



# City of Oak Park Heights, Minnesota DESIGN GUIDELINES



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introduction

## **purpose & background**



The City of Oak Park Heights has created these Guidelines to assist property owners, developers and redevelopers in understanding the City's goals, objectives, and regulations for architecture and site design in the commercial areas. This book consists of text and graphic illustrations which communicate the City's expectations for new development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation of property.

The Oak Park Heights Design Guidelines serve three primary functions:

1. To guide developers or property owners proposing expansions, renovations, or new construction of buildings or parking in commercial, business, warehouse, or industrial areas.
2. To facilitate dialogue between the City and developers/property owners to achieve creative design solutions.
3. To assist City officials, commissioners, and staff in reviewing development proposals.



The Guidelines, by definition, are a set of recommended design goals for new and existing buildings and sites. The Guidelines set further a desired character for properties without directly specific design requirements. A glossary of terms applicable to these Design Guidelines is found starting on page 32.

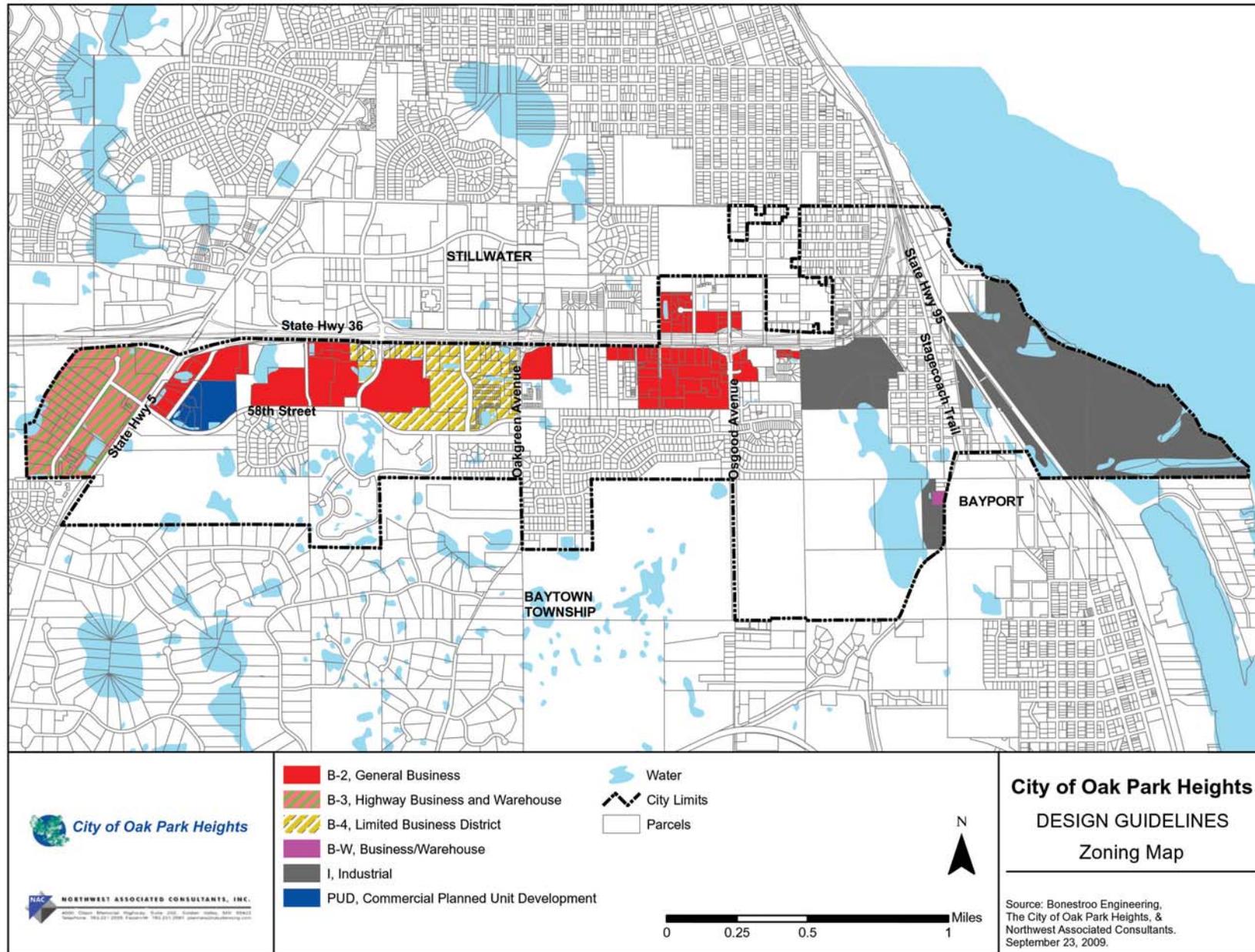
## scope & application

The policies and regulations in the Design Guidelines apply to all projects in the “B” Business Districts, the “I” Industrial Districts, the “P-I” Public Institutional District, and any business or industrial planned unit developments of the City of Oak Park Heights. Any project subject to these Guidelines will be required to conform to the Guidelines only to the extent that the project involves design features addressed by the Guidelines. As an example, a building project which consists of replacing windows will be required to meet the Guidelines with respect to the windows, but will not be required to also change its non-conforming roof style to comply with the Guidelines. Building additions that increase the total enclosed volume of the structure will require the entire building to be brought into Guidelines conformance.

A project which complies with a policy statement will likely be viewed more favorably than one which does not. However, adherence to the overall character is the bottom line. Projects which achieve the character objectives may be able to overcome modifications to individual policy statements.

For convenience, a map of those areas currently subject to the Guidelines is provided on the following page. Rezoning actions of the City Council will alter the properties affected, and as such, the City’s official zoning map should be consulted for updated information. Depending on the scope of the project, one of two different review processes will apply. These are as follows:

1. Administrative Review. Many projects will require administrative review only. These include projects which involve minor exterior alterations to existing buildings, but which do not require separate zoning permits. Maintenance of existing buildings requiring a building permit and replacement of exact materials consistent with the Design Guidelines will require only administrative review.





2. Planning Commission and City Council Review. Projects of greater scope, or those which already require more extensive City zoning review, will need to be reviewed by the Planning Commission and then approved by the City Council.

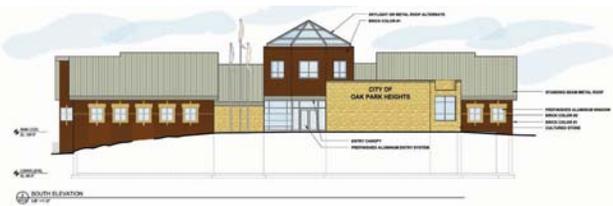
Such projects include:

- a. those buildings that are completely new,
- b. those which alter the building design, building wall or roof surface, or alter window, door or bay openings and locations,
- c. those which require variances, subdivision approval, conditional use permits, or other zoning permit or amendment,
- d. those which alter the height of an existing building by more than two feet up or down,
- e. those which alter the lot coverage of an existing building by more than 10% up or down,
- f. those accessory buildings within areas subject to the Guidelines.

## process for filing & review

### Procedure

1. Applicants requesting Design Guidelines review are required to contact the Zoning Administrator in order to set up a pre-application meeting to discuss the project in question. A meeting with City staff is required to discuss the application process, Design Guidelines policies and regulations, review conceptual plans, provide advice and to avoid any unnecessary plan modifications or design related conflicts.
2. Requests for Design Guidelines review by the Planning Commission and City Council shall be filed with the office of the Zoning Administrator on an official application form at least 30 days in advance of the meeting at which it will first be considered. Said application shall be accompanied by a fee as provided for by City Council resolution. Such application shall be accompanied by five large scale (22 inches by 34 inches) copies and one reduced scale (11 inches by 17 inches) copy of the building plans and elevations in conformity with the provisions of this section. The Zoning Administrator may waive or alter any of the submittal requirements specified herein if not applicable to a project. The request shall be considered officially submitted and the application approval timeline commences only when all the information requirements of this section are complied with and the required fees are paid.
3. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 15.99, an application for a project shall be approved or denied by the City Council within 60 days from the date of its official and complete submission, unless notice of extension is provided by the City or a time waiver is granted by the applicant. The City may extend the review and decision-making period an additional 60 days to the extent allowed by State law.
4. Upon receipt of the completed application, the Zoning Administrator shall schedule review of the request at the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting. The applicant shall post a sign on the property or in the window of the building so as to notify the public that the land in question is the subject of a review by the Planning Commission and City Council.



5. The City Planner, Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, and City Council may request additional information from the applicant to clarify the application and intent of the project.
6. The Planning Commission shall make its report to the City Council after conducting the initial review.
7. Upon receipt of the reports and recommendation of the Planning Commission, the City Council shall have the option to set and hold a public hearing on the request. The City Council may also refer the matter back to the Planning Commission for further consideration.
8. Approval of the application by the City Council shall require passage by a simple majority vote of the entire City Council. The City Council may impose such conditions and restrictions as it deems appropriate or require such revisions or modifications it deems necessary to protect and enhance the general architectural and site character of the City's commercial areas consistent with the policies and regulations of the Design Guidelines.
9. The City Council reserves the right to decline approval of a request if due regard is not shown for the policies and regulations of the Design Guidelines provided herein.

Submission and Presentation Requirements. In addition to any submittal requirements required by the City, applicants shall submit the following documents to portray their design proposals for either administrative or Planning Commission/ City Council review. The Zoning Administrator may waive any of the requirements specified below if not applicable to a project:

1. Colored illustration site plan.
  2. Colored perspective sketch representing realistic proportions of the building and its immediate surroundings.
  3. Colored building elevations (front, rear, and sides at 1/4 inch scale minimum).
  4. Partial or enlarged building elevation (2 inch scale minimum).
  5. Enlarged sketch of site amenities.
  6. Materials board with actual examples of all building materials.
  7. Colored computer graphic simulation and/or an architectural model.
- \* Sketches and simulations shall depict landscaping at no more than five years growth.
- \*\* Additional presentation items may be required based upon the size and complexity of the specific development proposal.



### Variances

1. Findings. The City Council may approve a variance from these Guidelines when, in its opinion, exceptional and undue hardship may result from strict compliance. In approving any variance, the City Council shall prescribe any conditions that it deems necessary to or desirable to the public interest. A variance shall only be approved when the City Council finds that each and every one of the following apply, unless one or more of the criteria are not applicable to the particular situation:
  - a. There are special circumstances or highly unique conditions affecting the property such that the strict application of the provisions of these Guidelines would deprive the applicant of a reasonable use of the land or buildings.
  - b. The granting of the variance will not be detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare or injurious to other property in the area in which property is situated.
  - c. The variance is to correct inequities resulting from an extreme physical hardship such as topography or to prevent removal of significant or desirable vegetation.
  - d. Hardships relating to economic difficulties shall not be considered for the purpose of granting a variance.
  - e. The hardship is not a result of an action by the owner, applicant or any agent.
  - f. The variance will not in any manner vary the process of the Design Guidelines or the area subject to Design Guidelines review.

2. Procedures.
  - a. Requests for variance shall be filed with the Office of the Zoning Administrator on an official application form at least 30 days in advance of the meeting at which it will be considered. Said application shall be accompanied by a fee as provided for by City Council resolution. The request shall be considered officially submitted and the application approval timeline commences only when all the information requirements of this section are complied with and the required fees are paid.
  - b. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 15.99, as may be amended, an application for a variance shall be approved or denied by the City Council within 60 days from the date of its official and complete submission unless notice of extension is provided by the City or a time waiver is granted by the applicant. The City may extend the review and decision-making period an additional 60 days to the extent allowed by State law.
  - c. The procedures for Planning Commission review and City Council consideration, as found in the Process for Filing and Review section of the Guidelines, shall be used for processing variances.
  - d. Approval of a variance request by the City Council shall be by four-fifths vote of the full City Council.



e. Whenever a variance has been considered and denied by the City Council, a similar application and proposal for the variance affecting the same property shall not be considered again by the Planning Commission or City Council for a least six months from the date of its denial, except as follows:

- 1) If the applicant or property owner can clearly demonstrate that the circumstances surrounding the previous variance application have changed significantly.
- 2) The City Council may reconsider such matter by a majority vote of the entire City Council.

#### Appeals

1. Board Designation. The City Council shall serve as the Board of Adjustments and Appeals.
2. Applicability. An appeal shall only be applicable to an administrative order, requirement or interpretation of intent of provisions of these Guidelines. Opinions and evaluations as they pertain to the impact or result of a request are not subject to the appeal procedure.
3. Filing. An appeal from the action of an administrative officer of the City shall be filed by any officer, department, board or commission of the City or a property owner or their agent with the Zoning Administrator within 30 business days after the making of the order, requirement, or interpretation being appealed.

4. Stay of Proceedings. An appeal stays all proceedings and the furtherance of the action being appealed unless it is certified to the Board of Adjustment and Appeals, after the notice of appeal is filed, that by reason of facts stated in the certificate a stay would cause imminent peril to life and property.
5. Procedure. The procedure for making an appeal shall be as follows:
  - a. An appeal shall be filed by any officer, department, board, or commission of the City or a property owner or their agent with the Zoning Administrator stating the specific grounds upon which the appeal is made. Said application shall be accompanied by a fee as established by City Council resolution. In cases where the application is judged to be incomplete, the Zoning Administrator shall notify the applicant, in writing, within 15 business days of the date of submission.
  - b. The Zoning Administrator shall instruct the appropriate staff persons to prepare technical reports when appropriate and shall provide general assistance in preparing a recommendation on the action to the Board of Adjustment and Appeals.
  - c. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 15.99, the Board of Adjustment and Appeals shall make its decision by resolution within sixty (60) days from the date on which a completed application is filed.
  - d. The Zoning Administrator shall serve a copy of the final order of the Board upon the applicant by mail.



sustainable guidelines

## sustainable development



*Sustainable site planning, improvement of indoor environmental qualities, conservation of energy and water and utilization of sustainable materials is vital to all [re]development .*

### **Objective**

*To function as a sustainable community where both public and private sectors seek to balance urban development and redevelopment with natural resource protection.*

The City of Oak Park Heights will incorporate sustainable green building and development practices into the design, construction, and operation of City facilities and projects. For private sector developments and redevelopment, the City shall encourage and promote the application of sustainable development practices. The following factors shall be considered in all development: site planning, water management, energy, material use and indoor environmental quality.

### **Site Planning**

Establishing sustainable design objectives and integrating building location and features that encourage development, preservation, or restoration practices that limit the environmental impacts of buildings on local ecosystems.

### **Indoor Environmental Quality**

Americans spend on average 90 percent of their time indoors. Indoor environmental quality can be addressed by product manufacturing and construction practices that prevent many of the health issues associated with buildings.

### **Energy**

Use of green building technologies address the energy and atmosphere issues in two primary ways: by reducing the amount of energy required and by using forms that are less damaging to the environment.

### **Material Use**

Building material choices are an important aspect of sustainable design because of the extensive method of extraction, processing, and transportation required for their use. Sustainable design promotes use of local, recycled and rapidly renewable materials.

### **Water Management**

Buildings and sites that use water efficiently reduce operation and maintenance costs and reduces consumer costs of municipal supply and treatment facilities.



architectural guidelines

## facade treatments



*Change in building materials and varying building setbacks provides a well defined building base, middle and top.*



*Small increments of differing facade treatments relate to the human scale.*

### **Objective**

*To add visual interest and variety, emphasize the pedestrian scale and avoid long, monotonous facades.*

### **Defined Base, Middle and Top**

Buildings should have a well-defined base, middle and top. The base or ground floor should appear visually distinct from the upper stories through the use of a change in building materials, window shape or size, an intermediate cornice line, an awning, arcade or portico or similar techniques. The base or ground floor of the building should include elements that relate to the human scale, including texture, projections, doors, windows, awnings, canopies or ornamentation.

### **Distinct Modules**

The primary façade(s) of buildings should be articulated into smaller increments of no more than 30 feet in width through the use of different textures, division into storefronts with separate display windows, ornamental features such as arcades or awnings, or by division of the building mass into several small segments.

### **Entries**

The main entry must always face the primary street, or access roadway at sidewalk grade.

### **Awnings**

Where awnings are used, canvas or fabric awnings are preferred. Awnings should closely complement the building's architectural character and aesthetics. Internally illuminated awnings are prohibited.

## ground level expression

### **Objective**

*To create visual interest, opportunities for sociability, and overall pedestrian safety and comfort.*

Ground level expression refers to the way in which a building meets the street. Methods should be used to distinguish the ground floor of a building from upper floors, such as creating an intermediate cornice line, using different building materials or detailing, and using awnings, trellises or arcades. Windows and clear entrances may also be used to enhance a building's appearance on the street, and may be further augmented by pocket parks, outdoor café seating and plantings adjacent to the front façade.



*Outdoor seating, windows, landscaping and architectural arcade at the front facade expresses ground level layering.*



*Interesting building footprints offer opportunities to create pockets of landscaping which provide pedestrian respite and visual interest. Differing architectural building materials and detailing presented in horizontal banding enhance the building's appearance from the street.*

## transparency - window & door openings



Large facade windows offer retail display space.



Recessed window openings create a horizontal rhythm while offering a significant level of transparency.

### **Objective**

*To enliven the streetscape and enhance security by providing views into and out of buildings with windows and door openings.*

### **Window and Door Design**

- Windows should be designed with recessed openings to create a strong rhythm of light and shadow.
- Mirrored glass or glass block should not be used on street-facing facades. Glazing in windows and doors should be clear or slightly tinted, allowing views into and out of the interior.
- Window shape, size and patterns should emphasize the intended organization of the façade and the definition of the building.
- Display windows of at least 3 feet deep may be used to meet these requirements, but no windows located above eye level.

### **Level of Transparency**

Where commercial or office uses are found on the ground floor, at least 20 percent of the ground floor primary (street-facing or access roadway) façade and 15 percent of each side or rear façade shall consist of window and door openings designed as specified above. Note that spandrel glass may be used on the up to half of the window and door surfaces on any building façade.

## entries

### **Objective**

*To establish the visual importance of the primary street entrance and to ensure that entries contribute to the visual attractiveness of the building and readily visible.*

Primary building entrances on all buildings should face the primary abutting public street, access roadway or walkway, or link to that street by clearly defined and visible walkway or courtyard. Additional secondary entrances may be oriented to a secondary street or parking area. In the case of a corner building or a building abutting more than one street, the street with the higher classification shall be considered primary.

The main entrance should be placed at sidewalk grade. Entries shall be designed with one or more of the following:

- Canopy, portico, overhang, arcade or arch above the entrance.
- Recesses or projections in the building façade surrounding the entrance.
- Peaked roof or raised parapet over the door.
- Display windows surrounding the entrance.
- Architectural detailing such as tile work or ornamental moldings.
- Permanent planters or window boxes for landscaping.



*Facade projects from building front, creating a prominent entry with overhang, planters and seating.*



*Signage, display windows, planters and landscaping clearly define primary building entrances.*

## roof design



Prominent rooflines and strong corner elements establish individuality.



Roofline changes with varying heights and cornices can add visual interest to a single development.

### **Objective**

*To add visual interest and variety and to minimize views of rooftop equipment from public streets and pedestrian ways.*

### **Roof Design**

A building's roofline can establish its individuality and interest within the context of commercial or industrial areas, and variety in rooflines from building to building can add visual interest to mixed-use and residential areas. Some suggested techniques that add interest include varying heights and cornices within an otherwise unified design scheme, using roofline changes to note entrances or commercial bays, and establishing rooflines at street corners.

### **Rooftop Equipment**

- All rooftop equipment shall be screened from view from across adjacent properties, adjacent streets and pedestrian views from adjacent sidewalks.
- If the building rooftop equipment is screened by the building's parapet, the parapet must meet building height limits.
- Rooftop equipment shall be set back from any primary façade that fronts a public street a distance equal to at least 1 ½ times its height. No enclosure shall be larger than 25 percent of the roof area.
- Screens shall be of durable, permanent materials (not including wood) that are compatible with the primary building materials in quality and color.

## building materials & colors



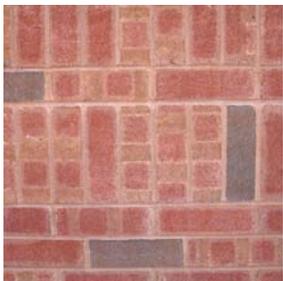
### **Objective**

*To ensure that high quality, durable and authentic building materials are used and that building colors are aesthetically pleasing and compatible with their surroundings.*

### **ALL DISTRICTS**

### **Building Colors**

Building colors should accent, blend with, or complement the surroundings. Principal building colors should generally consist of neutral, or muted colors with low reflectance. “Warm-toned” colors are encouraged because of their year-round appeal. No more than three principal colors should be used on a façade or individual storefront. Bright or primary colors are acceptable when determined through the design and review process to be appropriate for the site and building use.



## building materials & colors

### COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

#### Building Materials

All buildings should be constructed of high-quality materials:

- **The primary building materials** should cover at least 60 percent of the façade. The materials must be integrally colored and may consist of brick, natural stone, precast concrete units, architectural precast concrete panels or glass.
- **Secondary building materials** should cover no more than 30 percent of the façade and may consist of decorative block, fiber cement board, stucco or EFIS.
- **Accent materials** may be used on up to 10 percent of any of the building's facades. These materials may include door and window frames, lintels, cornices, architectural metalwork, glass block, copper flashing or similar materials.
- **Roof materials** that are acceptable include prefinished metal with a flat standing seam, untreated copper, slate and asphalt.

#### Prohibited Materials

- Unadorned, plain or painted concrete block.
- Unadorned, precast concrete panels.
- Aluminum, vinyl, fiberglass, asphalt or fiberboard (masonite) siding.
- Building color wraps or neon as a building accent.



*High quality primary, secondary and accent materials ensures building longevity.*

## building materials & colors

### INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

#### Building Materials

A variety of building materials should be used to provide visual interest. Wall materials capable of withstanding vandalism or accidental damage should be chosen. Pole buildings/post frame construction (agriculture buildings) and exposed metal finished buildings are not permitted.



*Large box industrial buildings can provide visual interest with interesting architectural elements and landscaping.*

## franchise architecture

### **Objective**

*To encourage building design that supports the city's design goals.*

Franchise establishments typically desire a specific architectural motif in order to emphasize consistency in their network and attract regular customers. In many cases, this standardized architecture conflicts with a unique regional architecture and character desired for the community. There are ways, however, of incorporating the franchise's desire signage and even some building treatments, while still encouraging the basic principles of commercial building design listed above. Franchises or national chains should follow these guidelines to create context-sensitive buildings that are sustainable and reusable.

Drive-through canopies and accessory structures, when required, shall be constructed of the same materials as the primary building, with the same level of architectural quality and detailing.



*Multi-tenant buildings offer unique opportunities for alternative franchise architecture and landscape.*



*National franchises need not appear homogenized and "typical."*



site design guidelines

## building placement / site planning



*Building orientation towards the primary street provides positive and inviting views of development*



*Building facades facing the roadway offer opportunities for landscaped frontage.*

### **Objective**

*To orient buildings toward the primary street to improve walkability and attractiveness to pedestrians.*

Buildings should have well defined front façade with entrances facing the street or access roadway. Larger buildings (30,000 square feet or more in size) may be oriented perpendicular to the street provided that at least one entrance facing the street is provided. Buildings may be set back a minimum of 85 feet from the sidewalk to allow for 2 rows of parking and drive aisles plus landscaped frontage. This setback may be increased in cases where topography or other physical or man-made conditions would prevent parking areas from being located to the rear of the building.

## parking areas / screening

### **Objective**

*To soften the appearance of parking areas and minimize the visual impact of the parking lots when viewed from adjacent properties, streets and sidewalks.*



*Parking lot interiors offer visual appeal and stormwater infiltration.*

Parking lot frontage on pedestrian streets should be minimized and their edges and interior should be extensively greened with a combination of hedges, ornamental railings, walls, bollards, tress, and other methods to screen parking from pedestrian areas. A landscaped buffer strip of at least 10 feet wide should be provided between the curb of parking areas and property lines.

Parking areas shall be screened with a combination of landscape materials, landform, and decorative fencing or walls sufficient to screen parked cars on a year-round basis while providing adequate visibility for pedestrians. Internal parking lot landscaping should be incorporated when possible. Within off-street parking facilities with 50 or more stalls, landscape islands, peninsulas or rain gardens (bioinfiltration islands) should be provided at a rate of 180 square feet per 125 surface stalls or fraction thereof. Landscape islands shall be irrigated unless alternative stormwater management techniques are employed.



*Parking is screened from the pedestrian by landscaped materials.*

The islands or peninsulas must be contained within raised, curbed beds consistent with other applicable parking lot construction required by city ordinance. Depressed bioinfiltration islands shall be permissible provided a ribbon-style curb or other approved edging is installed, traffic control measures are taken, trash management plans are in place and some vertical aspects like trees or tall planting – are provided to give the bioinfiltration island more visual appeal and break up the sight lines of the parking lot.

Strategies for shared parking between adjacent uses are encouraged, including taking advantage of peak and off-peak business hours, nighttime activities, special events and other needs.

## pedestrian & common space



*Common spaces should be visible and accessible to pedestrians.*



*Pedestrians linger with opportunities for respite such as landscaped seating areas and walkways.*

### **Objective**

*To ensure that pedestrians and bicyclists have safe and convenient access to all business establishments and to enhance community interactions through the provision of usable common space.*

### **Pedestrian Areas**

The coordination of public and private pedestrian treatments is required. Sidewalks may be required along all street frontages, in accordance with the Comprehensive Park and Trail System Plan. A well-defined pedestrian path shall be provided from the sidewalk to each principal pedestrian entrance of a building. Walkways shall be located so that the distance between the street and entrance is minimized. Walkways shall be at least 5 feet in width, and shall be distinguished through pavement material from the surrounding parking lot. Walkways shall be landscaped with trees, shrubs, flower beds, and/or planter pots. Sidewalk of at least 5 feet in width shall be provided along all building facades that abut parking areas.

Green space is especially encouraged at the corners of main intersections in the city. These areas should be intensely landscaped to hold the corner and enhance the pedestrian environment and visual appearance from the street.

### **Common Space**

The creation of common space is recommended, including plazas, courtyards, and landscaped seating areas. Elements within common spaces might include sculptures, built-in benches, pedestrian-scale lighting, public art, and colorful paving. Common spaces should be visible and easily accessible, provided with adequate light, and sheltered from adverse wind.

## landscaping, trees & site improvements



*Building entrances and separation of uses are emphasized through site furnishings and landscape improvements.*

### **Objective**

*To ensure private landscaping and site improvements enhance the visual appearance of the community, complement existing and planned public improvements, and aid in managing stormwater runoff volume.*

### **All Site Improvements**

Landscape improvements and site furnishings, including lighting, seating, planters, trees or shrubs, trash receptacles, and similar elements, shall be defined and utilized throughout the city.

### Building Entrance Plantings

Deciduous and or ornamental trees are required near the front and entrance of buildings. Deciduous trees shall be planted a minimum of 20 feet and ornamental trees a minimum of 15 feet from the building.

Pedestrian scale shrub planter areas within the front walk are encouraged.

### Shade Trees Within Public Right of Way

Shade trees shall be planted within a landscape boulevard spaced as specified in Chapter 13 of the City Code.

### Tree Preservation

Applicants shall exert their best effort to avoid damage to or the destruction of significant trees when designed, locating, grading for and building improvements. Specific tree preservation policies are found in Chapter 13 of the City Code.

## preferred / prohibited trees & shrubs



Overstory trees, shrubs and ground cover separate vehicle parking from the sidewalk and roadway.



Linear swaths of shrub plantings soften the building ground plane, while offering visibility to retail development.

### Objective

To ensure trees planted in Oak Park Heights thrive and contribute to an attractive landscaping system through out the city.

### Plant Material Variety

A mixture of plant material types is encouraged. Desirable species are (but not limited to):

#### Deciduous Trees

Red Maple – *Acer rubrum* and cultivars  
 Sugar Maple – *Acer saccharum*  
 River Birch – *Betula nigra*  
 Hackberry – *Celtis occidentalis*  
 Ginkgo – *Ginkgo biloba*  
 Honeylocust – *Gleditsia triacanthos* and cultivars  
 Kentucky Coffeetree – *Gymnocladus dioica*  
 Swamp White Oak – *Quercus bicolor*  
 Pin Oak – *Quercus ellipsoidalis* (Norther Pin Oak)  
 Bur Oak – *Quercus macrocarpa*  
 Northern Red Oak – *Quercus rubra*  
 Linden – *Tilia* spp. and cultivars  
 Disease Resistant Elm cultivars

#### Ornamental Trees (sterile or varieties with persistent fruit)

Thornless Cockspur Hawthorn – *Crataegus crus-galli* var. *inermis*  
 Flowering Crabapples – *Malus* spp. and cultivars (disease resistant cultivars, especially to fungal disease and apple scabs)  
 Mountain Ash – *Sorbus* spp. and cultivars  
 Japanese Tree Lilac – *Syringa reticulata*

#### Coniferous Trees

Black Hills Spruce – *Picea glauca densata*  
 Norway Spruce – *Picea abies*  
 Austrian Pine – *Pinus nigra*  
 Red Pine – *Pinus resinosa*  
 White Pine – *Pinus strobus*

#### Deciduous Shrubs

Chokeberry - *Aronia* spp.  
 Dogwood - *Cornus* spp.  
 Cotoneaster - *Cotoneaster* spp.  
 Euonymus - *Euonymus* spp.  
 Forsythia - *Forsythia* spp.  
 Dwarf Honeysuckle – *Lonicera* spp. and cultivars  
 Ninebark - *Physocarpus* spp.

#### Deciduous Shrubs (continued)

Fragrant Sumac – *Rhus aromatica*  
 Current - *Ribes* spp.  
 Dwarf Willow - *Salix* spp. and cultivars  
 Lilac - *Syringa* spp.  
 Viburnum - *Viburnum* spp.

#### Coniferous Shrubs

Juniper - *Juniper* spp.  
 Dwarf Mugho Pine – *Pinus mugo pumilio*  
 Arborvitae - *Thuja* spp.  
 Yew – *Taxus* spp.

#### Prohibited Trees & Shrubs

Amur Maple – *Acer ginnala*  
 Boxelder – *Acer negundo*  
 Norway Maple – *Acer platanoides*  
 Silver Maple – *Acer saccharinum*  
 Japanese barberry – *Berberis thunbergii*  
 Siberian peashrub – *Caragana arborescens*  
 Russian Olive – *Elaeagnus angustifolia*  
 Ash - *Fraxinus* spp. (All species and varieties)  
 Female Ginkgo – *Ginkgo biloba*  
 Black Walnut – *Juglans nigra* (Unless given adequate space)  
 Exotic Honeysuckles – *Lonicera tartarica*, *L. morrowii*, *L. x bella*  
 Red Mulberry – *Morus rubra*  
 Eastern Cottonwood – *Populus deltoides* (Except for cottonless cultivars)  
 American Elm – *Ulmus americana* (Except for disease resistant varieties)  
 Siberian Elm – *Ulmus pumila*  
 Common Buckthorn – *Rhamnus cathartica*  
 Black Locust – *Robinia pseudoacacia*  
 Willow – *Salix* spp. (Except dwarf varieties)

## location & screening of utilities, service, loading, drive-through & storage areas

### **Objective**

*To screen views from and minimize noise impacts on surrounding streets and properties.*

### **Utilities**

All utilities in commercial and industrial developments shall be placed underground.

### **Screening**

Any outdoor storage, service, drive-through or loading areas shall be screening as provided in the Zoning Ordinance and located in the side or rear of the principle building.

Loading Docks, drive-throughs, truck parking, HVAC equipment, transformers, trash collection, and other service functions shall be incorporated into the design of the building or screened with walls of design and materials similar to the principle building. Landscape material shall also be incorporated to create a screen. This screening will help ensure that the visual and noise impacts of these functions are fully contained.



*Coordinated storage areas disguise utilitarian accessory uses.*



*High quality trash enclosures emphasize architectural level of detail that is intended.*



*HVAC screening blends seamlessly with building architecture.*

## Lighting

### Objective

To ensure quality lighting design through glare reduction, cut off fixtures, and the use of pedestrian-scale lighting fixtures, while maintaining adequate light levels for safety.

### Fixtures

Exterior light fixtures shall be selected to minimize glare, cut off in design and comply with the lighting provisions found in the Zoning Ordinance.

The style of lighting fixtures should be compatible with the architecture of nearby buildings. Pedestrian scaled lighting, not exceeding 15 feet in height, should be located adjacent to walkways and entrances to buildings.

Parking lot illumination should consist of a combination of commercial grade parking lot and pedestrian style fixtures. Pedestrian fixtures should be used for lighting internal parking lot walkways. Parking lot fixtures should be employed to illuminate parking bays and drive aisles.



Full cut off wall and street fixtures reduce glare while maintaining an adequate light level for safety.

## signage



### **Objective**

*To encourage signs that are architecturally compatible with the style, composition, materials, colors and details of the building, and with other signs on nearby buildings. Signs should be an integral part of the building and site design.*

### **All Signs**

All signs shall comply with the sign provisions found in the Zoning Ordinance.

### **Wall and Projecting Signs**

Signs should be positioned so they are an integral design feature of the building and to complement and enhance the building's architectural features. Signs should not obscure or cover architectural details such as stone arches, glass transom panels, or decorative brickwork. Signs may be placed:

- In the horizontal lintel above the storefront windows
- Within window glass
- Projecting from the building
- As part of an awning



### **Shape**

Wall signs should generally match the architecture of the building. In most cases, the edges of signs shall include a raised border that sets the sign apart from the building. Individual raised letters set onto the sign area surface are also preferred. Projecting signs may be designed in a variety of shapes.



Acceptable signage occurs in a variety of shapes and sizes.

## signage (continued)



*A coordinated sign plan offers continuity.*



*Landscaped monument signs offer advertising space while providing a human scale to the development.*

### Colors

Sign colors shall be compatible with the building façade to which the sign is attached. No more than three colors should be used per sign, unless part of an illustration. To ensure the legibility of the sign, a high degree of contrast between the background and letters is preferred. A combination of soft/neutral shades and dark/rich shades (see Building Colors standard) are encouraged.

### Materials

Signs materials should be consistent or compatible with the original construction materials and architectural style of the building façade on which they are to be displayed. Natural materials such as wood and metal are more appropriate than plastic. Neon signs may be appropriate for windows.

### Illumination

External illumination of signs is permitted if directed at the sign. Light shall not shine directly onto the ground or adjacent buildings. Internal illumination is allowed if only the text and/or large portions of the message are lit.

### Free-Standing Signs

Ground or monument signs are encouraged rather than pylon signs. Sign materials, colors, and architectural detailing should be similar to those of the principal building. The area around the base of the sign should be landscaped.

## pedestrian/bicycle routes



### **Objective**

*To provide appropriate and convenient access for all people to commercial and industrial areas of the community.*

### **Pedestrian and Bike Access**

Convenient access to the site for pedestrians and bicycles shall be included, i.e. walkways, signage, ramps, and bike racks.

Sidewalks shall be included on both sides of a major entrance to a commercial use. Sidewalks shall continue in the development to connect with the primary entrances to the building. The development plan shall be reviewed to assure safety of pedestrians and bicyclists through the use of sidewalks and walkways.

Bike racks in commercial developments should be provided in a visible and preferably, sheltered location.



### **Comprehensive Park & Trail Plan**

The commercial and industrial sites shall include trail segments and connections in coordination with the City's Comprehensive Park & Trail System Plan.



*Incorporating pedestrian / bicycle walkways, signage, ramps and bike racks provides convenient access for all people.*

## stormwater treatments



Photograph: [www.urbanwaterquality.org](http://www.urbanwaterquality.org)



Bioinfiltration systems minimize total impervious surface, minimize direct connection between impervious surfaces and capture and treat rainstorm

### **Objective**

*To promote stormwater systems designed as amenities that serve as attractive enhancements for the community, while achieving the city's water quality standards.*

### **Stormwater Management**

Innovative stormwater management strategies are strongly encouraged. Several innovative technologies are available to improve stormwater quality, while offering benefits such as lowering peak flow velocity and volume, lessening possibilities of erosion, filtering pollutants, silt, phosphorous and nitrogen, and reusing water for irrigating parks and gardens rather than installing expensive systems. Stormwater treatment strategies should also serve other purposes such as creating community amenities that enhance common spaces, supporting biodiversity, and reducing the capital costs for municipal infrastructure. All stormwater strategies employed in the city must meet the water quality standards of the Oak Park Heights Surface Water Management Plan.

When designing a stormwater system for properties in Oak Park Heights, the following site planning principals should be considered:

### **Minimize Total Impervious Surface**

Impervious areas prevent infiltration of rainfall and act as pollutant collectors between storms, while vegetated surfaces tend to treat or uptake pollutants. Total impervious surface should be reduced by located parking areas beneath buildings, minimizing building footprints by adding stories, and by using porous paving materials rather than traditional asphalt and concrete for parking lots, roads, sidewalks, and driveways.

### **Minimize Direct Connection between Impervious Surfaces**

Connected impervious surfaces result in rapid stormwater flows. Driveways, sidewalks, and streets may be sloped so that runoff drains first to lawns or vegetated swales.

### **Plant More Vegetation**

Trees and shrubs can capture as much as 35 percent of the annual rainfall through absorption or evaporation. Roots provide a path for increased water infiltration as well.



glossary

*The following terms are descriptive only and are set out for the convenience of the user. This glossary is not intended to replace the meaning given to the same terms in other City ordinances.*

<b>Access</b>	A way or means of approach to provide physical entrance to a property.
<b>Aesthetic</b>	The perception of artistic elements, or elements in the natural or man-made environment which are pleasing to the eye.
<b>Aisle</b>	The traveled way by which cars enter and depart parking spaces.
<b>Architectural Control</b>	Public regulation of the design of private buildings to develop, preserve or enhance the attractiveness or character of a particular area or individual buildings.
<b>Awning</b>	A roof-like cover that is temporary in nature and that projects from the wall of a building for the purpose of shielding a doorway or window from the elements.
<b>Base of Façade</b>	The most public part of the building, featuring a larger glass area and often emphasizing its horizontal dimension.
<b>Bay</b>	The modular width of an architectural unit.
<b>Berm</b>	A mound of earth, or the act of pushing earth into a mound.
<b>Building Façade</b>	The portion of any exterior elevation of a building extending from grade to the top of the parapet wall or eaves and the entire width of the building elevation.
<b>Building Height</b>	The distance to be measured from the mean ground level to the top of a flat roof, to the mean distance of the highest gable on a pitched or hip roof, to the deck line of a mansard roof, to the uppermost point on all other roof types.
<b>Building Line</b>	A line parallel to a lot line on the ordinary high water level at the required setback beyond which a structure may not extend.
<b>Bus Shelter</b>	A small, roofed structure having from one to three walls, located near a street, and designed primarily for the protection and convenience of bus passengers.
<b>Courtyard Organization</b>	Grouping of buildings to help define usable outdoor space.

<b>Cut-Off Type Luminaire</b>	A luminaire with elements such as shields, reflectors, or refractor panels which direct and cut-off the light at a cut-off angle less than 90 degrees.
<b>Easement, Drainage</b>	A grant by a property owner for the use of a strip of land and for the purpose of constructing and maintaining streets, trails, sidewalks, drives, and/or utilities, including, but not limited to, wetlands, ponding areas, sanitary sewers, water mains, electric lines, telephone lines, storm sewer or storm drainage ways, and gas lines.
<b>Façade</b>	The main exterior face of a building exposed to public view or that wall viewed by persons not within the building.
<b>Fenestration</b>	The design and placement of windows in a building.
<b>Footcandle</b>	A unit of illumination produced on a surface, all points of which are one (1) foot from a uniform point source of one (1) candle.
<b>Frontage</b>	That boundary of a lot which abuts an existing or dedicated public street, watercourse or similar barrier.
<b>Glare</b>	The effect produced by brightness sufficient to cause annoyance, discomfort, or loss in visual performance and visibility.
<b>Green Area</b>	Land shown on a development plan, master plan or official map for preservation, recreation, landscaping or park.
<b>Human Scale</b>	Human scale suggests designing with the pedestrian in mind rather than the automobile. Human scale is derived from a building's architectural details and elements whose size people are familiar with.
<b>Impervious Surface Coverage</b>	Any structure or surface which interferes to any degree with the direct absorption of water into the ground, including but not limited to, roofs, sidewalks, paved driveways and parking areas, patios, tennis courts, swimming pools, or any other similar surface.
<b>Island</b>	In parking lot design, built-up structures, usually curbed, placed at the end of parking rows as a guide to traffic and also used for landscaping, signing or lighting.
<b>Lot Coverage</b>	That portion of the lot that is covered by buildings and structures.
<b>Median Island</b>	A barrier placed between lanes of traffic.
<b>Modulation</b>	Modulation is the relationship of bays and building widths to building height. A module.

<b>Off-Street Parking Space</b>	A temporary storage area for a motor vehicle that is directly accessible to an access aisle, and which is not located on a dedicated street right-of-way.
<b>On-Street Parking Space</b>	A temporary storage area for a motor vehicle which is located on a dedicated street right-of-way.
<b>Opacity</b>	Degree of obscuration of light.
<b>Open Space, Common</b>	Land within or related to a development, not individually owned or dedicated for public use, which is designed and intended for the common use or enjoyment of the residents of the development and may include such complementary structures and improvements as are necessary and appropriate.
<b>Open Space, Green</b>	An open space area not occupied by any structures or impervious surfaces.
<b>Open Space, Public</b>	Open space owned by a public agency and maintained by it for the use and enjoyment of the general public.
<b>Open Space Ratio</b>	Total area of open space divided by the total site area in which the open space is located.
<b>Park</b>	A tract of land, designated and used by the public for active and passive recreation.
<b>Parking Access</b>	The area of a parking lot that allows motor vehicles ingress and egress from the street.
<b>Parking Area</b>	Any public or private land area designed and used for parking motor vehicles including parking lots, garages, private driveways and legally designated areas of public streets.
<b>Parking Bay</b>	The parking module consisting of one or two rows of parking spaces and the aisle from which motor vehicles enter and leave the spaces.
<b>Pavement</b>	(1) Brick, stone, concrete or asphalt placed on the surface of the land; (2) That part of a street having an improved surface.
<b>Perimeter Landscaped Open Space</b>	A landscaped area intended to enhance the appearance of parking lots and other outdoor auto related uses or to screen incompatible uses from each other along their boundaries.
<b>Plaza</b>	An open space which may be improved and landscaped; usually surrounded by streets and buildings.
<b>Polygon</b>	A closed plane figure with four or more sides.
<b>Porch</b>	A covered entrance to a building, usually with a separate roof.

<b>Public Areas</b>	Public parks, playgrounds, trails, paths and other recreational areas and other public open spaces; scenic and historic sites; schools and other public buildings and structures.
<b>Right-of-way</b>	(1) A strip of land acquired by reservation, dedication, forced dedication, prescription or condemnation and intended to be occupied or occupied by a road, crosswalk, railroad, electric transmission lines, oil or gas pipeline, water line, sanitary storm sewer and other similar uses; (2) Generally, the right of one to pass over the property of another.
<b>Roof</b>	The outside top covering of a building.
<b>Screening</b>	A method of visually shielding or obscuring one abutting or nearby structure or use from another structure or use, outdoor storage areas, mechanical or electrical equipment, and trash receptacles by fencing, walls, berms or densely planted vegetation.
<b>Setback</b>	The minimum horizontal distance between a structure and lot line, ordinary high water mark, or right-of-way easement. Distances are to be measured from the most outwardly extended portion of the structure at ground level, except as provided hereinafter.
<b>Shaft</b>	One or more floors above the shop front, usually used for less public kinds of activities, featuring less window area than the ground floor and emphasizing its vertical dimension.
<b>Sidewalk</b>	A paved, surfaced or leveled area, paralleling and usually separated from the street, used as a pedestrian walkway.
<b>Sight Triangle</b>	A triangular shaped portion of land established at street intersections in which nothing is erected, placed, planted or allowed to grow in such a manner as to limit or obstruct the sight distance of motorists entering or leaving the intersection.
<b>Sign Area</b>	That area with the marginal lines of the surface which bears the advertisement or, in the case of messages, figures or symbols attached directly to the part of a building, that area which is included in the smallest rectangle or series of geometric figures which can be made to circumscribe the message, figure or symbol displayed thereon.
<b>Sign - Area Identification</b>	A freestanding sign which identifies the name of an office or business structure containing three (3) or more structures or an office or business structure containing three (3) or more independent operations.
<b>Sign - Awning Canopy or Marquee Sign</b>	A written or graphic message, identification or advertisement, as part of or permanently or semi-permanently affixed to an awning, canopy, marquee, or other similar device. Where lighting is incorporated with the awning, canopy or marquee, the apparatus shall not be construed as a sign exclusive of the area physically designed to form the message, identification, or advertisement thereto.

<b>Sign – Flashing</b>	An illuminated sign upon which the artificial light is not kept constant in terms of intensity or color when the sign is illuminated.
<b>Sign – Freestanding</b>	A self-supported sign not affixed to another structure.
<b>Sign - Holiday Signs</b>	A holiday sign shall be defined as decorations and/or messages which recognize an official national, state or local holiday or community festival.
<b>Sign – Illuminated</b>	Any sign which is lighted by an artificial light source either directed upon it or illuminated from an interior source.
<b>Sign - Maximum Height Of</b>	The vertical distance measured from the grade to the top of such a sign.
<b>Sign - Minimum Height Of</b>	The vertical distance measured from the nearest finished grade to the lower limit of such sign.
<b>Sign – Monument</b>	A block-type sign structure not supported by poles or braces, but rather placed directly on the ground.
<b>Sign – Portable</b>	A sign so designed as to be movable from one location to another and which is not permanently attached to the ground, sales display device, or structure.
<b>Sign – Projecting</b>	A sign, other than a wall sign, which is affixed to a building and which extends perpendicular from the building wall.
<b>Sign – Pylon</b>	A freestanding sign mounted on top of a single post which is greater than ten (10) feet in height.
<b>Sign – Roof</b>	Any sign which is erected, constructed or attached wholly or in part upon or over the roof of a building.
<b>Sign - Sandwich Board</b>	Two boards with messages, hinged at the top and used on sidewalks or yards for advertising.
<b>Sign – Snipe</b>	Signs affixed to trees, light or public sign poles.
<b>Sign – Temporary</b>	Any sign which is erected or displayed for a specific period of time.
<b>Sign – Wall</b>	A sign which is affixed to the exterior wall or a building and which is parallel to the building wall. A wall sign does not project more than twelve (12) inches from the surface to which it is attached, nor extended beyond the top of the parapet wall.
<b>Sign - Wall Graphic</b>	A sign which is painted directly on an exterior wall.

<b>Sign – Window</b>	A sign affixed to or inside of a window in view of the general public. This does not include merchandise on display.
<b>Storefront Building</b>	A commercial building located at the street line, with display windows and principal entry on the ground floor facing the sidewalk. Storefront buildings typically include traditional elements such as a sign band above the storefront, a transom, a recessed entry, and a kickplate as a base to the storefront.
<b>Street Furniture</b>	Man-made, above-ground items that are usually found in street rights-of-way, including benches, kiosks, plants, canopies, shelters and phone booths.
<b>Traditional Building</b>	Typically, a one or two story storefront building, as defined above. Other buildings may be considered traditional for the purpose of these guidelines based on their age, architectural character, or associations with persons or events important to the City's history.
<b>Transparent-Opaque</b>	Addresses how easy it is for pedestrian passersby to see the activity within a shop. Transparent shops serve better to attract people into the shop, while opaque storefront represent a break in the retail continuity.
<b>Undulation</b>	Variation in the height and/or roof lines of a series of adjacent buildings, as well as variation in the horizontal relationship of adjacent building facades.
<b>Usable Open Space</b>	A required ground area or terrace area on a lot which is graded, developed, landscaped and/or equipped, and which is intended and maintained for either active or passive recreation or both, available and accessible to and usable by all persons occupying a dwelling on the lot or a development project and their guests. Such areas shall be grassed and landscaped or covered only for recreational purposes. Roofs, driveways, and parking areas shall not constitute usable open space. Required front and side yards shall be excluded from the usable open space area calculation.
<b>Window Head</b>	The upper horizontal cross member or decorative element of a window frame. The heads of windows are formed in a variety of ways; some are semi-circle, arches or triangular shapes. Some have bold and rich decorative moldings.