



# **CITY OF COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA**

## ***CITY CENTER DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES***

September 1, 1998

Amended Dec 15, 2020  
Per Ordinance 2020-100

prepared by

***LDR International, Inc.***  
9175 Guilford Road  
Columbia, MD 21046  
ph. 410.792.4360  
fax 301.498.5070

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	i
LIST OF FIGURES .....	v
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 BACKGROUND .....	1-1
1.2 STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS .....	1-1
1.2.1 Development Principles .....	1-1
1.2.2 Policy Challenges and Strategies .....	1-2
1.2.3 Physical Improvement Challenges and Strategies .....	1-2
1.3 RATIONALE FOR DESIGN/ DEVELOPMENT REVIEW .....	1-3
1.4 COMMUNITY OUTREACH .....	1-3
1.4.1 SCDDA Public Input Process .....	1-4
1.4.2 August 1997 Workshops .....	1-4
1.4.4 October 1997 Workshops .....	1-6
1.4.5 December 1997 Workshops .....	1-6
1.5 PREMISE OF THE CITY CENTER DESIGN/ DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES .....	1-6
1.6 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE GUIDELINES .....	1-6
1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT .....	1-7
<b>CHAPTER 2: CITY CENTER FRAMEWORK</b>	
2.1 INTRODUCTION .....	2-1
2.2 CITY CENTER CONTEXT .....	2-1
2.3 ACCESS AND CIRCULATION .....	2-3
2.4 STREETSCAPES, PARKS, AND OPEN SPACE .....	2-4
2.5 STREET CHARACTER AND HIERARCHY .....	2-5
2.5.1 Gateway Corridors/Streets .....	2-5
2.5.2 Urban Boulevards .....	2-7
2.5.3 Image Streets .....	2-7
2.5.4 Pedestrian Priority Streets .....	2-7
2.5.5 Retail/Commercial Streets .....	2-8
2.5.6 Residential and Service Streets .....	2-8
2.6 CITY CENTER NEIGHBORHOODS, DISTRICTS, AND ATTRACTIONS .....	2-9
2.6.1 Main Street/CBD .....	2-9
2.6.2 City Center East .....	2-9
2.6.3 The Vista .....	2-10
2.6.4 State Capitol .....	2-10
2.6.5 University of South Carolina .....	2-10
2.6.6 Arena District .....	2-10
2.6.7 South Vista .....	2-10
2.6.8 Canal District .....	2-10
2.6.9 Arsenal Hill .....	2-11
<b>CHAPTER 3: IMPLEMENTATION</b>	
3.1 INTRODUCTION .....	3-1
3.2 PROJECTS SUBJECT TO REVIEW .....	3-1
3.3 INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY .....	3-1

3.3.1	Design/Development Review Commission (Board of Architectural Review)	3-0
3.3.2	Design/Development Staff Support and Review	3-3
3.3.3	Design/Development Technical Advisory Committee	3-4
3.4	REVIEW PROCESS	3-5
3.4.1	Process Steps	3-6
3.4.2	Review Schedule/Involvement	3-10
3.4.3	Relationship of Design/Development Review to Other Project Review	3-10
3.5	RELATIONSHIP OF D/D REVIEW TO OTHER PROCESSES/ REGULATIONS	3-10
3.5.1	Comprehensive Plan	3-11
3.5.2	Zoning	3-11
3.5.3	Landmarks Commission	3-11
<del>3.5.4</del>	<del>Site Plan Review</del>	<del>3-12</del>
3.6	DESIGN/ DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES INCENTIVES	3-12

**CHAPTER 4: GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT**

4.1	CORRIDOR AND STREETSCAPE ANALYSIS	4-1
4.1.1	Primary "Gateways"	4-1
4.1.2	Secondary Gateways	4-2
4.1.3	Entrance Corridors	4-2
4.1.4	Corridor Guidelines	4-3
4.2	STREETSCAPE FRAMEWORK	4-4
4.2.1	Streetscape Improvements	4-4
4.2.2	Urban Gateways and Priority Intersections	4-9
4.3	PARKING FACILITY, LOCATION, LANDSCAPING, AND SCREENING	4-10
4.3.1	Structured Parking	4-10
4.3.2	Surface Parking	4-11
4.4	SERVICE AND LOADING AREAS	4-13
4.5	STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS	4-14
4.5.1	Roadway Elements	4-14
4.5.2	Streetscape Furniture	4-16
4.5.3	Utility Burial and Relocation	4-24
4.5.4	Signage and Graphic Identity	4-24
4.6	PUBLIC ART	4-25
4.7	MAINTENANCE OF CITY LANDSCAPE RESOURCES	4-26

**CHAPTER 5: GUIDELINES FOR PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT**

5.1	INTRODUCTION	5-1
5.2	ARCHITECTURAL STYLE OR THEME	5-1
5.3	BUILDING MASS AND ORGANIZATION	5-2
5.3.1	Building Heights	5-2
5.3.2	Facade Proportion and Rhythm	5-3
5.3.3	Proportion of Openings	5-4
5.3.4	Horizontal Rhythms/Alignment Of Architectural Element	5-4
5.3.5	Wall Articulation	5-4
5.3.6	Roofs and Upper Story Details	5-5
5.4	SITE PLANNING	5-7
5.4.1	Setbacks	5-7
5.4.2	Street Orientation	5-8
5.5	OPEN SPACES IN PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT	5-9
5.6	LANDSCAPING	5-9

5.7 THE STOREFRONT .....	5-10
5.7.1 Storefront Composition, Accessories, and Details .....	5-11
5.7.2 Exterior Walls/Materials .....	5-14
5.8 THE UPPER FACADE .....	5-15
5.8.1 Cornice and Fascia .....	5-17
5.8.2 Wall Materials .....	5-17
5.8.3 Windows .....	5-17
5.8.4 Piers .....	5-17
5.9 BUILDING ADDITIONS, RENOVATIONS & DEMOLITIONS .....	5-17
5.9.1 Preservation of Traditional Features and Decoration .....	5-18
5.9.2 Removal of Elements Inconsistent with Original Facade .....	5-18
5.9.3 Storefront Renovation .....	5-18
5.9.4 Window Replacement .....	5-19
5.9.5 Door Replacement .....	5-19
5.9.6 Awnings .....	5-19
5.9.7 Painting .....	5-20
5.9.8 Repair and Cleaning .....	5-20
5.9.9 Replacement Of Unavailable Components .....	5-20
5.9.10 Additions To Existing Structures .....	5-20
5.9.11 Demolitions .....	5-20
5.10 PARKING FACILITY, LOCATION, LANDSCAPING, AND SCREENING .....	5-21
5.10.1 Structured Parking .....	5-22
5.10.2 Surface Parking .....	5-23

**CHAPTER 6: SIGN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

6.1 INTRODUCTION .....	6-1
6.2 GENERAL GUIDELINES .....	6-1
6.2.1 Color .....	6-1
6.2.2 Materials .....	6-2
6.2.3 Sign Legibility .....	6-3
6.2.4 Sign Illumination .....	6-3
6.3 WALL SIGNS .....	6-4
6.4 PROJECTING SIGNS .....	6-5
6.5 WINDOW SIGNS .....	6-7
6.6 AWNING SIGNS .....	6-7
6.7 FIGURATIVE SIGNS .....	6-8

**CHAPTER 7: GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

7.1 DESIGN TERMS .....	7-1
7.2 ARCHITECTURAL AND PLANNING TERMS .....	7-3
7.3 PRESERVATION TERMS .....	7-6

**APPENDIX A: SECRETARY OF INTERIOR STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION .....** A-1



5.9.5	Door Replacement . . . . .	5-19
5.9.6	Awnings . . . . .	5-19
5.9.7	Painting . . . . .	5-20
5.9.8	Repair and Cleaning . . . . .	5-20
5.9.9	Replacement Of Unavailable Components . . . . .	5-20
5.9.10	Additions To Existing Structures . . . . .	5-20
5.9.11	Demolitions . . . . .	5-20

**CHAPTER 6: SIGN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

6.1	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	6-1
6.2	GENERAL GUIDELINES . . . . .	6-1
6.2.1	Color . . . . .	6-1
6.2.2	Materials . . . . .	6-2
6.2.3	Sign Legibility . . . . .	6-3
6.2.4	Sign Illumination . . . . .	6-3
6.3	WALL SIGNS . . . . .	6-4
6.4	PROJECTING SIGNS . . . . .	6-5
6.5	WINDOW SIGNS . . . . .	6-7
6.6	AWNING SIGNS . . . . .	6-7
6.7	FIGURATIVE SIGNS . . . . .	6-8
6.8	PARKING FACILITY, LOCATION, LANDSCAPING, AND SCREENING . . . . .	6-9
6.8.1	Structured Parking . . . . .	6-10
6.8.2	Surface Parking . . . . .	6-11

**CHAPTER 7: GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

7.1	DESIGN TERMS . . . . .	7-1
7.2	ARCHITECTURAL AND PLANNING TERMS . . . . .	7-3
7.3	PRESERVATION TERMS . . . . .	7-6

**APPENDIX A: SECRETARY OF INTERIOR STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION . . . . . A-1**

# LIST OF FIGURES

	<b>Appears on or After Page</b>
Figure 2-1 Street Hierarchy .....	2-6
Figure 2-2 City Center Districts .....	2-10
Figure 3-1 Design/Development Review Process .....	3-9

---

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

These *Guidelines* have been prepared as part of a larger strategic assessment effort that the City of Columbia initiated in early 1997. The overall purpose of the strategic assessment process is to identify and implement strategies to revitalize what has come to be known as “City Center.” Reflecting common usage in many European cities, as well as many American capital cities, the City Center label applies to the area bordered by the Congaree River on the west, Elmwood Avenue to the north, Pickens Street to east, and Blossom Street on the south. Through the years, parts or all of this area have been referred to variously as the Congaree Vista, Main Street, the Vista, the Central Business District (or CBD), and the Urban Core. Now, these areas are known collectively as City Center.

### 1.2 STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS

In early 1997, the City of Columbia initiated a strategic assessment process with the overall purpose of identifying and implementing strategies to revitalize Columbia’s City Center. This revitalization will continue to occur until well into the next century, and will be achieved only through a strong partnership between public and private interests. The strategic assessment process sets the foundation for the City’s ongoing commitment to that partnership.

The City’s initial effort in the strategic assessment process was the preparation of the *City Center Strategic Assessment Report*. This report, which culminated over six months of intensive work by a collaboration of the City Council, City staff, consultants, and representatives of the community, outlines a series of public investment commitments that establish the foundation for ongoing improvement of City Center. The report also includes a series of recommendations for strategic City action to effect positive change in the area. These *Guidelines*—aimed at improving the quality of development and design in City Center—are the first of two key initial efforts; the second will be an *Economic Development/City Center Master Plan* that will focus on essential future public investments to improving City Center. Together, these two efforts reflect a broad, collective vision of the Greater Columbia community and provide a basis for public and private decision-making and investment.

#### 1.2.1 Development Principles

As part of the Strategic assessment process, the City developed a series of principles to support the vision for City Center and to guide the actions related to the challenges and strategies. These principles, which were formally adopted by the City Council and the City Center Committee, are as follows:

- Promote residential development and a pedestrian-friendly environment
- Promote City Center as belonging to everyone
- Create a critical mass of activities, opportunities, and resources
- Leverage public investment
- Recognize City Center as an economic resource
- Establish linkages to surrounding districts and employment centers
- Continue creating high quality public environments
- Understand visitor/tourism development as an economic force
- Acknowledge housing as a priority and an essential ingredient for success
- Support mixed-use development throughout City Center
- Support neighborhood re-investment and vitality
- Develop criteria for success

### 1.2.2 Policy Challenges and Strategies

The *City Center Strategic Assessment Report* presents a series of 11 policy challenges and outlines a strategy for addressing each challenge. These challenges and strategies, which include preparation of these *Design/Development Guidelines*, are detailed in the *Strategic Assessment Report* and listed below:

- Establish a Housing Development Policy
- Establish City Center as a Focal Point for Public Investment
- Coordinate City Center Management
- Implement Development and Design Guidelines
- Create a "New Enhanced Personality and Image"
- Promote City Center Economic Development and Marketing
- Analyze Costs, Funding Sources and Economic Impact of City Center Investment
- Support Art Throughout the City
- Define Expectations for Various Domains
- Support a Regional Intermodal Transportation Network
- Establish Measures for Success

### 1.2.3 Physical Improvement Challenges and Strategies

Each of the policy challenges outlined above has physical improvement implications. Following is a list of the challenges and strategies related to physical improvements as presented in the *Strategic Assessment Report*.

- Adopt the Visitor Domain Concept
- Emphasizing Housing Development as an Important Ingredient of Success
- Encourage Commercial Development as an Important Ingredient of Success
- Promote Pedestrian-Friendly Improvements
- Support the Conference Center/Hotel and USC Arena Site Selection Process
- Promote City Center Attractions and Public Facilities

- Link CanalSide and the Three Rivers Greenway to City Center
- Establish City Center Support Services
- Develop and Implement a Parking Plan
- Expand City Center Trolley Route - "The Connection"

### 1.3 RATIONALE FOR DESIGN/ DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

Communities throughout the United States have incorporated some degree of design review into their land development processes. Such review is intended to bridge the gap between the rigid, quantitative dictates of zoning and the broader, qualitative objectives expressed in comprehensive planning reports. Design review relates to the overall appearance and functioning of communities and the buildings and spaces that define them, and design guidelines are the vehicle for expressing local preferences for that form—and function. Guidelines are written to work with other plans to establish clearly how a community should grow and change into the future. Chapter 3 of this report explains the relationship between the guidelines presented herein and the City's other development plans and review processes.

Everybody who has a stake in the way Columbia's City Center changes and grows is affected by these *Design/Development Guidelines*. These "stakeholders" span a broad range of interests, including the following:

- Citizens of the Community (Including Both Residents and Workers)
- Private Property Owners
- Business Owners
- Developers
- Public Agency Leaders
- Visitors
- Real Estate Professionals
- Architects
- Designers
- Building Contractors
- Community Organizations

Change is influenced by all of these stakeholders, and all—in turn—are affected by the change. Without direction, change can be chaotic and the results unsupported and sometimes undesirable. Conversely, change that occurs by design and with community support will be predictable and will gain community acceptance. These *Design/Development Guidelines* are, in part, the means by which the community expresses its vision for the future; they, in effect, are the investment guide that determines what benefits will accrue to the community.

### 1.4 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

One of the City's key objectives in undertaking the preparation of the *Design/Development Guidelines* was the productive engagement of the community in helping to shape the content of the *Guidelines*. This



objective reflects an ongoing commitment to ensuring open public participation in all of the City's planning efforts.

#### 1.4.1 SCDDA Public Input Process

Prior to initiation of the Design/Development Guidelines process, the City of Columbia, the Columbia Downtown Business Association, and the Columbia Development Corporation sponsored a Public Input Process that played an important role in prompting the City to prepare Design/Development Guidelines. That process—which was facilitated by the South Carolina Downtown Development Association (SCDDA) and a volunteer design team of 23 local architects, urban planners, landscape architects, and City staff—consisted of six days of public activities and meetings focused on making the “Urban Core of Columbia a unique and well-designed place for living, working, and playing.” The results were presented in a report that summarized the input received throughout the process, described a vision for the urban core, and outlined a series of recommendations for implementing achieving that vision. Among the implementation recommendations was the institution of a “Design Management Policy,” including design guidelines; that recommendation provided the impetus for preparing the *Design/Development Guidelines*.

#### 1.4.2 August 1997 Workshops

In the interest of achieving meaningful public participation, the work program for the *Guidelines* called for a series of public workshops. These workshops, which supplemented the outreach conducted in conjunction with the Strategic Assessment process, are described below.

The first set of workshops was held in August 1997, when LDR International—working with the City of Columbia City Council and City staff—conducted two workshops to initiate the public participation process for the *City Center Design/Development Guidelines*. The two workshops—identical in nature—were designed with two objectives in mind. The first was to inform the community generally about design/development guidelines by explaining their basic role and function in the planning and development process. The second, and more important, objective was to solicit input from the workshop participants concerning their perspectives on development and design in City Center. The City held two workshops, with the intent of providing opportunities for the participation of as many community representatives as possible, including private property owners, business owners, developers, public agency leaders, residents, and workers. The City was successful in attracting the participation of all of these segments of community, including several participants who spanned the categories (e.g., City Center property owner, business owner, and resident).

The August workshops also attracted many local design professionals, including members of the Columbia Design League, many of whom

also participated in the SCDDA public input process. These architects and urban designers also remained actively involved in the process of shaping the *Design/Development Guidelines* through subsequent outreach efforts, as well as through focus group participation.

The comments received at the two workshops were broad-ranging, reflecting the perspectives of a wide range of interests. Following is a summary, by topical category, of these comments.

**Diversity and Flexibility:** Among the most frequently commented-on issues in both sessions was the need to recognize the diversity of settings in the area defined as City Center. This diversity argued for retaining a maximum amount of flexibility in the guidelines, according to several of the workshop participants. The discussion of diversity focused on recognizing the unique circumstances of the various development settings in City Center. There was also a strong sentiment that the guidelines, while articulating some *unifying* qualities, should not promote design *uniformity*.

**Area/Neighborhood Focus:** On a note related to the issue of diversity, several of the workshop participants urged the City to clearly identify different areas within City Center. These participants pointed-out that different neighborhoods or areas serve different functions not only with respect to City Center, but also in relation to other areas of the city outside of City Center.

**Incentives:** Many of the workshop participants, while generally supporting the idea of guidelines, warned that the *Design/Development Guidelines* would not be successful unless the City identified and/or provided sufficient incentives for property owners and developers to comply with them.

**Educational Forum:** Several workshop participants felt the Guidelines process provided an excellent opportunity to educate the community about the benefits of sound design. In particular, the issue of the economic benefits of good development and design policies was stressed numerous times.

**Implementation Issues:** The issue of implementation of the Guidelines was very important to several of the workshop participants. The Guidelines were seen as an opportunity to begin improving coordination regarding comprehensive planning and development policies.

**City Center Vitality:** The workshops provided an opportunity to discuss issues relating to overall vitality of City Center. An important element of City Center vitality according to many of the participants is its attractiveness to visitors. The distinction between visitors and

tourists was emphasized; visitors can include area workers who stay after work to shop and recreate, residents of the region who come to City Center to do the same, and tourists who come to Columbia for a variety of reasons. There was consensus that the qualities that make a place pleasant to live in also make it an attractive place to visit.

These comments provided the basis for much of the work reflected in this report.

#### 1.4.4 October 1997 Workshops

In October 1997, the City sponsored another round of workshops to solicit direct advice from community stakeholders concerning the specific contents and application of the *Design/Development Guidelines*. These workshops were principally attended by stakeholders with very direct interest in the development process. The overriding messages delivered by these attendees was that the Guidelines should broadly-defined and that the process for administering them should be clear and fair.

#### 1.4.5 December 1997 Workshops

The City conducted a third set of workshops in December 1997 to initiate review of a *Working Draft Design/Development Guidelines Report* (dated December 2, 1997). Those workshops took the form of three public meetings over two days (December 10th and 11th). Based on those meetings, the City revised the *Working Draft Report* and met with several interest groups to solicit recommendations for further revision of the *Guidelines*.

### 1.5 PREMISE OF THE CITY CENTER DESIGN/ DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Columbia's City Center has a significant amount of developable vacant or essentially vacant land, as well as land and property that will be subject to conversion to other uses as the economy continues to evolve. These Guidelines establish high quality development and design as a priority as projects are proposed, reviewed, approved, and developed. This priority status is based on the fundamental premise that the economic vitality of City Center, as well Columbia as a whole, is inextricably tied to the quality of the built environment.

### 1.6 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE GUIDELINES

The purpose of these Guidelines is to guide the new construction, conversion, adaptive reuse, enhancement, and conservation of buildings and streetscapes within City Center. City Center constitutes the economic heart of the region as well as the most intensely urban part of Columbia. Distinguished by the height, massing, and the historic character of its architecture, this area is the dominant built area within Columbia. In fulfilling this purpose, the Guidelines will help the City progress toward addressing several important objectives. These objectives, which were developed in response to input from several different sources during the preparation of the *Guidelines*, are as follows:

- To reinforce and build upon Columbia's architectural and design assets.
- To create a high quality, pedestrian-friendly environment in City Center.
- To establish a shared public-private partnership in promoting and achieving high quality development and design in City Center.
- To create a development pattern that connects the different areas and elements within City Center, without promoting design uniformity.
- To reinvigorate City Center's existing residential neighborhoods and promote new residential development in City Center as a means of injecting around-the-clock life into the area.
- To establish better coordination among the City's development review and regulation processes and to more clearly communicate the City's development policies for City Center.
- To establish a development review process within City Center that is fair, predictable, and based upon objective criteria.
- To convey the interests of the community of Columbia through well-written, clearly understood development and design guidelines.

## 1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

This report is organized into seven chapters, only three of which (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) actually include prescriptive guidelines. The balance of the report presents descriptive information that establishes the background for understanding and interpreting the prescriptive guidelines.





---

## CHAPTER 2

# CITY CENTER FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The “City Center Framework” was first articulated in the *Strategic Assessment Report* (see discussion in Chapter 1 of this report). It expresses the City’s longer-term development vision for City Center and establishes the context for making development decisions and reviewing project proposals. The Framework was developed following careful analysis and an in-depth study of the entire City Center, including review of previous planning studies, adopted plans, and reports and a focused inventory of City Center’s development pattern, including existing assets and future development proposals. The Framework provides flexible guidance that responds to the development principles, challenges, and strategies identified in the *Strategic Assessment Report*. A key aspect of the Framework is its implementation-orientation; it calls for periodic reevaluation and assessment of development accomplishments—and corresponding adjustments to reflect market changes and emerging opportunities.

City Center Framework is explained in a series of separate sections that follow:

- City Center Context and Design Concepts
- Access and Circulation
- Parks and Open Space
- Street Character and Hierarchy
- City Center Neighborhoods, Districts, and Attractions

### 2.2 CITY CENTER CONTEXT

Bounded by Elmwood Avenue to the north, Pickens Street to the east, Blossom Street to the south, and the Congaree River to the west, City Center covers nearly 1,400 acres. Originally designed by John Guignard in 1787, Columbia is one of the first “planned cities” in the United States. The city’s street grid is the most powerful element of City Center’s urban form, creating the skeletal framework that underlies the distinctly urban development pattern. This grid—and its resulting parallel lines and right angles—defines City Center’s many subareas or districts, as described below.

City Center encompasses a broad variety of uses, including the State Capitol, the University of South Carolina, and Central Business District. It is a major regional employment center, with over 60,000 workers. The area also includes over 150 acres of vacant or underutilized land with the capacity to accommodate between of 2.5 and 3.5 million square feet of retail, office, and

industrial development; most of this potential is located west of Assembly Street.

City Center's grid streets were laid out in an unusually generous scale, with blocks and rights-of-way of large dimensions. The typical city block in most mid-sized American cities is 250 to 300 feet square (between 1.4 and 2.1 acres), with 60- to 80-foot rights-of-way; the blocks in City Center, however, are 420-foot square (about 4.1 acres), with 100- to 150-foot rights-of-way. These dimensions are more than adequate for contemporary and infill development, making it possible to place buildings along all four-block fronts where entire blocks are still available with sufficient space on the block interiors to accommodate all parking and service needs.

The network of rail lines, which influenced the city's development pattern throughout much of its history, has been reduced to a single two-track corridor that travels below-grade through the area. The new below-grade configuration eliminated some of the traffic problems and much of the visual intrusion associated with the rail lines; it has also created physical divisions in City Center that serve to define neighborhoods and districts.

Columbia's historic downtown commercial area, centered on Gervais Street, is an important image-setting asset for much of City Center. Streetscape improvements, redevelopment projects, and successful retail, office, and restaurant uses along Gervais Street are creating a synergy that is spreading to other parts of the city. An important aspect of this recent development is that it has capitalized on the historic architecture and development pattern to reinforce the human scale and urban character of the area, thereby setting the tone for new development in other parts of City Center.

The Gervais Street precedent will serve to encourage the type of livable, vibrant urban neighborhood development that will result in the revitalization of the entire City Center. The Arsenal Hill neighborhood, Governor's Hill, CanalSide, and Parkside Apartments provide a basis for residential development that are beginning to make City Center a new and desired address in the city. The State Museum, the Koger Performing Arts Center, the Columbia Museum of Art, and the proposed Arena and Conference Center, along with the historic district, serve to further focus cultural activity. Adjacent university and government functions will expand into office development opportunities.

City Center has significant open space assets in Finlay Park, Memorial Park, Canal Park, Columbia Canal, and Congaree

Riverfront land. In addition, the wide rights-of-way will permit development of the most important element of an urban neighborhood's open space, its streetscape.

Columbia City Center is comprised of a number of districts, with interconnected residential, business, and entertainment uses that complement each other and create a dynamic city center.

## 2.3 ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

City Center is served by a number of major arterials and expressways. Interstate 126 brings traffic in from the northwest and I-277 brings traffic from the north and east. Blossom Street, Gervais Street, Taylor/Hampton Streets, and Elmwood Avenue are east-west arterials, and Huger, Assembly and Sumter and Bull Streets are north-south routes. Assembly Street and Gervais Street bisect City Center and are the predominant image streets. Taylor and Hampton Streets are coupled one-way streets that converge into Jarvis Klapman Boulevard at CanalSide and continue over the Congaree River to West Columbia.

Assembly Street, Taylor Street, and Hampton Street are the least pedestrian-friendly in City Center. Assembly Street (Route 48) is a ten-lane, north-south route that creates a pedestrian barrier between Main Street and the Vista. Parking along the center median can be dangerous, crossing the expansive right-of-way can be daunting, and the "concrete" environment is neither aesthetically-pleasant or pedestrian-friendly.

Similar to Assembly Street, both Taylor and Hampton Streets are six lanes wide. The width of the traffic lanes and speed of vehicles, especially traveling west down Taylor Street, make the streets intimidating for pedestrians. Realigning and extending curbs, decreasing lane widths, and adding medians, or even returning the streets to two-way traffic could make these streets more comfortable for pedestrians.

The grid roadway network in City Center accommodates existing traffic volumes and is expected to be adequate for near-term future demands, albeit with increasing congestion. It has sufficiently wide rights-of-way so that any further road widening is unnecessary. Most City Center streets have adequate room for the necessary traffic and parking lanes, as well as generous sidewalks and streetscape zones. Many City Center streets, however, have either very narrow sidewalks or none at all. On such streets, it may be possible to reduce the width of the existing roadbed to permit new or widened sidewalks; this would have the effect of diminishing the apparent dominance of the automobile and increasing the prominence of pedestrian-oriented street features.

While accommodation of pedestrian needs should be an important feature of any City Center circulation improvements, the City should also consider the needs of cyclists. City Center's relatively flat topography and Columbia's mild climate suit the area well for bicycling. In planning for and designing future roadway improvements, the City should therefore address the needs of bike commuters and recreational cyclists of all types. In doing so, it will be particularly important to coordinate access with planned riverfront development and recreational trails.

## **2.4 STREETSAPES, PARKS, AND OPEN SPACE**

The streetscape is the most important component of City Center's open space system. Memorable cities have great streets, and these streets are the organizing elements for pedestrian activity, architecture, traffic, and social interaction. With City Center's wide rights-of-way, Columbia has the opportunity to create tree-lined urban streets that will link existing and future development.

With the exception of Gervais Street, all of City Center's streets need streetscape improvements: paving, curbs, sidewalks, and, most importantly, street trees. While this will require a major investment of public and private funds and resources, it is absolutely necessary for the creation of the kind of environment that will attract private investment. Streetscape improvements are perhaps the most visible evidence of the City's many investments in the City Center; they also provide the most tangible benefit to the private property owner. Without the unifying fabric of an attractive, high-quality streetscape, the image of a livable urban neighborhoods and a high-value setting for business will be difficult to accomplish.

While City Center's streets and streetscape improvements are vital aspects of the urban open space framework, the existing parks (Finlay, Memorial, and Canal) are equally important. In addition, City Center's urban plazas, particularly the Museum Plaza on Main Street, create active civic open space in the heart of City Center.

The Historic Columbia Canal and the Congaree River, with the proposed Three Rivers Greenway, will provide an accessible river recreation system and new catalyst for river-related housing. The Greenway initiative will also act as a vehicle to focus redevelopment and investment along the western edge of City Center. This effort, along with CanalSide, the State Museum, City Docks, and Bicentennial Park, and their open space and streetscape linkages to the east will begin to provide important access to recreational activities for the residents of Columbia.

To strengthen the emerging network open space and parks in City Center, the City will need to reinforce new east-west corridors or image streets through the northern and southern areas of City Center. In particular, Laurel and Greene Streets should be improved and enhanced to create stronger linkages from the CBD and USC through Arsenal Hill and South Vista to the Columbia Canal, Three Rivers Greenway, and Bicentennial Park.

## 2.5 STREET CHARACTER AND HIERARCHY

Columbia's City Center is defined by a series of streets with varying scale and character based on their design, function, and predominant uses and activities. They can be categorized into a level of street hierarchy that recognizes these qualities. This hierarchical approach does not follow a standard roadway classification system; it instead focuses on vehicular and pedestrian movement and scale of proposed improvements. The hierarchy includes the following categories:

- Gateway Corridors/Streets
- Urban Boulevards
- Image Streets
- Pedestrian Priority Streets
- Retail/Commercial Streets
- Residential Streets
- Service Streets

Table 2-1 lists the City Center streets that fall into each category and Figure 2-1 [Street Hierarchy] shows their location within City Center, while the following paragraphs explain the categories.

### 2.5.1 Gateway Corridors/Streets

Gateway/Corridor Streets are those streets that carry the largest volume of traffic and set an image of Columbia's City Center for those entering in automobiles. These streets are the city's formal "front door" and will be the premier "address" streets. Development and streetscape treatment along these streets should project an image of the highest quality, since they will be interpreted as indicators of the character of the entire City Center.

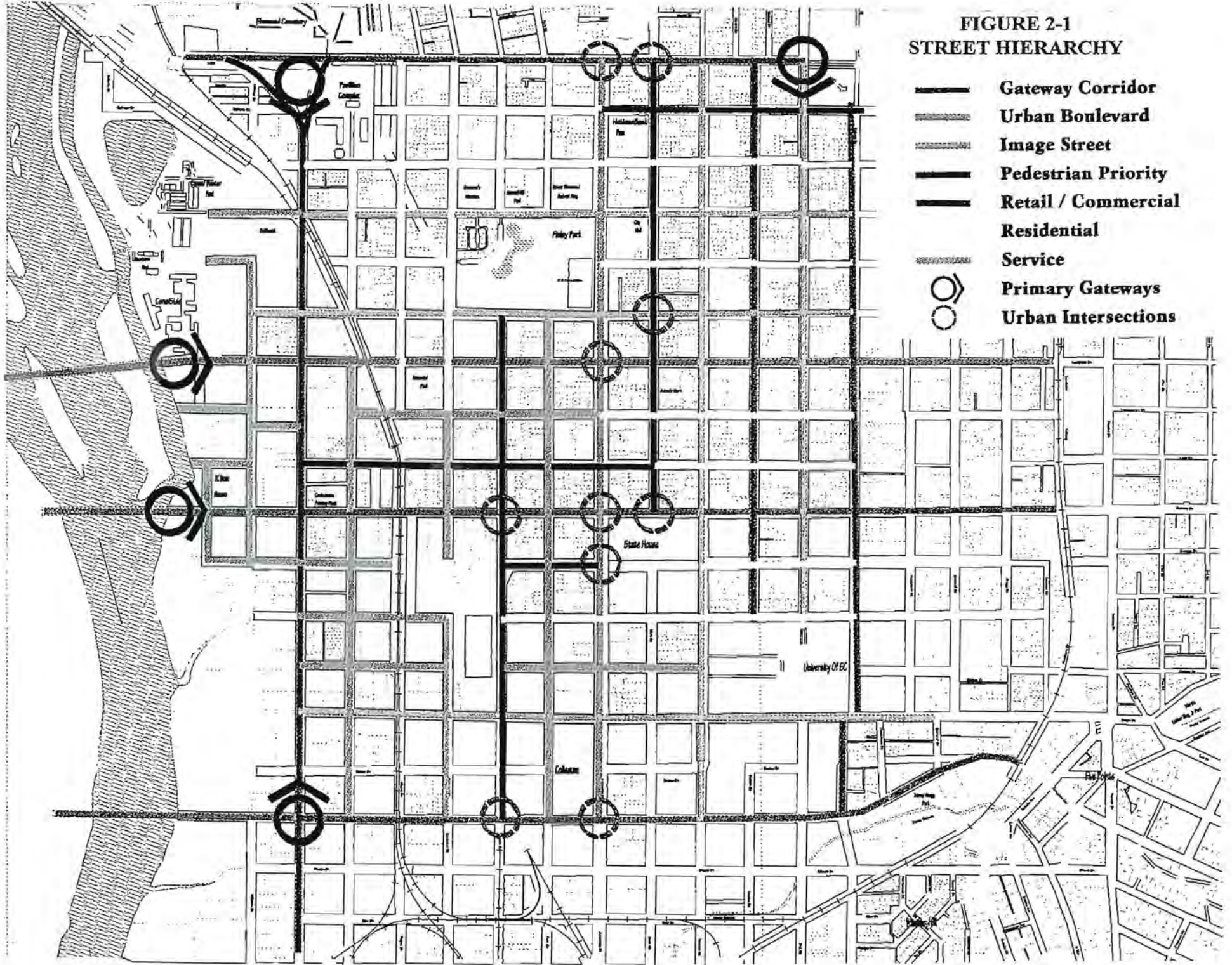
Elmwood Avenue and Hampton Street are City Center's main gateway corridor streets. These two streets are important elements in the regional transportation network and carry heavy traffic. As development occurs, the most important action along these streets will be prevention of uses that will have a negative impact on City Center's image. There are likely to be great pressures for suburban "strip"-type development along these corridors; the City should discourage this type of development. The City must review any proposed new uses along these streets with the goal of enhancing the long-term development and enhancement of these important gateway streets.



**TABLE 2-1  
STREET HIERARCHY CATEGORIES AND CITY CENTER STREETS**

Category	City Center Streets
Gateway Corridor	Elmwood Hampton Gervais Blossom Main Street Bull Street
Urban Boulevards	Assembly
Image Streets	Sumter Bull Laurel Taylor Green Main Garvais Lincoln Washington
Pedestrian Priority	Main Lady Lincoln Senate
Retail/Commercial Streets	Calhoun (East of Assembly) Marion Pickens Huger
Residential	Calhoun (west of Assembly) Blanding (east of Assembly) Park (north of Laurel) Lincoln (north of Laurel) Gadsden (north of Washington) Wayne (north of Washington) Pulaski (north of Taylor) Senate (east of Assembly) Pendleton (east of Assembly) Lady (east of Main) Washington (east of Assembly)
Service	Senate (west of Railroad) Pendleton (west of Gasden) College (west of Sumter) Devine (west of Park) Pulaski (south of Hampton) Park (south of Laurel)

**FIGURE 2-1  
STREET HIERARCHY**





Gervais Street is the one street in the district with a consistent development edge and an historic character. The street is also a major entrance to downtown; the corridor accommodates over 40,000 vehicle-trips per day, so many City Center visitors gain their first impressions of City Center from Gervais Street. With successful renovation and re-use of historic structures already underway, and recent streetscape enhancements, Gervais Street is the "pace-setter" for the entire City Center. Gervais Street's physical assets human scale, interesting architecture, unified setbacks provide a reference point for shaping the physical character of other areas/districts within City Center.

The northern end of Main Street, at the intersection with Elmwood Avenue, also serves as a key gateway to City Center. This intersection is particularly important because it serves a dual function as both an east-west entry and a north-south entry.

### 2.5.2 Urban Boulevards

The primary function of Urban Boulevards is to effectively move vehicles through urban environments. Historically, grand boulevards have had main through lanes sometimes separated by a median and service lanes separated by a tree lined median. These streets typically function as "traffic" arterials and often have only minor pedestrian activity associated with them.

Assembly Street is City Center's only urban boulevard. With its ten lanes of traffic and a primary central north-south linkage from Elmwood Avenue to the State Fairgrounds, its prominence is paramount and treating it as less of a barrier is vitally important. The City should consider improving pedestrian crossings and cross linkages, narrowing curb widths or adding curb extensions, and removing some on-street parking along the central median. Assembly Street's most critical needs include a unified development edge, adherence to a building setback/footprint guideline to foster development of strong blockfaces, and streetscape improvements including a widened, tree-lined median.

### 2.5.3 Image Streets

Image streets include those streets that have an important transportation function and also have "high visibility" based on their location and adjacent fronting uses. Major uses on these streets include corporate offices, public buildings and institutions, and commercial and retail uses. These streets typically have a higher amount of pedestrian activity than urban boulevards. City Center's image streets include Sumter, Bull, Taylor, Laurel, and Greene Streets, as well as part of Main Street.

### 2.5.4 Pedestrian Priority Streets

Columbia's City Center pedestrian priority streets provide the major pedestrian linkages for the downtown community and activity centers. The character of these streets will build on the

existing "sense of place" of each area. In the overall design and in the detail of each element, these streets should be the finest pedestrian environment that Columbia can offer. These streets also relate to the "visitors domain" defined to concentrate critical mass and leverage investment into the core of City Center. New or renovated development along these corridors should contribute to the synergy of these important pedestrian spaces. City Center's pedestrian priority streets are Main, Lady, Lincoln, and Senate Streets.

#### **2.5.5 Retail/Commercial Streets**

These streets function as key retail and business streets and have a high level of pedestrian activity, whether along the street or from a service/commercial automobile perspective (i.e., drive-up, "suburban" uses). Included in this category are Calhoun Street, Pickens Street, Marion Street, and Huger Street.

While Huger Street falls into this category by virtue of its function as an important commercial street, it differs qualitatively from the other retail/commercial streets in City Center. Its north-south link to Interstate 126 and the volume of traffic it handles have resulted in the development of a different mix of uses along its frontage than other City Center streets. Most importantly, the Huger Street corridor has a significant presence of auto-oriented heavy commercial and industrial uses, which do not rely on—and are not conducive to—pedestrian traffic.

#### **2.5.6 Residential and Service Streets**

Residential and service streets carry the lowest volume of traffic and typically have the smallest scale cross-section. These streets do not share the strategic locations of the other City Center streets, but the quality of their environment is nonetheless important to surrounding development. All streets within City Center should be planned to eventually receive streetscape improvements to achieve the overall impression of a cohesive, desirable place to live and invest. The recommended treatment for these residential and service streets should be simple and easy to maintain, yet should create a comfortable, sophisticated setting that will hallmark the entire City Center.

Residential streets are primarily fronted by residential uses or a combination of residential and neighborhood/professional business uses. Appropriate urban setbacks should be maintained and public/private community open spaces are encouraged. Neighborhood plazas and parks should be located adjacent to or visible from these streets. This category includes those streets in the northern and eastern areas of City Center, including Wayne, Gadsden, Lincoln, Park, Calhoun, Richland, Blanding, Washington, Lady, Senate, and Pendleton Streets.

Service streets are typically dominated by surface or structured parking areas and a mixture of business uses. Streets that fall into this category are located in the western and southern areas of City Center and include: Washington, Pulaski, Gist, Williams, Senate, Pendleton, College, and Devine Streets.

## 2.6 CITY CENTER NEIGHBORHOODS, DISTRICTS, AND ATTRACTIONS

Columbia's City Center is made up of a number of distinctive neighborhoods, subareas, and districts. While the edges of these areas are relatively soft, they are characterized by predominant use patterns or development qualities. While street names are used here to indicate approximate boundaries, districts with similar uses or development types generally straddle streets, with transitions occurring at the mid-block.

Figure 2-2 [City Center Districts] shows City Center's 10 major subareas or districts. While each has predominant uses, complementary (mixed) uses should occur—and are encouraged. Because they are written to cover the entire City Center, the Guidelines in this report are overarching and broad in nature, without focused directions for the City Center subareas described here. Given the unique identity, character, and function of these subareas, the City may wish to prepare more specific, focused guidelines for these and other appropriate areas in the future.

The areas shown in Figure 2-2 and described below were derived based on their existing development pattern, proposed future uses, road networks, traffic circulation, and proximity to existing uses in City Center.

### 2.6.1 Main Street/CBD

As the spine of City Center, Main Street and its surrounding business district are the region's most concentrated employment center, with over 80,000 employees working in the area. It also is home to scattered commercial, retail, restaurant, and residential uses.

### 2.6.2 City Center East

Extending from Sumter Street east to Pickens Street, this area is a mix of uses predominated by businesses and commercial uses. The northern and eastern parts of this district, with their historic fabric of residential-scale buildings, date back to their past as Columbia's closest "in-town" neighborhoods. Many of the formerly-residential structures in these areas have been converted to businesses, professional offices, and commercial uses. The southern and western parts of City Center East are dominated by large institutional uses, including hospitals and churches.

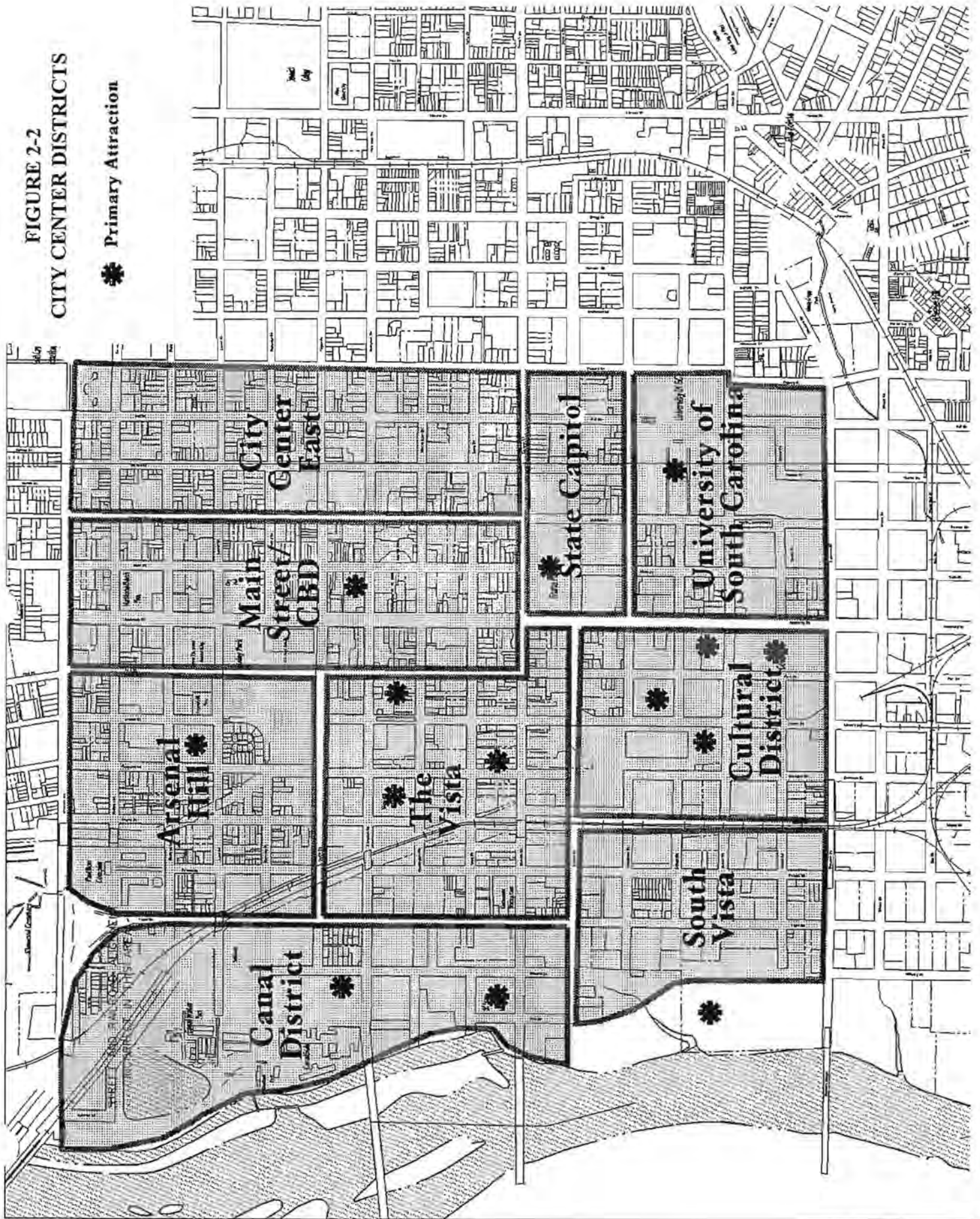
The wide range of uses and development scales within City Center East make it the most difficult City Center district to address, from both design and use perspectives.



- 2.6.3 The Vista** This district, part of which is defined as a historic preservation district and protection area, contains a unique mix of traditional/historic building stock and cultural, entertainment, and retail uses. Extending from Senate Street north to Hampton/Taylor Streets, it has substantial potential for future development, including additional cultural, arts/entertainment uses and live/work, loft conversion uses, housing, and retail development.
- 2.6.4 State Capitol** This district is dominated by the State Capitol, government offices, and institutional uses. Like the CBD, it is one of the primary contributing activity generators and is centrally situated between the University of South Carolina and Main Street/CBD.
- 2.6.5 University of South Carolina** Home to the Fighting Gamecocks and a student population of almost 26,000, the University of South Carolina campus anchors the southeast region of City Center and ties the Vista and Five Points neighborhoods together. Overlapping uses in the Arena District also tie the University to the Vista via the Koger Center and USC Music School, the existing Coliseum, and the proposed USC arena. Dominated by university and institutional uses, this district expands east beyond Pickens Street and south to the State Fairgrounds. University growth in the future will extend beyond these areas as residential housing and recreational demands necessitate.
- 2.6.6 Arena District** This area is currently composed of a mix of uses, including the South Carolina Department of Transportation headquarters, SMI Owens Steel Company, motels/commercial, the Koger Performing Arts Center, and the USC Coliseum. The proposed USC Arena and Midlands Regional Conference Center will also be developed within this district and be complemented by future uses such as hotels, offices, housing, and entertainment.
- 2.6.7 South Vista** Bisected by Huger Street, South Vista contains a variety of commercial, industrial, and office uses, as well as significant development opportunities. The Huger Street corridor should continue to attract commercial/business ventures, while frontage along Bicentennial Park and blocks eastward may attract residential, loft-conversion, and other mixed-use developments.
- 2.6.8 Canal District** Anchored by the South Carolina State Museum and adjacent to the Historic Columbia Canal, this district is the western gateway to City Center. Bisected by the newly-revived Gervais Street with views of the Capitol dome, it also is the riverfront gateway to the Historic Columbia Canal, Congaree River, and various elements of the proposed Three Rivers Greenway project. Parts of the area are dominated by land extensive uses such as Kline Iron and Steel and the SCG&E Bus Barn. The Canal District has the potential to

**FIGURE 2-2**  
**CITY CENTER DISTRICTS**

☼ Primary Attraction



contain other area attractions, recreational amenities, and residential/commercial uses.

The Three Rivers Greenway project and proposed Bicentennial Park will be catalytic links from Granby Park at the south, north past the City's waterworks, and west across the Congaree up the Saluda River.

The northern part of the Canal District consists of CanalSide, the Central Correctional Institute, and the Canal Water Plant. According to current plans, residential uses will eventually predominate this area and will be complemented with commercial/retail activities along Huger Street, within the CanalSide project, and potentially along the Canal.

#### **2.6.9 Arsenal Hill**

The Pavilion and Governor's Hill are residential anchors to this district which contains a mixture of uses including commercial and offices. Home to the Governor's Mansion and adjacent to Finlay Park, this area is presently one of the strongest City Center residential neighborhoods. A mixture of other residential densities are needed to complement those existing developments and create diversity of future City Center housing opportunities.



---

## CHAPTER 3 IMPLEMENTATION

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In order for the *Design/Development Guidelines* to accomplish the objectives outlined in Chapter 1 of this report, the process of implementing and administering the *Guidelines* must be fair and consistent. The keys to this fairness and consistency is a clear, easily-understood process for reviewing projects for compliance with the *Guidelines* that does not place an extraordinary burden on property owners and developers. In placing this chapter before the detailed directives contained in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, the City recognizes the primary importance of the implementation process. This chapter outlines an institutional and procedural framework that will lead to successful implementation of the substantive guidelines.

### 3.2 PROJECTS SUBJECT TO REVIEW

The following types of projects will be subject to review for compliance with the *Design/Development Guidelines*:

1. Building permit applicants within City Center
2. Projects at any location concerned with designated historic structures (Landmarks Guidelines will also apply)
3. Projects at any location within design preservation (DP) districts (Landmark Guidelines will also apply)

Projects not affecting the exterior appearance of an existing structure will not be subject to review.

The area of application (City Center) will be indicated in the City's *Zoning Ordinance* as the Design/Development Overlay (D/DO). As described in Section 3.4 of this report, however, the extent and rigor of the review will differ depending on the nature of the project. For instance, some smaller or non-controversial projects may be covered by staff-level review, with appeals to the formal review body; the projects are designated as "simple" projects. Generally, new construction projects of 50,000 square feet or larger will be subjected to board review, as well as expansions, additions, and external renovations exceeding \$500,000 in value; these projects are designated as "complex" projects.

### 3.3 INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

The review of projects for compliance with the *Guidelines* will be the responsibility of a combination of City staff and appointed officials. The following paragraphs describe a new institutional framework for implementation of the *Guidelines*. This includes a clear delineation of responsibilities and authority among City staff and appointed officials.



### 3.3.1 Design/Development Review Commission (Board of Architectural Review)

South Carolina State Law enables local governments to create a board of architectural review or similar body (e.g., historic district board, landmarks commission, design review board) through their zoning ordinances. Such bodies are set-up as administrative mechanisms for carrying-out special zoning provisions for specific areas. State law permits these bodies to include up to ten (10) members. Columbia has set aside five (5) seats for the following:

- An architect registered in the State of South Carolina
- A lawyer admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of South Carolina
- An architectural historian
- A city planner
- A real estate developer or licensed real estate broker

In Columbia, the Landmarks Commission has operated according to this enabling legislation, focusing on five areas of the city with an emphasis on historical and architectural preservation. The current Landmarks Commission has nine City Council-appointed volunteer members, matching the prescribed profile described above. Each member of the Commission is appointed to a three-year term, with a maximum of two consecutive terms.

The *South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994* mandated that local governments in South Carolina institute a number of changes in local planning practices. The Act stipulated that local governments bring their plans, ordinances, and practices into conformance with the provisions of the Act by May 1999. In Columbia, this would include reauthorizing the Landmarks Commission as the board of architectural review, as described in the Act.

The *1994 Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act* provides an excellent opportunity for the City of Columbia to refocus on the issue of design review. In particular, it allows the City the opportunity to establish a new framework for consideration of design issues, rather than simply reauthorizing the Landmarks Commission as currently constituted. The City should seize this opportunity and create a new "Design/Development Review Commission," or "D/DRC."

In creating a new Design/Development Review Commission, the City would replace the Landmarks Commission with a similar, yet new, body that would have the authority to review projects for compliance with the *Design/Development Guidelines*, as well as the existing Landmarks Regulations. In essence, the new Design/Development Review Commission would thus wear two hats, leaving the the City with only one appointed body with the authority and responsibility to consider historical and architectural design issues.



While the combination of functional responsibilities would result in a workload greater than that of the current Landmarks Commission and would require a broader focus, it would also minimize administrative duplication. This is particularly the case in areas of City Center that are designated as Landmark Districts, Architectural Conservation Districts, Historical Commercial Districts, or Preservation Areas, and thus would be subject to review for compliance with these *Guidelines* and the guidelines governing development activity in designated historic districts.

As noted above, the Design/Development Review Commission would be established by the same enabling authority (Section 6-29-870 [A] of the South Carolina Code of Laws) as the Landmarks Commission. Establishment of the new body would, however, provide the opportunity to create a commission with a membership profile that is more focused on the type of issues covered in the *Design/Development Guidelines*. The addition of an architect with historic preservation experience as a sixth mandatory seat would help achieve this objective. The remaining three seats—assuming a nine-member commission—would be appointed by the City Council based on experience and/or education related to design and development. Ideally, these seats would be filled by individuals with one or more of the following qualifications:

- Historic Preservationist
- Engineer in the Design/Construction field
- Landscape Architect
- Banker/Finance Professional
- Property Owner within City Center
- Design Professional (other than an architect)
- Building Contractor

Perhaps the greatest benefit of creating a new Design/Development Review Commission is that it will give the City an opportunity to make a “fresh start” in considering design-related development issues. This will be particularly beneficial because the City will be able to reconcile the institutional framework with new procedures (see discussion of Review Process below).

### 3.3.2 Design/Development Staff Support and Review

The role of staff is another important element of effective administration of the Guidelines. To ensure the smooth implementation of the Guidelines, the City must assign staff directly-responsible for administering the Design/Development Review process and staff to support the process.

The City staff person or agency responsible for administering the process should have technical training related to the provisions of the

Guidelines. Currently, the office of the Zoning Administrator is charged with these responsibilities as they relate to the Landmarks Commission. While this office does have staff expertise related to architectural history, the primary function of the office is to interpret and implement the Zoning Ordinance and to support the Zoning Board of Adjustments. Given the prominence of design as a strategic issue in City Center, the City should elevate the staff prominence by appointing or hiring a staff member to be solely responsible for issues related to implementation of the *Design/Development Guidelines*; for instance, the City could establish a “City Center Urban Designer” position and hire someone with specific training and experience in design review. The position should be supported by sufficient technical and administrative support staff to ensure that the Design/Development Review function gets off to a good start. Also, the City’s Historic Preservationist should be part of this office since all Landmarks review will be handled through the D/DR process.

The issue of staffing City Center Design/Development Review activities raises some important organizational questions, most important of which relates to where the new staff would reside in the City’s overall organization. While the purpose of this report is not to recommend larger organizational changes, the City should be careful to establish a place in the organization that allows for substantial autonomy and that is free from potential conflicts.

In addition to the D/DR staff, applicants with especially complex projects may be assigned a Development Coordinator to assist with the Design/Development Review process. The Coordinator will assist the applicant to insure that all City processes are clearly understood; to make sure that meetings with appropriate City staff, boards, and commissions are scheduled; and to ensure that the applicant is “walked-through” the process of project review in a timely fashion. Coordinators will be assigned based on the location of the project application, as described below under the description of the D/DTAC.

**3.3.3 Design/Development  
Technical Advisory  
Committee**

In addition to assigning a single City agency with primary responsibility for coordinating project review, the City should also identify a Design/Development Technical Advisory Committee (D/DTAC) to support the efforts of the primarily-responsible staff. The D/DTAC should be composed of City staff representatives with particular interest in design and development within City Center. Because the nature of project applications submitted to the City will vary significantly, the membership of the D/DTAC should vary to match the particular application. The committee should be drawn from the following three groups, with participation in project review as indicated:

**Group A:** This is the core technical group whose comments—by virtue of their job descriptions—will be considered essential input to D/DR staff. Their attendance and/or advice and consent on all issues brought before the D/DTAC and D/DRC will be mandatory, and attendance at Pre-Application meetings may be requested. Group A membership will consist of representatives of the following:

- Planning Division
- Zoning Division
- Inspections Department
- Utilities and Engineering Department
- Fire Department

**Group B:** This group will consist of primary advisors for projects within City Center, as determined by geography. Every project application submitted to the D/DRC will fall under the geographic jurisdiction of one of the following members' constituencies. Depending on the location of the project, these members will also serve as designated Development Coordinators. In this capacity, these members will serve as the liaison between the applicant and the City for all development approval-related processes. For each project, the Development Coordinator will come from one of the following:

- Economic Development Department
- Columbia Development Corporation (CDC)
- Columbia Downtown Business Association (CDBA)

**Group C:** These advisors will be drawn from the City's public service departments on an as-needed basis. Group A may include representatives of the following City departments:

- Public Services Department (Traffic)
- Public Services Department (Forestry and Beautification)
- Police Department

The D/DTAC should participate routinely in the review process as outlined below, with representation assigned by Department/Division Heads. In particular the Committee should provide technical advice to Design/Development Review staff in formulating recommendations and/or approving projects. The D/DTAC would not necessarily have to meet as a group, although such meetings could be beneficial, particularly with larger, more complex projects.

### 3.4 REVIEW PROCESS

As indicated above, the process of reviewing projects for compliance with the provisions of the *Guidelines* must be well-defined and fair. It is in the City's interest to define a process that maximizes opportunities for dialogue between project proponents and the City; the process should be cooperative, not adversarial. This section

outlines a series of steps that would allow for the effective review of projects for compliance with the *Guidelines*, without constraining market activity with a cumbersome process.

### 3.4.1 Process Steps

This section outlines a six-step process for considering development applications within City Center. The steps outlined below do not include specific time frames for completion; it is the City's intent, however, that it take no longer than 30 days to act on an application (i.e., from preliminary application [Step 2] through approval or denial [Step 5]). The total time to process an application will vary depending on a variety of factors, including legal noticing requirements and the timing of application submittal. Under any circumstances, timely processing will require the active involvement of both City staff and the project applicants and/or their representatives.

#### ***Step 1: Pre-Application Review/Meeting***

The first step in the process—prior to formal submittal of a project application—should be a voluntary meeting between City representatives and the project proponent, at the request of the project proponent. The purpose of this “pre-application” meeting is to start the process off on the right foot by sharing information concerning the nature of the project (from the proponent) and the nature of the process (from the City). The meeting should provide an opportunity to open communications and establish a framework for problem-solving throughout project consideration.

To facilitate pre-application review, the City should clearly identify an initial point of contact within the new Design/Development Review staff for any discussion of potentially-affected projects, and all communication should be coordinated through that contact. This procedure should be consistent, and everyone—including other City representatives—should direct inquiries and refer calls to the designated contact person.

As a result of the pre-application review and meeting, both City staff and the prospective project proponent should gain a clear understanding of how the process will unfold and who will be responsible for producing what—and when.

#### ***Step 2: Preparation and Submittal of Preliminary Application***

Based on the pre-application meeting (if there is one), the project proponent should submit a preliminary application to the City that describes the proposed project in detail. The purpose of the preliminary application is to establish the basis for formal dialogue and negotiation between the City and the applicant. The City should formally acknowledge receipt of the preliminary application and

schedule a meeting with the project proponent. For very simple projects, this preliminary application may be sufficient for project approval; in such cases, the applicant would not have to complete Steps 3 and 4, as described below.

### ***Step 3: Preliminary Staff Review/Meeting***

As noted above, the City's Design/Development staff should meet with the project applicant to review the proposal and provide feedback. Prior to this meeting, the appropriate members of the D/DTAC will have been provided an opportunity to review the preliminary application and provide written comments to Design/Development staff. For complex projects, it may be beneficial for appropriate members of the D/DTAC to participate in the review meeting, but such involvement would not be mandatory.

This meeting is important because it sets the tone for negotiation and subsequent communications. City staff should provide the proponent with a brief review of the preliminary application, perhaps in the form of a predefined compliance check list. If necessary, staff should also advise the project proponent on how to bring the project into compliance with the provisions of the *Guidelines*, preferably as non-binding written recommendations.

A secondary, but important, role of this meeting should be to provide the prospective applicant with information about the relationship of the *Design Guidelines* requirements to other City requirements that may be imposed in conjunction with the project (i.e., engineering, building inspection, fire marshal).

### ***Step 4: Submittal of Formal Application***

Based on the preliminary staff review, the project applicant should revise the preliminary application to respond to staff and D/DTAC concerns, and submit a formal application. Submittal of the formal application will trigger the formal City review and evaluation process. As noted above, some small, simple projects may bypass this step, relying instead on the preliminary application submitted in Step 2.

### ***Step 5: Formal City Review of Application***

Upon receipt of the application, the City would initiate formal review, which should be coordinated through the Design/Development staff. This review will focus exclusively on project compliance with the provisions of the *Guidelines*. Depending on the size or complexity of the project, formal City review may initially be handled entirely by Design/Development Review staff—with input from the D/DTAC, or it may involve formal public review by the D/DRC.

**Simple Projects:** For smaller and/or less complex projects, Design/Development Review staff, with the input of the D/DTAC, will have the authority to grant certificates of compliance with the *Guidelines*. Such authority will generally be limited to development projects that are under 50,000 square feet in size or for expansions, additions, or external renovation for which the value is less than \$500,000.

**Complex Projects:** Projects that exceed the thresholds described above, projects judged too complex for other reasons according to Design/Development Review staff, and demolition applications must be subjected to D/DRC public review. For projects that must go to the D/DRC, Design/Development Review staff will work with the D/DTAC to prepare a staff report for the D/DRC. This report, which the D/DRC should receive at least one week prior to the meeting at which the project will be heard, should include a recommendation for D/DRC action.

The D/DRC will then meet to consider the application and take one of two actions:

- Affirm the staff recommendation, and either deny or issue a certificate of design compliance.
- Dissent from the staff recommendation and either deny or issue a certificate of design compliance.

Immediately following the determination of the D/DRC, staff will notify—in writing—the applicant of the outcome, with an explanation if warranted.

### ***Step 6: Appeal of Decision***

Any party at interest may appeal an issuance or denial of a certificate of design compliance within 30 days following the determination. In the case of decisions of the the Design/Development Review staff, the appeal will be made to the D/DRC, while appeals of D/DRC determinations must be filed with the Circuit Court.

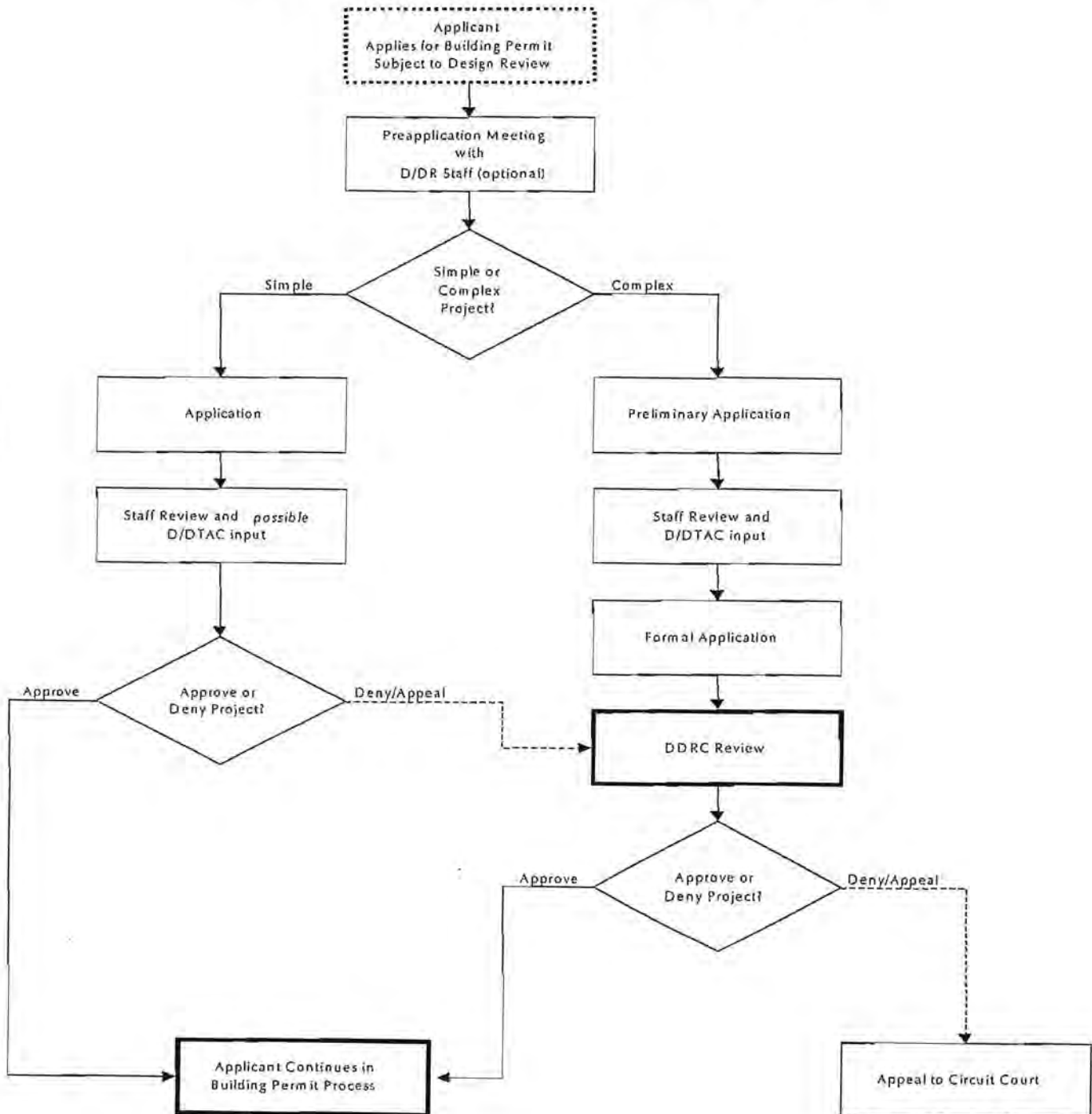
Appeals of Design/Development Review staff decisions will be heard according to a process similar to that of original D/DRC review. D/DR staff will place the item on the agenda of a D/DRC meeting and shall prepare a staff report summarizing the findings underlying the D/DR staff decision. The D/DRC shall consider the project application along with the staff report. The D/DRC will then uphold or overturn the staff decision, either granting or denying issuance of a certificate of design compliance, with or without additional conditions.



The final determinations of the D/DRC are appealable only to the Circuit Court, and not the City Council or Planning Commission. Any party at interest must file such an appeal within 30 days of the date of the action appealed.

Figure 3-1 [Design/Development Review Process] depicts the six-step Design/Development Review process graphically.

**FIGURE 3-1: DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS**



**3.4.2 Review Schedule/Involvement**

The process outlined in the steps described above is designed to provide for a streamlined review process that allows for the minimum time necessary to review a project for compliance with the *Design/Development Guidelines*. Ultimately, the time allotted for each step will balance the needs of all parties involved in that step, with the intent of minimizing time while maximizing input. Very simply, sufficient time should be set-aside to allow staff to prepare a thorough and fair analysis, while providing applicants with enough time to prepare and present materials related to their projects. As indicated earlier in this report, however, the total time for the City to act on a project application (Steps 2 through 5) should not exceed 30 days. Table 3-1 summarizes the sequence of steps and the parties involved in each step.

**TABLE 3-1  
DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS  
INVOLVEMENT IN STEPS**

Process Step	Applicant	D/DR Staff	D/DTAC	D/DRC	Court
Step 1: Pre-Application Review/Meeting					
Step 2: Preparation and Submittal of Preliminary Application					
Step 3: Preliminary Staff Review/Meeting					
Step 4: Submittal of Formal Application					
Step 5: Formal City Review of Application					
Simple Project					
Complex Project					
Step 6: Appeal of Decision*					
D/DR Staff Decision					
D/DRC Decision					

\*Appeal may be filed by any party with an interest in the project

**3.4.3 Relationship of Design/Development Review to Other Project Review**

Depending on their complexity and location, projects within City Center seeking City approval may have to go through several review processes (e.g., zoning permit approval, site plan review, building permit approval). To the extent possible the Design/Development Review process described above should be synchronized with these other processes; where possible, similar substantive review steps should run concurrently. In certain instances, however, design compliance may be issued prior to other approvals.

**3.5 RELATIONSHIP OF DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW TO OTHER PROCESSES/REGULATIONS**

As suggested above, these *Design/Development Guidelines* are only one aspect of the planning and development review and permitting process; there are several other planning processes that the City oversees. One of the clear messages that the City received through its public participation process for the *Guidelines* was that the land use development process in Columbia has been and continues to be chaotic. There seems to be little certainty within the processes that affect development in City Center and little coordination among those processes. This section describes the

relationship of the Guidelines to the existing processes, indicating how the various processes need and need not recognize the implications of the Guidelines.

### 3.5.1 Comprehensive Plan

The City of Columbia's *Comprehensive Plan* establishes an overall vision for the entire city and specifies goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures necessary to achieve the vision. This includes prescribing land use types and densities for the entire city. The City is currently in the process of updating its *Comprehensive Plan* as well as developing a *City Center Master Plan*. Both should be completed by early 1999. The City anticipates that those aspects of the *Comprehensive Plan* and *City Center Master Plan* that address City Center will draw upon the findings of the *Design/Development Guidelines* preparation process, as well as the strategic planning process.

### 3.5.2 Zoning

The City's Zoning Ordinance and Zoning map implement the *Comprehensive Plan* and *City Center Master Plan* by specifying the details—through maps and text—necessary to realize the general policy directions of the *Comprehensive Plan*. Zoning is intended to ensure that development fits-in with existing and future needs of the community while promoting public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, prosperity, and the general welfare of the community. This includes regulating building heights and setbacks, which are critically important to defining the overall feel of development in City Center. It is through the Zoning Ordinance that the Design Development Guidelines will be implemented through the creation of the D/D Overlay.

Zoning authority is a function of the police power of local governments and is established legislatively. Zoning in Columbia is implemented by a combination of the Zoning Administrator and the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

### 3.5.3 Landmarks Commission

Columbia's Landmarks Commission was established to preserve the appearance of historic properties and/or areas of Columbia. Its responsibility is limited to reviewing proposed physical exterior changes to ensure that they don't compromise the historic qualities of an area or building. This responsibility is limited to the City's five preservation districts and individually designated landmarks structures or sites. The five districts are as follows:

- Robert Mills/Hampton Preston
- Arsenal Hill
- USC Residential
- Elmwood Park
- Gervais Street Historic Commercial District



Proponents of new construction, demolition, or placement of signs within these districts must obtain a “certificate of design approval” from the Landmarks Commission. For minor projects, certificates can be issued by City staff, but major projects must go before a public hearing of the Commission. Appeals of staff decisions are heard by the Commission, and appeals of Commission decisions are heard by “a court of competent jurisdiction.”

The Landmarks Commission evaluates projects for compliance with the provisions of the City’s *Urban Design and Historic Preservation (Landmarks) Regulations* (Section 6-0811 of the City Code). These provisions describe a series of non-binding design criteria that generally outline the desired characteristics of projects. For the Gervais Street Historic Commercial District, the City has also adopted design guidelines “to be used in an advisory capacity only.”

As discussed earlier in this report, the current functions of the Landmarks Commission would be absorbed by the newly-created Design/Development Review Commission. The D/DRC would continue to administer the existing Landmarks Ordinance and new design guidelines provisions in the zoning ordinance. In doing so, the Commission would essentially “wear two different hats” in reviewing projects in the five preservation districts for compliance with Landmarks Ordinance and the City Center Design/Development Guidelines, respectively. The Landmarks ordinance would take precedence over the Design/Development Guidelines if in conflict.

#### 3.5.4 Site Plan Review

~~Site plan review in Columbia is handled by the City’s Planning Department, which has authority to approve site plans for building projects of 25,000 square feet or less; larger projects must go before the City’s Planning Commission. Once applications are accepted, the Planning Department has 10 days to review the project, including evaluation of the site plan and preparation of a staff report for the Planning Commission. The Commission may then approve, approve with conditions, or deny the project. Planning Commission decisions are appealable to the circuit court, not the City Council.~~

~~Within City Center, the D/DRC and Design/Development Review staff will assume responsibility for site plan review. This would streamline the overall development review process. Building inspections, fire, floodplain, traffic and other reviews that may need to be performed would still be completed by the respective City departments, however, a Design/Development Coordinator will provide assistance by expediting the development through this process.~~

### 3.6 DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES INCENTIVES

The City of Columbia has developed the following incentives to encourage development within the Design Development District recognizing that the district requires additional commitment to the quality of City Center Columbia.

**Streamlined/Expedited Processing:** For projects of less than 50,000 square feet or \$500,000 in value and in full compliance with the *Guidelines*, applications may be approved with Staff review only, with no formal notification required. This would significantly decrease the time required for project approval.

**Design/Development Coordinator:** As described above, for some projects the City may assign a Development Coordinator to expedite application processing and provide technical support to the applicant in proceeding through the development review process.

**City Fee Reduction:** The City may reduce otherwise-required project fees (e.g., building permits, water tap) by as much as 50 percent.

**Parking Requirements:** The City may broaden approved parking requirements from those requirements specified in the *Zoning Ordinance*.

**Height Restrictions:** The City could support relaxing the height restrictions specified to allow additional height for projects complying with the *Guidelines*.

**Zoning Variances:** Applicant requests for zoning variances may be supported by City staff for projects in compliance with the *Guidelines*.

---

## CHAPTER 4

### GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT

#### 4.1 CORRIDOR AND STREETScape ANALYSIS

This section establishes the context for public agency leadership in improving the quality of development and design in City Center. It does this by analyzing the quality of public streets in City Center and recommending strategies for addressing design opportunities and solutions for problems associated with poor quality design.

##### 4.1.1 Primary "Gateways"

Primary access to Columbia is provided by three interstate highways and their connectors: I-20, I-26, I-126, I-77, and I-277. Two of these highways serve as gateways to City Center: I-26/US 1, I-26/US 321, I-277/Bull Street, and I-126/Elmwood and Huger.

##### *Western Gateways*

I-26 at Springdale into West Columbia and Cayce serves as the western gateway from these communities, Lake Murray and Columbia's airport. Both US 1/378 and US 321, 76, and 21 are characterized as heavily-trafficked "commercial corridors." They contain a variety of uses including motels, gas stations, restaurants, car dealers, and other service commercial uses. The roadways are dominated by highly-visible commercial uses, parking lots, and commercial signs; they also suffer from minimal landscaping and a lack of street trees.

Rights-of-way for the western gateway roads vary from about 90 to 110 feet and typically include zones of only 6 to 10 feet of pedestrian/streetscape space beyond the curblines. The narrowness of the current pedestrian/streetscape zone prohibits extensive internal streetscape improvements. As a result, such improvements must primarily be made through encouragement of private property owners to better landscape their properties.

##### *I-277 at Elmwood Avenue*

Interstate 77/I-277 enters City Center from the northeast at the intersection of Bull Street and Elmwood Avenue. This primary/secondary gateway should be enhanced to announce one's arrival to the city and City Center. "Ceremonial" elements (pylons, walls, and signs) should announce arrival, wayfinding signage should clearly direct residents and visitors. Landscape and streetscape elements should be aesthetic and harmonious with other City Center improvements.



### ***I-126 at Elmwood Avenue***

I-26/I-126 enters City Center at the Elmwood Avenue/Huger Street intersection. While highway signage is adequate for directing traffic to Huger Street, it does not direct potential City Center visitors to stay on Elmwood and continue east. Architectural/landscape “landmarks” or identity markers should be improved to better accentuate this important gateway.

#### **4.1.2 Secondary Gateways**

A secondary series of gateways is generally defined by the three roadway bridges crossing the Congaree River and the Assembly Street/Blossom Street intersection.

The gateways at the river are generally defined by the aesthetic quality of the bridges and bridge lighting and by the open space areas adjacent to the bridges themselves. Both the Blossom Street and Gervais Street bridges have recently been improved. The architectural character of the bridges and the balustrades with the pedestrian scale lights create an exciting and pleasing announcement of entry into the city. The Jarvis Klapman Bridge suffers the “interstate feel” of jersey barriers and no lighting; furthermore, it is dominated by an obsolete pedestrian overpass over the roadway.

On the eastern side of the river, both Gervais Street and Blossom Street have two- or three-block zones where Palmetto trees line the street edge, helping to create a pleasant pedestrian environment. This theme should be used more widely throughout City Center and specifically along Hampton Street and Elmwood Avenue; it could also be used effectively on other strategic open spaces and streetscapes.

#### **4.1.3 Entrance Corridors**

The key entrance corridors into City Center are Elmwood Avenue, Hampton/Taylor Streets, Gervais Street, and Blossom Street. These roadways provide local access and connect City Center’s various commercial, residential, and employment areas. Gervais Street, and Hampton/Taylor Streets are central, east-west corridors that extend from the Congaree River to Forest Acres and Fort Jackson, respectively.

### ***Hampton and Taylor Streets***

Inside City Center, Hampton and Taylor Streets are more traditional urban streets with commercial and employment uses fronting them. They form a one-way couplet west of Park Street and carry high volumes of traffic. The streets would benefit from traffic calming measures including a return to two way traffic to make them more pedestrian-friendly. Specific corridor guidelines should be developed for this corridor, as well as for U.S. Routes 1 and 21 west of the river.

### ***Gervais, Elmwood, and Blossom Streets***

The segment of Gervais Street between Assembly Street and the Congaree River has recently been improved and is unique within City Center. Between Sumter and Millwood Avenue, Gervais becomes more commercial in character, similar to Elmwood and Blossom Streets. The character of these corridors is similar to that in many cities in which freestanding commercial uses and other uses have developed over time. A number of key issues affect the visual quality of these corridors, including the following:

- Existing overhead utility lines create visual clutter;
- The streetscape is often dominated by roadway paving, commercial or industrial uses and adjacent parking areas;
- Curb cuts are numerous and often wider than necessary;
- Numerous signs, including billboards, compete for the driver's attention;
- Individual parcel landscape treatments are inconsistent and largely ineffective;
- Very few street trees have been planted and parking areas are typically unscreened;

The length and complexity of conditions within these corridors make implementation of improvements time-consuming and costly. To properly address these needs, the City should work with major property owners, business operators, and adjacent jurisdictions to prepare conceptual streetscape designs; this collaborative approach will help gain consensus on corridor redesign. Once the concepts are agreed-upon, final designs addressing specific streetscape improvements can be prepared and implemented.

In many cases, needed or anticipated roadway, utility and/or drainage improvements are in the City's or State's long-term improvement plans. Clearly, streetscape designs for these corridors should be prepared in conjunction with plans for roadway and infrastructure improvements. Timing of this work should coincide with the SCDOT's schedule for planned roadway improvements.

#### **4.1.4 Corridor Guidelines**

While the guidelines presented in this report will provide direction concerning the quality of the streetscape in City Center, they do not address the specific needs of individual streets or roadway corridors. To fill this gap, the City should develop corridor guidelines to address the image of the important corridors that enter into and run through City Center. These guidelines, which would contain much more detail than is presented in this chapter, should address the following features of the streetscape:

- Utilities
- Domination of paving
- Curb Cuts
- Signs
- Landscape (buffering/screening)
- Streetscape
- Parking

Recommendations should relate to the functional and aesthetic aspects of the public right-of-way and private properties within the corridors. They would include:

- Public Right-of-Way
  - Consolidation of Utilities
  - Legibility and location of directional signage
  - Quality of and character of street and important intersections
  - Minimize quantity and spacing of curb cuts
- Private Properties
  - Street trees/streetscapes
  - Standardize minimal ROW setbacks
  - Consolidate/share curb cuts
  - Develop better consistency in quality signage
  - Review parking and drive lane scale

Site development guidelines addressing these issues could be administered in several ways. One alternative, which is used in many cities, would be the creation of a “Corridor Overlay District” in which development in important corridors is regulated by specific design guidelines.

## 4.2 STREETScape FRAMEWORK

Based on the corridor and streetscape analysis outlined above, the City has established a streetscape framework strategy that consists of a hierarchy of street improvement levels and the identification of key urban gateways and priority intersections.

### 4.2.1 Streetscape Improvements

The streetscape framework strategy presents the overall level of streetscape improvements for City Center by outlining four levels of emphasis, recommending the highest level of improvements for those streets with the most pedestrian activity and/or highest visibility. Following are descriptions of the four hierarchical levels—from “A” to “D”—along with descriptions of City Center streets falling within each.

#### ***Streetscape Level “A”***

Main Street and Assembly Street are the only City Center streets that fall into the Level “A” category. Based on the pedestrian activity level and high visibility and north/south traffic movement, these streets should

receive the highest level of hardscape and landscape improvements. Main and Assembly should receive a level of treatment similar to that already completed along Gervais Street improvements. As the highest-visibility roadways in the strategic framework, these Level "A" streets should "play-off" of the Gervais Street improvements and begin to set the tone or "palette" of character and materials for the overall City Center environment.

#### Streetscape Level "A"



Since Main and Assembly Streets differ dramatically from each other in terms of their vehicular and pedestrian functions and uses, approaches to their improvement will vary. Main Street is the center of City Center and has the highest level of pedestrian activity, as well as relatively low traffic flows. Its streetscape design must be pedestrian-friendly, accessible, inviting, and safe, and its design elements must focus on details that relate to the ratio of pedestrian to vehicular activity.

Assembly Street US route 21 is City Center's urban boulevard and main north-south arterial route. Because of its width and the prominence of pavement, it is perceived as a significant impediment to east-west pedestrian travel. As a result of its function as a carrier of high volumes of automobile traffic, Assembly Street is probably the most viewed street in City Center, albeit mostly from inside of cars. This visibility presents great opportunities, but to capitalize on these opportunities, the City must attend to design elements that relate to enhancement of the pedestrian experience and, and also "read" well from the road. This attention should focus on two key elements:

- Better defined crosswalks, pedestrian signals, curb cuts and expanded sidewalks/median;



- A redesigned central median that removes on-street parking, adds “green,” possible use areas, and increases refuges for pedestrians.

In summary, the streets designated for Level “A” treatment should reflect the highest quality of streetscape in the city. Attention should be given to street trees, tree grates or planters, curbs/seatwalls, paving materials and patterns, decorative street lighting, and a palette of street furniture (furnishings), including high quality benches and trash receptacles (in appropriate pedestrian areas). The design approach for this category should be as consistent as possible and should be transitional with the level of detail from Main Street being the highest to Assembly Street having less of an emphasis. For example, special paving may be used throughout the sidewalk areas on Main Street, but used as an accent band or in “fields” on Assembly Street.

### ***Streetscape Level “B”***

This streetscape level applies to City Center streets that link business and neighborhood areas. Based on the level of pedestrian activity, hardscape improvements and furnishings (including special paving, lighting, benches, landscape, and trash receptacles) should be programmed for those areas. Horticultural improvements (including street trees, Palmetto trees, low-level plantings, and seasonal plantings where appropriate) should also be designated for these areas.

### **Streetscape Level “B”**



Amenities and furnishings similar to those in Streetscape Level “A” should be introduced to Level “B” streets. The extent to which they are implemented will, however, vary somewhat. For example, higher level improvements will be prioritized to those streets with higher levels of pedestrian activity, rather than those with high automobile traffic capacity. Special paving and street furnishings would be more prevalent on Pedestrian Priority Streets and would be limited to certain



areas (such as a zone parallel to the street or near intersections), rather than throughout the sidewalk area.

### ***Streetscape Level "C"***

This streetscape level applies to City Center's Image Streets and Retail/Commercial Streets.

**Streetscape Level "C"**



The initial and primary focus for these areas should include consistent installation of street trees, intersection announcements and seasonal plantings, as appropriate, in key locations. Decorative street lights and street furnishings may also be used on selective streets and, as appropriate, to certain districts or neighborhoods. Long-term hardscape improvements including sidewalk upgrades, new lighting, and pedestrian crosswalks should be planned for these streets. For example, sidewalks should primarily be of concrete and key intersections may have special paving or architectural elements. Trees also may be planted in tree grates, tree planters with curbed edges, tree pits with ground cover, or grass medians adjacent to the curbline.

### ***Streetscape Level "D"***

This streetscape level applies to City Center's Residential and Service Streets, as well as to all other streets (standard streets). The primary focus for these streets should be installation of street trees and hardscape improvements in conjunction with necessary roadway, utility or drainage improvements.

Streetscape Level "D"



Table 4-1 lists the streets falling into each category in the Streetscape hierarchy.

TABLE 4-1 STREETSCAPE FRAMEWORK			
Level "A"	Level "B"	Level "C"	Level "D"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main Street</li> <li>• Assembly Street</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lady (west of Main)</li> <li>• Blossom</li> <li>• Lincoln (south of Laurel)</li> <li>• Senate</li> <li>• Gervais</li> <li>• Elmwood</li> <li>• Hampton</li> <li>• Taylor</li> <li>• Laurel</li> <li>• Greene</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calhoun</li> <li>• Marion</li> <li>• Pickens</li> <li>• Huger</li> <li>• Sumter</li> <li>• Bull</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calhoun (west of Assembly)</li> <li>• Blanding (east of Assembly)</li> <li>• Park</li> <li>• Lincoln (north of Laurel)</li> <li>• Gadsden(n. of Washington)</li> <li>• Wayne (n. of Washington)</li> <li>• Pulaski</li> <li>• Senate</li> <li>• Pendleton</li> <li>• Lady (east of Main)</li> <li>• Washington</li> <li>• Pendleton</li> <li>• Devine</li> <li>• College</li> <li>• Williams</li> <li>• Gist</li> </ul>

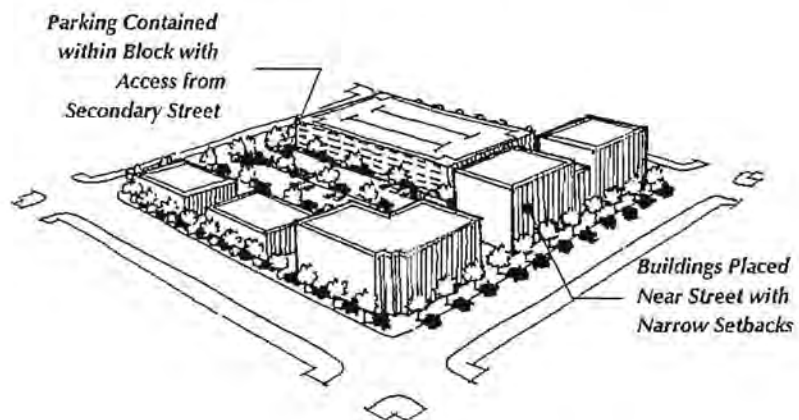
#### 4.2.2 Urban Gateways and Priority Intersections

Urban gateways at Huger Street and Elmwood, Blossom, Hampton, and Gervais Street, and at Bull and Elmwood Streets are highlights on the streetscape framework plan. In addition, several intersections have been identified as “high priority.” These intersections should receive special design attention based on their high visibility and importance. The level of attention will vary depending on the existing condition of each intersection and any proposed SCDOT plans for intersection improvements.

#### 4.3 PARKING FACILITY, LOCATION, LANDSCAPING, AND SCREENING

The location and design treatment of the parking needed to serve City Center development will have significant influence on the area's physical structure and visual character. One of the most difficult issues in urban development is providing an adequate amount of convenient parking without allowing parking structures and surface lots to dominate the urban setting. The amount of off-street parking required for any new development is prescribed in the City's Zoning Ordinance; the guidance provided herein should ultimately be reflected in the parking provisions of that ordinance. Following are several principles that should apply to all parking facilities within City Center, both structured and surface.

- Generally, the parking required for each block should be contained within that block. Where parcels within a block are developed by different owners, the parking requirements of each development should be accommodated within its own parcel unless a cooperative parking plan is submitted at the time of the earliest development.



- For office, retail, and/or residential uses, the City may broaden approved parking requirements from those requirements specified in the *Zoning Ordinance*.
- Consideration should be given to proposals for reduced off-street parking requirements based on analysis of potential for



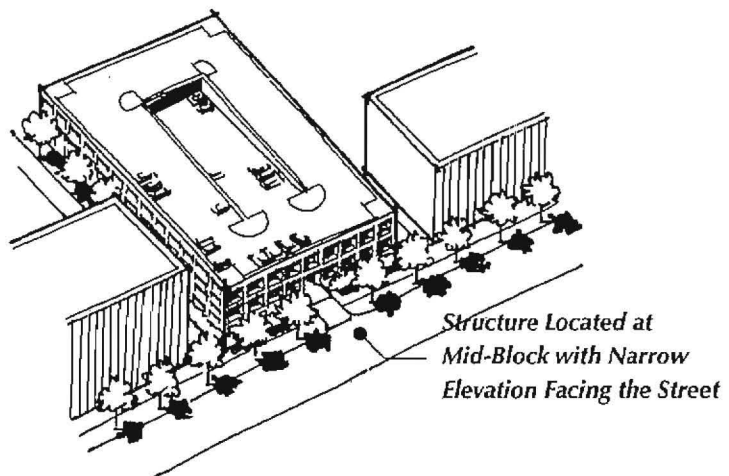
shared use of parking spaces by two or more uses which do not experience concurrent peak parking demands, or the potential for sharing adjacent existing off-street parking facilities.

- A standard directional sign designating parking areas should be designed and adopted for use throughout City Center.
- The use of an entire block for parking (either surface or structured) is generally discouraged.

### 4.3.1 Structured Parking

The location and design of parking structures both public and private should be governed by the following guidelines:

- Where possible, parking structures should be located within the block core, with actively programmed building space fronting on all streets.



- Where location of parking within the block core is not feasible, parking structures should be located to the rear of the principal-use building, with the principal-use building oriented to front on the address street. The ground floor of the parking structure should be actively programmed on streets with an active commercial frontage.
- No parking structure frontage should be permitted on City Center's gateway, image, or pedestrian priority streets unless the structure's facade provides a compatible streetscape frontage and active programming on the ground floor.
- Any parking structure which is located adjacent to a street should be set back a minimum of 6 feet and a maximum of 10

feet from the sidewalk. This setback should be landscaped with trees, shrubs, and ground cover to soften views of the structure, provide visual interest, and establish a sense of human scale.

- Structured parking configured as a base level podium supporting a high-rise tower should not be permitted.
- The architectural treatment of parking structures should be compatible in quality, form, materials, colors and textures with the structure(s) being served.



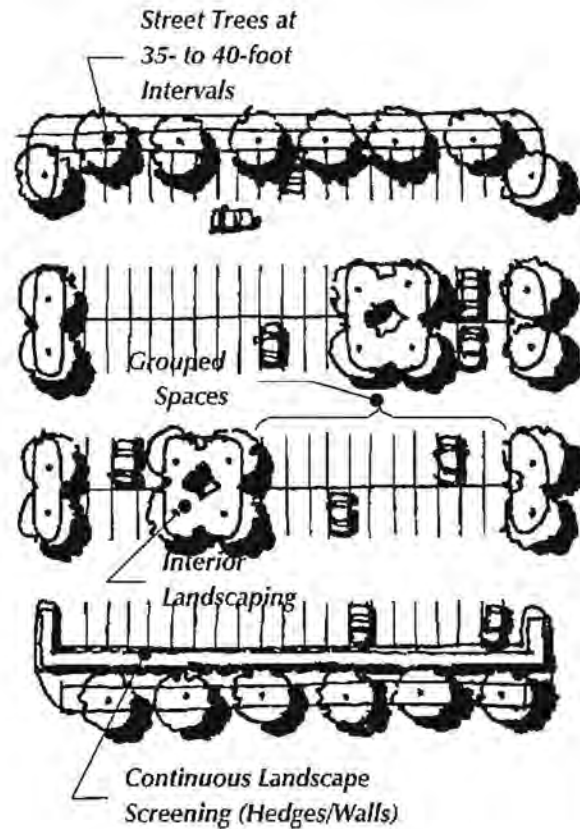
- Parking structure roof lines which are visible from the street should be level; ramping should occur within the structure or on the interior of the block where it is screened from the street.

#### 4.3.2 Surface Parking

New surface parking lots should be designed to minimize the negative impact of large paved surfaces on the quality of the visual environment. New surface lots should be designed according to the following guidelines:

- Street trees should be provided along all street frontage and spaced at 35- to 40-foot intervals.





- Continuous landscape screening (along 100 percent of the street frontage except at entrances and exits) must be provided by an evergreen or deciduous hedge.
- Street trees should be installed at a minimum size of 2½-inch caliper and should be 14 to 16 feet high.
- Hedges should be installed at a minimum height of 24 inches, with a maximum spacing of 30 inches; hedges should be maintained at a height of 36 to 42 inches. Hedges should be installed in a minimum 5-foot wide continuous landscape zone.
- Solid masonry walls 30 to 36 inches high can be substituted for hedges to screen parking areas; Materials should match the site's exterior building materials. Where such walls replace hedges, the 5-foot landscape zone should be maintained.
- Concrete or masonry barrier curbing should be provided for all perimeter and interior parking lot landscaping.
- Parking lots shall be separated from sidewalks, streets, or alleys by an open space of at least five feet between the parking area

and the edge of the right-of-way. This area shall be landscaped with appropriate grass, ground cover, shrubs, and trees.

- Interior parking lot landscaping should be provided to divide lots into groups of parking spaces and break large expanses of parking. Parking lots should have one landscaped island and one shade tree per twenty parking spaces. The minimal size of an interior landscaped parking island should be 200 square feet. Landscaped islands at least 5 feet in width shall be introduced in all parking areas at intervals not exceeding 100 feet. A minimum of 10 percent of the total area of the lot shall be dedicated to landscaped areas.
- When at least 25 percent of all outdoor vehicular pavement area, or at least 50 percent of all outdoor pedestrian pavement area, consists of decorative or permeable pavement, the required average density of trees required in parking lots shall be decreased by 25 percent.
- The required average density of trees in parking lots shall be decreased by 25 percent when stone, unit masonry, or other decorative curb is provided in lieu of concrete curb.
- Temporary parking lots: Improved temporary parking lots are often established on vacant lots or in conjunction with development projects (to accommodate vehicles associated with the development). Temporary parking lots shall be allowed for surface parking for a time not to exceed one calendar year from the date of initial use.

These standards should be applied and enforced for all existing and new parking lots. The City should work with owners of existing parking facilities to jointly provide improvements within and beyond the public right-of-way. This approach can be used as a mechanism to systematically improve public and private property adjacent to parking lots.

#### 4.4 SERVICE AND LOADING AREAS

Service and loading areas should be located to minimize their visibility from public streets. On blocks with multiple sides facing gateway streets, individual determinations of the more visually significant frontages will be required.

Refuse containers and actively-used service and loading areas must be screened from view by the buildings they serve or by solid masonry walls which are designed as an integral part of the building, finished with compatible materials and with a minimum height of six feet. If screening walls are located adjacent to public

use areas, they must be buffered from view with a landscaped strip at least eight feet wide.

Wherever possible, ground-mounted mechanical equipment should be located within a screened service area. Where this is not feasible, mechanical equipment should be located where it is not visible from streets, sidewalks and adjacent properties.

Areas used for occasional service or loading (less than one day per week, or less than one hour per day) may be treated according to the guidelines for surface parking lots.

## **4.5 STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS**

The detail elements of a streetscape play a vital role in creating a desired theme or sense of place in City Center. Key elements to be considered include roadway elements, streetscape furniture, utilities, public art, and signage. Improvements to each of these elements should be thought of as long-term investments, and their quality should not be compromised. The components that make up the elements should be chosen for their design, structural stability, durability, and cost. This section summarizes the qualities to be sought in selecting each aspect of the various streetscape elements.

### **4.5.1 Roadway Elements**

The largest and most visible aspect of the streetscape is the roadway itself, including the sidewalks. The City has considerable influence over the quality of the streetscape by virtue of its decisions concerning the various roadway elements. The following paragraphs describe qualitative criteria for ensuring that roadways and their sidewalks contribute positively to the quality of the streetscape.

#### ***Paving Design***

Special sidewalk treatments (including brick or concrete pavers) add color, texture and sense of quality to the streetscape. Sand-set masonry pavers, if properly installed, are cost effective over the long-term because of their durability and ability to be removed and reset. When sidewalks are constructed of cast-in-place concrete, the need for access to utilities in commercial areas frequently results in excavation and unsightly concrete patching. The level of quality in the streetscape environment can be greatly enhanced through the introduction of special paving, especially on "gateway" streets, primary retail streets and nearby visitor attractions.



### *Crosswalk Design*

Pedestrian crosswalks in City Center should be generally consistent in layout and design. However, the materials used for implementation may differ. A typical crosswalk can be painted asphalt, or constructed of brick, concrete or cobblestone. Painted crosswalks are by far the most practical and cost effective for typical intersections. Special pavers are appropriate as a crosswalk surface in intensively-used pedestrian areas.



The dimensions for crosswalks may vary from street to street. It is generally desirable to align the outer limits of crosswalks with the building facades of the two intersecting streets. The inner limits of the crosswalks can be defined by adopting standard dimensions for crossing widths (ranging from 10 to 15 feet or equal to the sidewalk width). This approach allows the streetscape to continue visually across the road. However, this approach may not always



work due to misaligned building facades, curvilinear streets or streets that are misaligned. Crosswalk widths should be maximized wherever possible to increase their visibility from automobiles. Crosswalks and handicap ramps should adhere to American Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.



### ***Curb Extensions***

Curb Extensions or “Neck-downs” (which narrow the street) can be constructed to provide traffic calming and also improve the pedestrian environment. These curb modifications are most commonly used at intersections to reduce the scale of the street and facilitate pedestrian crossings and movement. This approach is recommended where a reduction in traffic speed is sought and where radii can be maintained to allow turning movements for buses and emergency vehicles. Curb extensions also improve the pedestrian environment by:

- Creating additional space for trees and street furnishings and
- Eliminating conflicts created by parallel parking near intersections.

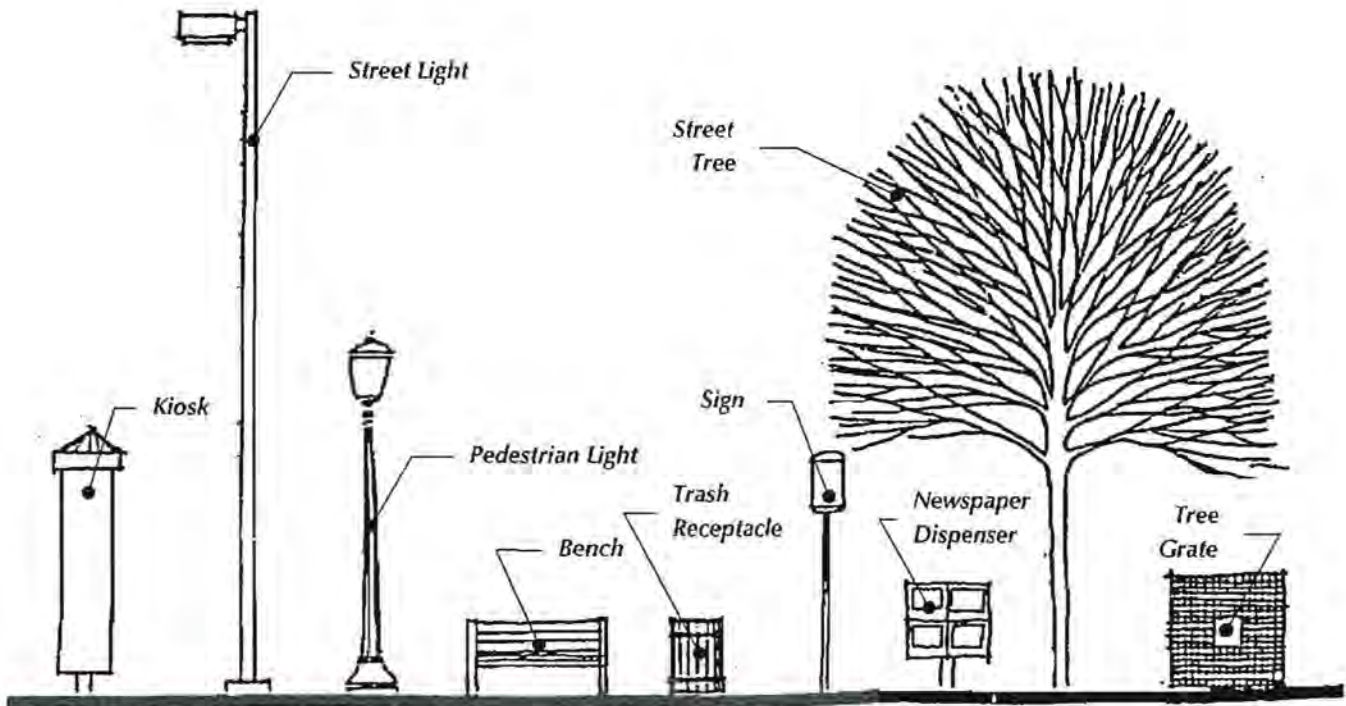
Curb extensions can also be used effectively in locations other than intersections, for example, at mid-block to facilitate a pedestrian crossing.

### **4.5.2 Streetscape Furniture**

Streetscape furniture should be consistent throughout the downtown to provide a sense of continuity and theme. This will help to give visual consistency and reduce maintenance and stockpiling of spare parts. The palette of street furnishings include the items listed below. The palette of streetscape furniture selected should also be used in the downtown parks and open spaces.



- Pedestrian Lighting
- Trash Receptacles
- Benches
- Tree Grates
- In-ground Planters
- Container Plantings
- Drinking Fountains
- Bicycle Racks
- Newspaper Dispensers



Only strong and durable elements should be selected. The extra cost for quality materials will ultimately provide savings over the life expectancy of cheaper fixtures. Furniture should have an adequate minimum setback of 2½ feet from the face of the curb to avoid damage from trucks and automobiles.

A standard family of colors should be identified for downtown streetscape furniture. All metal parts should be painted with these colors. Specific types of furnishings and colors should be designated for city "districts." The adopted color should be dark with a glossy, rather than matte, finish. Dark green or black are the most effective colors to use in a traditional streetscape environment.

Open space in new private developments downtown should use the City's adopted street furniture in their site plans. Specific guidelines should be developed to enforce these standards.

### *Pedestrian Lighting*

Adequate lighting is essential to both the business community and residents because it increases visibility and security. Pedestrian lights are generally set on 14 foot poles at 70 to 80 foot intervals. In addition to providing adequate ambient lighting for pedestrians and the street, they are a very important decorative element. The design of pedestrian lights should give a strong direction to the theme and character for the area.

We recommend continuing the use of the new “historic” style pedestrian lights. The “acorn” fixtures on fluted columns are compatible with a variety of settings and help establish the desired character of Columbia. Double-headed fixtures should be selectively used on major gateway streets, such as Elmwood, Hampton, Gervais, Blossom, Assembly, and for special focal areas. Otherwise, single-headed fixtures for streets and wall-mounted fixtures for alleys should be used. Standard street lights and lamp types for Columbia should be designated by ordinance. The types chosen can be designated for a particular street or “district”.





### ***Trash Receptacles***

This often overlooked element can play a very important role in the quality of the streetscape environment. If public trash receptacles are provided, the need for litter pick-up will be reduced.



### ***Benches***

Benches offer a place to sit, rest, wait and watch. Placement should depend on need and should not interfere with pedestrian



movement. Backed benches are preferred over backless benches for comfort, except in areas offering views in either direction.



### *Tree Grates*

Tree roots, especially on young trees, need protection in areas where pedestrian traffic is heavy. Without such protection, the soil becomes compacted and the trees may die from suffocation.



Tree grates are only recommended where sidewalk dimensions or pedestrian movement prohibit the use of tree planting beds. If tree grates are used, the maximum size units should be installed to

provide additional root space for the trees. For narrow sidewalks, where tree grates are needed, 4-foot by 8-foot or 5-foot by 10-foot grates are preferred. Under no circumstances should a grate smaller than 4-by-8 feet or 6-by-6 feet be used. It is important to use cast iron "pedestrian-friendly" tree grates which have smaller openings to minimize tripping hazards. Large tree pits without grates are the preferred planting environment (discussed in the next section). However, where tree grates are necessary, special tree installation techniques are recommended.

The streetscape should be designed so that the sidewalk (if cast-in-place) is suspended over a continuous planting trench in which the soil has been amended. Alternatively, sand set paving units can be used in a continuous band between the street trees to allow drainage and root growth. This method of construction will provide a healthier environment for the tree roots, thus increasing the life span of the street trees. We also recommend root aeration strips be placed parallel to the curbline between tree pots. Thin strips will provide a place for tree roots to grow. This should reduce sidewalk and tree maintenance costs over the long run.

In situations where electricity is desired to power holiday lights in trees, electrical service should be provided via flush mounted waterproof outlets at the base of the tree.

### ***In-Ground Planters***

In-ground planters are preferred over tree grates for new street trees. A planting bed facilitates a "greener" streetscape environment and allows for improved water absorption. This approach also lessens the risk of compaction and provides additional room for root growth.





Pedestrians can be discouraged from walking through the planters by elevating them slightly with a coping edge or curb edge and planting with ground cover or low shrub masses (one foot height maximum). If ground covers are used, seasonal bulbs can be interspersed to provide color, with a minimum amount of maintenance.

In-ground planters should only be used in areas where a walkway width of at least eight feet from building face can be maintained. If planting beds are used on narrower walks, pedestrians will feel confined and may disregard the planter edges by walking through them. In these situations, it is better to use tree grates.

### ***Container Plantings***

Year-round container plantings should be used in City Center and in Columbia's neighborhoods to add color and create seasonal interest. Seasonal containers should be used extensively near building entrances and in key pedestrian zones.



### ***Newspaper Dispensers***

Organizing several individual newspaper dispensers of various sizes, shapes, and colors into one attractive unit will greatly improve the street image.



### ***Bicycle Racks***

Bicycle racks are often left out of streetscape plans because they are not seen as an essential item. As a result, bicycles are often chained to other pieces of street furniture. This is visually unappealing, and can damage the furniture. Providing bicycle racks will help minimize this maintenance problem. The racks must be strategically placed where they can be used without impeding pedestrian movement (i.e., parking areas, sidewalk extensions and open spaces).



### ***Bollards***

Bollards should be used as accent elements to restrict automobiles from entering into or parking in pedestrian-priority or pedestrian-only areas. Placement of bollards 10- to 15-foot intervals along the street edge will accomplish this purpose.

### ***Drinking Fountains***

Drinking fountains should be simple in design and located in areas of intense pedestrian activity. They are generally used in urban parks and streetscapes which double as festival areas.

#### **4.5.3 Utility Burial and Relocation**

The location of utilities often creates conflicts with proposed street trees and other streetscape improvements. As utilities are buried and relocated underground we recommend that utilities be placed consistently in locations that minimize the opportunity for conflicts with street trees. We recommend that utilities either be placed underground either in the center of the street or from 7- to 12-feet back from the curb face. These locations should minimize future conflicts and allow trees and utilities to co-exist.

#### **4.5.4 Signage and Graphic Identity**

Currently, Columbia suffers from a lack of effective directional signage. The existing trailblazer system is inconsistently implemented and largely ineffective. Many redundant directional and regulatory signs need to be removed. A comprehensive vehicular and pedestrian signage system needs to be developed for the City. Key program components should, at a minimum, include:

- *Trailblazer Signage* on interstate highways and arterial streets to major visitor destinations.
- *Improved Street Name Signage* to include larger, more visible lettering than is present on existing signs found in City Center and along major streets.
- *Standardized Parking Signage* to identify parking facilities.
- *Pedestrian-Oriented Visitor Information System* to guide pedestrians to key attractions such as hotels, entertainment venues, shopping and/or public buildings.
- *Improved Regulatory Signage*. Route signage should be simplified and installed in a common format to achieve the maximum impact.
- *Banners and Special Graphics* should be utilized to publicize events and festivals, and to provide a special character for city "gateways" and important areas.





One of the biggest challenges in designing a sign system is developing a logo. Creating a new graphic identity for City Center Columbia may be an additional step in unifying the City's marketing efforts through signage, brochures, events, and promotional activities. The City's current logo is adequate, although a new logo may be considered as the City approaches the next millennium.

#### 4.6 PUBLIC ART

Public art should be incorporated into the City Center wherever possible to create a special identity and sense of place for





important spaces including plazas, parks, and building entrance areas.

For all public and private projects, one to two percent of the total project budget should be allocated for public art. Public art should achieve aesthetic excellence, establish functionality related to its setting, and be durable and safe.



#### 4.7 MAINTENANCE OF CITY LANDSCAPE RESOURCES

Maintenance of public resources is a key issue for the City of Columbia as it is for most cities. Landscape maintenance and management is particularly important given the fragile nature of this natural resource and its overall environmental and aesthetic impact on the community. Every year, Columbia's landscape maintenance needs will increase as additional street trees are planted and as existing plant materials mature. Unfortunately, most cities have not been able to meet these needs. To resolve this problem, a number of key issues must be addressed, including:

- Responsibility for landscape resources;
- Comprehensive street tree inventory and management plan needs; and
- Funding and staffing needs.

In Columbia, the key to addressing the issues effectively is coordination among the City agencies responsible for various aspects of the city's landscape resources.

---

## CHAPTER 5

### GUIDELINES FOR PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The construction of new buildings and renovation of existing buildings are principally the domain of the private sector development community. This chapter provides guidance concerning new development and renovation, with the understanding that City Center is a complex area with a variety of development settings. Accordingly, this chapter consists primarily of practical directions for retaining existing positive qualities and creating new projects that contribute to the distinct and exceptional character of City Center.

The guidelines in this chapter are illustrative rather than prescriptive. They describe appropriate kinds of changes and improvements that can be made to existing structures, as well as recommending the incorporation of particular design elements into new construction. These guidelines, while attempting to be comprehensive in scope, are not exhaustive in detail. The aim is to engender creative approaches and solutions within a workable framework, rather than laying out detailed and rigid standards.

The overall objective of this chapter is to ensure that new development projects contribute to the continued economic vitality of City Center. The key emphasis of the guidelines in this chapter is to reinforce the existing fabric of City Center by ensuring that new projects are developed within the rhythm of the existing development pattern. This "contextual" approach to evaluating the design of new projects is fundamental to the implementation of the *Guidelines*.

#### 5.2 ARCHITECTURAL STYLE OR THEME

No predetermined architectural style or design theme is required in Columbia's City Center; however, the design of a building should be compatible with its function and with its surroundings (context). New buildings should be compatible with the existing more traditional buildings; their design, particularly front facades, should be influenced by the other facades on the street, but should not attempt to copy them. New buildings should take care in material selections and architectural detailing so they do not look like cheap historic imitations. These projects should be sympathetic and compatible with surrounding buildings in terms of mass, scale, height, facade rhythm, placement of doors and windows, color, and use of materials without giving the feeling that new or renovated structures must duplicate an architectural style from the past to be successful.

### 5.3 BUILDING MASS AND ORGANIZATION

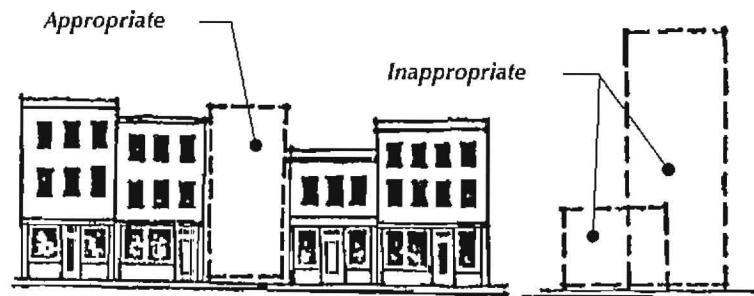
The height and scale of new buildings within City Center should complement existing structures while providing a sense of human scale and proportion. New infill structures should be designed to provide storefront windows, doors, entries, transoms, awnings, cornice treatments and other architectural features designed to complement existing structures without duplicating a past architectural style. This section outlines guidelines for building massing and organization.

While these *Guidelines* do not address the regulation of uses within buildings, the City strongly encourages that—in retail and commercial areas of City Center—the ground level of buildings be developed with retail uses. Such uses will draw activity to the street, thereby enlivening the area.

#### 5.3.1 Building Heights

The City's comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance are the primary legal vehicles for expressing regulations concerning the height of buildings. This section provides non-binding general direction for development within City Center, with the recommendation that the City's regulatory plans and codes be amended to reflect the guidance included here. The overall objective of addressing building heights within the *Design/Development Guidelines* is to help achieve the desired urban character for City Center. An important element of this character in Columbia is the retention of important viewlines; in particular, views of the Capitol and the Congaree River and its river valley are important to City Center's image.

Except for areas where existing structures are predominantly single-story, the most fundamental guidance for building heights in City Center is that the minimum height for any new building in the district should typically be two stories, even if the building contains only one functional story (e.g., a single-story, high-ceilinged commercial building). Low profile office buildings, commercial buildings, and residences will not yield the density, urban scale, and character desired for City Center, and should, therefore, be discouraged.



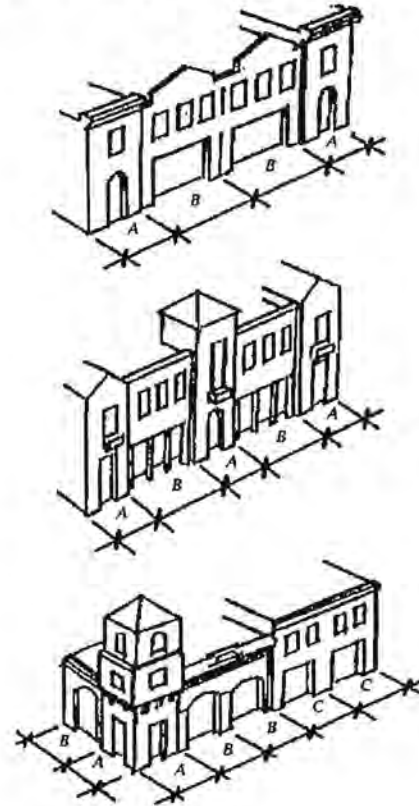
**Infill Building Heights**

As a general rule, and consistent with current zoning provisions, buildings within most of City Center should be no more than five stories. There are, however, exceptions. Parts of City Center are already

developed with buildings as tall as 25 stories (350 feet), mostly within the Central Business District. For the most part, these areas are zoned either C-4 (Central Area Commercial) or C-5 (Central Business District); neither of these zones includes any specific restriction on height. As noted above, it is not the intent of these Guidelines to establish new height standards for development in City Center. It is, however, critical that in applying these Guidelines—as well as other development regulations—the City be consistent in considering the height of proposed structures as they relate to the adjacent development context. Building height should be considered on a case-by-case basis recognizing the importance of the Columbia Vista and views of the Capitol dome from key locations throughout the city.

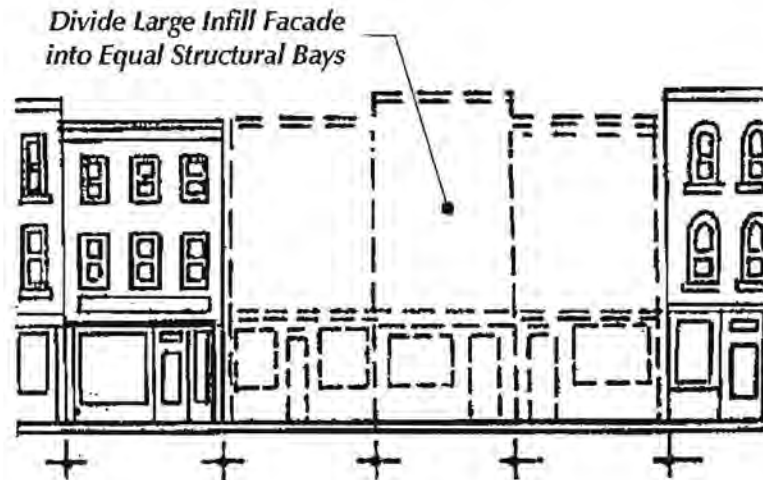
### 5.3.2 Facade Proportion and Rhythm

The facade is literally the exterior of a building that “faces” the street. It is the architectural front of the building and is typically distinguished from other faces by elaboration of architectural or ornamental details. Building facades are critical to the pedestrian quality of the street. The width and pattern of facade elements can help pedestrians negotiate a street by providing a standard measure of progress. This is true regardless of the overall width of the building; for example, a building can extend for the full length of a block and still have a facade design that divides the building into smaller, pedestrian scale elements. The following guidelines deal with establishing a pedestrian-friendly rhythm in new buildings, while subsequent sections address facade detail.





- The characteristic proportion (relationship of height to width) of existing facade elements should be respected in relation to new infill development.
- Whenever an infill building is proposed that is much "wider" than the existing characteristic facades on the street, the infill facades should be broken down into a series of appropriately proportioned "structural bays" or components typically segmented by a series of columns or masonry piers that frame window, door, and bulkhead components.



### 5.3.3 Proportion of Openings

- Maintain the predominant difference between upper story openings and street level storefront openings (windows and doors). Usually, there is a much greater window area (70 percent) at the storefront level for pedestrians to have a better view of the merchandise displayed behind as opposed to upper stories which have smaller window openings (40 percent).
- Whenever an infill building is proposed between two adjacent commercial structures, the characteristic rhythm, proportion and spacing of existing door and window openings should be maintained.

### 5.3.4 Horizontal Rhythms/Alignment Of Architectural Element

- Whenever an infill building is proposed, the common horizontal elements (e.g., cornice line and window height, width, and spacing) established by neighboring structures should be identified and the infill design should complement and accentuate what is already in place.

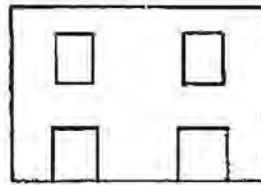
### 5.3.5 Wall Articulation

- Long, blank, unarticulated street wall facades should not be allowed. Facades should instead be divided into a series of structural bays (e.g., masonry piers which frame window and door

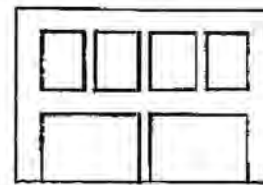
elements). This subdivision of the wall plane establishes a rhythm similar to many existing older buildings found in City Center.

- Monolithic street wall facades should be "broken" by vertical and horizontal articulation (e.g., sculpted, carved or penetrated wall surfaces defined by recesses and reveals). These features are characterized by: (a) breaks (reveals, recesses) in the surface of the wall itself; (b) placement of window and door openings; or (c) the placement of balconies, awnings, and/or canopies.

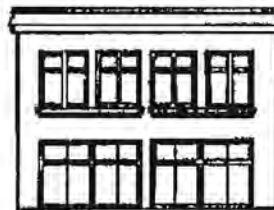
#### Breaking-Up a Building Facade to Achieve Greater Articulation



*Openings too Small  
Relative to Building Mass*



*Increase Size  
of Openings*



*Articulate Openings*



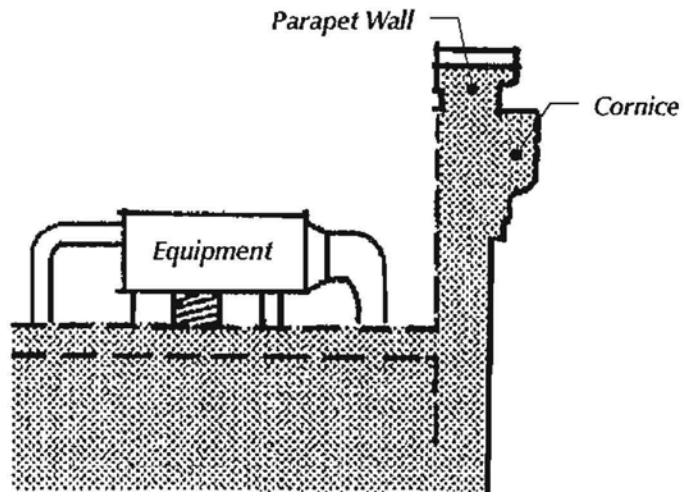
*Break-Up Building Mass*

- Large unbroken facade surfaces should be avoided, especially at the storefront level. This can be achieved in a number of ways including: (a) dividing the facade into a series of display windows with smaller panes of glass; (b) constructing the facade with small human scale materials such as brick or decorative tile along bulkheads; (c) providing traditional recessed entries; (d) careful sizing, placement and overall design of signage; and (e) providing consistent door and window reveals.

#### 5.3.6 Roofs and Upper Story Details

- Roofs may be flat or sloped. The visible portion of sloped roofs should be sheathed with a roofing material complementary to the architectural style of the building and other surrounding buildings.
- Cornice lines of new buildings (horizontal rhythm element) should complement buildings on adjacent properties to maintain continuity.

- Radical roof pitches that create overly prominent or out-of-character buildings (e.g., A-frames, geodesic domes, or chalet style buildings) are strongly discouraged. Shallow gables or fenestrated parapets may be allowed if in character with surrounding buildings.
- In the case of high-rise structures and Churches, however, some roof treatment such as a gable or spire is encouraged to add variety to the City's skyline and/or replace spires that have been removed from the City's churches over the years.
- Roof mounted mechanical or utility equipment should be screened. The method of screening should be architecturally integrated with the structure in terms of materials, color, shape and size. Equipment should be screened by solid building elements (e.g., parapet wall) instead of after-the-fact add-on screening (e.g., wood or metal slats).



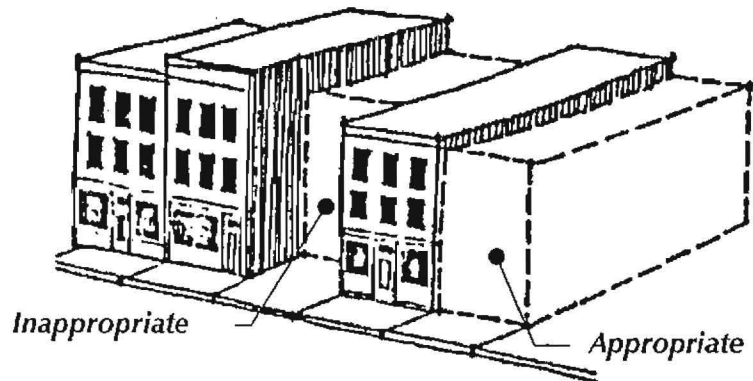
## 5.4 SITE PLANNING

The manner in which a building and its accessory uses are arranged on a site are critical to how the building contributes to the overall quality of the built environment. This section outlines a series of site planning guidelines that will help establish a human scale, pedestrian-friendly quality in City Center.

### 5.4.1 Setbacks

The horizontal distance between a lot line and the edge of the nearest building on the lot, including porches or any covered projection thereof, excluding steps, is referred to as the "setback." The most densely-developed areas of central cities typically have uniform setbacks, with building edges very near to or abutting the lot line, and thus the right-of-way (ROW) or sidewalk edge. This development pattern conveys a strong urban feeling by creating a sense of containment along the street edge, which, in turn, adds to a feeling of pedestrian security and comfort.

Much of the underlying zoning in Columbia City Center establishes a minimum setback of 25 feet while other areas have no specific setback standards. The overlay Design/Development zone will supercede the zoning underneath and establish new setback standards that will be uniform in their application throughout City Center. This will preserve the urban feel of City Center while allowing flexibility in development depending on the context of the block on which a new development is being built.



In order to preserve the scale of the pedestrian environment and continue to foster the urban character of the City Center, the Design/Development District will have no minimum required front yard setback. The maximum setback for any new structure should be the average of the existing setback in the block and adjacent blocks where the project is to be constructed. In situations where the average is not established, the setback will be ten feet.

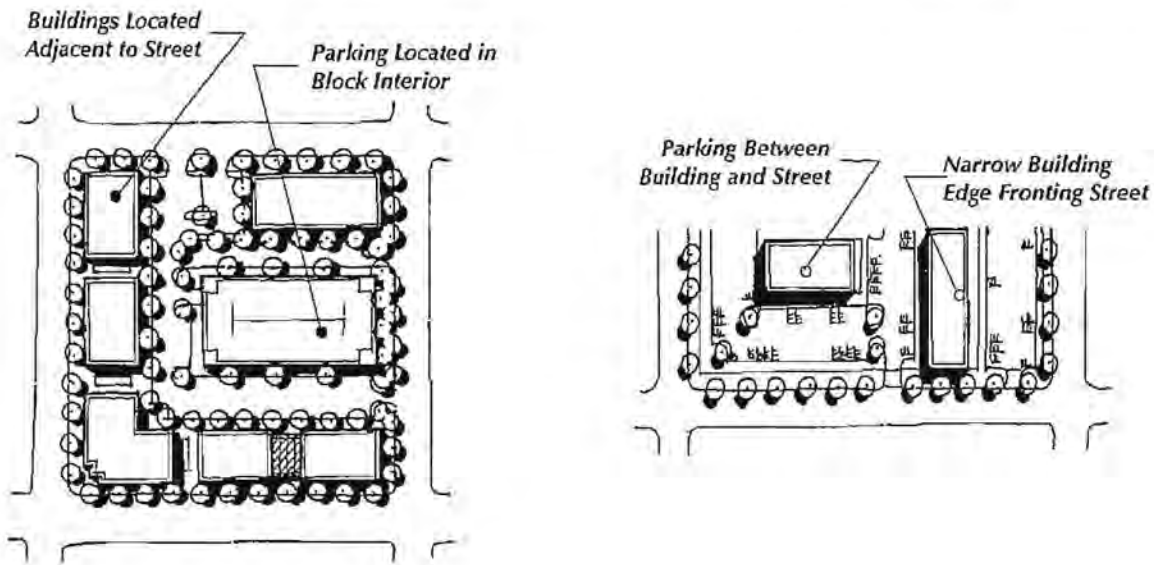


Although the criteria for setbacks will be the same throughout the City Center Design/Development District, some areas of the district have a more urban commercial character and others maintain a residential character. Each project still should be evaluated in context with its surroundings in order to properly decide whether a minimum or maximum setback should be used so that the overall character of the street is preserved.

#### **5.4.2 Street Orientation**

The way that a structure is oriented to the street plays a big role in establishing the overall feeling of the street. As a general rule, buildings should be oriented so as to engage and maintain pedestrian interest. Following are specific directions on how this can be accomplished.

- Storefronts should be designed to orient to the major street frontage. While side or rear entries may be desirable, the predominant major building entry should be oriented toward the major street.
- The front building facade should be oriented parallel to the street or toward a major plaza or park.
- Buildings on corners should include storefront design features for at least 50 percent of the wall area on the side street elevation.

*Appropriate Siting**Inappropriate Siting*

## 5.5 OPEN SPACES IN PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

City Center's streets, with their street trees and pedestrian amenities, are the district's primary open space. The narrow setbacks are specifically intended to prevent development of the broad landscaped open spaces typical of suburban campus-like settings. Any unbuilt zones along the setback line (i.e., plazas, entrance courts) should be small, intense areas that are placed and designed so that they will be occupied at various times of the day.

To invite public use and ensure user security, plazas or other public open spaces should be visible from streets and sidewalks, and should be surrounded by actively programmed building spaces such as shops, restaurants, residential units or offices.

The design of plazas and open spaces in private development should conform to the guidelines for public open spaces, and the landscaping guidelines in the following section.

## 5.6 LANDSCAPING

The streetscape, which is installed and maintained by the public sector, is the most important landscape element in City Center, as described in Chapter 4. There will, however, be many opportunities for landscaping in conjunction with private development. Goals and methods for landscaping in an urban setting differ from common suburban practices; the following guidelines emphasize those differences, without

attempting to cover all principles of sound site design and horticultural practices. These guidelines supplement the guidelines presented in Chapter 4; they do not replace them. In other words, private development projects incorporating the features addressed in Chapter 4 (e.g., parking structures and lots) will have to comply with the Chapter 4 guidelines related to those features.

- Maintenance resources should be given first consideration when planning the urban landscape. In most situations, ease of maintenance is of paramount importance. Complex designs should never be attempted unless the required maintenance can be assured.
- Paved surfaces, benches, trash receptacles and other landscape furnishings should be of the highest quality construction and should be compatible in design with the architecture of adjacent development.
- Site preparation and grading should respect traditional urban forms of development. Berms and other suburban land sculpturing techniques are not appropriate in City Center.
- Plant materials, particularly canopy trees, should be selected from varieties which are well adapted to the local climate and soils, resistant to pests and diseases, long-lived and strong, and free of excessive litter and other maintenance problems. Canopy trees should have an attractive crown structure; ground cover materials should have a tight, weed-resistant growth habit.
- Every effort should be made to preserve existing trees over four feet in diameter. Where existing trees can be incorporated in new development, appropriate measures should be taken to protect them during construction.

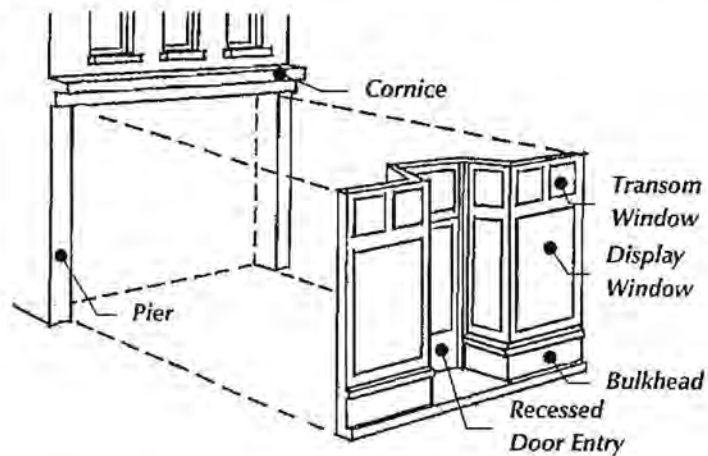
Street trees and other streetscape improvements are planned for all streets in City Center. Where new development is planned for an area not scheduled for installation of streetscape improvements within the succeeding year, the developer may be required to provide them. The City will provide design specifications on request; these specifications (including dimensions, materials, and planting methods) must be followed and will be subject to inspection.

## 5.7 THE STOREFRONT

This section focuses on establishing “storefronts” that will help revitalize and unify City Center’s commercial street frontages. It should be noted that the term “storefront” does not necessarily imply that a building has a retail commercial use; storefronts are simply the sides of the building that face the street and connect with the sidewalk.

Although the storefront is only one of the architectural features of a building's facade, it is an important visual element. The storefront traditionally has experienced the greatest amount of change during a building's life and holds the most potential for creative alterations affecting both the character of the building and the streetscape. Once inappropriate additions are removed, the storefront's original design is the best guideline for any refurbishment or alteration.

Historically, the traditional storefront had few decorative elements other than simple details that were repeated across the face of the building (e.g., structural bays containing window and door openings, continuous cornice line, transoms, bulkheads, etc.), integrating the storefront into the character of the entire facade. Emphasis was typically placed on the display windows and their contents. The rest of the storefront was designed in a simple manner, in order not to compete with the displayed items but rather to clearly project the product or service being offered inside.



The ground floor of the typical historical City Center structure was designed to be what is now referred to as a "traditional" storefront and sales floor. Upper floors commonly were used for office space, residential units, or storage. Traditional storefront buildings can be small, individual, or mid-block structures that accommodate a single business, or large buildings designed to provide space for two or more businesses, separated by masonry columns or piers forming distinct storefront structural bays. This building type is designed to be perceived as a whole unit, with the visual emphasis consistently placed on the storefront area and its display windows, versus the upper story facade characterized by vertical windows, parapets, or cornices.

### 5.7.1 Storefront Composition, Accessories, and Details

#### *Entries/Doorways*

- The main entry to a building, leading to a lobby, stair or central corridor, should be emphasized at the street to announce a point of arrival in one or more of the following ways:



- flanked columns, decorative fixtures or other details;
  - recessed within a larger arched or cased decorative opening;
  - covered by means of a portico (formal porch) projecting from or set into the building face (refer to zoning guidelines for allowable projections);
  - punctuated by means of a change in roofline, a tower, or a break in the surface of the subject wall.
- Buildings situated at the corner of a public street should provide a prominent corner entrance to street level shops or lobby space, in a manner consistent with Main Entries, as described above.
  - Commercial storefront entries are typically recessed and/or sheltered by a covered arcade structure, canopy or awning. This provides more area for display space, a sheltered transition area to the interior of the store and emphasizes the entrance. Recessed entries should be retained and are strongly encouraged in new storefront construction, although overly-deep entries (over 5-feet) should be avoided, as they may attract transients.

### ***Door and Window Design***

- Doors can be accentuated with simple details such as a handsome brass door pull, brass kickplate, or an attractive painted sign.
- Doors to retail shops should contain a high percentage of glass in order to view the retail contents.
- When windows are added or changed, it is important that the new design be sympathetic to and compatible with the facade theme of the whole block (streetscape).
- Use of clear glass (at least 88 percent light transmission) on the first floor is recommended.
- Storefront windows should be as large as possible and no closer than 18 inches from the ground (bulkhead height). By limiting the bulkhead height, the visibility to the storefront displays and retail interior is maximized. Maximum bulkhead heights for new construction should be 36 inches.
- Introducing or changing the location or size of windows or other openings that alter the architectural rhythm or character of the original building is discouraged.
- Permanent, fixed security grates or grilles in front of windows are discouraged; as an alternative security glass is recommended. If

security grilles are necessary, they should be placed inside the building behind the window display area.

- Where transom windows exist, every effort should be made to retain this traditional storefront feature. If the ceiling inside the structure has been lowered, the ceiling should be stepped up to meet the transom so that light will penetrate the interior of the building.

### ***Awnings And Canopies***

Awnings and canopies provide the opportunity to add color and visual relief to buildings, as well as serving a functional purpose by protecting windows from intense direct sunlight. The following guidelines describe the qualities that will ensure that awnings and canopies if used contribute positively to City Center's overall design quality.

- When there are several businesses in one building, awnings of a compatible color should be used with simple signs on the valance flap that may vary in type style and color to differentiate the individual businesses within the building. Bright and/or contrasting colors should be avoided.
- Where the facade is divided into distinct structural bays (sections defined by vertical architectural elements, such as masonry piers), awnings should be placed within the vertical elements rather than overlapping them. The awning design should respond to the scale, proportion and rhythm created by these structural bay elements and "nestle" into the space created by the structural bay.
- Awnings, if used, should be of a durable, commercial grade fabric, canvas or similar material having a matte finish.
- Awning frames and supports should be of painted or coated metal or other noncorroding material.
- Glossy or shiny plastic or similar awning material is not recommended.
- Aluminum or metal awnings or canopies generally detract from the historic character of the City Center and are discouraged in historic areas.
- Awning shape should relate to the window or door opening. Barrel shaped awnings should be used to complement arched windows while square awnings should be used on rectangular windows.

- Awnings should be well-maintained, washed regularly and replaced when faded or torn.
- Awnings should have a single color or two-color stripes. Utilizing more colors is permitted but will be considered as sign area.

### ***Grillework/Metalwork and Other Details***

There are a number of details, often thought of as mundane, that may be incorporated into building design to add a degree of visual richness and interest while meeting functional needs. Such details include the following items:

- Light fixtures, wall mounted or hung with decorative metal brackets.
- Metal grillework, at vent openings or as decorative features at windows, doorways or gates.
- Decorative scuppers, catches and down-spouts, preferably of copper.
- Balconies, rails, finials, corbels, plaques, etc.
- Flag or banner pole brackets.
- Fire sprinkler stand pipe enclosures and hose bib covers, preferably of brass.
- Security Devices.

### **5.7.2 Exterior Walls/Materials**

The design elements for exterior walls involves two aspects—color and texture. If the building's exterior design is complicated with many design features, the wall texture should be simple and subdued. If the building design is simple (perhaps more monolithic), a finely textured material, such as patterned masonry, can greatly enrich the building's overall character.

### ***Recommended Materials***

Storefront materials should be consistent with the materials used on significant (historically correct) adjacent buildings. The following materials are considered appropriate for buildings within City Center. The number of different wall materials used on any one building should, however, be kept to a minimum (ideally, two or less).

#### *Building Walls:*

- clear glass, glass block (storefront only)

- glass block (transom)
- stucco/exterior plaster (smooth trowled)
- new or used face-brick
- cut stone, rusticated block (cast stone)
- clapboard
- ceramic tiles (bulkhead)

*Roofs (where visible):*

- standing seam metal roofs
- class "A" composition shingles (limited to refurbishment of residential structures)
- tile of neutral color

***Discouraged Materials***

The following building materials are considered inappropriate in City Center and are discouraged.

*Building Walls:*

- imitation masonry (e.g. imitation, rusticated block) of any kind
- reflective or opaque glass (at the street level)
- vinyl, aluminum or other metal siding
- imitation stone or flagstone parquet
- rough sawn or "natural" (unfinished) wood
- "pecky" cedar
- used brick with no fired face (salvaged from interior walls)
- imitation wood siding
- coarsely finished "rough-sawn" on rustic materials (e.g. wood shakes, barnwood, board and batten or T-111 siding)
- plastic panels
- vertical siding
- walls painted with bright and/or contrasting colors

*Roofs (where visible):*

- crushed stone
- shake
- brightly colored tile (orange, blue, etc.)
- corrugated fiberglass

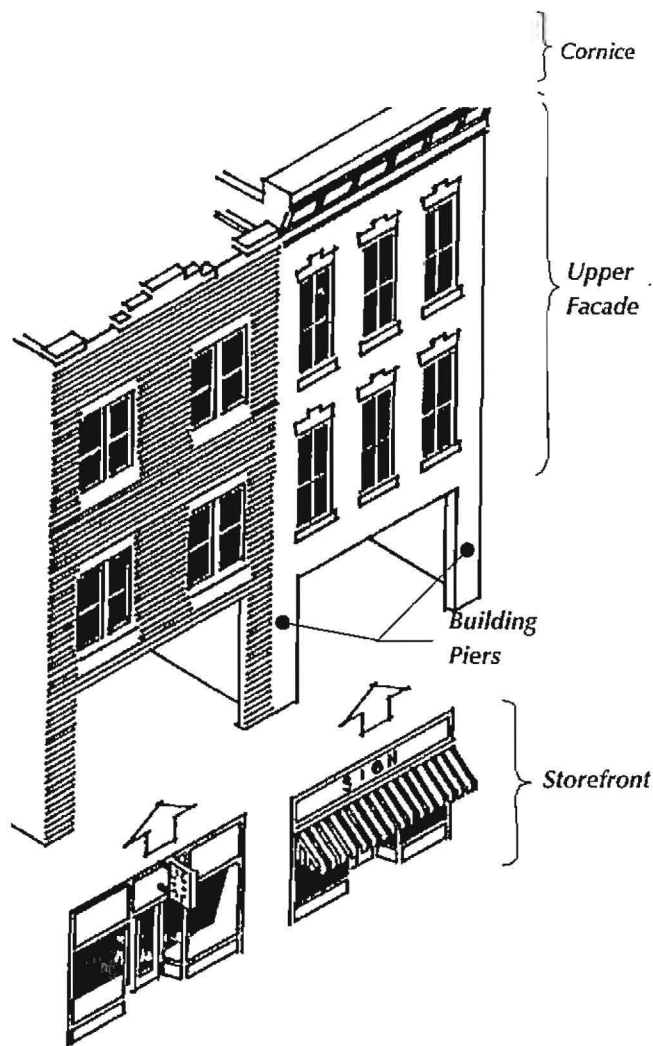
**5.8 THE UPPER FACADE**

The upper facade of a building is distinct from the street-level storefront, and the design qualities differ. The upper facade consists of the following components:

- The cornice and fascia that cap the building front;
- The building's upper stories;



- The windows, which provide articulation and interest to the upper architecture; and
- The piers, which extend to the ground level to visually support the



facade and frame the storefront.

The more massive, solid architecture of the upper facade gives the building its feeling of substance and expresses its architectural quality and character. As a result, the design treatment, materials and conditions of the upper facade play an important role in defining the architectural style of the building and in relating it to neighboring buildings in the block face.

The following paragraphs provide general guidance for the development and/or renovations of the upper facades of buildings in City Center.

- 5.8.1 Cornice and Fascia** A cornice or fascia creates a strong roof line and gives a finished appearance to the building facade. Where they have been removed these elements should be restored to re-emphasize the original design intent of the structure. The new cornice or fascia should be designed in proportion with the overall mass of the building.
- 5.8.2 Wall Materials** Wall materials should be selected to coordinate with neighboring structures and to complement the design of the storefront.
- 5.8.3 Windows** Upper story windows should create a sense of scale and to add articulation and visual interest to the upper facade. The reintroduction or reglazing of the facade's original upper story windows will have a dramatic impact in restoring the architectural integrity of many commercial buildings. The proportions of the restored windows and the rhythm of the window pattern should replicate the original facade design as closely as possible.
- 5.8.4 Piers** The piers that frame the storefront and visually anchor the upper facade play an essential role in creating the unified architectural framework which organizes the street level's visual diversity. Where these piers have been eliminated or reduced in size, the architectural definition of the facade will be weak and the upper architecture inadequately balanced. The piers' width and spacing should give support to the facade. Piers which segment the storefront are recommended on wide buildings to improve proportional balance. To emphasize the piers' integral role in defining the architectural character of the upper facade, they should be treated with the same surface material.
- 5.9 BUILDING ADDITIONS, RENOVATIONS, AND DEMOLITIONS** The renovation/restoration of older structures provides an excellent means of maintaining and reinforcing the historic character of Columbia's traditional City Center and should be encouraged. Renovation and expansion not only increases property values in the area but also serves as an inspiration to other property owners and developers to make similar efforts.

When an existing structure is to be renovated or expanded, care should be taken to complete the work in a manner that respects the original design character of the structure. The appropriate design guidelines in this section are to be implemented whenever a structure is to be renovated or expanded.

In addition, renovation of structures of historic significance should follow applicable City-adopted guidelines for historic landmarks and districts and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (see Appendix A).

**5.9.1 Preservation of Traditional Features and Decoration**

Sensitive response to existing materials, details, proportions, as well as patterns of materials and openings is strongly recommended when any such work will affect the appearance of an existing building's exterior.

- Many times in the remodeling of storefronts, original decorative details are intact as visual "leftovers" or simply covered up with subsequent construction. If the building is to be refurbished, these forgotten details should not be wasted. If enough of them remain, they can be restored as part of the original design. If only a few remain, they can be incorporated as design features in a new storefront. In either case, the design of any improvements should grow out of the remaining traditional details and create a harmonious background which emphasizes them.
- Existing historic decoration should be preserved. It reinforces the traditional character of Columbia's City Center and adds a richness of detail which is often irreplaceable at today's costs. At the same time, the details of the decoration lend a unique character to individual buildings and to City Center as a whole. In cases where historic

**5.9.2 Removal of Elements Inconsistent with Original Facade**

Buildings are often altered over time in an effort by owners or shopkeepers to "keep up with changing times" or to "remake a tired image." Unfortunately, such changes are often done in a "tack-on" manner and result in gradual, but severe, erosion of the original character and cohesion of an area. Restoration of buildings which have been substantially or carelessly altered is strongly encouraged.

- Existing building elements incompatible with the original facade design of the building should be removed. These include: excessive use of exterior embellishments and "modernized" elements such as metal grilles or rusticated materials.
- Metal aluminum canopies have a thin, unsubstantial and "tacked on" appearance which is inconsistent with the desirable design concept for City Center. Existing metal canopies should be removed and, if appropriate, replaced with fabric awnings, consistent with the architectural style of the building.
- There are many major multi-story buildings in City Center which have had all of their original facades covered over with "modernized" material veneers. These veneers or slipcovers should be removed in whole to reveal the intact original facades whenever possible.

**5.9.3 Storefront Renovation**

- Where the original storefront remains (little or no remodeling has occurred), it should be preserved and repaired with as little alteration as possible.

- Where only part of the original storefront remains (limited remodeling has occurred), the storefront should be repaired, maintaining historic materials where possible, including the replacement of extensively deteriorated or missing parts with new parts based upon surviving examples of transoms, bulkheads, pilasters, signs, etc.
- Where the original storefront is completely missing (extensive remodeling has occurred), the first priority is to reconstruct the storefront based upon historical, pictorial and physical documentation. If that is not practical, the design of the new storefront should be compatible with the size, scale, proportion, material and color of the existing structure.

#### 5.9.4 Window Replacement

The impact of windows on the facade is determined by the size, shape, pattern of openings, spacing and placement within the facade. When altering or reconstructing windows, consideration of these elements is crucial to retaining the structure's original architectural balance and integrity.

- Wherever possible retain the original window openings. If the existing ceiling has been lowered, pull the dropped ceiling back from the original window.
- If possible, save and restore the original windows and frames. Replace missing, rotting or broken sash, frames, mullions and muntins with similar material.
- If the original window openings have been altered, developers are encouraged to restore the openings to their original configuration and detail. Blocking or filling window openings that contribute to the overall facade design is discouraged.
- When replacing windows, consideration should be given to the original size and shape detailing and framing materials. Where practical, replacement windows should be the same operating type as the original window.

#### 5.9.5 Door Replacement

- Where possible, original doors and door hardware should be retained, repaired and refinished, provided they can comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- If new replacement doors are necessary, they should be compatible with the historical character and design of the structure.

#### 5.9.6 Awnings

- Original awning hardware should be used if it is in working order or is repairable.



- The traditional canvas, slanted awnings are most appropriate for older storefronts and is encouraged over contemporary hooped or box styles.

#### 5.9.7 Painting

Done properly, painting can be one of the simplest and most dramatic improvements one can make to a facade. It gives the facade a well-maintained appearance and is essential to the long life of many traditional materials.

#### 5.9.8 Repair and Cleaning

- Surface cleaning should be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other harsh cleaning methods that may damage historic building materials is strongly discouraged.
- Waterproofing and graffiti proofing sealers should be used after cleaning and repair.

#### 5.9.9 Replacement Of Unavailable Components

When historic construction materials cannot be replaced or matched, care should be taken to match the original pattern, thickness, color, and texture as closely as possible with available materials. In general, simulated replacement materials (artificial stone, simulated "aged" brick) are discouraged.

#### 5.9.10 Additions To Existing Structures

The design of a proposed addition should follow the general scale, proportion, massing, and detailing of the original structure; it should be harmonious, not in stark contrast.

- New additions should be interpretations of the existing buildings wherein the main characteristics of the existing structure are incorporated using modern construction methods. This may include: the extension of architectural lines from the existing structure to the addition; repetition of window and entrance spacing; use of harmonizing colors and materials; and the inclusion of similar, yet distinct, architectural details (i.e., window/door trim, lighting fixtures, tile/brick decoration, etc.).
- New additions should be designed so that if the addition were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the original structure would be unimpaired.
- Decks, stairs and other minor additions should use similar materials, design, and colors to the original building. These additions should occur in areas not visible from the street.

#### 5.9.11 Demolitions

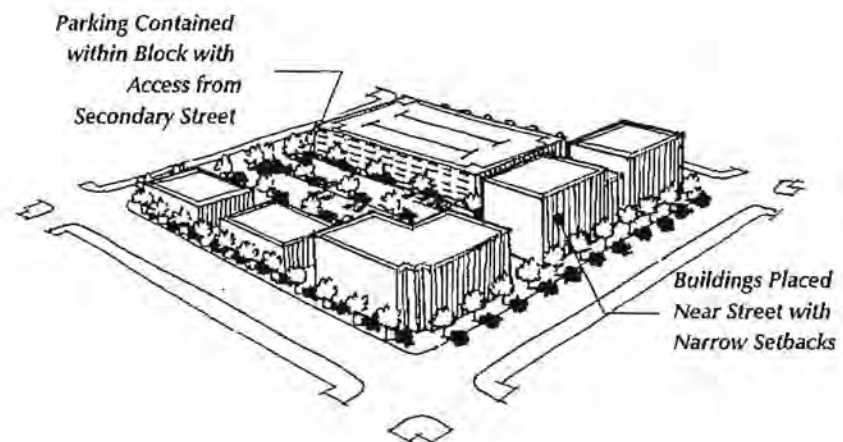
Demolition of existing buildings is strongly discouraged. However, in certain cases buildings are not in character with their surroundings nor are they functionally necessary. In such situations a building may be

demolished if a replacement building in character with the surrounding structures replaces the structure being demolished.

## 6.8 PARKING FACILITY, LOCATION, LANDSCAPING, AND SCREENING

The location and design treatment of the parking needed to serve City Center development will have significant influence on the area's physical structure and visual character. One of the most difficult issues in urban development is providing an adequate amount of convenient parking without allowing parking structures and surface lots to dominate the urban setting. The amount of off-street parking required for any new development is prescribed in the City's Zoning Ordinance; the guidance provided herein should ultimately be reflected in the parking provisions of that ordinance. Following are several principles that should apply to all parking facilities within City Center, both structured and surface.

- Generally, the parking required for each block should be contained within that block. Where parcels within a block are developed by different owners, the parking requirements of each development should be accommodated within its own parcel unless a cooperative parking plan is submitted at the time of the earliest development.



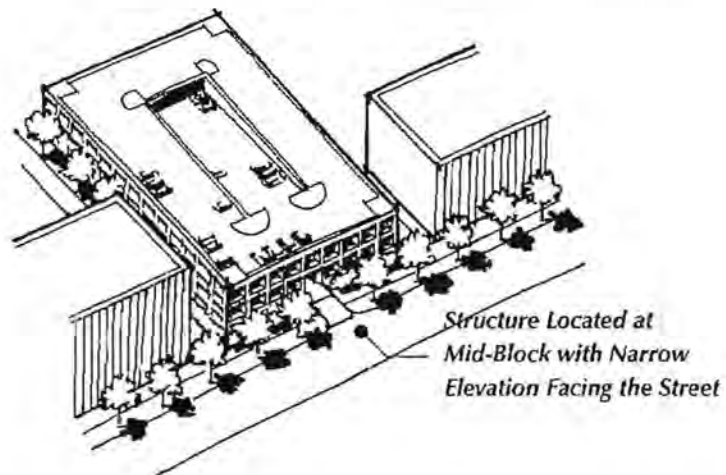
- For office, retail, and/or residential uses, the City may broaden approved parking requirements from those requirements specified in the *Zoning Ordinance*.
- Consideration should be given to proposals for reduced off-street parking requirements based on analysis of potential for shared use of parking spaces by two or more uses which do not experience concurrent peak parking demands, or the potential for sharing adjacent existing off-street parking facilities.

- A standard directional sign designating parking areas should be designed and adopted for use throughout City Center.
- The use of an entire block for parking (either surface or structured) is generally discouraged.

### 6.8.1 Structured Parking

The location and design of parking structures both public and private should be governed by the following guidelines:

- Where possible, parking structures should be located within the block core, with actively programmed building space fronting on all streets.



- Where location of parking within the block core is not feasible, parking structures should be located to the rear of the principal-use building, with the principal-use building oriented to front on the address street. The ground floor of the parking structure should be actively programmed on streets with an active commercial frontage.
- No parking structure frontage should be permitted on City Center's gateway, image, or pedestrian priority streets unless the structure's facade provides a compatible streetscape frontage and active programming on the ground floor.
- Any parking structure which is located adjacent to a street should be set back a minimum of 6 feet and a maximum of 10 feet from the sidewalk. This setback should be landscaped with trees, shrubs, and ground cover to soften views of the structure, provide visual interest, and establish a sense of human scale.
- Structured parking configured as a base level podium supporting a high-rise tower should not be permitted.

- The parking structure should be compatible in quality, form, materials, colors and textures with the structure(s) being served.



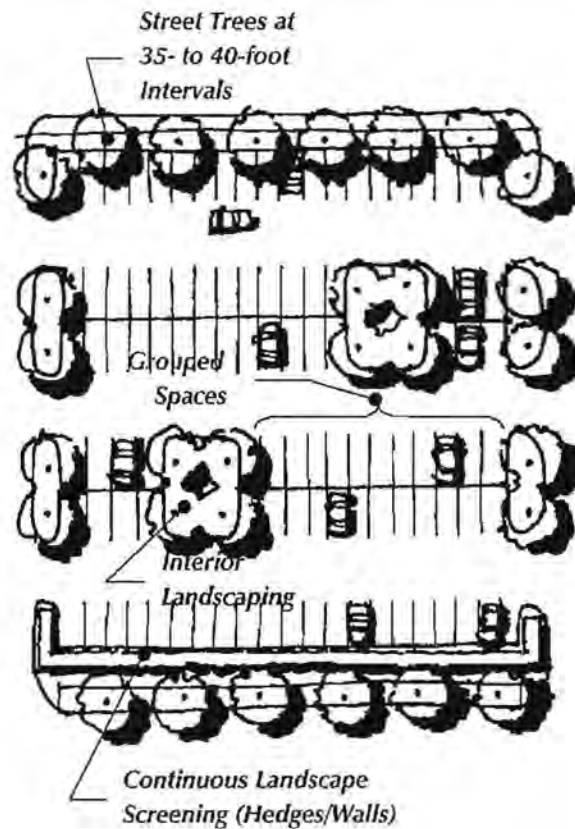
- Parking structure roof lines which are visible from the street should be level; ramping should occur within the structure or on the interior of the block where it is screened from the street.

### 6.8.2 Surface Parking

New surface parking lots should be designed to minimize the negative impact of large paved surfaces on the quality of the visual environment. New surface lots should be designed according to these guidelines:

- Street trees should be provided along all street frontage and spaced at 35- to 40-foot intervals.





- Continuous landscape screening (along 100 percent of the street frontage except at entrances and exits) must be provided by an evergreen or deciduous hedge.
- Street trees should be installed at a minimum size of 2½-inch caliper and should be 14 to 16 feet high.
- Hedges should be installed at a minimum height of 24 inches, with a maximum spacing of 30 inches; hedges should be maintained at a height of 36 to 42 inches. Hedges should be installed in a minimum 5-foot wide continuous landscape zone.
- Solid masonry walls 30 to 36 inches high can be substituted for hedges to screen parking areas; Materials should match the site's exterior building materials. Where such walls replace hedges, the 5-foot landscape zone should be maintained.
- Concrete or masonry barrier curbing should be provided for all perimeter and interior parking lot landscaping.
- Parking lots shall be separated from sidewalks, streets, or alleys by an open space of at least five feet between the parking area and the

edge of the right-of-way. This area shall be landscaped with appropriate grass, ground cover, shrubs, and trees.

- Interior parking lot landscaping should be provided to divide lots into groups of parking spaces and break large expanses of parking. Parking lots should have one landscaped island and one shade tree per twenty parking spaces. The minimal size of an interior landscaped parking island should be 200 square feet. Landscaped islands at least 5 feet in width shall be introduced in all parking areas at intervals not exceeding 100 feet. A minimum of 10 percent of the total area of the lot shall be dedicated to landscaped areas.
- When at least 25 percent of all outdoor vehicular pavement area, or at least 50 percent of all outdoor pedestrian pavement area, consists of decorative or permeable pavement, the required average density of trees required in parking lots shall be decreased by 25 percent.
- The required average density of trees in parking lots shall be decreased by 25 percent when stone, unit masonry, or other decorative curb is provided in lieu of concrete curb.
- Temporary parking lots: Temporary parking lots are often established on vacant lots or in conjunction with development projects (to accommodate vehicles associated with the development). Temporary parking lots shall be allowed for surface parking for a time not to exceed one calendar year from the date of initial use.

These standards should be applied and enforced for all existing and new parking lots. The City should work with owners of existing parking facilities to jointly provide improvements within and beyond the public right-of-way. This approach can be used as a mechanism to systematically improve public and private property adjacent to parking lots.

---

## CHAPTER 6

# SIGN DESIGN GUIDELINES

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In Columbia, as in many American towns, the visual distinction between the traditional downtown business district and outlying general commercial strips has become blurred. Sign manufacturers and designers have encouraged businesses downtown to install the type of large-scale signs used along commercial highways, where signs need to be larger to attract the attention of motorists passing at high speeds. Pedestrian-oriented commercial areas, such as much of the City Center, were designed to accommodate shoppers strolling along sidewalks and motorists driving at slower speeds. Signs to attract the attention of these passers-by should accordingly be encouraged; this chapter provides guidance on how to evaluate the quality of signs to ensure that this is done.

While size is an important aspect of signs, proper sizing does not ensure an attractive sign. Other considerations such as location, lettering style, color and illumination are also very important in designing an attractive, functional sign. The guidelines that follow address these issues, and others, and are intended to help business owners put up quality signs that add to and support the historic character of City Center.

***Special Note:*** *The following are “guidelines” only and are not intended to supersede the Columbia Sign Ordinance. All signs must comply with the regulations contained in Article H, Regulation of Signs, of the Columbia Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 3 of the Municipal Code).*

### 6.2 GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following general design guidelines should be considered prior to developing signs for any project.

#### 6.2.1 Color

- Color is one of the most important aspects of visual communication. It can be used to catch the eye or to communicate ideas or feelings.
- Too many colors used simultaneously can confuse and negate the message of a sign. Even the most carefully planned sign may look unattractive due to poor color selection.
- Contrast is an important influence on the legibility of signs. Light letters on a dark background or dark letters on a light background are most legible.

- Limit the total number of colors used in any one sign. Small accents of several colors may make a sign unique and attractive, but the competition of large areas of many different colors decreases readability.
- Colors or color combinations that interfere with legibility of the sign copy or that interfere with viewer identification of other signs should be avoided. Bright day-glo (fluorescent) colors should be avoided as they are distracting and do not usually blend well with other background colors.
- Sign colors should complement the colors used on the structures and the project as a whole.
- Advertising signs should not be painted directly over brick facades in historic districts, however, historic painted signs or advertisements may be preserved when they add to the overall character of the building.

## 6.2.2 Materials

- The following materials are recommended for signs in City Center:
  - Wood (carved, sandblasted, etched, and properly sealed, primed and painted, or stained).
  - Metal (formed, etched, cast, engraved, and properly primed and painted or factory coated to protect against corrosion).
  - High density pre-formed foam or similar material. New materials may be very appropriate if properly designed in a manner consistent with these guidelines, and painted or otherwise finished to compliment the architecture.
  - Custom neon tubing, in the form of graphics or lettering, may be incorporated into several of the above permitted sign types.
  - Sign materials should be compatible with the design of the face of the facade where they are placed.
- The selected materials should contribute to the legibility of the sign. For example, glossy finishes are often difficult to read because of glare and reflections.
- Individually-mounted internally illuminated channel letters, and internally illuminated plastic-faced cabinet signs are discouraged.
- Paper and cloth signs are not suitable for exterior use (except on awnings) because they deteriorate quickly. Paper and cloth signs are appropriate for interior temporary use only. The use



of signs on paper or cloth should be the result of careful thinking about readability and the image of the business.

### 6.2.3 Sign Legibility

- An effective sign should do more than attract attention, it should communicate its message. Usually, this is a question of the readability of words and phrases. The most significant influence on legibility is lettering.
- Use a brief message whenever possible. The fewer the words, the more effective the sign. A sign with a brief, succinct message is easier to read and looks more attractive. Evaluate each word. If the word does not contribute directly to the basic message of the sign, it detracts from it and probably should be deleted.
- Avoid spacing letters and words too close together. Crowding of letters, words or lines will make any sign more difficult to read. Conversely, over-spacing these elements causes the viewer to read each item individually, again obscuring the message. As a general rule, letters should not occupy more than 75% of sign panel area.
- Limit the number of lettering styles in order to increase legibility. A general rule to follow is to limit the number of different letter types to no more than two for small signs and three for larger signs.
- Avoid hard-to-read, overly intricate typefaces and symbols. Typefaces and symbols that are difficult to read reduce the sign's ability to communicate.
- Avoid faddish or bizarre typefaces if they are difficult to read. These typefaces may be in vogue and look good today, but soon may go out of style. The image conveyed by the sign may quickly become that of a dated and unfashionable business.
- Use symbols and logos in the place of words whenever appropriate. Pictographic images will usually register more quickly in the viewer's mind than a written message.

### 6.2.4 Sign Illumination

- The way in which a sign is to be illuminated should be considered carefully. Like color, illumination has considerable value for visual communication.
- First, consider if the sign needs to be lighted at all. Lights in the window display may be sufficient to identify the business. This is particularly true if good window graphics are used.

Often, nearby street lights provide ample illumination of a sign after dark.

- If the sign can be illuminated by an indirect source of light, this is usually the best arrangement because the sign will appear to be better integrated with the building's architecture. Light fixtures supported in front of the structure cast light on the sign and generally a portion of the face of the structure as well. Indirect lighting emphasizes the continuity of the structure's surface and signs become an integral part of the facade.
- Whenever indirect lighting fixtures are used (fluorescent or incandescent), care should be taken to properly shield the light source to prevent glare from spilling over into residential areas and any public right-of-way. Signs should be lighted only to the minimum level required for nighttime readability.
- Back-lighted solid letters, are a preferred alternative to internally illuminated letter signs. Signs comprised of opaque individually cut letters mounted directly on a structure can often use a distinctive element of the structure's facade as a backdrop, thereby providing a better integration of the sign with the structure.
- The most appropriate type of sign illumination in City Center is indirect lighting. Again, indirect lighting helps the sign to appear as an integral part of the facade, not something that was added later. Indirect lighting is also more appropriate for historic districts and produces a more intimate ambiance on the street. Signs that are directly lighted are allowed in City Center Commercial Districts.

### 6.3 WALL SIGNS

- Signs should be placed consistent with the proportions and scale of the elements within the structure's facade. A particular sign may fit well on a plain wall area, but might overpower the finer scale and proportion of a lower storefront. A sign which is appropriate near an entry may look tiny and out of place above the ground level.
- Signs should be located where architectural features or details suggest a location, size, or shape for the sign. The best location for a wall sign continues to be a band or blank area between the first and second floors of a building.
- Signs should be placed on buildings consistent with sign locations on adjacent buildings. This can establish visual continuity among store fronts.

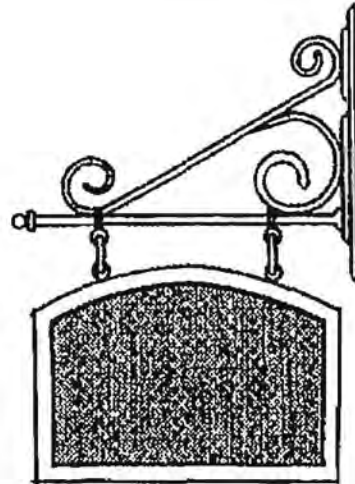
*Appropriate**Inappropriate*

- In pedestrian-oriented areas, signs should relate to the sidewalk instead of motorists. In this case, small projecting signs or signs under awnings are most appropriate. Place signs in close proximity to the store entrance.



## 6.4 PROJECTING SIGNS

- The number of projecting signs per business should be limited to one. The distance between projecting signs shall be at least 50 feet for maximum visibility.
- On a multi-storied building, the sign should be suspended between the bottom of the second story window sills and the top of the doors or windows of the first story. On a one-story building, the top of the sign should be suspended in line with the lowest point of the roof.



*Appropriate Projecting  
Sign Design*

- The sign should be hung at a 90° angle from the face of the building. It should be pinned at least 6 inches away from the wall for best visibility but should not project beyond a vertical plane set 2 feet inside the curb line.
- The bottom of the sign should maintain at least a 10 foot pedestrian clearance from the sidewalk level.





- All signs which project over a public right-of-way require a City sign permit.
- Decorative iron and wood brackets that support projecting signs are encouraged.
- The lines of the brackets should harmonize with the shape of the sign. The most important feature of a bracket should be its ability to hold up the sign.
- To avoid damaging brick and stonework, brackets should be designed so that they can be bolted into masonry joints when possible.

## 6.5 WINDOW SIGNS

**Note:** Interior signs 12-inches or less from the window are considered as exterior advertising signs and as such are counted in the overall sign square footage limits of the City's zoning regulations.

- Window signs (permanent or temporary) should not cover more than 50 percent of the area of each window.



- Window signs should be limited to individual letters and logos placed on the interior surface of the window and intended to be viewed from outside. Glass-mounted graphic logos may be applied by silk screening or pre-spaced vinyl die-cut forms.

## 6.6 AWNING SIGNS

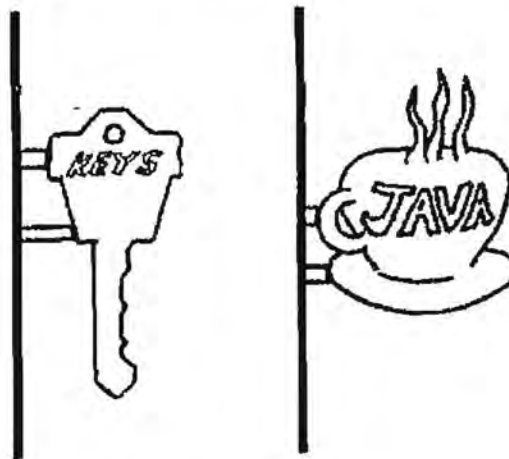
- When initially installed, awnings should be provided with removable valances and end panels to accommodate future changes in sign copy. Painting cloth awnings in order to change sign copy is strongly discouraged, as this will decrease the fire resistant/retardant properties of the treated canvas.
- The text copy is limited to the name of the business only.

- Letter color should be compatible with the awning and the building color scheme.



## 6.7 FIGURATIVE SIGNS

Signs which advertise the occupant business through the use of graphic or crafted symbols, such as shoes, keys, glasses, books, etc. are encouraged. Figurative signs may be incorporated into any of the allowable sign types identified above.



*Figurative Signs*

---

## CHAPTER 7

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

#### 7.1 DESIGN TERMS

**Aesthetics** - The science and philosophy of beauty. If something is aesthetic, it is of beauty or artistic.

**Alignment (Architectural)** - The visual alignment and subsequent placement of architectural elements such as windows, cornice elements, soffits, awnings, etc. from one structure to adjacent structures in order to promote blockscape continuity.

**Articulation** - Describes the degree or manner in which a building wall or roofline is made up of distinct parts or elements. A highly articulated wall will appear to be composed of a number of different planes, usually made distinct by their change in direction (projections and recesses) and/or changes in materials, colors or textures.

**Blockscape** - The aggregated facade wall composed of uninterrupted placement of individual urban oriented structures located side-by-side along an entire block as opposed to individual buildings located within the block.

**Mass** - Mass describes three dimensional forms, the simplest of which are cubes, boxes (or "rectangular solids"), cylinders, pyramids and cones. Buildings are rarely one of these simple forms, but generally are composites of varying types of assets. This composition is generally described as the "massing" of forms in a building.

During the design process, massing is one of many aspects of form considered by an architect or designer and can be the result of both exterior and interior design concepts. Exterior massing can identify an entry, denote a stairway or simply create a desirable form. Interior spaces (or lack of mass) can be designed to create an intimate space or perhaps a monumental entry. Interior spaces create and affect exterior mass, and exterior mass can affect the interior space.

Mass and massing are inevitably affected by their opposite, open space. The lack of mass, or creation of perceived open space, can significantly affect the character of a building. Architects often call attention to a lack of mass, by defining the open space with low walls or railings. Landscape architects also use massing in design such as in grouping of plants with different sizes and shapes. These areas are intended to be perceived as a whole rather than as individual trees or shrubs. Plant masses can be used to fill a space, define the boundary of an open area, or extend the perceived form of an architectural element.

**Monolithic** A single large flat surface (facade) without relief. A massive unyielding structure.

**Pattern** The pattern of material can also add texture and can be used to add character, scale and balance to a building. The lines of the many types of brick bonds are examples of how material can be placed in a pattern to create texture. The natural texture of rough wood shingles exhibit texture by the nature of the material and by the pattern in which the shingles are placed.

**Proportion** Proportion deals with the ratio of dimension between elements. Proportion can describe height to height ratios, width to width ratios, width to height ratios, as well as ratios of massing. Landscaping can be used to establish a consistent rhythm along a streetscape which will disguise the lack of proportion in building size and placement.

**Rhythm (Horizontal, Vertical)** The regular or harmonious recurrence of lines, shapes, forms, elements or colors, usually within a proportional system.

**Scale (Human)** Scale is the measurement of the relationship of one object to another object. The scale of a building can be described in terms of its relationship to a human being. All components of a building also have a relationship to each other and to the building as a whole, which is the "scale" of the components. Generally, the scale of the building components also relate to the scale of the entire building.

The relationship of a building, or portions of a building, to a human being is called its relationship to "human scale." The spectrum of relationships to human scale ranges from *intimate* to *monumental*. Intimate usually refers to small spaces or detail which is very much in keeping with the human scale, usually areas around eight to ten feet in size. These spaces feel intimate because of the relationship of a human being to the space. The distance of eight to ten feet is about the limit of sensory perception of communication between people including voice inclination and facial expression. This distance is also about the limit of an up-stretched arm reach for human beings which is another measure of human scale. The components of a building with an intimate scale are often small and include details which break those components into smaller units.

At the other end of the spectrum, monumental scale is used to present a feeling of grandeur, security, timelessness or spiritual well-being. Building types which commonly use the monumental scale to express these feelings are banks, churches and civic buildings. The components of this scale also reflect this grandness, with oversized double door entries, 18 foot glass storefronts or two-story columns.



Landscape or hardscape elements can also bring human scale to a large building by introducing features such as a tree canopy, leaf textures and fragrance.

Plants can complement the scale of the architecture, as when large trees are used next to tall buildings, or small trees to accent a building component such as an entry.

**Surface Materials** Can be used to create a texture for a building from the roughness of stone or a ribbed metal screen to the smoothness of marble or glass. Some materials, such as wood, may be either rough (such as wood shingles or re-sawn lumber) or smooth (such as clapboard siding).

**Texture** Texture refers to variations in the exterior facade and may be described in terms of roughness of the surface material, the patterns inherent in the material or the patterns in which the material is placed. Texture and lack of texture influence the mass, scale and rhythm of a building. Texture also can add intimate scale to large buildings by the use of small detailed patterns, such as brick masonry.

## 7.2 ARCHITECTURAL AND PLANNING TERMS

**Arcade** An arched roof or covered passage way.

**Arch** A curved structure supporting its weight over an open space such as a door or window.

**Awning** A fixed cover, typically comprised of cloth over a metal frame, that is placed over windows or building openings as protection from the sun and rain.

**Balcony** A railed projecting platform found above ground level on a building.

**Baluster** The upright portion of the row of supports for a porch railing.

**Balustrade** A series of balusters surmounted by a rail.

**Bay (Structural)** A regularly repeated spatial element in a building defined by beams or ribs and their supports.

**Bulkhead** The space located between the pavement/sidewalk and the bottom of a traditional storefront window.

**Canopy** A projection over a niche or doorway; often decorative or decorated.

**Casement Window** Window with hinges to the side and a vertical opening either on the side or in the center.

**Colonnade** A row of columns supporting a roof structure.

**Column** A vertical support, usually cylindrical, consisting of a base, shaft and capital, either monolithic or built-up of drums the full diameter of the shaft.

**Cornice** The horizontal projection at the top of a wall; the top course or molding of a wall when it serves as a crowning member.

**Curb Cuts** The elimination of a street curb to enable vehicles to cross sidewalks and enter driveways or parking lots.

**Double Hung Window** A window with an upper and low sash arranged so that each slides vertically past the other.

**Eaves** The overhang at the lower edge of the roof which usually projects out over the walls.

**Facade** The exterior face of a building which is the architectural front, sometimes distinguished from other faces by elaboration of architectural or ornamental details.

**Fascia** The outside horizontal board on a cornice.

**Fenestration** The arrangement and design of windows in a building.

**Focal Point** A building, object or natural element in a streetscene that stands out and serves as a point of focus, catching and holding the viewer's attention.

**Glazed Brick** A brick which has been glazed and fired on one side.

**Hip Roof** A roof with four uniformly pitched sides.

**Infill** A newly constructed building within an existing development area.

**Lintel** A horizontal support member that supports a load over an opening, as a window or door opening, usually made of wood, stone or steel; may be exposed or obscured by wall coverings.

**Lot** A parcel of land, in single or joint ownership, and occupied or to be occupied by a main building and accessory buildings, or by a dwelling group and its accessory buildings, together with such open spaces and having its principal frontage on a street, road, highway or waterway.

**Mansard** Traditionally, a roof with two slopes on each side, the lower slope being much steeper. In contemporary commercial development,

the second portion of the roof is replaced with a flat roof or an equipment well. These are referred to as Mansard roofs but bear little resemblance to the original.

**Masonry** Wall construction of such material as stone, brick and adobe.

**Mullions** The divisional pieces in a multi-paned window.

**Ornamentation** Details added to a structure solely for decorative reasons (i.e. to add shape, texture or color to an architectural composition).

**Outbuilding** An auxiliary structure that is located away from a house or principal building (e.g. garage, studio, guest house, shed).

**Parapet** A low wall generally running around the outside of a flat roof.

**Pier** A stout column or pillar.

**Pilaster** A column attached to a wall or pier.

**Pitch** The slope of a roof expressed in terms of ratio of height to span.

**Porch** A covered entrance or semi-enclosed space projecting from the facade of a building; may be open sided or screened.

**Primary Building Facade** The particular facade of a building which faces the street to which the address of the building pertains.

**Recess** A hollow place, as in a wall.

**Relief** Carving raised above a background plane, as in base relief.

**Reveal** The vertical side section of a doorway or window frame.

**Ridge** The highest line of a roof when sloping planes intersect.

**Rustication** A method of forming stonework with recessed joints and smooth or roughly textured block faces.

**Sash** The framework into which window panes are set.

**Setback** The minimum horizontal distance between the lot or property line and the nearest front, side or rear line of the building (as the case may be), including porches or any covered projection thereof, excluding steps.

**Shake** Split wood shingles.

**Siding** The finish covering on the exterior of a frame building (with the exception of masonry). The term cladding is often used to describe any exterior wall covering, including masonry.

**Sill** The framing member that forms the lower side of an opening, such as a door sill. A window sill forms the lower, usually projecting, lip on the outside face of a window.

**Storefront** The traditional "main street" facade bounded by a structural pier on either side, the sidewalk on the bottom and the lower edge of the upper facade on top, typically dominated by retail display windows.

**Street Wall** The edges created by buildings and landscaping that enclose the street and create space.

**Stucco** An exterior finish, usually textured, composed of portland cement, lime and sand, which are mixed with water.

**Transom** The horizontal division or cross-bar in a window. A window opening above a door.

**Trellis** A lattice on which vines are often trained.

**Trim** The decorative finish around a door or window; the architrave or decorative casing used around a door or window frame.

### 7.3 PRESERVATION TERMS

**Restoration** The careful and meticulous return of a building to its appearance at a particular time period, usually on its original site, by removal of later work and/or replacement of missing earlier work.

**Reconstruction** The construction, on its original site or a replica of a building or facility which no longer exists, based upon archeological, historical, documentary and physical evidence. Both modern and traditional construction techniques may be used.

**Reconstitution** The piece-by-piece reassembly of a building. Reconstitution on the original site replaces buildings damaged by disasters such as war, earthquake or flood, where most of its parts remain; reconstitution at a new site is usually the result of changes in land use and redevelopment programs.

**Recycling, Adaptive Reuse** The reuse of older structures that would have otherwise been demolished, often involving extensive restoration or rehabilitation of the interior and/or exterior to accommodate the new use.

**Rehabilitation, Renovation** The modification of or changes to an existing building in order to extend its useful life or utility through



repairs or alterations, while preserving the features of the building that contribute to its architectural, cultural or historical character.

**Remodeling** Any change or alteration to a building which substantially alters its original state.

**Significant Architectural Style** The style of the building which existed when the building became important historically.



## APPENDIX A

# SECRETARY OF INTERIOR STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for property which requires minimal alteration of the building structure, or site and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.

The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.

All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.

Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.

Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.

Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, whenever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historic, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.

The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.

Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archaeological resources affected by, or adjacent to any project.

Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material, and character of the property, neighborhood or environment.

Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be impaired.





G:\2PROJECT\55020.00\55020.02\DDREPORT.WPD