

Town of La Plata

Central Business and Central Business Transition District Community Design Guidelines



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About This Document

This document presents the Town of La Plata Community Design Guidelines as prepared and approved by the Town Council, the Vision Implementation Team and the Design Review Board. It is an outgrowth of the Vision Plan for Greater La Plata, dated March 10, 2000, and The Plan for the Future of Downtown La Plata, dated March 15, 2001, and reflects the principles and goals of those two plans as a means of achieving a vision for the long-term future of La Plata.

This document is organized into three parts:

Part I, **Introduction**, provides a brief overview of the design review process.

Part II, **Community Design Guidelines**, outlines the intent and guidelines for each category under consideration in the design review process, with supporting illustrations and photographs.

Part III, **Appendix**, contains a glossary to clarify the meaning of certain design terms plus a bibliography.

The La Plata municipal government has enjoyed a long history of effective planning, and this document is intended to support the existing policies adopted by the Town Council. In addition to the Vision Plan, the Community Design Guidelines fulfill the goals, objectives, principles and standards of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan and all relevant chapters of the Town Code.

Statement of Purpose

The Vision Plan for Greater La Plata outlines the future for the Town and the greater La Plata area in broad terms. Based on extensive input from key stakeholders within the community, the Vision Plan describes the collective needs and aspirations of its citizens. The Vision Plan was followed by The Plan for the Future of Downtown La Plata, which lays out in greater detail the implementation strategy for both short- and long-term improvements, which would result in a cohesive urban design for the Town of La Plata.

Building upon the historic features and character of the Town, the implementation plan emphasizes the need for shaping a livable, walkable and vibrant downtown. The plan gives special attention to opportunities for creating new street connections in and around downtown to enhance mobility; rebuilding streetscapes and sidewalks to enhance pedestrian convenience and comfort; creating site development opportunities for new office, retail and residential development; and providing adequate parking throughout the downtown.

The purpose of the design review process is to foster the development of high quality and innovative designs, which support the collective vision for the Town. The design guidelines are intended to aid property owners, developers and designers in understanding the Town's urban design expectations. The design review process brings people together to ensure that these expectations can be met for all proposed development within the Town.

These design guidelines apply only to new development, redevelopment and/or additions to existing buildings within the Central Business District (C-B) and Central Business Transition District (CBT). The principles and goals for design review should be applied to all planning and design for development, redevelopment, and/or additions to existing buildings within the area included in the Vision Plan.

Areas subject to design review within the Central Business and Central Business Transition Districts are identified on zoning maps by "CB" and by "CBT." Additional information on the design review process is available from the Town of La Plata, 305 Queen Anne Street, PO Box 2268, La Plata, MD 20646, (301) 934-8421, or on the Town's website at www.townoflaplata.org

Design Review in La Plata

The design review process is an important tool in the implementation of the Town's urban design goals. The Town requires design review for all areas and individual buildings within the Central Business, Central Business Transition, and the Commercial Highway Districts.

Design review is conducted by the Design Review Board, a panel of citizens appointed by the Town Council. All members serve as volunteers and represent specific interest and expertise in planning, design and development.

Design review considers many aspects of a given proposal, including siting of buildings, building size, shape and materials, location of parking, landscaping and signage. Design review ensures that new development, as well as alterations to existing buildings, maintain and enhance the integrity and quality of the Town. The review process encourages flexibility, while striving to ensure the aesthetic and functional compatibility of new development with the desired character and economic and social vitality that is articulated in the Vision Plan. During the design review process, a proposal is evaluated against the design guidelines, along with consideration of other development regulations that may influence the proposed project, including compliance with the International Building Code, Maryland State Fire Code, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. In the event of inconsistency or conflict with other development regulations, the stricter of the two requirements shall take precedence.

The review process may vary with the type, size, and location of the proposed project. Proposals are initially reviewed by Town staff and forwarded to the Design Review Board. The process generally takes two to six weeks, depending on the calendar and the complexity of the proposed project. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Design Review Board Staff Representative early in the planning and design of

a proposed project when concept plans for site and building development are being prepared. In addition, applicants are encouraged to notify owners of nearby properties and solicit input from individuals, organizations, and neighborhood associations, as appropriate.

Prior to applying for a building permit, an applicant seeking design review for a property within the Central Business District or Central Business Transition District must complete the following steps:

1. Complete and submit the Application for Design Review with supporting materials
2. Present the proposed project to the Design Review Board for review and evaluation
3. Receive approval from the Design Review Board
4. Present the proposed project to the Planning Commission for review and approval, if required

Refer to the Design Review Application for meeting dates, deadlines, plus a list and number of required supporting materials. The application is available on the Town's website.

Applicants will present their projects to the Design Review Board for review and interactive discussion of all relevant issues. Following project presentations, the Design Review Board will evaluate projects and render decisions for approval, approval with conditions, or disapproval. Applicants may receive final decisions on the day of the design review. Projects approved with conditions must be resubmitted to staff for review and recommendation to the Design Review Board. An additional meeting with the Design Review Board may be required for final review and approval.

Decisions of the Design Review Board may be appealed to the Town Board of Appeals in accordance with Town Code.

Goals for Community Design Review

The goals for design review are intended to preserve the Town's heritage, enhance its livability, and improve its design quality. La Plata's development history has been different from that of many other Southern Maryland towns. Its beginnings are not clearly rooted in the Colonial, Federal, or Georgian periods of architectural style. Rather, La Plata emerged as a town in the late 19th century as a railroad center in the midst of an agrarian economy. As such, its early architectural character was "typical of that popular in newly founded small western towns between the Civil War and the turn of the 20th century" (Wearmouth, 1988, 2001). In the Central Business District, this meant a preponderance of one-, two- and two-and-a-half story detached frame structures, many with gable ends facing the street.

Today, many new buildings, new additions, renovations and other alterations have left the Central Business District with an architectural style and character that is poorly defined and frequently lacks the quality of design and construction that typified the Town in its earlier days.

This lack of cohesive identity was compounded by the devastation of the Central Business District by the tornado of April 28, 2002. However, the redevelopment of the downtown that will occur as a result of the tornado provides a unique opportunity to rebuild according to the principles of the Vision Plan, encouraging urban design excellence throughout the public spaces and private properties that make up the heart of La Plata. The work of the Washington Architectural Foundation and the resulting report from the Emergency Urban Planning Charrettes illustrate many of the ideas and principles that can be incorporated into the rebuilding of La Plata.

The Vision Implementation Team expressed the preference that new development be based on the style of the late 19th and early 20th century examples that typify La Plata's historical development. These examples are recognized as the core for developing a pattern of identity upon which future development can be based. However, it is important to note that diversity and variety of building types have also characterized La Plata's historical development. Thus, a strong commitment to quality in urban design— a building's location, size, shape and relationship to its surroundings today—and a well-designed public streetscape should be more important than strict adherence to, or replication of, any single architectural style from the past.

The objectives for Design Review include the following:

1. To encourage better design and site planning that will enhance the character of the Town and ensure that new development and redevelopment fulfill the goals of the Vision Plan.
2. To provide flexibility in the application of design guidelines.
3. To improve communication and participation among developers, neighbors and the Town early in the design and siting of new development and redevelopment.

Using Design Guidelines in the Design Review Process

The following Design Guidelines lay out the criteria that should be met as part of the design review process. They inform property owners, developers, and the community as to what issues will be addressed during the design review process. The guidelines state broader concepts than typical development standards in order to provide flexibility to designers and property owners to encourage designs that are innovative but appropriate to their locations. Applicants should be prepared to explain how their design meets or satisfies each applicable guideline.

During the design review process, the Design Review Board must determine how the proposal meets each of the applicable design guidelines. Proposals that meet all applicable guidelines will be approved; proposals that do not meet the applicable guidelines will not be approved.

The Design Review Board may add conditions to their approval of a project or may ask an applicant to revise the design to address specific deficiencies in order to be approved.

Waiver of Individual Design Guidelines

The Town recognizes that some of the guidelines may not be applicable in all cases, depending on the size or nature of a proposed project. In some cases, individual guidelines may be waived during the design review process. For example, an applicable guideline may be waived when the proposed design better meets the goals of design review than would mere compliance.

If a waiver is considered, applicants should explain how the goals are better met in the proposed design. Allowing the waiver of one or more guidelines during the design review process reflects the Town's concern that the design guidelines not become a rigid set of requirements that stifle innovation or increase design and construction costs prohibitively.

Framework of the Guidelines

The Town of La Plata Community Design Guidelines implement the urban design principles contained in the Vision Plan for Greater La Plata and The Plan for the Future of Downtown La Plata. The Design Guidelines recognize and encourage the participation of private property owners and public servants in a collaborative and cooperative urban design partnership, which is essential to the realization of the intentions embodied in the Vision Plan.

Based on the Vision Plan, the Design Guidelines contain five key sections:

- Section A. Site Planning
- Section B. Building Design
- Section C. The Streetscape
- Section D. Amenities for the Public
- Section E. Vehicular Access & Parking

Using the Guidelines

Design guidelines are qualitative statements that address the desired character of a development or project. Rather than being quantitative requirements, the guidelines are intended to provide flexibility for property owners and their design professionals in achieving the goals of the Vision Plan, the Comprehensive Plan, and other key planning and development requirements.

Each design guideline has a title, a statement of intent, and guideline language, accompanied by diagrams and photographs which illustrate each guideline. The guideline language is adopted by ordinance and represents the approval criteria against which the Design Review Board will evaluate a project and render a decision. The examples shown should not be considered as the only possible design solutions. The captions and examples are not adopted and can be easily updated as new projects are built.

Section A: Site Planning

- A1 Buildings Along the Street
- A2 Corner Buildings
- A3 Sidewalk Activities
- A4 Lighting
- A5 Screening
- A6 Unifying Elements

Section B: Building Design

- B1 Transition Between Commercial and Residential Uses
- B2 Neighborhood Context Façade Treatment
- B3 Prominent Entrances
- B4 Façade Transparency
- B5 Blank Walls
- B6 The Alley or Rear Façade
- B7 Massing
- B8 Roof Form
- B9 Screening Rooftop Equipment
- B10 Building Materials

Section C: The Streetscape

- C1 Pedestrian Interaction
- C2 Human Scale
- C3 Active Building Façades
- C4 Weather Protection
- C5 Site Furnishings

Section D: Amenities for the Public

- D1 Open Space
- D2 Landscaping
- D3 Sense of Place
- D4 Signage
- D5 Personal Safety & Security

Section E: Vehicular Access & Parking

- E1 Curb Cut Impacts
- E2 Parking Lot Design
- E3 Integrating Parking Structures
- E4 Pedestrian Connections
- E5 Drive-through Lanes

A1 Buildings Along the Street

Intent:

To ensure that new development contributes to the character and liveliness of the public right-of-way and pedestrian space as the primary unifying elements of the Downtown.

Guideline:

1. Emphasize the sense of enclosure of street space, created by buildings, which defines the pedestrian space as an active, comfortable and safe place where people can stop and visit without conflicting with other areas.
2. Align new buildings adjacent to existing buildings to match the façade of the building which is closest to the street.
3. Design buildings to maximize the amount of frontage along the public right-of-way.
4. Utilize front setback areas to create small public plazas and landscaped areas for sitting, gathering and other outdoor activities.
5. Design and locate parking areas to minimize the separation of buildings from the street, as well as from each other (building-to-building) along the street.



A2 Corner Buildings

Intent:

To use distinctive buildings to create defined and active intersections that stimulate pedestrian interest, comfort and use throughout the downtown.

Guideline:

1. Use design elements such as varying building heights, large ground level windows, awnings and canopies, signs and visually prominent pedestrian entrances to highlight corner buildings. (See B3: Façade Treatment/Prominent Entrances.)
2. Locate sidewalk-level retail stores and businesses at building corners to connect areas of activity from one street to the next.



A3 Sidewalk Activities

Intent:

To ensure that there is a minimum clear, unobstructed walking route along sidewalks.

Guideline:

1. Promote or encourage temporary sidewalk sales activities in areas of sufficient width to accommodate special activities as well as smooth pedestrian flow; providing a minimum of 5' paved surface, free of obstructions.
2. Locate outdoor restaurant seating, planters, signs and other activities to leave a 5' minimum clear pathway free of obstructions.
3. Construct sidewalks to allow comfortable side-by-side walking, providing a minimum of 5' of paved surface.



A4 Lighting

Intent:

To ensure that site lighting contributes to the character and promotes the activities of the downtown. To provide a sense of security, assuring safe and comfortable walking along streets and through parking areas.

Guideline:

1. Use exterior lighting to highlight the building's architecture and open spaces.
2. Integrate exterior lighting and its structural components with the building's overall design. Illuminate walkways adjacent to street crosswalks and other areas of pedestrian/vehicular interaction.
3. Illuminate walkways adjacent to street crosswalks and other areas of pedestrian/vehicular interaction.
4. Provide adequate illumination to provide a sense of security in walking to parking areas.
5. Limit the height of lighting fixtures to 24 ft. for parking areas and 12-14 ft. for pedestrian walkways.
6. Avoid disruptive lighting that spills over onto adjacent properties and into nighttime skies.
7. Coordinate lighting fixtures on private property with public right-of-way lighting standards in the streetscape.
8. Recessed lighting fixtures should be used under canopies so the element is not visible.



A5 Screening

Intent:

To reduce the adverse visual impact of service, loading and trash storage areas.

Guideline:

1. Locate service areas for trash collection, loading docks, propane/oil tanks, and mechanical equipment away from the street front to the rear of buildings. Locate propane tanks underground, where feasible.
2. Locate the opening to the service area away from the sidewalk.
3. Screen from view all service, loading and trash collection areas by a combination of permanent walls, fencing and/or planting.
4. Coordinate the design and materials of all enclosures with the architectural design of the primary structure.
5. Eliminate the use of chain link fencing, barbed wire and razor ribbon.



A6 Unifying Elements

Intent:

To link existing buildings and open spaces with new development throughout the downtown.

Guideline:

1. Integrate existing unifying elements, e.g. curving brick walls, and/or develop new features to help unify and connect individual buildings and different areas.
2. Use the street as a unifying element through the use of special pavers, bollards, and outdoor spaces.
3. Link areas of downtown with similar elements, e.g. fencing design, outdoor lighting, awnings.
4. Coordinate private property elements such as lighting and furniture with elements of the public streetscape.



B1 Transition Between Commercial and Residential Uses

Intent:

To ensure compatibility and distinction between the more intensive uses in the downtown and the lower intensity uses of adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Guideline:

1. Design multi-story commercial buildings to include lower roof heights for portions that are close to single family residential neighborhoods with lower roof heights.
2. Include additional architectural treatments such as windows, prominent doorways and canopies on any side of a building visible from the ground level of an adjacent single family neighborhood.
3. Include residential uses above ground level commercial uses wherever feasible.
4. Screen all service areas in accordance with the recommendations under Section A5, "Screening."



B2 Neighborhood Context

Intent:

To ensure that infill and redevelopment are compatible with the context of adjacent or nearby buildings.

Guideline:

1. Develop an architectural concept and compose the major building elements to reinforce desirable features such as details and materials existing in the surrounding building context.
2. Arrange the building size, shape and materials in response to one or more of the following, if present:
 - A. Neighboring buildings that have employed distinctive and effective massing compositions.
 - B. A surrounding district or buildings of similar or consistent material or style.
 - C. An adjacent or nearby landmark, institution or noteworthy building.
3. New development may incorporate architectural elements that reinforce the historic character of existing buildings, including but not limited to
 - A. materials
 - B. window proportions
 - C. cornice or canopy lines
 - D. roof treatment
 - E. colors
4. No single architectural style is required. Reliance on or use of standardized “corporate” or “franchise” style is strongly discouraged.



B3 Façade Treatment: Prominent Entrances

Intent:

To promote pedestrian comfort, safety and orientation through building entrances that are inviting, logical, easily identifiable and accessible, and clearly visible from streets and sidewalks.

Guideline:

1. Orient buildings to present the primary façade toward the street frontage with the highest pedestrian activity, with the principal entrance in full view.
2. Distinguish the principal entry to the building through the use of special treatments which may include, but are not limited to, any of the following:
 - A. ornamentation
 - B. recessed entrance
 - C. protruding entrance
 - D. canopy or awning
3. Design entries and associated open spaces to avoid the creation of isolated areas and to maintain lines of sight into and out of the building and adjacent spaces.



B4 Façade Treatment: Façade Transparency

Intent:

To enliven the streetscape through visual and physical connections between activities inside and outside the building.

Guideline:

1. Articulate the street level façade to provide an engaging pedestrian experience through open arcades and shop fronts, multiple building entries, merchandising display windows, and windows that encourage pedestrians to peer into the building interior.
2. Include windows with clear glass allowing views into the interior on all ground floor facades that are visible from and fronting on an abutting street.
3. On commercial building facades that are visible from a major arterial or pedestrian street provide windows on the ground floor that allow views into the interior.
4. Design buildings for flexibility to accommodate changes in use over time and minimize renovation costs.



B5 Façade Treatment: Blank Walls**Intent:**

To provide active, attractive walls facing adjacent streets, sidewalks and residential neighborhoods.

Guideline:

1. Walls, or portions of walls, which have few entries or windows should receive special design treatment to increase pedestrian safety, comfort and interest.
2. Special treatments may include any of the following:
 - A. limited lengths of blank walls
 - B. Accent courses of a different color or texture
 - C. landscaped areas or raised planting beds
 - D. small setbacks, indentations, or projections to create rhythm
 - E. different textures, colors or materials to break up the surface
 - F. canopies, awnings, trellises
 - G. artwork, either freestanding or as murals
 - H. seating ledges or perches
 - I. special lighting



B6 The Alley or Rear Façade

Intent:

To increase pedestrian safety, comfort and interest throughout the downtown.

Guideline:

1. Enhance the facades and surfaces in and adjacent to alleys and parking areas to create access that is visible, safe, and welcoming for drivers and pedestrians.
2. Enliven and enhance entrances to alleys and parking areas by extending storefront detailing around the corner into the alleyway.
3. Install well-designed and highly visible signage that indicates parking availability (on building facades adjacent to access drives.)
4. Install effective lighting to enhance visibility and safety for pedestrians and drivers alike.
5. Screen all service areas in accordance with Section A5: Screening.



B7 Massing

Intent:

To create well-proportioned buildings with a coherent architectural concept that exhibits forms and features that reflect the functions contained within the building.

Guideline:

1. Reduce the apparent bulk of a building by providing a clearly delineated “base,” “middle,” and “top.”
2. Provide variety and interest in the design of the building façade through the use of rhythm, pattern and proportion as part of a coherent whole.
3. Include a variety of roof heights and forms to articulate different areas and uses.
4. Integrate the different building and design elements including, but not limited to construction materials, roofs, entrances, as well as minor details, to achieve a coherent composition.



B8 Roof Form

Intent:

To ensure that roof lines present a distinct profile and appearance for the building and enhance the character of the downtown.

Guideline:

1. Integrate roof function, shape, surface materials, and colors with the building's overall design.
2. On gabled roofs, provide a minimum slope of 6:12 and a maximum slope of 12:12, especially to highlight major entrances.
3. On flat or shed-roofed buildings, incorporate projecting cornices to create a prominent edge when viewed against the sky.
4. Articulate long, uninterrupted expanses of roof with special treatments such as dormers and turned gables.



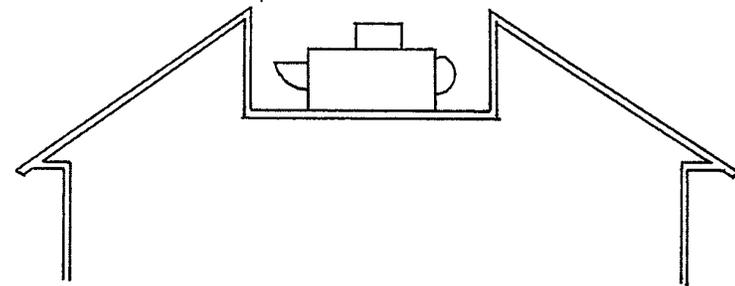
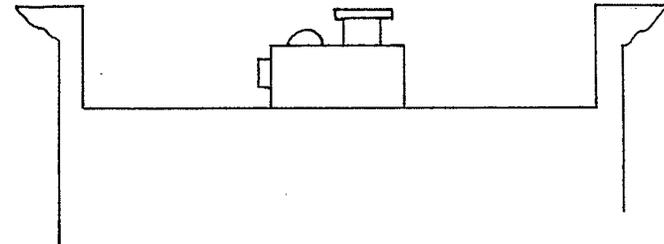
B9 Screening Rooftop Equipment

Intent:

To screen views of rooftop mechanical and communications equipment from the ground level of nearby streets and residential areas.

Guideline:

1. Screen mechanical and transmission equipment with extended parapet walls or other permanent roof forms that are integrated with the architecture of the building.
2. Painting mechanical equipment, erecting rooftop fences and attaching mansard-style roofs are not acceptable methods of screening.
3. Cell phone transmission equipment should be integrated into the design of the roofs.
4. Roof access ladder should be located inside the building or painted to match the façade.



City of Spokane Plan Commission

Rooftop screening for mechanical equipment should be incorporated as part of the overall building design. Top: Raised parapet screen. Bottom: Recessed well on pitched roof.

B10 Building Materials

Intent:

To encourage the use of high-quality, permanent and compatible materials that will upgrade the visual image of the downtown.

Guideline:

1. Utilize high quality, durable materials that reflect the Town's traditional main street character including, but not limited to brick, wood, and cast stone.
2. Limit the use of concrete block to side and rear walls which are not visible from the street and areas of public use. Treat concrete block in one or more of the following ways:
 - a. Textured surface such as split face or grooved.
 - b. Use of other masonry types such as brick or tile.
 - c. Use of decorative coursing or color.
3. Avoid highly tinted or mirrored glass as a major building element.
4. Use the natural color of materials such as brick, stone, and stained or painted wood. Reserve bright colors for trim or accents.
5. Consider the color of neighboring buildings when selecting colors for repainting or remodeling existing structures and for new structures.



C1 Pedestrian Interaction

Intent:

To create street level spaces and activities that are safe, comfortable, welcoming and open to the general public.

Guideline:

1. Provide spaces for street level uses that enhance main pedestrian links between areas and reinforce connections between retail and other business activities.
2. Promote use of the street front for friendly interaction through entrances, arcades, open space, seating areas, and product displays.
3. Recess portions of a building back from the sidewalk to create spaces for pedestrian-oriented activities such as vending, resting, sitting, or dining.
4. Develop pocket parks that incorporate amenities such as drinking fountains and sitting areas for patrons and the general public.



C2 Human Scale

Intent:

To ensure that building facades are composed of elements scaled to promote pedestrian comfort, safety and orientation.

Guideline:

1. Design architectural features, window patterns and material compositions to refer to the scale of human activities that take place both within and outside the building.
2. Incorporate building modulations and articulated structural bays to establish a human-scale framework.
3. Incorporate transparent windows at the street level to provide interest and activity along the sidewalk and, at night, to provide an inviting source of secondary lighting.



C3 Active Building Facades

Intent:

To ensure that building facades directly reinforce pedestrian activity at the sidewalk.

Guidelines:

1. Develop visual and physical connections into buildings' active interior spaces from adjacent sidewalks.
2. Use architectural elements such as atriums, grand entries and large ground-level windows to reveal important interior spaces and activities.
3. Integrate building setbacks with adjacent sidewalks to increase the space for potential public use.



C4 Weather Protection

Intent:

To ensure pedestrian comfort and safety along major pedestrian routes.

Guideline:

1. Develop integrated weather protection systems at the sidewalk level of buildings to mitigate the effects of heat, bright sun, rain, and wind, on pedestrians.
2. Incorporate overhead weather protection to help define the pedestrian space and reduce scale of large buildings.
3. Incorporate recessed lighting beneath canopies and awnings to create intimacy and promote a sense of security.



C5 Site Furnishings

Intent:

To create a more pedestrian friendly street through the use of site furnishings along the street and in open spaces available to the public.

Guidelines:

1. Include site furnishings such as benches, tables, bike racks and trash receptacles at building entrances, plazas, pocket parks and other open spaces.
2. Design or select site furnishings as an integral part of the architectural design of the primary structure(s).
3. Coordinate the selection of location, style and materials for site furnishings with the recommendations of the State Neighborhood Conservation Streetscape Project.



D1 Open Space

Intent:

To develop public open spaces that promote a visually pleasing, safe, and active environment for workers, residents and visitors.

Guideline:

1. Incorporate public open space in site planning in response to the unique conditions of the site or project.
2. Where a commercial or mixed-use building is set back from the sidewalk, pedestrian enhancements or special features such as furniture, sitting walls, decorative lighting and artwork, should be considered along the street frontage.
3. Develop pocket parks for the enjoyment of workers, residents and visitors.



D2 Landscaping

Intent:

To enhance the building, site and streetscape with generous landscaping, including special paving, planters, trellises, and site furniture, as well as living plant material.

Guideline:

1. Emphasize entries with special planting in conjunction with decorative paving and/or lighting.
2. Include special features such as courtyards or fountains.
3. Soften the building by screening blank walls, adding terracing, retaining walls, etc.
4. Incorporate a planter guard or low planter wall as part of the architecture or site design.
5. Select plants hardy in zone 7 for year-round interest, low maintenance and low water demand, utilizing species native to the area wherever possible.
6. Coordinate private property landscaping with public right-of-way trees and other plantings.
7. Incorporate Low Impact Development stormwater management techniques and practices in landscaped areas wherever possible.
8. Maintain all landscaping, buffering and screening in a healthy condition at all times. Dead or diseased plants should be removed and replaced.



D3 Sense of Place

Intent:

To create a distinct, attractive and memorable “sense of place” associated with buildings and the Downtown.

Guideline:

1. Provide special unifying elements such as logos, symbols or characters on the facades, within public open spaces, or on the sidewalk to create a special identity and/or focal points for the downtown.
2. Enliven intersections by treating the corner of the building or sidewalk area with public art and other elements that promote interaction and reinforce or create a distinctive character for the surrounding area.
3. Incorporate one or more of the following, as appropriate:
 - A. public art
 - B. street furniture such as seating kiosks, newspaper boxes
 - C. Distinctive landscaping
 - D. Kiosks
 - E. Public seating areas, especially near open spaces, bus stops, vending areas.
4. Emphasize the creation or promotion of themes.



D4 Signage

Intent:

To design signage appropriate to the scale and character of the building and the downtown, which meets the needs of both pedestrians and persons in vehicles. See Town Code Chapter 191, Article VII. Signs for a complete description of the sign permit process and regulations.

Guideline:

1. Design signage to accomplish the following:
 - A. Facilitate rapid orientation and wayfinding.
 - B. Add interest to the streetscape.
 - C. Reduce visual clutter.
 - D. Unify the project and the Downtown as a whole.
 - E. Enhance the appearance and safety of the downtown area.
 - F. Help define a “sense of place”.
 - G. Announce events and business activities.
2. Orient signs primarily to pedestrians through the use of projecting signs, window signs, logo signs, wall signs over entrances, sandwich board signs, and/or ground signs.
3. Design signs to fit the architectural character, proportions, design details and colors of the primary structure.
4. Use spotlights and indirect lighting to reduce excessive glare and visual domination of the streetscape.
5. Follow all current Town Code zoning requirements governing sign size and number.



D5 Personal Safety & Security

Intent:

To design buildings and sites to promote a feeling of personal safety and security.

Guideline:

1. Consider the following to help promote safety for the residents, workers, shoppers, and visitors:
 - A. Provide adequate lighting at a pedestrian or human scale.
 - B. Retain clear lines of sight into and out of entries and open spaces.
 - C. Use landscaping that maintains or enhances visibility.
 - D. Design parking areas to allow easy surveillance by maintaining clear lines of sight for those who park there, for pedestrians passing by and for occupants of nearby buildings.
 - E. Install clear directional signage.
 - F. Encourage “eyes on the street” through the placement of windows and street level activities.



E1 Curb Cut Impacts

Intent:

To minimize adverse impacts of curb cuts on 1) the safety and comfort of pedestrians, 2) opportunities for landscaping and street trees, 3) on-street parking, and 4) other uses that promote pedestrian interaction. See Town Code Chapters 170, 173 and 191.

Guideline:

1. Encourage access to parking areas by way of alleys or consolidated entry drives.
2. Minimize the number of curb cuts and locate them away from street intersections.
3. Minimize the width of the curb cut, driveway, and/or garage opening.
4. Locate and size curb cuts to facilitate smooth entrance onto and exit from thoroughfares.
5. Share driveways with adjacent property owners and parking lots.
6. Provide specialty paving where driveways cross the sidewalk.
7. Locate driveways to be visually less dominant.



E2 Parking Lot Design

Intent:

To provide safe, convenient access to and within parking lots without diminishing the quality of pedestrian walking or the visual quality of pedestrian walking or the visual quality of surrounding areas.

Guideline:

1. Limit the number of curb cut entrances and exits through shared access with adjoining property owners.
2. Minimize the amount of street frontage occupied by parking and driveways by locating parking lots to the side and rear of buildings.
3. Design parking wheel stop placement to respect pedestrian walkways and circulation paths.
4. Screen parking lots that are visible from the street through the use of planting beds, hedges, berms, fences and/or low walls.
5. Break up large paved areas with interior landscaping, including a variety of shade trees, shrubs, groundcovers and perennials for seasonal interest.
6. Incorporate landscaped bioretention areas, permeable paving materials, and other Low Impact Development practices wherever possible to reduce stormwater runoff.



E3 Integrating Parking Structures

Intent:

To minimize the visual and functional impacts of parking structures by integrating parking facilities with surrounding development.

Guideline:

1. Minimize the visibility of parking structures and vehicle entrances as seen from the surrounding streets through the use of topography, landscaping and decorative screens, trellises or grilles.
2. Visually integrate freestanding parking structures with adjacent buildings and streetscape.
3. Design the parking portion of a building to be architecturally compatible with the rest of the building and streetscape.
4. Incorporate pedestrian-oriented uses such as retail businesses at street level to reduce the visual impact of parking structures.
5. Arrange parking circulation and traffic flows to minimize the impact on safety and pedestrian comforts.



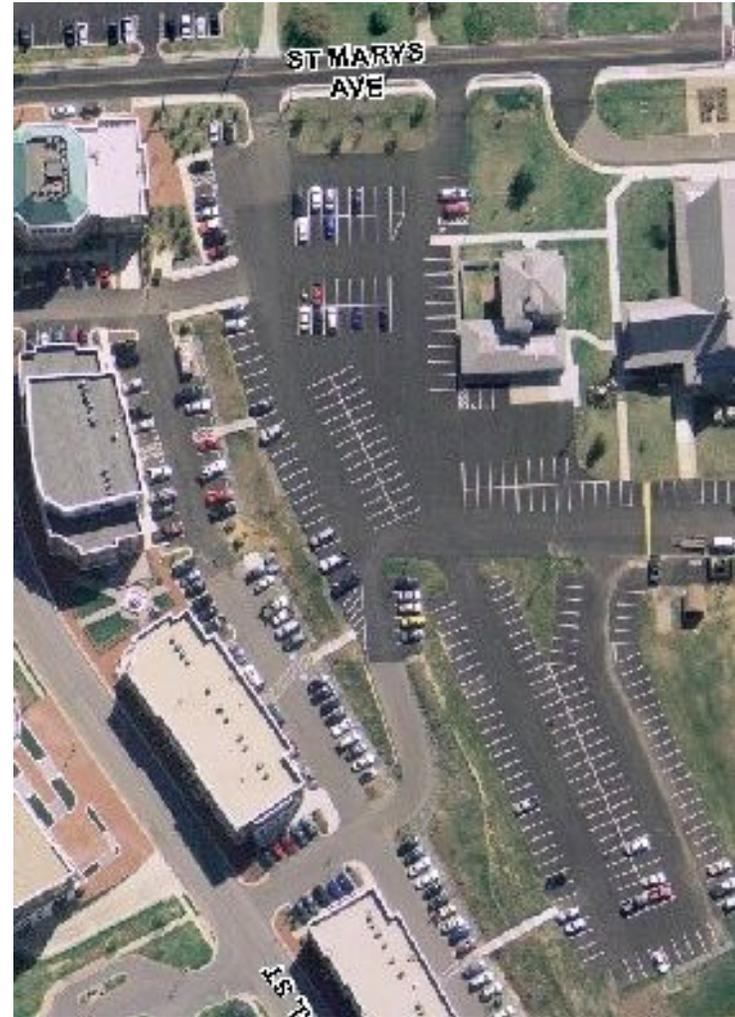
E4 Pedestrian Connections

Intent:

To create a network of safe, comfortable and attractive linkages for pedestrians.

Guideline:

1. Within parking lots containing more than 30 spaces, provide clearly defined pedestrian connections between the public right-of-way and building entrance, and between parking lots and building entrances.
2. Design pedestrian connections to be at least five feet wide and unobstructed by signs and utility poles.
3. Clearly define pedestrian connections by any of the following:
 - A. 6 inch vertical curb
 - B. Textured paving, including across vehicular lanes
 - C. A continuous landscaped area on at least one side of the walkway
4. Provide appropriate smooth surfaces and ramps for wheeled vehicles such as strollers, wheelchairs, and handcarts.



E5 Drive-through Lanes

Intent:

To ensure that the streetscape environment is lively, walkable and not overwhelmed by the presence of automobiles.

Guideline:

1. Discourage drive-in windows for all businesses within the downtown.
2. Locate access and stacking lanes serving drive-through businesses at the sides and rear of the building.
3. Minimize the number of curb cuts by coordinating drive-through circulation with parking circulation.



Design Review: A Selected Glossary

Alignment: The arrangement of objects, particularly buildings or building elements, in a straight line; frequently used to describe the relationship of buildings to a sidewalk, street edge or “build-to” line.

Amenity: Aesthetic or other feature of a development that increase its marketability or usability to the public.

Animated Sign: Any sign that uses movement or change of lighting to depict action or create a special effect or scene.

Architectural Features: Prominent or significant parts or elements of a building or structure.

Architectural Scale: The perceived height and bulk of a building relative to that of neighboring buildings, the street and the human body.

Articulation: The manner in which portions of a building form are expressed (materials, color, texture, pattern, modulation, etc.) and come together to define the structure.

Artwork: A device, element or feature whose primary purpose is to express, enhance or illustrate aesthetic quality, feeling, physical entity, ideal, local condition, historical or mythical happening, or cultural or social value. Examples of artwork include sculpture, bas-relief sculpture, mural, or unique specially crafted lighting, furniture, pavement, landscaping, or architectural treatment that is indented primarily, but not necessarily exclusively, for aesthetic purposes. Signs are not considered artwork.

Axonometric Drawing: Orthogonal projection using a 45-degree from horizontal and vertical to create a three-dimensional drawing of a structure with three surfaces showing and with horizontal and vertical distances drawn to scale, but diagonal and curved lines distorted.

Awning: Any non-rigid material, such as fabric or flexible plastic, that extends from the exterior wall of a building and is supported by or attached to a frame.

Balcony: An outdoor space built as an aboveground platform projecting from the wall of a building and enclosed by a parapet or railing.

Banner: Any sign of lightweight fabric or similar material that is permanently mounted to a pole or a building and enclosed by a parapet or railing.

Accent Course (also string course or horizontal course): A projecting horizontal band on the exterior of a building frequently marking the separation between floors or levels.

Bioretention: A water quality practice that utilizes landscaping and soils to treat urban stormwater runoff by collecting it in shallow depressions before filtering through a fabricated planting soil media.

Blank Walls: Walls subject to “blank wall” requirements meet the following criteria:

1. Any wall or portion of a wall that has a surface area of 400 square feet having a width of at least 10 feet without a window, door, or building modulation as defined below or other architectural feature.
2. Any ground level wall surface or section of a wall over 4 feet in height at ground level that is longer than 15 feet as measured horizontally without having a ground level window or door lying wholly or in part within the 15 foot section.

Block Face: The row of front facades, facing the street, for the length of one block.

Bollard: A thick post that may be used as a barrier to block the passage of vehicles and that may include lighting as an integrated component.

Buffer: A combination of physical space and vertical elements, such as plants, berms, fences, or walls, the purpose of which is to separate and screen incompatible land uses from each other.

Bufferyard: One of several specific combinations of minimum buildings setbacks, landscaped yards widths, and plant material requirements set forth for buffering incompatible land uses.

Design Review: A Selected Glossary

Building Marker: Any sign indicating the name of a building and date and incidental information about its construction, which is cut into a masonry surface or made of bronze or other permanent material.

Building Sign: Any sign attached to any part of a building, as contrasted to a freestanding sign.

Campus pattern: Distinctive, large parcel development featuring clustered buildings, unified landscaping, signage and compatibility of use.

Canopy: A structure constructed of rigid materials, including but not limited to, metal, wood, concrete, plastic or glass, which is attached to and supported by a building, or which is free-standing and supported by columns, poles or braces extended to the ground. Unlike a marquee, a canopy generally has very limited vertical surface area; and unlike an awning, a canopy is generally supported by vertical elements rising from the ground.

Canopy Sign: Any sign that is a part of or attached to an awning, canopy, or other fabric, plastic, or structural protective cover over a door, entrance, window, or outdoor service area. A marquee is not a canopy.

Changeable Copy Sign: A sign or portion thereof with characters, letters, or illustrations that can be changed or rearranged without altering the face or the surface of the sign. A sign on which the copy changes more than eight times per day shall be considered an animated sign.

Circulation: The movement or flow of people and/or vehicles from place to place.

Coherent: Orderly and logical, particularly with regard to the architectural relationships of a building to its individual parts, its site and context, and any other important elements.

Commercial Message: Any sign wording, logo, or other representation that, directly or indirectly, names, advertises, or calls attention to a business, product, service, or other commercial activity.

Compatibility: The size and character of a building element relative to other elements around it. For example, the size and proportion of windows in a building façade are usually related to one another, the spaces between them, and the scale of surrounding buildings.

Context: The characteristics of the buildings, streetscape, and landscape that support or surround a given building, site, or area such as predominance of period architecture or materials, wide sidewalks, continuous overhead weather protection, or consistent street trees.

Cornice: A molded and projecting horizontal feature that crowns a façade.

Course/Coursing: A continuous layer of building material, such as brick or tile, on a wall or roof of a building.

Courtyard: A landscaped space enclosed on a least three sides by a single structure.

Curb Cut: An area of street curb which is depressed to allow vehicular access to a driveway or parking lot.

Deciduous: A plant with foliage that is shed annually.

Deck: A roofless outdoor space built as an aboveground platform projecting from the wall of a building and connected by structural supports at grade or by the building structure.

Design Principle: A guiding concept as part of the overall project design development that reflects desirable characteristics of the urban environment, or responds to specific site/vicinity opportunities or constraints.

Design Review: A Selected Glossary

Durable and permanent building materials: Materials and construction methods of sufficient strength to last through years of wear and tear, inclement weather and multiple renovations, which ultimately contribute to an atmosphere of quality and continuity.

Evergreen: A plant with foliage that persists and remains green year-round.

Façade: Any portion of an exterior elevation of a building extending from the finish grade of the building to the top of the parapet wall or eaves, for the entire width of the building elevation.

Fenestration: The arrangement and design of windows and other openings on a building's façade.

Flag: Any fabric, banner, or bunting containing distinctive colors, patterns, or symbols, used as a symbol of a government, political subdivision, or other entity.

Freestanding Sign: Any sign supported by structures or supports that are placed on, or anchored in, the ground and that are independent from any building or other structure.

Frontage: The length of a property line along a street.

Gable: The upper, triangular portion of a façade, usually flanked by sloping roofs.

Gambrel Roof: A ridged roof having two slopes on each side, the lower slope having the steeper pitch. (See below.)

Gateway: A principal or ceremonial point of entrance into a district or neighborhood.

Grid: Two or more intersecting sets of regularly spaced parallel lines that generate a pattern of regularly spaced parts, such as a street grid.

Grocery Store: A retail establishment primarily selling food, as well as other convenience and household goods, which occupies a space of not less than four thousand square feet and not more than twenty-five thousand square feet.

Ground Mounted, or Monument Signs: Freestanding signs that generally have the entire bottom in contact with or in close proximity to the ground.

Highway Corridor: Anything that can be seen from, or has an impact on, the roadway. This encompasses the spatial features that lie between the edge of the right-of-way, the facades of buildings, and extending to a building's perimeter, rear yard areas, and beyond.

Human Scale: The perceived size of a building relative to a human being. A building is considered to have "good human scale" if there is an expression of human activity or use that indicates the building's size. For example, traditionally sized doors, windows, and balconies are elements that respond to the size of the human body, so these elements in a building indicate a building's overall size.

Incidental Sign: A sign, generally informational, that has a purpose secondary to the use of the zone lot on which it is located, such as "no parking," "entrance," "loading only," "telephone," and other similar directives.

Infill: The development of vacant, abandoned, passes over or underutilized land within built-up areas of existing communities, where infrastructure is already in place.

Infrastructure: The basic installations and facilities on which the continuance and growth of a community depend, such as roads, schools, transportation, communication, water and sewer systems.

Isometric Drawing: Similar to axonometric drawing but using 30 and 60 degree angles to project horizontal lines of a structure.

Design Review: A Selected Glossary

Large Retail Establishment: A retail establishment, or any combination of retail establishments in a single building, occupying more than twenty-five thousand gross square feet of floor area.

Lintel: A horizontal beam over an opening in a wall, either structural or decorative, such as often seen capping windows and door openings.

Logo/logo sign: A symbol or letter representing an entire word or words, e.g. the golden-arched “M” for McDonald’s.

Lot: Any piece or parcel of land or a portion of a subdivision, the boundaries of which have been established by some legal instrument of record, that is recognized and intended as a unit for the purpose of transfer of ownership.

Low Impact Development: An approach to stormwater management that combines hydrologically functional site design with pollution prevention measures to reduce the impacts of development on hydrology and water quality. Typically, stormwater is managed in small, cost-effective landscape features located on each lot rather than being conveyed and managed in large, costly pond facilities located at the bottom of drainage areas.

Mansard: A roof having two slopes on all four sides, with the lower slope almost vertical, and the upper almost horizontal.

Marquee: A shelter projecting over an entrance, frequently ornamental and of metal with or without glazing.

Marquee Sign: Any sign attached to, in any manner, or made a part of a marquee.

Massing: The three-dimensional bulk of a structure: height, width, and depth.

Modulation: A stepping back or projecting forward of sections of a structure’s façade within specified intervals of building width and depth, as a means of breaking up a structure’s apparent bulk.

Open Space: Land and/or water area with its surface open to the sky and predominantly undeveloped, which is set aside to serve the purposes of providing active or passive recreational opportunities, conserving valuable natural resources, and structuring urban development and form.

Ornamental Tree: A deciduous tree planted primarily for its ornamental value, or for screening. May be any size at maturity, but will tend to be smaller than a shade tree.

Parapet: A low, protective wall or railing along the edge of a roof, balcony, or similar structure.

Pattern: Objects arranged in a formal or regular manner where the arrangement is reproducible through building size and scale, architectural elements, materials, etc.

Pedestrian Orientation: The characteristics of an area where the location and access to buildings, types of uses permitted on the street level, and storefront design are based on the needs of persons on foot.

Pedestrian-Oriented Space: An area located outside of the public right-of-way, between the building and a street or along a pedestrian path, which promotes visual and pedestrian access onto the site and provides amenities and landscaping to enhance the public’s use of the space for passive activities such as resting, reading, picnicking, etc.

Pedestrian-Oriented Street: The designation of a street where pedestrians are given priority in the design and planned use of the street and where motorized vehicles are given secondary consideration if there is a conflict of use.

Design Review: A Selected Glossary

Pediment: A wide, low-pitched gable found in classical style buildings either at the top of facades or over window and door openings.

Pennant: Any lightweight plastic, fabric, or other material, whether or not containing a message of any kind, suspended from a rope, wire, or string, usually in series, designed to move in the wind.

Permanent Sign: A durable sign permanently mounted and anchored in the ground or on a wall.

Pervious Paving Materials: Paving materials such as open concrete block pavers, grasscrete, and some types of asphalt which allow rainfall to infiltrate the ground below.

Portable Sign: Any wheeled, trailered, or otherwise movable sign.

Porte-cochere: A roof or shelter for vehicles over a driveway outside an entrance doorway, sheltering those getting in or out of a vehicle.

Presentation Drawings: Drawings prepared to communicate the design character of the structure, usually prepared in color and including realistic representations of the building in its context, showing colors of building surfaces, shadows cast and people and landscaping. Three-dimensional sketches and projected or computer drawings may be included along with two dimensional floor plans, elevations and building section drawings.

Principal Building: The building in which is conducted the principal use of the zone lot on which it is located.

Projecting Sign: Any sign affixed to a building or wall in such a manner that its leading edge extends more than six inches beyond the surface of such building or wall.

Proportion: The balanced relationship of parts of a building, landscape, and structures to each other and to the whole.

Redevelopment: 1. Construction in previously developed areas which may include the demolition of existing structures and building new structures, or the substantial renovation of existing structures, often changing form and function. 2. The re-use of previously used, non-agricultural land. Redevelopment projects tend to be larger and more complex than infill projects.

Residential Sign: Any sign located in a district zoned for residential uses that contains no commercial message except advertising for goods or services legally offered on the premises where the sign is located, of offering such service at such location conforms with all requirements of the zoning ordinance.

Retail Establishment: An establishment in which sixty percent or more of the gross floor area is devoted to the sale or rental of goods or merchandise to the general public for personal or household consumption or to services incidental to the sale or rental of such goods or merchandise.

Reveal: Usually a line, scoring or joint in a wall or siding that exposes its depth and breaks up its mass.

Rhythm: Reference to the regular or harmonious recurrence of lines, shapes, forms or colors, incorporating the concept of repetition as a device to organize forms and spaces in architecture.

Roof Sign: Any sign erected and constructed wholly on and over the roof of a building, supported by the roof structure, and extending vertically above the highest portion of the roof.

Roof Sign, Integral: Any sign erected or constructed as an integral or essentially integral part of a normal roof structure of any design, such that no part of the sign extends vertically above the highest portion of the roof and such that no part of the sign is separated from the rest of the roof by a space of more than six inches.

Design Review: A Selected Glossary

Scale: The spatial relationship among structures along a street or block front, including height, bulk and yard relationships. The proportional relationship of the size of parts to one another and to the human figure.

Scale, Human: Used to describe the quality of a building that includes structural or architectural components of size and proportion that relate to the human form and/or that exhibits through its structural or architectural components the human functions contained within.

Screen/Screening: The treatment created with landscaping and/or structures to visually conceal an area or on-site utilitarian use that is considered unattractive.

Sense of Enclosure: A consistent series of building facades that create a defined street wall that focuses attention on the street's pedestrian activities. Successful enclosure creates an urban space for residents, shoppers, and workers. (Portland OR, Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines)

Sense of Place: The combined whole of distinctive natural and manmade features, as well as social and cultural traditions, that create an identifiable and definable character for an area. The term may be applied at any scale, from small pocket parks or neighborhoods to a region.

Setback: The required or actual placement of a building a specified distance away from a road, property line, or other structure.

Shade Tree: A deciduous (or rarely, an evergreen) tree planted primarily for its crown of foliage or overhead canopy.

Shrub: A woody plant, smaller than a tree, which consists of a number of small stems from the ground or small branches near the ground.

Sign: Any device, fixture, placard, or structure that uses any color, form, graphic, illumination, symbol, or writing to advertise, announce the purpose of, or identify the purpose of a person or entity, or to communicate information of any kind to the public.

Signage: Used to describe signs displayed and perceived collectively (as in a community) which are frequently coordinated through size, placement and graphic design.

Sight Visibility Triangle: The corner area of an intersection which is kept clear of vertical obstructions such as signage, fencing and landscaping in order to maintain clear lines of sight while making turns.

Site Plan: A detailed plan showing the proposed placement of structures, parking areas, open space, landscaping, and other development features, on a parcel of land.

Specimen Tree: A particularly impressive or unusual example of a species that due to its size, shape, age, or any other trait epitomizes the character of the species.

Street: A strip of land or way subject to vehicular traffic (as well as pedestrian traffic) that provides direct or indirect access to property, including, but not limited to, alleys, avenues, boulevards, courts, drives, highways, lanes, places, roads, terraces, trails, or other thoroughfares.

Streetscape: The visual character of a street as determined by elements such as structures, access, greenery, open space, view, etc. The scene as may be observed along a public street composed of natural and man-made components, including buildings, paving, planting, street furniture and miscellaneous structures.

Street Tree: A tree planted in close proximity to a street in order to provide canopy over the street, to give the street a sense of spatial definition and human scale, to provide shade, and soften the street environment.

Design Review: A Selected Glossary

Supermarket: A retail establishment primarily selling food, as well as other convenience and household goods, which occupies a space greater than twenty-five thousand square feet.

Suspended Sign: A sign that is suspended from the underside of a horizontal plane surface and is supported by such a surface.

Temporary Sign: Any sign that is used only temporarily and is not permanently mounted.

Transparency: A street level development standard that defines a requirement for clear or lightly tinted glass on the façade along an adjacent sidewalk or other walkway.

Tree: A large, woody plant having one or several self-supporting stems or trunks and numerous branches. May be classified as deciduous or evergreen.

Types of Signs: Ground-mounted or monument signs; pole signs; wall signs; roof signs; permanent signs; temporary; changeable copy (marquee) signs; awning and canopy signs; projecting signs; suspended signs; billboards; window and door signs; parked or abandoned vehicle signs; inflatable signs; roof signs; painted façade signs; inflatable signs, tethered balloons and blimps, beacons, flags or pennants.

Urban Boulevard: A multi-lane arterial street characterized by curb, gutter and sidewalks, on U.S. 301, particularly between MD 225/Hawthorne Road and Charles Street (MD 6). Travel lanes in each direction are separated by a wide median. Dual function as automobile and pedestrian circulation route.

Urban Form: The spatial arrangement of a particular environment, as defined by the connectivity of built mass and form, the natural environment, and the movement of person, goods and information within.

Vernacular: A building or complex of buildings that relate to, or are characteristic of a period, place or group; especially relating to or being the common building style of a period or place.

Wall Sign: Any sign attached parallel to, but within six inches of a wall, painted on the wall surface of, or erected and confined within the limits of an outside wall of any building or structure, which is supported by such wall or building, and which displays only on sign surface.

Window Sign: Any sign, picture, symbol, or combination thereof, designed to communicate information about an activity, business, commodity, event, sale, or service, that is placed inside a window or upon the window panes or glass and is visible from the exterior of the window.

Woodlands, Existing: Existing trees and shrubs of a number, size and type that approximately accomplish the same function as new plantings.

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