

4.9 Mendocino Avenue Corridor Plan Design Guidelines

The Mendocino Avenue Corridor Plan addresses the area between College Avenue and Steele Lane. Mendocino Avenue is a busy arterial that runs parallel to Highway 101 and serves as the primary access to Santa Rosa Junior College, one of the largest Community Colleges in the State of California. Mendocino Avenue also provides access to Santa Rosa High School and is lined by residential and commercial uses. In addition, Mendocino Avenue is an important route for public transit and cycling.

The guidelines in the Core Area section of the City of Santa Rosa's Design Guidelines document define the level of quality architecture that is expected for the Mendocino Avenue corridor. The following guidelines complement those and provide additional recommendations to enhance the relationship between proposed buildings and the streetscape in an effort to promote pedestrian activity along the corridor.

The city's review process encourages the highest level of design quality, while at the same time providing the flexibility necessary to encourage creativity on the part of project designers. The overall objective is to ensure that the intent of the guidelines are followed. The design guidelines in the Mendocino Avenue Corridor Plan support the city's existing design guidelines for the core/downtown area and will be applied by the city through the design review process.

The following are corridor wide goals that were developed during the community outreach process for the Mendocino Avenue Corridor Plan. Section 4.9 provides guidelines organized within each of the following categories; sidewalk treatment, landscaping, storefront design, building orientation, and development standards.

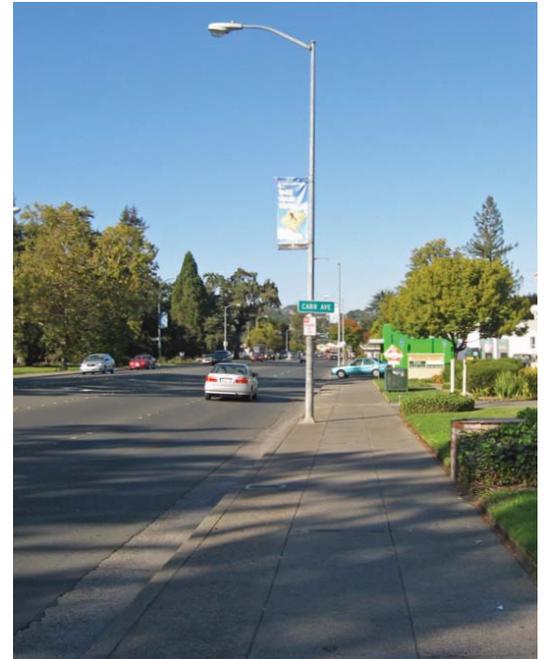


Figure 4.9.1 Street trees and sidewalk furniture would enhance pedestrian orientation of the Mendocino Avenue corridor.



Figure 4.9.2 All modes of travel are encouraged along the corridor.

I. GOALS - CORRIDOR WIDE

- A. To enhance the Mendocino Avenue corridor for all modes of travel including walking, bicycling, transit, and automobile use through traffic calming measures and increased aesthetics and landscaping.
- B. To improve pedestrian safety along the corridor.
- C. To encourage mixed-use development along the corridor, consistent with the City of Santa Rosa's City Code and General Plan objectives.
- D. To create an identity for the corridor that complements the surrounding area and attracts residents and visitors.



Figure 4.9.3 Improving pedestrian safety through enhanced crosswalks is a major goal of the plan.

II. GUIDELINES

4.9.1: Sidewalk Treatment – Lighting and sidewalk furnishings

Street furnishings should be provided along the corridor that complement the corridor's architectural character. The following potential street furniture options (including lighting, benches and trash receptacles, and tree grates) are recommended to support the environment envisioned for the corridor.

Lighting

Pedestrian scaled lighting should be installed along the sidewalks throughout the corridor and should be the appropriate size and spaced accurately to enhance the aesthetic quality of the streetscape and increase pedestrian safety. Decorative acorn lighting should be used that complies with the dimensioning and character described in the City's 1992 Street Light Standards illustrated in Figure 4.9.5.

Guidelines:

1. Light fixtures should incorporate the latest energy-efficient technology for directing light and reducing glare, while not spilling beyond property lines.
2. Pedestrian lights should be approximately 12-16 feet in height and appropriately spaced on both sides of the street along the corridor.
3. Parking lots, pedestrian walkways and paseos should be illuminated to ensure safe nighttime conditions.
4. Timers and sensors should be considered to avoid unnecessary lighting and conserve energy.

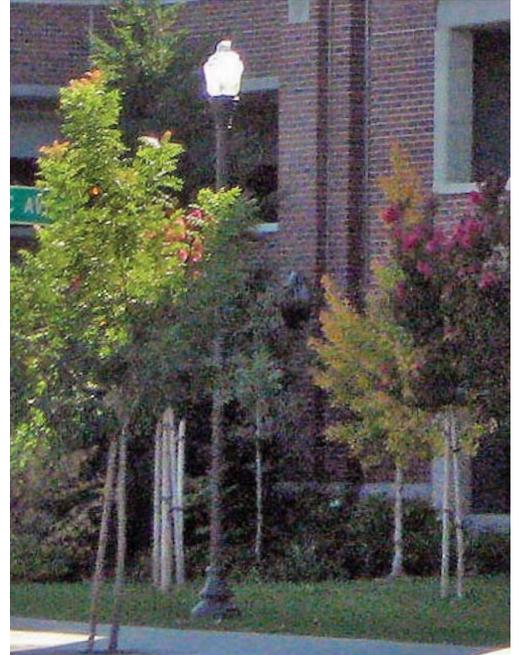


Figure 4.9.4 An example of city approved pedestrian scaled decorative acorn light currently along Mendocino Avenue.

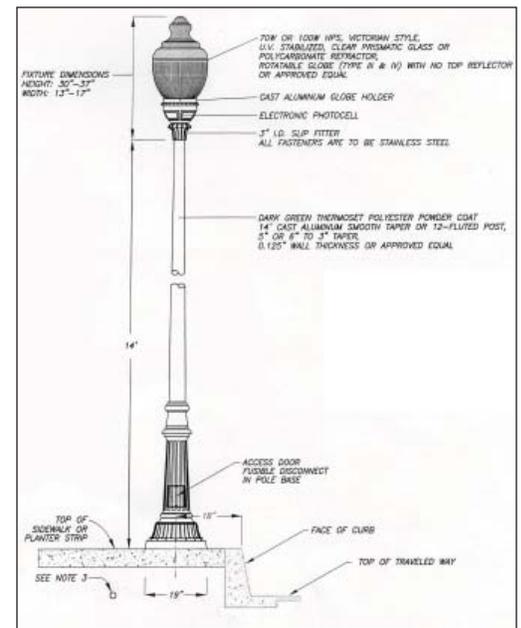


Figure 4.9.5 City's 1992 Street Light Standards.



Figure 4.9.6 Sidewalk furnishings can help define the architectural character of the corridor.



Figure 4.9.7 Trees and tree grates add aesthetic quality to the sidewalk as well as providing a buffer from the street.

Benches and Trash Receptacles

New benches and trash receptacles should be installed along the corridor to enhance the pedestrian environment. Typical placement of the benches and trash receptacles should be approximately every 100' and at key locations to provide seating and amenities for pedestrians.

Tree Grates

The installation of tree grates creates safer sidewalks, increased opportunities for outdoor seating, and can lead to the health of street trees and reduced sidewalk maintenance. The tree grates proposed throughout the corridor's sidewalks should be designed to complement the streetscape treatments (i.e. lighting and sidewalk furnishings) described in these design guidelines.

4.9.2: Landscaping

Landscaping along the corridor, located in sidewalk planter strips and in the center turn lane median, should adhere to the street tree list approved in 2007 by the City's Recreation & Parks Department. Section 1.3(II)B-Street Trees and Section 4.1-Landscaping in the City's Design Guidelines provides guidelines on landscaping requirements.

4.9.3: Storefront Design - Windows, doors, and entries

Retail demand may fluctuate along the corridor, and there should be flexibility to allow occupancy by a variety of use types. Well-designed storefronts, including windows, doors, wall composition, colors, and materials, are very important to create a sense of entry and pedestrian scale. The main building entrance of ground floor uses should be distinguished from the rest of the building and easily identifiable. The guidelines in Section 2.3-Core Area Buildings provides direction for storefront design along the corridor. The following complements those guidelines.

Guidelines:

1. Entry designs are encouraged but are not limited to incorporating the following methods to depict a sense of entry:
 - a. change in wall / window plane;
 - b. a projecting element above the entrance;
 - c. a change in material or detailing;
 - d. architectural elements such as flanked columns or decorative fixtures;
 - e. recessed doors, archways, or cased openings;
 - f. a portico or formal porch projecting from or set into the surface;
 - g. changes in the roofline or a tower
2. Recessed storefront entries are strongly encouraged.
3. Where recessed entries occur, a decorative paving material, such as tile, marble, or slate, is encouraged.
4. Passive solar design should be incorporated into the building design, where possible. Windows and skylights should be located to maximize natural lighting and reduce the need for indoor lighting.
5. Windows should be articulated with accent trim that is authentic to the architecture of the building.
6. To create shade and shadow detail, it is encouraged that windows be inset from building walls.



Figure 4.9.8 Storefront entries should be well articulated and clearly defined.



Figure 4.9.9 Storefronts should be appropriately scaled and make a strong connection with the sidewalk's edge.

7. Clear glass or lightly tinted glass is encouraged to be used on the ground floor of commercial buildings. Opaque, reflective, or dark tinted glass are not encouraged to be used for any portions of the building.
8. At least 60% of the ground level front building façades are encouraged to be transparent (windows and doors) in commercial buildings.
9. Windows and doors should be proportionate in scale to the building elevation.

4.9.4: Building Orientation

Where redevelopment may occur in areas such as the catalyst sites illustrated on the Preferred Corridor Plan, streets should be lined with retail storefronts and parking lots should be relocated behind buildings. The following guidelines are designed to enhance the corridor to achieve the desired pedestrian-oriented vision.

Guidelines:

1. Buildings should be placed at sidewalk edge and oriented toward the street. Landscaping should be installed between the street and the sidewalk buffering the sidewalk from traffic and providing a pedestrian scale to walkways.
2. Parking lots should be provided away from street edge behind buildings and should be clearly identifiable with directional signage. Where possible they should be connected and accessible from side streets.
3. Outdoor dining opportunities are encouraged but shall meet the conditions and requirements of section 20-42.160 Sidewalk cafés in Chapter 20-42 STANDARDS FOR SPECIFIC LAND USES of the City's Zoning Code.
4. Building entrances should be oriented toward the street frontage. They should not back onto existing or planned amenities such as parks and plazas.



Figure 4.9.10 Outdoor dining opportunities are encouraged to enliven the corridor and the pedestrian's experience.

5. Significant buildings with prominent architectural features should be located near corners and intersections whenever possible.
6. Outdoor spaces should have clear purpose that reflects careful planning and are not simply “left over” areas between structures. Such spaces should provide pedestrian amenities, such as benches, fountains, landscaping, public art, etc.
7. Loading areas and delivery service areas should be placed at the rear or side of buildings. These areas should be screened with decorative walls, trellises and vines, berming with landscaping, trees, or a combination of these treatments.
8. Intensified landscaping, changes in setbacks, and appropriate building orientation should be used to buffer or transition residential uses from adjacent commercial uses.
9. Climatic factors such as prevailing winds, shade trees, window and door orientation, and the positioning of buildings on the site should be coordinated to maximize energy conservation.



Figure 4.9.11 Appropriately scaled sidewalks create an inviting pedestrian environment.

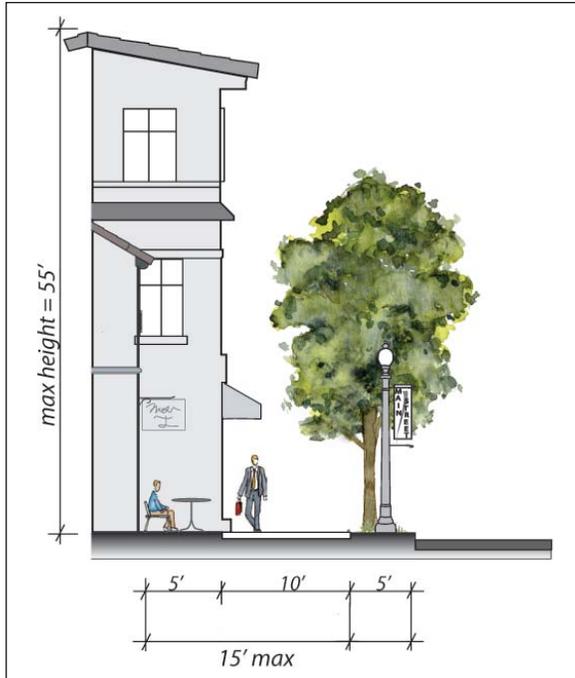


Figure 4.9.12 Height and setbacks

4.9.5: Draft Development Standards – Setbacks, Height, and Building Coverage

The following provides a summary of the development standards for buildings and how they interact with the public realm along the corridor. Detailed illustrations are included depicting the potential building setbacks and site layout for the land uses along the corridor including mixed-use, retail, and office uses.

Setbacks

- Front: min = 0' (from property line)
max = 15' (from property line)
- Side: min = 0'
max = 20' (to allow for plaza/pedestrian walkway)
- Rear: min = 0'

Height

- Mixed-Use (residential/office over retail)
max approx. = 55'
- Stand Alone Retail
max approx. = 45'

Building Coverage

- max = 100%

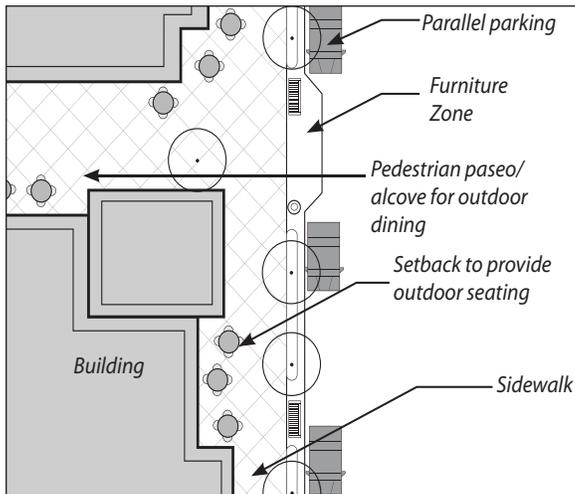


Figure 4.9.13 Building orientation and relationship to the public realm