

Part II: Site Planning

Part II addresses site planning components, offering guidance on essential qualities of open space, parking facilities, and fences and walls.

See complete guidelines document for additional language on Lighting Conditions, and Detached Structures/Enclosures.

Open Space

Downtown's network of urban open spaces take on various forms to provide essential areas for retreat, relaxation, recreation, and activity.

From sidewalks and alleys to pedestrian pathways and public plazas, the exterior spaces within Downtown Columbia facilitate pedestrian movement between destinations or offer spaces to gather and linger. These spaces should align with the following open space guidelines.



Public Open Space: This category of open space is dedicated area set aside or reserved in a private development as space fully open to the public, which may include alleys, parks, and urban plazas.



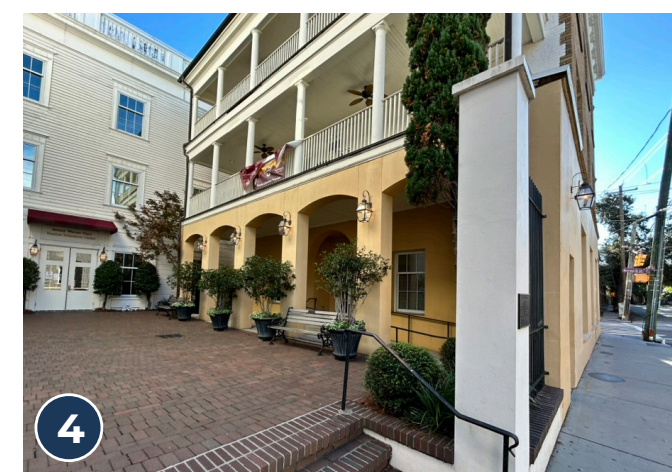
Semi-Public Open Space: This category of open space applies to spaces in private development that may be visually accessible to the public but may not be physically accessible to the public. Such spaces may include perimeter bufferyards, private patios and yards, and other such areas not available for general public use.



Privately Owned Public Space: This category of open space, also known as POPS, is an amenity space provided within a private development but accessible from and connected to the public realm and open to the public. All POPS must be in conformance with these design guidelines.

Intent

Ensure public and semi-public spaces within developments and in-between buildings serve as extensions of Downtown's public realm and are accessible, flexible, durable, comfortable, attractive, and lively spaces.



Landscape Design

- 7 ▶ **Shade Trees:** Incorporate shade or canopy trees into open space where feasible.
- ▶ **Plant Selection:**
 - ▶ Integrate plantings as part of the site design to enhance the overall aesthetic.
 - ▶ Select plant varieties for their suitability to the local climate and soil conditions; resistance to pests, diseases, and drought; and durable qualities to be long-lasting and low maintenance.

Open Space Guidelines

Connection with the Public Realm

- 1 ▶ Configure open space so that it is visible from and directly connects to the public sidewalk.
- 2 ▶ Place focal points of interest, such as art, sculpture, and fountains, at prominent locations to draw the attention and movement of pedestrians.

Active Frontage

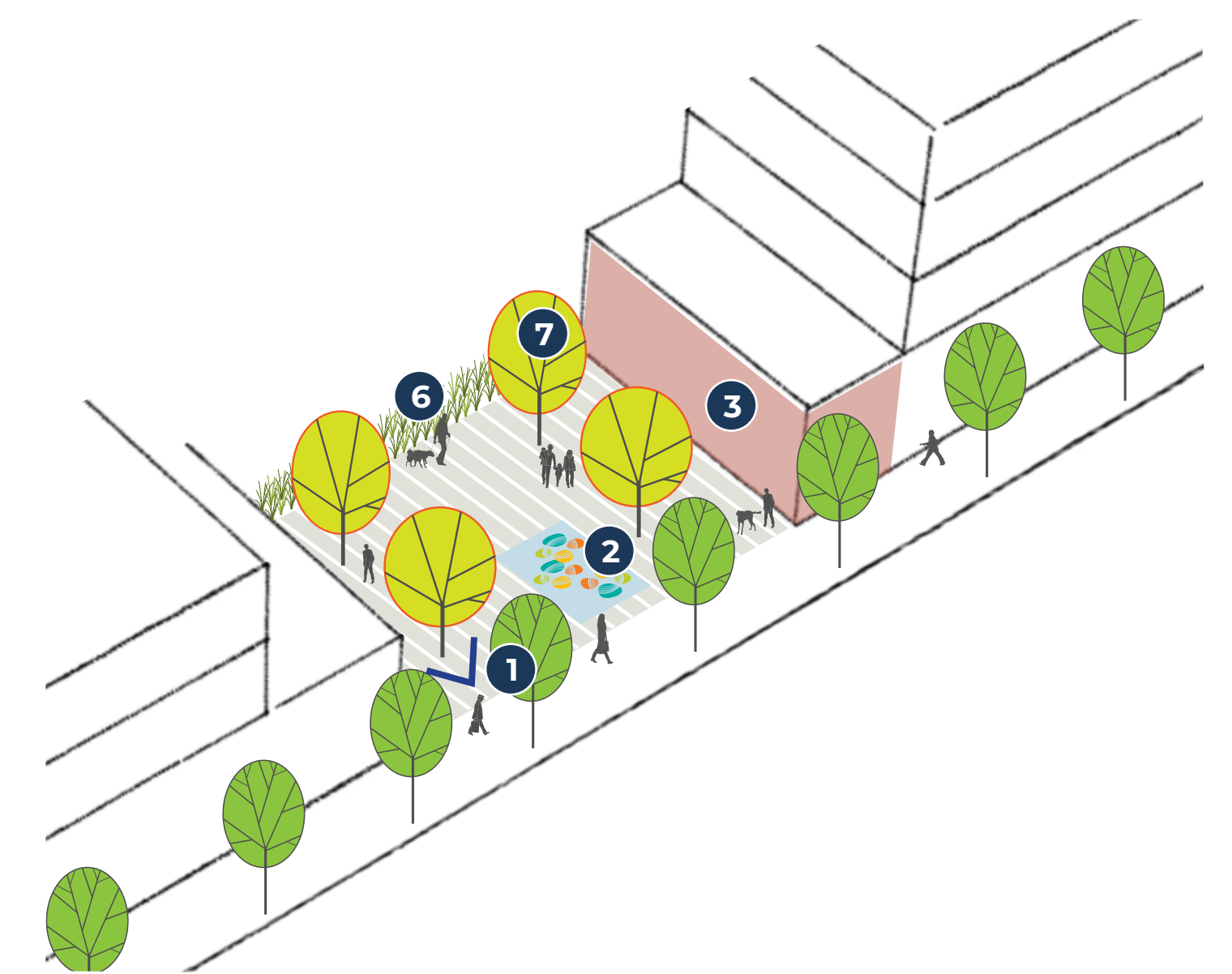
- 3 ▶ Activate at least one side of open space with one or more of the following activities or uses:
 - ▶ **Residential:** a residential use with a porch, stoop, balcony, or similar frontage overlooking the space;
 - ▶ **Retail or Personal Service:** a retail or personal service use with a storefront featuring a majority of storefront windows;
 - ▶ **Eating or Drinking Establishment:** a restaurant or bar with outdoor seating area;
 - ▶ **Office:** an office use with a primary or secondary entry facing the open space; or
 - ▶ **Recreation/Entertainment or Public/Civic/Institutional:** a recreational, entertainment, public, civic, or institutional use with a primary entry facing the open space.

Courtyards

- 4 ▶ **Residential Courtyards:** Orient residential windows, balconies, and ground-floor level stoops and/or patios to overlook the courtyard space.
- 5 ▶ **Commercial Courtyards:** Utilize commercial courtyards as areas for secondary frontage for retail and restaurant uses, outdoor seating, and display areas.

Furnishings and Amenities

- 6 ▶ Provide at least three (3) of the following elements in open space areas:
 - ▶ Plantings (either along the building perimeter or within a centralized planting area);
 - ▶ Surface treatments other than concrete;
 - ▶ Public art (either on the surface of vertical objects, interactive, or independent piece);
 - ▶ Water feature (either still or animated); and/or
 - ▶ Food service or other permanent vending or kiosk.
- ▶ **Site Furnishings:** Ensure site furniture and/or outdoor seating is of sturdy, commercial-grade construction designed for outdoor use.
- ▶ **Outdoor Seating:** Include varying types of site furniture and/or outdoor seating arrangements accommodating a range of users.



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See complete guidelines document for additional guidance on fences based on their function (i.e. screening, privacy, etc.)

Parking Facilities

What are Parking Facilities?

A parking facility includes surface parking lots, structured parking, and other spaces or enclosures dedicated to temporary storage of vehicles.

The goal of these guidelines is to provide an adequate amount of convenient parking without allowing parking structures and surface lots to dominate the urban setting of Downtown Columbia. The location and design treatment of parking facilities serving downtown development has significant influence on visual quality and character of Downtown.

Location of Parking Facilities

- 1 ▶ In general, contain parking facilities within the interior of the block.
- 2 ▶ Locate parking facility access points to minimize conflict with pedestrians and bicycle activity.
- 3 ▶ Avoid locating parking facilities on corners of street intersections. Rather, place buildings or public amenities at intersections.

Screening of Surface Parking Areas

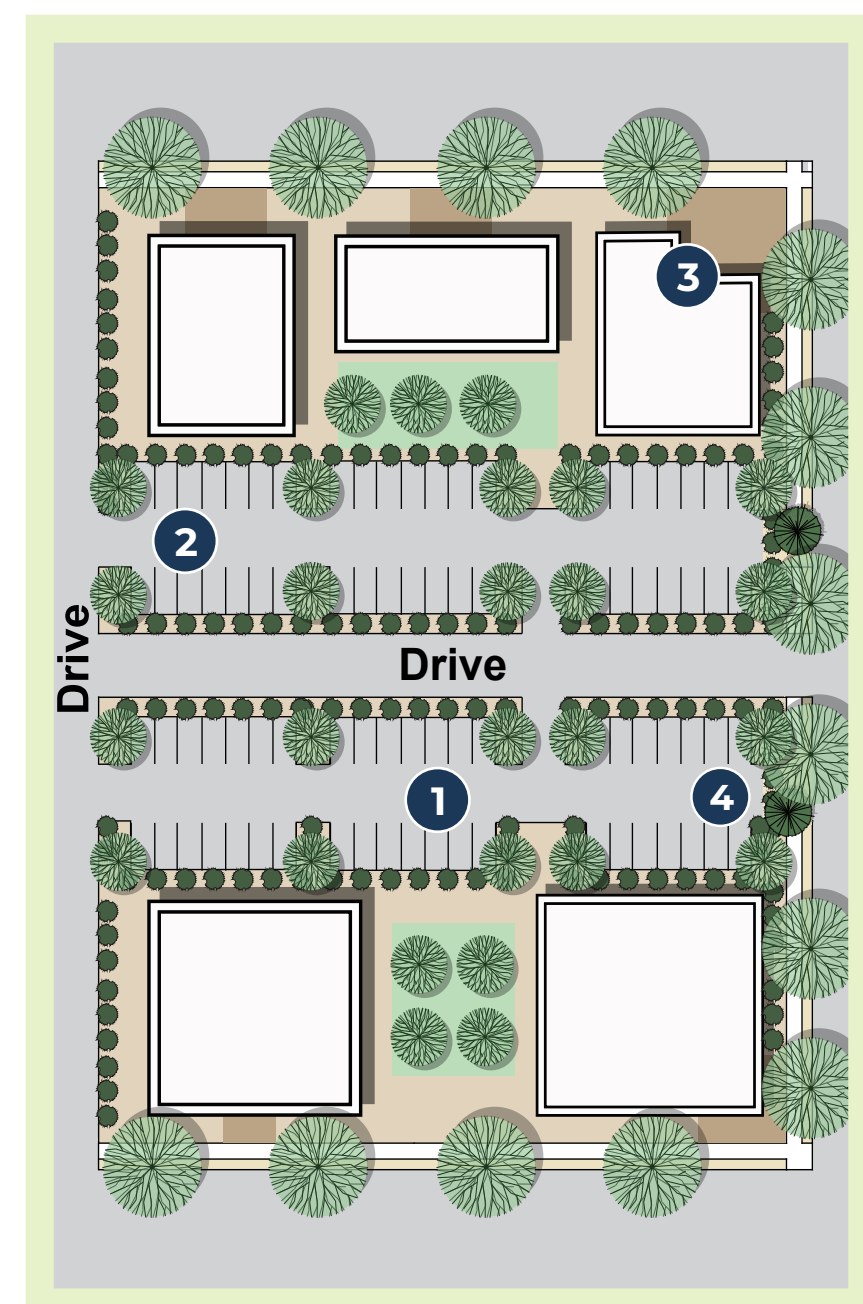
- 4 ▶ Provide a street protective yard with a minimum width of five (5) feet providing adequate planting areas for the healthy growth of required trees to maturity. Exceptions to the required street protective yard include areas designated for pedestrian pathways and vehicular ingress/egress points that intersect perpendicular to the street protective yard.

Mixed Office-Residential Areas

This type of frontage applies to mixed office-residential development (like single-family structures or similar buildings commonly found in Arsenal Hill).

- 5 ▶ Locate garages at least ten (10) feet behind the front face of the principal structure.
- 6 ▶ Locate parking pads dedicated for vehicles to the side or rear of the principal structure.
- 7 ▶ Extend driveways along the side of the principal structure.
- ▶ Avoid locating areas designated for vehicular parking in front of the principal structure.

Intent
Minimize the diminishing effects that parking facilities have on the built environment through placement, design, and screening.



Fences & Walls

What are Fences & Walls?

For the purposes of these Design Guidelines, a fence or wall is a barrier erected for security, privacy, and/or screening, to define a space, or simply as a decorative feature. The design and placement of these features can have a significant impact on the urban environment, both functionally and aesthetically.

Enhance the Pedestrian Experience

- ▶ Utilize one of the following design strategies in instances where a fence and/or wall are adjacent to the pedestrian realm:
 - ▶ Use at least two materials, one as the predominant material and the other as an accent;
 - ▶ Incorporate seating opportunities with low walls at appropriate height;
 - ▶ Soften the wall with terraces, planters, and/or vegetative cover with native plant species well-adapted to Columbia's climate;
 - ▶ Integrate art or crafted design into the wall such as mosaic tiles or ironwork;
 - ▶ Use natural material or adaptively reused material to add historical reference and meaning; or
 - ▶ Alternate the height of fence components at regular intervals.

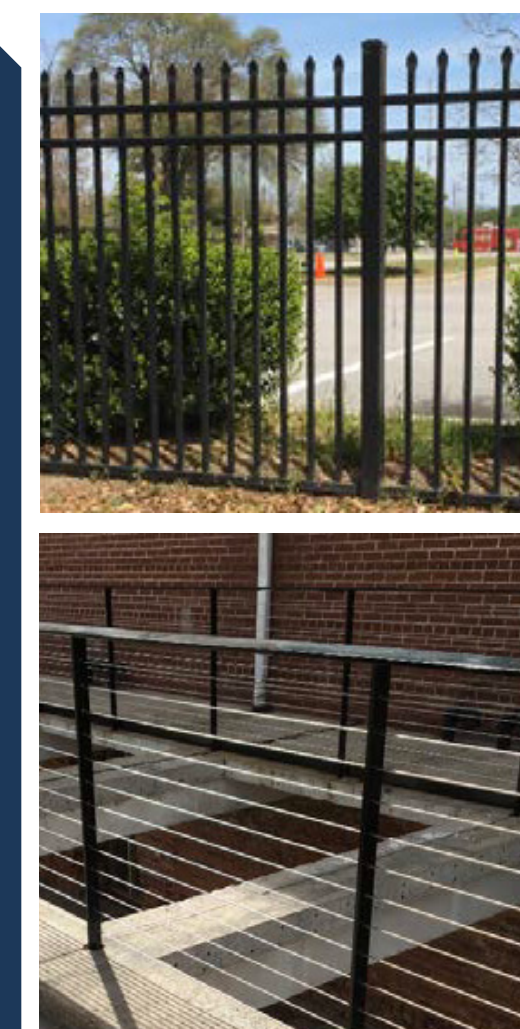
Reinforce Context-Sensitive Design

- ▶ Ensure design, material, location, and scale of fences and walls are compatible with adjacent structures on the property and existing walls and fences commonly found along the streetscape.

Minimize Visual Impact of Parking & Service Areas

- ▶ Utilize fences and walls complimentary to buildings and the streetscape for screening in instances where parking and service areas cannot be located behind buildings and away from pedestrian/public spaces.

Intent
Treat fences and walls as features that enhance the pedestrian experience, reinforce an area's character, and complement the scale and patterns of Downtown.



Fence & Wall Types & Materials

Steel or Aluminum Picket or Rail Fence

- ▶ Metal fences shall be transparent, and made of commercial grade materials, powder-coated or stainless steel for weather resilience.
- ▶ Style of fence shall be consistent with the style of the building, i.e., traditional decorative fences with lots of detail are more appropriate for historic or traditional buildings, whereas modern or simple building designs call for a more streamlined fence design.

Masonry Fences or Walls

- ▶ Metal solid masonry or stucco walls should relate to the structure(s) on the property.

Masonry with Metal Picket Fencing

- ▶ Fences may have masonry columns with fencing between or knee walls with fencing on top, or some combination thereof.
- ▶ Columns may be brick, stone, concrete, or stucco, but should have some relationship to the building(s) on the site. Picket style shall also be consistent with the style of the property.

