





## Purpose

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City Council Consideration of a motion to adopt the 2016 Update to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines (*acceptance of the guidelines will result in inclusion of the DT-4 and DT-5 downtown zone districts in the identified areas where height modifications may be considered through the city's Site Review process, per the height modifications ordinance approved by Council on March 31, 2015*)



## Background

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**Jan 1984:** CC appoints Task Force to draft Downtown Urban Design Plan & Design Guidelines

**Jan 1987:** CC adopts Downtown Urban Design Plan & Design Guidelines

**Sep 1997:** Downtown Alliance calls for update to the Guidelines

**2002:** CC adopts updated Guidelines

**2010-2015:** DAB calls for update to the 2002



## Background

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**Sep 2014 - Aug 2015:** DAB works on strikeouts of existing document with recommended revisions

**Fall 2014:** Boulder Design Excellence Initiative Project

**Jan 2015:** Victor Dover makes recommendations to CC

**March 2015:** CC adopts height ordinance

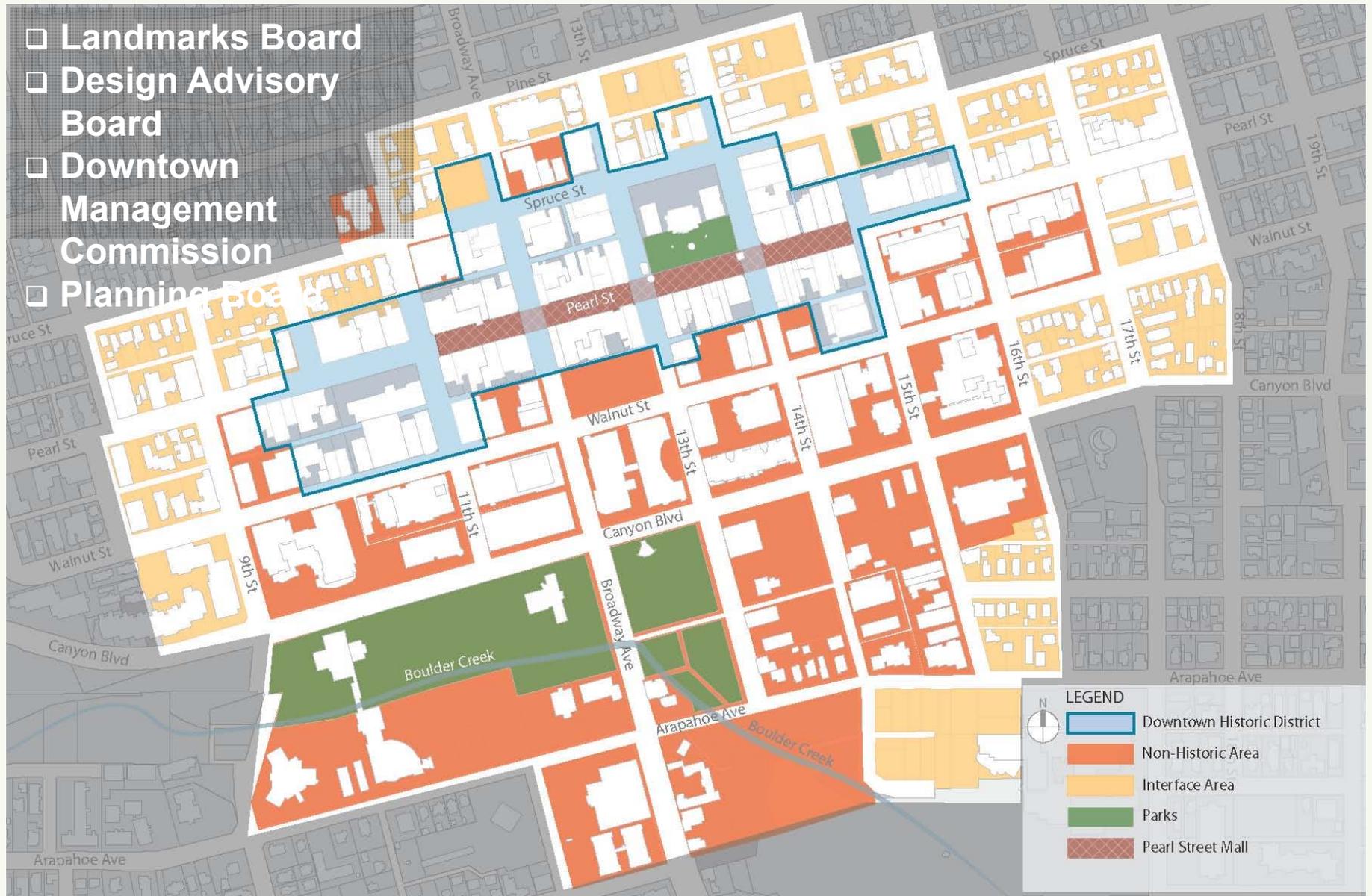
**Aug 2015:** Guidelines update initiated with a joint board working group

**Jan 2016:** Staff & working group complete a draft of



# Administration

- Landmarks Board
- Design Advisory Board
- Downtown Management Commission
- Planning Board





2016 Update to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines

# Update Process

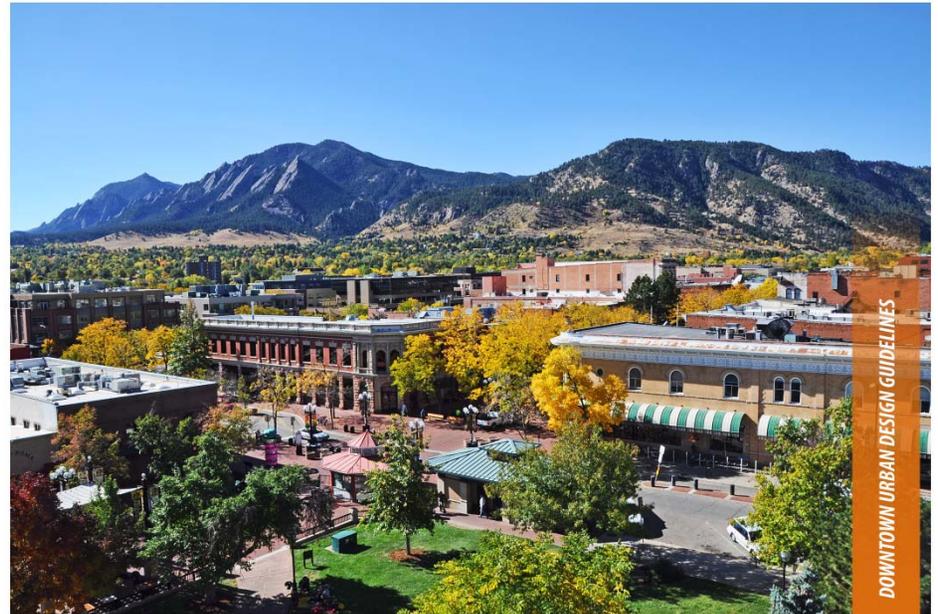
## Downtown Urban Design Guidelines



City of Boulder, Colorado



2002



DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

CITY OF BOULDER  
BOULDER, COLORADO  
FEBRUARY 2016





# The Working Group Process

DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES



## SECTION 1: THE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

add the period of significance for the district ✓

**BDAB Summary Comments:**  
The guidelines are very elaborate and difficult to apply. There are inconsistencies that need to be addressed.

**General Staff Comments:**  
Though the section is divided between historic and non-historic buildings the design requirements are very similar. There are instances where individual design requirements contradict or are redundant. Staff recommends clarifying the section to provide concise instructions that capture the design guidelines for the historic properties accurately.

Can we remove this bullet as it doesn't apply to the design specifics, but will be noted in the vision statement priority?

✓ Yes  
No  
Discuss

The boundaries of the Downtown Historic District, designated in 1999, 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 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 city's historic preservation program 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 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.

All buildings in the district have been evaluated for historic significance and are subject to Landmarks Board review when exterior work is involved.

### **Working Group Comments:**

Add a blurb that these guidelines apply to individually landmarked historic properties within the interface and non-historic areas of downtown.



## □ Downtown Urban Design Guidelines structure

- *Introduction*
- *Section 1: The Downtown Historic District*
- *Section 2: The Non-Historic Area*
- *Section 3: The Interface Areas*
- *Section 4: Parking Facilities*
- *Section 5: Commercial Signs*
- *Section 6: Streetscape Improvements*
- *Appendix A: Zoning District Definitions*
- *Appendix B: Design Review Check List*



# Usability

Condensed the Introduction, including the Design Review Process, Downtown Strategies, Application Submission Requirements, Land Use Regulations, and Basic Urban Design Considerations.

Application Submission Requirements

Other Boards, Commissions, and City Departments

The Downtown Design Advisory Board (DDAB) Process

The Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB) Process

- **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 (BVRCC), 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 the Guidelines are Organized**

The guidelines are organized into six sections. The first three sections address specific geographic areas of the downtown: The Downtown Historic District, the Non-historic Area, and the Neighborhood Interface Area. The last three sections address specific design topics: Parking Facilities, Downtown Signs, and The Streetscape.

Most sections are organized around several principle 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.

**The Design Review Process**

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

Specifically, LPAB reviews all projects located in the Downtown Historic District and landmarked structures located outside the District; DDAB reviews all projects with a construction value over \$10,000 in the Non-historic Area. In addition, DMC reviews projects located on the Downtown Boulder mall.

**Scheduling a Design Review Early Is Important:** 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* formal application is made to the city for a building permit or development review. 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.

10  Downtown Urban Design Guidelines



## Application Submission Requirements

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tion and new construction buildings in the Non-his-

ite Review, or other develop- through the Planning Review Committee reviews commendation to the porated in a Planning staff, blowing approval by the Landmark Alteration the issuance of a building

he Landmarks Design es forward for review by ic hearing unless the appli g or withdraw it for later s appeal any decision of the ee to the full LPAD for

construction applications a public hearing. The to call up by city Council. sday of every month after The Board consists of five sign professionals, who are

or the Design Review e Downtown Design advisory capacity when deling of non-contributing District. In such cases o/folico members.

ts, several of whom have professional experience in unity development. DDAB is responsible for of \$10,000 or more in the Non-historic Area and the ance with design recommendations that result from

ic or interface areas is for structures that are "locally if landmarked buildings". These buildings are reviewed AB. In addition, the LPAB may act in an advisory o DDAB on issues related to projects that are of his- finance but are not officially landmarked.

pletion of a DDAB review, staff notifies the Building it that the applicant has fulfilled the mandatory ew. In the case of projects requiring a site review DDAB submits recommendations to the Planning t that are incorporated in a staff memorandum for fur- on and approval or denial by the Planning staff, board, or city Council depending upon the nature of sion.

## PROCESS

if-way on the downtown Boulder mall such as out-

information on the downtown Boulder mall call the (303) 413-7300.

and city departments may need to be

erms if a "reversible right-of-way per- the Public Works Department. For info-

### Suburban and Building Appeals (SBA)

sets for zoning variances and adjustments.

ic details for street tree planting, plus sance can be obtained from the city

ation Division: Transportation Planning related issues such transit rider activity should be directed to the Transportation at 441-3266.

fund for specific alley improvements. re such as sharing trash storage or utility private property owner, the funds can perty improvements. For information on city of Boulder Transportation.

pany: Vehicular Street Lighting ed by the Public Service Company and of Boulder. Contact the city's in for further assistance with the selection lighting.

consists of five members appointed by five-year terms. The Commission pro- grams in the performing, visual and nation call (303) 441-4113.

city and scale of the project to be reviewed, and the per- should provide the appropriate architectural drawings. Show the reviewing body to fully understand the nature and

All relevant floor plans, building sections, and exterior eleva- tions should be illustrated at a scale sufficient to fully under- stand the proposed design.

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

Additional information that may be required for DDAB: Following additional information may be required if the pro- ject is of significant complexity that the two dimensional plans described above do not fully illustrate the design:

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

not perspective sketches illustrating the proposed project in its surroundings, from street level, to present the project in the pedestrian's viewpoint.

analysis of the shadow impact of the proposed project is required, especially for projects on the south side of down- town streets.

### Submission Requirements

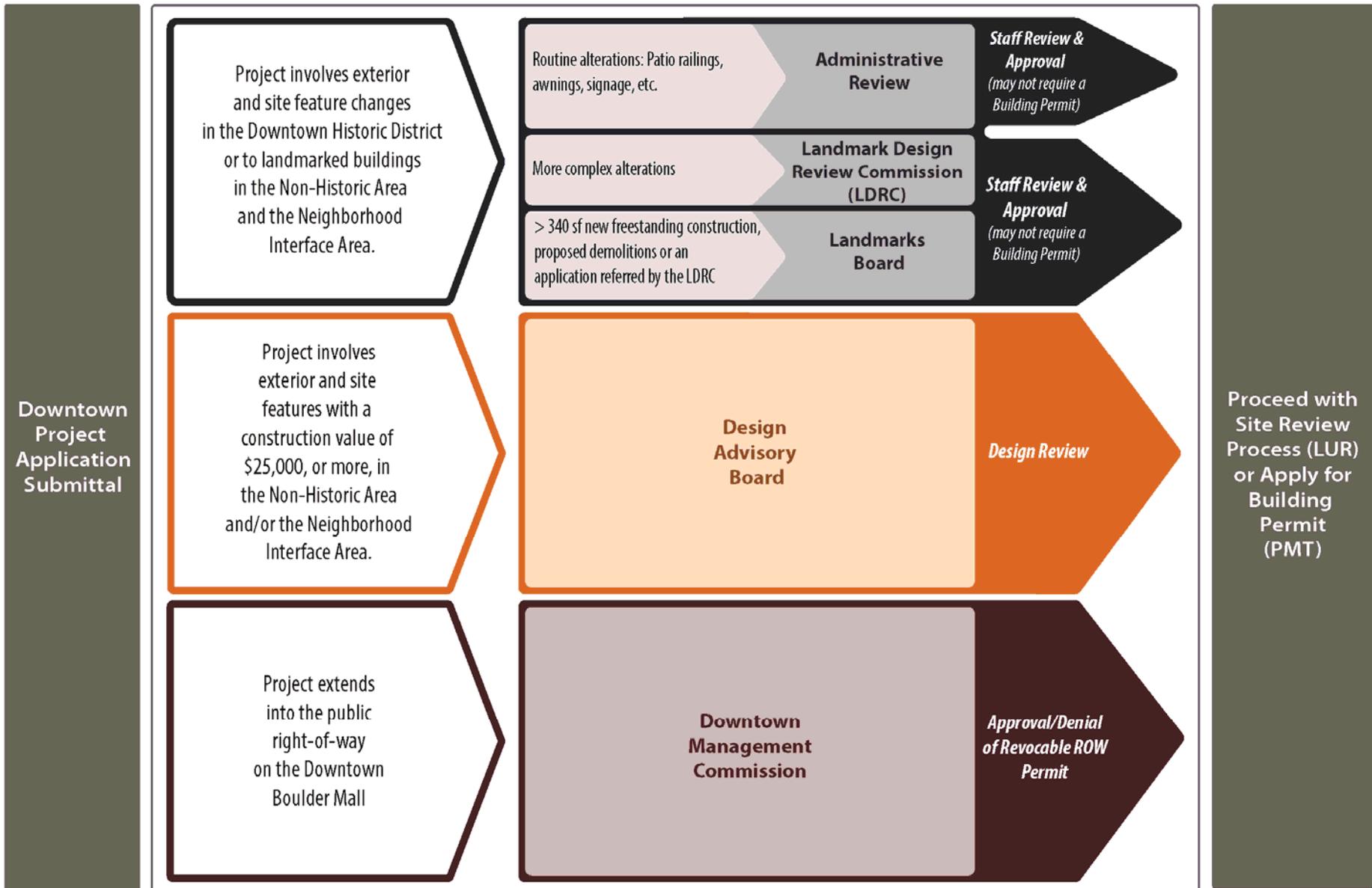
to DMC, seven (7) copies of the following items are re- quired for review:

scale elevation drawings illustrating the proposed de- signment with exact dimensions along with existing signs, trees, windows, doors, stairs, patios, and awnings on the site and adjacent buildings.

scale drawings of the proposed enhancement which includes specific design elements such as colors, materials, lettering.



# Usability





**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 [Zoning Map](#).

## ***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 individually 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.



## 2016 Update to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines

# Usability

### INTRODUCTION

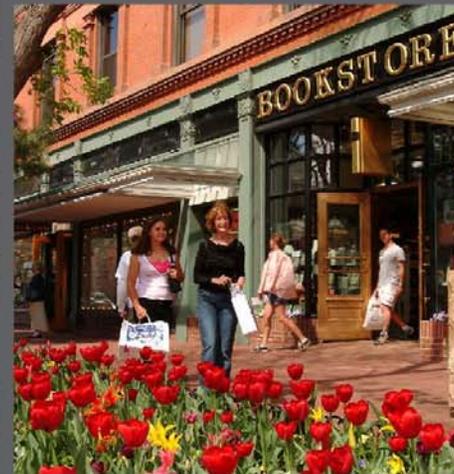
Downtown Boulder is characterized by the eclectic, fine grained and compact urban character of the Downtown Historic District nestled in against the natural backdrop of the Rocky Mountains. These qualities are reflected in the traditional buildings associated with the original settlement of the area, 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 respects and references the 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

### DOWNTOWN VISION





## 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.

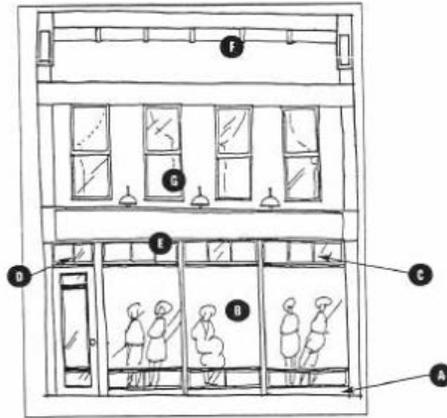
The purpose of this section is to provide guidance for the design of new construction and the renovation of non-contributing buildings in the district, in order to retain the historic context of the area while providing new opportunities. While new building design is expected to reflect the character 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 appurtenances 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 Incorporate Traditional Design Elements in New Designs



Repetition of traditional facade features creates 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. Kick plate as a base to the store front. Align the height with others in the block.
- B. First floor display window. Align with height of others in the block when others are appropriately placed.
- C. Incorporate a clerestory form in the display window.
- D. Transom, align with others when others are appropriately placed.
- E. Sign band.
- F. Parapet cap or cornice.
- G. Vertical window patterns and shapes, window sills on 2nd floor.
  - Angled entrances on corners.
  - Recessed central entrances



# Mergers

## Recessed Entries Where They Exist



Finished 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.



## Show The Display Window Element



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.



## Window Features



When the interior ceiling is lower than the transom or clerestory line, 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 color and materials of the transom and clerestory.



## Detailing of Upper Windows



When the interior ceiling is lower than the transom or clerestory line, 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 color and materials of the transom and clerestory.



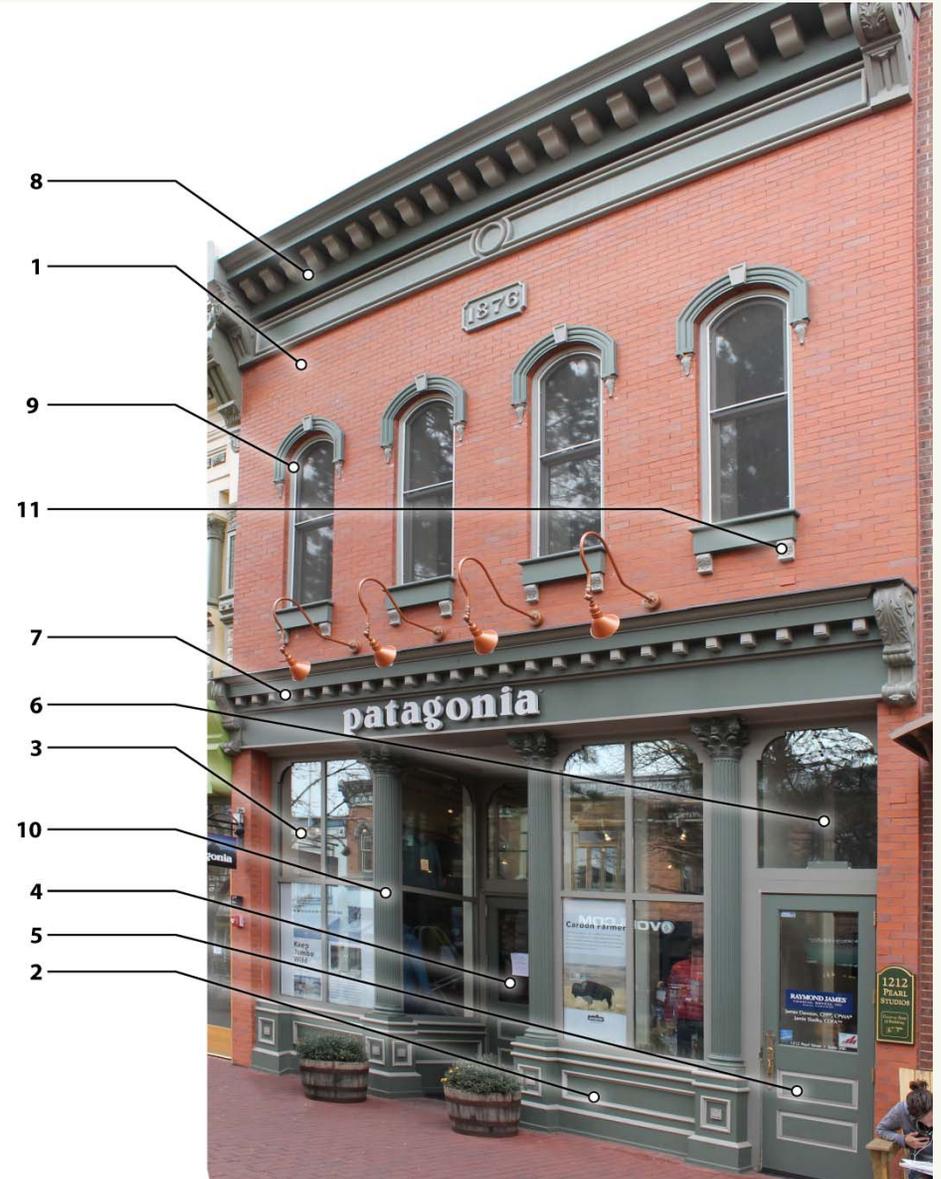


# Mergers

## 1.2 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





## The 1992 Downtown Illustrative Plan

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

### **1. 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".

### **2. 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.

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.

### **4. 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.

### **5. Design and construct streetscape improvements throughout the downtown**

The public image created by the visual quality of



# Improved Graphics

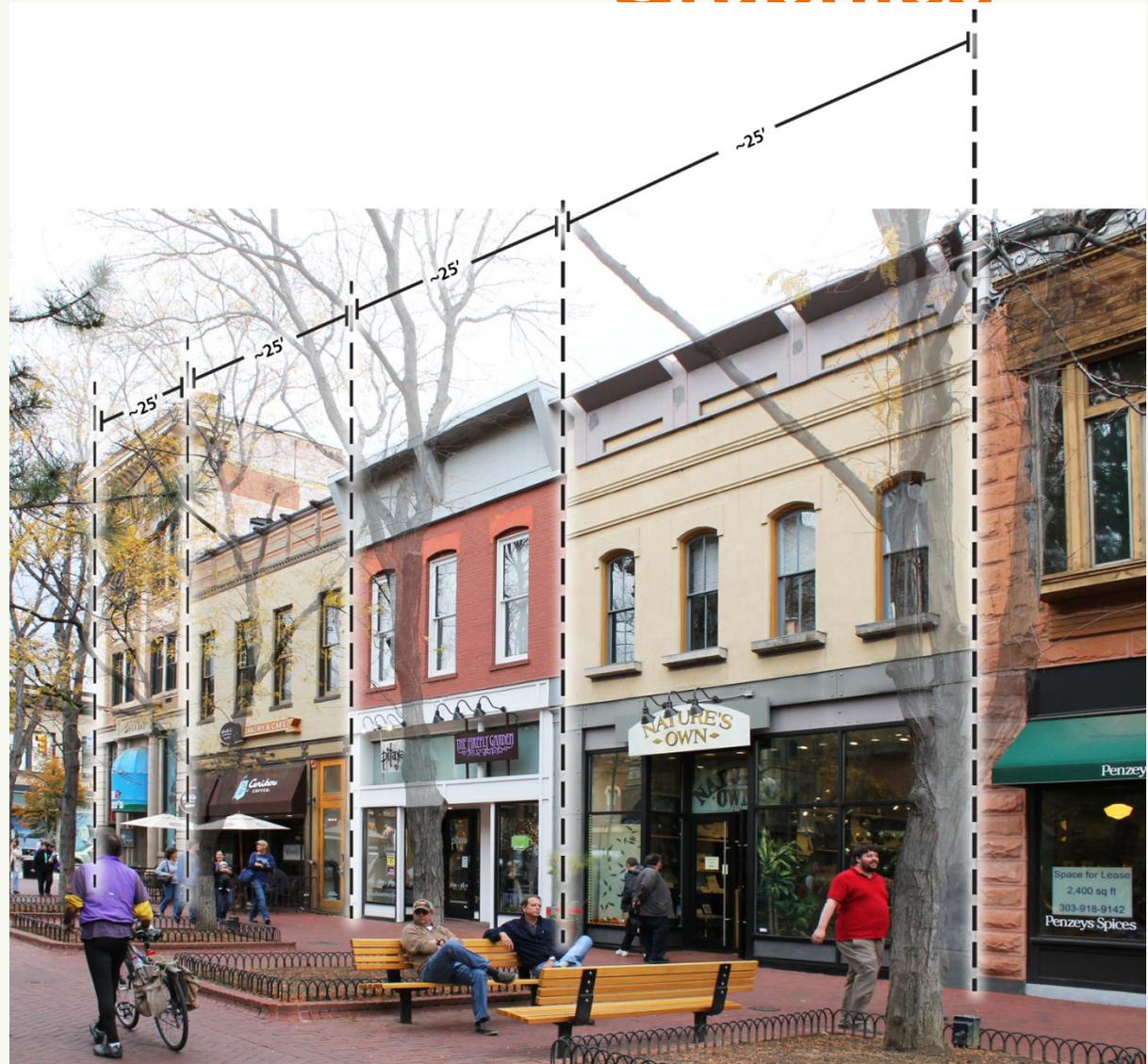
Replaced  
cumbersome graphics,  
for example:





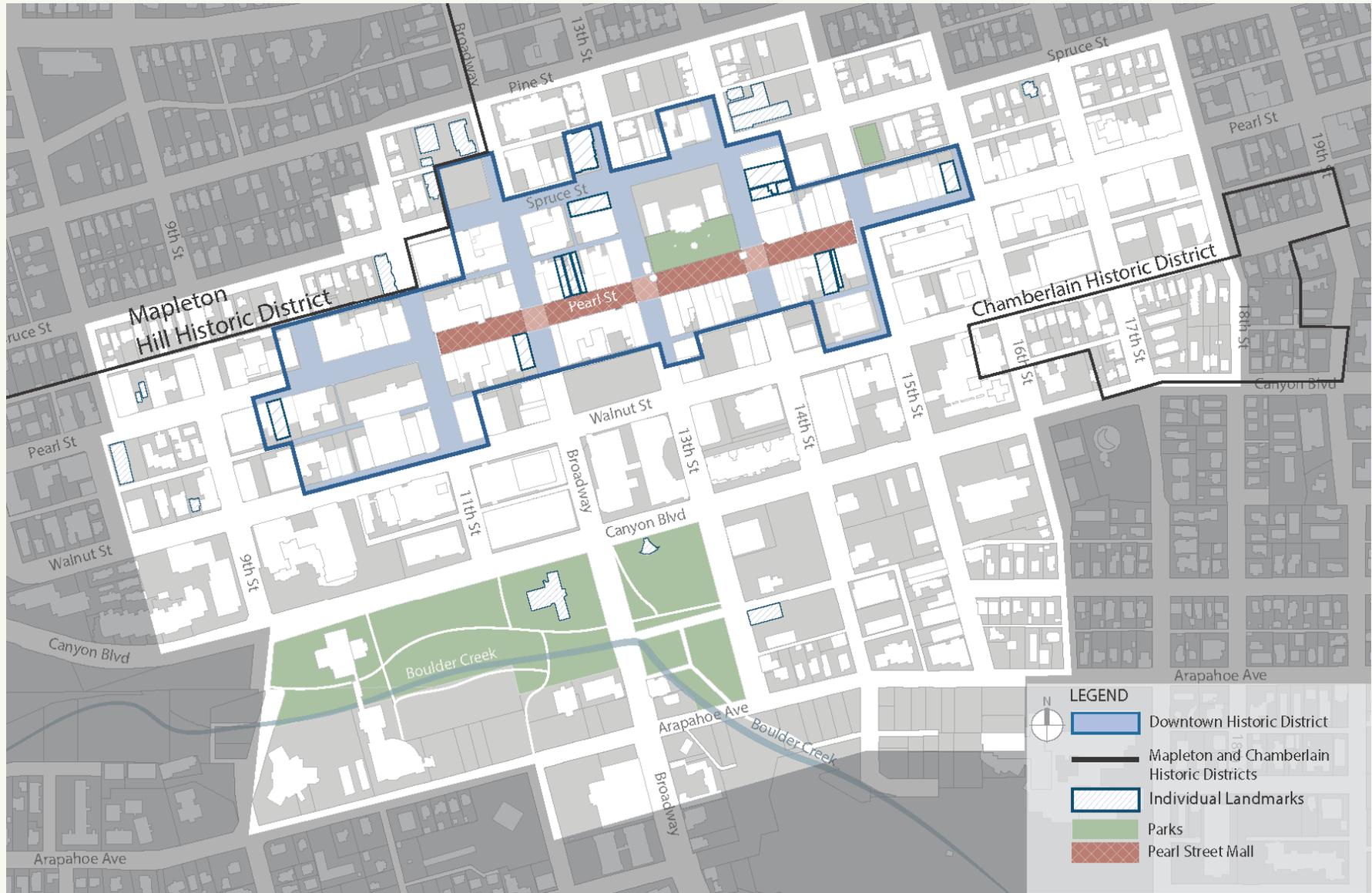
# Improved Graphics

Updated graphic representing the historic building rhythm and pattern





# Updated Maps





# Replaced Code References

## 4.3 Reduce The Visual Impact of Structured Parking



**A. 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 shield the facility from the street and to make the entire building visually pleasing.

**B. 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:**

**C. 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.



Design with traditional commercial features, this parking facility has retail/commercials spaces along the street

**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.