

**§9-6 CHARACTER DISTRICTS**

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§9-6-1 CHARACTER DISTRICTS ESTABLISHED

[\[See Commentary\]](#)

§9-6-1.1 Character Districts Overlay Land Use Intensity [Conventional Zoning] Districts. The zoning regulations of the jurisdiction make use of two sets of districts – (1) conventional zoning [land use intensity] districts and (2) character districts. All properties in the jurisdiction are assigned (and regulated by) one conventional zoning [land use intensity] district, as established in §7-4 of this Code and one character district, as described in this Code Section.

§9-6-1.2 Purpose and Intent. By assigning both conventional zoning [land use intensity] districts and character districts to properties, the community has chosen to retain the best aspects of conventional zoning [land use intensity district] ordinances – providing certainty as to the use of property and the intensity of use, measured in building square footage per acre (or Floor-Area Ratio), while introducing new regulations that guide character and design of development.

§9-6-1.3 Character Districts Established. The following character districts are hereby established.

1. Conservation
2. Conventional residential subdivision
3. Traditional neighborhood development (TND)
4. Campus
5. Pedestrian retail
6. Highway business
7. Mixed-use activity center
8. Undesignated

§9-6-2 GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR CHARACTER DISTRICTS

Unless otherwise specifically provided in this Code, development and land improvements shall conform to the requirements of the following table.

TABLE 1  
 GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR CHARACTER DISTRICTS

Character-istic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Conser- vation	Conven- tional Subdi- vision	Tradi- tional Neighbor- hood	Pedes- trian Retail	Highway Business	Mixed Use	Campus	Undesig- nated
Gravel Road	P	C	X	X	C	X	P	P
Paved Road	C	P	R	P	P	R	P	P
Drainage: open swale	P	P	X	X	P	X	P	P
Drainage: Curb/gutter	X	P	R	R	P	R	P	P
Sidewalk	P	R	R	R	P	R	P	P
Public or community water	P	R	R	P	P	R	P	P
Septic tank	R	P	X	P	C	X	P	P
Sanitary Sewer	X	P	R	P	P	R	P	P
Street lights	X	P	R	R	P	R	P	P
Building at or near street	C	X	R	R	P	P	C	P
Building material specification	R	NR	R	R	NR	R	R	NR
Sign unlighted	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Sign lighted	X	C	P	P	P	P	C	P
On-street parking	X	P	P	R	X	P	X	P
Off-street parking	NR	NR	R	R	R	R	NR	NR
Off-street loading	NR	NR	R	R	NR	R	NR	NR
Outside storage	X	X	X	C	P	C	P	P
Drive-through service lanes	X	X	X	X	P	C	C	P
Natural (indigenous) landscape	R	R	NR	NR	NR	NR	P	NR
Formal (not indigenous) landscape	X	P	P	R	R	R	P	NR

P = Permitted and may be appropriate  
 R = Required  
 NR = Not Required  
 X = Not permitted  
 C = Conditionally permitted

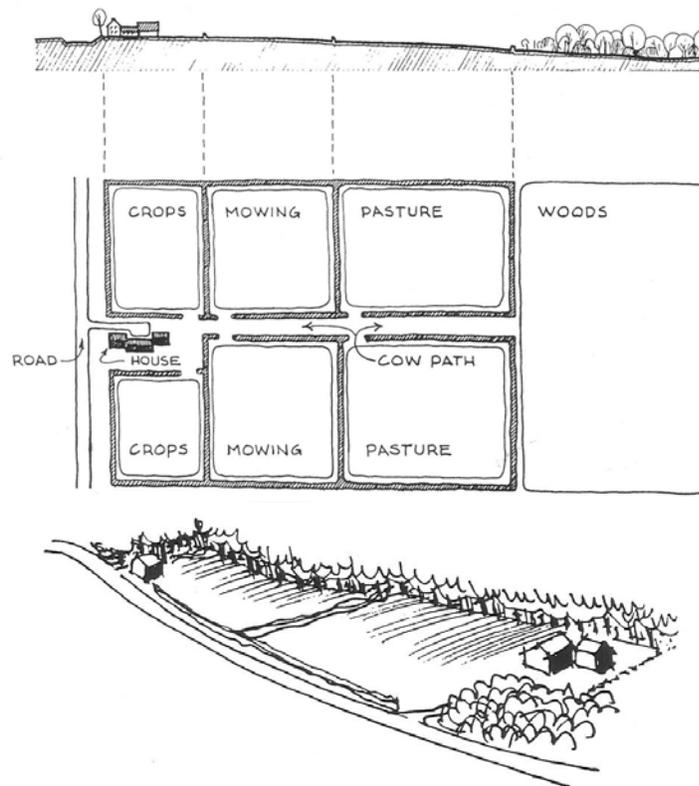
§9-6-3 CONSERVATION CHARACTER DISTRICT

§9-6-3.1 Description. This character district is intended to protect and preserve open-space and rural qualities established in the more remote, primarily undeveloped portions of the jurisdiction.

§9-6-3.2 Location of Dwellings and Other Buildings. Siting dwellings and other buildings within this character and design district is one of the most important considerations and therefore this aspect receives particular attention. Areas of the open countryside are less able to absorb development without significant impact upon existing scenic and rural amenities.



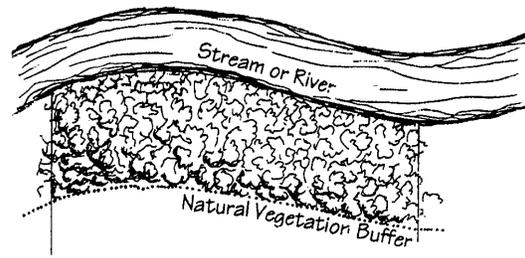
Consistent:  
Dwelling is located close to the road (or at the edge of fields) to allow continued use of land for crops and pasture. Future development should respect the established pattern of crop lands, pasture and the agricultural, rural, open space character of the area. Woodlands are preserved.



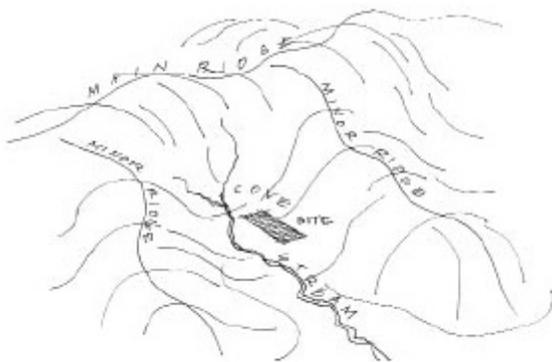
Source: Craighead, Paula M., Editor. The Hidden Design in Land Use Ordinances, Figure 12, p. 18 (top) and Figure 31, p. 36 (bottom). (Portland, ME: University of Southern Maine, 1991).

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Riparian zones, stream corridors, and wetlands shall be protected for their wildlife habitat and other values by a natural undisturbed buffer. Patches of high-quality habitat should be preserved, as large and circular as possible, and connected by green corridors that will facilitate movement of wildlife.

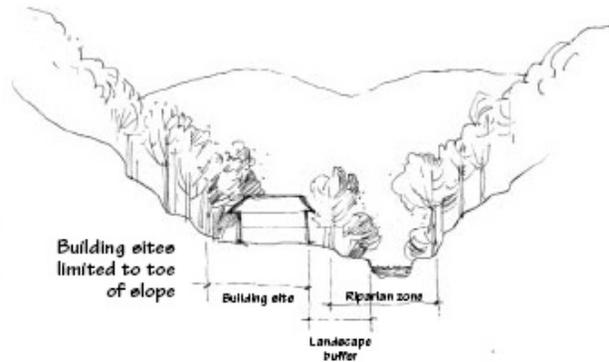


This historic development pattern of the region has been to locate home sites in sheltered coves (below, left). Building sites in narrow valleys should be limited to the toe of the mountain or hillside slope and away from riparian zones. Natural vegetation must be left undisturbed as a buffer along the stream (below, right).

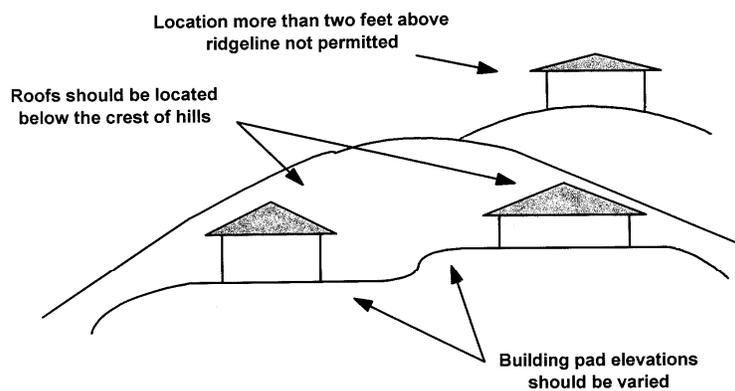


Historic development in sheltered coves

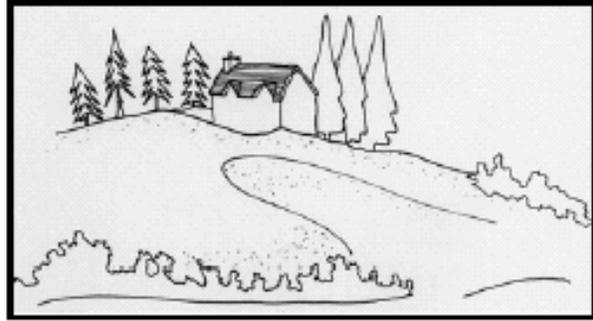
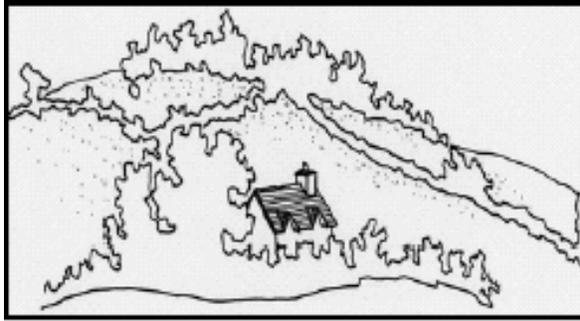
Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, FS-710. *The Built Environment Image Guide for the National Forests and Grasslands*, September 2001.



Where flexibility and choice exist with regard to locating a dwelling or other building, the most highly visible locations should be avoided. Locations at the top of hills or mountains or in the middle of open fields detract from the natural, rural, and/or open space character of this district. Buildings which would "break" the skyline (i.e., rise above the tree tops) when viewed from a distance should be avoided.



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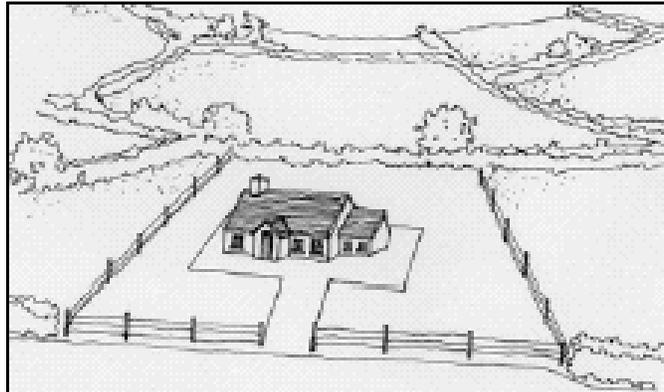


Source: Carlow County Council, County Development Plan 2003, Appendix One, Rural Housing Siting and Design Guidelines.

Above Left (Consistent): Building is sited within or adjacent to existing vegetation that partially screens the building.

Above Right (Inconsistent): Building is sited near top of ridge or hill and is too visible, and non-native landscaping has been introduced.

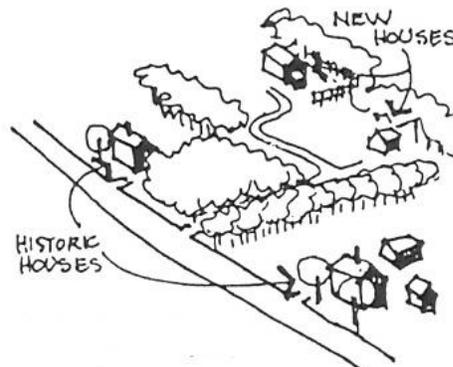
Right (Inconsistent): New house is sited in a visually prominent location in the center of the site with no regard for existing conditions.



Source: Carlow County Council, County Development Plan 2003, Appendix One, Rural Housing Siting and Design Guidelines.

If existing dwelling locations along a rural road establish a pattern, more or less, for setbacks, new dwellings facing the rural road should conform to that existing setback. For instance, if spacious front yards are provided, it would be inconsistent to locate a dwelling closer to the rural road. As another example, if dwellings are set fairly close to the rural road right-of-way, setting a dwelling back further than existing dwellings from the road would be inconsistent with the established rural settlement pattern.

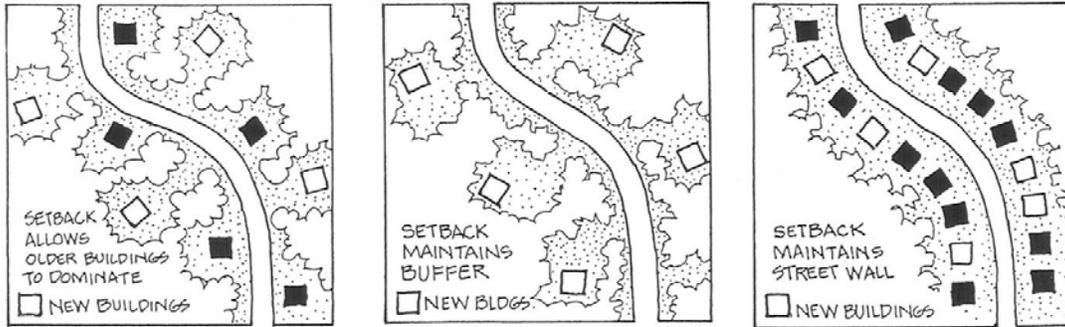
Consistent: New houses sited so as not to compete with older structures in established settlement pattern.



Source: Craighead, Paula M., Editor. The Hidden Design in Land Use Ordinances, Figure 50, p. 53. (Portland, ME: University of Southern Maine, 1991).

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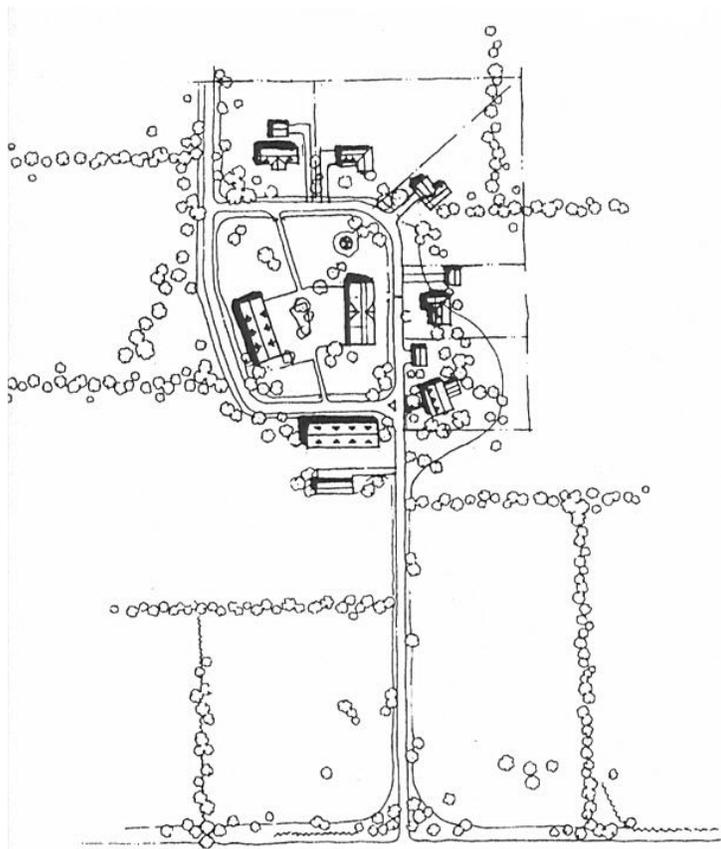
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Source: Craighead, Paula M., Editor. *The Hidden Design in Land Use Ordinances*, Figure 41, p. 44. (Portland, ME: University of Southern Maine, 1991).

Propose a site and design structures that will minimize the visual impact of a building and site on the natural landscape. In cases where there are practical reasons why a visible location must be selected it will need to be justified and an explanation given as to why sites that are less visible cannot be utilized. In addition, approval of building locations on visually prominent sites requires mitigation of visual impacts through buffering or screening, additional (or different) architectural treatments, or other appropriate measures.

**Consistent:** For small subdivisions, the lots are clustered near existing dwelling(s); buildings are set back from open fields adjacent to road; existing hedge rows and tree lines are maintained.

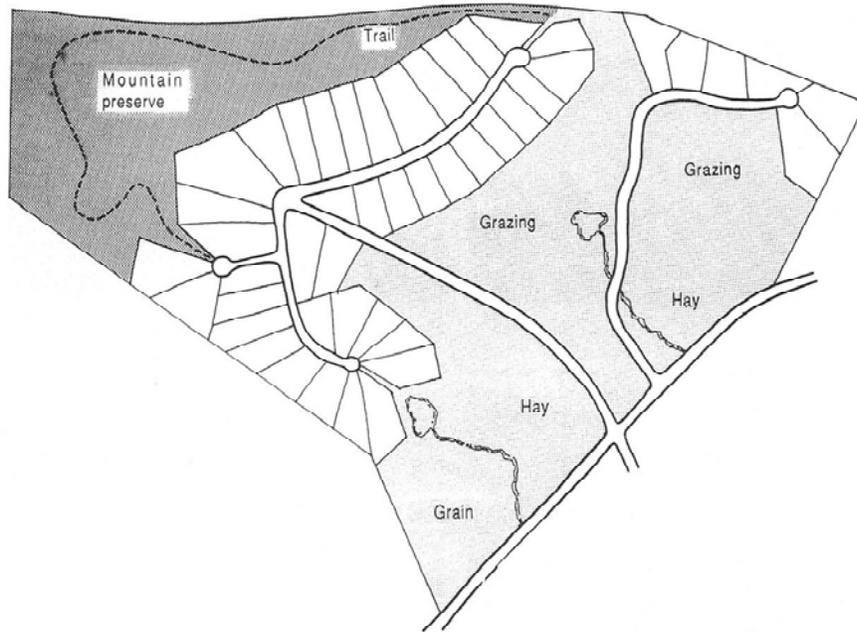


Source: Arendt, Randall, et al. *Rural By Design: Maintaining Small Town Character*, p. 201. (Chicago: Planners Press, 1994).

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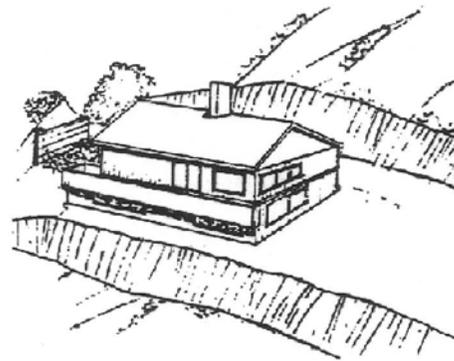
**Consistent:** When property to be subdivided consists of relatively flat bottom lands useful for agriculture and steeply sloping land, the lots shall be located as much as possible at the edge of the tree line near the toe of the mountain or hillside slope. Long cul-de-sacs, usually highly discouraged, are acceptable in this case because of the need to locate between the steep slopes and the agricultural land. Project incorporates trail through woodlands.



Source: Arendt, Randall, et al. *Rural By Design: Maintaining Small Town Character*, Figure 20-15a, p. 346. (Chicago: Planners Press, 1994).

**§9-6-3.3 Excavation and Grading.**

Within this character and design district, dwelling and building sites should be chosen that require the least amount of excavation and grading (e.g., cut and fill). Excessive excavation unnecessarily disturbs the natural contours of the land and can result in negative visually impacts and unnatural-looking sites.



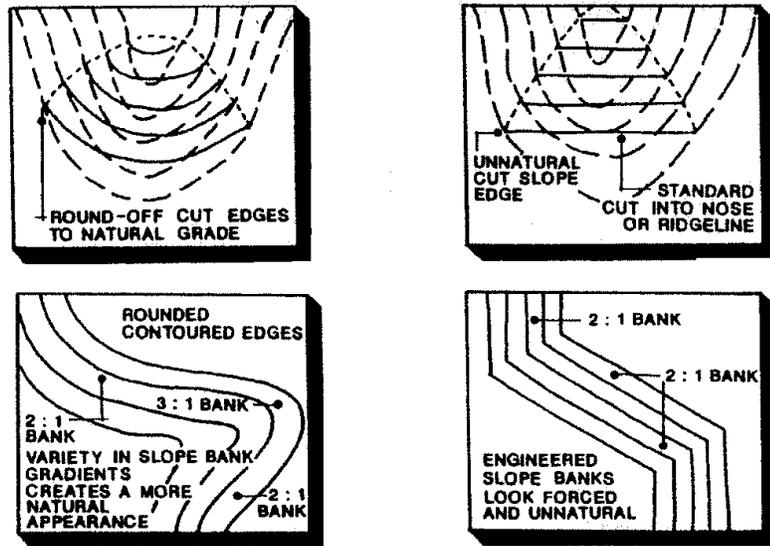
**Inconsistent:** Grading does not respect existing contours and does not blend into the landform. Avoid severe cutting, filling, padding, or terracing for home or building sites.

Source: Design Guidelines, Town of Portola Valley. Prepared by William Spangle and Associates, Inc. July 1989 (Revised September 2003)

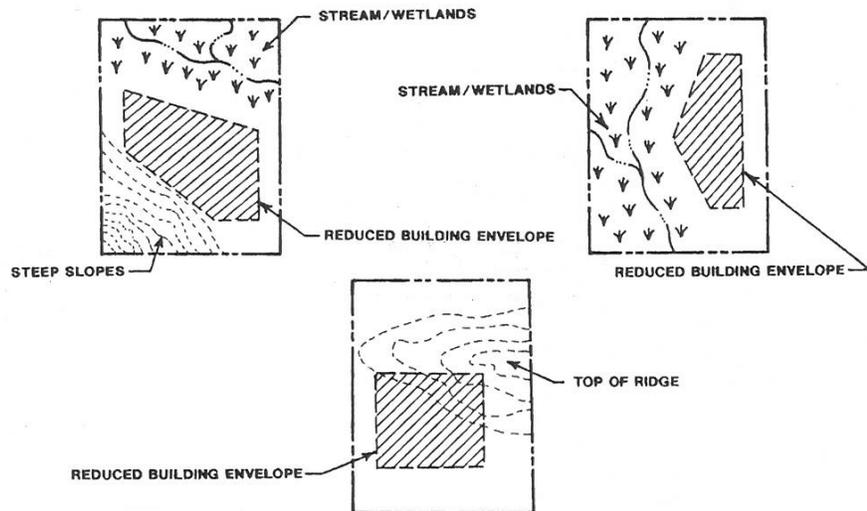
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When grading is necessary, rigid contouring should be avoided; counters should be rounded to appear undulating and natural (see figure).

Revegetate cuts, fills and other earth modification with appropriate native plant material.

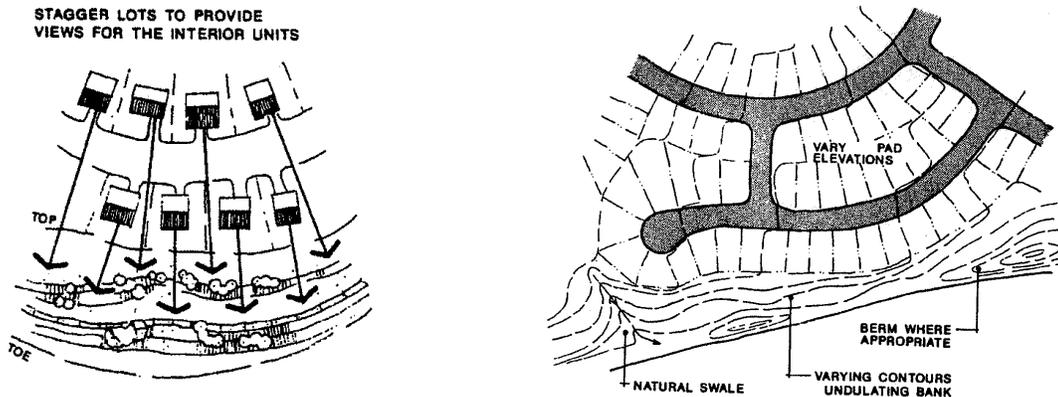


Consistent: Building envelopes are must be reduced when the lot includes environmentally sensitive areas including but not limited to, wetlands, steep slopes, and ridge tops.



Source: Heyer, Fred. *Preserving Rural Character*, Figure 2, p. 6. Planning Advisory Service Report No. 429 (1990). Chicago: American Planning Association.

For subdivisions and developments with multiple buildings, building pads (i.e., clearing and grading for buildings and structures) should be varied in elevation above or below road level to avoid the appearance of monotonous, flat, level pads.

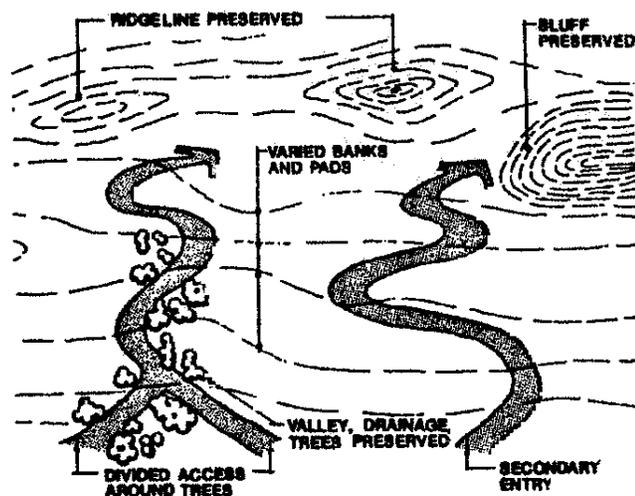


Projects involving more than one use or phase should be phased into workable units in a way that minimizes the amount of soil disturbance at any given point in time. When grading must occur, it should blend with the natural landform as much as possible. Grading to form level pads and building sites is strongly discouraged and when required such grading should be minimized.

§9-6-3.4 Retaining Walls. Earth berms, rock forms, or stone retaining walls should be used to minimize visual impacts of cuts. Hedges and fences may also be appropriate in some locations. Large, continuous surfaces of smooth concrete and related structures are considered inappropriate. The height of any retaining wall should not exceed four feet unless required to be higher for engineering reasons. In areas where cuts are steeper, a stepped or terraced wall should be used.

§9-6-3.5 Rural Road Design. Access from a public road through a site should follow or have due regard for the contours of the site.

One-way streets shall be permitted and encouraged where appropriate for the terrain and where public safety would not be jeopardized. For instance, a two-way road may have the directions of flow split into one-way pairs that differ in elevation, circumnavigate difficult terrain, or avoid tree clearance.

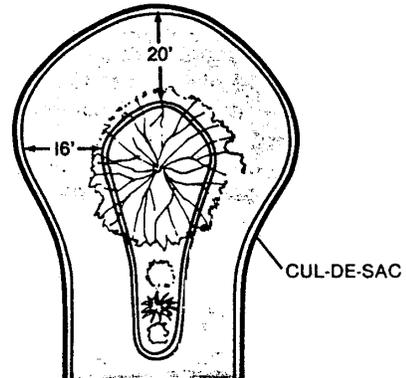


§9-6-3.6 Access from Dwellings and Building Sites onto Public Roads. In terms of choosing the location of road and driveway intersections with public roads, public safety considerations are more important than visual objectives and can override aesthetic considerations. The visual impact of access onto a public road is nonetheless important in terms of maintaining the character of this district. For instance, a road or driveway that has poor sight distances along the public road are to be avoided even if that is the best location from the

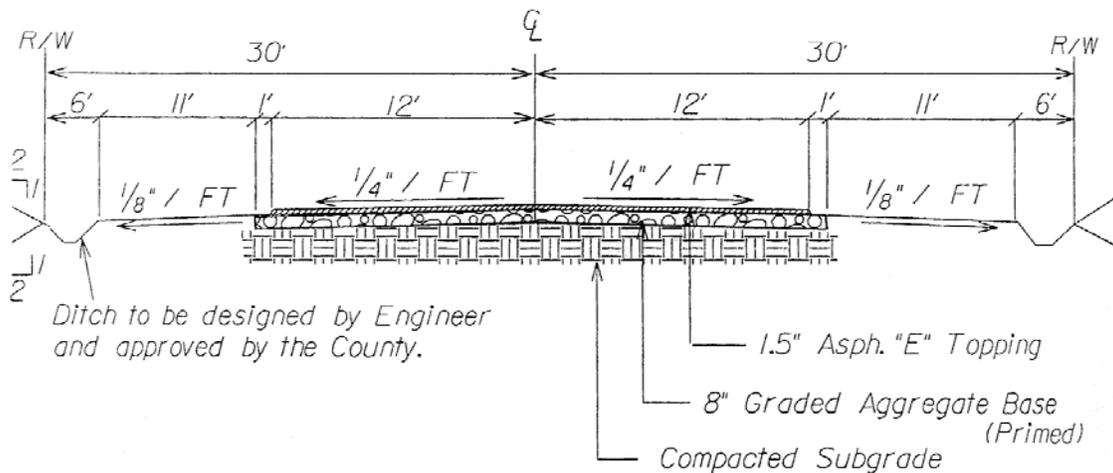
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perspective of maintaining aesthetic qualities. Any new driveway or public or private road entrance should be carefully located considering the view from the public road.

Consistent: Cul-de-sacs on rural roads serving less than 10 lots may have reduced turning radii and are encouraged to leave vegetation as a center island.



Source: De Chiara, Joseph, and Lee E. Koppelman. 1984. *Time-Saver Standards for Site Planning*. Figure 4.43, p. 355. New York: McGraw-Hill.



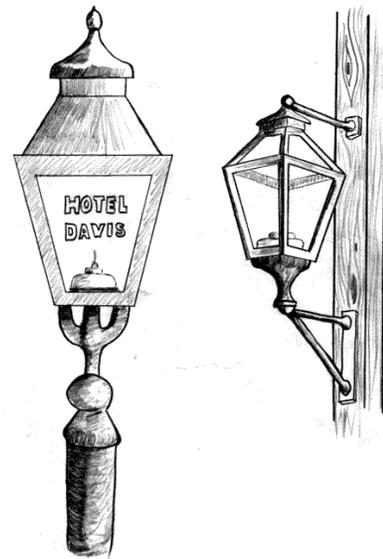
**Rural Road Cross-section**

Roads shall be crowned, or pitched, to promote drainage of surface water from the road into roadside ditches to minimize the detrimental effects of water.



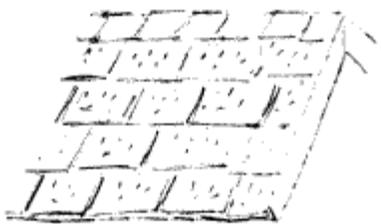
For all rural cross-section streets, public or private, ditches are essential for proper drainage and shall be designed and provided to handle total volume and velocity of water for the particular road location, as approved by the Land Use Officer. The width and depth of a ditch shall be based on runoff volume and on the drainage needed for the road base. This includes the groundwater drainage needed to lower the water table in the road base to make the road firmer and stronger, if necessary. The water in a drainage ditch shall not be closer than one foot from the edge of the street pavement.

§9-6-3.7 Lighting. In the interest of preserving the rural atmosphere of the night sky in exurban and rural areas, street lighting along streets in new subdivisions or land developments is discouraged. If desired by a developer, streetlights must be installed in accordance with local utility companies' standards and should additionally be designed and detailed so as to be compatible with the rural environment (i.e. post-top lights, not cobra-head lights).

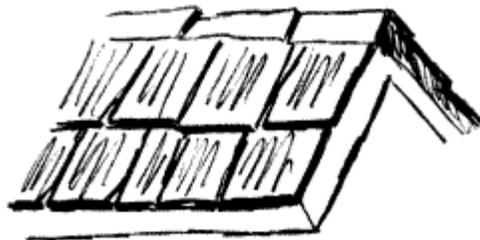


§9-6-3.8 Roof Materials.

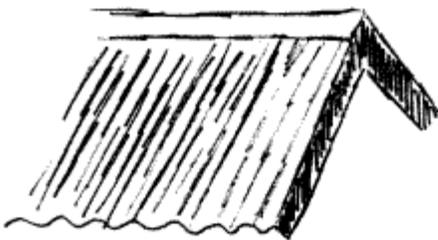
Consistent: Standing seam metal roof preferred; corrugated sheet metal acceptable on farm outbuildings; tar paper and asphalt shingles acceptable; cedar or other wood shake shingles preferred over tar paper and asphalt shingles.



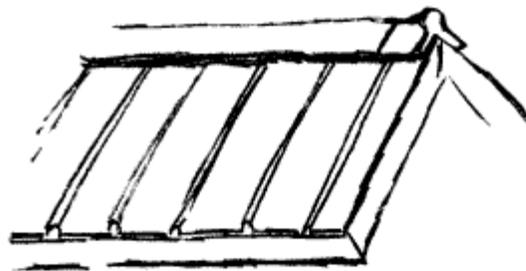
TAR PAPER/ASPHALT SHINGLES



CEDAR SHAKE TYPE SHINGLES



CORRUGATED SHEET METAL



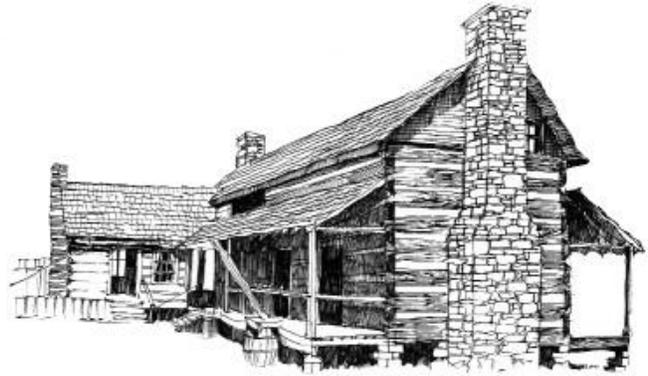
STANDING SEAM METAL ROOF

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**§9-6-3.9 Architecture and Exterior Building Materials.**

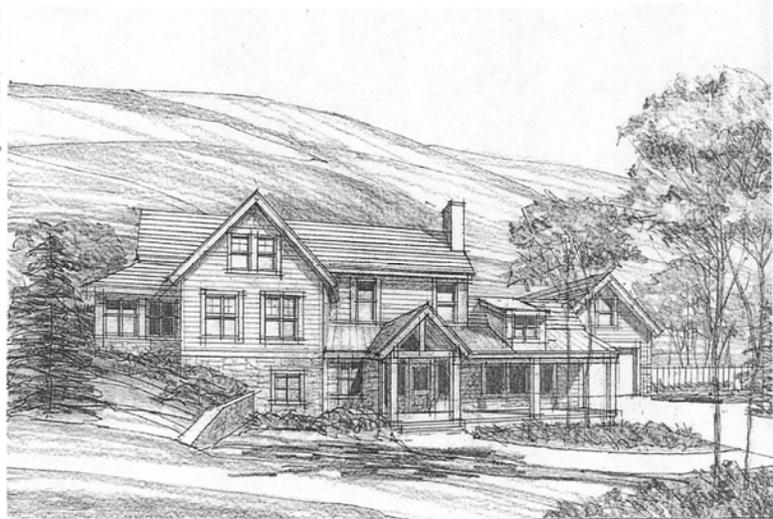
Architecture and building types should be compatible with existing buildings in the character and design district (see illustration, right), including stone chimneys, front (shed) porches, steep gabled roofs, and wood siding. If a dwelling or building is to be composed of building materials that are incompatible with the established building materials and architectural features, it can significantly change the character of the rural setting.



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, FS-710. *The Built Environment Image Guide for the National Forests and Grasslands*, September 2001.

In such instances where building materials incompatible or not consistent with the provisions of this design and character district must be used, the dwelling or building should not face or be located within 50 feet of the public road right-of-way.

**Consistent:** Steep or moderately steep gabled roof pitches, roof materials are asphalt composition shingle, wood shake, or standing-seam metal; front porch is provided, Base exterior is stone and siding is wood (hardi-plank) Chimneys. Structural (timber) elements exposed at front porch entrance. House is sited below ridgeline. Garage also has steep gabled roof and does not dominate view.



Source: The Uplands Design Guidelines, Eagle Ranch, Eagle, Colorado. Revised December 9, 2005.

**Consistent:** Similar features to the illustration above.



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, FS-710. *The Built Environment Image Guide for the National Forests and Grasslands*, September 2001.

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The use of natural materials for engineered structures is also encouraged, where appropriate. For instance, wood, stone, or dyed/textured concrete should be used for new guardrails, curbing, culverts and walls.

§9-6-3.10 Building Mass and Scale. A building's size, shape, and mass should relate to and be compatible with its surroundings. The mass of a building should relate proportionately to the landscape setting and the size of the lot.

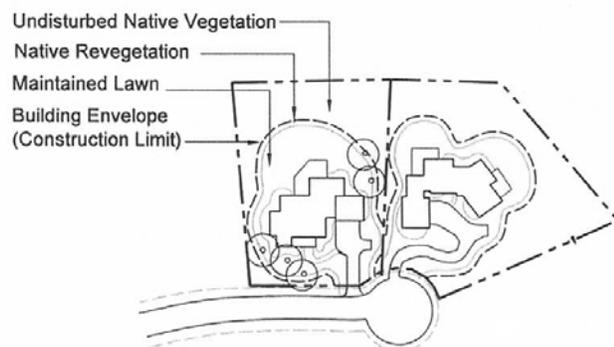
§9-6-3.11 Garages and Accessory Buildings and Structures. Garages (i.e., freestanding accessory buildings and structures for storage of vehicles) should complement the architectural style of the principal dwelling or building. They should not be visually prominent when viewed from the public road. Carport structures if composed of pre-fabricated metal shall not be located in a visible location in the front yard of a dwelling or building, or if they must be located in a visible area they must be screened with native vegetation. Oversized accessory buildings for recreational vehicles, boats, and storage cannot be sited within front yards and if provided they shall be located as far to the rear of the lot as possible.

Consistent: In this character area, barns and other agricultural outbuildings in good condition should be preserved.



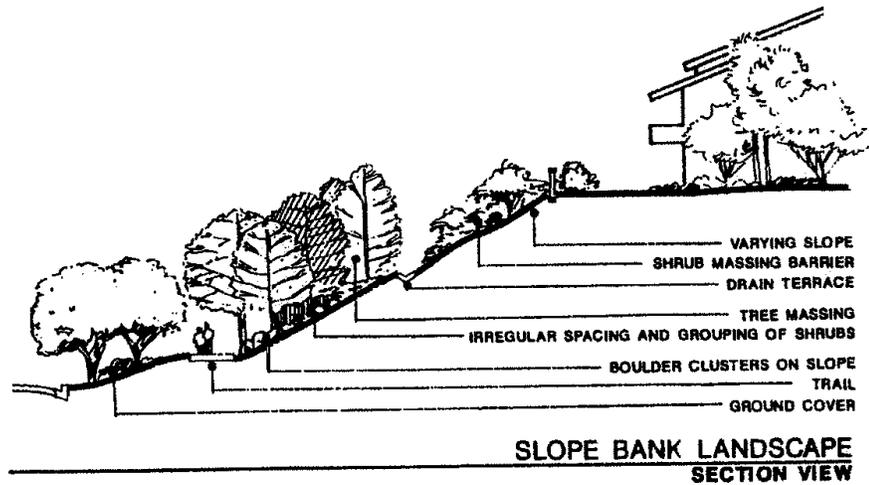
§9-6-3.12 Landscaping. Native species should be preserved, where possible, and when landscaping is added, only native (indigenous to the region or area) species of trees, shrubs, vines, and other vegetation should be used. When new landscaping is introduced, trees and shrubs should be planted in groups and irregular patterns, not in rows.

Home sites in this character district should have carefully defined construction limits (building envelopes). Native vegetation must be left undisturbed outside building envelopes and areas for driveways, or where vegetation must be removed, it shall be replaced with native species. The introduction of new, sodded yards is discouraged in front yards of this character district and a more natural appearance of native vegetation is sought.

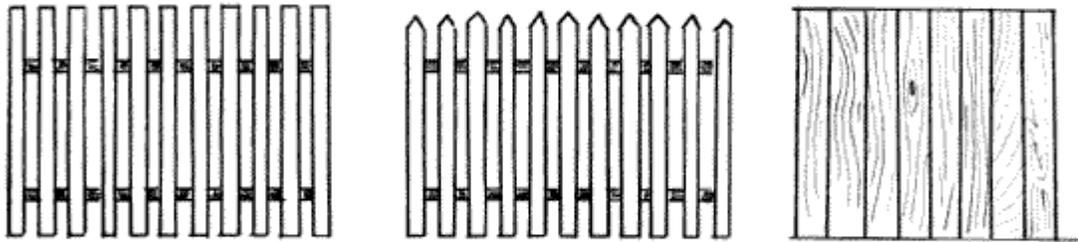


Source: The Uplands Design Guidelines, Eagle Ranch, Eagle, Colorado. Revised December 9, 2005.

Use plant materials that blend with the environment. Landscape schemes that are rough, natural and/or subdued in character are encouraged. Extensive areas of exotic plants and sod are discouraged where they would be visible from the public right-of-way.



§9-6-3.13 Fences and Walls. If fences are to be provided in the front yard of a dwelling or building, they must be composed of wood materials. Examples of acceptable wood materials for fences in front yards are shown below.



§9-6-3.14 Commercial and Other Non-Residential Uses.

Consistent: Rural appearance with timber or log construction, native stone, and wood siding. Pitched roof and front porch or cover.



Source: Peirce County, Washington. Title 18J – Development Regulations – Design Standards and Guidelines.

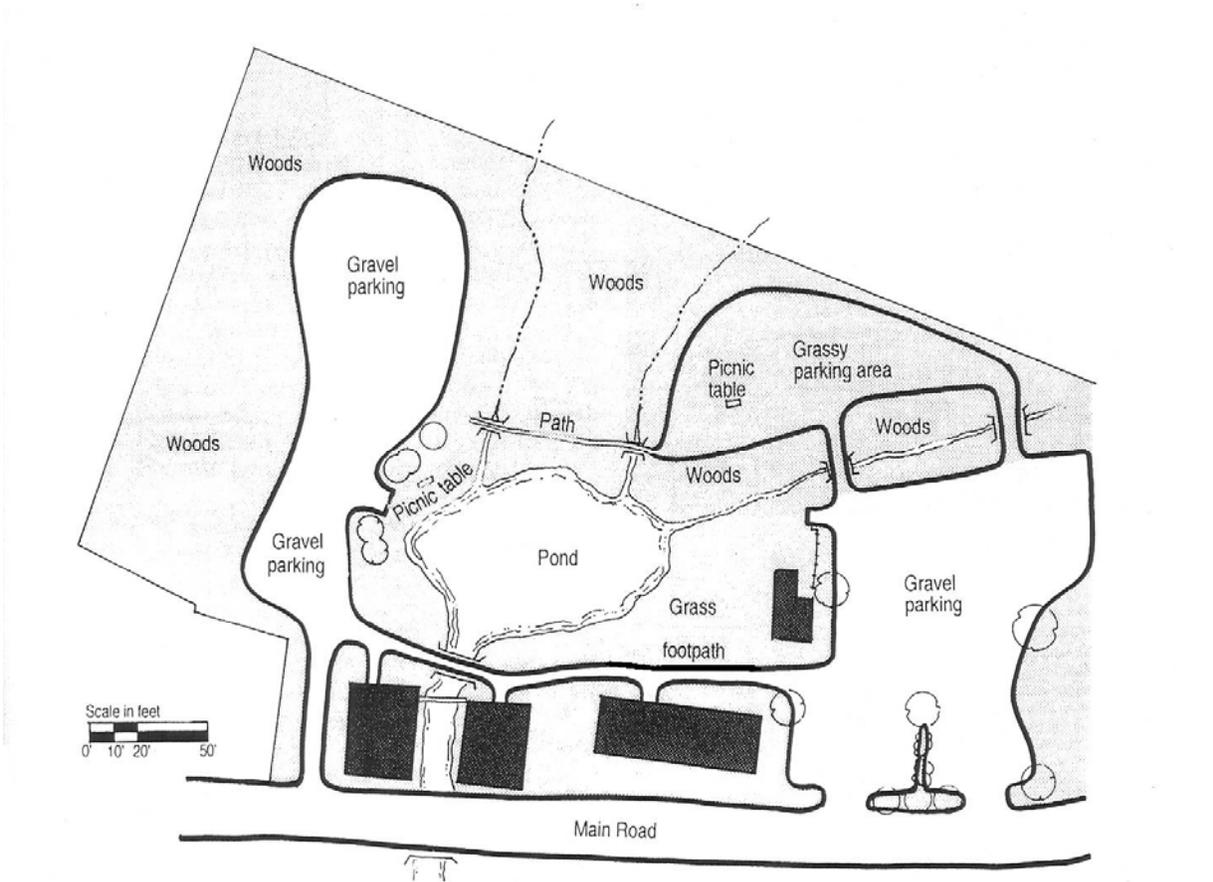
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Consistent: Rustic-looking commercial buildings give more of a natural appearance. Inconsistent: The billboard is discouraged if not prohibited.



Consistent: Rustic materials including exposed timber beams give this commercial building more of a rural character that fits a rural environment.



Source: Arendt, Randall, et al. *Rural By Design: Maintaining Small Town Character*, Figure 22-2a, p. 375. (Chicago: Planners Press, 1994).

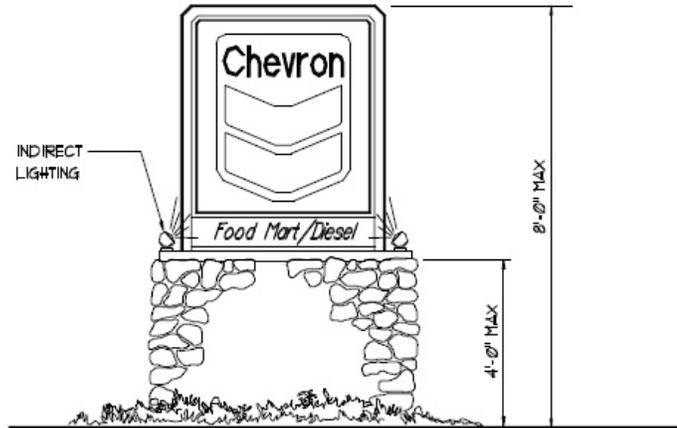
Consistent: Gravel rather than paved parking. The shapes of the parking lots are irregular and work with the existing topography and landscape rather than being laid out in uniform squares or rectangles. The site plan makes use of an existing pond as an amenity and provides paths

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and picnic tables for outdoor use. Woodlands are left as buffers. Buildings front the main road with little setback.

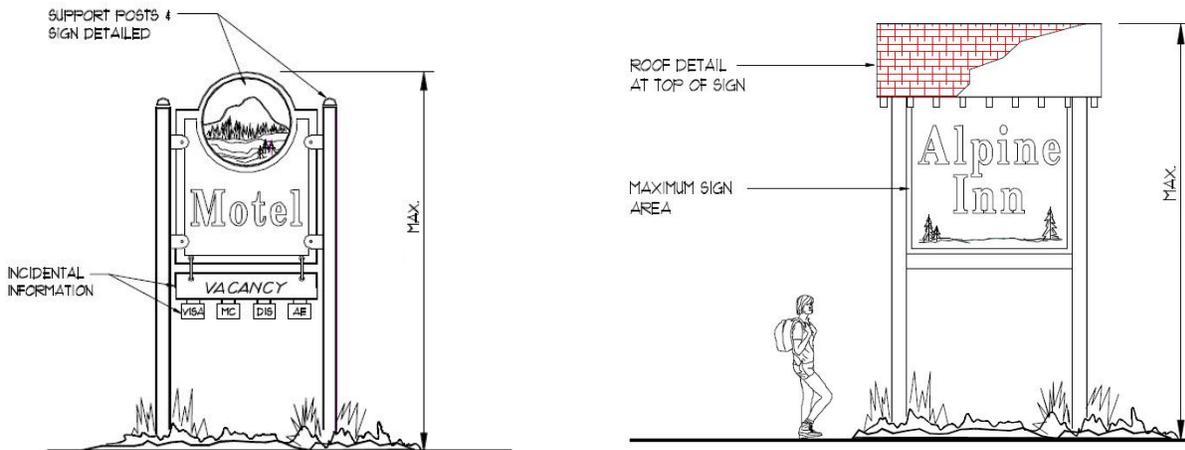
**§9-6-3.15 Signage.**

**Consistent:** Sign is not taller than 8 feet, base is not taller than 4 feet; sign is monument style with stacked stone; lighting, if permitted, is indirect only and not internally illuminated.



Source: Peirce County, Washington. Title 18J – Development Regulations – Design Standards and Guidelines.

**Consistent:** Sign composed of natural materials; unlighted unless externally illuminated; use of 4" by 4" support posts; detailing encouraged; pitched, shingled or metal roof over sign encouraged.



Source: Peirce County, Washington. Title 18J – Development Regulations – Design Standards and Guidelines.

§9-6-4 CONVENTIONAL RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION CHARACTER DISTRICT

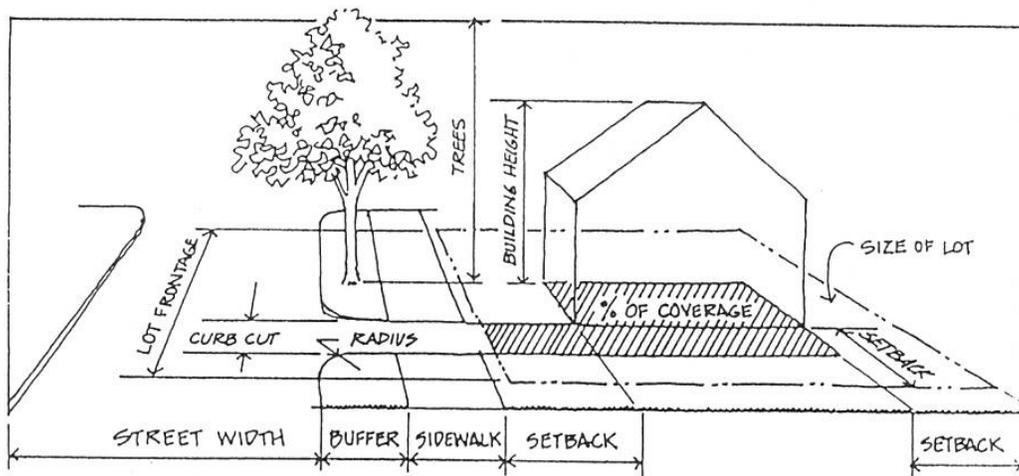
§ 9-6-4.1 Description. This character district is intended to accommodate tract housing (subdivisions) including planned communities with predominantly or exclusively residential use. Development has a suburban character, including curvilinear streets, identification monuments at entrances to subdivisions, landscaping (sometimes ornamental or non-native), and privacy fences. It may also include subdivision amenities such as tennis courts, community centers, golf courses.

Consistent: Cul-de-sacs and curvilinear designs. Lots are mostly of similar shape and size. Connectivity is provided in places but there are long, unbroken blocks.

Desirable but not required: Sidewalks with street trees.

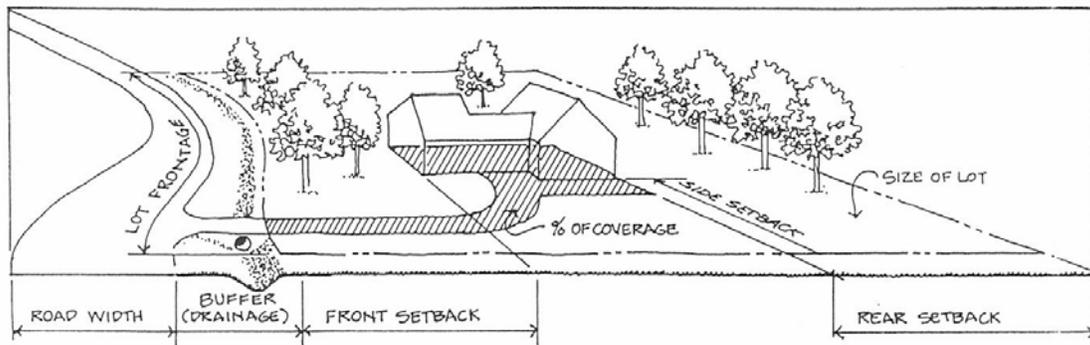


Source: Arendt, Randall, et al. *Rural By Design: Maintaining Small Town Character*, Figure 3-9, p. 39. (Chicago: Planners Press, 1994).



Source: Craighead, Paula M., Editor. *The Hidden Design in Land Use Ordinances*, Figure 1, p. 9. (Portland, ME: University of Southern Maine, 1991).

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Source: Craighead, Paula M., Editor. *The Hidden Design in Land Use Ordinances*, Figure 2, p. 9. (Portland, ME: University of Southern Maine, 1991).

**§9-6-4.2 Garages and Accessory Buildings and Structures.**

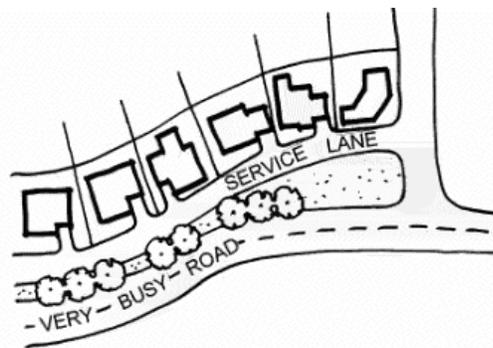
Garages (i.e., freestanding accessory buildings and structures for storage of vehicles) should complement the architectural style of the principal dwelling or building. They may be visually prominent when viewed from the public road.



Source: Design Guidelines, Town of Portola Valley. Prepared by William Spangle and Associates, Inc. July 1989 (Revised September 2003)

Carport structures shall not be composed of pre-fabricated metal shall be located in side or rear yards of a dwelling or building. Oversized accessory buildings for recreational vehicles, boats, and storage shall be located only in rear yards.

**§9-6-4.3 Access.** New residential subdivisions containing more than five (5) lots shall not have lots that directly access the existing public road. A new street or service drive shall be provided. If within small (5 lots or less) subdivisions individual driveways are permitted to access the existing public road, shared driveways may be required.

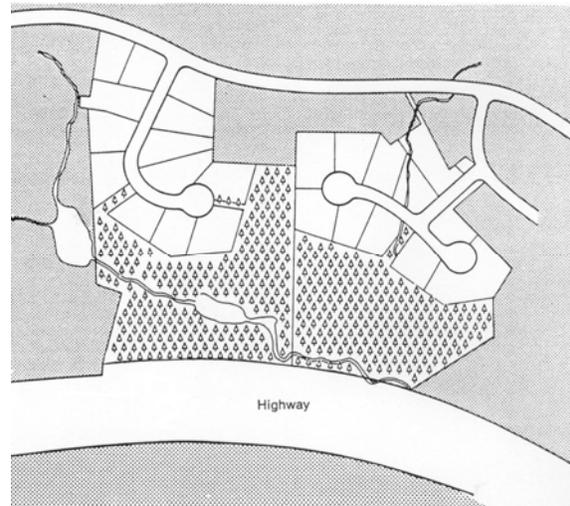


**§9-6 Character Districts**  
**Model Land Use Management Code**

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When a proposed subdivision has frontage on a limited access highway or railroad, a natural buffer should be maintained to muffle noises from the transportation corridor.

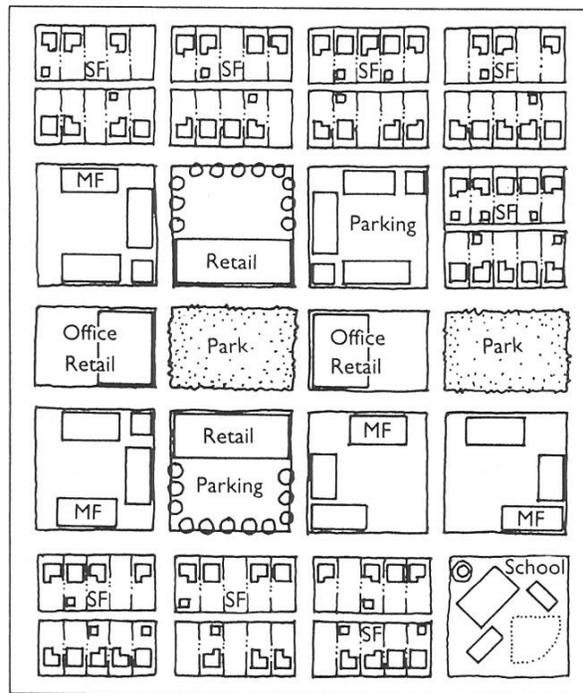
Consistent: Buffer remains between dwellings and transportation corridor. Subdivision is designed to provide pedestrian connections to the buffer and open space between the subdivision and the transportation corridor.



§9-6-5 TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT (TND) CHARACTER DISTRICT

§9-6-5.1 Description. The Traditional Neighborhood Development District is intended to provide for predominantly residential but mixed-use developments that are designed according to the principles of “new urbanism” with a grid or modified-grid street network, pedestrian scale and orientation, shallow front yards, relatively narrow local streets planted with shade trees and provided with wide sidewalks, and with automobile garages accessed via alleys or located to the rear of residential lots. TND districts are further distinguished from conventional suburban subdivision developments in their provision of public greens or common areas. TND districts are often located adjacent to the central business district or another core retail area.

Consistent: Grid pattern of blocks and streets. The traditional neighborhood development consists of a recognizable pattern of diverse land uses. one or more blocks containing shop front (retail) buildings fronting on or close to the street (usually in the center of the neighborhood for accessibility), with parking to the rear (screened from street to the rear and sides). Park blocks or greens are dispersed, usually with a random rather than regular pattern. Moving away from the pedestrian retail frontage, office uses and higher density residential uses (which may or may not be permitted in a given traditional neighborhood) are located adjacent to the retail block(s). Stepping down further in intensity and density, the more outlying blocks in the traditional neighborhood are detached, single-family dwellings on their own lots, usually fairly narrow in width (50-70 feet). Alley access is encouraged and may be required. School and/or church sites are a part of the neighborhood “fabric.”



Source: Calthorpe, Peter. “The Regional City.” Figure 5, p. 1.5-4. In *Time-Saver Standards for Urban Design*, edited by Donald Watson, Alan Plattus, and Robert Shibley. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003.

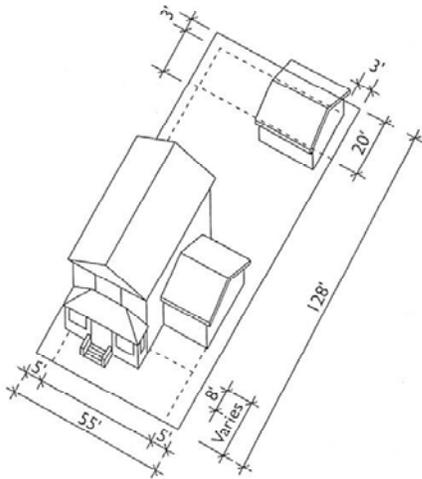


Source: Nashville, Tennessee, Metro Planning Department. 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue/Long Boulevard Urban Design Overlay. Adopted 3/16/04. Attachment to Ordinance No. BL 2004-151.

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**Consistent (above):** “Cottage” or small houses located close to the street, with gabled roofs and front porches, and with garage access at rear of lot. Accessory apartment above garage (subject to limitations).



Source: Kindell, Peter J., “Building Types,” p. 189 in *Planning and Urban Design Standards*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2006)

Source: Hill, John, W. *Design Characteristics of Maryland's Traditional Communities*, Figure 4, p. 5.1-2 in *Time Saver Standards for Urban Design* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003)

**Consistent:** Dwelling contains front porch and is located close to street. Minimal side yard setbacks. Garage is detached and located at rear of lot. Lot size is 50'-60' in width and approximately 100'-130' in depth (5,000 to 7,500 square feet of lot area).

**Consistent:** TND Street View – the original settlement pattern sets the character and establishes building themes that should be continued, including location of buildings close to the street and porches on the front of dwellings.



**Consistent:** House with front porch close to street.



**Consistent:** Streets with street trees and sidewalks.



Source: Arendt, Randall. Crossroads, Hamlet, Village, Town, Figure 55, p. 37. Planning Advisory Service Report No. 487/488. Chicago: American Planning Association, 1999.

Consistent: 3-story, higher density dwelling designed to face a green; buildings about the sidewalk.

Consistent: Townhouses, if permitted or conditionally permitted, have auto access to the rear of the lots via an alley.

§9-6-5.2 Pedestrian Access and Sidewalks. The site plan must demonstrate that the project will be designed in a way that gives preference to pedestrian (including transit users, where transit is available) versus vehicular access. To this end, the applicant shall identify and present a pedestrian access plan that provides pedestrian access connections to compatible adjacent properties and the public sidewalk system. Sidewalks meeting or exceeding local construction specifications shall be provided by the developer along all streetscapes abutting road corridors. Sidewalks meeting said specifications shall also be required to be installed by the developer along all other streets abutting the development area and along public and private through streets within the developments.

§9-6-5.3 Streetscape Improvements. The site plan of proposed development must demonstrate that the development will comply with the following streetscape improvements. Where not taken up by a building, the first ten (10) feet of private property abutting the right-of-way of the street shall be improved as a streetscape with an appropriate combination of the following elements: one or more pedestrian plazas or public use areas containing benches and shelters; amenity features such as low-lying walls or fountains; landscaping including street/shade trees; pedestrian-scale signage and development identification monuments; bicycle parking facilities; and steps or landings leading to buildings with retail or office-institutional uses on the ground floor with store-front windows. The local government may require a general purpose utility and streetscape easement of ten (10) feet in width if needed along the road right-of-way if additional right-of-way is needed and cannot be acquired.

§9-6-5.4 Maximum Building Setback. Buildings shall be placed close to (with little if any setback from) streets internal to the development, and along public streets abutting the development area, as determined in the site plan review and approval process. When a single building occupies a lot, said building shall be setback from the right-of-way no more than fifteen (15) feet.

§9-6-5.5 Residential Uses and Open Spaces. Residential areas should be designed in a grid-like pattern of blocks and interconnecting streets. Block length should not exceed 800 feet without intervening (mid-block) pedestrian access ways. Central residential areas should be designed in a grid-like pattern of blocks and interconnecting streets and alleys, and block length should not exceed 500-600 feet. Open spaces, such as town greens and public squares, should be located and designed to add to the visual amenities of the neighborhood and individual development. Greens and squares should be spatially defined and distributed

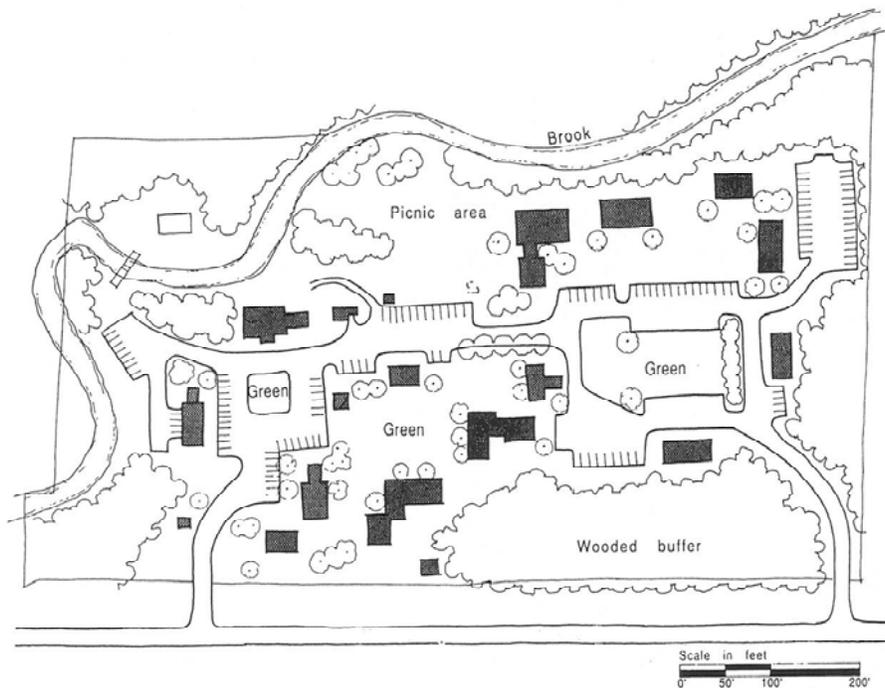
throughout the village so that no lot is more than a walking distance of 1,350 feet from a green, square, or park. Greens and squares should not be less than 8,000 square feet in area.

§9-6-5.6 Nonresidential and Mixed Uses. Enclosed retail trade establishments, personal service establishments, and related non-residential uses, if proposed and permitted, shall be located in careful relation to other land uses within and outside of the development. Such uses must be scaled to the pedestrian and to the district itself. The storefront area should contain retail uses, professional offices, and personal or professional services in one-and-one-half story buildings where each individual establishment is typically 1,500 square feet or less, and up to 3,500 square feet when located in buildings of two or more stories. Buildings containing residential units, usually on an upper story (i.e., vertical mixed use development) are particularly encouraged. Storefront buildings should have at least sixty (60) feet of their front façade coincident with their street frontage. Preferably, storefront buildings fronting the same street and located on the same block should be attached on the sides, except as necessary to accommodate pedestrian ways.

§9-6-6 CAMPUS CHARACTER DISTRICT

§9-6-6.1 Description. This district promotes a spacious pattern of buildings in a more natural setting or landscaped environment that gives the visitor an impression that the unit of land functions together as coherent whole, even among multiple buildings and potentially differing land uses. The campus character area is intended to apply mostly to large institutional campuses and planned industrial or business parks. Substantial attention is paid to landscaping and setting back buildings a substantial distance from internal and external roads.

Consistent: Buildings for institutions are relatively small and dispersed through the site. Substantial wooded buffer remains along the road, and riparian areas remain undeveloped. Parking is distributed throughout the site. Greens are provided within the campus



Source: Arendt, Randall, et al. *Rural By Design: Maintaining Small Town Character*, Figure 22-10a, p. 392. (Chicago: Planners Press, 1994).

Consistent: Institutional (educational shown) campus has a spacious appearance from the road. Buildings are typically no taller than one or two stories. A berm partially screens the parking lot from a nearby public road.



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Consistent: Monument-style sign marks the entrance to this industrial park. Entrance is attractively landscaped, including street trees and flowers planted at the base of the monument sign.

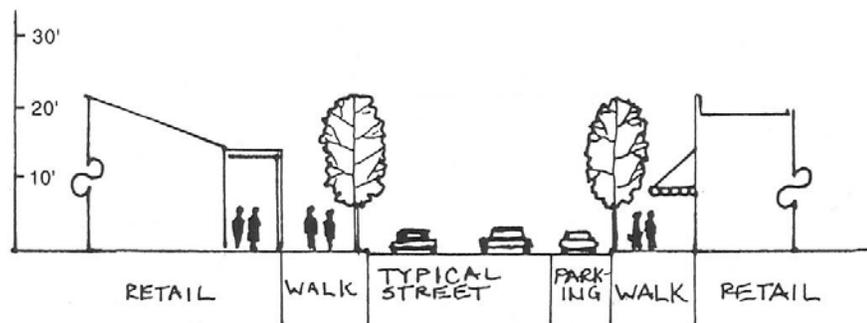


[\[See Commentary\]](#)

**§9-6-7 PEDESTRIAN RETAIL CHARACTER DISTRICT**

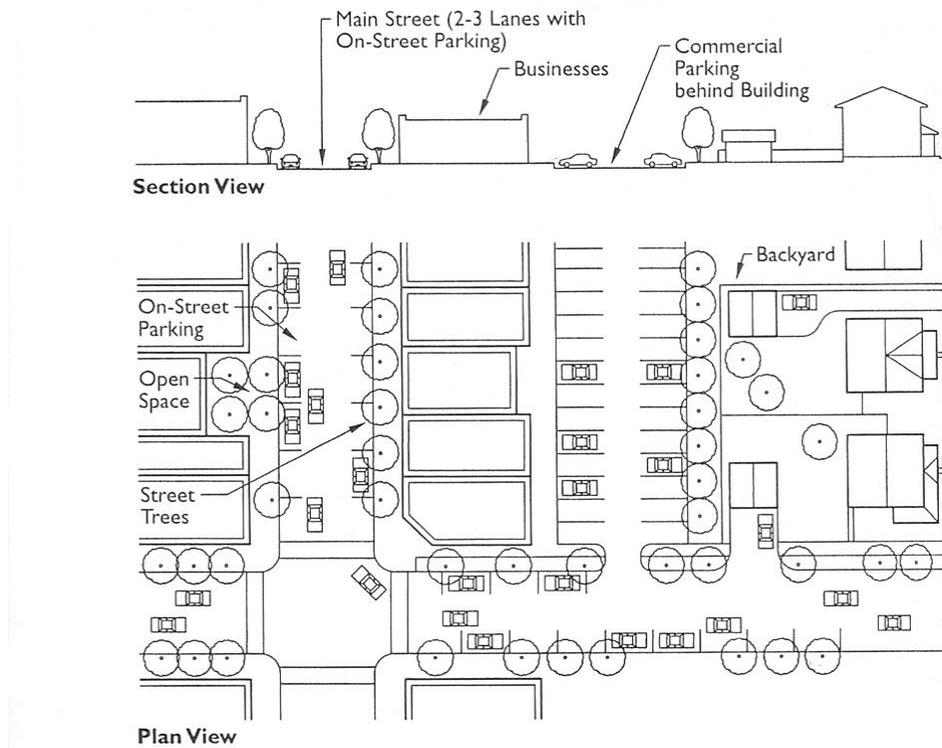
§9-6-7.1 Purpose. This district establishes and maintains areas of commerce that are designed first and foremost with attention to the pedestrian rather than the automobile. Sidewalks are wide enough for significant pedestrian activity and auto and truck access is limited in areas of pedestrian activity. Buildings frame the street by being located close to the street and with a height of at least 1.5 stories. The buildings, many of which are retail shops, have awnings and storefront windows, that add interest to pedestrians. Signs are smaller and closer to the ground, rather than being sized and located to attract motorists.

Consistent: 1.5-story or taller building heights, canopies and awnings, wide sidewalks with street trees, on-street parking.



Source: Arendt, Randall, et al. *Rural By Design: Maintaining Small Town Character*, Figure 9-11, p. 126. (Chicago: Planners Press, 1994).

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Source: Aaron Fortner, Market + Main, and Richard Dagenhart. Commercial Corridors, p. 418 in *Planning and Urban Design Standards* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2006).



Consistent: Building frames the street. Sidewalk provided. Street tree planting strip in between on-street parking and the sidewalk.

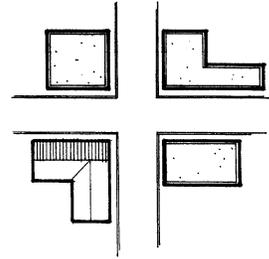


Consistent: Store-front retail spaces have awnings and are located abutting a wide sidewalk. On-street parking and street trees.

**§9-6 Character Districts**  
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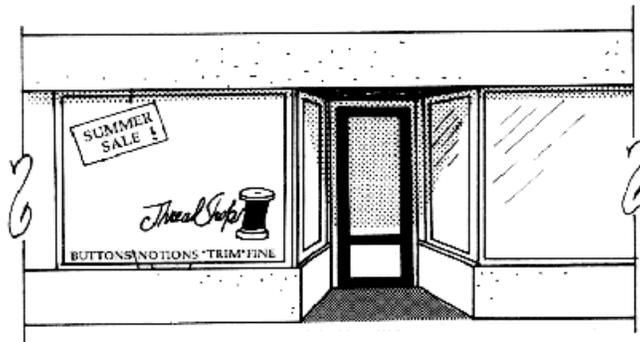
§9-6-7.2 Building Placement. Buildings should be placed close to (with little if any setback from) streets internal to the development, or along public streets abutting the development area, as determined in the development review and approval process. The buildings should be generally placed so that the main entrance is oriented to the street sidewalk.



Source: Morris, Marya, ed. 1996. *Creating Transit-Supportive Land Use Regulations*. PAS Report No. 468. Figure 1-9, p. 10. Chicago: American Planning Association.

§9-6-7.3 Ground Floors. The ground level of multi-story buildings should contain retail or entertainment uses with direct entry from the street to provide pedestrian interest along sidewalks. Pedestrian interest can be enhanced with use of windows, entrances, and architectural details. Pedestrian signage, awnings, and ornamentation are encouraged.

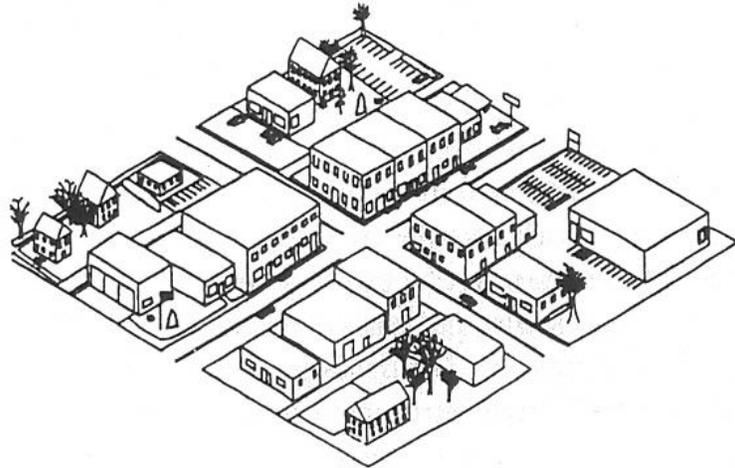
Consistent: Storefront windows should be transparent. Mirrored glass, faux windows or display casements are strongly discouraged.



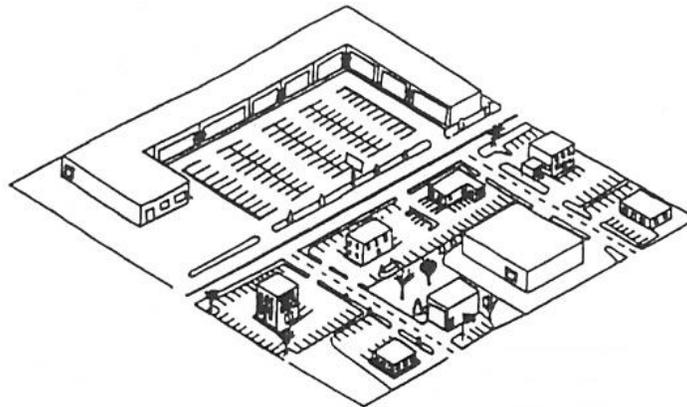
**§9-6 Character Districts**  
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Consistent: Grid block pattern. Buildings are not set back much if any from streets and they frame the street frontage and street corners. Two-story height for buildings desirable. Parking is mostly behind buildings (some on-street parking is permitted).



Inconsistent: Mostly single-story development with parking in the front of buildings. Strip shopping center has little if any articulation (projections and recesses). Individual development sites are not coordinated with one another.



Source: Arendt, Randall, et al. *Rural By Design: Maintaining Small Town Character*, Figure 9-2, p. 118. (Chicago: Planners Press, 1994).

Consistent: Skinny streets (one-way shown) with shade trees. Decorative post-top street lighting is pedestrian scale. Sidewalk constructed of distinctive materials rather than regular concrete or asphalt. Directional sign is small and low to the ground (pedestrian scale).



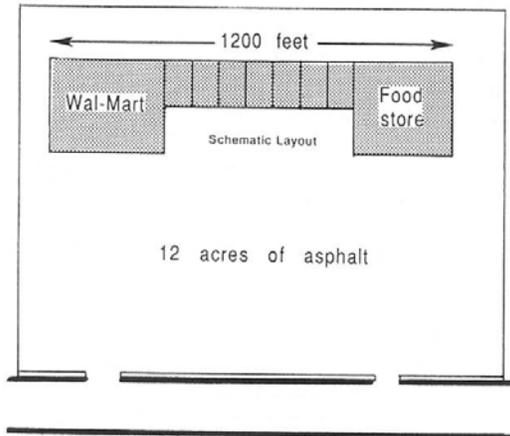
§9-6-7.4 Signs.

Consistent: Within pedestrian retail districts, projecting signs are permitted and encouraged.

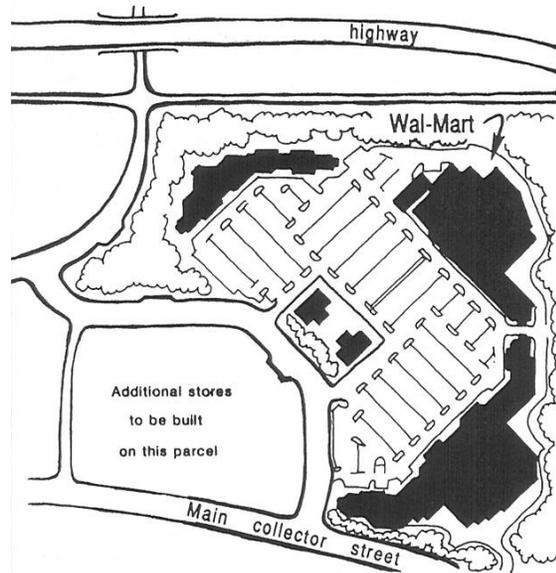


§9-6-8 HIGHWAY BUSINESS CHARACTER DISTRICT

§9-6-8.1 Description. This district corresponds with auto-oriented business and employment along highway corridors. This district is accessible by the pedestrian along the highway corridor, but walking is not necessarily a pleasant or safe experience. Auto and truck access dominate. Buildings are typically set back from the highway and have off-street parking in front of the buildings. Signs are larger and taller than in pedestrian retail districts, because they are designed to attract attention to highway motorists.



Source: Arendt, Randall, et al. *Rural By Design: Maintaining Small Town Character*, Figure 3-1, p. 28. (Chicago: Planners Press, 1994).



Source: Arendt, Randall, et al. *Rural By Design: Maintaining Small Town Character*, Figure 3-1, p. 28. (Chicago: Planners Press, 1994).

Acceptable but not encouraged: Buildings are long and not articulated. Parking is in front of the shopping center.

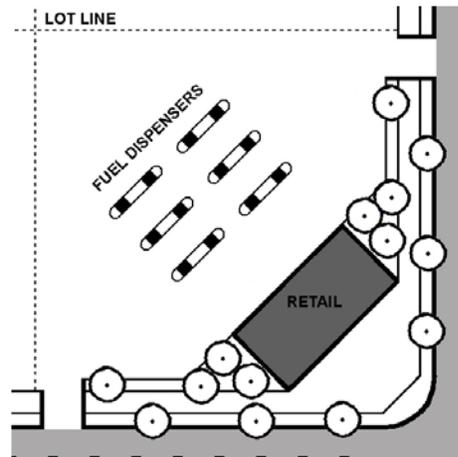
Consistent: Shopping center is buffered from major highway, and access is from a collector street instead of directly onto the highway or frontage road. Parking lot is broken up by outparcel.

Consistent: Shopping center has highly articulated architecture, with pitched roofs and other special architectural features including stacked stone. Sign is externally rather than internally illuminated. Cut-off fixtures are used for exterior lighting of the parking lot.

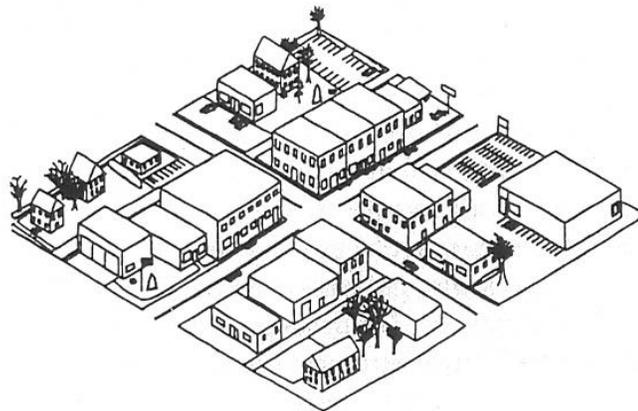
Inconsistent: No landscaping in the parking lot.



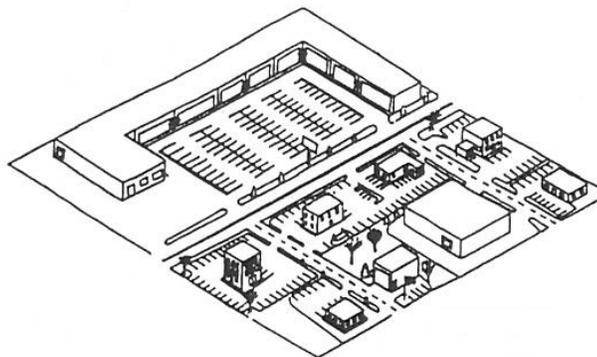
§9-6-8.2 Convenience Stores. Convenience stores should locate gas pumps behind the principal structure in order to effectively screen the pumps from view of the street. However, if fuel pumps are not located in the rear of the building, then additional landscaping should be required.



Consistent: Grid block pattern. Buildings are not set back much if any from streets so as to frame the street frontage and street corners. Two-story height for buildings desirable. Parking is mostly behind buildings (some on-street parking is permitted).

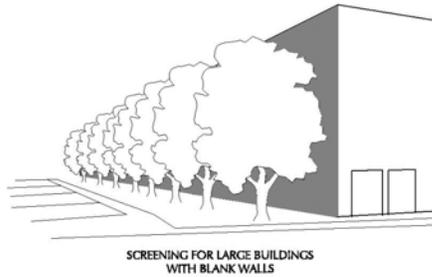


Acceptable but not encouraged: Mostly single-story development with parking in the front of buildings.



§9-6-8.3 Building Façades. Lengthy, featureless façades and building walls must be avoided. Large, flat, blank expanses on a façade are not acceptable and shall not be permitted.

Source: Arendt, Randall, et al. *Rural By Design: Maintaining Small Town Character*, Figure 9-2, p. 118. (Chicago: Planners Press, 1994).



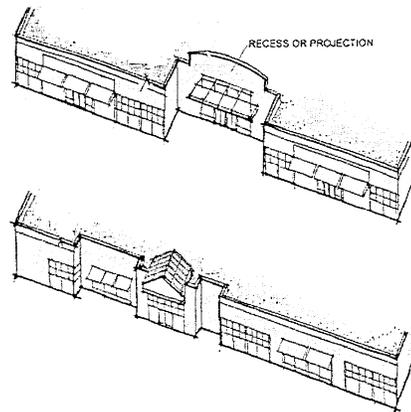
**Consistent:** A line of mature trees that almost entirely screens what would otherwise be a large, imposing side wall of a big box.

**Inconsistent:** The rear side of this shopping center consists of a finished but monotonous wall. Trash receptacles are not enclosed.

§9-6-8.4 **Architecture.** The walls of buildings for office, institutional, commercial, and industrial use shall not extend more than 200 linear feet parallel to a street unless the front façade of the building is designed in a way that breaks up the building face into discrete architectural elements, which can be accomplished through the following:

- (a) Façade modulation: stepping back or extending forward a portion of the façade.
- (b) Providing bay windows or repeating window patterns at regular intervals.
- (c) Providing a porch, patio, deck, covered entry to portions of the façade at the ground level, or in the case of buildings containing two or more story, balconies.
- (d) Changing the roofline by alternating dormers, or using stepped roofs, gables, or other roof elements.
- (e) Changing materials with the change in building plane.

***Façade Modulation:  
Recesses and Projections***



§9-6-8.5 Rooflines.

Consistent: Roof planes should be varied to increase visual interest, and awnings above windows and entrances also help to provide visual interest.



Inconsistent: Flat roofs and lengthy, non-articulated walls.



§9-6-8.6 Primary Building Materials. On front façades and other building sides visible from a public right-of-way, exterior building materials shall not include smooth-faced concrete block, tilt-up concrete panels, or prefabricated steel panels. The following types of external building materials are prohibited: highly reflective, shiny, or mirror-like materials; mill-finish (non-colored) aluminum metal windows or door frames; exposed, unfinished walls; exposed plywood or particle board; and unplastered, exposed concrete masonry blocks. This provision applies also to accessory buildings and structures, including signs.

Inconsistent: Commercial facilities shall be mostly screened from view of public rights-of-ways. If fenced with chain link, the fencing shall be coated with black vinyl. Corrugated metal siding is not permitted to be in view of public right-of-way.



§9-6-8.7 Retention and Detention Ponds. Design man-made lakes and stormwater ponds for maximum habitat value and to serve as amenities for the development. Detention ponds designed as amenity features with shallow (4:1) slopes. If fenced with chain link, the fencing shall be coated with black vinyl.



Consistent: Retention pond serves as an amenity feature and is landscaped.



Inconsistent: Chain-link fenced detention ponds in front yard visible from the highway. Ideally

#### §9-6-8.8 Retaining Walls.

Inconsistent: Tall, smooth faced concrete retaining walls are not permitted when visible from the right-of-way; in such cases they shall be faced with brick, stone, or other architectural treatment. The height and length of retaining walls should be minimized and screened with appropriate landscaping.



Discouraged: A highly visible, long, smooth, concrete retaining wall.

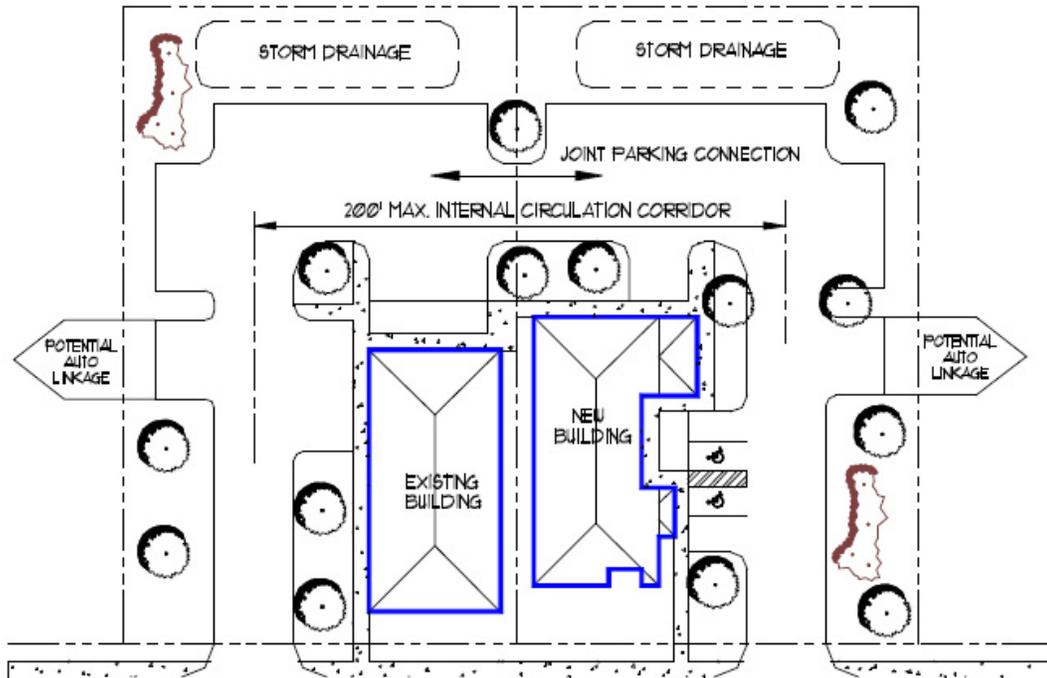
§9-6-8.9 Access. Inter-parcel access is strongly encouraged.

Inconsistent: Single-function, separated land uses. Conventional development patterns shown here provide no connections among different land uses. In this illustration, the residential subdivisions could be, but are not, connected with a pedestrian access-way to the school site and beyond.



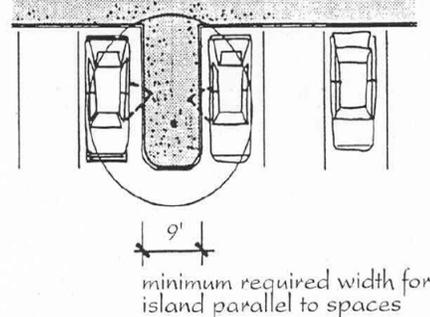
Source: Calthorpe, Peter. "The Regional City." Figure 4, p. 1.5-4. In *Time-Saver Standards for Urban Design*, edited by Donald Watson, Alan Plattus, and Robert Shibley. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003.

Consistent: Inter-parcel access provided. Storm drainage located to the rear of lots. Parking is provided to the side and rear of the lot.



Source: Peirce County, Washington. Title 18J – Development Regulations – Design Standards and Guidelines.

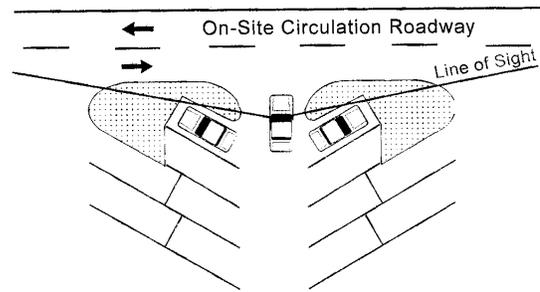
§9-6-8.10 Parking Lot Landscaping. One parking lot landscape island shall also be provided for every 100 linear feet of parking spaces measured along the widths of the parking spaces. Landscape islands shall be sized large enough so that they can contain at least one overstory tree or two understory trees which shall be planted in each island. No portion of an island shall be less than nine feet in width.



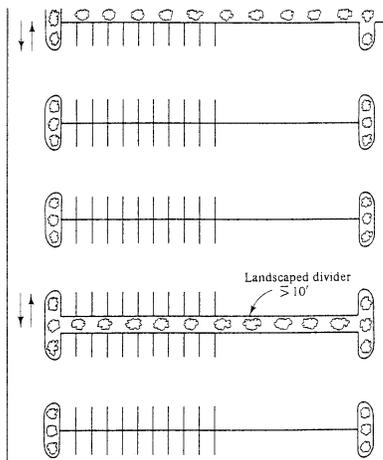
To the extent that the required front landscape strip does not shield parking lots from view, all parts of parking lots that face a street shall be screened from the street by a low (2-3.5 foot high) fence, wall, hedge, berm, buffer, or appropriate combination.

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**§9-6-8.11 Parking Lot Landscaped End Islands.** Landscaping at end islands of parking aisles shall not inhibit sight distance as required for motorist safety. Parking aisle end islands shall be curbed. Painted end islands are ineffective and are not permitted.



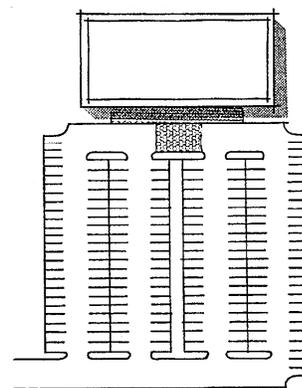
In large parking lots, landscape dividers should be installed every fourth row of parking spaces so as to divide the expanse of the parking lot and avoid improper and dangerous circulation habits. Where appropriate sidewalks may be installed within wide landscape dividers.



**Consistent:** Large parking lot is separated by curbed landscape divider with small shrubs and shade trees; shoebox style (cut-off fixture) lighting.

**§9-6-8.12 Pedestrian-Vehicle Intersections.** Pedestrian circulation should take precedence over vehicular circulation. Where pedestrian circulation crosses vehicular routes, a change in grade, materials, textures or colors should be provided to emphasize the conflict point and improve its visibility and safety. Accent strips of brick or textured paving may also be appropriate for defining pedestrian walkways.

**Consistent:** Pedestrian crossing a high traffic area is marked with change in paving materials. The central aisle provides a direct connection for pedestrians.



§9-6-8.13 Trash Enclosures and Recycling Collection.

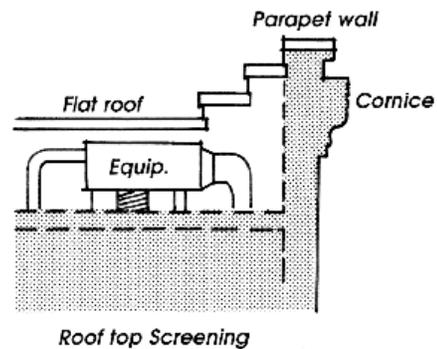
Trash enclosures shall be constructed of sturdy, durable, opaque materials (with trash receptacles screened from view) which are similar to or designed to be compatible with the project architecture. Trash enclosures should include adequate, accessible and convenient areas for collecting and loading recyclable materials. Space shall be provided within enclosures for pallets, skids, cartons, etc, and no overflow of these or other debris shall be allowed in public view.



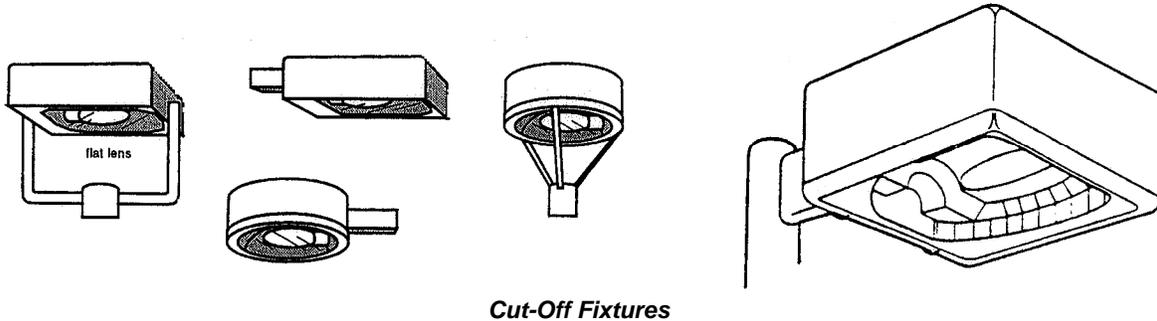
Consistent: The dumpster is enclosed on three sides with a solid decorative block wall, approximately eight feet high, that matches the primary building on the site. Doors allow for the complete enclosure of the receptacle area. The dumpster area is kept free from debris.

§9-6-8.14 Rooftop Mechanical Equipment.

Rooftop mechanical and electrical equipment shall be screened from public view by building elements that are designed as an integral part of the building architecture, or by a parapet wall.



§9-6-8.15 Lighting. Cut-off Fixtures are required. All luminaries used for outdoor lighting shall be full cutoff luminaries which do not emit any direct light above a horizontal plane through the lowest direct-light-emitting part of the luminaire.



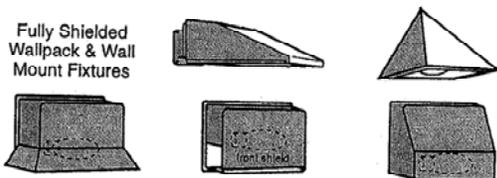
**Cut-Off Fixtures**

Security lighting unless activated by motion sensor devices, shall also meet this requirement.



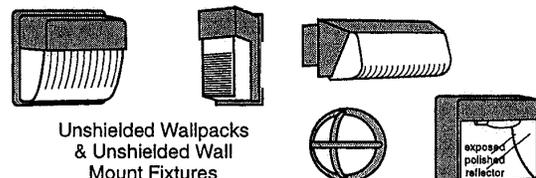
**Security Lighting**

Wallpacks are not permitted unless fully shielded.



Fully Shielded Wallpack & Wall Mount Fixtures

**Shielded Wallpacks Permitted**



Unshielded Wallpacks & Unshielded Wall Mount Fixtures

**Unshielded Wallpacks Prohibited**

**§9-6-9 MIXED-USE ACTIVITY CENTER CHARACTER DISTRICT**

**§9-6-9.1 Description.** This district has many of the same characteristics as the pedestrian retail district, but with greater mix of land uses. The activity center is an organized and pre-planned village center with a mixture of residential, civic/institutional, office, commercial and formal open spaces done following principles of New England-style town planning, New Urbanism, Traditional Neighborhood Development, and/or urban planning and redevelopment.

**§9-6-9.2 Land Use Mix.** The following guideline is provided for mixing land uses within an activity center.

<b>Use</b>	<b>Neighborhood</b>	<b>Urban</b>
Public and institutional	10% – 15%	5% – 15%
Core (retail/employment)	10% – 40%	30% – 70%
Housing (various types)	50% – 80%	20% – 65%

**§9-6-9.3 Live/Work Units.** Activity centers may include live/work units.



Source: Nashville, Tennessee, Metro Planning Department. 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue/Long Boulevard Urban Design Overlay. Adopted 3/16/04. Attachment to Ordinance No. BL 2004-151.

§9-6-10      UNDESIGNATED

§9-6-10.1 Description. This district applies to areas that have no particular, established development pattern, and/or that have few if any specific design requirements.

[\[See Commentary\]](#)