



# Activity Center Guidelines

City of Largo, Florida





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# I. Introduction

## A. Purpose

The Largo Activity Center Guidelines have been prepared to assist in achieving goals for the creation of attractive, sustainable, and economically vital destinations in strategic locations throughout the City. Applicable to areas designated in the Strategic Plan as Major Commercial Activity Centers and Neighborhood Commercial Centers, the guidelines are designed to ensure older, commercial strips are transformed over time into true centers of community activity.

Through careful design, these places can provide:

- new places to shop, eat, and entertain;
- sites for community events, activities, and celebrations;
- a range of housing types and configurations;
- new destinations within a short distance of existing neighborhoods;
- opportunities to increase walking, biking, and transit use; and
- more efficient use of existing public infrastructure.

## B. Applicability

The guidelines, applicable to private development projects within areas defined in the City's Strategic Plan as Major Commercial Activity Centers and Neighborhood Commercial Centers, address the following three general types of projects:

- **Infill Projects.** Projects proposing redevelopment fronting existing collectors and arterials on sites up to 4 acres total



The Largo Activity Center Guidelines are one of several tools the City has developed to promote the community's vision for the creation of more sustainable, vital, and accessible destinations.

land area. Projects at this scale should contribute to the larger Activity Centers' long-term transformation into a pedestrian friendly mixed-use destination. Buildings will typically be oriented toward existing or planned streets and public spaces, with rear yard parking accessed directly from an existing public street or a shared-access easement.

- **Small-Scale Projects.** Redevelopment and reuse of strip centers, small shopping centers, and other properties on sites of between 4 and 10 acres with frontage on an existing arterial or collector. Projects at this scale will be required to create an urban pattern of development with buildings oriented to existing or new streets and public spaces.
- **Large-Scale Projects.** Redevelopment of larger shopping centers and other properties on sites 10 acres or larger. Projects of this scale offer the greatest potential for the creation of destinations with mixed-use buildings, an urban street and block structure, and well-defined outdoor public spaces.

Rather than define a specific design response for all Activity Centers, the Guidelines recognize that individual projects have their own unique characteristics and should respond to their context in specific ways. Consequently, the guidelines are intended to provide advice and direction but may not be rigidly adhered to in all circumstances.

## C. Review Process

*[To be completed by staff. Section to address what will trigger staff's use of the guidelines and how the review process will work. Also need text stating how staff will address conflicts between the guidelines and provisions in existing codes and standards.]*

# II. Urban Design

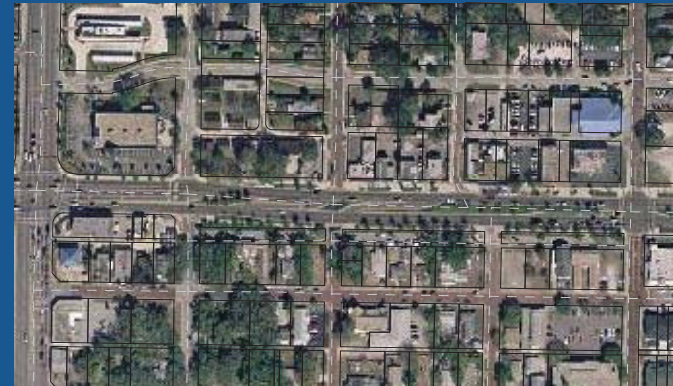
## A. Development Pattern

As called for in the City's Strategic Plan, Activity Centers should be served by networks of "connected streets that minimize traffic on adjacent roadways and facilitate internal connections between uses for pedestrians and cyclists." To serve diverse access and mobility needs, improve connections with surrounding neighborhoods, and provide numerous direct and indirect routes between destinations, projects within designated Activity Centers should be organized around development blocks served by accessible, attractive, pedestrian-friendly streets.

The following guidelines define City preferences for the division of large sites into development blocks and the creation of networks of walkable streets.

### DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS & LOTS

**Guideline.** Sites planned for Small-Scale and Large-Scale Projects should be divided into development blocks scaled to accommodate a mix of land uses, building types, and off-street parking and service areas. Development plans for such projects should define the limits of individual development blocks and, where necessary, show how proposed blocks may be divided into building lots.



Small block sizes, improved sidewalks, and mid-block parking are critical factors shaping Downtown Largo's renewal.



**Guideline.** Typical perimeter block dimensions should average 1,600 linear feet with maximum allowances of 2,000 linear feet as measured along the perimeter property line of a proposed development block. Perimeter block dimensions up to 3,000 linear feet may be permitted for blocks that contain mid-block parking structures or attached public spaces.

**Guideline.** Blocks need not be regular in form as long as guidelines for the creation of an interconnected street network and well-defined public spaces are met.

### NETWORKS OF WALKABLE STREETS

**Guideline.** Small-Scale and Large-Scale Projects should be designed to provide a fine-grained network of publicly accessible, pedestrian-friendly streets designed to support local vehicle traffic, cyclists, transit service, and connections to surrounding neighborhoods and destinations.

**Guideline.** In keeping with traditional street layouts in the City, streets should be designed to form a rectangular grid. However, an irregular pattern of streets or combinations of gridded and irregular patterns may be permitted as long as the design provides for connection to adjacent development and avoids impacts on sensitive resources.

**Guideline.** The extension of existing public streets is encouraged to distribute traffic and improve access; however, discontinuous streets may be permitted to minimize the potential for cut-through traffic on residential streets within or adjacent to an Activity Center.

**Guideline.** Street stubs and rights-of-way should be provided to allow for connections to future development or redevelopment on adjacent sites. The provision of a pedestrian passage within a provided public rights-of-way may be permitted where the extension of an existing street is deemed infeasible.

**Guideline.** Provide adequate access for commercial vehicles, service and loading activities, while minimizing the impact of such traffic on streets designed to support the highest levels of pedestrian activity.

**Guideline.** Dead-end streets, designed as hammer-heads or closes, may only be permitted where environmental or site constraints preclude practical alternatives.

**Guideline.** All proposed streets should be maintained for public access whether by public dedication or easement; private, closed, or gated streets are prohibited.



## B. Street Types

Existing and new streets and pedestrian ways in designated Activity Centers should be designed to serve as both local movement corridors and important extensions of the community's public realm. In all cases, streets within and adjacent to Activity Centers should be designed to provide for the safe, convenient, and comfortable movement of pedestrians. New streets should be constructed and existing streets improved to provide quality environments for walking, convenient connections to existing neighborhoods, and comfortable and safe connections between proximate destinations.

While the design of individual streets and street segments may vary considerably depending on their place within the larger street network, their intended character as active, attractive, and accessible public spaces should not be compromised.

The following guidelines provide direction for the improvement of streetscapes along the rights-of-way of existing streets and the design of new streets within designated Activity Centers. Applicants should work with staff to determine how best to address existing streets and which street types are appropriate for use where new streets are required in Small-Scale and Large-Scale Projects.



Streets should be designed to provide to provide quality environments for walking, convenient connections to existing neighborhoods, and comfortable and safe connections between proximate destinations.

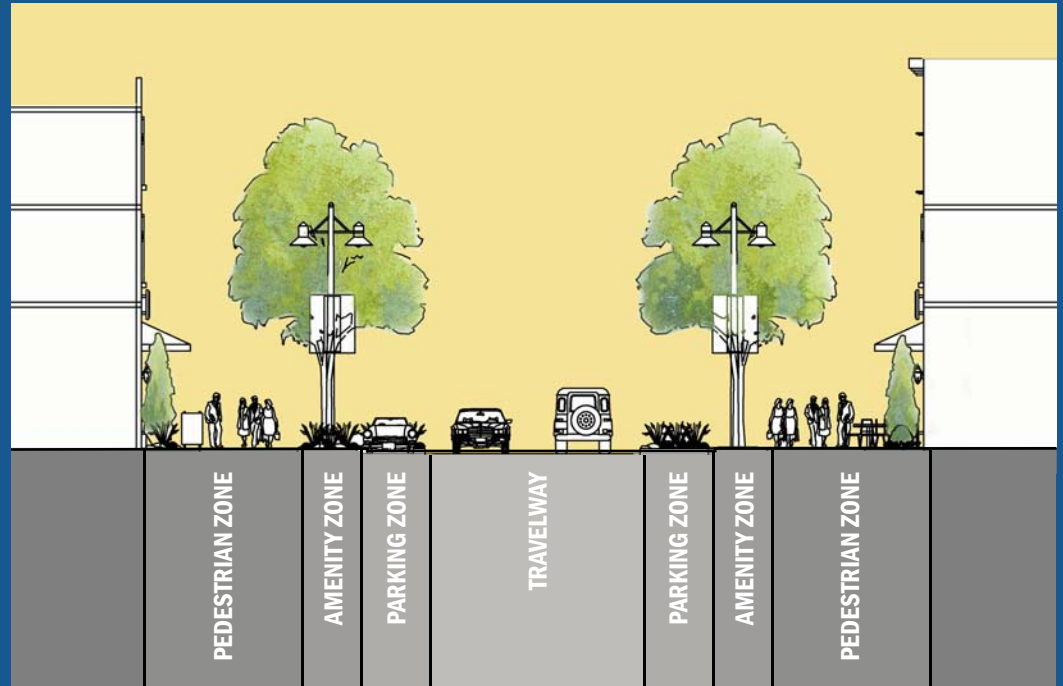
## EXISTING STREETS

**Guideline.** To the extent possible given rights-of-way constraints and utility and access conflicts, projects fronting existing arterial streets should be designed to meet the street and frontage guidelines for Primary Pedestrian Streets.

**Guideline.** Special attention should be given to the design of projects and streetscape improvements along existing streets designated as Community Streets in the City’s Strategic Plan. As defined in the plan, these streets should be improved with “wide pedestrian sidewalks and/or multipurpose trails, enhanced streetscape to include street trees, signage and lighting, and improved intersection crossings to include safe pedestrian crosswalks.”

## PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN STREETS

**Guideline.** Primary Pedestrian Streets should be designed to provide the highest level of pedestrian comfort, access, and safety. Designs should provide for low speed vehicle travel, on-street parking, pedestrian amenities, and a generous pedestrian clear zone lined by mostly continuous storefronts. Primary Pedestrian Streets are not necessarily designed to maintain free flows and a certain amount of congestion is accepted for its positive, traffic calming benefits.



The design of new streets and the redesign of existing streets in Activity Centers should address the guidelines for each of the primary functional zones: Pedestrian, Amenity, Parking, and Travelway. Designs should address the needs of all modes of anticipated travel.

**Guideline.** Primary Pedestrian Streets should be designed consistent with the following guidelines:

- **Travelway.** Primary Pedestrian Streets typically have two lanes of vehicular traffic and may also include a center turn lane. Vehicular lanes should be relatively narrow to ensure traffic speeds are maintained at no more than 25 mph and to give priority to pedestrian safety and convenience

rather than motor vehicle speeds and volumes. To limit the distance of pedestrian crossings, designs that include wide travel lanes, landscape medians or boulevard treatments, bike lanes, or other improvements that result in wider than necessary curb-to-curb dimensions are discouraged.

- **Parking Zone.** To support active street level uses, on-street parking should be provided. For streets with high levels of pedestrian activities and continuous retail frontage, parallel or angle parking should be provided; for streets with less active retail, professional office, and residential frontage, parallel parking should be provided. At intersections and places where mid-block pedestrian crossings are provided, the parking zone may be interrupted to allow for the extension of amenity and pedestrian zones, including areas to accommodate transit stops, to the edge of the travelway.
- **Amenity Zone.** As a buffer between pedestrian clear zones and travelways/parking zones, a minimum 5-foot-wide public amenities zone should be provided between on-street parking and the pedestrian clear zone and improved with shade trees in grates, outdoor seating, pedestrian scale lighting, and other amenities.
- **Pedestrian Zone.** Primary Pedestrian Streets should be designed with a wide, continuous pedestrian clear zone with a minimum 8-foot-wide unobstructed sidewalk and, if desired, additional space for outdoor cafes and display space against building frontages.



Designed with on street parking, public amenity zone, a wide, unobstructed sidewalk for a continuous pedestrian clear zone, and active street level uses, Primary Pedestrian Streets encourage high levels of pedestrian activity.



## SIDE STREETS

**Guideline.** Side Streets should serve pedestrian movement with continuous sidewalks and pedestrian amenities but may be designed to carry higher volumes of traffic and may not be fully lined with building facades.

**Guideline.** Side Streets should be designed consistent with the following guidelines:

- **Travelway.** Side Streets may be designed to carry two to four lanes of vehicular traffic with on-street parking. Vehicular lanes should be relatively narrow to ensure traffic speeds are maintained at no more than 25 mph and to give priority to pedestrian safety and convenience rather than motor vehicle speeds and volumes. Side Streets may include bike lanes, landscape medians, and other amenities resulting in curb-to-curb dimensions wider than those provided along Pedestrian Priority Streets.
- **Parking Zone.** For streets with less active or discontinuous retail frontage, professional office frontage, or residential frontage, parallel parking should be provided; angle parking is discouraged.
- **Amenity Zone.** As a buffer between pedestrian clear zones and travelways/parking zones, a minimum 5-foot wide public amenities zone with ground cover or lawn, shade trees, pedestrian scale lighting, and other amenities should be provided.
- **Pedestrian Zone.** Side Streets should be designed with a wide, continuous pedestrian clear zone with a minimum 5-foot-wide unobstructed sidewalk.



Stoops, porches, door yards, and screened surface parking lots are appropriate along roadways designated as Side Streets. Continuous sidewalks, public amenities, and landscaping create a pleasant pedestrian environment for these less active roadways.

## PEDESTRIAN WAYS

**Guideline.** To allow for a finer-grained pedestrian network, access to parking behind buildings, and additional opportunities for small-scale retail activity, Pedestrian Ways may be provided as mid-block pedestrian paths and to connect adjacent residential and mixed-use properties.

**Guideline.** Pedestrian Ways should be provided within a minimum 20-foot wide right-of-way and designed with a generally straight 10-foot wide pedestrian clear zone.

**Guideline.** To ensure pedestrian comfort and safety, landscape areas, shade structures, and lighting should be provided. In addition, awnings, shade trees, arbors, outdoor seating, and other furnishings may be provided so long as such improvements do not encroach upon the pedestrian clear zone.

**Guideline.** Vehicular traffic and parking are not permitted along Pedestrian Ways but removable bollards or other control devices may be used to allow for temporary emergency or service access.



Pedestrian Ways provide mid-block access between residential, parking areas, and mixed-use buildings. Vehicles are not permitted, but amenities and landscaping to enhance the pedestrian environment are encouraged so long as they do not impede pedestrian movement.

## ALLEYS & SERVICE LANES

**Guideline.** Alleys and Service Lanes should provide mid-block access to parking or service areas. Alleys/Service Lanes may be located within the public rights-of-way or access easements on private parcels.

**Guideline.** Alleys and Service Lanes should be designed with two-way paved travel lanes for vehicular traffic and a minimum 5-foot-wide clear zone on either side of the travel lanes to accommodate sufficient vehicle back-out space. Clear zones should be free of vertical obstructions and may consist of ground cover or enhanced pavement.

**Guideline.** Vehicular lanes should be relatively narrow to ensure traffic speeds are maintained at no more than 15 mph.

## C. Quality Public Spaces

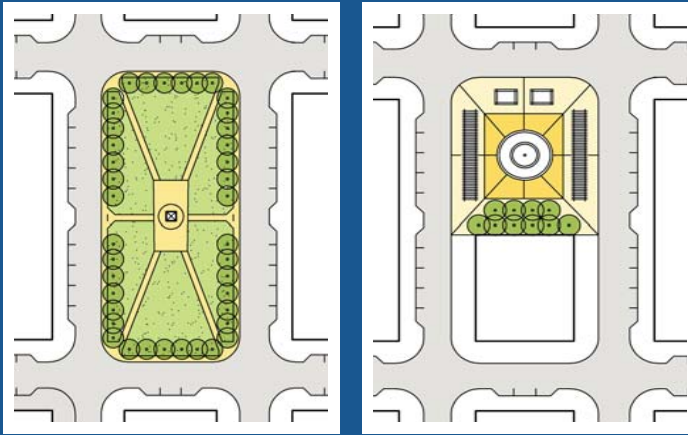
Well designed outdoor public spaces play pivotal roles in shaping a place's attractiveness, livability, and economic vitality. When designed to support a variety of activities, public squares, plazas, and greens provide important places for informal gathering, relaxation, and play; sites for artistic and cultural expression; and settings for community events and activities.

The following guidelines define the sizes and types of public spaces required within Activity Centers.

**Guideline.** Public spaces should be easily accessible, visible from adjacent streets, sidewalks, and buildings, and specifically set aside for public use. The following open spaces may not be counted toward the minimum amount of public space recommended by these guidelines: landscape and hardscape areas defined as part of a streetscape, median, or parking area; private yards, courtyards, or fenced areas primarily intended for use by building occupants; and landscape areas used as buffers, conservation or natural areas, or as parts of the stormwater management or drainage system.

**Guideline.** A minimum of 5% of the total acreage of a proposed project should be dedicated as public space. Area guidelines for public space may be reduced where a comparable amount and type of public space exists or is planned elsewhere within an Activity Center.

Sketches of detached (left) and attached (right) public spaces.



**Guideline.** Public spaces must be designed as one of the following two types of spaces—Central Spaces and Neighborhood Spaces—as defined below:

- Central Spaces should be between 20,000 and 60,000 square feet in area, centrally-located within the project, and located at key intersections along Primary Pedestrian Streets. Designs should include hardscape area with seating, shade structures, public art, water features, and other amenities designed to support active use and facilitate special events and activities.
- Neighborhood Spaces should be between 5,000 and 40,000 square feet in area. Designs may include a mix of hardscape and landscape areas with seating, shade structures, play equipment, and other amenities designed to support passive uses and limited, small-scale active uses.

**Guideline.** Large-Scale Projects should include at least one Central Space and as many Neighborhood Spaces as required to meet the minimum guideline. This guideline for a Central Space may be waived if a comparable space within  $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile walking distance from the project already exists or is committed. Small-Scale Projects should include at least one Neighborhood Space. Public spaces are not required for Infill Projects.

**Guideline.** Public spaces should generally be square or rectangular in form and located at the corner or end of a development block (attached public space) or surrounded on all sides by public streets (detached public space) as long as traffic does not impede pedestrian access to and from the space.

**Guideline.** To ensure access, comfort, and adaptability, public spaces should be designed as extensions of the public streetscape environment and include adequate seating, shade, landscaping, and open spaces for informal gathering and planned events. Clear lines of site should be provided to allow for the formal and informal surveillance of the space. The grade of hardscape areas, lawn panels, and planting beds within public spaces should generally match adjacent sidewalks.





Ulmer Park serves as an excellent local example of a Central Space that occupies a prominent location and supports a wide range of community events and activities.

The space above supports passive uses most week days but comes alive with arts and cultural events, small concerts, and other activities during evenings and weekends.

## D. Mix & Distribution of Uses

To advance the City's goals for creating attractive, sustainable destinations, Activity Centers should include a mix and intensity of land uses which help achieve the following goals:

- maximize opportunities for the localization of work, shopping, and leisure trips;
- lessen demands on local and regional street network;
- promote active lifestyles by encouraging walking and biking as convenient alternatives to automobile travel;
- support shared parking and “park once” trips;
- support more intensive use of transit;
- attract shops to serve the needs of surrounding neighborhoods; and
- contribute to street level activity and the informal surveillance of public spaces.

The following guidelines describe the preferred mix, intensity, and distribution of uses within designated Activity Centers.

### A MIX OF ACTIVE USES

**Guideline.** Provide a balanced mix of uses on site and in individual buildings that supports the creation of active, pedestrian-friendly streets and public spaces. Program uses and locate storefronts and building entries to maximize pedestrian traffic along Primary Pedestrian Streets.

**Guideline.** Small-Scale Projects and Large-Scale Projects should include at least two distinct categories of land use with no single use accounting for more than 75% of the total proposed gross floor area. Infill projects are also encouraged to provide a mix of uses.

**Guideline.** Similar or complementary uses should line opposite sides of streets. Transitions between different uses should occur at the rear of buildings, at intersections, or in mid-block locations.

**Guideline.** Encourage higher intensity uses to locate away from residential neighborhoods and ensure that parking for higher intensity uses is easily accessed from the regional road network.

**Guideline.** Encourage mixed-use projects that provide for a range of housing options with convenient access to service and amenities.

### PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED USES

**Guideline.** Projects within Activity Centers should include a mix of uses that are drawn from the following broad land use categories: commercial; office; residential; lodging; and live-work.

*[List to be finalized by City.]*

## E. Building Form & Frontages

Streets and public spaces in Activity Centers should be lined with quality urban buildings designed to reflect regional building traditions, use resources efficiently, and contribute to the creation of safe, comfortable, and attractive destinations. With careful design, uses that traditionally occupy strip shopping centers, shopping malls, and single use, suburban developments can be fully integrated into more compact, pedestrian-friendly settings.

The following guidelines address the placement, massing, and preferred frontage conditions for buildings in Activity Centers.

### BUILDING PLACEMENT

**Guideline.** The front facades of buildings should be oriented towards public streets and spaces. Primary entries to buildings should open directly onto public sidewalks and public spaces.

**Guideline.** To define the pedestrian realm and create a sense of enclosure, buildings should be placed along block perimeters with minimal or no setbacks. Street level setbacks should remain generally consistent along block frontages and across streets, with modest variations allowed for visual interest.

**Guideline.** Projects should be designed to enhance adjacent residential neighborhoods. Sites should be designed to reduce potential visual, noise, and use impacts on adjacent residential areas.

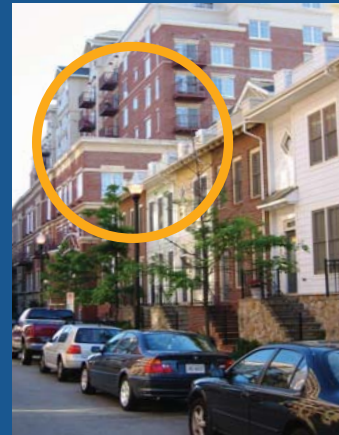
### BUILDING FORM

**Guideline.** Buildings in Activity Centers may range in height from one to six stories with two- to four-story buildings typical. Buildings taller than three stories should be located along existing arterials or in the center of larger projects. Above the 3rd story on all buildings, facades should step back 10 feet from the street level façade. Should buildings taller than 6 stories be permitted, further stepbacks may be required.

**Guideline.** Individual street segments should be lined with buildings of the same or similar height to establish a consistent street-wall. Where taller buildings are proposed across the street from lower buildings, street level facades should be generally consistent in height.

**Guideline.** Building designs should acknowledge the scale and proximity of adjacent residential neighborhoods through height reductions and tapering, increased stepbacks above street level facades, and other means to ensure effective transitions.





Buildings should maintain a generally consistent frontage condition along both sides of a roadway. To define the pedestrian realm and create a sense of enclosure, buildings should have no or minimal setback from the block perimeter.

For buildings taller than 3 stories, the upper stories should be stepped back (indicated above) to create a pedestrian-scaled street wall height. New buildings should be designed to acknowledge the scale and form of adjacent structures.

## FRONTAGE - EXISTING & PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN STREETS

**Guideline.** Mixed-use buildings along existing streets and Primary Pedestrian Streets should be designed consistent with the following guidelines:

- **Street Edge.** Buildings along Primary Pedestrian Streets should be aligned along block perimeters with little or no setback. Modest front setbacks along existing streets may be required to create recommended streetscape conditions with adequate pedestrian clear zones and public amenities zones.
- **Frontage.** Street level building facades should be designed as storefronts with generous display windows, high levels of transparency, and multiple entries to individual tenant spaces. Upper story multi-family units and office space should be accessed from common lobbies opening directly on sidewalks. Such lobbies should not occupy large extents of building frontage. Expanses of blank walls greater than 20 feet are not permitted.
- **Street Level Use.** Preferred street level uses along Primary Pedestrian Streets include specialty shops, service and convenience retail, restaurants, cafes, and other types of active, pedestrian-oriented uses. Uses that generate low-levels of pedestrian traffic or street level activity are not encouraged to front directly on Primary Pedestrian Streets.
- **Parking & Service.** Off-street parking lots and structures, loading docks, service areas, drive-through windows, and dumpsters should be located behind buildings in mid-block locations and screened from public view. Drives to access mid-block parking and service areas may occur only where access from an avenue, side street or alley is not feasible.



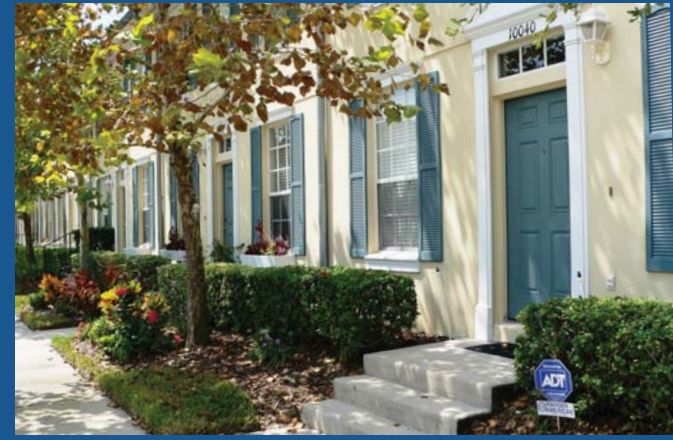
Buildings with street level storefronts with display windows, multiple entrances, and active uses should be designed to generate high levels of pedestrian traffic along Primary Pedestrian Streets. Access to service areas and parking should be restricted along these roadways.



## FRONTAGE - SIDE STREETS

**Guideline.** Buildings along Side Streets should be designed consistent with the following guidelines:

- **Street Edge.** Buildings along Side Streets should be aligned along block perimeters and have little or no setback where storefronts are proposed or modest setbacks where street level residential or office uses are proposed. Private courtyards or parking fronting a Side Street must be screened by planting or a 3-4 foot high wall aligned with adjacent building frontages.
- **Frontage.** Street level building facades should be oriented toward the street with modest set backs permitted for door-yards, stoops, or common yards. For residential projects, street level units should be elevated a minimum of 2 feet above sidewalk grade to increase privacy. Separate entries to ground floor units are encouraged. Upper story offices should be accessed directly from street level entries or common lobbies opening directly onto sidewalks. Blank walls greater than 20 feet are discouraged but may be allowed where very low levels of pedestrian activity are anticipated.
- **Street Level Use.** Preferred street level uses along Side Streets include residential, professional service, large-scale retail, and other uses that generate lower levels of pedestrian traffic than those on Primary Pedestrian Streets.
- **Parking & Service.** Off-street parking lots and structures, loading docks, service areas, and dumpsters should be located behind buildings in mid-block locations screened from public view. Access to mid-block surface and structured parking may occur from an avenue or side street but the number and width of curb cuts should be minimized.



Individual ground floor residential units along Side Streets should be designed to open directly onto the street with finished floor elevations 2 to 4 feet above sidewalk grade to ensure privacy.

## FRONTAGE - PEDESTRIAN WAYS

**Guideline.** Buildings along Pedestrian Ways should be designed consistent with the following guidelines:

- **Street Edge.** Buildings along Pedestrian Ways should be aligned along block perimeters and may have little or no setback where storefronts are proposed, or a modest setback to create landscaped yards or patio space where street level residential or office uses are proposed. Where present, landscaped yards and patios for ground floor uses should be provided on both sides of the pedestrian way, separated by low walls or hedgerows. The sideyard or patio areas may be raised above the pedestrian way grade up to 3 feet to provide privacy for street level uses.
- **Frontage.** Street level building facades should be designed as storefronts or stoops with generous windows, a high level of transparency, and multiple entries to tenant spaces. At intersections of streets and pedestrian ways, building facades should be designed with storefronts that wrap the corner. For residential projects, street level units should be elevated a minimum of 2 feet above sidewalk grade to increase privacy and separation from the street. Separate entries to ground floor units are encouraged. Upper level office space should be accessed directly from street level entries or common lobbies opening directly onto sidewalks. Expanses of blank walls greater than 20 feet in length are discouraged but may be allowed in locations where very low levels of pedestrian activity are anticipated.
- **Street Level Use.** Preferred street level uses along a Pedestrian Way should include either 1) specialty shops, service and convenience retail, restaurants, cafes, and other types of active, pedestrian-oriented uses or 2) residential, professional service, and other uses that generate lower levels of pedestrian traffic depending on the intended character of the space.
- **Parking & Service.** Off-street parking lots and structures, loading docks, service areas, drive-through windows, and dumpsters should be located behind buildings in mid-block locations and screened from public view. Pedestrian access to mid-block surface and structured parking may occur via a Pedestrian Way.



With generous windows, multiple entries to street level uses, amenities and landscaping pedestrian ways should provide a pleasant environment for retail, dining, in addition to access to mid-block parking or cross-block passage.



## F. Large-Scale Retail

The presence of large-scale retail uses, such as supermarkets, may be essential to the vitality of an Activity Center, but their large footprint, blank rear and side walls, and expansive service and loading areas can create visual and functional challenges. Poor integration also can affect a center's economic performance and "fit" within the surrounding community. Careful planning is required to ensure large-scale retail uses are well-integrated into projects.

The following guidelines, intended to supplement the City's existing Large-Scale Retail Ordinance, address the preferred configuration of large-scale retail uses in Activity Centers.

**Guideline.** Large-scale retail uses should be fully integrated into an Activity Center's pattern of streets and blocks with primary entries opening onto public sidewalks, active "liner" buildings along important streets, and service and loading areas in mid-block locations.

**Guideline.** Where a large-scale retail use occupies an entire block, building facades must follow applicable frontage and façade guidelines for designated street types. For example, blank walls and loading areas are not permitted. Large stores must be lined with smaller scale uses that encourage active pedestrian uses. Blank walks and loading docks should be located away from streets with active retail frontages and public spaces.

**Guideline.** Although generally discouraged, large expanses of surface parking to serve large-scale retail uses may be permitted as long as the design of the project provides for the following:

- an initial phase of development of sufficient intensity to create an attractive destination linked through pedestrian-friendly streets to the large-scale use;
- a street and block pattern and infrastructure phasing plan that would allow for the eventual replacement of parking fields with mixed-use development served by mid-block parking structures; and
- conformance to the City's large scale retail ordinance, with no more than 60% of parking in front of the building and with parking fields subdivided into distinct areas of no more than 100 spaces.

**Guideline.** To minimize the visual bulk of larger footprint uses, large-scale retail buildings should transition to surrounding streets and residential areas through design treatments, liner buildings with storefront entries, or other methods to create an active pedestrian frontage.



Examples of large-format retail uses wrapped with retail liners.



The grocery store is tucked under the apartment building and faces the back of the lot.



Examples of large-format retail uses integrated into mixed use projects include a grocery store (bottom right) with small shops wrapping the back of the store and fronting a "Main Street", a grocery store (bottom left) at the street level of an apartment building facing the interior of the block, and a department store (top left) and a sporting goods store (top right) with small-format retail liners opening onto pedestrian-friendly streets.

# III. Building, Site & Street Design

## A. Architectural Design

### GENERAL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

**Guideline.** In general, mixed-use buildings should be composed of simple masses with articulated base, middle, and top. Close attention should be given to the base design so as to improve the pedestrian experience and the overall quality of the street and public realm.

**Guideline.** Individual buildings should be designed with an identifiable architectural style, and although following a uniform design style throughout a large-scale project is discouraged, building styles should be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

### FAÇADE COMPOSITION

**Guideline.** To give human scale to buildings, provide natural light and ventilation to building occupants, and provide additional security on streets, upper-story building facades should incorporate well-proportioned windows in an





arrangement and pattern suitable to the scale of the façade and building. Windows should be designed to create depth and shadow effects and establish a rhythm and hierarchy across the façade.

**Guideline.** Facades should be designed with a balanced proportion of solid wall surface to exterior window openings, and be subdivided vertically into three or more bays in 12- to 18-foot increments. Increments may be created through modest projecting or recessing of wall surfaces, placement of piers or pilaster, or by other means.

**Guideline.** To give large structures the appearance of multiple attached buildings, façades should be articulated to create rhythm and variety. Generally, the same wall surface design should be repeated for no more than 1/3 of the length of the block or no more than 50% of the stories of the building.

**Guideline.** Façade lengths should not exceed 100 feet without a vertical setback from the base of the building to the roofline of at least 18 inches in width and depth

**Guideline.** Building corners that front an important intersection, public space, or gateway should be emphasized through architectural means that address both frontages. Corner emphasis techniques may include taller building volumes at the corner, projecting building elements, chamfered corners, and applied building elements that wrap the corner.



Facades should be subdivided vertically into bays defined through modest projecting or recessing of wall surfaces or placement of piers or pilaster (top). Special design emphasis is encouraged for buildings at important intersections and gateways.

## MATERIALS

**Guideline.** Buildings should be built out of quality, natural materials, as they tend to last longer, be more durable, look better, and age better than artificial and simulated materials. The following specific guidelines apply:

- **Mixed Use Buildings.** The primary building material for mixed use buildings within an Activity Center should be masonry, particularly at street level. Above street level, masonry-like building systems such as EIFS (Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems) are acceptable to the extent that they are detailed to complement the street level masonry detailing. High-quality materials such as terra cotta, cut stone, cast stone, clay-fired units, precast concrete, or other approved masonry materials are encouraged for architectural details or accents.
- **Storefronts.** Storefronts should be designed using a palette of piers, columns, or pilasters and trim to frame display windows and entries and constructed of high-quality durable materials.

## ARCHITECTURAL LIGHTING

**Guideline.** Decorative architectural lighting that accents building features and creates visual interest should be consistent with other buildings within an Activity Center. Lighting fixtures mounted directly on structures may be allowed when utilized to enhance specific architectural elements or to help establish scale or provide visual interest. Illuminators or fixtures used to light building mounted signage, building facades, or pedestrian arcades should be integrated into a building's architectural design. Lighting design should consider highlighting entries, art, terraces, and special landscape features.



Storefronts and facades along Primary Pedestrian Streets should be made of high quality, durable materials.

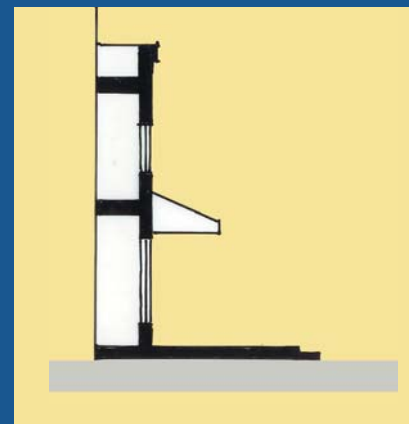
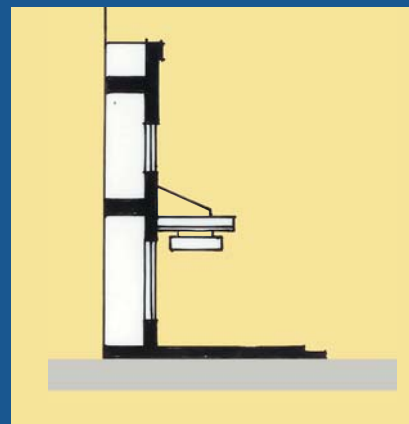
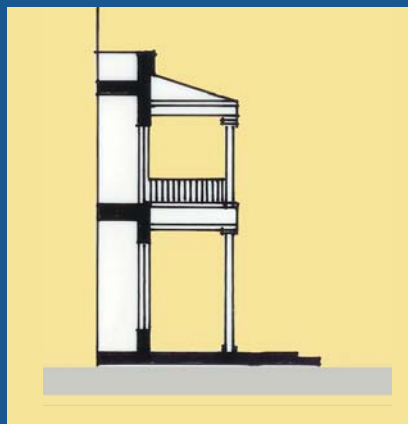
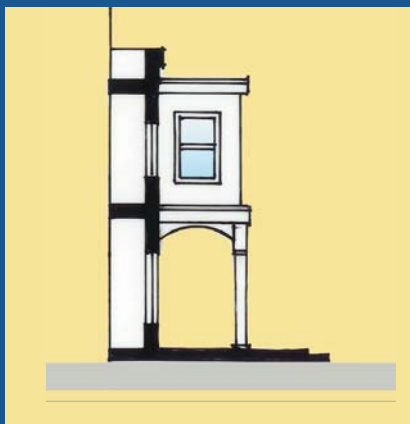
## WEATHER PROTECTION

**Guideline.** To enhance the pedestrian experience and architecture, buildings should provide protection from rain and sun. At a minimum, buildings should provide weather protection along at least 75% of façade lengths on Primary Pedestrian Streets. Where required, building entries and display windows should provide protection through one of the following means:

- **Arcades.** An arcade is a publicly-accessible space recessed within the mass of a building that provides cover for a pedestrian zone. The space should be vertical in proportion, with a clear width of at least 8 feet and clear height of approximately 1.5 times the width. The exterior of an arcade is defined by a series of openings supported by columns, piers, or pillars with the heights of openings from the sidewalk to the peak of the arch or lintel approximately 1.5 times greater than the width of openings between columns or piers.
- **Galleries.** A gallery is a structure appended to the exterior volume of a building that provides cover for a pedestrian clear zone. Galleries may be more than one story in height and may include a covered porch or open balcony on upper stories. The materials of a gallery often contrast to those of the mass of the building—for example, the use of metal or wood galleries attached to masonry structures.
- **Canopies.** Canopies are fixed horizontal (or nearly horizontal) elements suspended from the façade of the building to which they are attached. Unlike awnings, canopies are often made of metal and/or glass, suspended from chains, wire, metal rope or metal rods. Like awnings, canopies must define a protected space beneath them. Canopies should extend at least 6 feet from the structure to which they are attached; 8 feet is preferable. The lowest point on a canopy should be no lower than 8 feet above the sidewalk and no higher than 10 feet above it.
- **Awnings.** Awnings are ancillary lightweight structures of wood, metal, or canvas cantilevered from a building façade to provide shade to the fenestration and spatial containment and shelter to pedestrians. Natural materials—canvas, wood, and metal—are preferred. Vinyl materials and internal illumination are not permitted. To be most effective, awnings must extend out well over the sidewalk, and not be too high. Canopies should extend at least 6 feet from the structure to which they are attached; 8 feet is preferable. The lowest point on a canopy should be no lower than 8 feet above the sidewalk and no higher than 10 feet above it.

**Guideline.** In addition to elements designed for weather protection, projecting elements such as bay windows, balconies, porches, and cornices should also be incorporated into building design to add variety and interest, define building base height, or provide façade articulation.





Arcade



Gallery



Canopy



Awning



### ROOF FORM & ROOF-MOUNTED EQUIPMENT

**Guideline.** Both flat roofs and pitched roofs are permitted within an Activity Center and should be designed to be consistent with the following guidelines:

- Flat roofs are permissible on commercial or mixed-use buildings. Flat roofs must be raked at the minimum slope necessary to shed water and must meet all other applicable construction requirements. Buildings with flat roofs must include a parapet surround across the entire primary façade (front) as well as on both side facades. The top of this parapet should be no less than 18 inches higher than the highest point in the roof plane, and must be high enough to screen all roof-mounted mechanical equipment from view from any point on the adjacent street. Roof parapets should be treated as unique topping elements on the façade of flat-roof buildings. Special attention should be paid to the use of articulations, signage, details, inlays, friezes, or other appropriate elements.
- Pitched roofs should be, where possible, symmetrical hips or gables, with a pitch between 4:12 and 12:12. All pitched roofs must have an overhang of at least 12 inches; the overhang can extend to a maximum of 30 inches beyond the façade of the building. Roof brackets and rafter tail treatments are encouraged. Pitched roofs should be clad in Spanish tiles, barrel tiles, colored standing seam metal, slate, or similar materials.

**Guideline.** Rooftop mechanical equipment should be screened from streets and public spaces and mechanical

penthouses should be designed to complement façade designs and be clad in the same materials as the façade. Where such equipment will be visible from adjacent buildings or rear parking areas (lots or structures), the equipment must be mounted to be as unobtrusive as possible and painted to match finish roof materials.



Pitched roofs should provide an overhang of at least 12 inches.



Parapet walls allow mechanical equipment mounted on flat roofs to be hidden from the street level.

## DRIVE-THROUGH WINDOWS & SERVICE AREAS

**Guideline.** While Activity Centers are generally not appropriate locations for drive-through facilities serving restaurants, banks, pharmacies, and other retail uses, the City may allow these facilities so long as they are sited mid-

Drive-through windows should be limited within Activity Centers, but where provided should be sited mid-block to not impede pedestrian circulation.

The photos to the right show a bank with its primary entry oriented towards a “Main Street” (top) and a drive-through facility to the rear of the building and vehicle egress on a side street (bottom).



block, are not accessed or visible from a Primary Pedestrian Street, and pedestrian circulation is not impeded by drive-through traffic.

**Guideline.** Loading docks and service areas should be located mid-block and should not be visible from public streets, pedestrian passageways, and adjacent residential neighborhoods. Where screening walls are required, they should be designed as a natural extension of the architectural and landscape design for the project. Trash collection areas, loading, and service areas must be incorporated into the building envelope, or be screened from public view by a masonry wall at least 6 feet high or at least one foot higher than the container being screened. All screen walls must be landscaped. All screen walls will be built of durable masonry materials similar in type and detailing to the buildings they serve.

**Guideline.** Ground level mechanical equipment—dedicated units located on or near individual buildings as well as communal facilities—should be screened from public view. This may include air conditioners, electrical transformers, and trash collection equipment including receptacles and compactors.

## B. Sidewalks & Crosswalks

**Guideline.** The pattern, color, and dimensions of sidewalk paving should be coordinated throughout an Activity Center. Concrete with brushed or sandblasted finish is the preferred paving material for pedestrian clear zones. Concrete unit paving and brick pavers may be used as decorative banding along clear zones and in fields along amenity zones. Complex patterns and finishes should be avoided as they may be difficult to match should repairs be required and may require extensive maintenance over time.

**Guideline.** Within an Activity Center, intersections may be designed to reflect their importance within the larger destination. Special paving materials or designs may be used, if sparingly, as an indication to drivers that they have entered a pedestrian priority area.

**Guideline.** Through the use of painted or thermoplastic striping or concrete paving, crosswalks should be designed to contrast with pavement on either side of the walk; design details may vary in accordance with the importance of the intersection within the overall Activity Center plan.

**Guideline.** To comply with applicable ADA standards, curb ramps are required where sidewalks cross curbs. Curb ramps should be aligned across intersections and be located as a continuation of pedestrian clear zones.

**Guideline.** To reduce pedestrian crossing distances and vehicle speed during turning movements, curb lines may

be extended at key intersections and the radii of curbing at intersections should be no greater than 15 feet. Curb radii for alleys and service lanes, particularly those intended for use by larger trucks and service vehicles, may be 25 feet.



Thermoplastic striping provides for a high level of visual contrast and reflectivity (left).

Pedestrian crossings should be clearly indicated to help pedestrians safely cross roadways within Activity Centers (below).





## C. Street Furnishings

### GENERAL GUIDELINES

**Guideline.** Street furnishings such as seating, newspaper racks, bollards, trash receptacles, bicycle racks, and other elements installed in public spaces and amenity zones along sidewalks should be attractive, comfortable, durable, and easy to maintain and replace should they be damaged. To contribute to a sense of community identity, the design, type, color, and material of street furnishings should be carefully coordinated.

**Guideline.** In general, street furnishings should be placed within the public amenities zone, located adjacent to the curb, according to the following guidelines:

- For streets with on-street parking, street furnishings should be located no less than 24 inches from the curb line.
- On streets in which a travel lane is immediately adjacent to the sidewalk, furnishings should be located at least 42 inches from the curb line.
- Street furnishings should never be located within the minimum pedestrian clear zone of a sidewalk.



Street furnishings including seating, trash receptacles, and kiosks should be coordinated with other amenities such as signage, lighting, and landscaping. Cafe tables, chairs and umbrellas should be made of quality materials and complement street furnishings.

## SEATING

**Guideline.** Properly located and designed seating in a variety of standard forms including individual moveable seats, benches, low walls, ledges or even steps should be provided to allow for greater enjoyment of streets within an Activity Center. Seating should be designed consistent with the following guidelines:

- Seating surfaces should be between 16 and 18 inches high. Seating without a back should be a minimum of 16 inches in depth; seats with backs should be no less than 14 inches deep.
- Walls, ledges, and steps to be used for seating should be between 12-20 inches high, and at least 16 inches wide. If a wall is designed for seating on both sides, the top of the walls should be at least 30 inches wide.
- Seating should be durable, weather resistant, and comfortable. Sharp edges should be avoided at all costs.
- With the exception of individual movable chairs, seating should be permanently anchored and immovable.
- Seating should be located to afford occupants interesting views as well as a sense of psychological protection. Ideal views include active storefronts, intersections, pedestrians, or outdoor activities such as dining.



Seating can be provided in a variety of ways within an Activity Center: low walls, benches, and movable seats. Seating should be located to provide occupants with interesting views and a sense of security.

## BICYCLE RACKS

**Guideline.** To encourage use of bicycles for mobility, bicycle racks should be conveniently located and designed consistent with the following guidelines:

- Bicycle racks should not be located where they might interfere with vehicle or pedestrian movement, or otherwise place cyclists in danger.
- Racks should be located close to areas of high pedestrian activity, but should not be within the flow of pedestrian traffic. Racks should be easily visible from the adjacent street and sidewalks; ideally, racks should be visible from within adjacent buildings.
- Racks should be permanently mounted and designed for ease of use and maintenance. Racks should allow cyclists to lock both the bike frame and one wheel. Avoid racks with moving parts.



Bicycle racks should be conveniently located within an Activity Center. Racks should be positioned out of the pedestrian clear zone within view from sidewalks and adjacent buildings.



## TRASH & RECYCLING

**Guideline.** Trash and recycling receptacles should be located for ease of use by pedestrians, and for relative ease of pickup by trash collectors; however, the locations should not be obtrusive and receptacles should never be located within the pedestrian clear zone of a sidewalk. Trash receptacle design should be consistent with the following guidelines:

- Receptacles should coordinate with the design of other street furnishings. They should be designed and sized to match anticipated use. Receptacles should be permanently attached and should include covered tops as well as sealed bottoms.
- Receptacles should include two pieces. The inner container should be designed for easy collection of trash; the outer container should be low-maintenance and designed to coordinate with other street furnishings
- Receptacles should be placed in locations that are convenient to seating areas, but should be never be directly adjacent to any form of seating.



Trash receptacles and recycling bins should be designed in coordination with other street furnishings and should be located to maintain a clear pedestrian zone.



## NEWSPAPER RACKS & MAILBOXES

**Guideline.** All public streets and environments are required to provide appropriate locations for newspaper racks. These racks should be designed consistent with the following guidelines so as not to impede accessibility and pedestrian mobility.

- Racks should be clustered into “gang” units that meet all of the demands for circulation and distribution within a single coordinated furnishing. The design and construction of such units should coordinate with the other elements of street furnishings.
- News racks should be placed immediately adjacent to a building wall or within the area designated for public amenities within public rights-of-way. Racks should be placed at least 24 inches from the curb.
- Racks should not obstruct the view of pedestrians or drivers and should never be located outside the frame of the adjacent building footprint.

**Guideline.** The location and placement of mailboxes is determined by the United States Postal Service (USPS). Location(s) within an Activity Center should be coordinated with the USPS.



Newspaper racks should be consolidated into consistently designed boxes to reduce physical and visual clutter of individual boxes.

## KIOSKS

**Guideline.** Information kiosks, multi-purpose kiosks, and vendor stands and other design features may be placed in the public realm. Such structures should be designed consistent with the following guidelines.

- **Information Kiosk.** Information kiosks should be used to ease navigation within an Activity Center by providing visitors with street maps and highlighting destinations, tenants, and upcoming events. Information displayed must be regularly updated to reflect changes in tenants, vendors, and events. Information kiosks should be strategically placed near parking areas to maximize visibility and accessibility to passing foot traffic.
- **Vendor Kiosks & Carts.** In areas with sufficient sidewalk space, vendor carts may provide either food service or merchandising. A consistent and identifiable style should be encouraged for carts within an Activity Center.
- **Multipurpose Kiosks.** Multipurpose kiosks can be utilized to provide on-street retail, transit stops, site markers, and designated handbill areas. A consistent and identifiable style should be encouraged for kiosks within an Activity Center. Multipurpose kiosks can serve as a designated transit stops, marketing tools, or an announcement for upcoming events.



Multi-purpose kiosks can incorporate transit stops and marketing or information displays.



In locations with sufficient sidewalk or plaza space to accommodate small seating areas, vendor kiosks or carts may provide food service or merchandising.



Transit stops should be placed in key locations within an Activity Center in a consistent and identifiable style.

## D. Signage

**Guideline.** Commercial and wayfinding signage should be designed in compliance with City Standards to ensure tenants, residents, and visitors can quickly and easily find their way.

**Guideline.** All signage within an Activity Center should be designed to contribute to the overall character, identity, and wayfinding system. Signage and environmental graphics should be conceived of as an integral part of a site or building's architectural design, not as an applied afterthought.

**Guideline.** Each business within an Activity Center that includes an entryway onto a Primary Pedestrian Street should have one sign oriented and scaled to pedestrians.

**Guideline.** The colors, materials, sizes, shapes, and lighting of signs should be compatible with the architecture of the buildings and the businesses they identify, and should not be incompatible with surrounding buildings or development. Sign shapes should be simple geometric forms. Lettering should be simple, legible, and well proportioned for clear communication. Sign materials should be durable and easy to maintain.

**Guideline.** Wayfinding signs—typically free-standing signs installed in the public realm used to identify key locations, such as civic and commercial destinations and features,

parking, and public spaces—should be attractive, clear, consistent in theme, location, and design. To reduce visual clutter, they should be incorporated with other streetscape elements such as light standards, transit shelters, or kiosks.

**Guideline.** Commercial sign types planned for use in Activity Centers should be limited to the following:

- **Freestanding Project Identification Signs.** Permitted as part of a master sign plan approved for a mixed-use project; must meet City Comprehensive Development Code requirements (freestanding signs are limited to monument style signs with a maximum height of 8 feet).
- **Wall Sign.** A wall sign is applied directly to the exterior face of a building, with the exposed face of the sign within the plane of the façade and parallel to the façade. This type includes those painted onto or applied directly to the surface of a building's exterior face.
- **Canopy/Awning Sign.** A canopy or awning sign is mounted to, painted on, or otherwise attached to a canopy or awning.
- **Projecting/Blade Sign.** A projecting or blade sign is any sign, other than a wall, canopy, or awning sign, that is affixed to and projects from a building, generally at a 90-degree angle, and is supported solely by the wall from which it projects.
- **Window Sign.** A window sign is generally hung within a storefront window frame or applied directly to the window glass. Window signs should never obscure more than 25% of the area of the window in which they are hung. The entire sign must fit within the horizontal and vertical framing members of the window in which it is hung.





A complementary range of commercial and wayfinding signage types should be provided within Activity Centers. (Above: pedestrian-oriented signs and freestanding sign; top right: projecting signs and wayfinding sign; bottom right: canopy sign and wall sign.)



## E. Street & Site Lighting

**Guideline.** Site lighting should provide illumination for the security and safety of pedestrian and vehicle movements along streets, access and entry drives, parking lots, service and loading areas, pedestrian ways, courtyards and plazas, and building entries without intruding on adjacent properties or causing off-site glare. All lighting must meet minimum levels required per City Standards.

**Guideline.** In addition to ensuring that public safety and security criteria are met, exterior lighting should be designed to create a comfortable and attractive pedestrian environment. Light standards, poles, and other fixtures should be designed as a “family” of fixtures; architecturally compatible and consistent in design between sites within an Activity Center and adjacent properties. All intersections and perimeter public roads should be illuminated with similar poles and fixtures.

**Guideline.** Levels of illumination should be responsive to the type and level of anticipated activity, without over-illuminating the area (i.e., bright, uniform lighting of all public rights-of-ways is not desirable). Lighting fixtures should be selected and located to shield or confine light spread within a site’s boundaries and to eliminate light directed towards the sky. To facilitate security, specify lighting levels that are adequate for visibility, but not overly bright. All building entrances should be well-lighted.



Light standards, poles, and other fixtures should be designed as a “family” of fixtures; architecturally compatible and consistent in design between sites within an Activity Center and adjacent properties.

**Guideline.** Light standards should be located in a public amenity zone and should not interfere with pedestrian circulation.

**Guideline.** Parking lot lighting should be unobtrusive, and should not attract attention, but rather provide safe light for orderly functions. The fixtures should be uniform in design and provide adequate lighting for all areas. Select metal halide lighting with a concealed light source of the “cut-off” variety to prevent glare and “light trespass” onto adjacent buildings and sites. Emphasize pedestrian ways through parking lots with lighting.

**Guideline.** Walkway lighting should be scaled to the pedestrian (10-16 inches in height) and provide for safe passage particularly in areas which are dangerous, such as stairs, ramps, intersections, and underpasses. The use of lighted bollards with incandescent or metal halide lamps or other low-level fixtures is encouraged to identify pedestrian walkways and drop-off areas at entries to buildings. Emphasize pedestrian-to-vehicle intersections with low-level decorative streetlights.

**Guideline.** Landscape lighting should enhance and complement the landscape materials in the nighttime hours. The design of the landscape lighting should work for all seasons of the year and through the life of the landscape. When mounting from tree locations, consideration of the mature size of the plant and surrounding plant life will help achieve the desired effect. Conceal fixtures where possible (i.e., in trees, by landscape, behind rocks), control glare, and avoid extreme bright spots on the surrounding landscape.

## F. Landscape & Irrigation

**Guideline.** Trees and other plant materials should be provided as a means of enriching the pedestrian environment and enhancing the general aesthetics of an Activity Center. In order to provide variety and visual interest, landscaping within public rights-of-way may include permanent above grade planters, movable pots and planters, and hanging planters in addition to tree wells and planting strips.

**Guideline.** Typically, the amenity zone, or area separating the sidewalk from the street, should be the primary landscape zone. Landscaping may be located elsewhere between curb lines and building facades as long as adequate pedestrian clearance is maintained.

**Guideline.** To create a cohesive effect, a formal, rhythmic landscape design using trees and other plant materials of similar characteristics should be applied. Tree and plant selection should include multiple species with alternating color, form, and texture from block-to-block or within blocks. They should be arranged in an established pattern that is repeated regularly over the length of the block on both sides of the street, except where notable changes are desirable, such as indicating the location of a pocket park, plaza, etc.

**Guideline.** Shade trees should be provided, especially on Primary Pedestrian Streets, to create shade, reduce glare, buffer wind and cleanse the air. Street trees help create

a pleasant, pedestrian-scale space and enhance other aspects of streetscape design. When selecting quantity, size, location, and species of trees, compatibility with the physical conditions of the urban setting, such as rights-of-way constraints, adjacent commercial uses (outdoor dining, etc.), utility locations (both buried and above ground), storefront sign/architectural visibility, and volume of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, should be considered. Additionally, trees should not interfere with commercial signage, traffic signalization, street lighting, street furnishings, intersections, parking, driveways or alleys, utilities, motorist visibility, sight distance criteria, minimum pedestrian clear zone, or building façades.

**Guideline.** Planting size of trees is generally restricted by the area within which the tree will be located. The largest tree available for the rootball size should be provided to enhance the effect of maturing trees with substantial shade. Trees planted with tree grates or within tree wells will by necessity need to be smaller than trees located in large lawn/planting areas. Trees with a 3-inch caliper should be large enough to provide some shade at planting time, and significantly more when they develop, assuming proper cultural/maintenance activities.

**Guideline.** Adequate area for tree planting should be created to allow for healthy root zone growth. A structural soil mix should be provided in and around areas where trees are to be planted. Where high pedestrian volume occurs or is anticipated, tree grates or other means of pedestrian safety should be provided.

**Guideline.** As living elements of the street environment, selection of tree species should be given considerable attention. Street tree design should occur concurrently with, and guide, the selection and placement of public amenities, streetlights, and signage, rather than being treated as an afterthought. Mature tree characteristics, soil and air conditions, water, light, heat, maintenance, and budget should all be addressed prior to selection of tree types. The following guidelines provide additional considerations to species selection.

- Trees should be Florida #1 grade or better, in conformance with the Grades and Standards for Nursery Plants by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, latest edition with revisions.
- Street trees should be free of fruit and thorns to reduce maintenance and minimize potential harm to pedestrians.
- Trees should be strong wooded, disease and pest resistant, drought tolerant, single trunk and with a fairly long life expectancy.
- The selected species should have a local basis for endurance of air pollution, minimal maintenance, and compacted or infertile soils.

**Guideline.** Tree irrigation, in most cases bubblers, should be used on all street trees in commercial areas. The irrigation of trees should be developed in conjunction with a low volume landscape irrigation design.





Top Row: The primary landscape zone should be within the amenity zone, the area that separates the pedestrian clear zone from the street. Additional landscaping may be located adjacent to the structure as long as landscaping does not interfere with the pedestrian clear zone or building facades. Bottom Row: Examples of Movable Planters, Tree Wells, and Tree Grates.





## G. Parking

### GENERAL GUIDELINES

**Guideline.** Parking lots should be carefully designed and located to create pleasant and safe environments for pedestrians and connect different commercial developments and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

**Guideline.** Within Activity Centers, the need for automobile parking should be balanced with the requirements of an active urban environment by employing a creative mix of parking solutions, including on-street parking, off-street parking, shared parking, screening, surface parking lots, landscaping, and structured parking.

**Guideline.** Parking should not dominate the frontage of pedestrian-oriented streets or interrupt key pedestrian routes. Surface parking lots fronting street rights-of-way must not exceed 30% of the block length and must be screened from view by a wall, fence, landscaping or combination thereof. Parking type must adhere to the designated Street Type that describes the parking options allowed in an Activity Center and determines the basis for design guidelines.

**Guideline.** Parking requirements for specific building types are contained in the City of Largo Comprehensive Development Code (CDC).

**Guideline.** Shared parking should be considered to allow parking spaces to be shared by more than one use or building due to different schedules (day/night or weekday/weekend). When the feasibility of such multiple usage is demonstrated, the total sum of all parking requirements can generally be multiplied by a factor of 0.70 (70%) to calculate total parking required.

**Guideline.** All non-residential uses can meet their parking requirements with designated on-street parking (in front of the individual use) or designated spaces in accessible lots. Designated spaces must be in lots within 500 feet of the primary entrance of the use.

**Guideline.** Residential parking requirements should be accommodated on-site. Parking requirements for upper-story residential apartments in mixed-use buildings and live-work units can be met with designated spaces in adjacent rear parking lots. In cases where there is alley access, parking for single-family residences must be located at the rear of the lot.

### ON-STREET PARKING

**Guideline.** As a means of enhancing access to adjacent uses, buffering pedestrians from moving traffic, and increasing activity on the street, on-street parking along the curb line of streets and accessible directly from a moving lane should be provided. On-street parking can count towards the parking requirement of non-residential buildings that front onto the parking.

## OFF-STREET SURFACE PARKING

**Guideline.** Off-street parking lots should be designed consistent with the following guidelines:

- Off-street parking, either surface parking or structured parking, and access driveways or Alleys/Service Lanes should be planned to reduce the number of curb cuts, provide inter-connectivity between sites, and support pedestrian safety, connections, and comfort.
- All off-street parking should allow for and facilitate the use of emergency, sanitation, utility, and delivery vehicles.
- All off-street parking should allow a minimum of 5 feet between the edge of the paved parking lot surface and the nearest structure.
- Parking spaces adjacent to walkways or other pedestrian areas must use wheel stops to ensure that the vehicles do not encroach on these areas.

**Guideline.** Surface parking lots should be designed to be consistent with the following guidelines:

- Surface parking lots should be located generally to the rear of a building frontage and masked from public view.



Off-street surface parking lots fronting on public rights-of way should be screened from view by a wall, fence, landscaping, or combination thereof.



Surface parking lots shall conform to the City's large scale retail ordinance (contained in the Comprehensive Development Code), limiting surface parking permitted in front of large retail buildings and subdividing large parking lots into smaller distinct areas.

- Unless specifically designed as such, all parking stalls in parking lots should be for head-in parking. The dimensions of a standard surface-parking stall and two way drive aisle shall meet the minimum standards in the Comprehensive Development Code (CDC).
- Surface parking lots should be visually and functionally subdivided into manageable parking plazas. A row of cars should include neither more than 10 vehicles without interruption by a tree island, nor more than 24 cars without a connecting drive aisle. A standard diamond tree island should be no less than 5 feet on a side, and should be located at the intersection of four head-in parking spaces.
- A standard full space tree island should be 16 feet deep and no less than 8 feet wide and include at least one deciduous canopy tree and one standard pole light stanchion. In situations where two islands abut across two rows of parked cars, the island should be no less than 32 feet in length and 8 feet in width, with one deciduous canopy tree at each end and a single pole light at the center.
- All parking lots visible from public thoroughfares must be screened by planting and/or walls; these walls should be no less than 3 feet high and no more than 4 feet high.

- Cross-lot easements or shared parking lots should be encouraged on multi-parcel projects, with shared parking, shared driveways, and cross access between adjacent parcels to minimize driveways on the street.

**Guideline.** Surface parking lots should be designed, planned, and located to minimize visual impacts from public spaces.

## PARKING STRUCTURES

**Guideline.** To minimize visual impacts from public space and the acreage dedicated to parking, well-designed, off-street parking structures are encouraged within Activity Centers. Parking structures should be designed consistent with the following guidelines.

- The design and appearance of a parking structure, whether it is freestanding, attached, or integrated into other buildings, should relate architecturally to the surrounding buildings, and must contribute positively to the overall character of an Activity Center.
- A parking structure, whether freestanding or attached to a use structure, cannot front onto a Primary Pedestrian Street. Where the location of a structure within an Activity Center plan places it close to a fronting Primary Pedestrian Street, the garage must be masked from this street using liner buildings, whose height extends at least to the top of the second level of parking.

- Convenient, weather-protected pedestrian access between parking structures, main buildings, and sidewalks should be provided. Weather protection should be provided at all pick-up points associated with parking structures.
- General architectural standards for buildings within an Activity Center also apply to facades of parking structures visible from streets and public spaces.
- Parking structures should be designed so that sloped parking ramps are accommodated within the center of the structure. No slopes should be visible on the façade of a parking structure.



Parking structures should be designed to integrate with surrounding building fabric and help contribute to the overall character of an Activity Center.



# Acknowledgements

## **Largo City Commission**

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Vice Mayor Gigi Arntzen

Commissioner Mary Gray Black

Commissioner Woody Brown

Commissioner Harriet K. Crozier

Commissioner Robert Murray

Commissioner Rodney J. Woods

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### **Largo Activity Center Guidelines**

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