

**BOROUGH OF WOODCLIFF LAKE**

**Bergen County, New Jersey**

**Ordinance No. 19-07**

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 292 ENTITLED "SITE PLAN" OF THE BOROUGH CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF WOODCLIFF LAKE, STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF WOODCLIFF LAKE IN THE COUNTY OF BERGEN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AS FOLLOWS:**

**WHEREAS**, Chapter 292, of the Code of the Borough of Woodcliff Lake sets forth all regulations regarding the Site Plan Review within the Borough of Woodcliff Lake; and

**BE IT ORDAINED**, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Woodcliff Lake, County of Bergen and State of New Jersey that those portions of the aforesaid set forth below are hereby amended as follows and that those portions of the Ordinance not set forth below shall remain unchanged.

Article VI. Design Standards.

Sec. 292-33.1 **Design standards for the B -1 Broadway (East and West) Business District and the S – O Special Office District**

**A. SITE PLANNING**

(1) Residentially-Inspired Site Layout

A residential-style site layout is encouraged, including such features as:

- (a) Each building should be set back from Broadway to match the traditional setbacks of the older single-family homes along the corridor that have been converted to retail use.
- (b) The front twenty (20) feet of the required front yard should have a green lawn and extensive shrubs, trees, and other landscaping. If space constraints mean that parking cannot fit on the site if such a deep front lawn is provided, a narrower landscaped strip is possible at the front, but should not be less than ten (10) feet.
- (c) Where possible, such as in the case of comprehensive redevelopment, no parking should encroach on the required minimum front yard or be located between the building and Broadway. Surface parking spaces should be located along an interior side lot line and/or at the rear of the parcel, accessed from a side driveway.

(2) Vehicular Access and Buffering

- (a) Only one curb cut for vehicular access to/from Broadway is permitted per parcel, unless the parcel width is in excess of two hundred (200) feet. The maximum width of each curb cut shall be twenty-four (24) feet at the front lot line.

- (b) Corner lots are permitted an additional curb cut on the side street. The maximum width of each curb cut shall be twenty-four (24) feet at the side lot line.
- (c) In order to provide more flexibility in parking access and to facilitate shared parking between uses, easement or access agreements should be pursued to connect parking lots between adjacent parcels, where topography allows. Variances for parking within the required side yard setback may be granted in such cases. In this manner, an interior parcel could use an adjoining parcel's side street curb cut for secondary access, or two adjacent interior parcels could share their curb cuts so that one serves as an inlet and the other as an outlet.

### (3) Pedestrian Safety and Amenities

- (a) In order to improve the appearance and pedestrian safety of the Broadway corridor, existing continuous curb cuts that are wider than twenty (20) feet at the front or side lot line shall be narrowed down, in the case of comprehensive redevelopment. Where possible a parcel has more than one (1) existing curb cut on Broadway, surplus curb cuts should be removed so that only one curb cut remains.
- (b) Where a curb cut is removed or narrowed, the sidewalk should be extended. This applies to parcels on either side of Broadway, even where adjoining properties still lack sidewalks. Sidewalks shall be paved with concrete of minimum clear width of four (4) feet, and where possible should include a grass planting strip of minimum width of three (3) feet separating the sidewalk from the roadway.
- (c) Walkways shall be provided through a property's front yard setback linking the public sidewalk on Broadway to building entries.

### (4) Reservoir Views

- (a) Development should preserve or enhance views to the Woodcliff Lake Reservoir. While the train tracks create a physical separation from the Reservoir shoreline, the views to the Reservoir are a significant asset. Buildings, trees, and open spaces on the west side of Broadway should be sited in a manner that preserves existing views towards the Reservoir from Broadway.
- (b) Second-level restaurant and dining space is permitted and encouraged on both sides of Broadway when such space will be able to take advantage of views to the Reservoir. Such second-level space is only permitted in a mezzanine level, open and connected to the same business on the ground floor.

### (5) Parking Lots and Paving

- (a) Placement
  - i. The existing zoning ordinance, at Section 380-78, Parking, requires that parking shall not be located closer than ten (10) feet to a side or rear lot line nor closer than thirty (30) feet to any residentially-zoned property. Both the B-1 and S-O Districts back onto the R-15 district, so parking is subject to the thirty (30) foot setback. In addition, Section 380-80, Buffers, requires that a thirty (30) foot

landscaped buffer be provided at rear property line where a non-residential use abuts a residential zone.

- ii. Provided that the parking setbacks and buffer requirements can be met at the rear of the lot, the ideal location for parking is at the rear of a parcel, behind the building. Where a retail user desires some parking to be visible from the street, or where the site layout is constrained, another appropriate location for parking is at the side of the lot.
- iii. If parking must be placed in front of the building, it should be aligned with the longest drive aisle(s) parallel to Broadway and shall be limited to a single or a double row. A single row of parking shall not exceed forty-two (42) feet in depth, as measured perpendicular to Broadway (roughly, a row of eighteen (18) foot deep parking spaces and a twenty-four (24) foot deep access aisle). A double row of parking shall not occupy more than sixty (60) feet of depth (typically two eighteen (18) foot deep parking spaces separated by a 24-foot access aisle), as measured perpendicular to Broadway.
- iv. Structured parking may be located fully or partially underground, or as tuck-under at-grade parking. Any parking level that is fully or partially above grade shall be located to the interior side or the rear of a building, away from view of public streets. Structured or tuck-under parking shall not be located within the front façade of a building; instead, it shall be located behind active uses (retail stores, lobbies, or offices, etc.) have a minimum depth of twenty (20) feet as measured back from the front façade.

(b) Screening and Landscaping

In addition to the Zoning: requirements for parking at Section 330-87 of the Zoning Ordinance, any front parking lot shall be softened with a low wall or fence of two (2) to three (3) feet in height, running along the front lot line to create a separation between the parking lot and the public sidewalk and right-of-way. Walls shall be constructed of stone or masonry blocks faced with stone or cultured stone. Fences shall be wood or wood-appearance composite. Suggested fence styles are picket, split-rail, and other small-town or farm-style fencing. Chain link fences are prohibited along the front lot line and along the side lot line in front of the front façade line of buildings.

(c) Pavement and Surface Coverage

- i. Porous paving (porous asphalt, porous concrete, or permeable interlocking pavers) is permitted as a means to allow increased surface coverage beyond the maximum permitted in zoning code. (See Section 380-46 of the Zoning Ordinance) Except within the 300-foot buffer to the Woodcliff Lake Reservoir, parcels are permitted to increase the surface coverage to seventy percent (70%) of the lot, provided that the overall performance of the site provides the same permeability as when conventionally paved at fifty percent (50%) of the lot. An engineering study showing permeability calculations is required. The Borough

will require a maintenance manual and agreement to ensure that the porous paving areas will be cleaned, vacuumed, replenished, or otherwise maintained so as to ensure their permeability every year.

- ii. For new development or redevelopment on parcels located within three hundred (300) feet of the Reservoir, NJDEP may require that site coverage not increase beyond existing conditions. As such, new buildings and parking lots may be restricted so that they do not occupy more land than already paved or covered. If additional land must be paved in order to create sufficient parking, the Borough suggests that porous paving be considered, subject to NJDEP approval.
- iii. Porous paving facilities may not be removed or altered if they were installed as part of an approved site plan in accordance with these Design Guidelines. The Borough Building Department shall maintain a database of these properties and may perform routine maintenance inspections.

## B. BUILDING DESIGN

### (1) Residentially-inspired Building Form

As the Borough is largely residential, residential-inspired building forms are encouraged. Styles should reference elements of neo-traditional residential design, such as pitched roofs, deep overhangs, prominent front porches or entries, and facades broken down into bays and other massing forms. Where appropriate to the intended use, multi-story retail or commercial buildings are encouraged to take the form of large houses, with bays, gables, ells, etc. The Borough is less interested in seeing modernist or contemporary designs.

### (2) Floor Height

In buildings with first-floor retail or commercial space, the first floor is encouraged to have a minimum fifteen (15) foot floor-to-floor height, in order to create high-quality spaces that will be adaptable to many different tenants over the years. However, a floor to ceiling height of at least thirteen (13) feet is required.

### (3) Massing and Detailing

#### (a) Horizontal Articulation: Bays

- i. Horizontal articulation refers to massing and detailing elements that break the building into a series of bays. Breaking down the apparent size of a building is particularly important with long, low buildings, in order to minimize the bulk and create a sense of rhythm in the façade. All building facades exceeding fifty (50) feet in width shall be divided horizontally into distinct bays, each with a maximum width of fifty (50) feet. The design and dimensions of bays along one building façade should create a varied articulation; a monotonous repetition of the same bay design across a very wide façade shall be avoided.
- ii. To be considered a distinct bay, the bay shall include both a physical change in depth of the façade plane of at least one (1) foot deep relative to adjoining bay(s). Bays should be further distinguished through elements such as columns, pilasters, downspouts, expansion joints, size and rhythm of window spacing, and roofline shape. Variation in surface material, texture, pattern, and color is

also appropriate, but alone is not sufficient. Vertical bays should extend through all stories of the building but may exclude upper “penthouse” stories that are substantially stepped back from the primary façade plane.

(b) Horizontal Articulation: Roofline

On long building facades, the roofline should vary both in height and in shape by means of cross-gables, tower elements, or the vertical expression of bays through the top floor. These elements provide a focal point and break up the building mass. The rooftop expression of gable, tower, or bay elements should extend visibly downwards in a structurally logical fashion through all levels of the building.

(c) Vertical Articulation

- i. Vertical articulation refers to massing and detailing elements that break a building vertically into a base, middle, and top, to help minimize appearance of height and create a human-scaled building form.
- ii. Depending on the height of a building, the base of the building may simply be defined as a trim band or it may be articulated within the entire first floor. Masonry materials are appropriate within the base as the primary material or as an accent. For buildings with retail first floor uses, the base shall include storefront windows, clear glazed doors, awnings or canopies, and façade-mounted lighting.
- iii. The middle of the building should be distinguished from the base by a horizontal belt course or trim cornice; a projecting roof or overhang; a change in façade plane; recessed balconies; changes in material or fenestration pattern; and/or other appropriate means.
- iv. Depending on the height and design of a building, the top of the building may be expressed as the roofline exclusively or may also include the entire top floor. Buildings that are two and a half (2 ½) stories should use the entire rooftop half-story as a means to provide visual interest in the façade, including with deep eave overhangs that create shadow lines, decorative roof surfacing such as dimensional asphalt shingles or standing-seam roofing, dormers and dormer windows, and decorative brackets and dentils along cornice lines. Rooftop terraces are encouraged within stepback areas of the roof.
- v.

(4) Roof Form

In order to minimize overall building height on taller buildings and increase the sense of stature on single-story buildings, flat roofs are prohibited. Instead, a peaked or mansard roof form is required, which shall be one of the following types:

- (a) Peaked roofs on any permitted-height buildings may be gabled (one slope on each of two sides, and vertical walls on the other two sides), gambrel (two slopes on each of two sides, and vertical walls on the other two sides), or hip (a single, uniform slope on each side) form. Deep overhangs are encouraged on all pitched roofs.

- (b) On the tallest permitted buildings of two and a half (2 ½) stories, mansard roofs are another permitted roof form for the top level.
- i. Ideally, mansard roofs should be of the true mansard form, namely: a four-sided hip roof characterized by two (2) slopes on each of its sides, and in which the lower slope, punctured by dormer windows, at a steeper angle than the upper. This type of mansard roof can comply with the Borough's definition of a half story if the lower slope meets the upper slope at no more than five (5) feet above the floor level. The lower, steeper slope reduces the apparent height of the roof, and when combined with the upper, shallower slope, creates an additional floor of habitable space (a garret).
  - ii. A common, contemporary American interpretation of the mansard is a roof with a single steep slope on each side and a flat deck at the interior. The steeply-sloping sides often surround a top floor that is nearly as large as the floor below. This roof form is not an acceptable form for the tallest permitted building height of two and a half (2 ½ ) stories, because the Borough's definition of a half story requires a sloping roof to meet the exterior walls be no more than five (5) feet above the floor. Since this style of faux-mansard usually looks overly heavy and ponderous, it is discouraged on one (1) story and two (2) story building heights as well.
- (c) Shallow, false-gabled or false-gambrel roof shapes may be used to "ring" the entire perimeter of large roofs on one (1) or two (2) story buildings, screening a central flat roof at the interior, in order to conceal heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment from persons at ground level. However, such form is not permitted on two and a half (2 ½) story buildings because the interior portion of the roof must be sloping.

Any cross-gables used in a roof shall extend fully back to intersect the primary peaked roof mass.

#### (5) Facade Design and Transparency

The following standards are intended to help create buildings that relate to the public street and that appear friendly and approachable, with clearly-visible entries, pedestrian-scaled detailing, and a high degree of transparency in the form of glazing.

##### (a) Entry Emphasis

- i. The entryway to first floor uses should be clearly highlighted within the façade as part of a prominent bay, projection, recess, or other architectural mass. Entry doors should be framed with contrasting trim, piers, columns, or pediments. The primary entry door to each retail or commercial space shall face towards Broadway.
- ii. Each retail entry door shall have clear glazing in at least the top half. Retail entries that are flush with the facade shall include an awning or canopy of at least four (4) foot depth that extends at a minimum across the width of the

entry, or across the whole storefront. Alternately, retail entries may be recessed within the façade. As an alternative to awnings, sidewalk arcades are permitted for buildings with more than one retail storefront, provided that they are constructed with sufficient height and width to create an airy, spacious walkway.

- iii. Where a building with retail space has parking spaces to the rear, a secondary pedestrian entrance shall be provided from the rear parking lot. The secondary retail entry or entries shall provide some visibility into the interior retail space.

(b) Transparency

- i. Windows are very important to create transparency, a feeling of openness, and a transition between inside private space and outside public space.
- ii. Retail façades shall have windows and doors that comprise at least fifty percent (50%) of the area of the first-level façade. Ground-floor window glazing should be recessed at least three (3) inches relative to surrounding façade plane, or framed by dimensional architectural features that cast shadows, such as deep trim, columns, or pilasters. The base of retail windows shall extend to within (24) inches of grade in order to enhance views into the interior space. However, for buildings taking the form of a large single-family home, the first level is only required to have twenty-five percent (25%) of its area as windows, and such windows do not need to extend to within twenty-four (24) inches of grade.
- iii. On the second floors of all buildings, windows shall comprise at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the area of the second-level facade. Upper-story windows shall be framed with generous trim on all sides, including deep sills and lintels, of at least one inch deep relative to the façade plane and to the window glass, in order to create shadow lines that lend visual interest to the façade. Windows on the second floor should be organized symmetrically and their spacing and pattern should align with windows on the first floor.
- iv. The vertical end walls of a gabled or gambrel roof shall include windows in the uppermost floor; however, no minimum area of transparency is required. Sloping peaked roof planes that enclose useable space shall have dormer windows spaced regularly in a pattern that relates to windows on a lower floor, so as to avoid large areas of blank roof.
- v. Window glazing should be clear or lightly tinted. Energy-efficient coatings that tint glass are permitted in doors and windows, provided that the coating closest to clear is chosen to meet the energy criteria. Colored or stained window glass is permitted only for retail clerestory or transom windows. Dark tinted, opaque, spandrel, and mirrored glass is prohibited except for service areas, mechanical rooms, emergency exit doors, and the like.

(6) Materials and Architectural Styles

- i. Building façade and roofing materials should be appropriate to Woodcliff Lake's image as a rural, village-like, small town. Since the Borough's history is

not linked strongly to farming or industrial uses, buildings should minimize references to overly heavy or aggressive industrial or functional styles. Instead, buildings should espouse neo-traditional styles and materials. Within a building, all facades that are adjacent to or easily visible from a public street, public walkway, or public open space should exhibit the same degree of architectural detailing.

- ii. Appropriate materials for these styles include wood or fiber-cement clapboard and wood shingle. Brick, stone, and other masonry are appropriate but only as accents, not as the primary façade material. Vinyl and aluminum siding are prohibited. Roofs may include asphalt or dimensional asphalt tile. Standing-seam metal works well on small overhangs and similar accent masses and is encouraged on large roof areas as long as it does not look overlay industrial in combination with the entire building design.
- iii. Façade cladding materials should be extended around corners and extensions to a logical break in plane in order to avoid an artificial, “pasted-on” appearance.

## C. RELATED ITEMS

### (1) Signage

#### (a) Retail Signage Types

In addition to signage permitted in the current zoning, each individual retail tenant space may have up to four (4) types of signage provided the maximum permitted dimensions of the signs individually and in aggregate, meet the restrictions in the zoning code:

- i. Façade signs (called “attached signs” in the zoning code) are mounted over the storefront window or entryway. They shall be placed within an entablature area over the storefront windows, a flat area framed by architectural detailing. Signage shall not be placed in a way that blocks windows or obstructs building architectural details. Preferred styles for retail signage within the entablature include flat painted signs, dimensional carved-relief signs, or channel-cut signs with individually pin-mounted letters. Façade signs shall be lit from above by gooseneck lighting mounted on the facade. Neither signage boards nor individual signage letters and graphics shall be interior-lit.
- ii. Hanging signs project perpendicularly from the façade so as to be seen by pedestrians on a walkway in front of the stores. They shall maintain at least seven (7) feet of vertical clear space below. Hanging signs may not be internally-lit.
- iii. Window signs are painted, etched, or otherwise applied to the glazing on the entry door or window. They shall be airy and largely transparent, without large blocks of solid color, so as to maintain visibility into the retail space. This signage type is an addition to what the current zoning permits.



- iv. Awning signs may be placed on fabric awnings spanning a retail storefront. Signage on the vertical front panel of an awning shall be limited to the name of the business (that is, lettering only) and shall be applied in only one color. Signage on the flat sloping area of an awning may include the business name and/or a graphic and shall be applied in one color only. This signage type is an addition to what the current zoning permits.

(b) Consistency in Storefront Signage

Retail signage for storefronts within the same building shall have a consistent format in terms of type of signage materials and mounting (for example, all made of individual metal dimensional letters, or all painted on wooden boards). It is not necessary for each sign to be identical in form; instead, each retailer should be permitted to use its own typefaces, graphic icons, and colors. However, use of more than a few colors within one store's sign is discouraged.

(c) Temporary Signs

The existing zoning code lacks any criteria for the type of temporary signs or posters that retailers and restaurants often place in their storefront windows, such as those that advertise store sales, advertise cigarette or alcohol brands, or list weekly sale prices for grocery items. These posters are often placed in windows for weeks, or indefinitely, blocking views into the business and making the building less attractive. These types of signs should not exceed ten percent (10%) of the first-floor façade area and should be removed after three (3) weeks, after which time no further such signs may be placed for at least three (3) weeks. Larger-area temporary signs are permitted if they are mounted as largely-transparent decals or painted lettering on glazing, allowing views through them into the business interior.

(2) Lighting

Gooseneck façade lighting is encouraged for sign illumination and as architectural accent lighting.

(3) Mechanical Equipment

- (a) Mechanical equipment shall be shielded from view of the public sidewalk. Ground-floor outdoor mechanical equipment, outdoor refuse areas, and outdoor storage shall be screened with high-quality fencing that is largely opaque. Chain link fencing is prohibited as a screening type.
- (b) Interior mechanical and service rooms that extend to the front façade of a building shall include glazing that is harmonious with the overall window pattern of the front façade, but said glazing may use translucent, opaque, or spandrel glass.

(4) Fencing and Walls

- (a) Most of the traditional single-family homes along Broadway that have been converted into businesses maintain a feeling of openness and greenery by means

of their *fenceless* landscaped front yards. To maintain this bucolic feeling, fences and walls exceeding three (3) feet in height are not permitted alongside lot lines within the minimum required front setback. Permitted fence and wall types along the front yard line and along the side lot line within the required minimum front setback include picket or split-rail fences and stone or masonry walls.

(b) Chain-link fences are only permitted along rear property lines.

(5) Outdoor Dining Areas

Outdoor restaurant seating helps enliven retail areas by bringing activity outside, fostering people-watching, and bridging the gap between the public street and the private retail food establishment. Outdoor dining areas that provide seating for patrons of a restaurant, café, or bakery or similar retail -food business are encouraged and permitted along Broadway, subject to the requirements set forth in Section 380-41 I of the Zoning code. Heat lamps are encouraged in seating areas in order to extend outdoor dining into shoulder seasons (spring and fall). Umbrellas are encouraged for summertime shade.

(6) Landscaping and Open Space

(a) Site Landscaping Character

Site landscaping around buildings and parking lots shall build on natural open space features, including the Reservoir and the wooded hillsides sloping up away from the Reservoir, to strengthen Woodcliff Lake's self-image as a rural, bucolic place. Landscaping, fencing, and furnishings should suggest a rural or village-like appearance, such as with stone walls, picket fences, split-rail or other farm-type fencing, copses (small stands of trees), and meadow areas. Where possible, vegetation and building placement should enhance or preserve views down to the reservoir.

(b) Required Open Space Dedication on Larger Projects

Projects equal to or exceeding one (1.0) acre in size shall provide a publicly-accessible pocket park, courtyard, or plaza that meets the following standards:

- i. The open space shall be at least 2,000 square feet. It may be of any shape, but shall measure at least 25 feet in all dimensions, and all of the contributing open space shall be contiguous rather than fragmented.
- ii. The space shall be located between buildings and Broadway, or to the side of buildings and visible from Broadway, in order to be visible as a public amenity. Specifically, one edge of the space shall be adjacent to, or within sixty (60) feet, of Broadway. The required front yard area may be used to provide this open space.
- iii. Ideally, the public space should be adjacent to the entry to a complementary retail business, such as a café or small market, or the entrance of an office or upstairs use, so that pedestrian activity associated with the building can help

to enliven the open space. However, the space must be available for the general public to use, not just retail customers.

- iv. The space shall be well-lit with dark-sky compliant lighting (i.e., downcast and full cutoff so as to not cause glare or light pollution of the night sky).
- v. Seating in the form of benches, moveable chairs or low stone walls at least thirty (30) inches high and eighteen (18) inches wide is required.
- vi. The space shall include both softscape areas of landscaping with a mix of low vegetation and trees, and hardscape areas with decorative unit paving, gravel or other porous paving, and/or concrete.

Severability All provisions of this Ordinance are severable. If for any reason, any provision of this Ordinance is held to be invalid, the validity of the remainder of the Ordinance shall not be affected.

Effective Date. This Ordinance shall become effective upon final approval and publication, pursuant to law, and upon completion of all outstanding cases.