

# DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR REVERE'S COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

A POCKET GUIDE to understanding the Design Guidelines for Business Districts in Revere, MA



There are many varied buildings, styles of architecture and types of businesses that contribute to Revere's vibrant commercial corridors.

**WHAT THIS INITIATIVE IS:**

- An opportunity to strengthen corridor character
- An economic development incentive to stimulate activity
- An opportunity to celebrate the city's diversity

To promote Revere's unique commercial districts, the City hired Gamble Associates and omloop, Architects, Urban Designers and Planners to develop storefront and signage design guidelines for Revere's commercial corridors. The goal is to **preserve the individuality of small businesses that are staples of the city's commercial districts** and the consumers they serve.

This pocket guide provides examples of storefront and signage improvements that can be explored and implemented by small businesses and property owners when upgrading their facades. The Design Guidelines are organized into nine categories and summarize concepts that emerged from conversations with individual business owners and city planners. They are intended to **enhance buildings and the public realm interface that stimulate economic activity.**

SIX OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

- 1. Leverage the City of Revere's cultural diversity**  
Revere has always been multi-cultural. Celebrate it!

**2. Keep it local**  
Celebrate the uniqueness of the brand

**3. Remove clutter**  
Uncover the materials that have covered up the past
- 4. Right-size the scale of the signage**  
Update or install signs that are in proportion to the façade

**5. Use a light touch**  
Reduce the number of elements; less is more.

**6. Integrate lighting**  
Ensure the building is properly lit, safe and attractive.

Taken together, these principles direct property owners and tenants to take steps that beautify their buildings and businesses and increase vitality.

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## APPENDIX A



BRAND IDENTITY



TRANSPARENCY



SIGNAGE



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MATERIALS



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## BRAND IDENTITY



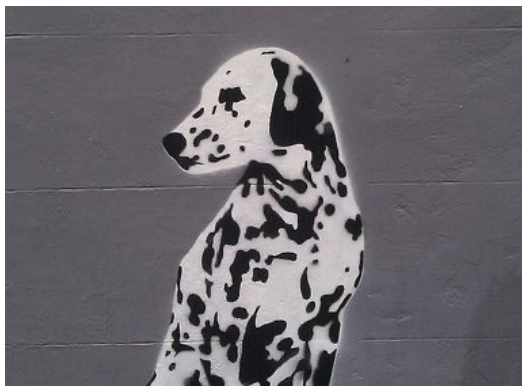
Every business has a brand, a unique identity with colors and font styles and sizes. Many have logos that are distinctive. These elements can be amplified with signage and through the application of color. **The most effective brands work at a variety of scales** and can be seen on the building as both a pedestrian on the sidewalk and from the street traveling at the speed of a car. Take advantage of the most compelling aspect of your brand to increase traffic to your business, store, restaurant or shop.

### ENCOURAGE

- Decorative or well made signs that reflect the individuality of the business
- Cultural references and elements that make a store unique
- The incorporation of logos on the building facades
- Historical (ghost) signage that recalls a building's past life

### DISCOURAGE

- Too many colors (two main colors and three accents are usually enough) or color schemes that conflict with the brand's identity or signage
- Clutter (layers built up over time)
- Mixed messages
- Long mottos or business slogans



## COLOR

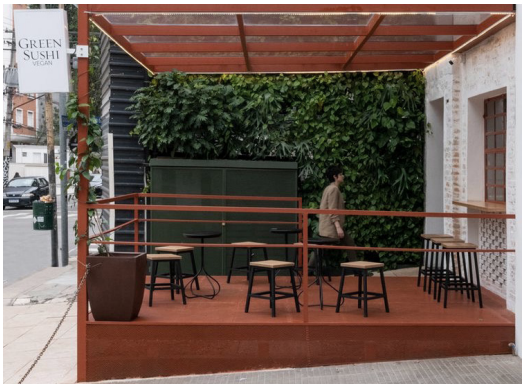
Every business has one color scheme that defines it. Choose a backdrop color that makes the business brand or logo stand out through contrast or one that harmonizes and complements the building's facade. Colors are trendy and what constitutes a "good" color is subjective, however **an effective color for a building will accentuate historical details of the architecture** that make it unique, such as the cornice, parapet or window trim or one that reinforces the building's massing and proportions.

### ENCOURAGE

- The identity of the building or brand through the use of color
- Color to highlight or express cultural affiliations or products

### DISCOURAGE

- The presence of deteriorating signs, awnings, billboards and equipment
- Colors that compete with the architectural elements of the building



## MATERIALS



Materials should be selected with respect to their performative characteristics and sustainable qualities rather than just trends or aesthetic appeal. With this in mind, durability, maintenance, recyclability characteristics, energy use and consumption needs should be taken into account. When feasible, **use natural and sustainable materials**. Durable and natural materials will ensure a high degree of quality and long-term viability.

### ENCOURAGE

- The use of durable, high-quality materials that are locally-sourced
- Sustainable materials with low embodied energy and are recyclable
- Materials that are historically appropriate for Revere

### DISCOURAGE

- The use of vinyl, plastic or poor-quality building finishes
- Faux materials that mimic other materials



## TRANSPARENCY



Increasing the amount of visibility into a business brings a number of benefits. For one, **greater transparency enables pedestrians to view into the space which increases safety and security**. Second, more natural light allows more products or services inside the space to be seen from the outside. Third, the organization of what is sold (or the services provided) can be better organized or displayed as a result of increased visibility.

### ENCOURAGE

- Increase visibility into the store with more areas of glass
- Return size of openings to their historical scale or proportion
- Organize merchandise in a manner that reinforces the brand
- Interior or accent lighting

### DISCOURAGE

- The build-up of posters and advertisements on windows
- Painting over or covering glass with solid panels
- The haphazard organization of goods or products
- The use of awnings that are in poor condition



## LIGHTING

A successful commercial corridor is a compelling place to be at all times of the day, even at night when businesses may be closed. Effective lighting calls attention to a store or business or restaurant while also capitalizing on the architectural features of the building. There are many varieties of light fixtures - from cove lighting to spot lighting to wall washers to sidewalk projections - but **an effective lighting strategy will reinforce brand identity** while also providing safety and security. The application of lighting needs to be strategic.

### ENCOURAGE

- Accent lighting that highlights architectural details
- Full cut-off downlights and recessed fixtures
- Cove, neon and sidewalk projection lighting
- Energy-efficient fixtures

### DISCOURAGE

- Internally lit plastic signs
- Light sources that create glare
- Motion, flashing or animated lighting



## PUBLIC SPACE



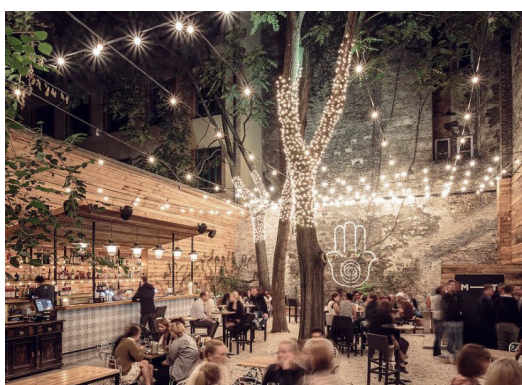
Great urban streets are great places. Incorporating street trees, planting beds and natural green buffers provide shade and increase comfort. **The environmental benefits of landscaped areas reduce heat island impacts, assist with ground water recharge and filter pollutants**. Even small amounts of planting areas have a large visual impact. Where possible, remove impervious surfaces such as asphalt and concrete to facilitate the greening of the site.

### ENCOURAGE

- The use of landscape buffers to shield adjacent properties and parking
- Planting of local, drought tolerant plants that address stormwater
- Maintenance and growth of existing trees on the property
- Removal of asphalt or concrete where permeable pavers are possible
- The incorporation of outdoor spaces for seating and gathering

### DISCOURAGE

- Large expanses of asphalt from property line to property line
- Improvements that are not ADA accessible
- Unscreened or unenclosed trash receptacles
- Broken or weathered outdoor dining equipment



## SIGNAGE



Commercial establishments need to advertise. However, signs should be appropriate to Revere without contributing to visual clutter. A balance needs to be struck between calling attention to an individual business and forging a positive collective image for the corridor. Signs can either complement or detract from that image depending on their design, placement, quantity, size, materials, colors and condition. **Effective signage works at many scales**. Identifying the most appropriate scale for signage without overwhelming the building is key.

### ENCOURAGE

- Attractive signs that are proportional to the building
- A diversity of sign types visible to pedestrians and moving cars
- Signs that are located above the storefront (frieze or transom)
- Colors that complement the building
- Open face metal channel letters with period script styles
- Signage cut through a surface and illuminated from behind
- Reverse channel "halo" letters
- Externally illuminated signage: carved, raised or free-standing

### DISCOURAGE:

- Cabinet signs (fabricated sign boxes with backlight plastic faces)
- Vacuum-formed plastic letters
- Digitally-printed flat panel signs
- Visible name, stamps, or decals of the sign manufacturer
- Non-ornamental hardware or brackets used to attach signs



## ARCHITECTURE

Revere's commercial corridors have buildings as diverse as their businesses. The corridors evolved incrementally over many years; diversity of architectural styles is a good thing. **A singular design aesthetic is neither possible nor necessary**. Foreground elements of a building such as cornice lines or roof profiles that make it unique through color, material, signage and/or lighting and background and obscure things that are less important. Service entries or mechanical equipment should painted to visually recede and be screened from view.

### ENCOURAGE

- Consider the building elevation as a whole unit/composition
- Capitalize on the details of the building that make it distinctive
- Universal (and ADA compliant) design for people of all abilities and ages
- If several businesses share one building: develop a common strategy and team up with other tenants/owners rather than as individuals (choose a building color that benefits all, etc)

### DISCOURAGE

- A wide variety of canopies and architectural elements
- Stand-alone signs not designed as a part of the building
- Temporary fixes that become permanent over time



## UTILITIES



Buildings have significant heating and cooling requirements, regardless of the size of the building. Rooftop mechanical units and/or window air-conditioning units are necessary for comfort. However, their location and placement can easily overwhelm a building's façade. **Rooftop mechanical equipment should be setback from the primary building elevation and screened from view from the public right-of-way**. Remove outdated equipment and, where possible, replace legacy units with contemporary, high-performance options that are more environmentally-responsive.

### ENCOURAGE

- The coloration of mechanical elements that can camouflage them
- Visual screening with louvers for rooftop mechanical areas
- The removal of old or outdated equipment
- Centralized areas for utility locations

### DISCOURAGE

- Haphazard or unintentional locations for utilities
- Exposed electrical conduit
- Broken or cracked utility covers, vents or screens

