



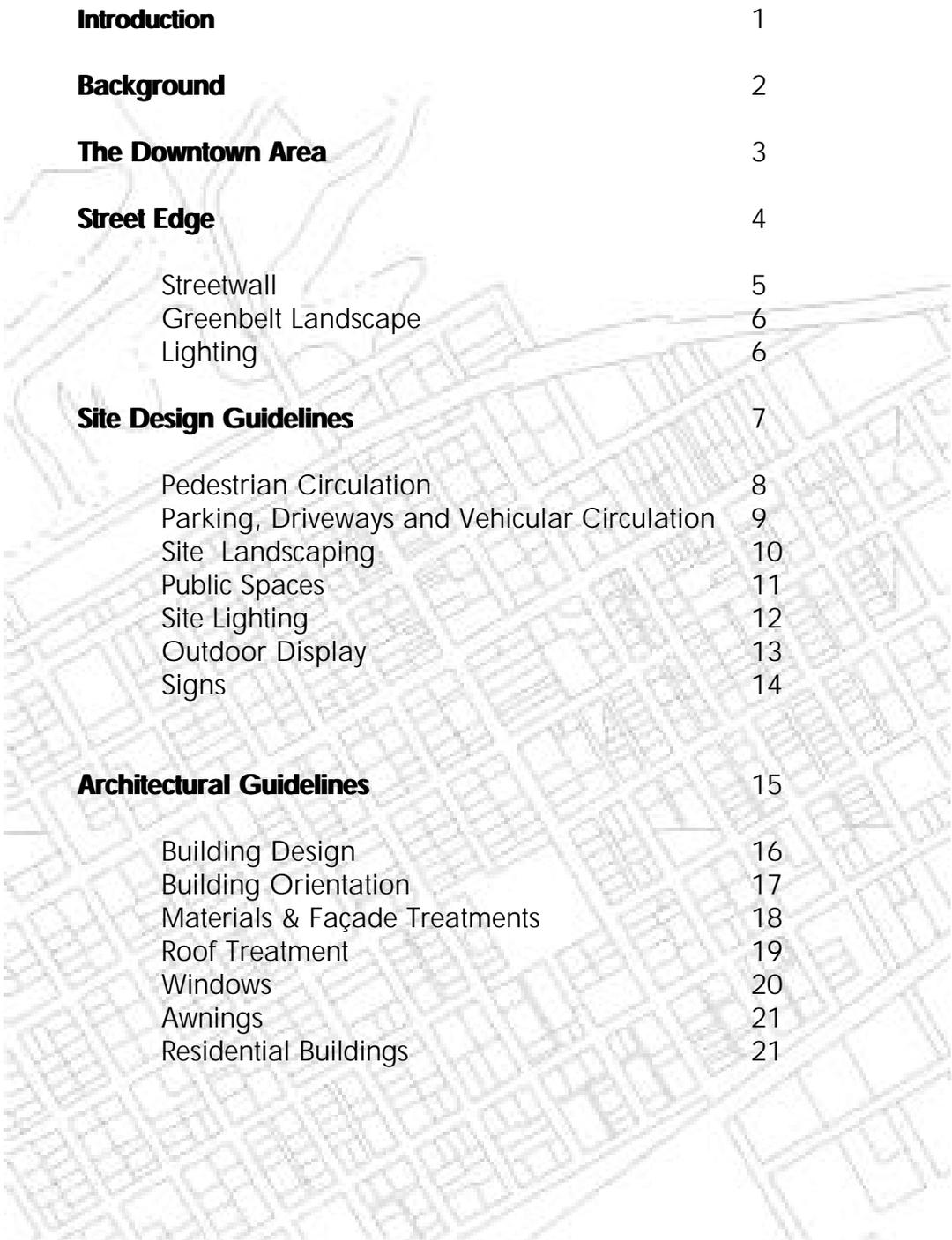
CITY OF GRAND BLANC DOWNTOWN DESIGN MANUAL

SEPTEMBER 5, 2001

“Great streets do not just happen. Overwhelmingly, the best streets derive from a conscious act of conception and creation of the street as a whole. The hands of decision makers are visible”

Allan B. Jacobs

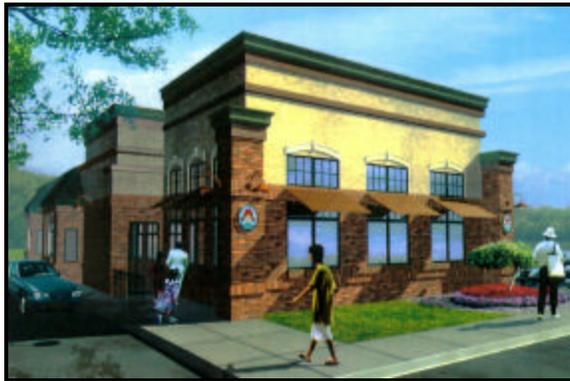
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INTRODUCTION

This design manual is intended to provide the city, design professionals and members of the business community with a comprehensive set of guidelines to prepare and review development proposals located within Grand Blanc's downtown area. The central business district provides locations for a variety of places to work, live, shop, recreate and be entertained. Currently, the downtown area contains a variety of building setbacks and limited coordination between parcels and developments. The city adopted new zoning ordinance standards to promote a more compact, 'traditional' land development pattern, for all new projects and major renovations to existing sites within the central business district. New projects such as the Burger King, Blockbuster Video and Wendy's demonstrate the intent of this design manual which is to integrate the communities desired characteristics into buildings and site design.



New Grand Blanc Wendy's—2001

These site design and architectural guidelines have been created to strengthen the functional and aesthetic qualities of the downtown area to create an environment more similar to other downtown areas and typical of the small to mid-sized communities in the midwest. The guidelines describe treatments that are typically considered to be more 'urban' because the intent is to create an atmosphere that is distinct from other areas within the city and the township. Equal emphasis is placed on individual sites as well as coordination between sites within the downtown.

The provisions of this manual shall apply to all new development as well as redevelopment of existing buildings to the extent practical. This design manual does not seek to create a rigid set of standards. Instead, it is intended to articulate the vision and provide various alternatives to conventional site development by addressing the community's desire to give greater consideration to pedestrian access and scale, creating a unified visual appearance and developing a more attractive downtown environment. Prior to making a formal application for site plan review, property owners and their design professionals are highly encouraged to meet with city staff and the planning commission.

BACKGROUND

The Grand Blanc community has been experiencing additional growth over the past several years. People and businesses are attracted by the quality of life, schools and other amenities. Yet, one thing found to be missing was an active downtown area with pedestrian scale amenities. Through various planning efforts, there has been strong community support to create a vibrant downtown area in the City of Grand Blanc. To this end, the city has worked diligently to evaluate the downtown, determine appropriate land uses, identify desired characteristics and develop a program to invigorate the downtown.

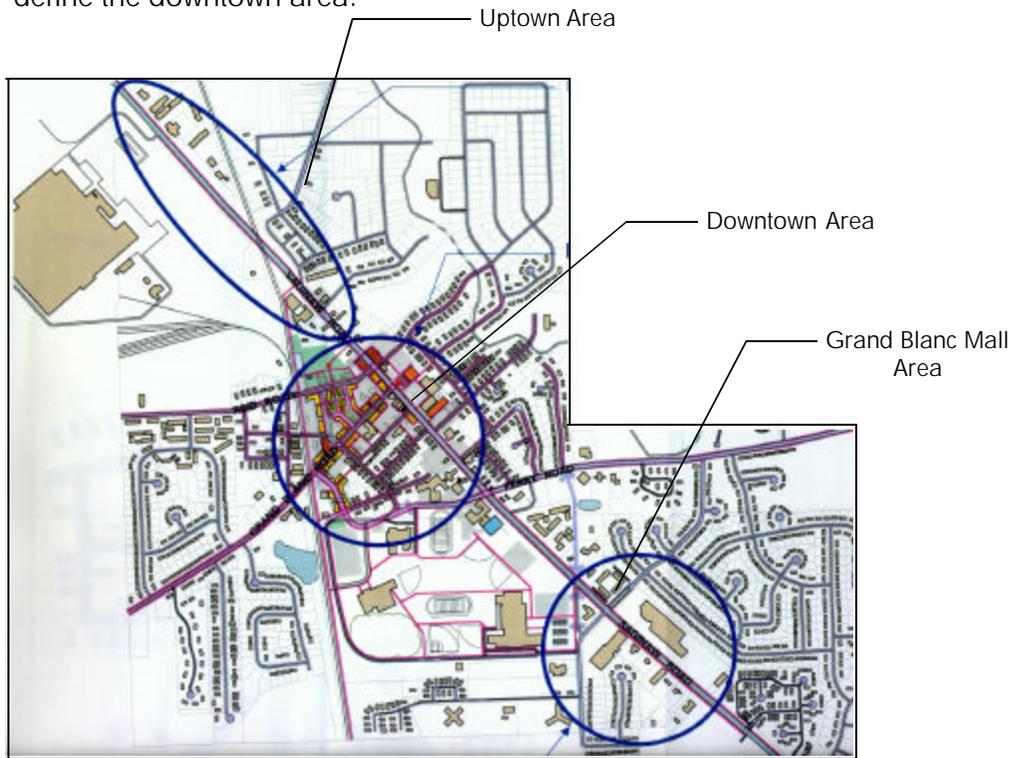
The Downtown Strategic Vision Plan was adopted during Spring of 2000. The city's Central Business District zoning regulations are one of the tools to implement the recommendations contained in the Downtown Strategic Vision Plan. The zoning ordinance includes specific language on architectural and site design standards.



City of Grand Blanc, Michigan

THE DOWNTOWN AREA

The design manual applies to the entire downtown area which encompasses three distinct nodes along South Saginaw Street, as defined in the Downtown Strategic Vision Plan. The 'downtown area' is centrally located at the intersection of Grand Blanc Road. This area extends several blocks west of South Saginaw Street and offers the most likely potential for higher density development/redevelopment. To the north, the 'uptown area' possesses a more linear orientation along South Saginaw Street and contains a mixture of local and regional retail/service uses. To the south, the 'Grand Blanc Mall area' provides regional retail opportunities to patrons residing well beyond the city limits. Taken in total, including linkages between, these three nodes define the downtown area.



Activity Nodes Downtown Strategic Vision Plan

STREET EDGE

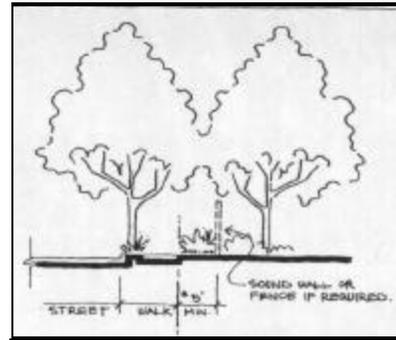
The street edge, or the streetscape, refers to a collection of elements that define the character of the public streets, sidewalks and adjacent private property. In this manual, the street edge is given separate consideration because of the significant role it has in defining the pedestrian, vehicular and aesthetic experience of the downtown area. In Grand Blanc, the streetscape currently includes a sidewalk and ornamental street lights throughout most of the downtown. To strengthen continuity within the downtown area, additional elements such as a decorative wall, landscape and access management standards shall be implemented.



STREETWALL

A streetwall shall be incorporated within the frontage landscape treatment to define public spaces and obscure parking areas. Streetwalls shall generally be designed and placed to achieve the following objectives...

- ◆ Have a height of 3½ feet, tapering down to 2½ feet at driveway entrances.
- ◆ Constructed of brick with slightly raised vertical columns at the ends, as well as in the middle of long wall segments, and a limestone cap placed upon the brick surfaces.
- ◆ Located five (5) feet beyond the sidewalk. In locations where existing conditions do not permit placement at this location, adjustments shall be considered on a site by site basis.
- ◆ Contiguous except for breaks at driveways, ground signs and segments exceeding 100' in length.
- ◆ Decorative wrought iron elements such as archways, railings and fence segments may be used to identify key locations or break up wall segments.
- ◆ Placed outside of clear vision areas at driveway entrances and intersections to minimize visual interference.



Creating Liveble Street, Portland



GREENBELT LANDSCAPE

The area between the edge of the roadway pavement and the building and/or parking area shall be considered the 'greenbelt'. Within the greenbelt, landscape elements shall include ...

- ◆ A mixture of trees and upright shrubs, located in a manner which screens the parking, accents the building or provides a visual and physical separation between pedestrian and vehicular traffic.



- ◆ Evenly spaced street trees, within or along all public right-of-ways.
- ◆ Planting beds on each side of vehicular driveways to assist with identifying access points, planting beds shall contain a combination of upright and low-level shrubs as well as perennial and annual flowers.
- ◆ Spreading shrubs shall be used sparingly as the visual impact is minimal.
- ◆ A planting bed around the base of the sign.

LIGHTING

The City standard and spacing requirements for ornamental street lighting shall be used.

SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES

The whole assemblage of buildings, streets, public spaces, landscape and pedestrian facilities is as important as the design details of individual buildings. The site design guidelines encompass components beyond the building which must be addressed in total to achieve the desired image and functionality of the downtown area. The vitality of the downtown is dependant on creating an environment that is navigable and safe for both pedestrians and vehicles. In addition to individual sites, it is as important to ensure these components are coordinated with adjacent sites to achieve a cohesive product.

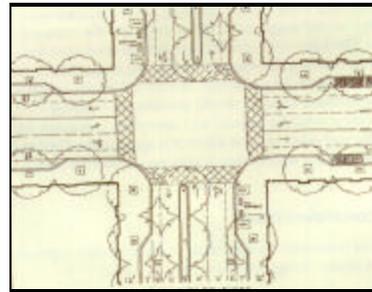


City of Grand Blanc, Michigan

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

South Saginaw Street, and to an lesser extent Grand Blanc and Reid Roads, has an important function to move vehicles through the community. Yet the streets must also have an important function to accommodate and encourage pedestrian activity. This second function has been sacrificed to some degree. For a downtown area to be safe, attractive and vibrant, accommodations must be made for pedestrians. Pedestrian circulation within the entire downtown area shall be designed to...

- ◆ Connect the downtown area with existing and proposed pathways throughout the community, as well as emphasize main points of entry/exit for development parcels.
- ◆ Eliminate conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, etc. by providing separation between automotive and non-automotive routes.
- ◆ Clearly identify crosswalks by means of advance warning signs, variation of materials and/or pavement markings.
- ◆ Link pedestrian routes, through parking lots if needed, to building entrances. Ideally, this connection would be provided via a sidewalk, however in some applications clearly delineated cross walks may be more practical.
- ◆ Eliminate short cuts through landscaped areas by providing pedestrian connections in appropriate locations, closely spaced plant material or other design methods.
- ◆ Provide locations for bike racks and benches where appropriate.



Creating Liveable Streets—Portland
Metro Regional Services, 1997



City of Grand Blanc, Michigan

PARKING, DRIVEWAYS AND VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

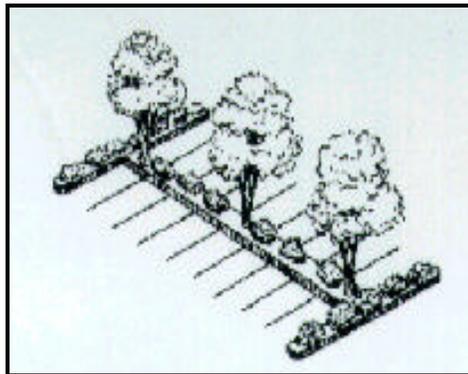
Layout of sites to accommodate vehicles need to relate to the road system and other elements of the site. To balance the vehicular needs with the objectives of creating a vibrant, pedestrian friendly downtown area, vehicular components shall be planned to...

- ◆ Locate off-street parking and related service areas behind the buildings. In locations where the site size and configuration does not allow this, utilize building, landscape, walls or other architectural elements to create a visual transition to parking areas.
- ◆ Enhance the flow of traffic into or out of the parking lot by providing adequate stacking room that does not interfere with interior site circulation. Similarly, parking lots should not be designed so a vehicle backing from a space interferes with vehicles entering the driveway.
- ◆ Provide shared rear service drives to connect a series of buildings, particularly for sites located on the east side of South Saginaw Street, north of Old Bridge Street.
- ◆ Consider limited on-street parallel parking along side streets to provide the walkable ambiance and assist with reducing vehicular speeds.
- ◆ Limit sites to one driveway, in most cases.
- ◆ Align driveways, or be adequately spaced from other driveways to promote good traffic operations and safety.
- ◆ Limit conflicts between patrons and service/delivery vehicles.
- ◆ Provide convenient access to waste receptacles for service vehicles.

SITE LANDSCAPING

Landscaping provides many aesthetic and functional qualities which enhance the overall appearance of outdoor spaces, provide shade, reduce the mass of buildings and define/enclose spaces. The location of plant material shall be carefully located so that it does not create a nuisance, safety concern or a maintenance problem. Site landscaping shall achieve the following objectives...

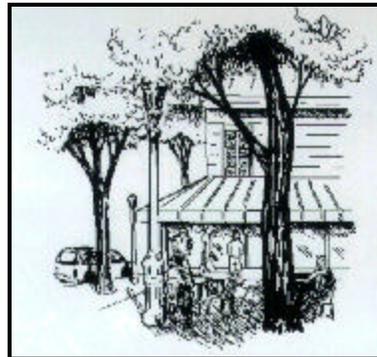
- ◆ Create a strong visual impact by consolidating plant material, unless the site dictates otherwise.
- ◆ Provide foundation plantings at public building entrances and along the portion of the building fronting onto South Saginaw Street, Grand Blanc and Reid Roads. The minimum width of the planting area shall be 4' beyond the roof overhang.
- ◆ Screen mechanical equipment so it blends into the overall landscape plan, rather than calls attention to it. Ground mounted equipment shall be located in the side or rear yards, in a location that is least visible to the public. If no other feasible alternative exists, a front yard location may be permitted.
- ◆ Create a transition between buildings, parking spaces and from the street edge.
- ◆ Landscape shall not negatively impact site circulation patterns.
- ◆ Select plant material to complement the architectural style and details of the building, such as upright shrubs as foundation plantings or trees to break up longer building walls.



PUBLIC SPACES

To attract additional patrons throughout the daytime and evening hours, attractive places must be provided for people to gather. With planned improvements and programming, Physicians Park will offer a large public space within the downtown. In addition to the anticipated pedestrian improvements, other public spaces shall be planned in conjunction with new development and redevelopment of existing sites. Even small sites shall provide some type of pedestrian amenity. Examples of appropriate public spaces and pedestrian amenities include eliminate space ...

- ◆ Public spaces shall be sited to provide functional spaces which enhance the use of the building rather than residual areas after the building and parking lot has been sited.
- ◆ Spaces shall be placed next to areas that generate pedestrian activity such as street corners, shops, restaurants and high density residential uses.
- ◆ Outdoor dining/sidewalk cafes
- ◆ Open air markets, vegetable, produce or flower sales
- ◆ Public plazas, art, or sculpture display
- ◆ Outdoor seating/benches
- ◆ Pocket parks
- ◆ Bike racks
- ◆ Gazebo or covered shelter



SITE LIGHTING

Site lighting is an important element, too little lighting may create unsafe conditions while too much lighting detracts from the overall scheme of a unified downtown area. In addition, where sites abut existing single family residential, lighting can become a nuisance. Lighting must be selected to create an attractive balance between the pedestrian and automobile. Site lighting shall be designed to...

- ◆ Provide for adequate safety without overly emphasizing the site or building.
- ◆ For redevelopment of existing gas stations, canopy lighting shall be recessed.
- ◆ Eliminate an outward or upward glare.
- ◆ Consist of decorative fixtures, such as goose neck fixtures, be architecturally integrated with the building style, materials and color and contain shields to direct light downward. Pole fixtures shall be located within landscaped islands or behind the curb or sidewalk.
- ◆ Provide appropriate pedestrian scale lighting such as bollard lighting, 3' to 4' in height.



OUTDOOR DISPLAY

For select uses, outdoor display may be appropriate such as an outdoor market or garden center. However display areas must be integrated into the site as opposed to an add-on use, this will ensure the downtown area does not take on a cluttered or chaotic appearance. Outdoor display shall be developed in accordance with the following...

- ◆ Provide a decorative enclosure such as wrought iron fence and columns or an obscuring wall. Enclosure shall be solid at the ground so that debris does not leave the confined area. Wall materials or columns shall be consistent with the primary building material.
- ◆ Located in a manner that fits into the overall site and is inviting to patrons.
- ◆ Used exclusively from sale of goods, not storage.

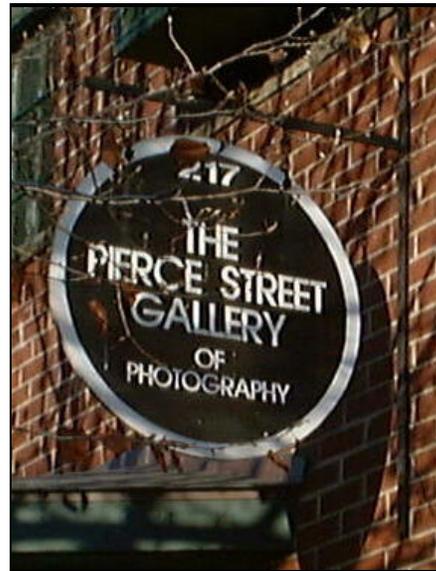


City of Grand Blanc, Michigan

SIGNS

Signs provide an important function of both advertising and navigation by motorists and pedestrians. However, often times signs dominate a site and are counter productive to the primary function of directing patrons. Through careful and well-planned site design, the number of potential signs shall be limited. Signs shall be...

- ◆ Architecturally integrated with their surroundings in terms of size, shape, color, texture and lighting and not promote visual competition with other signs in the downtown area.
- ◆ Located such that they do not impede vision of pedestrians or motorists.
- ◆ Limited to the number necessary to direct patrons throughout the site.
- ◆ Consist of individual channel cut letters or sand-blasted/carved lettering, indirect illumination is preferred.
- ◆ Applied to dark colored backgrounds. Stark white or bright colored backgrounds such as red, yellow or orange are discouraged.
- ◆ Limited to necessary information, regardless of the size permitted by the sign ordinance. Repetitive information shall not be permitted, such as dual signs on corner building when one sign is highly visible from the intersection.



City of Grand Blanc, Michigan

ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

The individual buildings are only a part of the whole. Collectively, buildings in close geographic proximity define the character of an area. Too often, building design is considered in isolation. These guidelines have been established to create consistency within the downtown in terms of building location and scale while at the same time encouraging architectural identity on a site by site basis.



City of Grand Blanc, Michigan

BUILDING DESIGN

Architectural design shall be complementary with older historic building forms/styles and more recent projects developed under the premise of these design guidelines in terms of building style, form, size, color and materials, although diversity is encouraged. The following design considerations shall apply...

- ◆ Sites containing multiple buildings must possess compatible design elements and a strong visual relationship between buildings.
- ◆ Exterior design and details (color, architectural form, type and number of materials) shall be coordinated on all building facades to achieve harmony and design continuity.
- ◆ Building facades that are visible from the street and portions of buildings that are visible to the public must be finished in a manner that is consistent with the front façade.
- ◆ Exterior finish colors shall fit into the context of the built environment. Subtle earth-toned colors are preferred over stark or bright colors.
- ◆ Large scale structures shall be broken down into smaller components in order to reduce the perceived height and mass.
- ◆ Where the rear of the building is located near parking areas, well defined access to, and into, the building shall be provided.
- ◆ Building shall represent a unique style and not the result of a 'corporate' or 'franchised' style. Additionally, buildings shall not used primarily as a means of advertising.

BUILDING ORIENTATION

The relationship of a building to its site, the public right-of-way and adjacent buildings is a critical component of a successful urban design. The orientation of buildings shall be located based on the following...

- ◆ Oriented parallel to the road. Buildings located at a corner intersection shall be parallel to both streets, unless site conditions dictate otherwise.
- ◆ Maintain a 10 foot setback along the street. In locations where it is impractical to maintain the 10 foot setback, landscape elements such as walls, fences or plant materials shall be used to visually reinforce the established setback line. Buildings at corner locations shall not be located so they interfere with site distance.
- ◆ Front facades shall occupy the majority of street frontage, this eliminates irregularly sized gaps, voids, along the street edge.
- ◆ A primary entrance shall be provided from the street. Secondary entrances may also be provided in proximity to the parking area.
- ◆ Buildings should be used to obscure the service areas, including trash pick up, delivery vehicles, mechanical equipment and other similar necessities which may distract from the overall orderly appearance of the downtown area.

MATERIALS AND FACADE TREATMENTS

Buildings shall promote a high quality design that contributes toward the creation of a downtown atmosphere. Building materials and facade treatments shall be designed to address the following considerations...

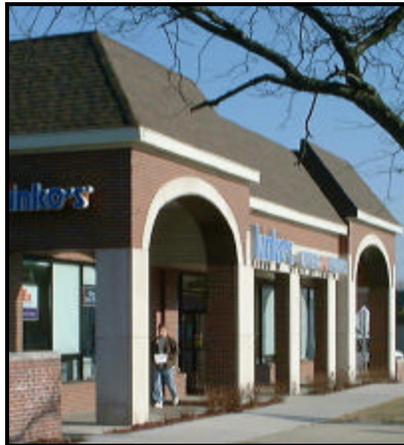
- ◆ Buildings shall consist of durable, high quality materials. The primary building material shall consist of brick or stone. Fiberglass reinforced concrete, polymer plastic (fypon) or Exterior Insulation and Finishing Systems (EIFS) materials may be used exclusively for accent purposes. Highly reflective materials are discouraged.
- ◆ Synthetic materials shall not be used within eight feet of the ground level.
- ◆ Material and/or color changes shall generally occur where there is a change of plane along the building facade.
- ◆ Provide variation along facades visible by the public such as include relief along the building plane including offsets or projections having a minimum width of three (3) feet, architectural banding and/or vertical projections.
- ◆ All vents, gutters, down spouts, flashing, electrical conduits, soffits, etc. shall be painted to match the color of the adjacent surface, unless it is being used expressly as a trim or accent element.
- ◆ Exposed neon shall not be permitted on the building exterior.
- ◆ In locations where drive through facilities are permitted, they must be architecturally integrated into the building. Where drive throughs are visible from a public street or single family residential area they shall substantially obscured from view by means of architectural treatments and/or landscaping. The locations of drive through facilities shall not be contrary to the circulation standards referenced as part of the site design guidelines.



ROOF TREATMENT

In addition to the street level, attention must also be given to the top of the building. The following guidelines are intended to promote visual interest, reduce massing and screen roof top equipment. Roof treatments shall...

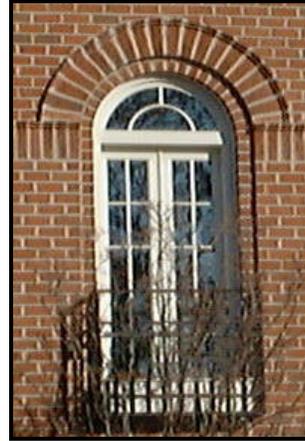
- ◆ Provide variation within the roof line, including raised/ decorative parapet over the primary customer entrance, peaked roof forms and/or dimensional details at the cornice level.
- ◆ Utilize different roof planes for facades within public view.
- ◆ Consist of asphalt, fiberglass, tile, slate or cedar shingles. Standing metal seam roof systems shall be used only as an accent material.
- ◆ Roof top equipment must be screened from ground level view at public streets and adjacent property lines. Parapet and screen walls shall be designed as an integral component of the building and not an 'add-on' which weakens the design.



WINDOWS

Storefront windows, used in appropriate proportions, are an important building element for creating a pedestrian scale downtown environment. Windows break up wall segments and provide an opportunity for interaction between the buildings interior and exterior at the street level. Transom windows are encouraged as a design feature above the main windows. Windows shall provide...

- ◆ Openings or articulation of bays to maintain a sense of scale and add interest to the building. Long, blank facades along sides visible to the public shall be avoided. Windows and doors shall comprise at least 50% of the first floor front facade of a building containing a commercial use. The glazed area of a facade above the first floor shall not exceed 35% percent of the total facade area of that floor.
- ◆ A horizontal or vertical emphasis.
- ◆ Individual 'punched' or framed windows rather than 'ribbon' style windows. Window frames and mullions shall be a neutral color and complement the overall color scheme for the building.
- ◆ Clear or lightly tinted glass, reflective glass is not permitted.



AWNINGS

Awnings are encouraged for first floor retail uses to provide architectural interest and provide protection for pedestrians during inclement weather. Awnings shall...

- ◆ Consist of opaque material, translucent or internally lit structures are not permitted.
- ◆ Coordinate with the style and color of the building.
- ◆ Not be used for the purpose of advertising.



RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

In addition to the applicable guidelines contained herein, the following additional standards shall apply to residential structures located within the downtown area.

- ◆ Infill development within existing neighborhoods shall be sensitively designed to respect the established lot/structure pattern.
- ◆ Garage locations shall be varied and/or recessed to reduce the emphasis on the garages along the street edge.
- ◆ Multiple family residential units shall be varied using color, arrangement and/or materials to emphasize facade elements. The planes of exterior walls shall be varied in height, depth or direction. Long facades shall include sufficient relief and landscaping to reduce the dominance of the building.

