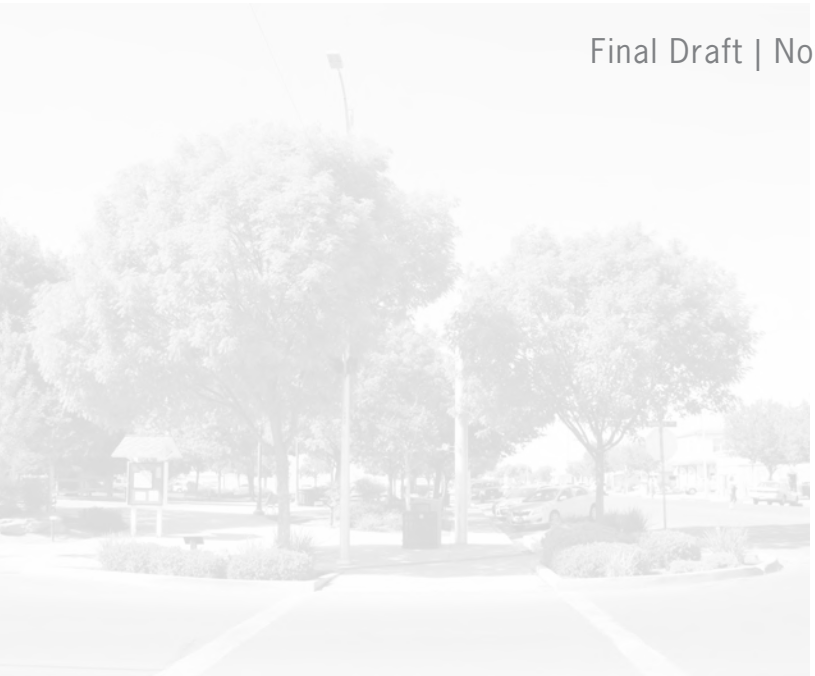
COMMERCIAL BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES & STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

For the City of Corcoran

Final Draft | November 27, 2013



COMMERCIAL BUILDING
DESIGN GUIDELINES & STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

For the City of Corcoran

The work upon which this publication is based was funded in whole through a grant awarded by the Strategic Growth Council.

COMMERCIAL BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

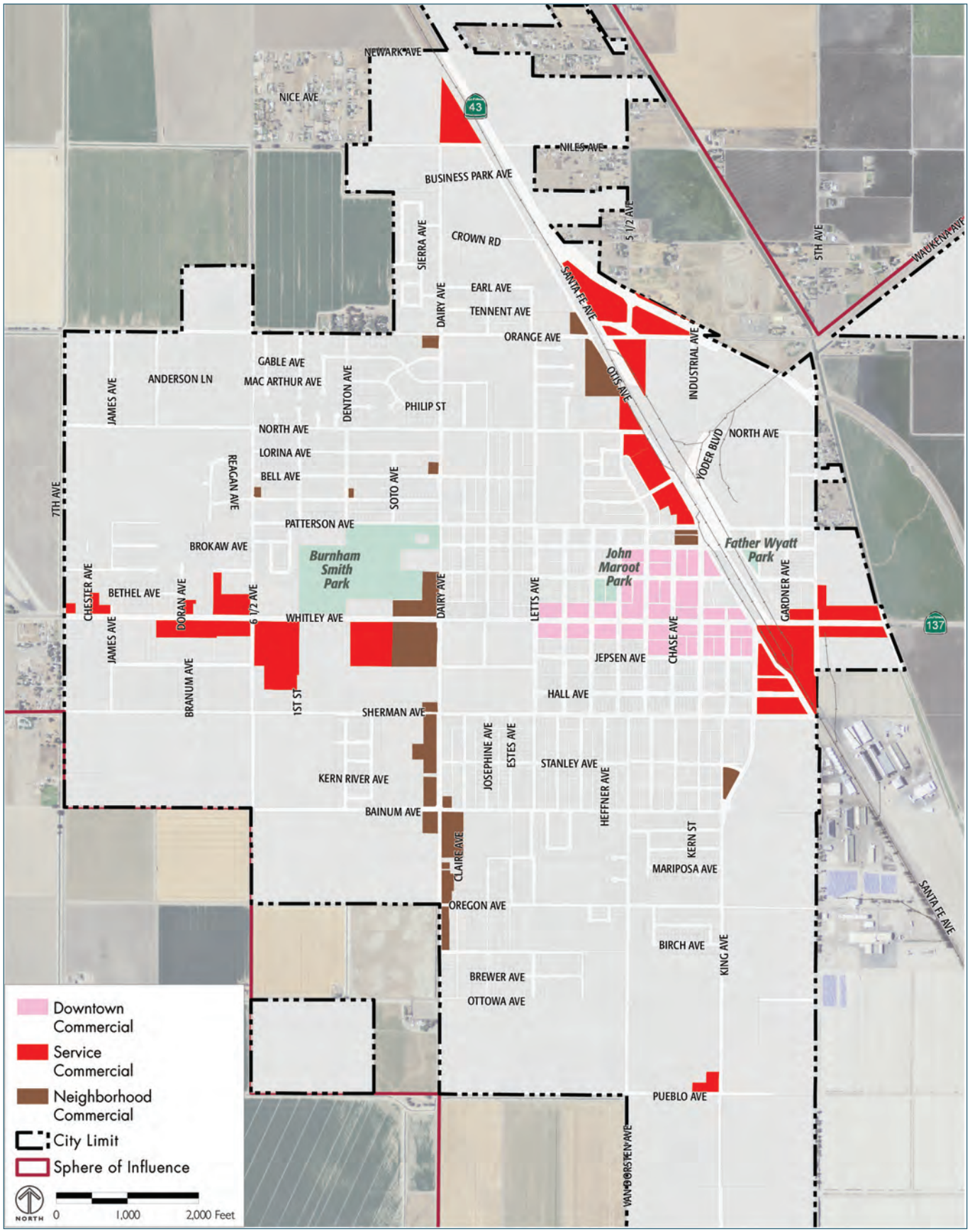


Figure 1 - Commercial Land Uses

COMMERCIAL BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES & STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

The Commercial Building Design Guidelines will serve as an important companion to the City of Corcoran's Updated General Plan. They will help to ensure that new streetscapes and private development projects carry out the community vision identified during this planning process and also provide the community with the highest level of quality design. Together, the following guidelines and standards will provide a flexible framework of optional strategies for property owners, architects, and City staff to follow and use for inspiration when planning development projects within the areas identified in Figure 1.

COMMERCIAL BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

I. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Section I of this document outlines the Guiding Principles that set the stage and provide context for the optional guidelines that follow. They address core topics such as Corcoran's community character, pedestrian-friendliness, and sustainability that are recurring themes in the guidelines that follow. Many of these guidelines are appropriate for development under any of the commercial land use designations found in the General Plan to incorporate. These universally-applicable commercial guidelines will be addressed in Section II, and followed by those that are specific only to commercial development in Downtown Corcoran in Section III.

These principles serve as the underlying context and background for the guidelines and standards described in this chapter, and will help to ensure that plans for future development in Corcoran are appropriate and consistent.

1. Projects should reflect the uniqueness of their specific sites and neighboring development. Corcoran's small-town character and its unique history as an agricultural and railroad hub is evident in the style and form of several of its existing buildings. New buildings, and any improvements to existing ones, should respect and celebrate this historic character.

2. Projects should emphasize the visual prominence of buildings, and facades, enhance landscaping where possible, and minimize the visual impacts of parking. New streetscapes, buildings, and façade improvements should be constructed to honor and accentuate the urban form of an established and significant city. Buildings should be well-proportioned with generous windows and entryways that pique visual interest, and should be constructed with attractive and durable materials. Additional building features, such as signage and lighting fixtures, should reflect the style and scale of the surrounding buildings.

3. Building designs should emphasize variety and visually avoid large box-like structures. Larger buildings should be broken apart into smaller masses in order to create a streetscape environment that relates better to human scale. For an example, a building with a 90-foot facade along the street would create more visual interest and relate better to pedestrians if it was separated into three 30-foot parts.

4. Projects should be pedestrian friendly. This includes shade from trees, awnings, and trellises; places for people to sit and congregate; wide and well-maintained sidewalks that facilitate pedestrian movement; and many interesting storefronts with landscaping and artwork that reward passersby. Car parking should be broken up into smaller pools, and street traffic calming techniques such as bulb-outs, or striped crosswalks should be used to attract pedestrians and foster a vibrant and friendly streetscape environment.

5. Buildings located near street frontages should enliven the visual environment and encourage pedestrian movement. Their appearance should be inviting and friendly, and should allow for visual interaction between pedestrians on the sidewalk and people within the building. The main faces of buildings should either face the street or be located along a paseo, as opposed to parking lots, and buildings should be built close to the sidewalk with corner buildings should accentuating the corner with a tower, special roof, entryway, or other special feature.

6. New development and improvements within the City should strive to minimize impacts on both the natural and built environment. Streetscapes that encourage pedestrian and bicycle traffic will help to reduce automobile congestion and gasoline consumption, and buildings that utilize sustainable construction methods will save energy and materials. Similarly, streets and projects that use drought tolerant landscaping techniques will help to reduce overall water consumption, and energy efficient lighting systems will reduce the negative impact of excessive nighttime lighting that limits the natural view of the nighttime sky.

II. GENERAL COMMERCIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

The guidelines addressed in this chapter are meant to aid potential developers and City Staff in ensuring that new development, redevelopment, and alterations to existing commercial structures throughout the city complement the community vision identified in the Corcoran General Plan and provide the community with the highest level of quality design for the following commercial land use designations: Downtown Commercial, Service Commercial, and Neighborhood Commercial. These guidelines are not mandatory and should be followed only when appropriate and feasible.

A. SITE PLANNING

The following guidelines are intended to serve only as suggestions of elements that future commercial development in Corcoran could incorporate to create an attractive and pedestrian-accessible environment that benefits merchants, visitors, and residents alike.

1. *Building Placement and Pedestrian Orientation*

a) Whenever feasible, a development should include minimal front and side setbacks, and entries and windows that face the street. By orienting entries and windows in close proximity to a sidewalk the activity that a building generates from people walking in and out of it brings vibrancy and character to the street.

b) Buildings should prioritize their orientation to the pedestrian realm by offering attractive, well-landscaped pedestrian spaces for both walking and congregating that include plazas, interior walkways, and paseos.

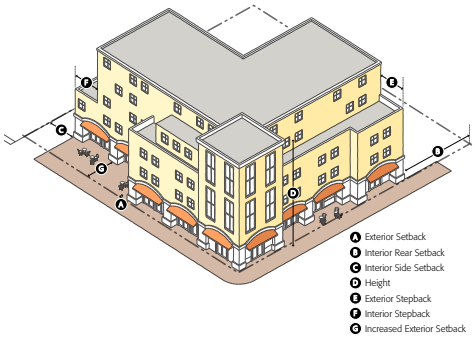
c) Buildings should include a high percentage of windows on the ground floor to increase their visual transparency, allowing for pedestrians and drivers to see more of the interior activities within buildings.

d) Whenever feasible, parking should be located at the rear of the parcel to allow for a continuous street frontage that caters to the pedestrian and minimizes that presence of cars. Any parking that is located along the side or front of a building should include a "street edge" of landscaping, walls, or trellises that continues the general linear progression of the building's facade along the street.

e) Vehicle access should not dominate a site, even when vehicle access must be accommodated for parking or loading areas–pedestrian and bicycle access should be given equal consideration and buildings should provide attractive, well-marked pedestrian links between parking areas and the building entrances

f) When feasible, building entrances should be accessed directly from a public sidewalk. Development that includes multiple buildings on larger sites should develop pedestrian pathways through the site that connect the buildings and parking areas to the public right-of-way, ultimately functioning as an internal public sidewalk system.

g) Larger buildings should provide multiple entrances along frontages greater than 150 feet in length.



A typical multi-story downtown commercial building oriented towards the street with varying setbacks that create areas for pedestrians to gather

On-site pathways connect multiple building entrances on a larger parcel together

Large bushes screen a parking lot from the pedestrian's view and create a street edge along the sidewalk

Commercial buildings with heights, massing, and setbacks that are compatible with surrounding, single-family development

Corner buildings used angled facades to create more attractive and interesting entryways

2. Neighborhood Context

a) Buildings should have heights, massing, setbacks and architectural character that are compatible with surrounding buildings.

b) Buildings should frame significant views by ensuring that the gaps between them provide a view of a significant feature from a publicly-accessible vantage point.

c) New site designs should coordinate with existing development on adjacent properties to avoid creating excessive noise or intrusions on privacy, particularly when development is adjacent to sensitive uses such as residential development or historic buildings.

d) Owners of adjoining properties are encouraged to develop shared facilities such as driveways, parking areas, pedestrian plazas and pedestrian pathways in order to bring an element of cohesion to the distinct buildings and to increase pedestrian access between them.

3. Corner Sites

a) Buildings gain prominence when they are located at the intersection of two streets, and their design should acknowledge and celebrate this.

b) Buildings located on street corners should either be placed to meet the corner, or use a small setback to provide a public plaza or open space with direct access to the building from the public sidewalk.

c) Whenever feasible, the main entrance of a corner building should be located at the corner.

d) Street corner development should include special design and architectural features that anchor the intersection and serve as a visual place-maker for pedestrians. Corner treatments might include taller building elements, such as a tower, or a rounded or angled facet on the corner entrance.

e) Parking should be provided behind the building, allowing for the corner of the site to remain an active part of the street scene and pedestrian environment.

4. Environmentally-Sensitive Site Development

a) The reuse and incorporation of existing buildings should be the priority of all new projects. If reuse or incorporation is not possible, then building materials should be recycled.

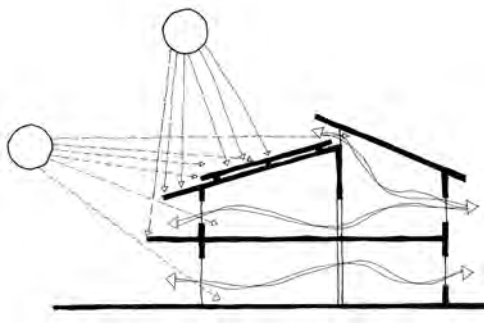
b) Orient buildings towards the sun to provide natural heating and daylighting that maximizes energy efficiency, and plant shade trees wherever possible to provide natural shading and cooling for buildings.

c) Every building's orientation should account for both winter and summer sun to maximize its energy efficiency, as well as to reduce the amount of shade it casts on neighboring properties and public spaces.

d) Whenever feasible, take advantage of natural winds for cooling by orienting doors and windows towards the prevailing wind direction.

e) Incorporate solar panels, other photovoltaic systems and wind turbines into sites and buildings wherever practical.

f) New development should provide no more than the minimum number of vehicle parking spaces, offer accessible bicycle parking, and include inviting and attractive pedestrian environments in their site designs.



A building oriented to the sun and prevailing winds reduces heating and cooling costs

5. Outdoor Spaces

a) Design buildings to include well-defined semi-public outdoor spaces, where feasible, to help support pedestrian activity and connect the building to the public realm.

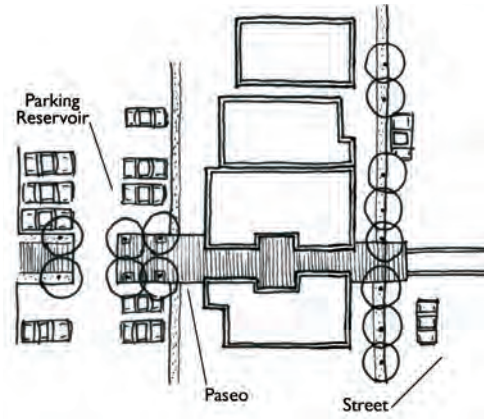
b) Open spaces, plazas and paseos should be designed to maximize pedestrian circulation between buildings and open spaces, and seating areas should include landscaping, shade elements, and lighting.

c) Open spaces should be visible and easily-accessible from public streets as well as buildings.

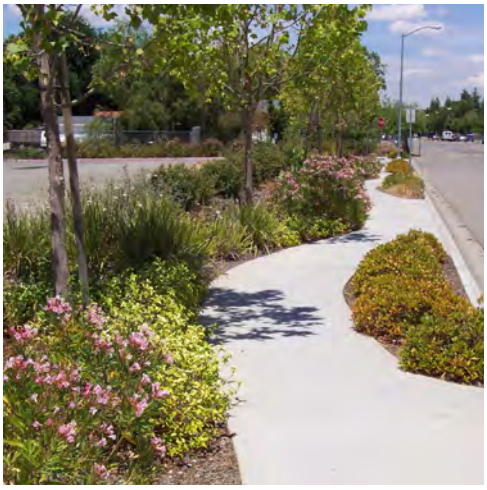
d) Consider climatic factors such as sun orientation and prevailing winds when locating open space areas.

Well-definied semi-public outdoor spaces support pedestrian activity

Parking areas divided into smaller units decreases visual impacts associated with large expanses of pavement and vehicles



Parking in this illustration is located behind the street-fronting commercial development and is accessed from the street via a pedestrian paseo



A landscaped buffer between this parking lot and the street helps to minimize the presence of the parking lot

6. Parking Area Design

a) Parking should be provided behind buildings, whenever feasible, and shared public parking should be provided along all alley frontages. If the inclusion of a street-fronting parking lot is unavoidable, buffer the parking area with landscaping to create a pedestrian-friendly edge along the sidewalk.

b) Provide landscaping in all parking areas for shade and aesthetic enhancement with 15-foot-minimum canopies at a minimum ratio of four trees per 20 parking stalls, whenever feasible.

c) Surface parking areas should be divided into smaller units to decrease the visual impacts associated with large expanses of pavement and vehicles. Smaller units can be created through the use of landscaped walkways, tree rows or other landscape elements.

d) Incorporate fully accessible pedestrian circulation paths within parking areas and between adjoining developments, whenever feasible.

e) Landowners should be encouraged to negotiate shared parking agreements with one another–allowing uses with differing peak hours of operation to utilize the off-street parking facilities provided by another building or use.

f) All new projects should provide bicycle racks in close proximity to building entrances while ensuring that pedestrian and auto circulation is not impeded.

g) When feasible, place "wheel stops" adjacent to tree wells and planter areas in parking lots, so that parked cars cannot extend into landscaped areas.

h) Permeable surfaces for paving should be considered and used when possible.

i) When feasible, facilitate the drainage of parking areas into swales with the use of flush curbs, perforated curbs and tree offsets.

j) Transitions should be created between a swale area and its surrounding landscape with plant material in and adjacent to the swale.

k) When feasible, do not constrain pedestrian circulation between the parking area and other neighborhood amenities that could be reached on foot, and avoid placing fences where they would limit overall pedestrian circulation throughout the area.

7. Service and Refuse Areas

a) Access points should be limited to the minimum number that is necessary to serve the property, and whenever possible should be located at an alley, or through a common access point that is shared with other vehicles.

b) Driveway widths should be minimized. However, if a driveway must accommodate large vehicles, such as delivery trucks, the minimum width that can accommodate the effective turning radius of these vehicles should be used.

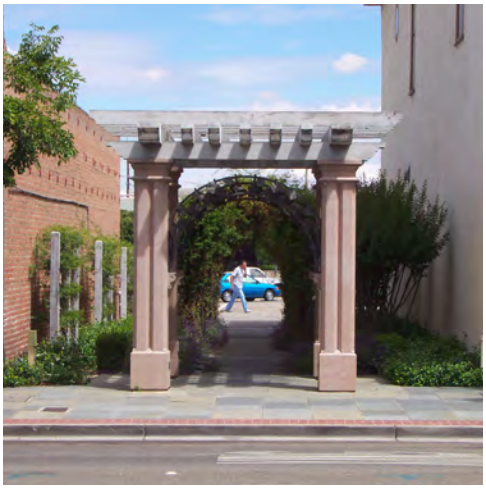
c) Driveways should be placed at right angles to the street, and where a driveway crosses a sidewalk, clearly demarcate the sidewalk across the entire width of the driveway.

d) Trash enclosures, service areas, utility meters, and other mechanical and electrical equipment should be located within alleys or at the rear of large parcels and obscured from the public view by landscaping or well-design enclosures.

A commercial service area located along an alley at the rear of the property and away from the public right-of-way

A larger commercial building is broken down in scale with vertical divisions and changes in mass and texture

The recessed storefront entrance helps to vary this larger building's facade



An arcade between buildings provides more than ten feet of clear space between the building facade and the edge of the arcade, so that there is adequate space to walk

B. BUILDING DESIGN

Building design guidelines are intended to provide inspiration for development that considers the human scale and provides opportunities for pedestrian activity around the building and on the adjacent public streets–ultimately contributing to the overall character and vitality of the area.

1. *Building Rhythm*

a) Building facades should establish a rhythm that is small-scale with building bay widths between 25 to 50 feet in width.

b) Buildings should feature varying wall planes, heights, and contrasting materials that give distinction to the façade and prevent buildings from becoming large, featureless structures.

2. *Mass, Proportion, and Facade Detail*

a) The mass of larger buildings should be broken apart into proportional components that give the building a less massive impression for pedestrians. Varying wall plans, heights and contrasting materials are all tools that can be implemented to break up large, featureless structures into relatable pieces.

b) When feasible, subdivide buildings into horizontal segments that are compatible with the scale of adjacent buildings, and so that buildings have a distinct base, middle, and top.

c) Use vertical architectural elements such as columns, piers or pilasters to subdivide buildings into smaller increments at the ground floor and upper stories. These vertical divisions should accurately express the structure system of the building.

d) For larger buildings that include multiple tenants along the ground floor, individual tenant spaces should be differentiated with columns and pilasters, or recesses and bays.

e) When feasible, establish depth and shadow by incorporating architectural features that project from the building face, such as window bays and pilasters, and provide building reveals or offsets in the wall plane, such as entryways and recessed windows. Details such as these add visual interest, distinctiveness, and a human scale to buildings.

f) Buildings should include awnings, canopies and arcades that provide shade and cover from the elements, reinforce the pedestrian scale, and are consistent with the character of the building.

g) When designing arcades that cut through the middle of the property, provide at least ten feet of clear space between the building facade and the edge of the arcade, so that there is adequate space to walk as people enter and exit buildings, whenever feasible.Awnings and canopies should provide a minimum clearance of eight feet between the sidewalk and the bottom of the canopy or awning valence.

3. Ground Floor Entrances and Building Activity

a) All entries should be accentuated with features such as moldings, lighting, overhangs, or awnings, and primary entries to buildings should feature prominent elements such as recessed entry bays, to create a transitional space between the building and the street.

b) Entrances should include one or more of the following features: a taller mass above, such as a tower or other volume; special architectural elements, such as columns, overhanging roofs, trellises, or awnings; a recessed entryway or bay in the façade.

c) Entries to ground-floor retail areas and main building entries should occur either from a primary street and be oriented towards the sidewalk, or from a pedestrian paseo, plaza or other internal pedestrian pathway system that runs through the site.

d) Public and publicly-oriented uses should be located on the ground floor of buildings to encourage pedestrian activity along the surrounding sidewalks. In buildings with a vertical mix of uses, the ground floor should be reserved for activity-generating retail store fronts, and residential or office uses should occupy the upper floors.

e) Where adequate sidewalk space exists, doors or sliding windows should be designed to enable restaurants or markets to expand onto the sidewalk and increase the vibrancy of the street scene.

f) Where unique use or occupancy requirements preclude windows along the ground floor, such as movie theaters or parking structures, exterior walls should be painted with murals, or walls should be screened by landscaping or other pedestrian amenities such as trellises, benches, sculptures or shaded structures.

4. Windows

a) For buildings with active uses along the ground floor, windows should be positioned for visibility by both pedestrians and motorists at street level.

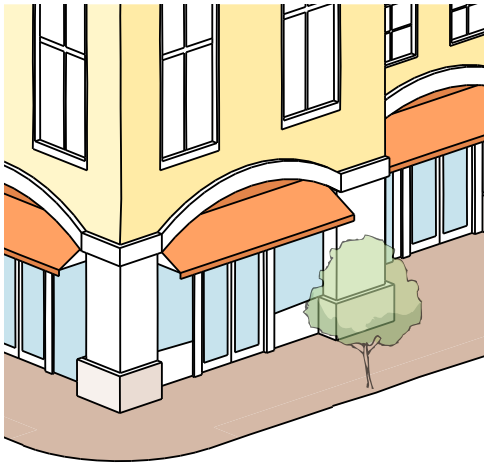
b) Clear glass should be used in ground floor windows and doors of all commercial businesses to promote visibility into the ground floor space.

c) Wherever feasible, include facade openings and windows that are vertically proportioned, with a greater height than width. Appropriate height-width ratios typically range from 1.5:1 to 2:1.

d) Display windows should be spaced evenly along a building's ground floor façade for a minimum of 60 percent of the building's width.

e) For ground floor retail windows, utilize a larger window proportion than for upper floor windows, whenever feasible.Upper story windows should be enhanced through the inclusion of sills, molded surrounds and lintels.

f) Operable windows should be employed for taking advantage of breezes and thus reducing energy costs.



Vertical pilasters in this illustration create shallow recesses for the windows and transparent entryways

Arches and a brick facade add a distinctive look to this building

Entries to ground floor retail along the street include features like awnings and prominent windows

Large windows with clear glass along the ground floor promote visibility

A marketplace becomes a pedestrian attraction with sliding ground floor doors that on to the sidewalk

Changes in color are used to differentiate between components of a building

5. Building Materials and Colors

a) Materials should be chosen to respect the climate and traditions of Corcoran. Brick, stone, and wood siding finishes are all acceptable for utilization.

b) Genuine materials should be used rather than simulated materials. Where one building material is used to simulate another, it should be used in a way that is in keeping with the character and properties of the material being simulated.

c) The colors and materials used on the exterior of a building should adhere to an appropriately varied palette and should be used on all four sides of the building.

d) Changes in color or materials should be used to differentiate between different components of a building or tenant spaces, and to help distinguish the base, body and top of the building from one another more effectively.

6. Roofs and Parapets

a) The shape of the roof should be designed to reflect the configuration of the building's mass, volume, and overall architecture.

b) Use roof forms that have a consistent character from all vantage points, whenever feasible.

c) Attractively detailed roofs can enhance and strengthen the character of a building. If feasible and appropriate to the building's architectural style, embolden the roofline with cornice or parapet detailing on flat roofs, or detail around the eaves on sloped roofs.

d) Avoid false fronts and flat, thinly applied mansard forms.

e) Screen all roof-mounted mechanical and electrical equipment, as well as communication equipment such as satellite dishes and cell phone towers, from public view. Design the screening to be architecturally consistent with the building.

f) Avoid highly reflective roofing materials.

7. Signage and Gateways

a) Signage should identify the occupant or occupants of a building, and should not be primarily intended as a form of advertisement.

b) Incorporate building scale, design and materials into the design of signs, whenever feasible.

c) Standardized or corporate signage is permissible but should conform to the architectural detailing of the associated building.

d) Consider developing a master sign program for multi-tenant buildings to minimize potential visual conflict, clutter, and competition.

e) For large parcel developments with multiple buildings on site and an internal circulation system, a single, free-standing sign displaying all the development's commercial occupants and their addresses is permissible and should be located at the entrance to the site.

f) Avoid obscuring architectural details such as recesses, structural bays or fenestration with wall-mounted signs, whenever feasible.

g) Painted signs and individual letters are encouraged. These signs should be lit by separate spot lighting and should present a neat and aligned appearance.

Attractive and detailed roofs enhance the character of a building

A single freestanding sign contains the names of all the occupants of a commercial development

Large overhangs along a sidewalk shades pedestrians and keeps storefronts cool

8. Green Building

Design solutions should incorporate strategies to conserve resources during both construction and operation of the building. Should the developer choose to incorporate any of these optional strategies, the financial savings can be substantial, on top of the energy and resource benefits provided.

a) Water Conservation

i. Rooftop catchment systems should be used to collect rainwater for reuse as a supplemental landscape water supply.

ii. Low-water-use fixtures and appliances should be incorporated into all new and renovated buildings.

iii. Allow and encourage "greywater" plumbing systems in new buildings that reuse water from washing machines, dishwashers, and other on-site uses for limited purposes, such as watering plants and flushing toilets.

b) Energy Conservation

i. Maximize the number and size of north-facing and south-facing windows, and use smaller and fewer windows on the east and west sides of the building.

ii. Minimize direct sunlight by incorporating strategically placed overhangs, louvers or similar shade-producing features.

iii. Design building interiors to take advantage of natural ventilation by orienting rooms so that natural breezes blow through them.

iv. Insulate and seal all new and renovated buildings to properly contain heated or cooled air.

v. Use energy-efficient heating, ventilation and cooling systems that regulate the interior temperature of buildings throughout the day.

c) Materials Conservation

i. Use rapidly renewable materials such as bamboo, engineered lumber, and paper-based cellulose where appropriate.

ii. Use high-quality materials to reduce maintenance and replacement costs.

iii. Determine the best possible new uses for existing buildings with respect to their contribution to neighborhood character, economic feasibility, economic revitalization and interior conversion potential.

iv. When adaptively reusing historically significant buildings, preserve the defining historic features of buildings wherever possible.

v. Ensure that parking standards provide flexibility for adaptive reuse, using measures such as counting on-street parking spaces towards minimum parking requirements, providing shared public parking areas, and allowing developers to pay in-lieu fees for parking.

Durable, recycled materials can reduce maintenance and replacement costs

Landscaping provides an attractive setting for pedestrians, softens hard contours, and creates gathering areas along the street

C. LANDSCAPE DESIGN

1. Function

a) Landscaping should be used to provide an attractive setting for development, soften hard building contours, shade walkways, gathering areas, parking areas and other larger expanses of pavement, and screen any unsightly uses. Additionally, landscaping should aid in managing stormwater.

b) Landscaping along the edges of paths, plazas and seating areas helps to define and organize the site, and a hierarchical range of planting sizes and materials accentuate the transition between the horizontal ground plane of the sidewalk or parking area and the vertical frontages of the building.

c) Pedestrian entries into sites should be enhanced with landscaping and decorative paving, trellis structures, pedestrian-scaled lighting and seating.

d) Where pedestrian paths cross parking areas or driveways, the paths should incorporate landscaping and decorative paving to help define the pedestrian realm.

2. Plants and Materials

a) See the Sample Plan Legend to the left for a list of suggested trees, shrubs and ground-cover for private commercial Development in Corcoran. Species that are native or well-adapted to Corcoran's Central Valley climate are recommended for use as they will generally require less water and maintenance.

b) Seasonal and year-round flowering shrubs and trees should be located where they can be most appreciated by site users and passersby, such as adjacent to walks and recreational areas, or as frames for building entrances and stairs.

c) Landscaped areas, including trees, paving, walls and fences, should be regularly maintained to keep landscapes aesthetically pleasing, and to remove dead and dying plants that create fire hazards.

d) Gateways or entry points should be accented with distinctive trees and plants.

SAMPLE PLANT LEGEND

SYMBOL	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
LARGE TREES		
	Pistache chinensis	Chinese Pistache
	Prunus 'Krauter Vesuvius'	Flowering Plum
	Quercus suber	Cork Oak
SMALL TREES		
	Arctostaphylos manzanita	Manzanita
	Cercis occidentalis	Redbud
	Cotinus coggygria	Smoke Tree
LARGE SHRUBS		
	Xylosma 'Compacta'	NCN
	Nerium o. 'Petite Salmon'	Oleander
	Juniperus s. 'Skyrocket'	Juniper Column
	Cistus ladanifer	Crimson-spot Rockrose
	Salvia microphylla	Sage
	Arctostaphylos d. 'Howard McMinn'	Manzanita
SMALL SHRUBS & PERRENIALS		
	Epilobium californica	California Fuchsia
	Carex tumulicola	Berkeley Sedge
	Nandina 'Fire Power'	Heavenly Bamboo
	Nassella tenuissima	Mexican Feather Grass
	Erigeron glaucas	Beach Aster
GROUNDCOVER		
	Arctostaphylos 'Emerald Carpet'	Emerald Carpet
	Myoporum parvifolum	NCN
	Cotoneaster dammeri	Bearberry Cotoneaster

Sample Plant Legend for Plants Appropriate to Corcoran's Climate

3. Fences and Walls

a) Fences and walls should be designed to balance the need for privacy and security with the need to maintain visibility and contribute positively to the character of the community.

b) New fences and walls should be integrated with existing ones through the use of similar materials, span dimensions, heights, and construction techniques.

c) Avoid screening fences and walls between buildings and the street whenever feasible.

d) Screening fences adjacent to any residential properties should be designed to maintain a character and scale appropriate to the residential neighborhood while still blocking out impacts generated by the commercial development that are incompatible with residential uses. Such impacts might include noise and lights from cars in commercial parking lots, and noise from delivery trucks.

e) Consider ensuring that fences around plazas and outdoor spaces are semi-transparent and architecturally compatible with the building.

4. Landscaping in Plazas, Paseos and Open Space

a) Outdoor pedestrian spaces in private development should include appropriate outdoor furniture, such as seating, walls, trash receptacles, bike racks and other elements.

b) A mixture of formal seating should be included in open spaces, such as benches and chairs, as well as informal seating, such as low walls and stairs.

c) Publicly-accessible private plazas and open spaces should be landscaped and incorporate high-quality paving materials, such as unit-pavers, stone, concrete or tile.

d) Public art should be incorporated into open spaces.

A semi-transparent fence around this outdoor dining area adds to the street life of the sidewalk

Outdoor seating areas in plazas offer a social venue for gathering

Potted landscaping adds color and vibrancy to the sidewalk scene

Street lamps add character and safety to these night time street scenes

5. Exterior Lighting

a) Exterior lighting serves as an integral part of the building and landscape design. Site plans and architectural plans should include the location of fixtures, their design, and the nature and level of the illumination they will provide.

b) Lighting locations should be concentrated around areas with security concerns, such as pedestrian paths, outdoor gathering spaces and building entries.

c) The height of luminaries should be in scale with the building and site design, and should not exceed 18 feet in height from grade.

d) All outdoor lighting should be oriented toward the ground and fully shielded to prevent unwanted light from spilling onto adjacent properties.

e) Lighting should be energy-efficient, and exterior lighting should be designed to reduce the impact of light pollution, or artificial light on the night sky. The fixtures should provide no more light that what is necessary, and should focus the light downwards, towards the sidewalk. "Dark sky" features should be used to shield the sky from excess lighting or light pollution.

f) Along street frontages, lighting should articulate the building's architecture and facade and should be used sparingly and in key locations.

g) Structural lighting should highlight points of visual interest.

h) All lighting for outdoor service, loading or storage areas should be contained within the specific yard space boundaries and enclosure walls. No light spillover should occur outside the service area and light sources should not be visible from the street or adjacent properties.

6. Stormwater Management

a) Projects should minimize the amount of paved areas dedicated to parking; And where feasible, should include "green" stormwater collection and treatment.

b) Stormwater retention features that minimize runoff into streets, parking lots, landscaped areas and open spaces should be incorporated whenever feasible. Stormwater retention features include drainage swales and retention basins.

c) Use permeable paving materials for streets, sidewalks, parking lots and driveways.

d) Incorporate design features such as rain gardens to capture, store and reuse stormwater.

Stormwater landscaping system with parallel street parking

7. Parking Landscaping

a) Surface parking areas should provide landscaping for shade and aesthetic enhancement.

b) Parking lots should be landscaped with broad branching shade trees (15 foot canopy or more) at a minimum ratio of four trees per 20 parking stalls.

c) Permeable surfaces for paving should be considered and used when possible.

d) Drainage into swale areas is encouraged for stormwater collection and may be accommodated through design elements, such as flush curbs, perforated curbs and tree offsets.

Permeable surfaces for paving allow for better drainage in parking lots

A stormwater drainage system for a parking lot with a bio swale

III. DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL SPECIFIC DESIGN GUIDELINES

Downtown commercial parcels are clustered along Whitley Avenue, the "Downtown Main Street" of Corcoran. The City Hall building evokes the character of Corcoran's beginnings as a 20th Century railroad junction town with its brick facade and detailed stone cornices and archways. New construction and facade improvements to development with a downtown commercial designation should build upon this existing main street character by incorporating facades with a continuous street frontage and glazed storefronts along the ground floor. Building materials and styles should look substantial and complement existing buildings that reflect the City's history as a turn-of-the-century railroad town. Brick, stucco and stone are all acceptable materials, however individual buildings should be consistent and not mix styles. The following guidelines are intended to build upon the guidelines addressed in Section II and help developers take the next steps in achieving the "Downtown Main Street" character of Corcoran in future projects.

a) Shared public parking within alleys should be provided for new development downtown that abuts an existing alley.

b) All trash enclosures, service areas, utility meters, and other mechanical and electrical equipment should be located within alleys and obscured from the public view by landscaping or well-designed enclosures.

c) Driveways should be avoided altogether, and instead, service and parking access for buildings should be delegated to existing alleyways that bisect many of the downtown's blocks already.

d) In order to ensure a small-scale street frontage rhythm, the storefronts for buildings on larger lots should be broken down into 30- to 50-foot sections to match the existing pattern of the older commercial development in Downtown. These sections should be expressed as vertical divisions along the building façade that extend the height of the building.

e) Any facades without windows and public entrances should be avoided along Whitley Avenue so that the "main street" character of the street is preserved.

f) Building materials should be chosen to respect the climate and traditions of the "main street" character of a historical Central Valley railroad town. Brick, stone, and wood siding are all acceptable materials that could be utilized.

g) Building exteriors that use either innovative new materials or traditional materials in unconventional ways are permissible, as long as these innovative treatments fit the desired "main street" character.

h) Freestanding signage along the sidewalk should be avoided, as well as repetitious signage on the same building frontage. However, a wayfinding signage system for Downtown Corcoran that adds character and a sense of place to the area should be encouraged.

Wayfinding signs can add character to a downtown and promote the character of the community

This storefront is oriented to the street and uses traditional materials that convey a "main street" character

A long building facade is broken up into smaller sections to create a "main street" character

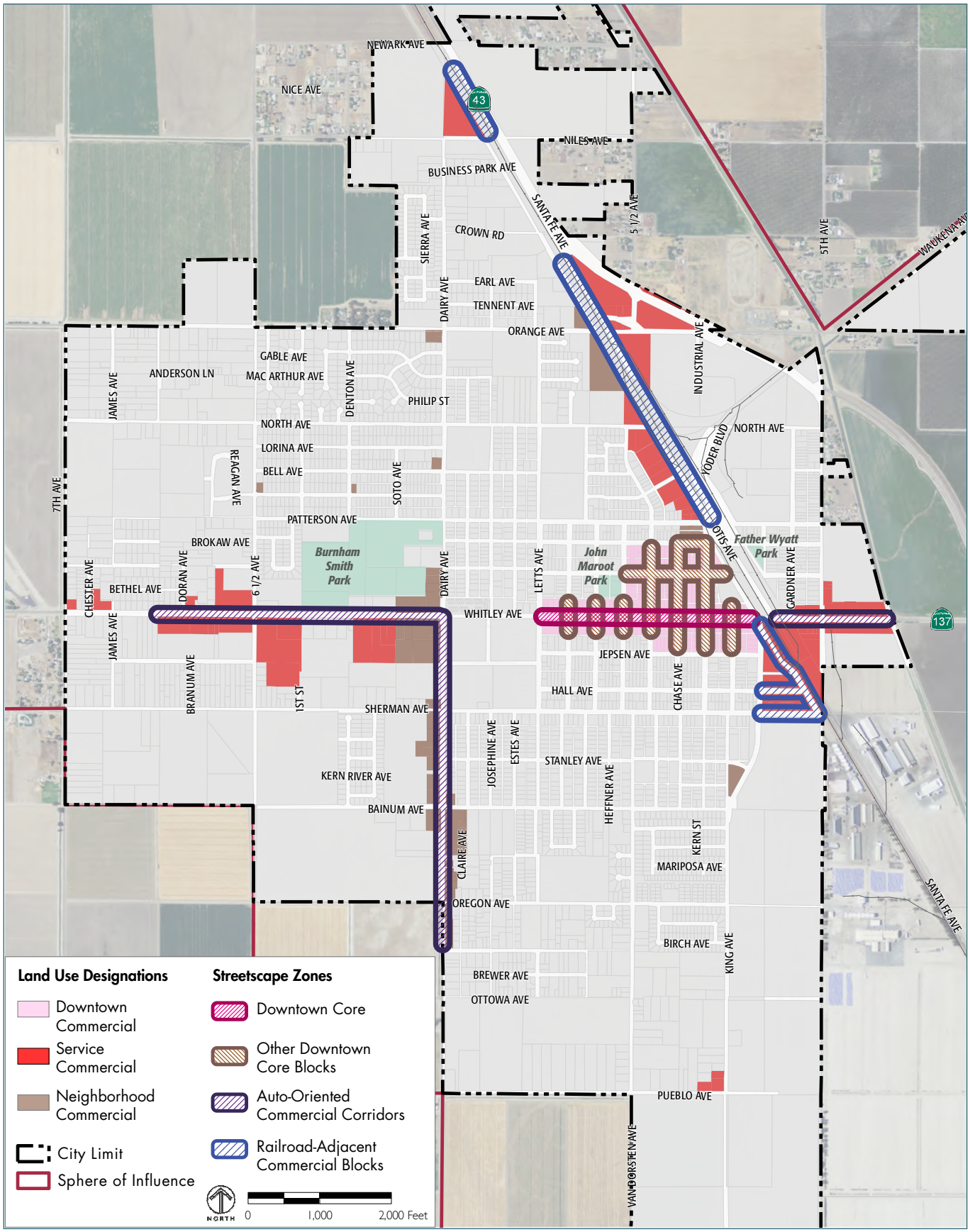


Figure 2 - Commercial Land Uses and Streetscape Zones

STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

The following standards focus on the design of the public right-of-way, including sidewalk areas, street landscaping, on-street parking areas and travel lanes. They are intended to serve as suggestions for how to create a pedestrian-oriented and active street environment for the streetscape zones shown in Figure 2. Section I of this chapter includes general street design guidelines that apply to all streets in commercial districts and Section II contains additional street design guidelines that are specific for the following areas:

- Downtown Core
- Other Downtown Core Blocks
- Auto-Oriented Commercial Corridors
- Railroad-Adjacent Commercial Blocks

I. GENERAL STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

This section provides general standards and guidelines for the design of all new public street rights-of-way as well as improvements to existing rights-of-way within commercial districts in Corcoran, including Downtown Commercial, Service Commercial, and Neighborhood Commercial, as illustrated in Figure 2. These standards are not mandatory and should be followed only when appropriate and feasible.

1. Sidewalk and Street Design

a) Sidewalks should meet all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for width and surfacing.

b) A minimum 4-foot width along the sidewalk should be entirely clear of all obstacles.

c) Sidewalk widths should be adequate to support the level of pedestrian activity that is intended and desired.

d) Curb ramps should be provided at every intersection, and wherever possible, one curb ramp should be provided perpendicular to every pedestrian crossing.

e) Travel lanes should not exceed 12 feet in width to allow for additional room for pedestrian amenities, a median, and/or parking. Travel lanes should still provide for safe circulation of emergency vehicles.

f) Sidewalks should use high-quality materials and installation to ensure long use and avoid frequent replacement. Recycled and/or locally sourced paving materials should be specified wherever feasible.

g) Driveways should be designed to provide a level pedestrian path of travel at the back of the sidewalk, with a more steeply sloped driveway apron at the street edge.

h) Driveways and curb cuts should be minimized to limit conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Wherever possible, driveways for adjacent uses should be consolidated.

Adequately spaced sidewalks support pedestrian activity and landscaping

12-foot travel lanes with street parking and painted crosswalks allowing for pedestrians to cross at mid-block

High-quality paving materials help differentiate these crosswalks from the street

Street trees planted in between the sidewalk and street with a planting strip help to buffer pedestrians from vehicles

Tree grates along a sidewalk

Landscaping along sidewalks adds to the quality of the pedestrian experience

2. Street Trees

a) Street trees should be provided along roadways to provide shade for pedestrians, assist in stormwater management, buffer pedestrians from traffic, and provide visual interest on the street.

b) Deciduous or semi-deciduous tree species are preferred.

c) Street trees should be provided in a consistent manner for the entire length of the street, and should create a large (25- to 35-foot) canopy that adds character and a sense of place to the street.

d) Existing mature trees should be maintained and protected wherever possible, including by notching or stepping back buildings where trees are deemed to be of significance.

e) Where possible, trees should be planted in between the sidewalk and street with a planting strip that buffers vehicles from pedestrians.

f) Where possible, individual tree wells should be connected with linear planting strips or larger planting areas to increase soil volumes and the potential for a more robust urban forest.

g) Street trees should be provided with adequate sub-surface root space to allow for growth.

h) The minimum square footage of a tree well is 24 square feet (4 feet x 6 feet). In cases where space is limited, tree wells could be reduced to 16 square feet and planted with appropriately sized trees.

i) Tree grates should be used for all trees placed in the sidewalk, and should be located out of the pedestrian path of travel whenever possible.

3. Landscaping

a) Landscaping should be used to contribute to the quality of the pedestrian experience by adding visual interest, providing scale and shade, and contributing to a sense of comfort.

b) Plant materials should be in scale with the adjacent land uses and buildings.

c) A plant palette should be chosen to provide visual continuity throughout the street.

d) In order to provide added variety and visual interest, landscaping in commercial areas may include permanent above-grade planters, movable pots and planters, and hanging planters, in addition to tree wells and planting strips.

e) California native and drought-tolerant species should be used where possible to minimize maintenance and water consumption. See the Sample Plan Legend on page 20 for a list of suggested plant species.

4. *Pedestrian-Scale Street Lighting*

Pedestrian-scale street lighting will not only help to improve security, but will also add to the character of the street and neighborhood. Sidewalks and landscaped areas should be lit to enhance both safety and comfort.

a) Roadway lighting and pedestrian-scaled lighting should be designed in conjunction with one another to create a safe and attractive environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

b) Street lighting should be provided for both pedestrians and vehicles at intervals of approximately 30 feet, alternating from one side of the street to the other. These street lighting distance standards are intended to promote a pedestrian-scale and ensure a safe and comfortable environment for pedestrians.

c) Greater amounts of lighting should be provided in areas where there are safety concerns and where there is potential for conflict between pedestrians and vehicles, such as at intersections.

d) Sidewalks should be illuminated through the use of pedestrian-scaled lighting, typically 10 feet to 16 feet in height, especially in high intensity pedestrian areas.

e) Street lighting fixture styles should reflect the architectural character of the surrounding buildings and streetscape, and the type and size of the fixtures should be consistent along a single block.

f) Placement of lighting should not interfere with the pedestrian path of travel and should not distract or interfere with vehicular circulation.

g) Street lamps should be oriented toward the ground and designed with "dark sky" technology to help preserve views of the night sky.

h) In order to conserve energy and reduce long-term costs, energy-efficient, Energy Star-certified lamps should be used for all pedestrian lighting, and hours of operation should be monitored and limited to avoid waste.

Lighting should reflect the pedestrian scale and also preserve the neighborhood commercial feel of the street

Public seating area with planting to buffer pedestrians from the road

Clearly market bicycle lane of 6 feet in width

5. Street Furnishings and Amenities

Street furniture encourages pedestrian activity and enhances gathering spaces along the street. It can also provide for the opportunity to serve as a form of artwork that is custom designed by local artists, Corcoran youth, or other members of the community to reflect the different cultures represented within the City.

a) Street furniture and other amenities, such as trash receptacles, kiosks, benches, public art, and newsstands, should be located in conjunction with active pedestrian areas such as intersections, key building entries, public open spaces, bus stops, important intersections and pedestrian streets.

b) Public seating should be attractive, yet easy to maintain, and should reinforce the identity and sense of place in the area. Groupings of benches should all be of the same style.

c) Where possible, benches should be placed against a building wall to allow clear pedestrian paths of travel, and to face the sidewalk accommodating neighborhood interaction.

d) In some cases, where sidewalk widths permit, facing benches is encouraged to help create "outdoor rooms" in areas where people meet and gather.

e) Street furniture needs to be designed for universal access and to facilitate use by those of all ages and abilities.

f) Wayfinding signage should be provided to direct pedestrians to nearby destinations and attractions.

6. Bicycle Facilities Design

a) Class II on-street bicycle lanes should have a minimum width of 5 feet. Where possible, the gutter should not be included as part of the bicycle lane's width.

b) Bicycle racks should be discreet, functional, and both easy to use and maintain. Artistically designed or custom designed models could serve as an additional way to enhance the character of the street as well.

c) Placement should consider ease of entry and exit with bicycles, and should not conflict with pedestrian circulation.

d) Bicycle racks should be located in prominent locations that are clearly visible to cyclists from the street and from adjacent buildings and public spaces.

7. Public Art

a) Public art can be added to building fronts or sides as a means of reflecting community history, culture, and art.

b) Placement of murals should be considered at important intersections, and the artwork should reflect the community character and enhance the visual and cultural aspects of the neighborhood.

8. Transit Design

a) Where feasible, bus stops should be located at the far side of the intersections they serve.

b) Bus shelters should face the street and their location should not conflict with the pedestrian path of travel.

c) All bus stops should have at least one bench and provide shelter from weather when possible.

d) Bus shelters should be made of transparent materials that allow for visibility to maintain the safety of riders.

e) All bus stops should be prominently signed, and all pertinent route and schedule information, including major connecting services, should be posted.

Public art can include colorful murals or fountains in front of building entrances or in plazas

Bus shelters should be transparent and include bus schedule information

II. DOWNTOWN CORE BLOCKS

(Whitley Avenue between Letts Avenue and Otis Avenue)

Whitley Avenue is the commercial core and activity center of Downtown Corcoran. The blocks along both sides of Whitley Avenue between Letts Avenue and Otis Avenue are designated as Corcoran's Downtown Commercial District in the General Plan. While Whitley Avenue east of Van Dorsten Avenue currently provides a pedestrian-oriented streetscape environment with trees, benches, and bulb-outs, the streetscape west of Van Dorsten Avenue lacks such pedestrian-friendly amenities. Future street improvements west of Van Dorsten Avenue should be consistent with the existing street character east of Van Dorsten Avenue to provide a continuous main street feeling along Whitley Avenue. The guidelines below are intended to ensure that improvements along Whitley Avenue within Downtown are cohesive while contributing to a comfortable, pedestrian-friendly street in line with the vision outlined for this area in the General Plan.

a) Sidewalks should be widened to 10 feet, and up to 16 feet where possible, to create a more accessible and active pedestrian realm in Downtown Corcoran.

b) Diagonal parking should be provided west of Van Dorsten Avenue where possible.

c) Intersection bulbouts should be provided at all street intersections within the Downtown, building on improvements that have already been implemented Whitley Avenue between Van Dorsten Avenue and Otis Avenue.

d) Intersection bulbouts should incorporate significant landscaping and planting to provide shade and add to the aesthetic character to the Downtown.

e) Decorative paving can greatly enhance the character of a neighborhood, direct traffic flow, and serve as a street-calming measure. Mid-block crossings with special paving should be provided at points where paseos cross the street or at the intersection of any alleyways.

f) Permeable paving reduces the quantity of runoff entering the storm drain systems and should complement the character of Downtown and be appropriate for the space available.

g) Gateway and wayfinding signage throughout Downtown Corcoran would help contribute to community pride within the City, and should be externally lit to ensure visibility at night.

h) Street furniture, including pedestrian-scale street lighting, trash receptacles, benches, and public art, should be provided along Whitley Avenue between Letts Avenue and Von Dorsten Avenue in a similar manner to the east end of Whitley Avenue.

i) Where space permits, planter boxes should be added to the street as buffers between pedestrians and vehicles, and also as an added form of visual texture for the downtown streetscape.

j) Planter boxes should be placed against a building wall or the street edge in order to allow for easy pedestrian movement along the sidewalk.

k) Seasonal and year-round flowering shrubs and trees should be used where they can be most appreciated, such as adjacent to walks and recreational areas, or as frames for building entrances and stairs.

l) Larger bicycle parking racks should be provided within bulbouts where there is additional public space, while smaller racks should be placed near the curb on sidewalks where necessary and feasible.

Sidewalks widened to 16 feet create a more accessible and active pedestrian realm

Facing seating creates an "outdoor room" for people to meet and gather in.

A planter box along the street edge adds character

III. OTHER DOWNTOWN CORE BLOCKS

(Hanna Avenue, Jepsen Avenue, Wigdal Avenue, Van Dorsten Avenue, Norboe Avenue, Chase Avenue, Chittenden Avenue, King Avenue and Flory Avenue)

These blocks are also part of the Downtown Commercial designation in the General Plan, and they play an important role in establishing the character of Downtown Corcoran as a pedestrian-friendly commercial district, and should reflect this role through the following streetscape standards.

a) Sidewalks should be provided along all streets at a minimum width of 7 feet.

b) Striped crosswalks should be provided at all intersections where possible, and particularly at intersections that experience heavy pedestrian traffic.

c) Intersection bulbouts should be provided where possible.

d) On-street parking should be provided where possible, but should be coordinated with entrances to residential or commercial parking areas.

e) Mid-block crossings with special paving should be provided at points where alleys/paseos cross the street.

f) Street furniture should be coordinated in type, color, and material to contribute to a sense of identity of the Downtown area.

A striped pedestrian crossing with a paved sidewalk bulbout and street trees

Benches facing each other create an "outdoor room" where people can meet and gather

Sidewalks greater than 7 feet allow for more pedestrian movement and activity

IV. AUTO-ORIENTED COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

(Whitley Avenue east of Otis Avenue and west of Dairy Avenue and Dairy/6th Avenue between Whitley Avenue and Osage Avenue)

Auto-Oriented Commercial Corridors include Whitley Avenue east of Otis Avenue and west of Dairy Avenue within the city limits and Dairy/6th Avenue between Whitley Avenue and Osage Avenue, as shown in Figure 2. These streets serve as major arterial corridors with long blocks, few intersections, and higher traffic speeds. These corridors currently have a variety of uses, including residential, commercial, institutional, and recreational. The following guidelines should be used to ensure that improvements to these corridors are consistent with the vision outlined for this area in the General Plan, and also provide a comfortable and visually stimulating, streetscape environment that accommodates both pedestrian and car traffic safely.

a) Sidewalks should be provided along all streets at a minimum width of 6 feet.

b) The streets should be reconfigured to include a landscaped median with cut-throughs at intersections for pedestrians as well as turn pockets at the major intersections.

c) Decorative paving can greatly enhance the character of a neighborhood, direct traffic flow, and serve as a street-calming measure. Crosswalks with special paving should be provided at all intersections.

d) Gateway and wayfinding should be incorporated into medians to signify important entries to Downtown areas, especially along Whitley Avenue between Flory Avenue and Sweet Canal.

e) Parallel parking should be provided where possible, but should be coordinated with entrances to commercial and residential parking areas.

f) Class II bike lanes should be striped on both sides of the street as planned in the 2011 Kings County Regional Bicycle Plan.

A landscaped median with turn lanes and pockets of parallel parking

Gateway signage creates a sense of place for an area and can help to add importance to the town

A prominently marked Class II lane of 6 feet in width

V. RAILROAD-ADJACENT COMMERCIAL BLOCKS

Figure 2 illustrates railroad-adjacent commercial blocks. Generally, these blocks have large underutilized parcels that are designated Service Commercial and are located immediately next to the railroads. Due to the railroads running southeasterly, these blocks create an irregular grid system. The rail lines limit east-west connections and pose additional challenges to creating an enclosed, pedestrian-scaled street. Because of their peripheral locations and auto-oriented land use, it is less likely that pedestrian foot traffic would occur in these blocks compared to the commercial streets addressed above. Yet, to ensure a safe and comfortable streetscape for merchants, visitors, and residents alike, the following guidelines should be used.

a) Continuous sidewalks should be provided along at least one side of the street, especially along the side of developed parcels rather than the side of the railroads, at a minimum width of 6 feet with a landscaped buffer.

b) No on-street parking should be allowed when rights-of-way are limited.

c) Class II bike lanes should be striped on both sides of Otis Avenue between Orange Avenue and Patterson Avenue as planned in the 2011 Kings County Regional Bicycle Plan.

d) Where visible, utility wires and poles should be undergrounded.

e) A special treatment for railroad crossings, such as installing a rubber surface to minimize the flangeway gap, detectable warnings, safety signs, and/or traffic lights, should be considered along Orange Avenue and Sherman Avenue.

A continuous sidewalk with 6 feet of landscaped buffer and a Class II bike lane

On-street parking only when the width of the rights-of-way allow for it

A signaled pedestrian traffic button at a train crossing