for crossings over rail per WMATA and CSX.
- Bridges should be accessible for those traveling on foot, bike, via wheelchair, or for individuals pushing strollers or similar devices. The bridge should be designed with safety in mind, providing good visibility for travelers. Lighting and other safety features should be included.
- Any new bridge should be a significant design element in the downtown and not just a functional crossing. It should provide vistas in at least one direction and should relate to the development context at either end of the bridge.



Bridge crossing over rail in Colorado Springs, CO completed in July 2021.



View of construction in the Ripley District, from Georgia Avenue.



3 Districts

3. DISTRICTS

This section includes design guidelines for the six downtown districts where the majority of future development is likely to occur. It includes district-specific guidelines as well as site-specific guidelines for several opportunity sites identified in the *Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Sector Plan*. All guidelines in previous sections apply to the sites in this section as well.

3.1 Ellsworth District

The Ellsworth District is the heart of Silver Spring. It is the primary activity center where people from all over the county and the region come to shop, eat, enjoy entertainment, and just hang out. Veterans Plaza and Ellsworth Place are some of the most successful public spaces in the area; festivals, music events, and a farmers' market regularly take place here. The Plan envisions Ellsworth District as the active heart of downtown Silver Spring, with a greener public realm and exciting flexible public spaces that connect Georgia Avenue to Cedar Street. The illustrative plan in Figure 29 identifies opportunity sites recommended in the Sector Plan, Green Loop connections, key pedestrian connections, and recommended open spaces. It also highlights gateways to the downtown and significant corners where architecturally interesting elements should be included in future development.





Ellsworth Place

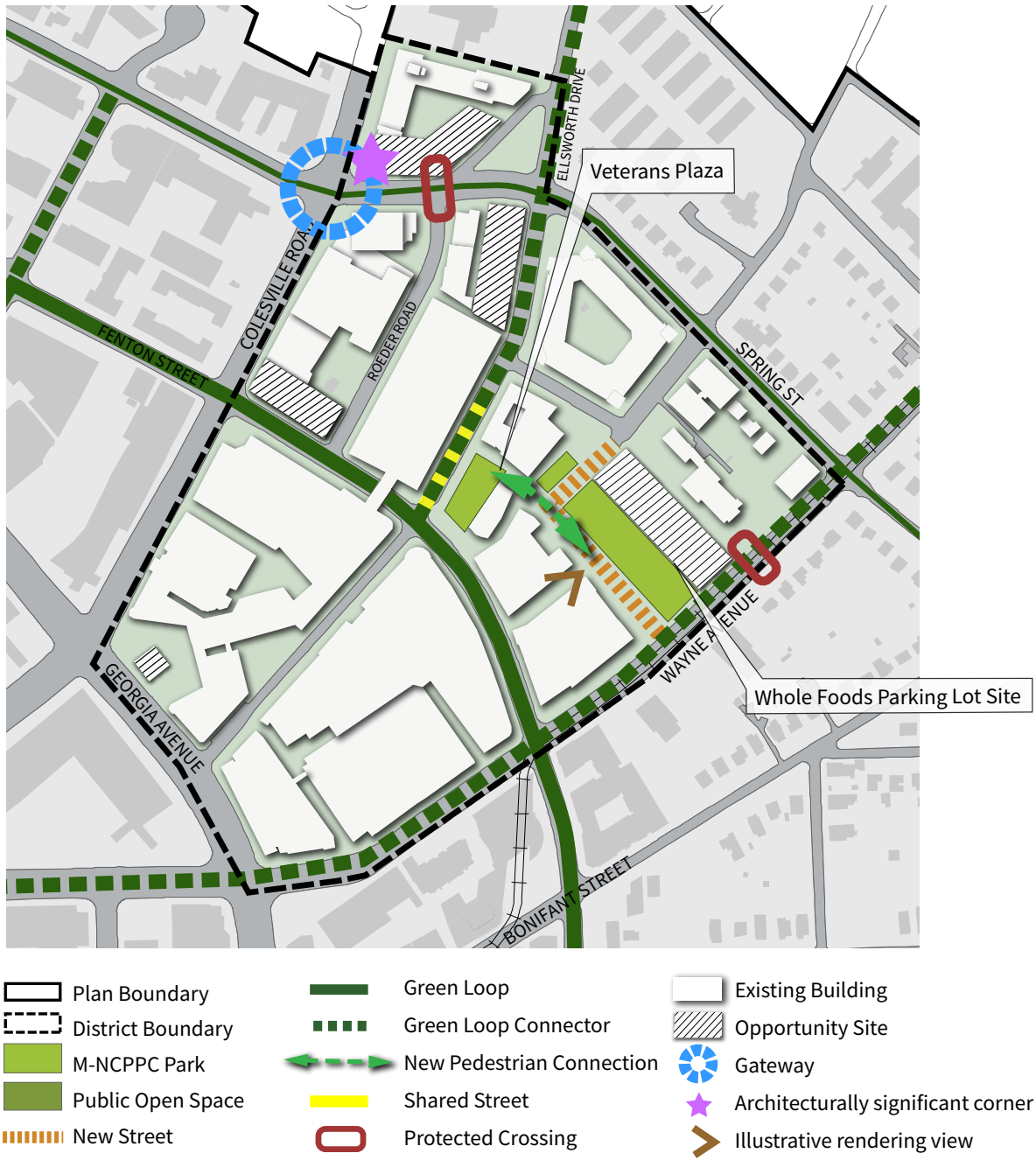


Figure 29: Ellsworth District Illustrative Urban Design Diagram

3.1.1 Whole Foods Parking Lot Site

Currently, one of the largest surface parking lots remaining in downtown Silver Spring is along Wayne Avenue, and serves Whole Foods, Ace Hardware, CVS and several other businesses. Along the northeast side of the parking lot is St. Michael's church and rectory.

The Plan recommends a mixed-use development on this site, along with a green space connecting Wayne Avenue to Veterans Plaza. The Parks recommendations describe the green space (E3 – Ellsworth District Park) as a space that includes both sunny and shaded areas, potentially with recreational amenities.

Additional guidelines for this site:

- Mixed-use development should face the Whole Foods/Ace Hardware frontages. The new development should expand the already successful retail market in this area.
- Parking should be provided either below-grade or integrated into the new development. See Structured Parking guidelines in Section 2.3.4.
- Consider facing retail along Wayne Avenue or including the lobby to the residences or offices above off of Wayne Avenue. If there are no entrances along Wayne Avenue, frontages should create interest along the sidewalk.
- Service and loading should be screened and should not disrupt the pedestrian experience of the new retail street. Service vehicle access should minimize disruption to the pedestrian retail street and should be limited to specific off-peak hours.
- Site design should allow for views to the church from within the site.
- Bases should respond to the height and scale of the existing retail on this site and towers should be setback above the base. Refer to Base and Tower guidelines in Section 2.3.2.



Figure 30: Whole Foods site illustrative rendering.
Before and after: Existing photo (Google Streetview) and illustrative rendering of future potential development scenario for the Whole Foods parking lot site. This view is looking east across the parking lot towards St. Michael's church. See Figure 29 for view location (rendering by DIG).

3.2 Fenton Village District

Fenton Village is a much-loved destination in Silver Spring—it is the place in the downtown that best celebrates the diversity of this urban area. It is characterized by smaller scale retail, a mix of residential types, and a strong streetscape. The SSDAC Plan envisions that the Fenton Village District will build on and sustain its diversity with new community open spaces, new development at an appropriate scale to support small businesses, and an expanded presence for the arts. The illustrative plan below identifies opportunity sites recommended in the Sector Plan, Green Loop connections, key pedestrian connections, and recommended open spaces. It also highlights corners where architecturally interesting elements should be included in future development.



Brigadier General Charles E. McGee Library.



Local businesses on Georgia Avenue in Fenton Village. There is a strong fabric of two-story retail along the east side of Georgia Avenue.

3.2.1 Building Form in the Fenton Village District

Along Fenton Street and Georgia Avenue there is an existing fabric of two-story retail that creates the unique environment that is Fenton Village. Much of the Fenton Village District is included in the Fenton Village Overlay Zone which includes development standards about building height and step-backs that new development must follow. Those standards help to maintain a built form in Fenton Village with lower buildings along Fenton Street and the east side of Georgia Avenue, and taller buildings at the mid-block.

In order to maintain the strong two-story fabric, all buildings in Fenton Village should have a step-back above the Pedestrian Level, even though the few floors above the Pedestrian Level are still considered the Base. If a step-back is not feasible, then the differentiation may be an architectural element that is not in the same plane as the primary façade, or a change in color and/or material. This differentiation does not have to occur for the full length of the Pedestrian Level but should be a primary feature of the building massing.



Buildings in Fenton Village stepping up in height towards the mid-block, and then down again to Georgia Avenue. This view is looking west down Thayer Avenue.



Figure 31: Fenton Village District Illustrative Urban Design Diagram

3.2.2 Safeway Site/Block at Thayer and Bonifant

Grocery stores are necessary for communities to thrive as people need convenient access to fresh and healthy food. The existing Safeway located on Fenton Street and Thayer Avenue is vital to Fenton Village, however the existing configuration of this site—with loading/service off of Fenton Street and a surface parking lot—does not support the urban design goals of the SSDAC Plan or these Design Guidelines. If the site were to redevelop, the Plan goals support a grocery store in this location, designed according to these guidelines.

The Plan recommends a mixed-use development on this site, with frontages and entrances on Fenton Street and Thayer Avenue. The development is adjacent to a proposed new north-south street that would connect Thayer Avenue with Bonifant Street. This new connection aligns with a series of north-south connections at the blocks to the south of this block. These new streets enhance the street grid in Fenton Village by breaking up large "superblocks."

Additional guidelines for this site:

- New ground-floor, community-serving retail should have a main entrance on Fenton Street.
- Loading, service and parking should be accessed via the new proposed street and/or an alley. There should not be loading docks on Fenton Street.
- Parking should be provided either below-grade or integrated into the new development. See Structured Parking guidelines in Section 2.3.4.
- Refer to Fenton Village Overlay Zone text regarding setbacks.
- Building base should be two floors or equivalent to two floors consistent with pattern of development along Fenton Street.
- For cross sections of proposed new streets, refer to Section 3.6.9. Street Cross Sections, in the SSDAC Plan.





The Safeway on Georgia Avenue in Petworth has a prominent corner frontage (left) and the loading entrance is off of an alley from Randolph Street NW (right).

3.2.3 Parking Garage 4 Site/Block between Silver Spring Avenue and Sligo Avenue

The Plan envisions a redesigned block for this location. Currently, Parking Garage 4 sites in the middle of a block, surrounded by surface parking lots and alleys. The Plan recommends dividing this block into four quadrants via a north-south street running from Sligo Avenue to Silver Spring Avenue, and an east-west mid-block pedestrian connection. The Plan also recommends a public open space that fronts on Fenton Street to provide a civic gathering space for Fenton Village. The development on this block is envisioned as primarily residential but the flexible zoning allows for mixed-use. The new development will have to include required replacement public parking as determined by the Parking Lot District (PLD).

Additional guidelines for this site:

- New north-south street should align with the street immediately to the north, between Silver Spring Avenue and Thayer Avenue.
- New mixed-use or residential development should connect to the new north-south street, to the new public open space and to Silver Spring Avenue.
- Public open space should consider the guidelines described in Section 2.4.5 Privately Owned Public Spaces.
- Parking should be provided either below-grade or integrated into the new development. See Structured Parking guidelines in Section 2.3.4.
- Bases for any development along Fenton Street or along Silver Spring Avenue should be two floors or equivalent to two floors consistent with pattern of development along Fenton Street. Above two floors the building should step back according to the Fenton Village Overlay Zone.
- Loading, service and parking should ideally be accessed via the new proposed street and/or an alley. There should not be loading docks on Fenton Street.



Figure 32: Parking Garage 4 site before and after
Existing photos and illustrative rendering of a future possible development scenario for the Parking Garage 4 Site. This view is looking west across Fenton Street towards the site. See Figure 31 for view location (rendering by DIG).

3.3 Metro Center and Ripley Districts

The area around the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit Center is the commercial center of Silver Spring and will continue to host some of the tallest buildings and the densest development in the downtown. The SSDAC Plan envisions that the Metro Center District will welcome visitors to an active area with the highest-intensity commercial development in the downtown, world-class public space, and safe and inviting connections to surrounding districts.

Over the last decade the Ripley area has emerged as a micro-neighborhood within the downtown. Residents choose the Ripley District to be close to everything, with parcels under development today and several more key opportunity sites. The Plan imagines the Ripley District as a vibrant complete multi-family, residential district steps from the Metro, Purple Line, and Metropolitan Branch Trail, with a new central open space and a pedestrian connection to South Silver Spring across the Metrorail/CSX tracks. The illustrative plans below identify opportunity sites recommended in the Sector Plan, Green Loop connections, key pedestrian connections, and recommended open spaces. The diagram also highlights corners where architecturally interesting elements should be included in future development.





Inventa Towers (left) in the Metro Center District; looking toward the Ripley District from Georgia Avenue (right).

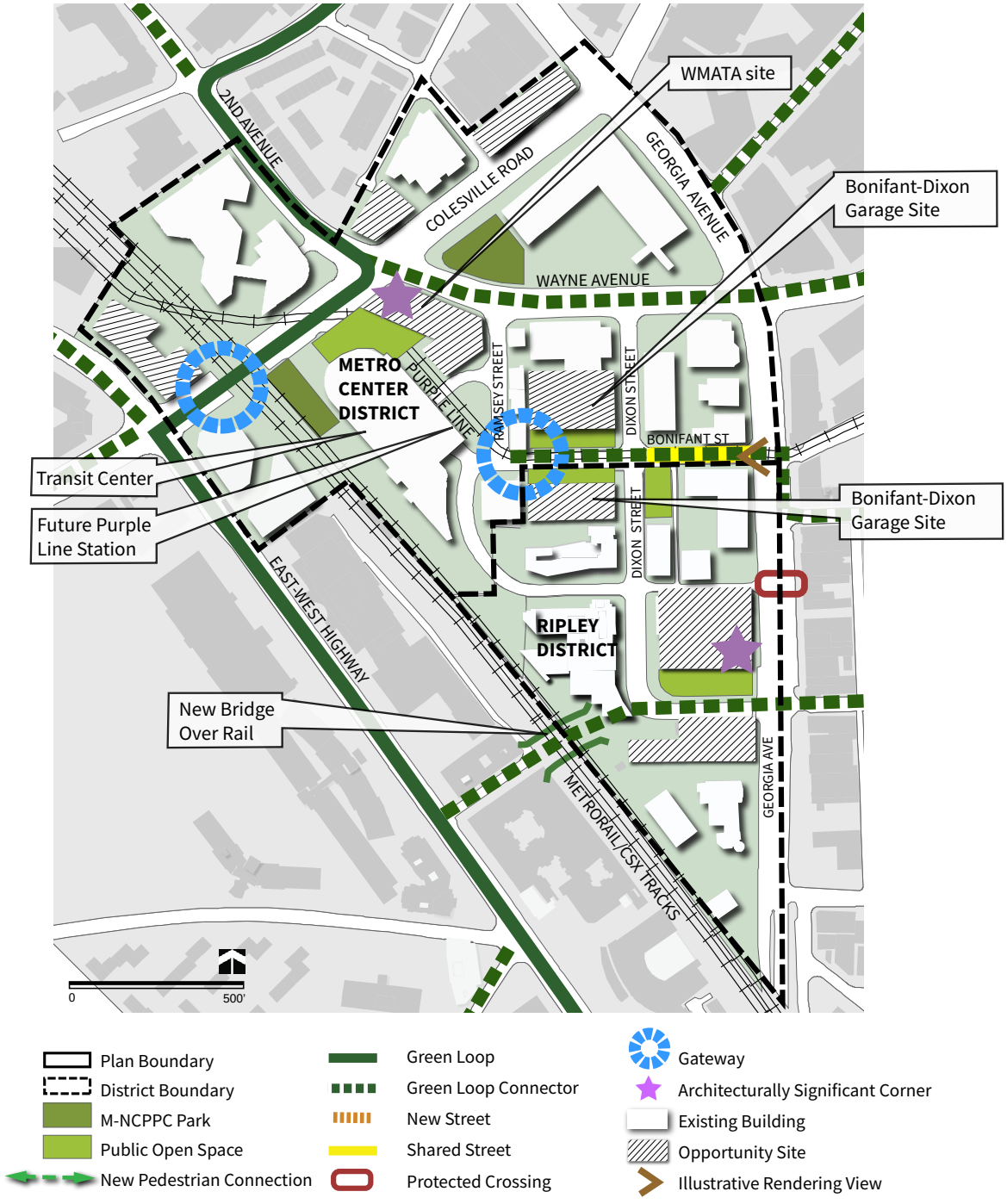


Figure 33: Illustrative Urban Design Diagram of Metro Center and Ripley Districts

3.3.1 Transit Center and Surrounding Blocks

The Sarbanes Transit Center is one of the busiest multi-modal centers in the region. Metrorail, MARC train and numerous bus lines converge here, as well as the future Purple Line station which is currently under construction. Silver Spring is a regional destination and many people who come to the downtown to work, eat, shop or enjoy entertainment arrive via the Transit Center.

Today the arrival experience from the Transit Center along Colesville Road, or at Ramsey Avenue and Bonifant Street after the Purple Line is running, is uninspiring and can even be disorienting. However, there are several key opportunity sites that have the potential to transform the Metro Center/Ripley Districts. The opportunity sites include the WMATA site adjacent to the Transit Center, and the two large development sites on Bonifant Street where the Bonifant-Dixon Parking Garage is today. In addition, the Ripley District, which will serve as the gateway to the downtown from the Purple Line Transit Center station, has several opportunity sites for future high-rise development.

Additional guidelines for these sites:

- Development on the WMATA site adjacent to the Transit Center should have an active Pedestrian Level that engages the public realm in a significant way and contributes to a welcoming arrival experience along Colesville Road.
- Pedestrian Levels for sites along Bonifant Street should engage the public realm and contribute to a welcoming gateway/arrival experience along Bonifant Street as it connects to Georgia Avenue.
- High-rise Towers in the Metro Center and Ripley District are visible from either Metrorail or MARC trains that travel to and from the Transit Center. Towers in these districts should strive for exceptional design that takes these views into account.
- All towers in Metro Center and Ripley District should have architecturally significant Caps that contribute to the downtown Silver Spring skyline in a meaningful way.



Figure 34: Existing Transit Center development sites (rendering by DIG).

Visioning Charrette

During the Spring/Summer of 2022, while the Sector Plan was underway, three notable architecture firms were invited to participate in a mini-charette to reimagining the Silver Spring Transit Center.

The aim of the charrette was to create a forward-thinking vision for the Silver Spring Transit Center that maintained all the transportation infrastructure while creating a welcoming gateway for a regional destination. The illustrative renderings below represent some of the ideas that emerged from the charrette.

FX Collaborative



Perkins Eastman



Shalom Baranes



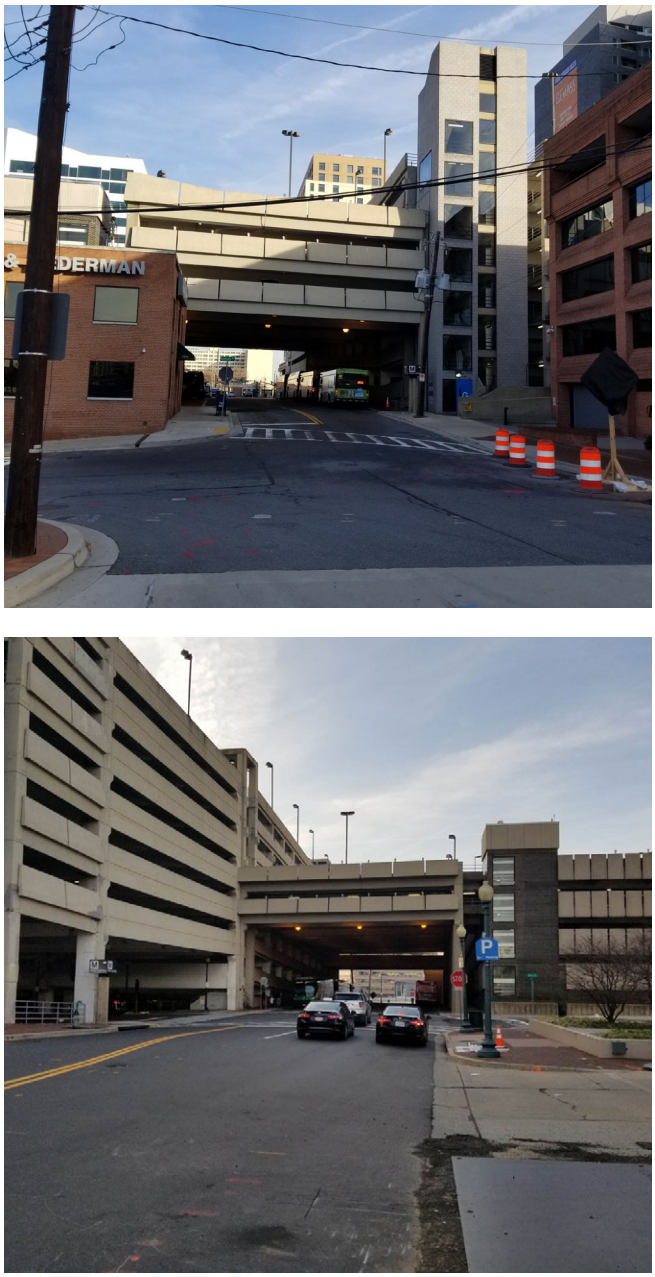
Figure 35: Images from the Transit Center Charette

A. Purple Line Station and Bonifant Street

The new Purple Line station at the Transit Center will be located at the third level adjacent to the intersection of Ramsey Street and Bonifant Street. Today the view down Bonifant Street east towards Georgia Avenue is blocked by the Bonifant-Dixon Parking Garage which crosses over Bonifant Street at its upper levels. The Plan envisions the redevelopment of that garage into three distinct sites —two development sites and a small park. The Plan recommends a linear green pedestrian connection from the Purple Line station to Georgia Avenue via Bonifant Street. A portion of Bonifant Street is recommended as a Shared Street, and the new park will provide much-needed active and passive recreation opportunities in the Ripley District. The Plan envisions Dixon Avenue as the new spine of the Ripley District with active ground floor uses and a safe and comfortable environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. It is assumed that redevelopment of the garage site will include appropriate replacement parking as required by MCDOT.

Additional guidelines for these sites:

- The development sites created by the removal/ redevelopment of the garage will be among the most visible in downtown Silver Spring and the mapped heights are 300-360 feet. Towers on these sites should be architecturally exceptional with creative and interesting Caps. The site on the north side of Bonifant Street is large; any design proposal for this site should be creative and take advantage of both views and solar orientation (refer to Section 2.2.3.).
- The design of the Pedestrian Level at Bonifant Street and Dixon Avenue should highlight this corner as a "gateway" into the downtown from the Purple Line station.
- The green pedestrian connection along the south side of Bonifant Street should complement the sidewalk and enhance the pedestrian experience between the Purple Line Station and the park. It should also serve as a buffer from the train tracks as Bonifant Street is currently proposed to be rail only for this portion.



Existing conditions at Bonifant Street and the Bonifant-Dixon parking garage. View looking east down Bonifant Street (top), view looking west towards the Transit Center (bottom).



Figure 36: Bonifant Street illustrative rendering.
This view of a possible future scenario for Bonifant Street is looking west toward the Purple Line Station at the Transit Center. See Figure 33 for view location (rendering by DIG).

3.4 South Silver Spring District

South Silver Spring is a large district with a great diversity of housing types, commercial and educational uses, and public spaces, including Jesup Blair Park. The rail tracks separate this district from the rest of downtown. The Plan envisions South Silver Spring leveraging its unique array of assets to become a destination for mixed-use development that serves a diverse community. It will also serve as a connector between the developing centers along Georgia Avenue, from the Walter Reed Campus in Washington, D.C. to the core of downtown Silver Spring. South Silver Spring will become a destination within the downtown, with the renovation of Jesup Blair Park and the opportunity for Montgomery College to expand its presence in this neighborhood. The illustrative plan in Figure 37 identifies opportunity sites recommended in the Sector Plan, Green Loop connections, key pedestrian connections, and recommended open spaces. It also highlights corners where architecturally interesting elements should be included in future development.

The Plan identifies many opportunity sites in the South Silver Spring District. Most of these are likely to be single-building infill sites and thus the guidelines in the Site and Building Form sections will be sufficient. The two sites discussed in the following subsections are large enough that they are both recommended for buildings and open spaces in the Plan.



Acorn Park at Newell Street (top), multifamily apartment buildings on East-West Highway (middle), Montgomery College Takoma Park-Silver Spring along Georgia Avenue (bottom).

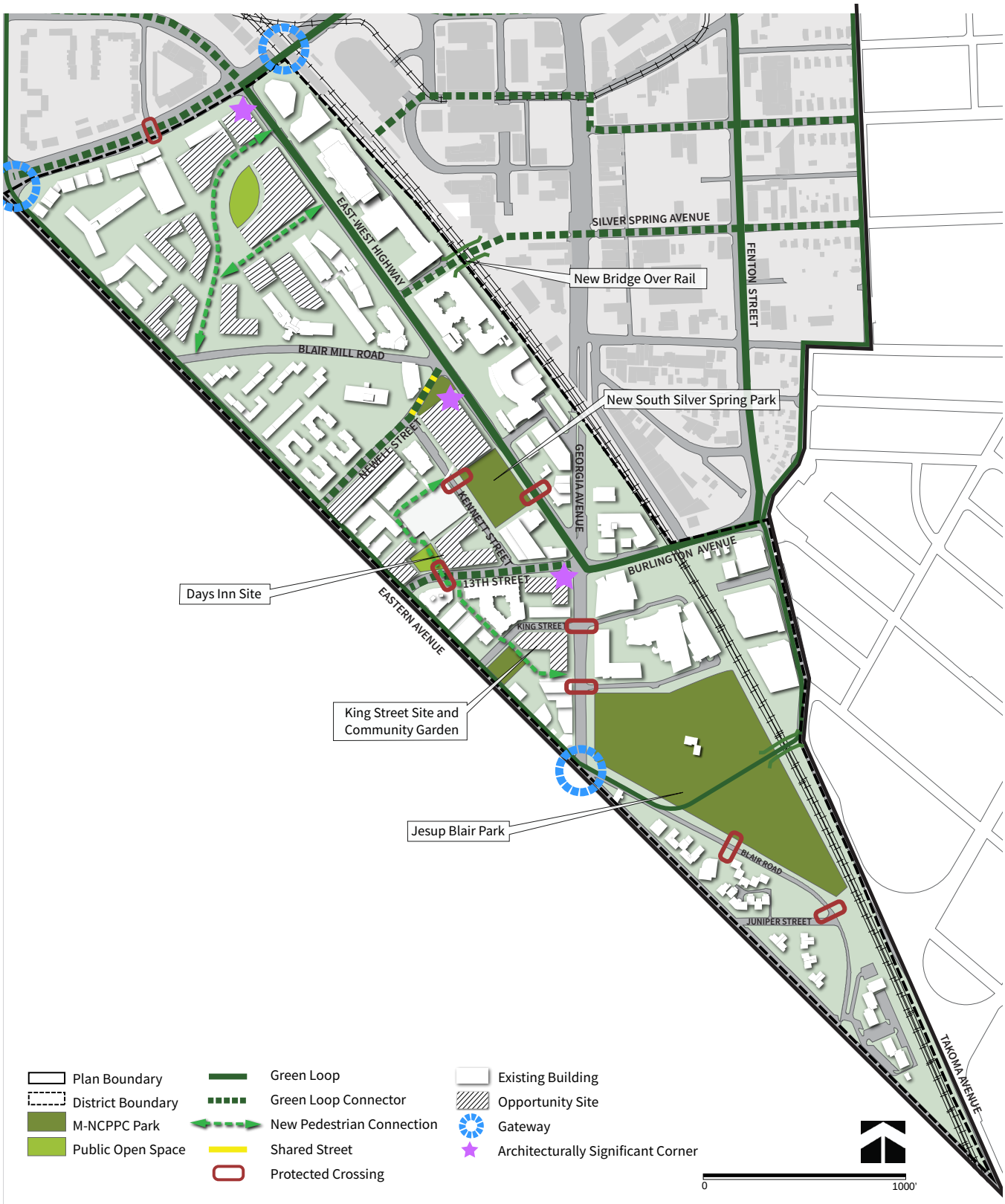


Figure 37: South Silver Spring District Illustrative Urban Design Diagram.

3.4.1 Days Inn Site (8040 13th Street)

The Plan recommends this site as a mixed-use development with a central public open space and a connection to the new recommended public park between Kennett Street and East-West Highway.

Additional guidelines for this site:

- New development should front on 13th Street and/or Kennett Street, with consideration for the Eastern Avenue façade as well.
- There should be a clear connection between the new park on Kennett Street and any development on this site. Consider views between these sites.
- Consider how the development relates to the existing public parking facilities on this site. If parking is provided it should be either below-grade or integrated into the new development. See Parking guidelines in Section 2.3.4.
- Building should step back above the base along 13th Street. Base and Tower to follow guidelines in Section 2.3.2.

3.4.2 7980 Georgia Avenue (at King Street)

The Plan recommends this site as a mixed-use development with ground-floor retail facing Georgia Avenue. The Plan also recommends maintaining the open space on this site, potentially continuing the existing garden use.

Additional guidelines for this site:

- New development should have a main entrance on Georgia Avenue.
- Parking should be provided either below-grade or integrated into the new development. See Parking guidelines in Section 2.3.4.
- Base should respond to pedestrian-scale retail environment on lower Georgia Avenue. Base to be a maximum of 2-3 stories tall and then step back according to Base and Tower rules in sections 2.3.2.
- Loading, service and parking should ideally be accessed via an alley or a driveway onto the site. If it is located off of King Street it should be designed to minimize disruption to the pedestrian environment and screened as much as possible. No loading, service or parking should be accessed from Georgia Avenue.

3.4.3 Heights along Eastern Avenue

Properties that face single-family homes along Eastern Avenue should step heights down as described below:

- Provide a step-back above the Base such that no building portion exceeds 70 feet in height within 20 feet from the Eastern Avenue ROW.
- Provide step-backs and/or design upper portions of buildings so that no building portion exceeds 120 feet in height within 40 feet from the Eastern Avenue ROW.

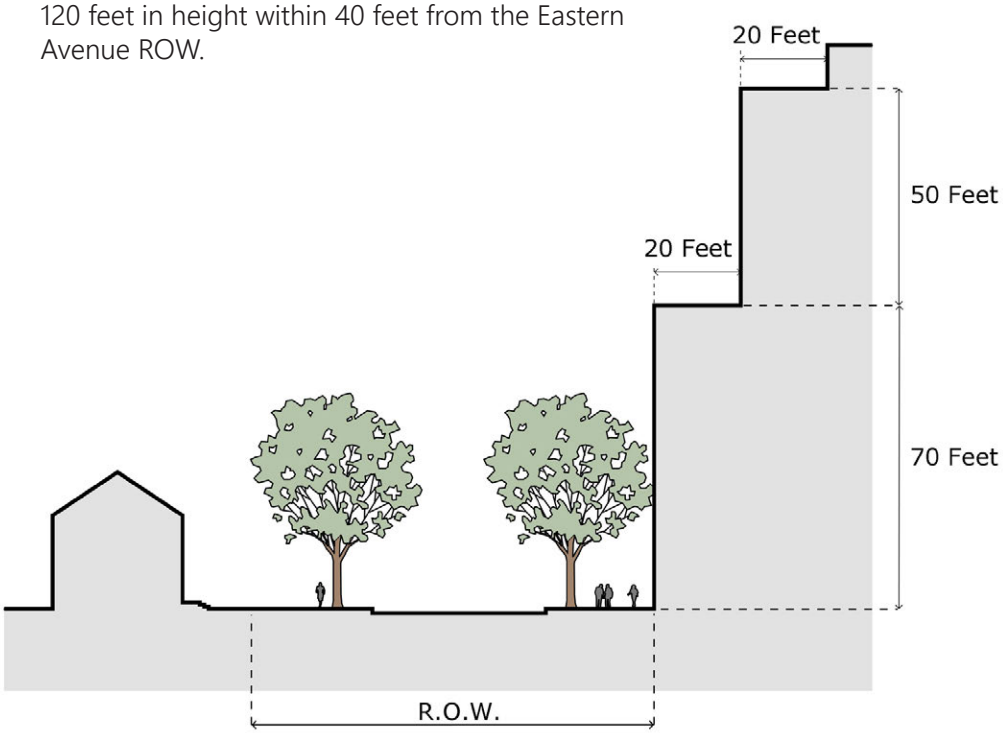
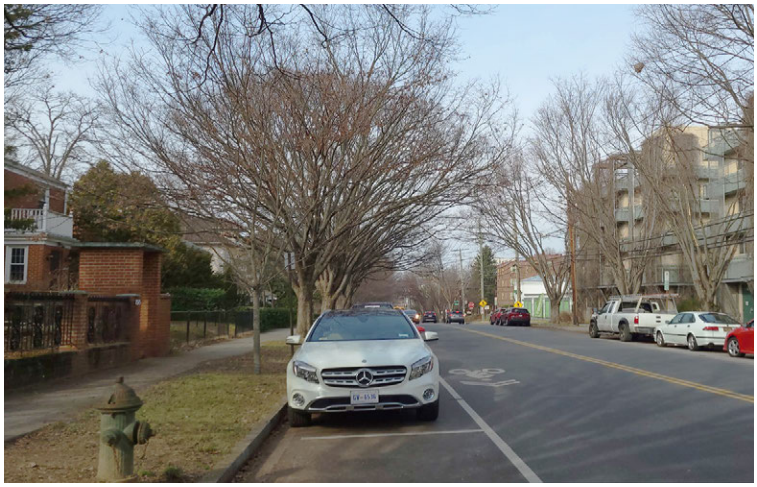


Figure 38: Section diagram of step-backs along Eastern Avenue





Single-family homes along the Washington, D.C. border at Eastern Avenue face low- and mid-rise buildings in Silver Spring (both images).

3.5 Downtown North District

The area north of Colesville Road includes a mix of housing types, commercial, institutional, and civic uses, as well as retail and entertainment uses such as the Fillmore concert venue. The Plan envisions that the Downtown North District will emerge as a center for health and health sciences with the state-of-the-art South County Regional Recreation and Aquatic Center (under construction) and the world-renowned United Therapeutics campus connected via Cameron Street. The illustrative plan below identifies opportunity sites recommended in the Sector Plan, Green Loop connections, key pedestrian connections, and recommended open spaces. The diagram also highlights corners where architecturally interesting elements should be included in future development.







Cameron Street is a key spine in the Downtown North District, with United Therapeutics' campus at one end (top), and new mixed-use development (middle) and the courthouse at the other (bottom).



Figure 39: Downtown North District Illustrative Urban Design Diagram.

3.5.1 Cameron Street Parking Garage

This site is an existing county parking garage. The Plan recommends this site for redevelopment, assuming that required public parking would be replaced as part of any future project. The Plan recommends extending 1st Street south through the site (where an existing driveway through the garage exists today), connecting it with Ramsey Street. This would divide the parking garage into two development sites (east and west), both appropriate for residential or commercial uses.

Additional guidelines for this site:

- For both sites, main and secondary entrances should be on Cameron Street and/or the 1st Street extension.
- If a site is appropriate for ground-floor retail, the entrance should be on Cameron Street or on 1st Street extension close to the corner at Cameron Street.
- A park is recommended in the Sector Plan at the corner of 2nd Avenue and Cameron Street. The west site is adjacent to the park and should have park views from several levels. Consider a terrace that looks down onto the park at the top of the Base. The ground floor should engage the park as well with views and/or secondary entrance(s) from that side of the building.
- The design of the Bases of both buildings should relate to the scale of the townhomes and low-rise development on the south side of Cameron Street. Refer to the Base guidelines in Section 2.3.2..
- Entrance to any parking structures and/or loading docks should be from the 1st street extension or an alley created for access and not from Cameron Street.

3.5.2 Spring Street/Cameron Street Parking Garage (Garage 2)

This site has the potential to improve the pedestrian experience on two key streets in the Downtown North District. This L-shaped parking facility is tucked into the middle of a large block with one entrance/exit on Spring Street and the other off of Cameron Street.

Additional guidelines for this site:

- Provide a green connection for pedestrians and bikes that extends Fenton Street and connects to the path under construction at the 8787 Georgia Avenue site, as recommended in the Sector Plan. This should be designed with the guidelines in Section 2.2.5 for through-block connections.
- Provide an open space that will serve this corner of the Downtown North District and connect to the green through-block connection.
- Redevelopment of this site should consider entrances on both Spring Street and Cameron. Locating service and parking entrances on this site will be challenging and care should be taken to minimize disruption to the pedestrian experience on both streets.
- This block is one of the few “superblocks” left in the downtown. The mixed-use project at 8787 Georgia Avenue has taken several steps to reduce the superblock feel on that site; similarly, any redevelopment of this garage site should improve the internal circulation on this block.



Figure 40: Cameron Garage site before and after
Existing photo and illustrative rendering of a potential development scenario for the Cameron Street garage site, including the 1st Street extension. This view is looking north towards the new intersection that would be created by the 1st Street extension. See Figure 39 for view location (rendering by DIG).