

# Countywide Facade Improvement Program

## FACADE DESIGN GUIDEBOOK

Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs  
Neighborhood Revitalization Section



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The Countywide Facade Improvement Program (Program) provides technical and financial assistance for property and business owners to encourage private investment in commercial properties throughout the County. These visible, often transformative, improvements to building and business exteriors and properties add to their overall appeal, as well as that of the neighborhoods and communities in which they are located.

Participation in the Program, managed by the Neighborhood Revitalization Section of the **Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA)**, offers many benefits. Improving the appearance of your building or business exterior adds value, draws new attention to your property and brand, and can help expand your customer base. The best benefit is reimbursement by the Program of up to 50% of the cost for the approved renovations.

This Guidebook provides ideas and examples to use as inspiration for improving your own property. Whether you own a multi-tenant commercial building or a small business establishment, the Program can help you make visible, lasting improvements that will help your property stand out. From new pylon and building signage, lighting, and exterior painting to parking lot repaving, new landscaping, vibrant new building murals and other exterior art elements, the Program can help make your property a more welcoming destination for customers and more attractive to potential new tenants.

The Guidebook provides visual and descriptive examples of potential facade improvements along with rough cost estimates for each presented on a lower cost (\$), medium cost (\$\$), and higher cost (\$\$\$) scale. The purpose of this publication is to help you understand the many design and cost

options available to make improving your property attainable. The dollar sign symbols are not intended to be specific amounts, but rather give general guidance on the cost ranges of improvements.

**(\$)** Represents improvements at the economical end of the cost range that are typically more cosmetic. Improvements in this category might include paint, awnings, and signage.

**(\$\$)** Represents improvements in the middle of the cost range that have a larger impact to the property. This medium range of improvements would include some architectural enhancements typically needed for older facades. This category might also include storefront and window replacements, the addition of new facade treatments, lighting, and hard canopies.

**(\$\$\$)** Represents improvements at the higher end of the cost range that are renovations to the entire building facade and adjacent site areas. This higher cost level of investment may include new window and door openings, architectural elements, and site improvements including illuminated signage, landscape, and site lighting.

The examples contained within this Guidebook are not required improvements, but rather a collection of ideas and suggestions illustrating the possibilities for improving your property with support from the Program.

Specific criteria for the Program is provided in the **'Countywide Facade Improvement Program Guidelines'** on the DHCA website at:

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DHCA/community/neighborhood/facade.html](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DHCA/community/neighborhood/facade.html)

The Program Guidelines give details on eligible and ineligible improvement projects, the design review and approval process, funding levels and corresponding easement terms, the reimbursement payment process and more.

On behalf of DHCA and the Neighborhood Revitalization Section, we hope this Guidebook helps spur increased Program participation and, in turn, helps transform the appearance and appeal of smaller commercial properties and local businesses across the County. Each project is a win for the owner, a win for the neighborhood, and a win for the community as a whole.



## WHY IMPROVE MY FACADE?

Facade improvements yield a myriad of important benefits.

Renovated facades increase a building's 'curb appeal' and are a proven method of raising the value of a property. An enhanced facade provides a more attractive public presentation and image, and may help to increase foot traffic and overall business.

The renovation of a facade can also contribute to lower energy consumption and lower monthly operational costs. This can be achieved with the installation of new, insulated storefronts, higher quality windows and doors, or the use of highly efficient LED lighting, for example.

Just one property or business improving their facade can spark others to follow suit, drastically adding to the appeal of the area, creating new interest and attracting more business to the community.



## HOW TO IMPROVE MY FACADE?

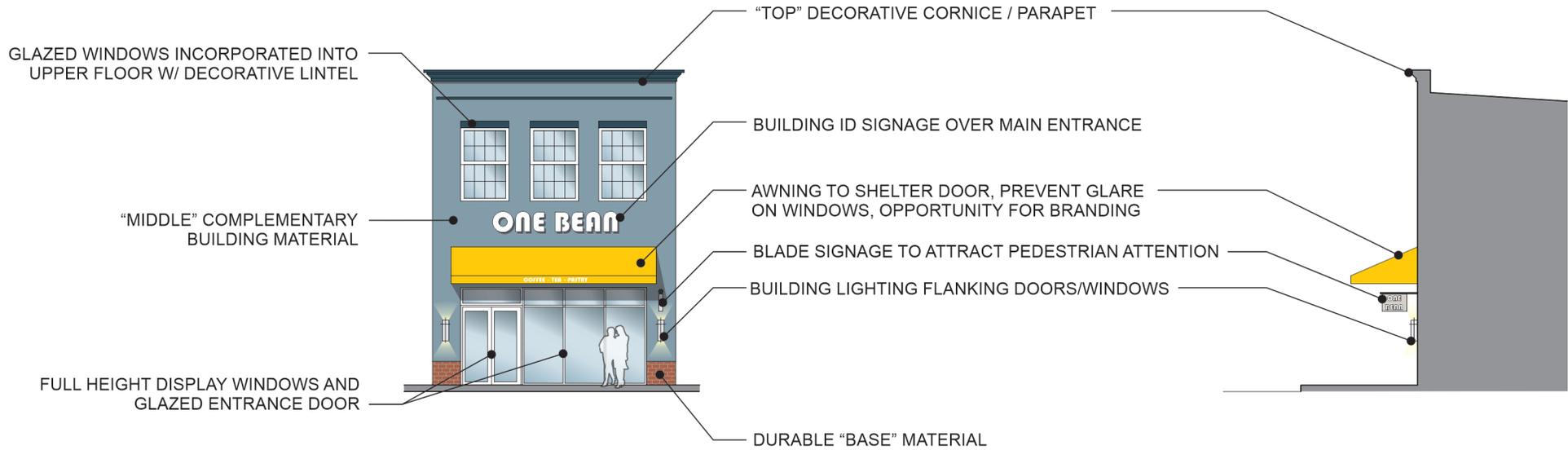
Approaching a facade improvement may seem like a daunting task, but there are resources and help available.

For simple upgrades, a design-build contractor may be able to assist with recommendations and products. Signage, awning and canopy companies typically offer in-house design and building services.

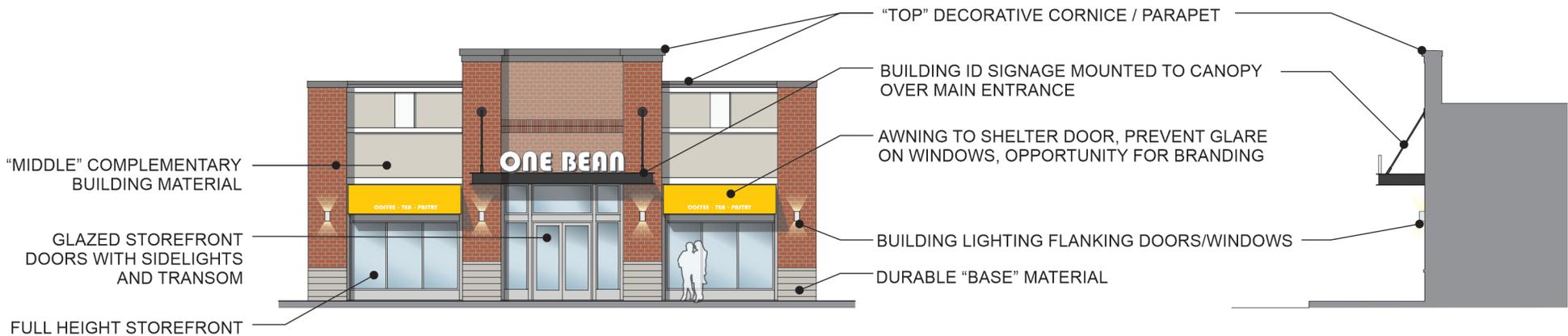
For larger renovations, it may make sense to engage a licensed architect and landscape architect. Your local chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) or American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) will have listings of qualified professionals in your area.



# ANATOMY OF A GOOD FACADE



**EXAMPLE 01: TRADITIONAL MAIN STREET BUILDING**



**EXAMPLE 02: COMMERCIAL MULTI-TENANT BUILDING**

# BEFORE AND AFTER

One of the best ways to show how improving your commercial property can make a big impact is through “before and after” examples. The following examples will help give you an idea of what can be done within different budgets, from a more modest approach with minor improvements to a more comprehensive facade renovation. With a little creativity, there are many ways to refresh the look of your property.

## (\$) 1143 Hollins Street, Baltimore

This modest facade renovation repainted the wood trim work with a vibrant aqua paint color and provided new signage to update the curb appeal of this pizzeria in Southwest Baltimore.



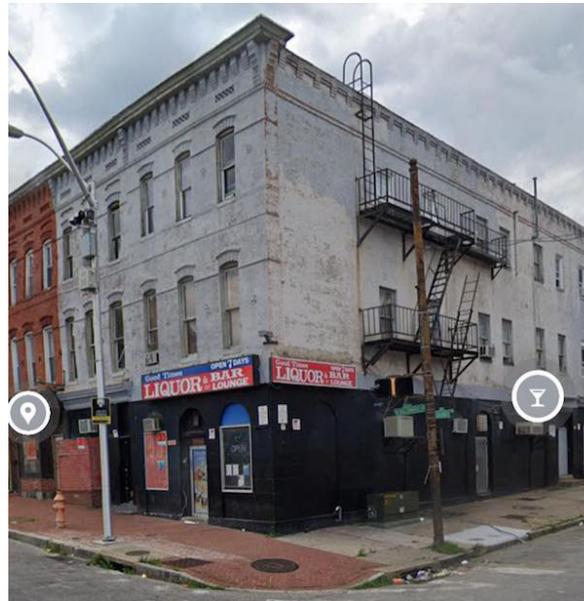
Before



After

## (\$\$) 1600 W. Baltimore Street, Baltimore

This renovation of a multi tenant building in Southwest Baltimore provided new energy efficient windows and doors, a light off white coat of paint on the building with the trim work in a contrasting dark charcoal color, and new signage. The use of the light field paint creates a more inviting image for the business.



Before



After

# BEFORE AND AFTER

## (\$\$) 13401 New Hampshire Avenue, Colesville

This brick commercial/office building had a long, heavy awning, mis-matched signage and a generally worn exterior. New windows and doors, two new flat awnings and new back-lit building signage and address numbering give the building an updated, modern aesthetic.

The reconfigured and resurfaced parking lot compliments new exterior LED lighting on all sides of the building, tidy new dumpster enclosure and all new landscaping.

Three businesses benefited from this project, in particular the second floor martial arts center thanks to greatly improved nighttime visibility of classes.

This project was part of the Colesville Facade Improvement Program.



Before



After

# BEFORE AND AFTER

## (\$\$\$) 15440 Old Columbia Pike, Burtonsville

Revitalized features include a facade renovation on the primary two sides of the building with modern design and materials. The remainder of the exterior is cleaned up and new paint treatment applied to all sides of building. New energy efficient windows and doors provided throughout. Finally, new LED lighting for parking lot and building, as well as ADA-compliant storefront sidewalks completed the work.

This renovation was part of the Burtonsville Facade Improvement Program which spurred dramatic physical improvements for 21 local small businesses.



Before



After

## (\$\$) Curbside Monument Signage

As part of the Burtonsville Facade Improvement Program, a total of five outdated and weathered curbside shopping center and business signs were replaced with new, prominent monument signage featuring back lit panels.

The professionally designed and installed signs immediately made a noticeable and dramatic improvement to curb appeal.

Each new sign features a highly visible new logo or branded lettering, helping to create a recognizable and cohesive identity for the area. The after picture shows a new pylon sign identifying three businesses in the Burtonsville Village Center.



Before



After

# BEFORE AND AFTER

## (\$\$\$) 15520 Old Columbia Pike, Burtonsville

The project began with the demolition of the unsightly and deteriorated car lift and canopy in front of the building.

The building renovation provided a new facade structure with modern design and materials, including new energy efficient windows and doors. The secondary sides and back of the building were cleaned up and painted. New back lit building signage and LED building lighting added the finishing touches.

On the site, the sidewalks were brought up to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, the parking lot was repaired and resurfaced, and new LED lighting was installed.



Before



After

For more Before and After examples of the Burtonville Facade Improvement Program, please visit:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DHCA/community/neighborhood/facade/burtonville.html>

# BEFORE AND AFTER

## (\$\$\$) 912 Thayer Avenue, Silver Spring

The 40 year old structure was first stripped down to the original steel frame and then renovated to current new office standards. The work included new energy efficient windows and doors and a complete renovation of the building's exterior facade.

This type of full scale renovation modernized and transformed this building, making it a neighborhood landmark and source of pride for the owners and community.



Before



After

### Windows

#### Objective:

Windows help lighten and brighten your space, draw customers into your business and enliven the street scape.

#### Recommendations:

Large, display windows to showcase merchandise or creative graphics will increase the visual appeal of your business. Windows are available in many different styles, sizes, materials, and price points. Windows can be single openings or a continuous storefront system.

A new, good quality window with clear glass and a low-e coating can help save on energy costs in an existing building. Glass that has a dark or mirrored finish is not recommended.

Below are a few types of windows to consider for your facade design.

**Transom windows** located over a door or other windows allow additional light into the space. Sidelights are windows flanking the sides of a door to allow extra light inside.

**Display windows** are large windows used primarily in retail settings to show off merchandise and attract people inside.

**Operable windows** are often used at restaurants and cafes to allow fresh air in and to create an indoor/outdoor atmosphere during nice weather.



*Large display, aluminum storefront windows create a great line of sight to help draw customers into the café*

## Windows - Cost Estimate



### **(\$)**

The existing display window is renovated by re-pairing any damage and re-painting the window in a contrasting pop of color.



### **(\$\$) Medium Cost Approach**

New storefront windows and complimentary surrounding trimwork provide a clean and modern storefront design for this shop.



### **(\$\$\$) Higher Cost Approach**

Large scale, operable windows create an indoor/ outdoor environment for seating, and allow this restaurant to open up to the street.

## Doors

### Objective:

To encourage pedestrian activity and provide a welcoming entrance to your building or tenants.

### Recommendations:

Doors are a touch point and one of the first impressions people get when entering your business. Replacing door hardware and repainting a worn out entrance door is a budget friendly improvement. However, if your budget allows, replacing an old or solid entrance door with a glazed door and/or sidelights will create a welcoming approach into your property.

Like windows, doors come in many sizes, shapes, materials, and price points. Doors are available as single or double swing doors, automatic sliding doors, and glazed roll up garage doors to name a few common types. They can be made of all glass, solid wood, metal with glass infill, or a mixture of materials. The design of the doors and hardware is almost limitless and can be tailored to fit the branding and look of your business.

## Roll Down Security Doors and Grilles

### Objective:

Provide security outside of business hours, while not negatively impacting the design of the facade.

### Recommendations:

Roll down doors and grilles may be a necessary security measure to deter vandalism or burglary after hours. It is recommended that the security doors and grilles are integrated into the facade design so that they are recessed and hidden during business hours, maintaining the building's aesthetic.



**Images Above: Wood and glass doors with a transom. The left door is modern and simple, the right door is historic and ornate. A contrasting, complementary paint color with window graphics is a successful solution for both**



**Image to Left: Security grilles roll up and disappear from view during business hours**

## Doors - Cost Estimate



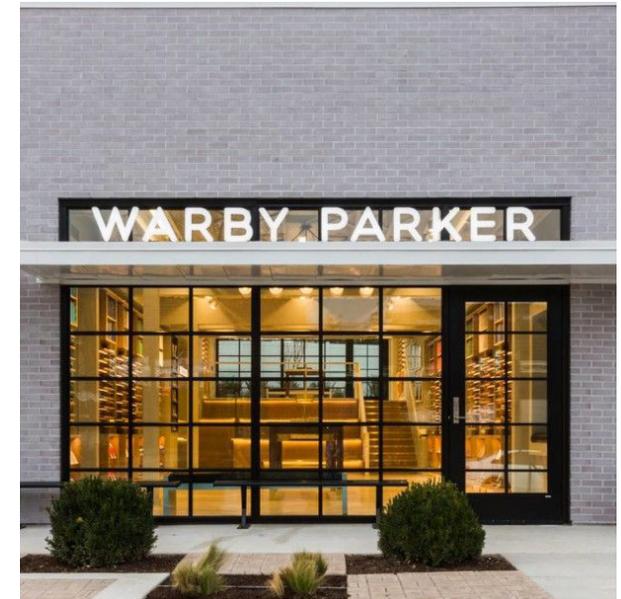
### **(\$)** Low Cost Approach

Re-painting the existing door in a trendy color and adding branding/graphics that ties into the display window design is an eye catching solution.



### **(\$\$)** Medium Cost Approach

Custom door hardware with branding is a unique way to update and upgrade a door.



### **(\$\$\$)** Higher Cost Approach

This storefront system with corresponding swing door is a bold contrast to the simple white brick and modern design of the facade.

## Canopies and Awnings

### Objective:

The use of awnings and canopies is encouraged to draw attention to your entrance while providing shelter.

### Recommendations:

Canopies and awnings are common design elements for commercial properties and are often used to help identify a commercial tenant's space. They are useful in preventing glare on retail display windows, providing shelter from light rain, and providing shade for outdoor cafe seating along the building. Canopies and awnings help to create visual interest with pops of color and can be a good spot for locating signage and/or branding.

Awnings are typically fabric, vinyl or metal affixed to a frame and attached to the building. Retractable awnings are often used at restaurants to cover outdoor seating.

Canopies are usually metal, acrylic, glass or a combination thereof and are cantilevered or hung from the building. They normally require additional structure for anchoring within the wall.

The use of high quality materials is recommended when selecting an awning or canopy. They will last longer and require less maintenance.

Consider a mounting height that works with the overall facade design and will help bring the scale of the building down to the pedestrian. Typically 9' to 12' to the underside of a canopy is recommended.



*Retractable fabric awning over retail store entrance adds to branding and provides architectural detail*

## Canopies and Awnings - Cost Estimate



### **(\$)** Low Cost Approach

Fabric awning ties into the color pallet of the shop front to create a cohesive look.



### **(\$\$)** Medium Cost Approach

Metal canopies over the storefront at the outdoor seating area prevent glare on the storefront, help lower the scale of the building, and provide interest in the facade.



### **(\$\$\$)** Higher Cost Approach

Wrap around canopy that is fully integrated into the design of the building facade provides shade for seating areas and visual interest with shadows below open canopy areas.

## Lighting

### Objective:

Good exterior and facade lighting design improves the pedestrian experience, provides safety at night, helps illuminate facade design elements like awnings and signage and, when using LED fixtures, provides energy cost savings.

### Recommendations:

There are many types of building lighting available at all price points. The light color, temperature of the lighting (warm vs. cool) and the style of bulbs and fixture are all things to consider when making a selection. A warmer, color temperature of 3500 Kelvin or lower is recommended in most instances. The use of LED or other energy efficient fixtures is encouraged.

Below are a few common fixture types.

**Wall sconces** are used to provide general lighting at night and commonly as a decorative element for the facade.

**Goose-necks** are wall mounted fixtures with heads that stick out and shine back towards the facade to illuminate items like signage and wall graphics/murals.

**Facade wall wash lighting** is often used in conjunction with landscape lighting to create interest and highlight design features, such as cornices, at night.

**Building mounted string or catenary lighting** is a popular way to add a sparkle of lighting to seating areas below.



Wall sconces flank the entrance door



Goose-neck fixtures illuminate building signage



Simple facade wall wash fixtures create a subtle yet effective lighting solution for this grocery store



String lighting hung from the underside of the canopy adds sparkle to the outdoor seating area

## Lighting - Cost Estimate



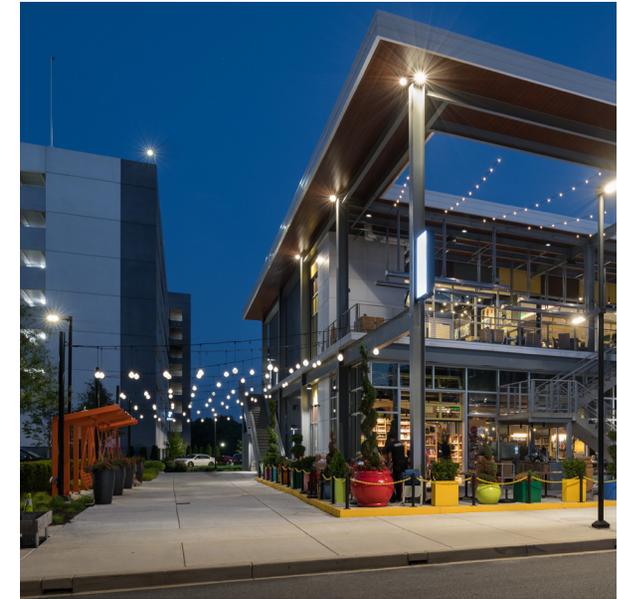
### **(\$)** Low Cost Approach

Re-lamping or replacing fixtures with energy efficient fixtures in the same locations.



### **(\$\$)** Medium Cost Approach

Adding new, linear light fixtures on the underside of the existing canopy playfully ties into a larger renovation of this business.



### **(\$\$\$)** Higher Cost Approach

Extending lighting design from this restaurant's outdoor seating area into the site elements creates inviting common area spaces.

## Facade Materials

### Objective:

Provide thoughtful and creative design to help promote visual interest and update the look of a building's facade through the use of durable and high quality materials.

### Recommendations:

A mix of opaque materials and transparent fenestration such as windows and doors, creates visual interest and can help articulate the entrance and avoid blank walls. The placement, patterning, scale, and colors of the materials utilized is up to the creativity of the designer and property or business owner. However, the use of high quality and low maintenance materials is encouraged, while extremely bright colors or using too many finishes and colors can look cluttered and is not recommended.

Below are a few types of materials to consider for your building design.

Brick/Masonry veneer is a long lasting material that is often used around the base of a building, as it can be taken below grade. The veneer assembly is non structural, visually appealing, and fireproof.

Fiber cement board is available as siding, panels, board and batten, shakes, trim, and other various profiles. It is a low maintenance material that comes prefinished or primed for field painting, and some lines mimic wood.

Vinyl siding is made to look like traditional wood siding but with the benefits of vinyl. It is low maintenance and budget friendly.



*A light green field paint with contrasting dark green trim is complimented by orange accents at the door, window trim, and signage*

## Facade Materials

Exterior insulation & finishing systems, commonly known as EIFS, are exterior wall systems that provide an insulated, water-resistant, finished surface. It can be used to achieve cornices, banding, and other architectural features. Systems that mimic brick and metal panels are also available.

Metal panels and siding are extremely low maintenance, do not retain moisture, are one of the most durable materials on the market, and offer a modern aesthetic.

A fresh coat of paint is a cost effective way to revamp the look of your building facade. A good quality, exterior grade paint and primer is recommended.

## Architectural Screening

### Objective:

Hide unsightly mechanical units or other similar items from view through the use of architectural elements incorporated into the facade design.

### Recommendations:

Mechanical equipment, while necessary to the functioning of the building, can negatively impact the appearance of your property if not located or screened appropriately.

For rooftop equipment that is visible from the street or adjacent buildings, decorative screening can help shield it. Another solution in a larger renovation is to integrate the screen into the design of the building's parapet, which is the portion of the buildings walls that extend up past a flat roof.



**Mechanical equipment on the roof is set back an appropriate distance behind a raised parapet wall around the building's perimeter, so it is not visible from the street and adjacent parking lots**

## Facade Materials/Architectural Screening - Cost Estimate



### (\$ ) Low Cost Approach

Repainting an existing facade. Bright colored doors and windows in coral and green pop against an understated gray painted brick building to create a welcoming and fun facade.



### (\$\$ ) Medium Cost Approach

An accent wall out of Brick/Masonry Veneer is an eye catching feature element for this business. Areas like this should be limited to select locations you want to draw attention to.



### (\$\$\$ ) Higher Cost Approach

A mix of materials including brick veneer, fiber cement panels, metal screens, and wood look siding are used in a full scale renovation.

## Murals

### Objective:

Murals add vibrant, visual interest to blank walls and can help activate an under utilized space, such as an alley.

### Recommendations:

A mural is a painting, mosaic, or other permanent artwork attached or applied directly to the outside of your building. It is recommended that you engage a qualified muralist to create and implement the mural design.

The scale and subject of the mural should be appropriate for the building or wall to which it will be applied. Like other materials, high quality paints or products compatible with your building's substrate are recommended.

It is also important to consider if and how the mural will be lit at night. If lighting is desired, it should be included as part of the overall mural design.

Murals are popular on social media and as they become more well known, can help drive people to your property/business.

### (\$) Building Mural, Baltimore

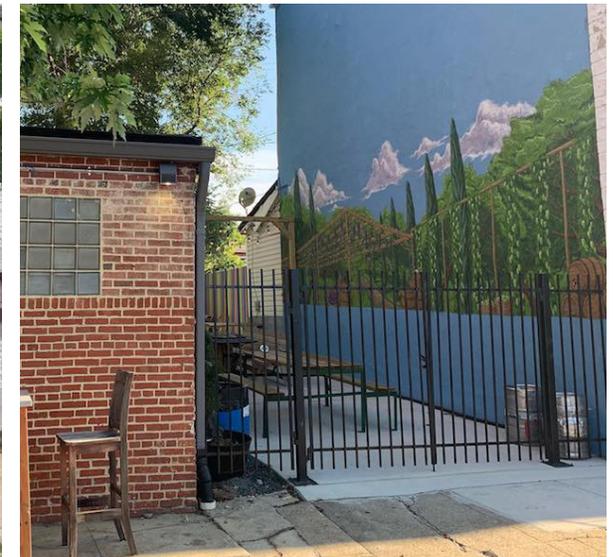
Opposite is an example of a renovation to a vacant lot. By painting a mural on the building and adding outdoor furniture and fencing, a bright, clean, and inviting outdoor space for the adjacent business is created, while also providing a mural for the neighborhood.



*Colorful mural featured on a side wall facing a parking lot can help attract attention to your business/property*



*Before*



*After*

## Building Tenant Signs

Signage is the primary way to establish the identity of tenants, showcasing their unique branding in a visible and compelling way. Signs offer a quick way to convey the name of the business, types of goods and services offered, business hours, and other functional information.

### Objective:

Provide signage that clearly conveys the business' information in an appropriate location, scale, and design that is complementary to the overall design of the facade.

### Recommendations:

The design and materials of a sign are left up to your creativity, as there are many options available. However, the use of high quality materials such as metal, acrylic, and wood, will last longer and require less maintenance.

The size and shape of the sign should be appropriate for the building and area that it will be placed. The colors and contrast of the sign against the building must also be considered. For example, light letters on a dark background or dark letters on a light background are most legible.

It is also important to consider if and how the sign will be illuminated when it is dark. The sign may be internally lit, back lit, or externally lit. Internally illuminated sign boxes are discouraged. Instead opt for individual letters or logos that are internally illuminated. It is also good practice to make sure signage illumination is shielded or directed so that the light does not adversely affect the surroundings.

Below are a few types of signs to consider for your building design.

A **Fascia Sign** identifies the tenant and is located on the building above the display windows and/or entry doors. Typically, fascia signs are flat signs or individual letters affixed to a backplate or the building.

An **Entry Sign** is a single sided sign mounted directly above or adjacent to the entrance to draw the attention of pedestrians. This sign type is encouraged for tenants whose primary fascia signage is located more than 12' above the sidewalk.

A **Blade Sign** is a double-sided sign mounted perpendicular to the building facade or suspended from the underside of a soffit. It is usually placed near the entrance(s) to a retail space. Pedestrians are likely to notice these signs as they walk along the sidewalk.

**Grand Projecting or Marquee** signs are double-sided signs that project from the face of the building, and should be used at select locations for prominent tenants. In light of the significant visual impact that can be achieved through this sign type, a high quality of design is recommended. They normally require additional structure for anchoring within the wall.

An **Inlaid Entry Vestibule Floor Sign** is a pattern, medallion, or individual letters recessed into the floor, located within the entry vestibule and integrated flush into the surrounding floor system. The sign type must be fabricated out of durable materials such as tile, terrazzo, stone cast metal, or concrete, and should comply with building code standards for slip resistance.

**Painted Signs** are applied directly onto the building. They often include the business name, logo, or can be incorporated into a mural. High quality paints that are compatible with the building substrate are recommended. This type of sign usually has an exterior lighting element associated with it.

**Window Graphics** are typically made of vinyl and are mounted directly to window or door glass, intended to be read from the exterior. It is a good place to reinforce branding or provide information such as hours of operation.

## Building Tenant Signs



**Fascia Sign.** Pinned off lettering externally illuminated with a linear goose-neck fixture



**Entry Signs.** Located above and adjacent to the main entrance



**Blade Sign**



**Grand Projecting Marquee Sign.** Displays the company's logo



**Inlaid Entry Graphic.** Inlaid penny tile pattern



**Window Graphic.** Displays business info such as hours of operation

## Signage - Cost Estimate



### **(\$)** Low Cost Approach

A painted sign in a contrasting, script font is a simple graphic that creates visual interest against the single color building facade.



### **(\$\$)** Medium Cost Approach

A fascia sign in a contrasting light color against the dark siding is easy to read and is externally illuminated with gooseneck light fixtures for enhanced nighttime visibility.



### **(\$\$\$)** Higher Cost Approach

Individual, illuminated channel letters mounted to the metal canopy. The business' slogan is mounted to the face of the canopy below the name, which reinforces the tenant's branding.

## Site Signage

### Objective:

Well-thought-out placement and quality design of site signage helps attract the attention of passers-by and brings focus to the business. Site signage provides effective and immediate advertising, reaching people where they are.

### Recommendations:

Coordinate the site signage design with the design elements/character of the principal buildings on the site. This helps enhance the identity of the business at the street edge. Avoid cluttering of information and messages



*Site identification sign design coordinates with the building design*



*The color of site signage coordinates with the building color scheme (door and shutters)*

## Site Signage

Use appropriate information load, font size and colors to ensure legibility of the sign message and avoid cluttering of information and messages.

Colors used on sign should be complimentary to each other when using 3 or more colors. Use colors to enhance the visual quality of a property, business identity and branding.



*Use lighter color letters on darker color background on sign panel to ensure legibility*



*Use complimentary colors on sign to ensure the brand*

## Site Signage

Site wayfinding signs should be located to clearly direct patrons to their intended destinations.

Landscape planting around the sign is highly encouraged where space is available. It helps enhance the visual quality of the property and projects a positive and vibrant business image. Property identification/site entrance signs should be sized and located to avoid blocking the patrons' sightline.

Pylon/Monumental signs may be used at the entrance of a strip shopping center. Sign should combine all business names in a single sign panel in an orderly manner.



*Wayfinding sign with a clear message*



*Elaborate landscaping adds to this sign's appeal*



*This cluttered, disorganized, and hard to read sign is not encouraged*



*This transformed sign is easy to read and inviting*

## Site Signage - Cost Estimate



**(\$)** Low Cost Approach

Small, simple painted sign panel on posts.



**(\$\$)** Medium Cost Approach

Monumental sign shared by multiple businesses.



**(\$\$\$)** Higher Cost Approach

Sign with stone columns and veneer, accented with vibrant landscape planting.

## Property Frontage

### Objectives:

The property frontage needs to project positive curb appeal showing the identity and image that the owner wishes to project to customers and the community. Improvements made to the property frontage give a fresh, inviting, vibrant look to the property and the business. Pedestrian and vehicular entrances, parking areas, landscape planting and open spaces all play an important role to create a positive impression and strengthen the identity for a business.

### Recommendations:

To enhance visual quality of property frontage and to project a positive image of the property, place planting, public art, decorative paving, site lighting etc., along street frontage within the private property where space is available.

Provide planting, tables, chairs, space defining/separation fencing and other site furniture where space is available and maintain uninterrupted pedestrian path.

Use plants, planters, site furniture, decorative paving, and lighting at shop front to project a visually appealing image and store identity.



*Provide benches, tables and chairs, trash receptacle, decorative paving and landscape planting*



*Outdoor dining area along property frontage that does not interfere with pedestrian walkway*

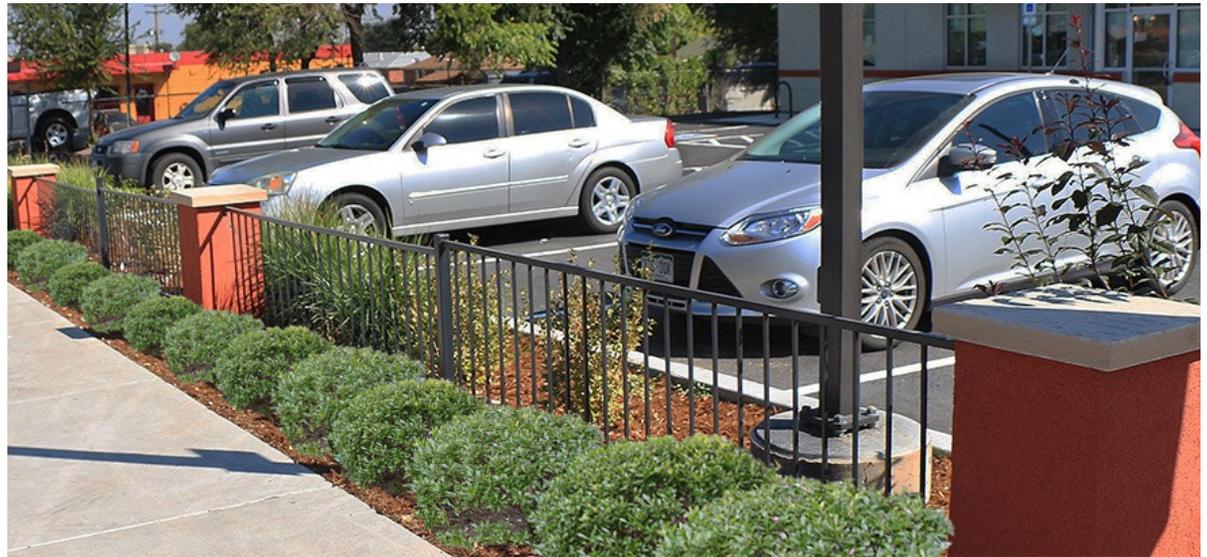


*Shop front enhancements with colorful merchandise*

## Property Frontage

Screen functional but unattractive features or uses. Depending on space availability and site terrain, install landscape strips, decorative fencing, or landscape walls along the edge of the parking lot that abuts the public street and sidewalk. Also see Screening and Buffering and Parking Lot sections.

To strengthen the business identity and create a cohesive image, strive to coordinate proposed improvements with existing design and features of surrounding businesses and properties.



*Fence and plants at parking frontage*



*Shop frontages have a cohesive image*



*Addition of amenities within the public right-of-way requires permit*

## Property Frontage - Cost Estimate



### **(\$)** Low Cost Approach

One set of table and chairs with one planter at a small store front.



### **(\$\$)** Medium Cost Approach

A row of tables and chairs along building front under existing awnings.



### **(\$\$\$)** Higher Cost Approach

Larger scale landscape plantings and planters help separate and define an outdoor dining area enhanced with decorative paving.

## Parking Lot

### Objectives:

Convenient, safe, and accessible customer parking, as well as service and loading areas are essential for successful business operation. Parking lot improvements may include new paved areas, repair of existing paving, striping, signage, lighting, and planting. Off-street parking can be located in the front, side and rear yards.

### Recommendations:

To help ensure pedestrian safety in the parking lot, locate Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible spaces near building entrances for the convenience and safety of elderly patrons and employees, as well as those with varying abilities.

To minimize the unpleasant visual quality of the parking lot and help project a positive image in the front, placing parking lots in the back of the property is highly encouraged.

The use of planting medians or islands to separate the entranceway and interior roads from the parking bays will enhance the visual quality of the property.

Install ADA compliant walkways to connect building entrances to various parts of parking lots and pedestrian scale lighting for use at night to aid visibility and safety. Also see Site Lighting section.

Paved, striped, and landscaped parking lots project a positive and inviting business image.



**Provide ADA compliant parking spaces near building entrance**



**Place the majority of parking in the rear of the property when possible**



**Install ADA compliant walkway by parking lot**



**Paved, striped and organized parking lot with planting median separating interior road**

## Parking Lot

Shade trees provide comfort and shading from the sun and a buffer between the parking lot and any adjacent commercial or residential uses.

Provide landscape strip when abutting streets to screen the parking lots and to enhance the curb appeal. Also see Sections on Property Frontage and Screening and Buffering.

Place site furniture or amenity space where space is available in the vicinity of the parking lot to provide amenities and comforts for patrons.



*Trees to provide shade in the parking lot*



*A buffer with planting and opaque fencing*



*Planting strip along street frontage*



*Inviting amenity space near parking lot*

## Parking Lot - Cost Estimate



**(\$)** *Low Cost Approach*

Paved and striped parking lot.



**(\$\$)** *Medium Cost Approach*

Paved, striped and landscaped parking lot.



**(\$\$\$)** *Higher Cost Approach*

Including amenities such as planters, bench, and trash receptacle.

## Screening and Buffering

### Objectives:

Minimizing the adverse visual quality of undesirable site features such as dumpsters, transformers, parking lots, etc., can ensure a more appealing environment.

Dumpsters, storage, loading and related facilities are essential for business operation, but tend to project negative visual quality. They can be concealed with freestanding enclosures or enclosures that are extensions of the building architecture.

### Recommendations:

Screening and buffering through landscaping, walls, and fences helps diminish the adverse impacts of undesirable views, separate dissimilar uses and mitigate noise.

A solid fence or screen wall can provide privacy and help reduce noise levels from surrounding areas.

Use of evergreen plants along with deciduous plant materials along a fence, berm or wall is an effective way to screen undesirable views and bring additional greenery to the landscape.



*Trees, shrubs and wall provide a buffer between the parking and pedestrian walkway*



*Trees, shrubs, and fencing help screen the parking lot*

## Screening and Buffering

For screening of dumpsters, storage, loading and other services areas, the use of chain-linked fencing is discouraged. Opaque screening made of wood, recycled plastic or vinyl, metal and masonry or a combination of these materials, are preferred alternatives.



*Wood*



*Vinyl*



*Steel*



*Combination*

## Screening and Buffering - Cost Estimate



### **(\$)**

Planting of screening shrubs only.



### **(\$\$) Medium Cost Approach**

Opaque wood or vinyl fencing only.



### **(\$\$\$) Higher Cost Approach**

Combination of masonry wall, wood fencing/gate and plantings.

## Hardscape Features

### Objectives:

Hardscape features and materials play an important role in the visual quality and appeal of a store or property entrance area, outdoor amenity space or walkway. Hardscape features typically include, but are not limited to, paving, benches, tables and chairs, trash/recycling receptacles, bollards, planters, landscape walls, and decorative fencing. They can provide a welcoming, pleasant, and comfortable place for pedestrians, patrons, and employees.

### Recommendations:

Create amenity spaces around the building that include some of the following hardscape features: decorative paving, benches, trash/recycling receptacles, and bollards. Include landscape planting as well.

Provide site furniture at proper locations such as by the building entrance, along the walkway, in the outdoor amenity space, etc. for the convenience of both patrons and employees.

Select complementary styles and colors of paving and site furniture, including benches, trash/recycling receptacles, bollards, planters, fencing, and light standards that complement the physical characteristics of the building and its surroundings.

Use landscape walls, planters, or decorative fencing to separate seating areas and pedestrian paths.



**Install paving, fence and trees to create amenity space**



**Install benches and landscape planting for patrons and employees**



**Select site furniture and planters that complement the building style and its surroundings**



**Use of ornate fencing and large, colorful planters stylishly enclose an outdoor dining area**

## Hardscape Features

Install landscape wall where significant grade change occurs on site and use a sloped walkway or ramp to ensure universal accessibility.

Select suitable paving materials and site furniture for intended functions and visual compatibility with surroundings.

Avoid cluttering of site furniture within a space.

Proposed hardscape features should not jeopardize user security or safety.

Select durable and easy to maintain materials to help ensure sustainability of use.



*Use landscape wall where grade change occurs and provide accessible sloped walk at building entrance*



*For areas serving various functions, select decorative paving materials to complement each other and nearby buildings*



*Uncluttered and inviting exterior space*

## Hardscape Features - Cost Estimate



### **(\$)** *Low Cost Approach*

Bistro tables and chairs on existing paving.



### **(\$\$)** *Medium Cost Approach*

Outdoor dining area with tables and chairs defined by planters.



### **(\$\$\$)** *Higher Cost Approach*

Outdoor dining area on decorative paving with tables, chairs and umbrellas, enclosed with ornate iron fencing.

## Planting

### Objective:

Planting plays an important role in the built environment. When used creatively, it provides aesthetically pleasing visual relief and helps creatively soften the built environment. Plants help enhance the identity of a business, increase property value, and instill pride in the neighborhood. In addition, they provide shade, privacy, screening, and buffering, as well as help separate uses and spaces. Landscape planting can also help manage stormwater on site.

### Recommendations:

Provide landscape planting where space is available to improve visual quality.

Install seasonal displays to highlight different colors, flowers, and fragrances.

Plants or planters at the business or building entrance increase the sense of arrival and place, and serve as a visually inviting space divider or focal point.



*Provide landscape planting at property frontage*



*Mix planting to provide seasonal interest*



*Use planters to highlight the building entrance or to define spaces of different uses*



*Planters serve as focal point and can be used to manage stormwater*

## Planting

Place evergreen shrubs or trees as buffer to protect privacy.

Install major deciduous trees to provide shade on hot days for parked cars, pedestrian, patrons and employees.

Use a variety of plants to soften the building and the built environment.

Where security is a concern, avoid creating hiding places by planting low-growing plants.



*Use dense plants to provide privacy*



*Use major deciduous trees to provide shade*



*Install planting strip for stormwater management*



*Use plants to soften the building and provide buffer from street traffic*

## Planting

A variety of plant species and colorings at the property frontage helps to improve and strengthen the business image and identity.

Evergreen plants help screen the view to undesirable objects year-round.

Install landscaped buffer strip to separate dissimilar uses and protect privacy.

Avoid plantings that block the sight lines of motorists at ingress/egress points and where motorists would make turns.

Also see sections on Property Frontage, Parking Lot, and Screening and Buffering.



*Planting along property frontage elevates the image of a business*



*Planting evergreens along the property frontage provides year-round buffering*



*Grasses and perennials planted in a bufferyard*



*Low planting near parking lot driveway maintains clear sightlines for motorists entering and exiting*

## Planting - Cost Estimate



### **(\$)** *Low Cost Approach*

Small planter pots or in-ground planting of perennials and grasses.



### **(\$\$)** *Medium Cost Approach*

Low-growing plants in larger planters provide visual appeal and help buffer dining areas from sidewalk.



### **(\$\$\$)** *Higher Cost Approach*

In-ground planting of trees and evergreen shrubs with decorative brick paving

## Site Lighting

### Objective:

Site Lighting performs multiple functions for a property. It will ensure the safety of patrons and employees, project a positive image of the business and invite nighttime use by enhancing the visual quality of the property.

### Recommendations:

Provide adequate illumination to ensure a safe nighttime environment for pedestrians and motorists.

Select light fixtures that are compatible in design with nearby buildings and other site features and blend with the style of the surrounding neighborhood to maintain visual cohesiveness.



*Lighting at parking lot and walkway to promote nighttime safety and visibility*



*The style of lighting should reflect the style of buildings*

## Site Lighting

Use of bollard lights along the walkway and in the vicinity of the building is encouraged.

Use of site lighting to accentuate building and hard-scape features, artwork, plants, and site ID signs is encouraged.

Use low maintenance and durable materials. Use of LED lights is encouraged for energy savings.



*Use bollard lights along the walkway*



*Use lighting to highlight the landscape*



*Use site lighting to accentuate the characteristics of the building features as well as those of the amenity space*

## Site Lighting - Cost Estimate



**(\$)** *Low Cost Approach*

Simple luminaire and post design with aluminum post.



**(\$\$)** *Medium Cost Approach*

More decorative luminaire and post design with steel post.



**(\$\$\$)** *Higher Cost Approach*

Most decorative luminaire and post design in cast-iron.

## Green Infrastructure / Stormwater Management (SWM) Facility

### Objectives:

Green infrastructures are facilities installed on the property to manage the site rainwater/runoff to ensure positive drainage and prevent water ponding on site. Commonly used SWM facilities for small to medium size properties include rain gardens, micro bioretention areas, grass swales, bioswales, and landscape infiltration areas. Well-landscaped and designed green infrastructure will not only efficiently manage the site rainwater, but also provide additional amenities and visual interests to the property.

### Recommendations:

Add planters by the downsprout to capture rainwater from the building to water plants. Excavation of existing paving is not necessary.

Remove and convert unused or unnecessary paved areas into landscaped areas and direct rainwater to them.

Consider conversion of planting islands or median on the parking lot into SWM facilities.

Incorporate SWM facilities into the landscape as site amenities.

The design of more elaborate green infrastructure may require the design services of civil engineers or landscape architects.



*Direct rooftop rainwater into planters*



*Convert paved areas into a planted SWM bed*



*Use of exterior planting area as a SWM facility and visually appealing greenspace*

## Green Infrastructure - Cost Estimate



### **(\$)** Low Cost Approach

Installing planters on existing pavement to capture rainwater from downspout.



### **(\$\$)** Medium Cost Approach

Excavating existing paving and installing a rain-garden to manage the rainwater.



### **(\$\$\$)** Higher Cost Approach

Installing a larger green infrastructure facility with plants, boulders and check dam along the parking lot frontage.

## Public Art or Artistic Features

### Objectives:

Placing public art or artistic features on the property will not only enhance the visual quality but also project an inviting image to potential and existing customers. It provides additional visual interest to the property to attract existing and potential customers and to project a positive business image.

### Recommendations:

Provide multi-color site furniture, such as planters and colorful bistro tables and chairs to project a cheerful, vibrant and inviting business image and gathering area.

Painting site furniture, such as benches, picnic tables, bike racks, etc., in complementary colors to provide added visual interests is a relatively low cost approach to provide an artistic feature on the property.

Include freestanding artwork in amenity space to provide visual interest.

Incorporate artwork as a functional feature such as fencing, planters, benches, seating backrest, etc.



*Multi-color bistro table and chairs in outdoor dining plaza invites patrons*



*Painted image on bench in complementary colors*



*Include freestanding artwork in open space when possible*



*Incorporate functional artwork when and where possible*

## Public Art or Artistic Features

Use a combination of hardscape materials, such as decorative paving, sculptures, and water features to provide an artistic focal point in the amenity space of a retail property or business.



*A combination of mosaic, sculpture, and a fountain in a retail plaza area is a visually inviting element in this design*

## Public Art or Artistic Features - Cost Estimate



**(\$)** *Low Cost Approach*

Decorative or painted bench.



**(\$\$)** *Medium Cost Approach*

Freestanding public art installation.



**(\$\$\$)** *Higher Cost Approach*

Combination of sculptures, dramatic lighting and a variety of plant species with decorative hardscaping.



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