

AN ORDINANCE TO THE SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS FOR THE CITY OF MOBILE, ALBAMA CODES TO CREATE NEW WALKABLE STREET STANDARDS THAT ENABLES TRADITIONAL, WALKABLE VILLAGE AND NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS WITHIN THE CITY OF MOBILE

Sponsored by Mrs. Gina Gregory and Mr. Reggie Copeland.

WHEREAS, The Village of Spring Hill, Inc. is a private, section 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation formed in 2006 for the purpose of improving Spring Hill. Since its inception, the organization has generated broad-based community support for its stated purpose of improving the pedestrian, aesthetic, and commercial amenities of the area; and,

WHEREAS, over the course of more than a decade Spring Hill has failed to achieve a level of stability and growth desired by its residents and business owners in its main commercial centers, and the current environment is typified by underutilized buildings, lack of cohesive design, and vehicular-oriented design with extensive paving limiting pedestrian use and negatively impacting the area's aesthetics, health, safety, and welfare; and,

WHEREAS, The Village of Spring Hill, Inc. commissioned a study aimed at developing a strategic community plan to set a clear and comprehensive approach for the future development and revitalization of its main commercial centers; and,

WHEREAS, The Village of Spring Hill, Inc. contracted with Dover, Kohl & Partners to create a community plan. In November 2007, a week-long charrette was held to achieve a community vision for the future of its main commercial centers. The charrette process included a series of workshops, presentations, and interactive meetings, with participation from residents, property owners, business owners, City of Mobile staff, and elected officials. Following the charrette, *The Blueprint for Spring Hill* was produced, a comprehensive planning document that summarized the charrette process and resulting vision, and includes a review of existing zoning, open spaces, and physical features in the main commercial centers; a series of "First Principles" which embody the citizenry's vision for the future of its community; an analysis of the network of streets, lots, and buildings, and recommendations for improvements to achieve the community vision; a transportation analysis of pedestrian and vehicular accommodations in the area, as well as parking availability and needs, recommendations for improvements to achieve the community vision; and an economic analysis that identifies a range of redevelopment and infill strategies for the community; and,

WHEREAS, through the charrette process, the community and design team arrived at a series of urban design and policy principles to guide appropriate infill development and streetscape improvements in Spring Hill's main commercial centers. These "First Principles" include creating *Walkable Street Scenes*; achieving *Connectedness* for both vehicles and pedestrian networks; encouraging *Compact, Mixed*

Uses for redeveloping properties; and requiring *Street-Oriented Buildings* to create a continuous frontage and support pedestrian activity, health, safety, and welfare; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council supports the efforts of The Village of Spring Hill, Inc. and others to improve the Spring Hill commercial centers, and the Council is of the opinion that the creation of a walkable street for traditional/ walkable village and neighborhood centers is necessary to implement *The Blueprint for Spring Hill*, and to enable and encourage redevelopment in accordance with the “First Principles” as well as to promote the general welfare of Spring Hill and the City at large; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MOBILE, ALABAMA as follows:

Section II. “Definitions” of the Subdivision Regulations for the City of Mobile, Alabama shall be amended to add the following definitions:

Block Face: One side of a block.

Civic Space: Civic spaces are open spaces that are strategically placed to serve a community function. Civic spaces may be used for active or passive activities, and commonly include parks, squares, plazas, playgrounds, or community gardens.

Streetscape: The appearance or view of the street including trees, lighting fixtures, and street furnishings such as benches and trash receptacles.

Walkable Street: A street that provides amenities for pedestrians as well as vehicles. Common amenities include sidewalks, shading devices (such as awnings, colonnades, second-floor balconies, or street trees), and on-street parking.

Section V. “Design Standards” of the Subdivision Regulations for the City of Mobile, Alabama shall be amended to add the following section:

F. Streets in the TCDO.

1. *Purpose and Intent*. The City of Mobile seeks to create a Traditional Center District Overlay (TCDO), which establishes land development requirements that enable and encourage traditional, walkable village and neighborhood centers, and bring a balance between vehicular and pedestrian-oriented design. These street standards were created to enable walkable village and neighborhood center development within the defined TCDO areas by approving street standards conducive to traditional, walkable districts, including the regulation of lane width, street edge, street tree plantings and sidewalks, as well as interconnectivity of the street network.

2. *Applicability.* The regulations and criteria set forth in this section are applicable to the geographic areas within the Traditional Center District Overlay Boundary (TCDOB), as defined in Chapter 64-3.H of the Zoning Ordinance, Figures 1 and 2. Except where explicitly provided to the contrary, whenever the requirements of these regulations are in conflict with the requirements of the Subdivision Regulations for the City of Mobile, Alabama, the requirement within this ordinance shall supersede. However, the underlying requirements remain applicable where this overlay remains silent.
3. *Graphics and Illustrations.* In case of conflict between any figure and any text in this overlay ordinance, the text shall apply and supersede the graphic or illustration.
4. *Principles of Acceptability.*
 - a. *Trees:* Street trees shall be provided on all new or improved streets in the TCDO, in compliance of this section. Street trees shall be located a minimum of fifteen (15) feet from the radius of a curb at street intersections.
5. *Street Standards.* The following standards shall be followed for all new or improved streets in the TCDO:
 - a. *Street Layout.* Connectivity of the street grid throughout the TCDO is regulated by these regulations. The conceptual physical locations of proposed streets are identified in the TCDO regulating plans contained in Section 64-3.H of the Zoning Ordinance figure 3-5. Reconfigurations or adjustments to the proposed street locations are subject to the following:
 - (1) *Proposed streets.* Proposed streets shown on the regulating plans (see Section 64-3.H of the Zoning Ordinance figure 3-5) may be moved as long as the street connectivity is maintained, and the block configuration meets the standards defined in items F.6 of the Subdivision Regulations.
 - (2) *Additional streets.* Additional streets may be added to the regulating plans (see Section 64-3.H of the Zoning Ordinance figure 3-5) to create a smaller block pattern; however, no streets may be removed without being replaced such that connectivity is maintained.
 - b. *Walkable Streets.* All new or improved streets within the TCDO shall be designated as Walkable Streets. The Walkable Street requirements of this section shall supersede all applicable street requirements, including those for Major Streets, Collector Streets, and Minor Streets, contained in the Subdivision Regulations.
 - c. *Closed-End Streets.* Closed-end streets shall not be permitted in the TCDO.

- d. *Public or Private Streets.* New streets may be public or private; on private streets, public access shall be dedicated via an easement.
- e. *Alleys.* Alleys shall be permitted within the TCDO. The following requirements shall be met:
 - (1) A continuous network of rear and side alleys is encouraged on all new or redeveloped lots to serve as the primary means of vehicular ingress and egress in the TCDO. Rear alleys shall be required for all new or redeveloped parcels narrower than 65 feet, subject to the following:
 - (a) A property internal to a block that redevelops prior to its neighbors is not required to construct an alley; however, the site plan shall reflect rear or side setbacks that provide enough room for the future connection when neighboring properties do redevelop, either via an alley or rear parking drive aisle connection.
 - (b) An exception to the requirement of an alley may be granted upon receipt of agreements with neighboring properties granting vehicular cross access through existing drives or parking lots.
 - (2) Alleys shall be a minimum of twenty (20) feet wide.
 - (3) Alleys shall connect to existing streets or other alleys.
 - (4) Alleys may be dedicated to the City of Mobile, or may remain under private ownership.
- f. *Streets at Business Centers.* The requirements of streets at business centers shall not be applicable in the TCDO.
- g. *Intersections.* Street jogs with centerline offsets less than 125' shall be permitted for Walkable Streets.
- h. *Curvature of Streets.* The minimum radius of curvature of streets on the centerline of a Walkable Street shall be 100 feet.
- i. *Walkable Street Standards.*
 - (1) There shall be no minimum width for rights-of-way and roadways for Walkable Streets; instead, such streets shall be regulated by assembling the appropriate sizes/ dimensions of the following components: lane width, street edge, street tree plantings and sidewalks. The standards for these components shall be as stated in the following table; these dimensions supersede all other applicable standards of the Subdivision Regulations:

TABLE INSET:

Streetscape Standards	Sub-districts		
	<i>Village Center</i>	<i>Neighborhood Center</i>	<i>Neighborhood General</i>
Lane Width:			
<i>Travel Lane</i>	9' to 11' ¹	9' to 11' ¹	8' to 10'
<i>Turning Lane</i>	9' to 11'	9' to 11'	no turning lanes
<i>Parking Lane</i>	parallel – 7' to 8' angle – 15' to 18'	parallel – 7' to 8' angle – 15' to 18'	parallel – 7' to 8' angle – 15' to 18'
Street Edge:			
<i>Type</i>	raised curb	raised curb	raised curb or open swale
<i>Corner radius</i> ²	10' to 15'	10' to 20'	10' to 25'
<i>Corner radius</i> ³	5' max.	5' max.	5' max.
Street trees:			
<i>Type</i>	tree wells	tree wells or planting strip	planting strip
<i>Width</i>	4' min. wells	4' min. wells; 6' to 12' strips	6' min. strips
<i>Tree spacing</i>	Approx. 30' on center	Approx. 30' on center	Approx. 30' on center
<i>Tree diversity</i>	single species per block	single species per block	alternating species allowed
Sidewalk:			
<i>Type</i>	sidewalk required	sidewalk required	sidewalk required
<i>Width</i> ^{4 5}	15' or 12' min.	12' min.	6' min.
<p>1 A 12' wide travel lane may be used, only when reconfiguring an existing right-of-way to retain existing curb to curb dimensions, or for one-way roadways.</p> <p>2 These radius standards supersede those contained in Section V.B.16 of the Subdivision Regulations, and apply to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • swales (measured to edge of pavement); • raised curbs if both on-street parallel parking and curb bulbs (curb extensions) are provided (measured to vertical face of curb); and • raised curbs if on-street parallel parking is not provided (measured to vertical face of curb). <p>The standards for curb bulbs may be adjusted by the City Engineer based on a technical analysis using AutoTurn or turning templates.</p> <p>3 This radius standard supersede those contained in Section V.B.16 of the Subdivision Regulations, and apply to raised curbs if on-street parallel parking is provided without curb extensions (measured to vertical face of curb).</p> <p>4 A minimum width of fifteen (15) feet shall be maintained along the back edge of curb of Old Shell Road and McGregor Avenue within the Village Center Sub-district to allow ample space for sidewalks to accommodate pedestrians and street improvements such as street lights and street trees. All other streets in the Village Center shall maintain a width of twelve (12) feet for sidewalks.</p> <p>5 These minimum sidewalk requirements apply to sidewalks which enfront building parcels. All sidewalks that enfront civic spaces may be 6' min.</p>			

(2) *Sample Street Sections.* Sample new and improved street section assemblies using the street standards for Walkable Streets in the TCDO are shown in Figures 1 - 2.

Figure 1: Sample New Street Sections

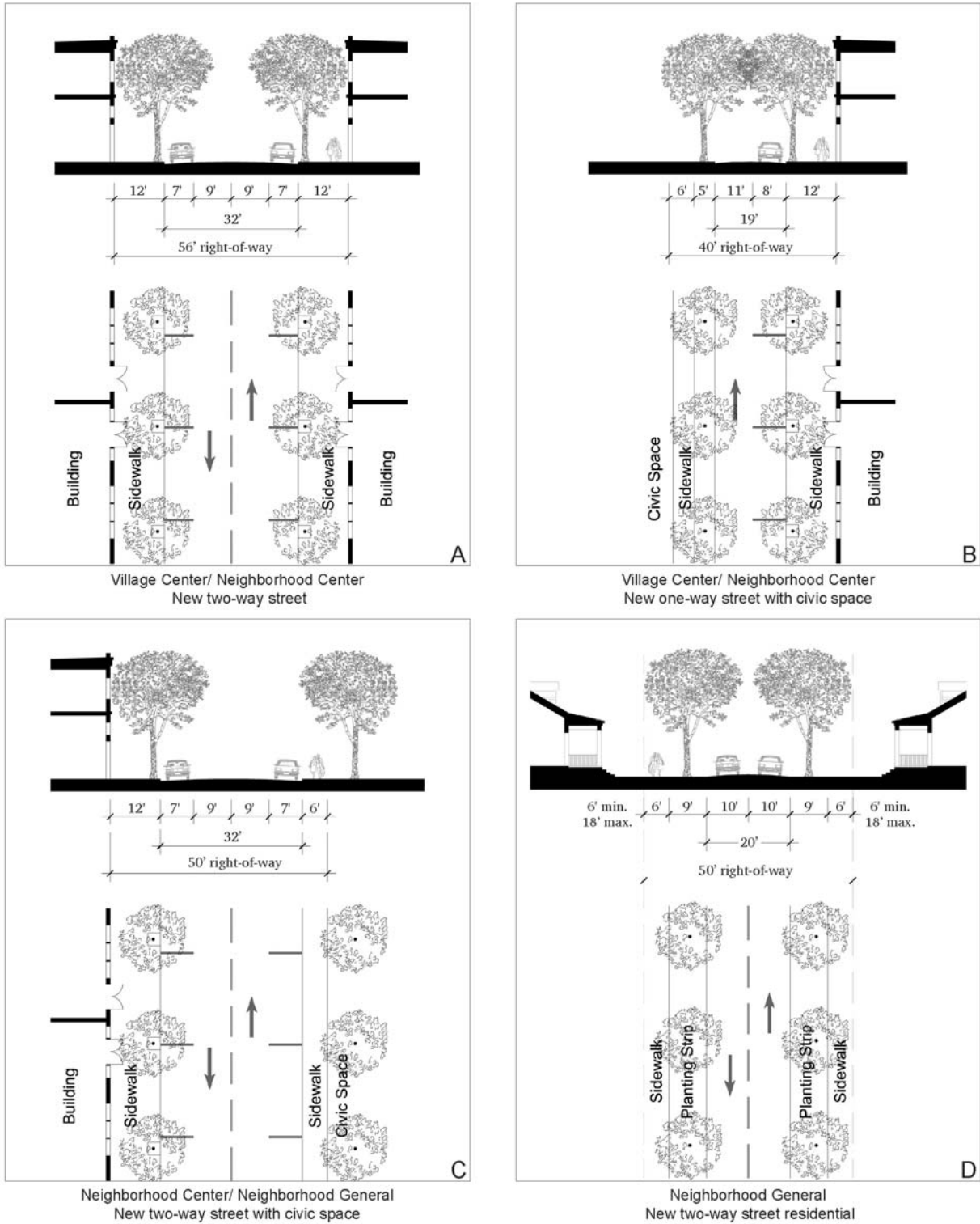
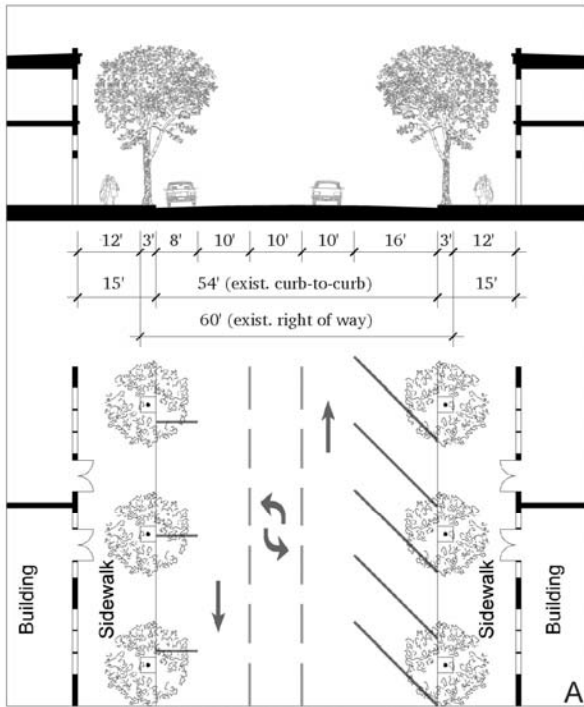
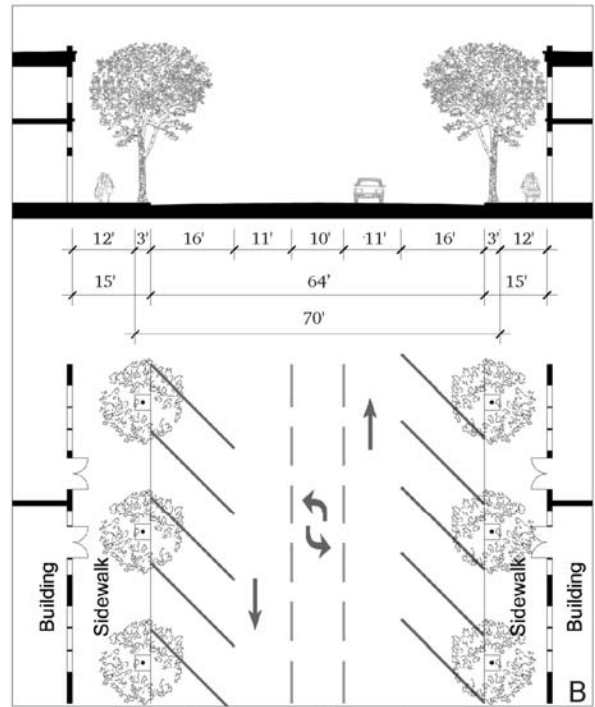


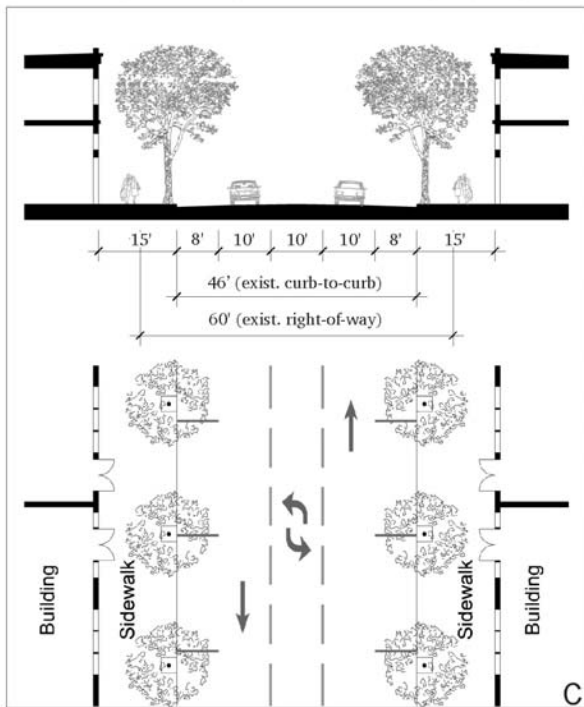
Figure 2: Sample Improved Street Sections



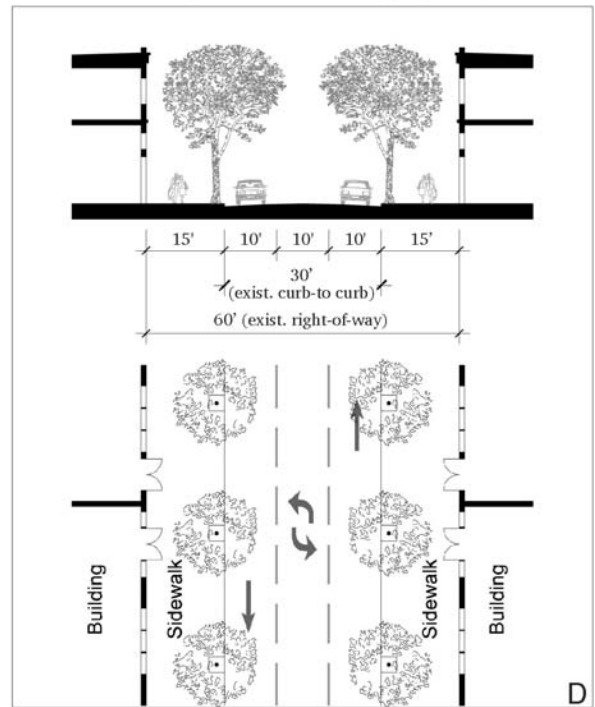
Old Shell Road by McGregor Avenue
Two-way street with parallel and back-in angled parking



Old Shell Road by McGregor Avenue
Two-way street with back-in angled parking

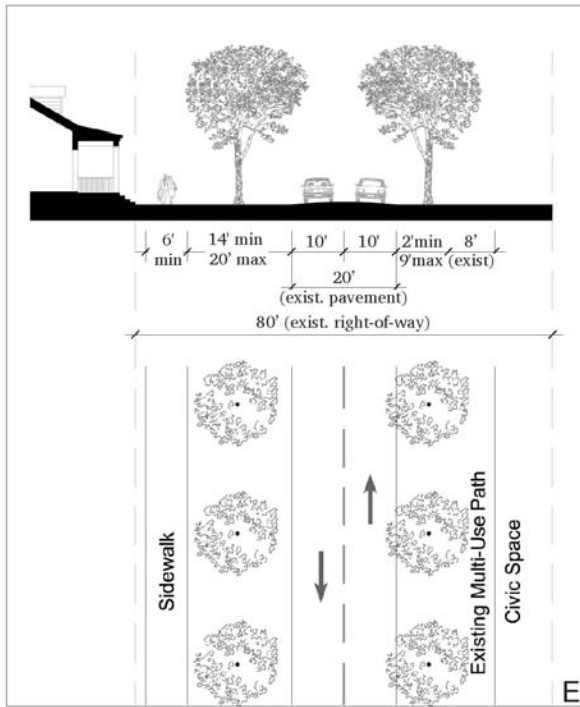


Old Shell Road
Two-way street with parallel parking

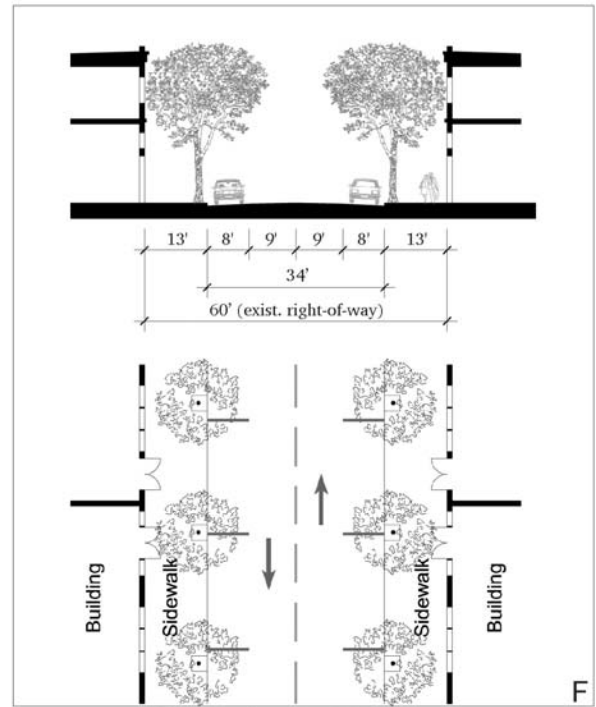


Old Shell Road
Two-way street

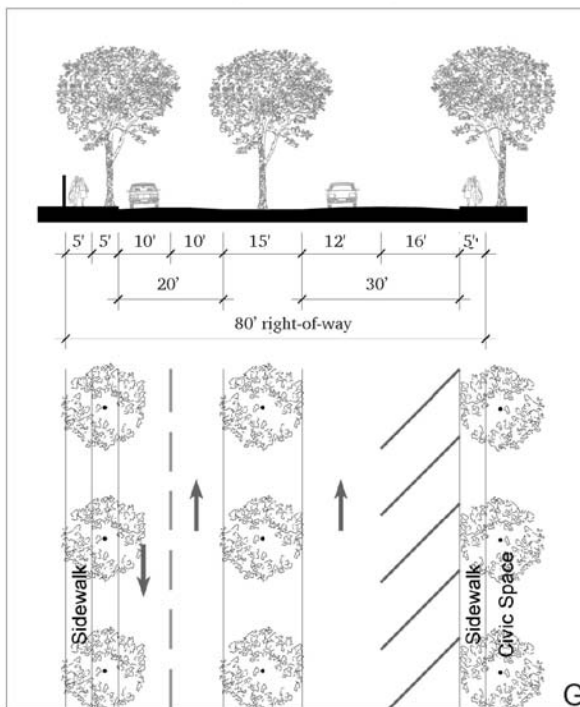
Figure 2: Sample Improved Street Sections (continued)



Museum Drive
Two-way street with civic space



Bit & Spur Road by Old Shell Road
Two-way street



Neighborhood General
One-way access lane by civic space

- j. *Lighting.* The treatment of street lighting has impact on public safety and welfare. The lighting standards are intended to ensure that the street light fixtures are compatible with each other; the orientation of lighting is also very important to maintaining the safety and welfare of pedestrians on the street.
 - (1) Street lights shall be mounted on poles between eight (8) feet and eighteen (18) feet above adjacent grade.
 - (2) Placement of fixtures shall be in alignment with street trees, spaced evenly between the trees.
 - (3) Light fixtures shall be downcast or low cut-off fixtures to prevent glare and light pollution.
 - (4) Cobra head light fixtures shall not be permitted.
 - (5) Floodlights or directional lights must be shielded or aimed in such a way that they do not shine into other lots, the street, or civic spaces.
 - (6) Streetlights shall be of a similar character as other pedestrian-scaled fixtures installed along the same streetscape within the TCDO.
- k. *Sidewalk and Streetscape Improvements.* At the time of development or redevelopment, sidewalk and/ or streetscape improvements envisioned in the *Blueprint for Spring Hill* shall be either constructed or funded as established by the city engineer for any portion of the sidewalk and/ or streetscape adjacent to the parcel.

6. *Blocks.*

- a. *Size and Shape of Blocks.* Except as otherwise provided herein, block perimeters may not exceed 1,600 linear feet as measured along the inner edges of each street right-of-way. Blocks may also be broken by a civic space provided that space is at least 50 feet wide and will provide perpetual pedestrian access between the blocks and to any lots that front the civic space. Block perimeters may exceed this limit, up to a maximum of 2,000 linear feet, only if one or more of the following conditions apply:
 - (3) The block contains a parking facility mid-block that serves a mixture of uses.
 - (4) The block contains valuable natural features that should not be crossed by a street.
- b. *Crosswalkways.* Any single block face longer than five hundred (500) feet must include a crosswalkway at least eight (8) feet in width that connects to another street. Upon redevelopment, individual lots with over two hundred (200) feet of frontage shall meet this requirement within their lot, unless already satisfied within their block face.

7. *Lots.*

- a. *Minimum Dimensions.* There shall be no minimum dimensions for lots within the TCDO.
- b. *Maximum Depth.* There shall be no maximum depth for individual lots within the TCDO; however, the maximum block size of section V.F.6 of the Subdivision Regulations shall be maintained.
- c. *Minimum Front Yard Setback.* The minimum setbacks within the TCDO shall be as stated in Chapter 64-3.H of the Zoning Ordinance.