Design Guidelines

develop
work
play
be onMain
live
innovate
collaborate
create

onMain
Dayton's Innovation District

About this document

These design guidelines translate the vision and principles of the onMain Master Plan into clear strategies to shape the physical character of the district. Building on the plan's foundation, they provide direction for future development—ensuring that buildings, streets, and community spaces reflect onMain's values of sustainability, identity, and activation. This document is intended to guide architects, developers, and city staff as projects move from concept to construction, supporting a cohesive and high-quality urban environment as the district evolves.

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onMain is a place that embodies the best of Dayton; as we were, as we are today, and as we'll forever be. A place where tinkerers will tinker, inventors will invent and dreamers will dream. A place where curious and open minds come together to work, live and play. It's a place that sparks innovation and echoes Dayton's can-do, creative spirit. A place with a distinctive identity and personality and a vibe that is open, welcoming, and inclusive for everyone. It's a place where people of all cultures and backgrounds go to learn and discover, to play and relax, to work and to live. To be.

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Executive Summary

The Design Guidelines translate the Master Plan for onMain into action—offering a clear yet flexible framework to shape a resilient, inclusive, and high-quality urban district.

Purpose

The onMain Design Guidelines translate the bold vision of the onMain Master Plan into a practical framework for shaping the district's physical environment. More than a redevelopment project, onMain represents a reimagining of what an innovation district can be—one that is sustainable, inclusive, and distinctly Dayton.

These guidelines provide direction for architects, developers, city staff, and community partners as projects move from concept to construction. They ensure that every building, street, and open space contributes to a cohesive, high-quality urban district that reflects Dayton's creative spirit and commitment to long-term resilience.

Core Tenets

The guidelines are organized around three interconnected tenets that define onMain's development character and guide design decisions:

Sustainability

Design with long-term resilience in mind—integrating environmental performance, adaptable infrastructure, and technological innovation to support a healthy, future-ready district.

Identity

Celebrate the site's history, setting, and institutional context to create a place that is rooted in Dayton's legacy.

Activation

Foster a connected and pedestrian-friendly neighborhood through walkable streets, active frontages, and community spaces that bring energy to the district from day one.

Together, these tenets create a shared language for design excellence—linking the aspirations of the Master Plan with the practical realities of implementation.

How to Use This Document

The onMain Design Guidelines are a flexible, outcome-oriented tool that supports creativity while maintaining consistency with the district's vision.

USE THIS DOCUMENT TO:

- Inform early site planning and concept design, ensuring alignment with onMain's core tenets.
- Guide project reviews by onMain Inc., demonstrating how each proposal meets the intent of the guidelines.
- Reference during construction and long-term management to maintain design quality and reinforce a cohesive district identity.

The guidelines work in concert with the Planned Development zoning (PD-176) and the onMain Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CCRs), forming a comprehensive system that unites design vision, legal framework, and implementation.

As the district grows, this document will serve as both a reference and a roadmap—ensuring that onMain remains a model for sustainable, people-centered urban development.

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1. Introduction

Purpose of the Guidelines
Using the Guidelines
Relationship to Zoning
Design Review Process

Overview

Purpose of the Guidelines

The onMain Design Guidelines serve as the bridge between the visionary framework of the onMain Master Plan and the practical realities of design and development. They translate high-level goals into clear expectations for the form, character, and performance of future projects—ensuring that individual decisions contribute to a cohesive and enduring district identity.

While the Master Plan articulates big ideas—sustainability, innovation, inclusivity, and design excellence—these guidelines define how those ideas take shape on the ground. They provide a common language for architects, engineers, developers, and City staff, supporting a collaborative process that aligns public and private investments around shared outcomes.

At its core, the purpose of the Design Guidelines is to:

- Reinforce the district's vision by translating conceptual aspirations into implementable design direction;
- Coordinate design and infrastructure decisions so that buildings, streets, and open spaces function together as an integrated urban system;
- Promote design quality and innovation that reflect Dayton's legacy of creativity and problem-solving;
- Provide predictability for developers and design teams, ensuring design review is consistent, transparent, and tied to clear intent.

onMain is envisioned as Dayton's premier innovation district—a model for how post-industrial cities can transform underused land into sustainable, people-centered communities. Located between downtown Dayton and the University of Dayton, the 38-acre site of the former Montgomery County Fairgrounds represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to connect institutions, foster collaboration, and build a new economic and cultural anchor for the region.

Using the Guidelines

The Design Guidelines apply to all development within the onMain district, including new buildings, renovations, streetscapes, open spaces, and infrastructure. They are intended for use by developers, designers, City staff, institutional partners, and community stakeholders throughout planning, design, and construction.

The onMain Design Guidelines promote flexibility by encouraging creative, context-specific design solutions that interpret the district's vision rather than follow a single prescribed style. The guidelines integrate site planning, building design, streetscapes, landscape, and infrastructure to ensure every element contributes to a cohesive, high-performing district. They are intended to help developers, designers, city staff, and community partners align expectations early and work together effectively throughout the design process. The framework is

also adaptable, allowing onMain to evolve as new technologies, materials, and best practices emerge—ensuring the district continues to reflect innovation, resilience, and design excellence over time.

The guidelines are not prescriptive checklists, but flexible strategies that encourage creativity and innovation while aligning with the district's overarching goals. They are particularly useful during:

- Pre-application meetings and conceptual design discussions;
- Site planning and architectural design phases;
- City review processes tied to zoning, infrastructure, or public improvements;
- Long-term evaluation of district development quality and consistency.

Relationship to Zoning

The Design Guidelines complement and expand upon the Planned Development (PD-176) zoning and the onMain Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CCRs). Together, these documents create a comprehensive structure for implementing the district's vision through both regulatory and design-based tools.

- PD Zoning (PD-176) establishes the legal framework for land use, density, building height, setbacks, and permitted activities. It defines what can be built.
- The Design Guidelines provide qualitative direction—addressing how development should look, feel, and function to achieve design excellence and long-term cohesion.
- The CCRs outline the ongoing governance and maintenance responsibilities necessary to preserve design quality over time.

This integrated approach ensures that the district maintains both flexibility and accountability. Developers and design teams are encouraged to explore innovative approaches, provided they uphold the intent of the guidelines and reinforce the district's defining principles of Sustainability, Identity, and Activation.

As onMain grows, this framework allows for diverse architectural expression within a unified urban vision—balancing creativity with consistency to ensure that the district matures into a distinct place: rooted in its history, yet forward-looking in its design and function.

Design Review Process

The design review process ensures that every project within onMain contributes to a cohesive, high-quality, and enduring district. It is both a collaborative design dialogue and a formal review mechanism.

Each project moves through coordinated steps with onMain staff and the City of Dayton, from early concept discussions through final approvals, ensuring alignment with the Master Plan, Planned Development zoning (PD-176), and these Design Guidelines.

Roles and Responsibilities

onMain Staff

As stewards of the district's design integrity, onMain staff guide, review, and document the design process.

- Serve as the primary point of contact for developers and design teams.
- Provide interpretation and guidance on applying the guidelines.
- Monitor construction for consistency with approved designs.
- Maintain a record of all review actions and approvals.

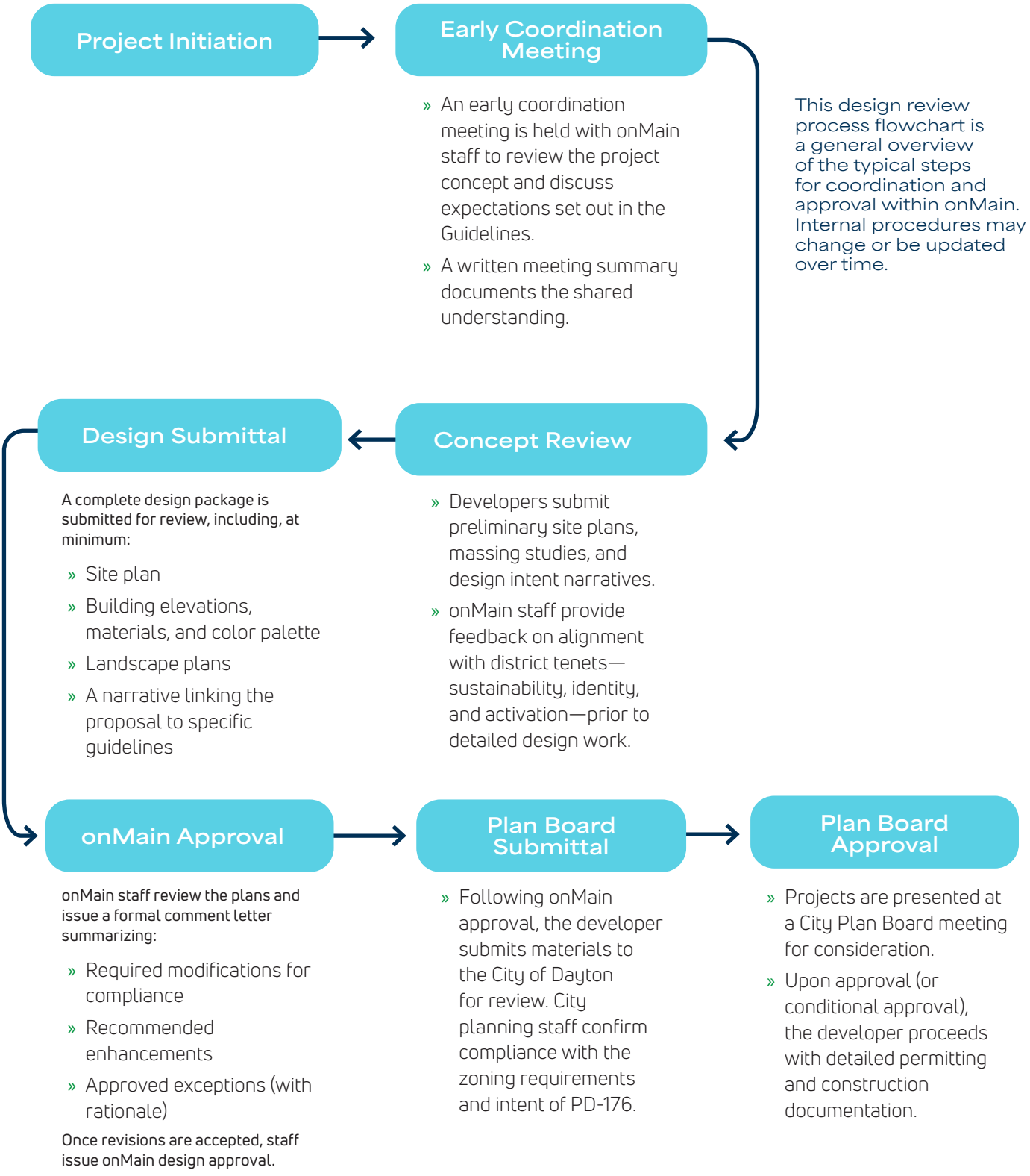
Developers and Design Teams

Developers and designers play a central role in upholding the district's standards.

- Review the guidelines early to understand design expectations.
- Engage with onMain staff during the conceptual design phase to confirm direction.
- Submit complete design review materials for evaluation.
- Respond to comments and secure approval before construction.
- Coordinate directly with the City of Dayton for PD compliance, Plan Board submittal, and building permits.

Process Overview

The design review process follows a sequence of collaborative and regulatory steps, moving from concept to City approval. Development teams are expected to work closely with onMain staff throughout all phases—from planning and design to construction—to ensure alignment with the district's vision.



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2. Framework

Vision
Design Concepts
Principles
Framework

Vision

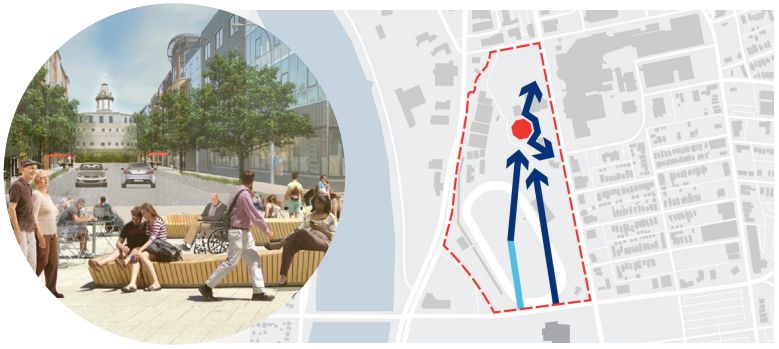
The Vision from the adopted Master Plan describes the future of onMain and inform the design guidelines that follow.

This is an opportunity to...

- Represent the best of Dayton as a city of innovation, entrepreneurialism, creativity, sustainability and inclusiveness.
- Establish a unique platform to create, build and demonstrate solutions across a range of disciplines from health care, energy, housing, environment, business creation and neighborhood wellbeing.
- Create a density of ideas, activity and collaborations that can propel the next wave of businesses and entrepreneurs to bring jobs and opportunity to Daytonians and the Miami Valley.
- Create a setting that connects people, neighborhoods, businesses and institutions in a meaningfully diverse, equitable and inclusive way.
- Establish a neighborhood unlike any other in the Miami Valley that demonstrates a new type of walkable urban environment.
- Establish development standards that reflect the missions and values of the two institutions by integrating environmental sustainability and wellness into the design.

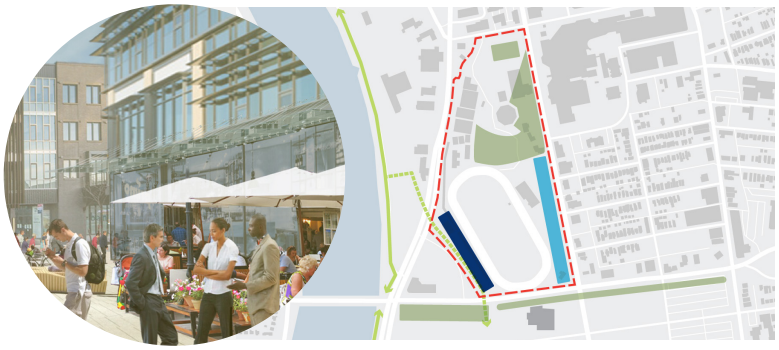
Design Concepts

Any specific designs for the site should consider the four concepts outlined in the onMain Vision: views, public realm, edges and mobility/connectivity.



Views

The Roundhouse is preserved and restored and becomes a focal point within the development.

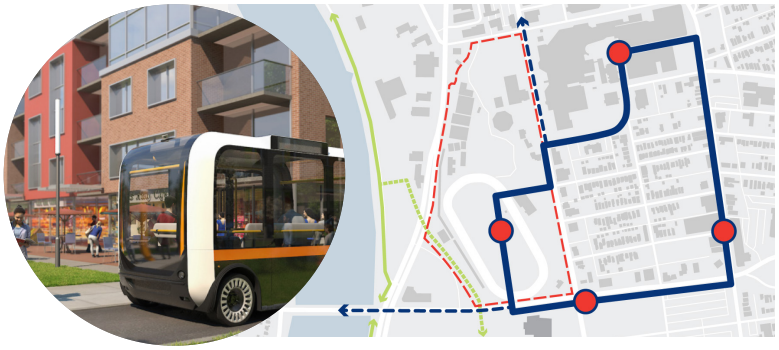


Public Realm

Public gathering spaces such as plazas and open space are integral with development. Amenities such as outdoor dining create a neighborhood feel and contribute to the energy of the place.

Edges

The character of the site is defined by improving edges along Main and Stewart streets. Along Main Street, bring buildings to the street and include ground-floor retail and community uses and wide sidewalks. Along Stewart Street, use of a tree lawn and greenspace provides greater pedestrian separation from vehicular traffic.



Mobility / Connectivity

Emerging technology in the form of an autonomous shuttle complements bike facilities and comfortable pedestrian sidewalks to shorten perceived distance between campus, hospital and the development.

Principles

The following principles from the adopted Master Plan describe the site's intended character and inform the design guidelines that follow.

Development policies are intended to promote...

1 Sustainable values

Development of the site will reflect the institutions' values for holistic sustainability: environmental, economic, social and emotional. This means: respect for nature and environmental systems; commitment to realizing financial benefit for the investors, community and individuals; inclusion of community spaces and housing choices for a range of community members; and fostering affection for the place.

2 Advanced and integrated technology

The site and its structures will reflect creative thinking for building materials, energy use, data analytics and sensor technology. Dayton has a powerful history of invention and innovation. This site represents the future for these same attributes.

3 Flexibility (adaptable) over time

The site of the former fairgrounds is relatively large at 38 acres. It also exists in real estate market with less than a robust demand. Build out of development will take several years and there is a need for flexibility and adaptability over time.

4 Healthy living choices

The layout of the site will be thoughtful in supporting the wellness of its employees and residents. This includes an attractive and safe public realm for walking, biking and other recreation. It will also be a place that minimizes unhealthy emissions.

5 A distinct but integrated "place"

Living, working, learning and playing will be possible throughout the site. It will be a place that is occupied 24-hours a day, seven days a week. It will become an integrated, mixed-use neighborhood in the truest sense, distinct from conventional development.

6 A high-quality public realm

A great neighborhood must have high-quality, carefully-designed streets and public spaces and this site will have them. This also means strong "edges" of the development where buildings are built to the street, framing the public place for people to move (walk, bike and drive) as well as congregate.

Physical design is intended to feature...

7 Unique amenities to enliven streets and common spaces

The site development will create a vibrant neighborhood where the streets, sidewalks, plazas and parks are well-designed. Opportunities to animate the streets and ground-level activity of buildings will be maximized.

8 Regard for the bluff and its potential

The north side of the site is a bluff with steep slopes down to Apple and Stewart streets. While it offers unique views to downtown and other neighborhoods, it is barrier for connectivity. The development of the site will respect the unique landform and maximize its potential as an amenity.

9 Respect for the site's history

Future development will respect the site's—and adjacent area's—history, especially as it relates to the fairground activities. This can be large gestures, like the goal of maintaining the Roundhouse, or small gestures, like public art.

10 Connection to anchors and larger community

The site will be not be an "island." It will have connections—physical and visual—to Miami Valley Hospital, the University of Dayton and adjacent neighborhoods. It will also have connections to the Great Miami River trail network.

11 Concentrated mass in initial phase

The initial development activity will be concentrated in way that creates a density of activity and interest. This will create a more impactful demonstration of progress than if development is dispersed.

12 Development progressing from the edges inward

To create a positive tone for initial development, the initial projects should be constructed along the Main and Stewart streets. This will signal progress (while deeper parcels take longer to develop) and build confidence in the community and from potential investors.

Framework

The Design Guidelines establish a clear framework to implement the onMain vision. Organized around the core tenets of Sustainability, Identity, and Activation, the framework links the design principles from the Master Plan that provide background and intent, with the design guidelines to inform physical development across the site.

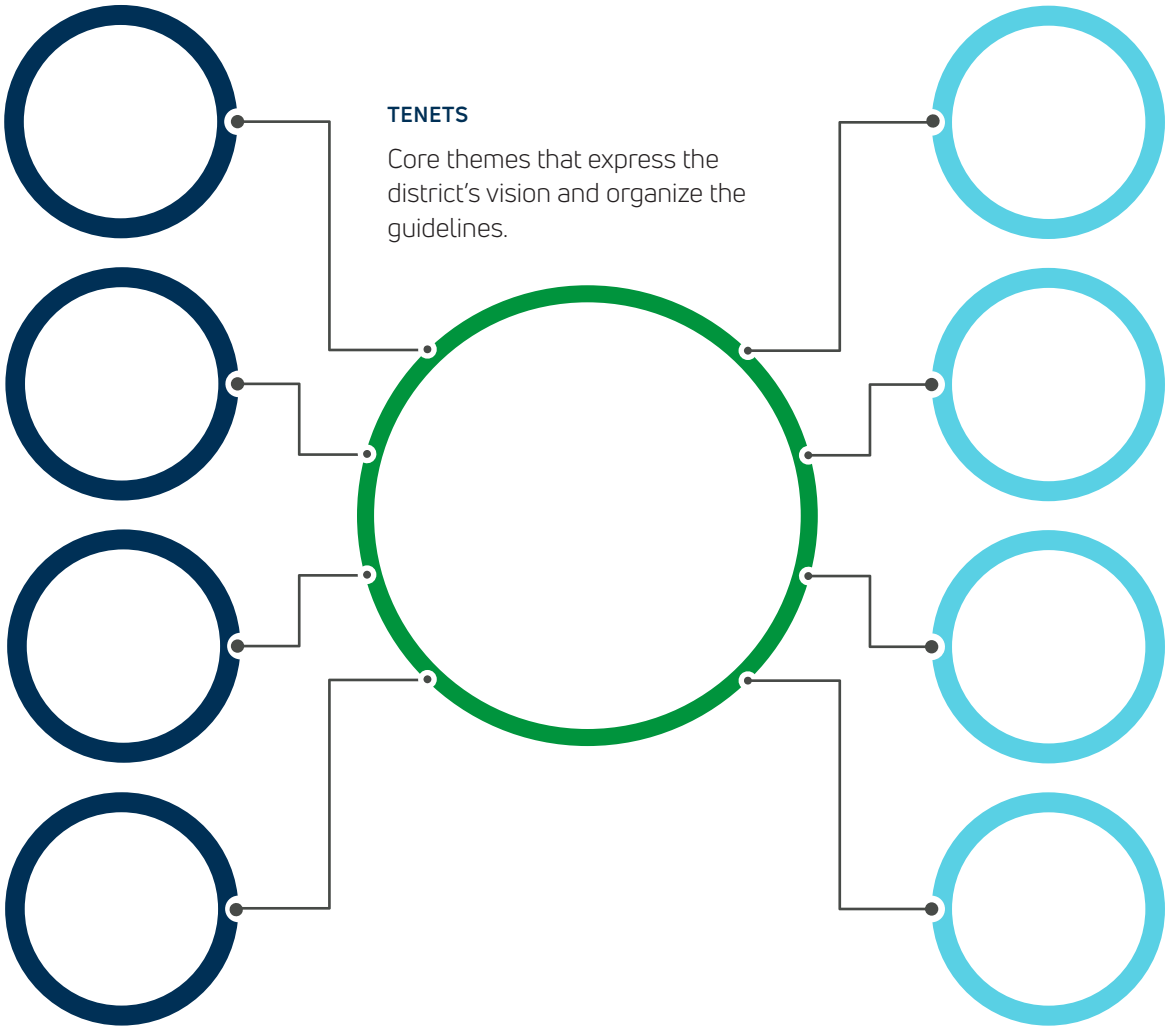
Three core components define this framework:

PRINCIPLES

Statements from the Master Plan that define what development should achieve under each tenet.

GUIDELINES

Practical strategies for applying the principles through design and planning decisions.



TENETS

Core themes that express the district's vision and organize the guidelines.

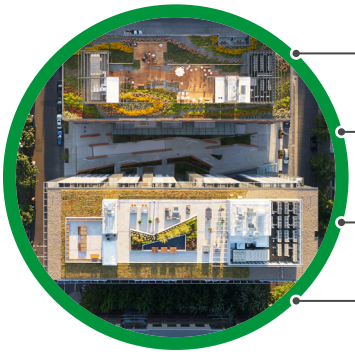
3. Guidelines

Sustainability
Identity
Activation

Design Guidelines

Each tenet is supported by related guidelines that translate principles into practical strategies for design and planning decisions. The following pages outline, for each guideline, a Background statement, an Intent statement, and potential Strategies to guide development.

Sustainability



1. Design sustainable, adaptable buildings.
2. Design utility infrastructure to be integrated, accessible, and adaptable.
3. Integrate bike, transit, and pedestrian amenities into building design.
4. Incorporate green stormwater ystems.

Identity

5. Use building height and massing to activate civic spaces.
6. Embed stories of the site through signage, landscapes, and architectural details.
7. Connect to key institutions.
8. Create a cohesive, pedestrian-oriented signage system.

Activation

9. Engage the street.
10. Include plazas and gathering spaces in major developments.
11. Use durable, local materials.
12. Integrate pedestrian-scale lighting.

Sustainability

Design with long-term resilience in mind—integrating environmental sustainability, technological innovation, and adaptable infrastructure to support a healthy, future-ready district.

Sustainability is a core value and guiding principle of the onMain master plan. The district is envisioned as "a sustainable, high-quality development that will serve the community for generations," with systems and structures that reduce environmental impact while supporting human health and adaptability over time. The plan calls for an integrated approach to infrastructure, mobility, architecture, and open space—where compact, flexible buildings are oriented for energy performance, utilities are designed to evolve with emerging technologies, and streets double as ecological systems.

Green infrastructure such as bioswales, permeable paving, and green roofs are emphasized to manage stormwater and create visible, educational landscapes. Active transportation is supported by wide sidewalks, protected bike lanes, and transit connections. Buildings are expected to promote wellness with operable windows, balconies, and access to light and air.

Design Principles

1. Sustainable values

Development of the site will reflect the institutions' values for holistic sustainability: environmental, economic, social and emotional. This means: respect for nature and environmental systems; commitment to realizing financial benefit for the investors, community and individuals; inclusion of community spaces and housing choices for a range of community members; and fostering affection for the place.

2. Advanced and integrated technology

The site and its structures will reflect creative thinking for building materials, energy use, data analytics and sensor technology. Dayton has a powerful history of invention and innovation. This site represents the future for these same attributes.

3. Flexibility (adaptable) over time

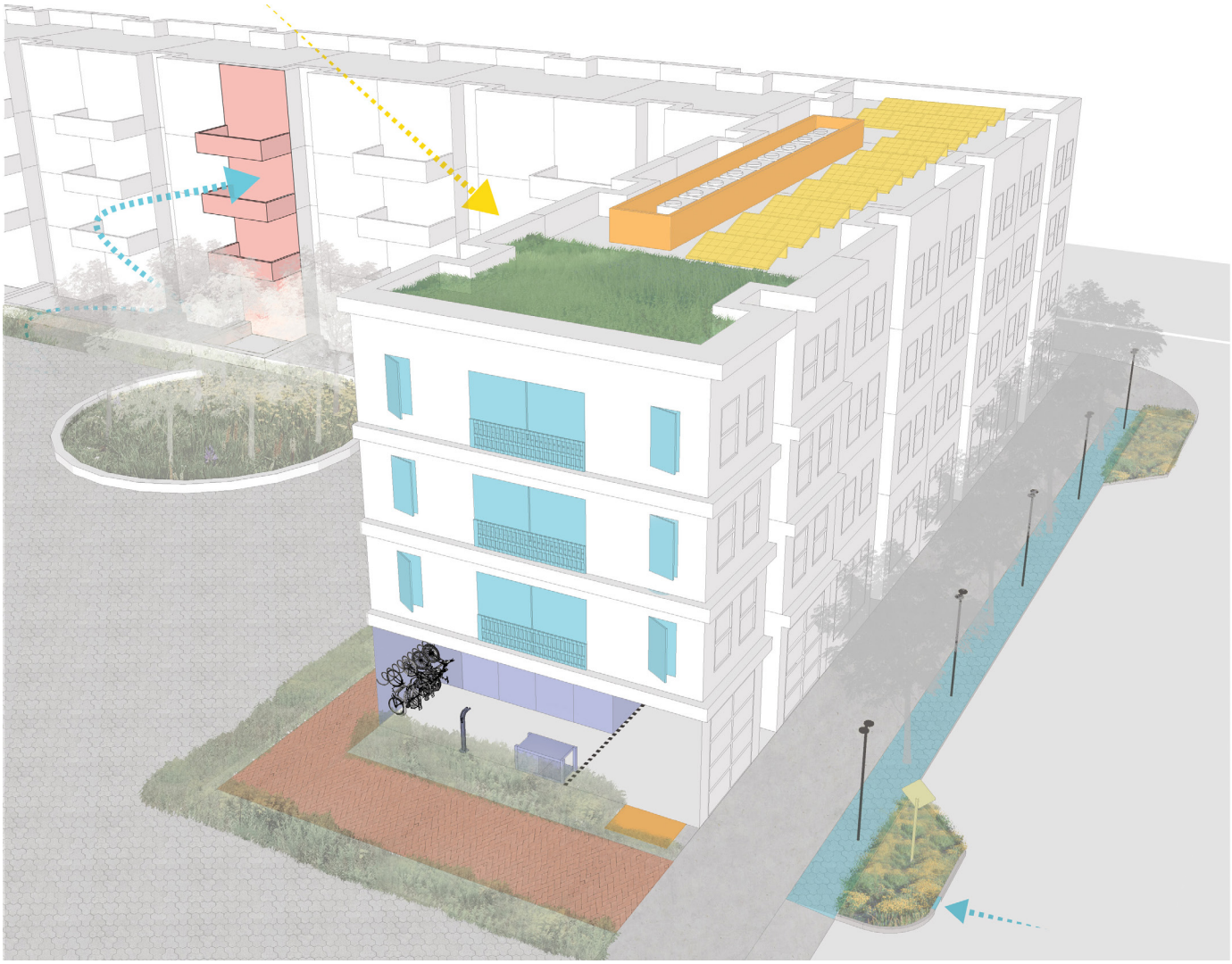
The site of the former fairgrounds is relatively large at 38 acres. It also exists in real estate market with less than a robust demand. Build out of development will take several years and there is a need for flexibility and adaptability over time.

4. Healthy living choices

The layout of the site will be thoughtful in supporting the wellness of its employees and residents. This includes an attractive and safe public realm for walking, biking and other recreation. It will also be a place that minimizes unhealthy emissions.

Strategies Diagram

The diagram below illustrates potential strategies to meet each guideline. These strategies serve as examples of how the guideline might be met and are intended to inspire creative solutions. Alternative approaches not shown may also be appropriate, as long as the overall design response successfully addresses the intent of the guideline.



Guideline 1

Solar panels are integrated on the rooftop. Courtyard openings between, or within, buildings provide daylight and airflow. Ground-floor bays are designed with flexible layouts to accommodate changing uses over time.

Guideline 2

Mechanical equipment is organized on rooftops behind a parapet wall. Utility access is located discreetly at the building base and along sidewalks, with screened areas to minimize visual impact.

Guideline 3

Design includes secured bike storage and end-of-trip facilities near building entrances. Pedestrian paths are aligned directly to recessed entry points, marked with weather-protective canopies.

Guideline 4

Linear bioswales run alongside sidewalks and street edges to capture runoff. Landscaped planting zones define plaza and courtyard areas, while permeable paving is used within pedestrian areas. Stormwater is visibily managed as part of the design.

Guideline 1

Design sustainable, adaptable buildings.

Washington, DC

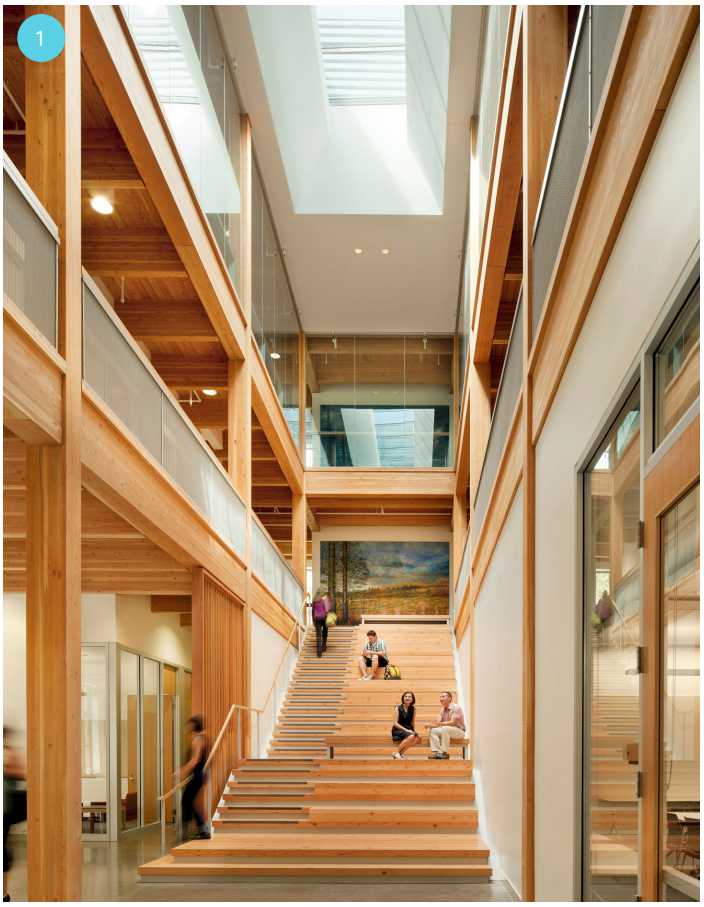
Background

onMain is conceived as a model innovation district rooted in environmental performance, technological advancement, and long-term adaptability. The Master Plan positions high-performance buildings as essential to fulfilling onMain's vision. Buildings are expected to serve as visible markers of the district's forward-thinking identity. Given the site's prominence and the importance of early development in establishing district character, architecture must be designed not only for current programmatic needs but also for future uses, changes in climate, and advances in building technology.

The plan encourages designs that take advantage of passive solar strategies, daylit interiors, and biophilic principles to promote comfort and reduce reliance on mechanical systems. It also notes that buildings should reflect flexibility in use over time—particularly ground-floor spaces that may shift in use over time. These goals align onMain with national best practices for sustainable urban development and position the district as a living laboratory for innovation.

Intent Statement

Promote architecture that exemplifies long-term environmental and functional resilience. Buildings should integrate passive design, biophilic features, and high-efficiency systems to reduce operational energy and support occupant health. At the same time, designs must be flexible—capable of adapting to new uses, technologies, or tenant needs without requiring full demolition or excessive retrofitting. Emphasize design strategies that are both visible and measurable, showcasing onMain's commitment to sustainability in ways that are experienced daily by users, residents, and visitors. This approach will help set a district-wide precedent for environmental responsibility and reinforce onMain's identity as a climate-conscious, adaptable neighborhood.



Solar access, generous ceiling heights

Assmebly using modular systems

Flexible interior layout, open structural bays

Support long-term environmental performance through buildings that are energy-efficient, flexible over time, and responsive to climate and site conditions.

Strategies to Meet the Guideline

- Shape building massing to enable solar access and natural ventilation (e.g., courtyards, narrow floor plates).
- Orient structures for passive solar gain in winter and shading in summer.
- Use modular or flexible interior layouts to allow for future adaptation or reuse.
- Design ground floors with open structural bays, generous ceiling heights, and service access to accommodate future changes in use.
- Incorporate green roofs for insulation, stormwater retention, and urban habitat.
- Apply biophilic design principles such as natural materials, ample daylight, and interior greenery.
- Provide operable windows and individual climate controls to enhance comfort and indoor air quality.
- Design for disassembly using modular systems or easily separated material layers.
- Incorporate real-time energy monitoring systems to support building performance awareness.

ENABLE SOLAR ACCESS AND NATURAL VENTILATION

Incorporate design elements like courtyards, stepped volumes, and narrow floor plates to ensure access to daylight and airflow across the building. These passive design moves reduce reliance on mechanical systems and improve occupant comfort, especially when combined with operable windows and strategic shading.

DISTRICT OFFICE
Portland, OR
Source: Hacker Architects

DESIGN GROUND FLOORS FOR FUTURE ADAPTABILITY

Ground floors with tall ceiling heights, open structural spans, and rear service access can easily transition from one use to another—like retail to coworking, or parking to active commercial space. This flexibility extends the life of the building and supports changing market needs over time.

UC HEALTH
Cincinnati, OH
Source: Cannon Design

INCORPORATE GREEN ROOFS

Green roofs provide multiple benefits: they insulate buildings, manage stormwater runoff, and introduce urban green space that supports biodiversity and improves resident well-being. When accessible, they can also offer recreational or gathering space.

GOAT BLOCKS
Portland, OR
Source: Killian Pacific

Guideline 2:

Design utility infrastructure to be integrated, accessible, and adaptable.

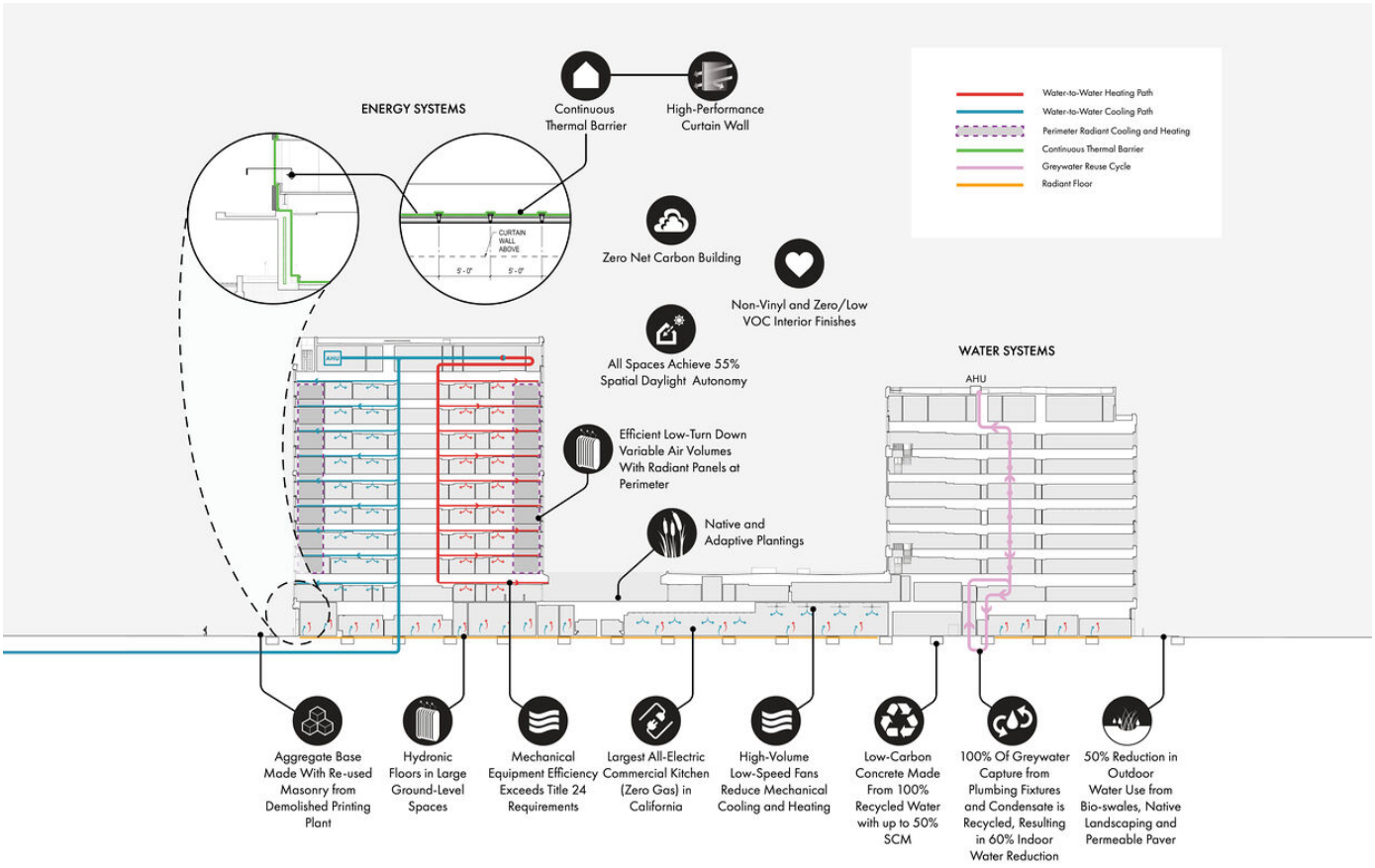
Heartline, Portland, OR

Background

Utility systems play a foundational role in supporting the onMain district's ambitions for resilience, innovation, and sustainability. onMain will require utility infrastructure that is coordinated across parcels, integrated within the built environment, and ready to evolve alongside emerging technologies. Key infrastructure concepts include the implementation of a geothermal district heating and cooling system, the exploration of microgrids for electrical resilience, and the incorporation of advanced communication and energy monitoring systems. These are not simply technical upgrades—they are structural decisions that shape how energy, water, and data are distributed and experienced throughout the district.

Intent

Ensure that all utility systems—electrical, mechanical, water, data, and energy—are integrated into the design of buildings and landscapes in ways that are both discreet and functional. Prioritize designs that anticipate future upgrades, align with shared district infrastructure systems, and reduce the spatial and visual impact of mechanical equipment. Utility design should actively support innovation in building performance and tenant services. Developers and designers should coordinate early with the onMain organization to align private systems with emerging district-wide strategies. Over time, this infrastructure will become one of the clearest markers of onMain's commitment to high-performance urban systems.



Sustainability Diagram, ZGF

Ensure utilities are discreetly incorporated and able to evolve with emerging technologies and maintenance needs.

Strategies to Meet the Guideline

- Conceal HVAC and mechanical systems with parapets or architectural screens.
- Locate utility connections and equipment away from primary building frontages, and where necessary, incorporate them into architectural features or screened enclosures that match the building design.
- Utilize underground utility vaults or subsurface distribution for electrical, telecommunications, and stormwater systems to reduce above-ground clutter and preserve space for pedestrian and landscape amenities.
- Screen and buffer loading and service areas with landscaping, walls, or architectural elements to reduce visual and acoustic impacts on the public realm.
- Cluster rooftop systems to reserve space for solar panels or green roofs.
- Provide utility corridors sized for future upgrades, including fiber and smart technologies.
- Integrate infrastructure for building-wide smart systems—lighting, HVAC, and occupancy sensing.

SCREEN AND BUFFER UTILITY EQUIPMENT AT GRADE

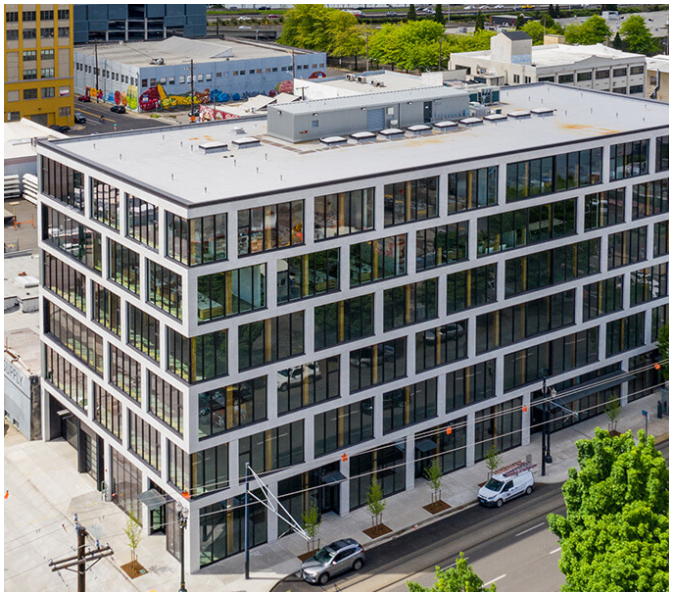
When utilities must remain above ground, thoughtful design can minimize their visual impact. Placing utility boxes, meters, and equipment away from primary frontages—and enclosing them with architectural panels, landscape walls, or plantings—helps maintain a cohesive streetscape and pedestrian experience.

LL HAWKINS
Portland, OR
Source: Holst Architecture

CLUSTER ROOFTOP SYSTEMS

Organizing mechanical equipment into compact rooftop zones leaves room for solar panels or green roofs. This strategic layout reduces visual clutter while maintaining the potential for future upgrades or retrofits.

DISTRICT OFFICE
Portland, OR
Source: Hacker Architects



INTEGRATE OR SCREEN PARKING AND LOADING ACCESS

Design parking and loading access to be discreetly integrated or screened, ensuring these functional elements do not disrupt the pedestrian environment. Use architectural features, landscaping, or setbacks to minimize visibility and maintain active, engaging building edges.

MOB CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
Hyattsville, MD
Source: Cannon Design

Guideline 3

Integrate bike, transit, and pedestrian amenities into building design.

Slabtown Marketplace, Portland, OR

Background

The onMain Master Plan envisions a walkable, transit-oriented innovation district where buildings and mobility systems are deeply intertwined. Buildings are not standalone objects in this framework; they are active participants in shaping the experience of movement through the district. Their form, function, and interface with the street determine whether active transportation is encouraged or discouraged.

From the earliest phases, development must provide multimodal amenities into the fabric of buildings. This includes covered and secure bike storage, intuitive pedestrian entries, and ground-floor transparency that enhances safety and comfort. The Master Plan emphasizes the importance of prioritizing infrastructure for walking and cycling over vehicle access, especially along key corridors. Building design that accommodates and amplifies these systems will reinforce onMain's vision.

Intent

Integrate transportation choices directly into the design of buildings, reinforcing onMain's commitment to active, sustainable, and inclusive mobility. Buildings should provide safe, convenient access for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders, with amenities that support daily use and long-term behavior change. Development should minimize conflicts between vehicles and vulnerable users, using design tools to calm traffic and prioritize the pedestrian realm. Above all, buildings should reinforce the district's goal of creating a compact, connected neighborhood that makes active transportation not just viable, but preferable.

Coordinated frontage seating with entries

Bike repair stations

Covered waiting area adjacent to transit stop and bicycle facilities

Support multimodal access and reduce car dependency by embedding active transportation features—like bike storage, transit access, and walkable entries—into building frontages and site plans.

Strategies to Meet the Guideline

- Provide amenities such as bike storage, repair stations, benches, lighting, and intuitive wayfinding.
- Ensure universally accessible entrances and clear, legible pedestrian crossings.
- Design frontages to connect seamlessly with adjacent bike and transit infrastructure.
- Incorporate covered bike parking and end-of-trip facilities like showers and lockers.
- Coordinate building entries and amenity zones with transit stops and mobility hubs.
- Design curb cuts and driveways to prioritize pedestrian and cyclist safety, using raised crossings, visual cues (e.g., changes in paving material), and warning signage.
- Locate parking and loading access on secondary or mid-block locations along East-West streets to avoid interrupting key pedestrian and bike corridors at intersections and primary crossings.
- Use shared driveways and consolidated access points to reduce curb cuts and preserve continuous sidewalks and bikeways.

ALIGN ENTRIES WITH PEDESTRIAN AND TRANSIT ROUTES

Primary building entrances should face sidewalks and be within direct line of sight from nearby transit stops. When possible, entries should be co-located with crosswalks or pedestrian desire lines, reinforcing walkability and intuitive access from buses, bike lanes, or shared-use paths.

SLABTOWN MARKETPLACE
Portland, OR
Source: Holst Architecture

PROVIDE COVERED BIKE PARKING NEAR ENTRANCES

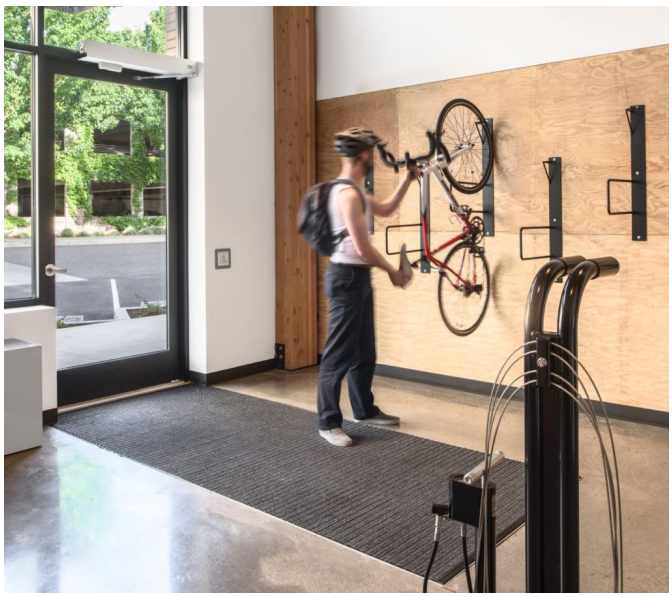
Secure, covered bike parking should be integrated near main building entries—not hidden or off to the side—making it easy for cyclists to park and feel their transportation choice is supported. Placement under canopies or integrated into landscape features enhances both usability and visual appeal.

MARKET OF CHOICE
Portland, OR
Source: Killian Pacific

PROVIDE END-OF-TRIP FACILITIES IN COMMERCIAL AND MIXED-USE BUILDINGS

In workplaces or mixed-use buildings, include showers, changing rooms, and lockers for cyclists and transit riders. These features make biking or taking the bus to work viable year-round and support active commuting habits—especially for office, health care, or campus settings.

THE HUDSON
Vancouver, WA
Source: Killian Pacific



Guideline 4

Incorporate green stormwater systems.

K Street NW, Washington, DC

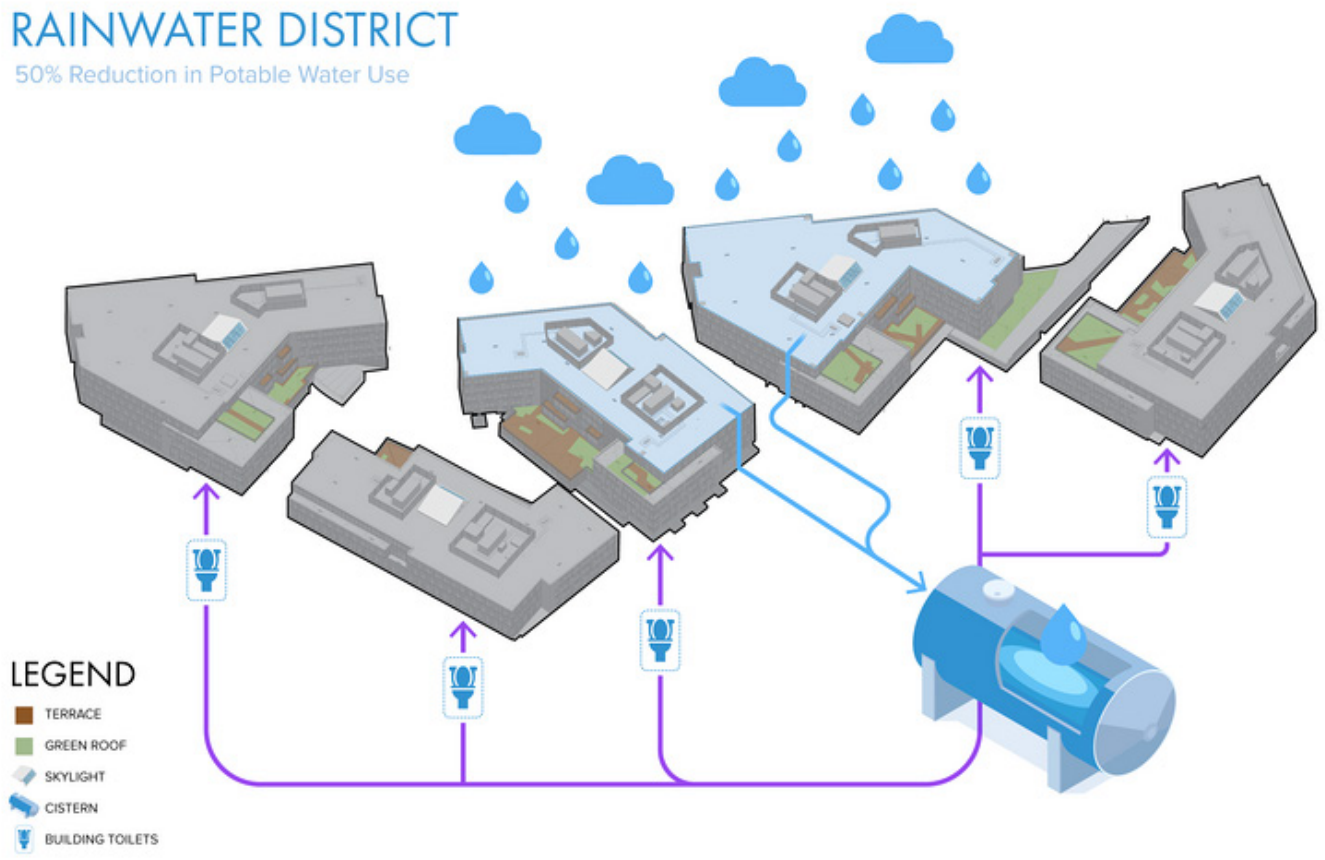
Background

onMain's commitment to green infrastructure is grounded in its unique location within the Miami Valley watershed and its responsibility to reduce environmental impact while enhancing community space. The Master Plan (p. 22) outlines a clear vision for stormwater systems that go beyond functional drainage—incorporating bioswales, rain gardens, permeable paving, and other visible strategies to shape the experience of streets, parks, and plazas. Green infrastructure plays a dual role in the district: it manages runoff and water quality, and it contributes to placemaking, ecological restoration, and public education.

As the district develops, especially during early street and public realm construction, it is critical that green stormwater strategies be embedded from the outset. These systems can reinforce the identity of the district while supporting long-term performance, cost savings, and regulatory compliance. The Master Plan recommends that stormwater infrastructure be integrated into major corridors, plazas, and shared open spaces.

Intent

Promote the integration of green stormwater systems that are visible, multifunctional, and ecologically beneficial. Encourage site and building designs that treat water as a resource, using strategies that capture, filter, and reuse stormwater while enhancing the quality and usability of community space. Stormwater features should be legible to the public, supporting onMain's goals for environmental education, civic identity, and regional watershed health. Designers should coordinate with district-scale infrastructure planning to ensure continuity of systems and maximize cumulative impact across parcels.



Washindton Village, ZGF

Manage stormwater on-site through visible, ecologically integrated features that enhance aesthetics and performance.

Strategies to Meet the Guideline

- Use linear bioswales along streets and pathways to collect and filter runoff.
- Pave plazas and sidewalks with permeable materials such as unit pavers or porous concrete.
- Incorporate rain gardens, vegetated swales, or surface water channels in public realm design.
- Make stormwater systems visible to highlight their ecological and educational value.
- Use vegetated roof systems with overflow control to reduce stormwater volumes.
- Coordinate with district-wide stormwater strategies, including shared or phased systems.

INTEGRATE LINEAR BIOSWALES ALONG STREETS AND PATHWAYS

Bioswales along sidewalks and shared streets capture and filter stormwater runoff from adjacent buildings and pavement. Planted with native grasses and perennials, these linear systems enhance curb appeal while visibly demonstrating sustainable water management in action.

ALLEN STREET RAIN GARDENS
State College, PA
Source: State College Borough

USE PERMEABLE PAVING IN PLAZAS AND SIDEWALKS

Permeable pavers or porous concrete allow rainwater to seep through the surface, reducing runoff and replenishing groundwater. When used in plazas and walkways, these materials blend infrastructure with community space, making stormwater function part of the everyday pedestrian experience.

SLABTOWN MARKETPLACE
Portland, OR
Source: Holst Architecture

HIGHLIGHT STORMWATER SYSTEMS AS EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Rain gardens, surface water channels, and green walls can be designed as interactive or interpretive elements that make green infrastructure visible and engaging. These systems help educate visitors about ecology, water cycles, and sustainability while creating distinctive outdoor environments.

Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine
Pasadena, CA
Source: Cannon Design

Identity

Celebrate the site's history, setting, and institutional context to create a place that is both rooted in legacy and uniquely onMain.

onMain is located at the intersection of powerful histories, landscapes, and institutional partnerships. The master plan positions the district as "distinct but integrated"—a place that acknowledges its past while expressing a bold, innovative identity. The site includes historic assets like the Roundhouse, proximity to the Great Miami River, and dramatic topography along the bluff—all of which inform its future character.

Identity is also shaped through connections to the University of Dayton and Miami Valley Hospital, whose institutional presence helps define onMain's purpose as a hub of innovation and well-being. Streets, signage, and landscapes should foster a sense of continuity while establishing a contemporary district brand. The built environment should be place-specific, and legible—contributing to a public realm that is memorable and meaningful.

Design Principles

5. A distinct but integrated "place"

Living, working, learning and playing will be possible throughout the site. It will be a place that is occupied 24-hours a day, seven days a week. It will become an integrated, mixed-use neighborhood in the truest sense, distinct from conventional development.

8. Regard for the bluff and its potential

The north side of the site is a bluff with steep slopes down to Apple and Stewart streets. While it offers unique views to downtown and other neighborhoods, it is a barrier for connectivity. The development of the site will respect the unique landform and maximize its potential as an amenity.

9. Respect for the site's history

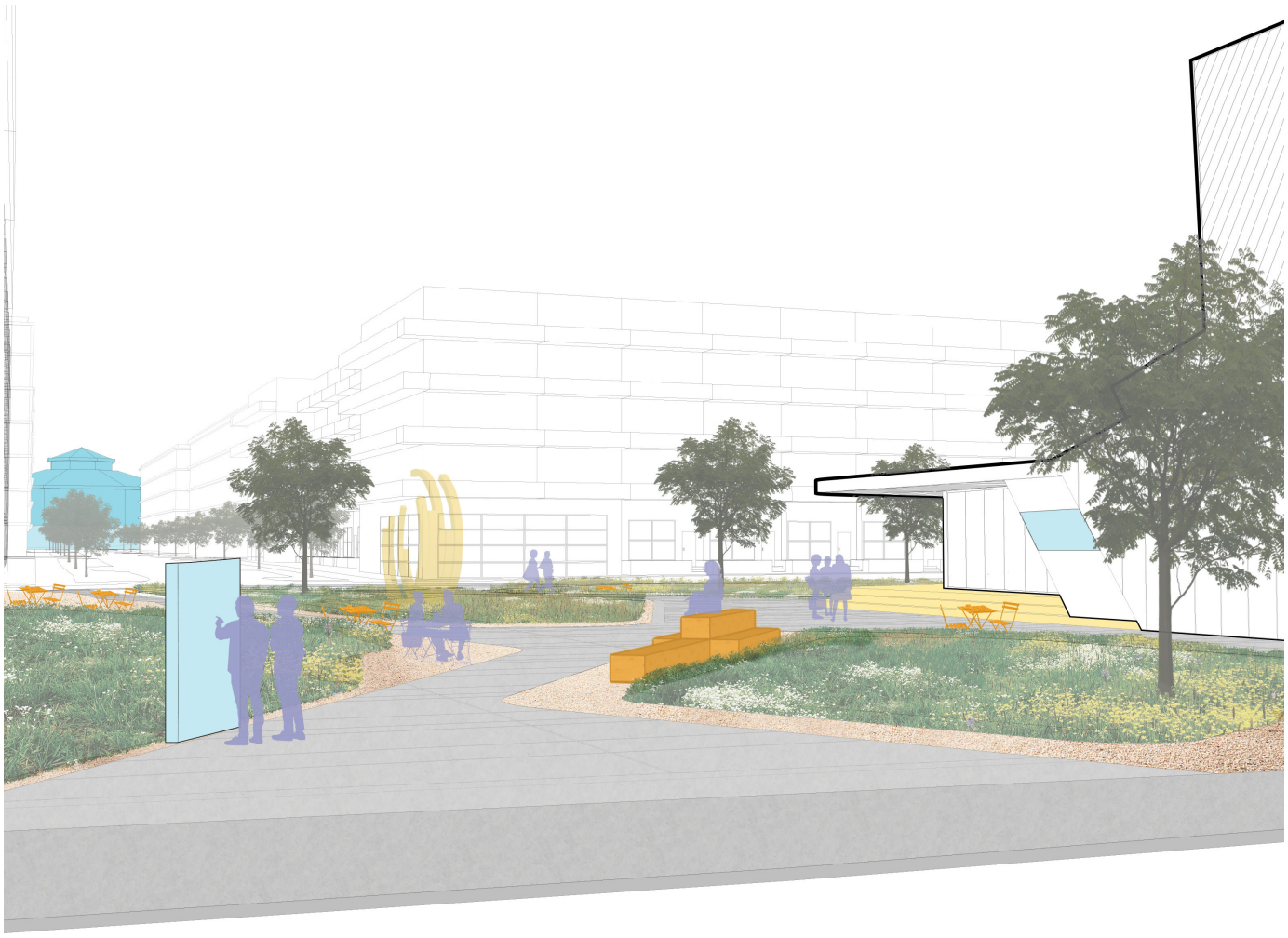
Future development will respect the site's—and adjacent area's—history, especially as it relates to the fairground activities. This can be large gestures, like the goal of maintaining the Roundhouse, or small gestures, like public art.

10. Connection to anchors and larger community

The site will be not be an "island." It will have connections—physical and visual—to Miami Valley Hospital, the University of Dayton and adjacent neighborhoods. It will also have connections to the Great Miami River trail network.

Diagram

The diagram below illustrates potential strategies to meet the guideline. These strategies serve as examples of how the guideline might be met and are intended to inspire creative solutions. Alternative approaches not shown may also be appropriate, as long as the overall design response successfully addresses the intent of the guideline.



GUIDELINE 4

Buildings step back and frame open plazas, creating edges that define gathering areas, while clear sightlines across the space maintain openness and comfort.

GUIDELINE 5

Interpretive elements, such as sculptural art pieces and seating walls, are integrated along pathways. Native plantings shape the character of open spaces, while paving changes highlight circulation routes.

GUIDELINE 6

Pedestrian pathways extend through the site with aligned edges and sightlines leading toward adjacent destinations. Landmarks and shared gathering spaces reinforce visual and physical connections across the district.

GUIDELINE 7

Freestanding vertical markers appear at key paths and open space edges. Sculptural gateway elements highlight entry points, while consistent forms and materials maintain a unified identity.

Guideline 5

Use building height and massing to activate civic spaces.

Slabtown, Portland, OR

Background

The onMain Master Plan defines civic spaces as key organizing features of the district, with plazas, greens, and gathering areas serving as focal points of daily life and special events. These spaces must be framed and activated by the architecture around them in order to succeed. The Plan identifies strategic locations—such as the central green, the civic plaza, and the Main Street frontage—where building massing should respond to and enhance adjacent open spaces. Building form, height transitions, and articulation must be used intentionally to shape a variety of experiences: from bold, urban corners that serve as landmarks to low-scale edges that provide comfort, enclosure, and human scale.

The Master Plan also highlights the importance of defining strong spatial edges along civic spaces without overwhelming them. Massing strategies must respect both the topography—particularly the bluff to the north—and the adjacency of historic structures. Buildings should help make spaces legible and inviting while fostering a coherent and place-specific built environment.

Intent

Support building designs that thoughtfully shape and activate civic spaces, enhancing their usability, legibility, and character. Use massing to frame views, reinforce gateways, and create welcoming outdoor spaces that support gathering. Design transitions in scale where buildings meet community space, ensuring that architecture contributes to a comfortable, human-centered environment while also offering visual variety and interest.

Step down massing to reduce perceived height

Building oriented to define courtyard

Carve massing and highlight entries with public art

Shape buildings to frame and energize community spaces while maintaining human scale and visual integrity.

Strategies to Meet the Guideline

- Step down massing near the bluff to preserve views and reduce visual dominance.
- Orient buildings to define and activate civic spaces like plazas, greens, and courtyards.
- Use varied heights and articulated façades to establish a sense of place within each block.
- Highlight corners and gateways with landmark elements or public art.
- Design massing to complement adjacent historic or civic structures without mimicking them.

ORIENT BUILDINGS TO DEFINE AND ACTIVATE CIVIC SPACES

Buildings should be intentionally placed and shaped to frame key community spaces—such as plazas, greens, or shared courtyards—establishing clear edges, encouraging activity, and reinforcing a sense of enclosure. Entries, balconies, and ground-floor uses should face these spaces to bring life to the public realm.

ROCHE DIAGNOSTICS
Indianapolis, IN
Source: Cannon Design

STEP DOWN MASSING NEAR THE BLUFF TO PRESERVE VIEWS

Along sensitive edges—like the bluff—buildings should taper in height to maintain view corridors and reduce their visual impact. This approach respects the site's natural topography and ensures that civic spaces remain comfortable, accessible, and visually connected to their broader context.

GOAT BLOCKS
Portland, OR
Source: Killian Pacific

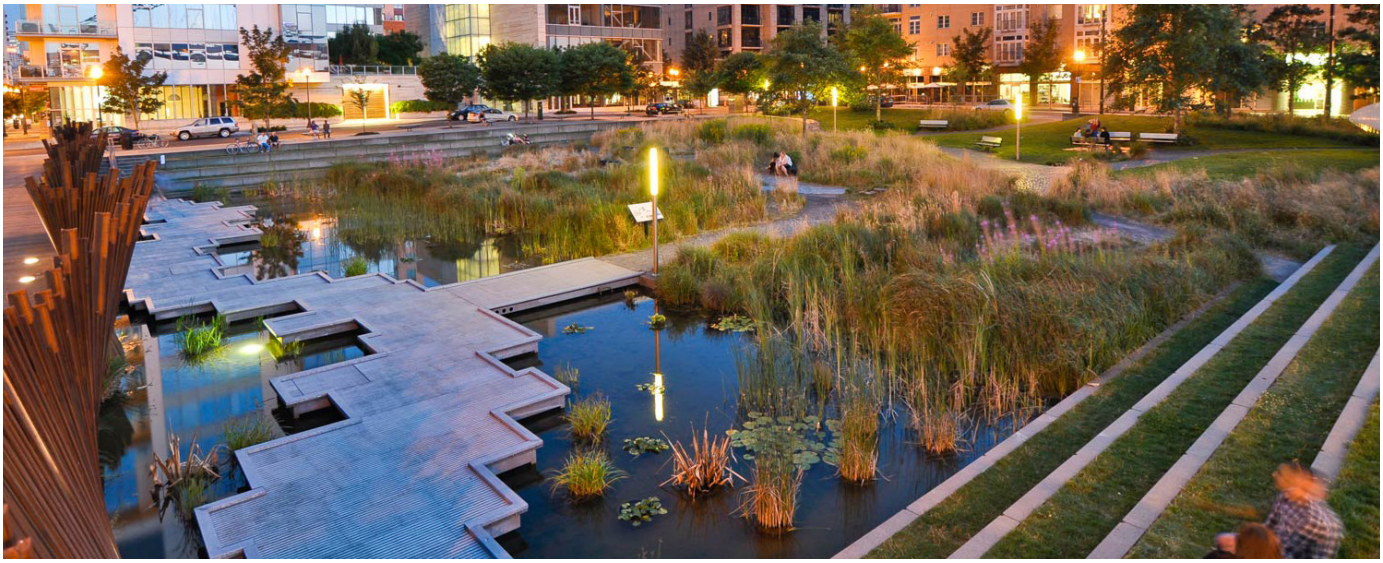
USE VARIED HEIGHTS AND ARTICULATED FAÇADES

Within each block, a mix of heights and façade expressions can help avoid monotony and give each civic space a unique identity. Vertical and horizontal modulation, roofline variation, and public-facing architectural features (like balconies, setbacks, or bays) all contribute to a human-scaled, engaging environment.

CORTEX
St. Louis, MO
Source: Cannon Design

Guideline 6:

Embed stories of the site through signage, landscapes, and architectural details.



Tanner Creek Park, Portland, OR

Background

onMain is located on a site with deep historical, cultural, and ecological significance. The Master Plan calls for honoring this layered past through interpretive elements, public art, and architectural storytelling that reflect both the evolution of the land and the people who shaped it. The site's history spans indigenous use, the former Montgomery County Fairgrounds, the Roundhouse rail facility, Miami Valley Hospital, and Dayton's long tradition of innovation. These narratives are integral to the district's identity and must be made visible through thoughtful design.

Intent

Encourage the integration of storytelling into the physical design of the district to reflect its layered history, local culture, and collective identity. Use interpretive signage, art, landscapes, and architectural details to express both tangible and intangible heritage—from natural systems to human narratives.

Sculptural shade elements provide pathway definition

Public art incorporated in building frontage

Gardens and edible plantings incorporated in open spaces

Celebrate the layered history, culture, and innovation of onMain, Dayton, and the Miami Valley by incorporating narrative elements into the built environment.

Strategies to Meet the Guideline

- Use inlays or sculptural elements to tell stories of the site's evolution.
- Incorporate native plants, water features, and art that reflect the Miami Valley's ecology and climate.
- Collaborate with artists and historians to express narratives via murals, installations, and interpretive signage.
- Highlight Dayton's legacy of innovation through building form and other elements in the built environment.
- Incorporate sustainable values by using reclaimed materials and explaining green infrastructure through signage or design elements.
- Incorporate community gardens or edible plantings in parks, courtyards, and open spaces to support health, food access, and social connection.

USE NATIVE PLANTINGS

Integrate native Ohio species to reduce water use, support pollinators, and improve stormwater absorption. Native landscapes are more resilient to climate extremes, require less maintenance, and strengthen biodiversity.

GRANDVIEW YARD
Columbus, OH

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE

Include community gardens, edible landscapes, or rooftop planters to support local food access. Partner with local organizations for programming, to support local food access, reduce the carbon footprint of food, and strengthen social resilience and connection.

HAZEL YING LEE APARTMENTS
Portland, OR
Source: Holst Architecture

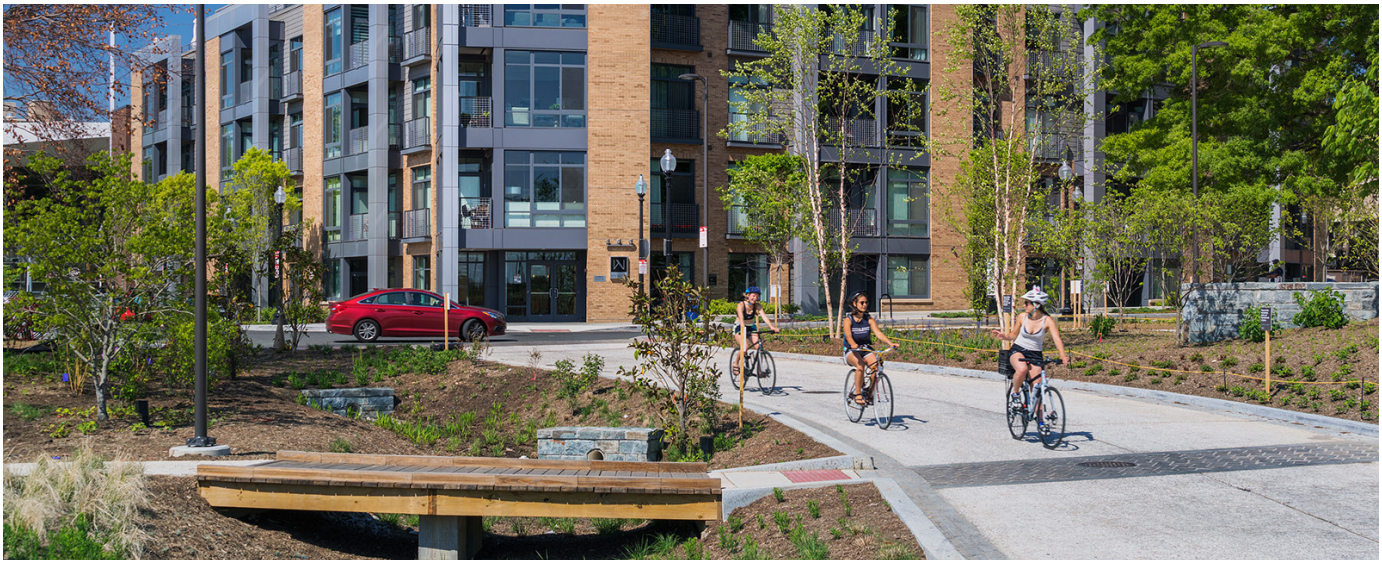
USE INLAYS, ETCHED MATERIALS, OR SCULPTURAL DETAILS

Architectural and hardscape elements—such as etched glass, metal inlays, or cast stone—can incorporate historical maps, patterns, or text to subtly reveal the site's transformation over time. These embedded narratives turn walls, walkways, and thresholds into touchpoints for memory and meaning.

CENTRAL PARK
Denver, CO
Source: Solana Central Park

Guideline 7

Connect to key institutions.



The Wharf, Washington, DC

Background

The onMain site is strategically located between two of Dayton's anchor institutions: the University of Dayton and Miami Valley Hospital. The Master Plan (pp. 10–12) identifies these relationships as foundational to the district's identity and function. It positions onMain as a shared civic campus that fosters collaboration, research, and community health. Physically, this vision is supported by proposed street extensions, pedestrian connections, shared-use facilities, and visual corridors that strengthen the district's permeability and symbolic alignment with its neighbors.

Institutional partnerships are also embedded in the district's programming goals. The plan envisions joint research initiatives, workforce development, and public health programming that benefit from seamless spatial integration. To support these synergies, onMain must not feel like an island but rather an open, legible, and integrated part of the city. Buildings, community spaces, and circulation networks must all work together to make institutional boundaries porous and collaborative.

Intent

Promote strong physical, visual, and programmatic connections between onMain and adjacent institutions. Design development to reinforce shared identity and collaboration across boundaries through aligned sightlines, walkable routes, and shared community spaces. Gateways, intersections, and building placement should express proximity to UD and Miami Valley Hospital while inviting interaction and joint use. These connections are essential to onMain's role as a district of innovation, learning, and community wellness.

Sightlines create intuitive links

Street grid is extended through the site

Pprovide visual wayfinding cues between internal and external spaces

Reinforce physical and visual connections to adjacent institutions to support shared identity and collaboration.

Strategies to Meet the Guideline

- Extend the street grid and trail networks to support intuitive pedestrian and bike access between onMain, University of Dayton, and Miami Valley Hospital.
- Design streetscapes with wayfinding, shade, lighting, and rest areas to enhance comfort and encourage walking between institutions.
- Use wayfinding, landscape, and sightlines to create intuitive links to institutional anchors.
- Co-locate flexible civic or shared-use spaces near institutional edges to invite collaboration.
- Design gateways and intersections with visual cues that highlight institutional proximity.
- Frame views and corridors to highlight institutional buildings, supporting visual connectivity and sense of arrival.

EXTEND THE STREET GRID

Framing views and aligning circulation with key campus landmarks—such as a hospital tower or university quad—can guide movement and visually reinforce proximity. Wayfinding elements like signage, branded banners, or lighting can extend institutional identity into the public realm, helping orient visitors and signal shared purpose.

MAY LEE STATE OFFICE COMPLEX
Sacramento, CA
Source: ZGF Architects

CO-LOCATE SHARED-USE OR CIVIC SPACES ALONG INSTITUTIONAL EDGES

Positioning flexible, publicly accessible spaces—like community rooms, innovation hubs, or health outreach centers—near institutional boundaries invites interaction between students, staff, and the public. These programmatic overlaps support informal exchange and activate campus edges.

FORA HEALTH
Portland, OR
Source: Holst Architecture

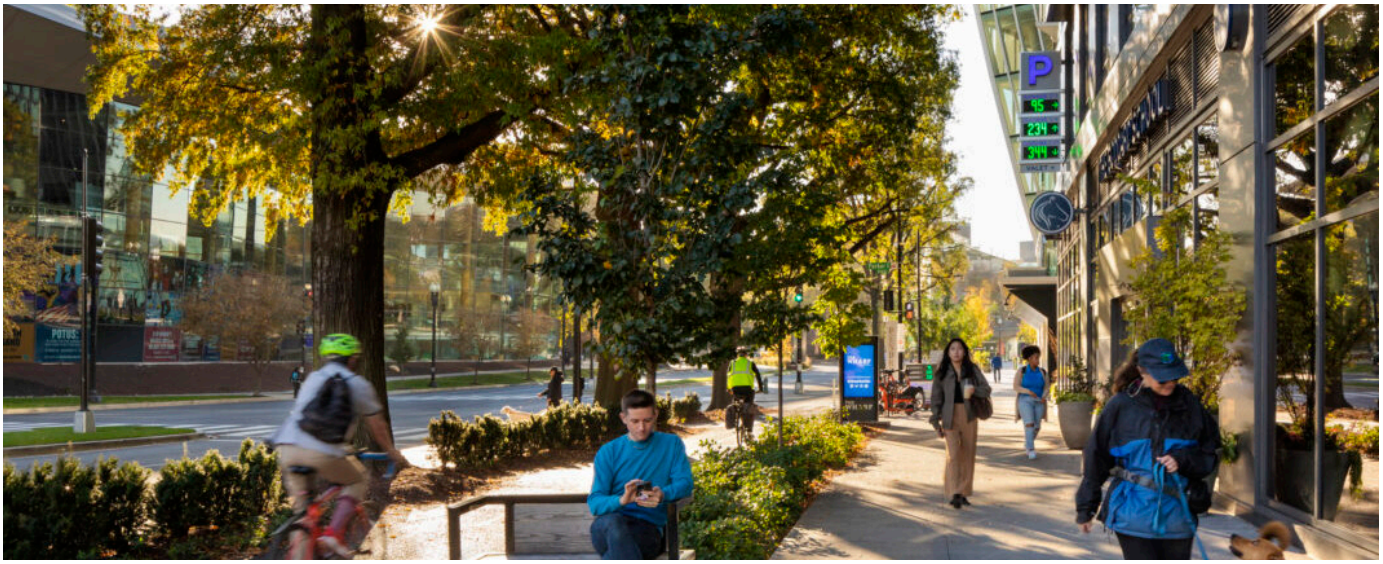
DESIGN GATEWAYS AND INTERSECTIONS TO HIGHLIGHT INSTITUTIONAL PROXIMITY

Strategic use of materials, signage, lighting, and planting at key district entrances can visually connect onMain to its institutional neighbors. These gateway moments signal arrival, reinforce identity, and offer orientation for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike.

THE RIVERFRONT AT PROMENADE PARK
Fort Wayne, IN
Source: Studio M Architecture and Planning

Guideline 8

Create a cohesive, pedestrian-oriented signage system.



The Wharf, Washington , DC

Background

The onMain Master Plan (pg. 23) outlines the importance of coordinated identity elements—including signage, materials, and wayfinding—to help unify the district's evolving fabric. A clear, human-scaled signage system reinforces walkability by making navigation intuitive and enhancing the sense of place. As the district builds out over time, a strong visual language is needed to knit together diverse buildings, landscapes, and uses into a coherent whole.

Signage plays multiple roles: it communicates identity, orients users, interprets stories, and guides behavior. The plan emphasizes that signage should reflect high design standards, be consistent in material and typographic language, and support accessibility for users of all abilities. It should also reflect onMain's values of innovation, sustainability, and inclusivity. This is especially important in a district with a wide mix of users.

Intent

Establish a coordinated, high-quality signage system that supports pedestrian movement, reinforces district identity, and communicates clearly at a human scale. Prioritize materials, scale, and layout that reflect onMain's design standards while ensuring accessibility and legibility. Signage should help unify the district's parcels and community spaces while providing interpretive opportunities to connect users to place and history. A consistent signage strategy will help shape a legible, inclusive, and walkable experience for all.

Small scale signage designed for pedestrian visibility

Mural ceiling contributes to a cohesive wayfinding system

See Image 17 above

Foster district identity and walkability through clear, coordinated signage at a human scale.

Strategies to Meet the Guideline

- Use high-quality, contemporary materials that reflect the site's context (e.g., steel, reclaimed wood, etched glass).
- Prioritize small-scale, eye-level signage designed for pedestrian visibility.
- Contribute to a comprehensive system of identity markers, directional signs, interpretive elements, and regulations.
- Ensure consistency in typography, scale, and placement to avoid visual clutter.

PRIORITIZE SMALL-SCALE, EYE-LEVEL SIGNAGE

Signs should be placed where pedestrians naturally look—at eye level or slightly below—and sized for readability at walking speed. This includes wayfinding, building numbers, and interpretive elements that support safe, intuitive navigation and enrich the walking experience.

DOWNTOWN CARY PARK
Cary, NC
Source: RSM Design

USE HIGH-QUALITY, CONTEXTUAL MATERIALS

Materials like etched glass, steel, or reclaimed wood can tie signage into the broader architectural and landscape language of the district. These tactile, durable finishes communicate a sense of permanence and craft that reinforces district identity.

DOWNTOWN CARY PARK
Cary, NC
Source: RSM Design

COORDINATE IDENTITY AND DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

A well-designed signage system should include consistent visual elements—typography, icons, materials—that link identity markers, wayfinding, regulatory signs, and storytelling pieces. This cohesion reduces clutter and reinforces a sense of place across the entire district.

DOWNTOWN CARY PARK
Cary, NC
Source: RSM Design

Activation

Foster a connected and pedestrian-friendly neighborhood through walkable streets, active frontages, unique amenities, and development that animates the district from day one.

A vibrant, walkable public realm is central to onMain's vision as "a welcoming and inclusive place" with active edges and community life embedded throughout the district. Activation is not just about retail—it is about how buildings and public spaces support everyday social interaction, safety, and engagement. The plan emphasizes "development that enlivens streets and spaces," with transparent ground floors, multiple points of entry, and outdoor uses that invite activity throughout the day and year.

Materials and lighting play a key role in shaping pedestrian experience—highlighting texture, warmth, and visibility. Activation at onMain means building a neighborhood that feels alive, connected, and ready to grow.

Design Principles

6. A high-quality public realm

A great neighborhood must have high-quality, carefully-designed streets and public spaces and this site will have them. This also means strong "edges" of the development where buildings are built to the street, framing the public place for people to move (walk, bike and drive) as well as congregate.

7. Unique amenities to enliven streets and common spaces

The site development will create a vibrant neighborhood where the streets, sidewalks, plazas and parks are well-designed. Opportunities to animate the streets and ground-level activity of buildings will be maximized.

11. Concentrated mass in initial phase

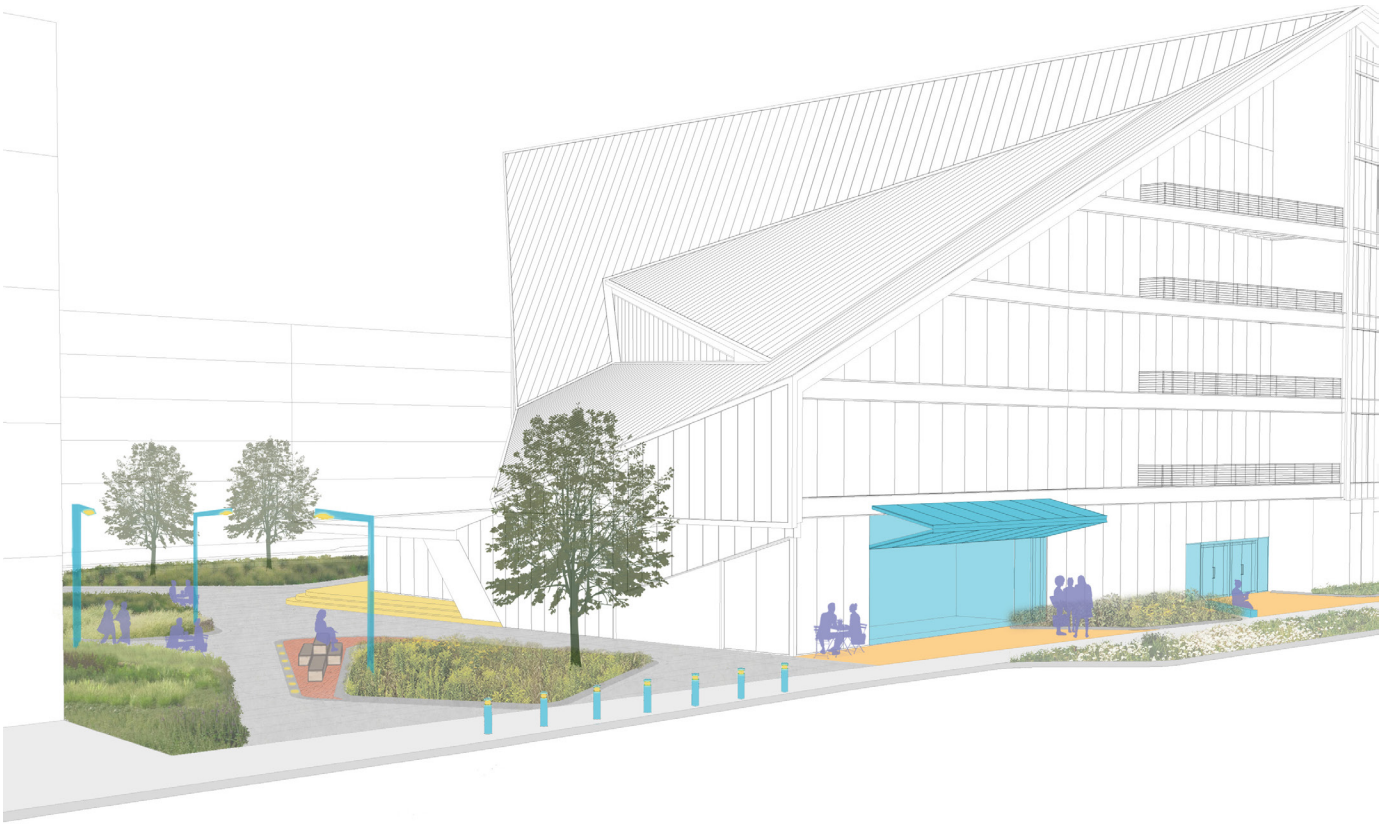
The initial development activity will be concentrated in a way that creates a density of activity and interest. This will create a more impactful demonstration of progress than if development is dispersed.

12. Development progressing from the edges inward

To create a positive tone for initial development, the initial projects should be constructed along Main and Stewart streets. This will signal progress (while deeper parcels take longer to develop) and build confidence in the community and from potential investors.

Diagram

The diagram below illustrates potential strategies to meet the guideline. These strategies serve as examples of how the guideline might be met and are intended to inspire creative solutions. Alternative approaches not shown may also be appropriate, as long as the overall design response successfully addresses the intent of the guideline.



GUIDELINE 9

Frequent entires and transparent façades create an active building edge. Landscaped areas and paving changes define spill-out and seating zones along the sidewalk.

GUIDELINE 10

A landscaped plaza sits at the building's edge with seating, shade trees, and open paved areas. Terraced steps connect the building to the plaza, blending indoor and outdoor uses and supporting flexible programming.

GUIDELINE 11

The building façade incorporates articulated metal cladding with with transparent storefront zones at the ground level. Distinct elements, including overhead doors, highlight entries with durable material expression.

GUIDELINE 12

Vertical bollard lights line the sidewalk and plaza edges. Overhead fixtures frame circulation routes, establishing layered, human-scale illumination throughout gathering spaces.

Guideline 9

Engage the street.

Arts Walk Farmers Market, Washington, DC

Background

The edges of buildings define the life of the street. The Master Plan calls for active, transparent, and permeable ground floors that support a lively public realm. Ground-floor design is one of the most immediate ways to shape public experience and influence walkability, safety, and vibrancy. Buildings that engage with the street promote casual interaction, economic vitality, and flexible use of space over time.

The plan also encourages ground-floor formats that can accommodate a variety of tenant types and adapt to evolving markets. This means providing storefront modules with flexible dimensions, durable finishes, and access to utilities. In addition, building edges should support informal activation—through stoops, seating, displays, or pop-up uses—that invite engagement and express a welcoming character. These strategies will be particularly important in early phases of development, as a critical mass of users and amenities is built.

Intent

Design building frontages that contribute to an active, inviting, and evolving streetscape. Prioritize transparency, frequent entries, and direct connections to adjacent sidewalks, plazas, and open spaces. Create flexible edge conditions that can host a range of uses and accommodate both permanent and temporary activations. Support district vibrancy by treating the building edge as an extension of the public realm—one that invites gathering, commerce, and creativity.

Community space activates the residential lobby

Ground floor transparency adjacent to public plaza

Semi-private, layered frontages

Design buildings that contribute to an engaging streetscape and vibrant public realm.

Strategies to Meet the Guideline

- Incorporate ground-level transparency and direct access to adjacent streets, parks, or plazas to support an active and welcoming public realm.
- Break up long façades with frequent entries and varied frontage types to increase permeability and visual interest.
- Design residential frontages with semi-private thresholds—such as stoops, porches, or garden setbacks—and individual entrances to balance privacy with street engagement.
- Use low fences, planters, or vertical separation to define private spaces.
- Program ground floors with uses that support activity throughout the day and evening, including small-scale retail, live/work units, and community-oriented spaces.
- Design flexible ground-floor zones with ceiling heights, floor plates, and structural systems that can accommodate a mix of uses and evolve over time.
- Include elements like café seating, spill-out zones, recessed entries, and covered stoops to animate building edges and encourage social interaction.

ENSURE GROUND-LEVEL TRANSPARENCY AND DIRECT ACCESS TO THE STREET

Windows and doors at street level should be transparent, frequent, and accessible—creating strong visual and physical connections between interior activity and the public realm.

MILWAUKEE-BELDEN TOD
Chicago, IL
Source: Wheeler Kearns Architects

INCLUDE SPILL-OUT ZONES AND STREET-ENGAGING ELEMENTS

Features like café seating, stoops, planters, and small terraces extend activity into the public realm and create a layered, human-scaled edge. These informal gathering zones make the street feel active and welcoming, supporting both social life and flexible programming.

REVERE
Portland, OR
Source: Holst Architecture

DESIGN FLEXIBLE STOREFRONT MODULES FOR EVOLVING TENANTS AND TEMPORARY USES

Ground floors should be designed in adaptable bays with generous ceiling heights and modular layouts to support a range of tenant types—from startups to pop-ups to long-term retail. Flexibility ensures the district can evolve with changing market needs and support local entrepreneurs.

GOAT BLOCKS
Portland, OR
Source: Killian Pacific

Guideline 10:

Include plazas and gathering spaces in major developments.

Heartline, Portland, OR

Background

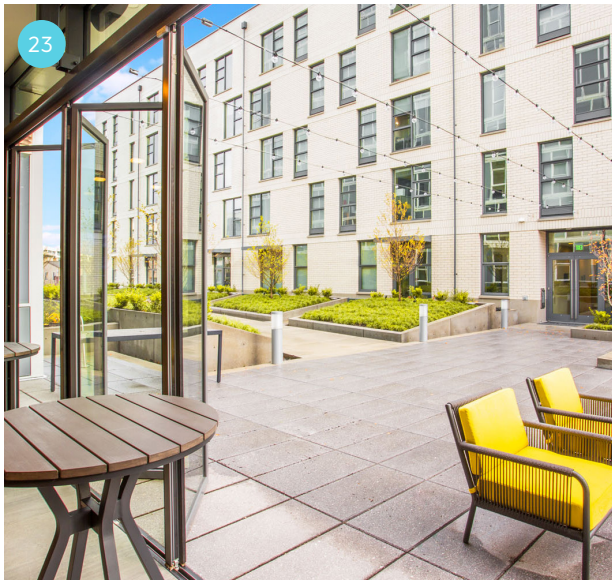
Civic and social spaces are central to the onMain vision. The Master Plan defines a network of community spaces—ranging from large-scale greens and plazas to small pocket parks and terraces—as primary organizing elements. These spaces support social interaction, wellness, performance, and everyday use. They are also key to onMain's placemaking strategy, helping establish a district identity rooted in openness, community, and public life.

The plan outlines a phased implementation of community spaces, beginning with major civic elements in early development areas and complemented over time by smaller-scale spaces embedded in individual projects. These spaces must be flexible, inclusive, and adaptable to seasonal and daily variation. They also need to provide amenities—such as seating, shade, lighting, and access to utilities—to support a broad range of uses and users. Thoughtful integration of these spaces within private development is essential to realizing the full potential of the district.

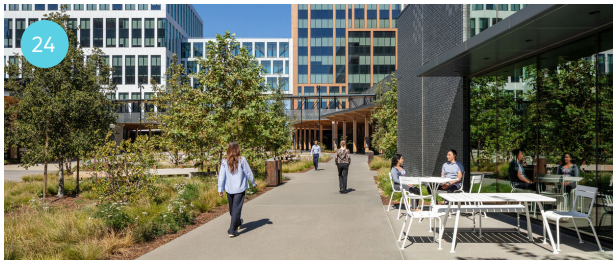
Intent

Create welcoming, usable gathering spaces as an integral part of site development. Spaces should be designed to support a wide range of activities—from quiet relaxation to public events—and should be scaled, located, and programmed to maximize visibility and accessibility. These spaces form the civic backbone of the district and should be treated as essential design elements, not leftover parcels. Every major project must contribute to onMain's goal of becoming a neighborhood of shared experiences and meaningful encounters.

Plaza with flexible seating



Terrace and operable windows extend building activity outside



Landscape design helps define walkways and gathering areas

Incorporate welcoming community spaces that support both formal and informal social interaction.

Strategies to Meet the Guideline

- Design flexible areas with infrastructure such as electrical hookups, lighting, and shade structures to support temporary uses like markets or performances.
- Integrate pocket parks, terraces, and plazas into site design to invite casual use throughout the day.
- Use a blend of hardscape and landscape to accommodate movement and gathering.
- Include balconies and terraces that extend building activity into the public realm.
- Position community spaces at key pedestrian nodes to encourage use and visibility.
- Provide amenities such as water features, play elements, and public art to support diverse users.
- Allow for adaptable boundaries and flexible site furniture that can support spontaneous or curated activation.

DESIGN FLEXIBLE AREAS TO SUPPORT EVENTS AND TEMPORARY USES

Community spaces should include built-in infrastructure like electrical hookups, Wi-Fi, lighting, and shade structures to accommodate markets, performances, and festivals. This makes the space adaptable to different scales of activity, from spontaneous gatherings to organized programming.

NEWBO CITY MARKET
Cedar Rapids, IA
Source: Project for Public Spaces

INTEGRATE POCKET PARKS AND PLAZAS INTO SITE DESIGN

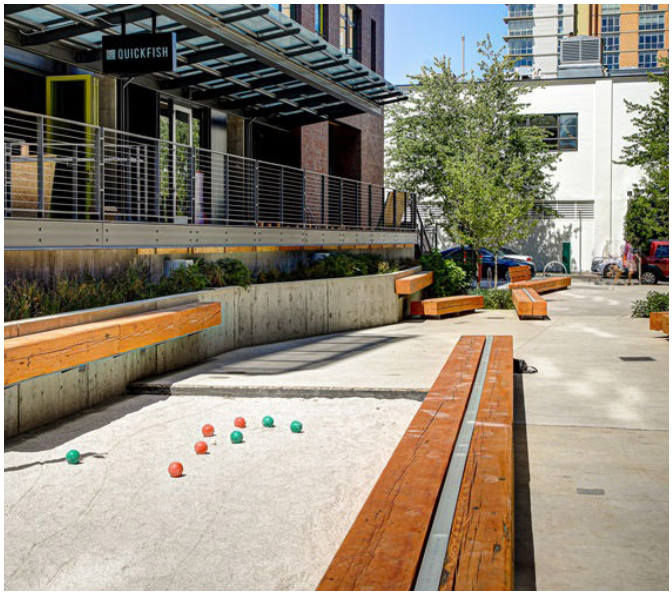
Incorporating plazas, terraces, or green pockets into development parcels ensures public life is woven into the fabric of the district. These spaces provide opportunities for rest, meeting, or play—and should be visible and easily accessed from sidewalks or building entrances.

THE AURORA
Portland, OR
Source: Holst Architecture

PROVIDE AMENITIES THAT ENCOURAGE BELONGING

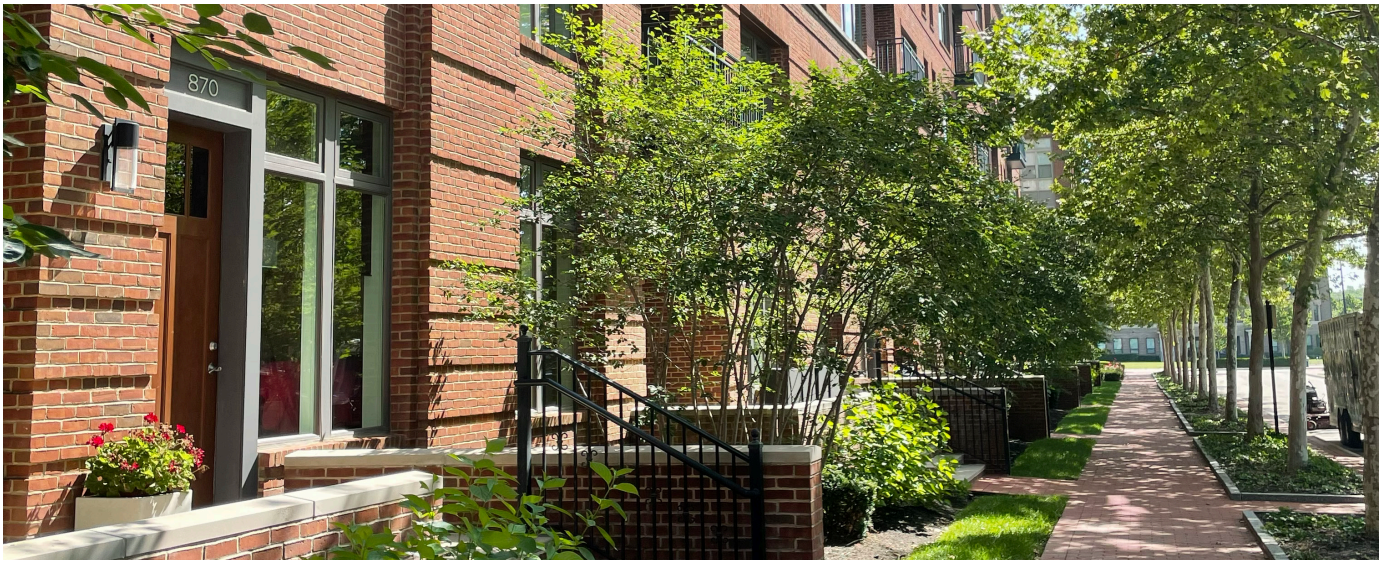
Water features, seating nooks, play elements, and public art create layered experiences that serve diverse users—from children and families to students and older adults. These elements encourage users to linger, interact, and feel ownership of the space.

HEARTLINE
Portland, OR
Source: Andersen Construction



Guideline 11

Use durable, local materials.



Grandview Yard, Columbus, OH

Background

The use of regionally appropriate and long-lasting materials is fundamental to onMain's goals for sustainability, identity, and long-term value. The Master Plan encourages materials that are expressive of Dayton's industrial heritage—such as brick, steel, and precast concrete—while also supporting environmental responsibility and craftsmanship. Material quality plays a major role in how buildings age, how maintenance costs are managed, and how the district feels over time.

Using durable materials that resonate with local culture reinforces authenticity and reduces environmental impact through lower embodied carbon and longer lifecycle performance. Buildings that are well-detailed and composed of quality materials signal permanence and care, building trust with residents, tenants, and visitors. The Master Plan envisions a district that is both future-facing and grounded in place—material choices are a key expression of this balance.

Intent

Encourage the use of resilient, regionally sourced, and expressive materials that enhance the district's durability and cultural identity. Materials should perform well in Dayton's climate, reduce long-term maintenance, and visually tie new development to the city's legacy of industry, making, and innovation. Projects should emphasize craftsmanship and thoughtful detailing, especially at the ground level where the public experiences buildings up close.

Craftsmanship highlighted at building entries

Brick used as the primary building material

Durable material used at the ground floor in high-touch areas

Support long-term building performance, reduce environmental impact, and reflect Dayton's industrial heritage with materials that are resilient, regionally appropriate, and thoughtfully applied.

Strategies to Meet the Guideline

- Prioritize regionally appropriate, long-lasting materials like brick, wood, weathered steel, and precast concrete.
- Reference Dayton's industrial past through exposed structure, steelwork, and detailing.
- Highlight craftsmanship in storefronts, canopies, and community furnishings.
- Incorporate reclaimed or historically inspired materials in new construction.
- Choose materials that wear well over time and endure the local climate.
- Use robust finishes at high-traffic areas to reduce maintenance needs.
- Source materials locally where possible to reduce embodied carbon and support regional industry.

PRIORITIZE REGIONALLY APPROPRIATE, LONG-LASTING MATERIALS

Materials like brick, weathered steel, and precast concrete not only withstand Dayton's climate but also reflect the city's industrial roots. Their durability reduces long-term maintenance and replacement needs, while grounding new development in a strong local aesthetic.

D'YOUVILLE UNIVERSITY
Buffalo, NY
Source: Cannon Design

HIGHLIGHT CRAFTSMANSHIP

High-quality detailing in wood, metal, or concrete—especially at eye level—elevates the character of buildings and reinforces a sense of care and permanence. Custom signage, handrails, benches, or storefront systems all offer opportunities to showcase craft.

LL HAWKINS
Portland, OR
Source: Holst Architecture

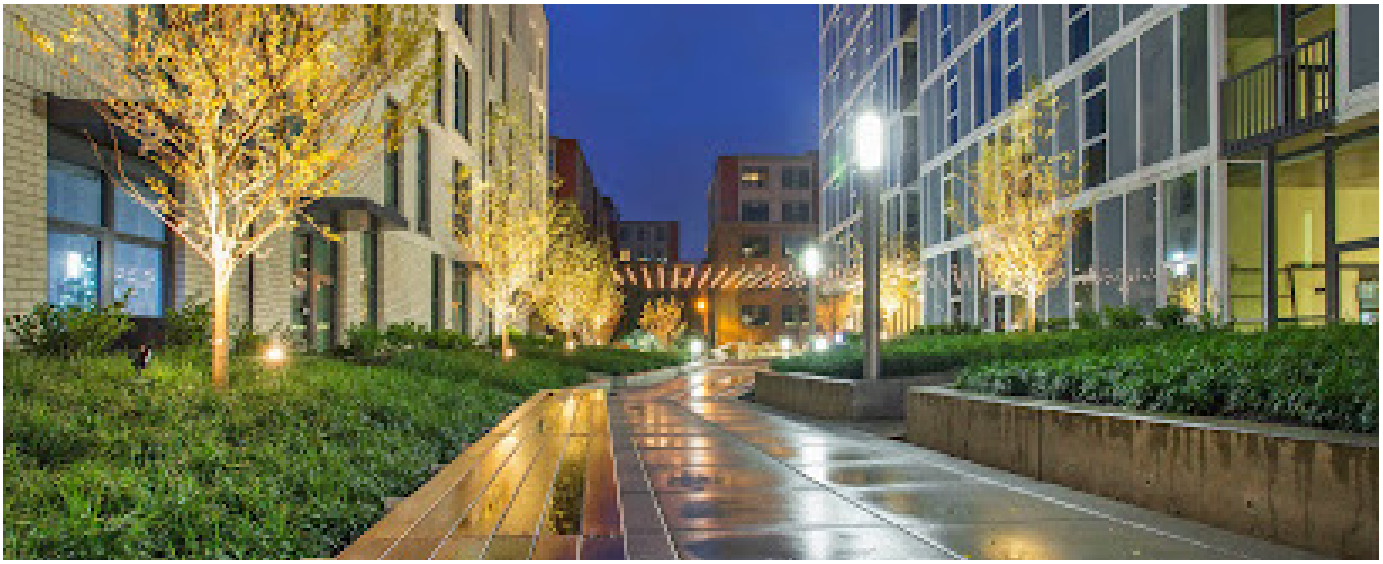
INCORPORATE RECLAIMED OR HISTORICALLY INSPIRED MATERIALS

Using salvaged materials like brick, timber, or industrial metal—either as accents or structural elements—connects new construction to Dayton's layered past. These materials bring texture and story to the site while reducing the embodied carbon of new builds.

CARLTON CIVIC CENTER
Carlton, OR
Source: Holst Architecture

Guideline 12

Integrate pedestrian-scale lighting.



Block 17, Portland, OR

Background

Lighting is a critical component of onMain's public realm, supporting nighttime safety, comfort, and vibrancy. The Master Plan calls for layered lighting strategies that prioritize pedestrian-scale fixtures and avoid glare or overlighting. Lighting contributes to walkability, enhances aesthetics, and can support placemaking when integrated with public art, landscapes, and signage.

As a district intended to welcome activity "every day of the year," onMain must ensure that nighttime environments feel safe, accessible, and inviting. Lighting can also showcase architectural features, interpretive elements, or green infrastructure. Smart lighting systems that adjust based on time of day or occupancy further align with the district's innovation goals.

Intent

Provide high-quality, human-scaled lighting throughout the district to support safe, comfortable, and attractive nighttime environments. Lighting should be layered, warm in tone, and coordinated with streetscapes, signage, and civic spaces. Prioritize energy efficiency, dark-sky compliance, and integration with smart systems where feasible. Pedestrian-scale lighting reinforces walkability and encourages public life after dark, contributing to onMain's identity as a vibrant, welcoming place around the clock.

Canopy and bollard lighting define walkway

Recessed lighting in building overhang

Architectural lighting highlights canopy over walkway

Support safety, walkability, and nighttime vibrancy with lighting designed at a human scale.

Strategies to Meet the Guideline

- Employ a layered lighting strategy—path lighting, bollards, pole fixtures, and façade-mounted lights.
- Illuminate gathering areas, plantings, and art to enhance ambiance and usability.
- Use dark-sky compliant fixtures and warm color temperatures to promote nighttime comfort.
- Ensure lighting is uniform and avoids deep shadows, particularly at crosswalks and entrances.

EMPLOY A LAYERED LIGHTING STRATEGY

A carefully layered lighting design, with path lights, bollards, and pole fixtures, creates a welcoming atmosphere while ensuring pedestrian safety. Layering different light sources at varying heights provides both functional visibility and aesthetic appeal, making the space feel vibrant and secure after dark.

UC HEALTH CLIFTON CAMPUS
Cincinnati, OH
Source: Cannon Design

ILLUMINATE GATHERING AREAS, PLANTINGS, AND ART

Softly illuminated plantings, art pieces, and gathering areas add character and a sense of place. Thoughtful lighting design enhances the beauty of these spaces, encouraging evening use and social interactions while supporting a sense of safety and comfort.

ELLEN BROWNING BUILDING
Portland, OR
Source: Hacker Architects

USE DARK-SKY COMPLIANT FIXTURES

Warm-toned, dark-sky compliant fixtures ensure a balanced light environment that minimizes glare while promoting comfort. This sustainable lighting approach improves visual continuity and reduces light pollution, allowing the urban landscape to shine while protecting the night sky.

42XX
Los Angeles, CA
Source: Think Wood

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4. Implementation

How the Guidelines are Applied

Implementation

To ensure the onMain Design Guidelines serve as a practical tool for shaping high-quality development, this section provides a roadmap for applying the guidelines over time.

How the Guidelines are Applied

The onMain Design Guidelines are intended to guide the physical development of the site in alignment with the onMain Vision and Master Plan, offering a structured yet adaptable framework for ensuring design excellence. Implementation of these guidelines is embedded within the legal and administrative framework outlined in the Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CCRs) and the Ground Sublease agreements for onMain.

The Design Guidelines work in tandem with the Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CCRs) and each Ground Sublease agreement. These documents ensure that every project contributes to a unified and high-quality environment.

How Legal Agreements Support the Review Process

The Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions and Reservation of Easements (CCRs) set the overarching rules for development across the district, including shared infrastructure, land use, and maintenance responsibilities. Section 7 of the CCRs outlines the requirement for design review and approval by onMain Inc.

The Ground Sublease (signed by each developer leasing land from onMain Inc.) reinforces these requirements. It obligates the developer to:

- Follow the Design Guidelines and obtain design approvals;
- Meet baseline sustainability goals (e.g., LEED v4 BD+C "Certified" or equivalent);
- Secure all necessary City approvals and permits;
- Include provisions in leases or subleases to ensure compliance by occupants.

Together, these documents provide the legal and organizational foundation for high-quality development at onMain. They ensure that the shared vision is implemented consistently across multiple parcels and project phases.

Review Process Overview

EARLY COORDINATION WITH ONMAIN INC.

Developers are encouraged to meet with onMain Inc., the site's managing entity, early in the process to review design goals, site requirements, and how to apply the guidelines. This early step can help identify opportunities and avoid potential conflicts later.

DESIGN SUBMITTAL

Before any construction begins, developers must submit detailed plans for review. These must demonstrate how the project complies with the Design Guidelines and the key tenets of sustainability, identity, and activation. Required materials may include site plans, building elevations, landscape designs, and a written summary of how the project addresses the guidelines.

DESIGN REVIEW BY ONMAIN

As described in Section 7 of the CCRs, all improvements—buildings, signage, landscaping, site work, or exterior alterations—must be reviewed and approved by onMain Inc. This includes ensuring that design proposals are consistent with and meet the intent of these guidelines.

CITY REVIEW AND ZONING COMPLIANCE

After approval by onMain Inc., the project must also be reviewed by the City of Dayton for consistency with PD-176 (the Planned Development zoning in place for onMain). This step includes review by the Plan Board.

FLEXIBILITY AND ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

The Design Guidelines are outcome-oriented. While they outline clear expectations for design quality, they also allow for flexibility when a proposed solution achieves the same—or better—results in a different way.

To request an alternative approach, a developer must:

- Clearly explain how the proposed design meets the intent of the guidelines;
- Demonstrate that the design provides equal or better quality, function, and experience;
- Submit the alternative for review and approval by onMain Inc.

Throughout all phases, the guidelines provide a consistent set of values, while allowing for evolution in response to changing needs, innovation, and lessons learned from earlier development.

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