



City of Pleasant Hill

Missouri 7 Highway Corridor Commercial Design Guidelines

Why are the Design Guidelines Important?

The purpose of these guidelines is to promote the image and development quality expected in the Missouri 7 Highway Corridor. Historically, the community's neighborhoods and downtown were pleasant, tree-lined streets with smaller scale neighborhood-oriented retail shops. However, current development practices emphasize automobile uses and access, which can be at odds with the City's goal of creating a pedestrian-friendly, safe, and visually pleasing experience. Although development patterns have changed over time, it is still possible to protect and enhance the traditional pedestrian-friendly character of Pleasant Hill.

In addition to downtown Pleasant Hill, Missouri 7 Highway serves as the primary commercial corridor in the community. The 7 Highway Corridor provides many benefits to the city as a whole and to the individual neighborhoods it abuts, both now and in the future. The Corridor serves as the gateway to the city for visitors and residents, and contributes significantly to the city's image. How the 7 Highway Corridor is managed and developed in the future will play a significant role in our sense of community pride.

Guiding Principles

In order to protect and enhance the Missouri 7 Highway Corridor the following Guiding Principles were prepared to serve as the basic framework for the design guidelines that will guide both public investment and private development throughout the Corridor.

Promote Sustainable Development

- Plan and construct infrastructure and new development to harmonize with the natural environment.
- Promote cost-effective, environmentally friendly, "green" development options in both public and private projects.
- Provide a built environment and streetscapes that are comfortable and in scale with pedestrian activities.
- Incorporate open space (landscaping and/or plazas) into private building plans.

Promote Quality Development

- Celebrate the 7 Highway Corridor as a high quality gateway to Pleasant Hill through the use of outstanding and creative design solutions.
- Embrace the 7 Highway Corridor as a "boulevard" creating a memorable visual experience through enhanced public infrastructure and streetscape improvements.
- Ensure new development is designed with a high level of architectural detail, innovative design, and high quality materials.
- Provide distinctive architectural and landscape features at significant intersections.

Promote Compatible Growth

- New development should be compatible in terms of design, density, massing and scale to adjacent properties.
- New development should transition in increasing height and density away from adjacent lower intensity development.
- Enhanced landscaping should be used along the highway frontage to create order throughout the Corridor.
- The appearance of large expanses of parking and paving should be minimized.
- The presence of parking areas, and the negative visual and noise impacts of vehicles should be minimized along the highway frontage and near residential areas.
- Signs should be complementary to the character of the Corridor.

Promote Economic Development

- Ensure the long-term functionality and capacity of 7 Highway by managing access and accommodating appropriate setbacks for future highway widening.
- Facilitate new growth by planning for development and infrastructure improvements in a unified interconnected manner through cohesive site designs, rather than the incremental development of individual freestanding parcels.



Application of the Design Guidelines

These guidelines are to be used as a tool in conjunction with other City requirements and project review procedures in meeting the overall objectives of the City and the Comprehensive Plan. The guidelines constitute the City's definition of quality commercial development. While these guidelines are not absolute or codified development requirements, their application should be considered a "target" in meeting the objectives of quality development within the corridor.

When interpreting and implementing the guidelines the level of design quality and building appearance is subject to a tiered pattern, dependent upon location, visibility, and character of the surrounding area. Design quality may vary based upon the following:

High Visibility Or Sensitive Areas:

The highest development standards, including building materials and architectural design are required for buildings within this category. Such developments are expected to achieve the guidelines to the fullest extent possible. Properties subject to this category are those with the following attributes:

- Properties located within approximately one-quarter mile on both sides of Missouri 7 Highway from of 163rd Street on the south to 150 Highway on the north;
- Properties located adjacent to existing or planned residential uses;
- Properties located near historically significant structures; and
- Properties located in areas determined significant to the community image.

Predominantly Developed Areas:

Buildings proposed in predominantly developed areas south of 163rd Street may be permitted to incorporate comparable building materials and design features as nearby buildings and will be permitted more flexibility in achieving the "highest quality" development standards. Development design in these areas may not be considered of the "highest quality" but should still present an attractive and quality image for the community. However if the City Planning Commission determines a property, or area, located south of 163rd Street is significant to the community image, development on the property shall comply with the design guidelines to the fullest extent possible.

Specific application of these guidelines for all commercial areas should be accomplished through the site plan review process as well as the following:

- Use planned zoning to establish a master development plan, ensuring the larger development area will be interconnected with cohesive and compatible site designs. Sites for individual freestanding businesses shall be designed to associate with a larger development area.
- Access to 7 Highway shall be consistent with the design guidelines and subject to approval by the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), including any more stringent access management standards required by MoDOT.



Site Layout and Development Pattern

Appropriately sited buildings will greatly enhance the formation of the public streetscape. Buildings should be sited to make efficient use of space, provide a “sense of place,” and to create a cohesive visual identity and attractive street scene. All primary and freestanding buildings must be arranged and grouped to create a distinct street edge.

A. ‘Green’ Development Practices:

‘Green’ infrastructure is an approach to wet weather management that is cost-effective, sustainable, and environmentally friendly. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, green infrastructure can reduce reliance on traditional storm water structures (i.e. pipes, channels, and treatment plants) that are expensive to build, operate, and maintain. In addition, green infrastructure can also protect surface waters and drinking water supplies, mitigate the impact of urban heat islands, reduce energy demands, and protect highly valued natural habitats, forests, and agricultural lands. Natural buffers and native vegetation should be used whenever possible to reduce grading and the need for larger enclosed pipe systems –thus reducing up front development costs as well as long-term maintenance needs.

Opportunities to implement “green” design practices in Pleasant Hill include:

1. Use of native vegetation for landscaping.
2. Reducing impervious surfaces through the addition of porous pavement or the replacement of existing pavement with ‘pervious’ structures (See Figure 1), and the creation of vegetated swales and landscaped bioretention areas.
3. Storm water conveyance through grassed channels, bioretention channels, and disconnection of impervious areas to redirect runoff to vegetated areas (See Figure 2).
4. Storm water storage to reduce peak discharge via pedestal sidewalks, rainwater capture and use (rain barrels), green roofs, and yard, curb, or subsurface storage.
5. Storm water infiltration through trenches and basins, and exfiltration devices (See Figure 3).
6. Landscaping measures such as bioretention cells, rain gardens, slope reduction, planter boxes, and native ground cover.
7. Use of ‘rainwater harvesting’ for non-potable uses such as toilet flushing and landscape irrigation.
8. Providing regional retention by building wet retention ponds and constructed wetlands.
9. Providing dedicated open space and conservation easements.

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3





B. Building location and orientation: Buildings should be sited within these limits:

1. If there is NO parking or paving designed between the proposed building and the future right-of-way and landscape setback (see Figure 4) then the building is required to be set back from the center of the right-of-way a minimum of 75 feet. In this scenario the following should apply (See figure 6):
 - a. A minimum of 50% of the building facade that faces the highway should be an “**active wall**”.
 - b. Landscaping should be installed in the landscape setback as set forth by the Landscape, Open Space, and Amenities section A.2.
2. If there IS parking located between the building and the future right-of-way and landscape setback (see Figure 5), the following apply:
 - a. The maximum depth of paved area should not exceed 60 feet (24 foot two-way driving aisle with 18 foot long parking spaces on both sides).
 - b. Additional parking should be located on the sides or rear of the building to minimize the size of parking areas along Highway 7.
 - c. The building should not be set back more than 140 feet from the center of the Highway 7 right-of-way, unless additional landscaping area is provided between the parking area and the building.
 - d. The parking or paving areas should be screened by additional landscaping elements as set forth by the Landscape, Open Space, and Site Amenities section A.3.
3. In addition to these guidelines, buildings should be oriented on the site to:
 - a. Frame the corner of an adjacent street or entrance drive intersection.
 - b. Create a focal point at the four corners of major street intersections. A focal point may consist of a building with **exceptional architectural design**, a vertical architectural feature, public art, and/or exceptional designed public plaza or landscape amenities. However, parking areas should not be located within a minimum 200-foot radius of the center point of the intersection.
 - c. Cluster individual freestanding buildings to define the street edge and create amenity areas between buildings. The even dispersal of freestanding buildings in a widely spaced pattern is not desirable.

Figure 4

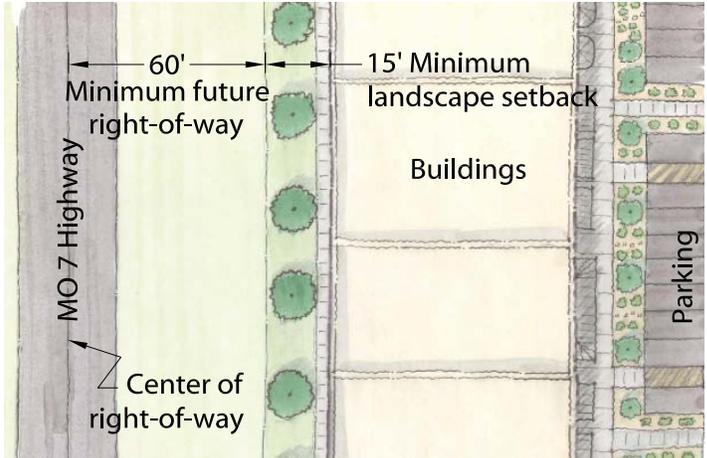


Figure 5

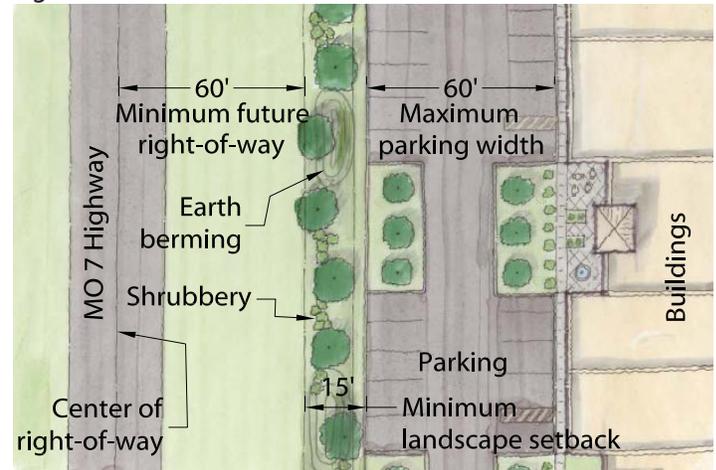


Figure 6





C. Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation: Internal circulation for both vehicles and pedestrians should be safe and convenient, and provide connectivity within and between developments. The pedestrian network and the experience of the pedestrian within the development must be considered with the same or higher priority as that of the automobile. Walkways must be designed and buffered in a manner that encourages their use.

1. Create a network of pedestrian walkways to link the entrances of every commercial building to each other and to the public sidewalk system along Highway 7 and other streets, as well as to adjacent neighborhoods (See Figure 7). Walkways should be at least five (5) feet in width and wider in areas with higher levels of pedestrian activity.
2. Provide walkways along entrance or internal access drives and set back at least six (6) feet from drive or parking lot curbs (See Figure 7).
3. Walkways that extend through parking areas should be incorporated into linear landscape strips. These areas should generally be 20 feet or wider to accommodate car overhangs and planting areas between the sidewalk and the curb. (See Figure 8). Walkways painted onto pavement or extending through multiple individual landscape islands are not appropriate.
4. Walkways must be built to accommodate one of two situations. They must be built directly adjacent to the building wall to create space for a “transition zone” of pedestrian amenities between the street or drive and walkway such as street trees, landscape planters, pedestrian lighting, and other streetscape amenities (See Figure 9), or they must be set back several feet from a building wall to incorporate building foundation landscape plantings.
5. At each point where a walkway crosses a paved area in a parking lot or internal street or driveway, the crosswalk should be clearly delineated through the use of change in paving materials distinguished by color, texture, or height (See Figure 10).

Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10





D. Parking Layout and Design: Parking lots must be effectively screened from Highway 7 and the surrounding street network and adjacent incompatible uses.

1. A distinct system of internal circulation drives must be provided for access to parking areas. In order to minimize pedestrian conflict, such circulation drives should not be located along the facades of buildings that contain primary customer entrances (See Figure 11).
2. Parking areas should be distributed into smaller parking blocks generally containing no more than 40 spaces. Each parking block should be separated by buildings, landscaping, access drives or streets, or pedestrian walkways.
3. Parking spaces directly accessible from access drives and the number of parking aisle intersections with the internal circulation drives should be limited to minimize the number of potential car accident locations within the internal system.

Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 11



4. Circulation drive connections should be provided between adjacent nonresidential parking lots (See Figure 11).
5. Connections with adjacent residential areas should be planned and incorporated wherever possible to provide convenient access for nearby neighborhoods, without encouraging cut-through traffic from the commercial center to access a major roadway.
6. Illumination of parking lots should be provided with individual decorative poles and fixtures, rather than building mounted fixtures (See Figure 12). Any building mounted light fixtures should be decorative in nature and used primarily at entrances, rather than for site or parking lot lighting purposes.
7. Parking lot light fixtures should be nonadjustable, horizontally mounted fixtures, or fixtures with less than 90 degree luminaire cutoff (See Figure 12). Fixtures that project light or glare toward street right-of-way or adjoining properties are not permitted.
8. Illumination of parking lots near residential uses should be limited to individual poles and fixtures not to exceed fifteen (15) feet in height as measured from grade (See Figure 12).
9. Building-mounted light fixtures should be for aesthetic and safety purposes only and direct light downward, not outward (See Figure 13).



Landscape, Open Space, and Amenities

A key element of new commercial development is the creation of a consistent landscape character along the Highway 7 Corridor. Each parcel should contribute to the overall appearance and quality of the Corridor through complying with the landscaping requirements of this section. Landscaping that is built as part of new commercial development along the Highway 7 Corridor should incorporate environmentally sensitive design practices wherever possible. The incorporation of these guidelines into all Corridor development will result in the creation of an aesthetically uniform landscape design quality and character in Pleasant Hill.

A. Minimum Highway 7 Corridor landscape requirements:

1. A minimum 15 foot wide landscape buffer along the future Highway 7 right-of-way, and all other street rights-of-way (See Figure 14).
2. Shade or ornamental trees should be planted in the landscape buffer area along the Highway 7 frontage at a maximum spacing of one tree per 25 linear feet of right-of-way frontage (See Figure 14).
3. In areas where parking and paving are located between the building and the landscape buffer, screening must be provided through a **sufficient combination** of the following:
 - a. Planting shrubs and other low vegetation between trees, no less than 3 feet in height (See Figure 15).
 - b. Using earth berms no less than 3 feet in height.

B. Natural vegetation and storm water retention/detention: All new development should be sensitive to the environmental characteristics of Pleasant Hill. It should consider incorporating low impact development practices such as landscaping with vegetation native to western Missouri and providing areas for storm water runoff to collect and dissipate slowly to prevent pollution and contribute to erosion and flooding.

1. Priority should be given to preserving areas of significant natural features such as drainage channels, mature trees and vegetation, stream corridors, wetlands, prominent bluffs and steep slope areas (See Figure 16).
2. Significant natural features should be preserved through common open space or public dedication.
3. Buildings, parking areas, other structures, and grading should be set back from such features a distance that will ensure their continued quality and natural functions.
4. The preservation of such areas generally will not be considered a site amenity unless they comply with the remaining guidelines in this section.

Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16





C. Site amenities and decorative landscaping:

Additional landscaping should enhance the design of the site while preserving the natural drainage and other environmental functions of the site.

1. Landscaping should make use of natural materials such as stone taken from the site or stone locally quarried, native grasses and other native ground cover, natural and low maintenance irrigation techniques, gray water, permeable concrete, and other environmentally sensitive landscaping practices.
2. All site amenities should be an integral part of the overall design, rather than an undevelopable parcel, storm water facility, of an unusable perimeter buffer (See Figure 17).
3. Open storm drainage and detention areas visible to the public should be incorporated into the design of the development as an attractive water feature amenity or focal point. Such an area may be considered a site amenity provided it meets the spirit and intent of the guidelines set forth in this section.

Building Design

The design and treatment of commercial buildings plays an important role in the visual identity of Pleasant Hill. The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure the function, quality, and appearance of new structures is compatible in the context of the surrounding area.

A. Building design characteristics:

1. Buildings should front onto Highway 7 or a major access drive to define a clear edge. Buildings should provide at least fifty percent (50%) of the building's "active wall" oriented toward the street (See Figure 18).
2. Buildings should be designed to create human scale with elements such as canopies or porticos, arcades, colonnades, raised landscape planters, pedestrian level lighting, and special building material treatments at the base of the building.
3. All buildings should have architectural interest and variety to avoid the effect of long or massive walls with no relation to human scale. Building walls facing a street, pedestrian walkway, or adjacent development should meet the following (See Figure 19):
 - a. Incorporate architectural features such as columns, ribs, pilasters or piers, changes in plane, changes in texture or masonry pattern, or an equivalent element that subdivides the wall into human scale proportions.
 - b. Incorporate a building bay or structural building system for walls exceeding 30 feet in width.

Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19





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Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Bays shall be visually established by architectural features such as columns, ribs or pilasters, piers, changes in wall planes, changes in texture or materials and fenestration pattern no less than twelve inches (12") in width.

- c. Incorporate features into ground level walls such as windows, entrances, arcades, arbors, awnings, trellises, or alternative architectural detail that defines human scale to subdivide façade along no less than sixty (60%) percent of the façade. Windows shall be recessed no less than 25% the thickness of the wall and include visually prominent sills or other forms of framing.
4. Any business with drive-through lanes should be oriented so the drive-through areas are not readily visible from the Highway or street right-of-way.
5. Window canopies/awnings should be canvas with a matte finish, tile, slate, or decorative metal and should be compatible with the overall color scheme of the facade from which it projects (*See Figure 20*). Awnings with a high gloss finish or illuminated plastic canopies/awnings are not desirable.
6. All exterior building wall signs facing toward or visible from residential dwellings should be either non-illuminated or indirectly illuminated. No internally illuminated wall signs should be permitted in any location where visible from residential dwellings.
7. Decorative architectural accent lighting and landscape lighting should be used to illuminate sidewalks, access drives, parking areas, and public gathering spaces.
8. Buildings near residential uses should be compatible with the residential buildings in design, scale, and massing (*See Figure 21*).
 - a. Buildings near residential uses should include sloped roofs, or the appearance of sloped roofs (mansard and gables) to maintain a residential appearance, unless other architectural features and site design provide residential compatibility.
 - b. Nonresidential sites designed to "back up" to residential rather than integrate with residential uses should be subject to buffers with greater setbacks and landscape requirements. Setbacks and landscape buffers for buildings and parking/paved areas should be further increased for developments with loading docks, overhead doors, parking, or nonresidential buildings more than one story in height adjacent to residential zoning (*See Figure 22*).
 - c. The sides and rear of the nonresidential buildings should be treated with the same level of design quality and appearance as the front facades where such elevations are visible from a street or parking lot.



B. Building Materials/Colors: Building materials and colors used in a commercial development should be durable, attractive, and have low maintenance requirements. Individual “corporate image” design elements and colors must be incorporated only as secondary elements to the development. Such elements should be consistent and blend with the larger development area (See Figure 23).

1. A variety and well proportioned mixture of exterior building materials and colors should be used to create visual interest and to avoid monotony, but must be consistent with a pallet of materials approved for the development area. No one material and color should dominate a building or a development. Corporate materials and colors should only be used to create variety if incorporated as secondary elements (See Figure 24).
2. Exterior building materials should consist of those that are durable, economically-maintained, and of a quality that will retain their appearance over time, including but not limited to, natural or synthetic stone; brick; stucco; integrally-colored, textured, or glazed concrete masonry units; high-quality prestressed concrete systems; or glass (See Figure 25). Water-managed Exterior Installation Finish Systems (EIFS) may also be incorporated as a decorative accent material (See Figure 26).
3. Materials considered not acceptable include: vinyl siding; smooth-faced gray concrete block, painted or stained concrete block, tilt-up concrete panels; barrier-type EIFS; standard single- or double-tee concrete systems; split shakes, rough-sawn or board and batten wood; or field-painted or pre-finished standard corrugated metal siding.

Figure 23



Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26





Definitions

Active wall – the side of the building containing the majority of the storefronts, customer entrances, and windows.

Amenity area – designed open space that is framed by multiple buildings and is shared by several or all of the users of the buildings.

Exceptional architectural design – a design element that is integrated into a building façade for the primary purpose of establishing a design hierarchy, denoting a prominent building entrance, or signifying a focal point in a vista.

Human scale – the perceived size of a building relative to a human being. A building is considered to have good human scale if there is an expression of human activity or use that indicates the building's size. For example, traditionally sized doors, windows, and balconies are elements that respond to the size of the human body, so these elements in a building indicate a building's overall size.

Natural Features—"Natural features" include but are not limited to flood plains and surface drainage channels, stream corridors and other bodies of water, steep slopes, prominent ridges, bluffs, or valleys, and existing trees and vegetation.

Orient—To bring in relation to, or adjust to, the surroundings, situation, or environment; to place with the most important parts facing in certain directions; to set or arrange in a determinate position: as in 'to orient a building.

Significant natural feature – any element of the environment or landscape that is important to the ecological function of an area, and whose removal would be detrimental to the quality of the area.

Sufficient combination – a design that incorporates at least two of the listed techniques or others of similar effectiveness and accomplishes the spirit or intent of the design guidelines. These situations will be reviewed for their potential to meet the requirements set forth by the guidelines.