

**NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER OVERLAY  
DESIGN GUIDEBOOK**  
CITY OF TALLMADGE  
2025

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## Introduction

The Neighborhood Center Overlay Design Guidebook aims to create a cohesive, pedestrian-friendly district that bridges the gap between the city's traditional residential area and commercial district. This district should cater to the community's daily needs while offering vibrant street-level activity.

Commercial uses should be the primary focus, with well-designed residential units integrated into upper floors of commercial buildings or separate mixed-use developments. These developments must harmonize commercial and residential functions, minimizing any negative impacts. Separate entrances, thoughtful parking, and other measures can help achieve this balance. As with neighboring commercial zones, building designs should be inspired by the local context. Architectural details should reflect the space's character and function, creating an authentic and inviting atmosphere.

These standards will safeguard and enhance the unique character of Tallmadge's community development. While they don't prescribe a specific style, they encourage imaginative design that aligns with the district's vision.

The design guidebook includes descriptive narratives, illustrations, and examples to help developers and consultants understand and achieve the city's goals. It also outlines minimum site and building design standards to ensure quality in all new projects. By combining these elements, the standards offer flexibility while setting a higher bar for all development. They provide guidelines rather than rigid requirements, allowing for creativity within a framework that protects Tallmadge's distinctive identity.

The Design Guidelines are intended to serve a number of purposes. They:

1. Educate property owners, developers, the public, and plan reviewers on what is expected and desired for new development throughout the City of Tallmadge;
2. Present clear principles and priorities for achieving this vision;
3. Present clear policy guidelines and criteria for development to implement the design vision; and
4. Illustrate specific techniques to use when planning and designing developments.

All new construction and alterations of 60% or more to site or structures must comply with the design guidelines. The base or underlying zoning use district regulations shall also apply.

Minor deviations may be approved by city staff if they maintain similar materials, configurations, or techniques that align with the guidelines' intent.

Major modifications to building façades due to specific functional needs require approval from the Architectural Review Board. These modifications must preserve the overall character of the site while adhering to all other standards. All approved deviations should be clearly indicated on the final project plans.

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## Neighborhood Center Overlay District Map Area

The Neighborhood Center Overlay District Design Guidebook was prepared to address the intended design strategies for properties as mapped in Appendix B of the Zoning Code.

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### Design Principles

The narrative provides a visual interpretation of the architectural guidelines that will govern development in Overlay Districts throughout Tallmadge. These guidelines offer a framework for property owners, developers, and review boards to assess project proposals, ensuring that early planning and design align with the city's vision. By incorporating these standards, costly revisions can be minimized, and the undesirable sprawl often associated with new development can be mitigated. Ultimately, this approach promotes a cohesive and desirable future for Tallmadge.

### District Features

#### Balance of Mixed Uses

Design should prioritize a diverse and lively mix of compatible uses. Retail, restaurants, and, in some cases, offices should typically occupy the ground floor along street fronts. Residential use to be limited to first floors of buildings or parts of buildings only where they are behind those with street frontage or where the use is adjacent to existing residential in the neighboring district or may be integrated into a single building or located in separate structures on the site.

#### Connectivity of Uses

Effective mixed-use developments foster connections between different uses, rather than isolating them. The design should encourage people to walk between various spaces and enjoy socializing in attractive outdoor areas. This includes building orientation towards streets and alleys, a network of sidewalks and pathways, strategic parking placement, and ample green spaces, landscaping, seating, and other amenities.

#### Active Street Frontage

To encourage active street frontage, on-street parking should be avoided in front yards. Buildings should be set back closer to the street, with usable spaces designed to attract patrons. Ground-floor commercial spaces, such as retail shops and restaurants, can create such inviting environments.

#### Compactness

To create a walkable neighborhood center, buildings should be positioned in close proximity to each other, with a network of well-maintained walkways connecting them.

## Compatibility with Neighboring Districts

The development's architecture should complement the existing architectural styles in the neighborhood, whether traditional, modern, or historic, creating a sense of continuity. The goal is to create a cohesive district that maintains the neighborhood's character while fostering a vibrant atmosphere.

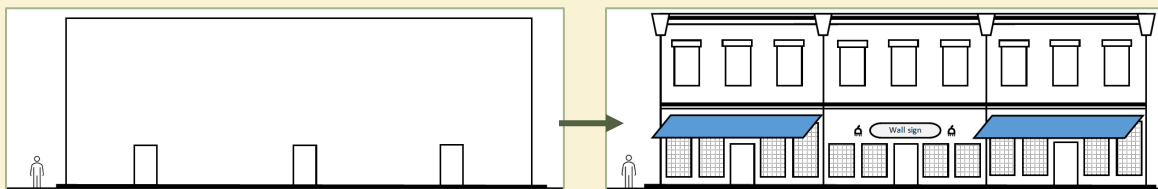
## Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

One of the key benefits of mixed use is its emphasis on walking and bicycling to reduce auto dependence. To promote these modes of transportation, including bike parking and storage, create a network of pedestrian pathways, minimize driveway access points, and require parking areas to be located at the rear of buildings.

## Building Scale

Human scale refers to the comfortable and natural relationship between people and their built environment. When buildings and spaces are designed to feel inviting and proportional, they effectively achieve human scale. Monumental scale, while conveying importance, often incorporates human-scale elements for balance. Materials, textures, patterns, colors, and details contribute to this perception.

Building dimensions, streets, and public spaces should be carefully planned to create a comfortable and inviting environment. Factors like building height, width, street width, streetscape features, building setbacks, and proportional relationships are crucial. Architectural elements like cornices, windows, columns, and piers can scale down large buildings to a more human-friendly size, making them inviting and comfortable.



Building height can add dignity but also create an overwhelming presence. The relationship between height and other architectural features is crucial. Building height and scale should be considered in relation to the site and surrounding buildings.

Architectural details can help reduce the perceived mass of large buildings. Features like street-level openings, decorative elements, and residential-style forms can make commercial buildings feel more approachable. Avoid long, uninterrupted walls or roof planes. Building wall offsets, like projections, recesses, and changes in floor level, can add interest, break up large walls, and create a more human-scale appearance.

## Intended Building Character



A new design that reflects the underlying similarities between commercial and residential buildings in the community, without mimicking existing structures, is preferred. This will allow the new buildings to be seen as products of their own time while maintaining compatibility with their historic neighbors.

1. The building character of this district shall generally employ building types where:
  - a. Front elevations facing the street and overall massing shall be pedestrian in scale.
  - b. Designs include facets of varied materials and architectural features.
  - c. A front façade shall be architecturally emphasized and all sides of the shall be consistent with the front.
  - d. Multi-tenant buildings should be designed to allow each tenant to have a unique frontage but maintain cohesiveness in style.
    - i. Different sign types (wall, projecting, awning) are encouraged but should be complemented in material and framing colors.
    - ii. Downlit lighting shall be of the same style and color.
    - iii. Planters and types of plants are recommended to be incorporated and be weather appropriate.
    - iv. Outdoor benches and art are recommended.
2. Upper-Level Features. Upper floor balconies, bays, and windows shall be provided whenever opportunities exist for these types of features.
3. The primary entrance shall be both architecturally and functionally designed on the front façade of the building facing the primary public street. Such entrances shall be designed to convey their prominence on the fronting façade.
4. Canopies and awnings shall be canvas, blade type, pergola or similar material and shall be permitted to encroach over a sidewalk to within two feet of a public street curb and may be illuminated by external lighting only.
5. Windows. At least 50% of the street level frontages should be in windows or doorways. Street level windows shall be visually permeable. Mirrored glass is not permitted in any location. Faux or display casements are not permitted in lieu of exterior window treatments for the frontage elevation. Windows shall be vertically proportioned wherever possible.

Also, to the extent possible, upper story windows shall be vertically aligned with the location of windows and doors on the ground level, including storefront or display windows.

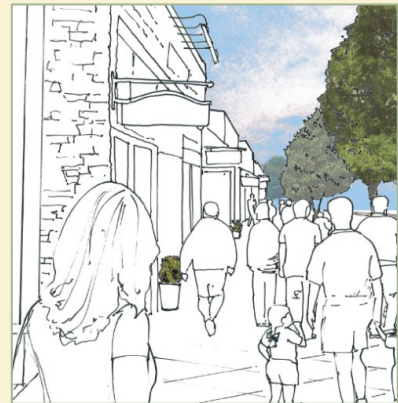
Windows at ground floor façade shall be at minimum 50% transparency. Where shading is a concern, awnings may be used to shade the glass.

6. **Roof Configuration.** Sloping roofs such as gable and hipped roofs are appropriate for primary roof forms. A blending of sloping roof forms and flat roofs may be appropriate for larger projects.
7. **Additions.** The design of new additions should be such that the original character of the building can be clearly seen and should be compatible in scale, materials and character with the main building. Any rooftop addition should keep the mass and scale subordinate to the primary building and be in character with the primary structure's design.

### Building Materials and Color

New buildings should use materials that complement the visual character of the district, creating a sense of continuity. These materials should resemble those traditionally found in the area. While color does not directly impact a building's form, it can significantly influence its perceived size and how it blends with its surroundings. All visible sides of a building, including those facing public streets or neighboring properties, should use consistent materials and detailing of comparable quality. The materials chosen should be appropriate for the building type and design. Avoid piecemeal embellishments and frequent changes in materials. Metal buildings should generally be prohibited, except as specifically permitted in local zoning regulations.

## Building Design



The latest trends in retail spending show a significant change from in store to internet-net based sales. Too many commercial buildings focus solely on what happens inside the building. But some minor improvements to the exterior can make businesses into the kind of place people like to go to. And while a few people spending time together might not make or break a business, they provide a visual indicator to pedestrians and people travelling in cars that this is a different, special kind of place.

Frontage quality attracts people and increases the vibrancy of the district. The placement and size of windows and doors contribute to this visual effect. Main entrances and windows are to be street-facing and be similar to existing buildings in the area, resulting in a consistent solid-to-void ratio.

### *Building Color*

Color is probably the easiest, and perhaps the most inexpensive way to improve the attractiveness of commercial buildings. It is also the most effective improvement to create distinctive building fronts and enable customers to easily distinguish between various businesses.

Color, however, is an accent, not the key feature of a building. Avoid using colors to attract attention. Rather, focus on using colors that complement the brand identity of individual businesses. Fluorescent and neon colors are not recommended.

### *Building Materials*

Traditional building materials such as wood, brick, and stone are encouraged.

- Horizontal lap siding of traditional dimensions is appropriate in most applications.
- Maintenance of traditional siding dimensions are encouraged.
- Brick or stone, similar to that used traditionally, is also appropriate.
- Highly reflective materials are inappropriate.
- New materials that are similar in character to traditional ones may be considered.  
Alternative materials should have a proven durability in similar locations in this climate.

The following chart is intended as a general guide to the materials most and least preferred for use within the District. It is not intended to be comprehensive. Actual exterior materials and colors should be approved by the city. Materials listed in the 'Not Recommended' column, or materials not specifically listed in this chart, may be permitted, but are subject to review and approval by the Architectural Review Board to ensure appropriateness.

ELEMENT	RECOMMENDED	NOT RECOMMENDED
<b>Façade</b>	Brick Bare (consistent tone) Painted (approved color) Special Masonry Units Textured Concrete Block Colored Concrete Block Split-faced Block Natural Stone / Imitation Stone Wood Clapboard Wood Shingle	Plain (bare) Concrete Masonry Units Metal Siding Exterior Insulation Finish Systems  Asphalt Siding
<b>Trim</b>	Wood (Painted or Stained) Finished Grade Aluminum	Bare Wood Lumber Grade
<b>Windows</b>	Anodized Aluminum Frame Wood Frame Vinyl Clad Expressed Lintels (over openings) Brick Limestone Colored Concrete Clear, Etched or Frosted Glass Stained Glass	Steel Plate or Angle  Mirrored Glass
<b>Roof</b>	Natural Slate Standing Seam Metal Small Seam Width Asphalt Shingles Parapet Caps / Chimney Caps Stone, Pre-cast Concrete	
<b>Other</b>	Canvas, Blade Awnings 3 color maximum, approved colors Walkway Pavers / Sidewalk Stamped or Poured Concrete Brick or Colored Paving Stones	Plastic Awnings

### Building and Street Lighting

The type and placement of lighting on a building are important considerations. Historically, exterior lighting was understated, used primarily to illuminate entrances, walkways, and signs.

Incandescent lamps, which produced a warm, daylight-like glow and were relatively low-intensity, were typically used in shielded fixtures. While modern lighting technologies may be considered, the overall goal should be to maintain a modest, focused lighting approach.

### *Lighting*

1. Street lighting should be used to enhance the pedestrian experience at night by providing a well-lit environment.
2. Light pole and lamp design should be similar to those used in the district.
3. Streetlights should convey a pedestrian-oriented scale and convey a color spectrum that is similar to daylight.
4. Exterior lights should be used to accent architectural details, building entrances, signs, and illuminate sidewalks.
5. Minimize the visual impacts of site and architectural lighting through the use of low intensity white lights that are similar to daylight.
6. Prevent glare by using shielded and focused light sources that focus light downward. Unshielded, high intensity lights sources and those that direct light upward should not be permitted.
7. Shield any lighting associated with service areas, parking lots, and parking structures.

### *Mechanical Screening*

Utilities that may be found on properties include telephone and electrical lines, ventilation systems, utility meters, mechanical equipment, transformers, generators, air conditioners, and other similar utility hardware. Adequate space for these utilities should be planned in a project from the outset and they should be designed such that their visual impacts are minimized. Service areas for trash, recycling containers, loading facilities, and site maintenance equipment should be carefully planned as an integral part of a site. While service areas are essential, their visual impact should be minimized. When planning a site, adequate space should be allocated for service areas, rather than simply placing them in leftover areas.

Accessory structures must be of similar design, materials, and colors as the principal building and should be appropriately landscaped.

#### *Mechanical Screening and Service Areas*

Adequate space for utilities should be planned in a project from the outset and they should be designed such that their visual impacts are minimized.

Trash and recycling storage areas also are concerns. Service areas for trash, recycling containers, loading facilities, and site maintenance equipment should be carefully planned as an integral part of a site. To the greatest extent feasible, these areas should be screened from public view to reduce the visual impacts. When laying out a site, adequate provisions should be made for service areas. They should not simply be located in left-over yards, for example.

1. Minimize the visual impacts of utility connections and service boxes.
  - a. Project elements like mechanical equipment, electrical and telephone lines, utility meters, transformers, generators and similar features or other utility hardware on roof, ground, or buildings shall be screened from public view with materials similar to the structure.

- b. Ground mounted mechanical equipment shall be located to the rear or side yard and screened from off-site view.
  - c. Roof-mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened from off-site view by a parapet wall and shall not be visible from the street. Unused equipment should be removed.
  - d. Locate a satellite dish out of public view, to the extent feasible, and in compliance with other regulations.
2. Minimize the visual impacts of trash storage and service areas.
- a. Loading and service delivery areas shall be located to the rear or side yard away from the primary street frontage and away from major pedestrian routes; typically place them at the rear of a building when feasible.
  - b. Locate storage, solid waste collection, and loading areas at least 20 feet from any public street, public sidewalk, internal pedestrian walkway, or building with residential use.
  - c. Incorporate loading docks, truck parking, outdoor storage, trash collection, trash compaction, and other service functions into the overall design of the building and landscaping so that the visual and acoustic impacts of these functions are fully contained/screened and out of view from adjacent properties and public streets.
  - d. Use screening materials for solid waste collection and loading areas that are the same and of equal quality to the materials used for the primary building and landscaping.

## Seating Areas and Public Spaces

One of the ways stores, shops, and shopping centers compete with the internet is by focusing on what people cannot order online: the value customers increasingly place on socializing and entertainment as part of the shopping experience.

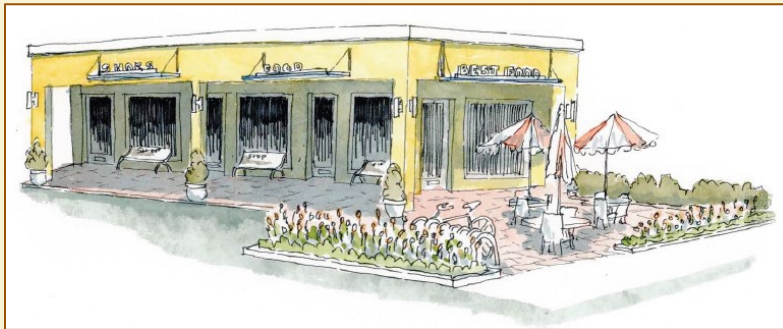
There are numerous ways to design seating areas; it all depends on the level of investment. However, even a simple sitting area will invite pedestrians to come shop and stay awhile.

The following are 3 examples where public seating has been added to a building in different ways and shows how converting three parking spaces into an outdoor seating and dining area activates the critical space between the building and the street.

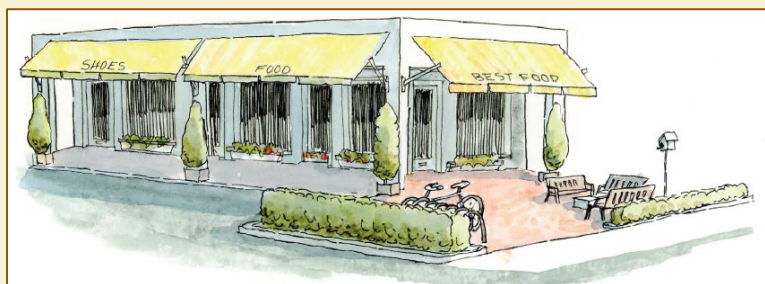
Example 1



Example 2



Example 3



## Signs

Signs serve two primary purposes: attracting attention and conveying information about the business or services offered. A well-designed building façade can effectively capture attention, allowing the sign to focus on providing clear and informative content. New signs should be designed in harmony with the building's architecture and the surrounding area and comply with City's Zoning Code, Section 1108 and specifically those for Overlay Districts in Section 1108.12.

<b>TABLE 1108.12-01: SUMMARY TABLE NON-RESIDENTIAL OVERLAY DISTRICTS.</b>		
		<b>NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER</b>
<b>Wall Signs</b>	<b>Number</b>	1/nonresidential tenant
	<b>Max Area (sf)<sup>1</sup></b>	1 sf/linear ft of tenant space frontage; 40 sf max
	<b>Illumination</b>	Internal or External
<b>Awning/ Canopy Signs</b>	<b>Number</b>	1/nonresidential tenant
<b>Window Signs</b>	<b>Number</b>	1/nonresidential tenant
	<b>Max Area</b>	35% of window area on front façade
<b>Projecting Signs</b>	<b>Number</b>	1/tenant
	<b>Max Area (sf)</b>	8
	<b>Illumination</b>	External illumination, gooseneck
<b>Freestanding Signs: Pole Signs/ Monument Signs</b>	<b>Number</b>	1/road frontage 1/residential development entrance
	<b>Max Area (sf)</b>	48
	<b>Max Height (ft)</b>	10
	<b>Illumination</b>	External only, ground-lit or decorative fixture
<b>Flags</b>	<b>Number (max. of either type: flag or feather banner)</b>	Prohibited
<b>Feather Banner</b>	<b>Number (max. of either type: flag or feather banner)</b>	Prohibited

<sup>1</sup> Bonuses may apply depending on the lot dimensions. Reference TCO 1108.05.

A sign typically serves two functions: first, to attract attention, and second to convey information, essentially identifying the business or services offered within. If it is well designed, a building front alone can serve the attention-getting function, allowing the sign to be focused on conveying information in a well-conceived manner. Contrary to conventional design, more signage does not equal greater exposure. All new signs should be developed with the overall context of the building and of the area in mind.

These guidelines are to ensure that signs are integrated in architectural design and consistent with the character of the development. Signs for multi-tenant or phased developments should remain consistent in terms of materials, design features, and scale, however it is encouraged to allow variety in types of building signs. Ultimately, these guidelines are intended to reduce the visual clutter of numerous signs placed along roadways.

1. Signs should be coordinated with the composition of the overall façade and in proportion to the building such that it does not dominate the appearance. Incorporate design elements for on-site signs that are consistent with each other and with the overall architectural character of the development, in terms of their materials, height, colors, and lettering style, to reinforce visual continuity. Sign materials should be compatible with that of the building façade and should use colors that are compatible with those of the building front.
2. Locate signs on a building such that it will emphasize design elements of the façade itself and fit within existing architectural features.
3. Window signs are permitted on the glass or hung inside the window and should cover no more than 35% of the total window area on the side of the building on which it is displayed.
4. Projecting signs may be considered. Small projecting signs should be located near the business entrance, just above the door or to the side of it, while large projecting signs should be mounted higher and centered on the façade or positioned at the corner. All attached signage shall meet size requirements as specified in the Zoning Ordinance.
5. Signs not attached to buildings shall be ground mounted signs. Such signs shall be no larger than the width and area allowed in the Zoning Ordinance for each respective zoning district. The height of all signs within the district shall not exceed six (6) feet tall. All ground mounted signs shall be located a minimum of five (5) feet behind the street right-of-way.
6. The most appropriate lighting of a sign is external with lights directed at the signage. All lighted signs shall have their lighting directed in such a manner as to illuminate only the face of the sign.
7. Internally illuminated signs are discouraged.

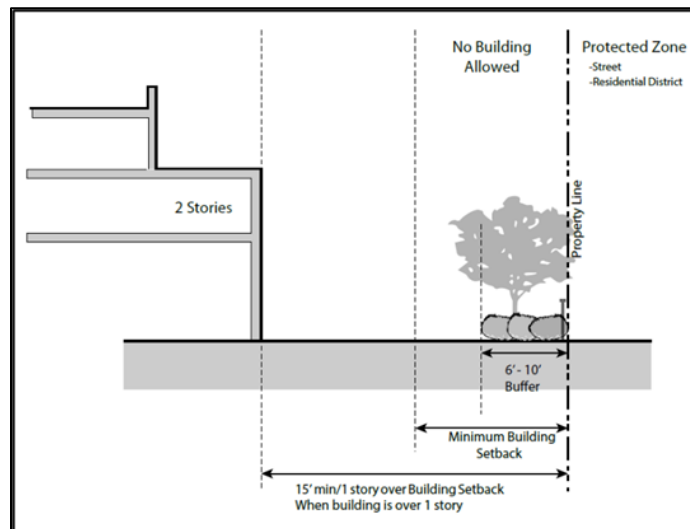
## Desired Development Patterns

The desired development pattern in the O-NC is the introduction of a mix of uses as a transition between established residential and commercial districts.

1. The design of new infill development shall be sensitive to the scale and design characteristics of established structures in abutting residential neighborhoods, with the objective of achieving a harmonious transition between the new development and existing neighborhood. Consideration shall be given to factors including, but not limited to, orientation of architectural features, building articulation, and exterior building treatments.
2. Maintain the alignment of buildings at the sidewalks edge by locating the front building wall at the sidewalk line when feasible. Where a building must be set back from the sidewalk, use landscape elements to define the sidewalk edge.
3. Orient the front entrance of the building toward the street and clearly identify the primary entrance. A secondary public entrance to commercial spaces is also encouraged in larger buildings.
4. Buildings should be placed so as to have 75% of the building on the primary street.
5. New structures should be oriented towards West Avenue, with parking predominantly located at the rear and sides of buildings.

Parallel or angled parking can be provided in front, ensuring adequate space for pedestrian traffic.

6. Transition Height Zoning should be incorporated where building heights gradually increase from single-story to two- or three-story structures. In areas adjacent to residential districts, new buildings should harmonize with the prevailing single-story residential scale.
7. Use of trees and flowering plants is strongly encouraged to enhance the pedestrian experience.



## Street Design, Sidewalks, and Trees

“Streetscape” is the general term applied to all of the elements that make up the public realm surrounding thoroughfares: street paving, sidewalks, planting strips, lighting, traffic signals, outdoor street furniture, public signs, and utilities. Street trees with protective canopies can be used to enclose and define streetscapes.

Encourage the use of street trees, streetlights, planted medians, underground utilities, and other amenities to create a more visually appealing and pedestrian-friendly environment along streets/drives connecting activity centers. Gateways to activity centers, and possibly

neighborhoods, should be delineated with distinctive streetscape elements. These can include signs, special paving at crosswalks, grouped plantings, fountains, and other signature features.

Coordinate the total visual effect of all streetscape elements within a development or along an arterial or major collector, including paving, sidewalks, street trees and plantings, lighting, traffic signals, signs, street furniture, and utilities. Develop and use a common palette of colors, materials, and design. Consideration should be given to coordinating streetscape elements of individual developments with adjacent developments. While they need not match, they should coordinate and not clash.

### Landscaping

In order to soften the image of commercial buildings, plants should be selected to add colors that complement a building's architectural style and an individual business's brand. Planters can be installed to separate and shield outdoor dining areas and enhance building façades.

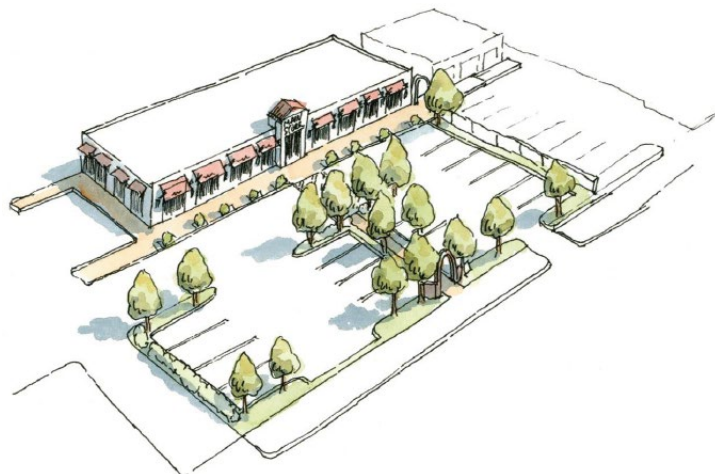
### Fences & Walls

All fences and walls must have a consistent design and be kept in good condition. These structures should match or complement the primary building material. Chain-link fencing is prohibited unless needed for security, and in such cases, it should be discreetly located away from public view.

### Parking

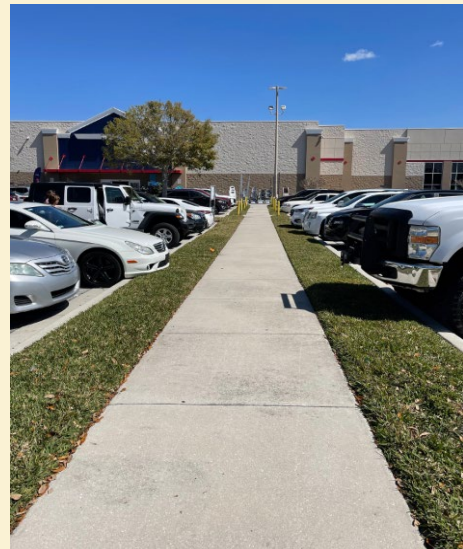
The intent of these regulations is to offer safe pedestrian movement to and from the parking lot, to add human scale to the parking lot, to improve the physical and aesthetic integration of the parking with the building, and to ensure safety and security of the parking lot. This goal includes reducing the image of the “sea of parking” one finds along corridors at retail centers and the “garage-scape” in neighborhoods. Parking is necessary at work, at home, and at destinations throughout the town. However, there is no reason it needs to dominate the view.

Break parking lots into modules or multiple smaller lots using techniques such as natural topography, logically placed landscaped pedestrian paths to destinations, and by linear aisles of plantings should be utilized. Avoid large expanses of asphalt. Reducing the amount of parking lots through such methods as providing on-street parking, using off-site parking such as municipal lots, sharing parking among complementary uses, providing pull-in spaces in front of shops and creating overflow lots is also encouraged. These techniques may require some flexibility when applying parking standards.



Automobiles are so much a part of everyday life that space needs to be made for them wherever people live, work, and play. New parking facilities should be designed to be attractive, compatible additions to the district. In general, a new parking facility should remain subordinate to the street scene. These guidelines will address how parking can be adequate, convenient but unobtrusive.

1. Minimize the visual impacts of a parking lot by locating surface lots in the interior of a block whenever possible. Where a parking lot shares a site with a building, place the parking at the rear of the site or beside the building.
2. Reduce the scale of parking lots.
  - a. Break parking lots into pods or multiple smaller lots using techniques such as the natural topography, logically placed landscaped pedestrian paths to destinations, and by linear aisles of plantings. Avoid large expanses of asphalt.
  - b. A maximum of 20 spaces shall be allowed per pod. All parking areas shall be connected to building entrances with delineated pedestrian connections.
  - c. When two or more parking bays are proposed, a continuous landscape island with pedestrian walkway must be installed between every other bay.
  - d. Areas for storage of snow shall be designed separately from landscaped areas to protect landscaping.
  - e. Limit the amount of parking between the street and principal buildings oriented to streets, (such as outparcels in shopping centers) to no more than one row of nose-in parking between the building and the street to which it is oriented.
  - f. Site a portion of parking out of view. Generally, site a minimum of 20-40 percent of parking to the rear and sides of buildings.
3. Accommodate pedestrian needs around parking areas.
  - a. Plan parking so that it least interferes with appropriate pedestrian access and connections to adjoining developments.
4. Where a parking lot abuts a public sidewalk or street, provide a visual buffer.
  - a. Use landscaped strips or planters.
  - b. Consider the use of a wall as screen for the edge of the lot.
  - c. Use a combination of trees and shrubs to create a landscape buffer.



Provide clear pedestrian paths and crossings from parking spaces to main entrances and the street.

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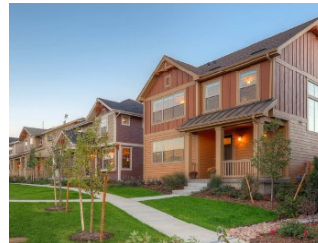
## Renovation of Existing Structures

As environmental concerns and historical preservation gain importance, adaptive reuse is a recommended approach. By converting old buildings into mixed-use spaces, preservation and sustainability is promoted. Transforming old warehouses, factories, or offices into developments with homes, shops, and green areas is a prime example.

1. All new construction, including additions to existing buildings, must comply with these regulations.
2. Changing or rebuilding 60% or more of any façade of a building requires the entire building to comply with the regulations.
3. Changing or rebuilding less than 60% of any façade of a building requires only that façade to comply.
4. All new windows, entrances, storefronts, and doorways must be designed in accordance with these regulations.
5. Routine maintenance and repair are exempt from these requirements.

## Inspirations

### Development Character



#### Keep in Mind

- **Preservation of Architectural Harmony:** When modifying existing structures, alterations should be designed to complement the architectural aesthetics of neighboring developments.
- **Consistent Neighborhood Character:** New construction projects should align with the residential architectural styles of adjacent properties to maintain a cohesive neighborhood aesthetic.

## Awnings

Awnings provide several important yet often overlooked benefits. They help prevent direct sunlight from shining into buildings. By reducing direct sunlight, window tinting can be removed. And without window tinting, potential customers can see more of the business.

Awnings create shade for pedestrians. Awnings also provide a medium for signage; Awnings can also complement the architectural style of the building or the brand identity of individual shops.

### Keep in Mind

- Awnings should hang at least 8 feet above the grade, allowing undisturbed views into the interior
- Darker color awnings will fade quicker than lighter colors
- Lights can be attached to the awning support to down light the storefront
- Blade signage can be suspended from the awning structure
- Consider using alternative natural materials

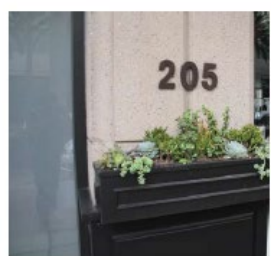
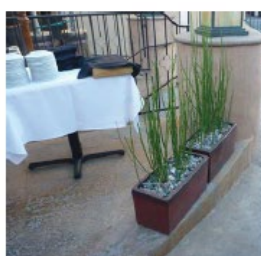
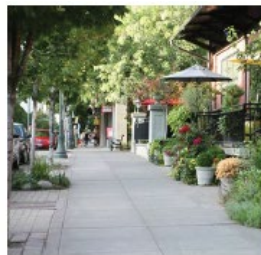


## Landscaping

Even a little bit of landscaping can greatly soften the image of commercial buildings. Plans should be selected to add colors that complement a building’s architectural style and an individual business’s brand. Planters can be installed to separate and shield outdoor dining areas.

### Keep in Mind

- When selecting plants, consider their watering needs and, when appropriate, use indigenous and drought tolerate species
- Tall accent trees can be used to mark entrances and public spaces
- Shade trees should be species that actually provide shade in the summer
- Trees should be trimmed below five or six feet to avoid impacts to the views pedestrians and people in cars have of the businesses
- Avoid thorny plants in places where people might come into contact with the landscape
- Place flowing plants close to the building to serve as part of the building design and architecture



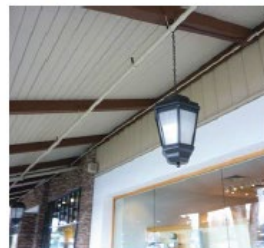
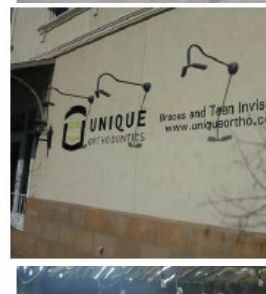
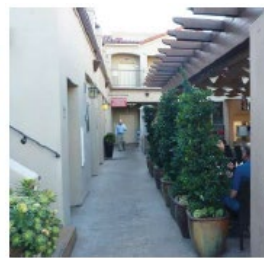
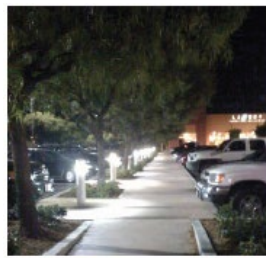
## Lighting

Lighting fixtures help define the architectural style of a building. And common parking, pedestrian, and building lighting helps create a unified image of a commercial property.

Most importantly, though, lighting illuminates parking areas, walkways, and building exteriors, influencing the customer’s experience after sundown and ensuring business visibility.

### Keep in Mind

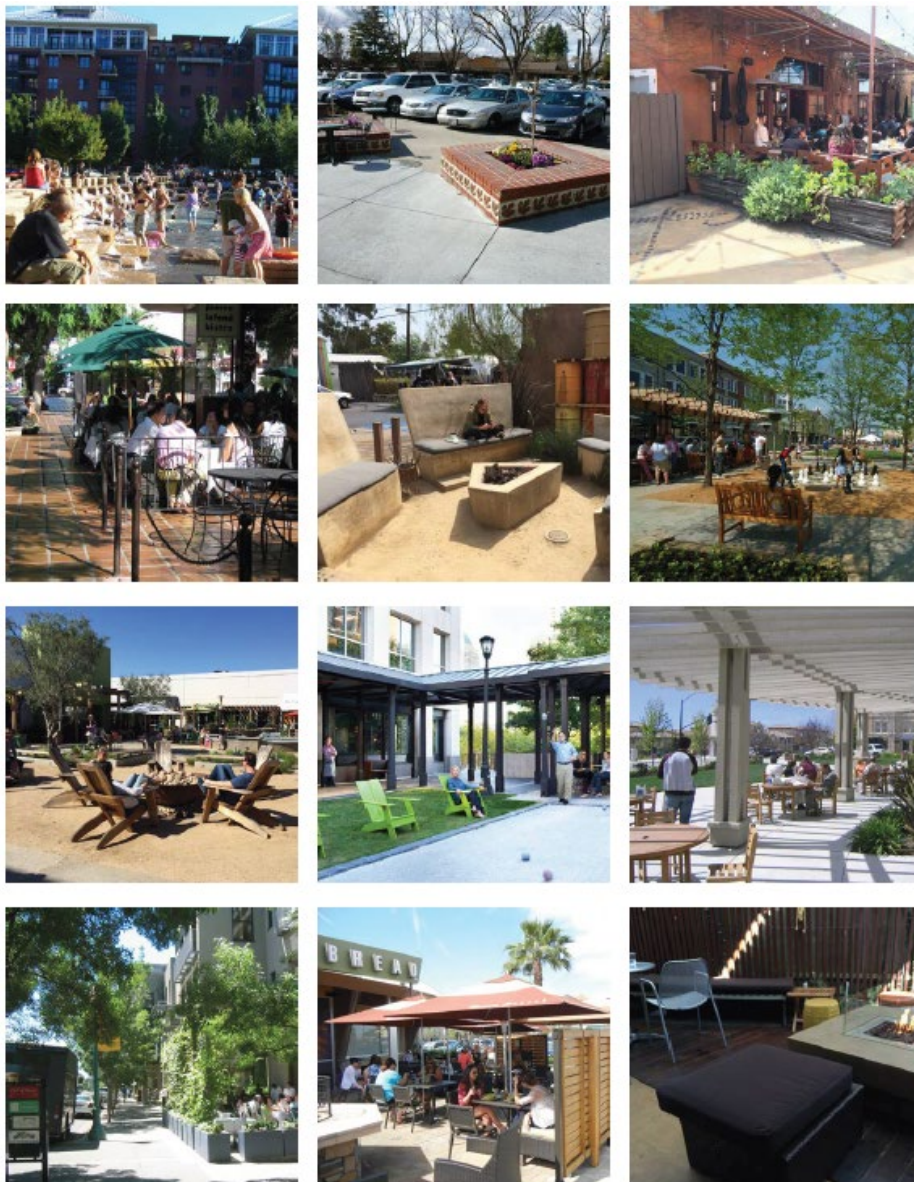
- When possible, use natural material colors
- Plastic light fixtures may endure time as long as they are protected from the sun
- Light color fixtures are best for direct sun exposure
- LED warm tone lights are best used in hard-to-reach places as they last longer
- Use downlit lighting to avoid nighttime light pollution
- Use low-profile parking and walkway lighting to avoid shadows from shade trees



## Outdoor Seating Areas

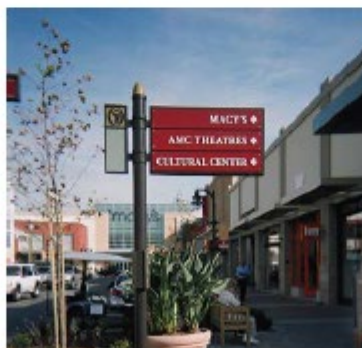
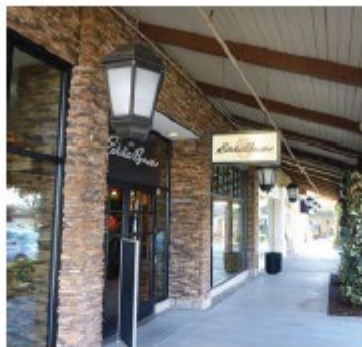
Outdoor seating and outdoor dining areas are a fundamental design element to capitalize on the evolving trend of experience-oriented shopping. After all, sitting and socializing with friends is something that the internet cannot replicate.

As the examples show, there is almost an endless variety of seating styles and materials. Outdoor seating areas should incorporate a mix of seating types and include garden features. Outdoor dining areas generally need ample shading, and often have landscaping, walls, or fence structures to separate diners from pedestrians.



- Keep in Mind**
- Outdoor seating areas should have movable chairs that the public can rearrange as needed;
  - Outdoor dining seats need to be easily movable, but they should be durable and sturdy
  - Shading, water fountains, fire pits, and other garden features enhance the experience
  - Outdoor dining usually needs to be cordoned off if alcohol will be served

## Signage



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## Interpretation of Terms used in this Section.

These definitions apply to terms related to compliance in the preceding text:

**Appropriate** – In some cases, a stated action or design choice is defined as being “appropriate” in the text. In such cases, by choosing the design approach referred to as “appropriate,” the reader will be in compliance with the guideline. However, in other cases, there may be a design that is not expressly mentioned in the text that also may be deemed “appropriate by the Architectural Review Board.

**Consider** – When the term “consider” is used, a design suggestion is offered to the readers as an example of one method of how the design guidelines at hand could be met. Applicants may elect to follow the suggestion but may also seek alternative means of meeting it. In other cases, the reader is instructed to evaluate the ability to take the course recommended in the context of the specific project.

**Context** – In many cases, the reader is instructed to relate to the context of the project area. The “context” relates to those properties and structures adjacent to, and within the same block as, the proposed project.

**Should** – If the term “should” appears in a design guideline, compliance is strongly encouraged but is not required.

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## References

City of Tallmadge, Zoning Code

City of Tallmadge Comprehensive Plan

City of Clovis, CA, Commercial Corridor Pattern Book

Town of Pendleton SC, Corridor Overlay Design Guidelines

Enabling Better Places, Commercial Corridors and Shopping Centers, Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU), February 20, 2020.