

D. Landscape Design

The standards and guidelines in this section give design guidance for the landscaping components of projects in the commercial areas of the City. All landscaping shall comply with the water efficiency requirements of the City's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance.

1. Coverage

Intent: To provide adequate landscaping materials that enhance the appearance of development projects.

1.1 Minimum Standards

STANDARD

1.1.1 Altogether, the landscaping required in the front, side, and rear yard setbacks and in the parking areas represents the minimum acceptable landscape coverage for commercial sites. Developers are strongly encouraged to provide more than the minimum standard, particularly in publicly viewed areas, in order to create a more attractive environment for employees and the general public.

2. Function

Intent: To provide adequate pedestrian amenities and attractive environments between public streets and commercial development.

2.1 Function

GUIDELINE

2.1.1 Landscaping should be used to provide an attractive setting for development; soften hard building contours; shade walkways, parking areas and other large



Landscaping softens hard building contours.

expanses of pavement; buffer and merge various uses; mitigate building height; and screen unsightly uses.

3. Layout

Intent: To incorporate appropriate landscape materials that provide an aesthetically pleasing transition between the building and adjacent sidewalks or pedestrian paths.

3.1 General

GUIDELINES

3.1.1 Planting plans for building setbacks should include a hierarchy of plantings in terms of size and types of plant materials that mark the transition between the horizontal ground plane at the sidewalk or parking area and the tall, vertical façades of buildings.

3.1.2 Landscaping close to the sidewalk should provide shade on the sidewalk, while also allowing views into the site. Denser plant material should be located closer to the building.

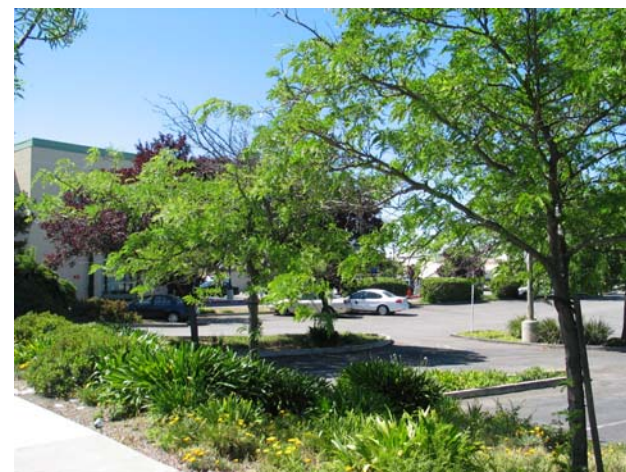
3.1.3 Landscaping should enhance the built environment and contribute to the spatial organization of the site.

3.2 Street Frontage

STANDARDS

3.2.1 Street trees shall be included along all street frontages of commercial development.

3.2.2 Street trees shall be a minimum 24-inch box size and should be selected from a list of City-approved trees. All street trees shall be deep rooted trees, that are well adapted to urban conditions.



Landscaping near sidewalk provides shade but also views into the site.

5: COMMERCIAL

GUIDELINES

3.2.3 Trees should be planted a minimum of 3 feet behind the curb and should be trimmed to a minimum of 6 feet above the root crown.

3.2.4 The selected trees should be broad branching, with a mature canopy spread of 40 feet and a high canopy to allow visibility of buildings.

3.2.5 Utilize the City's street tree list when choosing street frontage trees.

3.3 Setbacks

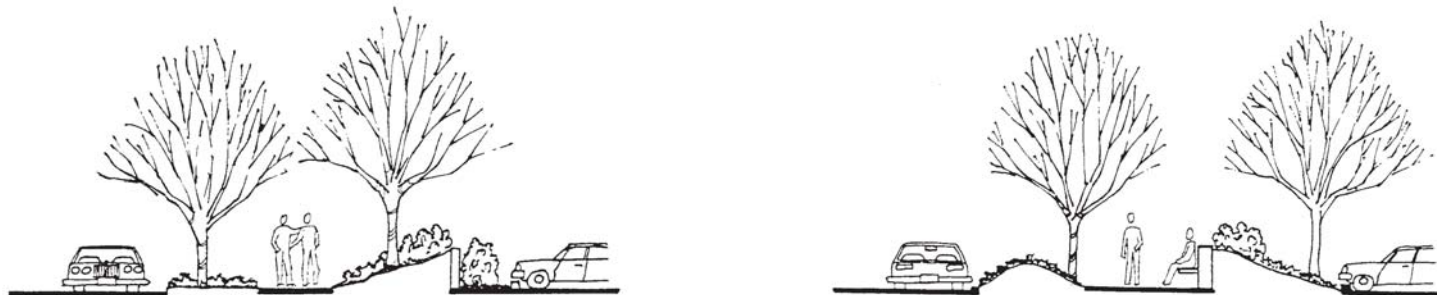
STANDARD

3.3.1 Parking areas adjacent to street frontages shall have a minimum 10-foot landscaped setback between the sidewalk and the on-site parking spaces.

3.4 Parking Buffer

STANDARD

3.4.1 Surface parking areas facing a public street shall be buffered by berming or landscaping.



Combinations of berms, landscaping and low walls help screen parking areas from public views.

GUIDELINE

3.4.2 For security purposes, openings should be incorporated into the landscape design to provide clear views into the site.

3.5 Focal Elements

GUIDELINE

3.5.1 The use of trees for purposes of creating focal elements, including tree clusters, is encouraged. Such a design element would augment rather than replace required street tree planting.

3.6 Swales

STANDARD

3.6.1 Drainage swales that are incorporated into landscape designs shall conform to the Water Resources Division's standards and guidelines for swales.

GUIDELINES

3.6.2 Swales are strongly recommended to reduce water quality impacts associated with site runoff.

3.6.3 Longitudinal slope of swales should be between 1% and 5%. Proposed swales with a slope of less than 1% will not be approved unless adequate underdrains are provided to prevent ponding. Swales of greater than 3% may be required to install check dams to reduce velocity through swale.

3.6.4 Side slopes should not exceed 3:1 horizontal:vertical.

3.6.5 Swale bottom must be graded flat to improve pollutant removal. Swale bottom should ideally be at least 4 to 6 feet wide, with a minimum of 2 feet.

3.4.6 Provide at least 1200 square feet of usable swale area per acre of impervious surface.



Drainage swales for parking lot runoff reduce negative impact on overall water quality.

4. Materials

Intent: To ensure that the landscaping materials are of an appropriate age and size that enables the materials to be fully functioning site amenities.

4.1 Plant Selection

STANDARD

4.1.1 Street trees and other plant materials within the public right of way shall be consistent with adopted City plans and regulations.

GUIDELINES

4.1.2 Plant and landscape materials should be selected and sited to reflect both ornamental and functional characteristics. Full-canopy shade trees, greenery and brightly colored flowering materials all add to the overall favorable impression of Livermore.

4.1.3 A well coordinated palette of plant species should be selected for general landscaping purposes, such as parking lots and setback areas.

4.1.4 Plant species should be generally hardy and not require extensive maintenance.

4.1.5 Species which are native or well-adapted to the climatic conditions in Livermore are preferable, since those will generally require less water and maintenance.

4.1.6 Both seasonal and year-round flowering shrubs and trees should be used where they can be most appreciated – adjacent to walks and recreational areas, or as a frame for building entrances and stairs.

4.1.7 Evergreen shrubs and trees should be used for screening along rear property lines, around trash/recycling areas and mechanical equipment and to obscure grillwork and fencing associated with subsurface parking garages.



Landscaping with native, drought-tolerant plants.

4.1.8 In general, deciduous trees with open branching structures are recommended to ensure visibility to retail establishments.

4.1.9 Loose materials such as gravel, wood chips and bark that are frequently used for groundcovers in residential settings should not be used in commercial developments. Instead, groundcover should consist predominantly of plant materials.

4.2 Plant Size and Scale

STANDARD

4.2.1 The following minimum sizes for plant materials are required at the time of installation:

- a) At a minimum, 20% of the trees shall have a 24-inch box container size or larger.
- b) The remaining trees shall have a 15-gallon minimum container size and a one-inch caliper size at chest height.
- c) Unless otherwise approved by the Design Review Committee, shrubs not used as ground cover shall have a five-gallon minimum container size, a minimum height of 18 inches and a minimum spread of 18 to 24 inches.

GUIDELINES

4.2.2 Plant material should be sized and spaced such that lush and mature appearance will be attained within two years of planting.

4.2.3 Larger, more mature plant materials should be used in areas of particular importance, such as entries, to achieve an immediate effect.

4.2.4 Ground cover should be spaced to provide complete coverage within one year of planting (i.e. 12 inches on center maximum for plants taken from flats; 18 to 24 inches on center for material from one-gallon containers).

4.2.5 The scale and nature of landscape materials should be appropriate to the site and structure.

4.2.6 Large structures and large open sites should be complemented with large scale material (i.e. plants, rocks, timbers, walls, fences, etc.).

4.2.7 Mature sizes of plant materials need to be considered when selecting plant species.

4.2.8 Root barriers should be provided within 5 feet of a sidewalk or wall.

4.3 Irrigation

STANDARDS

4.3.1 All landscaped areas shall have automatic irrigation systems installed to ensure that plant materials survive. It is particularly important in commercial development that irrigation systems are designed so as not to overspray public walks, paved areas, buildings and fences. Drip irrigation systems are preferred.

4.3.2 Landscape plans shall demonstrate compliance with the City's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance.

4.4 Maintenance

STANDARD

4.4.1 Landscaped areas, including trees and other planting as well as paving, walls and fences shall be regularly maintained.

5. Plazas and Open Space

Intent: To ensure that outdoor areas for employees and commercial patrons are aesthetically pleasing and promote greater activity in commercial areas.

5.1 Plazas and Protected Seating Areas

STANDARDS

- 5.1.1 Publicly-accessible plazas and open spaces are encouraged to be provided as part of commercial projects.
- 5.1.2 Plazas and open spaces shall be landscaped and incorporate high quality paving materials, such as bricks, stone, concrete or tile.
- 5.1.3 Outdoor pedestrian spaces shall include appropriate outdoor furniture, such as seating, walls, trash receptacles, bike racks and other elements.

GUIDELINES

- 5.1.3 Paving, planting and other landscape materials should be coordinated with the design of the building, lighting and site.
- 5.1.4 Pedestrian amenities, such as plazas, courtyards and other open spaces should be provided for spaces between buildings.
- 5.1.5 When adjacent to street, outdoor areas should be buffered with architectural features and planting.
- 5.1.6 When adjacent to a major street a fountain providing a pleasant background noise should be considered.



Outdoor seating area coordinated with development's overall scheme.



Public outdoor seating in a pleasant setting.

5: COMMERCIAL

5.1.5 Where practical, outdoor areas should be visible from public streets or trail networks and accessible from the building as well as the street or potential network.

5.1.6 Outdoor furniture should be coordinated with the theme of the building.

5.1.7 Pay phones and newspaper racks should be incorporated where appropriate.

5.1.8 Ample landscaping with fountains and well-shaded seating areas are highly encouraged, as is the use of varied paving materials.

5.1.9 Plant materials should be of a drought-tolerant species where appropriate and provide variety, while being consistent with the architectural design of the building.



Publicly accessible outdoor seating area with furniture that is coordinated with architectural design.



Protected outdoor seating area accessible from public street.

6. Fences and Walls

Intent: To ensure that fencing contributes to the overall design of commercial buildings and development.

6.1 Fence and Wall Design

STANDARD

6.1.1 All screening shall be designed as an integral part of the overall building design.

GUIDELINES

6.1.2 Screening fences and walls are not recommended between commercial buildings and the street along primary and secondary street frontages. Screening fences and walls are permitted on internal side and rear property lines.

6.1.3 Screening fences located to the sides and rear of properties should be visually compatible with adjacent ornamental fence designs and adjacent building architecture. Related colors, a cap or top articulation and related post spacing should be used to enhance compatibility.

6.1.4 Adjacent to residential properties, screening fences should maintain a character and scale appropriate to residential neighborhoods; more detailed fencing types with heightened design detailing and additional ornamentation are recommended.

6.1.5 Fences around plazas and outdoor areas should be semi-transparent and architecturally compatible with the building and should be no more than 3 feet tall.



Unobtrusive fence design contributes to overall building and site design.

5: COMMERCIAL

6.2 Height

GUIDELINE

6.2.1 Overall height of screening fences and walls should not exceed six feet in height.

6.3 Articulation

GUIDELINES

6.3.1 The length of screening fences and walls adjacent to public rights of way should be minimized to the maximum extent feasible.

6.3.2 Design elements should be used to break up long expanses of uninterrupted walls, both horizontally and vertically. Walls over three feet in height should include design elements such as textured concrete block, interlocking “diamond” blocks, formed concrete with reveals or similar materials. Landscape materials should also be used to provide surface relief.



Maximum height for screening fences should be 6 feet.

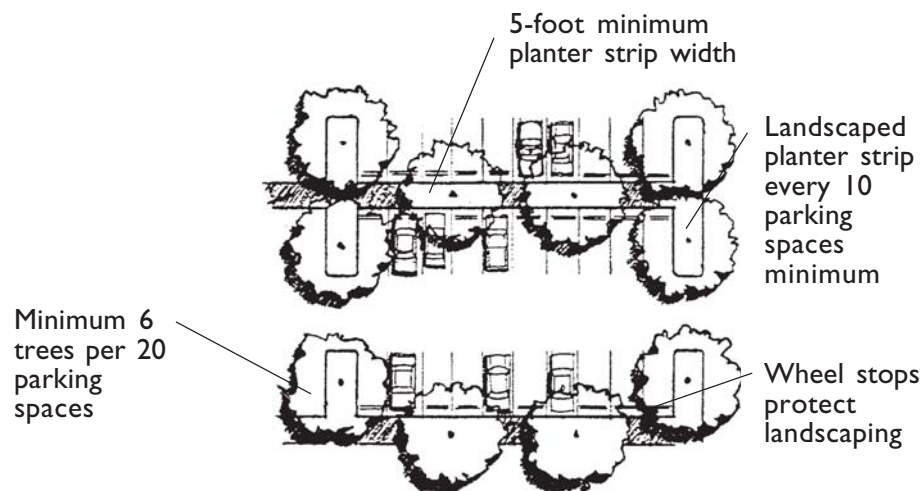
7. Parking Area Landscaping

Intent: In a warm summer climate such as Livermore's, shading is extremely important to reduce glare and heat buildup as well as to provide an attractive, functional, comfortable environment.

STANDARDS

7.1.1 All parking areas shall provide interior landscaping for shade and aesthetic enhancement.

7.1.2 Parking lots shall be landscaped with broad branching shade trees at a minimum ratio of three trees per 10 parking spaces for single loaded stalls, six trees per 20 parking spaces for double loaded stalls and one tree for every three parking spaces for smaller parking bays.



Extensive parking area landscaping provides shade and enhances esthetic quality.



Planter area of a minimum 5-foot width.

5: COMMERCIAL

7.1.3 Curbed planter areas shall be provided at the end of each parking aisle to protect parked vehicles from the turning movements of other vehicles.

GUIDELINES

7.1.4 Views of parking areas from public streets should be buffered by landscaping, earth berms or some combination of the two in order to reduce the visual impact of large parking areas.

7.1.5 For security reasons, openings should be incorporated into the landscaping in order to permit clear views into the site.

7.1.6 No more than ten parking spaces should be located in a row without an intervening landscaped planter strip. The intervening planter strip should be the full depth and width of the adjacent parking spaces.

7.1.7 Planter areas should provide a 5-foot minimum width of clear planting space. Eight feet is recommended.

7.1.8 Wheel stops should be used adjacent to tree wells and planter areas to protect landscaping from car overhangs. In place of wheel stops, the planter curb may be used for car overhangs, provided the 5-foot minimum clear planting area is maintained.

7.1.9 Drainage into swale areas is encouraged and may be accommodated through design elements such as flush curbs, perforated curbs and tree offsets.

7.1.10 Plant material in and adjacent to swales should delineate the transition between the swale area and the surrounding landscape.

7.1.11 Sidewalks, parking areas and other infrastructure should be protected through the use of root barriers, engineered soils or similar techniques.



Landscaped planter strip with disabled access ramp is the width of a parking space.

8. Undeveloped Areas

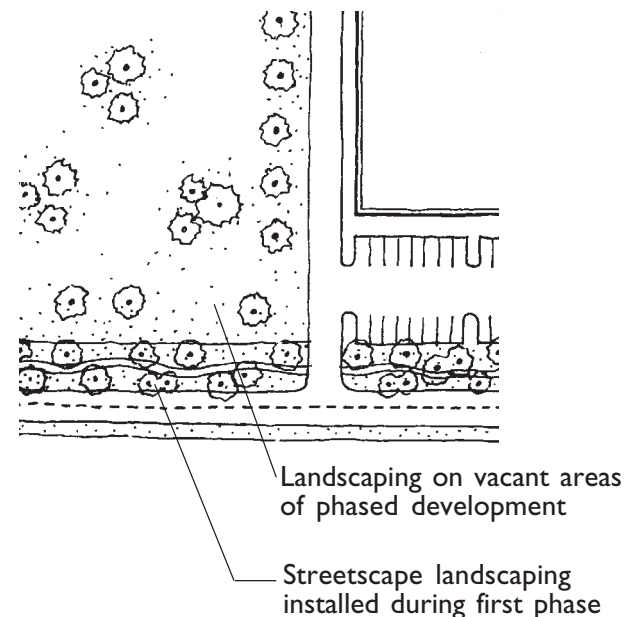
Intent: To ensure that vacant parcels do not detract from the overall goal of attractive and visually distinctive industrial development areas.

STANDARDS

8.1.1 All undeveloped portions of each occupied parcel shall be maintained as landscaped area.

8.1.2 For phased developments, landscaping shall be installed along the entire street frontage during the first phase.

8.1.3 Undeveloped areas shall be maintained and irrigated and shall not be used for any kind of storage.



5: COMMERCIAL

E. Signs

This section provides standards and guidelines for all signs in the commercial areas of the City. All signs shall conform to standards specified in the City of Livermore Planning and Zoning Code.

1. Function

Intent: To ensure that signs in commercial areas enhances the built environment and do not contribute to visual clutter.

1.1 Purpose

STANDARD

1.1.1 Primary purpose of signs is to identify the business or businesses located at a specific site.

GUIDELINES

1.1.2 Signs should not be used as advertisements.

1.1.3 The design of a sign should be simple and easy to read.

1.1.4 The sign's message should be limited to the business name and/or the logo of the business occupying the site.



Coordinated sign design.

2. Architectural Context and Placement

Intent: To ensure that signs are an integral component of the design of a project.

2.1 Context

STANDARD

2.1.1 Bands, trim or building color, which are used to establish a corporate identity and do not relate to the architectural style or other colors of the building shall be considered a sign and will be regulated as such.

GUIDELINES

2.1.2 Sign design should conform to and be in harmony with the architectural character of the building.

2.1.3 Signs attached to a building should be designed as integral components of the building and not obscure or conceal architectural elements.

2.1.4 Standardized or corporate signs, which do not conform to the color or architectural detailing of the building, should be avoided.

2.2 Placement

STANDARD

2.2.1 Signs shall not be permitted on top of any roof, and no sign attached to a wall or eave shall project above the eave line of the building.

GUIDELINE

2.2.2 Signs should generally be symmetrically located within a defined architectural space.



Symmetrically located, architecturally integrated wall sign.

5: COMMERCIAL

3. Sign Design

Intent: To ensure that signs are designed and constructed to make a positive contribution to the overall character of the commercial project.

3.1 General Design

STANDARDS

- 3.1.1 Where internally illuminated lighting is used, only individual letter signs shall be permitted.
- 3.1.2 No “can” (box type) signs with a translucent plastic sign panel front with applied or painted lettering shall be permitted except for tenant logos.
- 3.1.3 Can signs with opaque faces and push through lettering shall only be permitted where the sign ties into the architecture of the building.
- 3.1.4 Exposed raceways shall not be used.

GUIDELINES

- 3.1.4 Sign design should be appropriate to the business establishment, building architecture and area in which it is located.
- 3.1.5 Exposed neon signs are strongly discouraged.



Back-lit letters appear in silhouette on building façade.



Externally illuminated individual letter sign ties into architecture.

3.2 Wall or Window Signs

STANDARDS

- 3.2.1 Painted signs and letters shall present a neat and aligned appearance. The services of a skilled professional sign painter are strongly recommended.
- 3.2.2 Externally illuminated or halo lit signs are encouraged and where used shall have an opaque face.
- 3.2.3 Window signs shall not be placed in a manner which obscures primary views into and out from the storefront.

GUIDELINES

- 3.2.4 Where individual letters are used, letters should be three dimensional, created by raised letter forms mounted to the building façade or sign panel, or by incised openings cut-out from the sign panel.
- 3.2.5 For signs identifying hours of operation, menus, newspaper reviews and other customer information, it is recommended that these be framed, board-mounted or plastic laminated for a finished appearance.

3.3 Projecting Signs

GUIDELINES

- 3.3.1 Structural supports for projecting signs should be designed so that their visual appearance is minimized, and/or coordinated with the overall architecture and color scheme of the building. They should not appear to be “tacked on” without regard for the alignments, proportions, colors and forms of their adjacent buildings and signs.
- 3.3.2 Sign fonts should be selected to provide both visual clarity and artistic expression.



Window sign.



Projecting sign.

3.4 Awning and Canopy-Mounted Signs

STANDARDS

3.4.1 Any signing on awnings shall be painted directly onto the awning material.

3.4.2 Awning signs shall be restricted to the lower one-third of the awning and the awning valance.

GUIDELINES

3.4.1 Awnings. Lettering and graphics on awnings may occur on the sloped front, sides or fascia of the awning.

3.4.2 Canopies. Individual three-dimensional letters are recommended. Individual letters may be mounted within the vertical fascia of the canopy or attached to the canopy above the fascia.

3.4.3 Under Awning Signs. Signs made of high quality materials may be utilized.

3.5 Freestanding Signs

GUIDELINES

3.5.1 All freestanding signs should be designed to relate to the architecture of the building or development they serve.

3.5.2 Exterior materials, finishes and colors should be the same or similar to those of the building or structures on site. High quality, durable materials should be used as these elements will receive a higher degree of interface with the public than most building components.



Individual three dimensional letter sign mounted on awning structure.

3.6 Multiple-Tenant Complexes

STANDARD

3.6.1 Multiple-tenant buildings and complexes shall develop a Master Sign Program to minimize the potential visual conflicts and competition among tenant signs, while ensuring adequate identification for each tenant.

GUIDELINES

3.6.2 Free-standing signs may include the names of major tenants.

3.6.3 Free-standing signs used to identify such complexes should include the name and address of the complex.



Multi-tenant building sign restricting sign size but not lettering for each individual tenant.

F Lighting

This section contains the standards and guidelines for exterior lighting in the commercial areas of the City.

1. Lighting Design and Illumination

Intent: To ensure that the design of fixtures and the light provided contributes to the character of development and does not impact adjacent development. As well as to ensure that lighting enhances architecture and landscape design.

1.1 Design

STANDARDS

- 1.1.1** Exterior lighting shall be designed as an integral part of the building and landscape design.
- 1.1.2** Site plans and architectural plans shall include the location of fixtures, their design and the nature and level of the illumination they will provide.
- 1.1.3** Illumination levels shall be provided to address security concerns, especially for parking lots, pedestrian paths, outdoor gathering spaces, at building entries and any other pedestrian accessible areas.

GUIDELINES

- 1.1.4** Decorative lighting fixtures, such as gooseneck lighting, are strongly encouraged.
- 1.1.5** Lighting should generally be designed to include cut-offs to minimize the negative effects of lighting of the sky.



Exterior lighting enhances architectural design.

1.2 Lighting Height

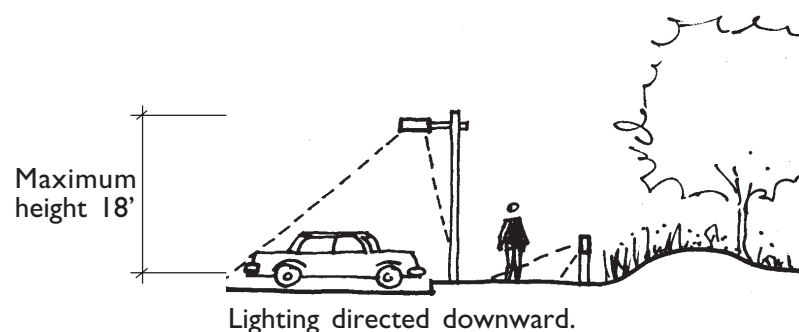
STANDARD

1.2.1 The height of luminaries shall be in scale with the building and site design and in no case shall they exceed 18 feet in height from grade.

GUIDELINES

1.2.2 Lighting sources should be kept as low to the ground as possible while ensuring safe and functional levels of illumination.

1.2.3 Area lighting should be directed downward or employ control features so as to avoid light being directed offsite as well as to avoid lighting of the night sky.



Downward directed lighting.



1.3 Area of Illumination

STANDARD

1.3.1 The light source for externally illuminated signs must be positioned so that light does not shine directly on adjoining properties or cause glare or shine in the eyes of motorists or pedestrians.

GUIDELINES

1.3.2 Lighting should be located so as to minimize the impact of lighting upon adjacent buildings and properties, especially residential uses.

1.3.3 In general, the location of lighting should respond to the anticipated use and not exceed the amount of illumination required by users.

1.3.4 Illumination over an entire area or use of overly bright lighting is strongly discouraged.

1.3.5 Lighting for pedestrian safety should illuminate changes in grade, path intersections and other areas along paths which, if left unlit, would cause the user to feel insecure. Recommended minimum levels of illumination along pedestrian paths between destinations is 0.5 foot-candles. At pedestrian destination points such as entryways, plazas and courtyards, lighting levels should typically achieve illumination of 1 foot-candle.

1.3.6 The placement of light standards, whether for street lights or garden lights, should not interfere with pedestrian movement.



Lighting with cut-off shield.

1.4 Parking Area Illumination

GUIDELINES

1.4.1 Illumination should be concentrated along the pedestrian paths leading to parking areas and in the specific areas where cars are parked.

1.4.2 Illumination should achieve a lighting level of 1 foot-candle on the parking lot surface.

1.5 Prohibited Lights

STANDARD

1.5.1 No outdoor lights shall be permitted that blink, flash or change intensity.



Bollard lighting for pedestrian path.