

PARKING STRUCTURE STANDARDS

Background

Traditionally, the design of a parking structure takes a secondary position to the development of a larger project or a secondary position to cost considerations. Many times, a parking structure is simply considered to be a building needed to provide temporary storage of vehicles and not as an integral part of the design fabric of Virginia Beach -- or any other city. These guidelines are intended to result in parking structures that integrate into the existing and desired design fabric of the city and in particular, to the existing and desired design fabric of the area in which the structure is located. Hopefully, the final design of the parking structure will be viewed as a long-term, quality amenity to the city and not as a utilitarian 'quick-fix' for a parking problem.



Urban parking structure with retail

Site

- A. Access to parking structures should be designed so as not to obstruct free flow of traffic on adjoining public streets (e.g., right and left turn lanes into the structure). Entrances and exits should be located so that each is separated from the other. Separation of the two reduces the turning movement conflicts which occur as vehicles enter and exit the structure.
- B. There should be adequate provision for ingress and egress to all parking spaces to ensure ease of mobility, ample maneuvering clearance, and safety of vehicles and pedestrians.
- C. Access points to the parking structure for pedestrians should be located to avoid pedestrian/vehicle conflicts.
- D. Loading areas within the structure should be provided for vanpools/carpools which may be picking up or discharging passengers who have vehicles parked in the structure.
- E. Security features, as described in the security section below, should be incorporated into the site design as appropriate.

F. *Exterior Facade Design*

- A. The exterior facade should maintain a horizontal line throughout. The sloping nature of the interior structure, necessary in the design of parking structures, should not be repeated on the exterior facade.
- B. The height and mass of the structure should be consistent with the urban design fabric within which the structure is to be located (e.g., a seven-story parking structure should not be situated in an area that consists of primarily two- to three-story structures).
- C. Facades that face public rights-of-way should incorporate a repeating pattern that includes color change, texture change and material change, each of which should be integral parts of the structure not superficially applied trim, graphics, or paint. In addition, vertical elements should be incorporated into the exterior facade design in order to create a repeating pattern. This can be accomplished through the use of reveals, projecting ribs, or offsets, which should be no less than 12 inches in width. All such elements should repeat at intervals of no more than 30 feet.
- D. A wall or other screening of sufficient height to screen parked vehicles and which exhibits a visually pleasing character should be provided.
- E. Elevator and stair shafts should be topped with gabled roofs or other architectural accents.
- F. In commercial districts with an existing or planned urban design fabric, ground-level retail use is encouraged to enhance the streetscape. Where retail is not practical, other amenities, such as an art wall, are encouraged as means of enhancing the streetscape. The ground-level of the structure should never consist of a featureless length of a wall.
- G. Pedestrian entrances should be well defined and attractive.
- H. Exterior building materials for all portions of the building should be high quality, durable, and aesthetically pleasing. Predominant exterior building materials should include any combination of brick, wood, stone, or tinted, textured, concrete masonry units. Bare or painted concrete as the only exterior facade material is strongly discouraged.

Security Features

Proper security is an important aspect of operating a parking structure. A safe, secure environment must be provided for patrons, employees and vehicles. Adequate security measures should be an integral part of the initial design. Secure and lock the parking structure when not in use.

The overall design of the structure should be such that it provides for easy surveillance from the street. The proper placement and design of windows, lighting, and landscaping increases the ability for police and others to observe intruders and maximizes the potential to deter crime.

- A. **Lighting:** A higher light level improves security and is an important passive technique for preventing crime. Parking structures should be designed to provide high light levels throughout all areas. Lighting should be uniform throughout the structure so that dark hiding places are not created. The recommended light level for a parking structure is a uniformly distributed 10 footcandles. Light colored ceilings and upper walls are also recommended to increase light. Extra light should be considered in pedestrian areas such as stairs, elevator lobbies, entrances, exits, and ramps. In addition, lighting should be designed so that parkers are not shocked by great contrasts in light levels between the outside and inside of the structure.
- B. **Elevators:** Elevators should be located along the exterior periphery of the building, preferably on a street side and oriented so that the elevator lobby is visible from the street at each level. The back of the elevator cab and shaft should be made of glass or other similar transparent material that will allow maximum surveillance from the exterior.
- C. **Stairways:** As with elevators, stairways should be located along the exterior periphery of the building, preferably on a street side and oriented so that the stairway is visible from the street at each level. Glass or a similar transparent material should be used to allow visibility.
- D. **Access:** Pedestrian access into and out of the building should be channeled through only one or two points to allow surveillance either by a cashier or a remote television camera.

- E. **Sound Detection Equipment and Cameras:** Both sound detection equipment and cameras can be used to help monitor pedestrian activity, especially in remote sections and at entrances and exits. Television or sound equipment should be installed so that it is tamper-proof.
- F. **Cash Security:** Use of drop safes and silent alarms in the cashier's booth should be considered.