

Design Standards for the TC District.¹

[Added 1-18-2023 by L.L. No. 1-2023; Amended 5-1-2024 by L.L. No. 1-2024]

A. Purposes and Intent.

- (1) These design standards have been developed to implement the policy established in the Town of Union Vale Master Plan. In particular, these design standards implement the following Master Plan Actions:
 - (a) Use graphic representations wherever possible to convey and illustrate the meaning and intent of the revised zoning code.
 - (b) Improve design review for commercial and office uses.
 - (c) Create commercial development architectural design guidelines to encourage new developments to fit the desired aesthetic character.
- (2) The design goal for the TC District is to allow for the mixed use development that is consistent with the rural character of the Town that emulates and builds on Union Vale's traditional development patterns such as in hamlets, and to promote development that serves the local, rather than regional area. The intent of TC District development standards is to minimize traffic congestion, suburban design and sprawl, infrastructure costs, and environmental degradation.
- (3) The Town hopes that when applicants are provided with clear design guidance at the beginning of the approval process, and before large expenditures are made, they will know up-front what will be acceptable in the Town. In this way, designs consistent with the vision, goals and plans established by the Town can be promoted. The Town desires to be supportive and business-friendly and hopes that if consistent design is incorporated early in project development in the TC District, then expensive delays, controversy and project redesign can be avoided. To *this end*, these design standards shall be applied to all residential and nonresidential development within the TC District.

B. General Design Standards. Union Vale's design standards are not meant to stymie creativity and diversity in architecture and building. The Town does not intend for every new building to look the same. However, these Design Standards, together with the zoning's development standards for the TC District, are intended to promote quality development that will maintain the unique character of Union Vale.

C. Specific Design Standards for Town Center District.

- (1) Unless otherwise stated, the following design standards are mandatory for new commercial and mixed use buildings and structures in the TC district, including multi-family and townhouse developments. These design standards are not required, but encouraged for residential developments. All requirements of Chapter 210 (Zoning)

¹ Editor's Note: Unless where noted, all photographs courtesy of ReGrowth Planning, P.O. Box 892 Dorset, Vermont.

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shall also be met in addition to these specific design standards where applicable. Where the following standards are stated as not mandatory, compliance is strongly encouraged. The term “shall” is interpreted as mandatory. The term “should” or “may” is interpreted as optional.

(2) Building Placement

(a) Front Yard Setback.

- [1] Buildings must present their main facade toward Rt. 55 with the actual entrance to the side or in the rear of the building where all the parking will be. The front facade facing Rt. 55 shall have at least windows and other facade elements such



Figure 1. Example of a building with an appropriate front facade and the main entrance on the side with a side-oriented parking lot

as awnings and landscaping that give the appearance of a front facade. Buildings shall be oriented parallel or perpendicular to Rt. 55 and public sidewalks. All parking shall be in the rear or side of the proposed structure.

- [2] On NYS Route 55 new buildings shall be positioned pursuant to Attachment 1 of the Zoning Law and no less than 20 feet and no greater than 35 feet.
- [3] Provisions shall be made for public plaza or outdoor use, outdoor restaurant or other associated activities.
- [4] On secondary or internal roads, buildings shall not exceed a setback of 20 feet from the edge of pavement. New secondary or internal roads shall be designed to link with adjacent buildings and parking areas. Site plans shall include set-asides for parking or road banking and connections off-site to enable connection with future developments.

(b) Side Yard Setback.

- [1] The Planning Board may permit zero side yard setbacks to allow buildings to be constructed next to one another. Buffering requirements for different uses as outlined in § 210-37 must also be adhered to.

(c) Minimum Frontage Build Out.

- [1] For buildings fronting Rt. 55, a minimum frontage build out of 70% is recommended.
- [2] For buildings fronting interior access roads, a minimum frontage build out of 60% is recommended to create a near continuous facade along the sidewalk and screen rear parking areas.

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(3) Street Organization, On-Street Parking and Restrictions.

(a) New Roads:

- [1] New secondary or internal access roads shall, where appropriate, link adjacent buildings and parking areas. They shall create or continue an interconnected network of streets laid out in walkable blocks. Cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets are prohibited, except where topography or natural features make these necessary, or within a residential conservation subdivision.

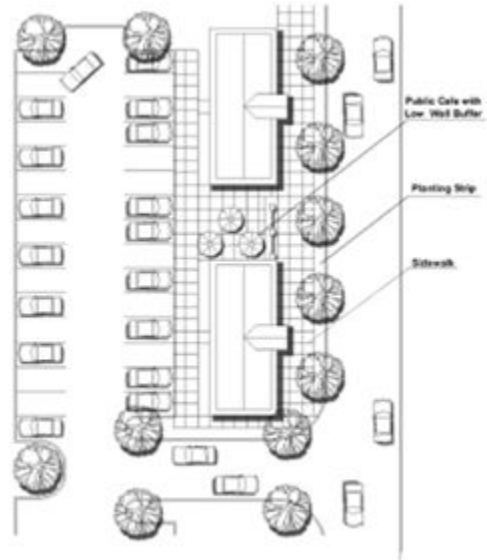


Figure 2: Example of parking and street organization for Town Center Zone

- [2] Well-defined ADA compliant crosswalks, small turning radii at intersections and other traffic calming elements shall be incorporated.
- [3] On-street parking is not permitted on NYS Route 55.
- [4] On-street parking along internal roads may be allowed where there are mixed use buildings.

(4) Off-Street Parking.

(a) Location:

- [1] Parking to the rear or side of a building is mandatory for all structures within the TC District pursuant to § 210-25. Rear parking is preferred.
- [2] Side of building parking may be allowed if all parking requirements cannot be fulfilled in rear of building due to site conditions.
- [3] Where site conditions warrant, variations to such orientation are subject to Town Planning Board approval pursuant to § 210-25. Where lot layout and configuration warrant it, only one row of parking shall be allowed in front of a structure and only upon approval by the Planning Board: In no case shall more than 20% of required parking be placed to the front of a building. If parking is to be placed to the side of a building, there shall be a minimum five foot landscape buffer between parking area and edge of the sidewalk

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[4] Landscape materials for this buffer shall contain native trees, hedges, and shrubs and parking areas may be further screened through use of low walls of brick, wood, wrought iron, or an acceptable substitute.

[5] Shared access points are required to reduce curb cuts, where appropriate.

[6] Cross-easements shall be used where practical to formalize shared access arrangements between business sites.

[7] Peak period (spillover) parking areas with alternate pervious paving materials are strongly encouraged and could include grass surfaces. The Planning Board may require siting of future parking areas should expansion of uses warrant it. Such banked parking shall be shown on all site plans and be maintained appropriately to allow for such parking if needed.

[8] For residential uses or other uses having garages, the sidewalk level facades of garages shall be designed to obscure the view of parked cars.

(b) Parking Area Landscaping: All parking lots shall meet landscape requirements of 210-37 and the following:



Figure 3. Example of a landscaped island with sign and shade tree.



Figure 4. Example of a landscaped sidewalk used in part for screening a parking area.

[1] For parking areas greater than 20 stalls, a minimum of 15% of the paved parking area shall be planted.

[2] No parking space shall be more than 75 feet from a large deciduous tree.

[3] One deciduous tree per 10 parking spaces is required.

[4] For parking lots greater than 30 cars, planting islands nine feet wide by 18 feet deep, constructed with sub-surface drainage and compaction resistant soil will be required to be placed in the interior of the parking area.

(c) The following landscape sizes are required:

[1] Native Canopy/Deciduous trees: 3" caliper.

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- [2] Native Small flowering trees: 2” caliper.
 - [3] Native Large shrubs: 30” height.
 - [4] Trees shall be planted so that trunk is a minimum of 2.5 feet from curb edge.
- (5) Green Space.
- (a) Unless the development has been part of a conservation design where 50% of the parcel is preserved as open space, a 35% green space percentage is required. Green space shall be organized in a meaningful and useful manner as one or more pocket parks, squares or community greens.
- (6) Screening and Buffers.
- (a) Refer to § 210-37 for screening and buffering requirements.
 - (b) Landscape screening and buffers shall be designed to separate business/commercial and residential land uses.
 - (c) Adequacy, type, size, and arrangements of trees, shrubs, and other landscaping shall constitute a visual screen and/or buffer between the project site and adjoining land use properties and shall include the maximum retention of desirable or specimen existing vegetation. Parking, services, and loading/maneuvering areas shall be landscaped and screened from view of adjacent properties and from within the project site.
- (7) Site Lighting. All site lighting shall meet requirements of § 210-64B(5), lighting requirements for specific uses in Chapter 210 and the following:
- (a) Height.
 - [1] Pedestrian scale and area lighting shall be required.
 - [2] Pedestrian Lighting shall be 12’ maximum height.
 - [3] Area Lighting shall be 15’ or 2’ lower than building height whichever is less.
 - (b) Lighting Type.
 - [1] Preferred appearance is farmhouse style.
 - [2] All lighting bulbs and fixtures shall be dark-sky compliant to minimize glare and light pollution.
 - (c) Footcandles.
 - [1] Light source (LED bulbs only) shall not be visible from any angle.



Figure 5. Example of appropriate lighting style for the TC District.

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- [2] Fixtures shall be designed to shield glare from adjacent streets, properties and sky.
- [3] No lights shall produce glare so as to cause illumination beyond the boundaries of the property.
- [4] Flashing or intrinsically bright sources of illumination shall be prohibited.

(8) Public Spaces.



Figure 6. Example of sidewalk treatment, street furniture and landscaping suitable for TC District where planting strip serves as landscape feature and for street furniture.

- (a) Sidewalk Material.
 - [1] Constructed of concrete; brick, concrete or stone pavers; or stone slabs.
- (b) Sidewalk Width and Location.
 - [1] Sidewalks shall be a minimum of 5’ wide and shall meet all ADA requirements.
 - [2] Sidewalks shall have a minimum 4’ planting strip between the curb and the sidewalk, and shall meet all ADA requirements.
 - [3] Sidewalks shall be required when development occurs on parcels having frontage on Route 55 and CR 2.

(c) Sidewalk Connections.

- [1] Where sidewalk crosses a parking lot access drive, the pedestrian paving pattern shall continue uninterrupted as a means of alerting pedestrians and drivers where their paths cross. Where enhanced paver is used, the pattern generally abuts asphalt. In these cases, a band of concrete shall be added as a protective edging between the asphalt and the decorative paving.



Figure 7. Example of a pedestrian sidewalk that continues through driveway to prioritize pedestrians.

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Figure 8. Example of decorative bollards appropriate for TC District.

- [2] New sidewalks shall connect to adjacent properties.
 - [3] Bollards may be introduced at sidewalk road crossings.
 - [d] Sidewalk Landscaping.
 - [1] When no planting strip is present, street trees shall be planted between the curb and the building line. All street tree planting in paved areas should be covered with a porous hard surfaced grate. Trees should not be planted closer than 7' to the building line.
 - [2] When a planting strip is present between the sidewalk and the curb, street trees should be planted in the planting strip.
 - [3] One large deciduous tree for each 35' of linear road frontage (minimum). The street trees should generally be evenly spaced to create or maintain a rhythm/pattern
 - [4] Tree species may include ash, elm, maple, oak, or other shade trees as approved by the Planning Board.
- (9) Sidewalk Retail.
- (a) Sidewalk retail uses are strongly encouraged.
 - (b) Merchandise shall be removed at the close of business.
 - (c) No retail activity shall obstruct the safe passage of pedestrians on sidewalks and a minimum five foot wide unobstructed path shall be maintained at all times on sidewalks.
- (10) Public Plazas and Outdoor Dining.
- (a) Plazas are to be areas continuously accessible to the public and may be landscaped or paved and are typically surrounded by buildings or streets and open to the sky. A plaza usually provides amenities such as seating, ornamental fountains, lighting, and landscaping for use by pedestrians. The following should be included in public plaza and outdoor dining designs:
 - [1] Incorporation of works of art into the public spaces, exterior facade or entrance lobbies is encouraged.
 - [2] Area should be landscaped with trees, perennials, annuals, herbaceous shrubbery, ornamental lighting, and benches.
 - [3] Area should be constructed on side of building that receives the most sunlight when possible.
 - [4] Enhanced paving should be used to accent important "places"

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outdoors: at entrances as a “welcome mat” and in spaces where people congregate, pause or wait.

(b) Outdoor Dining.



Figure 9. Example of appropriately designed outdoor dining area.

Definition: A dining area of a designated size with seating and/or tables located outdoors of a restaurant, coffee shop, or other food service establishment, which is a) located entirely outside the walls of the subject building; b) enclosed on two sides or fewer by the walls of the building with or without a solid roof cover; or c) enclosed on three sides by the walls of the building without a solid roof cover. The seating may be in addition to the indoor seating, or it may be the only seating available for the restaurant. The outdoor dining area must be visually and architecturally integrated pursuant to the design standards.

The following standards apply to outdoor dining:

- [1] In order to accommodate outdoor dining on a patio or other similar structure, a building may be permitted by the Planning Board to be set back an additional area from the required maximum front setback. In such a case, the front setback shall be a maximum of 10 feet from the required maximum front setback. Such extension shall only apply to outdoor dining uses associated with an approved nonresidential use.
- [2] Sidewalk cafes should be temporary structures and dismantled during winter months.
- [3] Structures should be consistent with existing state regulation for safety.
- [4] No cafe shall obstruct the safe passage of pedestrians on sidewalks and a minimum five foot wide unobstructed path shall be maintained at all times on sidewalks.
- [5] If at side of building, an edge matching the line of the building facade should be created; the edge should be made of transparent fence made of wood or wrought iron at a maximum height of 4’.
- [6] In no case should the fence/railing combination prohibit views from the sidewalk into the cafe area.

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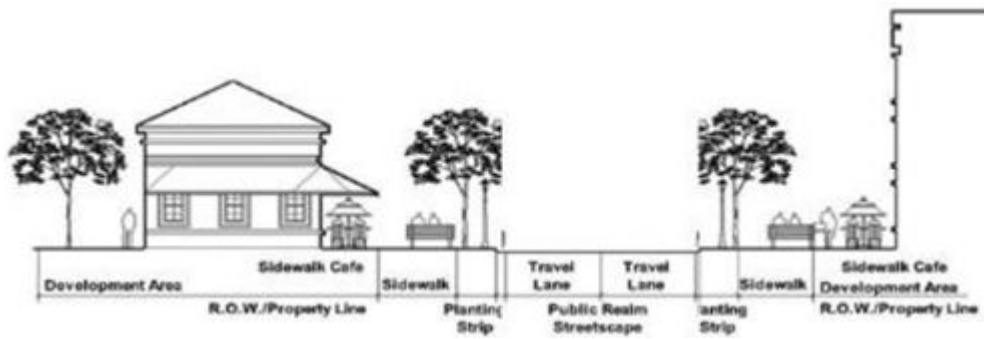


Figure 10:
Example of
cafe in front
of buildings
for Town
Center
Zone.



Figure 11. Examples of signs that would be consistent and encouraged for the TC District.

- (11) Signage
 - (a) See § 210-26 for specific sign requirements
 - (b) See illustrations above for examples of sign designs that are encouraged.
- (12) Utilities.
 - (a) All utilities shall be placed underground.
- (13) Proportion of Buildings.
 - (a) Multiple story buildings are strongly encouraged.
 - (b) Maximum two functional stories. Coordination with local fire departments will be required to ensure proper fire protection services are available for multistory buildings.
 - (c) Maximum height shall be 35 feet.
 - (d) TC: Maximum Building Coverage - 50% of the lot.



Figure 12. This multifamily development includes many design features consistent with the TC Design Standards including setbacks, sidewalks, front yard landscaping, traditional building styles, two story buildings, facade breaks, and traditional windows.

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- (e) TC: Building Maximum 2,500 square foot footprint per structure for commercial uses. Not applicable to multifamily dwellings, town homes or other residential structures.
- (f) First story height should be a minimum of 12 feet measured floor to floor.
- (g) Multiple buildings are allowed and can be constructed on the same lot with a zero side-yard setback (i.e., shared wall) with common access occurring on the second floor.
- (h) Mixed use buildings in the TC District are allowed. When provided for the first-floor frontage (facing Rt. 55 or an internal street) shall only be for the commercial use, with residential use to the rear or on the second floor.

(14) Roof.

- (a) Flat or Shed roofs are prohibited. However, flat roofs are permissible if all rooftop mechanicals are fully hidden from view. Pitched, hip (gable), Gambrel, Dutch gable, Saltbox, Mansard, and Dormer styles are permitted. Regardless of roof type, mechanicals shall be hidden on all four sides from all line of sights.



Figure 13. Example of a new building showing a roof design with cupolas consistent with the rural character in Union Vale. This also shows appropriate facade breaks used to improve the aesthetics of a large building.

- [1] Where roof type allows, a parapet with cornice details along facades facing public streets shall be incorporated.
- [2] Plain parapets discouraged.



Figure 14. Example of a commercial building. This example shows many desired features for the TC District including outdoor eating area, use of awnings, traditional building style facade and rooflines, front landscaping. It also includes a main entrance facing the street, but a usable

- (b) Pitched Roofs.
 - [1] Should complement the overall style of the building.
 - [2] Materials should not be reflective.
 - [3] Colors should complement the overall character of the building.
 - [4] Should incorporate measures to prevent falling snow and ice onto the sidewalk.

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entrance to the side with side parking.

(15) Facade Treatment and Fenestration.

- (a) Overall facade composition should break the building down into smaller distinct portions to provide a small-scale impression related to the pedestrian. Any building having greater than 60' of road frontage shall include a facade break.
- (b) Building transparency and interior lighting is important at the street level; consequently, ground floor level should have a minimum 50% to 75% glass surface that is oriented vertically.



Figure 15. This new building exemplifies many desired design elements including facade breaks, use of traditional windows, short setbacks to the street, and traditional siding. This building could house commercial on the ground floor, and commercial and/or residential on the second floor.

- (c) Floor to ceiling windows where the entire facade is glassed is not a traditional building style and are strongly discouraged.
- (d) Upper floor windows should relate to the first in shape, form, and pattern.
- (e) Upper floor windows should make up at least 30% of the facade.
- (f) Storefront construction should be recessed enough at the point of entry to allow the door to swing out without obstructing the sidewalk.
- (g) Windows should not be mounted flush to the exterior of the facade.



Figure 16. This is an example of facade windows that meet the design standards for the TC District.

- (h) The architectural treatment of the front building facade shall be continued in its major features, around all visible sides from the primary street.

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- (i) Blank, windowless walls facing sidewalks, streets and other public places are prohibited.

(16) Specialty Equipment.

- (a) Rooftop Mechanical Equipment, Satellite Dishes, Antennas, etc.

- [1] Shall be screened from public view with the use of architecturally compatible materials, parapets, sloped roof form or walls that are at least as high as the equipment being screened.



- (b) Ground level equipment such as mechanical equipment, dumpsters and loading docks:

- [1] Shall be screened from public view with landscaping materials, natural material walls and opaque fencing, or other design treatments compatible with the finishes of the principal structure.

Figure 17. This example shows an effective use of landscaping and fencing to screen utilities.

(17) Materials and Color

- (a) Permitted Facade Materials, Styles and Colors:

- [1] Wood.
- [2] Siding of high-quality recycled product simulating a natural material.
- [3] Natural stone, stone veneer, or cast or cultured stone. Siding can also be of traditional board and batten, shakes, shingles or clapboard style.
- [4] Traditional brick.
- [5] Fiber Cement Board.
- [6] Architectural masonry units (colored, textured, painted).



Figure 18. This is an example of a franchise business with building design elements and signage that incorporates many of the design standards desired for the TC District. Note rooflines, lighting, signage, bollards, side parking, side entrance and windows.

- (b) Prohibited Materials:

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- [1] Plain (bare) masonry units.
- [2] Vinyl or metal siding that is installed in flat sheets or other means that result in a smooth finish.
- [3] Imitation stone made of plastic or sold in sheets.

(c) Trim Materials:

- [1] Finish-grade painted or stained wood.
- [2] Trim material of high-quality recycled product simulating a natural material.
- [3] Bare, lumber grade wood shall be prohibited.
- [4] Windows should have anodized aluminum or painted wood frame. Bare aluminum frames are prohibited. Any material used must be paintable.

(d) Building Colors:

- [1] Fluorescent colors are prohibited. White with dark accents or mixes of colors evoking a traditional farmhouse design aesthetic encouraged. Colors should be chosen from a commercial paint distributor's historic color pallet and shall be submitted for review by the Planning Board.

— (18 Awnings and Canopies.
)

- (a) Strongly encouraged on building facades that face public streets.
- (b) One awning sign shall be permitted for each window or door of the facade covered by the awning. All signs shall meet sign size requirements of Chapter 210.
- (c) Awnings to which signs may be attached must be fastened to the facade of the building and not supported from the ground; shall not extend more than seven feet from the facade; and no portion of the awning shall be nearer than seven feet from the ground.
- (d) All awning signs shall only identify the business establishment occupied by the facade on which the awning is located.
- (e) Awning Materials.
 - [1] Shall be constructed of canvas.
 - [2] Internal lighting or backlighting is not permitted.
 - [3] Color schemes shall be consistent with the colors outlined under materials and colors.
 - [4] Retractable awnings are permitted.