

Since Summer 2021, the North Charles Village Planned Unit Development (NCV PUD) has followed an extensive process for renewing and expanding the PUD. Updating the Design Review Guidelines to sync with City Design and Landscape Manuals along with the list of USES required major revisions to conform to the Transform Baltimore City Zoning Code adopted in 2017. NCV PUD Design Review Committee Members Matthew Mosca and Joe Rexing with Sandy Sparks, Committee Chair made major updates to the 1996 Guidelines to conform with City Planning Codes. Based on 25 years of the NCV PUD design reviews, the review process steps are now systemized and clarified. Ren Southard, AIA, Design Planner II, City of Baltimore Department of Planning, analyzed and finalized the proposed guidelines.

City Council Representative Odette Ramos (14th District) plans to introduce the NCV PUD City Council Ordinance in February. If you have comments or questions about the DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES, please contact Sandy Sparks, Chair, Land Use Committee, srsparks@verizon.net or Council Representative Odette Ramos, Odette.Ramos@baltimorecity.gov

**DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES proposed for NCV PUD City Council Ordinance introduction
January 6, 2023**

BACKGROUND

By Ordinance 96-35, December 1996, the Mayor and City Council approved the North Charles Village Planned Unit Development affecting 37 multiple properties and which remains the single example in Baltimore City of a PUD introduced by a partnership of Greater Homewood Community Corporation and Johns Hopkins University to include a community-based design review process.

In 2003, City Council legislation expanded the original 1996 boundaries north of 33rd Street and adopted new Design Standards & Guidelines based on the professional experience of the Design Review Committee. The Committee is well-respected for working collaboratively with owners, managers, and design professionals on each renovation or new construction project as it progresses from concept to completion.

2016 adoption of *Article 32 Zoning Code, Transform Baltimore*.

Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) are intended to encourage the best possible design of building forms and site planning for tracts of land controlled by a PUD, per § 13-101. This control over an entire development, rather than project by project regulation, will produce a well-designed development resulting in a beneficial effect upon the health, security, general welfare, and morals of the City and the neighboring areas.

Property owners and business managers within the district require approval by the Design Review Committee before obtaining appropriate City Building Permits. The Design Review Committee offers ongoing constructive advice to reach attractive and reasonable design solutions to maintain the standards envisioned in these Guidelines. ***At the inception of a project***, please contact the Committee Chair to ensure the most effective and efficient approval process.

Goals for the Expanded North Charles Village PUD

The following goals will guide the actions and decisions implemented by the North Charles Village PUD Design Review Committee:

- Increase the variety of retail opportunities to better serve the people who live, work, and study in the area;
- Develop a vibrant identity for the North Charles Village Business and PUD area (see map opposite for boundaries);
- Maintain the scale and flavor of Charles Village's distinctive architectural fabric;
- Create a healthy Charles Village community business district to attract residents and the students and employees of Johns Hopkins University, Union Memorial Hospital, and area schools;
- Eliminate blighted and vacant buildings to stabilize property values and encourage investment;
- Increase employment in Charles Village;
- Increase parking capacity in the area while developing a pedestrian friendly neighborhood.

Design Review Committee

Established in December 1996, the North Charles Village PUD Design Review Committee is a standing committee of the Charles Village Civic Association (CVCA). All representatives must demonstrate professional design, planning, and/or economic development experience. CVCA designates the committee chair and a volunteer architect. In addition to a PUD commercial property owner, a PUD resident, and a planner from the Baltimore City Planning Department, the committee includes representatives from the Charles Village Community Benefits District, the North Charles Village Business Association, Abell Improvement Association, Greenway Community Association, Oakenshawe Improvement Association, Johns Hopkins University, and Union Memorial Hospital.

Designs for all improvements and modifications affecting the exterior of any building and grounds should be submitted to the NCV PUD Design Review Committee for review and recommendation. Final plans for significant improvements and modifications are then presented to the Baltimore City for review and approval.

An amendment to the design standards will be considered a minor amendment to the PUD, which will be reviewed and approved by the Baltimore City Planning Commission.

I. Design Review Process

To ensure that development is consistent with the requirements and objectives of the North Charles Village (NCV) Planned Unit Development (PUD) District, all plans and specifications for new construction including parking lots and exterior rehabilitation for any property must be submitted for approval to the Baltimore City Department of Planning.

Step 1: Contact the NCV PUD Committee Chair. Schedule a preliminary discussion regarding the planned project.

Step 2: Schedule a presentation to the NCV PUD Design Review Committee.

Step 3: Final Submission and Approval by the NCV PUD Design Review Committee

Preliminary Project Presentation

Before the plans are finalized for the required City permits, all property owners and development teams are encouraged to bring their conceptual and preliminary designs to the Design Review Committee to begin

a dialogue. An early presentation of the plans will often help the proposal proceed smoothly through the approval process without major and costly last-minute changes. Preliminary presentations may expedite, but do not change, the formal approval process. The Committee will work with the applicant to achieve an approvable project.

Submitting parties are responsible for providing the following information to the NCV PUD Design Review Committee.

Renovation Projects that change existing building facades visible from a public street:

- 1) photographs of the existing facades and neighboring buildings;
- 2) elevations of all facades showing the proposed changes;
- 3) additional drawings or renderings as needed to explain the proposed changes illustrated in context with existing adjacent construction; and
- 4) color chips and samples of proposed materials.

New Projects that include new structures or new additions which are visible from a public street:

- 1) the items listed above;
- 2) elevations of all the facades;
- 3) a complete set of floor plans;
- 4) a site plan showing adjacent properties and structures; and
- 5) site plans and drawings must be drawn to a standard architectural or engineering scale.

Photographs and renderings must show enough of the blocks and buildings around the project so that the Design Review Committee can determine how successfully the project fits with the nearby parts of the neighborhood and the context of the NCV PUD.

The Design Review Committee will have up to 30 days from the date of the receipt of the final required information from the owner or developer to recommend approval or disapproval of the permit to Baltimore City Department of Planning.

Design Review approval consists of a letter to the Baltimore City Department of Planning written within ten working days of the decision for required permits to proceed. If the owner or developer and the Design Review Committee are unable to reach consensus, a letter of approval will not be issued.

II. Charles Village/Abell Historic District

The NCV PUD area is within the Charles Village/Abell Historic District, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Building preservation, wherever possible is a stated goal of the Design Committee.

III. Design Guidelines

New construction must be compatible with existing architecture in scale, mass, materials, color, and setbacks. This section pertains to all new construction, remodeling, and renovation within the PUD. Exterior building materials that relate to existing buildings in the Charles Village area in color, size, texture, and type are encouraged. Natural building materials such as stone, brick, cast stone are encouraged. Buildings composed of predominately metal panels and glass are discouraged. Modern

synthetic stone materials made of polymer core forms with applied cementitious coatings are strongly discouraged.

All exterior building materials that constitute the permanent finish of all surfaces of any new construction or changes to an existing building must be submitted to the PUD Design Review Committee for review, input, and approval before the City review and permit process begin.

Materials covered in this section include but are not limited to:

Masonry: modular brick, mortar, stone, cast stone, architectural pre-cast concrete, concrete and other cementitious materials, paving. Bonding patterns that relate to examples found on buildings in the Charles Village community: Flemish, English, and Common Bond (five stretched rows to one header row) patterns are encouraged.

Wood: type of wood and finish (clear coating including gloss level)

Paints: all finish paints to include gloss level, manufacturer, and identification (number, code, etc.). Paint color modifications and changes from the paint colors approved at the time of the original submission must be submitted to the PUD Design Re-view Committee for review at least 30 days prior to planned repainting.

Metals: anodized, patinated, natural, powder-coated

Glass: window types, glass block, decorative glass panels, including frosted, hammered, ribbed, seeded, and other glass types, etc.

Roofing Materials: Reflective materials to reduce heat absorption is encouraged. Green roofing encouraged for all new construction and renovations wherever possible.

Examples of the proposed building materials must be presented at the time of the preliminary submission or at a subsequent time deemed appropriate by the PUD Design Review Committee. In addition to actual examples of the proposed building materials, the source of the building material, the manufacturer's identification of the building material, and the specifications for each building material will be made available to the PUD Design Review Committee.

Photographs of the proposed building materials in other similar applications are also encouraged.

A. Lighting & Lighting Systems

This section pertains to all projects for new construction and renovations to existing structures within the PUD boundaries. Lighting should be for the benefit of pedestrians and to a pedestrian scale. All projects that require changes in lighting and all buildings with two or more commercial tenants must present a co-ordinated lighting design for the building. The lighting design should address City Lighting Code guidelines.

B. Signs

A successful sign can both reinforce the image of NCV PUD and strengthen the identity of the business. Signs must meet all guidelines set by § 17-Signs in Article 32 – Zoning Code.

Signage for Single Commercial Fronts. Signs are encouraged to have simple design. A storefront should not have more than two signs. Signs are limited to those mounted on the building face and on an awning, or canopy. One sign shall read as primary and one secondary. A graphic band, at the bottom of the window may be permitted. Corner buildings may have two signs on each elevation.

Signage for Buildings with Two or More Commercial Tenants. In addition to the rules governing sign types in this section, signage for larger buildings should be planned as an organized system that is coordinated for the entire building. The appearance of an accumulation of individual signs, should be avoided. All buildings with two or more commercial tenants should include a coordinated signage system for the entire building. Signs should be organized in an appropriate manner consistent with the architecture and clearly identifying the commercial tenant. Though individual signs may be considered; they must conform to an organized system that harmonizes with the design of the building.

Sign Types

Wall Signs: A flush-mounted signboard may extend up to 1'-0" of the end of the store front and should not be more than 2 feet 6 inches high. The sign should be mounted below the second story windowsills. It is imperative that signage be designed to complement an existing building or be part of a signage system for a new building. Generally, lettering should be between 8 and 18 inches high and occupy up to 50% of the signboard.

Projecting Signs. Hanging signs should be a maximum of 5 square feet, project less than 3 feet from face of structure, and coordinate with adjacent signage so as not to interfere with existing signage.

Box Signs. New box signs are not permitted.

Illuminated Signs. Illuminated signs can be appropriate if they respect the proportions of the storefront and the PUD guide-lines. Painted signs may be directly illuminated with LED lighting. Exposed neon signage can also be effective, adding color and vitality to the street. Refer to Section VII: Lighting and Lighting Systems.

Permanent Window Signs. Permanent signs on the glazing may be permitted when they comply section These permanent signs will thereby count as one of the two permitted signs on the storefront. Only store hours mounted to glazing are permitted in addition to the two permanent signs outlined above. Window signs should not obscure the display areas. The color of the letters should contrast with the display background. Light-colored letters with dark borders are effective.

Store Hour Signs. Only store hours listed discreetly on door glazing or adjacent to door glazing are permitted beyond the two signs listed above.

Illumination of Signage. As part of the overall signage system, a coordinated system of illumination of the signage must be presented to the PUD Design Re-view Committee for review and recommendation. No interior illuminated box signs are permitted (see Section VII: Lighting and Lighting Systems). Dark Sky principals for Illumination are strongly encouraged.

Signage Materials. Samples of the materials of the signage must be presented for review by the PUD Design Review Committee. Proposed colors for all materials should be fully identified and specified. The manufacturer's complete specifications for each material should be submitted at the same time as the samples.

Samples of paint finishes and any other coatings or finishes (powder-coated metals, anodized metals, etc.) must be submitted to the PUD Design Review Committee for review and recommendations. Paints and coatings that are proposed must be presented in the gloss level that will be used. Complete specifications for each paint and coating will accompany all samples.

The use of flags and banners must be coordinated with the system of signage as proposed. Materials for the flags and banners, as well as finishes and materials of the flagpoles and banner supports, must be presented to the PUD Design Review Committee for review and recommendation as part of the presentation of the signage system. A **flag** is defined as a woven fabric panel attached at one end to a fixed pole set at an angle (right angle included) to the elevation of the building. A **banner** is defined as a woven fabric panel attached at both ends to fixed poles set at right angles to the elevation of a building. Location, size, and number of flags and banners must be shown on building drawings.

C. Awnings

Canvas awnings are encouraged as important design elements of the traditional storefront. All awnings must be suitable in size and appearance for the architecture of the store front.

A standard street-level awning should be mounted so to comply with Baltimore City Code. An 8-to-12-inch valance may be attached at the awning bar. Awning signage must be limited to maximum 12-inch valences. An awning may be attached above the display windows and below the cornice or sign panel. An awning may also be mounted between the transom and display windows to allow light into the store. An awning should reinforce the frame of the storefront and should not cover the piers or the space between the second story windowsills and the storefront cornice. Aluminum and vinyl awnings are not permitted. Canopies that are a part of the building's architectural features are allowed.

D. General Illumination

Illumination of the building should enhance the appearance of the structure after dark: safety, security and aesthetics are the principals that should guide general illumination. Excessive amounts of lighting should be avoided. Control of the proposed lighting is very important. Lighting should be designed to avoid overcasting (i.e., throwing light beyond) the area to be illuminated. Efforts to avoid lighting pollution are important and will be considered, including Dark Sky guidelines. High-contrast light levels at grade should be avoided.

Safety and lighting security should conform to all requirements set forth in the various regulations of the City of Baltimore. Where appropriate, decorative lighting may be used. Any site lighting, including landscape lighting, to be installed as street lighting or part of infrastructure improvements, should be taken into consideration. Illustrations and complete manufacturer's description and specifications of any and all lighting units that are proposed for use are to be presented to the PUD Design Review Committee in a timely manner either at the preliminary submission or at a subsequent time to be determined by the PUD Design Review Committee.

E. Adjoining Properties

Adjoining properties used by the same occupant should be rehabilitated in a unified and harmonious manner. Each building should be rehabilitated and repaired with materials and in a manner consistent with the original construction techniques, where feasible.

F. Security Grilles

Security grilles and screens are not allowed on the street fronts of commercial properties.

G. Rear of Properties

The rear of buildings must be maintained in a neat and clean appearance at all times. Provisions must be incorporated into designs to house and secure waste and recycling receptacles outside of the public way. Recessed, tamperproof, frost proof, hose hydrants are encouraged to afford housekeeping of areas housing refuse containers.

Trash Containers should be screened by a solid wall and are subject to review and recommendation. HVAC Equipment should be installed to minimize visual, noise, and odor impacts and meet Baltimore City Code noise regulations.

H. Landscaping & Management of Outdoor Spaces

Screened and/or landscaped parking areas are encouraged. Street trees are encouraged; all plantings must have appropriately sized wells per Baltimore City Landscape Manual requirements. Outdoor storage is not permitted except for stacking of seasonal furniture when interior space is not available. Fitted covers for stacked seasonal furniture are encouraged.

All green spaces should be designed and landscaped in a manner appropriate to an urban streetscape to enhance the buildings:

- Broad plantings of a limited number of types of plants are encouraged.
- Designs should be complementary to the building(s). Creation of shade, sight lines, and safety must be considered.
- Only plant materials that can thrive in the specified environment should be chosen. The use of native plants is strongly encouraged.

Since planters will require daily maintenance, they should be planned so as not to create hazards to pedestrian traffic. Consideration of watering the planters must be considered when planning the location of planters.

Landscaped areas must be kept in a clean, orderly appearance at all times. Designs for all green spaces, including roof gardens that are part of new construction, must be submitted for review to the PUD Design Review Committee at the time of the preliminary submission. Submissions are required to include lists and locations of plant materials for all permanent plantings

Complete specifications for landscaping and street furnishings proposed for use should be presented to the PUD Design Review Committee in a timely manner, either at the preliminary submission or at a subsequent time to be determined by the PUD Design Review Committee. A maintenance plan for the landscaping must be submitted with the plans and specifications.

I. Street and Open Space Furnishings

Seating, tables, trash receptacles, and bicycle parking devices are all features that facilitate the development of vital urban spaces. The use of exterior furnishings for the streetscape and open spaces is encouraged. All furnishings should be well designed and of a high quality to withstand urban commercial use and the effects of the seasons. Seasonal furnishings must be removed to interior storage when not in use. Permanent and seasonal furnishings must be maintained in good condition at all times. Complete specifications of all permanent street furnishings proposed for use must be presented to the PUD Design Review Committee in a timely manner, either at the preliminary

submission or at a subsequent time to be determined by the PUD Design Review Committee. A maintenance plan for these features should be included with the specifications.

J. General Maintenance & Sanitation

The success of the PUD to create a vibrant urban center is predicated on good maintenance and sanitation procedures. Buildings, grounds, sidewalks, furnishings, parking areas, and other facilities and spaces must be clean and maintained in good condition at all times. Sanitation services should be scheduled to ensure that all receptacles are prevented from overflowing and creating an unsightly and unsanitary condition. New buildings must provide Tamperproof frost proof hydrants on the exterior facades at regular intervals to permit power-washing of the sidewalks and other paved open spaces on a regular basis.

K. Demolition

Before a building demolition permit can be issued, the Baltimore City Planning Commission must approve development plans. Financing must be secured and an application for a building permit completed. Demolition sites must be fully screened to limit the impact of dust and noise at all times.

North Charles Village PUD Design Review Committee Contact Information

Committee Chair, Sandy Sparks, 410-890-5844 or srsparks@verizon.net
Baltimore City Planning Department, 410-396-5932 or 410-396-PLAN
Baltimore City Building Permit Office, 410-396-3360