

2017

Rootstown Township Design Guidelines

Rootstown Township, Ohio

3/28/2017

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INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

Rootstown Township's *Design Guidelines* have been developed to guide the appearance, form, and function of new development and redevelopment in nonresidential, and mixed residential, commercial zoning districts within Rootstown Township.

In utilizing these guidelines, the applicant, the staff, or any other users should consider the characteristics of the site and its immediate context, applicable plans for an area, the nature of the use, and the intent of the guidelines and performance standards as they apply to the specific project.

In cases in which special conditions exist that are not specifically addressed by the standards, the intent statement should serve as the basis for determining the appropriateness of the proposed design.

What are the objectives of the Design Guidelines?

The application of design standards and guidelines to mixed residential commercial, light industrial, and non-residentially zoned properties will assist Rootstown Township to implement its Comprehensive Plan and other specific plans for areas and other neighborhood business districts in a more effective manner. The main objectives of the guidelines, which will be used in guiding changes and development, and in reviewing plans for development and improvements, are as follows:

1. Assist the planning and design of quality developments and provide for increased opportunities and land use efficiency for redevelopment, new development, and business development expansion.
2. Protect property and private investment.
3. Encourage a viable and compatible mix of commercial, business, office, and residential uses in the Township.
4. Encourage the integration of mixed uses in designated areas through the development of two-to-three story buildings, continuous building forms placed parallel to the street, with minimum setbacks from the right-of-way, and an attractive and viable pedestrian-friendly environment.
5. Encourage creative planning and design in the arrangement and siting of buildings, parking areas, circulation and access, shared parking facilities and ingress/egress arrangements, and elimination of multiple curb cuts.
6. Make the policy of efficient traffic flow compatible with the policy of promoting an attractive and viable, pedestrian-friendly environment through the establishment of a safe, convenient, and attractive pedestrian network of paths and public places.
7. Allow the application of performance standards to development and redevelopment so as to mitigate any adverse impacts on adjacent areas and the business corridors.
8. Avoid piecemeal and fragmented development that detracts from the establishment of a viable business environment and strong neighborhood appearance and character that reflect plans or studies for the subject area.
9. Promote public health, safety and welfare.

How are the Design Guidelines organized?

The Guidelines are presented in five chapters:

- I: Site Planning
- II: Architecture
- III: Landscape
- IV: Lighting
- V: Signage

Each chapter starts with a set of goals that envision what the Township hopes to accomplish by adhering to the *Guidelines*. Individual chapters are divided into sections that deal with specific issues. For each issue the *Guidelines* provide planning objectives and specific design guidelines.

Photographs are used throughout the *Guidelines* to illustrate what would be considered acceptable in Rootstown Township. The photographs are representative samples to make the *Guidelines* more reader-friendly. The *Guidelines* are not meant to stifle creativity; in all situations, there may be many ways to achieve the Township's goals.

Are the Guidelines mandatory?

Throughout the document the word “should” is used to denote that these are recommended guidelines and not mandatory standards. The guidelines in this manual are intended to accompany adopted Township plans and guide the Rootstown Township Planning and Zoning Department during the review process of applications from business or property owners for improvements, and modifications to existing buildings and for parking and circulation improvements in the commercial districts. In many cases the Zoning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals encourages compliance in order to facilitate the review of development projects.

Where do the Design Guidelines apply?

The provisions of the *Guidelines* apply to all nonresidential zoned areas in Rootstown Township. It applies to new construction as well as expansions or redevelopment of existing buildings and sites.

How will the Guidelines be used?

There are two main functions of the *Guidelines*. First, they will provide guidance to landowners and developers in the early stages of planning and design, to address the question of “What is the Township looking for?”.

Secondly, it will be used as a benchmark by the planning staff, Zoning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and peer reviewers to evaluate development proposals as

part of the review processes to address the questions of “Does it meet the Township’s criteria?” and “What will it look like and how will it function?”

Implementation of the design guidelines relies heavily on the services of architects, civil engineers, and landscape architects working as consultants or developers. The *Guidelines* will be administered by staff through the review process. The *Guidelines* will be applied to development that requires site plan approval from the Zoning Commission or Board of Zoning Appeals, but are suggested for all developments in the community.

What will the ultimate outcome be for Rootstown Township?

The *Guidelines* are not designed to produce immediate results. Like the Comprehensive Plan and other Township plans, they provide a framework for the future. The process is intended to ensure that site plans are reviewed efficiently by staff, the Zoning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals, resulting in high quality development that contributes to the Township’s overall aesthetics and immediate environment of the subject site.

SITE PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

Each property is unique. Plans for development and redevelopment should be based upon a careful understanding of the site and its surroundings in order to meet the requirements of the ultimate user, while meeting the Township's goals for functionality, safety, and visual character, and ensure consistency with adopted plans.

These guidelines are intended to supplement, illustrate, and amplify various sections of the Rootstown Township Zoning Resolution. Check the applicable sections of the resolution for specific requirements.

Site Planning Goals:

- Distinctive, attractive properties that welcome people to Rootstown Township.



- Developments should be integrated into the commercial areas and the immediate context through street connections, sidewalks, connecting outdoor spaces, land use transition and compatibility, and building scale and character, which respects the uniqueness of each property and reinforces the Township's sense of place and character and seeks a balance between serving both automobile and pedestrian movement.
- Public open space throughout Rootstown Township to enhance its appearance and support pedestrian use.
- An attractive, functional, and safe environment that is conducive to commerce and other permitted activities.
- Protection for abutting residential properties through sensitive site planning, buffering, and architectural design.
- Upgrading visual character and sense of human scale in spaces through particular attention to architecture, site planning, signage, landscaping, and lighting.
- Encourage increased walking and bicycling by providing safe, attractive, interconnected facilities.
- Universal accessibility that meets the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

GENERAL SITE PLANNING PRINCIPLES

OBJECTIVES

Good site planning should result in an attractive, safe, and economically viable relationship between buildings, parking, signage, lighting, landscaping, and the surrounding environment. Site plans should minimize the visual effects of parking and utilities, feature high-quality landscaping, accommodate pedestrian movement, and encourage connections to nearby properties.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Site Analysis.** The site plan should be based upon a careful analysis of existing site conditions that considers topography, wetlands, soil conditions, existing vegetation, drainage, abutting land uses, and other factors that will influence the placement of buildings, roads, and parking areas. The Zoning Commission or Board of Zoning Appeals may require a graphic presentation to demonstrate how knowledge of site conditions has influenced the site plan.

- **Preservation of Existing Features.** Site development should minimize disruption to natural and cultural features (e.g., mature trees, wetlands, drainage ways, stone walls) in a manner that would change their existing character.



Preservation of mature trees adds visual interest and reduces the impact of the heat island effect of the paved areas.

- **Open Space.** Open Space areas should be preserved and integrated throughout the development. Where possible, open space should be continuous and used to preserve significant natural and cultural features. Open space should be coordinated with abutting properties to create continuous open space networks for wildlife corridors, riparian buffers, visual screening, etc.
- **Use of Open Space.** Open space should not contain any type of commercial activity, overflow parking, paved surfaces, constructed stormwater management facilities, or active recreation. Uses may include open vegetated areas, picnic areas, planting beds, bioretention areas, naturalistic water features, and similar features.



This fast food restaurant (center) is an outparcel within a large retail development (to the right). Circulation, including drive-through, parking and pedestrian access, has been carefully integrated into the existing site.

- **Parking Lots.** Parking should be located primarily at the side or rear of the building, with minimal parking in front. Parking lots should be screened to minimize their appearance in most districts.
- **Relationships to Surrounding Properties.** Developments should be linked with the adjacent properties in the corridor and surrounding areas, in order to provide direct, safe, and convenient pedestrian, automobile, and bicycle access. Where applicable, the expansion of the pedestrian network should be achieved through the: extension of public and/or private streets whenever possible, extension of sidewalks and/or paths in and through the development, and extension of green space in and through the development.
- **Ancillary Uses & Utilities.** Service areas, outdoor storage and sales areas, HVAC equipment, trash containers, and other similar features should not abut residential neighborhoods and should be screened from adjacent properties.
- **Buildings in Existing Parking Lots.** The development of buildings on out-parcels or additions extending towards the street are strongly encouraged to break up the scale of large parking areas.

The scale and appearance of an existing un-landscaped parking lot was improved by adding a new restaurant surrounded by landscaped islands.



- **Coordinated Future Development.** Where site plans are presented for a portion of property, the applicant should show how the plan has been designed to accommodate future buildings, access roads, sidewalks, drainage, utilities, signage, and preserved open space in a coordinated fashion.
- **Orientation of Development.** While the majority of the existing buildings are free-standing and are not situated at close proximity and parallel to the roadway, the redevelopment of these properties should consider the building placement as it relates to roadways and the adjacent properties.

- **Entryways.** The design and character of the entryway to the development establishes its identity and its theme, and sets forth its image and quality. Entryways should be designed in a manner unique to the character and theme of the development, and should also be compatible with the existing general character of the adjoining areas in the corridor.



Redevelopment of this site established several more pronounced entryways to the building, and draw a stronger connection towards the adjacent public roadway

- **Corner Sites.** Site entryways, primary circulation patterns, and connections to adjacent uses should act as complete streets and serve pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles, and other modes of transportation without the necessity to use arterial roadways where possible. Street extensions, roadways, and vehicular drive connections to adjacent developments should include facilities to accommodate pedestrians and should incorporate streetscapes or landscaping. New access points and roadways used for site entry should align across primary roadways to form controlled intersections.
- **Above Ground Utilities.** Utility traditionally place above ground (electric telephone, cable, etc.) should be examined for potential to: be placed underground, placed behind buildings with rear connections or consolidated on as few utility poles as possible. Substations, transformers and fuel tanks should be placed in screened enclosures away from primary pedestrian paths and vehicle entry areas (refer to Outdoor Service and Storage Areas section).

CIRCULATION

OBJECTIVES

Development activities should be characterized by safe, user-friendly, and efficient traffic flow. Access management principles should be followed to reduce the number of curb cuts, provide a safe vehicular and pedestrian environment, encourage intraparcels travel, and minimize the number of trips on roadways.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Curb Cuts.** Site plans involving curb cuts should comply with the requirements of ODOT and the Portage County Engineer's Office, and plans should demonstrate an adherence to sound access management principles to promote efficient traffic flow and maintain a high level of safety for pedestrians and motorists. The number of curb cuts should be minimized to increase vehicular and pedestrian safety and the location and design of driveway entrances to the property should minimize conflict with off-site traffic, and provide for safe transition into the parking lot. Entrance drives should be located so that they reduce potential traffic problems, afford maximum sight distance, provide adequate queuing, and acceleration and deceleration lanes if necessary.
- **Shared Access.** Entrances to abutting commercial properties should be combined wherever feasible to minimize curb cuts and provide for more efficient traffic flow across developments.
- **Internal Traffic Flow.** To ensure the safety of motorists and pedestrians, the development plan should clearly delineate internal traffic patterns for both vehicles and pedestrians. Parking spaces, directional arrows, crosswalks, raised curb landscaped islands, and other markings on the ground should be delineated with pavement paint/material signage.
- **Connections with Adjacent Properties.** Pedestrian and vehicular connections between parking lots and driveways on adjacent parcels should be provided wherever feasible to minimize turning movements onto major roadways. Internal connections should provide safe, direct access while discouraging vehicular



The predominance of curb cuts along this roadway creates an unsafe/uninviting pedestrian environment.

shortcuts. Cross easements should be provided as required to facilitate circulation, and anticipate future connections.

- **Refuge Zones.** Pedestrian islands (five feet minimum width) should be installed in driveways where the crossing distance is greater than 32 ft.
- **Traffic Calming.** New developments or modifications to existing buildings should ensure their integration with the existing and future traffic patterns and traffic volume through the use of appropriate traffic management techniques.

This raised crosswalk is traffic calming for both vehicles and pedestrians.



Traffic calming measures should be included where appropriate to discourage speeding within the site and between abutting properties. Measures may include speed tables, on-street parking, raised crosswalks, vertical curbing, curvilinear road alignment, roadside plantings, neck-downs, curbed islands, and signage.

- **Drive-Throughs.** Where such uses are allowable, access routes leading to or from takeout windows or other drive-throughs should minimize conflicts with pedestrian circulation routes. Motorists should be made aware of pedestrians through signage, lighting, raised crosswalks, changes in paving, or other devices.
- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Movement.** The development plan should provide for safe pedestrian and bicycle movement within the site and between abutting properties. Walkways should be designed to create a safe, efficient, and uninterrupted pedestrian way, and walkways should avoid frequent crossings by driveways or streets. They should be separated from streets and parking lots by curbs or other means to create physical separation. Specifically, onsite pedestrian connections should be provided



to and between the following points:

- The primary entrance or entrances to each building
 - Existing or planned transit stops, stations, and park-n-ride locations
 - Existing or future trail systems or amenities, where determined appropriate by the Rootstown Township Planning and Zoning Department
- **Maintenance.** All crosswalks and parking area lines should be repainted periodically to ensure their effectiveness.
 - **Transit Connections.** Redevelopment and/or site improvements should plan for access and connectivity to existing and future transit facilities, including, but not limited to, park-and-ride locations, pullouts, stops, and shelters. Transit stops should be incorporated into the layout of the site, and should be protected from automobiles, where feasible, to become safe pedestrian spaces.



This raised crosswalk is traffic calming for both vehicles and pedestrians.

PARKING AREAS

OBJECTIVES

Parking lots should be designed to complement adjacent buildings, the site, and the commercial district without becoming a dominant visual element. Every effort should be made to reduce the scale of parking lots by minimizing the total amount of paved surface visible from the road.

Providing more parking than the code requires adds substantial costs to development and redevelopment, and in some cases the added costs will prevent development altogether.

Parking lots should be designed as inviting, pedestrian-friendly places by careful attention to landscaping, lighting, and walkways.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Orientation.** Parking lots should be designed as part of the overall plan for the site, and coordinated with the circulation plan, building entrances, lighting, landscaping, snow storage, and service areas. Parking lots should be located and designed so they do not detract from the character and scale of the parking area should be located to the rear and sides of the building so that they can be screened by buildings.
- **Scale.** Parking areas should be broken up with trees, landscaped islands, grade changes, low walls, or other appropriate features. Large expanses of interrupted pavement should be avoided and new parking areas should incorporate green infrastructure facilities to accommodate runoff. See the Rootstown Township Zoning Resolution for specific guidelines regarding parking areas.

An attractively landscaped parking lot that is a positive asset to the business and the surrounding commercial area.



- **Shared Parking.** Shared parking use among different sites, where the peak parking demands occur at different times is encouraged.
- **Parking Aisles.** Parking lots should be oriented to minimize the number of parking lanes crossed by pedestrians.
- **Sustainable Parking.** Parking areas constructed with sustainable materials in accordance with LEED for similar design specifications can be used for infrequent parking or overflow parking.
- **Parking Obstruction.** Pedestrian walkways through parking areas should allow for at least a four foot (4') wide clear zone from vehicles obstructing the walkway.

PEDESTRIAN SPACES

OBJECTIVES

Commercial buildings should provide outdoor spaces for a variety of uses – seating/resting, dining, displays, and aesthetic enhancement – to create a pedestrian friendly environment. Decisions with respect to the pedestrian movement system should be considered concurrently with the site planning process, and should not be added as an afterthought in the form of pavement strips, left over space, or orientation signs.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Outdoor Spaces.** Development plans should include outdoor use areas such as greens, plazas, and courtyards appropriate to the use of the property. Buildings should be oriented toward open spaces rather than roadways, and should have a major access on the space. Outdoor spaces should be coordinated with the pedestrian circulation plan to encourage pedestrian use, with provisions for seating and outdoor activities. Outdoor spaces should be designed to separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic with landscaping, grade changes, and other site features.
- **Planning.** Where outdoor use areas are provided, they should be located in sunny, highly visible locations and sized to fit the anticipated uses.
- **Materials.** Outdoor use areas should be constructed of high quality, easily maintained materials. All elements within the space should be coordinated with the architecture and site elements to achieve a unified look. The use of decorative paving is encouraged for sitting areas, pedestrian plazas, building entrances, or other designed open spaces.

This pedestrian passageway should have been designed as an inviting green way space.



PUBLIC SIDEWALKS

OBJECTIVES

Public sidewalks and planted esplanades can be a highly desirable part of the streetscape, adding scale in a commercial landscape and creating a safe place for pedestrian movement.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Coordination with Other Sites.** Where sidewalks are required by the Township, they should be constructed within or near the right-of-way to encourage safe pedestrian movement. Facilities should be coordinated with abutting land uses to create interconnections throughout the commercial area and linkages to surrounding residential neighborhoods. Lighting and other amenities abutting walkways should be at human scale and provide line of sight to other pedestrians, motor vehicles, etc.



Private development should be connected with a public sidewalk wherever possible. This sidewalk and crosswalk connect the roadway to the entrance of the building.

Coordination with Site Plan.

All new sidewalks should be coordinated with the Site Plan to avoid conflicts with landscaping, utilities, grading, drainage structures, signs, and other elements.

- **Material Selection.** Materials selected for curbing and sidewalks should be durable and long-lasting, and consistent with the character of the district.

- **Crosswalks.** Where sidewalks intersect with commercial drives or roads, crosswalks should be installed to alert the motorist and improve visibility. Crosswalks should offer a noticeable change in texture and color. Raised crosswalks should be considered at key locations as a traffic calming device to make crosswalks more visible. Signs may be warranted in certain situations as determined by the Institute for Traffic Engineers (ITE).

INTERNAL WALKWAYS

OBJECTIVES

Site development should consider the needs of the pedestrian for safe, functional, attractive walkways throughout the property.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Location.** Internal walkways should be located where motorists can anticipate pedestrians and react accordingly. Walkways should be designed to give the pedestrian a full view of oncoming vehicles, with minimal interference from trees, shrubs, signs, light fixtures and parked cars. Walkways should avoid drive-through lanes, access and service drives, and other high-traffic routes.
- **Orientation.** Walkways in parking lots should be aligned with the main entry or a focal point on the building to assist in wayfinding.
- **Width.** Internal walkways should be a minimum of four feet wide. Additional width may be necessary in certain conditions, e.g., where shopping carts may be used, where heavy pedestrian traffic is anticipated, or where cars overhang the walkway.
- **Coordination with Landscaping.** Areas adjacent to walkways should be landscaped with trees, shrubs, flower beds, ground covers, or other such materials for year-round interest. Shrubs should be used with care to avoid blind spots. Special features, such as benches, flower beds, planters, and artwork can be used to enhance the walkway. Trees along all walkways should be trimmed to provide adequate sight distance and to remove potential obstacles.



A dedicated walkway that provides a safe, well-marked pathway to the main entrance while minimizing conflicts with vehicles

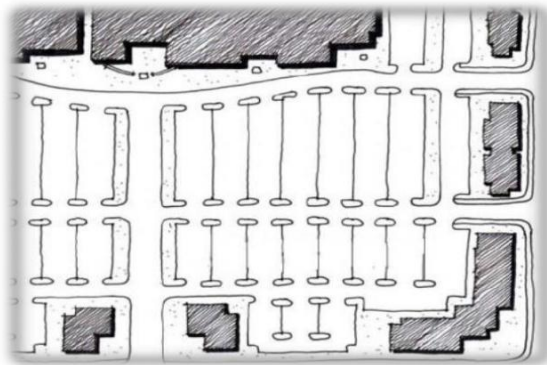
MULTIPLE BUILDING DEVELOPMENTS

OBJECTIVES

Developments consisting of more than one structure should exhibit a high degree of coordination in site planning, architectural design, site design, and site detailing. All physical components should be designed to complement an overall plan.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Master Plan.** Where multiple buildings are proposed, a master plan should be prepared to show the general location of future buildings, parking lots, roads and driveways, lighting, signage, landscaping, walkways, utilities, service areas, stormwater management, and other components of site development. The master plan should also show how traffic, stormwater, and utilities will be coordinated with adjacent properties. The plan should consider significant natural or cultural features and integrate open space.
- **Phasing Plan.** As part of the Development Plan application, the applicant should provide a phasing plan that illustrates the sequence of development and what steps will be taken to ensure compatibility between current and future activities.



This conceptual image demonstrates how outparcels and outparcel structures should be configured along off-site streets to create a consistent building wall along the street (note, does not include landscaping, pedestrian access, routes, etc.).

- **Building Orientation.** Multiple building developments should be designed to create usable, safe and attractive pedestrian spaces, at a “human scaled”, and preserve significant site features, and minimize the appearance of parking areas.
- **Focal Points.** A limited number of buildings or other elements should be designed as focal points. These structures should be visually more prominent, enhanced by height, massing, distinctive architectural treatment, lighting, landscaping, or other distinguishing features.
- **Circulation.** A unified site plan will be required that will identify ingress/egress, internal circulation, and shared driveways that should be installed, to the extent possible, with the first phase of development.

OUTDOOR SERVICE & STORAGE AREAS

OBJECTIVES

Outdoor service and storage areas should be integrated into the overall site plan. They should be designed to meet the functional needs of the facility while minimizing any traffic or visual conflicts, audible noise, or smells.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Locations.** All facilities for service, including waste collection and storage facilities/areas, off-street loading and unloading areas, loading docks, utility areas, mechanical equipment, dumpsters, fueling areas, and vehicle service and maintenance areas should be located at the side or rear of the principal building. Locations that face public roadways or abutting residential properties should be avoided.



This service area is screened by a solid wall that repeats the design elements used elsewhere on the site.

- **Design.** Outdoor service and storage areas should be sized to fit the specific needs of the building and its intended operations.
- **Screening Design.** Service areas should be screened with architectural elements such as walls or fences. Screening may be further enhanced with

evergreen trees, shrubs, and earth berms. Structural screens and fencing should complement the design of the main structure by repetition of materials, detailing, scale, and color. Where chain link fencing is required for safety, it should be landscaped and painted black or a similar dark color, or coated with dark vinyl. All screening shall be properly maintained.

- **Recycling Facilities.** The installation and use of recycling bins is encouraged. All recycling facilities should be screened in a manner similar to other service areas. Dumpsters and recycling areas should be consolidated where possible.



Trash enclosures should be sized to accommodate the dumpster for the facility.

BUFFERS & SCREENING

OBJECTIVES

Buffering or screening will be required in certain areas to ensure compatibility between incompatible land uses, particularly between commercial, industrial and residential properties. Plantings, earth berms, stone walls, grade changes, fences, distance, and other means can be used effectively to create the necessary visual and psychological separation.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Appropriateness.** The selection of the proper type of buffer should result from a thorough understanding of existing site conditions, distances to property lines, the intensity of the proposed land use, and the degree of concern expressed by the Planning & Zoning Department, Zoning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and abutting landowners
- **Design.** Buffers and screens should be considered an integral part of the Site Plan. Stone walls, plantings, fencing, landforms, etc., used for buffers should be similar in form, texture, scale, and appearance to other landscape elements.
- **Maintenance.** Buffers should be maintained throughout the life of the project in a condition that assures continual year-round effectiveness. Where plantings do not survive, or grow to a point where they no longer serve as effective buffers, they should be replaced to meet the intent of the approved plan. Walls, fencing, or earth berms used to screen parking lots and add visual interest to the planter strip should be designed as an integral part of the grading plan.

- **Fencing.** Where fencing or other architectural elements (e.g., screening walls) is installed in a highly visible location, it should be treated as an architectural element, complementing the form, style, color, or detailing of the adjacent building.



A variable height fence provides good visual separation between a convenience store and a residential neighborhood. The fence is attractive on both sides.

- **Walls.** Where freestanding walls are installed they should be constructed using durable materials. Walls at the street view should relate to the form, texture, and style of the walls installed by Rootstown Township.
- **Combinations.** Combining plantings, berms, fencing, and walls will often result in an economical, attractive way to meet the buffer requirements and create a distinctive landscape.



The use of decorative walls and materials in private development to mirror that installed by Rootstown Township is encouraged.



This row of trees helps create a visual buffer between the road and the plaza parking lot.

ON SITE AMENITIES

OBJECTIVES

An attractive public realm is a fundamental ingredient in the success of a commercial development with a high degree of shoppers, especially in mixed use development situations. Open air and semi-enclosed spaces that allow people to congregate and interact away from the flow of traffic are important elements of good urban design and should be encouraged in new developments of 5 acres or greater, or in developments with new building(s) or additions with new square footage totaling 50,000 square feet or greater.

The different types of open air and semi-enclosed spaces can be categorized as follows:

- **Public Spaces:** Public spaces are areas where the property is owned by a public agency and the public is allowed to enter and congregate.
- **Semi-Public Spaces:** Semi-public spaces consist of areas where the public is allowed to enter and congregate but, unlike public spaces, are owned by a private interest.

- **Private Spaces:**
Private spaces are owned by a private interest for the use of adjacent building employees, tenants, or customers. The typology of such spaces may be categorized as follows:

- **Patio or Plaza Area.** Patio or plaza areas shall be comprised of seating areas provided such patio or plaza has a minimum depth and width of ten (10) feet, and a minimum total area of three hundred (300) square feet.

- Asphalt is prohibited as a paver; use of decorative pavers or textured, colored concrete is required.
- Patios and plazas should include pedestrian amenities intended to support these places as gathering areas.

- **Landscaped Mini-Parks, Squares, or Greens.** Such park or green areas shall have a minimum depth and width of ten (10) feet and a minimum total area of six hundred fifty (650) square feet, and should include



Example of a shared public space integrated into site planning.

pedestrian amenities intended to support these places as gathering areas.

- Water Feature. Water features (e.g. fountain), provided the feature is easily accessed by pedestrians and includes or integrates seating areas for pedestrians.
- Outdoor Public Art. Outdoor public art, provided the feature is visible to pedestrians or motorists.
- Other. Other well-designed areas and/or focal feature may be considered, which the Planning and Zoning Department finds consistent with the intent of these guidelines, substantially enhances the development, and serves as a gathering place for residents, visitors, customers, and employees.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Size.** Patios, plazas, mini-parks, squares and greens should be proportionate in size to the development.
- **Visibility.** In order to serve as a focal point, a feature should be visible and easily recognizable as an area that encourages outdoor assembly.
- **Pedestrians.** Pedestrian amenities for patios and plazas, and for landscaped mini-parks, squares or greens may include seating, lighting, special paving, planting, food and flower vendors, and artwork.
- **Nearby Areas.** The presence or absence of complementary pedestrian spaces in adjacent and surrounding parcels, as well as nearby residential areas, should be considered when determining the appropriate location of an outdoor space and/or feature. Open spaces should be designed and sited to minimize any potential negative impact on adjoining properties, and used in a way that does not create disturbances.
 - **Visibility.** Providing good public visibility of on-site outdoor amenities should serve to enhance the security of pedestrians. Accordingly, when a building will be adjacent to a pedestrian plaza, patio, mini-park, square or green, the building wall facing such outdoor amenity should contain at least one of the following elements:
 - A building entry
 - Windows facing onto the outdoor amenity
 - Arcades along the edges of the outdoor amenity
 - Outdoor seating areas
- **Lighting.** For safety, nighttime use, to highlight selected elements and comfort.

ARCHITECTURE

INTRODUCTION

Rootstown Township's Design Guidelines establish standards for new or renovated commercial and light industrial buildings that will embrace future design. The guidelines are not intended to dictate building styles; rather they provide a guide that illustrates Rootstown Township's vision for its future.

Architectural Goals:

- Well-designed buildings that reinforce Rootstown Township's sense of place, and/or that of the surrounding area.
- Building designs that thoughtfully consider scale, form, orientation, height, setback, massing, materials, color, and architectural features.
- Buildings that present a 'front door' to the street and make a positive contribution to the streetscape.
- Buildings that are designed to address human scale, comfort, enjoyment, and safety of the users.
- Buildings that are designed as permanent, positive additions to the community, constructed of high quality, long lasting materials.
- Street corners that are treated as special places.
 - Architecture that recognizes diversity of Rootstown Township's zoning districts and geographic areas.
- Sustainable design should be a key consideration in building design.



This office structure uses a variety of durable, high quality materials.

GENERAL ARCHITECTURAL PRINCIPLES

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of these guidelines is to encourage architecture that provides lasting value. Building design should be developed to a human scale through careful consideration of architectural forms, massing, detailing, number and use of materials, and color.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Design.** New buildings should be designed to fit the specific characteristics of their particular site and surrounding area. The architecture will be influenced by use of lasting materials, the specific needs of the intended users, the nature of the intended use, and other site-specific factors.
- **Human Scale.** Buildings and site elements should be designed and detailed to human scale. Many architectural elements can add scale to a building – recessed openings, divided pane windows, building mounted light fixtures, projecting rooflines, covered walkways, and similar features – provided they are designed as integral parts of the overall structure.
- **Freestanding Accessory Structures.** Where freestanding non-habitable structures are allowed (e.g., ATMs, storage units, recycling sheds, trash enclosures, utility buildings), they should meet the same design standards as the principal building(s) on the site. The design of freestanding structures should be coordinated with the principal building through repetition of architectural forms, materials, colors, and detailing.



The scale of this traditional office design is reduced by variations in roofline, massing, and quality architectural details.

RENOVATIONS & ADDITIONS

OBJECTIVES

Renovations or additions offer an opportunity to add visual interest to existing buildings and to strengthen their relationship with the site and nearby structures. The Township expects high quality architectural and site design for all renovations and additions.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Materials.** Where the existing building currently meets the design guidelines, proposed renovations should be designed to respect the proportions and details of the original building. Where the existing building does not meet the design guidelines, the owner is strongly encouraged to upgrade the most visible portions of the entire structure.
- **Design.** Applications to the Zoning Commission or Board of Zoning Appeals that involve renovations and additions should show all improvements and how they relate to the existing structure.
- **Architectural Features.** Renovations should retain any distinctive architectural features, which should be incorporated into the addition where possible.
- **Addition Locations.** Efforts should be taken to provide building additions that provide a greater connection towards public roadways and help improve the pedestrian orientation of development.



This expansion continues the architectural character and materials of the original building.

FAÇADE DESIGN

OBJECTIVES

All buildings should be present an inviting, human scale façade to the street, internal drives, parking areas, and surrounding neighborhoods. Entrances should be clearly visible from the street and reinforced through site and architectural features.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Front Elevation.** The front facade (the facade facing streets) should be designed as the front of the building. The front elevation should contain a front door, and/or windows, and should incorporate human-scale detailing through the use of cornices, or other projections and details, structural or architectural bays, recessed windows or doors, material or material module changes, or color and/or texture differences so as to be easily recognized as the main access point. On corner lots, the main entrance should face the major street, or be located on the corner of the building. Building entrances should be visible from the street and provide unobstructed areas for pedestrians.
- **Side & Rear Elevations.** Similar materials and detailing, to a lesser extent, should be used on all facades to ensure continuity and design completeness and give the building scale and visual interest.
- **Entrances.** Each building should have a clearly defined, highly visible customer entrance, which is visually obvious and should be emphasized through the use of such architectural treatments. Building entrances shall be located where a sidewalk exists to a roadway, and in the case of multi-tenant buildings, each separate space should have its own public entrance. The use of the following architectural elements is recommended to add scale to the building, provided that they are integral to the design:
 - Canopies and covered walkways or arcades
 - Arches
 - Differing colors
 - Overhanging rooflines to provide shelter for pedestrians
 - Recesses or projections in keeping with the scale of the building
 - Raised corniced parapets over entrances.
 - Gables and dormers



The front facade of this restaurant has a well-defined entrance towards the roadway that offers some protection to its customers, and also provides a rear entrance from its parking area.

- **Integration into the Design.** Architectural details should be an integral part of the design of the structure, and not merely appendages.
- **Blank Walls.** Facades should not extend for more than 75 horizontal feet in length without incorporating architectural features such as windows, cornices, porches, corners, projections, changes in color or graphical patterns, variety in texture or building materials or offsets. Projections used to break up the mass of the building should extend to the ground. Blank walls should not face roadways, residential areas, or other public viewpoints.
- **Site Design.** Signage, lighting, landscaping and other exterior elements should be designed to complement the facade, avoid visual or functional conflicts, maintain visibility, and create visual interest in ways that are compatible with the architectural character of the surrounding area.
- **Ground Floors.** The horizontal length of the façade of the ground floor of buildings facing public streets should include awnings, transparent display windows, entry awnings, or other similar pedestrian-friendly features, and weather protection elements should be complementary to the building's design. As an alternative, other architectural elements may be used to provide scale and visual interest to the front facade.

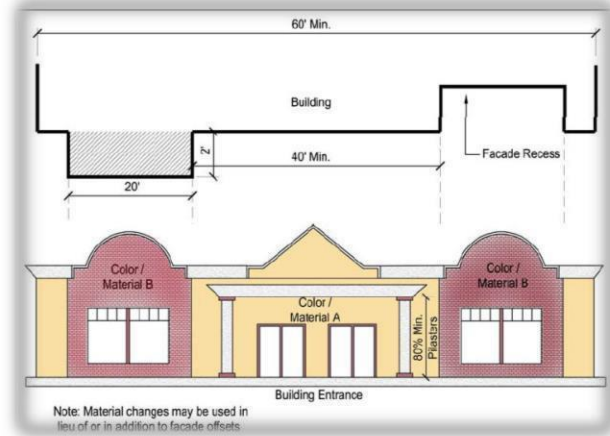


Illustration of how the facade offset provisions may be applied.

- **Shutters.** Where shutters are used, they should be sized to fit the openings and provided for all windows on a given wall.
- **Functional Elements.** All vents, downspouts, electrical conduits, service meters, HVAC equipment, service areas, loading docks, service connections, and other functional elements of the building should be treated as integral parts of the design. Meters, utility banks, HVAC equipment, and other exterior service elements should be contained in service closets, screened with walls or fences, or located out of view from the public. Building elevations should show the location and treatment of all functional elements. The designer is encouraged to locate as many of these functional elements as possible to the side or rear of the building.

BUILDING MATERIALS

OBJECTIVES

Building materials and design details reflect a building's style and character.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Materials.** Buildings should be constructed of high-quality materials and the use of variety of materials is encouraged. Acceptable primary materials include brick, clapboards and shingles (wood, fiberglass, metal), and stone or simulated stone. Contemporary secondary or supporting materials with the same visual characteristics as traditional materials (e.g., cement plank clapboards) are acceptable if properly detailed with surface textures and trim at openings, corners, and changes in material and in context with the primary materials. Painted medium density overlay (MDO) plywood is acceptable when used as a secondary material in combination with traditional materials to give it scale. Long-term maintenance needs should be a consideration in the selection of all building materials.
- **Materials Discouraged.** Highly reflective or processed materials (e.g., sheet metal or plastic panels, brushed aluminum, bronzed glass), stucco or synthetic stucco, adobe, concrete block, T-111, untreated plywood, particle board, tilt-up concrete panels, and multicolored brick (incorporating occasional white bricks in a random pattern) are discouraged as the primary facade material.
- **Colors.** Facade colors should be low reflectance. The use of high intensity, high reflectance, chrome, metallic, or fluorescent colors, or black is discouraged as the primary color.
- **Trim.** Where trim is used, it should be painted or stained to complement the building's primary color.
- **Detailing.** Arbitrary changes in materials or embellishments that are not in keeping with the rest of the building are discouraged.
- **EIFS (Exterior Insulation and Finish System).** EIFS is an exterior wall covering that insulates and provides weather protection in a selection of shapes, colors, and textures that can replicate almost any architectural style or finish



Example of materials encouraged in new building design.

material, or stand by itself as an architectural finish. In some instances, and with proper maintenance, EIFS may be an acceptable secondary material in building design.

AWNINGS & CANOPIES

OBJECTIVES

When properly installed and maintained, awnings and canopies can enhance the appearance and function of a building by providing shade, shelter, shadow patterns, and visual interest. Where awnings are used, they should complement the design, materials, and color of the building.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Location.** Where awnings are used, both fixed or retractable, they should be an integral element of the architecture. Awnings should be located directly over windows or doors to provide protection from the elements, and maintained in working condition.
- **Materials.** Awnings and canopies should not be made of highly reflective materials. Their colors should complement the facade of the building.
- **Design Elements.** Graphics used on awnings for identification or advertising should be designed as an integral part of the signage for the property, and be coordinated with other sign elements in terms of typeface, color, and spacing.



These awnings act to bring down the scale of the facade.

ROOFS

OBJECTIVES

Rooflines can add visual interest to the streetscape and establish a sense of continuity between adjacent buildings. When used properly, rooflines can reduce the mass of large structures, emphasize entrances, and provide shade and shelter for the pedestrian.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Preferred Materials.** Composite asphalt shingles and standing-seam non-glare metal are preferred for visible roofing. High gloss roofing materials are prohibited.
- **Roof Colors.** Roofing materials should complement the color and texture of the building's facade. Roof colors should be muted earth tones or a color that is darker than the facade. Stripes and patterns on the roof are strongly discouraged.
- **Roof Pitch.** Prominent roofs should have a minimum pitch of 4/12 (ratio of rise to run), unless demonstrated to the Zoning Commission or Board of Zoning Appeals' satisfaction that this is not practicable from an engineering or technical standpoint.
- **Flat Roofs.** Flat roofs, though discouraged, are permitted except that where any non-architectural roofing materials (e.g. tar and paper) are utilized, such roofing shall be concealed with parapet walls that have 3-dimensional cornice treatments or similar screening methods. All roof-based equipment shall be located on the rear of elevations so as to have minimal visual impact from a public street or surrounding residential uses.
- **Rooflines.** Where appropriate, eaves and roof overhangs should be incorporated into the design of the roof to provide a distinct shadow line.



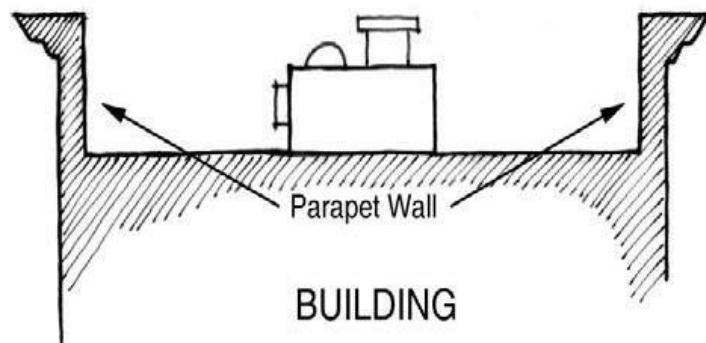
The higher roof structures are integrated into the roofline and provides a welcome break in the length of the building.

- **Roof-Mounted Equipment.** Mechanical, HVAC, and other equipment mounted on rooftops should be screened from public view or grouped in a location where visibility is limited. Screening for roof-mounted equipment should be designed as an integral part of the architecture to complement the building's mass and appearance.
- **Projections.** The use of cupolas, dormers, chimneys, and other roof projections is encouraged, provided they are designed as integral parts of the structure and do not appear to be floating or pasted on.



Roof-mounted mechanical equipment has been effectively screened by a roof top structure (above).

The below picture better illustrates what is hidden beyond the roof line.



STREET CORNERS

OBJECTIVES

Buildings located on corners are particularly important because they help define the character of two streets. These high-visibility locations should be emphasized by quality architecture and site development.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Siting on Corner Lots.** A building on the corner of two public streets should be located as close to the intersection as allowed by the Rootstown Township Zoning Resolution or adopted Plan. No parking, vehicular travelways, or service areas should be located between the building and property lines along both streets.

- **Corner Buildings.** Buildings on corners should be articulated to add mass and visual prominence to the street corner.



- **Entrance.** The main entrance to the building may be located on

This building's architecture shape is the type of shape encouraged by the Township for buildings at street corners, with both sides having windows facing the street and the entrance located near the intersection.

the major street or on the corner and designed to be visible from both streets. The architectural treatment of the corner should emphasize its prominent position. This can be accomplished by greater massing, unique detailing, lighting, etc.

- **Focal Points.** Corner locations offer opportunities to create dynamic focal points in the streetscape. These can take the form of distinctive architectural elements, signs, sculpture, lighting, or landscaping. Where they are used, focal points should be visually related to the building as a whole, providing an accent without overwhelming it.

LINEAR COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

OBJECTIVES

Linear commercial buildings (e.g., strip shopping centers, multi-tenant offices, and commercial buildings) should be designed with facade and roofline elements that reduce their scale and add architectural interest.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Design.** Buildings with multiple storefronts (e.g., strip shopping centers, one story office buildings) should be visually unified through the use of complementary architectural forms, similar materials and colors, consistent details, and coordinated signage. Variations in the front setbacks, especially those projecting towards the street, are strongly encouraged to add visual interest, and create spaces for common entries.

- **Scale.** Linear structures should include architectural elements designed to provide shelter, encourage pedestrian movement, and visually unite the building. These can include covered walkways, open colonnades, and similar features.

- **Entrances.** Pedestrian entrances to each building should be clearly delineated to convey a sense of individuality. This can be accomplished by architectural detailing, roofline breaks, landscaping, lighting, or a

combination of these elements. Where covered walkways are used, they should extend the full length of the facade.



A retail complex where changes in the rooflines help to break up the mass of the building.

- **Roof Lines.** Variations in rooflines, detailing, and building heights should be included to break up the scale of connected linear buildings.
- **Focal Points.** Linear commercial buildings should include a focal point – such as raised entrance way, clock tower, or other architectural elements – to add visual interest, help reduce the scale of the building, and highlight the entrance.
- **Pedestrian Access.** Where a multi-tenant building greater than two hundred (200) feet wide separates two public areas, pedestrian access should be provided through the building(s). The pedestrian pass-through must stay open, regardless of whether businesses are open or closed.

SERVICE STATIONS & CONVENIENCE STORES

OBJECTIVES

Service stations and convenience stores that sell gasoline should be designed with facade and roofline elements that reduce their scale and add architectural interest to the building.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Orientation.** Service stations and convenience stores should be sited to face the street.
- **Canopies.** Where canopies are used over gasoline pumps, they should be integrated into the design of the building. Canopies should complement the main structure through consistency in roof pitch, architectural detailing, materials, and color. Pitched roofs with fascia trim are preferred for canopies. Bands of bold color on the canopy and backlighting inside the canopy are discouraged.
- **Pedestrian Circulation.** Connections to the public sidewalk should be included in the site plan to encourage pedestrian use. Access routes leading to or from service stations and convenience stores should minimize conflicts with pedestrian circulation.



The pump canopy repeats the same forms, colors and materials as the main building.

DRIVE-THROUGHS

OBJECTIVES

Drive-throughs (for restaurants, pharmacies, banks, and similar uses) should be subordinate to the design of the main building. Drive-throughs require careful consideration of architectural design and circulation planning to integrate them into the streetscape.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Drive-Throughs.** Where drive-throughs are allowed, they should be incorporated into the design of the building through their scale, color, detailing, massing, and other architectural treatments. Drive-through operations and other automobile-oriented facilities should be designed with facade and roofline elements through roof pitch, architectural detailing, materials, and color, which reduce their scale and add architectural interest. Bands of bold color on the canopy and backlighting inside the canopy are discouraged.
- **Location.** Drive-throughs should be located at the side or rear of the building and avoid facing public or private roadways. Where drive-throughs are located at the rear, consideration should be given to making the site as visible as possible to ensure the safety of the patrons.



This drive-through has been designed as an integral part of the building. It repeats rooflines, forms, and materials used in the main building.

MULTI STORY / “BIG BOX” BUILDINGS

OBJECTIVES

Large scale multi story or “big box” buildings that are typically built of masonry or concrete block materials should include architectural variations and details that provide variety in materials, forms and colors.

Architectural design should add to community character, while providing flexibility to avoid rigid uniformity of design. All elements including the scale and mass of buildings, materials, colors, roof styles, door and window openings, and details should promote a cohesive design aesthetic. Building masses should respond to a human scale with materials and details that provide visual interest at the street and sidewalk level. Buildings should be reduced in apparent mass or articulated to avoid large monolithic shapes.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Materials.** Buildings should be constructed of high quality materials that relate to the color, form, and texture of the proposed structure as well as nearby structures.



The facade elements of this building help make the building have a pedestrian scale.

- **Building Mass, Forms, and Pedestrian Scale.** Variations in facade elements should reduce perceived mass and scale. Variations in color, materials, and/or texture, and a facade composition that uses rhythms and patterns of windows, columns, and other architectural features are encouraged. Buildings should have features and patterns that provide visual interest at the scale of the pedestrian, which reduces apparent mass and that relate to local architectural character.
- **Design Elements.** Moldings and trim should be incorporated into the façade. Building entrances shall contrast with the surrounding wall planes by changing materials and color from the primary facade. Any wall within a Public Zone should incorporate significant architectural treatments and features to diminish the building mass.
- **Roof Lines and Roof Elements.** Roofs should contribute to the unified appearance of each development and should be considered as seen from ground level, other adjacent buildings and public roadways. Roof lines include the main building as well as entrances, arcades, and porches. Avoid roof/parapet lines running in continuous planes absent variations in height, vertical planes (jogs), or materials. All mechanical, electrical, and electronic equipment attached to or mounted on the building roof should be set back from the edge of roof and screened from public view. Screening material should be compatible with materials and colors.



Despite this department store being 40 feet tall, the architectural elements of the entrance makes it pedestrian friendly.

LANDSCAPE

INTRODUCTION

Landscaping should be an integral part of all site plan developments. Trees, shrubs, and other landscape elements can be used to accentuate buildings, create a sense of identity, reduce the number of impervious surfaces, and provide human scale. Applicants should carefully evaluate the physical characteristics of each site and their own maintenance abilities when making the final selection to ensure that the plantings will survive and achieve maturity in their selected locations.

These Guidelines are intended to supplement, illustrate, and amplify the existing landscaping standards and the landscaping criteria outlined in the Rootstown Township Zoning Resolution or in the adopted plan.

Landscaping Goals:

- Incorporate appropriate plantings that are in scale with their surroundings.
- Separate roadways from commercial development by attractive landscape planter strips.
- Incorporate plantings in parking lots to add aesthetic value, reduce their scale, provide canopy shade, reduce radiant heat from the surface, reduce headlight glare, and add seasonal interest.
- Preserve mature trees and other significant landscape features which help define the character of the community.
- Provide screening for less attractive parts of a site or incompatible land uses.
- Help define areas where pedestrians are safely separated from a road or drive pattern.
- Reinforce wayfinding by emphasizing entrances and circulation patterns.



A mixture of landscape materials is encouraged, especially where visible from the public right of way.

GENERAL LANDSCAPE PRINCIPLES

OBJECTIVES

Development in Rootstown Township should be characterized by a rich variety of landscape materials that enhance human scale, complement the architecture, reinforce circulation paths, highlight entrances, provide canopy shade, and add seasonal interest.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Plans.** Landscape Plans should be prepared by a landscape architect registered in Ohio, or other qualified professional familiar with local growing conditions.
- **Coordination with Site Features.** The landscape plan should show all utilities, signage, lighting, pedestrian circulation, and other site features that may influence the selection or location of plantings. The plan should be designed to avoid conflicts (both at the time of planting and in the future) between plantings and other site elements.
- **Safety.** The selection of plant materials should consider public health so they will not create unsafe conditions,



A landscaped detention area for a small retail center.

interfere with utilities
or block sight lines for
pedestrians, bicyclists,

- or motorists.

Variety. Plant materials should exhibit some seasonal color and interesting texture to create a distinctive, yet low maintenance environment. Landscape plans should strike a balance between monoculture (the use of a single species) and excessive variety.

Irrigation. Underground irrigation is encouraged in front setbacks, public spaces, and other highly visible areas. It should be designed to prevent overflow or flooding onto walkways or parking lots.

TREE PROTECTION

OBJECTIVES

Mature trees along roadways in the Township and nearby areas are an important element of community character that also reflects Rootstown Township's preservation initiatives. They provide significant shade, year-round visual interest, and comfort to pedestrians. Where practical, existing mature specimen trees should be preserved during development. Preserving large existing trees within the planting strip will decrease the number of new trees required.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Existing Trees/Plants.** The preservation of existing or unique trees or other significant plantings should be considered during the initial site inventory and development of the sketch plan. Transplanting and reusing trees and other plantings is strongly encouraged.
- **Tree Protection.** The landscape plan should show how existing trees and vegetation will be protected during construction. As a general rule, no construction activity should be allowed within the drip line (outer edge of the tree canopy). This includes grading, compaction, utility installation, stockpiling of construction material, or movement of vehicles.
- **Temporary Measures.** Barricades in the form of snow fencing or similar materials should be installed during construction to protect trees and their root zones.
- **Grade Changes.** Grading within the drip line in excess of a few inches should be avoided since it may cause irreparable damage to the root system and cause the tree to die.



These trees were protected during the construction and they help provide visual interest and significant shade.

- **Tree Walls/Wells.** Where grading is required near trees to be preserved, properly designed tree wells or walls may be used to ensure the long-term health of the tree.

PLANTING STRIPS

OBJECTIVES

Commercial development should be separated from the adjacent roads by landscaped planting strips. These areas should be designed to screen parking areas, separate land uses, and visually unify the Township's business districts.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Ground Covers.** Appropriate ground cover includes turf grass, ornamental grasses, perennials, low-growing evergreens and flowering shrubs. Planting other than turf grass should be spaced close enough to achieve full coverage within 3 years after installation.
- **Plant Masses.** Shrubs, perennials, annuals, and ornamental grasses used in planter strips should be installed in masses or 'drifts' that emphasize colors, forms, and textures. glare and the view of vehicles, while still allowing the public to see the building.
- **Streetside Trees.** The required trees within planter strips may be installed in a linear fashion or informal groupings. Linear plantings may be appropriate along roadways to create a boulevard effect, using large spreading deciduous trees to define the edge of the travelway, provide shade and add scale, a sense of place, and orientation to commercial corridors.
- **Roadside Plantings.** Trees and other landscaping planted at intersections should preserve a clear area for sight lines to roadways and businesses.
- **Parking Lots.** Parking areas should be separated from the street by plantings, earth berms, walls, and/or other landscape elements to minimize headlight

Planting strips should be fully vegetated with turf grass or other living plant material.





Linear grouping of trees can be used to create a boulevard effect.

PARKING LOT LANDSCAPING

OBJECTIVES

Landscaping in parking lots can be used to improve their appearance, reduce the scale and amount of paved areas, define edges, provide shade, reduce headlight glare, and add seasonal interest.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Trees in Parking Lots.** The interior area of any parking lot should be landscaped, with planting requirements set forth in the Rootstown Township Zoning Resolution. The development plan should incorporate landscaped islands as a means of creating an attractive character; establish a sense of place, and to increase the value and marketability of the development.
- **Location of Trees.** Trees should be planted a minimum of three feet (3') from the end of parking lot islands.
- **Safety.** Trees in parking lots or those that abut walkways should be pruned above the paved surface to avoid becoming an obstacle. Shrubs and ornamental plantings in parking lot islands should not block visibility.
- **Entryways.** The design of entryways should provide for a substantial landscape treatment. A variety of plant materials should be used to establish an attractive landscape with year-round color and texture. In addition, other elements such as earth berms, decorative walls, low fencing, landscape lighting, sculptural elements, paving, water feature, and signage may be utilized based on an effective design and these themes should be carried through the development.



Ornamental trees lead the eye to the entrance of this retail center.

TREE SELECTION & PLANTING

OBJECTIVES

Trees are used throughout Rootstown Township, including those planted within the right of way, near buildings, and in parking lots. Trees should be sited to achieve full maturity and display their natural form.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Suitability.** Trees should be resistant to insect infestation, drought, disease, roadside salt, and auto emissions. All plant material should be suitable to Rootstown Township's growing conditions.
- **Planting Locations.** Trees should be planted in locations where their root development and branching patterns will not interfere with window displays, signage, underground or overhead utilities, streets, and sidewalks.
- **Pedestrian Movement.** The lower branches of trees planted near pathways and sidewalks should minimize interference with pedestrian movement throughout the year.



Trees, shrubs, and perennial groundcover used to create a highly unified, inviting streetscape.

SHRUBS & ORNAMENTAL PLANTING

OBJECTIVES

A variety of shrubs and ornamental plantings should be used throughout the community to add seasonal color, provide visual interest, help define spaces, screen undesirable elements, and emphasize circulation routes.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Variety in Plantings.** The use of flowering shrubs, evergreen shrubs, perennials, annuals, vines, ornamental grasses, and other plant material is highly recommended, in addition to street trees, evergreen trees, and ornamental trees.
- **Selection.** The selection of plantings should consider ultimate height and spread, maintenance, pest and disease tolerance, and their nuisance potential (severe thorns, excessive leaf litter, etc.).
- **Foundation & Wall Plantings.** Planting beds are recommended along exposed building edges, foundations and uninterrupted walls. Plantings should be installed a minimum of 18 inches from the wall to allow proper root zone development. Plantings should provide either a formal pattern or a naturalistic blend of heights, colors, and species.



Small areas of accent plantings can add color, texture and visual interest to the landscape.

LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

OBJECTIVES

Landscape plans should anticipate 3-8 years for shrubs to achieve maturity, and 1520+ years for trees. Proper maintenance should be provided to assure that the landscaping achieves its proper form and full height. Maintenance of all landscape elements should be considered in the development of the Site Plan.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Replacement Planting.** If plant materials specified, including grass areas, do not survive or are damaged, they should be replaced in accordance with the approved planting plan and to provide the necessary landscape effect.
- **Low Maintenance Materials.** The use of plant materials and landscape elements that require a low degree of maintenance is strongly encouraged.



Despite this property being vacant, this landscape strip still enhances the streetscape because low maintenance materials are used.

LIGHTING

OBJECTIVES

Outdoor lighting directly impacts the visual appearance of Rootstown Township, as well as the Township's safety and security. The following lighting guidelines are designed to help balance the need for visibility and safety and enhance the visual quality of Rootstown Township, while respecting the privacy of abutting residential properties.

Lighting in commercial developments is a major determinant of night time activity. It should create a sense of safety, particularly for pedestrians, and should emphasize key features of the site. At the same time, it needs to balance the lighting needs of the different uses on the site and reinforce a



unified image and identity for the project.

Lighting plans should consider illumination levels and fixtures that accommodate safety and visibility needs, but are also respectful of neighbors and are compatible with nearby development. Light levels should comply with the Rootstown Township

Zoning Resolution and not exceed the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) recommended minimum standards. These Guidelines are intended to supplement, illustrate, and amplify such provisions.

Lighting Goals:

- Provide appropriate levels of lighting to ensure visibility and safety in both pedestrian and vehicular areas while avoiding over-illumination.
- Promote wise energy consumption.
- Help to unify the quality of the visual environment through the selection of attractive, appropriately scaled fixtures.
- Avoid light fixtures or mountings that can cause distractions or hazards to motorists or pedestrians.
- Minimize reflected light from parking lots and large commercial users that contribute to skyglow.
- Avoid intrusions onto abutting properties, especially residential uses.
- Enhance noteworthy features such as monuments, sculpture, or architectural elements.

GENERAL LIGHTING PRINCIPLES

OBJECTIVES

Exterior lighting should be designed to provide the minimum level of illumination necessary for security, safety, and visual appeal for both pedestrians and vehicles. Lighting should allow activity after sunset without adding to unnecessary skyglow. Functional, aesthetic, and safety goals should be met with fixtures that are designed as integral site elements.

The selection of light fixtures shall be made in the context of the entire development, so that similar materials, colors, etc. are replicated.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Lighting Plan.** Lighting plans required for development plan review should be presented with the application to enable staff, the Zoning Commission, and/or Board of Zoning Appeals to properly understand and review the lighting design.

- **Pole and Fixture Design.** The location and design of lighting should complement adjacent buildings, pedestrian amenities, and site elements. Poles and fixtures should be proportionate to the buildings and spaces they illuminate.



- **Mounting**

Heights. Light fixtures should be mounted at the lowest level allowing compliance with

The Lighting Plan for this commercial building considers both security and visual appeal for motorists and pedestrians.

IESNA practices and the Rootstown Township Zoning Resolution.

- **Safety and Energy Conservation.** Illumination levels should not exceed the minimums to provide safe conditions as currently defined by the IESNA.
- **Safety Considerations.** The design and placement of plantings, buffers, screen walls, fencing, and other landscape elements should be coordinated with the lighting plan to eliminate dark spots and potential hiding places.
- **Feature Lighting.** Unique building or landscape features may be highlighted if the lighting does not create glare or distraction.
- **Light Pollution.** Lighting should not cause spillover onto neighboring residential properties or create dangerous conditions due to glare on adjacent roadways.
- **Energy Saving Devices.** Wherever practicable, lighting design should include the installation of timers, photo sensors, and other energy saving devices to reduce the overall energy required for the development and eliminate unnecessary lighting.

DRIVEWAYS, PARKING LOTS, OUTDOOR SALES & SERVICE AREAS

OBJECTIVES

Proposed lighting for driveways, parking lots, and outdoor sales and service areas should be designed to provide the minimum lighting necessary for traffic and pedestrian safety. Lighting should not cause glare or avoidable spillover onto adjacent properties. Poles and fixtures should be proportional in size to the roadways they are illuminating.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Illumination.** Driveway lighting should be designed to illuminate the roadway and sidewalk, with a concentration on roadways. Light fixtures should be selected and aimed to prevent glare and spillage onto abutting properties.
- **Design.** The design and color of fixtures (poles and luminaries) used along driveways should complement the architecture, landscaping, and street furnishings of the site to be developed or redeveloped in terms of color, form, and style.
- **Layout.** The alignment and spacing of fixtures in parking lots should follow a regular pattern that is coordinated with the orientation of buildings and other site elements.
- **Location.** Light poles should be incorporated within raised planting areas wherever possible to avoid damage from vehicles and plows.
- **Coordination with Planting Plan.** The lighting plan should be coordinated with the landscape plan to avoid obstructions from large trees, dark spots from shadows, or other conflicts as plantings mature.



Simple 'shoe -box' fixtures mounted on square poles provide a clean look that compliments the architecture.

PEDESTRIAN SPACES

OBJECTIVES

The lighting of pedestrian spaces should consider users' needs and safety. Light standards should adequately, but not excessively, illuminate not only the space occupied by people, but also the elements within those spaces such as stairs, walls, benches, curbs, and landscaping. Light fixtures should be oriented to pedestrian circulation so that pedestrian ways are emphasized and safety is enhanced.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Heights.** Mounting heights for pedestrian lighting should be appropriate for the project and the setting. Light bollard fixtures, 3-4 feet in height, and ornamental fixtures, up to 12 feet in height, are encouraged as pedestrian area lighting.
- **Luminaries.** Lamps should be high efficiency, housed in a luminaire that is classified by IESNA as a cutoff fixture. In general, illumination should not exceed 100 watts.
- **Decorative.** Ornamental and decorative lighting should be used to highlight significant design elements (e.g., gateways, plazas, major building entrances).
- **Scale.** Pedestrian circulation is encouraged and therefore pedestrian-oriented lighting is encouraged. Pedestrian area lighting should emphasize the location of pedestrian ways and be in character with the architectural and landscape design of the development.
- **Number of Fixtures.** For pedestrian circulation areas the use of a greater number of low fixtures is preferred over fewer taller fixtures. In either case, the layout should avoid major dark spots between fixtures.



Low pedestrian lights should be well constructed and secured to a permanent base to prevent damage and dislocation. Bollard fixtures like above provide even illumination and complement the building.

BUILDING FACADES & LANDSCAPE LIGHTING

OBJECTIVES

Facade lighting is a way of highlighting special architectural features and attractively landscaped areas, while adding depth and variety to developments at night. Lighting used to illuminate building facades and landscaping should be limited to areas where it enhances particular features in accordance with the overall lighting plan and does not disturb surrounding residential areas.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Location.** Lighting fixtures should be properly sited, aimed, and shielded so that light is directed only onto the building facade. Lighting fixtures should not be directed toward adjacent streets, sidewalks, or properties.
- **Mounting Heights.** The maximum light fixture height for building mounted light fixtures should be 15 feet on the facades facing public streets (the front lot line) and 20 feet on all other facades.
- **Wall-Mounted Fixtures.** Facade-mounted lighting fixtures should include full face shielding: either solid panel or louvers that direct the light upward or downward.



These facade-mounted lighting fixtures are visually compatible with the form and color of the building.

SERVICE STATIONS, CONVENIENCE STORES, SERVICE AREAS & CANOPY LIGHTING

OBJECTIVES

Lit canopies, architectural features, or devices used to illuminate gas stations, convenience stores, and drive-through elements of a building should facilitate the activities taking place in such locations without creating glare onto adjacent properties or roadways.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Canopy Luminaries.** Canopy-mounted light fixtures must comply with the Rootstown Township Zoning Resolution so motorists cannot see the source of light. Drop fixtures are not permitted.
- **Fascia.** Lights should not be mounted on the sides (fascia) or top of the canopy. Sides and tops of canopies should not be illuminated.
- **Service Areas.** Fully shielded lighting fixtures should be used in all parking areas, in service and delivery areas.



Lighting should be considered as an integral part of the canopy design. The canopy fixtures are recessed so the light source is not visible and does not create 'hot spots' that are distracting to the passing motorist.

SIGNAGE

BACKGROUND

Signs play a central role in providing information and wayfinding. They inform motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians, while having a direct effect on the overall appearance of the roadway.

These Guidelines are intended to supplement, illustrate and amplify the provisions of the Rootstown Township Zoning Resolution, and those found in adopted plans for areas of the Township.

Signage Goals

- Provide basic, legible information with attractive, highly legible signage.
- Create distinctive signage that is compatible with quality architecture and site design.
- Reduce visual clutter along roadways in Rootstown Township.
- Protect the investment of commercial interests throughout Rootstown Township by establishing a quality benchmark for future signage.
- Promote safety and wayfinding by ensuring adequate display of building/business address number.



Freestanding/monument signage is encouraged to reflect the architecture and/or building materials used in the primary structure.

GENERAL SIGN PRINCIPLES

OBJECTIVES

Commercial establishments should be identified by attractive, legible signs that serve the needs of the individual business, complement the site and the architecture, and are legible to both the motorist and pedestrian.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Signage Plan.** Information on the location and design of signs should be submitted as part of the application. The applicant should resubmit the plan to the planning staff for review, if the building's tenant is unknown at the time of application.
- **Compatibility.** Signs should be designed to achieve a high level of visual compatibility with the building(s) and surroundings through the use of similar detailing, form, color, lighting, and materials.
- **Design.** The shape of the sign should complement the architectural features on the building. Simple geometric shapes are preferred for all signage. Signs should be detailed to complement the building.
- **Lettering Size.** In general, the minimum lettering size for identification signs should be six inches in height. Smaller letters are generally unreadable at high speeds and may require motorists to slow down to read them, potentially causing safety hazards.
- **Advertising Features.** Objects other than signs designed primarily to attract public attention are discouraged because they distract motorists and contribute to visual clutter. These include greater-than-life size models of food or other products, replicas of spokes-people associated with commercial products and rows of flags and banners.
- **Materials.** The composition of signs shall be made of durable materials that reflect those used on the principal structure. The use of painted plywood shall be discouraged.



The name of the business and the main message is clear and readable.

- **Messages.** Signs used to identify businesses should be kept simple and direct in message and content and convey only the most essential information about the business.

FREESTANDING SIGNAGE

OBJECTIVES

Signage that is not affixed to a facade shall be designed to complement the design of the building and in concert with the signage pattern and character of public and private development.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Height.** Signage is encouraged to be erected at lower heights, maintaining clearance above landscaping and parked automobiles, and below power lines and mature trees.
- **Signage Support Structures.** The use ground mounted signs are generally encouraged, as opposed to pole signs. Support structure for such signs shall be of materials that are compatible with the sign and surrounding site, preferably constructed with a stone base.
- **Readerboards.** Where readerboards are part of a permanent sign, they should contain no more than three lines of text. Lettering height should be a maximum of 6". The readerboard should be fully integrated into the overall sign design by virtue of its form, scale, color, and detailing.



Highly legible sign characterized by simplicity in materials, with the prominent display of the building address for motorists, and use of materials that match the primary structure.

BUILDING-MOUNTED SIGNS

OBJECTIVES

Building-mounted signs used to identify commercial properties should be integrated into the design of the building.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Design.** Facade-mounted signs should be designed as an integral element of the architecture. The shape and materials of the sign should complement the architectural features on the building.
- **Location.** Signs should not be mounted in locations that obscure architectural details on the building. Signage should be mounted on vertical surfaces without projecting above the fascia trim.
- **Signage Placement.** Signage on awnings, windows, and other facade elements shall be designed to complement and be consistent with the building architecture.



These signs are well integrated with the architecture, using only essential information about the tenant.

MULTI TENANT PROPERTIES

OBJECTIVES

Multi-tenant commercial properties should provide legible, attractive signs that help people identify the property without contributing to sign clutter. Entrance signs should stress the identity of the place and de-emphasize individual tenants that occupy it.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Hierarchy of Signs.** A hierarchy of signage should be established to facilitate wayfinding and minimize site clutter. Multi-tenant properties on major roadways should be identified by a simple identification sign in a highly visible location.
- **Identification Signs.** Multi-tenant buildings or multi-building sites should have one identification sign conveying an overall identity for the property. This sign should be located near the main entrance to reinforce circulation patterns and minimize visual clutter. Identification signs that also list multiple tenants should exhibit a logical hierarchy in the display of information (i.e., address, name of building/development, primary tenant, other tenants).
- **Informational & Directional Signs.** Entryway, informational they should be an integral design element of the development's character and architecture.
- **Compatibility.** The design of multi-tenant signs should be coordinated with and directional signs should conform to the Rootstown Township Zoning Resolution, and the design of the principal building (s) in terms of color, materials, detailing, and style.
- **Color Consistency.** Multi-tenant signs should conform to a simple color



This retail center is identified by a single sign at the entrance; names of the tenants are primarily found on the building facades. The result is less clutter along the busy road.

and graphic palette in order to minimize the confusion and clutter of the sign. In general, multi-tenant signs should have no more than three colors.



A multi-tenant sign with a clean hierarchy of information. Individual tenants are listed in large print for legibility.

EXTERNALLY-LIT SIGNS

OBJECTIVES

Lighting for externally-lit signs should be designed as an integral part of the sign design. Lighting must not create glare that would distract motorists or pedestrians, nor should the degree of illumination disturb the surrounding residential areas or contribute to light pollution.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Light Level.** The illumination level on the vertical surface of the sign should be bright enough to provide a noticeable contrast with the surrounding building or landscape without causing undue glare or reflection.
- **Lighting.** Lighting fixtures should be carefully located, aimed, and shielded so that light is directed only onto the sign facade. Lights should not be aimed toward adjacent streets, sidewalks, or abutting properties. Ground-mounted lighting should be screened or partially buried to minimize the view of the light source.
- **Design.** Light fixtures and mounting devices should be selected to complement the color and design of the sign and the architecture. Concealed light sources are strongly encouraged.



The lawn-mounted light fixture has been aimed to avoid spillover onto abutting property. Landscape could conceal light sources and minimize hotspots for drivers and pedestrians.

INTERNALLY-LIT SIGNS

OBJECTIVES

Internally-lit signs should not create glare that would distract motorists or pedestrians, nor should the degree of illumination disturb surrounding residential areas or contribute to light pollution.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Design.** Internally-lit signs should consist of light lettering and/or symbols set against a dark background to minimize the amount of light emanating from the sign. Internally-lit letters and symbols are preferred over whole panels that are internally lit.
- **Intensity.** Internally-lit signs should not act as light fixtures or cause glare on nearby pathways or roadways.
- **Maintenance.** Signs should be located where they can be easily maintained. Non-functioning bulbs should be replaced immediately.



An effective use of individual internally-lit letters to create a simple identity for a commercial building.