

**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

[303.441.4248](tel:303.441.4248) - Direct

[pahoak@bouldercolorado.gov](mailto:pahoak@bouldercolorado.gov)

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