

2021

# **Downtown Urban Design Standards and Guidelines**

Arapahoe Square  
Central Platte Valley – Auraria  
Golden Triangle



Prepared by:

**City and County of Denver  
Community Planning & Development**

# Downtown Urban Design Standards and Guidelines

## Arapahoe Square, Central Platte Valley – Auraria, & Golden Triangle

### Acknowledgments

#### Denver City Council

Candi CdeBaca, Council District 9  
Chris Hinds, City Council District 10

#### Community Planning & Development

Laura Aldrete, Executive Director  
  
Sarah Nurmela, Neighborhood Planning Manager  
Chris Gleissner, Manager  
Jason Whitlock, Principal City Planner

#### Project Team

Lilly Djanants, Senior City Planner – Project Manager  
Abe Barge, Principal City Planner  
Kristofer Johnson, Principal City Planner  
Josh Palmeri, Senior City Planner  
Fran Penafiel, Associate City Planner  
Krystal Marquez, Senior City Planner  
Bridget Rassbach, Urban Design Architect

#### City Attorney’s Office

Nathan Lucero, Senior Assistant City Attorney  
Adam Hernandez, Senior Assistant City Attorney

#### Department of Transportation & Infrastructure

Eulois Cleckley, Executive Director  
  
Jennifer Hillhouse, Planning Director  
Eric Osmundsen, Manager  
Jim Turner, Supervisor  
Marco Cabanillas, Senior Engineer  
Riley LaMie, Senior City Planner

#### Parks & Recreation

Allegra “Happy” Haynes, Executive Director  
  
Mark Bernstein, Chief of Staff  
Laurie Tabachnick, Associate City Planner  
  
Michael Swanson, City Forester  
Jim Myer, Field Superintendent  
Eric Huetig, Plans Review Specialist

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# Signature Page

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

Rules and regulations adopted pursuant to Denver Revised Municipal Code, Section 12.18.  
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## DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Adopted September 1, 2021

## APPROVED FOR LEGALITY



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Kristin Bronson  
City Attorney  
City and County of Denver

## APPROVED AND ADOPTED



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Laura Aldrete  
Executive Director, Community Planning and Development  
City and County of Denver

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# Introduction

Downtown Denver is the cultural and economic heart of the city and of the Rocky Mountains region. This document aims to ensure the level of design quality and neighborhood activity generated by new development, renovations, and other improvements are consistent with the exceptional potential presented by this area.

# Overview

## Evolution of Downtown Denver

Over the last 50 years Denver's Downtown skyline has been slowly transforming. Today, Downtown Denver has the tallest buildings within at least 500 miles of the city and continues to evolve and grow in response to urban growth trends, market demands, employment opportunities, and improved transportation networks.

Prior to large high-rise buildings, Downtown Denver had a dense urban fabric, comprised of stone and brick buildings, many of which still remain and have been designated with historic status. These buildings bring a richness to Downtown Denver through their historic integrity, building scale, street activation, architectural details, craftsmanship, and quality of finishes.

Much of the high-rise development of the 1970s and 1980s was driven by maximizing floor plate sizes and generally catered to an auto-oriented culture of oversized streets. As a result, development often lacked a sense of street enclosure, ground floor facade transparency, articulation and activation, and did not reflect the Human Scale or positively impact the Public Realm. Moreover, while Downtown Denver developed with a large core of commercial uses, it never realized a true mixed-use pattern that also included residential, civic, and cultural facilities and Open Space. Denver was not alone in this type of planning and development, and many American cities were plagued with similar outcomes of downtowns with active daytime employment centers, but vacant and dangerous nighttime spaces. More recently, many cities have sought to correct this by using zoning and other tools to encourage a vibrant, 24-hour mix of uses in downtown locations.

Through Blueprint Denver, the citywide land use and transportation plan, Downtown has been identified as an appropriate place for high intensity development. While continuing to develop a distinctive skyline, Downtown Denver's new development should foster a better relationship with the street and Public Realm through smaller block sizes, facade breakdown, and intentional building placement. The aim is to achieve a built environment that respects the pedestrian, promotes a true mixture of uses, and activates the Public Realm with successful and vibrant ground floor uses.

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## Downtown

The Downtown Urban Design Standards and Guidelines (DSG) address three distinctive downtown neighborhoods, Arapahoe Square, Central Platte Valley – Auraria and Golden Triangle. These DSG will help guide context-sensitive, vibrant urban neighborhoods in these rapidly evolving areas.

## Applicability

The Downtown DSG shall apply to properties in Denver Zoning Code D-AS-12+, D-AS-20+, D-CPV-T, D-CPV-R, D-CPV-C, D-GT, or Former Chapter 59 B-8-G zone districts. DSG documents and review processes that previously applied to these areas including the Arapahoe Square DSG, Central Platte Valley-Auraria DSG, and Golden Triangle B-8-G Design Guidelines are no longer applicable.

- Arapahoe Square design review area is bound by 20th Street, Park Avenue West, the alley between Lawrence and Larimer, and the alley between Welton and Glenarm.
- CPV-Auraria design review area is bound by Speer Boulevard, Interstate 25, the Consolidated Main Line (CML) and the South Platte River.
- Golden Triangle design review area is generally bound by Speer Boulevard, 7th Avenue, the alley between Lincoln and Sherman Street, and parts of 14th, 13th, 12th, and Colfax Avenues.

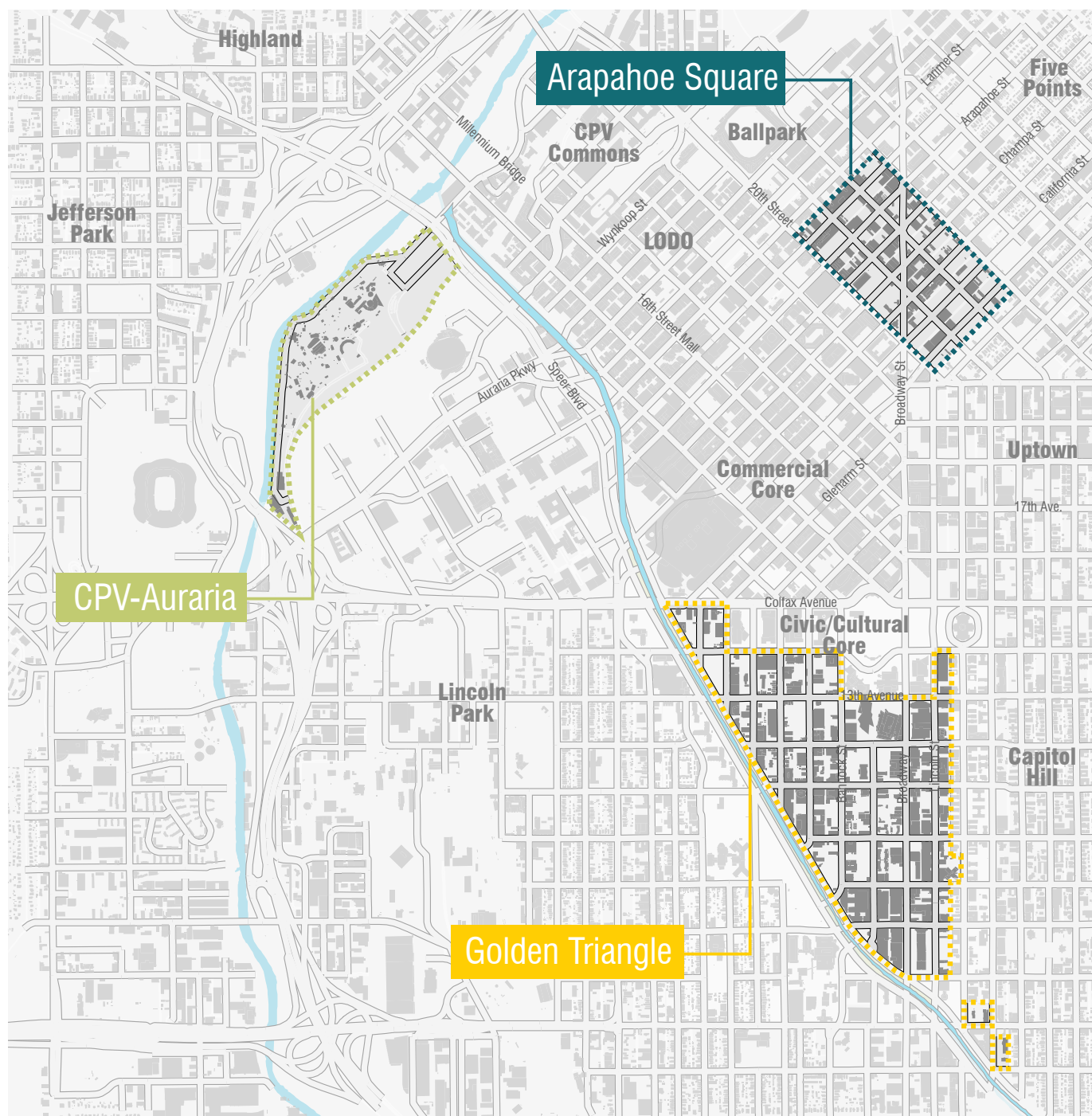
All new construction, additions, adaptive reuse, exterior improvements, signs, and new or expanded outdoor use areas proposed in these areas shall follow these DSG.

This document sets forth intent statements, design standards, and design guidelines that provide the basis for review of proposed development on private properties and associated improvements in privately-managed Right-of-Way. Public Right-of-Way shall continue to be reviewed by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure and their requirements, which may deviate from these DSG. The Zoning Administrator shall utilize design review findings by staff and the Downtown Design Advisory Board when making a determination of Approval, Approval with Conditions, or Denial for proposed projects in Arapahoe Square, CPV-Auraria, and Golden Triangle.

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The three neighborhoods covered by the Downtown DSG are Arapahoe Square, CPV-Auraria, and the Golden Triangle. For more detailed description of these areas refer to Chapter 5 - Neighborhood Specific Design.



# Overview

## A Vision for High Quality Design

The purpose of the Downtown DSG is to foster the vision established by the variety of neighborhood plans including the Downtown Area Plan (2007), Downtown Area Plan Amendment (2018), Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan (2011) and Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan (2014) which set clear expectations for the level of design quality expected for development of Downtown Denver. The DSG guides the form, scale, character, and quality of individual projects to ensure that Arapahoe Square, CPV-Auraria and Golden Triangle evolve into mixed-use neighborhoods with a distinctive identity within the Downtown context.

## Downtown Denver's Guiding Principles

Development within Arapahoe Square, CPV-Auraria, and Golden Triangle should be well-designed and detailed, such that it can be appreciated when viewed as a part of the city skyline and at the most intimate level by the pedestrian. The guiding principles that follow support the vision for Downtown Denver by describing the overarching design goals for the neighborhoods. These principles are further reinforced by the intent statements, design standards, and guidelines to support a densely populated, mixed-use neighborhood with a distinctive identity in Downtown. Each project should express excellence in design and raise the bar for others to follow.

**Sense of Place.** A sense of place will be achieved through a cohesive and well-designed environment that contributes to one's perception of being within a particular district. A neighborhood built around intimate block sizes, proportional scale relationships between Streetwall height and the width of the street, and well-detailed architecture that relates to the street will distinguish this area from others. Activated Off-Street Pedestrian Connections that become special refuge areas among busy streets can support a unique identity for the district. A well-detailed Public Realm that shares a common design language and engages active ground floor uses contributes to a legibility and liveliness that is comfortable, safe, and inviting year-round.

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1. A proportionate sense of street enclosure, breakdown of building massing, well-articulated facades, ample sidewalk space, and landscape elements all contribute to a comfortable and engaging street that reflects Human Scale.



2. A cohesive and well-designed environment, that includes positive building form and design and the Public Realm contributes to a sense of place and one's perception of being within a particular district.

# Overview

**Human Scale.** Moderate block sizes and a fine-grained network of pedestrian connections will organize Arapahoe Square, CPV-Auraria, and Golden Triangle into smaller building sites that promote a sense of Human Scale. Buildings that clearly define the Streetwall and utilize a variety of methods to break down large facades into smaller components further contribute to a comfortable scale in the urban environment. Additional architectural elements such as windows, fenestration, cornices, and materials, and the design of the streetscape add the final layers that speak to the sense of Human Scale. The lower four to five stories of the building are especially important as they are within a pedestrian's direct and peripheral view. Above five stories, articulation with vertical and horizontal elements, like recessed or protruding balconies, help break down massive building facades.

**Creativity.** Innovative and distinctive design solutions will help define the future character of Downtown Denver. Creative building design that creates distinctive architectural forms contributes to the sense of place, adds visual interest, and becomes a beacon for residents, employees, and visitors to experience. Streets that prioritize people and transit and incorporate neighborhood-wide Open Space and stormwater infrastructure can become a green network drawing nature into the district. Flexibility and creativity are inherent to the design envisioned for this area with multiple opportunities to push the boundaries in exchange for other community benefits.

**Context.** Design in Arapahoe Square, CPV-Auraria, and Golden Triangle will consider surrounding buildings, neighborhoods, and uses to create an interconnected district with contextual relationships throughout. Building Massing that responds to the adjacent and surrounding context supports a coordinated approach to a comfortable Public Realm and ensures appropriate transitions between neighboring structures. While each site may be developed and designed by a different team, thus taking on different shapes and forms, collectively they are harmonious within the district and contribute to an overarching idea that is reflective of its context, zoning, and other natural or human-made characteristics.

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**Sustainability.** Social, economic, and environmental sustainability are promoted in Arapahoe Square, CPV-Auraria, and Golden Triangle through various mechanisms that occur at a range of scales. Blocks and streets that incorporate interconnected Off-Street Pedestrian Connections, Enhanced Setbacks, Parks and Open Space promote high levels of pedestrian activity and knit together green infrastructure to clean water before it enters the South Platte River or Cherry Creek. Buildings that are shaped to preserve access to natural light and air also support a vibrant, active, and economically viable Street Level. Building design and construction will incorporate sustainable materials and assembly methods that meet performance and durability criteria using current emerging technologies and low impact development practices.



3. Social, economic, and environmental sustainability are promoted through various mechanisms that occur at a range of scales.



# Policy & Regulatory Foundation

The Downtown DSG serve as one of several documents that are part of the City's planning and development process for Arapahoe Square, CPV-Auraria, and Golden Triangle. The DSG's are intended to implement adopted City regulations, plans, and policies. Key policy and regulatory documents relevant to Downtown are summarized below. All documents are available for download at [www.denvergov.org/CPD](http://www.denvergov.org/CPD).

## Comprehensive Plan 2040

Denver Comprehensive Plan 2040 establishes six vision elements to serve as the backbone of Denver's future: Equitable, Affordable and Inclusive; Strong and Authentic Neighborhoods; Connected, Safe and Accessible Places; Economically Diverse and Vibrant; Environmentally Resilient; and Healthy and Active. The goals are clear and concise, but are meant to provide flexibility over time. It is used as the guiding document for city leaders, institutions and community members to shape the city we will become over the next twenty years.

## Blueprint Denver 2019

Blueprint Denver is a citizen-driven, integrated land-use and transportation plan. The plan was adopted by City Council in 2019 and aims to enhance Denver life through the three elements of a complete neighborhood: Land Use and Built Form; Mobility; Quality of Live Infrastructure. Blueprint Denver aims to create an inclusive city using the three elements of complete neighborhoods, by creating great places accessible to everyone, regardless of age, ability or income. Blueprint Denver provides a nuanced way to handle growth and development, preserving our most cherished historic and cultural assets while directing growth to key centers, corridors and high density residential areas where there are underutilized land and strong transportation options. Responsibly handling Denver's share of the region's growth can bring positive economic benefits and placemaking opportunities that help the city achieve its vision and goals.

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## Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan 2011

The Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan is the most current planning document for Arapahoe Square. It was adopted by City Council in 2011 as an element of the Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000. It is used by public agencies, utility service providers, neighborhood and business organizations, residents, business owners, land owners and private developers to shape development and public improvements in Arapahoe Square.

## Downtown Area Plan 2007

The Downtown Area Plan (2007) established more detailed policies for the Downtown area which includes Lower Downtown, Commercial Core, Cultural Core, Golden Triangle, Ballpark, Arapahoe Square, Auraria Campus, and three distinct areas of the Central Platte Valley.

## Downtown Area Plan Amendment 2018

The Downtown Area Plan Amendment establishes the overall vision and describes a set of goals and recommendations specifically for CPV-Auraria that directs future development of the area. The policy guidance found in the Plan Amendment resulted in new zone districts and DSG to shape future projects in CPV-Auraria.

## Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan 2014

The Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan sets forth a comprehensive, holistic approach, weaving together a nuanced set of strategies that collectively foster an Eclectic, Connected, Creative, and Livable Golden Triangle.



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## Civic Center District Plan 2005

The Civic Center District Plan provides a 30-year vision for the government complex, which is a defined public campus with permeable borders that link it to the surrounding urban activity centers. The District is defined by two significant urban forms: a Civic Axis that connects the State Capitol west to Speer Boulevard, and a Cultural Axis that connects Civic Center Park to the cultural facilities on Acoma Street.

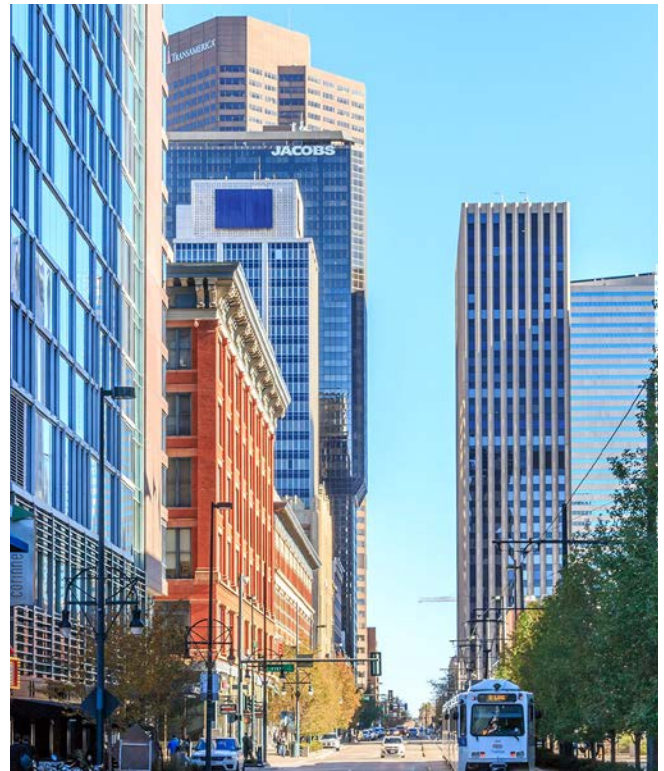
## Denver Revised Municipal Code

The Denver Revised Municipal Code (DRMC) is the complete code of ordinances for the City and County of Denver. These DSG are adopted per the rule-making authority provided in Section 12.18 of the DRMC. Any amendments to the DSG will also be reviewed and adopted according to DRMC Section 12.18.

## Denver Zoning Code

The Denver Zoning Code preserves and promotes the public health, safety and welfare of the City's residents and employees and facilitates the growth and expansion of the City. The code applies context-sensitive zoning requirements to provide the basic building form, parking, signage, and land use requirements for all neighborhoods within the City, including Arapahoe Square (D-AS-12+ and D-AS-20+), CPV-Auraria (D-CPV-T, D-CPV-R, and D-CPV-C), and Golden Triangle (D-GT).

Section 12.2.8 of the Denver Zoning Code establishes the Design Advisory Board to review projects according to these DSG.



4. Blueprint Denver has identified the Downtown area as an appropriate location for high intensity development that incorporates a variety of mobility options.



5. Downtown Area Plan Amendment recommends additional amenity spaces to allow for retail spillover, outdoor dining, and other Street Level activities, while maintaining a comfortable clear walking path for pedestrians.

# How to Use This Document

## Organization & Format

The DSG is organized to follow a typical approach to project design. Below is a list of the chapters and general description of the structure found within Chapters 1-6.

### Introduction

#### Chapter 1 | Site Organization

#### Chapter 2 | Building Mass & Scale

#### Chapter 3 | Facade Design & Site Details

#### Chapter 4 | Private Streetscape Design

#### Chapter 5 | Neighborhood Specific Design

#### Chapter 6 | Building Signs

### Glossary of Terms

**Intent Statements** establish the objectives to be achieved for each topic and may also be used to determine the appropriateness of alternatives or innovative approaches that do not meet specific design standards. It is expected that projects will be consistent with all relevant intent statements.

**Design Standards** set prescriptive criteria for achieving the intent statements. They use the term “shall” to indicate that compliance is expected and are numbered by chapter for reference.

**Design Guidelines** provide additional suggestions to achieve the intent statements. They use the term “should” or “consider” and are numbered by chapter for reference.

### Application of the Standards and Guidelines:

Projects are expected to be consistent with all relevant intent statements, but not all standards and guidelines may apply to every project in Arapahoe Square, CPV-Auraria, and Golden Triangle. Standards and guidelines that refer to design topics or elements that are not part of a development or redevelopment project are not applicable. Some standards and guidelines include a list of appropriate techniques or examples of how compliance can be met. These lists are informational and not intended to describe an exclusive or exhaustive set of methods.

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**Underlined Text in this Document:** Underlined text indicates a cross reference to a related design topic or a hyperlink to a related web site. In electronic (Acrobat PDF) versions of this document, clicking on an underlined cross reference or hyperlink will open the related document page or web site. In most versions of Adobe Acrobat, clicking the Alt + left arrow keys will link back to the original page. Underlined text is also used to indicate terms that are defined in the Glossary of Terms.

**Sidebars:** These grey boxes offer background information about a related topic. They do not imply additional compliance or requirements.

**Neighborhood Specific Design Chapter:** Chapters 1-4 and 6 are generally applicable to all projects in the three neighborhoods covered by these DSG's. Chapter 5 is composed of three sections that specifically address the desired design outcome for the individual neighborhoods (Arapahoe Square, CPV-Auraria, and Golden Triangle) based on their unique characteristics, including any recommendations regarding Key Streets.

## ILLUSTRATIONS IN THIS DOCUMENT

The DSG include many photographs and diagrams to illustrate desired approaches. The illustrations are provided as illustrative examples and are not intended to indicate the only option(s).

If there appears to be a conflict between the text of the DSG and a related illustration, the text shall prevail.

# How to Use This Document

## FLEXIBILITY FOR CREATIVE OR INNOVATIVE DESIGNS

In some cases, an innovative or creative design approach that does not comply with specific design standards or guidelines may be approved if it is consistent with the guiding principles and relevant intent statements. It is the applicant's responsibility to show that an alternative solution is consistent with, and effectively implements the guiding principles and intent statements of the DSG.

The standards and guidelines are intended to present design principles that encourage development that promotes cohesiveness and compatibility with the existing and desired character of Downtown, as well as excellence in urban design. They are not intended to restrict innovation, imagination or variety in design. If an alternative design can be demonstrated to achieve the desired character and meet the intent of the standards and guidelines differently than the general criteria, the Design Advisory Board and City Staff may consider a substitution.

Flexibility for designs that do not comply with specific design standards or guidelines could be especially appropriate for entertainment, cultural and civic buildings that stand out from the surrounding context with unique building mass and scale, transparency, and/or ground floor active use patterns.

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6. Example of a cultural use with a creative and innovative design.



7. Example of a commercial use with a creative and innovative design.



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## Using the Downtown DSG

This document is organized into an Introduction and five Chapters that are used by City Staff, the Design Advisory Board, and Planning Board to evaluate proposed projects. Project applicants should use the DSG to inform their design decisions on proposed projects. The Introduction summarizes the design review process and Chapters 1-6 provide specific design standards and guidelines.

ALL  
USERS

### Introduction

Used by all to understand the role of the DSG, design review phases, and submittal requirements for each step of the review process.

### Chapter 1 | Site Organization

Used by the Design Advisory Board and City Staff to evaluate the arrangement of buildings and related features on a site, as well as the functional character of those features and how they shape the Public Realm.

### Chapter 2 | Building Mass & Scale

Used by the Design Advisory Board and City Staff to evaluate the three-dimensional mass and scale of a project and the relationship to the surrounding context.

### Chapter 3 | Facade Design & Site Details

Used by the Design Advisory Board and City Staff to evaluate the visual and functional character of individual buildings, particularly related to the design quality provided at the Street Level, on all Visible Facades, and in the Public Realm.

### Chapter 4 | Private Streetscape Design

Used by the Design Advisory Board and City Staff to evaluate the treatment of the area between the street and the Zone Lot line, when the street is under private ownership or maintenance. If this area is within public Right-of-Way, then Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) requirements apply and may deviate from this chapter's standards and guidelines.

### Chapter 5 | Neighborhood Specific Design

Used by the Design Advisory Board and City Staff to evaluate context-specific design solutions, that address the characteristics and qualities unique to Arapahoe Square, CPV-Auraria or Golden Triangle.

### Chapter 6 | Building Signs

Used by City Staff to review the location and design of all signs in Arapahoe Square, CPV-Auraria, and Golden Triangle. Note, this chapter is also used by the Planning Board, the Design Advisory Board, and City Staff to review Comprehensive Sign Plans.

CITY STAFF &  
DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD

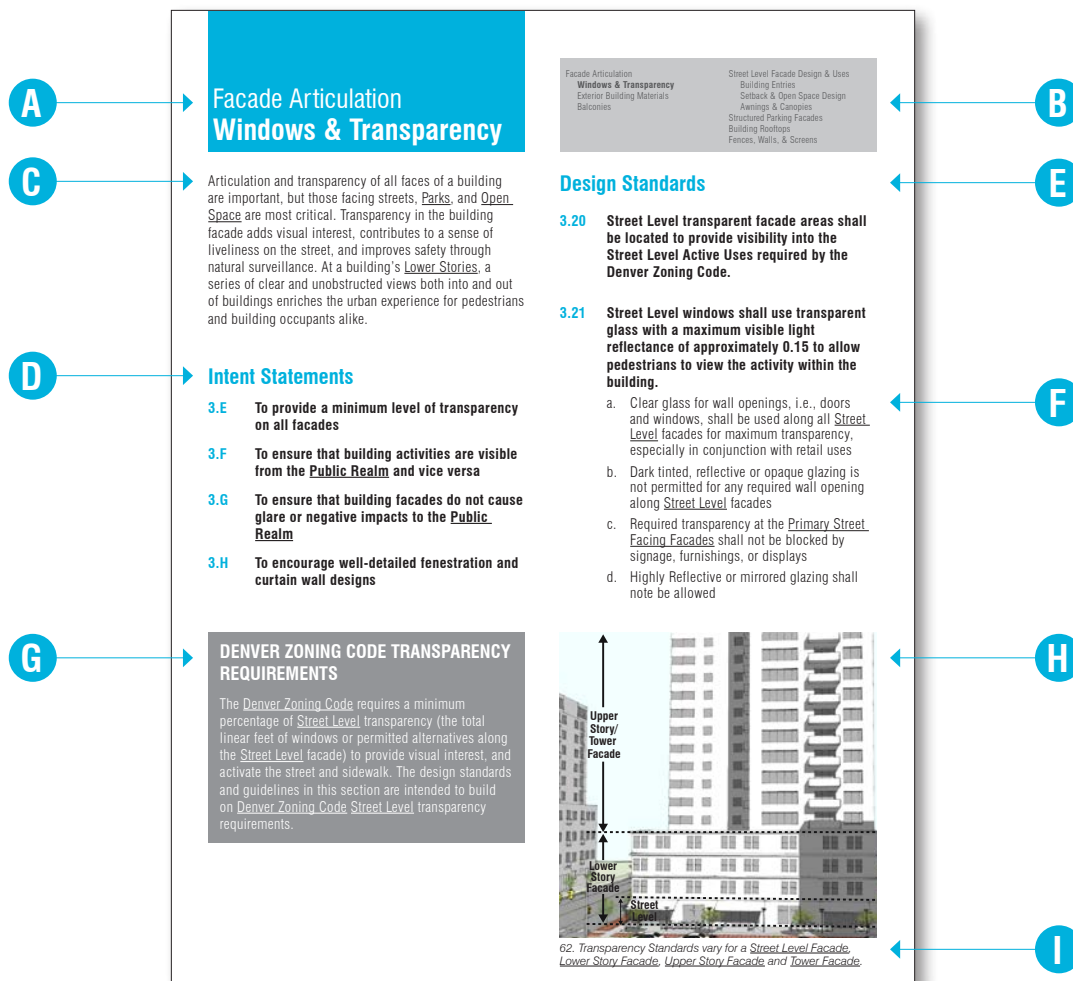
CITY STAFF,  
DAB &  
PLANNING  
BOARD

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## Sample DSG Format

To increase clarity and ease-of-use, the individual design standards and guidelines pages in Chapters 1-6 use a typical format. Below is a sample page to indicate elements of the typical format.



- A** Topic or Subtopic is also identified in the heading.
- B** Location of topic or subtopic within the chapter.
- C** Narrative of the design goals for each topic or subtopic.
- D** Intent Statements establish the objectives to be achieved for each topic or subtopic and may also be used to determine the appropriateness of alternative or innovative approaches that do not meet specific design standards.
- E** Design Standards set prescriptive criteria for achieving the intent statements. They are numbered by chapter for reference and use the term "shall" to indicate that compliance is expected.
- E** Design Guidelines provide additional suggestions to achieve the intent statements. They are numbered by chapter for reference and use the term "should" or "consider."

- F** Additional Information is provided as a bulleted list beneath some standards and guidelines to describe more detailed concepts or appropriate approaches and strategies, but is not intended to be an exhaustive list or set of requirements.
- G** Sidebars provide background information on the design topic or relationship to the Denver Zoning Code.
- H** Photographs and Diagrams visually describe the standards and guidelines.
- I** Underlined Text indicates cross references to related document topics and website hyperlinks (in PDF version). Capitalized Text indicates defined terms in the glossary.

# Design Review Process

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## Summary of Design Review Process

The design review process is closely coordinated with the chapters of this document and is intended to follow the typical approach to project design. Each project will be evaluated based on its unique context and attributes. Approval or denial of an individual project will not set specific precedent for future design review decisions, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

At each stage, City Staff will review the submittal and determine whether the applicant is prepared to proceed to the Downtown Design Advisory Board (DAB) for review. More than one submittal may be required by staff before proceeding to the review meeting with the DAB. City Staff will make a recommendation to the DAB regarding the project's compliance with the DSG. For some project types that are smaller in scope, such as exterior improvements or expanded outdoor use areas, the application may be able to be reviewed administratively by City Staff or proceed directly to the Design Review

submittal for review by the DAB. City Staff will determine the appropriate process for each project on a case-by-case basis and inform the applicant at the required Pre-Application/Concept Review meeting.

Design approval of each project is tied to the expiration of the approved Site Development Plan. Significant changes to an approved Site Development Plan that require an amendment will also require additional design review by City Staff and DAB.

PROJECT TYPE	REVIEWERS	REVIEW PROCESS
<b>Project Types Reviewed by the Design Advisory Board</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New building construction and additions</li> <li>Major exterior building improvements, including significant changes in materials or transparency</li> <li>Major site improvements, including new or significantly expanded outdoor use areas in locations that are visible from the street</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Staff</li> <li>Design Advisory Board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design Advisory Board Review Process</li> </ul>
<b>Project Types Not Reviewed by the Design Advisory Board</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor exterior building improvements</li> <li>Minor site improvements, including small expansions to outdoor use areas or new outdoor use areas in locations that are not visible from the street</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Staff (may be referred to Design Advisory Board)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrative review as part of zoning and/or building permit review</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive Sign Plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Staff</li> <li>Design Advisory Board</li> <li>Denver Planning Board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Division 10.10 of the Denver Zoning Code</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual sign permits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrative review as part of sign permit review</li> </ul>

### 8. Review Process by Project Type

# Design Review Process

## Downtown Design Advisory Board

The Downtown Design Advisory Board is empowered through the Denver Zoning Code to advise and assist the Community Planning and Development Department in the design review process. The board is composed of Downtown residents, property owners, design professionals, and real estate development industry representatives who help ensure that projects are developed in accordance with these DSG's. See [www.denvergov.org/downtowndesign](http://www.denvergov.org/downtowndesign) for more information.

The DAB advises on the project types listed at left. For all types of review, the DSG's shall be used in conjunction with the Denver Zoning Code D-AS-12+, D-AS-20+, D-CPV-T, D-CPV-R, D-CPV-C, or D-GT zone districts, and all other applicable regulations. The Design Advisory Board shall work within the established design review process to provide recommendations regarding project approval to the City's Zoning Administrator. The DAB may provide additional feedback that is not addressed in a standard or guideline but is aligned with overall intent.

## ADDITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD REVIEW IN GOLDEN TRIANGLE

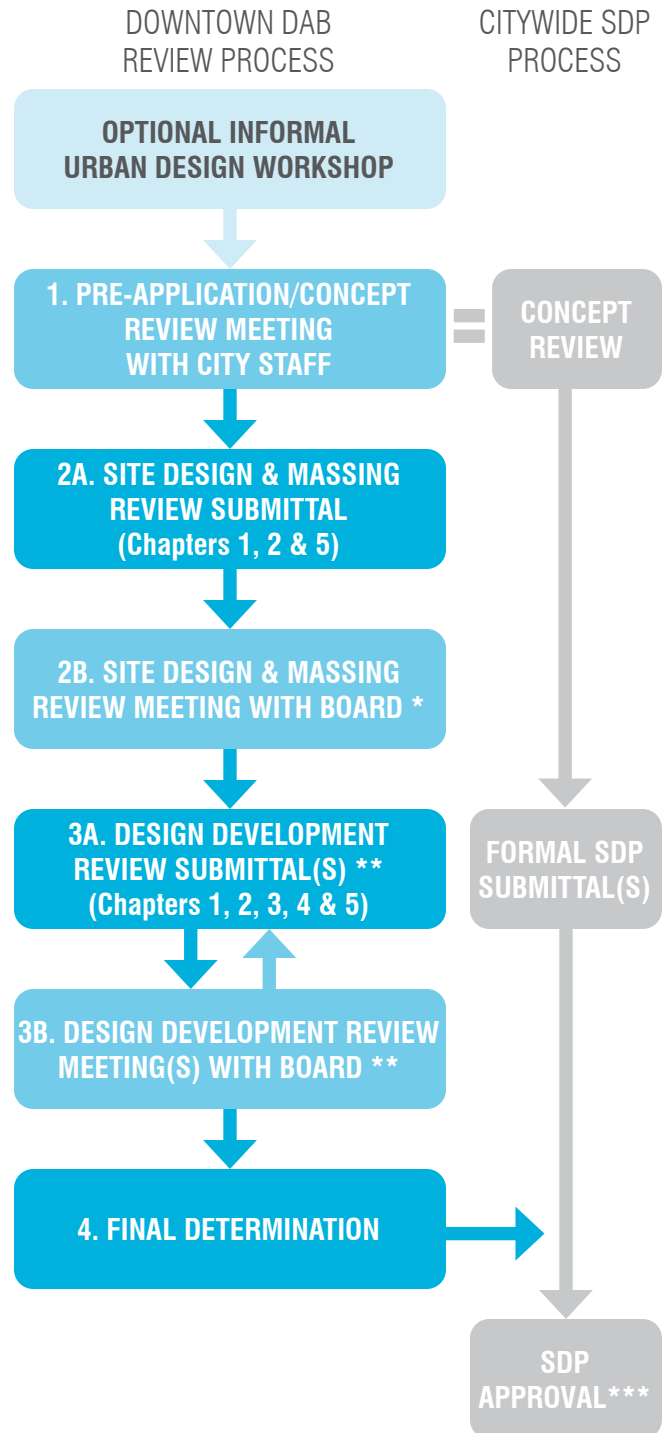
The applicant shall make a presentation to the Golden Triangle Creative District Urban Design Committee, or equivalent neighborhood organization, during the Site Design and Massing and Design Development stages. Whenever possible, these presentations should occur prior to review by the Downtown Design Advisory Board to incorporate neighborhood input into the design submittal and discussion.

## REVIEW OF LANDMARK STRUCTURES

Buildings designated as Landmark Structures or contributing buildings within Historic Districts are reviewed by the Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC). Projects within the design review boundary established by these DSG that are required to be reviewed by the LPC shall not be required to be reviewed by the Downtown DAB, however City Staff may still refer them to the Downtown DAB for additional evaluation.

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For projects reviewed by the DAB, the following standard review process applies.



\* May be waived by City Staff for smaller projects

\*\* May require multiple Design Development Review submittals and meetings prior to receiving a Board recommendation

\*\*\* Must be approved by other applicable City agencies

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## Informal Urban Design Workshop

An optional Urban Design Workshop with City Staff is encouraged to help facilitate an early understanding of unique Denver Zoning Code requirements in the D-AS-12+, D-AS-20+, D-CPV-T, D-CPV-R, D-CPV-C, or D-GT zone districts and their relationship to these DSG. The goal of the Urban Design Workshop is to establish a baseline of building character and design quality at the project's conception that aligns with the recommendations of the DSG. This meeting should occur prior to the Pre-Application/Concept Review Meeting to identify and address possible conflicts early on in the process.

## 1. Pre-Application/Concept Review Meeting

A required Pre-Application/Concept Review Meeting with City Staff will address the design review process and submittal requirements necessary at each step. This meeting provides an opportunity for discussion of the proposed project with other various City agencies that may affect the overall design. The Concept Review meeting that is required for the citywide Site Development Plan (SDP) review process typically serves as the Pre-Application/Concept Review for the purpose of these DSG.

## 2A. Site Design and Massing Review Submittal

Following the Pre-Application/Concept Review meeting, and prior to a Formal SDP submittal, an applicant may submit materials for review of the general site organization and massing of the proposed project. The submittal shall focus on the content found in [“Chapter 1 | Site Organization”](#) and [“Chapter 2 | Building Mass & Scale”](#) and any relevant portions of [“Chapter 5 | Neighborhood Specific Design”](#) of this document. More detailed design elements described in [“Chapter 3 | Facade Design & Site Details”](#) and [“Chapter 4 | Private Streetscape Design”](#) should not be included in the submittal. City Staff will work with the applicant to ensure the submittal is complete and provides the relevant information prior to formal submission to the DAB.

## 2B. Site Design and Massing Review Meeting

In a public meeting, the DAB will review the Site Design and Massing Review submittal. This will provide an opportunity for early input from the DAB related to the relationship of the proposed project to the surrounding context, site layout, access, location of building program and uses, and overall scale and massing. City Staff and the applicant (or the applicant's designee) will present the item to the DAB. Following the presentation, the DAB shall discuss the merits of the application and provide input to the applicant on how well the project complies with the DSG. DAB feedback will provide direction to help the applicant further develop a full Design Development Review submittal.

Typically, only one Site Design and Massing Review meeting will be necessary, but a significant change in the project may result in the DAB requesting a second review. A project must proceed through the Site Design and Massing Review meeting and incorporate Design Advisory Board comments prior to submitting a Formal SDP.

## 3A. Design Development Review Submittal(s)

Once the applicant has completed the Site Design and Massing Review meeting with the DAB, and concurrent with the Formal SDP submittal, the Design Development Review submittal may occur. The Design Development Review submittal shall incorporate DAB feedback from the Site Design and Massing Review and include more detailed architectural and streetscape elements of the proposed project. The submittal shall address items reviewed previously and include additional topics found in [“Chapter 3 | Facade Design & Site Details”](#), [“Chapter 4 | Private Streetscape Design”](#) and [“Chapter 5 | Neighborhood Specific Design”](#) of this document. City Staff will work with the applicant to ensure the submittal is complete and provides the relevant information prior to formal submission to the DAB. The DAB may require additional submittals prior to making a recommendation.



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## 3B. Design Development Review Meeting(s)

In a public meeting, the DAB will review the Design Development Review submittal. City Staff and the applicant (or the applicant's designee) will present the item to the DAB. Following the presentation, the DAB shall discuss the merits of the application and provide input to the applicant on how the project complies with the DSG.

In the Design Development Review meeting, the DAB will review the topics found in all chapters of this document. However, Site Design and Massing characteristics addressed in Step 2 are expected to be largely resolved by this stage of the review process.

The DAB may require additional submittal materials and/or subsequent meetings prior to making a recommendation. At the conclusion of the Design Development Review meeting(s), the Design Advisory Board shall make a formal recommendation of Approval, Approval with Conditions, or Denial to the Zoning Administrator.

## 4. Final Determination

The Zoning Administrator, utilizing the recommendation of the DAB, will make a final determination of Approval, Approval with Conditions, or Denial for the design review component of the submitted application.

Note, The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, Department of Parks and Recreation Office of the City Forester (City Forester), and other departments or agencies will also review and approve specific aspects of most applications through the SDP process. Reviews by other departments and agencies are independent of the DAB recommendation and apply to all projects in the City and County of Denver

# Submittal Requirements

This checklist applies to new construction and additions. The DAB will not review an application that is incomplete. The following materials are required prior to scheduling a Site Design and Massing Review or Design Development Review meeting with the DAB. Submittal items may be combined where appropriate and required information is still clearly communicated. When necessary, the DAB or City Staff may request additional information from the applicant to describe compliance with the DSG.

In addition to submittal requirements listed below, refer to the Downtown DAB web page for a checklist of submittal documents.

## Concept Review Submittal (1)

- ☐ Project goal statement defining the overall goals and objectives of the project including the program of uses and role within the context of the neighborhood.
- ☐ Context map showing the location of the project within Downtown Denver.
- ☐ Context photograph(s) and aerial images showing the project location in relationship to surrounding buildings and context.
- ☐ Block context analysis that examines the relationship of the project to the block where it is located.
- ☐ Conceptual site plan (scaled, dimensioned and labeled) showing any existing trees, structures, etc. and intent of preservation or removal:
- ☐ Conceptual building massing studies (scaled, dimensioned and labeled):
- ☐ Architectural and landscape design precedents.

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## Site Design and Massing Review Submittal (2A)

- ☐ Downtown DSG checklist addressing compliance with the topics in Chapters 1, 2, and 5, as applicable.
- ☐ Project goal statement defining the overall goals and objectives of the project including the program of uses and role within the context of the neighborhood. The narrative should identify how the project addresses applicable neighborhood and small area plan policies and the DSG.
- ☐ Project design intent statement defining the design intent of the project and describing how the proposed development meets these DSG. If a standard is not met, the applicant must demonstrate in the narrative how the proposed alternative better achieves the intent statement.
- ☐ Context map showing the location of the project within Downtown Denver.
- ☐ Context photograph(s) and aerial images showing the project location in relationship to surrounding buildings and context. These photos should include a comprehensive view of any adjacent building elevations and other existing development or features that could influence the proposed project.
- ☐ Massing analysis to demonstrate how the proposed project may influence views, access to light and air, shadow impacts, etc. on neighboring streets, properties, and Open Space.
- ☐ Neighborhood context analysis that examines the area within a ¼ mile radius from the site. The neighborhood context analysis should evaluate topics that could include, but are not limited to:
  - a. major streets and block patterns
  - b. vehicular access
  - c. pedestrian/bicycle routes and connections
  - d. transit routes, stations, and stops
  - e. Parks and natural features
  - f. surrounding building character (heights, materials, etc.)

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- g. historic landmark properties
  - h. Street Level uses
  - i. Public Realm elements (setback patterns, Enhanced Commercial Setback and Open Space areas, sidewalks, Amenity Zones, street trees, etc.)
  - j. amenities and destinations (community centers, museums, entertainment, trails, libraries, schools, retail areas, etc.)
  - k. topographic information (where significant)
- ☐ Block context analysis that examines the relationship of the project to the block where it is located. The block context analysis should evaluate topics that could include, but are not limited to:
- a. size of the block and arrangement of individual property boundaries or Zone Lots
  - b. location and size of public streets, Alleys or Private Access Drives, vehicular access points, and Off-Street Pedestrian Connections
  - c. Public Realm elements (setback patterns, Enhanced Commercial Setback and Open Space areas, sidewalks, Amenity Zones, street trees, etc.)
  - d. Historic Resources
  - e. existing and proposed building footprints
  - f. existing and proposed building heights
  - g. existing and proposed Tower separation
  - h. existing and proposed building entrances
  - i. existing and proposed Street Level land uses
- ☐ Adjacent property analysis showing the elevation of the proposed project in context with the elevations of nearby buildings
- a. interior Zone Lots should include the entire block
  - b. corner Zone Lots should include both block faces and buildings across the street
  - c. evaluate if directly adjacent properties are considered Character Building(s) and provide information on how the proposed project will respond to their mass, scale, and architectural details (see [“Chapter 3 | Facade Design & Site Details”](#) and [“Glossary of Terms”](#))

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- ☐ Schematic site plan (scaled, dimensioned and labeled):
- a. property lines and Zone Lot boundaries
  - b. required setbacks
  - c. site access and circulation
  - d. building footprints, including Tower locations (if applicable)
  - e. Street Level uses
  - f. site amenities, such as furnishings, lighting, Open Space, or Enhanced Setbacks
  - g. existing trees with intent of preservation or removal
- ☐ Conceptual building sections, floor plans, and all elevations (scaled and dimensioned)
- ☐ Three-dimensional conceptual building massing with views taken at the Street Level incorporating photography of the surrounding context. Aerial birds-eye views are encouraged, but optional.
- ☐ Images and graphic representations of:
- a. street sections to communicate street enclosure relationships
  - b. conceptual building program and uses
  - c. image precedents of the proposed design character and quality of the project
- ☐ If Towers are proposed, provide plans (scaled and dimensioned) showing floor plate size, linear dimension, and separation requirements from neighboring properties
- ☐ If a project is seeking the Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension Alternative, provide a narrative description and analysis showing compliance with these specific requirements. See [“Chapter 2 | Building Mass & Scale”](#).
- ☐ If a project is seeking the Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative, provide a narrative description and analysis showing compliance with these requirements. See [“Chapter 5 | Neighborhood Specific Design”](#).

# Submittal Requirements

## Design Development Review Submittal (3A)

- ☐ Downtown DSG checklist addressing compliance with the topics in Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, as applicable.
- ☐ The following items listed above in the Site Design and Massing submittal checklist (revised as necessary):
  - a. project goal statement
  - b. project design intent statement
  - c. context map
  - d. context photographs
  - e. massing analysis
  - f. neighborhood context analysis
  - g. block context analysis
  - h. adjacent property analysis
- ☐ Detailed site plans (scaled and dimensioned):
  - a. property lines and Zone Lot boundaries
  - b. required setbacks
  - c. site access and circulation
  - d. proposed building footprints, including Tower locations (if applicable)
  - e. Street Level uses
  - f. site amenities, such as furnishings, lighting, Open Space, or Enhanced Setbacks
  - g. streetscape plan
  - h. landscape plan (including tree protection)
  - i. grading plan
- ☐ Detailed building sections, floor plans, and all elevations (scaled and dimensioned), including indication of potential future locations for signage.
- ☐ Three-dimensional conceptual building massing with views taken at the Street Level incorporating photography of the surrounding context. Aerial birds-eye views are optional, but encouraged to help communicate the relationship to the surrounding context.

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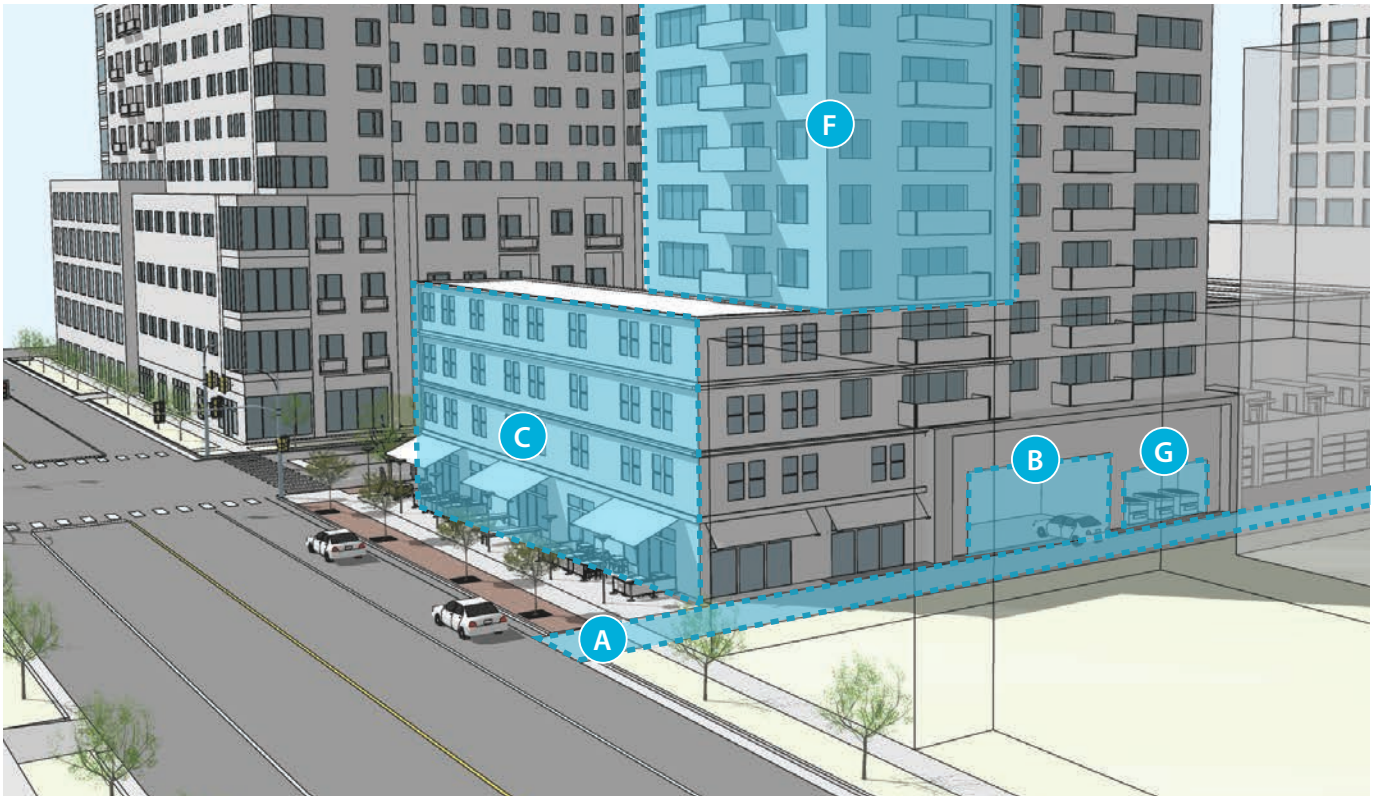
- ☐ Images and graphic representations of:
  - a. street sections to describe street enclosure relationships
  - b. proposed building program and uses
  - c. elevations and details showing compliance with Street Level facade design and building articulation standards
  - d. streetscape details, materials, etc.
  - e. landscape details, materials, etc.
- ☐ Lighting plan and renderings showing the location and character of pedestrian site lighting and exterior building lighting.
- ☐ Window glazing details with architectural notation on elevations and sections to demonstrate compliance with transparency standards for Street Level Facades, Lower Story Facades, Upper Story Facades, and Tower Facades.
- ☐ List of all external building materials and image examples each material. Physical samples may need to be provided upon request.
- ☐ Color and/or material samples to depict color, texture and material quality for construction (as needed).
- ☐ If Towers are proposed, provide plans (scaled and dimensioned) showing floor plate size, linear dimension, and separation requirements from neighboring properties
- ☐ If a project is seeking the Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension Alternative, provide a narrative description and analysis showing compliance with these specific requirements. See ["Chapter 2 | Building Mass & Scale"](#).
- ☐ If a project is seeking the Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative, provide a narrative description and analysis showing compliance with these requirements. See ["Chapter 5 | Neighborhood Specific Design"](#).

# Chapter 1 | Site Organization

Site Organization addresses the arrangement of pedestrian connections, vehicle access, and service areas, as well as the spatial relationships of individual buildings and tower elements to the Public Realm.

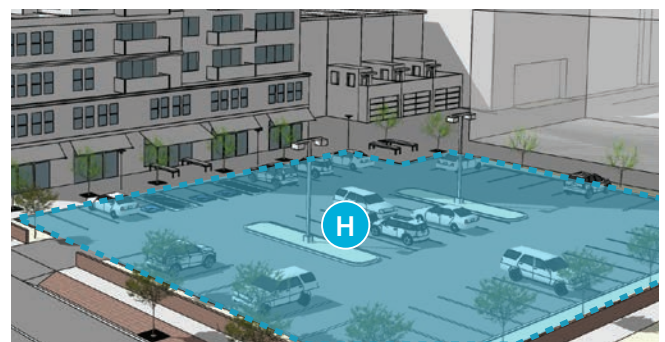
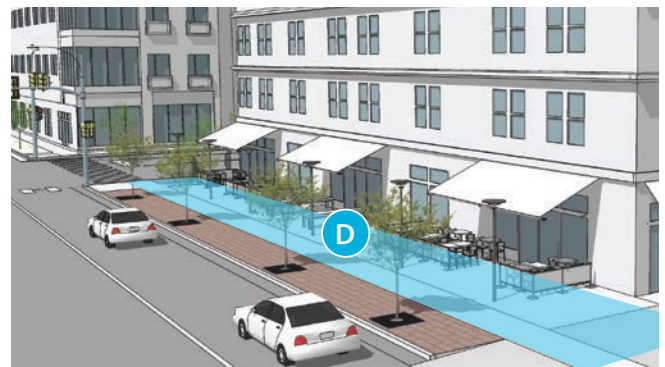
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## Site Organization Overview

- A** Alley, Private Access Drive, and Off-Street Pedestrian Connections
- B** Vehicle Access
- C** Street Frontage
- D** Enhanced Commercial Setback
- E** Open Space
- F** Tower Placement
- G** Service Areas & Utilities
- H** Surface Parking



# Site Design & Vehicle Access

As the city changes, retaining significant and irreplaceable building and block typologies helps preserve neighborhood character, scale, and overall atmosphere. This can be achieved when new development is sensitive to existing lot dimensions, building setbacks, facade modulation, and overall consistency of block layout.

This section provides guidance on the location and design of Alleys, Private Access Drives, and Vehicle Access Points into blocks and buildings from surrounding streets in addition to existing standards established by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI).



9. An Off-Street Pedestrian Connection should link together Open Spaces or residential uses.

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## Intent Statements

- 1.A To reinforce traditional urban block and lot typology that reinforces typical block and alley patterns and reflects the original zone lot rhythm**
- 1.B To break up long facades into components that add interest to massing and facade wall and promote Human Scale**
- 1.C To promote continuity of Street Level activity and minimize pedestrian conflicts**
- 1.D To encourage vehicular access through alleys or private access drives**

## Design Standards

- 1.01** Where patterns of streets and Alleys already exist, blocks shall maintain an Alley grid system.
- 1.02** Where use of an Alley or Private Access Drive is not feasible to provide consolidated vehicle access, the number of Vehicle Access Points from the street shall be minimized.  
Limit access points based on lot width (as measured from Zone Lot Line to Zone Lot Line):
  - a. Zone Lot Widths 350 feet or less: maximum one access point
  - b. Zone Lot Widths over 350 feet: maximum of two access points
  - c. Frontages of any length on a Key Street shall have a maximum of one access point

*Note that this standard shall be coordinated with DOTI during Site Development Plan review.*
- 1.03** Vehicle access points shall be located and designed to minimize impacts on the Public Realm.
  - a. Avoid locating Vehicle Access Points along Key Streets
  - b. Do not locate a Vehicle Access Point adjacent to a Park or Open Space



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- c. Limit the width of driveways
- d. Recess vehicle access doors or entries from the street
- e. Consider using special paving materials to differentiate pedestrian and vehicle use areas

**1.04** Vehicle entries facing a Primary Street shall be located and dimensioned to minimize vehicular impacts on pedestrians.

- a. Set back the access door at least 5 feet from the building facade
- b. Limit the width of the access to no more than 25 feet

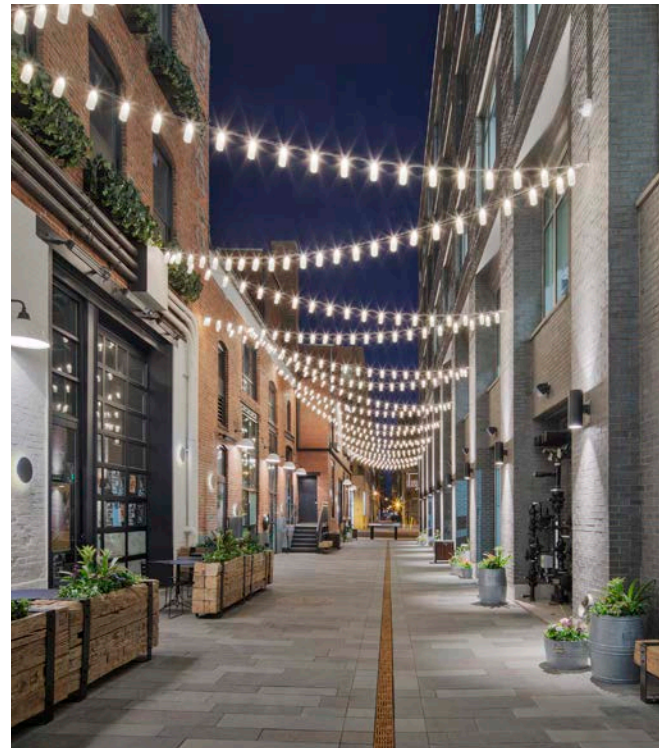
**1.05** An Alley or Private Access Drive that is also intended to serve as an Off-Street Pedestrian Connection shall be designed to promote pedestrian use.

**1.06** An Alley or Private Access Drive with an entrance on the South Platte Riverfront shall be designed to also serve as an Off-Street Pedestrian Connection.

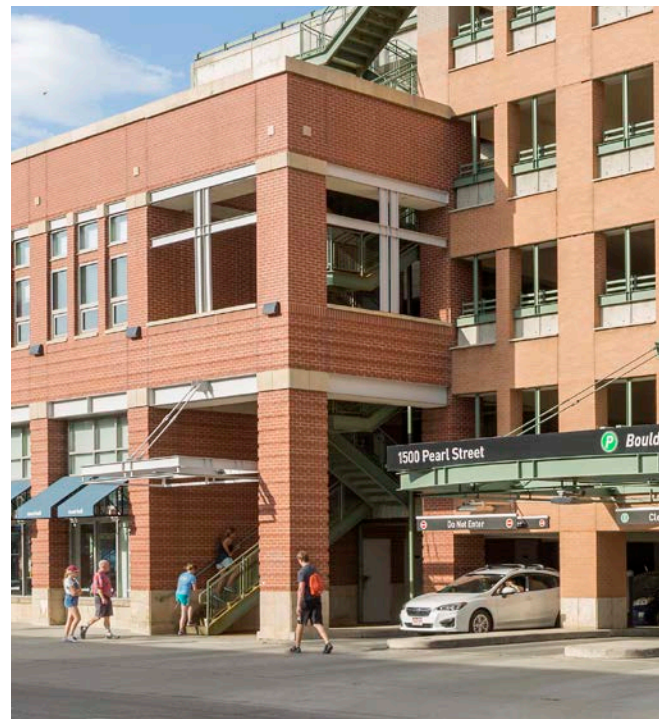
**1.07** An Off-Street Pedestrian Connection shall be designed to promote pedestrian use.

Off-Street Pedestrian Connection shall have:

- a. A minimum width of 15 feet
- b. The majority of its length open to the sky (uncovered)
- c. Open public access during at least business hours, preferably 24 hours
- d. Pedestrian-oriented lighting
- e. Residential or commercial uses along at least part of its length (see ["Street Level Facade Design & Uses"](#))
- f. Connections to adjacent Open Spaces, Parks, or the South Platte Riverfront. (See ["Street Level Facade Design & Uses"](#))
- g. Special paving materials or other elements to distinguish pedestrian use areas from vehicle use areas when an Off-Street Pedestrian Connection is integrated into a Private Access Drive



10. Off-Street Pedestrian Connections shall be designed to promote pedestrian use, which may include pedestrian-oriented lighting and active commercial uses.



11. Limiting the width of driveways and consolidating vehicle and utility access areas can help minimize pedestrian impacts.

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- 1.08** If passenger loading areas cannot be accommodated in an Alley or Private Access Drive, Primary Street facing passenger loading areas shall be designed to minimize pedestrian impacts.

Appropriate locations include:

- A full-time curbside drop off lane that does not require narrowing of the Amenity Zone or sidewalk
- Within an Interior Vehicle Court or off-street parking facility

Inappropriate locations include:

- Between the sidewalk and building entrance, such as a porte cochere

- 1.09** On-street passenger loading areas shall not encroach into the Amenity Zone or sidewalk.

## Design Guidelines

- 1.10** Zone lots located on the same block frontage should share vehicle access using an Alley or Private Access Drive.

*Note that a Private Access Drive may connect to an Interior Vehicle Court rather than connecting between two frontages.*

- 1.11** Alleys, Private Access Drives and Off-Street Pedestrian Connections with an entrance on the South Platte Riverfront or Cherry Creek trail should be oriented to frame views of the river or creek.

- 1.12** New developments should avoid artificially raised or lowered grades where possible.



12. This Private Access Drive primarily serves as an Off-Street Pedestrian Connection and can also accommodate vehicle access to parking areas.

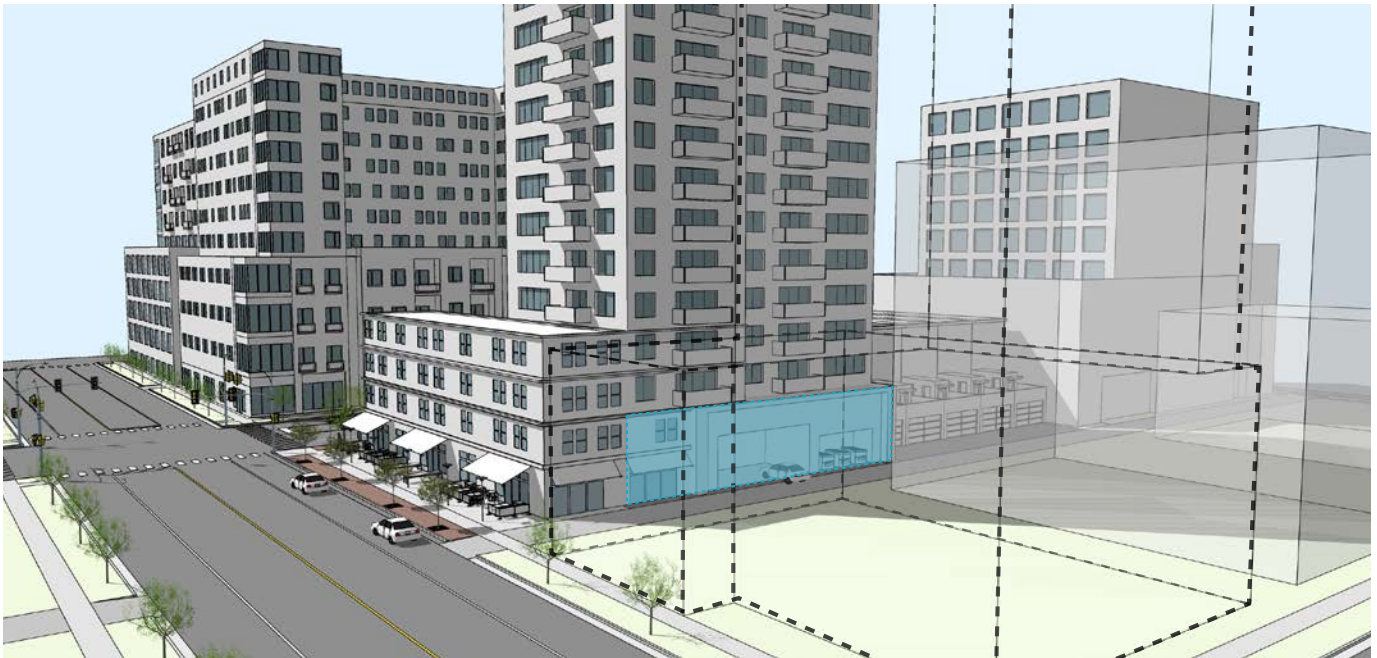
## DOTI REVIEW OF VEHICLE ACCESS

Vehicle access, including the design of Private Access Drives, is subject to review and approval by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure. In some cases, DOTI review may result in required changes that deviate from these DSG.

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*13. Blocks shall be configured to consolidate Vehicle Access Points using Alleys or Private Access Drives.*



# Street Frontage & Enhanced Setback

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The configuration of the street frontage, including building setback locations, establishes the interface between the edges of a block and the adjacent Public Realm. Building frontages along a block will generally be configured into one of the following frontage types:

- Building facades located near the minimum Primary Street setback defined by the Denver Zoning Code
- An Enhanced Commercial Setback to extend the Public Realm between the sidewalk and building
- An Enhanced Residential Setback to provide a transition from the Public Realm to private residential units at the Street Level

The design standards and guidelines in this section promote pedestrian-oriented frontage configurations that reflect the desired character of adjacent streets and uses, including riverfront and corner locations.

New development that reinforces desired existing patterns of frontages and setbacks enrich and support these familiar qualities of the city.

## Intent Statements

- 1.E To promote active pedestrian-oriented streets**
- 1.F To promote engagement between building uses and the Public Realm**
- 1.G To encourage additional space for pedestrian activity and related amenities**

### DENVER ZONING CODE STREET FRONTAGE REQUIREMENTS

The Denver Zoning Code provides specific requirements related to building frontage, including minimum setbacks (which vary for Street Level residential units), maximum build-to ranges and minimum Private Open Space areas on larger Zone Lots.

The design standards and guidelines in this section build from the Denver Zoning Code requirements and provide additional guidance regarding the location and design of frontage elements.



14. The configuration of the street frontage, including setback and Open Space locations, establishes the interface between the edges of a block and the adjacent Public Realm.

# Street Frontage & Enhanced Setback

## Design Standards

- 1.13** Street frontages shall be configured to promote pedestrian activity around the edges of a block.

Appropriate techniques include:

- Enhanced Commercial Setbacks
- Enhanced Residential Setbacks
- Open Space

*Building facades less than 5 feet from the Primary Street Zone Lot Line are most appropriate where there is ample pedestrian space in the Right-of-Way and no outdoor use areas are planned.*

- 1.14** An Enhanced Commercial Setback shall be configured to promote pedestrian activity and engagement of interior uses.

- Provide at least 5 feet to extend the Public Realm between the sidewalk and building where significant pedestrian traffic or outdoor uses are anticipated, especially along Key Streets and the South Platte Riverfront
- Locate Enhanced Commercial Setback at-grade with the adjacent sidewalk
- Incorporate pedestrian-oriented design features, such as public art, outdoor seating, lighting, landscaping, building entries, etc. (see ["Street Level Facade Design & Uses"](#))

- 1.15** An Enhanced Residential Setback shall be configured to provide a transition between the Public Realm and Street Level residential uses.

- Provide at least 7 feet (15 feet on the South Platte Riverfront) to provide a transition from the Public Realm to private residential units at the Street Level
- Provide a clear visual view and connection between the Public Realm and entries to residential units
- Incorporate design features to provide a public-private transition such as stoops, landscaping, terraces, and raised entryways (see ["Street Level Facade Design & Uses"](#))

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### ENHANCED COMMERCIAL SETBACKS



An Enhanced Commercial Setback is the additional space created when buildings with Street Level frontages that do not contain residential units are set back at least 5 feet from the Primary Street property line, but are still positioned within the Primary Street build-to range provided in the Denver Zoning Code. They can range in size from modest setback areas provided by building offsets to larger areas with outdoor patio seating, landscaping or other amenities.

### ENHANCED RESIDENTIAL SETBACKS



An Enhanced Residential Setback is the additional space created when buildings with Street Level frontages containing residential units are set back at least 7 feet (15 feet on the River) from the Primary Street property line, but are still positioned within the Primary Street build-to range provided in the Denver Zoning Code. They provide space for a transition from the Public Realm to private residential units, which may include porches, stoops, landscaping and other features.

# Street Frontage & Enhanced Setback

## Design Guidelines

**1.16** Enhanced Commercial Setback areas should be located in areas where limited sidewalk width otherwise prevents outdoor use areas.

**1.17** The location of the Primary Street facade should generally align with established setback patterns on adjacent Zone Lots.

*Note that adjusted setback patterns may be appropriate to accommodate an enhanced setback, or to improve street enclosure ratio (see [“Streetwall Height”](#)).*

**1.18** When existing setbacks vary on either side of a building site, an infill building should be located to align with the most appropriate setback or create a transition between the two.

**1.19** At the intersection of two Primary Streets, the frontages should be configured to clearly define the corner and enhance a sense of street enclosure.

Appropriate techniques include:

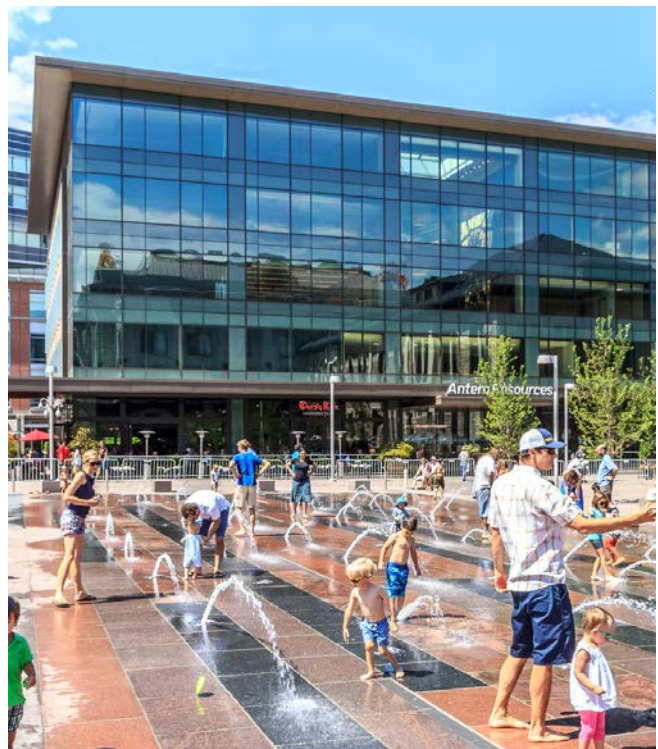
- Locate building facades less than 5 feet from the Primary Street property line
- Use a distinctive building corner treatment to highlight a primary building entry (see [“Building Entries”](#)).

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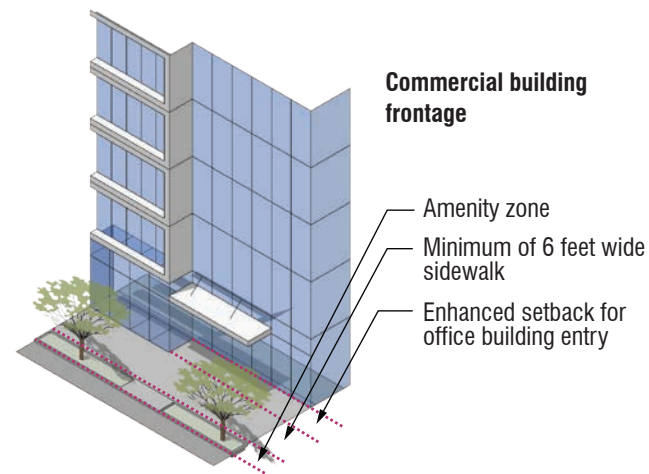
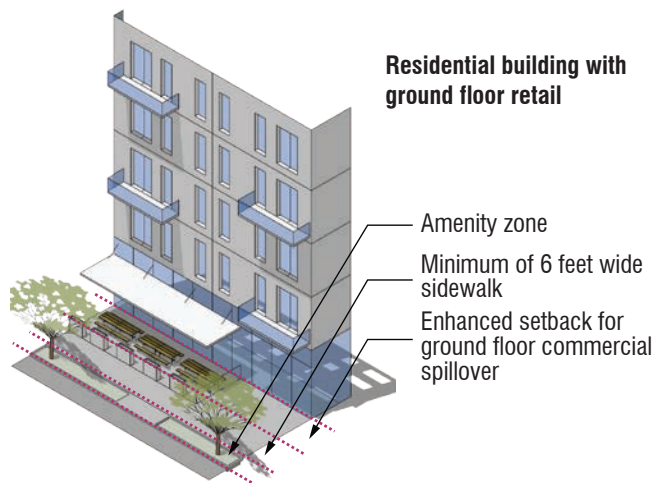
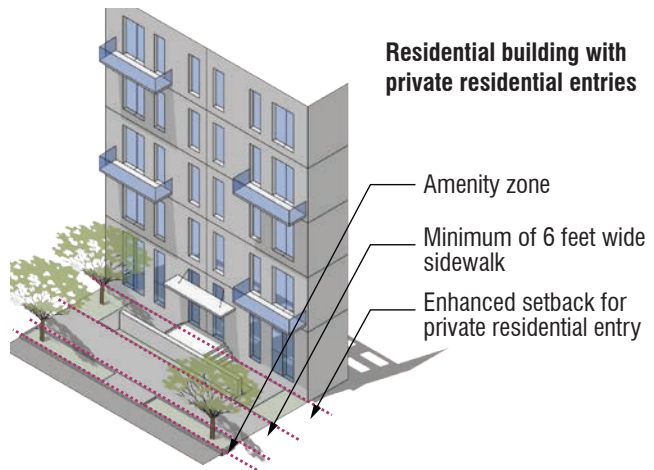
15. An Enhanced Commercial Setback is appropriate to extend the Public Realm between the sidewalk and building where significant pedestrian traffic or outdoor uses are anticipated.



16. An Open Space shall be configured to promote pedestrian connections between the Public Realm and private development.



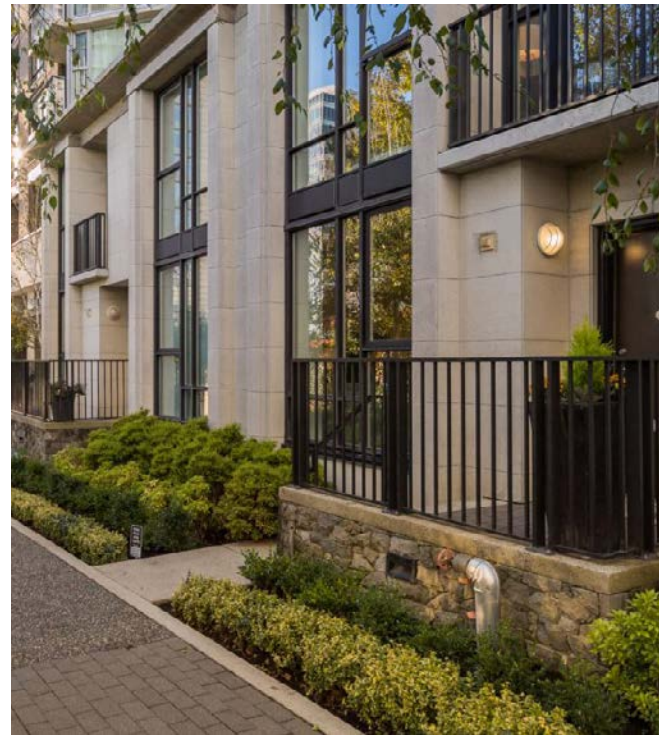
# Street Frontage & Enhanced Setback



17. Street Level Active Uses can incorporate Enhanced Setbacks to provide additional space for pedestrian movement, outdoor use areas, landscaping, and other related amenities.

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 Development Along the 5280 Trail



18. An Enhanced Residential Setback shall be configured to provide a transition between the Public Realm and adjacent residential uses.



19. Enhanced Commercial Setback areas should be located in areas where limited sidewalk width otherwise prevents outdoor use areas.

# Open Space Configuration

As Downtown Denver continues to grow, the need for Open Space becomes even more important. Private development can contribute to an open space network that is thoughtfully integrated into the built urban fabric. When properly designed and managed, Open Space can improve the pedestrian experience by serving a variety of outdoor uses in the form of plazas, forecourts, landscaped setbacks, mid-block pedestrian connections, courtyards, gardens, playgrounds and dog parks. A network of Open Space contributes much needed areas for retreat, relaxation, and recreation in the urban environment where parkland is scarce. Open Space can also serve as an area of activation and socialization allowing for spillover of ground floor retail spaces.

Open Space must be considered concurrent with site design and building programming, as part of an iterative design process that considers size, placement, sun exposure, accessibility and visibility from the right-of-way. In addition to appropriate location of Open Space, the use and format are to be appropriated to reflect the needs of the neighborhood and support citywide objectives.



20. Open Space should aim to accommodate landscaping, seating, lighting, and protection from the elements.

Site Design & Vehicle Access  
Street Frontage & Enhanced Setback  
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## Intent Statements

- 1.H To support adjacent existing or planned open space networks**
- 1.I To break down long building frontages**
- 1.J To ensure sunlight and human comfort is maximized within Open Spaces**
- 1.K To provide areas for pedestrian respite and accommodate a variety of outdoor uses**
- 1.L To promote the safety and visibility of Open Space**

## OPEN SPACE

For the purpose of these DSG, an Open Space is a privately-owned space that is adjacent to and physically open to the street, allowing public access at least during business hours and meeting specific Denver Zoning Code criteria applicable to Private Open Space.

Examples include privately-owned courtyards, plazas, and similar features. An Open Space is differentiated from an Enhanced Setback by its dimensions, which may extend beyond the maximum build-to range specified in the Denver Zoning Code, but typically would occur along only a limited percentage of the street frontage. It is differentiated from a Park because it is privately-owned and would generally not provide neighborhood-level recreation space.





# Open Space Configuration

## Design Standards

- 1.20** Open Space shall be configured to promote pedestrian connections between the Public Realm and private development.
- Locate Open Space to serve as a continuation of the Public Realm.
  - Locate Open Space at the same elevation as the adjacent sidewalk whenever possible. Where significant elevation differences exist between the Public Realm and Open Space, maintain at least one primary at-grade connection with the sidewalk.
  - Locate and orient Open Space to maximize sky exposure and solar gain in winter months for human comfort
  - Configure Open Space to provide a direct visual connection to the Public Realm.
  - Activate Open Space with pedestrian-oriented design features (see ["Street Level Facade Design & Uses"](#))
  - Where possible locate Open Space to highlight access to an Off-Street Pedestrian Connection
- 1.21** The scale of Open Space shall be well sized and proportioned (not fragmented) to accommodate functional uses.

## Design Guidelines

- 1.22** Open Space should be located to create a consistent network of Open Spaces throughout the block, street and neighborhood.
- 1.23** Open Space should be located and sized to accommodate a variety of uses complementary to the adjacent building uses.

*Note: Consider dog parks and playgrounds at residential buildings, and plazas with landscaping and seating for commercial uses.*

Site Design & Vehicle Access  
Street Frontage & Enhanced Setback  
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- 1.24** Open Space, such as forecourts, plazas, and gardens, should be used to enhance prominent building entrances.
- 1.25** Open Space should accommodate a combination of the following elements:
- Landscaping,
  - Seating,
  - Lighting,
  - Protection from the elements, and
  - Public art
- 1.26** Large Open Spaces (approximately 10,000 square feet or more) should be designed to create smaller defined sub-areas that reflect the human scale.
- 1.27** Open Space should incorporate both hardscape and landscape areas.
- [See Setback and Open Space Design in Chapter 3.](#)



21. Configure Open Space to provide a direct visual connection to the Public Realm.

# Tower Placement & Separation

Tower placement and separation addresses the location of Tower building elements when using the Denver Zoning Code Standard Tower or Point Tower building forms, including the orientation of tower elements and separation between towers.

The design standards and guidelines in this section promote Tower locations and orientations that preserve access to sunlight, frame views and maintain spacing between towers along the skyline. They also promote Tower designs that are located or stepped back from the Lower Story Facade to preserve Human Scale, reinforce the Lower Stories as the defining element of the Public Realm, and enhance pedestrian comfort by interrupting any downward wind shear from a Tower.

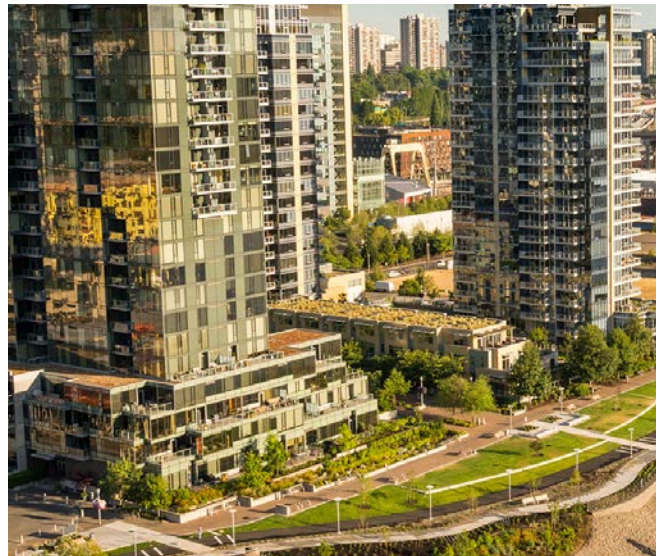
Tower placement and separation work together with Tower massing and design to determine the overall visual and physical effects on adjacent properties and the Public Realm. Tower massing, including floor plate alternatives, are addressed in [“Building Massing”](#). Tower design details are addressed in [“Facade Articulation”](#).

## Intent Statements

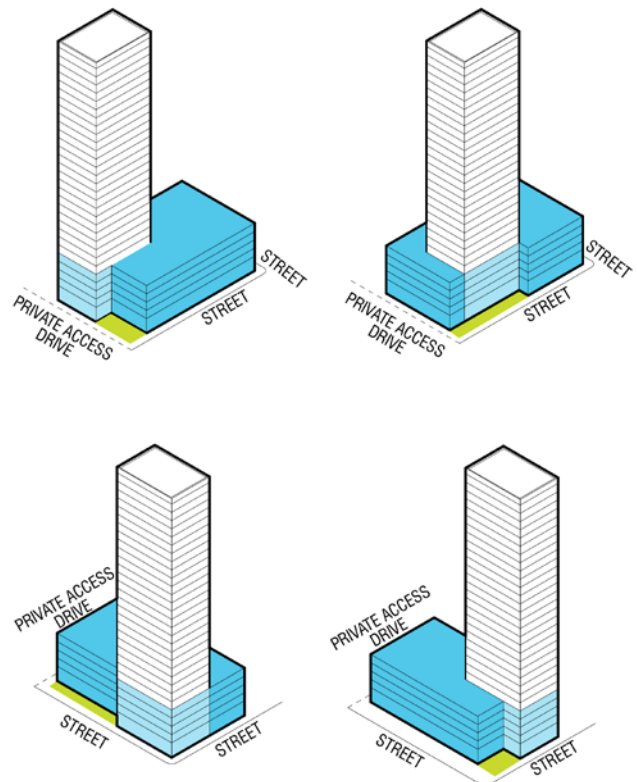
- 1.M To ensure access to light and air to the Street Level**
- 1.N To promote visual permeability from within and outside the neighborhood**
- 1.O To promote Human Scale at the Street Level**
- 1.P To promote building forms that contribute positively to the Denver skyline**
- 1.Q To provide daylight to uses located in Towers**
- 1.R To promote context sensitive design**

Site Design & Vehicle Access  
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22. Appropriately locating Towers will protect access to light and air and promote Human Scale at the Street Level.



23. Illustration of tower location options.

# Tower Placement & Separation

Site Design & Vehicle Access  
Street Frontage & Enhanced Setback  
Open Space Configuration  
**Tower Placement & Separation**  
Service Area & Utility Location

Surface Parking  
Development Along the 5280 Trail

## Design Standards

- 1.28** Towers shall be located and oriented to preserve light and air and promote Human Scale at the Street Level.  
Appropriate techniques include:
- Orient a Tower perpendicular to the nearest street frontage unless such orientation would not maximize tower separation or sky exposure
  - Set a Tower back from the Lower Story Facade by a minimum of 15 feet
  - Where a Lower Story Facade is setback 15 feet or more, align the tower with that portion of the Lower Story Facade
  - Extend a Tower directly above a Lower Story Facade at a building corner located at the intersection of two Primary Streets.
- 1.29** Towers shall be located and oriented to minimize impacts on adjacent Historic Resources, Character Buildings, or lower-scale zone districts.  
Appropriate techniques include:
- Stepping the building away from Historic Resources, Character Buildings, or lower-scale zone districts.
  - Providing an intentional setback by a minimum of 15 feet away from Historic Resources, Character Buildings, or lower-scale zone districts.

## Design Guidelines

- 1.30** Tower placement, spacing, and orientation should be positioned to preserve views and sky exposure from adjacent buildings, Open Spaces, amenity areas, and the Public Realm.
- 1.31** Towers should be staggered when located in a clustered arrangement to create visual interest within the skyline.  
Appropriate techniques include:
- Offset the towers in plan of sufficient measure that achieves a vertical staggering effect when viewed from a distance
  - Vary the height of the Towers by 5 stories or more to provide a difference in height that can be perceived at the Street Level
- 1.32** Towers should be placed to maximize the distance between the Tower and adjacent building facades beyond the minimum requirements.
- 1.33** Towers should be located to serve as visual anchors at important locations.  
Appropriate locations include:
- Intersection of Key Streets
  - Transit node
  - Large public Park
  - At Gateway Corners
- 1.34** Towers should be placed and oriented to improve building energy performance, natural ventilation, and daylighting.

# Service Area & Utility Location

Service area and utility configuration addresses the location and functional characteristics of the services and utilities that support residential and commercial uses that activate the neighborhood.

Service areas may include, but are not limited to:

- Waste/recycling storage and collection areas
- Loading docks

Utilities may include, but are not limited to:

- Vents
- Meters
- Transformers and mechanical equipment
- Telecommunications equipment

The design standards and guidelines promote service area and utility configurations that are concealed within and behind buildings to promote a safer, more comfortable, and attractive Public Realm and pedestrian environment.

## Intent Statements

- 1.S To reduce conflicts between servicing activities, pedestrians, and cyclists**
- 1.T To minimize the visibility and impact of service areas to the Public Realm**
- 1.U To promote the use of Alleys or Private Access Drives as the primary means of accessing service areas and utilities**
- 1.V To protect Enhanced Setback areas, Open Spaces and other highly pedestrian-oriented areas from noise and odor impacts associated with service areas**
- 1.W To minimize and discourage multiple curb cuts along Primary Streets**
- 1.X To integrate utility and mechanical systems into facade elements**

Site Design & Vehicle Access  
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**Service Area & Utility Location**

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Development Along the 5280 Trail

## Design Standards

- 1.35** Dumpsters or other waste, recycling or composting receptacles associated with building uses shall be located and configured to be visually away and screened from the Public Realm.

See [“Fences, Walls, & Screens”](#).

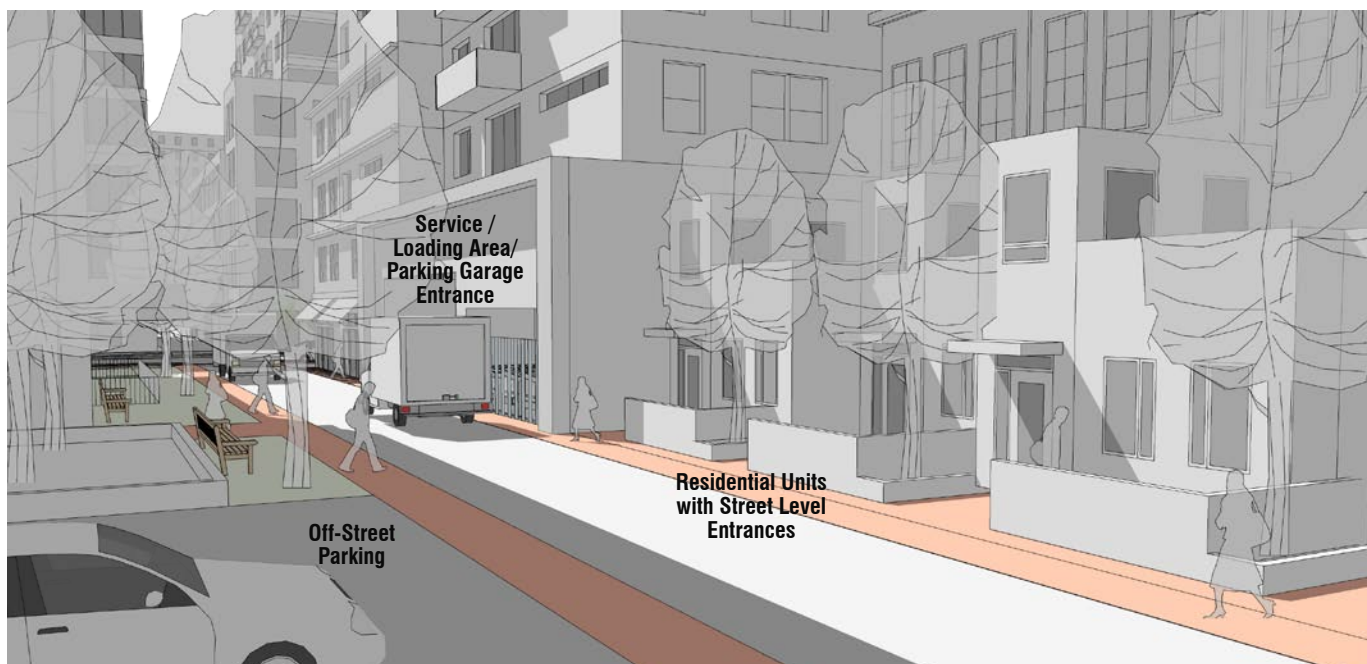
## Design Guidelines

- 1.36** Service areas and utilities should be located and configured to minimize impacts on the Public Realm.  
Appropriate service area and utility locations include:
  - a. Along an Alley or Private Access Drive
  - b. Within a building, to the rear with other back-of-house uses or beneath the Street Level
  - c. Within a building alcove when locating along an Alley or Private Access Drive is not possible
  - d. Within a sub-surface vault or elevatorInappropriate service area and utility locations include:
  - e. Adjacent to an Enhanced Setback or Open Space
  - f. Adjacent to a building entry
  - g. Any frontage facing the South Platte Riverfront

## PUBLIC UTILITY REQUIREMENTS

Denver's local utility provider, Xcel Energy, must approve utility locations. The utility provider also reserves the right to install utilities in permanent on-site locations.





25. On-site loading, service areas, and utilities shall be located on the Alley or Private Access Drive, or within the building mass and away from pedestrian focused areas such as sidewalks or Open Space.

- 1.37** Access to service areas should be through Vehicle Access Points shared with other service areas or uses to minimize pedestrian and Public Realm impacts.

See [Standard 1.03](#) for additional information.

- 1.38** When not located along an Alley or Private Access Drive, utilities should be located within a building alcove, utility room, or landscaped area and be fully screened from the Public Realm.

- 1.39** Where service areas and utilities are not located away from the Public Realm, they should be screened to limit negative impacts.

- 1.40** When utilities must be visible and cannot be screened from the Public Realm, they should be painted with a color consistent with the building, family of street furnishings, or used as a canvas for an artistic element.

- 1.41** To the extent possible, consolidate utility services into a single area and designate a utility corridor to minimize disruption to the Public Realm.



# Surface Parking

Surface Parking is discouraged in a downtown context as they introduce gaps into the urban fabric and affect the walkability and vitality of the Street Level. When needed, Surface Parking areas must use strategies to reduce the real and perceived size of the lot, create visual relief from the large expanse of cars or vacant spaces, and reduce the local environmental effects through landscaping.

Great parking designs are safe, attractive, drained efficiently, properly landscaped and well-integrated into the street. Good surface parking landscaping offers shade and visual relief while maintaining visibility. It is imperative for parking area lighting to provide coverage for pedestrian and vehicular safety, protection against assault, theft and vandalism, and comfort of the user.

## Intent Statements

- 1.Y To ensure that Surface Parking is well-integrated into the streetscape**
- 1.Z To ensure that Surface Parking contributes positively to a sustainable urban environment**
- 1.AA To minimize the visual impacts of parked cars on the Public Realm**
- 1.AB To encourage Surface Parking designs that provide flexibility for temporary events**
- 1.AC To ensure that Surface Parking design promotes pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular safety**
- 1.AD To ensure that Surface Parking areas are not the dominant characteristic of the site**

## Design Standards

- 1.42** Access to Surface Parking shall be consolidated to minimize the number and width of driveway impacts across the Public Realm.

Site Design & Vehicle Access  
Street Frontage & Enhanced Setback  
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Service Area & Utility Location

**Surface Parking**  
Development Along the 5280 Trail

- 1.43** Surface Parking shall be screened from adjacent Enhanced Setback areas and Open Spaces.

Appropriate screening techniques include:

- a. Trees and other vegetation
- b. Garden walls

*See “Denver Zoning Code Parking/ Screening Requirements.”*

- 1.44** Surface Parking shall incorporate enhanced pedestrian lighting at highly trafficked areas such as entrances/exits, kiosks, pathways, and loading/unloading zones.

- 1.45** Surface Parking that is adjacent to a Primary Street shall incorporate a landscaped buffer between the parking lot and the right-of-way.

Appropriate screening techniques include:

- a. Trees
- b. Shrubs at 42” or less
- c. Landscaping
- d. Garden walls

- 1.46** Surface parking shall limit the use of dark surfaces within the parking lot through the use of light-colored materials, such as concrete, white asphalt or light-colored pavers to reduce surface temperatures and heat island effect.



26. Landscaping, porous pavers, and other techniques should be used in surface parking areas to contribute to a more sustainable urban environment.

# Surface Parking

Site Design & Vehicle Access  
Street Frontage & Enhanced Setback  
Open Space Configuration  
Tower Placement & Separation  
Service Area & Utility Location

**Surface Parking**  
Development Along the 5280 Trail

## Design Guidelines

**1.47** Surface Parking should be located at the rear of the building and away from Primary Streets.

**1.48** Surface Parking should be designed to minimize the length of the lot frontage that is adjacent to a street and/or sidewalk.

**1.49** Surface Parking with a dimension greater than 150 feet should be divided into multiple zones through landscaping.

*Note: Refer to the DZC for additional zoning standards.*

**1.50** Surface Parking should be designed to provide flexibility for temporary uses such as pop-up events and public gatherings.

**1.51** Surface Parking should distribute landscaping throughout the site to soften and screen parking lot edges, reinforce vehicular circulation routes, improve pedestrian conditions and maximize shade and stormwater benefits.

**1.52** Surface Parking designs should incorporate low impact development (LID) principles for stormwater management.

Appropriate features include, but are not limited to:

- a. Permeable paving
- b. Bioswales and bio-retention areas
- c. Landscaping (using native and drought tolerant species that require little maintenance)
- d. Tree canopy, soil infrastructure, and irrigation to support health and long term viability

**1.53** Surface Parking should incorporate decorative paving or changes in paving material or color to emphasize edges, pedestrian routes, loading areas and other special features within the parking lot.



27. Surface Parking with a dimension greater than 150 feet should be divided into multiple zones through landscaping.

# Development Along the 5280 Trail

The 5280 Trail will link neighborhoods and connect people along a 5-mile urban trail that weaves through communities rich with culture, key landmarks, and vibrant activity. The 5280 Trail is envisioned along 21st Street in Arapahoe Square, Chopper Circle and 11th Street in CPV-Auraria, and 12th Avenue, Acoma Street, and 9th Avenue in the Golden Triangle. The design and layout of the 5280 Trail will adapt to the varying conditions found within each neighborhood. The 5280 Trail will become a focus of mobility that will better connect several downtown neighborhoods to each other, and importantly serve as a 'hub and spoke' system that expands outward to connect neighborhoods throughout the city.

Due to 5280's unique relationship with the three districts, the following guidelines are to be considered for development and site improvements along these streets.

## WHY THE 5280 TRAIL?

As a dedicated urban trail and linear park, the 5280 Trail is intended to unite urban life with Colorado's outdoor culture. It will encourage residents, employees and visitors to use active modes of transportation while engaging in Downtown's cultural and civic facilities. More than a trail, it will add green space to Downtown and provide a safe and beautiful place to actively recreate and engage with Downtown neighborhoods, cultural amenities and more.

The 5280 Trail also presents economic opportunities as well. According to a San Francisco State University study, 66 percent of shops on San Francisco's Valencia Street reported business improved after the city reduced the width for cars, and widened sidewalk and added bike infrastructure. A 2008 Australian study showed that per square foot, bike parking produced more than three times the revenue for businesses than car parking in an hour.

Site Design & Vehicle Access  
Street Frontage & Enhanced Setback  
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Surface Parking  
**Development Along the 5280 Trail**

## Intent Statements

- 1.AE To ensure new development supports the 5280 Trail**
- 1.AF To encourage distinct design characteristics that are indicative of the individual neighborhoods along the 5280 Trail**

## Design Guidelines

- 1.54** Projects should coordinate with City departments early in the process to integrate the 5280 Trail into the design
- 1.55** Streetscape and landscape design should contribute to and reinforce the presence of the 5280 Trail.
- 1.56** Areas along the 5280 Trail should incorporate Enhanced Commercial Setbacks for retail, dining, and other highly active uses.
- 1.57** Highly Active Uses at the Street Level should be located along building frontages facing the 5280 Trail.
- 1.58** Open Space along the 5280 Trail should be highly activated with pedestrian amenities and landscaping.
- 1.59** Projects along the 5280 Trail should provide additional pedestrian and bicycle-related amenities.  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Additional bicycle parking
  - b. Pedestrian lighting
  - c. Bicycle repair stations
  - d. Public seating
  - e. Enhanced tree canopy coverage and infrastructure to support long-term growth

# Development Along the 5280 Trail

- 1.60** Vehicle curb cuts along the 5280 Trail should be minimized.
- 1.61** A cohesive design aesthetic should be developed that is unique to each neighborhood and reflect the goals of the 5280 Trail.
- 1.62** Projects adjacent to the 5280 Trail should incorporate distinctive wayfinding features, Public Art, and other sculptural design elements.
- 1.63** Development adjacent to the 5280 Trail should incorporate the 5280 Design Guidelines in coordination with DOTI and other City departments.

Site Design & Vehicle Access  
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## SECTIONS OF THE 5280 TRAIL IN AREAS ADDRESSED BY THE DOWNTOWN DSG



### Chopper Circle (CPV-Auraria)

The 5280 Trail runs along the south side of Chopper Circle from 11th Street across Speer Blvd. The 5280 then connects around the Downtown Children's Playground to the west end of Wynkoop Street.

### 21st Street (Arapahoe Square)

21st Street acts as an enhanced connection between the entertainment blocks around Coors Field to Benedict Fountain Park.

### 12th Avenue (Golden Triangle)

The 5280 Trail follows 12th Avenue to connect the civic core on Sherman Street to the arts and cultural campus at Acoma Street.

### Acoma Street (Golden Triangle)

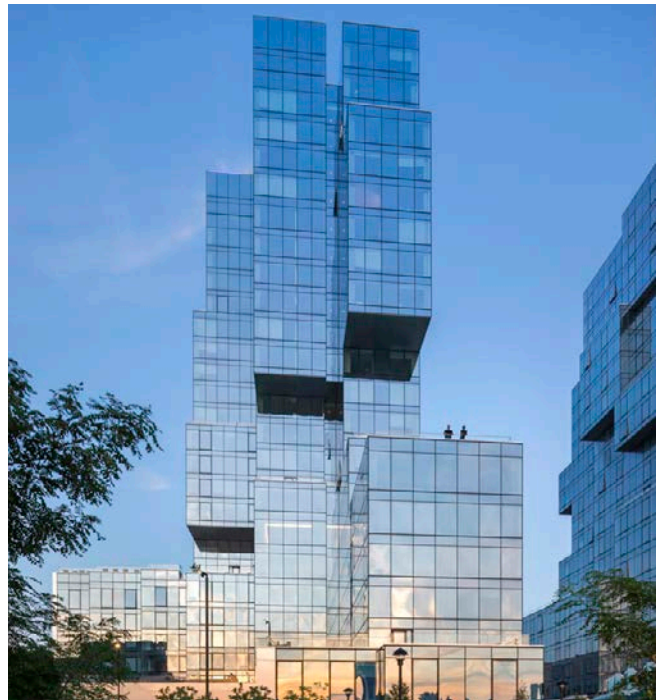
The 5280 Trail rolls down tree-lined Acoma Street to 9th Avenue before crossing over Speer Blvd via Bannock Street and continuing through Sunken Gardens Park.

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# Chapter 2 | Building Mass & Scale

Building Mass & Scale addresses the three-dimensional characteristics of building volume, particularly as it relates to the street and adjacent properties.

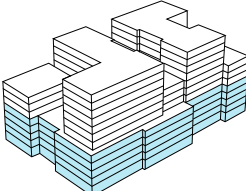
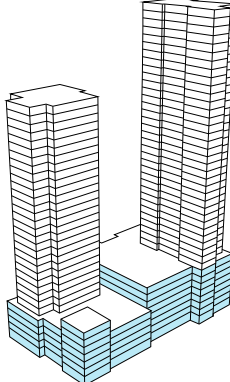
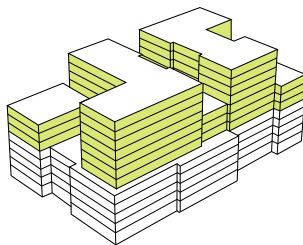
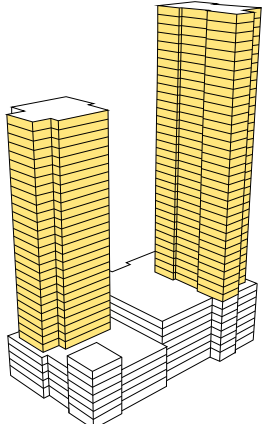


28. Configuring a building's mass and scale to develop a variety of volumes, using techniques such as shifts in the facade plane, breaks up monolithic building forms and adds Human Scale character.

# BUILDING FORM MASSING COMPONENTS BY ZONE DISTRICT

Some design standards and guidelines in this document refer to specific massing components of a building. Guidance for the Lower Stories of a building acknowledge the importance of Primary Street-Facing Facade design on the stories of a building closest to the pedestrian sidewalk while guidance for the Upper Stories or Tower components of a building acknowledge overall building mass and scale as well as impact on the skyline.

As illustrated below, the division between Lower Stories and Upper Stories/Tower is generally at the maximum height for a Denver Zoning Code-required Upper Story Setback. The division between Lower Stories and Upper Stories/Tower may be considered to be at a lower story when an Upper Story Setback is located below the maximum height specified in the Denver Zoning Code. For example, if an Upper Story Setback is located at the 2nd story, then stories 3+ will be considered to be the Upper Story Facade of a Denver Zoning Code General Building Form or the Tower Facade of a Denver Zoning Code Point Tower or Standard Tower Building Form.

FACADE LEVEL	EXAMPLE
<p><b>Lower Stories</b> <i>(applies to all building forms)</i></p> <p>Facade area <b>BELOW</b> DZC-required Upper Story Setback</p>	<div>  <p>(General Form)</p>  <p>(Tower Form)</p> </div>
<p><b>Upper Stories</b> <i>(applies to General building form only)</i></p> <p>Facade area <b>ABOVE</b> DZC-required Upper Story Setback</p>	<div>  <p>(General Form)</p> </div>
<p><b>Tower</b> <i>(applies to Standard Tower and Point Tower building forms only)</i></p> <p>Facade area <b>ABOVE</b> DZC-required Upper Story Setback</p>	<div>  <p>(Tower Form)</p> </div>

# Building Massing

Building Massing significantly impacts how the size of a structure is perceived by a person at the Street Level. Comfortable Streetwall height, Upper Story Setbacks, generous Tower separation distances, and Facades that are broken down into smaller individual masses, reduces the perceived bulk of a structure and creates a more visually interesting block. These strategies are especially important for portions of buildings that front onto the Public Realm.

The visual massing of Towers can be reduced with tall, slender and sculptural forms that complement Denver's skyline. Towers generally have reduced visual and physical impact on the Street Level when they have a limited Tower Floor Plate size, or when the overall Massing appears to be smaller through Upper Story Setbacks or setbacks that distinguish the Tower from the building's Lower Stories.

## POINT TOWER BUILDING FORM

The Denver Zoning Code Point Tower Building Form allows buildings that incorporate tall, slender Tower building elements with elevated design quality that preserve views and sky exposure while also minimizing the visibility of structured parking.

The Point Tower Building Form limits the floor area (Tower Floor Plate) of Tower building components above a specified height, in exchange for a greater height allowance.

The design standards and guidelines in this section are intended to build on Denver Zoning Code requirements.

### Building Massing

Streetwall Height

Building Fit and Transitions

## Intent Statements

- 2.A To ensure Building Massing supports a comfortable Street Level experience**
- 2.B To encourage building modules that break down long undifferentiated frontages**
- 2.C To use Building Massing to purposefully reinforce building uses or adjacent distinctive features**
- 2.D To promote building sizes and proportions that contribute to visual permeability within and across the neighborhood**
- 2.E To allow creative and innovative Building Massing**
- 2.F To coordinate Building Massing across the Lower Story Facade and Upper Story Facade/Tower Facade**
- 2.G To encourage buildings that respond to the surrounding context**



# Building Massing

## Design Standards

### 2.01 Building Massing shall promote a sense of Human Scale at the Street Level.

Appropriate techniques include:

- a. Incorporating Upper Story Setbacks or stepbacks to reduce the visual impact of taller buildings on the Public Realm
- b. Clearly distinguishing the Street Level from the remainder of the Lower Stories (see [“Street Level Facade Design & Uses”](#))

### 2.02 Buildings with over approximately 150 feet of Primary Street frontage shall incorporate coordinated Building Massing techniques on the Lower Story Facade.

Appropriate techniques include:

- a. A minimum one-story change in the height\* for the depth of an Upper Story Setback (15 feet)
- b. A Facade plane change with a minimum depth or projection of 3 feet that extends the full height of the Lower Story Facade
- c. A building material or color change that extends the full height of the Lower Story Facade
- d. Additional techniques that achieve the overall intent of this standard

*Note that Upper Story Setbacks at or below the height specified in the Denver Zoning Code will count towards the zoning requirement for an Upper Story Setback.*

### 2.03 Changes in Building Massing shall be purposeful, reinforcing a proportionate composition of massing shifts.

Appropriate techniques include:

- a. Identifying changes in interior uses
- b. Enhancing important building features
- c. Reinforcing structural bays or other architectural systems
- d. Clearly defining the Street Level, Lower Stories, and Upper Stories/Tower

#### Building Massing

Streetwall Height

Building Fit and Transitions



29. Coordinated Massing techniques, such as changes in height of an Upper Story Setback, facade plane, and materials, are important to breaking down the appearance of building bulk and providing visual interest on long facades.

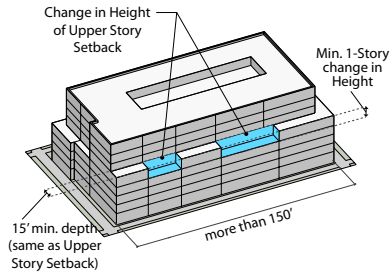


30. Changes in Building Massing shall be purposeful and reinforce the design intent of the building.

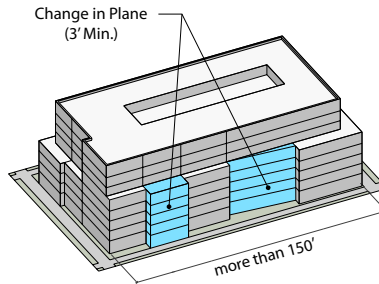


## COORDINATED MASSING SHIFT TECHNIQUES

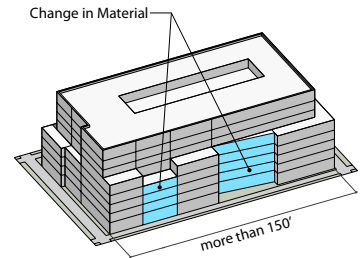
Coordinated Massing techniques help divide a larger building into smaller modules that promote a Human Scale urban environment. Massing techniques that may be combined to meet [Standard 2.02](#) are described and illustrated below.



31. Changes in Upper Story Setback height should be a minimum of one story for the depth of the Upper Story Setback (15 feet).



32. Facade plane changes should be a minimum of 3 feet and apply to the full height of the Lower Story Facade.



33. Changes in materials/color should apply to the full height of the Lower Story Facade.

### Combining Massing Techniques (A-C)



34. A coordinated change in Upper Story Setback height, facade plane, and materials/color creates a distinct Building Massing break that divides the facade into smaller modules. This graphic depicts how all three Building Massing techniques described in [Standard 2.02](#) may be used to meet the standard.



# Building Massing

## Building Massing

Streetwall Height

Building Fit and Transitions

### Examples of Flexibility for Creative Designs that Meet Building Massing Intent Statements



35. Flexibility may be provided for alternative designs that meet the intent statements for building massing and scale but do not utilize the specific Building Massing techniques described in [Standard 2.02](#). Refer to the Introduction chapter for additional notes on [Flexibility for Creative or Innovative Designs](#).

# Building Massing

**2.04** When multiple Towers are located on the same Zone Lot, they shall have distinct Massing and not be identical in shape.

Appropriate techniques include:

- Towers of different height
- Changes in Tower Floor Plate size or dimension
- Shifts in Facade plane

**2.05** When using the Denver Zoning Code Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension Alternative available to the Point Tower Building Form and Standard Tower Building Form, a Tower shall exhibit exceptional creativity and iconic design.

Appropriate strategies include:

- Creative Tower designs incorporating tapering Tower Floor Plate sizes that require flexibility for some larger Tower Floor Plates within the tapering design
- Creative Tower Floor Plate designs that incorporate curves or unusual angles
- Creative Tower designs incorporating other characteristics described in [“Exceptional Creativity & Iconic Design”](#) at right

## TOWER FLOOR PLATE LINEAR DIMENSION ALTERNATIVE

The Denver Zoning Code sets forth a maximum Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension for the Point Tower Building Form and Standard Tower Building Form.

The Denver Zoning Code also specifically enables a Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension Alternative that allows additional length to provide flexibility for creative designs that clearly meet the intent of these DSG. The Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension Alternative varies by building form, as specified in the Denver Zoning Code.

City Staff and the Design Advisory Board will use [Standard 2.05](#) to determine whether a Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension Alternative is appropriate for a specific Tower design.

### Building Massing

Streetwall Height

Building Fit and Transitions



36. The newly constructed Vancouver House in British Columbia, Canada, incorporates a tapering design with curves and unusual angles.

## EXCEPTIONALLY CREATIVE OR INNOVATIVE DESIGNS

Iconic building designs establish a focal element in the urban environment that breaks from convention in a striking manner to create a special place. These structures are easily identifiable, recognizable, and stand out from their surrounding context. They often embody a sense of pride for the community, and may gain national or international recognition.

Iconic designs are:

- Unique: Does not follow convention
- Elegant: Simple design with sophisticated details
- Metaphorical: Design that represents a larger idea or philosophy
- Innovative: Forward thinking use of technology, materials or techniques
- Intentional: Design elements that are meaningful rather than decorative
- Enduring: Design that withstands the test of time



# Building Massing

## Design Guidelines

- 2.06** Building Massing techniques should be coordinated between Lower Story Facades and Upper Story Facades/Tower Facades to promote a cohesive design.
- 2.07** Building Massing should clearly communicate the base, middle, and top of the building.
- 2.08** Buildings with less than approximately 150 feet of Primary Street frontage should incorporate coordinated Massing techniques on the Lower Story Facade.
- See [Standard 2.02](#) for buildings with more than 150' of frontage.
- 2.09** Buildings with more than approximately 200 feet of Primary Street frontage should be designed to further reduce visual mass and scale.
- Appropriate strategies include:
- Combining all three Building Massing techniques described in [Standard 2.02](#)
  - Increasing the dimensions of the Massing techniques described in [Standard 2.02](#) (i.e., change a facade plane greater than 3 feet)
  - Increasing the depth of Upper Story Setbacks or incorporate additional setbacks on the Lower Story Facade
  - Breaking down the Lower Story Facade into visually separate modules
- 2.10** Building Massing should integrate creative designs to create architectural interest and reduce the overall scale of the building mass from the Street Level.
- Appropriate techniques include:
- Varying the location of Upper Story Setbacks above the Street Level
  - Incorporating curves, angles or other shapes into Street Level and Upper Story Setbacks

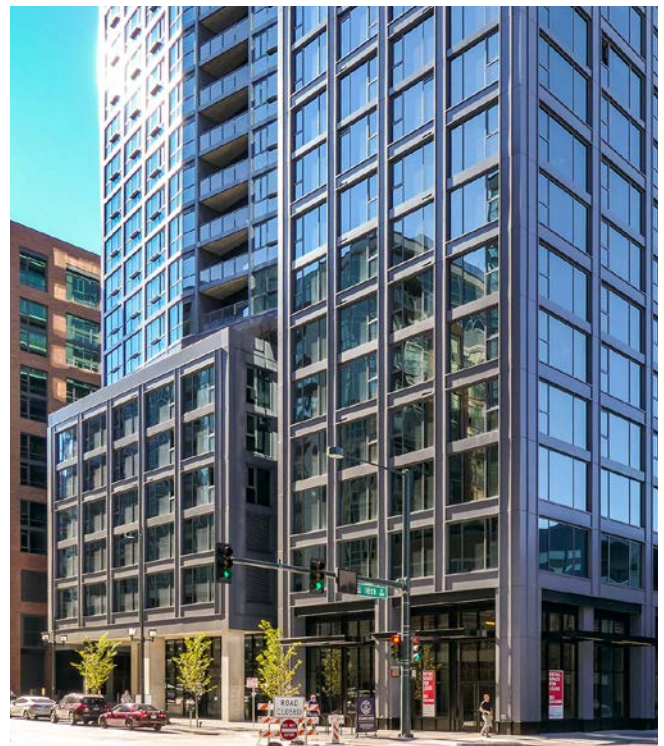
### Building Massing

Streetwall Height

Building Fit and Transitions



37. Breaking down the Lower Story Facade into visually separate modules is one strategy to further reduce visual mass and scale on buildings with more than 200 feet of Primary Street frontage.



38. Building Massing should emphasize key building features such as primary entries, or corner elements when located at street intersections.



# Building Massing

**2.11** Building Massing should emphasize key building features such as primary entries, or corner elements when located at street intersections.

**2.12** Tower Facades should incorporate facade plane changes or other similar Massing techniques to break down long frontages. Use a facade plane change or similar technique at a minimum interval depending on the Tower building form:

- a. Point Tower Building Form:  
Approximately 100 feet
- b. Standard Tower Building Form:  
Approximately 150 feet

**2.13** Towers should be shaped to increase the distance between adjacent building facades beyond minimum requirements.

Appropriate techniques include:

- a. Offset Towers
- b. Non-parallel walls
- c. Tapering or curved Towers

**2.14** The massing of Upper Stories and Towers should be shaped and organized to preserve and maximize sunlight and sky exposure from adjacent existing properties and the Public Realm.

Appropriate techniques include:

- a. Locating Upper Story Setback areas along an Enhanced Setback, Open Space, or other significant features in the Public Realm
- b. Providing sufficient separation between or orienting windows, balconies, or outdoor areas on adjacent properties to avoid looking directly into one another
- c. Shaping Towers to minimize Tower visibility from street level and shadow impacts

## Building Massing

Streetwall Height

Building Fit and Transitions

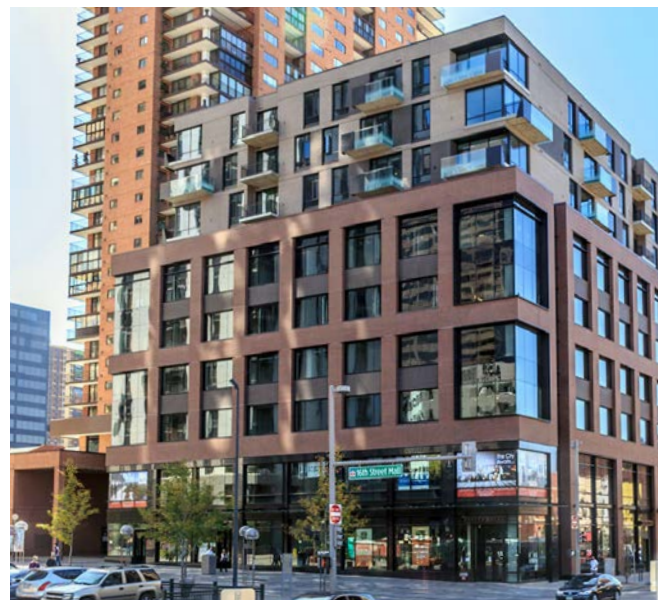
**2.15** The Building Massing of Upper Stories or Towers should incorporate opportunities to frame views from the Public Realm to important natural and neighborhood features.

Natural and neighborhood features may include:

- a. Street or visual corridor terminus
- b. Major intersection, key streets, bridge crossing, or transit node
- c. Important public Parks, plazas, or Open Spaces
- d. Rocky Mountains or the River

## SKY EXPOSURE

Sky exposure is the measurable amount of sky seen from a street, Park, or Open Space above and in between building masses. Bulky buildings can lead to a loss of sky exposure which can affect the comfort, quality, and use of the Public Realm. Shaping building mass can help protect access to the sky, improve the usability and enjoyment of outdoor spaces, and allow trees and vegetation to thrive.



39. Upper Story Setbacks should be oriented toward Enhanced Setbacks, Open Space, or other significant features in the Public Realm to preserve sunlight and maximize sky exposure.

# Building Massing

- 2.16** Building Massing should respond to the adjacent context especially at lower-scaled buildings and public spaces.

Appropriate techniques include:

- A setback of at least 10 feet from an adjacent side interior Zone Lot line
- An Upper Story Setback of at least 15 feet from the plane of the Lower Story Facade to reduce Streetwall height
- A step down in overall building height as perceived from the street
- Definition of building modules that reflect the size and shape of adjacent buildings

- 2.17** Buildings adjacent to, or across the street from, a Park or Open Space should use architectural Massing to reinforce a sense of place, enclosure, and security that strengthens the public amenity.

Appropriate techniques include:

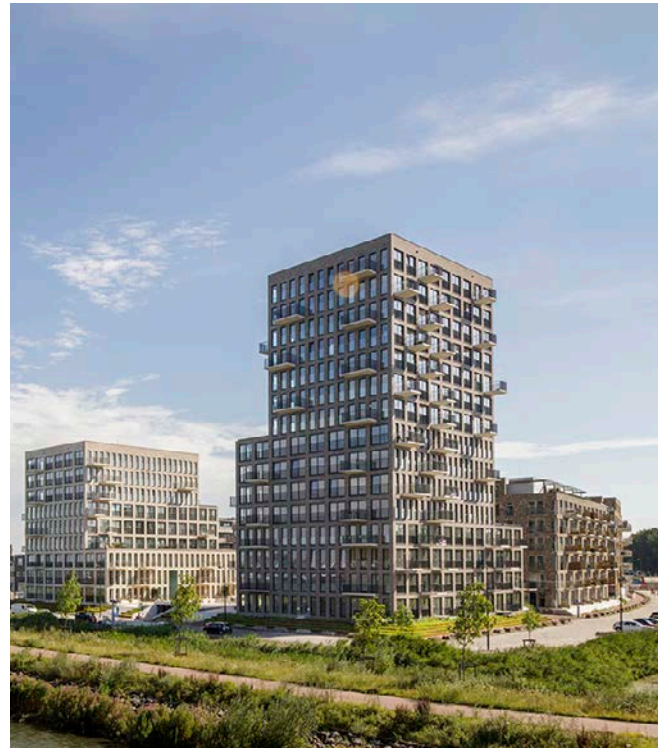
- Increasing building height as the Park or Open Space increases in size
- Orienting buildings with Active Uses and transparency towards the Park or Open Space
- Orienting Upper Story Setbacks along the Park or Open Space

See [Guideline 2.23](#) for more information.

## Building Massing

Streetwall Height

Building Fit and Transitions



40. Buildings adjacent to, or across the street from, a public Park or Open Space should use architectural Massing to reinforce a sense of place, enclosure, and security that strengthens the public amenity.

## USING ARCHITECTURE TO FRAME VIEWS

Building Massing can be used to frame views from the Public Realm to important focal points such as the Rocky Mountains, South Platte River, Cherry Creek, significant civic or cultural buildings, prominent architectural elements or Open Spaces. The organization of streets, Open Space, amenity areas, and Building Massing all contribute to the framing of significant neighborhood elements.

Towers and other tall building components can be an integral part of shaping what is being viewed. The design and placement of the building base, Tower, and adjacent Open Spaces work collectively to open up or frame a desired view. Well-designed tall buildings on prominent sites can become recognizable landmarks, providing points of orientation and visual interest within Arapahoe Square, CPV-Auraria, and the Golden Triangle.

# Streetwall Height

Collectively, the built environment shapes the pedestrian experience by creating a sense of enclosure and well-defined pedestrian zones. The character of the Streetwall (the predominant plane of the Primary Street-Facing Facade from the Street Level up to an Upper Story Setback or other significant shift in Building Massing) plays an important role in defining the edges of streets, Parks, and Open Space. Further, walkable streets that have a proportional sense of enclosure, tend to enhance the level of comfort felt at the Street Level.

This sense of enclosure is generally determined by the relationship between the height of the Streetwall and the width of the adjacent Public Realm (including the street and sidewalk) between the buildings. A proportionate Street Enclosure Ratio can make the Public Realm more comfortable and often contributes to pedestrian safety, as drivers have a tendency to slow down.

Streetwall height will often vary along a block frontage with Towers creating a high Street Enclosure Ratio and lower structures, such as row homes, create a comfortable Street Enclosure Ratio when combined with landscaping and street trees, especially along wide streets or adjacent to Open Space or Park areas.

## Intent Statements

- 2.H To promote a well-defined Streetwall that establishes a proportional street enclosure ratio**
- 2.I To promote a range of Streetwall heights along the street and within each block**
- 2.J To coordinate a scale relationship between the Streetwall of adjacent properties**

Building Massing

**Streetwall Height**

Building Fit and Transitions



*41. The Streetwall height shall be approximately 60%-100% of the width of the Right-of-Way.*



# Streetwall Height

## Design Standards

- 2.18** The predominant Streetwall height shall be approximately 60%-100% of the width of the Right-of-Way.
- Appropriate strategies include:
- Incorporating taller Streetwall heights where the Right-of-Way is wide
  - Using Upper Story Setbacks to reduce the height of the Streetwall
  - Using landscaping, street trees or other elements to create a comfortable sense of enclosure along portions of block frontage with a lower Streetwall, or wide Right-of-Way (exceeding approximately 100 feet)

*Note: Short sections of the Streetwall that are less than or exceed this range are acceptable and should be located to enhance a specific building element or use.*

- 2.19** Where the width of the Right of Way measures approximately 80 feet or less, enclosure ratio shall be allowed to be less than 60%.

## Design Guidelines

- 2.20** Streetwall height should vary throughout the street and within each block to support architectural variety.
- 2.21** Streetwall height should consider the adjacent existing neighboring context. At street corners, this includes the context on both streets.
- Appropriate techniques include:
- Using Upper Story Setbacks and other Massing techniques to match a portion of the immediately adjacent Streetwall height
  - Incorporating bold corner elements and Massing to distinguish Streetwall height
  - Using cornices, material changes, and other facade articulation techniques to create a scale relationship between buildings (see [“Facade Articulation”](#))

Building Massing  
Streetwall Height  
Building Fit and Transitions



42. Streetwall height should vary throughout the block to support architectural variety.



43. Streetwall height should consider the existing neighboring context. At street corners, this includes the context on both streets.



# Streetwall Height

**2.22** When Right-of-Way width is more than 100 feet, the predominate Streetwall height should be approximately 80%-100% of width, or use additional street trees and other elements to enhance a sense of enclosure.

**2.23** Streetwall height should respond to the scale and proportion of adjacent Parks and Open Space.

Appropriate techniques include:

- a. Increasing Streetwall height as the Park or Open Space increases in size
- b. Decreasing Streetwall height or include Enhanced Setbacks and Open Space along the South Platte River

**2.24** The height of the Streetwall should aim to match the established height of the Lower Story Facade along the majority of the block frontage.

Appropriate techniques to define the Lower Story Facade of the Streetwall include:

- a. An Upper Story Setback (including Upper Story Setbacks required by the Denver Zoning Code)
- b. A cornice, pediment or similar element
- c. A reveal or similar element

*Note that the height of the Streetwall may exceed the height of the Lower Stories along limited portions of frontage, especially where necessary to achieve a comfortable Street Enclosure Ratio.*

Building Massing

Streetwall Height

Building Fit and Transitions



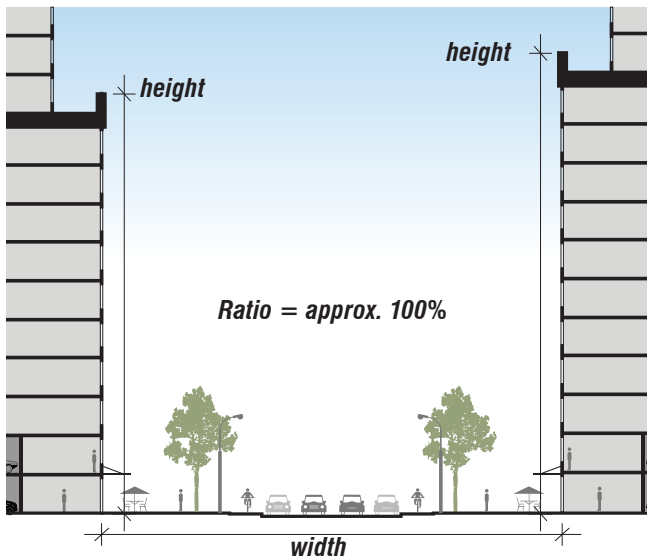
44. Streetwall height should respond to the scale and proportion of adjacent Parks and Open Space. Generally increase Streetwall height as the Park or Open Space increases in size.



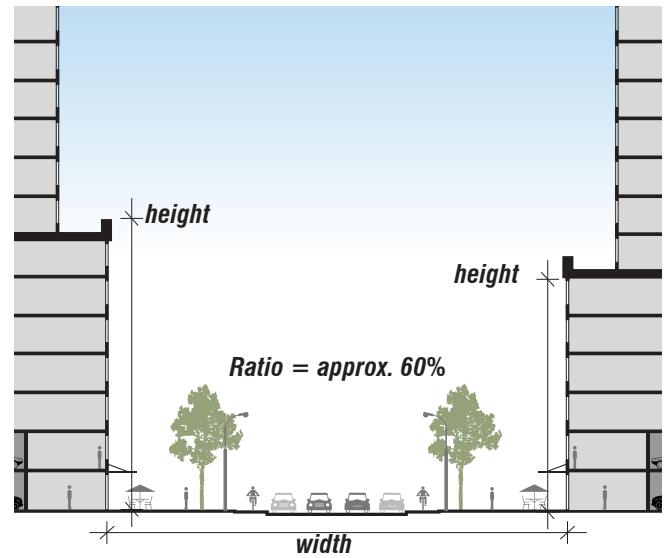
45. Streetwall height should respond to the scale and proportion of adjacent Parks and Open Space. Generally decrease Streetwall height or include Enhanced Setbacks and Open Space along the South Platte River.

# Streetwall Height

Building Massing  
Streetwall Height  
Building Fit and Transitions



46. A 100% (1:1) ratio of Streetwall height to Right-of-Way width provides a strong sense of street enclosure. Taller Streetwalls with ratios greater than 100% can negatively impact the sense of enclosure by creating a canyon effect that blocks sun and sky exposure.



47. A 60% (1:1.6) ratio of Streetwall height to Right-of-Way width provides a less strong sense of street enclosure, but can be mitigated by using street trees to contribute to the comfort level on the street. Shorter Streetwalls that create ratios less than 60% are not desired unless supplemented by additional street trees or other elements to enhance the sense of enclosure.

# Building Fit and Transitions

Strong neighborhood identity is reinforced by a commonality and continuity of building forms referred to as the urban fabric. Appropriate fit and transition of infill development is achieved when new buildings are integrated with the height, scale, fenestration patterns and character of neighboring buildings that reinforces the broader neighborhood scale and structure. Infill building materials and details are additional factors that can establish compatibility with its context and are addressed in [\*“Design Details for Infill Development”\*](#).

In addition to scale, massing and architectural elements, buildings can also support neighboring context by extending or complementing existing uses, connecting to public space, supporting circulation patterns or spatial connections, or reflecting cultural influences within the neighborhood.



48. Appropriate fit and transition of infill development is achieved when new buildings are integrated with the height, scale and character of neighboring buildings.

## BUILDING FIT AND TRANSITIONS ADJACENT TO HISTORIC RESOURCE OR CHARACTER BUILDING

A site is considered to be adjacent to a Historic Resource or Character Building when any of the these are true:

- A Zone Lot containing a Landmark Structure, Contributing Structure in a Historic District, and/or Character Building is located directly adjacent to the site on either side of the what will be considered the Primary Street facing facade
- A Zone Lot containing a Landmark Structure, Contributing Structure in a Historic District, and/or Character Building is located across the alley or private access drive from the site

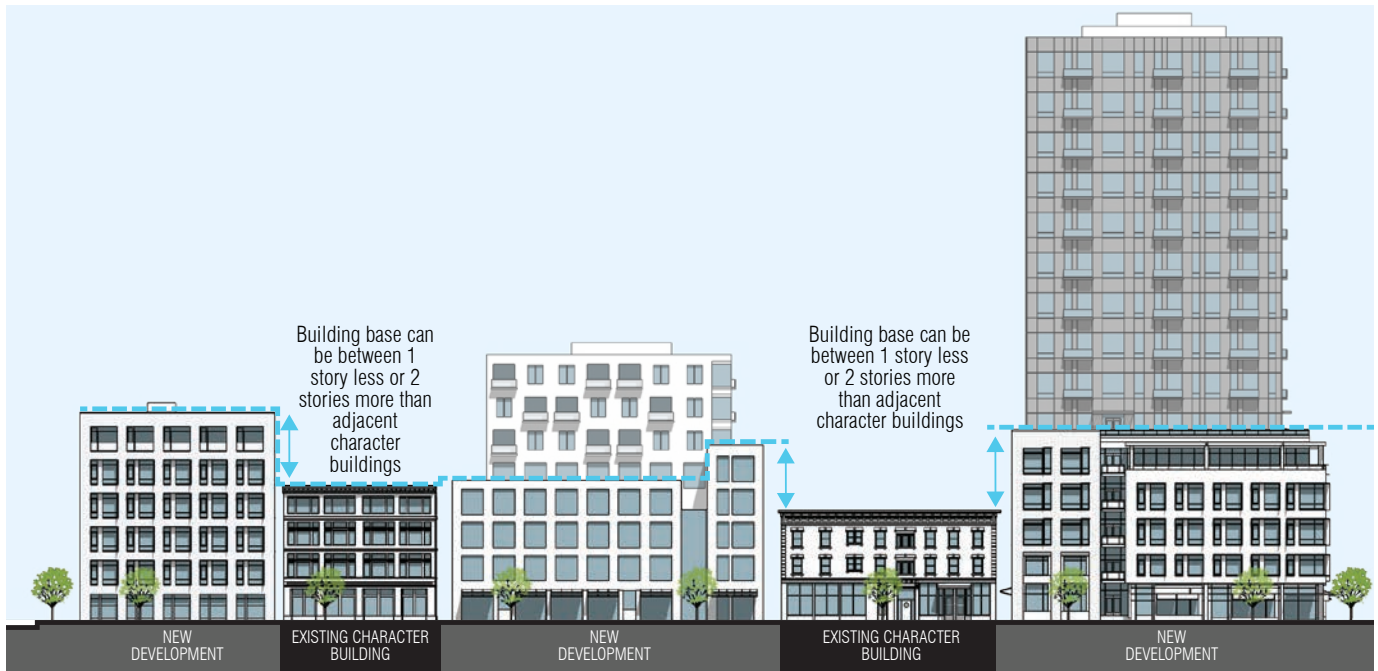
A Character Building is any structure that has massing, scale and architectural features that adds to Denver's varied architectural heritage. The structure may or may not be eligible for historic designation, but is desired to remain because it adds significant quality to the city, a neighborhood, or an area. The massing, scale and architectural character of these buildings may vary between neighborhoods, nevertheless their presence adds a significant quality that speaks to Denver's rich architectural heritage. Moreover, some of these buildings are more recent public buildings, such as museums and libraries, that have added value to the character of the neighborhood. Therefore, it is especially important for new development to provide transitions where adjacent character context is not anticipated to change.

The design approach and methods to achieve an appropriate fit and transition to Historic Resource or Character Building will be determined on a site-by-site basis and will consider:

- Relationship to a Historic Resource or Character Building
- Existing and planned context
- Size of the development site
- Planned intensity of use and scale of development
- Proximity and scale of adjacent built form
- Location or size of adjacent streets, parks and open space
- Building Materials

# Building Fit and Transitions

Building Massing  
Streetwall Height  
**Building Fit and Transitions**



49. Development adjacent to a lower scale Historic Resource or Character Building shall provide a height transition to respect and reinforce the established street wall height.

## Intent Statements

- 2.K To maintain, highlight and emphasize characteristics of adjacent Historic Resource and Character Building**
- 2.L To promote distinctive design that is compatible with adjacent Historic Resource or Character Building**
- 2.M To provide a scale transition between taller buildings and adjacent lower-scale neighborhoods or buildings**

## Design Standards

- 2.25** Building massing shall relate to the scale of the Streetwall of adjacent Historic Resource or Character Building.  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Breaking a large building into smaller masses similar to the scale of the adjacent Historic Resource or Character Building

- 2.26** Development adjacent to a lower-scale Historic Resource or Character Building shall provide a height transition to respect and reinforce established height.  
Appropriate strategies include:
  - a. Align the streetwall height of infill development to be between one story less or 2 stories more than the height of the adjacent Historic Resource or Character Building
  - b. To support height variation along a street wall, avoid perfect alignment with an adjacent Historic Resource or a Character Building, (a minimum variation of 12 to 18 inches is desired)

- 2.27** Development adjacent to a Historic Resource or Character Building shall provide a side setback or a sensitive transition along the portion of the building.

- 2.28** Standard Towers and Point Towers shall provide horizontal separation and a height transition down to adjacent Historic Resource or Character Building.



# Building Fit and Transitions

**2.29** Additions, renovations, and adaptations to Character Buildings, shall respond to the existing height and scale of the original structure.

Appropriate techniques include:

- a. Minimize the removal of original building massing and form
- b. Set back rooftop additions to reduce visual impacts and preserve the existing roof form and building materials

## Design Guidelines

**2.30** New development should express similar building modulation of adjacent Historic Resource or Character Building.

**2.31** New development that is more than twice as tall as an adjacent Historic Resource or Character Building should design building massing to avoid excessive shadow impacts.

**2.32** Development on a site larger than a standard single lot should express the original lot sizes in their structural modules or that of adjacent Historic Resource or Character Building.

- a. Consider structural system of infill buildings to relate to the typical lot sizes and become a determinant of the facade articulation, assuring compatibility with the scale of existing Historic Resource or Character Building
- b. Consider massing shifts that have unique architectural expressions and appear as individual buildings

**2.33** Towers adjacent to Historic Resource or Character Building should be setback by at least 15 feet from the Historic Resource or Character Building.

[See “Tower Placement & Separation”.](#)

Building Massing  
Streetwall Height  
**Building Fit and Transitions**



51. Development on a site larger than a standard single lot should express the original lot sizes in their structural modules or that of adjacent Historic Resource or Character Building.



50. New development should express similar building modulation of adjacent Historic Resource or Character building

# Building Fit and Transitions

Building Massing

Streetwall Height

**Building Fit and Transitions**



52. Avoid perfect alignment with adjacent or abutting Historic Resource or a Character Building



53. Setting back rooftop addition to reduce visual impacts and preserve the existing roof form and building materials

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# Chapter 3 | Facade Design & Site Details

Once the basic building massing has been defined, the architectural details and surrounding site design help to further shape the identity of the project. Facade Design & Site Details addresses the design character of individual buildings, particularly how they are experienced from the Public Realm.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN SCALE DESIGN

Throughout this document, the term Human Scale is commonly used and refers to a built environment that is reasonably scaled and shaped to reflect physical and cognitive characteristics of humans. When walking along a street or sitting in an Open Space, people feel psychologically comfortable in spaces that proportionally reflect our physical scale and senses.

The understanding of what is perceived as Human Scale is based on its context. For example, what is considered proportionally designed and scaled in a low-rise community may not be appropriate for a high-intensity development. Therefore, it is important to capture a range of Human Scale principles as a combination of elements in the built environment, including street enclosure, building height and massing, architectural details and materials, street trees and landscaping, and ground-level paving, lighting, and furnishings.

- **Street Enclosure** refers to the degree to which the width of streets and other public spaces are visually defined by vertical elements such as buildings, walls, and trees. Streets where the Streetwall (or building facade directly adjacent to the street and sidewalk) is proportionally related to the width of the street, provide a comfortable sense of street enclosure, that appeals to our Human Scale senses and have a room-like quality. In a high-intensity urban environment where street widths are over 60 feet, a proportionate sense of street enclosure is especially important to properly frame our perception of space. Wide streets that lack a commensurate Streetwall can feel uncomfortably open and exposed to pedestrians.

See [“Streetwall Height”](#).

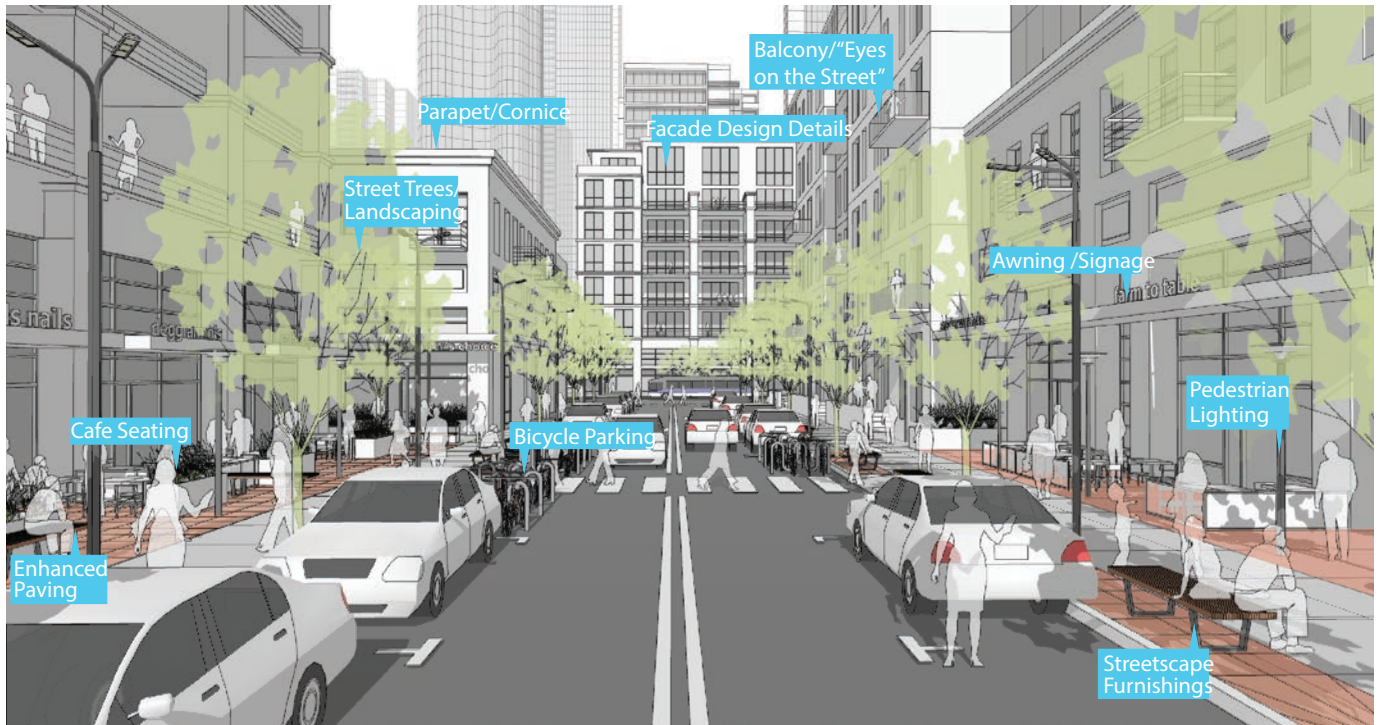
- **Trees and Landscape Areas** play an important role in breaking down a space to the Human Scale, by positively contributing to a sense of enclosure, providing shade, and adding needed softness in an urban environment. Trees with large canopies are especially important on wider streets to alleviate a feeling of vastness by enclosing pedestrian spaces, and conversely on streets with tall buildings to break down overwhelming vertical elements. Trees contribute to defining a sense of place, by enhancing the built environment, reflect heat and light from building, and reduce traffic noise.

See [“Amenity Zone & Street Trees”](#).

- **Facade Design and Architectural Details** can significantly contribute to our sense of Human Scale by creating a variety of vertical and horizontal forms on the facade, using window and door openings, change in materials and textures, placement of awnings, canopies, signage, and lighting. However, it is not sufficient to simply incorporate these elements; rather the quality of design, proportion, and scale of these elements need to be harmoniously arranged for people to find them pleasing and reflective of the Human Scale. These elements in combination with uses and activity are directly responsible for the visual and experiential richness found at the Street Level in vibrant urban neighborhoods.
- **Safety and Comfort** are important aspects of any public space but especially true in dense urban settings. Transparency at the ground floor is highly desired as it provides “eyes on the street.” Mixed-use buildings with active ground floor uses generate additional foot traffic along the street and contribute to our sense of safety. Active retail spaces with well-lit window displays and pedestrian-scaled street lighting help us feel more comfortable after dark. Extensive tree canopy can provide relief from natural elements such as the sun or sudden wind gusts, enhancing the streetscape and making walking along the street more enjoyable. Thoughtfully placed street furnishings help us feel comfortable by breaking down a large street into smaller “rooms”, and provide areas to rest and enjoy city life.
- **Sense of Place** can be achieved when the techniques mentioned above are utilized and tailored to define a distinctive context. Streets and places that successfully achieve a Human Scale through visual richness and order, tend to embody a sense of place that is differentiated across the city. They are impressionable and memorable in the mind and become a place to return to time and time again.



54. Human Scale affects our sense of comfort and safety impacting a desire to walk down a street or to avoid it. Building facade designs that lack appropriate massing or articulation and include large expanses of undifferentiated building wall, generally create an undesirable pedestrian environment.



55. Human Scale can be addressed through simple techniques that break down the size and proportion of the urban environment. An intentional integration of pedestrian-oriented Street Level uses, facade articulation and architectural details, and streetscape features helps break down overall building massing and animates the Public Realm.



# Facade Articulation

Thoughtful articulation that is coordinated with overall massing helps divide a large building into smaller modules that promote an engaging Human Scale pedestrian environment. Facades that incorporate changes in plane, materials, and rhythm add interest and texture, as opposed to long, repetitive or blank facades. Coordinating architectural details and articulation with interior uses further reinforces the clarity of the urban environment.

## Intent Statements

- 3.A To further refine building form, massing and proportions through facade articulation**
- 3.B To promote well-detailed Facade designs with texture and depth that provide a sense of Human Scale**
- 3.C To ensure a cohesive Facade design**
- 3.D To minimize blank or unarticulated Facades**

## Design Standards

- 3.01** All Primary Street-Facing Facades, Visible Facades, and Tower Facades shall incorporate articulation techniques that reinforce building massing techniques.  
Appropriate articulation techniques include:
  - a. Vertical and horizontal projections/banding
  - b. Vertical and horizontal recesses
  - c. Window composition/design
  - d. Balconies or terraces
  - e. Continuing articulation techniques used on the Lower Story Facade onto the Upper Story Facade/Tower Facade that express a sense of depth
- 3.02** Articulation techniques used on a Lower Story Facade shall continue around the corner of an Alley or Private Access Drive for approximately 50 feet.

**Facade Articulation**  
Windows & Transparency  
Exterior Building Materials  
Balconies  
Design Details for Infill Development  
Adaptive Reuse and Building Additions

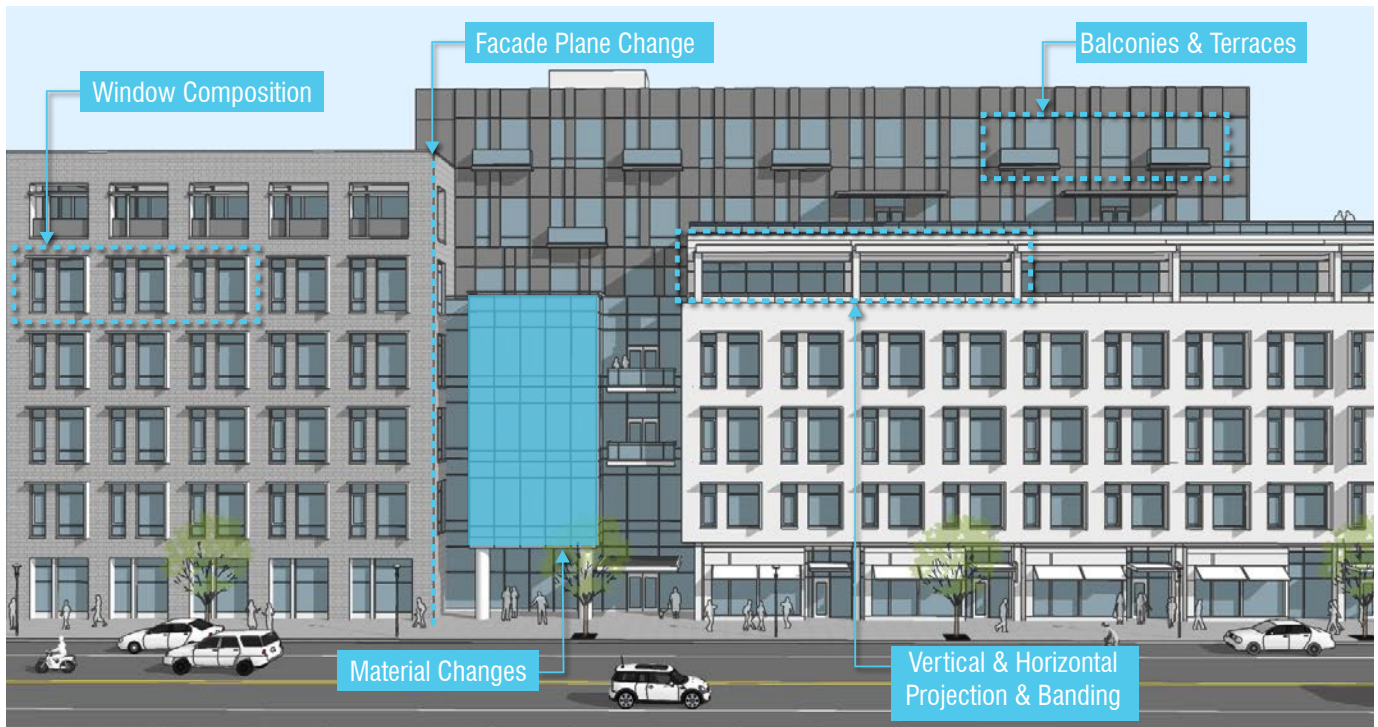
Street Level Facade Design & Uses  
Building Entries  
Setback & Open Space Design  
Awnings & Canopies  
Structured Parking Facades  
Building Rooftops  
Fences, Walls, & Screens



56. Vertical projections, pilasters, columns, and other elements can create a rhythm on the facade.



57. Horizontal projections, material banding, color changes and other elements can create a rhythm on the facade.



58. Facade articulation that reinforces building massing adds texture and rhythm to promote a Human Scale urban environment. Several facade articulation techniques illustrated above are examples of how to meet the design standards and guidelines of this section. Note that the articulation techniques described in [3.01](#) shall reinforce the massing techniques described in [“Building Massing”](#).

**3.03** Tower Facades shall be designed to be viewed from all sides as opposed to only addressing articulation along Primary Streets.

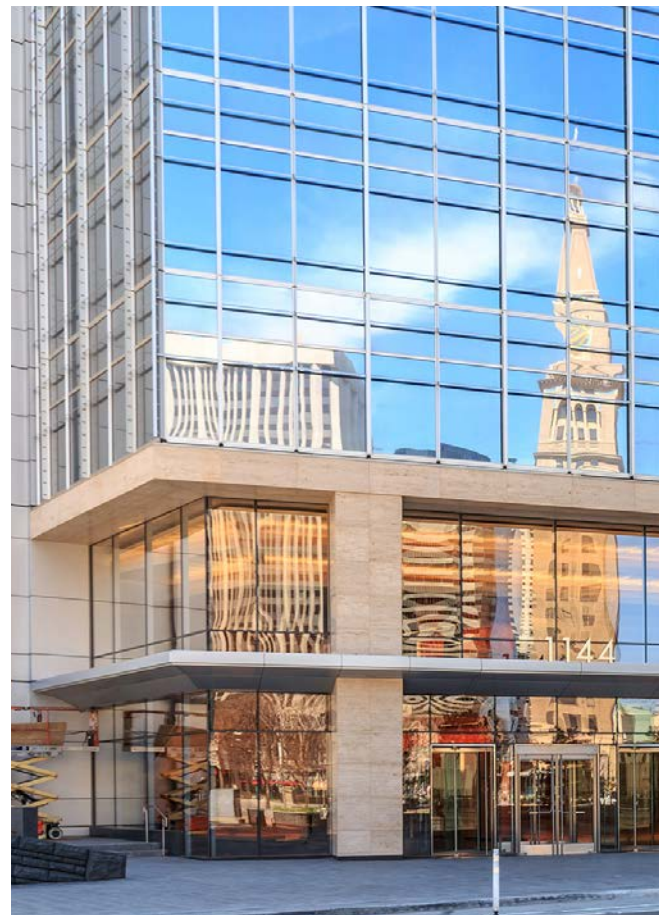
**3.04** Visible Facade areas not facing Primary Streets shall incorporate features to enhance visual interest and avoid long blank walls.

Such features include:

- Transparency consistent with standards for Primary Street-facing Facades (see [“Windows & Transparency”](#))
- Wall Murals or other Public Art

**3.05** Lower Story Facades and Upper Story Facades/Tower Facades shall limit walls without transparency or articulation consistent with [Standard 3.01](#) to a maximum of 50 feet in length per segment.

**3.06** Scaling elements, architectural details, and other forms of facade articulation shall be integrated into building massing so they convey a sense of depth and texture rather than a thinly applied surface treatment.



59. A Lower Story Facade shall express a first or second story datum line.



# Facade Articulation



60. When multiple towers are located on the same Zone Lot they should be distinct and not identical, but can be complementary to each other and employ similar architectural articulation and design approach.

**3.07** Facades shall be designed to accommodate locations for Upper Story building identification signage.

Appropriate strategies include:

- a. Reserving an area along the roof parapet, or space for integration into a roof cap feature, for future Upper Story building identification signage

**3.08** Telecommunication equipment that is mounted on a building facade shall be properly screened/painted to integrate into the overall facade design and building massing.

## Facade Articulation

Windows & Transparency  
Exterior Building Materials  
Balconies  
Design Details for Infill Development  
Adaptive Reuse and Building Additions

Street Level Facade Design & Uses  
Building Entries  
Setback & Open Space Design  
Awnings & Canopies  
Structured Parking Facades  
Building Rooftops  
Fences, Walls, & Screens



61. Articulation techniques used on a Lower Story Facade shall continue around the corner of an Alley or Private Access Drive.

## Design Guidelines

**3.09** Buildings with more than approximately 200 feet of Primary Street frontage should use coordinated massing and articulation techniques to create visually separate modules with distinct facades.

See [“Building Massing”](#).

**3.10** Adjacent buildings of varying heights should align design features to express an architectural scale relationship.

Consider aligning features such as:

- a. Cornices
- b. Belt courses
- c. Fenestration patterns
- d. Building setbacks
- e. Reveals
- f. Materials and Textures

# Facade Articulation

## Facade Articulation

Windows & Transparency  
Exterior Building Materials  
Balconies  
Design Details for Infill Development  
Adaptive Reuse and Building Additions

Street Level Facade Design & Uses  
Building Entries  
Setback & Open Space Design  
Awnings & Canopies  
Structured Parking Facades  
Building Rooftops  
Fences, Walls, & Screens

**3.11** Special attention should be given to the design of buildings located at street intersections.

- Establish a clear and defined edge at the Right-of-Way
- Activate the corner through high levels of transparency and signature building entries
- Incorporate iconic architectural elements to highlight components of the building

**3.12** Variations in articulation, materials and fenestration patterns should be used to emphasize building features, such as entries, corner elements, and changes in interior use.

**3.13** Facade articulation techniques used on the Lower Story Facade should coordinate with Upper Story Facades/Tower Facades to result in a cohesive building design.

**3.14** A Lower Story Facade should express a first or second story datum line.

Appropriate techniques include:

- Facade plane changes
- Incorporating other architectural expressions such as belt courses, cornices, fenestration, awnings and canopies, or changes in material

**3.15** All Tower Facades should include a variety of articulation, fenestration and material patterns to create visual interest.

- Variation in the design and articulation of each tower facade is encouraged to provide visual interest and to respond to differing conditions within the adjacent context
- Curtain walls should be articulated through changes in transparency, fenestration, mullion scale and pattern, and other architectural details (see [“Windows & Transparency”](#))

**3.16** When multiple Towers are located on the same Zone Lot they should be distinct and not identical, but can be complementary to each other and employ similar architectural articulation and design approach.

**3.17** Visible exterior building components, such as light fixtures and mechanical vents should be integrated into the facade design as to be integral with the building architecture.

**3.18** Outdoor lighting fixtures should be designed to minimize light pollution and glare to adjacent properties and street(s).

## PASSIVE SOLAR DESIGN

Passive solar design techniques should be considered, especially on south and west facing facades. Incorporating screens, energy-efficient and/or operable windows and other methods can minimize heat gain and contribute to reductions in energy use.



62. Facades shall be designed to accommodate locations for Upper Story building identification signage.

# Facade Articulation

## Windows & Transparency

Articulation and transparency of all faces of a building are important, but those facing streets, Parks, and Open Space are most critical. Transparency in the building facade adds visual interest, contributes to a sense of liveliness on the street, and improves safety through natural surveillance. At a building's Lower Stories, a series of clear and unobstructed views both into and out of buildings enriches the urban experience for pedestrians and building occupants alike.

### Intent Statements

- 3.E** To provide a minimum level of transparency on all facades
- 3.F** To ensure that building activities are visible from the Public Realm and vice versa
- 3.G** To ensure that building facades do not cause glare or negative impacts to the Public Realm
- 3.H** To encourage well-detailed fenestration and curtain wall designs

### Design Standards

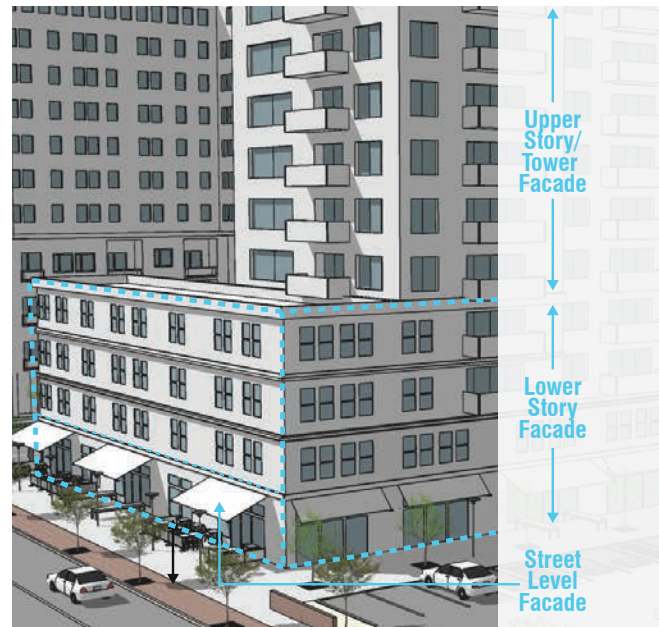
- 3.19** Street Level transparent facade areas shall be located to provide visibility into Street Level Active Uses.
- 3.20** Lower Story Facades, excluding the Street Level, shall incorporate a minimum of 50% transparent glass with a maximum reflectance coefficient of 0.35.

#### DENVER ZONING CODE TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS

The Denver Zoning Code requires a minimum percentage of Street Level transparency (the total linear feet of windows or permitted alternatives along the Street Level facade) to provide visual interest, and activate the street and sidewalk. The design standards and guidelines in this section build on Denver Zoning Code Street Level transparency requirements.

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64. Transparency standards vary for a Street Level Facade, Lower Story Facade, Upper Story Facade and Tower Facade.

- 3.21** Street Level glazing shall use transparent glass to allow pedestrians to view the activity within the building.
  - a. Glazing shall have a maximum reflection coefficient of approximately 0.15
  - b. Transparent glazing for wall openings, i.e., doors and windows, shall be used along all Street Level facades for maximum transparency
  - c. Required transparency at the Primary Street Facing Facades shall not be blocked by signage, furnishings, displays, advertising, graphics, or other screening elements

*\*Note: Clear glazing does not include dark tinted, reflective, mirrored, or opaque glazing*

- 3.22** Upper Story Facades shall incorporate a minimum of 40% transparent glass with a maximum reflectance of 0.35.
- 3.23** Tower Facades shall incorporate a minimum of 50% transparent glass with a maximum reflectance of 0.35.



# Facade Articulation

## Windows & Transparency

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65. The design standards and guidelines for Windows & Transparency are intended to encourage visually interesting facade designs.



66. Window composition with substantial window framing provides interplay of depth and shadow on Building Facade.

**3.24** Secondary Facades on the Upper Stories of a building that face an Alley, Private Access Drive, or Off-Street Pedestrian Connections shall incorporate a minimum of approximately 25% transparent glass with a maximum reflectance of 0.35.

**3.25** Window designs at Lower Story facades shall be detailed to reinforce overall facade articulation and design.

Appropriate techniques include:

- Recessing or projecting a window bay or opening a minimum of 4 inches from the facade plane
- Utilizing window framing to create an intentional shadow line
- Mullion patterns that provide depth and visual character

## Design Guidelines

**3.26** For mixed-use developments, the amount of transparency should reflect different uses within the building.

- A lower glass-to-wall ratio is typical of residential uses

- A higher glass-to-wall ratio is typical of commercial uses

**3.27** Clear, Low-E, or slightly tinted windows should be used to ensure the visibility of pedestrian-oriented commercial uses.

**3.28** Large expanses of glass should be subdivided into smaller units.

Appropriate techniques include:

- Scaling techniques using mullions, exposed structural elements, floor plates and detailing

**3.29** When large expanses of glass are used Lower Story facades should integrate bird friendly glazing techniques.

Appropriate techniques include:

- Low reflectance opaque materials
- Visual markers applied to glass with a maximum spacing of 4 inches by 4 inches or other proven bird-friendly glazing treatment
- Building integrated structures to mute reflections on glass surfaces



# Facade Articulation

## Exterior Building Materials

Denver and its surrounding region have a long tradition of building in brick and stone. This tradition is complementary to the goals of these guidelines in the effort to provide scale, texture, detail, and color in the Downtown pedestrian environment. These materials have an inherently Human Scaled quality to them derived from their traditional shaping and placement by hand. Materials are not limited to Masonry. However the form, scale, detail, texture and quality of any materials used in close proximity to the pedestrian environment should be carefully considered.

### Intent Statements

- 3.I To encourage use of well-detailed exterior materials with texture and depth that provide a sense of Human Scale**
- 3.J To integrate changes in exterior building materials with the overall design and articulation of the building**
- 3.K To promote use of a variety of high-quality durable exterior materials**
- 3.L To reduce resource and energy consumption through use of sustainable exterior materials**



67. Building materials shall be of proven quality and durability.

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### Design Standards

- 3.30 Exterior building materials and finishes shall be detailed to articulate texture and depth.**  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Adding visual interest through texture, depth, finish and detailing
  - b. Applying materials in units, panels or modules that produce shadow lines to help convey a sense of scale

- 3.31 Building materials shall be of proven quality and durability.**

- a. Design and install materials to ensure the appearance of quality
- b. Use of materials that require minimal or no maintenance

*Note that an applicant may be required to demonstrate the durability of unproven or unusual materials.*

- 3.32 Architectural cast-in-place concrete shall incorporate textural detailing, color, and finish elements to ensure a high-quality final surface.**

- 3.33 Cementitious Stucco, Fiber Cement Siding, or Exterior Insulating Finish Systems (EIFS) shall not be used on any Visible Facade.**

*Note, this standard does not preclude exterior insulated systems that utilize masonry, metal panels, or other durable finishes.*

*An exception for limited application of the above mentioned materials may be appropriate on a Secondary Facade facing an Alley or Private Access Drive that is not intended to serve as an Off-Street Pedestrian Connection.*

# Facade Articulation

## Exterior Building Materials

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### Design Guidelines

- 3.34** Any change in Facade materials should be combined with a variation in the wall plane
- When changing Facade materials:
- Vary the wall plane with a projection or recess at least 4 inches wide and 4 inches deep
  - Locate the material change at the inside corner of the variation in Facade plane and terminate into the rear wall plane to integrate the material change with overall Facade design
  - Provide an intentional reveal separating the two materials

- 3.35** Visible building facades should incorporate materials that are appropriate to individual massing components, interior uses, and relationships with the Public Realm.

Appropriate techniques include:

- Use of especially durable materials at the Street Level
- Use of 'heavy' materials (i.e. brick, stone, or metal) on Lower Story Facades to anchor the building
- Use of 'light' materials that are either primarily transparent or metal, spandrel glass, etc. on Upper Story Facades/Tower Facades
- Use of curtain walls that employ high-quality materials and finishes with detail and texture
- Use of a variety of materials and material colors that reinforce building massing and articulation techniques
- Use of materials that gracefully weather, or develop a patina, depicting the passage of time

- 3.36** All Visible Facades of a building should be treated equally in terms of materials, color, and design details.
- Building materials used on a Facade facing an Alley or Private Access Drive should be consistent with those used on Primary Street-facing Facades.

- 3.37** The use of highly reflective materials that generate glare and heat, especially at the Street Level, should be avoided.
- 3.38** Synthetic materials should be used in ways that reflect their intrinsic characteristics and avoid application of imitation or false replication of natural materials.
- 3.39** Changes in building materials should be coordinated with changes in building mass and articulation.
- See ["Building Massing"](#).
- 3.40** Innovative building materials should be used to contribute to environmental sustainability.
- 3.41** Materials should be locally or regionally sourced when practical and available.



68. Carefully detailed materials should be used to reinforce building mass, scale, and articulation techniques.

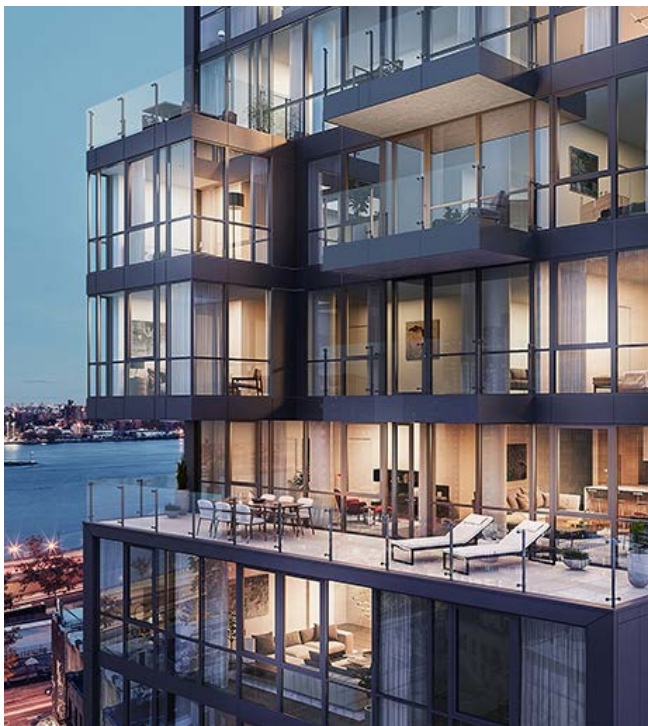
# Facade Articulation

## Balconies

Balconies are commonly expressed in building facades, and provide an important outdoor space, especially in dense communities. Placement and design of balconies can have a major impact on the Public Realm and on the overall building appearance and massing. Balcony arrangements should be carefully planned and integrated within the building facade to avoid additional massing and shadow impacts, reductions in privacy, and conflicts with existing or planned street trees.

### Intent Statements

- 3.M To integrate balconies into the design of the building facade and contribute to the overall articulation techniques**
- 3.N To limit the physical and visual effects of balconies on overall building mass and scale**
- 3.O To orient activity towards the Public Realm**



70. Balcony design and placement shall not significantly increase the physical and visual building mass.

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69. Inset or cantilevered balconies and terraces help create vertical and horizontal rhythms on the facade that break down building mass and scale into smaller modules.

### Design Standards

- 3.42** Balconies and terraces shall be incorporated into the vertical and horizontal articulation of the building Facade.
- 3.43** Balcony design and placement shall not significantly increase the physical and visual building mass.
- 3.44** Balcony railings shall not significantly block visibility of the Facade.
- 3.45** Balconies located on the second or third story shall not extend beyond the private property boundary to protect privacy and minimize conflicts with the Right-of-Way.
- 3.46** Exterior design of enclosed balconies shall be coordinated throughout the building and be consistent with the overall Facade design.

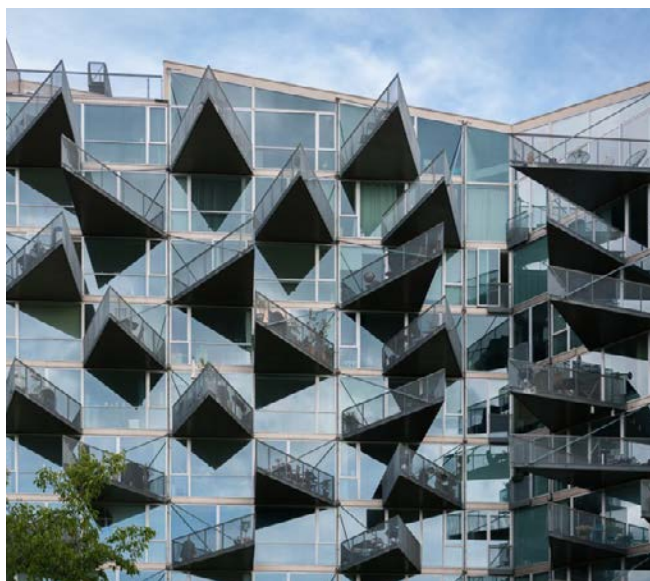


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## Balconies

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72. Extruded or protruding balconies should be designed to occasionally break the rhythm of repetitive floor plates and create a staggering effect of various sizes and shapes.



71. Balconies, front doors, and patios facing Alleys or Private Access Drives create a sense of activity.

## Design Guidelines

**3.47** Balcony railings on Primary Street-Facing Facades should be at least 40 percent open or transparent above a height of 18 inches, as measured from the balcony walking surface.

**3.48** Balconies should be placed to further activate the street or public spaces.

Appropriate placement includes:

- Locate balconies on building facades that face a Park or Open Space to maximize the number of “eyes on the park”
- Locate balconies on building facades facing active Alleys or Private Access Drives

**3.49** Balconies with glass railings should use bird-safe applications that consider patterns, coating and reflectivity to reduce bird strikes.

**3.50** The underside of balconies should have materials, colors, and textures that are similar to and integrated with the overall facade design.



73. Balconies and terraces shall be incorporated into vertical and horizontal shifts in building massing.

# Design Details for Infill Development

Historic Resources and Character Buildings are a unique and valuable feature of Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. These buildings reflect the architectural and cultural history of Denver and help unify the neighborhood's sense of place. Infill buildings, particularly the street-facing facade, can seek inspiration from an adjacent Historic Resource or Character Building.

New buildings that respect the prevalent characteristics elaborated within this section without mimicking a Historic Resource or Character Building, will result in buildings that fit comfortably into the context of the urban streets while still expressing their own individuality and time. Rather than replicating historic treatments, shapes, and styles, the intents, standards and guidelines in this section provide guidance to infill development to respond to their context not only through their massing, scale, and proportions, as described in [“Chapter 1 | Site Organization”](#) and [“Chapter 2 | Building Mass & Scale”](#), but also through articulation of facade design, material choice, and roof form.

## HISTORIC LANDMARKS & DISTRICTS

**Arapahoe Square** includes designated Denver Landmark structures and is adjacent to three Historic Districts:

- Ballpark Historic District - A historic commercial district located across the alley at the northwest edge of Arapahoe Square
- Clements Historic District - A historic residential district located across the alley at the southeast edge of Arapahoe Square
- Curtis Park Historic District - A historic residential district located across Park Avenue West from Arapahoe Square
- Five Points Historic Cultural District - A historic mixed use district located east of 20th Street from Arapahoe Square

**Golden Triangle** includes designated Denver Landmark structures and is adjacent to Historic Districts:

- Civic Center Historic District
- Sherman Grant Historic District
- Speer Boulevard Parkway District

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## INFILL DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TO A HISTORIC RESOURCE OR CHARACTER BUILDING

Infill development is encouraged to use articulation that creates facade divisions with widths similar to adjacent Historic Resources or Character Buildings. A variety of techniques can achieve this articulation, including facade design, material variations, and color variations. For example, if the facades of nearby Historic Resource or Character Buildings are vertical in proportion (taller than they are wide) then maintaining the vertical orientation of the building facade will result in a more compatible design.

Do not replicate Historic Resource or Character Building architecture to achieve these guidelines and standards. Do not design new facades to create a false historic appearance or copy historic architectural features unless such features are integral to the design of the new construction.

A facade will be considered to be adjacent to a Historic Resource or Character Building when it is visible from a Historic District or Landmark Structure, or is visible from a street or alley within 1/2 block of a Historic District, or zone lot that includes a Landmark Structure.

## Intent Statements

- 3.P To ensure designs that are compatible with adjacent Historic Resources and/or Character Buildings**
- 3.Q To promote contemporary designs that do not replicate or mimic historic style or period of architecture**
- 3.R To ensure design elements derived from adjacent Historic Resources and/or Character Buildings are integrated into the overall facade composition**
- 3.S To ensure that infill development enriches the street with quality of design, materials and finishes**

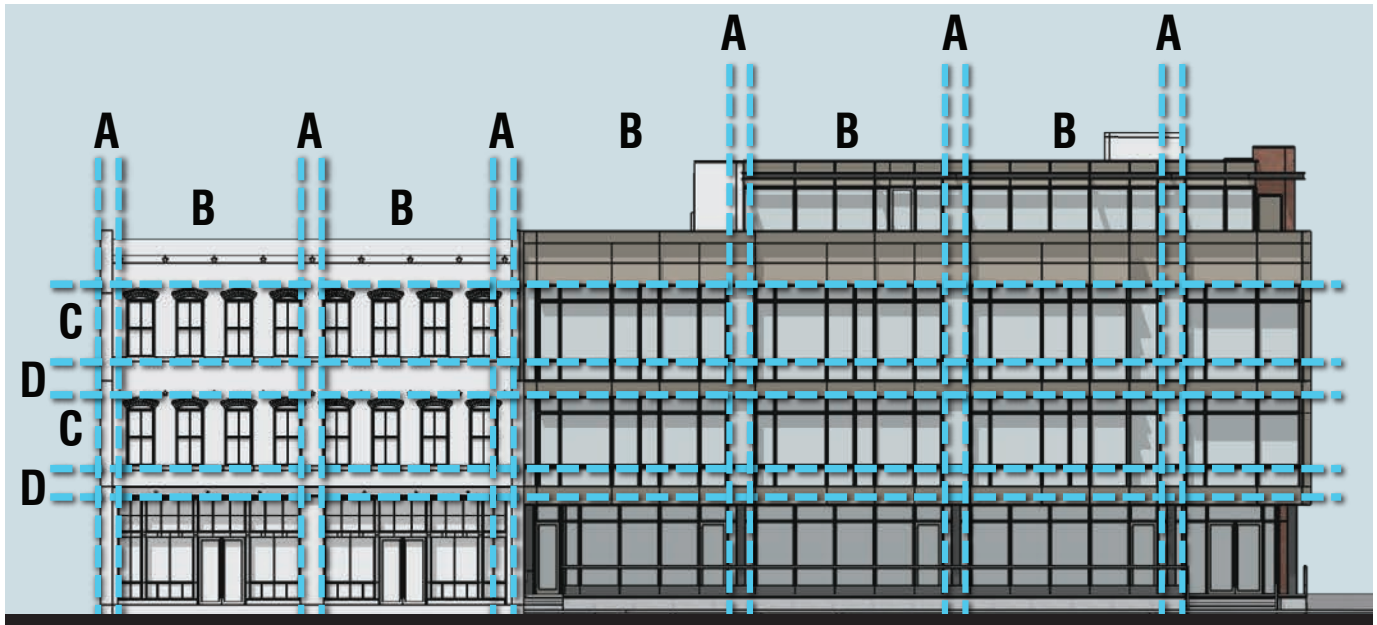


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75. The example above demonstrates how horizontal elements and structural bays from adjacent Historic Resource or Character Building facade are applied in new development.

## Design Standards

**3.51** New buildings adjacent to a Historic Resource or Character Building shall recognize and respond to existing patterns of scale, form, articulation, materials, and proportion.

See [Chapter 2 | Building Mass & Scale](#)

**3.52** Street facing facades shall express base, middle, and top that reflects the adjacent Historic Resource or Character Buildings.

**3.53** A facade adjacent to a Historic Resource or Character Building shall incorporate design features consistent with the design standards and guidelines for Primary Street-facing Facades.

**3.54** Architectural details on new buildings adjacent to a Historic Resource or Character Building shall not replicate or mimic a historic period.



74. Architectural details on new buildings adjacent to a Historic Resource or Character Building shall not simply replicate or mimic a historic period.



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76. As per graphic above, architectural details on new buildings adjacent to a Historic Resource or Character Building shall not simply replicate or mimic a historic period.

**3.55** A facade adjacent to a Historic Resource or Character Building shall have at least one horizontal element of the facade design aligned approximately with another horizontal building element on the adjacent Historic Resource or Character Building.

**3.56** New building adjacent to a Historic Resource or Character building, shall consider the following characteristics:

- a. Facade rhythm
- b. Structural bays
- c. Solid to void relationships
- d. Facade proportion and spacing
- e. Street wall height
- f. Ground floor height
- g. Fenestration patterns
- h. Cornices, belt courses
- i. Materials
- j. Canopies

## Design Guidelines

**3.57** The Street-Level facade should incorporate a floor-to-ceiling height that aligns with an adjacent Historic Resource or Character Building.

See also [Street Level Facade Design and Uses, Standard 3.70.](#)

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## CHARACTER BUILDINGS

Downtown Denver has a rich existing building fabric. Many of these buildings are of unique character and contribute to neighborhood placemaking and Denver's identity. Their presence adds significant quality that speaks to Denver's rich architectural legacy.

A Character Building is any structure that has massing, scale and architectural features that add to Denver's varied architectural heritage. A Character Building may or may not qualify for Historic Landmark designation but is desired to remain because it adds significant quality to the city, a neighborhood, or an area. Some Character Buildings are more recent public structures, such as museums and libraries, that have added value to the character of the neighborhood. A Character Building need not be from any specific time-period, but should exhibit original massing and façade details that have not been significantly altered over time.

An assessment of adjacent properties is required to determine if adjacent structures are considered Character Buildings. Refer to the Submission Checklist in the ["Introduction"](#).





# Adaptive Reuse and Building Additions

Adaptive reuse, is the process of re-purposing buildings that have outlived their original purposes for different uses or functions while at the same time retaining their architectural features to preserve neighborhoods character. Adaptive reuse of buildings is a form of sustainable urban regeneration as it extends the original building's life, avoids demolition waste, and preserves embodied energy in existing materials, and helps maintain neighborhood character and contextuality. The standards and guidelines in this section aim to encourage a thoughtful and sensitive approach to adaptive reuse buildings without compromising the architectural integrity of the building facade. However, any attempt to replicate the facade of a character building when creating a new addition, often devalues the quality of the original character building.

## Intent Statements

- 3.T To encourage reuse of existing buildings with solutions that contributes to the unique architectural integrity of the neighborhood**
- 3.U To promote building additions that are proportional to the original structure**
- 3.V To ensure that new design details integrate harmoniously with existing architectural details**



77. Side, rear or top addition should draw upon, but not mimic, the existing materials, massing, fenestration patterns, and details of the existing structure.

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## Design Standards

- 3.58 Adaptive reuse shall maintain the Primary Street facing facade and materials to the greatest extent practicable.**
  - a. When necessary, deteriorated exterior portions of buildings should be repaired by reinforcing historic materials and by replacing original materials with in-kind materials or with compatible substitute materials
  - b. Any necessary replacement materials shall be compatible in size, scale, materials, and design to the remaining original building
- 3.59 New additions to a Character Building shall use materials that are compatible with, but clearly differentiated from, basic design elements and materials of the existing building.**
- 3.60 Rooftop additions shall be clearly distinguishable as new, yet appropriately scaled to be compatible with overall form, scale and mass, and detailed to sit atop of the existing building.**
- 3.61 Existing facade elements that are determined to be essential to the integrity of the Character Building shall be maintained and preserved.**



# Adaptive Reuse and Building Additions

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78. Adaptive reuse of character buildings shall make all efforts to keep the primary street facade of a Character Building intact.



79. Rooftop additions shall be highly distinguishable as new, yet appropriately scaled and detailed to sit atop the character building

## Design Guidelines

**3.62** Side, rear or top addition should draw upon, but not mimic, the existing materials, massing, fenestration patterns, and details of the existing structure.

**3.63** Modifications to the facade of a Character Building should not hinder the ability to interpret the design character of the original building.

**3.64** Additional entrances, window openings, and other similar modifications should be constructed in a manner that preserves the character of the buildings.

**3.65** If a Character Building has lost facade details over time compromising the integrity of the facade, future alterations should aim to restore original facade characteristics of the building.

*Note that the reconstruction of a partially, or completely, removed storefront should be based on historical, pictorial or physical documentation. It is not appropriate to create a storefront with a false historic appearance.*

**3.66** Exterior materials of a Character Building that were historically unpainted should generally remain unpainted.

*Note that appropriate non-historic protective coatings may be applied to exterior materials where needed to protect the original material, such as in areas of high pedestrian use.*

**3.67** Original exterior building material throughout the building should be preserved and maintained to the extent practicable.

# Street Level Facade Design & Uses

In a downtown context, buildings may have multiple frontages that face streets, Alleys, Private Access Drives, the South Platte Riverfront, Parks, or Open Spaces. Active commercial and retail uses are often the most desirable activity generators along the Street Level Facade because the resulting pattern of entrances and display windows provides multiple points of interaction between the building interior and adjacent public realm.

Street Level Facades with enhanced architectural elements that address Human Scale create streets that encourage and reinforce pedestrian activity. Lining the Street Level Facade with Active Uses further promotes a safe and animated Public Realm. Conversely, continuous uninterrupted glazing, lobbies and large-format commercial uses tend to be relatively un-animated spaces that lack a strong or engaging connection with pedestrians and do little to improve safety from natural surveillance and activity along the Street Level Facade.

On streets that prioritize residential character, Street Level residential units can create an animated frontage, broaden the range of housing choices, and increase the opportunity for social interaction and natural surveillance.

## DENVER ZONING CODE TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS

The Denver Zoning Code requires a minimum percentage of Street Level transparency (the total linear feet of windows or permitted alternatives along the Street Level facade) to provide visual interest, and activate the street and sidewalk. The design standards and guidelines in this section are intended to build on Denver Zoning Code Street Level transparency requirements.

## DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD REVIEW OF FACADE DESIGN FOR SIGN LOCATION

Although the Design Advisory Board does not use “[Chapter 6 | Building Signs](#)” to review the location and design of individual signs, the Design Advisory Board does use “[Chapter 3 | Facade Design & Site Details](#)” to consider potential future sign locations when reviewing proposed building designs.

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## Intent Statements

- 3.W** To activate the Public Realm through a variety of uses and architectural design elements
- 3.X** To promote Street Level designs with texture and depth that provide a sense of Human Scale
- 3.Y** To provide well-designed transitions between public and private space
- 3.Z** To encourage flexible Street Level designs that can accommodate a variety of uses over time
- 3.AA** To encourage Street Level design and uses that contribute to public safety
- 3.AB** To ensure that facade designs consider potential future locations for pedestrian oriented signage
- 3.AC** To create visual interest at the Street Level



80. Where Key Streets intersect other streets, Street Level commercial space shall wrap the corner onto the intersecting streets

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## Design Standards

- 3.68** On Key Streets, frontages meeting Denver Zoning Code requirements for Street Level non-residential Active Uses shall:
- Be focused at building corners (i.e., at intersections of two streets or at activated Alleys and Private Access Drives). Where Key Streets intersect other streets, Street Level commercial space shall wrap the corner onto the intersecting streets
  - Incorporate wall openings, such as windows and doors, along the Street Level Facade that go beyond the minimum requirement set in the DZC.
- 3.69** A Street Level Facade shall be designed to provide Human Scale through articulation, transparency, and architectural details.
- 3.70** The Street Level Facade shall incorporate elements to relate taller ground floor heights to Human Scale.
- A height of approximately 12 feet (floor to ceiling) is desired for a Street Level occupied by residential uses
  - A height of approximately 14 feet (floor to ceiling) is desired for a Street Level occupied by commercial uses
- 3.71** Street Level Facades shall use well-detailed, quality and durable materials that provide texture and depth.

See [“Exterior Building Materials”](#).

- 3.72** Street Level building entries shall be emphasized.
- Appropriate strategies include:
- Recessed or projecting entries
  - Recessed or projecting canopies or awnings
  - Other design solutions that emphasize building entry prominence

- 3.73** Buildings shall maintain a relationship between the public sidewalk and elevation of Street Level commercial uses, not to exceed approximately 42 inches.

- 3.74** Street Level residential units shall include a vertical transition from the sidewalk level up to the finished floor elevation of the building that does not exceed approximately 42 inches.

*Note that along the South Platte Riverfront, vertical separation greater than 42 inches may be acceptable. Greater height differences may be appropriate in areas with significant grade changes or if used in combination with stoops and other architecture features.”*

- 3.75** Facades shall be designed to accommodate locations for future pedestrian-oriented signage.

Appropriate strategies include:

- Incorporating a designated band or area for signage above the Street Level for potential future signage
- Designing canopies and awnings to accommodate potential future signage
- Designating areas to accommodate tenant or directory signage near primary building entries



81. Facades shall be designed to accommodate locations for future pedestrian-oriented signage.



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- 3.76** Accent lighting shall be coordinated with the scale and facade design of the building.
- 3.77** Exterior lighting shall be integrated with the building design, create a sense of safety, and encourage pedestrian activity after dark.
- Shield exterior lighting to reduce glare and eliminate light being cast into the night sky
  - Orient exterior lights away from adjacent residential properties
  - For individual buildings, develop a family of lighting with layers that contribute to the night-time experience
  - Relate landscape lighting to the pedestrian scale and character, highlighting special landscape features

## Design Guidelines

- 3.78** On Key Streets, the Street Level should be developed with as much street-oriented commercial frontage as practicable.
- 3.79** Commercial frontages should activate the adjacent Public Realm.  
Appropriate techniques include:
- Locate Highly Active Uses at or near the minimum Primary Street setback
  - Utilize Enhanced Commercial Setback areas with pedestrian seating, outdoor dining, or an extended sidewalk. (See [“Setback & Open Space Design”](#))
  - Locate Open Spaces such as plazas that are directly connected to building entries and Highly Active Uses
- 3.80** Commercial frontages with Highly Active Uses should be incorporated along the South Platte Riverfront.



82. When a variety of active uses and architectural elements at the Street Level are oriented to the street, they contribute to a sense of safety and activate the Public Realm.



83. Windows, stoops, and patios, such as this example can build upon the area's unique location by orienting and focusing on the South Platte Riverfront.

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**3.81** Street Level commercial frontage should be distinguished from residential facades through such methods as height, material, detail, percentage of glazing.

**3.82** Street Level commercial spaces should provide flexibility to accommodate other interim uses in areas where active retail is planned, but not yet fully established.

**3.83** Street Level commercial spaces should be designed to accommodate future division to host small retail spaces or consolidation to support larger retail needs.

Appropriate techniques include:

- Standardize structural bay spacing
- Provide multiple entry points
- Coordinate electrical, plumbing and HVAC systems with individual bays

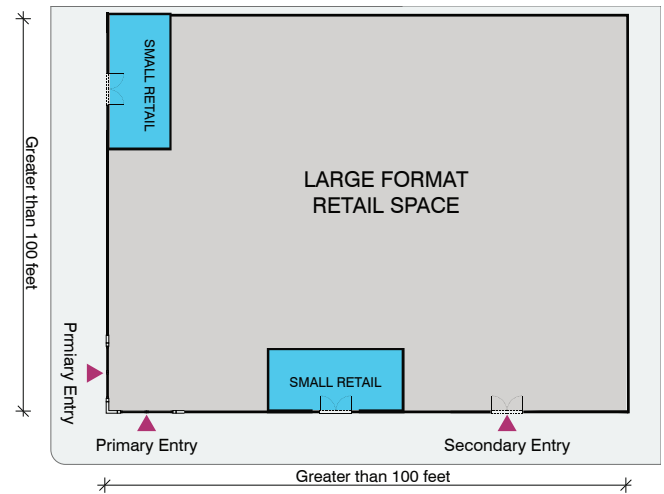
**3.84** Street Level retail frontages greater than approximately 100 feet in length should be interspersed with additional pedestrian entries or smaller Active Uses with a minimum depth of 15 feet.

**3.85** The Street Level should be visually distinguished from Lower Stories above through the use of architectural elements including awnings, canopies, cornices, or lintels.

**3.86** Canopies and awnings used to define the Street Level should be integrated into building design.

- Provide generously-sized awnings, metal awning screens and other vertical screens to provide shade for glass windows/doors while preserving transparency

See [“Awnings & Canopies”](#).



84. Street Level retail frontages greater than approximately 100 feet in length should be interspersed with additional pedestrian entries or smaller Active Uses with a minimum depth of 15 feet.



85. Commercial frontages should activate adjacent sidewalks using various methods, including extending outdoor seating into Enhanced Commercial Setbacks.



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- 3.87** Street Level building design and architectural features should be used to highlight commercial uses, storefronts, and tenant entries.
- 3.88** Street Level facade design should reinforce the physical and visual connections between interior spaces and the Public Realm.
- Strategies, such as operable folding storefronts and roll-up doors, are encouraged to integrate indoor and outdoor spaces and activate the Public Realm
- 3.89** Activated Alleys and Private Access Drives that include commercial and residential uses should incorporate the same features as street-facing Facades.
- 3.90** Buildings should accommodate a transition between adjacent sidewalks and Street Level residential units.
- Appropriate techniques include:
- A landscaped Enhanced Residential Setback area (see [Guideline 3.113](#))
  - Open Spaces such as courtyards
  - Stoops or small private yard areas
  - Vertical transition from Street Level to the finished floor of the building not to exceed approximately 42" (see [Standard 3.74](#))
- 3.91** Landscaping should not entirely block views to and from interior uses.
- 3.92** Street Level facades adjacent to or across the street from a Park, Open Space, or the South Platte Riverfront should incorporate features that activate the edge and contribute to visibility and safety.
- Appropriate features include:
- Entrances and transparency linked to active interior uses
  - Outdoor seating areas
  - Adequate, pedestrian-scaled lighting
  - Clear sight lines into the adjacent area



86. Orienting Active Uses toward the South Platte Riverfront provides visibility and security and encourage continuous use and public "ownership" of the river. A variety of uses such as restaurants, cafes, and retail will enliven the area, offering more reasons to populate the riverfront and add to its vitality (see [Guideline 3.80](#) and [Guideline 3.92](#)).



87. Street Level Facade shall be designed to relate to Human Scale through articulation, transparency, and architectural details.



# Street Level Facade Design & Uses

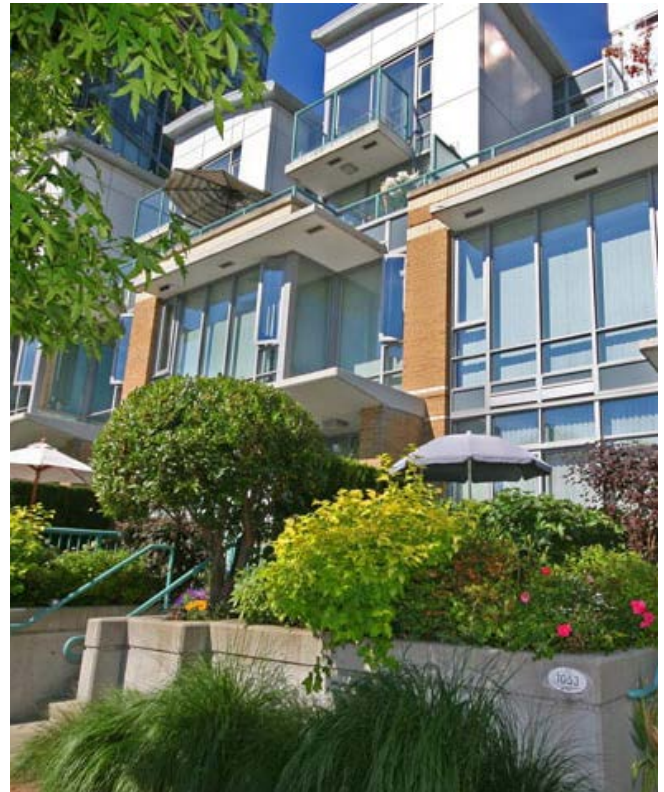
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- 3.93** Off Street Pedestrian Connections, Alleys and Private Access Drives should be illuminated for vehicle and pedestrian safety.
- 3.94** Security lighting should be integrated into the architectural and landscape lighting system.



88. Street Level facades adjacent to or across the street from a Park, Open Space, or the South Platte Riverfront should incorporate features that activate the edge and contribute to visibility and safety.



89. A vertical transition and landscaped Enhanced Residential Setback provide a transition between adjacent sidewalk and a Street Level residential unit.

# Street Level Facade Design & Uses

## Building Entries

A high degree of visual and physical connection, including multiple entrances, support an active and safe Public Realm. Vibrant and interesting streets are often characterized by many active, street-related uses accessed by a series of pedestrian entrances from the sidewalk.

Well-articulated entrances create an arrival experience and identity that defines the transition between public and private. Direct, universal access from the sidewalk to each building or Street Level use, animates the street and encourages pedestrian activity to occur in the Public Realm rather than inside the building. Clear, visible entries and views from building interiors to the street provide security for building occupants and pedestrians.

Conversely, overly large or consecutive vehicular entries can negatively affect the pedestrian experience in the Public Realm. These vehicular entrances should be minimized in size and number, and designed to recede into the building facade.

### Intent Statements

- 3.AD** To emphasize importance of pedestrian entries as a defining feature of Street Level design
- 3.AE** To ensure that pedestrian entrances are located to generate activity and vibrancy on the Street Level
- 3.AF** To minimize the number and impact of vehicular entries from the street

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### Design Standards

- 3.95** Entrances shall be easily differentiated from the adjacent facade.
- 3.96** Entrances set back from the Public Realm by a plaza or entry court shall be visible and maintain direct, universal access from the sidewalk.



90. Entrances shall be easily differentiated from the adjacent facade.



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### Design Guidelines

**3.97** Primary building entrances should be emphasized over secondary commercial and/or individual residential entrances through signature building elements.

Appropriate strategies include:

- Changes in massing and facade plane
- Differentiation in material and/or color
- Higher level of architectural detailing
- Landscape features
- Accent lighting
- Provide additional pedestrian interest and comfort at primary entrances

**3.98** Where light rail or multi-modal transit stations exist adjacent to a building, entrances should orient toward the station.

**3.99** Entrances to individual Street Level residential units shall be located approximately 6 to 42 inches above the elevation of the adjacent sidewalk.

*Note that along the South Platte Riverfront, vertical separation greater than 42 inches may be acceptable.*

**3.100** Vehicle access doors facing a Primary Street should incorporate high-quality materials and finishes that are consistent with the building.



91. A street facing pedestrian entrance shall be located to relate directly to an immediate interior Street Level building use.



92. Primary building entrances should be emphasized over secondary commercial and/or residential entrances through signature building elements.



# Street Level Facade Design & Uses

## Setback & Open Space Design

A well-designed Public Realm, is a flexible publicly-accessible space that can support a variety of uses and programmatic opportunities. The design should also create an environment that supports meets or exceeds public standards for universal accessibility, pedestrian comfort, safety, and high-quality architectural, landscape, and sustainable design.

New building developments have important on-site opportunities to provide publicly-accessible Enhanced Commercial Setbacks and Open Space, as well as semi-private Enhanced Residential Setbacks when building Street Level residential space. These spaces are typically privately-owned and maintained. However, with the exception of Enhanced Residential Setbacks, they should act as public places and be designed to encourage year-round public use. The location of Enhanced Setbacks and Open Space along with the type, size, and intended use of the space, may vary depending upon building use, site characteristics, and the range of additional publicly-accessible spaces available in the surrounding area.

### Intent Statements

- 3.AG To encourage a variety of Open Space typologies**
- 3.AH To provide space for publicly accessible outdoor amenities adjacent to the street**
- 3.AI To provide transitions between public and private areas**
- 3.AJ To ensure that the Enhanced Setbacks and Open Space contributes to the quality of the street and the neighborhood**
- 3.AK To ensure a well designed Open Space with quality materials that contribute to the Human Scale**
- 3.AL To ensure landscaping and other elements accommodate Street Level transparency**
- 3.AM To encourage additional trees and landscaping to reduce heat island effect**

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93. Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas are intended to ensure that spaces where buildings are not built directly along the sidewalk edge still contribute to activating the Public Realm.



94. Residential frontages along the South Platte Riverfront like the example above provide a transition between adjacent sidewalks and private residences, by incorporating elements such as terraces, stoops, planters, and seating areas. The cumulative effect of these technique provide a comfortable transition between public and private realm.

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### Design Standards

**3.101** Open Space shall not be enclosed by walls greater than 42 inches in height.

**3.102** Open Spaces shall be fronted with Highly Active Uses on at least one side of the Open Space.

Highly Active Uses include, but are not limited to:

- Retail storefronts
- Restaurants and cafes
- Building lobbies and building amenity areas
- Recreation facilities
- Arts, cultural or civic facilities

**3.103** Street Level residential uses on the South Platte Riverfront, shall incorporate an Enhanced Residential Setback or Open Space to provide a semi-private transition zone.

Appropriate techniques include:

- Vertical grade separations
- Stoops, porches, and patios
- Seating areas
- Trees and landscaping with supporting infrastructure for long-term survival

**3.104** Enhanced Commercial Setback and Open Space areas shall be designed to provide pedestrian comfort.

Appropriate techniques include:

- Access to sun and shade
- Benches, waste receptacles and other furnishings
- Pedestrian-scaled lighting
- Trees and landscaping with supporting infrastructure for long-term survival

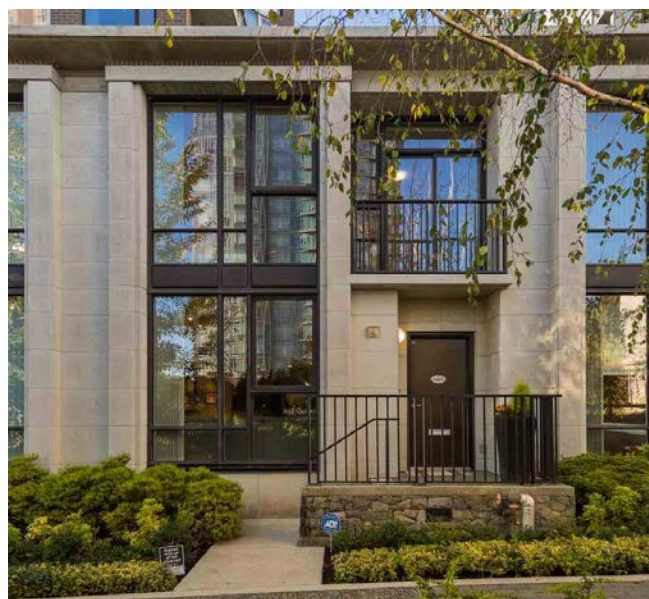
**3.105** Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas shall not include landscaping, fencing, or walls that significantly block views to and from interior uses at the Street Level in order to provide natural surveillance of pedestrian areas.

**3.106** Paving in Enhanced Commercial Setback and Open Space areas shall incorporate a variety of finishes, patterns, and detailing to distinguish different use areas and contribute to the Human Scale of the Public Realm.

**3.107** Open Space shall be designed to encourage public use.

- Provide clear pedestrian access
- Incorporate signage and other visual elements to identify the open space is publicly accessible
- Provide seating, trees, landscaping, and other elements that support pedestrian use

**3.108** Open Space areas larger than 500 square feet shall incorporate trees and a minimum of 30% landscape or pervious area. Pervious surfaces in lieu of landscape areas may be appropriate for Open Spaces anticipated to accommodate high levels of activity.



95. Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas shall not include landscaping, fencing, or walls that significantly block views to and from interior uses at the Street Level in order to provide natural surveillance of pedestrian areas.

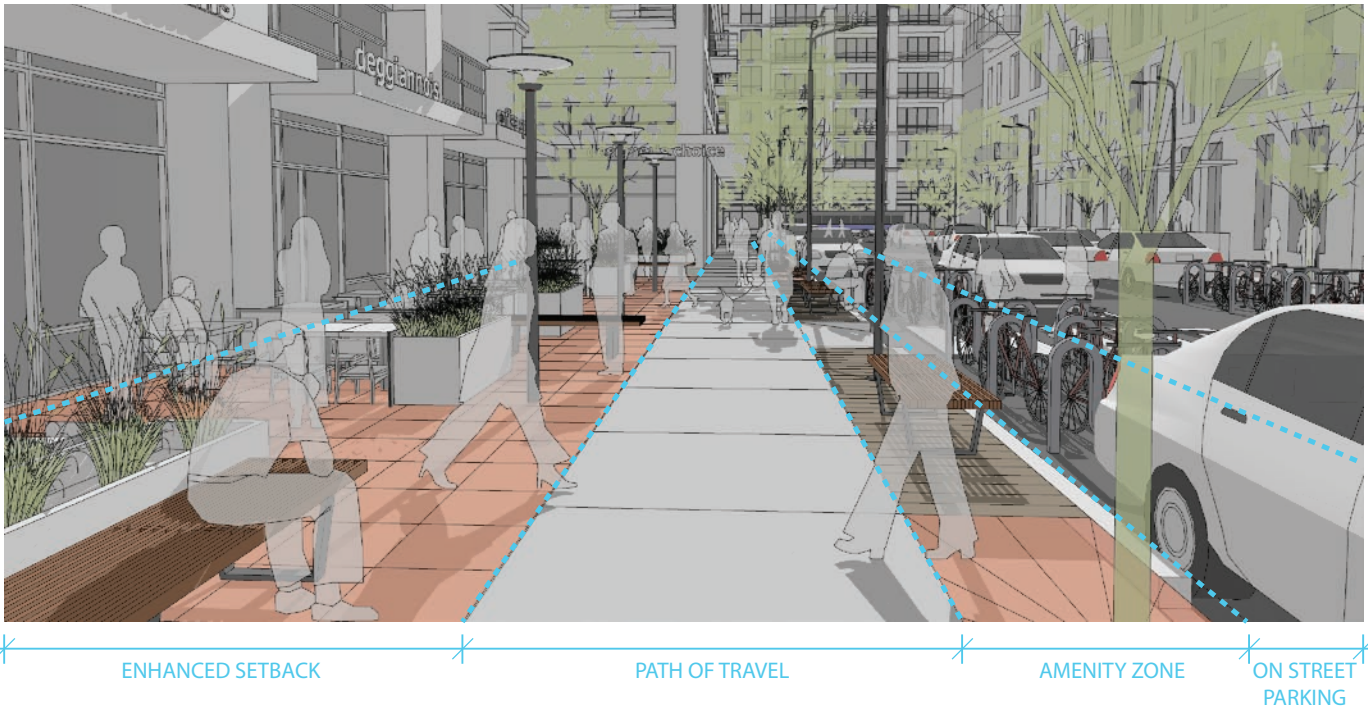


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96. Outdoor dining may occur on any portion of the Public Realm provided a minimum 8-foot wide continuous walkway is maintained. ROW enhancements are to be coordinated with DOTI and DPR.

**3.109** Planters or railings with planters shall be used when enclosure of outdoor eating and drinking areas is required.

**3.112** Pedestrian areas that are part of an Enhanced Commercial Setback, Enhanced Residential Setback, or Open Space should use high-quality durable materials.

## Design Guidelines

**3.110** Enhanced Commercial Setback and Open Space areas should be designed to support a mix of passive and active uses.

**3.111** Street Level facades should be augmented with Enhanced Commercial Setbacks that improve the pedestrian environment and serve as an extension of the Public Realm.

- Consider modest setbacks that add pedestrian use area
- Consider using complementary materials that are similar to the adjacent sidewalk, yet distinguish the Enhanced Commercial Setback area through changes in color, texture, and/or pattern

**3.113** Enhanced Commercial Setback, Enhanced Residential Setback, and Open Space areas should be designed to complement adjacent building uses.

Complementary designs for an Enhanced Commercial Setback include:

- Areas that provide seating for customers of adjacent commercial storefronts
- Outdoor eating and servicing areas adjacent to a cafe or restaurant
- Landscaped courtyards with integrated seating to complement adjacent commercial uses

Complementary designs for an Enhanced Residential Setback include:

- Stoops or landscaped areas to transition to adjacent Street Level residential units
- Landscaped courtyards with integrated seating to complement adjacent residential units



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- 3.114** Enhanced Setbacks and Open Space areas should incorporate features to enhance year-round usability.

Features may include, but are not limited to:

- Trees, canopies, awnings, or other features that provide shade where the space is exposed to the summer sun
- Seating areas designed and oriented to provide winter warmth avoiding areas that may be shaded in the winter months

*Note that examples of passive uses may be seating areas, access to sun and shade, public art, fountains and the like. While active uses may include play areas, dog parks, sport courts, flexible open spaces, and the like.*

- 3.115** Larger Open Spaces should be designed to accommodate events such as outdoor markets or performances, where possible.

- 3.116** Enhanced Commercial Setbacks and Open Space areas should provide both formal and informal seating areas.

Formal seating may include, but is not limited to:

- Integrated benches
- Movable chairs or benches

Informal seating may include, but is not limited to:

- Planter ledges that provide seating
- Bollards or planters

- 3.117** Water features or water design themes should be considered to enhance the quality and character of Open Space.

- Water features should be functionally and visually integrated with the overall design of the Open Space
- Water features should be designed to be attractive and useful with or without water
- Water features should be interactive and engaging to users in the Public Realm

- 3.118** Trees and plantings in an Enhanced Setback or Open Space area should be hardy and drought tolerant.

- 3.119** Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas should incorporate enhanced on-site water quality systems, where possible.

Appropriate techniques include:

- Incorporate enhanced stormwater system design into the overall design of the Public Realm
- Design water quality areas beyond purely functional requirements to be attractive in wet and dry conditions

*Note that when provided, applicant should indicate a maintenance plan and specify vegetation types, as well as solutions for drought.*

See [“Stormwater Management & Landscape”](#).

- 3.120** Public Art should be integrated into an Enhanced Commercial Setback or Open Space area, where possible.

See [“Public Art”](#).



97. Public Art should be integrated into an Enhanced Commercial Setback or Open Space area, where possible.

# Street Level Facade Design & Uses

## Awnings & Canopies

Awnings and canopies provide architectural interest and help break down large building facades to the human-scale along the Public Realm. They also provide important sun and weather protection especially at primary building entries and individual entries.

### Intent Statements

- 3.AN** To ensure that awnings and canopies are integrated into the overall building facade and public realm
- 3.AO** To add visual interest to the pedestrian environment and contribute to the Human Scale of the Street Level
- 3.AP** To provide shade and weather protection for pedestrians
- 3.AQ** To create interesting rhythms and patterns along the building facade
- 3.AR** To ensure that awnings and canopies are made of durable and quality materials

### Design Standards

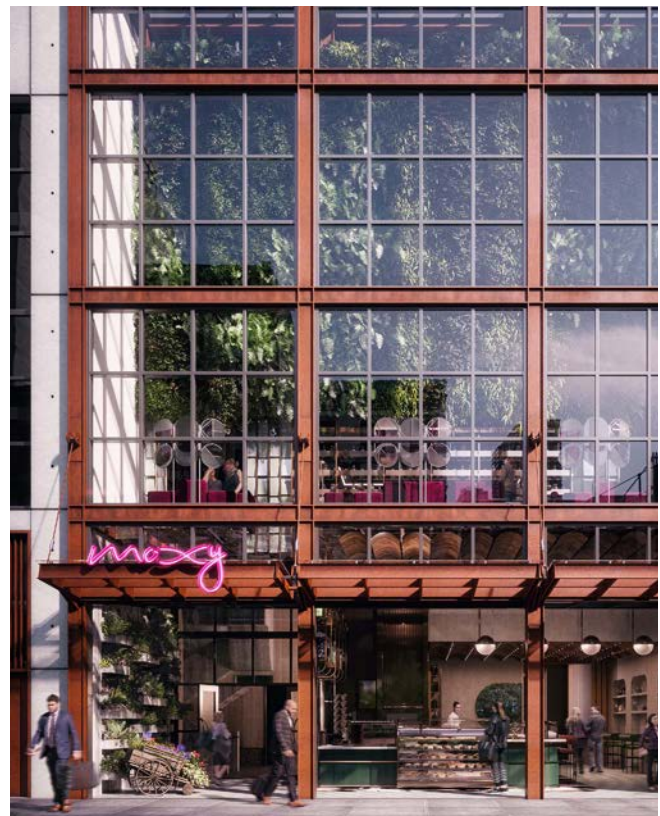
- 3.121** Awnings and canopies shall be an integral part of the architectural design of the building.
  - a. Incorporate awnings and canopies into vertical and horizontal shifts in building massing and articulation
  - b. Awnings and canopies shall not be supported by posts in the Public Realm, but be cantilevered or hung from the building face
- 3.122** Awnings and canopies shall be fabricated of quality durable materials consistent with materials used on the building.
- 3.123** Awnings and canopies shall not interfere with existing or proposed street trees.
- 3.124** Awnings and canopies shall be sized to provide shelter and shade.

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98. Awnings and canopies shall be an integral part of the architectural design of the building.



99. Awnings and canopies shall be fabricated of quality durable materials consistent with materials used on the building.



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## Awnings & Canopies

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100. Awnings and canopies should be designed as individual components and not be continuous and uninterrupted along the street frontage.



101. Canopies should incorporate transparent or translucent glazing to permit the passage of light, and avoid deep shadowed spaces.

## Design Guidelines

- 3.125** Awnings and canopies should be consistent with, and relate to, the Facade design of the building.
- 3.126** The design of awnings or canopies from one building and block to the next should be diverse, but compatible with the overall architecture and streetscape design.
- 3.127** Awnings and canopies should contribute to the Human Scale of the Street Level and not be located over approximately 8-14 feet above the sidewalk.
- 3.128** Awnings and canopies should be designed as individual components and not be continuous and uninterrupted along the street frontage.
- 3.129** Retractable awnings should be considered to provide shade for seasonal outdoor seating.

- 3.130** Canopies should incorporate transparent or translucent glazing to permit the passage of light, and avoid deep shadowed spaces.

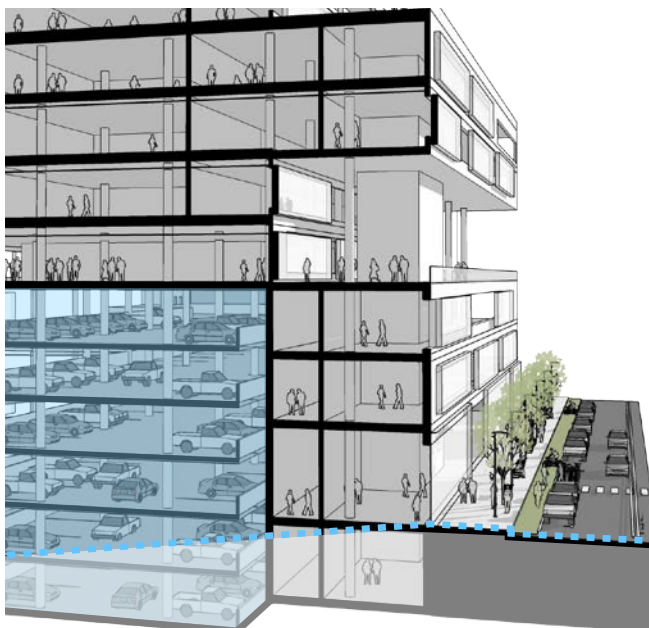


# Structured Parking Facades

Zoning standards in the D-CPV districts require that a majority of Primary Street-facing parking structure facades be wrapped by Active Uses. The remaining visible areas must still screen structured parking to avoid views of parked cars from the street and further strengthen the characteristics of the Public Realm. The following standards and guidelines address the visible portion of parking structures to complement the design context of the area as expressed in the scale, proportion and materials of nearby buildings.

## Intent Statements

- 3.AS** To promote structured parking facades that are fully activated with uses
- 3.AT** To minimize the impact of vehicles and structured parking on the Public Realm and surrounding properties
- 3.AU** To ensure all parking structures have well designed facades that are visually compatible with the character and quality of the overall building facade



102. Structured parking should be completely wrapped with another use on facades facing Key Streets.

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## Design Standards

### 3.131 Facade areas with Visible Structured Parking shall be designed to minimize the visual impacts to the Public Realm by screening lights and vehicle headlights.

Appropriate techniques include to screen security lighting and headlights:

- a. Use of non-transparent materials for approximately the first 36 to 48 inches of the facade on each floor, to block the view of headlights
- b. Architectural features and screening that conceal ceiling and security lighting
- c. Use of fully-shielded LED or other lighting not exceeding approximately 2,500 lumens
- d. All garage interior lighting within 40 feet of openings must have light shields and be on automatic dimmers to reduce lighting in evening and night hours to maximum 2 foot candles

### 3.132 Facade areas with Visible Structured Parking shall reflect the overall fenestration pattern on the building facade and meet the same transparency standards for non parking facades.

- a. Use similar opening proportions to those on the overall facade
- b. Align openings with those on adjacent buildings or facade areas

### 3.133 Visible Structured Parking shall be integrated into the overall Facade and utilize architectural articulation consistent with the rest of the building design.

Appropriate techniques include:

- a. Continuing similar building materials across facade areas with Visible Structured Parking
- b. Continuing vertical and horizontal articulation across facade areas with Visible Structured Parking
- c. Provide a high level of architectural design and finish. Expanses of blank walls shall not be allowed

See [“Facade Articulation”](#).

# Structured Parking Facades

**3.134** Fenestration pattern for Visible Structured Parking shall integrate treatments that mitigate the appearance of a parking garage.

Features may include, but are not limited to:

- Mullions
- Glass panels
- Decorative screening

**3.135** Design treatments used for Visible Structured Parking shall continue around the corner for approximately 50 feet of an Alley or Private Access Drive-facing Facade.

**3.136** Mechanical ventilation systems for structured parking shall be located to minimize the impact on adjacent properties.

**3.137** When Alley or Private Access Drive is available mechanical ventilation systems shall not be located on Primary Street-facing Facade. When an Alley or Private Access Drive is not provided, mechanical ventilation shall be properly screened and integrated into the Primary Street-facing Facade.

- Locate ventilation and mechanical systems away from entrances, windows or balconies of adjacent properties

## Design Guidelines

**3.138** Structured parking should be completely wrapped with active use on facades facing Key Streets.

**3.139** Street facing Visible Structured Parking should be designed to accommodate future conversion to non-parking uses.

**3.140** Alley and Private Access Drive-facing facades of parking structures that face adjacent non-parking uses should be designed to mitigate impacts on neighbors.

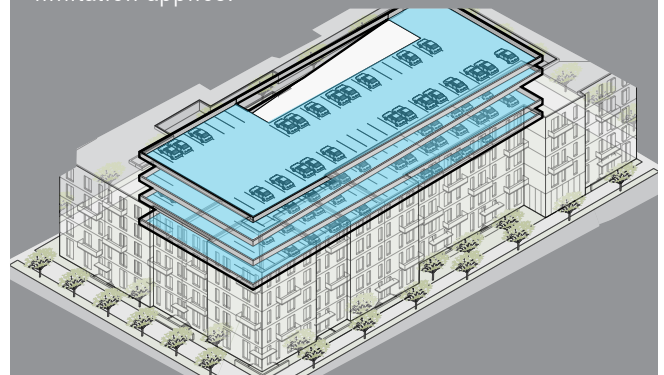
- Use features such as screened facade openings that block views of headlights and lighting
- Locate ventilation and mechanical systems away from entrances, windows or balconies of adjacent properties

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## DENVER ZONING CODE LIMITATION ON VISIBLE PARKING

In the D-CPV-T/R/C, D-AS-12+/20+, and D-GT zone districts, the Denver Zoning Code includes a limitation on the visibility of parking structures above the Street Level along Primary Streets. This limitation requires any parking structure facade located within 70% of the street-facing Zone Lot width to be wrapped by an Active Use, meaning that any portion in the remaining 30% of the Zone Lot may be visible. To minimize the visual prominence of parking structures, the design standards and guidelines in this section build on the Denver Zoning Code limitation and express the architectural quality that is expected for any Visible Structured Parking. Refer to the Denver Zoning Code for more details on the specific situations where this limitation applies.



103. Retail and facade ornamentation on the Lower Story Facade of the building mask a parking structure, effectively screening views of parked cars and providing an active street environment for the pedestrian.

# Building Rooftops

Although mostly invisible from the street, rooftops are prominent features of the cityscape from neighboring buildings. Appropriate designs for the top of a building are influenced by many factors, which may include location, height, building composition, architectural expression, and overall 'fit' within the existing context of the city skyline. While not all building rooflines will warrant a signature feature, a roofline that utilizes architectural features highlighted through lighting and form can enhance the design and presence of a building at night.

Importantly, rooftop appurtenances must be considered early in the design process and integrated into the overall architectural composition, rather than simply attached as an afterthought. Items such as vents, tanks, wiring, rooftop rooms, and stored window washing equipment can create unattractive clutter. High-quality materials, occupiable outdoor space, and rooftop mechanical equipment shielded or arranged with care can make the roof a neutral or attractive part of the urban view.

## Intent Statements

- 3.AV To create building rooflines that positively contribute to the quality and character of the city skyline**
- 3.AW To ensure that non-decorative rooftop equipment, such as mechanical and telecommunication, are fully screened from view and integrated into the rooftop design**
- 3.AX To incorporate environmentally sustainable building technologies**

## Design Standards

- 3.141** Rooftop mechanical and service elements, such as ventilation equipment, elevator penthouses, mechanical rooms, antennas and telecommunications equipment, shall be screened and set back from the roof edge/parapet to minimize visibility from the Public Realm.

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- a. Screen equipment from view from surrounding streets and structures
- b. Set back equipment by at least 10 feet from the roof edge/parapet
- c. Where rooftop mechanical and service elements are taller than 10 feet in height from the rooftop, increase setbacks by one foot for each foot of additional height

- 3.142** Rooftop mechanical, service and amenity elements shall be integrated into building design and massing to minimize visual clutter on the skyline.

Appropriate techniques include:

- a. Integrating rooftop mechanical, service and amenity elements (such as a rooftop deck) into rooftop architectural features
- b. Using materials and colors that are complementary to Upper Story Facade or Tower Facade treatments to screen rooftop mechanical and service elements

- 3.143** Rooftop screening material that is visible from the street shall be of durable and quality material that complements the overall facade design.

- 3.144** Mechanical equipment located adjacent to or facing window or door openings shall provide screening and sound buffers to mitigate noise and visual impact.

- 3.145** Telecommunication equipment shall not be mounted on any primary street facing facades.
  - a. Aim to locate telecommunication equipment on rooftops, Alley or Private Access Drive
  - b. When telecommunication equipment is required to be located on a side interior zone lot line, locate equipment at least 15 feet away from Primary Street Facing Facade
  - c. Paint telecommunication equipment to match or compliment the exterior facade finish and color



# Building Rooftops

Facade Articulation  
Windows & Transparency  
Exterior Building Materials  
Balconies  
Design Details for Infill Development  
Adaptive Reuse and Building Additions

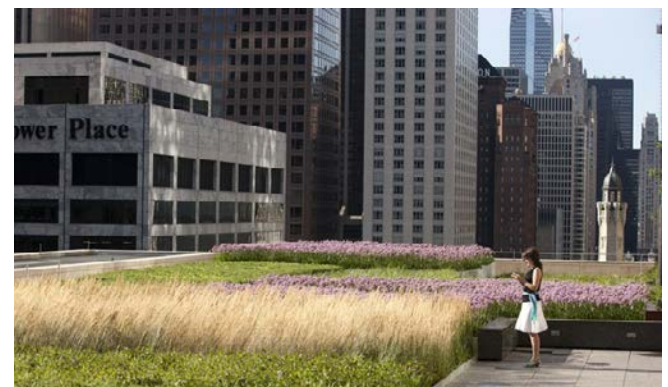
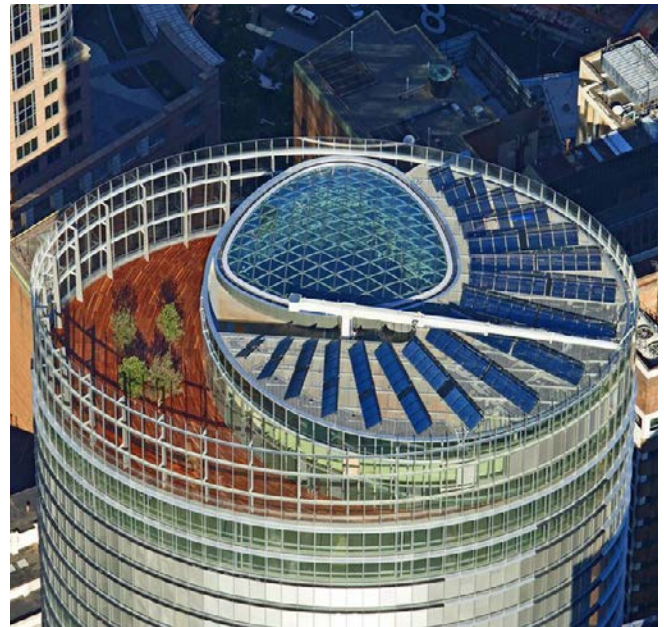
Street Level Facade Design & Uses  
Building Entries  
Setback & Open Space Design  
Awnings & Canopies  
Structured Parking Facades  
**Building Rooftops**  
Fences, Walls, & Screens



104. Rooftop screening should be expressed as part of the building composition and fully integrated architecturally.

## Design Guidelines

- 3.146** Building rooftops and parapets should enhance the character of the skyline and strengthen the identity of individual buildings.
- 3.147** Rooftop lighting should be designed with adjustable intensity controls.
- 3.148** Rooftop screening should be expressed as part of the building composition and integrated into the building design and massing.
- 3.149** Vents, exhaust fans, and other roof penetrations should be grouped to the greatest extent possible to avoid visual clutter.
- 3.150** Environmentally sustainable technologies such as solar panels, planted green roofs, and blue roofs for water runoff collection and treatment, should be incorporated into the top of buildings.



105. Sustainable technologies such as solar panels, planted green roofs, and blue roofs for water runoff collection and treatment, should be incorporated into the top of buildings.

## DENVER GREEN BUILDING ORDINANCE

The Denver Green Building Ordinance requires that new buildings with 25,000 or greater in gross floor area, including those who must only comply with the provision of a cool roof, must submit required documents for review when constructing either a new roof or a roof replacement. Buildings Renewable energy devices being used to fulfill a Green Buildings Ordinance requirement shall also be submitted for review, regardless of the size of the system.

# Fences, Walls, & Screens

Where buildings are set back from the sidewalk edge, low fences and walls can provide a threshold between public and private space. A low fence creates comfortable separation while encouraging interaction between residents and passersby. In contrast, taller fences and walls evoke a sense of fortification and create isolated enclosures.

## Intent Statements

- 3.AY** To ensure that fences, walls, and screens enhance the pedestrian environment and are well integrated into the building design and overall streetscape
- 3.AZ** To ensure that fences, walls and screens use quality and durable materials
- 3.BA** To ensure that fences and walls reinforce ground level transparency, and a welcoming character for ground level uses facing the street

## Design Standards

- 3.151** Primary Street-facing fences and walls shall not exceed approximately 42 inches in height above the Street Level.  
Appropriate exceptions include:
  - a. Existing building
  - b. Raised platforms that require railings for safety
- 3.152** Fences and walls shall complement the architectural style and materials of the Lower Story Facade.
- 3.153** Side yard fences and walls shall connect to the side of a building a minimum of 2 feet back from the front facade of the building.

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**Fences, Walls, & Screens**



106. *Street Level* residential units can incorporate railings between private patios and landings to physically separate them from the *Public Realm*, but still allow for social interaction.

- 3.154** Fences, walls, and screens for service areas and utilities shall be designed to minimize visibility from the Public Realm and complement adjacent building facades.
  - a. Use colors and materials that are complementary to the building facade color and materials
  - b. Screen dumpsters or other waste receptacles with high-quality materials and/or landscaping that is consistent with the building design
- 3.155** Fences and walls visible from the Public Realm shall use durable, high-quality materials compatible with the materials of the primary structure.



# Fences, Walls, & Screens

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107. Fences and walls shall complement the architectural style and materials of the Lower Story Facade.

## Design Guidelines

**3.156** Methods other than fences and walls used to create appropriate transitions between the Public Realm and Street Level uses are preferred.

Appropriate techniques include:

- a. Stoops
- b. Landscaping
- c. Terracing

**3.157** Minimize the use of fences and walls to completely enclose private spaces.

**3.158** When enclosure of outdoor eating and drinking areas is required, railings should be designed as an integral part of the building Facade.

**3.159** Fences, walls, and screens should be made of durable and low-maintenance materials, such as metal or Masonry and/or be integrated into high-quality landscape planters.

**3.160** Gates should be in proportion to the fence or wall and not exceed approximately 42 inches in height above the Street Level when adjacent to the Public Realm.

**3.161** Retaining walls should be designed in the form of low terraces, limited to 30 inches or less, to preserve high visibility and avoid required railings.



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# Chapter 4 | Private Streetscape Design

Private Streetscape Design addresses the quality of the space found between the curb and the face of the building or property boundary along streets that are privately owned or managed. This space is the primary area of public occupation and significantly shapes the pedestrian experience.

# Introduction to Streetscape Design

Streetscape design addresses the character of the space generally located between the street edge and face of adjacent buildings, including the sidewalk and Amenity Zone. Well designed streetscape and landscape elements support a healthier, safer, and more comfortable pedestrian experience and add distinctive character to the area. The design standards and guidelines included in this chapter are focused on the character and quality of the experience, rather than specific design solutions, to provide flexibility in addressing technical engineering and infrastructure requirements.

Typically, streetscapes and the street itself are located within a public Right-of-Way located between private property. These DSG are not applicable within the public Right-of-Way. The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) and the Office of the City Forester has review and approval authority of all work located within the public Right-of-Way. These DSG are only applicable for streets located outside the public Right-of-Way.

Right-of-Way areas that are privately owned and managed shall use these DSG to address the design character and quality of the streetscape. Other associated processes or documents, such as Infrastructure Master Plans or Development Agreements, may require additional standards related to block size, vehicular access, streets, and the Public Realm. Note also that the property owner is responsible for maintenance and care of adjacent street trees even if the property is located within an improvement and/or maintenance district.

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE AND OFFICE OF THE CITY FORESTER REVIEW OF STREETSCAPE DESIGN

All projects in the public Right-of-Way are subject to review and approval by the City of Denver's Department of Transportation and Infrastructure and the Office of the City Forester. DOTI and City Forester review may result in required changes to streetscape designs or deviation from these DSG.

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Streetscape Paving  
Amenity Zone & Street Trees  
Bicycle & Scooter Parking  
Public Art  
Stormwater Management & Landscape

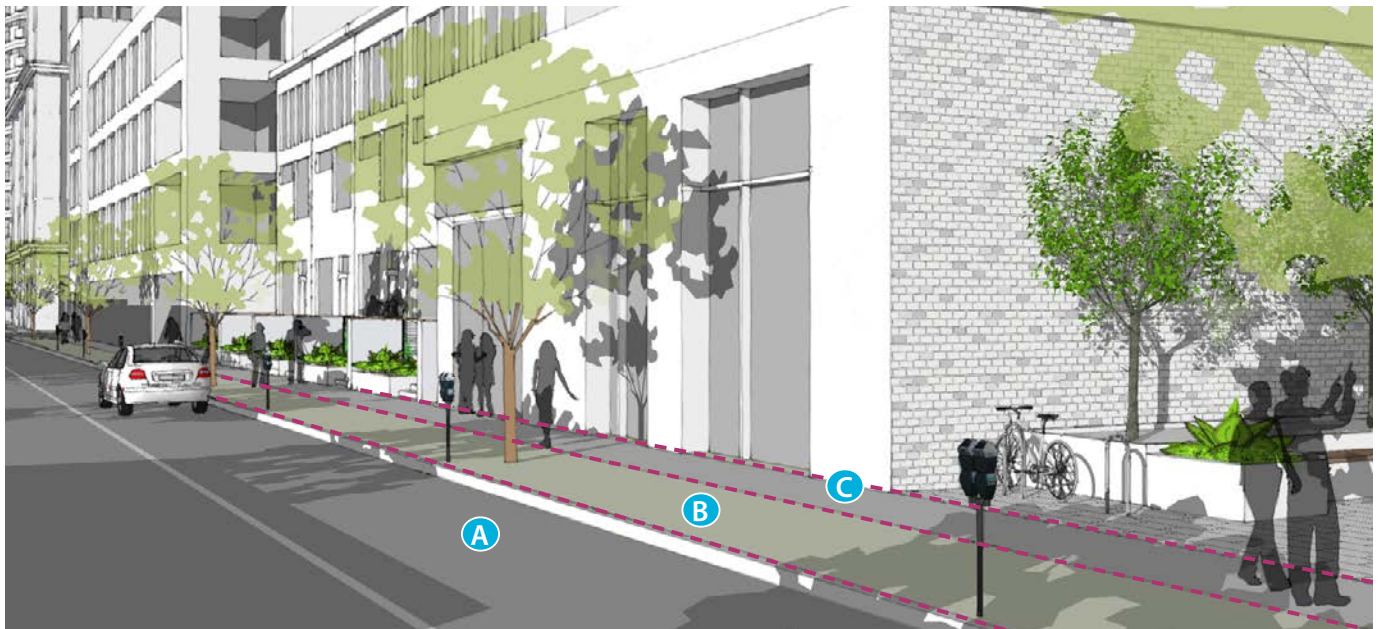
## Streetscape Elements

The urban streetscape will typically include a progression of spaces from the street to the Primary Street Zone Lot Line (usually near the edge of the sidewalk). The standards and guidelines in this chapter primarily address design treatments within the Amenity Zone and sidewalk areas. [“Setback & Open Space Design”](#) provides specific guidance for Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas which are located on private property, but are often directly linked to the sidewalk and overall streetscape.

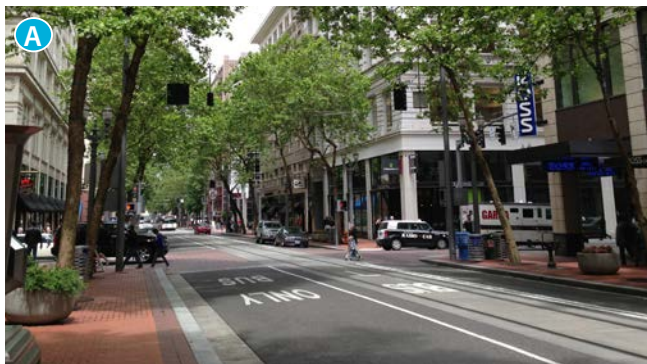


# Introduction to Streetscape Design

**Introduction to Streetscape Design**  
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108. Typical streetscape areas include the street, Amenity Zone, and pedestrian zone.



109. The street is the paved area within the Right-of-Way that is typically reserved for vehicular traffic, bicycles, transit, and on-street parking.



110. The Amenity Zone is the area between the street and sidewalk that is improved with street trees, paving, street furniture or other amenities. See [“Amenity Zone & Street Trees”](#) for additional information.



111. The pedestrian zone provides the primary pedestrian walkway between the Amenity Zone and the Primary Street Zone Lot Line. They may be directly linked to Enhanced Commercial Setback and Open Space areas described in [“Setback & Open Space Design”](#).

# Streetscape Furnishing & Lighting

Streetscape furnishings contribute to the identity and character of a district. Elements such as seating, bicycle racks, trash/recycling receptacles, and newspaper dispensers add important functionality, as well as visual interest, to the street. Street furnishings create the settings for resting, sitting and eating, and social encounters with others. Such settings may be of great importance to the elderly, those with limited mobility, and adults who have small children. In addition to their functional aspects, furnishings can also be socially significant as they support a comfortable environment and encourage human interaction.

Streetscape lighting provides illumination of both the roadways and the Public Realm for visibility, safety, and security. Pedestrian lighting complements required street lighting and contributes to the safety and design quality of the nighttime pedestrian experience.

## Intent Statements

- 4.A To use furnishings and lighting elements to contribute to the activity and Human Scale of the streetscape**
- 4.B To promote a comfortable, safe, and clean pedestrian environment**
- 4.C To ensure that streetscape furnishings and lighting are made of high-quality, durable materials**
- 4.D To allow creative furnishing and lighting designs**

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112. Streetscape furnishings can be used to encourage pedestrian activity and define areas of respite.

## RESPITE AREAS

Respite Areas are small spaces adjacent to the sidewalk that encourage pedestrians to briefly dwell and linger in the Public Realm. These can be especially useful near Street Level commercial and retail land uses. Respite Areas should include seating elements, vegetation and shade from street trees, and other furnishings that create a comfortable space for a short break from the urban environment.

## FLEXIBILITY FOR SMALL LOTS

Flexibility in the application of the design standards and guidelines in this chapter may be appropriate for smaller lots (lots less than approximately 75 feet in width).



# Streetscape Furnishing & Lighting

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113. Streetscape furnishings shall be located to maintain a clear pedestrian walkway at least 8 feet in width.



114. Streetscape lighting shall be designed to contribute to the pedestrian experience and enhance a sense of security.

## Design Standards

**4.01** Streetscape furnishings shall be provided to encourage pedestrian activity.

Appropriate techniques include:

- Benches
- Planters
- Bicycle racks
- Waste and recycle receptacles
- Pet waste bag dispensers

**4.02** Streetscape furnishings shall be located to maintain a clear pedestrian walkway of at least 8 feet in width.

**4.03** Streetscape furnishings shall be durable and suitable for outdoor conditions in the local climate.

**4.04** Streetscape lighting shall be designed to contribute to the pedestrian experience and enhance a sense of security.

Appropriate techniques include:

- Placing fixtures at lower heights
- Use of fixtures that provide even lighting
- Installation of fixtures at sufficient intervals to avoid dark zones

**4.05** Streetscape lighting, telecommunication towers, and furnishings shall be located outside of or between tree planting areas whenever possible. Where they cannot be located outside of planting areas, locate at the end(s) of planting areas to minimize above and below ground impacts to trees and other vegetation.



# Streetscape Furnishing & Lighting

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## Design Guidelines

- 4.06** Seating should be designed so that it does not hold water and/or debris.
- 4.07** Seating should be located to utilize desired sun and/or shade areas.
- 4.08** Waste receptacles should be provided and have multiple functions such as landfill, compost, and recycling.
- 4.09** Streetscape furnishings should incorporate creative designs.  
Appropriate techniques include:
- a. Streetscape furnishings that serve multiple purposes such as planters with integrated seating or lighting
  - b. Flexible and movable seating
  - c. Incorporating Public Art
- 4.10** Streetscape furnishings should consider opportunities to support wireless connectivity, mobile communication, and other similar technologies.



115. Streetscape furnishings should incorporate creative designs.

- 4.11** Pedestrian lighting should be integrated into streetscape design elements.  
Appropriate locations include:
- a. Streetscape furnishings
  - b. Paving systems
  - c. Walls, railings, or bollards
- 4.12** Pedestrian lighting should be Dark Sky compliant and designed to minimize light pollution.
- 4.13** Telecommunications equipment, signage, and other pole-mounted elements should be integrated into pedestrian lighting or other streetscape features to reduce clutter within the Public Realm.



116. Pedestrian lighting should be integrated into streetscape design elements.

# Streetscape Paving

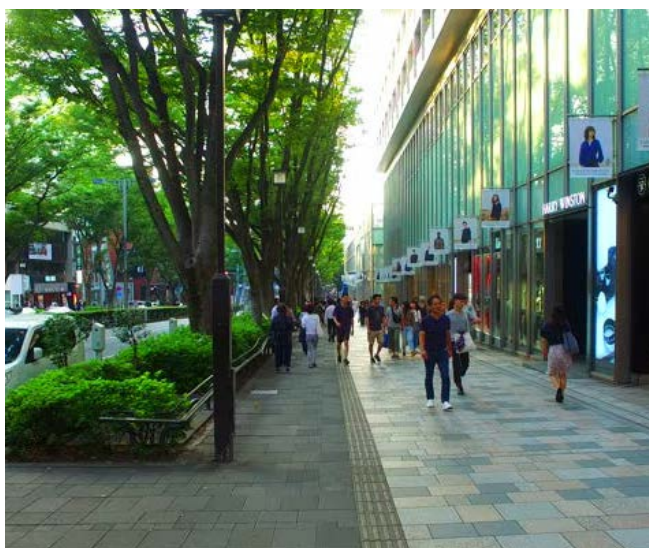
Changes in paving material, color, or finish can distinguish varying pedestrian conditions in the streetscape, such as sidewalks and Amenity Zones, and help break down large spaces to a more Human Scale. It can also be used to help establish the character of a district or special zone. Unique colors, textures and materials can be used to create variety, embellish the Public Realm, and guide movement through subtle wayfinding cues.

## Intent Statements

- 4.E To encourage coordinated paving designs**
- 4.F To identify different areas of the streetscape**
- 4.G To promote paving designs that help manage stormwater**

## Design Standards

- 4.14** Streetscape paving shall incorporate a variety of finishes, colors, patterns, and/or detailing to distinguish different use areas and contribute to the Human Scale of the Public Realm.



117. Streetscape paving shall incorporate a variety of finishes, colors, patterns, and/or detailing to contribute to the Human Scale of the Public Realm.

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## Design Guidelines

- 4.15** Paving materials should be coordinated along blocks and streets to maintain a consistent design approach.
- 4.16** Paving design should be used to differentiate varying uses and areas of the streetscape.  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Use of distinctive paving to differentiate the Amenity Zone from the pedestrian walkway
  - b. Use of distinctive paving to differentiate the sidewalks from an Enhanced Commercial Setback, Open Space, or Private Access Drive
  - c. Use of creative paving designs that distinguish different types of mobility or identify specific streets/districts
- 4.17** Permeable paving should be considered to allow infiltration of stormwater.  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Ensure permeable paving meets requirements for pedestrian use
  - b. Design permeable paving to be easily cleaned and maintained to encourage proper function over time

## PAVING MATERIALS IN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY

DOTI reviews and approves paving materials and designs within the public Right-of-Way. DOTI may approve unique or distinctive paving designs in the public Right-of-Way if applicants have a program in place to ensure ongoing maintenance of special paving.

## STREET PAVING

This section addresses only pedestrian-area paving within the streetscape that is between the curb and Zone Lot. It does not address the paving of vehicular travel lanes, bicycle lanes, or other paved areas within streets, Alleys, or Private Access Drives.



# Amenity Zone & Street Trees

The Amenity Zone is the area between the street and sidewalk that should incorporate street trees, landscaping, paving, streetscape furnishings, stormwater management systems and other amenities. The Amenity Zone contributes to the overall health and quality of life of the city, downtown residents, and area users. With proper design, the Amenity Zone can promote a sense of place and enhance and invigorate the Public Realm in urban environments.

Street trees and vegetated landscaping are a vital component of the Amenity Zone and urban forest, especially in higher intensity areas, because of the direct proximity to people and the built environment. Street trees contribute substantial social, environmental, and economic benefits including but not limited to: mitigating the urban heat island effect, providing shade for pedestrian enjoyment, increased pedestrian traffic and longer shopping times, capturing and intercepting air and water pollution, reducing heat radiation and light reflection, providing wildlife habitat, lowering vehicle speeds, reducing crime rates, promoting increased social cohesion, and improved mental and physical health.

Trees also help break down the urban environment to Human Scale, creating a sense of place. They have an ability to focus and tie the streetscape together, and be used to screen, connect, or emphasize adjacent structures or objects. As trees branch across the pavement, they tend to visually reduce adjacent building height and street width, softening the built environment.

## Intent Statements

- 4.H To create a well-designed, resilient, and diverse streetscape**
- 4.I To ensure Amenity Zone designs and materials retain their quality over time**
- 4.J To introduce natural elements to the streetscape**
- 4.K To ensure thoughtful placement and long-term viability of street trees**

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## Design Standards

- 4.18** The Amenity Zone shall incorporate a variety of streetscape elements and amenities.

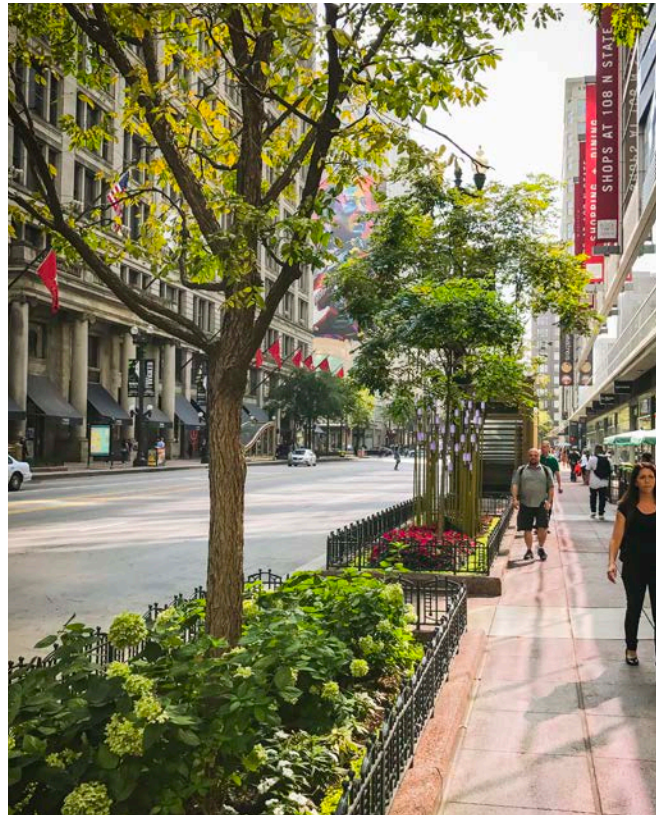
Appropriate techniques include:

- a. Street trees and landscape areas
- b. Paved pedestrian use areas
- c. Outdoor eating and serving areas
- d. Fixed and movable furnishings
- e. Pedestrian lighting

- 4.19** Amenity Zone designs shall respond to an adjacent dedicated Bicycle Facility.

Appropriate techniques include:

- a. Providing designated pedestrian access to/from the Bicycle Facility
- b. Locating bicycle racks to be accessible from the Bicycle Facility



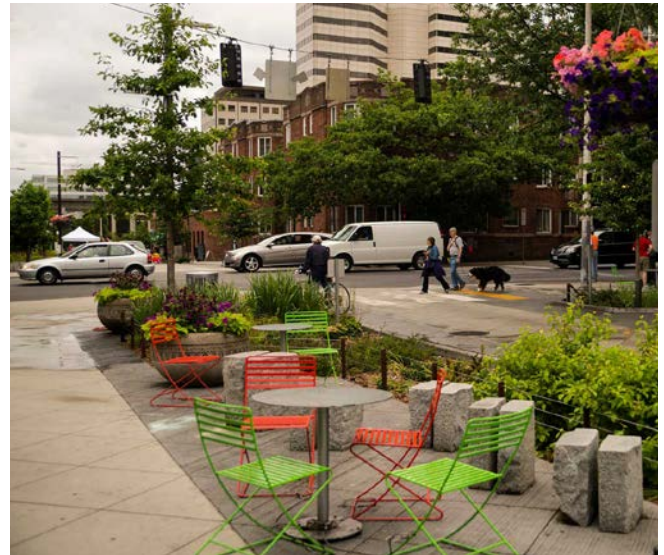
118. Street trees and landscape areas within the Amenity Zone can be used to soften and humanize the urban environment.



# Amenity Zone & Street Trees

- 4.20** Bollards located in Amenity Zones shall not obstruct pedestrian or bicycle mobility.
- 4.21** New multi-unit residential projects shall prioritize designated pet areas on private property outside the public Right-of-Way.
- 4.22** Streetscape design adjacent to multi-unit residential projects shall address pet-related impacts.  
Appropriate techniques include:
- Providing resilient landscaping in the Amenity Zone that can survive impacts related to dogs or other pets
  - Considering limited use of barriers or fencing to protect landscape areas
- 4.23** Street tree planting shall follow current ordinances, rules and regulations, and standards established by the City Forester.
- 4.24** Street tree planting areas shall be designed to support the root system of mature trees.  
*Where open tree lawns are not utilized, provide subsurface infrastructure to ensure a minimum 600 cubic feet of soil volume per tree, equally distributed irrigation/drainage, and airspace above soil level for root respiration.*  
Appropriate techniques include:
- Structural cells
  - Suspended pavement systems
  - Other DOTI/City Forester approved subsurface technologies
- 4.25** Tree grates, when necessary, shall be designed to accommodate yearly tree growth and mature trunk sizes.

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119. The Amenity Zone shall incorporate a variety of streetscape elements, such as outdoor eating and serving areas.



120. Tree grates, when necessary, shall be designed to accommodate yearly tree growth and mature trunk sizes.

# Amenity Zone & Street Trees

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## Design Guidelines

- 4.26** When the use of traditional bollards is necessary they should be removable or retractable, integrate lighting, and be slim in character to not be visually distracting.
- 4.27** Signs, display kiosks, and other ground-mounted appurtenances should be integrated with other streetscape elements to reduce clutter and located outside planting areas to avoid conflicts with the Amenity Zone and street trees.
- 4.28** Underground utilities and access to them should be consolidated and located outside planting areas to avoid conflicts with the Amenity Zone and street trees.
- 4.29** Underground parking structures should not extend below the Amenity Zone and street tree planting areas above.
- 4.30** Planting areas should be designed to provide viable, long term plant growth for trees and other vegetation.  
Appropriate techniques include:
- Using salt tolerant woody shrubs and other landscape material to surround street trees
  - Using features that retain organic surface treatments and other ground covers in the planting area
  - Omitting weed barrier fabric in street tree planting areas

## OFFICE OF THE CITY FORESTER APPROVAL

A permit is required from the Department of Parks and Recreation Office of the City Forester prior to planting or removing trees from the public Right-of-Way per Chapter 57 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code.



121. Planting areas should be designed to provide viable, long term plant growth for trees and other vegetation.



122. Low Impact Development stormwater management systems should be integrated into the Amenity Zone where appropriate.



# Amenity Zone & Street Trees

- 4.31** Building location and streetscape designs should promote maximum available soil volume for long-term street tree survival. Appropriate techniques include:
- Using infrastructure designed to support paved areas above available soil volume
  - Stepping back building facades
  - Considering encroachments such as balconies, signs, awnings, etc.
  - Creating bulb-outs that provide more space for shade trees
- 4.32** Amenity Zone designs and materials should promote long-term quality and minimize maintenance. Appropriate techniques include:
- Using high-quality durable materials, including landscape materials
  - Using modular elements that may be removed to allow maintenance access or replacement
  - Using integrated irrigation systems
- 4.33** Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater management systems should be integrated into the Amenity Zone where appropriate.
- See [“Stormwater Management & Landscape”](#).

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## STREET TREES

The Office of the City Forester maintains a list of approved street trees and required spacing rules. Any deviation from the list must be approved by the City Forester. A permit is required from the City Forester prior to planting or removing trees from the public Right-of-Way per Chapter 57 of the [Revised Municipal Code](#). Trees planted within the public Right-of-Way are also subject to DOTI review.

Maintaining tree species diversity is the priority to avoid mass tree losses that can occur through monoculture planting. Street tree species selection can also contribute to visual consistency and aesthetic quality based on tree size, shape, branch structure, and seasonal leaf color.

[Colorado State University](#) also maintains a list of recommended tree species for the Front Range for trees planted outside the Right-of-Way.

## STRUCTURAL CELLS VS. SOILS

Structural Cells and other techniques can be used in conjunction with suspended paving systems to support the weight of pedestrian and vehicular loading while allowing for large volumes of lightly compacted soils below that promote mature tree growth. By supporting healthier-growing trees, Structural Cells help promote the intent to introduce natural elements to the street and Public Realm. Suspended pavement systems also contribute to maintenance of pre-development hydrology to support LID stormwater management.

Structural soil is a medium below the pavement that is approximately 80% rock and can be compacted to support building and paving requirements while still allowing for some tree root growth. Structural soil should only be used in specific applications as coordinated with the Office of the City Forester.

Structural Cells and suspended pavement systems are the preferred method since they support healthier and faster tree growth over time than structural soils, due in part to their ability to minimize compaction, allow better hydrologic conditions, and maintain much higher levels of natural soil and organic matter.



# Bicycle & Scooter Parking

Convenient and safe bicycle parking and related facilities are fundamental to encouraging alternative modes of mobility, particularly when traveling short distances on a regular basis. These standards and guidelines represent a basis for helping to provide sufficient bicycle parking facilities throughout Downtown Denver. In addition to the provision of bicycle parking, new commercial development is to consider additional needs for bicycle users, such as lockers, changing rooms, and shower facilities.

## Intent Statements

- 4.L To promote sufficient parking for bicycles, scooters and other micromobility devices that is appropriate to adjacent uses**
- 4.M To ensure that bicycle parking is safe, secure, and easily accessible**

### DENVER ZONING CODE BICYCLE PARKING REQUIREMENTS

The Denver Zoning Code provides specific requirements for fixed bicycle parking. The design standards and guidelines in this section are intended to build on Denver Zoning Code requirements with additional guidance regarding the placement and character of bicycle parking. They are also intended to encourage the provision of additional bicycle parking beyond minimum requirements.

### DOTI'S BICYCLE FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure provides standards for the design of required bicycle facilities. DOTI also requires a permit for placement of bicycle parking in the public Right-of-Way. See DOTI Bicycle Parking Standards for specific dimensions and spacing requirements.

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123. Bicycle parking shall be located near active pedestrian areas that are visible from the street.

## Design Standards

- 4.34** Bicycle and scooter parking shall be located to avoid conflicts with pedestrians and trees.
- 4.35** Bicycle racks and scooter parking shall be located outside Amenity Zone planting areas and a minimum of 4 feet from street trees. Further distances are encouraged to avoid use of trees as docking stations and/or racks.
- 4.36** Pedestrian and bicycle access to parking garages shall be safe and conveniently located.
- 4.37** Bicycle and scooter parking shall be located near active pedestrian areas that are visible from the street.  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Within safe and convenient access to main pedestrian entries
  - b. In an Amenity Zone
  - c. In an Enhanced Commercial Setback or Open Space (in a way that complements the design and functionality of the space)

# Bicycle & Scooter Parking

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124. Enclosed bicycle parking should include individually secured bicycle facilities and additional end-of-trip facilities.

## Design Guidelines

- 4.38** Bicycle parking should be located adjacent to Highly Active Uses to increase security and natural surveillance.
- 4.39** In active commercial areas, additional bicycle parking, beyond Denver Zoning Code minimums, should be provided. Additional secure bicycle parking is especially important adjacent to:
- Dedicated bicycle facilities
  - High traffic pedestrian areas
  - Transit stations
  - Multi-tenant building entrances
- 4.40** Bicycle parking provided in addition to minimum Denver Zoning Code requirements should incorporate creative designs. Appropriate techniques include:
- Integration with streetscape furnishings, lighting, etc.
  - Incorporation of Public Art
  - Use of Bicycle Corrals
- 4.41** Enclosed bicycle parking should include individually secured bicycle facilities.
- 4.42** Enclosed bicycle parking should include a variety of end-of-trip facilities. Appropriate facilities include:
- Bicycle repair and service equipment
  - Water fountains
  - Courtesy equipment (benches, mirror, towel service)
- 4.43** Buildings containing more than 100,000 sf of office uses should include bicycle commuter shower facilities. Appropriate facilities should include:
- Showers and clothing storage areas for bicycle commuters
  - Two showers for every 100,000 square feet of office use
  - Equal shower access for all users
  - Lockers that are clean, well-maintained, and large enough to accommodate bags, helmets, and clothing
  - Easy accessibility to bicycle parking

# Public Art

Public Art captures and reinforces the unique character of a place. Additionally, the setting for Public Art should be considered part of the experience of the art itself. The impact of the place on the art may be as great as the art's impact on the place. The two together enrich the Public Realm, encourage pedestrians to linger and return, and create memorable experiences. Locations with the most impact and opportunities for Public Art can often be identified and secured when considered early in the project planning stages.

Public Art includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Sculpture, painting, graphic arts, mosaics, photography, crafts, mixed media, earth works and environmental installations, and decorative or ornamental elements which are designed by practicing artists

The following elements will generally not be considered acceptable forms of Public Art:

- Directional elements such as environmental graphics and signage
- Objects which are mass produced in a standard design such as playground equipment, benches and chairs
- Reproductions of original works of art, except in such cases as film, video, photography, printmaking and other media arts
- Landscape architecture and gardening, except where the elements are designed by an artist and are an integral part of a larger piece of artwork
- Renovation of historic facades or other historical elements functional to the project
- Commercial elements used to promote or advertise the project
- Other elements which are functional or directly related to the operation of internal uses

Note that the City and County of Denver has an existing Public Art program that is established through the Denver Revised Municipal Code. Public Art described in this section may or may not be a formal component of this program, but rather represents art that is accessible and able to be enjoyed by the public.

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## PUBLIC ART IN THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

The Downtown Golden Triangle district (D-GT) encourages Public Art as an alternative to Street Level nonresidential Active Uses and Private Open Space required for large projects.

In order to obtain approval of the proposed artwork, the developer must submit a proposal as part of the Design Development Review process prior to purchasing or commissioning the artwork for consideration. The developer is strongly encouraged to meet with City staff and neighborhood stakeholders as early as possible to discuss potential concepts. Final approval of the artwork is contingent on review and approval by Denver Arts & Venues.

### Qualifications

Public Art must cost at least 1 percent of the valuation of construction of the new structure or structure renovation, or \$500,000, whichever is less.

Public Art must be displayed outside or on the exterior surface of the new or renovated structure and be visible from at least one public street.





# Public Art

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## DOWNTOWN DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD REVIEW OF PUBLIC ART

If the final Public Art element is not procured during the Site Development Plan review period, the Downtown Design Advisory Board may approve the design, with conditions that the applicant return to the board for final review and approval.

The Public Art proposal must contain a written and visual description of the project art, including the following appropriate information:

- Site plans of the vicinity where the art is to be located
- Elevations
- Perspectives
- Details of structural elements
- Verification of costs
- Maintenance requirements, maintenance schedule and source of maintenance funds

Denver Arts & Venues will review and approve the proposal as a work of Public Art and the Downtown Design Advisory Board will review the integration of the art as part of the overall project design.



## PUBLIC ART GOALS

- **Intentional.** Incorporate Public Art into the early stages of the planning and design process for each new development. Successful Public Art is not an afterthought and must be integral to the overall growth of the built environment.
- **Creativity.** Aim for the highest interest and quality by enabling artists to create original and sustainable artwork, with attention to design, materials, construction, and location. Artworks should be curated carefully and build upon the surrounding collection of Public Art.
- **Placemaking.** Use dynamic visual elements to create focal points, meeting places, and social landmarks that will enhance Downtown's image and vibrancy.
- **Identity.** Define and enhance the distinct quality of Downtown's diverse visual and cultural environments. Provide meaningful opportunities for communities to participate and identify with each other through arts, culture, and history.
- **Wayfinding.** Foster a common language for residents and visitors to communicate with through visual clues and landmarks that help them navigate and embrace a potentially unfamiliar environment. (Note, directional signage is generally not considered Public Art)



# Public Art

## Intent Statements

- 4.N** To encourage the use of Public Art to enhance the Public Realm
- 4.O** To ensure Public Art is publicly accessible and integrated into the Public Realm
- 4.P** To ensure that Public Art is well constructed from durable materials

## Design Standards

- 4.44** Public Art shall be located outside the building or on the exterior surface of the building, available and accessible to the general public.
- 4.45** Public Art shall be located to be properly viewed and experienced from the Public Realm and avoid conflicts with streetscape elements and street trees.
- 4.46** Public Art shall be constructed using durable materials that can withstand weather and physical touch.

## Design Guidelines

- 4.47** Public Art should be considered based on the following process and objectives:
  - a. Access at all hours and seasons and use of the site
  - b. Opportunities for rotating installations and diversity of scale and material
  - c. Opportunities for art to be embedded in public spaces and infrastructure
- 4.48** Public Art should aim to incorporate playful and interactive elements for people of all ages.

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125. Public Art, when provided, shall be located to be properly viewed and experienced from the Public Realm.

- 4.49** Public Art should be integrated into the overall vision for the project architecture, landscape and site design by incorporating the artist into the design team early in the process.

Appropriate Public Art opportunities may include:

- a. A conceptual framework to organize Enhanced Setbacks, Open Spaces and the overall streetscape
- b. An independent sculpture or two-dimensional work that marks an entryway, corner, feature area, or view terminus
- c. A combination of visual arts with the building elements, including facades, canopies, floors, lighting, etc.
- d. Visual arts combined with the landscape design, functional, or decorative elements of a site, such as water features, lighting, seating, paving, walls, fences, entrances and exits, etc.



# Public Art

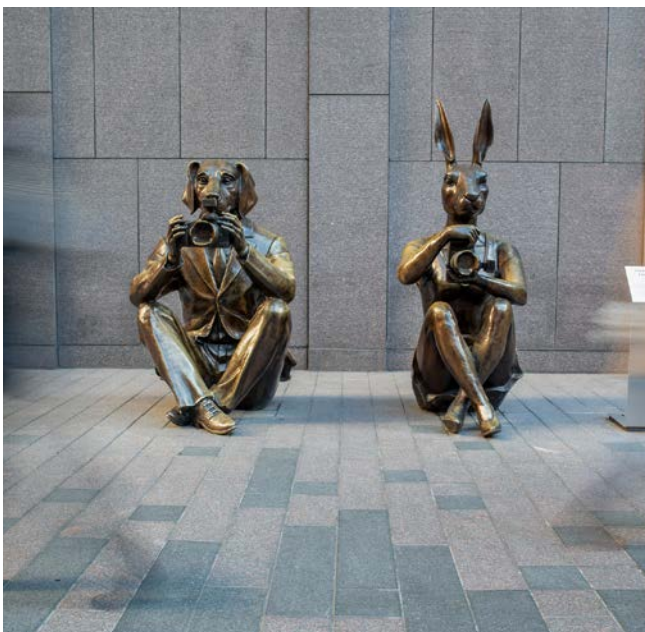
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126. Visual arts combined with the landscape design, functional, or decorative elements of a site, such as water features, lighting, seating, paving, walls, fences, entrances and exits, etc.



127. Public Art should be integrated into the overall vision for the project architecture, landscape and site design by incorporating the artist into the design team early in the process.



128. Public Art should be constructed using durable materials that can withstand weather and physical touch.



129. Public Art should aim to incorporate playful and interactive elements for people of all ages.



# Stormwater Management & Landscape

Stormwater management is a critical component of development everywhere. Integrating solutions within a development retains, redirects or otherwise prevents stormwater from entering City systems and the River. On-site detention and management of stormwater greatly reduces impacts on adjacent collection areas, ecosystems and treatment facilities. Flood resiliency, stormwater management, and Public Realm design objectives can and should be integrated into a comprehensive system.

## Intent Statements

- 4.Q To use creative best management practices to recycle and filter water on site**
- 4.R To reduce the amount of supplemental water used for on-going operations and maintenance of landscape areas**
- 4.S To use design solutions that reduce infrastructure needs to accommodate stormwater flow**

## LID STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Low Impact Development (LID) is a stormwater management approach to address rainfall in a way which more closely mimics the natural hydrologic system at the site prior to development. LID stormwater management systems, such as the stormwater planter illustrated above, allow for infiltration, storage, filtration, evaporation and/or detention of stormwater close to the location where the rain fell. They promote environmental sustainability by increasing water quality and reducing off-site impacts.

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130. Stormwater landscape areas shall be designed beyond purely functional requirements and contribute to the visual quality of the Public Realm in wet and dry conditions.



131. Amenity Zones should be designed to address stormwater management and meet the intent of DOTI Ultra-Urban Green Infrastructure Guidelines.

# Stormwater Management & Landscape

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Stormwater Management & Landscape

## Design Standards

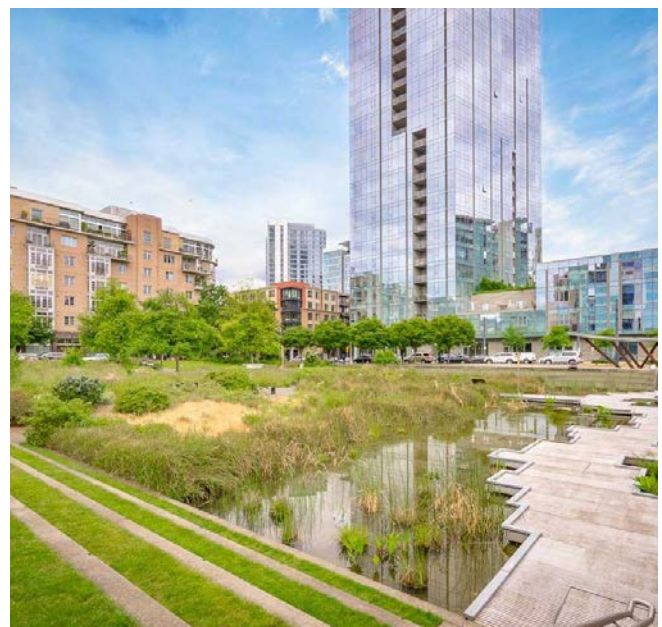
- 4.50** Stormwater landscape areas in the streetscape shall be designed beyond purely functional requirements and contribute to the visual quality of the Public Realm in wet and dry conditions.

## Design Guidelines

- 4.51** Stormwater solutions should be accommodated within the property.  
*See [“Setback & Open Space Design”](#).*
- 4.52** Amenity Zones should be designed to address stormwater management and meet the intent of DOTI Ultra-Urban Green Infrastructure Guidelines.
- 4.53** Amenity Zones should incorporate design solutions that maintain a pervious surface, particularly where fully landscaped areas are not feasible or appropriate.
- 4.54** Stormwater runoff should be directed towards landscape areas where possible.  
*Note that salt tolerant plants and trees should be incorporated due to de-icer agents and other potential contaminants in stormwater runoff.*
- 4.55** Greywater should be considered for landscape irrigation where feasible.
- 4.56** Native or adapted plants with low water requirements should be used.
- 4.57** Landscape areas required by the Denver Green Building ordinance should be coordinated with stormwater management to create systems that serve multiple uses.



132. Amenity Zones should incorporate design solutions that maintain a pervious surface, particularly where fully landscaped areas are not feasible or appropriate.



133. Landscape areas required by the Denver Green Building Ordinance should be coordinated with stormwater management to create systems that serve multiple uses.

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# Chapter 5 | Neighborhood Specific Design

The section addresses neighborhood and context-specific design expectations that are applicable to a single neighborhood only, such as Arapahoe Square, CPV-Auraria, or Golden Triangle.

# Arapahoe Square Introduction

Arapahoe Square provides one of the top opportunities for growth and change in Central Denver and will be a critical connection point between surrounding neighborhoods and the Central Business District. While some parts of Arapahoe Square lack an established context, some areas do maintain the original pattern of commercial and mixed-use buildings that originally characterized the district. These areas provide inspiration for the future development of Arapahoe Square into a cutting edge, densely populated, mixed-use area that provides a range of housing types and a center for innovative businesses.

## Existing Context

Arapahoe Square lies directly northeast of the Central Business District, as illustrated in [Figure 134](#).

The district is characterized by its wide variety of building designs and scales. Its position between the Central Business District and neighborhoods to the north provides an opportunity for redevelopment of Arapahoe Square into a vibrant mixed-use area that services downtown workers and local residents.

### Arapahoe Square Introduction

21st Street  
Park Avenue West  
20th Street & Broadway  
Arapahoe & Curtis Streets  
Welton Street

Upper Story Setback Alternative for  
21st Street & Park Avenue West

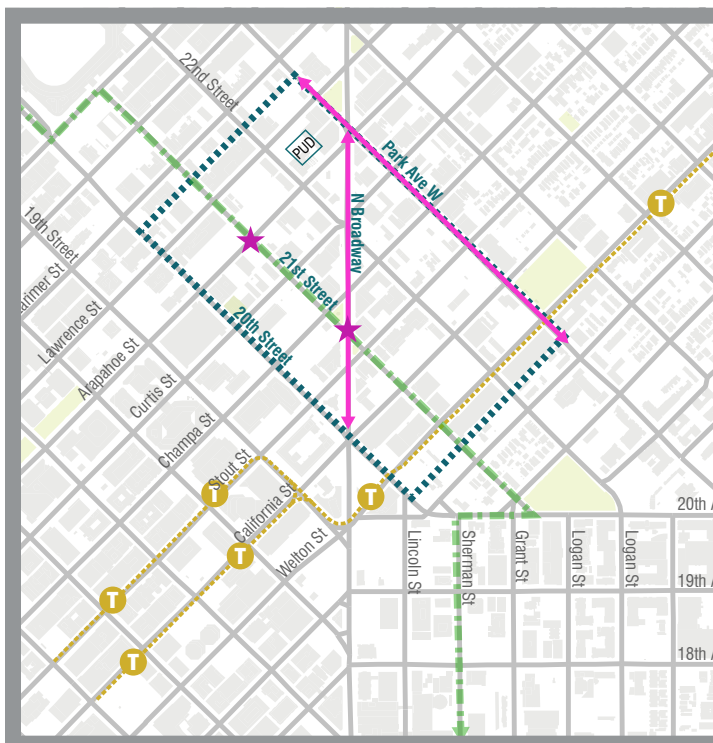
## Applicability

The Arapahoe Square section of this chapter applies to the area illustrated in [Figure 134](#). This design review area is bounded by:

- 20th Street
- Park Avenue West
- The alley between Lawrence and Larimer
- The alley between Welton and Glenarm

Note that the design review area shall include all properties within the D-AS-12+ and D-AS-20+ zone districts as shown on the official zoning map, regardless of whether such properties are within the boundary illustrated at left. The D-AS zone district is not part of the design review area.

All new construction, additions, exterior improvements, signs, and new or expanded outdoor use areas proposed in these zone districts shall follow these DSG, but additional specific standards and guidelines that are only applicable to Arapahoe Square are covered in this section.



## GRAND BOULEVARDS

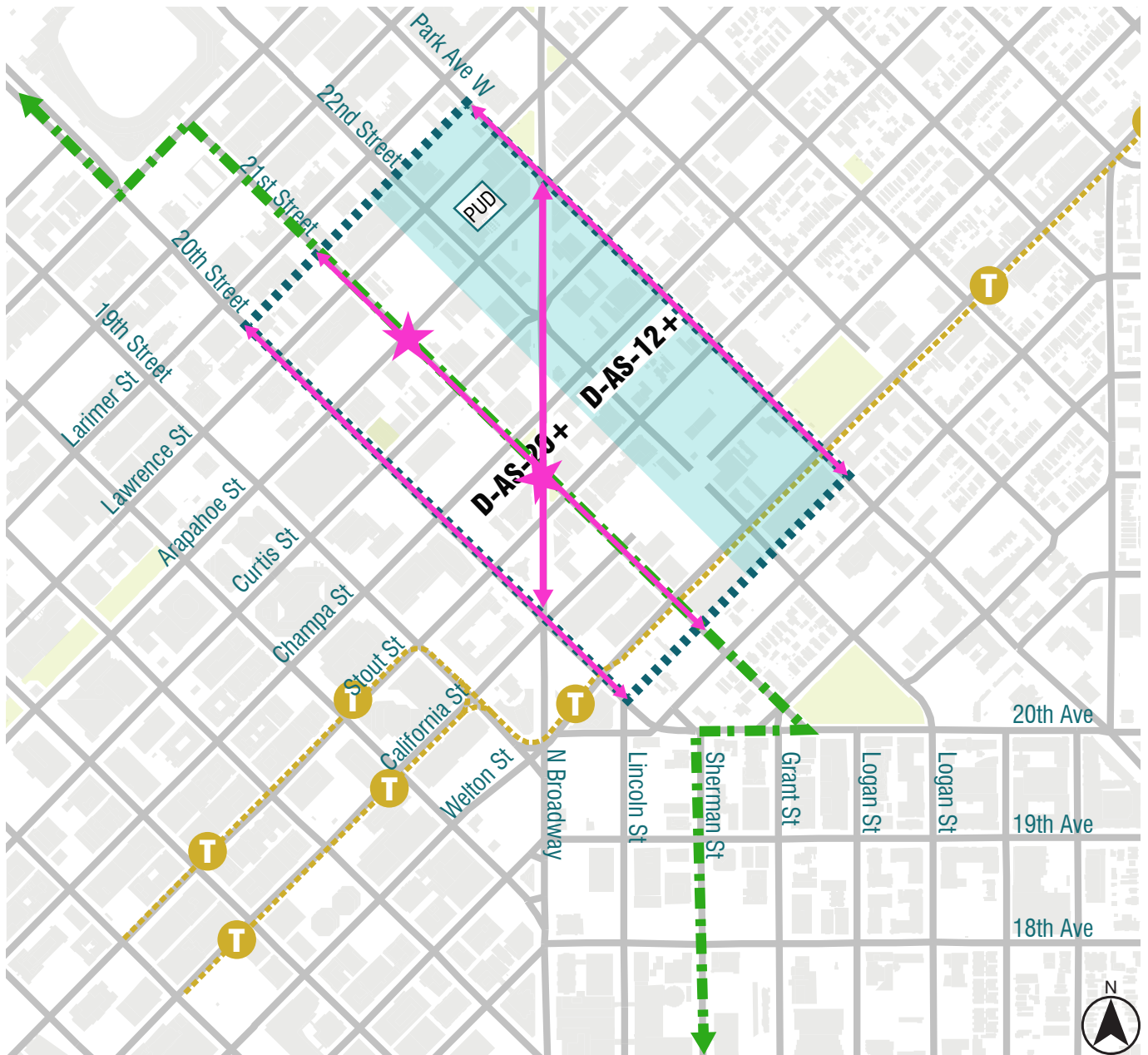
The 2007 Downtown Area Plan and 2011 Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan identify Broadway and Park Avenue West as “Grand Boulevards” that will transform into “celebrated, multi-modal boulevards.”

## GATEWAY CORNERS

The following Gateway Corners provide opportunities for architecturally significant moments that invite pedestrians onto the street:

- 21st Street & Arapahoe Street
- 21st Street & Broadway

- Arapahoe Square Design Review Area
- Grand Boulevard
- ★ Gateway Corner
- T Existing Light Rail and Stations
- - - Planned 5280 Trail



134. All new construction, additions, exterior improvements, signs, and new or expanded outdoor use areas proposed in the D-AS-12+ and D-AS-20+ zone districts located within the design review area, shall follow this additional guidance.

The following sections provides context-specific site, building and streetscape design standards and guidelines that apply to projects with frontage on one or more of the following Key Streets in Arapahoe Square:

- 20th Street
- 21st Street
- Arapahoe Street
- Broadway
- Curtis Street
- Park Avenue West
- Welton Street

Note that all other applicable design standards and guidelines in this document also apply to projects with frontage on one or more Key Streets.

#### ARAPAHOE SQUARE DESIGN REVIEW AREA

- Key Street
- Gateway Corner
- Existing Light Rail and Stations
- Planned 5280 Trail



# Arapahoe Square

## 21st Street

21st Street serves as the primary east-west pedestrian and bicycle connection through Arapahoe Square from Coors Field to the Clements Historic District. The 2011 Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan recommends making 21st Street into a focal point and community gathering space for Northeast Downtown neighborhoods. A subsequent urban design plan builds on this concept to envision 21st Street as a highly active, park-like street. The character of 21st Street will vary as it crosses Arapahoe Square.

(The alley between Larimer and Lawrence) to Broadway, 21st Street will transition from a highly active commercial street that combines bicycle and pedestrian activity near Coors Field and Ballpark Historic District through the active Gateway Corner at Arapahoe to the Gateway Corner at Broadway. 21st Street will also provide a park-like transition to the lower-scale residential neighborhood.

### Intent Statements

- 5.A To encourage development of 21st Street as a signature street that emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle activity**
- 5.B To provide flexibility for creative Upper Story Setback designs that integrate with building design along 21st Street**
- 5.C To frame views of unique terminating vistas at Benedict Fountain Park and Coors Field at either end of 21st Street**
- 5.D To promote development of a vibrant mixed-use street with highly activated Open Spaces along 21st Street from the alley between Larimer and Lawrence toward Broadway**
- 5.E To provide a defined gateway through strong urban forms at 21st and Broadway**
- 5.F To promote a more park-like and neighborhood-scaled environment as 21st Street transitions from Broadway to the Clements Historic District**

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Upper Story Setback Alternative for  
21st Street & Park Avenue West

### Design Standards

- 5.01** Streetscape designs on 21st Street shall promote implementation of the 21st Street Urban Design Plan.
- 5.02** Distinctive design elements shall be used to identify Gateway Corners along 21st Street. Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Locating iconic building elements at the corner (note that the Upper Story Setback alternative allows for flexible building massing)
  - b. Locating a Point Tower at the corner
  - c. Identifying corner building elements with a change in materials or wall plane
  - d. Locating Highly Active Uses with significant transparency at the Street Level
- 5.03** Buildings shall be oriented to front 21st Street with well-defined pedestrian entry features.
- 5.04** Vehicle access points to parking, service, or drop off areas shall not be provided from 21st Street. See [“Block Configuration & Vehicle Access”](#).

### SPECIFIC DENVER ZONING CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR 21ST STREET

The Denver Zoning Code (DZC) requires a context-specific 100% Upper Story Setback requirement for 21st Street that is intended to reinforce Human Scale design and maximize sky exposure. As described in “Upper Story Setback Alternative for 21st Street & Park Avenue West” the DZC also allows alternative Upper Story Setback designs along 21st Street to enable creative designs and allow building massing that highlights Gateway Corners.”

# Arapahoe Square

## 21st Street

Arapahoe Square Introduction  
**21st Street**  
Park Avenue West  
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Welton Street

Upper Story Setback Alternative for  
21st Street & Park Avenue West

- 5.05** The Street Level adjacent to 21st Street from the Ballpark Historic District to Broadway shall be occupied primarily by Highly Active Uses.
- 5.06** Lower Story Facades along 21st Street between the Ballpark Historic District and Broadway shall incorporate a minimum of 60% Masonry materials that reflect the adjacent Historic District.
- 5.07** Residential frontages along 21st Street from Broadway to the Clements Historic District shall provide a transition between adjacent sidewalks and private residences.  
Appropriate techniques include:
- A landscaped Enhanced Residential Setback
  - Open Spaces such as courtyards
  - Stoops or small private yard areas
- 5.08** Alternative Upper Story Setback designs allowed by the Denver Zoning Code along 21st Street shall provide a total setback surface area equal to, or greater than, the approximate area of a 10 foot Upper Story Setback for the full width of the street-facing building facade.
- Alternative setback designs may vary in depth from zero to 30 feet.
  - Areas that are set back more than 30 feet do not apply towards the total setback surface area.
  - Use of the upper-story setback alternative shall not result in continuous facade lengths of over 80 feet within 10 feet of the primary street property line.

See *“Upper Story Setback Alternative for 21st Street & Park Avenue West”* for more information on the standard.

## Design Guidelines

- 5.09** Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas along 21st Street should incorporate innovative, environmentally friendly stormwater management techniques whenever possible.
- 5.10** Site designs along 21st Street between the Ballpark Historic District and Broadway should incorporate highly-activated Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas.
- 5.11** Site designs along 21st Street between Broadway and the Clements Historic District should incorporate landscaped Open Space and Enhanced Setback areas, when possible.
- 5.12** Upper Story designs on 21st Street should incorporate curves, angles or other innovative setback configurations.
- 5.13** Upper Story Setbacks on 21st Street should be located and designed to preserve sky exposure and views from Enhanced Setback and Private Open Space.

# Arapahoe Square

## Park Avenue West

Park Avenue West as a Key Street forms the northeastern border of Arapahoe Square. It provides a direct connection to Interstate 25 and serves as an important mass and scale transition to the adjacent Curtis Park neighborhood. The 2007 Downtown Area Plan and The 2011 Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan identify Park Avenue West as a “Grand Boulevard” (see above).

### Intent Statements

- 5.G To provide a building scale transition along Park Avenue West between Arapahoe Square and lower-scale neighborhoods to the northeast**
- 5.H To provide flexibility for creative Upper Story Setback designs that provide a building scale transition to neighborhoods to the northeast**

### SPECIFIC DENVER ZONING CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR PARK AVENUE

The Denver Zoning Code (DZC) requires a context-specific 100% Upper Story Setback requirement for Park Avenue West that is intended to promote the intent for Park Avenue West to provide a building scale transition to lower-scale neighborhoods to the northeast. As described in “Upper Story Setback Alternative for 21st Street & Park Avenue West”, the DZC also allows alternative Upper Story Setback designs along Park Avenue West to enable creative designs that provide a building scale transition to neighborhood to the northeast.

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21st Street  
**Park Avenue West**  
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Arapahoe & Curtis Streets  
Welton Street

Upper Story Setback Alternative for  
21st Street & Park Avenue West

### Design Standards

- 5.14 Building designs on Park Avenue West shall incorporate features that promote a compatible transition to the Curtis Park Historic District.**  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Use of masonry materials such as brick, stone, or terra cotta
  - b. Use of massing and articulation techniques that reflect typical rhythms in the adjacent Historic District
  - c. Upper Story Setback designs that provide compatible scale relationships with the adjacent Historic District
- 5.15 Alternative Upper Story Setback designs allowed by the Denver Zoning Code along Park Avenue West shall provide a total setback surface area equal to or greater than the approximate area of a 10 foot Upper Story Setback for the full width of the street-facing building facade.**
  - a. Alternative setback designs may vary in depth from zero to 30 feet
  - b. Areas that are set back more than 30 feet do not apply towards the total setback surface area
  - c. Alternatives shall not result in continuous facade lengths of over 80 feet within 10 feet of the primary street property line

*See “Upper Story Setback Alternative for 21st Street & Park Avenue West”*



# Arapahoe Square

## 20th Street & Broadway

20th Street will further develop as a an urban, pedestrian-oriented street that provides an active transition between Arapahoe Square and the Central Business District.

Broadway Blvd cuts diagonally through Arapahoe Square, creating complex intersections with unique lot configurations. The Downtown Area Plan and Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan identify Broadway north of 20th as a “Grand Boulevard” with a high-quality green streetscape and Public Realm.

### Intent Statements

- 5.I To promote development of a highly active, pedestrian-oriented Street Level along 20th Street and Broadway.**
- 5.J To promote development of an urban street character with strong building massing along 20th Street and Broadway**



135. Distinctive design elements shall be used to identify the Gateway Corner at Broadway and 21st Street.

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**20th Street & Broadway**  
Arapahoe & Curtis Streets  
Welton Street

Upper Story Setback Alternative for  
21st Street & Park Avenue West

### Design Standards

- 5.16 Distinctive design elements shall be used to identify the Gateway Corner at Broadway and 21st Street.**

Appropriate techniques include:

- a. Locating iconic building elements at the corner (note that the Upper Story Setback alternative allows for flexible building massing on the 21st Street frontage)
- b. Locating a Point Tower at the corner
- c. Identifying corner building elements with a change in materials or wall plane
- d. Locating Highly Active Uses with significant transparency at the Street Level

See “Gateway Corners” for more information.

### Design Guidelines

- 5.17 Upper Story Setbacks should generally be limited on 20th Street and Broadway to create a strong street wall.**

### SPECIFIC DZC REQUIREMENTS FOR 20TH STREET & BROADWAY

The Denver Zoning Code (DZC) does not require an Upper Story Setback on 20th Street or Broadway in Arapahoe Square to enable development with a highly urban character with strong building massing.

# Arapahoe Square

## Arapahoe Street & Curtis Street

Arapahoe Street provides a connection for pedestrians and bicyclists (using the protected bike lane) from the Central Business District through Arapahoe Square to Curtis Park. Skyline Park is a key pedestrian amenity along Arapahoe Street to the southwest of Arapahoe Square.

Curtis Street provides a pedestrian connection through Arapahoe Square, connecting the Denver Center for the Performing Arts in the southwest to Mestizo-Curtis Park in the northeast. Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan recommends evaluation of conversion to two-way operations and opportunities to widen sidewalks. The Plan also identifies the corner of 21st and Curtis as a key gateway.

### Intent Statements

- 5.K To promote development of Arapahoe Street as a pedestrian gateway into Arapahoe Square, connecting Skyline Park through to Curtis Park**
- 5.L To provide a pedestrian and visual connection along Curtis Street between Mestizo-Curtis Park to the northeast and the Denver Performing Arts Center to the southwest**
- 5.M To promote innovative, environmentally friendly stormwater management techniques on Arapahoe Street and Curtis Street**

### SPECIFIC ZONING REQUIREMENTS FOR ARAPAHOE & CURTIS STREETS

The Denver Zoning Code (DZC) provides a context-specific build-to range on Arapahoe Street and Curtis Street that enables Enhanced Setback areas to extend the full length of the lot frontage. This expanded setback area promotes the intent for Arapahoe and Curtis Streets to function as a primary pedestrian and visual connection through Arapahoe Square.

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**Arapahoe & Curtis Streets**  
Welton Street

Upper Story Setback Alternative for  
21st Street & Park Avenue West

### Design Guidelines

- 5.18** The street frontage along Arapahoe Street and Curtis Street should incorporate features that promote pedestrian and bicycle use.

Appropriate techniques include:

- a. Enhanced Setbacks and Open Space areas (see [“Enhanced Setbacks & Open Space”](#) for more information)
- b. Street furniture to provide places of respite
- c. Unique paving materials or pedestrian lighting built into the paving system (note that paving materials must maintain handicap accessibility)
- d. Pedestrian-scale lighting

- 5.19** Streetscape designs on Arapahoe Street and Curtis Street should promote pedestrian activity.

Appropriate techniques include:

- a. Wide, unobstructed sidewalks
- b. Mid block bulb outs (with cut through for bicycle facilities, where applicable)
- c. Parklets
- d. Increased tree canopy

- 5.20** Whenever possible, Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas along Arapahoe and Curtis Streets should incorporate innovative, environmentally friendly stormwater management techniques.

- 5.21** Upper Story Setbacks along Arapahoe Street and Curtis Street should be positioned to maximize the visual connection between the central business district and neighborhoods to the northeast.

# Arapahoe Square Welton Street

Welton Street is an important transit corridor provides a transition to the Clements Historic District to the southeast and Five Points Historic Cultural District to the northeast. The sidewalk area along the southeast side of the street is uniquely configured adjacent to an active light rail line and could be improved to better accommodate pedestrians.

## SPECIFIC DENVER ZONING CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR WELTON

The Denver Zoning Code (DZC) provides a context-specific build-to range on the southeast side of Welton Street that enables Enhanced Setback areas to extend the full length of the lot frontage. This expanded pedestrian area promotes the intent for Welton Street to provide a comfortable pedestrian environment adjacent to the light rail line.

## REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT (RTD) REVIEW ON WELTON STREET

The Regional Transit District (RTD) must approve streetscape and other improvements that impact the Public Right-of-Way along the southeast (light rail) side of Welton Street to ensure that designs do not interfere with transit operations.



136. View of Arapahoe Square

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Arapahoe & Curtis Streets  
**Welton Street**

Upper Story Setback Alternative for  
21st Street & Park Avenue West

## Intent Statements

**5.N To provide a comfortable pedestrian experience along Welton Street**

**5.0 To mitigate impacts of the light rail line on the southeast side of Welton Street**

## Design Guidelines

**5.22** The street frontage along the southeast side of Welton Street should provide a comfortable transition between the building and the light rail line by providing additional space for pedestrians.

Appropriate techniques include:

- a. Enhanced Setbacks, particularly to provide expanded sidewalk areas for safe pedestrian movement
- b. Open Space areas, such as plazas and courtyards
- c. Recessed entries
- d. Residential stoops or yard areas
- e. An arcade area that is at least 5 feet deep

**5.23** Streetscape designs on the southeast (light rail) side of Welton Street should help buffer the sidewalk from the adjacent light rail line.

Appropriate techniques include:

- a. Columnar street trees
- b. Street lighting and other features with a strong vertical dimension
- c. Raised planters or herbaceous perennials



# Upper Story Setback Alternative for 21st Street & Park Avenue West

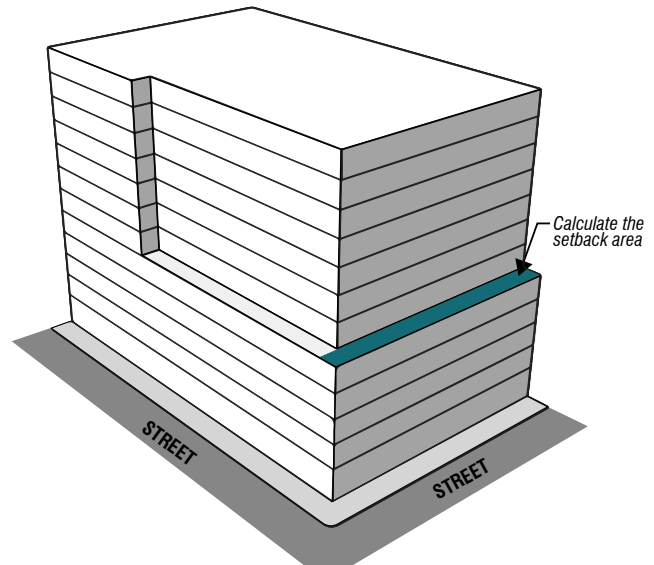
The Denver Zoning Code requires a 10 foot Upper Story Setback for 100% of lot frontage on 21st Street and Park Avenue West. The DZC also specifically enables an “Upper Story Setback alternative” that allows redistribution of the setback area to provide flexibility for creative Upper Story Setback designs. Alternative Upper Story Setback designs must provide a total setback area equal to, or greater than, the area of a 10 foot Upper Story Setback for 100% of the lot frontage at or below 5 stories and 70 feet, as illustrated below. Standard [5.08](#) will be used to review alternative Upper Story Setback designs on 21st Street. Standard [5.15](#) will be used to review alternative story setback designs on Park Avenue West.



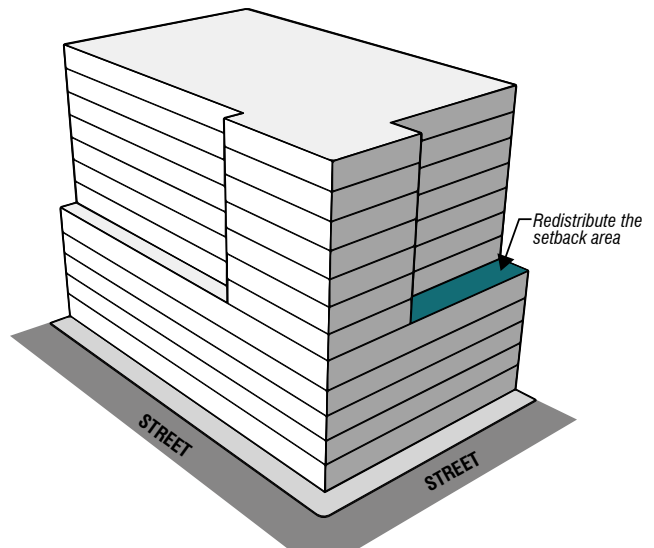
137. Example of redistributing the Upper Story Setback Area.

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Upper Story Setback Alternative  
for 21st Street &  
Park Avenue West



138. Redistributing the Upper Story Setback Area. To determine the Upper Story Setback area that must be provided in an alternative design, first calculate the area that would be provided in a 10 foot setback for 100% of the lot frontage. For example, a 10 foot Upper Story Setback for 100% of a 125 foot wide lot along 21st Street would be 1,250 square feet in area (multiply the 10 foot setback by the 125 foot lot width), as illustrated above in blue.

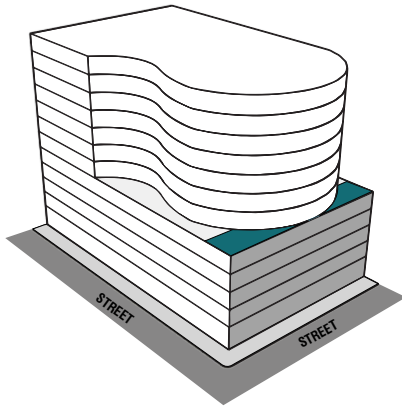


139. Redistributing the Upper Story Setback Area. To determine the Upper Story Setback area that must be provided in an alternative design, first calculate the area that would be provided in a 10 foot setback for 100% of the lot frontage. For example, a 10 foot Upper Story Setback for 100% of a 125 foot wide lot along 21st Street would be 1,250 square feet in area (multiply the 10 foot setback by the 125 foot lot width), as illustrated above in blue.

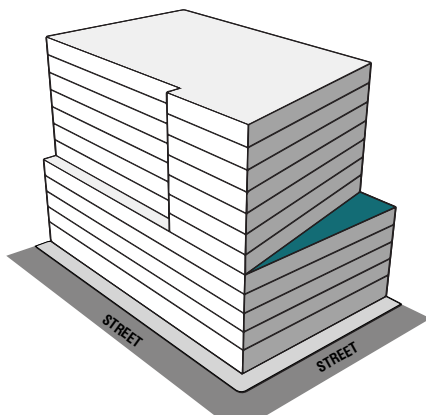
# Upper Story Setback Alternative for 21st Street & Park Avenue West

Arapahoe Square Introduction  
21st Street  
Park Avenue West  
20th Street & Broadway  
Arapahoe & Curtis Streets  
Welton Street

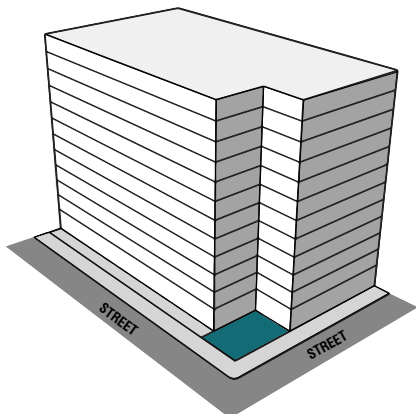
## Upper Story Setback Alternative for 21st Street & Park Avenue West



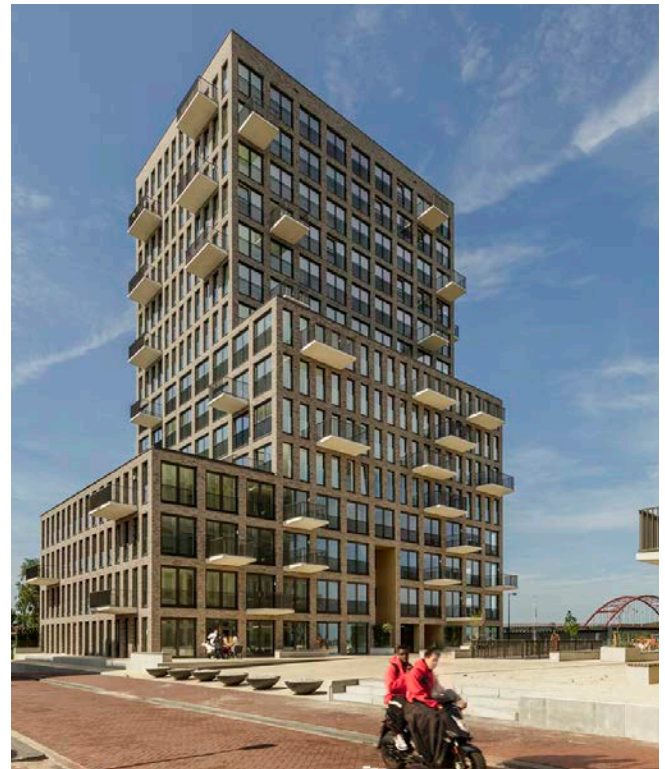
140. Creative Designs Allowed Through the Upper Story Setback Alternative. In the example illustrated above, the alternative is used to allow a curved setback design on Park Avenue West.



141. Creative Designs Allowed Through the Upper Story Setback Alternative. In the example illustrated above, the alternative is used to allow an angled setback design on Park Avenue West.



142. Creative Designs Allowed Through the Upper Story Setback Alternative. In the example illustrated above, the alternative is used to consolidate required setback area into a Street Level plaza at a Gateway Corner on 21st Street.



144. Example of redistributing the Upper Story Setback Area.



143. Example of redistributing the Upper Story Setback Area.



# Central Platte Valley - Auraria Introduction

The Central Platte Valley – Auraria (CPV-Auraria) district represents a unique and significant opportunity for growth and change in Downtown Denver. This document aims to ensure the level of design quality and neighborhood activity generated by new development is consistent with the exceptional potential represented by this area.

## Existing Context

Central Platte Valley - Auraria (CPV-Auraria) is located west of Lower Downtown, north of Auraria Campus, and east of Jefferson Park. The Consolidated Main Line (CML) railroad and South Platte River (River) bisect the area. The Regional Transportation District (RTD) E, C, and W light rail lines run parallel to the CML and include two stations within CPV-Auraria: Broncos Stadium at Mile High and Pepsi Center/Elitch Gardens

CPV-Auraria has largely remained underutilized and separated from Denver's Downtown urban fabric. In the past, it was predominantly used for freight rail and its services, partly due to its convenient location along the River. While the River still supports a diverse ecology, the area's industrial past and railroad-related uses have greatly affected the quality of the River and adjacent riparian areas over time.

More recently, the area has been occupied by large entertainment and cultural venues served by acres of surface parking. This land use pattern has resulted in an unusually large and significantly underutilized land area within Downtown. The area's position within the Downtown context provides an opportunity for a high level of allowed building intensity and mix of uses to promote a vibrant neighborhood that serves as a place to work, live, and play.

## Future of CPV-Auraria

In 2017, property owners, community stakeholders, and the City of Denver initiated a process to develop a vision for future development in CPV-Auraria. Through this public process, the Downtown Area Plan Amendment (2018) was adopted. The Downtown Area Plan Amendment created a vision for CPV-Auraria to become a

### CPV-Auraria Introduction

Site Planning

Riverfront Development

Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative

densely populated, mixed-use neighborhood that provides a range of housing types, becomes a center for innovative businesses, and embraces the River.

The River and adjacent Parks are envisioned to become an enhanced greenway with trail networks, widened riparian areas, and a mixture of passive and active uses. As the area evolves into a vibrant urban environment with retail and housing along the riverfront, its vitality will be enriched by connecting and extending the green network across the neighborhood. The area represents a major opportunity for Denver to create a diverse urban riverfront that accommodates a variety of compatible land uses, while also enhancing the rich ecology of the river.

The South Platte River serves as the singular element to be celebrated throughout and establish CPV-Auraria as a distinctive district within Downtown.

## KEY STREETS

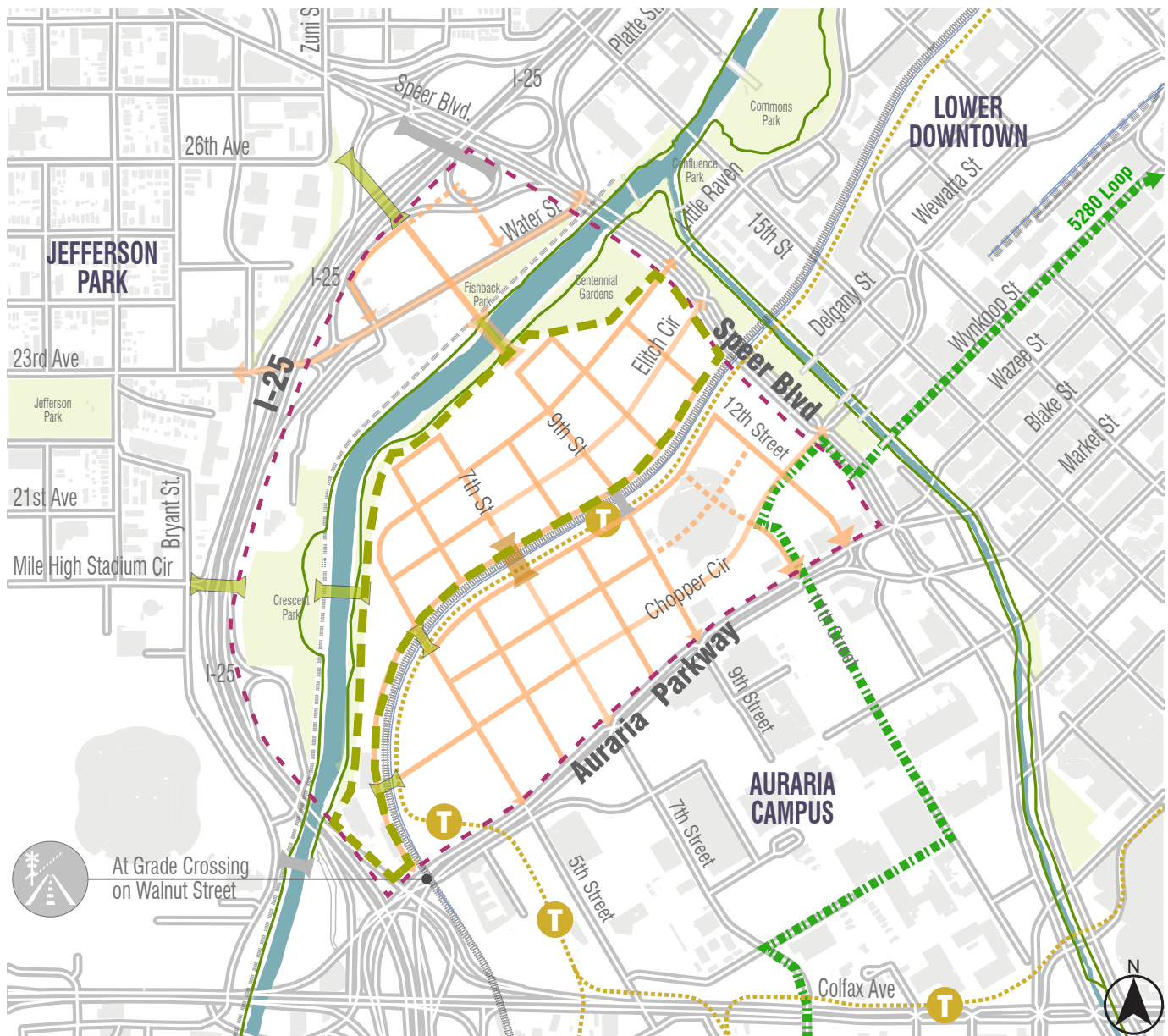
The Downtown Area Plan Amendment established the following as Key Streets in the future street grid for CPV-Auraria.

- 7th Street
- 9th Street
- Elitch Circle
- Little Raven Street
- Chopper Circle
- Water Street

Many of these streets are also reflected in the [Denver Zoning Code](#), where they are required to provide a minimum amount of non-residential [Active Uses](#) at the [Street Level](#).

[Key Streets](#) serve as important pedestrian and bicycle connections through CPV-Auraria, are anticipated to have high ground-floor commercial activity, and will be expected to have enhanced standards for exceptional design and quality. Some standards and guidelines that follow will reference the desired character along [Key Streets](#).





One potential future connectivity network as envisioned by the Downtown Area Plan Amendment (2018). Roads, bridges, and other connections shown in the diagram are conceptual and subject to change based on future master planning and engineering studies.

145. All new construction, additions, exterior improvements, signs, and new or expanded outdoor use areas proposed in the D-CPV-T, D-CPV-R, and D-CPV-C zone districts located within the design review area, shall follow this additional guidance.

## Applicability

The CPV-Auraria section of this chapter shall apply only to properties with Denver Zoning Code D-CPV-T, D-CPV-R, or D-CPV-C zone districts that are located within the design review area, which is bounded by Speer Boulevard, Interstate 25, and Auraria Parkway. All new construction, additions, exterior improvements, signs, and new or expanded outdoor use areas proposed in these zone districts shall follow these DSG, but additional specific standards and guidelines that are only applicable to CPV-Auraria are covered in this section.

- ■ ■ ■ **CPV-AURARIA DESIGN REVIEW AREA**
- ■ ■ ■ Downtown Area Plan Amendment Boundary
- T — Existing Light Rail and Stations
- ▤ ▤ ▤ ▤ Existing CML
- ▤ ▤ ▤ ▤ Platte Valley Trolley
- ↔ Potential Street Extensions
- ■ — ■ — ■ Planned 5280 Trail
- ▤ ▤ Existing Ped & Bike Bridge
- ▤ ▤ Potential All Mode Bridge
- ▤ ▤ Potential Ped & Bike Bridge or All Mode Bridge
- ▤ ▤ Potential Ped & Bike Bridge

# CPV-Auraria

## Site Planning

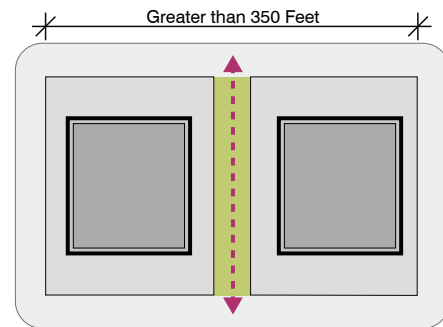
The design standards and guidelines in this section ensure that block configuration and vehicle access promotes the guiding principles for site organization by breaking down large blocks into a Human Scale network of pedestrian connections that are protected from vehicle impacts. When larger blocks are broken up with Off-Street Pedestrian Connections, block interiors can be activated with shops, restaurants and Street Level dwelling units to create additional neighborhood focal points.

### Intent Statements

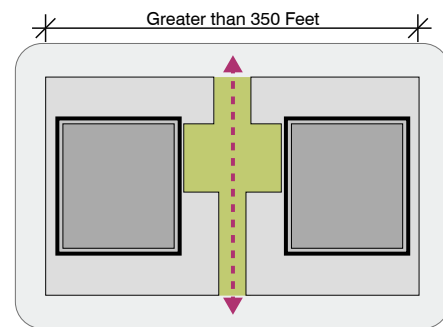
- 5.P To promote a pedestrian-oriented neighborhood with walkable block sizes and a network of pedestrian connections**
- 5.Q To reinforce Denver’s traditional block grid with streets and alleys**

### Design Standards

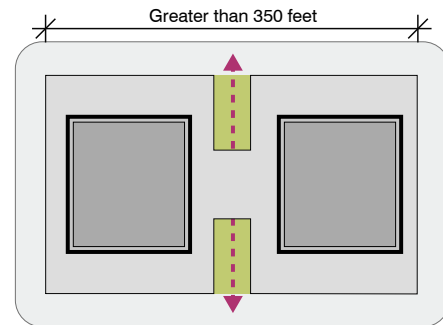
- 5.24** Blocks shall be configured to break down long frontages, provide pedestrian connections across the neighborhood, and minimize the number of Vehicle Access Points.
- Appropriate strategies include:
- a. Limit block sizes to keep individual block frontages to less than approximately 350 feet
  - b. Configure blocks longer than approximately 350 feet to provide an Off-Street Pedestrian Connection between adjoining streets (see [Standard 5.25](#))
  - c. Configure all blocks to consolidate Vehicle Access Points (see [Standard 5.26](#))



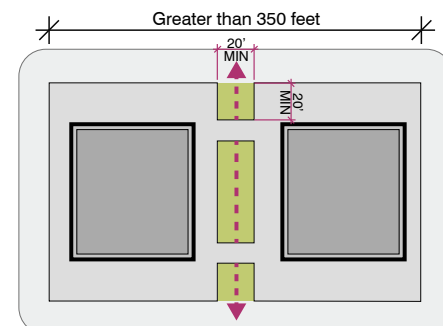
a. Clear passageway



b. Clear passageway with Open Space or Interior Vehicular Court



c. Clear passageway at street level with buildings connecting above 2nd floor



d. Clear passageway at street level with buildings connecting above 2nd floor

146. In areas where street patterns and block sizes have not been established, new block frontages exceeding approximately 350 feet shall incorporate at least one Off-Street Pedestrian Connection to an adjoining street frontage.

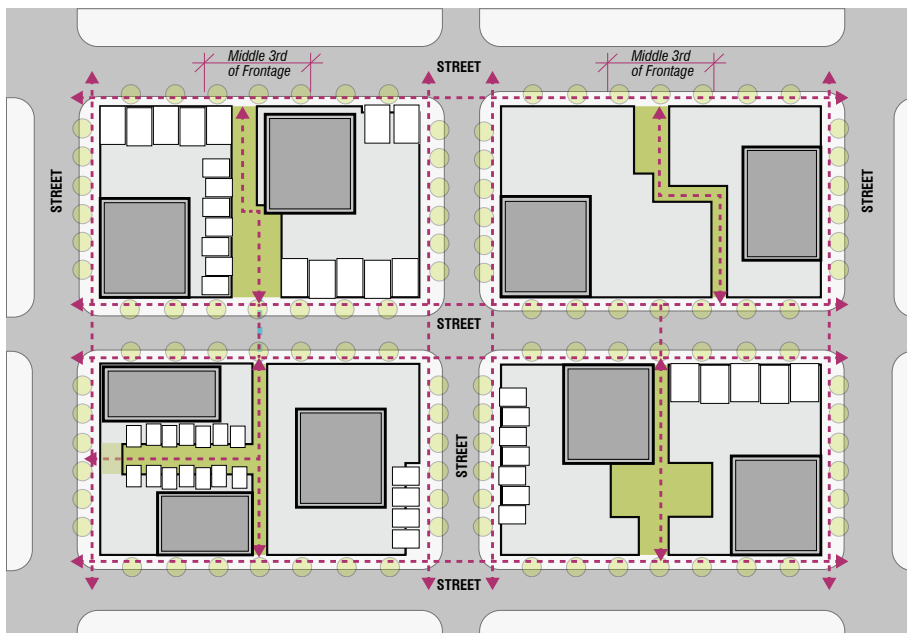
# CPV-Auraria

## Site Planning

CPV-Auraria Introduction

### Site Planning

Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative



- Pedestrian and Bicyclist Circulation
- Uncovered Off-Street Pedestrian Connection, Alley, or Private Access Drive improved for pedestrian use.
- Covered Off-Street Pedestrian Connection, Alley, or Private Access Drive passing beneath a building.

147. Diagram showing potential block configurations on frontages longer than approximately 350 feet that incorporate an Off-Street Pedestrian Connection, Alley, or Private Access Drive.

**5.25** Block frontages exceeding approximately 350 feet shall incorporate at least one Off-Street Pedestrian Connection to an adjoining street frontage.

- a. Locate the entrance in the middle third of the block to break down the frontage length
- b. Locate the entrance to generally align with the entrances of neighboring Off-Street Pedestrian Connections to provide connections across the neighborhood
- c. Design the connection to be at least 15 feet wide and open to the sky (uncovered) for at least 15 feet in depth from the Lower Story Facade
- d. Design the connection to encourage pedestrian use per [Standard 1.07](#)
- e. Ensure continuous and perpetual public access
- f. Consider improving an Alley or Private Access Drive to also serve as an Off-Street Pedestrian Connection (see [Standard 1.07](#))
- g. Through connections should be avoided on blocks adjacent to the Consolidated Main Line, Interstate 25, or other locations where a full connection is not practical

**5.26** Blocks shall be configured to consolidate vehicle access onto Alleys or Private Access Drives.

Use Alleys or Private Access Drives to provide consolidated access to:

- a. Parking areas or structures
- b. A combined Interior Vehicle Court
- c. Passenger loading areas
- d. Service and utility areas

## Design Guidelines

**5.27** A block frontage that exceeds approximately 350 feet should provide an Open Space with significant Building Massing break where it is not feasible to incorporate an Off-Street Pedestrian Connection.



# CPV-Auraria

## Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative

### DENVER ZONING CODE TOWER BUILDING FORMS & TOWER SEPARATION ALTERNATIVE

The Denver Zoning Code establishes Standard Tower and Point Tower Building Forms that allow potentially unlimited height for Tower building components above specified heights that meet maximum Tower Floor Plate and minimum Tower Floor Plate Separation requirements.

The Denver Zoning Code also specifically enables a Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative that allows for a reduced minimum separation to provide flexibility in special circumstances where creative Tower designs are found to meet the design standards and guidelines for Tower Floor Plate Separation included in this section.

Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative designs must be consistent with and exceed overall design goals and objectives while demonstrating exceptional creativity and incorporating high-quality iconic design. [Standard 5.28 - Standard 5.31](#) will be used to review Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative designs in the D-CPV-R and D-CPV-C zone districts.



148. Tower shall meet or exceed design standards and guidelines for tower massing and design.

CPV-Auraria Introduction

Site Planning

Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative

## Intent Statements

### 5.R To promote varied Tower spacing

## Design Standards

**5.28** When using the Denver Zoning Code Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative available to the Point Tower Building Form in the D-CPV-R zone district, the Tower shall be located near a Park that is adjacent to the River.

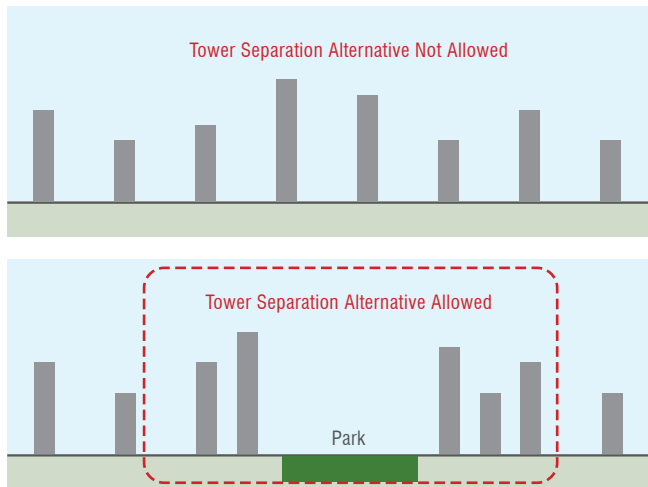
- a. A Tower will be considered to be 'near' a Park if it is located within a linear distance of the Park that is no more than 1.5 times the average width or depth of the Park.
- b. Example using Park width: Where a Park has an average width of 300 feet, a Tower located within 450 feet of the edge of the Park, as measured parallel to the River, would be eligible for use of the Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative.
- c. Example using Park depth: Where a Park has an average depth of 200 feet, a Tower located within 300 feet of the edge of the Park, as measured perpendicular to the River, would be eligible for use of the Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative.

**5.29** When using the Denver Zoning Code Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative available to the Point Tower Building Form in the D-CPV-R zone district, a Tower Floor Plate shall be separated from any other Tower Floor Plate by a minimum distance related to the size of the nearby Park.

- a. The minimum Tower Floor Plate Separation may be reduced to 100 feet where the nearby Park is at least one-half acre in size and has a minimum average width of approximately 150 feet and minimum average depth of approximately 100 feet, as measured relative to the River.

# CPV-Auraria

## Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative

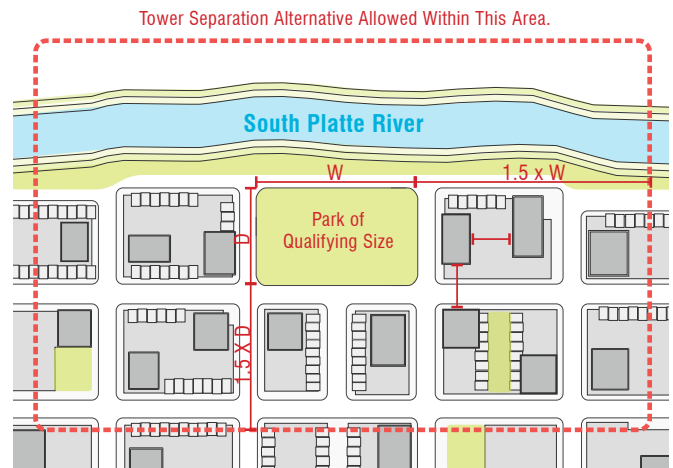


149. When located near a large Park that is adjacent to the River, Tower Floor Plates shall be separated by a minimum distance that is related to the size of the Park.

CPV-Auraria Introduction

Site Planning

Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative

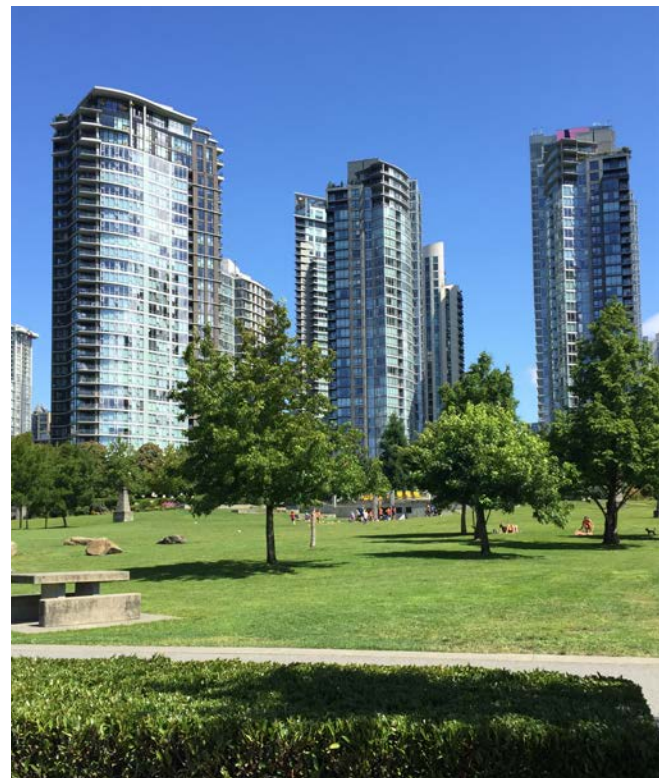


- b. The minimum Tower Floor Plate Separation may be reduced to 80 feet where the nearby Park is at least one acre in size and has a minimum average width of approximately 250 feet and minimum average depth of approximately 150 feet, as measured relative to the River.

**5.30** When using the Denver Zoning Code Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative available to the Standard Tower Building Form in the D-CPV-C zone district, the Tower shall be located within 300 feet of the Consolidated Main Line railroad tracks.

**5.31** When using the Denver Zoning Code Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative available to the Standard Tower or Point Tower Building Form in the D-CPV-R or D-CPV-C zone district, the Tower shall meet or exceed design standards and guidelines for tower massing and design.

See ["Building Massing"](#) and ["Facade Articulation"](#).



150. A Tower will be considered to be 'near' a Park if it is located within a linear distance of the Park that is no more than 1.5 times the average width or depth of the Park.

# Golden Triangle Introduction

The Golden Triangle is a mid- to high-density, mixed-use neighborhood that encompasses the highest concentration of civic, arts, and cultural destinations that define the city of Denver and state of Colorado. The district also contains a range of other uses and activities, including housing, restaurants, bars, cafes, retail services, office buildings, and many art studios and galleries. It is this eclectic patchwork of uses and places – a rich, textured urban mosaic – that makes the Golden Triangle a truly distinct neighborhood in downtown Denver.

## Existing Context

The Golden Triangle is located between the Cherry Creek Greenway, the Downtown business district, Capitol Hill and La Alma/Lincoln Park in the urban core of Denver. Major corridors such as Speer Boulevard to the west, Colfax Avenue to the north, and Broadway/Lincoln Avenue to the east, form the “triangle” of the district.

The Golden Triangle has a high concentration of cultural and arts-related amenities, businesses, and attractions. In many ways, these uses and activities characterize much of the Golden Triangle as an arts district or museum district. Within the Downtown area, the Golden Triangle plays a vital role as a center for civic and cultural destinations.

The built context of the area ranges from small-scale historic structures to contemporary hi-rise residential buildings reaching nearly 200 feet in height. The eclectic mix of old and new, small and tall structures is embraced by area residents and visitors.

Acoma Street serves as a tree-lined green spine through the center of the neighborhood. However, most of the area lacks substantial tree cover, open space, and landscape areas needed to balance the rapidly increasing urban character and population density.

## Vision for the Golden Triangle

The City and County of Denver adopted the Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan in 2014. That plan set forth a vision of the neighborhood as an arts and culture focused community with a mixture of housing, employment, and destination and neighborhood-serving retail complemented by active ground floor uses, generous

### Golden Triangle Introduction

Acoma Street  
Broadway & Lincoln Street  
12th Avenue  
11th Avenue & Bannock Street  
Pedestrian Lighting

sidewalks, enhanced streetscape, and architectural design with human scale and detail. The Golden Triangle is envisioned as an eclectic neighborhood where no specific architectural style is intended. However, all projects should be responsive to their context and influenced by the scale and character of adjacent buildings. The vision for the Golden Triangle is rooted in enhancing the existing urban mosaic through contextual design, pedestrian-focused amenities, and support for Denver’s arts and cultural legacy.

## Applicability

The Golden Triangle section of this Chapter shall apply only to properties within the Denver Zoning Code D-GT zone district located in the design review area generally bound by Speer Boulevard to the west, portions of Colfax, 14th Ave, 13th Ave, and 12th Ave to the north, the alley between Lincoln and Sherman Streets to the east, and 7th Avenue to the south.

All new construction, additions, exterior improvements, signs, and new or expanded outdoor use areas proposed in these zone districts shall follow these DSG. Additional standards and guidelines that are only applicable to Golden Triangle are covered in this section.

## KEY STREETS

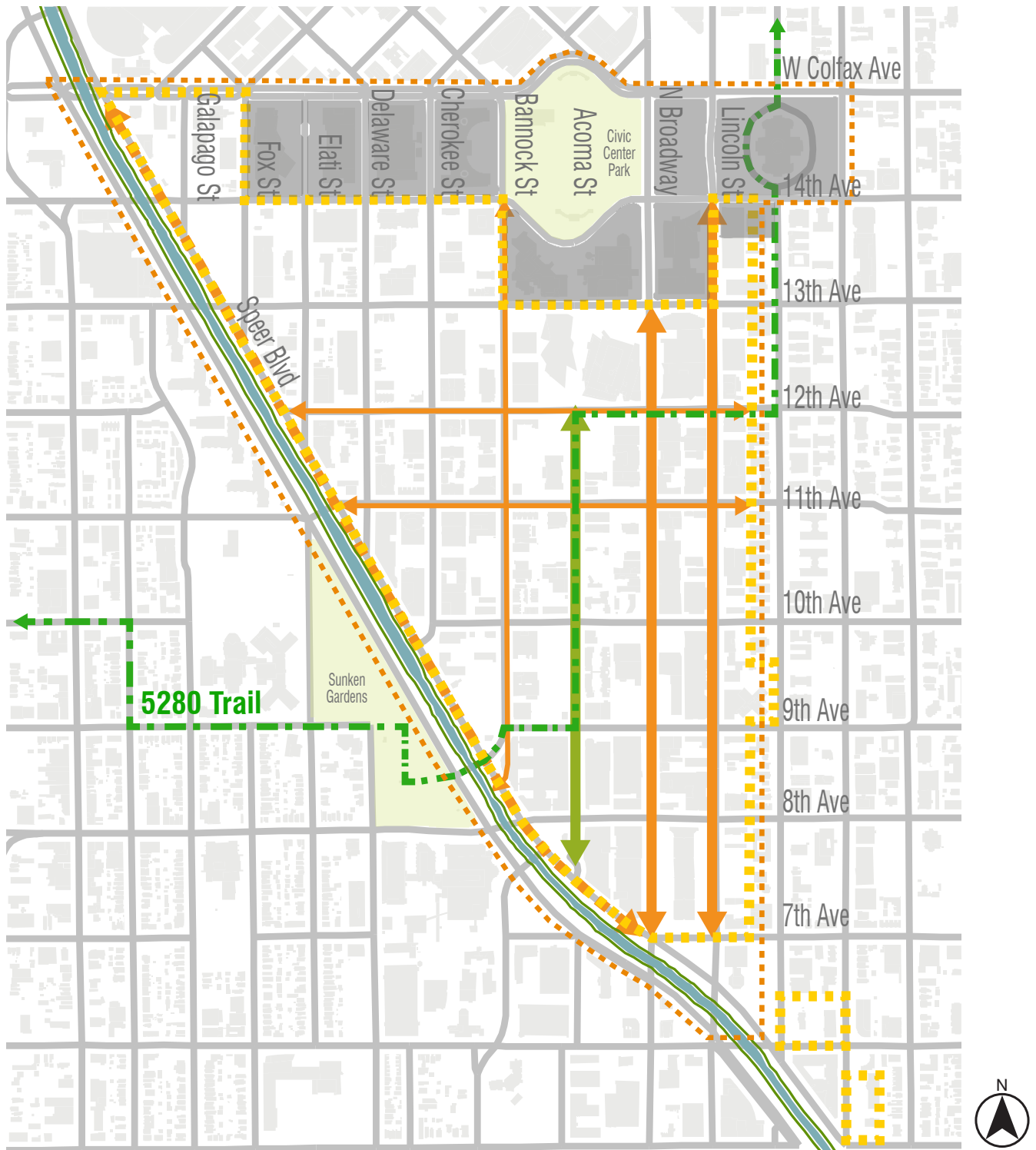
The Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan and subsequent efforts recognized the unique context of the following Key Streets:

- Acoma Street (Neighborhood Greenway)
- Broadway (Grand Boulevard)
- Lincoln Street (Grand Boulevard)
- 12th Avenue
- 11th Avenue
- Bannock Street

For Speer Boulevard refer to Denver’s Designated Parkways and Boulevards Design Guidelines for additional design intent and guidance.

For Colfax and 14th Avenues refer to the Civic Center District Plan for additional design intent and guidance.





151. All new construction, additions, exterior improvements, signs, and new or expanded outdoor use areas proposed in the D-GT zone district located within the design review area, shall follow this additional guidance.

- ■ ■ **GOLDEN TRIANGLE DESIGN REVIEW AREA**
- ■ ■ Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan Boundary
- Key Streets
- Neighborhood Greenway
- - - - - Planned 5280 Trail
- Areas not affected by these DSG

*NOTE: Buildings in the Civic Center Historic District must comply with the Civic Center Design Guidelines and be reviewed and approved by the Landmark Preservation Commission. For additional details about design in this area, see the Civic Center Design Guidelines.*

# Golden Triangle

## Acoma Street

The Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan of 2014 recommends establishing green corridors along key streets with a focus on Acoma Street as a neighborhood greenway and an extension of the arts and cultural campus created by the Denver Art Museum, Clyfford Still Museum, Kirkland Museum, and Denver Public Library. Acoma Street is envisioned to have enhanced pedestrian amenities and the ability to host programmed events and informal gatherings, especially in the area between 11th and 12th Avenues that is also home to the Denver Historic Landmark Evans School.

As a neighborhood greenway, the vision for Acoma Street includes enhanced landscaping, public art, open space, seating areas, and outdoor space for retail and dining uses. The proposed 5280 Trail is anticipated to further support the goals of the neighborhood greenway.

The following design standards and guidelines apply to Acoma Street between 12th and 8th Avenues.

### Intent Statements

- 5.S To promote a pedestrian focused greenway along Acoma Street**
- 5.T To encourage additional space for pedestrian activity and related amenities**
- 5.U To encourage arts and cultural elements along Acoma Street**
- 5.V To support distinctive placemaking along Acoma Street**

Golden Triangle Introduction  
**Acoma Street**  
Broadway & Lincoln Street  
12th Avenue  
11th Avenue & Bannock Street  
Pedestrian Lighting

### Design Standards

- 5.32 Street Level design and uses at the intersections of 12th Avenue and 11th Avenue shall be highly active and pedestrian-oriented.**  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Exceeding transparency requirements set in the Denver Zoning Code.
  - b. Locating nonresidential uses wrapping the corner of both frontages for at least 50 feet
- 5.33 Building frontages shall be configured to support a pedestrian-oriented greenway and network of Open Space.**  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Locating Open Space required by the Denver Zoning Code along Acoma Street
  - b. Locating Enhanced Setbacks along Acoma Street
  - c. Accommodating wider Amenity Zones that allow for mature tree canopy and root spread
  - d. Incorporating additional landscaping and trees between the street and building facade
- 5.34 Lower Stories shall be clearly expressed and emphasize a Human Scale streetwall.**
- 5.35 A clear path of travel of at least 6 feet shall be provided for pedestrians.**
- 5.36 The health of the tree canopy shall be prioritized.**  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Maintaining and preserving existing healthy street trees and tree canopy
  - b. Planting additional street trees and providing necessary soil volume and irrigation
  - c. Exceeding minimum tree planting standards established by the Office of the City Forester
  - d. Designing planting areas to promote long term health and growth as well as protect vegetation from utilities, vehicles, and pets

# Golden Triangle

## Acoma Street

Golden Triangle Introduction  
Acoma Street  
Broadway & Lincoln Street  
12th Avenue  
11th Avenue & Bannock Street  
Pedestrian Lighting



152. Building frontages shall be configured to support a pedestrian-oriented greenway and network of Open Space.

### Design Guidelines

**5.37** Vehicle curb cuts should be minimized and access should be provided via an Alley or Private Access Drive.

**5.38** Parking structures should be fully wrapped by active uses and not visible from the street.

**5.39** Parking structures should provide spaces available to the general public.

**5.40** Streetwall height should primarily be 3 or 4 stories tall.

**5.41** Upper Story Setbacks should exceed the horizontal and depth dimensions required by the Denver Zoning Code.

**5.42** Building facades should exceed the standards and guidelines for facade design and uses.

[See Chapter 3, Street Level Facade Design & Uses.](#)

**5.43** Street Level facades should incorporate masonry materials that contribute to the existing context.

**5.44** Existing Character Buildings should be considered for Landmark protection or repurposed through Adaptive Reuse.

[See Chapter 3, Adaptive Reuse and Building Additions.](#)

**5.45** Public Art should be incorporated as an integral part of projects.

**5.46** Streetscape design should be coordinated. Appropriate elements to consider include:

- Streetscape furnishings
- Landscape planters
- Paving systems
- Walls, railings, or bollards
- Pedestrian lighting

**5.47** Streetscape design and furnishings should incorporate highly creative solutions.

**5.48** Amenity Zones and Open Space should incorporate enhanced green infrastructure and stormwater management techniques.



# Golden Triangle

## Broadway & Lincoln Street

The Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan identifies Broadway as Grand Boulevard. It recommends that development along both Broadway and Lincoln Street is contextually appropriate with enhanced gateway entrances at the northern and southern ends of the neighborhood. The two streets are envisioned to have a strong sense of identity serving diverse transportation, economic, recreation, and placemaking functions. Broadway is especially viewed as a strong economic corridor, that bolsters the vitality of the neighborhood and the coupling of Lincoln and Broadway serves as an important link to adjacent communities.

The following design standards and guidelines apply to Broadway between 13th and 7th Avenues, and to Lincoln Street between 14th and 7th Avenues.

### Intent Statements

- 5.W To reinforce Highly Active Uses at the Street Level along Broadway and Lincoln Street**
- 5.X To enhance the Street Level experience along Broadway Blvd and Lincoln Street**
- 5.Y To promote Broadway as a Grand Boulevard**

### Design Standards

- 5.49** Street Level design and uses shall be highly active and pedestrian-oriented.  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Exceeding transparency requirements set in the Denver Zoning Code.
  - b. Locating primarily nonresidential uses at ground floor
- 5.50** Building frontages shall be configured to support a pedestrian, bicycle, and transit-oriented boulevard.  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Incorporating Enhanced Setbacks
  - b. Accommodating wider Amenity Zones that allow for mature tree canopy and root spread, transit facilities, and pedestrian amenities

Golden Triangle Introduction  
Acoma Street  
**Broadway & Lincoln Street**  
12th Avenue  
11th Avenue & Bannock Street  
Pedestrian Lighting

- 5.51** A clear path of travel of at least 6 feet shall be provided for pedestrians.

### Design Guidelines

- 5.52** Vehicle curb cuts should be minimized and access should be provided via an Alley or Private Access Drive.
- 5.53** Parking structures should provide spaces available to the general public.
- 5.54** Streetwall height should primarily be 5 to 8 stories tall.
- 5.55** Streetscape design should be coordinated. Appropriate elements to consider include:
  - a. Streetscape furnishings
  - b. Landscape planters
  - c. Paving systems
  - d. Walls, railings, or bollards
  - e. Pedestrian lighting
- 5.56** The health of the tree canopy should be prioritized. Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Maintaining and preserving existing healthy street trees and tree canopy
  - b. Planting additional street trees and providing necessary soil volume and irrigation
  - c. Exceeding minimum tree planting standards established by the Office of the City Forester
  - d. Designing planting areas to promote long term health and growth as well as protect vegetation from utilities, vehicles, and pets
- 5.57** Existing Character Buildings should be considered for Landmark protection or repurposed through Adaptive Reuse.

[See Chapter 3, Adaptive Reuse and Building Additions.](#)

# Golden Triangle

## 12th Avenue

Much like Acoma Street, the Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan envisions 12th Avenue as green corridor with a focus on adjacent arts and cultural uses, linking communities across Speer Blvd to the west and Lincoln Street to the east.

The Plan envisions that 12th Avenue incorporate Public Art, Enhanced Setbacks, and Open Space that can accommodate shade trees, green infrastructure, and areas of respite. Additionally, these areas can be integrated with outdoor extensions of active ground floor uses such as retail, restaurants, and artist studios.

The following design standards and guidelines apply to 12th Avenue between Speer Blvd and Lincoln St.

### Intent Statements

- 5.Z To promote a pedestrian focused greenway along 12th Avenue**
- 5.AA To encourage additional space for pedestrian activity and related amenities**
- 5.AB To encourage arts and cultural elements along 12th Avenue**
- 5.AC To support distinctive placemaking along 12th Avenue**

### Design Standards

- 5.58** Street Level design and uses at the intersection of 12th Avenue with Acoma Street and Bannock Street shall be highly active and pedestrian-oriented.  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Exceeding transparency requirements set in the Denver Zoning Code.
  - b. Locating nonresidential uses wrapping the corner of both frontages for at least 50 feet

Golden Triangle Introduction  
Acoma Street  
Broadway & Lincoln Street  
**12th Avenue**  
11th Avenue & Bannock Street  
Pedestrian Lighting



*155. Street Level design and uses at the intersection of 12th Avenue with Acoma Street and Bannock Street shall be highly active and pedestrian-oriented.*

- 5.59** Building frontages shall be configured to support a pedestrian-oriented greenway and network of Open Space.  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Locating Open Space required by the Denver Zoning Code along 12th Avenue
  - b. Locating Enhanced Setbacks along 12th Avenue
  - c. Accommodating wider amenity zones that allow for mature tree canopy and root spread
  - d. Incorporating additional landscaping and trees between the street and building facade
- 5.60** Lower Stories shall be clearly expressed and emphasize a Human Scale streetwall.
- 5.61** A clear path of travel of at least 6 feet shall be provided for pedestrians.

# Golden Triangle

## 12th Avenue

Golden Triangle Introduction  
Acoma Street  
Broadway & Lincoln Street  
**12th Avenue**  
11th Avenue & Bannock Street  
Pedestrian Lighting

- 5.62** The health of the tree canopy shall be prioritized. Appropriate techniques include:
- Maintaining and preserving existing healthy street trees and tree canopy
  - Planting additional street trees and providing necessary soil volume and irrigation
  - Exceeding minimum tree planting standards established by the Office of the City Forester
  - Designing planting areas to promote long term health and growth as well as protect vegetation from utilities, vehicles, and pets

### Design Guidelines

- 5.63** Upper Story Setbacks on the south side of 12th Avenue should exceed the horizontal and depth dimensions required by the Denver Zoning Code to minimize shadow impacts.
- 5.64** Parking structures should provide spaces available to the general public.



156. Streetscape design and furnishings should incorporate highly creative solutions.

- 5.65** Building facades should exceed the standards and guidelines for facade design and uses.

[See Chapter 3, Street Level Facade Design & Uses.](#)

- 5.66** Street Level Active Uses that complement the civic, arts, and cultural institutions should be included along 12th Avenue, especially between Broadway and Cherokee Street.
- 5.67** Public Art should be incorporated as an integral part of projects.

- 5.68** Streetscape design should be coordinated. Appropriate elements to consider include:

- Streetscape furnishings
- Landscape planters
- Paving systems
- Walls, railings, or bollards
- Pedestrian lighting

- 5.69** Streetscape design and furnishings should incorporate highly creative solutions.

- 5.70** Amenity Zones and Open Space should incorporate enhanced green infrastructure and stormwater management techniques.

- 5.71** Existing Character Buildings should be considered for Landmark protection or repurposed through Adaptive Reuse.

[See Chapter 3, Adaptive Reuse and Building Additions.](#)



# Golden Triangle

## 11th Avenue & Bannock Street

Golden Triangle Introduction  
Acoma Street  
Broadway & Lincoln Street  
12th Avenue  
**11th Avenue & Bannock Street**  
Pedestrian Lighting

The Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan identifies 11th Avenue and Bannock Street as commercial and retail focused corridors. Given their central location as north-south and east-west spines through the area, the existing retail shops, cafes, and restaurants can be further enhanced and expanded to become critical neighborhood-serving commercial uses. The Plan recommends that new development provide additional nonresidential uses, Enhanced Setbacks that accommodate outdoor uses, bike facilities, Public Art, and other streetscape features that foster walking and shopping. Bannock Street is intended to further promote arts and cultural uses that contribute additional pedestrian traffic along the street bringing a diverse group of people to the neighborhood.

The following design standards and guidelines apply to Bannock Street between 14th and 8th Avenues, and to 11th Avenue between Speer Blvd and Lincoln Street.

### Intent Statements

- 5.AD To reinforce Highly Active Uses at the Street Level along 11th Avenue and Bannock Street**
- 5.AE To promote interaction between internal building uses and the Public Realm**
- 5.AF To encourage additional space for pedestrian activity and related amenities**
- 5.AG To encourage arts and cultural elements along Bannock Street**

### Design Standards

- 5.72** Street Level design and uses shall be highly active and pedestrian-oriented.  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Exceeding transparency requirements set in the Denver Zoning Code.
  - b. Locating primarily nonresidential uses at ground floor

- 5.73** Building frontages shall be configured to support a highly active, pedestrian oriented commercial corridor.  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Locating Open Space required by the Denver Zoning Code along 11th Avenue and Bannock Street
  - b. Incorporating Enhanced Setbacks
  - c. Accommodating wider amenity zones that allow for mature tree canopy and root spread and pedestrian amenities
- 5.74** Lower Stories shall be clearly expressed and emphasize a Human Scale streetwall.
- 5.75** A clear path of travel of at least 6 feet shall be provided for pedestrians.

### Design Guidelines

- 5.76** Vehicle curb cuts should be minimized and access should be provided via an Alley or Private Access Drive.
- 5.77** Parking structures should provide spaces available to the general public.
- 5.78** Upper Story Setbacks on the south side of 11th Avenue should exceed the horizontal and depth dimensions required by the Denver Zoning Code to minimize shadow impacts.
- 5.79** Streetwall height should vary to contribute to a sense of variety and activity.
- 5.80** Public Art and arts and cultural uses should be incorporated as an integral part of projects.

# Golden Triangle

## 11th Avenue & Bannock Street

Golden Triangle Introduction  
Acoma Street  
Broadway & Lincoln Street  
12th Avenue  
**11th Avenue & Bannock Street**  
Pedestrian Lighting

### 5.81 Streetscape design should be coordinated.

Appropriate elements to consider include:

- Streetscape furnishings
- Landscape planters
- Paving systems
- Walls, railings, or bollards
- Pedestrian lighting

### 5.82 The health of the tree canopy should be prioritized.

Appropriate techniques include:

- Maintaining and preserving existing healthy street trees and tree canopy
- Planting additional street trees and providing necessary soil volume and irrigation
- Exceeding minimum tree planting standards established by the Office of the City Forester
- Designing planting areas to promote long term health and growth as well as protect vegetation from utilities, vehicles, and pets

### 5.83 Existing Character Buildings should be considered for Landmark protection or repurposed through Adaptive Reuse.

[See Chapter 3, Adaptive Reuse and Building Additions.](#)



157. Existing Character Buildings should be considered for Landmark protection or repurposed through Adaptive Reuse.

# Golden Triangle

## Pedestrian Lighting

The Golden Triangle uses consistent pedestrian lighting elements to establish a unifying streetscape appearance. While the original fixtures are no longer manufactured, the following standards and guidelines describe how contemporary approaches can maintain a similar design theme and visual characteristics.

### Intent Statements

- 5.AH To establish uniform pedestrian lighting character**
- 5.AI To highlight specific areas with distinct features.**

### GLOBE AND ACORN FIXTURES

In lieu of a direct specification, acorn-style and globe-style pedestrian lighting should meet these general criteria:

- White or clear globe/acorn shape luminaire (note, luminaire shall incorporate internal refractors for Dark Sky compliance)
- A decorative luminaire base with an integral holder/ballast housing
- All hardware should be stainless steel and tamper resistant.
- The ballast and socket assembly should be furnished with a quick disconnect plug and mounted on a removable ballast plate.
- UL listed and labeled as suitable for exterior use and wet locations.



Golden Triangle Introduction  
Acoma Street  
Broadway & Lincoln Street  
12th Avenue  
11th Avenue & Bannock Street  
**Pedestrian Lighting**

### Design Standards

- 5.84** Acorn-style fixtures shall be used in most locations throughout the Golden Triangle, except as otherwise noted below.
- 5.85** Globe-style fixtures shall be used in the following locations:
  - a. Speer Boulevard
  - b. Acoma Street north of 9th Avenue
  - c. 14th Avenue
  - d. Denver Parks
- 5.86** Pedestrian light fixtures shall be Dark Sky compliant and designed to minimize light pollution.

### Design Guidelines

- 5.87** Pedestrian lighting should be installed at least fifty feet (50') apart. Note, sixty to one hundred fifteen feet (60'-115') separation is recommended.
- 5.88** Post height for pedestrian light fixtures should be consistent with existing posts within one block. In the absence of other reference lighting, post height should reflect the width of the Right of Way and be taller as the Right of Way increases.
- 5.89** Post color should be consistent with existing posts within one block. In the absence of other reference lighting, post color should be black.



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## Chapter 6 | Building Signs

Building Signs addresses design aspects related to sign type, location, materials, and lighting. In addition to identifying various uses and tenants, signs play an important role in defining the visual character and quality of the urban environment. This chapter will be used by City Staff to review individual signs and only be used by the Design Advisory Board in the review of Comprehensive Sign Plans.



158. Distinctive signs that are integrated into the overall building design promote a cohesive urban environment.

## DENVER ZONING CODE SIGN REQUIREMENTS

Division 10.10 of the Denver Zoning Code provides base requirements for the erection, remodeling, enlarging, moving, operation and maintenance of all signs.

The design standards and guidelines in this Chapter are intended to build on Denver Zoning Code requirements.

Sign review is a separate zoning process which may be subject to design review. Sign size and location are regulated by the Denver Zoning Code.

## DENVER COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PLANS

Division 10.10 of the Denver Zoning Code enables a Comprehensive Sign Plan process that allows flexibility in requirements for the size, type and location of signs for large facilities subject to review by City Staff and the Denver Planning Board. This flexibility is offered in exchange for a coordinated program of signage ensuring a higher standard of design quality for such signs. The Downtown Design Advisory Board will evaluate Comprehensive Sign Plans in advance of the review and determination of approval by the Denver Planning Board.

For buildings that have Comprehensive Sign Plans, refer to the plans for allowed sign locations, types, quantity, and size requirements.

In some instances Comprehensive Sign Plans will allow for sign placement, application, and type that may be in contrast to these DSG. In those instances the placement, application, and type of sign shall be referenced and governed by the Comprehensive Sign Plan.



## HIERARCHY OF SIGNAGE

When planning signage, it is important to understand the purpose that each sign can play, and to consider the hierarchy and scale of signs types, messages and designs. “Layering” information will help visitors obtain the information they need, while also ensuring that every proposed sign has an objective. The diagram and related photographs below illustrate layering of primary, secondary and additional/iconic signage consistent with the guiding principles for building signs.



### A PRIMARY SIGNAGE



Located near active building entrances and strategically placed to be viewed from longer distances. Typically one primary sign per business is appropriate.

### B SECONDARY SIGNAGE



Secondary signage provides additional information that is viewed from shorter distances and at the pedestrian level. Typically one to three secondary signs per business are appropriate.

### C ADDITIONAL SIGNAGE



Additional/iconic signage promotes creativity, context-sensitivity and overall sense of place, often through artistic, three-dimensional imagery. Typically one iconic sign per business is appropriate.

# Building Sign Location

Signs provide a vital service in an urban district, informing pedestrians and expressing the character and tone of the experiences within. Signs have a powerful presence in the streetscape and can affect the pedestrian and vehicular experience significantly.

## Intent Statements

- 6.A** To encourage signs that promote a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented street frontage
- 6.B** To improve wayfinding by identifying primary entrances
- 6.C** To provide clear identification of building uses and tenants
- 6.D** To ensure signs are located to be subordinate to and integrate with the building design
- 6.E** To minimize impact of signage on adjacent streetscape environment

## Design Standards

- 6.01** Unless a building has a Comprehensive Sign Plan, a building shall not have more than one sign located above the Street Level on each facade.
- 6.02** Signs at the Street Level shall be located for pedestrian use and visibility. Appropriate strategies include:
  - a. Locate signs at, or just above, the Street Level entrance
  - b. Incorporate a distinct signage band area at the Street Level
  - c. Integrate signage within a storefront

### Building Sign Location

Building Sign Character & Material

Building Sign Lighting

Individual Sign Types – Projecting Signs

Individual Sign Types – Non-Projecting Signs



159. Signs shall be located at, or just above, the Street Level or near the top of the building rather than midway along a facade.

- 6.03** Signs shall be subordinate to and integrate with the overall design of the facade. Appropriate strategies include:
  - a. Ensure that signage is not the most prominent feature of the facade
  - b. Locate signs in architectural bays or panels
  - c. Utilize areas of the facade designed and reserved specifically for signage

See [“Street Level Facade Design & Uses”](#).

# Building Sign Location

- 6.04** Signs for Street Level uses shall be located adjacent to the identified use unless part of a Joint Identification Sign.
- 6.05** Signs shall be located and designed to avoid conflicts with streetscape elements. Streetscape elements to consider include:
- Street trees and future tree growth
  - Street lighting
  - Street furniture

## Design Guidelines

- 6.06** Signs should be located at, or just above, the Street Level or near the top of the building rather than midway along a facade. Use a Comprehensive Sign Plan for additional locations on building facades.
- 6.07** Signs located above the Street Level should be reserved to identify a single major tenant.
- 6.08** Signs for multiple tenants above the Street Level should be consolidated into a Street Level Joint Identification Sign.
- See [“Joint Identification Signs”](#).
- 6.09** Signs should clearly designate tenant spaces and building entries.
- 6.10** Signage at Historic Resource or Character Buildings should be consistent with traditional signage patterns.
- Place a sign above or near the primary entrance to an establishment, preferably in a traditional location such as a historic sign band or in large storefront windows.

### Building Sign Location

Building Sign Character & Material

Building Sign Lighting

Individual Sign Types – Projecting Signs

Individual Sign Types – Non-Projecting Signs



160. Signs for Street Level uses shall be located to ensure pedestrian visibility.



161. Signs should clearly designate tenant spaces and building entries.



# Building Sign Character & Material

Building Sign Location

**Building Sign Character & Material**

Building Sign Lighting

Individual Sign Types – Projecting Signs

Individual Sign Types – Non-Projecting Signs

## Intent Statements

- 6.F** To promote well-designed and durable signage that retains a quality appearance over time
- 6.G** To promote creative and iconographic sign design at prominent locations
- 6.H** To encourage signage design that is well integrated and complimentary to the overall building design and aesthetic

## Design Standards

- 6.11** Signs shall be designed to complement the design of the building facade.
- 6.12** Signs shall incorporate high-quality durable materials appropriate for urban settings that will maintain their quality over time.  
Appropriate materials include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Metal
  - b. Stone such as slate, marble or sandstone
  - c. Painted, gilded or sandblasted glass
- 6.13** Signs at the Street Level shall incorporate design details, materials, and scaling elements that relate to Human Scale.
- 6.14** Signs located above the Street Level shall include only a single line of text and may not occupy more than 600 square feet of area.  
*Note that a Comprehensive Sign Plan may allow flexibility from this standard.*
- 6.15** Box or cabinet signs shall not be allowed.
- 6.16** Fasteners and other sign attachment devices shall be integrated into the facade design and not cause unnecessary damage.



162. Signs at the Street Level shall incorporate design details, materials, and scaling elements that relate to Human Scale.

# Building Sign Character & Material

Building Sign Location

**Building Sign Character & Material**

Building Sign Lighting

Individual Sign Types – Projecting Signs

Individual Sign Types – Non-Projecting Signs



163. Signs shall incorporate durable materials and complement the design of the building facade.

## Design Guidelines

**6.17** Signs should be designed to work together to create a cohesive identity for the building facade or tenant.

**6.18** Signs located at corner entrances, within an Open Space, or in other highly-visible locations should be designed to be creative and iconographic.

Appropriate techniques include:

- a. Incorporate symbols or representations of products into sign design
- b. Utilize iconic typography in sign design
- c. Integrate creative lighting into sign design

*Note that projecting signs must incorporate iconographic features (see [“Individual Sign Types – Projecting Signs”](#)).*

**6.19** Signs should be designed using distinctive materials and craftsmanship.



164. Signs should be designed to work together to create a cohesive identity for the building facade or tenant.



# Building Sign Lighting

## Intent Statements

- 6.I** To ensure that sign lighting is coordinated with building facade design and lighting
- 6.J** To ensure that sign lighting does not adversely affect the Public Realm or adjacent properties.

## Design Standards

- 6.20** Sign lighting shall be integrated into the design of the sign or facade.  
Appropriate strategies include:
  - a. Indirect back lit/halo lighting
  - b. Lighting arms that provide direct lighting
  - c. Lighting integrated into an architectural feature

- 6.21** Sign lighting shall be designed to minimize light pollution and avoid adverse impacts to the Public Realm and adjacent properties.  
Appropriate strategies include:
  - a. Focus lighting directly towards the sign
  - b. Incorporate hoods or caps to avoid indirect glare

- 6.22** Electrical conduits and raceways for sign lighting shall be integrated into the design of the facade and not directly exposed.

- 6.23** Electronic message boards shall have auto dimming capabilities to respond to daylight conditions.

## Design Guidelines

- 6.24** Sign lighting should be provided to support nighttime pedestrian activity.
- 6.25** Sign lighting should be consistent with overall building lighting.

Building Sign Location  
Building Sign Character & Material  
**Building Sign Lighting**  
Individual Sign Types – Projecting Signs  
Individual Sign Types – Non-Projecting Signs



165. Sign lighting shall be integrated into the design of the sign or facade.



166. Indirect back lit/halo lighting is an appropriate way to integrate lighting into the design of the sign.



# Individual Sign Types – Projecting Signs

## Intent Statements

- 6.K** To promote projecting signs that contribute to the overall arrangement and variety of signage on the building facade
- 6.L** To promote projecting sign designs that enliven the pedestrian environment with creative, expressive, and iconic shapes

### DESIGN REVIEW OF PROJECTING SIGNS

Projecting signs are permitted in the Downtown Arapahoe Square 12+/20+ zone districts; Downtown Central Platte Valley Transition, River, and Center zone districts; and Downtown Golden Triangle zone district without a Comprehensive Sign Plan. City Staff will review and approve applications for new or modified projecting signs.

Building Sign Location

Building Sign Character & Material

Building Sign Lighting

**Individual Sign Types – Projecting Signs**

Individual Sign Types – Non-Projecting Signs

## Design Standards

- 6.26** Projecting signs shall be designed to be creative and iconographic.  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Incorporate symbols or representations of products into sign design
  - b. Utilize iconic typography in sign design
  - c. Integrate creative lighting into sign design

- 6.27** Projecting signs shall be three-dimensional.  
Appropriate techniques include:
  - a. Use shapes that limit the need for signage text
  - b. Incorporate three-dimensional objects, such as products related to the advertised use, in sign design (objects may be abstracted)



167. Projecting signs shall be designed to be creative, iconographic, and three-dimensional.



168. Projecting signs shall be designed to be creative, iconographic, and three-dimensional.

# Individual Sign Types – Non-Projecting Signs

Building Sign Location  
Building Sign Character & Material  
Building Sign Lighting  
Individual Sign Types – Projecting Signs  
**Individual Sign Types – Non-Projecting Signs**

## Intent Statements

- 6.M** To promote appropriate use of a variety of sign types
- 6.N** To limit the visual impact of multiple signs on a building facade
- 6.O** To maintain the appearance of an active Street Level with a high percentage of transparency

## Design Standards

### ARCADE SIGNS

- 6.28** Arcade signs shall be mounted perpendicular to the building facade hanging from an arcade.

### GROUND SIGNS

- 6.29** Ground signs shall be located in Enhanced Commercial Setback or Open Space areas outside tree planting areas and scaled for pedestrians.

### WALL SIGNS

- 6.30** Wall signs shall be designed to fit within sign bands or architectural details on the building facade.
- 6.31** Where a wall sign is used as a joint identification sign, it shall be located adjacent to a primary building entry.

### WINDOW SIGNS

- 6.32** Window signs shall not cover more than 20% of the window area.
- 6.33** Door Signage shall be used to identify business name, address, hours of operation and a possible logo if needed, and shall be located at eye level.
- 6.34** Font size of door graphics shall be sized to be appropriately legible when standing in front of the door.

## Design Guidelines

### ARCADE SIGNS

- 6.35** Arcade signs should be scaled to be compatible with the overall arcade design.

### GROUND SIGNS

- 6.36** Materials used for ground mounted signs should be coordinated with materials used on adjacent buildings.

### JOINT IDENTIFICATION SIGNS

- 6.37** Joint identification signs should be designed with a coordinated set of materials, color and typefaces.

### WALL SIGNS

- 6.38** Where a wall sign will be internally-lit, internally-illuminated lettering should be used rather than a single internally-illuminated box.

### WINDOW SIGNS

- 6.39** Window signs should be scaled for pedestrians and located at, or below, pedestrian height.
  - a. Limit window signs to logos or additional product information
  - b. Use individual lettering rather than solid color backgrounds



# Individual Sign Types – Non-Projecting Signs

Building Sign Location  
Building Sign Character & Material  
Building Sign Lighting  
Individual Sign Types – Projecting Signs  
**Individual Sign Types – Non-Projecting Signs**



172. Arcade Sign - a sign attached to the roof or wall of an arcade and totally within the outside limits of the structural surfaces which are delineating the arcade



173. Ground Sign - a sign supported by poles, uprights or braces extending from the ground or an object on the ground but not attached to any part of any building



174. Joint Identification Sign - a sign which serves as a common or collective identification for three or more businesses on the same zone lot (note that Joint Identification Signs are a type of wall or ground sign)



175. Wall Sign - a sign attached to, painted on or erected against a wall, fascia, parapet wall or pitched roof of a building or structure (note that a wall sign may be used as a joint identification sign)



176. Window Sign - a sign which is applied or attached to, or located within three feet of the interior of a window, which sign can be seen through the window from the exterior of the structure



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# Glossary of Terms

# Glossary of Terms

The terms included here are terms that are consistently referenced throughout the DSG. Many of the terms are consistent with Denver Zoning Code definitions but are included in this document for ease and accessibility. For terms that are not included here, refer to the Denver Zoning Code, Section 13.3 Definition of Words, Terms and Phrases as well as Section 11.12 Use Definitions.

## ACTIVE USES

See Street Level Active Uses and Highly Active Uses

## ADAPTIVE REUSE

The renovation and reuse of existing structures for new purposes.

## ADJACENT

Sharing a zone lot line or being separated only by an alley. Named or numbered streets destroy adjacency, except where specifically allowed by this document, for example along the South Platte Riverfront.

## ALLEY

A public way that is less in size than a street, and which is not designed for general travel, which is used primarily as a means of access to the rear of residences and business establishments. Also see Private Access Drive.

## AMENITY ZONE

An area between the street and sidewalk that is improved with street trees, landscaping, paving, street furniture or other amenities. See “Amenity Zone & Street Trees” in Chapter 4 for additional information and illustrations.

## ARTICULATION

See Facade Articulation.

## BICYCLE CORRAL

An on-street bicycle parking facility that can accommodate bicycles in the same area as an on-street vehicle parking space. They work best where sidewalks are too narrow to accommodate bicycle racks and in areas with both high levels of people bicycling and demand for bicycle parking.

## BICYCLE FACILITY

A lane, path, or shoulder for use by bicyclists, or a shelter/parking facility for bicycles.

## BUILDING MASSING

The overall configuration of the major three-dimensional volumes, modules, or elements of an individual building and its Facade. Such volumes, modules, or elements are generally defined by significant and recognizable changes in height, setback, or Facade plane. Also see Facade Articulation.

## CEMENTITIOUS STUCCO

An exterior wall finish, usually composed of cement, sand, and lime, and applied while wet.

## CHARACTER BUILDING

A structure with distinctive massing, scale, and design features that add to Denver’s varied architectural heritage.

## CITY STAFF

For purposes of these DSG, City Staff refers to the City Zoning Administrator and his or her designees in the Department of Community Planning and Development.

## COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PLAN

Division 10.10 of the Denver Zoning Code enables a Comprehensive Sign Plan process that allows flexibility in requirements for the size, type and location of signs of large facilities.

## CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE

A structure that is designated as contributing to the historic or architectural qualities of a Historic District according to the provisions of [Chapter 30 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code](#).



# Glossary of Terms

## DENVER ZONING CODE

The Denver Zoning Code implements the city's vision for the future of Denver by calibrating regulations for structures, uses and parking by neighborhood context. The Denver Zoning Code generally sets forth quantitative requirements such as maximum heights or minimum setbacks that apply in addition to the discretionary design standards and guidelines included in this document. See [www.denvergov.org/zoning](http://www.denvergov.org/zoning) for more information.

## DOWNTOWN DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD

A group of design professionals, development industry representatives, and downtown-area residents and property owners appointed by the Mayor of Denver to review and provide recommendations on proposed projects using these DSG. See "Design Review Process" on page 10 and [www.denvergov.org/downtowndesign](http://www.denvergov.org/downtowndesign) for more information.

## EXTERIOR INSULATED FINISH SYSTEM (EIFS)

A general class of non-load bearing building cladding systems using rigid foam insulation, fiberglass mesh, and a thin synthetic stucco finish.

## ENHANCED COMMERCIAL SETBACK

The additional space created when Street Level frontages that do not contain residential units are set back at least 5' from the Primary Street property line, but are generally still positioned within the Primary Street build-to range provided in the Denver Zoning Code. Enhanced Commercial Setbacks can range in size from modest setback areas provided by building offsets to larger areas with outdoor patio seating, landscaping or other amenities.

## ENHANCED RESIDENTIAL SETBACK

The additional space created when Street Level frontages containing residential units are set back at least 7' (15' on the South Platte Riverfront) from the Primary Street property line, but are generally still positioned within the Primary Street build-to range provided in the Denver Zoning Code. Enhanced Residential Setbacks provide space for a transition from the Public Realm to private residential units, which may include porches, stoops, landscaping and other features.

## ENHANCED SETBACK

The space created when buildings are set back more than the minimum Primary Street setback dimension, but still within the Primary Street build-to range specified in the Denver Zoning Code. See Enhanced Commercial Setback and Enhanced Residential Setback for specific types of Enhanced Setback.

## FACADE

The exterior face or wall surface of a building. For the purpose of these DSG, a Facade includes all stories of a building.

## FACADE ADJACENT TO A HISTORIC RESOURCE

A Facade visible from a Historic District or Landmark Structure, or visible from a street, Alley or Private Access Drive within 1/2 block of a Historic District or Zone Lot that includes a Landmark Structure.

## FACADE ARTICULATION

Design elements that add texture, interest, depth and rhythm to the Facade of a building, including horizontal and vertical projections, cornices, balcony rows, fenestration patterns, awnings and canopies, as well as horizontal and vertical changes in material, color and/or finish. Also see Building Massing.

## FIBER CEMENT SIDING

A building material used to cover the exterior of a building. Fiber cement is a composite material made of sand, cement and cellulose fibers. Fiber Cement Siding includes HardieBoard and HardiePlank.

## GATEWAY CORNER

An intersection where strong building massing will help invite pedestrians onto active sections of adjacent streets.

## GENERAL BUILDING FORM

A Denver Zoning Code building form that establishes a base set of standards and can accommodate a full range of different uses.

# Glossary of Terms

## HIGHLY ACTIVE USES

Uses that contribute to the activation and engagement of the pedestrian experience. These uses include, but are not limited to, retail storefronts, restaurants and cafes, building lobbies and amenity areas, and arts and cultural facilities. Uses that are not considered Highly Active Uses are residential units, light warehousing, mini-storage, parking spaces or parking aisles. Also see Street Level Active Uses.

## HISTORIC DISTRICT

A district that is locally-designated for preservation under the provisions of [Chapter 30 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code](#).

## HISTORIC RESOURCE

A Landmark Structure or Historic District that is locally-designated for preservation under the provisions of [Chapter 30 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code](#).

## HUMAN SCALE

The perception of a building and/or environment based on proportions, scaling elements, and context-sensitive solutions that allow a human to reasonably interpret the design through comparable elements in their own experience. See “Guiding Principles of Human Scale Design” in Chapter 3 for more information.

## INTERIOR VEHICLE COURT

A vehicle use area within the interior of a block and accessed by an Alley or Private Access Drive. An Interior Vehicle Court may serve as a drop-off area for surrounding building uses and provide access to parking or service areas.

## KEY STREETS

Unique or important streets where context-specific design guidance is provided. See “Key Streets” on page 4 for more information.

## LANDMARK STRUCTURE

A structure that is locally-designated for preservation under the provisions of [Chapter 30 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code](#).

## LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT

A stormwater management approach to address rainfall in a way that more closely mimics the natural hydrologic system at the site prior to any development.

## LOWER STORIES

The portion of a building generally located below an Upper Story Setback specified in the Denver Zoning Code. For example, where the Denver Zoning Code specifies an Upper Story Setback above 5 stories or 70 feet, the Lower Stories will generally be stories 1-5. However, the Lower Stories may be considered to end at a lower height where an Upper Story Setback is located below the maximum height specified in the Denver Zoning Code. See the related definitions of Lower Story Facade, Upper Stories and Tower, as well as “Building Form Massing Components” on page 160 for more information.

## LOWER STORY FACADE

The Primary Street-Facing Facade of a building’s Lower Stories. Note that the Lower Story Facade and the Streetwall often describe the same Facade areas, although the Streetwall will sometimes rise higher along Facade areas where there is no Upper Story Setback, or where a Tower rises directly above a building’s Lower Stories. See the related definitions of Upper Story Facade and Tower Facade, as well as “Building Form Massing Components” on page 160 for more information.

## MASONRY

Building materials characterized by individual units laid in and bound together by mortar. Masonry materials include brick, stone and terra cotta.

## MASSING

See Building Massing.

# Glossary of Terms

## OFF-STREET PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION

An improved and maintained way providing pedestrian access from the Right-Of-Way into the interior of a block. For the purpose of these DSG, an Off-Street Pedestrian Connection includes any improved pedestrian way through the interior of a block to provide pedestrian connections between block frontages or provide pedestrian access to uses located in the interior of a block. Note that an Alley or Private Access Drive may also serve as an Off-Street Pedestrian Connection when improved for pedestrian use. Note that some Off-Street Pedestrian Connections will also meet the definition of Open Space.

## OPEN SPACE

For the purpose of these DSG, an Open Space is a privately-owned space that is adjacent to and physically open to the street, allowing public access at least during business hours and meeting the Denver Zoning Code Article 13.1 criteria for areas satisfying a minimum percentage of Private Open Space, including minimum width, depth and overall area.

Examples of Open Space include privately-owned courtyards, plazas, expanded access points to Off-Street Pedestrian Connections and similar features that are intended to be publicly visible and usable. An Open Space is differentiated from an Enhanced Setback by its dimensions, which may extend beyond the maximum build-to range specified in the Denver Zoning Code, but typically would occur along only a limited percentage of the street frontage. An Open Space is differentiated from a Park because it is privately-owned and would generally not provide neighborhood-level recreation space.

## PARK

A large publicly or privately-owned outdoor space providing neighborhood-level amenities or recreation areas. A Park is differentiated from an Open Space because it is not specifically associated with a privately-owned building or group of buildings and is generally much larger in size.

## PARKLET

A sidewalk extension that provides more space and amenities for people using the street. Parklets are typically installed in parking lanes and use one or more parking spaces.

## POINT TOWER BUILDING FORM

A Denver Zoning Code building form that allows tall, slender Tower building elements. This building form sets more restrictive requirements for the size of a Tower Floor Plate than the Standard Tower Building Form.

## PRIMARY STREET

Any named or numbered street, and the South Platte River, as defined in the Denver Zoning Code.

## PRIMARY STREET-FACING FACADE

Any Facade that is located roughly parallel to, and is visible from, a Primary Street. Primary Street-Facing Facades do not include Facades that are generally perpendicular to a Primary Street, although such Facades may still be considered as a Visible Facade or Secondary Facade.

## PRIMARY STREET UPPER STORY SETBACK

See Upper Story Setback.

## PRIVATE ACCESS DRIVE

An improved and maintained way providing vehicular access from the Right-of-Way into the interior of a block. For the purpose of these DSG, a Private Access Drive includes any privately owned off-street vehicle way through the interior of a block to provide individual vehicular access points to parking areas, service areas, an Interior Vehicle Court or similar features shared by multiple buildings or sites on a block. Note that a Private Access Drive may also serve as an Off-Street Pedestrian Connection when improved for pedestrian use. Also see Alley.



# Glossary of Terms

## PRIVATE OPEN SPACE

A Denver Zoning Code term applied to publicly-accessible, but privately owned, spaces meeting minimum code-specified criteria. See Open Space.

## PUBLIC ART

Any structure or other installation meeting the definition of “Works of Public Art” in [Section 20-86 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code](#). Public Art includes, but is not limited to, paintings, sculptures, mosaics, earthworks, sound/light art and other artist-created works. For the purpose of these DSG, Public Art may include works that are privately owned, but publicly accessible, including artwork located in Open Space.

## PUBLIC REALM

Areas within the Right-of-Way (including streets and sidewalks) and Parks, as well as publicly-accessible areas on private property, including Off-Street Pedestrian Connections, Open Space and Enhanced Setbacks.

## QUALITY

Refers to materials that are low maintenance, durable, and appropriate for the intended use or design application.

## RESPIRE AREA

Small space adjacent to the sidewalk that encourage pedestrians to briefly dwell and linger in the Public Realm. A Respite Area typically includes seating elements, shade from street trees, and other furnishings.

## RIGHT-OF-WAY

The area of land that is intended to provide access to individual sites. The Right-Of-Way generally includes the roadway, sidewalks, Amenity Zone, and Alley. This area could be publicly owned by the municipality over which the road and sidewalk is built, or privately owned and maintained by others such as a metropolitan district or homeowners association.

## SECONDARY FACADE

Any Facade that does not meet the definition of a Primary Street-Facing Facade, including Facades that face towards an Alley or Private Access Drive. Note that some Secondary Facades will also meet the definition of a Visible Facade.

## SOUTH PLATTE RIVERFRONT

Areas fronting both sides of the South Platte River, including streets and Parks that are located between the river and private development areas. Zone Lots adjacent to such streets and Parks, or the river itself, are considered adjacent to the South Platte Riverfront.

## STANDARD TOWER BUILDING FORM

A Denver Zoning Code building form that allows larger Tower building elements to accommodate uses that need a larger Tower Floor Plate. This building form allows greater flexibility in the size of a Tower Floor Plate than the Point Tower Building Form.

## STREET ENCLOSURE RATIO

A measurement of the proportional relationship between the Streetwall of a building and the width of the adjacent Right-of-Way. Note the perception of Street Enclosure Ratio may be influenced by landscaping or street trees that provide a sense of enclosure.

## STREET LEVEL

The first story or level in a building or structure, as defined by the Denver Zoning Code. For the purpose of these DSG, Street Level will generally be considered to be the story or level of a building or structure that interfaces directly with the Public Realm, including Street Level building frontages facing streets, Open Spaces and Off-Street Pedestrian Connections. Note that the Street Level is considered to be part of the Lower Stories.

# Glossary of Terms

## **STREET LEVEL FACADE**

The Facade at the Street Level that faces the Public Realm, including Open Spaces and Off-Street Pedestrian Connections. Note that the Street Level Facade is part of the Lower Story Facade.

## **STREET LEVEL ACTIVE USES**

Uses that contribute to the activation and engagement of the street, as defined by the Denver Zoning Code. The Denver Zoning Code requires a minimum percentage of Street Level Active Uses on a Primary Street-Facing Facade. Also see Highly Active Uses.

## **STREETWALL**

The predominant plane of the Primary Street-Facing Facade from the Street Level up to an Upper Story Setback or other significant shift in building massing. Note that the Lower Story Facade is part of the Streetwall.

## **STRUCTURAL CELLS**

A below pavement structural system that allows for tree roots to grow in less compacted natural soils, while providing the necessary support for paving systems that can accommodate pedestrian and vehicular loading. See “Suspended Pavement Systems & Structural Soil” in Chapter 4.

## **SURFACE PARKING**

A storage area for motor vehicles that is not within a completely enclosed structure, including surface parking lot, deck parking and tuck-under parking.

## **TOWER**

The portion of a Point Tower Building Form or Standard Tower Building Form that is located above an Upper Story Setback specified in the Denver Zoning Code, including all stories where the Denver Zoning Code specifies a maximum Tower Floor Plate Area, maximum Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension and minimum Tower Floor Plate Separation (note that a Tower is sometimes also referred to as a Tower massing component or a Tower building element). For example, where the Denver Zoning Code

specifies an Upper Story Setback above 5 stories or 70 feet, the Tower will generally be any portion of the building above 5 stories. Where the Denver Zoning Code specifies an Upper Story Setback above 8 stories or 110 feet, the Tower will generally be any portion of the building above 8 stories. However, a Tower may be considered to begin at a lower height where Upper Story Setbacks are located below the maximum height specified in the Denver Zoning Code or where the portion of the building that meets the maximum Tower Floor Plate Area, maximum Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension and minimum Tower Floor Plate Separation begins below the height specified in the Denver Zoning Code.

## **TOWER FACADE**

The Primary Street-Facing Facades and Visible Facades of all stories of a Tower. See the related definitions of Lower Story Facade and Tower, as well as “Facade Levels” on page 39 for more information.

## **TOWER FLOOR PLATE**

Any single story of a Tower.

## **TOWER FLOOR PLATE AREA**

The total square foot area of a single Tower Floor Plate per the rules of measurement set forth in Article 13 of the Denver Zoning Code.

## **TOWER FLOOR PLATE LINEAR DIMENSION**

The longest horizontal distance between the exterior walls of a single Tower Floor Plate per the rules of measurement set forth in Article 13 of the Denver Zoning Code.

## **TOWER FLOOR PLATE LINEAR DIMENSION ALTERNATIVE**

A Denver Zoning Code standard that allows for an increased Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension on a Point Tower Building Form or Standard Tower Building Form to provide flexibility in special circumstances where creative Tower designs are found to meet the design standards and guidelines for the Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension Alternative in Chapter 2.

# Glossary of Terms

## **TOWER FLOOR PLATE SEPARATION**

The shortest horizontal distance between two Tower Floor Plates per the rules of measurement set forth in Article 13 of the Denver Zoning Code.

## **TOWER FLOOR PLATE SEPARATION ALTERNATIVE**

A Denver Zoning Code standard that allows for a reduced minimum separation between Tower Floor Plates on a Point Tower Building Form or Standard Tower Building Form to provide flexibility in special circumstances where creative Tower designs are found to meet the design standards and guidelines for the Tower Floor Plate Separation Alternative in Chapter 5.

## **UPPER STORIES**

The portion of a General Building Form that is located above an Upper Story Setback specified in the Denver Zoning Code. For example, where the Denver Zoning Code specifies an Upper Story Setback above 5 stories or 70 feet, the Upper Stories will generally be any portion of the building above 5 stories. However, the Upper Stories may be considered to begin at a lower height where Upper Story Setbacks are located below the maximum height specified in the Denver Zoning Code. Note that the portion of a Point Tower Building Form or Standard Tower Building Form that is located above an Upper Story Setback specified in the Denver Zoning Code is defined as the Tower rather than the Upper Stories. See the related definitions of Lower Stories, Upper Story Facade and Tower, as well as “Building Form Massing Components” on page 164 for more information.

## **UPPER STORY FACADE**

The Primary Street-Facing Facade of the Upper Stories of a General Building Form. Note that the Facades of a Point Tower Building Form or Standard Tower Building Form that are located above an Upper Story Setback specified in the Denver Zoning Code are defined as Tower Facades rather than Upper Story Facades. See the related definitions of Lower Story Facade and Upper Stories, as well as “Facade Levels” on page 39 for more information.

## **UPPER STORY SETBACK**

A building setback required by the Denver Zoning Code at a maximum specified height above the Street Level to provide appropriate pedestrian height, scale and massing. For the purpose of these DSG, Upper Story Setbacks may also refer to other setbacks above or below the maximum setback height specified in the Denver Zoning Code.

## **VEHICLE ACCESS POINT**

A point providing vehicular access to a Zone Lot, parking area, parking structure or shared Alley/Private Access Drive from an adjacent street.

## **VISIBLE FACADE**

Any Secondary Facade that is visible from the Public Realm at the time of construction without significant blockage by building or site features. For example, a Facade that is perpendicular to a Primary Street and faces towards an adjacent Open Space or existing lower-scale development on an adjacent Zone Lot that does not block views of the Facade from the Public Realm will be considered to be a Visible Facade. Note that some Visible Facades will also meet the definition of a Facade Adjacent to a Historic Resource.

## **VISIBLE STRUCTURED PARKING**

A structured parking Facade that is not wrapped with another use and is located on the Primary Street-facing Facade, or faces a Historic Resource per the definition of a Facade Adjacent to a Historic Resource.

## **WALL MURAL**

A mural is any piece of artwork or super graphic (which does not serve as an advertisement) painted or applied directly on a wall.

## **ZONE LOT**

As defined in the Denver Zoning Code, the land designated as the building site for a structure; also, the land area occupied by a use or a structure. Many Denver Zoning Code requirements, such as Upper Story Setbacks are measured in relation to Zone Lot size or Zone Lot Line.



# Glossary of Terms

## **ZONE LOT LINE**

As defined in the Denver Zoning Code, any boundary of a Zone Lot. Many Denver Zoning Code requirements, such as Upper Story Setbacks, are measured in relation to Zone Lot size or Zone Lot Lines.

## **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR**

A member of City Staff appointed by the Executive Director of the Department of Community Planning and Development to take final action regarding zoning permits, make code interpretations and undertake other duties as outlined in the Denver Zoning Code. The Zoning Administrator may designate their authority to any member of City Staff.



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