



**MAIN  
STREET**  
2023  
*Now*

**Have It Your Way:  
Getting Chains & Franchises  
that Fit-In**

© Ed McMahon  
Urban Land Institute  
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# Where is This?



An historic house in Taunton, MA being torn down to make way for a new gas station and convenience store.



What are we building today that will be worth preserving in the future?



This is an important question because 80% of everything ever built in the US has been constructed since 1970 and much of what we have built is pure junk.



# What is a Chain Store?



- A **chain store** is a retail outlet in which many locations share a brand, central management & standard business practices.
- They have come to dominate the retail and dining markets and many service categories in large parts of the world.
- A **franchise** is one form of a chain store.



Source: Wikipedia

# Chains on Main



Urban Outfitters – Ithaca, NY

- The most economically successful Main Streets often include a combination of strong locally owned businesses as well as some national brands and chain stores.



Talbots – Hingham, MA

- Landlords like chain stores because they are credit tenants, but too many chain stores can make a main street uncompetitive by making them just like every shopping center and mall.

# Reuse is Always Better than Demolition



McDonald's – Bray, Ireland



Starbuck's Alexandria, VA



CVS – Washington, DC



Planet Fitness – Collingswood, NJ



# Benefits of Adaptive Reuse

- Adaptive reuse can lower costs.
- Adaptive reuse is more sustainable.
- Adaptive reuse preserves history.
- Adaptive reuse finishes projects faster.
- Adaptive reuse can act as a catalyst.



# Chain Drug Stores



A typical “off-the-shelf” chain drug store, set back from the street and surrounded by asphalt.



# You Have a Choice!

“When a chain store developer comes to town, they generally have three designs (A, B, or C) ranging from Anywhere USA to Unique (sensitive to local character).”

“Which one gets built depends heavily upon how much push back the company gets from local residents and officials about design & its importance.”

Source: Bob Gibbs, Retail Consultant, Birmingham, MI

# Walgreens – Plan A



# Walgreens – Plan B



# Walgreens – Plan C

**Brookline, MA**



# Walgreens – Plan C

Kenosha, WI





# Walgreens – Plan C

Poland, Ohio



# Walgreens – Plan C

Carmel, IN



# Walgreens – Plan C

Avon, CO



# Walgreens – Plan C

Key West, FL  
In historic movie theatre



# Things to Know

- Chains may prefer their prototype design, but they *will* depart from their off-the-shelf design to be in an economically profitable location.
- The character of you community is more valuable and more important than a large corporations' preferences.
- Communities that accept “Anywhere USA” design will lose their unique identity and sense of place. They will also become less valuable as places to live, work, or invest
- Communities that have higher expectations get better results and this in turn makes them more desirable as places to live, invest, and visit.

Walgreens in downtown **Oak Park, IL** meets the street and has parking on the side.



A Walgreens in **San Antonio, TX** meets the corner and uses materials that compliment the historic, art deco high rise next door



Walgreens in a new mixed-use building in  
downtown **Brookhaven, GA**





# Walgreens – Chicago, IL



A typical suburban style CVS surrounded by parking.



# CVS – Charleston, SC



# CVS – Miami Beach, FL



CVS in **Westerville, OH** fits-in with the town's historic architecture and is a "good neighbor" in both siting & design.



The CVS in **Winter Park, FL** is in a new, multi-story, mixed use building.



The CVS in **Lancaster, PA** shows how a chain drug store can respect a Main Street setting by pulling the building up to the sidewalk and locating the parking & drive-thru in the rear.



This CVS in **Washington, DC** is in an old movie theatre.  
It is an excellent example of adaptive reuse.





CVS in **Davidson, NC** is in a new two-story building. Davidson's form-based code requires minimum heights and zero front setbacks in downtown and gateway corridors.



# Fast Food Restaurants





Plan A



Plan B



Plan C

# Pizza Hut – Palm Springs, CA



# Pizza Hut – Madison, WI



# Pizza Hut - Warwickshire, UK





# A Typical McDonalds



# McDonald's - Long Island, NY



# McDonald's – Stowe, VT



# McDonald's – Sedona, AZ



# McDonald's – Lake Forest, IL



# McDonald's – Richmond, VA



# McDonald's – Annapolis, MD



# McDonald's – St Louis, MO





# McDonald's – San Antonio, TX



# McDonald's – Freeport, ME



# A Typical Burger King



# Burger King – Chesterfield, VA



# Burger King – Key West, FL



# Burger King – Santa Fe, NM



# Burger King – Lahaina, HI



# Burger King – Nottingham, UK





Typical KFC Restaurant located on a busy commercial street.



# KFC – Charleston, SC



KFC in **Carmel, IN** is also on a busy commercial street, but the city requires commercial buildings to be pulled up to the sidewalk. There are minimum height requirements & design standards.



# KFC - Japan



# KFC - Russia



# KFC - China



# A typical Dairy Queen in “Anytown USA”



The Dairy Queen in **Herndon, VA** is in a new 2-story brick building on the town's historic main street.





The Dairy Queen in **Andalusia, AL** is in an historic Main Street building. The mural is a family album for the city.



# Dairy Queen –Route 66, AZ



# Dairy Queens on Main Street

**Unionville, OT**



**Winsome, MI**



# Typical Taco Bell in “Anytown USA”



# Taco Bell – Pacifica, CA



# Taco Bell – Freeport, ME



Taco Bell in **Chesterfield County, VA**. This County, like many others in Virginia, has a gateway corridor overlay that regulates building siting, design, setbacks, landscaping & signage.



Taco Bell in a restored Spanish Colonial House in **Ft. Collins, CO**. Taco Bell planned to demolish the house & build a typical off-the-shelf building. The city approved commercial rezoning only after Taco Bell agreed to reuse the house.





A typical Dunkin' Donuts store set back from the street, surrounded by parking and pays no attention to the town's vernacular architecture



The Dunkin Donut in **Westerly, RI** illustrates the impact of landscaping, siting closer to the street and improved store design.



The owner of this handsome building in downtown **Providence, RI** used Historic Preservation Tax Credits to restore the building. The first floor has commercial space, including a Dunkin Donuts. The upper floors are housing.



# Dunkin Donuts – Pawleys Island, SC



# Dunkin Donuts – Marysville, TN



# Dunkin' Donuts – Chestertown, MD



# Dunkin' Donuts - Hyannis, MA



# Starbucks



- Starbucks has never had a prototype building.
- From its inception, it sought Main Street locations and favored community friendly design.
- Starbucks has adaptively reused hundreds of historic buildings, across the US.



# Starbucks – Los Angeles, CA



# Starbucks – Alexandria, VA



# Starbucks – Alturas, CA



# Starbucks – Walla Walla, WA



# Starbucks – Ketchum, ID

**A Former Church**



# Starbucks – Baltimore, MD



# Starbucks - Japan



# Starbucks - Spain





# Starbucks - Vietnam



# Gas Stations & Convenience Stores



A typical 7-11 convenience store, set back from the street in a featureless single-story building with a large parking lot and tall pole mounted sign.



The 7-11 in **Bethesda, MD** put the parking behind the building which made the store both more attractive & more pedestrian friendly. Relocating auto access to the side street, rather than the main arterial, also reduced auto accidents.



A new 7-11 in a mixed-use building in **Washington, DC** doesn't need parking because it is in a dense, walkable neighborhood.



This Wawa convenience store in **Chestnut Hill, PA** is in a historic main street building.



The Sheetz in **Morgantown, WV** is the company's first store without gas pumps. It features prepared foods to cater to university students.



A typical small town service station with oversized signs, a brightly colored canopy and gas pumps located in front of a nondescript building.





Compare the Shell Station to this Texaco Station in **Charleston, SC**. Note the handsome building, the low monument style sign & the gas pumps located behind the building rather than facing the street.



A regional gas station/convenience store company proposed to build its prototype model in a small town in the Adirondacks. The town said they preferred a “Adirondack style” building.



This is the gas station/store that was built in **Old Forge, NY** after the Planning Board asked for an “Adirondack Style” building.





Typical Gas Station  
Canopy

Better Gas Station  
Canopy



It is becoming much more common for service stations to locate the parking and gas pumps behind the building as illustrated by this Mobil Station in Menominee Falls, Wisconsin.



Another view of the Mobil Station in **Menominee Falls, WI**. The building has office space on the second floor, just like other main street buildings.

Gas Pumps



This Turkey Hill Mini-Mart in **Columbus, OH** locates the gas pumps behind the building. Turkey Hill is owned by Kroger, which was willing to work with the community to design a building that would fit with the neighborhood.



Another view of the Turkey Hill Mini-Mart in **Columbus, OH** shows how the building meets the sidewalk & relates to its neighbors in both siting & materials





This convenience store in **Davidson, NC** has gas pumps and parking behind the store



Gas Pumps

Dollar Stores are proliferating all over America. They are typically in featureless, single-story buildings with no windows & little architectural character.



The Dollar General store in **Montevallo, AL** shows how a dollar store can be a handsome community asset, if it is sensitively designed and sited.



The Dollar Store in **Salisbury, NC** is a big improvement over the typical, off-the-shelf model. The use of brick & the inclusion of windows & awnings make a difference.



The Dollar Store in **Townsend, TN** puts an attractive façade on a simple metal building.



# Dollar General – Plainfield, NJ



**Bennington, VT's Dollar Store is pulled up to the sidewalk, has a handsome brick façade with faux windows & what appears to be a second story.**



The Dollar store in **Ridgeway, PA** is in a historic, downtown building, rather than a new building on the strip outside of town.





# Big Box Stores



Walmart: the Old Paradigm – a large featureless, single-story building surrounded by acres of asphalt, on a commercial strip, outside of town.



This Walmart in **Bennington, VT** does not look anything like the old grey-blue box. Walmart has become far more flexible when comes to exterior design & issues like siting, landscaping and signage.



# Walmart *Will* Adjust its Facade, but Only if You Ask



Westminister, CA



Madison, MS



Buda, TX



Anchorage, AK

The Walmart in **Long Beach, CA** shows how a big box store can be enhanced by landscaping, careful siting & creating a public realm outside the store.



The Walmart in **Washington, DC** is in a new, mixed-use building. 200 apartments are above the store. The parking is under the building. The store has real windows, escalators & other retailers on the street level.



**Washington, DC's 2nd Walmart is also in a mixed-use building with housing above the store and parking underneath. This development in the Fort Totten neighborhood helped revitalize a once under performing commercial corridor**



A 3rd urban Walmart in **Washington, DC** is built on a former used-car lot. The handsome building hides the parking on a lower-level underneath the store.





The new Walmart in **Bentonville, Arkansas** is downtown in an attractive, 2 story building. The parking is in deck behind the store.



In the past, Target, like other big box stores, was almost always located in large, single-story buildings, outside of town, surrounded by acres of parking.



**Gaithersburg MD's Target is in a 2-story building. This means it uses half as much land and fits better with the community. The city has an ordinance that says no commercial building can have a "footprint" larger than 80,000 sq. ft. Parking is in a deck across the street.**



Today, Target stores, like this one in **Minneapolis, MN** have changed both their setting & their design to embrace the growing urban marketplace. Tenants in the apartments above the Target can now sleep upstairs and shop downstairs.



The Target in **Stamford, CT** resembles an old-fashioned Department Store



This Target in **Portland OR** is in a former department store. Target has located several new stores in restored historic buildings, including the Louis Sullivan designed Carson Pirie Scott Building in Chicago.



**Sunnyvale, CA illustrates how a big box retailer, like Target, can be sensitively sited into a downtown.**



A new small format Target in **Cincinnati, OH** has a prominent street front entrance, large display windows and parking behind the building.





A typical Home Depot in “Anytown USA”



The **Chandler, AZ** Home Depot shows how the impact of a big box can be lessened by articulating the roofline, subduing the colors and adding landscaping & natural materials indigenous to the Southwest.



# Home Depot – Evergreen, CO



This Home Depot is in **Chicago's** Lincoln Park neighborhood. Note the two-story building, the glass façade, the hidden parking, and the building's orientation to the street.



This Home Depot in **Vancouver, BC** is typical of the new generation of urban big box stores. The building incorporates housing, a grocery store, a Home Depot and structured parking, all under one roof.



This Home Depot in **NYC** is in a mixed use, historic building. Because of the limited amount of parking, Home Depot has a home delivery service.



Lowes, like other big box companies, is creating new, smaller format, urban stores. This store is in **New York City**.



# Grocery Stores

## Old Paradigm

- Suburban Location
- Single Use Building
- Parking lot between store and the Street



## New Paradigm

- Urban & Suburban Location
- Mixed Use Building
- Parking Under, Behind, or on Top of Store





# Grocery Store – Anywhere USA



A grocery store in Middleton Hills, WI illustrates how moving parking to the interior of the block helps to preserve the streetscape and small-town feel.



This rendering of the South Point Grocery Store in Memphis, TN shows how to hide the parking.



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# Typical Suburban Grocery Store



# Urban Grocery Store – Atlanta, GA



# A Kroger Store in Main Street Friendly Building

Columbus, OH

Hides parking & meets the street



# Kroger – Grosse Pointe, MI



This Harris Teeter in **Alexandria, VA** is typical of the new generation of urban grocery stores. It is in a multi-story, mixed use building.  
The parking, entered at the far right, is under the building





A new **Piggly Wiggly** Store in Athens, Georgia. The store is on the first level. There are market rate apartments on the upper-levels. Parking is in deck behind the store.



# Publix – Ft Lauderdale, FL



# Safeway – Bethesda, MD



# Trader Joe's – Arlington, VA



Grocery companies are now even willing to reuse older buildings. This Giant Grocery in **Washington, DC** is in a once abandoned building. It is part of a successful mixed-use project in a revitalized urban neighborhood.



This Publix Super Market in **Columbia, SC** is another example of adaptive reuse. It is in a restored warehouse building in the historic Vista neighborhood.



# Other Types of Chains





**Auto Dealer**  
Anywhere USA

**Auto Dealer**  
Rhinebeck, NY







**Tractor Supply**  
Anywhere USA

**Tractor Supply**  
Westminster, MD





**Auto Zone**  
Anywhere USA

**Auto Zone**  
Charlottesville, VA





**Typical Jiffy Lube**  
Anywhere USA

**Better Jiffy Lube**  
Cape Cod, MA





**Typical Best Buy**  
Anywhere USA



**Better Best Buy**  
St. Louis Park, MN



**Typical Popeyes**  
Anywhere USA

**Better Popeyes**  
New Orleans, LA



# Questions & Discussion

# Better Building Techniques

- Architectural Design Review
- Corridor Overlays
- Leverage
- Architectural Design Guidelines
- Form Based Codes
- Education & Awards
- Just Ask

# Design Standards



- **Design standards** are a set of threshold requirements for building siting & design.
- Over 3000 US cities have some sort of legally enforceable architectural design standards.
- Design standards are common in historic districts, gateway corridors, downtowns, and resort communities.





# SEDONA

## LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

### Intent

Building design directly impacts the character and function of new development. The building design standards are intended to:

- a. Ensure that new building design is sensitive to and compatible with the Sedona built and natural environment, which is achieved through compliance with this Code;
- b. Ensure that multi-building or phased developments use compatible schemes of materials, colors, and architectural vocabulary to ensure consistency;
- c. Ensure building materials are durable and have low-maintenance requirements in the semi-arid environment;
- d. Encourage sustainable development by limiting the amount of resources necessary to construct and operate buildings and by designing buildings to be adaptable for multiple uses;
- e. Ensure that buildings are compatible in architectural style & proportionate to elements within the project site, adjacent & neighboring properties, & the area within which they are

# Design Review



Santa Barbara, CA -Condos



Sarasota, FL – Whole Foods



Alexandria, VA - CVS



Key West, FL – Burger King

# Corridor Overlays



Henrico County, VA



Franchise built in Overlay District

- Corridor overlays are a widely used tool for improving development along road corridors.
- Overlay zones are placed over existing zoning districts (commercial, residential, etc.)
- Regulations or incentives are attached to overlay districts to protect a specific resource or guide development within an area.
- Typical regulations control building design, height, signage, landscaping, setbacks, etc.

# Commercial Corridor - Before



# Commercial Corridor After



# Typical 7-11



People won't walk along a street like this.

More curb cuts , mean more accidents.

# 7-11 in Corridor Overlay



# Form Based Codes

- Regulate Building Form not Use
- Emphasize Appearance & Public Realm
- Focus on Visual Aspect of:
  - \* Building Height, Bulk & Materials
  - \* Facade Treatment
  - \* Windows to wall ratio
  - \* Relationship of Building to Street
  - \* Location of Parking

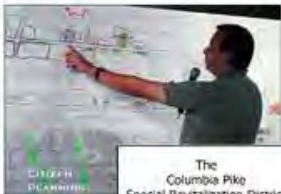


# Columbia Pike Form Based Code

## Columbia Pike Form Based Code Arlington, Virginia



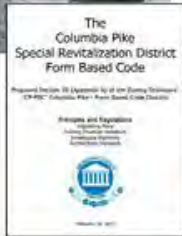
For nearly three years the citizens of Arlington County helped to define a concept for growth along Columbia Pike. Joining forces with the County and the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization (CPRO), the community is looking to transform Columbia Pike through a comprehensive effort. This effort, spelled out in the County adopted "Columbia Pike Initiative," sets forth a long-range vision to create a competitive and vibrant corridor by addressing issues such as economic and community development, land use and zoning, urban design, transportation, housing and open space.



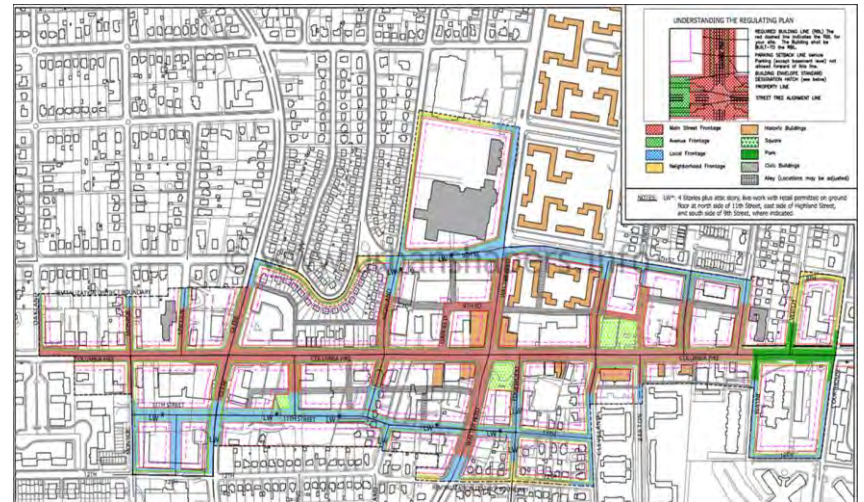
The Pike corridor is an organizing element for the future of the community. Smart redevelopment is a catalyst for social, economic, and physical improvements that affect the lives of all Arlington residents. But for the Pike to be functional, livable, and serve an ever-changing economy, the street must have a better-defined physical form. The resulting new code is the foundation for making this possible.

**The Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District Form Based Code** introduces livable approaches to redevelopment and revitalization throughout the Columbia Pike corridor. Instead of focusing on what is undesirable, Form Based Codes focus on the community's design vision. Basic rules specify a range of acceptable building types and locations, and welcome mixed-use development. After extensive public involvement, including an urban design charrette, the Form Based Code for Columbia Pike was developed to preserve the existing community character while improving the quality of new development along the corridor. The comprehensive effort sets forth a long-range vision to create a competitive and vibrant corridor and urban center.

Arlington County is one of the first jurisdictions in the nation to apply Form Based Code to revitalize existing older sectors; this is among the largest (if not the largest) application of Form Based Code in the country. The following pages describe the process that was followed in the development of the code - from conceptual visualizations, to detailed regulations to achieve the vision, in the form of written and visual standards for infill development.

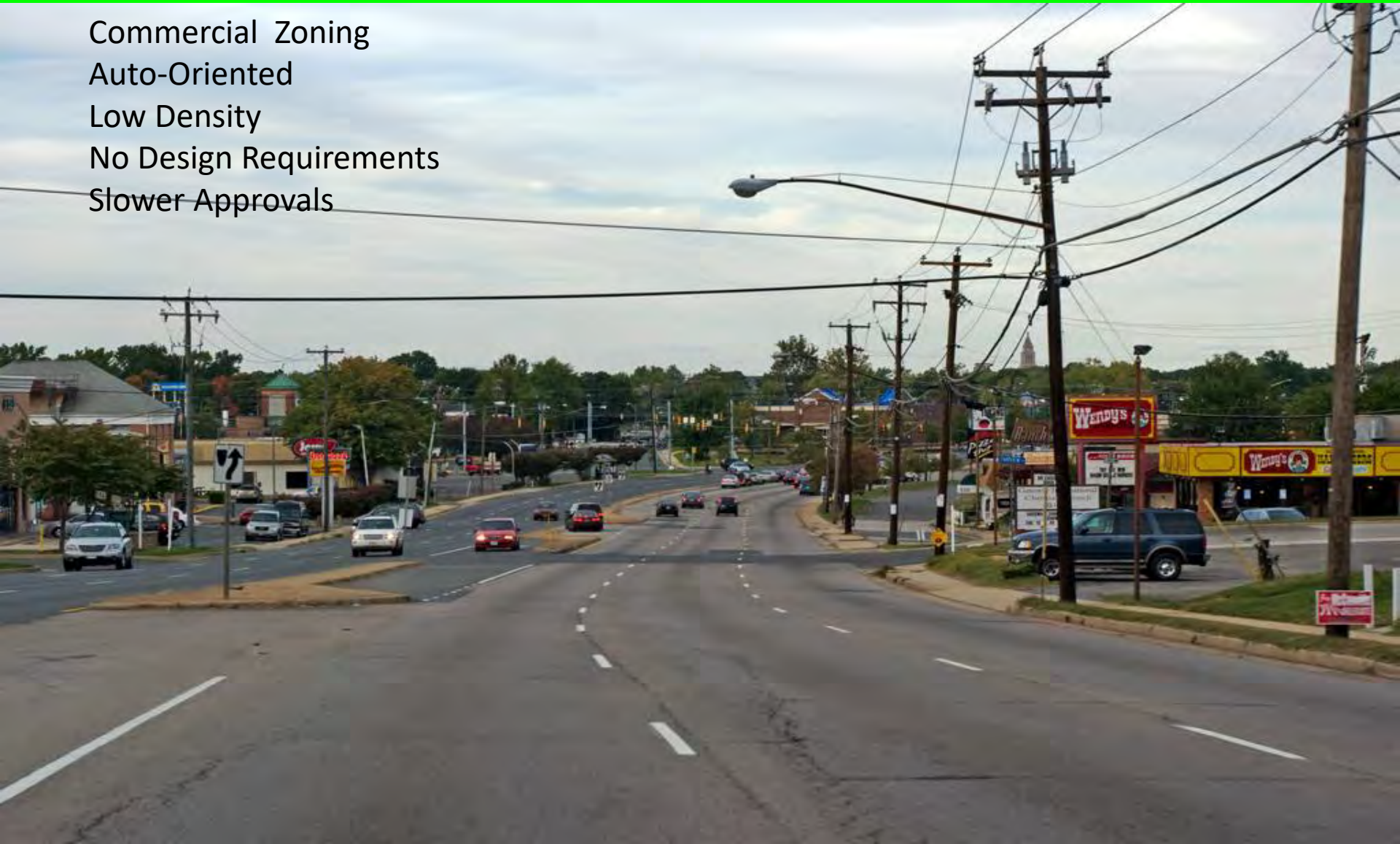


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# Columbia Pike - Before

Commercial Zoning  
Auto-Oriented  
Low Density  
No Design Requirements  
Slower Approvals



# Columbia Pike - After

Mixed Use Allowed  
Pedestrian & Transit Friendly  
Higher Densities  
Maximum & Minimum Heights  
Faster Approvals



# Advantages of Form-Based Codes

1. They are prescriptive (they state what you want), rather than proscriptive (what you don't want).
2. They allow citizens to see what will happen, giving them more comfort with the future and density.
3. They regulate development at the scale of an individual building or lot encouraging independent development by multiple owners rather than large mega projects.
4. They result in a diversity of architecture, materials, uses & ownership but within an agreed upon vision.
5. They work well in existing communities by defining and codifying a neighborhood's existing DNA. Vernacular architecture can be replicated promoting compatible infill.

# Typical Big Box Store – Setback from Road



# Build to Line - Charlotte, NC



# Typical Gas Station

Non-Descript Building  
Gas Pumps in Front  
Dangerous for Pedestrians



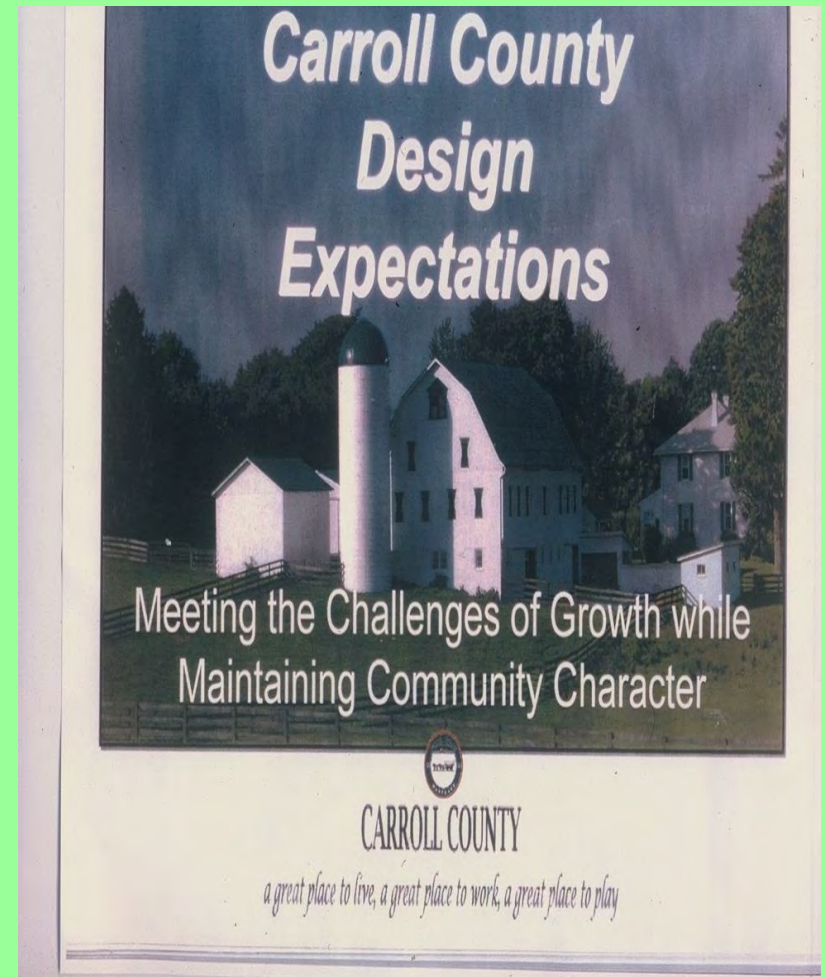
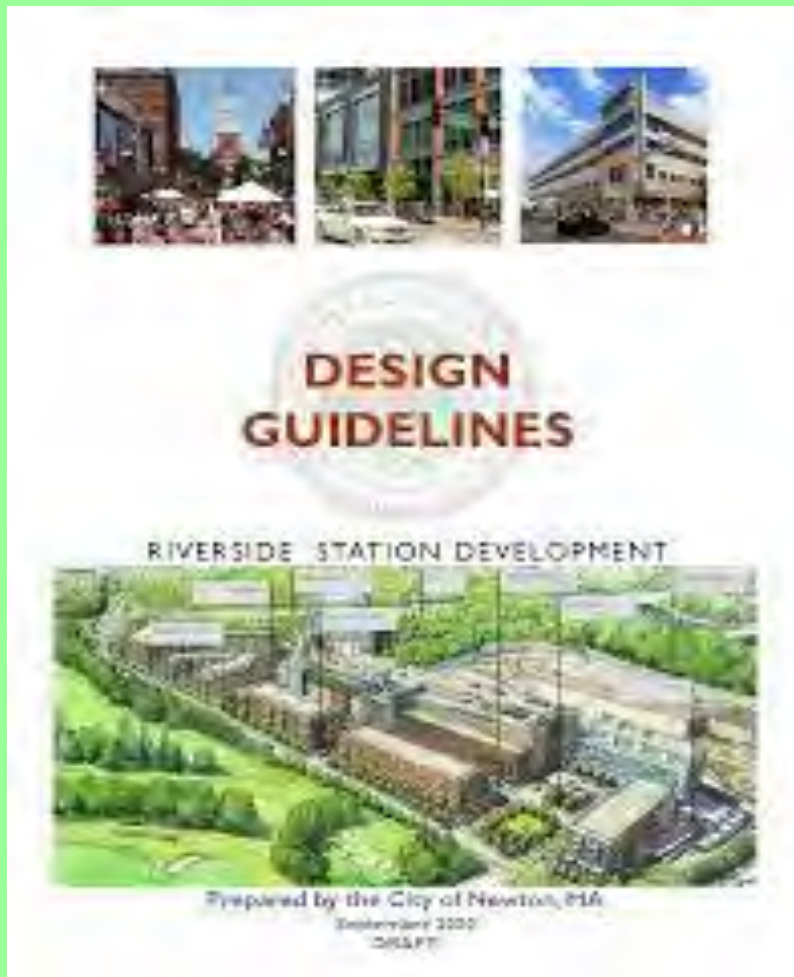
# Gas Station in Charleston, SC



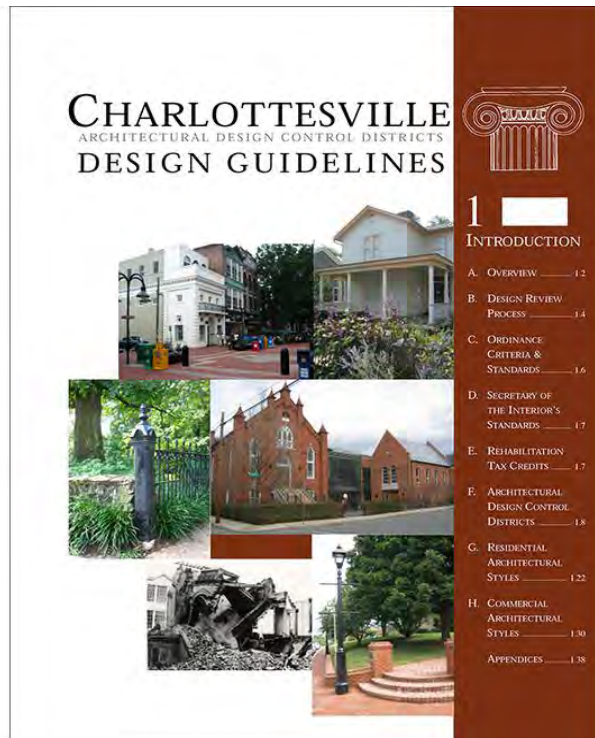
Handsome Building  
Pumps Behind  
Safer for Pedistrians



# Design Guidelines



# Design Guidelines



- **Design guidelines** are a set of discretionary statements or strong suggestions about how land should be developed, or buildings designed.
- Design guidelines work best when they are visually illustrated.
- Any city could set up a system of **voluntary compliance, but mandatory review.**

# Design Guidelines

To improve compliance with Design Guidelines, use:

- **Education** – provide visual examples of what you want & don't want
- **Incentives** – offer expedited permit review, density bonuses, reduced fees, or other incentives to encourage better siting, landscaping or design.
- **Awards** – publicly recognize companies and buildings that follow the guidelines.
- **Leverage** – chains often want a variance, a rezoning, an alley closing or something else. This gives towns leverage to get something in return.

# Typical Chain Motel



# Chain Motel – Goshen, IN



# Proposed CVS



# CVS Built



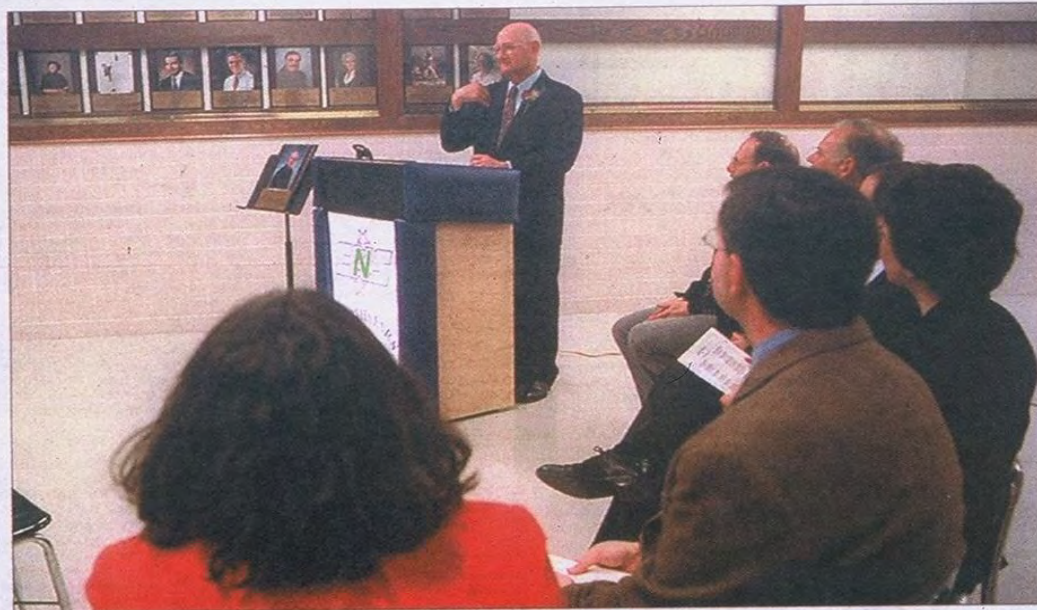
# Leverage

The Post Standard

## Making Way For Wal-Mart

Developer asks for help on roadwork. Plans call for making improvements to Route 11.

Page 3





McDonald's proposed their typical suburban style building in an historic **Richmond, VA** neighborhood. They revised their original design plans in exchange for a zoning "variance" that would permit a drive-thru.



Taco Bell bought a house next to this old restaurant. They needed a rezoning to use the residential site for a new restaurant. **Ft Collins, CO** conditioned the rezoning on adaptive reuse of the house.



# Taco Bell – Ft. Collins, CO



# Just Ask





Madison, GA

Hardees – Red Wing, MN



# Hardees – Asheville, NC



# A Prototype Fast Mart





# Fast Mart - Spotsylvania, VA



The author met with the building owner and his architect. They changed their standard design after being asked to do so and after we explained why it was important given the sensitive location of the service station





Mobil

W  
& T  
MILK &  
CRO  
Mo

# Lessons Learned

- Any structure built for infinite replication will fail to provide the sense of place all communities need to thrive.
- You have options. Communities with higher expectations get better results.
- Communities that say no to poor quality, formulaic development, will always get better development in its place.
- Chains may not like to change from their formulaic buildings, but they will do whatever is necessary to be in an economically profitable location. If the revenue potential of a given location is sufficient, chains will adapt their prototype as necessary to locate there.
- The character of your community is more important than some corporation's preferences.
- It's always better to show national companies what you want, rather than just saying what you don't want.
- Communities that are desperate for anything, will get the worst of everything.

# Additional Resources

- **Design Review: Guiding Better Development**, Mark Hinshaw and Marya Morris, PAS Report 591, American Planning Association, 2018
- **Meeting the Big Box Challenge: Planning, Design & Regulatory Strategies**, Jennifer Evans Conley, PAS Report, 537, American Planning Association, 2006
- **Rural By Design**, Randall Arendt, APA Press, 2015
- **Saving Face: How Corporate Franchise Design Can Respect Community Character**, Ronald Lee Fleming, American Planning Association, 2001
- **Street Graphics and the Law**, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Daniel Mandelker, John Baker & Richard Crawford, PAS Report 580, American Planning Association, 2015

# Thank You!

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