The goal of the 4MRV Design Guidelines is to reinforce the pedestrian realm and a community vision for industrial character infused with arts. The guidelines can inform and shape new development in the area, as well as building and site design improvements that accompany the reuse and retrofit of existing structures.

During the 4MRV planning initiative, the Working Group and community expressed a strong desire to retain an industrial character in the study area and to support a blending of additional arts uses and aesthetics into the district. Four Mile Run Valley is different from the County’s other commercial areas, and there is a desire to retain and strengthen a unique identity here. There is also a desire to improve streetscapes and the public realm, specifically to make the area safer and more inviting for pedestrians so that the existing and future uses in the district can thrive.

The Concept Plan described in Chapter 3 designates areas where certain uses and building heights are envisioned and identifies a general character of development for those areas. Building upon this concept, the Design Guidelines in this chapter describe important design elements of new or reused buildings, and improved streetscapes, that can reinforce the pedestrian realm and implement the vision for an Arts and Industrial District that is complemented with arts, recreation and cultural resources.

**FIGURE 4.1:**
Recommended Concept Plan for the 4MRV area (at right; see Chapter 3 for details)

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**PRESERVE EXISTING USES**
- **Character:** Area could change, over time, with reuse/redevelopment of industrial/service commercial or public uses already prevalent in the area.
- **Uses:** Industrial / service commercial / public
- **Height:** up to 75 feet (existing height limit); up to 120 feet (adjacent to I-395)

**PRESERVE EXISTING USES / ENCOURAGE ARTS-ORIENTED USES**
- **Character:** This area could have a mix of arts, maker spaces, and retail to blend with existing industrial and service commercial uses. Existing buildings could be retrofitted for new uses and/or infill development could occur.
- **Uses:** Flex Industrial / retail / public
- **Height:** up to 75 feet (existing height limit)

**BROADER USES**
- **Character:** Flexible industrial/retail ground floor uses and industrial, residential or office development on the upper floors.
- **Uses:** Flex Industrial / retail / office / residential / public
- **Height:** up to 75 feet
Design Guidelines can reinforce and guide implementation of the community vision as public and private improvements envisioned by the Plan are implemented and building uses change over time.

The images at right show how Oakland Street could transform, retaining an industrial character, but with improved public space and some new arts-focused uses. The street design accommodates vehicular movement, on-street parking, street trees, and a widened sidewalk that can be used for walking and dining. A flush street design, where the sidewalk is level with the rest of the streetspace, provides flexibility; portions of the street could be easily closed off to vehicles on certain days and times for local festivals or markets.

Building facades maintain an industrial appearance and character; buildings can have increased transparency (openings), murals, and shopfronts that are inviting to pedestrians. The form and materials of improved buildings should provide a cohesive setting that fits with existing industrial and service commercial buildings in the district.

The following pages describe key design features and typical materials that are used in flex industrial buildings.
In 4MRV, Flex Industrial buildings should be designed to have consistent building detailing as typically found in light industrial settings, so they fit within and enhance the existing urban context and community vision for industrial character. Design details could include:

1. Rectilinear building forms with simple massing, typically open floor plans, and flat roofs.
2. Generous floor-to-ceiling heights (at least 14’ floor-to-ceiling on the ground floor)
3. Ample windows / openings on the building facade, including floor-to-ceiling windows or the repurposing of garage doors as building fenestration.
4. Use of exposed building materials, such as metal rafters and concrete block.
5. Use of brick, concrete or stone masonry for primary building wall material; use of metal paneling and glass systems for ornamentation (see page 4.4).

FIGURE 4.3: FLEX INDUSTRIAL PRECEDENT IMAGES
MATERIALS
Use of a consistent palette of materials and consistent detailing can unify buildings within the district. Historically, buildings in the 4MRV had utilitarian facades generally lacking ornament, reflecting the functional nature of their intended use. Structures are generally masonry buildings with flat roofs. The following guidelines are intended to encourage new or reused buildings to fit within this context:

1. Building wall materials should reinforce the industrial character of development envisioned and existing within 4MRV. Encouraged building wall materials include: brick, concrete or stone masonry; stucco; and metal and glass systems (for windows, doors, and storefront conditions). Siding materials can be used for ornamentation, but are not encouraged as a primary building wall material.
2. Street walls, where installed to separate sidewalks from parking areas, should generally be comprised of the same material as the primary building façade. Fences can be metal (including wrought iron, steel or aluminum).
3. Brick masonry should generally be comprised of a standard unit size and height. Brick masonry may be painted.

BUILDING PLACEMENT AND MASSING
Generally, reuse of existing building stock is anticipated, however limited redevelopment may occur. Where redevelopment occurs, new opportunities arise to add to the existing fabric and rhythm of the streetspace. The following guidelines are intended to encourage new or reused buildings to fit within this context:

1. Private Buildings - Where existing building are reused or existing uses are continued, property owners are encouraged to examine how the entire site, including the building facade, the roof, and parking areas can be utilized to contribute to the vision for the area.
   - New private buildings that are built in areas designated for “Broader Uses” (See pages 3.1 and 3.2) within Subareas C and D should be sited at the back of the sidewalk.
   - New private buildings built in areas that are not designated for “Broader Uses” should consider how best to contribute to the streetspace through building placement, or the creation of open space and/or outdoor seating.
   Building height may vary, within the overall 75 foot height limit established in the Zoning Ordinance, but flexibility with respect to future uses should be considered.
2. Public Buildings - Where existing County buildings are reused or existing uses are continued, the County should examine how the entire site, including the building facade, the roof, and parking areas can be utilized to contribute to the vision for the area. New County buildings should be sited in a manner that reinforces the public realm and, where necessary, shields certain public uses from public view. New County buildings should be at least 2 stories in height and either:
   - Be built at the back of the sidewalk and have operable doors and windows facing the street, or
   - Be set back to provide functional public space along the street frontage.
FIGURE 4.4: TYPICAL BUILDING MATERIALS
PUBLIC ART AND CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

The inclusion of a hub of arts-oriented uses and public art within the 4MRV area is a defining feature that will set this portion of the County apart from other commercial areas.

1. Per Policy Recommendation B.4.e, the County should work with the Arts Commission, the Public Art Committee, Public Art Staff and the community to identify opportunities, per the Public Art Master Plan, to integrate public art within identified parks, public spaces, and other Four Mile Run Valley locations.

2. Murals are encouraged for existing blank building wall facades to provide pedestrian interest and reinforce the unique character for this area. Local artists should be considered for such commissions, per the County’s Public Art policy and Guidelines.

3. Area streetscapes are another opportunity for creative placemaking. Examples include the painting of temporary walkway/sidewalk buffers with murals or design features, or the installation of parklets that incorporate art and seating. These improvements can be commissioned, installed and maintained by a local business or arts organization.
PUBLIC ART CONSIDERATIONS

There are many kinds of art installations in the public realm: community-initiated, stand-alone, integrated, temporary or permanent. Often one highly visible, well-publicized and community-based art project can serve as a catalyst to encourage more art activities and installations in a district. The following considerations can set a community on the right path to the best possible outcome when it comes to public art:

1. Site Selection: A good place to start is to catalog the locations within the district best suited for an art project or installation. Sites where public art is best displayed include areas of high pedestrian traffic that are visible and broadly accessible. Keep in mind that public art can create a place of congregation and establish a landmark or gateway.

2. Artist Proposals: If a community group or organization is willing to facilitate a public art project, they can start by designating, pooling, or raising funds for a proposal process. Considerations within the proposal can include: thematic relationship to the community, its history or goals; representation of the values and culture of community members; how the art will activate or enhance a site; scale of the final piece; any lighting or signage needs around the artwork; and material selection and longevity.

3. Design and Review Process: A selection committee made up of community stakeholders and design professionals should meet with the artist or facilitator to discuss ideas and any parameters for the artwork. If a proposal was part of the artist/facilitator selection process, this committee should identify any issues or concerns about the construction, assembly, or installation of the final project.

4. Temporary Art Projects: Sometimes the best art speaks to a specific time, activates a space before it transitions to a more permanent use, or creates a special moment in time by lasting only for a season. Temporary art installations can be easier and less costly to implement. They also provide valuable opportunities for emerging artists and new art districts to experiment with different locations, materials, and styles.

5. Maintenance: Before a public art piece is installed or completed, a maintenance plan should be in place that considers the responsibilities and methods of funding for ongoing maintenance needs. Generally speaking, routine maintenance of any specific artwork should become the responsibility of the agency that houses the artwork.

6. Making Space for Local Artists: Encouraging artists and community engagement in the arts is an important part of any public art strategy. Any agency can begin by coordinating partnerships between local businesses and artists, hosting art exhibits or activities, and commissioning artwork.

The draft update to the Public Art Master Plan highlights several focus areas within Arlington for where public art is a priority. Four Mile Run Valley is one such focus area. The role and incorporation of public art has been woven into both the Four Mile Run valley Area Planning documents. Additionally, there are several other projects and opportunities within the broader Four Mile Run area where public art will or should be incorporated, including: Nauck Town Square; Jennie Dean Park; Short Bridge Park; Drew Park; Nelson Street Pedestrian Bridge (artist on the design team); and the Shirlington Transit Center expansion.

The overall goals for the inclusion of public art in these projects and opportunities are:

• Support the County’s multiple goals for the Four Mile Run corridor, including storm and wastewater management, open space and recreation.
• Enhance the design of infrastructure (such as wastewater management and floodways).
• Enhance the public understanding of infrastructure (such as wastewater management and floodways) and natural systems (such as tributaries and riparian habitat).
• Support urban design, community planning and open space goals for the Four Mile Run Valley, the rest of Nauck and Shirlington.
• Ensure that recommendations for public art in the Four Mile Run Valley Area Plan are consistent with the vision, goals and priorities of the Public Art Master Plan.
GUIDELINES TO REINFORCE THE PEDESTRIAN REALM

An important goal of this Plan is to improve pedestrian safety and comfort. This can be achieved through a combination of streetscape improvements and changes to how buildings address the street.

The vision for Four Mile Run Drive is to maximize on-street parking and walkability. In the near term, this can be done through paint and planters that define a temporarily widened sidewalk space and parking areas. Over time, improved crosswalks and more permanent changes, such as moving curbs and inserting street trees, planters and green infrastructure, can be accomplished.

As some buildings are inhabited by new uses or new development occurs, buildings can become better oriented to the improved streetscape. Facades can open to sidewalks and streetscapes with shaded shopfronts and larger openings; outdoor dining and public art can activate the streetscape; parking can be reorganized to better define public space and access between buildings and sidewalks; and signage and lighting can provide orientation as well as contribute to the district’s character.

The following pages describe elements that produce a positive pedestrian environment: building entrances, facade transparency, shopfronts and dining, shading of sidewalks, access to parking, signage and lighting.

FIGURE 4.6: FOUR MILE RUN DRIVE AT OXFORD STREET, BEFORE-AND-AFTER

above: Mid-term street design improvements, which utilize paint to redefine vehicular lanes and establish a widened, continuous sidewalk with planters to define parking areas; and potential building reuse with facade improvements that are oriented to the improved street. (See Chapter 3 for more detail about street design concepts.)

left: Existing conditions

right, page 4.9: Implementation of permanent improvements, such as mid-block crossings and the permanent street design changes (moving curbs, and installing trees and green infrastructure).
These conceptual exhibits are for illustrative purposes only. A future design process will fully assess through traffic concerns and lead to a specific design that incorporates appropriate materials and landscaping, and provides technical solutions for loading and deliveries.
The following guidelines can apply to new or reused buildings in the 4MRV area, to enhance walkability and the pedestrian realm and are options to be considered at the time of reinvestment in properties. Property owners are encouraged to consider these design elements as a menu of choices, rather than requirements, with the goal of contributing to the vision and enhancing the public realm on a site-by-site basis.

**PRIMARY ENTRANCES**

The primary entrance of a building should directly face and open onto a street/sidewalk or a pedestrian-oriented public space. The public space can include a garden, courtyard, or forecourt; the public space should connect directly to the sidewalk. Primary entrances that open directly onto parking lots are discouraged.

**BUILDING FACADES**

**Transparency**

All building façades which face a street or public space should meet the minimum transparency guidelines below. The intent of the façade transparency guidelines is to eliminate expanses of blank walls facing the public realm. The percentage of transparency per story is calculated within the area between the finished floor and finished ceiling and is a total percentage of doors and windows along that portion of the façade. Building facades that exceed the minimum transparency guidelines are encouraged.

1. Minimum building façade transparency for ground story (retail): sixty (60) percent
2. Minimum building façade transparency for ground story (uses other than retail): thirty (30) percent
3. Minimum building façade transparency for upper stories: thirty (30) percent

**Treatments**

Although existing buildings in this area generally have little or no architectural ornamentation, in keeping with their utilitarian industrial purpose, new and existing building facades can be “dressed up” to create interest by:

1. Developing an interesting paint scheme, or
2. Adding public art or ornamentation.

**FIGURE 4.7: BUILDING TRANSPARENCY**
LINER BUILDINGS
The character of some uses of land, such as warehouses and parking structures, may preclude their buildings from meeting the Façade Transparency guidelines. Such buildings can be constructed or retrofitted in a manner that they are separated from adjacent streets (but not alleys) by liner buildings.
1. Liner buildings should be at least fifteen (15) feet in depth; this ensures that the interior area is sufficient to be an actively used space.
2. Liner buildings may be detached from or attached to the primary building.
3. Liner buildings may be used for any purpose allowed on the lot on which they are located except for parking.
4. Liner buildings should meet the Façade Transparency guidelines above.

PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED SHOPFRONTS
1. The entrances to shopfronts (or an activating use) could be covered, either by an awning, canopy, second floor balcony, arcade / colonnade, or by being inset into the main body of the building (see page 4.12).
2. Shopfronts should provide interior views for pedestrians on sidewalks. The top of all shopfront window sills should be between one (1) and three (3) feet above the adjacent sidewalk. Shopfront windows should extend up from the sill at least eight (8) feet above the adjacent sidewalk.
3. Shopfront doors should contain at least sixty (60) percent transparent glass; solid doors are not desirable.

OUTDOOR DINING
Outdoor dining activates streetscapes. Dining is encouraged to occur in the front or side of buildings. However, a minimum 6’ clear sidewalk dimension should be maintained along the front of the building for pedestrian access.
SHADING OF SHOPFRONTS

Buildings with a shopfront (or activating use) on the ground story may have awnings, balconies, colonnades, or arcades facing the primary streets; these elements are also encouraged for buildings with other active or public ground floor uses. The following design guidance applies:

1. Awnings over ground-story doors or windows should have a depth of at least five (5) feet and a clear height of at least eight (8) feet above grade. Awnings should extend over at least twenty-five (25) percent of the width of the building’s façade.

2. Second-story balconies should have a depth of at least 6 feet and a clear height below of at least ten (10) feet above grade. Balconies should extend over at least twenty-five (25) percent of the width of the building’s façade. Balconies can have roofs but should be open toward the street.

3. Colonnades and arcades should have a clear width from their support columns to the building’s façade of at least eight (8) feet and a clear height above grade of at least ten (10) feet. Support columns should be spaced no farther apart than they are tall. Colonnades or arcades should extend over at least seventy-five (75) percent of the width of the building’s façade.

FIGURE 4.9: SHADING APPURtenANCES
PARKING

Per Policy Recommendation C.2.a, a district-wide approach to parking should be explored for the 4MRV area, with expanded on-street parking resources to support existing and future public and private uses.

1. Curb cuts should be shortened and/or consolidated where possible, to improve pedestrian safety and sidewalk continuity. Parking should be accessed from rear alleys (where they exist - for example, in new development in subarea C or D) and/or from side streets if the lot is located on a corner. If no rear alley or side street exists, then efforts should be made to allow access across neighboring properties, where possible.

2. When access to parking must be directly from the street, driveways should be designed such that pedestrian access and safety are maximized.

3. Off-street parking areas for new development: parking lots or garages should be set back from street sidewalks or public spaces a minimum of twenty (20) feet, except:
   a. When the parking is located within the building footprint, and at least five feet below grade and screened from pedestrian view; or
   b. Where constrained sites do not allow a 20’ setback, a low wall or fence (4’ max height) can be used to separate surface parking lots from pedestrians on area streets or in public spaces.
PRIVATE SIGNAGE AND LIGHTING

Signage and lighting in the private realm should enhance the character of the public realm, and help to give identity to the streetscape.

1. Building wall signs (including painted signs as well as signage affixed to the wall) should be an integral component of the facade design. Property owners are encouraged to incorporate materials, designs and lighting to accentuate the unique character of the area.

2. Consideration of security and pedestrian comfort shall be prioritized by increasing illumination low to the ground in parking lots, at building entries, and semi-public spaces.

WAYFINDING, LIGHTING AND FURNITURE

Installation of appropriately-scaled wayfinding signage on public right-of-ways can help to unify a district and encourage pedestrian life. Wayfinding signage that identifies key public areas and unique local designations can be installed and maintained by the County or by a local business or arts organization.

1. It should be consistent in theme and placement, and coordinated with other streetscape furniture (e.g., light posts) to reduce visual clutter in the public realm.

2. Area Plan wayfinding should be coordinated with, and complementary to, the 4MRV Park Master Plan wayfinding measures.

Signage and lighting fixtures within area streets and public spaces can create a unifying scheme or provide interest within the 4MRV district.

1. A combination of pedestrian-scaled street light fixtures (generally not taller than 16 feet) as well as intersection street light fixtures can ensure a well-lit street area and establish a unifying element along the street.

2. The long-term streetspace vision for Four Mile Run Drive (See p. 4.9) should incorporate street furniture that is coordinated with the Jennie Dean Park design process.
FIGURE 4.12: WAYFINDING EXAMPLES