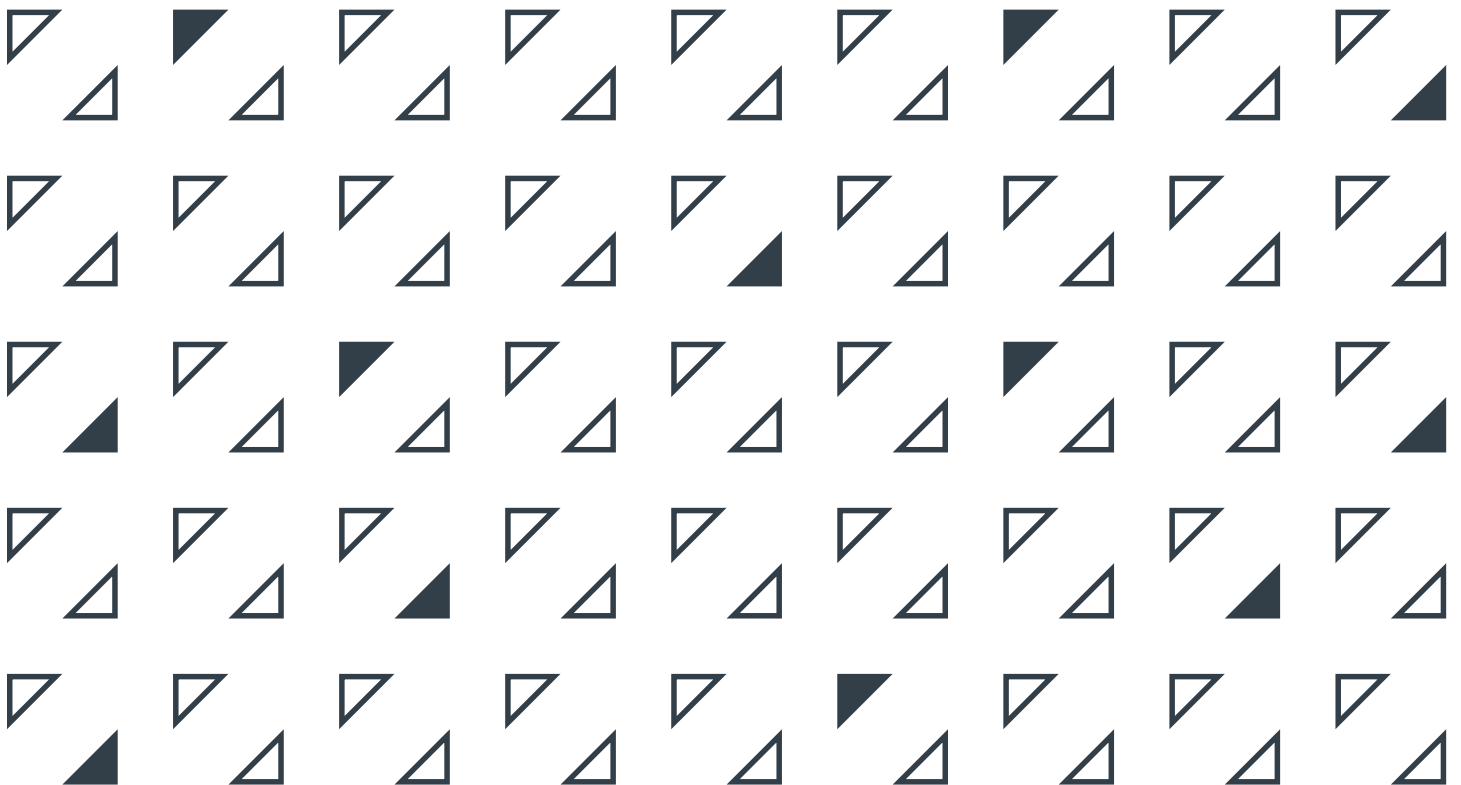


Research Triangle Park

# RTP 3.0

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

04.10.2026





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# INTRODUCTION

## Design Guidelines Purpose and Intent

The Design Guidelines for Research Triangle Park 3.0 (RTP 3.0) provide a framework to guide the evolution of Research Triangle Park (RTP) over the coming decades. The purpose is to ensure that development within RTP aligns with the Park's vision and objectives, fostering a built environment that is innovative, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of its users. The guidelines will inform future developments, ensuring consistency in design quality while allowing for flexibility to accommodate emerging trends and technologies.

The intent of these guidelines is to shape a consistent and high-quality public realm, foster architectural and landscape design that reflects the Park's unique character, and ensure that every project contributes to a cohesive, vibrant, and sustainable RTP. The guidelines emphasize clarity and flexibility, providing direction without prescribing uniformity, and promoting creativity while reinforcing shared goals for the Park's next chapter.



Research, Innovation & Technology



Dynamic Mixed-Use Environments



Nature & Environmental Stewardship

## RTP 3.0 Mission, Vision, and Goals

RTP 3.0 represents the next evolution of Research Triangle Park to:

### **Re-establish RTP as a global epicenter of 21st Century innovation and sustainability, strengthening its role as an economic driver in the region.**

To realize this transformation, RTP 3.0 introduces three complementary land use types that together define a more connected and diverse physical framework.

#### **MIXED-USE NODE (MUN)**

Compact, walkable centers that integrate research, housing, retail, and public space within a human-scaled, transit-supportive environment. These nodes serve as RTP's new hubs of activity and innovation, 15-minute neighborhoods that bring daily needs and discovery closer together.

#### **RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT (RND)**

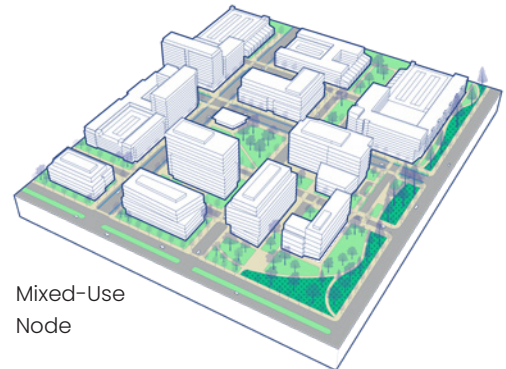
Complete, connected neighborhoods that provide diverse housing options, local amenities, and a strong sense of community. Designed for people first, these neighborhoods balance density with green space and promote wellness through walkable streets and accessible open space.

#### **ENHANCED CORPORATE CAMPUS (ECC)**

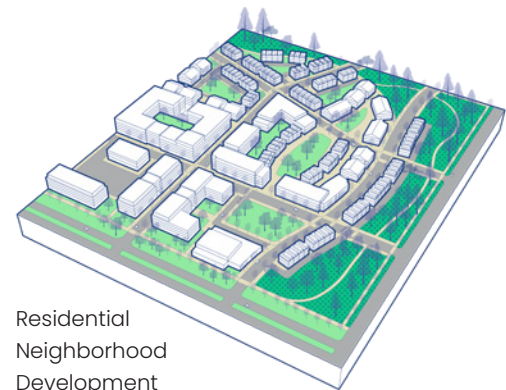
Evolved employment environments that blend research, office, and amenity spaces with natural systems and multimodal access. ECCs preserve RTP's identity as a global research leader while introducing greater flexibility, connectedness, and environmental performance. ECCs may be public, private, or a combination of the two.

Together, these land uses define a flexible but intentional structure that encourages growth, diversity, and sustainability across the Park, anchored by the RTP Greenway and a network of open spaces that weave ecological health and mobility throughout.

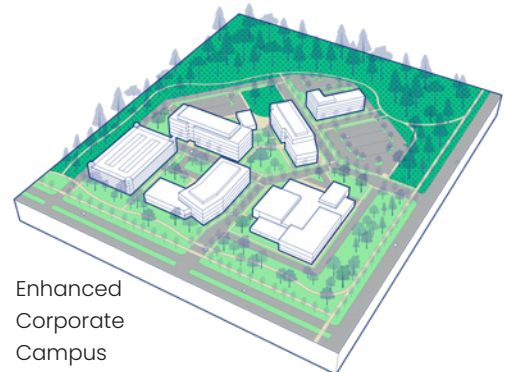
The RTP Design Guidelines only apply to the three new development types (MUN, RND, and ECC). Developments under Traditional Corporate Development (TCD) as identified in the RTP Development Standards are not subject to the RTP Design Guidelines.



Mixed-Use Node



Residential Neighborhood Development



Enhanced Corporate Campus

## The Private Regulations Process

The Development Standards and Design Guidelines for RTP 3.0 work together to ensure high-quality growth that advances the Park's long-term vision. While both documents shape the built environment, they serve distinct yet complementary purposes within the development review process.



### DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Planning Board Oversight

The RTP Development Standards establish the regulatory framework that governs physical development within the Park. These standards are prescriptive, defining precise requirements for land use, height, setbacks, parking, stormwater management, signage, and other measurable aspects of site development.

The RTP Planning Board evaluates development proposals for alignment with the Development Standards and ensures that projects meet the baseline expectations for form, uses, and performance across the Park.



### DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design Board Oversight

The RTP Design Guidelines complement the Development Standards by establishing design expectations and recommendations that apply to development under any of the three new land use types (MUN, RND, or ECC). These guidelines articulate the qualities of place that define future development in RTP; walkability, connectivity, urban design, landscape character, sustainability, and architectural integrity. Rather than prescribing specific solutions, the Design Guidelines provide flexible direction that allows individual projects to apply the guidelines in ways that reflect the context, use, and character of RTP 3.0 while maintaining a standard set of expectations for design quality.

The RTP Design Board evaluates development proposals for alignment with the principles and intent of the Design Guidelines, focusing on the quality of site design, architecture, landscape, and public realm.

## MASTER DEVELOPMENT AND SITE-SPECIFIC DESIGN GUIDELINES

For RND development and multi-phased MUN development larger than 15 acres, detailed design guidelines providing specificity related to materials, furnishings, plantings, signage, architectural expression, and public realm design will be required as part of the RTP Design Board review process. This is to ensure alignment with how the park-wide design guidelines in this document are being implemented over the course of these projects. This also ensures better design consistency and quality of future large-scale development in RTP.

## EVALUATION MATRIX

In an effort to demystify the RTP Design Board review process, the Design Guidelines provide the evaluation matrix at the end of this document. This evaluation matrix will be used by the RTP Design Board to review proposed projects.

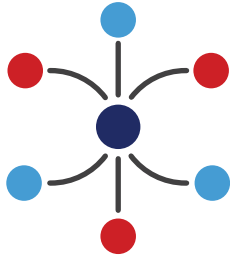
## DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

Applicants seeking to develop under RTP 3.0 must first get site plan approval from the RTP Planning Board to develop an MUN, RND, or ECC. Applicants may then enter the county site plan review process with the applicable county jurisdiction. RTP Design Board approval for the design components of the project must be granted prior to construction commencement but may occur concurrently with county site plan review or following site plan approval. Applicants may also bring design materials to the RTP Design Board for comment prior to seeking final approval, if desired.

DESIGN GUIDELINE EVALUATION MATRIX		
EVALUATION MATRIX		
To help provide transparency and clarity around the review process, members of the RTP Design Board will use this evaluation matrix to review proposed project alignment with the RTP Design Guidelines.		
DESIGN GUIDELINE	RATING 1 (LOW)- 5 (HIGH)	NOTES
PRINCIPLE 1	DG-1.01 Design walkable, pedestrian-scaled blocks	
	DG-1.02 Establish a legible, hierarchical network of streets	
	DG-1.03 Align built-to-line and frontages to define the street edge	
	DG-1.04 Provide efficient, context-sensitive parking solutions	
	DG-1.05 Build an integrated multi-modal transportation network	
	DG-1.06 Design streetscapes that support an active public realm	
	DG-1.07 Integrate lighting to enhance safety while defining character and boundaries	
	DG-1.08 Use signage to enhance wayfinding and district identity	
	PRINCIPLE 2	DG-2.01 Create welcoming and accessible open spaces serving a variety of users and functions
DG-2.02 Establish an interconnected open space network		
DG-2.03 Utilize consistent, high-quality materials to create enduring open spaces		
PRINCIPLE 3	DG-3.01 Shape buildings to define a human-scaled public realm	
DG-3.02 Balance cohesion, variety, and environmental response.		
DG-3.03 Create facades with depth, craft, and transparency		
DG-3.04 Employ authentic materials and express innovation		
DG-3.05 Integrate design excellence and environmental performance		
DG-3.06 Design for adaptability and visible stewardship		

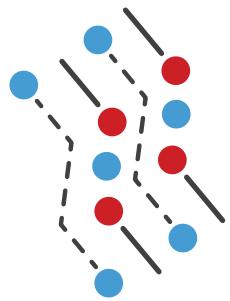
## How to Use This Document

The Design Guidelines are organized around three overarching principles that collectively express the character and aspirations of RTP 3.0. Each principle bridges scales, from buildings to blocks to landscapes, and provides a foundation for decisions that shape the Park's physical environment.



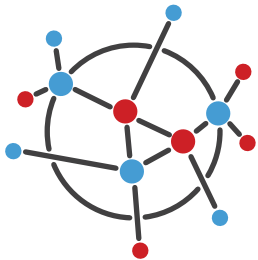
### **PRINCIPLE 1: DESIGN INTERCONNECTED ENVIRONMENTS**

Create a cohesive and legible framework of streets, public spaces, and buildings that supports movement, collaboration, and community life. Interconnected urbanism links site design, transportation, and the public realm to foster safe, walkable, multimodal environments that bring people and ideas together.



### **PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN HEALTHY AND ROBUST LANDSCAPES**

Celebrate RTP's defining landscape character as both ecological infrastructure and social amenity. Healthy and robust landscapes connect people to nature, strengthen biodiversity, and form a continuous network of open spaces and trails that support recreation, resilience, and well-being.



### **PRINCIPLE 3: DESIGN ARCHITECTURE THAT INSPIRES AND ENDURES**

Advance architectural expression that embodies innovation, authenticity, and longevity. Buildings should engage the public realm, express their purpose with clarity, and contribute to an enduring architectural legacy that reflects RTP's spirit of creativity and excellence.

Each principle is supported by three components, each with subsequent design guidelines. Each design guideline has a short description and then a series of recommendations for how to achieve the principle. Additional precedent imagery and diagrams help communicate the recommendations.

While the recommendations apply to all three of the new RTP 3.0 land use types, some design guidelines include recommendations that are specific to one or more of the land use types. These are noted in the navy blue bar located on applicable spreads.

COMPONENT

DESIGN GUIDELINE

DESCRIPTION

RECOMMENDATIONS

PRECEDENT IMAGERY AND DIAGRAMS

LAND USE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Site Design

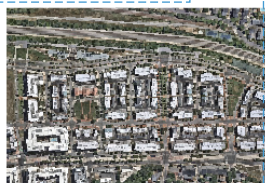
DG-1.01 Design Walkable, Pedestrian-Scaled Blocks

interconnected, pedestrian-scale blocks ensure walkable, flexible environments, especially when reinforced with public frontages to encourage vibrant street life.

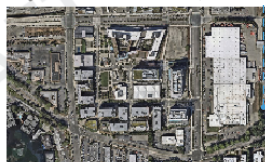
- Maximize pedestrian permeability by avoiding large blocks or super-block conditions. Public pedestrian through-connections may be provided by exterior pedestrian passageways, mews, courtyards, plazas, greenways, and other publicly-accessible spaces.
- Open Space within a block, adjacent to one- or two streets can be deducted from the block length dimension.
- Additional mid-block, pedestrian-only secondary connections are desired for block lengths longer than 500 feet. These pedestrian walkways are intended to connect parking areas to destinations.
- Blocks should be laid out in a responsible and sensitive manner that is influenced by and limits disturbance to site topography, drainage, and ecological corridors.
- Blocks and streets should be master planned to create focal points, terminating vistas, thresholds/gateways, and identity with landmarks and a memorable urban form.
- Coordinate block configuration with the proposed hierarchy of streets.



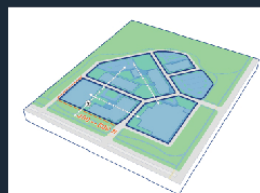
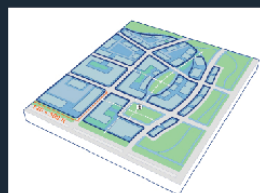
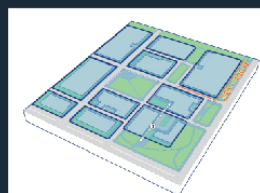
Bloc 83 in Raleigh exemplifies a walkable and permeable block structure that reinforces public frontages and provides a mid-block connection through a landscaped courtyard.



A compact, efficient, and pedestrian-friendly block configuration at Potomac Yards in Alexandria, VA.



Flexible blocks in a walkable corporate-anchored district (Spring District, Bellevue, WA).



MUN Specific

- Preferred block lengths should range from 250-400 feet to promote walkability, permeability, and retail visibility. Shorter blocks increase pedestrian connections, reduce travel distances, and create a fine-grained urban fabric suited for active ground-floor uses and transit-oriented environments.

RND Specific

- Preferred block lengths should range from 120-500 feet to balance walkability with efficient land use. More flexibility in block sizes accommodate varied scales of residential, civic, and small commercial uses while maintaining slightly longer blocks than mixed-use cores.

ECC Specific

- Recognizing the need for flexibility in corporate campus development needs, preferred block lengths should range from 400-800 feet if possible to support walkability, building footprints, service areas, but should still include internal pedestrian pathways and green corridors to ensure walkability and connectivity within the campus and to surrounding districts.

# PRINCIPLE 1: DESIGN INTERCONNECTED ENVIRONMENTS

## Design Statement

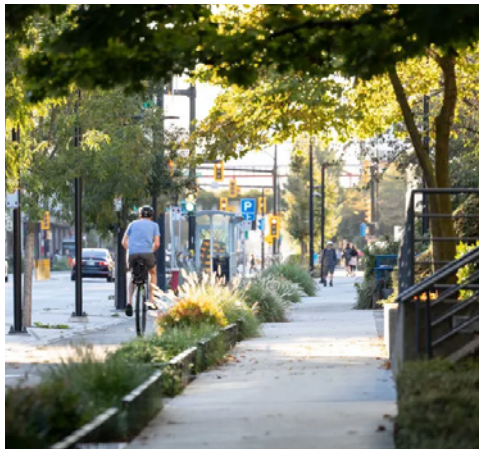
Interconnected environments are places designed as cohesive networks that balance built and natural environments and prioritize the human scale. Developments are seamlessly linked by multimodal streets, trails, and green corridors. The relationship between urbanized areas and adjacent natural forests is strengthened through contiguous open-space systems that support both ecological function and human experience. These environments prioritize walkability, transit access, and social interaction to foster vibrant, inclusive, and resilient communities where daily life unfolds.

## Sustainability Statement

Interconnected environments promote a connected urban structure that supports environmental health, reduces carbon emissions, and enhances resilience. Compact and connected districts minimize land consumption and infrastructure demand while allowing for the preservation and restoration of natural systems. Mobility is supported through walkable and bike-friendly networks, transit-oriented development, and reduced reliance on private vehicles. Green infrastructure, including tree canopies, permeable surfaces, and bioswales, is incorporated throughout the urban fabric to manage stormwater and support biodiversity and adaptive urban environment.



Integrated Built Environment



Multi-Modal Connections

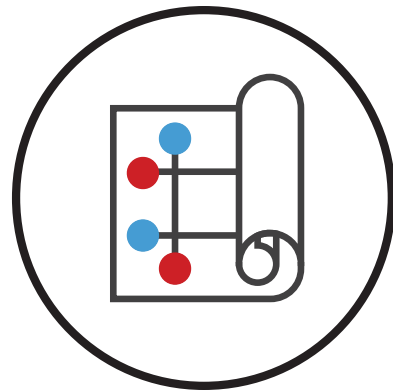


Continuous Open Space Networks

## Components Overview

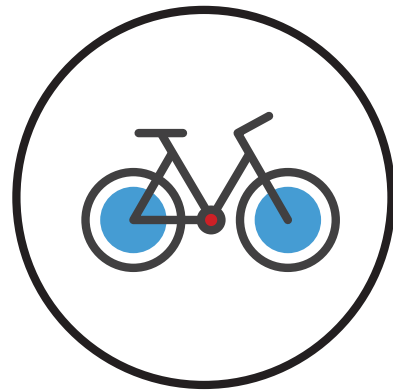
### SITE DESIGN

Site design is the process of organizing land, buildings, circulation, and open spaces to create functional, accessible, and contextually responsive places. It integrates natural systems, built form, and infrastructure to shape how people experience and move through a site.



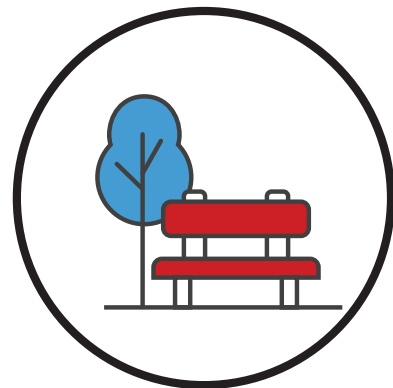
### TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Transportation and mobility encompass the systems, networks, and design strategies that enable people to move safely, efficiently, and sustainably within and beyond a community. Thoughtful design integrates multiple modes, multiple modes – walking, cycling, transit, and vehicles – into a connected network that prioritizes accessibility, safety, and environmental health.



### PUBLIC REALM ELEMENTS

Public realm elements are the physical and spatial components that shape the outdoor environments, including streets, sidewalks, plazas, parks, and open spaces. Elements, such as paving, lighting, seating, landscaping, signage, and street furnishings define the character, comfort, and identity of public spaces.



# Site Design

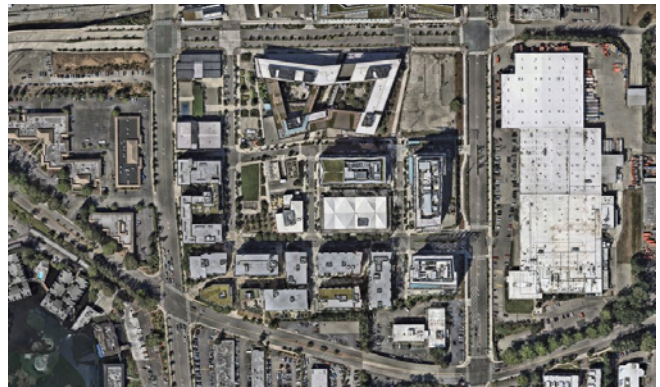
## DG-1.01 Design Walkable, Pedestrian-Scaled Blocks

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A compact, efficient, and pedestrian-friendly block configuration at Potomac Yards in Alexandria, VA.

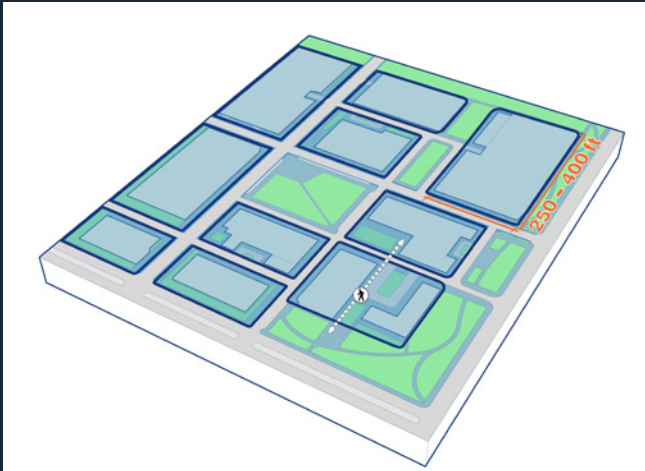


Flexible blocks in a walkable corporate-anchored district (Spring District, Bellevue, WA).



Bloc 83 in Raleigh exemplifies a walkable and permeable block structure that reinforces public frontages and provides a mid-block connection through a landscaped courtyard.





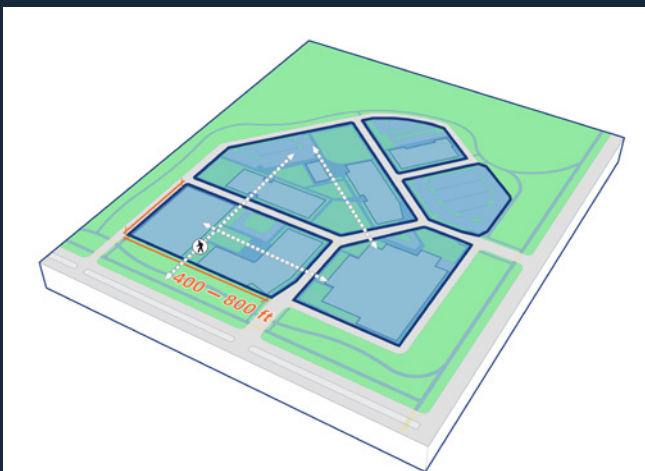
## MUN Specific

- Preferred block lengths should range from 250-400 feet to promote walkability, permeability, and retail visibility. Shorter blocks increase pedestrian connections, reduce travel distances, and create a fine-grained urban fabric suited for active ground-floor uses and transit-oriented environments.



## RND Specific

- Preferred block lengths should range from 120-500 feet to balance walkability with efficient land use. More flexibility in block sizes accommodates varied scales of residential, civic, and small commercial uses while maintaining slightly longer blocks than mixed-use cores.



## ECC Specific

- Recognizing the need for flexibility in corporate campus developments, preferred block lengths should range from 400-800 feet to support walkability, building footprints, and service areas. Blocks should still include internal pedestrian pathways and green corridors to ensure walkability and connectivity within the campus and to surrounding districts.

## DG-1.02 Establish a Legible, Hierarchical Network of Streets

Clear street hierarchy promotes safe, efficient circulation for a broad range of users and reinforces a coherent development structure supporting legibility, wayfinding, and a strong sense of place.

- Create connected streets and street grids for distributed vehicular movements and maximum walkability. Avoid and eliminate cul-de-sac and dead-end conditions.
- Coordinate the layout and designs of streets and drives with the proposed block configuration (refer to DG-1.01 Block Configuration).
- Streets should have clear hierarchy that supports different scales of development, types of building frontages, and capacity.
- Plan for phased development, ensuring that initial street segments establish a framework that can be extended logically as the area grows.
- Utilize a clear hierarchy of collector and local streets to guide the siting of key buildings and open spaces and to frame key gateways, focal points, and sight lines.

For RTP 3.0, there are three categories of street types identified: thoroughfare streets, collector streets, and local streets. (See details in appendix.)

### *Thoroughfares*

Thoroughfares function as the main circulation corridors that connect major destinations, accommodate the highest traffic volumes, define major edges and gateways, and provide prominent pedestrian and landscape treatments.

### *Collector Streets*

Collector streets should be designed to accommodate moderate vehicular traffic connecting thoroughfares to local streets. Collector streets are opportunities for interfacing with active, public-facing building functions such as main entrances and retail frontage.

### *Local Streets*

Local streets accommodate limited through-traffic to allow for pedestrian-scaled blocks and provide access for secondary and residential building entrances, service, and loading. Local street variations allow for narrow alleys, shared pedestrian and vehicular drives, and on-street parking.



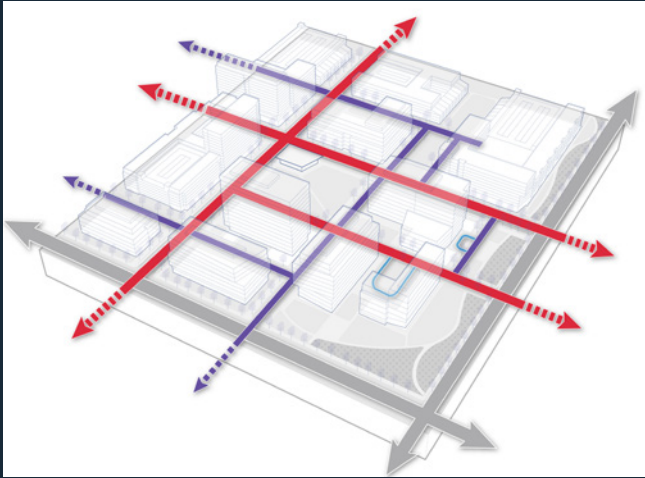
Thoroughfare



Collector Street

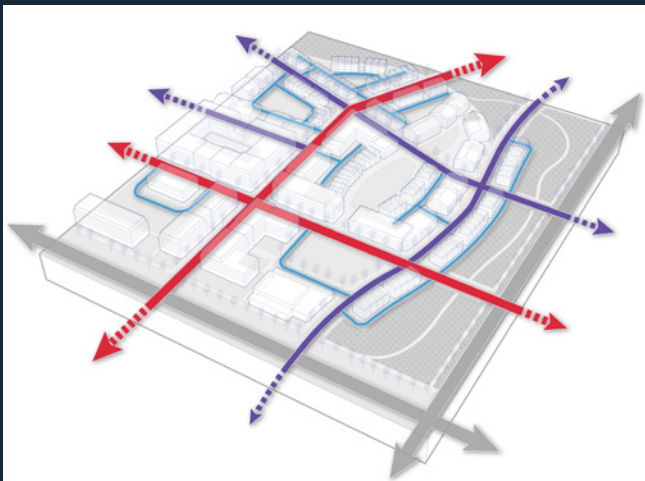


Local Street



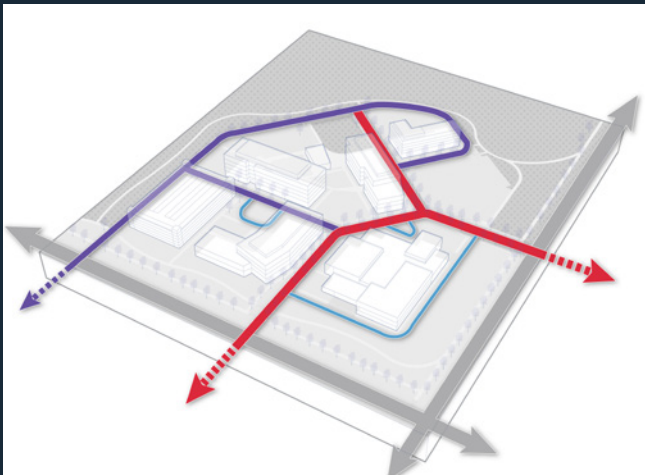
## MUN Specific

- Provide a clear hierarchy of streets that balances collector and local streets to support efficient movement, access, and identity.
- Ensure connectivity extends in all directions, linking developments to adjacent sites, neighborhoods, and open spaces through multiple points of access.
- Incorporate alleys as functional collector streets that can accommodate service needs or transform into intimate retail and pedestrian corridors that enhance the overall street network and public realm.



## RND Specific

- Locate collector streets adjacent to the commercial core and key public functions to support activity, visibility, and access.
- Use local streets to reinforce fine-grained walkability.
- Utilize the local street alley configuration to provide access to parking and residential garages.



## ECC Specific

- Organize collector streets around campus entrances and thoroughfares for intuitive navigation.
- Utilize thoroughfares as opportunities for gateways, to enhance natural features, and to frame views.
- Ensure that primary entrances are visible from collector streets and utilize local streets for drop-off, parking and service access.
- Maintain limited and strategic connectivity on all sides of the site that balances circulation, privacy, and context.



## DG-1.03 Align Build-to-Lines and Frontages to Define the Street Edge

A cohesive, human-scaled street edge enhances the pedestrian experience through well-calibrated build-to lines and frontage zones. While the specific recommendations for this guideline are related to the various land use types, the following principles provide general direction for creating walkable, engaging, and contextually appropriate development.

- Maintain consistent build-to lines and frontage occupation to establish a strong street wall.
- Coordinate build-to-lines with landscape and frontage types (stoops, terraces, arcades, or lawns) to reinforce street character.
- Allow strategic variation in setbacks to define parks, plazas, and greenways, ensuring continuity of the “urban wall.”
- Use frontage design to support transparency, visibility, and direct access to ground-level uses.
- The design of frontage zones should establish a clear sense of transition from public to semi-public/semi-private to private realm.
- Residential entries should maximize “front doors” at the street level and utilizes the transitions from public to private to provide safe, interesting, and cohesive transitions between the public and private realm.

**The RTP Design Guidelines work in tandem with the RTP Development Standards to shape streetscapes that reflect each place type’s intended character. The Development Standards specify the required percentage of each building that must occupy the build-to zone. To create well-defined street edges and block frontages, these Design Guidelines suggest percentages of block frontages that should be occupied by buildings (as blocks may be comprised by more than one building).**

**The RTP Development Standards define the standards for minimum and maximum build-to-lines for new buildings along thoroughfare, collector, and local streets in each of the three land use types.**

**The build-to zone is the area of a parcel between the minimum and maximum build-to-lines. The RTP Development Standards establish large build-to zones to allow for flexibility. (See RTP Development Standards Section 6(B))**



A transition from the public to private realm within the frontage zone.

## MUN Specific

Build-to-lines and frontages in MUN zones should contribute in creating a high-quality, urban-feeling sidewalk experience.

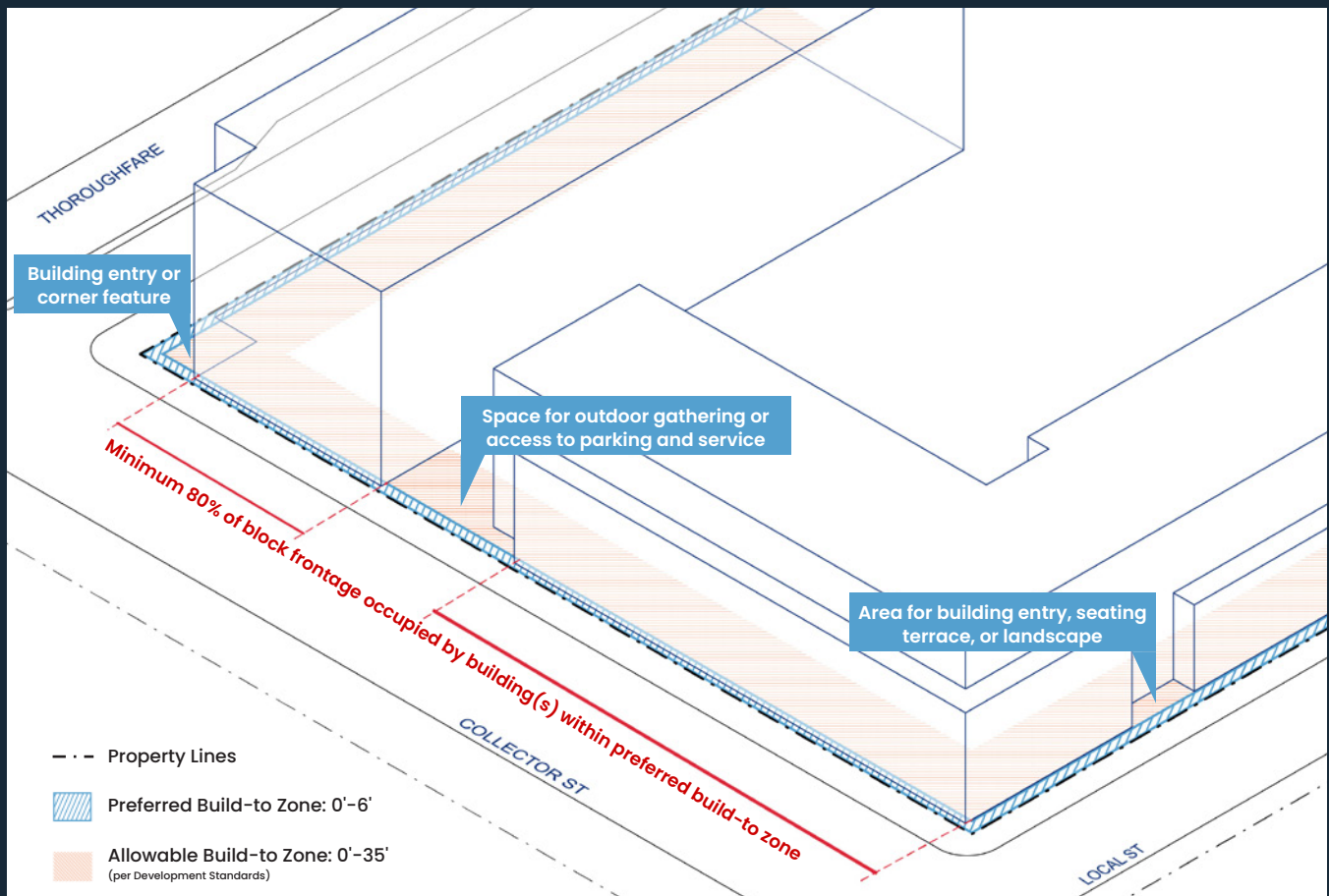
Per the Development Standards, the minimum build-to line is 0' and the maximum is 35' for MUN along thoroughfare, collector, and local streets.

- Per these Design Guidelines, the preferred and recommended build-to zone for MUN is between 0'-6' for typical conditions, with acceptable variation outside this build-to zone for special conditions such as plazas, dining terraces, and other activating features or amenity spaces.
- In most areas of MUN, buildings should ideally occupy 80-100% of each block frontage.

- Building setbacks should accommodate an appropriate area for door swings, signage, furniture, planters, and other pedestrian-friendly amenities.



A sidewalk and streetscape built up to the build-to-Line.



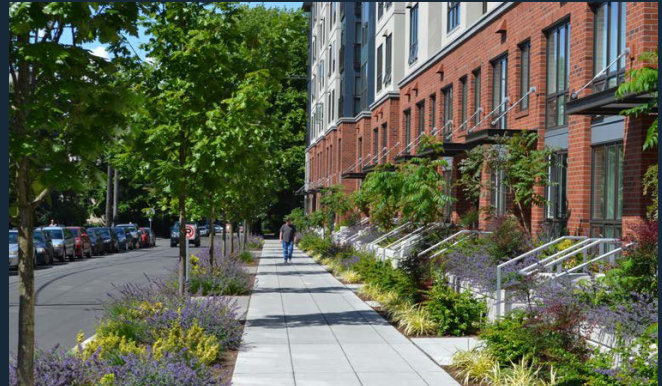
## RND Specific

Setbacks and frontages in RND should create a neighborhood feel by fostering community-building and reinforcing a strong connection to the natural landscape of RTP.

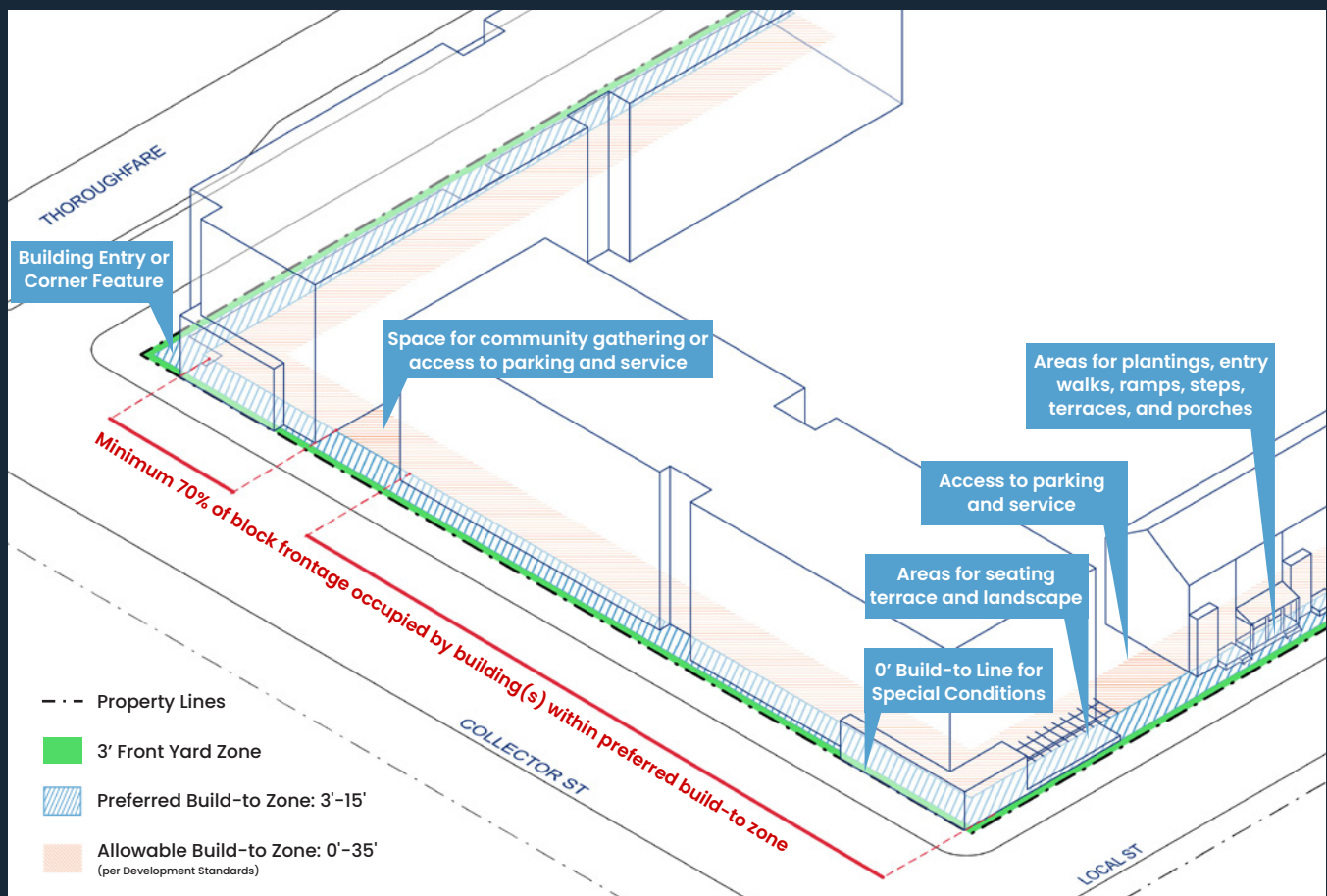
Per the Development Standards, the minimum build-to line is 0' and the maximum is 35' for RND along thoroughfare, collector, and local streets.

- Per these Design Guidelines, the preferred and recommended build-to zone for RND is between 3'-15' to allow for front yard features such as plantings, entry walks/ramps/steps, terraces, porches, and architectural projections.
- Variation outside this build-to zone is acceptable for special conditions such as small neighborhood parks, conservation areas, stormwater gardens, or other open spaces.
- In most areas of RND, buildings should ideally occupy a minimum of 70% of each block frontage.

- Build-to lines of 0' may be appropriate for certain locations or conditions within RND, such as at neighborhood centers, sub-centers, or key intersections where non-residential or mixed uses may be clustered (refer to Sec.7 of Development Standards).



Front entry walkways, terraces, and plantings create a natural transition from public sidewalk to private residences.



## ECC Specific

Setbacks and frontages in ECC should accommodate the wide-ranging needs of corporate tenants related to privacy, security, access, visibility, and operations while contributing to a coherent sense of campus and connection to the natural landscape of RTP.

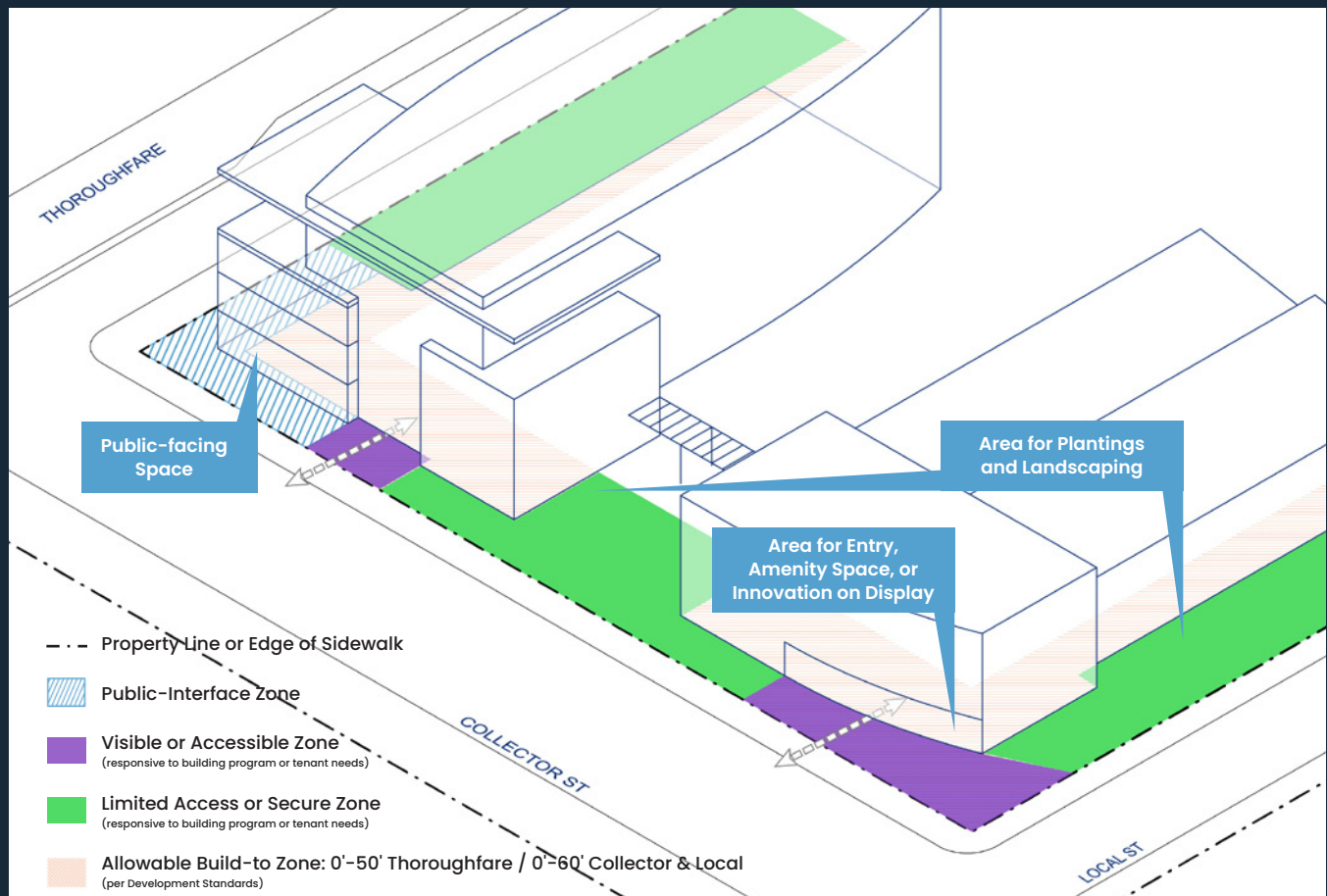
Per the Development Standards, the minimum build-to line is 0' for ECC along all street types. The maximum build-to line is 50' along Thoroughfares and 60' along Collector and Local Streets.

- Siting of buildings within the build-to zone should leverage opportunities to bring more public-facing spaces and functions toward the street.
- Consider putting collaboration and innovation on display, and design areas between the street and the buildings to allow for visible connections.

- Pay special attention to the landscape treatment of setback zones when siting secure, limited access, large-footprint, manufacturing, warehouse, and other specialized facilities.



A large setback appropriate for ECC.



## DG-1.04 Provide Efficient, Context-Sensitive Parking Solutions

Parking is an integrated element of the urban fabric, supporting accessibility while maintaining a balanced and engaging public realm. Well-planned facilities enhance walkability, reinforce active street edges, and harmonize the needs of vehicles, pedestrians, and adjacent land uses.

### STRUCTURED PARKING

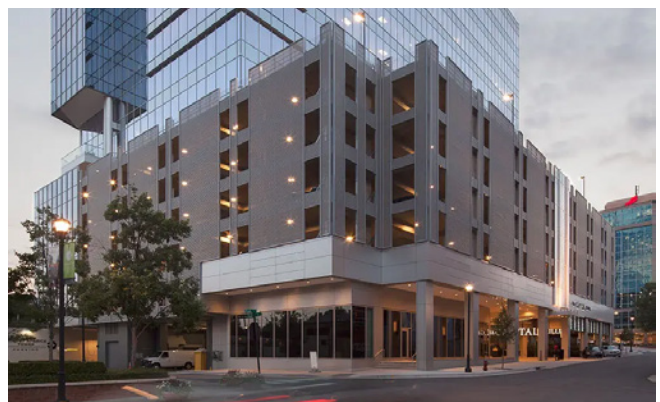
- Structured parking is encouraged when appropriate. Parking should ideally be located underground or above grade in stand-alone garages or in podium- or building-integrated garages.
- Locate structured parking toward the interior of the block or development parcel to minimize its visibility from public streets and open spaces.
- Parking garages should be fully wrapped or screened with buildings when located along a street frontage or public open space. In cases where they cannot be fully wrapped or screened, their facade should be designed to be architecturally compatible with adjacent or adjoining buildings.
- When located along a street frontage, design structured parking with active ground-floor uses such as retail, offices, or lobbies to maintain street-level energy and support pedestrian activity.
- Avoid placing parking entrances or driveways along thoroughfare streets to reduce conflicts with pedestrians and preserve a continuous, active frontage.
- Employ a district parking strategy with shared parking resources to take advantage of different peak demand times throughout the day and week. This applies to surface parking as well as structured parking.



Parking garages near downtown Durham sited at the center of blocks and wrapped with buildings.



The parking garage at Bloc 83 in Raleigh is designed to be architecturally compatible with its companion buildings.



The Bank of America Tower in Raleigh's North Hills has a parking plinth lined with office on one side (left) and a ground level restaurant on the other (right) side.



Parking lots in RTP should fit in with RTP's natural aesthetic and feature robust plantings, trees, and rain gardens.

### **SURFACE PARKING**

- District parking should be consolidated at key location(s) to optimize access and service to all users of the neighborhood.
- Avoid placing surface parking lots directly adjacent to thoroughfares or collector streets to preserve active and visually engaging frontages along key corridors.
- All surface parking should contain clearly delineated, safe pedestrian paths from parking to the street frontage.
- Parking should be convenient to users and sufficient to support the various users, but it should not be a dominant visual feature of the neighborhood.
- Surface parking lots should be limited in mixed-use neighborhoods. If necessary, they should be sited at the center of blocks and surrounded by buildings on all sides at the perimeter of the block.



A well-defined street parking tucked in between planted bump-outs at Baltimore Peninsula.

### **STREET PARKING**

- Incorporate on-street parking on all streets where feasible to improve access, calm traffic, and create a safer pedestrian environment.
- Design parallel parking zones with clear markings, adequate space for door swings, and unobstructed sight-lines near intersections.
- Use curb bump-outs to define parking areas, reduce crossing distances, and slow vehicle speeds; include trees, planting, or bike racks where possible.
- Place meters, signage, and equipment outside pedestrian paths to maintain clear, accessible sidewalks.
- Provide ADA-compliant spaces with proper ramps and ensure parking does not block crosswalks, bike lanes, or transit stops.
- Use permeable paving and landscaped bump-outs to manage stormwater and enhance the visual quality of the streetscape.

# Transportation & Mobility

## DG-1.05 Build an Integrated Multi-Modal Transportation Network

A network of streets are the backbone of a multi-modal system at RTP that seamlessly integrates various modes of travel to support a dynamic and connected community for all users.

- Design infrastructure to support smooth transitions between different modes of transportation, such as well-placed transit stops, bike racks, and pedestrian-friendly connections.
- Incorporate sidewalks along all streets and utilize appropriate widths and separation of modes particularly for collector and thoroughfare streets.
- Connect sidewalks that are within 300 ft of sidewalks in adjacent properties to avoid dead-ends.
- Promote the use of electric and low-emission vehicles by providing charging stations and incentives for green transportation choices.
- Ensure that all multi-modal infrastructure is ADA-compliant, providing equal access to all users regardless of mobility levels.
- Implement traffic calming measures such as reduced speed zones, raised crosswalks, and clear signage to protect pedestrians and cyclists.
- Design crossings and intersections with enhanced safety features including tactile paving, audible signals, and ramps to enhance usability and to prioritize ease of use for non-motorized users.
- Incorporate flex zones — temporary parking spaces — that can serve as rideshare pick-up and drop-off, loading and valet services.



Bike share



Neighborhood electric vehicle (NEV)



Protected bicycle lane

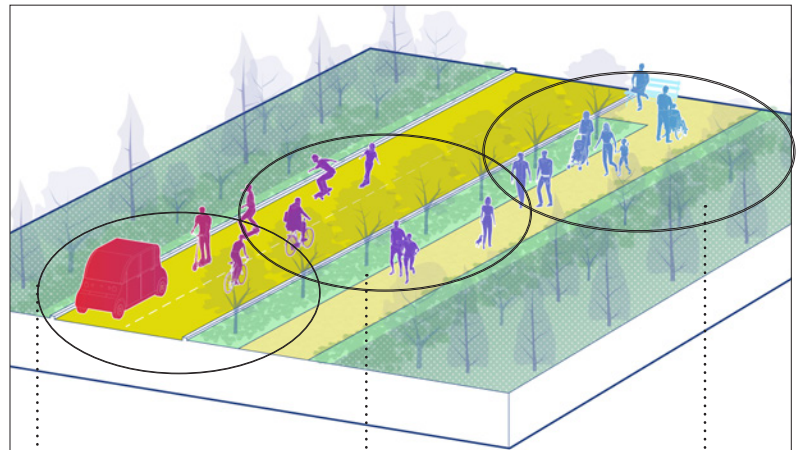
RTP 3.0 has an opportunity to lead forward-thinking micromobility solutions by designing environments that anticipate the increased use of small, lightweight, human- and electric-powered transportation while avoiding conflicts with pedestrians and vehicles.

- Design streets and pathways to accommodate micromobility devices such as bikes, e-bikes, e-scooters, electric skateboards, and other personal transportation devices.
- Prioritize connections between micromobility lanes and major destinations like transit hubs, residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, corporate campuses, and parks.

- Provide well-marked, protected lanes that separate micromobility users from vehicles and pedestrians. Shared spaces should have clear signage indicating speed limits and right-of-way rules.
- Establish designated parking, docking areas, and charging stations for micromobility devices within 100 feet of building entrances and at key transit points. Ensure these areas are organized to avoid obstructing pedestrian walkways.
- Incorporate weather-protected zones, seating, and rest areas along major micromobility corridors to enhance user comfort.

The RTP Greenway is a proposed 10-mile multi-use path connecting RTP’s network of trails, streets, campuses, parks, and natural landscapes via a key north-south spine. The RTP Greenway proposes a three-lane easement to accommodate existing and emerging forms of micromobility while preserving the safety of more recreational users. Please refer to the RTP Greenway Design Guidelines for more information.

Section Detail of the RTP Greenway



**HIGH-SPEED USERS**  
up to 25MPH

- Neighborhood Electric Vehicles
- Motorized micromobility including scooters and bikes
- Experienced cyclists

**MID-SPEED USERS**  
up to 12MPH

- Casual cyclists
- Runners
- Skateboarders

**LOW-SPEED USERS**  
up to 3MPH

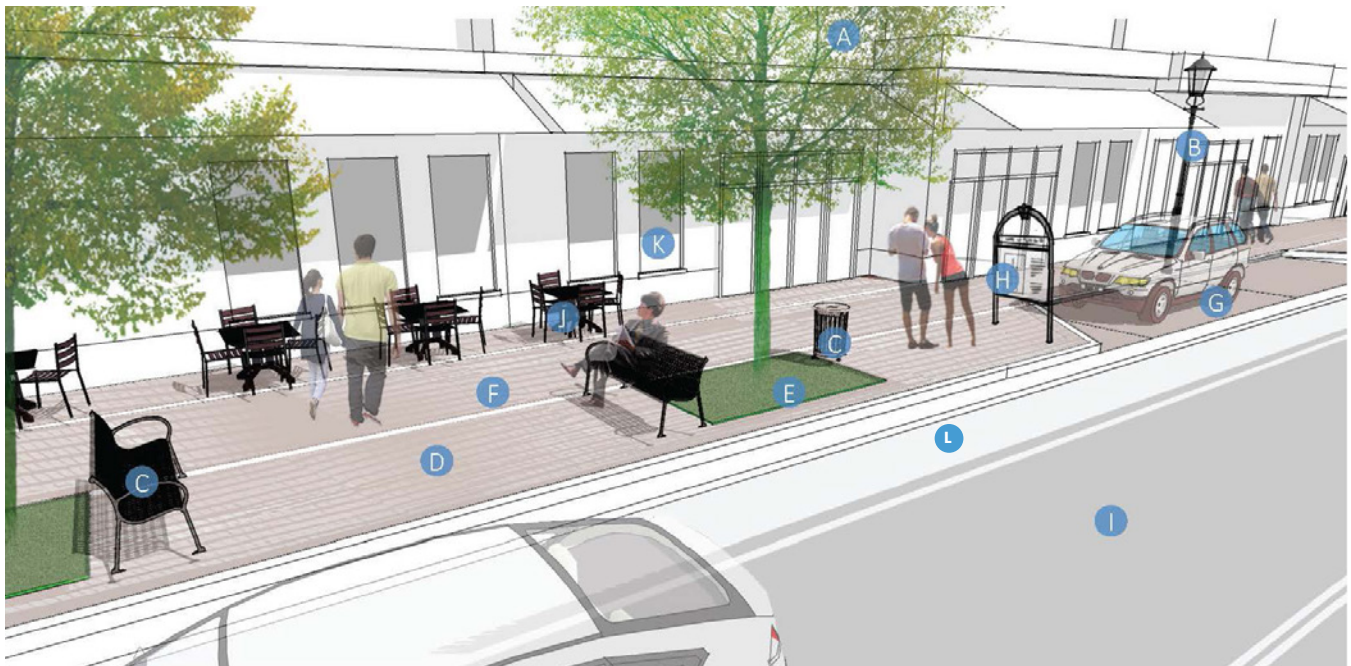
- Walkers
- People with families
- People with disabilities

# Public Realm Elements

## DG-1.06 Design Streetscapes that Support an Active Public Realm

Streetscapes are a critical part of the public realm, shaping the experience of pedestrians and contributing to community character. Thoughtful design of streetscape elements enhances safety, accessibility, and aesthetic quality. (See details in appendix)

- Design the public realm to integrate flexible gathering zones, adaptable furniture, and landscape features that encourage spontaneous community use.
- Street sections and plans should include the following elements, but not limited to: street trees, lighting and charging, furnishings, materials & finishes, landscape beds, walkway, on-street parking/loading zone, wayfinding, travel lanes, transit zones, public art, dining zone, building street presence, and bike lanes.
- Design pedestrian zones with adequate space for movement, seating, and outdoor dining to ensure comfort and accessibility for all users. Use tree grates, pavers, and clear walking zones to maintain continuous pedestrian flow.
- When minimum sidewalk widths cannot be achieved within the right-of-way, secure additional sidewalk easements to accommodate furnishings, planting, and outdoor activity areas without compromising accessibility.
- Arrange sidewalks, plazas, and frontage zones to encourage social and community interaction while maintaining accessibility and clear circulation.



- |                                |   |                                   |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>A</b> Street Trees          | <b>E</b> Landscape Beds                 | <b>I</b> Travel Lanes             |
| <b>B</b> Lighting and Charging | <b>F</b> Walkway                        | <b>J</b> Dining Zone              |
| <b>C</b> Furnishings           | <b>G</b> On-Street Parking/Loading Zone | <b>K</b> Building Street Presence |
| <b>D</b> Materials & Finishes  | <b>H</b> Wayfinding                     | <b>L</b> Bike Lane                |

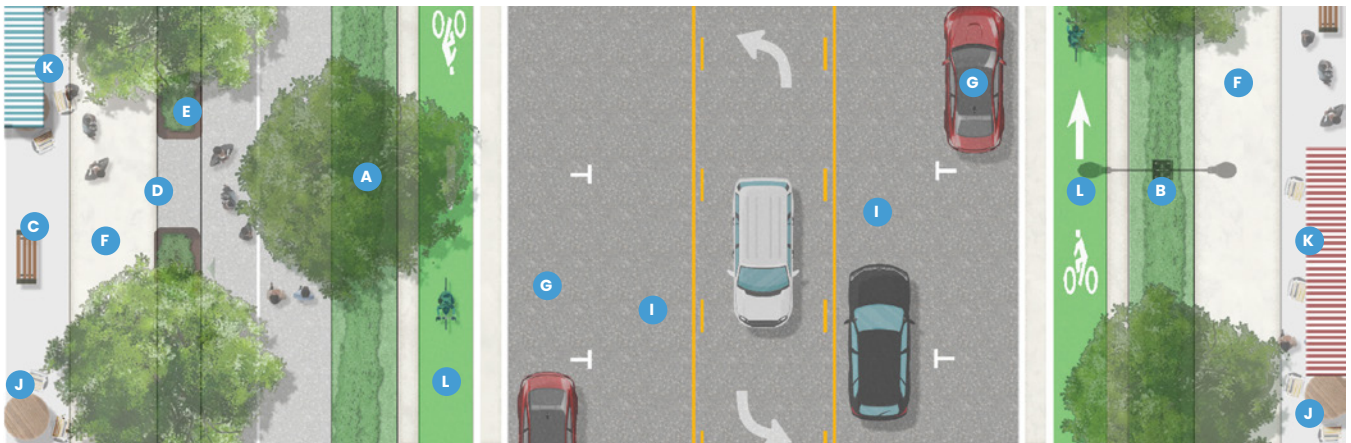
- Coordinate paving, lighting, signage, and furnishings to establish cohesive visual identity, enhance comfort, and reinforce neighborhood context.
- Pedestrian-scale lighting should be located between street lighting poles.
- Benches should be available without obstructing the walkway.
- Wayfinding signs should be at the pedestrian scale and provide clear direction at key intersections.
- Trash and recycling receptacles should be provided at most seating areas.
- Incorporate green infrastructure when appropriate by using elements such as: stormwater planters / bioswales, stormwater bump-outs, stormwater trees, and green gutters.



Example of how the public realm should incorporate and layer multiple streetscape elements.



Variety of public realm elements that are designed for human interaction.



## DG-1.06 Design Streetscapes that Support an Active Public Realm (Continued)

### WALLS, FENCES, AND SCREENING

- Design screening to enhance aesthetics, maintain privacy, and reduce visual clutter.
- Ensure materials and designs complement the neighborhood character and streetscape.
- Use high-quality materials like masonry, wood, or metal that are durable and visually appealing.
- Limit fence heights to balance security and visibility; maintain transparency where safety is a concern.
- Design fences and screens to promote safety, avoiding solid barriers that block sight-lines in public areas.
- Incorporate lighting and open designs for enhanced visibility and security near pathways and entrances.
- Coordinate walls, fences, and plantings with other streetscape elements for a cohesive look.
- Use screening as an opportunity to integrate public art, branding, or decorative features.
- Use layered plantings with trees, shrubs, and ground cover to screen parking lots, utilities, and service areas.
- Select low-maintenance, climate-adapted species for durability and year-round coverage.
- Enclose trash, recycling, and service areas with durable walls or fences, combined with landscaping to soften views.
- Ensure easy access for service operations while minimizing visibility from public spaces.
- Hazardous waste shall be handled, stored, and disposed of in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations, and shall be enclosed with durable, appropriate screening to minimize visual impact.



Proper mechanical/service screening helps make the public realm contiguous.



Mechanical screening can fit in with the existing architecture.

## DG-1.07 Integrate Lighting to Enhance Safety while Defining Character and Boundaries

Lighting and edge elements should work together to create safe, welcoming, and cohesive public spaces. Pedestrian-scale lighting can highlight walkways, entrances, and gathering areas while reducing glare. Coordinated materials, fixtures, and landscaping reinforce a space's character, guide movement, and ensure comfort at night.

- When able, adhere to Dark Sky Principles:

**Useful:** All outdoor lighting should have a clear purpose.

**Targeted:** Light should be aimed where it is needed, with shields to prevent light from spilling beyond the intended area.

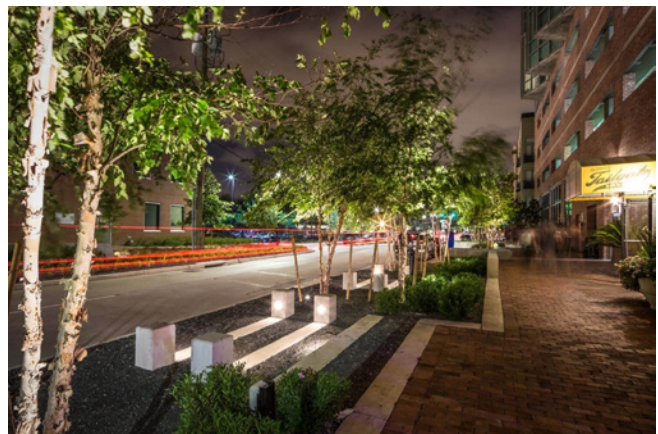
**Low level:** The brightness should be no more than necessary to perform the task.

**Controlled:** Use features like timers and motion sensors to ensure light is only on when it is needed and can be dimmed when possible.

**Warm-colored:** Use warmer color temperatures (yellowish or reddish hues) instead of cooler, blue-toned.

- Provide consistent, even lighting without dark spots, glare, or excessive brightness
- Use pedestrian-scale fixtures along sidewalks, paths, and crosswalks.
- Light bike lanes, transit stops, crosswalks, and intersections for visibility and safety.
- Ensure thoroughfares have adequate, evenly distributed lighting without over-illumination
- Use energy-efficient LEDs and consider solar-powered lighting where suitable.
- Implement smart lighting controls for adaptive use.

- Select durable fixtures and establish a maintenance plan to ensure long-term performance.
- Consider integrating lighting into site elements like furnishings, planters, site walls, or public art.
- Highlight trees, landscaping, and architecture selectively for visual interest.



Lighting the public realm creates an attractive and safe environment.



Hybrid lighting fixture



Streetscape lighting

## DG-1.08 Use Signage to Enhance Wayfinding and District Identity

Signage is an expression of RTP's character, contributing to a cohesive and visually balanced environment while maintaining clarity, legibility, and an appropriate sense of scale within its context.

- For any RND development or MUN development over 15 acres, site specific signage design guidelines that align with these general standards should be provided for RTP Design Board review.
- Signage should be of high quality design and materials, consistent with the design of the public realm.
- Address signage visible from public right-of-way need to align with the existing RTF Address Marker Policy.
- Signs may use mixed materials such as metal, wood, brass, or neon, with illumination from behind or within individual letters.
- Develop a coordinated signage system that complements the architecture, landscape, and overall identity of the development.
- Use consistent materials, colors, and typography across all sign types within a development area to create a unified visual language.
- Incorporate wayfinding, informational, and gateway signs that are clear, legible, and scaled appropriately to their context.
- Integrate lighting and landscape elements to enhance visibility and reinforce the character of the site.
- Ensure signs contribute to placemaking by reflecting the development's design aesthetic and supporting an intuitive user experience.

- The following signs are prohibited:
  - Electronic messaging signs or signs employing moving or flashing lights.
  - Signs employing exposed electrical conduits.
  - Ballast boxes or other equipment.
  - Audible or odor producing signs.
  - Cardboard signs.
  - Roof mounted and temporary type signage, such as banners, etc. (note: temporary)
  - A-frame signs, with the exception of use during temporary, short-term events.

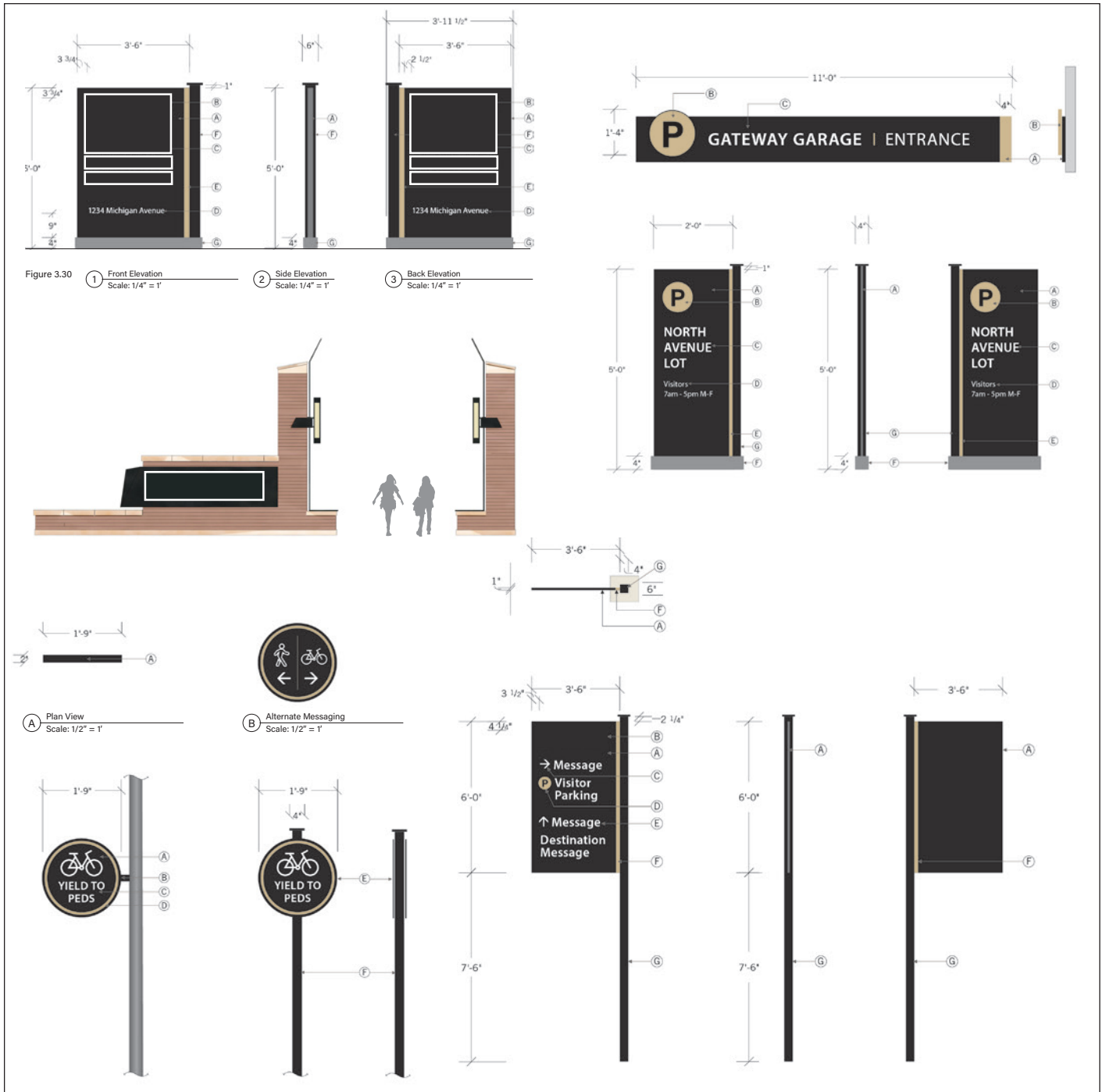


Signage as part of the public realm in HUB RTP.



Signage example from HUB RTP.

Below is an example of a signage design package that a proposed RND or multi-phased MUN over 15 acres should produce to ensure consistency of signage across RTP.



# PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN HEALTHY AND ROBUST LANDSCAPES

## Design Statement

RTP is a “community within a park” with a variety of open spaces that foster a strong sense of place, ecological resilience, and well-being across varied contexts. An interconnected network of open spaces preserves and restores natural systems while supporting habitat continuity, stormwater management, and climate adaptation. Open spaces should reflect RTP’s innovative spirit and encourage active living, social interaction, and year-round use. To support these goals, components such as planting design, hardscape material selection, and maintenance strategies should prioritize native biodiversity, long-term adaptability, and performance to ensure enduring open spaces.

## Sustainability Statement

Sustainable landscapes promote ecological balance, conserve resources, and enhance environmental performance at every scale. Native planting, soil restoration, and naturalized stormwater systems improve water quality and strengthen biodiversity. Tree canopy shading, material reuse, and efficient site design contribute to energy conservation and reduced reliance on vehicles. Each landscape functions as an active system for climate resilience, carbon reduction, and human well-being, reinforcing a landscape network that sustains both people and the environment.



Programmable, flexible amenity spaces



Secondary spaces with native plantings



Natural areas with amenities

## Components Overview

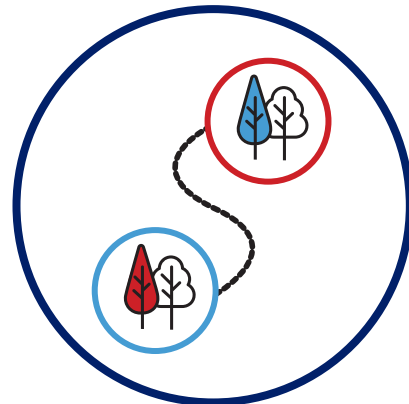
### TYOLOGIES

Open space typologies define the range and character of outdoor spaces that contribute to the ecological health, social vitality, and visual identity of a community. A diversity of open space types ensures access to nature, recreation, and gathering areas for all users while promoting environmental resilience and connectivity.



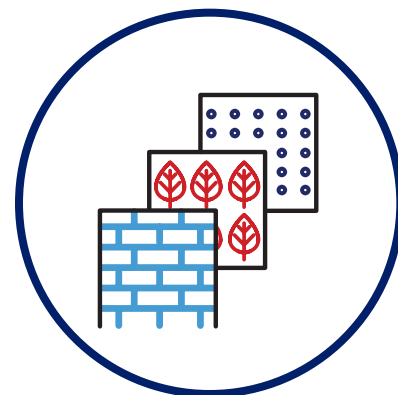
### CONNECTIONS

A network of varied, interconnected open spaces creates a unified system that is greater than the sum of its parts by offering both continuity and distinct character with memorable moments across the landscape.



### MATERIALS

Thoughtfully designed and consistently applied hardscape materials, plant material, and furnishings reinforce the character of a place, promote accessibility, and support social interaction. Materials and finishes should be durable, sustainable, and contextually aligned with surrounding architecture and landscape.



# Typologies

## DG-2.01 Create Welcoming and Accessible Open Spaces Serving a Variety of Users and Functions.

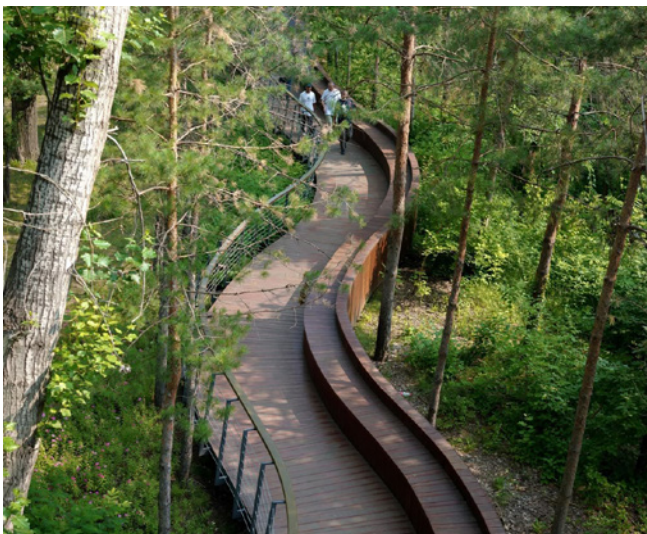
A variety of open spaces, from broad open lawns to narrow pedestrian promenades and private courtyards, create a rich set of landscapes serving a variety of users and functions. Open spaces should foster inclusivity and accessibility, offering opportunities for people of all ages and abilities across a broad range of landscape typologies. The design of landscapes should be flexible and adaptable to invite regular and seasonal use through thoughtful programming and amenities.

- Prioritize universal accessibility through intuitive navigation for all users while avoiding barriers to use such as stairs and separate entrances.
- Consider opportunities and strategies for daily, weekly, seasonal, and year-round activation features and programming.
- Physical elements such as public art, food & beverage, pavilions, playgrounds, water features, and movable seating promote activity and park use.
- Incorporate flexible multi-use spaces for special events such as markets, fairs, festivals, concerts, and food trucks.
- Open spaces should serve a variety of users and range from public to private. Public and publicly accessible spaces should serve as outdoor living rooms that create welcoming places for social gathering and community connection. Semi-public spaces such as outdoor dining terraces face public spaces but have association with a private function. Private open spaces accommodate tenants, guests, and users associated with specific buildings or programs such as a building courtyard.
- Access to public spaces should be intuitive, unrestricted and centrally located.
- Private open spaces may take the form of courtyards, forecourts, gardens, passageways, and side or rear yards utilized as outdoor dining areas, tenant amenity spaces, or other uses associated with immediately adjacent building(s).
- As necessary and appropriate, utilize signage, landscaping, and site features such as low walls, fences, and gates to clearly delineate private, semi-private and public spaces.
- While public access may be limited or restricted at corporate campuses, a hierarchy of open spaces should be maintained and broad access to central open spaces should be encouraged.

## NATURAL AREAS

Existing natural areas such as streams and wetlands provide important ecological systems that serve as a buffer from developed areas and define the landscape's character and health.

- Protect and enhance existing natural systems by preserving biodiversity, habitat, and natural hydrology adjacent to development areas.
- Integrate and celebrate natural features through borrowed views, indirect engagement, and design inspiration drawn from the surrounding landscape.
- Minimize site disturbance by incorporating low-impact access points such as trails, boardwalks, and overlooks that allow for thoughtful exploration.
- Offer opportunities for education and recreation that foster environmental awareness and connection to place.



Decking with integrated seating over an ecologically sensitive natural area.

## ACTIVE RECREATION

Active recreational areas accommodate organized and informal physical activities such as sports fields, courts, and playgrounds that serve the community.

- Accommodate a range of users and recreation types to support diverse age groups, abilities, and activities.
- Locate facilities as integrated nodes within the broader open-space network, prioritizing connections to existing multi-use trails and circulation systems.
- Design flexible layouts that can adapt over time to evolving recreation trends and community needs.
- Enhance comfort and usability with ample shade, seating, and gathering areas for rest, socializing, and spectators.



Clustered playfields with integrated pathway network and accessory buildings.

## PASSIVE RECREATION

Passive recreation areas offer proximate access to maintained landscape areas for recreation, seating, and respite ranging in scale from pocket parks in dense districts to flexible, open lawns.

- Create strong visual and physical connections to surrounding buildings, landscapes, and development, using views, pathways, and spatial organization to unify the site.
- Design layered, comfortable, and universally accessible environments with shade, seating, and intuitive circulation that invite daily use and accommodate users of all abilities.
- Provide flexible, multi-functional spaces that support gatherings, play, relaxation, and community events, fostering social interaction and activation throughout the day and year.
- Incorporate amenities and infrastructure such as power, Wi-Fi, lighting, and seating to support both informal use and programmed activities.
- Express community identity and environmental performance through art, planting, and integrated stormwater features that enhance character and sustainability.



Flexible central green supporting events.

## SQUARES AND PLAZAS AND PROMENADES

Typically defined by buildings and located in central, highly trafficked locations, squares, plazas and promenades are primarily hardscaped spaces serving as community gathering focal points and part of an active street life.

- Establish a strong sense of enclosure, proportion and wayfinding by utilizing a limited hardscape and plant palette that prioritizes a strong definition of edges.
- Activate edges and promote pedestrian comfort with shade trees, seating, and active ground-floor uses such as cafés and shops.
- Accommodate civic events, markets, and cultural programming through flexible hardscape areas, adaptable furnishings, and integrated shade elements.
- Integrate public art, lighting, and furnishings to create a welcoming environment that invites use throughout the day and evening.
- Support connectivity and continuity between retail, civic, and transit functions through a unified, durable palette of paving and planting materials that prioritizes and facilitates key pedestrian desire lines.



Plaza accommodating both key pedestrian desire lines and opportunities for shade and respite.

## STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PARKS

Stormwater management parks integrate stormwater functions with recreation and aesthetics by utilizing detention and/or retention, filtration, and green infrastructure as an organizing feature in the landscape. Refer to DG-2.03 for more details regarding stormwater infrastructure.

- Strengthen site resilience by improving infiltration, supporting biodiversity, and reducing downstream flooding impacts.
- Integrate and protect existing stormwater systems such as streams and wetlands.
- Create multi-functional landscapes that combine stormwater management with opportunities for recreation, learning, and habitat creation.
- Reveal and celebrate water systems through the use of topography, planting, and pathways that make ecological processes visible and educational.



Retention basin as a feature in the landscape with layered plantings and pathways.

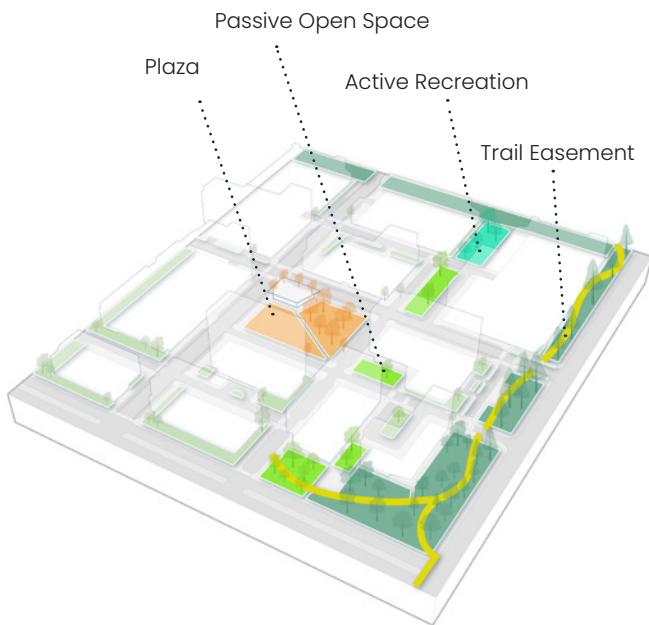
## PUBLIC ACCESS EASEMENT TRAILS

Trails are continuous, multi-modal paths designed for walking, biking, and recreation, connecting neighborhoods, natural areas, and activity centers.

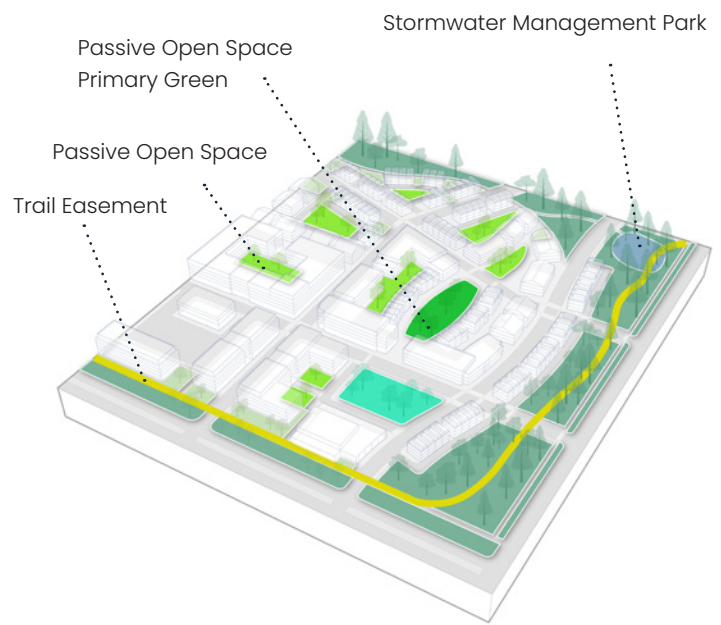
- Establish safe, continuous, and shaded connections that link key open spaces, destinations, and activity nodes.
- Integrate circulation routes with ecological corridors to reinforce habitat connectivity and landscape continuity.
- Design for multiple user types with clear wayfinding, appropriate widths, and durable, low-maintenance surfaces.
- Promote health and well-being by encouraging daily physical activity and regular contact with nature.
- Prioritize connections to and extension of the to the RTP Greenway. Refer to the RTP Greenway Design Guidelines for more information.



Multi-use pathway engaging with adjacent development and naturalized plantings.



Example of MUN Open Space Typologies



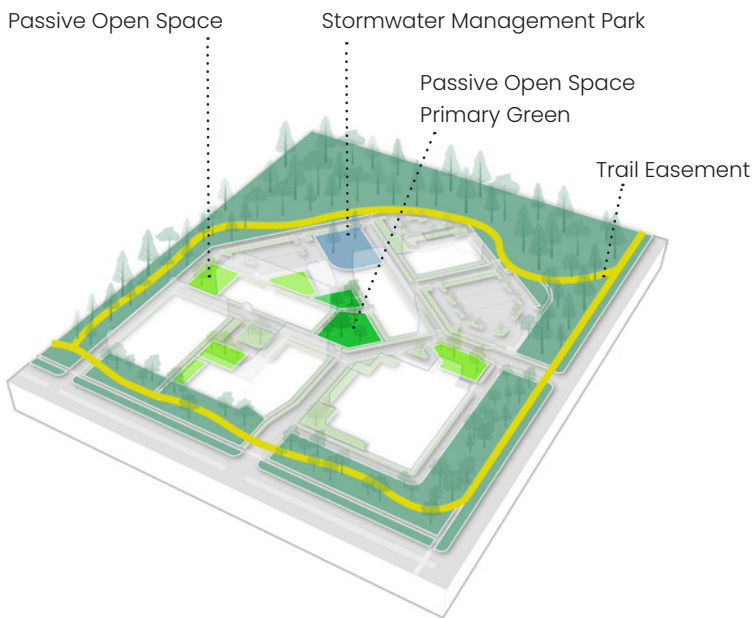
Example of RND Open Space Typologies

## MUN Specific

- Prioritize centrally located plazas and squares framed by active building and street frontages to create vibrant, well-defined public spaces.
- Integrate urban bioretention and water-capture strategies such as permeable paving, underground cisterns, and urban bioretention within plazas and hardscape areas.
- Incorporate flexible promenades and linear open spaces that strengthen pedestrian connections and accommodate events, gatherings, and daily use.
- Select durable materials and furnishings that withstand heavy use while maintaining visual quality and cohesion across the public realm.









## RND Specific

- Create effective transitions between private, semi-private, semi-public, and public spaces through landscape elements, grading, and subtle changes in materials to ensure privacy while maintaining visual continuity. Refer to DG-1.03 for more information.
- Locate active recreation amenities such as playgrounds and playfields within close proximity to residential areas.
- Incorporate small-scale green infrastructure including rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable paving to manage stormwater through decentralized, low-impact strategies.
- Establish a connected trail network linking active and passive open spaces with nearby mixed-use areas, community destinations, and employment centers.



Example of ECC Open Space Typologies

#### OPEN SPACE TYPOLOGIES

 Public Access Trail Easement	 Plaza
 Passive Open space Primary Green	 Stormwater Management Park
 Passive Open Space	 Active Recreation
 Passive Open Space Streetscape	 Natural Areas

## ECC Specific

- Minimize the visual impact of fences and barriers by integrating them with landscape plantings and topographic changes where appropriate.
- Organize key amenities around central open spaces and ensure comfortable, intuitive pedestrian connections between work areas, gathering spaces, and campus destinations.
- Connect to local and regional multimodal trail networks to support recreation, active commuting, and sustainable transportation options.
- Incorporate flexible furnishings, power access, and Wi-Fi to support both informal individual use and collaborative outdoor meetings.

## Preferred Frequencies

### MUN Preferred Frequency

- Primary public space (plaza, green) every ¼–½ mile (5–10-minute walk).
- Smaller pocket spaces or courtyards every 300–500 feet along active streets.
- Green connectors or shared streets every block or two to maintain permeability.

### RND Preferred Frequency

- Neighborhood passive open space every 800–1,000 feet.
- Pocket parks or shared courtyards every 400–600 feet.
- The RTP Greenway or trails connect neighborhoods at ½–1-mile intervals.

### ECC Preferred Frequency

- Primary campus green or plaza every ¼–½ mile within large campuses.
- Smaller plazas or courtyards adjacent to each major building cluster.
- Perimeter or inter-building trails spaced 400–800 feet apart to form continuous walking loops.

# Connections

## DG-2.02 Establish an Interconnected Open Space Network.

A cohesive open space network forms the foundation of a healthy and enduring development. It weaves together a variety of open spaces—ranging from natural forests and greenways to plazas, courtyards, and recreational parks—into an interconnected system that supports ecological function, social life, and well-being.

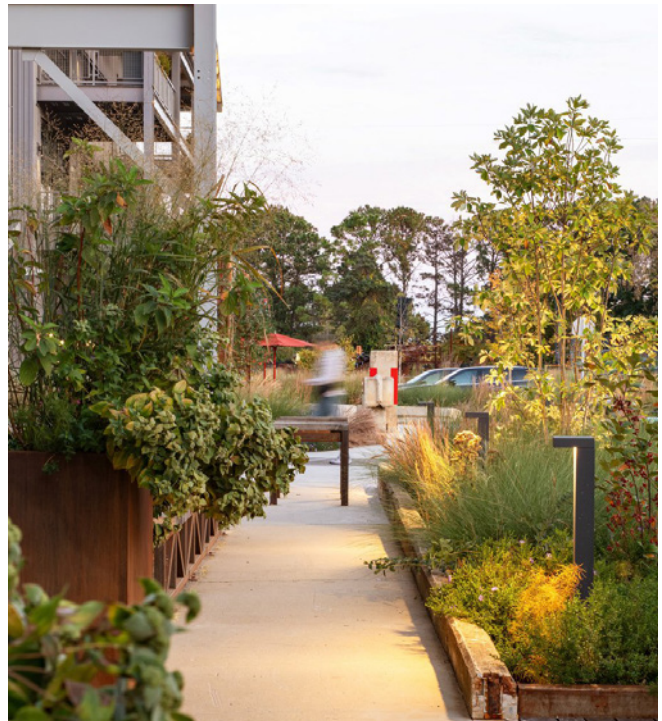
- Establish a network of open spaces that varies in scale, character, and use to support gathering, recreation, and movement. Refer to DG-2.01 for open space typology guidelines.

- Strengthen connections between open space nodes, existing development, regional ecological corridors, and trail networks.
- Integrate streetscapes and public spaces to create a cohesive public realm that supports pedestrian activity and visual continuity.
- Promote diversity and flexibility within the open-space system to accommodate a wide range of experiences and community needs.

Maximizing connectivity and developing a high-quality, comprehensive trail network throughout RTP is a central goal of the RTP 3.0 vision, linking natural preserves, employment centers, and urban areas into one interconnected system.



A residential promenade serves as both a connector highly integrated with the streetscape and an amenity space.



A network of pedestrian pathways with layered plantings and attention to pedestrian-scaled detail connects open spaces.

- Create a seamless multimodal network by prioritizing direct connections between development nodes, regional trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, and transit routes.
- Design safe, high-quality multi-use trails with a minimum width of 10 to 12 feet and consistent lighting in urban and high-use areas to accommodate all non-motorized users.
- Enhance legibility and safety with clear signage for rules, directions, and destinations, as well as well-marked crossings that include features such as raised crosswalks, flashing beacons, or grade-separated options where appropriate.
- Provide user amenities and rest areas including seating, water fountains, shade, and bike repair stations at key nodes and regular intervals for comfort and convenience.
- Minimize environmental impact by aligning trails with existing topography and natural features, avoiding unnecessary disturbance, and incorporating raised pathways in sensitive areas.
- Integrate sustainable infrastructure such as bioswales, rain gardens, and permeable pavements to manage stormwater and reduce erosion along the trail corridor.

**A proposed ten-mile north-to-south RTP Greenway will utilize the district's 3,000 acres of natural areas and 15 miles of existing trails to better connect the network. The location of any proposed development will be a key factor in determining its relationship to the primary north-to-south RTP Greenway, whether through direct engagement or connection via the broader trail system. The development of the RTP Greenway and its potential alignment is ongoing. Refer to the supporting RTP Greenway Design Guidelines document for more information.**



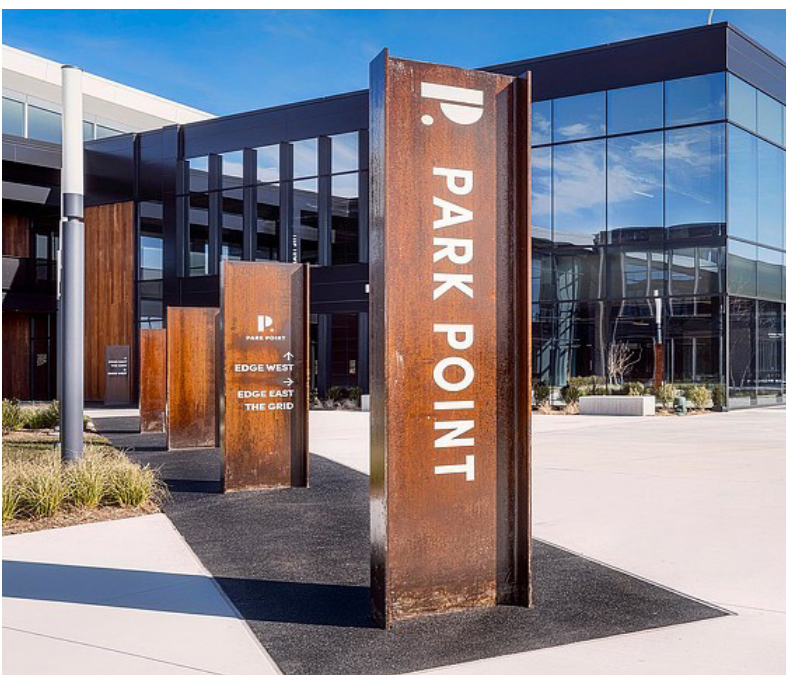
Multi-use pathway with seating and public art

# Materials

## DG-2.03 Utilize Consistent, High-Quality Materials to Create Enduring Open Spaces.

The natural environment is central to the look and character of RTP and should be expressed through a rich variety of materials that create high-quality open spaces. RTP can further support well-being and foster a vibrant sense of community by enhancing existing ecological assets, improving accessibility and connectivity, and strengthening ecological performance.

- Apply a consistent palette of materials and furnishings to establish visual cohesion and strengthen district identity.
- Enhance gateways, branding, and wayfinding to clearly identify both district-wide and regional destinations.
- Incorporate lush, context-sensitive planting to reinforce neighborhood character, provide shade, and enhance comfort.
- Implement universal design principles to ensure equitable access from primary vehicular and pedestrian routes, using tactile paving and clear cues at crossings, steps, and entrances.
- Prioritize the use of local materials where feasible.



Materials utilized as branding and wayfinding to direct users towards main entrances.



Materials inviting casual use and socialization.

## PLANT MATERIAL

- Limit high-maintenance lawn areas to select, appropriately sized recreation spaces, emphasizing sustainable and manageable landscapes.
- Integrate planting throughout pathways, seating areas, and gathering spaces to provide shade, define spaces, frame views, and create visual cohesion.
- Align planting character with context, using more formal, structured compositions in active public areas and naturalized plantings at site perimeters and adjacent natural areas.
- Prioritize native, low-maintenance, and drought-tolerant species, including pollinator-friendly and edible plants that enhance biodiversity and community engagement.
- Incorporate a balanced mix of deciduous and evergreen species to maintain structure and visual interest through all seasons.
- Use trees, shrubs, perennials, and bulbs to create dynamic, multi-seasonal landscapes.
- Soften built edges with vegetation to create comfortable transitions between buildings and open spaces.
- Identify opportunities for reforestation and no-mow zones along edges and less active areas to enhance ecology and reduce maintenance demands.



Structured layering of native shrubs and trees



Naturalized plantings adjacent to seating and pathways create seasonal interest and contrast.



No-mow areas, meadows, and forested edges reduce maintenance requirements and increase wildlife habitat.

## STORMWATER

- Integrate stormwater management visibly within the landscape, avoiding isolated detention areas and instead creating accessible, functional, and educational site features.
- Replicate natural hydrology by preserving existing drainage patterns and designing systems that mimic pre-development water flow and infiltration.
- Employ a range of context-sensitive strategies from green roofs and urban bioretention cells to landscaped bioswales and rain gardens to manage runoff across diverse site conditions.
- Enhance ecological performance by supporting native plant communities, improving water quality, and providing habitat for pollinators and wildlife.
- Plan for long-term resilience by designing adaptable systems capable of managing increased rainfall and evolving climate conditions.
- Ensure durability and ease of maintenance through accessible layouts, simple plant palettes, and species tolerant of both drought and periodic inundation.



A retention pond with planted, naturalized edges serves as both a landscape amenity and stormwater management.



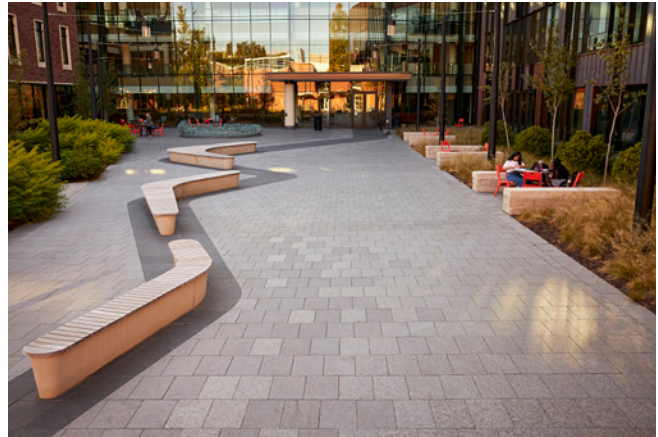
Swales as a design feature in the streetscape.



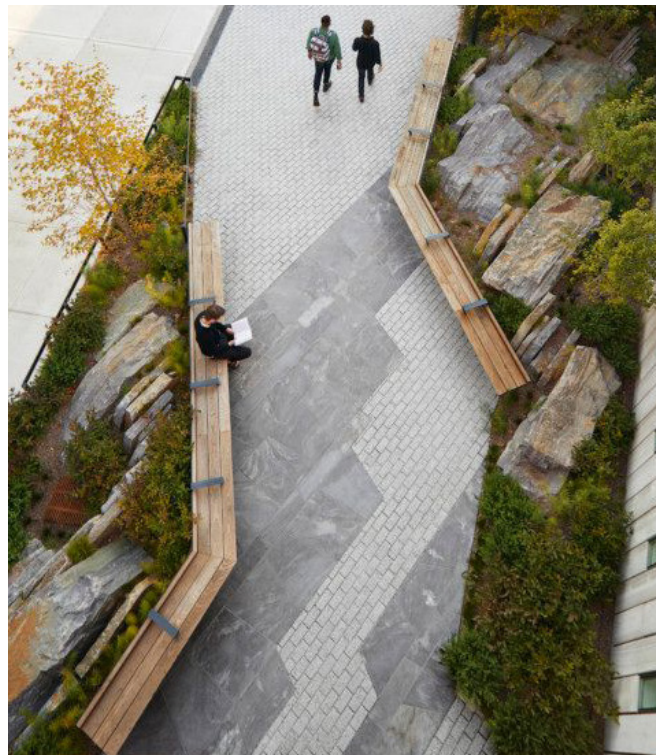
Bioretention and stormwater conveyance integrated into pathways seating areas.

## HARDSCAPE

- Establish a clear hierarchy of pathways that responds to anticipated use, distinguishing primary, secondary, and tertiary walks through variations in width, material, and scoring patterns.
- Align circulation routes with desire lines and key destinations to create intuitive, legible, and connected movement throughout the site.
- Use durable, all-weather materials such as concrete or asphalt for urban trails, and consider permeable or natural surfaces—like crushed stone or compacted earth—in natural settings.
- Incorporate concrete pavers to introduce visual texture, modular flexibility, and material variation, reinforcing spatial hierarchy and defining gathering areas.
- Select pavers with durable finishes and stable sub-grade preparation, ensuring longevity and safety under pedestrian and light-service use.
- Integrate permeable paving and subtle grading to support stormwater infiltration and reduce runoff where feasible.
- Avoid stairs when transitioning between grade levels, prioritizing accessible, universally navigable routes and gentle slopes.
- Use walls only where necessary, limiting height and considering site furniture, railings, or planting as alternatives to solid concrete elements.
- Coordinate hardscape materials, lighting, furnishings, and planting to create a cohesive and visually unified environment.
- Consider comfort, maintenance, and safety in all hardscape selections, addressing surface heat, slip resistance, and nighttime visibility.



The Integration of seating, paver details and lighting creates outdoor rooms and interface with adjacent building entrances.



A variety of paver materiality, pattern and texture create visual interest and delineate space.

## FURNISHINGS

- Provide a mix of fixed and movable seating to accommodate various activities and group sizes.
- Place benches in shaded areas, near pathways, and at scenic or social gathering points.
- Include movable tables and chairs in plazas to promote flexibility and encourage social interaction.
- Ensure all furnishings and amenities comply with ADA standards to accommodate users of all abilities.

## PUBLIC ART

- Integrate art installations that reflect the community's identity and foster a sense of place.
- Use art as functional elements, such as sculptural seating or interactive features.



Adirondack chairs at Park Point



Flexible seating at Boxyard RTP



"Cow parade" sculpture at RTP



Playful seating with a range of functions



Burdens Creek restoration with native plants at HUB RTP

# PRINCIPLE 3: DESIGN ARCHITECTURE THAT INSPIRES AND ENDURES

## Design Statement

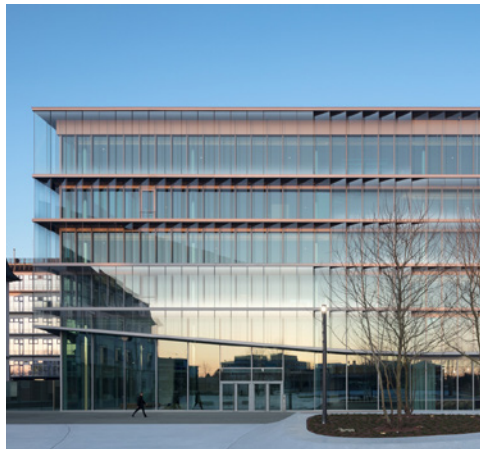
Enduring architecture unites innovation, function, and beauty within a cohesive urban fabric shaped by its natural surroundings. Buildings reflect Research Triangle Park's forward-thinking identity through expressive forms, crafted materials, and attention to human experience. The relationship between structure and setting is strengthened through context-sensitive design, access to daylight, and comfortable proportions that invite connection and inclusivity. Each building contributes to a dynamic and memorable environment where design excellence supports lasting community identity.

## Sustainability Statement

High-performing buildings advance environmental performance, resilience, and human well-being. Compact and efficient forms reduce energy and water use while minimizing embodied carbon and supporting adaptability over time. Green building systems and passive design strategies enhance comfort and extend the life of materials and resources. Renewable energy, sustainable materials, and biodiversity-focused design reinforce a culture of stewardship, positioning Research Triangle Park as a living model of innovation and environmental responsibility.



Expressive Form



Material Quality

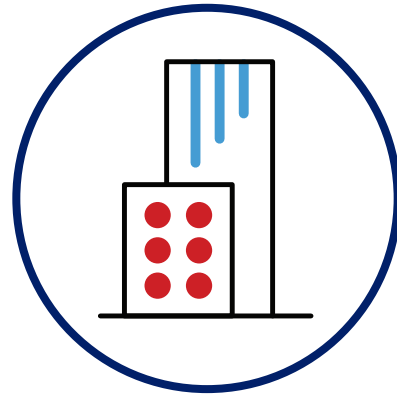


Attention to Human Experience

## Components Overview

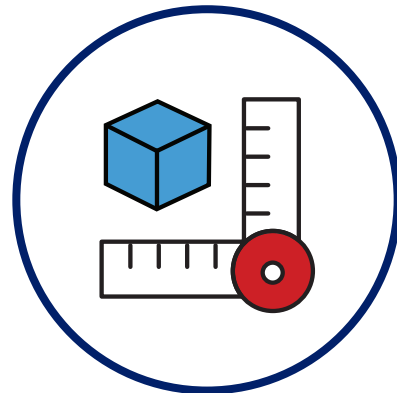
### BUILDING FORM & MASSING

The form and massing of buildings define RTP's physical structure and sense of place. This component focuses on how buildings shape space, frame streets and open areas, and respond thoughtfully to their surrounding context and climate. Composed form, human-scaled design, and environmental sensitivity together create a cohesive and enduring urban fabric.



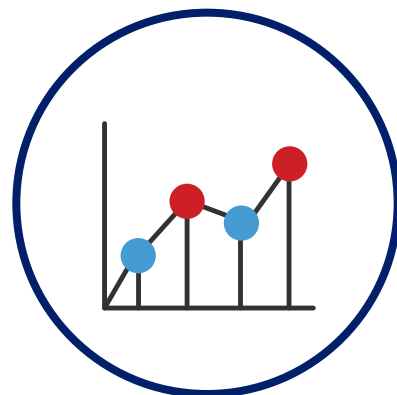
### ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION

Architectural expression and materiality establish the visual and tactile character of RTP's neighborhoods and campuses. This component emphasizes the craft, proportion, and transparency that enrich human experience and connect architecture to place. Authentic materials and expressive forms should reflect RTP's identity by uniting technological innovation, regional influence, and design excellence.



### BUILDING PERFORMANCE & INNOVATION

Building performance and innovation drive forward-looking design that blends sustainability, adaptability, and RTP's ethos of research and discovery. This component focuses on architecture that performs beautifully by integrating passive and active systems, resilient construction, and flexible planning. Each building should serve as both a high-performing environment and a visible expression of environmental stewardship and innovation.



# Building Form & Massing

## DG-3.01 Shape Buildings to Define a Human-Scaled Public Realm

Building form, massing, siting, and orientation should be designed to frame streets and open spaces to support walkable, connected, and comfortable environments.

### REINFORCE THE URBAN FRAMEWORK

- Align buildings parallel or perpendicular to streets and public spaces to define coherent blocks, corridors, and urban rooms.
- Coordinate primary facades and entries with the street hierarchy and block structure to strengthen wayfinding and connectivity.
- Position commercial and active ground-floor entries along thoroughfares, collectors, or at key multimodal connections; place residential entries to enhance neighborhood-scale walkability.

### SHAPE THE PUBLIC REALM

- Activate street edges with publicly-oriented ground floor uses and frequent entry points.
- Integrate porches, stoops, terraces, and canopies to create clear transitions between public, semi-public, semi-private, and private spaces.
- Calibrate setbacks and frontage types to support a continuous and well-defined street edge.
- Break down larger buildings into legible, human-scaled components through massing steps, façade articulation, and rhythmic variation.



Buildings sited and shaped to form the 'walls' of a park.



Transparency, active uses, human-scaled architecture, and comfortable transitions engaging public realm.



Buildings stepping down and broken down into a comfortable pedestrian scale and rhythm.

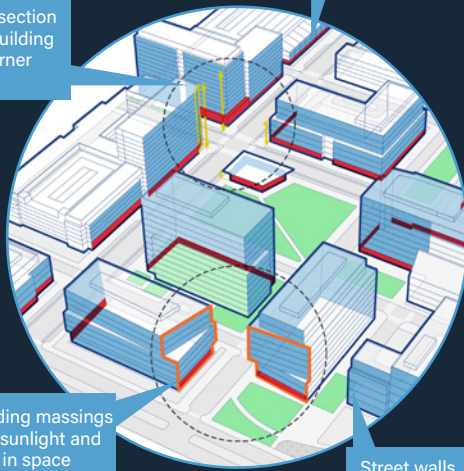
## MUN Specific

Accentuated intersection through various building heights and corner element

Well-scaled frontage

Stepped building massings to preserve sunlight and comfort in space

Street walls



For MUN, buildings should define active, continuous street edges that foster walkable, vibrant environments.

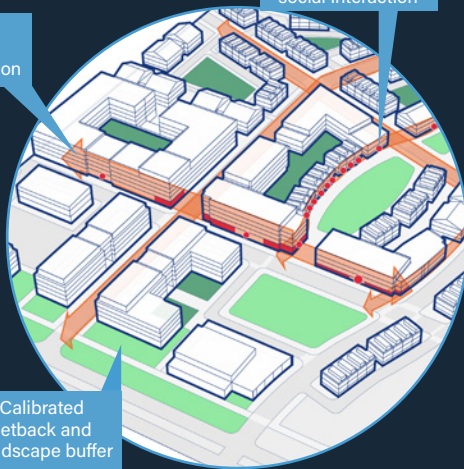
- Align ground floors to define civic spaces and corridors, with frequent entries and active uses that engage pedestrians.
- Frame key streets and public spaces with consistent streetwalls and well-scaled frontages.
- Step building massing to preserve sunlight and comfort in plazas and shared spaces
- Accentuate intersections and gateways through varied height, corner elements, or civic-scale gestures.

## RND Specific

Maintained architectural rhythmic variation

Porches, stoops and terraces promote social interaction

Calibrated setback and Landscape buffer



In RND, building form should reinforce comfortable, people-oriented streetscapes with clear transitions between public and private spaces.

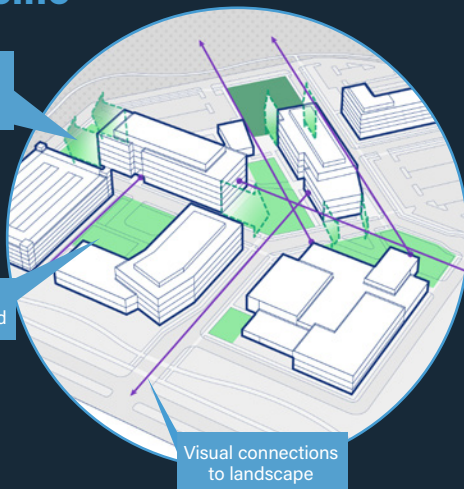
- Align homes along streets and greens to reinforce a social, neighborhood-oriented edge.
- Porches, stoops, and terraces should promote social interaction and complement the surrounding landscape.
- Calibrate setbacks and landscape buffers to balance privacy and sociability.
- Maintain rhythmic variation in width, roofline, and entry conditions to create visual continuity.

## ECC Specific

Open space as building form extensions

Group buildings defined courtyard

Visual connections to landscape



While flexibility is needed for different types of ECC development, generally speaking, buildings should shape legible, connected campus spaces that blend architecture and landscape. Massing should define pedestrian pathways and outdoor rooms without overpowering the open, natural setting.

- Group buildings to define courtyards and outdoor rooms that invite interaction.
- Modulate height and spacing to retain openness and visual connection to the landscape.
- Integrate walking paths and landscape terraces as extensions of building form.

## DG-3.02 Balance Cohesion, Variety, and Environmental Response

Buildings should be sited, oriented, and shaped to achieve a harmonious fit within the built context and landscape environment of RTP.

### COMPOSE FOR COHESION AND VARIETY

- Maintain consistent proportions, alignments, and heights across districts while encouraging creative variation.
- Highlight key corners, gateways, or civic spaces with distinctive yet contextually sensitive forms.
- Mark terminating vistas or landmarks with buildings or features of civic importance.

### RESPOND TO CLIMATE AND LANDSCAPE

- Transition heights and volumes in response to adjacent context, topography, and the hierarchy of open spaces.
- Orient and sculpt buildings to maximize daylight, provide natural ventilation, and to frame significant natural and landscape features.
- Use shading, stepbacks, overhangs, and vegetation to moderate solar exposure and wind.
- Preserve sunlight on key public spaces and use trees and vegetation to provide seasonally appropriate shade.



A new district showing a balance of cohesion and variety.



An architectural response to local climate that frames a natural view and creates an enjoyable space.



Buildings in RTP should feel intimately and purposefully connected to the landscape.

## MUN Specific



Hub RTP created a cohesive and diverse new district that blends urbanism with RTP's natural landscape.

Buildings in MUN should maintain a consistent urban rhythm and scale while allowing for architectural variety that reflects diverse uses. Orientation and shading strategies should enhance comfort and sustainability within dense, walkable environments.

- Coordinate building heights and setbacks to reinforce an urban edge while allowing variety at nodes and within the skyline.
- Orient upper levels and roof forms to optimize daylight and reduce heat gain.
- Introduce shaded arcades or canopies at key pedestrian routes for comfort and continuity.

## RND Specific



A mix of housing types oriented towards a community greenway.

In RND, architectural variety should support a cohesive neighborhood identity and accommodate different housing types. Building orientation and massing should respond to natural features, views, and solar access.

- Mix housing types and building scales to achieve diversity within a coherent fabric.
- Position buildings to frame views toward open space, greenways, or shared amenities.

## ECC Specific



The Alexandria Center for AgTech achieves a sense of campus unity within a landscape-oriented setting.

In ECC, building form should balance flexibility and unity across a landscape-driven setting. Architecture should be organized to preserve natural systems, capture daylight, and frame shared outdoor amenities.

- Employ a unified architectural rhythm that accommodates phased development.
- Follow natural contours and preserve mature vegetation where feasible.
- Incorporate breezeways, overhangs, and covered walks to enhance microclimate and connectivity.

# Architectural Expression

## DG-3.03 Create Facades with Depth, Craft, and Transparency

Facades should be designed to convey quality and create visual interest through articulation, proportion, and material richness.

### ARTICULATE FACADE DEPTH AND PROPORTION

- Use reveals, recesses, and changes in material to create depth, shadow, and structural legibility.
- Maintain consistent horizontal datums and window proportions for visual coherence.
- Avoid cantilevered balconies that protrude from a facade and opt for integrated balconies that are supported at three or more corners.



An ordered visual richness achieved through reveals, recesses, and material changes.

### PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY AND ACTIVATION

- Maximize visibility, permeability, and transparency at the ground floor to engage pedestrians (Refer to Sec. 6-8 in Development Standards for transparency requirements).
- Integrate shading, lighting, and detailing that enhance comfort and nighttime character.

### EMPHASIZE CRAFT AND PERMANENCE

- Showcase authentic construction details and material junctions that express care, precision, and durability.



Clean, well-crafted details and quality materials, especially at the ground level, convey durability.



A simple and coherent building facade with structural legibility, high transparency, and shadow depth.



Facades for manufacturing and warehouse facilities should feature durable materials, precise detailing, and lighting.

## MUN Specific

In MUN, facades should engage the street through transparency, rhythm, and human-scaled detail. Upper-level articulation and high-quality materials should contribute to a cohesive urban experience and identity.

- Animate ground floors through frequent entries, storefront transparency, and articulated detailing.
- Layer materials, structure, and shading to convey depth and human scale.
- Integrate architectural lighting and signage as part of the streetscape experience.



A mixed-use office building that engages the street with ground-level storefronts and frequent entries.

## RND Specific

In RND, facades should emphasize warmth, craft, and residential character. Articulation should highlight entries, windows, and porches to reinforce the neighborhood's walkable, small-scale feel.

- Highlight doors, windows, and porches to emphasize craftsmanship and hierarchy.
- Maintain coherent facade proportions across varied building types.
- Employ modest material or color contrast to express individuality within an overall harmony.



The Walker in Cary achieves an elegant residential character through a warm color palette and proportioned openings.

## ECC Specific

In ECC, facades should balance technological precision with human-scaled articulation. Transparency and detailing should reveal interior activity where feasible while maintaining harmony with the surrounding landscape.

- Reveal program and activity through selective transparency and precise detailing.
- Balance glass and solid surfaces to control glare and enhance comfort.
- Treat structural or shading systems as expressive, integrated design elements.



Facades in ECC should exude precision and performance.

## DG-3.04 Employ Authentic Materials and Express Innovation

Materials and building forms should reflect RTP's identity by combining regional character with technological advancement.

### CHOOSE AUTHENTIC, ENDURING MATERIALS

- Use durable, low-maintenance materials suited to the region's climate and long-term performance.
- Reference regional palettes of metal, brick, wood, stone, terra cotta, and concrete in modern interpretations.
- Avoid synthetic or imitation materials that diminish architectural integrity.



Park Point displays a durable blend of materials.

- Prioritize recycled, low-embodied-carbon, and responsibly sourced materials.
- Highlight renewable or biogenic materials that demonstrate environmental commitment.

### EXPRESS INNOVATION AND IDENTITY

- Reveal structure, systems, or fabrication techniques as part of the architectural expression.
- Celebrate RTP's culture of research and discovery through forward-looking design that unites performance and beauty.



The Eli Lilly campus at RTP balances performance and beauty.



Buildings at the Alexandria Center for Advanced Technologies showcase authentic and enduring materials that support campus identity and express innovation.

## MUN Specific



The Smoky Hollow mixed-use district in Raleigh blends glass, metal, and brick to craft a contemporary urban aesthetic.

In MUN, materials should reflect durability, authenticity, and urban quality, using masonry, metal, and glass to convey permanence and craft. Innovative elements may highlight sustainability or technology that reinforces RTP's forward-looking character.

- Combine durable materials such as brick, metal, and glass for a contemporary urban expression.
- Emphasize transitions, corners, and entries through refined detailing or contrasting finishes.

## RND Specific



A multi-family residential building in Winston-Salem featuring a natural, earthy material palette and subtle color shifts.

In RND, materials should draw from natural, tactile palettes, such as wood, brick, stone, and other regionally-resonant finishes, to create a sense of warmth and belonging. Sustainable materials should emphasize comfort and longevity.

- Favor natural, regionally sourced materials that reinforce a sense of permanence and warmth.
- Differentiate primary and secondary elevations through subtle material or color shifts.
- Apply finishes suited to local climate and long-term residential durability.

## ECC Specific



Facade design that balances operational requirements while showcasing research and collaboration spaces.

In ECC, material expression should merge innovation with environmental sensitivity. High-performance facades, advanced composites, and renewable materials should express RTP's leadership in research and sustainability.

- Showcase advanced fabrication methods, renewable materials, and precision assemblies.
- Integrate prefabricated or modular systems to demonstrate flexibility and efficiency.
- Expose structural and environmental systems as design features that embody RTP's innovation ethos.

# Building Performance & Innovation

## DG-3.05 Integrate Design Excellence and Environmental Performance

Architectural design quality and sustainability should combine to achieve buildings that are beautiful, efficient, and resilient.

### REDUCE CARBON FOOTPRINTS

- Optimize orientation, daylighting, and ventilation to reduce energy demand and enhance comfort.
- Integrate renewable energy, high-efficiency systems, and smart controls to improve building performance.
- Preserve embodied carbon and cultural continuity by retaining distinctive structural or architectural elements where feasible.

### ENHANCE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- Prioritize daylight, air quality, acoustics, and healthy materials to support occupant comfort and productivity.
- Use green roofs, rain gardens, and stormwater reuse systems to support biodiversity and resilience.



A high-performance office complex that meshes design quality and sustainability.



An attractive interior space that features natural materials and maximizes daylight and views.



Boxyard utilized existing shipping containers to achieve high-quality design in a “cheap and cheery” way.



Biosolar roofs can reduce carbon footprint by minimizing heat gain and generating renewable energy.

## MUN Specific

Buildings in MUN should integrate passive and active systems seamlessly into their architecture—reducing energy use while maintaining urban quality and comfort. Green roofs, shading devices, and energy-efficient facades should be visible parts of the design vocabulary.

- Employ responsive facades and shading to improve comfort and energy performance in active public zones.
- Incorporate rooftop systems such as solar panels, green roofs, or amenity decks, that serve multiple functions.

## RND Specific

In RND, design should prioritize passive strategies such as natural ventilation, daylighting, and shading to enhance comfort and reduce energy demand. Building systems should support healthy indoor environments and sustainable lifestyles.

- Design for passive performance through orientation, shading, and natural ventilation.
- Integrate renewable systems seamlessly into roofs and outbuildings.

## ECC Specific

In ECC, environmental performance should be expressed at both the building and campus scale. Architecture should incorporate renewable energy, smart systems, and ecological design that showcase RTP's commitment to sustainable innovation.

- Pair smart technologies with passive design strategies to optimize performance across large buildings.
- Deploy site-scale renewable energy and water systems integrated into the landscape network.
- Prioritize daylight, views, and natural ventilation to strengthen well-being and productivity.

## DG-3.06 Design for Adaptability and Visible Stewardship

Buildings should be designed to evolve over time and visibly embody RTP's commitment to innovation and sustainability.

### PLAN FOR FLEXIBILITY AND REUSE

- Evaluate opportunities to repurpose, expand, or modernize existing buildings before pursuing new construction.
- Adapt existing structures to new research, office, or mixed-use programs through flexible floorplates and updated systems.
- Showcase adaptive reuse projects as models of RTP's evolution toward sustainable reinvention.
- Design new structures and systems to accommodate future uses, technologies, and layouts.
- Provide convertible ground floors and modular systems for long-term adaptability.

### CELEBRATE VISIBLE SUSTAINABILITY

- Integrate photovoltaics, shading devices, and green infrastructure as visible, educational design features.
- Encourage pilot projects and "living labs" that demonstrate emerging technologies and materials.

### COMMUNICATE PERFORMANCE

- Share measurable outcomes such as energy savings, carbon reduction, and wellness metrics to promote transparency and collective learning.



The Park Point campus creatively repurposed existing structures into a successful and vibrant area.



Simple building forms with flexible floorplates and convertible ground floors are more adaptable and future-proof.



Sustainable building systems and features can become prominent visual and educational features.

## MUN Specific

In MUN, buildings should be designed for flexible use and incremental evolution—accommodating new tenants, technologies, or programs over time. Visible sustainability features such as photovoltaics or shading devices should reinforce RTP’s leadership in design innovation.

- Plan structural grids and service cores for flexible reuse or reconfiguration.
- Use demountable systems and modular partitions to support evolving tenancy.
- Express sustainability measures, such as energy systems or green infrastructure, as part of the building identity.

## RND Specific

In RND, adaptability should support diverse living arrangements and evolving needs. Sustainable features like solar panels, rainwater systems, and durable materials should be integrated gracefully into the neighborhood aesthetic.

- Design unit layouts that allow for multi-generational living or future subdivision.
- Specify resilient materials and assemblies that enable repair and renewal.
- Integrate shared energy or water systems as community-scaled amenities.

## ECC Specific

In ECC, flexibility and visible stewardship are central to long-term relevance. Buildings should anticipate changes in research and workplace models, and visibly communicate sustainability through integrated systems and transparent performance metrics.

- Provide adaptable floorplates and infrastructure that can evolve with research and workplace needs.
- Highlight building performance systems as visible expressions of environmental responsibility.
- Incorporate pilot zones or testbeds to foster on-site experimentation and learning.

# DESIGN GUIDELINE EVALUATION MATRIX

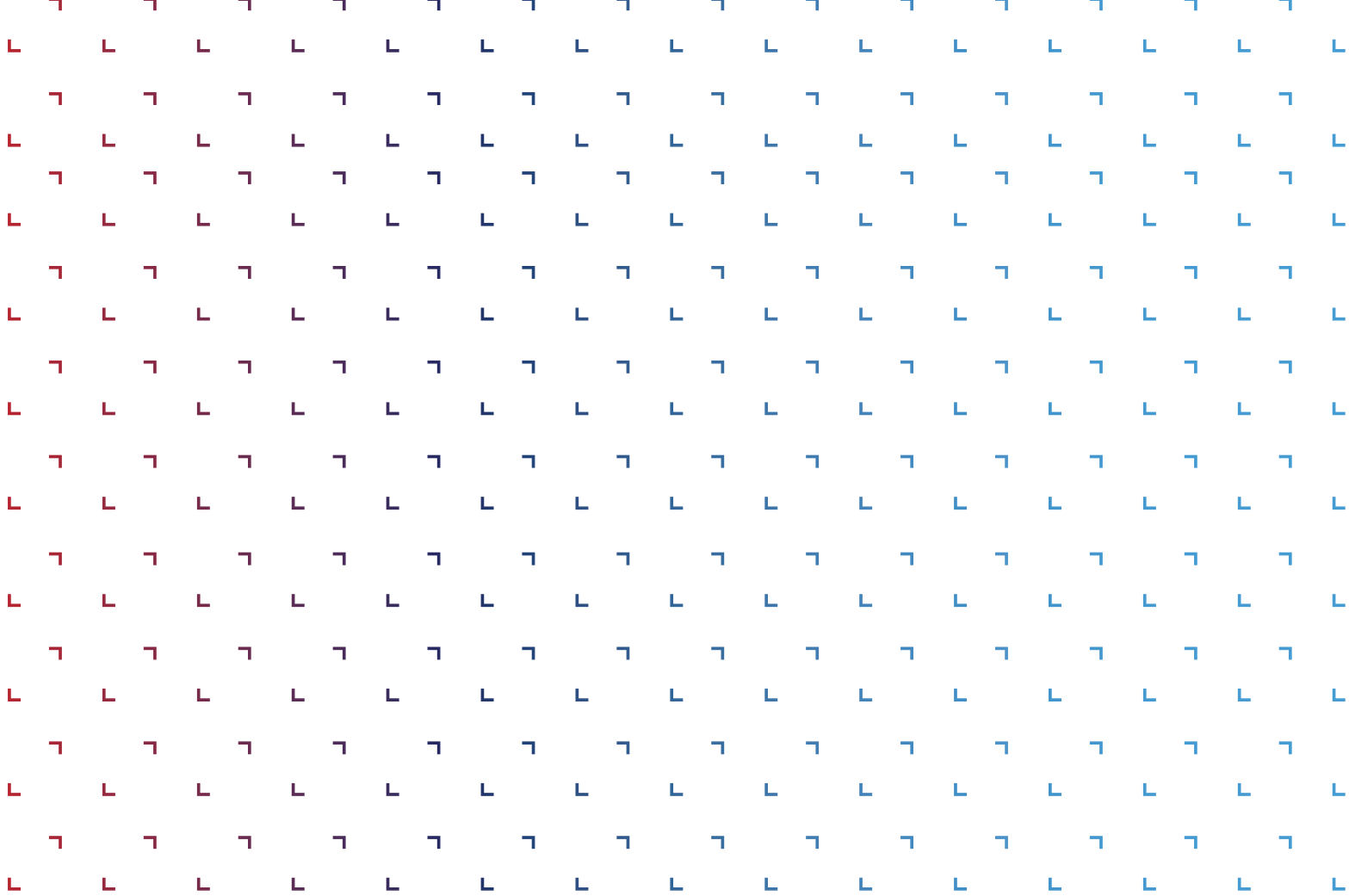
## EVALUATION MATRIX

To help provide transparency and clarity around the review process, members of the RTP Design Board will use this evaluation matrix to review proposed project alignment with the RTP Design Guidelines.

DESIGN GUIDELINE	RATING 1 (LOW)- 5 (HIGH)	NOTES
<b>DG-1.01</b> Design walkable, pedestrian-scaled blocks		
<b>DG-1.02</b> Establish a legible, hierarchical network of streets		
<b>DG-1.03</b> Align build-to-line and frontages to define the street edge		
<b>DG-1.04</b> Provide efficient, context-sensitive parking solutions		
<b>DG-1.05</b> Build an integrated multi-modal transportation network		
<b>DG-1.06</b> Design streetscapes that support an active public realm		
<b>DG-1.07</b> Integrate lighting to enhance safety while defining character and boundaries		
<b>DG-1.08</b> Use signage to enhance wayfinding and district identity		

PRINCIPLE 1

	DESIGN GUIDELINE	RATING 1 (LOW)- 5(HIGH)	NOTES
PRINCIPLE 2	<b>DG-2.01</b> Create welcoming and accessible open spaces serving a variety of users and functions		
	<b>DG-2.02</b> Establish an interconnected open space network		
	<b>DG-2.03</b> Utilize consistent, high-quality materials to create enduring open spaces		
PRINCIPLE 3	<b>DG-3.01</b> Shape buildings to define a human-scaled public realm		
	<b>DG-3.02</b> Balance cohesion, variety, and environmental response.		
	<b>DG-3.03</b> Create facades with depth, craft, and transparency		
	<b>DG-3.04</b> Employ authentic materials and express innovation		
	<b>DG-3.05</b> Integrate design excellence and environmental performance		
	<b>DG-3.06</b> Design for adaptability and visible stewardship		

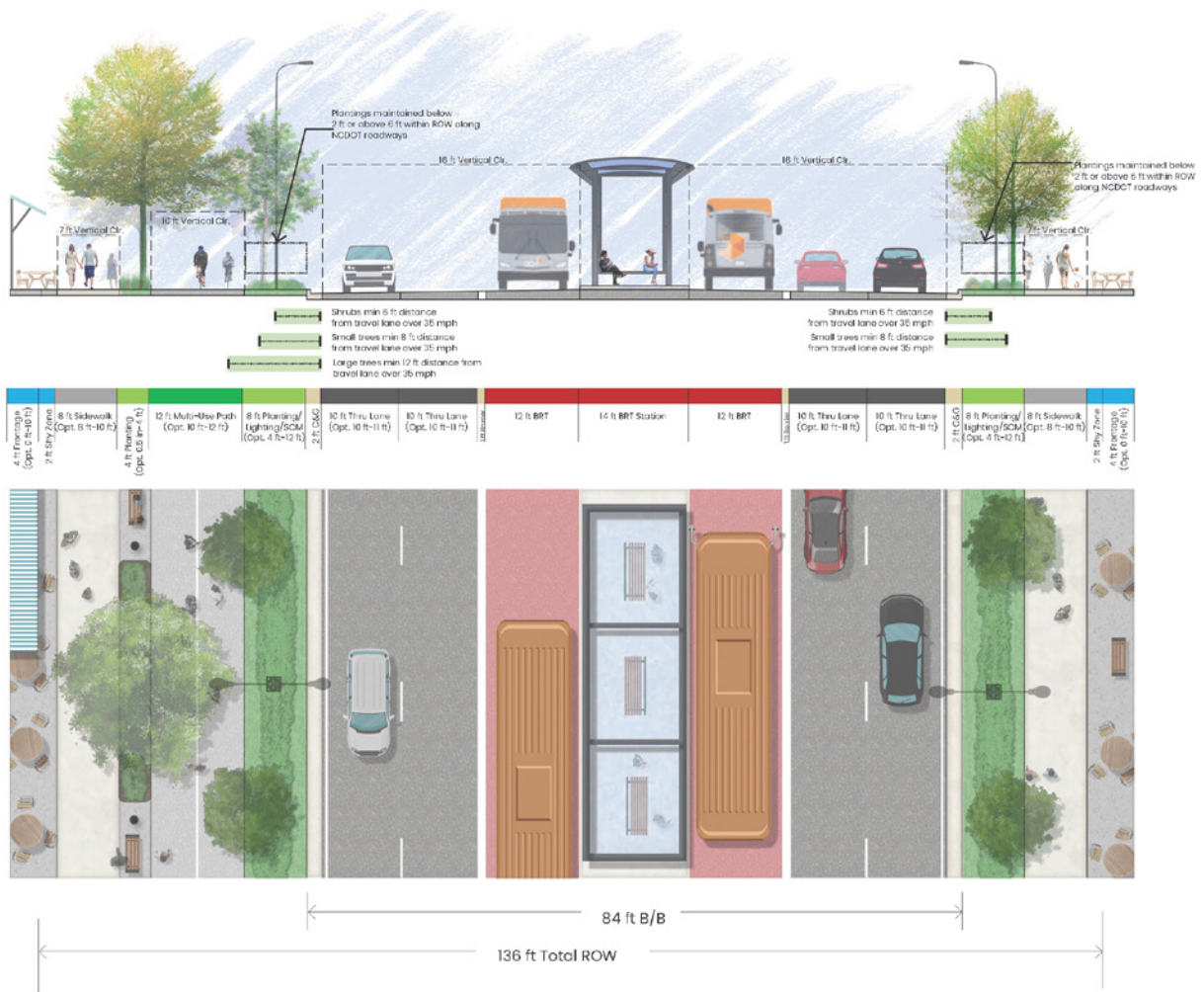


700 Park Offices Drive, Suite 007  
Durham, NC 27713  
[www.rtp.org](http://www.rtp.org)

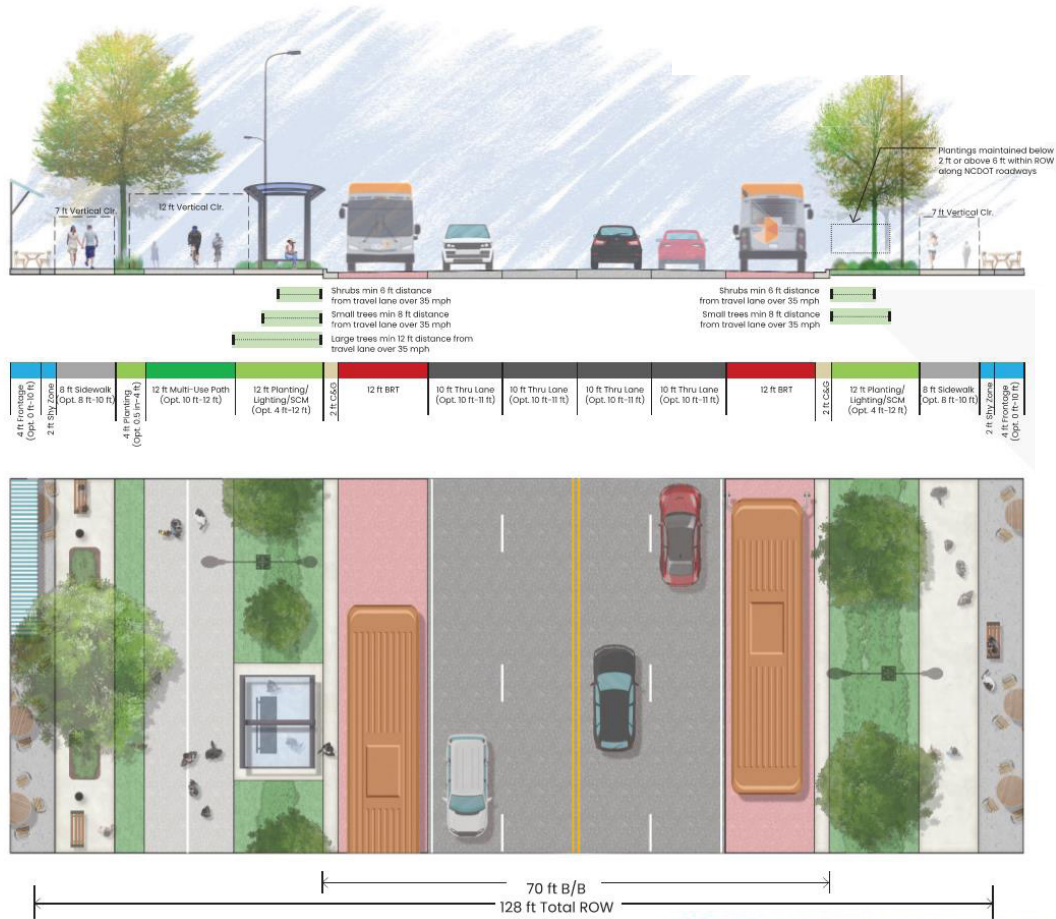
# APPENDIX: STREET SECTIONS

The proposed new street types for RTP 3.0 reflect walkable, connected, active streets that support safe, multi-modal movement and good street design. Dimensional requirements related to these street types can be found in the Development Standards. Recommendations for preferred features and sizes are shown in the following street section and plan diagrams.

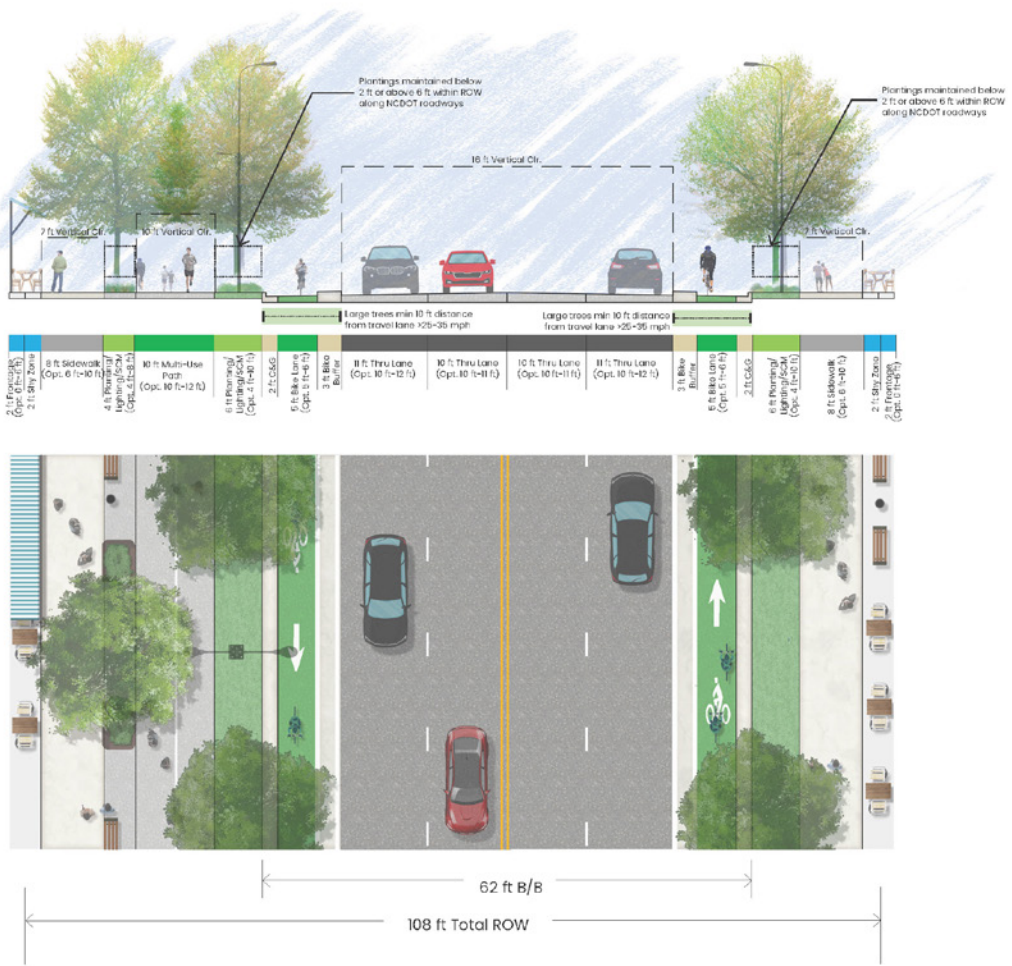
## Thoroughfare Street with BRT - Center-running



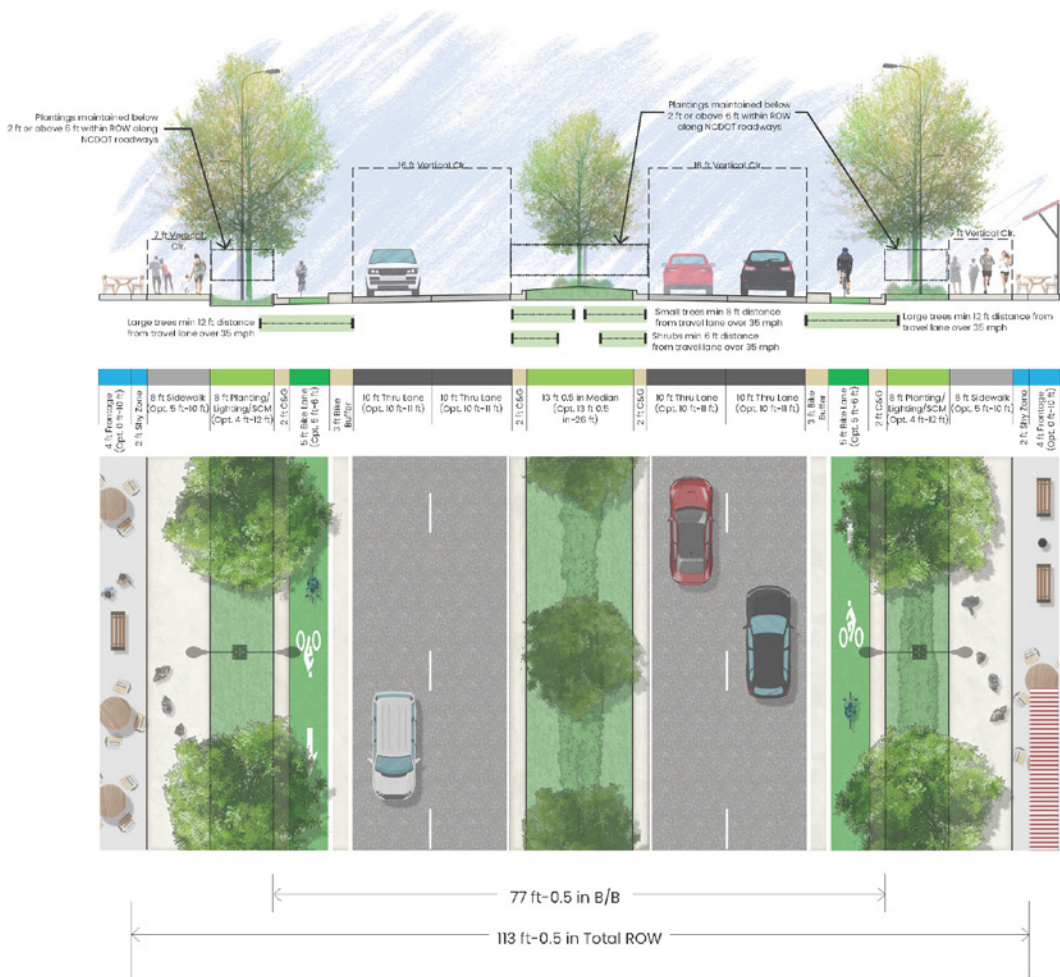
# Thoroughfare Street with BRT - Side-running



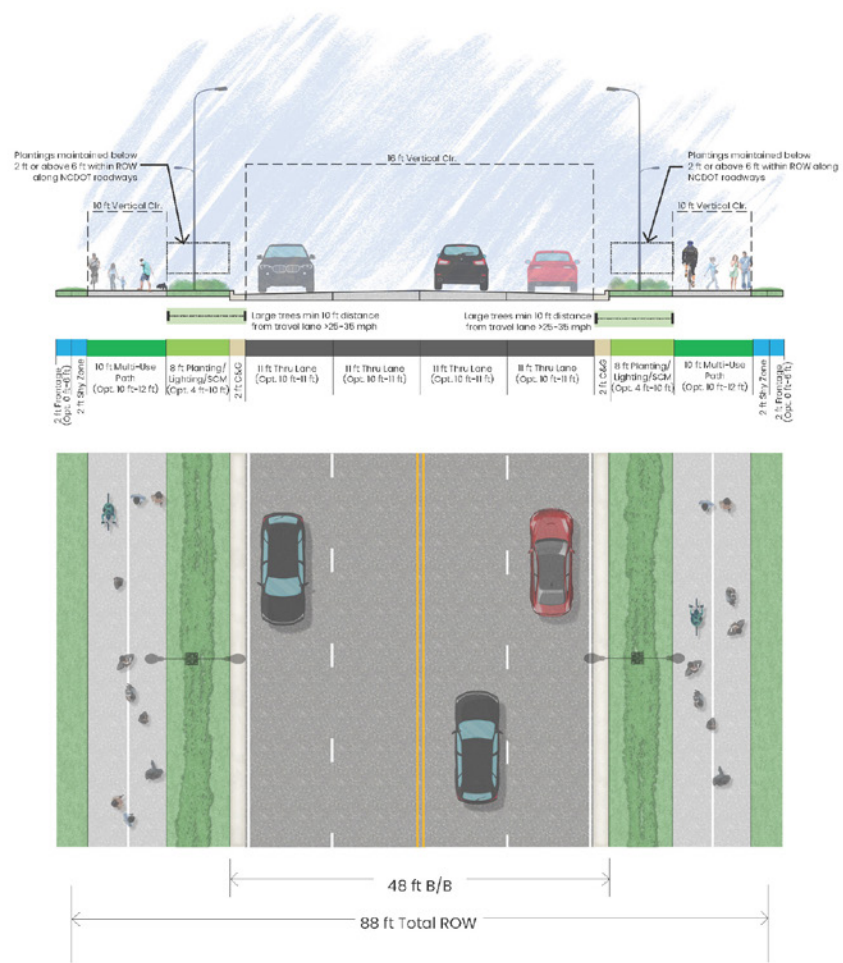
# Thoroughfare A



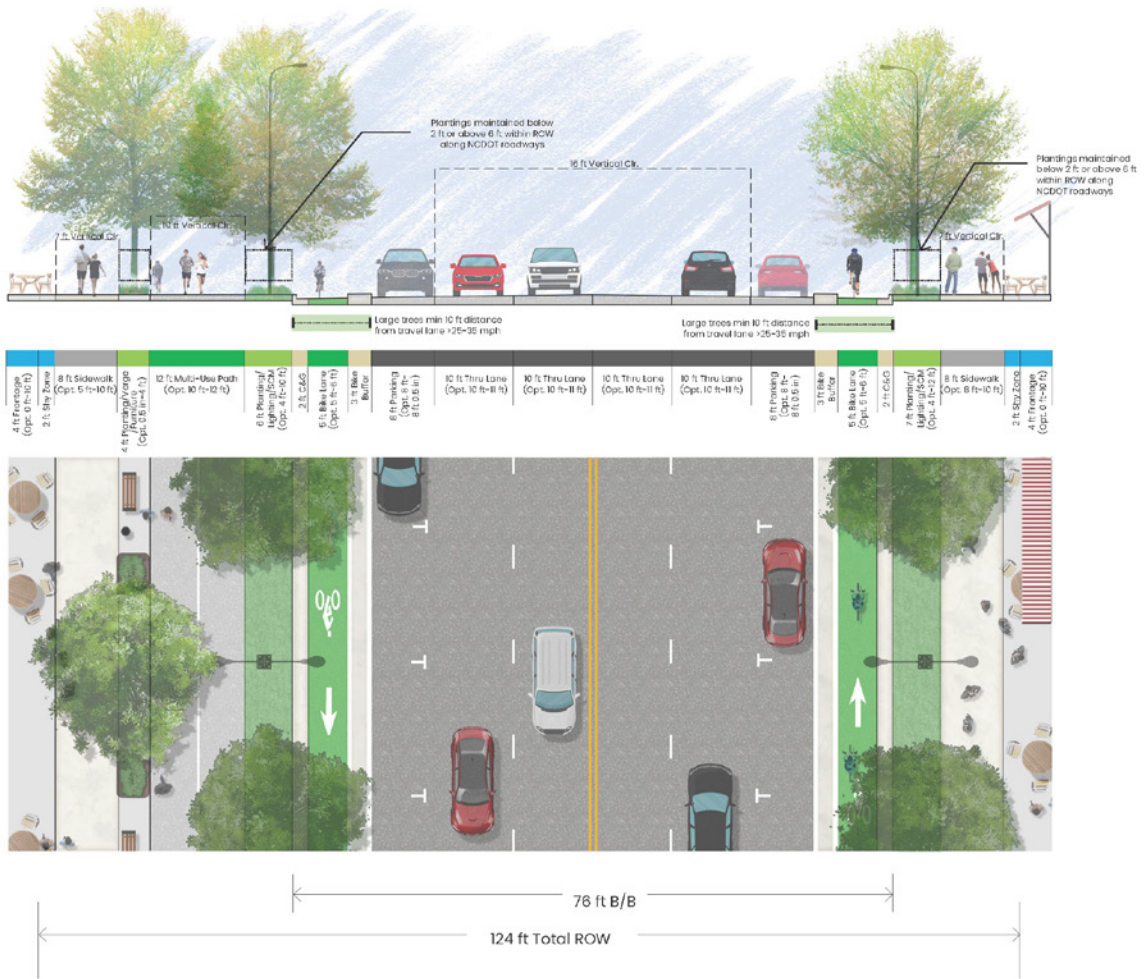
# Thoroughfare Street with Median



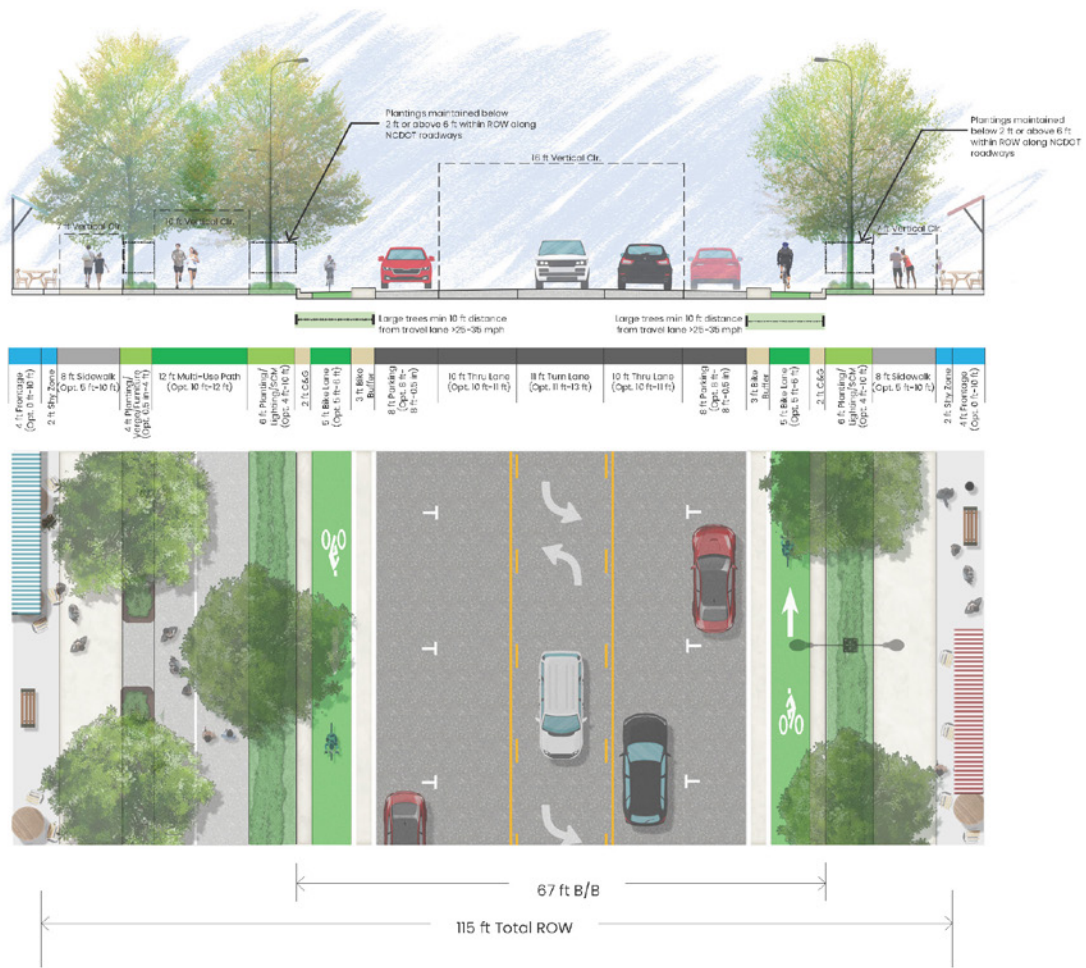
# Thoroughfare B



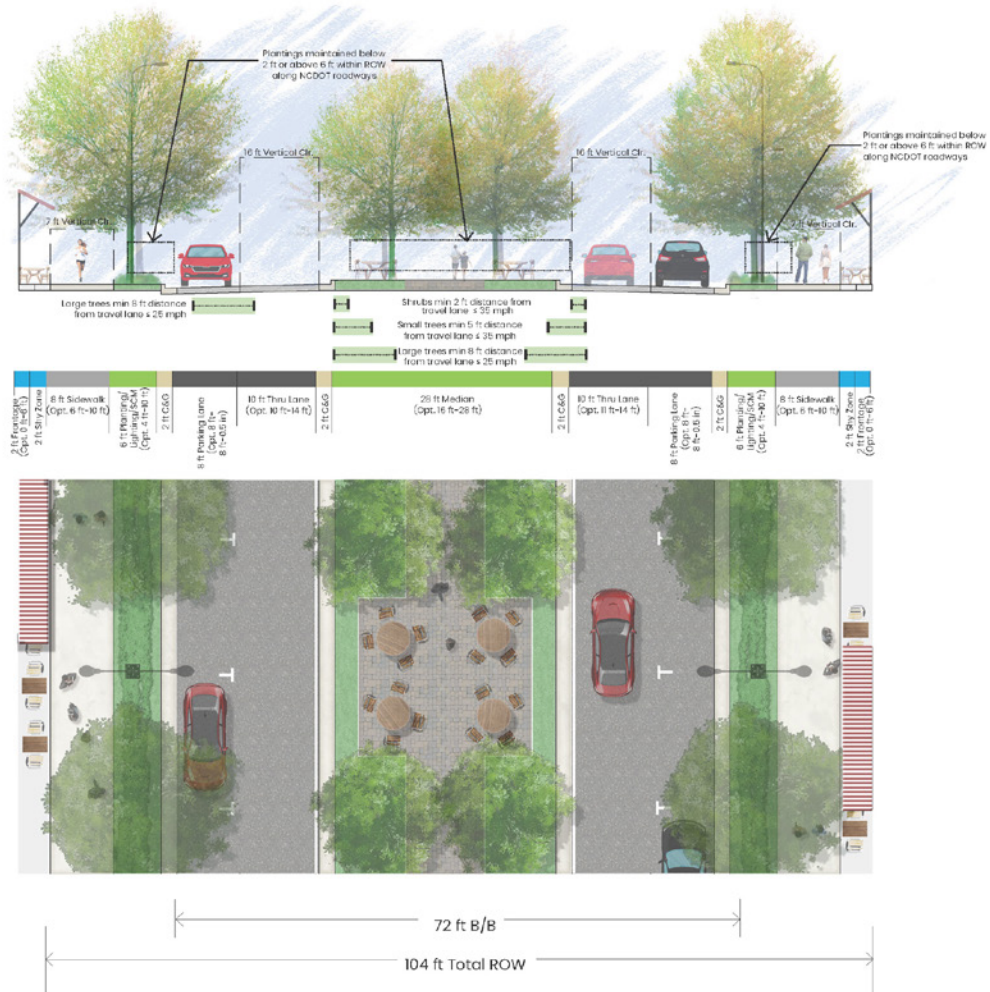
# Collector Street Four Lane



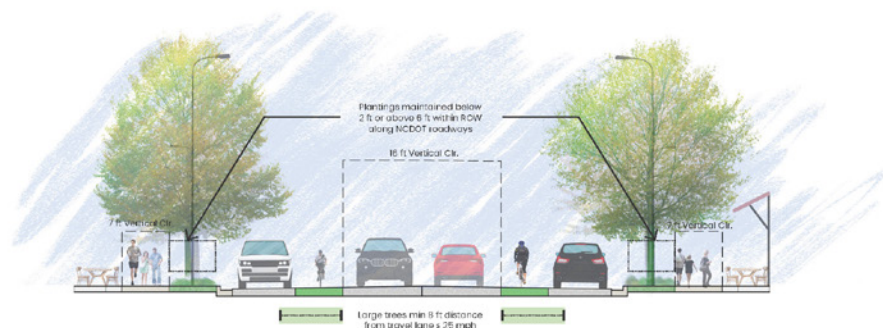
# Collector Street Three Lane



# Collector Street with Multimodal Median

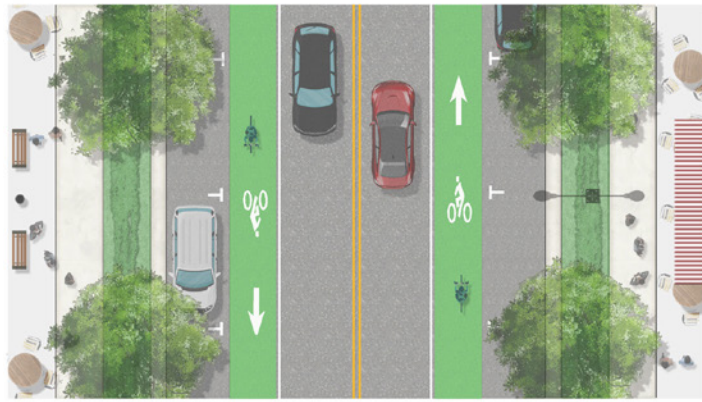


# Local Street Two Lane

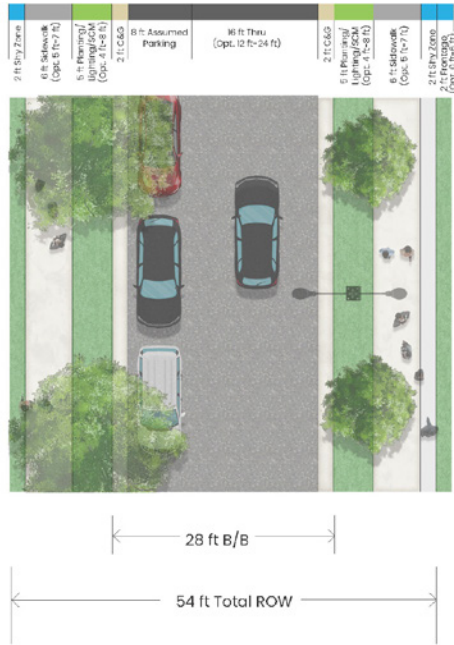
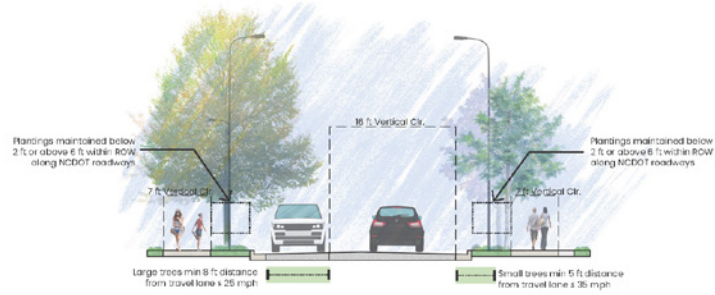


Large trees min 8 ft distance from travel lanes + 25' length

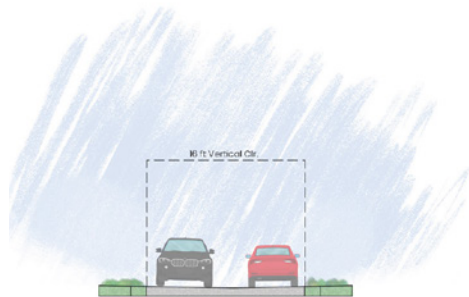
4 ft Roadway (Opt. 0 ft-0 ft)	2 ft Shy Zone	6 ft Sidewalk (Opt. 8 ft-10 ft)	7 ft Planting/ Lighting (Opt. 4 ft-10 ft)	2 ft C&G	8 ft Parking Lane (Opt. 8 ft-10 ft)	2 ft C&G	7 ft Planting/ Lighting (Opt. 4 ft-10 ft)	6 ft Sidewalk (Opt. 8 ft-10 ft)	2 ft Shy Zone	4 ft Roadway (Opt. 0 ft-10 ft)
8 ft Thru Lane (Opt. 10 ft-11 ft)	10 ft Thru Lane (Opt. 10 ft-11 ft)	8 ft Bike Lane (Opt. 5 ft-8 ft)	8 ft Thru Lane (Opt. 10 ft-11 ft)	8 ft Bike Lane (Opt. 5 ft-8 ft)	8 ft Parking Lane (Opt. 8 ft-10 ft)	2 ft C&G	7 ft Planting/ Lighting (Opt. 4 ft-10 ft)	6 ft Sidewalk (Opt. 8 ft-10 ft)	2 ft Shy Zone	4 ft Roadway (Opt. 0 ft-10 ft)



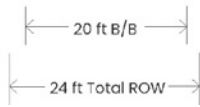
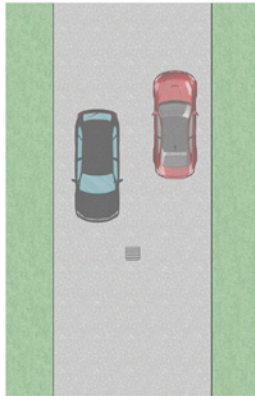
# Local Street Two-Way



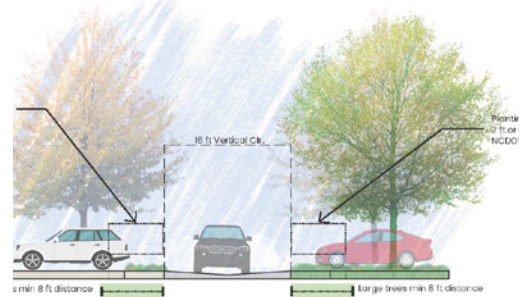
## Local Steet Alley



4 ft. Planting (Opt: 1 ft-10 ft)	20 ft Alley (Opt: 12 ft-24 ft)	2 ft Sky Zone (Opt: 0 ft-10 ft)
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## Local Steet One-Way



13 ft Building Setback (Opt: 13 ft-20 ft)	2 ft. Cit. Zone 6 ft. Planting/ Lighting/SOM (Opt: 4 ft-8 ft)	16 ft Alley (Opt: 12 ft-24 ft)	6 ft. Planting/ Lighting/SOM (Opt: 4 ft-8 ft)	2 ft. Cit. Zone	13 ft Building Setback (Opt: 13 ft-20 ft)
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