

**§7-8 RURAL/SUBURBAN ARTERIAL CORRIDOR OVERLAY**

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**[See Commentary]**

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§7-8-1 PURPOSE AND INTENT

The purposes of this Resolution [Ordinance] are to:

- (a) Improve and enhance the aesthetic qualities of development within the arterial road corridor, by establishing an amenity zone adjacent to the corridor, within which amenity features are required, and through the implementation of other land use regulations.
- (b) Ensure that sidewalks on individual development are provided to connect with the public sidewalk system.
- (c) Manage the location and intensity of development within the arterial road corridor to avoid a strip commercial pattern and to concentrate development in focus areas.
- (d) Ensure safe access by vehicles to destinations in the corridor in a manner that does not conflict with pedestrian access.

§7-8-2 DEFINITIONS

Amenity: Pedestrian shelters, gazebos, decorative paving, pathways and sidewalks, landscaping, retention ponds when designed according to the specifications of this Resolution [Ordinance], signage when scaled to the pedestrian and constructed of materials and sizes specified in this Resolution [Ordinance] and other aesthetic features and characteristics approved by the Land Use Officer.

Amenity zone: The area between the right-of-way of an arterial road and any principal building, or forty feet (40') from the right-of-way, whichever is less, within a focus area. The amenity zone is an area which may include landscaping, green space, retention ponds, signage,

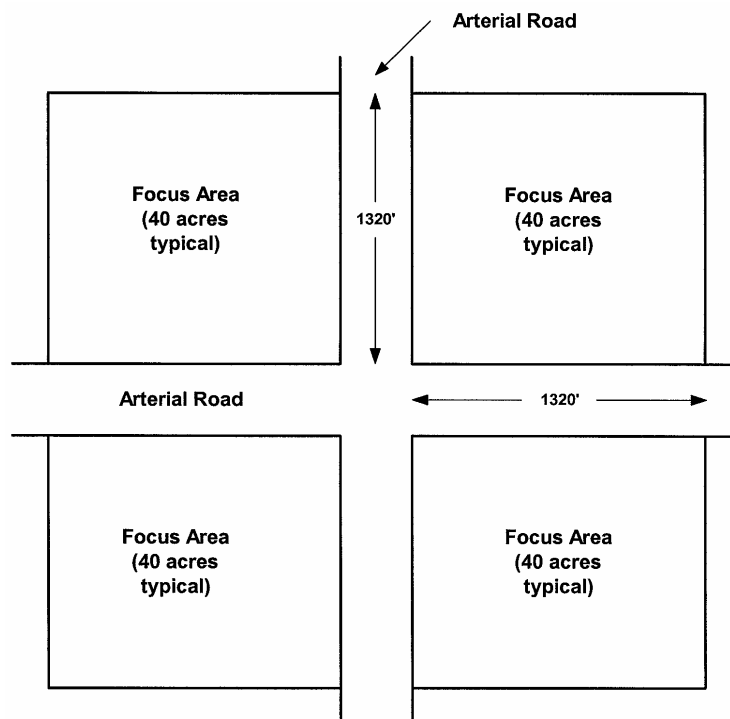
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gazebos, pedestrian shelters, and pathways, or some combination of these, which are designed or provided to enliven the pedestrian experience.

**Corridor:** All lands located wholly or partially within 1,320 feet of the right-of-way of \_\_\_\_\_ [insert name of rural/suburban arterial road or roads].

**Focus area:** An area of land within the corridor, at the intersection (usually a quadrant) of the arterial road and any other intersecting arterial road, or those other intersections which have been designated in the county's [city's] comprehensive plan as an activity center or commercial/mixed-use development node. Unless more specifically shown on the corridor overlay map, a focus area shall be generally limited to a square parcel of land extending 1,320 feet (1/4 mile) from the intersection to which it pertains in both directions along the arterial road rights-of-way. The focus area includes approximately 40 acres at each quadrant.



**FOCUS AREAS**

**Street tree:** A tree selected for its large canopy at maturity, approved by the Land Use Officer.

**§7-8-3 APPLICABILITY**

This Resolution [Ordinance] shall apply to all properties lying wholly or partially within the \_\_\_\_\_ [insert name of rural/suburban arterial road] corridor as shown on the official land use intensity districts map [or zoning map; or overlay district map], which is hereby adopted and made a part of this Resolution [Ordinance]. Said map may be amended in accordance with Section 7-4 of this Code. No clearing or other disturbance of land shall occur, and no building, structure or use shall be established, except in compliance with the provisions of this Resolution [Ordinance].

§7-8-4            PERMITTED USES IN FOCUS AREAS

Uses in the overlay district shall be governed by use restrictions and the dimensional requirements for the underlying land use intensity [or zoning] district in which the property is located. In addition, uses shall be subject to the specific use provisions of this Code Section, as applicable. In the event of a conflict between the regulations of the underlying district and the corridor overlay district, this Code Section shall govern.

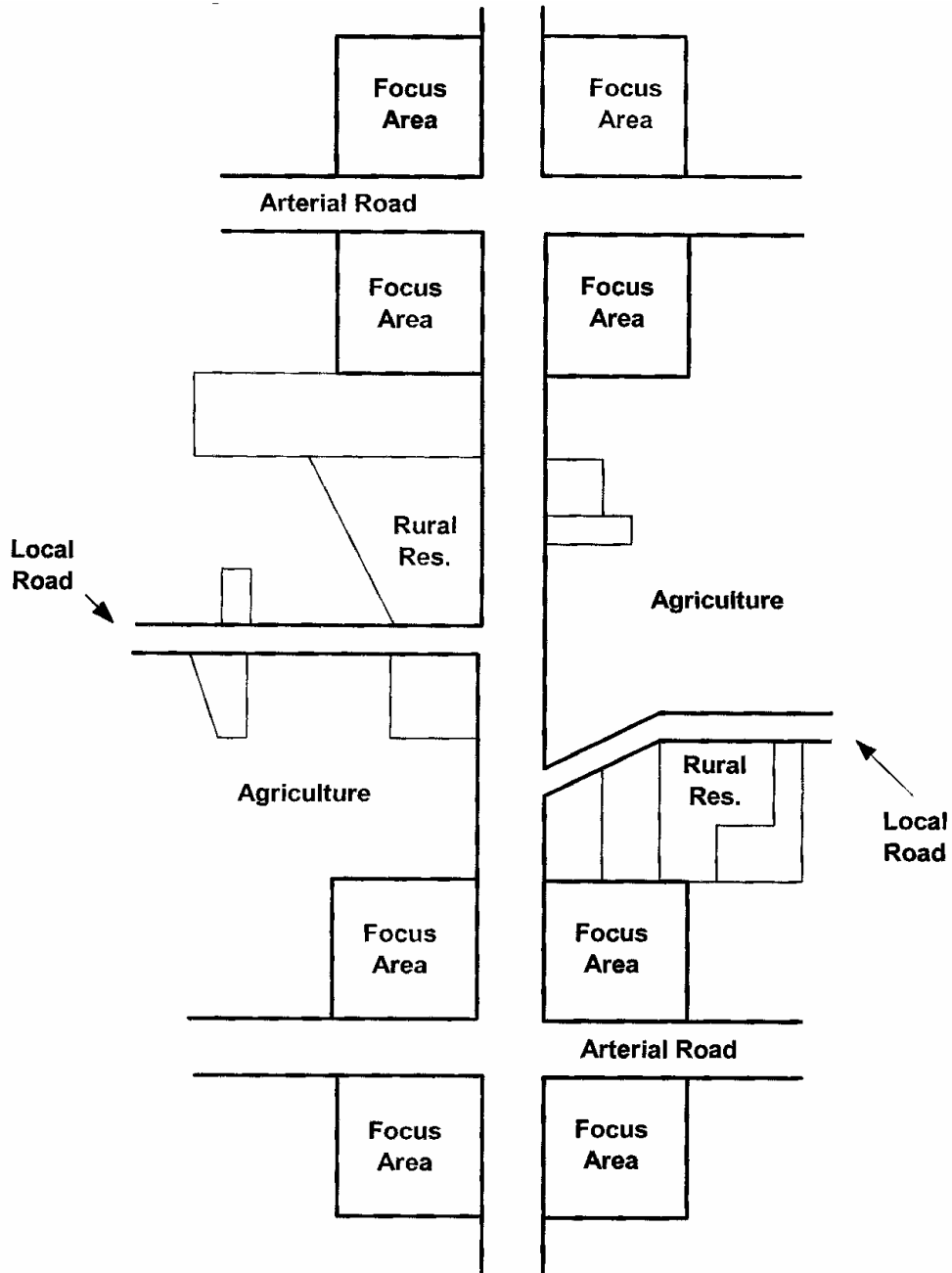
It is the intent of this Resolution [Ordinance] that lands within focus areas contain primarily commercial uses but are also developed with civic spaces, institutional uses and residences. Mixed uses, including residential use in the same building as commercial, office or other uses, are especially encouraged.

§7-8-5            PERMITTED USES OUTSIDE FOCUS AREAS WITHIN THE CORRIDOR

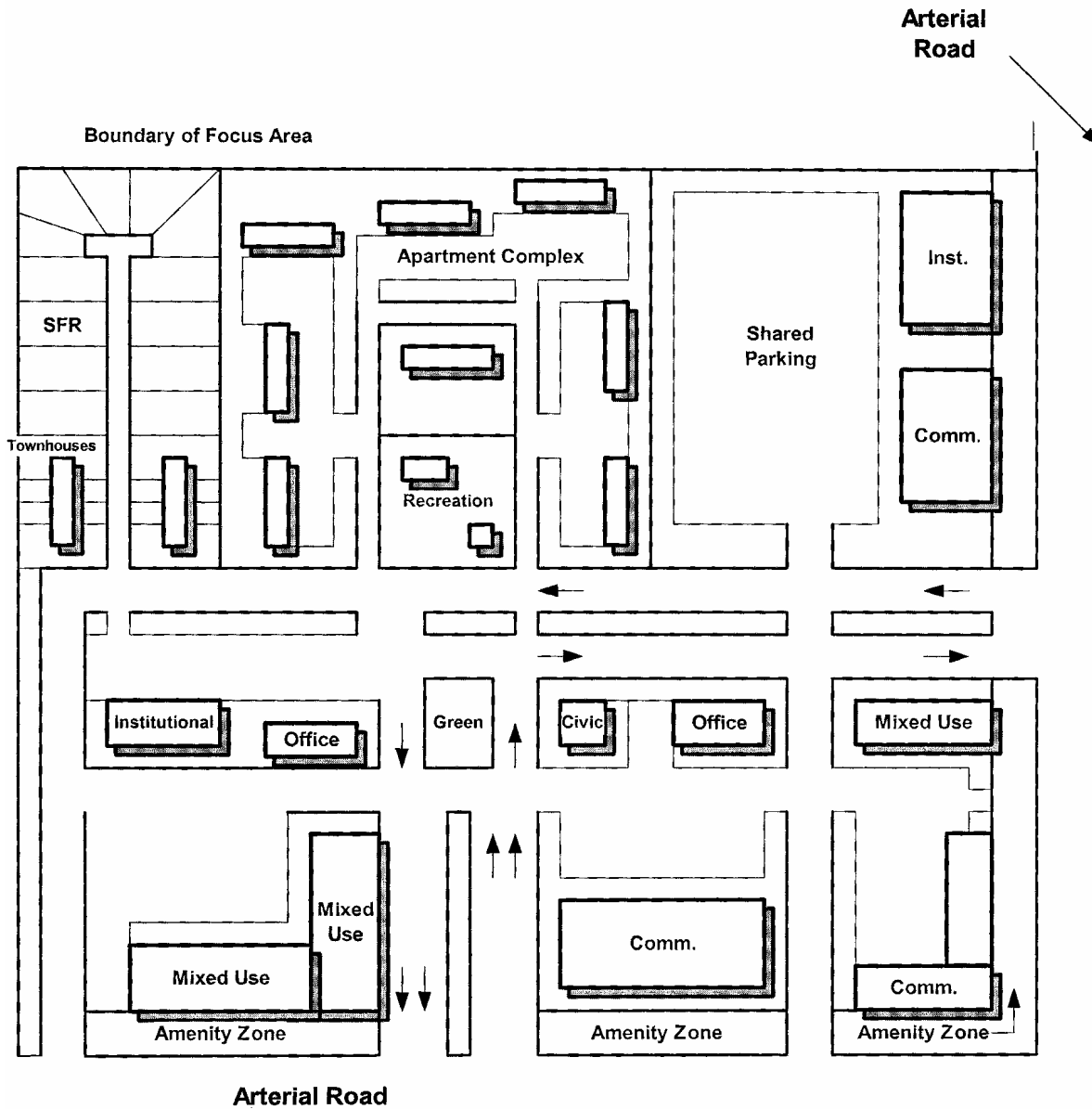
Agriculture, public uses and semi-public uses shall be permitted within the corridor outside focus areas. Institutional uses such as churches containing buildings no greater than 10,000 square feet shall be permitted within the corridor outside focus areas.

No land in the regulated corridor outside a focus area shall be developed for a commercial or industrial use, except as follows:

- (a) Land that is already located within a commercial or industrial land use intensity [or zoning] district may be developed, used and expanded in accordance with the regulations for the underlying land use intensity [or zoning] district in which it is located.
- (b) Land that is developed for a commercial or industrial use may continue to be used but shall only be expanded in accordance with the regulations for the underlying land use intensity [or zoning] district in which it is located.
- (c) Land may be developed for commercial, industrial, larger-scale institutional use or other use upon application and approval of a conditional use permit in accordance with the provisions of Section 7-4 of this Code.



## CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT



**ILLUSTRATIVE FOCUS AREA  
DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT**

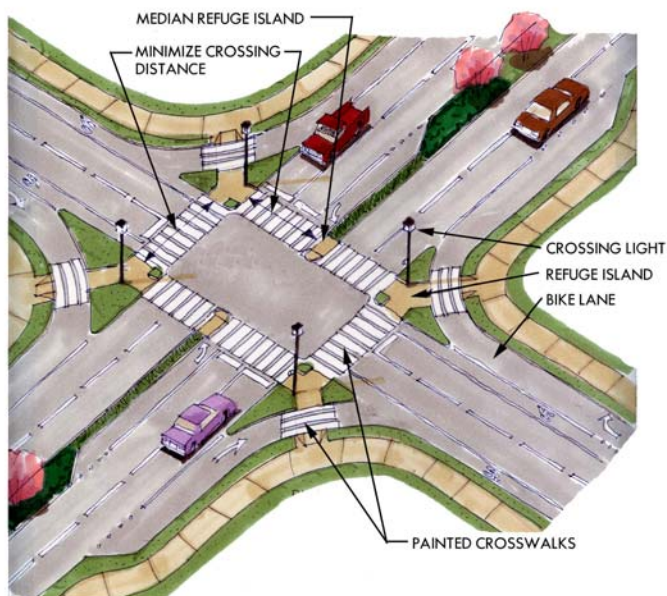
§7-8-6 ACCESS

§7-8-6.1 Medians. Roads and entrances to developments connecting with the arterial road in the corridor and serving development in the focus area shall include center medians for a distance of at least 200 feet from the right-of-way. Medians are desired because they improve traffic safety and can be planted to enhance the overall appearance of the focus area, as well as provide refuge for pedestrians.

§7-8-6.2 Vehicular Access to Site. Within the focus area, subdivision of lots along an arterial road shall not be allowed if designed so that each lot has its own individual access to the major road and no other access. Each pod of development, or if subdivided, each lot including outparcels, must be connected with on-site access to a frontage road or interconnecting driveway, rather than directly on the arterial road.

§7-8-6.3 Pedestrian Access. Pedestrian access must be provided to individual developments and each establishment within the development. Pedestrians should not have to walk in and along parking aisles, driveways or roadways to get from any one building to another; rather, pedestrian ways shall be well defined, take as direct a path as possible, and they should be separated where practical from automobile access ways.

Sidewalks on individual properties must connect to the sidewalk system within the arterial road right-of-way and to adjacent parcels where compatible as determined by the Land Use Officer. Where medians are required, pedestrian access shall be provided across the median as approved by the Land Use Officer. Pedestrian improvements at the intersection of the arterial roads should be made to ensure that pedestrians can travel safely from one focus area to another.



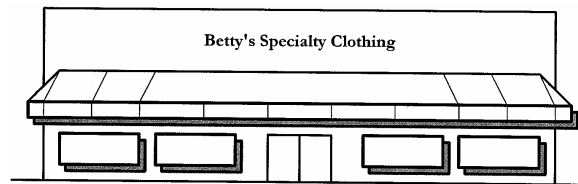
Source: Talka & Connor, and Hughes Good O'Leary and Ryan. 2000. Design Guidelines for the Garrison Hill District, State Route 120/Marietta Highway. Roswell, GA: Department of Community Development.

§7-8-6.4 Interparcel Access. The roadway pattern within development in focus areas should allow short trips between developments in the activity center without use of the major road within the corridor. Within a focus area, development shall interconnect with the road

network of any adjacent development or site within the focus area, unless the Land Use Officer determines such connection would be incompatible.

§7-8-7 BUILDING PLACEMENT, HEIGHT AND INTENSITY

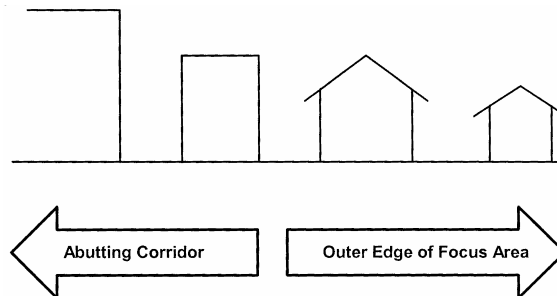
§7-8-7.1 Placement Generally. Buildings should be arranged so that they help frame and define the fronting arterial roads or driveways (i.e., the arterial road in the corridor, an intersecting arterial road, or internal streets or driveways of the development), thus giving deliberate form to streets and sidewalk areas. At least fifty percent (50%) of the front building façade of a principal building in a focus area must orient towards (face) the fronting arterial road or internal street or driveway, and the buildings shall be located within 20 feet to those fronting street rights-of-way, so as to effectively frame and define the streetscape and provide convenient pedestrian accesses along those streets to the buildings.



**Encouraged:  
Shops Facing Street  
With Awnings and Storefront Windows  
Help Define Streetscape**

§7-8-7.2 Placement in Relation to Other Quadrants in the Focus Area. Whenever a focus area extends to one or more other quadrants of a major road intersection, the buildings on the different quadrants of the street should not be separated from each other by parking lots. The line and massing of the buildings and structures on each quadrant should be arranged such that they are as close to each other as possible and served with sidewalks, so as to encourage pedestrian movement between the quadrants on opposite sides of the street(s).

§7-8-7.3 Building Height. Building heights should be greatest in that part of the focus area closest to the arterial road intersection and they should transition to lower heights as they are located further outward toward the outer edge of the focus area. Buildings at the outer edge of the focus area should be comparable in height with the surrounding neighborhood beyond the focus area.



**Decrease Height and Mass  
in the Focus Area**

§7-8-7.4 Building Mass, Intensity and Density. Mass of buildings and building intensity (floor area ratios) should be highest when located closest to the arterial road intersection, transitioning to progressively lower intensities moving outwards to the outer edge of the focus area. Buildings at the outer edge of the focus area should be comparable in mass and intensity with the surrounding neighborhood or existing land uses adjacent and beyond the focus area.

§7-8-7.5 Floor-Area Ratio. Development in the focus area shall not exceed a floor-area ratio of 0.6. Separate measurements shall be made for each quadrant. Detached, single-family dwellings are exempt from inclusion in the calculation of maximum permitted floor area in the focus area. The floor-area ratio permitted for development outside a focus area shall not exceed 0.25.

## §7-8-8 PARKING LOCATION AND DESIGN

§7-8-8.1 Location of Parking Areas. Buildings should be located at the corner of sites closest to the road intersection, so that the line of sight to parking areas is blocked by buildings and so that the travel path from public sidewalks is shortened. Parking must be located in a way that it is not visually dominant. Parking should be located to the side or rear of buildings. Parking between buildings and an arterial road is discouraged, but in no case shall more than 25 percent of the parking provided on any given site be located between a principal building and an arterial road in the focus area.

§7-8-8.2 Screening of Parking Areas. When parking areas are provided in a front yard (in between an arterial road right-of-way and a principal building), they shall be visually screened by a minimum two and one half-foot high evergreen hedge planted between the right-of-way and parking areas, or an earthen berm within the amenity zone to obscure visibility of the parking lot from view from the corridor.

§7-8-8.3 Shared Parking. Shared parking shall be provided when multiple uses are located close to one another and their parking demands differ by time of day or day of the week (e.g., church and an indoor theater).

## §7-8-9 AMENITY ZONE

§7-8-9.1 Established. The area between the right-of-way of an arterial road and any principal building, or forty feet (40') from the right-of-way, whichever is less, is hereby established as a focus area. An amenity zone, as defined, shall be established between the corridor arterial road or intersecting arterial road right-of-way and the development, for at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the property frontage of each property within the focus area. The amenity zone shall be devoted to interest-creating features, such as monuments, pedestrian plazas, landscaping, public art, or other approved pedestrian-friendly features. Signs that are scaled to the pedestrian are permitted within amenity zones.

§7-8-9.2 Uses and Improvements. Pedestrian-oriented outdoor spaces are especially encouraged within amenity zones. Gathering spaces may include formal parks, town greens, small parks/plazas and other places for pedestrian comfort and public interaction. These spaces should be integrated purposefully into the overall design of the activity center and not merely be residual areas left over after buildings and parking lots are sited. These spaces should also be placed next to the areas that generate the users, such as street corners, shops and restaurants, stores, day care centers and dwellings.

Within amenity zones, street furniture (e.g., benches, trash receptacles), pedestrian-scale lighting (e.g., bollards) and sensitively arranged uses such as outdoor patios should be provided to encourage human interaction and street life. Street furniture, including benches and trash receptacles (waste bins) should be provided in amenity zones at intervals of one bench

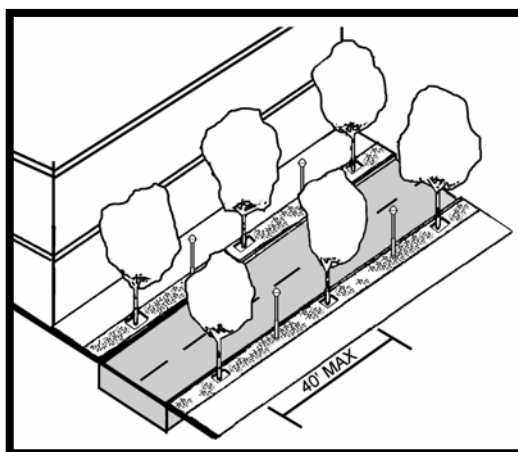
and one trash receptacle for every four hundred (400) feet of frontage. Advertising shall not be permitted on street furniture.

#### §7-8-10 LANDSCAPING

§7-8-10.1 Amenity Zones. Amenity zones shall be landscaped according to a landscape and streetscape plan approved by the Land Use Officer. The amount of landscaping required will depend on the types and amounts of other amenities provided.

§7-8-10.2 Medians. Where medians are required, they shall be landscaped with low-lying (not to exceed two feet high) ground cover, flowers and/or small shrubs that will not interfere with sight visibility of motorists or pedestrians.

§7-8-10.3 Street trees. Street trees provide a good contrast to buildings and pavement and help soften the built environment. They enliven streetscapes by blending natural features with built features. Street trees also help buffer pedestrians from vehicles and offer summer shade. Street trees shall be no more than forty-foot (40') intervals along the entire property fronting the corridor. Street trees shall be placed within the right-of-way of the arterial corridor, if permitted by the County [City] Engineer given available right-of-way and visibility considerations or within the first ten feet (10') of the amenity zone.



Courtesy of: City of Atlanta, "Quality of Life Development Codes" 2003

§7-8-10.4 Perimeter Buffers. When a single-family residence abuts the boundary of a focus area, a vegetated buffer of at least twenty-five (25) feet in width shall be planted along the entire property line inside the focus area boundary, between the non-single family development and a single-family residence. Perimeter buffers may be penetrated by utilities and sidewalks and, if determined appropriate by the Land Use Officer, vehicular access.

#### §7-8-11 PROVISIONS FOR SPECIFIC USES

§7-8-11.1 Big Box Retail Development. "Big box" development (individual retail establishments with 60,000 square feet or more floor area in one building) must be completely screened with rows of dense vegetation (i.e., buffers of trees) or with topographic changes (i.e., berms) from all arterial roads.

§7-8-11.2 Communication Towers. Communication towers shall be set back a minimum of twice the tower's height from the right-of-way of an arterial road in the corridor.

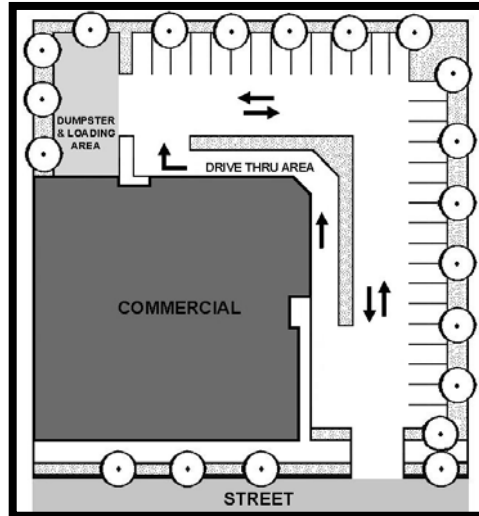
§7-8-11.3 Fences and Walls. Where provided and where visible from the arterial road, fences and walls should be composed of natural materials (i.e., wood and stone), and

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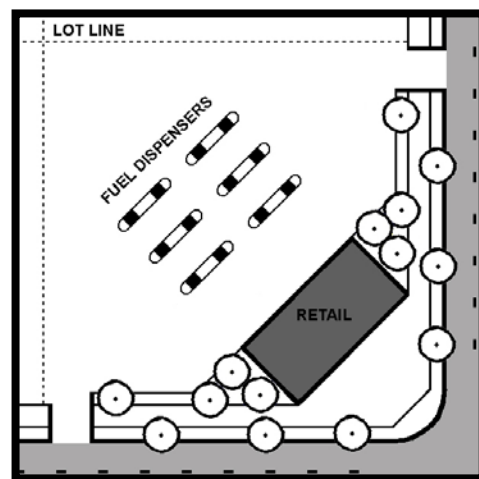
landscaping should be used to minimize or soften the appearance from the public right-of-way. Chain link fencing shall not be permitted except in side or rear yards and shall be screened with vegetation to a height of six (6) feet.

§7-8-11.4 Drive-Through Facilities. Drive-through facilities shall be located to the rear or side of the building and shall not abut an amenity zone.



Courtesy of: City of Atlanta, "Quality of Life Development Codes" 2003

§7-8-11.5 Gas Station Pump Islands. Gas station pump islands, if permitted, must be located behind the principal building and substantially obstructed (except for as may be viewed through approved driveway entrances and exits) from view from the corridor.



Courtesy of: City of Atlanta, "Quality of Life Development Codes" 2003

§7-8-11.6 Outside Display and Storage and Service Areas. If permitted, the outside storage or display of vehicles, equipment or merchandise to be rented, leased or sold, and service areas like loading docks, shall be substantially obstructed from view from the corridor. Screening of outside display and storage and service areas shall be accomplished by a natural

vegetative buffer, a building, an earthen berm, a 100 percent opaque, solid wooden fence or wall or a combination of these screening methods. The use of low-lying landscaping that does not screen the display areas from view from the public right-of-way shall not be considered compliant with this requirement.

§7-8-11.7 Stormwater Detention Facilities. Design of stormwater detention facilities as amenities shall be required when the facility is located within an amenity zone. For example, spray fountains or water falls are attractive alternatives for moving water. Open storm drainage and detention areas visible from the corridor should be incorporated into the design of the development as an attractive amenity. Wet-bottom basins are encouraged. Dry basins, where used, shall be sloped adequately to ensure proper surface drainage, designed so slopes and bottoms can be easily maintained and extensively landscaped.

## §7-8-12 ARCHITECTURE

§7-8-12.1 Building Walls. Lengthy, featureless façades and building walls lining the corridor must be avoided. Large, flat, blank expanses on a façade are not acceptable and shall not be permitted. Building walls shall not extend more than 200 linear feet parallel to the arterial road unless the front façade of the building changes at the building line (i.e., front setback in relation to the arterial road) by at least five feet (5') or the front building façade is designed in a way that breaks up the building face into discrete architectural elements. There should be some differentiation between the building base and the top, which can be accomplished with building articulation or details at the roof line. Building articulation can be accomplished through the following:

- (a) Façade modulation: stepping back or extending forward a portion of the façade.
- (b) Providing bay windows or repeating window patterns at regular intervals.
- (c) Providing a porch, patio, deck, covered entry to portions of the façade at the ground level or in the case of two or more story buildings, balconies.
- (d) Changing the roofline by alternating dormers, or using stepped roofs, gables or other roof elements.
- (e) Changing materials with the change in building plane.

Multiple buildings on the same site should be designed to create a cohesive visual relationship among the buildings. All exterior facades of buildings should employ architectural elements (color, material, design, etc.) which are common to one another.

§7-8-12.2 Awnings. Awnings on commercial structures are encouraged to provide additional unity to buildings as well as provide visual interest. Fixed fabric awnings should extend the entire length of the building or leased portion of the building. Signage may be incorporated into awnings, subject to compliance with applicable sign regulations. Colors should be compatible with the building materials and primary colors are appropriate if their color intensity is muted. Solid awnings or stripes are appropriate.

§7-8-12.3 Building Materials. Corrugated and/or sheet metal siding, prefabricated steel panels, smooth-face, split or ground face concrete block, tilt-up concrete panels and synthetic stucco shall not be permitted on a building unless it is screened from view from arterial roads. All non-residential building exteriors visible from arterial roads shall be constructed of stone, wood or other natural materials.

§7-8-12.4 Windows. Within a focus area, windows shall be provided on the façade on all buildings within 100 feet of the corridor and facing the corridor. A minimum of twenty-five

(25) percent of the ground floor façade area shall be composed of windows, which shall be non-reflective and transparent.

§7-8-12.5 Rooftop Mechanical Equipment. Any mechanical equipment located on the roof of a building shall be screened from view from the right-of-way of the corridor by the building roof, a parapet wall or by other screen approved by the Land Use Officer. Such equipment should be as inconspicuous as possible from other viewpoints, as well. In the case of flat roofs, cooling and air handling equipment may be located within a roof depression to comply with this requirement. Where such screening is not feasible in the Land Use Officer's opinion, equipment shall be painted or screened in a manner as to minimize its visibility.

§7-8-12.6 Gutters and Downspouts. Sheet metal gutters and downspouts shall be of a color or painted to a color that is compatible with the other colors on the building façade.

### §7-8-13 SIGNAGE

§7-8-13.1 Off-Premise Signs. Billboards shall not be permitted in the corridor. To help advertise and direct the motoring public to businesses and activities in focus areas which do not directly access the arterial road or are screened from view, development applicants may provide and seek approval by the Land Use Officer of a program for off-premise "logo" directional signs, each no more than sixty-four (64) square feet in area, and which shall be spaced no more frequently than every 1,320 feet along an arterial road. Subject to the Land Use Officer's approval (and other jurisdictions if applicable), directional logo signs may be placed at corners of intersections or along appropriate portions of the corridor, within or immediately outside public right-of-ways, to guide customers and patrons from the arterial road and along public frontage roads to their destinations.

§7-8-13.2 On-Premise Signs. Freestanding signs should be monument style. Signage should be unobtrusive and compatible in scale, size, material and character with the building to which it is directed. All signs shall meet the provisions of the county's [city's] sign regulations. Signs in amenity zones should be all-wooden construction and should not be internally illuminated.

§7-8-13.3 Sign Programs. All off-premise and on-premise signs within activity centers shall only be approved as a part of a sign program that shows how signs will complement the style, color and materials of buildings.

### §7-8-14 LAND USE OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Land Use Officer shall evaluate all proposed development activities within the corridor overlay district. No development permit, land use permit or building permit shall be issued unless the development, land use, building or structure is in compliance with this Resolution [Ordinance].

### §7-8-15 VARIANCES

If an applicant asserts that the application of this Resolution [Ordinance] would deny the reasonable use of property, the applicant may apply for a variance. A variance is intended to provide a remedy to address those cases in which the application of this Resolution [Ordinance] unreasonably restricts all economic use of a parcel of land and the restriction cannot be remedied by other authorized techniques or conditions. A variance to the provisions of this Resolution [Ordinance] may be filed, considered and granted in accordance with Section 1-10 of this code.

**[See Commentary]**

§7-8-16      APPEALS

A developer or other party aggrieved by a decision of the Land Use Officer in the administration, interpretation or enforcement of this Resolution [Ordinance] may appeal said decision as provided in Section §1-10 of this Code.

***[See References]***