

COLONIAL BEACH DESIGN GUIDELINES



September 12, 2013

Colonial Beach Design Guidelines

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Figure 1.0
Aerial image of Colonial Beach.

Introduction

Colonial Beach began its existence as a bathing and fishing resort around 1867. From then through today, Colonial Beach has remained a favorite recreation and relaxation spot for both residents and visitors. The town's location on the Potomac River was an asset in an era, prior to the advent of the automobile, when travel was slow and restrictive. Most visitors arrived by boat from Washington, D.C. The steamboat and ferryboat era brought prosperity. Steamships included the town on daily runs between Washington, D.C., Norfolk, and Baltimore. These daily services from many locations guaranteed the town's success.

Colonial Beach prospered as a resort for many years. The lure of beaches and waterfront property started a building boom of Victorian-era homes, summer cottages, and hotels. Many hotels, rooming houses, a dance pavilion, a carousel, restaurants, and amusement halls with bowling alleys lined the beach front and surrounding area. The beach and boardwalk were typically filled with people from May through September. Canoeing was also a popular activity, and the Potomac River would be crowded with canoes paddling up and down. Numerous recreational activities such as bathing, fishing, and boating attracted both residents and visitors.

During the latter part of the 20th century, the town suffered economically. Nearly all of the wood vernacular commercial structures along the boardwalk were demolished. The deterioration of the downtown district was a result of the termination of the steamboat service, and devastating storms and fires that destroyed many buildings. There are, however, several early 20th century commercial and residential buildings in Colonial Beach that are still utilized today. A 2001 historical survey, completed by Kathryn A. Miller with Historic and Architectural Resources, found great historic significance, stating that, "Few communities have such a complete representation of historic resort architecture."

In recent decades, Colonial Beach has been regaining its appeal as a waterfront resort, attracting working families, retirees, and second-home development. In the midst of this period, Colonial Beach desires to encourage managed, high-quality growth, in keeping with its historical character. Despite the loss of many landmarks, their memories and the many people associated with them live on. Colonial Beach's small-town atmosphere, historic events, and architecture are its greatest assets. Building on these assets will reinforce the town's identity and help to create a long-term vibrant community.

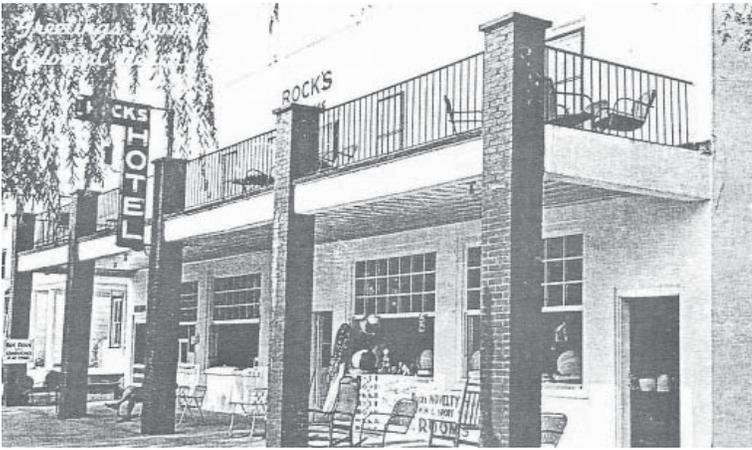


Figure 1.1
Historic image of the Rocks Hotel.



Figure 1.2
1940's image of the boardwalk.



Figure 1.3
Historic image of the Colonial Beach beach front.

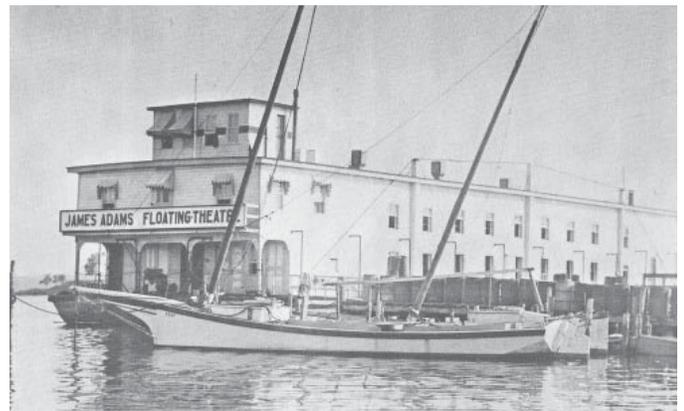


Figure 1.4
Historic image of the James Adams Floating Theatre



Figure 1.5
Historic image of Westmoreland Sundry Store. Building still exists today as a real estate office.

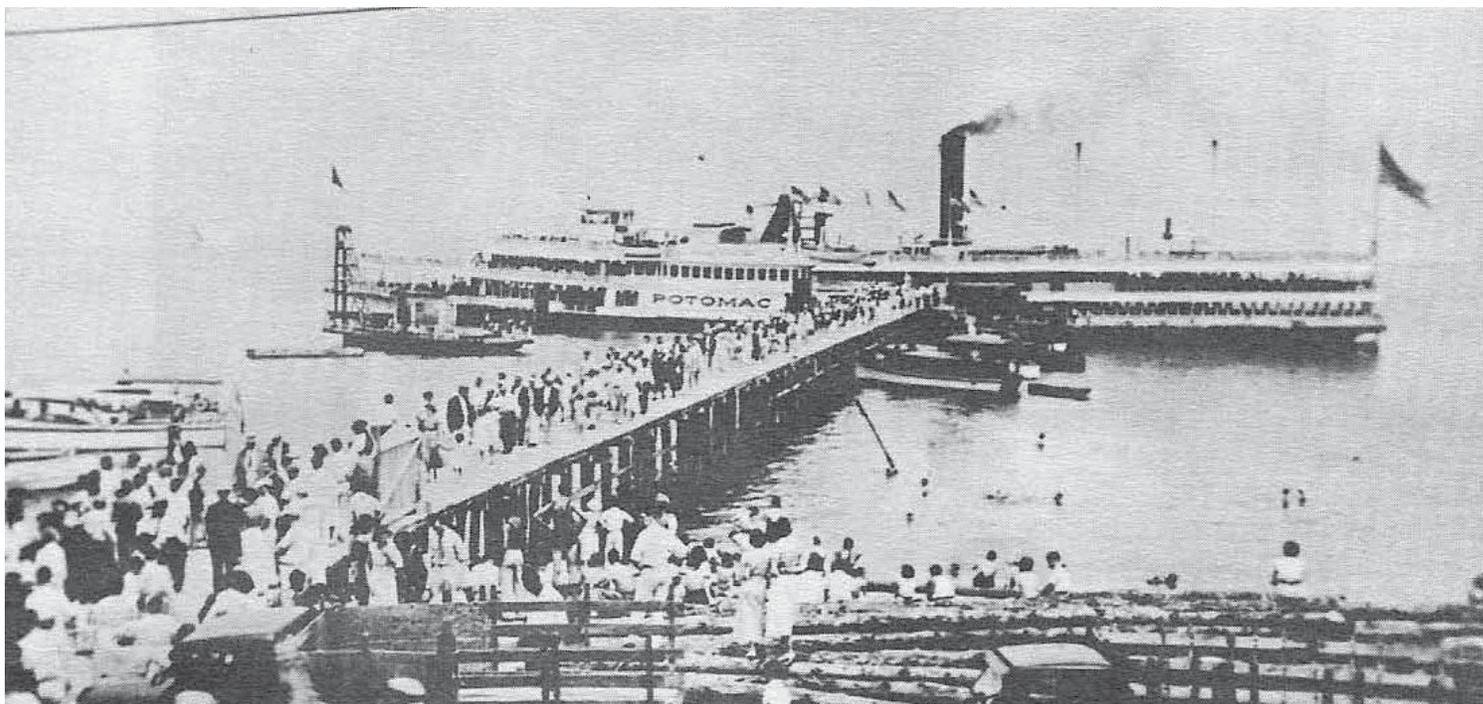


Figure 1.6
Historic image of the Potomac Steamship docked at the Colonial Beach pier.

Purpose

The Colonial Beach guidelines were newly developed to guide development and redevelopment. The guidelines encourage an attractive and historically unique town that celebrates its history and maritime ties to the Potomac River. This document contains the concepts that:

- Celebrate the unique heritage and distinct neighborhoods of Colonial Beach;
- Establish a sense of place and economic vitality;
- Promote the town as a destination for visiting, working, playing, and living; and
- Preserve the character and strengthen the identity and community.

The guidelines are designed to provide a balance between aesthetics and functionality. They address site design, architecture, and other elements that work together to define the community. These guidelines should serve as the foundation for planning, design, and development in the town of Colonial Beach. The guidelines are not intended to limit creativity, but rather to exemplify the unique characteristics of Colonial Beach and guide good, context-sensitive, sustainable design.

How to Use This Document

This document is organized in three sections: General Guidelines, Resort Area Guidelines, and The Point Guidelines.

General Guidelines—these focus on elements in the Central Planning Area and The Point Planning Area. See Figure 1.7 for town planning areas. They can be applied to other areas of the town as desired/appropriate.

Resort Area Guidelines—supplemental guidelines that focus specifically on Colonial Beach's historic resort commercial core and are primarily for nonresidential or mixed-use buildings. These are intended to detail specific elements that are unique to this area. The general guidelines also apply in this area.

The Point Area Guidelines —supplemental guidelines that focus on the large residential area south of the Resort Area. They are primarily intended to be used for single-family dwellings, and limited maritime commercial properties along the fringe of The Point. These are intended to detail specific elements that are unique to this area. The general guidelines also apply in this area.

Each section hereinafter is subdivided into three categories: Site Layout, Architecture, and Other Elements. Collectively

these sections will highlight the specific guidelines that will shape and direct future development in Colonial Beach.

The following is a summary of the categories and terms that will be used throughout this document.

I. Site Layout—Site Layout describes how elements are arranged on a site and how those elements respond to the environment. When developing or redeveloping property, natural site features and historic architecture should be preserved. Views should be celebrated, and pedestrian mobility should be enhanced. Key elements that will be discussed are:

a. Environmental Character

i. Environmental character are the unique features that distinguish a site. Features range from mature vegetation, natural drainage patterns, architecture styles, and views to the water.

b. Setbacks and Building Location

i. The setback is the space between the right-of-way line and the building footprint. Setbacks will vary depending on the area.

ii. The building location is physically where the buildings and accompanying structures are placed on a lot. Key elements to consider are the building's use, parking, circulation, adjacent structures, and views.

c. Circulation

i. Circulation is the way people move through a site. Circulation includes pedestrians, automobiles, bicycles, and golf carts.

d. Parking

i. Parking, whether on-site, off-site, or shared, should be provided and designed for the property's use and density. All types of vehicles should be considered when designing parking areas, including bicycles and golf carts.

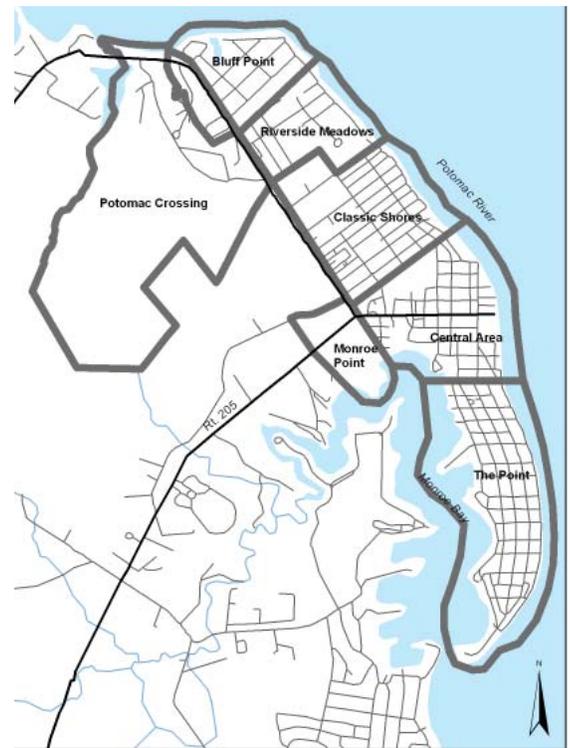


Figure 1.7
Town planning areas. These guidelines specifically apply to properties within the Central and The Point planning areas. They can be applied to other areas as desired/appropriate.

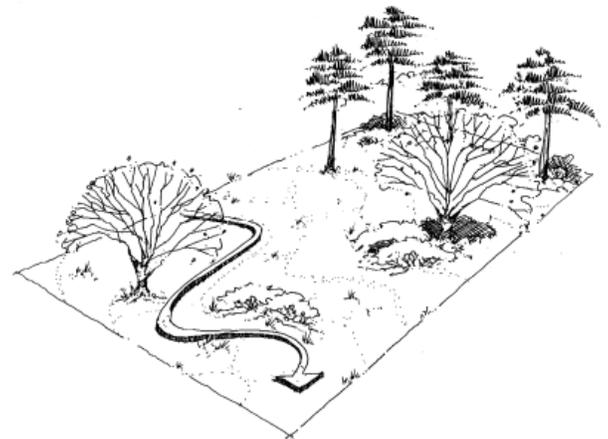


Figure 1.8
Existing site features such as drainage, vegetation, and views should be preserved when possible.

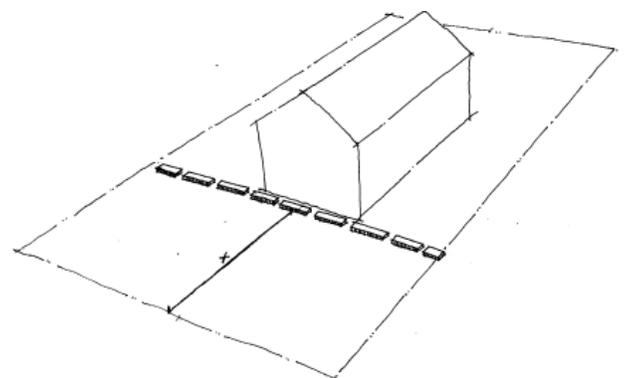


Figure 1.9
The setback is the space between the right-of-way line and building footprint.

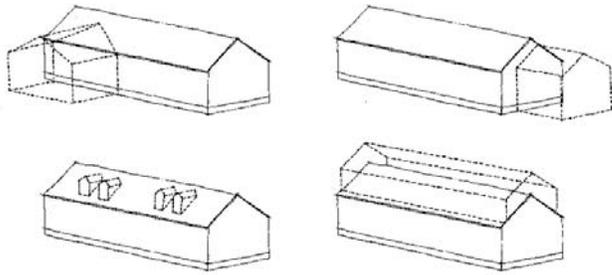


Figure 1.10
Additions should be designed to complement the original character of the building.

II. Architecture—Architectural styles vary throughout Colonial Beach. Styles range from the eclectic Historic Resort Commercial Area area to more traditional resort cottage neighborhoods. Although the overall style may differ from building to building, it is important that all the styles work together to enhance the character of the town.

- a. **Preservation of Historical Structures**
 - i. Colonial Beach derives much of its character from its historic buildings. These buildings should be preserved and/or renovated whenever possible.
- b. **Scale and Mass**
 - i. Building scale and mass is how the building's layout is arranged and perceived. Well-designed buildings incorporate elements proportional to the human scale.
- c. **Architectural Styles**
 - i. Several types of architectural styles exist in Colonial Beach. The predominant styles and their dominating features are discussed.
- d. **Architectural Elements**
 - i. Architectural elements include but are not limited to detail, entrances, windows, roofs, building material, and color selection.

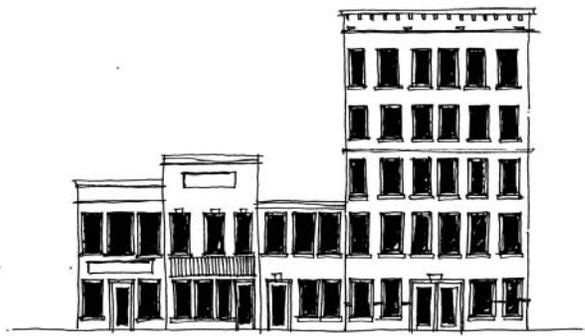


Figure 1.11
Building scale should be consistent with adjacent properties. The building to the right is an example of inappropriate use of scale.



Figure 1.12
Typical building facade.

III. Other Elements—In addition to site layout and architecture, town character is derived through a combination of other elements. All these elements work together to create desirable community character.

a. Utilities

- i. Utilities are the services that provide water, electric, gas, telecommunications, sewer, etc. For the purposes of this document, utilities also include refuse and exterior storage containers.

b. Lighting

- i. Lighting is provided along streetscapes and outdoor areas to enhance the pedestrian experience. Illumination should be provided for safety, security, and aesthetics.

c. Signage

- i. Signage is used to inform the public. A variety of sign types are desired in Colonial Beach, such as wayfinding, interpretive, and informational (advertising).

d. Landscaping

- i. Landscaping helps to define exterior space, adds aesthetic value, and naturalizes urban areas. Landscaping can also be used to screen unsightly views and complement architectural styles.

e. Fences and Screening

- i. Fencing is used to accent and define exterior space.
- ii. Screening is used to conceal unsightly elements such as refuse containers and mechanical equipment.

f. Site Furnishings (Commercial / Business)

- i. Site furnishings are used to provide comfort, convenience, and accent exterior spaces. Site furnishings include, benches, trash receptacles, and planters.

g. Public Art/Mural (Commercial / Business)

- i. Art can come in a variety of forms and media. The intent of public art is to engage the town and reflect this growing culture in Colonial Beach.

h. Outdoor Areas (Commercial / Business)

- i. Outdoor areas can be used for many different activities. They should be used to create inviting public spaces that support vibrant commercial areas.



Figure 1.13
Above ground utilities area unsightly and create visual turbidity.



Figure 1.14
When utilities are placed underground and or screened, it improves the overall quality of the streetscape.

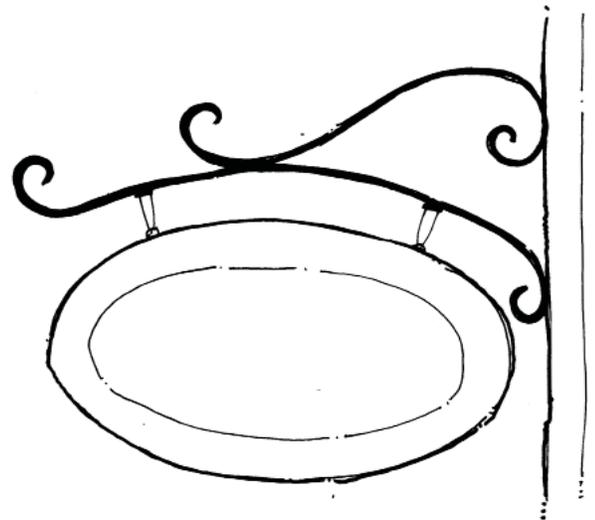


Figure 1.15
Signs should not dominate the streetscape. Signs similar to this should be used for identifying businesses.

General Guidelines

Defining Community Character

To establish a foundation for the development of general area guidelines, community members were asked to brainstorm on existing elements that define their community. The following elements were identified:

- Charming, quaint and historic small town
- Quiet/peaceful and slow-moving
- Waterfront community - views of the water
- Fishing and boating community / marinas
- Tourist destination
- Special events
- Artistic
- Eclectic/wide variety of architectural styles
- Wooden buildings
- Bicycling and walking
- Cottages
- Seafood restaurants and marinas
- Golf cart community
- Retirement destination

The following guidelines were developed to incorporate aspects of these key defining elements in all new developments and redevelopments. Additional character-defining elements were identified for both the Historic Resort Commercial Area and The Point. See pages 23 and 29 for those elements and supplemental guidelines.

I. Site Layout

a. *Environmental Character*

- i. Before construction begins, the site's natural features, such as drainage patterns and existing vegetation, should be analyzed.
 1. Natural drainage areas and patterns should be observed before altering a site. Using the existing topography to direct stormwater can reduce construction cost and impacts to the environment.
 2. A clear-cutting method for site preparation should be avoided. Existing mature trees should be preserved, unless doing so would result in a hazardous or unhealthy condition. Trees to be preserved should have fencing placed around the dripline to prevent soil compaction during construction.
- ii. Properties along shorelines should utilize natural shoreline stabilization techniques whenever feasible.
- iii. Stormwater from building roofs should be reused as much as possible. Collected rainwater can be used to water lawns, trees, and plants.

b. *Setbacks and Building Location*

- i. Where infill buildings are planned, the setback of proposed buildings should be based on the existing street geometry to be consistent with adjacent properties.



Figure 2.0
Good example of a repurposed gas station building.

- ii. Buildings should locate their main entrances or storefronts toward the street. The entrances should be directly accessible from the sidewalk. This maintains the traditional emphasis toward pedestrian-oriented streetscapes.
- iii. Buildings should be located to limit the visibility of large parking areas from main roadways.

c. Circulation

i. Pedestrian

- 1. Safety for pedestrians is the highest priority. Crosswalks should be clearly marked and located at the intersections of primary roads.
- 2. Sidewalks should connect adjacent properties.
- 3. Sidewalks should be constructed with a separate material than that of the vehicle circulation.

ii. Bicyclist

- 1. Bicycling is an important form of transportation and recreation.
- 2. Bike rack locations should be considered when designing a site.
- 3. In such a small town, separate bike lanes are not needed on most roadways. However, in designing roadway and pedestrian corridors, bicyclist circulation should be considered.

iii. Vehicular

- 1. Proposed vehicular streets should connect freely to existing streets while preserving the existing grid pattern.

iv. Golf Cart

- 1. Golf carts are permitted on all roadways in town except Rt. 205. Golf cart parking should be considered in all new developments and redevelopments.

d. Parking

- i. On-street parking should dominate in the Historic Resort Commercial Area.
- ii. Off-street parking should be provided behind or to the sides of buildings.
 - 1. Integrate the parking area in building's layout; consider the parking area as an extension of the building.
 - 2. Large, expansive parking areas should be avoided. Instead of compiling all off-street parking into a single lot, the parking lot should be broken up into smaller areas. These smaller areas, referred to as "parking courts," are more visually pleasing.
 - 3. Landscape islands should be placed at a minimum of every 10 parking spaces. Islands



Figure 2.1
Mature trees should be preserved and protected during construction.



Figure 2.2
Uninterrupted sidewalks and crosswalks should be provided for pedestrians.



Figure 2.3
Parking for golf carts should be considered in all new developments and redevelopments.



Figure 2.4
Example of a stepped back upper story that would be appropriate to use for buildings in which three floors are desired.



Figure 2.5
Historic buildings, storefronts, and architectural elements should be persevered when possible.



Figure 2.6
Additions to buildings should be complimentary to the original structure. The addition should be located next to or behind the primary building to preserve the original character.

4. should be a minimum of 8' wide, large enough to accommodate a large shade tree.
4. In addition to automobiles, bicycle and golf cart parking should be provided.

II. Architecture

a. *Preservation of Historical Structures*

- i. Historic buildings, storefronts, and architectural elements such as entryways, display windows, doors, and architectural detail should be preserved to the greatest extent possible. When repairing or renovating buildings, it is recommended that any non-historic storefront or facade treatments be removed.
- ii. When reconstruction is necessary, deteriorated building elements should be replaced to match the original elements in size, scale, proportions, material, texture, and detail. Base the design on historical research and evidence. Maintain the original proportions and dimensions.
- iii. Additions should be compatible with the existing building and proportional in shape, position, location, size, material, and detail. Maintain the character of the original building by adding to the back or the sides of the structure
- iv. When new construction is necessary, because a building is too deteriorated, retain the character of the building through a design that is compatible with the scale, material, color, and texture of the historic building or surrounding buildings.

b. *Scale and Massing*

- i. A building's scale and massing (spatial layout) affect how it is perceived. Spaces that are designed with a human scale approach are more visually pleasing and walkable.
 1. One- and two-story buildings are the predominant building style. Where three stories are permitted, care should be taken to design the building in such a manner that it does not overpower adjacent structures. One option is to step back upper stories to minimize their impact.
 2. Avoid a box-like appearance by using building offsets, projections, balconies, and setbacks.
 3. Roof lines should have multiple heights and planes.
 4. Avoid blank walls by using windows, trellises, material changes, or other features that increase visual interest for people on the street.

c. *Architectural Style*

- i. Several architectural styles are prominent in Colonial Beach. The two dominating styles are Victorian and Resort Cottage. If an alternative style is chosen, it should incorporate the architectural elements found in these styles as much as possible.
- ii. Victorian style buildings are often complex in form and create picturesque compositions. Heavily detailed porches, elaborate woodwork, and textures created by scalloped, diamond, and fish-scale shingles are common features. Elements that should be considered when designing a Victorian style building are:
 - 1. Prominent porch elements.
 - 2. An orderly, symmetrical relationship between windows, doors, and building mass.
 - 3. Ornaments influenced by natural forms or turned decorative millwork.
 - 4. Vertically proportioned windows and doors.
- iii. Resort Cottage structures have low-pitched roofs, wide eave overhangs, and ornamental rafter trails and brackets. Some of the most recognizable features of this style are:
 - 1. Grouped windows in pairs or in sets of three with divided light patterns in upper sashes.
 - 2. Deep, broad porch elements with expressive structural components.
 - 3. Simple, straightforward volume with low-sloped, gabled, or hipped roof.
 - 4. A continuous horizontal trim band or belt course at the second floor window.



Figure 2.7
Typical example of a dwelling that displays elements from the Victorian style.



Figure 2.8
Typical example of an appropriate beach cottage style house. This type of dwelling is typically found in The Point area.



Figure 2.9
Architectural styles vary in Colonial Beach; the Historic Resort Commercial Area has a unique, eclectic, array of styles.



Figure 2.10
Facade designs should vary along the street to represent multiple buildings.



Figure 2.11
Entrances should be clearly defined and use elements such as parapets.

d. Architectural Elements

i. Facade

1. Façade design should vary along the street block as opposed to presenting a single face for the block; each building should display different and unique elements.
2. Provide façade treatments with the greatest amount of detail and refinement at the street level. A variety of the following features should be included in each building façade:
 - a. Recesses or projections;
 - b. Overhangs;
 - c. Raised parapet;
 - d. Fine architectural detailing; and
 - e. Canopies or porticos.

ii. Entrances

1. Building entrances should be clearly defined and highly visible from the street. Entrances should include elements such as: canopies, porticos, outdoor patios, display windows, and planters.

iii. Windows (Residential)

1. Modestly scaled, vertically oriented windows should be used.
2. Upper windows should align with those on the lower level.
3. Where privacy is an issue, utilize opaque glass materials or increase the sill height above the sight line from adjacent properties.



Figure 2.12
Storefronts should be appropriately scaled and use a proper ratio of display windows

iv. Roofs

1. Roofs should be designed using a combination of the following elements:
 - a. A cornice or molding to define the top of a parapet (a low wall along the edge of a roof or balcony);
 - b. Overhanging eaves;
 - c. Sloping roofs; and
 - d. Multiple roof planes.

2. Materials

- a. The use of traditional building materials such as brick or wood (composite material is acceptable) for primary wall surfaces is preferred.
- b. Building materials that display complex texture can be used to strengthen human scale.
- c. Materials that are highly reflective or that do not convey a human scale are inappropriate as primary building materials.

v. Color

1. Use colors that blend with the surrounding natural environment and complement adjacent buildings.



Figure 2.13
Using a combination of building material and texture helps to define building character.

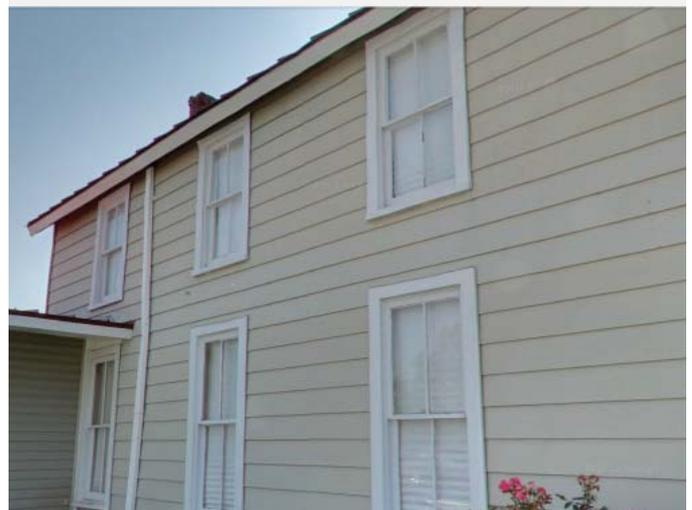


Figure 2.14
Windows should align vertically and have trim that complements the building's architectural style.



Figure 2.15
Overhead utilities can dominate the streetscape; when feasible, utilities should be placed underground.



Figure 2.16
Lighting should be consistent with the building's architectural character.

III. Other Elements

a. Utilities

- i. Storage, refuse, and service areas should be screened and placed away from the streetscape.
- ii. Utilities including electric, voice, data, and cable should be located underground when feasible. This will provide a streetscape free of unsightly elements.
- iii. When unpractical to place utilities underground, utility poles, transformers, and pedestals should be consolidated and should not obstruct pedestrian flow or vehicular sight lines.
- iv. Utility pedestals, generators, chillers, and air conditioning units should be screened from public view while maintaining appropriate means of access.
- v. All above- and below-grade utilities should be coordinated with landscape treatments to:
 1. Avoid possible conflicts (present and future);
 2. Conceal unsightly equipment; and
 3. Provide a continuous streetscape character.

b. Lighting

- i. Pedestrian lighting should be provided in commercial areas. Lighting should be considered for all of the following reasons:
 1. Safety—change in grade, path intersections;
 2. Security—outdoor areas; and
 3. Aesthetic—architectural accents.
- ii. All lighting should respond and be complementary to the architectural style of the building.
- iii. Energy-efficient fixtures such as LEDs should be used when available.
- iv. The lighting style and illumination should remain consistent throughout an outdoor area or streetscape. Pedestrian pole heights should be 10'-15' high.
- v. The location of light fixtures should respond to the site's anticipated use. Lighting for pedestrian circulation should illuminate changes in grade, sidewalk and sidewalk intersections, seating areas, and any other areas along a path that if unlit would cause the user to feel insecure.
- vi. Lighting should not intrude on adjacent property or glare into drivers' eyes.
- vii. Accent lights should be used to accent vegetation and buildings facades.
- viii. Light fixtures that reduce light pollution into the sky and onto adjacent properties should be chosen.

c. **Signage**

- i. Informational (advertising), interpretative (educational), and wayfinding (directional) signs are all desired in the town.
 - 1. Signs should be compatible with existing architectural style, material, and scale. A sign should not obscure or compete with the architectural style of the building.
 - 2. Signs should not dominate the streetscape.
- ii. Historical Signs
 - 1. Preserve historical signs where they exist.
 - 2. The location of new signs for commercial buildings should be appropriate and resemble signs on other historic buildings.
 - 3. New signs should support the historic character of the area.
- iii. Appropriate Sign Types
 - 1. Flush-mounted wall signs.
 - 2. Window signs (painted on the glass or hung inside the window).
 - 3. Projecting signs, mounted perpendicular to the building front.
 - 4. Awning and canopy signs.
 - 5. Sandwich-board signs.
 - 6. Directory signs.
- iv. Inappropriate Sign Types
 - 1. Billboards and banners.
 - 2. Internally lit plastic.
 - 3. Any sign that visually overpowers the building or obscures significant views of architectural features or views to the water.
- v. Sign Lighting
 - 1. A sign may be illuminated if the light is confined to or directed to the surface of the sign. No flashing, rotating, or intermittent illumination should be used.
 - 2. Light should be directed at the sign from an external, shielded lamp.
 - 3. The light source of signs should be shielded so that it may not be seen or shine into the eyes of drivers or pedestrians.



Figure 2.17
Mounted perpendicular signs are one example of an appropriate sign type.

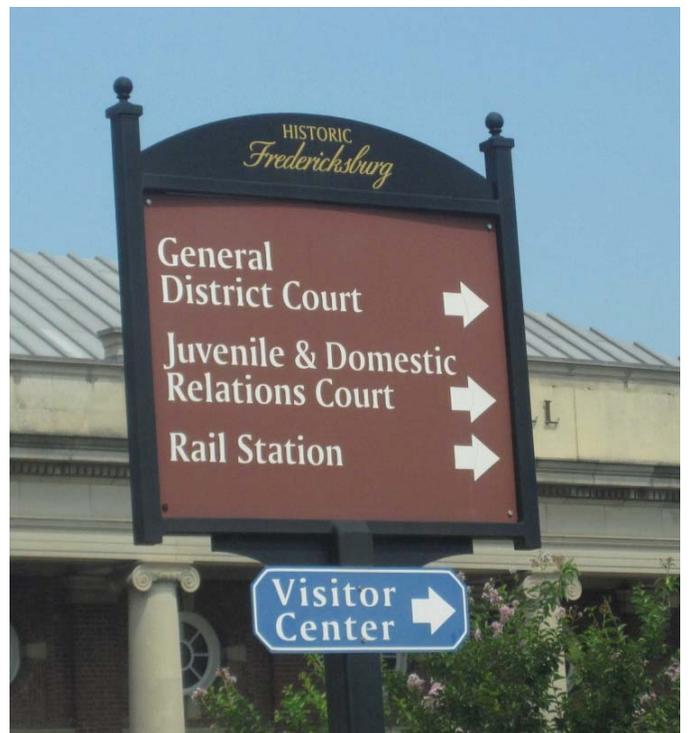


Figure 2.18
Wayfinding signs provide direction to the town's destinations.



Figure 2.19
Street signs can be designed to reflect the unique character of Colonial Beach.



Figure 2.20
Large, uninterrupted walls can be visually broken up with the use of a planted trellis.



Figure 2.21
Planters can be placed on top of pavement to accent building facades.

d. Landscaping

- i. Existing healthy vegetation should be preserved when feasible. See Environmental Character of the General Guidelines on page 12.
- ii. Plants native to the Coastal Plains should be used when possible. Using native plants will reduce the need for irrigation and supplemental soil amendments.
- iii. Species planted near the riverfront or beach should be salt tolerant and appropriate for this environment.
- iv. Vegetation can be used to reduce energy consumption for buildings. Large deciduous trees should be planted on the south sides of buildings. The trees will shade the building in the summer and allow for natural solar gain in the winter.
- v. When screening is necessary, vegetation can be used. Appropriate screening material should be low maintenance, evergreen, and mature to an appropriate size.
- vi. Trellises are encouraged and can be used to accent buildings and provide shade for pedestrians. Trellises should be used in combination with climbing vegetation.
- vii. Plantings should be used to provide shade and to accent features such as building entryways and outdoor areas. Planting material should be appropriately sized for their ultimate growth.

e. Fences/Screening

- i. Fencing and screening material should be consistent with the building’s architectural style and site furniture.
- ii. Chain link fencing should not be utilized in front yards or visible from any primary roadway.
- iii. Items that are unsightly should be screened from public view; this includes, but is not limited to, dumpsters, waste receptacles, and utilities.

f. Site Furnishings (Commercial)

- i. Site furnishings should be used to enhance the pedestrian experience by providing comfort and streetscape character. Important factors to consider when arranging site furnishings are:
 1. Cluster site furnishings such as planters, trash containers, and benches whenever possible.
 2. Accent building pockets, side streets, and entries with site furnishings.
 3. Street furnishings should be used to encourage pedestrian use while providing comfort, convenience, and visual interest to commercial areas.
 4. Art, murals, and other works should be featured in public areas where appropriate.



Figure 2.22
Public art displays are strongly encouraged. This beach mural was created by the local Artists Guild on a public building adjacent to the boardwalk.



Figure 2.23
Site furniture should be placed in areas that provide protection from the sun and weather.



Figure 2.24
When exterior elements are combined properly, they complement each other to create visually stimulating streetscapes.

Historic Resort Commercial Area Guidelines

The Historic Resort Commercial Area is generally located between Washington Avenue on the east and the Potomac River on the west. Colonial Avenue forms the northern boundary, and Boundary Street is the southern boundary. This area has always housed a wide range of land use and is the historic commercial core. Due to its history, location adjacent to the boardwalk, and beach front, it is one of the predominate character-defining areas in town. Unfortunately, due to economic decline and devastating storms, many of the historic structures have been lost. However, the inherent character of the area has endured and is evident in the remaining buildings and activities that bring this area to life. In addition, the continued presence of municipal and public offices such as the town hall, police station, school board office, library and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission have assisted in keeping a constant stream of individuals visiting the area. Currently, there is mix of commercial establishments (mostly retail,

restaurants, and hospitality businesses) and residential units in this area. New developments and redevelopments in this area should be developed in conformance with the Business District Revitalization Plan and incorporate the following elements:

- Views of the river/bay
- Walkability – pedestrian corridors
- Eclectic architecture styles
- Arts expression
- Boardwalk access



Figure 3.0
Aerial view of the Historic Resort Area.

Defining the Resort Area Character

To establish a foundation for the development of supplemental guidelines that focus on the Historic Commercial Resort Area, community members were asked to brainstorm on existing elements that define this unique area. The following elements were identified as those key elements.

- On-street parking
- Specialty shops, restaurants and galleries
- Boardwalk / beach front environment
- Window shopping
- Benches / sitting areas
- Eclectic architecture
- Pedestrian friendly
- Low-rise buildings
- Open outdoor areas / even space
- Remaining historic buildings
- Historical activities and events (ferries, waterman, resort, etc.)

The following guidelines were developed to promote the continuation of these key defining elements in all new developments and redevelopments in the Historic Resort Commercial Area.

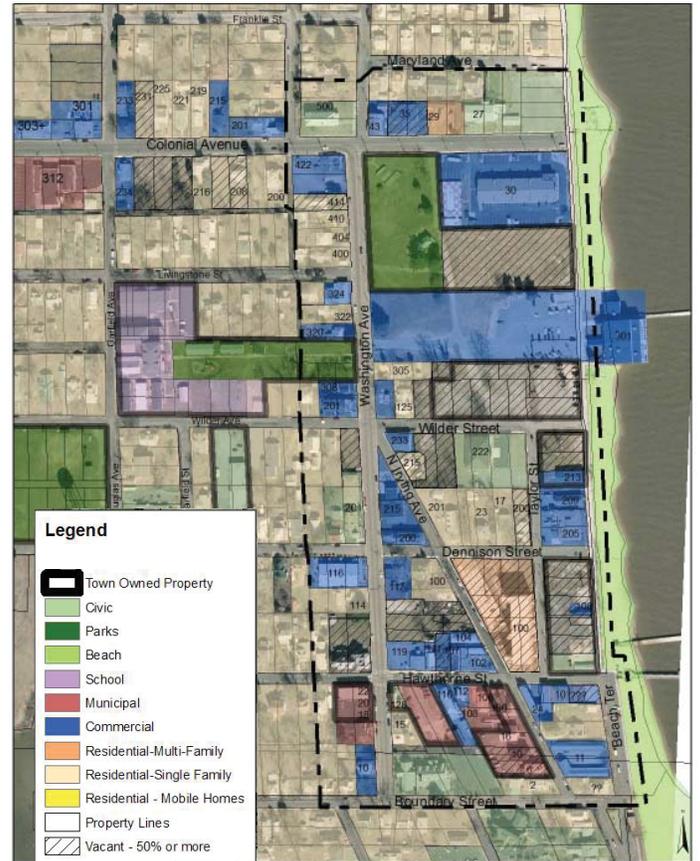


Figure 3.1
Historic Resort Commercial Area boundary and land uses.



Figure 3.2
Examples of architecture styles present in the Historic Resort Commercial Area.



Figure 3.3
Low-impact development approaches should be considered when addressing stormwater. The image above is an example of a bioretention swale.



Figure 3.4
Off-street parking can be provided on the side or rear of the building. Landscaping should be used to screen and buffer adjacent property uses.

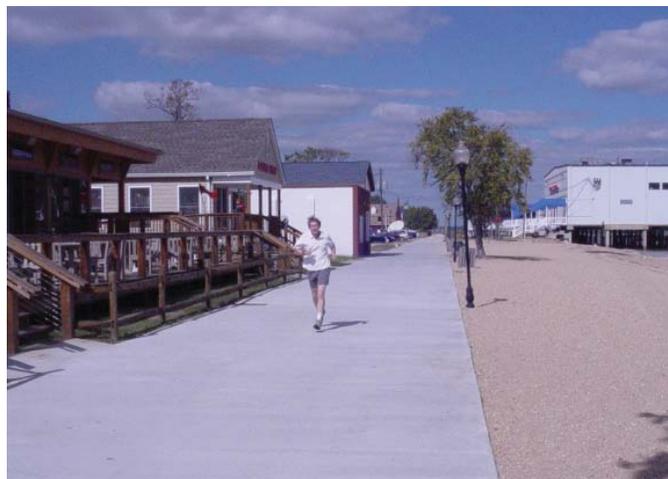


Figure 3.5
Colonial Beach boardwalk. Multiple pedestrian accessways to the boardwalk and beach front should be provided.

I. Site Layout

a. *Environmental Character*

- i. A unique attribute for Colonial Beach is its proximity to the Potomac River. Creating scenic views to the river are encouraged. Buildings should be oriented for maximum views. Vegetation should not be planted in areas where it would eventually obstruct views.
- ii. Utilize permeable pavement surfaces such as porous asphalt and concrete, grasscrete and/or traditional-looking block pavers that have the aesthetic appeal of brick or stone while reducing storm water runoff when possible.
- iii. Provide catchments and swales that allow stormwater to return naturally to the water table where feasible.

b. *Circulation*

- i. Circulation in the Historic Resort Commercial Area should be oriented around pedestrians and be established along the existing downtown streets with the implementation of sidewalks along all streets.
 1. Sidewalks a minimum of 8' in width should be located between the building and the street. Wider sidewalks are needed where benches, lights, and other streetscape elements are proposed.
- ii. Adjacent properties should share connections to create a walkable community and minimize pedestrian/vehicular conflicts.
- iii. Pedestrians in the Historic Resort Commercial Area should have unrestricted access to the boardwalk through the use of several public access ways.

c. *Parking*

- i. On-street public parking should be provided along streets in the Historic Resort Commercial Area and will provide convenient short-term parking opportunities for patrons of area establishments.
- ii. Long-term parking should be accommodated with larger off-street public- and private-parking areas. See the General Guidelines on page 13 for additional information.
- iii. Bicycle and golf cart parking should be provided at locations that are easily identifiable, visible, and convenient to customers.

II. Architecture

a. *Preservation of historic structures*

- i. See Architecture under General Guidelines on page 14 for information on preserving existing buildings.
- ii. When buildings cannot be preserved or renovated, new buildings should fit the existing eclectic character and borrow elements from existing buildings.
- iii. The Historic Resort Commercial Area has a mixture of residential and commercial uses. These can be combined to make mixed-use buildings with retail on the bottom and residential above.

b. *Scale and Massing*

- i. Building height is one of the main components relating to scale and massing. Typical buildings in this area should be as follows:
 1. Historic Resort Commercial Area in general – 3 stories max; and
 2. Along boardwalk – 1-2 stories.

c. *Architectural Styles*

- i. Architectural styles in the Historic Resort Commercial Area vary widely. Together, the styles contribute to an overall eclectic style that gives the area its unique character.
- ii. New buildings should represent authentic architectural styles. The use of facade treatments to mimic architectural styles is strongly discouraged. See Architecture under General Guidelines on page 14 for more information on the dominant architectural styles in town.

d. *Architectural Elements*

- i. Material
 1. Brick and wood (or composite wood materials) should be the dominant building materials.
 2. Stucco is appropriate for smaller scaled buildings; however, the building should not have large, uninterrupted walls.
- ii. Ground-floor retail / hospitality uses
 1. All commercial buildings should incorporate grade-level businesses and storefronts that provide features and pedestrian-oriented amenities at the street level, such as display windows, awnings, etc.
 2. To make new, larger buildings compatible with the surrounding architectural context, facade articulation and architectural embellishments are important considerations. Larger



Figure 3.6
Historic structures should be restored and repurposed when feasible. This historic building currently houses the Colonial Beach Museum.



Figure 3.7
Authentic architectural styles dominate the Historic Resort Area. New structures should resemble the character and authenticity of these buildings.



Figure 3.8
This building features a large tower and fish-scale shingles; these are common elements in the Victorian style.



Figure 3.9
Lighting can be used to accent architectural features, entryways and signs.



Figure 3.10
Wayfinding signs should be provided in convenient areas for pedestrian use. The signs should provide direction to the unique features and venues in Colonial Beach. Town-wide maps are also encouraged.

buildings should have facade articulation that reflects a group of small buildings and reinforces the architectural rhythm in the Historic Resort Commercial Area.

- iii. Display windows
 1. Storefronts should have proportional display windows that align with the street.
 2. The displays should be attractive and draw pedestrians into the business.

III. Other Elements

a. Utilities

- i. When feasible, utilities should be located underground.
- ii. Storage, refuse, and service areas shall be screened with plantings and elements that blend in with the building's architecture style.
- iii. Walls that screen storage, service, and refuse areas from view should be integrated into the building architecture.

b. Lighting

- i. Pedestrian lights should be installed along all sidewalks within the Historic Resort Commercial Area.
 1. Fixtures and poles should be consistent with site furniture style, material, and color.
 2. They should be located to provide continuous illumination.
- ii. Aesthetic lighting should be used to accent architectural features, outdoor areas, and site amenities, such as art work or fountains.
- iii. The use of low-level lighting in plaza walls, stairs, and seat walls is encouraged.
- iv. Fixtures attached to buildings should be consistent with architectural style and color.

c. Signage

- i. Signs should be employed to identify the uses of structures, and offer public information and wayfinding. The three types of signs that should be utilized in the Historic Resort Commercial Area are:
 1. Wayfinding signage—intended to guide and inform the public. Wayfinding signs should be accessible and located throughout the town. This type of signage includes town maps and directional signage.
 2. Interpretative signage—intended to educate the public. Interpretative signs will include information about history, the local vernacular, or unique environmental features. Given the history of the Historic Resort

Commercial Area, numerous interpretative signage opportunities exist that will add greatly to the character of the area.

3. Informational (advertising) signage—should be used to identify businesses. This type of sign should be simple and appropriate to the type of business it identifies.

d. Landscaping

- i. Avoid obstructing views of historic buildings and views to the water by selecting appropriate material.
- ii. The river and beach front landscaping should consist of native salt-tolerant species.
- iii. Plantings should be utilized to accent site features. Planting beds should be included at major pedestrian nodes, in open spaces, and along building facades.
- iv. Additional landscape elements that can be integrated into building design are:
 1. Trellises—these structures can be planted with climbing vegetation.
 2. Arbors—this type of structure can accent an entryway or be used as a transition for exterior spaces.
 3. Pergolas—these structures can provide shade for customers and can be located over outdoor dining areas.
- v. Plantings should be used to screen parking lots, loading areas, and major utility structures.
- vi. Tree canopies should be used to enhance the pedestrian shopping experience and create an enjoyable pedestrian environment.

e. Public Art / Murals / Other Works

- i. Public art is highly desired in the Historic Resort Commercial Area.
- ii. The art should be commissioned by a local artist and/or reflect the culture and character of Colonial Beach.

f. Public Open Spaces / Outdoor Eating Area

- i. Events are an important aspect of the Historic Resort Commercial Area. Developments are encouraged to incorporate outdoor spaces that will support the events and activities routinely scheduled.
- ii. Restaurants are encouraged to include secure outdoor dining areas.
- iii. Environmental factors such as sun, shade, wind, and views should be considered when choosing locations for outdoor areas.
- iv. Outdoor areas should be designed in conjunction with site furniture. See general guidelines on page 21.



Figure 3.11
Landscaping should be combined with other exterior elements to enhance the streetscape character.



Figure 3.12
Street trees should be planted to provide character and shade for pedestrians.



Figure 3.13
Businesses are encouraged to provide outdoor dining opportunities for customers.

The Point Guidelines

The Point is generally described as the area south of Boundary Street. This area is dominated by single-family residential with limited multi-family and commercial uses. The commercial use properties are primarily maritime establishments, such as marinas and boat docks.

This area has historical significance to the town. It was one of the first residential areas established and is primarily made up of single-family lots averaging approximately 5,000 sq. ft. A number of the homes are “vacation-cottage” homes occupied primarily in the summer months. A Survey of Architectural Resources in Westmoreland County, Virginia was completed



Figure 4.0
The Point is primarily made up of single-family residential units with limited maritime commercial properties located around the fringes.

in 2001. This identified a number of historical properties in the area. The buildings are primarily wood frame vernacular buildings with front porches and, more often than not, a porch on more than one elevation. These buildings, along with many others in the area, make up the unique cottage-type character of The Point. There has been a trend in recent years to convert these smaller cottages into larger, year-round, modern dwelling units.

The Point has several public parks and beaches. Many residents and visitors travel along Irving Avenue and Monroe Bay Avenue to experience the area’s unique character and expansive views of the Potomac River and Monroe Bay.

Most of the streets are narrow two-lane roadways without curbs and gutters. The northern section of the area has narrow sidewalks along several of its streets. New developments and redevelopments in this area should incorporate the following elements.

- Views of the bay and river
- Historic resort cottage architecture



Figure 4.1
Aerial view of The Point.

Defining The Point Area Character

To establish a foundation for the development of supplemental guidelines that focus on The Point, community members were asked to brainstorm on existing elements that define this unique area. The following elements were identified as those key elements:

- Historic resort cottage architecture
- One- and two-story buildings
- Porches and cupolas
- Multiple roof lines
- Small lot sizes
- Quiet residential area
- Marinas
- Bed-and-breakfasts
- Parks and outdoor recreational areas
- Bicycle and jogging routes
- Vacation rental cottages

The following guidelines were developed to promote the continuation of these key defining elements in all new developments and redevelopments in The Point planning area.

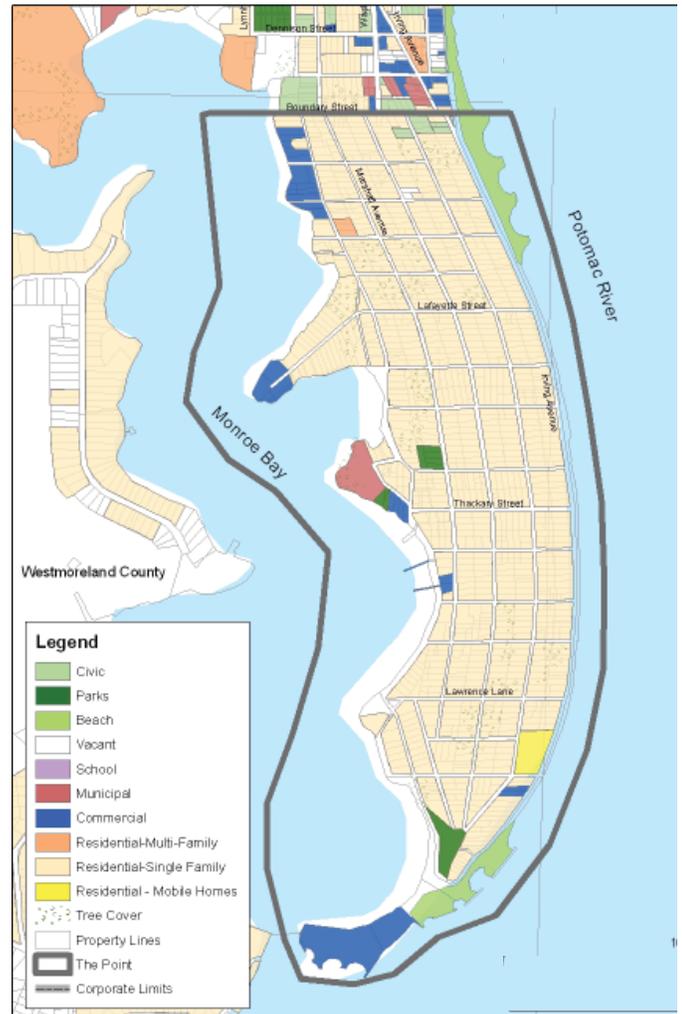


Figure 4.2
The Point planning area boundary and land uses.



Figure 4.3
Example of typical beach cottage façade found throughout The Point.



Figure 4.4
In The Point area, buildings should be oriented to be consistent with neighboring structures.



Figure 4.5
Garages should be located toward the rear of the lot.



Figure 4.6
Large front porches on more than one side help define the character of buildings in The Point.

I. Site Layout

a. *Environmental Character*

- i. Natural environmental features, such as large mature trees, should be retained and protected during construction. See general guidelines on page 12.

b. *Setbacks and Building Location*

- i. Setbacks should be consistent with adjacent buildings.
- ii. Garage Placement
 1. Detached garages set back in the rear yard are preferred.
 2. Attached garages should be recessed at least 10' back from the front and/or located on the side of the house.
- iii. Lot orientation for The Point is unique in that the lots and buildings are not always perpendicular to the street. This pattern should be maintained when new buildings and additions are constructed.

II. Architecture

a. *Preserve Existing Buildings*

- i. Existing buildings in The Point should be preserved if feasible. See general architecture guidelines on page 14.
- ii. If a new building is to be constructed, it should reflect the style, form, and mass of adjacent buildings. General heights for buildings in The Point should be:
 1. 1-2 stories preferably, or
 2. 3 stories if:
 - a. Architectural elements are arranged to mitigate the height and bulk of the building.
 - b. Buildings include variations in roof form, height, and footprint.

b. *Architectural Styles*

- i. The predominant architecture styles found in The Point area are Victorian and Resort Cottage. Modifications to existing buildings and new buildings should honor these styles. See General Guidelines on page 14.

c. *Architectural Elements*

- i. Architectural elements should evoke the character of older buildings.
 1. Height, bulk, and general massing should be consistent with other buildings in the area.

2. Buildings should locate a covered porch on the side facing the street. In general, the porch should run the entire front facade or be a minimum of 20'-25' long.
3. Roof style and pitch should be consistent with adjacent structures and architectural style.
4. Miscellaneous details such as trim, balusters, and dormers should be integrated into the building design.

ii. Materials

1. Materials should reflect the character of historic Victorian and Resort Cottage style dwellings.
2. Siding material should be wood or a wood-like synthetic siding such as Hardiplank placed in horizontal lines.



Figure 4.7
Example of a new home representing the historical architectural style found in The Point area.



Figure 4.8
Materials such as Hardiplank are an acceptable alternative to wood siding.



Figure 4.9
Example of existing architectural style found in The Point area.



Figure 4.10
Utility and mechanical units should be screened from public view.



Figure 4.11
Appropriate fencing height for front yards.

III. Other Elements

a. *Utilities*

- i. Utilities to buildings should be placed underground.

b. *Landscaping*

- i. Buildings should include foundation plantings on any side fronting a public street.
- ii. Building front yards should have a minimum of one large shade tree.

c. *Fences/Screening*

- i. Fencing in front yards should be constructed of wood or metal. Fences should not exceed 42” in height and should complement the building’s architectural style.
- ii. All building utilities, communication boxes, and air condition units should be screened from public view.



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