

WEST SIDE

- LARGE, HIGH CANOPY TREES ALONG BACK OF SIDEWALK
- BRICK BAND (STAMPED ASPHALT) ALONG FRONT OF SIDEWALK
- PLANTING ISLANDS TO DELINEATE PARKING AND 'SOFTEN' VIEW FROM STREET.

EAST SIDE

- SMALL TO MEDIUM TREES ALONG BACK OF SIDEWALK
- PLANTING ISLANDS TO DELINEATE PROPERTY LINES

TOWN OF READING

SOUTH MAIN STREET

DESIGN BEST PRACTICES

MARCH 2012

*Early Ideas
for Streetscaping*

South Main S

Reading, Massac

Prep
Gates, Leighton & Assoc



Town of Reading - South Main Street Design Best Practices

The Community Planning and Development Commission has developed the following set of Design Best Practices for the South Main Street Corridor as a way to communicate to property owners and developers the community's preferences related to development attributes in the corridor. The South Main Street corridor is one of the Gateways to Reading and therefore represents the character of Reading to residents, visitors, employees and business customers.

Unfortunately much of the South Main Street corridor in the past has been characterized by a varied commercial mix, lack of investment, business turnover, and unappealing aesthetics. South Main Street is a major element of the commercial corridor in Reading and a gateway to the downtown and central core of the community. Through the Master Planning process the community established the following goals for the South Main Street Corridor:

- Minimize parking in front of the buildings
- Encourage landscaping/greenery along the street edge/building fronts
- Preserve and enhance residential uses that are interspersed with commercial uses in the corridor
- Preserve existing density/intensity of use
- Minimize additional overhead utilities/Encourage underground utility connections
- Improve pedestrian environment along Main Street
- Encourage designs/roadway changes that calm traffic

Design Best Practices

These South Main Street Design Best Practices have been developed to assist in shaping new construction or redevelopment along the corridor to advance the goals of the Master Plan. The Design Best Practices are based on an understanding that a high quality of design and construction enhance the economic vitality of the business district, and improve the overall quality of living near and traveling through the South Main Street corridor.

The goals of the Design Best Practices are as follows:

- Endorse the Goals of the Master Plan
- Supplement the existing Zoning By-Law
- Assist property owners and developers by summarizing community expectations for development in the corridor
- Facilitate thoughtful, contextually sensitive design
- Streamline Site Plan Review

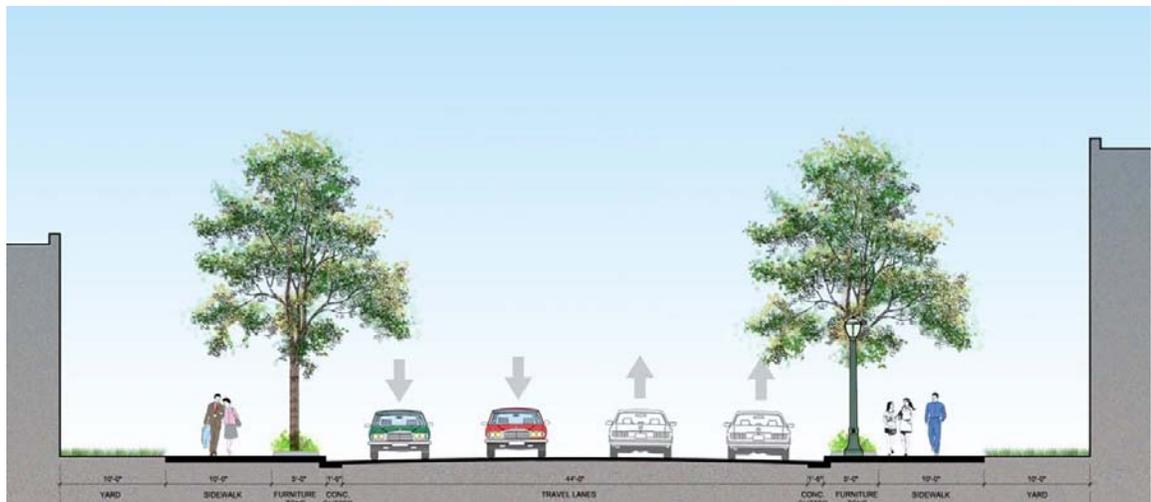
The Design Best Practices are to be a helpful source of information and ideas for owners, designers and builders to relate the goals and objectives of the town for the South Main Street corridor. The belief is that through communication of this information early on during the design and construction process, the site plan review and approval process will be swift and efficient.

Site Design Standards

Sidewalks

Intent: Provide sidewalk and associated facilities along the corridor that make pedestrian and bicycle use a safe and enjoyable way to travel along the corridor.

- Minimize the number and size of driveway curb cuts that cross sidewalks or pedestrian paths.
- Provide visual or textual indications to drivers as they cross sidewalks/pedestrian paths (i.e. cross walks, textured pavement)
- On-site bicycle parking (preferably covered parking if possible) is encouraged for uses where bicycle access is possible (i.e. residential, retail, office uses, etc.)
- Accommodate the separation of sidewalks and pedestrian ways from highway traffic through the use of tree lawns, landscaping or hardscaping that provides pedestrians a feeling of separation from traffic. A landscaped separation of at least 5 feet is strongly encouraged wherever possible. Hardscape is encouraged when less than 5 feet is available. See Landscape section for discussion on Best Practices for landscaped separation.



Source: Greenberg Farrow / Peter Drey Urban Design Studio 2005

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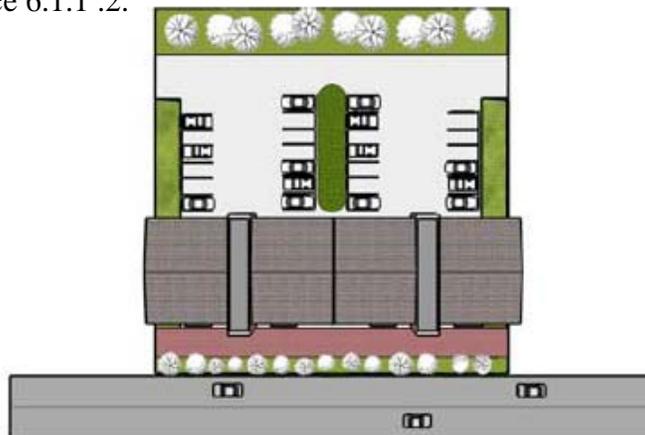


- On-site pedestrian ways and sidewalks should be developed to provide connection to pedestrian network on adjoining parcels or to the public right-of-way.
- Outdoor restaurant seating, furniture, amenities, planters, conforming signs and other activities are encouraged but should be planned to maintain a minimum 5-foot wide unobstructed pathway.

Parking

Intent: Minimize the adverse impact of parking on the character of the corridor by minimizing the area and visual impact of parking in the front yard of buildings.

- The use of shared parking spaces is encouraged. With a shared parking plan, demonstrated to CPDC with private agreements where spaces are within 300 feet from building entrance, CPDC will advocate to the ZBA for approval of off-site parking, if in conformance 6.1.1 .2.



Source: Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network

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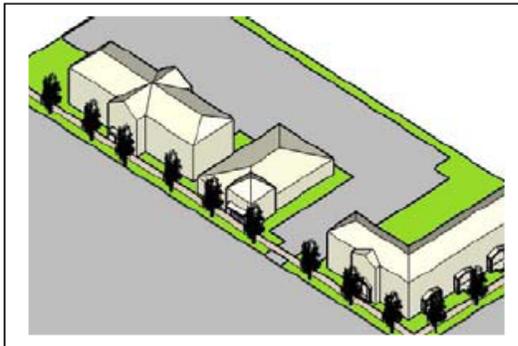
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- Parking should be located in the rear or side yards to the maximum extent possible. In locations where parking can only be accommodated in the front yard, screening and earth berms should be provided to minimize the visual impact. However, screening should continue to permit limited view from the sidewalk into the parking lot.
- To minimize the visual impact of any structured parking, structures shall be integrated into the building design.
- Parking should incorporate provisions to accommodate both auto and bicycle parking.

Driveways:

Intent: Minimize the amount of space dedicated to automobile access and circulation.

- Driveways/parking access should be designed to provide only one connection to Main Street, whether shared or independent. Shared driveways are encouraged, where possible.



Source: Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network

- Driveway connections to adjacent parcels are encouraged where possible.
- Driveway access should be located away from parcel edges/corners, except where access agreements with adjacent parcel are in place.

Drainage

Intent: To minimize the impact of development and impervious surfaces on the town's stormwater systems.

- Encourage Low Impact Development (LID) practices for mitigation of existing runoff and on-site stormwater treatment (e.g., rain gardens, tree box filters in parking areas).
- The use of rainwater harvesting for building use and/or irrigation purposes is encouraged.

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- Parking islands shall be adequately sized for storm events and provide proper infiltration area to support their plantings at maturity.

Landscaping Amenities

Intent: To enhance the building site and streetscape. To use unifying elements that link Main Street buildings to each other and to downtown.

- The installation of trees along the Main Street edge as well as side streets of any properties, planted at 25 to 50-foot intervals, is encouraged in order to provide a tree-lined corridor along Main Street. Trees are encouraged within landscaped area between curb and sidewalk where distance is sufficient to accommodate tree well and accessible path along sidewalk. Where this is not possible, trees are encouraged to be located at the immediate back side of the sidewalk.
- The location of new trees should be done in a way that does not block building and street signage.
- Short native shrubbery and ground cover is encouraged to be used along building facades.



Source: North Olmstead Design Guidelines

- A landscape plan is encouraged to be developed using a mix of native species that will require minimal irrigation and fertilizer and that will provide seasonal interest.

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- The landscape design within a parking lot should be developed to both beautify the area and to provide shade and sun relief to vehicles, pedestrians, and patrons. All parking areas should include a mix of native tree species including deciduous, conifer, and flowering trees.



*Source: Town of LeRay
Commercial Corridor Design Guidelines, 2008*

- Hardscape features and materials should be designed to complement the building(s) and provide for patron interest and convenience. For example, when applicable, landscape walls or boulders or brick pathways should be arranged to provide for casual sitting and conversation areas.
- Landscape amenities should be used to enhance the site's design, functionality, and access. These features should match the Town Standard where applicable:
 - Street Trees (Town Tree Warden should be consulted regarding preferred street trees)
 - When architectural style permits, prefer use of hardscape amenities (benches, fences, bike racks, sidewalks, area lighting) similar to those in downtown Reading
 - Curbing (Vertical Granite Curbing should be used along all primary circulation routes (i.e. driveways))
- Landscape buffering should be provided in areas adjacent to residences. The buffer should provide a mix of species, sizes, and groupings to provide a natural barrier. Where room permits, earth berms should be incorporated into the buffering. If used, fences should be of a complementary material to the residences. Locations of plantings shall vary to contoured vertical surface rather than a straight line wall or fence.

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Lighting

Intent: Ensure that site lighting contributes to the character of the neighborhood the site and provides a sense of security and safety as well as energy efficiency.

- Lighting fixtures should be located to respond to the anticipated use (e.g. signage, site features).
- Energy efficient lighting alternatives are encouraged (i.e. LED)
- The lighting design should avoid bright lighting or significant relative brightness differences with adjacent dissimilar land uses. Photometric data shall be provided, as requested, for specific development.
- All outdoor lighting should comply with the following shielding provisions: Direct light emitted by exterior luminaire should not emit directly by a lamp, off a reflector, or through a refractor above a horizontal plane (90 degrees) through the fixture's lowest light-emitting part. Cut-off shields may be recommended where necessary.
- Lighting sources should be concealed wherever possible from the public right-of-way.
- The height of a light fixture shall be measured from the ground to the light emitting flat glass of the luminaire; pole height may be higher than this light-emitting height. Use of lighting standards is encouraged to be generally no more than eighteen feet high.
- Street poles and lighting fixtures shall be dark in color to reduce light reflectivity.
- Lighting fixture assembly should coordinate with the architecture it serves. Exterior lighting should reinforce entries and illuminate pedestrian routes. Site lighting should be subdued and pedestrian in scale.
- The use of shatterproof coverings for low-level lighting is encouraged.
- The location of lighting supports shall be identified so as not to create pedestrian or vehicular safety hazards.
- Spacing of pole lights should provide for uniformity of light, with the distance depending on the minimum illumination levels required.
- If a sidewalk or walkway includes trees, pole lights should be located between the trees so that the tree canopy does not interfere with illumination coverage.

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- All light fixtures should emit a steady and constant light and should not emit a flashing or irregular light, unless specifically required by Federal, State or municipal authorities.
- Exterior lighting should be controlled by a photo sensor or time switch that automatically turns off non-security lights when commercial facilities are closed.

Utility Areas and Utilities

Intent: Reduce the adverse visual impact of service areas by proper location and screening.

- Service, Loading Areas, Electrical transformers, and site mechanical equipments should be located and screened to minimize views from public areas and abutting residential areas. Screening should employ good quality plantings and/or construction materials, such as steel, cast iron fencing, brick, wood or stone.
- The use of chain link fencing visible from the street is strongly discouraged.
- Electrical and communication utilities should be underground for all new development.

Building Massing Design Standards

Location on site

Intent: Encourage the siting and massing of buildings so that they contribute to, engage and enliven the public way and pedestrian space. Encourage development of a gateway corridor that provides an introduction to Reading and the downtown district.

- Any new or reconstructed buildings are encouraged to be located as close to Main Street as permitted by zoning bylaws, and should include pedestrian uses and landscaping in front of the building and parking in the side or rear yards.
- Buildings of more than 3 stories should step back 10 feet from the front plane above the 3rd story to diminish building mass in the front and the side that abuts a driveway.
- Building heights should be scaled in proportion to adjacent properties, or provide transition to abutting neighborhoods.
- Building fronts should be oriented parallel with the roadway to maintain the 'street wall'.

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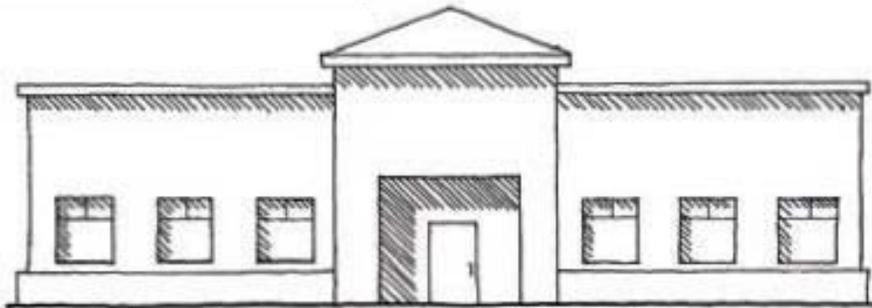
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- Upper stories are encouraged be set back, treated with different materials or incorporated into the roof line, to diminish the building mass consistent with the specific architectural typology.
- Design that recognizes adjacent residential neighborhoods but that is distinct in its commercial corridor location is encouraged.

Building Entries

Intent: Promote pedestrian comfort, safety and orientation through building entrances that are inviting, logical, easily identifiable and accessible.

- Primary entrances should be oriented toward the open side yards or the front yards that are clearly visible from streets and sidewalks.
- Where entrances from rear parking are desired, an additional front or side door is encouraged to avoid placing the “back” of the building to the street



Source: San Diego Association of Governments, Designing for Smart Growth

Façade Design Standards

Building Façade features

Intent: Create building facades that engage and enliven the streetscape. Provide for appropriate façade transparency and ‘active wall’ that connect inside and out.

- Architectural features and façade articulation should be continued on all sides visible from the street.
- Building facades and footprints should be articulated to vary the streetscape, provide visual interest and reflect the function of the space.
- Blank facades are not desirable. Changes in material, which are accompanied by a change in plan, vertical and/or horizontal elements shall be used to provide a pedestrian scale in areas where windows and doors are not functionally required.

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- No uninterrupted façade length should exceed 30 feet, or 40% of the total façade length, whichever is less, without incorporating at least two of the following:
 - Color Change
 - Material Change
 - Texture Change
 - Architectural projection or recesses
 - Trellises, balconies, doorways or windows



*Source: Clark Washington,
DRAFT Commercial Design
Guidelines*

Building Materials

Intent: Encourage the use of building materials that fit with the character and history of the Town of Reading and are native to New England and the existing neighborhood buildings.

- Materials and building treatments should be consistent and compatible with the materials, backgrounds surrounding neighborhood buildings. High quality, durable materials that are proven to have a long life expectancy are preferred.
- Appropriate materials are considered to include (but are not limited to) wood, brick, natural stone and masonry, manufactured stone and masonry, glass, cementitious fiber board, tile, cellular or composite PVC trim.