The Norwalk Redevelopment Agency has the authority to review the design of any project proposed within the Wall Street-West Avenue Redevelopment Area. The following section explains the process for review of all development applications within the Redevelopment area and provides specific design guidelines for the Wall Street-West Avenue Neighborhood.

**Development Plan Review**

The Norwalk Redevelopment Agency, in conjunction with the Zoning Commission, shall review for approval or disapproval all development plans for new construction and building rehabilitation within the Redevelopment Area to determine compatibility with the appropriate Design Guidelines. These plans must include proposed use, site plan, exterior design of all buildings, architectural treatment, landscaping, design of all signs, and other items subject to Design Review. In such review, the Agency may draw upon technical assistance as it deems necessary. Plans or any portion of plans may be rejected for noncompliance with this Redevelopment Plan.

It is the responsibility of any applicant proposing a project within Redevelopment Area to comply with the design guidelines under this Redevelopment Plan for any project within the Redevelopment Area.

Review procedures of the Agency shall be such that there is a continuing review of the redeveloper’s proposals at various stages of the design process. The process shall be such as to preclude the possibility that a redeveloper might devote considerable time and cost to a plan only to find that it is completely unacceptable to the Agency.

The site plan and exterior design of all buildings and development proposed for the project area shall be subject to final approval by the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency.

**Applicability**

The Design Guidelines are to be followed by developers, property owners, architects, landscape architects, and others working with the City when advancing new projects in the Wall Street-West Avenue Neighborhood Plan area and will be used by the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency and the Zoning Commission in the process of project review and approval.
These design guidelines are organized as follows:

**Site Design Specifications**
Guidelines for site design that apply to all development proposals within the Wall Street-West Avenue plan area. These specifications address building orientation, site access, parking, green infrastructure, sidewalks, street furniture, landscaping, open space, lighting and signage. These guidelines also apply to public infrastructure projects within the Redevelopment Area.

**Building/Architectural Design Specifications**
Guidelines for building/architectural design that apply to renovation of existing structures and construction of new buildings within the Wall Street-West Avenue plan area. These specifications address building massing, facades and roofs, as well as rehabilitation of historic structures and compatibility of new development with historic structures.

**Waterfront Design Guidelines**
Guidelines for any future redevelopment of waterfront properties, consistent with Norwalk’s Harbor Management Plan. These guidelines are intended to 1) support existing businesses while connecting residents and visitors to the waterfront, 2) repurpose vacant or abandoned properties for job creation and public space, 3) enhance the ecological health of the Norwalk River, and 4) enhance neighborhood resilience.

**Application to Corridor Typologies**
This section describes the applicability of the site design specifications and building/architectural design specifications to primary (commercial) and secondary (connecting) corridors within the neighborhood, as follows:

**Commercial Corridors**
- West Avenue
- Wall Street
- Belden Avenue
- Route 1 (Cross Street)
- Main Street

**Connecting Corridors**
- Maple Street
- Knight Street
- High Street
- Commerce Street
- Harbor Avenue

**Relationship to other codes and regulations**
All projects, new construction as well as rehabilitation, must also be in compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances. These include, but are not limited to:

- Norwalk Housing Code
- Connecticut Building Code
- Norwalk Electrical Code
- Norwalk Plumbing Code
- Norwalk Fire Prevention Code
- Norwalk Building Zoning Regulations
- Norwalk Building Ordinance
- Norwalk Conservation and Development Policies
- Coastal and Environmental requirements
- Other applicable Norwalk Design Guidelines
- The Fair Housing Act
- ADA Accessibility Guidelines and Standards
- City of Norwalk Roadway Standards
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Site Design

A. Building Orientation

Buildings should be sited to create a strong relationship with the street, conceal parking and loading areas, and frame open space.

*For setback, height and density requirements see Norwalk Zoning Code*

- Front facades and primary building entrances should face public streets.
- Buildings should be uniformly located at the edge of the sidewalk to create an uninterrupted street wall and a sense of enclosure of the space of the street.

B. Site Access, Parking and Loading

Clear and legible routes connecting all modes of transportation to the site must be provided, including pedestrians, bicycles, transit, on-demand transportation, and owner-occupied vehicles.

*See Norwalk Zoning Code and City of Norwalk Roadway Standards*

Note: The City of Norwalk is currently undertaking a city-wide parking study to create policies for effective parking provision and management throughout the city. Parking issues most crucial to resolve in the Wall Street-West Avenue neighborhood are management of on-street parking and provision of off-street parking spaces to support local businesses. The parking study’s recommendations for addressing these issues will be incorporated into this neighborhood plan when that study has been completed.

- The number and width of vehicular access points should be minimized.
- Pedestrian crossings should be marked and differentiated with variations in paving materials. (See City of Norwalk Roadway Standards)
- Sidewalks are required:
  - Along all perimeter street frontages.
  - Linking public frontage streets to all building entries.
- Off-street parking and loading zones to serve delivery needs should be located behind buildings and should not be located between the sidewalk and the building frontage.
  - In cases where the Redevelopment Agency deems this is infeasible, parking should be located to the side of the building and should be limited in length and well screened.
  - For existing parking areas located within the front yard setback, they should be screened with low landscaped berms, landscape beds, and/or low decorative fences or stone walls, and softened with additional planting internal to the parking area.
  - Large parking areas should be broken into smaller areas with landscaped islands containing low plantings and trees.
- Loading zones for on-demand transportation services (i.e. Uber, Lyft, etc.) should be incorporated into site design.
- Curb cuts to parking areas and service areas should come, wherever possible, from secondary streets or alleys.
Driveway at corner lot to be at Secondary Frontage.

Driveway only when condition A. not feasible.

Driveway at midblock Lot

**Front Layer:** Parking and dumpsters are not permitted in Front Layer.

**Frontage Build-out:** Building front must occupy a minimum of 50% of Primary Frontage Line.

**Loading:** Loading shall be on private premises when feasible.
C. Green Infrastructure

- Green infrastructure, such as bio-swales, rain gardens, porous pavements, and street tree trenches absorb run off within parking lots and along the street, beautify the street and provide shade and should be included in all parking lot design and streetscape improvement projects.

- Along streets and within parking areas, the width of paved areas should be minimized and a continuous planting zone should be provided to maximize infiltration and reduce heating of paved surfaces.

Bioswales

Impervious Paving

- **Pavement**: Conventional pavement sloped to drain to biosawle.
- **Bioswale**: Plantings, soil materials, and aggregate to be consistent with bio-swale technical design best practices.

Pervious Paving

- **Pavement**: Pavement to be Pervious Pavers, Pervious Concrete, Pervious Asphalt.
- **Conventional Landscaping**

Sidewalk

- **R.O.W. Bioswale**: Sidewalk bioswales may be installed with through-curb inlets to capture stormwater from the R.O.W.
- **Connected Tree Bed**: A series of tree wells / tree beds may be connected subsurface to allow infiltration of stormwater.
### D. Sidewalks, street furniture and landscaping

Elements that should be incorporated into the streetscapes in the Wall Street-West Avenue neighborhood as part of development projects or as capital infrastructure investments by the City of Norwalk include sidewalks, crosswalks, signage, lighting, street furniture, landscaping and public art.

*(See City of Norwalk Roadway Standards – Urban Area)*

- Materials and species utilized should be lasting, sustainable and relatively low maintenance. Specifically, amenities should be:
  - Composed of durable, long lasting materials
  - Unique to Norwalk, reinforcing sense of place
  - Simple and comfortable
  - Visible, safe and accessible

### Sidewalks
*(See City of Norwalk Roadway Standards – Urban Area)*

- Where possible, vehicle lanes should be narrowed to extend curbs and reclaim more width for sidewalk activation.
  - While traffic flow has traditionally been emphasized along these corridors, in planning for the future, a complete streets approach should be taken that balances the needs of all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists.

- Sidewalks must be at least 7 feet in width from curb to face of building, per the City of Norwalk's Roadway Standards for business areas. In designated historic areas, sidewalk width and paving material should be consistent with the historic character of the area, as approved by the City of Norwalk's Director of Public Works. Sidewalks should accommodate 2-way pedestrian traffic, planting strips, ADA accessibility, and outdoor dining tables, benches and transit shelters where feasible.

### Streetscape amenities
*(See City of Norwalk Roadway Standards – Complete Streets)*

- **Benches**: located under trees where possible; face seating away from the street
- **Tree, medium**: 20-25’ on center
- **Pedestrian Lights**: 12-15’ high; spacing depends on strength of light; historic fixture where applicable
- **Awning**: located above entrance, 3-6’ protruding from façade, min. 8’ high; continuous across building front if possible
- **Garbage receptacle**: 1-2 per block
- **Bike racks**: locate near major destinations and be placed on the sidewalk outside of pedestrian zone
- **Public art including sculptures, murals, statues, and any other visual art accessible to the public**: locate in prominent spaces; work with the Norwalk Arts Commission to select artists and place art
- **Signage**: neighborhood wayfinding signage must be consistent throughout the plan area
Frontage Zone is located directly in front of building. Zone is occupied by elements that belong to building such as potted plants, benches.

Throughway Zone is an unobstructed passage for pedestrians. Minimum 5ft width.

Furniture Zone contains benches, street lamps, sign posts, benches, and more.

Parking Zone: includes parallel parking and parklets.

- Benches
- Street Tree
- Street Lamp
- Potted Plants
- Bike Rack
- Tables & Chairs
- Parklet
- Bus Stop
- Trash Can
- Accessible curb ramp
- Bulb Out
- Parking
Landscaping
Development projects should include elements of landscaping that contribute to the overall site design and integrates with adjacent properties. This includes landscape elements that address buildings on the site, the streetscape, and buffering of service and mechanical features on the site as well as adjacent properties. Plantings should be drought tolerant or adapted to the local climate. Irrigation is encouraged provided sustainable practices are followed. Whenever possible, native plant materials shall be used. At no time shall any plant listed by the Connecticut Invasive Plants Council be included.

(See City of Norwalk Roadway Standards – Complete Streets)

Building landscaping: should be used to soften building edges, building entries and plaza areas and mitigate or screen less desirable parts of a building façade
- Foundation plantings, planter beds and raised planters

Streetscape plantings: should be used to enhance public sidewalks and create a relationship between the building and the pedestrian realm
- Street trees, grassy strips, planter beds and green infrastructure sidewalk features (bioswales, bio-swales, rain gardens, porous pavements, etc.)

Landscape buffers and decorative fences: should be used to conceal parking, dumpsters, recycling areas, staging areas, utilities and other outdoor equipment or service uses from pedestrian views
- Fencing may not be used as a buffer between buildings and the pedestrian realm on commercial or connecting corridors.
- Where a commercially zoned property abuts a residentially zoned property, buffering elements should be provided to screen the property along the adjoining property line
- Landscape buffers should be at least three-season and of lushly planted vegetation, averaging 4-5 feet tall

Frontage Concept 1
- Front Sidewalk
- Front Layer — Plantings and trees are located behind fencing. Minimum one tree per 20 feet of sidewalk length.
- Fencing — Metal Fencing on Primary Frontage Line.

Frontage Concept 2
- Front Sidewalk
- Front Layer — Plantings and trees are located in front of fencing. Minimum one tree per 20 feet of sidewalk length.
- Screen Wall — Masonry wall with historically compatible materials

Dumpster Screening
- Dumpster Screening material must fully obstruct view of containers.
- Trash container screening may be constructed of wooden fencing or similar screening devices.
E. Open space and Parklets

As redevelopment occurs in the neighborhood, the creation of new public open spaces should be emphasized. This can be achieved by encouraging, requiring or incentivizing the creation of green, public spaces as part of new development projects as well as through the creation of Parklets within public rights of way. (See City of Norwalk Roadway Standards)

The following categories of open space should be incorporated into new development proposals, as appropriate:

- **Public open space**: Whether created by a private developer or by a public entity, some public open space should be provided as part of any new development.
- **Open space linkages**: Open space created as part of a new development should link to existing or proposed trails or pathways adjacent or near to the property to create a network of connected open spaces and walking routes.
- **Parklets**: Small open space within the public right of way that are typically installed within parking lanes.
**F. Lighting**

An integrated lighting plan should be provided as part of all development applications, addressing both on site and directly adjacent off-site needs for pedestrians, vehicles, building entries and parking areas and should be considerate of neighboring properties.

*(See City of Norwalk Roadway Standards)*

- Highlight key areas and attractive features of the site
- Scaled appropriately to use and historic design
- Pedestrian height lighting in non-vehicular areas
- Lighting with various height must have similar design and fixtures.
- Minimize glare and spillage and not trespass onto the street or neighboring properties
- All fixtures shall contain energy efficient light sources
- Comply with City of Norwalk Roadway Standards

**Lighting**

- **Street Lamp**
  - **Building lighting street level:** Directed to sidewalk and to signage.

- **Building lighting**
  - **Building lighting rear yard:** Cut-off to minimize spill onto adjacent property and into dark sky.
  - **Rear yard lighting:** Cut-off to minimize spill onto adjacent property and into dark sky.

- **Street lighting**
  - **Ground lighting:**
    - Allowed with low light levels. Cut-off to minimize spill onto adjacent property and into dark sky.

- **Rope lighting:**
  - Permitted at ground floor with low light levels.
G. Signage

Signage for business/commercial uses should comply with the City of Norwalk’s signage regulations and communicate a positive and clear identity for the establishment.

*(See Norwalk Zoning Code)*

- Must be a part of the building and façade design
- Design and placement should harmonize with the building’s architectural features
- Materials must be durable, low maintenance, and compatible with building materials and design
- Scale must be appropriate for its intended use and location on the building or site
- Buildings with more than one sign should be compatible with one another in terms of materials, color, lettering, style, and logo use
- Comply with Norwalk Zoning Code re: Signage

Signage

Blade Sign Zone

Primary Sign Zone: Commercial signage is located at top of first floor.

Window Signage Zone: All signage to be behind glass and in conformance with zoning code.

Sidewalk Board Sign

Definitions

*Blade Sign*: A sign placed perpendicular to the facade of the building located at top of ground floor or higher. Blade signs may project maximum of 5 feet over sidewalk.
Building/Architectural Design

A. Building massing

Buildings should be designed to harmonize with existing structures with respect to design, scale and materials.

(See Norwalk Zoning Code)

- Structures should be designed to reduce their perceived height and bulk by dividing the building mass into smaller-scale components.
- Where new construction is permitted above five stories, buildings must step back at the fifth story.
- Sites located at a prominent corner, intersection, or recognized gateway should have building features and orientation that recognize the corner or gateway and respond to it with a suitable building form.
  - Examples of prominent building features include tower or cupola elements, corner detailing, additional building height, or other building forms that provide a visual anchor.
- Sustainable design principles and practices should be employed in the design of buildings.

Building Massing

- Step-Back: Located above 5th floor
- Building on property line
- Maximum Building Height as allowed per zoning code.

- 6th Level
- 5th Level
- 4th Level
- 3rd Level
- 2nd Level
- 1st Level
B. Rooflines

- On larger buildings, should follow the variation in massing so as to appear as a series of side-by-side buildings
- Can be emphasized with gabled or other pitched roof forms, parapets, balustrades, and/or cornices
- Buildings should have a distinct base, middle and top. This can be achieved with color, materials and setbacks.

C. Building facades

- Broken into vertical and horizontal parts that reinforce a rhythm and pattern
- Designed to be activated with at least 75% of the ground floor of street-facing facades composed of transparent materials
- Rendered with texture and depth
- Differentiated at intervals of not less than 50 feet by a change in material, a variation in the plane of the wall, decorative components, or functional element such as entryway or portico
- Should not over-prioritize franchise features or identity. The building form, roof form and façade design should not be overly specific to a franchise or brand.
Building Top Zone: Building top should be distinguished with materials. Building Top Zone: Building top should be distinguished with materials and architectural details. Top Zone may range from 2ft to multiple stories.

Building Middle: Facade with generally repetitive organization of fenestration.

Building Base: Building base should be distinguished from middle by change in materials and architectural details. Base height may range from 2ft to multiple stories. Minimum 75% transparent surface at ground floor.

Facade Variation

Vertical Organization
Vertical Organization
Maximum 50ft without variations
D. Historic structures

New development should complement existing historic structures and additions to existing historic buildings should be compatible with the architectural style of such buildings.

(See State Historic Preservation Standards)

- Existing historic structures should be integrated into any proposed development plan
- New buildings and additions should complement and reflect the structure and style of historic structures
- Historic structures should be considered for restoration, sensitive rehabilitation, preservation or adaptive reuse as may be appropriate to the historic structure and nature of its reuse
- Rehabilitation and reuse of historic properties must comply with all relevant local, state and federal requirements

E. Sustainability/Green Infrastructure

As the effects of climate change become more prevalent in communities it becomes increasingly important to plan for development and communities that are resilient. This plan supports and promotes resiliency by including sustainable design principles by requiring sustainability review. These include standards that reduce the urban heat island effect such as color and materials, increasing and requiring green spaces, further integration of the natural and urban environments, and sustainable practices including, but not limited to, alternative energy sources and coastal resiliency measures in new construction and rehabilitation projects.

New development or rehabilitation of existing structures should include green infrastructure such as solar panels, green roofs, green walls and recycled materials.

- Green infrastructure should be exempt from zoning bulk and height requirements.
- Historic structures should also consider these measures where possible.
West Avenue and Wall Street are the primary commercial corridors that define the Wall Street-West Avenue neighborhood. Connected to them is a network of secondary commercial streets that extend outward to the neighborhood’s boundaries. The overall objective for streetscape and building design along these corridors is to create a lively pedestrian experience that encourages activity, creates a sense of place and fosters a sense of community within the neighborhood. The following section elaborates on the design guidelines described above with respect to where specific elements should be emphasized within the Wall Street-West Avenue neighborhood.

**Figure 12: Corridors and Gateways**

- Connecting Corridor
- Commercial Corridor
- Gateway

Source: Googlemaps; RPA
West Avenue

West Avenue is the main commercial corridor in the neighborhood. It features a wide variety of uses ranging from walkable, urban scale to suburban commercial. The roadway is relatively wide and has four traffic lanes in most locations as well as on-street parking. Consistent with Norwalk’s 2012 Connectivity Master Plan, West Avenue should be redesigned as a complete street that emphasizes not only vehicular flow, but also walkability and bikeability.

Buildings
As sites fronting on or adjacent to West Avenue are redeveloped, emphasis should be placed on creating street frontage that prioritizes the pedestrian experience.

(See Norwalk Zoning Code)

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Streetscape
Given the width of the roadway, there is ample space to accommodate multiple modes and shift the emphasis from cars to people. Such a shift would not only enliven the streetscape along the West Avenue corridor, but it would also help to establish a more seamless relationship between West Avenue and Wall Street.

Currently, sidewalks along West Avenue are in relatively good condition and include an attractive brick paving detail. There is pedestrian scale lighting along the corridor. Street trees are planted in front of recent development sites and existing urban scale buildings but are lacking along stretches of West Avenue that are occupied by older suburban scale development sites.

Wall Street

The historic character and scale of Wall Street is one of its most important assets. The streetscape features commercial and mixed-use buildings that range from 1-5 stories. Brick and stone are the predominant façade material. Sidewalks are narrow, constrained by two to three vehicle lanes and on-street parking. There are decorative sidewalk treatments along most of Wall Street and some street furniture, including planters, benches and trash receptacles. While there are some street trees around the intersection of Wall Street and Belden Avenue and around the intersection of Wall and River Streets, street trees are sparse throughout the corridor. Cobra head fixtures light the corridor; there is no pedestrian scale lighting along Wall Street sidewalks.

Buildings
Renovation of existing structures and new development on Wall Street should respect and reflect the historic character of the neighborhood. Activation of the streetscape is critical to creating an attractive and vibrant urban environment in this corridor.

(See Norwalk Zoning Code)

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Streetscape
Improving pedestrian comfort is an essential building block for supporting existing businesses and attracting new businesses to the area that are seeking a lively, urban environment and pedestrian activity. A complete streets approach should be taken along the length of Wall Street, including the introduction of sharrows or bike lanes where feasible. Permanent public art and temporary installations should be introduced along the corridor to strengthen sense of place and celebrate the local arts community.

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Connecting Corridors

Connecting corridors provide critical links between the neighborhood’s internal blocks and its main commercial thoroughfares and include:

- Maple Street
- Knight Street
- High Street
- Cross Street
- Commerce Street
- Harbor Avenue

Along these corridors emphasis should be placed on enhancing pedestrian comfort and improving mobility for vehicles and cyclists. The following elements should be included as part of any site development application for properties along connecting corridors.

- Sidewalks
- Street trees
- Street furniture
- Pedestrian-scale lighting
- Loading zones

Consistent with Norwalk’s 2012 Connectivity Master Plan, Commerce Street and Harbor Avenue should be designated as a shared-lane bicycle route. In addition, a truck route should be designated along a connecting corridor(s) to connect the waterfront to I-95 and Route 7.
Neighborhood Gateways

Gateways announce key entry points into the neighborhood and provide an important opportunity to create a sense of arrival, indicate an identity and celebrate the local community. Gateway treatments can include landscaping, public art and signage.

Key gateways within the Wall Street-West Avenue neighborhood include:

- West Avenue & Maple Street
- West Avenue, Wall Street & Belden Avenue
- Wall Street & Main Street
- Cross Street & Main Street

As redevelopment occurs in the vicinity of these gateways, Norwalk should work with developers to enhance these gateways.

Maple Street

Maple Street, which connects Norwalk Hospital to West Avenue is a critical connecting corridor within the Wall Street-West Avenue neighborhood. While the physical distance between the hospital and West Avenue is only one block, the visual distance makes it feel much longer. Pedestrians walking from the hospital along Maple Street to West Avenue must cross four lanes of traffic and walk underneath the Route 7 overpasses. The walk is uncomfortable – the landscape is not attractive; sidewalks are narrow and are not shaded; and the underpass is not well lit.

Norwalk Hospital is the City of Norwalk’s largest employer and hospital employees and visitors represent tremendous purchasing power that could applied to the local neighborhood. Key to unlocking this economic potential is helping people bridge the short physical distance between the hospital and West Avenue. Streetscape improvements including landscaping, lighting, wider and more attractive sidewalks, street furniture and other place-making treatments would make the short walk from Norwalk Hospital to West Avenue a much more attractive option.
Transit Improvements

Enhancing transit connectivity between the Wall Street-West Avenue neighborhood and employment centers within the City of Norwalk and the greater Norwalk region is essential to economic development in the Wall Street-West Avenue neighborhood. One of the area’s key assets is its urban character and walkability, which is attractive to existing and future neighborhood residents and businesses. Transit accessibility is essential to serving the needs of low- and moderate-income residents and workers who depend on public transportation to access jobs as well as higher income residents and businesses seeking a dynamic, urban environment to live and do business. Previous planning efforts have focused on a high frequency (10 minutes or less) electric or low-emitting transit circulator service along West Avenue. The circulator system would connect to the South Norwalk rail station and Norwalk Transit District bus hub on Belden Avenue and circulate around each area prior to making the return trip. The service has been envisioned to not only benefit commuters, but also bring visitors from South Norwalk to the Wall Street-West Avenue neighborhood.

Over the past six years, however, the transit landscape has shifted dramatically with the introduction of on-demand transportation network companies such as Uber and Lyft and new direct shuttle services provided by developments such as Avalon and Waypointe, which bring transport residents to and from the South Norwalk train station. Given these changes, a new approach to transit connectivity between the Wall Street-West Avenue neighborhood and the South Norwalk train station should be considered and evaluated with the overall goal of providing a direct transit connection between the neighborhood and the South Norwalk train station and also to increase transit access to major employment hubs including the Merritt 7 office park and Norwalk Hospital. Opportunities to be explored should include, but not be limited to:

- An on-demand service with routing centered on the West Avenue corridor
- A bus rapid transit (and/or potential future autonomous vehicle) corridor along West Avenue and Martin Luther King Boulevard
- A new neighborhood train station on the Danbury branch line

Parking

Walker Consulting is preparing a Citywide Parking Plan for Norwalk, which will include parking policy recommendations for the Wall Street-West Avenue neighborhood. Parking policies for this neighborhood should be consistent with that plan.