

Manual of Best Practices for Transit-Oriented Development



This document is intended as a resource for New Jersey municipalities wishing to plan for high quality transit-oriented development.

The language and images in this manual are examples of great transit-supportive/pedestrian-friendly zoning text and design guideline language that we have collected. The language is meant to help municipalities craft plans and ordinances that fit their specific situation and goals. It is not a list of mandatory standards.

Whether your municipality is small or large, whether you intend to apply for Transit Village Designation or just hope to enrich the transit and pedestrian experience in your community, we hope you find this manual helpful.

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SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Land Use and Transportation Integration

- Streets are public places used by pedestrians, drivers, bicyclists and various modes of public transportation.



- All development and street networks must be designed with pedestrian safety in mind and not favor any travel mode over another, whether it be bicycle, foot, or motorized.
- Coordination with the transportation needs of adjacent land uses is essential.
- All new development should be designed to embrace transit facilities.
- The transit facility should be fully integrated into the design of

the pedestrian environment with all means of access convenient and safe.

- Where any new development is located on an



established bus route, bus turnouts, shelters, and appropriate streetscape should be incorporated into the site and streets design components.

- Land use must be considered an integral part of the transportation



network because of the influence it has as well as the needs it places on it.

Pedestrian Connectivity and Site Design

- Continuous sidewalks of appropriate width should be provided along all street frontages.



- Sidewalks connecting the transit facility to key destinations should be direct, visually unobstructed, pleasing, and provide a safe experience for pedestrians.
- Driveway curb cuts should be kept to a minimum on primary pedestrian routes. Instead, create access through shared alleyways wherever feasible.
- Where sidewalks interface with driveways, the sidewalk should remain level as it

continues across the driveway. Special material differentiating the sidewalk from the driveway is encouraged to ensure motorists understand they are crossing a pedestrian right of way.

- Where the street grid is interrupted by steep slopes or other topographic variations, walkways or stairways should be built to maintain pedestrian continuity. The street network grid should be maintained and extended wherever possible.

- Eliminate security fences, gates, and barriers between different uses (except to protect the privacy and security of private open space). Where practical, utilize “eyes-on-the-street” design approaches to create public through-routes with line-of-sight connections to adjacent neighborhoods (without barriers, fences, gates or signs that imply that the route is for use of the development’s residents only).



- Bicycle networks should run throughout the transit village district and link directly to the transit facility with clear signage delineating the way.



Building Placement and Streetwalls

- All buildings should be placed in direct relationship to the street and pedestrian realm in order to maintain a continuous building street wall and safe, pleasant pedestrian experience.
- Buildings should be oriented so entrances are clearly identifiable and open directly onto a public sidewalk or plaza.



- Primary entrances shall be conveniently oriented to public streets or plazas to allow safe, convenient access to and from transit facilities and/or services.
- Corner buildings should be oriented so primary entrances, windows and architectural elements face the intersection on a diagonal.
- Buildings should be placed to minimize the number of driveways along main streets and primary pedestrian routes.



- Shared driveways and shipping and receiving access are encouraged to reduce the number of curb openings to enhance the streetscape and promote traffic safety.
- All loading areas should be located in a rear yard and screened from view from public rights-of-ways. Otherwise, regulations detailing the appropriate time for deliveries should be established.
 - Drive-through establishments should be avoided within the transit village district.

New Streets

- All new streets should be public streets.



- New development projects (for example townhomes and condominium developments) should be fully integrated within the public street network.

- The layout of new streets should be fully integrated within the fabric of the

community in a network (grid pattern) where feasible, emphasizing interconnectivity and the ability to reach local destinations from a variety of directions and modes of travel.

- It is desirable to have streets with block faces of 400 feet in length or less. For blocks over 600 feet, provide a mid-block cut-through for pedestrians.

- The use of service alleys off of side streets is encouraged.
- On-street public parking is encouraged.

Open Space & the Public Realm

- All new open space should be designed to easily integrate into the public pedestrian circulation system.
- New open space in the transit village district should contribute to the public's safety and provide direct pedestrian access to transit whenever possible.
- Open space should be easily accessible to pedestrians. Fences, gates, and signs that create obstacles for pedestrians should be avoided.
- Bollards, trees, and other street furniture should be used to protect pedestrians and buildings.



- Comfortable and attractive street furniture that is accessible to the physically disabled should be provided in public spaces for public enjoyment and comfort. Street furniture should not be in the main pedestrian walkway.
 - Public art or amenities (such as sculpture, fountains, murals, artist-designed street furnishings, etc.) should be integrated into all new development regardless if the development is publicly or privately funded.



Parking Structures

- The ground floor façade of any parking structure abutting a street or walkway should be wrapped with retail or office uses. Where appropriate,



- liner buildings shielding the garage from public view should be considered.
 - Facades should be designed and architecturally detailed to be compatible and complementary to other uses within the district.
- When fronting a street, windows or other openings should be provided.
- Top decks of parking structures visible from other properties should be encouraged to be designed for uses including: storm water management, solar arrays, or landscaping sufficient to provide surrounding properties with pleasing views.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

Facades

- Buildings should have a well-defined front façade with primary entrances facing the street.
- Buildings should be aligned so that the dominant lines of their facades parallel the line of the street, creating a well-defined street edge with variation rather than monolithic design.
- New building facades should have a pedestrian scale aesthetic. This can be accomplished by establishing rhythmic patterns and architectural elements such as windows, columns, rooflines, signage, building materials and colors.
- The primary façade(s) (portion viewable by the public from streets and parking lots) of buildings should be articulated into smaller increments through the following or similar techniques:
 - Stepping back or extending upper floors,
 - Dividing facades into multiple storefronts with separate display windows and entrances,
 - Providing awnings, canopies, window bays, balconies or similar ornamental features, and
 - Varying rooflines to reinforce the articulation of the primary façade.
- Buildings are viewed from a variety of vantage points. Consequently the placement of doors, windows, balconies, changes in materials, or roof height, etc. should be designed to provide an attractive and harmonious design on all sides.



- Rear facades should be designed as an integral part of the overall building with similar materials and detail treatments.
- In general, buildings over two stories should have well-defined horizontal architectural elements such as building base, middle and roofline.



- The base, or ground floor, should appear visually distinct from the upper stories, through the use of a change in building materials, window shape or size, an intermediate cornice line, an awning, arcade or portico, or similar techniques.
- Portions of upper stories (above the typical design character of the community) should be stepped back from the line of the front façade to minimize the impacts of taller

structures. Outdoor terraces, rooftop patios, etc., should be elements occupying the space created by such step-back.

- Architectural details such as ornamental cornices, arched windows and warm-toned bands of contrasting materials/color are encouraged in new construction. The contemporary adaptation of historic and vernacular residential, institutional and commercial styles found elsewhere in the municipality is encouraged.

Transparency: Window and Door Openings

- It is preferable for non-residential and mixed-use buildings to include windows and door openings wherever possible, providing pedestrian-scale design while activating the sidewalk.
- Ideally, private residences could incorporate windows and door openings on the ground floor of the primary street façade. This provides people inside the building a visual connection to activity on the sidewalk and street.
- Glass on street-facing doors and windows should be clear or lightly tinted, allowing views into and out of the building's interior. Mirrored, dark tinted, opaque or glass block should be avoided whenever possible.



Building Entrances

- Primary building entrances on all buildings should face on a public street, walkway, or plaza, or linked to that street by a clearly defined and visible walkway or courtyard.



- Additional secondary entrances should be oriented to a secondary street or parking area.
- Residential entries should be separate and distinct from commercial entrances.
- Entrances should be clearly

identifiable and open directly onto a public sidewalk or plaza.

- Primary entrances should be oriented towards transit.
- The main entrance of a corner building should be placed on a diagonal and oriented to the intersection.
- Non-residential building entries should be designed with one or more of the following:
 - Canopy, portico, overhang, arcade or arch above the entrance
 - Recesses or projections in the building facade surrounding the entrance
 - Display windows surrounding the entrance
 - Architectural detailing such as brickwork or ornamental moldings
 - Planting areas, pots or window boxes for seasonal landscaping
 - Use of porches, steps, overhangs, hooded front doors or similar architectural elements to define the primary entrances to all residences



Roof Design

- Roof lines and cornice details should be completed in a three-dimensional manner so that the features on the back of the roof or similar unfinished areas are not visible.
- Buildings may be designed with pitched and/or flat roofs. Flat roofs should be defined with a discernable cornice line.
- Variations in roof type, height, and or distinct, separate roof segments should be considered as a means of creating greater visual interest, identifying changes in use, areas of ownership or reducing monotony.
- Pitched roofs such as gable, hip, shed or mansard roofs should be clad with highly durable materials such as standing seam metal, slate, ceramic or fireproof composite tiles.
- Use of asphalt shingles is discouraged.
- All rooftop equipment should be screened from view from adjacent streets, public rights-of-way and adjacent properties. Preferably, rooftop equipment should be screened by the building parapet, or should be located out of view from the ground.
- Exterior mechanical equipment such as ductwork should not be located on primary building facades.
- Soft water tanks, gas meters, and electrical meters should also be screened from public view wherever possible.
- All screening should be architecturally compatible with the primary structure. The screening should be part of the articulation of the building and not appear to be an afterthought. Sound attenuation to mechanical equipment is also encouraged.



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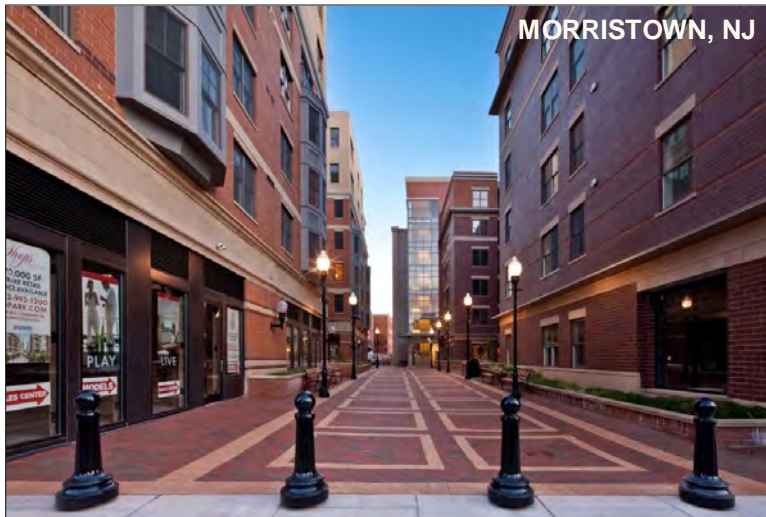
Franchise Architecture

- Franchise architecture is a recognizable building design that is trademarked or identified with a particular chain or corporation and is generic in nature.
- Franchise architecture is generally discouraged unless it employs a traditional storefront commercial style.
- Franchises or national chains should create context sensitive buildings that reflect community character. In addition, it should employ materials that are sustainable and reusable.



Building Materials

- Buildings should be constructed of durable, high-quality materials such as: brick, natural stone, manufactured stone, textured, patterned and/or integrally colored cast-in-place concrete or precast concrete masonry units (provided that surfaces handled to give walls a 3-dimensional texture).
- Buildings may include architectural metal decorative panels, structural elements and decorative support or trim members. Buildings constructed of unadorned plain or painted concrete block, unarticulated or blank, tilt-up concrete panels, pre-fabricated metal building systems, glass curtain wall systems, aluminum, vinyl, fiberglass, asphalt or fiberboard siding are discouraged.



Awnings

- Awnings, overhangs and arcades are encouraged where pedestrians are expected to walk and shop to provide overhead protection and to create significant entrances.
- Canvas or fabric awnings are preferable. If glass or metal awnings are used, they should closely complement the building's architectural character and aesthetic.
- Back lighted awnings and canopy signs should not be used.



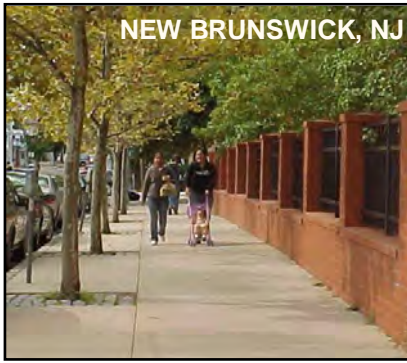
PARKING GUIDELINES

Parking standards within the transit village district should reflect proximity to high frequency transit service, pedestrian-friendly built forms and a mix of uses.

Parking

- Off-street parking should not be allowed between a public street or pedestrian way and the required frontage for a building.
- Off-street parking lots should, preferably, be located in surface lots on the side or rear of a lot, in an underground lot or in a parking structure clad to the design vocabulary of the street wall.
- Residential garages should be as invisible from the street as possible to maintain a traditional neighborhood feel.
- Parking lots should be designed to minimize conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians. Where pedestrian walkways should be integrated within the design of all parking areas in the district
- Parking lot entrances and exits should be designed away from primary pedestrian routes.





- Excessive length of parking bays should be divided by intermediate landscaped islands. Landscape islands should be able to be properly maintained with minimal effort and can be planted with trees, shrubs, and include groundcover or decorative pavers.
- A landscape buffer strip should be provided between all parking areas located along a public street. The buffer strip should consist

of shade trees with a decorative fence, a solid wall or dense hedge. Such fence, wall or hedge should provide adequate width with views into and out of parking areas preserved for safety considerations.



- Lighted sidewalks should extend between rear or side parking areas and building entrances.
- When garbage dumpsters are located in parking areas, they shall be screened from public view with an attractive enclosure.

Automobile Parking

- Minimum on-site parking requirements should be avoided whenever possible.
- Parking requirements for similar uses within walking distance of each other should be reduced to account for the likely cross-patronage activity.
- Parking requirements for sites within walking distance of a heavy rail, light rail, and bus transit station should be reduced.
- For uses that are ancillary to a larger business, no additional parking will be required (such as a snack shop in an office building).
- Shared parking among buildings with different peak periods should be encouraged (such as a church sharing with an office building).
- For large shared parking arrangements, jurisdictions are encouraged to require formal shared parking agreements that are recorded with the municipality.



Bicycle Parking

- Bicycle parking should be as conveniently located as the most convenient automobile spaces (other than those spaces for persons with disabilities).
- Bicycle parking should be an integral part of the overall site layout and designed to minimize visual clutter.
- Bicycle parking should be provided in a well-lighted area.
- Ideally, bicycle parking spaces outside of a building should be located within a



one hundred (100) foot diameter of the primary building entrance.

- Bicycle parking areas should, preferably, afford a four (4) foot wide access aisle to ensure safe access to spaces.
- Bicycle parking should be located so as to protect bicycles from automobile damage.
- All bicycle racks and lockers should be securely anchored to the ground or building structure.
- Municipal ordinances could be amended to permit some reduction in off-street auto parking requirements in exchange for extra bicycle parking.



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