ARAPAHOE SQUARE
DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES
April, 2019
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ARAPAHOE SQUARE DESIGN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Adopted April 9, 2019

APPROVED FOR LEGALITY

City Attorney
City and County of Denver

APPROVED AND ADOPTED

Manager, Community Planning and Development
City and County of Denver
This chapter includes:

- Vision For Arapahoe Square ................................................................................................ Page 2
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Arapahoe Square provides one of the top opportunities for growth and change in Central Denver and will be a critical connection point between surrounding neighborhoods and the Central Business District. While some parts of Arapahoe Square lack an established context, some areas do maintain the original pattern of commercial and mixed-use buildings that originally characterized the district. These areas provide inspiration for the future development of Arapahoe Square into a cutting edge, densely populated, mixed-use area that provides a range of housing types and a center for innovative businesses.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DESIGN IN ARAPAHOE SQUARE**

Development and redevelopment will promote the vision for Arapahoe Square by incorporating the following design principles:

- **Sense of Place.** Design in Arapahoe Square will promote a vibrant sense of place.
- **Human Scale.** Design in Arapahoe Square will be scaled primarily to encourage an active pedestrian environment.
- **Creativity.** Innovative and unique design solutions will help define a unique future character for Arapahoe Square.
- **Context.** Design in Arapahoe Square will consider surrounding buildings and adjacent neighborhoods to create an interconnected district with fluid transitions.
- **Sustainability.** Design in Arapahoe Square will promote social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Additional detail regarding each of the guiding principles above is provided in the introduction to each chapter of the design standards and guidelines. See page 5 for more information on the policy and regulatory foundation for the design standards and guidelines.
PURPOSE OF THE DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

The purpose of the Design Standards & Guidelines for Arapahoe Square (DSG) is to promote the neighborhood vision by setting clear expectations for the level of design quality envisioned for improvements in Arapahoe Square. This document sets forth design standards and guidelines that provide the basis for review of proposed improvements on private properties and associated improvements in the Public Right-of-Way.

The Zoning Administrator shall utilize staff and design review findings by the Design Advisory Board when making a determination of Approval, Approval with Conditions or Denial for proposed projects in Arapahoe Square. See “Design Review Process” on page 9 for more information.

COMMUNITY INPUT ON THE DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

The Arapahoe Square Design Standards and Guidelines are an important part of a comprehensive form-based regulatory framework for Arapahoe Square that was adopted in August, 2016. Community members helped develop the regulatory framework by providing input through:

» A dedicated stakeholder task force
» A public open house
» Public hearings at City Council and Planning Board
» Community presentations
» One-on-one meetings with City staff

Visit www.denvergov.org/downtowndesign for more information.
The Arapahoe Square Design Standards and Guidelines apply to the area illustrated in Figure 1. This design review area is bounded by:

» 20th Street
» Park Avenue West
» The alley between Lawrence and Larimer
» The alley between Welton and Glenarm

Note that the design review area shall include all properties within the D-AS-12+ and D-AS-20+ zone districts as shown on the official zoning map, regardless of whether such properties are within the boundary illustrated at left. The D-AS zone district is not part of the design review area.

Arapahoe Square lies directly northeast of the Central Business District, as illustrated in Figure 1 above.

The district is characterized by its wide variety of building designs and scales. Its position between the Central Business District and neighborhoods to the north provides an opportunity for redevelopment of Arapahoe Square into a vibrant mixed-use area that services downtown workers and local residents.

**KEY STREETS**

The design standards and guidelines recognize the unique context of the following Key Streets:

- 20th Street
- 21st Street
- Arapahoe Street
- Broadway
- Curtis Street
- Park Avenue West
- Welton Street

See “Guide to the Key Streets in Arapahoe Square” on page 55 for more information.
POLICY AND REGULATORY FOUNDATION

The Design Standards and Guidelines for Arapahoe Square serve as one of a number of documents involved in the City’s planning and development process. The design standards and guidelines are intended to implement adopted City regulations, plans and policies while working within existing regulations. Key policy and regulatory documents relevant to Arapahoe Square are summarized below. All documents are available for download at denvergov.org/CPD.

DENVER REVISED MUNICIPAL CODE

The Denver Revised Municipal Code (DRMC) provides the complete code of ordinances for the City and County of Denver. The Arapahoe Square Design Standards and Guidelines are adopted per the Rule-making authority provided in Section 12.18 of the DRMC.

DENVER ZONING CODE

The Denver Zoning Code preserves and promotes the public health, safety and welfare of the City’s residents and employees and facilitates the orderly growth and expansion of the City. Zoning regulations provide the basic form, parking, signage, and land-use requirements for all neighborhoods within the City, including Arapahoe Square.

As illustrated on the official zoning map, specialized zone districts (D-AS-12+ and D-AS-20+) apply context-sensitive zoning requirements in Arapahoe Square.

BLUEPRINT DENVER

Blueprint Denver is a citizen-driven, integrated land-use and transportation plan. The plan was adopted in 2002 and aims to enhance Denver life by using land in the way that is healthy for its economy, supports alternative modes of transportation and maintains the integrity of neighborhoods. Blueprint Denver identifies and differentiates areas of stability from areas of change in order to guide new development. It identifies Arapahoe Square as an area of change.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2000

Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000 establishes a vision for Denver as a city that is livable for its people, now and in the future. The plan reflects the effort of hundreds of residents from different backgrounds and perspectives, who have agreed on the city’s long-term purposes, and suggested strategies that will sustain its intangible assets for the future.

DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN

The 2007 Downtown Area Plan provides an overall vision and set of goals and recommendations for the downtown area, including the redevelopment of Arapahoe Square as a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood.

NORTHEAST DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS PLAN

The Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan is the most current planning document for Arapahoe Square. It was adopted by City Council in 2011 as an element of the Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000. It is used by public agencies, utilities, neighborhood and business organizations, residents, business owners, land owners and private developers to shape development and public improvements in Arapahoe Square.
ORGANIZATION & FORMAT

The Design Standards and Guidelines for Arapahoe Square are organized into chapters that address different levels of design, or specific design topics, as summarized in “Using the Design Standards & Guidelines Chapters” on page 7.

Chapters 1-5 begin with a set of guiding principles. Each topic within the chapter is then addressed at three levels:

1. **Intent Statements** establish the objectives to be achieved for each topic and may also be used to determine the appropriateness of alternative or innovative approaches that do not meet specific design standards.

2. **Design Standards** set prescriptive criteria for achieving the intent statements. They use the term “shall” to indicate that compliance is expected and are numbered by chapter for reference. (note that Chapter 4.0 Streetscape Design Guidelines does not include design standards)

3. **Design Guidelines** provide additional suggestions to achieve the intent statements. They use the term “should” or “consider” and are numbered by chapter for reference.

The guiding principles, intent statements, design standards and guidelines provide structure for the design review process while encouraging flexibility for creative design.

See “Sample Design Standards & Guidelines Format” on page 8 for more detail regarding the format and use of guiding principles, intent statements, design standards and design guidelines.

FLEXIBILITY FOR CREATIVE OR INNOVATIVE DESIGNS

In some cases, an innovative or creative design approach that does not comply with specific design standards or guidelines may be approved if it is consistent with the guiding principles and relevant intent statements. It is the applicant’s responsibility to show that an alternative solution is consistent with, and effectively implements the guiding principles and intent statements of the Arapahoe Square Design Standards and Guidelines.

UNDERLINED TEXT IN THIS DOCUMENT

Underlined text indicates a cross reference to a related design topic or a hyperlink to a related web site. In electronic (Acrobat PDF) versions of this document, clicking on an underlined cross reference or hyperlink will open the related document page or web site. In most versions of Adobe Acrobat, clicking the Alt + left arrow keys will link back to the original page.

Underlined text is also used to indicate terms that are defined in the document Appendix.
USING THE DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES CHAPTERS

This document is organized into an introduction and five chapters that are used by City Staff, the Design Advisory Board, and Planning Board as summarized below.

INTRODUCTION
Page 1

The introduction summarizes the vision, purpose and applicability of the design standards and guidelines. It also details the design review process and application requirements for projects throughout Arapahoe Square. It is used by applicants, the Design Advisory Board, Planning Board, and City Staff.

1.0 SITE DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES
Page 15

This chapter is used by the Design Advisory Board and City Staff to review plans for the arrangement of buildings and related features on a site, as well as the visual and functional character of those features and how they shape the Public Realm.

2.0 BUILDING DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES
Page 29

This chapter is used by the Design Advisory Board and City Staff to review plans for the vertical component of development and redevelopment, which includes the visual and functional character of individual buildings.

3.0 KEY STREETS DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES
Page 53

This chapter is used by the Design Advisory Board and City Staff to review context-specific site, building and streetscape designs with frontage along one or more of the streets listed under “Key Streets” on page 4. It does not apply to review of projects on other streets.

4.0 STREETSCAPE DESIGN GUIDELINES
Page 65

This chapter is used by the Design Advisory Board and City Staff to review plans for the treatment of the Public Right-of-Way between the street and the primary street property line.

5.0 SIGN DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES
Page 73

City Staff uses this chapter to review the location and design of all sign types in Arapahoe Square as well as Vital Sign Plans. This chapter is also used by the Planning Board and City Staff to review Comprehensive Sign Plans.

See “Design Review Process” on page 9 for more information about the application of the sign design standards and guidelines.

Figure 2: Using the Design Standards & Guidelines Chapters
To increase clarity and ease-of-use, the individual design standards and guidelines pages in Chapters 1-4 use a standard format. The chart below uses a sample page from Chapter 2 (page 42) to indicate each key element of the standard format.

**Intention Statements**
- To activate the Street Level and integrate pedestrian circulation into building design.
- To ensure that pedestrian entries are clearly visible.

**Design Standards**
- 2.28 Pedestrian entrances shall front onto a public street or street-facing Open Space.
- 2.29 The design of primary entries shall respond to the Street Level of the building use.
- 2.30 Pedestrian entrances should be integrated into a signature building element whenever possible.
- 2.31 Where transit stops are adjacent to a building, a pedestrian entrance should be located adjacent to the stop.
- 2.32 For buildings with multiple tenants, facades should be divided into narrow widths or bays and provide multiple secondary access points to animate the street.

**Design Guidelines**
- a. Locate commercial entrances at the level of the adjacent sidewalk whenever possible.
- b. Locate residential entrances no more than approximately 3 feet above the level of the adjacent sidewalk.

**Denver Zoning Code Pedestrian Access Requirements**
The Denver Zoning Code includes pedestrian access (entrance) requirements to ensure a clear, obvious, publicly accessible connection between the primary street and uses within the building.

**Key to the Sample Design Standards and Guidelines Page Above**
- **A** The Design Topic is indicated with a heading at the top of each page.
- **B** A Design Subtopic is sometimes included in black text at the right side of the header.
- **C** Photographs & Diagrams are located below the page heading. They are numbered for easy reference.
- **D** Intent Statements establish the objectives to be achieved for each topic and may also be used to determine the appropriateness of alternative or innovative approaches that do not meet specific design standards.
- **E** Design Standards set prescriptive criteria for achieving the intent statements. They use the term “shall” to indicate that compliance is expected and are numbered by chapter for reference.
- **F** Design Guidelines provide additional suggestions to achieve the intent statements. They use the term “should” or “consider” and are numbered by chapter for reference.
- **G** Additional Information is provided as a bulleted list beneath some standards and guidelines to indicate specific approaches and strategies.
- **H** Sidebars provide background information on the design topic or relationship to the Denver Zoning Code.
- **I** Underlined Text indicates terms defined in the Appendix, or provides clickable cross references to related document topics and web site hyperlinks (in PDF version).

Figure 3: Sample Design Standards & Guidelines Format
The design review process for projects in Arapahoe Square (D-AS-12+ and D-AS-20+ Zone Districts) complements the standard development review process that applies to all projects in Denver. The process is intended to follow a typical approach to project design from initial concept to site design and massing, and finally, complete project design. Design review authority varies depending on project type and scale, as summarized in Figure 4 below.

### Project Types Reviewed by the Design Advisory Board

- New building construction and additions
- Major exterior building improvements, including significant changes in materials or transparency
- Major site improvements, including new or significantly expanded outdoor use areas in locations that are visible from the street

See Figure 5 for more information on the Design Advisory Board review process.

### Project Types Not Reviewed by the Design Advisory Board

- Minor exterior building improvements
- Minor site improvements, including small expansions to outdoor use areas or new outdoor use areas in locations that are not visible from the street
- Comprehensive Sign Plans
- Sign permits

*City Staff will determine the appropriate process for each project on a case-by-case basis and inform the applicant at the required Pre-Application/Concept Review meeting.

The Design Advisory Board is empowered through the Denver Zoning Code to advise and assist the Community Planning and Development Department with review of proposed projects to ensure that they are developed in accordance with these design standards and guidelines. The board works within an established development review process to provide recommendations regarding project approval to the City’s Zoning Administrator.

The Design Advisory Board advises on the project types listed in Figure 4 above. New signs and Comprehensive Sign Plans are not reviewed by the Design Advisory Board and are subject to the standard citywide review processes as described in the table. The complete process for projects reviewed by the Design Advisory Board is outlined in Figure 5 on page 10.

See [www.denvergov.org/downtowndesign](http://www.denvergov.org/downtowndesign) for more information.

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**Figure 4: Review Process by Project Type**

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**Design Review Precedent**

The design review process will evaluate each project based on its unique context and attributes. Approval or denial of an individual project will not set specific precedent for future design review decisions, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
A standard process applies to most projects reviewed by the Design Advisory Board, as illustrated in Figure 5 below. At each stage, City Staff will review the submittal and determine whether the applicant is prepared to proceed to the Design Advisory Board. City Staff may require more than one submittal before proceeding to the review meeting with the Design Advisory Board and will make a recommendation to the Design Advisory Board regarding the project’s compliance with the design standards and guidelines.

Note that some project types, such as larger exterior improvements and expanded outdoor use areas that are subject to Design Advisory Board review, may be eligible to begin review at Step 3 in Figure 5 below.

**OPTIONAL CONCEPT WORKSHOP**

An optional concept workshop with City Staff is strongly encouraged to facilitate an early understanding of unique Denver Zoning Code requirements in the D-AS-12+ and D-AS-20+ districts and their relationship to these design standards and guidelines. The goal of the optional concept workshop is to establish a baseline of building character and design quality at the project’s conception that aligns with the recommendations of the design standards and guidelines. This meeting should occur prior to the pre-application/concept review meeting to identify and address possible conflicts early on in the process.

1. **PRE-APPLICATION/CONCEPT REVIEW MEETING**

A required pre-application/concept review meeting with City Staff will address the design review process and submittal requirements necessary at each step. This meeting provides an opportunity for discussion of the proposed project with other City agencies that may affect the overall design. The concept review meeting required for the citywide Site Development Plan (SDP) review process may also serve as the pre-application/concept review for the design review process guided by these design standards and guidelines.

2A. **SITE DESIGN AND MASSING REVIEW SUBMITTAL**

Following the pre-application/concept review meeting, an applicant may submit materials for review of the general site organization and massing of the proposed project. The submittal should focus on the design standards and guidelines in Chapter 1.0 of these design standards and guidelines, as well as the design standards and guidelines in the “Building Mass & Scale” section of Chapter 2.0, as well as the Chapter 2.0 location and separation standards when using the Point Tower building form (Standards 2.74, 2.75 and 2.79, when relevant, as well as Guideline 2.81). More detailed design elements should not be included in the submittal.
2B. SITE DESIGN AND MASSING REVIEW MEETING

In a public meeting, the Design Advisory Board, will review the site design and massing review submittal. This will provide an opportunity for early input from the Design Advisory Board, related to the relationship of the proposed project to the surrounding context, site layout, access, location of building program and uses, and overall scale and massing. City Staff and the applicant (or the applicant’s designee) will present the item to the Design Advisory Board. Following the presentation, the Design Advisory Board, shall discuss the merits of the application and provide input to the applicant on how the project complies with the design standards and guidelines. Design Advisory Board, feedback will provide direction to help the applicant further develop a full design review submittal.

One site design and massing review meeting will be required in a typical process, but a significant change in the project may result in the Design Advisory Board, requesting a second review. A project must proceed through the site design and massing review meeting and incorporate Design Advisory Board, comments prior to submitting a formal SDP.

3A. DESIGN REVIEW SUBMITTAL(S)

Once the applicant has completed the site design and massing review meeting with the Design Advisory Board, and concurrent with the Formal SDP submittal, the design review submittal may occur. The design review submittal shall incorporate Design Advisory Board, feedback from the site design and massing review and include more detailed architectural and streetscape elements of the proposed project. The submittal shall address items reviewed previously and include additional topics found in all chapters of this document.

3B. DESIGN REVIEW MEETING(S)

In a public meeting, the Design Advisory Board, will review the design review submittal. City Staff and the applicant (or the applicant’s designee) will present the item to the Design Advisory Board. Following the presentation, the Design Advisory Board shall discuss the merits of the application and provide input to the applicant on how the project complies with the design standards and guidelines.

In the design review meeting, the Design Advisory Board will review the topics found in all chapters of this document. However, site design and massing characteristics addressed in Step 2 are expected to be largely resolved by this step in the review process. The Design Advisory Board may require additional submittal materials and/or subsequent meetings prior to making a recommendation.

At the conclusion of the design review meeting, the Design Advisory Board shall make a formal recommendation of approval, approval with conditions, or denial to the Zoning Administrator.

4. FINAL DETERMINATION

The Zoning Administrator, utilizing the recommendation of the Design Advisory Board, will make a final determination of approval, approval with conditions, or denial for the submitted application.

The Department of Public Works, Department of Parks and Recreation Office of the City Forester (City Forester), and other departments or agencies will also review and approve specific aspects of most applications through the SDP process. Review by other departments and agencies applies to all projects in the City and County of Denver and is not unique to Arapahoe Square.
SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

This checklist applies to new construction and additions. The Design Advisory Board will not review an application that is incomplete. The following materials are required prior to scheduling a site design and massing review or design review meeting with the Design Advisory Board. Submittal items may be combined where appropriate and required information is still clearly communicated. When necessary, the Design Advisory Board or City Staff may request additional information from the applicant to describe compliance with the design standards and guidelines.

SITE DESIGN AND MASSING REVIEW SUBMITTAL (2A)

☐ Arapahoe Square DSG checklist addressing compliance with site design and massing topics.

☐ Project goal statement defining the overall goals and objectives of the project including the program of uses and role within the context of the neighborhood. The narrative should address how the project address the Downtown Area Plan Amendment vision elements and guiding principles in the DSG.

☐ Project design intent statement defining the design intent of the project and describing how the proposed development meets the Arapahoe Square DSG. If a standard is not met, the applicant must demonstrate in the narrative how the proposed alternative better achieves the intent statement.

☐ Context map showing the location of the project within Arapahoe Square.

☐ Context photograph(s) showing the project location in relationship to surrounding buildings and context. These photos should include a comprehensive view of any adjacent building elevations and other existing development or features that could influence the proposed project.

☐ Massing analysis to demonstrate how the proposed project may influence views, access to light and air, shadow impacts, etc. on neighboring streets, properties, and Open Space.

☐ Neighborhood context analysis that examines the area within a ¼ mile radius from the site. The neighborhood context analysis should evaluate topics that could include, but are not limited to:
  a. major streets and block patterns
  b. vehicular access
  c. pedestrian/bicycle routes and connections
  d. transit routes, stations, and stops
  e. Parks, Open Spaces, natural features, etc.
  f. surrounding building character (heights, materials, etc.)
  g. historic landmark properties
  h. Street Level land uses
    i. Public Realm elements (setback patterns, Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas, sidewalks, Amenity Zones, street trees, etc.)
    j. amenities and destinations (community centers, museums, entertainment, trails, libraries, schools, retail areas, etc.)
    k. topographic information (where significant)

☐ Block context analysis that examines the relationship of the project to the block where it is located. The block context analysis should evaluate topics that could include, but are not limited to:
  a. size of the block and arrangement of individual property boundaries or Zone Lots
  b. location and size of public streets, Alleys or Private Access Drives, vehicular access points, and Off-Street Pedestrian Connections
  c. Public Realm elements (setback patterns, Enhanced Setbacks and Open Space areas, sidewalks, Amenity Zones, street trees, etc.)
  d. Historic Resources
  e. existing and proposed building footprints
  f. existing and proposed building heights
  g. existing and proposed Tower separation
  h. existing and proposed building entrances
  i. existing and proposed Street Level land uses
SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS (continued)

- Building elevation analysis showing the elevation of the proposed project in context with the elevations of adjacent buildings
  - a. Interior lots should include the entire block
  - b. Corner lots should include both block faces and buildings across the street

- Conceptual site plan (scaled and dimensioned):
  - a. property lines and Zone Lot boundaries
  - b. required setbacks
  - c. site access and circulation
  - d. building footprints, including Tower locations (if applicable)
  - e. Street Level uses
  - f. site amenities, such as Open Space or Enhanced Setbacks

- Conceptual building sections, floor plans, and all elevations (scaled and dimensioned)

- Three-dimensional conceptual building massing views taken from the Street Level that incorporate photography of the surrounding context. Aerial birds-eye views are encouraged, but optional.

- Images and graphic representations of:
  - a. street sections to communicate street enclosure relationships
  - b. conceptual building program and uses
  - c. image precedents of the proposed design character and quality of the project

- If Towers are proposed, provide plans (scaled and dimensioned) showing Tower Floor Plate area, Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension, and Tower Floor Plate separation

- If a project is seeking the Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension Alternative, provide a narrative description and analysis showing compliance with these specific requirements.
□ Arapahoe Square DSG checklist addressing compliance with the topics in all remaining chapters of the DSG

□ The following items listed above in the Site Design and Massing submittal checklist (revised as necessary):
  a. project goal statement
  b. project design intent statement
  c. context map
  d. context photographs
  e. massing analysis
  f. neighborhood context analysis
  g. block context analysis
  h. building elevation analysis

□ Detailed site plans (scaled and dimensioned):
  a. property lines and Zone Lot boundaries
  b. required setbacks
  c. site access and circulation
  d. proposed building footprints, including Tower locations (if applicable)
  e. Street Level uses
  f. site amenities, such as Open Space or Enhanced Setbacks
  g. streetscape plan
  h. landscape plan
  i. grading plan

□ Detailed building sections, floor plans, and all elevations (scaled and dimensioned), including indication of potential future locations for signage.

□ Three-dimensional architecturally rendered views taken from the Street Level that incorporate photography of the surrounding context. Aerial birds-eye views are encouraged, but optional.

□ Images and graphic representations of:
  a. street sections to describe street enclosure relationships
  b. proposed building program and uses
  c. elevations and details showing compliance with Street Level Facade design and building articulation standards
  d. streetscape details, materials, etc.
  e. landscape details, materials, etc.

□ Lighting plan and renderings showing the location and character of pedestrian site lighting and exterior building lighting.

□ Window glazing details with architectural notation on elevations and sections to demonstrate compliance with transparency standards for Street Level Facades, Lower Story Facades, Upper Story Facades, and Tower Facades.

□ List and provide photographic examples of all external building materials.

□ Color and/or material samples to depict color, texture and material quality for construction (as needed).

□ If Towers are proposed, provide plans (scaled and dimensioned) showing Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension area, Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension, and Tower Floor Plate separation

□ If a project is seeking the Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension Alternative, provide a narrative description and analysis showing compliance with these specific requirements.
1.0 SITE DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

This chapter includes:

- Introduction to the Site Design Standards & Guidelines ........................................ Page 16
- Street Frontage ........................................................................................................... Page 18
  » Enhanced Setbacks & Open Space ........................................................................... Page 20
- Vehicle Access ........................................................................................................ Page 22
- Parking ..................................................................................................................... Page 24
  » Vehicular Surface Parking ..................................................................................... Page 24
  » Bicycle Parking ...................................................................................................... Page 26
- Service Areas & Utilities .......................................................................................... Page 27

ILLUSTRATIONS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

The design standards and guidelines include many photographs and diagrams to illustrate acceptable or unacceptable approaches. The illustrations are provided as examples and are not intended to indicate the only options.

If there appears to be a conflict between the text of the design standards and guidelines and a related illustration, the text shall prevail.

KEY TO ILLUSTRATION SYMBOLS

- A checkmark on an illustration indicates an approach that is generally appropriate.
- An X mark on an illustration indicates an approach that is generally inappropriate.
Site design addresses the arrangement of buildings and the spaces on a site, as well as the visual and functional character of those spaces and how they shape the Public Realm.

This chapter provides design standards and guidelines for site design topics, including street frontage, Open Space, surface parking and service areas. The design standards and guidelines apply to site improvements throughout Arapahoe Square.

Note that design standards and guidelines for the visual and functional character of individual buildings located on a site are provided in Chapter 2.0 on page 29. Additional design standards and guidelines for Key Streets, such as 21st Street and Curtis Street, are provided in Chapter 3.0 on page 53.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SITE DESIGN

The following core site design principles provide the basis for the standards and guidelines:

- **Sense of Place.** Site designs that frame the street and sidewalks with buildings, Enhanced Setback areas and Open Space help create active edges and provide a sense of comfort and safety that promotes a strong sense of place.

- **Human Scale.** Site designs that provide respite from the busy urban environment and encourage pedestrian activity help promote a sense of Human Scale in Arapahoe Square.

- **Creativity.** Site designs that incorporate creative features help to define a unique future character for Arapahoe Square.

- **Context.** Site designs that are sensitive to their context help ensure harmonious relationships throughout Arapahoe Square and with adjacent neighborhoods.

- **Sustainability.** Site designs that encourage pedestrian interaction and incorporate low impact development principles promote social, economic and environmental sustainability.

DESIGN FLEXIBILITY

In some cases, an innovative or creative approach that does not comply with specific design standards or guidelines may be approved if the applicant is able to demonstrate that it is consistent with the relevant guiding principles and intent statements.
SITE DESIGN OVERVIEW

A. STREET FRONTAGE

B. ENHANCED SETBACKS/OPEN SPACE

C. VEHICLE ACCESS

D. VEHICULAR SURFACE PARKING

E. BICYCLE PARKING

F. SERVICE AREAS & UTILITIES

LEGEND

A Street Frontage - Page 18
B Street Frontage: Enhanced Setbacks & Open Space - Page 20
C Vehicle Access - Page 22
D Parking: Vehicular Surface Parking - Page 24
E Parking: Bicycle Parking - Page 26
F Service Areas & Utilities - Page 27

Figure 6: Site Design Overview
INTENT STATEMENTS

• To locate and orient buildings to create a well-defined street frontage that promotes a vibrant pedestrian experience
• To provide a variety of experiences along the street frontage
• To link the street frontage to activities in adjacent buildings

DESIGN STANDARD

1.01 Buildings shall be located to clearly define a pedestrian-oriented street frontage.

One or more of the following frontage conditions are appropriate:

a. Buildings located at or near the primary street zone lot line to frame the sidewalk
b. An Enhanced Setback to extend the public use area
c. An Open Space area such as a plaza or courtyard

See “Pedestrian-oriented Street Frontage” on page 19 for more information.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

1.02 Commercial frontages should activate adjacent sidewalks.

Use one or more of the following features:

a. Buildings located at or near the primary street zone lot line with Street Level Active Uses at the sidewalk edge
b. Enhanced Setback areas with pedestrian seating, outdoor dining, or an extended sidewalk
c. Open Spaces such as plazas that are directly connected to building entries and Highly Active Uses

1.03 Residential frontages should provide a transition between adjacent sidewalks and private residences.

Use one or more transitional features, such as:

a. Building located at or near the primary street zone lot line with primary entrance/lobby areas at the sidewalk edge
b. A landscaped Enhanced Setback area (especially near neighborhood edges)
c. Open Spaces such as courtyards
d. Stoops or small private yard areas

1.04 Street frontages should respond to the surrounding context.

a. Where pedestrian activity is low and/or safety is a primary concern, locating Facades at or near the primary street zone lot line is appropriate.
b. Where pedestrian activity is high, Enhanced Setbacks and Open Space are appropriate to provide relief and variety.
PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED STREET FRONTAGE

The strategies described and illustrated below are appropriate to clearly define a pedestrian-oriented street frontage.

A. BUILDINGS LOCATED AT OR NEAR THE PRIMARY STREET ZONE LOT LINE

Buildings located at or near the primary street zone lot line directly activate the street and sidewalk with building entries and activities. See “Street Level Design” on page 41 for related building design standards and guidelines.

B. ENHANCED SETBACKS

An Enhanced Setback is the space created when buildings are set back from the primary street property line, but generally still positioned within the primary street build-to range provided in the Denver Zoning Code. Such setbacks should be enhanced to provide attractive and usable areas that activate the street frontage. They can range in size from modest extensions of the sidewalk that provide additional pedestrian area to larger landscape or patio seating areas.

C. OPEN SPACE

Open Spaces extend beyond the primary street build-to range allowed by the Denver Zoning Code to provide expanded pedestrian use areas. They are typically located adjacent to the street frontage, but may sometimes be located along internal paths or walkways. Open Space may include courtyards & plazas, pocket parks and pedestrian paths leading into a site.

Note that the Open Space used to meet the Private Access Drive Build-to alternative provided in the Denver Zoning Code must meet the standards and guidelines on pages 20 and 21.
INTENT STATEMENTS

• To ensure that areas where buildings are not built directly along the sidewalk activate the Public Realm
• To encourage additional sidewalk space for pedestrian movement and door openings
• To encourage a variety of Open Spaces, such as courtyards, plazas, and pocket parks
• To provide comfortable space for publicly accessible outdoor amenities, such as café seating, event space, and public art
• To promote an active pedestrian connection between the Public Realm and private development

ENHANCED SETBACKS & OPEN SPACE ON KEY STREETS

Chapter "3.0 Key Streets Design Standards & Guidelines" includes street-specific guidance for Enhanced Setbacks and Open Space, including:

» Guidelines 3.09-3.11 on page 58
» Guideline 3.20 on page 62
» Guideline 3.22 on page 63

DESIGN STANDARDS

1.05 Pedestrian areas that are part of Enhanced Setbacks and Open Space shall be located at grade with the sidewalk.

    Note that areas intended for private residential use may be located above or below the sidewalk level. See Standard 2.29 on page 42 for more information on raised residential entries.

1.06 Open Spaces, such as courtyards and plazas, shall be fronted with Highly Active Uses on at least one side.

    Highly Active Uses include, but are not limited to:
    a. Retail storefronts
    b. Restaurants and cafes
    c. Building lobbies and amenity areas
    d. Indoor art or recreation facilities
    e. Arts and cultural facilities

1.07 Where Open Spaces, such as courtyards and plazas are provided, they shall be located adjacent to pedestrian building entries or along routes that lead to building entries.

1.08 Open Spaces, such as courtyards and plazas, shall be located and oriented to provide a direct visual connection to the street.

1.09 Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas shall include integrated pedestrian-scale lighting to encourage evening use and to enhance security.
**DESIGN GUIDELINES**

1.10 Facades adjacent to Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas should incorporate features that promote pedestrian safety.

   Such features may include, but are not limited to:
   a. Clear sight lines
   b. Adequate, pedestrian-scaled, lighting
   c. Transparent windows linked to building uses
   d. Taller Street Level floor-to-floor heights that promote visual interest and pedestrian safety

   See "Street Level Design" on page 41 in Chapter 2.0 for more information.

1.11 Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas should be designed to complement adjacent building uses.

   Complementary designs include:
   a. Enhanced Setback areas that provide seating for customers of adjacent commercial storefronts
   b. Outdoor dining areas adjacent to a cafe or restaurant
   c. Landscaped courtyards with integrated seating to complement adjacent residential or office uses
   d. Stoops or small yard areas to complement adjacent row house units

1.12 Enhanced Setbacks and Open Space areas should provide both formal and informal seating areas.

   Formal seating may include, but is not limited to:
   a. Integrated benches
   b. Movable chairs or benches

   Informal seating may include, but is not limited to:
   c. Planter ledges that provide seating
   d. Bollards or planters

1.13 Enhanced Setbacks and Open Space areas should incorporate features to enhance year-round usability.

   Features may include, but are not limited to:
   a. Trees, canopies, awnings, or other features that provide shade where an Open Space is exposed to the summer sun
   b. Seating areas designed and oriented to provide winter warmth where an Open Space may be shaded in the winter

1.14 Enhanced Setback areas should serve as an extension of the public sidewalk.

   a. Use materials that are similar to the adjacent sidewalk.
   b. Consider modest setbacks that add pedestrian use area.

1.15 Pedestrian areas that are part of Enhanced Setbacks and Open Space should be paved with high-quality, durable materials.

1.16 Open Space areas, such as plazas and courtyards, should be designed to maximize sky exposure and access to natural light.

1.17 Trees and plantings in an Enhanced Setback or Open Space area should be hardy and drought tolerant.

   See “Street Trees” on page 70 for more information.

1.18 Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas should incorporate sustainable stormwater management systems, where possible.

   See Guideline 3.09 on page 58 for stormwater management on 21st Street.

1.19 Open Space should be designed to accommodate events such as outdoor markets or concerts, where possible.

1.20 Public art should be integrated into an Enhanced Setback or Open Space area, where possible.

1.21 Additional private amenity areas, such as decks, should be provided for residents and employees.
Vehicle Access

**INTENT STATEMENTS**

- To minimize conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- To reduce the visual impacts of vehicle access on the Public Realm.
- To promote the use of alleys as the primary means of accessing vehicle parking, loading, and service areas.
- To protect sidewalks, Enhanced Setback areas, Open Spaces, and other pedestrian-oriented areas from vehicular impacts.

**PUBLIC WORKS REVIEW**

Vehicle access is subject to review and approval by the City of Denver’s Department of Public Works. In some cases, Public Works review may result in required changes that deviate from the design standards and guidelines.

**VEHICLE ACCESS ON KEY STREETS**

In some cases, context-sensitive vehicle access standards and guidelines are provided for Key Streets, such as 21st Street and Curtis Street. See Chapter 3.0 on page 53 for more information.

**DESIGN STANDARDS**

1.22 Vehicle access shall be taken from the alley.

1.23 Where alley access is not feasible, the number of street access points shall depend on lot frontage.
   - a. Zone lots with less than approx. 300 feet of street frontage: 0-1 access points
   - b. Zone lots with more than approx. 300 feet of street frontage: 1-2 access points

1.24 Vehicle Access Points shall be designed to minimize impacts on pedestrians.

   Appropriate strategies include:
   - Limiting the width of Vehicle Access Points
   - Using special paving materials to differentiate pedestrian and vehicle use areas
   - Screening vehicle access areas with landscaping or other vertical elements
   - Consolidating Vehicle Access Points with service areas
   - Recessing vehicle access areas

1.25 Vehicle Access Points shall not be located adjacent to an Enhanced Setback or Open Space area.

**DESIGN GUIDELINES**

1.26 Where alley access is not possible, vehicle access should generally be taken from named,* rather than numbered, streets.

   *Exception: Vehicle access should generally not be taken from Park Avenue West, Broadway, the southeast side of Welton Street and frontages with dedicated bicycle facilities.

   See Standard 3.04 on page 57 for vehicle access considerations on 21st Street.

1.27 Vehicle Access Points should be located and designed to maintain an active street edge where alley access is not possible.

   Appropriate strategies include:
   - a. Limiting the width of Vehicle Access Points
   - b. Using paving materials that match or resemble adjacent building materials
   - c. Locating active building floors directly above Vehicle Access Points

1.28 Vehicle access doors should incorporate high-quality materials and finishes that are consistent with the building.
Site designs that minimize conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists will help ensure a sense of place in Arapahoe Square. As illustrated below, vehicle access locations and designs that protect pedestrians while reducing visual impacts on the Public Realm are desired throughout Arapahoe Square. See “Public Works Review” on page 22 at left for more information regarding approval of vehicular access points.

**ACCESS FROM ALLEY**
Vehicle access shall be taken from the alley, or from the back side of a full block development where an alley is not present.

**ACCESS FROM NAMED STREETS**
Where alley access is not possible, vehicle access should generally be taken from named, rather than numbered, streets (see Guideline 1.26 on page 22 for exceptions).

**ACCESS FROM NUMBERED STREETS**
Vehicle access should generally not be provided from numbered streets (the short end of the block), where the alley already provides access. Access is especially inappropriate from 21st Street (see Standard 3.04 on page 57 for more information).

**LIMITED ACCESS WIDTH**
Limiting the width of Vehicle Access Points can help minimize impacts on pedestrians.

**RECESSED VEHICLE ACCESS DOORS**
Recessing vehicle access doors from the street can help mitigate visual impacts.

**CONSOLIDATION WITH UTILITIES**
Consolidating vehicle and utility access areas can help minimize pedestrian impacts.

Figure 8: Vehicle Access Options
Parking

Vehicular Surface Parking

8. Surface parking shall be located at the rear and/or to one side of the building.

*INTENT STATEMENTS*

- To ensure that surface parking is well-integrated to the streetscape
- To ensure that surface parking contributes positively to a sustainable urban environment

*DENVER ZONING CODE PARKING/SCREENING REQUIREMENTS*

The Denver Zoning Code provides basic parking location requirements and sets forth the minimum number of required parking spaces in the Downtown Neighborhood Context. The Denver Zoning Code does not require a minimum number of off-street parking in Arapahoe Square.

The Denver Zoning Code also provides specific requirements for surface parking lot landscaping, including:

» Required street tree planting
» Required Tree Lawn
» Required screening device (decorative wall)

The design guidelines and standards in this section are intended to build on Denver Zoning Code parking lot landscaping requirements.

*DESIGN STANDARDS*

1.29 Surface parking shall not be permitted between facades and streets.

1.30 Surface parking shall be located at the rear and/or to one side of the building.

1.31 Surface parking shall not be the dominant site characteristic.

1.32 Parking shall be screened from adjacent Enhanced Setback areas and Open Spaces.

Appropriate screening devices include:

a. Landscaping
b. Trees
c. Garden walls

See “Denver Zoning Code Parking/Screening Requirements” at left for more information.
10. Surface parking designs should incorporate low impact development (LID) principles for stormwater management.

11. Surface parking lots should be designed to provide flexibility for temporary events such as pop-up events and public gatherings.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

1.33 Where a surface parking lot is located to the side of a building, the short dimension of the lot should face towards the street and sidewalk.

1.34 Surface parking designs should incorporate low impact development (LID) principles for stormwater management.

Appropriate features include, but are not limited to:

a. Permeable paving
b. Bioswales and bioretention areas
c. Tree cover

1.35 The placement and design of surface parking lots should consider the potential future use and development of the site.

1.36 Surface parking lots should be designed to provide flexibility for temporary events such as pop-up events and public gatherings.

1.37 Surface parking lots should incorporate signage and wayfinding for orientation and accessibility.
INTENT STATEMENTS

- To promote sufficient bicycle parking, especially adjacent to existing and planned bicycle facilities
- To ensure that bicycle parking is located in a highly visible and accessible area near pedestrian circulation
- To ensure that bicycle parking is safe and secure
- To promote a multi-modal network

DENVER ZONING CODE BICYCLE PARKING REQUIREMENTS

The Denver Zoning Code provides specific requirements for fixed bicycle parking. The design standards and guidelines in this section are intended to build on Denver Zoning Code requirements with additional guidance regarding the placement and character of bicycle parking. They are also intended to encourage the provision of additional bicycle parking beyond minimum requirements.

DESIGN STANDARDS

1.38 Bicycle parking shall be located in active areas that are visible from the Public Right-of-Way.

Locate bicycle parking:

a. Within 50 feet of a pedestrian entry; and/or
b. In an Amenity Zone

c. In an Enhanced Setback or Open Space (in a way that compliments the design and functionality of the space)

1.39 Bicycle racks shall not impede pedestrian traffic.

1.40 Bicycle racks shall be located a minimum of 4 feet from street trees.

PUBLIC WORKS BICYCLE FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

The City of Denver’s Department of Public Works provides standards for the design of required bicycle facilities. Public Works also requires a permit for placement of bicycle parking in the Public Right-of-Way.

See Public Work’s Bicycle Parking Standards for specific dimensions and spacing requirements. Note that Guidelines 4.12 and 4.19 in Chapter 4.0 also relate to bicycle parking.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

1.41 Additional bicycle parking, beyond Denver Zoning Code minimums, should be provided whenever possible.

Additional bicycle parking is especially important adjacent to:

a. Dedicated bicycle facilities
b. High traffic pedestrian areas

1.42 Bicycle Parking should be located adjacent to Highly Active Uses to increase security and natural surveillance.

1.43 Bicycle parking provided in addition to minimum Denver Zoning Code requirements should incorporate creative designs.

Consider:

a. Creative place making
b. Integration of public art
c. Use of Bicycle Corrals

Note that the design of bicycle parking located in the public-right-of-way will be subject to approval by the City of Denver’s Department of Public Works.
Service Areas & Utilities

INTENT STATEMENTS

• To minimize the visibility and impact of service areas to the Public Realm
• To reduce conflicts between servicing activities, pedestrians and cyclists
• To promote the use of alleys as the primary means of accessing service areas and utilities
• To protect Enhanced Setback areas, Open Spaces and other highly pedestrian-oriented areas from noise and odor impacts associated with service areas
• To encourage utility and service areas to be consolidated with other Vehicle Access Points

PUBLIC UTILITY REQUIREMENTS

The City of Denver’s local utility provider, Xcel Energy, must approve utility locations. The utility provider also reserves the right to install utilities in permanent on-site locations.

DESIGN STANDARDS

1.44 Service, utility and loading areas shall be located on the alley, or within the building mass and away from pedestrian focused areas such as sidewalks or Open Space.

1.45 Service, utility and loading areas shall not be located adjacent to Enhanced Setback, Open Space areas or pedestrian entries.

1.46 Adequate service area lighting shall be provided to promote safety.

1.47 Ventilation shafts, grates, and other above-ground mechanical or site servicing equipment, shall be located away from the Public Realm.

1.48 Dumpsters shall be located and designed to promote safety and minimize visual impacts.
   a. Recess dumpsters from the Public Right-of-Way.
   b. Screen dumpsters with high-quality materials and/or landscaping that is consistent with building design.
   c. Secure dumpsters to prevent access by non-service personnel.

1.49 Rooftop mechanical, electrical and telecommunications systems shall be screened to minimize visibility from the primary street or adjacent neighborhoods.

1.50 Service areas should be combined with Vehicle Access Points to minimize pedestrian and Public Realm impacts.

Also see Standard 1.24 on page 22.
2.0 BUILDING DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

This chapter includes:

- Introduction to the Building Design Standards & Guidelines ........................................ Page 30
- Building Mass & Scale ........................................................................................................... Page 32
  » Articulation .................................................................................................................. Page 36
  » Upper Story Setback ...................................................................................................... Page 39
- Street Level Design .............................................................................................................. Page 41
  » Building Entries ............................................................................................................. Page 42
- Facade Design ..................................................................................................................... Page 43
  » Windows & Transparency .......................................................................................... Page 43
  » Building Materials ....................................................................................................... Page 45
  » Designing for Signage ................................................................................................. Page 46
- Structured Parking Design ................................................................................................ Page 47
- Special Contexts & Building Forms .................................................................................. Page 49
  » Point Tower Building Form ...................................................................................... Page 49
  » Historic Transitions ...................................................................................................... Page 51

ILLUSTRATIONS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

The design standards and guidelines include many photographs and diagrams to illustrate acceptable or unacceptable approaches. The illustrations are provided as examples and are not intended to indicate the only options.

If there appears to be a conflict between the text of the design standards and guidelines and a related illustration, the text shall prevail.

KEY TO ILLUSTRATION SYMBOLS

A checkmark on an illustration indicates an approach that is generally appropriate.

An X mark on an illustration indicates an approach that is generally inappropriate.
Introduction to the Building Design Standards & Guidelines

Building design addresses the vertical component of development and redevelopment, which includes the visual and functional character of individual buildings.

This chapter provides design standards and guidelines for key building design topics, including building massing, pedestrian character and materials. The design standards and guidelines apply to projects throughout Arapahoe Square. Note that design standards and guidelines for the arrangement of buildings and related features on a site are provided in Chapter 1.0 on page 15. Additional design standards and guidelines for Key Streets, such as 21st Street and Curtis Street, are provided in Chapter 3.0 on page 53.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING DESIGN

The following core building design principles provide the basis for the standards and guidelines:

• **Sense of Place.** Buildings that are designed to frame and relate to the Public Realm help promote a vibrant sense of place.

• **Human Scale.** Buildings that are scaled and designed to encourage pedestrian activity promote a sense of Human Scale throughout Arapahoe Square.

• **Creativity.** Buildings that incorporate innovative and unique design solutions will help define a unique character for Arapahoe Square.

• **Context.** Buildings that are sensitive to their context help ensure harmonious relationships throughout Arapahoe Square and with adjacent neighborhoods.

• **Sustainability.** Buildings that provide opportunities for interaction among a wide variety of people and incorporate environmentally sustainable design approaches will help the district adapt to future urban demands.

ZONING CODE BUILDING FORMS

The Denver Zoning Code allows for three building forms in Arapahoe Square:

• **General Building Form.** Allows a base building height with flexible requirements

• **General With Height Incentive Building Form.** Allows for greater building height if the majority of structured parking is wrapped with other uses, located underground or provided off-site.

• **Point Tower Building Form.** Allows buildings with slender Tower building elements that preserve views and maximize sky exposure (see "Point Tower Building Form" on page 49).

The design standards and guidelines in this Chapter reinforce Denver Zoning Code building form requirements.

DESIGN FLEXIBILITY

In some cases, a creative approach that does not comply with specific standards or guidelines may be approved if an applicant demonstrates consistency with the relevant guiding principles and intent statements.
BUILDING DESIGN OVERVIEW

A-C. BUILDING MASS & SCALE

D-E. STREET LEVEL DESIGN

F. WINDOWS & TRANSPARENCY

I. SPECIAL CONTEXTS & BUILDING FORMS: POINT TOWER BUILDING FORM

LEGEND

The design standards and guidelines in this chapter refer to distinct Primary Street-facing Facade levels. The Street Level Facade defines the first level of the building. The Lower Story Facade is generally stories 1-5 (including the Street Level Facade), with everything above defined as the Upper Story Facade, or Tower Facade, depending on the Denver Zoning Code building form used. See "Glossary of Terms" in the Appendix for more information.

Figure 9: Building Design Overview
# Building Mass & Scale

**INTENT STATEMENTS**
- To encourage varied building massing that promotes a sense of place through creative Human Scale design
- To promote buildings with cohesive massing and articulation across the Lower Story Facade and Upper Story Facade/Tower Facade
- To promote creative and innovative building massing
- To encourage context-sensitive building massing
- To promote integrated building massing across zone district boundaries
- To maintain access to sunlight and views

## DESIGN STANDARDS

### 2.01 Buildings shall promote an overall sense of Human Scale.

- Incorporate Upper Story Setbacks to reduce the visual impact of upper stories on the Public Realm (see “Upper Story Setback” on page 39 for more information)
- Clearly define the Street Level (see “Street Level Design” on page 41 for more information).
- Use materials that convey scale in their proportion and detail (applications that appear as units, panels or modules help convey sense of scale). See “Building Materials” on page 45 for more information).

### 2.02 Massing techniques shall be coordinated between Lower Story Facades and Upper Story Facades/Tower Facades to promote cohesive design.

### 2.03 Buildings over approximately 125 feet of primary street frontage shall incorporate coordinated massing techniques on the Lower Story Facade.*

Combine at least two of the following techniques every 25-75 feet along the Lower Story Facade, or three of the following techniques at a minimum of every 12-125 feet along the Lower Story Facade:
- A change in the height of an Upper Story Setback for a minimum depth of 10 feet**
- A Facade plane change with a minimum 3 foot depth and minimum height of approximately 2/3 the height of the Lower Story Facade
- A building material or color change for a minimum height of approximately 2/3 of the height of the Lower Story Facade

See “Coordinated Massing Techniques” on page 33 for more information.

*Excepting buildings under 3 stories or 45 feet in height **Upper Story Setbacks at or below the fifth story count towards the zoning requirement for an Upper Story Setback - see page 39 for more information.

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**HUMAN SCALE BUILDING DESIGN**

A sense of Human Scale is achieved when one can interpret the size of a building by comparing its design features to common design features in everyday experience. Examples include:

- Incorporating massing and articulation techniques that visually divide the building into smaller modules
- Spacing and dimensioning windows and openings to reflect those on nearby buildings.
- Using Masonry or other materials with a familiar dimension

**DENVER ZONING CODE MASSING REQUIREMENTS**

The Denver Zoning Code provides base requirements related to building mass and scale, including:

- Maximum height limits
- Upper Story Setbacks (see page 39)
- Point Tower floor area limits (see page 49)
COORDINATED MASSING TECHNIQUES

Coordinated massing techniques help divide a larger building into smaller modules that promote a Human Scaled urban environment. Massing techniques that meet Standard 2.03 on page 32 are described and illustrated below. The graphics on this page illustrate combinations of two techniques every 25-75 feet. Combinations of three techniques every 12-125 feet are illustrated on the next page.

A. CHANGE IN UPPER STORY SETBACK HEIGHT

A change in Upper Story Setback height must be a minimum of one story for the depth of the Upper Story Setback (10 feet). A change in Upper Story Setback height must lower the setback height below the fifth story and be combined with either a Facade plane change or material/color change. Note that setbacks will count towards the zoning requirement for an Upper Story Setback. See page 39 for more information.

B. FACADE PLANE CHANGE

A Facade plane change must be a minimum of 3 feet and must rise a minimum of approximately 2/3 the height of the Facade. A Facade plane change must cause the Facade to inset or project and be combined with either a change in the height of an Upper Story Setback or material/color change.

C. CHANGE IN BUILDING MATERIALS OR COLOR

A change in materials/color must apply to approximately 2/3 the height of the Facade. A material/color change must create variation on the appearance of the Facade and be combined with either a change in Upper Story Setback height or Facade plane change.
A coordinated change in all three massing techniques described in Standard 2.03 on page 32 may occur at longer intervals.

A combined change in Upper Story Setback height, Façade plane and materials helps create a massing break that divides the Façade into smaller modules.

5. FLEXIBILITY FOR CREATIVE DESIGNS

As illustrated above, flexibility may be provided for creative designs that meet the intent statements for building mass and scale on page 32, but do not utilize the specific massing techniques described in Standard 2.03 on page 32.

Figure 8: Coordinated Massing Techniques (continued)
2.04 Smaller buildings with less than approximately 125 feet of primary street frontage should incorporate coordinated massing techniques on the Lower Story Facade.

2.05 Large buildings with more than approximately 250 feet of primary street frontage and approximately 8 stories in height should be designed to reduce visual mass and scale and preserve sky exposure.

Appropriate strategies include:
- Increasing the dimension of the massing techniques described in Standard 2.03 (i.e., incorporating more than a 3 foot Facade plane change on the Lower Story Facade)
- Increasing Upper Story Setbacks or incorporating additional setbacks above the 6th story
- Breaking upper story mass into separate towers or visual modules

2.06 Buildings with approximately 12 or more stories should incorporate design elements that create a clear finish at the top of the building.

Appropriate forms and elements include:
- Roof forms that relate to the heights, proportions, forms and materials of surrounding buildings of similar scale
- Architectural rooftop elements such as cornice and cap elements

2.07 When a building is located adjacent to a lower-scale building, it should incorporate features that establish compatible scale relationships.

Such features include:
- Building modules that reflect the size and shape of adjacent lower-scale buildings
- Horizontal articulation techniques that align with adjacent lower-scale building heights (see Guideline 2.17 on page 37 for more information)
- A step down toward the lower-scale building

2.08 Where a building crosses a zone district boundary, it should incorporate connected and integrated massing features.

Appropriate features include:
- Use of similar building modules on both sides of the zone district boundary
- Continuation of similar Lower Story Facade massing techniques across the zone district boundary

17. Buildings shall promote an overall sense of Human Scale in Arapahoe Square.
Chapter 2.0 Building Design Standards & Guidelines

Building Mass & Scale

INTENT STATEMENTS

• To promote reinforce building massing techniques
• To ensure cohesive Facade designs
• To promote visually interesting building Facades
• To maintain a sense of Human Scale on the Lower Story Facade (see “Human Scale Building Design” on page 32 for more information)

ARTICULATION & THE UPPER STORY SETBACK

The Upper Story Setback required on most streets in Arapahoe Square may be considered as a horizontal articulation technique. See “Upper Story Setback” on page 39 for more information.

DESIGN STANDARDS

2.09 All Primary Street-facing Facades and Tower Facades shall incorporate vertical & horizontal articulation techniques that reinforce the massing techniques described in design standard 2.03.

Appropriate articulation techniques include:

a. Facade plane changes of a minimum of approximately 2-3 inches
b. Vertical projections
c. Horizontal projections/banding
d. Window composition/design
e. Balconies or terraces
f. Material changes

See “Facade Articulation Techniques” on page 38 for more information.

2.10 Upper story Alley-facing Facades shall incorporate vertical and horizontal articulation techniques consistent with those described in Standard 2.09 above.

See “Facade Articulation Techniques” on page 38 for more information.

2.11 Articulation techniques used on a Lower Story Facade shall continue around an alley corner for approximately 25 feet of the Alley-facing Facade.

2.12 Facade articulation shall holistically support the building form.

Appropriate strategies include:

a. Using Facade articulation techniques to reinforce the overall pattern of building massing
b. Continuing articulation techniques used on the Lower Story Facade onto the Upper Story Facade

2.13 Articulation techniques, such as a change in materials or setback, shall be used to highlight structural building modules and differentiate building uses at the Street Level.

2.14 Visible Facade areas shall incorporate features to enhance visual interest and avoid the appearance of long blank walls.

Such features include:

a. Articulation consistent with design standard 2.09
b. Transparency consistent with standards for Primary Street-facing Facades (see “Windows & Transparency” on page 43)
c. Wall Murals or other art works

ARAPAHOE SQUARE
19. Facade articulation shall holistically support the building form.

20. Where balconies and terraces are provided, they should be integrated into vertical and horizontal articulation systems.

21. Horizontal articulation elements should align with the roof lines or articulation on adjacent buildings.

**DESIGN GUIDELINES**

2.15 Facade articulation should generally promote a Facade rhythm that relates to typical street and lot dimensions in Arapahoe Square.

See “Relationship of Articulation & Typical Lot & Street Dimensions” below for more information.

2.16 Facade articulation should generally align between the Lower Story Facade and Upper Story Facades/Tower Facades to avoid creating a visual disconnection between the building’s Lower Stories and Upper Stories/Tower.

See “Facade Levels” on page 31 for more information.

2.17 Horizontal articulation elements should align with the roof lines or articulation on adjacent buildings.

2.18 Where balconies and terraces are provided, they should be integrated into vertical and horizontal articulation systems.

**RELATIONSHIP OF ARTICULATION & TYPICAL LOT & STREET DIMENSIONS**

Facade articulation should generally relate to the original 25 foot lot widths and 80 foot Right-of-Way in Arapahoe Square. Vertical articulation should establish a pattern of building bays that is no wider than approximately double the original lot width on the Lower Story Facade and no wider than the typical street width on the Upper Story Facade or Tower Facade.
Facade articulation combines with massing techniques to add texture and rhythm that promotes a Human Scaled urban environment with a strong sense of place. The Facade articulation techniques described and illustrated below may be used to meet design standard 2.09 on page 36. Note that the illustration below combines articulation techniques with the massing techniques illustrated on pages 33-34.

A. FACADE PLANE CHANGES
Facade plane changes include vertical notches or shifts in the building façade in addition to those used to meet Standard 2.03 to help break down visual mass and scale.

B. VERTICAL PROJECTIONS
Vertical projections include pilasters, columns and other elements that help create a vertical rhythm on the Facade.

C. HORIZONTAL PROJECTIONS/BANDING
Horizontal projections and banding include projections, bands, color changes or other elements that help create a horizontal rhythm on the Facade.

D. WINDOW COMPOSITION/DESIGN
Window composition and design includes window groupings, use of header/sill elements and window insets or projections that help create a rhythm on the Facade.

E. BALCONIES & TERRACES
Inset or cantilevered balconies and terraces help create vertical and horizontal rhythms on the Facade that break down building mass and scale into smaller modules.

F. MATERIAL CHANGES
Material changes in addition to those used to meet Standard 2.03 help create vertical and horizontal rhythms along the Facade that break down mass and scale into smaller modules.
22. Upper Story Setbacks promote Façade designs that relate to adjacent smaller-scale buildings.

### INTENT STATEMENTS

- To promote design features that relate to the original pattern of 2 to 5-story building heights along the street
- To encourage creative Façade designs
- To promote Façade designs that relate to adjacent smaller-scale buildings
- To provide a scale transition along street frontages that face existing lower-scale neighborhoods
- To promote access to sunlight and views

### DENVER ZONING CODE UPPER-STORY SETBACK REQUIREMENTS

The Denver Zoning Code requires a minimum Primary Street Upper Story Setback at or below 5 stories and 70 feet on most streets in Arapahoe Square (excepting Broadway and 20th). Upper Story Setbacks along Park Avenue West and 21st Street must extend the full primary street frontage (excepting alternatives approved as described on page 40). On other streets, a percentage of the frontage is excepted from the required setback.

The guidelines and standards in this section are intended to build on Denver Zoning Code Upper Story Setback requirements.

### DESIGN STANDARDS

2.19 Upper Story Setbacks shall be integral to overall building design.

Appropriate techniques include:

a. Using Upper Story Setbacks to emphasize building design elements, such as strong corner features
b. Integrating a series of Upper Story Setbacks into an overall system of building massing and articulation (see “Building Mass & Scale” on page 32 and “Articulation” on page 36 for more information)

2.20 Where allowed, Façade areas that are not set back shall be located to highlight key building features such as primary entries or corner locations.

### DESIGN GUIDELINES

2.21 Upper Story Setbacks should preserve views and maximize sky exposure from adjacent properties and key locations along the street frontage.

Appropriate techniques include:

a. Locating Upper Story Setback areas above a public or Private Open Space
b. Locating Upper Story Setbacks to promote access to sunlight and views from upper story windows or deck areas on adjacent properties

2.22 Upper Story Setbacks should incorporate creative designs.

Appropriate strategies include:

a. Varying setbacks between the Street Level and fifth story
b. Incorporating curves, angles or other shapes into setback designs

See “Creative Upper Story Setback Designs” on page 40 for illustrations of creative setback designs.

23. Upper Story Setbacks shall be integrated into the overall building design.
An Upper Story Setback is a building setback at a maximum specified height above the Street Level, as required by the Denver Zoning Code (see “Denver Zoning Code Upper-Story Setback Requirements” on page 39) to provide appropriate pedestrian height, scale and massing. An Upper Story Setback is measured from the Primary Street zone lot line, meaning that a building that is set back from the zone lot line at the Street Level may not require a setback at a higher story.

The Denver Zoning Code excepts a percentage of the frontage from the Primary Street Upper-Story Setback requirement on most streets, and allows setback alternatives on streets with no percentage exception. This allows flexibility for the creative setback designs illustrated below (note that the areas used to meet the minimum percentage setback requirement are marked in orange).

**SETBACK MEASUREMENT**

**CREATIVE UPPER STORY SETBACK DESIGNS**

**UPPER STORY SETBACK ALTERNATIVE ON 21ST & PARK AVE.**

Although the Denver Zoning Code requires an Upper Story Setback above the fifth floor for 100% of the primary street frontage along 21st Street and Park Avenue West, but allows the Zoning Administrator to approve an alternative design that meets design standards 3.08 and 3.15 in Chapter 3.

Figure 12: Working with Upper Story Setbacks
Street Level Design

INTENT STATEMENTS

• To promote and active pedestrian area with Human Scale design features at the Street Level (see “Human Scale Building Design” on page 32 for more information)

• To clearly define a prominent pedestrian area

DENVER ZONING CODE ACTIVE USE REQUIREMENTS

The Denver Zoning Code requires a minimum percentage of Street Level Active Use (uses other than parking or other inactive uses).

The design standards and guidelines in this section are intended to build on Denver Zoning Code requirements.

DESIGN STANDARDS

2.23 A pedestrian-oriented Street Level shall be clearly defined for each street-facing Facade.

Appropriate features to define the Street Level along the primary street frontage include:

a. Awnings and canopies
b. A prominent cornice above the Street Level
c. Changes in materials between the Street Level and stories above the Street Level

2.24 The Street Level shall be articulated to promote a Human Scale building frontage.

Appropriate techniques include:

a. Recessed entries
b. Projecting window bays
c. Changes in Street Level setback

See “Human Scale Building Design” on page 32 and “Articulation” on page 36 for more information.

2.25 The Street Level shall incorporate a substantial floor-to-floor height to promote visual prominence.

a. An approximately 12 foot floor-to-floor height minimum is appropriate for a Street Level occupied by residential uses.
b. An approximately 14 foot floor-to-floor height minimum is appropriate for a Street Level occupied by commercial uses.
c. Taller Street Level floor-to-floor heights are encouraged.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

2.26 Canopies and awnings used to define the Street Level should be integrated into building design.

2.27 The height of the Street Level should be informed by the Street Level height of any adjacent Denver Landmark structures.
Chapter 2.0 Building Design Standards & Guidelines

INTENT STATEMENTS

• To activate the Street Level and integrate pedestrian circulation into building design
• To provide a high number of Street Level entries into active uses to encourage pedestrian activity
• To ensure that pedestrian entries are clearly visible

DENVER ZONING CODE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

The Denver Zoning Code includes pedestrian access (entrance) requirements to ensure a clear, obvious, publicly accessible connection between the primary street and uses within the building.

The design guidelines and standards in this section are intended to build on Denver Zoning Code pedestrian access requirements for the D-AS-12+ and D-AS-20+ zone districts.

DESIGN STANDARDS

2.28 Pedestrian entrances shall front onto a public street or street-facing Open Space.

2.29 The design of primary entries shall respond to the Street Level of the building use.
   a. Locate commercial entrances at the level of the adjacent sidewalk whenever possible.
   b. Locate residential entrances no more than approximately 3 feet above the level of the adjacent sidewalk.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

2.30 Pedestrian entrances should be integrated into a signature building element whenever possible.

2.31 Where transit stops are adjacent to a building, a pedestrian entrance should be located adjacent to the stop.

2.32 For buildings with multiple tenants, façades should be divided into narrow widths or bays and provide multiple secondary access points to animate the street.
Chapter 2.0 Building Design Standards & Guidelines

### INTENT STATEMENTS

- To encourage Facades that create a sense of Human Scale
- To encourage visually interesting Facade designs that create interplay of light and shadow on the building’s surface
- To enhance safety with “eyes on the street”
- To ensure that building activities are visible from the Public Realm
- To ensure that building Facade transparency does not cause glare or negative impacts to the Public Realm.

### DESIGN STANDARDS

#### 2.33 Transparency on Street Level Facade

Facade shall be located to provide visibility into the Street Level Active Uses required by the Denver Zoning Code.

See “Denver Zoning Code Active Use Requirements” on page 41 for more information.

#### 2.34 Windows on a Street Level Facade

Windows shall be transparent glass with a maximum reflectance of approximately 0.15 that allows for pedestrians to view the activity within the building.

See “Denver Zoning Code Transparency Requirements” at left for information on related zoning provisions.

#### 2.35 Lower Story Facades

Lower Story Facades, excluding the Street Level Facade, shall incorporate a minimum of 50% transparent glass with a maximum reflectance of approximately 0.30.

a. Use of opaque/spandrel glass is acceptable to continue glazing patterns where screening of utilities or structural elements is required.

See Standard 2.77 on page 49 for transparency standards that apply to all Facades of a Tower (regardless of whether they face the street).

#### 2.36 Upper Story Facades

Upper Story Facades shall incorporate a minimum of 40% transparent glass with a maximum reflectance of approximately 0.35.

a. Minimal use of opaque glass is acceptable to continue glazing patterns where screening of utilities is required.

See “Facade Levels” on page 31 for more information.

#### 2.37 Alley-facing Facades on Upper Stories

Alley-facing Facades on Upper Stories shall incorporate a minimum of approximately 25% transparent glass with a maximum reflectance of approximately 0.35.

a. Minimal use of opaque glass is acceptable to continue glazing patterns where screening of utilities is required.

See “Facade Levels” on page 31 for more information.

#### 2.38 Exterior reflective coatings

Exterior reflective coatings shall not be used on transparent window glazing.

### TRANSPARENCY FOR STRUCTURED PARKING

The design standards and guidelines in this Transparency section do not apply to Visible Structured Parking. See “Structured Parking Design” on page 47 for standards and guidelines that promote openings in a structured parking Facade to produce the impression of transparent Facade areas.
DESIGN STANDARDS (Continued)

2.39 Window openings shall be designed to provide depth of detail on the Facade.

Appropriate techniques include:

a. Recessing a window opening a minimum of 4 to 6 inches behind the Facade
b. Projecting windows a minimum of 4 to 6 inches in front of the Facade

Windows & Transparency

ADJACENT TO A HISTORIC RESOURCE

A Facade Adjacent to a Historic Resource is subject to special design standards and guidelines for windows and transparency. See “Historic Transitions” on page 51 for more information.

Windows & Transparency

ADJACENT TO 21ST STREET

Building Facades fronting 21st Street are subject to special design standards and guidelines for windows and transparency. See “Design Standards & Guidelines for 21st Street” on page 56 for more information.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

2.40 For mixed-use developments, levels of transparency should reflect different uses within the building.

a. A lower glass-to-wall ratio is typical of residential uses.
b. A higher glass-to-wall ratio is typical of commercial uses.

2.41 Balcony railings should not significantly block visibility of Facade areas used to meet transparency standards.

2.42 Clear, “Low E,” or slightly tinted windows should be used to ensure the visibility of pedestrian-oriented commercial uses.

2.43 Landscaping should not significantly block transparent window areas at the Street Level.
INTENT STATEMENTS

- To ensure that building materials used on any Visible Facade provide visual interest and a sense of Human Scale.
- To discourage building materials that produce flat or featureless surfaces on any Visible Facade.
- To encourage the use of innovative, high-quality and sustainable materials.
- To promote use of durable building materials and material treatments.
- To ensure that building materials are integrated into a cohesive Facade design.

BUILDING MATERIALS ADJACENT TO A HISTORIC RESOURCE

A Facade Adjacent to a Historic Resource is subject to special design standards and guidelines for materials. See “Historic Transitions” on page 51 for more information.

BUILDING MATERIALS ADJACENT TO 21ST STREET

Some building Facades fronting 21st Street are subject to a special design standard for masonry materials. See Standard 3.06 on page 57 for more information.

DESIGN STANDARDS

2.44 Building materials used on a Primary Street-facing Facade shall be of proven durability.

a. Applicants may be required to demonstrate the durability of unproven or unusual materials.

2.45 Building materials used on a Primary Street-facing Facade shall be properly finished and detailed.

2.46 The pattern of building materials used on the Lower Story Facade shall continue around an alley corner onto approximately 25 feet of the lower stories of the Alley-facing Facade.

2.47 Any change in materials shall be combined with a variation in the wall plane.

2.48 Cementitious Stucco shall not be used on more than 50% of the Lower Story Facade.

2.49 Fiber Cement Siding materials shall not be used on more than 50% of the Primary Street-facing Facade.

2.50 EIFS (Exterior Insulating Finish Systems) and other synthetic stucco materials shall not be used on a Primary Street-facing Facade, Visible Facade or Building Facade Adjacent to a Historic District.

2.51 Building materials should be selected and applied to convey a sense of Human Scale.

Appropriate techniques include:

a. Adding visual interest through texture, finish and detailing.

b. Applying materials in units, panels or modules that produce shadow lines to help convey a sense of scale.

2.52 Any change in building materials should occur at the inside corner of a variation in the wall plane.

2.53 Carefully detailed materials should be used to reinforce building mass, scale and articulation techniques.

See “Building Mass & Scale” on page 32 and “Articulation” on page 36 for additional information.

2.54 Building materials used on Upper Story Alley-facing Facades should be consistent with material standards for Primary Street-facing Facades, whenever possible.

2.55 Cementitious Stucco should not be used on Upper Story Facade/Tower Facade areas that may be difficult to reach or maintain.
**INTENT STATEMENTS**

- To ensure that Facade designs consider potential future locations for pedestrian-oriented signage.
- To encourage Facade designs that promote harmonious relationships between overall building mass and scale, architectural features and potential future signage.

**DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD REVIEW OF FACADE DESIGN**

The Denver Zoning Code uses the design standards and guidelines in this section to consider potential future sign locations when reviewing proposed building designs.

The location and design of individual signs are reviewed separately from building design and are addressed in Chapter 5.0 on page 73.

**DESIGN STANDARDS**

2.56 Facade designs shall consider potential future locations for pedestrian-oriented signage.

Appropriate strategies include:

a. Incorporating a designated band or area for signage above the Street Level for potential future signage.

b. Designing canopies and awnings to accommodate potential future signage.

c. Designating areas to accommodate tenant or directory signage near primary building entries.

See "Comprehensive Sign Plan" on page 75 for more information for zoning requirements related to sign location.

2.57 Where applicable, Facade designs shall consider locations for potential large-scale building identification signage.

Appropriate strategies include:

a. Limiting large-scale building identification signage to taller buildings (approx. 12+ stories).

b. Reserving an area along the roof parapet, or integrated into a roof cap feature, for future large-scale building identification signage.

2.58 Overall building design or architectural features should be used to market building tenants rather than signage, whenever possible.

Appropriate strategies include:

a. Using building massing techniques to create projecting or recessed Facade elements that emphasize storefronts or tenant entries (See “Building Mass & Scale” on page 32 for more information).

b. Locating architectural features to highlight storefronts or tenant entries.

c. Using iconic building elements such as tower elements or curved Facades to emphasize storefronts or tenant entries.

d. Incorporating building address signage into the design of the Facade.

2.59 Facade designs should integrate power sources for future signage lighting, whenever possible.
Structured Parking Design

**INTENT STATEMENTS**

- To limit the visibility of structured parking and promote a Human Scale Public Realm
- To promote structured parking designs that are compatible with the character and quality of the overall building Facade and adjacent building Facades
- To ensure that the design of Visible Structured Parking is compatible with adjacent Historic Resources (see “Historic Transitions” on page 51 for more information)

**DESIGN STANDARDS**

2.60 Where provided, Visible Structured Parking shall be integrated into any Facade areas that do not include parking.

Appropriate techniques include:

a. Continuing similar building materials across Facade areas with Visible Structured Parking
b. Continuing vertical and horizontal articulation across Facade areas with Visible Structured Parking

See “Articulation” on page 36 for more information.

2.61 Facade areas with Visible Structured Parking shall reflect the overall pattern of openings on any Facade areas that do not include parking.

a. Use similar opening proportions to those on the overall Facade.
b. Align openings with those on adjacent buildings or Facade areas.

2.62 Facade areas with Visible Structured Parking shall incorporate openings that reflect transparency standards for non-parking Facades.

See “Windows & Transparency” on page 43 for more information.

**DENVER ZONING CODE LIMITATION ON STRUCTURED PARKING VISIBILITY**

The Denver Zoning Code General With Height Incentive Building Form and Point Tower Building Form provide a height incentive for buildings that wrap a minimum percentage of structured parking with another use, locate parking underground or do not provide on-site parking.

The design standards and guidelines in this section build on Denver Zoning Code standards to address the design of any Visible Structured Parking. Note that the code does not require a minimum number of on-site parking spaces in the D-AS-12+ and D-AS-20+ zone districts.

**VISIBLE STRUCTURED PARKING**

Visible Structured Parking refers a structured parking Facade that is not wrapped with another use and is located on the Primary Street-facing Facade, or is adjacent to a Historic Resource. See “Facade Adjacent to a Historic Resource” on page 51 for more information.

**STRUCTURED PARKING ADJACENT TO A HISTORIC RESOURCE**

A Facade Adjacent to a Historic Resource is subject to special design standards and guidelines for structured parking design. See “Historic Transitions” on page 51 for more information.

**ARTISTIC SCREENING OF A PARKING STRUCTURE**

Artistic screens may sometimes be appropriate for Facade areas with Visible Structured Parking. While such screens may vary in character from the overall building Facade and adjacent building Facades, they may be approved on a case-by-case basis where they:

- Are a “work of public art” as defined by Section 20-86 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code, as determined by the Zoning Administrator with input from Denver Arts and Venues
- Limit the view of all parked cars and angled ramps from adjacent plazas, public rights-of-way, private streets and plazas or Open Space

2.83 Facade areas with Visible Structured Parking shall reflect the overall pattern of openings on any Facade areas that do not include parking.
2.63 Facade areas with Visible Structured Parking shall be designed to limit the view of parked cars and angled ramps from the Public Realm.

2.64 Facade areas with Visible Structured Parking shall be designed to minimize the visual impacts of security lighting and headlights.

Appropriate techniques include:

a. Use of non-transparent materials for approximately the first 36 to 48 inches of the Facade to block the view of headlights
b. Architectural features that block the view of ceiling and security lighting
c. Use of fully-shielded LED or other lighting not exceeding approximately 6,500 lumens

2.65 Design treatments used for Visible Structured Parking shall continue around an alley corner for approximately 25 feet of the Alley-facing Facade.

2.66 Parking access points, service areas and ventilation shall not adversely affect the Public Realm.

   a. Whenever possible, provide parking access and related services from the alley (see “Vehicle Access” on page 22 for related standards and guidelines).
   b. Do not place mechanical ventilation systems for structured parking on a Primary Street-facing Facade.

2.67 Where structured parking is wrapped with another use to meet Denver Zoning Code requirements for the General with Height Incentive Building Form or Point Tower Building Form, the use that wraps the parking shall activate the Public Realm.

Activated uses include:

a. Residential uses
b. Commercial uses
c. Other uses with a similar level of human activity to the above

2.68 Street Level Facade areas with Visible Structured Parking should be designed to accommodate future conversion to non-parking uses.

2.69 Rammed portions of structured parking should not be located on a Primary Street-facing Facade unless they are wrapped with another use.

2.70 Facade areas with Visible Structured Parking should be fully enclosed and ventilated whenever possible.

2.71 Alley-facing Facades of parking structures that are adjacent to non-parking uses should be designed to mitigate impacts on neighbors.

Appropriate techniques include:

a. Screening of Facade openings
b. Use of features that block views of headlights and lighting

For Alley-facing Facades adjacent to a Historic Resource, see page 52.

2.72 Dedicated parking spaces should be provided for car share services, whenever possible.

2.73 Whenever possible, all structured parking within a General with Height Incentive Building Form or Point Tower Building Form, should be completely wrapped with another use.
2.74 When using the Point Tower Building Form, a Tower shall be located to provide separation from any other existing or planned Tower. The approximate minimum distance between Towers shall be:
   a. 80 feet for a Tower up to 250 feet in total building height
   b. 100 feet for a Tower over 250 feet in total building height

2.75 When using the Point Tower Building Form, a Tower shall be located and oriented to serve as a visual anchor and maximize sky exposure from the Public Realm and adjacent Historic Resources. Appropriate techniques include:
   a. Locating a Tower on a prominent corner to serve as a visual anchor or gateway
   b. Locating and orienting a Tower to minimize impacts on adjacent Historic Resources or lower-scale zone districts
   c. Locating a Tower on a Gateway Corner along 21st Street (See Guideline 3.02 on page 57)
   d. Orienting a Tower to maximize sky exposure from Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas

2.76 When using the Point Tower Building Form, a Tower shall be designed to be viewed from all sides.

2.77 When using the Point Tower Building Form, a Tower shall positively contribute to the quality and character of the Denver skyline. Appropriate techniques include:
   a. Incorporating an architectural “cap” or other element that creates an integrated tower conclusion
   b. Locating a Tower to frame view of Downtown or the mountains

2.78 When using the Point Tower Building Form, all Tower Facades shall incorporate a minimum of 40% transparent glass with a maximum reflectance of approximately 0.35 above the fifth story.
TOWER FLOOR PLATE LINEAR DIMENSION ALTERNATIVE

The Denver Zoning Code sets forth a maximum Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension for the Point Tower Building Form and Standard Tower Building Form. The Denver Zoning Code also specifically enables a Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension Alternative that allows additional length to provide flexibility for creative designs that clearly meet the intent of these design standards and guidelines. The Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension Alternative varies by building form, as specified in the Denver Zoning Code. City Staff and the Design Advisory Board will use Standard 2.79 to determine whether a Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension Alternative is appropriate for a specific Tower design.

EXCEPTIONAL ICONIC DESIGN

Iconic building designs establish a focal element in the urban environment that breaks from convention in a striking manner to create a special place. These structures are easily identifiable, recognizable, and stand out from their surrounding context. They often embody a sense of pride for the community, and may gain national or international recognition.

Iconic designs are:

» Unique. Does not follow convention
» Elegant. Simple design with sophisticated details
» Metaphorical. Design that represents a larger idea or philosophy
» Innovative. Forward thinking use of technology, materials or techniques
» Intentional. Design elements that are meaningful rather than decorative
» Enduring. Design that withstands the test of time

DESIGN STANDARDS (continued)

2.79 When using the Denver Zoning Code Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension Alternative available to the Point Tower Building Form, a Tower shall exhibit exceptional creativity and iconic design.

Appropriate strategies include:

a. Creative Tower designs incorporating tapering Tower Floor Plate sizes that require flexibility for some larger Tower Floor Plates within the tapering design
b. Creative Tower Floor Plate designs that incorporate curves or unusual angles
c. Creative Tower designs incorporating other characteristics described in Exceptional Iconic Design at left

DESIGN GUIDELINES

2.80 A Tower should incorporate creative designs.

Creative solutions are appropriate for:

a. Tower shape
b. Tower Facade design

2.81 The placement, spacing and orientation of a Tower should be sensitive to other existing and planned buildings.

Appropriate techniques include:

a. Orienting a Tower to preserve views and sky exposure from adjacent streets Private Open Spaces and private amenity areas
b. Providing an Upper Story Setback between a Tower and a side interior property line to promote flexibility for Point Tower forms on adjacent lots
c. Creating a Waldrum Diagram to evaluate sky exposure per Denver Zoning Code requirements for the Downtown Core (D-C) zone district

2.82 A Point Tower Building Form should provide high-quality private and shared outdoor amenity spaces.

Such spaces may include:

a. Amenity decks located above the Lower Story Facade
b. Usable green roof areas
### INTENT STATEMENTS

- To maintain and highlight Historic Resources in and around Arapahoe Square
- To promote high-quality, four-sided, design on Facades, including structured parking, that may be visible from an adjacent Historic Resource
- To promote design compatibility on a building Facade Adjacent to a Historic Resource

### HISTORIC LANDMARKS & DISTRICTS

Arapahoe Square includes two designated Denver Landmark structures and is adjacent to three Historic Districts:

- **Ballpark Historic District**
  A historic commercial district located across the alley at the northwest edge of Arapahoe Square

- **Clements Historic District**
  A historic residential district located across the alley at the southeast edge of Arapahoe Square

- **Curtis Park Historic District**
  A historic residential district located across Park Avenue West from Arapahoe Square

### DESIGN STANDARDS

**2.84** A Facade Adjacent to a Historic Resource shall incorporate design features consistent with the design standards and guidelines for Primary Street-facing Facades.

Such features include:
- a. Articulation consistent with design standards and guidelines on pages 36-37
- b. Upper story transparency consistent with the design standards and guidelines for “Windows & Transparency” on pages 43-44

*See Standard 2.89 on page 52 for structured parking Facades.*

**2.85** A Facade Adjacent to a Historic Resource shall incorporate a minimum of 60%* Masonry on the Lower Story Facade and a minimum of 30%* Masonry on the Upper Story Facade.

Appropriate Masonry materials include:
- a. Brick
- b. Stone and Terra cotta

*Not including window, transom glass and door areas. The Upper Stories of a Point Tower are excepted.

**2.86** Where Masonry is not used, a Facade Adjacent to a Historic Resource shall meet the building material standards and guidelines for Primary Street-facing Facades.

### FACADE ADJACENT TO A HISTORIC RESOURCE

A Facade will be considered to be adjacent to a Historic Resource when it is visible from a Historic District or Landmark Structure, or is visible from a street or alley within 1/2 block of a Historic District, or zone lot that includes a Landmark Structure, as illustrated at left. Note that all Facades facing the alley between Larimer and Lawrence Streets, all Facades facing the alley between Welton and Glenarm Streets and most Facades facing Park Avenue West meet the definition of a Facade Adjacent to a Historic Resource.
2.87 The mass and scale of a new building should reflect mass and scale characteristics of an adjacent Denver Landmark Structure or an adjacent Contributing Structure in a Historic District.

Appropriate techniques include:

a. Positioning taller portions of the building (including Point Towers) away from historic buildings.

b. Use of building modules that reflect the size and shape of adjacent historic buildings.

c. Horizontal articulation techniques that align with adjacent historic building heights (see “Articulation” on page 36 for more information).

2.88 The pattern of windows and openings on the Primary Street-facing Facade of a new building should reflect the pattern of windows and openings on an adjacent Denver Landmark Structure or an adjacent Contributing Structure in a Historic District.
3.0 KEY STREETS DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

This chapter includes:

- Introduction to the Key Streets Design Standards & Guidelines ...................... Page 54
- Design Standards & Guidelines for 21st Street .................................................. Page 56
- Design Standards for Park Avenue West ........................................................... Page 59
- Design Standards & Guidelines for 20th Street & Broadway ......................... Page 61
- Design Guidelines for Arapahoe & Curtis Streets ........................................... Page 62
- Design Guidelines for Welton Street ............................................................... Page 63

ILLUSTRATIONS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

The design standards and guidelines include many photographs and diagrams to illustrate acceptable or unacceptable approaches. The illustrations are provided as examples and are not intended to indicate the only options.

If there appears to be a conflict between the text of the design standards and guidelines and a related illustration, the text shall prevail.

KEY TO ILLUSTRATION SYMBOLS

- A checkmark on an illustration indicates an approach that is generally appropriate.
- An X mark on an illustration indicates an approach that is generally inappropriate.
This chapter provides context-specific site, building and streetscape design standards and guidelines that apply to projects with frontage on one or more of the following **Key Streets** in Arapahoe Square:

- 20th Street
- 21st Street
- Arapahoe Street
- Broadway
- Curtis Street
- Park Avenue West
- Welton Street

See “Guide to the Key Streets in Arapahoe Square” on the next page for more information on the unique context of each of the **Key Streets**. Note that all other applicable design standards and guidelines in this document also apply to projects with frontage on one or more **Key Streets**.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR KEY STREETS

The following core design principles provide the basis for the standards and guidelines for **Key Streets**:

- **Sense of Place.** Designs that reinforce the unique characteristics of **Key Streets** promote a distinctive sense of place in Arapahoe Square.

- **Human Scale.** Pedestrian-oriented designs promote a sense of **Human Scale** in Arapahoe Square.

- **Creativity.** Creative designs highlight and differentiate **Key Streets** throughout Arapahoe Square.

- **Context.** Designs that promote the unique design intent for each **Key Street** help create a sense of context throughout Arapahoe Square.

- **Sustainability.** Pedestrian-oriented designs for that incorporate **Low Impact Development** principles help promote sustainability on **Key Streets**.

## DESIGN FLEXIBILITY

In some cases, an innovative or creative approach that does not comply with specific design standards or guidelines may be approved if the applicant is able to demonstrate that it is consistent with the relevant guiding principles and intent statements.
GUIDE TO THE KEY STREETS IN ARAPAHOE SQUARE

GATEWAY CORNERS
The following Gateway Corners provide opportunities for architecturally significant moments that invite pedestrians onto the street:
» 21st Street & Arapahoe Street
» 21st Street & Broadway

GRAND BOULEVARDS
The 2007 Downtown Area Plan and 2011 Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan identify Broadway and Park Avenue West as “Grand Boulevards” that will transform into “celebrated, multi-modal boulevards.”

EXISTING & FUTURE CONDITIONS ON THE KEY STREETS

21st Street
This Key Street serves as the primary east-west pedestrian and bicycle connection through Arapahoe Square from Coors Field to the Clements Historic District. The 2011 Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan recommends making 21st Street into a focal point and community gathering space for Northeast Downtown neighborhoods. A subsequent urban design plan builds on this concept to envision 21st as a highly active, park-like street. The character of 21st Street will vary as it crosses Arapahoe Square:

From the Ballpark Historic District (alley between Larimer and Lawrence) to Broadway, 21st Street will transition from a highly active commercial street that combines bicycle and pedestrian activity near Coors Field and Ballpark Historic District through the active Gateway Corner at Arapahoe to the Gateway Corner at Broadway.

From Broadway to the Clements Historic District, 21st Street will provide a park-like transition to the lower-scale residential neighborhood.

PARK AVENUE WEST
This Key Street forms the northeastern border of Arapahoe Square. It provides a direct connection to Interstate 25 and serves as an important mass and scale transition to the adjacent Curtis Park neighborhood. The 2007 Downtown Area Plan and The 2011 Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan identify Park Avenue West as a “Grand Boulevard” (see above).

20th Street
This Key Street will further develop as an urban, pedestrian-oriented street that provides an active transition between Arapahoe Square and the Central Business District.

ARAPAHOE STREET
This Key Street provides a connection for pedestrians and bicyclists (using the protected bike lane) from the Central Business District through Arapahoe Square to Curtis Park. Skyline Park is a key pedestrian amenity along Arapahoe Street to the southwest of Arapahoe Square.

CURTIS STREET
This Key Street provides a pedestrian connection through Arapahoe Square, connecting the Denver Center for the Performing Arts in the southwest to Mestizo-Curtis Park in the northeast. Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan recommends evaluation of conversion to two-way operations and opportunities to widen sidewalks. The Plan also identifies the corner of 21st and Curtis as a key gateway.

BROADWAY
This Key Street cuts diagonally through Arapahoe Square, creating complex intersections with unique lot configurations. The Downtown Area Plan and Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan identify Broadway north of 20th as a “Grand Boulevard” (see above) with a high-quality green streetscape and Public Realm.

WELTON STREET
This important transit corridor provides a transition to the Clements Historic District to the southeast and Five Points Historic Cultural District to the northeast. The sidewalk area along the southeast side of the street is uniquely configured adjacent to an active light rail line and could be improved to better accommodate pedestrians.

Figure 13: Guide to the Key Streets in Arapahoe Square
Design Standards & Guidelines for 21st Street

44. 21st Street is intended to develop as a signature street that emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle activity while also providing opportunities for festivals and special events.

SPECIFIC DENVER ZONING CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR 21ST STREET

The Denver Zoning Code requires a context-specific 100% Upper Story Setback requirement for 21st Street that is intended to reinforce Human Scale design and maximize sky exposure. As described in “Upper Story Setback Alternative for 21st Street & Park Avenue West” on page 60, the Denver Zoning Code also allows alternative Upper Story Setback designs along 21st Street to enable creative designs and allow building massing that highlights Gateway Corners.

21ST STREET URBAN DESIGN PLAN

The City of Denver is currently developing an urban design plan that will recommend infrastructure improvements to promote 21st Street as a signature “shared street” that emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle activity while also providing opportunities for festivals and other special events. The design standards and guidelines in this section are intended to help implement initial recommendations from the urban design plan, which will be adopted in late 2016.

INTENT STATEMENTS

- To encourage development of 21st Street as a signature street that emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle activity
- To promote innovative, environmentally friendly stormwater best management practices on 21st Street
- To provide flexibility for creative Upper Story Setback designs that integrate with building design along 21st Street
- To frame views of unique terminating vistas at Benedict Found Park and Coors Field at either end of 21st Street
- To promote development of a vibrant mixed-use street with highly-activated Open Spaces along 21st Street from alley between Larimer and Lawrence toward Broadway
- To provide a defined gateway through strong urban forms at 21st and Broadway (see “Gateway Corners” on page 55 for more information)
- To promote a more park-like and neighborhood-scaled environment as 21st Street transitions from Broadway to the Clements Historic District
3.01 Streetscape designs on 21st Street shall promote implementation of the 21st Street Urban Design Plan.

See “21st Street Urban Design Plan” on page 56 for more information.

3.02 Distinctive design elements shall be used to identify Gateway Corners along 21st Street.

Appropriate elements include:

a. Locating iconic building elements at the corner (note that the Upper Story Setback alternative described on page 60 allows for flexible building massing)

b. Locating a Point Tower at the corner

c. Identifying corner building elements with a change in materials or wall plane

d. Locating Highly Active Uses with significant transparency at the Street Level

3.03 Buildings shall be oriented to front 21st Street with well-defined pedestrian entry features.

3.04 Vehicle Access Points to parking, service, or drop off areas shall not be provided from 21st Street.

See “Vehicle Access” on page 22 for additional information.

3.05 The Street Level adjacent to 21st Street from the Ballpark Historic District to Broadway shall be occupied primarily by Highly Active Uses.

Highly Active Uses include, but are not limited to:

a. Retail storefronts

b. Restaurants and cafes

c. Indoor arts and recreation

d. Building lobbies and amenities

e. Arts and cultural facilities

Street Level uses that will not be considered as highly active include:

f. Residential units (unless the entire building is residential and Street Level residential uses have individual street-facing entries onto 21st Street)

g. Light warehousing

h. Mini-storage

i. Parking aisles and spaces

3.06 Lower Story Facades along 21st Street between the Ballpark Historic District and Broadway shall incorporate a minimum of 60% Masonry materials that reflect the adjacent Historic District.

Appropriate materials include, but are not limited to:

a. Brick

b. Stone and Terra cotta

3.07 Residential frontages along 21st Street from Broadway to the Clements Historic District shall provide a transition between adjacent sidewalks and private residences.

Use one or more transitional features, such as:

a. A landscaped Enhanced Setback

b. Open Spaces such as courtyards

c. Stoops or small private yard areas

3.08 Alternative Upper Story Setback designs allowed by the Denver Zoning Code along 21st Street shall provide a total setback surface area equal to, or greater than, the approximate area of a 10 foot Upper Story Setback for the full width of the Primary Street-facing Facade.

a. Alternative setback designs may vary in depth from zero to 30 feet.

b. Areas that are set back more than 30 feet do not apply towards the total setback surface area.

c. Use of the upper-story setback alternative shall not result in continuous Facade lengths of over 80 feet within 10 feet of the primary street property line.

See “Upper Story Setback Alternative for 21st Street & Park Avenue West” on page 60 for more information on the standard.
3.09 Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas along 21st Street should incorporate innovative, environmentally friendly stormwater management techniques whenever possible.

Appropriate techniques include:

a. Bioswales
b. Permeable Pavers
c. Infiltration Tree Wells
d. Sub-regional Detention Ponds (in conjunction with new Open Space)
e. Other Low-Impact Development Techniques

3.10 Site designs along 21st Street between the Ballpark Historic District and Broadway should incorporate highly-activated Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas.

3.11 Site designs along 21st Street between Broadway and the Clements Historic District should incorporate landscaped Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas.

Also see Standard 3.07 on page 57 for residential frontages.

3.12 Upper Story designs on 21st Street should incorporate curves, angles or other innovative setback configurations.

3.13 Upper Story Setbacks on 21st Street should be located and designed to preserve sky exposure and views from Enhanced Setback and Private Open Space.
48. Park Avenue West forms the northeastern border of Arapahoe Square where it adjoins the Curtis Park Historic District.

**INTENT STATEMENTS**

- To provide a building scale transition along Park Avenue West between Arapahoe Square and lower-scale neighborhoods to the northeast
- To provide flexibility for creative Upper Story Setback designs that provide a building scale transition to neighborhoods to the northeast

**SPECIFIC DENVER ZONING CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR PARK AVENUE**

The Denver Zoning Code requires a context-specific 100% Upper Story Setback requirement for Park Avenue West that is intended to promote the intent for Park Avenue West to provide a building scale transition to lower-scale neighborhoods to the northeast. As described in “Upper Story Setback Alternative for 21st Street & Park Avenue West” on page 60, the Denver Zoning Code also allows alternative Upper Story Setback designs along Park Avenue West to enable creative designs that provide a building scale transition to neighborhood to the northeast.

**DESIGN STANDARDS**

3.14 Building designs on Park Avenue West shall incorporate features that promote a compatible transition to the Curtis Park Historic District.

Appropriate features include:

a. Use of Masonry building materials on the Primary Street-facing Facade (see Standard 2.85 on page 51 for Masonry requirements on a Facade Adjacent to a Historic Resource)

b. Use of massing and articulation techniques that reflect typical rhythms in the adjacent Historic District

c. Upper Story Setback designs that provide compatible scale relationships with the adjacent Historic District (See Standard 3.15 on page 59 for additional information on Upper Story Setback designs).

3.15 Alternative Upper Story Setback designs allowed by the Denver Zoning Code along Park Avenue West shall provide a total setback surface area equal to or greater than the approximate area of a 10 foot Upper Story Setback for the full width of the Primary Street-facing Facade.

a. Alternative setback designs may vary in depth from zero to 30 feet.

b. Areas that are set back more than 30 feet do not apply towards the total setback surface area.

b. Alternatives shall not result in continuous Facade lengths of over 80 feet within 10 feet of the primary street property line.

See “Upper Story Setback Alternative for 21st Street & Park Avenue West” on page 60 for more information.
The Denver Zoning Code requires a 10 foot Upper Story Setback for 100% of lot frontage on 21st Street and Park Avenue West. The DZC also specifically enables an “Upper Story Setback alternative” that allows redistribution of the setback area to provide flexibility for creative Upper Story Setback designs. Alternative Upper Story Setback designs must provide a total setback area equal to, or greater than, the area of a 10 foot Upper Story Setback for 100% of the lot frontage at or below 5 stories and 70 feet, as illustrated below. Standard 3.08 on page 57 will be used to review alternative Upper Story Setback designs on 21st Street. Standard 3.15 on page 59 will be used to review alternative story setback designs on Park Avenue West.

**REDISTRIBUTING THE UPPER STORY SETBACK AREA**

To determine the Upper Story Setback area that must be provided in an alternative design, first calculate the area that would be provided in a 10 foot setback for 100% of the lot frontage. For example, a 10 foot Upper Story Setback for 100% of a 125 foot wide lot along 21st Street would be 1,250 square feet in area (multiply the 10 foot setback by the 125 foot lot width), as illustrated above in orange.

An alternative setback design may redistribute the area of a 10% setback for 100% of the lot frontage. All setback areas within 30 feet of the Primary Street property line count toward the required setback area. For example, a required 1,250 square foot setback area along 21st Street may be redistributed into a creative design with setbacks from 0 to 30 feet as long as the resulting setback area is a minimum of approximately 1,250 feet, as illustrated above in orange.

**CREATIVE DESIGNS ALLOWED THROUGH THE UPPER STORY SETBACK ALTERNATIVE**

In the example illustrated above, the alternative is used to allow an angled setback design on Park Avenue West.

In the example illustrated above, the alternative is used to allow a curved setback design on Park Avenue West.

In the example illustrated above, the alternative is used to consolidate required setback area into a Street Level plaza at a Gateway Corner on 21st Street.

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Figure 14: Upper Story Setback Alternative for 21st Street & Park Avenue West
49. 20th Street is intended to provide an active transition between Arapahoe Square and the Central Business District.

**INTENT STATEMENT**

- To promote development of a highly active, pedestrian-oriented Street Level along 20th Street and Broadway.
- To promote development of an urban street character with strong building massing along 20th Street and Broadway.

**DENVER ZONING CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR 20TH STREET & BROADWAY**

The Denver Zoning Code does not require an Upper Story Setback on 20th Street or Broadway in Arapahoe Square to enable development with a highly urban character with strong building massing.

50. Broadway cuts diagonally through Arapahoe Square, from the Downtown Core in the south to the edge of Curtis Park in the north.

**DESIGN STANDARD**

3.16 Distinctive design elements shall be used to identify the Gateway Corner at Broadway and 21st Street.

Appropriate elements include:

a. Locating iconic building elements at the corner (note that the Upper Story Setback alternative described on page 60 allows for flexible building massing on the 21st Street frontage)

b. Locating a Point Tower at the corner

c. Identifying corner building elements with a change in materials or wall plane

d. Locating Highly Active Uses with significant transparency at the Street Level

See “Gateway Corners” on page 55 for more information.

51. The diagonal path of Broadway creates complex intersections and unique lot configurations as it passes through Arapahoe Square.

**DESIGN GUIDELINE**

3.17 Upper Story Setbacks should generally be limited on 20th Street and Broadway to create a strong street wall.
### Design Guidelines for Arapahoe & Curtis Streets

**INTENT STATEMENTS**

- To promote development of Arapahoe Street as a pedestrian gateway into Arapahoe Square, connecting Skyline Park through to Curtis Park
- To provide a pedestrian and visual connection along Curtis Street between Mestizo-Curtis Park to the northeast and the Denver Performing Arts Center to the southwest
- To promote innovative, environmentally friendly stormwater management techniques on Arapahoe Street and Curtis Street

**SPECIFIC ZONING REQUIREMENTS FOR ARAPAHOE & CURTIS STREETS**

The Denver Zoning Code provides a context-specific build-to range on Arapahoe Street and Curtis Street that enables Enhanced Setback areas to extend the full length of the lot frontage. This expanded setback area promotes the intent for Arapahoe and Curtis Streets to function as a primary pedestrian and visual connection through Arapahoe Square.

**DESIGN GUIDELINES**

3.18 The street frontage along Arapahoe Street and Curtis Street should incorporate features that promote pedestrian and bicycle use.

Appropriate features include:

a. Enhanced Setbacks and Open Space areas (see “Enhanced Setbacks & Open Space” on page 20 for more information)
b. Street furniture to provide places of respite
c. Unique paving materials or pedestrian lighting built into the paving system (note that paving materials must maintain handicap accessibility)
d. Pedestrian-scale lighting

See Guideline 4.12 on page 69 for more information.

3.19 Streetscape designs on Arapahoe Street and Curtis Street should promote pedestrian activity.

Appropriate techniques include:

a. Wide, unobstructed sidewalks
b. Mid block bulb outs (with cut throughs for bicycle facilities, where applicable)
c. Parklets

d. Other Low-Impact Development Techniques

3.20 Whenever possible, Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas along Arapahoe and Curtis Streets should incorporate innovative, environmentally friendly stormwater management techniques.

Appropriate techniques include:

a. Bioswales
b. Permeable Pavers
c. Infiltration Tree Wells

d. Pedestrian-scale lighting

3.21 Upper Story Setbacks along Arapahoe Street and Curtis Street should be positioned to maximize the visual connection between the central business district and neighborhoods to the northeast.
INTENT STATEMENTS

- To provide a comfortable pedestrian experience along Welton Street
- To mitigate impacts of the light rail line on the southeast side of Welton Street

SPECIFIC DENVER ZONING CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR WELTON

The Denver Zoning Code provides a context-specific build-to range on the southeast side of Welton Street that enables Enhanced Setback areas to extend the full length of the lot frontage. This expanded pedestrian area promotes the intent for Welton Street to provide a comfortable pedestrian environment adjacent to the light rail line.

REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT (RTD) PURVIEW ON WELTON STREET

The Regional Transit District (RTD) must approve streetscape and other improvements that impact the Public Right-of-Way along the southeast (light rail) side of Welton Street to ensure that designs do not interfere with transit operations.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

3.22 The street frontage along the southeast side of Welton Street should provide a comfortable transition between the building and the light rail line by providing additional space for pedestrians. Appropriate features include:

- **a. Enhanced Setbacks**, particularly to provide expanded sidewalk areas for safe pedestrian movement (see “B. Enhanced Setbacks” on page 19 for more information)
- **b. Open Space** areas, such as plazas and courtyards (see “C. Open Space” on page 19 for more information)
- **c. Recessed entries**
- **d. Residential stoops or yard areas**
- **e. An arcade area that is at least 5 feet deep**

3.23 Streetscape designs on the southeast (light rail) side of Welton Street should help buffer the sidewalk from the adjacent light rail line.

Appropriate techniques include:

- Columnar street trees
- Street lighting and other features with a strong vertical dimension
- Raised planters or herbaceous perennials

See Chapter 4.0 on page 65 for design standards and guidelines that apply to streetscape design throughout Arapahoe Square.
This chapter includes:

- Introduction to the Streetscape Design Guidelines ............................................................... Page 66
- Amenity Zone & Street Trees ................................................................................................ Page 68
- Streetscape Paving ................................................................................................................ Page 71
- Streetscape Furnishing & Lighting .................................................................................. Page 72

**ILLUSTRATIONS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT**

The design standards and guidelines include many photographs and diagrams to illustrate acceptable or unacceptable approaches. The illustrations are provided as examples and are not intended to indicate the only options.

*If there appears to be a conflict between the text of the design standards and guidelines and a related illustration, the text shall prevail.*

**KEY TO ILLUSTRATION SYMBOLS**

- **A checkmark** on an illustration indicates an approach that is generally appropriate.
- **An X mark** on an illustration indicates an approach that is generally inappropriate.
Streetscape design addresses the character of the Public Right-of-Way (ROW) between the property line and the primary street, including the sidewalk and amenity zone between the sidewalk and the street.

This chapter provides design guidelines for key streetscape design topics, including paving, lighting, furnishing, street trees and the design of the amenity zone. Design standards are not included in this chapter.

Note that design standards and guidelines for building arrangement and Open Space areas on individual sites (outside of the ROW) are provided in Chapter 1.0 on page 15. Additional design standards and guidelines for Key Streets, such as 21st Street and Curtis Street, are provided in Chapter 3.0 on page 53.

The following core streetscape design principles provide the basis for the guidelines:

- **Sense of Place.** Streetscape designs that define the pedestrian area and create a cohesive design environment along the street promote the sense of Arapahoe Square as a distinctive district within Downtown Denver.

- **Human Scale.** Streetscape designs that create a rhythm of pedestrian-oriented elements along the sidewalk help promote a sense of Human Scale in Arapahoe Square.

- **Creativity.** Streetscape designs that incorporate creative features help establish a unique future character for Arapahoe Square.

- **Context.** Streetscape designs that respond to the scale and character of the street help promote a sense of context throughout Arapahoe Square.

- **Sustainability.** Streetscape designs that encourage pedestrian interaction and incorporate low impact development principles promote social, economic and environmental sustainability.

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**GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR STREETSCAPE DESIGN**

**PUBLIC WORKS REVIEW OF STREETSCAPE DESIGNS**
All projects in the Public Right-of-Way are subject to review and approval by the City of Denver’s Department of Public Works. In some cases, Public Works review may result in required changes to streetscape designs or deviation from the design guidelines.

**STREETSCAPE ON 21ST STREET**
In some cases, special or unique streetscape designs may be appropriate on for frontages along 21st Street. See “Design Standards & Guidelines for 21st Street” on page 56 for additional information.

**DESIGN FLEXIBILITY**
In some cases, an innovative or creative approach that does not comply with specific design standards or guidelines may be approved if the applicant is able to demonstrate that it is consistent with the relevant guiding principles and intent statements.
The urban streetscape of Arapahoe Square includes a progression of spaces from the street to the Primary Street zone lot line (usually near the inside edge of the sidewalk) where private property begins. The three typical elements of this streetscape progression are described and illustrated below. The guidelines in this chapter primarily address design treatments within the Amenity Zone and sidewalk areas. The site and building design standards and guidelines that apply to development on the private property side of the Primary Street zone lot line are provided in Chapters 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0. Page 20 of Chapter 3.0 provides specific design standards and guidelines for Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas located on private property, but directly linked to the sidewalk and overall streetscape.

A. STREET

The street is the paved area within the Public Right-of-Way that is reserved for vehicular traffic, bicycles, transit, and on-street parking.

B. AMENITY ZONE

The amenity zone is the area between the street and sidewalk that is improved with street trees, paving, street furniture or other amenities. See “Amenity Zone Design Elements” on page 70 for additional information and illustrations.

C. SIDEWALK

Sidewalks provide the primary pedestrian-use area between the Amenity Zone and the Primary Street zone lot line. They may be directly linked to the Enhanced Setback and Open Space areas described on Page 20 of Chapter 3.0.

Figure 15: Streetscape Elements
**Amenity Zone & Street Trees**

### INTENT STATEMENTS

- To provide definition between vehicular and pedestrian use areas
- To create a cohesive public street experience along both sides of the street and between blocks
- To introduce natural elements to the street and Public Realm
- To encourage low maintenance amenity zone designs that retain their quality over time
- To encourage amenity zone designs that help maintain a safe Public Realm
- To encourage amenity zone designs that promote environmental sustainability

### DESIGN GUIDELINES

**4.01** The Amenity Zone should incorporate a variety of pedestrian-oriented amenities.

- Appropriate amenities include:
  - Street trees
  - Paved pedestrian use areas
  - Street furniture and pedestrian-scale lighting

**4.02** Building and streetscape designs should promote development of a mature tree canopy.

- Appropriate strategies include:
  - Providing bulb-outs that allow space for larger canopy trees.
  - Stepping buildings back by approximately 5 feet above the second or third floor to allow room for symmetrical canopy growth.

**4.03** Amenity Zone design and location should protect pedestrians from moving traffic.

**4.04** Trees planted in the Public Right-of-Way should follow current Office of the City Forester municipal codes and rules and regulations.

**4.05** Trees should be planted in the amenity zone at intervals that will provide a full canopy when trees reach maturity.

- Note that other strategies/plantings are appropriate on the southeast side of Welton (see Guideline 3.23 on page 63)

**4.06** Tree shape should generally be consistent along the same side of a block, while maintaining species diversity.

**4.07** Street tree species should be adapted to the harsh conditions of a dense urban environment.

- See “Street Trees” on page 70 for links to lists of approved street trees.

**4.08** Planting areas should be designed to protect trees.

- Appropriate strategies include:
  - Use of slightly raised planter beds that protect trees from de-icing agents or other chemicals while retaining pedestrian mobility (an approximate minimum 8 foot clear pedestrian area)
  - Use of features that retain crusher fines or other ground covers in the tree bed

### CITY FORESTER APPROVAL

A permit is required from the Office of the City Forester prior to planting or removing trees from the Public Right-of-Way per Chapter 57 of the Revised Municipal Code

### FLEXIBILITY FOR SMALL LOTS

Flexibility in the application of the Streetscape Design Guidelines may be appropriate for smaller lots (lots less than approximately 75 feet in width).
Amenity Zone & Street Trees (continued)

4.09 Tree pits should be designed to support the root system of mature shade trees.

Appropriate strategies include:
   a. Dimensioning tree pits by at least 5 feet wide by 15 feet long
   b. Using suspended pavement systems
   c. Using structural soil where access across the amenity zone is required (see “Suspended Pavement Systems & Structural Soil” on page 70 for more information)
   d. Using permeable pavers

4.10 The use of tree grates should be avoided whenever possible to promote healthier and longer-lived trees.

4.11 Where they are used, tree grates should accommodate mature trunk sizes and incorporate features to protect trees from locked bikes.

4.12 Amenity zone designs should respond to any adjacent dedicated Bicycle Facility.

Appropriate strategies include:
   a. Providing designated pedestrian connections across the Bicycle Facility
   b. Locating bicycle racks to be accessible from the Bicycle Facility

See Guideline 3.18 on page 62 and “Bicycle Parking in the Public Right-of-way” on page 72 for more information.

4.13 Landscaping used in the amenity zone should be hardy and drought tolerant.

   a. Trees and ground covers may be more appropriate than smaller shrubs that often do not survive over time.

4.14 Amenity zone designs should promote long-term maintenance.

Appropriate strategies include:
   a. Use of integrated irrigation systems
   b. Use of modular elements that may be removed to allow maintenance access

4.15 Amenity Zone design adjacent to multifamily residential projects should consider pet-related impacts.

   a. Consider dedicated areas for dogs or other pets.
   b. Provide plantings or hardscape areas that can survive impacts related to dogs or other pets.
   c. Avoid locating lawn areas in the Amenity Zone that cannot survive over time.

4.16 Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater management systems should be integrated into the amenity zone whenever possible.

Appropriate stormwater management systems include:
   a. Stormwater planters
   b. Bioretention areas
   c. Structural cells
   d. Infiltration planters
   e. Permeable paving (also see Guideline 4.11 on page 69)

See “LID Stormwater Management” on page 70 for more information.
AMENITY ZONE DESIGN ELEMENTS

The Amenity Zone is the area between the street and sidewalk that is improved with street trees, paving, street furniture, stormwater management systems or other amenities. Amenity Zones in Arapahoe Square are located within the Public Right-of-Way. The design elements illustrated below are appropriate for use in the Amenity Zone.

STREET TREES

The City Forester maintains a list of approved street trees and provides additional tree spacing information. Any deviation from the list must be approved by the City Forester. A permit is required from the Office of the City Forester prior to planting or removing trees from the Public Right-of-Way per Chapter 57 of the Revised Municipal Code. Trees planted within the Public Right-of-Way are also subject to Department of Public Works review.

While planting of street trees should help promote visual consistency through similar tree shapes, leaf color and growing conditions, it is important to maintain tree species diversity to avoid mass trees losses that can occur through monoculture planting.

Note that Colorado State University also maintains a list of recommended tree species for the Front Range.

PAVED PEDESTRIAN USE AREAS

Paved pedestrian use areas within the Amenity Zone provide space for street furniture and pedestrian access between the street and sidewalk. See “Streetscape Paving” on page 71 for more information.

LID STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Low Impact Development (LID) is stormwater management approach to address rainfall in a way which more closely mimics the natural hydrologic system at the site prior to development. LID stormwater management systems, such as the stormwater planter illustrated above, allow for infiltration, storage, filtration, evaporation and/or detention of stormwater close to the location where the rain fell. They promote environmental sustainability by increasing water quality and reducing off-site impacts.

SUSPENDED PAVEMENT SYSTEMS & STRUCTURAL SOIL

Suspended pavement systems support the weight of paving to allow for lightly compacted soil areas that support tree growth. By supporting healthier, faster-growing trees, Suspended pavement systems help promote the intent to introduce natural elements to the street and Public Realm that also maintain their quality over time. Suspended pavement systems also allow maintenance of pre-development hydrology to support LID stormwater management.

Structural soil is a below pavement medium that can be compacted to support building and paving requirements while still allowing for tree root growth. It may be used under the Amenity Zone as well as surrounding streets and sidewalks where suspended pavement systems are not possible.

STREET FURNITURE

Creative street furniture, such as benches or trash receptacles, within the Amenity Zone provide respite areas and enhance Arapahoe Square’s image. See “Streetscape Furnishing & Lighting” on page 72 for more information.

PEDESTRIAN-SCALE LIGHTING

Creative pedestrian-scale lighting within the Amenity Zone promotes a comfortable and safe pedestrian environment and enhances Arapahoe Square’s image. See “Streetscape Furnishing & Lighting” on page 72 for more information.

Figure 16: Amenity Zone Design Elements
Streetscape Paving

59. Paving materials and treatments should be used to differentiate key elements of the Public Right-of-Way.

**INTENT STATEMENTS**

- To clearly define pedestrian use areas
- To encourage creative paving designs that help create a unique sense of place
- To define different elements of the streetscape with distinct paving
- To promote paving designs that help manage stormwater

**DISTINCT PAVING MATERIALS**

The City of Denver’s Public Works Department reviews and approves paving materials and designs. Public Works may approve unique or distinctive paving designs if applicants have a program to ensure ongoing maintenance of paving.

**STREET PAVING**

Note that this section addresses only paving within the streetscape area that is within the Public Right-of-Way between the curb and front property line. The design standards and guidelines do not address paving of the street.

**DESIGN GUIDELINES**

4.17 Paving materials and treatments should be used to differentiate key elements of the Public Right-of-Way.

Appropriate strategies include:

a. Using distinctive paving to differentiate the amenity zone from the pedestrian sidewalk
b. Using distinctive paving to differentiate the pedestrian sidewalk Open Space areas
c. Using creative paving designs that help create a unique sense of place

4.18 Permeable paving systems should be incorporated into streetscape designs to allow natural stormwater drainage.

a. Design permeable paving systems to be easily cleaned and maintained.
b. Develop a maintenance plan to ensure that permeable paving systems continue to function over time.
INTENT STATEMENTS

• To promote a comfortable, safe and clean pedestrian environment
• To invite pedestrians to linger with a rhythm of respite areas within the streetscape
• To ensure the long term success of the streetscape through furnishings and lighting that maintain their quality over time
• To promote creative streetscape furnishing and lighting designs

DESIGN GUIDELINES

4.19 Streetscape furnishings should be provided to encourage pedestrian activity.
   Appropriate streetscape furnishings include:
   a. Benches
   b. Planters
   c. Bicycle racks
   d. Trash containers
   e. Pet waste bag dispensers

4.20 Streetscape furnishings and lighting should be durable and suitable for outdoor conditions.

4.21 Streetscape furnishings, such as cafe seating, should maintain at least a 6 foot clear pedestrian area along the sidewalk.

4.22 Streetscape designs should integrate pedestrian-scale lighting to encourage evening use and enhance security.
   Appropriate strategies include:
   a. Use of low-height fixtures
   b. Use of fixtures that provide soft lighting
   c. Installation of fixtures at frequent intervals

4.23 Streetscape furnishing and lighting should incorporate creative designs.
   Appropriate strategies include:
   a. Use of streetscape furnishings that serve multiple purposes such as planters with integrated seating
   b. Incorporating public art

4.24 Streetscape furnishing and lighting should enhance neighborhood safety.
   Appropriate strategies include:
   a. Designing benches and other seating to discourage overnight use
   b. Ensuring that pedestrian use areas are well lit

4.25 Where possible, pedestrian lighting should be integrated into streetscape design elements.
   Appropriate strategies include:
   a. Integrating lighting into streetscape furnishings
   b. Integrating lighting into planters or garden walls
   c. Integrating LED lighting into paving systems

BICYCLE PARKING IN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY

The design standards and guidelines for bicycle parking on page 26 in Chapter 1.0 Site Design Standards & Guidelines also apply to the design of bicycle parking located in the Public Right-of-Way.
This chapter includes:

- Introduction to the Sign Design Standards & Guidelines... Page 74
- Sign Location.................................................................................................................. Page 76
- Sign Character & Materials......................................................................................... Page 77
- Sign Lighting.................................................................................................................. Page 78
- Individual Sign Types.................................................................................................. Page 80
  » Projecting Signs......................................................................................................... Page 80
  » Non-Projecting Sign Types........................................................................................ Page 81

ILLUSTRATIONS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

The design standards and guidelines include many photographs and diagrams to illustrate acceptable or unacceptable approaches. The illustrations are provided as examples and are not intended to indicate the only options.

If there appears to be a conflict between the text of the design standards and guidelines and a related illustration, the text shall prevail.

KEY TO ILLUSTRATION SYMBOLS

- **A checkmark** on an illustration indicates an approach that is generally appropriate.
- **An X mark** on an illustration indicates an approach that is generally inappropriate.
Introduction to the Sign Design Standards & Guidelines

Sign design addresses the location, character and lighting of signage.

This chapter provides design standards and guidelines for a variety of sign types throughout Arapahoe Square.

The location and design of individual signs are not reviewed by the Design Advisory Board. However, the design standards and guidelines in this chapter will be used to guide review of:

- Comprehensive Sign Plans by City Staff and/or the Denver Planning Board
- New or modified projecting signs (where permitted by a Comprehensive Sign Plan) by City Staff
- All other (non-projecting) permitted sign types by City Staff


GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SIGN DESIGN

The following core sign design principles provide the basis for the standards and guidelines:

- Sense of Place. Unique signs that are integrated into overall building design help create a cohesive design environment along the street and promote the sense of Arapahoe Square as a distinctive district within Downtown Denver.
- Human Scale. Signs that are located and scaled for pedestrian visibility promote a sense of Human Scale in Arapahoe Square.
- Creativity. Signs with creative shapes and iconographic designs help establish a unique future character for Arapahoe Square.
- Context. Signs that are located and designed to respond to their surroundings promote a sense of context throughout Arapahoe Square.
- Sustainability. Signs that assist with pedestrian wayfinding promote environmental sustainability by encouraging pedestrian activity throughout Arapahoe Square.

DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD REVIEW OF FACADE DESIGN

Although the Design Advisory Board does not use this chapter to review the location and design of individual signs, the DAB does consider potential future sign locations when reviewing proposed building designs.

See “Designing for Signage” on page 46 in Chapter 2.0 for more information.

DENVER ZONING CODE SIGN REQUIREMENTS

Division 10.10 of the Denver Zoning Code provides base requirements for the erection, remodeling, enlarging, moving, operation and maintenance of all signs.

The design standards and guidelines in this Chapter are intended to build on Denver Zoning Code requirements.
SIGN HIERARCHY

When planning signage, it is important to understand the purpose that each sign can play, and to consider the hierarchy and scale of signs types, messages and designs. “Layering” information will help visitors obtain the information they need, while also ensuring that every proposed sign has an objective. With a few exceptions, most building signage plans should provide for both primary and secondary signage. This signage should be attractive and visually interesting. Iconic shaped signs add an extra layer of artistry and appeal, and can help to convey the unique personality and character of the building occupant.

A. PRIMARY SIGNAGE
   Primary Signage is strategically placed to be viewed from longer distances, and should be located at or near primary entrances. Typically one primary sign per business is appropriate.

B. SECONDARY SIGNAGE
   Secondary Signage provides additional information that is viewed from shorter distances and at the pedestrian level. Typically one to three secondary signs per business are appropriate.

C. ADDITIONAL/ICONIC SIGNAGE
   Iconic Signage should be located and designed to increase the character on the street and incorporate artistic, three-dimensional imagery. Typically one iconic sign per business is appropriate.

COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PLAN

Division 10.10 of the Denver Zoning Code enables a Comprehensive Sign Plan process that allows flexibility in zoning requirements for the size, type and location of signs identifying the use and location of signs for large facilities (as defined in the Denver Zoning Code) subject to review by City Staff and the Planning Board. The Denver Zoning Code also enables a comprehensive sign plan process that allows for projecting signs on smaller facilities subject to review by City Staff. This flexibility is offered in exchange for a coordinated program of signage ensuring a higher standard of design quality for such signs.
Sign Location

Intent Statements

- To encourage sign locations that promote a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented street frontage
- To ensure that signs are integrated into overall building design
- To promote coordinated sign locations on building Facades.
- To improve wayfinding in Arapahoe Square by identifying business and entrance locations

Facade Design for Signage

Additional design standards and guidelines that address the relationship of signage overall Facade design are provided on page 46 in Chapter 2.0.

Design Standards

5.01 Signs shall be located within Facade areas set aside for signage in the overall Facade design.

   Such Facade areas may include:
   a. A distinct signage band area above storefronts at the Street Level
   b. Architectural bays or panels

   See “Designing for Signage” on page 46 for design standards and guidelines related to setting aside Facade areas for potential future signage.

5.02 Where Facade areas have not been set aside for signs in the overall Facade design, signs shall be located in areas where they best integrate with the overall design of the Facade.

5.03 Signs for Street Level uses shall be located to ensure pedestrian visibility.

5.04 Signs shall be located adjacent to the identified use.

   Note that this design standard does not apply to Joint Identification Signs (see page 81).

5.05 No more than one sign shall be located on each Upper Story Facade or Tower Facade.

5.06 Signs shall not overlap or conceal architectural features on the building Facade.

Design Guidelines

5.07 Signs located on Upper Story Facade or Tower Facade should be consolidated to identify the building or a single tenant.

5.08 Signs for multiple tenants should be consolidated whenever possible.

   See “Joint Identification Signs” on page 81 for related design standards and guidelines.

5.09 Signs should indicate building entries and entries to parking facilities.

5.10 Signs should be coordinated so as not to conflict with key streetscape elements whenever possible.

   Streetscape elements to consider, include:
   a. Street trees
   b. Street lighting
   c. Street furniture

5.11 Tenant signage should not be located significantly above the Street Level unless it is located and designed to be integral to the building Facade.

5.12 Sign locations should not interfere with future tree growth.
Sign Character & Materials

INTENT STATEMENTS

• To encourage the development of a well-defined sense of place in Arapahoe Square
• To promote Human Scaled, pedestrian-oriented signage
• To ensure that signs are subordinate to overall building design
• To ensure that signs retain a quality appearance over time

DESIGN STANDARDS

5.13 Signs shall be oriented towards and scaled for pedestrians.
   Appropriate strategies include:
   a. Locating signs at, or just above, the Street Level
   b. Ensuring that signage is not the most prominent feature of Street Level Facade design

5.14 Signs shall be designed to integrate with architectural features on the building Facade.

5.15 Signs shall incorporate durable materials that will maintain their quality over time.
   Appropriate materials include, but are not limited to:
   a. Metal
   b. Painted or carved wood
   c. Individual wood or cast metal letters or symbols
   d. Stone such as slate, marble or sandstone
   e. Painted, gilded or sandblasted glass

DESIGN GUIDELINES

5.16 Signs should be designed to work together to create a cohesive identity for the building Facade.
   Note that a Comprehensive Sign Plan provides flexibility for a coordinated palette of signage on a large facility. See “Comprehensive Sign Plan” on page 75 for more information.

5.17 Signs should be designed to be creative and iconographic whenever possible.
   Appropriate techniques include:
   a. Incorporating symbols or representations of products into sign design
   b. Integrating iconic typology into sign design
   c. Integrating creative lighting into sign design
   Note that projecting signs must incorporate iconic features. See page 80 for more information.

5.18 Signs should be designed using distinctive materials and craftsmanship, whenever possible.
### INTENT STATEMENTS
- To promote pedestrian-oriented lighting that enhances security
- To encourage sign lighting that maintains its quality over time
- To ensure that sign lighting does not adversely affect residents

### DESIGN STANDARDS

**5.19 Sign lighting shall be integrated into the design of the sign or Facade.**

Appropriate strategies include:
- a. Built-in indirect back lit/halo lighting
- b. Built in goose neck or contemporary lighting arms
- c. Sign lighting that is integrated into an architectural feature on the building Facade

**5.20 Sign lighting shall be directed toward signs for pedestrians on adjacent sidewalks.**

Appropriate strategies include:
- a. Focusing lighting directly towards the sign
- b. Incorporating hoods or caps to avoid casting light upward

**5.21 Electrical conduits and raceways for sign lighting shall be concealed.**

Appropriate strategies include:
- a. Integrating electrical connections into the design of the Facade
- b. Painting conduit to blend with the Facade color

### DESIGN GUIDELINES

**5.22 Signs should be lit to encourage continuous pedestrian activity in Arapahoe Square.**

**5.23 Sign lighting should not cast light into residential windows.**

**5.24 Sign lighting should be consistent with overall building lighting.**

**5.25 Internally illuminated signs should be designed to allow for easy maintenance and replacement of lighting systems.**
## DEFINITIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL SIGN TYPES

Sign types allowed by the Denver Zoning Code are defined and illustrated below. Design standards and guidelines specific to each sign type are provide on the following pages.

### A. PROJECTING SIGN

An iconographic three-dimensional sign attached to and projecting from the wall of a building, typically perpendicular to a façade. This sign type is only allowed with a Comprehensive Sign Plan.

### B. ARCADE SIGN

A sign attached to the roof or wall of an arcade and totally within the outside limits of the structural surfaces which are delineating the arcade.

### C. GROUND SIGN

A sign supported by poles, uprights or braces extending from the ground or an object on the ground but not attached to any part of any building (note that a ground sign may be used as a joint identification sign).

### D. WALL SIGN

A sign attached to, painted on or erected against a wall, facia, parapet wall or pitched roof of a building or structure (note that a wall sign may be used as a joint identification sign).

### E. WINDOW SIGN

A sign which is applied or attached to, or located within three feet of the interior of a window, which sign can be seen through the window from the exterior of the structure.

### F. JOINT IDENTIFICATION SIGN

A sign which serves as a common or collective identification for three or more businesses on the same zone lot (note that Joint Identification Signs are a type of wall or ground sign).

Figure 18: Definitions and Illustrations for Individual Sign Types
INTENT STATEMENTS

- To promote a unique visitor experience through creative sign design
- To promote projecting sign locations and designs that are integrated into the overall arrangement of signage on the building Facade.
- To ensure that projecting signs are pedestrian oriented
- To promote projecting sign designs that enliven the pedestrian environment with unique, expressive and iconic shapes

DESIGN STANDARDS

5.26 Projecting signs shall be designed to be creative and iconographic.

Appropriate techniques include:
- a. Integrating iconic typology into sign design
- b. Integrating creative lighting into sign design

5.27 Projecting signs shall be three-dimensional.

Appropriate techniques include:
- a. Using shapes that limit the need for signage text
- b. Incorporating three-dimensional objects, such as products related to the advertised use, in sign design (objects may be abstracted)

5.28 Where multiple projecting signs are used on a single building, they shall use a consistent attachment detail.

DESIGN GUIDELINE

5.29 Projecting signs should be located to enhance building image.

Appropriate locations include:
- a. On a building corner
- b. Above a recessed Facade element

Projecting signs may be permitted through an approved Comprehensive Sign Plan for a large facility, or through a staff-approved plan for a smaller facility (see "Comprehensive Sign Plan" on page 75). City Staff will review and approve applications for new or modified projecting signs.
INTENT STATEMENTS

• To promote appropriate use of a variety of sign types
• To limit the visual impact of multiple signs on a building facade
• To maintain the appearance of an active street level with a high percentage of transparency

DENVER ZONING CODE BONUS FOR JOINT IDENTIFICATION SIGNS

For some multi-tenant buildings, the Denver Zoning Code exempts one joint tenant sign from the calculation of maximum signage area in Arapahoe Square. Such joint tenant signs may take the form of a wall or ground sign.

DESIGN STANDARDS

ARCADE SIGNS

5.30 Arcade signs shall be mounted parallel to the building facade within an arcaded building entry or perpendicular to the building facade hanging from an arcade.

GROUND SIGNS

5.31 Ground signs shall be located only in Enhanced Setback or Open Space areas.

WALL SIGNS

5.32 Walls signs shall be designed to fit within sign bands or architectural details on the building facade.

5.33 Where a wall sign is used as a joint identification sign, it shall be located adjacent to a primary building entry.

WINDOW SIGNS

5.34 Window signs shall not cover more than approximately 20% of the window area.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

ARCADE SIGNS

5.35 Arcade signs should be scaled to be compatible with the overall arcade design.

GROUND SIGNS

5.36 Materials used for ground mounted signs should be coordinated with materials used on adjacent buildings, whenever possible.

JOINT IDENTIFICATION SIGNS

5.37 Joint identification signs should be designed with a coordinated set of materials, colors and typefaces.

WALL SIGNS

5.38 Where possible, wall signs should generally align with wall signs on neighboring buildings.

5.39 Where a wall sign will be internally-lit, separate internally-illuminated lettering should be used rather than a single internally-illuminated box.

WINDOW SIGNS

5.40 Window signs should generally be scaled for pedestrians and located at, or below, pedestrian height.

a. Limit window signs to logos or additional product information.

b. Use individual lettering rather than solid color backgrounds.
APPENDIX

Contents

• Glossary of Terms ........................................................................................................ii
Glossary of Terms

The terms included here are terms that are consistently referenced throughout the design standards and guidelines. Many of the terms are consistent with Denver Zoning Code definitions but are included in this document for ease and accessibility. For terms that are not included here, refer to the Denver Zoning Code, Section 13.3 Definition of Words, Terms and Phrases as well as Section 11.12 Use Definitions.

**ACTIVE USES**
See “Street Level Active Uses” and “Highly Active Uses”

**ALLEY**
A public way that is less in size than a street, and which is not designed for general travel, which is used primarily as a means of access to the rear of residences and business establishments. Also see Private Access Drive.

**ALLEY-FACING FACADE**
Any facade that is located roughly parallel to, and is visible from an alley that is part of the Public Right-of-Way.

**AMENITY ZONE**
An area between the street and sidewalk that is improved with street trees, paving, street furniture or other amenities. An Amenity Zone is typically located within the Public Right-of-Way. See “Amenity Zone Design Elements” on page 70 for additional information and illustrations.

**BICYCLE CORRAL**
Bicycle Corrals are an on-street bicycle parking facility that can accommodate bicycles in the same area as an on street-vehicle parking space. They work best where sidewalks are too narrow to accommodate bicycle racks and in areas with both high levels of people bicycling and demand for bicycle parking.

**CEMENTITIOUS STUCCO**
An exterior wall finish, usually composed of cement, sand, and lime, and applied while wet.

**BICYCLE FACILITY**
A lane, path, or shoulder for use by bicyclists, or a shelter/parking facility for bicycles.

**CITY STAFF**
For purposes of these Design Standards and Guidelines, “City Staff” refers to the City Zoning Administrator and his or her designees in the Department of Community Planning and Development.

**COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PLAN**
Division 10.10 of the Denver Zoning Code enables a Comprehensive Sign Plan process that allows flexibility in zoning requirement for the size, type and location of signs identifying the use and location of large facilities (as defined in the Denver Zoning Code). See “Comprehensive Sign Plan” on page 75 for more information.

**CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE**
A structure that is designated as contributing to the historic or architectural qualities of a Historic District according to the provisions of the Denver Revised Municipal Code, Chapter 30.

**DENVER ZONING CODE**
The Denver Zoning Code implements the city’s vision for the future of Denver, by calibrating regulations for structures, uses and parking by neighborhood context. The Denver Zoning Code generally sets forth quantitative requirements such as maximum heights or minimum setbacks that apply in addition to the discretionary design standards and guidelines included in this document. See www.denvergov.org/zoning for more information.

**DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD**
A group of downtown residents, property owners, design professionals and development industry representatives appointed by the Mayor of Denver to review proposed projects in Arapahoe Square using these design standards and guidelines. See “Design Review Process” on page 9 and www.denvergov.org/downtowndesign for more information.

**ENHANCED SETBACK**
The space created when buildings are set back from the primary street property line, but generally still positioned within the primary street build-to range provided in the Denver Zoning Code. Such setbacks should be enhanced to provide attractive and usable areas that activate the street frontage. They can range in size from modest setback areas provided by building offsets to larger patio seating or pedestrian use areas. See “Pedestrian-oriented Street Frontage” on page 19 for more information.
FACADE
The exterior face or wall surface of a building. For the purpose of these design standards and guidelines, a Facade includes all stories of a building.

FACADE ADJACENT TO A HISTORIC RESOURCE
A facade will be considered to be adjacent to a Historic Resource when it is visible from a Historic District or Landmark Structure, or is visible from a street or alley within 1/2 block of a Historic District, or zone lot that includes a Landmark Structure, as illustrated at left. Note that all facades facing the alley between Larimer and Lawrence Streets and all facades facing the alley between Welton and Glenarm Streets meet the definition of a Facade Adjacent to A Historic Resource. See “Facade Adjacent to a Historic Resource” on page 51 for more information.

FIBER CEMENT SIDING
A building material used to cover the exterior of a building. Fiber cement is a composite material made of sand, cement and cellulose fibers. Fiber Cement Siding includes HardieBoard and HardiePlank.

GATEWAY CORNER
An intersection where strong building massing will help invite pedestrians onto active sections of 21st Street. See “Gateway Corners” on page 55 for more information.

GENERAL BUILDING FORM
A Denver Zoning Code building form that establishes the base set of standards for Arapahoe Square zone districts from which all other building forms deviate for specific situations.

GENERAL WITH HEIGHT INCENTIVE BUILDING FORM
A Denver Zoning Code building form that promotes buildings with elevated design quality that minimizes the visibility of structured parking while allowing increased building height.

HUMAN SCALE
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. See “Human Scale Building Design” on page 32 for more information.

HISTORIC DISTRICT
A districts that is locally-designated for preservation under the provisions of the Denver Revised Municipal Code, Chapter 30.

HISTORIC RESOURCE
A Landmark Structure or Historic District that is locally-designated for preservation under the provisions of the Denver Revised Municipal Code, Chapter 30.

KEY STREETS
Unique or important streets in Arapahoe Square where context-specific design guidance is provided. See “Key Streets” on page 4 for more information.

LANDMARK STRUCTURE
A structures that is locally-designated for preservation under the provisions of the Denver Revised Municipal Code, Chapter 30.

LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT
Low Impact Development (LID) is stormwater management approach to address rainfall in a way which more closely mimics the natural hydrologic system at the site prior to any development.

LOWER STORIES
The portion of a building generally located below an Upper Story Setback specified in the Denver Zoning Code. For example, where the Denver Zoning Code specifies an Upper Story Setback above 5 stories or 70 feet, the Lower Stories will generally be stories 1-5. However, the Lower Stories may be considered to end at a lower height where an Upper Story Setback is located below the maximum height specified in the Denver Zoning Code. See the related definitions of Lower Story Facade, Upper Stories and Tower.
Glossary of Terms (continued)

LOWER STORY FACADE
The Primary Street-facing Facade of a building’s Lower Stories. See the related definitions of Lower Stories, Upper Stories and Tower.

MASONRY
Building materials characterized by individual units laid in and bound together by mortar. Masonry materials include brick, stone and terra cotta.

OFF-STREET PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION
An improved and maintained way providing pedestrian access from the Public Right-of-Way into the interior of a block. For the purpose of these design standards and guidelines, an Off-Street Pedestrian Connection includes any improved pedestrian way through the interior of a block to provide pedestrian connections between block frontages or provide pedestrian access to uses located in the interior of a block. Note that an Alley or Private Access Drive may also serve as an Off-Street Pedestrian Connection when improved for pedestrian use.

OPEN SPACE
A type of Enhanced Setback that may extend beyond the primary street build-to range allowed by the Denver Zoning Code to provide more substantial Street Level pedestrian use areas, such as: courtyards, plazas, pocket parks, and pedestrian pathways leading into a development. Also see Private Open Space.

PARK
A large Open Space providing publicly-accessible neighborhood-level outdoor recreation space. Parks are generally publicly-owned, but may be privately-owned in some cases.

PARKLET
A parklet is a sidewalk extension that provides more space and amenities for people using the street. Usually parklets are installed on parking lanes and use one or more parking spaces.

POINT TOWER BUILDING FORM
A Denver Zoning Code building form that allows buildings that incorporate tall, slender Tower building elements with elevated design quality that preserve views and sky exposure while also minimizing the visibility of structured parking. See “Point Tower Building Form” on page 49 for more information.

PRIMARY STREET
Any named or numbered street in Arapahoe Square, as defined in the Denver Zoning Code.

PRIMARY STREET-FACING FACADE
Any facade that is located roughly parallel to, and is visible from, a Primary Street. Primary Street-facing Facades do not include facades that are generally perpendicular to a Primary Street, although such facades may still be considered as a Visible Facade.

PRIMARY STREET UPPER STORY SETBACK
See Upper Story Setback.

PRIVATE ACCESS DRIVE
An improved and maintained way providing vehicular access from the Public Right-of-Way into the interior of a block. For the purpose of these design standards and guidelines, a Private Access Drive includes any privately owned off-street vehicle way through the interior of a block to provide individual vehicular access points to parking areas, service areas, an Interior Vehicle Court or similar features shared by multiple buildings or sites on a block. Note that a Private Access Drive may also serve as an Off-Street Pedestrian Connection when improved for pedestrian use. Also see Alley.

PRIVATE OPEN SPACE
An Open Space located on private property that may also qualify as a build-to alternative in the Denver Zoning Code.

PUBLIC REALM
Areas within the Public Right-of-Way (including streets and sidewalks), as well as parks, Enhanced Setbacks, Open Space and connecting paths or walkways located on private property adjacent to the Public Right-of-Way.

PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY
The area of land that is intended to provide access to individual sites. The Public Right-of-Way generally includes the roadway, sidewalks, Amenity Zone, and Alley. This area could be publicly owned by the municipality over which the road and sidewalk is built, or privately owned and maintained by others such as a metropolitan district or homeowners association.

QUALITY
Refers to the use of a material that is low maintenance, will stand up to wear and tear and is appropriate for the intended use or design application.
Appendix

DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

Glossary of Terms (continued)

RIGHT-OF-WAY
See Public Right-of-Way

SCALE
The perception of a building's size in relation to a human, based on proportions, scaling elements and contextually sensitive solutions to the design of the structure. Scale is one of the elements that contribute to our perception of a place's character.

STREET LEVEL
The first story or level in a building or structure, as defined by the Denver Zoning Code. For the purpose of these design standards and guidelines, Street Level will generally be considered to be the story or level of a building or structure that interfaces directly with the Public Realm, including Street Level building frontages facing streets, Open Spaces and Off-Street Pedestrian Connections. Note that the Street Level is considered to be part of the Lower Stories.

STREET LEVEL ACTIVE USES
Uses that contribute to the activation and engagement of the street, as defined by the Denver Zoning Code. The Denver Zoning Code requires a minimum percentage of Street Level Active Uses on a Primary Street-facing Facade. Also see Highly Active Uses.

STREET LEVEL FACADE
The Primary Street-facing Facade at the Street Level along with any other Street Level Facade areas that face the Public Realm, including Street Level Facades facing streets, Open Spaces and Off-Street Pedestrian Connections. Note that the Street Level Facade is part of the Lower Story Facade.

STRUCTURAL SOIL
Structural soil is a below pavement medium that can be compacted to support building and paving requirements while still allowing for tree root growth. See “Suspended Pavement Systems & Structural Soil” on page 70 for more information.

TOWER
The portion of a Point Tower Building Form that is located above an Upper Story Setback specified in the Denver Zoning Code, including all stories where the Denver Zoning Code specifies a maximum Tower Floor Plate area and maximum Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension (note that a Tower is sometimes also referred to as a Tower massing component or a Tower building element). For example, where the Denver Zoning Code specifies an Upper Story Setback above 5 stories or 70 feet, the Tower will generally be any portion of the building above 5 stories. However, a Tower may be considered to begin at a lower height where Upper Story Setbacks are located below the maximum height specified in the Denver Zoning Code or where the portion of the building that meets the maximum Tower Floor Plate area and maximum Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension begins below the height specified in the Denver Zoning Code.

TOWER FACADE
The Primary Street-facing Facades and Visible Facades of all stories of a Tower. See the related definitions of Lower Story Facade and Tower.

TOWER FLOOR PLATE
Any single story of a Tower, as measured to the exterior wall faces. The Tower Floor Plate is used for Denver Zoning Code requirements and design standards and guidelines related to Tower Floor Plate area and Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension.

TOWER FLOOR PLATE LINEAR DIMENSION
The longest horizontal distance between the exterior walls of a single Tower Floor Plate per the rules of measurement set forth in Article 13 of the Denver Zoning Code. Maximum Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension promotes access to light an air and creative design solutions by limiting the width of individual Tower Facades.

TOWER FLOOR PLATE LINEAR DIMENSION ALTERNATIVE
A Denver Zoning Code standard that allows for an increased Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension on a Point Tower Building Form to provide flexibility in special circumstances where creative Tower designs are found to meet Standard 2.79 in Chapter 2.0.
Glossary of Terms (continued)

UPPER STORIES
The portion of a General Building Form or General With Height Incentive Building Form that is located above an Upper Story Setback specified in the Denver Zoning Code. For example, where the Denver Zoning Code specifies an Upper Story Setback above 5 stories or 70 feet, the Upper Stories will generally be any portion of the building above 5 stories. However, the Upper Stories may be considered to begin at a lower height where Upper Story Setbacks are located below the maximum height specified in the Denver Zoning Code. Note that the portion of a Point Tower Building Form that is located above an Upper Story Setback specified in the Denver Zoning Code is defined as the Tower rather than the Upper Stories. See the related definitions of Upper Story Facade, Lower Stories and Tower.

UPPER STORY FACADE
The Primary Street-facing Facade of the Upper Stories of a General Building Form or General With Height Incentive Building Form. Note that the Facades of a Point Tower Building Form that are located above an Upper Story Setback specified in the Denver Zoning Code are defined as Tower Facades rather than Upper Story Facades. See the related definitions of Lower Story Facade and Upper Stories.

UPPER STORY SETBACK
A Denver Zoning Code-required building setback at a maximum specified height above the Street Level to provide appropriate pedestrian height, scale and massing. May also refer to other setbacks above the fifth story as described in these design standards and guidelines.

VEHICLE ACCESS POINT
A point providing vehicular access to a Zone Lot, parking area, parking structure or shared Alley/Private Access Drive from an adjacent street.

VISIBLE FACADE
Any facade that is not a Primary Street-facing Facade, Alley-facing Facade or Facade Adjacent to A Historic Resource, but is visible from the Public Realm at the time of construction without significant blockage by building or site features.

VISIBLE STRUCTURED PARKING
Visible Structured Parking refers to a structured parking facade that is not wrapped with another use and is located on the Primary Street-facing Facade, or faces a historic resource per the definition of a Facade Adjacent to a Historic Resource.

WALL MURAL
A mural is any piece of artwork or super graphic (which does not serve as an advertisement) painted or applied directly on a wall.

WALDRUM DIAGRAM
A Denver Zoning Code technique to calculate the percentage of sky exposure that a building’s profile allows through to the street below.

ZONE LOT
As defined in the Denver Zoning Code, the land designated as the building site for a structure, or the land area occupied by a use or a structure. Many Denver Zoning Code requirements, such as Upper Story Setbacks are measured in relation to Zone Lot size or Zone Lot Line / Zone Lot Boundary Lines.

ZONE LOT LINE / ZONE LOT BOUNDARY LINE
As defined in the Denver Zoning Code, any line separating a Zone Lot from a street, an Alley, another Zone Lot or any other land not part of the Zone Lot. Many Denver Zoning Code requirements, such as Upper Story Setbacks, are measured in relation to Zone Lot size or Zone Lot Line / Zone Lot Boundary Lines.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR
A member of City Staff appointed by the Executive Director of the Department of Community Planning and Development to take final action regarding zoning permits, make code interpretations and undertake other duties as outlined in the Denver Zoning Code. The Zoning Administrator may designate their authority to any member of City Staff.