

# Urban Design Manual

Volume II - Civic Development





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### **Notice:**

The urban design guidelines and principles in this manual reflect the guidelines for urban form and other policies of Miami-Dade County's Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP) pertaining to community land use and housing patterns and design. Although the establishment and use of sound principles of urban design are recommended in the CDMP, at this time many standards in the County's current Zoning Code (Chapter 33, Code of Miami-Dade County) are inconsistent with many of these principles and may impede, but do not necessarily prevent, their implementation. Many of these principles can be accomplished within the current standards of the Code and others may be accomplished using procedures established in the Code. These guidelines are issued to illustrate ways to accomplish the land use and housing patterns and design objectives encouraged by policies of the CDMP, and as a supplement to standards of the Zoning Code for the site plan review process provided for in the Code. Miami-Dade County has been amending the Code to more fully reflect these principles including the Traditional Neighborhood District, the Community Urban Center, the Planned Area Development District and recently the Rowhouse District. Applications for zoning actions and site plan approvals should employ the principles recommended in this manual to the maximum extent practicable. In particular, request for development approvals and site plans associated with requests for district boundary changes, special exceptions, or other actions requiring public hearings, should at an early opportunity also identify any other variances to the current zoning that may be desirable or necessary to enable utilization of these recommended design principles, particularly those necessary to implement explicit provisions of the CDMP. Applicants are also advised to provide complete plans when requesting zoning or permit approvals in an effort to avoid unnecessary delays.

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# Urban Design Manual: Volume 11- Civic Development

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"... there can be only one successful civic art. This will be one which joins utility to beauty. Cities are not made to be looked at, but to be lived in; and if in the decoration of them there be any forgetfulness of that, no successful civic art will follow and the effort will defeat itself. Realizing this, we should try to discover some general rules for guidance, and if we succeed, by noting the requirements and the various means that have been tried to satisfy them, we should be able to that extent to translate our art into a civic science that will be more or less exact – into the science of city-building, which is the text-book of civic art."

Charles Mulford Robinson, 1903, from his book Modern Civic Art: Or, The City Made Beautiful



The quality of the built environment within a community makes a positive contribution to the lives of the people who live and work in it. High quality public open spaces and civic structures engender a sense of pride in a place, promote healthy living and encourage community interaction. A creative design approach and careful planning create communities that are safe, sustainable and enriching.

### Introduction

### **Purpose of the Manual**

The purpose of the manual is to illustrate the basic design principles for the placement and design of public open space and civic structures that may be utilized to significantly improve the quality of the public realm in Miami-Dade County and the health of it's community. The manual provides guidelines for community leaders, County staff, developers and designers in the development of civic spaces and buildings. This document should be circulated widely and used to not only educate the public and private sectors about the importance of providing meaningful open space for daily human interaction, but inform how such places, and the structures within them, define a community's character, contribute to civic art and enhance the public realm. This manual illustrates design concepts that when used consistently, contribute to a seamlessly connected and sustainable open space system. The plans and illustrations used in this manual show how to design, using urban design principles, concepts for defining, forming and physically connecting an open space network that can be successfully accommodated within or surrounding publiclyowned and private property. The ultimate goal of this document is to provide civic building and open space development that is successfully integrated within the various urban contexts of Miami-Dade County. These range from compact and intensely built downtowns or neighborhood centers to rural settings. All of which are connected by enhanced infrastructure that allows access and enjoyment of such environments by all County residents.

### The Public Realm

The public realm consists of a community's accessible private and public open spaces including all the attributes that define their built or natural forms. The public realm is a manifestation of naturally caused environments or man-made spaces, each addressing the needs of a population. In either case, they serve as places for people to gather and socialize, exercise their freedom of expression, access daily services, engage in physical activity or for contemplation. Elements that are part of the public realm include natural features, plazas, squares, parks, streets, as well as civic buildings and structures. When designing the public realm, one should strive for public spaces, including streets that accommodate and enhance the pedestrian experience. The scale of civic development can range from the monumental to the intimate depending on the desired experience. There are instances where these public spaces or structures act as focal points or terminate vistas and can be experienced from a distance; in other scenarios, the space, whether a square or street acts as a room eliciting pedestrian participation. Successful civic design tailored to the regional context produces diverse and distinctive neighborhoods, replete with civic buildings, monuments and open spaces that constitute civic art. Civic art involves a creative approach to developing the built environment, combines function with meaning and beauty, promotes a sense of belonging and can serve as an important element in helping communities develop identity.



The public realm is a critical part of a community's infrastructure that creates significant value and distinction for a neighborhood. A well-designed public realm encourages social interaction, civic engagement, physical activity and time spent outdoors.



#### Savannah

The plan of Savannah, Georgia, founded in 1733 by General James Oglethorpe, has a grid layout and four original squares, each at the center of a ward.



#### Washington DC

L'Enfant's baroque plan for Washington DC developed in 1791, features ceremonial spaces and grand radial avenues resulting in a system of intersecting diagonal avenues superimposed over a grid system.

## A Brief History

### **Civic Design Prior to WWII**

Throughout the history of cities, the most importantly perceived civic spaces, and the buildings which defined them, were predominately created to celebrate governmental and religious institutions, both symbols of society's need for order and spiritual fulfillment. Open spaces in conjunction with the buildings that addressed them were used for daily services, such as commerce as well as trading activities, which were also an integral part of the urban fabric. A number of open spaces were utilitarian, but nevertheless offered opportunities for social gatherings, like spaces with fountains or wells, which provided inhabitants with water to sustain any daily needs. As a result, these open spaces became areas of daily dissemination of information and pedestrian activity. The picturesque layouts and shapes of many old city streets and open spaces were a byproduct of topographical conditions, rather than the product of an educated or contrived plan. However, during the Renaissance, much would change. Architects realized that a rectilinear grid of blocks and streets, also known as the gridiron, would make perfect geometries for squares and plazas, and axial monument placement was regarded as utopian. The powerful views afforded by symmetrical building placement, monuments ending on an axis, proportioned plazas and human-scaled appointments would provide ideal open spaces for cities and cleaner living environments for their citizens. This method of town planning was exported to the New World from Europe and shaped the way towns on the American continent were built for many centuries; the United States would be no exception.

The use of the gridiron block and street system was preferred for its rationality, economic benefits, and quick method for organizing new towns in America, from its colonial roots to the settlement of the western US territories. In the haste of rapid town organization and development, especially during the 19th century, the principles of arranging buildings of civic importance was given very little importance or not provided for in the town design process. Most town grids, with exceptions of cities like Savannah, Georgia and Charleston. South Carolina. did not have lots or blocks set aside for the placement of important buildings or open spaces. Further, the US Constitution's inferred language of keeping government small and less focused on people's daily lives played a role in the people's interpretation of monument building. One exception to this is the Washington DC Plan by Pierre Charles L' Enfant, a grid interrupted with diagonal boulevards, was a baroque concept which set aside the most important sites and city lots for monuments and civic building placement. One important distinction must be made for some early colonial towns in America, such as the aforementioned Savannah and Charleston, which were developed using Old World town planning principles and trended their expansions with similar. At the turn of the 20th century, the gridiron town, especially those lacking the beauty and emotional and physical benefits associated with properly addressed civic space, was perceived as ugly by academics, architects and city leaders. With the advent and eventual industrialization of the nation some cities and towns also became overcrowded due to a fast growing immigrant population looking for work and a better life, while people moving from rural areas to cities were searching for the same. The overcrowded cities lacking significant open space and the elegance associated with places that emphasize civic art eventually led to the implementation of several city and town civic design movements in many US cities and towns.

The City Beautiful movement emerged from the general perception, in the late 19th Century, that American cities were unattractive and unhealthy places to live, due in part to fast, unplanned development responding to a rapidly growing US population. This movement can be most clearly identified by characteristics that include monumentally scaled buildings and long, wide, tree-lined thoroughfares, both diagonal and picturesque that intersect with existing streets and converge at prominent sites and parks. The idea was to overlay these urban design principles onto existing street networks and block grids, as done in Chicago, or to be implemented in new development, as well as other small residential subdivisions throughout the US. Though Coral Gables is South Florida's best example of The City Beautiful Movement, many other communities, such as Miami Shores and Opa Locka, were designed with the same principles in mind.

The Urban Parks movement beginning in the middle of the 19th century was a reaction to overcrowded urban areas where slums predominated and green spaces were absent, or located in areas far from cities. Frederick Law Olmstead's plan for Central Park in New York City best exemplifies the scale and design characteristics of open spaces encouraged by the Urban Parks Movement. Characteristics include sprawling lawns, meandering paths, monuments placed to visual advantage and areas for passive and active recreation. The park's large scale provides a refuge for the bustling urban centers which surround them, giving city inhabitants a reachable green refuge from city life much as Olmstead intended. A subsequent evolution of the large centrally located park was the idea and eventual realization in many US cities and towns of arranging a continuous network of large open spaces to connect the different neighborhoods which make up a city. Started in the late 19th

century, the city of Boston's "Emerald Necklace" is an uninterrupted, connected seven-mile open space system offering a variety of passive and active recreation opportunities to many of Boston's neighborhoods. In addition to the sprawling lawns and gardens, miles of pedestrian paths, habitats for urban wildlife, and recreation areas, civic buildings and monuments in these parks were arranged in the landscape to take advantage of their visual impact. This idealized approach to park building and monument placement that emerged from the urban park movement was applied to university site planning, and is still used today in educational campus development. The principles of landscape design used in the Urban Parks movement were unprecedented in the history of civic architecture and space planning and uniquely American.

Conversely, the Garden City Movement initiated by Sir Ebenezer Howard promoted self-sustaining towns arranged in a concentric street and block pattern fitted with open spaces, parks and integrated business, as well as, industrial uses within walking distance from residences. The ideal garden town was limited in size and population, surrounded by agriculture or green belts and connected to major cities by rail. The movement was a response to a growing population living in unpleasant conditions with close proximity to the heavy industrial facilities within the city. A closer look at early 20th century Florida communities, such as Venice, Florida, designed by John Nolen, George Merrick's Coral Gables, Miami Shores, Opa-Locka, Miami Beach and Miami, reveals a blend of the Garden City and City Beautiful Movements, within their urban framework.



### Coral Gables

Planned in the 1920s, Coral Gables is South Florida's best example of The City Beautiful Movement.



### Central Park

Central Park in the center of Manhattan in New York City, exemplifies the scale and characteristics of open spaces encouraged by the Urban Parks Movement.



### Miami Lakes

The 1960s concentric plan of Miami Lakes was at the forefront of town design in South Florida.

### Civic Design After WWII

Even as these early communities were emerging, new concepts of urban planning and design were arising. They challenged the ideas of these movements, mainly due to the increasing dependencies on the automobile. The use of the car facilitated the separation of land uses, intending to distance housing from nearby industrial areas. After World War II, mass-produced residential subdivisions comprised much of the new development in south Florida and in the nation, and new communities neglected many qualities and charms of the City Beautiful Movement, the Urban Parks Movement and those of early towns developed during America's colonization. The phrase "suburban sprawl" best describes this period of development which continues today. A legacy of this type of community development has been the almost complete disregard of the important role of civic institutions and open space as community focal points. Technology allowed buildings housing residential and commercial uses to expand vertically dwarfing many institutional and civic use buildings, which have traditionally, even up to the late 19th century, been built to a scale representing grand symbols of community principles. The invention of the skyscraper posed a challenge for urban planners in the consideration of street scale and the placement of civic uses even at the turn of the 20th century. Further, local zoning and land use codes, adopted by most American towns by the middle of the 20th century, address intensity and density controls. Although easy to administer, they are rigid and unresponsive to alternative development forms and do not translate to the principles of place-making, which are imperative to the design of civic buildings and open spaces.

Few developments, after WWII, embraced the principles of urban design, civic building and open space placement, as provided in the early 20th century movements. One exception to this

pattern of development in South Florida is the Town of Miami Lakes. Miami Lakes' "nautilus" street pattern draws upon the baroque radial city plan and includes a mixed-use main street at the core of the town, surrounded by residential communities, connected by a series of concentrically arranged streets. Small pocket parks, greens and other open spaces are interspersed throughout the community providing Miami-Dade County a well design alternative to sprawl. Although Miami Lakes has a well-balanced distribution of uses, which includes public open space; the civic use open spaces and buildings were not placed in celebrated locations, such as, at the end of important streets or inside a plaza. Even less consideration is given to the design of the architecture itself.

From the late 20th century to today many cities have invested in large public works projects and complexes of civic importance. Whether intended as economic engines to attract visitors, or as new symbols of civic pride, the civic building boom has produced a number of remarkable pieces of architecture nationwide. In Miami-Dade County, some of the projects considered as part of this civic movement are the Miami Museum of Modern Art, the Science Museum, the Miami Performing Arts Center, the Miami Beach New World Symphony Center and American Airlines Arena. Typically, the parcels provided for the accommodation of civic art are significant in size, but are isolated from large concentrations of people and devoid of the urban fabric necessary to frame buildings of civic importance. The provision of prominent civic use lots are rarely part of a vision plan or adopted local/countywide comprehensive plans. New civic structures have to compete for architectural prominence in an urban landscape filled with both vertically and horizontally, significantly scaled buildings. The result of this competition of scales has been

the emergence of conspicuous civic structures, placed randomly in the landscape. Often, these structures do incorporate some form of civic space, contributing to the green network of the city while simultaneously sparking development and redevelopment, and fostering a renaissance in many of the struggling neighborhoods that they inhabit.

Miami-Dade has in the past years adopted plans, zoning districts, and policies that contribute to smart growth, conservation, sustainable development and creation of inviting public civic open space and their treatment. Among them are Community Urban Center districts, Rapid Transit development zones, the Open Space Master Plan, the Aesthetics Master Plan, and the Traditional Neighborhood District. Some legislation like the Traditional Neighborhood District and Community Urban Center Districts are part of zoning ordinances guiding development based on smart growth principles on private property and others such as the Open Space Master Plan, Green-print and the Aesthetics Master Plan provide guidelines for the creation and embellishment of public space and sustainable development, including how to interconnect the Miami-Dade County Metropolitan area with a network of different scaled public open spaces, create a linked transportation network and conservation of natural resources. What sets the recent legislation from those adopted in the mid part of the 20th century is the attempt at a holistic approach to planning communities from the Metropolitan to the local level. This presents an opportunity for Miami-Dade County to implement a plan that includes a network of civic spaces and art and considers the location, scale and placement of our monuments.



#### **Princeton Community Urban Center District**

The Princeton Community Urban Center plan promotes quality public realm and urban design that embraces economic viability, sustainability and creates a sense of place within Miami-Dade County.



	MORE DENSITY	LESS DENSITY
	PRIMARILY MIXED USE	PRIMARILY RESIDENTIAL
	LARGER BUILDINGS	SMALLER BUILDINGS
	MORE HARDSCAPE	MORE GREEN SPACE
	ATTACHED BUILDINGS	DETACHED BUILDINGS
-	ASSIGNED FRONTAGES	<b>ROTATED FRONTAGES</b>
R	STOOPS & SHOPFRONTS	YARDS & FRONTAGES
A	SHALLOW SETBACKS	DEEP SETBACKS
m	ALIGNED FRONTAGES	ROTATED FRONTAGES
	SIMPLE MASSING	ARTICULATED MASSING
	MASONRY BUILDINGS	WOODEN BUILDINGS
	GENERALLY FLAT ROOFS	GENERALLY PITCHED ROOFS
	BUILDING MOUNTED SIGNAGE	SMALL YARD SIGNS
	DOMESTIC ANIMALS	LIVESTOCK
	STREETS & ALLEYS	ROAD & LANES
	WIDE SIDEWALKS	NARROW PATHS
٦	DEDICATED PARKING	OPPORTUNISTIC PARKING
JBL	SMALLER CURB RADII	LARGER CURB RADII
ō	RAISED CURBS	OPEN SWALES
	STREET LIGHTING	STARLIGHT
	SINGLE TREE SPECIES	MIXED TREE CLUSTERS
9	REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS	LOCAL GATHERING PLACES
5	PLAZAS & SQUARES	PARKS & GREENS

# **Open Space**

Miami-Dade County has developed an Open Space Master Plan (OSMP), which creates a vision for the implementation of a great system of parks and open spaces. The OSMP identifies the County's existing network of open spaces and sets goals for their improvement, expansion and preservation. A key component of the OSMP is the transformation of open spaces into significant community focal points of varying scales aimed to improve the social fabric of the County by providing equitable access to parks and open spaces, as well as more opportunities for all its residents to meet, socialize and connect with one another. The organizing tool used is the urbanto-rural transect, which establishes a framework that identifies a continuous series of zones ranging from rural to urban, and categorizes various degrees of development intended to promote growth and increase pedestrian life. The distinct built environments contained by the transect guide the design and development of parks and open spaces.

The vision for the Miami-Dade County Parks and Open Space System includes the following components:

- I. Great Parks
- 2. Great Public Spaces
- 3. Great Natural and Cultural Places
- 4. Great Greenways, Trails and Water Trails
- 5. Great Streets

### **Placement of Open Spaces**

Open spaces are vital elements of urban design and should be considered as an integral part of a community. Open space design should recognize the specific conditions of each of the rural-tourban transect zones and be designed to reflect, as well as reinforce the character of its location. Generally, plazas and squares are suitable open space types for an urban environment, while in a sub-urban setting these open space types can also be complemented by greens or active and passive parks, which are the appropriate open space types in a rural context. Well-designed open areas should be clearly defined by buildings and landscape. The goal is to create a balanced, hierarchically defined open space network, which provides all residents convenient access to a diverse range of open spaces within walking distance from work and home, aimed to encourage social networking, physical activity and time spent outdoors. When properly placed and designed, open spaces also complement focal points, provide a foreground for civic buildings, become part of a community's civic art and contribute to the character of a neighborhood.



Quality urban design ensures residents of a community spend time outdoors, thus making the public realm of significant importance. A diverse and interconnected network of public open spaces produces a broad set of social and health benefits for all residents.



This plaza at the center of a mixed-use neighborhood provides an outdoor "room" for public enjoyment defined by the surrounding architecture. The plaza provides opportunities for recreation, social gatherings and contributes to the well-being of the community.

### Plazas

Plazas are open spaces designed for public enjoyment and defined by streets and surrounding buildings. Their primary functions are to encourage a diversity of opportunities for social activities, provide relief and relaxation, expand and reinforce the public realm and contribute to the livability and general amenity of a community. A plaza may also be used as a stage for public and religious buildings or other structures of public significance.

### **S**quares

Squares are planned open public spaces, usually rectangular in shape, commonly found in the center of a community and provide a sense of physical and environmental relief to the built environment. Well-designed squares encourage social interaction and foster a community's sense of pride. Design elements such as trees, quality of formal and informal seating, as well as lighting contribute to a square's attractiveness and character. A central square, generally consisting of a lawn area in front of buildings of civic importance, is typical in early American towns.



This rendering of the center of a community illustrates a square fronted by civic and mixed-use buildings. The square contributes to the sense of place of the neighborhood and offers its residents a formal outdoor public space of civic significance.



This central green is clearly defined by landscaping, sidewalks, streets and the buildings that front it along its perimeter, while more intimate greens are located throughout the community to provide passive and active recreational opportunities for all its residents.

### Greens

Greens are prominent social areas in a neighborhood and are a predominant type of open space in American urbanism. Similar to a central square, the green can be used as an urban space at the center of a community. Central greens should be clearly defined on all sides by a road, architecture and landscape. Smaller detached and attached greens can be evenly distributed throughout a neighborhood to offer additional outdoor space for residents.

### Parks

Parks are naturalistic open spaces used for active and passive recreation; they create a sense of place and connect residents to one another, as well as to their larger environment. Welldesigned urban parks appear as natural spaces interrupting the urban architectural fabric. In sub-urban and rural settings, parks combined with schools make a logical connection between neighborhoods, while larger parks should be located towards the edge of the neighborhood. Parks are one of the most effective methods to build a sense of community and improve the quality of life of its residents.



This illustration depicts an urban park within a neighborhood that provides a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities, while preserving valuable open space for the enjoyment of the residents. Parks contribute to public health, individual well-being, and help strengthen ties among community residents.



This illustration of a civic building and its corresponding public open space shows basic components of urban design. The civic building is placed close to the sidewalk, across from a green, and a loggia provides a transitional space between the street, sidewalk and the interior of the building, while complementing the quality of the public realm and promoting interaction among pedestrians.

# **Civic Building Design**

Civic buildings are among the most pronounced components of urban design and should be placed in prominent locations within a neighborhood. They serve the public in an array of forms and settings, as well as act as community focal points. Well-designed civic buildings enhance the public realm and help communities create an identity.

The design of civic building is directly related to the location of the structure within the urban-torural transect. There are distinctive qualities of civic building design, whether in an urban context or a rural setting, that impact the relationship between the building and the built environment, as well as the people who occupy both. For example, civic structures in urban settings should enhance and be designed appropriately to fit this context, frame the street and promote a high level of pedestrian activity. As the location moves from an urban to a rural environment, design issues could shift from pedestrian oriented to how to situate the building on the site, in a more informal setting.

The following pages summarize the elements of civic building design that should respond to context, as well as renderings representing idealized conditions. This section will address the following elements:

- Building Placement
- Main Building Front
- Service Area
- Parking
- Landscape

### **Building Placement**

The placement of public buildings within a site should give them a civic presence and complement the quality of the public realm. The interaction of civic structures with the built environment can differ as one progresses through the urban-to-rural transect. Civic buildings in urban conditions should be located adjacent to sidewalks in a manner that allows for effective land utilization, helps enclose the street, creates visual interest, enhances the pedestrian experience and establishes appropriate scale. While in a sub-urban context, it is also important that civic buildings address the street and contribute to a pattern of pedestrian activity; in rural settings, they should be allowed flexibility and could be set back away from the street, creating a more relaxed character.



This example of a civic building in a sub-urban environment shows the structure placed parallel to the street and sidewalk, behind a small setback. A loggia encroaches into the setback creating visual interest and providing a transition between the sidewalk and the interior of the building.



This illustration of a civic building shows design elements that express prominence, reveal the civic nature of the structure and enhance the public realm. The first floor of the building sits several steps above the public open space it fronts; the height of its floors is taller than that of the surrounding buildings; the main front has a symmetrical composition and there is a relation among the proportions of the elements of the facade and the volumes of the structure.

### Main Building Front

The architecture and presence of public buildings should inspire civic pride among the residents of a community. Civic buildings should be designed to enhance the public realm and their main front should be oriented towards the street or associated with a significant public open space. The main front must be designed to physically express prominence, reflect the structure's civic nature and to be clearly identifiable through the use of architectural design elements. The building's primary entrance must be located on this front and should promote a natural interaction with pedestrians, while a secondary entrance can serve the parking area or garage. In order to achieve a coherent built environment, civic buildings should have clearly defined fronts and backs independent of their location in the transect.

### Service Area

The design of civic buildings should incorporate an appropriate method for consolidating and screening utilities and service areas from public view. The service frontage of a civic building should occur on the least visible building side. Utilities should be located in areas enclosed within the building or architectural elements. Landscaping on its own is not sufficient to conceal utilities and service areas from pedestrian view; integrating them as part of a structure can provide opportunities to create civic art as well as serving a practical function.



This illustration shows a low wall and gate enclosing the mechanical equipment area of a civic building, screening these utilities from pedestrian view. Service areas and utility equipment should be designed to be screened from public view, away from the street front and their access should not preside over the pedestrian environment.



In this example, off-street vehicular parking is provided behind a group of civic buildings, while on-street parking is available along the side streets. Parking lots should be located to the rear of buildings or in the interior of a block and should not dominate the frontage of pedestrian-oriented streets, interrupt pedestrian routes or negatively impact the surrounding neighborhood.

### Parking

Parking facilities should be designed and located so that they are convenient, safe, efficient and do not disrupt pedestrian activities and walkability, but still provide the adequate amount of vehicular storage needed. Off-street parking facilities should be situated at the rear or side of buildings; screened by buildings, low walls or vegetation from view of neighboring streets. Access to parking should minimize curb cuts and driveways onto streets to avoid disruptions to traffic flow and the pedestrian experience. Onstreet parking should be present around civic facilities and should count towards meeting the required number of parking spaces for that use. In urban environments shared parking could help satisfy parking demands and mitigate parking requirements.

### Landscape

Landscaping should complement civic buildings in order to achieve successful spatial definition of the public realm. Appropriate landscaping is an important element of civic buildings and necessary to promote pedestrian activity or gatherings. Well-designed landscaping has the ability to control urban character. In an urban setting landscaping should be formal and orderly to help maintain definition of the street edge. In a rural context, irregularly interspersed trees are a sign of the casual character that could be suitable for this environment.



This light rail transit station located within a transit oriented development (TOD) fronts a public open space. The palm trees along the perimeter of the open space are planted in a formal pattern, complementing the design of the station and contributing to the urban character of the neighborhood.



This street in a mixed-use neighborhood incorporates many of the elements that provide a sense of spatial definition, visual enclosure and create an appealing outdoor "room" for pedestrians. Buildings that frame the public realm and engage the street, active street level uses, prominent doors and windows, as well as a height-to-width ratio of approximately I to I contribute to an enjoyable and pleasant environment.

### **Streets**

### **Spatial Definition and Enclosure**

Since streets are the most common public spaces, one of the most important goals of urban design is the control of the street space. Successful spatial definition of the public realm is a direct result of the street cross section and is critical to visual enclosure and human scale. The ratio of street space width to adjacent building height is a proportion whose manipulation generates places of different character. The sense of spatial enclosure is related to the physiology of the human eye. There has been much research on the topic of spatial enclosure creating human scale. Basically, if the cone of vision encompasses less street wall than sky opening, the sense of enclosure will be minimal. If the street wall is greater than the amount of sky, a sense of enclosure will result. For example, a height-to-width ratio of I to 6 is the absolute maximum providing any level of defined space. A I to 3 ratio results in a feeling of defined space. Generally, the sense of spatial enclosure increases as the ratio of street wall to sky opening increases.

In South Florida, street trees are often the element that defines the road cross section. This compensates for low building heights and wide rights-of-way.



### l to l ratio

The I to I ratio is an ideal cross-section resulting in a positive human scale relationship. Although this section occurs in older cities, particularly in Europe, it seldom occurs along South Florida roadways. The I to I ratio is ideal for pedestrian passages.



I to 3 ratio The ratio of I to 3 is an effective minimum section for South Florida roadways. It produces a sense of enclosure and a positive human-scale relationship.



I to 6 ratio The ratio of I to 6 is the absolute maximum road section width to street wall. The use of street trees will enhance this section, and allow for the ratio to seem less severe.

Adapted from Site Community and Urban Planning Ninth Edition of Architectural Graphic Standards by Gary Greenan, Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Kamal Zeharin and Iskander Shafie.



### **By Recess Line**

Taller buildings establish an appropriate street section by the design of the building base to relate to street width. This condition can be achieved with the use of elements such as colonnades or extended overhangs.



**By Facade** A I to 2 ratio can easily be accomplished in lower scale residential development, particularly for higher density attached residential uses such as townhouses.



#### By Landscaping

In this example, street trees instead of buildings produce a 1 to 2 ratio. In South Florida this is the prevalent condition in single-family detached residential areas. However, the use of buildings rather than landscape to create the street section is usually more successful in defining space. The building to building section should not exceed a 1 to 6 ratio regardless of whether trees are used. Generally, a 1 to 3 building section is most appropriate for a residential street section.

Streets are an important component of the livability of a community and the public realm. They should be designed to accommodate safe, convenient and attractive travel for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motor vehicle drivers and transit riders alike ought to be able to comfortably move along and across complete streets. Well-designed streets encourage healthy lifestyles, improve social interaction, foster walkable communities and create a sense of place.

A complete street is comprised of many different elements, which may include: sidewalks, street trees, bicycle lanes, on-street parking, center medians, vehicular travel lanes, dedicated bus lanes, crosswalks and more. The elements used can differ from street to street, but the end result should achieve a connected network that is safe, effective and balances all modes of travel.



This image illustrates an example of a mixed-use thoroughfare which has a positive appeal. Wide sidewalks, perimeter roads that incorporate parallel parking, landscaped medians, trees at uniform spacing, clearly defined pedestrian crossings, as well as architectural continuity through buildings of similar heights and detailing make immeasurable contributions in terms of creating a safe and pleasant street environment.



An appropriately designed street is safe, convenient and attractive for all users, regardless of their mode of travel. Consideration must be made to ensure that all vehicles have ample space to travel efficiently and safely, but also so that pedestrians are protected from the vehicles. Shade trees, human-scaled lighting and street furniture should be situated in a manner that provides separation between pedestrians and motor vehicles.

### Boulevard

A boulevard is a high-capacity thoroughfare, divided by a landscaped median, dedicated public transit lanes or a combination of both in walkable sub-urban or urban environments. Boulevards should be designed to carry both through and local traffic, pedestrians and bicyclists, and can also accommodate different modes of public transportation. Along boulevards fronted by uses associated with heavy pedestrian traffic, a frontage street and/or on-street parking can be implemented to maintain pedestrian safety. Regularly planted landscaping, street furniture and lighting should also be incorporated into the design of a boulevard.







S - SIDEWALK P - PARKING B - BICYCLE MT - MIXED-TRAFFIC L - LANDSCAPE BRT - BUS RAPID TRANSIT









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S - SIDEWALK P - PARKING B - BICYCLE MT - MIXED-TRAFFIC L - LANDSCAPE BRT - BUS RAPID TRANSIT

### Avenue

Typically shorter than a boulevard, an avenue is a medium-high capacity thoroughfare that serves as primary pedestrian and bicycle routes and some local transit routes. Avenues are the most commonly occurring thoroughfare types, because they serve the widest variety of land uses. Avenues usually contain curbed, on-street parking, in addition to high quality pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. Landscape, street furniture and lighting should enhance both the vehicular and pedestrian experience within the section. Avenues can achieve a great balance for all modes of transportation, from shoppers on foot to some forms of public transportation.











S - SIDEWALK P - PARKING B - BICYCLE MT - MIXED-TRAFFIC L - LANDSCAPE BRT - BUS RAPID TRANSIT

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S - SIDEWALK P - PARKING B - BICYCLE MT - MIXED-TRAFFIC L - LANDSCAPE BRT - BUS RAPID TRANSIT

### Main Street

A main street is a walkable thoroughfare adjacent to mostly commercial and office uses with some higher intensity residential. Vehicles and bicyclists can be accommodated within the right-of-way and allow for connectivity to public transportation routes on higher capacity boulevards and avenues. On-street parking is encouraged to mitigate parking requirements and also, when combined with landscaping and other elements function as an extra layer of protection for pedestrians on foot.

### Local Street

A local street is a walkable thoroughfare that primarily serves abutting neighborhoods. They collect and distribute vehicular, as well as bicycle traffic at the neighborhood level and disperse them onto higher capacity thoroughfares like boulevards, avenues and main streets. Local streets should be landscaped, curbed and contain some on-street parking, but can have naturally landscaped swales instead.







S - SIDEWALK P - PARKING B - BICYCLE MT - MIXED-TRAFFIC L - LANDSCAPE BRT - BUS RAPID TRANSIT



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S - SIDEWALK P - PARKING B - BICYCLE MT - MIXED-TRAFFIC L - LANDSCAPE BRT - BUS RAPID TRANSIT

### **Neighborhood Street**

A neighborhood street, typically of lower capacity and speed, is primarily used to connect residential uses on a block to block level, within single neighborhoods. Neighborhood streets may be curbed or swaled and should include sidewalks or paths, as well as street trees. Both vehicles and bicyclists should feel comfortable using neighborhood streets, however, there are no accommodations made to formally distinguish between the two.







S - SIDEWALK P - PARKING B - BICYCLE MT - MIXED-TRAFFIC L - LANDSCAPE BRT - BUS RAPID TRANSIT







### Road

A road is a small scale, local thoroughfare fronted by lower intensity buildings. A road tends to be rural in character without curbs or on-street parking and has naturally planted landscaping and paths versus sidewalks and street trees.







### Service Lane

Service lanes are narrow access roads found in urban or sub-urban areas and run between or behind buildings. They provide side or rear access to properties where parking and utilities are located.







S - SIDEWALK PA - PATH B - BICYCLE MT - MIXED-TRAFFIC L - LANDSCAPE BRT - BUS RAPID TRANSIT

# **Building Types**

The functions and programs provided by civic structures typically occur in four distinct building types. These building types are classified as perimeter yard, courtyard, sideyard and rear yard. All of these building types can be located in urban, sub-urban or rural environments, but differ in scale depending on their civic function.



### **Perimeter Yard**

The perimeter yard building is an object building, with open space completely surrounding the structure. Parking should be placed at the rear of the building, off of an alley, while the building is placed close to the sidewalk. Placement of the structure at the front of the parcel helps to define the street space. Design features such as a loggia, can act as transitional elements between the sidewalk and the interior of the building.



### Courtyard

One or more outdoor spaces enclosed by the walls of the building define the courtyard type. These spaces can also be defined by the walls of adjacent buildings and provide light, air, as well as open space views to the internalized functions of the building. The placement of parking at the rear, off an alley, creates a more attractive street frontage. The courtyard building can be either attached or detached.



### Sideyard

The sideyard building is positioned on a side property line and occupies one side of the parcel leaving a generous side area reserved for open space or providing access to other buildings behind. Placing the building close to the sidewalk and street, with parking at the rear, results in a well proportioned road cross section and definition of the public realm.



### **Rear Yard**

The rear yard is a series of attached habitable spaces placed towards the front of the parcel with the open space placed behind the building. The bar building is an intense form of the rear yard type found in urban environments. The bar-like structure can accommodate a variety of functions over multiple floors. Parking located at the rear, off an alley, creates a more attractive street frontage.

### Architecture

The architecture of civic structures should reflect their civic nature, convey to the observer their significance and contribute to civic art. Civic architecture should be of a scale and sophistication that is noticeable from the consistent urban fabric. Object or foreground civic buildings can be expressed more freely than their background counterparts. The detachment allows the objectification of the structure, providing designers with the ability to express civic buildings more freely, while civic buildings proposed in infill conditions should respond to the architectural characteristics of the adjoining structures. Good architecture is, in part, the result of carefully studied and well executed building proportions. Commonly applied proportioning systems in the development of civic buildings include the golden ratio, human scale, as well as geometric and mathematical formulas. The architecture of civic structures can help enhance neighborhoods, strengthen communities and provide character to the public realm.



This traditional example of an infill civic building complements the architectural vocabulary and materials used in the adjoining historic structure. The building's stone base and vertical openings emulates its neighbors facade, while anchoring the building to the ground.



Civic art that successfully expresses its function can act as an icon for residents by visually relating its purpose through design and architectural composition.



These examples of foreground civic buildings demonstrate modern architecture can easily be incorporated into civic design. It is important that close attention be paid to the design of all facades of a foreground building, regardless of its architectural style.



This example shows a well-designed building facade created by the careful coordination of signage and architectural design. The sign is integrated with the design of the building, creating a positive visual image for the structure, while architectural details enhance the physical appearance of the building and convey its use to the community.

# Signage

Signs, as well as the letters and supporting elements within them, should be designed to complement the architecture of civic structures. Signs identifying paths and other open space functions should blend with the landscape and be constructed of materials compatible with the natural and manmade features of the open space. A wayfinding signage program for civic buildings and open spaces within a neighborhood helps define the community's character and enhance the public realm.



A wayfinding sign program that incorporates art, landmarks, signage and environmental cues helps residents and visitors experience a community without confusion. These cues should be well planned, seamlessly connected and esthetically pleasing, creating a positive impression, as well as a sense of security and comfort.

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