



LOFT

COMMERCIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

for South Forsyth



OVERVIEW OF THE DESIGN STANDARDS

WHAT DO THEY REGULATE?

The South Forsyth Commercial Design Standards aim to elevate the quality and durability of commercial construction. The enhancement of architectural appearance and expansion of landscaped amenity zones form a critical element of the code requirements.

The standards were adopted in December of 2020 after a series of public meetings that allowed the community to give input on the standards and provide feedback on draft regulations.

What is regulated?

The design standards regulate a number of aspects of development, including building and site design, pedestrian walkways, landscaping, parking, specific use requirements, and more.

Where do the regulations apply?

The map at the right shows the specific area within which these regulations apply. Other existing regulations and design overlays within this area continue to apply in addition to these standards.

What types of development are regulated?

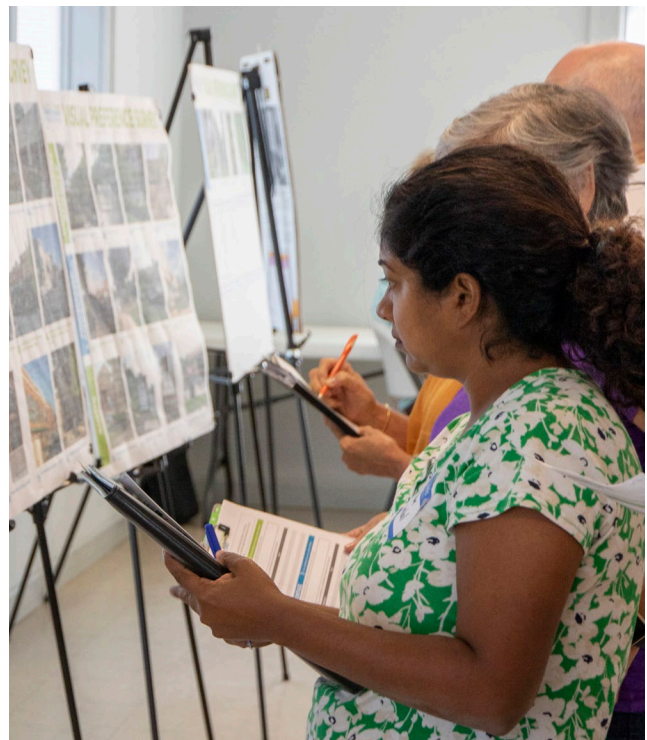
All new commercial development in South Forsyth is required to follow these standards, with the exception of clubs/lodges, places of worship, colleges, and schools when not contained within a commercial retail center. (See Section 12-13.4(A) for detailed exemptions.)

Do the regulations apply to renovations?

Redeveloped or expanded commercial sites or buildings where more than 25% of the original building or site is impacted have to follow the new standards. All existing development will be grandfathered and not required to meet the new requirements unless it exceeds this threshold.

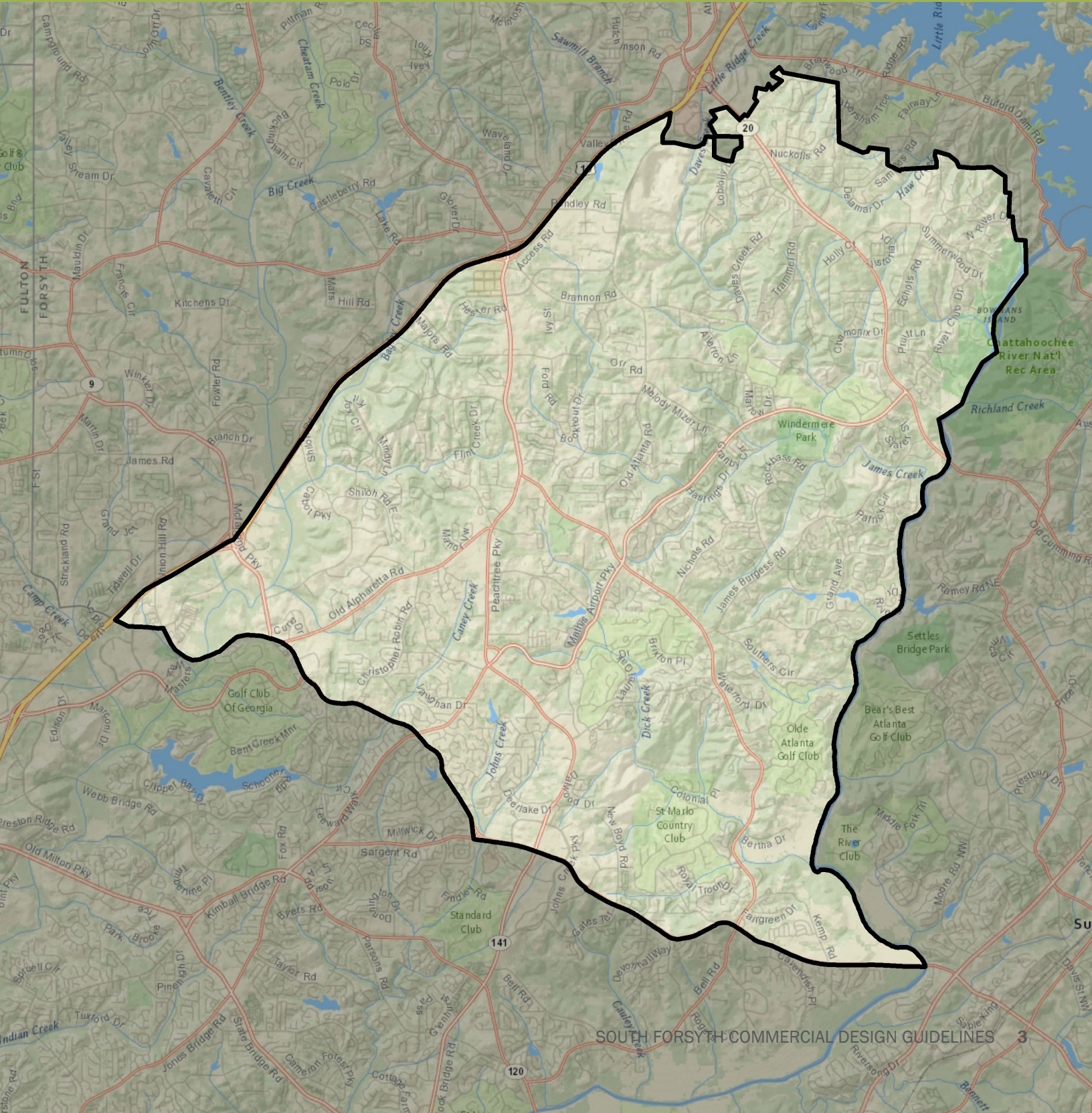
What is the purpose of this document?

These design guidelines are intended as a companion to the design standards and serve to illustrate and show examples of appropriate ways to implement the regulations. In the event of a conflict between this document and the regulations, the regulations control.



WHERE THESE STANDARDS APPLY

ALL COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH FORSYTH



LANDSCAPING & PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

SECTION 12-13.5

REFER TO THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE FOR DETAILED REQUIREMENTS

Zones of varying widths are required adjacent to the right of way, between the parking lot and against the building. All zones are located on private property, not within public right-of-way. These zones integrate trees, shrubs, ornamental plants, and benches.



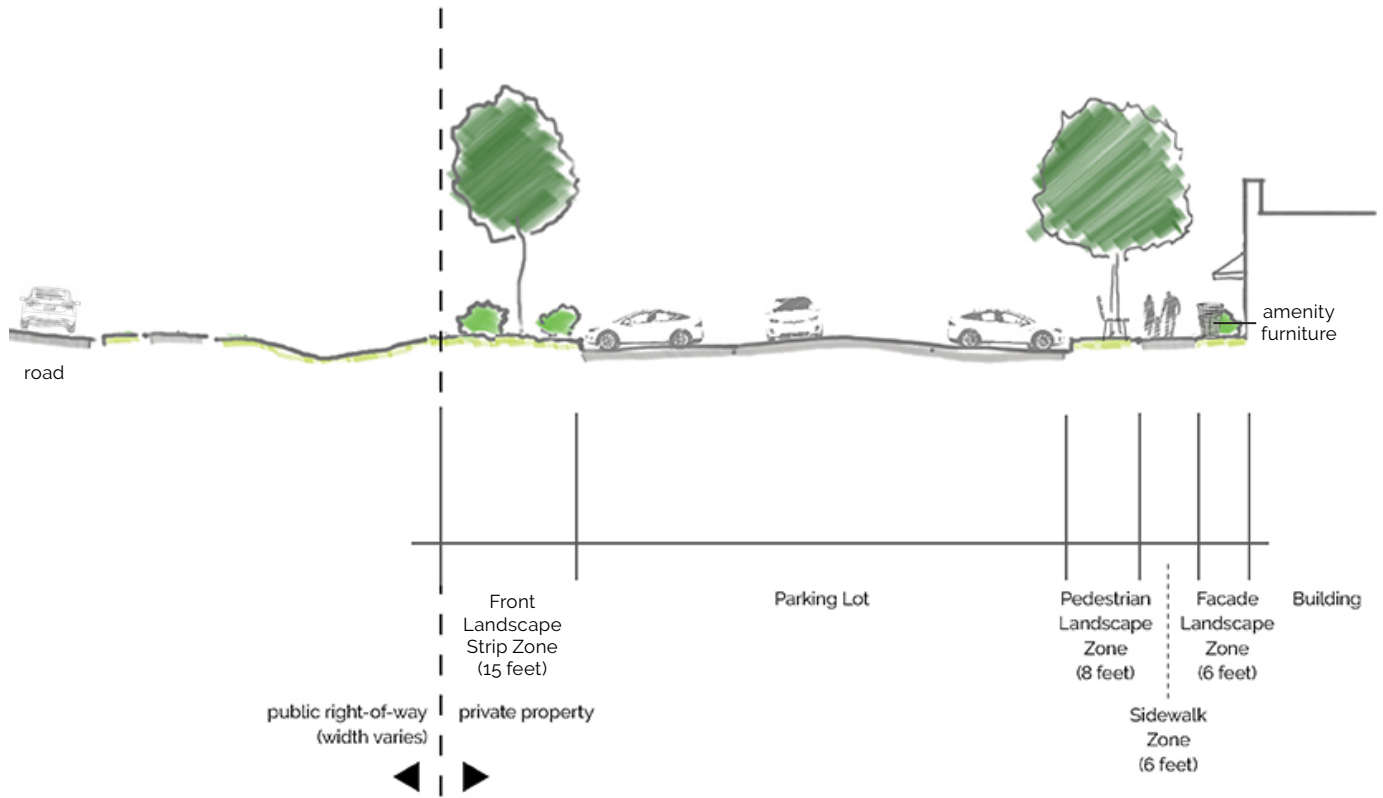
image courtesy Jim Hancock

Minimum Zone Width Requirements

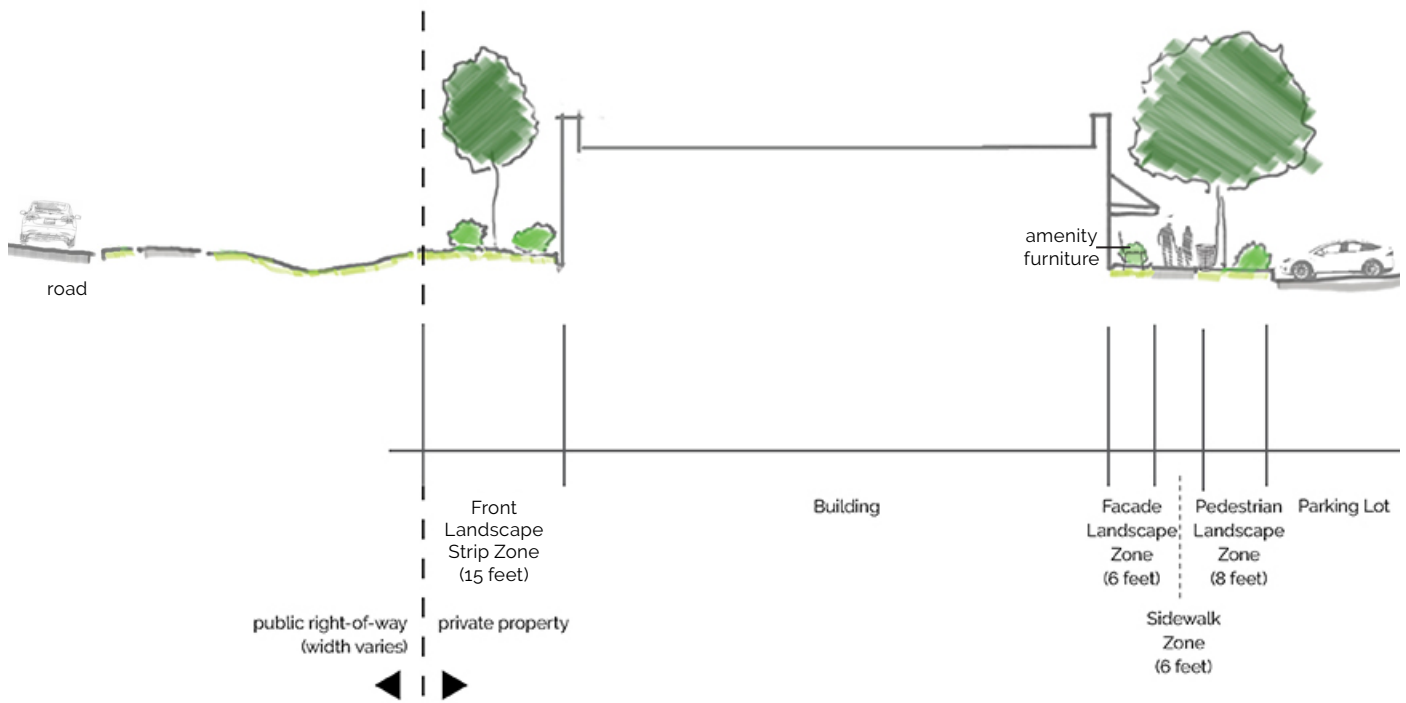
Roadway Width	Front Landscape Strip Zone	Pedestrian Landscape Zone	Sidewalk Zone	Facade Landscape Zone (required if Pedestrian Zone < 14 feet wide)
≥ 4 lanes	15 feet	8 feet	6 feet	6 feet
< 4 lanes	10 feet	8 feet	6 feet	6 feet



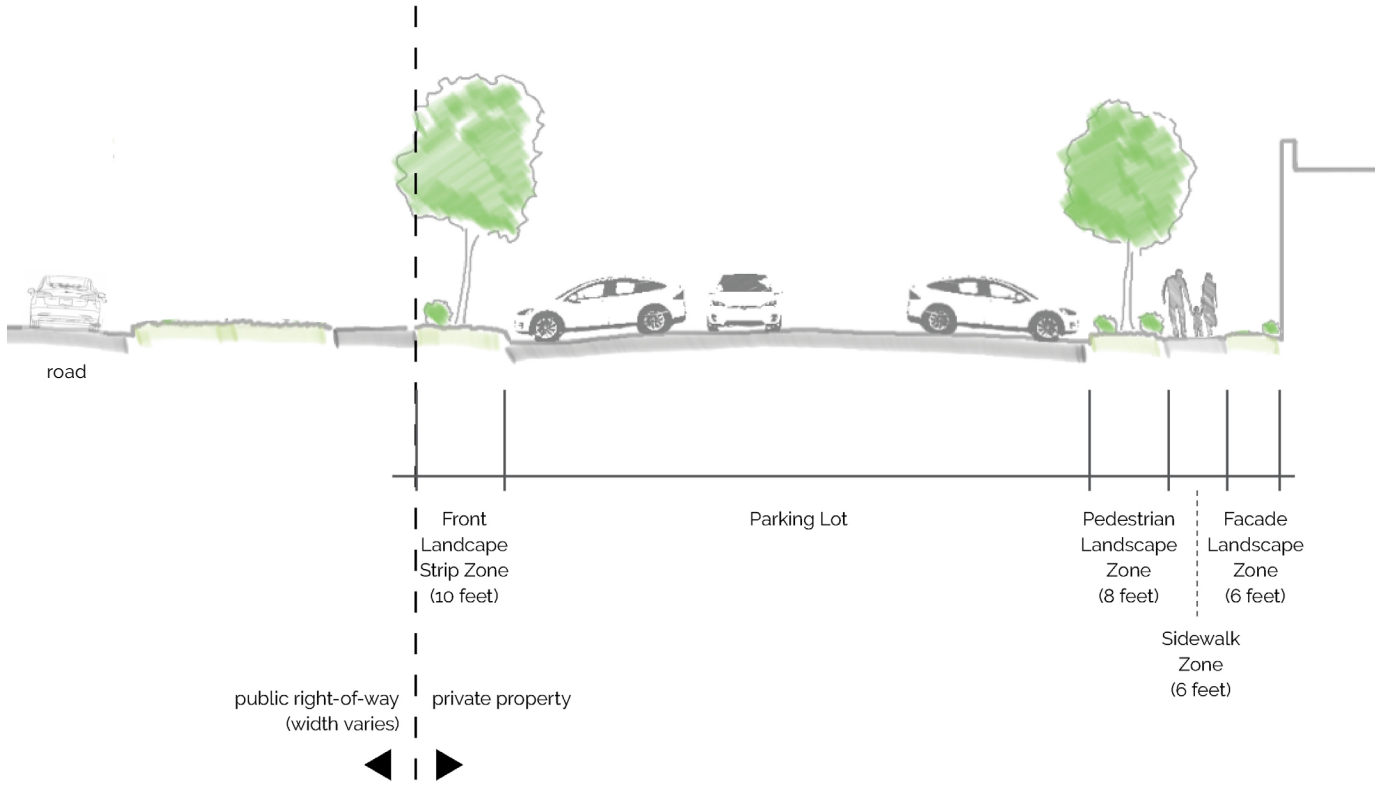
Along Roads with 4+ Lanes (where parking is in front of building)



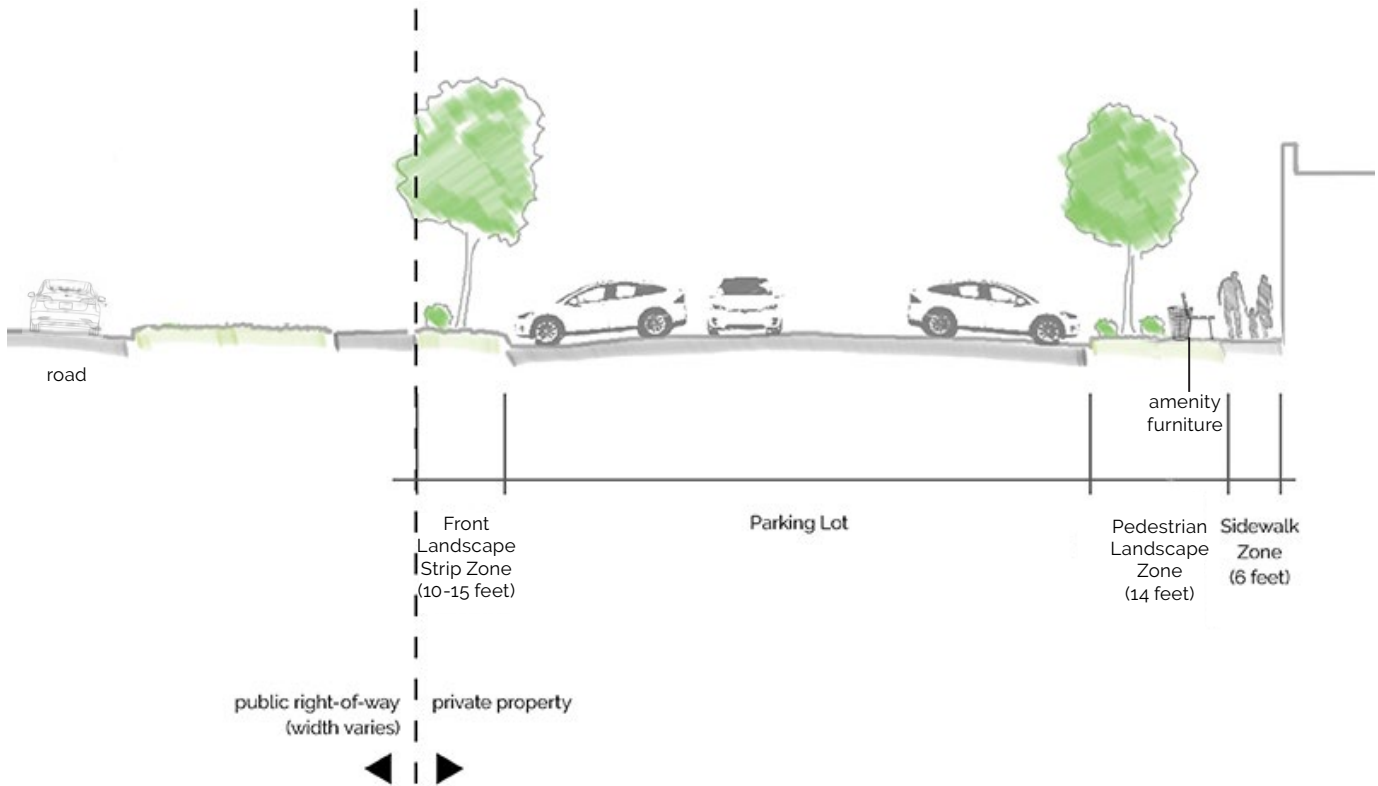
Along Roads with 4+ Lanes (where parking is behind building)



Along Roads with Less Than 4 Lanes



Option for Expanded Pedestrian Landscape Zone



PARKING LOTS

SECTIONS
12-13.6-7

REFER TO THE UNIFIED
DEVELOPMENT CODE FOR
DETAILED REQUIREMENTS

A number of requirements are provided related to parking lots, bicycles, and transportation. The goal of the short-term parking spaces is to allow space for deliveries, rideshare, and autonomous vehicles.



BEAUTIFICATION AREA

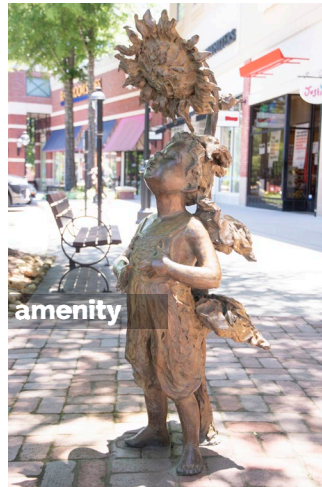
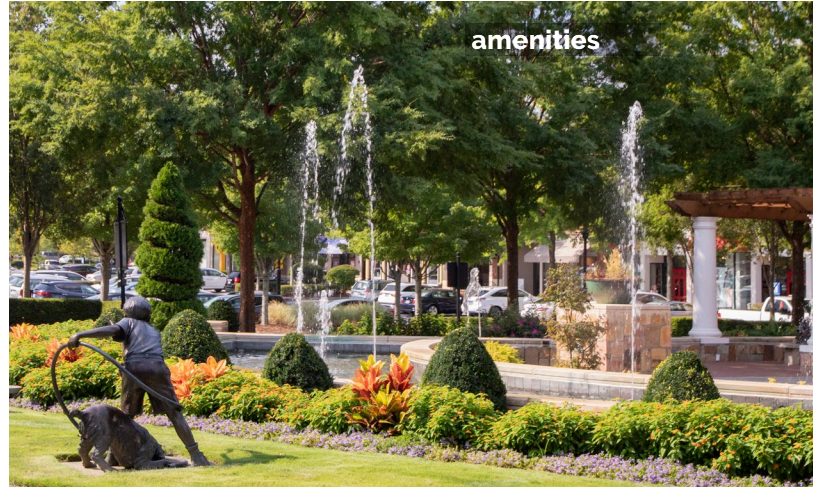
SECTION 12-13.8

REFER TO THE UNIFIED
DEVELOPMENT CODE FOR
DETAILED REQUIREMENTS

A publicly accessible amenity area is required and must be located between the parking lot and the building. It must include two of the following three elements:

- Enhanced landscape area (must cover at least 3% of site area and include a mix of shrubs and landscaping)
- Fountain, drinking fountain, sculpture or other public art, or decorative hardscape feature
- Other amenities (subject to County approval)

Corner sites (at the intersection of two roads) must provide an additional 1,000 square feet of enhanced landscape area, and must provide a fountain, sculpture or other public art, or entrance feature.



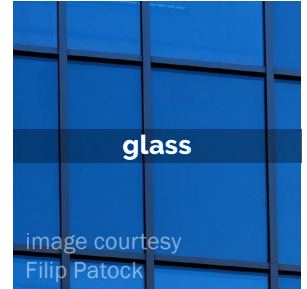
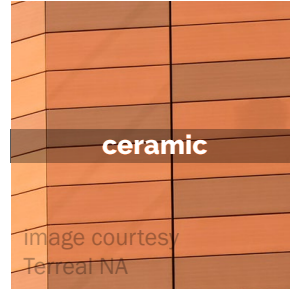
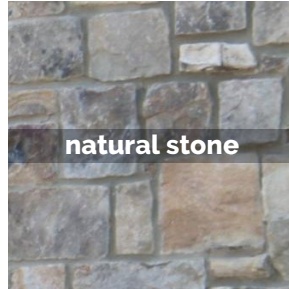
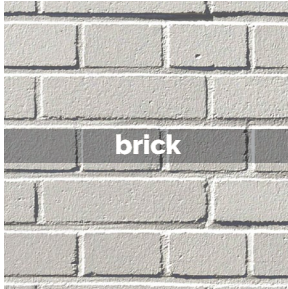
FACADE MATERIALS

SECTION 12-13.9

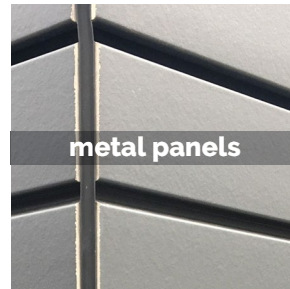
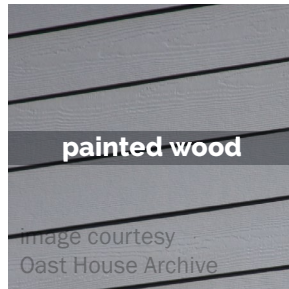
REFER TO THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE FOR DETAILED REQUIREMENTS

Only the following facade materials are allowed. Brick must be at least 1¾ inch thick and wrap the corner of the building. The facade must not be more than 65% glass.

Required 75% Minimum Each Facade



Allowed up to 25% Maximum for Each Facade



OTHER ARCHITECTURAL REQUIREMENTS

SECTIONS
12-13.10-12
REFER TO THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE FOR DETAILED REQUIREMENTS

A number of requirements are provided for building facades, roofs, and windows. Building entrances must be emphasized with two of the following:

- Exaggeration of form, such as enlarged arches or columns
- Change in facade materials
- Recesses/projections of at least 4 inches
- Tower, awning, or change in roof height
- Planters or wing walls (including seating)

Gutters made of vinyl or other plastic are not allowed.

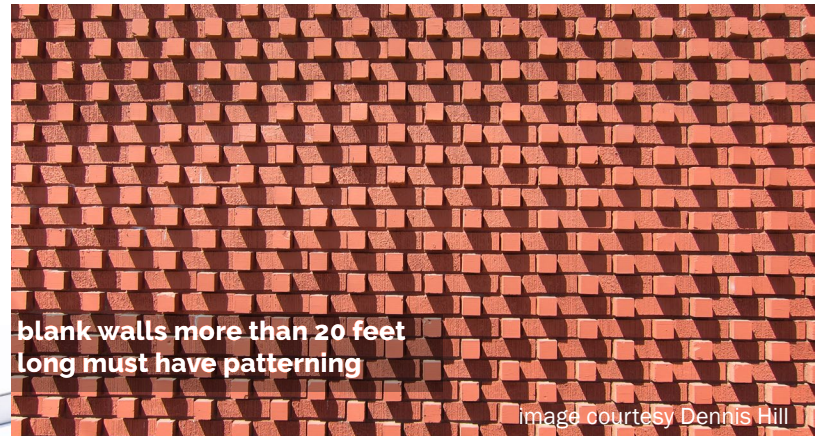
Serving windows may not face the road.

At least 45% of the area of each facade that faces the road must be windows.

parapet wall or screen required to hide rooftop equipment

cornice with overhang and 2-foot-tall parapet required on low-slope roofs

at least 45% of the facade area must be windows



16-inch facade offset required every 60 feet

entrance must be emphasized



SCREENING

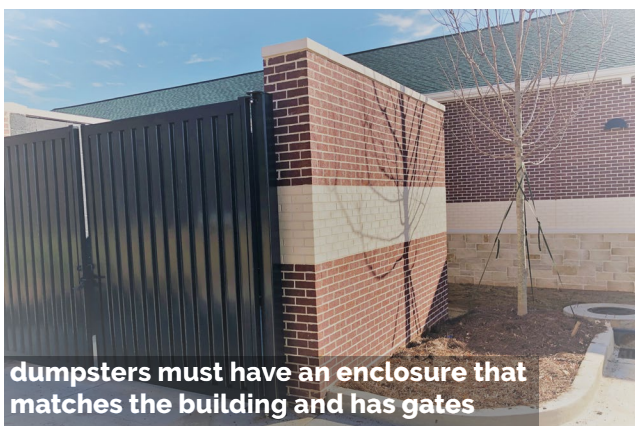
SECTION 12-13.13

REFER TO THE UNIFIED
DEVELOPMENT CODE FOR
DETAILED REQUIREMENTS

Any outdoor merchandise displays must be 90% screened from view with walls or trees and shrubs. Automotive parts and materials, outdoor kennels, and pre-made structures such as sheds and gazebos are prohibited from outdoor display.



Outdoor storage of materials and ground level mechanical equipment must be screened from view. Loading areas and service bays are not allowed to face a public road.



Vending machines and lockers must meet the following requirements:

- Maximum of 1 unit for every 90 feet of frontage
- No unit may be more than 86 inches wide, 40 inches deep, or 84 inches tall
- Must either match the color of the building, be screened by a fence or wall, or be located on the side or rear of the building



LIGHTING & SIGNS

SECTIONS
12-13.14-15

REFER TO THE UNIFIED
DEVELOPMENT CODE FOR
DETAILED REQUIREMENTS

Monument signs must be architecturally compatible with building(s).

window signs must be no larger than 20%
of the window where they are posted



electronic signs allowed
only at fuel stations



image courtesy
makelessnoise

all light fixtures
must be full cutoff



neon and faux neon
signs are prohibited



led string lights prohibited
around windows, awnings,
and rooflines

image courtesy Robert Couse-Baker

12 SOUTH FORSYTH COMMERCIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES



gas station canopies
must use recessed lights

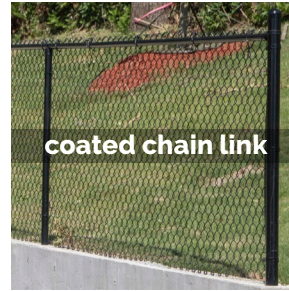
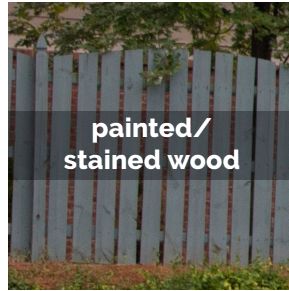
FENCES & WALLS

SECTIONS
12-13.16-17

REFER TO THE UNIFIED
DEVELOPMENT CODE FOR
DETAILED REQUIREMENTS

Coated chain link fencing is only allowed where not facing the road, or along the rear of the property with screening, but not against residential.

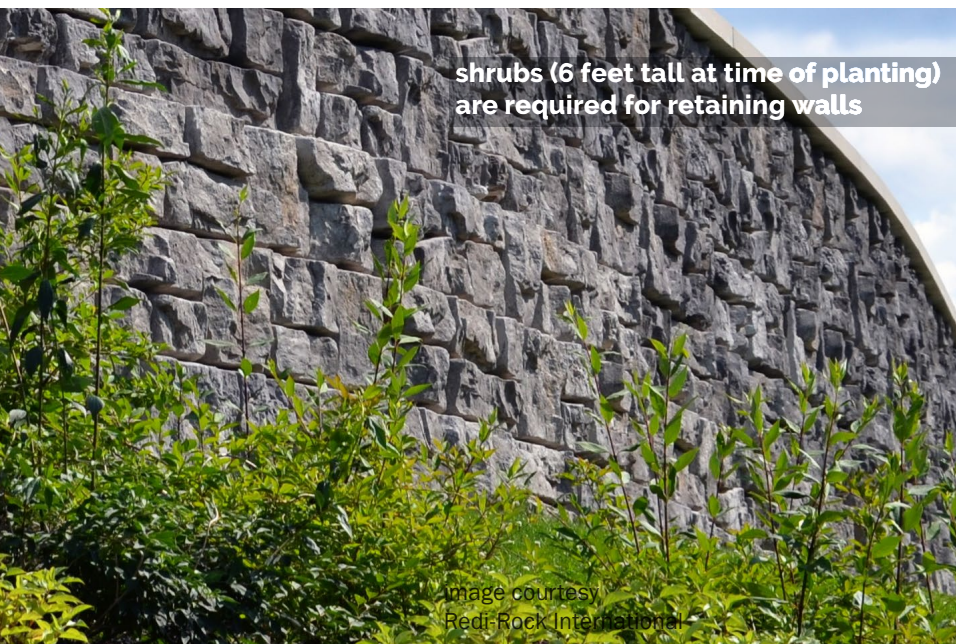
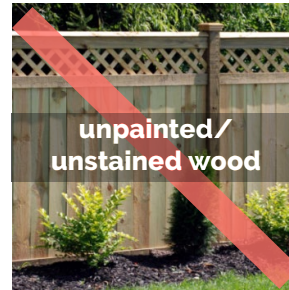
Allowed



Prohibited



Prohibited



SELF-SERVICE STORAGE

SECTION 12-13.18

REFER TO THE UNIFIED
DEVELOPMENT CODE FOR
DETAILED REQUIREMENTS



**3 stories maximum
above finished grade**

**pedestrian entrance
required on each facade
that faces a public road**

FUEL STATIONS

SECTION 12-13.19

REFER TO THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE FOR DETAILED REQUIREMENTS

lighted or painted bands of color are prohibited

sides of canopy should extend 12 inches below canopy to reduce light pollution

canopy and building design should be integrated

pumps must be protected by curbs or bollards



row of evergreen trees required adjacent to road

branding should be subtle

setbacks required for pumps and canopy when in a node designated in the Comprehensive Plan



VEHICLE RENTAL/ SALES/ SERVICE ESTABLISH- MENTS

These regulations apply to vehicle dealerships, vehicle rental establishments, vehicle service and repair shops, and car washes.

Service bays must be screened if they face a side property line. Car washing and detailing must happen inside a building or be 90% screened by walls.

Architectural accents should be done with different materials or architectural detailing rather than paint.

PARKING STRUCTURES

Parking decks are not allowed to be taller than the buildings they serve, and must be at least 150 feet from any residentially zoned property.

SECTION 12-13.20

REFER TO THE UNIFIED
DEVELOPMENT CODE FOR
DETAILED REQUIREMENTS



SECTION 12-13.21

REFER TO THE UNIFIED
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