

# Table of Contents

A section needs to be added on the Design Review Board, including:

How members are selected and trained

The administration procedures for the review board

# Introduction

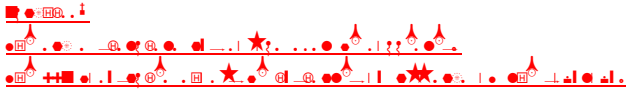
Downtown Ann Arbor is the civic, economic and cultural heart of the community. The Downtown Ann Arbor Design Guidelines are intended to provide general design principles and specific qualitative measures to promote the community's objectives for maintaining downtown as the center of the community. By helping to accommodate compatible infill, redevelopment, development and public space, the design guidelines also promote economic sustainability and reduce sprawl in outlying areas.

New development should be sensitive to the traditional context of downtown Ann Arbor. Although such development may be larger or taller than that seen traditionally historically, or incorporate contemporary design elements and materials, it should also respect reflect the design context and traditions of the character district, block and street in which it is located.

## Application of the Design Guidelines

The design guidelines in this document apply to development on all properties within the Downtown Core (D1) and Downtown Interface (D2) zoning districts. For properties that are in a designated historic district, refer to the separate Design Guidelines for Historic Districts.

When considering a project downtown, property owners, developers and architects ~~are encouraged to~~ must refer to the downtown design guide—lines and design review process. Compliance with the review process is mandatory, and compliance with the design guidelines is voluntary.



## **Interpreting the Design Guidelines**

Eliminate this page. It is not necessary.



## **Interpreting Applying the Design Guidelines**

Projects throughout downtown Ann Arbor should address the intent of all relevant design guidelines included in this document. However, certain guidelines will not be relevant for all projects. For example, design guidelines for building massing and building elements are not relevant to a project involving only site development or improvement. When considering a project in downtown Ann Arbor, use the design guidelines checklist provided as Appendix A to note which guidelines are relevant and how they would be addressed.

There is a dynamic interaction among the guidelines and the design variables that they address. An individual project may address certain guidelines very specifically while addressing others in a more general way. This balance may be considered when determining whether the project meets the overall intent of the guidelines, acknowledging that certain guidelines will be more important than others based on the context and the specific aspects of an individual design.

When a project incorporates design solutions that do not appear to meet one or more specific design guidelines, the intent statements in the relevant design guidelines sections may be used to determine whether the alternative design solution is appropriate. Explain the entire mandatory review and compliance process and make-up of design review board.



## **Guide to this Document**

This document is organized into an introduction, an overview of design principles, two primary chapters of design guidelines and an appendix.

### **Introduction**

This section presents a general vision for downtown Ann Arbor, describes the purpose and policy base for design guidelines, introduces the concept of Character Districts and describes the format of the design guidelines. The introduction should be consulted when considering a project within any part of downtown Ann Arbor.

### **Chapter 1: Urban Design Principles**

This chapter provides an overview of the urban design principles which are the foundation for the design guidelines and explains their relationship with concepts and requirements that are part of the downtown zoning districts. The urban design principles address how streets are crafted to be active and pedestrian-friendly and to establish a sense of relatedness among properties. Chapter 1 should be consulted when considering a project within any part of downtown Ann Arbor.

### **Chapter 2: General Design Guidelines**

This chapter presents the general design guidelines that apply throughout downtown. The design guidelines in this chapter are organized into three levels, general to specific, that reflect the typical design development process:

• • •

Design Guidelines for Site Planning Design Guidelines for Building Massing Design Guidelines for Building Elements

Chapter 2: General Design Guidelines

Chapter 2 should be consulted when considering a project within any part of downtown Ann Arbor, with the exception of historic districts.

### **Chapter 3: Design Guidelines for Character Districts**

This chapter describes each of the downtown character districts that are defined in the zoning code, provides direction on how the general design guidelines should be interpreted in each district and presents context-specific design guidelines for each district. Because every property within downtown Ann Arbor is within one of the eight defined character districts, the specific section for that character district should be consulted when considering a project in downtown Ann Arbor.

### **Appendix**

These materials provide additional information to supplement the Downtown Ann Arbor Design Guidelines. They include a design guidelines checklist and a glossary of terms.

# A Vision for Downtown

This document is a tool for achieving a vision for downtown in which high quality design is a cornerstone for other community planning objectives. The initial vision for downtown is based on a variety of policy documents and planning efforts including:

## ~~Downtown Plan~~

~~Ann Arbor's 1988 Downtown Plan objectives help provide a policy base for the Downtown Design Guidelines:~~

- ~~• Add to the area's identity as a special place~~
- ~~• Encourage a high level of quality in building design~~
- ~~• Maintain a low rise building profile along pedestrian streets~~
- ~~• Provide height transitions in between new and existing buildings • Encourage articulation in the massing of larger new buildings to fit into the surrounding context~~

~~•••~~

1988 Downtown Plan

1992 Central Area Plan

2006 Recommended Vision and Policy Framework ([Calthorpe Study](#))

This initial vision was supplemented through the public process to develop these design guidelines. That vision for the future is briefly described here to provide an understanding of the principles, objectives and guidelines that follow.

## Community Character

Downtown Ann Arbor will remain the heart of the community, becoming even more vibrant as a mix of uses and activities energize the area year-round. As the center of cultural and civic functions, as well as commercial activity, downtown will continue to have streets that are active, inviting walking and providing places for community interaction. Residential use will expand and thus provide a built-in base of people who enhance the vitality of the area. This mix of development will extend into parts of downtown that have been less vibrant, thereby knitting existing activity centers into a more cohesive whole.

Downtown Ann Arbor also will strengthen its role as the symbolic center of the community with well-designed buildings, places and streetscapes. Excellence and creativity in design will be hallmarks. This is reflected in a higher density of building in some areas; other places step down in scale and promote positive open space to respect transitional edges and lower-scaled settings. These improvements are designed to be compatible with the historic-existing context and contribute to the high energy level in the downtown.



## **Economic Development**

The downtown will also be a place for job creation, providing major employment for the city's residents. Retail, dining and entertainment uses will continue to expand, as will professional services. The appealing physical setting will attract new investment to stimulate the economy. All citizens thereby benefit from downtown's success.

## **Livability**

High quality design will enhance downtown's livability. Cultural and civic facilities are designed to create places that celebrate the sense of community. These include plazas, courtyards and streetscapes that are ~~symbolic of~~essential to the quality and role of downtown. Religious places and other community-based organizations thrive as well and contribute to the diversity of design expressions. Well-designed parks, trails and greenways further enhance livability and are linked in a network of recreation and alternative transportation systems. Each development that abuts these systems is designed to enhance their appeal and function.

## **Historic Resources**

Downtown will continue to be a place rich in historic resources. Landmark buildings and historic districts add ~~accents~~the sense of time and place to the urban fabric and provide a context for new development ~~in many areas~~. These historic assets enhance the quality of life, help make streets pedestrian-friendly and support economic development. They remain actively used, supporting people living and working in the downtown.

## **Context**

The overall mission of the design guidelines and the zoning provisions stemming from the A2D2 process is to (improve) downtown Ann Arbor while respecting the environment in which any building will occur. Each project should fit in with the pattern of architecture and spaces on surrounding streets. At the edges, new structures should mediate the impacts of tall buildings so as to buffer ground level areas and nearby residential neighborhoods which typically represent historical, lower buildings. Each change should be consistent with the fabric of its surroundings or carry the burden of showing how it improves upon its precedents.

## Regulatory Framework for Downtown

The Downtown Ann Arbor Design Guidelines are part of a system of tools, including zoning and historic design guidelines, that help shape downtown development and redevelopment. All development is subject to the requirements of the city's zoning code. In historic districts, development must also comply with the city's historic preservation ordinance and historic district design guidelines. Development is encouraged to comply with ~~the intent of~~ the Downtown Ann Arbor Design Guidelines in those areas not within a designated historic district.

The downtown zoning districts establish the general use and basic area, height and placement standards for development, while design guide- lines provide more detailed criteria to shape project design. The design guidelines are intended to complement and build upon the zoning requirements. ~~Where any conflict may exist between zoning requirements and the design guidelines, the zoning requirements will prevail.~~  
Add a paragraph referring to Master Plan.

Downtown Design Guidelines box:  
Replace "are encouraged to" with "should"

## Character Districts

The downtown zoning districts include a series of Character Overlay Zoning Districts that are intended to supplement the regulations for zoning districts in the downtown to reflect the diversity of historical and built environments. They account for differences in the existing street pattern, density, massing, and design features throughout downtown. They also acknowledge the community's intent for the future development of each area. The Character Overlay Zoning Districts, referred to in this document simply as Character Districts, are used to provide specific design guidance for different settings throughout downtown. The guidelines in Chapter 2: General Design Guidelines apply to properties in any part of downtown but Chapter 3: Design Guidelines for Character Districts includes specific design guidelines for each of the eight character districts shown on the map on the following page.

When considering a project in downtown Ann Arbor, Chapter 2: General Design Guidelines and the design guidelines in the section corresponding to the applicable character district within ~~the~~ Chapter 3: Design Guidelines for Character Districts should be reviewed as an integral component of project review.



## Guidelines Format

Each design guideline in this document typically has six components as listed below.

- 1. Design Guideline Topic** describes the design topic that is addressed by the subsequent design guidelines.
- 2. The Intent Statement** describes the desired state or condition of the design element or elements under discussion.
- 3. The Design Guideline Statement** describes a desired performance-oriented design treatment.
- 4. Supplemental Information** on the application of the design guideline provides an expanded explanation of the guideline, suggestions on how to meet the objective, or additional requirements in the form of a bulleted list.  
**(Add tree symbol)**
- 5. High Priority Guidelines** are indicated by a special symbol. Additional design guidelines are listed in priority order within each section.
- 6. Illustrations** are provided to clarify the intent of the guideline.



# Guide to this Document

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## Introduction

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## Chapter 1: Urban Design Principles

This chapter provides an overview of the urban design principles which are the foundation for the design guidelines and explains their relationship with concepts and requirements that are part of the downtown zoning districts. The urban design principles address how streets are crafted to be active and pedestrian-friendly and to establish a sense of relatedness among properties. Chapter 1 should be consulted when considering a project within any part of downtown Ann Arbor.

## Chapter 2: General Design Guidelines

This chapter presents the general design guidelines that apply throughout downtown. The design guidelines in this chapter are organized into three levels, general to specific, that reflect the typical design development process:

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These materials provide additional information to supplement the Downtown Ann Arbor Design Guidelines. They include a design guidelines checklist and a glossary of terms.



## Design Guidelines for Site Planning Design Guidelines for Building Massing Design Guidelines for Building Elements

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the urban design principles that are the foundation for the design guidelines.

### Chapter 2: General Design Guidelines

Chapter 2 should be consulted when considering a project within any part of downtown Ann Arbor, with the exception of historic districts.

## Chapter 3: Design Guidelines for Character Districts

This chapter describes each of the downtown character districts that are defined in the zoning code, provides direction on how the general design guidelines should be interpreted in each district and presents context-specific design guidelines for each district. Because every property within downtown Ann Arbor is within one of the eight defined character districts, the specific section for that character district should be consulted when considering a project in downtown Ann Arbor.

## Appendix

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# Chapter 1: Urban Design Principles

This chapter describes the general urban design principles that are the basis of the Downtown Design Guidelines. The relationship between these principles and the requirements of the downtown zoning districts is also described. A number of key terms used throughout the guidelines are defined in this chapter. The Appendix to the Downtown Design Guidelines includes a glossary of additional terms.

The urban design principles for downtown promote active, pedestrian-friendly streets and a sense of relatedness among properties. At the same time they ~~also~~ promote excellence in creative design, sustainable building strategies and economic development. Many of these concepts are used commonly in the design community, and are set forth here to assure a broader understanding of how they are applied in the design guidelines.

The guidelines in this document ~~encourage~~ should result in design solutions that will ~~help to~~ reinforce objectives for street edge character, as well as building mass and scale as defined for the different downtown character districts. ~~In many cases, e~~ Established patterns of development provide a desired context that should be continued and reinforced.

Captions for photos should say, "Main Street Historic District" (or other as appropriate) whenever a photo is used from one of the historic districts. in new de-velopment. Still other places need a stronger sense of continuity, and in these cases forward-looking guidance encourages establishment of a new context. In both established and redeveloping contexts, new creative designs that reinterpret traditional patterns are to be wel-comed.

## Building Massing Principles

The height, size and general form of buildings are the primary factors that determine a building's apparent scale. Building massing principles for downtown encourage a scale of development that promotes a comfortable pedestrian environment and is compatible with existing historic resources and surrounding lower scale neighborhoods.

Ann Arbor's zoning code addresses key building massing principles including overall height, building size, streetwall height and building articulation. Each of these principles is summarized below. The Downtown Design Guidelines ~~are intended to~~ complement the zoning code by providing a more detailed level of guidance on context-sensitive building design that support the building massing principles for downtown. Additional definitions are provided in the appendix to this document.

### Building Height and ~~Scale~~Massing

The zoning code provides standards for maximum height as well as the usable floor area of buildings in relation to the size of their lots. The maximum usable floor area varies by zoning district and the maximum height varies by character district. Note that floor area increases may be granted as an incentive for development that supports key objectives for downtown and is in compliance with the design guidelines. Consult the zoning code for additional details.

New buildings should ~~appear to be in~~respect the scale ~~with of~~ the established context, ~~while~~when also accommodating greater densities. A building may be sculpted in ways that convey scale at the street level, as perceived along a block and on the horizon.

Changes in streetwall height, building articulation and building modules can help sculpt a building to reduce its apparent height and ~~scale~~massing. Reducing the maximum diagonal dimension of any tower elements will help taller buildings fit in with lower scale neighbors. The zoning code and Downtown Design Guidelines promote a varied building height and ~~scale~~massing that is compatible with existing context while allowing for larger and taller buildings.

### Streetwall Height and Offsets

The zoning code defines the streetwall as the exterior face of a building that fronts a public street between the street grade and the minimum or maximum specified streetwall height. This is the building front as experienced by pedestrians. ~~If the overall height of a building is taller than the streetwall height, taller building elements must be partly or completely offset from the maximum streetwall height so that they are stepped back into a property and away from the street.~~

The height of a building as seen at the sidewalk edge is a key consideration. ~~It, as this has a~~influences ~~strong influence on~~ the ~~sense of scale experi-~~enced by pedestrian experiences. Traditionally, streetwall heights varied in downtown Ann Arbor, contributing to a diverse skyline. While buildings that are relatively tall can be found throughout downtown, typical streetwall heights are generally from two to four stories. The zoning code and design guidelines promote a varied but traditionally-scaled streetwall while allowing for taller buildings that are stepped away from the street.



## Building Articulation and Modules

The zoning code defines articulation as the way in which a building wall surface is broken down into vertical modules, sub-parts or major elements which are distinguished by changes in materials, texture or surface plane. Building modules are sub-parts of a larger building that appear as a single facade plane. They create discrete volumetric building components that may be used to break down the overall mass and ~~scale~~ height of a building into smaller parts that relate to traditionally scaled buildings. The zoning code addresses building articulation principles by setting maximum lengths for individual building modules.

The Downtown Design Guidelines expand on the zoning standard for building modules to include the full range of building configuration and design elements that may be used to break down the apparent mass and scale of a building. A building may be articulated with changes in massing, materials and surface treatments. Such articulation can add visual interest and serve to reduce the perceived scale of a larger building by further dividing it into modules, or sub-parts, that appear similar in size to smaller established buildings.

In many cases, downtown commercial and mixed-use buildings are ~~vertically~~ articulated to express a distinct base, middle, and cap. Such articulation ~~helps establish~~ may be accomplished ~~a by sense of scale and may be accomplished~~ using a traditional or contemporary approach.



## Building Frontage Principles

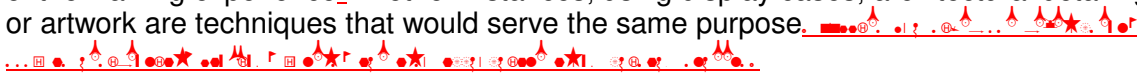
The character of the sidewalk edge has a significant impact on the pedestrian experience. Building frontage principles for downtown promote an active, pedestrian-oriented environment. They also acknowledge varied objectives for downtown's streets. Some streets are envisioned to be retail-oriented at the street level, while others should have a mix of retail with other commercial uses (offices and services). Still others would have a mix of commercial and residential uses at the street and some would have a stronger residential emphasis. While all of these areas are zoned for the same mix of uses, these variations in the focus of uses should be reflected in the character of the street edge.

Ann Arbor's zoning code supports the overall objective for pedestrian-scaled streets and addresses varied objectives for different types of downtown streets by defining a series of building frontage designations. Required minimum and maximum building setbacks and permitted vehicular access vary depending on the building frontage designation for a street. Each of the building frontage designations is summarized below. The Downtown Design Guidelines ~~are intended to~~ complement the zoning by providing a more detailed level of guidance on pedestrian-friendly design solutions that support the building frontage principles for downtown.

### Primary Street

Primary streets are frontages where placement of buildings at the front property line is desired. The zoning code requires the majority of the building frontage to be built directly at the sidewalk edge, helping to define a strong urban streetwall. For most character districts, exceptions are provided for plazas, pedestrian circulation and recessed entries or alcoves. Vehicular access must be provided via a public alley, when accessible, to minimize disruption to pedestrians.

Primary streets are intended to have a retail focus in which most buildings have first floor storefronts aligned at the sidewalk edge. While ~~having strongly defined~~ richly articulated, active storefronts ~~is~~ are preferred, other design treatments that provide visual interest to pedestrians, convey a sense of scale and express ~~activity~~ are also appropriate ~~at the street level~~ activity. Small plazas and courtyards, ~~for example, may be~~ are encouraged because they provided ~~that offer~~ places for outdoor activities. In these cases, a portion of the building wall may be set back from the sidewalk edge. When this does occur, the resulting space should be one that is animated and that contributes to the attractiveness of the walking experience. In other instances, using display cases, architectural detailing or artwork are techniques that would serve the same purpose.



## Secondary Street

Secondary streets are frontages where a range of building setbacks from the front property line is acceptable. The zoning code requires the majority of the building frontage to be built within a short distance of the sidewalk edge. Setbacks may be greater to allow for entry courts or plazas along a portion of the frontage.

Secondary streets are intended to have a varied street edge, with some buildings positioned at the sidewalk edge and others set back a limited amount to allow for patios, stoops and lawns. While secondary streets are likely to include fewer retail uses than primary streets, providing an inviting street edge remains an important objective. Many secondary streets are corridors that link downtown's activity centers, or provide transitions between primary streets and areas with more landscaped street edges. A wide range of treatments are-is encouraged to promote a pedestrian-friendly street edge on secondary streets.

## Front Yard Street

Front yard streets are frontages where a setback from the front property line is desired. The zoning code requires a front setback that is not less than that established by nearby buildings.

Front yard streets are intended to have a consistent lawn or yard-garden areas (not parking) between the sidewalk and the building. Such streets have a residential heritage that stems from rows of single-family houses with green yards in front. In many cases, unenclosed front porches encroach-extend into the yard. While commercial uses mixed with multi-family residential are anticipated in these areas, the established pattern of a green street frontage, with a clear progression of space from public to private, remains an objective.



## Civic Corridors

Although most streets in downtown Ann Arbor are an important part of the city's civic realm, certain streets play a unique role. These civic corridors are distinguished by important ~~civic~~ anchors and institutions such as the Ann Arbor City Hall, Washtenaw County Courthouse, Ann Arbor District Library, and the University of Michigan campus. Civic corridor is not one of the building frontages defined within the zoning code. ~~Civic corridors~~ Examples such as Huron Street and 5th Avenue ~~and Huron Street south to the library lot~~ have varied building frontage designations and pass through multiple character districts. Although there are significant differences in design character along their length, it is important to consider their overall civic role through the thoughtful placement and coordination of institutional facilities and public places.

~~Civic corridors should contribute to a sense of community and provide places for celebration~~—Special design consideration should ~~also~~ be given to view corridors as well as the placement and orientation of institutional buildings to ensure that they are perceived as community spaces. Institutional buildings and their primary entrances should be oriented towards civic corridors along which they are located. View corridors towards civic anchors and institutions should be promoted.

## **Additional Design Principles**

In addition to building massing and frontage principles, the Downtown Design Guidelines are based on a number of additional design principles that are not directly addressed by the downtown zoning districts. Such principles address more detailed building elements as well as sustainable design.

### **Connectivity**

Principles for connectivity address the network of spaces, places and paths that provide linkages within individual sites, between sites and throughout the downtown. The Downtown Design Guidelines, reflect objectives for pedestrian connections, open spaces, building massing and building design that support an active, inter-connected, pedestrian environment.

Providing active parks, plazas and open spaces are key considerations. In some cases, trails and paths may also be developed. Some of these spaces may be in association with planned greenways, but others may be smaller, incremental passageways. These incremental passages serve to connect properties and provide links to other blocks, second-ary entries, parking facilities and other services.

### **Fenestration and Transparency**

Fenestration refers to the placement of windows on a building's exterior. Principles for fenestration and transparency address the relationship of solid building wall to transparent glass areas. The Downtown Design Guidelines address fenestration and transparency through guidelines for the street edge and distinct building elements such as windows and entries. The guidelines reflect objectives for fenestration and transparency to convey scale and establish a sense of visual continuity among buildings along a block. They encourage patterns that reflect traditional commercial block composition but also recognize that new patterns may evolve with changing uses, building technologies and sustainability objectives.

### **Human Scale**

Principles for human scale address the scale relationship between the human body and the built environment. A sense of human scale is achieved when one can reasonably interpret the size of a building by comparing features of its design to comparable elements in one's experience. Using a building material of a familiar dimension, such as traditional brick, is an example, as is using windows of similar dimensions. The Downtown Design Guidelines reflect objectives for human scale primarily through a focus on the experience of pedestrians at the street edge.

## **Landmark Buildings**

While many buildings downtown may be considered background structures, in that they reflect design similarities that contribute to a sense of visual continuity, there are others that stand out as landmarks. These are typically civic, cultural and institutional facilities which are designed to serve a public function. Often they are designed as unique accents in the urban framework, and frequently have a more monumental presence. Even so, each landmark building should be designed with its context in mind. Design principles for landmark buildings acknowledge that these facilities merit individual consideration, both in terms of their landmark qualities as well as how they relate to other civic facilities and the broader context of commercial and residential uses in the area.

## **Sustainable Design**

Principles for sustainable design address how building, site and landscape designs can provide energy and environmental benefits as well as benefits to their users. For example, sustainably designed buildings often have pleasant, healthy and productive interior environments. The City of Ann Arbor is committed to promoting building, site and landscape designs that conserve energy and reduce environmental impacts. These include concepts for sustainable building, the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, green building construction and carbon footprint reduction. The Downtown Design Guidelines address sustainable design at the site planning, building massing and building design levels. The design guidelines for sustainability may resemble other guidelines throughout the document. Where guidelines may overlap, sustainability should be a high priority. The guidelines for sustainability are not comprehensive, and projects are encouraged to provide additional strategies for sustainable building, site and landscape design. New theories and technologies continually emerge in approaches to green building in its broadest sense. As they do, they should be applied to the greatest extent feasible.

## **Accessibility**

Downtown should be accessible for all users. This principle may translate into design techniques that provide zero-step entries as well as other special treatments. Some accessibility standards are established in city and state codes, as well as in the criteria defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act. Nothing in the downtown design guidelines should be construed to impede one from meeting these standards or from achieving higher levels of accessibility.

## Chapter 2: General Design Guidelines

This chapter presents general design guidelines for new construction projects in downtown Ann Arbor outside of historic districts. Additional design guidelines specific to each Character District are provided in Chapter 3: Design Guidelines for Character Districts. For development in historic districts, refer to the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines document.

The design guidelines are arranged into three levels reflecting the typical design development process:

Design Guidelines for Site Planning

Design Guidelines for Building Massing

Design Guidelines for Building Elements

These guidelines are intended to promote high quality development that is compatible with its surrounding context and that promote the features of a vital downtown described in Chapter 1: Urban Design Principles. At each level, general design principles are followed by a series of specific design guidelines. They are listed in priority order as described at right. Particular attention is given to the street-level pedestrian experience, the perceived scale of buildings and the successful interpretation of design principles that are part of the zoning for downtown Ann Arbor.

## **Design Guidelines for Site Planning**

Site planning addresses the arrangement of buildings and other features on a site as well as how that site will relate to its neighbors. A number of site planning standards are addressed by the downtown zoning districts including:

*Provide a mid-block pedestrian connection through a larger property. Such connections provide both solar access and natural ventilation to secondary portions of structures and expose secondary entries, patios and other outdoor uses.*

*Nickel's Arcade in the State Street Character District serves as a mid-block pedestrian connection. Improved alleys form part of the existing pedestrian network.*

•••••

Building frontage requirements including setbacks. Parking requirements. Vehicular access requirements. Screening of vehicular use areas.

Chapter 1: Urban Design Principles provides additional information on site planning concepts and terms including a description of the building frontage types used within the downtown zoning districts. The site planning design guidelines in this section focus on the location of key site elements, sustainable site design and the organization of pedestrian connections and open spaces. Chapter 3: Design Guidelines for Character Districts includes additional site planning design guidelines for some character districts to help ensure that unique design contexts are respected and enhanced.

### **1.0**

## **Pedestrian Connections**

Pedestrian connections include sidewalks, trails, paths and alleys that provide pedestrian access within, through and among properties. They provide access to buildings, courtyards, plazas and other site elements.

A coordinated system of sidewalk-level connections should provide pedestrians with safe, convenient and barrier-free access to the various functions within a site as well as to pedestrian connections and open spaces on adjacent sites. Pedestrian connections should be clearly visible and should be outdoors or generally open to the sky. While a high level of connectivity is desired, interior linkages between parking areas and buildings are discouraged because they may reduce pedestrian activity at the sidewalk level.

### **1.1**

#### **Provide on-site pedestrian connections at the sidewalk level.**

Use pedestrian connections to:

••

Link on-site open spaces such as courtyards and plazas directly to a public sidewalk. Create north-south pedestrian links through blocks between State Street and 5th Street and east-west pedestrian links through blocks between First Street and Division Street south of Liberty Street.

The following types of pedestrian connections are discouraged:

- Direct interior connections between parking areas and buildings

**~~1.2 — Link to at least one pedestrian connection or open space that has been provided on an adjoining property.~~**

~~Examples of connections and spaces to link to: • Internal walkways • Plazas and courtyards • Mid-block passages~~

~~• Arcades~~

**~~1.3 — Enliven a pedestrian connection with uses and amenities that provide interest.~~**

~~Use at least two of the following: • Landscaping • Benches • Public art~~

~~• Lighting • Architectural detail, windows and storefronts on walls that frame the space~~

## 2.0

### Open Space

Open spaces include courtyards, plazas, patios, terraces and landscape areas. They include both public open spaces and open spaces that are provided within private development.

Places for people to gather, engage in activities and enjoy a sense of community are desired throughout downtown. Such spaces should be located at the sidewalk level and should be sized relative to intended use and level of pedestrian activity in the area. Small spaces with visually interesting features and amenities are usually more effective than large expanses of hard surface. Throughout downtown, landscape elements that give a sense of scale should be used to invite use. In commercial areas, open spaces should have an urban character that enlivens the street, provides variation in the street wall and enhances the pedestrian experience. Outside the commercial core and in civic areas, open spaces may be more passive and park-like.

#### 2.1 — Design an urban open space to maximize pedestrian use.

Use the following strategies:

- Locate an urban open space where there is a high level of pedestrian activity.

- Locate urban open space at the sidewalk level.

- Size an urban open space relative to the amount of pedestrian activity in the area.

- Place an urban open space to provide a focal point on a site.

- Orient an urban open space to the street, internal pedestrian connections, cultural resources or natural features.

- Locate an urban open space to be enclosed by buildings on at least two sides.

Do not:

- Place open spaces to be raised above, or sunken below the sidewalk level.
- Locate large open spaces where there is not a very high level of pedestrian activity.

#### 2.2 — Enliven an urban open space with uses and amenities that provide interest to pedestrians.

Use at least two of the following:

- Benches
- Public art
- Lighting
- Architectural details, windows and storefronts on walls that frame the space
- Landscaping (including plant materials, site structures and decorative paving)

## 3.0

### Parking and Driveways

Downtown Ann Arbor has a number of public parking lots and structures managed by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and the University of Michigan. Downtown residents, employees and visitors also have access to a well-developed public transit system. However, new parking will continue to be necessary downtown.

When designing new parking lots, structures and associated driveways, the primary goal is to make a positive contribution to the street edge, minimize visual impacts and provide for an active, pedestrian-friendly street front. It is important to note that the downtown zoning districts provide specific standards for parking including the minimum number of parking spaces and required screening of surface parking areas.

#### **3.1 — Provide a pedestrian-friendly street edge adjacent to structured parking.**

Use at least two of the following:

- Landscape planting area

- Kiosks, vending booths and other service shops

- Architectural screens

- Public art

A “wrap” of other uses such as shops or housing at the street level

#### **3.2 — Locate driveways and access points to minimize impact on pedestrians.**

Appropriate access points include:

- From an alley

- From a secondary, cross street

- From a primary street, positioned as far as possible from an intersection

#### **3.3 — Locate a surface parking area to minimize impacts on pedestrians.**

Appropriate locations include:

- Behind a building

- To the side of a building

- Behind a landscaped area

## 4.0

### Sustainability in Site Planning

The arrangement of buildings, landscaping and impervious surfaces plays a critical role in how a site relates to the environment and impacts sustainable design possibilities on adjacent properties. Sustainable site design considerations include landscape design, drainage and building locations.

Site designs should support and encourage green building principles to maximize energy efficiency, minimize effects on local ground water and limit negative impacts on local ecosystems. Site designs should also take into account effects on an adjoining property's solar access and ability to implement the same environmental design principles. Note that careful consideration should also be given to balancing sustainable site design principles such as environmentally friendly building locations with a need to minimize impacts on adjacent properties and low scale neighborhoods.

#### 4.1 — Utilize landscape areas and features to promote energy efficiency.

Use these elements:

- Groupings of deciduous trees and plants to provide summer shade and allow solar access in winter.

- Plant groups oriented to provide wind protection of plazas and entries in wintertime.

- Plant groups located to allow cooling summer breezes into outdoor spaces.

- Plant species that require low levels of water.

- Plant species that are native and non-invasive.

#### 4.2 — Provide natural storm water systems and retention basins that also serve as amenities.

Appropriate strategies include:

- 

- Using rain gardens that will retain water yet serve as a site amenity at other times.

- Using porous materials in drainage and detention areas to promote percolation into the soil.

## **Design Guidelines for Building Massing**

Building massing principles address the overall height, size and shape of an individual structure. It is important to note that the downtown zoning districts address key building massing considerations including:

Maximum Floor Area Ratio •

Maximum Building Height •

Maximum and Minimum Streetwall Height •

Average Offset at the Maximum Streetwall Height •

Maximum Building Module Length

Additional information on the building massing elements addressed by the downtown zoning districts is included in Chapter 1: Urban Design Principles. The building massing design guidelines in this section are intended to complement the requirements of the downtown zoning districts by promoting building designs that support downtown massing traditions such as varied building heights and pedestrian scaled street fronts. Chapter 3: Design Guidelines for Character Districts includes additional building massing design guidelines for some character districts to help ensure that unique design contexts are respected and enhanced.

## 5.0

### Building Height

Building height principles include both the location and overall height of taller building elements as well as the height of buildings at the streetwall or near lower scale buildings and neighbors. The existing variety of building heights in downtown Ann Arbor helps to define the character of the area. The scale is generally low at the sidewalk edge with streetwall heights most often ranging from two to four stories and taller building elements stepping into the property. In some cases, tower elements rise directly at the sidewalk edge for a limited portion of the streetwall.

New development should continue Ann Arbor's tradition of height variation, expressing and supporting human scale and architectural diversity in the area while also respecting adjacent lower scale buildings or neighborhoods. This can be accomplished while also accommodating taller new buildings. Stepping taller building elements down and reducing the maximum diagonal dimension for any tower elements will help taller building fit in with lower scale neighbors. It is important to note that the downtown zoning districts set the maximum building height and provide maximum and minimum heights for the streetwall portion of a building.

#### **5.1 — Position or configure taller building elements to minimize impacts on adjacent lower scale areas.**

Appropriate strategies include:

•••

Stepping taller building elements back, and away from, adjacent lower scale buildings or neighborhoods

Locating taller building elements at the intersection of one or more primary streets

Reducing the maximum diagonal dimension of any tower elements of a building

#### **5.2 — Provide variation in building heights for a project that extends over several lots.**

Appropriate strategies include: •—

Providing variety in building height for projects that occupy three or more traditional parcels to provide a sense of scale that is consistent with design traditions

Providing variety in streetwall height within a two to four story range in height (refer to the zoning code for information on required offsets at the maximum streetwall height)

Varying building and streetwall height to reflect the underlying pattern of traditional lot widths

Extending variation in building height well into the lot depth, not simply as a “vener” along the street edge

## 6.0

### Building Articulation

Building articulation refers to a range of building configuration and design elements used to break down the apparent mass and scale of a building and add interest to its facade. The character of downtown Ann Arbor relies upon a human scale that is partly expressed through a variation in the height, design and configuration of building modules. Such variations include structures that are broken down into smaller parts that relate to traditionally scaled buildings and design elements or changes in material that reflect traditional vertical or horizontal facade patterns.

Horizontal building articulation elements should reflect traditional patterns along the street such as storefront heights and cornice lines. Vertical articulation elements should reference the traditional pattern of underlying lot widths. Commercial and mixed-use buildings may reflect a traditional base, middle and cap facade composition while buildings in, or adjacent to, residential areas should reflect residential articulation patterns including sloped roof forms. It is important to note that the downtown zoning districts set maximum building module lengths.

#### **6.1 — When a new building will be larger than surrounding traditional structures, visually divide it into smaller building modules that provide a sense of human scale.**

Use these techniques to express different building modules:

Vary the height of individual building modules. •

Vary the height of cornice lines and other roof finish elements. •

Change wall surface materials, colors or texture. •

Use vertical moldings to express different building modules. •

Align projecting features, such as balconies or sun screens, to express different building modules. •

Use underlying traditional lot widths to help determine the width of building modules at the street level.

#### **6.2 — Provide a clear definition between lower and upper floors to maintain a sense of scale at the street level.** Distinguish the first floor, or first two floors, from those above using these methods: •

A distinct horizontal molding. •

A distinct change in materials, colors or textures. •

A distinct change in the ratio of solid to void (wall to window percentage). •

A change in the setbacks of upper floors.

#### **6.3 — Design a commercial or mixed-used building to reflect the traditional composition of a base, middle and cap.**

Use these methods: •

A distinctive cornice line to establish a cap. •

A roof form that provides a sense of “closure” to the building. •

A change in wall surface materials, colors or texture to distinguish the base, middle and cap. •

A distinct horizontal molding to define the base level. •

A distinct change in the ratio of solid to void (wall to window percentage) to distinguish the base from the middle portion of the building. •

A change in the setbacks of upper floors to define a cap.

## 7.0

### **Sustainability in Building Massing**

The arrangement, proportions and orientation of building mass relate to sustainability considerations for a building and neighboring properties. Sustainable building massing considerations include solar access and building orientation.

Building masses should be oriented to maximize the potential for natural daylighting as well as both active and passive solar energy collection. Note that careful consideration should also be given to balancing sustainable building massing principles such as solar orientation with a need to minimize impacts on adjacent properties and low scale neighborhoods.

#### **7.1 Design building massing to maximize solar energy potential.**

Use at least two of the following strategies:

Design a building to allow natural daylighting to reach the maximum amount of actively used, interior spaces.

Orient roofs to support solar collectors.

Articulate walls to serve as shading.

Use thermal storage walls on a portion of the south facing building exposure.

#### **7.2 Orient a building to maximize green building principles while ensuring compatibility with adjacent, lower-scale buildings or neighborhoods.**

Appropriate strategies include:

Positioning the taller portion of a building along a north-south axis to minimize shading on lower scale neighborhoods to the north.

Positioning a building to prevent shading on south-facing facades of adjacent buildings during winter months.

Positioning the taller portion of a building to minimize winter shading on adjacent sidewalks and open spaces to prevent ice-over.

## **Design Guidelines for Building Elements**

Building elements include the specific design features that give character and detail to a building. They are not generally addressed by the requirements of the downtown zoning districts. Entries, windows, materials and other building elements influence the degree to which a new building contributes to the urban fabric. Quality and creativity are most clearly expressed and experienced at this level of design.

The design of building elements should promote development that is compatible with its surrounding context. However, a wide range of styles or design themes are appropriate including creative, contemporary and environmentally-oriented design solutions. Wall surfaces of traditional brick and stone exhibit a scale and texture that invites pedestrian activity. Surfaces that have variations in depth with substantial shadow lines also add interest. Faux building elements and materials are not appropriate.

### **8.0**

#### **Street Edge**

The building elements and specific architectural details used at the street front have a direct impact on the quality of the pedestrian experience.

Building elements should be combined to create an active and interesting street front. Creative use of materials, textures and architectural details is especially important where there are few windows at the street front of a building.

#### **8.1 Use building elements to create a street edge that invites pedestrian activity.**

Appropriate street edge elements include: •

Storefronts with active uses visible from the street •

Visually interesting building entries •

First floor canopies that complement the design character of the building and its street front •

Architectural details that provide a sense of human scale •

Wall surfaces with visually interesting detailing, textures and colors •

Art features including sculptures, friezes and murals where storefronts or other active uses are not possible

## **9.0 Entries**

The location, spacing and general pattern of building entries relates closely to the quality of the pedestrian experience downtown-

Building entries should be located to enhance the street level experience and help to give a sense of human scale. Entries should be clearly defined, accessible and located to express rhythm and visual interest along a street front. Although traditional building entry designs are appropriate, creative and contemporary interpretations are encouraged-

### **9.1**

**Clearly define a primary entrance and orient it towards the street.**

Use these elements: •

A recessed area that creates a shadow which signifies a break in the building wall line • A canopy or awning positioned over the entry that distinguishes it from other portions of the building •

A change in wall materials, textures or colors that frame the entry •

A distinctive paving pattern leading to the entry •

Accent lighting that defines the entry way

### **9.2**

**Position and design entries to reflect traditional patterns.**

Use these techniques:

Position an entry to fit within a pattern of others established on the street-

Locate the entry at or near the street level to invite its use-

Do not locate an entry below grade-

## 10.0 Windows

The size, shape and positioning of windows on the facade of a building helps define a sense of scale and continuity. In downtown Ann Arbor, the upper story windows of traditional commercial buildings often appear to align with others in the block, and establish a rhythm, or pattern, of solid and void that visually links buildings along the street. Lower story windows of traditional commercial buildings generally provide for a high level of transparency consistent with a pedestrian-oriented storefront setting. Window design and placement should help to establish a sense of scale and provide visual interest. A high level of ground floor transparency is appropriate throughout downtown, but is especially important in areas traditionally defined by commercial storefronts. In areas where upper floor window patterns are clearly established, continuing the general pattern is encouraged. However, new strategies may be introduced, including contemporary and creative window rhythms and patterns. Faux treatments such as snap-in mullions or shallow and non-usable balconies are inappropriate.

### **10.1 Provide a high level of ground floor transparency on a building in an area traditionally defined by commercial storefronts.**

Use the following strategies:

Design a building to incorporate ground floor storefronts wherever possible. Where storefronts are not possible, incorporate a high level of transparency in ground floor office, lobby or residential uses while providing sufficient privacy for occupants. Do not:

- Use dark or tinted glass in ground floor windows facing the street or an open space
- Substantially block views into or out of ground floor windows with stickers, posters or advertising

### **10.2 Design a building facade above the ground floor to incorporate window patterns consistent with traditional patterns in the area.**

Traditional window patterns above the ground floor include:

Vertically proportioned, single windows, "punched" into a more solid wall surface, and evenly spaced along it

Sets of vertically proportioned windows, often in groups of two or three windows, spaced along a floor

- A horizontal band of glass, but with mullions that create a clear rhythm or pattern across the wall surface

Inappropriate window elements and treatments include:

- Faux balconies

- Snap-in mullions

### **10.3 Arrange windows to reflect the traditional rhythm and general alignment of windows in the area.**

Traditional window rhythms and alignments include:

Rows of windows of similar dimensions, aligned horizontally along a wall surface

Window sills or headers that also align

## 11.0 Materials

Exterior building materials can provide a sense of scale and texture, often affecting how pedestrians interact with a building. Building materials can also convey design quality and visual interest.

The palette of building materials chosen should reinforce massing and architectural concepts for a building and enhance the character of both the building and its context. High quality, environmentally friendly materials are appropriate, and creative applications are encouraged. Traditional masonry of brick and stone is preferred. Lap siding is also appropriate. However, some new materials can be appropriate when they convey sufficient sense of scale and texture. New materials should be durable, and not easily crack or break. They should be used in modules or panels that have a recognizable scale such as that of traditional masonry bricks or stone. Applying a single material in large featureless expanses is not appropriate.

### 11.1 Use materials to convey a sense of human scale and visual interest to pedestrians.

Recommended materials are:

Brick

Stone

Architectural metals

Architectural glass

Horizontal lap siding (especially along edges of residential neighborhoods)

Newer materials, including synthetic ones, with proven durability in the local climate

Avoid using:

Synthetic materials that do not have proven durability

Synthetic materials that do not appear as panels or modules

Synthetic materials that are applied to large surfaces without material variation

Synthetic materials that lack a sense of human scale

## **12.0 Sustainability in Building Elements**

The elements that make up a building can significantly impact its environmental performance. Such elements include windows, materials and mechanical systems. Building elements should be selected and applied to maximize the building's environmental performance while promoting compatibility with surrounding sites and buildings. New or innovative building materials are appropriate if they have been tested and proven effective in a similar climate. Solar or wind systems are also encouraged if located to minimize visual impacts on neighboring sites or buildings. Where environmental or mechanical systems may generate noise, they should be located to minimize potential impacts on neighboring sites or buildings.

### **12.1 Use sustainable building materials whenever possible.**

Such materials include:

- Locally manufactured materials
- Low maintenance materials
- Materials with long life spans

Such materials do not include:

- Toxic or otherwise hazardous materials

### **12.2 Incorporate building elements that allow for natural environmental control.**

Incorporate at least two of the following:

- Operable windows for natural ventilation
- Low infiltration fenestration products
- Rotating doors or wind locks at high volume entries
- Interior or exterior light shelves/solar screens above south facing windows

## Additional Design Principles

In addition to building massing and frontage principles, the Downtown Design Guidelines are based on a number of additional design principles that are not directly addressed by the downtown zoning districts. Such principles address more detailed building elements as well as sustainable design and respect for historic neighborhoods and properties.

### **Context**

Add paragraph referring to important of context in terms of design.

### **Connectivity and open spaces**

Principles for connectivity address the network of spaces, places and paths that provide linkages within individual sites, between sites and throughout the downtown. The Downtown Design Guidelines, reflect objectives for pedestrian connections, open spaces, building massing and building design that support an active, inter-connected, pedestrian environment.

Providing active parks, plazas and open spaces are key considerations. In some cases, trails and paths may also be developed. Some of these spaces may be in association with planned greenways, but others may be smaller, incremental passageways. These incremental passages serve to connect properties and provide links to other blocks, secondary entries, parking facilities and other services.

### **Fenestration and Transparency**

Fenestration refers to the placement of windows on a building's exterior. Principles for fenestration and transparency address the relationship of solid building wall to transparent glass areas. The Downtown Design Guidelines address fenestration and transparency through guidelines for the street edge and distinct building elements such as windows and entries. The guidelines reflect objectives for fenestration and transparency to convey scale and establish a sense of visual continuity among buildings along a block. They encourage patterns that reflect traditional commercial block composition but also recognize that new patterns may evolve with changing uses, building technologies and sustainability objectives.

### **Human Scale**

Principles for human scale address the scale relationship between the human body and the built environment. A sense of human scale is achieved when one can reasonably interpret the size of a building by comparing features of its design to comparable elements in one's experience. Using a building material of a familiar dimension, such as traditional brick, is an example, as is using windows of similar dimensions. The Downtown Design Guidelines reflect objectives for human scale primarily through a focus on the experience of pedestrians at the street edge.



## Landmark Buildings

While many buildings downtown may be considered background structures, in that they reflect design similarities that contribute to a sense of visual continuity, there are others that stand out as landmarks. These are typically civic, cultural, religious, and institutional facilities that are designed to serve a public function. Often they are designed as unique accents in the urban framework, and frequently have a more monumental presence. ~~Even so, each landmark building should be designed with its context in mind.~~ Design principles for landmark buildings acknowledge that these facilities merit individual consideration, both in terms of their landmark qualities as well as how they relate to other civic facilities and the broader context of commercial and residential uses in the area. Even so, each landmark building should be designed with its context in mind.

## Sustainable Design

Principles for sustainable design address how building, site and landscape designs can provide energy and environmental benefits as well as benefits to their users. ~~For example, sustainably designed buildings often have pleasant, healthy and productive interior environments.~~ The City of Ann Arbor is committed to promoting building, site and landscape designs that conserve energy and reduce environmental impacts. These include concepts for sustainable building, the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, green building construction and carbon footprint reduction.



The Downtown Design Guidelines address sustainable design at the site planning, building massing and building design levels. The design guidelines for sustainability may resemble other guidelines throughout the document. Where guidelines may overlap, sustainability should be a high priority. The guidelines for sustainability are not comprehensive, and projects are encouraged to provide additional strategies for sustainable building, site and landscape design. New theories and technologies continually emerge in approaches to green building in its broadest sense. As they do, they should be applied to the greatest extent feasible.

## Accessibility

~~Downtown should be accessible for all users. This principle may translate into design techniques that provide zero-step entries as well.~~ Designs must comply with accessibility standards defined in the accessibility (defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act), state and city codes.

~~Need photo of Methodist Church from front instead of side as other special treatments. Some accessibility standards are established in city and state codes, as well as in the criteria defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act. Nothing in the downtown design guidelines should be construed to impede one from meeting these standards or from achieving higher levels of accessibility.~~



# Design Guidelines for Site Planning

Site planning addresses the arrangement of buildings and other features on a site as well as how that site will relate to its neighbors. A number of site planning standards are addressed by the downtown zoning districts including:

*Provide a mid-block pedestrian connection through a larger property. Such connections provide both solar access and natural ventilation to secondary portions of structures and expose secondary entries, patios and other outdoor uses.*

*Nickel's Arcade in the State Street Character District serves as a mid-block pedestrian connection.*

*Improved alleys form part of the existing pedestrian network.*

••••


Building frontage requirements including setbacks Parking requirements Vehicular access requirements Screening of vehicular use areas

Chapter 1: Urban Design Principles provides additional information on site planning concepts and terms including a description of the building frontage types used within the downtown zoning districts. The site planning design guidelines in this section focus on the location of key site elements, sustainable site design and the organization of pedestrian connections and open spaces. Chapter 3: Design Guidelines for Character Districts includes additional site planning design guidelines for some character districts to help ensure that unique design contexts are respected and enhanced.

## 1.0

### Pedestrian Connections

Pedestrian connections include sidewalks, trails, paths and alleys that provide pedestrian access within, through and among properties. They provide access to buildings, courtyards, plazas and other site elements.

A coordinated system of sidewalk-level connections should provide pedestrians with safe, convenient and barrier-free access to the various functions within a site as well as to pedestrian connections and open spaces on adjacent sites. Pedestrian connections should be clearly visible (Nickels Arcade is not open to the sky, but works great.)-and should be outdoors or generally open to the sky. While a high level of connectivity is desired, interior linkages between parking areas and buildings are discouraged because they may reduce pedestrian activity at the sidewalk level. 

### 1.1

#### Provide on-site pedestrian connections at the sidewalk level.

Use pedestrian connections to:

••

Link on-site open spaces such as courtyards and plazas directly to a public sidewalk.

Create north-south pedestrian links through blocks between State Street and 5th Street and east-west pedestrian links through blocks between First Street-Avenue and Division Street south of Liberty Street.

The following types of pedestrian connections are discouraged:

- Direct interior connections between parking areas and buildings.



**1.2 Link to at least one pedestrian connection or open space that has been provided on an adjoining property.**

Examples of connections and spaces to link to:

- Internal walkways
- Plazas and courtyards
- Mid-block passages
- Arcades

**1.3 Enliven a pedestrian connection with uses and amenities that provide interest.**

Use at least two of the following:

- Landscaping
- Benches
- Public art
- Lighting
- Architectural detail, windows and storefronts on walls that frame the space

Sketch shown is unclear example.

## 2.0

### Open Space

Open spaces include courtyards, plazas, patios, terraces and landscape areas. They include both public open spaces and open spaces that are provided within private development.

Places for people to gather, ~~engage in and enjoy activities activities~~ and ~~enjoy~~ a sense of community are desired throughout downtown. Such spaces should be located at the sidewalk level and should be sized relative to intended use and level of pedestrian activity in the area. Small spaces with visually interesting features and amenities are usually more effective than large expanses of hard surface. Throughout downtown, landscape elements that give a sense of scale should be used to invite use. In commercial areas, open spaces should have an urban character that enlivens the street, provides variation in the street wall and enhances the pedestrian experience. Outside the commercial core and in civic areas, open spaces may be more passive and park-like.

#### 2.1 Design an urban open space to maximize pedestrian use.

Use the following strategies:

Locate an urban open space where there is a high level of pedestrian activity.

Locate urban open space at the sidewalk level •

Size an urban open space relative to the amount of pedestrian activity in the area. •

Place an urban open space to provide a focal point on a site. •

Orient an urban open space to the street, internal pedestrian connections, cultural resources or natural features. •

Locate an urban open space to be enclosed by buildings on at least two sides.

Do not:

Place open spaces to be raised above, or sunken below the sidewalk level. Locate large open spaces where there is not a very high level of pedestrian activity.

#### 2.2 Enliven an urban open space with uses and amenities that provide interest to pedestrians.

Use at least ~~two~~ three of the following:

- Benches
- Public art
- Lighting
- Architectural details, windows and storefronts on walls that frame the space
- Landscaping (including plant materials, site structures and decorative paving)

## 3.0

### Parking and Driveways

~~Downtown Ann Arbor has a number of public parking lots and structures managed by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and the University of Michigan. Downtown residents, employees and visitors also have access to a well-developed public transit system. However, new parking will continue to be necessary downtown.~~

When designing new parking lots, structures and associated driveways, the primary goal is to make a positive contribution to the street edge, minimize visual impacts and provide for an active, pedestrian-friendly street front. It is important to note that the downtown zoning districts provide specific standards for parking including the minimum number of parking spaces and required screening of surface parking areas.

#### 3.1 Provide a pedestrian-friendly street edge adjacent to structured parking.

Use at least ~~two~~ three of the following: •

Landscaped planting area •

Kiosks, ~~vending booths~~ and ~~other service~~ shops •

Architectural screens •

Public art •

A “wrap” of other uses such as shops or housing at the street level

The architectural screens example at bottom of page is not a good example. Can structure at 4<sup>th</sup> and William provide a better example?

This brings up the question, Why do all the examples need to be from Ann Arbor. If necessary, use photos from other locations to provide better examples of points.

### **3.2 Locate driveways and access points to minimize impact on pedestrians.**

Appropriate access points include:

From an alley

From a secondary, cross street F

From a primary street, positioned as far as possible from an intersection

### **3.3 Locate a surface parking area to minimize impacts on pedestrians.**

Appropriate locations include: •

Behind a building •

To the side of a building •

Behind a landscaped area

The second sketch should replace “An appropriate location...” with “A less appropriate...”

This should be followed with the statement, “Least desirable is parking located adjacent to residential.”

|

## 4.0

### Sustainability in Site Planning

The arrangement of buildings, landscaping and impervious surfaces plays a critical role in how a site relates to the environment and impacts sustainable design possibilities on adjacent properties. Sustainable site design considerations include preservation of historic character, landscape design, drainage and building locations.

Site designs should support and encourage green building principles to maximize energy efficiency, minimize effects on local ground water and limit negative impacts on local ecosystems. Site designs should also take into account effects on an adjoining any other property's solar access and ability to implement the same environmental design principles. Note that careful consideration should also be given to balancing sustainable site design principles such as environmentally friendly building locations with a need to minimize impacts on adjacent proper- ties and low scale neighborhoods.

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- Groupings of deciduous trees and plants to provide summer shade and allow solar access in winter

- Plant groups oriented to provide wind protection of plazas and entries in wintertime

- Plant groups located to allow cooling summer breezes into outdoor spaces

- Plant species that require low levels of water irrigation

- Plant species that are native and non-invasive

#### 4.2 Provide natural storm water systems and retention basins that also serve as amenities.

Appropriate strategies include:

- •

- Using rain gardens that will retain water yet serve as a site amenity at other times

- Using porous materials in drainage and detention areas to promote percolation into the soil

Photo of YMCA site is not good quality. Is there a better example?

## Design Guidelines for Building Massing

Building massing principles address the overall height, size and shape of an individual structure. It is important to note that the downtown zoning districts address key building massing considerations including:

- Maximum Floor Area Ratio
- Maximum Building Height
- Maximum and Minimum Streetwall Height
- Average Offset at the Maximum Streetwall Height
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Additional information on the building massing elements addressed by the downtown zoning districts is included in Chapter 1: Urban Design Principles. The building massing design guidelines in this section are intended to complement the requirements of the downtown zoning districts by promoting building designs that support downtown massing traditions such as varied building heights and pedestrian scaled street fronts. Chapter 3: Design Guidelines for Character Districts includes additional building massing design guidelines for some character districts to help ensure that existing unique design contexts are respected and enhanced.



## 5.0

### Building Height

Building height principles include both the location and overall height of taller building elements as well as the height of buildings at the streetwall or near lower scale buildings and neighbors. The existing variety of building heights in downtown Ann Arbor helps to define the character of the area. *The scale is generally low at the sidewalk edge with streetwall heights most often ranging from two to four stories and taller building elements stepping into the property.* (This is a false statement.) In some cases, tower elements rise directly at the sidewalk edge for a limited portion of the streetwall.

New development should continue Ann Arbor's tradition of height variation, expressing and supporting human scale and architectural diversity in the area while also respecting context, such as adjacent lower scale buildings or neighborhoods. This can be accomplished while also accommodating taller new buildings. Stepping taller building elements down and reducing the maximum diagonal dimension for any tower elements will help taller buildings fit in with lower scale neighbors. It is important to note that the downtown zoning districts set the maximum building height and provide maximum and minimum heights for the streetwall portion of a building.

#### 5.1 Position or configure taller building elements to minimize impacts on adjacent lower-scale areas.

Appropriate strategies include:

• • •

Stepping taller building elements back, and away from, adjacent lower-scale buildings or neighborhoods

Locating taller building elements at the intersection of one or more primary streets

Reducing the maximum diagonal dimension of any tower elements of a building

The sketch presents an unacceptable example of contextual design.

5.2

Eliminate this entire page. We don't agree with overall statement.

5.2— Provide variation in building heights for a project that extends over several lots.

Appropriate strategies include: •—

Providing variety in building height for projects that occupy three or more traditional parcels to provide a sense of scale that is consistent with design traditions.

Providing variety in streetwall height within a two-to-four story range in height (refer to the zoning code for information on required offsets at the maximum streetwall height).

Varying building and streetwall height to reflect the underlying pattern of traditional lot widths.

Extending variation in building height well into the lot depth, not simply as a “veneer” along the street edge.

## 6.0

### Building Articulation

Building articulation refers to a range of building configuration and design elements used to break down the apparent mass and scale of a building and add interest to its facade. The character of downtown Ann Arbor relies upon a human scale that is partly expressed through a variation in the height, design and configuration of building modules. Such variations include structures that are broken down into smaller parts that relate to traditionally scaled buildings and design elements or changes in material that reflect traditional vertical or horizontal facade patterns.

Horizontal building articulation elements should ~~reflect~~ respect traditional patterns along the street such as storefront heights and cornice lines. Vertical articulation elements should ~~reference~~ follow the ~~traditional~~ historical pattern of underlying lot widths.

Commercial and mixed-use buildings may reflect a traditional base, middle and cap facade composition while buildings in, or adjacent to, residential areas should reflect residential articulation patterns including sloped roof forms. It is important to note that the down-town zoning districts set maximum building module lengths.

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Use these techniques to express different building modules:

Vary the height of individual building modules. •

Vary the height of cornice lines and other roof finish elements. •

Change wall surface materials, colors or texture. •

Use vertical moldings to express different building modules. •

Align projecting features, such as balconies or sun screens, to express different building modules. •

Use underlying traditional lot widths to help determine the width of building modules at the street level.

The top sketch looks “goofy.”

**6.2 Provide a clear definition between lower and upper floors to maintain a sense of scale at the street level.** Distinguish the first floor, or first two floors, from those above using these methods: •

A distinct horizontal molding •

A distinct change in materials, colors or textures •

A distinct change in the ratio of solid to void (wall to window percentage) •

A change in the setbacks of upper floors

**6.3 Design a commercial or mixed-used building to reflect the traditional composition of a base, middle and cap.**

Use these methods: •

A distinctive cornice line to establish a cap •

A roof form that provides a sense of “closure” to the building •

A change in wall surface materials, colors or texture to distinguish the base, middle and cap •

A distinct horizontal molding to define the base level •

A distinct change in the ratio of solid to void (wall to window percentage) to distinguish the base from the middle portion of the building •

A change in the setbacks of upper floors to define a cap

Replace sketches with appropriate photos, even if not from Ann Arbor.

## 7.0

### Sustainability in Building Massing

The arrangement, proportions and orientation of building mass relate to sustainability considerations for a building and neighboring properties. Sustainable building massing considerations include solar access and building orientation.

Building masses should be oriented to maximize the potential for natural daylighting as well as both active and passive solar energy collection. Note that careful consideration should also be given to balancing sustainable building massing principles such as solar orientation with a need to minimize impacts on adjacent properties and low scale neighborhoods.


#### 7.1 Design building massing to maximize solar energy potential.

Use at least two of the following strategies:

- Design a building to allow natural daylighting to reach the maximum amount of actively used, interior spaces.

- Orient roofs to support solar collectors.

- Articulate walls to serve as shading.

- Use thermal storage walls on a portion of the south facing building exposure. 



#### 7.2 Orient a building to maximize green building principles while ensuring compatibility with adjacent, lower-scale buildings or neighborhoods.

Appropriate strategies include:

- Positioning the taller portion of a building along a north-south axis to minimize shading on lower scale neighborhoods to the north

Positioning a building to prevent shading on south-facing facades of adjacent buildings during winter months


Positioning the taller portion of a building to minimize winter shading on adjacent sidewalks and open spaces to prevent icing-over

(Add section on protecting viewsheds.)

Do not use the sketch; it is a poor example.

## Design Guidelines for Building Elements

Building elements include the specific design features that give character and detail to a building. They are not generally addressed by the requirements of the downtown zoning districts. Entries, windows, materials and other building elements influence the degree to which a new building contributes to the urban fabric. Quality and creativity are most clearly expressed and experienced at this level of design.

The design of building elements should promote development that is compatible with its surrounding context. However, a wide range of styles or design themes are appropriate including creative, contemporary and environmentally-oriented design solutions. Wall surfaces of traditional brick and stone exhibit a scale and texture that invites pedestrian activity. Surfaces that have variations in depth with substantial shadow lines also add interest. Faux building elements and materials are not appropriate. 

### 8.0

#### Street Edge

The building elements and specific architectural details used at the street front have a direct impact on the quality of the pedestrian experience.

Building elements should be combined to create an active and interesting street ~~front~~presence. Creative use of materials, textures and architectural details is especially important where there are few windows at the street front of a building.

#### 8.1 Use building elements to create a street edge that invites pedestrian activity.

Appropriate street edge elements include: •

Storefronts with active uses visible from the street •

Visually interesting building entries •

First floor canopies that complement the design character of the building and its street front •

Architectural details that provide a sense of human scale •

Wall surfaces with visually interesting detailing, textures and colors •

Art features including sculptures, friezes and murals

Argiero's is a good example, but photo is taken from a very poor angle. Show the front of the building where storefronts or other active uses are not possible

## 9.0 Entries

The location, spacing and general pattern of building entries relates closely to the quality of the pedestrian experience downtown.

Building entries should be located to enhance the street level experience and help to give a sense of human scale. Entries should be clearly defined, accessible and located to express rhythm and visual interest along a street front. Although traditional building entry designs are appropriate, creative and contemporary interpretations are encouraged.

### 9.1

#### **Clearly define a primary entrance and orient it towards the street.**

Use these elements:

- A recessed area that creates a shadow which signifies a break in the building wall line
- A canopy or awning positioned over the entry that distinguishes it from other portions of the building

- A change in wall materials, textures or colors that frame the entry

- A distinctive paving pattern leading to the entry

- Accent lighting that defines the entry way

### 9.2

#### **Position and design entries to reflect traditional patterns.**

Use these techniques:

Position an entry to fit within a pattern of others established on the street.

Locate the entry at or near the street level to invite its use.

Do not locate an entry below grade.



## 10.0 Windows

The size, shape and positioning of windows on the facade of a building helps define a sense of scale and continuity. In downtown Ann Arbor, the upper story windows of traditional commercial buildings often appear to align with others in the block, and establish a rhythm, or pattern, of solid and void that visually links buildings along the street. Lower story windows of traditional commercial buildings generally provide for a high level of transparency consistent with a pedestrian-oriented storefront setting. Window design and placement should help to establish a sense of scale and provide visual interest. A high level of ground floor transparency is appropriate throughout downtown, but is especially important in areas traditionally defined by commercial storefronts. In areas where upper floor window patterns are clearly established, continuing the general pattern is encouraged. However, new strategies may be introduced, including contemporary and creative window rhythms and patterns. Faux treatments such as snap-in mullions-muntins or shallow and non-usable balconies are inappropriate.

### **10.1 Provide a high level of ground floor transparency on a building in an area traditionally defined by commercial storefronts.** Use the following strategies:

Design a building to incorporate ground floor storefronts wherever possible.

Where storefronts are not possible, incorporate a high level of transparency in ground floor office, lobby or residential uses while providing sufficient privacy for occupants.

Do not: •

Use dark or tinted glass in ground floor windows facing the street or an open space

•Substantially block views into or out of ground floor windows with stickers, posters or advertising

Photo: Use better angle for photo, showing entire height.

Use photo of Starbucks building as a second example, rather than sketch.

The storefront window sketch is not an appropriate prototype for all new buildings. There are other acceptable fronts.

## **10.2 Design a building facade above the ground floor to incorporate window patterns consistent with traditional patterns in the area.**

Traditional window patterns above the ground floor include:

Vertically proportioned, single windows, “punched” into a more solid wall surface, and evenly spaced along it

Sets of vertically proportioned windows, often in groups of two or three windows, spaced along a floor

•A horizontal band of glass, but with mullions-muntins that create a clear rhythm or pattern across the wall surface

Inappropriate window elements and treatments include: •

Faux balconies

Snap-in mullionsmuntins

## **10.3 Arrange windows to reflect the traditional rhythm and general alignment of windows in the area.**

Traditional window rhythms and alignments include:

Rows of windows of similar dimensions, aligned horizontally along a wall surface

Window sills or headers that also align

Terrible photos. Terrible examples.

## 11.0 Materials

Exterior building materials can provide a sense of scale and texture, often affecting how pedestrians interact with a building. Building materials can also convey design quality and visual interest.

The palette of building materials chosen should reinforce massing and architectural concepts for a building and enhance the character of both the building and its context. High quality, environmentally friendly materials are appropriate, and creative applications are encouraged. Traditional masonry of brick and stone or terra cotta is preferred. Lap siding is also appropriate. However, some new materials can be appropriate when they convey sufficient sense of scale and texture. New materials should be durable, and not easily crack or break. They should be used in modules or panels that have a recognizable scale such as that of traditional masonry bricks or stone. Applying a single material in large featureless expanses is not appropriate.

### 11.1 Use materials to convey a sense of human scale and visual interest to pedestrians.

Recommended materials are: •

Brick •

Stone •

Terra Cotta

Architectural metals

Architectural glass •

Horizontal lap siding (especially along edges of residential neighborhoods) •

Newer materials, including synthetic ones, with proven durability in the local climate

Avoid using:

Synthetic materials that do not have proven durability •

Synthetic materials that do not appear as panels or modules •

Synthetic materials that are applied to large surfaces without material variation

Synthetic materials that lack a sense of human scale

Box “Human Scale”: Wasn’t this covered previously?

Eliminate “Materials applied...” sketch. This is not what we want.

## **12.0 Sustainability in Building Elements**

The elements that make up a building can significantly impact its environmental performance. Such elements include windows, materials and mechanical systems. Building elements should be selected and applied to maximize the building's environmental performance while promoting compatibility with surrounding sites and buildings. New or innovative building materials are appropriate if they have been tested and proven effective in a similar climate. Solar or wind systems are also encouraged if located to minimize visual impacts on neighboring sites or buildings. Where environmental or mechanical systems may generate noise, they should be located to minimize potential impacts on neighboring sites or buildings.

### **12.1 Use sustainable building materials whenever possible.**

Such materials include: •

High quality, durable materials

Locally manufactured materials •

Low maintenance materials •

Materials with long life spans

Materials with high recycled content

(Add statement on rehab over new construction with embodied energy.)

Such materials do not include: •

Toxic or otherwise hazardous materials

### **12.2 Incorporate building elements that allow for natural environmental control.**

Incorporate at least two of the following: •

Operable windows for natural ventilation •

Low infiltration fenestration products •

Rotating doors or wind locks at high volume entries •

Interior or exterior light shelves/solar screens above south facing windows

# Chapter 3: Design Guidelines for Character Districts

The zoning regulations for downtown Ann Arbor define a series of Character Overlay Zoning Districts to reflect the diversity of historical and built environments within the downtown. This chapter describes these character districts in greater detail and provides context specific design guidelines for each area. These guidelines are based on design objectives derived from existing features that are valued and from a vision for each area in which new characteristics may also be introduced.

## A. South University Character District

The South University Character District lies along the southeastern edge of the University of Michigan Central Campus, which separates it from the other mixed use districts of downtown. This is an area characterized by a mix of building types and sizes, with retail uses at the street level and relatively narrow lot widths. This small scale contributes to a fine-grained character that makes the place an interesting walking experience.

The intent for this district is to maintain a variety in scale, with design that reflects the small-scale widths and heights of buildings in the area at the streetwall and locates taller portions toward the interior of the lot. The existing variety of small scale commercial and retail enterprises mixed with some residential uses should be maintained, minimizing the impact on nearby residential streets.

There are some sensitive edges where properties abut established single-family and low scale multi-family buildings. In these locations, it is important that new development incorporate some green space that will continue the tradition of front yard character. Setting taller buildings back from abutting property lines in order to minimize impacts, or stepping down the height of the structure will be important. Outdoor uses are encouraged. This includes plazas, courtyards, and

dining terraces. These spaces should generally occur at the ground level, but there are also opportunities to introduce dining terraces at the second floor level. While most buildings should be built at or near the sidewalk edge, some variation in the front wall setbacks is to be encouraged, when this will result in active outdoor use areas that will help to animate the street.

From an economic development standpoint, the city seeks to encourage new investment in the South University area. With an increase in density, more commercial uses may be accommodated such that it becomes more of a destination in its own right. This will reinforce South University's identity as a mixed-use neighborhood that includes off-campus retail, restaurant and commercial services destination. While new investment occurs, it is also important to reflect the energetic mix of users and age groups that is a significant feature of the district.

### **Design Guidelines for South University Character District**

The following context-specific guidelines apply to properties in South University in addition to the guidelines provided in Chapter 2: General Design Guidelines.

#### **A.1 Provide a diversity of building heights in South University.**

- Provide variation in the streetwall height from two to three stories. ([Conflicts with zoning](#))
- Step the mass of taller buildings down towards adjacent lower-scale buildings or neighborhoods

#### **A.2 Reflect traditional patterns in the design of the street-wall of a building in South University.**

Appropriate strategies include:

- Articulating building facades at the streetwall to reflect the underlying traditional narrow lot widths in the area
- Providing limited breaks in the streetwall to accommodate small plazas, courtyards and dining areas

#### **A.3 Incorporate roof forms appropriate to the**

## **surrounding context in South University.**

Such forms include:

- Sloping roofs on buildings across the street from, or adjacent to, residential dwellings
- Flat or sloping roof forms with a distinct parapet or cornice line in commercial or mixed-use areas

## **B. State Street Character District**

The State Street Character District frames the northwest corner of the University of Michigan central campus and defines the eastern edge of the commercial core. This area is characterized by a mixture of entertainment and retail uses with strong connections to the campus. The intent for this district is preservation of the integrity of the historic district properties and the overall historic character of the area, with design that includes features of the traditional commercial storefronts at the sidewalk's edge. A portion of State Street is a locally designated historic district. When considering projects in the historic district, consult the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines.

Along State Street itself, many buildings are of historic significance, and retain features of traditional commercial buildings, with storefronts aligned at the sidewalk edge. These first floor levels are more transparent than those of floors above, and this distinction helps to create a horizontal line along the street that establishes a one-story scale held in common among most properties. This contributes to a sense of visual continuity that unifies the street scene.

Along Washington and Liberty Streets, some taller buildings exist, and new structures with additional mass may be accommodated. As this occurs, it will be important to have a strongly defined streetwall that is visually interesting for pedestrians. It is equally important that buildings be articulated to reflect the traditional building heights at the street edge. ~~R~~Including retail, dining and entertainment uses that provide views to inside activities is-are to be encouraged ~~for this reason.~~

While maintaining a consistent line of building fronts at the sidewalk is important, it is also desirable to have sidewalks that are as wide as possible. Therefore, in some portions along Washington and Liberty Streets, it may be appropriate to place a

portion of a building farther back from the existing sidewalk line, when this space can be “added” to the sidewalk.

Photo of yellow sign serves no purpose. Eliminate

### **Design Guidelines for State Street Character District**

The following context-specific guidelines apply to properties in State Street in addition to the guidelines provided in Chapter 2: General Design Guidelines.

#### **B.1 Design outdoor spaces and walkways to encourage pedestrian activity in State Street.**

- Provide wide sidewalks, courtyards and plazas that can accommodate street furniture and plantings.
- Create active corners that contribute to the continuity of ground floor commercial activities.
- Minimize ~~private~~ encroachment onto public right-of-way that would constrain pedestrian activity.

#### **B.2 ~~A new building~~ New buildings should reflect the established two to three-story streetwall height in State Street.**

- Provide variety in streetwall heights from two to three stories.
- Step down taller building masses towards lower scale residential areas to the north and south of the character district to provide a transition in scale.

Photo with sidewalk signs is not a good example. Need photo without signs.

Get a more descriptive photo of the alley. □ **C.**

### **Liberty/Division Character District**

The Liberty/Division Character District is located in the core of

down-town, yet retains a ~~small-scale~~ residential character. A significant portion of this district coincides with the East William Historic District, and for this reason, preservation of the integrity of these resources is a high priority, as is the retention of the overall sense of scale. While increased building mass can be accommodated in this district, it is the intent to maintain the traditional scale and rhythm of residential buildings. When considering projects in the historic district, consult the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines.

Individual street corridors within this character district are relatively distinct from one another. Liberty Street from Fifth Avenue to Thompson Street forms a primary connection between the Main Street and State Street Character Districts and includes many shops and restaurants. William, Thompson and Division Streets feature a diverse array of converted residential structures mixed with larger commercial buildings.

While increased building mass can be accommodated in this area, it is important that the traditional scale and rhythm of residential buildings be maintained. Therefore, keeping fronts of buildings set back from the street with some landscaped area will be important. It is also key to use porches or similar one-story elements to define primary entrances and to establish a scale similar to that of existing buildings.

[Center-left photo: Eliminate](#)

[Lower right photo: Show Division between Liberty and](#)

[William](#) □ **Design Guidelines for Liberty/Division Character District**

The following context-specific guidelines apply to properties in Liberty/Division in addition to the guidelines provided in Chapter 2: General Design Guidelines.

**C.1 Use building forms that relate to traditional residential structures in Liberty/Division.**

- Divide larger buildings into modules that reflect the scale of traditional residential structures in the area.
- Step down the height of larger buildings at edge

abut-ting smaller historic structures.

## **C.2 Enhance pedestrian links to other parts of down-town.**

- Provide sheltered awnings and canopies over side-walks.
- Provide places for outdoor seating along pedestrian links.

## Seva photo not a good example. □ **D. East Huron 1 and 2**

### **Character Districts**

The East Huron 1 and 2 Character Districts center along the eastern portion of the Huron Street civic corridor. This area differs from most of downtown in that ~~the uses are primarily institutional and~~ buildings are seen “in the round” with open space surrounding them. The intent for these districts is to continue the tradition of free-standing buildings with open ~~space in front~~ spaces surrounding them, incorporating design that includes signature building elements that give landmark qualities to properties.

East Huron 1 is the northeastern section of the East Huron area. The zoning for this district requires lower streetwall and overall building heights. East Huron 2 is the southern and northwestern sections of the East Huron area. The zoning for this district allows for taller streetwall and overall building heights but requires a front setback on Huron.

East Huron’s free-standing ~~institutional~~ buildings typically have a clearly defined front entrance facing the street. They may also be set back some distance with landscaping in the foreground. N~~Even new~~ structures ~~that do not house institutional functions~~ should continue this design tradition, with substantial amounts of open space in front, and a “presence” in design that signals a sense of connection with the community at large. Signature building elements that give landmark qualities to properties are also appropriate. Creative, contemporary interpretations of corner towers, decorative parapet lines, and other special details are examples.

Enhancing the pedestrian experience is a key objective in East Huron. Maintaining wide sidewalks and providing amenities along the way are important. This is especially noteworthy along Huron

Street, where high traffic volumes could otherwise discourage pedestrian uses. ~~Be-cause Huron Street is a Civic Corridor as described in Chapter 1: Urban Design Principles, it is important to consider the relationship of institutional facilities and enhance pedestrian circulation patterns. Providing convenient access to the public sidewalk system is important.~~

Replace Harris Hall photo with one showing only forecourt of hotel with its landscaping. □ **Design Guidelines for East Huron 1 and 2**

## **Character**

### **Districts**

The following context-specific guidelines apply to properties in East Huron in addition to the guidelines provided in Chapter 2: General Design Guidelines.

#### **D.1 Design free-standing buildings to be seen “in the round.”**

Strategies include:

- Providing interest and conveying a sense of scale on all building faces
- Designing a building with one or more corner tower elements including creative, contemporary interpretations of a tower element
- Designing a building to incorporate decorative parapet lines or other special details

Respect front and side setbacks in D1

Continue the pattern of front yard setbacks in D2

#### **D.2 Design new development to improve the pedestrian realm in East Huron.**

Strategies include:

- ~~Providing~~ Continue the pattern of yards and plazas for pedestrians to gather or rest along the street
- Providing convenient access to the public sidewalk system
- Providing walkways to connect between buildings where development is separated by yard areas

D.3 Design in scale with adjacent historic districts

Step down heights adjacent to residential and historic properties

Design in context with existing roof slopes

Maintain traditional setbacks adjacent to residentially zoned properties

## E. Midtown Character District

The Midtown Character District is framed on all sides by other downtown character districts and contains the Fifth Avenue civic corridor. At present, this district lacks a strong sense of identity and is a place where creation of a new context should occur. The intent for this district is higher density development with a strongly defined street edge and active open spaces, but one that respects the scale of existing historic and architecturally distinctive buildings within the district. These include the Heydon properties, Ann Arbor News building, and the original Bell Telephone building.

Key principles for sustainability (the following does not relate to sustainability) will also be important in this area, including considerations of how mid- and high-rise towers are positioned such that they can frame views and respect active outdoor areas in the vicinity. There also may be opportunities to introduce additional mid-block passageways and ~~even~~ arcades that help invite circulation through this area. Is it necessary to state the sentence on arcades and passageways?

Because Midtown is framed by other contexts, there will be some edges that require sensitive treatment where sites abut other character districts that have a lower scale. This new emerging context will be best served with well-designed “background” buildings that work together to create a sense of continuity and consistency in context. At the same time, creatively conceived accents in the urban fabric, such as active courtyards and plazas and signature building elements, should be welcomed.

Differing guidelines are needed for area north of Liberty St.

## Design Guidelines for Midtown Character District

The following context-specific guidelines apply to properties in Midtown in addition to the guidelines provided in Chapter 2: General Design Guidelines.

### **E.1 Enhance pedestrian links to other parts of downtown, especially along Civic Corridors such as ~~5th~~ Fifth Avenue.**

- Provide sheltered awnings and canopies over sidewalks.
- Provide places for outdoor seating along pedestrian links.
- Provide small open space areas to enliven the street edge.

### **E.2 Provide a well defined street edge.**

Strategies include:

- Aligning building fronts at the sidewalk edge (no need for this statement)
- Providing limited setback areas for small open spaces

- Respect front yards and historic setbacks where they exist.

### **E.3 Provide a sense of visual continuity in building massing.**

- Reflect a similar rhythm, scale and orientation in building streetwalls.
- Align primary building masses and floor heights with others on the block.

### **E.4 Provide building height transitions from Midtown to adjacent character districts.**

- Step down taller building masses where a site abuts lower scaled character districts or historic structures.

## F. Main Street Character District

The Main Street Character District is the traditional heart of downtown, with a regional ~~entertainment and business~~restaurant and retail focus. The center of the district contains the Main Street Historic District, and preservation of these resources is a high priority. The intent for this district is design that maintains the traditional rhythm of existing storefronts along the street edge and varying parapet lines. When considering projects in the historic district, consult the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines.

First and second floor heights are similar among traditional buildings in Main Street ~~which and~~ helps establish a continuity of scale. Architectural details also provide interest and convey a sense of scale in Main Street. These are from a variety of architectural styles and periods, but most are of durable materials and high quality execution.

Maintaining the traditional rhythm of storefronts along the street edge is also important. While there is some variety in their widths, most storefronts reflect the historic lot dimension. Even larger buildings which occupy several lots are divided into modules that reflect this dimension. It is important that new construction maintain this rhythm as well. This rhythm of lot widths is also reflected in parapet lines.

Because building heights vary with the lots, this helps to reduce the sense of mass along the street edge and contributes to its visual interest. This variation in parapet lines should be continued. This will be especially important for buildings that may be taller than the norm.

Because most traditional building fronts align at the sidewalk edge, a uniform streetwall results that provides a sense of enclosure for the area.

New investment should support the area's growing regional and local role as the primary street-oriented restaurant, retail and business district. (This is not needed in a design guideline.)

Bottom photo of "Main Street" is not Main Street or descriptive

## **Design Guidelines for Main Street Character District**

The following context-specific guidelines apply to properties in Main Street in addition to the guidelines provided in Chapter 2: General Design Guidelines.

### **F.1 Provide a well-defined street edge that invites pedestrian activity.**

Strategies include:

- Aligning building fronts at the sidewalk edge
- Providing limited setback areas for open spaces with inviting street furniture, public art and other pedestrian amenities
- Providing tall first-floor storefronts with large transparent windows along the ground floor (See the design guidelines for building elements in Chapter 2: General Design Guidelines for additional details)

### **F.2 Maintain the established streetwall height of two to four-stories.**

- Maintain a strong cornice line between two and four-stories and set back taller building elements (note that the downtown zoning districts include minimum and maximum streetwall heights and minimum offset requirements).
- Vary streetwall heights between two and four-stories to reflect Main Street's originally platted lot widths.

### **F.3 Maintain established window patterns on upper floors.**

Strategies include:

- Aligning and spacing windows to reflect established patterns on surrounding buildings
- Recess or "Punch" windows into a more solid wall
- Using moldings, trim elements and window surrounds that establish substantial shadow lines

## G. Kerrytown Character District

The Kerrytown Character District frames the north end of downtown and is characterized by a mix of small-scale commercial buildings and houses that have been adapted to different uses. The eastern part of the district is part of the Old Fourth Ward Historic District, while the southeast corner of the district is located in the Fourth/Ann Historic District. The intent for this district is ~~retaining~~ to retain traditional existing building patterns, with lower-scale building modules and residential shapes. When considering projects in the historic districts, consult the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines.

Detroit Street is an unusual feature in this district, because it runs at a diagonal to the established grid. Smaller, wedge-shaped blocks result from this layout, which causes oddly shaped lots and buildings. These contribute to the distinctive character of Kerrytown and therefore this street pattern should be maintained.

Several streets in Kerrytown are paved with brick, contributing to the historic feeling of the district. New brick-paved plazas, courtyards and walkways are appropriate throughout the district.

Kerrytown contains an eclectic mix of buildings types, with a moderate variation in scale. In the northern portion of the district, single-family residential type buildings are typical. Commercial and warehouse buildings are typical nearer to the Main Street Character District. New investment in Kerrytown should fit into the existing eclectic mix of buildings and uses within Kerrytown's tree-lined residential, industrial and commercial blocks.

## Design Guidelines for Kerrytown Character District

The following context-specific guidelines apply to properties in Kerrytown in addition to the guidelines provided in Chapter 2: General Design Guidelines.

### **G.1 Design buildings in Kerrytown to appear to have a similar scale as traditional structures as seen from the street.**

Appropriate strategies include:

- Dividing a new building into modules that reflect the traditional scale of Kerrytown's small commercial buildings and single-family structures
- Incorporating one and two-story elements in a new building
- Reflecting the scale of any adjacent small scale residential buildings
- Stepping down a larger building towards adjacent historic structures

### **G.2 Use front and side setback areas to reflect Kerrytown's residential character.**

- Provide landscaping within any required front setback area.
- Increase side setbacks where a new building is adjacent to lower scale residential buildings

### **G.3 Whenever possible, incorporate existing buildings into new development.**

Appropriate strategies include:

- Constructing an addition to an existing traditional buildings rather than a new building
- Incorporating an existing structure into the site plan for a new development

~~• Retaining existing building facades when constructing a new building~~

## H. First Street Character District

The First Street Character District runs north-south along the Ann Arbor Railroad and Allen Creek floodplain. This area is characterized by oddly-shaped blocks and a mixture of commercial storefronts, industrial buildings and single-family homes. Many of these buildings are located in the Old West Side historic district, which makes up much of the character district. The intent for this district is for ~~infill~~ development that preserves historic buildings' assets, supports downtown activities, and provides non motorized connections through preservation of a system of public and common open spaces. New development along the Allen Creek floodplain should be sited to provide green space on site and be located in such a way that it will connect with green space of abutting properties. When considering development in the floodplain, consult the City's Flood Mitigation Plan. When considering projects in the historic district, consult the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines.

A potential for infill building exists in this area. Buildings that draw upon the industrial heritage in creative contemporary ways are encouraged. Designs that reflect state-of-the-art technologies in building are particularly welcomed here. New investment in the area should demonstrate environmental leadership. It should also support downtown cultural, art, entertainment, residential and commercial activities; preserve historic buildings' assets; and support community-wide, non-motorized connections through preservation of a system of public and common open spaces.

A city goal is to promote development of green space along this corridor. These green space and linkage goals are based on restoring the floodplain and are not always related to public open space. ~~Some~~ proposals have called for extensive amounts of public green space; others are more restrained. In each case, there remains the potential for ~~substantial~~ infill building, especially in higher elevations of the area that do not limit the preservation or creation of open space. However, the concept of establishing a sense of a green spine is a key concept, and that is reflected in the special guidelines for this area. Even though development may occur, it is important that a continuous greensward be established. For this reason, all redevelopment should be sited to provide substantial green space on site, and this should be located such that it will connect with green space of abutting properties. This green space should include opportunities to establish a continuous trail through the area as well.

## Design Guidelines for First Street Character District

The following context-specific guidelines apply to properties in the First Street Character District in addition to the guidelines provided in Chapter 2: General Design Guidelines.

### H.1 Provide green edges for development within the floodplain.

- Provide landscaped transitions to the open space from developed areas.
- Site open space to be connected with open spaces on adjacent properties

### H.2 Design ground floor areas to be pedestrian friendly.

Appropriate strategies for development throughout the district include:

~~• Designing the floor-to-floor height of first floor of a building to be taller than the floor-to-floor height of upper stories~~

- Providing landscaped open space areas near building entries
- Providing linkages to on and off-street pedestrian connections

In floodplain areas where regulations constrain ground floor development, appropriate strategies include:

- Providing landscaping and architectural screening to buffer ground floor areas used for parking

~~• Designing a building to incorporate ground floor entry areas with enclosed stairs leading to building areas above the flood level~~

- Providing an increased front setback area that is terraced up to a front entry above the flood level
- Developing on-site storm water retention areas as amenities

### H.3 Use simple building forms and functional materials to reflect the industrial heritage of the district.

Appropriate building forms include:

- Simple, rectangular building forms
- Flat roofs

Appropriate materials include:

- Brick and other traditional industrial materials used in a contemporary way
- Brick combined with new, innovative materials that are simple and functional

### H.4 Minimize the visual impacts of parking.

- Locate parking at the grade level of a structure and screen it with other uses and/or landscaping.
- Locate surface lots to the interior of a property and frame them with buildings and/or landscaping.

# Appendix A: Design

## Guidelines Checklist

This four page checklist provides an outline of the design guidelines for downtown Ann Arbor. The checklist is to be used in conjunction with the design guidelines and is not intended as a substitute for the full text of the Downtown Ann Arbor Design Guidelines. Specific strategies that may be used to meet the intent of each design guideline are described in chapters 1 and 2 of the design guidelines document.

When considering a project in downtown Ann Arbor, use this checklist to note which guidelines are applicable. Review chapter 1 and 2 design guidelines and mark each as appropriate. Provide a brief description for each guideline:

The checklist should be eliminated because the determination should remain with the design review committee, who must recommend based on the complexity of overlapping standards involved with each case and each character district.

### Pedestrian Connections

- 1.1 Provide on-site pedestrian connections at the sidewalk level.
- 1.2 Link to at least one pedestrian connection or open space that has been provided on an adjoining property.
- 1.3 Enliven a pedestrian connection with uses and amenities that provide interest.

### 2.0 Open Space

- 2.1 Design an urban open space to maximize pedestrian use.
- 2.2 Enliven an urban open space with uses and amenities that provide interest to pedestrians.

### 3.0 Parking and Driveways

- 3.1 Provide a pedestrian-friendly street edge adjacent to structured parking.
- 3.2 Locate driveways and access points to minimize impact on pedestrians.
- 3.3 Locate a surface parking area to minimize impacts on pedestrians.

### 4.0 Sustainability in Site Planning

- 4.1 Utilize landscape areas and features to promote energy efficiency.
- 4.2 Provide natural storm water systems and retention basins that also serve as amenities.

## 5.0 Building Height

5.1 Position or configure taller building elements to minimize impacts on adjacent lower-scale areas.

5.2 Provide variation in building heights for a project that extends over several lots.

## 6.0 Building Articulation

6.1 When a new building will be larger than surrounding traditional structures, visually divide it into smaller building modules that provide a sense of human scale.

6.2 Provide a clear definition between lower and upper floors to maintain a sense of scale at the street level.

6.3 Design a commercial or mixed-used building to reflect the traditional composition of a base, middle and cap.

## 7.0 Sustainability in Building Massing

7.1 Design building massing to maximize solar energy potential.

7.2 Orient a building to maximize green building principles while ensuring compatibility with adjacent, lower-scale buildings or neighborhoods.

## 8.0 Street Edge

8.1 Use building elements to create a street edge that invites pedestrian activity.

## 9.0 Entries

9.1 Clearly define a primary entrance and orient it towards the street.

9.2 Position and design entries to reflect traditional patterns.

## 10.0 Windows

10.1 Provide a high level of ground floor transparency on a building in an area traditionally defined by commercial storefronts.

10.2 Design a building facade above the ground floor to incorporate window patterns consistent with traditional patterns in the area.

10.3 Arrange windows to reflect the traditional rhythm and general alignment of windows in the area.

## 11.0 Materials

11.1 Use materials to convey a sense of human scale and visual interest to pedestrians.

12.0 Sustainability in Building Elements

12.1 Use sustainable building materials whenever possible.

12.2 Incorporate building elements that allow for natural environmental control.

**Articulation:** Design elements, both horizontal and vertical that add interest to the face of a building. Massing articulation is the way in which a building is broken down into modules, sub-parts, or major elements.

**Building Module:** A sub-part of a larger building that appears as a single facade plane. One large building can incorporate several modules.

**Fenestration:** The placement, form, and size of windows on a building's exterior. Also see Transparency.

**Floor Area Ratio (FAR):** The total floor area of all buildings on a lot divided by the total area of the lot.

**Horizontal Alignment:** Design elements such as moldings and cornices or changes in material and color that produce horizontal lines along a building facade. A block face may have buildings with coordinated elements of horizontal alignment.

**Massing Articulation:** See Articulation.

**Maximum Diagonal:** The longest diagonal dimension of a building or tower.

**Module:** See building module.

**Offset:** The distance that a tower or upper part of a building is set back from the streetwall or lower portion of the building

**Parapet Block:** A block of buildings with a roof profile that results from being built directly against each other such as along a traditional main street.

**Setback:** The distance that a building is set back from the front, side or rear property line.

**Streetwall:** The wall formed by buildings along the setback line or the base portion of a taller building or tower. Streetwall height is the exterior face of a building that fronts a public street between the street grade and the minimum or maximum specified streetwall height.

**Tower:** Any portion of a building that rises above the streetwall (usually narrower than the streetwall or base portion of a building.) Towers are often include a lower/middle tower section and an upper tower section.

**Transparency:** The relationship of solid building wall to open or glass areas.