

Town of Cumberland
ROUTE 1 DESIGN STANDARDS



Adopted by the Cumberland Town Council on February 22, 2016 as part of the
2009 Cumberland Comprehensive Plan (as amended in 2014)

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Section 100: Policy and Goals

101. Site Plan Review: These design standards shall be used by the Planning Board as part of the site plan review process when evaluating proposed development projects in the U.S. Route 1 Corridor, defined for purposes of these standards as the OC-North (OC-N) and OC South (OC-S) districts, and any lot in the Limited Density Residential (LDR) District with frontage on U.S. Route 1.

102. Goals: Because U.S. Route 1 is a major entry point to the Town of Cumberland, the Town has adopted these standards to ensure that all development within the U.S. Route 1 Corridor meets the following goals:

- .1 To encourage high quality, economically viable development that reinforces Cumberland's sense of place, and that is reflective of and responsive to the Town's unique architectural character.
- .2 To promote uses of the type and density that respond to each site's ability to sustain development, both ecologically and with regard to the efficient provision of adequate public services.
- .3 To preserve, wherever possible, the rural appearance of the Corridor by maintaining or creating a buffer of trees and other vegetation along the highway and preserving open space to reduce the apparent density of development.
- .4 To foster an attractive, functional and safe environment that is conducive to commerce, senior housing, pedestrian and cycling activities and other allowed uses.
- .5 To protect abutting residential properties through sensitive site planning, buffering and building design.

103. Applicability: These standards shall apply to the development and redevelopment of properties located in the U.S. Route 1 Corridor, whether Site Plan Review is required or not.

104. Design Handbook: The standards set forth herein are for the purpose of making objective findings of fact as part of Site Plan Review. For additional information and illustrations, please refer to the Route One Design Standards Handbook which is available at www.cumberlandmaine.com

Section 200: Master Planning

On properties that are large enough to accommodate more than a single structure, developers shall prepare a conceptual master plan to show the Planning Board the general location of future buildings, parking areas, circulation patterns, open space, utilities, storm water management plan and any other pertinent information.

Section 300: Site Development Standards

301. Site Design

Wherever possible, large buildings shall fit into the existing topography and vegetation, and shall not require dramatic grade changes around their perimeter. Landscaping, site walls, pedestrian amenities and existing trees can be utilized to reduce the apparent scale of large buildings.

302. Rt. 1 Buffer Strip:

A 75' buffer from the Rt. 1 right-of-way to the buildings is required for all lots with frontage on U.S. Route 1, except for lots located in the U.S. Route 1 Overlay District.

Healthy trees within the 75' buffer shall be maintained in their natural state. Where there are few or no trees within the buffer, the buffer area shall be landscaped with trees or with flowering shrubs, fencing, or architectural features such as stone walls, in accordance with an approved landscape plan. When plantings do not survive or grow to a point where they no longer serve as effective buffers, they shall be replaced or enhanced to meet the intent of the approved plan

303. Vehicular Access:

New driveways and existing driveways for which the use has changed or expanded require a Maine Department of Transportation "Driveway Entrance Permit." Shared entrance locations will be required whenever possible

304. Parking:

Parking shall not be the dominant visual element when viewed from US Route 1. Parking shall be located to the side or rear of buildings.

305. Service Areas:

Exterior dumpsters, recycling facilities, mechanical units, loading docks and other similar uses shall meet the needs of the facility with a minimum of visual, odor or noise impacts. They shall be fully screened from view by plantings or fencing. Service areas are not permitted on any front or side of a building that is visible from US Route 1.

306. Electric, Telephone and Cable:

All wired connections from existing utilities on U.S. Route 1 shall be made to individual lots via underground conduit.

Section 400: Building Standards:

401. Building Design

All structures shall be designed in the traditional New England style of architecture whenever feasible.

402. Facades and Exterior Walls

Unbroken facades in excess of 80 feet are overwhelming whether they are visible from Route 1, other roadways or pedestrian areas, or when they abut residential areas. Breaking up the plane of the wall is required to reduce this sense of overwhelming scale. Where the plane of the wall is broken, the offset shall be proportionate to the building's height and length. A general rule of thumb for such projections or recesses is that their depth shall be at least 3% of the façade's length, and they shall extend for at least 20% of the façade's length.

Other devices to add interest to long walls include strong shadow lines, changes in rooflines, pilasters and similar architectural details, as well as patterns in the surface material and wall openings. All façade elements shall be coordinated with the landscape plan.

Commercial buildings shall include a focal point – such as a raised entranceway or clock tower, or other architectural element – to add visual interest and help reduce the scale of the building.

Facades of commercial buildings that face U.S. Route 1 or other roadways shall have transparent openings along 30% or more of the length of the ground floor.

403. Building Entrances

Large structures shall have clearly defined and highly visible entrances emphasized through such devices as significant variations in rooflines or cornice lines, changes in materials, porticos, landscape treatments, distinctive lighting or other architectural treatments.

The building's main entrance shall be a dominant architectural feature of the building and clearly demarcated by the site design and landscaping.

Pedestrian entrances to each business or tenant shall be clearly defined and easily accessible.

Where building entrances do not face U.S. Route 1, the U.S. Route 1 façade shall be complimentary to the general style of the building and surrounding buildings.

404. Building Materials

Traditional siding materials common to New England are brick, painted clapboard and either painted or unpainted shingles. Contemporary materials that have the same visual characteristics as traditional materials (e.g., cementitious clapboards or vinyl siding) are acceptable if attention is paid to detailing (e.g., corners, trim at openings, changes in material). Metal cladding is not allowed on any front, rear or side of the building that is visible from Route 1.

Common traditional roofing materials are shingles –, as well as standing seam metal. Where visible, the roofing color shall be selected to complement the color and texture of the building's façade. Roofing colors shall be darker than the color of the façade.

405. Architectural Details

Architectural details, such as colonnades, pilasters, gable ends, awnings, display windows and appropriately positioned light fixtures, shall be used to reduce the scale and uniformity of larger buildings.

406. Roofs

Flat roofs are prohibited, unless the applicant can demonstrate that a flat roof can meet these standards.

407. Windows

Windows shall reflect a classic New England style by featuring divided lights (window panes) and detailing trim around them.

408. Awnings and Canopies

Awnings and canopies can enhance the appearance and function of a building by providing shade, shelter, shadow patterns, and visual interest. Where awnings are used, they shall complement the overall design and color of the building.

Whether fixed or retractable, awnings and canopies shall be an integral element of the architecture. They shall be located directly over windows and doors to provide protection from the elements. Awnings or canopies shall not be used as signage, light sources or advertising features.

Section 500: Signage

Commercial and residential signage along the U.S. Route 1 Corridor in Cumberland shall have attractive and legible signs that complement the site and the architecture. Internally illuminated signs and reader boards are not permitted. All signage shall comply with the requirements of the Cumberland Zoning Ordinance.

501 Signage Plan

The Planning Board shall require that a signage plan be submitted as part of the site plan or subdivision plan for the development. The signage plan shall show the location of all signs on a site plan drawing and on building elevations, as well as sign materials, dimensions, elevations, etc.

Signs shall be placed in locations that do not interfere with the safe and logical usage of the site. They shall not block motorists' lines of sight or create hazards for pedestrians or bicyclists. Roof mounted signs are not permitted. Signs may be located within the 75' buffer providing there is minimal clearing of vegetation required.

502 Sign Design

The shape, materials, and finish of all proposed signage shall complement the architectural features of the associated building.

503. Sign Colors

Signs shall be limited to three contrasting colors that are complimentary to the colors of the associated building.

504. Sign Content

To ensure a clear and easily readable message, a single sign with a minimum of informational content shall be used.

Lettering on any sign intended to be read by passing motorists needs to be legible at the posted speed limit.

Variable message "reader boards", sponsor logos, slogans or other messages that promote products or services other than the tenants' are not permitted.

Signage for any proposed development should prominently feature its assigned street address to facilitate general way-finding and e-911 emergency response.

505. Building Mounted Signs

Building or façade mounted signs shall be designed as an integral element of the architecture, and shall not obscure any of the architectural details of the building. Signs shall be mounted on vertical surfaces and shall not project past the elevation of the building(s). Signs shall be located a minimum of 18" from the edge of a vertical wall.

Flush mounted (flat) signs shall be mounted with concealed hardware. Perpendicular hanging signs shall be mounted with hardware designed to complement the building's architecture.

506. Freestanding Signs

Freestanding signs are allowed consistent with the signage plan. They shall be designed to complement the associated building. This will entail similar forms, materials, colors and finishes. Landscaping surrounding the base of such signs shall be consistent with the landscaping of the entire site.

507. Sign Illumination

Only externally lit signs are allowed in the U.S. Route 1 Corridor. Externally illuminated signs are made of an opaque material and shall have a dedicated light fixture or fixtures mounted in close proximity, aimed directly at the sign face. The illumination level on the vertical surface of the sign should create a noticeable contrast with the surrounding building or landscape without causing undue reflection or glare.

Lighting fixtures for signs shall be located, aimed and shielded such that light is only directed onto the surface of the sign. Fixtures shall be mounted above the sign and be aimed downward to prevent illumination of the sky and to avoid blinding passing motorists

Where signage lighting abuts residential areas, lighting shall be substantially reduced in intensity, or turned off, within one hour of the business closing. Signage lighting may not be turned on until within one hour of the business opening.

Section 600: Waiver Provision

Where the Planning Board or Town Planner, for Staff Site Plan Reviews, finds that there are special circumstances of a particular plan that make a particular submission requirement or review standard inapplicable, a waiver may be granted, provided that such waiver will not have the effect of nullifying the intent and purpose of the Comprehensive Plan or these Design Standards. The applicant shall submit, in writing, the reason for the requested waiver. In granting waivers or modifications, the Planning Board or Town Planner may require such conditions that will substantially secure the objective of the standards so waived or modified.

Definitions

Applicant. The person, organization, land owner or representative of the same who is seeking Site Plan or Subdivision approval from the Town, or who is seeking any other permit or permission from the Town.

Architectural Features. A part, portion, or projection that contributes to the beauty or elegance of a building or structure, exclusive of signs, that is not necessary for the structural integrity of the building or structure. Examples of architectural features of a building include cornices, eaves, gutters, blet courses, windows, sills, lintels, façade or fascia.

Buffer. Any planted or built barrier intended to visually, and in some cases acoustically, separate two adjacent but different uses. Also used to shield an unpleasant use on a site from other uses on the site, such as a dumpster. Buffers are typically vegetated (planted) but can also be in the form of a berm or fence.

Curb Cut. The interruption of a curb at which point vehicles may enter or leave the roadway.

Cut-off Fixtures. A type of light fixture that prevents most of the light from projecting above the horizontal plane of the fixture.

Developer. The person, organization, land owner or representative of the same who is seeking Site Plan or Subdivision approval from the Town, or who is seeking any other permit or permission from the Town.

Landscape Plan. A drawing in a project proposal that identifies the species, quantity and location of all proposed vegetation.

Open Space. Areas of a building site that are left unbuilt to be used for public use of visual enhancement. This can be landscaped or left in a natural state, depending upon the individual project.

Planning Board. The Town board empowered to grant Site Plan approval and Subdivision approval. Any project proposed in the U.S. Route 1 corridor will require Planning Board review and approval.

Scale. The interrelationships of a development, its elements and its surroundings in terms of size, bulk, intensity and aesthetics.

Service Area. A designated area on a development site where a business accommodates its necessary but visually unattractive services such as shipping and delivery, trash storage and pick-up, utility storage and the like