

REVISE YOUR REGS: ACTIVE LIVING DESIGN STANDARDS MATRIX

This chart will help you scrutinize your community’s regulations, development standards, and processes to see how well they support designs that encourage people to get more physical activity. Be sure to consult with appropriate guidebooks (for example, AASHTO 1999 and 2005) and with specialized professionals (such as walkability-oriented engineers, planners, and landscape architects) as you move forward.

COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

Active Living Design Element	Revise Your Ordinance or Plan to:	Recommended Standard or Action
Building setbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce building setbacks to create development that is inviting to pedestrians and enhances safety by raising the numbers of “eyes on the street.” Establish New Urbanist or traditional neighborhood design (TND) zones and standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow zero or near lot line development (buildings situated at the front of parcels and built right up to or close to sidewalks) for both residential and commercial developments in mixed-use zones. Establish “build to” lines of 10–15 feet.
Mixed-use zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish mixed-use zone(s). Create appropriate descriptions of an array of complementary uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed-use zones should allow for mixing of residential, office space, schools, retail shopping, food/restaurants, outdoor recreation, and civic/public uses. Allow neighborhood stores, day care, small office buildings, and schools in existing residential neighborhoods. Allow second-story apartments and offices in neighborhood commercial buildings.
Parcel sizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce or eliminate minimum parcel size requirement. Raise the number of houses allowed per acre to enable compact design and support transit systems. Allow for longer, narrower lot sizes that increase the number of lots facing the street. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compact design has residential densities ranging from 6 to 12 units/acre. Higher densities (13–45 units per acre) are appropriate for mixed-uses zones or established urban centers.
Parking for commercial areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the required number of parking spaces per square foot of retail space or set maximum parking allowances. Allow for parking at the rear of commercial buildings. Create separate walking areas through parking lots to safely separate motorists and pedestrians. Allow on-street parking on arterial streets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum parking allowance: 4 spaces per 1,000 square feet of commercial leaseable space. Enable flexible parking standards (e.g., negotiated in the site plan review). The number of spaces can be varied to reflect other available parking such as on-street parking or lots that can be shared with users with different peak times (e.g., office parking space shared with bar/restaurant).
Residential garages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage placement of garages at the rear of parcels; avoid “snout houses” in which forward-jutting attached garages dominate the street. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow the development of rear-entry garages and detached structures using alleyways in new subdivisions.

Adapted from these sources: Burden, 2002; Bicycle Federation of America Campaign to Make America Walkable, 1998; Hirschhorn and Souza, 2001; Ewing, 1999a; AASHTO, 1999.

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Active Living Design Element	Revise Your Ordinance or Plan to:	Recommended Standard or Action
Bike Lanes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require accomodation of bike lanes on all arterial streets (including both new road construction and reconstruction). • Add bike lanes to existing streets by narrowing the width or reducing the number of automobile travel lanes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AASHTO recommended widths for bike lanes: for roads with no curb and gutter, minimum 4 feet; for roads with on-street parking, 5 feet. (For more complete information see AASHTO, 1999.)
Buffer zones and planting strips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require planting strips or buffer zones of adequate width between sidewalks and streets. Roadways with higher vehicle speeds require greater separation from sidewalks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planting strips can range from 4 to 12 feet in width; minimum recommended width is 6 feet. • Place trees along existing planting strips. • Maintain obstruction-free pedestrian area
Crossing Signals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide crossing signals at key intersections to help pedestrians determine when to cross. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian signals should be integrated with streetlights (automatically giving pedestrians time to cross) at intersections on high-volume roads • Crossing signals should give adequate time for elderly or disabled people to safely cross the road; slower pedestrians travel at approximately 3 feet per second. • For high pedestrian volumes, consider countdown timers on pedestrian signals.
Crosswalks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider using marked and raised crosswalks near all schools. • Require marked crosswalks at all major intersections with signals. • Add pedestrian signals and other amenities; crosswalks alone are not enough to protect pedestrians. • Maintain high-visibility pavement markings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended standard width for crosswalks: 10 feet. • Width of marking lines should be selected according to needed visibility. A minimum of 10–12 inches wide is recommended; 18–24 inches wide is appropriate for places requiring greater visibility. • All legs of intersections with traffic signals should be marked and available for pedestrian use.
Curb Cuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize curb cuts, like driveways, that increase the possibility of crashes between pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt access management approaches; consult Michigan Department of Transportation for more details. • Scrutinize curb cuts closely during the site plan review process.
Curb Ramps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer using two curb cuts at 90 degrees to align with sidewalks instead of using one continuous ramp. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum width of curb ramp: 5 feet. • Scrutinize curb ramps at all intersections; upgrade to standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act.
Median and central crossing islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require the installation of islands on newly built wide streets. • Require islands on all reconstruction projects of wide roads. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider median islands for all roads wider than 60 feet. • Island dimensions: 8–10 feet long and a minimum of 6 feet wide, with a minimum island size of 50 square feet. • Islands should be illuminated and have curb ramps or cut-throughs for accessibility.

STREETS AND SIDEWALKS

Active Living Design Element	Revise Your Ordinance or Plan to:	Recommended Standard or Action
On-street parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow on-street parking on both sides of the street in residential neighborhoods. • Allow angle parking where speeds are appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restripe wide streets to provide on-street parking and/or designated bike lanes. Bike lanes should be a minimum of 4 feet, with 5 feet allotted next to parked cars.
Paved shoulders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require wide shoulders on all new or reconstructed major county roads or heavily traveled roads with speeds 35 mph or higher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum width for paved shoulder with painted shoulder line: 4 feet.
Sidewalks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require sidewalks on both sides of all city streets and in new residential subdivisions. • Require extensions or connections between previously developed sidewalks and new sidewalks. • Place sidewalks in rural areas at schools, businesses, and worksites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum sidewalk widths: 5 feet in residential neighborhoods; 10 feet in commercial areas outside downtown; 12 feet in downtown shopping areas.
Sidewalk maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require all sidewalks to be cleared of snow within 24 hours of snowfall. • Schedule routine maintenance with higher frequency in spring and fall (storm debris and leaves, respectively) • Create a sidewalk repair program to periodically replace deteriorating or buckled concrete. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an inspection and maintenance schedule and checklist for the public works department. • Require annual reports on sidewalk maintenance from local government officers.
Street and lane widths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for narrower street widths in residential neighborhoods. • Reduce lane widths on arterial and collector streets to calm traffic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended street widths: 24–26 feet for roads in residential neighborhoods; smaller streets can work (for more information, see Burden, 2002). • Standard lane widths in commercial areas (12–14 feet) can be reduced to 9–11 feet. • Eliminate unnecessary travel lanes (e.g., reduce four lanes to three).
Street connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require streets to connect to other streets and destinations. • Support a grid street design. • Prohibit dead-end streets or cul-de-sacs unless terrain or existing road patterns require them. • If cul-de-sacs are used, provide pedestrian/bike connections at the ends of streets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use block lengths of 250–350 feet (measuring from intersection to intersection).
Street lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require appropriate lighting in all new and redevelopment projects. • Require lighting at all road intersections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Height for pedestrian-appropriate lighting fixtures: 8–12 feet. • Full-spectrum light is recommended to reduce glare and provide more realistic colors at night. • Lights should be shielded downward to reduce light pollution.
Street trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require all new developments to plant street trees along roadways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees should be regularly spaced along streets at intervals ranging from 15 to 50 feet apart. Smaller intervals create more attractive streets, but intervals must take into account the size of mature trees and their canopies. • Trees appropriate for planting are 8–10 feet high with a 2-inch diameter trunk at time of planting.

OTHER BICYCLE, PEDESTRIAN, AND RECREATION AMENITIES

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Bicycle parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require commercial buildings and shopping areas to provide bicycle parking places. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate parking within 50 feet of entrances. Transit stations and high-volume locations should offer covered bike parking. See recommended codes (in Resources section) for examples of bike parking standards.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require new developments to set aside land for playgrounds or pocket parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use cluster zoning to protect open space. Consider giving density bonuses (e.g., allowing additional housing units) to developers that use cluster zoning. Work with developers to provide walking trails on open space provided in projects. Require a neighborhood park or other common space for subdivisions of 30 or more parcels.
Pedestrian amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require benches, trash cans, and street trees in public areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amenities should be placed close to buildings or along roadways in buffer zones without blocking sidewalks.
Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support transit lines and transit stops in or along all new developments and reconstruction projects. Include bike racks on buses and vans in urban areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local transit officials to provide transit stops throughout the community. Ensure that transit stops are free of obstacles and accessible to people with disabilities. Provide a minimum 4-foot-wide clearance zone for opening bus doors. Provide well-lit shelters and covered structures, where feasible.
Two-way shared-use paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support development of shared-use paths. Prepare a greenway plan to identify appropriate open space and participate in regional trails-planning efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum shared-use path width: 10 feet. Provide 12 feet in areas with high levels of use. Install proper signage at heights appropriate to pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists to warn of trail crossings. Unpaved (dirt or ground) 2-foot shoulders can reduce potential conflicts and increase capacity at minimal cost.