

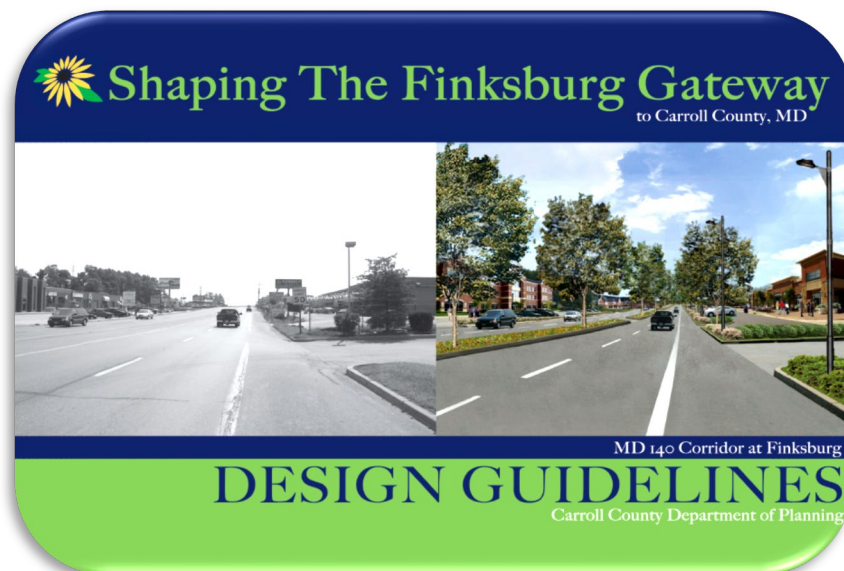


# FINKSBURG FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



## *Design Guidelines*

The guidance on facade and signage design found within this document was pulled directly from the [2013 Shaping the Finksburg Gateway – Design Guidelines](#). The document was created as a quick reference for those wishing to participate in the Finksburg Facade Improvement Program.



# Facade

Building facades that provide visual interest, especially on the first floor, are important in pedestrian-oriented areas. A distinctive identity for a corridor can also be created through a common palette of materials, forms, height and features forging a coordinated and inviting ambience.

## 2.2 Entrances and Entranceways

### a. Objectives

- 1) Ensure entrance design is compatible/respectful of the surrounding area and buildings to maintain cohesiveness.
- 2) Clearly delineate the entrance and entranceway.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide planting or planting island/median along the entranceway to enhance the sense of arrival.
- 2) At vehicular access points, provide a durable drive apron using concrete or decorative pavers to clearly delineate the access locations.
- 3) Use planting, lighting, bollards, signs and other features to enhance the sense of entrance.

## 2.7 Storage and Loading Areas, Dumpsters and Ground Mounted Electrical/Mechanical Equipment

### a. Objectives

- 1) Minimize the adverse visual impact of service area site features.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Locate dumpsters, loading areas, storage areas, utility and mechanical features in the rear of the building away from the public street.
- 2) Avoid direct sight lines into these features from adjacent roads and entrance drives. Make best use of existing topography or create earth berms with landscaping for screening.
- 3) Where possible, conceal these site features from all adjacent properties and public and private roads. Design enclosures to be consistent with the materials, color and design of the building.
- 4) Provide adequate screening of all service area site features, in accordance with the Design Guidelines.

## 2.8 Slopes, Embankments and Retaining Walls

### a. Objectives

- 1) Avoid extreme grade modifications that are visible from the public right-of-way and may impact on adjacent properties.
- 2) Use topography to enhance visual quality.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Terrace slopes, building and parking lots to reduce the height of embankments, especially along property lines.
- 2) Incorporate distinctive site features into site design.

# Facade

## 2.10 Site Lighting

### a. Objectives

- 1) Avoid light pollution. Keep the glare of lighting off public roadways and on the site.
- 2) Use light fixtures to maintain cohesiveness of the site design.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Select light fixtures that are compatible in design with the building and other site features and use the same style of light fixtures throughout the entire site when possible.
- 2) Use full cut-off lights with flat lenses to reduce light trespass.
- 3) Refrain from the following lighting types: yard lighting, floodlights, gang floodlights, wall pack lights, non-cutoff shoebox lights, and cobra-head cluster lights.
- 4) Recess canopy lighting within the structure. Ensure that the edge of the canopy protrudes below the surface area of the light.
- 5) Refer to Carroll County's "Design Expectations" document for recommended lighting types.

## 3.4 Facade

Building facades that have variety and visual interest, especially on the first floor, are crucial in creating pedestrian friendliness.

### a. Objectives

- 1) Promote thoughtful building facade treatment at ground/street level that is pedestrian friendly and inviting.
- 2) Highlight the building's main entrance.
- 3) Use various architectural elements to create visual interest and avoid blank walls.
- 4) Articulate the building facades of warehouses or other similar buildings with architectural design details.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Allow views to the exterior by providing windows on ground floor facades, visible from abutting street or parking lot.
- 2) Use open arcades to provide a pleasant, inviting pedestrian experience.
- 3) Use lighting, landscaping, porches, awnings, signs, arcades, etc. to highlight the sense of building entrance.
- 4) Use window design in terms of size, shape, type, and pattern to break up the sense of massiveness on the facade.
- 5) Use corners, belt courses, bay divisions, and variations in wall plane to enhance the visual interest of the facade.
- 6) If the building's function requires a basic, box-like building form, introduce exterior articulation such as changes in color, material or plane for facades that are visible from public streets.
- 7) If the facade is more than 100 feet in length, use recesses and offsets, angular forms, or other features to provide visual interest.

# Facade

## 3.5 Walls/Windows/Doors

### a. Objectives

- 1) Use doors and windows to add to the attractiveness of a building, encourage pedestrian activity, enliven the streetscape, and make streets and buildings safer.
- 2) Make rear entrances as attractive and inviting as the front entrance.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide street-oriented primary entrances. Dual entry areas are also acceptable, with entries oriented to the street and to parking at the back or side of the building.
- 2) Maximize transparency and windows on the ground floor for pedestrian interest. Use at least 40% of the building facade for windows or window display areas. Avoid windowless walls along the public street.
- 3) Establish recesses for entries and for outdoor eating or display areas. Besides providing gathering areas, these recesses can create visual interest along the street. Planters or landscaping may be incorporated into such recesses but must not extend into the public sidewalk or right-of-way.
- 4) Use the same design guides above for the rear building entrance.

## 3.7 Exterior Building Material

The finish of a building provides a statement for a particular business within and a visual interest for the Corridor as a whole. Quality building materials emphasizes a sense of pride for the corridor, the County, and its residents.

### a. Objectives

- 1) Use quality building materials to create an identity for the Corridor and engender pride in its appearance.
- 2) Use building materials to enhance business image and identity and improve the visual quality of the site.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Use one or a combination of the following materials as a first choice within the Corridor:
  - Finish face brick.
  - Ground face and split face concrete block.
  - Natural stone.
  - Stucco and simulated stucco finish such as 'Exterior Insulated Finish Systems' (EIFS).
  - Horizontal or vertical cement board siding (or similar material) and natural wood siding.
  - Cement board shake siding (or similar material) and natural cedar shake wood siding.
- 2) Avoid the following materials within the Corridor:
  - Vinyl siding in any form.
  - Concrete block.
  - Painted concrete block or painted brick.

# Facade

## 3.8 Awnings

### a. Objectives

- 1) Encourage the use of awnings to create visual interest and provide shade.
- 2) Coordinate the design of the awning with the building in terms of placement, color, shape, and size.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Mount awnings in locations that respect the design of the building.
- 2) Avoid awnings that could obscure transom windows, grille work, piers, pilasters, and other ornamental features.
- 3) In openings with transoms, mount the awnings below the transom on the horizontal framing element separating the storefront window from the transom.
- 4) Design awnings to project over individual window and door openings (i.e., mounted in the reveals of openings).
- 5) Avoid awnings that are a continuous feature, extending over several windows, doors, masonry piers, or arches.
- 6) Mount awnings on the wood or metal framing within a door or window opening (and not on the wall surrounding the opening).
- 7) Use shed awnings, with no end panels, when possible. Shed awnings are visually lighter and simpler, and they are more traditional in appearance than convex (bull nose) or box awnings.
- 8) Use convex-shaped (domed) awnings for locations with round-arched window/door openings.
- 9) Use simple horizontal valances on awnings. Scalloped or decorative valences are discouraged.
- 10) Use awnings with a single, solid color. Use awning colors that complement the colors of the building. Colors that call more attention to the awning than the building are inappropriate.
- 11) Install awnings that are retractable (or appear to be retractable), so they may be used seasonally and will appear as temporary features on a building instead of fixed architectural elements.

# Signage

The intent of signage design guidelines is to provide guidance for the way signs are designed, constructed, and mounted. Signage plays a significant role in creating either a positive or negative visual image for the individual property as well as the corridor. A well-designed sign can be attention-getting and convey information about the business, while at the same time in keeping with the characteristics of Finksburg's rural and residential appeal.

The Route 140 corridor, being an older commercial and industrial corridor, has many freestanding, pole-mounted signs. Over time, the cumulative effect of these signs has created a chaotic appearance. The existing signage and billboards along the Route 140 corridor has a significant impact on the overall impression of the corridor as unattractive. Providing a more consistent placement and orientation of signage with better design quality would reduce the visual clutter as well as project a more positive image.

The following guidelines for signs are meant to provide additional guidance for the design and installation of signs within the Finksburg corridor that will be both functional and attractive. They are not meant to replace the sign regulations contained in the County Zoning Ordinance.

## 4.1 Design

### a. Objectives

- 1) Achieve design consistency and harmony with the scale and architecture of the building to which the sign relates

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Ensure that the size and shape of signs are appropriate for the building on which they are placed and the area in which they are located.
- 2) Design signs so that they are integrated with the design of the building. A well-designed building facade or storefront is created by the careful coordination of sign and architectural design and a coordinated color scheme.
- 3) Design signs in multiple tenant buildings to complement or enhance other signs on the building.
- 4) Limit the size of sign panels to the width of the architectural support elements of the sign.

## 4.2 Color

### a. Objectives

- 1) Convey a positive and appropriate image of a business.
- 2) Attract viewer's attention without distraction or visual clutter.
- 3) Provide adequate and legible information to the viewer.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Selected colors that contribute to legibility and design integrity. Color contrast has significant impact on the legibility of signs. Provide a substantial contrast between the color and material of the background and the letters or symbols, to make the sign easier to read in both day and night. Light letters on a dark background or dark letters on a light background are most legible. Light letters on a dark background work best for both day and nighttime use.
- 2) Use small accents of several colors to make a sign unique and attractive. The competition of large areas of many different colors often decreases readability.
- 3) Use sign colors that complement the colors used on the building wall, adjacent buildings and the site as a whole.

# Signage

## 4.3 Letters and Words

- a. Objectives
  - 1) Ensure legibility of the information on sign.
- b. Guidelines
  - 1) Space letters and words for maximum readability. Crowding of letters, words, or lines will make any sign more difficult to read. Conversely, excessive spacing of these elements causes the viewer to read each item individually, again obscuring the message. As a general rule, dedicate no more than 75 percent of the sign panel area to letters.
  - 2) Limit the number of lettering styles that are used on a sign in order to increase legibility. As a general rule, limit the number of different letter types to no more than two for small signs and three for larger signs.

## 4.4 Symbols and Logos

- a. Objectives
  - 1) Provide a distinct identity for the business.
- b. Guidelines
  - 1) Use symbols and logos in place of words whenever appropriate.
  - 2) Use pictographic images that convey the nature and character of the business.
  - 3) Use franchise logos, rather than extensive signage, to capitalize on regional or national recognition.

## 4.5 Illumination

- a. Objectives
  - 1) Provide adequate illumination and minimize the adverse impact of excessive lighting.
  - 2) Enhance the architectural features of the building.
  - 3) Avoid light trespass onto adjacent properties
  - 4) Provide nighttime legibility.
- b. Guidelines
  - 1) Whenever possible, focus lighting down and inwards toward the sign to avoid light glare and trespass issues while providing maximum nighttime legibility.
  - 2) If they are to be internally illuminated, design freestanding monument signs so that the sign copy is the only portion that is illuminated. Make the sign background or field opaque.
  - 3) Use small, unobtrusive fixtures for external (projection) lighting. Avoid the use of oversized fixtures that are out of scale with the sign and structure.

# Signage

## 4.6 Wall Signs

### a. Objectives

- 1) Use wall signs in a manner that reinforces facade rhythm, scale, and proportion and complements other building features.
- 2) Minimize the visual clutter of signs on walls.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) On buildings that have a monolithic or plain facade, place signs so that they establish or continue appropriate design rhythm, scale, and proportion
- 2) Integrate wall and projecting signs into the building design to minimize visual clutter and help achieve a more consistent, attractive and pleasing view from public streets.
- 3) Mount signage to fit within architectural elements. Do not allow signs to hide or obscure building details or features.
- 4) Locate wall signs so that they emphasize elements of the facade itself.

## 4.7 Window Signs

### a. Objectives

- 1) Allow for the use of windows for business identification and limited advertisement without obscuring the function of the window for light and display.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Avoid the use of window signs as the primary signage for the business.
- 2) When window signs are used, paint on the surface of the window and in a permanent nature. Generally, follow the same design guidelines that apply to building mounted signs.
- 3) Avoid the use of temporary materials such as banners, cardboard or paper, and advertisements for specific products or brands sold on the premises.
- 4) Limit window signs to no more than 20% of the total window glass area of each business on the first floor facing the street.
- 5) Limit window signs to retail uses only; they are not appropriate for office and industrial uses.

## 4.8 Monument Signs

### a. Objectives

- 1) Design monument signs to be compatible with the building design.
- 2) Provide adequate business information.
- 3) Enhance business identity.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Limit monument signs to a maximum height of six (6) feet above road grade.
- 2) Design individual tenant sign panels to be uniform in size, recognizing that the major tenant or the name of the center may have a slightly larger sign panel.
- 3) Locate signage on the property of the business it relates to.
- 4) Coordinate materials and colors for freestanding monument signs with the materials and design elements/character of the principal buildings on the site. This helps enhance the identity of the building at the street edge.



# Signage

## 4.9 Discouraged Signs

- a. LED/LCD signs.
- b. Neon signs.
- c. Revolving signs.
- d. Sequential or continuous flashing light signs.
- e. Pylon or pole-mounted signs.
- f. Signs or lettering painted directly onto a building's facade.
- g. Bulk pennants, banners, streamers, clusters of flags, propellers or strings of twirlers, or flares.
- h. Tethered balloons or any inflatable signs.
- i. Portable or "sandwich board" signs.
- j. Roof signage.
- k. Billboards / off-premise signs of any type or form.
- l. Mobile or large movable signs.