

# RESIDENTIAL INFILL DEVELOPMENT

## Presentation

- Introduction
- Process
- Infill Issues
- Scope of  
Recommendations
- Preliminary  
Recommendations



City Council / Planning Commission / Infill Task Force Worksession

April 8, 2008

*Alexandria*

# Infill Task Force - Mission

- 1) Study the impact of large new housing construction and major residential additions in existing, established single-family neighborhoods;
- 2) Analyze existing City regulations that pertain to limiting infill impacts and make recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council for any regulatory changes;
- 3) Keep the public informed about the study, briefing the community at large on the progress of the infill study, and briefing the Planning Commission and City Council on their analysis and recommendations.

# Infill Task Force - Process

- First met in August 2007 to establish agenda



- Field trip in Sep 2007 to assess the impact of Infill problems in the City

# Infill Task Force - Process

- Held a community forum Nov 2007 – another scheduled for May 1, 2008



- Reviewed existing City regulations & assessed other tools available
- Focused on specific Infill problems & developed preliminary recommendations

# The Infill Issue

- Infill construction can be consistent with current zoning regulations but not with the neighborhood context.



# Identified Infill Problems

- Height & bulk of Infill projects
- Protection of historic or precious resources – need to address demolition issues
- Neighborhood compatibility
- Visual impact of front garages, vehicle parking, paving and driveways
- Teardowns & new construction on substandard lots
- Clarify some zoning provisions

# Infill Task Force – Scope of Recommendations

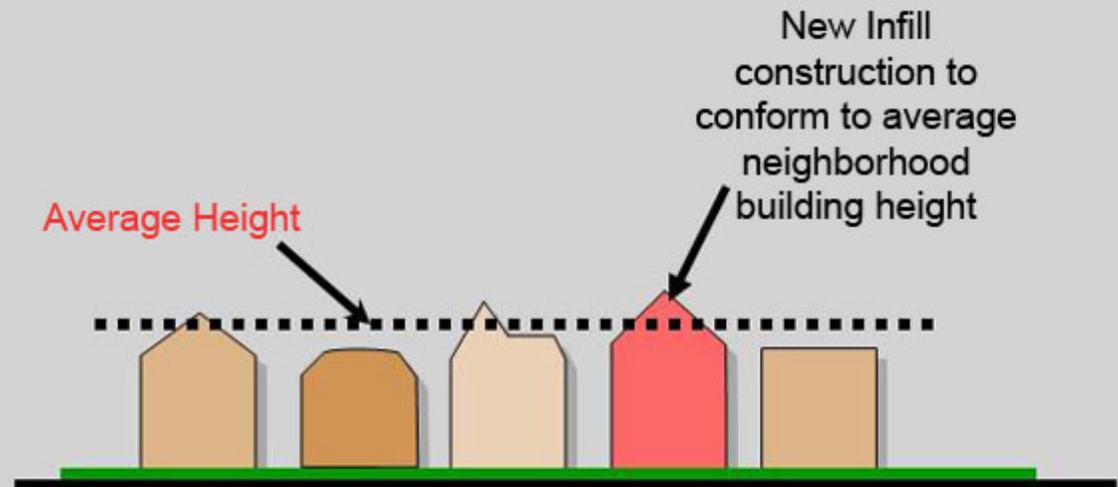
- Preliminary—Will be refining recommendations in next couple of months before final recommendations appear before Planning Commission and City Council in June
- Address single-family developments in residential zones only (R-20, R-12, R-8, R-5, R-2-5, RB and RA)
- Approach of recommending tools that are practical and effective without radical changes. Address most egregious cases.

# Preliminary Recommendations

# Control Type: *Height*

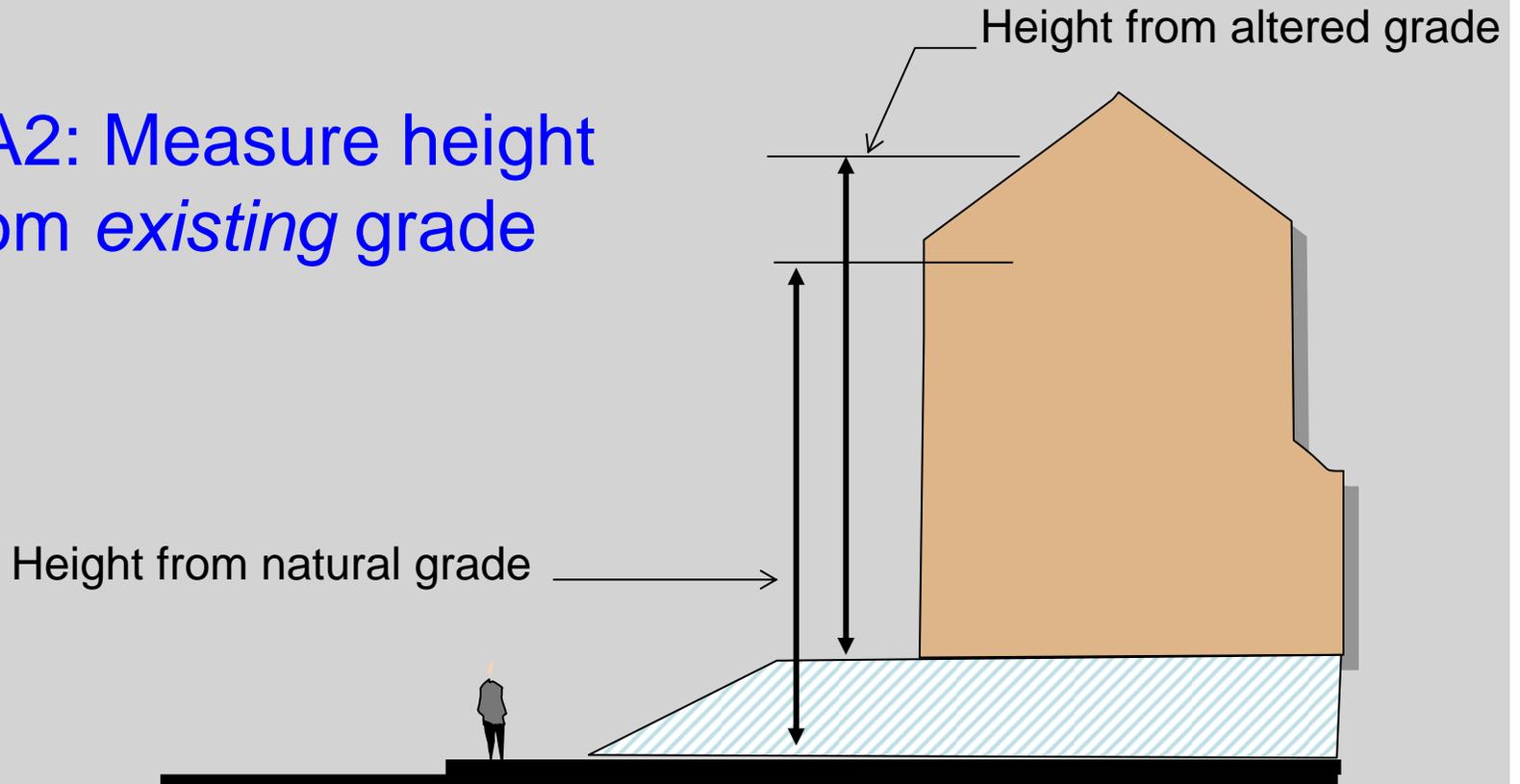
- A1a: Establish maximum height on the neighborhood block based on the average existing height on the block plus 20%

In blocks with mostly one-story houses, if the calculated height is less than 25 ft, the owner can build up to 25 ft.



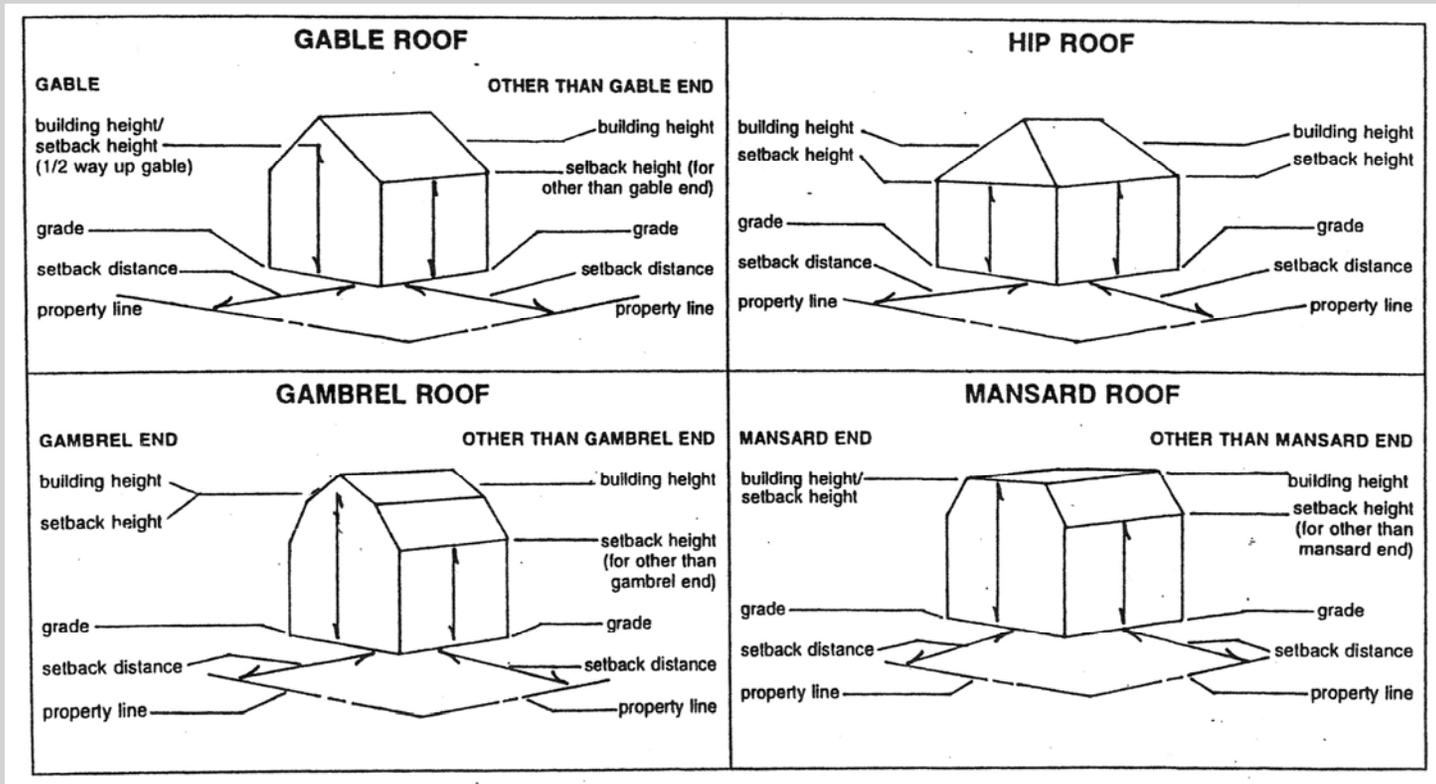
# Control Type: *Height*

- A2: Measure height from *existing* grade



# Control Type: *Height*

- A3: Identify height requirements for all roof types



# Control Type: *Height*

- A4: Permanently adopt interim threshold height requirements – requires that the front door threshold be less than 20% higher than the average on the block

**20% Above  
Average  
Threshold Height**



**Average  
Threshold  
Height (5 feet)**

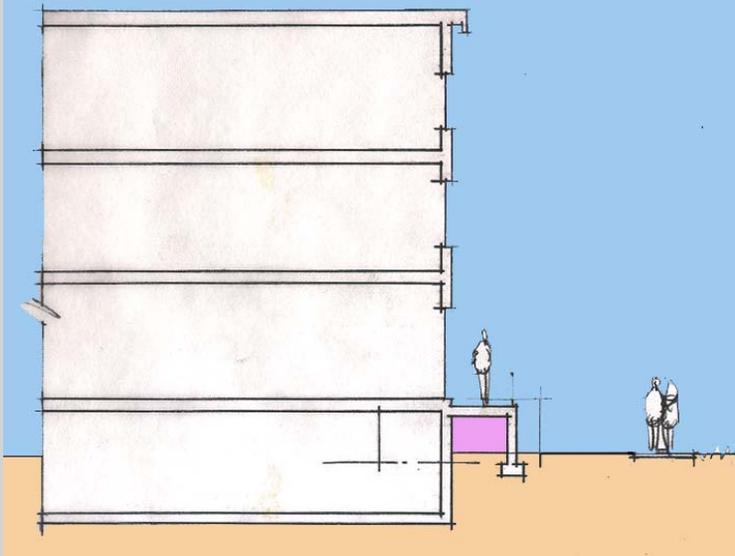
**20% Above Average  
Threshold Height (6  
feet)**

**Requires SUP for  
Greater than 20%  
Average Threshold  
Height (8 feet)**

# Control Type: *Height*

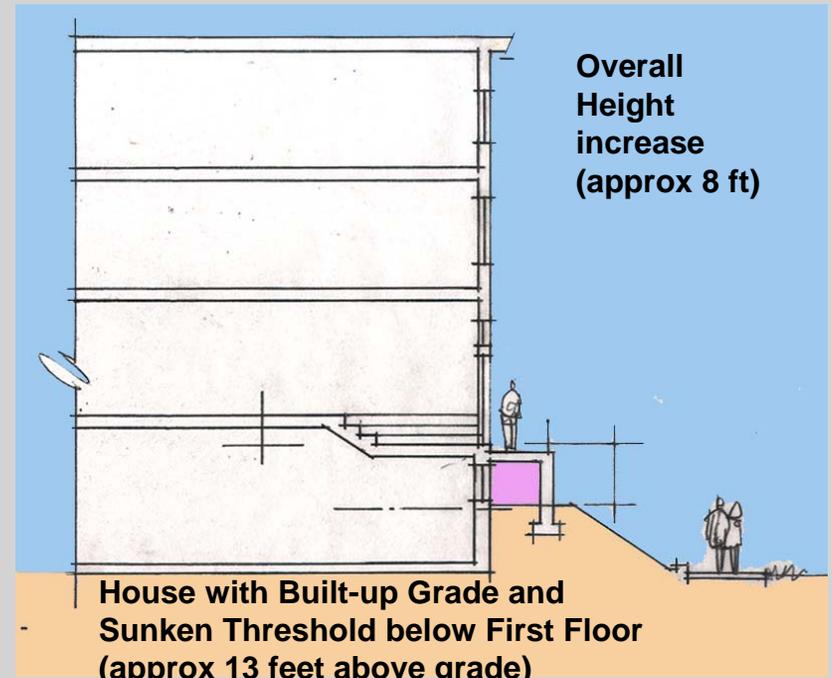
The height from the existing grade to the top of the threshold or first finished floor.

House Built on Existing Grade with Threshold at First Floor (approx 5 feet above grade)



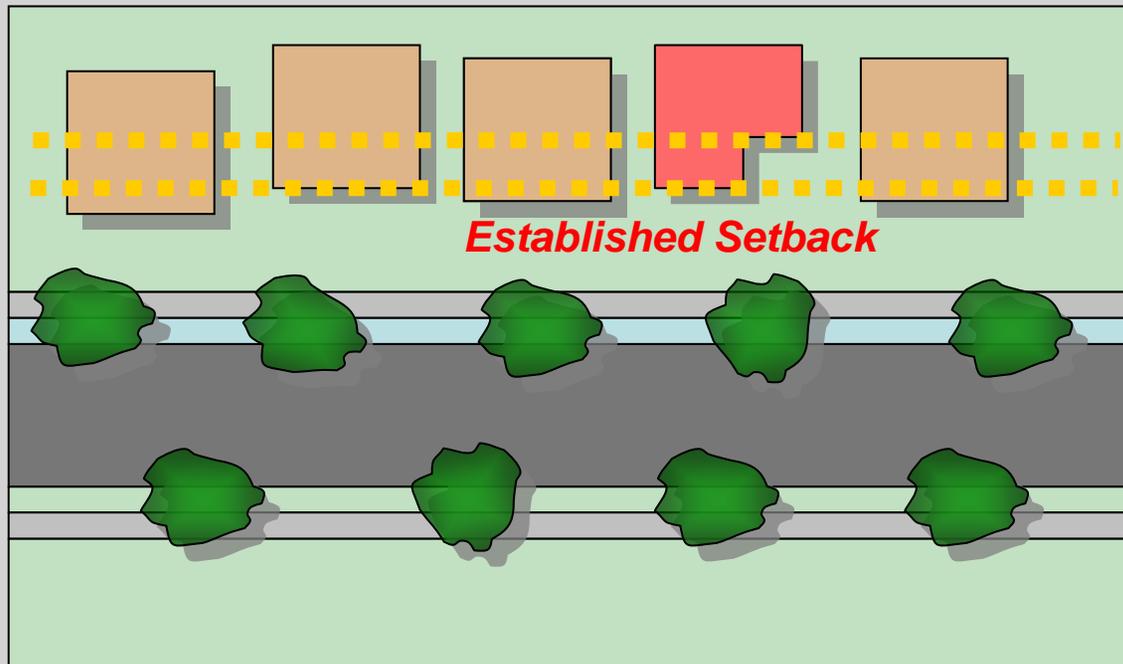
Overall Height increase (approx 8 ft)

House with Built-up Grade and Sunken Threshold below First Floor (approx 13 feet above grade)



# Control Type: *Setbacks*

- B1: Clarify front setback requirements to allow a new dwelling to meet the average setback of existing houses even though the average line is in front of the required setback line



# Control Type: *Setbacks*

- B2: Consider changing the side setback ratio in the R-5 and R-2-5 zones to provide more space between houses on narrow lots (and maybe reduce height near a neighbor).

*(Further staff analysis presented at the April meeting)*



1:3 Setback Ratio



1:2 Setback Ratio

## Control Type: *Bulk*

- C1: Clarify Floor Area definition to reduce excessive deductions for FAR purposes
  - Eliminate 7'6" language (projects that maximize FAR take advantage of this language)
  - Continue to exclude basements, stairs, HVAC areas
  - Exclude attic area with less than 5 ft of ceiling height
  - Exclude open front porches (a design incentive)
  - Exclude detached garages in the rear yard (a design incentive)

## Control Type: *Design-Bulk*

- D1: Encourage open front porches by excluding them from FAR calculations



# Control Type: *Design-Bulk*

## Incentives for Detached Garages

- D2: Encourage modest-scale detached garages in the rear yard by excluding them from FAR & current required setbacks



House with a Rear Yard Two-Car Garage



House with a Rear Yard One-Car Garage

# Control Type: *Design-Bulk*

## Incentives for Detached Garages

- D3: Allow driveway in required yards for access to detached garages in the rear yard



## Control Type: *Design-Bulk*

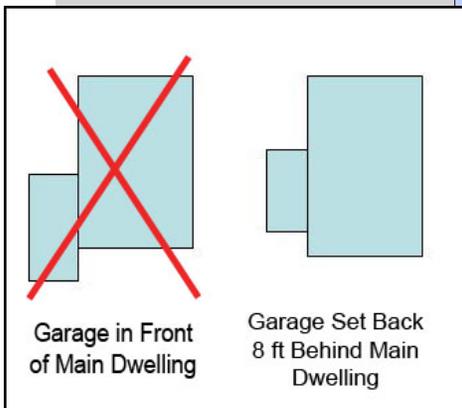
- D4: Allow tandem parking without an SUP



# Control Type: *Design-Bulk*

## Regulations for Attached Garages

- D5: Require attached garages to be set back 8 ft from the front face of the house
- D6: Require attached garages to be side-loaded when lots are 65 ft wide or greater



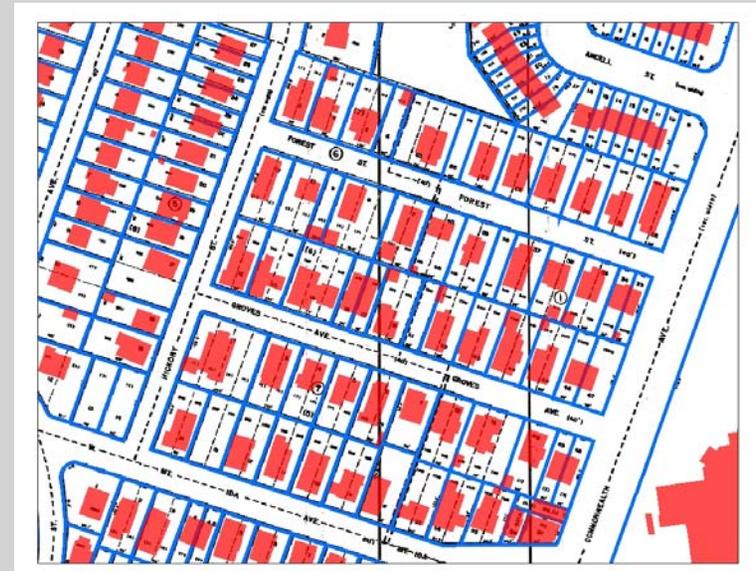
For lots 65 ft or wider,  
require side-loaded garage

# Control Type: *Design*

- E1: Permanently adopt interim subdivision regulations to ensure that the current “as-built” neighborhood character is considered during decisions on an application



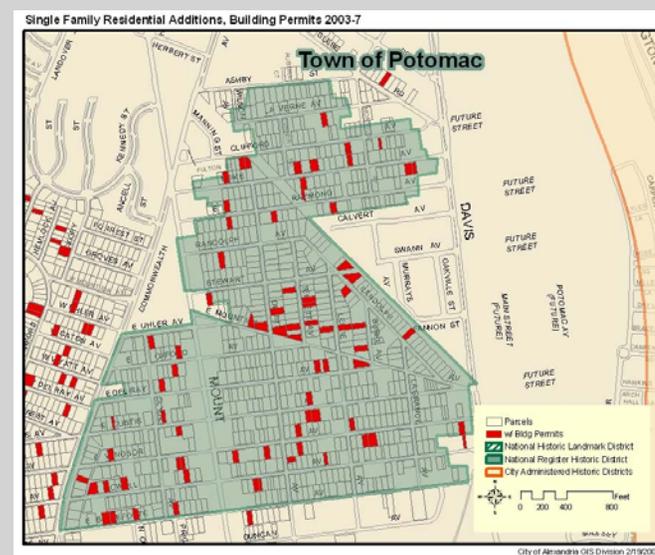
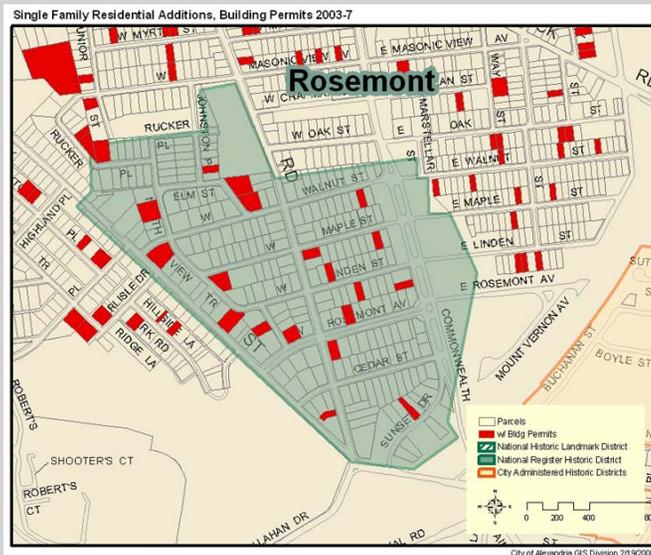
**Original Subdivision**



**Developed Neighborhood**

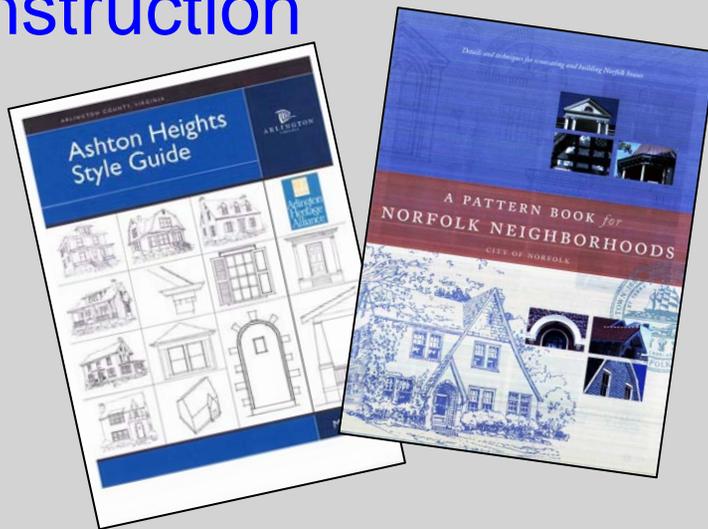
# Control Type: *Design*

- E2: Encourage the establishment of overlay districts (historic or conservation districts) to protect areas experiencing significant pressure (e.g., Rosemont, Town of Potomac) – this would be a long-term effort involving the communities



# Control Type: *Design*

- E3: Create a Citywide pattern book to guide owners toward sensitive additions or new construction



- E4: Require a tree preservation and landscaping plan for Infill projects that are teardowns/new construction or major additions

## Control Type: *Design*

- E5: Require owners of existing dwellings on substandard lots to go through an SUP process before being able to tear down the existing dwelling and build a new house





# Questions & Discussion