



CITY OF RIPON DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL PROJECTS

City of Ripon
259 N. Wilma Avenue
Ripon, CA 95366
Phone: (209) 599-2108

All C-1, C-2, C-2R, C-4, C-5, PO and BP Districts

Purpose

The design criteria for Commercial projects are intended as a reference to assist the designer in understanding the City's goals and objectives for quality commercial and professional office development. These guidelines complement the mandatory property development regulations contained in the City's Zoning Ordinance.

Applicability

These guidelines are advisory for permitted uses, but should be used as a guide in conjunction with uses subject to a site plan permit or a conditional use permit.

It is important to understand the intent and limitations of the graphic illustrations contained in these guidelines. The photographs and drawings are for illustrative purposes only. They are not intended to dictate design solutions, but simply to help the designer understand basic concepts and, where appropriate, suggest possible solutions. To accomplish this, certain illustrations may be purposely exaggerated or may include elements that are not consistent with other criteria as illustrated or described in the document.

Statement of Design Intent

To assist City staff in fully understanding a proposed development and the manner in which the Design Guidelines are being addressed within the context of the development, it is suggested that applications include a statement of design intent describing the project and its architecture. It is also suggested that perspective drawings, defining and illustrating the project, be submitted. These materials, while not required in all cases, will facilitate project review and will serve to streamline the review process.

1. **Site Planning Principles.** Placement of structures should consider topography of the site; trees to be saved, if appropriate; and the location of adjacent incompatible land uses.

a. Clustering and Massing of building structures should be considered in larger, multi-building developments, and larger single building developments. Clustering creates plazas or pedestrian malls and can prevent long “barracks-like” rows of structures. When clustering is impractical, a visual link between separate structures should be established. This link can be accomplished through the use of an arcade system, trellis, or other open structures and by surface and landscape treatments.

b. Public plazas and landscape areas should reflect careful planning and not simply be “left-over” areas. Such spaces can provide pedestrian amenities such as shade, benches, fountains, etc.

c. Freestanding, singular commercial structures should be oriented with their major entry toward the street where access is provided, as well as having their major façade parallel to the street. Where this is not practical, the façade facing the street shall incorporate windows, trellises, wall articulation, landscape, or other features to lessen the impact of an otherwise blank wall.

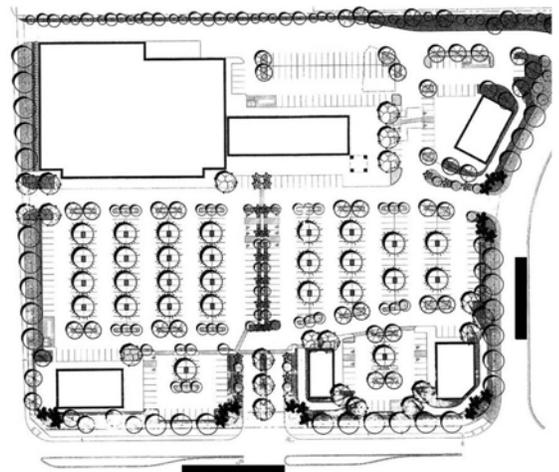
d. Consider orienting buildings to pedestrians in the “Professional Office” and “Neighborhood Commercial” Districts. This can be done by placing buildings closer to the street and incorporating a storefront appearance with ample windows, transparent doors, and similar storefront techniques.



Clustering of buildings provides synergy between uses and enhances the opportunity to provide public plazas.

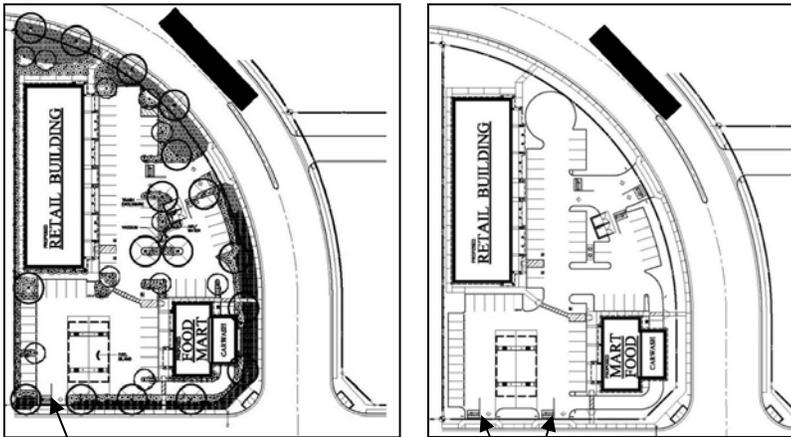
2. **Parking and Circulation.** Parking lot design and the location of loading facilities can be critical factors in the success or failure of a commercial use. In considering the possibilities for developing parking and loading areas, a developer should analyze ingress and egress with consideration to possible conflicts with street traffic, pedestrian and vehicular conflicts, on-site circulation and service vehicle zones, and the overall configuration and appearance of the parking area. (See City of Ripon Municipal Code Chapter 16.144, Parking and Loading).

a. Well thought out vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems should be an integral part of the site planning process. Pedestrian linkages between uses in commercial developments/buildings should be considered, including distinct pedestrian access from parking areas in large commercial developments, such as shopping centers.



Driveway aisles arranged perpendicular to the main building allow for safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian circulation. The use of enhanced paving or similar techniques helps identify pedestrian paths which cross a parking lot.

- b. All parking areas shall have internal circulation in which no backing movement is required, except that which is necessary to leave a parking space. It shall also be possible to maneuver within a parking area without the use of street right-of-way. No parking area design shall require an exiting vehicle to back onto a street.
- c. Parking aisles should be separated from vehicle circulation routes whenever possible.
- d. Common driveways which provide vehicular access to more than one site and shared parking facilities are encouraged.
- e. Loading docks and refuse storage should be located at the rear of the building and shall be screened from public view, adjoining public streets and rights-of-way and residentially zoned areas. The method of screening shall be architecturally compatible with other on-site development in terms of colors, materials, and architectural style. When it is not possible to locate loading facilities at the rear of the building, loading docks and doors should not dominate the frontage and screening needs to be considered, where appropriate. Loading facilities should be offset from driveway openings to provide safe maneuvering areas for vehicles accessing the property.

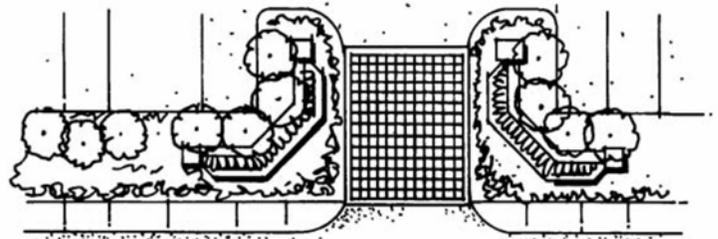


Do This:
 Driveway is located as far away from the intersection as possible, to provide adequate stacking distance for the intersection.

Avoid This:
 Driveways are located too close to each other and also located too close to the intersection to allow for appropriate stacking distance for the intersection.

- f. Parking areas should be separated from structures by either a raised concrete walkway or landscaped strip, preferably both. Situations where parking spaces directly abut structures should be avoided.
- g. Parking access points, whether located on front or side streets should be located as far away as possible from street intersections so that adequate stacking room is provided. The number of access points should be limited to the minimum amount necessary to provide adequate circulation.
- h. Parking areas should be designed so that pedestrians walk parallel to moving cars, where appropriate.

- i. Walkways from building entries should be provided for pedestrian access to public sidewalks.
- j. Parking lots should be broken up with the use of landscaping, landscape architectural amenities, pedestrian walkways, and/or main drive aisles to reduce the scale and massing of large asphalt parking lots.



Automobile entries should include special paving, signage, and landscape treatments.

k. With larger centers, parking stalls should be located far enough back from the main drive entrances to allow for appropriate stacking of cars exiting onto a public street and movement of cars off the public street.

l. Parking lots should be screened from the public right-of-way utilizing either landscape materials, low landscape walls, or any combination thereof.

m. Where a development abuts a residential district, consider appropriate pedestrian links between commercial and residential uses. “Pass-throughs, paseos, and similar links can facilitate pedestrian movement between the districts. Where appropriate, incorporation of plazas and/or business entries on the paseo is encouraged.



Parking Lot Screening with Landscaping and Walls



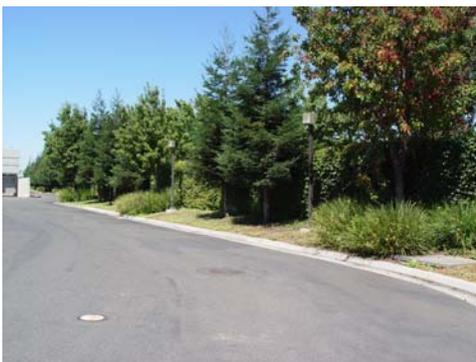
Pedestrian “Pass-through” or paseo examples



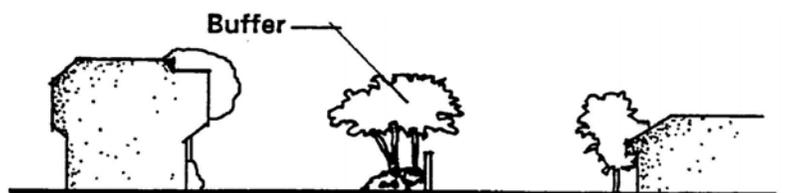
Parking Lot Screening with Landscaping

3. Landscape.

a. Landscape for commercial and office uses should define entrances to buildings and parking lots, define the edges of various land uses, provide transition between neighboring properties (buffering), and provide screening for loading and equipment areas.



Landscape Buffer between Commercial and Residential



Landscape Buffer between Commercial and Residential

- b. Landscape should be protected from vehicular and pedestrian encroachments by raised planting surfaces, walks, or the use of curbs.
- c. The use of vines and climbing plants on trellises and perimeter garden walls is strongly encouraged.
- d. Plants in boxed, clay, or similarly durable containers should be used for enhancement of sidewalk shops, plazas, and courtyards.



- e. At maturity, trees should provide a shade canopy for parking areas.
- f. Landscape should not obstruct visibility at drive-aisle intersections.

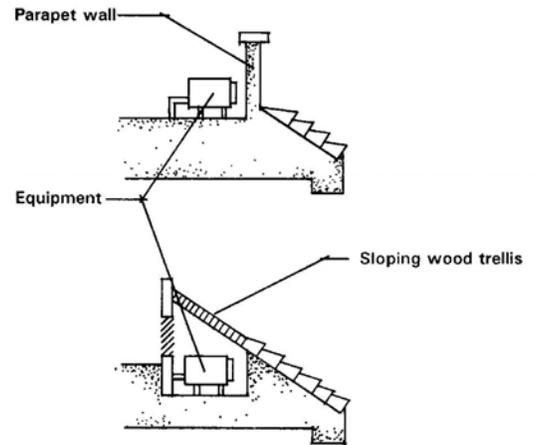
4. Walls and Fences.

- a. When used, walls should be designed to blend with the site's architecture.
- b. Security fencing and long expanses of fence or wall surfaces should include offsets or landscape or architectural features that break up the mass and prevent monotony.



5. **Screening.**

- a. Outdoor Equipment. Screening for outdoor equipment, whether on a roof, side of a structure, or on the ground should be architecturally integrated with the adjacent structure in terms of materials, color, shape, and size.



6. **Building Massing.**

- a. Height and scale of new development should consider adjacent development in their design. Some techniques that may be appropriate to enhance compatibility of adjacent development include increased building setbacks and height transitions.
- b. Large “box-like” structures can be unattractive and detract from the overall scale of a commercial district. The following are ways to reduce the appearance of large-scale, bulky structures.

- (1) Vary the planes of the exterior walls in depth and/or direction.
- (2) Vary the height of the buildings so that it appears to be divided into distinct massing elements.
- (3) Articulate the different parts of a building’s façade by use of color, arrangement of façade elements, or a change in materials.
- (4) Avoid blank walls at the ground-floor levels. Utilize windows, trellises, wall articulation, arcades, change in materials, landscape, or other features to lessen the impact of an otherwise bulky building.
- (5) The rear and side elevations should incorporate some of the architectural features of the main façade, when visible from the public right-of-way.



Variation in wall plane and height, together with façade articulation and material variation, adds visual interest.

c. Scale.

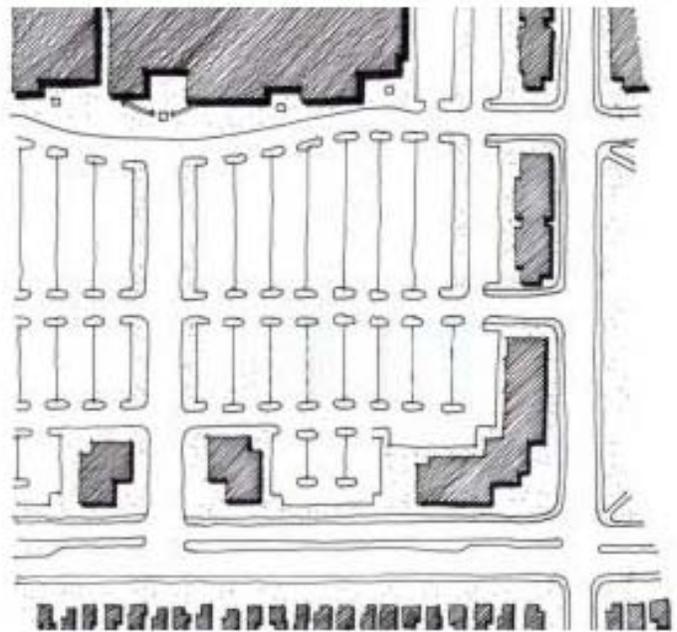
Scale is the relationship between the size of the new structure and the size of adjoining permanent structures and should be considered, particularly in newly developing areas. Large-scale building elements can appear imposing if they are situated in a visual environment which is predominantly smaller in scale. Some techniques that will lessen building-scale disparities include the following:

- (1) Building scale can be reduced through the proper use of window patterns, structural bays, roof overhangs, siding, awnings, moldings, fixtures, and other architectural details.
- (2) The scale of buildings should be carefully related to adjacent pedestrian areas (e.g., courtyards) and other structures.
- (3) Large dominating structures should be broken up, where appropriate, by: (1) creating horizontal emphasis through the use of trim and molding; (2) adding awnings, eaves, trellises, windows, or architectural ornamentation; (3) using combinations of complementary colors and materials; and (4) using landscaping materials.

d. Criteria Applying to Shopping Centers and Larger Retail Buildings/Developments.

(1) Building Location. In shopping centers and similar large retail developments, the primary street frontage should not be dominated by parking. Consider the use of one or more of the following elements along the street frontage:

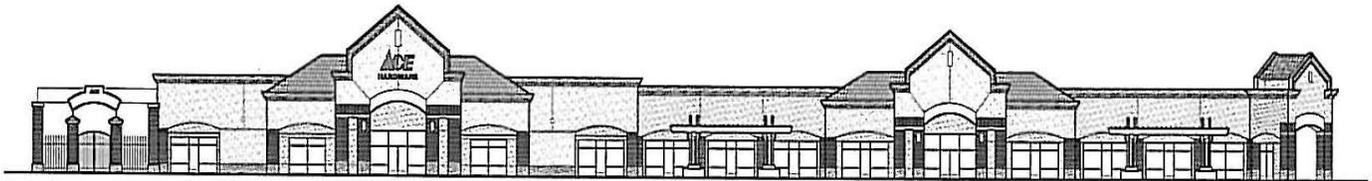
- (a) Public art.
- (b) Water features.
- (c) Smaller buildings.
- (d) Landscape.
- (e) Topographical differences
- (f) Low walls.
- (g) Bus shelters
- (h) Meandering pedestrian walkways/bikeways



Placing some structures along the street frontage of a shopping center can serve to frame the street corner and break up views of the parking lot

(2) Façade Articulation. Buildings with non-street fronting facades (including back and side facades) should consider incorporation of one or more of the following techniques to avoid long blank walls:

- (a) Wall plane projection or recesses.
- (b) Windows.
- (c) Variation in roof height.
- (d) Arcades or trellises.
- (e) Material Changes
- (f) Landscape.



Variation in height and wall plane, together with windows, material changes, and trellises, creates a pleasing façade.

(3) Flat/Parapet Roofs. Flat roofs should consider incorporating parapets and/or cornice treatments to conceal the roof and roof-mounted equipment. Cornice treatment suggestions include caps, color changes, moldings, and similar treatments.

(4) Street Orientation. Blank and opaque walls should not “back up to” streets or driveways. Some options for developments that abut more than one street or driveway include: Orienting secondary tenants to the side street; Providing windows and/or secondary entrances; or using architectural and landscape amenities to provide for an attractive appearance on the side or rear of the building.



- (5) Building Entries. Each principal building on a site should have clearly defined, highly visible customer entrances. A combination of some of the following techniques should be considered:
- (a) Canopies or porticos.
 - (b) Overhangs
 - (c) Recesses/projections.
 - (d) Arcades.
 - (e) Peaked roof forms.
 - (f) Arches.
 - (g) Architectural details, such as tile work and moldings, which are integrated into the building structure and design.
 - (h) Integral planters or wing walls that incorporate landscaped areas and/or places for sitting.



This photograph exhibits a number of desirable components, including varied height of buildings and rooflines, articulation of walls, use of different complimentary color schemes, trellises, varied building materials, consistent sign program, and nice landscaping on site.

- (6) Main Driveway Location. Design the main driveway to minimize turning-movement conflicts at the driveway entry and to enhance the safety of pedestrians as they access the building entry from the parking lot.



- (7) Public Areas. Public areas should be provided to offer opportunities for creating areas for public uses, such as outdoor seating, outdoor cafes, performance space, kiosk area, and similar activities. Amenities, such as benches, water features, landscape, shade structures, or similar elements, are desirable.



(8) Outdoor Sales and Storage.

- (a) Loading docks, truck parking, outdoor storage, trash collection, trash compaction, and other service functions shall be incorporated into the site design so that the visual and acoustic impacts of these functions are fully contained and out of view from adjacent properties and public streets to the extent determined feasible by the approving body. Screening materials should be similar to the principal materials of the building and landscape.
- (b) Areas for the storage and sale of seasonal inventory should be permanently defined and screened with walls and/or fences. Materials, colors, and designs of screening wall and/or fences should conform to those used as predominant materials and colors of the building.



Garden center screened using walls and attractive fencing, while still providing views of merchandise

- (9) Roofs. The roofline at the top of the structure should consider offsets and jogs to reduce the monotony of a large, uninterrupted roof plane to the extent consistent with the stated design intent.
- (10) Awnings. When more than one awning is used on a single structure, they should be harmonious. Awnings should complement the architectural style of the building. A minimum of 8-foot vertical clearance must be maintained.
- (11) Signs.
 - (a) Monument-type signs are the preferred alternative for business identification whenever possible. Where several tenants occupy the same site, individual wall-mounted signs are appropriate in combination with a monument sign identifying the development and address.
 - (b) The use of backlit, individually cut letter signs is encouraged. Exposed raceways should not be used.



Shopping Centers should employ the use of consistent sign patterns. Inconsistent sign patterns create confusion. The development of master sign programs for shopping centers is strongly recommended.

- (12) Lighting. Lighting is an important consideration in project design. Not only should the lights be compatible with the structures, they should not glare upon other properties or public streets.