Spring Valley Station District

Core Area Design Guidelines

August 18, 2004

Purpose and Intent

The Spring Valley Station District

Light rail transit has brought a new dimension to city planning, transit-oriented development, where all elements of development—uses, development rights, building regulations, area regulations, open space, parking, and signs—are regulated with the goal of supporting light rail ridership and creating a cohesive mixed-use district. The Spring Valley Station District (the District) surrounds the City of Richardson's Spring Valley DART Light Rail Station and is comprised of the Core Area and the Interface Areas. The Core Area includes the parcels closest to the Spring Valley Station whose development potential is affected by their proximity to the station. The Interface Areas are transition areas between the Core Area and the surrounding City.

New development within the Core Area is governed by a Planned Development (PD) ordinance and these design guidelines. Interface Area standards are detailed in the Spring Valley Station District Interface Area Design Guidelines.

Illustration 1: Aerial sketch of the Spring Valley Station District

The Core Area Design Guidelines

The City of Richardson understands the value of aesthetics and amenities as vital ingredients in strengthening and enhancing community identity, establishing and maintaining economic value and implementing the City's long-range vision for transit-oriented development. These guidelines were developed as a means of creating a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use environment within the Core Area of the Spring Valley TOD District and promoting consistent, quality design throughout the Core Area and the adjacent Interface Areas. The City's commitment to the implementation of the guidelines is evidenced by the adoption of this Resolution. These guidelines have been developed for use in all circumstances except where physical or design conditions prevent their reasonable application. In these instances, as outlined in this document, the City is authorized to approve exceptions without the need for special variance procedures.

Boundaries and Application

These guidelines apply to properties within the Core Area of the Spring Valley TOD District. The Core Area boundaries are shown in the Spring Valley Core Area Master Plan and are generally defined by Greenville Avenue on the east; Spring Valley Road and Centennial Boulevard on the south; the alley located between the US75 access road and Sherman Street on the west; and the southern edge of the RISD parcel, extending generally west along property lines to the alley between the US75 access road and Sherman Street. The application of these design guidelines shall be supplemental to the regulations with the Spring Valley Core Area Ordinance.

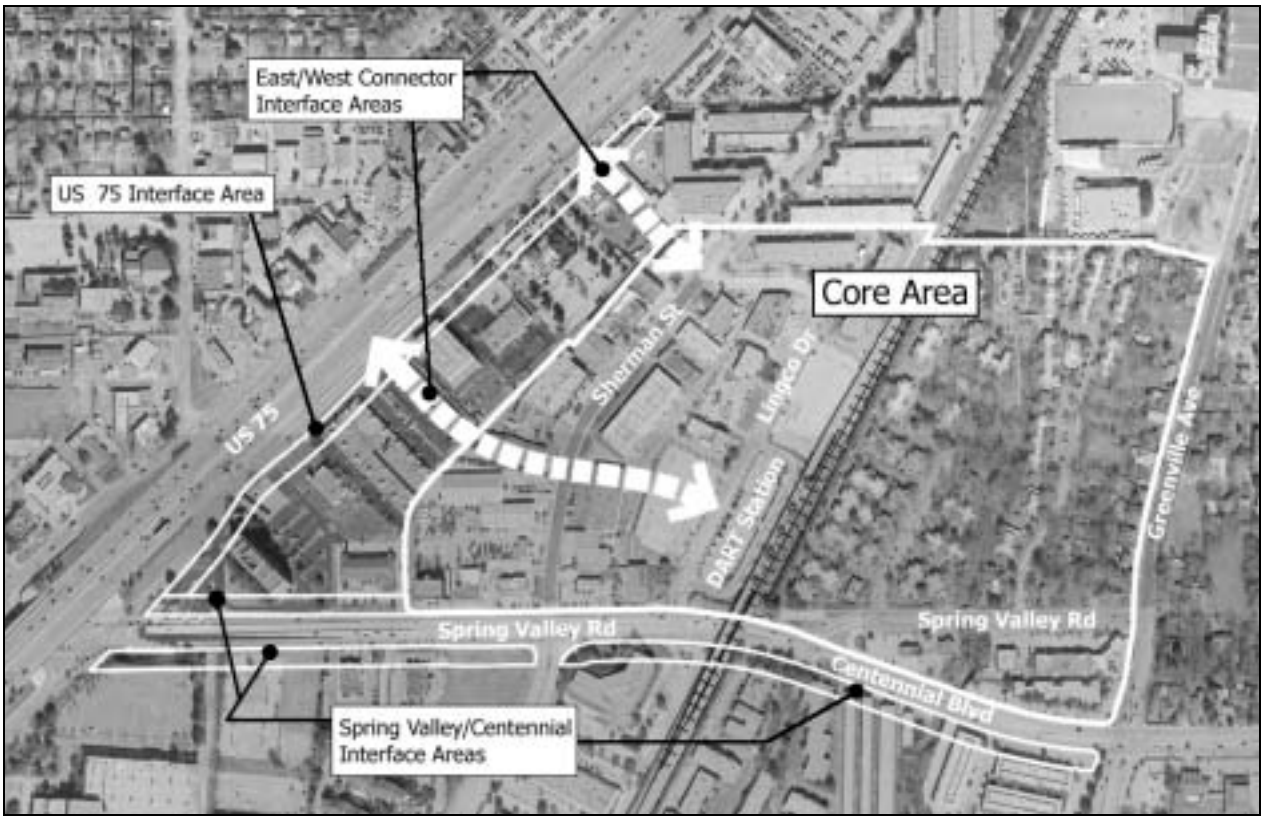

Illustration 2: Spring Valley Station District Application Plan

Definitions

For the purpose of these design guidelines, the following definitions should be used. Additional definitions for terms used in this document may be found in the Spring Valley TOD Core Area PD Ordinance and the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance.

Architectural elements—the individual components of a building, including walls, doors, windows, cornices, parapets, roofs, pediments, and other features.

Block—a unit of land bounded by streets or by a combination of streets (not including alleys) and public land, railroad rights-of-way, waterways, or any other barrier to the continuity of development.

Bollard—any small vertical element, such as a decorative steel or iron pole, or a short concrete column, intended to allow pedestrian traffic but to restrict vehicular traffic and often used in groups to indicate an edge between pedestrian and vehicular areas.

Building massing—the exterior volume of a building.

Building scale—the relationship between a building's component parts and the adjoining buildings, spaces, and people.

Caliper—the diameter of the trunk of a tree measured 6 inches above the ground.

Character—the distinctive structure, form, materials and style of a place, as reflected in the landscape, buildings, trees, spaces, furniture, materials, colors, and organization of the area.

Curb cut—any break in the curb for a vehicle entry or driveway apron.

Curb ramp—a sloping area of sidewalk, generally located at a corner, allowing access for wheelchairs and people with disabilities.

Design continuity—a unifying or connecting theme or physical feature for a particular setting or place, provided by one or more elements of the natural or built environment.

Pedestrian lighting—special lighting that adds drama, character, and illumination to pedestrian areas, which may consist of pedestrian-scale, pole-mounted luminaries, lighted bollards, or other low-level light sources.

Scale—the size of a building, space, or roadway in relation to some other element, such as a human or automobile.

Street lights—lights primarily intended to illuminate the roadway.

Building Design and Placement

Buildings located close to and facing the street create a pedestrian-friendly streetscape. Placing buildings near the sidewalk edge with minimal setbacks, rather than behind large front parking areas or garages, provides definition to the sidewalk and creates activity and architectural interest along the street. The building façade is integral to streetscape and should be well-designed and complementary to the rest of the Core Area.

Generally

- Buildings should be located in such a manner as to minimize conflicts between pedestrians and automobiles.
- Buildings should be oriented primarily to the street with street-oriented retail or service spaces.
- Buildings should be designed to complement the general architectural character of the district.
- Architectural elements should be designed to the appropriate scale and proportions of the selected architectural style.
- Outdoor dining areas and other amenities that enliven the streetscape adjacent to the street are encouraged.

Illustration 3: Sketch of typical intersection within the Core Area

Building façade

- Architectural features, materials, and color should be used where possible to tie buildings together into a cohesive district.
- Building facades should provide offsets (including projections, recesses, niches, fenestration), changes in materials or color, and other architectural enhancements to add

variety and interest. The use of decorative pilasters, moldings, cornices, and other façade treatments is encouraged to enrich building appearance.

- Architectural elements, such as canopies, awnings, roof and floor overhangs, and colonnades should be provided as appropriate to protect pedestrians from the elements, help unify parts of a building or block, provide human scale, or provide a backdrop for signage and graphics.
- The scale of individual building façade components should relate to one another and the human scale, particularly at the street level.
- All publicly visible facades of a building should be treated equally and consistently in terms of materials, colors, and design, and should have a "finished" appearance. Façades fronting service or parking areas at the ground floor level need not have windows but should include architectural interest rather than a blank appearance.

Building corners

Intersections and well-designed building corners can evolve into unique spaces of concentrated activity where pedestrians gather. In addition to the required increase in building setbacks at street intersections, enhanced building corners are strongly encouraged to enliven the streetscape in the Core Area.

- Larger building setbacks at corners and enhanced building corner design are encouraged to create spaces for active outdoor uses such as café seating, art, plazas, water features, etc.
- Where possible, active intersections characterized by similarly designed or scaled building corners on opposite sides of the street are encouraged.
- Enhanced building corners can include elements such as towers or other architectural appendages, windows, canopies, signs, outdoor seating, and building entrances.

Building entrances

- Entrances to buildings and/or tenant spaces should be highlighted with appropriate architectural features so as to distinguish them from the remainder of the building.
- Retail shops at street level should have direct access to and from the sidewalk.
- Entrances should be easily identifiable as primary points of access to buildings.
- Ground floor entrances to interior and upper level uses should be defined and integrated into the design of the overall building façade.
- Secondary entries, walkways, and galleries should provide access to parking placed at the rear of buildings.

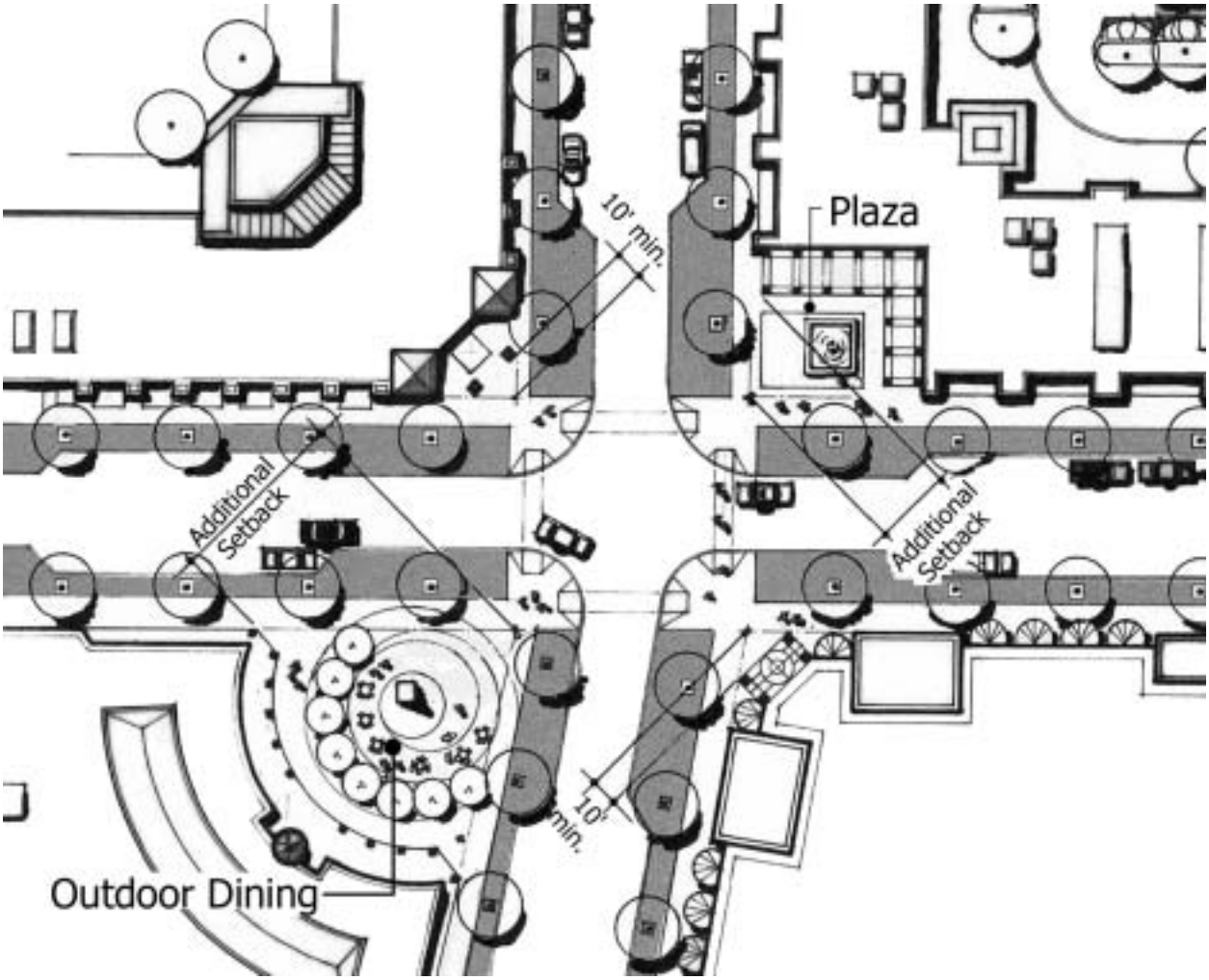

Illustration 4: Street intersection examples

Street Trees

Trees offer many benefits to the environment by providing color and shade; buffering wind, sun and bad views; cleaning the air; and reducing glare. A formal, repetitive use of trees is recommended to unify the Core Area and create a continuous pedestrian scale.

Selection

- Within a block, trees should have similar characteristics on both sides of the street.
- Trees should be selected that will be an appropriate size, form, and character for the chosen location.
- Trees should be thornless and fruitless to reduce maintenance.
- Tree varieties should be selected to minimize obstruction of views to retail signs when fully grown.

Tree Grates and Uplighting

Tree grates are an attractive way to protect trees planted in paved areas and high traffic pedestrian areas.

- Tree grates should fill the tree well and be designed to allow for trunk growth.
- Openings within tree grates should be no more than ¼" in width.
- Grates should be constructed of ductile iron, and either left unpainted or painted a dark color with a durable, factory-applied finish.
- Uplighting fixtures should shield the light source from passing motorists.

Furnishings

Pedestrian-oriented street furnishings such as seating, newspaper racks, bicycle racks, bollards, trash receptacles, lighting, planting pots, and planters are important functional elements and amenities.

- Furnishings should be designed to be attractive and unified within the Core Area.
- Furnishings should be located at least 3 feet from the back of curb.
- Maintenance, safety, and comfort should be primary considerations in the design, selection, and placement of furnishings.
- All furnishings should be designed for outdoor use and constructed of high-quality, durable materials requiring minimum maintenance.

Seating

Seating expands opportunities for people to use the street, especially in non-residential areas. Where used, seating may be provided by benches, planter walls, edges, steps or movable chairs.

- Seating should be durable and comfortable with metal the preferred material.
- Seating design should complement the style of the surrounding architecture and other street furnishings.
- Except for moveable chairs, seating should be secured permanently to paved surfaces for safety and to avoid vandalism and theft.
- Seating should be designed to discourage use for sleeping.

Newspaper Racks

Newspaper racks should serve the public without compromising pedestrian circulation and the appearance of the pedestrian zone.

- Newspaper racks should be clustered.
- Properly designed multi-racks are encouraged, and such racks should be permanently secured to the ground.
- Racks should be painted a neutral color so that they blend in with their surroundings.

- Racks should be located within the amenity zone or adjacent to the building, but in no case should the racks obstruct the required sidewalk width.
- Individual racks should not be chained or bolted to light poles, utility poles, street sign poles, signal poles, or any other element of the pedestrian zone, including furnishings.

Bicycle Racks

Bicycle racks should be provided to encourage bicycle use.

- Racks should be permanently mounted structures, simple in design, and easy to use.
- Racks should be located near building entrances or gathering places.

Bollards

Bollards are generally used to create a low barrier between vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

- Bollard design should be architecturally and aesthetically appropriate.
- Bollards should complement other street furnishings.

Trash Receptacles

Provision of trash receptacles is encouraged to help maintain a clean appearance in the Core Area.

- City approval is required for placement of the receptacles.
- Trash receptacles should be easily accessible for pedestrians and trash collection and constructed of metal.
- The design of the receptacles should relate to other street furnishings.
- The receptacles should be firmly attached to paving, with covered tops and sealed bottoms to keep contents dry and out of sight.
- Maintenance and emptying of receptacles is the responsibility of the property owner.

Planting Pots and Planters

Planting pots and planters provide added dimension and color to the streetscape, help direct pedestrian traffic, create focal points, and may incorporate pedestrian seating.

- Large pots are preferred instead of fixed planter boxes because of maintenance and potential conflicts with vehicles.
- Planters that are to be used for seating should be between 18 and 24 inches in height with a rim of at least 8 inches in width. Plant materials should not interfere with the seating.

Lighting

Lighting plays an important role in the character, function and security of the pedestrian zone.

- Light standards, poles, and fixture housings should be of a single color and design. Said color and design should be compatible with and complement the general architectural character of the district.

- All lighting fixtures should be restricted to down-light, cut-off, or indirect types and should be mounted no higher than 20' above the surrounding grade within 100' of any street right-of-way.
- Low-pressure sodium lighting or lighting of similar color is prohibited.

Open Space

Open space is a vital ingredient that contributes to the identity of an area, serves as a focal point, and enhances the pedestrian experience.

Parks, Plazas and Creeks

- Parks and plazas are encouraged to add beauty and interest, and reinforce the pedestrian scale and architectural character of the Core Area.
- Parks and plazas should generally be placed along streets and pedestrian ways.
- Parks and plazas may be designed for active or passive uses.
- Existing creeks should be preserved as a natural amenity and incorporated into the project design. Fencing and piping of creeks should be avoided and channelization improvements should be minimized.

Parking

Integrating parking with other elements and improvements in the Core Area is an important aspect of streetscape design.

Surface Parking Lots

Care should be taken in the design of surface parking lots to ensure they do not dominate the street frontage, interrupt sidewalks or negatively impact adjacent property.

- Surface parking should be located behind buildings or in the interior of a block, minimizing gaps in the continuity of the building facades along the street and sidewalk.
- Parking should be screened from adjacent streets by walls, shrubs, additional trees, or other suitable design elements.
- The number of parking lot curb cuts should be minimized to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and automobiles. Where possible, adjacent owners should share curb cuts.
- Dead-end parking is strongly discouraged.

Parking Structures

Parking structures should be designed so that they are compatible with adjacent buildings.

- Parking structures are encouraged to be "wrapped" as much as possible by adjacent buildings, minimizing their visibility from adjacent streets.
- The design of parking structures should be architecturally integrated with the design of the building(s) they serve.

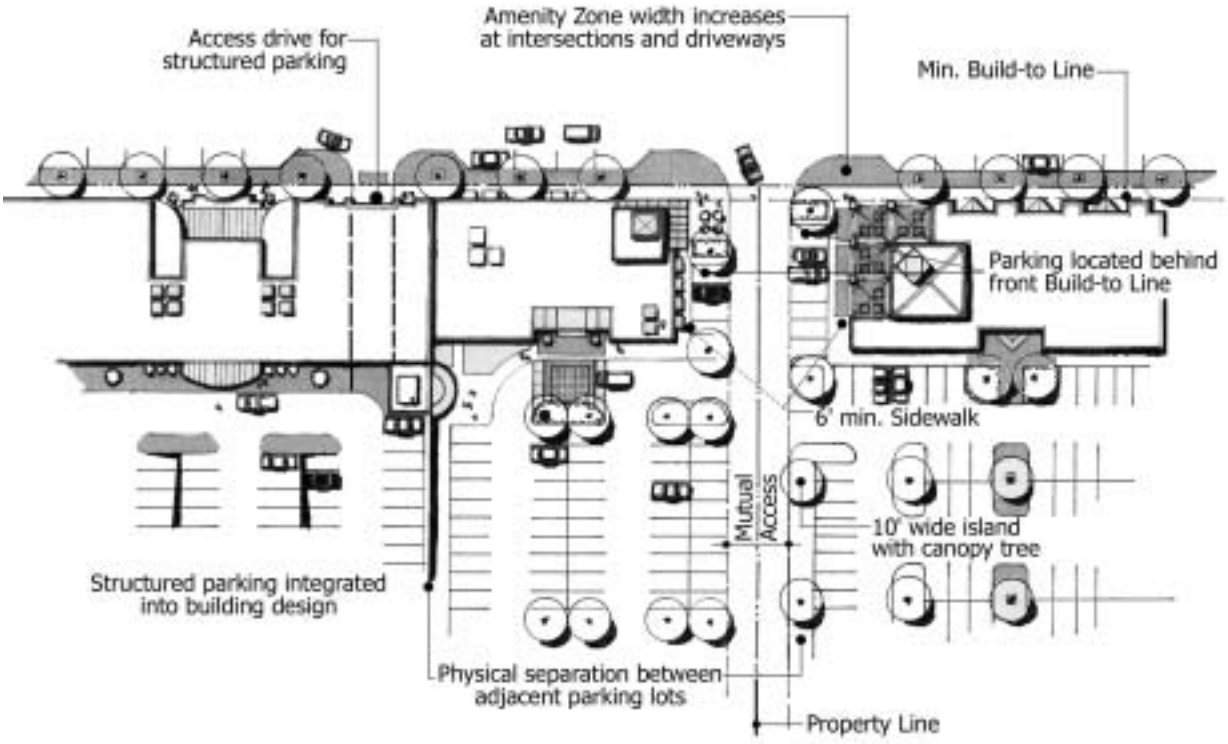

Illustration 5: Examples of parking area layouts

- Wherever possible, retail or service uses should be located at the ground floor level along any street frontage of parking structures.
- Clear signage should be provided to direct drivers to the parking structure.

Signs

Signs are important to the success of most businesses, identifying the business to both the driver and the pedestrian.

- The location, size, color, materials, and design of signs should be in keeping with the character of the district.
- Signage should be oriented towards the pedestrian (scale, legibility) to reinforce the character of the district.
- The number of signs should be limited to avoid clutter.
- Signs should be integrated into the building's overall design in terms of placement, materials, colors, scale, proportions, etc.
- Signs attached flush to the building should not obscure any significant architectural details.
- Sign shapes should be simple and straightforward to communicate well.
- Sign materials should be durable and easy to maintain.
- Sign lettering should be simple, legible, and appropriately proportioned for clear communication.

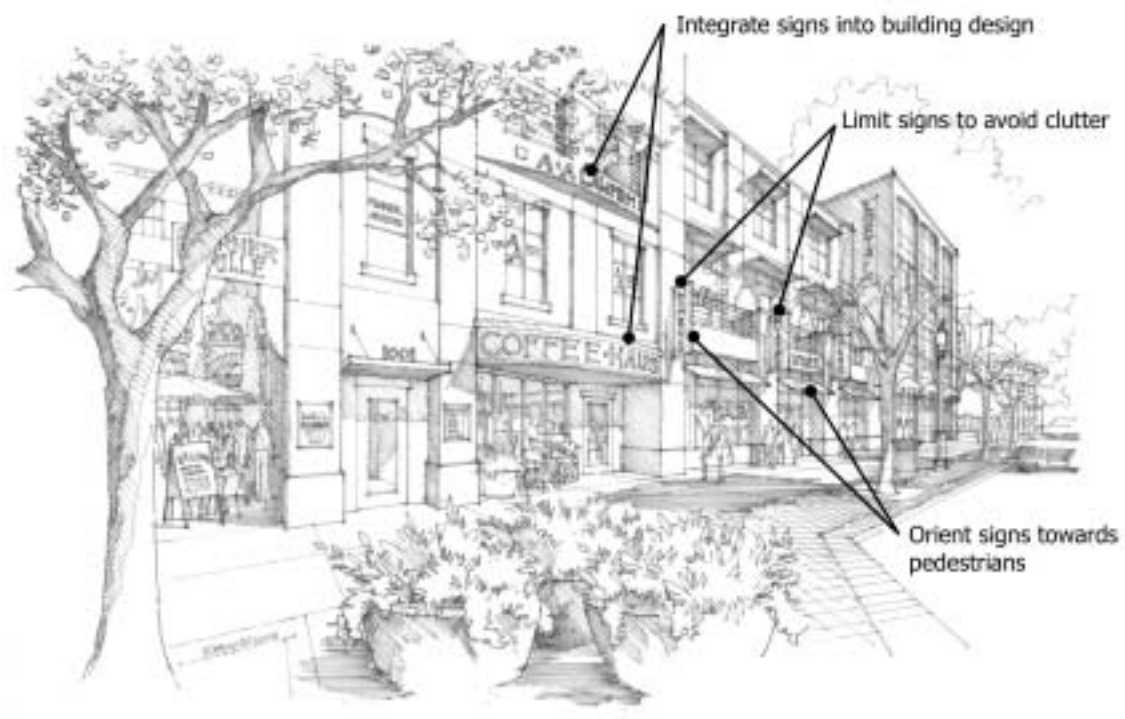

Illustration 6: Examples of signs

- Signs may be lit by external light sources as long as such sources are not visually intrusive to the pedestrian environment.
- Identification signs within a single development should be similar in design to enhance consistency and project identity.

Plant List

Name	Min. Size	Spacing
Street Trees		
• Bald Cypress (Taxodium distichum)	4” cal.	40’ o.c.
• Pond Cypress (Taxodium ascendens)	4” cal.	40’ o.c.
• Cedar Elm (Ulmus crassifolia)	4” cal.	40’ o.c.
• Chinquapin Oak (Quercus muehlenbergii)	4” cal.	40’ o.c.
• Lacebark Elm (Ulmus parvifolia)	4” cal.	40’ o.c.
• Lacey Oak (Quercus laceyi)	4” cal.	40’ o.c.
• Texas Ash (Fraxinus texensis)	4” cal.	40’ o.c.
Evergreen Shrubs		
• Carissa Holly (Ilex cornuta ‘Carissa’)	2 gal.	30” o.c.
• Dwarf Chinese Holly (Ilex cornuta ‘Rotunda’)	2 gal.	30” o.c.
• Dwarf Indian Hawthorn (Raphiolepis indica dwarf cultivars)	2 gal.	30” o.c.
• Dwarf Nandina (Nandina domestica dwarf cultivars)	2 gal.	24” o.c.
• Dwarf Yaupon Holly (Ilex vomitoria ‘Nana’)	2 gal.	24” o.c.
• Shore Juniper (Juniperus conferta)	2 gal.	24” o.c.
Ground Cover		
• Asiatic Jasmine (Trachelospermum asiaticum)	4” pots	9” o.c.
• Creeping Juniper (Juniperus horizontalis cultivars)	4” pots	9” o.c.
• Gray Santolina (Santolina chamaecyparissus)	4” pots	9” o.c.
• Liriope (Liriope muscari cultivars)	4” pots	9” o.c.
• Mondo Grass (Ophiopogon japonicus)	4” pots	9” o.c.
• Periwinkle (Vinca major)		