

Downtown Design Guidelines

for the South Nieman Road Zone

City of Shawnee

August 2019



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**The South Nieman Road Design Guidelines were approved by the Shawnee Downtown Partnership on June 28, 2018. The Planning Commission approved the guidelines on August 6, 2018, and the addition of sign guidelines on August 19, 2019.*

1.0 Introduction

Downtown Shawnee has been a commercial and residential center since the first settlements in the 1850s. The downtown area has a rich history, and has seen many changes over the past 150 years. Since 2001, Shawnee has prioritized reinvestment in the downtown area by undertaking a variety of long term planning efforts, implementing those plans, and through significant public infrastructure enhancements.

The Shawnee Downtown Action Plan, or Hyett Palma Study, and the 2014 Downtown Action Plan II were created to be the primary guiding documents for reinvestment in the downtown area. Many of the goals and actions identified in those plans have been accomplished and are ongoing.

Following directives from the Hyett Palma Study, architectural design standards were adopted in 2002 for the Pedestrian Zone (commercial areas along Johnson Drive generally west of Flint Street and east of Bluejacket Street, and Nieman Road from 60th Street to 56th Terrace.) The intent of the guidelines were to create design strategies to re-establish pedestrian orientation along the corridor. The document is a planning and implementation design tool for business owners and developers for future renovations and new development.

One of the 2014 Downtown Action Plan II goals is to enhance the overall economic value of the businesses and properties within the downtown area by adopting design standards for commercial properties along Nieman Road south of 60th Street to Shawnee Mission Parkway, the South Nieman Road Zone. As redevelopment opportunities continue to grow along the Nieman Corridor, additional downtown design standards are needed in order to match the established vision for the area.

2.0 Purpose

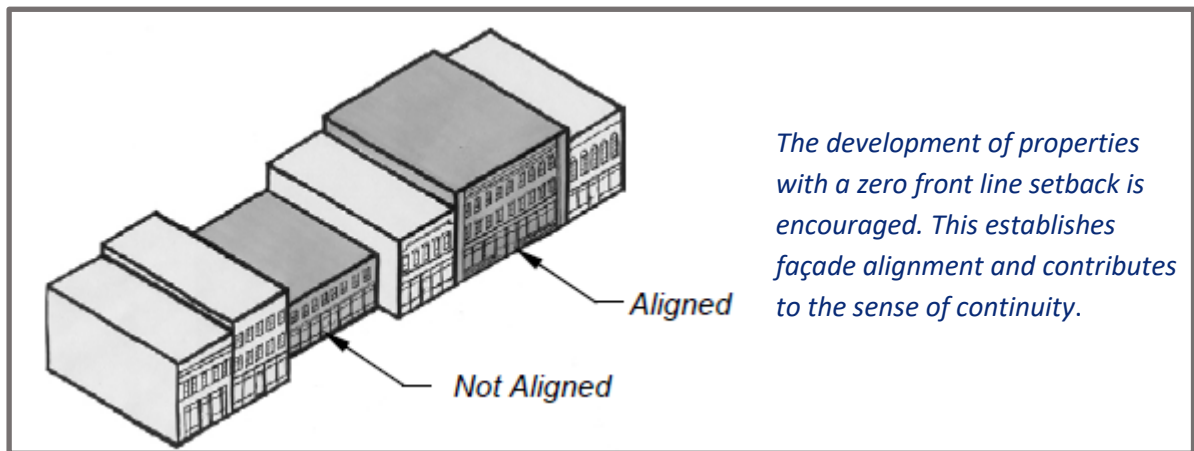
The Downtown Design Guidelines for the South Nieman Road Zone are intended to carry forward and build upon the existing Downtown Design Guidelines for the Pedestrian Zones. Many of the key elements remain consistent for the South Nieman Road Zone, including new buildings to be constructed at the property line along primary streets, parking behind buildings, pedestrian scale storefronts, multi-modal accommodations, use of quality exterior materials, and general compatibility with existing buildings.

The design guidelines are a tool with recommended strategies for implementing compatible and quality renovation and new development. They are intended to preserve and enhance the

4.0 Site Design

Intent: Development should respect and respond to adjacent properties. The guidelines are intended to improve pedestrian mobility, create memorable spaces, enhance the overall aesthetics of the corridor, and unify the downtown district.

1. All buildings should be oriented parallel to primary streets.
2. Setbacks
 - 2.1. Buildings should be built at the property line along Nieman Road.



- 2.2. Setback of commercial buildings from the property line along Nieman Road are only permitted in order to create minor pedestrian spaces, special architectural features, outdoor dining areas for restaurants, or to align with adjacent existing buildings.
 - 2.3. Setback of residential buildings from the property line are permitted for front stoops, stairway, or other necessary access.
3. Parking

- 3.1. No parking or other paved surface should interrupt the building frontage, except pedestrian plazas, malls, outdoor seating areas for restaurants, or walkways leading to the interior of the building or block.
 - 3.2. Parking lots and loading areas should not front onto Nieman Road, but should be located behind the building with access from side streets where possible.



Concept plans from the Community Connections Nieman Road Study depicting the massing of buildings along Nieman Road with parking primarily located on the interior of the site.

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- 3.3. New development should seek to achieve an optimal amount of parking without relying on standard parking minimums. The Shawnee Zoning Regulations allows minimum off-street parking spaces to be determined by the Planning Commission based on the amount of parking required for the use in a different zoning district, the volume of parking provided on-site, parking available in close proximity to the site in public lots, on-street parking, and shared parking. Parking should be determined based on (see the City of Shawnee Zoning Rules and Regulations Chapter 17.70).
 - 3.4. Break larger parking areas into smaller, multiple lots with landscaping, open space, or other screening elements.
 - 3.5. Screen parking from important public areas.
 - 3.6. Structured parking should be strategically planned to benefit all users by allowing shared parking.
 - 3.7. Structured parking should be incorporated into the overall building and site design, not as an afterthought.
 4. Access
 - 4.1. Site access and circulation for both on and off-street connections should be incorporated to include pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles and transit.
 - 4.2. Incorporation of on-site bicycle parking is encouraged.
 5. Landscaping
 - 5.1. Landscaping is required for all new developments addressing the requirements of the Municipal Code Chapter 17.57.
 - 5.2. For buildings constructed at the property line, landscaping may be incorporated into right-of-way within well-defined planting areas, including tree wells, as approved by the City.
 6. Outdoor amenities
 - 6.1. Restaurants may have an outdoor dining area accessory to the main restaurant function.
 - 6.2. Outdoor dining areas for restaurants must be well-defined with low wall, fence, or similar perimeter to ensure safety, and should be coordinated with the City to ensure compatibility of public streetscape elements.
 - 6.3. The incorporation of seasonal planters, benches, bike racks, art, public spaces, and other small-scale amenities are encouraged. Amenities should be



Example of incorporating bicycle facilities, a well-defined and compatible outdoor dining area, and off-street circulation.

coordinated with the City to ensure compatibility with public streetscape elements. Amenities should be placed to provide a continuous clear zone within the public walkway system for pedestrians and bicyclists, and to avoid conflicts with vehicular sight lines.

7. Screening

7.1. Screening facilities can be walls, fences, trees, plantings, shrubbery or other screening.

7.2. Loading and unloading areas should be screened from view from adjacent properties, and should be incorporated behind buildings.

7.3. Trash storage should be screened from view from adjacent properties and roadways, and should be incorporated behind buildings.

7.4. Trash enclosures should be enclosed on four sides with similar building materials and colors as the primary structure.

5.0 Transitions

Intent: Attention should be paid to create soft transitions to adjacent properties with regards to use, building form, and scale.

1. Consideration should be given to building height and transition when a development site is located adjacent to existing residential uses.
2. When built at the lot line and immediately adjacent to an existing building, a building may deviate more than one story if the transition is graduated.
3. Incorporating complementary architectural design (materials, colors, and design) or building types for dissimilar uses and complementary scales (upper floor setbacks, staggering building height, and large expanses) for dissimilar building masses provide for perceptual and physical transitions between developments.
4. Well-designed plantings, fences, and walls may be used for screening to buffer incompatible uses.

6.0 Building Design

Intent: Ensure visual cohesiveness by utilizing similar building components.

1. Covering, altering, or damaging historically significant building features is prohibited.
2. Buildings should ensure “four-sided”, quality design by applying consistent building details and scale on all sides.
3. Buildings fronting multiple streets should have consistent façade treatments, including materials, scale, proportion and detailing.
4. Additional architectural features should be added to exterior building corners at street intersections.



A gradual stepping of the building height from two to three stories in the illustration shows how consideration could be given to adjacent buildings at varying heights.



The Phoenix building in Overland Park, Kansas incorporates complementary building materials, colors, storefront components, and upper floor setbacks to maintain the pedestrian scale along the front property line.



Example of the use of additional architectural elements and materials at the primary corner of building where two streets intersect.

5. Building facades should consist of vertical building bays defined by a vertical architectural feature that projects or recesses from the wall plane. Columns, pilasters, piers, vertical changes in wall planes, or vertical changes in texture or material are considered vertical architectural features.



Example of new construction built at the property line with pedestrian oriented storefront elements, streetscape enhancements, well defined and modulating vertical building bays, and height deviations to create visual interest.

6. Building walls shall be subdivided and proportioned using features such as windows, entrances, storefronts, arbors, awning, trellises, or other similarly scaled architectural details.
7. A well-defined and recognizable building base and top need to be encouraged.
8. Rhythm and repetition of building elements is encouraged. This can be accomplished through incorporation of regular or patterned units organized to provide a continuance, flow or sense of movement. Examples include columns, windows, doorways, wall patterns, light fixtures, paving patterns, and roof elements.
9. Canopies or awnings across the front of one building with multiple businesses should be aligned horizontally and be a common profile.
10. Awnings and canopies for a single building should be consistent in color, pattern, material and mounting.
11. Flat front canopies are not permitted.
12. Scuppers, gutters, and downspouts should be constructed of high-quality, commercial grade materials, and should not dominate the building facades.
 - 12.1. Scuppers are not permitted to interrupt parapets and cornices, and are discouraged on the primary façade.
 - 12.2. Exposed gutters are not permitted for use with flat roofs.
 - 12.3. Exposed downspouts are only permitted at interior corners.

7.0 First Story

Intent: The first story design of buildings should encourage and accommodate pedestrian interaction through development at a human scale. Buildings that are similar in size and scale to the human form are more comfortable for people to interact and frame spaces creating a sense of place.

1. Common pedestrian-oriented storefront elements, include:
 - 1.1. Bottom bulkhead or base panel the first 18-24 inches above grade should be constructed of sturdy materials such as stone, brick, tile or decorative block.
 - 1.2. Large transparent, clear glass display windows, with transom windows above. Highly tinted, colored or reflective glass is not permitted.
 - 1.3. Horizontal molding or cornice cap the storefront.
 - 1.4. Pilasters give a well-defined frame.
 - 1.5. Additional components might include awnings, ornamental cornices, brackets and columns.



2. Exterior features should have consistent proportioning and shape.
3. Entrances to buildings are appropriate locations to express individual building character, and may be recessed or otherwise articulated to be easily identifiable.
4. Storefront doors should act as part of the storefront display, and should continue the same scale.
5. Awnings may encroach the public sidewalk up to 50% of the depth of the sidewalk.

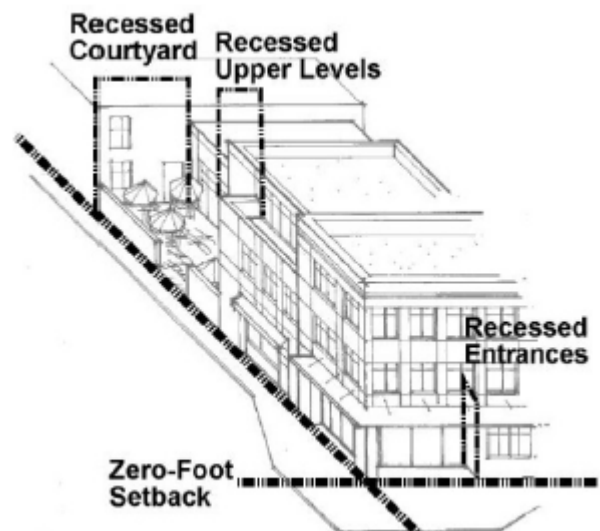
8.0 Upper Stories

Intent: Upper level components address the function of the upper floor(s), and give a building visual recognition from afar.

1. Balconies and rooftop amenities should not extend past the primary façade.
2. Beyond the third story a change of materials, or other similar treatments should be used to enhance the proportion and scale of the overall façade.
3. Upper floors of buildings can be setback from the public realm to reduce the scale and bulk of buildings, as well as add visual interest.



Upper story balconies are recessed along the façade, and a change of building materials and colors are used to break up the mass of the building.

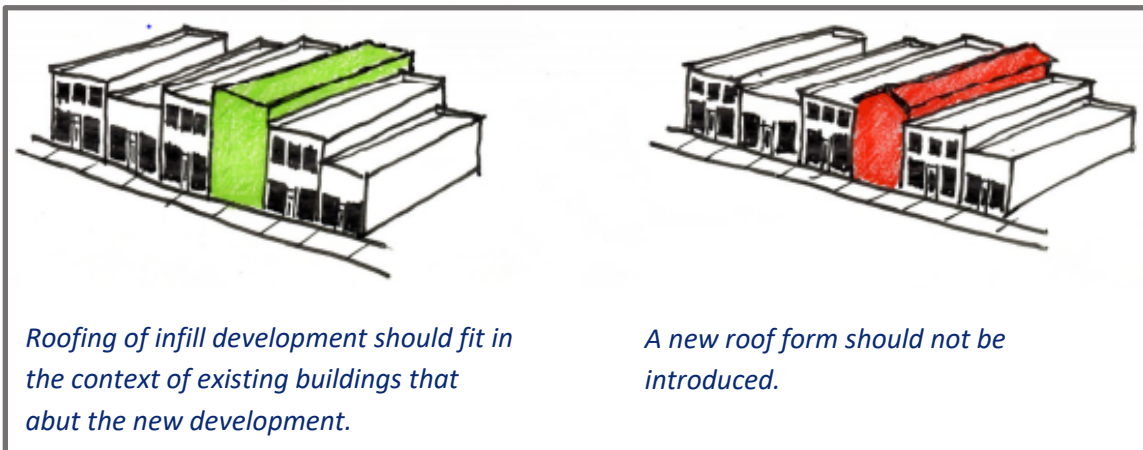


Example of ways to break down larger facades along the street front.

9.0 Roofs

Intent: Attention should be paid to roof forms and parapet and cornice details in order to create a visual building cap, while also acting as visual screenings.

1. False roofs, including mansard roofs are not permitted.
2. All flat roofs should have a parapet and a cornice on all facades or walls.
3. A parapet more than 90 feet in length should include a change in height or roof form at least every 90 feet. This change should align with the vertical building bays.
4. Rooftop plazas, restaurant service areas, and other amenities are encouraged.
5. Parapets and other roof top elements should be used to screen roof top equipment.
6. Infill development should not introduce a new roof form when immediately adjoining an existing building.



10.0 Building Materials

Intent: Use of quality materials helps create a unique place, sustainable, and resilient development.

1. Acceptable Exterior Building Materials

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary/Accent
Brick	Stucco	High-quality wood
Stone	Water-managed EIFS	Metal
Cast Stone	Cement Board	Synthetic Wood
Split-face block		Ceramic tiles
Synthetic stone		

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2. Prohibited materials include non-water-managed EIFS, wood shingles, glass block, and painted cinder block
 3. At least 50% of the exterior wall of each building elevation, excluding windows, doors, trim, and related items, should be primary materials.
 4. Primary materials should extend to grade due to durability.
 5. Tertiary materials should be located above primary materials.
 6. Fenestrations should be no more than 70% of exterior elevations on first story, and 50% beyond the first story for commercial uses.
 7. Development of multiple buildings should be constructed of the same primary building materials and colors.
 8. Horizontal changes of material should have a cap or sill that projects from the face of the building.

11.0 Lighting

Intent: Consideration should be given when selecting and locating exterior building lighting.

1. Exterior lighting should be used to accent components of the façade.
2. Seasonal lighting is not appropriate means for permanent lighting.
3. Consider the use of lighting with a similar color range and style to those existing throughout the district, including public street lighting.

12.0 Signage

Intent: Signage is an essential element in any commercial district. Too often signage becomes an overwhelming feature in an effort to compete for visual presence. Yet anonymity is clearly not good for business. A business's sign is important not only for identifying purposes, but as an expression of an image for the business. Money spent on quality signage is usually money well spent. Refer to the City of Shawnee Sign Ordinance for additional requirements and restrictions regarding signage.

1. Sign Types

- 1.1. Flush mounted wall signage is appropriate.
- 1.2. Blade/projecting building-mounting signage is appropriate, and preferred for ground floor tenants.
- 1.3. Projecting signs may be three-dimensional depicting iconographic images to attract pedestrian attention. The object may portray a business' persona or service with as few words as possible.
- 1.4. A combination of signage may be considered, and should be adapted for intended viewing audiences.
- 1.5. Wall-mounted box cabinet signs, awnings or canopies utilized as signs above the ground floor, and painted window signs are discouraged.

2. Design

- 2.1. Sign content should be easy to read.
- 2.2. Signage should be directed at and scaled to pedestrians, especially when adjacent to public walkways, paths, gathering spaces, or other high foot-traffic areas.
- 2.3. Signage should not overwhelm or hide character-defining features of a building, and instead should be well integrated into a building's architecture.
- 2.4. Signage should relate to the overall building composition.
- 2.5. Consider sign type and scale of signs. Appropriately placed sized signage can reinforce the architecture of a historic building and its surroundings, and attract customers. Conversely, maximizing signage may lead to visual clutter that does not promote business activity.



A small projecting sign is placed under a canopy sign to direct pedestrians to the business entrance. Signage may be incorporated onto the canopy to be seen from the street.

- 2.6. Building mounted signs should be placed at the same height and similar façade locations as adjacent tenants to provide an integrated block appearance.
- 2.7. For new development with a grouping of three or more tenants or establishments, a set of sign standards for all exterior signs is recommended. The standards should address size, colors, materials, styles of lettering, type of illumination, and location. Sign bands, panels, or canopies should be consistent throughout the development.
- 2.8. Signage on awnings and canopies should not exceed 20% of an awnings visible surface.
- 2.9. Window and door signage should be limited to covering a maximum of 25% of display or door glazing.
- 3. Materials
 - 3.1. Sign materials should relate to the exterior building materials and the adjacent streetscape.
 - 3.2. Materials must be weatherproof, including solid plastic, wood, masonry, metal, or other rigid materials, and permanently attached to the building by attachment to a rigid wall, frame, or structure.
 - 3.3. Color-coordinate sign colors with the colors of the building.



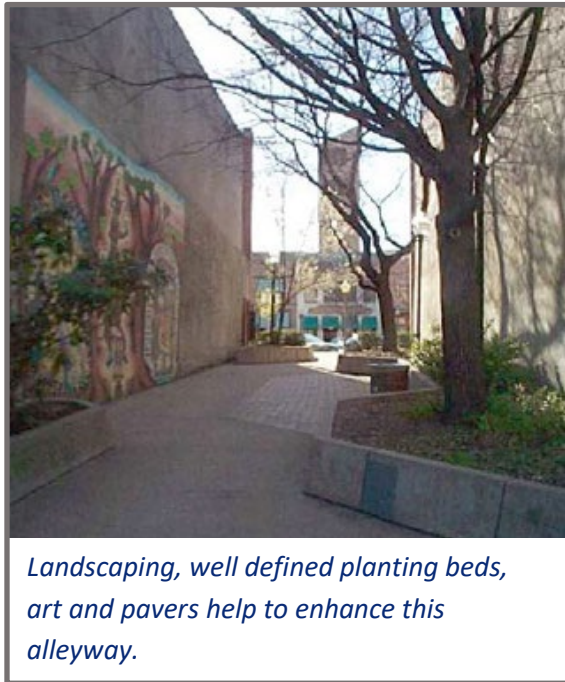
Similar sign type, placement, and size along multiple storefronts provide a cohesive and inviting streetscape.



Signage on awning and canopies should not exceed 20% of the visible surface, and should only be utilized by ground floor tenants.

13.0 Allies, Courtyards, Rear Entrances & Pedestrian Corridors

Intent: Alleys, courtyards, rear entrances and other pedestrian corridors should not be overlooked when planning improvements, and can be used to substantially improve pedestrian circulation and access from parking areas.



Landscaping, well defined planting beds, art and pavers help to enhance this alleyway.

1. Open alleyways between buildings offer opportunities for an enhanced “alleyscape.” The design of improvements to an ally façade should closely follow the established guidelines (four-sided design).
2. Alleys, courtyards, rear entrances and other pedestrian corridors should be well lit following Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.

14.0 Accessibility

Intent: The design guidelines should not prevent or inhibit compliance with accessibility laws.

1. All new construction shall comply with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).
2. The places of public accommodation shall be accessible to all users.