

# 13 Design Guidelines

## Introduction

The physical appearance of a site, architecture and landscape is critical to the success of the Southfield community. Achieving a healthy and vibrant image is the goal of these guidelines. They advocate a strong and consistent site development/redevelopment design vision for the community. To ensure that the recommendations of the guidelines are achievable, these guidelines are intended to be functionally compatible with and a supplement to the City of Southfield's Zoning Ordinance. The intent of the guidelines is to maintain flexibility and responsiveness to market conditions over time while still providing the vision and ground rules necessary for a successful development/redevelopment style that would span the years. The purpose of these Design Guidelines is to improve the overall quality of public and private development/improvement projects in the community, ensure the compatibility of development with surrounding land uses, and enhance pedestrian safety and walkability and vehicular movement and access within and through the community.

## Applicability

These Design Guidelines will apply universally to all public and private development/improvement projects in the community. The guidelines are intended to become a part of the development review process that is discretionary in nature for types of review that include:

- Requests for Rezoning
- Site Plan Approval
- Special Use Approval
- Major Rehabilitation of Existing Structures

Major rehabilitation shall mean any renovation, restoration, modification, addition or retrofit of a structure or site. Major rehabilitation shall not include routine maintenance and repair of a structure or feature on the site, such as roof replacement or general repairs to a parking area or other site feature.

While the guidelines address the physical design of different types of land uses and structures, they encompass large areas of the City. Thus, they are general in scope and coverage. In some cases, the Design Guidelines may be more restrictive than, but

they do not supersede or modify, the City of Southfield's Zoning Ordinance. In the event of conflict or discrepancy between the Design Guidelines and the Zoning Ordinance, the City Ordinances prevail. Proposed development will need to obtain the necessary variances, exceptions, waivers, etc. from City regulations as applicable.

## Site Planning

### Building Location and Orientation

#### Principles

- Emphasize pedestrian-orientation in site planning using appropriately-scaled buildings, placement and interconnectivity.
- Develop an efficient pattern of buildings and open spaces to concentrate activities, rather than dispersing them in a manner that requires greater automobile dependency.
- Locate and orient buildings to complement the orientation of adjacent development.
- Coordinate all infrastructure and utility design and location with utility providers to balance function and desired aesthetic character of the plan with efficient maintenance of the utilities.

#### Mixed-Use

1. Coordinate and comprehensively plan the location of buildings to provide order and compatibility, avoiding jumbled or confusing development patterns.
2. Site buildings to reasonably respond to solar, wind and other climatic factors.
3. Locate buildings so that their primary orientation complements adjacent development.
4. Orient buildings to frame pedestrian corridors and access drives, parking areas, open spaces and on-site amenities.
5. Discourage long, "barracks-like" strip commercial configurations.

### Commercial/Office/Research

1. Locate satellite (pad site) buildings at street intersections designed to anchor the corner.
2. Locate buildings to create and frame plazas and courtyards.
3. Orient freestanding satellite pad site building fronts toward the street or plaza and courtyards.
4. Link plazas and courtyards to pedestrian sidewalks and walkways.
5. Do not “wall-off” sites from surrounding land uses.
6. Provide connectivity and accessibility between the proposed site development and adjacent land uses.
7. Segment large parking lots into smaller parking courts enclosed and framed by trees to minimize the perceived scale of the total parking area.
8. Locate loading docks, trash enclosures and service areas out-of-view from roadways, sidewalks and open space amenities.
9. Provide separate parking areas for delivery trucks and service vehicles located away from customer/tenant parking lots and walkways.

### Multiple-Family and Single-Family Residential Attached

1. Organize buildings to create meaningful and usable open space areas.
2. Do not encircle multiple-family and single-family attached projects with parking stalls and drive aisles. Parking lots should be located in individual pods or small, defined parking courts.
3. Vary multiple-family residential building setbacks to promote streetscape variety.
4. Compose buildings of simple yet varied planes to assure compatibility and promote variety in overall building forms.

### Single-Family Residential Detached

1. Locate single-family detached units to create streetscape variety and visual interest. Discourage subdivisions of seemingly identical units sited with no variation on long, uninterrupted streets.
2. Site single-family detached units to mitigate garage impacts along the street by varying their locations and orientations.
3. Stagger the location of single-family units and garages relative to the street to create different building patterns.
4. Minimize building setbacks from streets as densities increases, while maintaining privacy.

5. Consider different setbacks to reflect different product types within the neighborhood.
6. Connect residential neighborhoods to commercial centers with sidewalks and open space areas.

## Vehicular/Pedestrian Circulation

### Principles

- Provide a safe, interconnected and efficient site circulation systems.
- Maximize opportunities for strong balanced transportation systems for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Create a safe, continuous network of pedestrian walkways within and between developments, so pedestrian will be more inclined to safely walk (rather than drive) between buildings.

### Vehicular Access and Circulation

1. In order to maximize the efficiency of the City’s street network, major traffic generators should be located so their primary access is from a principal or minor arterial.
2. Large site development/redevelopment should be located at the intersection of arterial streets so that access is available for both east/west and north/south traffic. Primary access points should be located so non-residential traffic is separated from the residential street system.
3. Internal vehicle circulation should provide a clear and direct path to the principal customer entrance of the primary building, to outlying pad sites, and to each parking area.
4. Every site development/redevelopment will be required to provide loading and delivery facilities separate from customer parking and pedestrian areas. As the size of the development and the volume of trucks increase, internal circulation patterns should reflect an increasing separation between automobile and truck traffic in order to minimize accidents and congestion.
5. Where possible, connections should be made to adjoining parking areas and access to lots consolidated through the use of shared curb cuts.

### **Pedestrian Access and Circulation**

1. An on-site system of pedestrian walkways should be designed to provide direct access and connections to and among the following:
  - Primary entrance or entrances to each building, including pad site buildings.
  - Any sidewalks or walkways on adjacent properties that extend to the boundaries shared with development.
  - Any public sidewalks along the perimeter streets adjacent to the development.
  - Where practicable and appropriate, adjacent land uses and development, public parks/open space or the other public or civic use.
2. Create opportunities for pedestrian gathering places throughout the site development using sidewalks and plaza areas connected to walkways.
3. Provide appropriate site furnishings for pedestrians.

### **Parking**

#### **Principles**

- Parking areas should be designed for a safe and orderly flow of traffic throughout the site.
- Major circulation patterns within parking areas should be well-defined with curbs and landscaped island and parking spaces along main circulation drives should be avoided. To the maximum extent practicable, dead-end parking areas should be avoided.
- Parking should be designed to reduce the scale of parking areas and siting a portion of the parking area out of view from the public street.
- Clear pedestrian circulation paths and amenity areas within parking areas should be included and install landscaping within parking areas to screen spaces and reduce the overall visual impact of large parking areas.

#### **On-site Parking**

1. Configure developments that accommodate large anchor tenants to promote convenient parking and vehicular access, as well as parking lot visibility.
2. Locate small shops/offices along the street or drive edge, with minimum setbacks. As a general rule, anchor tenant buildings such as large format retail and supermarkets; however,

this is just a guideline because they often require visible surface parking for patrons' major shopping trips.

3. Parking lots should be well-landscaped, pedestrian-friendly; adding character to the streetscape.
4. Divide surface parking areas into a series of small, connected lots defined by rows of trees and walkways that link parking areas to destinations.
5. Stagger building setbacks, above minimum standards if necessary, to enhance visual interest along the streetscape.
6. Do not wrap the perimeters of the developments with parking lots.

### **Building Architecture**

#### **Principles**

- Create a consistent architectural theme for all buildings in the development. Also create building masses and roof forms that reflect the architectural style of the development.
- Break down larger-scaled buildings into a series of smaller, pedestrian-oriented components.
- Articulate façades to reduce the massive scale of large commercial/service/office buildings.
- Incorporate architectural features that create visual interest and easily identifiable entrances.

#### **Building Massing and Roof Form**

1. Design all buildings within the development, including satellite (pad site) buildings and fast food establishments, to reflect a consistent architectural style.
2. Locate higher-intensity satellite building masses at corners designed to “announce” the entrance into the development.
3. Locate higher-intensity building masses toward the center of building complex. Transition building height outward and down to adjacent developments.
4. Punctuate large building masses with towers designed as landmark icons.
5. Segment buildings with a distinguishable base, middle and cap.
6. Reduce building mass. Use the following techniques to diminish the size and scale of buildings:
  - Building step backs
  - Variation of pitched roof forms and heights

- Emphasis and variation of building color and texture
7. Create roof forms that contribute to the unified appearance of the development.
  8. Use a consistent roof pitch for all buildings in the development, designed to unite the entire complex.
  9. Avoid continuous roof planes. Pitched roof planes should incorporate articulated roof elements that may include the following:
    - Cross gables
    - Roof monitors
    - Vertical tower elements
    - Roof dormers
  10. Terminate the top of pitched-roofed buildings with a distinctive cap. Design roof caps using the following techniques:
    - Support pitched roof eave overhangs with corbels or brackets.
    - Sheath pitched roofs with a roofing material that is complementary to the architectural style of the building.
    - Discourage radical roof pitches that create overly prominent or out-of-character buildings.
  11. Terminate the top of flat-roofed buildings with a distinctive cap. Design roof caps using the following techniques:
    - Terminate the top of flat roofs with a distinctive cornice and parapet wall.
    - Distinguish the cornice from the building façade, with the corbel forward from the front plane of the building face to articulate the cornice.
    - Top roof parapet walls with a distinctive cap or coping.
  12. Create pedestrian interest at storefront elevations. Use the following elements to provide storefront elevation variety and visual interest:
    - Arcades
    - Awnings
    - Bulkheads
    - Canopies
    - Storefront display windows
    - Transom windows

13. Create visual rhythms with structural bays that divide storefronts into a series of repetitive components. Storefronts should be segmented with vertically repeating columns/piers.
14. Promote four-sided architecture. Use similar storefront elements on side and rear building elevations that are visible from public view.
15. Locate building entrances to be clearly identifiable. Use the following techniques to distinguish building entrances:
  - Use towers and articulated corner elements to distinguish building entries.
  - Recess entrances into building façades sheltering patrons from the elements.
  - Define building entrances with an awning or canopy.

### Grocery Stores and Food Establishments

1. Design grocery stores to reflect the architectural style of the development.
2. Provide covered entrances and arcades designed to shelter patrons from the elements.
3. Provide tower and other elements that function as orientation features and landmark icons.
4. Use pitched roof forms to project a neighborly image.
5. Break-up pitched roof forms with plane breaks and roof dormers that segment large roof areas into smaller components.
6. Divide grocery store storefront windows with mullions to create a series of individual windows.
7. Design food establishments that reflect the architectural style of the development and use building materials and colors that are consistent with the development's architectural style.
8. Use a consistent sign type, style, materials, and illumination source as those used within the development.

### Large Format Retail

1. Design large format retail buildings to reflect the architectural style and use consistent building materials and colors of the entire development.
2. Encourage elements such as entrance pavilions to break-up large format architecture.
3. Encourage covered arcades as single-story transitional elements to larger-scaled building masses.
4. Articulate large format building façades by accentuating structural piers.

5. Punctuate building corners with material changes.
6. Encourage material changes to create a distinctive base, middle and top.
7. Encourage raised planters and landscaping to screen building façade.
8. Encourage window openings and awnings to articulate blank façades.
9. Design large format retail façades based upon the following guidelines:
  - Minimum storefront height: 16 feet
  - Minimum percentage of storefront window area: 25 percent
10. If flat roofs are used, terminate the top with a substantial cornice element.
11. Design large format accessory structures (i.e. gas station canopy) to reflect the architectural style of the large format retail building.

#### **Office/Research/Industrial**

1. The scale and massing of these buildings are generally large, being more oriented to drivers than pedestrians. Street-facing façades of buildings should be highlighted with accent elements, lighting or other features that aid in orientation.
2. Buildings should avoid blank elevations on street frontages through the use of building fenestration and architectural details related to the ‘structure’ of the building.
3. The selection of materials and colors should provide an enduring quality and enhance the architectural and massing concepts of the building.

#### **Screen Walls and Trash Enclosures**

1. Install decorative loading area screen walls that complement the building architecture.
2. Soften screen walls with landscaping.
3. Design trash enclosure screen walls to complement adjacent building architecture in terms of materials, texture and color.
4. Locate trash facilities near building service entrances and easily accessible by service vehicles.