

# Milwaukee River Greenway Site Plan Review Overlay Zone Design Standards

Exhibit A

File No. 081569

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Site Plan Review Overlay Zone is to add design and building placement standards over and above those required by the base zoning district. The Milwaukee River Greenway Site Plan Review Overlay Zone (MRGSPROZ) provides standards that balance protecting the primary environmental corridor (PEC) and creating high quality development along the upper reaches of the Milwaukee River. Specifically, these development standards apply to the area designated as the Milwaukee



River Greenway Site Plan Review Overlay Zone by Common Council File Number 081568, passed May 25, 2010, and depicted as such on the City's official zoning map.

## **Applicability**

All existing principal and accessory structures, as well as new single-family dwellings and duplexes, shall be exempt from MRGSPROZ Design Standards. Parcels south of North Avenue on the east bank of the river serve as a transition area between downtown and the Milwaukee River Greenway, and are exempt due to existing, high-density development.

Properties within the MRGSPROZ are subject to other legislation related to the protection of the PEC. See Common Council File Numbers:

081570: An ordinance relating to tree protection in the Milwaukee River Greenway Site Plan Review Overlay Zone.

081664: An ordinance relating to storm water management regulations applicable to properties within the Milwaukee River Greenway Site Plan Review Overlay Zone.

The design standards set forth in this document shall apply over and above the standards of the base (underlying) zoning districts. Wherever the requirements of this document are in conflict with the requirements of the base zoning district, the more restrictive requirements shall apply.

**Goals**

These development standards are intended to:

1. Preserve the Primary Environmental Corridor (PEC) and promote the natural beauty and environmental quality of the area.
2. Promote water-quality protection, bluff stability, erosion control, preservation of ecology and natural habitat and a tree-root protection zone for the PEC.
3. Enhance the Milwaukee River corridor by encouraging high quality, sustainable design.
4. Promote high quality development that is consistent with the City's comprehensive plan.
5. Ensure that buildings fit within the context in which they are built.
6. Facilitate transitions from commercial corridors and adjacent neighborhoods to the environmental corridor.

## **Definitions**

“Commercial corridors” means for the MRGSPROZ, this includes parcels abutting Capitol Drive, North Avenue, or Locust Street.

“Concrete masonry units” means concrete blocks (also known as cement block, foundation block, cinder block) are commonly used in foundation construction, typically measuring 8”x8”x16”, with no decorative finish or color.

“Critical tree root zones” or “critical root zones” according to the Tree Protection component of the overlay district (Common Council File Number 081570), defines critical tree root zones as: the portion of the root system of a tree that is the minimum necessary to maintain the continued health, vitality or stability of the tree, defined by a concentric circle around a tree with a radius that is equal to 1.5 feet for every inch in trunk diameter at breast height. “Diameter at breast height” means the diameter of a tree measured at 4.5 feet above the ground. For the purposes of zoning, development activities shall not disturb the critical root zone.

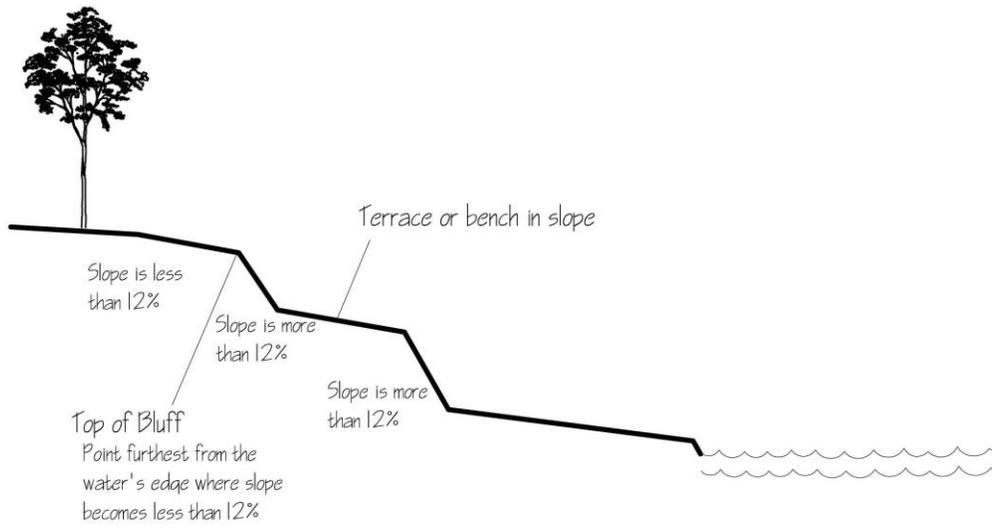
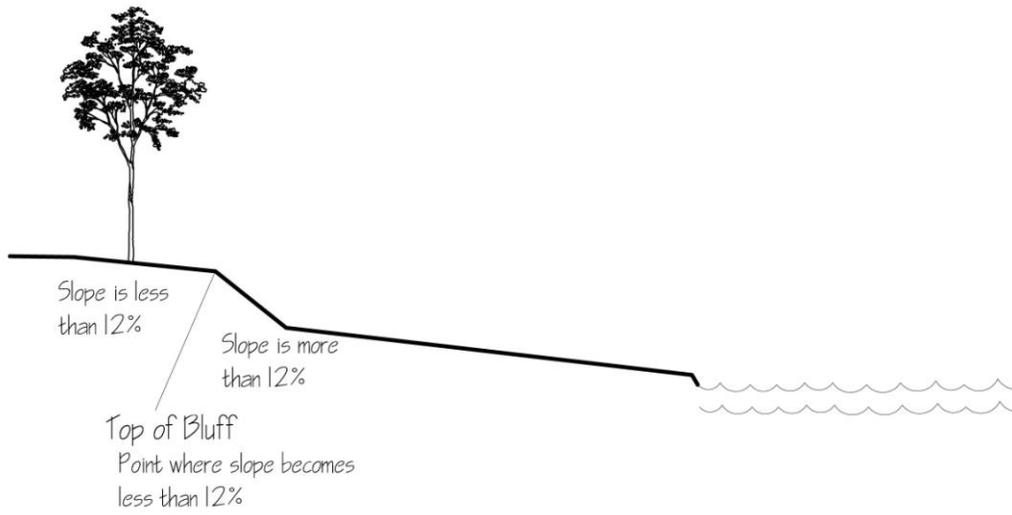
“Milwaukee River primary environmental corridor” means the area within the boundaries of the Milwaukee River Greenway Site Plan Review Overlay Zone which is also designated as primary environmental corridor.

“Primary environmental corridor” or “PEC” means areas which contain concentrations of significant natural resources and are at least 400 acres, 2 miles long and 200 feet wide, within the Milwaukee River greenway site plan review overlay zone as mapped from time to time by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC).

“River-side” means the side of parcel and building facing the Milwaukee River.

“Top of bluff” means the point at the top of bluff where the slope becomes less than 12 percent. When there is a terrace or ‘bench’ in the slope, the top of bluff is the point furthest from the water’s edge where the slope becomes less than 12 percent. If a parcel does not have topography meeting the criteria of top of bluff, underlying zoning will dictate setback; however, no principal building shall be constructed in the Milwaukee River PEC.

## Top of Bluff Illustrations



**Design Standards:**

1. Principal buildings shall not be constructed within the Milwaukee River Primary Environmental Corridor (PEC) boundary, as mapped from time to time by Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC).
2. Building Placement. Principal buildings require a minimum setback of 50 feet from the top of bluff.
  - a. Exception: Setback of principal buildings may be 25 feet from the top of bluff provided:
    - i. the principal building does not exceed a height of 45 feet, and;
    - ii. no more than 50% of the river-side façade of the principal building encroaches between 25 to 50 feet setback, and;
    - iii. 50% or more of the total principal building area is setback at least 50 feet from the top of bluff, and;
    - iv. the principal building has a green roof *or* high-albedo roof on at least 90% of roof area between 25 to 50 feet setback area, and;
    - v. landscape screening of principal building façade which encroaches the 50 feet setback, and;
    - vi. pervious surface greater than or equal to the square footage of principal building between 25 to 50 feet setback area. Pervious surface must be adjacent to the 50' setback line.

## Building Placement Exceptions – Conceptual Illustrations

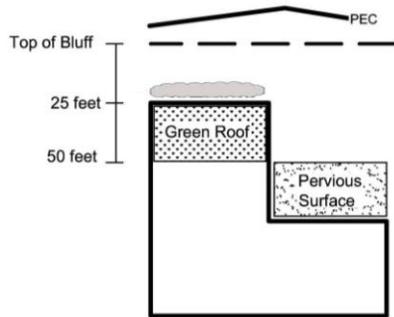


Figure 1

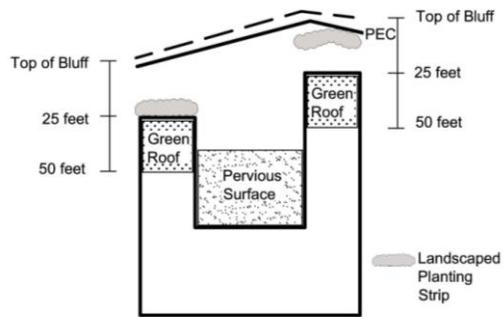


Figure 2

Figure 1 - Acceptable building placement:

- no more than 50% of river-side façade of building encroaches
- square footage of encroachment is offset by equal square footage of pervious surface
- more than 50% of the total building area is set back 50'
- encroachment has a green roof
- landscaped planting strip along principal building encroachment
- principal building is not in the PEC

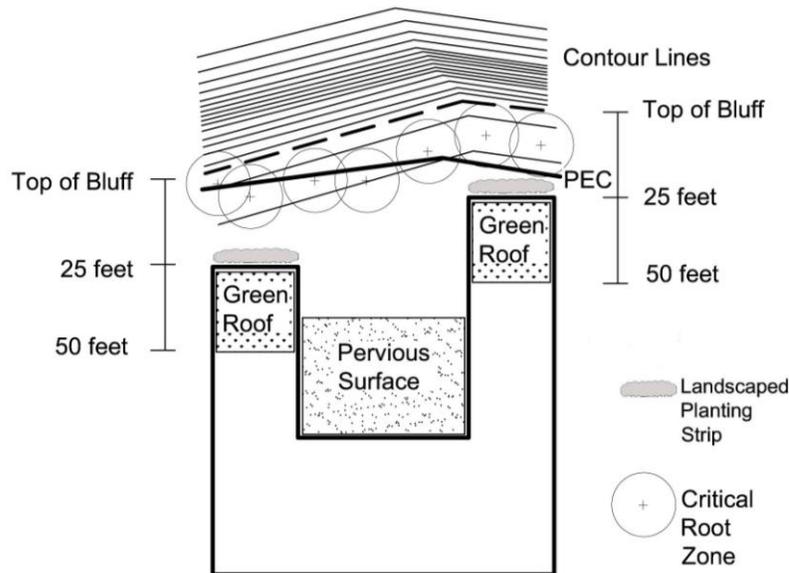
This plan still needs to illustrate additional items per the submittal checklist.

Figure 2 - Acceptable building placement:

- no more than 50% of river-side facade of building encroaches
- square footage of encroachment is offset by equal square footage of pervious surface
- more than 50% of the total building area is set back 50'
- encroachment has a green roof
- landscaped planting strip along principal building encroachment
- entire building is set back at least 25' from top of bluff at every point on the parcel
- principal building is not in the PEC

This plan still needs to illustrate additional items per the submittal checklist.

### Sample Setback Exception – Conceptual Illustration – Figure 3



Building encroachment: 25 ft x 25 ft x 2 segments = 1250 sf  
Pervious surface: 35 ft x 50 ft = 1750 sf

Figure 3 – Acceptable building placement:

- no more than 50% of river-side facade of building encroaches
- square footage of encroachment is offset by equal square footage of pervious surface
- more than 50% of the total building area is set back 50'
- encroachment has a green roof
- landscaped planting strip along principal building encroachment
- entire building is set back at least 25' from top of bluff at every point on the parcel
- principal building is not in the PEC

The plan illustrates contours at a one-foot contour interval, and clearly shows the top of bluff and PEC lines. The critical tree root zones are clearly marked. The calculations demonstrate that square footage of encroached pervious surface exceeds square footage of building encroachment.

This plan still needs to illustrate additional items per the submittal checklist.

3. Building Height. Principal building height on commercial corridors, which includes parcels abutting Capitol Drive, North Avenue, or Locust Street, is listed in Table 1. Principal building heights for all other areas in the overlay district are listed in Table 2.

Table 1. Commercial Corridors: See Figure 4	
Setback from Top of Bluff	Maximum Principal Building Height
25' – 50'	45' subject to additional requirements in Design Standard 2.a.
Over 50' – 100'	45'
Over 100'	Underlying Zoning

Table 2. Entire Overlay District EXCEPT Commercial Corridors: See Figure 5	
Setback from Top of Bluff	Maximum Principal Building Height
25' – 50'	45' subject to additional requirements in Design Standard 2.a.
Over 50' – 100'	45'
Over 100' – 150'	60'
Over 150'	Underlying Zoning

Figure 4 - Commercial Corridors:

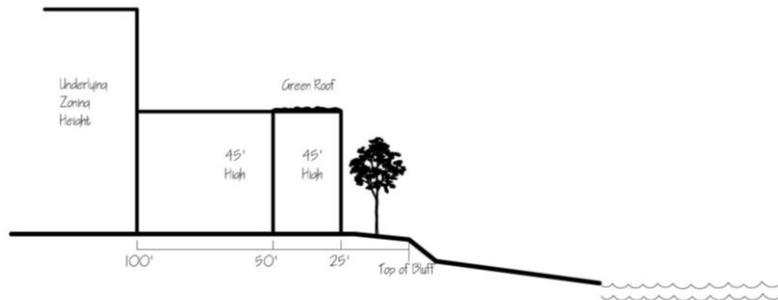
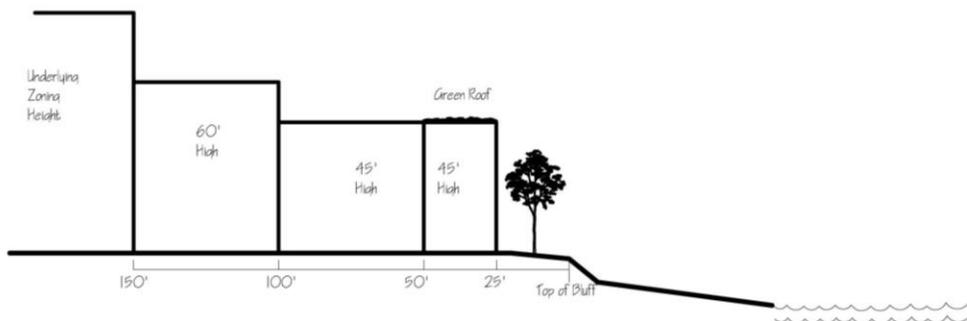


Figure 5 - Everywhere EXCEPT Commercial Corridors:



4. Building Design. Exterior building materials used on the river-side facade of a principal building shall be the same, or of equally high quality, as those used on the street side of the building.
  - a. Glass curtain building walls shall be permitted, provided that reduced or low-reflectivity (0-10%) glazing is used to minimize bird/building collisions.
  - b. Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems (EIFS) or simulated stucco shall not exceed 30 % of façade of building and may not be used on any ground level floors of a principal building.
  - c. Concrete masonry units shall not exceed 20% of river-side façade of building.
  - d. Prohibited materials on the river-side façade of buildings include:
    - i. Blank walls. A blank wall is defined as a ground floor wall, or portions of the ground floor wall over 6 feet tall in height, has a horizontal length greater than 15 feet and does not include a transparent window or door with glazing, or any portion of ground floor wall having a surface area of 400 square feet or greater, and does not include a transparent window or door with glazing.
    - ii. Vinyl and aluminum siding.
  
5. Signs. The only sign types permitted on the river-side of a building are Type A wall signs, as described in s. 295-407-2-b of the Zoning Code. Roof signs are prohibited.
  
6. Landscape Screening for Principal Buildings Which Encroach the 50 feet Setback. A minimum 8-foot wide landscaped planting strip shall be installed the length of the encroached river-side façade of a building. Landscaped planting strips shall be a minimum of 10-feet long. The landscaped planting strip does not have to be continuous.
  - a. Shrubs – minimum of 5 total shrubs or native grasses for every 10 linear feet of landscaped planting strip. Shrubs shall be at least 2 feet in height at time of planting. Grasses shall be at least 2-gallon container size at time of planting. Ornamental trees may be substituted for shrubs using a ratio of one ornamental tree to equal five shrubs. Landscape screening shall not be bermed.

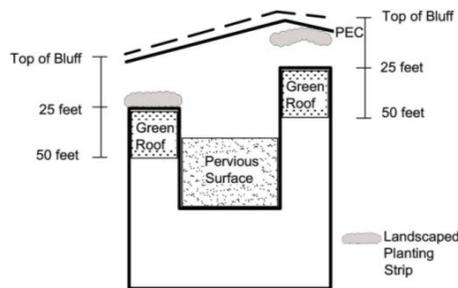


Figure 6

7. Parking. When surface parking is located on the river-side of a parcel, the river-side parking area shall contain Type A landscaping, as defined under s. 295-405-1-b-1 of the Zoning Code, to provide screening at low-level and high-level zones.

Minimum internal parking lot landscaping requirements are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Internal Parking Lot Landscaping Requirements		
Vehicular Use Area	Minimum Internal Required Landscaped Area – Percent of Total Parking Lot Area	Location to Plant Required Trees
3,000 sq ft or less	0%	No internal landscaping required
Over 3,000 sq ft – 4,500 sq ft	5%	Perimeter or islands
Over 4,500 sq ft – 30,000 sq ft	7.5%	Islands
Over 30,000 sq ft	10%	Islands

Each landscaped island in a parking lot shall measure at least 160 square feet, with one minimum dimension of 12 feet. (Figure 7) Each landscaped island shall include at a minimum:

one deciduous street-type tree (minimum of 2.5 inch caliper), and  
 one shrub (2-feet minimum height at time of planting) OR one native grass (minimum 2-gallon size container), and  
 ten groundcover plants (minimum 2-inch container) or perennials (minimum 4.5-inch container).

In parking lots with 10 spaces or more, no parking space shall be located more than 50 feet from the center of a tree. (Figure 8 - 9) Curb cuts or flush curbs shall be used when landscaped islands are used to treat storm water.

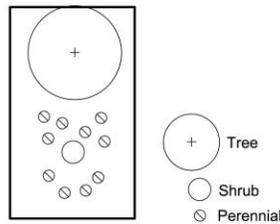
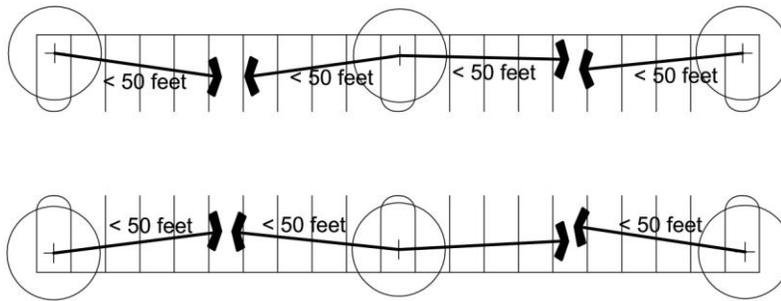
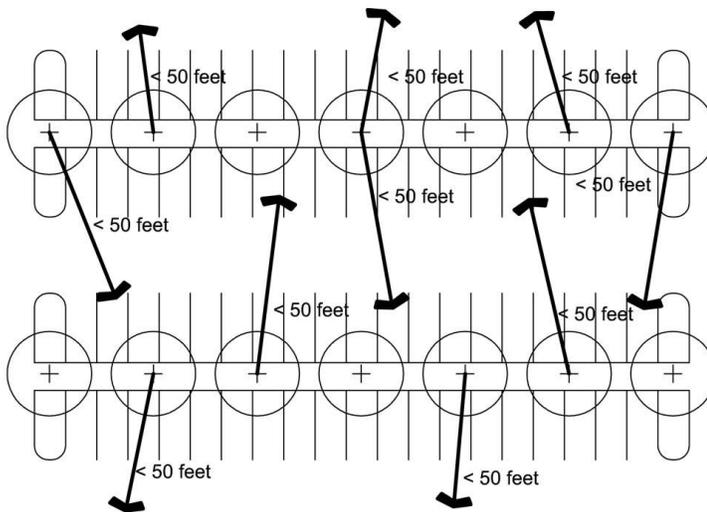


Figure 7 – 12 foot minimum width

**Parking Lot Illustrations**



**Figure 8**



**Figure 9**