Residential Office District

Creating a Transition to Residential Neighborhoods

Residential Office District

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Introduction

In many places, residential lots on busy roads are next to or across the street from businesses. Over time, property owners or potential developers of these properties may request rezonings, typically for intense commercial uses. This creates a dilemma for local elected officials. Should they grant the rezoning request and live with the negative consequences, including more traffic congestion and more adverse impacts on abutting neighbors? Or, should they turn down the rezoning request even though the property is clearly impacted by the road and nearby businesses?

The Residential Office District provides an alternative. This district permits very limited office development on residential properties, provided a residential character is maintained and driveway access is controlled.

This publication is designed to help municipalities adopt this type of zoning. The guidebook is divided into three distinct parts. Part 1 focuses on critical planning issues, including where to apply residential office zoning. Part 2 illustrates important design elements for appropriate limited office development. Part 3 contains the model residential office ordinance, which incorporates the design elements described in Part 2.

Key Elements of the Residential Office District

- District is intended for areas with many small residential lots on busy roads near intense non-residential development.
- Offices are permitted as a conditional use - residences are permitted by right.
- On smaller lots, offices are only permitted as a conversion of an existing home.
- On larger lots, new offices may be built with a maximum building footprint of 4,000 square feet.
- Offices must have a residential character.
- Offices must share a driveway with an abutting property.
- Office parking lots must be interconnected.
Benefits of Residential Office Zoning

Many communities lack a good transitional zoning district, such as a limited office district. However, with good design standards, this type of zoning has many benefits.

- **Protection of Adjacent Homes.** Because only less intense commercial uses are allowed, the impact on neighboring homes is limited. Unlike intense commercial uses, small offices create little noise, limited additional traffic, no litter, and minimal light.

  To minimize potential impacts, the Residential Office District requires buffers along residential property lines, includes building and parking setbacks from residential properties, and prohibits outdoor trash storage.

- **Control of Traffic.** The Residential Office District requires non-residential uses to share driveways and interconnect parking lots. In addition, the ordinance only allows low traffic generators. These requirements significantly reduce the traffic impact on adjacent roads.

  On the other hand, regular commercial zoning allows each lot to have its own high-volume driveway. Because lots are so small, these driveways are often in poor locations.
• **Preservation of Community Character and Historic Properties.** Limited office districts are designed for areas that typically have a significant amount of development, normally residential. It’s also designed to fit into this development. If historic homes exist, they can be converted. If new construction occurs, it must have a residential character.

Regular commercial zoning has no such limitations. If historic or residential buildings are in the way, they can easily be torn down.

• **Promotion of a Mixed Land Use Pattern.** Transitional office uses help create a mixed land use pattern in a community. Instead of areas consisting solely of homes and intense commercial uses, there is a third area that contains a mix of office and residential uses.

This type of development pattern places walkable and useful development, such as a dentist’s or accountant’s office, near homes. Without this type of zoning, these uses might end up in a less convenient location.

• **Protection of Property Values.** Limited office zoning protects abutting residential property values because it strictly limits the impact of commercial development, unlike general highway commercial zoning.

This zoning also helps the value of residential properties being rezoned to limited office by allowing a more marketable use.

Encourage reuse ... ... instead of demolition.
Future Trends

The future is always difficult to predict; however, a few trends point towards an increased interest in residential office zoning.

- With the internet and computers, more people are working from home. Residential office districts provide good locations for these types of workers.

- The county is aging, and older people generally need more services and fewer retail goods. Residential office zoning provides local places for services, such as medical, financial, and legal offices.

- Traffic congestion is increasing, which makes it more difficult for people to get to large, concentrated office destinations. Residential office zoning provides neighborhood locations for these offices.

- More people are starting their own businesses and consulting firms. The residential office district provides an easy place for a small business to start up.

Local municipalities will often receive requests for rezonings of residential properties on busy roads. Residential office zoning gives these communities a low-impact option for granting these types of requests.
Part 1
Part 1
Planning for Small-Scale Office Development

Part 1 of this publication discusses important planning issues for residential office zoning. When writing a residential office district, municipalities should identify areas on arterial streets and high volume roads adjacent to intense non-residential development where residential uses are less viable.
Types of Office Zoning

Offices come in many different sizes and shapes. Some of the most common types are listed below:

- **Home Occupations.** Although home occupations are not limited to offices, many, if not most, home occupations are offices. Often, these home occupation offices have no impact on the neighborhood, with one of the homeowners simply working from home on a computer. This is the smallest type of office typically allowed in local zoning ordinances.

- **Small-Scale Offices.** Some communities have zoning for smaller-scale offices, either in a residential area where homes convert to offices, which is the focus of this model ordinance, or as professional office zoning district along busy arterial or collector roads.

- **Large-Scale Offices.** Many communities, particularly those near highway interchanges, have zoning for larger scale offices. These offices might be permitted through light industrial zoning, research and development zoning, or suburban office zoning.
Potential Locations for Residential Office Zoning

Residential office zoning is most appropriate for areas that have the following characteristics:

- Consists of small single-family detached residential lots stripped out along a major road.
- Located on an arterial or collector road.
- Across the street from, next to, or in front of significant non-residential development, particularly retail commercial development.
- Provides a transition from non-residential areas to residential areas.

Existing Condition - An existing area is located on a busy road and across from intense commercial development. If this area were to be rezoned, residential office would be better than general commercial because it could preserve the homes, reduce driveways, and provide a buffer for the residential neighborhood.
Local municipalities should carefully evaluate potential locations for residential office zoning.

Because this zoning allows low-impact office development, it will generate more traffic and could have more of an impact on homes than residential zoning. Therefore, this zoning should only be used where most appropriate.

In some cases, municipalities may find that they have too much retail commercial stripped out along the community’s major roads. The Residential Office District can replace some of this excess retail commercial zoning.
Montgomery County’s 2005 comprehensive plan - *Shaping Our Future: A Comprehensive Plan for Montgomery County* - provides guidance on land use policy to local municipalities. It can be used to determine the most appropriate places for residential office zoning.

The land use map in this plan groups land uses by the intensity, function, and characteristics of an area. This map includes one land use category—the Community Mixed Use and Services land use—that is the most appropriate area for a Residential Office district. These areas are local community focal points that typically have a significant retail or institutional element with surrounding residential uses. Residential Office zoning can function as a transition between the retail areas and the residential areas.

A few limited locations in the Suburban Residential land use category might also be appropriate for Residential Office zoning, particularly properties on high volume arterials next to non-residential areas.

Areas chosen for Residential Office zoning should be consistent with the county and municipal comprehensive plans.

**Residential Office zoning is not appropriate in all areas of the county.**
- It is most appropriate in Community Mixed Use and Services areas.
- Some Suburban Residential areas might also be appropriate for this zoning, particularly properties on high volume arterials next to non-residential areas.
Using the Residential Office District to Preserve Historic Character

The Residential Office District can be used to encourage historic preservation or preservation of unique community character. This is primarily accomplished by allowing reuse of historic buildings for offices. Often, historic residential buildings along busy roads are allowed to deteriorate until they need to be torn down. Residential Office zoning provides an alternative to the continued deterioration of historic buildings.

On smaller lots, the model ordinance only allows offices in existing buildings, which helps preserve these buildings. However, it does not have the same requirement for larger lots. If historic preservation is a key goal, municipalities might want to require all non-residential uses to be in existing buildings, regardless of the lot size.

If Residential Office zoning is applied to an area with very distinct architectural styles, the building design standards in the ordinance should be changed to reflect these styles.

Local municipalities might want to try other tools besides the Residential Office District to preserve historic buildings. These alternative tools include village commercial zoning with historic preservation bonuses, historic preservation overlay districts, and official historic districts with Historical Architectural Review Boards.
Planning for Traffic Impacts

To limit potential traffic impacts on existing streets and residential neighborhoods, residential office zoning should only be used where it is necessary.

The ordinance itself is designed to limit traffic impacts by requiring combined driveways and interconnected parking lots.

Local municipalities can also use other tools to address traffic concerns, including traffic studies, transportation impact fees, and transportation development districts.

Alternative Traffic Impacts
Redevelopment of two residential half acre lots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario 1</th>
<th>Scenario 2</th>
<th>Scenario 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two single homes on two half acre lots with residential zoning</td>
<td>An 8,000 square foot office on an acre lot with residential office zoning</td>
<td>A 10,000 square foot drug store on an acre lot with commercial zoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>generates</td>
<td>generates</td>
<td>generates</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 total trips daily</td>
<td>88 total trips daily</td>
<td>881 total trips daily</td>
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<tr>
<td>and</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 PM peak hour trips</td>
<td>12 PM peak hour trips</td>
<td>86 PM peak hour trips</td>
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<tr>
<td>with</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 driveways</td>
<td>1 shared driveway</td>
<td>2 driveways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No parking lot interconnection with neighbors</td>
<td>Parking lot is interconnected with neighbors</td>
<td>No parking lot interconnection with neighbors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 2

design elements
Part 2
Design Elements

Part 2 of this publication introduces design elements that are featured throughout the Residential Office District. This section illustrates various design concepts found in the model ordinance outlined in Part 3 of this publication.
Permitted Uses
When it is used, Residential Office zoning often replaces residential zoning that exists along high-volume roads in a community. The permitted uses in the RO model ordinance allow the same uses that the prior residential zoning might have allowed, such as single family detached and semi-detached dwellings, municipal buildings, and parks. These uses can continue in the same manner as they would have under residential-only zoning.

Conditional Uses
The Residential Office District also contains conditional uses that are not typically found with residential zoning, including business and professional offices, funeral homes, bed and breakfast facilities, and institutional uses.

These conditional uses are permitted but must be specially approved by the elected governing body, which can impose extra conditions on the development for the use. The conditional uses in the RO model ordinance are also required to meet additional standards, including driveway access, building design, and setbacks.

All of these standards are designed to minimize the potential impact of non-residential development on abutting residential properties and adjacent major roads.
Dimensional Standards

The dimensional standards regulate lot size, setbacks, height, and coverage standards.

In the Residential Office District, the conditional uses are divided into two categories: Class One and Class Two. In Class One, proposed uses have a minimum lot size of 14,000 square feet and are only permitted as a conversion of an existing home. Class Two uses, on the other hand, must be on at least 40,000 square foot lots and can be in a freestanding building that is not a conversion.

All of the conditional uses must meet special setbacks from abutting residential properties, including building and parking area setbacks.

In addition, to keep the scale of new buildings compatible with abutting residences, the maximum footprint of buildings is 2,000 square feet for Class One uses and 4,000 square feet for Class Two uses.
Building Design Standards

Building design standards regulate the visual impact that non-residential uses will have on adjacent properties and how they will fit in with the architecture of the neighborhood.

The Residential Office District ordinance requires conditional uses to meet a variety of building design standards, including pitched roofs, compatible building materials, working front doors, residentially scaled windows and doors, and appropriate window to wall ratios.

These design standards help new development fit into existing neighborhoods. However, some neighborhoods may have a character that is significantly different from the model ordinance standards. In these cases, the standards should be adjusted to reflect this character. For example, in the Hollywood area of Abington, homes have flat roofs; so, in this case, the model ordinance’s pitched roof requirement would not be appropriate.

- Pitched roofs with dormers are better than ... 
- ... flat roofs or brightly-colored roofs.
- Stone, wood, and stucco are better than ... 
- ... glass, synthetic foam stucco, and metal.
- Residential windows and doors are better than ... 
- ... ribbons of glass and missing front doors.

Build Like This Instead of This
Driveway Design Standards

One of the key goals of the Residential Office District is to limit the impact of new non-residential development on major roads. This is accomplished through strict driveway access controls that require shared driveways and interconnections between properties.

The location of the shared driveway must be approved by the municipal governing body, based on the location’s ability to minimize the need for future driveways, maximize driveway distances from street intersections, or improve sight distances. All of these factors improve traffic safety, reduce potential congestion, and improve pedestrian safety.

In addition, local municipalities should encourage property owners to have agreements for the maintenance, repair, and insurance coverage for the shared driveways.

Existing Condition - Five residential lots on busy road with four driveways.

Lot 1 Redevelops - The existing home is converted to an office, and an addition is added. The existing driveway is used, and a cross-easement for shared access is granted to lot 2.
Lot 2 Redevelops - The property is converted to offices. The existing driveway on lot 2 is closed, and lot 2 must use the driveway on lot 1. Lot 2 grants cross-easements for shared access to lots 1 and 3.

Remaining Lots Redevelop - The three remaining homes are converted to offices. Lot 3’s driveway is closed, and lot 3 must use the driveway on lot 4. The four original driveways have been reduced to two.

Legend

1. Lot Number
2. Driveway Entrance
3. Cross-Easement for Shared Access
Parking Design Standards

Like buildings, parking lots can significantly change the character of an area. When parking lots are in front of buildings, brightly lit, and poorly landscaped, they create a non-residential character that does not match existing residential neighborhoods.

On the other hand, when parking lots are behind buildings, have attractive landscaping, and incorporate subdued lighting, the parking lot has a minimal impact on existing residential character, particularly if extensive buffering and landscaping is provided.

To reduce traffic on adjacent streets and to help drivers get from one property to the next, the Residential Office model ordinance requires parking lots on abutting lots to be interconnected.
Landscaping

Although landscaping is not regulated by the model Residential Office ordinance, landscaping is a critical component of land development.

Non-residential developments in the Residential Office District should have street trees, buffers, and site element screens. Regulations for these various landscaping elements should be in the municipality’s Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and can be based on the county’s Model Landscape Regulations.

To provide appropriate locations for this landscaping, the Residential Office District limits the amount of impervious coverage to 40 or 50% and requires parking area setbacks from abutting residually zoned properties.

Lighting, Outdoor Storage, and Trash Disposal

For abutting residential neighbors, the lighting, outdoor storage, and trash disposal of a development can be a big nuisance, if poorly designed.

To address potential problems, the Residential Office District prohibits outdoor storage, requires trash to be stored inside principal buildings, and regulates lighting.

Lighting poles cannot exceed twelve feet in height, must be set back at least 20 feet from residential property lines, and may not shine light onto abutting properties.
To keep a residential character, signs should be relatively small and inconspicuous.

Because signs are normally regulated in a separate sign ordinance, the Residential Office model does not include sign regulations. The following standards can be used to guide residential office requirements a municipality might add to its sign ordinance:

- Freestanding signs should not be taller than 6 feet or larger than 6 to 10 square feet.
- Wall signs should be prohibited or should be designed for a pedestrian scale only, perhaps with a maximum size of 4 to 6 square feet.
- Signs should only be externally lit, or not lit at all.
- Signs and posts should be made of materials and have a design that is compatible with the building and neighborhood.
model ordinance

Part 3

residential office district
Part 3
Model Ordinance

Part 3 of this publication presents the model ordinance, with commentary included in the right hand sidebar. The Residential Office District is intended to be adopted as a freestanding separate zoning district.

Some communities might prefer to structure the Residential Office District as an overlay district. This minimizes the changes for the underlying properties. To change the model ordinance to an overlay, the permitted uses list and dimensional standards should be removed.
Residential Office District

Section 1. Intent
The primary purpose of the Residential Office District (ROD) is to create transitions from intensively used areas to residential neighborhoods. Specifically, the Residential Office District is intended to:

A. Allow limited office uses as a transition between intensive commercial/industrial uses located on major roads and existing residential areas.

B. Limit the impact of non-residential development on residences by requiring a residential character, limiting the scale of buildings, controlling the location of parking areas, and requiring buffer landscaping.

C. Control access and limit the impact of development on the (municipality name) major roads.

D. Allow residences that are located on smaller lots, fronting major roads, and close to other residences to convert to office uses, provided the residential character of the neighborhood is not changed.

E. Encourage reuse of existing residential buildings.

Section 2. Permitted Uses
A lot may be used for one or more of the following by-right uses:

A. A single family detached dwelling.

B. Single-family semi-detached dwellings or duplexes.

C. Municipal buildings.

D. Outdoor parks and open space.

E. Agriculture.

Legislative Intent:
The legislative intent should be tailored to reflect each municipality’s own specific goals, especially goals related to the conservation of residential neighborhoods and the character of development along major roads.

Home occupations are very appropriate in Residential Office areas. These are normally permitted in all parts of a community and are regulated in the general provisions section of a zoning ordinance. If a municipality does not permit home occupations otherwise, then they should add home occupations to the permitted use section of this ordinance. (Please note: According to state law, no-impact home occupations, which have no signs, outside employees, or client traffic, must be allowed in all zoning districts. Requirements for other types of home occupations, however, are completely up to the discretion of local municipalities.)
Section 3. Conditional Uses

A lot may be used for one of the following classes of uses, provided a conditional use is received in accordance with the requirements of section ___ of this chapter and all standards of the RO District are met:

A. Class One conditional uses. On lots which meet the Class One requirements, one of the following uses is permitted:

1. Conversion of an existing home into professional offices.
2. Conversion of an existing home into a professional office and one (1) apartment.
3. Conversion of an existing home into a bed and breakfast facility.
4. Conversion of an existing home into two (2) apartments.

B. Class Two Conditional Uses: On lots which meet the Class Two requirements, one of the following uses is permitted as a conditional use:

1. Professional offices.
2. Funeral homes.
4. Schools, day care centers, churches and other religious establishments, meetinghouses, and post offices, in accordance with the Institutional Use standards of Article ___ and the dimensional and conditional use standards of the RO District, whichever is more restrictive.
5. Offices and one (1) apartment.

CONDITIONAL USES:
The uses listed in this section have a greater potential for negative impact on neighboring properties and the surrounding area than permitted uses.

The process for obtaining a conditional use should be outlined in other parts of a community's zoning ordinance.

When conversion of residential to nonresidential uses takes place the character of the residential structures should be preserved.

Some communities with historic areas may want to eliminate class two conditional uses to encourage preservation of existing structures.

Communities that have distinctive outbuildings, such as barns or carriage houses, might want to allow the class one conditional uses in these outbuildings.

With a maximum building footprint of 4,000 square feet, any institutional uses will be relatively small scale.
## Section 4. Dimensional Standards

Proposed uses shall meet the following dimensional requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uses Permitted By Right</th>
<th>Class One Conditional Uses</th>
<th>Class Two Conditional Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Net Lot Size (square feet)</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Lot Width (feet), measured at the street line of a public street</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Front Yard Setback (feet)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Side Yard Setback (feet) (single-family semi-detached dwellings may have a side yard of 0 feet along a common property wall)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Rear Yard Setback (feet)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Building Setback from Abutting Residential Zoning District (feet)</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Building Height</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setback for Parking Areas from Abutting Residential Zoning District (feet)</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setback for Parking Areas from All Other Property Lines (feet)</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setback between Buildings on the Same Lot (feet)</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Building Footprint (feet)</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Building Coverage</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Impervious Coverage, excluding common driveway area from the street to the first parking space or cross-driveway</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

The dimensional standards in this model ordinance are guidelines for communities. These standards should be adjusted to reflect existing conditions in a community.

The minimum lot size of 14,000 square feet will allow a standard-sized home to be converted to offices with a small addition and necessary parking. If this minimum lot size is changed to reflect existing lot sizes, a number of other standards should also be changed, including lot width, impervious coverage, and building coverage.

A lot width of between 70 feet and 80 feet is needed to allow a double row of parking (two 20’ spaces on each side of a 20’ parking aisle) with landscaping on each side. Widths of less than 70 feet will have little room for landscaping, and widths of less than 60 feet will have limited parking possibilities.

The front yard setback requirement should be changed if a uniform setback has been established along the street and this setback is different than 30 feet.

Some communities may want to require a minimum height of 2 stories for new buildings, if an existing historic character of 2 story buildings exists.

A smaller maximum building footprint may be appropriate in small scale residential neighborhoods. Larger maximum building footprints can be used when communities want to encourage more office space.

Those communities that wish to preserve historic character may want to eliminate the class two designation.
Section 5. Conditional Use Standards and Criteria

A. Buildings, driveways, parking areas, loading areas, outdoor activity areas, light sources, trash areas and other potential nuisances shall be located and designed to minimize adverse impacts on abutting residential properties. In order to limit the adverse impact of a proposed conditional use, the Board of Supervisors/Commissioners/Borough Council may require alternative site layouts, including increased setbacks from residential property lines, different locations of buildings, parking areas, and driveways, and increased screening for light sources and activity areas.

B. All conditional uses shall be served by public sewer and public water facilities.

C. For class one conditional uses, the proposed use must preserve, utilize, and maintain any existing principal building, provided this building was originally built for residential purposes.

D. For class one conditional uses, no new freestanding non-residential buildings shall be constructed on the property, and existing buildings shall be expanded by no more than fifty percent (50%) of the residential building floor area that existed at the time of passage of this Article. Building additions must be to the rear or side of the existing principal building.

E. All new conditional use buildings and additions must have a residential character, as demonstrated through elevations and other architectural drawings, and must include the following features:

1. A pitched roof covering the building or addition with a pitch of at least six (6) vertical inches to every twelve (12) horizontal inches. Dormers or gables shall be used to break up the bulk of roofs.

2. On all sides of buildings, residential building materials and colors that are similar to those found in compatible residences in the immediate neighborhood.

3. A working front door that faces the street and serves as a primary entrance.

4. Residentially scaled windows and doors, compatible in scale to those found in residences in the immediate neighborhood.

5. A wall to window/door opening ratio that is between 2 to 1 and 1 to 1.
F. Driveway access controls.

1. No more than one (1) driveway access shall be permitted per street frontage.

2. Along arterial streets or major collectors, all conditional uses shall be required to share access with an adjacent Residential Office District property whenever the conditional use has proposed driveway access to the arterial street or major collector. When driveway access is available on an abutting property, the applicant shall use this access, as outlined in section 5.F.2.a below. If shared access cannot be provided by an existing driveway on an abutting property, the applicant shall provide access in a way that maximizes the potential for shared access in the future, as outlined in section 5.F.2.b.

a. Shared Access via Existing Driveways.

   (i) When the nearest edge of an existing driveway on an adjacent nonresidential property zoned Residential Office with frontage on the same arterial or major collector is within 50 feet of the applicant's tract, the applicant's tract shall utilize the driveway on the adjacent tract as a shared access, provided an easement granting access to the applicant's tract has been recorded.

   (ii) The shared access shall be the sole access to the site from the applicable arterial street or major collector. Any existing driveways on the site to the applicable arterial street or major collector must be eliminated.

   (iii) Shared access shall not be required when all possible interconnections between the two abutting lots would cross twenty (20) linear feet or more of wetlands, floodplains, and/or slopes of 15% or more.

   (iv) Shared access may be located entirely on one lot or may be split along a common lot line.

b. Shared Access via New or Existing Driveway on the Property.

   (i) When shared access cannot be provided via an existing driveway consistent with section 5.F.2.b, above, a maximum of one driveway intersection shall be permitted on the property per street.
(ii) The driveway shall be located on a side lot line bordering a property zoned Residential Office. In order to accommodate required sight distances, or preserve environmental features, this driveway may be set back from the side lot line no more than fifty (50) feet. Shared access shall not be required when all possible interconnections between the two abutting lots would cross twenty (20) linear feet or more of wetlands, floodplains, and/or slopes of 15% or more.

(iii) Each nonresidential use shall provide an access easement for this driveway guaranteeing access to all abutting lots zoned Residential Office. In addition, the access easement shall provide access from the closest adjacent property line to the driveway. The easement between the driveway and the closest adjacent lot shall be in a logical location for a connection to the adjacent lot, shall have a minimum width of 35 feet, and shall be usually located between 50 and 130 feet from the street ultimate right-of-way line.

(iv) Existing driveways on the applicant’s site not meeting the requirements in this section shall be eliminated.

(v) The location of the driveway intersection with the street and the easement connection to the closest adjacent lot shall be subject to approval by the municipal governing body based on the driveway’s ability to minimize the need for future driveways, preserve existing historic buildings, and/or maximize the distance from existing street and driveway intersections, including consideration of safe sight distances.

(vi) Parking lot entranceways taking access from existing or future shared driveways shall be set back from the street ultimate right-of-way line a minimum of 50 feet. Parking shall not be permitted along shared driveways between the street ultimate right-of-way line and the rear edge of the easement granting access to the abutting lot.

G. Each non-residential use shall provide access easements for its parking aisles and driveways guaranteeing access and use to all abutting lots within the RO District, unless all possible interconnections would cross twenty (20) linear feet or more of wetlands, floodplains, and/or slopes of 15% or more. Parking areas on abutting lots shall be directly connected by a driveway. The applicant shall either construct these interconnections during the initial

This ordinance contains regulations that govern the design and placement of lighting fixtures on commercial properties. Some municipalities may already regulate lighting elsewhere in their zoning code. In such cases, this section should reference these other lighting regulations.

Landscaping is a very important aspect of potential office development, particularly for buffers and screening. The county’s Model Landscape Regulations can be used to guide a municipality’s landscaping standards.
land development or, if an interconnection is not currently feasible, escrow funds for future construction while also providing an easement to the abutting lot allowing future construction when the abutting lot develops as a conditional use.

H. Parking is not permitted in front yards or between buildings and streets.

I. No outdoor storage is permitted, and trash must be kept inside a principal building until collection.

J. All signs must meet the requirements of Article ____, Signs.

K. Lighting shall not shine on abutting residential properties, and lighting poles shall not exceed twelve (12) feet in height. Nonresidential light fixtures shall be setback a minimum of twenty (20) feet from residential property lines, and the light source itself shall not be visible from abutting residential properties.

L. All nonresidential uses shall provide landscaping, including buffers, street trees, and site element screens in accordance with Chapter ____, Subdivision and Land Development.