

CITY OF KENT

DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES



Ordinance No. 4116

Adopted by the City Council of Kent, Washington | June 17, 2014



CITY OF KENT

DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES

The City would like to acknowledge and thank those who contributed to the Downtown Design Guidelines. In addition to those listed below, numerous individuals provided insight, expertise, and other contributions that informed this project.

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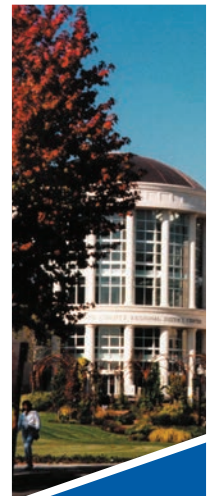
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BACKGROUND

In 1989, the City of Kent adopted The Downtown Plan that envisioned the small traditional downtown shopping district would transform into a vibrant pedestrian-friendly mixed-use center. The Downtown Plan was later updated in 2005 to become the Downtown Strategic Action Plan; it addressed the influences of high-capacity commuter rail serving the community. In 2013, the Downtown Subarea Action Plan (DSAP) expanded the Downtown Planning Area west of SR-167 and north of James Street up Central Avenue, creating a need to update the 2003 Downtown Design Review Guidelines.

The intent of the Downtown Design Guidelines is to establish a consensus of quality, unity and conformity. The design elements and guidelines reflect the DSAP's vision for Downtown Kent as a livable, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly mixed-use community that complements transit with office, commercial and residential uses clustered in the urban center. This vision for a vital downtown is consistent with regional growth strategies and the City's Comprehensive Plan. The DSAP's Planning Principles influence the goals of the Downtown Design Guidelines to create a memorable, extraordinary place, where the pedestrian is first in this livable, economically vital, and gracious downtown that is the "Heart of Kent".

This document incorporates the original design criteria and is updated to be applicable to the expanded Downtown Area. When a new development or a remodel of an existing building is proposed, the City will apply the design guidelines to accomplish the following goals:

DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES GOALS

- Build a desirable place to live with a variety of housing choices, convenient services, and a diversity of entertainment opportunities;
- Support a pedestrian-oriented environment that connects to surrounding neighborhoods;
- Create a memorable downtown experience that is attractive, safe, and inviting;
- Construct a visually attractive and economically vibrant urban center;
- Assure new development relates to the character of downtown and is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods;
- Ensure public and private outdoor spaces are enjoyable and accessible; and
- Encourage sustainable building and land management best practices.



APPLICATION OF DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Downtown Design Guidelines apply to the Downtown Area (see Figure 1) bounded by 64th Avenue South to the west; north of James Street and up Central Avenue to approximately South 234th Street; Kennebeck, Clark, Jason, and Titus to the east; and Willis Street to the south. The guidelines are applicable to all of the Downtown Area, while other guidelines apply only to particular pedestrian designated streets found in the Pedestrian Plan Overlay map.

All development within the Downtown Commercial (DC), Downtown Commercial Enterprise (DCE), and that portion of the General Commercial (GC), General Commercial Mixed Use (GC-MU), and Multifamily Residential Townhouse (MRT-16) zoning districts located within the Downtown Area (see Figure 1), is required to meet the requirements of downtown design review (KCC 15.09.046). Downtown design review is conducted by an administrative committee, except for modifications of existing buildings and sites that cost less than \$100,000, which are reviewed by Planning Services staff. The scope of work associated with an individual project will determine the extent to which design guidelines will be applied. Proposals that will not modify a building exterior or the site are exempt from design review.

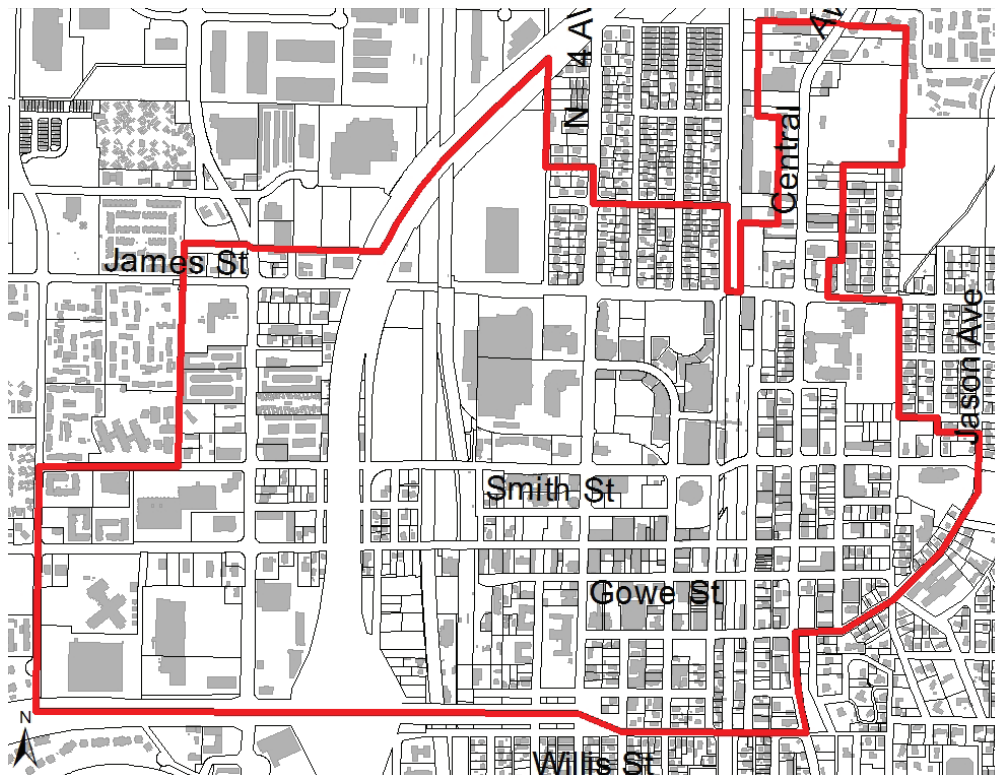


Figure 1: Downtown Area



PURPOSE OF DESIGN GUIDELINES

The purpose of the guidelines is to create site and building designs consistent with the DSAP's Planning Principles, Goals and Policies. The document is organized by design guideline topics into the Site Design and Building Design sections. Each section contains guidelines dealing with specific topics. The Definitions section will help the applicant understand design and architectural terminology.

The Downtown Design Guidelines set parameters for design, but also allow design flexibility and creative design solutions. Proposed development in the Downtown Area is expected to respond to the following design guidelines and standards in a manner that promotes a lively and vibrant pedestrian-oriented urban neighborhood, supports multiple modes of transportation including bicycling, and complements Kent's Historic District (DC zoning district).

This manual is easy to use. Each guideline starts with an objective that explains the desired outcome of each guideline and often provides a description and illustration to help the user apply the concepts. Guidelines that use the word "should" or "may" can be satisfied from a variety of listed design options or by equal or better means if it can be demonstrated satisfactorily to the Planning Director that the applicant satisfies the intent of the guidelines. Standards that use the word "shall" must be met. The guidelines place a minimum burden on projects, and most importantly, the guidelines do not inhibit creative design.

The City may permit a deviation from a specific standard if it is determined that public benefit may be achieved by an alternative proposal. The alternative proposal must be consistent with the intent of the guidelines and with the Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies. The applicant must demonstrate that the proposed deviation will result in increased pedestrian activity and visual interest along the street.

DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

Before preparing development plans in the Downtown Area, applicants should review the guidelines and use the Downtown Design Guidelines Checklist to determine which guidelines apply to their proposed project. Planning Services staff will discuss guidelines and standards with the applicant either during a pre-application meeting or informal pre-development design meeting in order to assist the applicant with final design approval.

For details on the application and review process, see Kent City Code 15.09.046; if you have questions, staff with Planning Services are available to assist you.



I. SITE DESIGN

Site design is the arrangement of buildings, landscaping, plazas, circulation elements, and other features in response to unique site features and surrounding context. A well-designed site should function with sensitivity to safety, aesthetics, and comfort for all users.

A. STREET RELATIONSHIP

INTENT:

To create a streetscape that is active, safe, convenient, comfortable and appealing for people on foot to connect to work places, parks, schools, shopping and transit facilities.

GUIDELINES:

1. Pedestrian Plan Overlay:

The Pedestrian Plan Overlay classifies certain streets downtown as Class A and Class B pedestrian streets. The objective is that development located adjacent to these streets meets a high standard for achieving a successful pedestrian-oriented environment. The Pedestrian Plan Overlay determines, on a block-by-block basis, the character of street frontage and level of pedestrian amenity. If, in the future, new streets are developed on large parcels of downtown land, the new streets should be designated according to planned pedestrian usage before development permits are approved.

The street designations are defined and illustrated on the Pedestrian Plan Overlay map (see Figure 2), followed by the design guidelines for Class A and Class B streets.

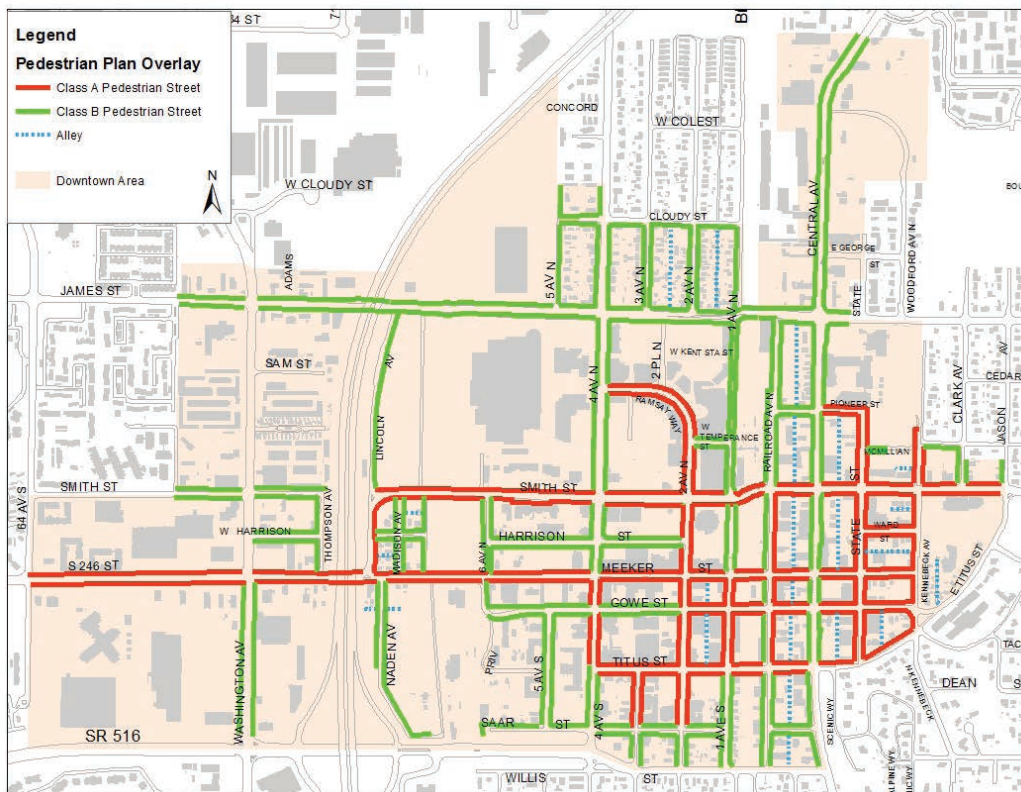


Figure 2: Pedestrian Plan Overlay



a. Class A Street:

Class A streets are intended to accommodate and foster the greatest pedestrian usage by providing a high degree of comfort and safety through streetscape design and minimization of vehicle-pedestrian conflict points. The following guidelines apply to a Class A street:

- (1) A continuous building wall should be maintained along the entire property frontage abutting a Class A street.
- (2) Curb cuts through a continuous building wall are restricted and should be permitted only when there is no alternative property frontage.
- (3) No surface parking areas should abut a Class A street unless there is no alternative property frontage.
- (4) Pedestrian access into or through the site is allowed to break the continuous building wall.

b. Class B Street:

Class B streets are intended to reinforce an active pedestrian-oriented experience, but also accommodate vehicular access to the site. The following guidelines apply to a Class B street:

- (1) A continuous building wall should be maintained for a minimum of 50% of the property frontage abutting a Class B street.
- (2) Curb cuts within the remaining 50% of the property are permitted from a Class B street.
- (3) Surface parking areas may front on a Class B street only within the remaining 50% of the property.
- (4) Surface parking areas shall not be allowed in front of the building.

2. Setback exceptions on Class A & Class B streets:

The objective is to ensure a pedestrian-oriented environment along Class A and Class B streets, except for the following:

a. Private Development Exception:

An exception to allow a maximum 20 foot setback is permitted if a pedestrian activity is planned for that space, such as an entry, pedestrian plaza, outdoor dining, or a garden space associated with residences (see section I.A.5.a. for setback provisions for corner buildings). The applicant may propose a greater setback to provide greater pedestrian interest and activity subject to approval by the city. The block within the Historic District is not eligible for exceptions.

- (1) The building setback is measured from the outside edge (closest to the building) of the required sidewalk.
- (2) The building setback can be applied to the entire building facade adjacent to the street corner or can be applied to only the first level of a multi-story building with the upper levels cantilevered over the first level. Vertical height of the overhead clearance for the ceiling of a pedestrian area or pathway under a cantilevered second level of a building shall not be less than 12 feet.



b. Public Development Exception:

An exception may be made for public space adjacent to a public building if the intent and standards of the pedestrian-oriented street front section (see section I.B.) are met. The setback area may not be used for parking.



3. Sidewalks & Streetscape Features:

The objective is to provide a pedestrian-friendly streetscape that maintains a continuous, safe and lively place by considering the following:

- a. A minimum four (4) foot amenity zone should be provided adjacent to the street for understory plantings, street trees, lighting, benches, trash and recycling receptacles, bike racks or other appropriate amenities. Refer to the City of Kent Design & Construction Standards for construction details for streets not designated Class A or Class B streets.
- b. The sidewalk area should maintain a minimum eight (8) foot-wide clear pedestrian walkway, with a maximum of two (2) feet used by adjacent activities, such as dining or sales display.
- c. Limit gaps in the streetscape by restricting parking access to the minimum width required by code.



4. Prominent building entrances:

The objective is to ensure building entrances are visually and physically accessible from the adjacent street by considering the following:

- a. Locate primary building entrances to have direct access to the public sidewalk.
- b. The primary building entrance shall offer some visual prominence such as a canopy, ornamental lighting, planters, or other appropriate features.
- c. Entrances may be on the side of a building, but they must be visible from the street and connected by a pedestrian pathway.
- d. Single residential entrances to multiple units should transition between the public sidewalk and the private entry (i.e., recessed or courtyard entry, weather protection, glazing, lighting, paving, etc.).
- e. Residential entries to individual units should provide distinctive features (i.e., stoops, covered porch, paving, landscaping, etc.)

5. Street Corners:

The objective is to improve the appearance of highly visible locations. New development on corner lots must enhance the visual qualities of the corner by one (1) or more of the following methods:



- a. Building Location:** Locate and design the building, with a maximum 20 foot setback from the property corner nearest the street intersection, to serve a pedestrian-attractive use such as outdoor dining (see section 1.A.2. for setback exceptions on Class A and Class B streets) and enhance the building corner with a building element such as a corner entry, tower, or other device. The applicant may propose a greater setback for greater pedestrian interest, subject to approval by the city.



- (1) The building setback is measured from the outside edge (closest to the building) of the required sidewalk.
- (2) The building setback can be applied to the entire building facade adjacent to the street corner or can be applied to only the first level of a multi-story building with the upper levels cantilevered over the first level. Vertical height of the overhead clearance for the ceiling of a pedestrian area or pathway under a cantilevered second level of a building shall not be less than 12 feet.



b. Landscaping: Install a substantial and seasonally interesting landscape (at least 200 square feet of ground surface area) at or near the property corner, taking care not to create a visibility or security problem. Container gardens, public art, or other features attractive to pedestrians may be substituted, subject to approval by the City.



c. Adjacent to Gateways: When the corner is adjacent to a city-designated gateway intersection, coordinate with the city to provide significant gateway elements such as landscaping, banners, special lighting, or other design features.

6. Pedestrian-friendly uses:

When located on Class A and B streets, supermarkets and similar multi-department businesses that include bakeries, deli's, flower shops, fruit and vegetable, or other similar sections should locate these sections next to the sidewalk with display windows or doors to the sidewalk.

B. PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

INTENT:

To provide an attractive, safe, connected and convenient pedestrian environment that will encourage pedestrian activities throughout and into downtown.

GUIDELINES:

1. Pedestrian weather protection:

The objective is to provide weather protection for pedestrians along buildings located on Class A and Class B streets. Pedestrian weather protection should feature all of the following:

- a. Buildings located along designated Class A and Class B streets should provide pedestrian weather protection at least 6 feet wide along at least 80% of the front of the building. The weather protection may be in the form of awnings, marquees, canopies, or building overhangs.
- b. Canopies or awnings should not extend higher than 15 feet above ground level or lower than 8 ½ feet at the lowest point. Vertical height of the overhead clearance for the bottom of an awning should not be more than 10 feet.
- c. The pedestrian covering should be constructed of high quality materials, and the color, configuration, and materials shall be as approved by the City.
- d. At each building entry, provide weather protection that creates a covered pedestrian space of at least 100 square feet.



2. Pedestrian-friendly building facades:

The objective is to provide pedestrian-friendly building facades on the ground floor level of buildings facing designated Class A and Class B streets. Building facades should feature all of the following characteristics:

- a. Transparent window area or window displays along at least 50% of the length of the ground floor façade.
- b. Sculptural, mosaic or bas-relief artwork over 50% of the length of ground floor façades without windows.



- c. At least 500 square feet of retail-oriented pedestrian space must be provided for every 100 linear feet of façade as measured along the property lines adjacent to the street.
- d. Other alternative façade or fenestration treatments as approved by the City.

3. Pedestrian areas at building entries:

The objective is to enhance primary public entries for commercial and multifamily residential buildings. Provide three (3) or more of the following elements: At least 200 square feet of landscaping at or near the entry.

- a. Benches consistent with the color and style established by the City.
- b. Special paving.
- c. Bicycle rack.
- d. Building ornamentation such as mosaic tile, relief sculpture, ornamental wood or metal trim, etc.
- e. Artwork.
- f. Special pedestrian lighting.
- g. Containerized plants.
- h. Other similar amenities as approved by the City.



4. Access to the main building entry:

The objective is to improve or provide clearly visible, convenient, safe pedestrian routes throughout a site and to surrounding areas and uses. Provide the following elements to primary public entries:

- a. Provide pedestrian access onto the site from the main street on which the use is located. Where a use fronts two streets, access shall be provided from the street closest to the main entrance or, preferably, from both streets.
- b. All buildings should have a paved pedestrian walkway at least eight (8) feet-wide from the street sidewalk to the main entry. The minimum walkway width may be five (5) feet wide for a portion of the length if the applicant presents a design that varies the width of the path to allow for pedestrian amenities in wider sections.
- c. Any building with an entry that does not face the street should have an entry sidewalk that is easily seen from the street. The sidewalk should be separate from vehicular traffic or raised above the pavement. The pathway should be at least four (4) feet wide if separate from parking stalls and at least six (6) feet wide if adjacent to parking.
- d. Provide pedestrian walkways connecting all business entries on the same development site.
- e. Provide pedestrian walkways through parking lots to the primary entry if the lot is greater than 150 feet long measured parallel to the storefront, or more than two (2) bays or 75 feet deep measured perpendicular to the storefront. Provide a pedestrian walkway at least every 150 feet in large parking lots.
- f. Integrate all walkways with the landscape plan.



5. Pedestrian activity areas:

The objective is to provide attractive pedestrian-oriented open space at key locations. When a front building façade is not directly adjacent to the public sidewalk, or when the front building façade is set back to form a public area adjacent to the sidewalk, this space shall be developed as a landscaped area, courtyard, plaza, or other similar pedestrian-oriented space.

- a. Where deemed appropriate, the following open space, plaza, courtyard, garden or other similar pedestrian-oriented space shall be provided in the development:
 - (1) Visual and pedestrian access (including accessibility for the disabled) into the site from the public right-of-way.





- (2) Special-textured paved pedestrian surfaces of either concrete or approved unit paving.
- (3) On-site or building mounted site lighting that complements the building façade.
- (4) Seating consisting of at least six (6) linear feet of seating area or at least one (1) seat per 60 square feet of plaza area or open space.
- (5) Trees and seasonal planting that defines the space, but does not act as a visual barrier.
- (6) Site furniture, artwork, fountains, or kiosks that are complementary to each other and to the site elements.
- (7) Signs to interpret notable history or architecture, if any.

b. The following materials or elements are prohibited in pedestrian activity areas:

- (1) Asphalt or gravel pavement.
- (2) Adjacent unscreened parking lots.
- (3) Adjacent chain link fences.
- (4) Adjacent on-site blank walls.

c. All public buildings shall have an open space, plaza, courtyard, garden or other similar pedestrian-oriented space.

6. Landscape components:

The objective is to encourage landscape design that will enhance the pedestrian environment and complement building and site design. Include where appropriate at least four (4) of the following landscape elements:

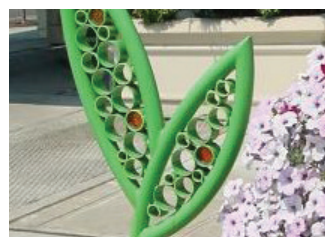


- a. Coordinate systems of pedestrian open spaces or planted areas to achieve continuity, variety and activity.
- b. Install plant materials that at maturity will be in scale with the building and will define and enhance the building modulation and entries.
- c. Select plant materials that provide a succession of blooms, seasonal color and varied textures.
- d. Extend the architectural concept of the building onto the site where possible, with low sitting walls, planter walls, columns or fence supports that complements or coordinates with the building design.
- e. Extend the site landscaping vertically onto walls through the use of climbing plant materials, espaliered trees or shrubs on metal trellises; or wall and window planters; and roof gardens.
- f. Coordinate on-site landscaping with the city recommended trees and shrubs to provide visual continuity.
- g. Onsite landscapes and adjacent plantings in or on the sidewalks must be consistently maintained by property owners as specified in Kent City Code.

7. General pedestrian amenities:

In addition to other required pedestrian amenities above, provide at least four (4) of the following for proposals on Class A streets. Provide at least three (3) on Class B streets.

- a. At least 150 square feet of pedestrian oriented space.
- b. Pedestrian furniture such as seating, flowers in planters or a drinking fountain.
- c. Artwork.
- d. Space for transit stop with seating that is consistent with or complements established streetscape furniture.
- e. Window displays over the majority of the front façade.
- f. A decorative screen wall, trellis or other building or site feature.
- g. Special pedestrian lighting in addition to required lighting.
- h. Bicycle rack.
- i. Other similar elements proposed by the applicant and approved by the City.



C. SITING AND SCREENING OF SERVICE AND PARKING FACILITIES

INTENT:

To diminish and soften the visual impact of asphalt and parked cars from the street and adjacent properties, reduce the visibility of unsightly but necessary activities (trash containers, for example), and to allow for infiltration of storm water run-off.

GUIDELINES:

1. Incompatible activities:

The objective is to minimize the impact of incompatible activities on adjacent uses. Incompatible activities include: outdoor storage (where permitted), service areas adjacent to other uses, public and private utilities apparatus, and commercial development contiguous with a residential-zoned property. Design standards for such incompatible activities are as follows:

- a. Locate incompatible activities, including allowed outdoor storage in the GC zone, away from neighboring properties to reduce visual impacts and physical conflicts.
- b. Where the City deems necessary, landscape buffers or another form of screening shall be provided along property lines adjacent to incompatible uses. When topography between the activities is sufficient to reduce impacts, then modification to the buffer options may be allowed.
- c. Integrate outdoor storage areas, utilities and loading facilities into the site design in a manner that reduces visual impact and obstruction of pedestrian and vehicular movement.
- d. Whenever feasible, locate or screen public/private utility apparatus (i.e., electrical conduit and utilities equipment and apparatus) so as not to be visible from the street or adjacent properties.
- e. Locate or screen roof-mounted mechanical equipment so that it blends with the architecture of the building and is not visible from the street or adjacent properties.
- f. Buffers or fences of outdoor storage and service areas (i.e. large waste containers) must conform to the requirements of the City of Kent Zoning Code as a minimum standard. Additional buffer area or screening may be required.

2. Parking lot facilities:

The objective is to coordinate parking lot facilities to reduce visual impacts as follows:

- a. In parking lots, the preferred location for markings and signs for individual stalls is the pavement. Limit the height of free standing or wall mounted stall signs to two (2) feet above grade, except for handicap accessible parking signs, which shall be placed perADA standards.
- b. Limit parking lot entrance signs to one (1) per parking area entrance. The sign shall be no more than six (6) feet in height above grade, and shall have a surface area of no more than six (6) square feet per side. The sign may not be internally lit, but may incorporate neon lights.
- c. Screen all moveable parking lot equipment (i.e., barrels, saw horses, etc.) from the public right-of-way.
- d. The size and surface area of required parking lots should be minimized by the following:
 - (1) Share parking facilities whenever feasible under the joint use parking standards of KCC 15.05.040 (C);
 - (2) Encourage the use of transit and ride share programs whenever possible and reduce the number of parking stalls pursuant to transit and rideshare provisions of KCC 15.05.040 (G);
 - (3) Encourage the use of municipal and other public and private parking structures and facilities;
 - (4) Encourage the use of bikes by providing bike parking for residents, employees, or customers; and
 - (5) Encourage the development of underground or rooftop parking facilities in multi-story buildings.



3. Parking lot landscaping:

The objective is to develop a positive downtown image, provide a buffer to adjacent residential uses, and mitigate summer heat and greenhouse emissions. The applicant must provide one (1) or more of the following solutions:

- a. Integrate interior surface parking and landscaping with required bio-filtration swales or surface water detention ponds.
- b. Preserve distant views.
- c. Provide a significant pedestrian-oriented space such as a pocket park or plaza.
- d. Create an extension or connection to a local park or a regional bicycle / pedestrian trail system.
- e. Provide outstanding public art within pedestrian view.
- f. Provide outstanding enhancement and support for the city-designated gateway intersections.
- g. Other elements that will result in a superior plan as proposed by the applicant and approved by the city.

D. SITE DESIGN FOR SAFETY

INTENT:

To promote personal safety and property security through design of site features including lighting, landscaping and building design.

GUIDELINES:

1. Pedestrian safety:

The objective is to ensure pedestrian safety by minimizing conflicts between drivers and pedestrians through the siting of structures, location of circulation elements, landscape design, and placement of signs. Incorporate the following methods for protecting pedestrian safety, where appropriate:

- a. Limit the number of potential encounters between pedestrians and vehicles through site design.
- b. Where pedestrian and motorist paths must cross, ensure visibility of pedestrians and vehicles.
- c. Within parking lots, provide raised pedestrian walkways where possible. Where not possible, provide at-grade walkways protected by curbs or landscaped areas.
- d. Distinctively mark pedestrian routes through parking lots. Use vertical design elements, or special paving such as brick, concrete, or cobblestone. Include pedestrian amenities such as benches, trash containers, and planters whenever possible.
- e. Separate service vehicle access and loading zones from pedestrian areas.
- f. Use on-site directional signs to clearly mark pedestrian and vehicular routes.



2. Eyes on the street:

The objective is to provide surveillance opportunities from buildings and public streets to discourage anti-social activity. Incorporate the following methods to increase personal safety and security, where appropriate:

- a. Avoid site design features that create entrapment areas such as long, dark enclosed corridors and opaque fences in locations with pedestrian activity.
- b. Ensure that site and building designs provide lines of sight that allow building occupants and passersby to observe on-site and street activities for the purpose of informal surveillance (i.e., windows, balconies, entries, etc.).



3. Lighting:

The objective is to provide artificial lighting that promotes visual interest and a sense of security for people in all pedestrian areas, including building entries, along walkways, and other public areas. Light spillover onto adjacent properties should be minimized. The following shall be provided in lighting plans:



- Establish an overlapping pattern of light at a height of about 10-15 feet in pedestrian areas.
- Use pedestrian-oriented lighting with cut-off features in all parks, plazas, or pathways to provide safety.
- Confine site lighting to the project site; use cut-off features or other methods to eliminate glare on adjacent properties. Ensure lighting fixtures complement distinctive features of building façades and landscaping.
- Ensure accent lighting is appropriate to and complements the overall character of the public or semi-public setting.
- Utilize energy-saving lighting bulbs and fixtures wherever possible.
- Indicate specific vertical and horizontal lighting levels in each lighted area (photometric analysis).

4. Safe landscape design:

The objective is to design the landscape so that long-term growth will not interfere with site lighting and surveillance.

- Place landscape elements to allow for long-term growth without significantly interfering with site lighting.
- Consider long-term growth characteristics when selecting plant species.
- At maturity maintain shrubs at a maximum height of 3 feet. Choose tree species with a high branch habit or prune tree limbs at least eight (8) feet above ground level to allow an open space or at least five (5) feet between the shrubs and the lower branches of the trees.



5. Quality of site furnishings and features:

The objective is to ensure quality site furnishings that are attractive, easily maintained, and safe. Consider the following:

- High-quality materials that are durable and easily maintained (i.e., furniture, bike racks, walls and paving).
- Permanent site features and furnishings that will discourage vandalism.
- Non-slip walkway surfaces for pedestrian safety.

E. RESIDENTIAL OPEN SPACE

INTENT:

To provide an open space network that is accessible to all residential units and will accommodate a wide variety of activities, both semi-public and private.

GUIDELINES:

1. Functional open space:

The objective is to design an open space network that is landscaped, private, and secure, and where lighting does not glare into housing. In each residential or mixed-use development one (1) or more of the following options shall be provided:

- An individual balcony or screened patio for each unit.
- Small, shared courtyard or furnished children's play area.
- Roof-top open space – roof garden or game court.





II. BUILDING DESIGN

Building Design is the choice and arrangement of construction materials, and how the built form sits within the context of its surroundings to influence the sense of place. A well-designed building should be welcoming, add human interest, and allow opportunities for meaningful social interactions.

A. BUILDING CONCEPT

INTENT:

To encourage building design that is appropriate to the site, enhances the architectural character of downtown and provides for interaction between pedestrians and the activities inside the buildings at ground level.

GUIDELINES:

1. Architectural Elements:

The objective is to organize architectural elements into a unified whole that coordinates with the local context and objectives. The following shall be addressed by the applicant in written format:

- a. Include a description of the design concept for the proposed building or complex.
- b. Include a statement of how the various building elements, such as walls, roofline, entries, modulation, materials, decorations, signage, lighting, etc., are organized into a functional and attractive composition.
- c. Describe how the concept relates to site conditions such as visibility, access, pedestrian circulation, and neighboring development. (Examples of design concepts are provided in the Definitions section of this document.)

B. HUMAN SCALE AND PEDESTRIAN ORIENTATION

INTENT:

To encourage buildings and public spaces that are “comfortable” and encourages human activity and that incorporates architectural features, elements, and details that achieve human scale.

GUIDELINES:

1. Building elements:

The objective is to use architectural elements that provide a sensitive transition for pedestrians and neighboring less intensive built environments. All new buildings and major exterior remodels must employ at least three (3) of the following elements or techniques to achieve “human scale”. However, if a proposed building is three (3) stories or more than 100 feet wide as measured along any visible façade facing a street, then the design shall use at least five (5) of the listed elements:



- a. Provide at least one (1) balcony (measuring at least 6 x 10 foot) or deck per upper floor on the facades facing streets.
- b. Bay windows.
- c. Windows separated through the use of molding or door jams.
- d. Windows with small multiple panes.
- e. Visible chimneys.
- f. Individual windows generally less than 32 square feet per pane and separated from other windows by at least a 6-inch molding.
- g. A gable or hipped roof, providing that the hipped or gable roof covers at least one half of the building’s footprint and has a slope greater or equal to 3 feet vertical in 12 feet horizontal.
- h. Ground floor building materials distinct from the upper stories.

- i. Building elements that define a pedestrian sheltering space such as a trellis, overhang canopy or other.
- j. One or more of the upper stories is set back at least 6 feet.
- k. Smaller symmetrical building elements near the entry or pedestrian oriented street \ fronts of large buildings. (see "Axial Symmetry" in the Definitions section).
- l. Other design methods proposed by the applicant and approved by the City.

C. ARCHITECTURAL SCALE

INTENT:

To encourage new development in a manner that creates gradual transition in perceived height, bulk and scale from the immediate and surrounding built environment.

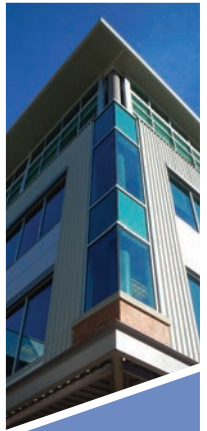
GUIDELINES:

1. Scale of large buildings:

The objective is to reduce the impacts of building height, bulk and scale. New buildings over three (3) stories, or over 10,000 square feet in gross building footprint, must provide design elements to reduce the appearance of bulk. Provide at least two (2) of the following features on facades visible from public rights-of-way and pedestrian routes and entries:



- a. Upper Story Setback - One or more upper stories must be set back from the ground floor at least 10 feet.
- b. Horizontal Building Modulation – To lessen the apparent bulk of the exterior wall of the structure, step back or project forward portions of a building façade within specified intervals of a building width and depth. Buildings within 400 feet of a public right-of-way or public open space or visible from that right-of-way or public open space shall meet the following design standards:
 - (1) The maximum width (as measured horizontally along the building exterior) without building modulation shall be 100 feet.
 - (2) The minimum depth of modulation shall be 6 feet.
 - (3) Balconies may be considered building modulation if each individual balcony has a floor area of 100 square feet.
- c. Modulated Roof Line – To further reduce the scale of large buildings, the roof lines shall be modulated according to one (1) or more of the following standards:
 - (1) For flat roofs or facades with a horizontal eave, fascia, or parapet, change the roof line so that no unmodulated segment of roof exceeds 100 feet, measured horizontally.
 - (2) Provide gable, hipped or shed roofs with a slope of at least three (3) feet vertical to 12 feet horizontal.
 - (3) Other roof forms such as arched, vaulted, dormer or saw-toothed may satisfy this regulation if the individual segments of the roof without a change in slope or discontinuity are less than 100 feet in width.
- d. Building Articulation Design – To provide visual interest and break up the perceived size and bulk of a building, the following should be incorporated, providing the interval does not exceed 100 feet:





- (1) Repeat distinctive window patterns at intervals equal to the articulation interval.
- (2) Provide a porch, patio, deck, or covered entry for each interval.
- (3) Provide a balcony or bay window for each interval.
- (4) Change the roofline by alternating dormers, stepped roofs, gables, or other roof elements to reinforce the modulation or articulation interval.
- (5) Change materials or colors with a change in building plane.
- (6) Provide a lighting fixture, trellis, tree or other landscape feature within each interval.

- e. Cluster smaller uses and activities around entrances on street-facing facades.
- f. Amass substantial landscaping or pedestrian oriented open spaces along the building façade.
- g. Provide a pedestrian pass-through that would access the rear of the lot through buildings over 200 feet in length.
- h. Other design methods proposed by the applicant and approved by the City.

D. BUILDING DETAILS AND ELEMENTS

INTENT:

To increase the attractiveness of buildings from the perspective of the pedestrian through the use of building design details, texture of building materials, quality of finishes, and small decorative elements.

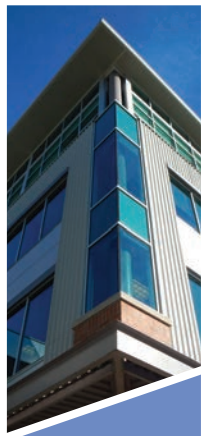
GUIDELINES:

1. Appropriate building details:

The objective is for the building to enhance the pedestrian experience. All new buildings shall include at least three (3) of the following elements on the facades that face a public street or park: (Note: A decorative element may be quite simple if it is suitably scaled and related to the building concept.)



- a. Articulated or decorated rooflines such as an ornamental molding, entablature, frieze, or other roofline device visible from the ground level. If the roofline decoration is in the form of a linear molding or board, the band must be at least 8" wide.
- b. Decorative treatment of windows and doors such as a decorative molding decorative glazing, door design, or framing details around all ground floor windows and doors.
- c. Decorative railings, grillwork, landscape guards, or trellises.
- d. Decorative light fixtures with a non-glare light source or a decorative shade or mounting.
- e. Decorative building materials, including the following:
 - (1) Masonry, shingles, brick or stone.
 - (2) Decorative moldings, brackets, wave trim or lattice work.
 - (3) Ceramic tile, stone, glass block, or glass.
 - (4) Artwork, freestanding or attached to the building. Artwork may be in the form of a mosaic mural, bas-relief sculpture, light sculpture, water sculpture, fountain, or freestanding sculpture.
 - (5) Other materials with decorative or textural qualities and other artwork as approved by the City. Drawings and material samples must accompany all proposals related to the above guidelines.



2. Historic District building details:

The objective is to create a sense of place and synergy that respects the historic ‘Mainstreet’ character of the original commercial district by applying similar cornice lines, scale, and textural qualities found within the Historic District (see Figure 3). In addition to the above building details and elements, projects proposed within the Historic District shall incorporate the following:



- a. Relate the size and proportion of new structures to the scale of adjacent buildings.
- b. Buildings may be larger than adjacent buildings, but must appear to be a row of related buildings with a similar scale as the neighboring buildings, and designed with a compatible pattern of architectural elements and reflect the prevailing cornice line. Facades may be similar but not identical.
- c. Design buildings in the Historic District with a “base”, a “middle”, and a “top” similar to the existing 1900 commercial buildings. The base should contain the greatest amount of architectural detail, the middle should have relatively fewer details and forms, and the top should have a cornice or other distinctive form.
- d. All buildings constructed to face Class A designated streets must have a main entrance with direct access to the street.
- e. Design entrances on the same level as the sidewalk.
- f. Include vertical elements present on existing buildings such as decorative building edges, corner trims, and attached rectangular pilasters or vertical trim strips.
- g. Include horizontal elements present on existing buildings such as a trim at the floor level of each story, rows of windows, repeated trim elements, and recesses.
- h. Create a commercial height and appearance by using a minimum floor to floor height for ground floor retail of 14 to 15 feet.

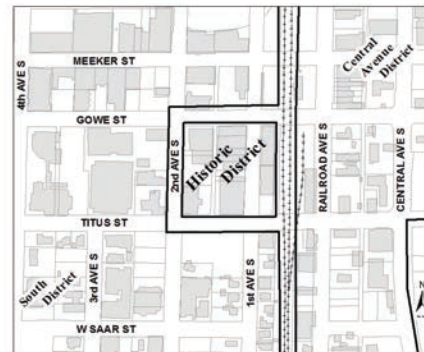


Figure 3: Historic District

- i. Include a kick plate wall section under the ground floor windows on the street façade of the building that mimics adjacent buildings.

3. Design elements for espresso stands and street vendors

To provide for a lively pedestrian environment, street vendors are encouraged. Espresso stands and other outdoor stands and carts for vending are subject to the following design standards:

- a. The stand or cart must be constructed of good quality, permanent materials. Tarps, plywood, cardboard, plastic sheeting, corrugated fiberglass, or similar materials are not permitted.
- b. The design, materials, and colors must be compatible with existing features in the proposed location.
- c. Awning quality must be equal to that required for permanent buildings.
- d. The size of the stand or cart must be adequate for storage, trash receptacles, and other facilities. No outside storage is permitted.
- e. Wiring and plumbing must be hidden from view.
- f. One sign, maximum area six (6) square feet, two (2) sided, is permitted. Menus and price lists two (2) square feet and less, are not considered signs for the purpose of this guideline.

E. MATERIALS AND COLORS

INTENT:

To encourage the use of high-quality compatible materials to upgrade the visual qualities of Downtown Kent while maintaining the character of the Historic District.



GUIDELINES:

1. Retain existing facades in the Historic District:

The objective is to preserve the character of existing historic buildings.

- a. Maintain and restore existing facades, trim, cornices or replace with similar replications.
- b. **Prohibited:** The use of metal siding, metal screening, plastic, wood, plywood, sheet wood products or fiberglass to cover over existing facades.

2. Use compatible building materials:

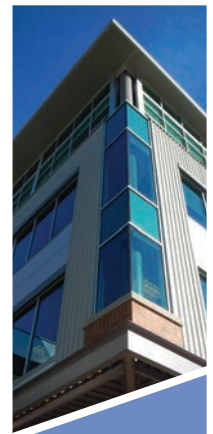
The objective is to enhance the visual quality, ease maintenance, and ensure longevity of new construction in downtown. The following standards guide the use of building materials:

- a. If metal siding is used over more than 25% of the building façade, then the metal siding must have a matted finish in a neutral, muted or earth tone such as buff, gray, beige, tan, cream, white, or a dulled color.
- b. If metal siding is used over 25% of the building façade, then the building design must include the following elements:
 - (1) Visible window and door trim painted or finished in a complimentary color.
 - (2) Corner and edge trim that cover exposed edges of the sheet metal panels.
 - (3) **Exception:** If the City determines that specially treated metal siding is used as an accent material to achieve special architectural character, the City may approve metal siding as a material even though it does not meet the above specifications.
- c. If concrete blocks (concrete masonry units or “cinder blocks”) for walls must be architecturally treated in one (1) or more of the following ways:
 - (1) Textured blocks with surfaces such as split face or grooved.
 - (2) Colored mortar.
 - (3) Other masonry types such as brick, glass block or tile in conjunction with concrete blocks.
- d. **Prohibited:** The following materials are not allowed in visible locations.
 - (1) Mirrored glass.
 - (2) Corrugated fiberglass.
 - (3) Chain-link fencing (except for a temporary purpose such as a construction site.)
 - (4) Barbed wire, concertina or razor wire.
 - (5) The use of metal siding, metal screening, plastic, plywood, sheet wood products, or fiberglass to cover existing facades is not permitted. Wood should not be used to cover existing brick or cast stone masonry.

3. Appropriate materials to blend with the Historic District:

The objective is to ensure that materials used in new construction blend with the historic commercial character of the district. The following materials are recommended:

- a. Decorative masonry
- b. Shingle brick
- c. Stone
- d. The applicant may propose other materials with decorative or texture qualities compatible with the existing character of the district, subject to approval by the City.



F. BLANK WALLS

INTENT:

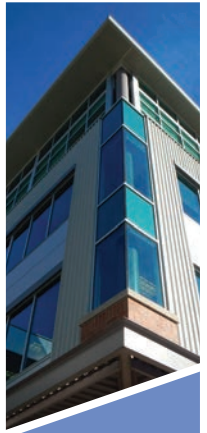
To increase pedestrian interest and reduce opportunities for taggers or other graffiti on unavoidable blank walls.

GUIDELINES:

1. Design treatment:

The objective is to reduce the impact of an unavoidable blank wall from the public or private sidewalk of pedestrian pathways. Treat all blank walls (see Definitions section) within 50 feet of street rights-of-way, parks, or adjacent lots in one or more of the following ways:

- a. Install a vertical trellis in front of the wall with climbing vines on at least 50% of the blank wall surface.
- b. Provide a planting bed at least five (5) feet wide or raised planter at least two (2) feet high and three (3) feet wide in front of the wall. Install with plant materials that will provide a rich assortment of height, texture, and seasonal color.
- c. Provide artwork (mosaic, mural, sculpture, relief or other) on at least 50% of the blank wall surface.
- d. Other methods as approved by the City.
- e. All proposed methods are subject to City approval. The applicant must submit architectural plans and elevations of the proposed treatments for approval.



III. DEFINITIONS

Architectural Elements

As used in these guidelines, the term architectural elements refers to the elements that make up an architectural composition or the building form, and can include such features as the roof form, entries, an arcade, porch, columns, windows, doors and other openings. "Architectural elements" is used interchangeably with architectural features in these guidelines.

Architectural Character

The architectural character of a building is that quality or qualities that make it distinctive and that are typically associated with its form and the arrangement of its architectural elements. For example, a prominent design feature may convey the architectural character of a structure. Examples are a distinctive roofline, a turret or portico, an arcade, an elaborate entry, or an unusual pattern of windows and doors.

Architectural Scale

The perceived height and bulk of a building relative to other forms in its context. Modulating facades and other treatments may reduce a building's apparent height and bulk.

Axial Symmetry

Axial symmetry is the similarity of form or arrangement on either side of a dividing line or plane through the center of an object.

Balcony

A balcony is an outdoor space built as an above ground platform projecting from the wall of a building and enclosed by a parapet or railing.

Bay Window

A bay window protrudes from an exterior wall. Typically, the bay contains a surface that lies parallel to the exterior wall, and two surfaces that extend perpendicular or diagonally from the exterior wall.

Blank Walls

Walls subject to "blank wall" requirements are any ground-level wall over six feet (6') in height measured from finished grade at the base of the wall, and longer than 50' measured horizontally. A wall subject to the requirement does not have any significant building feature, such as a window, door, modulation or articulation, or other special wall treatment within that 50' section.

Circulation

As used in these guidelines, the term circulation refers to the movement or flow of traffic from one place to another through available routes. Traffic includes a variety of modes of travel including pedestrian, motor vehicle and non-motorized methods such as bicycle.

Courtyard

A courtyard is an open space usually landscaped, which is enclosed on at least three sides by a structure or structures.

Curb Cut

A curb cut is a depression in the curb for a driveway to provide vehicular access between private property and the street.

Deck

A deck is a roofless, outdoors aboveground platform projecting from the wall of a building and supported by piers or columns.

Design Details

Architectural or building design details refer to the minor building elements that contribute to the character or architectural style of the structure. Design details may include moldings, mullions, rooftop features, the style of the windows and doors, hardware and other decorative features.





Façade

A façade is any portion of an exterior elevation of a building extending from the ground level to the top of the parapet wall or eaves, for the entire width of the building elevation. A front façade is typically the façade facing the major public street(s). An entry façade is typically the façade with the primary public entry.

Foot Candle

A foot candle is a unit used for measuring the amount of illumination on a surface. The amount of usable light from any given source is partially determined by the angle of incidence of the source and the distance to the illuminated surface.

Frontage

As used in these guidelines, frontage refers to length of a property line along a public street or right-of-way.

Front Yard

As used in these guidelines, the front yard is the area between the street(s) and the nearest building façade.

Gateways

As used in these guidelines, the term gateways refers to key intersections within the city which are entranceways into the Kent downtown area. The gateways will be enhanced by special sidewalk/crosswalk treatments, landscaping, signage, lighting, banners and other improvements to signify their status as entryways into the downtown core.

Historic District

The Historic District is the traditional and geographic heart of downtown Kent, containing the original business district. The boundaries of the Historic District are Second Avenue to the west, Meeker Street to the north, E. Titus Street to the south, and the Railroad tracts to the east. The area is shown in Fig. 3 on Page 17.

Human Scale

The size of a building element or space relative to the dimensions and proportions of a human being.

Incompatible Uses and Activities

As used in these guidelines, incompatible uses are those uses, including, but not limited to, outdoor storage, utilities equipment and apparatus, and loading and service facilities, which are considered to be visually intrusive, unsightly and which require site design and screening to mitigate the negative impacts to downtown retail commercial, residential development, and surrounding residential zoning districts.

Lumen

A lumen is a unit used for measuring the amount of light energy given off by a light source.

Modulation

Modulation is a stepping back or projecting forward of portions of a building façade within specified intervals of building width and depth as a means of breaking up the apparent bulk of a structure's continuous exterior walls. As used in these guidelines, the modulated portions must be at least 6 feet deep in order to qualify as modulation.

Pedestrian-Oriented Façades

"Pedestrian-oriented" façades are those that contribute to the character of the street experience providing pedestrian interest, comfort, and safety.

Pedestrian-oriented Space

A pedestrian-oriented space is an area between a building and a public street that promotes visual and pedestrian access onto the site and that provides pedestrian-oriented amenities and landscaping to enhance the public's use of the space.

Pedestrian-oriented Use

A pedestrian-oriented use is a commercial use whose customers arrive on foot, or where signage, advertising, window display and entry ways are oriented toward pedestrian traffic on a public sidewalk. Pedestrian-oriented businesses may include restaurants, retail shops, personal service businesses, travel services, banks (except drive-through windows), and similar establishments.



Service Areas

Service areas refer to areas, enclosed or open, that contain equipment and uses such as ground level mechanical equipment, utility vaults, loading zones, outdoor storage areas, and trash and recycling areas.

Site Planning

Site planning is the arrangement of buildings, driveways, sidewalks, landscaping, parking, public open spaces, and other facilities on a specific site. Good site planning will result in a cohesive site design concept and take into consideration natural features, topography, drainage requirements, access points, the design of neighboring sites, and other features in the immediate vicinity of the site.

Streetscape

The streetscape is the visual character and quality of a street as determined by various elements located between the edge of the street and the building face, such as trees and other landscaping, street furniture, artwork, transit stops, utility fixtures and equipment, and paving. Where there are frequent and wide spaces between buildings, the streetscape will be defined by the pattern of building and open space and the character of that open space.

Surface Parking

Surface parking is single level vehicular parking on the surface of the ground, generally a parking lot that typically is uncovered.

Structured Parking

Structured parking is a multiple level vehicular parking facility, generally a parking garage or similar structure constructed for that purpose.

Transit-oriented Development

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is development that is centered around and coordinated in its use and design with a transit station or other transit facility. Transit-oriented development includes a variety of different planning and development projects, but is typically compact, medium to high density, mixed-use development within walking distance of transit with a focus on pedestrian orientation and creating neighborhood centers, places and/ or gathering spots.

