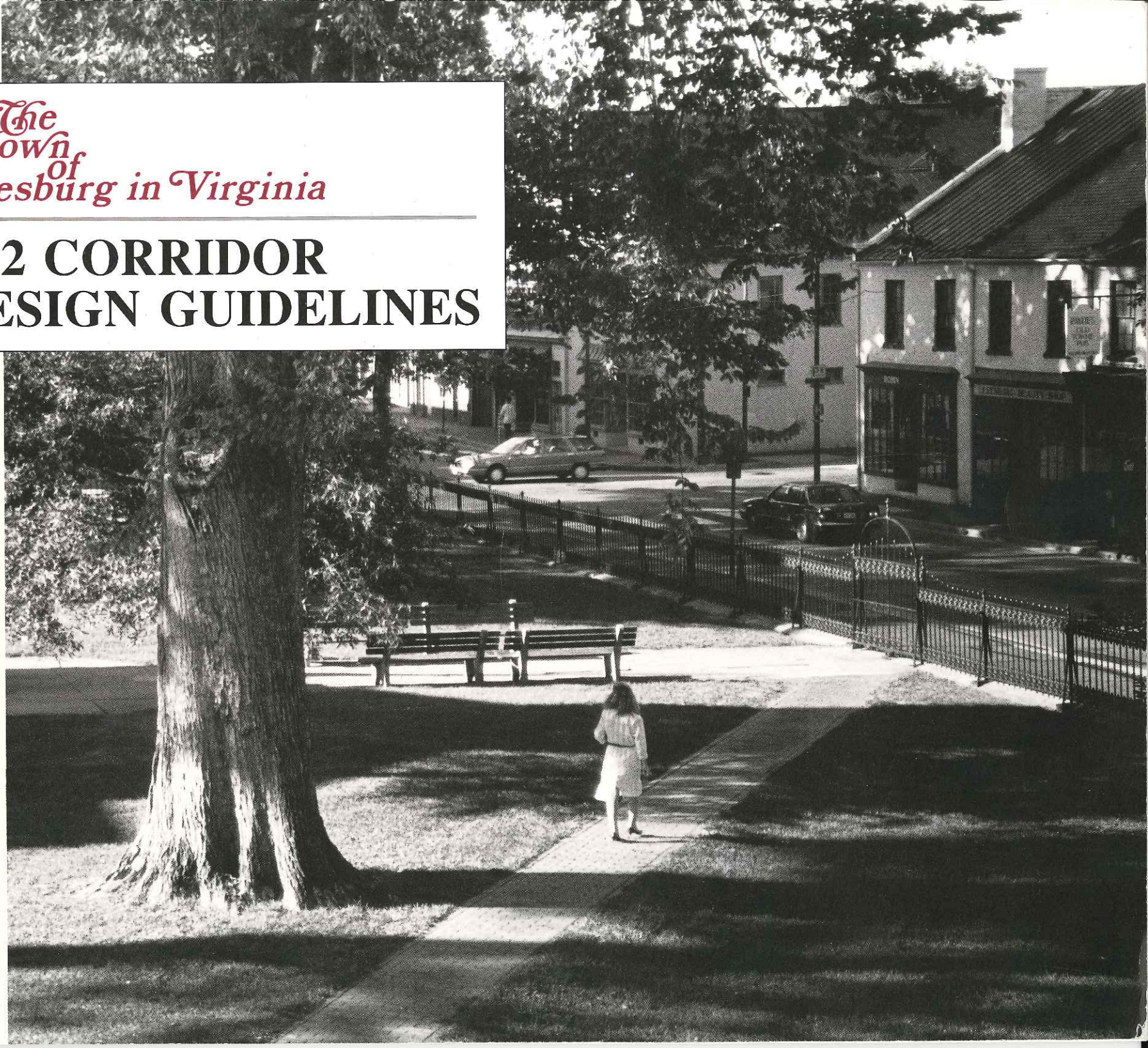


*The  
Town  
of  
Leesburg in Virginia*

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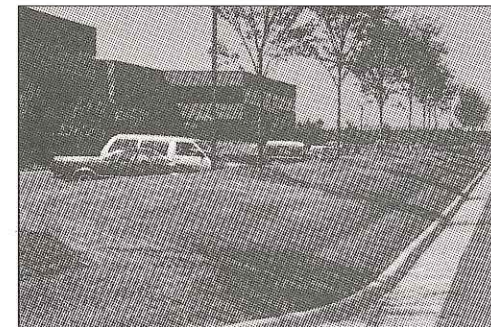
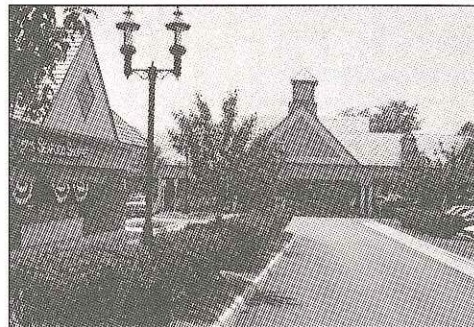
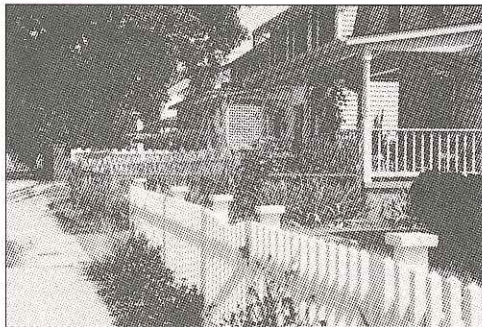
**H-2 CORRIDOR  
DESIGN GUIDELINES**



*The  
Town  
of  
Leesburg in Virginia*

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# H-2 CORRIDOR DESIGN GUIDELINES



Prepared for  
**Leesburg Town Council**

Adopted January 23, 1990  
Effective March 1, 1990

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# INTRODUCTION



*King Street, c. 1910-20*

## INTRODUCTION

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The H-2 Corridor Overlay District was established to encourage better design and enhance the visual experience along Leesburg's major roadways leading into the Old and Historic District. Recent provisions of Virginia law\* allow municipalities to designate important routes of tourist access to recognized historic districts and landmarks as corridors subject to special design regulations and review. Within the Leesburg corporate limits, U.S. Route 15 (North and South King streets) and Virginia Route 7 (East and West Market streets) serve as such access corridors, and have been designated as the H-2 Corridor Overlay District.

The intent of the H-2 District is not to restrict innovation, imagination or variety, but rather to promote design principles which create a better sense of transition from and balance with the intrinsic characteristics of the Old and Historic District. By developing a greater awareness on the part of the development community and town officials alike of such characteristics as the pedestrian environment, building height, construction materials, and sense of

scale, the design quality of the Old and Historic District can better be embodied in the architecture and site development of properties along the designated entry routes into the District.

The purpose of this document is to familiarize developers and property owners within the H-2 District with many of the important design issues that affect the appearance of Leesburg's entry corridors. This introduction sets forth the background and implementation of the H-2 District Ordinance, starting with a discussion of the role of design review. An explanation of how to use the Guidelines is provided at the end of the introduction. Separate chapters provide guidelines for the general areas of **building design** and **site design**. Finally, the Appendix contains materials such as maps and other references that are intended to supplement or clarify the Guidelines text.

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\* Refer to Section 15.1-503.2 of the 1950 *Code of Virginia*, as amended.

### The Role of Design Review

The Town of Leesburg has found that new development can have both a positive and negative impact on the character of an area. Zoning, subdivision controls and housing and building codes can prevent or mitigate some of the possibly detrimental effects of one land use upon another. Other aspects of development are more subtle and therefore less amenable to such exacting regulations. Design review can do what other land use controls cannot: monitor the quality of design and assist the Town in achieving its urban design objectives.

The construction of new buildings and the remodeling of existing structures affect the appearance of Leesburg; in some instances the design of such development may even affect the overall visual quality and character of the town. Therefore, the Town's objective for design review is to monitor both the appearance of a specific building or site and also the appropriateness of that design within the overall urban design fabric of the community.

The design review process is intended to ensure that new development is not only consistent with the town's zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan but that it is functionally well-designed, fits in well with the surrounding built and natural environment, and is in keeping with the distinctive character of Leesburg. This review process can help the town achieve a

stable balance between the rights of the individual property owner and the needs of the community at large.

### The H-2 Corridor Overlay District

Leesburg's first officially recognized historic district was created in 1963 through the adoption of a new article to the Leesburg Zoning Ordinance creating the Old and Historic District (also referred to as the H-1 District). The intent of the H-1 District is to protect and enhance the unique physical character of the area while recognizing the needs of existing residential, commercial, governmental, service and cultural uses. This article also authorized the formation of the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) for the purpose of determining the appropriateness of exterior architectural changes to existing structures, reviewing the appearance of new construction to ensure compatibility within the District, and reviewing requests for demolition or relocation of structures. A detailed inventory of the H-1 District undertaken in 1976 led to the creation of the *Old and Historic District Design Manual* which has been used since 1977 by the BAR as a guide in reviewing specific requests within the District.

The 1986 *Leesburg Town Plan* lists as one of its primary goals the continued protection of the Old and Historic District, due both to its value as a community resource and its contribution to the town's unique character. The Plan further states that "creative urban

design practices will be necessary to ensure that Leesburg develops with the variety of generally well-related mix of uses that gives the town its unique identity" and establishes a policy of "encouraging a mix of development types and styles which are generally compatible with Leesburg's historic, small town character." \*

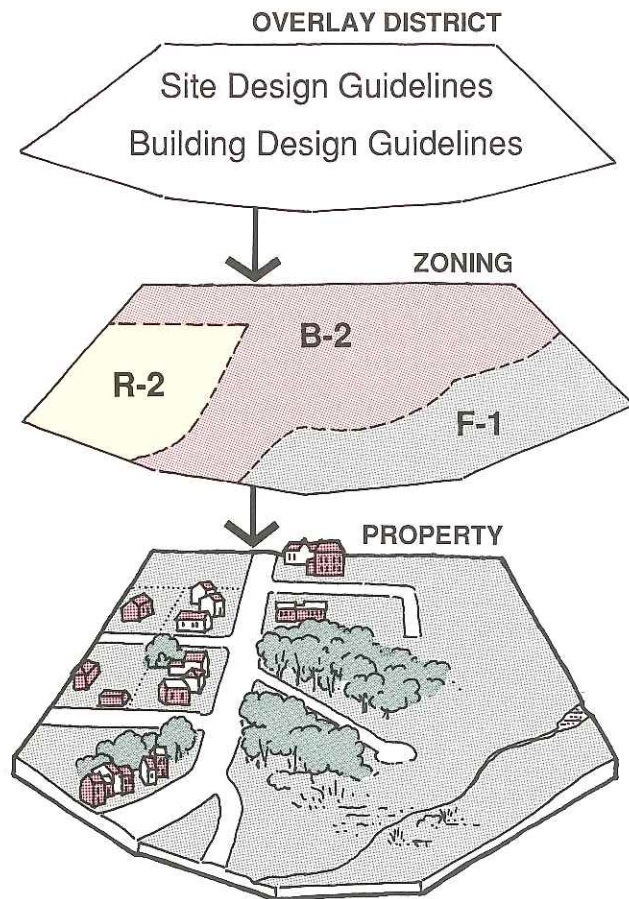
Additional policies in the Plan recognize that infill construction should be designed to be compatible in character, scale and design with surrounding buildings. Specific standards for new development are outlined, addressing the need for buildings that respect the scale of adjacent buildings and natural landforms, building materials and designs selected to harmonize with their surroundings, the retention of tree cover and the importance of appropriate landscaping, the preservation of natural topographic characteristics, and the need for new development to reflect and not compete with the character of surrounding areas.

To achieve the goals, policies and standards outlined by the *Town Plan*, the Leesburg Town Council authorized a study to examine arterial<sup>†</sup> corridors providing access to the Old and Historic District and the preparation of design guidelines to be utilized in reviewing proposals for new construction

\* Town of Leesburg, *Town Plan 1986*, adopted March 26, 1986, p. 92.

† These terms can be found in Appendix D: Glossary

An **overlay district** is subject to additional standards for development that supplement the requirements of the underlying zoning districts.



along these corridors. This effort is consistent with recent amendments to the *Code of Virginia*. The Town of Leesburg retained Land and Community Associates in April 1989 to complete this project.

Prior to the development of these Guidelines, Land and Community Associates prepared an *Inventory of Existing Conditions* for the major entry corridors into Leesburg's Old and Historic District. Roadways surveyed include Market Street (Virginia Route 7), King Street (U.S. Route 15), and the Routes 7/15 Bypass, excluding those areas within the Old and Historic District. The corridor inventory was not intended to provide detailed site information for every parcel contiguous to the roadway. Rather, it was designed to identify and document key existing conditions of both the natural and built environment that serve to define Leesburg's unique character. This information attempted to identify where opportunities existed along the corridors to more clearly define the transition from countryside to historic town center, and served as the basis for the development of the guidelines contained in this document.

#### Scope

The H-2 Corridor Overlay District<sup>†</sup> includes the areas adjacent to U.S. Route 15 (North and South King streets) and Virginia Route 7 (East and West Market streets) within the corporate limits of Leesburg, exclusive of the H-1 Overlay District. As an overlay district<sup>†</sup>

the H-2 District—like the Old and Historic (H-1) District—is subject to additional standards for development that supplement the requirements of the underlying zoning districts. While the permitted land uses for parcels are still determined by the *Town Zoning Ordinance* and Zoning Map, the ways in which those uses are developed are influenced by the provisions of the H-2 District Ordinance. All parcels within these corridors are subject to H-2 District review except single-family residential properties and approved planned development districts.

The H-2 District comprises those properties within a given distance from the centerline of the roadway right-of-way. This distance was determined after considering the scale and intensity of existing development, the types of development anticipated on undeveloped lands, the zoning classification of both developed and undeveloped properties, and the distances at which it is possible to see important building features and details. Because the character and extent of development vary from corridor to corridor, these distances, by necessity, are different for each of the roadways as follows:

- **U.S. Route 15 South** (S. King Street): 500' from the right-of-way centerline from the south corporate limits to the H-1 Overlay District.
- **Virginia Route 7 East** (E. Market Street): 1000' from the right-of-way centerline from



the east corporate limits to Route 7/15 Bypass; 500' from the right-of-way centerline from the Route 7/15 Bypass to Catoctin Circle; and 300' from the right-of-way centerline from Catoctin Circle to the H-1 Overlay District.

- **U.S. Route 15 North** (N. King Street): 500' from the right-of-way centerline from the north corporate limits to the H-1 Overlay District.
- **Virginia Route 7** (W. Market Street): 300' from the right-of-way centerline from the west corporate limits to the H-1 Overlay District.

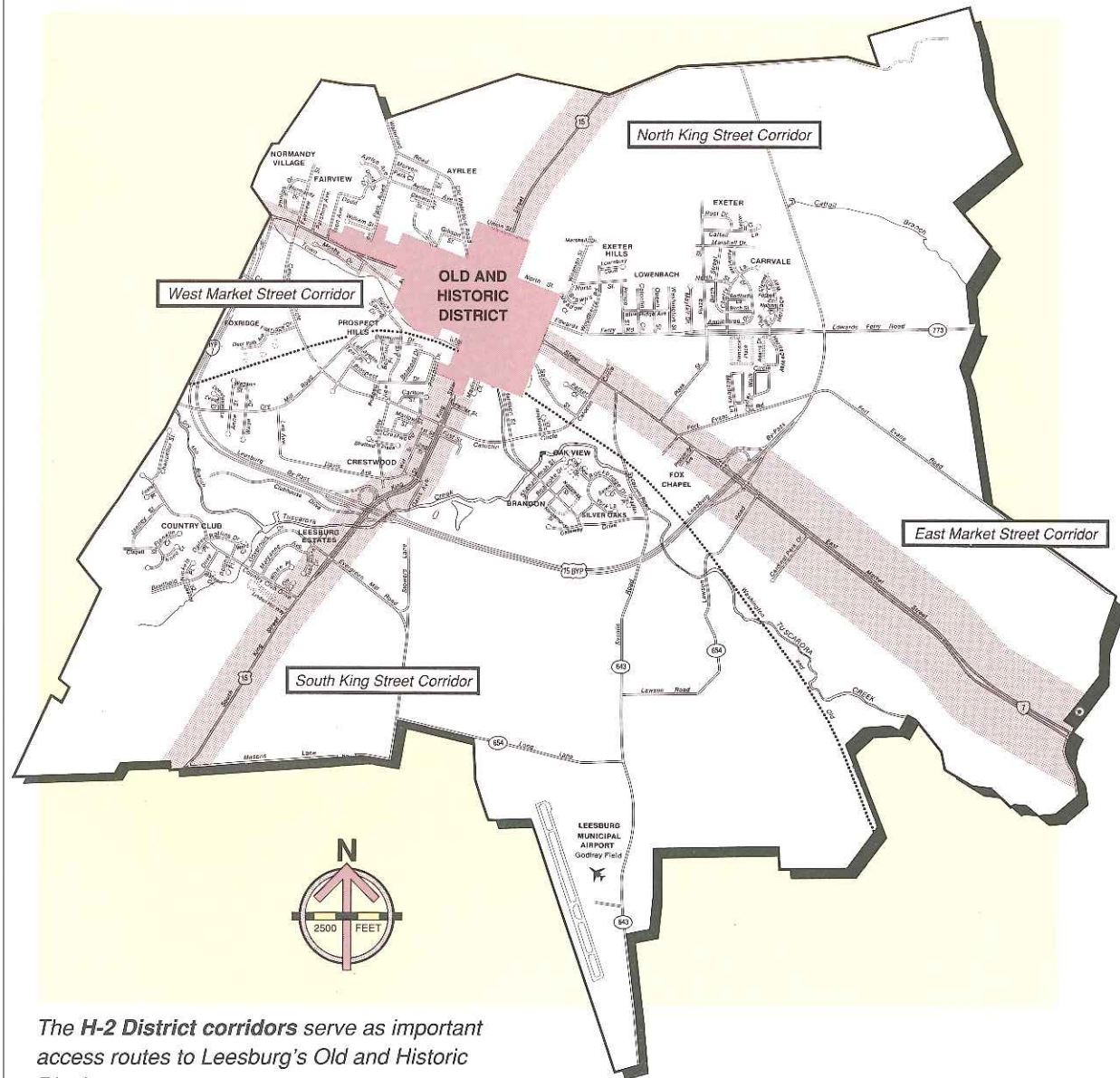
Areas within the H-2 District are subject to all provisions of the guidelines found in Chapters 1 and 2 of this document.

### How to Use The Guidelines

The guidelines in this document are divided into two chapters, addressing the principal aspects of the land development process—buildings and site:

- Chapter 1, *Building Design Guidelines*, is concerned with the exterior physical appearance of both new and renovated **buildings**, including issues such as siting, facade design, construction materials, and color.
- Chapter 2, *Site Design Guidelines*, addresses the design of **site features** that accompany buildings, such as natural amenities, site access, parking, pedestrian circulation and lighting.

### LEESBURG H-2 CORRIDOR OVERLAY DISTRICTS



*The H-2 District corridors serve as important access routes to Leesburg's Old and Historic District.*

Before beginning to formulate a development plan for a particular property, reference should be made to the detailed maps of the H-2 Corridors in Appendix A to confirm the applicability of these Guidelines. The maps show existing buildings, property lines and topography, and identify both the corridor boundaries and the underlying zoning ordinance classifications. An overview of some of the issues covered by the Guidelines can be obtained from the Table of Contents. Additional general information can be found on the first page of each of the chapters. Consulting the Guidelines early in the development process will enable prospective applicants to more readily respond to the Town's urban design objectives for properties within the H-2 District.

As the planning for a development project progresses, decisions must be made that will affect its form, appearance and physical layout. The Guidelines can and do offer specific information on many issues that relate to a project's visual impact. As the review of the project required by various municipal departments occurs, familiarity with and incorporation of the principles contained in the Guidelines will enable the review process to proceed more smoothly. Observance of such principles will ensure that Leesburg grows in a manner that is visually compatible with both its natural setting and historic physical resources.

While the information contained in the

Guidelines is intended to be general in nature and applicable to many types of development, there may be occasions when more detailed information is necessary. A list of additional references is included in Appendix B to provide assistance on other more specific design issues. The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* is a particularly important reference because it forms the basis for design review throughout the country and is also included as Appendix C. A glossary can be found in Appendix D that defines terms that may be unfamiliar or have specific meanings as used in this document. Such terms are indicated in the text by the symbol (†) after the word. Finally, Appendix E contains the text of the H-2 Corridor Overlay District Ordinance.

#### **Other Relevant Documents**

Additional information relating to site preparation and development can be found in other documents adopted by the Town of Leesburg. These documents are available from the Department of Planning, Zoning and Development in the Government Municipal Center.

- *Town Plan 1986*
- *Town Zoning Ordinance* (especially Article 9: Landscaping, Screening and Open Space Regulations and Article 10: Sign Regulations)
- *Leesburg Design and Construction Manual*
- *Subdivision and Land Development Regulations*

There may be additional documents and regulations that may apply to individual sites or buildings. The Department of Planning, Zoning and Development can assist in the identification of these items.