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Town of Leonardtown, MD
Monday, September 11, 2023

Chapter 155. Zoning

Article V. C-B Commercial Business District

§ 155-28. Standards for site planning and building design.

The following standards for site planning and building design shall be applicable to all sites located adjacent to and/or fronting on the Route 5 Corridor/Point Lookout Road but shall not apply to redevelopment of sites currently developed along the corridor.

A. Site planning: internal relationships. Commercial buildings shall be so grouped in relation to parking areas that after customers arriving by automobile enter the shopping center, establishments can be visited with a minimum of internal automotive movement. Facilities and access routes for deliveries, servicing and maintenance shall, so far as reasonably practicable, be separated from customer access routes and parking areas. Areas where deliveries to customers in automobiles are to be made or where services are to be provided for automobiles shall be so located and arranged as to prevent interference with pedestrian traffic within the center.

(1) Sites should be developed in a coordinated manner to complement adjacent structures through placement, architecture and size or mass. Where possible, commercial uses requiring floor areas in excess of 10,000 square feet should be designed to appear as several distinct, albeit attached, structures, each with a floor area no greater than 6,000 square feet to reduce the visual impact of a single, larger building mass in keeping with the scale of existing structures in Leonardtown.

(2) Whenever possible, commercial buildings on the same site should be clustered and incorporate plazas, courtyards, pocket parks, and other pedestrian use areas.

(3) Sites occupied by commercial uses should be designed to avoid the appearance of domination by automobiles. Positive methods to achieve this guideline include:

(a) Orienting buildings to fronting streets and placing some of the parking at the rear and/or sides;

(b) Designing the required parking area into a series of smaller, discrete, connected lots rather than a large uninterrupted parking lot(s);

(c) Providing well-defined pedestrian walkways through parking areas and from public sidewalks into the site. Well-defined walkways utilize pavers, changes in color, texture, and composition of paving materials and vertical plantings such as trees and shrubs. The minimum width of walkways should be five feet.

(d) Parking areas should be designed to be partially screened from view from adjacent streets and building occupants.

[1] Screening can be accomplished through a number of methods, including:

[a] Orienting buildings away from parking areas;

[b] Placing buildings between streets and parking lots/areas;

[c] Using extensive landscape screening, berms, and architecturally treated walls.

[2] Methods utilized should be designed to accomplish the intended screening while allowing adequate safety and surveillance of the parking areas.

B. Building design.

- (1) Buildings should reflect an individual design that has considered site location, conditions, intended use, and the character/building mass of surrounding development. Building designs should reflect an individual style and form and not merely current trends.
- (2) A consistent visual identity should be applied to all sides of buildings visible to the general public. All sides should have an equivalent level of quality of materials, detailing and window placement. Abrupt ending of architectural details should be avoided with no radical change in details, features or materials.
- (3) Large buildings should avoid long, blank, uninterrupted walls. Positive methods to achieve this objective include building wall offsets regarding modulation, changes in colors and materials, placement of windows and doors, use of porches, porticos or canopies, changes in floor level, and projections that provide building shadows that visually break up long, flat building facades.
- (4) Large buildings should avoid long, blank, uninterrupted roof planes. Positive methods to achieve this objective include height variations to give the appearance of distinct elements or offsets in the roof line to provide architectural interest and variety to the massing of the building and to relieve the effect of a single, long roof.
- (5) Large buildings should use modulation (defined as a measured setback or offset in a building face) to reduce overall bulk and mass. The planes of exterior walls should not run in one continuous direction more than 50 to 60 feet without an offset or setback. Offsets should be a minimum of 3 to 5 feet.
- (6) Large buildings should use articulation in a clear rhythm to reduce their perceived size. Articulation is the giving of emphasis to architectural elements (like windows, entries, balconies, etc.) that create a complementary pattern of rhythm, dividing large buildings into smaller identifiable pieces. Articulation in the form of doors, windows and other framed building openings that articulate architectural elements break up the look of a long, blank wall.
- (7) Buildings facing streets should incorporate pedestrian-scaled entrances. Pedestrian-scaled entrances are those that provide an expression of human activity or use in relation to building size. Doors, windows, entrances and other features should be designed to respond to the size of the human body and not give the appearance of anonymity or overwhelming the building's users.
- (8) Building design should incorporate traditional building materials such as masonry, stone, heavy timbers, brick or other natural-appearing materials.
- (9) Building colors should accent, blend with, or complement surroundings. Bright or brilliant colors should be reserved for trim and accents.
- (10) Outdoor storage areas, mechanical equipment and trash receptacles should not be visible from adjacent streets and pedestrian walkways. The method of screening such areas from view should be architecturally integrated with the building with respect to materials, shape and size.
- (11) Materials used for site features such as fences, screen walls, and signs should be appropriate to the zone district where the development is located and should complement building design through materials, color, shape and size.

C. The Mayor and Council may modify the strict application of all the preceding standards where it is felt that such would further the objectives of this chapter.

- (1) In addition to the standards and design criteria set forth in this article, multiple-family dwellings shall also be subject to the open space and general criteria set forth in §§ **155-22** and **155-23**, to the extent such criteria do not conflict with the provisions of this article or are otherwise impractical in this district, in which case any such conflicting or impractical criterion shall not apply.
[Added 1-13-2014 by Ord. No. 160]

- (2) Projects and development under this subsection shall be subject to the application and review procedure set forth in § **155-24**.
[Added 1-13-2014 by Ord. No. 160]