Direct Land Use Code Annotations

Article 3
General Development Standards

ARTICLE 3 - GENERAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DIVISION 3.1 GENERAL PROVISIONS — **(N.A.)**

Sections:

3.1.1 Applicability
3.1.2 Relation to Zone District Standards (Article 4)

DIVISION 3.2 SITE PLANNING AND DESIGN STANDARDS

Sections:

3.2.1 Landscaping and Tree Protection — **(N.A.)**
3.2.2 Access, Circulation and Parking — **(Examples & Explanations)**
3.2.3 Solar Access, Orientation, Shading — **(N.A.)**
3.2.4 Site Lighting — **(N.A.)**

3.2.1 Landscaping and Tree Protection — (N.A.)

3.2.2 Access, Circulation and Parking

(A) ***Purpose.*** This Section is intended to ensure that the parking and circulation aspects of all developments are well designed with regard to safety, efficiency and convenience for vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians and transit, both within the development and to and from surrounding areas. Sidewalk or bikeway extensions off-site may be required based on needs created by the proposed development. This Section sets forth minimum parking requirements in terms of numbers and dimensions of parking stalls, landscaping and shared parking. It also addresses the placement of drive-in facilities and loading zones.

(B) ***General Standard.*** The parking and circulation system within each development shall accommodate the movement of vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians and transit, throughout the proposed development and to and from surrounding areas, safely and conveniently, and shall contribute to the attractiveness of the development. The on-site pedestrian system must provide adequate directness, continuity, street crossings, visible interest and security as defined by the standards in this Section. The on-site bicycle system must connect to the city's on-street bikeway network. Connections to the off-road trail system shall be made, to the extent reasonably feasible.

Examples & Explanations

With consideration, each real estate development can:
- invite people to walk or ride bikes from place to place;
- accommodate people who arrive by car and become pedestrians once it is parked; and
- accommodate delivery and service trucks.

In the example above, thoughtful walkways and canopy trees make a sunny rear parking lot into a comfortable setting for a building entrance and a patio along with service areas.

Access, Circulation, and Parking

The most important connections for all forms of movement and access are *not* covered by this section. They lie in the street network, which is covered mostly in sections 3.6, 3.5, and several zone districts in Article 4. Those sections call for streets, and for building placement to shape the streets. After all new street connections are determined, and after building sites are set in relation to streets, then this section 3.2.2 becomes relevant.

This section deals mostly with walkways, parking lots, and internal drives. Other connections like bike trail linkages may also be called for in specific projects as well, depending on the context. Related equipment, such as lighting, furnishings, or a shelter, is sometimes part of the circulation system.

The tough issue here is making sure that as land is urbanized, the person walking or riding a bike is welcomed as well as the person driving a car or truck. This issue pervades the whole Code. Even if people walking are not important to the bottom line in a given real estate development, comfortable walking and gathering areas will still make it a more complete, acceptable addition to Fort Collins. This people-based approach also makes development more adaptable and viable for changes in use over the long term.

This section is relevant at two scales:

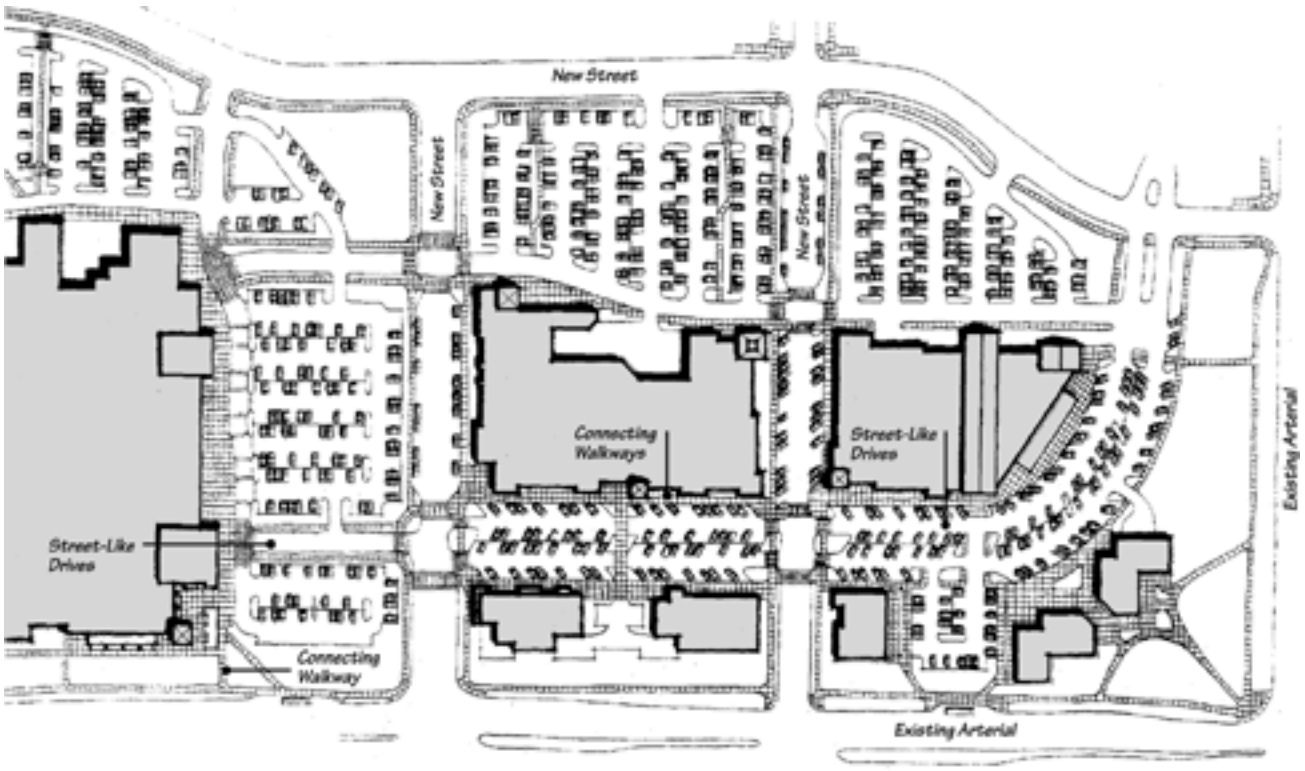
1. The Overall Layout of the Site Plan.

First, it is relevant at the larger scale of the overall site plan. This is particularly true for large developments with multiple buildings. Overall layout may be a minor issue on individual lots where the basic arrangement is already set.

2. The Specific Parts of the Site Plan.

Then, this section is relevant at the smaller scale of specific parts on the site plan — each walkway and drive with paving details, landscape details, and furnishings like bike racks and benches as appropriate.

Overall Layout/Drives and Connecting Walkways



At the Larger Scale:

The Overall Layout of the Site Plan.

While vehicular circulation will continue to be fully accommodated, a lot of this section is a response to examples of development in which vehicles are allowed to dominate the environment at the expense of pedestrian, bike, transit, and visual considerations.

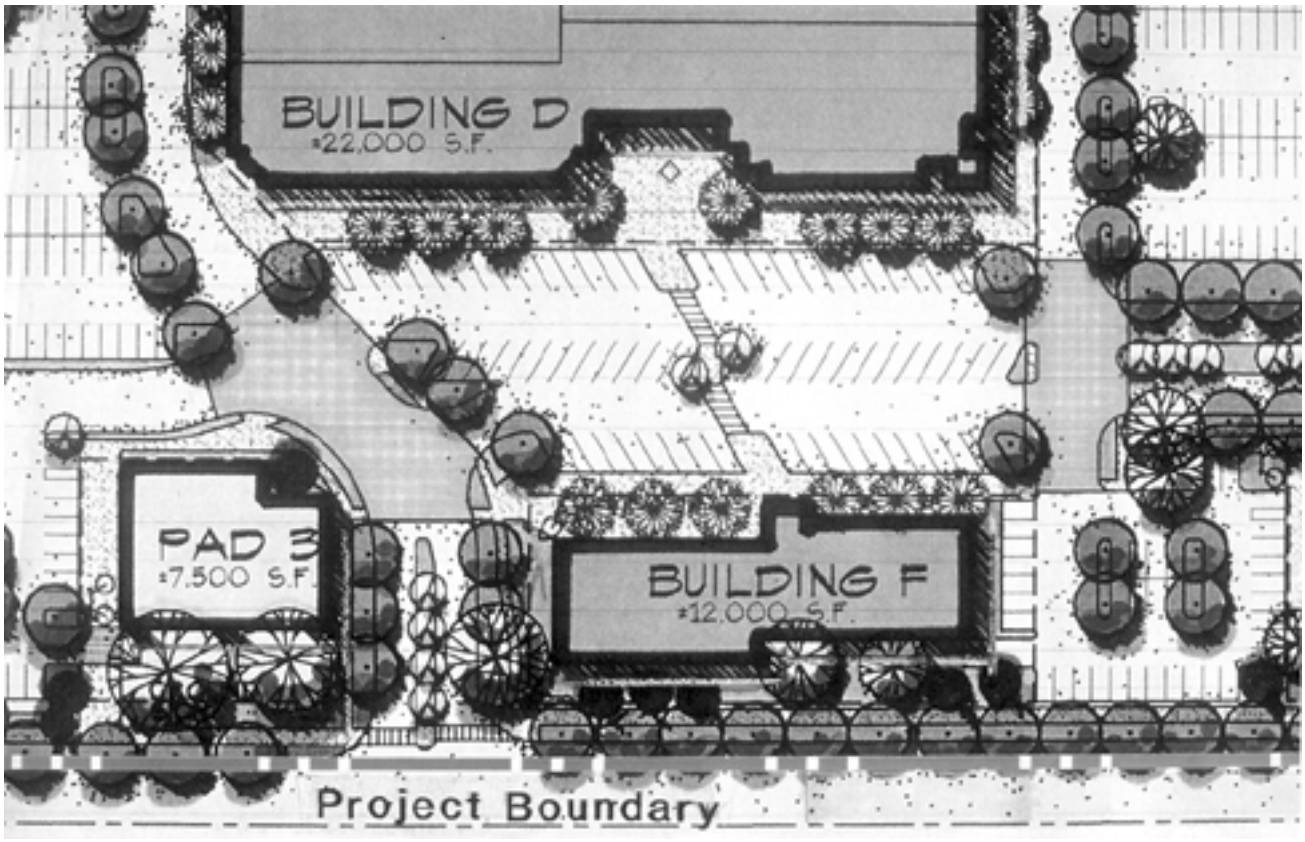
Walkways, and sometimes drives as well, need to be laid out from the point of view of a pedestrian. This means providing direct access at the schematic level of the design process. We need to think in terms of a continuous network for pedestrian movement as we do with respect to car driving.

Connecting Walkway along the edge of a parking lot.

"Connecting Walkway" is a key term that refers to any street sidewalk *or any* other *walkway that directly connects the building entrance to the street sidewalk without requiring pedestrians to walk across parking lots or driveways, around buildings, or around parking lot outlines which are not a logical route.*

Especially if a development has large commercial buildings and acres of parking, then on-site walkways may become as important as the street sidewalks. Roaring arterials with no chance for on-street parking may also make alternative pedestrian frontages more important.

In any case, the walkway system should still tie directly back to streets and surrounding neighborhoods or districts.

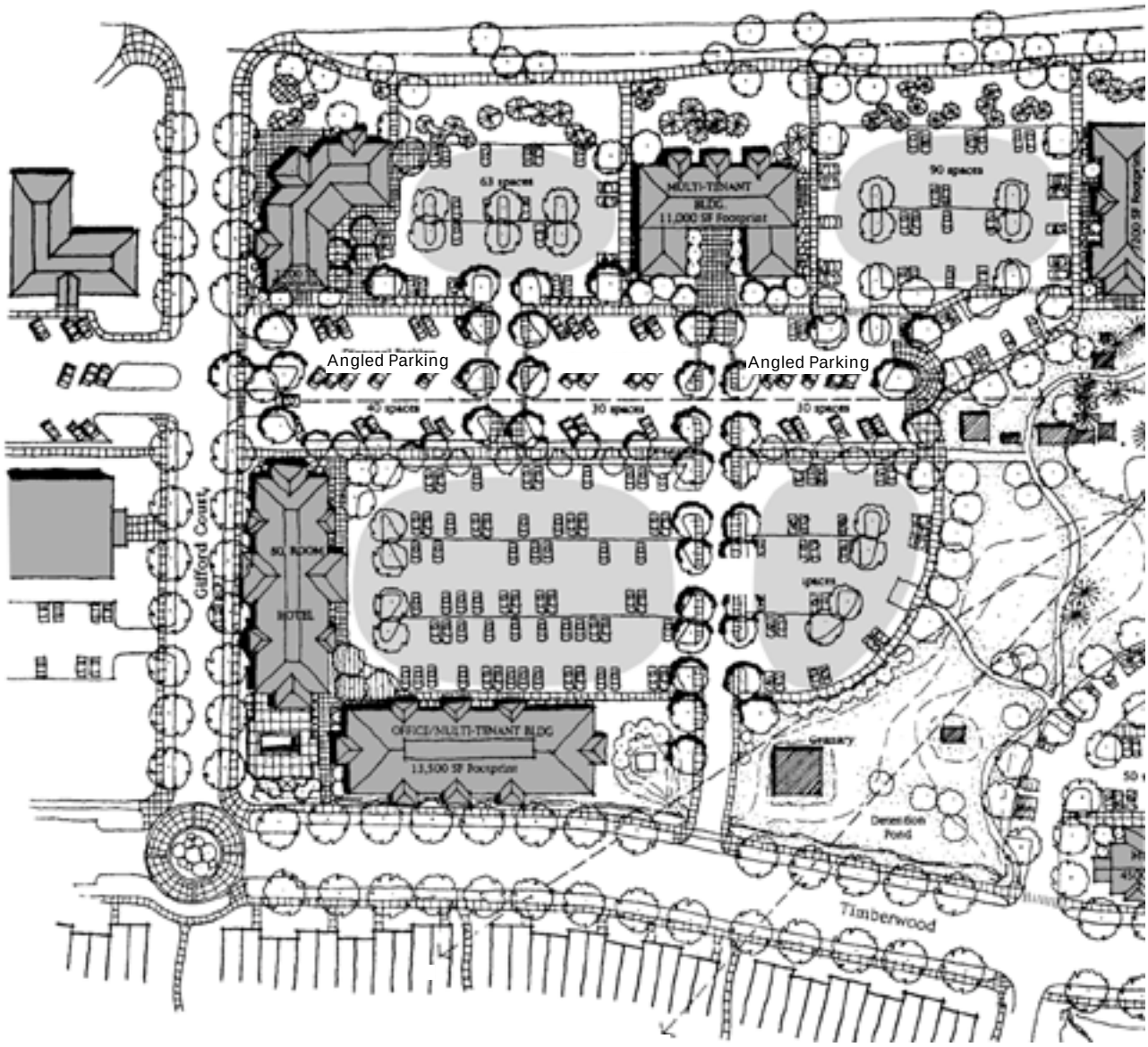


Above, a plan of the focal area of the Harmony Centre shopping center in south Fort Collins. The idea was to arrange this parking lot along the lines of a pedestrian street. Below, new in winter 1999.

Special Parking Lot Drives

One particular solution for large parking lots has been demonstrated in Fort Collins and elsewhere: street-like parking lot drives.

A street-like spine seems to create a better focus for buildings and their outdoor spaces than a monolithic parking lot does. It introduces some of the positive effects of nice local street frontage into the parking lot setting. Angled or parallel parking that looks like on-street parking is a subtle difference, but it seems to be a key to the positive effects.

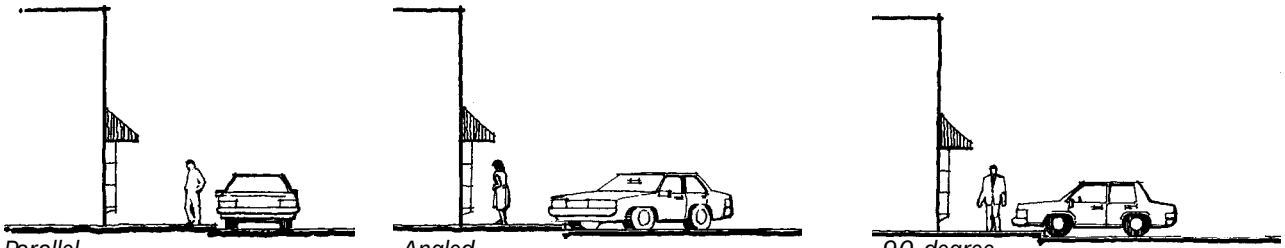


On the plan above, a spine with angled parking divides an otherwise vast parking lot into more comprehensible proportions, making the development a more fitting addition to the city. Functionally, this might break down a large parking lot into short term or everyday *parking, and* long-term or peak overflow *parking.*

Angled or parallel parking and pedestrians

This is a basic element that shows up again and again in places that are natural and casual for walking. But its positive effects on places are taken for granted without much thought.

It is part of countless great streets, and it is mainly a "street standards" issue.



Parallel *Angled* *90-degree*

Besides the natural association with great downtown districts, it seems to *generally* fit key pedestrian frontages better than 90-degree parking does. It imparts the feeling of a multi-functional street that leads somewhere, vs just a parking lot.

These four examples of actual streets are used to make a point: that angled and parallel parking shows up uncannily in place after place where cars and people mix, and yet everything works well for pedestrians. It exists despite relative inefficiency in numerical formulas for both the flow and the storage of vehicles.

The parallel parking gives this drive and Connecting Walkway a sense of convenient street frontage.

Building backs and their outdoor spaces face a parking lot drive. Paving and landscape details are thoughtfully done at a level of detail to be enjoyable for people walking.

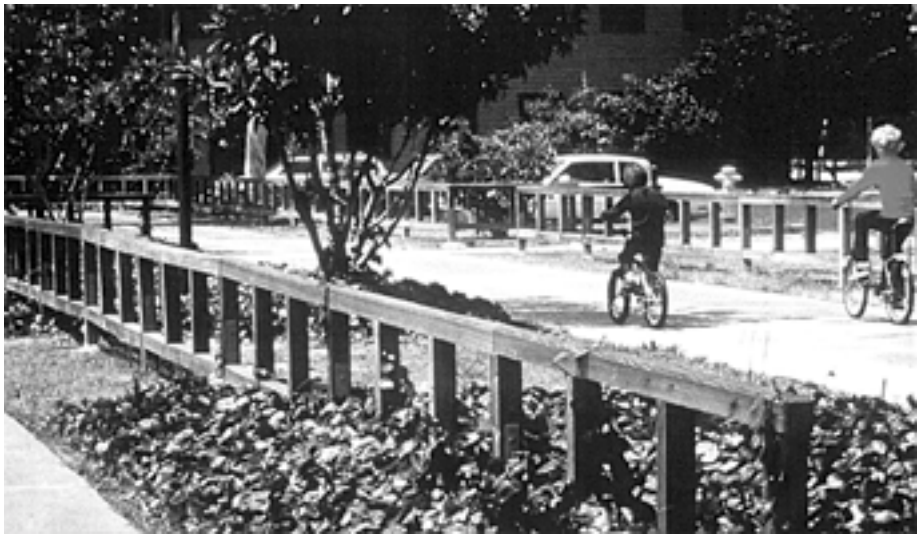
An inviting drive behind multi-faced buildings, with nice sidewalks and a plaza beyond. Simply including a trash urn helps to mark the pedestrian area. If needed, a crosswalk from left to right could use the median as a pedestrian island.

A parking lot? alley? court? behind street front apartments. This could also be an example of "attention to details". The lighting, paving, and matching design of the storage shed humanize this rear access drive and parking area.

The standards essentially say "accommodate cars and delivery trucks, but organize and tame them so they don't create a harsh, anonymous environment, threaten people walking, or separate and isolate buildings."

This is a common refrain in planning, but it is still easy to find developments whose design ignored these issues, when no standards were in place to require design attention. Disconnected pieces of sidewalk added last in leftover spots should not be the only consideration for the experience of a person walking in the city.

Besides parking lot arrangements, there will be other organizing elements that become part of the city fabric, including residential linkages as well as commercial ones.



A bike connector between two important neighborhood streets.

A walkway link.
These links allow all residents to maximize their time walking or bicycling, and avoid heavy arterial and collector traffic. Systemically, they may even help minimize the number of cars on streets in the city.

A drainageway doubles as a trail corridor.

For comfort and visual relief, canopy trees in landscape islands are required. Initial investment in good design enhances people's everyday lives for decades. Above, simple walkways are formed between the wheel stops. Below, the spine is 20 feet wide, with 2-foot curb areas, 4-foot tree cutouts, and 8 feet clear for the walkway.

At the Smaller Scale:

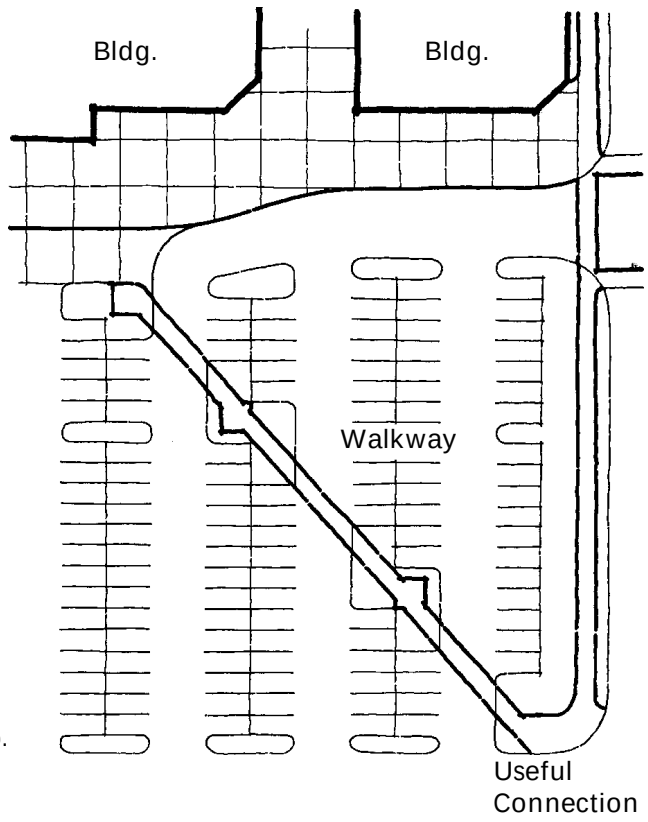
Parts and Details of the Site Plan

The two main parking lot details that need special design consideration are landscaping and walkways. If the parking lot is between the building entrance and the street or other key origins and destinations, then a walkway must be provided through the lot.

The layout must provide logical pedestrian connections, instead of forcing a walkway to follow a parking lot outline that is not a logical route. Walkways in islands should line up, lead to crosswalks, and tie in with the larger pedestrian network.

The two scales — the overall layout and the details — work together in walkable places.

a.



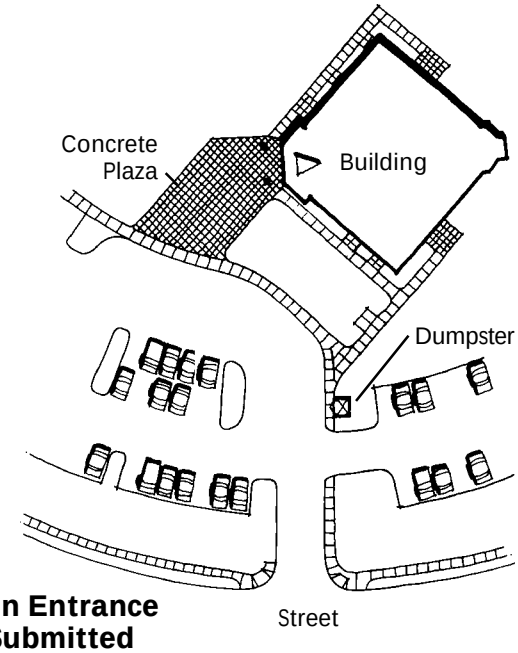
b.

c.

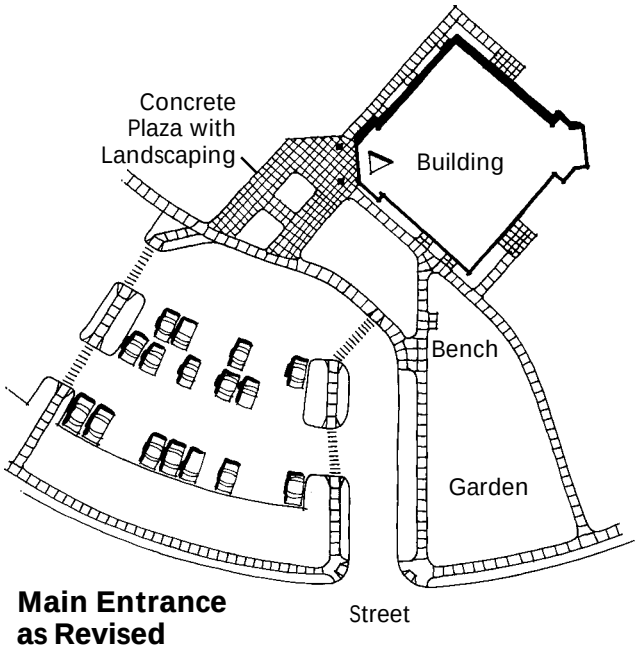
a. *Raised walkway.* b. *Diagonal walkway concept.*
c. *Clearly defined walkway between islands*

Example Parking Lot Details

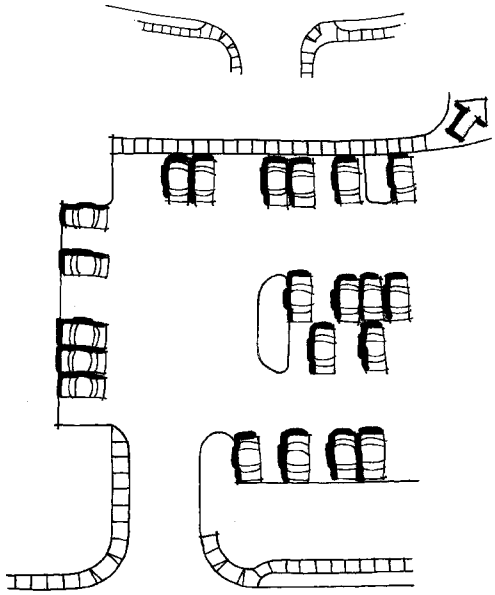
These examples are from a plan that was submitted and then revised in response to the standards. As revised, the walkways and islands line up, follow the logical direction of travel, tie together, and create a front yard garden where a parking lot had been proposed. (The parking and trash dumpster fit elsewhere.)



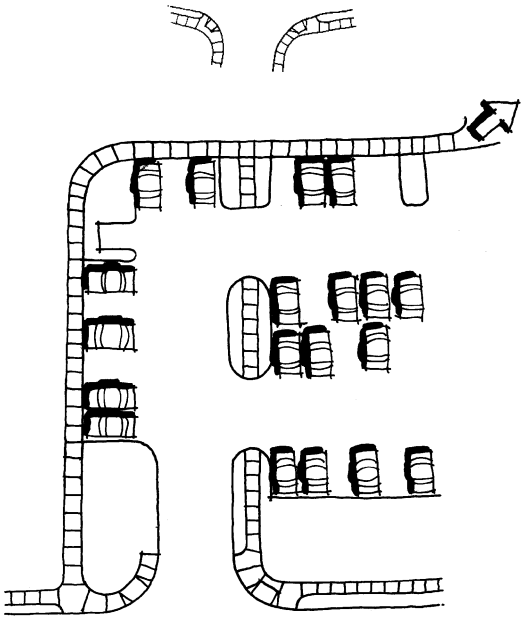
Main Entrance as Submitted



Main Entrance as Revised



Another Key Access Route as Submitted



Another Key Access Route as Revised

Before and After. *This rebuilt sidewalk between a subdivision and a neighborhood shopping center shows one result of design review. The new, more generous connection (below) is part of a development that converted a parking lot into a drive-thru bank. Original plans proposed* reducing *the existing sidewalks without considering pedestrians or the context. The design below worked fine for the developer — all it took was attention.*

For future projects: the faux brick stamped concrete is too coarse to be comfortable and creates awkward edges. Real pavers or a designed scoring pattern would work better.

Parking Along Important *Connecting Walkways*

90-degree parking along *connecting walkways* is intrusive, physically and visually. Pedestrian-friendly solutions make room for a clear walkway area that is defined separately from the bumper overhang area. Think in terms of a curb area wide enough for the overhanging cars, plus an adequate sidewalk. The sidewalk part can be marked by a row of trees, paving details as simple as scored bands, and landscaping. This is a place for creative design attention.

6 feet — the bare minimum allowed by the standards. Can work for secondary or utilitarian walkways.

Tree cutouts and concrete scoring define a separate walkway area. Connecting walkways warrant this kind of attention.

Ample width (10 feet) but no definition.

Same width with definition, plus angled parking.

More Parking Lot Details

The trellis on a blank wall, special paving, screen fencing and lighting enhance the everyday experience of users and passersby.

Walkway island with no ramps up and down.

Nicely scored, tinted, lightly textured concrete.

A gazebo in an island humanizes a large parking lot but is isolated. Landscaped walkway islands between parked cars would make it more of an accessible focal point.

An office complex added this garden-style arbor to connect the street to buildings set far back behind parking lots, for pedestrians and transit riders.

Simple wheel stops let the sidewalk be clearly defined separate from the car parking.

Other Small Connections

Handy details like these examples cannot really be legislated, but the standards *generally* call for attention to these kinds of nice touches — that is, thoughtfully designed small connections and details. Attention and pride, evidenced by details, lend a sense of security as part of the enhancement of everyday quality of life.

This kind of design may need to be done by the City, as well as by private developers. *Maintenance* is a particular planning and design issue for secondary linkages like these.

A simple connection for people.

creating invitations to walk and explore the neighborhood.

No design or pavement, simple and soft, just left alone. This canal runs right through a busy mixed use area — an arresting spot of softness that enhances the urbanity.

A narrow but inviting slot between buildings invites checking out. It serves a rear parking lot and connects two streets. Paving defines planter cutouts for vines on the unique arbors.

End Examples and Explanation of 3.2.2(B)

Land Use Code Continued

(C) ***Development Standards. —***
Generally covered by annotation under (B) General Standard.

(D) ***Access and Parking Lot Requirements. —***
Generally covered by annotation under (B) General Standard.

(E) ***Parking Lot Layout. —*** **Generally covered by annotation under (B) General Standard.**

(F) ***User Needs. —*** **Generally covered by annotation under (B) General Standard.**

(I) ***Shared Parking. —*** **Generally covered by annotation under (B) General Standard.**

(H) ***Drive-in Facilities. —*** **Generally covered by annotation under (B) General Standard.**

(I) ***Truck Traffic. —*** **N.A.**

(J) ***Setbacks. —*** **N.A.**

(K) ***Parking Lots - Required Number of Spaces for Type of Use. —*** **N.A.**

(L) ***Parking Stall Dimensions. —*** **N.A.**

(M) ***Landscaping. —*** **N.A.**

3.2.3 **Solar Access, Orientation, Shading — N.A.**

3.2.4 **Site Lighting — N.A.**

DIVISION 3.3 ENGINEERING STANDARDS — N.A.

Sections:

3.3.1 Plat Standards
3.3.2 Development Improvements
3.3.3 Water Hazards
3.3.4 Hazards
3.3.5 Engineering Design Standards

DIVISION 3.4 ENVIRONMENTAL, NATURAL AREA, RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION STANDARDS — N.A.

Sections:

3.4.1 Natural Areas and Features
3.4.2 Air Quality
3.4.3 Water Quality
3.4.4 Noise and Vibration
3.4.5 Hazardous Materials
3.4.6 Glare or Heat
3.4.7 Historic and Cultural Resources
3.4.8 Parks and Trails