

SECTION 1000

HIGHWAY CORRIDOR OVERLAY DISTRICT REGULATIONS

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SECTION 1000

HIGHWAY CORRIDOR OVERLAY DISTRICT REGULATIONS

1001.00 INTENT AND PURPOSE

A. The purpose of this section is to implement development standards applicable to various classifications of highway corridor overlay districts, as designated by the Board of County Supervisors, in accordance with Section 32-503.02 of the Zoning Ordinance. The standards contained herein are intended to protect the health, safety and welfare of the motoring public by preventing or reducing traffic congestion and distracting visual clutter associated with developments along major thoroughfares in the County. The standards achieve the stated purpose and intent by addressing the following physical characteristics of development: buffer and landscaping, access, lighting, outdoor storage, architecture of shopping centers and signage.

B. The standards contained in this section do not apply to HCODs established prior to February 20, 1996. For those HCODs, the regulations and requirements in Section 32-503.04 through Section 32-503.09 of the Zoning Ordinance, and any amendments thereto, remain in effect unless repealed by the Board of County Supervisors.

C. In addition to the standards contained in this section, all other applicable regulations in the Zoning Ordinance and the Design and Construction Standards Manual shall apply.

D. Unless otherwise specified in the ordinance creating an HCOD, when any lot or use is partially located within an HCOD, the remainder of the lot or use shall not be subject to the provisions of this section.

1002.00 CLASSIFICATIONS

A. The following six (6) classes of HCOD, as established by the Board of County Supervisors, shall determine which development standards are applicable to each designated section of an HCOD.

1. Rural Parkway.
2. Suburban Parkway.
3. Urban Parkway.
4. Rural Arterial.
5. Suburban Arterial.
6. Urban Arterial.

1003.00 DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

1003.01 Buffer Requirements: Unless other sections of the Zoning Ordinance or Section 800.00 of the Design and Construction Standards Manual require a greater buffer width, a proposed development shall provide a buffer area along the HCOD road in accordance with

Table 10-1. The HCOD buffer widths shown are minimum acceptable. Additional width is desirable. Additional width and plantings may be required with the review and approval of an application for a rezoning or special use permit on a case-by-case basis due to topography or other site/use characteristics to meet the intent of the HCOD.

These buffer areas shall be subject to the following development standards:

A. The buffer area for residential uses shall be platted as a separate lot deeded to a homeowners' association or as a buffer on individual lots with appropriate deed restrictions.

B. The minimum yard depth for residential uses required by the Zoning Ordinance shall be provided outside the buffer area.

C. No uses shall be allowed within the buffer area except:

1. Permitted entrances.
2. Minimal utility crossings.
3. Utility easements in rural and suburban parkway sections, which parallel the parkway and are located along the edge of the buffer area, and which serve to extend utilities to adjacent properties.
4. Trails and storm water management facilities which are an integral part of a landscape plan.
5. Signs as allowed in this section.

D. Notwithstanding the requirements in subsection C. above, on-site sewage disposal systems shall be allowed within buffer areas where no alternative location exists.

E. The buffer width may vary by up to twenty percent (20%) from the minimum width required at any point along the property line, as long as the buffer area provided remains equal to the minimum buffer area required.

1003.02 Landscaping Requirements: The buffer area shall be landscaped in accordance with this section and Tables 10-2 and 8-3. Refer to the plant selection guide in section 800 for a list of acceptable and unacceptable plants.

A. For nonresidential uses, the required plant units may consist of any combination of trees and shrubs. For residential uses, a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the required plant units shall consist of evergreens and ornamentals which provide effective screening.

B. Existing mature trees, particularly historic and specimen trees, within the buffer area shall be retained wherever possible. Selective clearing shall be permitted upon submission of a tree protection plan and if approved by the director of Planning.

C. Where existing mature trees at least six (6) inches in diameter at breast height (DBH) within the buffer area are retained, a credit of 1.25 may be taken towards the planting requirements where the minimum save area is two hundred fifty (250) square feet. Where the minimum save area is nine hundred (900) square feet or greater, the credit may be increased to 1.5. Also, where transplanted trees are four (4) inches DBH or larger at the time of planting, a credit of 1.25 may be taken towards the planting requirements only when an irrigation system is installed.

D. Where the buffer width, pursuant to Table 10-1, is twenty-five (25) feet or greater, a berm may be substituted for fifty percent (50%) of the plant unit requirement. The berm shall be graded to appear smooth, rounded and naturalistic. The berm shall be at least four (4) feet higher than the elevation of the adjacent ground. Its slope shall not exceed 3:1, except in unusual situations where 2:1 slope would be allowed with special ground cover.

E. Landscape designs must consider landscaping on and be compatible with existing adjacent uses. The choice of species and type of trees should:

1. Achieve unity of design by repetition of plant varieties and other materials and by correlating with adjacent developments and with the streetscape plantings where provided.
2. Extend the disease-resisting strategies required within a property to adjoining properties.

1003.03 Alternative Compliance for Buffer and Landscaping: The above buffer and landscape standards are not intended to be arbitrary or to inhibit creative solutions. Project or site conditions may arise where normal compliance is impractical or impossible, or where maximum achievement of the objectives can be obtained through alternative compliance.

A. Requests for alternative compliance for any application shall be accepted for review when one (1) or more of the following conditions are met:

1. Site conditions are such that full compliance is impossible or impractical; or improved environmental or architectural quality would result from the alternative compliance.
2. Space limitations or unusual shape of existing lots are such that full compliance is impossible or impractical.
3. Prevailing landscaping practices designed to achieve an overall effect in the surrounding neighborhood may justify alternative compliance. For example, a streetscape plan has been established and implemented along a particular corridor.
4. Safety conditions, such as sight distance, make alternative compliance necessary.
5. Change of use on the existing site increases the buffer area more than is feasible to provide. For example, the required buffer would encroach on the existing use and its ancillary use or would encompass more than ten percent (10%) of the existing parcel area.

6. Existing mature trees could be saved near, but not within the buffer, as long as the intent of the buffer is met.
7. The proposed use and its accessories are located a significant distance from the right-of-way and the buffer area will remain undisturbed, with the exception of possible supplementary plantings.
8. When a rural cluster development is proposed and a significant portion of the required open space is located between the home sites and the HCOD designated rural parkway, and/or the home sites are screened from the HCOD roadway by existing vegetation or terrain.
9. A previously approved reduction in the HCOD buffer width for a property along the HCOD is not justification for a reduction in the HCOD buffer width for another property.

B. Requests for alternative compliance shall be submitted to the Office of Planning prior to or as part of the development plan submission or concurrent with the submission of an application for rezoning or special use permit. The request shall be accompanied by sufficient detail and justification, written and/or graphic, to allow for an appropriate evaluation and decision. The alternative method of compliance must be comparable to the minimum standards in terms of quality and effectiveness. The request shall be limited to the specific project under review. The director of Planning or the designee shall evaluate the alternatives and accept or modify them.

1003.04 Access to HCOD Road:

- A. A minimum separation between vehicular access points shall be provided as shown in Table 10-4.
- B. In any event, parcels of land existing at the time the HCOD is created shall not be denied access to the HCOD roadway if no reasonable joint or cooperative access is feasible.

1003.05 Alternative Compliance for Vehicular Access: The above separation distances are not intended to be arbitrary. Project or site conditions may arise where normal compliance is impractical or impossible, or where maximum achievement of the objectives can only be obtained through alternative compliance.

- A. Requests for alternative compliance for any application shall be accepted for review when one (1) or more of the following conditions are met:
 1. In the event that wetlands, RPAs or other significant environmental features prevent this separation.
 2. In the event that safety considerations in terms of vertical or horizontal sight distance prevent this separation.
 3. In the event that unusual requirements of the uses dictate site circulation patterns that necessitate alternative access points.

B. Requests for alternative compliance shall be submitted to the Office of Planning prior to or as part of the development plan submission requirements or concurrent with the submission of an application for a special use permit. The request shall be accompanied by sufficient detail and justification, written and/or graphic, to allow an appropriate evaluation and decision. The alternative method of compliance must be comparable to the current standards in terms of effectiveness and safety and shall be limited to the specific project under review. The director of Planning, in consultation with the director of Transportation, shall evaluate the alternatives and accept or modify them.

1003.06 Parking Lot Lighting: All lighting shall be subject to the following standards:

A. Lighting must be contained on the site using shielded fixtures, full cutoff, recessed, flush lenses, or comparable standards so as to protect the public from exposure to the direct light of the fixture and to minimize the amount of light that is directed to the sky. Outdoor lighting levels (foot-candles) and associated standards shall be provided according to Section 250 of the Prince William County Zoning Ordinance. Lighting after business hours shall be reduced to security lighting only.

B. Parking lot lights may be incorporated into the street light scheme to illuminate public and private streets, sidewalks and pedestrian, bike and hiking trails, if acceptable to the director of Transportation.

C. Light poles located within two hundred (200) feet of the HCOD right-of-way shall not exceed twenty-four (24) feet in height. For shopping centers and large sites, the height could be increased to thirty-(30) feet to minimize the number of lighting fixtures.

1003.07 Decorative Exterior Floodlighting: When permitted, all decorative exterior floodlighting shall consist of an appropriate composition of brightness, textures and colors to dramatize a setting and extend the hours of the setting's usefulness. Floodlighting fixtures shall be located and shielded by structure and lenses so as to protect the public from exposure to the direct light of the fixture and to minimize the amount of light that is directed to the night sky.

1003.08 Outdoor Storage: All outside storage, service areas, refuse removal areas, loading areas or displays of goods shall be screened from the view of all public rights-of-ways in accordance with Section 802.50 of the Design and Construction Standards Manual, except as allowed by special use permit.

1003.09 Shopping Centers: The architecture, materials, colors, signage, lighting, and landscaping, including freestanding buildings or pad sites, shall be architecturally compatible, but not necessarily identical. Architectural and landscaping plans, including renderings and elevations that depict colors, materials and designs shall be submitted to confirm same.

1010.00 TABLES

Table 10-1

MINIMUM BUFFER WIDTH ALONG THE HCOD HIGHWAY					
Rural Parkway	Suburban Parkway	Urban Parkway	Rural Arterial	Arterial Urban	Suburban Arterial
Feet	Feet	Feet	Feet	Feet	Feet
50	50	25	20	20	20

*Buffer width may vary in accordance with section 1003.01 E

TABLE 10-2

BUFFER AREA PLANT UNITS	
Width in Feet	# of Plant Units Per 100 Feet Along the HCOD R/W
20	65
25	85
30	100
50	200
75	250
100*	350

*Fewer plant units may be required if allowed by proffer or SUP conditions.

TABLE 10-3

MINIMUM SEPARATION BETWEEN VEHICULAR ACCESS POINTSWITHIN AN HCOD					
Rural Parkway	Suburban Parkway	Urban Parkway	Rural Arterial	Arterial Urban	Suburban Arterial
Feet	Feet	Feet	Feet	Feet	Feet
900	350	350	700	350	350

* May be modified in accordance with section 1004.04B.