

## **Maplewood Avenue Complete Street Project**

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### Landscape and Streetscape Guidelines

Block bounded by Maplewood Avenue, Raynes Avenue, and Vaughan Street

City of Portsmouth

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*Draft for Review and Comment*

### **Purpose**

These guidelines are intended to coordinate future streetscape, landscape, and access for future redevelopment of privately-owned parcels within a block bounded by Maplewood Avenue, Raynes Avenue, and Vaughan Street. The City of Portsmouth has undertaken a design project to improve the streetscape, intersections, circulation, and parking within the rights-of-way that bound the block. These improvements are part of an overall program to significantly improve Maplewood Avenue. The City's goals include creating a Complete Streets environment along these public ways. The City seeks to enhance the character, value, vitality, and sustainability of both the public realm (the area within the public rights-of-way) and the private realm that may be developed in the future.

These guidelines will inform the planning, design, and approvals of future private development within this block so that it complements and enhances the public realm and contributes to the district's success.

### **Context**

Significant redevelopment has been underway in the areas of the downtown along Maplewood Avenue and the loop formed by Vaughan Street and Raynes Avenue (the Maplewood Corridor). The City recognized the need to re-organize the circulation in these areas to better accommodate future vehicle traffic, pedestrian circulation, bicycles, transit, including bus stops. The City seeks create a coherent, well designed streetscape in conjunction with transportation enhancements that extends the high quality of other downtown streetscapes to this area of Portsmouth and provides for a resilient landscape that features green design and green engineering principles.

The City has advanced the design of the public realm (the area within the public rights-of-way) along the Maplewood Corridor. It plans to implement the designed improvements through a sequence of public projects. It is coordinating the street edge design, streetscape, and access designs for all projects along the edge of the rights-of-way so that they are consistent with the City's goals and design.

The public realm is narrow along the perimeter of the block that is the subject of these guidelines. This limits the City's capability to provide the quality and extent of sidewalks, street trees and amenities that would be appropriate for the area. However, complementary improvements can be accomplished in concert with private sector redevelopment, should it occur in the future. These guidelines anticipate those opportunities that may emerge in the future.

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### **Streetscape and Block Perimeter Guidelines for Future Development**

Block Bounded by Maplewood Avenue, Raynes Avenue, and Vaughan Street

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## A. Sidewalk and Streetscape Guidelines

### Objective

The sidewalks along the perimeter of the block should be widened from that which can be accommodated within the public right-of-way. The additional width will allow the sidewalks to be generous pathways for pedestrians and to serve the entrances and uses along the perimeter of the site. The streetscape should have adequate width to provide for a sequence of street trees along the perimeter of the block. Areas near major building entrances and features should include a combination of paving, landscaping and amenities to invite pedestrians and provide attractive forecourts to the development. The landscape character should generally be consistent with the designs for nearby public realm improvements, featuring native species chosen for their hardiness and express variety, rather than uniformity.

### Guidelines

1. Sidewalk width - Sidewalks should be at least 8 feet of unobstructed width. Obstructions include streetlighting, street trees, utility posts or equipment, or street furniture. Wider segments with at least 10 feet wide should be employed along storefronts. Additional width should be provided at entrance plazas or areas where significant activity is anticipated.
2. Paving materials – Brick, where it is used, should match the typical unit size, color, and manufacture used by the City along the Maplewood Corridor. The sidewalk should have a brick border along the street curb matching the design of adjacent segments. Where there is not adjacent segment, the banding should be approximately 24 inches in width. Enhanced areas such as plazas, seating areas or other features should typically be predominately brick but should incorporate granite as a feature and complementary material. Concrete sidewalks may be employed and should use the same specification employed by the City along other areas of Maplewood Corridor.
3. Landscaped edges – The site designs should incorporate bands of landscaping along building edges where there are no storefronts, plazas, connecting sidewalks or other pedestrian features. The landscape and setback should vary in width but should typically be no less than 10 feet. This setback and may be used for street trees, natural plantings, integration of stormwater management and “green” infrastructure.
4. Street trees – The street trees should be varied in species and habit to reflect their location characteristics. The street tree spacing should be varied, rather than uniform. The species should be chosen in consultation with the City and should be the same or similar to other trees employed in the streetscape on other parts of the Maplewood Corridor.
5. Lighting – Indirect and high-cut off lighting should be used to highlight landscape features or entrances but should not create glare conditions. The light sources should provide a warm spectrum that renders natural growth so that it appears to be green.
6. Feature areas – The corner of Raynes Avenue and Maplewood Avenue should incorporate a significant landscape feature area with a combination of plantings and building setbacks to serve

### **Streetscape and Block Perimeter Guidelines for Future Development**

as a natural visual transition and focus for those approaching the site along the bridge. The other corners of the block should also feature a combination of setbacks and pedestrian-level landscaping, if they are not entrance plazas associated with building developments.

## **B. Site Circulation and Access**

### Objective

The vehicular curb cuts and entrances should be safely setback from intersections and crosswalks and be designed to limit visible impacts on the pedestrian environment. Clear and generous pedestrian access should be provided to major building entrances and storefronts. Because of its length, a publicly accessible mid-block sidewalk and passageway should be created linking Maplewood Avenue to Vaughan Street.

### Guidelines

1. Vehicle access locations – If possible and practical, vehicle access should not occur along Maplewood Avenue, but be constrained to other street segments to provide for visual and landscape continuity along the Maplewood Corridor.
2. Loading areas – Loading areas should be designed so that vehicles do not extend across sidewalks when the areas are in normal operations. Loading areas should have screening gates or doors when not in use.
3. Sight lines - Vehicle access points should be designed to have adequate sight lines to sidewalks, lanes and parking to all for safe maneuvering.
4. Mid-block pedestrian corridor – A mid-block pedestrian corridor at least 12 feet wide should be provided in mid-block location. The sidewalk width should be at least 8 feet. The ends of this corridor should be designed so that its location and purpose are clear. The corridor should be provided with lighting, pedestrian-oriented features, amenities, or landscaping.

## **C. Landscaping**

### Objective

The landscaping is intended to provide a natural character rather than formal, symmetrical plantings. The plant materials may be drawn from native species that are salt tolerant and may be found at tidal and marsh edges, grasses or other seasonally hardy species. This landscape may be enhanced with seasonal plantings.

## Guidelines

1. Planting beds – Planting beds should be linear or irregular, rather than being composed of simple geometric shapes. The planting beds should be designed to be part of the green infrastructure and stormwater management systems, where practical.
2. Species and geometries – The species are intended to generally provide year-round interest and character and be hardy, salt-resistant species that might reasonably colonize or be adaptable to the coastal edge conditions. Seasonal feature planting could be used as accents within these patterns.

## **D. Green Engineering**

### Objective

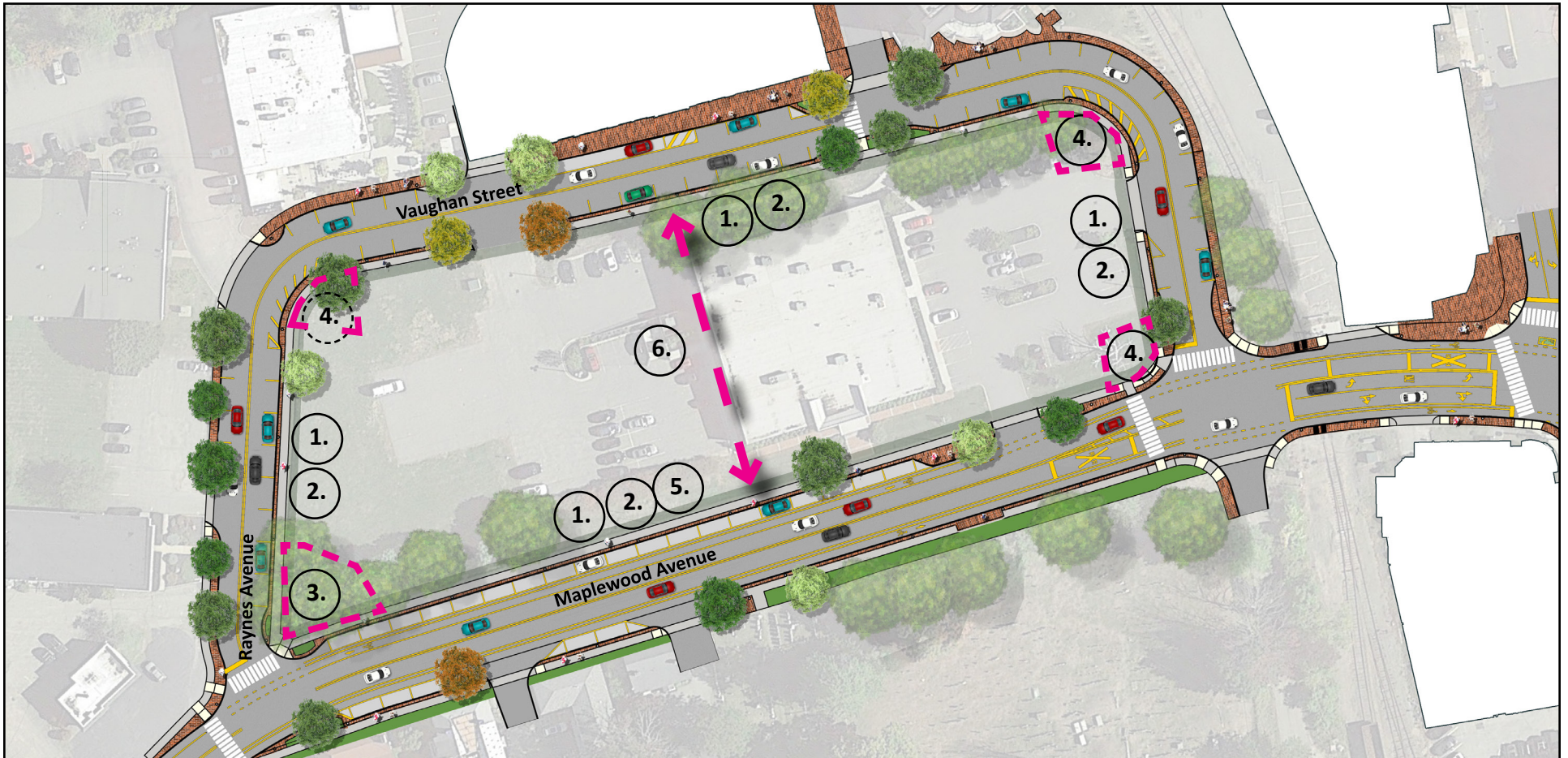
The streetscape and bordering landscaping within the block should contribute to the sustainability and resiliency of the area by incorporating contemporary practices and engineering that enhance water quality, stormwater management, and utilize recycled materials.

### Guidelines

1. Stormwater – The paving and site grading should use planting beds and landscape areas as integral parts of the stormwater management design to provide infiltration and water quality control benefits.
2. Irrigation – The designs should incorporate methods to use run-off to irrigate planting areas where practical.

# MAPLEWOOD AVENUE DOWNTOWN COMPLETE STREET PROJECT

## Block Diagram: Streetscape, Access and Perimeter Guidelines



### Illustration Key

1. Widened sidewalks - Sidewalks should be at least 8 feet of unobstructed width. Wider segments with at least 10 feet wide should be employed along storefronts. Additional width should be provided at entrance plazas or areas where significant activity is anticipated.
2. Landscaped edges – The site designs should incorporate bands of landscaping along building edges where there are no storefronts, plazas, connecting sidewalks or other pedestrian features. The landscape and setback should vary in width but should typically be no less than 10 feet.
3. Feature area at the corner of Raynes Avenue and Maplewood Avenue – This location

- should incorporate a significant landscape feature area with a combination of plantings and building setbacks
4. Features or entrance plazas at corners - These corners of the block should feature a combination of setbacks and pedestrian-level landscaping, if they are not entrance plazas associated with building developments.
5. Vehicle access locations – If possible and practical, vehicle access should not occur along Maplewood Avenue, but be constrained to other street segments.
6. Mid-block pedestrian corridor – A mid-block pedestrian corridor at least 12 feet wide should be provided in mid-block location.