Note: These guidelines are part of the Knoxville Zoning Ordinance, Article 5, Section 23, Supplementary Regulations.
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These guidelines were adopted by:
Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission on May 10, 2007
Knoxville City Council on August 28, 2007
PURPOSE

In April 2007, the Knoxville Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission adopted the Cumberland Avenue Corridor Plan, which outlined the design principles and guidelines contained in this document. A recommendation of that plan is to create a form-based code for the C-7 District. These guidelines are adopted: (1) to provide a framework for new development that is proposed in the district, and (2) to assist the C-7 Board in reviewing major public and private projects. Major projects include new buildings and parking lots and structures. Minor projects, which can be approved by MPC staff, include signs that are in keeping with the guidelines and exterior renovations of existing buildings. Interior renovations are not subject to review.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Buildings Form the Space of the Street
Buildings are in essence walls that, with the street, create a shared public “room”. The character and scale of the walls determine the character of the room. Continuous building frontage with active uses on a street creates a welcome and attractive space that supports pedestrian and economic activity. Property lines should be physically defined by buildings or street walls in order to clearly define public and private space and ensure that parking lots are located either behind buildings or buffered by street walls.

Building Height
The street will have a more cohesive, pedestrian feel if contiguous buildings are of similar heights. Buildings taller than those that have typically been built in the corridor are encouraged. However, relative uniformity in height will create a more cohesive, comfortable place. In other words, it is better to have two five-story buildings next to each other than a two-story building next to an eight-story building. The current C-7 Pedestrian Commercial District allows building heights of 8 stories or 90 feet. It will be difficult to ultimately create a consistent built form of 90 foot high buildings therefore, these guidelines recommend a lowering of the building height with the goal of achieving a more consistent urban form.

Environmental Sustainability
In addition to environmental benefits, “green” buildings can cost less, improve worker productivity, enhance marketing efforts, and help to create a district identity. Buildings should respond to the site, be efficient in water and energy use, be constructed of sustainable materials, and create healthy environment for the occupants. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Reference Guide for New Construction and Major Renovation, Version 2.2 is a valuable resource for guidance on green building techniques, practices and standards.

Parking & Access
Parking, and access to parking, should be located off of the side streets or alleys. Curb cuts along White Street, Cumberland Avenue and Lake Street should be discouraged. Surface parking lots should be screened and separated from public rights-of-way. Surface lots should be located behind or beside buildings. All surface lots should be landscaped and shading maximized.
**Service**
Service and delivery should be accommodated on side streets, alleys or in designated pull-out locations along Cumberland Avenue. All dumpsters and refuse collection areas should be located off the alley, and screened from public rights-of-way.

**Lighting**
Building and site lighting should be designed in such a way as to eliminate light trespass and minimize light pollution. The best lighting schemes will generally lower lighting levels, maximize uniformity and eliminate glare. Lighting for pedestrians is an important consideration and should be designed to maximize visibility and comfort. These considerations can decrease first costs, have marked value in life-cycle costs and create a more attractive and comfortable nighttime environment. The Illuminating Engineering Society of North American (IESNA) Recommended Practice Manual: Lighting for Exterior Environments (IESNA RP-33-99) is a valuable resource for guidance on best lighting practices.

**Signage**
The scale of signage should be designed with pedestrians in mind. Signs on awnings, in windows, and projecting from the face of the building can help create an interesting pedestrian environment.

**Landscaping**
Street trees are encouraged to augment the public landscape plan. Landscaping should be designed to provide shade for pedestrians and generally improve the aesthetic environment of the corridor. Impervious surfaces should also be shaded to mitigate urban heat island effects. The Knoxville Street Tree Master Plan should be used in selecting appropriate species.
FRONTAGE REQUIREMENTS

The Cumberland Avenue area, for the purpose of the design guidelines, has been broken up into four distinct frontage areas. Depending on their context, unique frontage requirements have been set forth in the following pages. The guidelines focus on key characteristics related to development and form that encompass building heights, siting requirements, key built elements and uses. Additionally, basic street characteristics are also outlined to complement the built form and create a safe and vibrant urban environment.

Figure 1: The Cumberland Avenue Area Frontages

![Map of Cumberland Avenue Area Frontages](image)
**CUMBERLAND AVENUE FRONTAGE**

**Height**
- Maximum height for any portion of the building should be 70 feet above the highest elevation of the property line fronting Cumberland Avenue.
- Minimum height of the building frontage along Cumberland Avenue should be 2 stories or 30 feet above the highest elevation of the property line fronting Cumberland Avenue.
- Ground story finished floor elevation can be no lower than exterior sidewalk elevation in front of building.

**Siting**
- The building must be built to the property line fronting Cumberland Avenue for at least 80% of total lot frontage.
- Outdoor seating areas in front of a building can be counted as building frontage provided that a street wall of at least 3 feet is included and the principle structure is located no more than 20 feet from the property line for the entire width of the seating area.
- For the remaining portion of the building that does not directly abut the property line, a street wall of at least 3 feet is required along Cumberland Avenue frontage.
- Vehicle parking should be located at least 20 feet away from Cumberland Avenue (except for underground parking floors).

**Elements**
- Blank walls greater than 20 feet in length are prohibited along street frontages.
- Doors, windows and fenestrations should occupy at least 75% of the total ground floor facade area.
- On corner lots, where Cumberland Avenue intersects major streets, at least one building entrance should be located at the corner.
- Parking should be located in the rear of the property with access to parking from the alleys and side streets.
- Structured parking should not exceed the primary structure's height.

**Uses**
- Ground floor to include retail or office uses
- Upper stories to include office, institutional and/or residential uses

**Street**
- One 14 foot lane, in each direction, which can accommodate both bicycles and motor vehicles
- 10 foot left-turn lane
- Pedestrian refuge on Cumberland Avenue crosswalks
- Options for designated pull-out areas: transit, on-street parking or wider sidewalks
Figure 2: Cumberland Avenue Frontage

- Ground Floor: retail or office uses
- Upper Floors: office, residential or institutional uses
- Build-to line
- Bus pull-out

30 feet to 70 feet in Height

70'-0" Right-of-Way
**LAKE AVENUE FRONTAGE**

**Height**
- Maximum height for any portion of the building should be 40 feet above the highest elevation of the property line fronting Lake Avenue.
- Minimum height of the building frontage along Lake Avenue should be 20 feet above the highest elevation of the property line fronting Lake Avenue.
- Height measurements are taken from the highest point of the property line fronting Lake Avenue to the mid-point of the roof.
- Ground story finished floor elevation can be no lower than exterior sidewalk elevation in front of building.

**Siting**
- The building must be built to the property line fronting Lake Avenue for at least 80% of the total lot frontage.

**Elements**
- Blank walls of length greater than 20 feet are prohibited along street frontages.
- Doors and windows should occupy at least 40% of the total ground floor facade area.
- Primary building entrances to be located on Lake Avenue

**Uses**
- Ground floor to include retail, office and/or residential uses
- Upper stories to include office, institutional and/or residential uses

**Street**
- Existing on-street parking should remain.
- Pedestrian amenities should be enhanced.
Figure 3: Lake Avenue Frontage
WHITE AVENUE-NEIGHBORHOOD FRONTAGE
(1700 to 1900 Blocks)

Height
- Maximum height for any portion of the building should be 40 feet above the highest
elevation of the property line fronting White Avenue.
- Minimum height of the building frontage along White Avenue should be 20 feet above
the highest elevation of the property line fronting White Avenue.
- Height measurements are taken from the highest point of the property line fronting
White Avenue to the mid-point of the roof.
- Ground story finished floor elevation can be no lower than the exterior sidewalk
elevation in front of the building.

Siting
- The building must be built to the property line fronting White Avenue for at least 80%
of the total lot frontage.

Elements
- Primary building entrance to be located on White Avenue frontage.
- Parking areas should be located in the rear of the property.
- Blank walls of length greater than 20 feet are prohibited along street frontages.

Uses
- Ground floor to include retail, office and/or residential uses
- Upper stories to include office, institutional and/or residential uses

Street
- Existing on-street parking should remain.
- Improve pedestrian amenities along White Avenue.
- Enhance pedestrian crosswalks.
Figure 4: White Avenue-Neighborhood Frontage (1700 to 1900 Blocks)

Ground Floor: retail, residential or office uses

Upper Floors: office, residential or institutional uses

20 to 40 feet in Height

Build-to Line

On-Street Parking

Existing Residential

5' 5' 14' 8' 30' 50'-0" Right-of-Way
WHITE AVENUE-HOSPITAL FRONTAGE  
(West Of 19th Street)

Height  
• Maximum height for any portion of the building should be 70 feet above the highest elevation of the property line fronting White Avenue.  
• Minimum height of the building frontage along White Avenue should be 20 feet above the highest elevation of the property line fronting White Avenue.  
• Height measurements are taken from the highest point of the property line fronting White Avenue to the mid-point of the roof.  
• Ground story finished floor elevation can be no lower than the exterior sidewalk elevation in front of the building.

Siting  
• Building must be set back 5 feet from the property boundary fronting White Avenue for 80% of the total lot frontage.

Elements  
• Primary building entrance to be located on White Avenue frontage  
• Parking areas should be located in the rear of the property.  
• Blank walls of length greater than 20 feet are prohibited along street frontages.

Uses  
• Ground floor to include retail, office, institutional and/or residential uses  
• Upper stories to include office, institutional and/or residential uses

Street  
• Existing 14-foot travel lane should remain.  
• Improve pedestrian amenities and sidewalk conditions along White Avenue.  
• Enhance pedestrian crosswalks to institutional uses.  
• Existing surface parking lots should be consolidated with structured parking.
**Figure 5: White Avenue-Hospital Frontage (West Of 19th Street)**

- **Upper Floors:** office, residential or institutional uses
- **Ground Floor:** retail, residential or office uses

- **Build-to Line**
- **On-Street Parking**
- **Hospital Frontage**
**PARKING AND SERVICE FACILITIES**

Parking and service facilities should be designed to enhance the pedestrian setting.

**Parking Entrances and Locations**
- Vehicular access must be from the side streets or alleys, and not from Cumberland Avenue. Access to mixed use structures (that is, parking structures with ground level or “liner” uses may be located off of Lake or White Avenues.

**Surface Parking Lots**
- Parking lots should be screened from streets and sidewalks. A combination of brick walls, hedges or wrought iron should be used in screening parking lots. In order to provide visibility for security, the height of solid materials (walls or hedges) should be three to three and one-half feet.
- Parking lots should be located behind or to the side of buildings, but never at the corner of a block.
- Shade trees (see Knoxville Street Tree Master Plan list) should be evenly distributed across parking lots using a ratio of one tree per ten spaces.

**Parking Structures**
- Along Cumberland Avenue, commercial uses should be provided at ground-level.
- Along Lake and White Avenues: (1) commercial or office uses should be at the ground-level of parking structures, or (2) residential units can be used as “liner uses” (that is, between the sidewalk and the parking decks).
- The turning radius at parking structure entrances and exits must be designed in relation to the future road and sidewalk widths outlined in the Cumberland Avenue Corridor Plan or subsequent street design documents.
- A minimum of five feet of landscaped space should be provided between the sidewalk and the sides of parking structures that do not have liner uses.

*Parking lots should be screened and located behind or to the side of buildings.*

*Commercial and residential uses line the street frontage of this parking garage.*
**Service Facilities**

- Business trash receptacles and dumpsters should be located off alleys or side streets and screened in similar materials to the “parent” building.
- Service and delivery access to buildings should be off the alleys, from side streets or from designated pull out locations.

**BUILDING MATERIALS**

Time-honored building materials, especially those associated with the brick of the University’s Cumberland Avenue-oriented buildings and the pre-1950 commercial buildings, should be used in commercial and residential development.

- Traditional materials, primarily red or terra-cotta brick and stucco-like materials, should be a primary consideration along Cumberland Avenue. Stucco-like materials should not be used at ground floor levels.
- Clapboard, shingle or stucco-like materials (which were occasionally used as the historic materials in the district’s residential areas) can be considered along Lake and White Avenues. For structures greater than two-stories, these materials should not be the predominant exterior covering. Stucco-like materials should not be used at ground floor levels.

**LANDSCAPING**

Landscape with native trees and other plants.

- In order to avoid disease problems and provide seasonal beauty, use a variety of trees in terms of size at maturity and species (see Knoxville Street Tree Master Plan for a list of recommended trees).
SIGNS
Signs should be designed at a pedestrian scale.

Various types of signs are permitted:
• Wall Signs: The total size of the sign should not exceed one-half (0.5) square feet per linear foot of the front face of the building or a maximum of 30 feet, whichever is less. The height of the sign should not exceed 24 inches.
• Awning signs
• Hanging and arcade signs should be no larger than six square feet.
• Window signs should be composed of applied letters or symbols and not exceed 30% of the store front glass panels. Neon lighted signs and symbols are permitted.
• Freestanding signs (not exceeding 3 by 4 feet) are encouraged in the yards of residential-type structures that are used for office or commercial purposes on the north side of White Avenue in the 1700 to 1900 blocks.
• Shingle signs (not exceeding six square feet) may be used throughout the district.
• Illumination of signs should be directed from an external light shield.

LIGHTING
Pedestrian-scale lighting should be provided throughout the district.

• Use lighting to accent architectural details and building entrances.
• Lighting that illuminates sidewalks may be placed on buildings.