

**MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**  
**COUNTY OF HENRICO**  
**Adopted by the Board of Supervisors**  
**November 28, 2000**

**I. Purpose:**

The purpose of this document is to establish development guidelines that will assist the development community, the Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors, and the Planning staff in the review of multi-family developments. These guidelines are not intended to affect property with an approved plan of development, conditionally zoned multi-family development, sites with an approved special exception, or previous multi-family developments on property as of November 28, 2000.

**II. Objectives:**

It is the objective of Henrico County to have multi-family developments that feature many quality elements. Multi-family developments are encouraged to provide a combination of natural, site design, and recreational amenities that help create attractive, livable communities and provide a desirable housing alternative to detached single-family homes. These guidelines have been developed to identify the quality elements that should be incorporated into multi-family developments.

**III. Development Policies/Guidelines:**

- A. Landscape design: Multi-family developments should incorporate a landscaping package which provides extensive landscaping and planting of entrances, recreational areas, parking areas, street frontage, and areas surrounding buildings or open spaces. Protection of large, mature trees is encouraged.
- B. Site design: Multi-family developments should incorporate an attractive building layout which retains, relates to and enhances the natural vegetation and terrain of the site or incorporates natural design features such as preservation of scenic vistas, natural areas, or other unique elements of the site.
- C. Relationship to adjacent properties: Multi-family developments should be designed with special attention to the compatibility of adjacent land uses, topography, existing vegetation, building height and orientation, and other similar factors.

- D. Recreational areas and structures: An area should be provided within the development that is conveniently accessible to residents for recreational use. The area should be designed to serve a variety of passive and active uses and should be designed and located in a manner that enhances the form and appearance of the development. The recreational area should be a non-linear, consolidated area of sufficient size, and the location should be outside the flood plain and steep slopes.

The developer is encouraged to include recreational structures, such as gazebos, clubhouses, swimming pools, tot lots, and tennis and basketball courts. These structures should not be located within a flood plain or on steep slopes.

- E. Open space: Open space areas in addition to the required building setbacks and areas between buildings are encouraged. These areas may include flood plain or other environmentally sensitive features. Impervious cover should not exceed 40% of the acreage of the site.
- F. Pedestrian circulation system: Sidewalks should be provided along one side of major driveways. Pathways or trails should also be used to provide for pedestrian circulation and access to open space, recreational areas, and other common facilities to create a comprehensive pedestrian circulation system.
- G. Perimeter buffer: The perimeter of the project should be landscaped. In areas where natural screening or other vegetative and tree cover is not present, a planted buffer should be provided and include at a minimum 4 large deciduous or evergreen trees, 2 small trees, and 16 shrubs for every 100 feet.
- H. Setbacks for driveways and parking areas: Driveways and parking areas should be at least 25 feet from all public rights-of-way.
- I. Building height: The height of buildings on the perimeter of the development should be compatible with surrounding uses and site considerations. Buildings in excess of two (2) stories in height should be set back generally proportional to the building height (the taller the building the greater the setback), depending on the adjacent land uses and size. Taller buildings should be concentrated in the interior of the project. At-grade, ground-level apartments are encouraged to meet the needs of the senior and disabled populations.
- J. Proximity to single-family residences: Special attention should be given to the perimeter of the project when adjacent to single-family residences or property zoned for single-family. Building setbacks for lots adjacent to single-family residential districts or property used for single-family dwellings should be at least 60 feet. No active recreational areas, parking, or refuse containers should be located within this setback area.

- K. Lighting standards: Parking lot lighting should be provided. Lighting should be a maximum of 15' and directed to minimize glare on public roads and adjacent properties. Decorative lighting is encouraged.
- L. Building materials and sound suppression: Multi-family developments should incorporate quality building techniques such as quality exterior building materials (brick, stone, quality vinyl, etc.) and sound suppression measures between units and floors/ceilings and on exterior of units when adjacent to high impact noise areas.
- M. Stormwater management facilities: Stormwater management facilities should be designed and utilized as a water feature amenity and/or designed and landscaped to make it an integral part of the development.
- N. Garages: On owner-occupied units, side- or rear- entry garages are encouraged. When front-entry garages are provided, the garage should be recessed at least 12 feet behind the unit.
- O. Refuse containers: The gates and doors on the masonry refuse screens should be of a substantial and durable material. Support posts, gate frames, hinges and latches should be of a sufficient size and strength to allow the gates to function without sagging or becoming a visual eyesore.

The numbers of refuse containers and the level of servicing shall be adequate for the development. Calculations to determine the required number should be shown on approved plans.

- P. Distribution of Parking Spaces: Special attention should be given to the location and distribution of parking spaces. Two parking spaces should be in close proximity to each unit and common parking areas for visitors should be in the general vicinity.

Parking spaces in townhouse projects should be designed so as to prohibit vehicles from backing onto public roads.

- Q. Underground Utilities: Except for junction boxes, meters and existing overhead utility lines and technical or environmental reasons, all utilities should be underground. Junction boxes should be screened.