



REGIONAL COMMERCIAL OVERLAY



INTRODUCTION

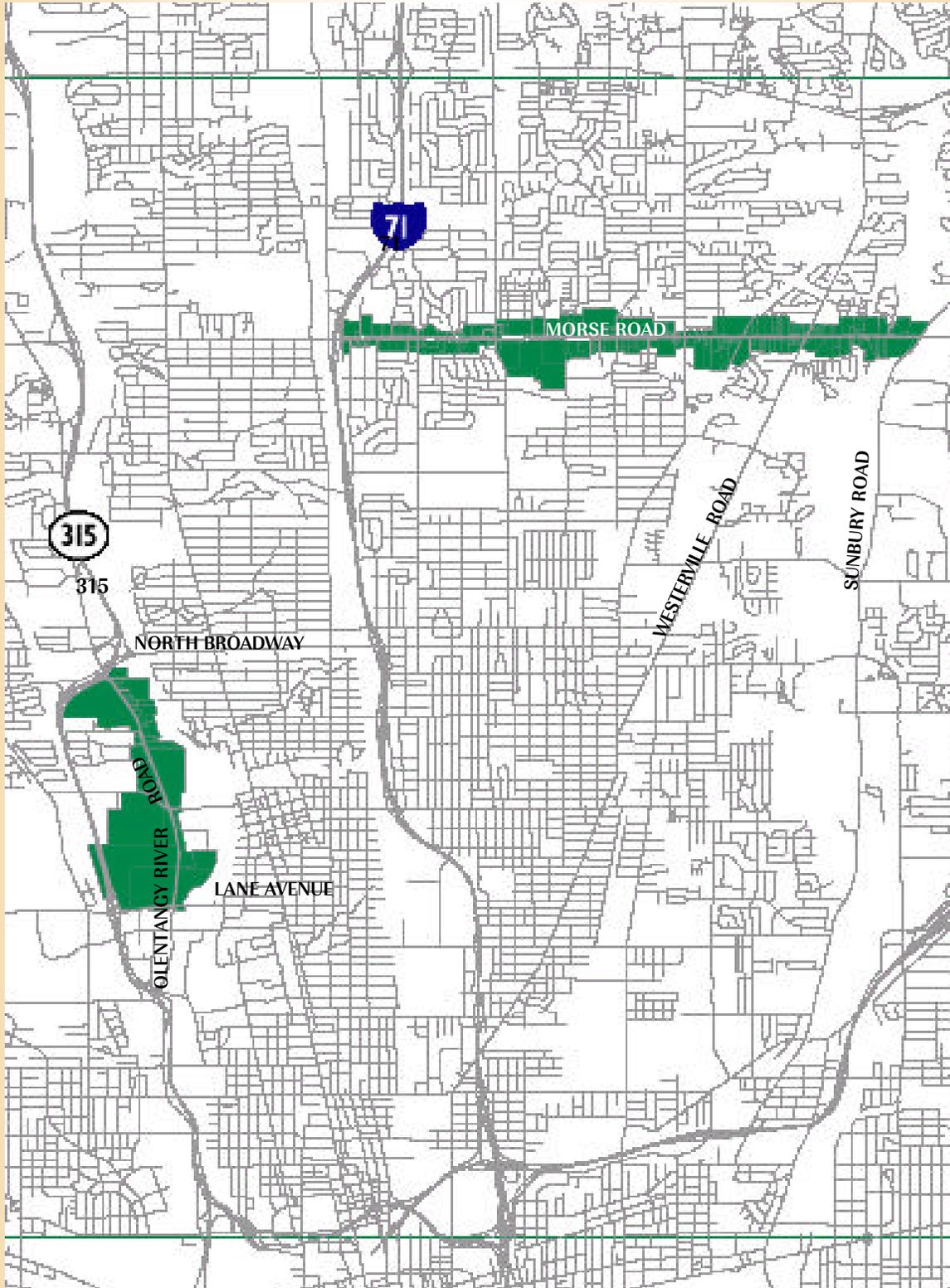
In 2002, Columbus City Council adopted the *Morse Road Planning Overlay*. This created specific development standards for any new development or redevelopment along Morse Road.

In 2003 it was recognized that the standards created for Morse Road were applicable to other corridors throughout the city. Therefore, the *Morse Road Overlay* was renamed to the *Regional Commercial Overlay*.

PURPOSE OF THE *REGIONAL COMMERCIAL OVERLAY*

The *Regional Commercial Overlay* establishes development standards that:

- establish consistent and appropriate building and parking setbacks
- establish safe access to lots and encourage adequate internal circulation
- reduce the amount and improve the visual quality of surface parking
- encourage pedestrian-friendly development



These boundaries are correct as of October 2005. Please verify boundaries on www.columbusinfobase.org

REGIONAL COMMERCIAL OVERLAY (RCO)

DEFINITIONS.

Building Frontage: "Building frontage" means the side, or facade, of a building closest to and most nearly parallel to an abutting street.

Building Frontage, Primary: "Primary building frontage" means a building frontage that abuts a street listed as a primary street in the applicable Overlay Areas subsection of this chapter.

Building Frontage, Secondary: "Secondary building frontage" means a building frontage that abuts an alley or a street not listed as a primary street in the applicable Overlay Areas subsection of this chapter.

Drive-Thru: "Drive-thru" means a building or portion thereof that, by design, permits customers to receive goods or services while remaining in a motor vehicle.

Setback: "Setback" means the distance between a lot line or right-of-way line and a building, structure, defined outdoor area serving as the primary activity, parking lot, or vehicular circulation area.

PURPOSE.

The purpose of the *Regional Commercial Overlay* is to create a safe, aesthetically pleasing, economically viable, and pedestrian friendly atmosphere along certain commercial corridors. Such corridors are typically characterized by vehicular-oriented architecture, large off-street parking lots, building setbacks greater than 30 feet, strip-commercial land uses, a street system that incorporates frontage roads and lot sizes greater than 0.5 acre.

The *Regional Commercial Overlay* is established to meet the following objectives:

- A. To establish consistent and appropriate setbacks to improve the traffic safety and aesthetics of the corridor.
- B. To reduce the amount and improve the visual quality of surface parking adjacent to public right-of-ways.
- C. To create safe pedestrian access on and between lots and to public right-of-ways.
- D. To establish safe access to lots and encourage adequate internal circulation, through shared access and appropriate spacing between entrances.
- E. To create a defined "edge" along public right-of-ways through consistent screening of adjacent surface parking lots and to provide landscaping in the interior of parking lots.
- F. To provide non-hazardous lighting of lots.

OVERLAY AREAS.

The boundaries of the *Regional Commercial Overlay* areas are part of the Official Zoning Map and shall be described in separate sections beginning with C.C. 3372.950 and ending with C.C. 3372.999. For the purposes and requirements of a *Regional Commercial Overlay* area, the term "primary street" means:

Morse Road
Olentangy River Road

3372.907 APPLICABILITY AND EXTENT.

A. APPLICABILITY:

The standards contained in the *Regional Commercial Overlay* apply as follows:

1. The placement, construction, or reconstruction of a building is subject to all provisions herein.
2. The expansion of a building's gross floor area by more than fifty (50) percent is subject to all provisions herein.
3. The construction or installation of a parking lot or exterior lighting is subject to any provisions herein that are directly applicable to the specific improvements.
4. Routine maintenance and in-kind replacement of materials are exempt from the provisions herein.

B. EXTENT:

The standards contained in the Overlay are in addition to the regulations of the underlying zoning districts and the general requirements contained in the Columbus Zoning Code. Where a specific Overlay standard is imposed, it is to be followed in lieu of a general provision of the Zoning Code; where the Overlay does not address a required standard and it is otherwise contained in the Zoning Code, the Zoning Code standard must be followed.

C. VARIANCES:

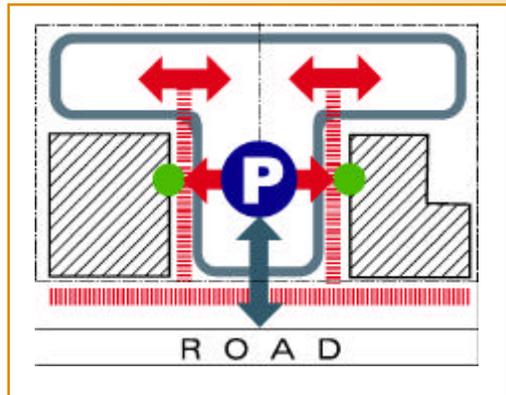
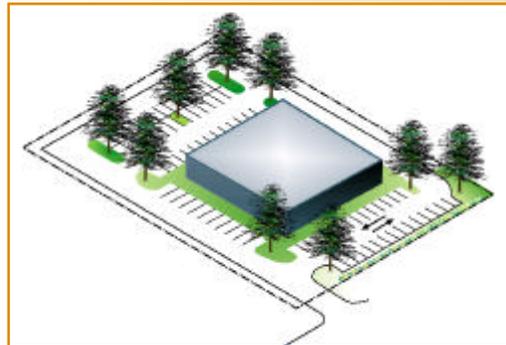
The Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) may approve a variance to any of the standards contained herein.

3372.908 SITE REDEVELOPMENT.

A. For sites that contain more than one (1) lot, with each lot being ten acres or more and developed under common standards for signage, lighting, landscaping, parking, access and/or circulation, a master plan must be submitted to, and approved by, the Columbus Development Commission. The master plan must address the standards and requirements described in Sections 3372.909 through 3372.915. Master plans must also address applicable standards of city-adopted plans for the area.

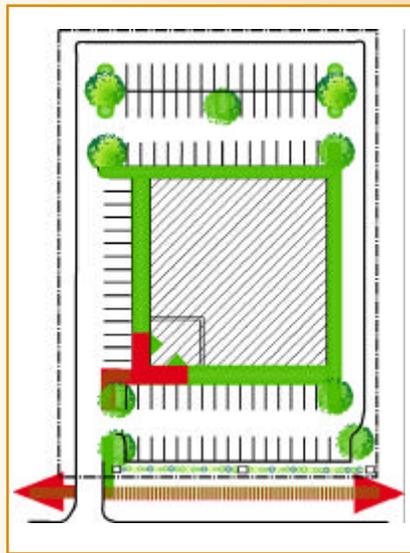
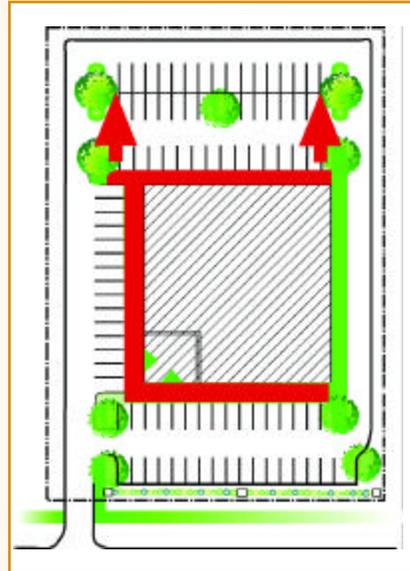
3372.909 SETBACK REQUIREMENTS.

- A. The setback for building or structure along a primary street shall be a minimum of 20 feet when a parking lot is not located in front of the building. The front yard must be live vegetation, but may include pedestrian access and signs.
- B. The setback for a parking lot along a primary street shall be a minimum of (10) feet. Parking lot setbacks are measured from abutting service roads when a service road is not part of the street right-of-way.
- C. A lot or premises of two (2) acres or less, which has a single use, is limited to two (2) rows of parking spaces and one (1), two (2)-way maneuvering aisle in front of a building. The remaining parking must be located behind the front building facade.
- D. A lot or premises of more than two (2) acres must be to clearly define pedestrian circulation. Parking adjacent to a primary street (see “overlay areas” subsection for definition) must be minimized. This can be achieved by placing at least half of the parking to the side or rear of the building or by reducing the amount of the sites frontage along the primary street by building behind existing or proposed buildings that are adjacent to the primary street.



3372.910 ACCESSIBILITY.

- A. Access points, curb cuts, shared driveways, parking layouts, and adjustments to the spacing requirements denoted in this Section must receive approval from the director of public service.
- B. A pedestrian walkway must be provided along the front of a building that contains multiple tenants.
- C. A pedestrian walkway must be provided from a public sidewalk to a building's primary entrance.
- D. A pedestrian walkway must be provided from a parking lot to a building entrance.
- E. A minimum of two hundred fifty (250) feet must be provided between curb cuts on separate lots or to public streets, as measured from pavement edge to pavement edge.
- F. Curb cuts on isolated corner lots must be one hundred twenty-five (125) feet from major intersections, as measured from pavement edge to pavement edge. A corner lot is considered isolated if due to property size, minimum spacing standards cannot be achieved and where joint access that meets minimum spacing standards cannot be obtained or is undesirable in terms of conflicting land uses or traffic volumes. When joint access becomes available that addresses these concerns, then the property owner must close the permitted driveway.
- G. A lot may be permitted two (2) curb cuts, when the curb cuts are spaced a minimum of six hundred (600) feet apart as measured from pavement edge to pavement edge, and when minimum spacing standards from adjacent access or public streets are met.



- H. A lot that contains a building with drive-thru service may have two (2), one (1)-way curb cuts depending on site layout, location of adjacent access, and whether adjacent access is available and may be shared.
- I. A lot that cannot be accessed from a service road or which cannot meet the provisions of subsections (E) or (F) or cannot be accommodated by shared access may be allowed one (1) curb cut.
- J. Direct access and curb cuts to a street for an out lot developed within a shopping center under the same ownership will not be allowed unless otherwise approved by the director of public service.
- K. As new development or redevelopment occurs shared curb cuts with adjoining lots must be provided, unless otherwise approved by the director of public service.



3372.912 LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING.

The intent of the requirements contained below is to provide adequate screening of parking lots, to create a defined "edge" along streets within the overlay boundaries, and to provide interior parking lot landscaping.

Tree plantings, landscaping, and screening are required along street frontages and in the interior of parking lots; the following standards are required:

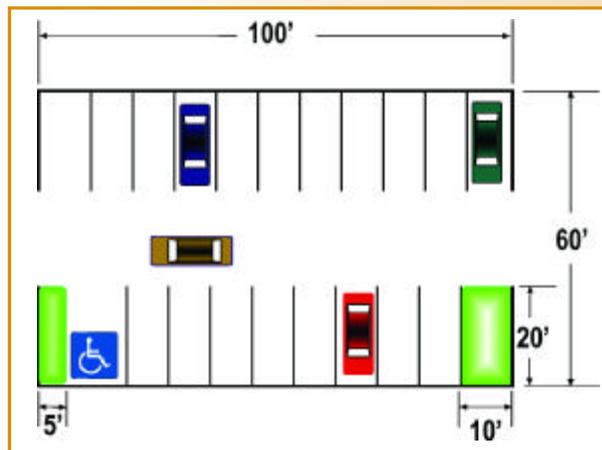
A. Species must be installed and maintained as follows:

1. Deciduous trees must be a minimum of two and one-half (2.5) inches in caliper, as measured four (4) feet from top of soil level;
2. Ornamental trees must be a minimum of two (2) inches in caliper, as measured four feet from top of soil level;
3. Tree canopies must be maintained at a minimum of eight (8) feet from the ground;
4. Hedges and shrubs may be deciduous or evergreen but must be a minimum of twenty-four (24) inches in height and width with an expected height of thirty-six (36) inches within three (3) years; and
5. All plants and landscaped areas must be maintained in a neat and healthy condition.

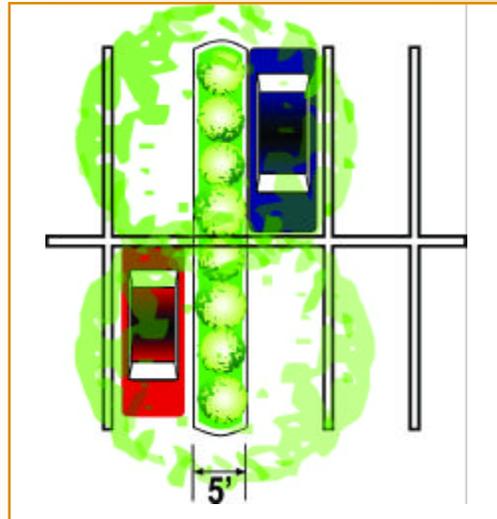
Replacement plants must be planted no later than the next planting season; and must also meet the size requirements herein.

B. A surface parking lot of six thousand (6,000) square feet or more or which contain twenty (20) or more parking spaces, must include five (5) percent of the parking lot in interior landscaping.

C. Landscaped islands must be installed within the interior of a parking lot in accordance with the following standards:



1. One landscape island is required for every twenty (20) parking spaces. If a site, due to its size and configuration, cannot meet this standard, two (2) landscape peninsulas may be substituted for one (1) landscape island;
2. All landscaped islands must have a minimum width of five (5) feet; and
3. Landscaped islands do not need to be uniformly spaced, but must be contained within and dispersed throughout the interior of a parking lot. Landscaped islands that define a main entrance-way and separate parking areas can count towards the required five (5) percent interior landscaping.



- D. A tree must be planted within the interior of a parking lot at a ratio of one (1) tree for every ten (10) parking spaces. All trees must be planted within a landscape island or peninsula.
- E. A minimum three (3)-foot high continuous row of planted shrubs must be planted to screen surface parking lots from a public street to an overall opacity of seventy-five (75) percent when in leaf. Ornamental plantings, in addition to the above requirement, are not prohibited. Such row of shrubs cannot exceed two hundred (200) lineal feet without incorporating one or more of the following changes in treatment:

1. A different species of shrub;
2. A brick or stone pier with a minimum height of forty-eight (48) inches. For Morse Road properties "Morse Road Stone" (Native Ohio Limestone, horizontally coursed with flush raked mortar joints. Any caps on walls or piers should be continuous natural stone caps.) must be used as the masonry material;
3. A three-foot brick or stone wall. For Morse Road properties "Morse Road Stone" (Native Ohio Limestone, horizontally coursed with flush raked mortar joints. Any caps on walls or piers should be continuous natural stone caps) must be used as the masonry material; or



4. Access drive, that is compliant with all standards herein.

The following shrub species are recommended. They have been selected based on their aesthetic appearance, mature height and hardiness.

Scientific Name	Common Name
Berberis thunbergii atropurpurea 'rose glow'	Rosey Glow Barberry
Cornus sericea 'kelsey'	Compact Redosier Dogwood
Euonymus alata 'Compacta'	Dwarf Burningbush
Juniperus chinensis 'Sea Green'	Sea Green Juniper
Myrica pensylvanica	Northern Bayberry
Viburnum carlesii	Koreanspice Viburnum
Viburnum x juddii	Judd Viburnum
Viburnum x burkwoodii 'Mohawk'	Mohawk Viburnum
Spiraea x bumalda 'Anthony Waterer'	Anthony Waterer Spiraea
Syringa meyeri 'Palibin'	Miss Kim Lilac

F. An auto dealership* is not required to landscape, plant trees, or otherwise screen areas used solely for new and used automobile display and inventory areas, but must maintain perennial plantings or a minimum twenty-four (24) inch high continuous hedge or shrub on any perimeter, which faces or abuts a public street. Employee and customer parking must be landscaped, planted and screened to the standards of this section. Areas used for the storage of cars awaiting repair must be screened to the standards of this section if they abut a public street. All display, inventory, parking, and storage areas must be clearly delineated on a site plan.

** Means the use of any building, lot, or other premise for the display and sale of new or used automobiles generally but may include light trucks or vans, and which may include any vehicle preparation or repair work conducted as an accessory use.*

G. Loading areas that are visible from a public right-of-way must be fully screened by structures and/or landscaped to a minimum height of six (6) feet and to a minimum of ninety (90) percent opacity.

H. A dumpster must be fully screened on three sides to a minimum height of six (6) feet or a height equal to that of the dumpster, which ever is greater and must maintain a minimum ninety (90) percent opacity. The open side must not be viewable from a public right-of-way or be oriented toward a contiguous residential use or district. All measurements are from established grade.

3372.914 LIGHTING.

- A. For general lighting, including parking lots, cut-off down lighting is required. For less intense pedestrian lighting, globe lighting may be used provided the level is no more than four thousand (4,000) lumens per fixture. All lights must be directed or shielded so as to avoid off-site light spillage.
- B. All external outdoor lighting fixtures, which are being used for the same purpose, within a given development must be from the same or similar manufacturer's type to insure aesthetic compatibility.
- C. Parking lot lighting must be in accordance with the following standards:
 - 1. Light fixtures must not exceed twenty (20) feet above grade when located on a lot or premise of two (2) acres or less;
 - 2. Light fixtures must not exceed twenty-eight (28) feet above grade when located on a lot or premise of more than two (2) acres;
 - 3. When located within twenty-five (25) feet of a residential district the height of a light fixture must not exceed fourteen (14) feet above grade; and
 - 4. In parking lots, lights must be placed in parking lot islands or on a solid base to protect both lights and vehicles from possible damage.
- D. All on-site utilities, within a new development or a fifty (50) percent or greater expansion of a building's gross floor area, must be underground.
- E. Gasoline service station canopy lighting must be recessed within a canopy and use an opaque shield around the sides of a light.
- F. Searchlights are prohibited.



City of Columbus

Michael B. Coleman, Mayor

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