

# Gray Village Center Design Guidelines

## Introduction

The Town of Gray has established a Village Center (VC) zoning district to promote economic development and revitalization of the Gray Village as set forth in the Gray Village Master Plan.

The purpose of the Village Center District design Guidelines is to establish well planned non-residential development that promotes economic diversification, employment opportunities, and pedestrian activity; create functional and visual diversity as well as a pleasant working and shopping environment; and maintain significant features of the natural environment while allowing maximum flexibility in the design of new non-residential development.

Non-residential development projects will consider the following criteria:

1. Preservation and/or treatment of natural features;
2. Compatibility with surrounding uses;
3. Relationship to transit corridors;
4. Proportional size, mix and arrangement of buildings;
5. Placement and orientation of parking;
6. Provision for amenities such as landscaping, plazas, and pedestrian friendly environment; and
7. Overall site circulation of vehicles and pedestrians.

The Town has enacted these Design Guidelines as a tool to supplement the performance standards contained in the Gray land use ordinances. Although there is greater flexibility allowed in meeting the Design Guidelines than in other regulations, they are to be interpreted as being mandatory requirements for all projects within the

district.

There are many ways to meet each guideline. The Design Guideline bullets in bold print set the standards that must be met for each project. The text following the bullets provides more specific direction for interpreting the standards and analyzing development applications. The Guidelines help the Planning Board determine that the project design meets the design goals and ordinance requirements.

Implementation of the Design Guidelines relies heavily on the services of architects and landscape architects working as consultants for developers and peer reviewers for the Town. The Design Guidelines provide a context for coordinated discussions of design issues in advance of formal site plan review procedures. This collaborative process ensures that site plans in the Village Center District produce high quality development that contributes to the area's downtown role.

## Part 1—Site Planning

### SITE CHARACTER

- **Preserve Historic Structures—** Structures of historic significance or which are listed on a municipal, county, state or national historical register shall comply with said municipal, county, state or national guidelines for historic structures.
- **Carefully Orient & Screen Rear & Loading Areas—**Rear or loading areas of buildings shall not face existing or planned amenities such as parks, open space, water features or public rights-of-way unless visually screened or architecturally articulated.
- **Maintain Existing Topography—** Development of sloped properties shall be designed in such a way as to maintain the natural contours of the land. Methods such as terraced parking lots, stepped building pads, and greater setbacks shall be employed to minimize grade differentials.

### LAND USE BUFFERING

- **Carefully Locate Objectionable Activities—**Noise, traffic, odorous, or hazardous activities shall be located adjacent to areas of similar activities on adjacent properties whenever practical. Such activities shall not be located in close proximity to residential or other incompatible areas such as schools or offices.
- **Carefully Locate and Screen Service Areas & Equipment—**Loading areas, access and circulation driveways, trash and storage areas, and rooftop equipment shall be visually screened and located as far as practical from adjacent residential areas.
- **Carefully Orient & Screen for Abutting Residential Uses—**Non-residential

uses that are incompatible with adjacent residential property shall be separated by masonry walls, landscaping, building orientation, and activity limitations. Buildings shall be designed to prevent a direct line of sight from within the building into adjacent residential property by employing design features such as screen walls, landscaping, window placement, building positioning or any combination thereof. A visual barrier of evergreen trees at least six (6) feet in height shall screen non-residential building walls and parking lots from adjacent residential property.

- **Connect Compatible Uses—**Non-residential uses compatible with adjacent residential areas may be connected by features that include, but are not limited to, driveways, parking areas, walkways and common landscaped areas, or enhanced by building orientation and unfenced property lines.

### BUILDING PLACEMENT

- **Build to the Street—**Commercial and office building frontage shall be located as near as practical to the front setback line, or if a corner building, as near as practical to the setback lines of both streets. In the case of corner buildings, this may be accomplished using angled or sculpted building corners or an open plaza at the corner.
- **Face Buildings to the Street—**Active building elevations with public access or windows shall face public streets wherever practical.
- **Coordinate Building Designs—**Multiple buildings in a single project must demonstrate a positive functional relationship with one another. This creates opportunities for plazas and pedestrian areas while preventing long “barrack-like” rows of buildings. When clustering is impractical, a visual link shall be established between buildings. This link shall be accomplished through the use of an arcade system, trellis, colonnade or other open

structures.

- **Provide Useable Open Spaces—** Wherever practical, open space areas shall be grouped into useable, prominent landscaped areas so as to provide useable open space within a complex of buildings or project; however this provision does not require that every building or project or all areas surrounding buildings to provide useable open space.
- **Provide Outdoor Seating Areas—** Buildings shall be placed in a manner that allows space for outdoor seating areas. Spaces between buildings that offer clear, useable shapes may be used for this purpose; however, this does not require that all spaces between buildings be designed for use as outdoor seating areas.

#### COLOR GUIDELINES

- **Use Compatible Colors—**Colors used on buildings shall be compatible with colors of the surrounding area.

#### TRASH LOADING/STORAGE AREAS

- **Enclose Dumpsters in Attractive & Durable Enclosures—**Trash and garbage containers shall be stored in an enclosure that is architecturally compatible with the project or building and which includes concrete pads or appropriately designed asphalt surfaces. Trash enclosure gates shall be constructed of durable materials that obscure view by a minimum of eighty (80) percent.
- **Locate Such Service Areas Away from Abutting Residences—**Non-residential buildings adjacent to residential properties shall be designed or positioned so that loading and delivery activities occur on the side of a building opposite the side facing residential property, and shall not be located within the required setback.

- **Provide Loading Areas for Restaurants—**Every free-standing restaurant site shall include a loading area or arrangement for other accommodations.
- **Loading Docks not to be Visible from the Street—**Loading docks shall not be directly visible from a public street. Complete screening matching the building design or a landscape buffer achieving eighty (80) percent screening within three (3) years shall be installed where necessary to meet this requirement.
- **No Standing & Idling Trucks—**Trucks are prohibited from parking and idling in maneuvering or circulation areas that are adjacent to residential properties, except for approved loading or dock areas.
- **Carefully Locate & Screen Outdoor Storage Areas—**Outdoor storage shall be located within approved storage areas that are permanently screened from view. Outdoor storage shall not be allowed in required parking or loading areas.

## Part 2—Landscaping Guidelines

### STANDARD DESIGN CONCEPTS

- **Use Trees to Accent Site Features—** Specimen trees, deciduous trees a minimum of two (2) inches DBH or evergreen trees a minimum of two (2) feet in height, shall be used in informal groupings and rows at major focal points such as project entrances.
- **Use Shrubs & Ornamental Plantings to Accent Site Features—** Non-residential projects shall include at least one of the following:
  1. Herbaceous perennials and ornamental grasses in informal groupings at major focal points such as project entrances.
  2. Groundcovers in lieu of turf in areas that receive minimal pedestrian traffic, such as along walkways and in medians.

### LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS FOR PARKING LOTS GREATER THAN 50 SPACES

- **Provide Landscaping in Parking Lot Islands—** Planting islands at the ends of parking rows shall meet the following standards:
  1. A minimum of three hundred (300) square feet with double loaded parking;
  2. A minimum of one hundred fifty (150) square feet with single loaded parking;
  3. A minimum interior width of nine (9) feet;
  4. Curbing six (6) inches high on all sides; and
  5. Shade trees, low shrubs, ground-

cover, or any combination thereof.

- **Use Landscaping to Accent & Organize Parking Areas & Pedestrian Paths—** Landscaping that accents driveway entrances, frames major circulation aisles, and highlights pedestrian pathways.

## Part 3—Lighting Guidelines

### PARKING LOT LIGHTING

- **Appropriately Direct & Shield Parking Lot Lights**—Parking lots shall require lighting, positioned or hooded in such a way that prevents the direct beam of the lights from projecting directly onto adjoining property or streets.
- **Limit Light Pole Heights**—Parking lot lights shall not exceed a height of twenty seven (27) feet from the parking lot surface or the height of the tallest building on the site, whichever is less.
- **Use Attractively Designed Light Poles**—Parking lot light poles shall be decorative, complementary and consistent with the architecture of the project.