

DRAFT URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Takoma Langley Crossroads Sector Plan

January 12, 2012



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Planning Framework

The guidelines under review today address *urban design concepts* that *characterize* the sector plan area:

- They provide detail on specific topics touched on in the Sector Plan
- The guidelines balance broad urban design concepts with specific design issues of Sector Plan area
- They form the framework for assessing specific projects brought to the planning board for the Sector Plan area

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Background

- 2010-2011 - Draft design guidelines developed by MNCPPC
- Winter 2011 - City of Takoma Park conducted urban design task force
- June 30, 2011 - Staff presentation to the Planning Board
- July/August 2011- Draft guidelines posted for review
- Fall 2011 - Revision of guidelines in collaboration with City of Takoma Park
- January 12, 2012 - Present revised guidelines to City of Takoma Park

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Explanation of Process

- 1) Sector Plan comes first - Design Guidelines follow
- 2) The design guidelines support and are informed by the Sector Plan

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Changes

Revised Table of Contents

Context

Vision

Gateways and **Termini**

Streets and the Pedestrian Experience

Open Spaces

Special Features

Good Neighbor Practices

The Core

Edges

Resources

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Context

The Takoma-Langley Crossroads (TLC) area:

- A densely populated, urbanizing suburban community of starter homes, garden apartments, apartment towers and strip shopping centers.
- Centrally located along Maryland's International Corridor
- Home to one of Maryland's most diverse populations)
- Adjacent to Prince George's County, the area has a distinct international character
- Serves as a gateway community for immigrants and other persons new to the region



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Vision

Takoma/Langley Crossroads will be a transit-oriented, pedestrian-friendly area that celebrates and builds on the cultural diversity of the Crossroads community.

- Elements that define the vision:
- Gateway
- Streets and Open Spaces
- Good Neighbor Practices
- Core
- Edges



Takoma Langley Crossroads today



Takoma Langley Crossroads tomorrow

Gateways & View Termini

- Primary gateways
- Secondary gateways
 - An architecturally significant building
 - A civic building or space
 - Iconic art
- A Pedestrian gateway
 - Streetscaping
 - Place Markers



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Guidelines

View Termini

Marks the end of a vista

- An architecturally significant building or element
- A natural feature
- A civic building or civic space
- Iconic Art



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Treatments of Gateways and View Termini



Gateways - the buildings above are examples of building that mark a gateway



View Termini - the buildings above, located at the end of a street, terminate the view down a street

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A civic building or space



Green spaces or plazas when integrated with a public building and/or include iconic art, act as gateways



A public building can act as view terminus and a gateway

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Iconic Art

- Large scale - visible from a distance
- Produces a striking, visceral or emotional effect on the viewer
- Permanence - it is intended to be a long-term installation
- Uniqueness - It has a quality of individuality that relates to its place



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Place Markers

- Symbolic structure
- Piers or columns
- Fountains
- Artwork
- Arches or canopies



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Street Corners



Architectural Feature



Two sided facade



Signage Corner



Primary and secondary facade



Corner Entrance



Corner Entrance and Signage



Unique facade treatment

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Streets and the Pedestrian Experience

- Pedestrian-friendly Grid
- Pedestrian Realm
- Defining the Street Edge
- Build-to Lines
- Building Form
- CPTED
- Parking
- Active Street Wall
- Building Signage
- Private Streets
- Green Streets
- International Corridor



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Pedestrian-Friendly Grid

A network of streets created with short, walkable blocks provides several routes to and from a destination. People who live in neighborhoods with a pedestrian friendly grid walk more, drive less and have easier access to transit.

Short, walkable blocks

The Plan recommends short, 250-500 foot long blocks to establish a human scale environment that is easy and pleasant to negotiate on foot and that provides a travel alternative to the car.



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Pedestrian Realm

- the interface between the building and the pedestrian realm
- the interface between the auto realm and the pedestrian realm



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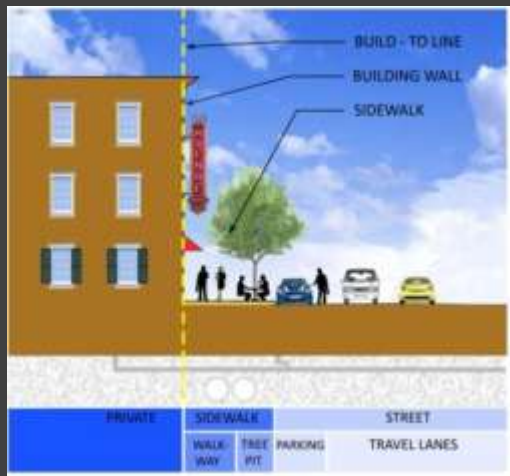
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Defining the Street Edge

The public realm is defined by the orientation of buildings to the street.

- Create defined corridors by placing buildings along an established *build-to line*.
- Where CRT zoned properties confront existing residentially zoned properties across the street, allow front yards/green space between the build-to line and the proposed building facade.



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Build – to Lines



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Building Form

- Vary building heights to achieve more visual interest
- Use distinctive building materials
- Create eyes on the street with windows and doors
- Strive for the imaginative use of traditional or contemporary styles that evoke a look or feel.



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CPTED: Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

Environmental design principles that seek to influence offender decisions by affecting the built and social environment. The principles include:

Natural Surveillance

Natural Access Control

Territorial Reinforcement

Maintenance



Balconies provide natural surveillance over streets and alleys



Clear point of entry that differentiates between public and private



Building elements define public and private spaces



Maintained properties express a sense of ownership

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Active street wall

Activate the street level along streets and public use spaces by locating uses , including the following:

- sidewalk cafes
- main entryways to buildings and residences
- retail uses

Parking

Parking but should be located on-street, in structures internal to a block, or in structures lined with street activating uses.

- Vehicles should access parking structures from alleys or side streets where possible
- Line parking garages with retail
- Allow on-street parking to help slow traffic and provide parking choices



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Building Signage

- artistic, distinctive
- an integral element of the building facade, such as a sign band
- complements the architecture - does not obstruct the architectural features.



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Private Streets

Private streets (and sidewalks) look and feel similar to public streets, but they can be more flexible in dimension, design and programming. They can:

- Be closed to allow the temporary expansion of the pedestrian realm be paved in special materials
- have depressed curbs have street furnishings distinct from surrounding public streets
- have underground utilities



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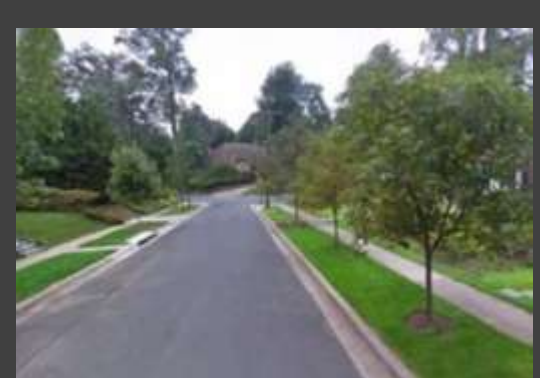
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Green Streets

A green street right-of-way gives priority to pedestrian circulation and open space and provides attractive, environmentally-friendly connections.



Green street treatments on commercial streets



Green street treatments for residential streets

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International Corridor

Create a unifying design theme with design elements that celebrate the community's history.

There should be high quality design elements that preserve and enhance the corridor's ethnic and cultural diversity

Design features could include:

- Signage
- Art
- Streetscaping



Open Space

Open spaces are a major part of the public realm in the Plan area. They will be both public and private, ranging in size from as small as a few thousand square feet up to 1 acre.

- Located in areas where two or more pedestrian paths converge.
- In the case of the civic green, located where the future Purple Line, two or three pedestrian routes (sidewalks), mid-block connections and automobile routes all converge.
- enlivened with public amenities
- activated by proximity to retail and residential uses
- Employing CPTED principals to ensure a space that will feel safe for all users.



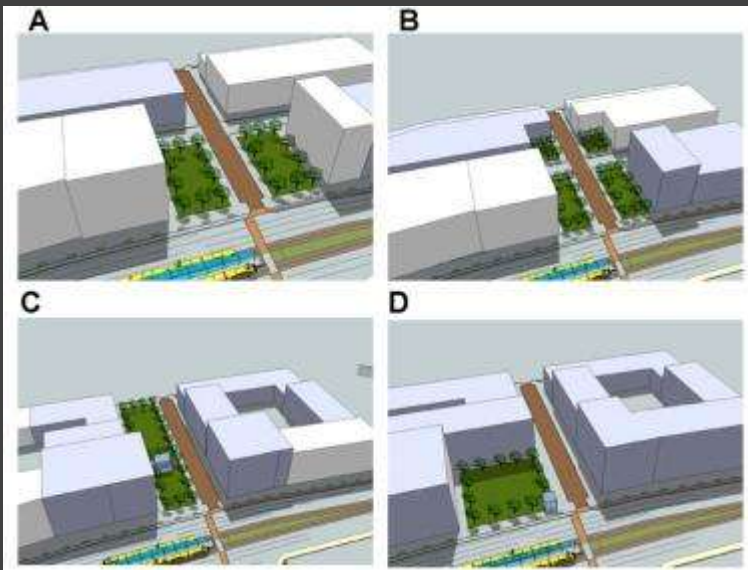
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Civic green

The green will function as a major outdoor public gathering space (Plan pages 26 and 52) with the following attributes:

- programmable
- approximately 1/2 to 1 acre
- includes significant lawn area (the proportion to be established at time of development)
- includes art



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Neighborhood common

The common will act as an outdoor living room
(Plan pages 26 and 53) and:

- provide opportunities for passive recreation and public interaction (gardens, fitness nodes and kiosks)
- be 1/2 to 1 acre
- be primarily green with shade trees, lawn areas and extensive planting
- open onto a public right-of-way
- be easily visible and accessible to adjacent buildings

include artistic and functional seating areas,
public art, and other amenities



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Small urban spaces

a series of these will act as intimate gathering spaces within major mixed-use developments (Plan, page 26) and:

- be intentional
- be activated
- include street furniture/seating
- combine landscape and hardscape
- include culturally significant artwork
- open onto a street



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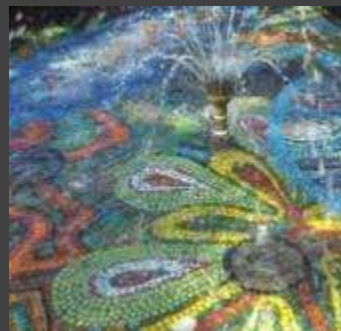
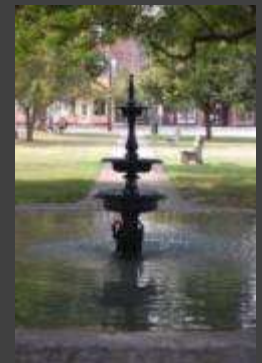
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Special Features

Special features are those unique elements that add character and identity to a place. They include fountains, small scale artwork, thematic paving, signage and furnishings

Fountains



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Publicly displayed art can celebrate local culture or history by emphasizing the culture and history that otherwise remains hidden. It often becomes a focus of civic pride as well as a landmark that gives identity to a place (see iconic art).

Artwork



There are three types of artwork that work in an urban context. Iconic art, described under Gateways and Termini becomes a symbol for place. The other two types work at a smaller street level or pedestrian scale:

- embedded art is incorporated into the existing structure of buildings and streetscape.
- Transitory art, often in varied media or seasonally inspired, is displayed for a limited time.



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Thematic Streetscaping

- Specialty paving
- Street furnishings
- Decorative paving inlays
- Directional signage



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City of Takoma Park Way-finding and Signage



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Street Furnishings

- outdoor furniture that combines art and function
- Lamppost banners
- innovative paving
- trash and recycling containers
- Planters and hanging baskets-(appropriate where maintained by a private entity)

The city of Takoma Park has specific styles of furniture for their residential and commercial areas.



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Good Neighbor Practices

KEY

1 - HVAC units located on roof

2 - Screen Dumpsters

3 - Access to parking and loading areas located off of alleys

4 - Sidewalks wide enough to accommodate three pedestrians walking side by side

5 - Place drive-thrus behind buildings



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Guidelines

Good Neighbor Practices

KEY

6 - Screening between parking and sidewalks

7 - Consolidate garbage and recycling

8 - Private courts and entryways should be visible from public spaces

9 - Access to parking/loading off of areas shared by adjacent properties



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Screening between parking and sidewalks

1



1A



A few examples of inappropriate screening materials:



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Locate HVAC units of roof



Screen Dumpsters



Consolidate trash and recycling



Private entryways should be visible from sidewalks



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Place drive-thru behind building and screen from street

6



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Place drive-thru behind building and screen from street

7



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The Core

The plan's core area is a regional destination due to its concentration of internationally diverse shops and the largest number of storefronts and the area's highest traffic volume.

It is at the core where the gateway, view termini, pedestrian experience, open spaces and amenities should be experienced at their greatest intensity.



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The Core as a whole-

- Activate the street with wide sidewalks
- Add on-street retail where appropriate
- Use specialty paving
- Include amenities or special features such as fountains, special paving, artwork or street furnishings
- Create public use spaces that are visible, defined, usable, inviting, interconnected and activated
- Connect public use spaces with pedestrian paths

The Crossroads (University and New Hampshire Avenue)

- Eliminate "hot rights" at the intersection
- Pull building edges up to the street (the build-to line)
- Create a Gateway
- Mark one of more corners with iconic art
- Include a public plaza on a corner



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Concentrate Development at Core

The Sector Plan recommends concentrating new development with the greatest densities and the tallest buildings at the core/purple lines station. From here development should step down as it moves away from the Core toward existing residentially zoned properties.



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Edges

Transitions should be ensured through:

- clustering higher density development around transit stations
- stepping down building heights
- Sidewalks with a landscape strip between the sidewalk and the curb rather than tree boxes



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Step down building heights

Building heights in CT zones adjacent to residential communities are to be limited to 40-45 feet so as not to overwhelm their neighbors.

- Limit height of buildings on Kennewick Avenue to 40 feet for the first 25 feet of a building's depth
- Limit height on Anne Street to 40 feet for the first 25 feet of a building's depth
- Limit building heights on Hammond Street to 40 feet for the first 25 feet of a building's depth.



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Appropriately scaled streetscape at boundaries

On commercial development abutting the New Hampshire Gardens neighborhood provide streetscapes that tie the new development with existing residential neighbors; including:

- appropriately scaled pedestrian realm (Sidewalk, tree panel and bike paths where appropriate)
- architectural style that improves upon the neighborhood
- appropriate landscaping to soften transitions
on-street parking



Anne Street

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Guidelines



Hammond Street

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Guidelines



Kennewick Avenue

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Next Steps

Resources

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

<http://www.cpted.net/>

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design

http://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTandards_index.htm

Montgomery County

Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 59

http://www.amlegal.com/montgomery_county_md/

Montgomery County Code

http://www.amlegal.com/montgomery_county_md/

Chapter 19 Erosions, Sediment Control and Stormwater Management

Chapter 22A Forest Conservation-Trees

Chapter 47 Vendors

Chapter 49 Streets and Roads

Chapter 50 Subdivision

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Next Steps

DPS Outdoor Café Seating Guide

<http://permittingservices.montgomerycountymd.gov/permitting/pdf/OutdoorCafeSeating.pdf>

DPS Sidewalk Vendor Operation and License

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/council/pdf/SCANNED_DOCS/20070227_1661.pdf

DPS Building Construction – Building Codes & Standards

<http://permittingservices.montgomerycountymd.gov/dpstmpl.asp?url=/permitting/bc/nfbldc.ap>

DOT Pedestrian Safety

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dottmpl.asp?url=/Content/dot/dir/pedsafety/index.asp>

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

M-NCPPC Takoma/Langley Sector Plan

http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/takoma_langley_crossroads/documents/TakomaLangleyCrossroadsplanningboarddraft_web.pdf

M-NCPPC County Bikeways Functional Master Plan

http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/transportation/bikeways/A_A/contents.shtm

M-NCPPC Development Manual

http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/development/development_manual/index.shtm

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Next Steps

M-NCPPC Commercial Residential Zone Overview

http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/development/com_res_zones.shtm

Prince George's County

Prince George's TLC Sector Plan

Pedestrian Access and Mobility Study

<http://www.pgplanning.org/Assets/Planning/Programs+and+Projects/Community+Plans/Takoma+Langley+Crossroads+Sector+Plan/TLC+PedStudy.pdf>

International Corridor Legacy Study

<http://www.pgplanning.org/Assets/Planning/Programs+and+Projects/Community+Plans/Takoma+Langley+Crossroads+Sector+Plan/ICC2003.pdf>

International Corridor Issue Identification Study

http://www.pgplanning.org/Assets/Planning/Programs+and+Projects/Community+Plans/Takoma+Langley+Crossroads+Sector+Plan/international_corridor.pdf

International Corridor Market Study

<http://www.pgplanning.org/Assets/Planning/Programs+and+Projects/Takoma+Langley+Crossroads+Sectional+Map+Amendment/ICC+Market+Study.pdf>

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Next Steps

- January 26, 2012 - Present guidelines to Planning Board
- February 2012 - PHED committee hearing on Takoma Langley Crossroads Sector Plan