

CITY OF VESTAVIA HILLS  
DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES



Adopted  
April 11, 2011







# DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

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## Article 1 GENERAL

### §1.1. Introduction

These Guidelines act as an extension of the Vestavia Hills Comprehensive Plan, which establishes the overarching principles and recommendations for the ongoing physical development and improvement of the city. This document includes general design guidelines for site planning, as well as specific guidance for landscaping, architectural, lighting and other particular design needs.

Master planned developments may also require project specific guidelines prepared by the applicant and in keeping with the spirit of these guidelines, to ensure the unique features of the site, its context and the overall development plan are respected.

These guidelines are not meant to prohibit alternative design solutions. The best solution for a site should not be rejected because it was not conceived of within these guidelines. When project designers prepare a design solution which departs from these guidelines, they should be prepared to present a design solution which conforms to them. As a rule, the Design Review Board will not support projects in conflict with these Guidelines except where the design solution is of truly exceptional quality and is generally in keeping with the spirit of these Guidelines.

### §1.2. Applicability

These guidelines shall apply to all projects requiring design review pursuant to §13.2 of the Vestavia Hills Zoning Ordinance as follows:

- 1.2.1. Residential developments. The site design, landscaping, and lighting of common areas in residential developments subject to design review shall be reviewed for consistency with the applicable guidelines in Articles 2, 3 and 5.

- 1.2.2. Non-residential developments. The site design, landscaping, architecture, and lighting of non-residential developments shall be reviewed for consistency with the applicable guidelines in Articles 2-5.

- 1.2.3. Mixed use developments. The site design, landscaping, architecture, and lighting of mixed-use developments, as may be permitted in the B-1.2 and MXD Districts, shall be reviewed for consistency with the applicable guidelines in Articles 2-6.

### §1.3. Submittal Requirements

Typical applications for design review shall include all materials listed in the Appendix. Applications for requests referred to the DRB by the Planning Commission, City Council or Board of Zoning Adjustment prior to said body's decision on the concerned request shall include, at a minimum, a site plan and conceptual landscape plan (both to scale) and a building elevation or color-rendered perspective sketch describing the intended character and scale of the building.

### §1.4. Definitions

The meaning of certain words and terms, as used herein, shall have the meanings provided herein. Any terms not defined herein shall have the meanings ascribed to them in the City Zoning Ordinance or Subdivision Regulations.

1. *Recommended.* Generally considered appropriate for use in achieving the intents of these Guidelines.
2. *Acceptable.* May be considered appropriate for use in achieving the intents of these Guidelines in specific conditions and/or when applied in combination with Recommended designs and materials.
3. *Discouraged.* Generally considered inappropriate for use in achieving the

intents of these Guidelines; however, where applied in combination with Recommended designs and materials; where used in a tasteful, creative and aesthetically-pleasing manner; and where deemed appropriate to the context in which they are applied, such designs and materials may be acceptable to the DRB.



**Article 2 SITE DESIGN**

**§2.1. General Guidelines**

- 2.1.1. Buildings should be located and configured on site so as to avoid the need for excessive landscaping treatments, including parking lot landscaping and screening.
- 2.1.2. For developments in which only a portion of the site is to be developed, the proposed development should be planned and designed on the site so as to allow for the future, expansion into, subdivision of and/or development of the remaining land.

**§2.2. Environmental Considerations**

- 2.2.1. Use of the site for buildings, parking areas and other functions should be planned to minimize grading and removal of trees and other natural vegetation.
- 2.2.2. Where practical existing, natural drainage features should be preserved, enhanced or otherwise used in meeting applicable regulations and such areas should be incorporated into the overall landscaping plan.
- 2.2.3. In areas where drainage is of concern, low impact design techniques and materials should be considered and may be accepted by the DRB, upon a recommendation by the City Engineer, as a substitute for any technique or material otherwise recommended in these guidelines that may inadvertently exacerbate drainage issues.
- 2.2.4. Stormwater retention and detention basins should be integrated into the overall site plan so as to serve as a landscape amenity.



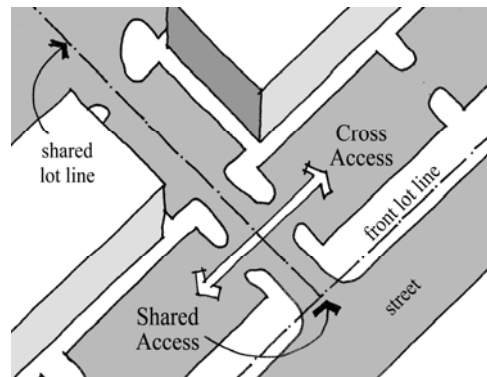
Recommended: Stormwater retention is incorporated into the site as a landscape amenity.



Discouraged: Stormwater retention is treated as leftover space.

**§2.3. Access and Circulation**

- 2.3.1. Access to the site should include the least number of driveways necessary to accommodate the expected traffic and should be placed away from street intersections and other driveways.
- 2.3.2. Shared access (to and from the public street) with abutting sites should be provided where practicable.
- 2.3.3. Cross access should be provided to adjoining sites, as appropriate to the uses concerned.



Shared and Cross Access

- 2.3.4. The main entrance should be safely accessible to pedestrians, including those arriving by a public sidewalk, if existing or planned, with as little crossing of vehicular use areas as possible.
- 2.3.5. Vehicular use areas should be the least in size as needed to accommodate the required parking and circulation on site. The site plan should avoid excessive impervious surfaces through the efficient design of vehicular use areas.

### Article 3 LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE DESIGN

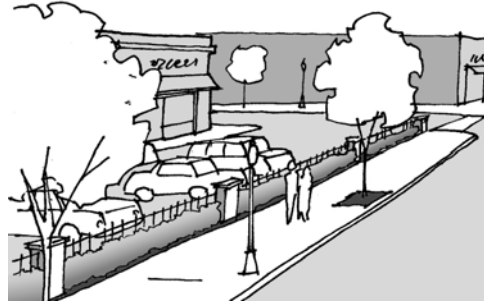
Landscaping should be provided to enhance the quality and value of individual projects and should be designed with consideration to the character of neighboring developments and public spaces to further enhance the quality and value of the public realm of the City.

#### §3.1. General

- 3.1.1. Unless otherwise specified, any required or recommended planting areas, beds, islands, etc. should include a suitable organic ground cover.
- 3.1.2. No landscaping area may obstruct sight distance along driveways, intersections and other vehicular access points.
- 3.1.3. Plant materials should be spaced to allow adequate growth. Planting areas should be of adequate size to accommodate intended root growth and without damage to adjacent walking or driving surfaces.
- 3.1.4. Native, drought-tolerant plants should be chosen to minimize water usage and irrigation system needs.

#### §3.2. Parking Lot Landscaping

- 3.2.1. Landscaping should be incorporated within and around surface parking lots to:
  - 1. reduce their visual impact on adjacent properties and the surrounding community
  - 2. reduce glare from headlights that may affect vision of motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists
  - 3. to control access and reinforce intended pedestrian circulation patterns to increase safety and reduce conflicts between pedestrians and motorists

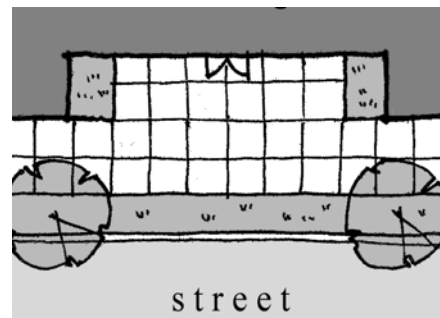


A hedge bordering a parking lot directs access to appropriate entrances and prevents headlight glare from being directed onto sidewalks and streets.

- 4. to break down the horizontal extent of such areas into smaller units thereby lending a greater sense of human scale
- 5. to provide shade throughout parking areas, thereby minimizing heat islands

#### §3.3. Building Landscaping

- 3.3.1. Building landscaping areas should contain mulch or similar ground cover and be protected from damage and erosion by curbing or similar barriers.
- 3.3.2. Required plantings should be evenly distributed to the degree practicable.
- 3.3.3. Where a non-residential or mixed-use building is located within twenty (20) feet of the front lot line, the building landscaping may be a hardscaped plaza or extension of the public sidewalk, as may be most appropriate given the development pattern and character of surrounding development.



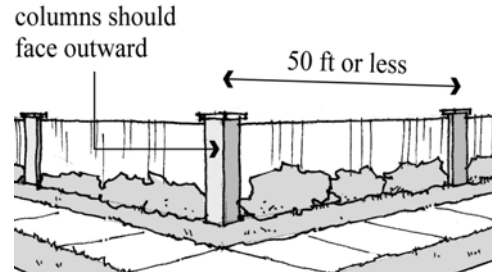
This small plaza, placed in front of a building lining the sidewalk, acts as an extension of the sidewalk and accentuates the building entrance.

- 3.3.4. Plazas or similar hardscape areas connecting a building entrance to a public sidewalk should include trees and/or planting beds. Trees help break down the scale of larger spaces, providing a sense of human scale, intimacy and shade.
- 3.3.5. Plantings should be layered with shorter plantings in front and taller plantings in the back.
- 3.3.6. The following are Discouraged for building landscaping or screen plantings:
1. Upright Junipers
  2. Conifers
  3. Photinia Glabra
  4. Variegated plant material
  5. Weeping Yaupon
  6. Ornamental Grasses

### §3.4. Materials and Sizing

#### 3.4.1. Fences and Walls

1. Fences and walls should be constructed in a durable fashion of brick, stone, other masonry materials, wood posts and planks, or metal or other materials specifically designed for the intended use or any combination thereof. Chain link fencing does not count towards landscaping requirements.
2. The use of solid fencing, such as a wooden privacy fence, should not create a stockade appearance. This may be avoided by the use of one or a combination of the following methods: undulation of the fence line; use of masonry columns at no greater than fifty (50) feet on center; or shrubs and/or trees.



Columns and shrubs add depth and variety to long, straight fences

#### 3.4.2. Recommended Trees:

1. Acer Rubrum/Red Maple, October Glory Maple, Red Sunset Maple, etc.
2. Acer Saccharum/Sugar Maple
3. Fagus Grandifolia/American Beech
4. Faxinum Pennsalvanica/Urbanite Ash
5. Halesia Carolina/Carolina Silverbell
6. Pistachia Chinesis/Chinese Pistace
7. Quercus Alba/White Oak
8. Quercus Coccinea/Scarlet Oak
9. Quercus Phellos/Willow Oak
10. Quercus Shumardii/Shumard Oak
11. Ulmus Parvifolia/Chinese Elm
12. Zelkova Serrata/Zelkova

- 3.4.3. Ground Covers. Ground cover includes grass seeding, sod, mulch, shrubs, non-living organic materials, inorganic materials, decorative gravel, and low growing vegetation and:

1. may include the following  
Recommended plants: Liriope, English Ivy or Periwinkle
2. may include annuals and perennials
3. may include the following  
Recommended materials: bark, shredded pine or similar; pine straw; pebbles, crushed rock, brick, tile or decorative blocks
4. Mulch, provided the following:

- a. Any and all mulch should be applied and maintained at a minimum of three (3) inch depth.
- b. Pine bark should be free of cambium, wood chips, sawdust or other extraneous/toxic materials.
- c. Mulch should be free of noxious weeds, grasses, seeds, roots, sticks, etc.
- d. Pine straw should be clean, fresh and non-rotted.
- e. Wood chips, saw dust, shredded newspaper, etc. are Discouraged.

3.4.4. Planting Dates. The following planting dates are recommended:

1. Non-container-grown deciduous: October 1 to April 1
2. Non-container-grown other: October 1 to April 1
3. Container grown: year round

**§3.5. Pedestrian Paths and Trails**

- 3.5.1. Pedestrian Paths and Trails, which do not require ADA accessibility, may be constructed of pervious materials and should include an edging material, as needed, to prevent loss of surface materials due to erosion.
- 3.5.2. Brick, concrete pavers, stone, and metal or plastic edging are Recommended edging materials for walkways surfaced with pea gravel, marble chips or similar loose materials. Wood timbers and railroad ties are generally Discouraged, except in naturalistic, low density areas.

**§3.6. Open Spaces**

3.6.1. General Guidelines

1. Open spaces should be designed and sized to suit the intended function of the space, including where necessary adequate provisions for parking.

2. Light fixtures should be of a pedestrian scale, either pole-mounted or ground-mounted. Such light fixtures should be located along any walkways within the open space and spaced as necessary to provide adequate lighting given the intended hours of use.
3. Open spaces should be located to be accessible from adjacent, existing and/or planned pedestrian facilities, including sidewalks, paths, trails and greenways.

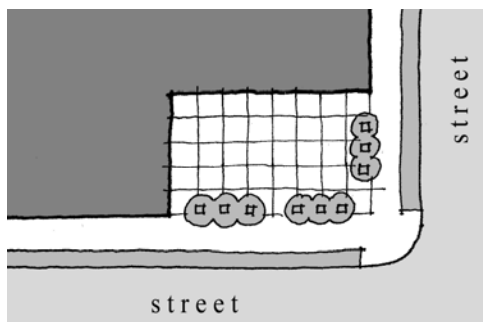
3.6.2. Parks. Parks should be designed for Passive or Active Recreation, or a combination of the two.

1. Entranceways should be reinforced with shrubs and other planting. Entrances should also include attractive signage scaled appropriately to the use of the space and surrounding development. Pedestrian-scaled lighting may also be appropriate at entranceways.
2. Passive recreation areas should include an open area of a size sufficient to accommodate various uses, walkways, and adequate lighting.
  - a. Gazebos, pavilions, benches, water features, sculptures, garbage receptacles, drinking fountains, bicycle racks and similar site furnishings are encouraged.
  - b. These spaces should include trees to provide shade and to define the edges of the space.
  - c. The overall design of a Passive Recreation Space and its landscaping may be formal or informal.
3. Active recreation areas:
  - a. These areas should include adequate lighting for the proposed activities. Multiple activity areas should be connected by well-lit walkways.

- b. Benches, garbage receptacles, drinking fountains, bicycle racks and similar sight furnishings should be provided.
- c. Playing fields should be oriented so that associated lighting may be located and designed to minimize glare on adjacent neighborhoods.
- d. These spaces should include trees to define the edges of the space and shade seating areas, where practicable.
- e. Landscaping should be used to organize and define multiple activity areas.

3.6.3. Plazas. Plazas should be included in large non-residential or mixed-use developments that include multiple buildings.

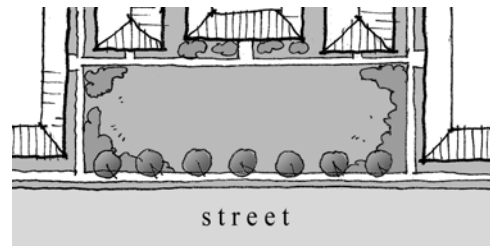
1. Plazas should be centrally located within the site or where it may provide a common focal point for the proposed and existing development. Locations at the intersection of major thoroughfares or at the terminus of a vista, or visual axis, are encouraged.
2. Plazas should include a combination of hardscape, ground cover, trees and other plantings.
3. At least fifty (50) percent of the perimeter of the plaza should be enclosed by buildings. Trees, shrubs and/or walls should be used to define those edges of the space not enclosed by buildings.



Trees define the edges of the plaza not lined by adjacent buildings

3.6.4. Common Open Spaces. Common open spaces within residential developments should be located on site where they are accessible to the greatest number of dwellings on-site to encourage pedestrian access.

1. Common open spaces may contain areas that are wet or frequently inundated, including detention or retention basins. However, such areas should not constitute the majority of the space being provided, but should be designed to allow for the recreational use of residents.
2. Generally, common open spaces should be designed for passive recreational use but may contain active recreational functions.
3. Required common open spaces must conform to the applicable requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.
4. Trees should be included along any sides abutting a street to define the space and buffer it from vehicular traffic.



Trees along the street frontage define the common open space and buffer it from the street

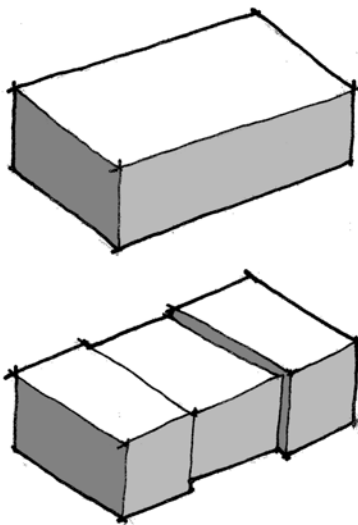
5. Shrubs, fences or walls may be used to control access to the space where appropriate for safety reasons, including reducing conflicts between vehicle and pedestrian circulation.

**Article 4 ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN**

Buildings should be designed to enhance the beauty and richness of the community, to complement their surroundings with rich, diverse materials and color palettes. Buildings are discouraged from calling attention to themselves through bright garish colors, reflective surfaces, etc.

**§4.1. Massing and Configuration**

4.1.1. Large buildings should be designed as a composite of multiple, smaller volumes.



Breaking down a simple box into multiple volumes creates a more interesting, human scale design

4.1.2. Low buildings with long facades should incorporate vertical articulation through changes in the roof line.

4.1.3. Buildings should be configured on site to provide definition to the streetscape or to adjacent open spaces and to reinforce intended circulation patterns.

4.1.4. In mixed-use and other areas where a compact development pattern is intended, in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan, buildings should be located along and with their entrances opening onto the public sidewalk.

4.1.5. The ground level of parking structures, where facing a public street, should contain leasable space planned and designed for uses appropriate to the location.

**§4.2. Facades**

Facades should be composed of durable materials that are compatible with the character of the surrounding commercial, village or mixed-use center.

4.2.1. For commercial buildings, the street level portion of facades should include a high percentage of transparent area to maximize window display area and to avoid large expanses of blank, unadorned and unarticulated wall area. This encourages window shopping by providing a more comfortable and engaging environment for pedestrians.

4.2.2. Architectural detailing, such as window/door surrounds, cornices, banding, variation in coursing/ bond pattern of brick, window muntin patterns etc. should be provided to provide a sense of human scale, texture and variety.

4.2.3. Windows, on the street level portion of a façade, should be transparent and provide two-way visibility. Darkly tinted and mirrored windows are Discouraged, except on portions of the façade above street level.

4.2.4. Parking structures should be architecturally integrated with the main building(s).

4.2.5. Façade Materials

1. Recommended:
  - a. Brick
  - b. Stucco
  - c. Painted or stained wood
  - d. Stone

- e. Precast concrete or cast stone
  - f. Ceramic or porcelain tile
  - g. Rubbed finish concrete
2. Acceptable. The following materials may be Acceptable when used in conjunction with Recommended materials and are Discouraged when used as the sole facade material, or only with each other:
- a. Exterior Insulation and Finish System (EIFS)
  - b. Storefront or curtainwall
  - c. Metal panels
  - d. Split face or ground face concrete block
  - e. Vinyl/ hardie board siding
3. Discouraged:
- a. Ribbed or corrugated metal
  - b. Unfinished concrete
  - c. Unfinished concrete block, including unfinished but painted concrete block
  - d. Unpainted or unstained wood
- 4.2.6. Colors. Exterior colors should be compatible with that of surrounding development in accord with the following:
- 1. Natural, subdued or darker colors are Recommended.
  - 2. Primary, pastel and bright colors are Discouraged.

#### **§4.3. Roofs.**

Roofs should be compatible with the overall design intent of the building and add interest and richness to the building design.

- 4.3.1. Roof surfaces that are visible from adjacent properties or public rights-of-way should be given special design attention in keeping with the following guidelines:

- 1. Recommended materials:
    - a. Standing Seam Metal
    - b. Dimensional Asphalt Composition Shingle
    - c. Wood Shake
    - d. Slate
    - e. Concrete Roof Tiles
    - f. Terra Cotta Roof Tiles
    - g. Metal Roof Tiles
  - 2. Acceptable materials:
    - a. Simulated Slate/Terra Cotta/Wood Shake Tiles
    - b. Non-dimensional Asphalt Composition Shingles
  - 3. Discouraged materials:
    - a. Ribbed or corrugated metal
    - b. Roll Roofing Material
    - c. Built-up or Single-ply Roofing Material
    - d. Roof Ballast
- 4.3.2. Roof colors should complement façade materials and colors and be compatible with that of surrounding development in accord with the following:
- 1. Natural, subdued or darker colors are Recommended.
  - 2. Primary, pastel and bright colors are Discouraged.

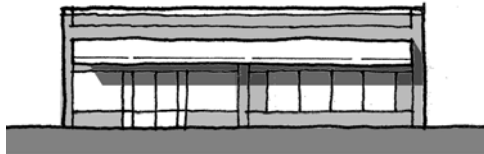
#### **§4.4. Awnings and Canopies**

Awnings and canopies are encouraged to provide shade and cover from inclement weather and to add articulation to building designs.

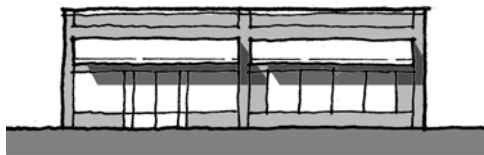
- 4.4.1. Awnings and canopies should complement the overall building design in scale, style, proportion and color.



4.4.2. The length of awnings should be consistent with the structural openings in the façade. Awnings longer than forty (40) feet should be avoided.



awning too long



awnings fitted to size of openings

4.4.3. A clear height of at least eight (8) feet should be maintained between the bottom edge of the awning or canopy and any walking surface immediately below.

4.4.4. Awnings and canopies should be of permanent design, construction and materials and should be supported, affixed or attached to the ground, building, or structure (as applicable) so as to be wind-resistant and otherwise in accordance with the City Building Code.

4.4.5. Recommended materials:

1. Opaque fabric or canvas, with color complementary to the overall building material palette
2. Metal canopy, with decorative hanging rods or brackets. Metal canopy, with utilitarian hanging rods or brackets, are Discouraged.

4.4.6. Backlit, translucent awnings are Discouraged.

#### **§4.5. Accessory Structures and Building Equipment**

4.5.1. Accessory structures and building equipment should be designed and/or

located to complement the overall design of the entire site. They should either blend or be screened (if required by §9.4 of the Zoning Ordinance) from adjacent properties and the public right-of-way.

Where location does not adequately conceal building equipment, an increase in the parapet height (for rooftop equipment) or screening should be provided.

4.5.2. Screening, where required by §9.4 of the Zoning Ordinance, should conform with the following:

1. Recommended Screening Materials for ground-mounted equipment:
  - a. Materials matching the building.
  - b. Brick
  - c. Split-faced and/ or colored concrete masonry units
  - d. Stone
  - e. Stucco/ EIFS
  - f. Painted or stained wood
  - g. Planted hedge
2. Discouraged screening materials for ground-mounted equipment:
  - a. Plain concrete masonry units, whether painted or unpainted
  - b. Metal siding (unless matching the main building siding).
3. Recommended materials for rooftop equipment:
  - a. Materials matching the building materials and colors
  - b. Stucco or EIFS, with colors complementary to the overall building palette
  - c. Flush metal panels, with colors complementary to the overall building palette

- d. Louver wall system, with colors complementary to the overall building palette
- 4. Discouraged materials for rooftop equipment:
  - a. Ribbed or corrugated metal
  - b. Perforated metal screen
  - c. Wood
- 4.5.3. Satellite Dishes. Satellite dishes should be obscured from view from the public rights-of-way and adjacent properties by placing them on a roof where practical. This allows the apparatus to be screened by the roof parapet. Where this is not possible, the apparatus should be attached to the building in an inconspicuous location, such as to the rear or side. Ground-mounted satellite dishes should be located to the rear of the principal building and screened, as needed with plantings and/or fencing.

## Article 5 LIGHTING DESIGN

Lighting is a critical component of all developments and therefore should be evaluated on all projects submitted for consideration by the DRB. Lighting level and distribution should be in conformance with the following guidelines.

### §5.1. General Guidelines

Lighting should be provided along streets, sidewalks, and other paths; within open spaces and parking lots; at building entrances; in locations appropriate for accenting of buildings, signage, gateway, and landscape elements.

- 5.1.1. Where taller fixtures are needed, heights above twenty (20) feet are Discouraged. This does not apply to lighting for sports and recreational fields.
- 5.1.2. Overly bright lights and frontal floodlighting should be avoided. Lower-wattage light sources should be used. Up-lighting should only be used where it will not interfere with the vision of passersby.
- 5.1.3. Light trespass and glare should be avoided. Fixtures should not project light beyond the objects or areas intended to be illuminated. Shielding should be used to prevent light trespass and glare.
  1. Fixtures with output greater than 3500 lumens should be full cutoff.
  2. Fixtures less than 3500 lumens should be cutoff or full cutoff.
- 5.1.4. High pressure sodium lighting is Discouraged.

### §5.2. Site Lighting

- 5.2.1. Fixtures along sidewalks and paths should be pedestrian-scaled, pole-mounted lights spaced no less than 25 feet and no greater than 100 feet.

- 5.2.2. Combination fixtures are Recommended to light a vehicular way and adjoining sidewalk.
- 5.2.3. Fixtures within parking lots should be provided along the perimeter and interior (in landscaping islands) and should be of the least height to provide the desired lighting level.

### §5.3. Building and Landscape Lighting

Lighting fixtures attached to the exterior of a building should comply with the following guidelines:

- 5.3.1. Attached or wall pack lighting facing adjacent properties or public rights of way should be screened by the building's architectural features or shielded per §5.1.3.
- 5.3.2. Building lighting should be integrated into the architectural design of the building rather than randomly placed along a facade.
- 5.3.3. Building lighting should have no blinking, flashing or fluttering lights or other illuminating device, which has a changing light intensity, brightness or color. Beacon lights are Discouraged. This does not include lighting devices required for fire alarm and/or emergency illumination.

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## **Article 6 DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR MIXED USE DEVELOPMENTS**

### **§6.1. Site Plan Design**

Site plans should establish legible circulation paths, human-scaled public spaces and clear transitions between public and private space through the location of buildings, parking areas, access points, and walkways.

### **§6.2. Street Design**

Effective street design is critical to the success of mixed-use development. Streets should provide an efficient and interconnected network for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. Street function and appearance should be in balance with the built environment and create a pleasant and safe experience for travelers and residents with homes and/or businesses facing the street.

6.2.1. Pedestrian Crossings. Crosswalks should be clearly marked and located carefully in relation to vehicular traffic. To ensure safety and usability, crossing distances should not exceed fifty (50) feet. Bulb-outs or median refuge islands should be used to reduce crossing distances for pedestrians.

1. Marked crosswalks that are specially paved or painted indicate the appropriate route across traffic for pedestrians, assist the visually-impaired, and encourage motorists' awareness of pedestrians.
2. Crosswalks should be aligned with the path of the sidewalk to ensure accessibility. Intersections and crossing areas with heavy traffic or wide crossing distances require crossing signals to aid pedestrians and motorists.

6.2.2. Streetscape Design. Local streets should be narrower and treated at a human scale. Streetscape elements provide a softened appearance and enhance the quality and

appeal for pedestrians. On-street parking and street trees help create a comfortable pedestrian realm buffered from vehicular traffic. Narrow road widths naturally reduce travel speeds and give greater spatial enclosure, allowing the streetscape to be experienced as an "urban room".

6.2.3. Landscaping is an essential element of a vibrant attractive streetscape. Street trees can help to create more pedestrian-friendly environments in both high-density centers and residential neighborhoods. Landscape buffers may also screen parking lots and conceal building equipment.

1. Street trees should be provided in tree wells or within a grassed planting strip, between the curb and sidewalk, approximately every forty 40-50 feet. Tree wells should be sized to accommodate the root growth of the matured tree and in no case should be less than four (4) feet in width.
2. Street trees should be canopy trees, such as oak, maple, elm or poplar, or understory trees, such as hawthorn, trident maple, crabapple, dogwood, redbud or cherry. Canopy trees are no less than twelve (12) feet in height at installation with a minimum caliper of two (2) inches. Understory trees are no less than eight (8) feet in height at installation and may be multi-trunked.
3. Where understory trees are used, the spacing may be reduced to 30-40 feet.

### **§6.3. Building Frontage Characteristics**

In mixed-use development, building frontages are the interface between the public street and the private building and should reflect the building use. Retail and dining uses should draw the public inside, while residential frontages protect the privacy of

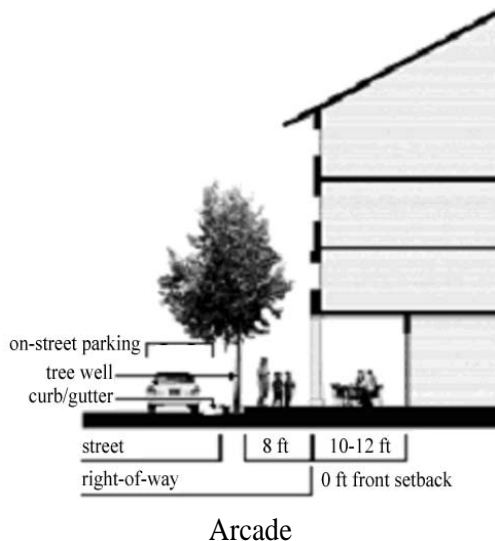
the interior, yet allow residents to observe and engage with neighbors and passersby.

Street or pedestrian level should always be given the most careful consideration. The typical progression from street to building includes: the travel way, on-street parking, planting strip, sidewalk, and building entry.

Within the center of mixed-use developments, Storefront and Arcade frontages are Recommended. In those areas where the development abuts single-family residential neighborhoods, Stoops, Dooryards and Common Yards are Recommended. Frontage Types are described following:

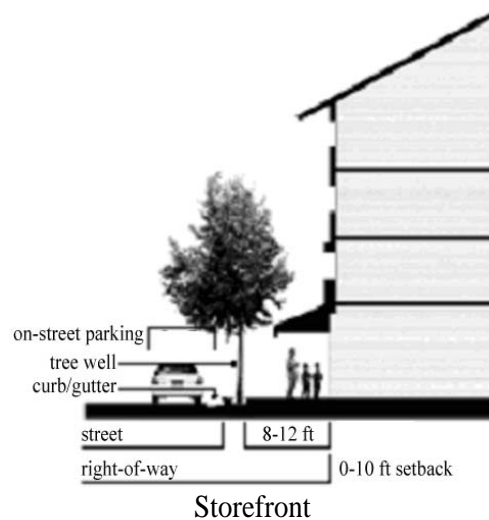
6.3.1. Arcade. An arcade is a ground level building setback enclosed by arches or piers supporting the building overhead or a canopy, creating a partially enclosed walkway. The arcade provides shade and weather protection. Ground floor retail and dining functions can expand into the arcade space. Specific guidelines include:

1. Appropriate for ground floor retail and dining uses in multiple story buildings
2. Front setback – 0 ft
3. Sidewalk Width – 8 ft (between curb and arcade)
4. Arcade Width – 10–12 ft



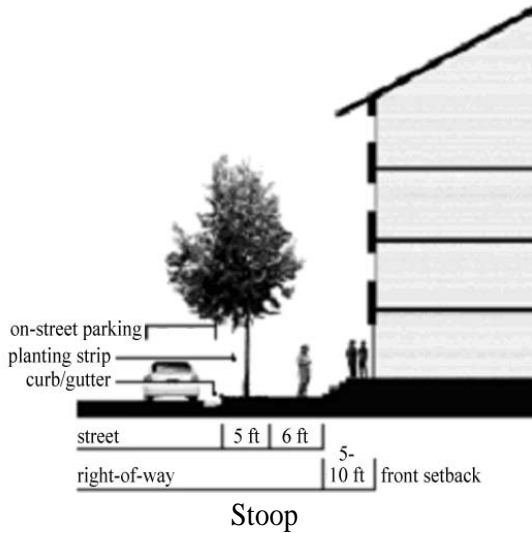
6.3.2. Storefront. A storefront is intended to promote retail activity. The facade should be up to the sidewalk. The ground floor facade should have large openings to draw attention inward. Awnings may extend over the sidewalk. Specific guidelines include:

1. Appropriate for retail, dining, service and office uses
2. Front Setback - 0-10 ft
3. Sidewalk Width – 8-12 ft



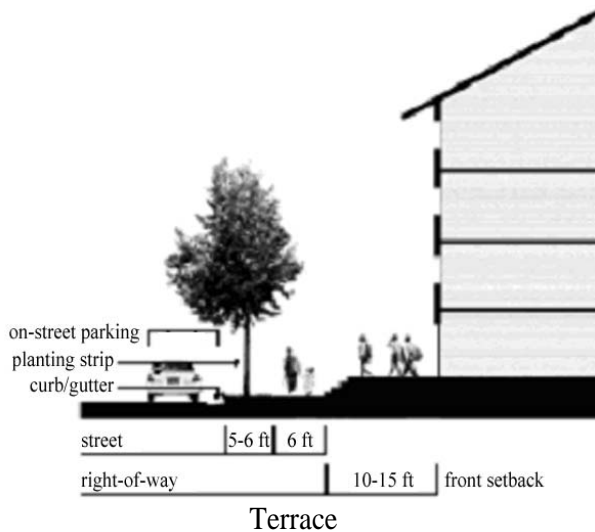
6.3.3. Stoop. A stoop provides a comfortable interface between the public sidewalk and adjoining residential units. Elevating the entrance above sidewalk grade minimizes the need for a building setback to provide privacy. The ‘stoop’ should be oriented towards the street to enable appropriate interaction between residents, neighbors, and passersby. Stoop fronts may mix with storefronts along a block face. Guidelines include:

1. Appropriate for residential and other uses
2. Elevated Ground floor entry – 2-5 ft
3. Building Setback – 5-10 ft
4. Sidewalk Width – 6 ft
5. Planting strip width – 5-6 ft



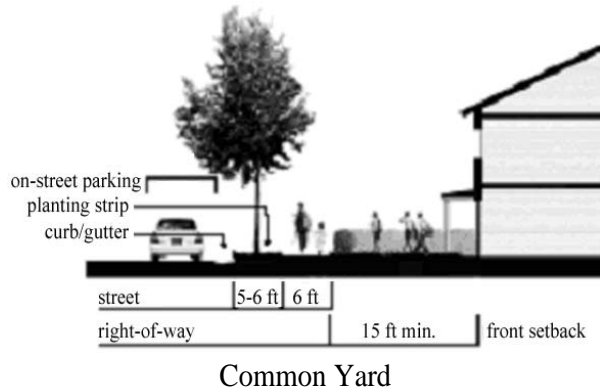
6.3.4. Terrace. A terrace includes a hardscaped or landscaped surface between the sidewalk and front building line. The large transitional space and elevated entrance allow the building to negotiate grade changes while maintaining a connection between the sidewalk and building. Specific guidelines include:

1. Appropriate for various uses
2. Elevated Ground floor entry
3. Building Setback – 10-15 ft
4. Sidewalk Width – 6 ft
5. Planting strip width – 5-6 ft



6.3.5. Common Yard. A common yard front includes a more substantial building setback and is intended for residential uses, but may also be used for civic or institutional uses. The front yard may be fenced or unfenced and should have similar landscaping to adjacent yards. Specific guidelines include:

1. Appropriate for residential or institutional uses
2. Building Setback – 15 ft min.
3. Sidewalk Width – 6 ft min.
4. Planting strip width – 5-8 ft



**§6.4. Landscape Design**

Landscape design should complement and enhance the character of buildings, streets, and pedestrian areas. Including natural elements into the built environment buffers harsh elements to maintain pedestrian-friendly and visually appealing streets. Different landscape strategies depend on building scale, density, street type, and land use. Trees and plantings also have important environmental benefits, protecting air quality and water run-off and providing shading to buildings, cars, and pedestrians.

**§6.5. Architectural Design**

6.5.1. Façades should provide a visually interesting environment and avoid extensive uniformity and homogeneity. Building façades should include

architectural recesses, bay windows, balconies, or other articulations to break up any flat, monolithic facades.

- 6.5.2. No building facing a street, sidewalk, park, plaza or other outdoor public space should have any blank, windowless wall wider than twenty-five (25) feet at ground level.
- 6.5.3. Windows should allow views into display areas, lobbies or similar activity areas. Windows should have a lower sill no more than three (3) feet above grade, except where interior floor levels prohibit such placement, the sill may be located no less than two (2) feet above the finished floor level to a maximum height of five (5) feet above the exterior grade.
- 6.5.4. A building's ground floor, facing a transit station or public street, should contain at least fifty (50) percent windows, doors or display areas.
- 6.5.5. Fenestration should be consistent with interior uses, with larger openings for retail space and smaller openings for residential use.
- 6.5.6. In multiple story buildings, floors should have distinctive changes in exterior material, texture, ornamentation, or color to create the perception of a base, middle and cap to the overall building facade. The first one or two stories of multi-story buildings should act as the base that complements the pedestrian environment. Upper stories may be slightly setback from the base and treated with different materials and colors.
- 6.5.7. Building entry treatment should vary by use. Ground floor retail, service and office spaces should have an entry fronting the public street accessible to pedestrians. Often, significant entries should be located along the street edge, but side and rear entries may handle routine traffic and service. In less dense

areas, single-family residence entries should be set back from the street right-of-way.

## **§6.6. Lighting Design**

- 6.6.1. Streetscape Lighting. A large number of low-intensity lights is preferred to fewer, higher-intensity lights to create an attractive pedestrian streetscape. In the center of mixed-use development, light posts should be 8-12 feet in height on both sides of the street and spaced no more than thirty (30) feet apart. For natural quality, lighting elements should provide full-spectrum light to prevent color distortion. Ornamental fixtures enhance the streetscape during daylight hours.
- 6.6.2. Roadway Lighting. Light posts may be located at both edges of the right-of-way or within a landscaped central median. Ornamental posts or posts that incorporate signage may be used to highlight centers and gateways. Lighting should be concentrated at intersections and crosswalks for pedestrian safety.



## Design Review Guidelines

# Appendix

## Submittal Requirements

The following shall be submitted, where applicable to the development, for review by the Design Review Board:

### Site Plan

- Location and size of proposed buildings, structures, open spaces and parking areas shown in relation to all lot lines and adjacent streets, sidewalks, existing buildings, and existing parking areas
- Location and size of proposed accesses to public streets including spacing from adjacent intersections and driveways on abutting properties
- Description of vehicular use areas, including circulation pattern, loading areas, and vehicle stacking space, if applicable
- Location of all proposed and existing sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities on and adjacent to the site and
- Location and type of drainage improvements and facilities, including detention or retention basins, shown in relation to all lot lines and adjacent streets, sidewalks, buildings, parking areas and open spaces

### Landscaping Plan

- Proposed landscaping plan with all plant materials clearly labeled, shown in relation to all lot lines and adjacent streets, buildings and parking areas
- Proposed parking areas and required landscaping
- Location, size, function and furnishings for proposed open spaces shown in relation to all lot lines and adjacent streets, sidewalks, buildings and parking areas
- Proposed landscape vehicles, equipment, and materials to be stored on the property
- Soil preparation methods, bedding and mulching, and planting details

- Proposed material schedule showing common name, size, spacing, quantity, and installation instructions – differentiating existing and new landscaping
- Proposed screening and buffers, including location of all uses and structures to be screened

### Architectural Plans

- Floor plans and building elevations
- Proposed facade materials and colors

### Lighting Plan

- Location of proposed exterior lighting fixtures shown in relation to all lot lines and adjacent streets, sidewalks, existing buildings, parking areas, open spaces, and any existing fixtures on-site or within 50 ft of the site boundary
- Height, method of shielding and intensity of proposed exterior lighting fixtures