

Visual Appearance

General Questions

1. Inventory aspects of different projects in Freeland (or other local areas) that are good examples of good design or layout. Think about good architecture, use of exterior materials, building layout and orientation to the street, distance from the street, landscaping, signage, and lighting. Where are there good examples of parking lots that fit into the site layout? What colors work well? (Let's avoid examples of bad design and layout so that this doesn't get personal in a negative way).
2. What are the main issues related to visual appearance? Think about architecture, setbacks from streets, orientation of buildings, colors, landscaping, and signs. Think about the appearance during the day vs. the night. Think about the difference between the Business Village zone (a pedestrian oriented area) vs. the Business General zone (serviced primarily by vehicles).
3. Is it appropriate to establish themes for architecture, color, and building materials, or is variety more important? If variety is important how do you encourage variety? Or conversely, how do you avoid one developer trying to repeat another developments project (our experience is that some developers will repeat many of the features of another project that was recently approved because they are under the impression that it might be easier to get a permit).
4. Is it better to have a very detailed list of prescriptive standards or should variety be encouraged through a "menu" of options? What are the core aspects that should be prescriptive and where/how should discretion be incorporated?

Specific Questions

5. Landscaping:
 - a. What are the top 5 reasons for having landscaping (no need to order them)? There are obvious environmental benefits of landscaping. When you are answering this, consider this from the visual appearance perspective only.
 - b. What are the top 5 factors to consider when considering the appropriateness of the specific landscaping plan? When we are reviewing a landscaping plan we are looking at the type of vegetation proposed, native vs. non-native (non-natives aren't necessarily always a negative thing), size at the time of planting vs. full grown, coniferous trees that provide year round screening vs. deciduous trees that provide good summer screening and interesting winter time color and structure, height variation between herbaceous grasses and ground covers at low height levels, bushes and shrubs at medium height levels, and trees at higher height levels. We also evaluate whether the landscaping will appear suburban (e.g. same tree of same size planted every 10 feet on center) or if

it will follow a more meandering pattern that is more likely to appear in a rural area.

- c. What is the purpose of landscaping in commercial projects? Is it for the purpose of hiding/screening buildings or complimenting buildings? Is it for the purpose of hiding/screening parking areas or not? Is it particularly important to use landscaping to accentuate certain areas, e.g. to street trees, corners at intersections? Is it particularly important to use landscaping to accentuate certain constructed features, e.g. landscaping around a monument sign, to highlight an entryway to a building or parking lot?

6. Signs:

- a. What types of signs are appropriate and what types should be prohibited? Consider the style of the sign, e.g. monument, pole, goal post.
- b. What type of illumination is appropriate? Consider backlit, internally illuminated, lit from above and/or below.
- c. What type of colors are appropriate?
- d. What scale of signage is appropriate in the Business Village designation vs. the Business General designation? Consider signage that may be affixed to a building, signs that are at a busy intersection, signs on Main Street where the speed limit is 25 vs. the highway where it is 45+.

7. Lighting:

- a. What are the important goals of lighting? Think about lights that illuminate signs and buildings, those that guide people down a path or in a courtyard, accentuating architectural feature and landscaping, and those that are for parking lots.
- b. Consider appropriate hours of full illumination vs. scaled back illumination.

8. Buildings:

- a. What are the important aspects of architecture? Consider the styles of architecture, roof pitch, colors, exterior building materials. Again, think about repetition vs. variety – do you want every building to be beige and all buildings to have a river rock veneer?
- b. How big and how tall should buildings be? It is likely that you will have a different conclusion for each of these two zoning designations. Should building height be related to the number of stories or the number of feet? Our experience is that a strict height limit that is measured in feet compromises the architecture when the owner is attempting to create as much interior square footage as possible. How can this be balanced?
- c. Is it appropriate to grant variations from these standards as an incentive to promote another goal? For example, if the developer is willing to incorporate low impact development or affordable housing into a

development should there be a different standard for square footage or height? In the Business Village pedestrian zone would it be appropriate to keep the height limit lower for a portion of a building that is up against the road or sidewalk, but allow a higher height limit further away from the street or sidewalk?

- d. What are the important elements to consider when determining the location and orientation of a building on a site? Consider setbacks, relationship to streets and sidewalks, relationship to parking areas. In the Business Village zone how can we ensure that the Main Street side of a building is pedestrian oriented, even if there is a parking lot on another side of the building with a vehicular oriented entryway?

9. Relationship Between Adjacent Uses:

- a. Often times we focus on how to make sure land use regulations can protect adjacent uses from adversely impacting one another. For example, we have standards that are intended to create a buffer between an industrial use and a residential use. What about the adjacent uses that we want to tie together in some way? Especially within the Business Village zone. What kinds of things are important when we are trying to encourage a pedestrian friendly transition from one property to another?