

Off-Street Parking

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE H-1 DISTRICT

Large parking lots have a significant impact on the appearance of downtown Roanoke, making it appear empty of businesses. However, the availability of accessible parking is also important to area residents and visitors who patronize downtown businesses. The design and placement of off-street parking is critical to maintaining the aesthetic quality of the historic district.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS...

Off-street parking areas usually represent a short-term or interim land use until more intensified development can occur.

Voids in a landscape—such as a vacant lot or an off-street parking area—are generally less desirable within the H-1 District that a continuous line of building facades.

Clearly defining the edges of off-street parking areas helps integrate these open spaces into the framework of downtown.

GUIDELINES FOR COMPATIBLE DESIGN

- **Recommended** actions or treatments are indicated by ✓.
- Actions or treatments **not recommended** are indicated by X.

Planning and Site Selection

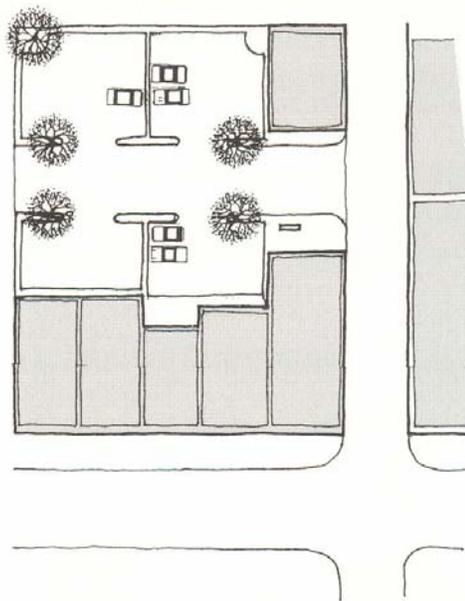
✓ Locate parking behind a building rather than to the side or front to reduce its visual effect. Design parking areas so that they enhance the appearance of a building's rear façade. Provide rear access to parking.

✓ Explore opportunities to share parking between two or more businesses that have their peak demand for parking at different times of the day or week.

✓ Consider alternative sites for employee parking in less heavily developed areas adjacent to a commercial district rather than directly within the district itself.

X Do not demolish commercial buildings

solely to provide off-street parking. Consider rehabilitating such buildings and providing parking at the rear of the lot.



Locating parking behind a commercial block reduces its visual impact yet puts it within easy access of employees, shoppers, and visitors.

X Do not develop parking areas in a way that would severely limit or preclude future building construction or other land uses.

Design Considerations for Parking

✓ Define the street frontage of parking lots and provide partial screening of parked vehicles using one or more of the following features:

- plant materials or
- low walls.

✓ Provide hard-surfaced paving, such as asphalt or concrete, sloped to provide proper drainage, for all parking lots.

✓ Use plant materials, such as street trees or shrubs, to provide definition and screening of parking lots. Plant materials should:

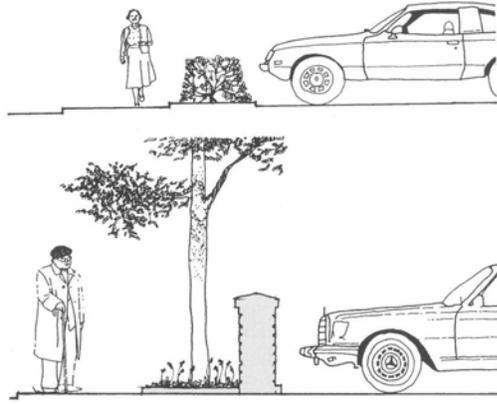
- require little maintenance and
- tolerate conditions in an urban environment.

DEFINITIONS

Peak demand: The time of day during which there is maximum usage.

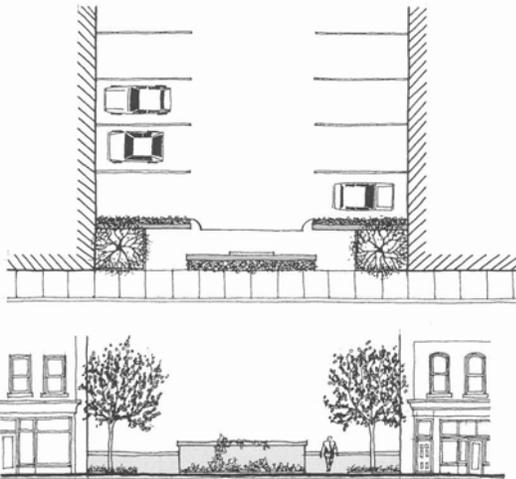
Street frontage: The length of a building site along a street.

Streetscape: The overall appearance of buildings, signs, lights, plantings, and other elements along a street.



Defining the street frontage of a parking lot with plant materials or walls helps to reduce the visual affect of parked vehicles.

- ✓ Use masonry walls to define and screen parking areas that are next to or between buildings. Choose masonry that is compatible with, but not necessarily the same as, that of adjacent buildings. Include landscaping in the design.
- ✓ Use painted iron fences in combination with plant materials to screen parked vehicles from view. Wooden fences are not appropriate.

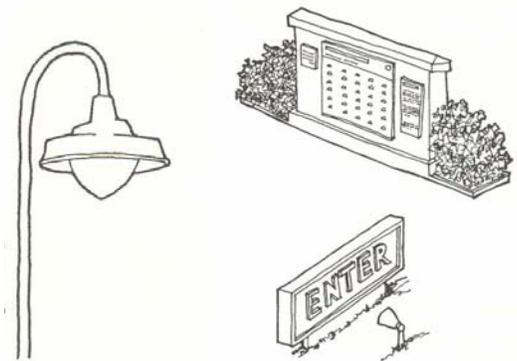


Masonry walls and plant materials at street frontages can help make an infill parking lot more compatible in appearance with neighboring buildings.

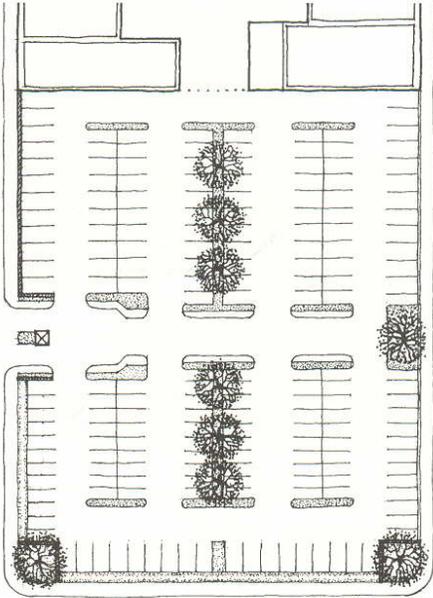
- ✓ Consolidate the entrance and exit of a parking lot in a single location at a sufficient distance from street intersections to avoid traffic and pedestrian conflicts.
- ✓ Define the entrance and exit of a large parking lot with appropriate signs and plant

materials while providing adequate lines of sight for entering and exiting vehicles.

- ✓ Provide several smaller areas of parking rather than a single expanse within a large parking lot, separated by features such as
 - planting islands,
 - walkways, and
 - access drives.
- ✓ Provide clearly defined pedestrian areas and handicapped accessibility within parking areas. Direct the flow of vehicles and pedestrians throughout the site using
 - raised walkways and curbs and
 - different paving materials and textures for vehicular and pedestrian circulation.
- ✓ Use appropriate lighting at the entrances and exits and within parking lots to provide adequate nighttime visibility and security for vehicles and pedestrians.
- ✓ Use appropriate signs to:
 - identify public and private parking lots and
 - notify parking patrons of applicable regulations and fees
- ✓ Design auxiliary buildings or structures, such as attendant booths or pay stations, that are in keeping with the architectural character and materials of adjacent commercial buildings. Appropriate construction materials for such buildings or structures may include
 - brick or stone,
 - painted wood, and
 - painted metal.



Giving careful design attention to pay stations, lighting, and signs helps make parking lots compatible with downtown Roanoke's historic character.



Reduce the scale of large parking areas by creating several smaller areas defined by drives, walkways, and plant materials.