PLACEMAKING PRINCIPLES 1.3

Streetscape Design

What great neighborhoods and towns typically have in common are excellent pedestrian environments. The most significant element in defining such an environment is a well-designed streetscape.

Taken collectively, the streetscape includes the street, the sidewalk and planting strips, all landscaping, street trees and street furniture on them, and the building facades fronting them. When designed with the pedestrian in mind, the streetscape becomes an outdoor "room," to be enjoyed by residents of a town or city.

In existing communities, such as Surfside, the greatest opportunity for improvement to a substandard pedestrian environment lies within the context of the existing sidewalks. A sidewalk can be broken down into three zones; the curb zone, the pedestrian travel zone, and the building interface zone.

The curb zone is toward the outer edge of the sidewalk, next to the road bed, and accommodates streetscape amenities and infrastructure. The pedestrian travel zone is centered on the sidewalk and must provide a clear path of travel. The building interface zone lies adjacent to the property line, providing access to buildings, and can accommodate additional streetscape amenities such as cafe seating, retail merchandising, etc.

There are numerous elements that may make up a streetscape, but they can be organized into four basic categories; paving, plantings, lighting, and furniture. These elements can vary in relation to the surrounding uses. Paving is the most visible streetscape element. Selecting an ideal paving material should take climate and maintenance into account. Concrete and asphalt are economical materials, and when combined with special materials or colored dyes can provide visual clues to changing street character, and/or a more pedestrian-oriented environment.

Landscape plantings typically have higher maintenance requirements than other streetscape elements because they can change seasonally and/or over time. However, this challenge is far outweighed by the quality of the environment great landscaping can provide a community. As with paving material, landscape selection should take into account local climate and surrounding uses and density.

Trees are the most visible landscape element. Trees in higher density areas, and along pedestrian lanes and alleys, should be planted in individual planters with water permeable materials, such as metal grates, brick pavers, and crushed stone, or in containers. If underground utilities are not an issue, tree selection should aim to provide a moderate tree canopy.

Examples of good streetscape design include wide sidewalks, good lighting, interesting and well merchandised store fronts, good seating, and opportunities for shade and weather protection.

In commercial areas, trees should be selected which grow their limbs higher, at maturity, than the ground floor retail signage to help prevent blocking advertising and shop fronts. Because buildings may have awnings and verandas that could conflict with tree canopies, it may sometimes be necessary to plant trees between on-street parking spaces, as an alternative means of accommodating street trees and achieving shade.

Planted beds in the ground, or raised, should be used primarily only in residential areas. Hanging planters, attached to light poles and buildings, are more appropriate for commercial areas.
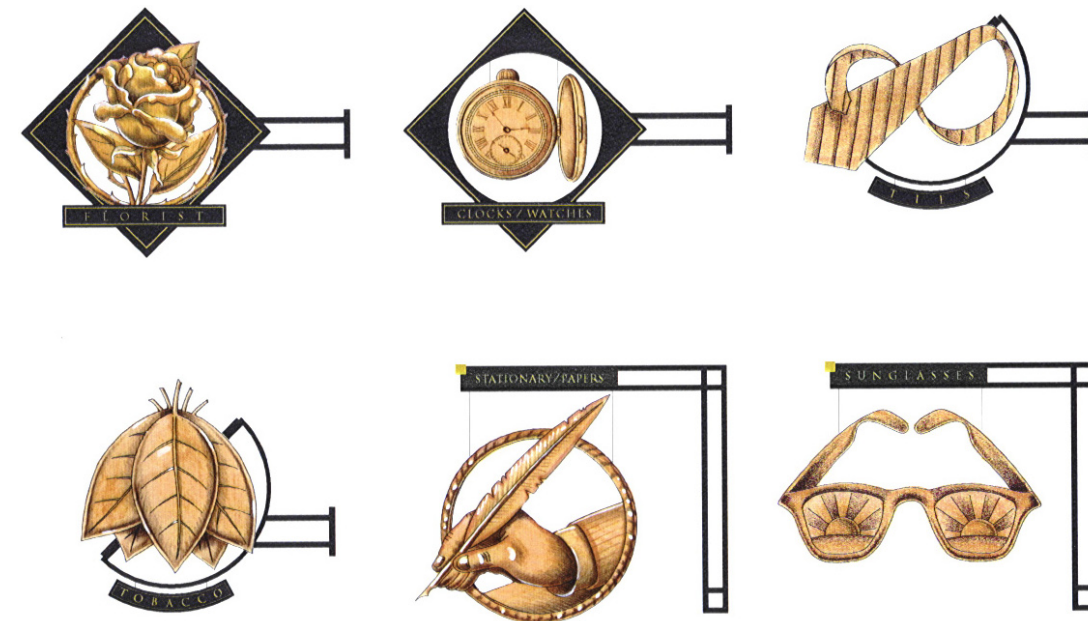
Lighting can serve to both illuminate the way for motorists and pedestrians as well as to discourage anti-social behavior. Speciality lighting can also be used as a design feature to accent building facades and/or as a means of focusing illumination on signage. The amount of lighting is also determined by the surrounding densities and land uses. The light intensity should range from .2 lux (lumens per square meter) for sidewalks and lanes in residential areas, 1.0 lux for commercial areas and parking, to 5.0 lux at building entrances.

Lighting is classified in three categories; roadway, sidewalk lighting, and ancillary lighting. Roadway lighting for important streets can be ornamental to help establish a theme for the neighborhood. The lighting should be mounted on poles that do not exceed 8.5 meters (28') in height. Their placement should be along the curb zone, and spaced between street trees. The average distance between a street tree and light pole should be no more than 12 meters (38'-40'). Such poles should also have a pedestrian scale to them, between 4 and 5 meters (12-16') in height, and should be used for pedestrian passages, plazas, and squares. It is important that the lights be a neutral color, so that the streets aren't bathed in a harsh color. Modern low-wattage lights, such as LEDs, are encouraged.

For rear lanes and alleys, where space is tight, overhead lighting strung along wires anchored to building facades, and/or attached directly to the building, is recommended.

GOOD STREETSCAPES CAN INCLUDE A MIX OF URBAN-FRIENDLY NATIONAL TENANTS AS WELL AS A DIVERSE ARRAY OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL MERCHANTS. MIXED USE (RESIDENTIAL/OFFICE ABOVE SHOPS IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT

Above: Some examples of perpendicular, or "blade" signage, which is designed to project from the face of a building, usually above a shop entrance, and directly in view of pedestrians walking along the sidewalk, below. In this case, the signs indicate the nature of the retail enterprise within, i.e., the signs with the glasses could be an optometrist, the sign with a clock could sell wristwatches, etc.

This form of signage is often referred to as "iconic," because it literally represents the merchandise offered within the store below.

Furniture in a streetscape provides scale and functionality. Types of street furniture include benches, tables and chairs, trash cans, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, bollards, kiosks, transit shelters, signage, parking meters, and newspaper stands. Their placement is within the curb zone and building facade zone. Near intersections a clear zone of 3.5 meters (10') is necessary where pedestrians wait to cross streets. A clear area should also be established at building entrances.

Benches should be located in high-use pedestrian areas. In a curb zone they should face the building facade or the street. If in the building facade zone they should face the street. In no instance should benches be placed in front of shop windows. Trash cans should be placed at frequent intervals and only within the curb zone. Private trash cans can be placed at building entrances along the building zone. Bike racks should be placed along the edges of plazas, squares and other open spaces. Newspaper stands should be installed as large scale, single racks, with multiple containers. Such stands may be combined with utility boxes in certain instances.

Signs should relate to other building elements in their placement and size. They should not obscure other building elements such as windows, cornices or decorative details. Sign material, style and color should complement the building facade. Individual shop signs in a single storefront should relate to each other in design, size, color, placement on the building, and lettering style.

Bollards can be steel or concrete and should only be used to prevent automobile traffic from encroaching in pedestrian zones. They are always located along the curb zone.

Kiosks provide information about community events, neighborhood maps, public phones, drinking fountains, and advertising. The width of a sidewalk is critical to whether or not a kiosk will become an amenity or obstacle. Non-advertising signage is always located in the curb zone and can come in a variety of styles, colors, and materials.

Street furniture elements can add or detract considerably to the pedestrian environment, both in terms of aesthetic appeal, as well as convenience and functionality. Care should be taken to ensure that these are well placed relative to their use, and that they are stylistically consistent with the overall look and feel of the community.

Urban Retail

The key to successful retail revitalization in an existing urban neighborhood is the quality of the street fabric: Great streets support and encourage thriving retail. To insure great streets, a combination of design elements and political issues can be summarized by ten principles:

1. **Select a Local Champion.** A champion can be a group, such as a business improvement district (BID), or corporation or partnership of local businesses, a community development group, or a neighborhood anchor. An individual champion can be a resident, elected official, property owner, or city staff person. The champion should pull together a core group of stakeholders to form a public/private partnership to help guide the redevelopment efforts. Stakeholders must be in it for the long term, so the members, if political, should be ready to stay on board even if they lose an election or choose not to run. The champion must also develop a process or mechanism for resolving conflicts among the stakeholders.

2. **Establish One Vision.** It is important to not let redevelopment efforts be "hijacked" by any one group or individual. Bring all agendas into the open. Create momentum by assigning each stakeholder a specific role. Make sure the vision aims to serve and enhance the neighborhood as much as the greater community. Serving the greater community is important, but should not be the main goal at the expense of supporting or sustaining the immediate neighborhood. To help carry out the vision, it may be necessary to hire a leasing professional to coordinate management and recruitment of tenants.

3. **Encourage residential development.** Increase home ownership to stabilize the neighborhood and create more stakeholders and customers within walking, or a short driving distance of the neighborhood commercial area. Nearby residences create a loyal customer base for retail such as grocery stores and markets. It also encourages mixed-use development, which can support longer business hours. It can also provide for affordable housing opportunities which attract workers who can live near employment.

4. **Give priority to the pedestrian.** Accommodating vehicular traffic is only one of many goals for successful neighborhood retail, but you must design for the pedestrian as well. Many streets are often too long to support retail over their entire length, as is the case with Harding Avenue in Surfside. Therefore, it is important to clarify retail districts and specific merchandising zones. The public realm (plazas, sidewalks, squares, etc.) should be designed to enhance and reinforce these discreet retail areas.

5. **Parking.** *Parking needs to be sized realistically. Urban shopping requires fewer spaces than suburban centers, but is still critical to commercial viability. Parking requirements will change over time. For metered spaces time limits should be fairly enforced so that turnover occurs, but not so tightly regulated that people end up shopping elsewhere. As densities increase, parking decks integrated into the urban fabric should be implemented. Bicycle parking is a growing part of the urban lifestyle, and should be included with appropriate amenities.*

6. **Merchandise and Lease Pro-actively.** *Establish a quasi-public retail leasing and management agency to plan and coordinate the neighborhood's leasing strategy. Actively pursue and recruit tenants and direct them to appropriate landlords and property owners so that leasing deals can be negotiated directly. The more effective the leasing agency, the quicker the neighborhood will become a thriving retail destination. A first priority of the agency may be to hire a management professional to direct its activities. Begin by identifying the core retail assets and focus on growing outward from them, creating a strong nucleus to build upon.*

7. **Be Proactive.** *Set up design guidelines and development standards (including form-based codes) to make sure new developments and facade improvements are compatible with the vision. Such standards can help control not only aesthetics but also concerns such as the types of stores and their operating hours. To solicit interest in redeveloping key properties, target requests for proposals.*

8. **Safety.** *The perception of a shopping district's safety has a tremendous impact on its viability. Active streets with a mix of uses promote a natural surveillance which deters crime. Police on foot and bike patrol have been shown to be an affective crime deterrent.*

9. **Develop an active core**. *Downtown residential and office uses are what extend shopping hours and foster active neighborhoods. Diverse retail anchors help create cross-shopping opportunities. Office users support daytime demand, especially professional tenants such as doctors, lawyers, or accountants, because they attract steady visitors, employ office staff, and serve neighborhood residents. Civic, cultural, and entertainment anchors also attract visitors and can create an efficient park-once-and-walk environment for shoppers with other needs and interests.*

10. **Manage for Change.** *Neighborhood retail grows and changes over time. Make sure to adjust the tenant mix as retail and neighborhood needs change, through incentive programs. It is not uncommon for shopping centers to change out as much as 10% of their tenants every year to remain competitive and cutting edge. To insure that problems do not go unchecked, there should be an ongoing conflict resolution process among the stakeholders. At the broader level, representatives of the business community and citizen leaders should develop long term relationships with public sector representatives and neighborhood spokespersons to insure the needs and concerns of the adjoining neighborhoods are heard and recognized.*

Downtown Commercial & Tourism

Commercial and tourist-related uses are an essential part of any real community, providing both jobs and tax base, as well as a diverse level of activities, energy and vitality.

Providing an appropriate physical environment to accommodate these uses is critical. Of particular importance is not only the physical attractiveness of this environment, but making certain that it is conveniently accessible and functional. It is also important to manage the interface between these activities and adjoining residential neighborhoods and land uses.

Properly managing these issues, in a thoughtful, well-executed design, will allow downtown commercial areas to provide highly desirable community amenities, in a much loved and appreciated setting, and can help provide for a wider spectrum of interests and lifestyles than a community without these features.

Architecture & Form-based Codes

Traditional (pre-war) community development patterns comprised a combination of urban design formats and architectural typologies which, taken together, consistently generated a functionally sustainable and harmoniously pleasing built environment and public realm. The fundamental building block of these traditional communities was the neighborhood, and these were defined by a specific dimensional parameter: a quarter-mile, or five-minute walk.
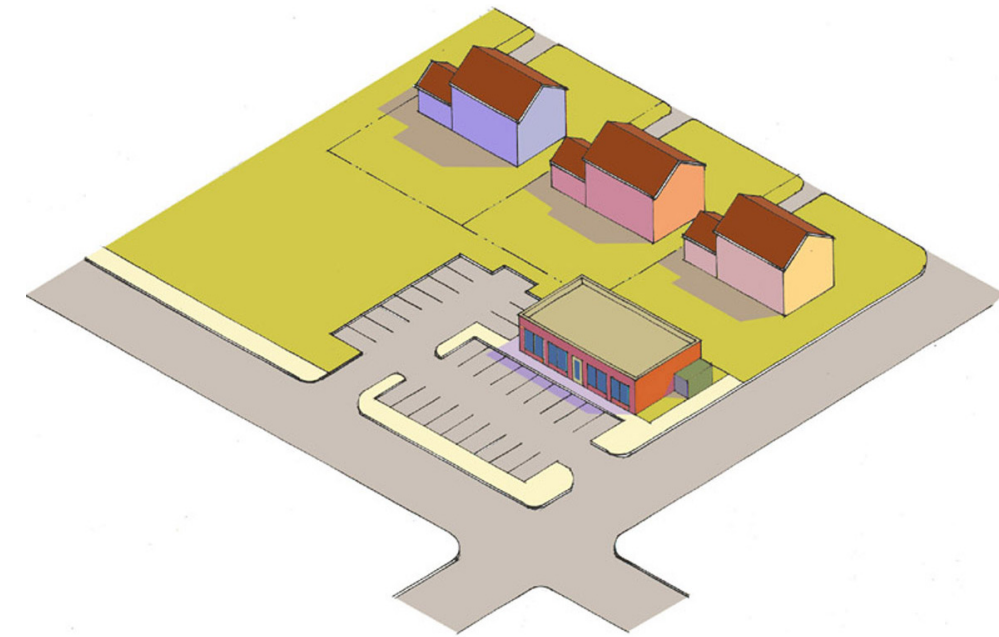
Within this envelope, (a square, approximate ½ mile on edge) neighborhoods were further defined and articulated by a diffuse network of contextually designed local streets, optimized to provide convenient, safe, and appealing walkability, and a range of mobility options within the neighborhood, and an even greater range of flexibility and mobility options on the larger-scale thoroughfares (avenues and boulevards) passing between neighborhoods and linking communities together over longer distances, within their greater regional context.

Typically, this underlying urban structure described above provided the foundational matrix upon which the building types were then applied, giving a recognizable physical form to the community. In general, the buildings were arranged in a rational and efficient fashion, with the largest and most diverse building types (typically multifamily and mixed-use) located in the neighborhood center, and with the least dense buildings (typically

single-family detached) relegated to the edge. The net effect was to allocate uses and building types throughout the community such that all stages of life were accommodated, within a full spectrum of affordability levels, and all of one's daily needs were immediately available within a short distance of either home or work.
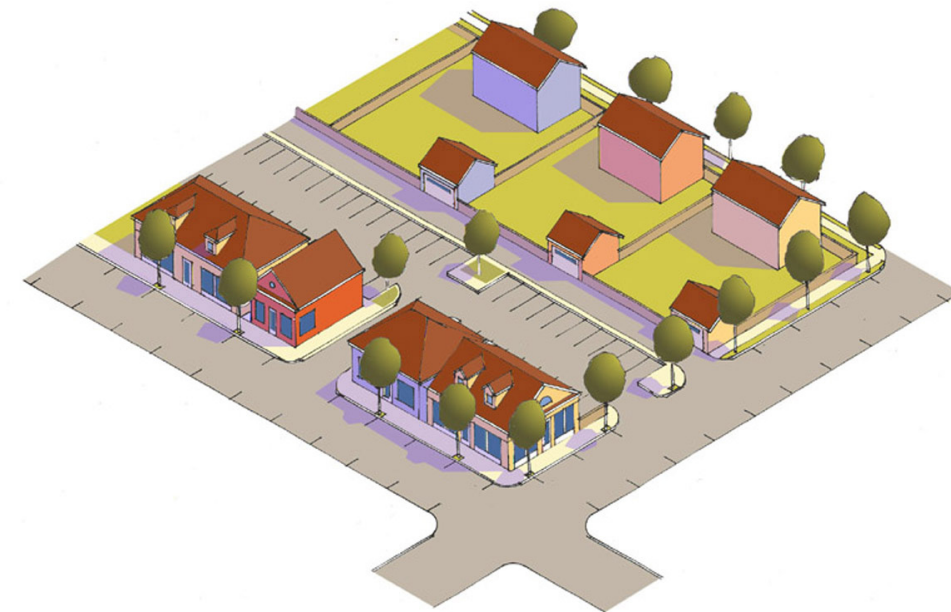
While there are often regional variations to this model, particularly in the architectural forms and styles -- often predicated upon climatic considerations -- certain basic community features and characteristics remain common to most places. Form-based codes allow for this tradition of regional community patterns and building typologies to be formally structured within a specifically designated framework, or regulating plan, based upon local preferences and precedent. The illustrative form-based code that follows is a graphic representation of such a code, and it depicts the various allowable building types and their respective placement on the lot, within an overall urban regulating plan, as described above.

Architectural styles, though typically a discreet component in form-based codes, are also addressed in this document, insomuch as they pertain to building form and massing, in addition to informing specific building details and materials, particularly with regard to climatically-driven forms.

IN SUBURBIA, THE CAR DOMINATES
A typical single-use neighborhood retail outlet in a car-oriented physical setting. The parking lot out in front of the store tells it all. No one ever walks here.

IN TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS, THE CAR IS ACCOMMODATED, BUT NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF THE PEDESTRIAN
Parking is in the rear, the pedestrian is provided for with sidewalks and street trees, and the retail buildings contain other uses, adding to its interest and vitality. You can drive here, but you can also walk or bicycle to your daily needs.

FIVE MINUTE WALK DIAGRAM
Historically, neighborhoods have been developed around the five minute walking radius (about 1/4 mile). In a good mixed-use neighborhood all of a person's daily needs are within a five minute walk from home, which happens to be the distance that an average person will walk to fulfill those needs.

FIVE MINUTE WALK DIAGRAM
The center of the neighborhood is the most dense and most active. Density gradually decreases toward the edge and a great diversity of housing and building types are found within this five minute walk, allowing people of diverse income levels and stages of life to live comfortably in close proximity to one another.