



Overlay Districts

**Article
11**

Richmond Hill Unified Development Ordinance

Section 11.1 Purpose

Two (2) overlay districts are established to recognize and protect the unique character and integrity of areas that embody significant elements of Richmond Hill's history and/or to present a positive and welcoming image along key entry points to the community.

- A. **Ford Avenue Historic District.** The purpose of the Ford Avenue Historic District is to preserve the historic resources from the era of Henry Ford along Ford Avenue and ensure that all future development is harmonious in size, scale, material, and siting with the historic buildings. The District is significant as the commercial core of the town built by Henry Ford following the establishment of his estate just northeast, on land previously associated with three antebellum rice plantations facing the Ogeechee River. Made up of 76 buildings in all, 20 buildings within the District were erected between 1925 and 1947 and are considered contributing to its significance. The District's contributing resources include businesses, houses, and religious and civic buildings built during the tenure of Henry Ford in Richmond Hill. The District's historic buildings are characterized by the regional architecture of the South, specifically the historic buildings which stood in Bryan County at Henry Ford's arrival--The historic buildings in Bryan County at the turn-of-the-century were straightforward and functional, drawing an aesthetic from the traditional assembly of materials utilized for the roofing, exterior finish, accent exterior finish, and accent trim colors (windows, doors, etc.).
- B. **Gateway Overlay District.** The Gateway Overlay District is intended to establish an inviting image and welcoming character along the city's main arterials into and through the community. The District provides cohesive design requirements across the city, ensuring appropriate aesthetic considerations consistent with the local vernacular of Southern Bryan County and coastal Georgia. The District's requirements set forth standards for commercial and non-commercial development at varying scales, designs, and situations appropriate to the various corridors. It complements the historic character protected by the Ford Avenue Historic District, and ensures quality development, creates a harmonious image, and minimizes congestion and clutter along these important, highly visible corridors.

Section 11.2 Applicability

- A. The requirements of the overlay districts apply to all uses and are in addition to and shall supplement those requirements imposed on the same lands by the underlying zoning provisions of this ordinance or other regulations of the City of Richmond Hill. These regulations supersede all conflicting regulations of the underlying zoning districts to the extent of such conflict.
- B. Where a lot or parcel of land lies partially within and partially outside an overlay district, the whole of the parcel shall be considered within the overlay district.
- C. The requirements of this article shall apply to all new construction and the repair, alteration, or change in material appearance of or additions to existing buildings or structures in both districts. Changes to the exterior color, material, and/or roof of a building or structure shall fully comply with the applicable requirements of this article. However, in the Gateway Overlay District only, the following provisions also apply: renovations and additions shall only be required to comply when the cost of construction exceeds 50 percent of the value of the building at the time of building permit application, or is cumulative to 50 percent over a 10-year time period, as a result of any additional building permit applications, in which case the entire building or structure shall be brought into compliance with the requirements of this article. The 50 percent provision does not apply to roofing material, site furnishings, windows and doors, awnings, and/or work related to exterior color. Any change to roofing material shall conform to the requirements of this article. Any exterior painting, replacement of any site furnishing, replacement of any doors or windows,

and/or changes or replacements to any non-conforming exterior building materials shall conform to the requirements of this article.

- D. Where any part of the two districts overlap, the standards of both shall apply. When applicable, the Ford Avenue Historic District shall take precedence related to rehabilitation of contributing structures, additions to contributing structures, and demolitions, otherwise the more stringent standards shall apply.
- E. **Ford Avenue Historic District:**
1. **Boundaries.** The Ford Avenue Historic District extends from the intersection of Highway 17 and Ford Avenue, formerly known as the crossroads, stretching east to incorporate all parcels sharing a boundary with the right-of-way of Ford Avenue, in addition to Parcels #0531051, #0532120, #053215302, and #0532180 ending with the eastern edge of the parcel associated with the Ford Kindergarten and Bailey Carpenter Barbershop (#054069) on the south side of the street and the eastern edge of Parcel #0532114 on the north side of the street; properties associated with The Ford Plantation, Inc. have been excluded. See Boundary Map in Appendix E.
 2. **Contributing Resources Map.** All resources on the “Ford Avenue Historic District Contributing Resources Map” shall be classified and designated as either contributing or non-contributing to the district. See Appendix E.
 3. **Period of Significance.** The period of significance for the Ford Avenue Historic District extends from 1925 to 1947.
- F. **Gateway Overlay District Boundaries:** The Gateway Overlay Area shall consist of the area generally described as the areas along, fronting, adjacent to, and/or accessed from GA144 between the City limits and Port Royal Drive and US Highway 17 between the northern City limits and southern City limits . See Boundary Map in Appendix G for the specific location.

Section 11.3 Ford Avenue Historic District Requirements

The Ford Avenue Historic District shall be governed by the rules and processes outlined in the Historic Preservation Ordinance. All exterior alterations, additions, new construction, demolitions and relocations within the Ford Avenue Historic District shall be consistent with the standards in this section. The standards are further elaborated and illustrated in the “Ford Avenue Historic District Design Guidelines Manual,” Appendix E.

- A. **Historic Building Rehabilitation Requirements.** Material changes to contributing resources shall be evaluated by use of the current edition of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation as published by the U.S. Department of the Interior and the following standards:
1. **Foundations.** Alterations to historic foundations shall be consistent with the following:
 - a. Historic foundation materials and design shall be preserved, maintained, and restored whenever applicable.
 - b. Unpainted historic brick shall not be painted or stuccoed.
 - c. The re-pointing of historic lime mortar shall utilize mortar of a similar color, texture, profile, and composition. The re-pointing of historic brickwork with Portland cement shall be prohibited.
 2. **Exterior Building Walls.** Alterations to building walls shall be consistent with the following:
 - a. Exterior materials and design shall be preserved, maintained, and restored on walls and gable ends to include original details such as gable end returns, cornice details, corner

- boards, engaged columns, door and window trim, moldings, and shingles; in addition to historic exterior wall materials to include wood weatherboards or clapboards and concrete masonry units.
- b. If the replacement of wood siding or features is necessary, only deteriorated materials shall be replaced with wood to match the existing.
 - c. Paint or other coatings, such as stucco, shall not be permitted on unpainted or uncoated historic masonry.
 - d. Synthetic or imitation materials such as vinyl or aluminum siding, brick veneer, Exterior Insulation Finishing Systems (EIFS), or asphalt siding shall not be permitted.
3. **Windows and Doors.** Alterations to windows and doors shall be consistent with the following:
- a. Original doors and windows visible from the public right-of-way shall be preserved, maintained, and restored to include associated transoms, sidelights, moldings, trim, and other elements.
 - b. When replacement parts are necessary, elements shall be replaced in-kind with features to match to include the duplication of profiles, massing, scale, and light patterns in design and material.
 - c. If the original window material and/or configuration is unknown, or if a new window is proposed in an unoriginal opening, the new window material and configuration shall be based on historic context.
 - d. When added, storm windows framing elements shall line up with existing window framing.
 - e. The addition of shutters, which are unoriginal to the District, shall not be permitted.
4. **Porches and Ramps.** Porch alterations and ramp additions shall be consistent with the following:
- a. Historic porches shall be preserved, maintained, and restored to include all character defining features such as handrails, balustrades, columns, brackets, floors and ceilings, roofs, rafters, eaves, etc.
 - b. Porch elements shall be retained, rather than replaced. If replacement is necessary, elements shall be replaced in-kind based on documented and physical evidence, if possible.
 - c. The enclosure of historic front porches visible from the public right-of-way, to include screening, shall not be permitted.
 - d. The enclosure of side and rear porches shall also be subject to the “Additions” standards and guidelines.
 - e. New porches shall not be permitted on primary facades.
 - f. Handicap accessible ramps or entryways shall respect the character-defining features, materials, and scale of the principal structure.
 - g. Ramps shall be located on the side or rear of historic buildings whenever possible and shall not be anchored to the building.
 - h. Ramps shall be made compatible through the incorporation of design elements from the primary facade.
 - i. Prohibited materials include fiberglass (including Perma-Cast), vinyl, and PVC.

5. **Awnings and Signage.** The incorporation of awnings or signage shall be consistent with the following:
 - a. Awnings shall not be permitted on historic buildings unless photographic or physical evidence exists to substantiate their historic location. In this instance, new awnings shall be of the same size, scale, and material based on evidence and historic context.
 - b. Awnings may consist of canvas, metal, or equivalent. Vinyl awnings shall not be permitted. PVC awning supports shall not be permitted.
 - c. All new signage on historic properties shall follow the *Article 16* Signs. In addition, the following standards shall apply:
 - i. Signage attached to historic facades shall not obscure any character-defining features.
 - ii. Attachments shall not damage historic materials and shall be reversible.
6. **Roofs and Chimneys.** Alterations to roofs and chimney shall be consistent with the following:
 - a. Original chimneys and roof materials, shapes, and pitch shall be preserved, maintained, and restored to include associated eaves, rafters, overhang, materials, and architectural decoration such as gable end returns, cupolas, and chimney corbels.
 - b. When necessary, historic roof materials shall be replaced in-kind to match as closely as possible the texture, color, design, and composition of historic roof materials.
 - c. Only asphalt or metal shingles shall be used as replacement roofing material.
 - d. Skylights shall not be visible from the right-of-way.
 - e. Gutters and downspouts shall either not be visible or shall be located on side and rear facades wherever possible.
7. **Additions.** New exterior additions, including porches, to historic buildings shall be consistent with the following:
 - a. New additions shall preserve the historic building's character, form, significant materials, and features.
 - b. Additions shall be placed on rear or secondary elevations and be compatible in mass, size, scale, and design while remaining differentiated.
 - c. Additions shall be installed in a way that is reversible, so that the essential form and integrity of the historic building remains if the addition is removed.
 - d. Whenever possible, additions shall be separated by a simple, recessed, small-scale hyphen, or connection, to physically and visually separate additions from historic buildings.
 - e. Rooftop additions shall not be visible from the public right-of-way.
8. **Mechanical Equipment.** All mechanical equipment shall, whether roof, wall, or ground mounted, be located on the side or rear façade and screened from view from any public right-of-way.
9. **Accessory Buildings.**
 - a. All accessory buildings shall be constructed to match the architectural features of the contributing building on the parcel or shall be screened from public view.
 - b. Accessory buildings shall be located to the side or rear of the contributing building.

- c. Accessory building shall be smaller in mass and scale than the contributing building.

B. Demolition, Neglect, and Relocating Historic Buildings. Demolition, neglect and relocating historic building undermines the character and integrity of the District and shall be prohibited in all but the most extreme circumstances.

1. **Demolition.** Demolition shall only be permitted when the following conditions are met:

- a. A threat to public health or public safety has been determined by the zoning administrator based on supporting documentation from a licensed structural engineer in the state of Georgia; and/or
- b. Demolition is required to avoid exceptional practical difficulty or undue hardship upon any owner of any specific property. If the difficulty or hardship claimed is economic, the applicant shall submit sufficient evidence, to include:
 - i. An appraisal,
 - ii. Property assessment,
 - iii. Amount paid for the property,
 - iv. Past income activity,
 - v. Evidence of attempts to sell the property.
- c. All evidence shall be reviewed to determine if the applicant has been deprived of a positive economic use or return on the subject property. Hardship shall not be of the owner's own making.

2. **Neglect.** All properties shall be secured and stabilized consistent with the International Property Maintenance Code.

3. **Relocation.** The relocation of historic buildings shall only be permitted if the following conditions are met.

- a. The relocation is the only means to preserve the building.
- b. The relocation has no negative effect on the character of the surrounding context or location, i.e. the relocation of a building to a new location on the same parcel or an adjacent parcel.
- c. The relocation is on another site within the City of Richmond Hill.
- d. Plans for the redevelopment of the lot meet the design standards for new construction, when applicable, as submitted and approved by the historic preservation commission prior to the issuance of a permit to relocate the building.

C. New Construction and Alterations to Non-Contributing Resources Requirements.

1. **Mass and Scale.**

- a. The overall mass and scale of a building shall be minimized by employing at least two (2) of the following methods, as approved by the historic preservation commission:
 - i. Recessing building floors above the first story;
 - ii. Varying the height of the building and/or roof line;
 - iii. Incorporating multiple structures of varying sizes;
 - iv. Articulating doors, windows, balconies, and plate lines such as three (3) inch or

more window and door recesses; or

- v. Other significant architectural variations.
- b. Buildings with a footprint larger than 5,000 square feet shall give the impression of several smaller common wall buildings rather than one monolithic building.

2. Building Setbacks.

- a. On parcels with an existing contributing building, the new building shall be located behind the front plane of the contributing building.
- b. On parcels adjacent to parcels with contributing buildings, the front yard setback shall be determined by the base zoning district or the average setback of the contributing buildings, whichever is greater.
- c. On all other parcels, the front yard setback shall be determined by the base zoning district.

3. Building Height. Maximum building heights shall be determined by the base zoning district, provided the following standards are also met:

- a. On parcels without contributing buildings, primary buildings shall be designed to create the impression of at least two stories.
- b. On parcels with contributing buildings, new construction shall not exceed the height of the contributing building.

4. Building Façade

- a. Composition.
 - i. The first floor shall promote interaction between pedestrian and building activities through the use of windows, doors, and storefronts.
 - ii. On multi-story buildings, all sides facing a street or parking area shall establish a differentiation between the ground floor portion of the façade and upper stories through architectural detailing such as cornice lines, changes of material, and stepped building faces.
 - iii. Buildings shall be designed with a visually distinct base, middle, and top through changes in details, materials, and texture.
 - iv. Exterior walls facing a street or parking area shall be made visually interesting by the use of architectural details (vertical elements, openings, change in materials or color, projections, recesses, etc.) as follows:
 - Institutional, office, and commercial buildings. No wall surface shall exceed 30 feet in length without an interruption in the horizontal plane of the wall of a minimum of two (2) feet and a vertical change in height of at least four (4) feet for a length of at least 15 feet.
- b. Materials. The exterior wall materials shall be wood or smooth cementitious clapboard siding (or otherwise equal as approved by the historic preservation commission). Building accents may be:
 - i. Tabby; and/or
 - ii. Brick.

5. Windows and Doors.

- a. The primary entrance shall be prominent within the façade and shall face the street.
 - b. Windows and doors shall create a pattern and spacing typical to the architectural vernacular.
 - c. Windows shall include mullions or similar divisions to avoid large expanses of glass on any wall in excess of 30 feet in length.
 - d. Window openings shall be vertical.
 - e. Windows and doors shall be inset a minimum of three inches.
 - f. Where utilized, windows with divided lights shall be simulated divided lights (muntins on both the interior and exterior).
 - g. Solid vinyl windows shall not be permitted.
- 6. Roofs.**
- a. Variations in the roof line shall be created to add visual interest and reduce the overall scale of buildings. Extremely large roof elements that dominate other architectural features of a building shall not be permitted.
 - b. Roofs shall have between 4:12 and 8:12, and shall be standing-seam metal or asphalt shingles. Flat roofs shall not be permitted.
 - c. Whenever possible, gutters and downspouts shall not be visible from the public right-of-way.
- 7. Awnings and Signage.** The incorporation of awnings or signage shall be consistent with the following:
- a. Awnings may consist of canvas, metal, or equivalent. Vinyl awnings shall not be permitted. PVC awning supports shall not be permitted.
 - b. All new signage shall be consistent with the standards in *Article 16 Signs*.
- 8. Mechanical Equipment.** All mechanical equipment shall, whether roof, wall, or ground mounted, be located on the side or rear façade and screened from view from any public right-of-way.
- 9. Accessory Buildings.**
- a. All accessory buildings shall be constructed to match the architectural features of the main structure on the parcel or shall be screened from public view.
 - b. Accessory buildings shall be located to the side or rear of the primary building.
 - c. Accessory building shall be smaller in mass and scale than the primary building.

Section 11.4 Gateway Overlay Requirements

Structures within the Gateway Overlay District shall be consistent with this section. The exterior appearance shall be historically appropriate to the design elements, colors and materials used in Antebellum Bryan County/Ford-Era vernacular architecture. The architectural review board may waive or modify the material requirements of this section if it finds that a proposed building design and the materials or combinations of materials are in keeping with the purpose and intent of this overlay district and are similar in appearance to those used in Antebellum Bryan County/Ford Era vernacular architecture. The architectural review board shall also consider the established or desired character of the area, visibility of the site, building scale, and design recommendations of the comprehensive plan.

- A. **Mass and Scale.** The overall mass and scale of a building shall be minimized by employing the following methods, as approved by the architectural review board:
1. Recessing building floors above the first story, as appropriate, or providing architectural distinction for each floor above the first story;
 2. Varying the height of the building and/or roof line;
 3. Reducing the overall size of building footprints;
 4. Incorporating other structures on the site with varying sizes, as appropriate;
 5. Articulating doors, windows, balconies and plate lines; or
 6. Other architectural variations as approved by the architectural review board.
- B. **Building Façade**
1. Composition.
 - a. Buildings shall be designed to give the impression of several smaller common wall buildings rather than one monolithic building. The primary entrance shall be prominent within the façade. The façade facing the primary road corridor(s), including GA 144 or US 17, shall include a prominent design element feature when not the primary entrance.
 - b. The first floor of multi-story buildings shall promote interaction between pedestrian and building activities. All sides facing a street or parking area shall establish a differentiation between the ground floor portion of the façade and upper stories through architectural detailing such as cornice lines, changes of material, and stepped building faces. Buildings shall be designed with a visually distinct base, middle, and top through changes in details, materials, color and texture.
 - c. Exterior walls facing or visible from a street, parking area, public area, or adjacent property shall be made visually interesting by the use of architectural details (vertical elements, change in materials or color, projections, recesses, windows, doors, shutters, etc.) as follows:
 - i. Institutional, office, multifamily, mixed-use, and commercial buildings. No wall surface shall exceed 30 feet in length without an interruption in the horizontal plane of the wall of a minimum of three (3) feet and a vertical change in height of at least four (4) feet for a length of at least 15 feet.
 - ii. Industrial. No wall surface shall exceed 60 feet in length without interruption in the horizontal plane of the wall of a minimum of five (5) feet.
 - iii. Design features such as doors, windows, shutters, and other similar elements shall be utilized to break-up any wall surfaces every 15 feet horizontal length. Such features may be opaque on the front and opaque or faux, non-functional components when located on the side, rear, or upper-story portions of a building.
 2. Exterior Finish Requirements. The exterior finish shall comply with the following:
 - a. **Exterior Material Options.** The exterior material of any structure shall consist of any of the following:
 - i. Clapboard siding that is a natural material, such as wood siding, cementitious siding, or any otherwise equal material as approved by the architectural review board, and is a minimum of 5/8" thickness.
 - ii. Tabby.

- iii. Savannah grey colored brick and appropriate historically-colored mortar as approved by the architectural review board.
 - iv. Non-Savannah grey colored brick when painted any approved color listed as an Exterior Color Option.
 - v. Other materials, as otherwise determined compatible and equal, as approved by the architectural review board.
 - b. For structures 5,000 square feet or less:
 - i. Clapboard siding shall be utilized for a minimum of 75% of the exterior, exclusive of doors, windows, or other such features.
 - ii. The remainder of the exterior shall utilize any of the other Exterior Material Options to complement the clapboard siding.
 - c. For structures greater than 5,000 square feet but less than 10,000 square feet:
 - i. Clapboard siding shall be utilized for a minimum of 50% of the exterior, exclusive of doors, windows, or other such features.
 - ii. The remainder of the exterior shall utilize any of the other Exterior Material Options to complement the clapboard siding.
 - d. For structures greater than 10,000 square feet but less than 20,000 square feet:
 - i. Clapboard siding shall be utilized for a minimum of 25% of the exterior, exclusive of doors, windows, or other such features.
 - ii. Tabby or Savannah grey colored brick shall be utilized for a minimum of 25% of the exterior, exclusive of doors, windows, or other such features.
 - iii. The remainder of the exterior shall utilize any of the other Exterior Material Options to complement the clapboard siding.
 - e. For structures greater than 20,000 square feet:
 - i. Clapboard siding shall be utilized for a minimum of 15% of the exterior, exclusive of doors, windows, or other such features.
 - ii. Tabby or Savannah grey colored brick shall be utilized for a minimum of 50% of the exterior, exclusive of doors, windows, or other such features.
 - iii. The remainder of the exterior shall utilize any of the other Exterior Material Options to complement the clapboard siding and stone.
 - f. The architectural review board shall have the authority to modify the above percentages so long as the minimum required is not reduced to zero, and the required Exterior Material Option is still utilized.
3. **Exterior Color Options.** The exterior color of any structure shall comply with the following:
- a. For historically contributing structures, structures on the same lot as a historically contributing structure, and structures adjacent to any historically contributing structures:
 - i. “White off the shelf”, true white without any pigments or other color additives.
 - ii. Any locally appropriate historic or vernacular color, as approved by the architectural review board.
 - iii. Any white, grey, or cream, as approved by the architectural review board.

- b. For all other structures:
 - i. “White off the shelf”, true white without any pigments or other color additives.
 - ii. Any locally appropriate historic or vernacular color, as approved by the architectural review board.
 - iii. Any color having an HSV intensity value of 15% or less and a brightness value of 85% or greater, as approved by the architectural review board.
 4. **Accent Exterior Finish.** Any option listed as an Exterior Material Option is acceptable.
 5. **Accent Colors.** Accent colors, including but not limited to trim, shutters, doors, windows, awnings, and site furnishings, shall consist of any of the following options, subject to approval by the architectural review board:
 - a. For accent trim:
 - i. Black.
 - ii. Any color having an HSV intensity value of 15% or less and a brightness value of 15% or less, that is considered grey or black, as approved by the architectural review board.
 - iii. Any color listed in Exterior Color Options above.
 - b. For any other accent features, such as shutters, doors, windows, awnings, and site furnishings:
 - i. Any color listed above for accent trim.
 - ii. Any color having an HSV intensity value of 50% or less, as approved by the architectural review board.
 - c. .
- C. Windows and Doors.**
1. Windows and doors shall create a pattern typical to the architectural vernacular.
 2. Windows shall include mullions or similar divisions to avoid large expanses of glass on any wall section in excess of 10 feet in length.
 3. Any window shall utilize at minimum 4 vertical and 2 horizontal panes, which may be separated by use of mullions and muntins, as approved by the architectural review board. Windows on the side or rear portion of the façade, including upper floor portions, may be faux, and non-functional windows.
 4. Glass storefront windows may use any colors listed in Accent Colors.
- D. Roofs.**
1. Configuration.
 - a. Variations in the roof line shall be created to add visual interest and reduce the overall scale of buildings. Such variations should add vertical elements to the roof line when provided. Extremely large roof elements that dominate other architectural features of a building may be permitted, as approved by the architectural review board, so long as the element is consistent with and does not contrast with other design features.
 - b. Roofs shall be sloped in accordance with the following, and shall utilize the greatest pitch prescribed as practicable:
 - i. For structures, or portions of structures, with footprints of 10,000 square feet or less, a

- slope between 6:12 and 8:12 shall be utilized.
- ii. For structures, or portions of structures with footprints between 10,000 and 20,000 square feet, a slope between 4:12 and 8:12 shall be utilized.
 - iii. For structures, or portions of structures with footprints 20,000 square feet or greater, a slope between 0:12 and 8:12 shall be utilized.
 - iv. The architectural review board may allow pitches less than the greatest pitch prescribed, so long as the intent of the requirement is met through the overall design.
- c. Flat and low-slope roofs shall only be permitted in accordance with the following:
- i. Roofs less than 4:12 pitch and rooftop equipment shall be concealed by parapet walls. Parapets shall include architecturally correct decorative elements like frieze and cornice detailing.
 - ii. Low-slope roofs (less than 4:12 pitch) on buildings, or portions of buildings, exceeding a footprint of 20,000 square feet shall slope to the rear.
2. *Materials.* The following materials may be used:
- a. Standing-seam metal, or otherwise equal material, meeting the color requirements for accent trim, as approved by the architectural review board.
 - b. Black or dark grey architectural shingles.
 - c. Exceptions. Flat and low-slope roofs shall be allowed the use of appropriate color-matched TPO so long as it is not visible from the street, parking areas, public spaces, or adjacent properties.
3. Whenever possible, gutters and downspouts shall not be visible on exterior walls visible to the public. Where gutters and downspouts are visible, they shall be color-matched to the facade exterior, treated as accent features, or otherwise designed to be hidden or obscured from public view.
4. Roof mounted mechanical devices shall be screened from all public views, such as below a roof parapet.
- E. **Awnings and Signage.** The incorporation of awnings or signage shall be consistent with the following:
1. Awnings may consist of canvas, metal, or equivalent. Vinyl awnings shall not be permitted. PVC awning supports shall not be permitted.
 2. Any awning shall comply with the requirements above for accent colors.
 3. All new signage shall be consistent with the standards in *Article 16 Signs*. Window signage shall comply with the color requirements of Sec. 11.4.B.5.
 4. Any monument sign shall utilize the Exterior Material Options and Exterior Color Options as part of the base and sign structure.
 5. Quill flags shall be prohibited.
- F. **Accessory Buildings.** All accessory buildings shall be constructed to match the architectural features of the main structure on the parcel and comply with the general requirements above. Where screened from public view, accessory buildings shall still comply with the requirements of this section.

Section 11.5 Site Design Requirements

All properties within the Gateway Overlay District shall be subject to the following:

A. General.

1. Development shall be designed to be harmonious with the surrounding development pattern and context with regard to the spatial relationship between structures and the right-of-way, circulation patterns, existing vegetation and topography, the architectural elements in surrounding development, and the size and form of new structures in relation to existing development. Where new buildings and uses are similar to those on adjoining sites, the design shall reflect similar setbacks, building height and form, scale and mass, complementary materials and colors, and landscape treatment. The intent is not uniformity, but compatibility.
2. Site components such as structures, parking areas, driveways and outdoor functions shall be arranged and located to emphasize the aesthetically pleasant components of the site, such as existing mature trees and views, historic or archaeological features, or superior architectural features. New buildings shall be oriented toward the adjoining public streets, so public entrances are a focal point on the building and site layout.
3. It is strongly encouraged that site designs include fencing or walls along adjacent roads in keeping with the Antebellum Bryan County/Ford-Era style fencing (See *Article 15*). All fencing along adjacent roads within the overlay district shall be constructed of Antebellum Bryan County/Ford-Era style fencing with white posts and rails, accented with Savannah Gray colored brick columns when columns are included. Walls shall be constructed of Savannah grey brick or painted brick. Where brick walls are utilized, the brick shall match that used throughout the site, unless otherwise approved by the architectural review board.
4. Mechanical Equipment shall, whether roof, wall, or ground mounted, be located on the side or rear façade and screened from view. The screening material shall be masonry walls or an enclosure constructed of materials consistent with the architectural elements of the building, and shall be opaque. If located on the roof of a building or in a location that cannot otherwise be screened, the equipment shall be enclosed or designed in a manner that is architecturally integrated with the building where it is located.

B. Parking.

1. Parking lots shall not be the dominant visual element of the site. During site design layout, large parking areas shall be located in the side or rear yard. Parking areas in the front yard along any main road corridors shall be limited to drive-aisles and not more than one row of parking spaces, and shall be minimized to the extent practicable for any other front yards located on the site.
2. Where feasible, adjoining properties shall share access driveways to minimize the number of driveways along public streets and connect parking areas to facilitate movement between sites. Shared service or secondary access alleys shall also be considered.

C. **Walkways.** Sidewalks shall be constructed along all street frontage in accordance with City standards. Interior walkways shall connect parking areas and the sidewalk along the street to the building entryways.

D. Lighting.

1. *General.* All lighting fixtures shall be decorative in design to complement the architectural themes established for the site. The light source (lamp) shall only be metal halide or LED and

- shall be consistent throughout the site. Illumination levels shall not exceed the recommended levels established by the most recent publication of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America, as assigned by activity or use. Light sources shall not be visible and shall be direct cutoff or shielded to reflect down and not permit light spillover onto adjoining streets or property.
2. *Service stations.* Service station canopy lighting shall be directional downward and fixtures shall not protrude beneath the bottom of the canopy. Pole-mounted lighting within service or loading areas may be required to provide additional shielding so the light is contained specifically within the service or loading area.
- E. **Furnishings.** Pedestrian scale furnishings and amenities are encouraged including, but not limited to, courtyards, plazas, patios, porches, shaded arcades, functional landscaped areas, benches, sculptures and fountains. Site furnishings shall be compatible with the architectural style and requirements for accent colors, and shall not display any copy, logo, or non-commercial speech.
- F. **Site Development.**
1. *Utilities.* All site utilities shall be located underground and shall comply with the applicable city standards.
 2. *Features and constraints.* The design of new development shall be sensitive to, and incorporate, the existing natural constraints and amenity opportunities of the site. Features including, but not limited to, sloped or steep topography, drainage or biological areas, historic or archaeological resources, wetlands, significant trees and views shall be incorporated into the site design, to the extent practical, as amenities and/or not be disturbed.
- G. **Access Management.** The number, location, and design of driveways along any arterial street within the overlay districts shall meet the requirements of *Section 14.5*. Within the Ford Avenue Historic District, the number and width shall not exceed the minimum required.
- H. **Landscaping.**
1. *Street Yard Greenway.*
 - a. Any required street yard greenway for lots fronting an arterial or collector road shall be reduced to 15' in depth along an arterial road and 10' in depth along a collector road, but shall otherwise meet the planting requirements of Sec. 15.3.B, except as modified below.
 - i. The required number of small trees may be reduced by 50% when a Ford-Era style fence is utilized throughout the length of the street yard greenway, though the required shrubbery may be placed on both sides of the fence or the side internal to the property.
 - ii. The required number of small trees and shrubs may be reduced by 33% when a Savannah grey brick wall is utilized, though the required small trees and shrubbery shall be placed on both sides of the wall, to the extent practicable.
 - b. For lots fronting any other streets or main access drives, a street yard greenway of 5' in depth meeting the following shall be required:
 - i. One (1) medium canopy or two (2) small canopy trees or palms for every 30 linear feet of frontage. The required number of small trees may be reduced by 50% when a Ford-Era style fence or a Savannah grey brick wall is utilized throughout the length of the street yard greenway.
 - ii. A double row, staggered evergreen shrub hedge or otherwise approved continuous grouping of evergreen shrubs planted along the lot frontage planted at a minimum of two and one-half (2 ½) feet o.c. and a species capable of being maintained at a three

(3) foot height within two (2) years of planting. This requirement may be waived entirely through the provision of a Savannah grey brick wall that creates an opaque screen of at least four feet in height of any adjacent parking areas.

- iii. Vehicular entrances shall be defined using a mixture of trees, shrubs, and groundcovers that will create a sense of arrival. Clusters of flowering and other ornamental plants are required. A minimum of 100 square feet shall be planted on each side of the entrance drive.

2. *Foundation Plantings.*

- a. The required foundation plantings shall include a minimum one small tree or palm and 10 shrubs planted every 30 linear feet of façade within a maximum of ten (10) feet of the building foundation.
- b. A minimum of 50% of the trees and shrubs provided for foundation plantings shall be evergreen species.

3. *Screening of Storage, Service, and Dumpster Areas.*

- a. Storage, service, and dumpster areas shall meet the requirements of Sec. 15.3.E and subsection 3.b and 3.c below.
- b. All dumpster and service areas shall be screened from view with walls meeting the Exterior Material Options and Exterior Color Options above.
- c. Any dumpster or service areas shall be screened on all sides, where one side may include an opaque gate.

4. *I-95 Buffer.*

- a. Properties adjacent to the I-95 ramps shall be required to provide a 25' buffer, or otherwise meet the requirements for a Type A buffer per *Table 15-3a*.

I. Area, Height, and Placement Requirements.

- 1. *Setbacks.* The minimum setbacks shall be reduced as follows for non-residential development:
 - a. The front setback along any main road corridor shall be a minimum of 25' or the average of the adjacent structures, whichever is less, or any lesser setback as otherwise allowed elsewhere in the UDO.
 - b. The front setback along any non-main road corridor frontage shall be reduced to 10'.
 - c. The side setbacks shall be a minimum of 10'.
 - d. The rear setbacks shall be a minimum of 10'.

J. Use Requirements.

- 1. *Restaurants, Drive-in or Drive-through.*
 - a. Restaurants, Drive-in or Drive-through, shall comply with the requirements of Sec. 13.4.G, as well as the requirements below.
 - b. Drive-through order stations shall be located to the side or rear of the development.
 - c. Drive-through windows shall be located on a side of the building not facing a main-road corridor, unless the drive-through lane and queuing area is screened and shielded from public view of the main road corridor through the use of walls, berms, landscaping, or other screening materials to provide an opaque screen.

- d. Drive-through lanes shall not impede the circulation within the internal accessways and external ingress and egress points.
2. *Vehicle Service Stations.*
 The following shall only apply to new construction, an expansion of the use of 50% or greater, redevelopment that involves 21,000 or more square feet, or for any substantial improvement of 50% or greater, where such expansion or substantial improvement shall be cumulative over a 10-year period:
 - a. Vehicle Service Stations shall comply with the requirements of Sec. 13.7.K, as well as the requirements below.
 - b. The primary structure shall front the main road corridor and any canopy and service pumps shall be located to the rear of the site behind the primary structure.
 - c. Any fuel storage tanks shall be located underground and to the side or rear of the primary structure.
 - d. Any fuel canopy shall be designed to be architecturally compatible with the primary structure and meet all design requirements, as applicable.
 - e. A minimum of two or 10% of the total number of provided parking spaces, whichever is less, shall include electrical vehicle charging stations.

Section 11.6 Project Review

A. Review and Permitting.

1. Pre-application Review. Applicants are strongly encouraged to meet with the Planning and Zoning Department prior to submission of plans, architectural renderings or elevations to preliminarily discuss design concepts. Such discussions shall not be binding. Placement on the agenda shall be scheduled through the zoning administrator.
2. Incomplete Application. Upon receiving an application, the zoning administrator shall determine if the application, including final plan, is complete in all respects as required by this section. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant as though no application had been received, with notice of deficiencies and non-filing.
3. Complete Application. Upon the determination that an application, including final plan, is complete, the zoning administrator shall forward copies of the application and plan to the architectural review board and/or historic preservation commission, as appropriate.
4. Technical Review. The zoning administrator shall review all plans and specifications with regard to compliance with the technical requirements of this article and all other ordinances and laws of the city.
5. Ford Avenue Historic District Certificate of Appropriateness Review. The historic preservation commission shall review the plan to determine compliance with the provisions of this article with respect to the design and materials of proposed buildings; alterations to existing buildings, signs and lighting. Following its review, the historic preservation commission shall approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application.
6. Gateway Overlay District Design Review. The architectural review board shall review the plan to determine compliance with the provisions of this article with respect to the design, color and materials of proposed buildings; signs and lighting. Following its review, the architectural review board shall approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application.

7. Project representation. The applicant or authorized representative shall be present at all meetings at which the request is to be considered. If the applicant or authorized representative is not present, the matter may be tabled by the architectural review board.
 8. Permit. Upon approval or approval with conditions by the historic preservation commission or architectural review board, as appropriate, the zoning administrator shall issue a letter of decision.
 9. Reapplication. Applications that have been denied shall not be resubmitted without substantial changes within 12 months from the date of denial.
- B. Required Submissions.** In addition to the requirements of Section 17-5, final plans for development within the Ford Avenue Historic District or Gateway Overlay District shall include facade elevation drawings, color renderings, and specifications as may be necessary to clearly illustrate the architectural design elements of the building, including the construction materials, size, and color of all elements of the building. A material sample board shall also be provided showing examples of proposed materials and colors to be used for all exterior elements.
- C. Scope of Work and Changes to Approved Submittals.**
1. Scope of Work.
 - a. Major changes to buildings are required to be reviewed by the appropriate board or commission. Any minor changes can be reviewed at the staff level. Any proposed work that is otherwise considered “minor” may be referred by staff to the appropriate board or commission for review and approval.
 - b. Appendix E details the general scope of work considered major and minor work related to the Ford Avenue Historic District.
 - c. Within the Gateway Overlay District, major work shall include any new construction, addition, substantial improvement, changes to exterior finishes, or a change in roofing material not related to architectural shingles. All other work shall be considered minor work.
 - d. Any work related to site components shall be reviewed by the appropriate body in accordance with this Article and *Article 17*. Materials for any walls shall be reviewed and approved by the architectural review board at the time of building elevation submittal, or as part of a separate or revised submittal.
 2. *Changes to Approved Submittals*. Any approved and valid Certificate of Appropriateness or Building Elevation requiring changes or revisions that are considered major changes shall be reviewed and approved in the same manner as the original application. Any minor changes may be reviewed and approved by staff.
- D. Variances.**
1. Variances from the provisions of this article may be granted by the city council only if all of the following findings are made:
 - a. Strict conformity with the provisions of this article cannot be met without undue hardship due to physical circumstances or conditions of the property;
 - b. That granting the variance will not cause substantial detriment to the public good.
 2. The procedures for consideration of variances to this ordinance shall be in accordance with the

requirements of *Article 29*, except that the following criteria shall be used to determine the merits of a requested variance. At least four (4) of the below criteria must be satisfied, one of which must be criteria 2.g below.

- a. That there are unique physical circumstances or conditions peculiar to the property including irregularity, narrowness or shallowness of the lot size or shape, or exceptional topographical or other physical conditions that make compliance with the requirements of this district unusually difficult.
- b. That because of such physical circumstance or conditions, the property cannot be developed in strict conformity with the provisions of this ordinance without undue hardship.
- c. The proposed color, material or design will not substantially conflict with existing structures in the vicinity.
- d. The proposed color, material or design is unlikely to set a precedent leading to similar requests which would generate or accelerate adverse changes in the vicinity.
- e. The proposed color, material or design will not have any negative impact on present or planned historic sites or development in the vicinity.
- f. If granted, the variance will not significantly affect fully compliant structures in the vicinity.
- g. The variance will not grant special privileges to the applicant not available to other similarly situated properties within the overlay district.