

## From Policy to Reality



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- I. **Purpose** - The purpose of this Article is to provide design standards that will enhance the appearance, pedestrian character and safety, and economic viability of specific districts and corridors within Model Community.
  
- II. **Applicability** - The standards in this Article apply to all new development, redevelopment and alterations to existing buildings or sites, with the following exceptions:
  - A. For alterations to existing buildings or sites, the standards shall apply to the element being developed or altered rather than the entire site (for example, building footprint or parking area).
  
  - B. Flexibility in the interpretation or application of any standard may be granted by the zoning administrator in cases where specific physical conditions of a building or site would make compliance difficult or inappropriate.

III. **Standards**

- A. **Compatibility with Historic Buildings** - New development shall relate to the design of identified historic buildings adjacent to the site, where present, in scale and character. This can be achieved by maintaining similar setbacks, facade divisions, roof lines, rhythm and proportions of openings, building materials and colors. Historic architectural styles need not be replicated.
  
- B. **Building Placement** - Buildings shall be placed at or close to the sidewalk to the extent practical. At intersections, buildings shall “hold the corner,” that is, have front and side facades aligned at or near the sidewalks of both streets.
  
- C. **Entrance Orientation** - Primary building entrances on all new buildings shall be oriented to the primary abutting public street. Additional secondary entrances may be oriented to a secondary street or parking area. Entries shall be clearly visible and identifiable from the street, and delineated with elements such as roof overhangs, recessed entries, landscaping, or similar design features.
  
- D. **Façade Articulation**
  - 1. Consistent with most traditional storefront buildings, a building width of 40 feet or less is encouraged. New buildings of more than 40 feet in width shall be divided into smaller increments, between 20 and 40 feet in width, through articulation of the facade. This can be achieved through combinations of the following techniques, and others that may meet the intent of this section.

*Design standards like these can be used across a variety of commercial and mixed-use districts, from a small neighborhood center to a downtown or transit station area or a new town center. These standards are written to be mandatory, with a provision for flexibility. However, the degree of design control or guidance desired will depend on each community’s goals and vision of its built environment.*

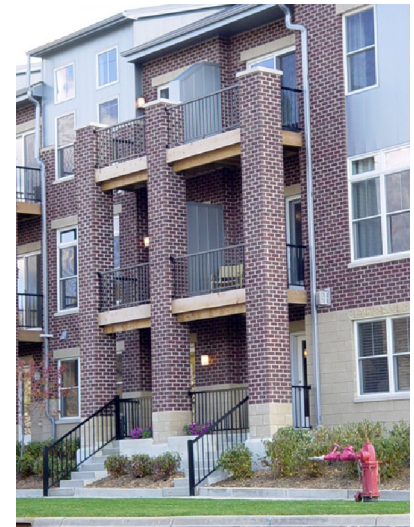
*Historic buildings can be defined through an Historic Resources Survey, and can include locally- or nationally-listed buildings, buildings potentially eligible for listing, or buildings otherwise identified in a community study.*





- a. **Façade Modulation** - Stepping back or extending forward a portion of the façade.
  - b. Vertical divisions using different textures or materials (although materials should be drawn from a common palette).
  - c. Division into storefronts, with separate display windows and entrances.
  - d. Variation in roof lines by alternating dormers, stepped roofs, gables, or other roof elements to reinforce the modulation or articulation interval.
  - e. Arcades, awnings, window bays, arched windows and balconies at intervals equal to the articulation interval.
2. No blank walls shall be permitted to face the public street, sidewalks, or other public spaces such as plazas. Elements such as windows, doors, columns, changes in material, and similar details should be used to add visual interest.
  3. Buildings shall be designed with a base, a middle and a top, created by variations in detailing, color and materials.
    - a. Articulated tops shall be considered in the design of all new buildings. This articulation might consist of pitched roofs, dormers, gable ends, cornice detailing, etc.
    - b. The base of the building shall include elements that relate to the human scale. These should include doors and windows, texture, projections, awnings and canopies, ornament, etc.
- E. **Door and Window Openings** - For new commercial, mixed-use and civic buildings, windows and doors or openings shall comprise at least fifty (50) percent of the length and at least thirty (30) percent of the area of the ground floor of the primary street façade. Window openings shall be located between two and 8 feet from ground level.
1. Windows shall be designed with punched and recessed openings, in order to create a strong rhythm of light and shadow.
  2. Glass on windows and doors shall be clear or slightly tinted, allowing views into and out of the interior.
  3. Window shape, size and patterns shall emphasize the intended organization of the façade and the definition of the building.

- F. **Ground-Floor Residential Uses** - Ground-floor residential uses at street level shall generally be separated from the street by landscaping, steps, porches, grade changes, and low ornamental fences or walls in order to create a private yard area between the sidewalk and the front door.
- G. **Equipment and Service Area Screening** - If an outdoor storage, service or loading area is visible from adjacent residential uses or a public street or walkway, it shall be screened by a decorative fence, wall or screen of plant material at least six (6) feet in height. Fences and walls shall be architecturally compatible with the primary structure.
- H. **Screening of Rooftop Equipment** - All rooftop equipment shall be screened from view from adjacent streets, public rights-of-way and adjacent properties. Rooftop equipment shall be screened by the building parapet, or shall be located out of view from the ground. If this is infeasible, the equipment shall be grouped within a single enclosure. This structure shall be set back a distance of one and one-half (1½) times its height from any primary facade fronting a public street. Screens shall be of durable, permanent materials (not including wood) that are compatible with the primary building materials. Exterior mechanical equipment such as ductwork shall not be located on primary building facades.
- I. **Materials** - Nonresidential or mixed use buildings shall be constructed of high-quality materials such as brick, stone, textured cast stone, or tinted masonry units. The following materials are generally not acceptable:
  - 1. Unadorned plain or painted concrete block;
  - 2. Tilt-up concrete panels;
  - 3. Pre-fabricated steel or sheet metal panels;
  - 4. Reflective glass; and
  - 5. Aluminum, vinyl, fiberglass, asphalt or fiberboard siding.All building façades visible from a public street or walkway shall employ materials and design features similar to those of the front façade.
- K. **Parking Structure Design** - The ground floor of any parking structure abutting a public street or walkway shall be designed and architecturally detailed in a manner consistent with new commercial or mixed-use buildings.
  - 1. Upper floors shall be designed so that sloped floors typical of parking structures do not dominate the appearance of the façade.



*Standards for materials are another optional element: some communities also specify preferred primary materials and colors and accent materials and colors.*





*Standards for screening and landscaping of surface parking areas should be applied in all zoning districts, but are included in this section as an example. Standards for plant materials and parking lot design are typically included with parking standards or as part of a separate ordinance section dealing with landscaping.*



2. Windows or openings shall be provided that echo those of surrounding buildings.
  3. Entrance drives to structured or underground parking shall be located and designed to minimize interference with pedestrian movement. Entrances should be on secondary streets where feasible.
- L. **Parking Area Landscaping and Screening** - Screening is required wherever parking lots abut public streets, sidewalks or paths, or are adjacent to residential or open space uses.
1. A landscape buffer strip a minimum of 5 feet in width shall be provided between all parking areas and the public sidewalk or street. The buffer strip shall consist of drought tolerant shade trees, low shrubs or perennial plants and a decorative fence or masonry wall. Plantings and parking lot screen walls or fences shall be between two and three feet in height to allow views into and out of parking areas.
  2. Parking bays shall have landscape islands at each end and bays in excess of 15 spaces in length shall be divided by intermediate landscape islands. Landscape islands at ends of bays shall provide at least 360 square feet of area for trees, shrubs and/or groundcovers. Intermediate landscape islands shall provide at least 180 square feet of planting area.