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Design Guidelines

Design guidelines enhance the visual image of commercial and industrial development in Woonsocket, create a positive business environment, help expedite project review, and reflect positively on existing and potential development. Guidelines incorporate best practices in architecture, civil engineering, and landscape architecture and encourage low impact design and energy efficiency. As guidelines, they are not strict regulatory standards, recognizing that unique sites or uses may not be appropriate for all. The overall objective is to ensure that the intent and spirit of the design guidelines are followed.

Design guidelines are prepared for adoption by the Planning Board within the Design Review Overlay District in accordance with Section 12.1. Design Review Overlay District of the City of Woonsocket, Rhode Island Code of Ordinance Appendix C – Zoning. “All nonresidential buildings, structures, improvements and facilities within zoning districts C-1, C-2, MU-1 and MU-2 shall be regulated by both the requirements of the district in which they are located and the requirements of this overlay district.” Guidelines proposed herein focus on C-2 Major Commercial District, MU-2 Mixed Use Industrial/Commercial District, and I-1 Light Industrial District zones. [Note: it is understood that the zoning ordinance will be amended so that design guidelines apply to I-1 zones as well and that design guidelines for the C-1 zone are being prepared separately.]

Architectural Design

Exterior architectural appearance should support the success of the business, reflect positively on adjacent land uses (especially less intensive land uses such as residential use), provide a pleasing view for passing motorists and pedestrians, and create a positive image for economic development in Woonsocket.

Building Orientation

Although development of the site may be constrained by available frontage, slopes, and wetlands, building orientation is generally best when it faces the street or is sited for maximum solar gain.

For large format buildings (greater than 25,000 sf) with the primary entrance and parking on the side, location of a shorter building wall along the road frontage may visually minimize the bulk of the structure. The building façade facing the street should include windows and other architectural detail to

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avoid a “blank wall” (see Figure 1). This is especially important when parking lots and entrances are located on the side of the building and the primary view of the building is the street-facing façade.



Figure 1: Corner building (on left) with entrance and parking on right and street-facing facade on the left includes similar design elements and active windows to create an inviting image from the road. On the right, the blank façade facing the street lacks architectural detail or visual interest.¹

Building Orientation Checklist

- Large format buildings oriented with narrow façade of building facing street
- Store windows and other interesting design features are included on narrow façade of large format building facing street

Building Massing

The perceived size of the building, especially for large format development, may be visually reduced through the use of pitched roofs, dormers, and gables (see Figure 2). Changes in roof line help reduce the perceived size of the building and are more visually appealing than flat roofed structures (see Figure 3). Pitched roofs (vs. flat roofs) may be compatible with existing building patterns in the area, especially in adjacent residential areas.



Figure 2: Varied roof lines and heights and a covered walkway with pedestrian scale ornamental lighting create a welcoming retail environment on the left. Varied façade treatments, column/articulation, and parapets provide

¹ All photos by P. Sherrill unless otherwise indicated

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visually appealing structure for large format development on the right. Photo on left:
<http://www.crossingat-smithfield.com/>



Figure 3: Peaked roof reduces the building mass on the left while the flat roof on the structure to the right not only makes a building look more expansive but does look as visually interesting.

Building Massing Checklist

- Pitched gables or dormers (no visible flat roof) are used

Façade Treatments

Varying the façade line for large format commercial structures and hotel/motels helps reduce the visual bulk of the building and is more appealing than a large building with a flat façade (see Figures 1, 2, 3 left and 4 left). New development should vary the building footprint so that there are pronounced changes in wall planes through use of bump-outs, columns, parapets and other façade articulation. Straight walls longer than 75 feet should be avoided.

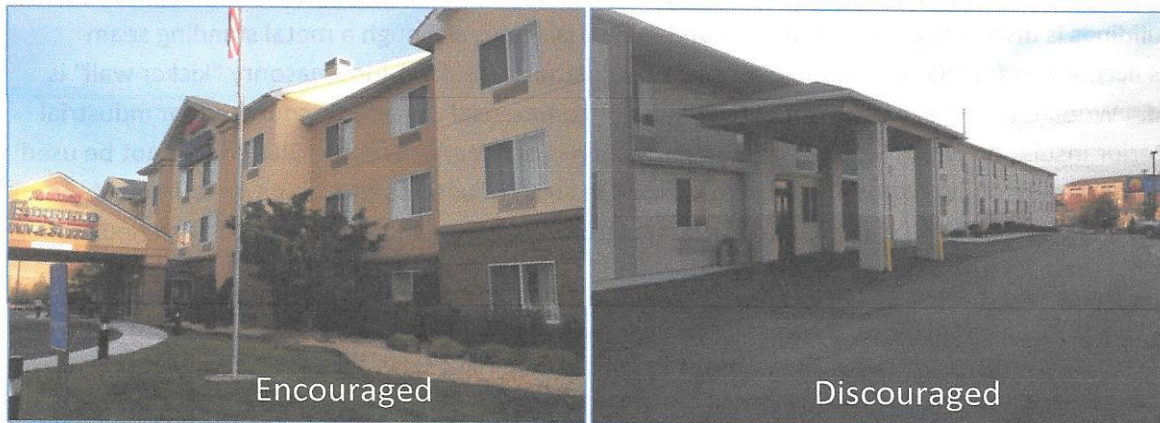


Figure 4: Varied facade lines, use of color, varied roof lines and landscaping create a visually appealing hotel on the left while the adjacent pre-fabricated hotel lacks curb appeal and does not reflect positively on the community.

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Pedestrian scale elements such as arcades, patios, plazas, sidewalks and other human scale elements can be used to contribute toward a welcoming exterior for customers and employees (see Figures 2 left and 3 left). Public entrances should be easily identified and made distinct from the remainder of the building through architectural form, use of canopies, porticoes, significant detailing or landscaping.

Variations in color can be used to break up the visual image of the structure (see Figures 2 right and 4 left). No more than two dominant colors with one accent color should be used. Façade color should be of low reflectance. The use of high intensity, black or florescent colors is discouraged. Bright corporate colors should be limited to signage.

Parapets, overhangs and other design elements should be considered with use of standing metal seam roofing material on peaked roofs to protect pedestrians, vehicles, and the building itself from sliding snow and ice. Internal gutters should be considered to reduce damage from ice dams and avoid sheet flow along pavement.

Façade Treatment Checklist

- Varied façade line is used (not straight)
- Pedestrian-scale elements such as arcades, patios, canopies and porticoes are incorporated
- Façade color treatment includes no more than two dominant and one accent color
- Parapets and overhangs are used to protect snow from sliding off pitched roofs
- Internal gutters are used

Building Materials

Materials should be selected not only for durability and low maintenance but also for visual appeal. Use of masonry materials including brick and masonry block (CMU) are encouraged for commercial (including hotel/motel construction) or industrial use. Masonry block should be either scored or accent block. Fieldstone details add local interest for commercial applications (see Figures 1, 2 left, and 5).

High-end architectural metal panels are suitable for use on four sides including the front façade. Use of metal buildings is discouraged in commercial and industrial zones although a metal standing seam façade is acceptable for the rear/loading area in an industrial zone if a 4-foot masonry “kicker wall” is provided. Wood building exteriors are encouraged for commercial use and discouraged for industrial use. Exterior Insulation Finish Systems (EIFS) such as Dryvit or Synergy or other EIFS should not be used as the basic building siding material but could be used in small quantities as accents or soffits under roof overhangs or as the ceiling of canopies and only if such EIFS are at least 6 feet above the finished grade.

Façade treatment on the entrance side should be utilized on all four sides of the building when abutting a residential or less-intensive use, when the rear or delivery/loading dock may be viewed from adjacent parcels, interior access roads, or public roads, or when customer access is anticipated to rear and sides. If these criteria are not met, façade treatment on three sides may be sufficient.

Use of renewable energy including rooftop solar is encouraged with appropriate screening. Energy efficient design that incorporates LEED (usgbc.org/leed), Advanced Building Energy Codes (aceee.org), Advanced Energy Design Guides (ashrae.org), or similar metrics or building codes is encouraged.

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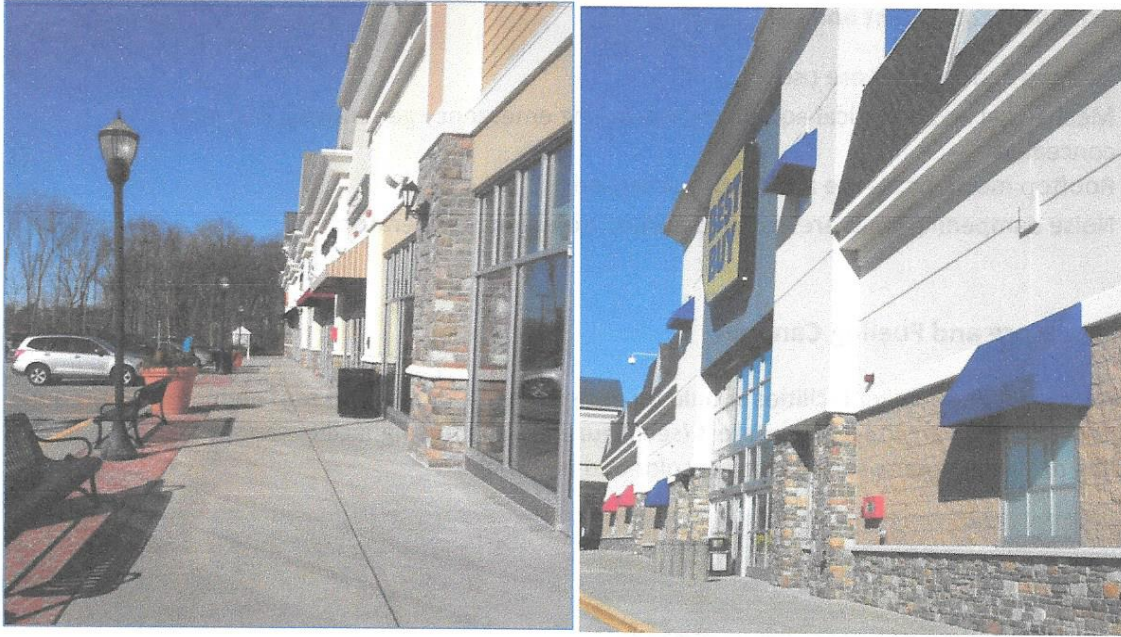


Figure 5: Various facade materials including stone, clapboards, textured masonry finishes and awnings enhance retail appeal. Benches, ornamental lighting and trash receptacles, textured pavement along the curb, and landscape planters improve the streetscape in front of small shops on left. False windows with awnings break up the expanse of large format store front but could be better animated with actual displays.

Building Materials Checklist

- Brick, scored CMU, or fieldstone are used for commercial or industrial development
- High end architectural metal panels are used on four sides in commercial or industrial zones
- Metal buildings are not used for either commercial or industrial applications
- A metal standing seam rear façade includes a 4-foot masonry “kicker wall” in an industrial zone
- Wood exteriors are utilized for commercial, not industrial use
- EIFS is limited to use as accents
- Façade treatment is used on all four sides of the building when abutting a residential or less-intensive use
- Energy efficient design is utilized
- Solar roof or other renewable energy source is used and appropriately screened

Mechanical Equipment and Utilities

Underground utilities should be used to eliminate overhead wires and wooden poles, and improve safety. Mechanical equipment, utility cabinets, dumpsters, and similar facilities should be screened with landscaping or attractive architectural features and integrated into the site design. Rooftop mechanical equipment should be adequately screened or concealed from view from adjacent property, parking lots and the road. Emergency generators should be placed to the rear or side of building and screened with vegetation or fencing. Noise dampening walls should be installed around generators to reduce noise impact on less intensive land uses such as residential areas.

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Mechanical Equipment and Utilities Checklist

- Underground utilities are used
- Mechanical and electrical equipment (including emergency generators) is screened or concealed
- Rooftop mechanicals are adequately screened
- Noise dampening walls are installed around emergency generators

Convenience Store and Fueling Canopy

Convenience stores with fueling facilities should be designed with façade and roof elements that reduce perceived scale and add architectural interest (see Figure 6). The fueling facility canopy should repeat main building design elements such as forms, color and material.

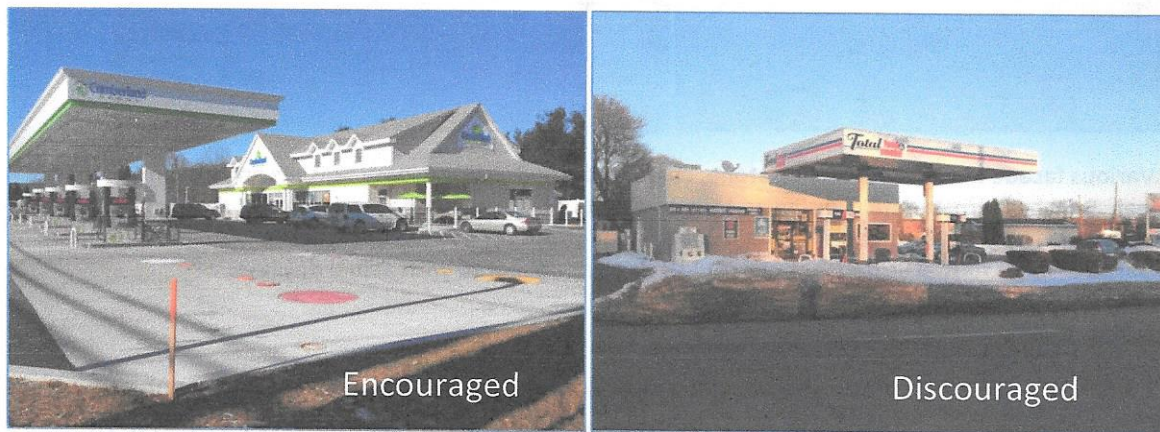


Figure 6: Similar architectural elements and colors create a unified image for the fueling canopy and the convenience store on the left. Fueling canopy on the right does not provide a unified image with the building.

Convenience Store and Fueling Canopy Checklist

- Peaked roof and other architectural treatments are used to reduce scale of building
- Design elements on canopy reflect design of building

Site Plan

Curb appeal, customer safety and environmental regulations have become increasingly important in site plan layout. Although site constraints such as parcel configuration, frontage length, slope and wetlands have historically dominated layout, regulatory requirements under the RIDOT Physical Alteration Permit curbed cut approval, Americans with Disability Act requirements for handicapped accessibility, and RIDEM regulatory requirements for on-site stormwater management now are critical considerations in site plan development.

Access Management and Pedestrian Safety

No more than two curb cuts should be provided from the public street. The provision of full access with right turn and left turn movements should be provided at one intersection, with a signalized intersection if signal warrants are met. Curb cuts should be adequately spaced and at a sufficient distance to other intersections to assure that adequate site distance and acceleration lanes are available (RIDOT Physical Alteration Permit requirements and traffic impact studies provide guidance). The use of internal roundabouts should be considered to safely direct vehicular and truck/delivery traffic. Traffic circulation should be defined by curbing and landscaping and not striping on asphalt. RIPTA bus service either to the building front for supermarkets and other similar retail or along the road should be considered as a convenience to employees and customers to reduce traffic volumes.

Pedestrian initiatives should be considered to improve safety for both customers and employees. Sidewalks should be constructed or maintained along the public right of way when frontage exceeds 100 feet (currently this is at the discretion of the Planning Board in commercial and industrial zones). Entrance and exit lanes should not exceed 20 feet in width (or two lanes) in each direction to reduce crosswalk lengths. Crosswalks should be provided across all exit and entrance roadways. When the intersection is signalized, a pedestrian phase should be included.

Internal pedestrian paths should be provided from the street (especially from a bus stop), through or adjacent to parking areas, to the building entrance (see Figure 7). Crosswalks through parking lots or across internal roadways should be clearly defined through use of raised, textured or color treatments.

Pedestrian connections to adjacent residential neighborhoods should be considered to reduce vehicular traffic and encourage walking as a healthy lifestyle. This is especially important if the path would provide neighborhood access to a bus stop. The potential for walking paths (paved or porous) for employee use during breaks should also be considered.

Joint vehicular and pedestrian access with an adjacent property should be considered to reduce curb cuts and improve safety on the public road (see Figure 8). Shared driveways and internal access between adjacent parcels at a similar elevation are encouraged to minimize the number of curb cuts on the adjacent road, provide alternative emergency access, and increase customer convenience by providing direct vehicular and pedestrian access between destinations. The Planning Board would support a variance from the buffer requirement if the applicant successfully demonstrates that the proposed development would meet one or more of these objectives. Issues to be addressed include but are not limited to snow plow management, snow storage, and drainage. Access is best protected through recorded easements.



Figure 7: Paved path through parking lot and colored/textured crosswalks (stamped concrete) enhance pedestrian safety and encourage walking between shops. Note that sufficient snow storage area must be designated to enable four-season use of the pedestrian walkway.

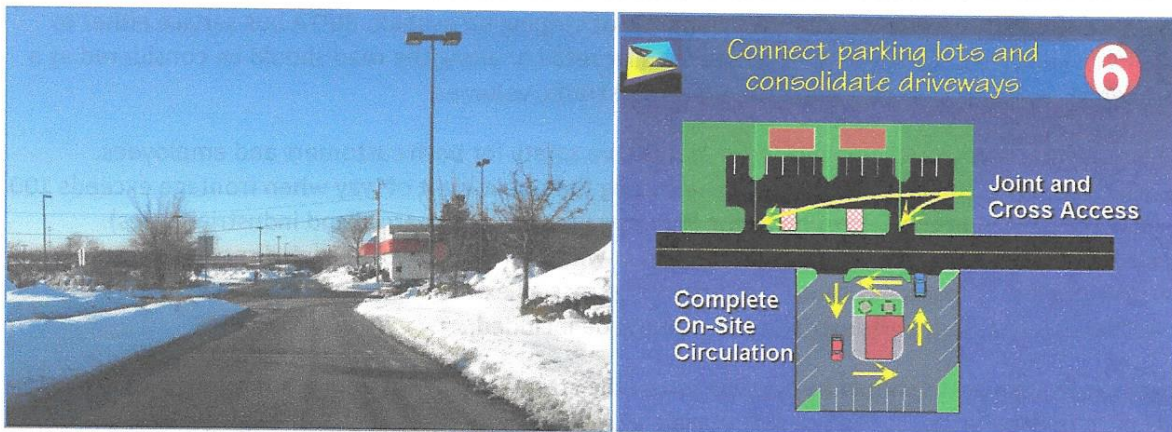


Figure 8: Interior access roads between retail developments help reduce vehicular volume and turning movements on major roadway. Image on right demonstrates how the number of curb cuts from individual properties can be reduced through joint and cross access and complete on-site circulation²

Access Management and Pedestrian Safety Checklist

- One primary entrance and no more than one secondary entrance for site access are provided
- Internal circulation is enhanced with roundabouts and signage for truck delivery
- Traffic circulation is defined by curbing and not striping on pavement
- RIPTA bus service is provided
- Sidewalk and crosswalk are provided along road and across entrance

²Williams, Kristine, *Access Management*, Example 6, <http://www.nctr.usf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Access-Management-08.20.03.pdf>

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- Entrance lanes do not exceed 20 feet (two lanes) in either direction; a pedestrian phase is included if the intersection is signalized
- Pedestrian crosswalks and paths with raised, colored or textured treatment are provided from road to building, through parking lot
- Pedestrian connections are provided to adjacent neighborhoods
- Joint or shared vehicular and pedestrian access with adjacent parcel is protected through recorded easements (to reduce curb cuts)

Parking

Parking should be placed to the side or rear of the building whenever possible to maintain a well-design landscaped area to the front (see Figure 9).

The minimum number of parking spaces required by the Zoning Ordinance should not be exceeded by more than 10 percent. High-intensity uses with reduced parking demand may make traditional parking requirements obsolete. The Planning Board would support a variance for a reduction of paved parking spaces for such high-intensity uses if the site plan designates parking areas to be paved if future uses warrant such construction.



Figure 9: On the left, landscaping and stormwater swale between road/sidewalk and building reduces visual impact of parking lot (located to side). On the right, perpendicular parking along the front of the building and a wide curb cut on the street create an image dominated by asphalt that decreases safety for motorists and lacks landscaping that could help manage stormwater runoff.

Joint use of parking by varied land uses should be encouraged to reduce impermeable pavement. Shared use parking is one of the low impact development techniques presented in the *Rhode Island Low Impact Development Site Planning and Design Guidance Manual*.³ Applicant must demonstrate to the Planning Board's satisfaction that parking demand for separate uses provides sufficient spaces to meet "time of day" requirements. Shared parking agreements are best protected through recorded easements that limit uses and continue with subsequent ownership. An example of shared use parking is presented in Figure 10.

³ Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and Coastal Resources Management Council. *Rhode Island Low Impact Development Site Planning and Design Guidance Manual*, March 2011.



Figure 10: Example of shared use parking.⁴

Snow management is an important consideration in assuring that a site will be fully operational and safe regardless of weather conditions. A snow storage plan should be presented which indicates how snow will be handled so that piles do not adversely affect the required minimum number of parking spaces or detract from pedestrian safety and vehicular circulation. The plan should indicate potential snowplow layouts. A commitment to off-site disposal of snow may be required.

Parking Checklist

- Parking is located to side or rear of building
- Number of parking spaces does not exceed 10% of the required minimum
- A variance has been requested to reduce the number of paved spaces based on high intensity uses with reduced parking demand; area for construction of future paved parking has been reserved
- Shared use parking (with easements) has been provided
- A snow storage management plan has been prepared that includes snow plow layout, snow stockpile locations, and a commitment to remove snow off-site to maintain the minimum number of parking spaces and protect pedestrian and vehicular safety

Storage and Loading Areas

Storage and loading areas must be located to the rear of the lot unless otherwise approved by the Department of Planning and Development or Planning Board. Storage and loading areas associated with commercial and industrial land uses should not be visible from neighboring property or streets or should be adequately screened on sides and top. Storage areas should harmonize with the architecture, design, and appearance of the primary structure and adjacent development. Storage and loading areas associated with an industrial land use should not exceed five percent of the gross floor area of the principal structure on the site.

⁴ <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bpoladm/suswshed/pdfs/lidplan.pdf>

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Storage and Loading Area Checklist

- Loading areas are located to the rear of the lot
- Loading areas are not visible from adjacent property or streets or are adequately screened
- Storage areas harmonize with the architecture, design and appearance of primary structure and adjacent development
- Industrial storage and loading areas do not exceed five percent of the gross floor area of the principal structure

Stormwater Management

Management of both the quality and quantity of stormwater is an important regulatory requirement of any development. Use of low impact development (LID) techniques such as bioretention areas (see Figure 11, left), landscaped gardens, and permeable pavers are some of the many possibilities for surface management of stormwater runoff.⁵ One important way to reduce stormwater on site is to avoid extensive non-pervious parking lots or parking fields, especially those that are unbroken by landscaping.



Figure 11: On left, bioretention garden helps manage stormwater flow from an adjacent parking lot.⁶ On right, a progression of deciduous trees and evergreen shrubs line access road and provide four-season interest.

Appropriate species of shade trees should be provided within landscaped islands within parking lots to shade pavement and help reduce ambient temperature and evaporation. Areas graded for site development but not otherwise incorporated into site features should be loamed and seeded with a conservation mix to encourage naturalized wildflower meadows. Species used in landscaping for stormwater management should be selected in accordance with the *Rhode Island Stormwater Design and Installation Standards Manual* Appendix B: Vegetation Guidelines and Planting List.⁷

⁵ *Rhode Island Low Impact Development Site Planning and Design Guidance Manual*, March 2011.

⁶ breedlovelandplanning.wordpress.com

⁷ Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and Coastal Resources Management Council, *Rhode Island Stormwater Design and Installation Standards Manual*, December 2010, <http://www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/regs/regs/water/swmanual.pdf>

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Stormwater Management Checklist

- LID techniques are incorporated for stormwater management in accordance with the *Rhode Island Low Impact Development Site Planning and Design Guidance Manual*
- Shade trees are planted on landscape islands in parking lots
- Areas graded but not developed or established as turf are seeded with a conservation mix
- Planting species used for stormwater management is in accordance with the *Rhode Island Stormwater Design and Installation Standards Manual*

Landscape Design

Planting should be part of every development for energy conservation, clear air, clean water, attractive surroundings, and enhanced real estate values. Landscape design shall be in accordance with Section 12.1-6 Green Space Requirement of the Woonsocket Zoning Ordinance.

Entrance plazas should incorporate special interest landscaping, scored, textured, or colored paving materials, site furniture such as benches and seating walls, and signage to create a sense of place. A diversity of landscape materials (see Figure 11 right) should be incorporated into landscape design to avoid a monoculture that may lack visual interest or be susceptible to disease. Existing vegetation and land forms should be retained and incorporated into the new design whenever feasible.

Outdoor seating space for restaurants and coffee shops should be considered within the front yard setback or as a buffer between parking areas and building to replicate a vibrant and dynamic street scene (see Figure 12).

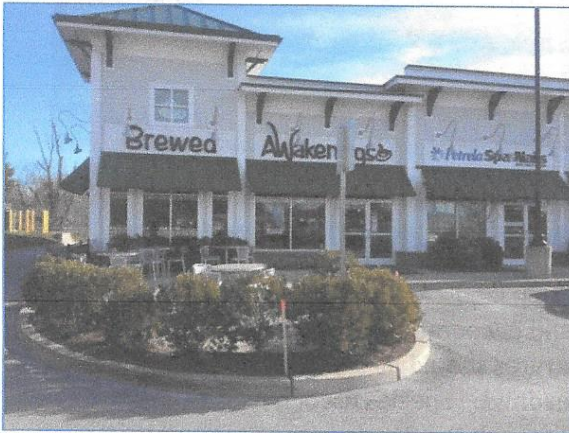


Figure 12: Café seating provided on a bump-out in the parking lot helps to create an active pedestrian scene, weather permitting.

Landscaping along the front building façade provides visual relief between pavement (sidewalk, parking lot or drive aisles) and the building while also reducing impervious surfaces (see Figure 13). Landscaping along the entrance side of the building is especially important when the building is oriented perpendicular to the public roadway, with landscaping to the front.

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Figure 13: Curvilinear landscaping between parking lot, sidewalk and building provides visual interest, softens the building facade, and reduces impervious surfaces. Building facades use a variety of masonry and stone facades, downlighting, and awnings to improve curb appeal for chain restaurants.

Ornamental fencing, stone walls, or other landscape feature may be used to visually separate the parking lot from the public realm on the street (see Figure 14). A gazebo, public seating area, or other focal point could be considered to enhance the sense of place and provide a public meeting space for customers, employees, and the community (see Figure 15). Benches placed at appropriate locations along pedestrian paths provide rest stops for walkers including those with handicaps. Use of ornamental trash receptacles helps reduce windblown trash and improves stormwater quality. Bicycle racks and bus passenger shelters may be as required by the Department of Planning and Development.



Figure 14: On the left, stone wall and street trees within the buffer zone to the rear of the sidewalk help incorporate a grade change and reduce the visibility of cars in parking lot. Ornamental metal fence and stone wall on the right separate the public and private realm and help divert attention of motorists and pedestrians from the parking lot to the rear of the fence (and snow).

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Figure 15: Seating area on left provides attractive respite (weather permitting) for both shoppers and employees. Fencing conceals view of building service area. On the right, gazebo provides a focal point, relief from expansive parking and roadway paving, and a location for civic events.

Street trees should be located within the public viewshed, to the rear of the sidewalk on private property. Species/cultivars should be selected from a locally approved tree list such as the Providence Tree List⁸ or as indicated on the University of Rhode Island Sustainable Plant List.⁹ Species should be selected to reflect existing adjacent street trees, tree shape and size at maturity, presence of any above-ground utilities, and road salt tolerance. Species/cultivar diversity is encouraged to avoid a monoculture that may succumb to disease. Three to four trees of each species should be planted to create a “drift” of similar blooms and foliage. The intent is to create a continuous canopy of relatively evenly spaced shade trees of similar mature size and shape.

A five foot minimum landscaped buffer should be provided between parking areas and internal roadways to create a sense of safety for pedestrians and buffering to adjacent properties. Snow storage areas should be designated to not encroach on sidewalks or public spaces.

The perimeter of parking areas associated with an industrial land use should be landscaped with solid screen evergreen plant material that extends at least 48 inches above the high point of the finished parking lot surface to screen the parking lot from view from adjacent streets and freeways.

Planted buffer hedges between more intensive commercial or industrial use and less intensive residential or vacant use should include a planting of species and size such that in a minimum of five years after planting the screen shall be continuous and a minimum of 10 feet high and 10 feet wide. It is preferred that the buffer planting include trees and shrubs, and both evergreen and deciduous materials.

⁸ Providence Tree List, Department of Public Parks, City Forester, revised July 2011

<https://www.providenceri.com/efile/816>

⁹ Sustainable Trees and Shrubs, Sustainable Plant List <http://www.uri.edu/cels/ceoc/documents/sustman.pdf>

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Landscape Design Checklist

- Frontage and building landscaping is provided
- Special interest landscaping is provided at plaza entrances
- Existing vegetation is retained to the greatest extent possible and protected during construction
- Outdoor seating is provided for restaurants and coffee shops
- Building exteriors are landscaped with planting beds or ornamental planters (sidewalks, parking lots and drive aisles do not extend to the building)
- Ornamental fencing, stone walls, or other landscape features are used to visually separate the parking lot from the public realm on the street
- Gazebo or other common gathering area is provided
- Bicycle racks, bus shelters, and other street furniture are provided
- Street trees are planted within the public viewshed (on private property)
- Salt-tolerant street tree species are referenced on an approved tree list
- Buffer landscaping includes a diversity of trees and shrubs, evergreens and deciduous plants
- Buffer hedges between more intensive commercial or industrial use and less intensive residential or vacant use are continuous and will attain a minimum height of 10 feet wide and 10 feet high in five years

Lighting

Lighting should serve only to illuminate entries, signage, displays, pedestrian and parking areas, or to highlight significant architectural elements such as the main entry. No light trespass on adjacent parcels (including the public road) should be designed. Use of cut off lights is encouraged. Pedestrian scaled fixtures (including ornamental lighting 14 feet in height or less) should be used to light walkways and driveway/parking area while maintaining acceptable levels of security (see Figures 2, 5, 14 and 16 left).

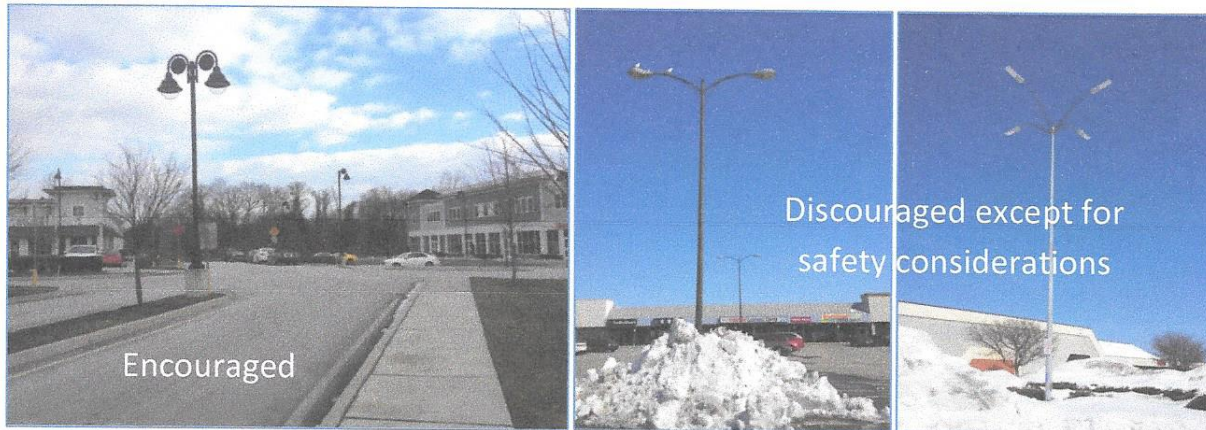


Figure 16: Low level ornamental lighting on the left is appropriate for areas with pedestrian use and low traffic speeds. High level parking lot lighting indicated in right two photos should be used only for safety and must be carefully selected to reduce light pollution in the night sky and to avoid light trespass on adjacent properties.

Pole mounted lights should be downward casting to minimize light pollution in the night sky. Energy efficient lighting fixtures such as LEDs are highly recommended and should complement the building's architecture and be appropriately scaled to the building and site. Metal halide or LED lighting may be

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preferable to low-pressure sodium lamps. Downward facing wall lights may be used to illuminate shop signage and enhance pedestrian safety along the building front (see Figures 12 and 13). Wall-pack lighting should be discouraged except in loading emergency exit areas. All non-essential lighting should be turned off after hours.

Lighting Checklist

- Lighting avoids light trespass
- Fixtures are downward casting (cut off lighting) to avoid pollution of the night sky
- Pedestrian scale fixtures (under 14 feet in height) are provided
- High level parking lot lighting is limited to safety use
- LED lighting is used for energy efficiency
- Downward facing wall lights are provided to illuminate signage and enhance pedestrian safety
- Use of wall-pack lighting is limited to loading and emergency exits
- Non-essential lighting is timed to shut off after hours

Signage

Signage not only provides wayfaring information for businesses but should promote visual harmony with associated buildings, contribute toward creation of a unique sense of place, and reflect positively on Woonsocket.

Signs should be compatible with surroundings, be proportional in size and scale to the building façade, and integrate with the architectural design (see Figure 15). Building signs should not overwhelm the building façade. Corporate franchise signage and logos should fit the context, color, scale and building elements. Use of a limited number (no more than two) of font sizes and colors are recommended to enhance readability and limit motorist distraction. Contrasting colors improve visibility. Light letters on a dark background work best for both day and night use. Use of symbols and logos may reduce the amount of text on a sign.

Signs may be lit internally with individually illuminated letters however internally illuminated plastic cabinet signs are discouraged since they may create a distracting glare that can be out of context with associated buildings. A projected light source such as a spotlight or downlights may be considered where there is slow moving traffic or if located in a pedestrian-oriented area (see Figures 12 and 13). The use of oversized lighting fixtures should be avoided.



Figure 15: Sign structure on the left utilizes three colors on a high contrast white background to increase legibility of business names. Attractive landscaping in a raised bed helps create a sense of place. Papa Gino's sign in middle incorporates white letters on two colors for readability and brand identification. Brick foundation and landscaping add to the curb appeal. Monument sign on right incorporates structural element from shopping center and utilizes single color for tenant listing.¹⁰

Shopping center free standing monument signs should maximize visibility and reduce the potential for a safety hazard for passing motorists. The number of tenant signs posted on a free standing monument sign should be limited to avoid distraction for motorists. The sign structure should be architecturally designed and incorporate design details, materials, and colors of the associated building(s). Monument and free standing signs should be landscaped or set off with a stone wall or other landscape feature. Storefront signage for multiple tenants should be coordinated by size, color, lighting, and material.

¹⁰ Photos collected by or taken by J. Siciliano

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Signage Checklist

- Signs are proportional in size and scale to the building façade, and integrate with the architectural design
- No more than two font sizes and colors are used
- Symbols and logos are used to reduce the amount of text
- Internally illuminated plastic cabinet signs are not proposed
- Monument signage is architecturally designed and incorporates design details, materials, and colors of the associated building(s)
- Landscaping with a stone wall or other landscape feature is provided for monument or free standing sign
- Storefront signage for multiple tenants is coordinated by size, color, lighting, and material

Master Checklist

Building Orientation Checklist

- Large format buildings oriented with narrow façade of building facing street
- Store windows and other interesting design features are included on narrow façade of large format building facing street

Building Massing Checklist

- Pitched gables or dormers (no visible flat roof) are used

Façade Treatment Checklist

- Varied façade line is used (not straight)
- Pedestrian-scale elements such as arcades, patios, canopies and porticoes are incorporated
- Façade color treatment includes no more than two dominant and one accent color
- Parapets and overhangs are used to protect snow from sliding off pitched roofs
- Internal gutters are used

Building Materials Checklist

- Brick, scored CMU, or fieldstone are used for commercial or industrial development
- High end architectural metal panels are used on four sides in commercial or industrial zones
- Metal buildings are not used for either commercial or industrial applications
- A metal standing seam rear façade includes a 4-foot masonry “kicker wall” in an industrial zone
- Wood exteriors are utilized for commercial, not industrial use
- EIFS is limited to use as accents
- Façade treatment is used on all four sides of the building when abutting a residential or less-intensive use
- Energy efficient design is utilized
- Solar roof or other renewable energy source is used and appropriately screened

Mechanical Equipment and Utilities Checklist

- Underground utilities are used
- Mechanical and electrical equipment (including emergency generators) is screened or concealed
- Rooftop mechanicals are adequately screened
- Noise dampening walls are installed around emergency generators

Convenience Store and Fueling Canopy Checklist

- Peaked roof and other architectural treatments are used to reduce scale of building
- Design elements on canopy reflect design of building

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Access Management and Pedestrian Safety Checklist

- One primary entrance and no more than one secondary entrance for site access are provided
- Internal circulation is enhanced with roundabouts and signage for truck delivery
- Traffic circulation is defined by curbing and not striping on pavement
- RIPTA bus service is provided
- Sidewalk and crosswalk are provided along road and across entrance
- Entrance lanes do not exceed 20 feet (two lanes) in either direction; a pedestrian phase is included if the intersection is signalized
- Pedestrian crosswalks and paths with raised, colored or textured treatment are provided from road to building, through parking lot
- Pedestrian connections are provided to adjacent neighborhoods
- Joint or shared vehicular and pedestrian access with adjacent parcel is protected through recorded easements (to reduce curb cuts)

Parking Checklist

- Parking is located to side or rear of building
- Number of parking spaces does not exceed 10% of the required minimum
- A variance has been requested to reduce the number of paved spaces based on high intensity uses with reduced parking demand; area for construction of future paved parking has been reserved
- Shared use parking (with easements) has been provided
- A snow storage management plan has been prepared that includes snow plow layout, snow stockpile locations, and a commitment to remove snow off-site to maintain the minimum number of parking spaces and protect pedestrian and vehicular safety

Storage and Loading Area Checklist

- Loading areas are located to the rear of the lot
- Loading areas are not visible from adjacent property or streets or are adequately screened
- Storage areas harmonize with the architecture, design and appearance of primary structure and adjacent development
- Industrial storage and loading areas do not exceed five percent of the gross floor area of the principal structure

Landscape Design Checklist

- Frontage and building landscaping is provided
- Special interest landscaping is provided at plaza entrances
- Existing vegetation is retained to the greatest extent possible and protected during construction
- Outdoor seating is provided for restaurants and coffee shops
- Building exteriors are landscaped with planting beds or ornamental planters (sidewalks,

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- parking lots and drive aisles do not extend to the building)
- Ornamental fencing, stone walls, or other landscape features are used to visually separate the parking lot from the public realm on the street
 - Gazebo or other common gathering area is provided
 - Bicycle racks, bus shelters, and other street furniture are provided
 - Street trees are planted within the public viewshed (on private property)
 - Salt-tolerant street tree species are referenced on an approved tree list
 - Buffer landscaping includes a diversity of trees and shrubs, evergreens and deciduous plants
 - Buffer hedges between more intensive commercial or industrial use and less intensive residential or vacant use are continuous and will attain a minimum height of 10 feet wide and 10 feet high in five years

Lighting Checklist

- Lighting avoids light trespass
- Fixtures are downward casting (cut off lighting) to avoid pollution of the night sky
- Pedestrian scale fixtures (under 14 feet in height) are provided
- High level parking lot lighting is limited to safety use
- LED lighting is used for energy efficiency
- Downward facing wall lights are provided to illuminate signage and enhance pedestrian safety
- Use of wall-pack lighting is limited to loading and emergency exits
- Non-essential lighting is timed to shut off after hours

Signage Checklist

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- Monument signage is architecturally designed and incorporates design details, materials, and colors of the associated building(s)
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Zoning Ordinance of the City of Woonsocket, Rhode Island

12.1. Design Review Overlay District.

The Design Review Overlay District is hereby established to regulate the design of new and existing commercial or mixed-use buildings, structures, improvements and facilities with regard to assessing the impacts of predominantly commercial development on the surrounding community with regard to issues of health and safety, visual and architectural quality and long-term planning strategies. All nonresidential buildings, structures, improvements and facilities within zoning districts C-1, C-2, MU-1, MU-2 and I-1 shall be regulated by both the requirements of the district in which they are located and the requirements of this overlay district. This district shall furthermore overlay all lots, or portions thereof, where any building, structure, improvement or facility is associated with a use otherwise permitted only in a C-1, C-2, MU-1, MU-2 and I-1 district, that has been granted by variance or special use permit by the zoning board of review.

(Ch. No. 6154, Sec. 1(J), 10-16-95; Ch. No. 6400, Sec. 1(M), 9-2-97) (Ch. 7845. 10-26-05.)

12.1-1 Design Review Commission. The design review commission is hereby established as the agency authorized to administer that portion of the Design Review Overlay Zone in which any proposed project includes the construction of a new commercial or mixed-use building, or any proposed project that includes the substantial exterior renovation of an existing commercial or mixed-use building. Substantial renovations shall mean to be those renovations, where 50% or more of the total existing exterior materials, are to be replaced, or 70% of the exterior facade materials are to be replaced. The members of the design review commission shall be the members of the planning board.

Design Review Officer. The design review officer is hereby established as the agent authorized to administer all other portions of the Design Review Overlay Zone which are not administered by the

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design review commission as defined above. The design review officer shall be appointed by the Mayor and serve until his/her successor is named. All decisions made by the design review officer may be appealed to the design review commission in writing.

(Ch. No. 6400, Sec. 1(N), 9-2-97)

12.1-2 Design Guidelines. The design review commission shall prepare and adopt design guidelines for development within this overlay district within six (6) months of the enactment of this ordinance. Said guidelines shall guide applicants in the development of proposals.

12.1-3 Submission of Plans and Proposals. A proposal for development within this overlay district may be made by any applicant by filing with the city planner an application describing the proposal and supporting materials. Applications and supporting materials shall be submitted for review under this subsection prior to the submittal of plans for a building permit. Supporting materials shall include seven (7) sets of each of the following:

12.1-3.1 Site Plan. A site plan is required which shall be prepared by a registered land surveyor or by a registered professional engineer. As appropriate under the requirements established by the State of Rhode Island for each class, and which shall include without limitation the following:

- (1) Location of all existing and proposed buildings and structures, including signs;
- (2) Location of all existing and proposed site improvements, including utilities;
- (3) Location of all existing and proposed points of vehicular and pedestrian access;
- (4) Location of all existing and proposed interior access corridors and parking spaces; and
- (5) Existing and proposed contour data for the site, at two-foot intervals.

12.1-3.2 Architectural Submittals. Architectural submittals are required which shall include without limitation the following:

- (1) Elevations for all sides of any proposed building or structure, including signs;
- (2) Exterior lighting plans;
- (3) Floor plans for all proposed buildings; and
- (4) Samples and/or descriptions of all materials for proposed exterior treatment.

12.1-3.3 Landscape Plans. Landscape plans are required which shall include without limitation the following:

- (1) Proposed plantings and other landscape material, shown by type, size and number; and
- (2) Provisions for pedestrian circulation; and
- (3) Site furnishings.

12.1-4 Pre-Development Conference. Developers shall be encouraged, but are not required, to discuss proposals at the outset with the city planner and the division engineer for suggestions and general guidance.

12.1-5 Evaluation of Proposals. Proposals for development within this overlay district shall be reviewed with respect to the following:

- (1) Architectural design;
- (2) Landscape design in accordance with the green space requirements set forth below;
- (3) Impacts on available utilities and the planning of future improvements;
- (4) Off-site traffic impacts;
- (5) On-site traffic circulation;
- (6) Overall visual quality;
- (7) Relationship to surrounding buildings and sites;
- (8) Sign design and placement; and
- (9) Site layout.

Fees to appear before Overlay District Commissions:

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- Appearance before Design Review Commission, two hundred dollars (\$200.00).
 - Appearance before River Corridor Overlay District Commission, two hundred dollars (\$200.00).
 - 12.1-6 Green Space Requirement. All developments within this overlay district shall include a minimum of fifty (50) square feet of on-site green space for every parking space required under this ordinance, except that in the case of parcels with unreasonable constraints, the design review commission may alter, reduce or waive the green space requirement. Said green space shall consist of areas that contain grass, ground cover, shrubs, trees, flower beds, or any combination of the above.
 - 12.1-6.1 Parking Areas. A minimum of five (5) percent of the green space shall be applied within parking and vehicular circulation areas in the form of landscaped strips or islands that divide parking areas and limit cross-traffic, and shall be evenly dispersed throughout said parking areas to the greatest extent possible.
 - 12.1-6.2 Perimeter Buffers. Landscaped buffer areas shall be established along the perimeter of all development sites as follows:
 - (1) Where any portion of a site is adjacent to any residential use property, a minimum landscaped buffer of ten (10) feet in width shall be established along the lot line which adjoins such residential use property, and said landscaped buffer shall contain plant materials and/or fencing to create a six (6) foot high screen between the properties.
 - (2) Where any portion of a site is adjacent to any nonresidential use property, a minimum landscaped buffer of five (5) feet in width shall be established along the lot line which adjoins such nonresidential use property, and said landscaped buffer shall contain landscape treatment which is determined by the design review commission to be of an appropriate nature.
 - (3) Where any portion of a site is adjacent to any street or public right-of-way, a minimum landscaped buffer of four (4) feet in width shall be established along the lot line which adjoins such street or right-of-way and trees of an appropriate size and type shall be located approximately every fifty (50) feet, with exact tree locations to be determined on a site-by-site basis to avoid interfering with underground utilities and/or curb cuts. In the case of any development located along Diamond Hill Road, the type of tree shall be green ash, and tree locations shall be approximately every seventy (70) feet.
- 12.1-7 Penalties. All plans and designs approved by the design review commission shall be executed as such. Failure to comply with approved plans shall be deemed a violation of this ordinance and of the building permit issued for such development, and shall cause the building official to issue a stop-work order until such time that the violation has been satisfactorily remedied.