

CHAPTER 27

Community Design Standards

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ARTICLE I

General Provisions

Sec. 27-1. Applicability.

(A) All development applications for multi-family housing, commercial, retail or industrial developments within Commercial or Industrial zone districts that are subject to site plan review and approval, and all projects subject to filing an application under the provisions of Chapter 25 of this Code, Areas & Activities of State Interest (1041 Regulations), shall comply with the applicable principles and standards contained in this Chapter.

(B) These standards shall apply to existing buildings when a proposed building expansion exceeds twenty percent (20%) of the existing floor area.
(Ord. 3 §1, 2009)

Sec. 27-2. Relation to zone district standards.

In the event of a conflict between a standard or requirement contained in this Chapter and Chapter 21 of this Code, the standard in Chapter 21 shall prevail.
(Ord. 3 §1, 2009)

Sec. 27-3. Application of community design standards.

The Planning Commission and the Council will evaluate each proposal based on these standards and the context within which each project is located. The standards are intended to be specific enough to guide development, but not so specific as to preclude creative design solutions. Applicants must conform to the design standards in this Chapter unless it can be demonstrated that an alternative meets one (1) or more of the following conditions:

- (1) The alternative better achieves the stated intent;
- (2) The intent cannot be achieved by application of the standard in this circumstance;
- (3) The effect of other standards will be improved by not applying a particular standard; or
- (4) Strict application or unique site features make the standard impractical.
(Ord. 3 §1, 2009)

Sec. 27-4. Community design policies.

The general policies listed below are intended to guide the development of multi-family, commercial and industrial projects.

- (1) Sustainable building and development. The City supports sustainable design and energy conservation practices in site planning and building projects in the community. The City supports the implementation of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System, implementation of the National Energy Code and the LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) program. The City encourages sustainable green building and development practices and site and building performance standards in five (5) areas:
 - (a) Sustainable site development.
 - (b) Water savings.
 - (c) Energy efficiency.
 - (d) Materials selection.
 - (e) Indoor environmental quality.

The City will consider waivers to elements of Chapter 21 of this Code, Zoning, in order to support the sustainable site and building practices listed above. Waivers to Articles VI, Building Regulations, and VII, Park-

ing and Loading Requirements, of Chapter 21 may be requested. Granting of any waivers to these portions of the Code will be based on proof of excellence in sustainable site design and energy conservation practices.

- (2) Design within the historic setting of the City. Developments shall be designed to fit into the setting of the City and protect scenic view corridors, historic districts and historic landscapes. The community setting of the City includes the following distinct areas:
- (a) East End. Between the Exit 241/I-70 interchange and about 17th Avenue lies the area commonly referred to as the "East End." This area consists largely of highway service commercial developments, including food and beverage, retail, service and lodging establishments. This area developed along what had previously been the U.S. 6 & 40 corridor which was the main east-west corridor through Colorado until the construction of Interstate 70. Much of the nonresidential development in the East End is a remnant of highway-style development built between the 1930s and the 1950s. Projects in this area are encouraged to build upon themes found in early highway roadside-era projects, including building elements based upon "roadside" architectural motifs and signage that includes limited neon and movement elements. The City supports redevelopment efforts across the East End that will create a vibrant, modern business district.

On property in the East End with double frontages between Miner Street and Colorado Boulevard, and Colorado Boulevard and Clear Creek, the City will support proposals that relate to Miner Street, Colorado Boulevard frontages and Clear Creek itself. Neither Miner Street nor Clear Creek should be considered the "back door" or rear yard of projects. Pedestrian access easements in the East End along existing roadways and the Creek are strongly recommended in any property development.

- (b) Commercial Downtown. Beginning at 17th Avenue and extending west to 13th Avenue, the Idaho Springs Historic Commercial District is the centerpiece of the community. This Chapter does not apply to properties within the District, those locally designated or listed on the State Register of Historic Properties or National Register of Historic Places. New developments within a two-block radius of the outside boundary of the District should build upon and support the architectural features of the District itself. Use of Historic District building materials, architectural styles and designs based upon historic City sites are strongly encouraged.
- (c) West End. Beginning at about 12th Avenue, the West End features commercial properties in the form of motels, bed and breakfast operations and some service/light industrial businesses. New proposals in this area are encouraged to develop at a generally smaller scale in order to better match the existing residential character of this area of the community.
- (d) Community Gateways. Gateway entrances to the City include lands at and near Interstate 70 interchanges, including Exit 243, Hidden Valley; Exit 241, East End; Exit 240, Historic Downtown; and Exit 239, West End. New projects within the immediate vicinity (three hundred [300] feet of the edge of Colorado Department of Transportation right-of-way at the interchange) of these Community Gateways shall develop elements of signage, landscaping and site design to create and support a sense of entry to the City. Design work at gateways to the City should reflect the historic mining heritage of the community.

(Ord. 3 §1, 2009)

Sec. 27-5. Neighborhood/community meeting.

(A) Development proposals subject to the provisions of this Chapter shall conduct a neighborhood meeting at the beginning stage of the design process. The applicant is required to present the project proposal to the neighborhood prior to the submission of a formal application. Written notice of this meeting will be sent by the City to property owners located within one hundred fifty (150) feet of the outer boundary of the project. While the City will conduct the mailing, the applicant will be responsible for all expenses and for providing appropriate materials, mailing lists and other items as necessary.

(B) This meeting is intended to solicit and document input on the proposed project prior to commencing formal design. The meeting results may be used to modify the project's conceptual design and, if no changes are made to the proposal based upon input heard or submitted at the meeting, the applicant will explain why neighborhood and community input did not generate any design modifications.
(Ord. 3 §1, 2009)

Sec. 27-6. Historic Preservation Review Commission (HPRC) notice.

Application materials for any project subject to the provisions of this Section will be provided to the HPRC in a timely manner. HPRC comments will be included in the review of any proposal by staff, the Planning Commission or the City Council, as appropriate.
(Ord. 3 §1, 2009)

Sec. 27-7—27-10. Reserved.

ARTICLE II

Landscape Design Standards

Sec. 27-11. Intent.

To promote quality landscape design suitable for the City's historic landscape, climate, mountain setting and character.
(Ord. 3 §1, 2009)

Sec. 27-12. Landscape standards.

All development applications subject to this Chapter shall be accompanied by an appropriate landscape plan completed by a professional landscape architect or equivalent. Landscape plans must address the standards listed below.

- (1) Site landscape design. Landscape improvements shall be an integral part of the overall site design for each property and:
 - (a) Configured to maximize connections within the site to natural areas and to landscaped areas in adjacent developments.
 - (b) Enhance natural features, creeks and streams, drainage ways and environmental resources.
 - (c) Designed for mature landscapes that will provide appropriate visibility for cars and pedestrians.
 - (d) Preserve and frame views.
 - (e) All landscapes shall maximize the use of native species. Where native material is not appropriate for the intended use or appearance, plant species that are regionally adapted and noninvasive may be used.
 - (f) Landscapes shall consist of a variety of species to enhance biodiversity.
 - (g) Landscape designs shall facilitate water conservation, including the use of xeriscaping principles as appropriate.
- (2) New buildings and paved areas.
 - (a) Anchor structures in the landscape through the use of trees, shrubs and groundcover. The size and intensity of plantings shall be appropriate to the size and context of the improvements.
 - (b) Integrate adjacent land uses of different intensities through a combination of berming, plantings and fencing. Use opaque screening only when necessary to mitigate the impact of noise, light, unattractive aesthetics and traffic. A fence shall not be the only screening material used.
 - (c) Use landscaping to provide a transition from developed, managed landscape to more natural vegetation.

(3) Plant materials.

- (a) Plants shall be healthy, well-branched, vigorous stock with a growth habit normal to the species and variety and free of diseases, insects and injuries. A variety of plant species shall be installed to help prevent the spread of disease.
- (b) All plants shall conform to standards for measurements, grading, branching, quality, ball and burlapping, as stated in the current edition of the *American Standard for Nursery Stock*, American Association of Nurserymen, Inc., (AAN-ASNS) and the Colorado Nursery Act of 1965 (CNA).
- (c) The minimum planting sizes on all required landscaping shall be two-inch caliper deciduous trees, one-and-one-half-inch caliper ornamental trees, six-foot tall evergreen trees and five-gallon shrubs.

(4) Street trees. Street trees shall be calculated to be placed at intervals of no greater than forty (40) feet along new and existing streets bordering the project. The placement of street trees may be combined into groupings as necessary to accommodate drive entrances, utility services and other elements particular to the site.

(5) Irrigation. All required landscaping shall be irrigated as required for plant establishment and maintenance. Irrigation shall be appropriate to the type and scope of the improvements and, at City direction, may include installation of a permanent irrigation system. All automatic irrigation systems must be installed with moisture sensors.

(6) Maintenance. In order to provide for the ongoing health and appearance of landscape improvements, all landscaping shall be maintained and replaced by the landowner or occupant as necessary.

(7) Screen Dumpster areas. Dumpster and trash storage areas visible from the public right-of-way or adjacent property must be screened with an opaque screen constructed of materials that are similar to materials used in the building architecture. Chain-link fencing with slats, tires or used building materials are not acceptable screening materials.

(Ord. 3 §1, 2009)

Sec. 27-13—27-18. Reserved.

ARTICLE III

Multi-Family Residential Architecture

Sec. 27-19. Intent.

The City encourages the development of multi-family residential units that will reflect the historic character of development in the City, create viable residential neighborhoods and bring creative and sustainable developments to the community.

(Ord. 3 §1, 2009)

Sec. 27-20. Multi-family design standards.

(A) Massing. All buildings shall be designed to provide complex massing configurations through the use of varied building forms, orientations, rooflines, facades and other design details.

(1) Plain, monolithic structures with long, monotonous, unbroken wall and roof plane surfaces of fifty (50) feet or more shall be prohibited.

(2) Facades of single-family attached townhomes shall be articulated to differentiate individual units.

(B) Maximum building length.

(1) The maximum length of any multi-family residential building shall not exceed one hundred fifty (150) feet.

(2) No more than six (6) townhome units may be attached in a single row or building cluster.

(C) Exterior wall materials. For multi-family and townhome buildings, the total exterior wall area of each building elevation shall employ distinctive materials, colors and/or design features.

- (1) Distinctive materials may include full-width brick or stone, stucco or cement lap siding.
- (2) Distinctive design features include: dormer, bay, sidelight or transom windows; functional or simulated chimneys and a covered front porch.

(D) Garages and carports.

- (1) Detached garages and carports shall be compatible with the principal building architecture, incorporating similar forms, scale, materials, colors and details.
- (2) Carports shall be limited to six (6) spaces per structure.
- (3) No more than six (6) garage doors may appear on any multi-family building elevation containing front doors, and the plane of each garage door shall be offset at least two (2) feet from the plane of the garage door adjacent to it.
- (4) Detached garages and carports shall have pitched roofs with a minimum slope of 4:12.

(E) Roof materials. All sloped roof areas shall be clad with either high-profile composition shingles, such as slate, tile or dimensional asphalt shingles, concrete or clay tiles or seamed architectural metal.

(F) Roof shapes.

- (1) All one-story, multi-family buildings shall have a pitched roof with a minimum slope of at least 6:12.
- (2) When sloping roofs are the predominant roof type, each building shall have at least three (3) distinct roof ridgelines.
- (3) When flat roofs are the predominant roof type, parapet walls shall vary in height and/or shape at least once in every fifty (50) feet of building wall length.

(G) Requirement for four-sided design. The special architectural features and treatments shall not be restricted to a single facade. All sides of a building open to view by the public, whether viewed from public or private property, shall display a similar level of quality and architectural interest.

(H) Windows. All elevations shall contain windows.

(I) HVAC and utilities. All exposed HVAC units and utility boxes must be designed to blend in with the building and/or landscaping.

(J) Architectural elements.

- (1) All multi-family buildings shall employ at least two (2) of the following design items applied consistently along each facade:
 - (a) Overhangs.
 - (b) Recesses.
 - (c) Projections.
 - (d) Shadow lines.
 - (e) Reveals.
- (2) Stairways serving as a primary point of entry/ exit in multi-family buildings shall not be located outside of the building footprint.
- (3) Primary entrances to apartment buildings should be identifiable by an architectural treatment such as a covered portico.

(K) Orientation. On a lot with multiple buildings, those located on the interior of the site shall relate to one another both functionally and visually. A building complex shall be organized around features such as courtyards, greens or quadrangles which encourage pedestrian activity and incidental social interaction. Smaller, individualized groupings of buildings are encouraged. Buildings shall be located to allow for adequate fire and emergency access. (Ord. 3 §1, 2009)

Sec. 27-21—27-25. Reserved.

ARTICLE IV

Commercial and Industrial Architecture

Sec. 27-26. Intent.

The City establishes the following minimum architectural standards in order to support existing commercial and industrial development in the community and develop new commercial and industrial projects/districts that enhance the appearance and business setting in the City. (Ord. 3 §1, 2009)

Sec. 27-27. General standards (commercial and industrial).

(A) Blank walls and wall articulation.

- (1) Walls shall not have an uninterrupted length exceeding thirty (30) feet.
- (2) Blank wall or service area treatment of side and/or rear elevations visible to the general public is not allowed unless the City determines there are adequate building or landscape features to conceal the view of the blank wall.
- (3) Continuous cornice lines or eaves are encouraged between adjacent buildings.
- (4) Buildings with flat roofs shall provide a parapet with an articulated cornice.

(B) Facade treatment. The architectural treatment of the front facade shall be continued, in its major features, around all visibly exposed sides of a building. A building's special architectural features and treatments shall not be restricted to a single facade. All sides of a building open to view by the public, whether viewed from public or private property, shall display a similar level of quality and architectural interest.

(C) Screening. All air-conditioning units, HVAC systems, exhaust pipes or stacks, elevator housing and satellite dishes, other telecommunications receiving devices and any other apparatus placed on the roof of a building shall be thoroughly screened from view from the public right-of-way and from adjacent properties by using walls, fencing, roof elements and landscaping.

(D) Rooftop mechanical units. Rooftop mechanical units and other miscellaneous rooftop equipment shall be substantially screened from view from public rights-of-way and other public places. Screening materials shall be of the same or comparable material, texture and color as the materials used on the building. Roof-mounted equipment screening shall be constructed as an encompassing monolithic unit, rather than as several individual screens.

(E) Loading and trash facilities. All trash facilities and loading and parking areas shall be screened from public view by landscaping, building elements or approved fencing to the greatest extent possible.

(F) Building form. The design of all buildings shall employ textured surfaces, projections, recesses, shadow lines, color, window patterns, overhangs, reveals, changes in parapet heights and similar architectural features to avoid monolithic shapes and surfaces and to emphasize building entries. Buildings shall not contain unbroken flat walls of thirty (30) feet or greater in length.

- (1) Buildings having single walls exceeding thirty (30) feet in length shall incorporate two (2) or more of the following for every thirty (30) feet or portion thereof:
 - (a) Pilasters;

- (b) Projections, recesses and reveals;
- (c) Windows and fenestration;
- (d) Arcades and pergolas;
- (e) Towers;
- (f) Gable projections;
- (g) Horizontal/vertical breaks; or
- (h) Other similar techniques.

(G) Exterior building materials and colors. Intense, bright or fluorescent colors shall not be used as the predominant color on any wall or roof of any primary or accessory structure.

(H) Walkways. Walkways must be located and aligned to directly and continuously connect areas or points of pedestrian origin and destination and not be located and aligned solely based on the outline of a parking lot configuration that does not provide such direct pedestrian access.

(I) Building orientation. Where possible, buildings shall be located to front on and relate primarily to streets. Building setbacks from local and collector streets should be minimized in order to establish a visually continuous, pedestrian-oriented street front. In the case of large buildings for employment, storage or auto-related uses, where greater setbacks are needed, a minimum of thirty percent (30%) of the building shall be brought to the setback line. If a minimized setback is not maintained, the larger setback area shall have landscaping, low walls or fencing, a tree canopy and/or other site improvements along the sidewalk designed for pedestrian interest, scale and comfort. (Ord. 3 §1, 2009)

Sec. 27-28. Commercial standards.

Commercial, retail and business projects shall meet the design standards below.

- (1) Windows. Windows shall be vertically proportioned wherever possible.
- (2) Thematic architectural styles. Prototypical or franchise architectural designs may be required to be modified to meet these design standards. Changes to prototypical franchise styles to meet these standards may include, but not be limited to, modifications to roofs and roof elements, windows, doors, building mass, materials, colors, placement of architectural features, etc. Franchise architectural styles found to meet these standards will not require any modification.
- (3) Awnings. Fixed or retractable awnings are permitted. Canvas is the preferred material, although other water-proofed fabrics may be used. Awnings or canopies which provide a generally consistent cover along the pedestrian walk are encouraged. Translucent awnings made of plastic, Teflon or similar materials are not permitted.
- (4) Multi-story, mixed-use structures. Commercial uses may be contained in multi-story mixed-use structures with commercial/retail uses on the ground level and/or apartment dwellings or offices on the upper levels.
- (5) Entries. Transparent entries and storefront style windows are mandatory in commercial projects. (Ord. 3 §1, 2009)

Sec. 27-29. Industrial architectural standards.

Industrial buildings shall meet the following standards:

- (1) Building types and styles.
 - (a) Office and entry spaces shall be distinguished from the building mass.
 - (b) Large, square, box-like structures are prohibited. Architectural elements with smaller forms stepping outwards and down are permissible.

- (c) Parking requirements shall be provided to the extent possible at the rear or sides of the building.
- (2) Requirement for four-sided design. A building's special architectural features and treatments shall not be restricted to a single facade. All sides of a building open to view by the public, whether viewed from public or private property, shall display a similar level of quality and architectural interest.
- (3) Exterior building materials and colors. Intense, bright or fluorescent colors shall not be used as the predominant color on any wall or roof of any primary or accessory structure.
- (4) Siting.
 - (a) Structures shall be sited to avoid a wall effect along public rights-of-way and along adjacent property lines. This can be achieved by varying the building setbacks and clustering buildings.
 - (b) Where multiple buildings are proposed on a development parcel, buildings shall be oriented to allow views into the project and shall preserve high-quality views through the project.

(Ord. 3 §1, 2009)

Sec. 27-30—27-35. Reserved.