

**CITY OF BOULDER  
PLANNING BOARD AGENDA ITEM**

**MEETING DATE:** February 4, 2016

**AGENDA TITLE:** Public hearing to consider a recommendation to City Council on the 2016 Update to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines .

**REQUESTING DEPARTMENTS:**

David Driskell, Executive Director of Planning, Housing, + Sustainability (PH+S)  
Susan Richstone, Deputy Director of PH+S  
Charles Ferro, Development Review Manager, PH+S  
Sam Assefa, Senior Urban Designer, PH+S  
Kalani Pahoia, Urban Designer, PH+S

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Hear Staff presentation
2. Planning Board discussion
3. Planning Board recommendation to City Council on the 2016 Update to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The *Downtown Urban Design Guidelines (Guidelines)* are used by the city to help review proposed preservation, renovation and new construction projects in downtown Boulder, including the Downtown Historic District. As part of the Design Excellence Initiative, and in response to City Council direction in March 2015, staff has been working with a working group comprised of representatives from the Planning Board, Landmarks Board, Design Advisory Board, and the Downtown Management Commission to update the Guidelines. The update to the Guidelines was prepared during seven working group sessions facilitated by staff from August through November 2015. In addition, staff held a joint board meeting and a public open house in December 2015 to present the draft edits and recommendations from the working group. The scope of the update has focused on improvements to the usability and efficacy of the Guidelines and does not entail substantial changes to the document or a change to the vision of Downtown. The proposed changes are based on points of consensus of the working group.

The purpose of this agenda item is to present the final draft of the Guidelines ([Attachment A](#)) and to consider a recommendation for adoption to City Council.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the Planning Board recommend that City Council adopt the 2016 updated Downtown Urban Design Guidelines.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Guidelines have their roots in planning initiatives started in the 1980s and were last updated in 2002. Rationale behind the update included the age of the document, lack of reflection to the current standards, and problematic sections in need of clarification. Over the last few years, the Design Advisory Board (DAB) in its annual letters to City Council, has articulated the need for updating the Guidelines. In late 2014 and early 2015, the DAB discussed specific areas and items in the Guidelines that it believed needed to be updated and provided staff with its suggested revisions in a form of a redlined copy of the current Guidelines.

The need to update the Guidelines became a priority due to current concerns about design outcomes, and as part of the Design Excellence Initiative work that began in 2014. In January 2015, Victor Dover of Dover Kohl & Partners (the firm hired by the city to provide consulting services for the Design Excellence Initiative) provided recommendations for short and long term actions the city should undertake to address design concerns. Recommendations included updating outdated guidelines, such as the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, and putting a hold on height modifications in all areas except those that have established community vision or until a clear guidance is confirmed through policy revisions.

On March 17, 2015, City Council unanimously approved third reading of the height modification ordinance with a sunset provision that would allow the areas of downtown north of Canyon that are zoned Downtown 4 and 5 (i.e., DT-4 and DT-5) to become automatically eligible for height modifications through the Site Review process upon adoption of the revised Guidelines by the City Council.

The height ordinance (Ordinance No. 8028) includes the following authority in Section 4:

*“Section 4. The council orders the city manager to add those areas north of Canyon Boulevard and within the DT-4 and DT-5 zoning districts, to the map designated as Appendix J, “Areas Where Height Modifications May be Considered,” B.R.C. 1981 after the final completion and adoption by the City Council of amendments that are presently under review for the 2002 Downtown Urban Design Guidelines.”*

In March 2015, the City Council directed staff to update the Guidelines within a six-month time period. In the second quarter of 2015, staff initiated a process ([Attachment D](#)) for updating the Guidelines and also recommended the formation of a working group. In August of 2015, the Design Guidelines Working Group was formed and tasked with serving in an advisory and authoring capacity for updating the Guidelines. The working group includes the following board and/or commission members:

1. Crystal Gray, PB
2. Bryan Bowen, PB
3. Kate Remley, LB
4. Deborah Yin, LB
5. Jamison Brown, DAB
6. David McInerney, DAB
7. Jerry Shapins, DMC

Upon completion of the working group sessions, staff presented the recommendations and draft guidelines to the public at an open house on December 8th, and to a joint board meeting on December 10, 2015. The joint board meeting included members from Planning Board, Landmarks Board, Design Advisory Board, and the Downtown Management Commission. Staff facilitated review of the draft document and collected feedback during the open house and joint board meeting.

In addition, staff has revised the Appendix J “Areas Where Height Modification May be Considered” map ([Attachment E](#)) to be consistent with the direction of height ordinance (Ordinance No. 8028) to include the DT-4 and DT-5 zoning districts.

## **DESIGN GUIDELINES WORKING GROUP PROCESS**

City staff facilitated seven sessions with the working group from August 28th through November 16, 2016. The work sessions included a chapter by chapter review and discussion of the existing Guidelines, as well as review and consideration of DAB’s suggested revisions. The working group sessions totaled fourteen (14) hours, not including the required independent review of the draft document by working group members.

Prior to each working group session a pdf input form was prepared for the assigned section of the document and circulated to the members. Areas of the document requiring attention, based the DAB’s recommendations and staff assessment, were flagged for the working group evaluation. In addition, individual working group members reviewed the flagged areas and indicated whether the topic warranted discussion during the working group session. If any topic or item was identified by a working group member it was then added to the agenda and discussed during the session. Items identified as needing updates were thoroughly reviewed by the group for content, context, appropriateness, and language. All changes were confirmed through a group consensus, and then incorporated by staff into the review draft after each meeting. The review draft was then forwarded to the group members prior to the next meeting as a record of the meeting. If no consensus could be met with regard to a topic or item in question it was not revised. Thus, some items within the document are carried forward unchanged from the 2002 Guidelines due to either a lack of consensus and/or the change amounted to a substantial alteration to the intent and purpose of the Guidelines.

The update included streamlining the document for usability, removal of redundant items, clarifying language, improving graphics and maps, removing of lengthy code references that are not relevant for inclusion in the Guidelines, and updating the technical information. Several sections were reorganized and/or merged to create a more coherent and easy to use document. This effort was aimed at bringing the 13-year-old document into alignment with the plans, policies and regulations created since the last update.

The following is a summary of the working group changes to the document per section:

### **Introduction**

Review of the Introduction occurred during working group sessions 1 and 2. Upon review of the section, the working group recommended making general corrections to make the acknowledgments current and reorganizing the section for clarity. The revisions included refocusing the document on urban design, creating a new downtown map, updating the introductory questions to include information on how the Guidelines are administered, summarizing the ten downtown strategies with a vision statement and improved images, clarifying and condensing the design review process with a diagram and information linking to the most current

application review types, replacing detailed land use and other geographic maps with notation links to the City's databases, and condensing the history subsection to focus on the development history of the area.

### Section 1: The Downtown Historic District

Review of the Section 1 occurred during working group sessions 2 through 4. Upon review of the section it was found the Guidelines contained a significant amount of redundancies within the individual guidelines and lacked sufficient guidance in regards to alterations or additions of historic properties. The working group recommended reorganizing the subsections and consolidating guidelines with the same, or similar, requirements.

Reorganization of Section 1 included:

1. Relocating and updating the recommended materials list to the beginning of the chapter;
2. Consolidating all of the Guidelines referencing existing historic properties into a comprehensive subsection of architectural elements with specifics regarding preservation;
3. Creating a new subsection of guidelines for contemporary alterations and additions to historic properties which follow the Secretary of the Interior standards and best practices, and
4. Revising the subsection on new construction in historic districts to reinforce the character defining features of the overall historic district.

In addition to the restructuring, the working group and staff recommended revising the maps, images, and diagrams to be more accurate and reflective of the historic properties. This resulted in the creation of new diagrams depicting historic features and two new historic district maps. The first map is an overview map with the Downtown Historic District boundary and the adjacent historic districts, and the second map is an enlarged area of the Historic District which identifies the individually landmarked and contributing historic buildings.

### Section 2: The Non-Historic and Section 3: The Interface Areas

Review of the Sections 2 and 3 occurred during working group sessions 4 and 5. Upon review of the sections, it was determined individual guidelines in Sections 2: The Non-Historic Area and Section 3: The Interface Area primarily addresses non-historic areas of Downtown and would be best served as a single section. The staff and working group identified areas of concern in the general lack of structure in the sections, redundant or unspecific guidelines, and the poor instructional quality of the images. The working group recommended consolidating the two sections and creating subsections addressing commercial and residential construction in the Non-Historic and Interface areas downtown.

In addition to the restructuring, the working group proposed and reviewed multiple imagery options to better illustrate the intent of the newly consolidated section. Included in these changes was the update to the map identifying the Non-Historic and Interface Area.

Section 4: Parking Facilities, Section 5: Commercial Signs, and Section 6: Streetscape Improvements

Review of the Sections 4 through 6 occurred during working group sessions 5 and 6. Review of the structure and individual guidelines in the sections revealed fairly disjointed content and a general restatement of requirements already covered within the Boulder Revised Code. In some instances the Guidelines, Boulder Revised Code (BRC) and the Design and Construction Standards (DCS) were at odds and competing against one another.

The working group recommended merging Section 4: Parking Facilities requirements into the design requirements of Sections 1 and 2, and to merge Sections 5 and 6 into a new “Public Realm” chapter. The rationale behind the creation of a “Public Realm” section was anything within the public right-of-way, including signage, landscaping, and streetscape, could be bundled into a comprehensive chapter and refined to provide more guidance.

Revisions to the new “Public Realm” sections included revising the language to provide urban design requirements without creating conflicts with other regulating documents, removing all the extensive code language, removing the extensive landscaping lists available in the code, and editing the section to illustrate the design requirements which are special to Downtown. In addition, the revision includes reworking the streetscape map and an extensive editing of the section imagery.

Appendix A & B

The appendix was deleted from the document. The working group and staff did not find enough cause to continue to keep a redundant list of the guideline subsection titles or zoning information.

**WORKING GROUP’S PROPOSED FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The working group concluded that while the current revisions and recommendations would improve the usability and general guidance of the document, there is a need for a more substantial focus for developing a visionary urban design plan and addressing and improving the development review process.

In addition to updating the current guidelines, the working group has proposed future recommendations to the City Council focused on the following deficits identified in the current guidelines:

**1. Urban Design**

- Develop a downtown urban design plan;
- Engage multiple stakeholders in developing a vision for downtown, as it is the heart of the city;
- Consider a Form-Based Code for the downtown area; and,
- Define the desirable downtown building forms and character.

**2. Land Use**

- Update the land use code and the DCS (Design and Construction Standards) to reflect the Guidelines and any newly identified urban design outcomes;
- Define the streetscape requirements;
- With the assistance of a consultant, complete a comprehensive update of the sign code and include signage in historic districts;

- Update the fencing and wall code;
- Revise the land use code use tables to consider compatibility between the use and the street activation; and,
- Revise the zoning districts to resolve issues of split block zoning and cross street compatibility.

### 3. Design Review Process

- Improve and foster cross-board communication and collaboration;
- Include DAB earlier in the development review process; and,
- Use 3D modeling in the design review process and encourage 3D massing models at the concept level of review.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH AND JOINT BOARD MEETING INPUT**

Staff conducted public outreach with an informational, open house session. Members of the public were presented the proposed changes to the Guidelines. In addition, staff supported online feedback forum and provided an informational session with Downtown Boulder Inc (DBI). General feedback from members of the public who attended the open house was positive. Currently, no feedback has been received from the online input forum.

DBI expressed concerns regarding the update of the Guidelines and lack of addressing the issue of parking requirements, lack of available parking in downtown, and the impact, and/or possible hardship to the development industry generated by additional requirements of updated Guidelines. Staff clarified with DBI the scope of the 2016 update does not involve substantive changes to the document. In addition, staff reiterated that in respect to parking the Guidelines do not regulate actual parking inventory, but rather focus on the design attributes of parking associated structures and surface lots.

Input from the Joint Board Meeting scheduled December 12th included the review of Downtown Urban Design Guidelines Draft (**Appendix B**) and was limited to the “Introduction”, “Section 1: The Historic District”, and a limited review of “Section 2: The Non-Historic & Interface Areas”. Board members present discussed the following list of summarized items:

**Table 1 - Summary of December 10, 2015 Joint Board Input**

	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Reviewed By Staff</b>	<b>Included in Final Draft Revision</b>
1.	Improve the vision statement		✓
2.	Add a photo collage representative of downtown		✓
3.	Revise the maps to include more information, e.g. Civic Area, Bike Paths, Boulder Creek		✓
4.	Add “Views” and “Sun and Shade”		✓
5.	Revise the maps and color coding of the document layout to be more functional and associated with the chapters		✓
6.	Revise the Review Process Chart, add “inappropriate” illustrative images, consolidate		✓

	paired imagery		
7.	Provide additional information in the History subsection		✓
8.	Review the details for windows, bulkheads, entrance and of the condensed bullets for the anatomy	✓	
9.	Add note to distinguish commercial at grade entrances		✓
10.	Add clarity in 1.3.2 regarding additions to historic buildings and referencing the scale and roof patterning of the overall block		✓
11.	Review the use of “soft” terms, e.g. consider, in general, etc	✓	
12.	Add requirement to wrap alley corner with frontage material		✓
13.	Add note to 1.4.4 to consider the relationship between height and footprint		✓
14.	Make universal edit from “handicap” to “universal access”		✓
15.	Edit language in respect to Sec. of Interior Standards and “differentiated yet compatible”		✓

**NEXT STEPS:**

February 16, 2016 - City Council

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- [A Downtown Urban Design Guidelines 2016](#)
- [B Downtown Urban Design Guidelines Draft dated Dec. 10, 2015](#)
- [C Legal Blackline Record](#)
- [D Working Group Process Timeline](#)
- [E Appendix J “Areas Where Height Modification May be Considered” map](#)
- [F Joint Board Meeting and Individual Board Member Input](#)



**DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

*CITY OF BOULDER*  
*BOULDER, COLORADO*  
*FEBRUARY 2016*



Acknowledgements

This third edition of the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines is the result of recommendations from a 2015 joint-board working group consisting of representatives from the Landmarks Board, Design Advisory Board, Downtown Management Commission, the Planning Board and City staff.

Much of the basis of this document may be attributed to earlier work by the Downtown Alliance, a group of city boards and commissions, non-profit organizations and neighborhood groups including the city of Boulder Planning Board; the Landmarks Board; the Design Advisory Board; the Downtown Management Commission; Downtown Boulder, Inc.; Historic Boulder; and representatives from the Whittier, Mapleton Hill, Goss Grove, and Flatirons neighborhoods.

Photo Credits:

Cover photo courtesy of Downtown Boulder, Inc. (DBI)

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Note:

The design guidelines include photographs and diagrams to illustrate acceptable or unacceptable approaches. These photographs and diagrams are provided as examples and are not intended to indicate the only options.

Note:

In general, these guidelines adhere to Local, State and Federal regulations, but wherever a discrepancy may arise, the higher standard shall be applied.

### ***What is the purpose of the guidelines?***

The purpose of this third edition of the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines is to provide a basis for understanding, discussing, and assessing the design quality of proposed preservation, renovation and new construction projects located within the boundaries of the Downtown Historic District, the Non-Historic Area, and the Interface Area.

Through the use of these guidelines, it is anticipated both private and public projects will endeavor to preserve and enhance the unique form, scale, and visual character of Downtown while strengthening the identity of the area through encouraging new, compatible development.

### ***How are the guidelines organized?***

The guidelines are organized into three sections. The first two sections address specific geographic areas of the Downtown: the Downtown Historic District and the Non-Historic & Neighborhood Interface Areas. The last section addresses the Public Realm.

The sections are organized around several principal guidelines and a number of "follow-up" guidelines. Within the margins are excerpts marked "Note:" and "Code:" reserved for more in depth references to the subject matter.

### ***How are the guidelines revised?***

The guidelines are part of a Downtown Area Plan and are adopted by Planning Board and City Council with advice from the Design Advisory Board. The Landmarks Board approves guidelines for the Downtown Historic District.

### ***How are the guidelines administered?***

Three review bodies are primarily responsible for administering these guidelines: the Landmarks Board (LB), the Design Advisory Board (DAB), and the Downtown Management Commission (DMC). Specifically, the LB reviews all projects located in the Downtown Historic District and landmarked properties located outside of the District but within the downtown boundaries. The Planning Board applies these guidelines as part of the site review process. DAB reviews all projects with a construction value over \$25,000 in the Non-Historic and Interface Areas, and the DMC reviews projects located on the Downtown Boulder Mall.

When this document uses terms such as "encouragement" and "generally", it acknowledges that these guidelines are utilized in a mandatory review and voluntary context; however, in the review of Landmark Alteration Certificates and Site Review applications, the guidelines may be applied with mandatory effect in the analysis of specific review criteria.



# DOWNTOWN VISION

Downtown Boulder is characterized by the eclectic, fine grained and compact urban character of the Downtown Historic District nestled in against the natural backdrop of the Rocky Mountains. These qualities are reflected in the traditional buildings associated with the original settlement of the area, the street grid and bustling economy, and civic life of downtown. This is also where the historic fabric is the setting for contemporary, vibrant and active urban life where people are living, working, shopping and recreating in the shadow of a visible history.

The urban design quality becomes a vital part of what makes Downtown Boulder a memorable place. These guidelines are intended to encourage the preservation and enhancement of Downtown's built environment through recognition of design attributes that are intrinsic to its existing character or essential to its ongoing appeal:

- Design innovation and excellence in form and visual character that respect and reference historic architectural context;
- Careful consideration of the urban and natural interface including views, green spaces, and waterways;
- Human-scaled space that results from the designed interplay of enclosing mass, void, and light;
- Street-level design oriented toward the pedestrian in motion; and
- Sustainable design practice with respect to solar access, water, energy and materials.

Photo Credits:  
DBI, Anish Palekar (OSMP), City of Boulder



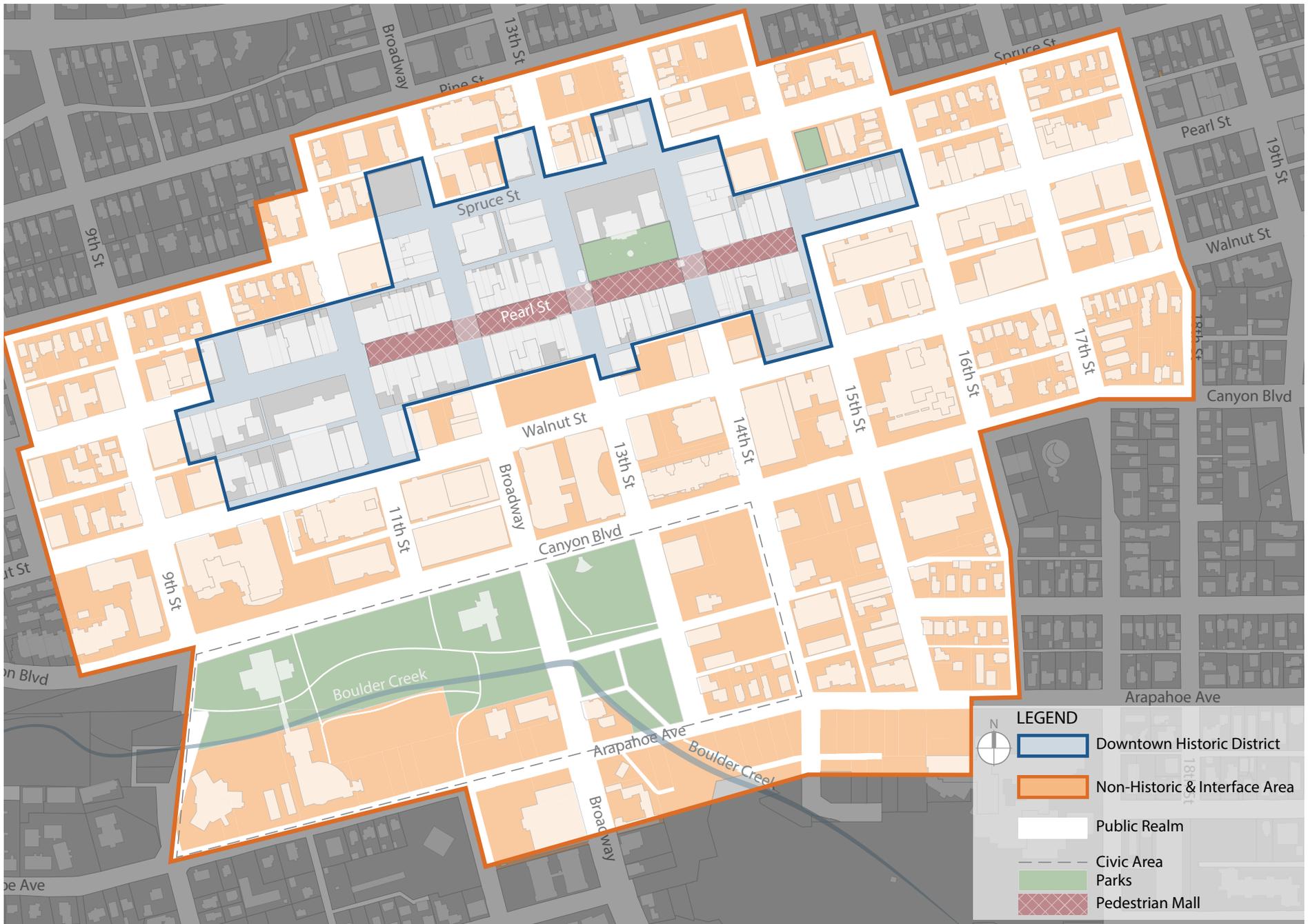


Fig. 1 Map of Downtown Boulder (City of Boulder)

**Note:**

Scheduling a design review early is important. In addition, scheduling a design review with the appropriate review body is the responsibility of the property owner, developer or their representative. In general, a meeting should be scheduled before a formal application is made to the city for a building permit or development review. For more information regarding the design review and application procedure please contact (303) 441-1880.

**Note:**

When requested LB or DAB may act in an advisory capacity to the other board.

**Note:**

For further map data please see the City of Boulder [eMapLink](#).

## ***THE REVIEW PROCESS***

### ***The Landmark Alteration Certificate (LAC) Review Process***

Landmark Alteration Certificate (LAC) review through the Historic Preservation Program is required for exterior changes to landmarked properties and all properties located within the Downtown Historic District boundaries. The majority of applications are reviewed by the Landmarks Design Review committee (LDRC) that meets each week. Routine changes, such as patios and signage, are reviewed by staff. More complex projects, including demolition or new construction, are reviewed by the Landmarks Board. To find out more or for an application, visit the City of Boulder [Historic Preservation website](#), or call (303) 441-1880.

### ***The Design Advisory Board (DAB) Process***

The Design Advisory Board (DAB) reviews projects valued over \$25,000 located in the Non-Historic Area and Interface Area which involve the construction of a new building or exterior work on an existing building. The board provides comments to persons responsible for the design and development, and assures compliance with the most recent Downtown Urban Design Guidelines. DAB also reviews projects that require a discretionary review. To find out more, visit the [DAB website](#), or call (303) 441-1880.

### ***The Downtown Management Commission (DMC) Process***

The DMC manages, controls and supervises the business affairs of the Central Area General Improvement District (CAGID) which includes review of projects which extend into the public right-of-way in the Downtown Boulder Pedestrian Mall. Typical projects reviewed by the DMC include outdoor eating areas, signs, awnings, and other elements. To find out more, visit the [DMC website](#), or call (303) 413-7300.

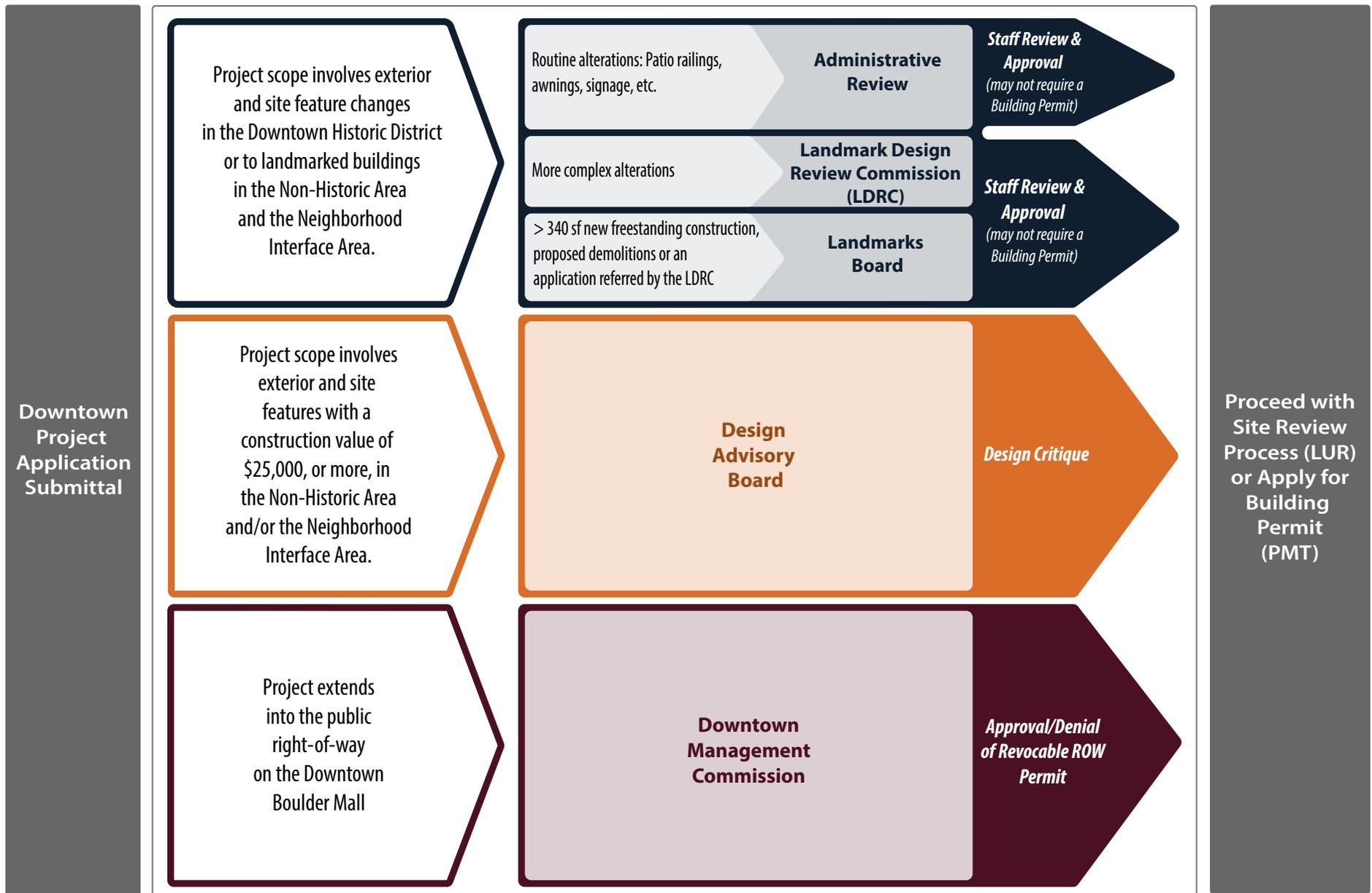


Fig. 2 Application progression for projects within Downtown Boulder (Source: City of Boulder)

Note:  
More information, on the history of Boulder, including historic photographs and other relevant background, is available at the [Boulder History Museum](#) and the [Carnegie Branch Library for Local History](#).

Note:  
Please see the National Register of Historic Places "[Downtown Boulder Historic District](#)" nomination for more specific details regarding the historic context and significance as it relates to the architectural history of the area.

Photo Credits:  
Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, City of Boulder

## DOWNTOWN HISTORY

In February of 1859, the Boulder City Town Company was organized to establish a supply center for miners going into the mountains in search of gold and silver in the hope that it would grow to "be an important town." Establishment of the two square mile town site followed the discovery of gold near present day Denver, and a resulting flood of prospectors to the area. One such prospector, George R. Williamson recounted that a straight line was laid out for the main street by driving a stake in the ground at the corner of what is now Broadway and Pearl Streets and "a sighting (was made) across this stick to the black spur on the prairie, known as Valmont Butte" made to establish the alignment of Pearl Street.<sup>1</sup> From the beginning Pearl Street has been the nucleus of the community, and its main street. In 1860, the fledgling town was described as containing about sixty log buildings (all with dirt floors), located mainly along Pearl Street. Several years later, upon visiting Boulder the intrepid English visitor described the town as "a hideous collection of frame houses on a burning plain."<sup>2</sup>

While growth in Boulder was slow until after the end of the Civil War, business generated from the mining camps, together with Boulder's selection as the county seat in 1861, the arrival of the railroad in 1873, and establishment of a state university in 1876, provided the foundation for steady growth and the construction of substantial business blocks in the commercial center of the town. Businesses were established along Pearl Street and adjoining streets to supply the needs of the town, local farmers, and mining camps.

By the 1880s, the commercial area had developed into bustling hub of restaurants, groceries, saloons, liquor stores, liverys, lumber yards, drug stores, dry goods stores, hardware stores, feed and flour stores, barbers, paint shops, and tailors, in addition to fraternal lodges and the county courthouse. An 1880 account of Boulder in the Boulder County News observed, "I've never seen a city of this size with so many saloons (approximately eighteen) and so few drunks."<sup>3</sup>

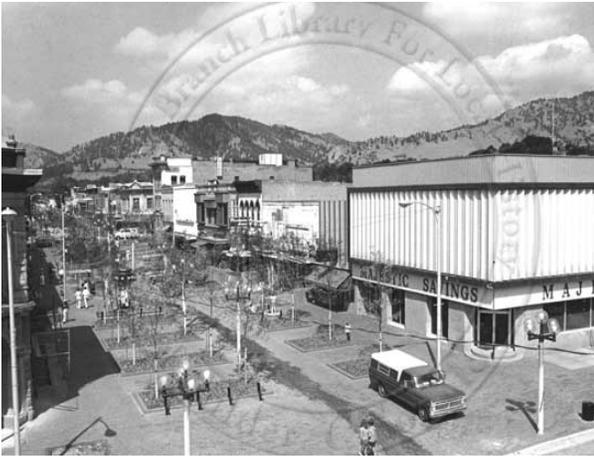
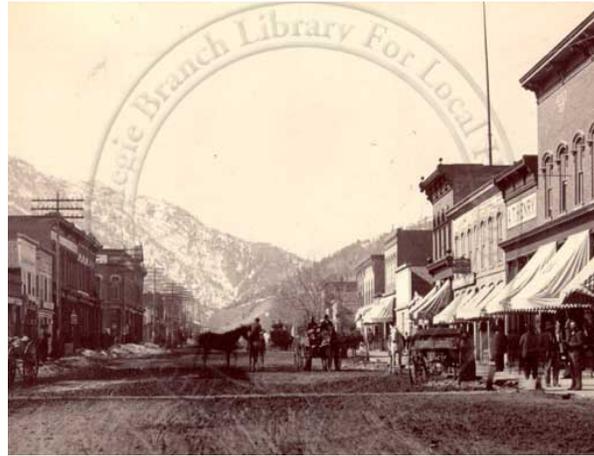
Streetcar service enabled residents in new areas of the city to conveniently shop and conduct business downtown as Boulder transformed from a supply town to a sleepy university city with commercial activities centered on and around Pearl Street. The Denver & Interurban Railroad (an intercity connection with Denver) ran along Pearl Street from 1908 until 1917. During the 1920s, several new commercial buildings were erected, updating the appearance of the downtown with Twentieth Century influences. The first decades of the 1900s also saw a rising awareness of Boulder's potential to draw newcomers and tourists with construction of the Boulderado Hotel in 1909 and the citywide planning for the improvement of Boulder with the Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. masterplan in 1910. Increasingly, Boulder residents were becoming sensitive to the built and natural environment, leading Saco DeBoer's 1928 zoning proposal establishing the first zoning ordinance creating seven zoning districts and the first height restrictions limiting downtown buildings to seventy-five feet and neighborhood shopping districts to thirty-five feet.

Boulder experienced tremendous growth after World War II as the university grew and the city marketed itself as a perfect place to locate "clean" industry. This led to a number of scientific research institutions and companies locating in the city. The resulting new jobs led to many new residential neighborhoods and automobile-oriented neighborhood shopping areas outside of the core area, creating competition to downtown and leading to the "modernization" of storefronts during the 1950s and 1960s. By the early 1970s, a merchant-led effort to revitalize Pearl Street was underway. Recognizing Boulder's area growth limitations as a result of acquisition of open space around the city, community leaders joined with downtown property owners and merchants to turn the four blocks of Pearl Street between 11th and 15th Streets into a pedestrian mall. The Pearl Street Mall is among the most successful such pedestrian ways in the United States with many restored historic buildings and a vibrant commercial area. In 1980, the Downtown Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places and in 1999 the area was designated a local historic district.

<sup>1</sup> "Boulder in Perspective – From Search for Gold to the Gold of Research", J.B. Schooland, Johnson Pub., 1980, p.136

<sup>2</sup> "A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains", Isabella L. Bird, John Murray Pub., 1879, p.230

<sup>3</sup> "Boulder in Perspective – From Search for Gold to the Gold of Research", J.B. Schooland, Johnson Pub., 1980



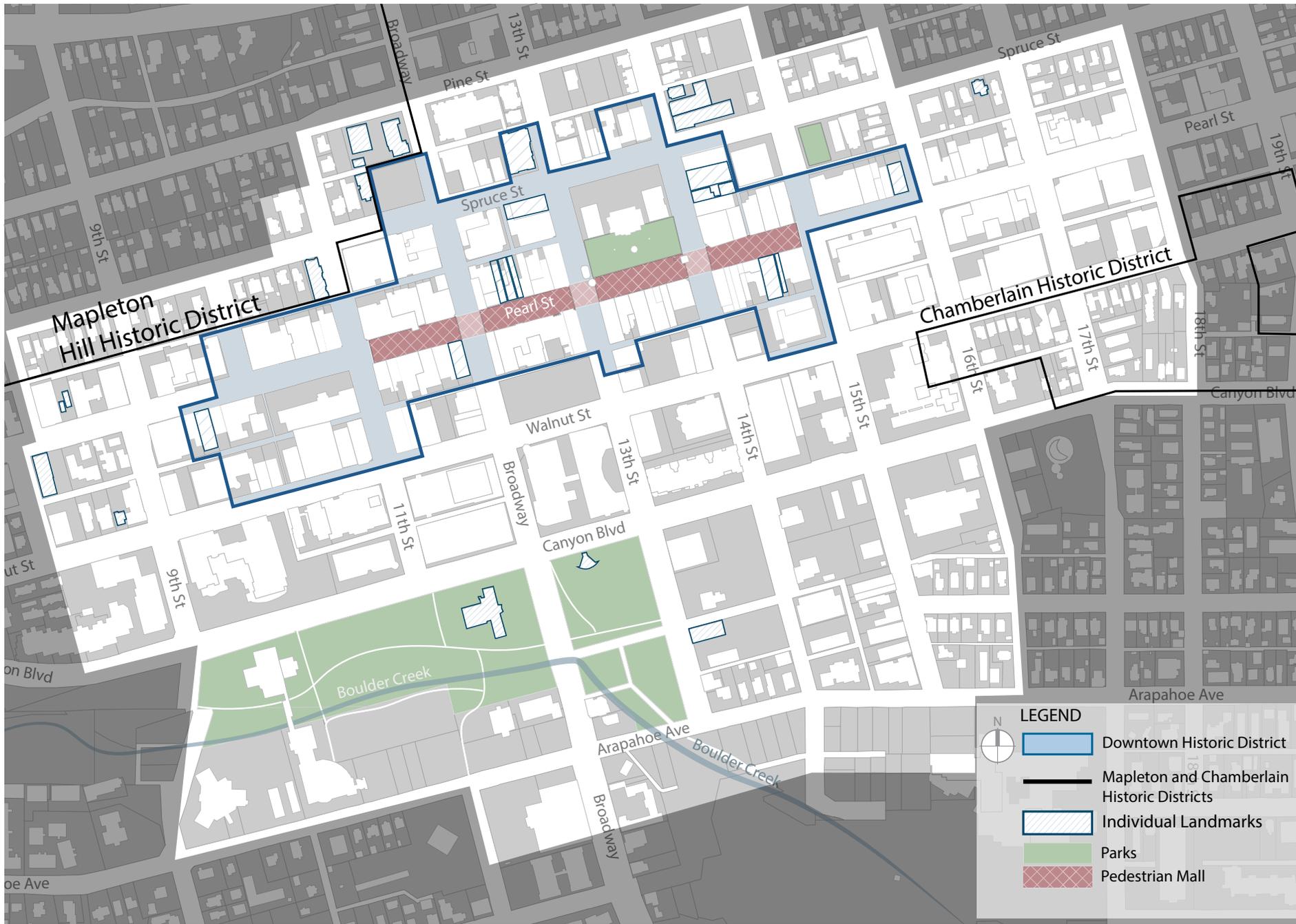


Fig. 2 Downtown Historic District Map (Source: City of Boulder)

## SECTION 1 *THE HISTORIC DISTRICT*

Note:

All buildings in the district have been evaluated for historic significance and are subject to Landmarks Board review when exterior work is involved. Any changes to a building, or site, require a [Landmark Alteration Certificate](#) prior to commencement.

The boundaries of the Downtown Historic District, designated in 1999 with a period of significance from 1858-1946, generally conform to the boundaries of the Downtown Boulder National Register Historic District. The district contains the City's greatest concentration of historic commercial buildings, especially along Pearl Street which forms its central spine. These buildings not only serve as a link with our cultural heritage, they also establish a model for design quality. Such buildings are resources for education, recreation and human enjoyment. They provide Downtown with a rich character and a human scale that are unique assets for both residents and visitors.

Development in the Downtown Historic District must be especially sensitive to issues of compatibility. The economic success of the area is in many ways dependent on maintaining the historic character and quality that sets the it apart from other shopping areas. For this reason, the preservation, restoration, and appropriate rehabilitation of older buildings in this district is of great importance.

***The urban design objectives for the Downtown Historic District are to:***

- Preserve and restore historic buildings.
- Preserve the integrity of the historic architectural features of individual buildings.
- Ensure that alterations and new construction strengthen and maintain the historic integrity of individual buildings and of the district at large.
- Encourage new development that will respect and enhance the visual character.
- Preserve the central area as a place for intense pedestrian activity.



**Note:**

The City's planning department maintains a file of each building in the Downtown area more than 50 years in age. The official Inventory/Survey forms on file indicate the level of significance of each building within the Downtown Historic District. For more information please visit the [City of Boulder Historic Preservation website](#) or call (303) 441-1800.

***Historic properties are organized into three categories:***

- **Local Landmark Buildings** - These buildings are officially designated as City of Boulder local landmarks. They have a special character, historic, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value in Boulder's local history. Landmarked buildings may include contributing properties to the Downtown Historic District. The greatest care must be given to preserving, restoring, and designing additions to these buildings.
- **Contributing Buildings** - Contributing buildings are those built during the district's period of significance (1858 through 1946) that exist in comparatively "original" condition, or that have been appropriately restored, and that clearly contribute to the historic significance and integrity of the area. Such buildings may have additions that are compatible with the historic character of the original building, have original material now covered, or have experienced some alteration, yet continue to convey some sense of history. Rehabilitations and additions should be sensitive and appropriate to the historic building and district.
- **Non-Contributing Buildings** - There are two types of non-contributing buildings in the Downtown Boulder Historic District. First, buildings built during the district's period of significance that have been altered to such an extent that historic information is not interpretable and restoration is not possible. Such buildings should be evaluated on a case by case basis to determine if saving and restoring them is feasible or desirable. Second, buildings erected after 1946 which are not individually significant. For alterations to these buildings, the guidelines for new construction and/or remodel of non-contributing buildings in this section apply.

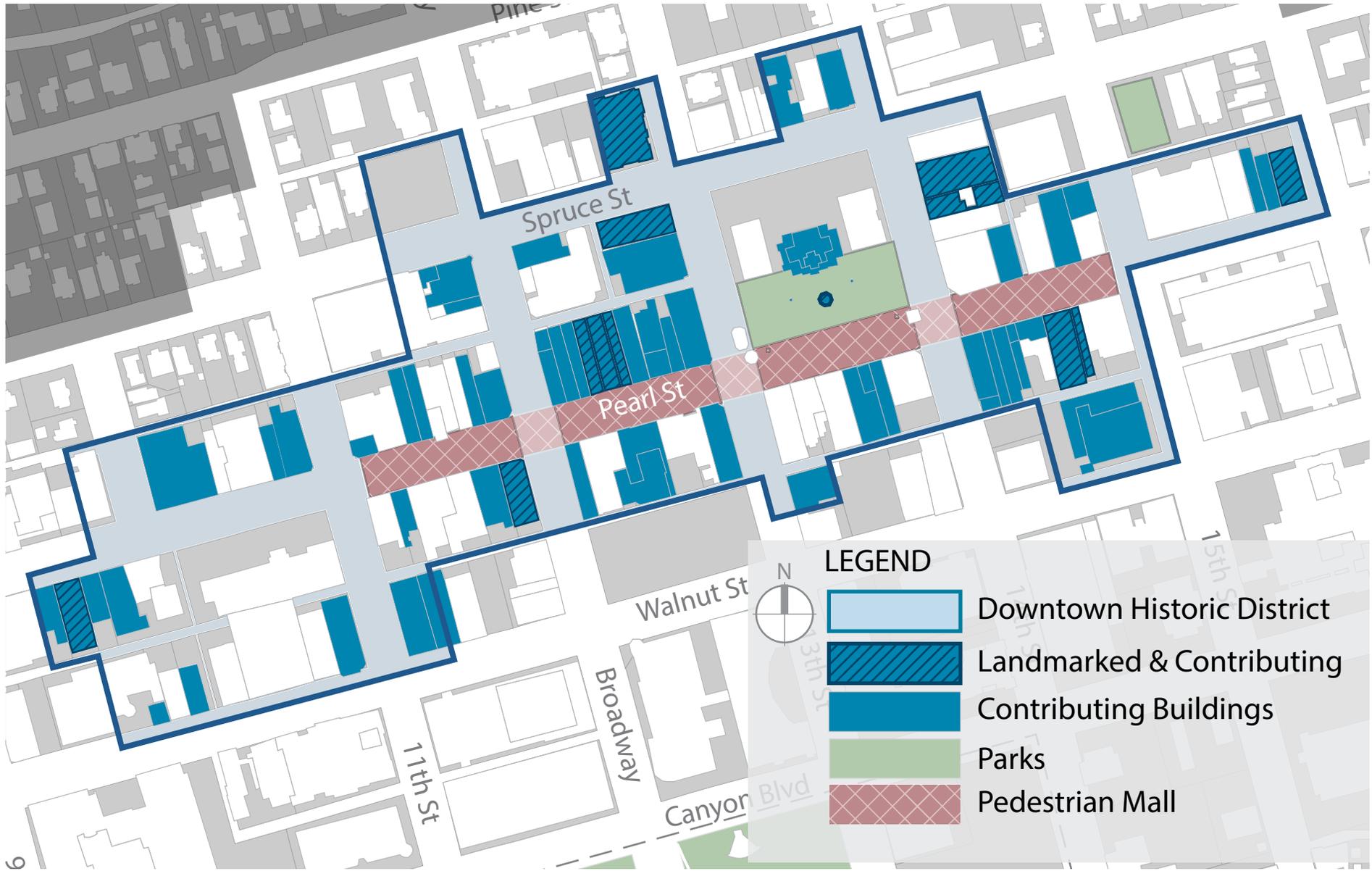


Fig. 3 Downtown Historic District Properties (Source: City of Boulder)



**Note:**

It is neither the intention of this guideline to recreate the past, nor to encourage theme design in the historic district, if the original building facade or original building materials do not exist. However, if documentary evidence exists, such as photographs, then an acceptable alternative is to reconstruct the facade.

Note: For further information on recommended treatments for historic properties please see [The Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings](#)

## 1.1 General guidelines for the Historic District

The following guidelines apply to all areas of the Downtown Boulder Historic District.

- A. The use of traditional, durable materials as the primary building material is encouraged to reflect the historic building construction and development pattern within the district. Choose accent materials similar in texture and scale to others in the district.
1. These following materials are generally appropriate:
    - Full dimension brick and stone masonry
    - Finish carpentry details, e.g. cornice molding, door and window casing
    - Finished lumber to achieve traditional patterns, e.g. horizontal siding rather than diagonal
    - Finished, embossed or painted metal and sheet metal
    - Clear or lightly tinted glass
    - Ceramic tiles
    - Brick, clay and ceramic pavers
    - Slate, finished metal, glazed ceramic and tile roofs
    - Brick, concrete or stone lintels
    - Brick, wood or stone columns
  2. The following materials are generally inappropriate:
    - Thin veneer products
    - Vinyl replacement windows
    - EIFS systems or EIFS decorative elements
    - Faux or simulated materials, including composite wood
    - Coarsely finished, “rustic” materials, such as wood shakes, shingles, barn board or stained fir plywood
    - Poorly crafted or “rustic” woodworking and finishing techniques
    - Indoor-outdoor carpeting or astro-turf
    - Corrugated metal and fiberglass (unless used sparingly)
    - Moss rock
    - “Antique” or old brick with partial paint, mottled light variegated brick, oversized brick and white brick mortar
    - Ornate wrought-iron, “New Orleans” style grille and rail work
    - Stucco surfaces that are highly textured such as those sometimes associated with a “hacienda” or “Mediterranean” style
    - Expanded metal
    - Silver or clear anodized aluminum sheets
    - Silver or clear aluminum extrusions for windows and doorways
    - Residential type sliding glass doors
    - Imitation wood siding or stone
    - Flat or molded plastic sheeting in quantities exceeding five square feet when used as primary facade materials
    - Imitation metal “rock work”
    - Plastic molded imitations of any conventional building material
    - Mirror or metalized reflective glass
    - Glass block
- B. Awnings may be used to provide visual depth and shade.
1. Awnings should be designed to fit the storefront opening to emphasize the building’s proportions and have at least an

Note:  
For detailed information on historic buildings and preservation information on individual building elements see the [National Park Service \(NPS\) Technical Briefs](#).

Code:  
See the Boulder Revised Code (B.R.C.) [Section 9-9-16, "Outdoor Lighting"](#) for lighting requirements.

Code:  
See the B.R.C. [Section 9-9-14, "Parking Lot Landscaping Standards"](#) for parking lot screening requirements.

- eight foot clearance from the sidewalk. Awnings should not obscure or damage important architectural details.
- 2. Operable fabric awnings are encouraged. Metal awnings or canopies that are similar in form to fabric awnings may be appropriate when designed as an integral part of the building facade, and do not appear as tacked-on additions. Awning color should be coordinated with the color scheme of the entire building front. Mechanized awnings and awnings on the upper stories are discouraged.
- C. Select building colors appropriate to the area's historic character.
  - 1. Select a color scheme that will visually link the building to its past as well as to others in the area. Consider colors that are compatible with the building's predominant materials, or do an analysis of colors pre-existing on the building and use one of the colors found.
  - 2. Develop a comprehensive color scheme. Consider the building as a whole as well as the details that need emphasis. Softer muted colors establish a uniform background. Establish a hierarchy for the color palette with one color on similar elements such as window frames. Reserve brighter colors for small special accents to emphasize entry ways and to highlight special structural ornamentation.
  - 3. It is not appropriate to paint unpainted brick. If the brick is already painted, paint removal is preferred. Avoid paint removal procedures that damage the original brick finish such as sand blasting or caustic chemicals. Before removing paint conduct a test to determine detrimental effects. If the existing paint on the brick is in poor condition and paint removal will damage the underlying brick, the brick should be repainted.
- D. Minimize the visibility of mechanical, structural, or electrical appurtenances.
  - 1. Use low-profile mechanical units and elevator shafts that are not visible from the street. If this is not possible, set back or screen rooftop equipment from view. Be sensitive to views from the upper floors of neighboring buildings. Skylights or solar panels should have low profiles and not be visible from the public right-of-way. These features should be installed in a manner which minimizes damage to historic materials.
- E. Improve rear or side alley elevations to enhance public access from parking lots and alleys.
  - 1. Where buildings are built to the alley edge, consider opportunities for alley display windows and secondary customer or employee entries.
  - 2. Screening for service equipment, trash, or any other rear-of-building elements should be designed as an integral part of the overall design. Where intact, historic alley facades should be preserved along with original features and materials. Alterations should be compatible with the historic scale and character of the building and block.
- F. Exterior building lighting should be designed to enhance the overall architecture of the building. Security lighting should be designed for safety, as well as night-time appearance.
- G. Reduce the visual impact of structured and surface parking.
  - 1. Parking structures should be compatible with the historic district, overall block and adjacent buildings. All parking structures should be architecturally screened and/or wrapped with an occupiable use.
  - 2. Surface Parking should be located to the rear of the property and screened from view.
  - 3. Pedestrian routes in structures and parking lots should be easily identifiable and accessed, with clear visual connections to the sidewalks and buildings.
- H. The law requires that universal access be located with the principal public entrance.
  - 1. In existing buildings, where the only route is not accessible from the principal public entrance, a rear or side service entrance route may be considered.
  - 2. Ramps and related accessibility modifications to a historic property should be compatible with the character of the building.



## Note:

For detailed information the preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic buildings and specific building elements see the [NPS Technical Briefs](#).

## 1.2 Guidelines for the preservation and restoration of local landmarks and contributing buildings

While it is acknowledged that changes to structures in the Downtown Historic District will occur over time, it is also a concern that these changes not damage the historic building fabric and character of the area. Preservation of the exteriors and storefronts of these buildings will continue their contribution to the unique historic character of the Downtown. Any building renovation or alteration, no matter the planned use, must retain the overall design integrity of the historic building by protecting the original features and materials and respecting the traditional design elements. The following are the guidelines for the preservation and restoration of local landmarks and contributing buildings:

- A. Preserve Original Character, Façades and Materials. Wherever possible retain these elements through restoration and repair, rather than replacement. If portions of the original material must be replaced, use a material similar to the original. The following elements are part of the traditional storefront building typology indicative to the development of Downtown Boulder. These elements include:
  1. Full-dimension bricks, or stone
  2. Display window bulkheads
  3. Large storefront display windows
  4. Recessed and corner entrances
  5. Secondary entrances and detailing
  6. Storefront transom
  7. Sign bands and storefront cornice
  8. Parapet walls, caps, and/or roof cornices
  9. Upper story vertically proportioned windows and/or fenestrations
  10. Columns, pilasters, and piers
  11. Decorative window sills, lintels, window hoods, and other window assembly elements
- B. Avoid concealing or removing original materials. If the original material has been covered, uncover it if feasible.
- C. Maintain the historic building set back line. Preserve the historic relationship of the building to the street or property line. Where buildings are built to the alley edge, consider secondary customer entries if original materials and features are not damaged.

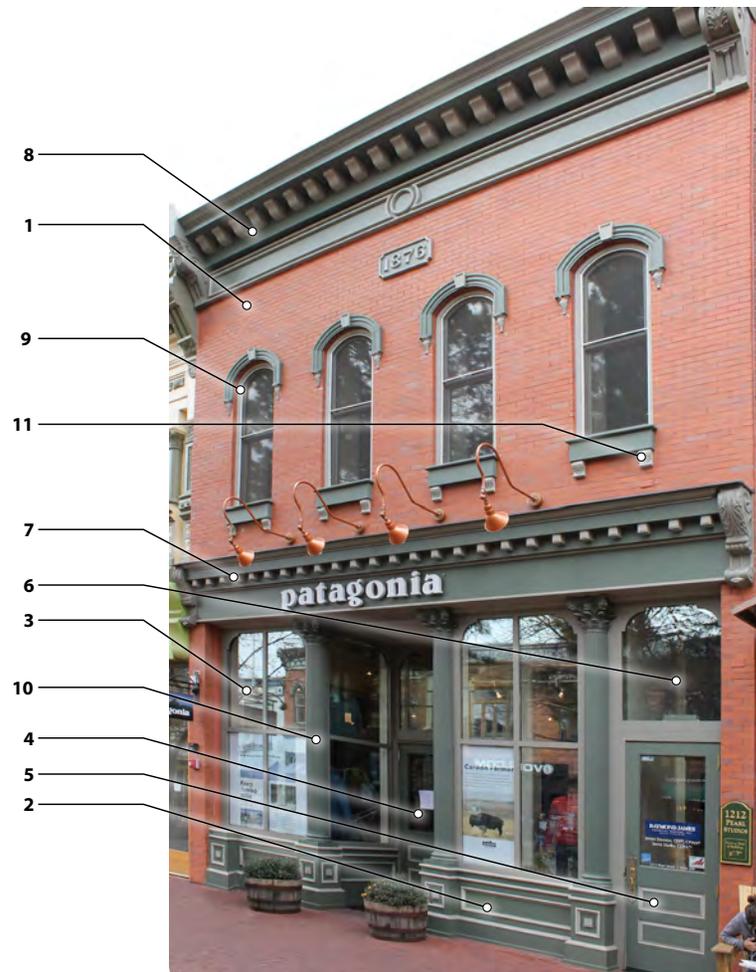


Fig. 4 Historic Building Elements  
(Source: City of Boulder)

Code:

See the [B.R.C. Section 9-7-1, "Schedule of Form and Bulk Standards"](#) for additional information on height and set back requirements.

### 1.3 Guidelines for contemporary alterations and additions to local landmarks and contributing buildings

The purpose of this section is to provide guidance for the design of additions or alterations to contributing buildings in order to retain the historic character of the overall district. While renovations and building design is expected to reflect the character of its own time acknowledging the Downtown as a living district, it is important that it also respect the traditional qualities that makes the Downtown unique, such as massing, scale, use of storefront detailing, and choice of materials.

#### A. Distinguish additions to historic buildings.

1. Additions to historic buildings should be differentiated, yet compatible, from the original while maintaining visual continuity through the use of design elements such as proportion and scale, siting, facade set back, and materials that are of a similar color and texture. When design elements contrast too strongly with the original structure, the addition will appear visually incompatible. Conversely, when the original design is replicated, the addition is indistinguishable and the historical evolution of the building becomes unrecognizable. New additions should be subordinate to the original building form.
2. For additions to a historic building, retain the original proportions, scale, and character of the main facade. Position the addition so it is subordinate to the original building. Express the difference between the original facade and the addition with a subtle change in color, texture or materials.
3. Maintain the proportions and the established pattern of upper story windows. In addition, upper floors should incorporate traditional vertically proportioned window openings with less window glazing and transparency than the lower floors. Use windows similar in size and shape to those used historically to maintain the facade pattern of the block.
4. Maintain the rhythm established by the repetition of the traditional ~25' facade widths for projects that extend over several lots by changing the materials, patterns, reveals, and building set backs in uniform intervals or by using design elements such as columns or pilasters.
5. Set back vertical additions to historic buildings maintaining the height of the primary, historic facade. Lateral additions should be subordinate and differentiated from the primary historic building. Additions need to demonstrate a harmonious relationship with the historic building height, mass, and scale.



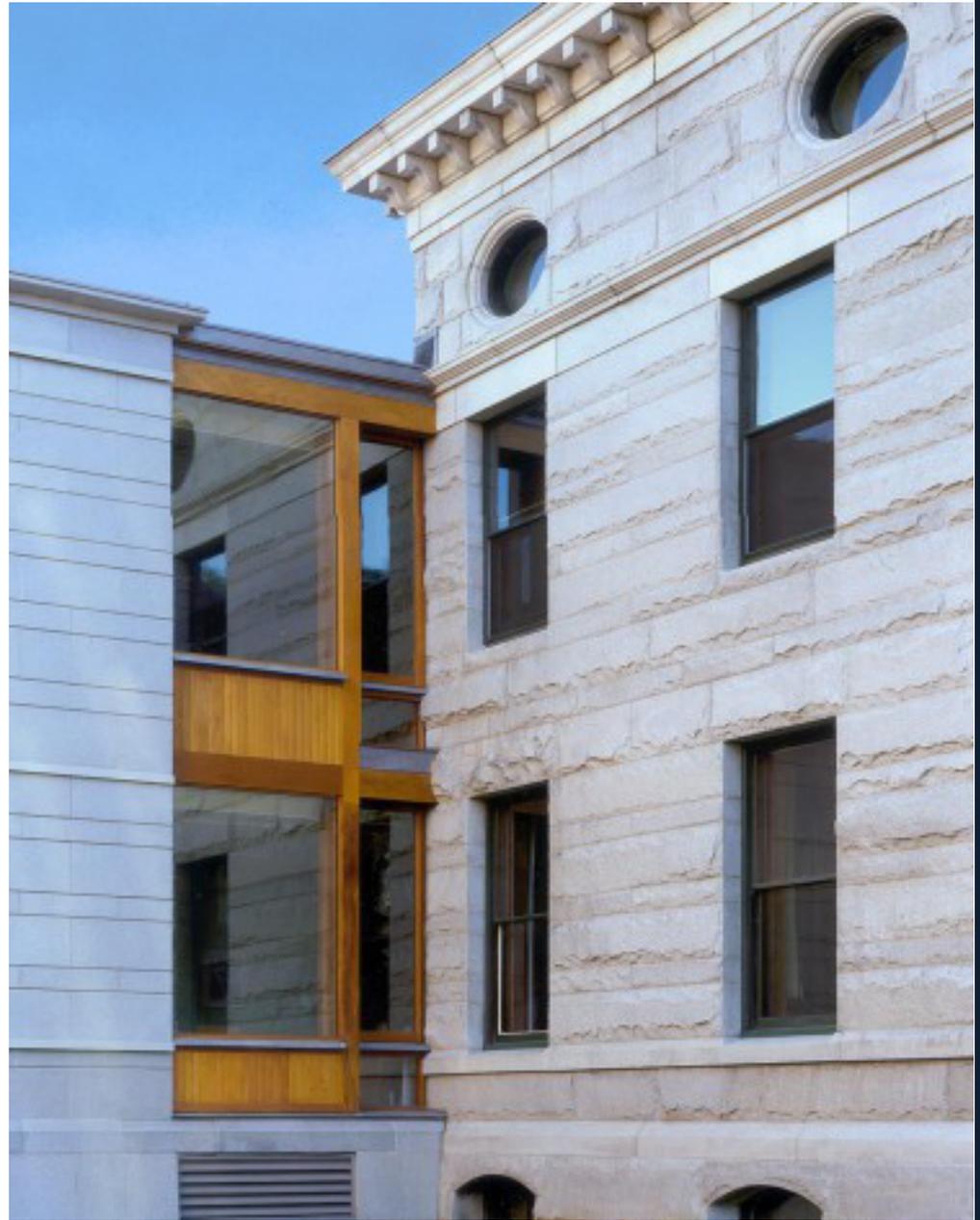
*Fig. 5 A new addition to a historic block with compatible scale  
(Source: National Park Service)*



Fig. 6 Historic pattern of building widths along Pearl Street Mall  
(Source: City of Boulder)



*Fig. 8 A non-conforming addition with incompatible materials, massing and window proportioning  
(Source: National Park Service)*



*Fig. 7 A new addition demonstrating a harmonious use of similar materials in a differentiated, yet compatible manner  
(Source: Gossens Bachman)*



## Code:

Objects or building elements extending into the public right-of-way require a revocable right-of-way permit and/or lease agreement, see the B.R.C. [Section 8-6-6, "Requirements for Revocable Permits, Short-Term Leases and Long-Term Leases"](#) for more information.

#### 1.4 Guidelines for new construction and remodeling non-contributing buildings in the Downtown Historic District

The purpose of this section is to provide guidance for the design of new construction and the renovation of non-contributing buildings in order to retain the historic character of the overall district. While new building design is expected to reflect the character of its own time acknowledging the Downtown as a living district, it is important that it also respect the traditional qualities that makes the Downtown unique, such as massing, scale, use of storefront detailing, and choice of materials.

- A. Incorporate traditional building elements in new design and construction. Careful integration of traditional facade features reinforces patterns and visual alignments that contribute to the overall character of the district. These features may be interpreted in new and contemporary ways. Please see Section 1.2 for a list of historic building elements.
- B. Construct new buildings to maintain the continuity of the historic building relationship to the street, adjacent properties, and/or the block.
- C. Maintain a human scale rather than a monolithic or monumental scale. Smaller scale buildings and the use of traditionally-sized building components help to establish a human scale and maintain the character of Downtown. Standard size brick, uniform building components, and standard window sizes are most appropriate.
- D. Consider the proportioning of the height and mass to the building footprint. In general, buildings should appear similar in height, mass, and scale to other buildings in the historic area to maintain the historic district's visual integrity and unique character. At the same time, it is important to maintain a variety of heights. While the actual heights of buildings are of concern, the perceived heights of buildings are equally important. One, two and three story buildings make up the primary architectural fabric of the Downtown, with taller buildings located at key intersections.
  1. Relate the height of buildings to neighboring structures at the sidewalk edge. For new structures that are significantly taller than adjacent buildings, upper floors should be set-back a minimum of 15' from the front facade to reduce the perceived height.
  2. Consider the effect of building height on shading and views. Building height can shade sidewalks during winter months leading to icy sidewalks and unappealing pedestrian areas
- E. Provide a variation of roof heights and types.
- F. Buildings are expected to be designed on all exposed elevations. Primary facade materials are to extend to secondary elevations, or wrap building corners, a proportionally relevant distance as to portray a sense of depth.
- G. Construct residential units to include entry stoops and/or porches. Residential entry porches are encouraged to extend 18" to 30" above grade. Construct commercial buildings at grade.



*Fig. 9 A compatible renovation with references to adjacent building height and contemporary references to the storefront building typology  
(Source: Olson Kundig)*



Fig. 10 New construction with compatible material, scale and window proportioning (Source: City of Boulder)

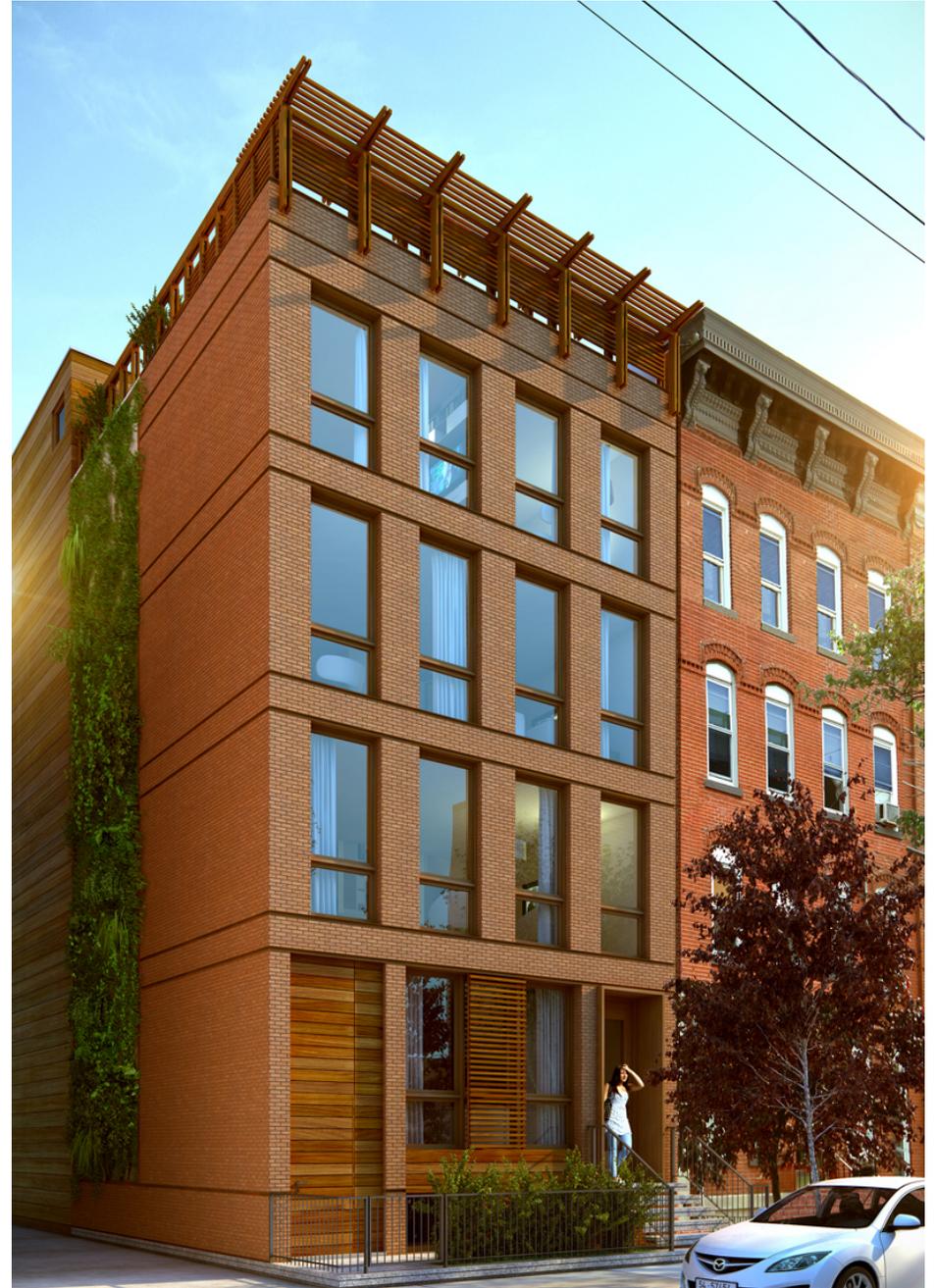


Fig. 11 New construction with contemporary, yet compatible, references to historic building elements (Source: Jorge Mastropietro Architects Atelier)



*Fig. 12 New construction with appropriate historic references including materiality and scale (Source: City of Boulder)*

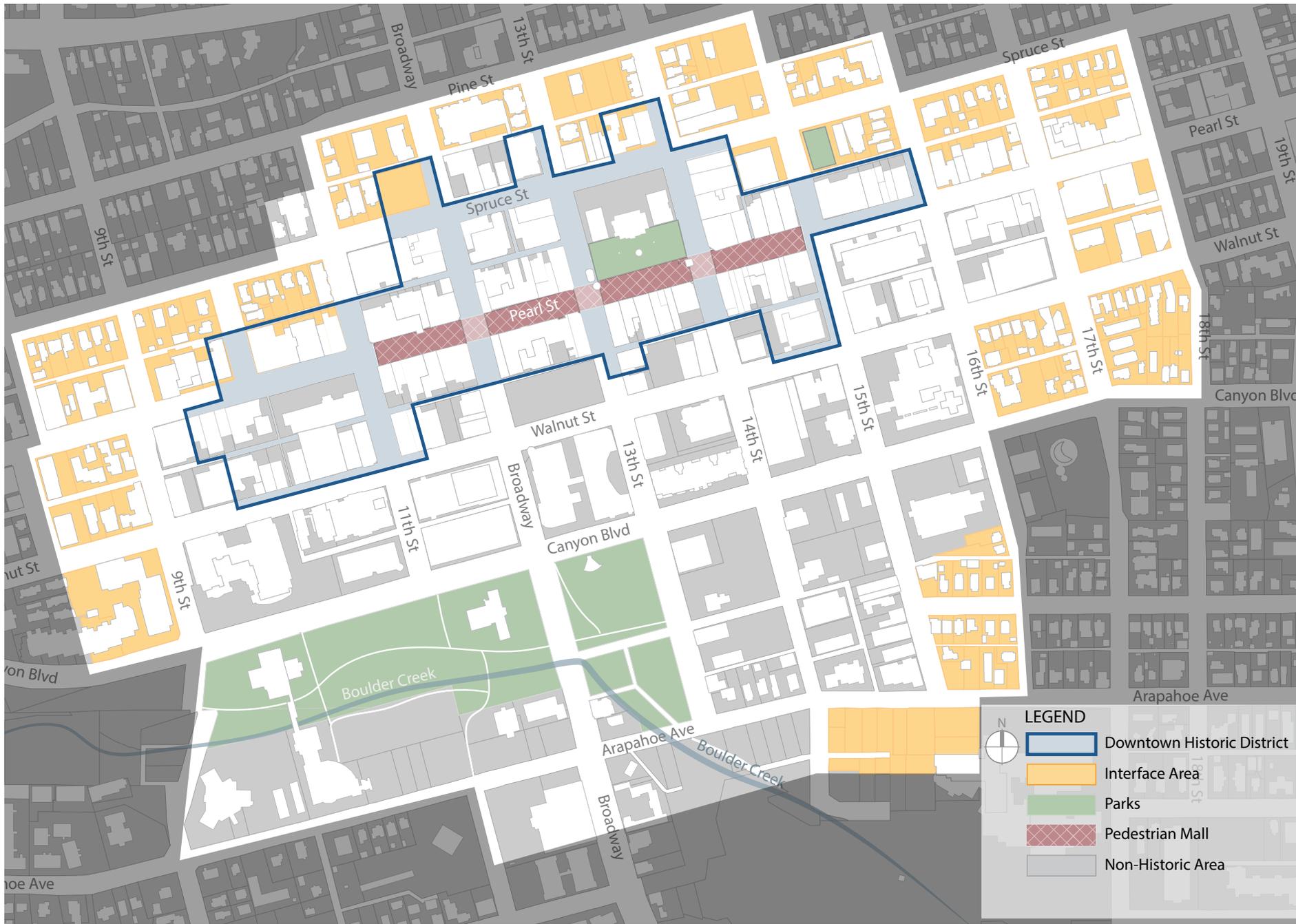


Fig. 13 Map of the Downtown Historic District, Non-Historic and the Interface Area (Source: City of Boulder)

## SECTION 2 THE NON-HISTORIC & INTERFACE AREAS

Code:

See the B.R.C. Section [9-2-4, "Good Neighbor Meetings and Management Plans"](#) or contact the DMC at (303) 413-7300.

Important design elements are 1) the Non-Historic Area's relationship to its surroundings, including the Historic Area, the Civic Park area, and the residential quality of the Interface Area, 2) the pedestrian quality of the area including the Downtown Boulder pedestrian mall, east and west Pearl Street, Spruce and Walnut streets, Canyon Boulevard, and the north-south streets that connect the Civic Area to the Downtown Boulder pedestrian mall area, and 3) new building design can reflect the character of its own time and meaningful juxtapositions, while respecting the integrity, scale, and massing of historic buildings in the surrounding areas.

Creative interpretations of traditional design elements, and designs that reflect the character of their time, are encouraged. The designs should be compatible with the surrounding historic context, but distinguishable. These guidelines also discourage projects that create inhospitable pedestrian design, and buildings that are inappropriate in scale and massing to their surroundings.

The Interface Area is composed of the blocks that link the core of the Downtown to the surrounding residential neighborhoods. This area requires special design sensitivities that must be addressed when commercial buildings are located adjacent to residential areas. Impacts to the surrounding residential areas can be minimized through careful design which respects the scale and quality of adjacent residential uses and thoughtfully transitions the commercial and residential areas.

### ***The urban design objectives for the Non-Historic and Interface Areas are to:***

- Reinforce the character of Downtown as a pedestrian place by encouraging architectural solutions that are visually pleasing, reflective of contemporary times yet stylistically appropriate to the context, and compatible in scale and character with their street.
- Encourage sensitive design along the edge where the Downtown commercial area abuts residential neighborhoods.
- Emphasize a clear distinction between the commercial and residential interface areas.
- Maintain the diversity in building type and size, and respect the adjoining residential character.
- Discourage adverse impacts from noise, night lighting, poor building design, and commercial service areas on adjacent residential neighborhoods.



**Note:**

See Section 3 for encroachments into the public right-of-way discussion on revocable lease and allowable dimensions.

**Code:**

See the B.R.C. [Section 9-9-14, "Parking Lot Landscaping Standards"](#) for parking lot screening requirements.

**Code:**

See the B.R.C. [Section 9-9-16, "Outdoor Lighting"](#) for lighting requirements.

**Note:**

A goal of the city is to make the Downtown as accessible as possible. All accessible design elements must conform to all applicable Federal, State and Local laws and codes. Wherever a discrepancy may arise, the higher standard shall be applied.

## 2.1 General guidelines for the Non-Historic and Interface Areas

- A. Maintain the historic or predominant building set back line.
  1. Maintain the relationship and continuity of the building wall to the street or property line.
  2. For commercial uses in residential buildings, maintain the predominant residential set back of the block, including any porches.
- B. Minimize the visibility of mechanical, structural, or electrical appurtenances
  1. Use low-profile mechanical units and elevator shafts that are not visible from the street. If this is not possible, set back or screen rooftop equipment from view. Be sensitive to views from the upper floors of neighboring buildings. Skylights or solar panels should have low profiles and not be visible from the public right-of-way.
- C. Design all sides of the building including alley elevations.
  1. Well designed rear building entrances, windows, balconies, and planting areas are encouraged.
  2. Improve rear or side alley elevations to enhance public access from parking lots and alleys.
  3. Where buildings are built to the alley edge, consider opportunities for alley display windows and secondary customer or employee entries.
  4. Primary facade materials are to extend to secondary elevations, or wrap building corners, a sufficient amount as to portray a sense of depth.
  5. Screening for service equipment, trash, or any other rear-of-building elements should be designed as an integral part of the overall design. Where intact, historic alley facades should be preserved along with original features and materials.
- D. Exterior building lighting should be designed to enhance the overall architecture of the building. Security lighting should be designed for safety, as well as night-time appearance.
- E. Reduce the visual impact of structured and surface parking.
  1. Parking structures should be compatible to the historic district and adjacent buildings. All parking structures should be architecturally screened and/or wrapped with an occupiable use.
  2. Locate any surface parking to the rear of the property. All surface parking must be screened.
  3. Pedestrian routes in structures and parking lots should be easily identifiable and accessed, with clear visual connections to the sidewalks and buildings.
- F. The law requires that universal access be located with the principal public entrance.
- G. Consider the quality of open space incorporated into new and renovated buildings. When appropriate to the context, integrate the surrounding open spaces into the building design. Well programmed plazas, courtyards, outdoor seating and dining areas on or adjacent to open spaces and pedestrian routes are encouraged.



*Fig. 14 A contemporary infill development with appropriate materiality, massing, and human scale elements  
(Source: Beyer Blinder Belle)*



Fig. 15 A contemporary infill development with traditional materials, an innovative approach to historic window proportioning and recessed upper floor  
(Source: Jorge Mastropietro Architects Atelier)

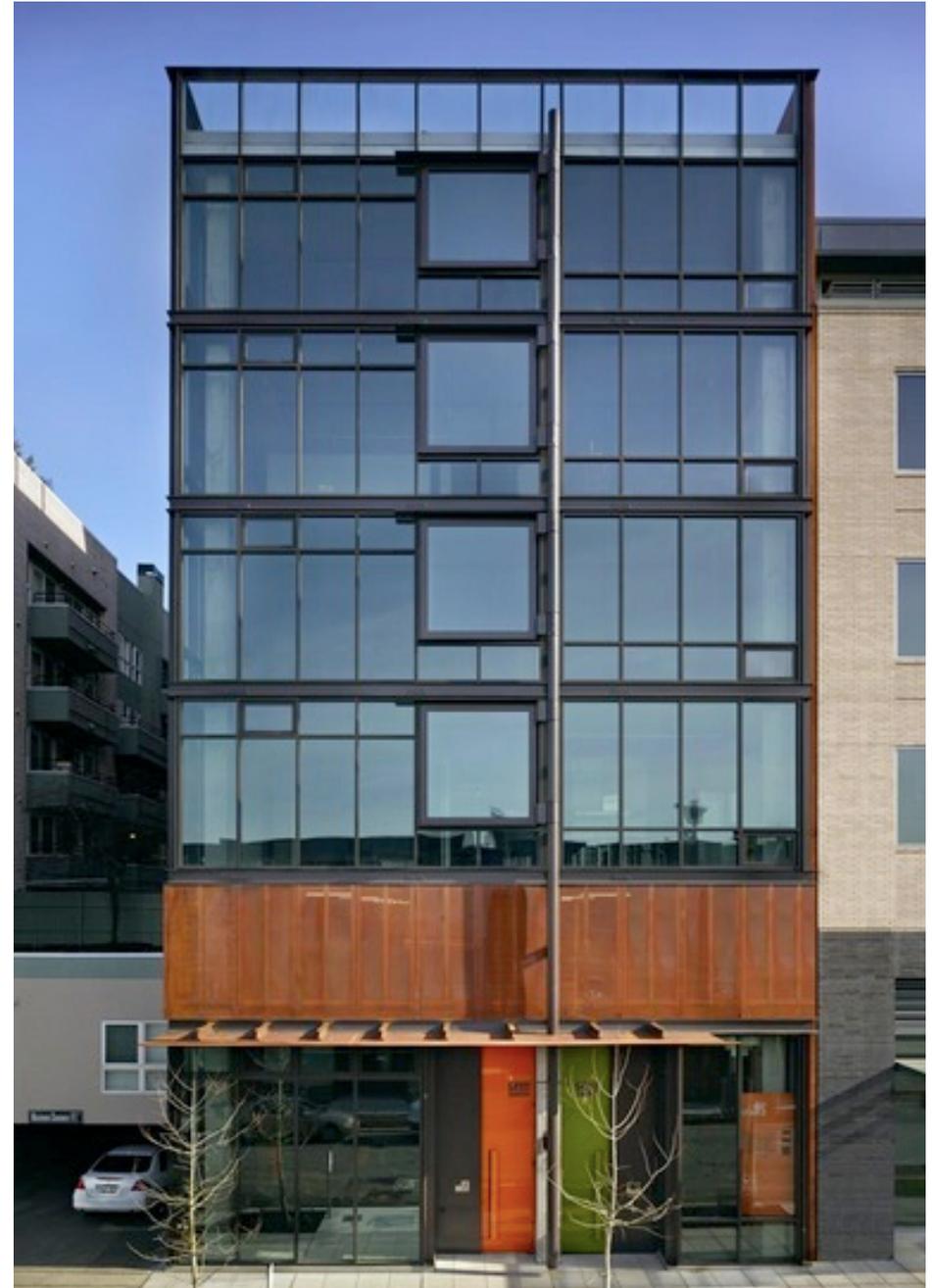


Fig. 16 A contemporary infill development with alternative material choices and a traditional storefront building form  
(Source: City of Boulder)

Code:

See the [B.R.C. Section 9-7-1, "Schedule of Form and Bulk Standards"](#) for specific height and set back requirements.

## 2.2 Commercial buildings in the Non-Historic and Interface Areas

- A. Consider incorporating traditional facade elements in new and contemporary ways. See Section 1: The Downtown Historic District for specific building elements.
- B. Consider the height, mass, and scale of buildings.
  - 1. In general, buildings should appear similar in height, mass, and scale to other buildings in the area. At the same time, it is important to maintain a variety of heights. While the actual heights of buildings are of concern, the perceived heights of buildings are equally important. One, two and three story buildings make up the primary architectural fabric of the Downtown, with taller buildings located at key intersections.
  - 2. Consider the height and proportion of buildings to neighboring structures. For new structures that are significantly taller than adjacent buildings, upper floors should be set-back a minimum of 15 feet from the front facade to reduce the perceived height.
  - 3. Consider the effect of building height on shading and views. Building height can shade sidewalks during winter months leading to icy sidewalks and unappealing pedestrian areas.
  - 4. Maintain the traditional, established breaks between buildings, such as existing paseos.
  - 5. For projects located in the Interface Area, construct buildings three floors or less and consider the adjacent residential height, mass, and scale.
  - 6. Commercial construction on a primarily residential block should be designed to reflect a residential character, e.g. residential set back on a primarily residential street.
- C. Maintain a human scale, rather than monolithic or monumental scale.
  - 1. Avoid large featureless facade surfaces. Include architectural elements and patterns that divide the facade into familiar intervals. A single facade should not exceed a maximum of 75 linear feet.
  - 2. Consider how the texture and pattern of building materials will be perceived. Use traditionally sized building components in a way that incorporates details, textures, and patterns to establish a sense of human scale.
  - 3. Maintain the distinction between ground and upper floors. Develop the first floor facade as primarily transparent. Consider using windows and other architectural features to create a pattern that will reinforce the traditional facade rhythm found on commercial buildings in the Downtown area. Lower floors are generally differentiated by a higher percentage of glazing and transparency than upper floors.
- D. Construct primary entrances at grade.



*Fig. 17 An adaptive reuse building with a contemporary interpretation of materials  
(Source: McHenry Architecture/Photographer: David J. Murray)*



*Fig. 18 An appropriate adaptive reuse of an existing residential building into a commercial occupancy  
(Source: City of Boulder)*





Fig. 19 A contemporary commercial building with traditional storefront proportioning including delineating the bottom, middle and top sections  
(Source: City of Boulder)

### 2.3 Residential buildings in the Non-Historic and Interface Areas

- A. Maintain the diverse architectural character of the residential buildings in the Interface Area.
- B. Construct residential units to include entry stoops and/or porches. Residential entry porches are encouraged to extend 18" to 30" above grade.
- C. When feasible, maintain residential uses in historic residential buildings.



Fig. 20 A well-articulated alley elevation with an appropriately screened trash enclosure  
(Source: City of Boulder)



Fig. 21 A contemporary row house with compatible materials and overall form  
(Source: City of Boulder)



*Fig. 22 A contemporary multifamily residential development with compatible materials and vertically oriented exterior detailing reflecting a townhome or rowhome building type  
(Source: Studio Architects)*



*Fig. 23 Contemporary single family residence in a historic district with compatible materials, scale and overall references to the surrounding vernacular roof forms  
(Source: Jeff Jordan Architects)*



Fig. 23 The Downtown Pedestrian Mall (Source: City of Boulder)

## SECTION 3 *THE PUBLIC REALM*

The term “public realm” refers to the entire system of open space, landscaping, signage, streets and sidewalks, by which people circulate through and experience the Downtown. Our image of Downtown Boulder, and the ease and safety with which we move through it, is determined by the quality of the streetscape.

### ***The urban design objectives of the Public Realm Guideline are to:***

- Unify the visual image of Downtown by creating a series of public sitting areas, completing the rhythm of street trees and street lighting, and providing landscaping with seasonal color or other qualities of visual interest.
- Create a pedestrian-oriented environment that is safe, accessible, visually pleasing, and comfortable.
- Strengthen Downtown’s visual connections. Visually and functionally connect the Downtown Boulder pedestrian mall and Civic Park, or east and west Pearl Street to the Downtown Boulder pedestrian mall.
- Maintain the visual unity and historic character of the Downtown Boulder pedestrian mall through the use of traditional materials.
- Respect and preserve adjacent residential neighborhoods through the use of residentially appropriate streetscape design.
- Encourage design and sign placement that promotes Downtown businesses while complementing the character and scale of the building.
- Promote signs that are designed as an integral yet noticeable part of a building’s overall design.
- Promote the sign design and placement that is effective individually and harmonious with the overall signage of the block.
- Encourage comfortable spaces by integrating appropriate landscaping and street trees into the public realm.
- Create an overall image in which a building, signage, and site design relate to each other.





Fig. 24 Downtown wall sign with directional lighting (Source: City of Boulder)



Fig. 25 Awning signs and patio extension (Source: City of Boulder)



Fig. 26 Projecting sign (Source: City of Boulder)

Code:

Awnings, signage, patio extensions, and other associated structures or objects extending into the public right-of-way require a revocable right-of-way permit and/or lease agreement, see the B.R.C [Section 8-6-6, "Requirements for Revocable Permits, Short-Term Leases and Long-Term Leases"](#) for more information.

Note:

The following is meant as a supplement to the city's Sign Code. Sign permits, obtained through the Planning Department, are required. Signs that extend into the Downtown Boulder pedestrian mall will require review by the Downtown Management Commission. For further information call the [DMC](#) at (303) 413-7300 and the [Planning Department](#) at (303) 441-1880.

Code:

Signs on historic buildings or in historic districts must comply with the B.R.C. [Chapter 9-11 "Historic Preservation"](#) and [Section 9-9-21, "Signs"](#) provisions.

### 3.1 Signs

- A. Commercial signs should function to identify and locate businesses, promote commercial activity, attract customers, provide direction and information, and in some cases create visual delight and architectural interest.
- B. Following are principal sign types that are applicable in the Downtown:
  - 1. Wall Signs:  
Wall signs are limited in size and defined as projecting less than 15 inches from the building. Wall signs should be positioned within architectural features such as the panels above storefronts, sign bands, on the transom windows, or flanking doorways. Wall mounted signs should align with others on a block to maintain established patterns.
  - 2. Projecting Signs:  
Projecting signs should be positioned along the first floor level of the facade. Projecting signs may take on their own special shape, or create their own symbol within the overall facade design.
  - 3. Awning Signs:  
Awnings should be positioned to emphasize special shapes or details of the facade, to draw attention to the shop entrances or to emphasize a display window. Awning signs may be illustrated with letters or symbols.
- C. Signage should be designed as an integral part of the overall building design. In general, signs should not obscure important architectural details. When several businesses share a building, signs should be aligned or organized in a directory.
- D. Use simple signs to clearly convey their messages.
  - 1. Sign materials should be durable and easy to maintain. Appropriate sign materials include painted or carved wood, carved wooden letters, epoxy letters, galvanized sheet metal, stone, specialty or decorative glass, clear and colored acrylic, or neon.
  - 2. Lighting external to the sign surface with illumination directed toward the sign is preferred. External lighting may also highlight architectural features. Internally lit signs are generally discouraged. The light level should not overpower the facade or other signs on the street. The light source should be shielded from pedestrian view. The lighting of symbol signs is encouraged. Internal lighting may be appropriate where only letters are illuminated or neon is used. Neon is acceptable, though restricted in size, if it does not obscure architectural detail or overly illuminate display windows.
  - 3. Signs should be designed in simple, straight-forward shapes that convey their message clearly. Symbols are easily read and enhance the pedestrian quality of the Downtown.
  - 4. Lettering styles should be proportioned, simple, and easy to read. In most instances, a simple typeface is preferred over a faddish or overly ornate type style. The number of type styles should be limited to two per sign. As a general rule, the letter forms should occupy not more than 75% of the total sign panel.



**Note:**

In general, the predominate material in the Downtown is brick. The use of brick to highlight and define the streetscape zones is especially appropriate in the blocks adjacent to the mall. Other appropriate materials include sandstone, or the use of art work which is stenciled or sandblasted into the concrete surface.

**Note:**

Colored concrete scored or formed to imitate brick or stone is inappropriate.

### 3.2 The Streetscape

- A. The existing street hierarchy is the basis for designing the streetscape. The concept of a street hierarchy is based on understanding how various Downtown streets function. For example, Canyon Boulevard and Broadway are major vehicular streets, thus street improvements should provide for large volumes of traffic while buffering pedestrians from traffic impacts. Four types of streets have been identified:
1. **The Downtown Boulder pedestrian mall (a vehicle-free pedestrian street):**  
The Downtown Boulder pedestrian mall, which encompasses Pearl Street from 11th to 15th Streets, is the most intensely used pedestrian zone in the area. As a shopping, festival, and public gathering place it will remain a vehicle free area with a unified brick paving design. Elaborate landscape treatments, including seasonally-varied plantings and coordinated street furniture, add to the pedestrian ambiance.
  2. **Canyon Boulevard and Broadway (major vehicular through streets):**  
Canyon Boulevard and Broadway accommodate large volumes of traffic moving through the Downtown. Streetscape features should be designed to buffer pedestrians from traffic impacts, provide greater building set backs and detached sidewalks with planting strips between the sidewalk and curb. The exception is the section of Broadway between Canyon Boulevard and Spruce Street in which attached sidewalks are needed to accommodate more intense pedestrian use. In areas with detached sidewalks, well designed landscaping and street trees shall be provided. On Canyon Boulevard, the use of landscaped median strips and pedestrian safe zones should be designed to minimize pedestrian/vehicular conflicts.
  3. **9th, 10th, 11th, 13th, and 14th Streets (north/south pedestrian connectors):**  
These five north/south streets provide the main pedestrian connections between the Downtown Boulder pedestrian mall and the Civic Park. Where these streets cross Canyon Boulevard, which is very wide, crosswalk designs that visually link the north and south sides of the boulevard are important. The use of similar materials, intersection gateway features, landscaping, and street furniture will help to visually weave the areas together and promote pedestrian access between these two important Downtown public gathering places.
  4. **All other streets in the Downtown (general pedestrian-oriented streets):**  
In order to create a unified image in the area, all streets should share common features. At minimum, these should include similar sidewalk scoring patterns, similar paving materials, similar street trees and tree grates, coordinated street furniture, the inclusion of sidewalk neck downs and pedestrian safe zones, removal of pedestrian obstructions, and consolidation of streetscape elements such as newspaper vending boxes, other traffic and directional signage, and pedestrian scale street lighting.
  5. **Alleyways (minor service-oriented streets):**  
Alleyways serve as secondary circulation and alternative routes for both pedestrians and vehicles to navigate Downtown. They can provide an alternate means of access to shops, restaurants and other commercial uses. Care must be taken in balancing the service function of the alley and making the street safe for pedestrians.
  6. **Paseos/Multiuse paths (vehicles free pathways):**  
Paseos provide mid-block pedestrian only access. Multiuse paths traverse the civic and park areas. To promote pedestrian circulation throughout the downtown area both should be encouraged in large projects. Design such connections to be interesting places with thoughtful integration into the overall circulation. They should be handicap accessible, illuminated, appropriately landscaped, and paved in materials compatible with their locations and surrounding context.
- B. Use materials that reinforce the continuity and integrity of the overall Downtown district. Any variations from the standard materials and patterns required by the Design and Construction Standards should be based on a streetscape plan that illustrates how the variation adds to the visual unity and improves the downtown streetscape, adjacent properties, and the overall image of the block. The design and materials should be durable, classic, and elegant including:



Fig. 27 Street Type Key Map (Source: City of Boulder)



## Code:

See the Design and Construction Standards "[Chapter 11 Technical Drawings](#)" and the B.R.C. "[Section 9-9-13, "Streetscape Design Standards"](#)" for additional requirements.

## Note:

Permanent kitchen equipment, new basement level extensions, second floor extensions and greenhouses are generally not permitted within the right-of-way.

## Note:

Light weight or movable handrails, chains, ropes and unsupported railings are inappropriate railing materials.

## Note:

Improvements in the right-of-way shall match the existing materials. Any proposals to differentiate the materials may require approval. For more information visit the City of Boulder [Planning website](#) or contact, (303) 441-1880.

## Note:

For more information on patio extensions and cafe seating contact the [DMC](#) at (303) 413-7300.

1. Brick
  2. Sandstone
  3. Scored grey concrete
  4. Black enamel street furniture and utility elements, e.g. right-of-way lighting, benches, trash receptacles, bollards, etc.
  5. Outdoor seating
- C. Use a basic sidewalk design to unify the visual image of Downtown. In most locations throughout the area, sidewalks average 15 feet wide from curb to property line. Streets should incorporate the following basic sidewalk elements:
1. Frontage Zone
 

The frontage zone width may vary by street and allows for extensions into the right-of-way which create comfortable and attractive sitting areas. Included within this zone are projecting signs, awnings, cafe seating, and gated patio encroachments.

    - Design public right-of-way extensions that are visually appropriate to the street character.
    - Seating areas for dining are limited to the width of the building frontage. All tables and chairs are to be removable.
    - Railing designs should reflect an open, transparent feeling. Visually closed-in railings that "box-in" the extension area are not appropriate.
    - Consider building programs and spatial layouts which provide alternative solutions to the need for gated, exterior dining areas. There must be a minimum 7' clearance between the edge of the railing or seating area and any vertical obstruction.
    - Create comfortable and attractive sitting areas, plazas, and small open spaces. Tables and chairs must be movable.
    - Orient seating to take advantage of views, sunshine in the winter, and shade in the summer.
  2. Pedestrian Zone
 

The sidewalk pedestrian-through zone is the travel area designated for pedestrians and must be kept clear of all obstacles.

    - Pedestrian zones walkway surfaces should be delineated from the curb zone or buffer areas.
  3. Curb Zone
 

The curb zone should consist of a 4' wide area measured perpendicular from the inside of the curb.

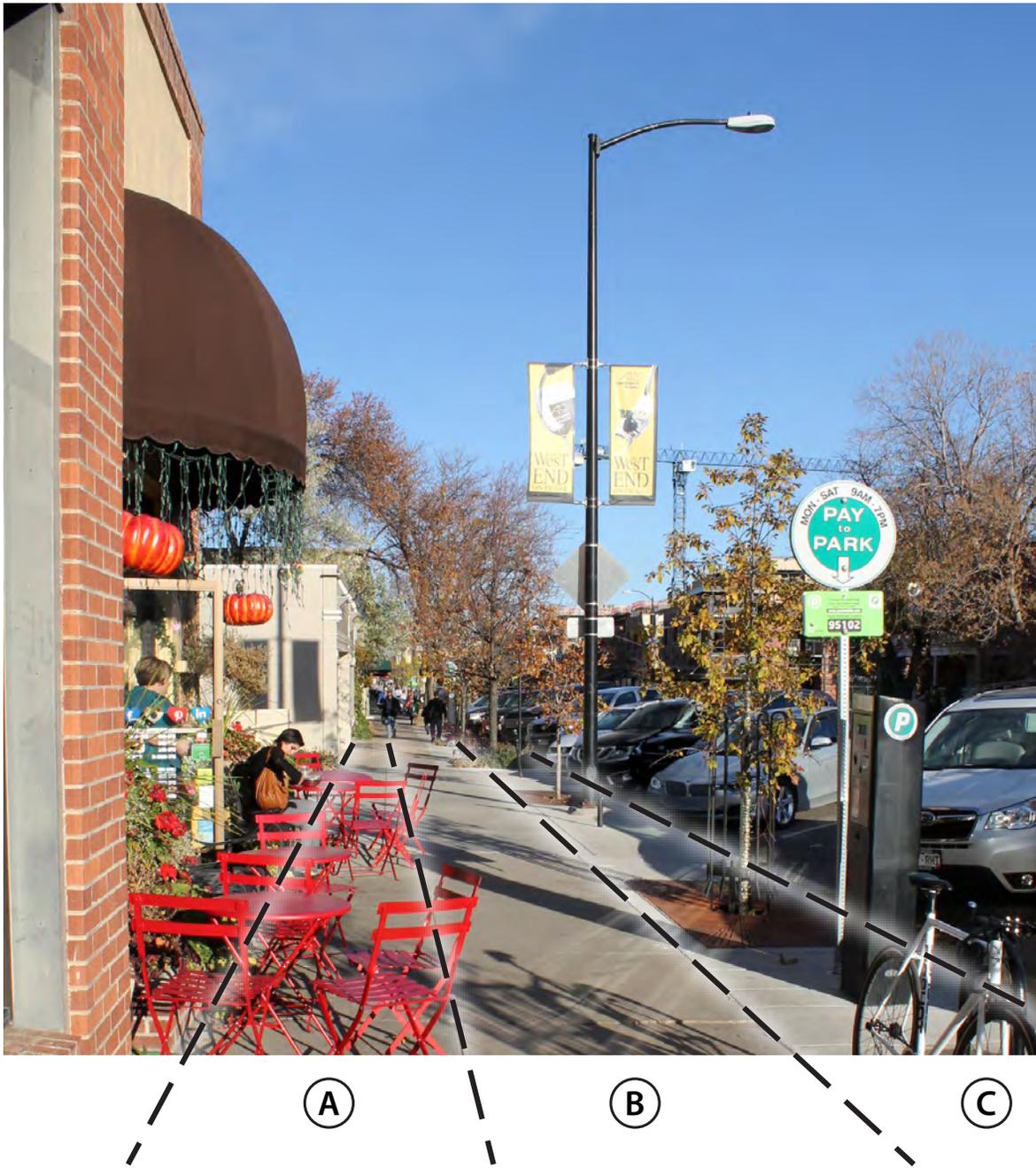
    - Street elements and landscaping should be organized to allow for pedestrian access to adjacent street parking.
    - On residential transition streets in the Interface Area blocks use landscaping in the curb zone rather than hard surface concrete.
  4. Corner Zone
 

At a minimum, the standard corner zone should include the following elements:

    - A pedestrian area where only essential "regulatory" elements, such as, signal posts, crosswalk signals and lighting are allowed. All other amenities including benches, bike racks, newspaper racks, are prohibited.
    - Corner "amenity areas" are located at either side of the pedestrian area. Elements such as benches and bike racks should be carefully arranged in an attractive and accessible fashion outside of any pedestrian throughways. Benches should be arranged to facilitate social interaction.
  5. Intersections
 

Important streets may require additional material detailing to match adjacent streetscape design and overall block character.

    - Materials include utilizing brick and scored concrete patterning, similar to adjacent pedestrian and curb zones, in the crosswalks and special paving within intersection squares. Important intersections are the areas between the Civic Park and Downtown Boulder pedestrian mall.



- (A) Frontage Zone**  
 On the Pedestrian Mall - 10' maximum extension of into the right-of-way.  
 On all other streets - 6' maximum extension into the right-of-way.
- (B) Pedestrian Zone**  
 On the Pedestrian Mall - The unobstructed pedestrian throughway must be no less than 8'. A 9'6" wide throughway is encouraged. Any type of extensions into the right-of-way must allow for the pedestrian circulation requirements.  
 On all other streets - An unobstructed pedestrian throughway of no less than 7' wide is required between vertical elements such as trees or poles and buildings.  
 Standard surface materials include brushed natural color gray concrete tooled in a maximum 4' x 4' square with brick accents.
- (C) Curb Zone**  
 A minimum 4' curb zone will include trees, bike parking, landscaping strips, furniture, street and/or utility elements.  
 Standard surface materials include brushed natural color gray concrete tooled in a 2' x 2' square pattern, possibly with brick accents.

Fig. 28 Diagram of the typical sidewalk zones (Source: City of Boulder)

**Code:**

For more information on landscaping requirements see the City of Boulder "[Design and Construction Standards](#)" and the B.R.C. [Section 9-9-12, "Landscaping and Screening Standards"](#).

**Note:**

Unsuitable streets trees not to be placed in the public right-of-way include Cottonwood, Chinese and Siberian Elm, Poplar, Russian Olive, Silver Maple, Tree of Heaven, Willow, evergreens that create sight obstructions, and clump forms or multi-stem trees.

**Note:**

Tree and landscape maintenance on commercially zoned properties, the maintenance of trees, tree grates, and surrounding hard and soft landscaping located in the public right-of-way is the responsibility of the private property owner. This includes all maintenance and repair of landscaping, trees, irrigation, spraying, fertilizing, and replacing plant materials and tree grates.

**Note:**

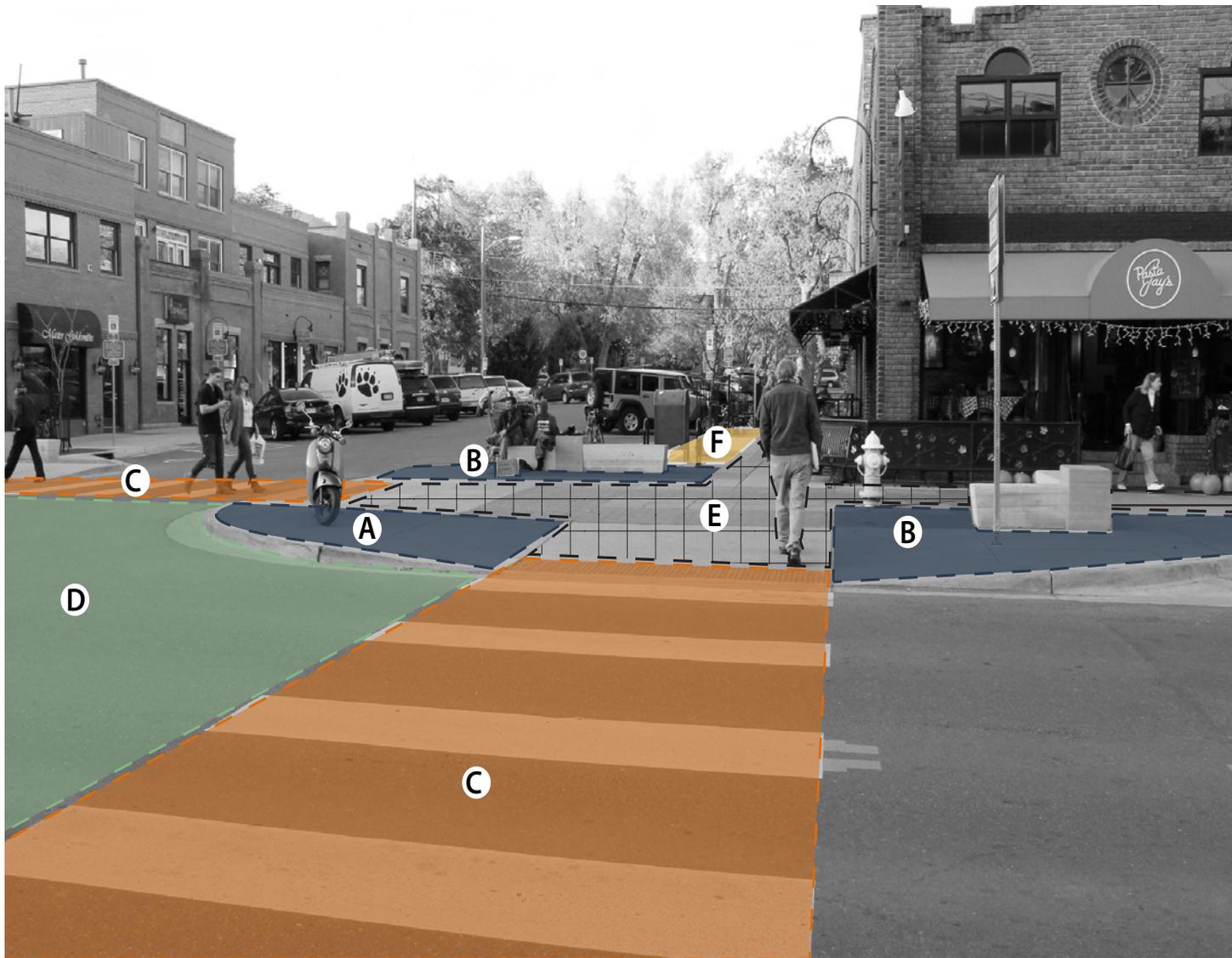
The city provides pruning, removal of street trees in the public right-of-way, safety inspections, and consultation on street trees that may pose a health or safety concern.

**Note:**

Contact the [DMC](#) at (303) 413-7300 for additional information regarding street furniture, trash receptacles, bicycle stands, and bollard variations for the Pedestrian Mall.

### 3.3 Landscaping

- A. Select street trees that are appropriate to their intended location and function. Plant trees that will tolerate full sun, drought, varying soil pH. Keep in mind that the conditions of various planting sites in the Downtown will vary and should be evaluated for individual landscape objectives and suitability to the specific street on which they are to be planted. The following guidelines should be followed:
  1. Large trees should be located along Canyon Boulevard, wide right-of-way streets, and principal access streets such as Pearl and Walnut Streets. Large trees should also be used to highlight corners, to provide cover for large plazas, or as accents against the skyline.
  2. Large maturing trees may be located on all downtown streets.
  3. Small trees should be used to provide seasonal color and a visual focal point for special locations such as a building entrance, corner area, sitting area, bus stop, or other significant area or view corridor.
  4. Install street trees in tree grates at areas of adjacent parking and high pedestrian traffic, except at locations where they occur in special raised planters in the curb zone, in large planted areas that are integrated with a sidewalk area, and in locations where existing trees located in the curb zones have a root system that has pushed up above grade where the use of a grate will injure the tree.
  5. Maintain at least a 10 foot distance between tree trunk and building line. This refers to the distance between a tree and building, not the distance necessary to maintain an unobstructed pedestrian area between a tree, as a vertical element, and a railing that encloses a sidewalk restaurant
  6. Where tree grates are used they should be aligned with paving pattern score lines and be placed with careful consideration of sidewalk use, such as a sidewalk cafe or curb cuts.
  7. Consider alternative methods to increase tree soil volume, e.g. modular, pre-engineered suspended pavement and structural cell systems.
- B. Select ground level plants that suit their location and function.
  1. Use landscaping, shrubs and ground cover to accent areas.
  2. Limit the use of annuals and high maintenance plants to the planting beds in the Downtown Boulder pedestrian mall. Use drought tolerant, climate appropriate landscaping, including shrubs, flowering perennials, ground cover, and ornamental grasses in planter beds.
  3. Do not use gravel or rough stone in place of ground cover in the curb zone.
  4. Whenever feasible, flowers and ornamental grasses should be used in combination to accent gateway locations and special sites.
  5. Plantings are preferred in natural, at-grade planting beds rather than planter pots or other containers.
  6. Consider maintenance requirements in the placement and design of these features.
- C. Maintain the character of Canyon Boulevard.
  1. Continue the large tree rows on either side of the street and center landscape median.
  2. In general, trees and other plant material should be arranged in an urban linear pattern that parallels the street rather than a less formal random arrangement.
  3. The primary trees along Canyon do not need to be planted with tree grates.
  4. The median should be planted to enhance the "boulevard" quality of the corridor.
  5. Incorporate grasses, paved areas or ground covers within the overall design of tree rows.



- (A)** Corner Zone - A pedestrian area or clear zone that is free of obstacles and lined up with the sidewalk pedestrian zone. Standard surface treatment includes brushed natural gray concrete scored in a 2'x 2' square pattern parallel to the street.
- (B)** Corner "amenity areas" - The amenity areas may incorporate benches, bike racks, news racks, and similar elements. Standard surface treatment includes brushed natural gray concrete scored in a 4'x 4' square pattern and may have brick detailing.
- (C)** Crosswalks - Pedestrian crosswalks should be a minimum of 10' wide with a 1' buffer on either side. Standard surface treatment includes truncated dome ramps and marking the crosswalk zone.
- (D)** Intersection Squares - the center area of intersections have the same surface material as the surrounding street surfaces.
- (E)** Pedestrian Zone
- (F)** Curb Zone

Fig. 29 Diagram of the typical corner and intersection zones (Source: City of Boulder)





Fig. 30 Brick, sandstone, and scored concrete defining a corner zone  
(Source: City of Boulder)



Fig. 31 Brick pavers and street features within the Pedestrian Mall  
(Source: City of Boulder)

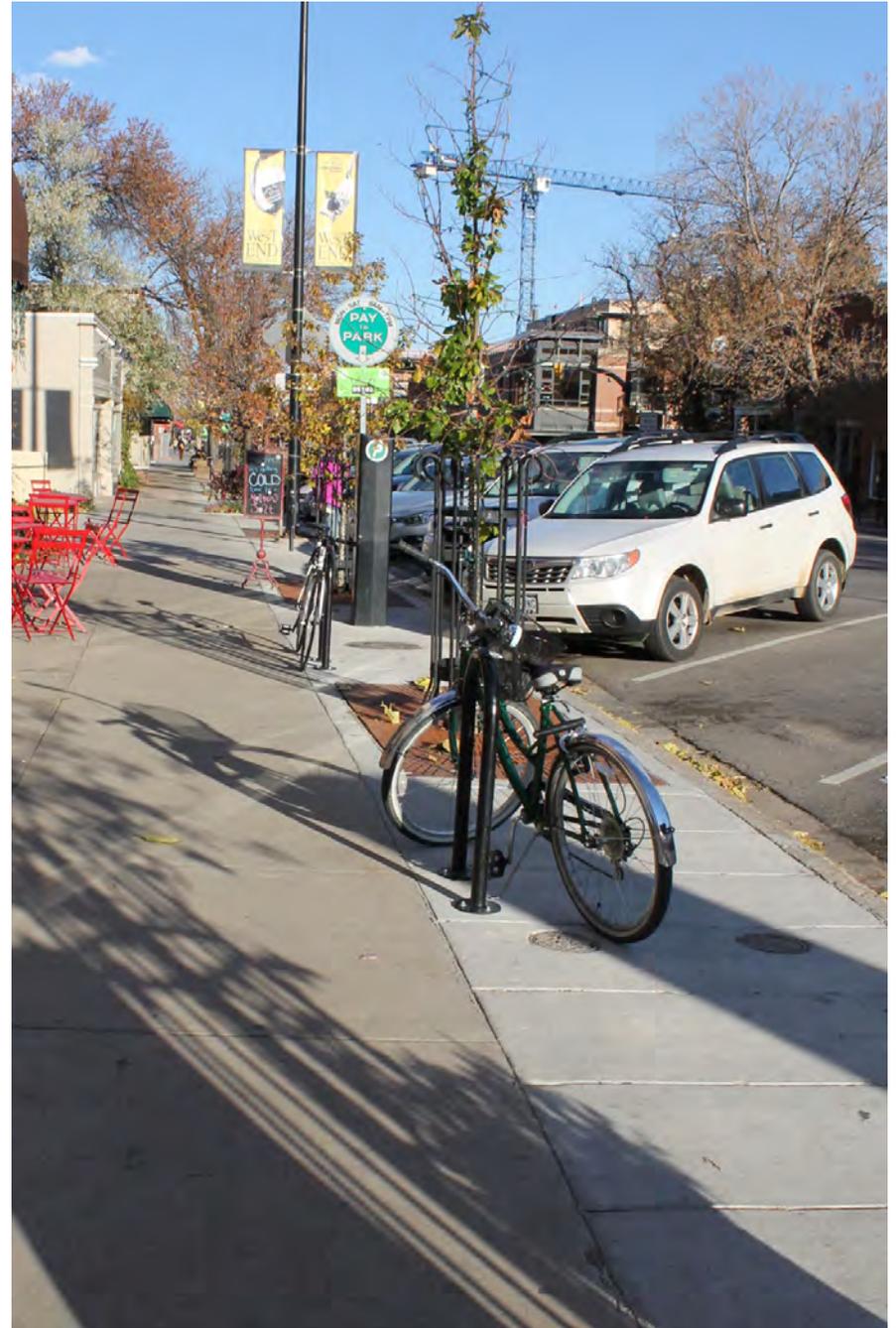


Fig. 32 Typical bicycle rack and tree grate  
(Source: City of Boulder)



Fig. 33 View of compatible patio extension with sandstone posts and iron railings  
(Source: City of Boulder)

Note:

The [Arts Commission](#), [DMC](#), [DAB](#), and [LB](#) are among the groups involved in making public art decisions in the Downtown.

### 3.4 Street Furnishings

- A. Use street furnishings to create a unified visual appearance in Downtown.
- B. In general, install standard benches, trash receptacles, appropriately sized bollards, pedestrian-scale street lighting, and bike stands in durable black metal to unify the visual quality of the Downtown.
- C. Strategically locate newspaper stands, kiosks and other furniture adjacent high-traffic areas, e.g. bus stops, intersections, etc.
- D. Create attractive, safe and comfortable bus stops crafted in durable and elegant materials.

### 3.5 Historic Features

- A. Preserve historic features of the streetscape. Whenever possible, preserve, restore, and reuse historic fixtures of the streetscape, such as flagstone sidewalks, globe light fixtures, or any other existing historic features located in the public right-of-way.
- B. Historic signs, such as those painted on side walls, should be preserved.
- C. Extensions into the right-of-way involving historic resources should be compatible and not substantially alter the property.

### 3.6 Public Art

- A. Enrich the downtown with public art and carefully site art within appropriate areas of the public realm. Consider the context, materials, purpose of the artwork at the proposed site.
- B. Freestanding artwork should not obscure building elements. Thoughtfully integrated artwork may be incorporated into the surface or facade design.
- C. Artwork may be utilized as gateway features within discrete areas of Downtown.
- D. Public art should be complementary and subordinate to associated historic properties and complement the period of significance of the building or district.



Fig. 34 West Pearl gateway obelisk (Source: City of Boulder)



## **DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**



Placeholder - Image selection in process



**MARCH 2015**  
CITY OF BOULDER



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### **Acknowledgements**

This third edition of the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines is the result of recommendations from 2015 joint-board working group consisting of representatives from the Landmarks Board, Boulder Design Advisory Board, Downtown Management Commission, the Planning Board and City staff.

Much of basis of this document may be attributed to earlier work by the Downtown Alliance, a group of city boards and commissions, non-profit organizations and neighborhood groups including the city of Boulder Planning Board; the Landmarks Board; the Boulder Design Advisory Board; the Downtown Management Commission; Downtown Boulder, Inc.; Historic Boulder; and representatives from the Whittier, Mapleton Hill, Goss Grove, and Flatirons neighborhoods.

**Pending joint board meeting finalization of content**



## INTRODUCTION

**Note:**

The design guidelines include many photographs and diagrams to illustrate acceptable or unacceptable approaches. The illustrations are provided as examples and are not intended to indicate the only options.

**Note:**

In general, these guidelines adhere the Local, State and Federal regulations, but wherever a discrepancy may arise, the higher standard shall be applied.

### ***What is the purpose of the guidelines?***

The purpose of this third edition of the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines is to provide a basis for understanding, discussing, and assessing the design quality of proposed preservation, renovation and new construction projects located within the boundaries of the Downtown Historic District, the Non-Historic Area, and the Interface Area.

Through the use of these guidelines it is anticipated both private and public projects will endeavor to preserve and enhance the unique form, scale, visual character of downtown, and strengthen the identity of the area while encouraging new compatible development.

### ***How are the guidelines organized?***

The guidelines are organized into three sections. The first two sections address specific geographic areas of the downtown: the Downtown Historic District and the Non-Historic & Neighborhood Interface Areas. The last section addresses the Public Realm.

The sections are organized around several principle guidelines and a number of “follow-up” guidelines. Within the margins are excerpts marked “Note:” and “CODE:” reserved for more in depth references to the subject matter.

### ***How are the guidelines revised?***

The guidelines, as part of the land use code and similar to all other area plans, are adopted by Planning Board and City Council with advice from the Boulder Design Advisory Board. The Landmarks Board adopts guidelines for the Downtown Historic District included in Section 1 of the guidelines.

### ***How are the guidelines administered?***

Three review bodies are primarily responsible for administering these guidelines: the Landmarks Board (LB), the Boulder Design Advisory Board (BDAB), and the Downtown Management Commission (DMC). Specifically, the LB reviews all projects located in the Downtown Historic District and landmarked properties located outside of the District, BDAB reviews all projects with a construction value over \$25,000 in the Non-Historic and Interface Areas, and the DMC reviews projects located on the Downtown Boulder Mall.



### DOWNTOWN VISION



*Fig. 1 View of Downtown Boulder 2015 (Source: City of Boulder)*

Downtown Boulder is characterized by the eclectic, fine grained and compact urban character of the Downtown Historic District. These qualities are reflected in the traditional buildings, streetscape and bustling economy, and the civic life of downtown. This is also where the historic fabric is the setting for contemporary, vibrant and active urban life where people are living, working, shopping, and recreating in the shadow of a visible history.

The urban design quality becomes a vital part of what makes Downtown Boulder a memorable place. These guidelines are intended to encourage the preservation and enhancement of Downtown's built environment through recognition of design attributes that are intrinsic to its character and essential to its ongoing appeal:

- Design innovation, excellence in form, and visual character that respects and references the historic architectural context;
- Human-scaled space that results from the designed interplay of enclosing mass, void, and light;
- Street-level design oriented toward the pedestrian in motion; and
- Sustainable design practice with respect to the use of water, energy, and materials.



Fig. 2 Area Map of Downtown Boulder (Source: City of Boulder)



### THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

Note: Scheduling a design review early is important. In addition, scheduling a design review with the appropriate review body is the responsibility of the property owner, developer or their representative. In general a meeting should be scheduled before formal application is made to the city for a building permit or development review. For more information regarding the design review and application procedure please contact (303) 441-1880.

Note: When requested LB or BDAB may act in an advisory capacity to the other board.

Note: For further map data please see the City of Boulder eMapLink GIS at [http://gisims.ci.boulder.co.us/website/pds/pds\\_eMapLink/viewer.htm](http://gisims.ci.boulder.co.us/website/pds/pds_eMapLink/viewer.htm).

#### ***The Landmark Alteration Certificate (LAC) Review Process***

Landmark Alteration Certificate (LAC) review through the Historic Preservation Program is required for exterior changes to landmarked properties and all properties located within the Downtown Historic District boundaries. The majority of applications are reviewed by the Landmarks Design Review committee (LDRC), that meets each week. Routine changes, such as patios and signage, are reviewed by staff. More complex projects, including demolition or new construction, are reviewed by the Landmarks Board. To find out more or for an application, visit [www.boulderhistoricpreservation.net](http://www.boulderhistoricpreservation.net) or call (303) 441-1880.

#### ***The Boulder Design Advisory Board (BDAB) Process***

The Boulder Design Advisory Board (BDAB) reviews projects valued over \$25,000 located in the Non-Historic and Interface Area which involve the construction of a new building or exterior work on an existing building. The board provides comments to persons responsible for the design and development, and assures compliance with the most recent Downtown Urban Design Guidelines. BDAB also reviews projects that require a discretionary review. To find out more, visit [www.bouldercolorado.gov/boards-commissions/bdab](http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/boards-commissions/bdab), or call (303) 441-1880.

#### ***The Downtown Management Commission (DMC) Process***

The DMC manages, controls and supervises the business affairs of the Central Area General Improvement District (CAGID) which includes review of projects which extend into the public right-of-way in the downtown Boulder Pedestrian Mall. Typical projects reviewed by the DMC include outdoor eating areas, signs, awnings, and other elements. To find out more, visit [www.bouldercolorado.gov/boards-commissions/downtown-management-commission](http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/boards-commissions/downtown-management-commission), or call (303) 413-7300.

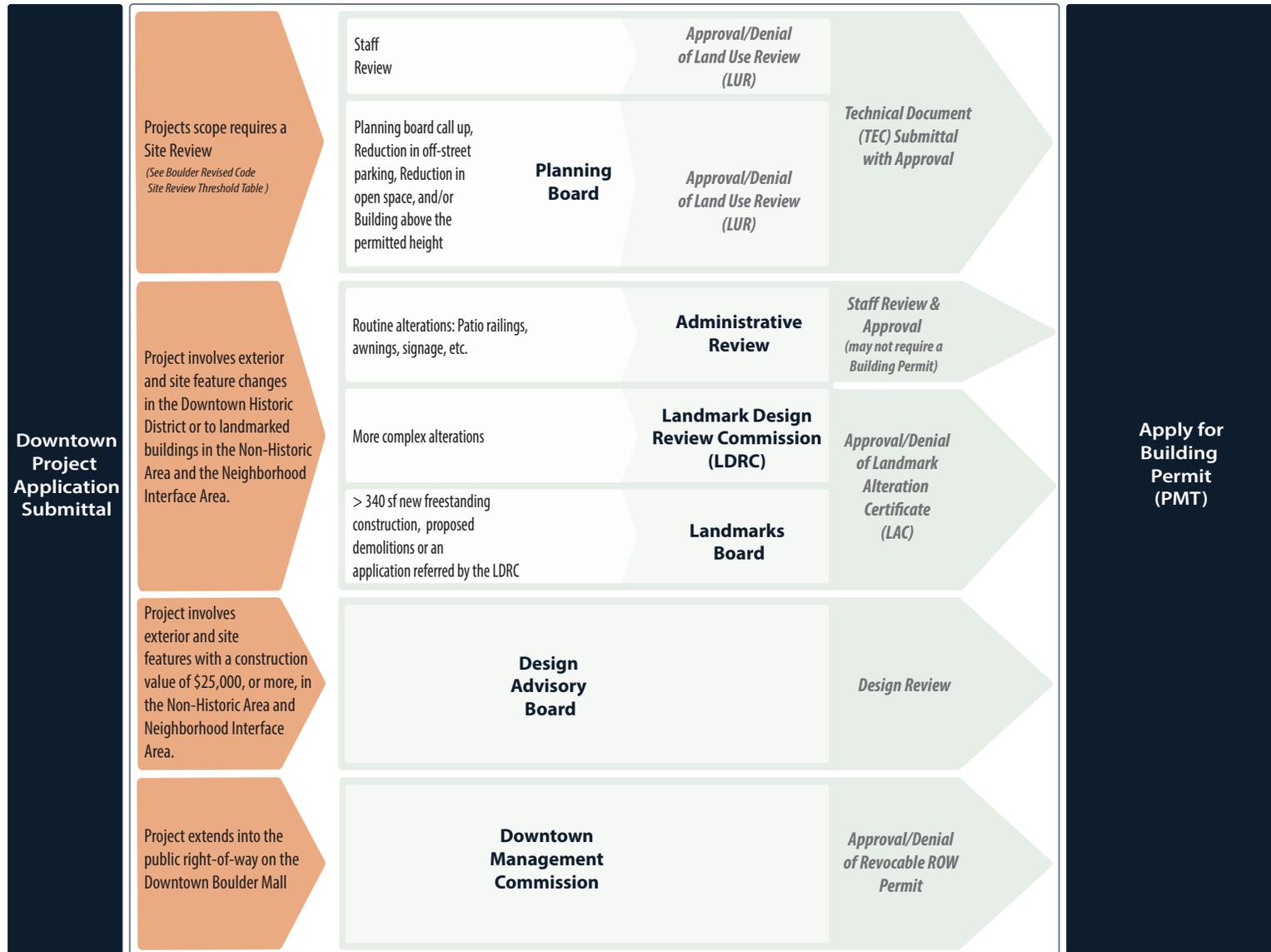


Fig. 3 Project Application Process (Source: City of Boulder)



### HISTORY

Text currently under review  
by city Historic Preservation  
Staff.

On February 10, 1859, the Boulder City Town Company was organized by A.A. Brookfield, the first president, and 56 shareholders. Boulder city developed as a supply base for miners going into the mountains in search of gold and silver providing miners with equipment, agricultural products, housing and transport services, and gambling and drinking establishments. The downtown section of Boulder was the nucleus of the fledgling community, and its main thoroughfare, Pearl Street, led into Boulder Canyon and the mining camps.

The business generated from the mining camps, together with Boulder's selection as the county seat in 1861 and the site for the state university in 1876, provided the foundation for steady growth and the erection of substantial business blocks in the commercial center of the town. Businesses were established along Pearl and adjoining streets to supply every need of the urban community, local farmers, and mining camps. The downtown experienced steady growth after the 1860s. By 1883, the commercial area included enterprises such as restaurants, groceries, saloons and liquor stores, lumber yards, drug stores, dry goods stores, hardware stores, feed and flour stores, barbers, paint shops, and tailors, in addition to fraternal lodges and the county courthouse.

Streetcar service enabled residents in new areas of the city to conveniently shop and conduct business downtown. In addition, the Denver & Interurban Railroad (an intercity connection with Denver) ran along Pearl Street from 1908-1917. During the 1920s, several new commercial buildings were erected, updating the appearance of the downtown with 20th Century influences. The early 1900s saw the planning for the improvement of Boulder with the Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. master plan in 1910 and the Saco DeBoer's zoning proposal establishing the first height restrictions limiting downtown buildings to 75 feet and neighborhood shopping districts to 35 feet, as well as seven zoning districts.

By the 1950s, competition from economic development in other areas of the City led to the modernization of historic storefronts downtown. By 1977, Boulder began a period of infill, restoration, and re-use of its past architectural development which continues to present and establishment of The Pearl Street Mall in 1976-1977. The redevelopment of the downtown area during this period led to the Historic Preservation Code and nomination of Downtown Boulder to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

# DRAFT - 10 DEC 2015 JOINT BOARD MEETING

## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

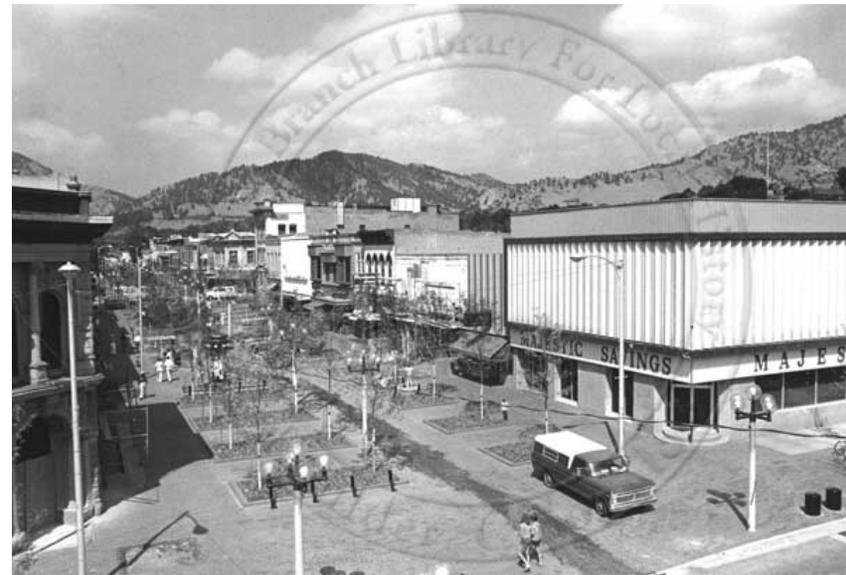
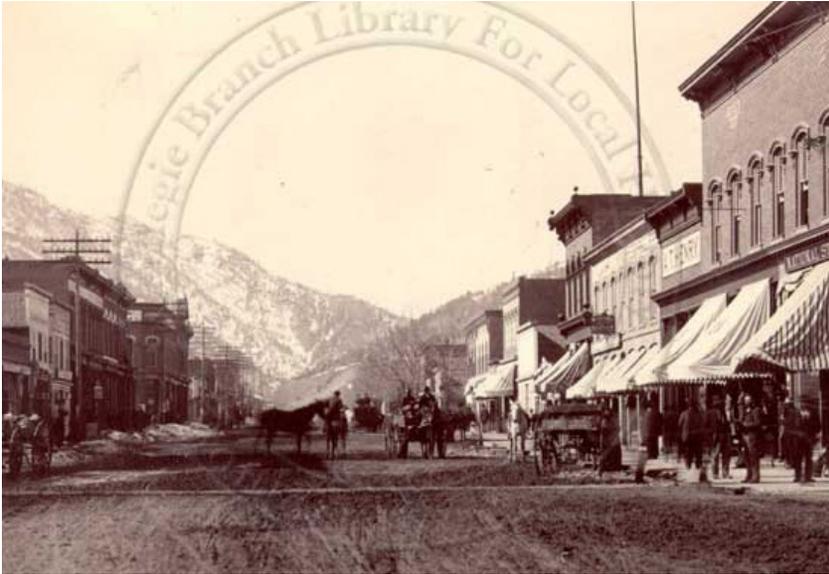


Fig. 4 Development of along Pearl Street ca. 1890, 1927, 1945 and 1976 (clockwise from top left)  
(Source: Carnegie Branch Library for Local History) **Acquiring permission**

## INTRODUCTION

# DRAFT - 10 DEC 2015 JOINT BOARD MEETING



## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

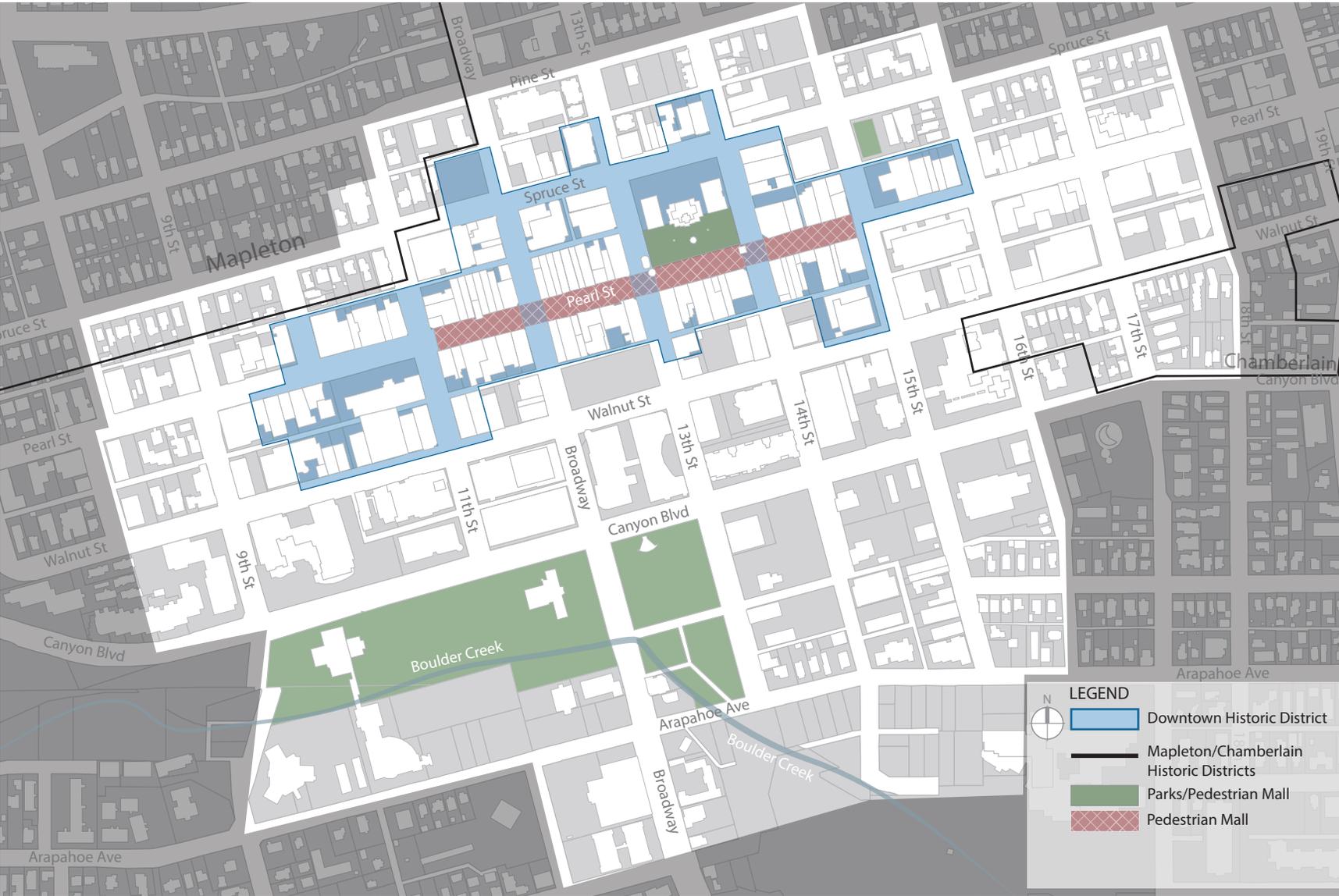


Fig. 5 Downtown Historic District Map (Source: City of Boulder)



## SECTION 1: THE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

Note: All buildings in the district have been evaluated for historic significance and are subject to Landmarks Board review when exterior work is involved. Any changes to a building, or site, require a Landmark Alteration Certificate prior to commencement.

The boundaries of the Downtown Historic District, designated in 1999 with a period of significance from 1858-1946, generally conform to the boundaries of the Downtown Boulder National Register Historic District. The district contains the city's greatest concentration of historic commercial buildings, especially along Pearl Street which forms its central spine. These buildings not only serve as a link with our cultural heritage; they also establish a model for design quality. Such buildings are resources for education, recreation and human enjoyment. They provide downtown with a rich character and a human scale that are unique assets for both residents and visitors.

Development in the Downtown Historic District must be especially sensitive to issues of compatibility. The economic success of the downtown is in many ways dependent on maintaining the historic character and quality that sets the downtown apart from other shopping areas. For this reason, the preservation, restoration, and appropriate rehabilitation of older buildings in this district is of great importance.

### *The urban design objectives for the Downtown Historic District are to:*

- Preserve and restore historic buildings.
- Preserve the integrity of the historic architectural features of individual buildings.
- Ensure that alterations and new construction strengthen and maintain the historic integrity of individual buildings and of the district at large.
- Encourage new development that will respect and enhance the visual character.
- Preserve the central area as a place for intense pedestrian activity.



## **DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

Note: The city's planning department maintains a file of each building in the downtown area more than 50 years in age. The official Inventory/Survey forms on file indicate the level of significance of each building within the Downtown Historic District. For more information please visit [www.boulderhistoricpreservation.net](http://www.boulderhistoricpreservation.net), or call (303) 441-1800.

***There are three categories of historic properties:***

### ***Local Landmark Buildings***

These buildings are officially designated as city of Boulder local landmarks. They have a special character, historic, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value in Boulder's local history. Landmarked buildings may include contributing properties to the Downtown Historic District. The greatest care must be given to preserving, restoring, and designing additions to these buildings.

### ***Contributing Buildings***

Contributing buildings are those built during the district's period of significance (1858 through 1946), that exist in comparatively "original" condition, or that have been appropriately restored, and that clearly contribute to the historic significance and integrity of the area. Such buildings may have additions that are compatible with the historic character of the original building, have original material now covered, or have experienced some alteration yet continue to convey some sense of history. Rehabilitations and additions should be sensitive and appropriate to the historic building and district.

### ***Non-Contributing Buildings***

There are two types of non-contributing buildings in the historic area: 1) buildings built during the district's period of significance that have been altered to such an extent that historic information is not interpretable and restoration is not possible. Such buildings should be evaluated on a case by case basis to determine if saving and restoring them is feasible or desirable; and, 2) buildings erected after 1946 which are not individually significant. For alterations to these buildings, the guidelines for new construction and/or remodel of non-contributing buildings in this section apply.

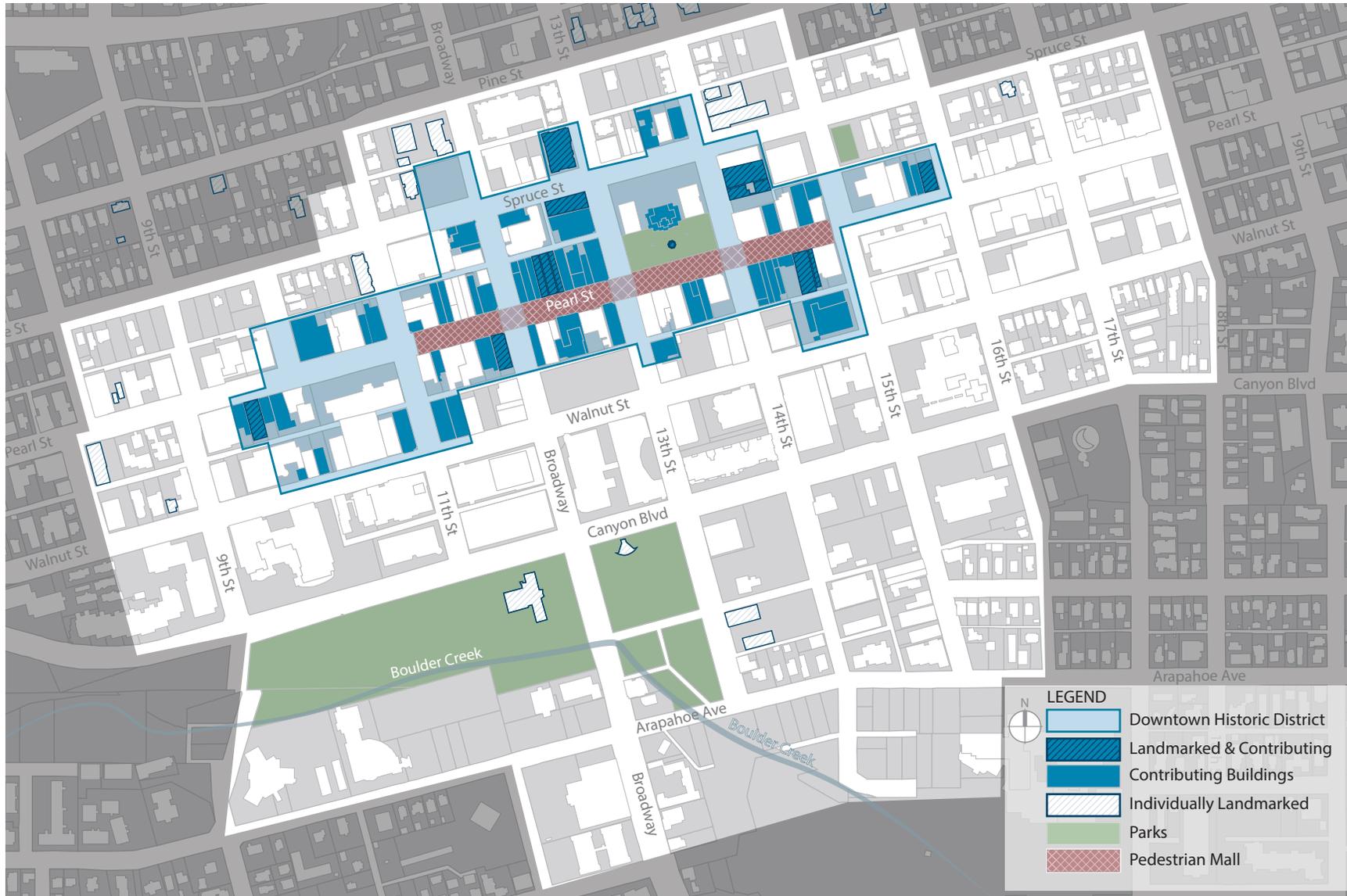


Fig. 6 Downtown Historic District Properties (Source: City of Boulder)

### SECTION 1: THE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT



## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Note: It is neither the intention of this guideline to recreate the past, nor to encourage theme design in the historic district, if the original building facade or original building materials do not exist. However, if documentary evidence such as photographs of the original does exist, then an acceptable alternative is to reconstruct the facade.

### 1.1 Use building materials that reinforce the integrity of the overall historic district

The use of traditional, durable materials as the primary building material is encouraged to reflect the historic building construction and development pattern within the district. Choose accent materials similar in texture and scale to others in the district.

These following materials are generally appropriate:

- Full dimension brick and stone masonry
- Finish carpentry details, e.g. cornice molding, door and window casing
- Finished lumber to achieve traditional patterns, e.g. horizontal siding rather than diagonal
- Finished, embossed or painted metal and sheet metal
- Clear or lightly tinted glass
- Ceramic tiles
- Brick, clay and ceramic pavers
- Slate, finished metal, glazed ceramic and tile roofs
- Brick, concrete and stone lintels
- brick, wood or stone columns

The following materials are generally inappropriate:

- Thin veneer products
- Vinyl Replacement Windows
- EIFS systems, or EIFS decorative elements
- Faux or simulated materials
- Coarsely finished, “rustic” materials, such as wood shakes, shingles, barn board or stained fir plywood.
- Poorly crafted or “rustic” woodworking and finishing techniques
- Indoor-outdoor carpeting or astro-turf
- Corrugated metal and fiberglass (unless used sparingly)
- Moss rock
- “Antique” or old brick with partial paint, mottled light variegated brick, oversized brick and white brick mortar
- Ornate wrought-iron, “New Orleans” style grille and rail work
- Stucco surfaces that are highly textured such as those sometimes associated with a “hacienda” or “Mediterranean” style
- Expanded metal
- Silver or clear anodized aluminum sheets
- Silver or clear aluminum extrusions for windows and doorways
- Residential type sliding glass doors



Note: For further information on recommended treatments for historic properties please see [The Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings.](#)

- Imitation wood siding or stone
- Flat or molded plastic sheeting in quantities exceeding five square feet when used as primary facade materials
- Imitation metal “rock work”
- Plastic molded imitations of any conventional building material
- Mirror or metalized reflective glass
- Glass block



## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

### **1.2 Guidelines for the preservation and restoration of local landmarks and contributing buildings**

While it is acknowledged that changes to structures in the Local Downtown Historic District will occur over time, it is also a concern that these changes do not damage the historic building fabric and character of downtown. Preservation of the exteriors and storefronts of these buildings will continue their contribution to the unique historic character of the downtown. Any building renovation or alteration, no matter the planned use, must retain the overall design integrity of the historic building by protecting the original features and materials and respecting the traditional design elements.

The following are the guidelines for the preservation and restoration of local landmarks and contributing buildings:

#### **1.2.1 Preserve Original Character, Façades and Materials**

Wherever possible retain these elements through restoration and repair, rather than replacement. If portions of the original material must be replaced, use a material similar to the original.

These elements include:

- A. Full-dimension bricks, or stone
- A. Display window bulkheads
- C. Storefront display windows
- D. Recessed and corner entrances
- E. Secondary entrances and detailing
- F. Storefront transom
- G. Sign bands and storefront cornice
- H. Parapet walls, caps, and roof cornices
- I. Upper story vertically proportioned windows and fenestrations
- J. Columns, pilasters, and piers
- K. Decorative window sills, lintels, window hoods, and other window assembly elements

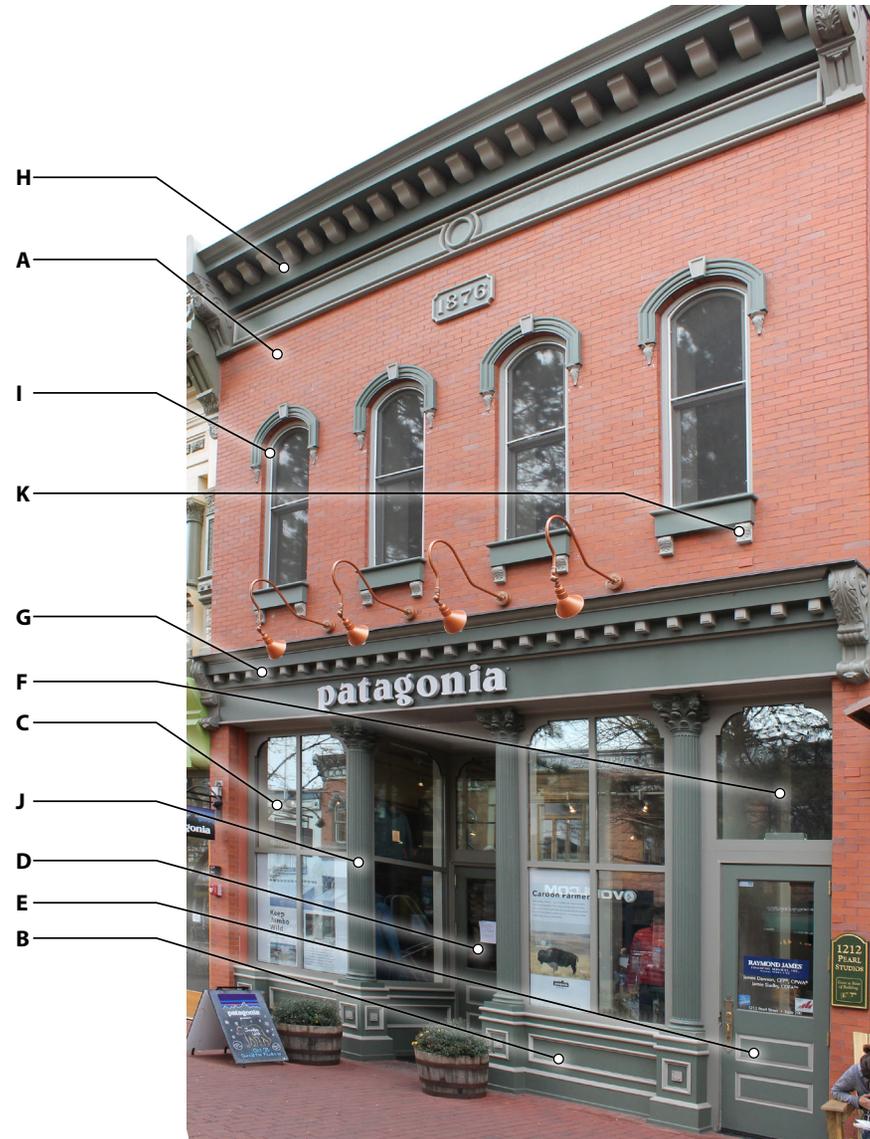


Fig. 7 Historic Building Facade Elements (Source: City of Boulder)

### SECTION 1: THE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT



## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Note: For more information on paint removal, restoration and rehabilitation of decorative wood elements and brick please see the Secretary of Interior Technical Preservation Services publications at <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>.

### **1.2.2 Avoid concealing or removing original materials.**

If the original material has been covered, uncover it if feasible. See the Secretary of Interior Technical Preservation Services publications for specific recommendations to preserve, rehabilitate, and restore historic buildings.

### **1.2.3 Maintain the historic building setback line**

Preserve the historic relationship of the building to the street or property line. Where buildings are built to the alley edge, consider secondary customer entries if original materials and features are not damaged.

## **1.3 Guidelines for contemporary alterations and additions to local landmarks and contributing buildings**

### **1.3.1 Awnings may be used to provide visual depth and shade**

Awnings should be designed to fit the storefront opening to emphasize the building's proportions. Awnings should not obscure or damage important architectural details. An eight foot clearance from the sidewalk to the awning is required.

Operable fabric awnings are encouraged. Metal awnings or canopies that are similar in form to fabric awnings may be appropriate when designed as an integral part of the building facade, and do not appear as tacked-on additions. Awning color should be coordinated with the color scheme of the entire building front. Mechanized awnings and awnings on the upper stories are discouraged.

### **1.3.2 Distinguish additions to historic buildings**

Additions to historic buildings should be subtly distinguishable from the original while maintaining visual continuity through the use of design elements such as proportion and scale, siting, facade set-back, and materials that are of a similar color and texture.

When design elements contrast too strongly with the original structure, the addition will appear visually incompatible. Conversely, when the original design is replicated, the addition is indistinguishable and the historical evolution of the building becomes unrecognizable.

A. For additions to a historic building, retain the original proportions, scale, and character of the main facade. Position the addition so it is subordinate to the original building. Express the difference between the original facade and the addition with a subtle change in color, texture or materials.



CODE: See the B.R.C Form and Bulk Standards for additional information on heights, setback, encroachments into the setback, and other zoning district specific requirements.

B. Maintain the proportions and the established pattern of upper story windows. In additions, upper floors should incorporate traditional vertically proportioned window openings with less window glazing and transparency than the lower floors. Use windows similar in size and shape to those used historically to maintain the facade pattern of the block.

C. Maintain the rhythm established by the repetition of the traditional 25' facade widths for projects that extend over several lots by changing the materials, patterns, reveals, building setbacks, or by using design elements such as columns or pilasters.

D. Set back additions to roofs of historic buildings, in order to maintain the height of the primary facade. New floors should be substantially set back from the primary facade so that the original building height and facade are clearly distinguishable from the new upper floor as seen from the street.

### **1.3.3 *Select building colors appropriate to the area's historic character***

In general, select a color scheme that will visually link the building to its past as well as to others in the area. Consider colors that are compatible with the building's predominant materials, or do an analysis of colors pre-existing on the building and use one of the colors found.

A. Develop a comprehensive color scheme. Consider the building as a whole as well as the details that need emphasis. Softer muted colors establish a uniform background. Establish a hierarchy for the color palette with one color on similar elements such as window frames. Reserve brighter colors for small special accents to emphasize entry ways and to highlight special structural ornamentation.

B. It is not appropriate to paint unpainted brick. If the brick is already painted, paint removal is preferred. Avoid paint removal procedures that damage the original brick finish such as sand blasting or caustic chemicals. Before removing paint conduct a test to determine detrimental effects. If the existing paint on the brick is in poor condition and paint removal will damage the underlying brick, the brick should be repainted.

### **1.3.4 *Minimize the visibility of mechanical, structural, or electrical appurtenances***

Use low-profile mechanical units and elevator shafts that are not visible from the street. If this is not possible, setback or screen rooftop equipment from view. Be sensitive to views from the upper floors of neighboring buildings. Skylights or solar panels should have low profiles and not be visible from the public right-of-way. These features should be installed in a manner which minimizes damage to historic materials.



## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Note: Furthermore, architectural styles that directly copy historic buildings, and theme designs, such as “wild west” are not appropriate.

Note:  
1.4.1 Items are for reference and are not intended to be used as comprehensive checklist

### **1.4 Guidelines for new construction and remodeling non-contributing buildings in the downtown historic district**

The purpose of this section is to provide guidance for the design of new construction and the renovation of non-contributing buildings in order to retain the historic character of the overall district. While new building design is expected to reflect the character of its own time acknowledging the downtown as a living district, it is important that it also respect the traditional qualities that makes the downtown unique such as massing, scale, use of storefront detailing, and choice of materials.

Guidelines from Section 1.3 concerning awnings, paint color, lighting, and appurtenances are also applicable to the non-contributing buildings.

#### **1.4.1 Consider traditional design elements in new designs**

Careful integration of traditional facade features reinforces patterns and visual alignments that contribute to the overall character of the district. While these features may be interpreted in new and contemporary ways, they generally include the following:

- A. Full-dimension brick or stone
- B. Display window bulkheads
- C. Display windows
- D. Recessed and corner entrances
- E. Entry door(s) and detailing
- F. Storefront transom
- G. Sign bands and storefront cornice
- H. Parapet walls, caps, and roof cornices
- I. Upper story vertical window patterns, shapes, and fenestrations
- J. Pilasters and piers
- K. Decorative window sills, lintels, window hoods and other window assembly elements
- L. Historic 25' building modules rhythm

#### **1.4.2 Maintain the historic building setback line**

Construct new buildings to maintain the continuity of the relationship of the historic building line to the street and adjacent properties, and/or the block.



Fig. 8 Historic building 25' module rhythm (Source: City of Boulder)

### SECTION 1: THE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT



## **DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

CODE: See B.R.C Form and Bulk Standards for more information on height limits and specific zoning districts.

### **1.4.3 Construct residential units to include entry stoops and/or porches**

Residential entry porches are encouraged to extend 18" to 30" above grade.

### **1.4.4 Consider the height and mass of buildings**

In general, buildings should appear similar in height, mass, and scale to other buildings in the historic area to maintain the historic district's visual integrity and unique character. At the same time, it is important to maintain a variety of heights. While the actual heights of buildings are of concern, the perceived heights of buildings are equally important. One, two and three story buildings make up the primary architectural fabric of the downtown, with taller buildings located at key intersections.

A. Relate the height of buildings to neighboring structures at the sidewalk edge. For new structures that are significantly taller than adjacent buildings, upper floors should be set-back a minimum of 15' from the front facade to reduce the perceived height.

B. Consider the effect of building height on shading and views. Building height can shade sidewalks during winter months leading to icy sidewalks and unappealing pedestrian areas.

### **1.4.5 Maintain a human scale rather than a monolithic or monumental scale**

Smaller scale buildings and the use of traditionally-sized building components help to establish a human scale and maintain the character of downtown. Standard size brick, uniform building components, and standard window sizes are most appropriate.

### **1.4.6 Improve rear or side alley elevations to enhance public access from parking lots and alleys.**

Where buildings are built to the alley edge, consider opportunities for alley display windows and secondary customer or employee entries.

Screening for service equipment, trash, or any other rear-of-building elements should be designed as an integral part of the overall design. Where intact, historic alley facades should be preserved along with original features and materials. Alterations should be compatible with the historic scale and character of the building and block.



*Fig. 9 Infill development with compatible materiality, historic building proportioning, and distinguishing contemporary features, Boulder, CO  
(Source: Studio Architects)*

### **SECTION 1: THE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT Placeholder - Pending image selection and licensing acquisition 23**

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## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES



Fig. 10 Surface parking located towards the rear of the property and screened from the street (Source: City of Boulder)



Fig. 11 Building integrated trash enclosure (Source: City of Boulder)



Fig. 12 Secondary alley entrance (Source: City of Boulder)

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## SECTION 1: THE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT



CODE: All lighting must also comply with B.R.C. Section 9-9-16, "Outdoor Lighting".

Note: All surface parking lots are required to meet the B.R.C. development standards for parking lot landscaping and screening.

### **1.5 Exterior building lighting should be designed to enhance the overall architecture of the building**

### **1.6 Reduce the visual impact of structured and surface parking**

- A. Parking structures are should be compatible to the historic district and adjacent buildings.
- B. All parking structures should be architecturally screened and/or wrapped with an occupiable use.
- C. Locate any surface parking to the rear of the property.
- D. All surface parking must be screened.
- E. Pedestrian routes in structures and parking lots should be easily identifiable and accessed, with clear visual connections to the sidewalks and buildings.
- F. Security lighting should be designed for safety, as well as night-time appearance.

### **1.7 Handicapped access shall be appropriately designed**

- A. In most cases the principal public entrance to a building should also be the principal entrance for handicapped accessibility. In existing buildings, where the only route is not accessible from the principal public entrance a rear or side service entrance route may be considered.
- B. Ramps and related accessibility modifications to a historic property should be compatible with the character of the building.

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## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

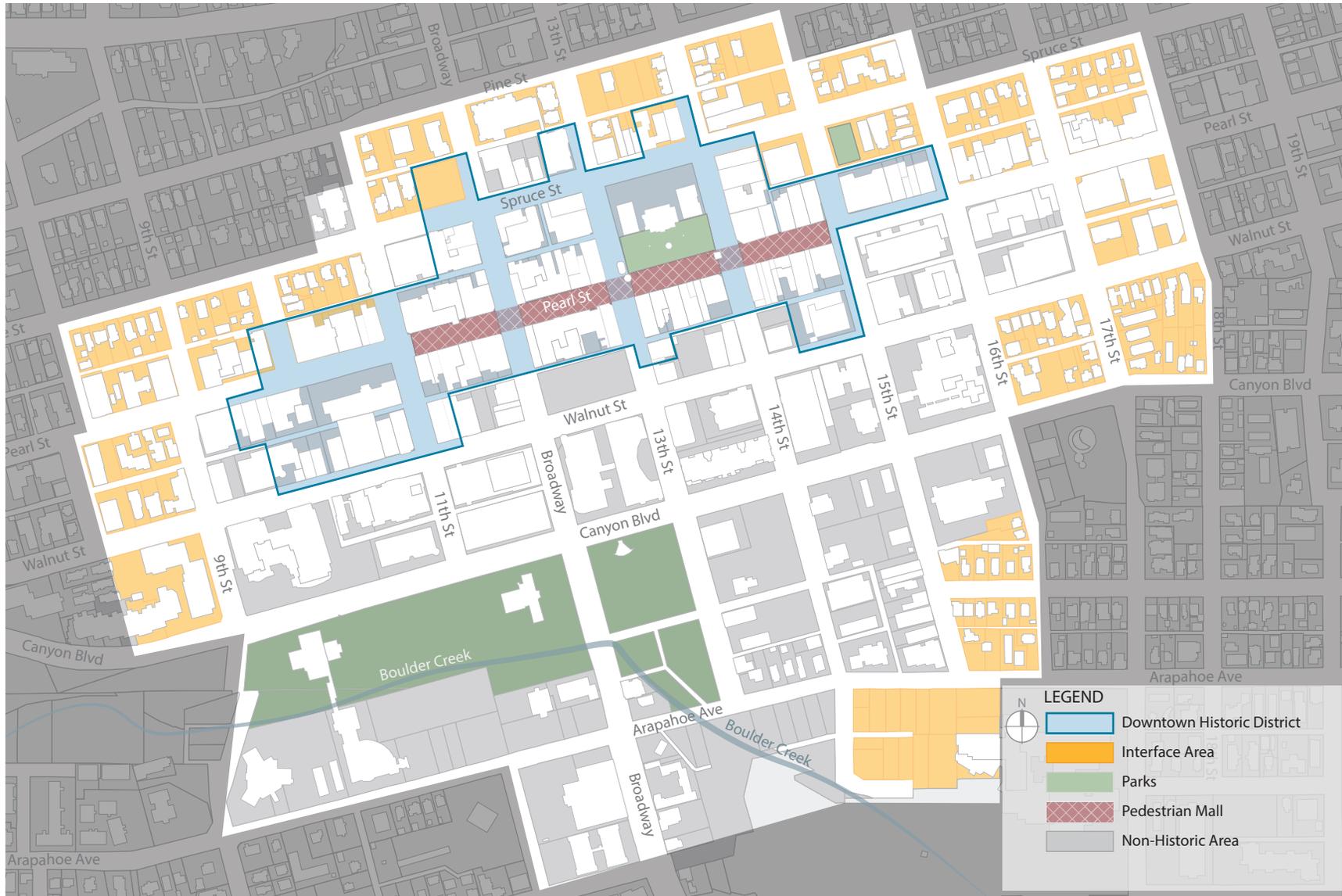


Fig. 9 Map of the Downtown Historic District, Non-Historic and the Interface Area (Source: City of Boulder)



## SECTION 2: THE NON-HISTORIC & INTERFACE AREAS

Notes: A good neighborhood policy has been implemented by downtown property and business owners and residents living in adjacent residential neighborhoods as a positive way to communicate about issues of "livability" in the interface area. Its purpose is to establish a standard of cooperation and a code of conduct not generally addressed by existing law. While compliance is voluntary, the policy asks that a "Good Neighbor Agreement" between commercial property or business owners and surrounding neighborhood residents be agreed to and signed. The policy asks owners to take action on a number of issues including: trash; litter; graffiti removal; the use of alternate transportation modes by employees; employee parking; noise, animal, pest, and weed control; deliveries; and employee/tenant education. For information on how businesses in the interface area can participate in the Good Neighbor Policy contact the DMC at (303) 441-4000.

Important design elements are 1) the Non-historic Area's relationship to its surroundings, including the Historic Area, the Civic Park area, and the residential quality of the Interface Area, 2) the pedestrian quality of the area including the downtown Boulder mall, east and west Pearl Street, Spruce and Walnut streets, Canyon Boulevard, and the north-south streets that connect Civic Park to the mall area, and 3) new building design can reflect the character of its own time and meaningful juxtapositions, while respecting the integrity, scale, and massing of historic buildings in the area.

Creative interpretations of traditional design elements, and designs that reflect the character of their time, are encouraged. The designs should be compatible with the surrounding historic context, but distinguishable. These guidelines also discourage projects that create inhospitable pedestrian design, and buildings that are inappropriate in scale and massing to their surroundings.

The Interface Area is composed of the blocks that link the core of the downtown to the surrounding residential neighborhoods. This area requires special design sensitivities that must be addressed when commercial buildings are located adjacent to residential areas. Impacts to the surrounding residential areas can be minimized through careful design which respects the scale and quality of adjacent residential uses and deftly transitions the commercial and residential areas.

### ***The urban design objectives for the Non-Historic and Interface Areas are to:***

- Reinforce the character of downtown as a pedestrian place by encouraging architectural solutions that are visually pleasing, reflective of contemporary times yet stylistically appropriate to the context, and compatible in scale and character with their street.
- Encourage sensitive design along the edge where the downtown commercial area abuts residential neighborhoods.
- Emphasizes a clear distinction between the commercial and residential interface areas.
- Maintain the diversity in building type and size, and respect the adjoining residential character.
- Discourage adverse impacts from noise, night lighting, poor building design, and commercial service areas on adjacent residential neighborhoods.

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## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES



Fig. 10 Contemporary storefront facade with transparency, compatible height, and innovative use of materials, Palo Alto, California (Source: Olson Kundig)



Fig. 12 Contemporary multi-family residential with human scale materials in Boulder, CO (Source: Studio Architects)



Fig. 11 Contemporary rowhome with traditional roof form and contemporary use of traditional materials in Goes, Netherlands (Source: Pasel Kuenzel)

### 28 Placeholder - Pending image selection and licensing acquisition SECTION 2: THE NON-HISTORIC & INTERFACE AREAS



Note: See Section 1.1 for recommended building materials

### **2.1 Commercial buildings in the Non-Historic and Interface Areas**

#### **2.1.1 Consider incorporating traditional facade elements in new and contemporary ways**

See Section 1: The Downtown Historic District for specific building elements.

#### **2.1.2 Maintain the historic or predominant building setback line.**

- A. Maintain the relationship and continuity of the building wall to the street or property line.
- B. For commercial uses in residential buildings, maintain the predominant residential setback of the block, including any porches.

#### **2.1.3 Consider the height, mass, and scale of buildings**

In general, buildings should appear similar in height, mass, and scale to other buildings in the area. At the same time, it is important to maintain a variety of heights. While the actual heights of buildings are of concern, the perceived heights of buildings are equally important. One, two and three story buildings make up the primary architectural fabric of the downtown, with taller buildings located at key intersections.

- A. Consider the height and proportion of buildings to neighboring structures. For new structures that are significantly taller than adjacent buildings, upper floors should be set-back a minimum of 15 feet from the front facade to reduce the perceived height.
- B. Consider the effect of building height on shading and views. Building height can shade sidewalks during winter months leading to icy sidewalks and unappealing pedestrian areas.
- C. Maintain the traditional, established breaks between buildings, such as alleyways.
- D. For projects located in the Interface Area, construct buildings three floors or less and consider the adjacent residential height, mass, and scale.
- E. Commercial construction on a primarily residential block should be designed to reflect a residential character, e.g. residential setback on a primarily residential street.

#### **2.1.6 Maintain a human scale, rather than monolithic or monumental scale**

- A. Avoid large featureless facade surfaces. Include architectural elements and patterns that divide the facade into familiar intervals. A single facade should not exceed a maximum of 75 linear feet.
- B. Consider how the texture and pattern of building materials will be perceived. Use traditionally sized building components in a way that incorporates details, textures, and patterns to establish a sense of human scale.



## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Note: A goal of the city is to make the downtown as accessible as possible. All accessible design elements must conform to all applicable Federal, State and Local laws and codes. Wherever a discrepancy may arise, the higher standard shall be applied.

Note: See Section 3 for encroachments into the public right-of-way discussion on revocable lease and allowable dimensions.

CODE: All lighting must also comply with B.R.C. Section 9-9-16, "Outdoor Lighting".

C. Maintain the distinction between upper and lower floors. Develop the first floor facade as primarily transparent. Consider using windows and other architectural features to create a pattern that will reinforce the traditional facade rhythm found on commercial buildings in the downtown area. Lower floors are generally differentiated by a higher percentage of glazing and transparency than upper floors.

### ***2.2 Residential buildings in the Non-Historic and Interface Areas***

- A. Maintain the diverse architectural character of the residential buildings in the interface area.
- B. Construct residential units to include entry stoops and/or porches. Residential entry porches are encouraged to extend 18" to 30" above grade.
- C. When feasible, maintain residential uses in historic residential buildings.

### ***2.3 Handicapped access shall be appropriately designed***

- A. In most cases the principal public entrance to a building should also be the principal entrance for handicapped accessibility.
- B. Ramps and related elements should be modest in their design and be visually integrated with the overall building design and site plan. They should not appear as a separate addition to a building facade.

### ***2.4 Open space and right-of-way considerations for the Non-Historic and Interface Areas***

- A. Consider the quality of open space incorporated into new and renovated buildings
- B. When appropriate, integrate the surrounding open spaces into the building design. Well programmed plazas, courtyards, outdoor seating and dining areas on or adjacent to open spaces and pedestrian routes are encouraged.

### ***2.5 Exterior building lighting should be designed to enhance the overall architecture of the building***

### ***2.6 Design attractive alleys and rear building facades***

- A. Design all sides of the building including alley elevations. Well designed rear building entrances, windows, balconies, and planting areas are encouraged.
- B. All trash enclosures should be integral to the building and all receptacles screened from view.
- C. All lighting should provide security and pedestrian visibility.

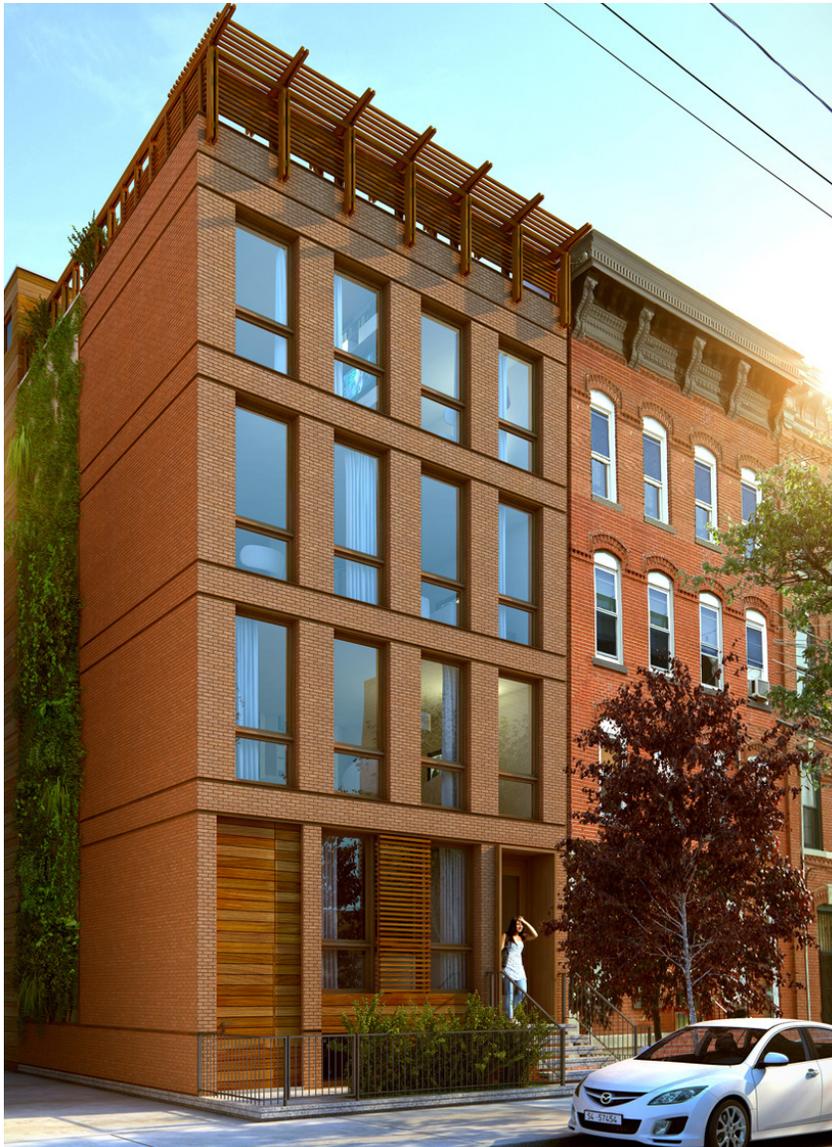


Fig. 13 Contemporary infill with a differentiated first floor to upper floor and sophisticated references to the adjacent building (Source: Jorge Mastropietro)



Fig. 14 Contemporary infill with a storefront first floor, contemporary awnings and references to the adjacent building's mass and scale (Source: City of Boulder)

## SECTION 2: THE NON-HISTORIC & INTERFACE AREAS Placeholder - Pending image selection and licensing acquisition 31



## **DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

CODE: All parking lots are required to meet the B.R.C. development standards for parking lot landscaping and screening..

### ***2.7 Reduce the visual impact of structured and surface parking***

- A. All parking structures should be architecturally screened and/or wrapped with an occupiable use.
- B. Locate any surface parking to the rear of the property.
- C. All surface parking must be screened.
- D. Pedestrian routes in structures and parking lots should be easily identifiable and accessed, with clear visual connections to the sidewalks and buildings.
- E. Security lighting should be designed for safety as well as night-time appearance.



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## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES



Fig. 17 The Downtown Pedestrian Mall (Source: City of Boulder)



### SECTION 3: THE PUBLIC REALM

#### CODE:

Awnings, signage, patio extensions, and other associated structures or objects extending into the public right-of-way require a revocable right-of-way permit and/or lease agreement, see B.R.C Section 8-6-6 for more information.

The term “public realm” refers to the entire system of open space, landscaping, signage, streets and sidewalks, by which people circulate through and experience the downtown. Our image of downtown Boulder, and the ease and safety with which we move through it, is determined by the quality of the streetscape.

#### *The urban design objectives of the Public Realm Guideline are to:*

- Unify the visual image of downtown by creating a series of public sitting areas, completing the rhythm of street trees and street lighting, and providing landscaping with seasonal color or other qualities of visual interest.
- Create a pedestrian oriented environment that is safe, accessible, visually pleasing, and comfortable.
- Strengthen downtown’s visual connections. Visually and functionally connect the downtown Boulder mall and Civic Park, or east and west Pearl Street to the mall.
- Maintain the visual unity and historic character of the downtown Boulder mall through the use of traditional materials.
- Respect and preserve adjacent residential neighborhoods through the use of sensitive streetscape design.
- Encourage design and sign placement that promotes downtown businesses while complementing the character and scale.
- Promote signs that are designed as an integral yet noticeable part of a building’s overall design.
- Promote the design of signs that are good neighbors within their block.
- Encourage comfortable spaces by integrating appropriate landscaping and street trees into the public realm.
- Create an overall image in which a building, signage, and site design relate to each other.



## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

### Note:

The following is meant as a supplement to the city's Sign Code. Sign permits, obtained through the Planning Department, are required. Signs that extend into the downtown Boulder mall public-right-of-way, will require review by the Downtown Management Commission. For further information call the DMC (303) 441-4000 and the Planning Department (303) 441-3270.

### CODE:

Signs on historic buildings or in historic districts must also comply with the B.R.C. Chapter 10-13 "Historic Preservation" and "Signs" 9-9-21 provisions.

## 3.1 Signs

Commercial signs should function to identify and locate businesses, promote commercial activity, attract customers, provide direction and information, and in some cases create visual delight and architectural interest.

### 3.1.1 *Following are principle sign types that are applicable in the downtown:*

#### A. Wall Signs:

Wall signs are limited in size and defined as projecting less than 15 inches from the building. Wall signs should be positioned within architectural features such as the panels above storefronts, sign bands, on the transom windows, or flanking doorways. Wall mounted signs should align with others on a block to maintain established patterns.

#### B. Projecting Signs:

Projecting signs should be positioned along the first floor level of the facade. Projecting signs may take on their own special shape, or create their own symbol within the overall facade design.

#### C. Awning Signs:

Awnings should be positioned to emphasize special shapes or details of the facade, to draw attention to the shop entrances or to emphasize a display window. Awning signs may be illustrated with letters or symbols.

### 3.1.2 *Signage should be designed as an integral part of the overall building design*

In general, signs should not obscure important architectural details. When several businesses share a building, signs should be aligned or organized in a directory.

### 3.1.3 *Use simple signs clearly convey a message*

#### A. Sign Materials:

Sign materials should be durable and easy to maintain. Appropriate sign materials include painted or carved wood, carved wooden letters, epoxy letters, galvanized sheet metal, stone, specialty or decorative glass, clear and colored acrylic, or neon.

#### B. Illumination:

Lighting external to the sign surface with illumination directed toward the sign is preferred. External lighting may also highlight architectural features. Internally lit signs are generally discouraged. The light level should not overpower the facade or other signs on the street. The light source should be shielded from pedestrian view. The lighting of symbol signs is encouraged. Internal lighting may be appropriate where only letters are illuminated or neon is used. Neon is acceptable, though restricted in size, if it does not obscure architectural detail or overly illuminate display windows.

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## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES



Fig. 18 Downtown wall sign with directional lighting (Source: City of Boulder)



Fig. 19 Awning signs and patio extension (Source: City of Boulder)



Fig. 20 Projecting sign (Source: City of Boulder)

### SECTION 3: THE PUBLIC REALM



## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES



Fig. 21 Street Type Key Map (Source: City of Boulder)



### C. Sign Shapes:

Signs should be designed in simple, straight-forward shapes that convey their message clearly. Symbols are easily read and enhance the pedestrian quality of the downtown.

### D. Graphics:

Lettering styles should be proportioned, simple, and easy to read. In most instances, a simple typeface is preferred over a faddish or overly ornate type style. The number of type styles should be limited to two per sign. As a general rule, the letter forms should occupy not more than 75% of the total sign panel.

## 3.2 The Streetscape

### 3.2.1 Use the existing street hierarchy as a basis for designing the streetscape

The concept of a street hierarchy is based on understanding how various downtown streets function. For example, Canyon Boulevard and Broadway are major vehicular streets, thus street improvements should provide for large volumes of traffic while buffering pedestrians from traffic impacts. Four types of streets have been identified:

#### A. The downtown Boulder mall (a vehicle-free pedestrian street):

The downtown Boulder mall, which encompasses Pearl Street from 11th to 15th Streets, is the most intensely used pedestrian zone in the downtown. As a shopping, festival, and public gathering place it will remain a vehicle free area with a unified brick paving design. Intense landscape treatments, including seasonally-varied plantings and coordinated street furniture, add to the pedestrian ambiance.

#### B. Canyon Boulevard and Broadway (major vehicular through streets):

Canyon Boulevard and Broadway accommodate large volumes of traffic moving through the downtown. Streetscape features should be designed to buffer pedestrians from traffic impacts, provide greater building setbacks and detached sidewalks with planting strips between the sidewalk and curb. The exception is the section of Broadway between Canyon Boulevard and Spruce Street in which attached sidewalks are needed to accommodate more intense pedestrian use. In areas with detached sidewalks, well designed landscaping and street trees should be provided. On Canyon Boulevard, the use of landscaped median strips and pedestrian safe zones should be designed to minimize pedestrian/vehicular conflicts.

#### C. 9th, 10th, 11th, 13th, and 14th Streets (north/south pedestrian connectors):

These five north/south streets provide the main pedestrian connections between the downtown Boulder mall and the Civic Park. Where these streets cross Canyon Boulevard, which is very wide, crosswalk designs that visually link the north and south sides of the boulevard are important. The use of similar materials, intersection gateway features, landscaping, and street furniture will help to visually



## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Note:

In general, the predominate material in the downtown is brick. The use of brick to highlight and define the streetscape zones is especially appropriate in the blocks adjacent to the mall. Other appropriate materials include sandstone, or the use of art work which is stenciled or sandblasted into the concrete surface.

Note:

Colored concrete scored or formed to imitate brick or stone is inappropriate.

weave the areas together and promote pedestrian access between these two important downtown public gathering places.

**D. All other streets in the downtown (general pedestrian oriented streets):**

In order to create a unified downtown image, all streets should share common features. At minimum, these should include similar sidewalk scoring patterns, similar paving materials, similar street trees and tree grates, coordinated street furniture, the inclusion of sidewalk neck downs and pedestrian safe zones, removal of pedestrian obstructions, and consolidation of streetscape elements such as newspaper vending boxes, other traffic and directional signage, and pedestrian scale street lighting.

**E. Alleys (general pedestrian oriented streets):**

Alleys serve as secondary circulation and alternative routes for both pedestrians and vehicles to navigate downtown. Downtown alleys can provide an alternate means of access to shops, restaurants and other commercial uses. Care must be taken in balancing the service function of the alley and making alley's safe and functional for pedestrians.

**F. Paseos (pedestrian only streets):**

Paseos in downtown provide mid-block pedestrian only access. Paseos should be encouraged in large projects to promote pedestrian circulation throughout the downtown. Design such connections to be interesting places, not merely hallways to parking lots or alley service loading areas. They should be handicap accessible, illuminated, appropriately landscaped, and paved in materials compatible with their locations and surrounding context.

### ***3.2.2 Use materials that reinforce the continuity and integrity of the overall downtown district***

Any variations from the standard materials and patterns required by the Design and Construction Standards should be based on a streetscape plan that illustrates how the variation adds to the visual unity of the downtown streetscape, adjacent properties, and the overall image of the block. The design and materials should be durable, classic, and elegant including:

- A. Brick
- B. Sandstone
- C. Scored grey concrete
- D. Black enamel street furniture and utility elements, e.g. right-of-way lighting, benches, trash cans, bollards, etc.
- E. Outdoor seating



Fig. 22 Brick, sandstone, and scored concrete defining a corner zone  
(Source: City of Boulder)



Fig. 23 Brick pavers and street features within the Pedestrian Mall  
(Source: City of Boulder)



Fig. 24 Typical bicycle rack and tree grate  
(Source: City of Boulder)

### SECTION 3: THE PUBLIC REALM



## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

### CODE:

See B.R.C. Section 9-9-1, "Streetscape Design Standards" for additional requirements.

### Note:

Permanent kitchen equipment, new basement level extensions, second floor extensions and greenhouses are generally not permitted within the right-of-way.

### Note:

Light weight or movable handrails, chains, ropes and unsupported railings are inappropriate railing materials.

### 3.2.3 Use a basic sidewalk design to unify the visual image of downtown

In most locations throughout the downtown, sidewalks average 15 feet wide from curb to property line. Streets in the downtown should incorporate the following basic sidewalk elements:

#### A. Frontage zone

The frontage zone width may vary by street and allows for extensions into the right-of-way which create comfortable and attractive sitting areas. Included within this zone are projecting signs, awnings, cafe seating, and gated patio encroachments.

- Design public right-of-way extensions that are visually appropriate to the street character.
- Seating areas for dining are limited to the width of the building frontage. All tables and chairs are to be removable.
- Railing designs should reflect an open, transparent feeling. Visually closed-in railings that "box-in" the extension area are not appropriate.
- Consider building programs and spatial layouts which provide alternative solutions to the need for gated, exterior dining areas.
- Create comfortable and attractive sitting areas, plazas, and small open spaces.
- Orient seating to take advantage of views, sunshine in the winter, and shade in the summer.

#### B. Pedestrian zone

The sidewalk pedestrian through zone is the area that must be kept clear of all obstacles.

- Pedestrian zones should be delineated from the curb zone or buffer areas.

#### C. Curb zone

The curb zone should consist of a 4' wide area measured perpendicular from the inside of the curb.

- Street elements and landscaping should be organized to allow for pedestrian access to adjacent street parking.
- On residential transition streets in the Neighborhood Interface blocks use landscaping in the curb zone rather than hard surface concrete.

#### D. Corner Zone

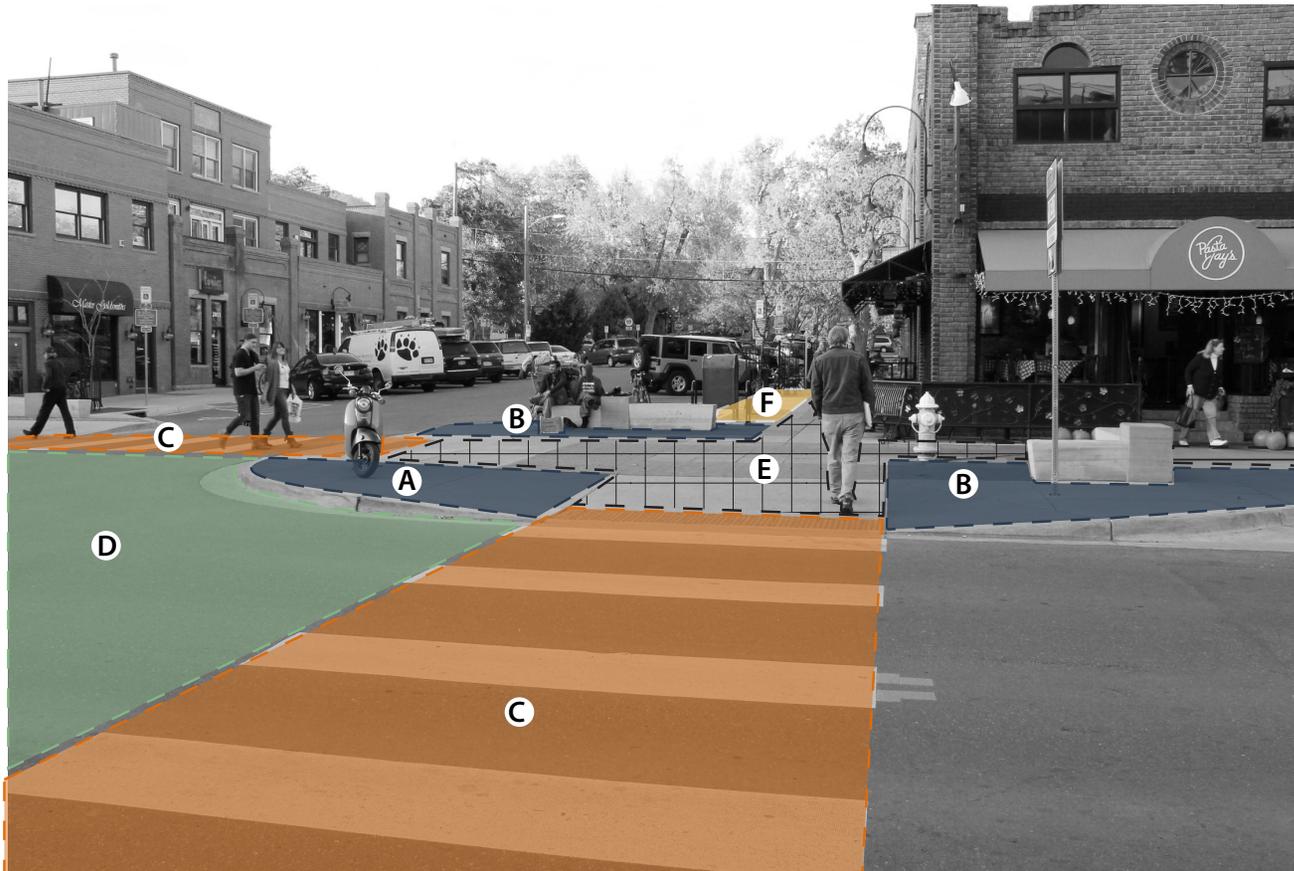
At a minimum, the standard corner zone should include the following elements:

- A pedestrian area with only essential "regulatory" elements such as signal posts are allowed. All other amenities such as benches, bike racks, newspaper racks, are prohibited.
- Corner "amenity areas" are located at either side of the pedestrian area. Elements such as benches and bike racks should be carefully arranged in an attractive and accessible fashion.



- (A)** Pedestrian Mall - 10' maximum extension into the right-of-way.  
All other streets - 6' maximum extension into the right-of-way.
- (B)** Pedestrian Mall - An unobstructed pedestrian area of between 8' to 9'6" is required on the downtown Boulder mall.  
All other streets - An unobstructed pedestrian area of no less than 7 feet is required between vertical elements such as trees or poles and buildings.  
Basic surface treatment includes brushed natural color gray concrete tooled in a maximum 4' x 4' square with brick accents
- (C)** A minimum 4' wide curb zone includes the street trees, street furniture and utility elements.  
Basic surface treatment includes brushed natural color gray concrete tooled in a 2' x 2' square pattern, possibly with brick accents  
Street elements which do not interfere with people accessing cars parked at the curb, mail boxes, trash receptacles, bus stops, bollards, and news racks.

Fig. 25 Diagram of the typical sidewalk zones (Source: City of Boulder)



- (A)** Corner Zone - A pedestrian area or clear zone that is free of obstacles and lined up with the sidewalk pedestrian zone. Standard surface treatment includes brushed natural gray concrete scored in a 2' x 2' square pattern parallel to the street.
- (B)** Corner "amenity areas" - The amenity areas may incorporate benches, bike racks, news racks, and similar elements. Standard surface treatment includes brushed natural gray concrete scored in a 4' x 4' square pattern and may have brick detailing.
- (C)** Crosswalks - Pedestrian crosswalks should be a minimum of 10 feet wide with a 1' buffer on either side. Standard surface treatment includes truncated dome ramps and marking the crosswalk zone.
- (D)** Intersection Squares - the center area of intersections have the same surface material as the surrounding street surfaces.
- (E)** Pedestrian Zone
- (F)** Curb Zone

Fig. 26 Diagram of the typical corner and intersection zones (Source: City of Boulder)



### 3.3 Items currently under review by City Landscape Architect for code redundancies

Note: Unsuitable streets trees not to be placed in the public right-of-way include Box Elder, Cottonwood, Chinese and Siberian Elm, Poplar, Russian Olive, Silver Maple, Tree of Heaven, Willow, evergreens that create sight obstructions, and clump forms or multi-stem trees.

Benches should be arranged to facilitate social interaction.

#### E. Intersections

Important streets may require additional material detailing to match adjacent streetscape design and overall block character.

- Materials include utilizing brick and scored concrete patterning similar to adjacent pedestrian and curb zones in the crosswalks and special paving within intersection squares. Important intersections are the areas between the Civic Park and downtown Boulder.

### 3.3 Landscaping

#### 3.3.1 Select street trees that are appropriate to their intended location and function

Plant trees that will tolerate full sun, drought, varying soil pH and will have a relatively compact crown. Keep in mind that the conditions of various planting sites in the downtown will vary and should be evaluated for individual landscape objectives and suitability to the specific street they are to be planted. The following guidelines should be followed:

- A. Large trees should be located along Canyon Boulevard, wide right-of-way streets, and principal access streets such as Pearl and Walnut Streets. Large trees should also be used to highlight corners, to provide cover for large plazas, or as accents against the skyline.
- B. Medium or large scale trees may be located on all other downtown streets.
- C. Medium trees, with narrow spread canopies, should be located in narrow streets, to fill in mid-block areas, provide visual relief and scale definition to large walls, provide shade and canopies for sidewalks and plaza areas, and establish large areas of color above eye level.
- D. Small trees should be used to provide seasonal color and a visual focal point for special locations such as a building entrance, corner area, sitting area, bus stop, or other significant area or view corridor.
- E. Trees in rights-of-way should be maintained with a minimum head height of 8' over sidewalks and 14' over the vehicular streets.
- F. Low maintenance trees are desirable which have low water requirements and can adapt to the downtown environment.
- G. Install street trees in tree grates except at locations where they occur in special raised planters in the curb zone, in large planted areas that are integrated with a sidewalk area, and in locations where existing trees located in the curb zones have a root system that has pushed up above grade where the use of a grate will injure the tree.
- H. Maintain at least a 10 foot distance between tree trunk and building line. This refers to the distance between a tree and building, not the distance necessary to maintain an unobstructed pedestrian area between a tree, as a vertical element, and a railing that encloses a sidewalk



## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

### Note:

Tree and landscape maintenance or commercially zoned properties, the maintenance of trees, tree grates, and surrounding hard and soft landscaping located in the public right-of-way is the responsibility of the private property owner. This includes all maintenance and repair of landscaping, trees, irrigation, spraying, fertilizing, and replacing plant materials and tree grates.

The city provides pruning, removal of street trees in the public right-of-way, safety inspections, and consultation on street trees that may pose a health or safety concern.

Note: Contact the Downtown Management Commission and for additional information regarding street furniture, trash receptacles, bicycle stands, and bollard variations for the Pedestrian Mall.

restaurant

- I. Tree grates should be aligned with paving pattern score lines and be placed with careful consideration of sidewalk use, such as a sidewalk cafe or curb cuts.
- J. Do not locate trees that will obstruct building entrances, corner visibility, or within any sidewalk pedestrian zones that must remain unobstructed.
- K. Consider alternative methods to increase tree soil volume, e.g. Modular, pre-engineered suspended pavement and structural cell systems.

### **3.3.2 Select Ground Level Plants That Suit Their Location And Function**

- A. Use landscaping, shrubs and ground cover to accent areas.
- B. Limit the use of annuals and high maintenance plants to the planting beds in the pedestrian mall. Use drought tolerant, climate appropriate landscaping, including scrubs, flowering perennials, ground cover, and ornamental grasses in planter beds.
- C. Do not use gravel or rough stone in place of ground cover in the curb zone.
- D. Whenever feasible, flowers and ornamental grasses should be used in combination to accent gateway locations and special sites.
- E. Plantings are preferred in natural, at-grade planting beds rather than planter pots or other containers.
- F. Consider maintenance requirements in the placement and design of these features.

### **3.3.3 Maintain the character of Canyon Boulevard**

- A. Continue the large tree rows on either side of the street and center landscape median.
- B. In general, trees and other plant material should be arranged in an urban linear pattern that parallels the street rather than a less formal random arrangement.
- C. The primary trees along Canyon do not need to be planted with tree grates.
- D. The median should be planted to enhance the “boulevard” quality of the corridor.
- E. Incorporate grasses, paved areas or ground covers within the overall design of tree rows.

### **3.4 Street furnishings create a unified visual appearance in downtown**

- A. In general, install standard benches, trash receptacles, appropriately sized-bollards, pedestrian-scale street lighting, and bike stands in durable black metal to unify the visual quality of the downtown.
- B. Strategically locate newspaper stands, kiosks and other furniture adjacent high-traffic areas, e.g. bus stops, intersections, etc.
- C. Create attractive, safe and comfortable bus stops crafted in durable and elegant materials.

### **3.5 Preserve historic features of the streetscape**

- A. Whenever possible, preserve, restore, and reuse historic fixtures of the streetscape, such as a flagstone sidewalks, globe light fixtures, or any other existing historic features located in the public right-of-way.



Fig. 27 Sandstone and iron patio railing extending into the right-of-way (Source: City of Boulder)

### SECTION 3: THE PUBLIC REALM



## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Note: The Arts Commission, the Downtown Management Commission, the DDAB, and the LPAB are among the groups involved in making public art decisions in the downtown.

- B. Historic signs, such as those painted on side walls, should be preserved.
- C. Extensions into the right-of-way involving historic resources should be compatible and not substantially alter the property.

### ***3.6 Enrich the downtown with public art***

- A. Carefully site public art within appropriate areas of the public realm. Consider the context, materials, purpose of the artwork at the proposed site.
- B. Freestanding artwork should not obscure building elements. Thoughtfully integrated artwork may be incorporated into the surface or facade design.
- C. Artwork may be utilized as gateway features within discrete areas of downtown.
- D. Public art should be complementary and subordinate to associated historic properties.



Fig. 28 West Pearl gateway obelisk (Source: City of Boulder)

## Downtown Urban Design Guidelines

City of Boulder, Colorado      ~~2002~~2016

### Acknowledgements:

~~The Downtown Alliance~~

This ~~second~~third edition of the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines is the ~~direct~~ result of recommendations from a 2015 joint-board working group consisting of representatives from the Landmarks Board, Boulder Design Advisory Board, Downtown Management Commission, the Planning Board and City staff.

Much of the basis of this document may be attributed to earlier work ~~conducted~~ by the Downtown Alliance, a group of city boards and commissions, non-profit organizations and neighborhood groups including the city of Boulder Planning Board; the Landmarks ~~Preservation Advisory~~ Board; the ~~Downtown~~ Design Advisory Board; the Downtown Management Commission; Downtown Boulder, Inc.; Historic Boulder; and representatives from the Whittier, Mapleton Hill, Goss Grove, and Flatirons neighborhoods.

~~Formed in the fall of 1996, the Downtown Alliance was charged with developing a scenario that would help the city to:~~

~~guide future development in a manner that maintains the downtown's livability and is consistent with the overall "feel" of the downtown,~~

~~protect downtown's historic character that is so closely associated with its image and quality of life, and~~

~~maintain the quality of life of surrounding neighborhoods and their relationship to the downtown.~~

~~While this edition of the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines replaces the 1986 Downtown Boulder Urban Design Plan, it draws much of its content from that document. The city wishes to acknowledge the individuals and organizations who produced that initial work and who implemented the downtown design review process. The city also wishes to acknowledge the work undertaken to implement the "interface blocks" which also contributed greatly to this document.~~

~~Other studies that contributed to this document include the 1976 Downtown Boulder Private Development Guidelines for Architecture and Signs, the 1992 Downtown Illustrative Plan, and the 1995-draft Downtown Boulder Pedestrian Streetscape Plan: Design and Standards.~~

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## Introduction

The purpose of this ~~second~~<sup>third</sup> edition of the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines is to provide a basis for understanding, discussing, and assessing the design quality of proposed preservation, renovation and new construction projects located within the boundaries of the Downtown Historic District, the Non-Historic Area, and the Interface Area.

Through the use of these guidelines it is anticipated ~~that~~ both private and public projects will endeavor to preserve and enhance the unique form, scale, and visual character of Downtown while strengthening the identity of the area through encouraging new, compatible development. ~~that make downtown unique within the city and the region.~~

~~These guidelines are designed to support the ten strategies outlined in the 1992 Downtown Illustrative Plan:~~

~~Assure the long term economic vitality of the downtown~~

~~Downtown Boulder is the heart of the city, the traditional hub of city life. Its future economic vitality is of great importance to the future health of the city. These guidelines will help the city to balance the need for economic vitality with the need to maintain and enhance downtown's unique "sense of place".~~

~~Establish a pedestrian district~~

~~Downtown Boulder is a walkable place. The ability to walk from one end of downtown to the other in less than 10 minutes, and the pedestrian scale of its sidewalks, buildings, and storefronts, are key factors in what makes the downtown area different.~~

~~Provide improved links between the Downtown Boulder mall and the Civic Park The Downtown Boulder mall is one of~~

~~America's premiere public places, and the Civic Park area is one of this city's most important public gathering places. By visually and functionally linking these two significant open spaces, downtown's north/south pedestrian system will be strengthened and its urban form clarified. Major north/south pedestrian corridors include 9th, 10th, and 11th Streets; Broadway, and 13th and 14th St.~~

~~Locate and build additional public places in the downtown~~

~~Open space is prized as one of Boulder's most valued assets. In addition to the expansive open spaces that ring the city, numerous creek, park, and trail systems weave through the city. Small plazas, parks, and open areas where people gather, rest and recreate are important elements in making central places like downtown livable. They provide access to views, create open areas in higher intensity developments, and add enjoyment for people working or shopping downtown.~~

~~Design and construct streetscape improvements throughout the downtown~~

~~The public image created by the visual quality of downtown's streets, sidewalks, and landscaping is important. People like attractive and well cared for environments within which to work and shop. The care and maintenance of this public realm, adds value to the downtown and improves public safety.~~

Maintain the historic character of the downtown area

Downtown's historic quality is of paramount importance to its public image and economic vitality. It is an asset to preserve and bank upon.

It builds value and creates opportunities for innovative marketing and advertising strategies. Most importantly, downtown's historic quality keeps Boulder in touch with its past and defines its unique character.

Expand the role of the arts [and public events] downtown

Successful downtowns depend not only on how they look but on what people can do there. Social and cultural events that attract people are fundamental to downtown's success. The role of the arts and related public events are closely linked to how people think of downtown, its attractiveness, safety, and social well-being.

Encourage residential uses adjacent to [and in] the downtown

Creating livable central places is a hallmark of many successful cities nationwide. Places where people live as well as work can create an attractive mix of uses that can improve public safety, increase the use of alternative modes of transportation, and build strong community ties. The city's land use regulations encourage housing not only adjacent to downtown but within the downtown itself in well-designed mixed-use projects.

Provide better access to the downtown for alternative transportation modes

A key to downtown success is the ability to move people comfortably to and from the area. No one mode of transportation provides all the answers. Rather, a strategy that relies on a balance of alternative modes, including walking, biking, transit, and auto is needed. Good urban design and appropriate land use planning can facilitate alternative transit mode in the downtown.

Parking

The 1992 Downtown Illustrative Plan identified parking as a needed strategy, and in 1996, the Downtown Alliance noted in A Proposal for the Downtown Central Business District that the relationship between alternative mode use, development, and parking needs should be monitored and incorporated as part of the downtown's planning process.

Downtown Land Use Regulations

When proposing a preservation, renovation, or new construction project for the downtown there are a number of working assumptions to consider:

As a result, zoning districts exist within the boundaries of Downtown Urban Design Guidelines and each comprises a unique set of conditions.

The following map identifies the location of the various zoning districts. For example, the RB-1X zone is the area likely to undergo the most significant change while the RB-1E zone, which includes most of the Historic Area, is likely to undergo the least change.

~~(See Appendix A: Zoning District Definitions which gives a definition of each zone).~~

#### Basic Urban Design Considerations

~~When proposing a preservation, renovation, or new construction project for the downtown there are a number of working assumptions to consider:~~

~~CAGID: The Central Area General Improvement District encompasses all of the area covered by these guidelines. While there are no parking requirements for commercial properties in CAGID, there are parking requirements for residential uses.~~

~~BID: The Downtown Boulder Improvement District provides services, facilities and improvements for owners of real and personal property in a 34 block area including CAGID plus contiguous blocks to the east and west; Spruce to Arapahoe and 8th to 21st~~

~~Flood zones: Much of the downtown is affected by the Boulder Creek flood zones. Restrictions of various types apply and will limit what development that can occur.~~

~~Views: Downtown Boulder is blessed with exceptional mountain views and projects should be designed to take advantage of this extraordinary asset. The south and west edges of downtown offer the most spectacular views.~~

~~Sun and Shade: In Boulder's climate, sun and shade are important factors. Concern for providing natural light in buildings, sunny sidewalks in the winter, and shady areas in the summer is an important consideration in project design.~~

~~Connections to other areas of town: Boulder's central area includes three major activity centers: Downtown Boulder, the Boulder Valley Regional Center (BVRC), and the University Hill Area. Connecting these areas through a variety of alternative modes and urban design improvements are important factors in their future success.~~

#### How are the guidelines are organized?

The guidelines are organized into ~~six~~three sections. The first ~~three~~two sections address specific geographic areas of the Downtown: the Downtown Historic District, and the Non-Historic Area, and the & Neighborhood Interface Areas. The last ~~three~~ sections address specific design topics: Parking Facilities, Downtown Signs, and The Streetscape section addresses the Public Realm.

~~Most~~The sections are organized around several ~~principle~~principal guidelines and a number of "follow-up" guidelines. (Appendix B offers a "check list" of the principle guidelines that can be used during a design review process).

~~The term CODE in bold letters introduces excerpts from the city's land use code to provide additional regulatory insight that is directly related to these design guidelines.~~

Within the margins are excerpts marked "Note:" and "Code:" reserved for more in depth references to the subject matter.

#### How are the guidelines revised?

The guidelines are part of a Downtown Area Plan and are adopted by Planning Board and City Council with advice from the Design Advisory Board. The Landmarks Board approves guidelines for the Downtown Historic District.

How are the guidelines administered?

Three review bodies are primarily responsible for administering these guidelines: the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB/LB), the ~~Downtown~~ Design Advisory Board (DDAB), and the Downtown Management Commission (DMC).

Specifically, LPAB/LB reviews all projects located in the Downtown Historic District and landmarked structures/properties located outside the District, of the District but within the downtown boundaries. The Planning Board applies these guidelines as part of the site review process. DDAB reviews all projects with a construction value over \$1025,000 in the Non-Historic and Interface Areas, ~~In addition,~~ and the DMC reviews projects located on the Downtown Boulder Mall.

When this document uses terms such as "encouragement" and "generally", it acknowledges that these guidelines are utilized in a mandatory review and voluntary context; however, in the review of Landmark Alteration Certificates and Site Review applications, the guidelines may be applied with mandatory effect in the analysis of specific review criteria.

Note:

The design guidelines include photographs and diagrams to illustrate acceptable or unacceptable approaches. These photographs and diagrams are provided as examples and are not intended to indicate the only options.

Note:

In general, these guidelines adhere to Local, State and Federal regulations, but wherever a discrepancy may arise, the higher standard shall be applied.

## DOWNTOWN VISION

Downtown Boulder is characterized by the eclectic, fine grained and compact urban character of the Downtown Historic District nestled in against the natural backdrop of the Rocky Mountains. These qualities are reflected in the traditional buildings associated with the original settlement of the area, the street grid and bustling economy, and civic life of downtown. This is also where the historic fabric is the setting for contemporary, vibrant and active urban life where people are living, working, shopping and recreating in the shadow of a visible history.

The urban design quality becomes a vital part of what makes Downtown Boulder a memorable place. These guidelines are intended to encourage the preservation and enhancement of Downtown's built environment through recognition of design attributes that are intrinsic to its existing character or essential to its ongoing appeal:

- Design innovation and excellence in form and visual character that respect and reference historic architectural context;
- Careful consideration of the urban and natural interface including views, green spaces, and waterways;
- Human-scaled space that results from the designed interplay of enclosing mass, void, and light;
- Street-level design oriented toward the pedestrian in motion; and
- Sustainable design practice with respect to solar access, water, energy and materials.

## The Design Review Process

### The Landmark Alteration Certificate (LAC) Review Process

Landmark Alteration Certificate (LAC) review through the Historic Preservation Program is required for exterior changes to landmarked properties and all properties located within the Downtown Historic District boundaries.

The majority of applications are reviewed by the Landmarks Design Review committee (LDRC), that meets each week. Routine changes, such as patios and signage, are reviewed by staff. More complex projects, including demolition or new construction, are reviewed by the Landmarks Board. To find out more or for an application, visit the City of Boulder Historic Preservation, or call (303) 441-1880.

### ~~The Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB) Process~~

~~LPAB is responsible for reviewing all exterior and site feature changes for preservation, restoration and new construction projects located in the Downtown Historic District.~~

~~Project review and compliance with final LPAB decisions are mandatory for projects in the District.~~

~~In addition, LPAB is responsible for reviewing exterior and site feature changes to landmarked buildings in the Non-historic Area and the Neighborhood Interface.~~

~~LPAB reviews all demolition requests for buildings over 50 years of age.~~

### ~~LPAB Design Review Committee meets weekly~~

~~Projects are reviewed by the LPAB Design Review Committee, which consists of two members of the full five member Board, and one Planning Department staff member. The Committee typically meets weekly at the Planning Department offices. The review is relatively informal in its proceedings. An appointment for LPAB review can be made by calling (303) 441-4293.~~

~~All exterior changes, alterations, removal or demolition of a building or site features in the Downtown Historic District require a Landmark Alteration Certificate prior to the issuance of a demolition permit or a building permit. Routine maintenance and minor repair does not require a Landmark Alteration Certificate. It is possible to schedule a "conceptual review" with the Committee to discuss preliminary design concepts before complete plans are reviewed.~~

~~NOTE: Section 10-13-14 of the Boulder Revised Code (B.R.C.), 1981, establishes the time limit for processing a Landmark Alteration Certificate (within fourteen days after a complete application is filed). A Landmark Alteration Certificate cannot be granted unless 1) an application is considered complete with all of the necessary sketches, drawings, photographs or other relevant information and 2) the application is reviewed and officially approved by the Landmarks Design Review Committee. A Landmark Alteration Certificate is granted on the affirmative vote of all three members of the Committee.~~

~~If the Landmarks Design Review Committee vote is split or if the project involved new construction or demolition, the application automatically goes forward for review by the full five member LPAB at a public hearing unless the applicant chooses to revise the application or withdraw it for later resubmission. The applicant may also appeal any decision of the Landmarks Design Review Committee to the full LPAB for review.~~

~~In the case of projects requiring a Site Review, or other development review, which is administered through the Planning Department, the Landmarks Design Review Committee reviews the proposal and then provides a recommendation to the Planning Department which is incorporated in a Planning staff~~

memorandum. The final decision is made by the Planning staff, Planning Board, or city Council. Following approval by the Planning staff or Planning Board, a Landmark Alteration Certificate must be received prior to the issuance of a building permit.

The full LPAB meets monthly

As described above, a split vote of the Landmarks Design Review Committee automatically goes forward for review by the full five member LPAB at a public hearing unless the applicant chooses to revise the application or withdraw it for later resubmission. The applicant may also appeal any decision of the Landmarks Design Review Committee to the full LPAB for review.

In addition, all demolition and new construction applications must be reviewed by the full LPAB at a public hearing. The decision of the full LPAB is subject to call up by city Council. The full LPAB meets the first Wednesday of every month after 6:00 p.m. in city Council Chambers. The Board consists of five volunteer city residents, including design professionals, who are appointed by city Council.

NOTE: On certain occasions, LPAB or the Design Review Committee may invite member of the Downtown Design Advisory Board (DDAB) to act in an advisory capacity when addressing new construction or remodeling of non-contributing buildings in the Downtown Historic District. In such cases DDAB participates as non-voting, ex-officio members.

#### The Design Advisory Board (DAB) Process

The Design Advisory Board (DAB) reviews projects valued over \$25,000 located in the Non-Historic Area and Interface Area which involve the construction of a new building or exterior work on an existing building. The board provides comments to persons responsible for the design and development, and assures compliance with the most recent Downtown Urban Design Guidelines. DAB also reviews projects that require a discretionary review. To find out more, visit the DAB, or call (303)441-1880.

#### The Downtown Design Advisory Board (DDAB) Process

DDAB is a city Council appointed board consisting of five Boulder citizens, several of whom have professional experience in the areas of architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and community development. DDAB is responsible for reviewing all exterior projects and site features with a construction value of \$10,000 or more in the Non-historic Area and the Neighborhood Interface Area. Project review is mandatory while compliance with design recommendations that result from the DDAB review is voluntary.

DDAB design review is a one-time review process. However, an applicant may return voluntarily for design critiques as often as necessary. DDAB reviews are generally scheduled for 4 pm, the second Wednesday of every month. Applications must be received no later than the first Wednesday of every month. A design review may be scheduled by the DDAB secretary by calling the Planning Department at (303) 441-3212.

The purpose of the DDAB review is to identify design issues and provide recommendations and advice to the applicant on their design proposal relative to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines.

NOTE: The only exception to DDAB review of projects in the non-historic or interface areas is for structures that are "locally designated landmarked buildings". These buildings are reviewed by the LPAB. In addition, the LPAB may act in an advisory capacity to DDAB on issues related to projects that are of historic significance but are not officially landmarked.

Upon completion of a DDAB review, staff notifies the Building Department that the applicant has

fulfilled the mandatory design review. In the case of projects requiring a site review process, DDAB submits recommendations to the Planning Department that are incorporated in a staff memorandum for further decision and approval or denial by the Planning staff, Planning Board, or city Council depending upon the nature of the application.

### The Downtown Management Commission (DMC) Process

The DMC manages, controls and supervises the business affairs of the Central Area General Improvement District (CAGID) which includes review of projects which extend into the public right-of-way in the Downtown Boulder Pedestrian Mall. Typical projects reviewed by the DMC include outdoor eating areas, signs, awnings, and other elements. To find out more, visit the DMC, or call (303) 413-7300.

#### The Downtown Management Commission Process

The DMC reviews the design of projects that extend into the public right-of-way on the downtown Boulder mall such as outdoor eating areas, signs, awnings and other elements.

The DMC should be contacted regarding construction projects that are on or extend into the downtown Boulder mall right-of-way, such as patio extensions, A.D.A. entrances, awnings, and signs. For information on the downtown Boulder mall call the DMC at (303) 413-7300.

#### Other Boards, Commissions, and City Departments

In addition to the LPAB, DDAB, and DMC, the following city boards, commissions, and city departments may need to be contacted, or may provide helpful information about a project.

#### Planning and Development Services.

City Planning staff is responsible for receiving recommendations and findings from the appropriate LPAB, DDAB, or DMC design review and incorporating them into the appropriate staff or Planning Board memos that are part of the city's development review process. A "pre-application meeting" to discuss development goals, uses, site design, or other relevant issues should be made with the Planning Department prior to entering into the site review process. It is intended to identify any problems or concerns that Planning staff may have prior to the applicant making a formal application.

The pre-application meeting with the Planning Department is not a substitute for the design review required by LPAB, DDAB, or DMC. Since it may help an applicant to identify issues that may need be addressed at the design review meeting, it may be preferable to schedule the pre-application meeting first. Pre-application meetings may be scheduled by calling the Planning Department at (303) 441-1880.

#### Planning Board

The Planning Board is responsible for decisions related to the city's land use regulations and reviews projects that are subject to the city's site review process. Such projects are forwarded to the Planning Board, either by staff or through a call-up procedure. In either case, Planning Board will review projects for their design quality as well as their conformance to the city code and other relevant regulations. As such, recommendations and findings based on these guidelines play a key role in Planning Board deliberations.

#### Public Works Department: Revocable Right-of-Way Permit

In addition to review by the DMC, any element or improvement in the public right-of-way, such as a sidewalk cafe, potted plant, handicapped ramp, or bike rack, must first be reviewed by the city of Boulder to determine if a "revocable right-of-way permit" is required from the Public Works Department. For information call 441-3200.

Board of Zoning Adjustment and Building Appeals (BOZABA)  
Reviews specific requests for zoning variances and adjustments.

#### City Forester

Information on specific details for street tree planting, plant materials, and maintenance can be obtained from the city Forester at 441-3406.

Boulder Transportation Division: Transportation Planning Information on transit related issues such as transit rider activity and bus shelter design should be directed to the Transportation Planning Department at 441-3266.

NOTE: The city has a fund for specific alley improvements. While certain conditions such as sharing trash storage or utility hook ups may apply to private property owners, the funds can be used for making property improvements. For information on the alley fund call the city of Boulder Transportation Department 441-3266.

Public Service Company: Vehicular Street Lighting Light poles are provided by the Public Service Company and maintained by the city of Boulder. Contact the city's Transportation Division for further assistance with the selection and provision of street lighting.

#### Arts Commission

The Arts Commission consists of five members appointed by city Council, each to a five year term. The Commission promotes and encourages programs in the performing, visual and literary arts. For information call (303) 441-4113.

#### Application Submission Requirements

Application requirements will vary depending upon the complexity and scale of the project to be reviewed, and the specific requirements of the reviewing body. In general, the applicant should provide the appropriate architectural drawings, sketches, and photographs of existing buildings and their sites to allow the reviewing body to fully understand the nature and scope of the exterior changes and any significant design issues.

#### LPAB Submission Requirements

For LPAB Design Review Committee, an applicant is required to fill out a Landmark Alteration Certificate Application and provide the information identified on the application form including an initial scaled sketch plan and elevation, as well as photos of the existing building that will be kept on file.

Call the Planning Department Preservation office at (303) 441-4293 regarding an application. Appointments are necessary for the weekly design review session. Application materials should be submitted in advance of any scheduled meeting.

#### DDAB Submission Requirements

For DDAB, ten (10) copies of all relevant information listed below must be submitted to the Planning Department no later than close of business on the first Wednesday of the month, one week prior to the DDAB meeting. Applications should be well organized and contain sufficient information to allow reviewers to fully understand the proposed building design or alteration, including relevant urban design information such as how the project fits within its surrounding context, and how it relates to adjacent buildings and properties.

At a minimum, DDAB applications should include the following information:

A map illustrating the location of the project within the context of the downtown as well as photographs of the project site and the surrounding area.

A site plan in a clear graphic style should be presented in the context of the city blocks surrounding the project. Site boundaries and dimensions should be clearly marked and special issues such as flood plain, shadows, land restrictions and the existing site conditions need to be highlighted.

All relevant floor plans, building sections, and exterior elevations should be illustrated at a scale sufficient to fully understand the proposed design.

Provide exterior wall elevations in color showing material and color selections.

Additional information that may be required for DDAB:

The following additional information may be required if the proposal modifies the permitted "by right" building height, or if the project is of significant complexity that the two dimensional drawings described above do not fully illustrate the design issues:

A simple mass model if the project is of significant size and complexity, showing the surrounding context.

Color perspective sketches illustrating the proposed project and its surroundings, from street level, to present the project from the pedestrian's viewpoint.

An analysis of the shadow impact of the proposed project is important, especially for projects on the south side of downtown streets.

#### DMC Submission Requirements

For the DMC, seven (7) copies of the following items are required for review:

To-scale elevation drawings illustrating the requested improvement with exact dimensions along with existing signs, planters, windows, doors, stairs, patios, and awnings on the building and adjacent buildings. To-scale drawings of the proposed enhancement which identifies specific design elements such as colors, materials, and lettering.

#### Note:

Scheduling a design review early is important. In addition, scheduling a design review with the appropriate review body is the responsibility of the property owner, developer or their representative such as an architect. In general, a meeting should be scheduled before a formal application is made to the city for a building permit or development review. For more information regarding the design review and application procedure please contact (303) 441-1880. Early project review often results in the resolution of design issues which can save valuable time once the project is submitted to the city.

NOTE: Many architects, developers, and owners find it useful to use the design review process as a sounding board to test ideas. For example, applicants may voluntarily return to discuss changes before making formal application for a building permit or development review to the city. For more information on how to proceed please call the following numbers.

For DDAB or LPAB call (303) 441-1880. For the DMC call (303) 413-7100.

#### Note:

When requested LB or DAB may act in an advisory capacity to the other board.

#### Note:

For further map data please see the City of Boulder eMapLink.

#### Downtown History

The Boulder Valley was first the home of Indians, primarily the Southern Arapaho tribe who maintained a village near Haystack Mountain. Ute, Cheyenne, Comanche, and Sioux were occasional visitors to the area. Gold seekers established the first non-native settlement in Boulder County on October 17, 1858 at Red Rocks near the entrance to Boulder Canyon. Less than a year later, on In February 10, of 1859, the Boulder ~~city~~City Town Company was organized by A.A. Brookfield, the first president, and 56 shareholders.

~~Boulder city developed as~~ to establish a supply base~~center~~ for miners going into the mountains in search of gold and silver. ~~Boulder city residents provided these miners with equipment, agricultural products, housing~~ in the hope that it would grow to "be an important town." Establishment of the two square mile town site followed the discovery of gold near present day Denver, and a resulting flood of prospectors to the area. One such prospector, George R. Williamson recounted that a straight line was laid out for the main street by driving a stake in the ground at the corner of what is now 12th and Pearl Streets and ~~transport services, and gambling and drinking establishments.~~ The downtown section of Boulder "a sighting (was made) across this stick to the black spur on the prairie, known as Valmont Butte" made to establish the alignment of Pearl Street.<sup>1</sup> From the beginning Pearl Street has been the nucleus of the fledgling community, and its main ~~thoroughfare, Pearl Street, led into Boulder Canyon and the mining camps.~~street. In 1860, the fledgling town was described as containing about sixty log buildings (all with dirt floors), located mainly along Pearl Street. Several years later, upon visiting Boulder the intrepid English visitor described the town as "a hideous collection of frame houses on a burning plain." <sup>2</sup>

~~The~~While growth in Boulder was slow until after the end of the Civil War, business generated from the mining camps, together with Boulder's selection as the county seat in 1861, the arrival of the railroad in 1873, and the site for the establishment of a state university in 1876, provided the foundation for steady growth and the ~~erection~~construction of substantial business blocks in the commercial center of the town. Businesses were established along Pearl Street and adjoining streets to supply ~~every~~the need of the urban community, local farmers, and mining camps. ~~The downtown experienced steady growth after the 1860s.~~

By ~~1883~~the 1880s, the commercial area ~~included enterprises such as~~had developed into bustling hub of restaurants, groceries, saloons ~~and~~, liquor stores, liveries, lumber yards, drug stores, dry goods stores, hardware stores, feed and flour stores, barbers, paint shops, and tailors, in addition to fraternal lodges and the county courthouse. An 1880 account of Boulder in the Boulder County News observed, "I've never seen a city of this size with so many saloons (approximately eighteen) and so few drunks."<sup>3</sup>

~~At the close of the nineteenth century, the establishment of Chautauqua and the creation of the Boulder Sanitarium diversified the local economy and led to further downtown development. In 1900, a~~

~~multitude of businesses flourished in down town Boulder. Streetcar service enabled residents in new areas of the city to conveniently shop and conduct business downtown. In addition, the~~ as Boulder transformed from a supply town to a sleepy university city with commercial activities centered on and around Pearl Street. The Denver & Interurban Railroad (an intercity connection with Denver) ran along Pearl Street from 1908 ~~1917. until~~1917. During the 1920s, several new commercial buildings were erected, updating the appearance of the downtown with 20th-Century influences. Although the economy slowed during the Great Depression, a few new buildings were added to the district, the most significant of which was the new Boulder County Courthouse, having replaced the original courthouse building that burned down in 1932. ~~Twentieth Century influences. The first decades of the 1900s also saw a rising awareness of Boulder’s potential to draw newcomers and tourists with construction of the Boulderado Hotel in 1909 and citywide planning for the improvement of Boulder with the Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. masterplan in 1910. Increasingly, Boulder residents were becoming sensitive to the built and natural environment, leading Saco DeBoer’s 1928 zoning proposal establishing the first height restrictions limiting downtown buildings to seventy-five feet and neighborhood shopping districts to thirty-five feet, as well as seven zoning districts.~~

~~Planning for the improvement of Boulder began as early as 1903, when the Boulder city Improvement Association was organized to pursue the “improvement of Boulder in health, growth, cleanliness, prosperity and attractiveness.” The Association retained nationally renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. to prepare a master plan in 1910 which has since guided Boulder’s development. Saco DeBoer, who served as Denver’s Landscape Architect, was hired to prepare a zoning proposal for Boulder. His 1928 plan created Boulder’s first height restrictions, which limited downtown buildings to 75 feet and neighborhood shopping districts to 35 feet, as well as recommended seven zoning districts.~~

~~Following Boulder experienced tremendous growth after World War II, the increased population of the automobile as the university grew and the city marketed itself as a perfect place to locate “clean” industry. This led to the creation of a number of scientific research institutions and companies locating in the city. The resulting new shopping areas further from the city center, including North Broadway, Arapahoe Village, and Basemar shopping centers in the 1950s. This competition jobs led to the many new residential neighborhoods and automobile-oriented neighborhood shopping areas outside of the core area, creating competition to downtown and leading to the “modernization” of historic storefronts downtown, including the application of metal panels and precast screens to exterior facades. In 1963, Crossroads Shopping Center, a major commercial competitor with downtown was completed.~~

~~However, with the purchase of thousands of acres during the 1950s and 1960s. By the early 1970s, a merchant-led effort to revitalize Pearl Street was underway. Recognizing Boulder’s area growth limitations as a result of acquisition of open space beginning in 1967, the adoption of the Boulder Valley~~

Comprehensive Plan in 1970, passage of the building height restriction ordinance in 1972, and the residential growth management ordinance in 1977, Boulder began a period of infill and re-use of its past architectural development which continues to present. Redevelopment plans for the downtown were formulated by around the city, community leaders joined with downtown property owners and merchants to insure the area's continued viability. During the 1970s, buildings were restored, remodeled and adapted to new uses. turn the four blocks of Pearl Street between 11th and 15th Streets into a pedestrian mall. The Pearl Street Mall was created from 1976-1977, prompting the return of many businesses and the restoration of historic buildings to the downtown.

Boulder's Historic Preservation Code was passed in September, 1974. The ordinance is instrumental in preserving significant portions of our past while encouraging identified among the rehabilitation of most successful such pedestrian ways in the United States with many restored historic buildings. Although and vibrant commercial area it is today.<sup>4</sup> In 1980, the Downtown Boulder Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places and in 1980, it 1999 the area was not designated as a local historic district. until 1999. Today's Downtown Historic District lies within the Boulder Original Townsite established by the Boulder city Town Company on February 10, 1859. Both the federal and local historic designations provide owners of contributing historic buildings the opportunity to apply for federal and state tax incentives for rehabilitation, as well as waivers from certain provisions of the Universal Building Code.

## Section 1: The ~~Downtown~~ Historic District

The boundaries of the Downtown Historic District, designated in 1999 with a period of significance from 1858-1946, generally conform to the boundaries of the Downtown Boulder National Register Historic District ~~which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.~~

~~The~~ district contains the city's greatest concentration of historic commercial buildings, especially along Pearl Street which forms its central spine. These buildings not only serve as a link with our cultural heritage; they also establish a model for design quality. Such buildings are resources for education, recreation and human enjoyment. They provide Downtown with a rich character and a human scale that are unique assets for both residents and visitors ~~to Boulder.~~

Development in the Downtown Historic District must be especially sensitive to issues of compatibility. ~~Indeed, the~~ The economic success of the Downtown is in many ways dependent on maintaining the historic character and quality that sets the Downtown apart from other shopping areas. For this reason, the preservation ~~and~~, restoration, and appropriate rehabilitation of older buildings in this district is of great importance.

~~The Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, LPAB, is responsible for reviewing all exterior changes and site features in preservation, restoration, remodel and new construction projects located in the Downtown Historic District. Any changes to a building or site require a Landmark Alteration Certificate prior to commencement.~~

The urban design objectives for the Downtown Historic District are to:

- Preserve and restore historic buildings.
- Preserve the integrity of the historic architectural features of individual buildings.
- Ensure that alterations and new construction strengthen and maintain the historic integrity of individual buildings and of the Historic Area district at large.
- Encourage new development that will respect and enhance the visual character. ~~Enhance the retail focus of the area.~~
- Preserve the central area as a place for intense pedestrian activity.

### Note:

All buildings in the district have been evaluated for historic significance and are subject to ~~LPAB~~ Landmarks Board review ~~of~~ when exterior alterations work is involved. Any changes to a building, or remodel site, require a Landmark Alteration prior to commencement.

~~There~~ Historic properties are ~~five~~ organized into three categories ~~of buildings:~~

### Local Landmark Buildings

These buildings are officially designated as city of Boulder local landmarks. They have a special character, historical, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value in Boulder's local history.

Landmarked buildings may include contributing properties to the Downtown Historic District. The greatest care must be given to preserving, restoring, and designing additions to these buildings.

### ~~Individually Significant Buildings~~

~~Individually significant buildings are those buildings that are considered individually eligible for the~~

National Register of Historic Places or for local landmark designation. These buildings are typically fifty years of age or older, unless the building is an exceptional example of a more recent architectural style or period. Care also must be taken in preserving and restoring them, as well as designing additions to these buildings.

### Contributing Buildings

Contributing buildings are those ~~buildings~~, built during the district's period of significance (1858 through 1946), that exist in comparatively "original" condition, or that have been appropriately restored, and that clearly contribute to the historic significance ~~or quality~~ and integrity of the area. Such buildings may have additions that are compatible with the historic character of the original building. ~~Renovations~~, have original material now covered, or have experienced some alteration yet continue to convey some sense of history. ~~Rehabilitations~~ and additions should be sensitive and appropriate to the ~~original structures~~. historic building and district.

### Contributing Restorable Buildings

Contributing restorable buildings are those built during the district's period of significance that have original material now covered, or buildings that have experienced some alteration, but still convey some sense of history. Restoration of these buildings would ensure their contribution to the historic quality of the area even though earlier additions may have not been particularly compatible with the original buildings. Renovations and additions should be sensitive and work to recreate the original structures.

### Non-Contributing Buildings

There are two types of non-contributing buildings in the historic area. ~~1) First~~ 1) First buildings built during the district's period of significance that have been altered to such an extent that historic information is not interpretable and restoration is not possible. Such buildings should be evaluated on a case by case basis to determine if saving and restoring them is feasible or desirable. ~~2) Second~~, 2) Second, buildings erected after 1946 which are not individually significant. For ~~renovating~~ alterations to these buildings, the guidelines for new construction and/or remodel of non-contributing buildings in this section apply. ~~See Section 1.2.~~

### Note:

The ~~Planning Department~~ city's planning department maintains a file of each building in the ~~downtown~~ which is Downtown area more than 50 years ~~old in age~~. The official Inventory/Survey forms on file indicate the level of significance of each ~~structure~~ building within the ~~Local~~ Downtown Historic District. For more information ~~call~~ please visit the Planning Department at City of Boulder Historic Preservation website or call (303) 441-3270/1800.

### 1.1 General guidelines for the Historic District

~~Section 1.1: Guidelines for the Preservation and Renovation of Local Landmarks, Individually Significant, Contributing, and Contributing Restorable Buildings~~  
LPAB reviews all exterior changes and site features, not building interiors.

The following guidelines apply to all areas of the Downtown Boulder Historic District.

A. The use of traditional, durable materials as the primary building material is encouraged to reflect the historic building construction and development pattern within the district. Choose accent materials similar in texture and scale to others in the district.

1. These following materials are generally appropriate:

- Full dimension brick and stone masonry

- Finish carpentry details, e.g. cornice molding, door and window casing
- Finished lumber to achieve traditional patterns, e.g. horizontal siding rather than diagonal  
Finished, embossed or painted metal and sheet metal
- Clear or lightly tinted glass Ceramic tiles
- Brick, clay and ceramic pavers
- Slate, finished metal, glazed ceramic and tile roofs Brick, concrete or stone lintels
- brick, wood or stone columns

The following materials are generally inappropriate:

- Thin veneer products
- Vinyl Replacement Windows
- EIFS systems or EIFS decorative elements
- Faux or simulated materials, including composite wood
- Coarsely finished, “rustic” materials, such as wood shakes, shingles, barn board or stained fir plywood
- Poorly crafted or “rustic” woodworking and finishing techniques Indoor-outdoor carpeting or astro-turf
- Corrugated metal and fiberglass (unless used sparingly)
- Moss rock
- “Antique” or old brick with partial paint, mottled light variegated brick, oversized brick and white brick mortar
- Ornate wrought-iron, “New Orleans” style grille and rail work
- Stucco surfaces that are highly textured such as those sometimes associated with a “hacienda” or “Mediterranean” style
- Expanded metal
- Silver or clear anodized aluminum sheets
- Silver or clear aluminum extrusions for windows and doorways Residential type sliding glass doors
- Imitation wood siding or stone
- Flat or molded plastic sheeting in quantities exceeding five square feet when used as primary facade materials
- Imitation metal “rock work”
- Plastic molded imitations of any conventional building material Mirror or metalized reflective glass
- Glass block

B. Awnings may be used to provide visual depth and shade

1. Awnings should be designed to fit the storefront opening to emphasize the building’s proportions and have at least an eight foot clearance from the sidewalk. Awnings should not obscure or damage important architectural details

2. Operable fabric awnings are encouraged. Metal awnings or canopies that are similar in form to fabric awnings may be appropriate when designed as an integral part of the building facade, and do not appear as tacked-on additions. Awning color should be coordinated with the color scheme of the entire building front. Mechanized awnings and awnings on the upper stories are discouraged.

C. Select building colors appropriate to the area’s historic character

1. Select a color scheme that will visually link the building to its past as well as to others in the area. Consider colors that are compatible with the building’s predominant materials, or do an analysis of colors pre-existing on the building and use one of the colors found.

2. Develop a comprehensive color scheme. Consider the building as a whole as well as the details that need emphasis. Softer muted colors establish a uniform background. Establish a hierarchy for the color palette with one color on similar elements such as window frames. Reserve brighter colors for small special accents to emphasize entry ways and to highlight special structural ornamentation.

3. It is not appropriate to paint unpainted brick. If the brick is already painted, paint removal is preferred. Avoid paint removal procedures that damage the original brick finish such as sand blasting or caustic chemicals. Before removing paint conduct a test to determine detrimental effects. If the existing paint on the brick is in poor condition and paint removal will damage the underlying brick, the brick should be repainted.

D. Minimize the visibility of mechanical, structural, or electrical appurtenances

1. Use low-profile mechanical units and elevator shafts that are not visible from the street. If this is not possible, setback or screen rooftop equipment from view. Be sensitive to views from the upper floors of neighboring buildings. Skylights or solar panels should have low profiles and not be visible from the public right-of-way. These features should be installed in a manner which minimizes damage to historic materials.

E. Improve rear or side alley elevations to enhance public access from parking lots and alleys.

1. Where buildings are built to the alley edge, consider opportunities for alley display windows and secondary customer or employee entries.

2. Screening for service equipment, trash, or any other rear-of-building elements should be designed as an integral part of the overall design. Where intact, historic alley facades should be preserved along with original features and materials. Alterations should be compatible with the historic scale and character of the building and block.

F. Exterior building lighting should be designed to enhance the overall architecture of the building. Security lighting should be designed for safety, as well as night-time appearance.

G. Reduce the visual impact of structured and surface parking.

1. Parking structures should be compatible to the historic district and adjacent buildings. All parking structures should be architecturally screened and/or wrapped with an occupiable use.

2. Locate any surface parking to the rear of the property. All surface parking must be screened.

3. Pedestrian routes in structures and parking lots should be easily identifiable and accessed, with clear visual connections to the sidewalks and buildings.

H. The law requires that universal access be located with the principal public entrance.

1. In existing buildings, where the only route is not accessible from the principal public entrance, a rear or side service entrance route may be considered.

2. Ramps and related accessibility modifications to a historic property should be compatible with the character of the building.

Note:

It is neither the intention of this guideline to recreate the past, nor to encourage theme design in the historic district, if the original building facade or original building materials do not exist. However, if documentary evidence exists, such as photographs, then an acceptable alternative is to reconstruct the facade.

Note:

For further information on recommended treatments for historic properties please see The Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating Restoring and Reconstructing Historic.

Note:

For detailed information on historic buildings and preservation information on individual building elements see the NPS Technical Briefs.

Code:

See the B.R.C. Section 9-9-16, "Outdoor Lighting" for lighting requirements.

Code:

See the B.R.C. Section 9-9-14, "Parking Lot Landscaping Standards" for parking lot screening requirements.

1.2 Guidelines for the preservation and restoration of local landmarks and contributing buildings

While it is acknowledged that changes to structures in the Local Downtown Historic District will occur over time, it is also a concern that these changes do not damage the historic building fabric and character of Downtown. Preservation of the exteriors and storefronts of these buildings will continue their contribution to the unique historic character of the Downtown. Any building renovation or alteration, no matter the planned use, must retain the overall design integrity of the historic building by protecting the original features and materials and respecting the traditional design elements. The following are the guidelines for the preservation and restoration of local landmarks and contributing buildings:

~~PRESERVE ORIGINAL FACADES Preservation of traditional facade elements found on existing buildings creates patterns along the face of the block that contribute to the overall historic character of the area.~~

~~These elements include:~~

~~Kick plates as base to building fronts~~

~~First floor display windows~~

~~Recessed central entrance areas or angled entrances corners~~

~~Transoms above entrance doors~~

~~Clerestory portions of display windows~~

~~Sign bands~~

~~Parapet walls with caps or cornices~~

~~Vertical window patterns, shapes, window sills on 2nd floor~~

~~Pilasters and decorative brick or stone~~

~~The facade elements define a building's visual and character. Respect the original design and material of the building. Even when a buildings use has change it is still important to retain and/or interpret traditional facade elements~~

~~Do not apply theme designs that alter the original character such as coach lanterns, mansard designs, wood shades, no non-operable shutters, and small-pane windows if they cannot be documented historically.~~

~~NOTE: It is not the intention of this guideline to recreate the past if the original building facade does not~~

exist. However, if the original facade does not exist, but documentary evidence such as photographs of the original does exist, then one recommended alternative is to restore the facade. Where exact reconstruction is not practical, new simplified contemporary interpretations of the original details are possible as long as the scale and character of the original detail is retained.

Preservation or restoration of ornamental cornices is particularly encouraged. Other important facade elements to be respected include belt courses, pilasters, window arches and frames. Adding more elaborate ornamentation than was originally found on the building facade is inappropriate.

**A. Preserve Original Character, Façades and Materials.**

**Wherever possible retain these elements through restoration and repair, rather than replacement**

**1.1.2—Preserve Facade Materials.** Retain original materials wherever possible through repair and restoration. Avoid concealing original facade materials. If the original material has been covered, uncover it if feasible. If portions of the original material must be replaced, use a material similar to the original. Brick was the predominant building material used in the downtown. Avoid the use of materials that are not visually compatible with the original facade, such as shiny metals, mirror glass, plastic panels, and vinyl windows or doors. **The following elements are part of the traditional storefront building typology indicative to the development of Downtown Boulder. These elements include:**

**Full-dimension bricks, or stone**

**Display window bulkheads**

**1.1.3—Align Architectural Features and Establish Patterns With Neighboring Buildings**

Restore or recreate the historic alignment of architectural features with other buildings on the block. These lines unify the street visually. The alignment of architectural features, from one building to the next, creates visual continuity and establishes a coherent visual context throughout the downtown. On commercial buildings they create patterns along the face of the block that contribute to the overall character of the area. Some facade elements that typically align with adjoining buildings include:

building kickplate

the top and bottom height of first floor

**Large storefront display windows**

**Recessed and corner entrances**

**Secondary entrances and detailing**

**Storefront transom over the entranceway**

clerestory portion of display windows

horizontal and vertical proportions of the building

**Sign bands and storefront cornice and restaurant front windows**

window openings and styles, especially upper story windows

sign band above the street level

parapet and cornice line

**Parapet walls, caps, and/or roof cornices**

**Upper story vertically proportioned windows and/or fenestrations**

**Columns, pilasters, and piers**

**Decorative window sills, lintels, window hoods, and other window assembly elements on upper floors**

roof lines and proportions

**1.14.—Maintain The Original Historic Line of The Building Setback**

Preserve storefront display windows at the sidewalk edge. Maintain historic recesses and entryways

where they exist. Occasionally, the line at the sidewalk is retained by the use of other elements such as planters, columns or railings, and the storefront is recessed.

**B. Avoid concealing or removing original materials. If the original material has been covered, uncover it if feasible.**

**C. Maintain the historic building setback line Preserve the historic relationship of the building to the street or property line.** Where buildings are built to the alley edge, consider ~~alley display windows and secondary customer entries~~ if original materials and features are not damaged.

**Note:**

**For detailed information the preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic buildings and specific building elements see the NPS Technical Briefs.**

For projections into the sidewalk such as outdoor dining areas, follow the guidelines for extensions into the right-of-way, Section 6.5.

**1.1.5— Maintain The Original Size, Shape And Proportion of Storefront Facades And Openings to Retain The Historic Scale And Character**

For most historic buildings, large panes of glass at the display window level with solid kick plates below are appropriate. Multipane designs that divide the storefront window into small components should only be used if they restore proven historic elements and original openings.

**1.1.6— Maintain Traditional Recessed Entries Where They Exist**

The rhythm of recessed entrances on the street contributes to visual continuity and historic character. Recessed entries identify the entrance and provide shelter, while corner entries on buildings located on the intersections of key streets draw pedestrians in. Use doors with a large area of glass above a solid panel at the base surrounded by a painted frame. Avoid unfinished anodized metal, bright aluminum, or stainless steel frames. Finished frames may be metal with black anodized or painted finish, however, painted or varnished wood is preferable. Residential type doors are not acceptable. If documentation of the entries is available, the recommended alternative is to restore the entry.

**1.1.7— Maintain The Kick Plate Below The Display Window Element**

Preserve the original kickplate whenever possible. For buildings with historic significance (local landmarks, individually significant, contributing, and contributing restorable buildings), restore the original kickplate from documentary evidence. If original information is not available, develop a new simplified design that retains the original character and dimensions of a kickplate that would most likely have been on the building. For renovations where there is no documentary evidence, appropriate kickplate materials are: brick, painted wood panels, stone, and glazed tile or painted metal in muted tones. Align the kickplate with those of other historic buildings in the block.

**1.1.8— Preserve The Transom And Sign Board Features**

The use of a clear glass transom over doors, or clerestory feature within the upper part of the display window area, is most historic. This area has been used for a sign or decorative element. Retain the original materials and proportions of the opening. If the framing that defines the transom has been removed, re-establish it in a new design.

If the interior ceiling is lower than the transom or clerestory line due to later renovation, raise the dropped ceiling up from the window to maintain its historical dimensions. Align transom or clerestory

window and framing with other adjacent buildings to maintain a clear line along the block face. Retain the original character and materials of the transom and clerestory.

#### 1.1.9—Preserve The Shape, Materials And Spacing of Upper Windows

Re-open/reveal upper story windows if they are presently blocked. If lowered ceilings are necessary, pull the dropped ceiling back from the window. If re-opening the window is not feasible, recreate the original windows from historical documents. If original to the building, shutters may be considered to define the original window proportions.

Maintain the original spacing patterns of the windows.

Preserve the window frame, sash, and surrounds. Repair rather than replace original windows; if repair is not feasible, replace with windows that match the existing windows as closely as possible. Size, frame and trim material, method of operation, size of sash members, window frame elements, and the pattern of divided lights are important features to replicate. A historic material such as wood is most appropriate. If molded plastic, vinyl or aluminum replacements must be used they should replicate original materials, finishes, and dimensions. Anodized, shiny, unfinished metals and altered dimensions are inappropriate.

#### 1.1.10—Awnings May Be Used to Provide Visual Depth And Shade

~~Awnings should be designed to fit the storefront opening to emphasize the building's proportions. Awnings should not obscure or damage important architectural details. An eight foot clearance from the sidewalk to the awning is required.~~ Align awnings with others on the block. This applies particularly to the bottom line of the awning. Mount the top edge to align with the top of the transom or with the framing that separates the clerestory section from the main display window. The valance may be used for a sign.

~~Operable fabric awnings are encouraged.~~ Metal awnings or canopies that are similar in form to fabric awnings may be appropriate when designed as an integral part of the building facade, not appearing as tacked-on additions. ~~Awning color should be coordinated with the color scheme of the entire building front. Mechanized awnings and awnings on the upper stories are discouraged.~~

#### 1.1.11—

### 1.3 Guidelines for contemporary alterations and additions to local landmarks and contributing buildings

The purpose of this section is to provide guidance for the design of additions or alterations to contributing buildings in order to retain the historic character of the overall district. While renovations and building design is expected to reflect the character of its own time acknowledging the Downtown as a living district, it is important that it also respect the traditional qualities that makes the Downtown unique such as massing, scale, use of storefront detailing, and choice of materials.

#### A. Distinguish additions to historic buildings

1. Additions to historic buildings should be subtly distinguishable, differentiated, yet compatible, from the original while maintaining visual continuity through the use of design elements such as proportion and scale, siting, facade set-back, and materials that are of a similar color and texture. When design elements contrast too strongly with the original structure, the addition will appear visually incompatible. Conversely, when the original design is replicated, the addition is indistinguishable and the historical evolution of the building becomes unrecognizable. New additions should be subordinate to the original building form.

2. A. For additions to the side of a historic building, retain the original proportions, scale, and

character of the main facade. Position the addition so it is ~~set back from the main facade, and express~~ subordinate to the original building. Express the difference between the original facade and the addition with a subtle change in color, texture or materials.

~~B. Set back additions to roofs of historic buildings, in order to maintain the height of the primary facade. New floors should be substantially set back from the primary facade so that the original building height and facade are clearly distinguishable from the new upper floor as seen from the street.~~

3. ~~C.~~ Maintain the proportions and the established pattern of upper story windows. In addition~~s~~, upper floors should incorporate traditional vertically proportioned window openings ~~within a more solid facade treatment~~ with less window glazing and transparency than the lower floors. Use windows similar in size and shape to those used historically to maintain the facade pattern of the block.

4. ~~D.~~ Maintain the rhythm established by the repetition of the traditional ~~25-foot~~ 25' facade widths. ~~In additions, maintain the rhythm of facade widths, especially for projects that extend over several lots, by changing the materials, patterns, reveals, and building setbacks, facade portions, in uniform intervals~~ or by using design elements such as columns or pilasters.

5. Set back vertical additions to historic buildings maintaining the height of the primary, historic facade. Lateral additions should be subordinate to the primary historic building and respond to the historic building height, mass, and scale.

Code:

See the B.R.C. Section 9-7-1, "Schedule of Form and Bulk Standards" for additional information on height and setback requirements.

~~1.1.12— Select Building Colors Appropriate to The Area's Historic Character~~

~~In general, select a color scheme that will visually link the building to its past as well as to others in the area. Consider colors that are compatible with the building's predominant materials such as red brick or stone, or do an analysis of colors pre-existing on the building and use one of the colors found.~~

~~Develop a comprehensive color scheme.~~

~~Consider the building as a whole as well as details that need emphasis. Softer muted colors establish a uniform background. In general, use one color on similar elements such as window frames to show that they are all part of the same facade. Reserve brighter colors for small special accents to emphasize entryways and to highlight special structural ornamentation.~~

~~It is not appropriate to paint unpainted brick.~~

~~If the brick is already painted, paint removal is preferred.~~ Avoid paint removal procedures that damage the original brick finish such as sand blasting or caustic chemicals. Before removing paint conduct a test to determine detrimental effects. If the existing paint on the brick is in poor condition and paint removal will damage the underlying brick, the brick should be repainted.

~~1.1.13— Minimize the visibility of HVAC units and other mechanical, structural, or electrical appurtenances~~

~~Use low profile mechanical units and elevator shafts on rooftops that are not visible from the street.~~

~~If this is not possible, setback or screen rooftop equipment from view. Also be sensitive to views from the upper floors of neighboring buildings. Skylights or solar panels should have low profiles and not be visible from public right-of ways. These features should be installed in a manner which minimizes damage to historic materials.~~

#### 1.4 Guidelines for new construction and remodeling non-contributing buildings in the Downtown historic district

~~Section 1.2: Guidelines for New Construction and Remodeling Non-Contributing Buildings in the Downtown Historic District~~

~~LPAB is responsible for reviewing all exterior changes and site features within the Downtown Historic District, not including building interiors.~~

The purpose of this section is to provide guidance for the design of new construction and the renovation of non-contributing buildings in order to retain the historic character of the overall district. While new building design is expected to reflect the character of its own time acknowledging the Downtown as a living district, it is important that it also respect the traditional qualities that makes the Downtown unique such as massing, scale, use of storefront detailing, and choice of materials. ~~the district, in order to retain the historic context of the area while providing new opportunities.~~

~~While new building design is expected to reflect the character of its own time, thereby making the downtown a living district, it is important that it also respect the traditional qualities that makes the downtown unique such as massing, scale, uses of storefront detailing and choice of materials. Guidelines from Section 1.1 concerning awnings, paint color, lighting, and appearances to buildings are also applicable to these buildings. Furthermore, architectural styles that directly copy historic buildings, and theme designs, such as "wild west" are not appropriate.~~

##### ~~1.2.1~~

##### A. Incorporate traditional design building elements in new designs and construction.

~~Repetition~~ Careful integration of traditional facade features creates reinforces patterns and visual alignments that contribute to the overall character of the district. While these These features may be interpreted in new and contemporary ways. Please see Section 1.2 for a list of historic building elements. ~~they generally include the following:~~

~~Kick plate as a base to the store front. Align the height with others in the block.~~

~~First floor display window. Align with height of others in the block when others are appropriately placed.~~

~~Incorporate a clerestory form in the display window.~~

~~Transom, align with others when others are appropriately placed.~~

~~Sign band.~~

~~Parapet cap or cornices.~~

~~Vertical window patterns and shapes, window sills on 2nd floor.~~

~~Angled entrances on corners.~~

~~Recessed central entrances~~

##### 1.2.2 Align Architectural Features With The Established Patterns of Neighboring Buildings

~~The alignment of architectural features and elements, from one building to the next, creates visual continuity and establishes a coherent visual context throughout the downtown. On commercial buildings they create patterns~~

**CODE:** Minimum percentage of lot frontage that must contain a building or buildings should not be less than 70% in the RB-1E, RB-2E, RB-1X, RB-2X, and RB-3X. Such standard is not applicable in RB-3E.

**CODE:** Maximum front yard landscaped setback is 0 feet for buildings in the RB-1E, RB-2E, RB-1X and up to 15 feet in the RB-3E, RB-2X, and RB-3X zones. **CODE:** Primary building entrance locations should face the street.

along the face of the block that contribute to the overall character of the area. Building facades should be designed to reinforce these patterns and support the area's established visual character. Some facade elements that typically align with adjoining buildings include:

- building kickplates
- the top and bottom heights of first floor display windows
- transoms above entrance doors, and clerestory elements in display windows
- horizontal and vertical proportions of the building
- storefront windows, even for restaurant venues
- upper story window openings and styles
- sign band above the street level
- parapet and cornice line
- window sills on upper floors
- roof lines and proportions

**1.2.3 — Maintain The Line of Storefronts at Sidewalk Edge And Orient Main Entrances to Open Toward The Street**

For commercial style buildings, if a portion of the building wall is proposed to be set back from the sidewalk, careful consideration should be given to maintaining the front line of the building at the sidewalk edge through the use of planters, railings, columns or similar features up to an overhanging second floor.

Maintain the original setback of historic buildings. In many cases, the building's placement on the site is an important defining characteristic. For instance, the County Courthouse and the Post Office have an open area between the building and the sidewalk, which is important to retain. For historic buildings that are not located at the zero setback line, place the addition behind the original setback.

**1.2.4 — Do Not Construct Half-level or Split-level First Floors That Extend Both Above And Below Grade**

**CODE:** First floor levels should be no lower than grade level and no higher than 2 feet above grade. (Consideration of flood mitigation design should be taken into account for buildings located in flood plain areas).

**B. Construct new buildings to maintain the continuity of the historic building relationship to the street, adjacent properties, and/or the block.**

**C. Maintain a Human Building Scale Rather Than a Monolithic or Monumental Scale. Smaller scale buildings and the use of traditionally-sized building components help to establish human scale and maintain the character of Downtown. Standard size brick, uniform building components, and standard window sizes are most appropriate.**

**1.2.5 — Consider The Height And Mass of Buildings**

**D. Consider the proportioning of the height and mass to the building footprint.** In general, buildings should appear similar in height, mass, and scale to other buildings in the historic area to maintain the area's historic district's visual integrity and unique character. At the same time, it is important to maintain a variety of heights ~~to create visual interest.~~ While the actual heights of buildings are of concern, the perceived heights of buildings are equally important. One, two and three story buildings make up the primary architectural fabric of the Downtown, with taller buildings located at key intersections.

Strive for visual interest in building forms.

With new construction, create architectural variety by stepping back upper floors and varying building massing, especially on larger sites.

1. Relate the height of buildings to neighboring structures at the sidewalk edge. For new structures that are significantly taller than adjacent buildings, upper floors should be set-back a minimum of 15 feet ~~15'~~ from the front facade to reduce the perceived height. However, slender forms such as towers and dormers that extend forward to the front facade may add visual variety and interest to the set-back area.

2. Consider the effect of building height on shading and views. Building height can shade sidewalks during winter months leading to icy sidewalks and unappealing pedestrian areas.

~~Wherever possible, new buildings should not shade the northern sidewalk area of east-west running streets at noon on December 21st, and should maintain view corridors.~~

E. Provide a variation of roof heights and types.

F. Buildings are expected to be designed on all exposed elevations. Primary facade materials are to extend to secondary elevations, or wrap building corners, a proportionally relevant distance as to portray a sense of depth.

G. Construct residential units to include entry stoops and/or porches. Residential entry porches are encouraged to extend 18" to 30" above grade. Construct commercial buildings at grade.

Code:

Objects or building elements extending into the public right-of-way require a revocable right-of-way permit and/or lease agreement, see the B.R.C Section 8-6-6, "Requirements for Revocable Permits, Short-Term Leases and Long-Term Leases" for more information.

~~1.2.6 — Maintain a Human Building Scale Rather Than a Monolithic or Monumental Scale~~

~~Smaller scale buildings and the use of traditionally sized building components help to establish human scale and maintain the character of downtown. Standard size brick, uniform building components, and standard window sizes are most appropriate.~~

~~1.2.7 — Maintain the Proportions of Storefront Windows And Doors and Established Pattern of Upper Story Windows~~

~~The first floor of downtown commercial buildings should be primarily transparent, with a pedestrian orientation and storefront appearance. Upper floors should incorporate traditional vertically proportioned window openings within a more solid facade treatment, awnings are not typically found on upper story windows. Use windows similar in size and shape to those used historically to maintain the facade pattern of the block. This is especially important for projects facing key pedestrian streets such as Pearl, 13th and 14th Streets.~~

~~1.2.8 — Maintain the Rhythm Established by The Repetition of The Traditional 25 Foot Facade Widths.~~

CODE: The allowable "by-right" height is up to 35 feet, with a maximum height of 55 feet through height review.

CODE: The maximum "by-right" number of stories allowed in 35 feet is two stories.

CODE: Generally, for commercial and residential buildings in RB-1X, RB-2X, RB-1E, and

RB-2E, the floor to floor heights should be up to 14 feet for the ground level, and up to 12 feet for the second floor.

CODE: In the RB1-X and RB1-E zones, principal building heights for a building located on a corner lot that faces two public streets may be

increased up to 10 feet in height and up to 3 stories if: the building contains no more than 3 stories above the

finished grade; the horizontal dimensions of the third story are no greater than 50 feet along the front-

yard street frontage by 70 feet along the side-yard street frontage, and the vertical planes of the third story are

- located directly above the vertical planes of the stories below.

Maintain the rhythm of facade widths, especially for projects that extend over several lots, by changing materials, patterns, reveals, building setbacks, facade portions, or by using design elements such as columns or pilasters.

#### 1.2.9—Use Building Materials That Have a Texture, Pattern And Scale Similar to Those in The District

The use of brick as the primary building material is encouraged to reflect historic building patterns in the commercial downtown. Choose accent materials similar in texture and scale to others in the district.

These include:

Brick and stone masonry

Wood details such as windows

Finished lumber, applied to achieve traditional patterns e.g.: horizontal siding rather than diagonal

Finished painted metal and sheet metal

Clear or lightly tinted glass

Ceramic tiles

Brick, clay and ceramic pavers

Slate, finished metal, glazed ceramic and tile roofs

Concrete and stone as lintels and wood or concrete columns

Embossed metal or corrugated metal

The following materials are generally inappropriate:

Coarsely finished, “rustic” materials, such as wood shakes, shingles, barn board or stained fir plywood. Poorly crafted or “rustic” woodworking and finishing techniques

Indoor-outdoor carpeting or astro-turf

Corrugated metal and fiberglass. (unless used sparingly)

**CODE:** For buildings located in the RB 1E, RB 2E, RB 3E, RB 1X, RB 2X, and RB 3X zones, a minimum of 60% of a ground floor facade facing a public street shall be made of transparent materials, or otherwise designed to allow pedestrians to view activities inside the buildings. This standard shall not apply to residential uses that may occur along the ground floor facade.

~~Moss rock~~

~~“Antique” or old brick with partial paint, mottled light variegated brick, oversized brick and white brick mortar~~

~~Ornate wrought iron, “New Orleans” style grille and rail work~~

~~Stucco surfaces that are highly textured such as those sometimes associated with a “hacienda” or “Mediterranean” style~~

~~Expanded metal~~

~~Silver or clear anodized aluminum sheets~~

~~Silver or clear aluminum extrusions for windows and doorways~~

~~Residential type sliding glass doors~~

~~Imitation wood siding or stone~~

~~Flat or molded plastic sheeting in quantities exceeding five square feet when used as primary facade materials~~

~~Imitation metal “rock work”~~

~~Plastic molded imitations of any conventional building material~~

~~Mirror or metalized reflective glass~~

~~Glass block~~

1.2.10—Improve Rear or Side Alley Elevations To Enhance Public Access From Parking Lots And Alleys  
Where buildings are built to the alley edge, consider opportunities for alley display windows and

secondary customer or employee entries, if original walls are not damaged.

Screening for service equipment, trash, or any other rear-of-building element that can be visually improved, should be designed as an integral part of the overall design. ~~Where intact, historic alley facades should be preserved along with original features and materials.~~ Alterations should be sensitive to and compatible with the historic scale and character of the building and area.

## Section 2: The Non-Historic Area & Interface Areas

~~The Non-Historic Area offers unique opportunities for design options and creation of variety in building forms. A focus on pedestrian activity and attention to massing, scale and alignment of building features are important design considerations.~~

~~Other~~ Important design elements are 1) the Non-historic Area's relationship to its surroundings, including the Historic Area, the Civic Park area, and the ~~neighborhood interface area~~ residential quality of the Interface Area, 2) the pedestrian quality of the area including the Downtown Boulder mall, east and west Pearl Street, Spruce and Walnut streets, Canyon Blvd Boulevard, and the north-south streets that connect Civic Park to the mall area, and 3) ~~that~~ new building design can reflect the character of its own time and meaningful juxtapositions, while respecting the integrity, scale, and massing of historic buildings in the area.

~~While~~ Creative interpretations of traditional design elements, and designs that reflect the character of their time, are encouraged, ~~they~~ The designs should be compatible with the surrounding historic context, but distinguishable from their historic neighbors. Architectural styles that directly copy historic buildings and theme designs, such as "wild west" or "neo-chalet" are inappropriate to the character of downtown Boulder. These guidelines also discourage projects that create inhospitable pedestrian design, and buildings that are inappropriate in scale and massing to their surroundings. DDAB is responsible for reviewing all projects with a construction value of \$10,000 or more in the Non-historic Area and the Interface area.

The Interface Area is composed of the blocks that link the core of the downtown to the surrounding residential neighborhoods. This area requires special design sensitivities that must be addressed when commercial buildings are located adjacent to residential areas. Impacts to the surrounding residential areas can be minimized through careful design which respects the scale and quality of adjacent residential uses and thoughtfully transitions the commercial and residential areas.

The urban design objectives for the Non-Historic and Interface Areas are to:

- Reinforce the character of Downtown as a pedestrian place by encouraging architectural solutions that are visually interesting, pleasing, reflective of contemporary times yet stylistically appropriate to their the context, and compatible in scale and character with their street.
- Encourage sensitive design along the edge where the Downtown commercial area abuts residential neighborhoods
- ~~Strengthen the identity of downtown as a place where people feel welcome and comfortable through the careful selection of building materials and human scale design.~~
- ~~Encourage development that complements pedestrian activity.~~
- Emphasizes a clear distinction between the commercial and residential interface areas
- Maintain the diversity in building type and size, and respect the adjoining residential character
- Discourage adverse impacts from noise, night lighting, poor building design, and commercial service areas on adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Code:

See the B.R.C. Section 9-2-4, "Good Neighbor Meetings and Management Plans" or contact the DMC at (303)441-4000.

2.1 General guidelines for the Non-Historic & Interface Areas

- A. Maintain the historic or predominant building setback line.
1. Maintain the relationship and continuity of the building wall to the street or property line.
  2. For commercial uses in residential buildings, maintain the predominant residential setback of the block, including any porches.
- B. Minimize the visibility of mechanical, structural, or electrical appurtenances
1. Use low-profile mechanical units and elevator shafts that are not visible from the street. If this is not possible, setback or screen rooftop equipment from view. Be sensitive to views from the upper floors of neighboring buildings. Skylights or solar panels should have low profiles and not be visible from the public right-of-way.
- C. Design all sides of the building including alley elevations.
1. Well designed rear building entrances, windows, balconies, and planting areas are encouraged.
  2. Improve rear or side alley elevations to enhance public access from parking lots and alleys.
  3. Where buildings are built to the alley edge, consider opportunities for alley display windows and secondary customer or employee entries.
  4. Primary facade materials are to extend to secondary elevations, or wrap building corners, a sufficient amount as to portray a sense of depth.
  5. Screening for service equipment, trash, or any other rear-of-building elements should be designed as an integral part of the overall design. Where intact, historic alley facades should be preserved along with original features and materials.
- D. Exterior building lighting should be designed to enhance the overall architecture of the building. Security lighting should be designed for safety, as well as night-time appearance.
- E. Reduce the visual impact of structured and surface parking.
1. Parking structures should be compatible to the historic district and adjacent buildings. All parking structures should be architecturally screened and/or wrapped with an occupiable use.
  2. Locate any surface parking to the rear of the property. All surface parking must be screened.
  3. Pedestrian routes in structures and parking lots should be easily identifiable and accessed, with clear visual connections to the sidewalks and buildings.
- F. The law requires that universal access be located with the principal public entrance.
- G. Consider the quality of open space incorporated into new and renovated buildings. When appropriate to the context, integrate the surrounding open spaces into the building design. Well programmed plazas, courtyards, outdoor seating and dining areas on or adjacent to open spaces and pedestrian routes are encouraged.

Note:

See Section 3 for encroachments into the public right-of-way discussion on revocable lease and allowable dimensions.

Code:

See the B.R.C. Section 9-9-14, "Parking Lot Landscaping Standards" for parking lot screening requirements.

**Code:**

See the B.R.C. Section 9-9-16, "Outdoor for lighting requirements."

**Note:**

A goal of the city is to make the Downtown as accessible as possible. All accessible design elements must conform to all applicable Federal, State and Local laws and codes. Wherever a discrepancy may arise, the higher standard shall be applied.

**2.2 Commercial buildings in the Non-Historic and Interface Areas**

**2.1**

**A. Consider incorporating traditional facade elements in new and contemporary ways. See Section 1: The Downtown Historic District for specific building elements.**

Repetition and use of traditional facade elements creates patterns and visual alignments that contribute to the overall character of the historic commercial area. While these features may be interpreted in new and contemporary ways, they include:

Kick plate as a base to the store front or restaurant front. Align the height with others when possible.

First floor display window. Align with height of others in the block when others are appropriately placed.

Transom. Align with others when others are appropriately placed.

Sign band.

Parapet cap or cornices.

Vertical indow patterns and shapes, window sills.

Angled corner entrance.

Recessed central entrances

Typical facade elements

**2.2 Consider the Alignment of Architectural Features and Established Patterns With Neighboring Buildings**

The alignment of architectural features, from one building to the next, creates visual continuity and establishes a coherent visual context throughout the downtown. While new building forms are expected, building facades should be designed to reinforce these patterns and support downtown's established visual character. Some horizontal elements that typically align with adjoining buildings include:

building kickplate

the top and bottom height of first floor display windows

transom over the entranceway

horizontal and vertical proportions of the building

storefront windows

window openings and styles, especially upper story windows

sign band above the street level

parapet and cornice line

window sills on upper floors

roof line and proportion

**2.3 Maintain the Line of Building Facades And Storefronts at Sidewalk Edge in Blocks**

CODE: Primary building entrance locations should face the street.  
CODE: Minimum percentage of lot frontage that must contain a building or buildings should not be less than 70% in the RB 1E, RB 2E, RB 1X, RB 2X, and RB 3X. Such standard is not applicable in RB 3E.  
CODE: With the exception of properties fronting onto Canyon Boulevard, all other properties have a maximum front yard landscaped setback that is 0 feet for buildings in the RB 1E, RB 2E, RB 1 X and up to 15 feet in the RB 3E, RB 2X, and RB 3X zones. As a major arterial street of four lanes, Canyon Boulevard has a setback of 78 feet from the centerline of the highway or 25 feet from the lot line adjoining the right of way, whichever is greater.

Buildings or other design features that are built up to the sidewalk maintain a line of visual continuity and provide visual interest for pedestrians. If a portion of the building facade is set back from the sidewalk, the sidewalk edge should be visually maintained through the use of a line of columns supporting upper floors or other features, such as a change in surface texture, a line of planters, portals, or railings.

Maintain the original setback of historic buildings. In many cases, the building's placement on the site is an important defining characteristic. For instance, the County Courthouse and the Post Office have an open area between the building and the sidewalk which is important to retain. For historic buildings that are not located at the zero setback line, place the addition behind the original setback.

#### 2.4. \_\_\_\_\_

#### B. \_\_\_\_\_ Consider the height, mass, and scale of buildings

1. \_\_\_\_\_ In general, buildings should ~~that~~ appear similar in height, mass, and scale to other buildings in the area ~~help to maintain the coherent visual image of the downtown character~~. At the same time, it is important to maintain a variety of heights, ~~to create visual interest~~. While the actual heights of buildings are of concern, the perceived heights of buildings are equally important. One, two and three story buildings make up the primary architectural fabric of the Downtown, with taller buildings located at key intersections.

~~Maintain visual interest in building forms.~~

~~Create architectural variety by stepping back upper floors and varying building massing, especially on larger sites.~~

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Consider Relate the height and proportion of buildings to neighboring structures, ~~at the sidewalk edge~~. For new structures that are significantly taller than adjacent buildings, upper floors should be set-back a minimum of 15 feet from the front facade to reduce the perceived height.

~~However, slender forms such as towers and dormers that extend forward to the front facade may add visual variety and interest to the setback area.~~

~~Maintain a standard floor to floor height. Generally, for commercial and residential buildings RB-1X, RB-2X, RB-1E, and RB-2E, the ground level floor to floor heights should be approximately 13 to 15 feet and up to 12 to 14 feet for the second floor. This is particularly important in the RB-1X zone along Walnut Street. It is also important guideline for commercial buildings, but not necessarily for residential buildings in the RB3X and RB-3E zones.~~

**CODE:** Generally, for commercial and residential buildings in RB-1X, RB-2X, RB-1E, and RB-2E, the floor to floor heights should be up to 14 feet for the ground level, and up to 12 feet for the second floor.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Consider the effect of building height on shading and views.

Building height can shade sidewalks during winter months leading to icy sidewalks which can discourage and unappealing pedestrian areas. ~~activity. Wherever possible, new buildings should maintain view corridors and should not shade the northern sidewalk of east-west running streets at noon on December 21.~~

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Maintain the traditional, established breaks between buildings, such as existing paseos.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ For projects located in the Interface Area, construct buildings three floors or less and consider the adjacent residential height, mass, and scale.

6. \_\_\_\_\_ Commercial construction on a primarily residential block should be designed to reflect a residential character, e.g. residential setback on a primarily residential street.

2.5

C. Maintain a human building scale, rather than monolithic or monumental scale

1. Avoid large featureless facade surfaces. Include architectural elements and patterns that divide the facade into familiar intervals. A single facade should not exceed a maximum of 75 linear feet.

~~Facade elements that are familiar to the pedestrian help establish a sense of scale and create visual patterns that link buildings within a block, while allowing individual identity of each building. Smaller-scale buildings and the use of traditionally sized building components help to establish human scale and maintain the character of downtown. Standard size brick, uniform building components, and standard window sizes are most appropriate.~~

2.6 Create Pedestrian Interest at the Street Level

~~Develop the first level of buildings to provide visual interest to pedestrians.~~

~~For a non-residential building, the first floor street walls should contain architectural elements that create visual interest and a pedestrian street environment such as display windows facing the sidewalk, outdoor dining areas, display cases, public art integrated with the building design, and architectural elements and details that create visual interest.~~

2. Consider how the texture and pattern of building materials will be perceived.

~~Use building materials that are familiar in their dimensions and that can be repeated. To help~~ Use traditionally sized building components in a way that incorporates details, textures, and patterns to establish a sense of human scale ~~use familiar building components in traditional sizes. For example, standard size brick, uniform building components, and typical window sizes, help to establish human scale. Combining building materials that can be visually contrasted also helps to achieve a sense of human scale.~~

3. Maintain the design distinction between upper and lower floors.

~~Develop the first floor facade as primarily transparent, making it inviting to the public. Consider using windows and other architectural features to create a pattern that will reinforce the traditional facade rhythm found on commercial buildings in the Downtown area. Upper/Lower floors are generally are differentiated through the use by a higher percentage of more solid areas~~ glazing and transparency than upper floors. ~~voids and with smaller, vertically oriented windows in a regular pattern.~~

2.7 Avoid Half Level, or Partial Level Basements That Extend More Than 2 Feet Above Grade

2.8 Shade Storefront Glass by Appropriate Means

~~To permit good visibility into storefront windows, and to create pedestrian interest, use awnings or, for buildings with recessed first floors, consider arcades. Note: See Section 6: Extensions into the public right-of-way discussion on revocable lease and allowable dimensions.~~

2.9

D. Construct primary entrances at grade.

Code:

**CODE:** For buildings located in the RB-1E, RB-2E, RB-3E, RB-1X, RB-2X, and RB-3X zones, a minimum of 60% of a ground floor facade facing a public street shall be made of transparent materials, or otherwise designed to allow pedestrians to view activities inside the buildings. This standard shall not apply to residential uses that occur along the ground floor facade.

**CODE:** First floor levels should be no lower than grade level and no higher than 2 feet above grade. (Note: except in flood zones.)

See the B.R.C. Section 9-7-1, "Schedule of Form and Bulk Standards" for specific height and setback requirements.

### 2.3 Residential buildings in the Non-Historic and Interface Areas

#### A. Maintain the diverse Residential architectural character of the residential buildings in the Interface Area

~~Maintain The Rhythm Established by The Repetition of The Traditional 25 Foot Facade Widths  
Maintain the rhythm of facade widths, especially for projects that extend over several lots, by changing materials, patterns, reveals, building setbacks, facade portions, or by using design elements such as columns or pilasters.~~

~~A single facade should not exceed a maximum of 75 linear feet (equivalent to three traditional lots). Traditional, established breaks between buildings, such as alley ways, should be maintained.~~

~~2.10 — Consider the Scale, Texture, and Pattern of Building Materials  
Use building materials that are familiar in their dimensions and that can be repeated. To help establish a sense of human scale, use familiar building components in traditional sizes. For example, standard size brick, uniform building components, and typical window sizes, help to establish human scale. Combining building materials that can be visually contrasted also helps to achieve a sense of human scale.~~

#### B. Construct residential units to include entry stoops and/or porches. Residential entry porches are encouraged to extend 18" to 30" above grade.

#### C. When feasible, maintain residential uses in historic residential buildings.

~~2.11 — Consider The Quality of Open Space  
Incorporated in New And Renovated Buildings~~

~~Create comfortable, safe, accessible, and appropriately located open spaces to provide pedestrian interest and convenience.~~

~~Orient open spaces to the sun and views. Create a sense of enclosure while maintaining safety, so that open spaces feel like outdoor rooms.~~

~~Provide seating that is useable year round. Plazas, courtyards, pocket parks, and terraces should be designed to be easily accessible and comfortable for a substantial part of the year. See Section 6.7.~~

~~Connect open spaces to other activity areas where people gather to sit, eat, or watch other people.~~

~~Locate sidewalk restaurants or outdoor dining areas on or~~

CODE: Allowable "by right" height is up to 35 feet, with a maximum of 55 feet through height review.

CODE: The maximum "by right" number of stories allowed in 35 feet is two stories.

CODE: Generally, for commercial and residential buildings in RB 1X, RB 2X, RB 1E, and RB 2E, the floor-to-floor heights should be up to 14 feet for the ground level, and up to 12 feet for the second floor.

CODE: In the RB1 X and RB1 E zones, principal buildings height for a building located on a corner lot that faces two public streets may be increased up to 10 feet in height and up to 3 stories if: the building contains no more than 3 stories above the finished grade; the horizontal dimensions of the third story are no greater than 50 feet along the front yard street frontage by 70 feet along the side yard street frontage; and, the vertical planes of the third story are located directly above the vertical planes of the stories below.

Locate sidewalk restaurants or outdoor dining areas on or adjacent to open spaces and pedestrian routes such as sidewalks and green areas. Connect shops or office entrances directly to places where people gather or walk.

Where appropriate and allowable, the use of well-designed and shielded rooftop decks for restaurants and access to views is encouraged.

## 2.12 — Recognize The Special Character of The Area South of Canyon Boulevard

Emphasize the “boulevard” character of Canyon by maintaining consistent building setbacks. (See section 6.10 for Canyon Boulevard landscaping)

Canyon Boulevard is one of the city’s most prominent avenues with its center planting strip and wide building setbacks. It has a unique character that divides the Civic Park area from the more urban Walnut, Pearl Street, and downtown Boulder mall areas.

Depending on the block, Canyon Boulevard has an urban character on the north side and a park-like character on the south side. North side buildings, especially between 9th and 16th streets, should line up at the same setback line and feature a deeper setback from Canyon Blvd. Features such as outdoor restaurants, pocket parks, pedestrian seating areas, and roof terraces and balconies on upper floors are encouraged along the south facing facade.

Ensure that new development or renovation is in compliance with the city’s, and if required, national flood control standards.

The architecture and use of buildings in the area south of Canyon Boulevard differ from the urban character of buildings along Pearl and Walnut streets. This area is directly affected by the Boulder Creek floodway which can affect the location, siting, and building design of construction projects.

Building forms compatible with the scale and character of the area are strongly encouraged.

A variety of building heights and forms is encouraged with primary entrances to shops and offices facing the main street.

Parking should be located to minimize visibility from the street, preferably at the rear of buildings not to the building side or front.

In this special area, focused on pedestrian ways, parks, and a unique mix of uses, keeping a downtown image of buildings facing onto the street is important.

Pedestrian and bicycle connections through the area that integrate park, creek, and sidewalk systems are strongly encouraged.

Bike and pedestrian pathways that connect the area internally and to surrounding areas, and that take advantage of the park and creek system that runs through the area, are desirable in maintaining the area’s unique character. When feasible, encourage right-of-way access routes through properties that can link bike and pedestrian pathways.

When adapting residential structures to commercial use, respect the residential character of the building front.

Avoid altering facade elements such as porches, original windows, building forms, and materials on the facade when adapting residential structures to commercial uses. New additions should be set back from

**CODE:** Canyon Boulevard, through the downtown, is a “major arterial street of 4 lanes” which requires that buildings be set back 78 feet from the centerline of the highway or 25 feet from the lot line adjoining the right-of-way, whichever is greater.

the primary facade or placed to the rear or the side of the property.

### Section 3: The Interface Area

~~The Interface Area is composed of the blocks that link the core of the downtown to the surrounding residential neighborhoods.~~ This area requires special design sensitivities that must be addressed when commercial buildings are located adjacent to residential areas.

From the neighborhood perspective, as well as for the health and appearance of the downtown commercial area, it is important that the residential blocks adjacent to the commercial area remain stable, quiet, secure, and orderly. For the most part, it is the impacts of the commercial area which can be most detrimental to the residential neighborhood, not the reverse. ~~These impacts can be minimized through careful design that emphasizes the transition between commercial and residential areas, and respects the scale and quality of adjacent residential uses.~~ It is expected that through the use of these guidelines, as well as appropriate land use and zoning restrictions, general neighborhood “livability” will be supported and enhanced.

#### Good Neighbor Policy

A good neighborhood policy has been implemented by downtown property and business owners and residents living in adjacent residential neighborhoods as a positive way to communicate about issues of “livability” in the interface area. Its purpose is to establish a standard of cooperation and a code of conduct not generally addressed by existing law. While compliance is voluntary, the policy asks that a “Good Neighbor Agreement” between commercial property or business owners and surrounding neighborhood residents be agreed to and signed. The policy asks owners to take action on a number of issues including: trash; litter; graffiti removal; the use of alternate transportation modes by employees; employee parking; noise, animal, pest, and weed control; deliveries; and employee/tenant education. For information on how businesses in the interface area can participate in the Good Neighbor Policy call the DMC at (303) 441-4000.

**NOTE:** DDAB is responsible for reviewing commercial projects within that portion of the Interface Area located in the Non-historic area. LPAB is responsible for that portion of the Interface Area that falls within the Historic Area.

The urban design objectives for the Neighborhood Interface Areas are to:

~~Encourage sensitive design along the edge where the downtown commercial area abuts residential neighborhoods.~~

Encourage sensitive site, building, and streetscape design that emphasizes a clear distinction between both commercial and residential areas.

~~Maintain the diversity in building type and size and respect the adjoining residential character that is important to the area.~~

~~Discourage adverse impacts from noise, night lighting, poor building design, and commercial service areas on adjacent residential neighborhoods.~~

#### 3.1 — Maintain the Diverse Residential Architectural Character of the Interface Area

Maintain historic residential buildings.

Although the rehabilitation of residential buildings for office use is possible to maintain the neighborhood’s character and scale, conversion of historic residential buildings to commercial or mixed-uses is appropriate only when the residential use is no longer feasible. Careful consideration must be given to the visual impacts a non-residential conversion may have on the surrounding residential area.

In general, construct buildings of three stories or less.

Create a height transition by locating taller portions of buildings toward the downtown, or Pearl Street, and lower portions located toward surrounding residential areas.

Commercial construction on a primarily residential block should be designed to reflect a residential character.

For example, a front yard setback for a commercial building in a residential block may be desirable. Careful consideration must be given to adjacent properties, the overall urban design quality of the block and the character of the surrounding area.

### 3.2 — Create Attractive Rear Alley Facades on Buildings Facing Toward Residential Areas

The design quality of the rear facades of commercial and mixed-use buildings that face residential zones is of great concern to the residential property owners.

Consideration must be given to creating a pleasant building design at the rear of the building. Include such features well designed building entrances, windows, balconies, the use of high quality materials, plaza areas and planting areas.

### 3.3 — Design alleys to serve as attractive alternative routes for pedestrians, as well as efficient service access for vehicles.

Consider what residents of adjacent residential neighborhoods will look at from their rear yards and porches. Well designed rear building entrances, windows, balconies plaza areas and planting areas are encouraged.

Elements such as trash collection areas should be screened, designed as an integral part of the overall building design, and present an attractive feature when viewed from adjacent residential areas.

Provide adequate lighting for pedestrians in all interface area alley ways for security and convenience.

Shield security lighting from adjacent residential uses so that it does not shine in adjacent residential windows. (Refer to the city Light Code).

Where parking in alleys places cars next to a public sidewalk, provide a minimum eight-foot landscaped strip between the parking area and the sidewalk.

Corner buildings located at the corner of alleyways and public streets may provide a visual buffer to hide alley parking and trash storage from pedestrian view.

### 3.4 — Where The Zoning Line Runs Along a Street or Lot Line, Commercial Development Should Respect The Existing Building Scale And Character of The Adjacent Residential Area.

Commercial construction on a primarily residential block should be designed to reflect a residential character. A front yard setback for commercial uses at some interface locations is desirable. Create a height transition by locating taller portions toward the downtown and lower portions toward residential areas.

### 3.5 — Design Streets in The Neighborhood Interface Area to Reflect Adjacent Residential Land Uses.

**CODE:** requires a 15-foot sight triangle where alleys intersect with streets.

Consider the scale and character of the public right-of-way between residential areas and commercial areas.

Create a strong residential quality in the design of street improvements at the interface of commercial and residential areas.

Traffic circles, landscaped medians, neck-downs and pocket parks are appropriate right-of-way treatments.

Maintain the traditional curb zone between the curb and the sidewalk of no less than four feet. Street trees, planted at 20 to 30 feet apart, average 25 foot on center, are recommended. (See Section 6, Streetscape Improvements). Plant flowers, grass or other live ground cover in the curb zone for the half block that extends between residential areas and the commercial alley ways. Rocks, gravel, or other rock-like material are not allowed in the curb zone area.

#### Section 4: Parking Facilities

The most critical elements to consider in evaluating the design of parking facilities are traffic impacts on adjacent streets, building massing, urban design relationships to adjacent buildings, the location of the facility within the downtown, its security, landscaping, and lighting.

The urban design objectives for the design of parking facilities are to:

Produce attractive parking facilities that are compatible additions to downtown which add to, rather than detract from, the area's historic character and function.

Enhance pedestrian activity at the sidewalk level through the use of retail wrap-on structured parking and landscape areas around surface parking.

Ensure that the design of the facility is of the highest quality.

##### 4.1 — Locate Surface Parking on Appropriate Sites

Locate parking facilities on blocks and streets in which they best serve their function without jeopardizing the pedestrian quality of the downtown.

Locations such as the area around Canyon Boulevard or adjacent to the "mall loop" are preferred. These will promote continuity of the pedestrian environment and a compact retail core. The mall loop is defined by 11th St, Walnut St, 15th St and Spruce.

Locate surface parking lots at the interior of the block not at corner locations. In a downtown setting corner locations are important as building sites for prominent buildings. Parking lots on corners in the downtown area give the suburban appearance of cars parked in front of buildings.

Surface parking lots that share a site with a building and that are to be located under a building but at grade should be placed at the building rear.

Parking lots under buildings should not extend to the street front. Rather, they should be shielded from the street by the front of the building. In this way the architectural continuity of the street can be preserved. Parking behind a building accessed from an alley is preferred in order to minimize the number of curb cuts, reduce turns, and minimize pedestrian conflicts.

**CODE:** The city code requires landscaping on the interior and the perimeter of parking lots. Section 9-3.3.4 describes standards for screening parking lots from the street, screening parking lots at property edges, and interior parking lot landscaping. For example, lots with fewer than 15 spaces (300 gross square feet per space) require no interior landscaping. Lots with 16 to 160 spaces require that at least five percent of the interior parking lot contain landscaping. Lots with more than 160 spaces and more than one double loaded row of parking require that at least ten percent of the interior parking lot contain landscaping.

#### 4.2 — Reduce Visual Impact of Surface Parking Lots

Subdivide surface parking lots into smaller areas through the use of landscaping or other visual elements.

Planting islands for flowers, ground cover, or shrubs should be used at entrances, exits, internal turns, and to separate double rows of cars. Planting islands should be large enough to sustain proposed plant materials. Such islands should be designed to break up the expanse of pavement and help establish the desired direction of circulation. Planting should be attractive, low maintenance, and hardy — able to survive soot and gas fumes. Landscaped areas should be protected with appropriate curbs, edging, bollards, railings, low walls, or similar elements.

Trees are the most essential form of greenery since they screen cars, provide shade, and frame views. Avoid trees with low-growing branches or that excrete resin or moisture.

Use parking lot signs compatible with those in general use in the downtown area.

Where the parking lot abuts a public sidewalk, provide a visual screen or landscaped buffer between the sidewalk and the parking lot.

There are several ways in which this may be accomplished:

The buffer may be a landscaped berm and/or planting strip, a minimum of 6 feet in width between the sidewalk and the parking lot, or the width equal to the setback of an adjacent building if wider than 6 feet.

The buffer area may be designed in conjunction with a low wall of a material similar to adjacent buildings. Ideal materials for downtown fences and walls include brick, stone, or metal. Do not use unfinished wood fences.

The buffer area should be planted with appropriate ground covers and small trees. Decorative plantings and bermed areas are encouraged to highlight entrance ways. Care should be given to protecting sight lines for both pedestrians and vehicles.

Materials and architectural detailing selected for buffers should be complementary to the character and materials of adjacent buildings. Low walls should be no larger than 48".

#### 4.3 — Reduce The Visual Impact of Structured Parking

Design parking structures so that they create a visually attractive and active pedestrian environment through the use of a retail/commercial wrap.

All above grade parking structures, in which parking is the principle use, should be wrapped with a two-story retail/commercial use to

**CODE:** The city code requires landscaping on the interior and the perimeter of parking lots. Section 9-3.3-4 describes standards for screening parking lots from the street, screening parking lots at property edges, and interior parking lot landscaping. For example, with regard to the issue minimum height and opacity: Parking lot screening may include landscape features such as planter boxes, walls, or hedges in combination with trees and plantings, but must provide a screen a minimum of 42 inches in height along the full length of the parking lot adjacent to the street. Planted materials must provide a significant screen when fully grown that is at least 42 inches in height as measured from the base of the sidewalk adjacent to the street, unless the parking lot is higher than the sidewalk, in which case it should be measured from the base of the parking lot adjacent to the street. Fences shall be no taller than 48 inches in height.

In the RB1 E, RB2 E, RB3 E, RB1 X, RB2 X, RB3 X, BMS X, IMS X, and MU X zones, the parking lot screening requirement can be met by any one of the following:

- A planting area with a minimum of a six foot width between the sidewalk and the parking lot, planted with shrubs having a mature height no lower than 42 inches;
- A fence, hedge, or wall meeting the requirements of Section 9-3.3-6, "Fences, Hedges, and Walls," B.R.C. 1981, and of a height no lower than 42 inches and fences and wall shall be no taller than 48 inches as measured from the base of the parking lot adjacent to the street.
- Another method, if approved by the city manager, that forms a significant screen between 42 and 48 inches for the length of the parking lot adjacent to the street.

shield the facility from the street and to make the entire building visually pleasing.

For a parking garage created as a principal use on a lot that is over 20,000 square feet in an RB-2E, RB-1X, RB-2X, or RB-3X zone, the following criteria apply:

The garage wrap should be compatible with surrounding buildings.

In general, the retail/commercial wrap should conform to the guidelines in Section 2: Non-Historic Area. Facade design should be considerate of both vertical and horizontal architectural proportions, window patterns, and architectural elements of buildings in the area.

#### 4.4 Security And Pedestrian Circulation Should Be Priorities

Pedestrian routes in structures and lots should be easily identifiable and accessed. ~~Clear visual connections between a garage, or surface parking lot, and adjacent sidewalks and buildings are desirable.~~ Interior and exterior lighting should be designed for safety as well as night-time appearance.

Section 3: The Public Realm  
Section 5: Commercial Signs

The term “public realm” refers to the entire system of open space, landscaping, signage, streets and sidewalks, by which people circulate through and experience the Downtown. Our image of Downtown Boulder, and the ease and safety with which we move through it, is determined by the quality of the streetscape.

The urban design objectives of the Public Realm Guideline are to:

- Unify the visual image of Downtown by creating a series of public sitting areas, completing the rhythm of street trees and street lighting, and providing landscaping with seasonal color or other qualities of visual interest.
- Create a pedestrian oriented environment that is safe, accessible, visually pleasing, and comfortable. Strengthen Downtown’s visual connections. Visually and functionally connect the Downtown Boulder mall and Civic Park, or east and west Pearl Street to the mall.
- Maintain the visual unity and historic character of the Downtown Boulder pedestrian mall through the use of traditional materials.
- Respect and preserve adjacent residential neighborhoods through the use of residentially appropriate streetscape design.
- Encourage design and sign placement that promotes downtown businesses while complementing downtown’s the character and scale of the building.
- Promote signs that are designed as an integral yet noticeable part of a building’s overall design. Promote the design and placement of signs that are both effective individually and are harmonious with the overall signage of the block.
- Encourage comfortable spaces by integrating appropriate landscaping and street trees into the public realm.
- Create an overall image in which a building signage, and site design relate to each other.

3.1 Signs

A. Commercial signs should function to identify and locate businesses, promote merchandise or service within commercial activity, attract customers, provide direction and information, and in some cases create visual delight and architectural interest.

The urban design objectives of the Commercial Sign Guidelines are

~~CODE: The building shall be set back fifteen feet from any property line adjacent to a public street, but not an alley, for any portions of the building between 35 feet and 45 feet in height. The facade of the building shall be set back 35 feet from any property line adjacent to a public street, but not an alley, for any portions of the building between 45 feet and 55 feet in height. All portions of a building above the permitted height shall also be required to meet the requirements set forth in Section 9 4 11, “Site Review.” CODE: The requirements for the maximum number of stories set forth in Section 9 3.2 1, “Schedule of Bulk Requirements,” B.R.C., 1981, shall not be applied to parking areas within auto parking garages.~~

~~CODE: A first floor retail wrap is required (floor area that is used for non parking purposes). The depth of the wrap is a minimum of 25 feet and a maximum of 35 feet; The wrap faces on all streets, except alleys, for the entire length of the building except for those places necessary to provide ingress and egress into the parking areas. And, the space is used for retail, restaurant and other pedestrian oriented uses otherwise permitted or approved in the zoning district.~~

~~CODE: A second floor wrap is required. The depth of the second floor wrap is a minimum of 15 feet and a maximum of 35 feet. The second floor wrap shall face on all streets, except alleys, for the entire length of the building. And, the space is for any use permitted or approved for the zoning district.~~

~~CODE: The maximum floor area ratio for non parking uses shall be 0.7:1. Uninhabitable space shall not be included in the floor area ratio calculation for non parking uses. The floor area ratios set forth in Sections 9 3.2 1, “Schedule of Bulk Requirements”, and 9 3.2 18, “Floor Area Ratios for RB 1E, RB 2E, RB 3E, RB 1X, RB 2X, and RB 3X Districts,” B.R.C. 1981, shall not be applied to a parking garage.~~

to:

~~Encourage design and sign placement that promotes downtown businesses while complementing downtown's character and scale.~~

~~Promote signs that are designed as an integral yet noticeable part of a building's overall design.~~

~~Promote the design of signs that are good neighbors within their block.~~

~~Create an overall image in which a building and its signs relate to each other in helping to draw customers.~~

NOTE: The following is meant as a supplement to the city's Sign Code. Sign permits, obtained through the Planning Department, are required. Signs that extend into the downtown Boulder mall public right of way, will require review by the Downtown Management Commission. For further information call the DMC (303) 441-4000 and the Planning Department (303) 441-3270.

Signs on historic buildings or in historic districts must also comply with "Historic Preservation" provisions, Chapter 10-13 of the Boulder Revised Code. Call the Planning Dept. (303) 441-3270.

5.1 — Signs Should be Designed as an Integral Part of The Overall Building Design  
In general, signs should not obscure important architectural details. They should align with others signs on the block to maintain the existing pattern of horizontal and vertical facade features. They should be positioned to emphasize special shapes or details of the facade, to draw attention to the shop entrance, or to emphasize a display window. When several businesses share a building, signs should be aligned or organized in a directory.

B. \_\_\_\_\_ Following are principle sign types that are applicable in the Downtown:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Wall Signs:

Wall signs are limited in size and defined as projecting less than 15 inches from the building. Wall signs should be positioned within architectural features such as the panels above storefronts, sign bands, on the transom windows, or flanking doorways. Wall mounted signs should align with others on a block to maintain established patterns.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Projecting Signs:

Projecting sign means a sign attached to a building and extending in whole or in part 15 inches or more horizontally beyond the surface of the building to which it is attached. Projecting signs should be positioned along the first floor level of the facade. Projecting signs may take on their own special shape, or create their own symbol within the overall facade design.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Awning Signs:

Awnings should be used to add visual interest to a building, provide shade, and add variety to the streetscape. They Awnings should be positioned to emphasize special shapes or details of the facade, to draw attention to the shop entrances or to emphasize a display window. Awning signs may be illustrated with letters or symbols.

**CODE:** The total area of all wall signs on a face of a building may not exceed fifteen percent of the area of that portion of the building face between ground level and the roof line or a line twenty five feet above grade level, whichever is less.

**CODE:** The total area of all wall signs on an architecturally distinct wall, where two or more such walls form a face of a building, shall not exceed twenty five percent of such wall. **CODE:** No part of a wall sign may be located more than twenty five feet above grade level.

**CODE:** No wall sign may be attached to or displayed against any parapet wall that does not extend around the entire perimeter of the roof enclosed by the parapet. No

**CODE:** Signs projecting over public property may not project more than thirty six inches from a wall of a building; the maximum permissible total area for such a sign is the lesser of:  
• 1 square foot of sign area for each linear foot of frontage of the building upon which such sign is displayed; or  
• 18 square feet per sign, with no face of the sign exceeding 9 square feet.

**CODE:** Projecting signs must have a minimum clearance above the sidewalk of eight feet and may not extend twelve feet or more above the sidewalk nor above the roof line.

**CODE:** No more than one projecting sign may be maintained per tenant space frontage at the ground level of a building. The minimum horizontal distance between projecting signs on a building shall be 25 feet.

In most cases, only one awning sign is allowed per building. Awning signs positioned along the first floor level of the facade shall be no less than 8 feet from the sidewalk to the sign. Awning signs in the downtown can be attached to flexible material awnings or fixed marquees or canopies that project from the building. Consult the city Sign Code.

#### 5.2 — Use Simple Signs to Clearly Convey a Message. Symbols Are Easily Read And Enhance Pedestrian Quality.

##### Sign Materials:

C. Signage should be designed as an integral part of the overall building design. In general, signs should not obscure important architectural details. When several businesses share a building, signs should be aligned or organized in a directory.

D. Use simple signs to clearly convey a message

1. Sign materials should be durable and easy to maintain. Appropriate sign materials include painted or carved wood; carved wooden letters; epoxy letters; galvanized sheet metal; slate, marble, stone, specialty or sandstone; gold leaf; gilt, painted, stained, or sandblasted decorative glass; clear and colored acrylic; or neon; or stained glass.

##### Illumination:

2. Lighting external to the sign surface with illumination directed toward the sign is preferred. External lighting may also highlight architectural features. Internally lit signs are generally discouraged because they can form masses of light which, when viewed in groups, can be unpleasant.

~~By coordinating the lighting intensity, color, sign placement and display window design, the entire storefront can become an effective sign.~~ The light level should not overpower the facade or other signs on the street. The light source should be shielded from pedestrian view. The lighting of symbol signs is encouraged. Internal lighting may be appropriate where only letters are illuminated or neon is used. Neon is acceptable, though restricted in size, if it does not obscure architectural detail or overly illuminate display windows.

##### Sign Shapes:

3. Signs should be designed in simple, straight-forward shapes that convey their message clearly. Symbols are easily read and enhance the pedestrian quality of the Downtown.

##### Graphics:

4. Lettering styles should be proportioned, simple, and easy to read. In most instances, a simple typeface is preferred over a faddish or overly ornate type style. The number of type styles should be limited to two per sign. As a general rule, the letter forms should occupy not more than 75% of the total sign panel.

##### Code:

Awnings, signage, patio extensions, and other associated structures or objects extending into the public right-of-way require a revocable right-of-way permit and/or lease agreement, see the B.R.C Section 8-6-6, "Requirements for Revocable Permits, Short-Term Leases and Long-Term" for more information.

##### Note:

The following is meant as a supplement to the city’s Sign Code. Sign permits, obtained through the Planning Department, are required. Signs that extend into the Downtown Boulder pedestrian mall will require review by the Downtown Management Commission. For further information call the DMC at (303) 413-7300 and the Planning at (303) 441-1880.

Code:

Signs on historic buildings or in historic districts must comply with the B.R.C. Chapter 9-11 “Historic and Section -9-21, provisions.

Section 6: Streetscape Improvements

~~The term “streetscape” refers to the entire system of streets, sidewalks, landscaping, and open spaces, by which people circulate through and experience the downtown. Our image of downtown Boulder, and the ease and safety with which we move through it, is determined by the quality of the streetscape.~~

The urban design objectives of the Streetscape Improvement Guideline are to:

~~Unify the visual image of downtown by creating a series of public sitting areas, completing the rhythm of street trees and street lighting, and providing landscaping with seasonal color or other qualities of visual interest.~~

~~Create a pedestrian-oriented environment that is safe, accessible, visually pleasing, and comfortable.~~

~~Strengthen downtown’s visual connections. Visually and functionally connect the downtown Boulder mall and Civic Park, or east and west Pearl Street to the mall.~~

~~Maintain the visual unity and historic character of the downtown Boulder mall through the use of traditional materials.~~

~~Encourage and accommodate the use of alternative modes of transportation to get to and from the downtown.~~

~~Maintain and preserve historic features of the streetscape such as flagstone and brick.~~

~~Respect and preserve adjacent residential neighborhoods through the use of sensitive streetscape design.~~

3.2 The Streetscape

6.1 Use

A. The existing street hierarchy as a basis for designing the streetscape. The concept of a street hierarchy is based on understanding how various Downtown streets function. For example, Canyon Boulevard and Broadway are major vehicular streets, thus street improvements should provide for large volumes of traffic while buffering pedestrians from traffic impacts. Four types of streets have been identified:

1. The Downtown Boulder pedestrian mall (a vehicle-free pedestrian street):

The Downtown Boulder mall, which encompasses Pearl Street from 11th to 15th Streets, is the most intensely used pedestrian zone in the Downtown. As a shopping, festival, and public gathering place it will remain a vehicle free area with a unified brick paving design. ~~throughout. Intense~~ Elaborate landscape treatments, including seasonally-varied plantings and coordinated street furniture, add to the pedestrian ambiance.

2. Canyon Boulevard and Broadway (major vehicular through streets):

Canyon Boulevard and Broadway accommodate large volumes of traffic moving through the Downtown.

Streetscape features should be designed to buffer pedestrians from traffic impacts, provide greater building setbacks and detached sidewalks with planting strips between the sidewalk and curb. The exception is the section of Broadway between Canyon Boulevard and Spruce Street in which attached sidewalks are needed to accommodate more intense pedestrian use. In areas with detached sidewalks, well designed landscaping and street trees ~~should~~shall be provided. On Canyon Boulevard, the use of landscaped median strips and pedestrian safe zones should be designed to minimize pedestrian/vehicular conflicts.

3. 9th, 10th, 11th, 13th, and 14th Streets (north/south pedestrian connectors):

These five north/south streets provide the main pedestrian connections between the Downtown Boulder pedestrian mall and the Civic Park. Where these streets cross Canyon Boulevard, which is very wide, crosswalk designs that visually link the north and south sides of the boulevard are important. The use of similar materials, intersection gateway features, landscaping, and street furniture will help to visually weave the areas together and promote pedestrian access between these two important Downtown public gathering places.

4. All other streets in the Downtown (general pedestrian oriented streets):

In order to create a unified Downtown image, all streets should share common features. At minimum, these should include similar sidewalk scoring patterns, similar paving materials, similar street trees and tree grates, coordinated street furniture, the inclusion of sidewalk neck downs and pedestrian safe zones, removal of pedestrian obstructions, and consolidation of streetscape elements such as newspaper vending boxes, similar other traffic and other directional signage, and pedestrian scale street lighting.

5. Alleyways (minor service oriented streets):

Alleys serve as secondary circulation and alternative routes for both pedestrians and vehicles to navigate Downtown. Downtown alleys can provide an alternate means of access to shops, restaurants and other commercial uses. Care must be taken in balancing the service function of the alley and making alley's safe and functional for pedestrians.

6. Paseos/Multiuse paths (vehicles free pathways):

Paseos provide mid-block pedestrian only access. Multiuse paths traverse the civic and park areas. Both should be encouraged in large projects to promote pedestrian circulation throughout the downtown area. Design such connections to be interesting places with thoughtful integration into the overall circulation. They should be handicap accessible, illuminated, appropriately landscaped, and paved in materials compatible with their locations and surrounding context.

6.2 Use a Basic Sidewalk Design to Unify The Visual Image of Downtown

B. Use materials that reinforce the continuity and integrity of the overall Downtown district. Any variations from the standard materials and patterns required by the Design and Construction Standards should be based on a streetscape plan that illustrates how the variation adds to the visual unity and improves the downtown streetscape, adjacent properties, and the overall image of the block. The design and materials should be durable, classic, and elegant including:

- Brick
- Sandstone
- Scored grey concrete
- Black enamel street furniture and utility elements, e.g. right-of-way lighting, benches, trash receptacles, bollards, etc.

- Outdoor seating

C. Use a basic sidewalk design to unify the visual image of Downtown. In most locations throughout the ~~downtown area~~, sidewalks average 15 feet wide from curb to property line. ~~At minimum, every street in the downtown~~ Streets should incorporate the following basic sidewalk elements:

1. Frontage zone

The frontage zone width may vary by street and allows for extensions into the right-of-way which create comfortable and attractive sitting areas. Included within this zone are projecting signs, awnings, cafe seating, and gated patio encroachments.

- Design public right-of-way extensions that are visually appropriate to the street character.
- Seating areas for dining are limited to the width of the building frontage. All tables and chairs are to be removable.
- Railing designs should reflect an open, transparent feeling.
- Visually closed-in railings that “box-in” the extension area are not appropriate.
- Consider building programs and spatial layouts which provide alternative solutions to the need for gated, exterior dining areas. There must be a minimum 7' clearance between the edge of the railing or seating area and any vertical obstruction.
- Create comfortable and attractive sitting areas, plazas, and small open spaces. Tables and chairs must be movable.
- Orient seating to take advantage of views, sunshine in the winter, and shade in the summer.

2. Pedestrian zone

The sidewalk pedestrian-through zone is the travel area designated for pedestrians and must be kept clear of all obstacles.

- Pedestrian zones walkway surfaces should be delineated from the curb zone or buffer areas.

3. Curb zone

The curb zone should consist of a 4-foot~~4~~' wide area measured perpendicular from the inside of the curb. ~~that may include the following:~~

- Street elements and landscaping should be organized to allow for pedestrian access to adjacent street parking.
- On residential transition streets in the Neighborhood Interface blocks use landscaping in the curb zone rather than hard surface concrete.

4. Corner Zone

At a minimum, the standard corner zone should include the following elements:

- A pedestrian area with only essential “regulatory” elements; such as, signal posts are allowed. All other amenities including benches, bike racks, newspaper racks, are prohibited.
- Corner “amenity areas” are located at either side of the pedestrian area. Elements such as benches and bike racks should be carefully arranged in an attractive and accessible fashion. Benches should be arranged to facilitate social interaction.

~~Brushed natural color gray concrete tooled in a 2' x 2' square pattern parallel to the street (not diagonal), possibly with brick accents~~

~~Street trees in appropriately sized tree grates (see Section 6.8)~~

~~Street elements which do not interfere with people accessing cars parked at the curb, mail boxes, trash receptacles, bus stops, bollards, and news racks.~~

~~Basic sidewalk design illustrating the curb zone, the pedestrian zone, and the corner zone. Note also the basic intersection design showing the crosswalks and the intersection paving squares~~

5. Intersections

Important streets may require additional material detailing to match adjacent streetscape design and overall block character.

- Materials include utilizing brick and scored concrete patterning, similar to adjacent pedestrian and curb zones, in the crosswalks and the intersection special paving within intersection squares. Important intersections are the areas between the Civic Park and Downtown Boulder.

#### Variations

##### Note:

In general, the predominate material in the ~~downtown~~ Downtown is brick. The use of brick to highlight and define the ~~curb zone~~ streetscape zones is especially appropriate in the blocks adjacent to the mall. Other appropriate materials ~~may be used to highlight the curb zone~~ include sandstone, or the use of art work which is stenciled or sandblasted into the concrete surface. ~~However, colored concrete scored to imitate brick is inappropriate.~~

##### Note:

Colored concrete scored or formed to imitate brick or stone is inappropriate.

##### Code:

See the Design and Construction Standards" Chapter 11 Technical Drawings" and the B.R.C. "Section 9-9-13, "Streetscape Design for additional requirements.

##### Note:

Permanent kitchen equipment, new basement level extensions, second floor extensions and greenhouses are generally not permitted within the right-of-way.

##### Note:

Light weight or movable handrails, chains, ropes and unsupported railings are inappropriate railing materials.

##### Note:

Improvements in the right-of-way shall match the existing materials. Any proposals to differentiate the materials may require approval. For more information visit the City of Boulder Planning or contact, (303) 441-1880.

##### Note:

For more information on patio extensions and cafe seating contact the DMC at (303) 413-7300

~~On the Neighborhood Interface blocks that create a transition between commercial and residential areas, use landscape materials in the curb zone rather than hard surface concrete. Materials such as flowers, grasses, or live ground cover will highlight the transition quality of the half block between the downtown and the interface areas. Rocks, gravel or other rocklike materials are not allowed in the curb zone.~~

~~Basic sidewalk design illustrating the curb zone, the pedestrian zone and the corner zone. Note also the basic intersection design showing the crosswalks and the intersection paving squares.~~

#### Pedestrian zone

The sidewalk pedestrian zone is the area that must be kept clear for pedestrian movement, and free of all obstacles. The pedestrian zone should comprise the following:

An unobstructed pedestrian area of no less than 7 feet is allowed between vertical elements such as trees or poles and buildings along streets located outside the downtown Boulder mall. An unobstructed pedestrian area of no less than 8 feet to 9 foot 6 inches is required on the downtown Boulder mall (See section 6.4).

Brushed natural color gray concrete tooled in a maximum 4'x 4' square pattern parallel to the street with brick accents. The location of tree grates or other elements may regulate the exact dimensions of the scoring pattern.

#### Variations

In certain cases, a different concrete scoring pattern or surface material such as brick may be used to run perpendicular to the sidewalk pedestrian zone or extend out vertically from the building or property line. Such variations would highlight the location of a special architectural feature such as an outdoor eating area, plaza, or recessed building entranceway.

Brick may also be used to highlight special use areas. Colored concrete scored to imitate brick is inappropriate. Brick paving used to highlight entrances.

#### Corner Zone

At minimum, the basic corner zone should include the following elements:

A pedestrian area or clear zone that is free of obstacles and lined up with the sidewalk pedestrian zone. This area should be made of brushed natural gray concrete scored in a 2'x 2' square pattern parallel to the street (not diagonal). The smaller scoring pattern is meant to distinguish the corner zone from the rest of the sidewalk. Only essential "regulatory" elements such as signal posts are allowed, all other elements such as benches, bike racks, newspaper racks, are prohibited.

Corner "amenity areas" are located at either side of the clear pedestrian. The amenity areas may incorporate benches, bike racks, news racks, and similar elements. Their shape and size may vary depending upon the use of a corner neck-down. Elements such as benches and bike racks should be carefully arranged in an attractive and accessible design. Benches should be arranged to facilitate social interaction. The amenity areas should be made of brushed natural gray concrete scored in a 4'x 4' square pattern parallel to the street (not diagonal), and may have brick detailing.

#### Variations

Shift the orientation of the concrete scoring pattern to a 45-degree angle to the street in a 2'x 2' pattern. Other variations may include edging the corner amenity and clear zones with brick paver bands using a dark, terra cotta red to compliment the color and quality of the mall brick. In certain areas, special materials such as brick or sandstone may be incorporated to clearly define an area. Depending on the location, amenity areas may also be used for public art features.

NOTE: Variations from the basic materials and patterns must be based on a streetscape plan that illustrates how the variation adds to the visual unity of the downtown streetscape, adjacent properties, and the overall image of the block.

6.3 — Use a Basic Intersection Design to Unify The Visual Image of Downtown  
Street intersections in the downtown should incorporate two basic elements:

#### Crosswalks

Pedestrian crosswalks should be a minimum of 10 feet wide, constructed of brushed natural gray

concrete scored in a 2 foot x 2 foot square pattern parallel to the street. 12 inch wide concrete strips occur at either side of the 10 foot wide walkway scored in a 12 inch square pattern. ADA ramps should connect the pedestrian crosswalk to the corner.

#### Intersection squares

In general, the center area of intersections should be made of the same material as the surrounding street surfaces.

#### Variations

Special paving may be used in intersection designs to highlight an important street or pedestrian connection. For example, crosswalks and intersection squares located between Civic Park and the downtown Boulder mall may incorporate special materials such as brick. Public art may be incorporated in the surface design. Special emphasis should be placed on the intersections along Canyon Boulevard from 9th to 14th Streets.

Other ideas that add to the visual interest include the following:

The use of brick or interlocking concrete pavers within the 10' wide crosswalk

A special border on either side of the 10' crosswalk consistent with adjacent sidewalk features.

A concrete center area scored in a square grid pattern.

A unique paving pattern or design within the center area to highlight an intersection.

#### 6.4 — Design Extensions Into The Public Right of Way That Are Visually And Functionally Appropriate to Their Street

Extensions into the public right-of-way, such as a sidewalk restaurant, public sitting area, or awnings over store windows, can add visual interest and encourage public activities that enhance the quality of life in downtown. They promote outdoor leisure use, provide opportunities for "people watching", and create a varied streetscape setting. Such are not substantially altered or obscured by the extension. Upper story extensions are generally not appropriate except when restoring a missing historic feature or when incorporating a traditional design element into a new building. The best extensions are characterized by design that is sensitive to the buildings, and that employ quality materials.

NOTE: When an extension onto a street, sidewalk, alley or other public property is desired, an application for a revocable permit should be made. A revocable permit is an agreement for the use of public land. Depending on the nature and permanency of the improvement, a lease and lease payment may be required. There are two general categories of right-of-way extensions: Extensions allowed on the downtown Boulder mall, and extensions allowed outside of the mall. For information call Public Works Department at (303) 441-3200.

Downtown Boulder mall right-of-way extensions only The boundaries of the downtown Boulder mall conform to the pedestrian area of Pearl Street which extends from 11th to 15th Streets. Permanent modifications such as building additions which include bay windows and similar enclosures that extend into the mall right-of-way are strongly discouraged.

The following criteria apply to extensions allowed on the mall:

Extensions allowed along the mall are limited on each block so that the expanse of buildings is not visually altered. No more than 125 feet per block face may be used for this purpose.

Maximum is a 10 foot extension, measured at ground level perpendicular to the building.

The most critical dimension in measuring the width of an extension is the area for pedestrians. A range-

of between 8 feet and 10 feet.

• A semi-permanent railing no less than 30 inches tall is required to define the edge of the extension. (See section 6.5)

The front and sides of extensions shall be permanently unenclosed.

No kitchen equipment shall be installed within the extension, although a service station may be, for example, joined to an outdoor restaurant.

All tables and chairs must be movable.

Second Floor Extensions into the mall are inappropriate, especially attached to historic or historically significant buildings except where historic evidence documents its accuracy.

New basement level extensions are not permitted.

Greenhouse enclosures are prohibited on the public right of way.

The eating area should be no more than the width of the cafe in front of which it is located.

Display windows that extend into the right of way are strongly discouraged.

Right-of-way extensions allowed along streets in areas outside of the downtown Boulder mall:

In general, extensions off the mall are more limited in area than those on the mall due to sidewalk width and the need for an unobstructed pedestrian area.

The following is a list of criteria for off-mall extensions:

Extensions into the public right of way can be up to 6 feet, measured perpendicular to the building or property line, as long as it is defined by a semi-permanent railing no less than 30" tall (See section 6.5).

The most critical dimension in measuring the width of an extension is the area for pedestrians. No less than 7 feet is allowed between the edge of the extension and any other vertical obstruction such as trees or poles. If necessary, the extension should be reduced to fit the 7-foot pedestrian requirement.

Greenhouse enclosures are prohibited on the public right of way.

The front and sides of extensions into the public right of way shall be permanently unenclosed.

No kitchen equipment shall be installed within the extension, although a service station may be, for example, joined to an outdoor restaurant.

All tables and chairs must be movable.

The eating area should be no more than the width of the cafe in front of which it is located.

Display windows that extend into the right of way are strongly discouraged.

Extensions into the public right of way related to historic buildings

When designing extensions for historically significant buildings, the extension should be distinguishable as new. It should not suggest that it is an original historic element. It should, however, be visually compatible with the original building and not damage the original structure. Accurate reconstruction of historic extensions into the right of way are appropriate options where documented.

#### 6.5 — Use Innovative Railing Designs to Define Outdoor Spaces, Such as Cafes, From Pedestrian Movement Areas

Railings define the boundary between public and private areas and create safety barriers for pedestrians.

Semi-permanent railings that can be fixed to the sidewalk are preferred. Site-specific designs are encouraged that reflect Boulder's history, the environment, or public art. No signage, advertising, goods or merchandise should be placed on the railing. ~~Railing designs should reflect an open,~~

~~transparent feeling.~~ Visually closed-in railings that "box in" the extension are not appropriate.

Materials such as metal rails and posts, stone or brick piers, and wood may be used when properly finished.

Decorative elements incorporated into the railing design are encouraged. In general, metal surfaces should have a black enamel finish although colors that are incorporated as part of a coordinated color plan for the building, or that are considered in the context of a work of public art, may be considered.

Light weight or movable handrails that may be hazardous during times of intense pedestrian crowding should be avoided. Chains, ropes and unsupported railings are unacceptable materials.

### 6.6 — Create Comfortable and Attractive Sitting Areas, Plazas, and Small Open Spaces

Seating areas, plazas, and small open spaces should be located throughout the downtown. They should be easily accessible and comfortable for as much of the year as possible. The use of ground level plant materials and trees to provide shade and pedestrian scale is strongly encouraged. All elements including walls, trees, paving, seating, pedestrian scale lighting, and water features should be designed as an integral part of the overall site design concept.

Orient seating to take advantage of views, sunshine in the winter, and shade in the summer.

Arrange benches and other street furniture in a coherent design that, in effect, creates small outdoor rooms. For example, at bus stops and sidewalk seating areas arrange benches, art work, landscaping, and other elements into pleasant and comfortable pedestrian environments.

Locate sitting areas, plazas, and small open spaces where they will get the most use.

Locate areas where downtown shoppers and workers congregate

— adjacent to a building lobby, heavily traveled sidewalks, or an outdoor restaurant. When located on private property, but serving as public amenities, plazas and courtyards should be directly connected to and accessible from the public sidewalk. If needed, security gates should be either an integral part of the design or completely hidden from view when not in use.

## 3.3 Landscaping

### Select street trees that are appropriate to their intended location and function.

#### 6.7 — Select Street Trees That Are Appropriate to Their Intended Location And Function

Approved tree list for commercial sites — For trees in grates and planting pits.

All of the trees in the following chart should do well in a downtown environment. Unless stated otherwise, they Plant trees that will tolerate full sun, drought, varying soil pH, and will have a relatively compact crown. Keep in mind that the conditions of various planting sites in the Downtown will vary and may need to meet should be evaluated for individual landscape objectives. The purpose of this list is to help in choosing a tree according to the size of the planting site. However, each site should be looked at individually by a professional.

Chart of approved tree list for commercial sites — For trees in grates and planting pits

Small Maturing Trees — Medium Maturing Trees — Large Maturing Trees  
(Under 25' Mature Height) — (30'–45' Mature Height) (Over 45' Mature Height)

Planting Pit Size Planting Pit Size Planting Pit Size

60 Cu. Ft. Minimum 3' — 96 Cu. Ft. Minimum 3' — 120 Cu. Ft. Minimum 3'

Minimum Depth — Minimum Depth — Minimum

(4x5x3) (4x8x3) Depth (4x10x3)

Tree Grate Area Tree Grate Area Tree Grate Area

20 Sq. Ft. Minimum 4' Minimum 32 Sq. Ft. Minimum 4' Minimum 40 Sq. Ft. Minimum 4' Minimum Width

— Width — Width

Spacing Between Trees — Spacing Between Trees — Spacing Between Trees 10' Minimum, 15' ——— 15' Minimum, 20' ——— 20' Minimum, 25' Recommended ——— Recommended Recommended  
 Caliper Size — Caliper Size — Caliper Size  
 1 1/2" measured 6" above grade 2" measured 6" above grade — 2" measured 6" above grade  
 Cherry, Flowering Prunus padus Hackberry\* Celtus occidentalis Ash, Green\* Fraxinus pennsylv-  
 ('Mayday') — ('Prairie Pride') ——— vanica ('Marshall's seedless,' 'Newport,' 'Patmore,')  
 Crabapple Malus spp. — Honeylocust\* Gleditsia triacanthoides Coffeetree, Kentucky\* (Fireblight resistant-  
 varieties and — thornless ('Skyline') Gymnocladus dioica upright forms, 'Spring Snow').  
 Goldenrain\* Koeleria paniculata — Hornbeam, European Pyramidal ——— Hackberry, Common\* Celtis  
 ulata — Carpinus betulus fastigiata ——— occidentalis  
 Hawthorn Crataegus spp. — Pear Pyrus calleryana spp. — Honeylocust\* Gleditsia triacanthoides  
 Crataegus inermis (thornless, — ('Chanticleer'), pyrus ussuriensis thornless ('Shademaster,' 'Ohio  
 Pioneer,' 'Cockspur') — sis, avoid 'Bradford' variety — ('Majestic')  
 Serviceberry Amelanchier spp. Linden, Littleleaf — Tilia cordata Linden, American Tilia ameri-  
 ('Greenspire,' 'Glenleen') ——— cana ('Redmond,' 'Legend')  
 Turkish Filbert Corylus colurna Maple, Red — Acer rubrum  
 ('Northwood')  
 Oak, Bur\*, English, Shumard, Red, Swamp White\* — Quercus: macrocarpa, robur, shumardii, rubra,  
 bicolor

\* Indicates drought tolerant species.

The tree list is designed for commercial sites where trees are to be placed in paved areas using tree grates and planting pits. Due to hardscape limitations (i.e. parking meters), spacing design may be modified based upon review by the appropriate design review board.

NOTE: In general, these guidelines adhere to the city's Design Construction Standards, but wherever a discrepancy may arise, the higher standard shall be used.

#### Descriptions of Approved Trees for Commercial Sites

##### Small trees (Under 25' Mature height)

Cherry, Flowering — example, 'Mayday' Tree; 20' - 25' height, 20' - 30' spread; moderately pyramidal shape; full sun or partial shade; adaptable water requirements.

Crabapple — example, 'Spring snow'; 20' - 25' height, 20' spread; minimally fruiting; moderately Oval shape; tolerates drought; full sun; adapts to growing conditions.

Goldenrain\* — 20' - 25' height, 15' - 20' spread; broadly globe shape; grows well in a wide range of soil types; tolerates drought; adaptable to alkaline soil and salt conditions; full sun or partial shade.

Hawthorn — example, 'Ohio Pioneer', Thornless 'Cockspur'; 15' - 25' height, 15' - 20' spread; broadly globe shape; tolerates drought; tolerates high pH and salt; does best in full sun

Serviceberry — 25' height, 10' - 20' spread; moderately ovate shape; tolerates drought; tolerates pH up to 7.0; sun or shade

##### Medium trees (30' - 45' Mature Height)

Hackberry\*—example, 'Prairie Pride'; 45' height, 30'–40' spread; moderately pyramidal shape; tolerates wide range of soil conditions; tolerates drought.

Honeylocust\*—example, 'Skyline'; 45' height, 30'–35' spread; moderately globe shape; tolerates wide range of soil types; tolerates high pH and salt; transplants easily.

Hornbeam, European Pyramidal—example, 'European Pyramidal'; 30'–45' height, 10'–15' spread; narrowly pyramidal; tolerates drought once established; grows in clay soils; sensitive to salt; adaptable to wide soil pH

Pear—example, 'Chanticleer'; 30'–40' height, 25'–35' spread; moderately columnar shape; tolerates drought and salt; adaptable to wide soil pH; hardiest of all the pears.

Linden, Littleleaf—example, 'Greenspire', 'Glenleven'; 45' height, 25'–35' spread; broadly to moderately pyramidal shape; has poor salt tolerance; adaptable to wide soil pH; withstands compaction.

Turkish Filbert; 45' height, 25'–30' spread; moderately pyramidal shape; drought tolerant; adaptable to varying soil pH; full sun.

#### Large trees (Over 45' Mature Height)

Ash, Green\*—example, 'Marshall seedless', 'Newport', 'Patmore'; 50'–60' height, 35'–45' spread; Moderately to broadly ovate shape; highly adaptable to urban conditions; tolerant of salt and high pH; tolerates drought; full sun.

Coffeetree, Kentucky\*—70' height, 40'–50' spread; moderately globe shape; tolerates alkaline soil; tolerates drought; pest-free; full sun.

Hackberry, Common—50'–60' height, 40'–50' spread; moderately globe shape; useful in difficult planting sites; prefers full sun; drought tolerant; adapted to alkaline soil; salt sensitive.

Honeylocust\*—example, 'Shademaster', 'Majestic'; 50'–60' height, 30'–40' spread; moderately globe shape; adaptable watering requirements once established; prefers full sun; tolerates alkaline soils; tolerates drought.

Linden, American—example, 'Redmond', 'Legend'; 50'–60' height, 30'–40' spread; moderately pyramidal shape; adaptable watering requirements once established; full sun or partial shade.

Maple, Red—example, 'Northwood'; 45'–55' height, 25'–35' spread; moderately globe shape; salt sensitive; adaptable water requirements once established; can become chlorotic in alkaline soils, prefers full sun.

Oak, Bur\*, English, Shumard, Red, Swamp White\*—50'–80' height, 50'–80' spread; broadly ovate to broadly globe shape; adaptable watering requirements once established; prefers full sun; adaptable to soil conditions, however some species can become chlorotic in alkaline soils; tolerates drought.

#### Unsuitable Street Trees:

Tree species that are not to be placed in public rights-of-way include: Box Elder, Cottonwood, Chinese

~~and Siberian Elm, Poplar, Russian Olive, Silver Maple, Tree of Heaven, Willow, evergreens that create sight obstructions, and clump forms or multi-stem trees.~~

#### Appropriate tree locations and Tree Grates

~~Tree species should be selected for their~~ and suitability to the specific street where on which they are to be planted. The following guidelines should be followed:

1. Large trees should be located along Canyon Boulevard, wide right-of-way streets, and principal access streets such as Pearl and Walnut Streets. Large trees should also be used to highlight corners, to provide cover for large plazas, or as accents against the skyline.

2. Large maturing ~~Medium or large scale~~ trees may be located on all ~~other~~ downtown streets. ~~Medium trees, with narrow spread canopies, should be located in narrow streets, to fill in mid block areas, provide visual relief and scale definition to large walls, provide shade and canopies for sidewalks and plaza areas, and establish large areas of color above eye level.~~

3. Small trees should be used to provide seasonal color and a visual focal point for special locations such as a building entrance, corner area, sitting area, bus stop, or other significant area or view corridor. ~~Trees in rights-of-way should be maintained with a minimum head height of 8' over sidewalks and 14' over the vehicular streets.~~

~~Low maintenance trees are desirable which have low water requirements and can adapt to the downtown environment.~~

4. Install street trees in tree grates at areas of adjacent parking and high pedestrian traffic, except at locations where they occur in special raised planters in the curb zone, in large planted areas that are integrated with a sidewalk area, and in locations where existing trees located in the curb zones have a root system that has pushed up above grade where the use of a grate will injure the tree.

5. Maintain at least a 10 foot distance between tree trunk and building line. This refers to the distance between a tree and building, not the distance necessary to maintain an unobstructed pedestrian area between a tree, as a vertical element, and a railing that encloses a sidewalk restaurant

6. Where tree grates are used they should be aligned with paving pattern score lines and be placed with careful consideration of sidewalk use, such as a sidewalk cafe or curb cuts.

7. Consider alternative methods to increase tree soil volume, e.g. Modular, pre-engineered suspended pavement and structural cell systems.

~~Do not locate trees that will obstruct building entrances, corner visibility, or within any sidewalk-pedestrian zones that must remain unobstructed.~~

#### B. Select Ground Level Plants That Suit Their Location and Function

1. Use landscaping, shrubs and ground cover to accent areas.

2. Limit the use of annuals and high maintenance plants to the planting beds in the pedestrian mall. Use drought tolerant, climate appropriate landscaping, including shrubs, flowering perennials, ground cover, and ornamental grasses in planter beds.

3. Do not use gravel or rough stone in place of ground cover in the curb zone.

4. Whenever feasible, flowers and ornamental grasses should be used in combination to accent gateway locations and special sites.

5. Plantings are preferred in natural, at-grade planting beds rather than planter pots or other containers.

6. Consider maintenance requirements in the placement and design of these features.

#### C. Maintain the character of Canyon Boulevard

1. Continue the large tree rows on either side of the street and center landscape median.

2. In general, trees and other plant material should be arranged in an urban linear pattern that

parallels the street rather than a less formal random arrangement.

3. The primary trees along Canyon do not need to be planted with tree grates.
4. The median should be planted to enhance the “boulevard” quality of the corridor.
5. Incorporate grasses, paved areas or ground covers within the overall design of tree rows.

NOTE: Tree clustering for well-designed planting

In general, trees on a particular street should be of the same species to create as much visual continuity as possible while, at the same time, providing different trees on other streets to avoid a monoculture within the downtown. However, specific locations, such as plaza fronts and significant building entrance ways may use a different species to distinguish them from the standard street tree located in the curb zone.

Code:

For more information on landscaping requirements see the City of Boulder "Design and Construction Standards" and the B.R.C. Section 9-9-12, "Landscaping and Screening Standards".

Note:

Unsuitable streets trees not to be placed in the public right-of-way include Cottonwood, Chinese and Siberian Elm, Poplar, Russian Olive, Silver Maple, Tree of Heaven, Willow, evergreens that create sight obstructions, and clump forms or multi-stem trees.

Note:

Tree and landscape maintenance ~~For~~ or commercially zoned properties, the maintenance of trees, tree grates, and surrounding hard and soft landscaping located in the public right-of-way ~~should be~~ is the responsibility of the private property owner. This includes all maintenance and repair of landscaping ~~and~~ trees including watering, irrigation, spraying, fertilizing, and replacing plant materials/ and tree grates.

Note:

The city provides ~~the following maintenance services: Pruning and~~ pruning, removal of street trees in the public right-of-way, ~~and~~ safety inspections, and consultation on street trees that may ~~impose~~ pose a health or safety concern.

Note:

Contact the Downtown Management Commission for additional information regarding street furniture, trash receptacles, bicycle stands, and bollard variations for the Pedestrian Mall.

NOTE: Authorization by the city Forester is needed before planting, pruning, spraying or removing any trees in the public right-of-way. This process enables the Forestry Division to keep an up-to-date tree inventory, and ensures proper tree selection, placement, and care of new and existing trees. Reference “Protection of Trees and Plants”, Chapter 6-6, B.R.C. 1981.

### 6.8 — Select Ground Level Plants That Suit Their Location And Function

Use landscaping, shrubs and ground cover to accent areas. Below eye-level plant materials add seasonal color to the downtown. They can block views to unsightly areas and fill empty areas with visual interest. However, do not use such plant material in corner locations and other areas that block the visibility.

**NOTE:** Planters located in the public right of way must receive a revocable permit. A maintenance clause may be included to ensure maintenance responsibility.

or block access to storefront windows or streetscape elements such as newspaper stands, parking meters, or mail boxes. Do not use gravel or rough stone in the curb zone in place of ground cover. The following are plant materials and details:

#### Flowers and natural grasses

~~Whenever feasible, flowers and ornamental grasses should be used in combination to accent gateway locations and special sites.~~ Maintenance must be considered in the placement and design of these features. Plantings are preferred in natural at-grade planting beds rather than planter pots or other containers.

#### Plant containers and potted plants

Although plant containers and potted plants can add color and plant variety to the streetscape, consider their use judiciously since they are fragile, difficult to maintain, and appear temporary. Planters may be located preferably adjacent to building entrances or as part of patio extensions. Typical planter materials are finished wood, precast concrete, and terra cotta. A maintenance-free finish is preferred as are stability, sturdiness, and sufficient weight to avoid tipping over. Planters must be temporary and moveable, not attached to the sidewalk.

### 6.9 — Maintain The ‘Boulevard’ Character of Canyon

~~— a Single Row of Street Trees on Either Side of The Street, The Building Set-back Line, And The Center Planting Strip.~~

Canyon Boulevard is one of the city’s most prominent avenues with its center planting strip and deep building setbacks. It is one of the downtown’s major access routes as well as a link between the Civic Park area and the downtown Boulder mall. The tree rows and center planting strip emphasize the park-like character of a “boulevard” and create a unique sense of entry to the downtown. Consider the following plant materials, details:

#### Tree Rows

Trees along Canyon do not need to be planted with tree grates, although areas that accent building entrance ways or other features such as pedestrian sitting areas may incorporate tree grates in the overall design. ~~In general, trees and other plant material should be arranged in an urban linear pattern that parallels the street rather than a less formal random arrangement.~~ To create visual interest, incorporate grass areas, paved areas or ground covers within the overall design of tree rows.

**CODE:** Canyon Boulevard, through the downtown, is a “major arterial street of 4 lanes” which requires that buildings be set back 78 feet from the centerline of the highway or 25 feet from the lot line adjoining the right of way, whichever is greater.

#### Ground cover

Use annual and perennial flower arrangements, or arrangements mixed with natural grasses, especially at street corners, for visual accent and color. Maintain view requirements to avoid blocking sight lines.

The Canyon median should be planted to enhance the “boulevard” quality of the corridor. Shrubs should not exceed 24” in height to avoid creating barriers to site lines especially at intersections.

### 6.10 — Create Gateway Elements at Important Downtown Entrance Ways

Gateway elements can create the appearance of symbolic entrance ways. Gateway treatments are of particular importance at key intersections such as the 9th, 10th, and 11th Street, Broadway, and the 13th, and 14th Street intersections along Canyon. They may also provide entrance ways to the downtown located along east and west Pearl Street, and at either end of the downtown section of

Broadway. Such gateways may be created by a change in the scale of nearby buildings; a sense of enclosure due to building setbacks, street trees and landscaping; a monument, streetlight, or the acknowledgment of a special vista or topographic feature.

In general, gateways should be visually creative and include an element of sufficient height and mass so as to be visible by motorists, lighted so as to be visible at night, and constructed of high quality materials such as brick, marble, granite, terrazzo, concrete, stainless or painted steel, copper, brass or glass.

Gateways associated with a particular sub-area of Boulder should be of consistent design. For example, gateways to downtown may be unique to that area while gateways at Crossroads should reflect features of that mall.

#### 6.11 — Establish Pedestrian Scale Street Lights Along Street Frontages When Feasible

Pedestrian street lighting should illuminate the sidewalk at a level that is consistent with pedestrian activities rather than vehicular activity. Spacing should be standard but may vary to accommodate existing vehicular street lights or street trees.

For pedestrian scale lighting located in the curb zone, fixtures should be the same 12' high as those used in other areas of the downtown. When arranged in a linear pattern they should be spaced approximately 50 to 75 foot apart. On major streets such as Broadway and Canyon, larger 15 foot high fixtures may be used. A custom streetlight fixture that combines both pedestrian and vehicular lighting could be considered on such major streets.

Pedestrian scale lighting may also be accomplished with fixtures that are mounted on buildings or located to accent architectural or landscape features. Such fixtures should be designed to enhance the overall architecture of the building, provide lighting for pedestrians and not damage historic materials.

NOTE: Light poles are provided by Public Services Company and maintained by the city of Boulder. Coordination with Public Service is an absolute requirement.

#### 6.12 — Handicapped Access Should Be Appropriately Designed, Clearly Visible From The Main Entranceway And, In General, Use The Same Access Routes As Those Used by Non Handicapped Users Where Possible

A goal of the city is to make the downtown as accessible as possible. All sidewalks, public use buildings, and public open spaces should be in compliance with American Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. All accessible design elements must conform to all applicable Federal, State and Local laws and codes.

Ramps and related elements should be modest in their design and be visually integrated with the overall building design and site plan. They should not appear as an unintegrated add-on to a building facade.

In most cases the principal public entrance to a building should also be the principal entrance for handicapped accessibility. In existing buildings, where only one route is determined to be accessible, other than the principal public entrance, a rear or side service entrance route may be considered.

#### 6.13 — Street Furnishings Create a Unified Visual Appearance in Downtown

A unified streetscape image adds to the overall visual quality of the downtown. Traditionally, black metal and wood have been the materials used for street furnishing in the downtown mall. In general, install standard benches, trash receptacles, and bike stands will unify the visual quality of the downtown through the use of a common colors, materials, and patterns. However on occasion, based upon a

design review by the appropriate group, street furniture might be designed to create a unique street feature, a visual statement, or even a public work of art. The following standard street elements should be considered for the downtown:

#### Benches

The standard downtown bench is made of black metal with woven horizontal and vertical strapping. Variations may include benches with or without backs and with single or multiple seats. Contact the Downtown Management Commission at (303) 441-4000. Varnished wood benches are characteristic mall features as well.

#### Trash receptacles

Three standard trash receptacles are available for use in the downtown: a large capacity black metal slat design, a small slat design that are attached to a utility pole, and a free standing ashtray and disposal can. All receptacles are made of black finished metal.

Locate receptacles at street corners in high pedestrian activity areas. One trash receptacle should be provided for each 1,000 square feet of sidewalk space with a minimum capacity of one cubic foot. High use areas such as eating spots should double the capacity. The use of a multiple receptacle system promotes recycling of glass, paper, or metal products.

#### Bicycle stand

The city of Boulder standard bike rack for low volume areas is a black metal pipe, inverted "U" design. For high volume areas the Cora, or coat hanger design in black metal, is preferred.

Bike racks should be grouped together and arranged in a regular pattern, rather than be dispersed randomly. Locate bike parking in high demand locations especially inside the mall Loop, at bus stops, or along bike lanes. Use the 1995 Downtown Bike Plan as a guide for locating likely parking areas. The Downtown Management Commission's travel demand management program provides for bicycle parking in the public right of way and uses the Downtown Bike Parking Plan as the guide for placement. To contact the DMC, call (303) 413-7300.

#### Bollards

Simple black metal, sandstone and concrete bollards have been the standard which may be used in a variety of ways. They can separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic, define property lines, protect a work of public art, or identify different use areas.

In pedestrian areas bollards should be 24-30 inches high, in vehicular areas 36 to 42 inches high. Bollards should be between 8 and 16 inches wide. When feasible, lighting can be incorporated in the bollard to highlight special features or for pedestrian safety.

#### Newspaper boxes

As a general guideline, encourage the use of newspaper boxes that are metal black enamel finish with white graphics. Boxes should be grouped together in a pedestal design, stacked a maximum of two high with a maximum length of 8 feet.

Locate boxes at nodes of pedestrian activity such as bus stops and street corners. Boxes should not reduce pedestrian or automobile sight lines. In general, provide 5 foot clearance to gain access to the boxes, and no less than 2 feet between the boxes and the curb.

#### Banners and flags

Banners and flags should be located in a manner that enhances the visual quality of downtown streets.

While dimensions may vary, they can be attached to existing streetscape elements such as utility poles. Pedestrian and vehicular clearance issues must be taken into consideration. Sign code issues may need to be addressed. Before constructing any banner or flag contact the Planning Dept. for sign code issues at 303-441-1880 and the DMC, at 303-413-7300, for banner and flag approval.

#### Kiosks, Information Directors, and “Way Finding” Signs.

The users of public places such as downtown Boulder need appropriate, correct and timely information to help them find their way and direct them to their destinations. Locate information elements at key intersections to convey public information; it may display a variety of different types of information such as leaflets, posters, and brochures. In general, they should be designed as an integrated part of the overall streetscape but should not interfere with pedestrian traffic flow. They should be permanently fixed in place and made of sturdy materials that are resistant to vandalism and wear and tear.

NOTE: A revocable right-of-way permit is required to any permanent installation in the public right-of-way from the Public Works Department, contact (303) 441-3200.

#### 6.14 — Create Attractive, Safe And Comfortable Bus Stops

Street side bus stops should be designed as mini-centers that include all of the necessary furniture, amenities, and shelter to make bus use pleasant. Bus shelters may incorporate transit maps, benches, news racks, bike storage, surface paving, trees, landscaping, and other amenities. Bus shelter design should be consistent throughout the downtown to create a transit identity and visual unity. Bus shelters should be visible to pedestrians, incorporate clear signage, and be well lighted. They should be made of finished, durable materials with unbreakable transparent side walls.

NOTE: The Boulder Transportation Division, Transportation Planning should be contacted regarding the design and location of bus stops.

#### 6.15 — When Feasible, Create Through-Block Pedestrian Corridors Between Buildings, Especially in a North-South Direction

Through-block connections, such as the Portal Building and Daily Camera walkway should be encouraged in large projects to promote pedestrian circulation throughout the downtown. Design such connections to be interesting places, not merely hallways to parking lots or alley service loading areas. They should be handicap accessible, well lighted, appropriately landscaped, and paved in materials compatible with their locations and surrounding context. Opportunities for artwork or other visual innovations are encouraged.

### 3.4 Street Furnishings

- A. Use street furnishings to create a unified visual appearance in Downtown.
- B. In general, install standard benches, trash receptacles, appropriately sized bollards, pedestrian-scale street lighting, and bike stands in durable black metal to unify the visual quality of the Downtown.
- C. Strategically locate newspaper stands, kiosks and other furniture adjacent high-traffic areas, e.g. bus stops, intersections, etc.
- D. Create attractive, safe and comfortable bus stops crafted in durable and elegant materials.

### 3.5 Historic Features

#### 6.16 —

- A. Preserve historic features of the streetscape. Whenever possible, preserve, restore, and reuse historic fixtures of the streetscape, such as a flagstone sidewalks, globe light fixtures, or any other

existing historic features located in the public right-of-way. Such elements offer a sense of historic continuity with Boulder's past. Repairs to these historic streetscape elements should ensure that construction materials and details are consistent with their historic character.

**B. Historic signs, such as those painted on side walls, should be preserved.**

**C. Extensions into the right-of-way involving historic resources should be compatible and not substantially alter the property.**

6.17 — Upgrade Downtown Alleys as Pedestrian Access Routes And Efficient Commercial Service Access  
Downtown alleys can create secondary pedestrian systems to navigate the downtown and may also provide an alternate means of access to shops, restaurants and other commercial uses. Care must be given to not impede the alley's primary service function. Further, any improvement using lighting should be designed to not cast glare onto adjacent residential properties, especially in the Interface Area.

In order to make alleys visually interesting, safe, and accessible to pedestrians:

Use decorative paving to identify alleyway building entrances by creating a 1 foot wide brick edging as a decorative element to define the width of alleys and the importance of certain alley pedestrian routes, and connect alleys to sidewalks.

Incorporate pedestrian scale street lighting and accent lighting to highlight building and alleyway entrances.

Use covered entrance ways and decorative signs to define alley entrances.

Incorporate bollards, planters, or similar elements to identify pedestrian areas from service or vehicle areas; consolidate service areas to hide unsightly trash and recycling bins in attractive containment designs.

Place utilities underground.

6.18 — Enrich The Downtown With

### **3.6 Public Art**

Public art can enrich the downtown experience, enhance its public image, and add beauty. But, while public art can beautify, it can also inspire intense public interest.

Public art may be representational or abstract. It may be unior multi-dimensional, humorous or sad, understandable or pose questions. It may be actively engaging or a passive backdrop to public events. Choosing, purchasing, installing, maintaining, and removing public art when necessary, requires careful deliberation and planning. Streetscape design incorporates public art to create visually interesting and informative environments. As long as the artistic intention is understood, public art may be many things.

**A. Enrich the downtown with public art and carefully site art within appropriate areas of the public realm. Consider the context, materials, purpose of the artwork at the proposed site.**

**B. Freestanding artwork should not obscure building elements. Thoughtfully integrated artwork may be incorporated into the surface or facade design.**

**C. Artwork may be utilized as gateway features within discrete areas of Downtown.**

**D. Public art should be complementary and subordinate to associated historic properties and complement the period of significance of the building or district.**

**Note:**

The Arts Commission, the Downtown Management Commission, the DAB, and the LPAB are among the groups involved in making public art decisions in the Downtown.

Decisions may address the following, among others:

The relationship of public art to its proposed site and its visual impact.  
The ability of public art to enhance the downtown experience such as bringing people together, inviting public interaction, creating moments of visual or intellectual interest, and enhancing the area's beauty.  
The durability of materials, maintenance and upkeep in public settings.

The placement of public art to terminate a vista or serve as the focal point.  
The human or monumental scale of artwork located along public streets.  
The context and character of the area surrounding the art site  
The artwork's symbolic and aesthetic qualities.  
Criteria for deaccessioning or removing artwork.

Review of artwork in the Downtown Historic District, with regard to the LPAB would consider the following criteria:

When related to a specific landmark building, the artwork should be subordinate to the overall building. The artwork should not obscure building elements or details. For example, a mural should not cover windows.

The artwork should not physically damage the building or site, such as paint on unpainted masonry. The artwork should be relevant to the location and not confuse the public with artwork that represents a false sense of history that can overshadow or detract from the period of significance of the building or district. For example, a mural of a New Orleans Street scene on a Victorian building.  
Historic signs, such as those painted on side walls, should be preserved, not eliminated.

#### Appendix A: Zoning District Definitions

Zoning districts are classified according to the pre-dominant character of development and current or intended use in the area. Zones designated with an (X), such as RB-1X, mean a redeveloping area where there are buildings and uses likely to be rehabilitated, restored, or replaced. Zones designated with an (E), such as RB-1E, mean an established area where development is stable and few changes are anticipated or encouraged. Following are the ten zoning districts located within the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines Boundary:

RB-1X: The regional business redeveloping area within the downtown core that is in the process of changing to a higher intensity use where a wide range of office, retail and public uses are permitted. This area has the greatest potential for new development and redevelopment within the downtown core.

RB-2X: Business areas providing a mid-level transition area between the higher intensity downtown commercial area and surrounding neighborhood commercial streets and lower intensity residential areas. Retail uses are typically found on the ground floor level with residential or office uses located above the ground floor level.

RB-3X: Business areas providing a transition area between a higher intensity regional business area and a lower intensity residential area. Retail uses are typically found on the ground floor level with residential or office uses located above the ground floor.

RB-1E: The regional business area of the Boulder Valley known as the Central Business District, when a

wide range of retail, office, residential, and public uses are permitted and in which many structures may be renovated or rehabilitated. A balance of new development with the maintenance and renovation of existing buildings is anticipated, and where development and redevelopment consistent with the established historic and urban design character is encouraged.

RB-2E: A higher-intensity transition area between the downtown and the surrounding residential areas where a wide range of retail, office, residential, and public uses are permitted. A balance of new development with the maintenance and renovation of existing buildings is anticipated, and where development and redevelopment consistent with the established historic and urban design character is encouraged.

RB-3E: A lower-intensity transition area between the downtown and the surrounding residential areas where a wide range of retail, office, residential, and public uses are permitted. A balance of new development with the maintenance and renovation of existing buildings is anticipated, and where development and redevelopment consistent with the established historic and urban design character is encouraged.

BMS-X: Business areas generally anchored around a main street that are intended to serve the surrounding residential neighborhoods. It is anticipated that development will occur in a pedestrian-oriented pattern, with buildings built up to the street; retail uses on the first floor; residential and office uses above the first floor; and where complementary uses may be allowed.

HR-X: High-density residential redeveloping areas in the process of changing from a historically predominantly single-family character and redeveloping to a primary use of attached apartment-type development and where complementary uses may be allowed.

MXR-E: Mixed density residential areas with a variety of single-family, detached, duplexes and multi-family units that will be maintained; existing structures may be renovated or rehabilitated.

TB-E: Transitional Business areas primarily used for commercial and complementary residential uses, including, without limitation, temporary lodging and office uses.

#### Appendix B: Design Review Check List

##### Section 1: The Downtown Historic District

##### Section 1.1 Guidelines For The Preservation And Renovation of Local Landmarks, Individually Significant, Contributing, And Contributing Restorable Buildings

###### 1.1.1. —preserve original facades

preserve facade materials

align architectural features and establish patterns with neighboring buildings

maintain the original historic line of the building setback

maintain the original size, shape and proportion of storefront facades and openings to retain the historic scale and character

maintain traditional recessed entries where they exist

maintain the kick plate below display windows

preserve the transom and clerestory if it exists

preserve the shape, materials and spacing of upper story windows

awnings may be used to provide visual depth to the facade and shade

distinguish additions to historic buildings  
select building colors appropriate to the historic character of the building and area  
1.1.13. Minimize the visibility of HVAC units and other mechanical, structural, or electrical appurtenances

#### Section 1.2 Guidelines For New Construction And Remodeling Non-contributing Buildings in The Local Downtown Historic District

incorporate traditional design elements in new designs  
align architectural features and established with the patterns of neighboring buildings  
maintain the line of storefronts at the sidewalk edge and orient main entrances to open toward the street  
do not construct half level or split level first floors that extend both above and below grade  
consider the height, mass, and scale of buildings  
maintain a human building scale rather than a monolithic or monumental scale  
maintain the proportions of storefront windows, doors and the established pattern of upper story windows.  
maintain the rhythm established by the repetition of the traditional 25-foot facade widths.  
use building materials that have a texture, pattern and scale similar to those in the district  
improve rear or side alley elevations to enhance public access from parking lots and alleys

#### Section 2: The Non Historic Area

consider incorporating traditional facade elements in new designs  
consider the alignment of architectural features and established patterns with neighboring buildings  
maintain the line of building facades and storefronts at the sidewalk edge  
consider the height, mass and scale of buildings  
maintain a human building scale, rather than a monolithic or monumental scale  
create pedestrian interest at the street level  
avoid half level, or partial level basements that extend more than 2 feet above grade  
shade storefront glass by appropriate means  
maintain the rhythm established by the repetition of the traditional 25-foot facade widths.  
consider the quality of open space incorporated in new and renovated buildings  
consider the special character of the area south of canyon boulevard

#### Section 3: The Interface Area

maintain the diverse residential architectural character of the interface area  
create attractive rear alley facades on buildings facing toward residential areas  
design alleys to serve as attractive routes for pedestrians, as well as efficient service access for vehicles  
where the zoning line runs along a street or along a lot line, commercial development should respect the existing building scale and character of the adjacent residential area.  
design streets in the neighborhood interface area to reflect adjacent residential land uses.

#### Section 4: Parking Facilities

locate surface parking on appropriate sites  
reduce the visual impact of surface parking lots  
reduce the visual impact of structured parking facilities  
security and pedestrian circulation should be priorities

## Section 5: Commercial Signs

signs should be designed as an integral part of the overall building design  
use simple signs to clearly convey a message. Symbols as signs are easily read and enhance pedestrian quality

## Section 6: Streetscape Improvements

use the existing street hierarchy as a basis for designing the streetscape  
use a basic sidewalk design to unify the visual image of downtown  
use a basic intersection design to unify the visual image of downtown design extensions into the public right-of-way that are visually and functionally appropriate to their street  
use innovative railing designs to define outdoor spaces, such as cafes, from pedestrian movement areas  
create comfortable and attractive sitting areas, plazas and small open spaces with a focus on views and sunshine  
select street trees that are appropriate to their location and function  
select ground level plants that suit their location and function  
maintain the “boulevard” character of Canyon Boulevard — a single row of street trees on either side of the street, the building set back line, and the center planting strip which defines the boulevard character  
create gateway elements at important downtown entrance ways  
establish pedestrian scale street lights along street frontages when feasible  
handicapped access should be appropriately designed, visible from the main entranceway, and in general, use the same access routes as those used by non-handicapped users where possible  
install street furnishings that create a unified visual appearance in downtown  
create attractive, safe and comfortable bus stops  
when feasible, create through-block pedestrian corridors between buildings, especially in a north-south direction  
preserve historic features of the streetscape  
upgrade downtown alleys as pedestrian access routes and efficient commercial service access  
enrich the downtown with public art

## List of Illustrations and Photographs

### Introduction

Map of the Downtown Historic District, the Non-historic Area, and the Neighborhood Interface  
Photo of historic buildings  
Map of downtown land use, zoning Map of CAGID and BID boundary  
Photos of views and settings in downtown  
Map of Downtown Historic District with five building designations identified

### Section 1: The Downtown Historic District

1.1 — illustration of typical historic facade with elements highlighted such as kick plate, etc...  
1.1.1 photo of historic storefront facade with original size, shape, proportions highlighted  
photo of the context of a historic block  
illustrations or of historic buildings on the sidewalk and set back from the sidewalk  
photos of recessed entries in mid-block and at a corner  
photos of historic kick-plates, transoms and clerestories

1.1.9 photos of traditional upper story windows and awnings  
1.1.11 photos of additions to side of a historic building, and to the roof  
illustration of typical historic facade elements highlighted  
photo of the context of a block, alignment of architectural features  
illustration of how to maintain the storefront line with the use of columns, etc.  
illustration of not building first floor more than 2 feet above grade  
photos of setbacks on upper floors to reduce perceived height, mass, and scale  
photos of buildings that demonstrate human scale with important elements highlighted  
illustration of buildings that are monolithic looking with elements highlighted  
photo: maintain proportions of upper and lower story windows with important elements  
illustration of 25 foot wide pattern of downtown facades

## Section 2: The Non-Historic Area

Map of the Downtown Historic District, the Non-historic Area, and the Interface Area  
illustration of typical facade elements highlighted, for new construction  
illustration showing alignment of features within the context of a block  
illustration of how to maintain storefronts at sidewalk edge  
photo of contemporary buildings in Non-historic Area demonstrating perceived height, mass, scale, via setback of upper floor  
photo of maintaining a standard floor to floor height in a new bldg.  
photos of buildings that demonstrate human scaled elements  
photo of visual interest features on a building at the street level  
illustration of the differences between lower and upper floor windows, features  
illustration of a people plaza  
photos of the character areas below and around Canyon Blvd.

## Section 3: The Interface Area

Map of the Downtown Historic District, the Non-historic Area, and the Neighborhood Interface  
photos of historic residential buildings next to commercial buildings in the Neighborhood Interface  
photo of alley with an attractive garbage storage near a neighborhood  
3.4 photo of curb zone grass in the half block adjacent to the Neighborhood Interface

## Section 4: Parking Facilities

photo of typical surface parking lot landscape elements  
photo of retail wrap on public parking facility

## Section 5: Commercial Signs

5.1 photos of typical wall sign and typical projecting sign  
photos of typical awning sign; typical sign materials, illumination, shapes, graphics  
photos of mall and surroundings

## Section 6: Streetscape

6.2 illustration of basic sidewalk elements including curb zone, pedestrian zone, corner zone, and of a basic intersection design  
6.2 photo of a Neighborhood Interface block showing landscape material in the curb zone  
photos of innovative, attractive railing design  
photo of plaza and seating area in the downtown

table of appropriate trees

photos of approved tree grates and of how tree clusters may highlight an entranceway

photos of appropriate ground covers in downtown

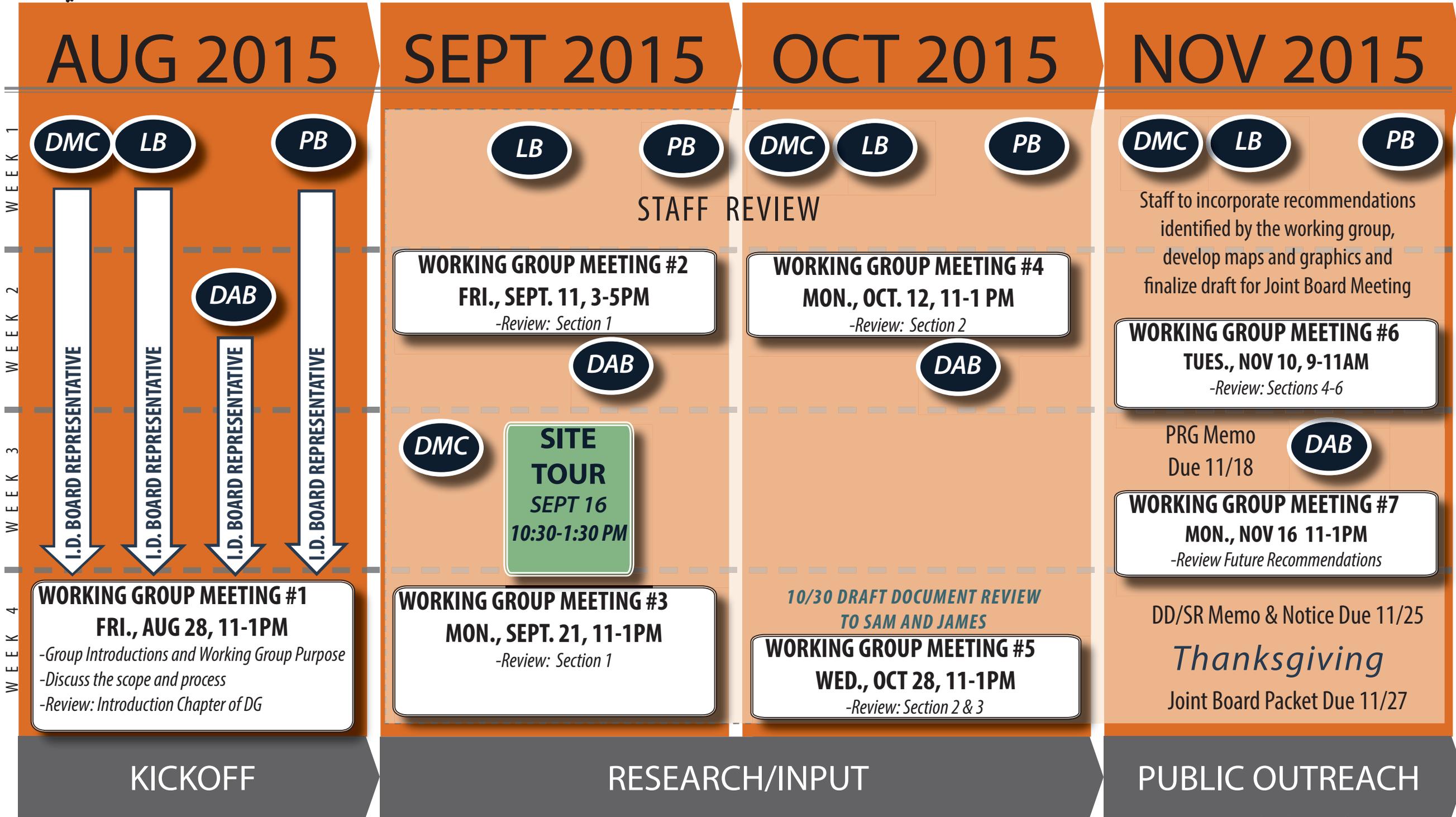
photos of typical Canyon Boulevard images

6.13 photos of standard benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks, bollards, newspaper boxes, banners and lights in the downtown

6.15 photo of through-block connector and a typical sidewalk

photo of improved alleyway

photos of public art in the downtown



KICKOFF

RESEARCH/INPUT

PUBLIC OUTREACH



# DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES UPDATE SCHEDULE

## DEC 2015

## JAN 2016

## FEB 2016

## MAR 2016

WEEK 1

**DMC** **LB** **PB**

**DMC** **LB** **PB**

**DMC**  
MON., FEB 1  
-REVIEW &  
RECOMMEND

**LB**  
WED., FEB 3  
-ADOPT SECTION  
1

**PB**  
THURS., FEB 4  
-ADOPT SECTIONS  
2-3

**CC**  
TUES., MAR 1  
2<sup>ND</sup> READING

STAFF REVIEW - INTERDEPARTMENTAL  
FRI., JAN 8

1st Reading Prelim Memo Due 2/5

WEEK 2

**OPEN HOUSE**  
DEC 8, 5-7 PM

**DAB**

**JOINT BOARD MEETING**  
PB, LB, BDAB, DMC  
DEC 10, 5-8PM

PRG Memo Due 1/13  
DAB Packet Due 1/15

1st Reading Final Memo Due 2/9

WEEK 3

Staff to finalize the  
Downtown Urban Design  
Guidelines Update for  
Adoption

DD/SR Memo & Notice Due 1/20  
PB & LB Packet Due 1/22

**CC**  
TUES., FEB 16  
1<sup>ST</sup> READING

2nd Reading Prelim Memo Due 2/16

WEEK 4

*Holiday Season*  
STAFF INPUT DUE WED., DEC 30

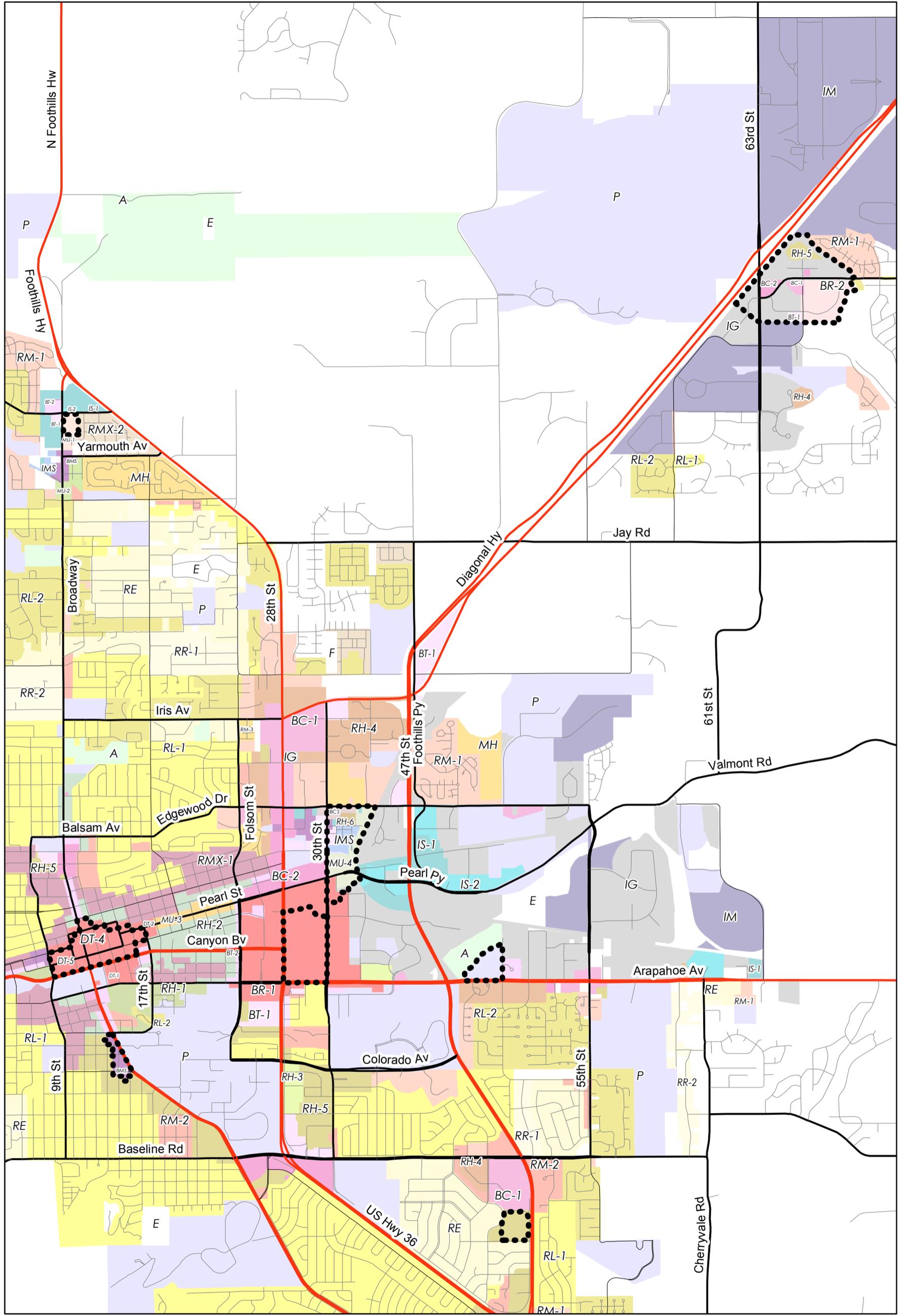
**DAB**  
WED., JAN 27  
-REVIEW &  
RECOMMEND

2nd Reading Prelim Memo Due 2/23

FINAL DOCUMENT

ADOPTION/IMPLEMENTATION

# Appendix J to Title 9 – Areas Where Height Modifications May be Considered



 Areas Where Height Modifications May be Considered



From: [Deborah Yin](#)  
 To: [Pahoa, Kalani](#)  
 Subject: Downtown Design Guidelines revision comments DY  
 Date: Friday, December 11, 2015 11:32:48 AM

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Hi Kalani.

You & Sam have done a great job with the guidelines & with the working group. Thanks for your patience & hard work.

I'd like to reiterate what I said at the meeting, that we may have pulled too much out from the perspective of the board reviewer, many of whom have no tools or skills to judge good design, on the other side of the table many design professionals & developers aren't well equipped either as we can see. So I agree with Liz's comments about looking again at the original verbiage describing architectural components.

Also from the perspective of the reviewer but a slightly different angle, if the guidelines sound too optional then it becomes difficult to tell an applicant, yes you do have to do these things, as the historic preservation program has the ability to do.

Appropriate lists of materials, can we add "durable" or "long lived" in the narrative part?

1.3.1 Second paragraph, last sentence: is it necessary to include "mechanized awnings", isn't it enough to just say "awnings"?

Figure 12 – I don't think this project is the best example of what we want to see more of.

2.1 It appears transparency @ ground floor has been removed. While not a guarantee of a good design it is a characteristic that is generally desirable. (This should be repeated in historic section additions & new buildings in districts section. Maybe there should be a reference to repeating existing patterns of transparency in the district.)

2.1.3.C.

- C. What does it mean to maintain established breaks such as alleyways? Isn't building across an alley already not permitted?
- Add back in 25' wide façade modules in all sectors of downtown not just historic district. This sort of patterning is one part of making a street that is inviting.
- I disagree that ground floors should not be encouraged to be taller than upper floors. It's worked very well in historic buildings & gives a building a feeling of generosity (not exactly the right word) along the street. Consider the new building at the NE corner of Pearl & 9<sup>th</sup>. Its ground floor is low & it conveys oppressiveness. The low ground floor contributes to that projects appearance of being a fortress rather than what we would want to see along Pearl especially, open & inviting.
- E. Add "urban" in front of "residential". Boulder is particularly prolific at producing suburban looking multifamily buildings, it appears many of our developers/designers have a difficult time making the leap from suburban to urban, it's important to differentiate.

Reminder, commercial buildings should have ground floors at grade.

3.1.3.D Why limit how much area letters can occupy on a sign panel? Seems

unnecessarily limiting? Some graphics that bleed to the edge of a page or panel work very well & are more interesting because they're less common.

3.2.2. Last sentence, can we use "timeless" instead of "classic"? i.e., not too trendy & not a trend that is no longer in favor.

3.2.2.A. Can we restore the statements about brick being the predominant paving material downtown. This is beneficial for the reviewer in addition to the applicant.

The Landmarks Board just recently dealt with an issue of sidewalk repairs made in a historic district where the concrete has a curing compound that made the concrete even more starkly bright. Strangely, the City's own public works department was doing the work & they were unaware that they needed to have the material/color approved by LB. So there should be a paragraph added about paving in the historic district. New brick to match existing brick, concrete to be treated in a way so as not to look brand new & sharply contrasting with existing old concrete. Flagstone must match existing flagstone in color, size including thickness.

3.3.1 Tree species should be selected for longevity. Many landscaping trees are selected for fast growth which often correlates to short lives & weakness.

Figure 25 & 26 Can the letter keys match the letter/number system in the text preceding?

For the For the Future List

The City should seriously think about the down sides of creating below grade plazas. I have not seen one that works, they are usually not used except by indigents. See this article about one in San Francisco.

<http://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/place/article/Sunken-Hallidie-Plaza-was-a-deeply-wrong-design-6626025.php>

3.3.3 (& generally)The City should dictate what types of trees are appropriate along Canyon & any other street where there is a particular effect or is a major cross town route such as Broadway, Arapahoe,... so that there is uniformity or a pattern other than each building having its own type of tree in front.

3.4 Doesn't the City & RTD control locations of bus stops? And have standard designs?

3.6 The city should have a program where building owners who want to incorporate public art can receive matching funds from the city or something so that the city has a say in what is installed & where.

The City should have separate streetscape (public realm standards) for its own public works within historic districts. These areas should not receive the same treatment as non historic areas.

Better stop now or else you won't read all my comments. We used to embed deep into a project specification that if a contractor read this far he was eligible to collect \$20. Not too many claimed the bonus.

Deborah

**From:** [Michelle Lee](#)  
**To:** [Pahoa, Kalani](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Downtown Urban Design Guidelines Joint Board Meeting Comments - Email 1 of 2  
**Date:** Thursday, December 17, 2015 5:01:43 PM

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Kalani, I wasn't sure what format you wanted comments. just a few below..

- section 1.4.4 A and section 2.1.3 A "**For new structures that are significantly taller than adjacent buildings, upper floors should be set-back a minimum of 15' from the front facade to reduce the perceived height**".
  - this is one of the few places in our guidelines that gives a specific dimension (15') and I'm not sure why. It's a blanket prescription that doesn't make sense. Every building's height, mass, scale and setbacks should be considered individually in their specific context. I highly recommend removing the 15' callout.
- the word "handicapped" should be replaced with "accessible" or "universal design" throughout
- the map on page 26 at the front of Section 2 should highlight the non-historic and interface area rather than the downtown. It's hard to tell a difference from this map and the map at the front of Section 1.
- on page 31, the right image is hard to see - too dark. Is there a better image that could illustrate the point more clearly?
- on page 39, it might be helpful to show section cut through the 3 major streets (A, B, C) it illustrate the buffering, scale, and volume. this is a quick easy tool to cut section: <http://streetmix.net/>

**Michelle W. Lee**

Architecture & Environmental Design  
phone 303-523-2202 | [ultraliteliving.com](http://ultraliteliving.com)

On Thu, Dec 17, 2015 at 4:19 PM, Pahoa, Kalani <[PahoaK@bouldercolorado.gov](mailto:PahoaK@bouldercolorado.gov)> wrote:

Hello Everyone,

This is a friendly reminder that the comments for the draft are due tomorrow (Friday, December 18). If you would like to comment please send your responses in by 5 p.m. As always, please forward your comments directly to me and not cc the rest of the Boards.

Regards,

Kalani

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**From:** Pahoia, Kalani  
**Sent:** Friday, December 11, 2015 2:25 PM  
**To:** BDAB; DMC; landmarksboard; boulderplanningboard  
**Cc:** Assefa, Samuel; Hewat, James; Cameron, Marcy  
**Subject:** Downtown Urban Design Guidelines Joint Board Meeting Comments - Email 1 of 2

Dear Board Members,

Thank you for coming to the joint board meeting last night and providing your feedback on the draft document. To recap the meeting, the joint board reviewed the Introduction and Section 1: The Historic District of the draft and provided feedback. The joint board comments are recorded in red on the attached pdf.

As mentioned during the meeting, staff will be collecting the remaining comments and input for the following questions:

1. Does the joint board have any feedback on the draft update to the DUDG (Attachment A), including the changes and restructuring of the document as recommended by the DUDG Working Group?
2. Is there anything that appears to be missing, or should be modified, to improve the clarity and usability of the guidelines?

Considering the extensive amount of discussion and review during the working group sessions, staff is not anticipating any significant changes to the draft. Please have your input to us by Friday, December 18, 2015. We look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Kalani

Kalani Pahoia

Urban Designer

Department of Community Planning and Sustainability

1739 Broadway, 3rd Floor

Boulder, CO 80306-0791

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Downtown design guidelines comments:

What is the point of this exercise? What is currently being allowed that will be prevented by the revised guidelines, and what is currently prevented that will be allowed by the revised guidelines?

There are occasional instances of "should" and one or two "must"s but overall, there are way too many instances of "generally," as in "x is generally inappropriate," and "consider" as in "consider the height and mass." Suggest doing a search on each of those and evaluate removing "generally" and firming up "consider" to something more regulatory sounding.

Somewhere, need to restore the basic urban design considerations from the original document:

**Views:** Downtown Boulder is blessed with exceptional mountain views and projects should be designed to take advantage of this extraordinary asset. The south and west edges of downtown offer the most spectacular views.

**Sun and Shade:** In Boulder's climate, sun and shade are important factors. Concern for providing natural light in buildings, sunny sidewalks in the winter, and shady areas in the summer is an important consideration in project design

p. 6, insert "individually" in front of landmarked properties"

History section, p. 8, needs to refer to the liveries and their evolution into automobiles. Also, reword the last sentences of the Introduction to:

By 1977, Boulder had begun a period of infill, restoration, and demolition which continues to the present. Loss of significant historic buildings provoked a movement to establish the city's Historic Preservation ordinance in xxx. The Pearl Street Mall was created in xxx and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

Not a fan of concrete lintels. Get rid of "generally" and just say "inappropriate" p.14-15 or maybe have a section of inappropriate in all cases

Don't understand why specifics from 1.1.5 to 1.1.9 are gone.

*Valde is in the specificity*

1.3.2d Setback of new upper floors on historic buildings. Is this redundant with 1.4.4?

1.4.4 "Consider"? the height and mass of buildings? See p. 22, in which the other headings under that item are all direct imperative action verbs.

***Address corner building height and mass separately from interior block buildings.***

***Needs some text about the relationship between height and footprint. For example, the so-called Sentinel buildings are tall but very narrow and therefore have a completely different impact than the bulkier new buildings downtown. Similarly, the Boulderado is tall but occupies a small footprint.***

p.27 non historic. Design elements text is really awkward, lists don't agree grammatically

Urban design objectives are meaningless

***Suggest more emphasis on block level context. New construction should enhance rather than interrupt neighborhood cohesion. New construction should, through its design, support neighborhood identity, wayfinding and rational edges. ('Wayfinding' is in reference to the phenomenon that a large new building can confuse people about where they are, whether they're still in the same neighborhood, what might be found beyond the new building, etc.)***

What does this mean: 2.2 A. Maintain the diverse architectural character of the residential buildings in the interface area?

2.6: include windows on alleys to increase safety and therefore activity

BDAB comments on p. 115-6 of packet were useful and wonder whether they will be incorporated or not.

Public realm discussion of Canyon should include reference to traffic calming measures

Public realm should include features that offer opportunities to lean, not just sit.

## ***Introduction***

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The vision statement could do better at capturing our (Boulder) setting

This feels generic – any downtown anywhere

- Views

- Mountains

- Creeks

- Civic Area

- “Historic core”

Look at it like an executive summary

Tailored to Boulder – What is special about Boulder?

Photograph from downtown to foothills

- \*maybe use photo from PowerPoint

- Important to have a creative/excellent photo for the front page

- Inspiring & exciting

- Collage with thumbnails

- Imagery that captures the vision

Concern that there is no reference to the civic area plan

- Maybe label on map

The bike/ped paths are lost on the map

- Pg 38. Layer in bike paths off street

Make the main map more experiential?

- Guide people to the section they need to look at

- Legend on page 5 – points to sections of the document

- That map – open w/ table of contents

- Key the colors to the sections

- Section header up to the top of the pages – and/or tabs

- Graphic components are busy – too many sizes and typefaces

- “Continue to think less”

Flowchart – doesn’t capture the circular process – see the applicant several times

- Set expectations

- Draw an arrow vertically as well

- Lead the applicant to the section they need

- Color code to match the sections

- Perhaps planning board section removed – where does site review fit?

- Rename the chart – the review process

History section –

Livery to auto dealerships

Change the sentence about why the landmarks program got started – this feels sanitized

History past the 1970s

Describe the character in historic terms – rich texture and patterns

Critical spines point toward the Canyon

## **Section 1**

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Add section numbers that correspond with the building types

Zoom into historic map -maybe another graphic is needed

\*\*\*north side of the Library on historic map

The word “generally” leaves too much wiggle room

Really need to look at material guidelines

Carpentry – specifically wood

Inappropriate – composite wood

Façade diagram

Missing bullet – keep the original size, shape, and form of original storefront

May have lost too much detail by simplifying to a bulleted list

Missing the appropriate vs. inappropriate imagery (i.e. pg 37 of original doc)

Do this/don't do this goes a long way

Go through paragraphs of building elements and make sure the details are still captured

Most of the time this doc is viewed online - make it a paired image

1.2.4 Now only talks residential – say 1<sup>st</sup> floor flush at grade with commercial

Primary entrance needs to be at grade

“Subtly distinguishable” vs. Sec of the Interior guidelines

Visual examples – appropriate vs. inappropriate

1.2.3D – look at the scale & roof patterning of the block as it relates to additions to historic

Add an E?

Clarity on D about vertical additions vs. lateral additions

Page 20 needs to say refer to list on page...

Instead of “consider” use a term like “integrate” or “incorporate”

What are the qualities that we want?

Richness or complexity

Maybe add a photograph

When a building has an alley corner – wrap the building (25'?)

Add note to all alley references

Pg 22 – “consider” and “in general”

Height and mass of buildings

Future recommendation – corner buildings separate from the rest of the block guidelines

– Future urban design plan

Relationship between height and footprint

Figure 9 may not be a good photo – it's not in the historic district

Pg 25 – subheading without context – maybe add images

Handicap section – are we above and beyond ADA

When added to a historic building – shouldn't detract

Don't use the word "sensitive" – say what we actually mean – provide actual guidance

## ***Section 2***

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Need a little more information

"New construction ....." example of text from Liz