

DOUGLAS AVENUE CORRIDOR DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

(June 28, 2005, Amended August 4, 2008)

With the principles of creating a corridor that is attractive and functional, accommodates a mix of land uses, presents attractive public spaces, provides a convenient and attractive parking supply, and increases safety through appropriate urban design, the Douglas Avenue Corridor District Design Guidelines are established under the authority SS62.23 and 66.1001 of the Wisconsin Statutes, and by the Common Council of the City of Racine through adoption on February 15, 2005 of An Ordinance To Amend The City's Comprehensive Plan And Adopt The Douglas Avenue Revitalization Plan.

Two distinct development patterns are discernable in the Douglas Avenue Corridor District. One pattern endeavors to accommodate the automobile and is most noticeable from Three Mile Road to Yout Street. The second pattern developed prior to the dominances of the automobile and is most noticeable from Yout Street to State Street. The applicable design guidelines for these distinct sub districts are established through the proceeding text.

North District Design Guidelines: 3 Mile Road to Yout Street

Parking Design

- a. Whenever possible, locate large parking areas to the side or rear of buildings.
- b. Parking areas should be well landscaped.
- c. Screen parking areas with ornamental fencing, dense hedges, or other plantings to soften the visual impact.
- d. Shared parking facilities are encouraged. Whenever possible, adjoining parking lots should be linked to provide internal traffic circulation from business to business.
- e. Internal walkways should be provided to interconnect parking lots with building entrances.

Building Placement

- a. On Douglas Avenue, buildings should be parallel to the street.
- b. Walkways should be provided to interconnect building entrances with public sidewalks.
- c. Design buildings so that public entrances face the street.
- d. Buildings should have a prominent location at key intersections. Locate parking to the sides or rear so the building can define the corner, rather than the parking lot.

Building Height

Where multi-story buildings are not planned or possible, the single story building should have a vertically extended parapet.

Building Design

- a. Walls should provide detail and variety and have no blank or unarticulated surfaces.
- b. All sides of buildings should be designed with details that complement the front façade. Sides visible from a public street should receive equal design treatment as seen on the main street façade.
- c. Design buildings as a product of their own time. While using historic buildings for design cues, the copying of historic appearances and details is discouraged.
- d. For larger buildings, design with variation to the building facade through use of materials and color, or by dividing the building into bays to break up large facades and create pedestrian interest at the street level.
- e. For corner buildings, incorporate distinctive architectural features including features such as towers, rounded walls, recessed entries and other design features.
- f. Window and door glazing should be clear so as to provide interest to the street. Mirrored or smoked glazing is discouraged.
- g. Brick and stone are the preferred primary building materials. Stucco or similarly applied surfaces and veneers are permitted eight feet above sidewalk grade.
- h. Accent materials such as awnings, parapets, and cornices should be utilized to provide interest in facades.
- i. Parapets should be used to conceal mechanical equipment and provide a pleasing edge to buildings.

Site Design (Miscellaneous)

- a. All dumpster and trash handling areas shall be appropriately screened.

- b. Overhead doors facing Douglas Avenue are highly discouraged, but when necessary, they shall be designed to have an architectural appearance that enhances or complements the streetscape and the parent building's façade.
- c. Unless otherwise prohibited by a conditional use permit, outside food or beverage vending machines shall be appropriately screened, lighted and located in a manner that is not detrimental to the streetscape, shall not disrupt or hinder vehicular or pedestrian traffic on or off the site, and shall not be placed in a location that is disruptive to adjacent or opposite properties.

Signage Design

- a. Appropriate sign types include: signs integrated into the design of the building along a sign panel; monument signs six to eight feet in height; other architecturally integrated free standing signs generally not exceeding 10 feet in height.
- b. Sign structures should reflect or compliment, in design and materials, the architectural character of the building it is associated with. Pole signs must be designed with a landscaped or architectural base.
- c. Individually mounted backlit building mounted letters are an acceptable form of signage.
- d. Small, well designed building-mounted light fixtures are a preferred method of sign illumination.

South Design District: Yout Street to State Street

Building Restoration

- a. Preservation of distinguishing features of the building is the goal. Removal or alteration of historic materials or distinctive architectural features should be avoided whenever possible.
- b. Original rough window openings shall be maintained unless otherwise approved by the Committee.
- c. Where practical, restore original masonry, and reconstruct missing elements such as cornices, windows, and storefronts that were part of the original building design. If restoration is not feasible, design new elements to complement the character, materials and design of the original building.
- d. Remove inappropriate elements such as signs, canopies, siding, etc. that cover details and features of the original building façade.
- e. Painting or repainting of natural brick or stone is strongly discouraged when those materials are in good condition. Proper cleaning of such surfaces is strongly recommended where practical.

Parking Design

- a. Screen parking areas with a dense hedge, decorative fencing, or other form of street wall having a setback found elsewhere within a well established block face.
- b. Whenever possible, locate large parking areas to the side or rear of buildings.
- b. Where possible, parking areas should be well landscaped.
- d. Shared parking facilities are encouraged. Whenever possible, adjoining parking lots should be linked to provide internal traffic circulation from business to business.
- e. Internal walkways should be provided to interconnect parking lots with building entrances.

Building Placement

- a. Buildings should enhance a blockface by contributing to the street wall as defined by individual facades.
- b. Where new buildings are in-filled within an established block face, the building setback should be consistent with adjoining buildings but in no case setback further than ten feet.
- c. In areas of minimal sidewalk width, building setbacks should include additional depth to accommodate landscaping and amenities, and widen the sidewalk zone.
- d. In special cases, buildings may be set back greater than ten feet to allow for the development of usable public open spaces such as pedestrian plazas.

Building Height

- a. Two story buildings are preferred as a minimum block height.
- b. One story buildings are discouraged but may be considered where exceptional design is displayed that includes extended one story facades that fit the historic context of the block face.
- c. New buildings should not vary by more than one-story from the average building height in blocks that exhibit an existing and a well-defined block face.

Building Design

- a. Design a building with a clearly defined base, middle and top. Bulk heads or kick plates, large store front windows, canopies, awnings, transom windows, sign panels, and decorative cornices are highly appropriate design components.
- b. Exterior materials should be durable and high quality. The use of false brick or other “faux” sidings is discouraged.
- c. Three color paint schemes are encouraged with a base color on the majority of the building, trim colors used on features such as windows, door trims, cornices, and accent colors on signs awnings, and other architectural details.
- d. Parapets should be used to conceal mechanical equipment and provide a pleasing edge to buildings.
- e. Windows and doors on the ground floor should not be darkly tinted colors or have a mirrored finish. Privacy should be created through curtains or similar measures that keep the perception of an open façade.
- f. Windows in infill construction should continue the established rhythm of openings established in the existing blockface with vertical window openings being the more appropriate design choice.
- g. If their use is warranted, roll down security screening and gates should be internal to window and door areas so as to minimize their visibility from the street.
- h. If appropriate, the ground floor of commercial retail buildings should have over half of the street wall area devoted to windows to enhance the pedestrian environment.
- i. Design building entrances as the focal point of the façade. Entrances located within ten feet of the sidewalk should include recessed entries.

Signage Design

- a. Preferred sign types include building mounted signs, window signs, projecting signs, and awning signs.
- b. Signs should be simple and easy to read.
- c. Sign colors should relate to and complement the primary colors of the building façade.
- d. Sign design and placement should fit the character of the building and not obscure architectural detail.
- e. Sign structures should reflect in design the architectural character of the building it is associated with.
- f. Plastic box signs are highly discouraged.
- g. Individually mounted backlit building mounted letters are an acceptable form of signage.
- h. Small, well designed building-mounted light fixtures are a preferred method of sign illumination.
- i. Window signs should not exceed 15% of the storefront window area.

Site Design (Miscellaneous)

- a. All dumpster and trash handling areas shall be appropriately screened.
- b. Overhead doors facing Douglas Avenue are highly discouraged, but when necessary, they shall be designed to have an architectural appearance that enhances or complements the streetscape and the parent building’s façade.
- c. Unless otherwise prohibited by a conditional use permit, outside food or beverage vending machines shall be appropriately screened, lighted and located in a manner that is not detrimental to the streetscape, shall not disrupt or hinder vehicular or pedestrian traffic on or off the site, and shall not be placed in a location that is disruptive to adjacent or opposite properties.

North District And South District Color Guidelines Color Palate

- a) Exterior color schemes shall be selected by the project applicant from the 1,082 tones found in the approved Sherwin Williams “COLOR” palate, or its industry equivalent. The approved palate may be reviewed at the office of the Department of City Development (the “Department”). Approved paint treatments from the Sherwin Williams “COLOR” palate are as follows:
 1. Body, trim, window, door and accent colors shall be selected from the 280 tones described as “Fundamentally Neutral” and the 560 tones described as “Color Options”, or their industry equivalent.
 2. Trim and accent colors only may also be selected from the 94 tones described as “Essentials” and 148 tones described as “Energetic Brights”, or their industry equivalent.

Color Selection Guidance

- a) In all cases, paint shall be applied in a professional, complete and workmanlike manner.
- b) Paint colors shall be viewed as a reversible finish. Building owners are encouraged to select colors appropriate to the style and period of the building construction. Monotonous color schemes, lacking in contrast, are discouraged and transitions of color are encouraged.
- c) Related color schemes such as monochromatic (different values of a single color), neutral (gray, taupe, tan or gray-beige), or analogous (colors close to one another on the color wheel such as blue and blue-violet) are appropriate.
- d) Contrasting color schemes such as opposites (colors opposite each other on the color wheel), split complement palettes (colors adjacent to true colors such a yellow and yellow-orange), or triad palettes (three colors spaced in fairly equal increments on the color wheel) are appropriate.