

# DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

These Downtown Urban Design Guidelines are a component of the City of Portland's Downtown Plan entitled *Downtown Vision: A Celebration of Urban Living and a Plan for Portland's Future* and of the City's Comprehensive Plan. They are supporting reference documents for the City's B-3 Downtown Business District Zoning Ordinance and Site Plan Standards, and a companion to the Technical and Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Portland.

The **Signage, Awnings and Canopies** section contained herein supercede the Signage requirements of the Urban Renewal Plan for Maine Way (pages 9-11 of Planning Report #29-76: Urban Renewal Plan for Maine Way, amended May 1976.)

## Introduction

Downtown Portland is the center of the region's business, governmental, cultural, and residential communities. It is also a physical environment comprised of a variety of individual buildings, streetscapes, parks, and districts in which people carry on with day-to-day interactions. As a physical environment, it should be designed to facilitate these uses in a setting that has beauty, is comfortable and secure, which provides amenity and interest for the pedestrian, and which celebrates the coming together of people in a concentrated pedestrian world. It is important that incremental changes to the physical environment through development or rehabilitation proposals continue to enhance the physical environment.

These guidelines are provided for the use of individual property owners and the development community in understanding the expectations of the greater community for the development of the Downtown. This represents a documentation of concerns which have been central issues within project reviews of proposed development in the past, and is an attempt to make the review process more understandable and predictable for the development community. These Guidelines are also intended to provide guidance and consistency for City staff and Planning Board development review. Finally, these Guidelines are intended to provide the public with a clearer presentation of important design issues to assure they reflect public concerns while providing a framework for public comment and involvement in the development process.

These Urban Design Guidelines are not intended to restrict the creativity of developers or designers in responding to the challenges of a given site. Rather they provide a framework of issues with which to be concerned in assuring that a creative design solution is compatible with the character of Portland's Downtown environment and is sensitive to pedestrian needs. These Guidelines are presented as a discussion of issues that specific site plan standards are intended to address. Unless otherwise provided for within the City Ordinances, these are guidelines only, a framework not to be ignored but flexible enough in intent, interpretation, and application to allow and encourage the developer and associated designers to come forward with creative and distinctive design solutions.

## **Purposes**

The underlying purposes of the Urban Design Guidelines are as follows:

1. Aesthetic - To respect and build upon the human-scaled and historic building fabric of the Downtown while creating a more attractive, desirable, high quality, rich and diverse environment.
2. Pedestrian Use - To increase pedestrian activity through the enhanced character, comfort, and interest of the pedestrian environment.
3. Accessibility - To assure accessibility to all.
4. Culture - To increase and support the integration of arts and culture throughout the Downtown environment.
5. Economic - To recognize the fundamental relationships between property values, livability, and the character and quality of the physical environment; to protect and enhance public and private investments throughout the Downtown by assuring respectful and compatible new development; and to minimize development costs by providing specific guidelines at the outset of the development process.

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## I. RELATIONSHIP TO PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

### A. Distinguish the lower 35 feet of building facades

*Standard: “The exterior design of portions of buildings within the first thirty-five (35) feet of height shall enhance the character, attractiveness, comfort, security, and usability of the street level pedestrian environment . . .”*

The most significant features of a building which are perceived at street level by the typical pedestrian moving through the Downtown are storefronts and building facades within immediate view and reach. While one’s peripheral view encompasses considerably more of a given façade and in fact draws in the context of other nearby buildings and open spaces, the focus of attention for each building is usually the first approximately thirty-five feet of building height. This portion of each building is readily perceived as an individual composition but allow more broadly as a component of the series of street facades and elements of a continuing streetscape involving all such facades along a given block or street. Throughout Downtown Portland, it is typically this first thirty-five feet or so, or the first two to three stories of buildings which are the most heavily articulated, create and sustain the greatest pedestrian interest, and in fact present themselves as the base of larger buildings.

Building entrances and display windows are typically the predominant elements of this Downtown street-level environment. The character and design of these elements are vital in assuring that frequent pedestrian access to and from buildings is provided or maintained, and that the excitement of walking about the Downtown is supported by a rich, varied and interesting environment.

#### 1. Storefronts and building facades

- Relationship to Context: In general, the design of storefronts and the facades of lower portions of buildings should relate to the architecture of the rest of the building and should demonstrate a unified overall building design.

Where alterations are made to existing buildings facades and storefronts, such alterations should respect and be compatible with the specific features and characteristics of the building of which it is a part. Characteristic elements of traditional storefront design relating to specific styles of building, including such prominent features as entrances (generally recessed) and display windows, the storefront bulkhead, piers and framing, transom windows corresponding to typically tall interior first floor space, and a sign panel often topped by a cornice, are common points of reference for both rehabilitations and for contemporary design solutions.

Where alterations to designated historic structures and within designated historic districts are involved, standards and guidelines found in the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance will be the basis for review. For other existing structures, existing original or significant features or evidence of such that might be found through historical research or physical evidence can provide a basis for storefront restoration or for contemporary design which is compatible with the rest of the building.

Where signage is provided on or adjacent to a storefront, the signage should generally be incidental to the storefront and should not overwhelm the building façade. Specific signage, awning and canopy guidelines are provided elsewhere for proposed installations in the Pedestrian Activities District (PAD) and PAD encouragement areas, as well as where such installations involve historic properties.

- Pedestrian-character: The design of storefronts should complement the pedestrian activity being accessible and visible from the public sidewalk.
- Materials and detailing: The design of storefronts and lower building facades should include the selection of high quality materials and detailing which relate to the rest of the building and to the surrounding context, and which convey a sense of permanence, durability, and richness in character. Ease of maintenance and a commitment to continuing upkeep are important considerations.
- Transparency: A predominance of glass which assures transparency between interior activities or products and pedestrian activity on the streets and sidewalks is very important to the vitality of the pedestrian environment. Glass should be used on the street level which assures visibility for pedestrian interest and, to the extent feasible, assures that there are obvious "eyes on the street" or a sense of security as a result of indoor and outdoor activity being readily visible. The placement of landscaping or other exterior features immediately adjacent to entrances and window openings can enhance the attractiveness of a property but should be careful not to substantially diminish visibility into or out of such openings.
- Contemporary design: Where creating a new façade through construction of an infill building within an existing building context, storefront design and building facades should respect the general pattern of storefront and façade design found in that surrounding context. Such design should draw from those surrounding buildings which themselves meet the guidelines presented herein. Contemporary design is encouraged where it reflects an understanding and respect for traditional patterns of storefront composition and design.

## 2. Building entrances

The traditional pattern of development in Downtown Portland resulted for the most part in incremental construction of individual buildings over extended periods of time. Typically, these buildings each had individual building entrances providing immediate access to street-fronting shops and businesses. Street level access also was provided to upper story activities through a separate entry. This pattern of frequent building entrances serving a large number of street-level businesses provided for considerable street-level pedestrian activity and encouraged pedestrian circulation. New development in the Downtown and rehabilitation or alterations of existing buildings should continue this pattern of frequent access.

- Compatibility with the building façade: Entrances are one of several building components which collectively comprise the overall base of a building. The design of building entrances should be considered as an integral component of a building's façade and should relate to the overall façade in terms of its style and scale, quality of design, and selection of materials and detailing.

- Prominence along the street: The placement and design of entrances to buildings and businesses should be readily identifiable and have a prominence on the building's street façade. Such entrances should not overpower the façade but should be designed so to complement the character and features of the building façade and storefront while clearly announcing the point of entry. The traditional method of recessing entrances, of utilizing signage, canopies and awnings, and of thoughtful and directed lighting can all help to define an entrance's prominence.

- Access to the street: Access to each street-level business should be maintained directly from the street wherever possible. Where buildings may contain multiple street-level tenants which are served by interior access or circulation, prominent access directly from the street should be provided as well to the extent feasible. In addition, building facades fronting on publicly accessible open space should provide access in the same manner as street-fronting facades. Consideration in satisfying this guideline will be given to situations where changing topography may make direct access (particularly accessible for special needs) difficult or impractical. Every effort should be made to make these portions of buildings accessible, as well as attractive and of interest to the pedestrian.

- Accessibility: All buildings should be barrier-free and accessible to the physically handicapped and to others who find themselves with special needs. The range of special needs typically encountered in the Downtown includes such situations a negotiating a baby carriage or stroller, ushering small children, accommodating physical and visual limitations of the elderly or handicapped, and others. Access for everyone should be provided in a manner which provides an interesting and positive pedestrian experience and which preserves human dignity.

### 3. Blank facades

The placement of street-level building facades which contain expanses of wall area with no windows, no entrances, and no other elements or features providing pedestrian interest and supporting pedestrian circulation and activity represent a serious detriment to the vitality and viability of a pedestrian-oriented street environment. The continuity of lively, inviting and visually appealing street-level facades is extremely important in encouraging pedestrian movement. When blank facades are located in mid-block areas, they tend to create gaps in this continuity which the average shopper or tourist will find at least disheartening and at most a deterrent to proceeding further along a particular street. When such facades are located at corners of blocks, they effectively can isolate entire blocks or areas of the Downtown from lively and frequent pedestrian circulation.

Blank facades located along pedestrian-oriented streets or along publicly accessible open space are discouraged. The maximum length of blank or undifferentiated facades should not exceed thirty feet generally throughout the Downtown, and should not exceed 15 feet within the Pedestrian Activities District. The preferred manner for differentiating a façade is to incorporate additional storefronts or with display windows and entrances as frequently as possible. For interior uses which require large volumes of windowless space, every effort should be made to contain these uses within the central portion of a site away from street fronting facades of the building. Having such uses on the interior of a site allows the perimeter of the property to retain pedestrian-oriented use.

In some cases, due to topographic change or windowless interior uses which cannot be located in any other portion of a site, building entrances and large windows may not be feasible. In such situations, it is important that the design of such facades incorporate significant features of visual

interest which will maintain the interest of the pedestrian. Such features might include relatively shallow display cases or display windows, substantial three-dimensional architectural ornamentation or artistic treatment, the incorporation of some special water or landscape feature, or some combination of thereof. Any such special feature should relate positively to the character of the remainder of the building, and to surrounding buildings.

#### 4. Special features

A variety of special building and street features have been explored in cities across the country in attempts to address sometimes adverse climatic conditions while providing enhanced pedestrian comfort. Incorporation of any of these features requires extreme care first in understanding the impact such a feature might have on the character and quality of street-level pedestrian activity, and second on the relationship such features have to a historic building context and to special qualities such as view corridors and prominent gateway entrances to the City.

- Arcades: Arcades are roofed passages with shops on one or both sides. The most common situations find arcades placed along a street frontage, with the first floor retail space set back beneath an overhang created by the upper floors of the rest of the building. Arcades, by virtue of the overhang, provide protection from rain, snow, and direct sunlight. Such arcades are not generally found today in Downtown Portland, although historically such protection from the elements was often found as a result of an extensive use of retractable awnings placed on many commercial buildings. Issues which should be considered when incorporating such features include: preserving existing street walls while comfortably integrating these features into an existing streetscape; assuring that active uses are placed along the recessed street level; assuring that an adequate but not excessive pedestrian circulation area is provided; and assuring that ample lighting and pedestrian interest is maintained. Arcade lighting should thoroughly light the interior of the arcade, with no dark areas or shadowy corners within the arcade. Any attempts to incorporate arcades on existing buildings should take care not to detract from the existing building's character nor remove or obscure significant features of historic properties.

A second type of arcade is the through-block connection, where a passageway is created linking one street typically with another parallel street. Particularly in long blocks, such connections should encourage pedestrian circulation between active pedestrian-oriented streets and between such streets and specific activity generators such as hotels, major office or retail buildings, and convention or cultural facilities. In a few selective instances, there may be an opportunity to expand such a through-block connection into a galleria, or larger pedestrian open space which becomes a major pedestrian destination in itself. Dead-end arcades, or arcades which may make a connection to a single destination anchor, such as an art museum, must be carefully considered to assure that the pedestrian connection can remain safe, pleasant, and viable at times when activity at the anchor is low or non-existent.

For this second type of arcade to be successful, the level of activity anticipated must be carefully examined and the character and quality of design must be exceptional. Special care must be taken in the siting of all such interior connections to provide active uses along the arcade while assuring that existing street-fronting pedestrian uses are not diminished in their attractiveness to pedestrian circulation and activity.

Where all of the above issues have been carefully addressed, these various types of arcades can be a positive contribution to the pedestrian streetscape.

- Skywalks and elevated walkways: The introduction of covered or fully enclosed walkways bridging over streets and connecting the second stories of buildings have been implemented in a variety of cities and situations around this country and in Canada. The extent of such systems can range substantially, from a relatively simple connection between a hotel or office building to a parking garage, to an extensive system tying together large portions of downtowns through interior climate-controlled passageways. Studies of those skywalk systems reveal a number of critical issues which must be addressed before any such program, large or small, is undertaken in Downtown Portland. Consideration must be given to the following:

- i. the impact of such an upper level system on existing street-level activity and businesses, respecting the principle that the character and liveliness of the street-level pedestrian environment is of utmost importance and should be reinforced at every opportunity;

- ii. the potential segregation of users who might frequent the walkway system versus the street, respecting the principle of *Downtown Vision* that for Portland to take the greatest advantage of its urban character, all people regardless of social or economic status must come together to share in a common experience;
- iii. the potential impact of such a system on the visual character of Downtown Portland, with concerns over the integration of such construction with a largely historic building environment and the potential visual obstructions which could detract from the character of the Downtown or eliminate significant views to natural or building landmarks; and
- iv. the need for a coordinate program of provision and maintenance of any such system, assuring universal participation of property owners along a particular route, common levels of maintenance and hours of access, and adequate levels of pedestrian activity, supporting pedestrian-oriented uses, and pedestrian interest and amenity.

*Downtown Vision*, the Plan for Portland's Downtown, does not incorporate a comprehensive network of skywalks due to the numerous critical issues cited above. In special circumstances, however, the provision of skywalks may be desirable. The provision of any such system should not be approved until the Planning Board and the City Council determine that all issues are suitably addressed and resolved in favor of an enhanced pedestrian environment. Easements and site plans should not be approved until these issues are suitably resolved.

- Street closings and pedestrian malls: The closure of public streets to create pedestrian malls has been tried with mixed success in a variety of situations around the country and abroad. The range of possibilities intended to encourage pedestrian activity on key streets runs from total prohibition of vehicles, to access for public transit and high ridership vehicles only, to closure only on special occasions (i.e. street fairs or carnivals) or for weekend shopping and entertainment (at a time when deliveries and service access demands are at a minimum). The trend in recent years has been to re-open those streets once completely closed to vehicular traffic. In any of the possible scenarios, consideration must be given to the following:

- i. the relationship of vehicular traffic, visibility from vehicles, on-street parking, and drop-off areas to the businesses and institutions along the streets that would be closed or restricted;
- ii. the effect of closure on maintaining necessary access for service and deliveries; and
- iii. the design and dimensions of the street, focusing on the scale and character of the space to be devoted to pedestrian circulation. The expected number of pedestrians must be related to the amount of space to be provided to assure that adequate space is provided. Interaction and face-to-face contacts are important to lively pedestrian space therefore it is also important that excessive space does not create a sense of low activity or diminish the interpersonal contacts. The quality, quantity, and character of pedestrian amenities, including such features as paving materials, lighting, benches and other seating, public art, landscaping, and street entertainment are all important design and programming issues vital to a lively pedestrian environment.

In general, the permanent closure of streets in the Downtown is discouraged. A proposal for any such pedestrian mall should not be approved until the Planning Board and City Council have determined that all such issues have been suitably addressed and resolved in favor of a viable business and cultural economy and an enhanced pedestrian environment. For proposals for extensive closures or for closure of significant streets, a trial period or portion of closure should be instituted prior to committing permanent alterations and improvements.

**B. Pedestrian Activities District (PAD)**

*Standard: “In addition to subsection 1 (a through d), proposed development and substantial building alterations located within the Pedestrian Activities District (PAD) overlay zone . . . shall be designed and constructed to accommodate pedestrian-oriented uses at the street level. Proposed development located within the PAD encouragement areas which is not initially constructed to accommodate pedestrian-oriented activities at the street-level shall be designed to have the capability of accommodating pedestrian-oriented uses through non-structural building alterations.”*

Factors that should be considered include:

1. Exterior design of street level building façade

The design of the exterior street-level façade should consider the visual relationship of proposed or potential entrances, window, and display openings to the overall design of the building. The introduction of new window or door openings or the shifting of openings should be considered in the initial façade design to assure that what may initially be a balanced and appropriate design for a façade is flexible over time and that future changes might be anticipated to assure future compatibility.

2. Design and placement of impenetrable exterior building features

In portions of buildings where street-level pedestrian-oriented uses are required or encouraged, it is important to locate impenetrable features (i.e. columns, piers, bearing walls, retaining walls, and mechanical/h.v.a.c. equipment) in such locations that do not create obstacles to accessible and viable pedestrian uses. Such features, by their very presence and by the difficulty and associated expense with which they might be modified, can become impediments to street-level uses or to future renovation which will accommodate such uses.

3. Orientation and accessibility to the street

The design and construction of street-level facades along pedestrian oriented streets should assure that street-fronting uses would be oriented to and accessible from the street wherever feasible. Orientation to the street should involve significant and prominent entrance opportunities, significant visibility of interior uses from the street, and prominent signage, awnings, or other identification of interior uses. Such orientation should not have the appearance of a service entrance or “back door”, but rather should appear as a primary, inviting pedestrian entrance to the building.

Accessibility from the street should be provided wherever feasible. Finished floor elevations and entrance elevations relative to sidewalk topographic elevations should be established with the intention of maximizing opportunities for building entrances along street

4. Adequacy of interior layout

Just as impenetrable exterior building features can be an obstacle to use of street-level building floor area, the interior layout of such space can impact its viability for pedestrian uses. The first forty (40) feet of floor area along specified street frontages in the Pedestrian Activities District should be laid out to accommodate retail or other pedestrian oriented uses. An approximately comparable portion of floor areas along PAD encouragement areas should be designed and constructed

to accommodate the broadest possible variety of floor layouts, or be able to be modified at reasonable cost to accommodate future pedestrian oriented uses. Placement of exterior building features as in (b) above, as well as the placement of interior features such as columns, bearing walls, stairs, elevators, and mechanical systems should support the layout of pedestrian oriented uses rather than divide a space into areas which can be difficult to utilize effectively or with flexibility.

#### 5. Continuity of street level uses

Continuity of pedestrian-oriented uses along designated street frontages is important to encourage pedestrian interest, movement and safety. Wherever possible, service entrances and vehicular entrances to parking lots, parking garages, drive-thru services, or other similar uses which interrupt the continuity of street-level uses should not be located along pedestrian oriented streets. Where such uses are unavoidable, extraordinary care should be taken to assure that the pedestrian environment remains both attractive and safe, and such interruptions should be kept to a minimum in both numbers and lengths. In such instances, the pedestrian should clearly have priority. Pedestrian paving patterns should continue across driveway entrances and should remain flush, with no steps or significant ramping introduced in order to accommodate vehicular access. Vehicular speeds should be kept to an absolute minimum. Lighting should assure both pedestrian comfort and safety.

### C. Sidewalk Areas and Open Space

*Standard: “The design of publicly accessible sidewalk areas and open space shall complement the general pattern of the Downtown pedestrian environment, conform with special City of Portland streetscape programs described in the Technical and Design Standards and Guidelines, and enhance the attractiveness, comfort, security, and usability of the pedestrian environment.”*

#### 1. Sidewalk, crosswalk, and street paving materials

- Sidewalk: The design and construction of sidewalks and open space paving are important components of the pedestrian environment. Historically, the Downtown has been characterized by brick sidewalks and the City’s general sidewalk maintenance and reconstruction program calls for brick sidewalks. Important factors which must be of concern in the installation and maintenance of brick sidewalks include the compatibility with adjoining or nearby paving surfaces, the appropriateness of the paving material in relation to proposed or existing buildings which are adjacent to the sidewalk, appropriateness during all seasons, and the character, durability, and ease of maintenance of the proposed material.

Prevalent problems found on many existing sidewalks are the uneven surfaces and excessive joints between bricks, both of which create hazardous walking conditions. These problems usually result from improper installation techniques or design including an inadequate base on which the brick is set or excessive spacing of pavers and inadequate maintenance (repointing). These issues can be addressed through careful design and installation of new surfaces, and a program of rehabilitation directed toward existing sidewalks.

Concern must also focus on Portland as a winter city, with frequent snow and ice conditions through an extended season each year. Maintenance of sidewalks becomes an imperative for assuring safe and comfortable pedestrian circulation throughout the Downtown. The use of brick as a surface material can result in a surface more slippery than alternative surfaces such as concrete pavers or poured concrete with a rough surface. Adequate sloping and drainage can aid in avoiding some problems. The use of concrete pavers in patterns and colors that replicate brick, and the combination of poured concrete and brick in attractive and practical paving patterns can also serve to address concerns over the potentially slippery nature of brick while retaining the historic character of brick sidewalks.

There is growing interest both in this country and in northern cities abroad in the use of heated sidewalks to maintain a clear and comfortable walking surface during colder months. The consideration of heating elements within the sidewalk construction is encouraged. The relation of such a system to underground utilities, the impact of such a system on the appearance of paving surfaces, the energy efficiency of providing and maintaining such a system relative to more conventional sidewalk maintenance, and the benefits such systems present in preserving street trees and other landscaping relative to other snow melting or snow clearing techniques should all be considered.

Open spaces such as parks and plazas offer special opportunities for creative and specialized paving patterns. The introduction of alternative patterns, colors and materials such as granite, brick, and concrete can create distinctive elements within these open spaces and are encouraged. Where such open spaces meet the public sidewalk, the specialized paving pattern should transition to the prevailing pattern of the public sidewalk so that sidewalk paving within the street right-of-way retains a consistent

unifying pattern along an entire street frontage and to assure that sidewalk paving forms a layer of commonality throughout an area. As a related issue, the design of publicly accessible open spaces should balance the provision of pedestrian paving surfaces with ample soft surfaces including landscaping and grass. Where pedestrian circulation will occur on such surfaces, these areas should be designed to prevent compaction and should be stabilized against erosion due to weather or use.

The provision of all sidewalks shall conform to the specifications and details contained within the City's *Technical and Design Standards and Guidelines*.

- Crosswalk: The design of street crosswalks which provide distinctive and clearly visible patterns on the walking surface offer both visual amenity and safety to the pedestrian. The use of painted crosswalks and thermally applied markings are techniques commonly endorsed by the City. In a few special instances, the City has permitted the installation of carefully designed crosswalks comprised of granite borders with a brick walking surface. While alternative crosswalk designs add amenity to the pedestrian environment and are encouraged under special situations or for special effect, the design and construction of any such special alternative must be carefully considered. Issues of durability, particularly as impacted by snow plowing, visibility, and ease of walking should be addressed. The provision of crosswalks across all City streets shall conform with the specifications and details contained within the City's *Technical and Design Standards and Guidelines*.

- Street: The design and construction of City streets shall conform to the specifications and details contained within the City's *Technical and Design Standards and Guidelines*. Where driveway surfaces on private property serve dual purpose as pedestrian circulation paths, the applicant or property owner is encouraged to explore creative alternative finish surfaces which provide greater pedestrian interest and amenity.

## 2. Landscaping, planters, irrigation, and tree guards and grates

- Landscaping: The use of landscaping, including overhead/canopy trees, ornamental trees, shrubs, ground cover, and flowers, is encouraged to enhance the character and livability of the Downtown. The use of plants with attractive flowers, colorful and changing foliage, distinctive bark, and prominent or unusual shape all serve to enrich the visual environment. The environmental benefits of providing shade, filtering noise, and cleansing the air are all vital properties of an attractive and healthy urban landscape.

- Compatibility: The coordinated use of landscaping serves as one method for providing distinctive character to different streets and areas of the Downtown. The selection of the primary plant materials (in particular the larger materials such as street and ornamental trees) and their location on a particular site, should be considered in coordination with public streetscape improvements which occur or are planned for the immediate area. Private improvements also should be compatible with other adjacent or nearby private improvements.

- Use and placement: The use of landscaping to provide visual interest, color, variety, and an ever changing and growing environment is an important element in support of an active pedestrian streetscape. The placement of street trees and planters within the public right-of-way should complement and enhance the pattern of similar features on adjacent and nearby properties and be consistent with planting programs established by the City. The use of landscaping also can be incorporated with or in place of fencing to screen or buffer otherwise objectionable or unsightly uses or building features such as building service areas, mechanical equipment, and surface parking lots.

- Plant selection: Consideration during the selection of all plant material should be given to the plant's tolerance to urban conditions which include poor drainage, litter and salt problems, vandalism and abuse, shade conditions, and disease and insects. Plant materials recommended for use within the Downtown are identified, along with appropriate sizes and installation specifications, within the *Technical and Design Standards of the City of Portland*. Where a developer or property owner wishes to deviate from this recommended plant list, such substitutions should be reviewed for approval by the City Arborist.

- Lighting: The illumination of plant materials can have a very pronounced impact on the character of the evening street environment. Whether providing accent lighting for individual specimen plant materials, general lighting for an area with distinctive plant materials, or illumination for special displays, celebrations or seasonal decoration, the added color and life provided by such lighting is encouraged. Wherever such illumination is proposed, care should be taken to assure that such lighting is complementary of existing City programs for street and sidewalk lighting, and that such proposed lighting enhances the pedestrian environment. Such special illumination, whether on private or public property, should generally be maintained by the owner of the proposed development, and the failure to maintain or a decision to remove such illumination should not result in an unattractive landscape.

- Planters, irrigation, and drainage: The manner in which landscaping is provided, watered, and drained is important to the viability and durability of the plant materials. In general, the larger the area in which plant material is located, the healthier it will be and the longer it will remain vigorous. Where individual tree wells are located along streets, the wells should be as large as possible to allow adequate water and air to the soil and root system. Where the dimensions of the sidewalk area permit, planting strips or portions of brick sidewalk set on sand should be considered to allow even greater area of permeable surface.

The provision of planters raised above the sidewalk surface provides plant material additional protection from compaction due to foot traffic, as well as providing some protection from salts and de-icers placed on icy sidewalks during the winter months. The introduction of such raised planters, particularly in situations where increased area of plant materials is viable, are encouraged. Care must be taken to assure that there is consistency in the style and character of planters provided within distinctive areas of the Downtown.

The adequate provision of a water source and method of drainage for planted areas is important to the continued viability of plant material. In areas such as small parks and plazas, the provision of an irrigation system is encouraged to assure adequate moisture. Such areas should also have drainage systems designed to prevent excess water accumulation or runoff onto pedestrian walk areas. Individual tree wells should be designed to allow adequate drainage, tying into curb line drainage systems wherever possible.

Specific planters, irrigation devices, and drainage methods recommended for use within the Downtown are identified within the *Technical and Design Standards of the City of Portland*. Where a developer or property owner wishes to deviate from these recommended specifications, such substitutions should be reviewed for approval by the City Arborist.

- Tree grates and guards: Generally throughout the Downtown, the provision of tree grates and guards are encouraged in order to assure adequate air and water access and to provide protection for trees located within pedestrian activity areas. In certain areas, where wide sidewalks exist and ample pedestrian circulation area is available, the use of granite pavers as a substitute for tree grates may be acceptable where such use

complements the character of the general area and is consistent with a City program for existing or proposed tree wells. Specific tree grates and guards recommended for use within the Downtown are identified, along with appropriate sizes and installation specifications, within the *Technical and Design Standards of the City of Portland*. Where a developer or property owner wishes to deviate from these recommended products, such substitutions should be reviewed for approval by the City Arborist.

- Maintenance: Continued maintenance of landscaping is an important ongoing effort vital to assuring the continued health of plant material and the continued effectiveness of landscaping as an attractive part of the pedestrian environment. A regular program of feeding, watering, pruning, damage repair, pest and weed control, and replacement of declining plant material should be established at the time of initial design and installation, and maintained thereafter.

### 3. Lighting

Downtown lighting by design should not only serve its functional purposes but also contribute to the attractiveness and aesthetic quality of the streetscape. Illumination of the sidewalks, storefronts and building facades improves the attractiveness and security of the downtown at night.

- Sidewalk lighting: Sidewalks should be amply lit with attractive and warm white light, using a combination of pole mounted, building mounted, soffit, and window lights. Care shall be taken to provide proper illumination levels, avoid glare from lighting sources, and avoid excess lighting spilling onto private property or skyward.

Frequent placement of lower wattage lights achieving a relatively uniform level of lighting is preferable to fewer brighter lights. The placement of lighting fixtures should be in relation to the scale of the pedestrian, downwardly directed, and shielded or reflected so as to avoid direct line of sight from pedestrians to the light source unless the light source is very low wattage and issues of glare do not exist.

- Building lighting: Lighting from store windows, entryways, marquis, canopies, awnings, soffits, and other integral building features is encouraged to integrate with and enhance sidewalk lighting.

- Building Facades: Prominent building facades should be lighted by carefully designed downwash systems of appropriate color and intensity. Generally only historic landmarks and civic buildings should be fully illuminated as well as buildings which substantially contribute to the character of the street and have sufficient ornamental detail to provide visual interest.

- Street Lighting: Street lighting shall comply with the *Technical and Design Standards and Guidelines*. Where street and sidewalk lighting are intended to be provided by the same luminaire, the guidelines presented herein are applicable as well.

- Luminaire: Lighting fixtures for both pedestrian and street lighting conditions should be selected for their visual interest as well as illumination qualities. The selection of lighting fixtures, or luminaries, represents an important decision in establishing a sense of identity and orientation within the pedestrian environment. Just as different areas within the Downtown vary in general activities, land uses, and architectural character which result in their own identities, selection of luminaries should contribute to the identity of those distinct areas within the Downtown. The selection of luminaries should provide an attractive addition to the streetscape in both daylight and evening hours.

Specifications for luminaries along sidewalks and within plazas adjoining sidewalks should conform to the luminaire standard designated in the *Technical and Design Standards and Guidelines*. A lighting program has been established for the following general areas within the Downtown:

- i. Old Port Generally;
- ii. Old Port Wharf Street;
- iii. Waterfront;
- iv. Congress Street;
- v. Gateway entrance routes to the Downtown; and
- vi. Other public streets.

Areas not designated, such as privately owned publicly accessible plazas and public open space, may select a different luminaire style which complements the standard for the area in the above schedule if the design of the space commands a special, unique, and equally distinctive luminaire feature. Consideration should be given, however, in the design of such spaces to coordination with the surrounding area by incorporating the standard luminaire.

- Special Lighting: The introduction of special lighting can provide an especially festive Downtown environment. Seasonal decorative lighting, most notably for the holiday season from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day, greatly contributes to the festive spirit by including decorative lights on buildings, in windows, and on trees and other landscape features. Such seasonal special lighting efforts are encouraged and should be coordinated with both City and privately-based community seasonal lighting programs wherever feasible.

In some additional circumstances, special lighting might be designed and installed either on a temporary or permanent basis as a decorative feature or object in and of itself. Other special lighting features might be proposed for illuminating sculpture, murals, fountains, extraordinary landscape features, or other such features. Special lighting such as these are encouraged, subject to careful design and installation consistent to the general guidelines for lighting described elsewhere in this section.

In all instances, selection of luminaries should consider durability and ease of replacement and maintenance. Desired lighting intensities should be achieved without glare, generally with downwardly directed luminaries, with design features and intensity levels which assure comfortable pedestrian line of sight to the luminaire.

#### D. Pedestrian Amenities

The character and comfort of pedestrian open spaces such as parks, plazas, and sidewalk areas is greatly affected by the quality, character, and quantity of amenities provided for the use of people who visit those spaces. Specific requirements and specifications for each of the following amenities (except where noted) can be found in the City's *Technical and Design Standards and Guidelines*.

##### 1. Benches and other seating

Pedestrians enjoy opportunities for pausing and resting, watching other people and activities, and eating lunch. Regular and frequent placement of benches or other seating along heavily used pedestrian routes is encouraged to accommodate these activities and thereby make the street environment more comfortable and inviting. Placement of seating should not interrupt or obstruct pedestrian circulation, and should assure maintenance and appropriate use. A variety of seating elements are encouraged, including benches, planter and retaining walls, steps or broad stairways, and individual fixed or moveable seats.

Within publicly accessible open space, adequate seating is a critical element which affects the use and success of that space. A general rule of thumb for the provision of seating applicable to a typical Downtown plaza is to provide one linear foot of seating for each thirty (30) square feet of open space. A balanced combination of seating types is usually encouraged.

## 2. Bus shelters and bus stops

The provision of clearly designated bus stops and comfortable amenities serving bus patrons are important elements of a successful public transit system. For development and public improvements along designated bus routes, the placement of standard bus shelters or the incorporation of sheltered waiting areas along building frontages is encouraged. The placement of shelters should not obstruct pedestrian circulation. Wherever feasible, shelters should provide a heated waiting area. All bus stops and shelters should be adequately illuminated and provide adequate seating, signage, and schedule/route information. Their design should complement the character of surrounding buildings and of the sidewalk or open space in which they are located.

## 3. Trash receptacles, mailboxes, newspaper boxes, public telephones

The provision of these traditional elements of the pedestrian environment serve very important needs and are encouraged. Their placement should avoid a visual appearance of clutter, should not obstruct pedestrian circulation, and should effectively support pedestrian activity. Their design should complement the character of surrounding buildings and of the sidewalk or open space in which they are located.

## 4. Directional and informational signage

In order to assure the greatest possible use of the Downtown by pedestrians, it is important that adequate orientation be provided. Carefully designed and sensitively sited directional and informational signage can enhance the accessibility of different districts, cultural facilities, special amenities or activities, and historic resources found within the Downtown. All such signage should be consistent with guidelines for signage established within this document, with signage requirements of the City Land Use Code, and with other applicable City signage programs.

## 5. Kiosks, fountains, and other special features

The introduction of informational kiosks and special features such as water fountains can provide informational amenity, excitement, or variety in the pedestrian environment and are encouraged. The location of such features should not obstruct pedestrian circulation and should complement the character of surrounding buildings and open space.

## 6. Artwork

The provision of artwork in publicly visible locations on private property, along pedestrian paths and sidewalks, and within publicly accessible open space is encouraged. The provision of artwork adds visual interest, a sense of creativity; and elements of discovery and surprise that greatly enhance the pedestrian experience. The provision of art also provides visible support to the local arts community. Artwork may be of a temporary or changing nature or permanent. The location of artwork should not obstruct pedestrian circulation nor interfere with normal Downtown maintenance efforts. The provision of artwork should be coordinated with applicable Public Arts programs.

## 7. Walls and fences

The use of walls and fences in the Downtown should enhance, rather than detract from, the character of the pedestrian environment. Ornamental fencing and creatively designed walls can add visual amenity while fulfilling often utilitarian functions. Such features should be kept as low as possible and integrated wherever adequate space allows with plant materials or other pedestrian amenity. Where the purpose is to screen views, care should be taken to retain pedestrian interest and not create, in effect, blank facades as discouraged elsewhere in this document. Exposed chain link fencing and fencing which suggests a rustic or rural setting are discouraged. Such features should complement the character of surrounding buildings and open space.

### E. Sidewalk Vendors and Sidewalk Cafes

The character and sense of liveliness of the pedestrian environment along sidewalks and within public open spaces can be greatly enriched by a diversity of activities. In addition to encouraging the use of street-level building frontages for retail and other pedestrian-oriented uses, an opportunity exists for activities which spill into the public right-of-way or which occur outside of buildings on private property immediately adjacent to pedestrian areas.

The provision of opportunities for a diversity of sidewalk vendors offering perishable wares such as food or flowers is encouraged. Such vendors should not obstruct pedestrian circulation, therefore the design of pedestrian paths and publicly accessible open space should assure that there are ample opportunities for the location of sidewalk vendors. The creative design and continual upkeep of vending carts and adequate maintenance of surrounding areas are encouraged. Such features are subject to City licensing provisions.

The establishment of outdoor sidewalk cafes is encouraged. The design, location, and construction or installation of such features must be carefully considered to assure that the proposed café does not obstruct pedestrian circulation, is appropriate in character with the surrounding buildings and open space, is comprised of durable and attractive materials, and is consistent with any related City streetscape programs.

#### F. Urban Open Space

The design of publicly accessible open space is extremely important to the future desirability and use of that space. Variety in the size and character of Downtown open space offers opportunities for varying activities and uses, and accommodates differing preferences and needs of the Downtown population. Opportunities should be created wherever possible for varied activities ranging from sitting quietly reading a book to joining together with large numbers of people engaged in or observing some performance.

Publicly-accessible parks, plazas, and other open space should be readily accessible from both sidewalks and surrounding buildings to assure maximum pedestrian circulation. Further, open space should be so located and designed to readily allow views from the sidewalk, street, and surrounding buildings into the open space as well as outward views from within the space. Such viewing should not create the impression of being under a spotlight, but rather should be adequate to allow casual people watching, create visual interest, and maintain a sense of personal safety.

The provision of varied, high quality, creatively designed, and comfortable pedestrian amenities including seating, lighting, artwork, trash receptacles, and more as described elsewhere must be carefully considered and be compatible with the overall program of amenities both within the open space and along adjoining streets. Solar access, wind protection, and landscaping should combine to enhance pedestrian comfort and provide a variety of sunny and shaded areas.

## **II. RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING DEVELOPMENT**

The physical development of the Downtown has been incremental over the last century. For much of this period, a fairly limited palette of available building technology and materials combined with a generally consistent approach to architectural character and building form. This has resulted in an existing building fabric noteworthy for its comfortable and consistent scale and compatibility of building materials. A closer look at buildings throughout the Downtown supports this consistency of general character while also revealing an extremely rich diversity in architectural styles and detailing which collectively provide a rich visual experience and a sense of the evolving history of the City. Where markedly different buildings deviated from the prevalent character, those that remain today tend to be noteworthy public buildings such as the Customs House and City Hall, or buildings that introduced a new era of design such as the Fidelity Trust Company Building.

Any development within this context, whether an infill or an individual building lot at mid-block or the redevelopment of an entire vacant block, should look to the character and prevailing pattern of development as an important frame of reference for new construction or substantial alteration.

In recognition of the intimate, pedestrian scale of the Downtown area, a premise of these guidelines is that large buildings (either exceptionally tall or massive) should be built differently in a small-scaled city than they might be built in a City of larger size or different character. Care must be taken to assure that new buildings be so composed and sited to reinforce and respect the scale and composition of existing building fabric while striving to meet the evolving functional needs and aesthetic interests of contemporary society. Care must also be taken to encourage diversity, an essential quality in creating an interesting and lively Downtown.

A. Integrate with, respect and enhance:

*Standard: “Proposed development shall respect, enhance, and be integrated with the existing character of the general pattern of development in the Downtown, surrounding building environment and streetscape.”*

The development of new buildings, building additions, and other improvements such as publicly accessible open space should be responsive to the character of existing buildings and open space, achieving a creative integration of past, present and future building design and construction. Throughout this discussion, it is important not only to respect and integrate with the existing fabric of the City, but also to enhance that fabric. Where existing structures are of high quality and in themselves positive examples of the concerns identified in these guidelines, they provide an important reference for nearby new construction. Where existing buildings are not responsive to the concerns described herein, proposals for new construction in their vicinity have the opportunity to creatively enhance that portion of the Downtown. Factors to be considered in meeting this standard include:

1. Street walls and building setbacks

Downtown Portland is characterized by a very consistent pattern of buildings located at the street line that provide very clear definition and character to the street. The street is the counterpoint to the built environment, and can be perceived as rooms and corridors in the fabric of the City. Buildings give spatial definition to the street, and the street provides relief in the form of light, air, and a viewing vantage for the buildings. A continuous street wall gives emphasis and meaning to open plazas and squares. Street walls assisting reinforcing the unique and irregular street pattern, maintaining the density of the urban fabric, and through contrast, enhancing the significance of open spaces. The most obvious examples are Congress and Exchange Streets, where very little variation in street wall occurs.

Along the Downtown's principle streets, it is particularly important to maintain this continuity by assuring that new development maintains the street wall condition by building to the street line. Subsection 2 of this Section II provides for some flexibility in this regard for special situations.

## 2. Open Space

The Downtown open space network is comprised of a variety of publicly-accessible parks and plazas, and the many public sidewalks and private interior corridors and arcades which tie these open spaces together.

The design of buildings adjacent to these various types of open space should strive to complement and reinforce the vitality of these areas for pedestrian activity. At the ground level, frequent points of access into the open space, pedestrian-oriented uses, and ample visibility between interior and exterior enhances and supports the viability of the open space. At upper stories, the generous provision of window area supports the security of the open space through increased supervision and visibility, while also providing substantial visual amenity for those surrounding buildings.

The massing of new buildings or building additions around open space should provide a sense of definition and enclosure to the open space, while not overwhelming the space either in scale or in impact on solar access or comfort within the park. The character of the exterior facades of buildings developed adjacent to open space should be of significant interest and detail to enhance the experience of park users. Unarticulated, blank facades are discouraged.

Proposals for the introduction of additional open space should look to the prevailing pattern of open space as it relates to building form and density throughout the Downtown. For example, Congress Street is characterized by a very consistent building wall established along the street, punctuated at only a limited number of locations by setbacks which provide for publicly accessible open space (i.e. City Hall and Maine Savings Plaza). Any proposal to introduce additional open space along Congress Street should consider any detrimental visual or pedestrian use impacts a break in the street wall might have, and should assure an enhanced pedestrian environment and not duplicate or detract from existing open space. Each street environment should be similarly considered as the placement of open space relative to each individual street or sub-area differs from one street or area to the next.

Other open spaces in the Downtown have occurred at points where significant changes in the street pattern occur (or once occurred). Congress Square, Monument Square, and Boothby Square each are at a point where the streets bend or streets merge or intersect at abrupt angles. Opportunities for future open space may present themselves at other similar kinds of locations Downtown.

### 3. Building form, scale and massing

Portland is a small-scaled city. Yet as a dynamic and growing City, the Downtown needs to accommodate a variety of changing uses and building tenants have requirements for interior floor areas that exceed, sometimes considerably, the prevailing supply of existing or available space. In some cases, tenants have outgrown their current space. In other instances, new tenants or new uses require larger space. If such needs are to be accommodated within the Downtown, larger buildings must be integrated into the fabric of the Downtown.

- Structure of the City: The character of the built environment results from incremental growth, development and redevelopment over an extended period of time. This incremental growth accommodated individual buildings of relatively small and discreet interior space demands while responding to the Downtown's changing topography by stepping buildings and entrances along sloping streets. The resulting pattern of building form and massing along the street is characterized by multiple, relatively narrow and discreet building facades.

Continued development Downtown should recognize and reinforce this character and pattern. The design of infill buildings as well as the design of larger buildings should provide a massing which is visually broken into both horizontal and vertical elements that reflect the scale and massing of buildings within the surrounding context.

The prevailing pattern of streets running parallel and perpendicular to the waterfront is expressed in relatively short blocks, reasonable walking distances between blocks, and frequent opportunities to turn corners or move from one street to parallel streets. This street and block pattern reinforces the preceding discussion of the historical development of the Downtown involving multiple buildings with relatively small footprints and relatively narrow building facades. Even blocks where larger buildings have been created, such as the 500 block of Congress Street, frequent opportunities exist to pass through the interiors of street-level businesses to reach paralleling streets. This important aspect of the structure of the Downtown is important to the liveliness and accessibility of retail businesses and cultural amenities.

The development of redevelopment of larger sites, and the potential assembly of more than one block or parcel through the discontinuance of intervening streets, should carefully consider this characteristic pattern of pedestrian circulation. Such development is encouraged to reinforce this pattern of pedestrian circulation by development of relatively small building footprints or by incorporating regular opportunities for building access and through-block connections.

- Skyline of the City: Building height and form contribute to a sense of order and image of the Downtown. Historically, the skyline was characterized by a regular pattern of commercial and residential structures punctuated by landmark structures such as church steeples or the cupolas and towers of prominent civic buildings. Over time, larger commercial buildings were constructed initially at the lower elevations of the waterfront and then more prominently throughout the Downtown. Most recently, the development of office buildings reaching a somewhat uniform maximum height of between 125 and 150 feet is creating a skyline dominated not by individually distinguishable landmark structures but progressively by less individually distinctive, box-like background buildings. At the same time, because of the scale of these office structures, previous visual landmarks are becoming less visible on the skyline. Collectively, the resulting skyline toward which the current pattern leads will diminish a sense of order and orientation presented on the Downtown skyline.

The pattern of building heights established through the zoning ordinance is intended to reinforce the changing topography of the peninsula, recognize the characteristic scale of historic areas and residential neighborhoods, and provide a clear sense of visual orientation with the tallest buildings along the central high spine of the peninsula. Moreover, tall buildings within the Downtown, those which exceed the prevailing height of the most recent office construction, are encouraged once again to provide distinctive elements on the skyline, to reinforce opportunities for establishing points of reference for visual orientation, and to create a more interesting and distinguishable city skyline.

- Massing: The overall volumetric relationships, or massing, of major architectural elements contributes to the building's overall appearance and sense of scale. Buildings, particularly larger buildings, should be designed to lessen the appearance of excessive bulk in order to maintain a scale and pattern comfortable to the pedestrian and to integrate with the prevailing pattern of existing buildings throughout the Downtown. While encouraging original design responses and distinguished architecture, the appearance and visual impact of a building's mass and bulk can be diminished in a variety of ways, such as the following:

- i. varying the planes of exterior walls through setbacks, recesses, or changes in direction;
- ii. varying building height so that the upper portions of larger buildings appear divided into distinct massing elements;  
and

- iii. articulating different components of a building, such as the overall building composition (base, middle, and top), the arrangement of façade elements and openings, and the choice and variation of building façade materials.

Generally, dimensional requirements of the Zoning Ordinance stipulate setbacks to prevent taller structures from overwhelming the pedestrian scale of the street-level environment and to prevent canyon-like impressions at the street edge. Location and massing of larger and taller structures within the central portions of a building lot make for a graduated transition from street wall to tower, and from the modest scale of existing buildings to the larger scale of such new buildings.

These techniques also can be used to relate the scale and massing of proposed buildings to existing buildings. The perception of scale from the pedestrian level is of primary interest. Further, the use of compatibly scaled building elements can establish relationships between new and existing buildings while allowing considerable latitude for distinctive and creative architectural design solutions. Where the prevailing context is dominated or distinguished by prominent horizontal building elements, the incorporation of significant horizontal elements such as window treatment, belt coursing, cornices and building setbacks can demonstrate a sensitivity to the surrounding context.

#### 4. Building façade proportion and composition

The design of new buildings, in particular the proportion and composition of the building's façade, should be responsive to the architectural context of buildings that surround the particular development site. These two aspects of a building's design relate closely to the manner in which scale and massing are perceived. A respectful integration of contemporary design within the existing context is encouraged and should complement, reinforce, and enhance the prevailing patterns and proportions of adjacent buildings without requiring imitation or repetition.

- Composition: The composition of a proposed building façade, that is the organization of its parts, should be carefully considered. Traditionally throughout the Downtown, buildings have been designed and constructed with a clearly identifiable three-part composition including a base, middle, and top. The base provides a portion of the building with a scale and level of ornamentation and articulation that is related directly to the pedestrian. The middle portion of the building generally provides a pattern of fenestration and detail that lends a sense of rhythm and scale to a building both horizontally and vertically. The top portion of the façade typically receives special treatment that terminates the building in an ornamental or distinctive manner.

Further, buildings Downtown frequently have a horizontal composition characterized by regular window openings set within distinctive bay spacings (often incorporating such elements as piers or pilasters). In some cases, the end bays of larger buildings are distinguishable from interior bays through additional ornamentation or a change in window pattern or some other feature expressed along the building's façade.

It is important that these different overall components of a façade relate to one another on each building to assure an integrated composition. It is equally important that these elements respect corresponding elements of adjacent buildings to assure that abrupt differences do not overwhelm existing buildings but rather reinforce prevailing patterns. In the design of larger buildings, it is particularly important to examine opportunities to compose the building both horizontally and vertically, respecting the character of buildings nearby through a contextually sensitive design while creating an interesting and creative individual building.

- Proportion: The proportion of building facades including the overall relationship between height and width of the complete façade and of components of the façade are related aspects of building composition and significant in assuring a contextual design response. Dramatic changes in proportion from one building to the next or in the character or proportion of façade elements along a given street often result in an inconsistent or ambiguous street character. The design of new buildings and substantial façade rehabilitations should strive to respect the character of building and façade proportions of surrounding development. Departure from prevailing patterns should be carefully considered to assure that the order and cohesiveness of a given street environment is not disrupted. The careful integration of the building into its surroundings, whether very similar or where creatively related but dissimilar, help to form "layers of commonality" which provide distinctiveness to different areas of the Downtown.

## 5. Pedestrian circulation and building entrances

There are strong patterns of pedestrian circulation and frequent building entrances that characterize the Downtown. The Downtown Open Space Plan identifies primary pedestrian circulation paths. Proposed development throughout the Downtown, and especially along these routes, should maintain and enhance these areas. Frequent building entrances, which have resulted in part from incremental development over time, are characteristic of the Downtown and support an active pedestrian environment. Proposed development should reinforce this pattern of providing frequent building access.

Section I, Relationship to Pedestrian Environment, provides further discussion.

6. Parking garages and surface lots

The provision of parking within the Downtown for the foreseeable future will be a continuing component of new development. It is important that the placement and design of new parking garages and surface parking lots be compatible with and enhances the character of the pedestrian environment Downtown while providing as well for the functional needs of such utilitarian facilities.

While it is of significant benefit to have parking, particularly turnover parking, in close proximity to retail storefronts and cultural activities parking areas should not create significant breaks in the continuity of businesses and activities which support pedestrian circulation and interest. Wherever feasible, priority should be given to maintaining pedestrian uses along street frontages and placement of parking should be shifted away from those street frontages and placed at the interior of sites and at upper stories in parking garages. Similarly, parking should be discouraged along the frontage of publicly accessible open space where pedestrian uses are important to the function of that open space.

- Parking Garages: Where parking garages are located along streets with significant pedestrian activity, the street-level uses of such parking facilities should be dedicated to pedestrian-oriented uses wherever feasible. Where initial conditions preclude the establishment of pedestrian-oriented uses along the street, parking garages should be designed and constructed so as to readily accommodate conversion to such ground floor uses at a later date. In addition, parking garages often have frontages or provide access from more than one street. In such situations, every effort is encouraged to incorporate through-block pedestrian connections which are clearly designated and which allow convenient pedestrian circulation along paths separate and distinct from vehicle travel lanes.

The design of parking garage facades should attempt to create a positive aesthetic solution that supports the interest of pedestrians nearby. While it may not be necessary to go to the extreme of masquerading the garage façade as some other type of use, the façade should fit comfortably with the other guidelines described throughout this document. Thoughtful detailing and screening of direct line of sight to vehicles and lighting contained within the garage is important, as well as providing additional landscaping or other site amenities at the facility's edges near public sidewalks.

- Surface parking lots: In general, surface parking areas within the dense Downtown setting are discouraged except on a temporary or interim basis. Where such facilities are proposed, care should be taken to assure that the character of these surface areas are attractive to the pedestrian walking nearby. The provision of adequate landscaping and/or ornamental fencing to help screen one's view of large areas of vehicular parking, the provision of appropriate lighting for pedestrian safety and comfort adjacent to such facilities, and the introduction of artwork or other pedestrian amenities along the pedestrian path can make such a facility more attractive.

Vehicular access such as driveway entrances or curb cuts to parking facilities should balance the needs for vehicular convenience with the priority for maintaining a safe and attractive pedestrian environment. The placement of such access should strive not to disrupt the continuity of pedestrian circulation. The design of these areas should give a clear indication to drivers that they are crossing a pedestrian area and that the pedestrian has the right-of-way. Pedestrian sidewalk materials should not be interrupted to accommodate an asphalt driveway, but rather the pattern of pedestrian paving material might change only to the degree that a clear indication is made to both driver and pedestrian that vehicles are present.

For example, where sidewalks are brick, the driveway entrance might be characterized by the placement of brick in a soldier coursing pattern or in some substantially distinctive brick pattern than is clearly part of the pedestrian sidewalk, but also recognizable as a vehicular path. Just as the sidewalk surface should not be interrupted to accommodate a driveway entrance, nor should sidewalk tilt-downs be the preferred solution to allowing smooth pedestrian circulation, but wherever possible the vehicular surface should be raised to meet the sidewalk. All such details must comply with the *Technical and Design Standards and Guidelines*.

- Signage: Adequate signage to attract and direct the motorist must be so designed, constructed and located so as not to overwhelm the pedestrian environment nor obstruct pedestrian vision or circulation. The design of signage for parking available to the general public should be consistent with a Downtown-wide program of signage for parking described in the *Technical and Design Standards and Guidelines*.

- Shared use: The design and management of Downtown parking facilities should consider opportunities for shared-use. Parking facilities are encouraged to consider extended use including day-time parking for office, retail, and cultural needs and “after-hours” (evening, weekend, and overnight) parking supporting retail, cultural and residential parking needs. Participation in the City’s clearinghouse program for residential parking is encouraged as well. Participation in a shared-use policy suggests a few issues that should be considered in the design and layout of parking facilities. In developing pedestrian and vehicular access patterns serving the parking facility, the presence of nearby residential units and adequate accessibility become important. The placement and design of street-level retail or other pedestrian-oriented uses should consider off-hour activities as well. Lighting and signage which support extended hours of use and possibly different pedestrian circulation patterns should be considered.

7. Areas within the downtown

Within distinctive areas of the Downtown, dissimilar buildings or greatly varying architectural designs can be linked by common elements that recur at regular intervals. Similarity of such things as paving materials, lighting standards, and exterior building materials or distinctive building features form layers of commonality that help to establish the identity of a particular area. Multiple layers within an area provide a richer and more identifiable character. When a new building is constructed without regard to existing layers within an area, the sense of identity of the area is lessened.

Areas within the Downtown which exhibit to some significant degree these layers of commonality include the Old Port Exchange, Commercial Street, Congress Street, and the area surrounding Lincoln Park identifiable as the Civic area. Development within each of these areas should enhance and reinforce those common features.

B. Standards for increasing setback beyond street build-to-line:

There are special exceptions to the predominant street wall condition described in the preceding guideline. The most notable of these are the public open spaces that have been created along the length of Congress Street. Congress Square Plaza, Maine Savings Plaza, and the City Hall Plaza are clearly exceptions to the pattern where public open space created in the heart of the Downtown provide welcome stops along an otherwise consistent street frontage. Monument Square and Longfellow Square represent other special and unusual situations where a change in the street grid or pattern have created opportunities for publicly accessible open space that reinforce prevailing street walls.

In order for proposed exceptions to this pattern of predominant street wall to be acceptable, the applicant must demonstrate to the Planning Board that the introduction of additional setbacks at the street level satisfies the following:

1. Open space and amenity

Provide substantial and viable publicly accessible open space or other amenity at the street level that supports and reinforces pedestrian activity and interest (such amenities might include plazas, outdoor eating spaces and cafes, or similar public amenity);

2. Prevailing character and continuity

Does not substantially detract from the prevailing street wall character by introducing such additional setback at critical building locations such as prominent form-defining corners, nor create a sense of discontinuity in particularly consistent or continuous settings;

3. Support for existing open space

Does not detract from existing publicly accessible open space by creating an excessive amount of open space in one area or by diminishing the viability or liveliness of that existing open space; and

4. Quality and orientation

The area of setback is of superior quality and character of design and of acceptable orientation to solar access and wind impact as to be attractive to pedestrian activity.

In addition to meeting the above exception criteria, such an additional setback may be appropriate where such setback provides a special setting for prominent civic buildings.

### **III. ROOF-TOP APPURTENANCES**

*Standard: "All mechanical equipment, ventilating and air conditioning and other building systems, elevators, stairways, radio or television masts or equipment, or other roof top elements not intended for human occupancy shall be fully enclosed in a manner consistent with the character, shape and materials of the principal building."*

The character of the skyline of the Downtown is defined in part by the character and profile of the tops of buildings. Evolutionary in nature, this skyline is rich with a diversity of steeples, towers and ornamental parapets that have been constructed as integral architectural components of individual buildings. At issue here are the various roof-top appurtenances such as mechanical, ventilating, or air conditioning systems, or

television or radio masts or equipment which have been located atop both recent and historic structures typically in order to provide contemporary conveniences or accommodate up-dated systems to those structures. Many of these appurtenances are seen as intrusions on the skyline where no attempt has been made to make an otherwise foreign and visually incongruous element fit comfortably within the architectural composition of individual buildings.

In addition, as building heights in part of the Downtown are increased, substantial numbers of Downtown employees and visitors will be experiencing views of the Downtown from upper stories of buildings. Such views, in a relatively small and pedestrian-scaled City, typically include a considerable number of rooftops and are impacted by the character and clutter of such rooftop appurtenances.

Wherever feasible, rooftop appurtenances should be located and designed so to appear as an integral part of the architectural character of the building on which they are located. The exterior appearance of these features should incorporate a scale, shape and choice of materials that is consistent with the principle building. In many cases, the simple placement of such features can go a long way toward making them indiscernible from pedestrian vantage points. The use of exaggerated parapet walls or architectural ornamentation can serve a similar function. Enclosing such features within a skin of materials which complement other materials on the building can help to integrate the feature with the rest of the building.

#### **IV. SHADOW IMPACT ON OPEN SPACE**

*Standard: "The location, massing and orientation of portions of buildings in excess of sixty-five (65) feet in height shall be such that substantial shadow impacts on public plazas, parks, and other publicly accessible open space are avoided."*

In a City with an extended period of cool autumn and spring seasons and a cold winter season, the availability of direct sunlight to areas of pedestrian activity plays an extremely important role in extending the use of those pedestrian areas. Frequently during these seasons, the availability of the sun's warmth makes sitting or standing within a park or plaza quite tolerable and often inviting whereas a shaded portion of the same park may be uncomfortable.

Of permanent and continuous impact on the availability of direct sunlight within an open space is the shadowing caused by the placement particularly of tall and massive structures immediately adjacent to publicly accessible open space. Even relatively short structures adjacent to a pedestrian open space can have a significant shadowing impact during the colder months when the sun is relatively low in the sky. In an effort to balance the needs for development opportunity, the importance of enclosing and defining open space with the building fabric adjacent to that open space, and the importance of maintaining sunlight in a given open space, substantial shadow impacts created by new construction or building additions which exceed 65 feet in height should be avoided.

Placing building height and mass at the center of sites or generally away from any such open space is encouraged.

Factors which should be considered and carefully evaluated in determining whether a shadow impact is substantial include:

1. the amount of area of publicly-accessible open space that is shadowed;
2. the time and duration of the shadow impact within the open space; and
3. the importance of sunlight to the utility of the type of open space being shadowed.

As a general reference, new development should not increase the area in shadow by more than 10 percent during the period from March 21 to September 21 during the critical hours of use for the following open spaces:

Longfellow Square	9 am to 3 pm	Congress Square	10 am to 3 pm
Monument Square	10 am to 3 pm	Lincoln Park	10 am to 2 pm
Lobsterman Plaza	9 am to 2 pm	City Hall Plaza	10 am to 2 pm
Tommy's Park	10 am to 2 pm	Post Office Park	10 am to 2 pm

A particularly important and somewhat unique condition can be found on certain streets within the Downtown. Key pedestrian streets that run the length of the peninsula, such as Congress Street, enjoy direct sunlight on sidewalks along the northern side of the street for much of their length during the mid-day hours of heaviest pedestrian activity. Design and massing of new development along these streets should strive wherever feasible to minimize any shadow impacts on these sidewalks particularly during the mid-day hours.

## V. WIND IMPACTS

*Standard: "The location, massing, orientation and architectural design of a new building or a building addition shall be such that no significant adverse wind impacts are created."*

Portland is a coastal city with gusty wind patterns and winds coming primarily from the northwest (winter), west, and southwest (summer). The average wind speed at pedestrian level is approximately 4.5 miles per hour.

The location, massing, height, and design of buildings and the placement of site features can all have a dramatic effect on the comfort level of pedestrian space as it is impacted by wind. In general, the taller the building, the stronger the wind potential is at the building's base. Monolithic buildings, those that do not change shape with height, almost invariably will be windy at their base when they are significantly taller than most of the surrounding buildings. When there are a lot of buildings of similar height in an area, the buildings tend to shelter one another.

The introduction of building setbacks, and pronounced architectural features such as projecting cornices, awnings and canopies, or other elements which give a three-dimensional relief to a structure all tend to help mitigate the potential impact of increased winds. The placement of site features such as walls, berms, and landscaping similarly can help to mitigate the wind impact by reducing speed or creating sheltered areas that might be most appropriate as seating or standing areas.

Consideration of wind impact as relating to new construction should have as its objective the establishment and maintenance of a comfortable pedestrian environment. Comfort levels for pedestrian use are related to wind speed, reflect the type of pedestrian activity that might be acceptable, and can be categorized (Melbourne's Criteria) as:

1. unacceptable and dangerous
2. uncomfortable for walking
3. acceptable for walking
4. acceptable for short periods of standing or sitting
5. acceptable for long periods of standing or sitting

In evaluating whether adverse wind impacts are created, the following factors should be considered:

1. Pre-development and projected post-development wind speeds and their impact on pedestrian movement; and
2. Impact of projected wind speed on the use of and comfort within existing and proposed pedestrian seating areas and other adverse impacts on the surrounding area.

## **VI. SETBACK FROM EXISTING STRUCTURES**

*Standard: "The location and design of proposed structures shall not create a detrimental impact on the structural integrity or safety of adjacent structures or the safety of occupants thereof."*

In general, the Downtown zoning ordinance does not require specific minimum setbacks from existing structures. The intention is to recognize that this is the most intensive urban environment where buildings sharing party wall conditions and property lines represent a positive and traditional development pattern encouraging a dense and vital urban fabric.

It is important, however, to assure that the location or design of proposed structures does not create a detrimental impact on either the structural integrity of adjacent existing structures or on the safety of occupants within those adjacent structures. The following examples are illustrative of the possible situations where the location and design of proposed structures might result in such a detrimental impact and which should be avoided.

1. The design of a proposed structure should not create a situation where resulting snow loading might occur on an adjacent structure that would threaten the structural stability of that structure. Alternative approaches to the design and location of the proposed structure might avoid such a snow-loading condition by introducing a setback or step-back from the existing structure or by modifying the design of the proposed structure to avoid a snow-loading condition. With agreement from all parties concerned, another alternative could involve the structural reinforcement of the existing structure or some design modification to the existing structure that would mitigate any potential problem.
2. The design or placement of a proposed structure should not render floor area in an existing adjacent structure unsafe by virtue of eliminating or obstructing means of egress which is required under fire or life safety codes. Alternative approaches for such possible situations might include the creation of suitable alternative means of egress for the existing structure either within or adjacent to the new structure or, with agreement of all parties concerned, on the premises of the existing structure.

It is important to assure that developers of new structures Downtown and owners of existing structures understand that buildings constructed at the property line are susceptible to development on adjacent properties without a minimum yard requirement or setback. New structures should be so designed and constructed wherever feasible so as not to burden adjacent properties with conditions where any such subsequent development would be restricted due to potential structural or safety problems.

## **VII. BUILDING TOPS**

*Standard: “Buildings or structures which exceed one hundred fifty (150) feet in height shall be designed so as to provide a distinctive top to the building which visually conveys a sense of interest and vertical termination to the building.”*

Historically, Portland has been a relatively small-scaled City with a fairly consistent pattern of building height punctuated by landmark structures such as church steeples, turrets or slender towers which provided visual interest and a sense of orientation. Over the last several decades, the character of recent development has been such that the pattern has evolved into a fairly consistent building height of approximately 125 to 150 feet in height, with fairly consistent and box-like building profiles becoming the norm. With the introduction of opportunities for significant increases in building height, there is an opportunity once again to provide a distinctive and exciting skyline composed of lower “background” buildings punctuated by taller landmark structures.

For taller buildings, those that exceed 150 feet in height, the design of the building top should visually convey a sense of slenderness and vertical termination while creating visual interest on the skyline. The introduction of sloped, conical, stepping, or otherwise distinctive and ornamental tops can generally make squat buildings seem more slender, provide a distinctive skyline to the City, and emphasize the height of landmark structures.

## **VIII. VIEW CORRIDORS, VISUAL LANDMARKS, AND GATEWAYS**

### **A. View Corridors**

*Standard: “The placement and massing of proposed development shall not substantially obstruct public views to landmarks and natural features from those locations identified on the View Corridor Protection Plan.”*

View corridors play a large role in determining the visual character of the City by revealing destinations and assisting pedestrians and motorists to orient themselves to the layout of streets and to the Downtown. Distant views provide visual and psychological connections to the world surrounding the City. Views may also make connections to the past by juxtaposing the old and the new. Portland’s relationship to the water is an important part of its unique character and identity. Key views to the harbor, Back Cove, and landmark buildings are a community resource to be preserved and protected. They create the sense of place that defines Downtown Portland as well as providing orientation to the public moving about Downtown.

The View Corridor Protection Plan identifies significant view corridors in the Downtown. The Plan also identifies the portions of those view corridors from which views along the corridor are important. Generally, the width of the view corridor is established by the width of the particular public right-of-way that is the principal component of the corridor, and the focus of the view is identified. Because of the substantial variation in topography on the peninsula, some level of development may be acceptable within the right-of-way width that does not effectively obstruct views from higher elevations.

With the pre-development view as a basis for reference, the placement and massing of new structure or other development along or within the designated view corridors should not substantially obstruct views to the water or landmark. To accommodate these view corridors, development on individual parcels may need to step taller portions of structures back out of the view corridor or so plan the layout of a development proposal so to site structures on other portions of a site. In some situations, low buildings could be constructed which would not block the particular view corridor. In other cases, parking or site amenities such as open space might be so placed to relate to the view corridor.

## B. Visual Landmarks

Landmark buildings in Downtown Portland help give the Downtown a sense of identity and history, and are important elements for providing orientation to both pedestrian and motor vehicle. The most recognizable landmarks, important symbols of the City and its institutions, are:

- Portland City Hall
- Custom House
- Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
- Munjoy Hill Observatory
- First Parish Church

The spirit of this policy could be extended to a variety of other important buildings in the peninsula area. Elements such as church spires, towers on schools and fire stations, and unique architectural roof features should be respected and viewed against the sky.

Presently, the distinctive profile of each of the five identified landmarks can be seen against the sky from important streets and squares. This quality contributes to their visual prominence. Typically, they are surrounded by structures of similar or lower height, so they seem an integral part of the areas in which they are located. When landmark buildings are dwarfed by structures of considerably larger scale, they appear as remnants of some bygone era. Development adjacent to these visual landmark structures is encouraged to be considerable of their importance and should assure wherever feasible that the landmarks be read against the sky from important streets and view corridors, and that they be surrounded by structures of similar scale.

To accommodate the protection of views to these landmark structures, it may be encouraged on individual sites to limit building heights or reconfigure building massing through setbacks or stepbacks to ensure that landmark structures can be seen and are not overwhelmed.

## C. Gateways

Downtown Portland today has a diverse set of gateway entrances characterized by water, air, and land approaches. The 1983 **Gateways to Portland** study provided an overview of the opportunities presented by gateways in general, including:

- a. Create a newcomer's *first impression* of the city;
- b. Provide a clear *orientation and guiding symbol*;
- c. Opportunity as a *pass-by-route* (such as I-295) where the passing view of Portland may be one's only impression of the City;
- d. Provide unique areas for residents and commuters to observe and relate to their city, *broadening an understanding of their city*.
- e. Provide pleasure of experiencing an attractive and more livable urban environment.

f. Image and potential *economic impact*.

The following list identifies existing significant Gateways:

I-295: From the Portland Jetport to Tukey's Bridge, I-295 offers a succession of dramatic and changing panorama views of the Downtown as one passes by the Downtown along the interstate highway system.

Franklin Street Arterial: The northernmost of two immediate Downtown exits from I-295, the Arterial provides perhaps the most dramatic opportunity to sense the changing topography of the saddle area of the peninsula and reveals the dramatic views to both the Back Cove and Portland Harbor that flank the Downtown.

Forest Avenue from I-295 to Congress Street: Forest Avenue provides the southernmost of two immediate Downtown exits from I-295 and is a major artery serving northwestern Portland neighborhoods and as Route 302 serving western communities. Forest Avenue brings the motorist into the heart of the Downtown near Congress Square. Both the Portland Performing Arts Center and the YMCA are major cultural facilities immediately found on this street.

State Street/High Street: This one-way pair provides access from the northern (Forest Avenue and I-295) along State Street through Longfellow Square, and from the south (primarily the Million Dollar Bridge) along High Street to Congress Square.

Preble/Elm Streets, Baxter Boulevard: Preble and Elm Streets comprise another one-way pair connecting Marginal Way, Forest Avenue, and Baxter Boulevard/Route 1 to the Downtown in the vicinity of Monument Square.

Portland Street: The approach to Downtown along Park Avenue, past historic Deering Oaks Park, and along Portland Street to Preble Street and Cumberland Avenue offers an opportunity for creating a more attractive Gateway entrance through an area that has potential for continued redevelopment. A dramatic view of the landmark City Hall Tower, particularly as illuminated at night offers visual amenity to this corridor.

Washington Avenue to Cumberland Avenue and Congress Street from the east: Washington Avenue serves as an entry for traffic approaching Downtown from the north with an exit from I-295 and a connection as an arterial along Washington Avenue from Falmouth, and from Munjoy Hill. This approach, bringing traffic through a portion of Munjoy Hill, has the potential to be substantially enhanced and to provide a sense of the mixed-use character of Portland's East End.

Congress Street from the west: This approach ties the Portland jetport, the Stroudwater neighborhood, and areas westerly to the Downtown connecting at Longfellow Square. This area has undergone considerable change over the last thirty years, and presents an important approach that would benefit greatly by gateway improvements.

Commercial Street: This approach ties I-295, across the Fore River at Veterans Memorial Bridge to West Commercial Street, along the industrial and marine-related mixed use waterfront, connecting to the Downtown in the vicinity of the Old Port.

The Million Dollar Bridge to York Street: After excellent views of the Portland waterfront and Downtown skyline as one crosses the bridge, this entry to the Downtown provides an opportunity to get a sense of the residential and evolving commercial districts which surround and are so important to the Downtown. This path has two branches, one leading up High Streets to Congress Square and the other continuing along York Street to Gorham's Corner and the Old Port.

Harbor Approach: With the islands of Casco Bay serving as residential communities of the City, and with a considerable summer population based on the islands or approaching the City by water, the approach to the Downtown from the water side is quite important. The dramatic views of the waterfront and the City's skyline are important and quite unique opportunities for Portland. The Casco Bay Ferry Terminal, International Ferry Terminal and public or private landings and docking facilities all serve as entry points for residents and visitors alike.

Air approach to Jetport over Harbor: The dramatic air approach over Casco Bay, the Portland Harbor and Downtown Portland offer a spectacular and ever changing introduction to the City.

While each of these entrances to the Downtown is unique, collectively there are opportunities to enhance these entrances by preserving view corridors and panoramic skyline views along or from these corridors, reinforcing and enhancing the scale, character and placement of buildings along these entrance routes, and by encouraging development which reinforces the unique positive aspects and opportunities for each particular Gateway.

At the scale of the streetscape, consistent street tree planting and landscape improvements, consistent sidewalk paving patterns, distinctive informational and directional signage, and lighting programs can reinforce the character and positive impression of each Gateway entrance. The provision of landscaping, paving materials, and other pedestrian amenities should all be of the highest quality and be compatible with and enhance the Gateway experience for both vehicle and pedestrian. Service yards, storage areas, and parking lots should be suitably screened from view along all designated Gateway entrances to the City.

Proposals for development along Gateway entrances to the Downtown are encouraged to examine and reinforce the unique character and opportunity of that gateway entrance to the Downtown in terms of the design and siting of buildings, land uses, and streetscape improvements.

## **IX. SIGNAGE/AWNINGS/CANOPIES**

### **A. General**

Signs, awnings, canopies and other similar devices are among the most noticeable visual elements of the urban environment. These devices are not only a practical business requirement for a property owner or tenant but also can significantly enhance a storefront, building façade and street environment. Signage designed, constructed, and installed throughout the Downtown should be executed and placed in a manner which is respectful of the character of the building on which it will be located and the character establishing the appropriateness of a proposed sign will be the character and design of those other existing signs which would meet the guidelines presented herein.

Signs, as components of a building façade, are relatively temporary as businesses or tenants change with some frequency over time. The design and installation of signage should recognize this temporary nature of signage and should always be approached with an attitude of reversibility. All signs should be designed and installed in a manner that upon their removal, the character defining features of the building remain intact and that the exterior materials of the building are not permanently or irreparably damaged.

### **B. Design**

#### **1. General**

- The design of signage should be respectful of the building on which it is located, carefully designed to fit a given façade complementing the building's architectural features. Signage inconsistent with the architectural style of a building, such as providing "colonialized" signs on a Victorian storefront, is not appropriate.
- The design of signage should be oriented and scaled to reflect the scale and character of movement of people around the building, with an emphasis primarily on the pedestrian and slow-moving traffic.
- Design, selection of materials, and workmanship shall be of high quality in appearance and character, complementary to the materials and character of the building, and convey a sense of permanence and durability.
- In addition, the design of signage on historic structures should consider historic signage that was previously or is currently incorporated on the building. Where clear documentation exists as to the character and design of original or historically significant signage found on that building, every effort should be made to meet contemporary signage needs with a sign designed in keeping with the building's historic signage.

## 2. Size

- The size of proposed signs should be compatible with the scale of the overall building, with the scale and character of the building's architectural features, and with the character of the specific sign location.
- The size of the sign should relate comfortably in size and scale to pedestrians moving about in the vicinity of the sign.
- No sign shall extend greater than four feet into any public right-of-way or beyond a vertical plane two (2) feet inside the curb line (face of curb).

## 3. Communication

- Signage is most effective when it is simple and limited in subject matter to the name of the business or property, a street address, and the incorporation of a logo, symbol, or other graphic display that is central to the primary tenant or use of the property. Signage should clearly be incidental to the tenant or use of the property. General commercial advertising unrelated to the principal use is discouraged. Signs advertising businesses or products not found on the property (off-premises signs) are not permitted.
- Lettering typefaces and words should be selected which are simple, easy to read, and scaled appropriately for both the sign and building. Logos or symbols are encouraged where integrated with the proposed sign. Pictographs (such as the creation of a projecting sign in the shape of a key for a lock shop) should be carefully considered and can be an interesting and appropriate feature in some situations.
- Colors on signage should be selected which complement the character and color pattern of the building. A sign should not, by virtue of its color, be distracting from the design and character of the building on which it is located. Signs tend to be most effective when there is a contrast in color between the lettering/symbols and the background of the sign.

## 4.. Illumination

- Generally, flashing or moving lights are not appropriate. Special situations, such as the design of marquees or features relating to special uses such as cultural events or public activities may be appropriate exceptions where sensitively designed and where no safety hazard is created.

- Illumination of signage should be compatible with the character of illumination already existing on the building and on surrounding buildings, on existing appropriate signs in the vicinity, and the character of illumination along the pedestrian areas adjacent to the building. Where internal illumination of a sign causes the scale of the sign to become excessive in relation to architectural features of the building due to the sign thickness necessary to accommodate internal devices, alternative lighting should be considered. Backlighting of individual letters may be an acceptable alternative.

- External illumination of signage should be concentrated evenly on the sign itself, with no significant glare or spillover onto adjacent buildings. The light source should be concealed from the direct view of the pedestrian.

- All electrical conduit, transformers, raceways, and wires must be concealed within or behind the sign or face of the building, or be designed as an integral element of the building façade, or be substantially disguised or hidden so as to be unobtrusive to the appearance of the building and sign. The attachment of such devices to the structure should not permanently damage any significant architectural features or the architectural fabric of the building.

#### C. Placement and Location

1. The placement of signage on all buildings should be carefully considered, taking into account the scale, character and design of the building, the traditional location of signage on Downtown buildings, the location of existing or designed sign boards, lower cornices, lintels, and piers, and the opportunity to use signage as an element to reinforce building entrances.
2. The placement of signage should not visually obscure architecturally significant features of the building. The method of attachment for new signs should not permanently alter or destroy significant features or materials of the building.
3. Where signage is proposed on window surfaces, such signage should not substantially obscure visibility through the window.

4. Generally, the placement of signage should occur below the sill of the second story windows. Where the design of the base portion of the building establishes some higher location as an appropriate location and where such location complements the character of appropriate signage on adjacent buildings or architectural features of adjacent buildings, alternative locations should be considered. Where unusual site characteristics exist or where exceptionally well-designed and integrated signage is proposed, placement elsewhere on a building will be considered. Painted signs on upper story windows, such as stenciled names of professional firms, are acceptable provided they do not detract from the character of window design.
5. In addition to placement criteria above, the minimum height of projecting signs, awnings, canopies, and marquees above the sidewalk shall conform to the current BOCA National Building Code. Further, projecting signs should be placed high enough to prevent vandalism.
6. No signs should extend or be placed above the roof or parapet line of any building. The development of taller buildings Downtown provides an opportunity for significant impact on the character and attractiveness of the City's skyline. Through other design guidelines dealing with rooftop appurtenances and ornamental building tops, the design of taller structures is encouraged to create architectural design rather than through a corporate logo or name emblazoned at the top of tall structures. Therefore, no signage should be placed on portions of buildings or structures exceeding 125 feet in height.
7. No private signs should be placed in the public way without specific license by the City.
8. Freestanding signs, excluding public information signs, are discouraged. Signage should be incorporated with building features or with integral site features such as planter walls.
9. The placement of signs shall not disrupt or obstruct the vision of drivers or pedestrians so as to create a hazardous situation. No signs should be so located as to significantly obstruct pedestrian circulation.

D. Number of Signs

1. The proliferation of signs within a dense urban environment can lead to visual confusion and a sense of clutter. The number of signs for each tenant or building should be kept to a minimum while recognizing the need for identification and visibility. Building signs and projecting signs should be limited to one per building street frontage for each business or tenant.

2. Where multiple signs occur on a single building, there should be a common pattern and character between such signs. Signs need not all be identical, but there should be a common pattern of placement, general design, and illumination.
3. Where multiple tenants are served by one sign or a grouping of signs, the signs should be treated as a building directory with the building name and/or address most prominent and the names of individual businesses or tenants subservient in the directory design. Such directories should be located at or near building entrances and should be scaled so that individual names are visible to the pedestrian.

E. Guidelines for Special Categories of Signs

In addition to the guidelines described above, certain types of signs require special guidelines that relate to their special character or purpose.

1. Awnings, Canopies and Marquees

These signs serve both as decorative and multi-functional devices. In addition to the color and character they can add to the visual environment, these features serve to protect pedestrians from adverse weather conditions, entice pedestrians to pause and view merchandise on display in storefronts, can protect displays from intense sunlight and can provide visual relief to otherwise flat or unarticulated facades. The shape and size of these devices should correspond to the shape, character, and size of the opening over which they will be installed, and should fully fill the width of the individual window or door opening. These devices should be designed and located to be compatible with other appropriate and similar features on the same building or on buildings in the vicinity. These devices should not obscure architecturally significant elements of the building.

2. Public Information Signs

This category of signage includes informational signage such as traffic regulations, transit information, public announcements or community activity information, and historic markers, as well as directional signage such as street signs and directions to major civic, arts or cultural facilities. Wherever possible, these signs should be designed and located so that they complement the character of the environment in which they are placed. Such signs may be free-standing as necessary to effectively serve their purpose. These signs may be located off the premises to which they refer.

### 3. Painted Wall Signs

Painted wall signs such as murals should be used only to enhance the environment or streetscape. They should not be developed for advertising purposes. Such wall signs should not disrupt the setting of an historic building or of an otherwise distinctive environment. Painted wall signs such as business names may be appropriate and should be reviewed according to other applicable guidelines. Where painted wall signs are appropriately located, the surface of walls used for such wall signs should be properly prepared so to reduce the need for maintenance and to assure long-term attractiveness. In a few instances, old painted wall signs of a commercial nature still are discernable on the facades of some buildings and serve as reminders of former businesses and activities found therein. These signs should be examined on an individual basis and, where they reflect a significant period of the Downtown's history, restoration of the most significant of these should be encouraged.

### 4. Address Signs

Address signs indicate the street address of a business or building. The location of these signs generally should occur above or on the entrance, and should be coordinated with adjacent establishments with the objective of making building identification easier.

### 5. Portable/Movable Signs

Portable sandwich board signs commonly found throughout the Downtown are the only portable freestanding signs (other than special temporary signs and public information signs) which are encouraged Downtown. All portable signs placed within the public way require special permitting through the City. In addition to requirements of that process, all such signs should be designed and located in a manner that does not detract from the character of the pedestrian environment, nor create obstacles to pedestrian circulation or visibility.

### 6. Temporary Signs

This category of sign is exhibited for a limited time to advertise special events or sales and is removed following the event. Included within this category are "For Sale or Lease" signs, construction signs, sale or promotional signs, and special events signs.

### 7. Banners, Flags and Pennants

Colorful flags, pennants and banners add color and movement into the streetscape. The incorporation of such elements into the streetscape or the placement on buildings should complement the character of the building fabric. While the flag or banner is relatively temporary in nature, the brackets or poles from which these elements hang tend to remain for extended periods. Attachment of such support devices to buildings or other structures should not cause irreversible damage to significant architectural features or fabric.

## 8. On-Site Service Signs

On-site service signs for such needs as identifying parking entrances and exits, handicapped parking spaces or handicapped access, drive-thru teller signs, and other similar directional signs should be considered as a whole system, coordinated in size, materials, design, and character within a single property and with adjacent properties.

### F. Maintenance

All signage should be maintained in good visual and structural condition.