

Town of North Greenbush

Main Avenue Design Guidelines

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Acknowledgments

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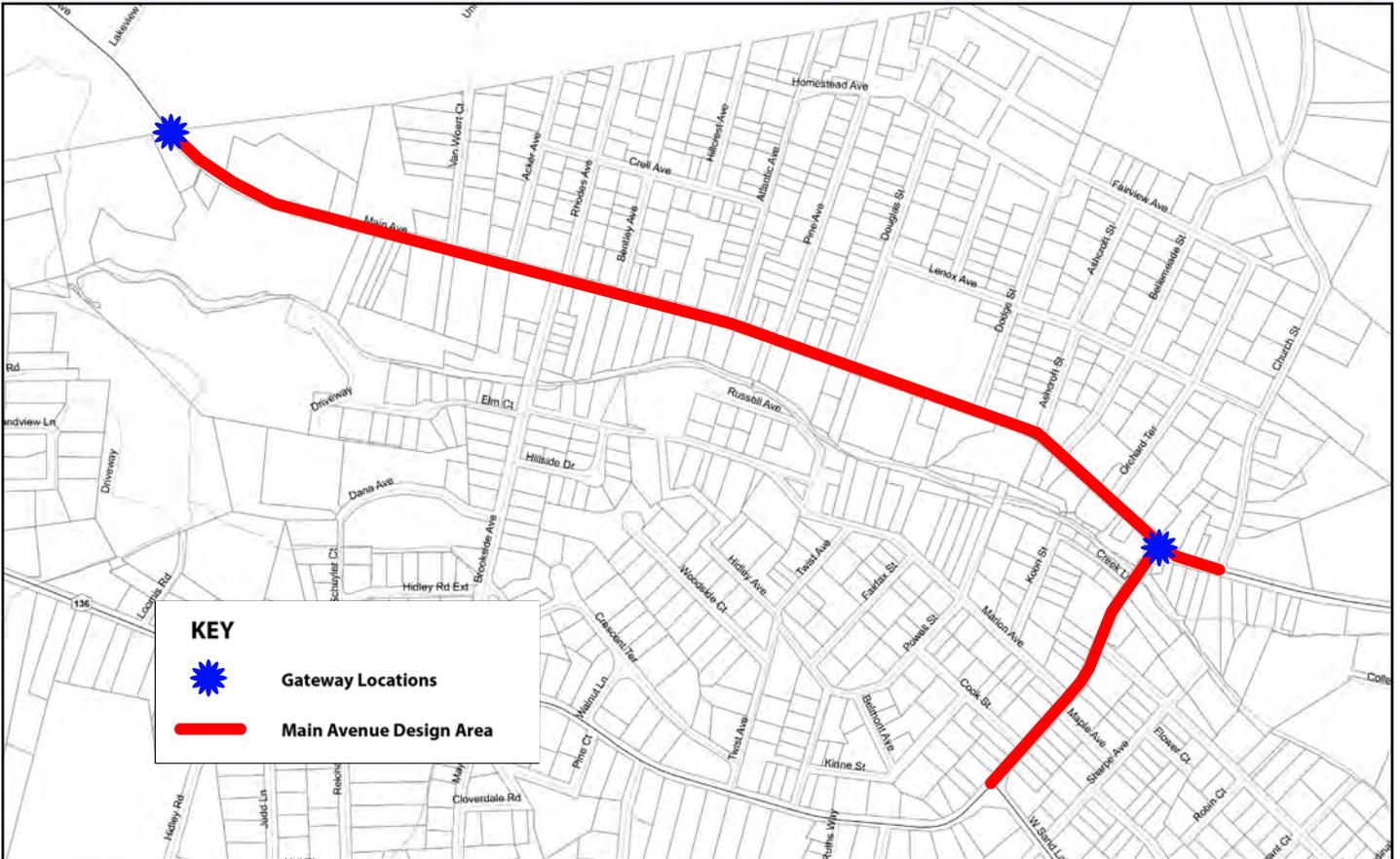
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Main Avenue Design Area

Main Avenue Design Area



Purpose & Location

Purpose

The Main Avenue Design Area in Wynantskill is intended to implement the goals and objectives of the Town of North Greenbush Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2009. The Design Guidelines are intended to serve as a template for the application of specified design principles in order to achieve a desired form and appearance of development.

The general design pattern for the Main Avenue corridor is to create walkable, highly integrated, multi-functional public and private spaces, through a network of connected streets, sidewalks, and uses. Structures in the Main Avenue Design Area are encouraged to have two to three stories, with retail on the ground floor and office or residential uses above.

Location

The Main Avenue Design Area includes all properties immediately adjacent to Main Avenue (Route 66) from its northern boundary with the Town of Brunswick to the intersection with West Sand Lake Road (Route 150); and includes all properties immediately adjacent to West Sand Lake Road (Route 150) to its intersection with White View Road (Route 136). All intersections, as described herein, shall include any and all properties immediately abutting either Route 66 or Route 150.

Residential properties shall be conscious of the intent of the design guidelines and shall make a good faith effort to incorporate the design recommendations when providing improvements to existing residential structures. Residential structures shall be required to prepare a site plan, in accordance with Chapter 155, and comply with the design guidelines when the proposed improvements to a residential structure exceed 50 percent of the existing structure's market value or alter 50 percent of the existing structure's floor area or exterior façade.

The location of the Main Avenue Design Area and key gateways are shown on the map entitled "Main Avenue Design Area."

Design Principles

The primary objective of the Main Avenue Design Area is to create a traditional main street design as well as enhance the positive qualities that currently exist. Specifically, the design principles for the Main Avenue Design Area are to:

- a) Establish a coordinated image for the Main Avenue Design Area;
- b) Bring buildings up toward the sidewalk and street edge;
- c) Promote a mix of commercial and residential uses in multistory buildings;
- d) Promote the prominent positioning of civic buildings and central green spaces in order to enhance community identity and public interaction;
- e) Promote pedestrian activity through a safe and walkable environment;
- f) Minimize the visual impact of the automobile by managing the placement of landscaping of parking areas;
- g) Encourage the development of shared parking areas between nearby uses;
- h) Protect important natural and historic features; and
- i) Encourage streetscape treatments to enhance the character and image of the corridor.

Planning Board Review

The design standards are intended to provide guidance to the Planning Board and its applicants during the review and development of projects within the Main Avenue Design Area.

The following terms have meanings as follows:

- a) The word “shall” means the standard is mandatory; and
- b) The words “should” or “may” mean the standard is recommended.

The Planning Board is empowered to require a mix of uses in any development project. Further, the Planning Board is empowered to require that a development be phased to ensure the required mix of uses is implemented. Applicants are encouraged to meet with the Planning Board prior to an application to discuss concepts, clarify procedures, and coordinate all applicable zoning and site plan requirements.

The following guidelines shall be followed in reviewing site plans and may only be modified by the Planning Board as set forth below. In certain cases it is recognized that the particular character of individual sites may preclude the application of certain design guidelines. Therefore, the Planning Board may modify the following guidelines where it finds that such modification is warranted. Circumstances that shall warrant modification of the guidelines may include, but not be limited to: physical constraints such as the location of existing buildings or changes in grade between adjacent properties; excessive cost; or failure to obtain an agreement or permit that is required for the implementation of the guidelines.

In reviewing any proposed modification, the Planning Board shall consider whether granting the modification will be consistent with the purposes of this chapter (including the relevant portions of the Zoning Ordinance applicable to this district), locally adopted plans, and the following principals:

- a) The general design and character of the proposal is in harmony with the neighboring properties in the district.
- b) The scale of the proposal in relation to the site and neighboring properties.
- c) The similarity of building materials and their color and texture in relation to those found in the surrounding district.
- d) The visual compatibility of the proposal with surrounding properties, including height, setbacks, roof shape, window and door arrangements, and the orientation of the building in relation to the street.

Design Guidelines

Architecture

All spaces, structures, and related site improvements visible to the public from public roadways shall be designed to add to the visual amenities of the surrounding area in relationship to the proposed development.

The color, size, height, location, roof treatments, building materials, landscaping, and proportion of openings of any proposed new construction, re-construction, or substantial rehabilitation, as well as proposed signage and lighting, shall be evaluated for compatibility with the area's surrounding architecture. The color, size, height, and architectural style of the building shall complement and not compete with other architecturally distinguished buildings in the district.

Appurtenances

- ✓ The use of air conditioners, satellite dishes, and any other accessory object attached to a principal property should be installed as not to detract from the building appearance or cover or damage architectural details.
- ✓ All rooftop mechanical equipment including but not limited to air conditioners and heating units, should be screened from direct public view.
- ✓ All mechanical equipment, waste collection and electrical transformer areas shall be screened from view through the use of fencing and/or landscaping.
- ✗ The use of appurtenances along the main façade of the property shall be prohibited.

Building Facades

- ✓ Whether the building is modern or traditional architecture it should respect traditional rhythms and the scale of other buildings along the corridor.
- ✓ The building façade should front the public street.
- ✓ The retail base of a building should be visually separated from the upper stories.
- ✓ Building surfaces over 50 feet in length should be relieved with changes to the wall plane that provide strong visual interest.
- ✗ Uninterrupted, flat and monotonous building facades are to be avoided.

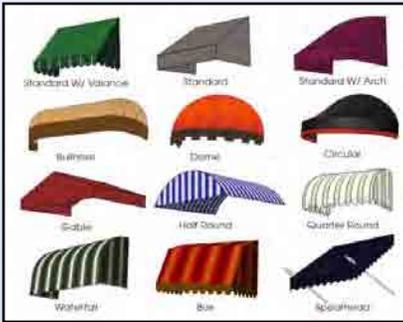


Design Guidelines



Awnings

- ✓ Awnings may be used to breakup a blank stretch of a building facade.
- ✓ Upper-story window awnings shall only be used on upper-story windows when awnings are used on ground floors storefronts.
- ✓ Proportion an awning so that it shall have:
 - A 7-foot clearance to the sidewalk, no closer than 24 inches from the curb.
 - A 4 to 7 foot projection over the sidewalk.
 - A 15 degree to 45 degree slope.
- ✓ Awning colors should reinforce the overall color scheme of the building.
- ✓ Individual awnings for upper-story windows shall be compatible with the design and materials of the ground floor awning and in most cases use the same color and pattern.
- ✗ Obscuring or destroying decorative details, of the façade (e.g. ornamental ironwork, arches or hooks, or storefront cornices) should be discouraged.
- ✗ Posts or columns that will interfere with pedestrians shall be prohibited in supporting an awning.
- ✗ Awnings made of metal, plastic, fiberglass or vinyl shall be prohibited.



Building Lighting

- ✓ Light of an appropriate color quality shall be recommended in order to preserve the natural daytime colors of objects.
- ✓ LED lighting shall be encouraged.
- ✗ Industrial lighting shall be prohibited.
- ✗ Low pressure sodium should not be used.
- ✗ Neon lighting shall be prohibited.



Design Guidelines

Building Materials

- ✓ Acceptable materials for the primary building and accents shall include brick, cast stone, stone, cultured stone, hardiplank, wood shingles, wood, high grade plastic, or high grade vinyl siding.
- ✗ Prohibited materials shall include products such as smooth-faced concrete block, aluminum and metal siding, shiny or mirror-like materials, and plywood siding.

Building Setbacks

- ✓ Buildings should be situated closer to the street with parking in the side or rear of the building.

Building Color/Paint

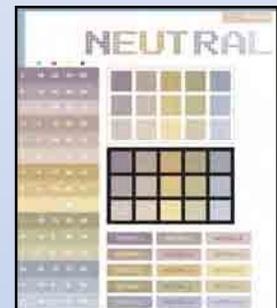
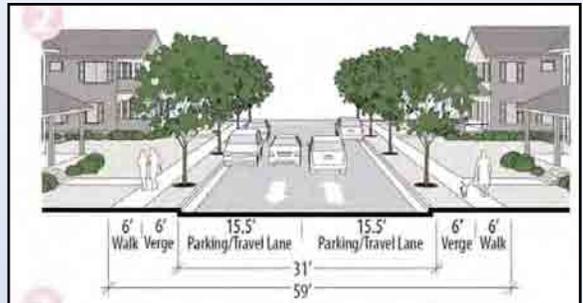
- ✓ A simple color scheme of up to three colors should be recommended.
- ✓ Neutral and Beige Tone patterns shall be used.
- ✓ Façade colors should be low-reflectance colors.
- ✗ High intensity colors, metallic colors, black, or fluorescent colors should not be used.
- ✗ Harsh or glaring colors shall be prohibited.

Entrances

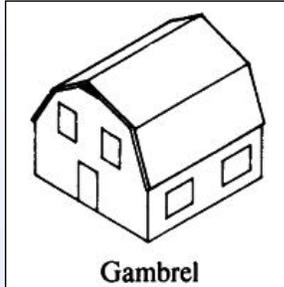
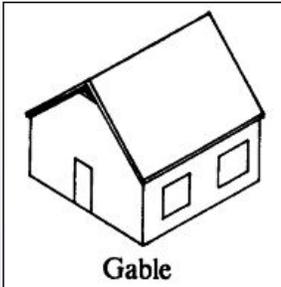
- ✓ Entrances should be attractive to pedestrians. Primary ground floor entrances should front on public streets, while secondary entrances should be located on the side or back of the building.

Massing/Scale

- ✓ New construction should be sized to work within the scale established by adjacent buildings.
- ✓ New construction shall be no more than three stories in height.



Design Guidelines



Roofline

- ✓ Single-story commercial buildings should have an artificial façade to raise the height of the building to create an appropriate scale.
- ✓ Gable and gambrel roof styles should be utilized.
- ✗ Flat roofed buildings shall be prohibited unless architecturally screened by an artificial facade.

Commercial Storefronts

- ✓ Sixty to seventy-five (60-75%) percent of the commercial storefront or other retail street level façade should be transparent through the use of glass windows and doors.
- ✓ The retail storefront façade at street level should be differentiated from the upper floors to create a visual base for the building and a pedestrian friendly scale.
- ✓ The storefronts should all possess a street-level continuity.

Windows and Doors

- ✓ Windows and doors should be of a similar size, proportion, spacing, and rhythm for the entire corridor.
- ✓ Buildings should be designed with windows that look out onto walkways, parking lots and common areas to further enhance safety and security.
- ✗ The use of Plexiglas shall be prohibited.
- ✗ Windows and doors shall not be blocked or boarded.
- ✗ Dark tinted glass should be discouraged.

Design Guidelines

Site Layout

Parking Areas

- ✓ Parking should be located along the side and to the rear of a building rather than in front to reduce its visual effect.
- ✓ Parking should be shared between two or more uses that have their peak demand for parking at different times of the day or week, or whenever determined feasible.
- ✓ Parking lots of neighboring properties should be physically connected whenever possible to reduce curb cuts.
- ✓ The entrance and exit of a parking lot should be consolidated in a single location with sufficient sight distance to avoid traffic and pedestrian conflicts.
- ✓ Any corner property should have their main exit off the side street when possible.
- ✓ Large expanses of paved surfaces should be landscaped to soften visual impact.
- ✓ Landscaped buffers, painted iron fences, and natural stone walls should be used between roadway frontages and adjacent properties.
- ✗ Buildings should not be demolished solely to provide off-street parking. Consider rehabilitating such buildings to maintain the building line.

Commercial Streets, Drives and Loading Areas

- ✓ All streets, drives, and loading areas shall be paved with asphalt and provided with concrete curbing.
- ✓ Loading and delivery areas may be shared between nearby uses and shall be determined by the Planning Board on a case-by-case basis.
- ✗ Parking shall not to be permitted along the main public street.

Residential Driveways, Parking and Garages

- ✓ Garages and accessory structures should be located to the rear of the primary building.
- ✓ The materials and architectural detailing of the garage and/or accessory structures should be similar to that of the primary structure and should be compatible with neighboring structures.
- ✗ Front yards should not appear to be parking areas.
- ✗ A garage should be discouraged from dominating the view from the street.



Design Guidelines



Common Open Space

- ✓ Public open space should provide level lawn areas to accommodate a range of uses and activities.
- ✓ Public open space uses should incorporate a range of ages.
- ✓ Paths and walkways should be provided throughout public and private open spaces.
- ✗ Plaza, outdoor dining, and other hardscaped features should not count towards open space requirements.

Buffers & Screening

- ✓ Landscaped buffer strips shall be provided separating parking areas, vehicular circulation facilities, or similar improvements from the sidewalk along any public street.
- ✓ An opaque screen for loading and service areas should comprise walls, fences, berms or evergreen plantings, or any combination thereof, and should be provided to conceal loading areas and service areas such as dumpsters where they are visible from the street.
- ✓ Street frontage of parking lots should be landscaped to partially screen parked vehicles using plant materials and/or low walls.
- ✓ Painted iron fences or low stone walls should be used in combination with plant materials for screening, where appropriate.
- ✗ Chain link fencing shall be prohibited.

Design Guidelines

Pedestrian Access

- ✓ Clearly defined pedestrian areas and handicapped accessibility shall be provided within parking areas and along the corridor.
- ✓ Pedestrian ways intended for public use and sidewalks should be composed of concrete, brick, or concrete unit pavers.
- ✗ Crushed gravel and stone shall not be a suitable material to use for public pedestrian areas.

Landscaping & Greenspace

- ✓ Plant materials should require little maintenance and tolerate conditions in an urban environment especially salt and sand deposited with snow removal.
- ✓ Required landscaping shall be permanently maintained in a healthy growing condition at all times.
- ✓ Plantings should not obscure corridor views or vehicle access points at maturity.
- ✓ Trees should not block the street view and should maintain a certain amount of openness that will facilitate pedestrian safety.
- ✓ Trees should vary and be suitable for the region.
- ✗ Invasive species shall not be permitted.

Site Furniture

- ✓ All site furniture within an open space shall be consistent and of similar style.
- ✓ Durable, hard surfaces should be incorporated where outdoor furniture including benches, movable chairs and tables can be appropriately installed or used.



Design Guidelines



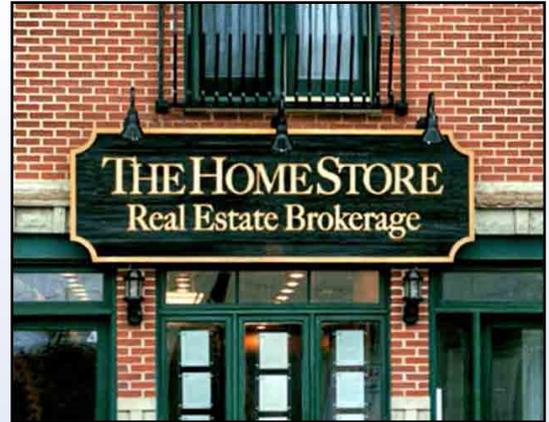
Lighting & Illumination

- ✓ Light fixtures should be appropriate to the scale and character of the site and design of the corridor.
- ✓ Glare should be controlled by using light fixtures with parabolic reflectors to direct light downward rather than outward.
- ✓ Light of an appropriate color quality should be used in order to preserve the natural daytime colors of objects.
- ✓ LED lighting should be recommended.
- ✓ Adequate lighting to side and rear entrances shall be provided for safety and security.
- ✓ All exterior lights shall be designed and located in such a manner as to prevent objectionable light and glare to spill across property lines.
- ✓ Poles that are less than twenty feet in height should be encouraged for general area lighting.
- ✗ Flashing or moving lights shall be prohibited.

Design Guidelines

Signage

- ✓ Signs should not dominate the visual element of the site.
- ✓ Signs on awnings should exist on the valance only.
- ✓ Attractive logos on the sloped part of the awning, or valance, may not exceed 15% of the sloped area.
- ✓ Banner signs should be constructed of heavyweight cotton or acrylic fabric.
- ✓ Banner signs should hang at least 8 feet above the grade.
- ✓ Façade signs should be located above the top of the first floor storefront openings and below second floor windowsills or below the roofline on a one story building.
- ✓ Lettering on façade signs should occupy no more than sixty-five (65) percent of the sign.
- ✓ Projecting signs should be at minimum of eight (8) feet above the sidewalk and should extend from the building face a maximum of five (5) feet, or 1/3 the width of the sidewalk; whichever is less.
- ✓ A simple color scheme of up to three Neutral and Earth Tone patterns shall be used.
- ✓ Colors should be low-reflectance colors.
- ✓ Exposed lamps used to illuminate signs should be equipped with goose-neck reflectors, or other devices arranged so as to concentrate the illumination upon the area of the sign and prevent glare.
- ✓ Window signs should complement the window display.
- ✓ Vinyl, computer cut letters and logos should be encouraged for window signage.
- ✗ Harsh or glaring colors shall be prohibited.
- ✗ Portable signs including sidewalk signs, A-frame signs, menu and sandwich board signs shall be prohibited.
- ✗ Individual channel letters with neon shall be prohibited.
- ✗ Internally illuminated plastic box signs shall be prohibited.
- ✗ Neon signs within a display window to add color and light to a storefront shall be prohibited.
- ✗ Window signs should not occupy more than twenty (20) percent of the window surface area.



Design Guidelines

Streetscape



Hanging Baskets and Banners

- ✓ Banners and hanging baskets should be mounted on light poles in a consistent manner.
- ✓ Banners should reflect the character of the corridor and be of a unified or coordinated design.



Landscaping/Street Trees

- ✓ Street tree species should be continuous and in designated locations along any street.
- ✓ Street trees should be tolerant of urban conditions, especially salt and sand deposited with snow removal.
- ✓ Planting intervals for street trees should range from 30 feet to 50 feet on center.
- ✓ Street trees should be installed with tree grates or within raised planting areas.
- ✓ Shrubbery shall be no higher than four feet above existing street grades, nor shall any tree with foliage extend below ten (10) feet above the established street grades.
- ✓ All landscaping (trees, shrubs, planted beds) shall be maintained for the purpose of protecting visibility.



Paving Materials

- ✓ Street paving materials should include asphalt along with decorative pavers and/or markings at crosswalk sections.
- ✓ Concrete or granite shall be used for curbing.



Design Guidelines

Pedestrian Access/Ways & Sidewalks

- ✓ Wherever practical, connect adjacent commercial establishments and surrounding neighborhoods through the provision of paved sidewalks.
- ✓ Where pedestrian pathways cross vehicular routes, they should be distinguished by a change in paving material, color, and/or texture.
- ✓ Painted markings or imprinted, colored asphalt using a pattern and color that is distinct should be encouraged.
- ✓ Sidewalks should be constructed with concrete and with the option of brick pavers for accent material.
- ✓ All sidewalks should be ADA compliant.
- ✓ Restaurants may be permitted to operate outdoor cafes in front of and on public sidewalks as long as space remains free for pedestrian sidewalk passage.

Public Art

- ✓ Art installations should be of a consistent design and coordinated along the corridor.

Street Furniture

- ✓ Railings, benches, bicycle parking systems, and other elements should be of a compatible design with the corridor.
- ✓ Benches and their arrangement should meet all ADA standards.

Street Lighting

- ✓ Street lighting fixtures should be consistent and spaced every 50 to 80 feet, staggered on either side of the street.
- ✓ Streetlights and other lighting shall be 10 to 15 feet in height.
- ✓ Lighting should avoid illumination above the horizontal level into the night sky.
- ✓ Street lighting should be of an ornamental design coordinated for the corridor.



Design Guidelines



Gateways

- ✓ Gateways shall be considered a crucial component to strengthen the perception and identity of the Main Avenue Design Area.
- ✓ Special design elements and landscaping treatments shall be required at key locations along the corridor to create gateways.
- ✓ Each gateway shall create a sense of identity for the Main Avenue corridor that indicates to both drivers and pedestrians that they are entering a unique and special space.
- ✓ Landscaping and signage at gateway locations shall be used to create a focal point. Signage should be designed to complement rather than obstruct or detract from the overall character of the corridor.
- ✓ Property owners in a gateway shall also use special design elements and landscaping to enhance the character of the corridor.