

Shore Drive Corridor Design Guidelines



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*Prepared by the Virginia Beach Planning Department with assistance from
Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc. and Folck, West & Savage
Architects, as part of the Shore Drive Transportation Study*



BACKGROUND

A 1997 report, entitled, “Bayfront, Virginia Beach, Virginia: An Evaluation of the Area’s Potential and A Strategy for its Enhancement and Development,” produced by an Advisory Services Panel of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), established the foundation for the ongoing planning and implementation efforts for the Shore Drive Corridor. The Shore Drive Corridor Plan, adopted by the City Council in 1998 as a component of the City’s Comprehensive Plan, was produced by the Shore Drive Advisory Committee in response to the recommendations of the ULI report.

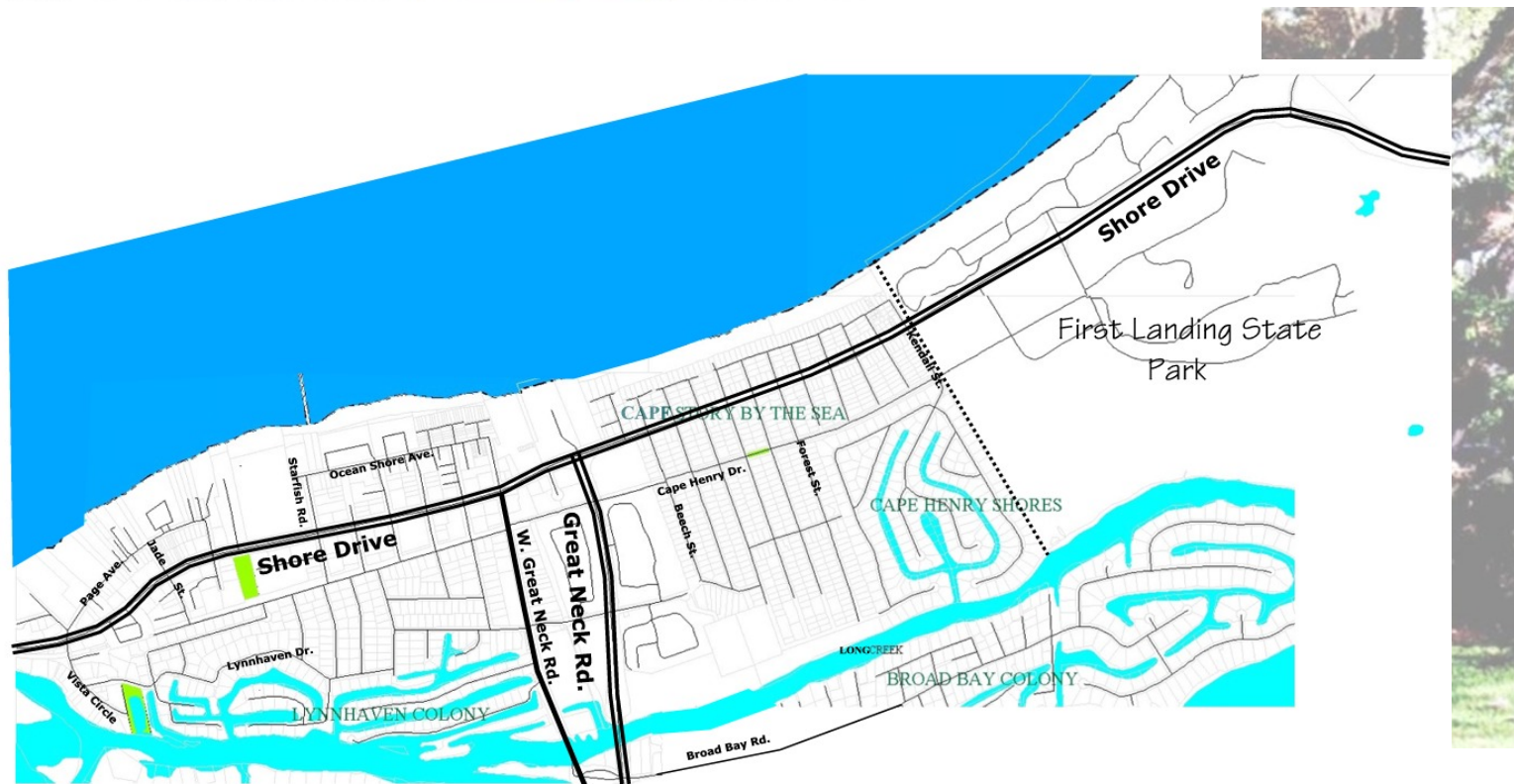
Both the ULI report and the Shore Drive Corridor Plan recommended that architectural, landscape, and urban design plans be developed for the corridor. In response to those recommendations, this document was produced to provide design guidelines for architectural, site, and landscape improvements proposed for properties within the corridor. The guidelines are the result of work done by Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc. and Folck, West & Savage Architects, as part of the Shore Drive Transportation Study (Capital Improvement Program Project # 2-114), as well as work conducted by staff of the Planning Department, which included a

photographic inventory of the corridor, design analysis of existing conditions, and review of previous plans, subdivision plats, and zoning documents.

APPLICABILITY

These guidelines provide design guidance for the properties adjacent to Shore Drive, from Independence Boulevard on the west to First Landing State Park on the east, and for the remainder of the area located within the Shore Drive Corridor Overlay. This area is described in Section 1700 of the City Zoning Ordinance and is designated on the Official Zoning Maps by a (SD) symbol following the primary zoning district designation.





EXISTING CONDITIONS

The existing built environment along Shore Drive consists of diverse residential and commercial uses, including small shopping centers, restaurants, boat sales, service stations, convenience stores, mid-rise apartment buildings, and high-rise apartment buildings.

One of the results of the work done by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) was the identification of five distinct “scenic corridor” zones for area. These zones were identified in recognition of the fact that

out by the ULI panel, the best of each of the unique areas can be used as integrating features to help make the corridor a whole.

The ULI panel recommended five distinct zones. The zones are used as the organizing framework for these design guidelines.

Green Zone

This zone is located in two areas of the corridor:

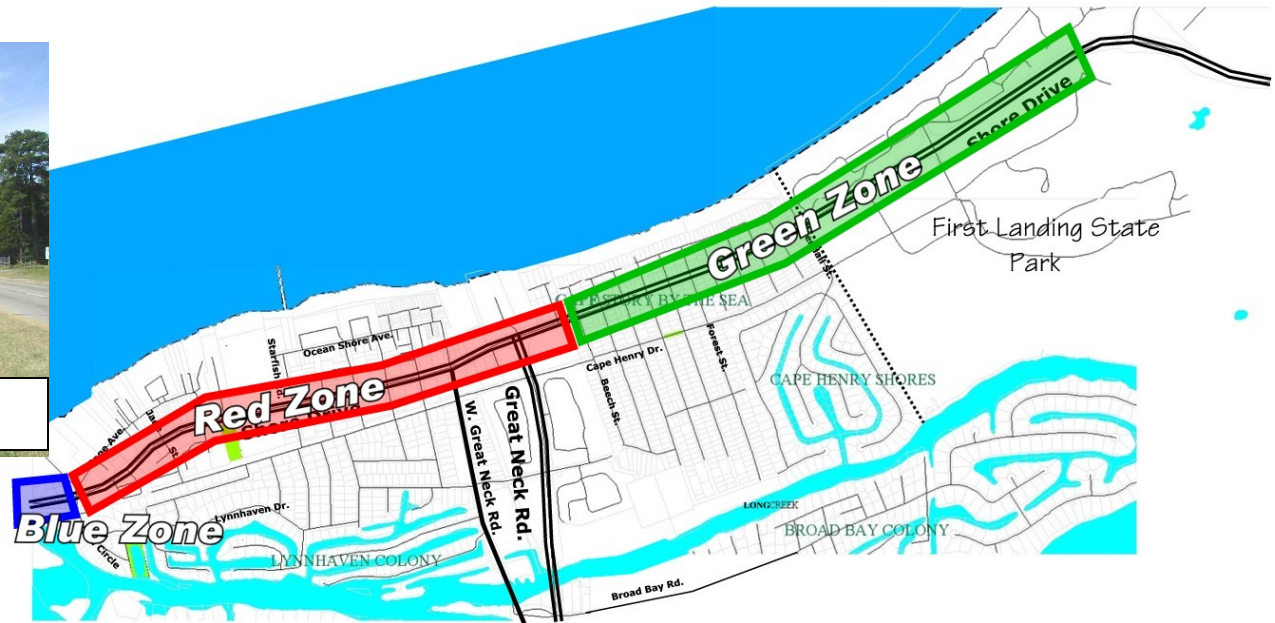
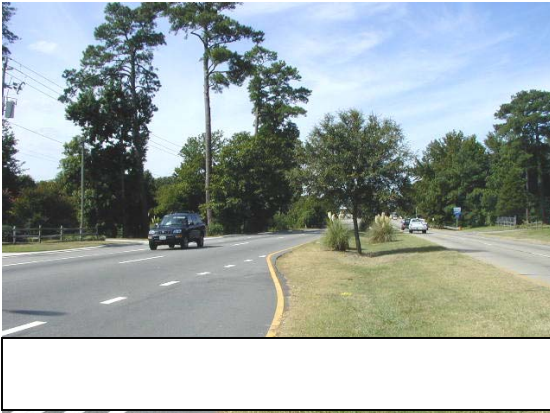
1. West - Generally between Lake Joyce (at Baylake United Methodist Church) and Marlin



while the existing zoning categories and the land use recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan are important, just as important are the existing unique design attributes of the corridor. Further, as pointed

Bay Lane, on the western end of the corridor, and





2. East -
Generally between First Landing State Park and Beech Street, on the eastern end of the corridor.

The ULI Report notes that

“This zone would extend the natural beauty of a tree-lined drive through the First landing State Park and provide a continuous green edge to the roadway by preserving the mature live oak and pine forest and adding other appropriate trees and shrubs to create the green screening effect. The median should have drifts of large trees to complement the overall forest,” (p. 27).

Existing Zoning – Eastern Green Zone

The area is primarily zoned for residential uses.



Comprehensive Plan – Eastern Green Zone

The Plan recommends the zone for residential land use at low and medium densities up to the park.

Existing Conditions – Eastern Green Zone

The area consists of single-family residential dwellings on small lots (7,500 square feet and under) and pockets of multi-family, medium-density dwellings.

Existing Zoning – Western Green Zone

The area is primarily zoned for low-density residential uses.

Comprehensive Plan – Western Green Zone

The Plan recommends the zone for residential land use at low densities.

Existing Conditions – Western Green Zone

A very well cared for area. Development is primarily single-family residential on the north side of Shore Drive. South side of Shore Drive includes a well-planned assisted-living facility with extensive green spaces and unobtrusive parking areas. Undeveloped parcels, some of which are wetlands, are also located on the south side.

Any specific design guidance for the Green Zone is provided in the “Design Guidelines” section.



Transition between Green Zone and Red Zone, looking east at Great Neck Road intersection – notice the trees along the edge in the background, giving way to parking areas with no landscape edge at the roadway.

Red Zone

Moving east to west through the corridor, the Green Zone begins to “give way” to the Red Zone. This transition occurs just to the east of the Great Neck

Road intersection, where the land use changes from predominantly residential to predominantly commercial uses. A mixture of architectural styles and building types characterizes the Red Zone, and there is no predominant design theme.

The ULI Report notes that within Red Zone, “parking lots would be landscaped with trees and hedges or low masonry walls to screen parked cars,” (p. 29). This observation is key to this zone, as landscaping along the edges to both screen parking lots and



Red Zone - looking west near Red Tide Road. Note the mix of uses and architectural styles and the positive impact on the streetscape

integrate the corridor would provide the fastest and most cost-efficient means of improving this part of the corridor.

Existing Zoning

The area is primarily zoned for commercial uses.

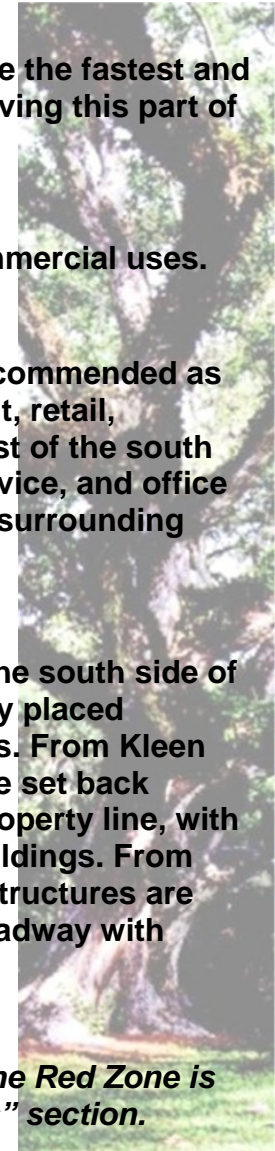
Comprehensive Plan

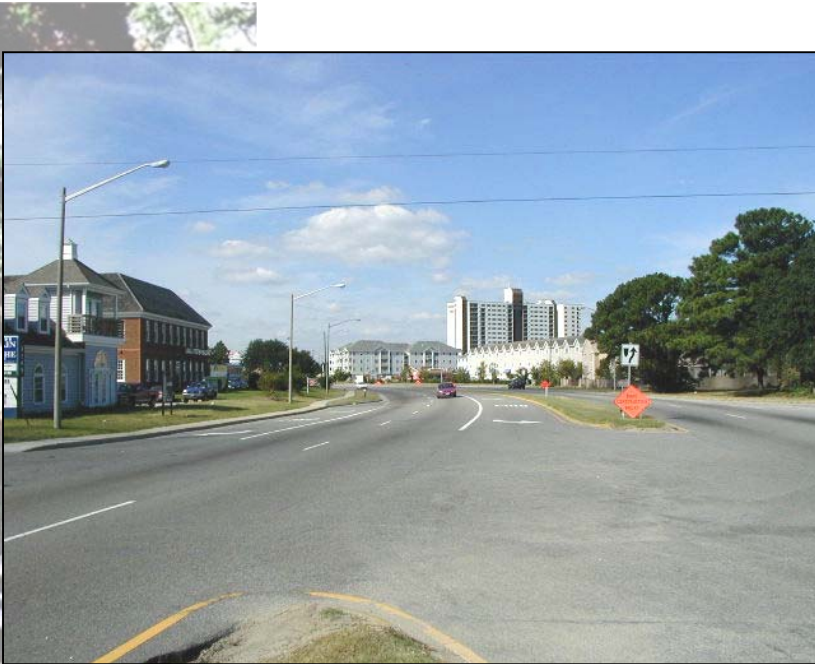
The north side of Shore Drive is recommended as Resort Area (lodging, entertainment, retail, recreational, and cultural uses. Most of the south side is recommended for retail, service, and office uses compatible with the needs of surrounding neighborhoods.

Existing Conditions

From Vista Circle to Kleen Street, the south side of Shore Drive possesses haphazardly placed structures and some vacant parcels. From Kleen Street to Urchin Road, buildings are set back approximately 50 feet from front property line, with some parking occurring behind buildings. From Urchin Road to Great Neck Road, structures are larger and set back far from the roadway with parking in front.

Any specific design guidance for the Red Zone is provided in the “Design Guidelines” section.





Red Zone - looking west near Kleen Street - Note the mix of uses and architectural styles and the positive impact of the trees. Note the impact on the vista created by the buildings in the background. The contrast of architectural styles for the buildings on the left is also interesting. Which building has a better “fit” with the overall image and vision for Shore Drive?

Blue Zone

Continuing to move along the corridor from east to west, the Red Zone transitions to the Blue Zone around the intersection with Vista Circle. The Blue Zone is unique in its close orientation to the



Blue Zone - looking west at Vista Circle. As in the other zones, there is a noticeable lack of landscape features in this area. Note how this area also possesses a contrast in architectural styles (building on left versus the mid-rise building in the background). Also significant in this zone, is the introduction to the landscape of tall towers carrying high-voltage power lines.

Lynnhaven River and the Chesapeake Bay. From the perspective of its landscape and architectural features, the Blue Zone is little different from the Red Zone; however, the opportunity presented by its

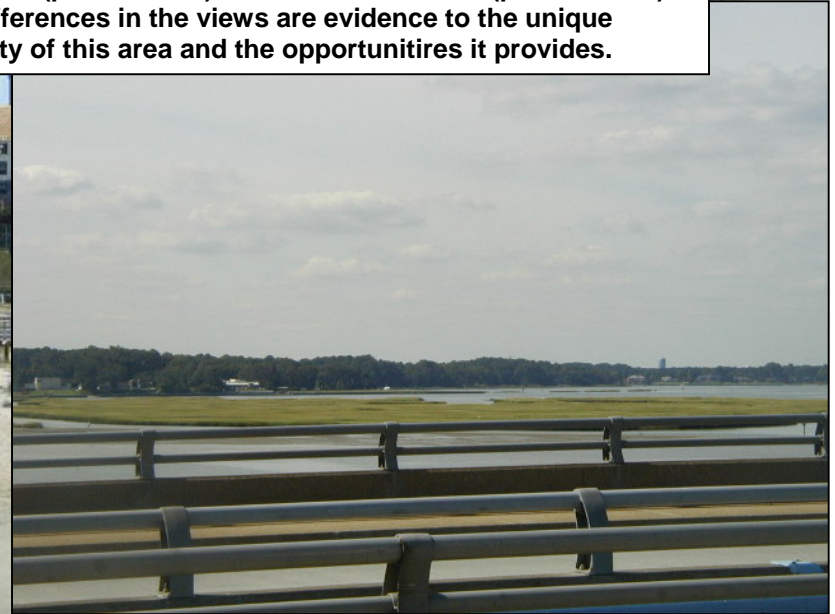


proximity to the water establishes it as a separate

“The Blue Zone would encompass the Lesner



Blue Zone – Two views from the Lesner Bridge: one to the northeast (photo to left) and one to the south (photo below). The differences in the views are evidence to the unique diversity of this area and the opportunities it provides.



design identity.

The ULI Report notes

Bridge and its approaches, with the objective being to facilitate views to the water environment. Only low planting is suggested, with a nautical theme to include stone and



brick paving and bridge abutment monuments, bollards, and ornamental lighting,” (p. 29).



Mixed Zone - looking east near intersection with Surry Road. Note, just as in the other zones, there is no defined architectural style in the area, and building types range across the spectrum. The lack of a defined edge is apparent here as a business and its parking begins to blend into the roadway.

Existing Zoning

The area is primarily zoned for resort commercial uses.

Comprehensive Plan

The Plan recommends the zone for Resort Area (lodging, entertainment, retail, recreational and cultural uses).

Existing Conditions

Restaurants, one and two-story structures, generating a lot of pedestrian traffic and demand for parking on the weekends. Commercial uses, such as boat sales and service, some shopping centers, and mid-rise and high-rise condominium towers.

Any specific design guidance for the Blue Zone is provided in the “Design Guidelines” section.

Mixed Zone

This area falls within the portion of Shore Drive as it runs through the Ocean Park neighborhood. The area possesses a mix of uses, primarily being single-family and duplex dwellings, offices, and commercial uses. Some of the commercial uses are oriented to the water (boat sales and repair, for example), closely tying this zone to the Blue Zone to the east. The zone suffers from the lack of a hard edge between the



roadway and the areas along the roadway. Parking areas for businesses tend to blend directly into the roadway in some spots. The recommendations of the Shore Drive Transportation Study, when implemented, should resolve this problem. The zone is also negatively impacted by the tall towers for high-voltage power lines that are visible along the southern side of the roadway.

For this zone, the ULI Report notes

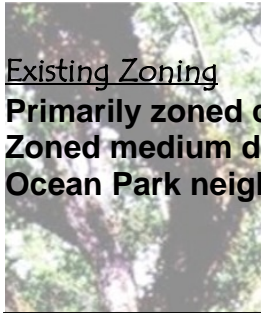


Mixed Zone - looking west near Stratford Road. Note the lack of a defining edge, low height of the buildings, lack of landscape features, and the impact of the tall power towers at the left.

“To accommodate a mixture of uses, residential uses would be screened in a manner similar to the Green Zone [mix of trees and shrubs along the edges], and commercial uses would have landscaped parking lots and sites with trees and hedges to screen the cars,” (p. 30).

Existing Zoning

Primarily zoned commercial along Shore Drive. Zoned medium density residential for parcels in the Ocean Park neighborhood.



Mixed Zone - the opportunity created in this zone as the roadway passes through Ocean Park is unique. The homes, some dating from the early 20th century, provide a defining design image for the area and the corridor.

Comprehensive Plan

The Plan recommends the Ocean Park neighborhood for residential land use at low and medium densities up to the park. Area along Shore Drive is recommended for retail, service, and office uses compatible with the needs of surrounding neighborhoods).

Existing Conditions

Commercial uses along Shore Drive. Existing buildings are generally one and two-story structures, set back 30 to 70 feet from front property line. Most of the parking is in front of the buildings, fronting on Shore Drive.

Any specific design guidance for the Mixed Zone is provided in the “Design Guidelines” section.



Gateway Zone



This zone is located on both sides of the overpass of Shore Drive by Northampton Boulevard (U.S. Route 13), generally from Lake Joyce on the east to Bradford Lake on the west.

The ULI Report notes

“Sign controls would be improved for the commercial uses, with landscaping required

for the parking lots and sites and hedges to screen the cars,” (p. 30).

Existing Zoning

The area is primarily zoned for commercial, high-density residential, and low-density residential toward Lake Joyce.



Gateway Zone at intersection with Pleasure House Road.





Comprehensive Plan

Area is primarily recommended for retail, service, and office uses compatible with the needs of surrounding neighborhoods.

Existing Conditions

Commercial uses, mostly shopping centers and a large grocery store. Existing buildings are one and two-story structures, set back 30 to 70 feet from the front property line. Most parking is in front of the buildings, fronting on Shore Drive.

Any specific design guidance for the Gateway Zone is provided in the “Design Guidelines” section.



DESIGN GUIDELINES

As seen in the previous pages, the Shore Drive corridor does not have an existing homogeneous architectural character. These guidelines do not attempt to dictate a particular architectural style, but are provided in order to

- Encourage development consistent with the community's goals that will achieve the physical characteristics necessary to enhance the economic vitality and visual aesthetics of the Shore Drive corridor;
- Ensure that the scale and context of new buildings are compatible with the desired character of the community, while encouraging existing buildings to upgrade to meet the higher standards of design; and
- Ensure that development relates to the pedestrian as well as to the automobile, and that non-residential uses are compatible with adjacent residential areas.



Architectural Design Guidelines

It is the intention of these guidelines to encourage development of locally appropriate building types and to discourage the continued intrusion into the corridor of inappropriate types. In light of the Shore Drive community's close ties with the Chesapeake Bay, and its desire to enhance its status as a scenic highway, gateway, and resort residential community, these guidelines are intended



to assist the community in the establishment of a Bayfront architectural character.

General Building Design Concepts

- Facades should be articulated to reduce the scale and one-dimensional appearance of buildings and to provide visual interest. The overall intent is to encourage a more human scale and pedestrian orientation.
- Facades greater than 50 feet in length, measured horizontally, visible from a public street, should incorporate wall plane projections or recesses having a depth of at least three feet to break up the expansiveness of the exterior.
- Fronts and sides of buildings oriented toward Shore Drive should incorporate one-story porches, arcades, bay windows, entry areas, awnings, or other such features.
- Any side of a building oriented toward a public street or public open space should incorporate one-story porches, arcades, bay windows, entry areas, arcades, breezeways, awnings, or other such features to add visual interest.

- Buildings should have clearly defined entrances featuring canopies, awnings, recesses, covered porches and/or peaked roof forms.
- Façade colors for all portions of the building should be low reflectance, subtle, neutral or earth tone colors (no primary colors). Building trim and accent areas may feature brighter colors, including primary colors.



- The placement of dormers and other raised roof areas, within a principal sloping roof, are



encouraged, as a way of gaining desired habitable or usable space while reducing the visual scale and height of a structure. The use of a “half-story” to accomplish this is encouraged.

Walls

Materials

- Walls should be clad in wood, cedar shingles, hardboard siding, lightweight concrete siding, or shingles.
- Limited quantities (up to 50% of the façade area visible from Shore Drive) of brick, stone, exterior finishing insulation system (EIFS), or split-faced block are allowable.
- Horizontal lap vinyl siding is generally discouraged, but may be suitable for portions of a building exterior if it is demonstrated to be high quality in terms of durability and design. Simulated singles are preferred.
- Cedar shake or good quality similar shake siding is encouraged.
- Exposed foundation walls should be brick, split-faced block, or painted concrete.

Methods

- Walls of more than one material should only change material along a horizontal line, not a vertical or diagonal line, and the ‘heavier’ material should always go beneath the ‘lighter’ material.
- Trim is required where there is a change in material or a change in the plane.
- The second floor should be stepped back from the first floor plan relative to Shore Drive.

Roofs

Materials

- Pitched roofs should be metal standing seam, copper, wood shakes, or high-quality asphalt shingles.
- Fascia and soffit material should be painted wood, vinyl or metal.

Methods

- Pitched roofs are highly encouraged and should have a slope between 6:12 and 10:12.
- An open fascia is encouraged with decorative rafter tails with a total depth of no more than



10 to 12 inches.

- Variations in rooflines are encouraged.
- Variation of the roofline through the use of overhanging eaves, parapets, height variations and entrance features is encouraged.
- Parapets of at least 24 inches shall conceal flat roofs and all rooftop equipment from street



level view.

- Roofs of buildings in the Mixed Zone should be pitched to maintain compatibility with the residential identity of the Ocean Park neighborhood. Commercial uses in the zone may have flat roofs, but such roofs should be 'hidden' by pitched roof elements.

Building Details

Materials

- Porches should be wood, synthetic wood (fypon or similar), or faced with brick or stone.
- Railing systems should be wood, painted steel, or vinyl.
- Columns should be wood or synthetic wood (fypon or similar).

Methods

- Columns should be a minimum of 8 inches square if 8 feet in height or less; a minimum of 10 inches square otherwise. Round and tapered columns are also appropriate as long as they are consistent with the proportions set out above for square columns.



- Porches, arcades, breezeways, etc. should be vertically proportional to the main building.
- Porch ceilings should be painted or should have detailed vinyl or similar exterior covering.
- Wood should be painted or stained with an opaque or semi-solid stain, except on walking surfaces, which may be unfinished.
- Balconies should extend beyond the face of the wall no more than 4 feet and should be supported by decorative exposed beams or brackets.
- The undercroft of porches should be enclosed with masonry or should be skirted by wood or vinyl lattice.
- Unfinished decks of treated wood may be placed on rear elevations and elevations not facing Shore Drive.

Windows and Doors

Materials

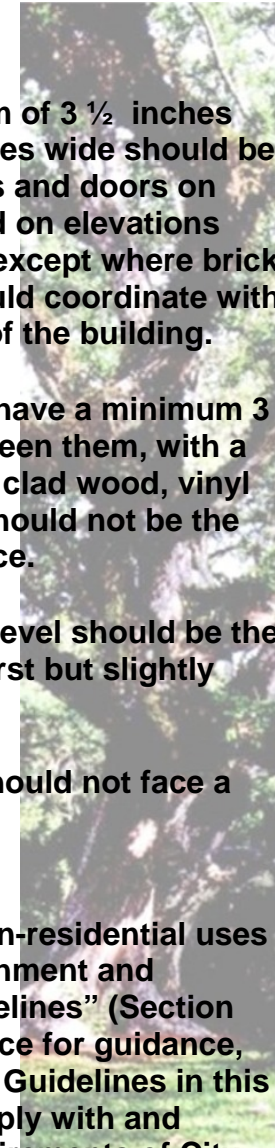
- Windows and exterior casing should be high quality wood, vinyl clad wood, vinyl or aluminum.

Methods

- Exterior casing of a minimum of 3 ½ inches wide to a maximum of 6 inches wide should be provided around all windows and doors on front and side elevations and on elevations facing public right-of-ways (except where brick veneer is used). Casing should coordinate with the overall style and theme of the building.
- Windows in a series should have a minimum 3 ½ inch wide separation between them, with a mullion cover of wood, vinyl clad wood, vinyl or aluminum. Exterior trim should not be the same color as the wall surface.
- Window size on the second level should be the same proportion as on the first but slightly smaller.
- Commercial garage doors should not face a public right-of-way.

Commercial

Retail, office, motel, and similar non-residential uses should refer to the “Retail Establishment and Shopping Centers Ordinance Guidelines” (Section 243-249 of the City Zoning Ordinance for guidance, supplemented by the Architectural Guidelines in this document. Landscaping must comply with and exceed where appropriate the requirements of City



development ordinances. The Shore Drive Recommended Plant Materials List (Spring 1999) from the Shore Drive Corridor Plan should serve as the primary plant palette for landscaping.

Materials

- In addition to door materials previously discussed, storefronts may be colored aluminum.
- Awnings should be built of a metal structure covered with canvas or solution-dyed acrylic fabric.

Methods

- The storefront, doors, awnings and signage shall be a unified design appropriate for the Shore Drive Corridor and not standard “franchise” architectural styling.
- The storefront should be detailed while the rest of the building should be simple. Storefront or window units should comprise a minimum of 75% of the first floor elevation and a 25% minimum of the second floor.
- Awnings or other single-story roof overhangs are encouraged.

- The vertical drip of an awning, if stenciled with signage as permitted by the City Zoning Ordinance, should be a minimum of 8 inches in height.

Miscellaneous

- Pathways and sidewalks to building entrances should be paved with concrete, pavers, or brick and should be landscaped with a minimum 3 foot strip on each side of the walk.
- All landscape materials and methods on parcels fronting on Shore Drive shall adhere to and strive to exceed City development ordinance requirements and the recommendations of the Shore Drive Corridor Plan. The Shore Drive Recommended Plant Materials List (Spring 1999) from the Shore Drive Corridor Plan should serve as the primary plant palette for landscaping.
- Materials compatible with the building’s architectural features shall screen mechanical equipment and trash containers.
- Roof-mounted equipment must be screened from view of all public right-of-ways or from any public open space. The roof screening shall form an integral part of the building



design.

- Fences along public right-of-ways should be compatible with the architectural style of the building. Materials should be brick, painted or stained wood, cedar left to weather naturally, and decorative vinyl or metal fence systems. Chain-link fencing and other industrial-style materials are strongly discouraged and inappropriate for the Shore Drive Corridor.
- Retaining walls visible from a public right-of-way should be made of brick or stone complementing the primary building and designed so as to blend with the natural feature of the land.
- Exterior light fixtures should be compatible with the style of the building they serve.
- As required under the City development ordinances, the trash dumpster shall be screened.

Parking Lot Guidelines

- All off-street parking areas of more than 4 parking spaces, whether residential or commercial, must comply with City Code requirements. Landscape materials and methods must adhere to the City development

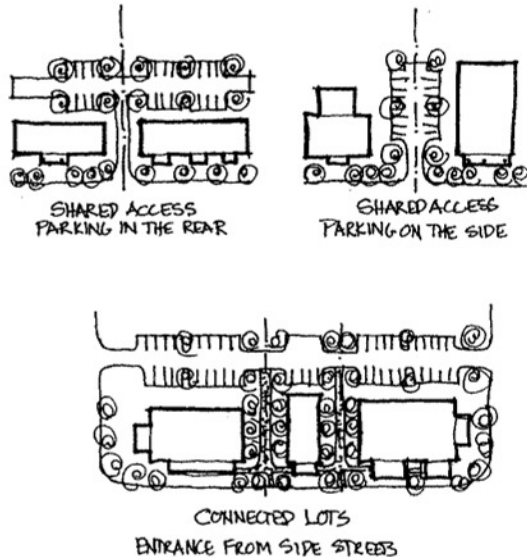
ordinances and any special provisions in these guidelines. The Shore Drive Recommended Plant Materials List (Spring 1999) from the Shore Drive Corridor Plan should serve as the primary plant palette for landscaping.

- Off-street parking lots should be located to the rear and side of buildings except for retail commercial uses, which must comply with the guidelines provided in the “Retail Establishments and Shopping Centers Ordinance Guidelines.”
- Large parking lots should be split up between the sides and the rear of the building, whenever possible, in order to break up expanses of paved areas.
- Continuous pedestrian walkways with a minimum of 3 foot width of landscaping on each side should be provided from all parking areas to the principal customer entrance on the street façade.
- Placement of parking should minimize and conceal large expanses of paving.
- Off-street parking should minimize curb cuts along Shore Drive. Vehicular entrances to parking lots should be from the side streets if



available.

- Preferred parking lot configurations are shown below.



Signage Guidelines

These guidelines apply to signage on all privately owned property including commercial and multi-family development.

Commercial Signage

- The style, size, color, and building material of all signs on the site should be coordinated, including signs for any out parcel development, on-site directional signs, and signs to be located on the face of any structure.
- Colors and materials should be in keeping with the colors used on the primary structure(s). Colors should be primarily neutral or earth-tone (no primary colors). A limited amount of brighter accents (primary colors), such as those commonly found in corporate logos, are acceptable.
- Sign materials should be durable, attractive, and coordinated with materials used on the primary structure.

Monument Signs

- The overall dimensions of a monument sign should not exceed 8 feet in height and 8 feet in width.
- As required by ordinance, a minimum of 75 square feet of landscaping, consisting of at least 50% evergreens, shall be included at the base of the sign.



- Individual letter height should not exceed 12 inches.
- Monument signage should be lit from the ground rather than internally-illuminated.
- Street numbering on buildings and signs is encouraged.

Signs for Neighborhood Entrances

- Entry identification signs should strive to adhere to the design principles contained in these guidelines for signs, particularly in regard to scale, style, materials, and colors.

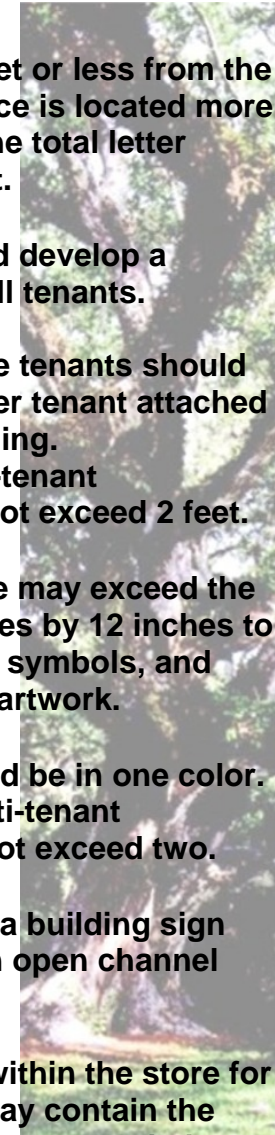
Building Signs

The following are provided as guidelines. The provisions of the City Zoning Ordinance regarding dimensional requirements prevail.

- Buildings may use individual channel letters as the main business signs only. All other building signage may be non-illuminated letters, blade signs, painted signs or banners. These types of signs may all be illuminated using appropriate surface mounted fixtures to light the face of the sign type selected.
- Letter height for single-tenant properties should not exceed 2 feet on any face of the

building that is located 55 feet or less from the street curb. If the building face is located more than 55 feet from the curb, the total letter height may increase to 3 feet.

- Multi-tenant buildings should develop a consistent sign system for all tenants.
 - Buildings with multiple tenants should be allowed one sign per tenant attached to the face of the building.
 - Letter height for multi-tenant development should not exceed 2 feet.
- A portion of building signage may exceed the above-stated height guidelines by 12 inches to accommodate no-text logos, symbols, and icons as part of the signage artwork.
- All letters in one name should be in one color. The number of colors in multi-tenant development signs should not exceed two.
- Neon signs are allowable as a building sign only when constructed as an open channel letter as a main tenant sign.
- One neon sign is allowable within the store for external viewing. The sign may contain the tenant's name. Neon signs should be limited to



a total area of 5 square feet.

- Blade signs should be constructed of a rigid material.

Special Additional Guidelines for Residential Development

The following additional guidelines primarily apply to medium and high-density development in the corridor:

- Front building façades should be located at the front yard setback.
- In developments of more than one building, at least one building should be located at the front yard setback.
- As an alternative to the above, three or more buildings may form a courtyard with two building sides located at the front yard setback.
- The street elevation of multiple unit residential buildings should have at least one street-oriented entrance and contain the principal windows of the front unit.
- Detached garages are encouraged to be located in the rear half of the lot, and where

possible, be accessed by an alley or shared drive. Adjacent properties are encouraged to share driveways or access drives.

- For structures with attached garages, the width of the front façade should be at least five feet greater than the width of the garage along its street frontage. The garage portion of the building should be set back at least five feet farther than the house from the street.
- The following should not be located between the street and the front building façade:
 - Loading docks and service areas;
 - Heating and ventilation equipment;
 - Any other mechanical equipment; and
 - Trash containers.

