

Review Criteria for Development along Commercial Corridors

Questions & Answers



What are Commercial Corridors?

Commercial corridors are streets, avenues, parkways, and boulevards associated with commerce and having a primarily commercial character. Historically, many commercial corridors were pleasant, tree-lined streets with smaller scale neighborhood-oriented retail shops. However, current development practices emphasize automobile uses and access, which can be at odds with the City's goal of creating a transit-oriented, pedestrian-friendly, safe urban experience. Although development patterns have changed over time, it is still possible to protect and enhance the traditional pedestrian-friendly character of the corridors.

The corridors that are affected by these rules and regulations are Alameda Boulevard, Broadway Street, Colorado Boulevard, Colfax Avenue, Evans Avenue, Federal Boulevard, Hampden Avenue, Leetsdale Drive, Lincoln Street, Morrison Road, Santa Fe Drive, Speer Boulevard, Sheridan Boulevard, and University Boulevard. Additional corridors may be designated by Planning Board. Check with Zoning Administration for the most recent list.

Why are commercial corridors important?

Commercial corridors provide many benefits to the city as a whole and to the individual neighborhoods they abut. The corridors serve as gateways into the city for visitors and residents and often establish a city's image. They provide service, shopping, dining, cultural and entertainment opportunities for residents of the region, city and adjacent neighborhoods. Corridors can either connect or separate residential neighborhoods, and they can add to a sense of community pride. Transportation options — whether walking, driving, or using mass transit — are a critical element of corridors.

How can new development along corridors improve?

To protect and enhance the beneficial qualities of corridors, the City and County of Denver Planning Board adopted additional rules and regulations for the review of development along commercial corridors. These rules and regulations are:

- ▶ be consistent with the standards and criteria established by the Denver Comprehensive Plan,



including any applicable adopted corridor, small area or neighborhood plan;

- ▶ be consistent with the City and County of Denver Streetscape Design Manual and streetscape design guidelines of applicable local improvement districts, e.g. pedestrian lights, detached sidewalks, and street trees;
- ▶ enhance each corridor's traditional street-oriented development patterns, setbacks, and build-to lines, provide a consistent edge to the public street and sidewalk space in order to provide pedestrian scale and access and to encourage pedestrian-oriented activity;
- ▶ provide visual interest and human scale through the use of prominent windows and operable entries at the street-facing facades, and through architectural variation, including form, materials, detail, and color;
- ▶ provide convenient pedestrian access from the public right-of-way to the project and utilize pedestrian-friendly site and building design;
- ▶ minimize the presence of parking areas and parking structures along the corridor edge to limit the conflicts with desired pedestrian activity and negative visual and noise impacts of parked autos on the corridor and on adjacent residential areas through a combination of site planning, building

placement, landscaping, masonry screening, fencing, and other effective buffering;

- ▶ use durable materials that complement Denver's tradition as a brick and masonry city;
- ▶ use appropriate lighting to enhance safety and security while minimizing glare and light pollution;
- ▶ incorporate signs that are readily visible to motorists and pedestrians and that are complementary to the character of the corridor and individual building architecture.



How will these regulations be applied?

These regulations are a subset of the Planned Development/Planned Building Group (PD/PBG) review. This review process applies to all new development on zone lots greater than 10,000 square feet in commercial and residential zones. Industrial zones are reviewed under different regulations. For complete information about PD/PBG applications, contact Zoning Administration at 720-865-3000.



Is this an additional layer of review?

No. These are supplemental rules and regulations that are included in the existing process for development approval.



Do the criteria restrict what I can build?

No, existing zoning still prevails. These guidelines address the site and building location and function, as well as improvements to the right of way and effects on adjacent properties. The building size, use, and number of parking spaces required are not affected. The location of these elements on the site may be affected by these rules and regulations.

A few last words

Commercial corridor review will enhance the vibrancy of the city by encouraging pedestrian- and transit-friendly design. The Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000 sets forth an urban design vision that "Denver's residents will continue to take pleasure in and be well-served by their urban surroundings. Denver's high-quality urban design traditions will be sustained by the City's adoption of policies that address beauty, function, history, economic development and the future with equal vigor."





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