

## **V. DESIGN GUIDELINES**

### **A. Purpose and Intent**

The standards contained herein are intended to provide a basis for communities in the study corridor in addressing various site development issues. The standards provide design criteria and suggest development approaches which will help the towns and developers consider issues of site organization, architecture, parking, site design, pedestrian circulation, and signs. The purpose of these design standards is to:

- maintain or improve the visual attractiveness of the Northern Hudson River Corridor;
- encourage innovation and quality in architectural and site design;
- minimize land use conflicts; and
- encourage strong pedestrian connections between station/platform nodes and activity centers.

These design standards provide basic information, but do not attempt to address all the design issues relevant to a proposed site plan. The standards should, however, present a clear enough understanding of critical issues that both the developer and review boards will be able to recognize. When circumstances require, additional assistance or review by a specialized consultant, to be paid for by the applicant, may be necessary to assure proper decision-making.

The interpretation of the development standards should remain the responsibility of the regulatory boards within each community.

### **B. Site Organization**

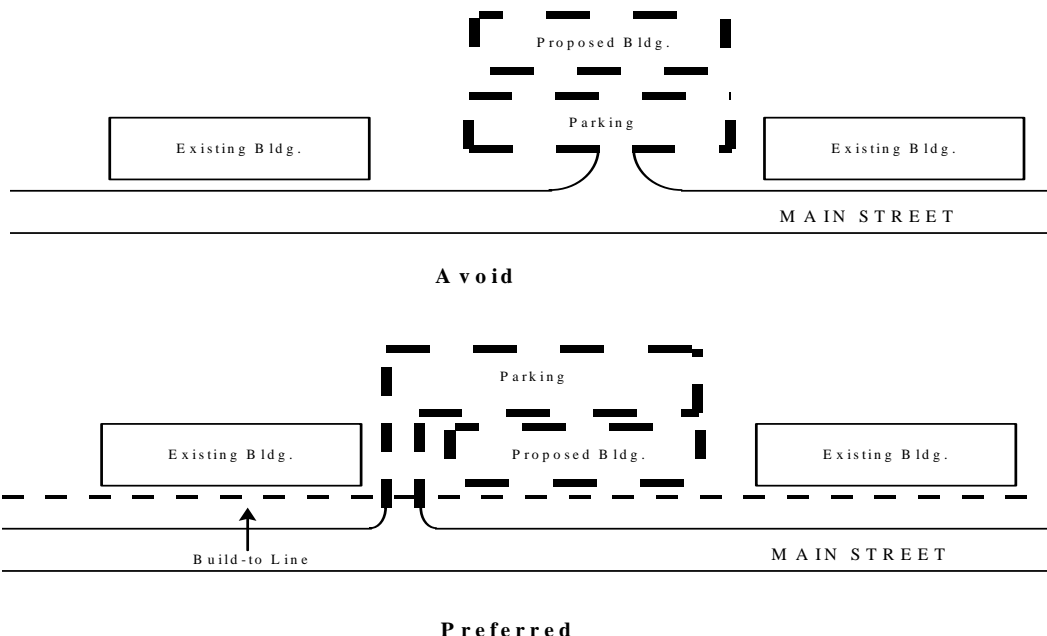
Proposed land development should address the opportunities and limitations present on a site and its adjacent surroundings. Site opportunities should be maximized to enhance the quality of the development, and conscientious steps should be taken to lessen potential negative impacts on the site and the surrounding community. A comprehensive site analysis should be undertaken and a land use plan prepared prior to any land clearing and subsequent development. The impacts of the proposed development on adjacent properties should be allocated a high priority by consideration during the design phase of the site planning process.

## 1. Building Setbacks and Relationship with Adjacent Development

Consistent setbacks from the street are strongly encouraged. New buildings in developed areas (i.e., North Creek, Hadley, Lake Luzerne, and Corinth) should conform to the dominant setback while preserving views to the surrounding mountains and the Hudson River. The following graphic depicts the build-to lines along major roadways within the gateway. Any exception to the build-to line must be reviewed by the community and serve a public function. For example, a building may be set back from the line if an outdoor café, dining deck, benches, or bicycle racks are located in front. The intent is to create an active space that invites the pedestrian in. In rural areas where no development pattern has been established, new development should be closer to the road with any proposed parking at the side or back. The intent is to prevent a highly suburban form, such as shopping plaza with large parking areas in front, from building in communities where the predominant character is traditional hamlet form.

In the more dense areas of the corridor, such as those areas closer to the hamlet centers, new infill development should match the existing hamlet character and be built to the backside of the sidewalk. This can be accomplished by changing (or proposing) site plan language from a minimum setback to a maximum setback of zero (0) feet. If this cannot be achieved the setbacks should be at least a minimum distance equal to the height of the buildings.

Where buildings are located in this manner, the line creates a defined edge to the public space, which contributes to the traditional hamlet character. Parallel or perpendicular relationships with the street is typical within the hamlets and, combined with the sidewalks and street trees (see later discussion) the canopied corridor creates an aesthetically pleasing environment. Also, buildings with display windows and porches at the sidewalk provide added activity and interest to attract pedestrians.



Where nonresidential uses are adjacent to residential uses, the specific siting of the nonresidential building should be responsive to the character and use of surrounding residential properties. A minimum side yard setback of 30 feet should be observed for buildings, parking or storage. Buffer plantings should be established to lessen the impacts of adjacent land uses and to create a transition between buildings of contrasting scales.

## **C. Architecture**

New architecture should relate to the surrounding environment in regard to texture, scale, mass, proportion, and color. A strong visual relationship between the building, the site, and adjacent development is vital for overall design compatibility. The exterior appearances of a building should complement the historic character of the Adirondacks.

### **1. Architectural Form**

Architectural standards should be applied consistently throughout the development. Emphasis should be placed on creating an interesting visual impression, particularly from public rights-of-way and adjacent lands. The use of different textures, complementary colors, shadow lines, detailing, and contrasting shapes to create an appealing facade is strongly encouraged. The use of single colors and/or blank walls is discouraged. All proposed buildings or structures should be sensitive to the existing community character. This includes:

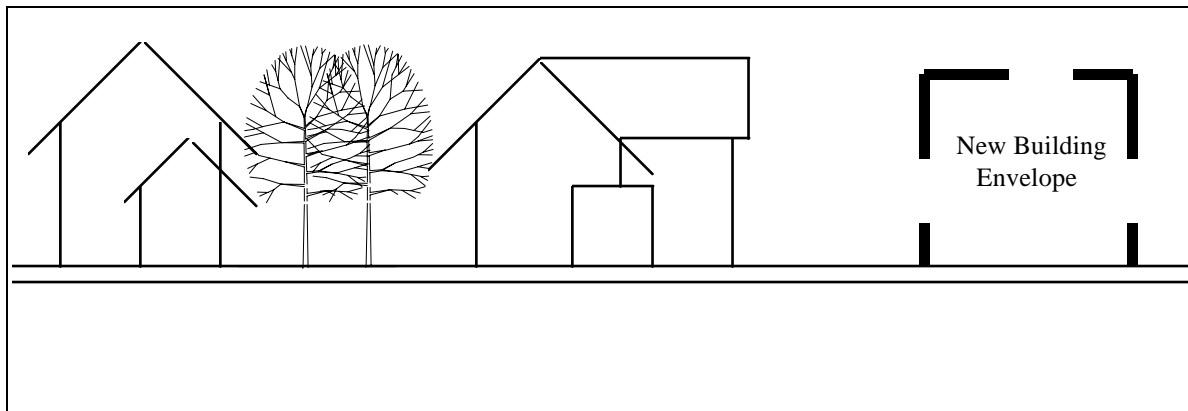
- Maintaining the existing proportional relationship between buildings, open space, and building setbacks.
- Avoiding contrast of color, height, materials, and facade of new development with the predominant style of adjacent buildings.
- Providing strong, clear boundaries between neighborhoods, different land uses, and land use intensity.
- Retaining architectural form and strengthening the character of hamlet centers and historic train station design.
- Constructing buildings to achieve a human scale and interest.

## 2. Building Height and Roof Design

The scale of the development should not overpower neighboring buildings. Through the use of variations in building height, roofline and grade definition, the perceived height of the building or project can be effectively reduced.

Construct new buildings in the corridor with a maximum two story eaves height. Story heights should remain within the range of those in surrounding buildings. Two story mixed-use buildings are encouraged.

*New infill buildings should fill space defined by adjacent buildings, harmonize with surrounding character, and maintain facade*



*rhythms and street lines*

The two roof types that are generally encouraged in the corridor are **Gable and Hip**. However, roof types closer to the center of hamlets should match the rooflines of the commercial buildings in the immediate area. The Gambrel or Mansard roof types are generally not encouraged, however, limited use of these roof types will lend variety. Structures with sloping roofs should take measures to ensure that the fall of snow, ice, or rain does not create a hazard for pedestrians. Sloping roof structures can employ the use of dormers and gables to give the facade a more visual prominence. Generally, roofs should reflect the historic character of what currently exists in the hamlet centers.

### **3. Facade Composition (i.e., rhythm)**

Facade pattern, or rhythm, concerns the arrangement of facade elements, such as windows and bays, in a recognizable and consistent pattern. A consistent spacing of windows along a building wall is one example.

Where there are adjacent structures, the facade should be in keeping with the rhythm of the adjacent structures. Keep the pattern simple so that it is easily understandable by the observer. Within the pattern, however, interesting details can be added to further enrich the design. Detail can be added to highlight the main entrance to a building that is within an important sight line of the pedestrian, bicyclist, and automobile. For example, as one enters the town of Thurman via NYS Rt. 481, any new development will be directly in the sight line of the on-coming traffic. Facade composition on this building is an import factor to consider when reviewing architectural details.

### **4. Building Materials**

Keep the quality of exterior materials sufficiently durable to guarantee low maintenance, stability, and a reasonable life span. Include facade materials that are durable such as common red brick, special masonry units, natural stone and wood. Undesired facade materials include beige brick, plain (bare) masonry units, vinyl siding, metal siding, and rough cut or smooth plywood.

Trim should consist of finished grade painted or stained wood rather than bare, lumber grade, wood. Windows should have anodized aluminum or wood frame and not bare aluminum frame. On facades of buildings, install canvas awnings rather than plastic internally lit awnings. And any paving should consist of brick, stone, or patterned concrete rather than asphalt. In low traffic areas, stamped asphalt can be considered.

## 5. Mechanical Equipment

Rooftop mechanical equipment should be screened from public view by the use of architecturally compatible materials.

Ground level mechanical and service equipment (such as air-conditioning equipment, and utility boxes and meters) should be screened from public view by the use of landscaping, walls, fencing or other design treatments compatible with the finishes of the principal structure.

## 6. Hazardous Glares/Reflections

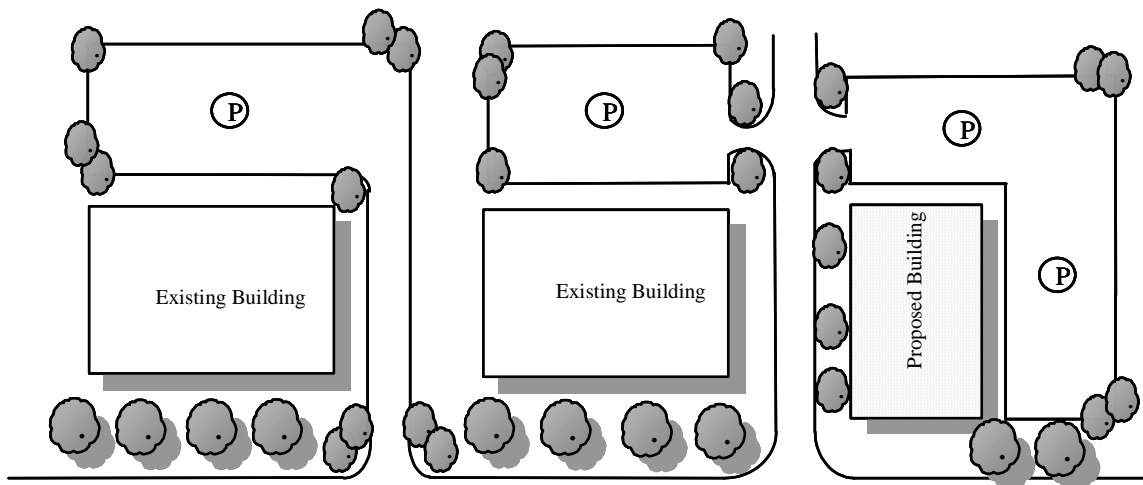
Highly reflective surfaces, such as a large amount of glass, that create hazardous glares are discouraged. Windows should be placed and added so as to encourage interaction between the interior of the building and the passer-by.

### D. Parking

#### 1. Off Street Parking

As the corridor is developed, the design and location of parking lots should be such that conflicts between the motorist and the pedestrian are avoided while at the same time creating a visual attractiveness within and around the site.

Parking areas should be located in close proximity to the proposed land use. Where possible, all parking areas should be sited behind the structure and a planting buffer should be established adjacent to the highway.



*Parking should be placed in the rear and/or side of the building. Setback provides room to preserve existing vegetation or establish new buffer planting along the roadway.*

## **2. Curb Cuts and Curbs**

Carefully place curb cuts to assure vehicular safety and to maintain vehicular flow. Adequate sight distances, determined by traffic speed, must be established at all curb cuts. Minimize and control curb cuts for commercial areas. One or two access points should serve clusters of commercial establishments. Maintain adequate setbacks along the road to permit buffer plantings to screen parking areas from highway view.

## **3. Bicycle Parking**

Increasingly, communities are beginning to witness travel within the corridor by bicycle. As the corridor begins to develop, the towns may consider short- and long-term bicycle parking at or near each node. For example, a restaurant may have bicycle racks for short-term parking while a fully developed train station use may provide bicycle lockers for long-term parking.

Locate bicycle parking within fifty feet of an entrance to the building or within a convenient distance of, and clearly visible from the primary entrance to the building. If bicycle parking is not visible from the street, post a sign indicating the location of all parking facilities.

## **4. Parking Area Lighting**

Provide adequate exterior lighting within parking areas. Place particular emphasis on parking lot entrances, exits and barriers. Position all lighting to minimize glare and illumination beyond the development.

## **E. Site Design**

Landscaping is an integral element of the site development plan. It should complement the building architecture and may provide the following:

- air movement
- air purification
- shading
- noise and dust abatement
- wind buffering
- oxygen regeneration
- groundwater recharge
- glare reduction
- visual screening
- definition of spaces
- highlight architectural features
- accentuate major entrances
- regulate circulation
- enhance property values
- site beautification

### **1. Landscape Plan**

Require a comprehensive landscape plans with all development proposals. The plans should locate all existing vegetation to remain and the location, species, and size of all new stock.

### **2. Preservation of Existing Features**

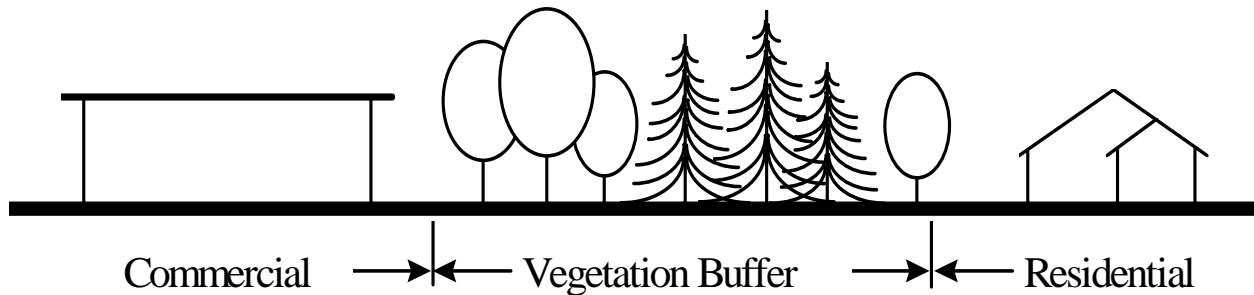
Mature tree stock takes years to reestablish once removed from a site and replacement is a difficult and expensive process. Existing vegetation can provide a sense of permanence and continuity to a new development.

- Existing Vegetation. Recognize existing vegetation in the design development process for all new development. Encourage and include the preservation of mature plant species, hedge rows, and woodlots as a design element in the comprehensive site landscape plan.
- Tree Protection. When developing a site, make every effort to protect existing tree stock over 8" in diameter. Uncontrolled removal of trees and vegetation may speed up the process of erosion, sedimentation and stormwater runoff. Note trees to be saved on the site plans and outline appropriate measures to protect the tree stock from damage during construction.

### 3. Buffers

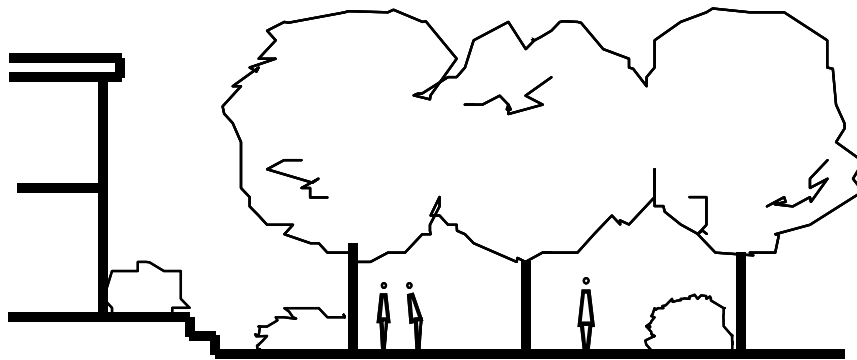
Landscape buffers between dissimilar or conflicting land uses are encouraged. Well-designed landscape treatments lessen adverse visual impacts between different types of land uses, reduce noise levels, mitigate effects from fumes, and increase privacy levels. Landscape buffers can take a variety of forms including open space separation, buffer plantings of various heights and widths, berms and fences. When residential uses are adjacent tourism commercial uses, they should be separated by a buffer edge which protects residential activities while providing pleasant visual experiences when viewed from the public right-of-way.

Generally, buffer and highway plantings should include a variety of local species and have low maintenance requirements. Their appearance should be natural, and clustering is preferred over planting in rows.



### 4. Public Spaces

Public open spaces, such as pedestrian plazas and landscaped areas, provide pedestrians with additional points of interest within a pedestrian scaled environment. When equipped with street furniture, they also offer an opportunity to rest and relax. Examples of public spaces can include parks, plaza, arcades, and porches. Pedestrian amenities such as lighting, special paving, planting, flower gardens, artwork and special recreational features can also enhance public spaces.



*Plantings, like architectural elements, should be used to create spaces, which are pleasant for people. Planting can provide shade, privacy, visual interest, etc.*

## 5. Street Trees

Streets within the nodes should be aligned with trees. New trees should consist of species with broad canopies and 4" minimum caliper trunks and should be planted at 30 to 35 foot intervals. Street trees can be planted within the first 10 feet of the front yard, in the lawn area between the sidewalk and the curb, or in the shoulder when designed to break up on-street parking areas.

Within the hamlet centers, street trees should be used to enhance the node and connect tourism amenities. Street trees provide summer shade and reduce heat build-up from asphalt areas. Trees and shrubs add variety to the streetscape and help distinguish public from private spaces.

## 6. Maintenance

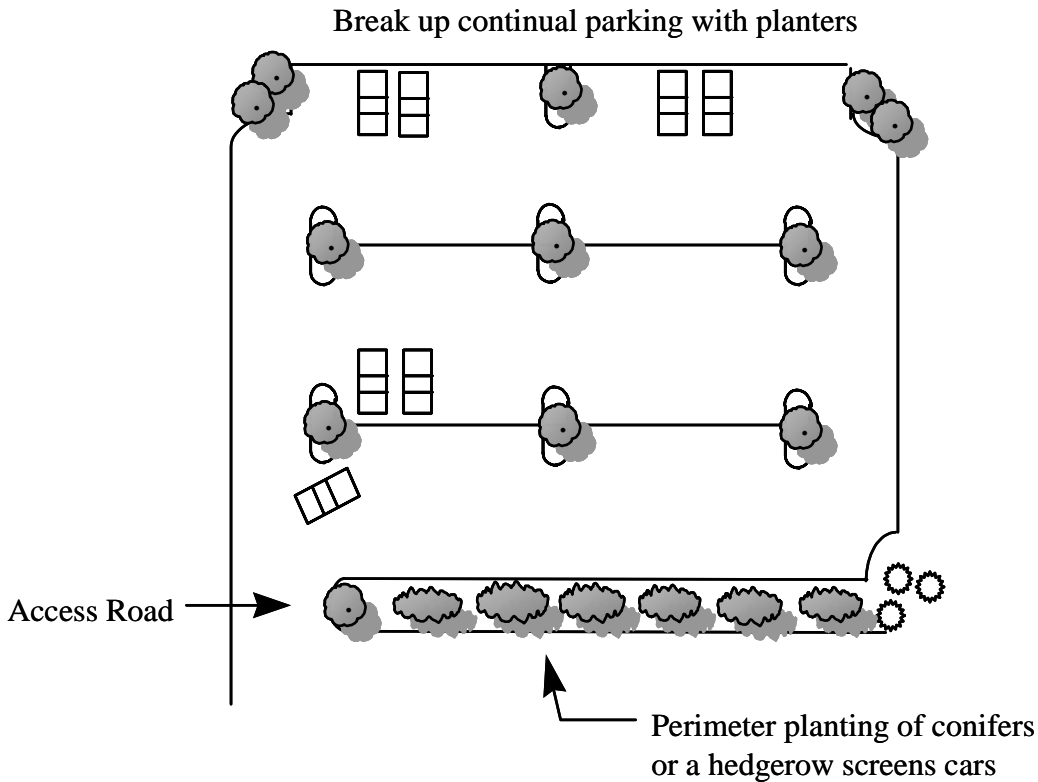
Design all landscaping within the site to facilitate ongoing maintenance. Where appropriate, low maintenance plants are encouraged. To ensure survival and usefulness of new plant materials in the near future, the following minimum sizes are recommended for this region:

<b>Plant Type</b>	<b>Size</b>
Large deciduous trees	3" to 2" > caliper (diameter)
Conifers	6' to 8' height
Small flowering trees	1 > caliper (diameter)
Large shrubs	30" to 36" height
Small shrubs	18" to 24" height

The selection of landscaping materials should be compatible to the Adirondack climate, soil types, and water availability.

## 7. Landscaping (interior and perimeter)

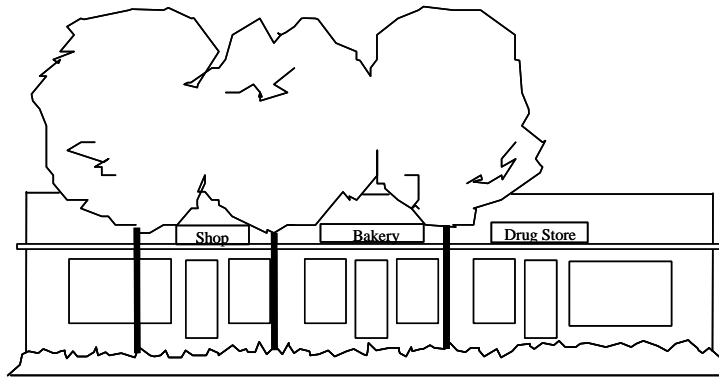
Intersperse the paved areas of large parking lots with landscaped views containing trees and/or other natural growing materials. Parking lot landscaping can break up large expanses of parking area and soften the appearance of paved surfaces. In addition, it can provide shade for pedestrians and vehicles.



*Planters and curbed planting beds help control traffic movement and parking and contribute to the attractiveness of developments.*

It is preferable to place off-street parking behind structures and away from the highway. Heavily screen parking lots when they must front a public right-of-way. Landscaping can be an effective way to screen parking and paved surfaces from view and to soften the appearance of parking areas. Additionally, landscaping provides protection from moving cars for the pedestrian.

To be effective, landscaping provisions should be specific about the results to be achieved (e.g., “ a continuous, unbroken, year-round visual screen within three years of planting”). Alternatives to landscaping, such as walls or opaque fences, can also be allowed. To ensure that such walls are attractive, combine them with landscaping or other design provisions. The planting strip should be at least seven feet in width.



*Planting buffers around parking lots improve views onto the site.*

## **8. Lighting**

The lighting of a site should provide security and visual interest while not projecting adverse glares onto adjacent properties. On-site lighting should be located to avoid harsh glares which distract the motorists line of sight and should reflect the historic character of the Village.



*Historic and invisible light fixtures should be used to provide security and functional lighting. Discourage excessive lighting for promotional/visibility purposes. Historic light fixtures are appropriate as architectural or site landscape accent features.*

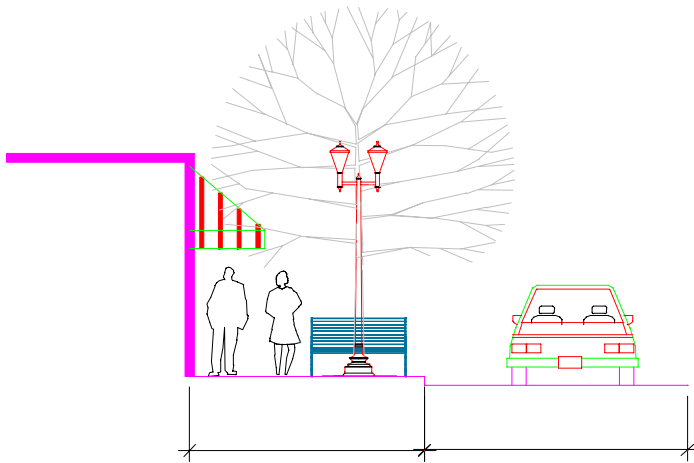
## F. Pedestrian Circulation

Convenient and safe pedestrian access to and from commercial and residential development is essential for the well-being of a community. This is especially true when connecting stations and platforms to adjacent hamlet centers or activity centers (i.e., recreational businesses.) The absence of a sidewalk/walkway system discourages pedestrian traffic or renders the pedestrians watchful of vehicles, but mostly, it deprives communities of places for people to casually visit with other people.

### 1. Landscape Buffers Between Sidewalks and Street Right-of-Ways

Landscape areas between curbs and the sidewalks and/or public right-of-way lines as an alternative to paving. Street trees are the most suitable plants within the public right-of-way corridor and should be spaced at approximately 50 feet apart for large trees and 30 feet for small to medium trees, closer spacing may be used in areas with low traffic speeds and frequent pedestrian use to strengthen street edges. Trees lessen glare and allow the motorist to concentrate on the street.

*Plant materials and landscaping in the public right-of-way provides shade for pedestrians and minimizes glare for drivers.*



## **2. Sidewalks**

Sidewalks should be encouraged within the nodes. They must be wide enough to accommodate the existing and projected volume of pedestrian and bicycle activity if they are to offer a quick and convenient means of travel. A uniform width is preferable over a narrow sidewalk and activities that impede pedestrian travel should be minimized. Sidewalks should also accommodate the needs of disabled persons.

Construct sidewalks at a minimum of four feet in width (if passing areas are provided), expanded to five and six feet along major pedestrian routes. Additionally, construct sidewalks in the commercial areas (such as along Main Street) at eight to 10 feet wide. On streets with parallel parking, locate sidewalks on the parking side.

## **3. Bicycle Circulation**

Encourage bicycle lanes in the nodes. Like sidewalks, prohibit activities that might obstruct the bike path. For example, in designated bike lanes, do not allow parking, other than for emergency vehicles. Where permitted, provide bike lanes that are 8 feet wide.

## **4. Fire/Emergency Access**

All modifications to the site should conform to New York State Fire Hydrant and Emergency Access Standards.

## **5. Utility Access**

All new projects are encouraged to install underground utility service systems. When economically feasible, existing aboveground utility service systems should be placed underground.

## **6. Art Features**

The use of art features such as sculptures, fountains, distinctive landscaping and murals add a unique identification and style to a development. Art features should be appropriate to the historic, architectural, and visual character of the site.

## **G. Signage**

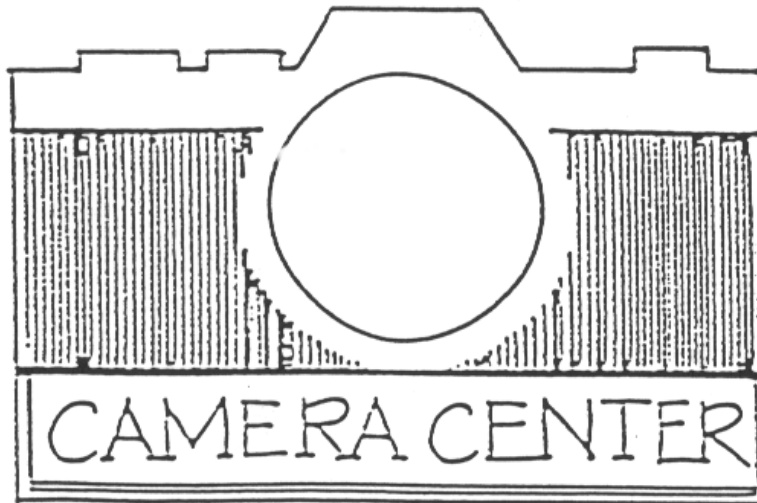
Attractive, coordinated, well-designed signs have a positive impact on both local businesses and the community. They provide a defined identification of individual businesses, stimulate business performance, create a pleasing environment that will attract people, and enhance the image of the community.

### **1. Type of Signage**

Wall mount, hang, or locate signs on the face of an awning within the hamlet centers. Determine signage needs by criteria established in the building's architecture, the relative size of the sign, and the message. Signs should be an integral design element of a building's architecture and be compatible with the building's style in terms of location, scale, color and lettering.

### **2. Location and Size of Signage**

Smaller signs are preferred in the nodes. The signs should be scaled toward the pedestrian. Color and type of lettering is more important than size for comprehension. Signs should be located just above awning height, which is approximately twelve (12) feet above ground. Hanging signs should also be located at this same height and not exceed 28 square feet. Allow free standing signs only if there is adequate room and traffic safety is not impeded.



*An example of a sign with a strong visual relationship to the business image.*

### **3. Color**

Colors should include a dark background, a contrasting color for lettering, and a color for emphasis (e.g., borders, shading, etc.). Color choices should conform to an earth-tone palate (i.e., reds, greens, beige) and/or to the color palate established by the building facade. Lettering styles should not be fancy so they can be easily read by the passer-by. Color and lettering exceptions can be permitted for illustrations and logos.

### **4. Lighting**

Light all signs from an outside source and disallow internally lit, back-lit, or flashing signs. Signage lighting that also lights the sidewalk is encouraged.

### **5. Materials**

Use durable materials such as finished grade wood and avoid using regular lumber grade wood such as plywood.

### **6. Awnings and Signage**

As mentioned before, install canvas awnings rather than plastic and/or metal. Do not allow internal lighting that highlights the awnings. Another advantage of canvas awnings is the ability to utilize them for signage. In addition to a wall-hung sign, the front brim of the awning can be painted with the business name.