

General Commercial District Design Standards
SITE DESIGN CHECKLIST

Project Name: _____
Address: _____
Permit No. _____
Reviewed by: _____
Date: _____

SITE DESIGN

MINIMUM STANDARD	PROJECT STANDARD
	<i>Applicant's Responses</i>
Pedestrian Connections (Page 3)¹	
1. A comprehensive system of pedestrian walkways shall link all site entrances, building entries, parking facilities, and common outdoor spaces with the public sidewalk.	
2. Clearly defined pedestrian connections shall be provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between public sidewalks and building entrances when buildings are not located directly adjacent to the sidewalk. • Between parking lots and building entrances. 	
3. Pedestrian connections shall be reinforced with pedestrian scale lighting, bollard lighting, landscaping, accent lighting, signage, or a combination thereof to aid in pedestrian way-finding.	
4. The type and nature of all materials used for pedestrian walkways shall be consistent within a development.	
5. Where transit stops occur in the public right-of-way, pedestrian walkways shall provide a clear and direct connection from the main building entrance to the transit stop.	
6. Pedestrian connections shall occur between adjacent developments where feasible.	

¹ See the General Commercial District Design Standards at <https://www.cityofmlt.com/DocumentCenter/View/215/General-Commercial-District-Design-Standards-PDF> for a fully copy of text and associated illustrations.

General Commercial District Design Standards – Site Design Checklist

Project Name & Case #
Address

Date
Page #

<p>7. Pedestrian walkways within parking areas may be included as part of the minimum requirements for interior parking lot landscaping if landscape is provided on one side.</p>	
<p>8. For parking lots that contain greater than 15 parking spaces, pedestrian connections through the parking lot shall be clearly defined in a combination of 2 or more of the following ways (except as walkways cross vehicular travel lanes):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) A raised walkway b) Special railing, bollards, and/or other architectural features to accent the walkway between parking bays` c) Special paving, such as concrete pavers in an asphalt area d) A continuous landscape area, a minimum of 3 feet wide along at least one side of the walkway 	
<p>9. Pedestrian walkways within parking areas shall be a minimum 5 feet width of clear, unobstructed passage.</p>	
<p>10. Wire chain link, including fencing, shall not be used to separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic.</p>	
<p>Parking Lot Lighting (Page 4)</p>	
<p>1. Parking lot lighting shall be appropriate to create adequate visibility at night and evenly distributed to increase security.</p>	
<p>2. Night lighting shall be provided where stairs, curbs, ramps, abrupt changes in walk direction, and crossing vehicle lanes occur.</p>	
<p>3. All lighting shall be energy-efficient, glare-free and shielded from the night sky and adjacent properties to reduce off-site spillover.</p>	
<p>Interior Parking Lot Landscaping (Page 5)</p>	
<p>1. Parking lot landscape shall be used to reinforce pedestrian and vehicular circulation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking lot entrances • Ends of driving aisles • Defining pedestrian walkways through parking lots 	
<p>2. Landscape areas next to a pedestrian walkway shall be maintained or plant material chosen to</p>	

General Commercial District Design Standards – Site Design Checklist

Project Name & Case #
Address

Date
Page #

<p>maintain a clear zone between 3 and 8 feet from ground level.</p>	
<p>3. A setback shall be provided that allows space for all trees and shrubs where vehicle overhang extends into landscape areas, except in landscape planting strips directly adjacent to internal pedestrian walkways within parking areas.</p>	
<p>4. For parking lots that contain greater than 50 parking spaces, the location of interior landscape islands shall be allowed to be consolidated for planting of large stands of trees to break up the scale of the parking lot.</p>	
<p>5. The number of trees required in the interior landscape area in parking lots shall be dependent upon the location of the parking lot in relation to the building and public right-of-way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the parking lot is located between the building and the public right-of-way, one tree for every four spaces shall be provided (1:4). • Where the parking lot is located to the side of the building and partially abuts the public right-of-way, one tree for every six spaces shall be provided (1:6). • Where the parking lot is located behind the building and is not visible from the public right-of-way, one tree for every eight spaces shall be provided (1:8). 	
<p>Parking Lot Screening (Page 6)</p>	
<p>1. Parking lots that abut the public right-of-way shall be screened with one or a combination of the following treatments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Low walls made of concrete, masonry, or other similar material and not exceeding a maximum height of 3 feet b) Raised planter walls planted with a minimum of 80% evergreen plant materials not to exceed a total height of 3.5 feet, including the plant material planted on top, except where necessary to address site geography c) Landscape planting consisting of 80% evergreen trees, shrubs, and groundcovers 	
<p>2. All walls and/or raised planters shall be designed to be viewed from all sides.</p>	

General Commercial District Design Standards – Site Design Checklist

Project Name & Case #
Address

Date
Page #

<p>3. A minimum 5-foot wide landscape planting area shall be provided between parking lots and adjacent developments to include a year-round sight barrier except where parking lots have been consolidated.</p>	
<p>4. Walls and raised planters shall not exceed a maximum height of 3 feet, except where necessary to address site geography, or unless all of the following are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portion of treatment that is above 3 feet in height is a minimum of 75% transparent (i.e. see-through metal railing or other similar treatment) • Screen treatment does not create a safety hazard. 	
<p>5. Wire chain link, including fencing, shall not be permitted to screen or enclose parking along a public sidewalk.</p>	
Screening of Site Service Elements (Page 7)	
<p>1. On-site service facilities, such as loading docks, dumpsters, etc., shall be located in an area that is least visible from the public right-of-way or common outdoor spaces. If service areas are located in a significantly visible area due to site constraints, they shall be screened from public view using landscaping or screen walls to the extent possible.</p>	
<p>2. All service, loading, and trash collection areas shall be screened by a combination of masonry, wood, and/or planting areas. Full screening shall be at least six feet high or as necessary to screen site service element(s).</p>	
<p>3. Loading and service areas shall not face any residential district, unless no other location is possible due to site constraints.</p>	
<p>4. Landscape screening shall be used in combination with architectural features or landforms.</p>	
<p>5. All screening shall reflect building architecture and shall include consideration of proportion, color, texture, and materials.</p>	
Site Landscape Areas (Page 8)	
<p>1. All areas not otherwise devoted to landscape required by these standards, parking, structures, or other site improvements shall be planted or remain in existing native, non-invasive vegetation.</p>	

General Commercial District Design Standards – Site Design Checklist

Project Name & Case #
Address

Date
Page #

<p>2. Perennials and/or annuals are encouraged to provide special interest and highlight pedestrian areas such as building and site entrances, public open space, plazas, and major pedestrian connections.</p>	
<p>3. Rocks, pebbles, sand, and similar non-living materials shall not be used as groundcover substitutes, but may be used as accent features provided such features do not exceed a maximum 5% of the total landscape area.</p>	
<p>Sidewalks (Page 9)</p>	
<p>1. Sidewalks shall provide adequate width for all sidewalk uses, including loading and unloading of people from on-street parking pedestrian traffic, and use of street furnishings. Sidewalk width shall be determined as the sum width required by separate functional clearance requirements as determined by the City.</p>	
<p>2. Sidewalks shall be adequately lit using pedestrian scale lighting.</p>	
<p>3. Where sidewalks need to be added for a development to meet city standards, they shall be provided by the developer.</p>	
<p>4. Unless otherwise required or where larger plaza areas are provided, sidewalk paving material shall be consistent with street frontage improvements of adjacent developments.</p>	
<p>5. Sidewalks within the public right of way shall be concrete, 2.5-foot grid, standard Mountlake Terrace sidewalk color, and float finish.</p>	
<p>6. Landscape areas next to a sidewalk shall be maintained or plant material chosen to maintain a clear zone between 3 and 8 feet from ground level within a minimum of 3 feet abutting the edge of the sidewalk.</p>	
<p>Street Trees (Page 10)</p>	
<p>1. Street trees shall be planted in the right-of-way between the property line and street according to Mountlake Terrace specifications when a building is constructed, remodeled to more than 10% of its value within a 5-year period, or its classified use is changed.</p>	

General Commercial District Design Standards – Site Design Checklist

Project Name & Case #
Address

Date
Page #

2. Street trees shall be spaced to provide a full and connecting canopy above the roadway according to tree species type.	
3. Wherever possible, street trees shall be provided in the public right of way to improve the character of the streetscape and increase environmental benefits.	
4. Street trees within the public right-of-way shall be located in tree pits with grates or in a continuous planting strip with groundcover. They shall be planted in properly prepared soil as directed by the Department.	
5. If a street has a uniform planting of street trees or a distinctive species within the right-of-way, then new street trees should match the planting pattern and species.	
6. Trees used adjacent to the public right-of-way should help create continuity within a neighborhood by displaying a strong repetitive form and/or seasonal interest with color, interesting bark, branching pattern, or flowers.	
7. Where tree grates are required, they shall be ADA accessible and of a similar size and material as tree grates found in adjacent developments.	
Front Yards/Entrances (Page 11-12)	
1. Primary building entries shall be clearly identifiable and visible from the street, with well-defined walkways from pedestrian routes and sidewalks to building entries.	
2. All landscape areas should include a wide range of plant materials including perennials, flowering shrubs and native shrubs and groundcovers. A minimum 40% of plant material used shall provide seasonal color or interest.	
3. Walls, shrubs, and other visual obstructions between street frontage and building shall be limited to a maximum 3 feet height to allow easy surveillance. Higher fencing may be installed if it is 75% visually transparent. Fencing material cannot be barbed wire.	
4. Landscaping should screen undesirable elements such as views to adjacent commercial or industrial	

General Commercial District Design Standards – Site Design Checklist

Project Name & Case #
Address

Date
Page #

development, utility boxes, outdoor storage areas, and dumpsters.	
5. Pedestrian scale lighting and/or bollards shall be provided to create a safe and defensible walkway to the entry.	
6. Functional, accent lighting should be used to highlight special focal points, building/site entrances, public art and special landscape features.	
7. Signage identifying building address should be visible from the street and public pedestrian walkway.	
8. Four or more of the following elements shall be used to highlight the main entrance to multifamily buildings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open space, plaza, or courtyard • Special paving • Ornamental gate and/or fence • Seating • Water feature(s) • Planter boxes or pots • Identifying building form such as covered entry • Functional, accent lighting • Art Work near the entry • Special landscape treatment with seasonal color, flowering trees, and trees with interesting bark or branching structure. 	
9. Front yards shall include an entrance sequence between the sidewalk and the building including elements such as, trellises, site furnishings, low hedges, landscaped borders, and special paving.	
10. Architectural features used at main pedestrian entrances shall compliment the architectural style of the building.	
Outdoor Common Spaces (Page 13-14)	
1. Either of the following two standards will guide the provision of outdoor common space: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Each multifamily development shall provide a minimum of 200 square feet of outdoor open space area for each unit in the complex, including those units occupied by the owner or building management personnel. 	

General Commercial District Design Standards – Site Design Checklist

Project Name & Case #
Address

Date
Page #

<p>b) Each multifamily development shall set aside 20% of gross area for outdoor common space. No more than 60% of the required outdoor common space may be used for permanent, active, recreational-use facilities such as swimming pools, tennis courts and playgrounds. Private outdoor spaces shall not count towards this outdoor common space provision.</p>	
<p>2. Common outdoor spaces shall be easily visible and accessible to multifamily residents.</p>	
<p>3. Common outdoor spaces shall provide at least 4 of the following amenities to accommodate a variety of ages and activities appropriate to the needs of the residents. Amenities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site furnishings (benches, tables) • Picnic areas • Play areas • Gardens • Patio or courtyards • Open lawn with trees • Play field • Special interest landscape • Pedestrian scale, bollards, or other accent lighting • Recreational trail system • Special paving, such as colored or stained concrete, stone, brick, or other unit pavers • Covered structure(s) (i.e., picnic shelter, gazebo) • Water feature(s) • Sports courts such as tennis, basketball, or volleyball 	
<p>4. If roof surfaces are given to resident use, open space on the ground is not required so long as the usable square footage is the same and the amenities are comparable.</p>	
<p>5. Window boxes, container plantings, hanging baskets, or other special interest landscape should be provided to enhance pedestrian areas. When used, window boxes, container planters and hanging baskets shall be made of weather resistant materials.</p>	

General Commercial District Design Standards – Site Design Checklist

Project Name & Case #
Address

Date
Page #

6. Multifamily projects shall be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, well-integrated common spaces.	
7. Lighting shall be provided within outdoor common spaces to provide visual interest at night and additional security.	
8. Common outdoor spaces shall not be located adjacent to dumpster enclosures, loading/services areas or other incompatible uses unless site constraints allow no other alternative.	
9. If common outdoor spaces are located adjacent to a street right of way or incompatible use, landscaping shall be used to provide a buffer that screens the view between the space and the right of way or incompatible use.	
10. Common outdoor spaces may be landscaped with plants other than turf or lawn, except in pedestrian and open play areas. A minimum 40% of plant varieties shall be perennial to provide year-round color, texture, and special interest.	
11. Outdoor common spaces used to meet these standards shall not be located within required landscape buffer areas.	
Vehicular Entrances (Page 15)	
1. Depending on site characteristics and difficulty of access, developments shall limit the number of vehicular access points to reduce traffic impacts and the site area devoted to roads.	
2. Vehicular entrances shall avoid crossing major pedestrian walkways and paths from building entrances to common spaces.	
3. Vehicular entrances shall be designed in coordination with the pedestrian circulation system. When and where possible, the vehicular entrance shall be coordinated with the pedestrian entrance to the site.	
4. If the vehicular entrance is the primary access to the site, signage identifying building address shall be clearly identifiable and visible to maximize way-finding.	
5. Vehicle circulation and parking should be integrated into the building design and concentrated	

General Commercial District Design Standards – Site Design Checklist

Project Name & Case #
Address

Date
Page #

on the interior of the development. Circulation design (scale and location) should be compatible with the adjacent neighborhood.	
Private Outdoor Spaces (Page 16)	
1. Outdoor spaces such as yards, decks, terraces, and patios shall be visually shielded from each other and delineated from the street. Shielding may consist of walls, fences, berms, hedges, and landscaping.	
2. Walls and fences used to define outdoor private spaces should be a maximum of 6 feet high. Visually permeable elements, such as open rails, ironwork, or trellis treatment are encouraged to promote interaction between neighbors.	
3. Outdoor spaces shall not be located adjacent to dumpster enclosures, loading/service areas, or other incompatible uses, except where site necessitates.	
4. Berms, low walls, fences, hedges, and/or landscaping shall be used to define private outdoor spaces, such as yards, decks, terraces, and patios, from each other and from the street right of way.	
5. Where landscape areas are provided, plant materials should be a mixture of deciduous and evergreen varieties.	
Storm Drainage (Page 17)	
1. Stormwater facilities, such as detention ponds and biofiltration swales shall be integrated into the overall project design. Use of a variety of facilities shall be considered in the design, such as rain gardens, street tree detention wells, and bioretention, biofiltration, and infiltration swales.	
2. Stormwater facilities shall provide a more naturalistic form and/or appearance through layout, design, and landscape treatment. An effort shall be made to provide facilities that are site amenities, without the need for fencing.	
3. Stormwater facilities located within landscape buffer areas shall provide the total required square foot area of the buffer, maintain the minimum width required, and meet planting requirements.	

General Commercial District Design Standards – Site Design Checklist

Project Name & Case #
Address

Date
Page #

4. Stormwater bioretention, biofiltration, and infiltration swales that are integrated into interior landscape areas within parking lots and that meet square footage requirements, as well as landscaping requirements, shall count toward the interior parking lot landscape requirement.	
5. Innovative stormwater treatment solutions should be considered in the site design to treat stormwater on site.	
6. Where site constraints cannot accommodate surface stormwater facilities, site designs may provide for placing stormwater detention and retention facilities underground.	